

Gregory I

Collected Works

DELPHI CLASSICS

Ancient Classics Series

The Collected Works of

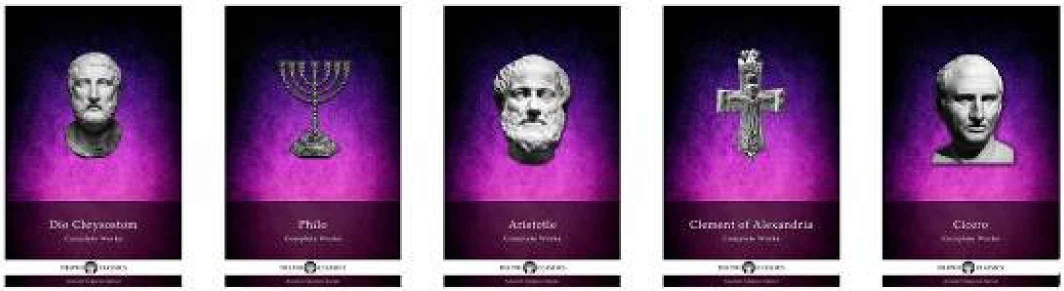
GREGORY I

(c. 540–604)

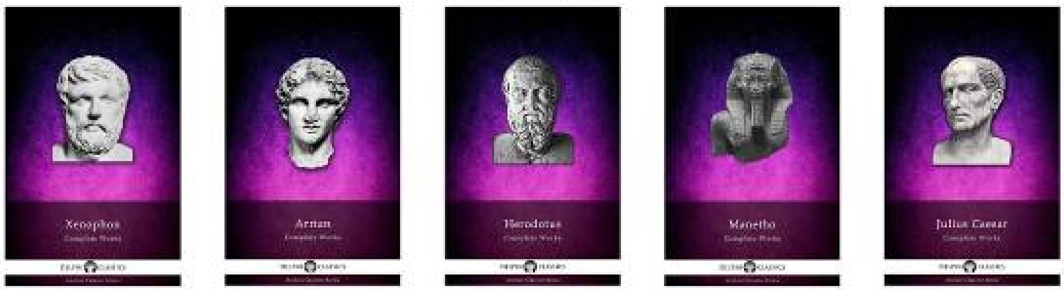


Contents

PHILOSOPHERS



HISTORIANS



EPIC POETS



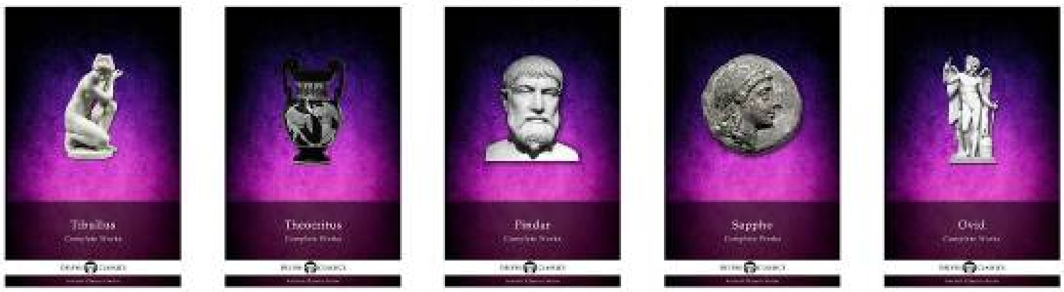
MEN OF SCIENCE



Dramatists



Lyric Poetry



DELPHI CLASSICS

www.delphiclassics.com

Free downloads and buy an entire series at a special discounted price

The Collected Works of

GREGORY I



By Delphi Classics, 2019

COPYRIGHT

Collected Works of Gregory I

First published in the United Kingdom in 2019 by Delphi Classics.

ISBN: 978 1 78877 962 3

Delphi Classics

is an imprint of

Delphi Publishing Ltd
Hastings, East Sussex
United Kingdom
Contact: sales@delphiclassics.com

DELPHI CLASSICS

www.delphiclassics.com

The Translations



The Imperial fora of Rome — Gregory was born into a wealthy patrician Roman family with close connections to the church.

Commentary on Job

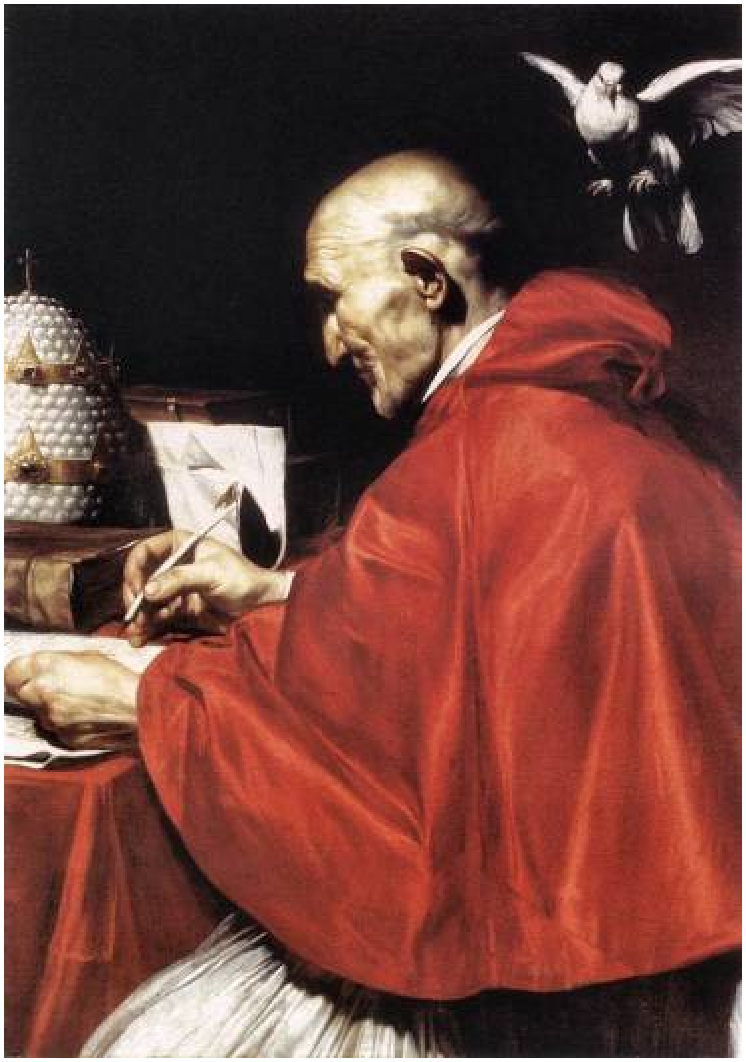
Translated by J. Bliss, 1847

Gregory's *Commentary on Job*, or *Moralia, sive Expositio in Job*, was written between 578 and 595. The work was commenced when Gregory was serving at the court of Tiberius II at Constantinople and completed several years later in Rome. Regarded widely as a major work, it comprises 35 books, offering an extensive consideration of "Moral Questions". The text is based on talks Gregory gave on the *Book of Job* to his 'brethren', who accompanied him to Constantinople. The work as we have it is the result of Gregory's revision and completion of the manuscript soon after his accession to the papal office.



Gregory and his Dove, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge Ms 389

CONTENTS


Saint Gregory the Great by José de Ribera, c. 1614

THE EPISTLE.

WHEREIN HE EXPLAINS THE TIME, OCCASION, DIVISION, PLAN, AND THE METHOD OF DISCOURSE AND OF INTERPRETATION PURSUED IN HIS WORK.

To the Most Devout and Holy Brother, my fellow Bishop Leander, *Gregory, the servant of God's servants.*

I. WHEN I knew you long since at Constantinople, my most blessed brother, at the time that I was kept there by the affairs of the Apostolical See, and that you had been brought thither by an embassage, with which you were charged, on counts touching the faith of the Wisigoths , I then detailed in your ears all that displeased me in myself, since for late and long I declined the grace of conversion, and after that I had been inspired with an heavenly affection I thought it better to be still shrouded in the secular habit. For though I had now disclosed to me what I should seek of the love of things eternal, yet long-established custom had so cast its chains upon me, that I could not change my outward habit: and while my purpose [*animus*] still compelled me to engage in the service of this world as it were in semblance only, many influences began to spring up against me from caring for this same world, so that the tie which kept me to it was now no longer in semblance only, but what is more serious, in my own mind. At length being anxious to avoid all these inconveniences, I sought the haven of the monastery, and having left all that is of the world, as at that time I vainly believed, I came out naked from the shipwreck of human life. For as the vessel that is negligently moored, is very often (when the storm waxes violent) tossed by the water out of its shelter on the safest shore, so under the cloak of the Ecclesiastical office, I found myself plunged on a sudden in a sea of secular matters, and because I had not held fast the tranquillity of the monastery when in possession, I learnt by losing it, how closely it

should have been held. For whereas the virtue of obedience was set against my own inclination to make me take the charge of ministering at the holy Altar, I was led to undertake that upon the grounds of the Church requiring it [*sub Ecclesiae colore*], which, if it might be done with impunity, I should get quit of by a second time withdrawing myself; and subsequently notwithstanding my unwillingness and reluctance, at the very time when the ministry of the Altar was a heavy weight, the further burden of the Pastoral charge was fastened on me, which I now find so much the more difficulty in bearing, as I feel myself to be unequal to it, and as I cannot take breath in any comfortable assurance in myself. For because, now that the end of the world is at hand, the times are disturbed by reason of the multiplied evils thereof, and we ourselves, who are supposed to be devoted to the inner mysteries, are thus become involved in outward cares; just as it happened then also when I was brought to the ministry of the Altar, this was brought about for me without my knowledge, viz. that I should receive the mighty charge of the Holy Order, to the end that I might be quartered under less restraint [*licentious excubarem*] in an earthly palace, whither indeed I was followed by many of my brethren from the monastery, who were attached to me by a kindred affection [*germana*]. Which happened, I perceive, by Divine dispensation, in order that by their example, as by an anchored cable, I might ever be kept fast to the tranquil shore of prayer, whenever I should be tossed by the ceaseless waves of secular affairs. For to their society I fled as to the bosom of the safest port from the rolling swell, and from the waves of earthly occupation; and though that office which withdrew me from the monastery had with the point of its employments stabbed me to death as to my former tranquillity of life, yet in their society, by means of the appeals of diligent reading, I was animated with the yearnings of daily renewed compunction. It was then that it seemed good to those same brethren, you too adding your influence, as you yourself

remember, to oblige me by the importunity of their requests to set forth the book of blessed Job; and as far as the Truth should inspire me with powers, to lay open to them those mysteries of such depth; and they made this too an additional burden which their petition laid upon me, that I would not only unravel the words of the history in allegorical senses, but that I would go on to give to the allegorical senses the turn of a moral exercise, with the addition of somewhat yet harder, that I would crown [or 'fortify,' *cingerem*] the several meanings with testimonies, and that the testimonies, which I brought forward, should they chance to appear involved, should be disentangled by the aid of additional explanation.

II. At first however, when in this obscure work, which hitherto had been thoroughly treated by none before us, I learnt the extent and character of the task to which I was forced, being overcome and wearied with the mere burthen of hearing of it, I confess that I sank under it. Yet immediately, when, in a strait between my alarms and my devout aspirations, I lifted up the eyes of my mind to the Bestower of all gifts [James 1, 17], waiving my scruples, I fixed my thoughts on this, that what an affection flowing from the hearts of my brethren enjoined upon me, could not certainly be impossible, I despaired, indeed, of being a match for these things, but, stronger for my very despair of myself, I forthwith raised my hopes to Him, by Whom the tongue of the dumb is opened, Who *maketh the lips of babes to speak eloquently*, [Wisd. 10, 21], Who has marked the undistinguished and brute brayings of an ass with the intelligible measures of human speech. What wonder, then, that a simple man should receive understanding from Him, Who whenever He willeth, utters His truth by the mouths of the very beasts of burthen? Armed then with the strength which this thought supplied, I roused mine own drought to explore so deep a well; and though the life of those, to whom I was compelled to give my interpretation, was far above me, yet I thought it no harm if the leaden pipe should supply

streams of water for the service of men. Whereupon, without further delay, I delivered the former parts of the book, in presence, to the same brethren assembled before me; and because I found my time to be then somewhat more free, in treating of the latter portion I used dictation; and when longer intervals of time were at my disposal, many things being added, a small number omitted, and some few left as they were, all that had been taken down in my presence as I spoke, I arranged in books with amendments. For when I was giving the last part by dictation, I in like manner carefully considered the style in which I had spoken the first part, so that my business was both with regard to those parts, which I had given orally, by going through them with a careful correction, to bring them up to somewhat like dictation, and with regard to what I had dictated, that it should not greatly differ from the style of colloquial delivery; so that the one being drawn out, and the other contracted, that which unlike modes produced might be formed into a not inconsistent whole. Though it must be added that the third portion of this work I have so left for the most part as I gave it by word of mouth, because the brethren, drawing me away to other things, would not have this to be corrected with any great degree of exactness. Pursuing my object of obeying their instructions, which I must confess were sufficiently numerous, now by the work of exposition, now by the flights of contemplation, and now by moral instruction, I have completed this work extending through thirty-five books [*volumina*], and six tomes [*codicibus*], and hence I shall be often found therein to put rather in the background the order of exposition, and to employ myself at greater length upon the wide field of contemplation and of moral instruction. But yet whosoever is speaking concerning God, must be careful to search out thoroughly whatsoever furnishes moral instruction to his hearers; and should account that to be the right method of ordering his discourse, if, when opportunity for edification requires it, he turn aside for a useful purpose from what he

had begun to speak of; for he that treats of sacred writ should follow the way of a river, for if a river, as it flows along its channel, meets with open valleys on its side, into these it immediately turns the course of its current, and when they are copiously supplied, presently it pours itself back into its bed. Thus unquestionably, thus should it be with everyone that treats of the Divine Word, that if, in discussing: any subject, he chance to find at hand any occasion of seasonable edification, he should, as it were, force the streams of discourse towards the adjacent valley, and, when he has poured forth enough upon its level of instruction, fall back into the channel of discourse which he had proposed to himself.

III. But be it known that there are some parts, which we go through in a historical exposition, some we trace out in allegory upon an investigation of the typical meaning, some we open in the lessons of moral teaching alone, allegorically conveyed, while there are some few which, with more particular care, we search out in all these ways together, exploring them in a threefold method. For first, we lay the historical foundations; next, by pursuing the typical sense, we erect a fabric of the mind to be a strong hold of faith; and moreover as the last step, by the grace of moral instruction, we, as it were, clothe the edifice with an overcast of colouring. Or at least how are the declarations of truth to be accounted of, but as food for the refreshment of the mind? These being handled with the alternate application of various methods, we serve up the viands of discourse in such sort as to prevent all disgust in the reader, thus invited as our guest, who, upon consideration of the various things presented to him, is to take that which he determines to be the choicest. Yet it sometimes happens that we neglect to interpret the plain words of the historical account, that we may not be too long in coming to the hidden senses, and sometimes they cannot be understood according to the letter, because when taken superficially, they convey no sort of instruction to the reader, but only engender error; for here,

for instance, it is said, *Under Whom they are bent who bear the world*. [Job 9, 13]. Now in the case of one so great, who can be ignorant that he never so fol1ows the vain fictions of the poets, as to fancy the weight of the world to be supported by the labour of the giants. Again, under the pressure of calamities he exclaims, *So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life*. [Jov 7, 15] Now who that is in his right senses could believe that a man of so high praise, who in a word, we know, received from the Judge of that which is within the reward of the virtue of patience, settled amidst his afflictions to finish his life by strangling? And sometimes even the very literal words forbid its being supposed that perchance they ought to be understood according to the letter. Thus he says, *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.* [Job 3, 3] And a little while afterwards he subjoins, *Let darkness seize it, and let it be involved in bitterness.* [ver. 5] And in cursing the same night he adds, *Lo! let that night be solitary*. Assuredly this day of his birth, which rolled itself out in the mere current of time, could never stand fast. In what way then did he wish it might be involved in darkness? For having gone by, it no longer was, neither yet, if it had existence in the nature of things, could it ever feel *bitterness;* it is evident therefore that the words cannot possibly be spoken of a day without feeling, when the wish expressed is that it be struck with a feeling of bitterness; and if the night of his conception had gone by, blended with the other nights, after what fashion would he have it become solitary, which as it could not be arrested from the flight of time, so neither could it be separated from union with the other nights. Again he says, *How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone, till I swallow down my spittle*. [Job 7, 19] Yet he had said a little above, *The things which my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.* [Job 6, 7] Now who does not know that spittle is more easily swallowed than food? it is wholly inconceivable then in what

connection he, who tells of his taking food, declares that he cannot swallow his spittle. Again he says, *I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O Thou preserver of men?* [Job 7, 20] Or more unequivocally, *Wouldest Thou destroy me by the iniquities of my youth.* [Job 13, 26] And yet in another answer he subjoins, *My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.* [Job 27, 6] How then does his heart not condemn him so long as he lives, who by a public avowal testifies that he has been a sinner, for faultiness of practice and acquittal of conscience can never meet together. Yet doubtless whereas the literal words when set against each other cannot be made to agree, they point out some other meaning in themselves which we are to seek for, as if with a kind of utterance they said, Whereas ye see our superficial form to be destructive to us, look for what may be found within us that is in place and consistent with itself.

IV. But sometimes, he who neglects to interpret the historical form of words according to the letter, keeps that light of truth concealed which is presented to him, and in laboriously seeking to find in them a further interior meaning, he loses that which he might easily obtain on the outside. Thus the Saint saith, *if I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; . . . if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;* [Job 31, 16-20] where it is to be observed, that if these words be violently strained to an allegorical signification, we make void all his acts of mercy. For as the word of God, by the mysteries which it contains, exercises the understanding of the wise, so usually by what presents itself on the outside, it nurses the simple-minded. It presenteth in open day that wherewith the little ones may be fed; it keepeth in secret that whereby men of a loftier range may be held in suspense of admiration. It is, as it were, a kind of

river, if I may so liken it, which is both shallow [*planus*] and deep, wherein both the lamb may find a footing, and the elephant float at large. Therefore as the fitness of each passage requires, the line of interpretation is studiously varied accordingly, in that the true sense of the word of God is found out with so much the greater fidelity, in proportion as it shifts its course through the different kinds of examples as each case may require.

V. This exposition being such as I have described, I have transmitted to your Blessedness for your inspection, not as being due for its worth's sake, but because I remember that I promised it on your making the request. In which whatsoever your Holiness may discover that is languid or unpolished, let it be most readily excused in proportion as the circumstance is known that it was said in a state of sickness; for when the body is worn down with sickness, the mind being also affected, our exertions to express ourselves likewise become faint. For many a year's circuit has gone by since I have been afflicted with frequent pains in the bowels, and the powers of my stomach being broken down, makes me at all times and seasons weakly; and under the influence of fevers, slow, but in constant succession, I draw my breath with difficulty; and when in the midst of these sufferings I ponder with earnest heed, that according to the testimony of Scripture, *He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth;* [Heb. 12, 6] the more I am weighed down by the severity of present afflictions, from my anticipations for eternity, I gather strength to breathe with so much the better assurance. And perchance it was this that Divine Providence designed, that I a stricken one, should set forth Job stricken, and that by these scourges I should the more perfectly enter into the feelings of one that was scourged. Yet it will be evident to all that consider the thing aright, that bodily ailment hinders the pursuits wherein I labour, and that with no slight power of opposition in this respect, that, when the powers of the flesh are not strong enough to discharge the office of speech, the mind cannot

adequately convey its meaning. For what is the office of the body saving to be the organ of the mind; and though the musician be ever so skilled in playing [*cantandi*], he cannot put his art in practice unless outward aids accord with himself for that purpose, for we know that the melody [*canticum*] which the hand of the proficient bids, is not rightly given back by instruments that are out of order; nor does the wind express his art, if the pipe, gaping with crevices, gives a grating sound. How much more affected in quality then is a thing like this exposition of mine, wherein the grace of delivery is so dissipated by the broken condition of the instrument, that no contrivance of skill can avail to recover it! But I beg that in going through the statements of this work, you would not seek the foliage of eloquence therein: for by the sacred oracles the vanity of a barren wordiness is purposely debarred those that treat thereof, in that it is forbidden to plant a grove in the temple of God. And doubtless we are all of us aware, that as often as the overrank crop shews stalks that abound in leaves, the grains of the ears are least filled and swelling. And hence that art of speaking itself, which is conveyed by rules of worldly training, I have despised to observe; for as the tenor of this Epistle also will tell, I do not escape the collisions of metacism, nor do I avoid the confusion of barbarisms, and I slight the observing of situations and arrangements, and the cases of prepositions; for I account it very far from meet to submit the words of the divine Oracle to the rules of Donatus. For neither are these observed by any of the translators thereof, in the authoritative [*auctoritate*] text of Holy Writ. Now as my exposition takes its origin from thence, it is plainly meet that this production, like a kind of offspring, should wear the likeness of its mother. Now it is the new Translation that I comment on; but when a case to be proved requires it, I take now the new and now the old for testimony, that as the Apostolic See, over which I preside by ordinance of God, uses both, the labours of my undertaking may have the support of both.

BOOK I.

The first verses of the first chapter of the Book of Job are explained first historically, then in an allegorical, and lastly in a moral sense.

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION.

1. *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job*. [Job 1, 1] It is for this reason that we are told where the holy man dwelt, that the meritoriousness of his virtue might be expressed; for who knows not that Uz is a land of the Gentiles? and the Gentile world came under the dominion of wickedness, in the same proportion that its eyes were shut to the knowledge of its Creator. Let us be told then where he dwelt, that this circumstance may be reckoned to his praise, that he was good among bad men; for it is no very great praise to be good in company with the good, but to be good with the bad; for as it is a greater offence not to be good among good men, so it is immeasurably high testimony for any one to have shewn himself good even among the wicked. Hence it is that the same blessed Job bears witness to himself, saying, *I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls*. [Job 30, 29] Hence it was that Peter extolled Lot with high commendation, because he found him to be good among a reprobate people; saying, *And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for he was righteous in seeing and hearing* [so Vulg.], *dwelling with them who vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds*. [2 Pet. 2, 7.8.] Now he evidently could not have been vexed unless he had both heard and witnessed the wicked deeds of his neighbours, and yet he is called righteous both in seeing and in hearing, because their wicked lives affected the ears and eyes of the Saint not with a pleasant sensation, but with the pain of a blow. Hence it is that Paul says to his disciples, *In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine like lights in*

the world. [Phil. 2, 15] Hence it is said to the Angel of the Church of Pergamos, *I know thy works,and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith*. [Rev. 2, 13] Hence the Holy Church is commended by the voice of the Spouse, where He says to her in the Song of love, *As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters*. [Cant. 2, 2] Well then is the blessed Job described, (by the mention of a gentile land,) as having dwelt among the wicked, that according to the testimony borne by the Spouse, be might be shewn to have grown up a lily among thorns, for which reason it is well subjoined immediately after,

And that man was simple [so Vulg.] *and upright*.

2. For there are some in such wise simple as not to know what uprightness is, but these walk wide of the innocence of real simplicity, in proportion as they are far from mounting up to the virtue of uprightness; for while they know not how to take heed to their steps by following uprightness, they can never remain innocent by walking in simplicity. Hence it is that Paul warns his disciples, and says, *But yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.* [Rom. 16, 19] Hence again he says, *Brethren, be not children in understanding, howbeit in malice be ye children*. [1 Cor. 14, 20] Hence Truth enjoins Her disciples by Her own lips, saying, *Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves*. [Mat. 10, 16] For in giving them admonition, He needfully joined the two together, so that both the simplicity of the dove might be instructed by the craftiness of the serpent, and again the craftiness of the serpent might be attempered by the simplicity of the dove. Hence it is that the Holy Spirit has manifested His presence to mankind, not in the form of a dove only, but also in the form of fire. For by the dove simplicity is indicated, and by fire, zeal. Therefore He is manifested in a dove, and in fire, because all they, who are full of Him, yield themselves to the mildness of simplicity, in such sort as

yet to kindle with a zeal of uprightness against the offences of sinners. It follows,

And one ,that feared God and eschewed evil.

3. To fear God is never to pass over any good thing, that ought to be done. Whence it is said by Solomon, *Whoso fears God, neglects nothing* [Eccl. 7, 18, (Vulg.) 19.]; but because there are some, who practise some good actions, yet in such wise that they are by no means withheld from certain evil practices; after he is said to have been *one that feared God*, it is still rightly reported of him that he also *eschewed evil*; for it is written, *Depart from evil, and do good* [Ps. 37, 27]; for indeed those good actions are not acceptable to God, which are stained in His sight by the admixture of evil deeds; and hence it is said by Solomon, *He who offendeth in one point, spoileth many good deeds* [Eccl. 9, 18]. Hence James bears witness, saying, *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*. [James 2, 10] Hence Paul saith, *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump* [1 Cor. 5, 6]. So then that it might be shewn us how spotless the blessed Job stood forth in his good actions, it is wisely done that we have it pointed out how far he was removed from evil deeds.

4. But it is the custom of narrators, when a wrestling match is woven into the story, first to describe the limbs of the combatants, how broad and strong the chest, how sound, how full their muscles swelled, how the belly below neither clogged by its weight, nor weakened by its shrunken size, that when they have first shewn the limbs to be fit for the combat, they may then at length describe their bold and mighty strokes. Thus because our athlete was about to combat the devil, the writer of the sacred story, recounting as it were before the exhibition in the arena the spiritual merits in this athlete, describes the members of the soul [*mentis*], saying, *And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil*; that when

the powerful setting of the limbs is known, from this very strength we may already prognosticate also the victory to follow. Next comes,

5. Ver. 2. *And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters*. The heart of the parent is often enticed into avarice by a numerous offspring, for he is the more inflamed with ambition for laying up an inheritance, in proportion as he abounds in the number to inherit it. In order then that it might be shewn what holiness of mind blessed Job possessed, he is both called righteous, and is said to have been the father of a numerous offspring. And the same man in the beginning of his book is declared devout in offering sacrifices, and besides he afterwards with his own mouth records himself as ready in giving alms. Let us then consider with what resolution he shewed himself to be endowed, whom no feelings of affection for so many heirs could ever dispose to be greedy of an inheritance for them. It proceeds;

5. Ver. 3. *His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household*. We know that the greater the loss, the greater the grief with which it affects the mind; to shew then how great was his virtue, we are told that it was very much, that he lost with patience; for never without pain do we part with aught, saving that which we hold without fondness; therefore while the greatness of his substance is described, yet soon after he is reported as resigned to the loss of it; thus parting with it without regret, it is plain that he had kept it without regard. It is also to be noted that in the first instance the riches of his heart are described, and afterwards the wealth of the body; for an abundant store is wont to make the mind so much the more slack to the fear of God, as it obliges it to be occupied with a diversity of cares; for inasmuch as it is dissipated by a multitude of objects, it is prevented standing fast in that which is within. Which was pointed out by Truth Itself in setting forth the

Parable of the sower; *He also that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful*. [Matt. 13, 22] See how the blessed Job is both said to have great possessions, and a little after is related to be devoutly assiduous in the divine sacrifices.

7. Let us then consider how great was the holiness of that man who though thus busied disengaged himself for such assiduous attendance upon God. Nor had the power of that precept as yet shone out, which bids us leave all things; yet blessed Job already kept the intent of it in his heart, in that he surely had left his substance in intention, which he kept without taking delight in it.

8. *So that this man was the greatest of all the men of the East.* [Job 1, 3] Who does not know that the men of the East are very wealthy, accordingly 'he was the greatest of all the men of the East;' as though it were expressly said that he was even richer than the rich.

9. Ver. 4. *And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.*

Greater wealth usually becomes the cause of greater discord between brethren. O, inestimable praise of a father's training! the father is both declared rich, and the sons at peace together, and while the wealth to be divided among them was there, an undivided affection yet filled the hearts of all.

10. Ver. 5. *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent, and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all.*

When it is said, *sent and sanctified them*, it is openly shewn what strictness he practised with those when present, for whom when absent he was not wanting in concern. But this circumstance demands our discreet consideration, that, when the days of feasting were past, he has recourse to

the purification of a holocaust for each day severally; for the holy man knew that there can scarcely be feasting without offence; he knew that the revelry of feasts must be cleansed away by much purification of sacrifices, and whatever stains the sons had contracted in their own persons at their feasts, the father wiped out by the offering of a sacrifice; for there are certain evils which it is either scarcely possible, or it may be said wholly impossible, to banish from feasting. Thus almost always voluptuousness is the accompaniment of entertainments; for when the body is relaxed in the delight of refreshment, the heart yields itself to the admission of an empty joy. Whence it is written, *The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play*. [Exod. 32, 6]

11. Almost always talkativeness is an attendant upon feasts, and when the belly is replenished, the tongue is unloosed; whence the rich man in hell is well described as thirsting for water, in these words, *Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame*. [Luke 16, 24] He is first said to have fared sumptuously every lay, and then it is recorded that he craved a drop of water upon his tongue; for as we have said, because at feasts talking is wont to give itself full vent, the fault is indicated by the punishment, in that he, whom the Truth had said *fared sumptuously every day*, was described as most on fire in his tongue. They that attune the harmony of stringed instruments arrange it with such exceeding skill, that frequently, when one chord is touched, a very different one, placed with many lying between, is made to vibrate, and when this last is sounded, the former, which is attempered to the same tune [*cantu*], rings without the others being struck. According to which Holy Scripture very often so deals with the several virtues, and vices too, that while by express mention it conveys one thing, it does by its silence bring before us another, for nothing is recorded against the rich man relating to talkativeness, but while the

punishment is described as in the tongue, we are shewn, which among others was his greatest offence in his feasting.

12. But whereas the seven brethren are described as making feasts, each one in his day, and whereas, when the days of feasting were over, Job is related to have offered seven sacrifices; the account plainly indicates that, in offering a sacrifice on the eighth day, the blessed Job was celebrating the mystery of the Resurrection. For the day, which is now named 'The Lord's day,' is the third from the death of our Redeemer, but in the order of creation it is the eighth, which is also the first in the work of creation, but because, on coming round again, it follows the seventh, it is properly reckoned the eighth; whereas then it is said that he offered sacrifices on the eighth day, it is shewn that he was full of the Spirit of sevenfold grace, and served the Lord for the hope of resurrection. Hence that Psalm is entitled 'for the Octave,' wherein joy for the resurrection is proclaimed, but, that the sons of blessed Job had been forearmed by the discipline of such perfect training, that they neither offended by word nor deed at their feasts, is plainly shewn, in that it is subjoined,

13. *For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed" God in their hearts*. For he had taught them to be perfect in deed and in word, about whose thought alone the father entertained fears. Now that we should not judge rashly of other men's hearts, we perceive in the words of this Saint, who does not say, 'that they *have* cursed God in their hearts,' but *it may be that they have cursed God in, their hearts*. Whence it is well said by Paul, *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts*; [1 Cor. 4, 5] for whoever deviates from the right line in thought, sins in darkness; we then should be the more backward boldly to condemn the hearts of others, in proportion as we know that we cannot by our own sight throw light into the darkness of another man's

thought. But here [al. this] we should consider with discrimination, with what severity that father was likely [*potuit*] to correct the deeds of his children, who set himself with so much solicitude to purify their hearts. What do those rulers of the Faithful say to this, who know nothing even of the very overt acts of their disciples? What are they thinking of in excuse for themselves, who mind not in those committed to them even the wounds of evil actions? But that his perseverance too in this holy work may be demonstrated, it is well added,

14. *Thus did Job all the days; for it is written, But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved*. In the sacrifice then, the holiness of his conduct is shewn, and in the entire number of the days of the sacrifice, perseverance in that holy conduct. These particulars we have gone through cursorily in following out the history. Now the order of interpretation requires that beginning afresh we should at this point open the secrets of its allegories.

ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

15. Ver, 1. *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job*. We believe from the history that these things took place, but let us here turn to see in what way they were allegorically fulfilled; for, as we have said, Job is interpreted, ‘a mourner,’ and Uz ‘a counsellor.’ Whom else then does the blessed Job express by his name, saving Him, of Whom the Prophet speaks, saying, *Surely He hath borne our griefs?* [Isa. 53, 4] He dwells in the land of Uz, in that He rules the hearts of a people of wise counsels; for Paul saith, that Christ is *the Wisdom of God and the Power of God* [1 Cor. 1, 24]; and this same Wisdom Herself by the lips of Solomon declareth, *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence, and am in the midst of witty inventions*. [Prov. 8, 12] So Job is an inhabitant of the land of Uz, because Wisdom, Which underwent the

pain of the Passion in our behalf, has made an habitation for Herself in those hearts, which are instinct with the counsels of life.

16. *And that man was perfect and upright*, In uprightness, justice is signified, and in simplicity, mercy [or 'meekness,' *mansuetudo*]. We in following out the straight line of justice, generally leave mercy behind; and in aiming to observe mercy, we deviate from the straight line of justice. Yet the Incarnate Lord maintained simplicity with uprightness; for He neither in shewing mercy parted with the strictness of Justice, nor again in the exactitude of justice did He part with the virtue of mercifulness. Hence when certain persons, having brought an adulteress before Him, would have tempted Him, in order that He might step into the fault either of unmercifulness or of injustice, He answered both alternatives by saying, *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.*[John 8, 7] *He that is without sin among you*, gives us the simplicity of mercy, *let him first cast a stone at her*, gives us the jealous sense of justice. Whence too the Prophet saith to him, *And in Thy Majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness*. [Ps. 45, 4] For in executing truth, He kept mercy united with justice, so that He neither lost the jealous sense of rectitude in the preponderance of mercy's scale, nor again unsettled the preponderance of mercy by that jealousy of rectitude.

17. *And one that feared God, and eschewed evil*. It is written of Him, *and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord hath filled Him*; for the Incarnate Lord shewed forth in His own person whatsoever He hath inspired us withal, that what He delivered by precept, He might recommend by example. So then according to our human nature our Redeemer feared God, for to redeem proud man, He took for man's sake an humble mind. And His acting likewise is fitly designated hereby, in that the blessed Job is said to eschew evil. For He Himself eschewed evil, not evil which He came in contact with in the doing, but which upon meeting with it, He rejected; for He forsook

the old life after man's method, which He found at His birth, and He stamped upon the character of His followers that new life, which He brought down with Him.

18. Ver. 2. *And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters*. What is conveyed to us in the number of seven, saving the sum of perfection? for to say nothing of the arguments of human reasoning which maintain that it is therefore perfect, because it consists of the first even number, and of the first uneven; of the first that is capable of division, and of the first which is incapable of it; we know most certainly that holy Scripture is wont to put the number seven for perfection, whence also it tells us that on the seventh day the Lord rested from His works; and it is hence too ,that the seventh day was given to man for a rest; i.e. for a 'Sabbath.' Hence it is that the year of jubilee, wherein we have a full rest set forth, is accomplished in seven weeks, being completed by the addition of the unit of our uniting together.

19. *Thus there were born to him seven sons*; namely, the Apostles manfully issuing forth to preach; who in putting in practice the precepts of perfection, as it were maintained in their manner of life the courage of the superior sex. For hence it is that twelve of them were chosen, who should be replenished with the perfection of the sevenfold grace of the Spirit. As from the number seven we rise to twelve; for seven multiplied in its component parts is extended to twelve; for whether four be taken by three or three by four, seven is changed into twelve, and hence, forasmuch as the holy Apostles were sent to proclaim the holy Trinity in the four quarters of the globe, they were chosen twelve in number, that by their very number they might set forth that perfection, which they proclaimed both by their lips and in their lives.

20. *And three daughters*. What do we understand by the daughters but the weaker multitudes of the faithful, who, though they never adhere with a

virtuous resolution to perfection of life, yet cleave with constancy to the belief of the Trinity which has been taught them. Thus by ‘the seven sons’ is represented the order of the Preachers, and by ‘the three daughters’ the multitude of the hearers. By ‘the three daughters’ may also be signified the three orders of the faithful, for after mention of the sons the daughters are named, in that succeeding next to the distinguished courage of the Apostles came three divisions of the faithful, in the state of life in the Church; viz. of Pastors, of those following continence, and of the married. And hence the prophet Ezekiel declares that he heard three men named that were set free; viz. Noah, and Daniel, and Job [Ezek. 14, 14f]; for what is signified by Noah who guided the Ark in the waters, but the order or rulers, who, while they govern the people for the fashioning of their lives, are the directors of holy Church amidst the waves of temptation? What is represented by Daniel, whose marvellous abstinence we have described to us, but the life of the continent, who, while they give up every thing that is of the world, rule with elevated mind over Babylon which lies beneath them? What is signified by Job but the life of the good that are married, who, while they do deeds of mercy by the good things of the world which they possess, do as it were advance to their heavenly country by the paths of earth? Therefore because after the holy Apostles there came these three divisions of the faithful, after the sons rightly follows the mention of the three daughters that were born to him. It proceeds:

Ver. 3. *His substance also was three thousand sheep and three thousand camels*.

21. That believing hearers have been gathered from various manners of 1ife, a truth which is first declared generally by the mention of the daughters, the same is afterwards brought before us in detail by the specification of the animals. For what does he set forth in the seven thousand sheep, but some men’s perfect innocency, which comes from the

pastures of the Law to the perfect estate of grace? what again is signified by the three thousand camels, but the crooked defectiveness of the Gentiles coming to the fulness of faith. Now in Holy Scripture, sometimes the Lord Himself is expressed by the title of a camel, and sometimes the Gentile people. For the Lord is signified by the name of a camel, as when it is said by that very Lord to the Jews that set themselves against Him, *who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel*. [Mat. 23, 24] For a gnat wounds while it whispers, but a camel of free will bends to receive its load. Thus the Jews strained at a gnat, in that they sought that a seditious robber should be let go, but they swallowed a camel, in that Him, Who had come down of His own accord to take upon Him the burthens of our mortal nature, they strove to overwhelm by their clamours. Again, the Gentile state is signified by the naming of a camel; and hence Rebecca on going to Isaac is brought on a camel's back, in that the Church, which hastens from the Gentile state to Christ, is found in the crooked and defective behaviour of the old life; and she, when she saw Isaac, descended, in that when the Gentile world knew the Lord, it abandoned its sins, and descending from the height of self-elation sought the lowly walks of humility; and she too in bashfulness covers herself with a veil, in that she is confounded in His presence for her past life. And hence it is said by the Apostle to these same Gentiles, *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* [Rom. 6, 21] Whereas then by the sheep we understand the Hebrews coming to the faith from the pastures of the Law, nothing hinders but that we understand by the camels the Gentile people, crooked in their ways and laden with idolatrous ceremonials. For because they devised them gods of their own selves whom they should worship, there had grown up as it were out of themselves a load upon their back which they should carry.

22. Furthermore in that they are common animals, it is possible that by camels is represented the life of the Samaritans. For camels chew the cud,

but do not divide the hoof. So likewise the Samaritans do as it were chew the cud, in that they receive in part the words of the Law, but do not divide the hoof as it were, forasmuch as they despise it in part. And they bear a grievous burthen upon the mind's pack, in that they weary themselves in whatsoever they do without any hope of eternity. For they are strangers to faith in the Resurrection, and what can be more grievous or more burthensome than to endure the tribulation of this passing state of existence, and yet never, for relief of mind, to look forward to the joy of our reward; but forasmuch as the Lord, when He appeared in the flesh, both filled the Hebrew people with the grace of perfection, and brought some of the Samaritans to the knowledge of the faith by shewing marvellous works, it might well be said of the shadow which was to express the reality, that he possessed both seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels. It goes on;

And five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses.

23. We have said above that by the number fifty, which is completed by seven weeks and the addition of an unit, rest is signified, and by the number 'ten' the sum of perfection is set forth. Now forasmuch as the perfection of rest is promised to the faithful, by multiplying fifty ten times, we in this, way arrive at five hundred. But in sacred Writ, the title of 'oxen' sometimes represents the dulness of the foolish sort, and sometimes the life of well doers. For because the stupidity of the fool is represented by the title of an ox, Solomon says rightly, *he goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter*. [Prov. 7, 22] Again, that the life of every labourer is forth by the title of oxen, the Precepts of the Law are a testimony, which enjoined through Moses; *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn*. [Deut. 25, 4] And this again is declared in plain words; *the labourer is worthy of his hire*. [Luke 10, 7] By the title of asses, too, we have represented sometimes the inertness of fools, sometimes the unrestrained

indulgence of the wanton, sometimes the simplemindedness of the Gentiles; for the inertness of fools is imaged by the designation of asses, as where it is said through Moses, *Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together*. [Deut. 22, 10] As though he said, 'do not associate fools and wise men together in preaching, lest by means of him who has no power to accomplish the work, you hinder him who has abundant power.' The unrestrained indulgence of the wanton is likewise set forth by the appellation of asses, as the prophet testifies, where he says, *whose flesh is as the flesh if asses*. [Ezek. 23, 20] Again, by the title of asses is shewn the simplicity of the Gentiles. Hence when the Lord went up toward Jerusalem, He is related to have sat upon a young ass, for what is it for Him to come to Jerusalem sitting upon an ass, except taking possession of the simple hearts of the Gentiles to conduct them to the vision of peace, by ruling and ordering them? And this is shewn by one passage, and that a very easy one; in that both the workmen of Judaea are represented by oxen, and the Gentile peoples by an ass, when it is said by the Prophet, *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib*. [Isa. 1, 3] For who appears as the ox, saving the Jewish people, whose neck was worn by the yoke of the Law? and who was the ass but the Gentile world, which was found like a brute animal of every deceiver, and was overlaid with whatever deceit he pleased, without resisting by any exercise of reason? Thus the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, in that both the Hebrews found out the God Whom they worshipped but as yet knew Him not, and the Gentile world received the food of the Law, which it had none of. That therefore which is spoken above in the designation of the sheep and of the camels, is here repeated below in the oxen and the asses.

24. Now even before the coming of the Redeemer Judaea possessed oxen, in that she sent out labourers to preach, to whom it is said by the voice of Truth, *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye*

compass sea and land to make one proselyte; *and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves*. [Mat. 23, 15] These were weighed down with the heavy yoke of the Law, because they were burthened with the ordinances of the external letter, to whom it is spoken by the voice of Truth, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*. [Mat. 11, 28. 29.] That in the Gospel, therefore, rest is promised to those that labour well, is the same thing as that five hundred yoke of oxen are made mention of in this place; for whereunto does their way lead, who submit their necks to the dominion of our Redeemer, excepting to rest? And hence we are told of five hundred she asses, forasmuch as the Gentile folk that are called, so long as they desire to attain to rest, gladly bear all the burthens of the commandments; and hence, that this rest should be sought of the Gentiles, Jacob in addressing his sons did mean to signify by the voice of prophecy, saying, *Issachar is a strong ass, crouching down between the boundaries* [Vulg. *Terminus,* E.V. burthens]: *And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed the shoulder to bear*. [Gen. 49, 14. 15.] For to crouch down between the boundaries is to rest forestalling the end of the world, and to seek nought of those things, which are now going forward amongst men, but to long after the things that shall be at the last; and the strong ass sees the rest and the pleasant land, when the simple Gentile world lifts itself up to the strong effort of good works, and that because it is on its way to the land of life eternal; and it bows the shoulder to bear, in that having beheld the rest above, it submits itself in doing its work even to severe precepts, and whatever littleness of mind represents as hard to bear, the hope of the reward makes this appear to it light and easy. So because both Judaea and the Gentile world are gathered to eternal rest as a portion of the elect, he is

rightly related to have possessed five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses. The account goes on;

And a very great household.

25. What means it that the number of the animals is first described, while the household is not mentioned till the end, but that the foolish things of the world are first gathered in to the knowledge of the faith, that afterwards the crafty things of the world may also be called? as Paul bears witness, who says; *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble, not many mighty are called; But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.* [1 Cor. 1, 26. 27.] For the first beginnings [*principia*] of holy Church are reputed to have been without knowledge of letters, plainly for this reason, that in His preachers the Redeemer might manifest to all, that it was not their discourse, but their cause, which had influence with the numbers [*populos*] that believed unto life. It proceeds;

So that this man was the greatest of all the men if the East.

26. That our Redeemer is styled *The East* is declared by the testimony of the Prophet, where he says, *And lo! the Man whose name is The East*. [Zech. 6, 12 Vulg. *Orients,* E.V. *the Branch*] And thus all that live in this Orient by faith, are rightly called men of the East. Now because all men are only men, whereas 'The East' Himself is both God and Man, it is rightly said, *He was the greatest of all the men of the East.* As though it were said in plain words, He surpassed all those that are born to God in faith. Because it is not by adoption, as others are, but by the Divine Nature that He is exalted, Who though He appeared like to others in His human Nature, yet in His Divine Nature continued above all men without fellow.

Ver.4. *And his sons went and feasted in their houses*.

27. The sons went to feast at their houses, when the Apostles as preachers, in the different regions of the world, served the banquet of virtue

to hearers as it were to eaters. And hence it is said to those very sons concerning the hungering multitude, *Give ye them to eat*. [Mat. 14, 16] And again; *And I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way* [Mat. 15, 32]; that is, let them by your preaching receive the word of consolation, that they may not by continuing to fast to the food of truth, sink under the labours of this life. Hence again it is said to the same sons, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life*. [John 6, 27] And how these feasts were set forth is added, whereas it is forthwith subjoined,

Everyone in his day.

28. If without any doubt the darkness of ignorance is the night of the soul, the understanding is not improperly styled the day. And hence Paul says, *One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike*. [Rom. 14, 5] As, if he had said in plain words; 'One man understands some things so as that some are left out, and another acquaints himself with all things that are possible to be understood, in such sort as they may be seen. Thus each son sets forth a feast in his day, in that every holy preacher, according to the measure of the enlightening of his understanding, feeds the minds of his hearers with the entertainments of Truth. Paul made a feast in his own day, when he said*, But she is happier if she so abide according to my judgment*. [1 Cor. 7, 40] He bade each to take account of his own day; when he said, *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*. [Rom. 14, 5] It goes on;

And sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

29. The sons call their sisters to the feast, in that the holy Apostles proclaim to hearers that are weak the joys of the refreshment above, and inasmuch as they see their souls to be starved of the food of truth, they feed them with the feast of God's Word. And it is well said, to eat and to drink with them. For holy Scripture is sometimes meat to us, and sometimes

drink. It is meat in the harder parts, in that it is in a certain sense broken in pieces by being explained, and swallowed after chewing; and it is drink in the plainer parts, in that it is imbibed just as it is found. The Prophet discerned holy Scripture to be meat, which was to be broken in pieces in the explaining, when he said, *The young children ask, and no man breaketh it unto them* [Lam. 4, 4], i.e. the weak ones sought that the stronger declarations of holy Scripture might be crumbled for them by explanation, but he could no where be found who should have explained them. The Prophet saw that holy Writ was drink, when he said, *Ho, everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters*. [Isa. 55, 1] Had not the plain commandments been drink, Truth would never have cried out with His own lips; *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink*. [John 5, 37] The Prophet saw that there was, as it were, a lack of meat and drink in Judaea, when he declared, *And their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst*. Isa. 5, 13] For it belongs to the few to attain a knowledge of the mighty and hidden meanings, but to the multitude it is given to understand the plain sense of the history. And therefore he declares that the honourable men of Judaea had perished not by thirst, but hunger, in that those who seemed to stand first, by giving themselves wholly to the outward sense, had not wherewithal to feed themselves from the inward parts by sifting their meaning, but forasmuch as when loftier minds fall away from the inward sense, the understanding of the little ones even in the outward meaning is dried up; it is rightly added in this place, *And the multitude dried up with thirst*. As if he said in plainer words, ‘whereas the common sort give over taking pains in their own lives, they now no longer seek even the streams of history.’ And they bear witness that they understood both the deep and the plain things contained in divine Writ, who in complaining to the Judge that rejects them, say, *We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence* [Luke 13, 26]; and this they subjoin in plain terms by

explaining it*; And thou hast taught in our streets*. Therefore because the sacred oracles are broken in the more obscure parts, by the explanation thereof, but in the plainer parts are drunk in just as they are found, it may be truly said, *And they sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them*. As though it were said in plain terms, they drew every weak one to themselves by the mildness of their persuasions, that both by setting forward great truths contemplatively, they might feed their minds, and by delivering little things historically, they might give them nourishment. The account proceeds:

Ver. 5. *And it was so, when the days of their feasting* [V. thus] *were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all.*

30. 'The days of feasting are gone,' when the ministrations of preaching are brought to an end; and when the feasts were ended, Job offered an holocaust for his sons, in that our Redeemer besought the Father in behalf of the Apostles, when they returned from preaching. Now it is rightly said, that he 'sent and sanctified,' in that when He bestowed the Holy Spirit Which proceeds from Himself, upon the hearts of His disciples, He cleansed them from whatsoever might be in them of offence, and it is rightly delivered that he rose up early to offer sacrifices; forasmuch as through this His offering up the prayer of His Intercessions in our behalf, he dispelled the night of error, and illumined the darkness of man's mind; that the soul might not be polluted in secret by any defilements of sin contracted from the very grace of preaching; that it might never attribute to itself aught that it does; that it might not, by attributing them to itself, lose all the things it had done. Hence it is well added,

For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and blessed God in their hearts.

31. For this blessing God, which means cursing, is the taking glory to one's self from a gift of His hand. Hence the Lord did well to wash the feet of the holy Apostles after their preaching, doubtless with this view, that He might shew plainly, both that very frequently in doing good the dust of sin is contracted, and that the steps of the speakers are often defiled by the same means whereby the hearts of their hearers are purified. For it often happens that some in giving words of exhortation, however poorly, are inwardly lifted up, because they are the channel, by which the grace of purification comes down; and while by the word they wash away the deeds of other men, they as it were contract the dust of an ill thought from a good course. What then was it to wash the disciples' feet after their preaching, but after the gloriousness of preaching to wipe off the dust of our thoughts, and to cleanse the heart's goings from inward pride? Nor does it hinder the universal knowledge which our Mediator has, that it is said, *It may be*; for knowing all things, but in His mode of speech taking upon Him our ignorance, and, in taking the same, giving us a lesson, He sometimes speaks as it were with our doubts; as where He says, *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?* [Luke 18, 8] When the feasting then was over, Job offered a sacrifice for his sons, saying, *It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their heart*; in that our Saviour, after He had cleansed His preachers from the evils that beset them even in the midst of the good things which they had done, kept them from temptations. It goes on,

Thus did Job continually.

32. Job does not cease 'to offer sacrifice continually,' in that our Redeemer offers a holocaust for us without ceasing, Who without intermission exhibits to the Father His Incarnation in our behalf. For His very Incarnation is itself the offering for our purification, and while He shews Himself as Man, He is the Intercession that washes out man's

misdeeds, and in the mystery of His Humanity He offers a perpetual Sacrifice, even because those things too are eternal which He purifies.

MORAL INTERPRETATION.

33. Now because in the very opening of our exposition we so made the Lord to be set forth in the person of blessed Job, that we said that both the Head and the Body, i.e. both Christ and His Church, were represented by him; therefore since we have shewn how our Head may be taken to be represented, let us now point out, how His Body, which we are, is set forth; that as we have heard from the history somewhat to admire, and learnt from the Head somewhat to believe, we may now deduce from the Body somewhat to maintain in our lives. For we should transform within ourselves that we read, that when the mind is moved by hearing, the life may concur to the execution of that which it has heard.

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job.

34. If 'Job' signifies 'grieving' and 'Uz' 'a Counsellor,' every elect person is not improperly represented by either name; in that be certainly abides in a mind of wise counsel, who hastens grieving from things present to things eternal. For there are some that take no heed to their life, and whilst they are seeking transitory objects, and either do not understand those that are eternal, or understanding despise them, they neither feel grief nor know how to entertain counsel, and when they are taking no account of the things above which they have lost, they think, unhappy wretches, that they are in the midst of good things. For these never raise the eyes of their mind to the light of truth which they were created for, they never bend the keenness of desire to the contemplation of their eternal country, but forsaking themselves amidst those things in which they are cast away, instead of their country they love the exile which is their lot, and rejoice in the darkness which they undergo as if in the brightness of the light. But, on

the contrary, when the minds of the elect perceive that all things transitory are nought, they seek out which be the things for which they were created, and whereas nothing suffices to the satisfying them out of God, thought itself, being wearied in them by the effort of the search, finds rest in the hope and contemplation of its Creator, longs to have a place among the citizens above; and each one of them, while yet in the body an inhabitant of the world, in mind already soars beyond the world, bewails the weariness of exile which he endures, and with the ceaseless incitements of love urges himself on to the country on high. When then he sees grieving how that that which he lost is eternal, he finds the salutary counsel, to look down upon this temporal scene which he is passing through, and the more the knowledge of that counsel increases, which bids him forsake perishable things, the more is grief augmented that he cannot yet attain to lasting objects. Hence Solomon well says, *He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow* [Eccles. 1, 18]; for he that already knows the high state which he does not as yet enjoy, is the more grieved for the low condition, in which he is yet held.

35. Job therefore is well said to dwell in the land of Uz, in that the mind of every elect person is kept going grieving in the counsels of knowledge. We must also observe what absence of grief of mind there is in precipitancy of action. For they that live without counsel, who give themselves over precipitately to the issue of events, are meanwhile harassed by no grief of reflection. For he that discreetly settles his mind in the counsels of life, heedfully takes account of himself, exercising circumspection in his every doing, and lest from that which he is doing a sudden and adverse issue should seize him, he first feels at it, gently applying to it the foot of reflection; he takes thought that fear may not withhold him from those things which ought to be done, nor precipitance hurry him into those which ought to be deferred; that evil things may not get the better of him through

his desires by an open assault, nor good things work his downfall insidiously by vain glory. Thus Job dwells in the land of Uz, in that the more the mind of the elect strives to live by following counsel, so much the more is it worn with the grief of so narrow a way. It goes on;

And that man sincere [*simplex,* E.V. perfect] *and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

36. Whoso longs for the eternal country, lives without doubt *sincere and upright*; I mean, *perfect* in practice, and *right* in faith, sincere in the good that he does in this lower state, right in the high truths which he minds in his inner self. For there are some who in the good actions that they do are not sincere, whereas they look to them not for a reward within but to win favour without. Hence it is well said by a certain wise man, *Woe to the sinner that goeth two ways* [Ecclus. 2, 12]; for the sinner goes two ways, when at the same time that what he sets forth in deed is of God, what he aims at in thought is of the world.

37. Now it is well said, *one that feared God and eschewed evil*; in that the holy Church of the elect enters indeed upon its paths of simplicity and of uprightness in [al. from] fear, but finishes them in charity, and it is hers then entirely 'to depart from evil,' when she has begun now from the love of God to feel unwillingness to sin. But whilst she still does good deeds from fear, she has not entirely departed from evil; because she sins even herein, that she would sin if she could have done it without punishment. So then when Job is said to fear God, it is rightly related that he also 'departs from evil,' in that whereas charity follows upon fear, that offence which is left behind in the mind is even trodden under foot in the purpose of the heart. And forasmuch as each particular vice is stifled by fear, whilst the several virtues spring from charity, it is rightly added,

And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

38. For there are seven sons born to us, when by the conception of good intent the seven virtues of the holy Spirit spring up in us. Thus the Prophet particularizes this inward offspring, when the Spirit renders the mind fruitful, in these words; *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him*. [Isa. 11, 2] So when by the coming of the Holy Spirit there is engendered in each of us, 'wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord,' something like a lasting posterity is begotten in the mind, which preserves the stock of our nobility that is above unto life, for so much the longer as it allies it with the love of eternity. Yet surely the seven sons have in us three sisters, forasmuch as all that manly work which these virtuous affections [*virtutum sensus*] do, they unite with faith, hope, and charity. For the seven sons never attain the perfection of the number ten, unless all that they do be done in faith, hope, and charity. But because this store of antecedent virtues is followed by a manifold concern for good works, it is rightly added,

Ver.3. *His substance also was seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels.*

39. For, saving the historical truth, we are at liberty to follow in a spiritual way that which our ears receive in a carnal shape. Thus we possess seven thousand sheep, when we feed the innocent thoughts within our breast, in a perfect purity of heart, with the food of truth which we have sought after.

40. And we shall have three thousand camels likewise in our possession, if all that is high and crooked in us be subdued to the order [*rationi*] of faith, and when of our own free will, and in our longing after humility, it is made to bow down itself under a knowledge of the Trinity. For we possess camels, whensoever we put down in humility all the high notions that we

entertain. Surely we are in possession of camels, when we bend our thoughts to sympathy with a brother's weakness, that bearing our burthens by turns, we may by lowering ourselves thereto know how to compassionate the weakness of another man. By camels, too, which do not cleave the hoof, but chew the cud, may be understood the good stewardships of earthly things, which, in that they have something of the world, and something of God, must needs be represented by a common animal. For though earthly stewardship may be subservient to our eternal welfare, yet we cannot acquit ourselves of it without inward disquietude. Therefore because both at the present time the mind is disturbed thereby, and also a reward laid up for ever, like a common animal, it both has something of the Law, and something it has not. For it does not cleave the hoof, in that the soul does not wholly sever itself from all earthly doings, but yet it ruminates, in that by the right dispensation of temporal things, it gains a hope of heavenly blessings with an assured confidence. Thus earthly stewardships agree with the law in the head, disagree therewith in the foot; forasmuch as while the objects which they desire to obtain by living righteously are of heaven, the concerns with which they are busied by their performances are of this world. When then we submit these earthly stewardships to the knowledge of the Trinity, we have camels in possession, as it were, by faith. The account goes on;

And five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses.

41. There are yokes of oxen for us in our possession, when the virtues in harmony plough up the hardness of our mind. We also possess five hundred she asses, when we restrain wanton inclinations, and when whatever of a carnal nature seeks to rise up in us, we curb in the spiritual mastery of the heart. Or indeed to possess she asses is to govern the simple thoughts within us, which, while they have no power to run in a more refined intelligence, by how much more lowly they walk, bear with so much the more meekness

their brother's burthens. For there are some who not understanding deep things constrain themselves the more humbly to the outward works of duty. Well then do we understand the simple thoughts by she asses, which are an animal slow indeed, yet devoted to carrying burthens, in that very often when made acquainted with our own ignorance, we bear the more lightly the burthens of others; and whereas we are not elevated as by any special height of wisdom, our mind bends itself in patience to submit to the dulness of another's soul. Now it is well done, whether it be the yokes of oxen or the she asses, that they are mentioned as five hundred, in that, whether in the case that through prudence we are wise, or in the case that we remain in humble ignorance, so long as we are in search of the rest of eternal peace, we are as it were kept within the number of the Jubilee. It goes on;

And a very great household,

42. We possess a very great household, when we restrain our host of thoughts under the mastery of the mind, that they may not by their very number get the better of the soul, nor in disordered array tread under the authority which belongs to our faculty of discernment. And the multitude of our thoughts is well marked out by the designation of a very great household. For we know that when the mistress is away the tongues of the handmaids wax clamorous, that they cease from silence, neglect the duties of their allotted task, and disarrange the whole ordered method of their life. But if the mistress suddenly appear, in a moment their noisy tongues are still, they renew the duties of their several tasks, and return to their own work as though they had never left it. Thus if reason for a moment leave the house of the mind, as if the mistress were absent, the den of our thoughts redoubles itself, like a bevy of talkative maids. But so soon as reason has returned to the mind, the confused tumult quiets itself at once, and the maids as it were betake themselves in silence to the task enjoined, whilst the thoughts forthwith submit themselves to their appropriate occasions for

usefulness. We possess, then, a great household, when with righteous authority we rule our innumerable thoughts by a discerning use of reason; and assuredly when we do this wisely, we are aiming to unite ourselves to the Angels by that very exercise of discernment: and hence it is rightly subjoined;

So that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

43. For we are then rendered great amongst all them of the east, when the cloud of carnal corruption being kept down by the rays of our discernment, we are, as far as the possibility of the thing admits, made the associates of those Spirits, which abide in the eastern light: and hence Paul says, *Our conversation is in heaven* [Phil. 3, 20]. For he that follows after temporal things, which are subject to decay, seeks the west [*occasum*], but whoso fixes his desires upon things above, proves that he dwells in the east. He then is great not among them of the west but among them of the east, who aims to excel not amid wicked men's scenes of action, who seek low and fleeting things, but amongst the choirs of the citizens above. It proceeds;

Ver. 4. *And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day.*

44. 'The sons feast in their houses,' when the several virtues feed the mind after their proper sort; and it is well said, Everyone his day, for each son's day is the shining of each virtue. Briefly to unfold then these same gifts of sevenfold grace, wisdom has one day, understanding another day, counsel another, fortitude another, knowledge another, piety another, fear another, for it is not the same thing to be wise that it is to understand; for many indeed are wise [*sapiunt*] in the things of eternity, but cannot in any sort understand them. Wisdom therefore gives a feast in its day in that it refreshes the mind with the hope and assurance of eternal things. Understanding spreads a feast in its day, forasmuch as, in that it penetrates the truths heard, refreshing the heart, it lights up its darkness. Counsel gives

a feast in its day, in that while it stays us from acting precipitately, it makes the mind to be full of reason. Fortitude gives a feast in its day, in that whereas it has no fear of adversity, it sets the viands of confidence before the alarmed soul. Knowledge prepares a feast in her day, in that in the mind's belly, she overcomes the emptiness of ignorance. Piety sets forth a feast in its day, in that it satisfies the bowels of the heart with deeds of mercy. Fear makes a feast in its day, in that whereas it keeps down the mind, that it may not pride itself in the present things, it strengthens it with the meat of hope for the future.

45. But I see that this point requires searching into in this feasting of the sons, viz. that by turns they feed one another. For each particular virtue is to the last degree destitute, unless one virtue lends its support to another. For wisdom is less worth if it lacks understanding, and understanding is wholly useless if it be not based upon wisdom, in that whilst it penetrates the higher mysteries without the counterpoise of wisdom, its own lightness is only lifting it up to meet with the heavier fall. Counsel is worthless, when the strength of fortitude is lacking thereto, since what it finds out by turning the thing over, from want of strength it never carries on so far as to the perfecting in deed; and fortitude is very much broken down, if it be not supported by counsel, since the greater the power which it perceives itself to have, so much the more miserably does this virtue rush headlong into ruin, without the governance of reason. Knowledge is nought if it hath not its use for piety; for whereas it neglects to put in practice the good that it knows, it binds itself the more closely to the Judgment: and piety is very useless, if it lacks the discernment of knowledge, in that while there is no knowledge to enlighten it, it knows not the way to shew mercy. And assuredly unless it has these virtues with it, fear itself rises up to the doing of no good action, forasmuch as while it is agitated about every thing, its own alarms renders it inactive and void of all good works. Since then by

reciprocal ministrations virtue is refreshed by virtue, it is truly said that the sons feast with one another by turns; and as one aids to relieve another, it is as if the numerous offspring to be fed were to prepare a banquet each his day. It follows;

And sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them.

46. When our virtues invite faith, hope, and charity into every thing they do, they do, as sons employed in labour, call their three sisters to a feast; that faith, hope, and charity may rejoice in the good work, which each virtue provides; and they as it were gain strength from that meat, whilst they are rendered more confident by good works, and whereas after meat they long to imbibe the dew of contemplation, they are as it were from the cup inebriated.

47. But what is there that we do, in this life, without some stain of defilement, howsoever slight? For sometimes by the very good things we do we draw near to the worse part, since while they beget much in the mind, they at the same time engender a certain security, and when the mind enjoys security, it unlooses itself in sloth; and sometimes they defile us with some self-elation, and set us so much the lower with God, as they make us bigger in our own eyes. Hence it is well added,

Ver. 5. *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them.*

47. For, when the round of the days of feasting is gone about, to send to his sons and to sanctify them, is after the perception [*sensum*] of the virtues to direct the inward intention, and to purify all that we do with the exact sifting of a reexamination, lest things be counted good which are evil, or at least such as are truly good be thought enough when they are imperfect. For thus it very often happens that the mind is taken in, so that it is deceived either in the quality of what is evil or the quantity of what is good. But these senses of the virtues are much better ascertained by prayers than by

examinings. For the things which we endeavour to search out more completely in ourselves, we oftener obtain a true insight into by praying than by investigating. For when the mind is lifted up on high by the kind of machine of compunction, all that may have been presented to it concerning itself, it surveys the more surely by passing judgment upon it beneath its feet. Hence it is well subjoined,

And rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings, according to the number of them all.

48. For we rise up early in the morning, when being penetrated with the light of compunction we leave the night of our human state, and open the eyes of the mind to the beams of the true light, and we offer a burnt offering for each son, when we offer up the sacrifice of prayer for each virtue, lest wisdom may uplift; or understanding, while it runs nimbly, deviate from the right path; or counsel, while it multiplies itself, grow into confusion; that fortitude, while it gives confidence, may not lead to precipitation, lest knowledge, while it knows and yet has no love, may swell the mind; lest piety, while it bends itself out of the right line, may become distorted; and lest fear, while it is unduly alarmed, may plunge one into the pit of despair. When then we pour out our prayers to the Lord in behalf of each several virtue, that it be free from alloy, what else do we but according to the number of our sons offer a burnt offering [*holocaustum*] for each? for an holocaust is rendered ‘the whole burnt.’ Therefore to pay a ‘ holocaust’ is to light up the whole soul with the fire of compunction, that the heart may burn on the altar of love, and consume the defilements of our thoughts, like the sins of our own offspring,

49. But none know how to do this saving those, who, before their thoughts proceed to deeds, restrain with anxious circumspection the inward motions of their hearts. None know how to do this saving they who have learnt to fortify their soul with a manly guard. Hence Ishbosheth is rightly

said to have perished by a sudden death, whom holy Scripture at the same time testifies to have had not a man for his doorkeeper but a woman, in these words; *And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon; and they came thither into the midst of the house:, and the portress of the house was fallen asleep, winnowing wheat. And they came privily into the house fetching ears of wheat, and they smote him in the groin.* [2 Sam. 4, 5-7. Vulg.] The portress winnows the wheat, when the wardkeeping of the mind distinguishes and separates the virtues from the vices; but if she falls asleep, she lets in conspirators to her master's destruction, in that when the cautiousness of discernment is at an end, a way is set open for evil spirits to slay the soul. They enter in and carry off the ears, in that they at once bear off the germs of good thoughts; and they smite in the groin, in that they cut off the virtue of the soul by the delights of the flesh. For to smite in the groin is to pierce the life of the mind with the delights of the flesh. But this Ishbosheth would never have perished by such a death, if he had not set a woman at the entrance to his house, i.e. set an easy guard at the way of access to the mind. For a strong and manly activity should be set over the doors of the heart, such as is never surprised by sleep of neglect, and never deceived by the errors of ignorance; and hence he is rightly named Ishbosheth, who is exposed by a female guard to the swords of his enemies, for Ishbosheth is rendered 'a man of confusion.' And he is 'a man of confusion,' who is not provided with a strong guard over his mind, in that while he reckons himself to be practising virtues, vices stealing in kill him [al. 'kill his soul'] unawares. The entrance to the mind then must be fortified with the whole sum of virtue, lest at any time enemies with insidious intent penetrate into it by the opening of heedless thought. Hence Solomon says, *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life* [Prov. 4, 23]. It is meet then that we form a most

careful estimate of the virtues that we practise, beginning with the original intent, lest the acts which they put forth, even though they be right, may proceed from a bad origin: and hence it is rightly subjoined in this place;

For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.

50. Our sons curse God in their hearts, when our righteous deeds proceed from unrighteous thoughts; when they put forth good things in public, but in secret devise mischief. Thus they curse God, when our minds reckon that they get from themselves that which they are. They curse God when they can understand that it is from Him that they have received their powers, and yet seek their own praise for His gifts. But be it known that our old enemy proceeds against our good actions in three ways, with this view, namely, that the thing which is done aright before the eyes of men, may be spoiled in the sight of the Judge within. For sometimes in a good work he pollutes the intention, that all that follows in the doing may come forth impure and unclean, because it is hereby made to rise troubled from its source. But sometimes he has no power to spoil the intention of a good deed, but he presents himself in the action itself as it were in the pathway; that whereas the person goes forth the more secure in the purpose of his heart, evil being secretly there laid, he may as it were be slain from ambush. And sometimes he neither corrupts the intention, nor overthrows it in the way, but he ensnares the good deed at the end of the action; and in proportion as he feigns himself to have gone further off, whether from the house of the heart or from the path of the deed, with the greater craftiness he watches to catch the end of the good action; and the more he has put a man off his guard by seeming to retire, so much the more incurably does he at times pierce him with an unexpected wound.

51. For he defiles the intention in a good work, in that when he sees men’s hearts ready to be deceived, he presents to their ambition the breath

of passing applause, that wherein they do aright, they may swerve by crookedness in the intention to make the lowest things their aim; and hence under the image of Judaea, it is well said by the Prophet of every soul that is caught in the snare of mal-intention, *Her adversaries are the chief* [Lament. 1, 5]. As though it were said in plain words, 'when a good work is taken in hand with no good intent, the spirits that are against us have dominion over her from the commencement of the conception, and the more completely possess themselves of her, even that they hold her under their power by the very beginning.'

52. But when they are unable to corrupt the intention, they conceal snares which they set in the way, that the heart, lifting itself up in that which is done well, may be impelled from one side to do evil; so that what at the outset it had set before itself in one way, it may go through in act far otherwise than it had begun. For often whilst human praise falls to the lot of a good deed, it alters the mind of the doer, and though not sought after, yet when offered it pleases; and whereas the mind of the well-doer is melted by the delight thereof, it is set loose from all vigorousness of the inward intention. Often when our sense of justice has begun to act aright, anger joins it from the side; and whereas it troubles the mind out of measure, by the quickness of our sense of uprightness, it wounds all the healthiness of our inward tranquillity. It often happens that sadness, attaching itself from the side, as it were, becomes the attendant of seriousness of mind, and that every deed which the mind commences with a good intention, this quality overcasts with a veil of sadness, and we are sometimes the slower in driving it away even in that it waits as it were in solemn attendance on the depressed mind. Often immoderate joy attaches itself to a good deed, and while it calls upon the mind for more mirth than is meet, it discards all the weight of gravity from our good action. For because the Psalmist had seen that even those that set out well are met by snares on the way, being filled

with the prophetic spirit, he rightly delivered it; *In this way that I walked they hid it snare for me* [Ps. 142, 3]. Which Jeremiah well and subtilly insinuates, who, while busied with telling of outward events, points out what things were done inwardly in ourselves, *There came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went; and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them.* [Jer. 41, 5-7] For those shave their beard, who remove from them confidence in their own powers. They rend their clothes, that spare not themselves in tearing in pieces outward appearance. They come to offer up in the house of the Lord frankincense and gifts, who engage to set forth prayer in union with works in sacrifice to God. But if in the very path of holy devotion they skill not to keep a wary eye on every side, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah goes forth to meet them; in that assuredly every evil spirit, after the example of its chief, even Satan, begotten in the erring principle of pride, presents itself as a snare to deceive, And it is likewise well said concerning him; weeping all along as he went; forasmuch as in order that he may cut off devout souls by smiting them, he hides himself as it were under the guise of virtue, and whereas he feigns to agree with those that really mourn, being thus with greater security admitted to the interior of the heart, he destroys whatsoever of virtue is there hidden within. And most often he engages to guide to higher things; and hence he is related to have said, Come unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam; and while he promises greater things he robs us even of the very little that we have; and hence it is rightly said, *And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael*

the son of Nethaniah slew them. So then he slays in the midst of the city the men that are come to offer gifts to God, in that those souls which are devoted to works of God, unless they watch over themselves with great circumspection, lose their life on the very way, through the enemy intercepting them unawares, as they go bearing the sacrifice of devotion; and from the hands of this enemy there is no escape, unless they speedily hasten back to repentance. Hence it is fitly added there, *But ten men were found among them, that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he slew them not.* [Jer. 41, 8] For the treasure in the field is hope in repentance, which, in that it is not discernible, is kept buried closely in the earth of the heart. They then that had treasures in the field were saved, in that they who after the fault of their unwariness return to the lamentation of repentance, do not likewise perish when taken captive

53. But when our old adversary neither deals a blow at the outset of the intention, nor intercepts us in the path of the execution, he sets the more mischievous snares at the end, which he so much the more wickedly besets, as he sees that it is all that is left to him to make a prey of. Now the Prophet had seen these snares set at the end of his course, when he said, *They will mark my heel*. [Ps. 56, 6] For because the end of the body is in the heel, what is signified thereby but the end of an action? Whether then it be evil spirits, or all wicked men that follow in the steps of their pride, they 'mark the heel' when they aim at spoiling the end of a good action; and hence it is said to that serpent, *it shall mark thy head, and thou shalt mark his heel*. [Gen. 3, 15. Vulg. thus] For to mark the serpent's head is to keep an eye upon the beginnings of his suggestions, and with the hand of needful consideration wholly to eradicate them from the avenues of the heart; yet when he is caught at the commencement, he busies himself to smite the heel, in that though he does not strike the intention with his suggestion at

the first, he strives to ensnare at the end. Now if the heart be once corrupted in the intention, the middle and the end of the action that follows is held in secure possession by the cunning adversary, since he sees that that whole tree bears fruit to himself, which he has poisoned at the root with his baleful tooth. Therefore because we have to watch with the greatest care, that the mind even in the service of good works be not polluted by a wicked intention, it is rightly said, *It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts*. As if it were said in plain words, that is no good work which is performed outwardly, unless the sacrifice of innocency be inwardly offered for it upon the altar of the heart in the presence of God. The stream of our work then is to be looked through, all we can, if it flows out pure from the well-spring of thought. With all care must the eye of the heart be guarded from the dust of wickedness, lest that which in action it shews upright to man, be within set awry by the fault of a crooked intention.

54. We must take heed, then, that our good works be not too few, take heed too that they be not unexamined, lest by doing too few works we be found barren, or by leaving them unexamined we be found foolish; for each several virtue is not really such, if it be not blended with other virtues; and hence it is well said to Moses, *Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, of good scent, with pure frankincense; of each shall there be a like weight. And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, well tempered together, and pure*. [Exod. 30, 34. 35.] For we make a perfume compounded of spices, when we yield a smell upon the altar of good works with the multitude of our virtues; and this is ‘tempered together and pure,’ in that the more we join virtue to virtue, the purer is the incense of good works we set forth. Hence it is well added, *And thou shalt beat them all very small, and put of it before the Tabernacle of the Testimony*. We ‘beat all the spices very small,’ when we pound our good deeds as it were in the mortar of the heart, by an inward sifting, and go over

them minutely, to see if they be really and truly good: and thus to reduce the spices to a powder, is to rub fine our virtues by consideration, and to call them back to the utmost exactitude of a secret reviewal; and observe that it is said of that powder, *and thou shalt put of it before the Tabernacle of the Testimony*: for this reason, in that our good works are then truly pleasing in the sight of our Judge, when the mind bruises them small by a more particular reexamination, and as it were makes a powder of the spices, that the good that is done be not coarse [*grossum*] and hard, lest if the close hand of reexamination do not bruise it fine, it scatter not from itself the more refined odour. For it is hence that the virtue of the Spouse is commended by the voice of the Bridegroom, where it is said, *Who is this, that cometh out of the wilderness like a rod of smoke of the perfume of myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?* [Cant. 3, 6] For holy Church rises up like a rod of smoke from spices, in that by the virtues of her life she duly advances to the uprightness of inward incense, nor lets herself run out into dissipated thought, but restrains herself in the recesses of the heart in the rod of severity: and while she never ceases to reconsider and go over anew the things that she does, she has in the deed myrrh and frankincense, but in the thought she has powder. Hence it is that it is said again to Moses of those who offer a victim, *And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces*. [Lev. 1, 6] For we strip the skin of the victim, when we remove from the eyes of the mind the overcast of virtue; and we ‘cut it in his pieces,’ when we minutely dissect its interior, and contemplate it piecemeal. We must therefore be careful, that when we overcome our evil habits, we are not overthrown by our good ones running riot, lest they chance to run out loosely, lest being unheeded they be taken captive, lest from error they forsake the path, lest broken down by weariness they lose the meed of past labours. For the mind ought in all

things to keep a wary eye about it, aye and in this very forethought of circumspection to be persevering; and hence it is rightly added,

Thus did Job all the days.

55. For vain is the good that we do, if it be given over before the end of life, in that it is vain too for him to run fast, who fails before he reaches the goal. For it is hence that it is said of the reprobate, *Woe unto you that have lost patience*. [Ecclus. 2, 14] Hence Truth says to His elect, *Ye are they that have continued with life in My temptations* [Luke 22, 28]. Hence Joseph, who is described to have remained righteous among his brethren until the very end, is the only one related to have had ‘a coat reaching to the ancles.’ [Gen. 37, 23. Vulg.] For what is a coat that reaches to the ancles but action finished? For it is as if the extended coat covered the ancle of the body, when well doing covers us in God’s sight even to the end of life. Hence it is that it is enjoined by Moses to offer upon the altar the tail of the sacrifice, namely, that every good action that we begin we may also complete with perseverance to the end. Therefore what is begun well is to be done every day, that whereas evil is driven away by our opposition, the very victory that goodness gains may be held fast in the hand of constancy.

56. These things then we have delivered under a threefold sense, that by setting a variety of viands before the delicate [*fastidienti*] sense of the soul, we may offer it something to choose by preference. But this we most earnestly entreat, that he that lifts up his mind to the spiritual signification, do not desist from his reverence for the history.

BOOK II.

From the sixth verse of the first chapter to the end, he follows out the exposition according to the threefold interpretation [historical, allegorical, moral].

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION.

1. Holy Writ is set before the eyes of the mind like a kind of mirror, that we may see our inward face in it; for therein we learn the deformities, therein we learn the beauties that we possess; there we are made sensible what progress we are making, there too how far we are from proficiency. It relates the deeds of the Saints [al. 'of the strong'], and stirs the hearts of the weak to follow their example, and while it commemorates their victorious deeds, it strengthens our feebleness against the assaults of our vices; and its words have this effect, that the mind is so much the less dismayed amidst conflicts as it sees the triumphs of so many brave men set before it. Sometimes however it not only informs us of their excellencies, but also makes known their mischances, that both in the victory of brave men we may see what we ought to seize on by imitation, and again in their falls what we ought to stand in fear of. For, observe how Job is described as rendered greater by temptation, but David by temptation brought to the ground, that both the virtue of our predecessors may cherish our hopes, and the downfall of our predecessors may brace us to the cautiousness of humility, so that whilst we are uplifted by the former to joy, by the latter we may be kept down through fears, and that the hearer's mind, being from the one source imbued with the confidence of hope, and from the other with the humility arising from fear, may neither swell with rash pride, in that it is kept down by alarm, nor be so kept down by fear as to despair, in that it finds support for confident hope in a precedent of virtue.

Ver.6. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.*

2. It is interesting to observe the method followed by Holy Writ in delineating, at the commencement of its relations, the qualities and the issues of the particular cases. For one while by the position of the place, now by the posture of the body, now by the temperature of the air, and now by the character of the time, it marks out what it has coming after concerning the action which is to follow; as by the position of the place Divine Scripture sets forth the merits of the circumstances that follow, and the results of the case, as where it relates of Israel that they could not hear the words of God in the mount [Ex. 19, 17], but received the commandments on the plain; doubtless betokening the subsequent weakness of the people who could not mount up to the top, but enfeebled themselves by living carelessly in the lowest things. By the posture of the body it tells of future events, as where in the Acts of the Apostles, Stephen discloses that he saw Jesus, Who sitteth at the right hand of the Power of God [Acts 7, 55, 56], in a standing posture; for standing is the posture of one in the act of rendering aid, and rightly is He discerned standing, Who gives succour in the press of the conflict. By the temperature of the air, the subsequent event is shewn, as when the Evangelist was telling that none out of Judaea were at that time to prove believers in our Lord's preaching, he prefaced it by saying, *and it was winter*, for it is written, *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* [John 10, 22. Mat. 24, 12.] Therefore he took care to particularize the winter season, to indicate that the frost of wickedness was in the hearers' hearts. Hence it is that it is beforehand remarked of Peter, when on the point of denying our Lord, that *it was cold, and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.* [John 18, 18] For he was now inwardly unenlivened by the warmth of Divine love, but to the love of this present life he was warming up, as though his weakness were set

boiling by the persecutors' coals. By the character of the time moreover the issue of the transaction is set forth, as it is related of Judas, who was never to be restored to pardon, that he went out at night to the treachery of his betrayal, where upon his going out, the Evangelist says, *And it was night*. [John 13, 30] Hence too it is declared to the wicked rich man, *This night shall thy soul be required of thee*; for that soul which is conveyed to darkness, is not recorded as required in the day time, but in the night. Hence it is that Solomon who received the gift of wisdom, but was not to persevere, is said to have received her in dreams and in the night. Hence it is that the Angels visit Abraham at midday, but when proposing to punish Sodom, they are recorded to have come thither at eventide, Therefore, because the trial of blessed Job is carried on to victory, it is related to have begun by day, it being said,

Now there was a day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

3. Now who are called the sons of God, saving the elect Angels? and as we know of them that they wait on the eyes of His Majesty, it is a worthy subject of inquiry, whence they come to present themselves before God. For it is of these that it is said by the voice of Truth*, Their angels do always behold the face of My Father, Which is in heaven?* [Mat. 18. 10] Of these the Prophet saith, *thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him*. [Dan. 7, 10] If then they ever behold and ever stand nigh, we must carefully and attentively consider whence they are come, who never go from Him; but since Paul says of them, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?* [Heb. 1, 14] in this, that we learn that they are sent, we discover whence they are come. But see, we add question to question, and as it were while we strive to unloose the loop, we are only fastening a knot. For how can they either always be in presence, or always

behold the face of the Father, of they are sent upon external ministration for our salvation? Which will however be the sooner believed, if we think of how great subtlety is the angelical nature. For they never so go forth apart from the vision of God, as to be deprived of the joys of interior contemplation; for if when they went forth they lost the vision of the Creator, they could neither have raised up the fallen, nor announced the truth to those in ignorance; and that fount of light, which by departing they were themselves deprived of, they could in no wise proffer to the blind. Herein then is the nature of Angels distinguished from the present condition of our own nature, that we are both circumscribed by space, and straitened by the blindness of ignorance; but the spirits of Angels are indeed bounded by space, yet their knowledge extends far above us beyond comparison; for they expand by external and internal knowing, since they contemplate the very source of knowledge itself. For of those things which are capable of being known, what is there that they know not, who know Him, to Whom all things are known? So that their knowledge when compared with ours is vastly extended, yet in comparison with the Divine knowledge it is little. In like manner as their very spirits in comparison indeed with our bodies are spirits, but being compared with the Supreme and Incomprehensible Spirit, they are Body. Therefore they are both sent from Him, and stand by Him too, since both in that they are circumscribed, they go forth, and in this, that they are also entirely present, they never go away. Thus they at the same time always behold the Father's face, and yet come to us; because they both go forth to us in a spiritual presence, and yet keep themselves there, whence they had gone out, by virtue of interior contemplation; it may then be said, *The sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord;* inasmuch as they come back thither by a return of the spirit, whence they never depart by any withdrawal of the mind.

And Satan came also among them.

4. It is a very necessary enquiry, how Satan could be present among the elect Angels, he who had a long time before been damned and banished from their number, as his pride required. Yet he is well described as having been present among them; for though he lost his blessed estate, yet he did not part with a nature like to theirs, and though his deserts sink him, he is lifted up by the properties of his subtle nature. And so he is said to have come before God among the sons of God, for Almighty God, with that eye with which He regards all spiritual things, beholds Satan also in the rank of a more subtle nature, as Scripture testifies, when it says, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*; [Prov. 15, 3] but this, viz. that Satan is said to have come before the presence of God, comes under a grave question with us; for it is written, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* [Matt. 5, 8] But Satan, who can never be of a pure heart, how could he have presented himself to see the Lord?

5. But it is to be observed, that he is said to have come before the Lord, but not that he saw the Lord. For he came to be seen, and not to see. He was in the Lord's sight, but the Lord was not in his sight; as when a blind man stands in the sun, he is himself bathed indeed in the rays of light, yet he sees nothing of the light, by which he is brightened. In like manner then Satan also appeared in the Lord's sight among the Angels. For the Power of God, which by a look penetrates all objects, beheld the impure spirit, who saw not Him. For because even those very things which flee from God's face cannot be hidden, in that all things are naked to the view of the Most High, Satan being absent came to Him, Who was present.

Ver. 7, *And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?*

6. How is it that it is never said to the elect Angels, when they come, 'Whence come ye?' while Satan is questioned whence he comes? For assuredly we never ask, but what we do not know; but God's not knowing is His condemning. Whence at the last He will say to some, *I know you not*

whence ye are; depart from me, ye that work iniquity. [Luke 13, 27] In the same way that a man of truth, who disdains to sin by a falsehood, is said not to know how to lie, not in being ignorant if he had the will to lie, but in disdaining to tell a falsehood, from love of truth. What then is it to say to Satan, *Whence comest thou?* but to condemn his ways, as though unknown. The light of truth then knows nought of the darkness, which it reproves; and the paths of Satan, which as a judge it condemns, it is meet that it should inquire after as though in ignorance of them. Hence it is that it is said to Adam in his sin by his Creator's voice, *Adam, where art thou?* [Gen. 3, 9] For Divine Power was not ignorant to what hiding place His servant had fled after his offence, but for that He saw that he, having fallen in his sin, was now as it were hidden under sin from the eyes of Truth, in that He approves not the darkness of his error, He knows not, as it were, where the sinner is, and both calls him, and asks him, saying, *Adam, where art thou?* hereby, that He calls him, He gives a token that He recalls him to repentance; hereby, that He questions him, He plainly intimates that He knows not sinners, that justly deserve to be damned, Accordingly the Lord never calls Satan, but yet He questions him, saying, *Whence comest thou?* without doubt because God never recalls the rebel spirit to repentance, but in not knowing his paths of pride, He condemns him; therefore while Satan is examined [*discutitur*] concerning his way, the elect Angels have not to be questioned whence they come, since their ways are known to God in so much as they are done of His own moving, and whilst they are subservient to His will alone, they can never be unknown to Him, in so far as, by His approving eye, it is Himself from Whom and before Whom they are done. It follows,

Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

7. The toilsomeness of labour is wont to be represented by the round of circuitous motion, Accordingly Satan went toiling round about the earth, for he scorned to abide at peace in the height of heaven; and whereas he intimates that he did not fly, but that he walked, he shews the weight of sin, by which he is kept down below. *Walking* then *up and down*, he went to and fro in the earth, for tumbling down from that his soaring in spiritual mightiness, and oppressed by the weight of his own wickedness, he came forth to his round of labour. For it is for no other reason that it is said of his members also by the Psalmist, *The wicked walk on every side*; for while they seek not things within, they weary themselves with toiling at things without. It follows ;

Ver. 8. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

8. This point, viz, that blessed Job is by the voice of God called *a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil*, having explained above minutely and particularly, we forbear to rehearse what we have said, lest while we go over points that have been already examined, we should be slow in coming to those which have not. This then requires our discreet consideration, how it is either that the Lord is said to speak to Satan, or that Satan is said to answer the Lord, for we must make out what this speaking means. For neither by the Lord Who is the supreme and unbounded Spirit, nor by Satan, who is invested with no fleshly nature, is the breath of air inhaled by the bellows of the lungs, after the manner of human beings, so that by the organ of the throat it should be given back in the articulation of the voice; but when the Incomprehensible Nature speaks to an invisible nature, it behoves that our imagination rising above the properties of our corporeal speech should be lifted to the sublime and unknown methods of interior speech. For we, that we may express

outwardly the things which we are inwardly sensible of, deliver these through the organ of the throat, by the sounds of the voice, since to the eyes of others we stand as it were behind the partition of the body, within the secret dwelling place of the mind; but when we desire to make ourselves manifest, we go forth as though through the door of the tongue, that we may shew what kind of persons we are within. But it is not so with a spiritual nature, which is not a twofold compound of mind and body. But again we must understand that even when incorporeal nature itself is said to speak, its speech is by no means characterized by one and the same form. For it is after one method that God speaks to the Angels, and after another that the Angels speak to God; in one manner that God speaks to the souls of Saints, in another that the souls of Saints speak to God; in one way God speaks to the devil, ill another the devil speaks to God.

9. For because no corporeal obstacle is in the way of a spiritual being, God speaks to the holy Angels in the very act of His revealing to their hearts His inscrutable secrets, that whatsoever they ought to do they may read it in the simple contemplation of truth, and that the very delights of contemplation should be like a kind of vocal precepts, for that is as it were spoken to them as hearers which is inspired into them as beholders. Whence when God was imparting to their hearts His visitation of vengeance upon the pride of man, He said, *Come, let us go down, and there confound their language.* [Gen. 11, 7] He saith to those who are close about Him, *Come,* doubtless because this very circumstance of never decreasing from the contemplation of God, is to be always increasing in the contemplation of Him, and never to depart from Him in heart, is as it were to be always coming to Him by a kind of steady motion. To them He also says, *Let us go down, and there confound their language.* The Angels ascend in that they behold their Creator; the Angels descend in that by a strict examination they put down that which exalts itself in unlawful measure. So then for God to

say, *Let us go down, and confound their speech*, is to exhibit to them in Himself that which would be rightly done, and by the power of interior vision to inspire into their minds, by secret influences, the judgments which are fit to be set forth.

10. It is after another manner that the Angels speak to God, as in the Revelation of John also they say, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom*; for the voice of the Angels in the praises of God is the very admiration itself of inward contemplation. To be struck dumb at the marvels of Divine goodness is to utter a voice, for the emotion of the heart excited with a feeling of awe is a mighty utterance of voice to the ears of a Spirit that is not circumscribed. This voice unfolds itself as it were in distinct words, while it moulds itself in the innumerable modes of admiration. God then speaks to the Angels when His inner will is revealed to them as the object of their perception; but the Angels speak to the Lord when by means of this, which they contemplate above themselves, they rise to emotions of admiration.

11. In one way God speaks to the souls of Saints, in another the souls of Saints speak to God; whence too it is again said in the Apocalypse of John, *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word if God, and for the testimony which. they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* [Rev. 6, 9. 10.] Where in the same place it is added, *And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled*; [Rev. 6, 11] for what else is it for souls to utter the prayer for vengeance, but to long for the day of final Judgment, and the resurrection of their lifeless bodies? For their great cry is their great longing; for everyone cries the less, the less he desires; and he utters the

louder voice in the ears of an uncircumscribed Spirit in proportion as he more entirely pours himself out in desire of Him, and so the words of souls are their very desires. For if the desire were not speech, the Prophet would not say, *Thine ear hath heard the desire of their heart;* [Ps. 10, 17] but as the mind which beseeches is usually affected one way and the mind which is besought another, and yet the souls of the Saints so cleave to God in the bosom of their inmost secresy, that in cleaving they find rest, how are those said to beseech, who it appears are in no degree at variance with His interior will? How are they said to beseech, who, we are assured, are not ignorant, either of God's will or of those things which shall be? Yet whilst fixed on Himself they are said to beseech any thing of Him, not in desiring aught that is at variance with the will of Him, Whom they behold, but in proportion as they cleave to Him with the greater ardour of mind, they also obtain from Him to beseech that of Him, which they know it is His will to do; so that they drink from Him that which they thirst after from Him. And in a manner to us incomprehensible as yet, what they hunger for in begging, they are filled withal in foreknowing; and so they would be at variance with their Creator's will, if they did not pray for that which they see to be His will, and they would cleave less closely to Him, if when He is willing to give, they knocked with less lively longing. These receive the answer spoken from God, *Rest yet for a little season, till your fellowservants and your brethren be fulfilled.* To say to those longing souls*, rest yet for a little season*, is to breathe upon them amid their burning desires, by the very foreknowledge, the soothings of consolation; so that both the voice of the souls is that desire which through love they entertain, and God's address in answer is this, that He reassures them in their desires with the certainty of retribution. For Him then to answer that they should await the gathering of their brethren to their number, is to infuse into their minds the delays of a glad awaiting, that while they long after the resurrection of the flesh, they

may be further gladdened by the accession of their brethren who remain to be gathered to them.

12. It is in one way that God speaks to the devil, and in another that the devil speaks to God, For God's speaking to the devil is His rebuking his ways and dealings with the visitation of a secret scrutiny, as it is here said, *Whence comest thou?* But the devil's answering Him, is his being unable to conceal any thing from His Omnipotent Majesty; whence he says, *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it*. For it is as it were for him to say what he had been doing, that he knows that he cannot hide his doings from the eyes of That Being. But we must understand that, as we learn in this place, God has four ways of speaking to the devil, and the devil has three ways of speaking to God, God speaks to the devil in four modes, for He both reprehends his unjust ways, and urges against him the righteousness of His Saints, and lets him by permission try their innocence, and sometimes stops him that he dare not tempt them, Thus he rebukes his unjust ways, as has been just now said, *Whence camnest thou?* He urges against him the righteousness of His own elect, as He saith, *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth?* [Job 1, 8] He allows him by permission to put their innocence to the test, as when He says, *All that he hath is in thy power.* [ver. 12] And again He prevents him from tempting, when He says, *But upon himself put not forth thy hand.* But the devil speaks to God in three ways, either when he communicates to Him his dealing, or when he calumniates the innocence of the elect with false charges, or when he demands the same innocence to put it to trial. For he communicates his ways who says, *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* [ver. 7] He calumniates the innocence of the elect, when he says, *Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about all his house, and about all that he hath on every side?* [ver. 9, 10] He demands the same

innocence to be subjected to trial, when he says, *But put forth Thine hand now and touch all that he hath and he will curse Thee to Thy face*. But God's saying, *Whence comest thou?* is His rebuking by virtue of His own goodness that one's paths of wickedness. His saying, *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth?* is His making the elect, by justifying them, such as a rebel angel might envy. God's saying, *All that he hath is in thy power*, is, for the probation of the Saints, His letting loose upon them that assault of the wicked one, by the secret exercise of His power. God's saying, *Only upon himself put not forth thine hand,* is His restraining him from an excessive assault of temptation, even in giving him permission. But the devil's saying, *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it,* signifies His inability to conceal from His unseen eyes the cunning of his wickedness. The devil's saying, *Doth Job fear God for nought?* is his complaining against the just within the hiding places of his own thoughts, his envying their gains, and from envy searching out flaws for their condemnation. The devil's saying, *Put forth Thine hand now and touch all that he hath*, is his panting with the fever of wickedness to afflict the just. For in that through envy he longs to tempt the just, he seeks as it were by entreaty to put them to the test. Now then, as we have briefly described the methods of inward speaking, let us return to the thread of interpretation, which has been slightly interrupted.

Ver. 8. *Have thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

13. The point has been already discussed in the foregoing discourse, that the devil proposed a contest not with Job but with God, blessed Job being set between them as the subject of the contest; and if we say that Job amid the blows erred in his speech, we assert what it is impious to imagine, that God was the loser in His pledge. For, lo, here also it is to be remarked, that

the devil did not first beg the blessed Job of the Lord, but the Lord commended him to the contempt of the devil; and unless He had known that he would continue in his uprightness, He would not assuredly have undertaken for him. Nor would He give him up to perish in the temptation, against whom, before the temptation was sent, those firebrands of envy were kindled in the tempter's mind from God's own commendations.

14. But the old adversary, when he fails to discover any evil of which he might accuse us, seeks to turn our very good points into evil, and being beaten upon works, looks through our words for a subject of accusation; and when he finds not in our words either ground of accusation, he strives to blacken the purpose of the heart, as though our good deeds did not come of a good mind, and ought not on that account to be reckoned good in the eyes of the Judge. For because he sees the fruit of the tree to be green even in the heat, he seeks as it were to set a worm at its root. For he says,

Ver. 9, 10. *Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast Thou, not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in, the land.*

15. As if he said in plain terms, 'What wonder is it, if he who has received so many blessings upon earth should behave without offence in return for them? He would then be really innocent, if he continued good in adversity; but why is he to be called great, whose every work has its recompense attending upon him, in all this abundance of good things?' For the crafty adversary, when he bethinks himself that the holy man had acted well in prosperity, hastens by means of adversity to prove him guilty before the Judge. Whence it is well said by the voice of the Angel in the Apocalypse, *The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night*. [Rev. 12, 10] Now holy Scripture is often used to set the day for prosperity, and the night for adversity. Accordingly he ceases

not to accuse us by day and by night; forasmuch as he strives to shew us to be chargeable one while in prosperity, another while in adversity. In the day he accuses us, when he slanders us that we abuse our good fortune; in the night he accuses us, when he shews that we do not exercise patience in adversity; and therefore because no strokes had as yet touched blessed Job, he was as it were still wholly without that whereof he might be able to accuse him by night, but because in prosperity he had thriven in a great holiness, he pretended that it was in return for his good fortune that he had done well, lying in the crafty assertion, that he did not keep his substance for the profit [*usum*] of the Lord, but that he served the Lord for the profit [*usum*] of his substance. For there are some who, to enjoy God, dea1 with this life like stewards, and there are some who to enjoy this life would make use of God by the bye. When then he describes the gifts of Divine bounty, he thinks to make light of the acts of the resolute doer, that he might impeach [*addicat*] the heart of him as though on the score of secret thoughts, whose life he was unable to reprove on the score of works; falsely asserting that whatever outward innocence of life there might be, was in compliance not with the love of God, but with his longing after temporal prosperity. And so knowing nothing of the powers of blessed Job, and yet being well aware that everyone is most truly tried by adversity, he demands him for trial, that he who throughout the day of prosperity had walked with unfailing foot, at least in the night of adversity might stumble, and by the offence of impatience might be laid low before the eyes of his commender. Whence he adds,

Ver. 11. *But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

16. When Satan has a desire to tempt the holy man, and yet tells the Lord that He must put forth His hand against him, it is very deserving of notice that even he, who is so especially lifted up against the Maker of all things,

never claims to himself the power to strike; for the devil knows well that he is unable to do any thing of himself, for neither in that he is a spirit does he subsist by himself. Hence it is that in the Gospel, the legion, which was to be cast out of the man, exclaimed, *If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine*; [Mat. 8, 31] for what wonder is it if he, who could not by his own power enter into the swine, had no power without the Creator's hand to touch the holy man's house?

17. But we must know that the will of Satan is always evil, but his power is never unjust, for his will he derives from himself, but his power he derives from God. For what he himself unrighteously desires to do, God does not allow to be done except with justice. Whence it is well said in the book of Kings, *the evil spirit of God came upon Saul*. [1 Sam. 18, 10] You see that one and the same spirit is both called the Lord's spirit and an evil Spirit; the Lord's, that is, by the concession of just power, but evil, by the desire of an unjust will, so that he is not to be dreaded, who has no power but by permission; and, therefore, that Power is the only worthy object of fear, which when It has allowed the enemy to vent his rage, makes even his unjust will serve the purpose of a just judgment. But he requires that His hand should be *put forth a little*; they being external things, of which he seeks the hurt. For Satan even does not consider himself to accomplish much, unless he inflicts a wound in the soul, that by so smiting he may bring one back from that country, from which he lies far removed, laid prostrate by the weapon of his own pride.

18. But why is it that he says*, if he have not blessed Thee to Thy face?* [so Vulg.] We look, it means, toward that we love, but that we would be quit of, we turn away our face from it. What then is the face of God, unless the regard of His favour is set before us to be understood? Accordingly he says, *But put forth Thine hand a little* [Vulg. *paullullum,* E.V. *now*], *and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.* As if he had said in plain

words, Withdraw the things which Thou hast given him, for if he lose Thy gifts, he will no longer seek the regard of Thy favour, when his temporal good things are taken away. For if he no longer has the things in which he takes delight, he will despise Thy favour even to cursing Thee. By which crafty address The Truth Whom he challenges is in no wise overcome; but that is permitted the enemy to his own undoing, which may be reckoned to the faithful servant for the increase of his reward; for which cause it is immediately subjoined,

Ver. 12. *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.*

19. We should mark in the Lord's words the dispensations of heavenly pity, how He lets go our enemy, and keeps him in; how He looses, and yet bridles him. He allows him some things for temptation, but withholds him from others. *All that he hath is in thy hand, only upon himself put not forth thine hand.* His substance He delivers over, but still He protects his person, which notwithstanding after a while He designs to give over to the tempter; yet He does not loose the enemy to every thing at once, lest he should crush His own subject [*civem*] by striking him on every side. For whenever many evils betide the elect, by the wonderful graciousness of the Creator they are dealt out by seasons, that what by coming all together would destroy, may when divided be borne up against. Hence Paul says, God is faithful, *Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* [1 Cor. 10, 13] Hence David says, *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me*. [Ps. 26, 2] As if he said in plain words, 'first examine my powers, and then, as I am able to bear, let me undergo temptation.' But this that is said, *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand,* is also capable of another sense, viz. that the Lord knew well, indeed, that His soldier was brave, yet chose to divide for him his contests with the enemy,

that, though victory should in every case be sure to that staunch warrior, yet that from one conflict first the enemy might return to the Lord defeated, and that then he might grant him another encounter to be again worsted, so that his faithful follower might come forth the more incomparable conqueror, in proportion as the vanquished foe had repaired his forces again for fresh wars with him. It follows,

So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

20. What is this, that Satan is said *to go forth from the presence of the Lord?* For how is it possible to *go forth* from Him, Who is every where present? Whence it is that He says, *Do not I fill heaven and earth?* [Jer. 23, 24] Hence it is written concerning His Spirit, *For the Spirit of the Lord filleth the world*. [Wisd. 1, 7] Hence it is that His Wisdom saith, *I alone compassed the circuit of heaven.* [Ecclus. 24, 5] Hence it is that the Lord says again, *The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.* [Isa. 66, 1] And again it is written of Him, *He meteth out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure*, [Is. 40, 12. Vulg.] for He abides both within and without the seat, whereon He rules. By His 'meting out heaven with a span, and comprehending the earth in a measure,' He is shewn to be Himself on every side beyond the circuit of all things which He has created. For that which is enclosed within is from without held in by that which encloseth it. "By the throne, therefore, whereon He is seated, it is meant that He is within and above; by the 'measure,' wherewith , 'He comprehends,' He is represented to be beyond and beneath; for whereas the same Being abides within all things, without all things, above all things, beneath all things, He is both above by virtue of His Dominion, and beneath by virtue of His Upholding; without, by His Immensity, and within, by His Subtlety; ruling from on high, holding together from below; encompassing without, penetrating within; not abiding by one part above, by another beneath, or by one part without, and by another part within, but One and the

Same, and wholly every where, upholding in ruling, ruling in upholding; penetrating in encompassing, encompassing in penetrating; whence He ruleth from above, thence upholding from beneath, and whence He enfoldeth from without, thence filling up within; ruling on high without disquietude, upholding below without effort; within, penetrating without attenuation, without, encompassing without expansion. So that He is both lower and higher, without place; He is wider without breadth; He is more subtle without rarity.

21. Whither then is there any 'going forth' from Him, Who being through the bulk of a body no where present, is through a Substance unlimited no where absent? Still, so long as Satan, kept down by the power of His Majesty, was unable to execute the longing of his wickedness, he, as it were, stood in the presence of the Lord, but he 'went forth' from the presence of the Lord, because, being freed from above from the pressure of an inward withholding, he went to the execution of his desire. He went forth from the presence of the Lord, forasmuch as his evil will, long bound by the fetters of a severe control, did at length proceed to fulfilment. For, as has been said, whilst that which he desired he had no power to fulfil, in a manner, he ;stood in the presence of the Lord,' because the Supreme Providence restrained him from the execution of his wickedness, but 'he went forth from His presence,' because in receiving the power to tempt, he arrived at the goal, at which his wickedness aimed, It goes on:

Ver. 13, 14, 15, *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

22. We ought to observe what times are suited for temptations; for the devil chose that as the time for tempting, when he found the sons of the blessed Job engaged in feasting; for the adversary does not only cast about what to do, but also when to do it. Then though he had gotten the power, yet he sought a fitting season to work his overthrow, to this end, that by God's disposal it might be recorded for our benefit, that the delight of full enjoyment is the forerunner of woe. But we should observe the craft with which the losses that were inflicted by him are themselves related; for it is not said, 'the oxen have been carried off by the Sabeans,' but 'the oxen, which have been carried away, were ploughing,' with the view doubtless that by mention of the profit of their labour, his cause for sorrow should be increased; for the same reason also [LXX. ai yhlei-ai onoi] among the Greeks it is not only asses, but asses with young, that are reported to have been taken away, that while such insignificant animals might less hurt the mind of the hearer from their value, they might from their productiveness inflict the sorer wound; and as misfortunes afflict the mind the more in proportion as, being many in number, they are also suddenly announced, the measure of his woes was enlarged even through the junctures at which the tidings arrived. For it follows,

Ver. 16, *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

23. Lest the loss of his property might not stir up sufficient grief at the hearing, he urges his feelings to exceed by the very words of the messengers. For it is to be remarked how craftily it is said, *the fire of God*, as though it were said, thou art suffering the visitation of Him, Whom thou desiredst to appease by so many sacrifices: thou art undergoing the wrath of Him, in Whose service thou didst daily weary thyself! For in signifying that God, Whom he had served, had brought upon him his misfortunes, he

mentions a sore point on which he may break forth; to the end that he might recall to mind his past services, and reckoning that he had served in vain, might be lifted up against the injustice of the Author. For the godly mind, when it finds itself to meet with crosses from the hands of man, finds repose in the consolations of Divine favour; and when it sees the storms of trial gather strength without, then seeking the covert of trust in the Lord, it takes refuge within the haven of the conscience. But that the cunning adversary might at one and the same moment crush the bold heart of the holy man, both by strokes from man and by despair in God, he both brought tidings at first that the Sabeans had made an irruption, and announced immediately afterwards that the fire of God had fallen from heaven, that he might as it were shut up every avenue of consolation, whereas he shews even Him to be against him, Who might have solaced his spirit amidst his adversities; so that considering himself in his trials to be on every side forsaken, and on every side in a strait, he might burst into reviling with so much the more hardihood as he did it in the greater desperation. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

24. Lo again, lest any thing should be wanting to his grief for the adversity that came of man, he brings tidings that bands of the Chaldeans had broken in, and lest the calamity that came from above should strike him with too little force, he shews that wrath is repeated in the heavens. For it follows;

Ver. 18, 19. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the*

wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

25. He who is not laid low by one wound is in consequence stricken twice and thrice, that at one time or another he may be struck to the very core. Thus the blow from the Sabeans had been reported, the Divine visitation by fire from heaven had been reported, tidings are brought of the plundering of the camels, by man again, and of the slaughter of his servants, and the fury of God’s displeasure is repeated, in that a fierce wind is shewn to have smitten the comers of the house, and to have overwhelmed his children. For because it is certain that without the Sovereign dictate the elements can never be put in motion, it is covertly implied that He, Who let them be stirred, did Himself stir up the elements against him, though, when Satan has once received the power from the Lord, he is able even to put the elements into commotion to serve his wicked designs. Nor should it disturb us, if a spirit cast down from on high should have the power to stir the air into storms, seeing that we know doubtless that to those even who are sentenced to the mines fire and water render service to supply their need. So then he obtained that tidings should be brought of misfortunes; he obtained that they should be many in number; he obtained that they should come suddenly. Now the first time that he brought bad tidings he inflicted a wound upon his yet peaceful breast, as upon sound members; but when he went on smiting the stricken soul, he dealt wound upon wound, that he might urge him to words of impatience.

26. But we should observe with what craftiness the ancient foe busied himself to break down the patience of the holy man, not so much by the loss of his substance as by the very order of the announcements. He, taking pains to announce first the slight disasters, and afterwards the greater ones, last of all brought him intelligence of the death of his sons, lest the father should account the losses of his property of slight importance, if he heard of

them when now childless, and lest it should the less disturb him to part with his goods, after he had learnt the death of his children, considering that the inheritance were no more, if he first removed out of the way those who were reserved to inherit it. So beginning from the least, he announced the worst intelligence last; that while worse disasters were made known to him in succession, every wound might find room for pain within his breast. Take notice of the craft with which so many a weight of ill is announced, both separately and at the same time suddenly, that his grief being increased both of a sudden and in point after point, might not contain itself within the hearer's breast, and that it might so much the more inflame him to utter blasphemy, as the fire, kindled within him by those sudden and multiplied tidings, raged in a narrower space.

27. Nor do I think that this ought to be lightly passed over, that the sons when they perish were feasting in the house of their elder brother. For it has been declared above that feasts can scarcely be gone through without transgression. To speak then of our own concerns and not of theirs, the lesson we ought to learn is, that what the younger ones do for pleasure's sake is checked by the control of the elder, but when the elder are themselves followers of pleasure, then, we may be sure, the reins of license are let loose for the younger; for who would keep himself under the control of authority, when even the very persons, who receive the right of control, freely give themselves to their pleasures? And so while they are feasting in the house of their elder brother, they perish, for then the enemy gets more effective power against us, when he marks that even those very persons, who are advanced for the keeping of discipline, are abandoned to joviality. For he is so much the more free and forward to strike, as he sees that they too, who might intercede for our faults, are taken up with pleasure. But far be it from us to suspect that the sons of so great a man were by devotedness to feasts given up to the gorging of the belly. But still we know for certain

that though a man, by the observance of self control, may not pass the bounds of necessity in eating, yet the animated earnestness of the mind is dulled amidst feasting, and that mind is less apt to reflect in what a conflict of temptations it is placed, which throws off restraint in a sense of security. In the eldest brother's day then he overwhelmed the sons, for the old foe in compassing the death of the younger, seeks an inlet for their ruin through the carelessness of the elder ones. But as we have marked with what piercing darts the tidings struck him, let us hear how our man of valour stands fast amid the blows, It proceeds;

Ver. 20. *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.*

28. There are some who account it a high degree of philosophical fortitude, if, when corrected by severe discipline, they are insensible to the strokes, and to the pains of those stripes. And there are some who feel to such excess the infliction of the blows, that under the influence of immediate grief, they even fall into excesses of the tongue. But whoever strives to maintain true philosophy, must go between either extreme, for the weightiness of true virtue consists not in dulness of heart, as also those limbs are very unhealthy from numbness which cannot feel any pain even when cut. Again, he deserts his guard over virtue, who feels the pain of chastisement beyond what is necessary; for while the heart is affected with excessive sorrow, it is stirred up to the extent of impatient reviling, and he who ought to have amended his misdeeds by means of the stripes, does his part that his wickedness should be increased by the correction. Agreeably to which, against the insensibility in the chastised, the words of the Prophet are, *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction*. [Jer. 5, 3] Against the faintheartedness of the chastened the Psalmist hath it, *They will never stand fast in adversity*; [Ps. 140, 10. Vulg.] for they would 'stand fast

in adversity,' if they bore calamities with patience, but so soon as they sink in spirit, when pressed with blows, they as it were lose the firmness of their footing, amidst the miseries inflicted on them.

29. Thus because blessed Job observed the rule of the true philosophy, he kept himself from either extreme with the evenness of a marvellous skill, that he might not by being insensible to the pain contemn the strokes, nor again, by feeling the pain immoderately, be hurried madly against the visitation of the Striker. For when all his substance was lost, all his children gone, *he rose up, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped*. In that *he rent his mantle*, in that *he shaved his head and fell down upon the ground*, he shews, we see, that he has felt the pain of the scourge; but in that it is added that *he worshipped*, it is plainly shewn that even in the midst of pain, he did not break forth against the decree of the Smiter. He was not altogether unmoved, lest by his very insensibility he should shew a contempt of God; nor was he completely in commotion, lest by excess of grief he should commit sin. But because there are two commandments of love, i.e. the love of God, and of our neighbour; that he might discharge the love of our neighbour, he paid the debt of mourning to his sons; that he might not forego the love of God, he performed the office of prayer amidst his groans. There are some that use to love God in prosperity, but in adversity to abate their love of Him from whom the stroke comes. But blessed Job, by that sign which he outwardly shewed in his distress, proved that he acknowledged the correction of his Father, but herein, that he continued humbly worshipping, he shewed that even under pain he did not give over the love of that Father. Therefore that he might not shew pride by his insensibility, he fell down at the stroke, but that he might not estrange himself from the Striker, he so fell down as to worship. But it was the practice of ancient times for everyone, who kept up the appearance of his person by encouraging the growth of his hair, to cut it

off in seasons of mourning; and, on the other hand that he who in peaceful times kept his hair cut, should in evidencing his distress cherish its growth. Thus blessed Job is shewn to have preserved his hair in the season of rest, when he is related to have shaven his head for the purpose of mourning, that whereas the hand of the Most High was fallen upon him in all the circumstances of his condition, the altered mien of penance might even by his own act overcloud him. But such an one, spoiled of his substance, bereft of his children, that rent his mantle, that shaved his head, that fell down upon the ground, let us hear what he says!

Ver. 21. *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.*

30. Oh! upon how elevated a seat of the counsels of the heart does he sit enthroned, who now lies prostrate on the earth with his clothes rent! For because by the judgment of the Lord he had lost all that he had, for the preserving his patience he brought to mind that time, when he had not as yet those things which he had lost, that, whilst he considers that at one time he had them not, he may moderate his concern for having lost them; for it is a high consolation in the loss of what we have, to recall to mind those times, when it was not our fortune to possess the things which we have lost. But as the earth has produced all of us, we not unjustly call her our mother. As it is written, *An heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mother's womb, till the day that they return to the mother of all things.* [Ecclus. 40, 1]

Blessed Job then, that he might mourn with patience for what he had lost here, marks attentively in what condition he had come hither. But for the furtherance of preserving patience, with still more discretion he considers, how he will go hence, and exclaims, *Naked came lout of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither*. As though he said, 'Naked did the earth bear me, when I came upon this scene, naked it will receive me back,

when I depart hence. I then who have lost what I had indeed given me, but what must yet have been abandoned, what have I parted with that was my own?' But because comfort is not only to be derived from the consideration of our creation [*conditionis 'conditoris.'*], but also from the justice of the Creator, he rightly adds,

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done. [so V. and lxx.]

31. The holy man, under trial from the adversary, had lost every thing, yet knowing that Satan had no power against him to tempt him, saving by the Lord's permission, he does not say, 'the Lord hath given, the devil hath taken away,' but *the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away*. For perchance it would have been a thing to grieve for, if what his Creator had given him, his enemy had taken from him: but when no other hath taken it away, saving He Who Himself gave it, He hath only recalled what was His own, and hath not taken away what was ours. For if we have from Him all that we make use of in our present life, what cause for grief that by His own decree we are made to surrender, of Whose bounty we have a loan? Nor is he at any time an unfair creditor, who while he is not bound to any set time of restitution, exacts, whenever he will, what he lends out. Whereupon it is well added, *As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done*; for since in this life we undergo things which we would not, it is needful for us to turn the bias of our will to Him, Who can will nought that is unjust. For there is great comfort in what is disagreeable to us, in that it comes to us by His disposal, to Whom nought but justice is pleasing. If then we be assured that what is just is the Lord's pleasure, and if we can suffer nothing but what is the Lord's pleasure, then all is just that we undergo, and it is great injustice, if we murmur at a just suffering.

32. But since we have heard how the intrepid speaker put forward the vindication of his cause against the adversary, now let us hear how in the

end of his speech he extols the Judge with benedictions. It follows, *Blessed be the Name of the Lord*. See how he concluded all that he felt alight with a blessing on the Lord, that the adversary might both perceive hence, and for his punishment under defeat take shame to himself, that he himself even though created in bliss had proved a rebel to that Lord, to Whom a mortal even under His scourge utters the hymn of glory.

But be it observed, that our enemy strikes us with as many darts as he afflicts us with temptations; for it is in a field of battle that we stand every day, every day we receive the weapons of his temptations. But we ourselves too send our javelins against him, if, when pierced with woes, we answer humbly. Thus blessed Job, when stricken with the loss of his substance and with the death of his children, forasmuch as he turned the force of his anguish into praise of his Creator, exclaiming, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; blessed be the Name of the Lord:* by his humility, struck down the enemy in his pride, and by his patience, laid low the cruel one. Let us never imagine that our combatant received wounds, and yet inflicted none. For whatever words of patience he gave forth to the praise of God, when he was stricken, he as it were hurled so many darts into the breast of his adversary, and inflicted much sorer wounds than he underwent; for by his affliction he lost the things of earth, but by bearing his affliction with humility, he multiplied his heavenly blessings. It follows,

Ver.22. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

33. Since, when we are laid hold of by distressing trials, we may even in the silent working of our thoughts, without word of mouth, be guilty of sin; the testimony both of the lips and of the heart is given to blessed Job. For it is first said, *he sinned not*, and then it is afterwards added, *nor charged God foolishly*: for he, who uttered nothing foolishly, kept offence from his tongue, and whereas the words, he sinned not, come before, it appears that

he excluded the sin of murmuring even from his thought, so that he neither sinned nor spake foolishly, since he neither swelled with indignation in his silent consciousness, nor gave a loose to his tongue in reviling. For he does 'charge God foolishly,' who, when the strokes of divine chastisement are fallen upon him, strives to justify himself. For if he venture in pride to assert his innocence, what else does he, but impugn the justice of the chastiser? Let it suffice for us to have run through the words of the history thus far: let us now turn the discourse of our exposition to investigate the mysteries of allegory. And herein, that it is written,

Ver.6. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.*

ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

34. It is first to be made out, wherefore any thing is said to be done on a particular day before the Lord, whereas with Him the progress of time is never marked by the variation of day and night. For neither does that light, which without coming enlighteneth whatsoever it chooseth, and without going forsaketh those things which it rejects, admit any imperfection of mutability; for, while it abideth unchangeable in itself, it orders all things that are subject to change, and has in such sort created all transient beings in itself, that in it they are incapable of transition, nor is there inwardly in His sight any lapse of time, which with us, without Him, has its course. Whence it comes to pass that those revolutions of the world remain fixed in His eternity, which, having no fixedness out of Him issue into existence [*emanant*]. Why then in relation to Him is it said, *one day*, in that His one day is His eternity? Which same the Psalmist perceived to be closed by no ending, and to open with no beginning, where he says, *One day in Thy courts is better than a thousand*. [Ps. 84, 10. Vulg.]

35. But as Holy Scripture speaks to those who are brought forth in time, it is meet that it should use words significant of time, in order that it may lift us up by so condescending, and that while it relates something that belongs to eternity after the manner of time, it may gradually transfer to the eternal world those who are habituated to the things of time, and that that eternity, which is unknown, while it amuses [*blanditur*] us with words that are known, may successfully impart itself to our minds. And what wonder is it, if in Holy Writ God is not overhasty to disclose the unchangeableness of His Nature to the mind of man, since after He had celebrated the triumph [*solemnitate*] of His Resurrection, it was by certain progressive steps that He made known the incorruptibility of the Body which He resumed again. For we have learnt from the testimony of Luke, that He first sent Angels to some, that were seeking for Him in the tomb; and again to the disciples who were talking of Him by the way, He Himself appeared, yet not so as to be known by them, Who indeed after the delay of an exhortation did shew Himself to be known of them in the breaking of bread; but at last, entering suddenly, He not only presented Himself to be known by sight, but to be handled also. For because the disciples still carried about with them faint hearts, in coming to the knowledge of this marvellous mystery they were to be nourished by such a method of its dispensation, that by little and little in seeking they might find some portion, that finding they might gain growth, and growing they might hold the faster the truths which they had learnt. Inasmuch then as we are not led to the eternal world at once, but by a progression of cases and of words as though by so many steps, this or that is said to be done on a certain day before Him within, Who views even time itself also out of time.

36. Or forasmuch as Satan too was there, was it the aim of Holy Scripture, when it says that this was done on a certain day, to point out that in the light God beheld the darkness? For we are unable to embrace light

and darkness in one and the same view, in that when the eye is fixed upon darkness, the light is put to flight, and when the eye is directed to the glittering rays of light, the shades of darkness disappear. But to that Power, Which in unchangeableness beholds all things changeable, Satan was present as in the day, in that It embraces undimmed the darkness of the apostate Angel. We, as we have said, cannot survey at one view both the objects which we choose in approval, and those which we condemn in disapproval; for while the mind is directed to the one subject, it is withdrawn from the other, and when it is brought back to this latter it is taken off from that, to which it had attached itself.

37. But forasmuch as God without changing beholds all things at the same instant, and without extension embraces all, i.e. both the good that He aids, and the evil that He judges; both that which thus aiding He rewards, and that which so judging He condemns; He is not Himself different in the things which He sets in different order. Accordingly Satan is said to have come before Him *on a day*, in that the light of His eternity is proof against the overclouding of any change; and herein, that the darkness is made present to Him, he is said to have presented himself among the sons of God, because in fact the impure spirit is penetrated by the self-same Power of Righteousness, wherewith the hearts of pure spirits are replenished; and that being is pierced through with the same ray of light, which is so shed abroad in them as that they shine.

38. He came among the sons of God, in that, though they serve God in rendering aid to the elect, he does this, in putting them to trial. He presented himself among the sons of God, in that, although they dispense the succours of mercy to all that labour in this present life, this one unwittingly serves the ends of His secret justice, while he strives to accomplish the ministry of their condemnation. Whence it is justly said by the Prophet in the books of Kings, *I saw the Lord sitting upon His throne, and all the host of Heaven*

standing by Him, on His right hand and on His left. And it was said, Wherewith shall I deceive Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead; And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth one and stood before the Lord, and said, I will deceive him. And it was said, Wherewith? and he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. [1 Kings 22, 19. &c]

For what is the throne of the Lord, unless we understand the Angelic Powers, in whose minds enthroned on high He disposeth all things below? And what is the host of heaven, unless the multitude of ministering Angels is set forth? Why then is it, that the host of heaven is said to stand on His right hand and on His left? For God, Who is in such sort within all things, that He is also without all, is neither bounded on the right hand nor on the left. However, the right hand of God is the elect portion of the Angels, and the left hand of God signifies the reprobate portion of Angels. For not alone do the good serve God by the aid which they render, but likewise the wicked by the trials which they inflict; not only they who lift upward them that are turning back from transgression, but they who press down those who refuse to turn back. Nor because it is called the host of heaven, are we hindered from understanding therein the reprobate portion of the Angels, for whatsoever birds we know to be poised in the air, we call them 'the birds of heaven.' And it is of these same spirits that Paul saith, *Against spiritual wickedness in high places*. [Ephes. 6, 12] And describing their head, he says, *According to the prince of the power of the air*. [Ephes. 2, 2] On the right hand and on the left hand of God, then, stands the Angelic Host, forasmuch as both the will of the elect spirits harmonizes with Divine mercy, and the mind of the reprobate, in serving their own evil ends, obeys the judgment of His strict decrees. Hence too it is said, that a spirit of falsehood immediately leaped forth in the midst, to deceive king Ahab, as his deserts called for. For it is not right to imagine that a good spirit would

ever have served the ends of deceit, so as to say, *I will go forth, and I will be a, lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets*. But because king Ahab by his previous sins had made himself worthy to be cursed with such deception, in order that he who had many times willingly fallen into sin, might for once unwillingly be caught for his punishment, leave is given by a secret justice to the evil spirits, that those whom with willing minds they strangle in the noose of sin, they may drag to the punishment of that sin even against their will. What then it is there to describe the Host of heaven as having stood on the right hand and on the left hand of God, the same it is here to declare Satan to have presented himself among the sons of God. So on the right hand of God there stood Angels, for that the sons of God are named; so on His left hand angels are standing, because Satan presented himself among them.

39. But as we have determined to search out the hidden senses of the allegory, we not unfitly take it to mean, that the Lord beheld Satan in the day, in that He restrained his ways in the Incarnation of His Wisdom; as though it were not to have seen him, to have for so long borne with his wickedness in the ruin of the human race. Whence it is straightway said to him by the voice of God,

Ver. 7. *Whence comest thou?*

40. In the day Satan is demanded of his ways, for that in the light of revealed Wisdom the snares of the hidden foe are discovered. Because, then, the devil is rebuked by the Incarnate Lord, and restrained from his baneful license, it is well subjoined, *And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?* For He then by arraigning attainted the ways of Satan, when by the Advent of the Mediator restraining the wickedness of his persuasions, He rebuked the same. And it is not without reason that the sons of God are related to have stood in the presence of the Lord on this day, forasmuch as it is by the light of Wisdom illuminating them that all the elect

are gathered to the calling of their eternal country. Who, though Incarnate Wisdom came to assemble them in actual deed, were yet by virtue of His foreknowledge already inwardly present to His Divinity. But since the old enemy, at the coming of the Redeemer, is questioned of his ways, let us hear what he says.

Ver. 7. *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*

41. For from the time of Adam till the coming of the Lord, he drew after him all the nations of the Gentiles; he went *to and fro in the earth, and walked up and down in it*, in that he stamped the foot-prints of his wickedness throughout the hearts of the Gentiles. For when he fell from on high he gained lawful possession of the minds of men, because he fastened them as willing captives in the chains of his iniquity; and he wandered the more at large in the world, in proportion as there was no one found who was in all things free from that his guilt. And his having gone to and fro in the world as with power, is his having found no man who could thoroughly resist him. But now let Satan return back, i.e. let the Divine power withhold him from the execution of his wickedness, since He has now appeared in the flesh, Who had no part in the infection of sin from the infirmity of the flesh. He came in humility for the proud enemy himself to wonder at, that he who had set at nought all the mightiness of His Divinity, might stand in awe even of the very infirmities of His Humanity. Wherefore also this very weakness of His human nature is immediately set forth against him with wonderful significance as an object to confound him; whereas it is said,

Ver. 8. *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?*

42. That Job means by interpretation, 'Grieving,' we have already said a little above. And He is truly called 'Grieving' in figure, Who is declared by the testimony of the Prophet 'to bear our griefs.' [Isa. 53, 4] Who has not

His like on the earth; for every man is only man, but He is both God and Man. He has not His like on earth, because though every son by adoption attains to the receiving of the Divine nature, yet none ever receives so much, as to be, by nature, God. He was even rightly styled a servant, because He did not disdain to take the form of a servant. Nor did His taking the humility of the flesh injure His sovereignty, for in order that He might both take upon Him that which He was to save, yet not undergo alteration in that which He had, He neither lessened the Divine by the Human, nor swallowed up the Human in the Divine; for although Paul hath it, *Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant;* [Phil. 2, 6. 7.] yet to Him it is 'emptying Himself,' of the greatness of His Invisible Being to manifest Himself as Visible; so that the form of a servant should be the covering of That Which without limitation enters into all things by virtue of Godhead. Again, God's saying to Satan in figure, *Hast Thou considered My servant Job*, is His exhibiting in his despite the Only-Begotten Son as an object of wonder in the form of a servant. For in that He made Him known in the flesh as of so great virtue, He as it were pointed out to the adversary in his pride what it would grieve him to contemplate; but now that He had brought before him a perfect object for him to admire, it remains that in order to strike down his pride he should further go on to enumerate its excellencies. It goes on,

Ver.8. *A perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.*

43. For there came among men the Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus, for the giving an example of living, *perfect* [*simplex*]; in respect of His rigour towards the evil spirits, *upright*; for the exterminating pride, *fearing God*; and for the wiping off impurity of life in His Elect, *departing from evil*. For it is said of Him by Isaiah in a special manner, *And*

shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. [Is. 11, 3] And He did in a special manner *depart from evil*, who refused to imitate the actions which He found among men, since, as Peter bears witness, *He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*. [1 Pet. 2, 22] It follows;

Ver. 9, 10. *Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*

The old enemy knew that the Redeemer of mankind was come to be the conqueror of himself; and hence it is said by the man possessed in the Gospel, *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?* [Mat. 8, 29] Yet before, when he perceived Him to be subject to passion, and saw that He might suffer all the mortal accidents of humanity, all that he imagined concerning His Divinity became doubtful to him from his exceeding pride. For savouring of nothing else but pride, whilst he beheld Him in humility, he doubted of His being God; and hence he has recourse to proof by temptation, saying, *If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread*. [Matt. 4, 3] In this way, because he saw that He was subject to passion, he did not believe Him to be God by birth, but to be kept by the grace of God. And for the same reason too he is in this place said to allege,

Ver. 10. *Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land*.

44. For he urges that both himself and his house are hedged about by God; because he could not find an entrance to His conscience by tempting him, He declares his substance to be hedged about, in that he dares not to attack His elect servants. He complains that *God had blessed the work of his hands, and that his substance was increased in the land*, for this reason, that

he pines at beholding that faith in Him enlarges its bounds, in man's coming to the knowledge of Him by the preaching of the Apostles. For His substance is said to be increasing, all the time that by the labours of the preachers the number of the faithful daily waxes larger. Satan's saying this to God, is his seeing these things with an envious eye. Satan's saying this to God, is his grieving at these things with a pining spirit. It proceeds:

Ver. 11. *But put forth Thine hand a little, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

45. For He, Whom he thought in time of tranquillity to be under the keeping of God's grace, he imagined might be led to sin by means of suffering; as though he had plainly said, 'One, Who for the miracles which He works is accounted God, being put to the test by afflictions, is discovered to be a sinner, and nothing better,' So the Lord said to Satan,

Ver. 12. *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.*

46. Whereas we are examining Holy Scripture under its figurative import, by the hand of Satan is to be understood not his power, but the extent of his tempting. All, then, that he hath is given into the hand of the Tempter, and he is only forbidden *to put forth his hand upon him*, which nevertheless, when his substance is gone, is permitted him; for that first Judaea, which was His possession, was taken from Him in unbelief, and that afterwards His flesh was nailed to the stock of the Cross, He then Who first underwent the opposition of Judaea, and afterwards came even to the Cross, in a manner first lost that He had, and then in His own Person endured the wickedness of the adversary.

So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

47. Just as it was said above, *Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord*, in that he attained the objects of his desire; for he was in a certain

sense in His presence, all the time that on account of Him, he failed to accomplish all that he mischievously thirsted after.

Ver. 13, *And there was a day, when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.*

48. We have said that the sons and daughters of blessed Job were a representation either of the order of the Apostles, or of the whole multitude of the faithful. Now the Lord Incarnate first chose a few out of Judaea unto faith, and afterwards He gathered to Himself the multitude of the Gentile people. But who was the eldest son of the Lord, unless the Jewish people is to be understood, which had been a long time born to Him by the teaching of the Law which He gave? and who the younger son but the Gentile people, which at the very end of the world was gathered together? And therefore whereas, when Satan was unwittingly contributing to the welfare of the human race, and having corrupted the hearts of those persecutors was demanding warrant for the Passion of the Lord, the Holy Apostles were as yet ignorant that the Gentile world were to be gathered to God, and preached to Judaea alone the mysteries of the Faith. When Satan is said to have gone out from the Lord, the sons and daughters are described to be feasting in the house of their elder brother. For it had been commanded them, *Go not into the way of the Gentiles.* [Mat. 10, 5] Now after the Death and Resurrection of our Lord, they turned to preaching to the Gentiles, for which reason too in their Acts we find them saying, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but since ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*. [Acts 13, 46] And thus these children of the bridegroom, of whom it is declared, and that by the voice of the same Bridegroom, *The children of the bridechamber shall not fast as long as the bridegroom is with them*, [Matt. 9, 15] are feasting in the house of their elder brother, for

this reason, that the Apostles still continued to be fed with the sweets of Holy Scripture in the gathering of the single people of the Jews.

Ver. 14, 15. *And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them; And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took all away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

49. What else do we take the oxen to mean in figure, but well-doers; what the asses, but certain men of simple ways? These are properly described to be feeding beside the oxen, because simple souls, even when they are incapable of comprehending deep mysteries, are near to the great, inasmuch as they account the excellencies of their brethren to be their own also by force of charity; and while envy of the knowledges [*sensibus*] of others is a thing unknown, they are never divided at pasture. The asses then take their food in company with the oxen, in that duller minds, when joined with the wise, are fed by their understanding. Now the Sabeans mean by interpretation 'captivators;' and who are signified by the name of 'captivators,' but the impure spirits who lead all men captive to infidelity, whom they make subject to themselves? These too strike the youths [*pueros*] with the sword, in that they inflict grievous wounds, with the darts of temptation, upon those whom the constancy of manhood does not yet maintain in freedom and hardiness. These indeed enter fairly upon well-doing, but while still in the delicate state of a first beginning, they are prostrated beneath the unclean spirits that take captive; these are stricken with the sword of the enemy, in that he pierces them with despair of life eternal.

50. But what is this, that the messenger comes with these words, *and I only am escaped alone?* Who is this messenger, who, when the rest are destroyed, 'escapes alone,' but the prophetic word, which, whilst all the evils happen, which it foretold, alone returns as it were unharmed to the

Lord? For when it is known to speak the truth concerning the fate of the lost, it is in a certain sense shewn to live among the dead. It is hence that the servant is sent to bring down Rebecca, on the occasion of Isaac's marrying; doubtless because the intervening Prophecy does service in espousing the Church to the Lord. So when the Sabeans made their assault, one servant alone escaped to give the tidings, because by means of malignant spirits leading captive weak minds, that declaration of Prophecy was confirmed, which, in foretelling the same captivity, saith, *Therefore My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge*. [Is. 5, 13] The prophecy therefore is in a manner preserved safe, when the captivity, which it foretold, is brought to light. It proceeds,

Ver. 16. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from Heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

51. All, who held the office of preaching in the Synagogue, were rightly named, 'the heavens,' plainly because they were supposed to be imbued with heavenly wisdom; and for this reason, when Moses was urging the Priests and the people to take heed of his words of admonition, he exclaimed, *Give ear, O ye Heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth*; [Deut. 32, 1] evidently signifying by the Heavens the order of rulers, and by the earth the people under them. There is then in this place no unfitness in interpreting the Heavens to mean either the Priests or the Pharisees, or the Doctors of the Law, who, to the eyes of men, while they attended on heavenly duties, seemed as it were to shed light from on high. Now because they were greatly stirred up in opposition to our Redeemer, it was as though 'fire fell from heaven;' whilst from those very men, who were accounted teachers of the truth, the flames of envy burst out, to the deceiving of the ignorant people. For we know from the testimony of the Gospel, that through envy at the truths which He taught

they sought an opportunity for His betrayal, but that from fear of the people they dared not make known what they went about. Hence too it is therein written, that in order to dissuade the people they say, *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? but this people, who knoweth not the Law, are cursed*. [John 7, 48. 49.] But what do we understand by the sheep and the servants, save all inoffensive, but still as yet fainthearted persons, who, while they feared to undergo the persecution of the Pharisees and the Rulers, were devoured by the fires of infidelity. So let it be said; *The fire of God is fallen from Heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants*; i.e. the flame of envy hath come down from the hearts of the rulers, and burnt up all that there was of good springing up in the people; for while the wicked rulers are claiming honour to themselves in opposition to the Truth, the hearts of their followers are turned from every right way. And here too it is well added, *And I only am escaped alone to tell thee*; for whereas the predicted case of wickedness is fulfilled, that word of prophecy escapes the extinction of falsehood, wherein it is said, *yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them* [Is. 26, 11]; as though it were plainly expressed, 'not only are the wicked afterwards tormented by fire sent in vengeance, but even now they are consumed therewith through envy;' in that they who are hereafter to be visited with the punishment of just retribution, inflict upon themselves here the tortures of envy. And thus the servant flies and returns alone, and announces that the sheep and the servants have been destroyed by fire, when Prophecy in forsaking the Jewish people shews that she has declared the truth, saying, *Jealousy has taken hold of a people without knowledge*; as though it said in plain words, 'when the people would not make out the words of the Prophets, but gave their belief to the words of the envious, the fire of jealousy consumed them, seeing that they were burnt in the fire of other men's envy.' It goes on,

Ver. 17. *Whilst he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

52. Knowing that the Chaldeans are to be interpreted 'fierce ones,' who else are represented by the name of Chaldeans but the stirrers of that of the persecution, who burst out even in open cries of malice, saying, *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!* [Luke 23, 21.] These *made themselves into three bands*, when the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees came severally to put questions. [Mk. 15, 13. 15.] Assuredly they were vanquished by the mouth of Wisdom, but forasmuch as we must suppose that they drew some foolish ones after them, having made themselves into bands, they carried away the camels; for each set of them poisoned the hearts of the foolish according to the evil notions, with which it was itself embued; and while by their persuasions they drag them to destruction, it was as if they led captive the crooked [*tortuosas*] minds of the weaker sort. Thus when the Lord preached in Samaria, there were many of the Samaritans that were joined to the heritage of that our Redeemer. But did not they, who, on the ground of the seven husbands of one woman that were dead, tempted the Lord against the hope of resurrection, do their best to bring back the believing Samaritans from their faith, who plainly knew nothing of the hope of a resurrection? Who, while they receive some things out of the Law, and disregard others, do as it were, after the manner of camels, ruminate indeed like a clean animal, but like an unclean animal do not cleave the hoof. Though camels which ruminate, yet do not cleave the hoof, are likewise a representation of those in Judaea, who had admitted the historical fact after the letter, but could not spiritually discern the proper force thereof. Upon these the Chaldeans seize in three bands, in that the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees, by their evil persuasions, turn them aside from all right

understanding. And at the same time they smite the servants with the sword; for though there were those among the people who were now capable of exercising reason, yet these they met not with force of reasoning, but with authoritativeness of power; and while they desire to be imitated as rulers by their subjects, notwithstanding if their followers can understand somewhat, yet they drag them to destruction by the prerogative of assumed authority. And it is fitly that one servant escapes from them to bring the tidings, in that when the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees do wickedly, that word of Prophecy, whilst forsaking them, is established sure, which saith, *And they that handle the Law knew me not.* [Jer. 2, 8] The account proceeds,

Ver. 18, 19. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon thy children, and they are dead.*

53. We have said a little above that by the sons and the daughters we understand the Apostles that preached, and the people under them; who are said to be feasting in their eldest brother's house, for that it was in the lot of the Jewish people still that they were fed with the sweets of the sacred truths preached. *And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness*. The wilderness is the heart of unbelievers, which being forsaken by the Lord is without an inhabitant to tend it. And what is the great wind, but strong temptation? Accordingly there came a great wind from the wilderness; for at the Passion of our Redeemer there came from the hearts of the Jews strong temptation against His faithful followers. The wilderness may likewise not unaptly be taken for the forsaken multitude of impure spirits, from whom came a wind and smote the house, in that they were the source whence the temptations proceeded, and overturned the hearts of the persecutors.

54. But this house wherein the sons were feasting was builded on four corners. Now we know the three orders of Rulers in the Synagogue, viz. the Priests, the Scribes, and the Elders of the people; to whom if we add the Pharisees likewise, we shall have found the four corners in this house. There came then a wind from the wilderness., and smote the four corners of the house; in that temptation burst forth from the unclean spirits and stirred up the minds of the four orders to the wickedness of persecution. That house fell and overwhelmed His children, forasmuch as when Judaea fell into the cruelty of persecuting our Lord, it overwhelmed the faith of the Apostles with fears of despair. For they had only to see their Master laid hold of, and, lo, they fled every way, denying Him. And though the Hand within did by foreknowledge hold their spirits in life, yet meanwhile carnal fear cut them off from the life of faith. They then who forsook their Master, when Judaea raged against Him, were as if killed by the house being overthrown, when its corners were smitten. But what do we think became of the flock of the faithful at that time, when, as we know, the very rams took to flight? Now in the midst of these events one escaped to bring tidings, in that the word of Prophecy, which had given warning of these things, approves itself to have been confirmed in saying of the persecuting people, *My beloved one hath done many crimes in Mine house* [Jer. 11. 15. Vulg.]; of the preachers, who though good yet fled at the Passion, *My neighbours stood afar off*; [Ps. 38, 12] saying again of the whole number, who were greatly afraid, *Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered*. [Zech. 13, 7] It proceeds;

Ver. 20. *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle*.

55. When his sons were destroyed in the ruin of the house, Job arose, because when Judaea was lost in unbelief, and when the Preachers were fallen in the death of fear, the Redeemer of mankind raised Himself from the death of His carnal nature; He shewed in what judgment He abandoned

His persecutors to themselves. For His rising is the shewing with what severity He forsakes sinners, just as His lying down is the patient endurance of ills inflicted. He rises then, when He executes the decrees of justice against the reprobate. And hence He is rightly described to have rent his mantle. For what stood as the mantle of the Lord, but the Synagogue, which by the preaching of the Prophets clung to the expectation of His Incarnation? For in the same way that He is now clothed with those by whom He is loved, as Paul is witness, who says, *That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot nor wrinkle* [Eph. 5, 27]; (for that which is described as having neither spot or wrinkle is surely made appear as a spiritual robe [*vestis rationalis*]; and at once clean in practice, and stretched in hope;) so when Judaea believed Him as yet to be made Incarnate, it was no less a garment through its clinging to Him.

56. But because He was looked for before He came, and coming, taught new truths, and teaching, wrought wonders, and working wonders, underwent wrongs, *He rent His mantle*, which He had put on Him, seeing that in Judaea some he withdrew from unbelief, whilst some He left therein. What then is the rent mantle but Judaea divided in contrary opinions? For, if His mantle had not been rent, the Evangelist would not have said that, at the preaching of our Lord, there arose strife among the people; *For some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay, but He deceiveth the people*. [John 7, 12] For that mantle of His was rent, in that being divided in opinions it lost the unity of concord. It proceeds; *And shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.*

57. What is signified by the hair that was shorn but the minuteness [*sublilitas*] of Sacraments? what by the head but the High Priesthood? Hence too it is said to the prophet Ezekiel, *And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head, and upon thy beard*; [Ezek. 5, 1] clearly that by the Prophet's act the

judgment of the Redeemer might be set out, Who when He came in the flesh ‘shaved the head,’ in that he took clean away from the Jewish Priesthood the Sacraments of His commandments; ‘and shaved the beard,’ in that in forsaking the kingdom of Israel, He cut off the glory of its excellency. And what is here expressed by the earth, but sinful man? For to the first man that sinned the words were spoken; *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*. [Gen. 3, 19] By the name of the earth then is signified the sinful Gentile world; for whilst Judaea thought herself righteous, it appears how damnable she thought the Gentile world, as Paul is witness, who saith, *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles*. [Gal. 2, 15] Therefore our Mediator, as it were, *shaved His head, and fell down upon the earth*, seeing that in forsaking Judaea, whilst He took away His Sacraments from her Priesthood, He came to the knowledge of the Gentiles. For He ‘shaved the hair from His Head,’ because He took away from that His first Priesthood the Sacraments of the Law. And He fell upon the earth, because He gave Himself to sinners for their salvation; and while He gave up those who appeared to themselves righteous, He took to Himself those, who both knew and confessed that they were unrighteous. And hence He Himself declares in the Gospel, *For judgment I am come into this world, that they that see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind*. [John 9, 39] And hence the pillar of the cloud, which went before the people in the wilderness, shone with a radiant flame of fire not in the day but in the night; for this reason, that our Redeemer, in giving guidance to those that followed Him by the example of life and conduct, yielded no light to such as trusted in their own righteousness, but all those who acknowledged the darkness of their sins, He shone with the fire of His love. Nor, because Job is said to fall on the earth, let us account this to be an unworthy representation of our Redeemer. For it is written, *The Lord sent a Word into Jacob, and it hath fallen* [E.V. *lighted*] *upon Israel.* [Is. 9, 8] For

Jacob means one that overthrows another, and *Israel*, one that sees God. And what is signified by Jacob but the Jewish people, and by Israel but the Gentile world? For in that very One Whom Jacob aimed to overthrow by the death of the flesh, the Gentile world, by the eyes of faith, beheld God. And thus the Word, that was sent to Jacob, lighted upon Israel; for Him whom the Jewish people rejected when He came to them, the Gentile world at once owned and found. For concerning the Holy Spirit it is written, *The Spirit of God fell upon them*. [Acts 11, 15]

58. And for this reason either the Word of God or the Holy Spirit is said to fall in Holy Scripture, to describe the suddenness of His coming. For whatever rushes down or falls, comes to the bottom directly. And therefore it is as if the Mediator had fallen upon the earth, that without any previous signs He unexpectedly came to the Gentiles. And it is well said, that *He fell down upon the earth and worshipped*, in that whilst He Himself undertook the low estate of the flesh, He poured into the hearts of believers the breathings of humility. For He did this, in that He taught the doing of it, in the same way that it is said of His Holy Spirit, *But the Spirit itself maketh request* [Vulg. *postulat*] *for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*. [Rom. 8, 26] Not that He petitions, Who is of perfect equality, but He is said to make request for no other reason than that He causes those to make request whose hearts He has filled: though our Redeemer, moreover, manifested this in His own Person, Who even besought the Father when He was drawing nigh to His Passion. For what wonder if, in the form of a servant, He submitted Himself to the Father by pouring out His supplications to Him, when in the same He even underwent the violence of sinners, to the very extremity of death. It proceeds:

Ver.21. *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.*

59. The mother of our Redeemer, after the flesh, was the Synagogue, from whom He came forth to us, made manifest by a Body. But she kept Him to herself veiled under the covering of the letter, seeing that she neglected to open the eyes of the understanding to the spiritual import thereof. Because in Him, thus veiling Himself with the flesh of an human Body, she would not see God, she as it were refused to behold Him naked in His Divinity. But He 'came naked out of His mother's womb,' because when He issued from the flesh of the Synagogue, He came openly manifest to the Gentiles; which is excellently represented by Joseph's leaving His cloak and fleeing. For when the adulterous woman would have used him to no good end, he, leaving his cloak, fled out of the house; because when the Synagogue, believing Him to be simply man, would have bound Him as it were in an adulterous embrace, He too left the covering of the letter to its eyes, and manifested Himself to the Gentiles without disguise for the acknowledgment of the Power of His Divinity. And hence Paul said, *But even to this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their hearts* [2 Cor. 3, 15]; for this reason, that the adulteress kept the cloak in her own hands, but Him, Whom she wickedly laid hold of, she let go naked. He then Who coming from the Synagogue plainly disclosed Himself to the faith of the Gentiles, 'came naked out of His mother's womb,' But does He wholly give her up? Where then is that which the Prophet declares, *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return?* [Is. 10, 22] where that which is written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved?* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] The time will be, then, when He will shew Himself clearly to the Synagogue also. Yes, the time will doubtless come in the end of the world, when He will make Himself known, even as He is God, to the remnant of His People. Whence it is likewise justly said in this place, *and naked shall I return thither.* For he 'returns naked to His mother's womb,' when, at the end of the world, He,

Who being made Man in time is the object of scorn, is revealed to the eyes of His Synagogue as God before all worlds. It proceeds; -

Ver. 21. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it come to pass; blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

60. Our Redeemer, in that He is God, gives all things with the Father; but in that He is Man, He receives at the hands of the Father, as one among all. Therefore let Him say of Judaea, so long as she believed in the mystery of His Incarnation to come, *the Lord hath given*. Let Him say of her, when she slighted the looked for coming of His Incarnation, *the Lord hath taken away*. For she was 'given,' when in the persons of a certain number she believed what was to be; but she was 'taken away,' as the just desert of her blindness, when she scorned to hold in veneration the truths believed by those.

61. But let Him instruct all that believe in Him, that when under scourges they may know how to bless God, in the words that are added, *As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done* [not in E.V.]; *blessed be the Name of the Lord*. Whence likewise, as the Gospel is witness, when He is described to be drawing near to His Passion, He is said to have taken bread and given thanks. And so He gives thanks Who is bearing the stripes of the sins of others. And He, Who did nothing worthy of strokes, blesses humbly under the infliction of them, doubtless that He might shew from hence what each man ought to do in the chastisement of his own transgressions, if He thus bears with patience the chastisement of the transgressions of others, that He might shew hence what the servant should do under correction, if He being equal gives thanks to the Father under the rod. It proceeds;

Ver. 22. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly*.

62. 'That he neither sinned, nor charged God foolishly,' Peter, as we have said, above testifies of Him in plain terms, saying, *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*. [1 Pet. 2, 22] For guile in the mouth is so

much the more senseless folly with God, the more that in the eyes of men it passes for crafty wisdom, as Paul bears witness, saying, *The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.* [1 Cor. 3, 19] Forasmuch then as there was no guile in His mouth, verily He said nothing foolishly. The Priests and the Rulers believed that He charged God foolishly, when, being questioned at the time of His Passion, He testified that He was the Son of God. And hence they question, saying, *What further need have we of witnesses? Behold now we have heard His blasphemy*. [Mat. 26, 65] But He did not charge God foolishly, in that speaking the words of truth, even in dying He brought before the unbelievers that concerning Himself, which He soon after manifested to all the redeemed by rising again.

MORAL INTERPRETATION.

63. We have briefly gone through these particulars, regarded under the view of representing our Head. Now, as they tend to the edification of His Body, let us explain them to be considered in a moral aspect; that we may learn how that, which is described to have been done in outward deed, is acted inwardly in our mind. Now when the sons of God present themselves before God, Satan also presents himself among them, in that it very often happens that that old enemy craftily blends and unites himself with those good thoughts, which are sown in our hearts through the instrumentality of the coming of the Holy Spirit, to disorder all that is rightly conceived, and tear in pieces what is once wrongly disordered. But He, Who created us, does not forsake us in our temptation. For our enemy, who hid himself in ambush against us, He makes easy to be discovered by us, through the illumination of His light. Wherefore He saith to him immediately, *Whence comest thou?*

64. For His interrogating the crafty foe is the discovering to us his ambush, that where we see him steal into the heart, we may watch against him with resolution and with caution.

Ver. 7. *Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*

65. Satan's *going to and fro in the earth* is his exploring the hearts of the carnal, and seeking diligently whence he may find grounds of accusation against them. He 'goeth round about the earth,' for he comes about the hearts of men, that he may carry off all that is good in them, that he may lodge evil in their minds, that he may heap up on that he has lodged, that he may perfect that he has heaped, that he may gain as his fellows in punishment those whom he has perfected in sin. And observe that he does not say that he has been flying through the earth, but that he has been *walking up and down in it*; for, in truth, he is never quick to leave whomsoever he tempts; but there where he finds a soft heart, he plants the foot of his wretched persuasion, so that by resting thereon, he may stamp the prints of evil practice, and by a like wickedness to his own may render reprobate all whom he is able; but in despite of him blessed Job is commended in these words;

Ver.8. *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

66. To him, whom Divine Inspiration makes strong to meet the enemy, God gives praise as it were in the ears of Satan; for His giving him praise is the first vouchsafing virtues, and afterwards preserving them when vouchsafed. But the old enemy is the more enraged against the righteous, the more he perceives that they are hedged around by the favour of God's protection. And hence he rejoins, and says,

Ver. 10. *Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*

67. As though he plainly said; ‘Wherefore dost Thou extol him whom Thou stablishest with Thy protection? for man would deserve Thy praises, while Thou despisest me, if he withstood me by his own proper strength.’ Hence also he immediately demands on man’s head with evil intent, what man’s Defender concedes though with a merciful design. For it is added,

Ver. 11. *But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath; and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

68. For when we yield plentifully the fruits of virtue, and when we are flourishing in uninterrupted prosperity, the mind is somewhat inclined to be lifted up, so as to imagine that all the excellency that she hath comes to her from herself. This same excellency, then, our old enemy with evil intent desires to lay hands on, whilst God no otherwise than in mercy allows it to be tried; that while the mind, under the force of temptation, is shaken in the good wherein it exulted, learning the powerlessness of its own frail condition, it may become the more strongly established in the hope of God’s aid; and it is brought to pass by a marvellous dispensation of His Mercy, that from the same source, whence the enemy tempts the soul to destroy it, the merciful Creator gives it instruction that it may live; and hence it is rightly added,

Ver. 12. *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.*

69. As if He said in plain words; ‘I give thee so to try the good that is in each one of Mine Elect by temptation from without, that thou mayest acquaint thine own self that I keep him holding on to Me by the inward root of the mind; and hence it is rightly added,

So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

70. For in that he is not suffered to prevail so far as to withdraw the heart, being thus shut out from the interior, he roams without. Who, even if he very often work confusion in the virtues of the soul, herein does it

without, in that, through God's withholding him, he never wounds the hearts of the good to their utter ruin. For he is permitted so far to rage against them as may be necessary, in order that they, thus instructed by temptation, may be stablished, that they may never attribute to their own strength the good which they do, nor neglect themselves in the sloth of security, loosing themselves from the bracings of fear, but that in keeping guard over their attainments they may watch with so much the greater prudence, as they see themselves to be ever confronting the enemy in the fight of temptations.

Ver. 13, 14, 15. *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

71. In the hearts of the Elect wisdom is first engendered, before all the graces that follow; and she comes forth as it were a first born offspring by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now this wisdom is our faith, as the Prophet testifies, saying, *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not understand* [E.V. *be established*]. [Is. 7, 9] For then we are truly wise to understand, when we yield the assent of our belief to all that our Creator says. Thus the sons are feasting in their eldest brother's house, when the other virtues are feasted in faith. But if this latter be not first produced in our hearts, all besides cannot be good, though it may seem to be good. The sons feast in their eldest brother's house, so long as our virtues are replenished with the good of holy writ, in the dwelling place of faith; for it is written, *without faith it is impossible to please God* [Heb. 11, 6]; and so our virtues taste the true feasts of life, when they begin to be sustained with the mysteries [*sacramentis*] of faith. The sons feast in their eldest brother's house, in that

except the other virtues, filling themselves with the feast of wisdom; do wisely all that they seek to do, they can never be virtues.

72. But observe, while the good that we do is fed with the rich fare of wisdom and of faith, our enemy carries off the *oxen* that *are plowing*, *and the asses feeding beside them*, *and kills the servants with the sword*. What are the *oxen plowing*, except we understand our serious thoughts, which while they wear [*conticiunt*] the heart with diligent tillage, yield abundant fruits of increase? and what do we take to be *the asses feeding beside them*, but the simple emotions of the heart, which, whilst carefully withheld from straying in double ways, we feed in the free pasture of purity? But oftentimes the crafty enemy, spying out the serious thoughts of our heart, corrupts them under the cloak of that beguiling pleasure which he insinuates; and when he sees the simple emotions of the heart, he displays the subtleties and refinements of discoveries, that while we aim at praise for subtlety, we may part with the simplicity of a pure mind; and though he has not the power to draw us to a deed of sin, nevertheless by secret theft [s*ubripiens*] he spoils the thoughts of good things through his temptations, that while he is seen to trouble the good that is in their mind, he may seem as though he had completely made spoil of it. By the oxen ploughing may also be understood the intents of charity, whereby we endeavour to render service to others, when we desire to cleave the hardness of a brother's heart by preaching; and by the asses also, for that they never resist with a mad rage those that are loading them, may be signified the meekness of patience, and oftentimes our old enemy, seeing us anxious to benefit others by our words, plunges the mind into a certain sleepy state of inactivity, that we are not disposed to do good to others, even though our own concerns leave us at liberty. Accordingly he carries away the oxen that are ploughing, when, by insinuating sloth that causes negligence, he breaks the force of those inward purposes, which were directed to produce the fruit of a brother's welfare,

and although the hearts of the Elect keep watch within the depths of their own thoughts, and, getting the better of it, take thought of the mischief, which they receive at the hands of the tempter; yet by this very circumstance, that he should prevail over the thoughts of good things though but for a moment, the malicious enemy exults in having gotten some booty.

73. Now oftentimes, when he sees the mind in a readiness to endure, he contrives to find out what it loves the best, and there sets his traps of offence; that the more the object is beloved, our patience may be the sooner disquieted by means of it. And indeed the hearts of the Elect ever return heedfully to themselves, and chastise themselves sorely, even for the slighest impulse to go wrong, and whilst by being moved they learn how they should have stood fast, they are sometimes the more firmly established for being shaken. But the ancient enemy, when he puts out our purposes of patience, though but for a moment, exults that he has, as it were, carried off the asses from the field of the heart. Now in the things which we determine to do we carefully consider, with the watchfulness of reason, what is proper, and to what cases. But too often the enemy, by rushing upon us with the sudden impulse of temptation, and coming unawares before the mind's looking out, slays as it were with the sword the very servants that are keeping watch, yet one escapes to tell that the rest [*alia*] is lost; for in whatsoever the mind is affected by the enemy, the discernment of reason ever returns to it, and she doth in a certain sense shew that she hath escaped alone, which doth resolutely consider with herself all that she has undergone. So then all the rest perish, and one alone returns home, when the motions of the heart are in the time of temptation put to rout, and then discernment comes back to the conscience; that whatever the mind, which has been caught by a sudden onset, calculates that she has lost, she may recover, when bowed down with heartfelt contrition.

Ver. 16. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

74. What is signified by sheep but the innocency of our thoughts? what is signified by sheep, but cleanness of heart in the good? Now we have said a little above that we speak of the aerial 'heaven,' whence too we name the birds of heaven. And we know that the impure spirits, that fell from the ethereal heaven, roam abroad in the mid space between this heaven and earth. These are the more envious that the hearts of men should mount up to the realms of heaven, that they see themselves to have been cast down from thence by the impurity of their pride. Forasmuch then as the glances of jealousy burst forth from the powers of the air against the purity of our thoughts, 'fire fell from heaven upon the sheep;' for oftentimes they inflame the pure thoughts of our minds with the fires of lust, and they do as it were consume the sheep with fire, when they disorder the chaste feelings of the mind with the temptations of sensuality. This is called the fire of God, for it owes its birth, though not to the making, yet to the permission of God. And because by a sudden onset they sometimes overwhelm the very cautions of the mind, they slay with the sword as it were the servants that are their keepers. Yet one escapes in safety, so long as persevering discernment reviews with exactness all that the mind suffers, and this alone escapes the peril of death; for even when the thoughts are put to rout, discretion does not give over to make known its losses to the mind, and as it were to call upon her lord to lament.

Ver. 17. *While he was yet speaking there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

75. By the camels, which have a clean mark, in that they ruminate, and an unclean, in that they do not cleave the hoof, are meant, as we have already said above, the godly stewardships of temporal things, in which in proportion as the charge is more extensive, the more doth the enemy multiply his plots against us. For every man who is set over the management of temporal affairs, is the more largely open to the darts of the hidden foe. For some things he aims to do with an eye to the future, and often whilst, thus cautious, he forecasts future events with exactness, he incautiously neglects to regard present evils. Often while his eye is on the present, he is asleep to the anticipation of coming events. Often in doing some things slothfully, he neglects what should be done with energy. Often in shewing himself overactive in the execution, by the very restlessness of his mode of acting he hurts the more the interests of his charge. Again, sometimes he strives to put restraint upon his lips, but is prevented keeping silence by the requirements of his business. Sometimes, whilst he restrains himself with excessive rigour, he is silent even when he ought to speak. Sometimes, while he gives himself more liberty to communicate necessary things, he says at the same time what he should never have given utterance to. And for the most part he is embarrassed with such vast complications of thoughts, that he is scarce able to bear the mere things, which with foresight he ponders in his mind, and while he produces nothing in deed, he is grievously overburdened [*insudat*] with the great weight upon his breast. For as that is hard to bear which he is subject to within his own bosom, even while unemployed and at rest from work without, he is yet wearied. For very frequently the mind as it were views coming events, and every energy is strung to meet them; a vehement heat of contention is conceived, sleep is put to flight, night is turned into day, and while the bed holds our limbs which are outwardly at rest, the cause is inwardly pleaded with vehement clamours in the court of our own heart. And it very often happens

that nothing comes to pass of the things foreseen, and that all that thinking of the heart, which had so long been strung up in preparation to the highest degree of intensity, proves vain, and is stilled in a moment. And the mind is so much the longer detained from necessary concerns, as it thinks on trifles to a wider extent. Forasmuch therefore as the evil spirits one while deal a blow against the charges of our stewardship by a slothful or a headlong mode of action, at another time throw them into disorder by a backward or an unchecked use of speech, and are almost always burthening them with excessive loads of care, the Chaldeans in three bands carry off the camels. For it is as it were to make three bands against the camels, to spread confusion amidst the business of earthly stewardship, now by unwarranted deed, now by overmuch speech, now by unregulated thought, so that while the mind is striving to direct itself effectually to outward ministrations, it should be cut off from the consideration of itself, and know nothing of the injuries which it sustains in itself, in the same proportion that it exerts itself in the affairs of others with a zeal above what is befitting. But when a right mind undertakes any charge of stewardship, it considers what is due to self and what to neighbours, and neither by excess of concern for others overlooks its own interests, nor by attention to its own welfare, puts behind the affairs of others. But yet it very often happens that while the mind is discreetly intent upon both, while it keeps itself clear for the utmost precautions, both as regards itself and the things which have been entrusted to it, still being thrown into confusion by some unexpected point in any case that arises, it is so hurried away headlong, that all its precautions are overwhelmed thereby in a moment. And hence the Chaldeans strike with the sword the servants that were the keepers of the camels. Yet one returns; for amidst all this the rational thought of discretion meets the eyes of our mind, and the soul, taking heed to herself, is led to comprehend what she has lost within by the sudden onset of temptation. It follows;

Ver. 18, 19. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

76. As we have before said, 'the wilderness' is the deserted multitude of impure spirits, which when it forsook the felicity of its Creator, as it were lost the hand of the cultivator. And from the same there came a strong wind, and overthrew the house; in that strong temptation seizes us [n] from the unclean spirits, and overturns the conscience from its settled frame of tranquillity. But this house stands by four corners for this reason, that the firm fabric of our mind is upheld by Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice. This house is grounded on four corners, in that the whole structure of good practice is raised in these four virtues. And hence do four rivers of Paradise water the earth. For while the heart is watered with these four virtues, it is cooled from all the heat of carnal desires. Yet sometimes when idleness steals on [o] the mind, prudence waxes cold; for when it is weary and turns slothful, it neglects to forecast coming events. Sometimes while some delight is stealing on [p] the mind, our temperance decays [q]. For in whatever degree we are led to take delight in the things of this life, we are the less temperate to forbear in things forbidden. Sometimes fear works its way into the heart and confounds the powers of our fortitude, and we prove the less able to encounter adversity, the more excessively we love some things that we dread to part with. And sometimes self-love invades the mind, makes it swerve by a secret declension from the straight line of justice: and in the degree that it refuses to refer itself wholly to its Maker, it goes contrary to the claims of justice. Thus 'a strong wind smites the four corners of the house,' in that strong temptation, by hidden impulses, shakes the four virtues; and the corners being smitten, the house is as it were

uprooted; in that when the virtues are beaten, the conscience is brought to trouble.

77. Now it is within these *four corners of the house* that the sons are feasting, because it is within the depths of the mind, which is carried up to the topmost height of perfection in these four virtues especially, that the others like a kind of offspring of the heart take their food together. For the gift of the Spirit, which, in the mind It works on, forms first of all Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, in order that the same mind may be perfectly fashioned to resist every species of assault, doth afterwards give it a temper in the seven virtues, so as against folly to bestow Wisdom, against dulness, Understanding, against rashness, Counsel, against fear, Courage, against ignorance, Knowledge, against hardness of heart, Piety, against pride, Fear.

78. But sometimes, whilst the mind is sustained with the plenitude and richness of a gift so large, if it enjoys uninterrupted security in these things, it forgets from what source it has them, and imagines that it derives that from itself, which it sees to be never wanting to it. Hence it is that this same grace sometimes withdraws itself for our good, and shews the presumptuous mind how weak it is in itself. For then we really learn whence our good qualities proceed, when, by seemingly losing them, we are made sensible that they can never be preserved by our own efforts. And so for the purpose of tutoring us in lessons of humility, it very often happens that, when the crisis of temptation is upon us, such extreme folly comes down upon our wisdom, that the mind being dismayed, knows nothing how to meet the evils that are threatened, or how to make ready against temptation. But by this very folly, the heart is wisely instructed; forasmuch as from whatever cause it turns to folly for a moment, it is afterwards rendered by the same the more really, as it is the more humbly, wise; and by these very means, whereby wisdom seems as if lost, it is held in more

secure possession. Sometimes when the mind lifts itself up in pride on the grounds of seeing high things, it is dulled with a remarkable obtuseness in the lowest and meanest subjects; that he, who with rapid flight penetrated into the highest things, should in a moment see the very lowest closed to his understanding. But this very dulness preserves to us, at the very time that it withdraws from us, our power of understanding. For whereas it abases the heart for a moment, it strengthens it in a more genuine way to understand the loftiest subjects. Sometimes while we are congratulating ourselves that we do every thing with grave deliberation, some piece of chance takes us in the nick, and we are carried off with a sudden precipitancy; and we, who believed ourselves always to have lived by method, are in a moment laid waste with an inward confusion. Yet by the discipline of this very confusion we learn not to attribute our counsels to our own powers; and we hold to gravity with the more matured endeavours, that we return to the same as if once lost. Sometimes while the mind resolutely defies adversity, when adverse events rise up, she is struck with violent alarm. But when agitated thereby, she learns to Whom to attribute it, that on any occasion she stood firm; and she afterwards holds fast her fortitude the more resolutely, as she sees it now gone as it were out of her hand the moment that terror came upon her. Sometimes whilst we are congratulating ourselves that we know great things, we are stunned with a blindness of instantaneous ignorance [q]. But in so far as the eye of the mind is for a moment closed by ignorance, it is afterwards the more really opened to admit knowledge, in that in fact being instructed by the stroke of its blindness, it may know also from whom it has its very knowing. Sometimes while ordering all things in a religious spirit, when we congratulate ourselves that we have in abundant measure the bowels of pious tenderness, we are struck with a sudden fit of hardness of heart. But when thus as it were hardened, we learn to Whom to ascribe the good dispositions of piety which we have; and the piety, which

has been in a manner extinguished, is recovered with more reality, seeing that it is loved with fuller affection as having been lost. Sometimes while the mind is overjoyed that it is bowed under the fear of God, it suddenly waxes stiff under the temptations of pride. Yet immediately conceiving great fears that it should have no fear, it speedily turns back again to humility, which it recovers upon a firmer footing, in proportion as it has felt the weight of this virtue by seeming to let it go.

79. When the house, then, is overthrown, the sons perish; because when the conscience is disturbed under temptation, the virtues that are engendered in the heart, for any advantage from ourselves knowing them, are speedily and in the space of a moment overwhelmed. Now these sons live inwardly by the Spirit, though they perish outwardly in the flesh; because, forsooth, although our virtues in the time of temptation be disordered in a moment, and fall from the safety of their seat, yet by perseverance in endeavour they hold on unimpaired in the root of the mind. With these the three sisters likewise are slain, for in the heart, sometimes Charity is ruffled by afflictions, Hope shaken by fear, Faith beaten down by questionings. For oftentimes we grow dull in the love of our Creator, while we are chastened with the rod beyond what we think suitable for us. Often while the mind fears more than need be, it weakens the confidence of its hopes. Often while the intellect is exercised with endless questionings, faith being staggered grows faint, as though it would fail. But yet the daughters live, who die when the house is struck. For notwithstanding that in the seat of the conscience the disorder by itself tells that Faith, Hope, and Charity, are almost slain, yet they are kept alive in the sight of God, by perseverance in a right purpose of mind; and hence a servant escapes alone to tell these things, in that discretion of mind remains unhurt even amid temptations. And the servant is the cause that Job recovers his sons by weeping, whilst the mind, being grieved at what discretion reports, keeps by penitence the

powers which it had in a manner begun to part with. By a marvellous dispensation of Providence are we thus dealt with, so that our conscience is at times struck with the smitings of guilt. For a person would count himself possessed of great powers indeed, if he never at any time within the depth of his mind felt the failure of them [see S. Macarius, Hom. xv.]. But when the mind is shaken by the assaults of temptation, and is as it were more than enough disheartened, there is shewn to it the defence of humility against the arts of its enemy, and from the very occasion, whence it fears to sink powerless, it receives strength to stand firm. But the person tempted not only learns from Whom he has his strength, but is made to understand with what great watchfulness he must preserve it. For oftentimes one, whom the conflict of temptation had not force to overcome, has been brought down in a worse way by his own self-security. For when anyone awearied relaxes himself at his ease, he abandons his mind without restraint to the corrupter. But if, by the dispensations of mercy from above, the stroke of temptation falls upon him, not so as to overwhelm him with a sudden violence, but to instruct him by a measured approach, then he is awakened to foresee the snares, so that with a cautious mind he girds himself to face the enemy in fight. And hence it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 20. *Then Job arose.*

80. For sitting betokens one at ease, but rising, one in a conflict. His rising, then, when he heard the evil tidings, is setting the mind more resolutely for conflicts, after the experience of temptations, by which very temptations even the power of discernment is the gainer, in that it learns the more perfectly to distinguish good from evil. And therefore it is well added,

And rent his mantle.

81. We ‘rend our mantle,’ whenever we review with a discriminating eye our past deeds; for unless with God our deeds were as a cloak that covered us, it would never have been declared by the voice of an Angel, *Blessed is*

he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame [Rev. 16, 15]; for 'our shame' is then 'seen,' when our life, appearing worthy of condemnation in the eyes of the righteous in judgment, has not the covering of after good practice. But because, as often as we are tempted with guilt, we are prompted to mourning, and being stirred by our own lamentations, open the eyes of the mind to the more perfect perception of the light of righteousness, we as it were rend our mantle in grief, in that in consequence of our weeping discretion being strengthened, we chastise [r] all that we do with greater strictness, and with wrathful hand. Then all our high-mindedness comes down, then all our overcunningness is dropped from our thoughts; and hence it is added,

And shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.

82. For what do we understand in a moral sense by hair, but the wandering thoughts of the mind? and hence it is elsewhere said to the Church, *Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet; and thy speech is comely*; [Cant. 4, 3] for a thread [*vitta* Vulg.] binds the hairs of the head. So the *lips* of the Spouse are *like a thread*, in that by the exhortations of Holy Church all dissipated thoughts in the minds of her hearers are put in bands, that they may not roam at large, and be spread abroad amongst forbidden objects, and thus spread abroad, lie heavy on the eyes of the mind, but may as it were gather themselves to one direction, in that the thread of holy preaching binds them. Which also is well represented to be *of scarlet*; for the preaching of the Saints glows only with charity. And what is signified by the head, but that very mind, which is principal in every action? Whence it is elsewhere said, *And let thy head lack no ointment* [Eccl. 9, 8]; for *ointment* upon the head is charity in the heart; and there is lack of ointment upon the head, when there is a withdrawal of charity from the heart. The shaving of the head then is the cutting off all superfluous thoughts from the mind. And he shaveth his head and falls upon the earth, who, restraining

thoughts of self-presumption, humbly acknowledges how weak he is in himself.

83. For it is hard for a man to do great things, and not to harbour confident thoughts in his own mind on the score of his great doings. For from this very fact, that we are living in strenuous opposition to our vices, presumptuous imaginations are engendered in the heart; and while the mind valorously beats down the evil habits without her, she is very often inwardly swoln within herself; and now she accounts herself to have some special merits, nor ever imagines that she sins in the conceits of self-esteem. But in the eyes of the severe Judge she is so much the worse delinquent, as the sin committed, in proportion as it is the more concealed, is well nigh incorrigible; and the pit is opened the wider to devour, the more proudly the life we lead glories in itself. Hence, as we have often said before, it is brought to pass by the merciful dispensations of our Creator, that the soul that places confidence in itself is struck down by a providential temptation; that being brought low it may find out what it is, and may lay aside the haughtiness of self-presumption. For as soon as the mind feels the blow of temptation, all the presumption and swelling of our thoughts abates.

84. For when the mind is lifted up in pride, it breaks out as it were into usurpation [s]. And it has for the attendants of its tyrannical power, its own imaginations that flatter it. But if an enemy assaults the tyrant, the favour of those attendants is speedily at an end. For when the adversary finds entrance the attendants fly, and fall away from him in fear, whom in time of peace they extolled with cunning flattery. But, when the attendants are withdrawn, he remains alone in the face of the enemy; for when high thoughts are gone, the troubled mind sees itself only and the temptation, and thus upon healing of evil tidings, the head is shaved, whensoever under the violent assault of temptation the mind is bared of the thoughts of self-assurance. For what does it mean that the Nazarites let their hair grow long,

saving that by a life of special continency proud thoughts gain ground? And what does it signify, that, the act of devotion over, the Nazarite is commanded to shave his head, and cast the hair into the sacrificial fire, but that we then reach the height of perfection, when we so overcome our external evil habits, as to discard from the mind even thoughts that are superfluous? To consume these in the sacrificial fire is, plainly, to set them on fire with the flame of divine love; that the whole heart should glow with the love of God, and burning up every superfluous thought, should as it were consume the hair of the Nazarite in completing his devotion. And observe that he fell upon the earth and worshipped; for he sets forth to God the true worship, who in humility sees that he is dust, who attributes no goodness to himself, who owns that the good that he does is from the mercy of the Creator; and hence he says well and fitly,

Ver. 21. *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither*.

85. As if the mind when tempted and taken in the powerlessness of its weak condition were to say, 'Naked I was by grace first begotten in the faith, and naked I shall be saved by the same grace in being taken up into heaven [*in assumptione*].' For it is a great consolation to a troubled mind, when, smitten with the assaults of sin, it sees itself as it were stripped of all virtue, to fly to the hope of Mercy alone, and prevent itself being stripped naked in proportion as it humbly thinks itself to be naked and bare of virtue, and though it be perchance bereaved of some virtue in the hour of temptation, yet acknowledging its own weakness, it is the better clad with humility itself, and is stronger as it is laid low than as it was standing, in that it ceases to ascribe to itself without the aid of God whatever it has. And hence it also at once owns with humility the hand of Him Who is both Giver and Judge, saying,

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.

86. Observe how he grew great by the discipline of temptations, who both in the possession of the virtue acknowledges the bounty of the Giver, and in the disorderment of his fortitude, the power of the Withdrawer; which fortitude nevertheless is not withdrawn, but is confounded and loses heart, that the assaulted mind, while it dreads every instant to lose the quality as it seems, being alway made humble, may never lose it.

As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; Blessed be the Name of the Lord.

87. In this circumstance, viz. that we are assaulted with inward trouble, it is meet that we refer the thing to the judgment of our Creator, that our heart may resound the louder the praises of its Maker, from the very cause that makes it, on being smitten, the more thoroughly to consider the impotency of its frail condition. Now it is justly said,

Ver. 22. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly:*

88. In that the mind in grief ought to watch with wariness and diligence, lest, when the temptation prompts it within, it break forth inwardly into the utterance of forbidden words, and murmur at the trial; and lest the fire, which burns it like gold, by the excesses of a lawless tongue, may turn it to the ashes of mere chaff.

89. Now nothing hinders that all that we have said concerning virtues, be understood of those gifts of the Holy Spirit which are vouchsafed in [vid. cha.] manifestation of virtue, for to one is given the gift of Prophecy, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the gifts of healing. But forasmuch as these gifts are not always present in the mind in the same degree, it is clearly shewn that it is for our good that they are sometimes withdrawn, lest the mind should be lifted up in pride. For if the Spirit of Prophecy had always been with the Prophets, plainly the Prophet Elisha would never have said, *Let her alone, for her soul is vexed within her, and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.* [2 Kings 4, 27] If the Spirit of

Prophecy had been always present to the Prophets, the Prophet Amos when asked would never have said, *I am* [so Vulg.] *no Prophet*; where he also adds, *neither a Prophet's son, but I am an herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit*. [Amos 7, 14.] How then was he no Prophet, who foretold so many true things concerning the future? or in what way was he a Prophet, if he at the time disowned the truth concerning himself? Why, because, at the moment that he was called in question [*requisitus*], he felt that the Spirit of Prophecy was not with him, he bore true testimony concerning himself, in saying; *I am not a Prophet*. Yet he added afterwards, *Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord. Therefore thus said the Lord, Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land*. [ver. 16, 17.] By these words of the Prophet it is plainly shewn, that while he was bearing that testimony about himself he was filled, and on the instant rewarded with the Spirit of Prophecy, because he humbly acknowledged himself to be no Prophet. And if the Spirit of Prophecy had always continued with the Prophets, the Prophet Nathan would never have allowed King David, when he consulted him about the building of the Temple, what a little while after he was to refuse him.

90. And hence, how justly is it written in the Gospel, *Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He Which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost*. For the Spirit descends into all the faithful, but remains in the Mediator alone, in a special manner. For He has never left the Human Nature of Him, from Whose Divine Nature He proceedeth. He remains therefore in Him, Who only can both do all things and at all times. Now the faithful, who receive Him, since they cannot always retain the gifts of miracles, as they desire, testify that they have received Him as it were in a passing manifestation. But whereas on the other hand it is said by the mouth of Truth concerning the same Spirit to the

Disciples, *For He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you*, [John 14, 17] how is it, that this same abiding of the Holy Spirit is by the voice of God declared to be the sign of the Mediator, where it is said, *Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding on Him?* If then according to the words of the Master He abideth in the disciples also, how will it be any longer a special sign, that He abides in the Mediator? Now this we shall learn the sooner, if we discriminate between the gifts of the same Spirit.

91. Now there are some of His gifts, without which life is never attained; and there are others whereby holiness of life is made known for the good of other men. For meekness, humility, faith, hope, charity, are gifts that come from Him, and they are such as man can never reach to life without. And the gift of Prophecy, healing, different kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues [*sermonum*], are His gifts; yet such as shew forth the presence of His power for the improvement of all beholders. In the case of these gifts then, without which we can never attain to life, the Holy Spirit for ever abides, whether in His preachers, or in all the Elect; but in those gifts whereof the object is not the preservation of our own life, but of the lives of others through the manifestation of Him, He by no means always abides in the Preachers. For He is indeed always ruling their hearts to the end of good living, yet does not always exhibit the signs of miraculous powers by them, but sometimes, for all manifestation of miracles, He withdraws Himself from them, in order that those powers, which belong to Him, may be had with greater humility, in the same degree that being in possession they cannot be retained.

92. But the Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, in all things hath Him both always and continually present. For the same Spirit even in Substance proceeds from Him. And thus, though He abides in the holy Preachers, He is justly said to abide in the Mediator in a special manner, for that in them He abides of grace for a particular object, but in Him He abides

substantially for all ends. For as our body is cognizant of the sense of touch only, but the head of the body has the use of all the five senses at once, so that it sees, hears, tastes, smells, and touches; so the members of the Supreme Head shine forth in some of the powers, but the Head Itself blazes forth in all of them. The Spirit then abides in Him in another sort, from Whom He never departs by reason of His Nature. Now those of His gifts, by which life is attained, can never without danger be lost, but the gifts, whereby holiness of life is made evident, are very often withdrawn, as we have said, without detriment. So then the first are to be kept for our own edification, the latter to be sought for the improvement of others. In the case of the one let the fear alarm us, lest they perish, but in the other, when they are withdrawn for a season, let humility be our consolation, for that they may chance to lift up the mind to entertain pride. Accordingly when the power of miracles which had been vouchsafed is withdrawn, let us exclaim as is right, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord*. For then, and only then, we really shew that we have held in a right spirit all that we had given us, when we bear with patience the momentary withdrawal thereof.

BOOK III.

The whole of the second chapter of the Book of Job is explained after the manner of the former Books, historically, allegorically, and morally.

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

1. BLESSED Job, though aimed at for death in his temptation, gained growth unto life by the stroke. And our old enemy grieved to find that he had only multiplied his excellences by the very means, by which he had thought to do away with them, but whereas he sees that he has been worsted in the first struggle, he prepares himself for fresh assaults of temptations, and still has the boldness to augur evil of that holy man; for one that is evil can never believe goodness to exist, though proved by his experience. Now those circumstances, which were promised in the first infliction, are again subjoined, when it is said,

Ver. 1, 2, 3. *Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

Because we have discussed these particulars very fully above, we the rather pass them over in silence, lest, whilst we often repeat points once gone into, we delay too long in coming to such as are untouched; although what is said to Satan by the Lord's voice, *Whence comest thou?* I cannot consider to be addressed to him just as it was before; for whereas he returns defeated from that contest upon which he had been let loose, and yet is

asked ‘whence he comes,’ when it is known from whence he comes, what else is this but that the impotency of his pride is chidden? As though the voice of God openly said, ‘See, thou art overcome by a single man, and him too beset with the infirmities of the flesh; thou, that strivest to set thyself up against Me, the Maker of all things!’ Hence when the Lord immediately went on to declare the excellences of Job, as He did before, it is together with the triumphs of his victory that He enumerates this, and adds,

And still he holdeth fast his integrity.

2. As if He said explicitly, ‘Thou indeed hast wrought thy malice, but he has not lost his innocence; and thou art forced to serve to his advancement by the very means whence thou thoughtest to lessen his advancement. For that inward innocency, which he honourably maintained when at rest, he has more honourably preserved under the rod. It follows;

Although thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause.

3. Whereas God is a just and a true God, it is important to enquire how and in what sense He shews that He had afflicted Job without cause. For because He is just, He could not afflict him without cause, and again, because He is true, He could not have spoken other than what He did. So then that both particulars may concur in Him that is just and true, so that He should both speak truth, and not act unjustly, let us know, that blessed Job was both in one sense smitten *without cause*, and again in another sense, that he was smitten not without cause. For as He that is just and true, says the thing of Himself, let us prove both that what He said was true, and that what He did was righteous. For it was necessary that the holy man, who was known to God alone and to his own conscience, should make known to all as a pattern for their imitation with what preeminent virtue he was enriched. For he could not visibly give to others examples of virtue, if he remained himself without temptation. Accordingly it was brought to pass, both that the very force of the infliction should exhibit his stores of virtue for the

imitation of all men, and that the strokes inflicted upon him should bring to light what in time of tranquillity lay hidden. Now by means of the same blows the virtue of patience gained increase, and the gloriousness of his reward was augmented by the pains of the scourge. Thus, that we may uphold the truth of God in word, and His equity in deed, the blessed Job is at one and the same time not afflicted without cause, seeing that his merits are increased, and yet he *is* afflicted *without cause*, in that he is not punished for any offence committed by him. For that man is stricken without cause, who has no fault to be cut away; and he is not stricken without cause, the merit of whose virtue is made to accumulate.

4. But what is meant when it is said, *Thou movedst Me against him?* Is 'the Truth' then inflamed by the words of Satan, so that at his instigation He falls to torturing His servants? Who could imagine those things of God which he even accounts unworthy of a good man? But because we ourselves never strike unless when moved, the stroke of God itself is called the 'moving' Him. And the voice of God condescends to our speech, that His doings may in one way or another be reached by man's understanding. For that Power which without compulsion created all things, and which without oversight rules all things, and without labour sustains all, and governs without being busied, corrects also without emotion. And by stripes He forms the minds of men to whatsoever He will, in such sort still that He never passeth into the darkness of change from the light of His Unchangeable Being. It follows;

Ver. 4, 5. *And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

5. The old enemy derives from outward things the charge which he urges against the blessed man's soul. For he affirms that 'skin is given for skin;' as it often happens that when we see a blow directed against the face, we

put our hands before our eyelids to guard the eyes from the stroke, and we present our bodies to be wounded, lest they be wounded in a tenderer part. Satan then, who knew that such things are customarily done, exclaims, *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give in exchange for his life.* As if he said in plain words, 'It is for this reason that Job bears with composure so many strokes falling without, because he fears lest he should be smitten himself, and so it is care of the flesh that makes him unmoved by hurt done to the feelings of the flesh; for while he fears for his own person, he feels the less the hurt of what belongs to him.

And hence he immediately requires his flesh to be smitten, in these words;

But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.

He had said above, *Touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.* [Job 1, 11] Now, as if forgetting his former proposal, being beaten upon one point, he demands another. And this is justly allowed him by God's dispensation, that the audacious disputer, by being over and over again overcome, may be made to keep silence. It proceeds;

Ver.6. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*

6. Here again, the safeguard of protection goes along with the permission to smite, and the dispensation of God both while guarding, forsakes his elect servant, and while forsaking, guards him. A portion of him He gives over, a portion He protects. For if he had left Job wholly in the hand of so dire a foe, what could have become of a mere man? And so with the very justice of the permission there is mixed a certain measure of pity, that in one and the same contest, both His lowly servant might rise by oppression, and the towering enemy be brought down by the permission. Thus the holy man is given over to the adversary's hand, but yet in his inmost soul he is held

fast by the hand of his Helper. For he was of the number of those sheep, concerning whom Truth itself said in the Gospel, *Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand*. [John 10, 28] And yet it is said to the enemy, when he demands him, *Behold, he is in thine hand*. The same man then is at the same time in the hand of God, and in the hand of the devil. For by saying, *he is in thine hand*, and straightway adding, *but save his life*, the pitiful Helper openly shewed that His hand was upon him whom He yielded up, and that in giving He did not give him, whom, while He cast him forth, He at the same time hid from the darts of his adversary.

7. But how is that it is said to Satan*, but save his life* [*animam*]? For how does he keep safe, who is ever longing to break in upon things under safe keeping? But Satan's *saving* is spoken of his not daring to break in, just as, conversely, we petition The Father in prayer, saying, *Lead us not into temptation*; [Matt. 6, 13] for neither does the Lord *lead us into temptation*, Who is ever mercifully shielding His servants there from. Yet it is as it were for Him 'to lead us into temptation,' not to protect us from the allurements of temptation. And He then as it were 'leads us not into the snare of temptation,' when He does not let us be tempted beyond what we are able to bear. In like manner then as God is said to 'lead us into temptation,' if He suffers our adversary to lead us thereinto, so our adversary is said to 'save our soul [*animum,* same as above],' when he is stayed from overcoming it by his temptations.

Ver. 7. *So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*

How 'Satan goes forth from the presence of the Lord,' is shewn by the remarks which have been already [some Mss. add 'often'] made above. It goes on;

And smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

8. Strokes are to be estimated in two ways, viz. to consider either of what kind, or how great. For being many they are often made right by their

quality, and being heavy by their quantity, i.e. when, if they be many, they be not heavy, and if they be heavy, they be not many; in order to shew, then, how by the sharpness of the stroke the adversary flamed against the holy man, not only in the badness of the kind, but also in the heaviness of the amount: to prove the quality, it is said, *And smote Job with sore boils*; and to teach the quantity, from the sole of his foot unto his crown. Plainly, that nothing might be void of glory in his soul, in whose body there is no part void of pain. It goes on;

Ver. 8. *And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.*

9. What is a potsherd made from, excepting mud? and what is the humour of the body, but mud? Accordingly he is said 'to scrape the humour with a potsherd,' as if it were plainly said, 'he wiped away mud with mud.' For the holy man reflected, whence that which he carried about him had been taken, and with the broken piece of a vessel of clay he scraped his broken vessel of clay. By which act we have it openly shewn us, in what manner he subdued under him that body of his when sound, which even when stricken he tended with such slight regard; how softly he dealt with his flesh in its sound state, who applied neither clothing, nor fingers, but only a potsherd to its very wounds. And thus he scraped the humour with a potsherd, that seeing himself in the very broken piece, he might even by the cleansing of the wound be taking a remedy for his soul.

10. But because it often happens that the mind is swelled by the circumstances that surround the body, and by the way men behave toward us the frailty of the body is removed from before the eyes of the mind, (as there are some of those that are of the world, who while they are buoyed up with temporal honours, whilst they rule in elevated stations, whilst they see the obedience of multitudes yielded to them at will, neglect to consider their own frailty, and altogether forget, nor ever take heed, how speedily that

vessel of clay which they bear, is liable to be shattered,) so blessed Job, that he might take thought of his own frailty from the things about him, and increase the intensity of his self-contempt in his own eyes, is described to have seated himself not any where on the earth, which at most in every place is found clean, but upon a dunghill. He set his body *on a dunghill*, that the mind might to its great profit consider thoroughly what was that substance of the flesh, which was *taken from the ground*. [Gen. 3, 23] He set his body on a dunghill, that even from the stench of the place he might apprehend how rapidly the body returneth to stench.

11. But see, while blessed Job is undergoing such losses in his substance, and grieving over the death of so many children whereby he is smitten, while he is suffering such numberless wounds, while he scrapes the running humour with a potsherd, whilst, running down in a state of corruption, he sat himself upon a dunghill, it is good to consider how it is that Almighty God, as though in unconcern, afflicts so grievously those, whom He looks upon as so dear to Him for all eternity. But, now, while I view the wounds and the torments of blessed Job, I suddenly call back my mind's eye to John, and I reflect not without the greatest astonishment, that he, being filled with the Spirit of prophecy within his mother's womb, and who, if I may say so, before his birth, was born again, he that was the *friend of the Bridegroom*, [John 3, 29] he than whom *none hath arisen greater among those born of women*, [Matt. 11, 11] he that was so great a Prophet, that he was even *more than a Prophet*, he is cast into prison by wicked men, and beheaded, for the dancing of a damsel, and a man of such severe virtue dies for the merriment of the vile! Do we imagine there was aught in his life which that most contemptible death was to wipe off? When, then, did he sin even in meat, whose food was but locusts and wild honey? How did he offend even by the quality of his clothing, the covering of whose body was of camel's hair? How could he transgress in his behaviour, who never went

out from the desert? How did the guilt of a talkative tongue defile him, who was parted far from mankind? When did even a fault of silence attach to him, who so vehemently charged those that came to him? *O generation, of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* [Matt. 3, 7] How is it then, that Job is distinguished above other men by the testimony of God, and yet by his plagues is brought down even to a dunghill? How is it that John is commended by the voice of God, and yet for the words of a drunkard suffers death as the prize of dancing? How is it, that Almighty God so utterly disregards in this present state of being those whom He chose so exaltedly before the worlds, saving this, which is plain to the religious sense of the faithful, that it is for this reason He thus presses them below, because He sees how to recompense them on high? And He casts them down without to the level of things contemptible, because He leads them on within to the height of things incomprehensible. From hence then let everyone collect what those will have to suffer There, that are condemned by Him, if here He thus torments those whom He loves, or how they shall be smitten, who are destined to be convicted at the Judgment, if their life is sunk so low, who are commended by witness of the Judge Himself. It proceeds;

Ver. 9. *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*

12. The old adversary is wont to tempt mankind in two ways; viz. so as either to break the hearts of the stedfast by tribulation, or to melt them by persuasion. Against blessed Job then he strenuously exerted himself in both; for first upon the householder he brought loss of substance; the father he bereaved by the death of his children; the man that was in health he smote with putrid sores. But forasmuch as him, that was outwardly corrupt, he saw still to hold on sound within, and because he grudged him, whom he had stripped naked outwardly, to be inwardly enriched by the setting forth of his

Maker's praise, in his cunning he reflects and considers, that the champion of God is only raised up against him by the very means whereby he is pressed down, and being defeated he betakes himself to subtle appliances of temptations. For he has recourse again to his arts of ancient contrivance, and because he knows by what means Adam is prone to be deceived, he has recourse to Eve. For he saw that blessed Job amidst the repeated loss of his goods, the countless wounds of his strokes, stood unconquered, as it were, in a kind of fortress of virtues. For he had set his mind on high, and therefore the machinations of the enemy were unable to force an entrance on it. The adversary then seeks by what steps he may mount up to this well-fenced fortress. Now the woman is close to the man and joined to him. Therefore he fixed his hold on the heart of the woman, and as it were found in it a ladder whereby he might be able to mount up to the heart of the man. He seized the mind of the wife, which was the ladder to the husband. But he could do nothing by this artifice. For the holy man minded that the woman was set under and not over him, and by speaking aright, he instructed her, whom the serpent set on to speak wrongly. For it was meet that manly reproof should hold in that looser mind; since indeed he knew even by the first fall of man, that the woman was unskilled to teach aright. And hence it is well said by Paul, *I permit not a woman to teach*. [1 Tim. 2, 12] Doubtless for that, when she once taught, she cast us off from an eternity of wisdom. And so the old enemy was beaten by [*perdidit ab*] Adam on a dunghill, he that conquered Adam in Paradise; and whereas he inflamed the wife, whom he took to his aid, to utter words of mispersuasion, he sent her to the school of holy instruction; and she that had been set on that she might destroy, was instructed that she should not ruin herself. Yes, the enemy is so stricken by those resolute men of our part, that his very own weapons are seized out of his hand. For by the same means, whereby he reckons to increase the pain of the wound, he is helping them to arms of virtue to use against himself.

13. Now from the words of his wife, thus persuading him amiss, we ought to mark with attention, that the old enemy goes about to bend the upright state of our mind, not only by means of himself, but by means of those that are attached to us. For when he cannot undermine our heart by his own persuading, then indeed he creeps to the thing by the tongues of those that belong to us. For hence it is written; *Beware of thine own children, and take heed to thyself from thy servants*. [Ecclus. 32, 22. Vulg.] Hence it is said by the Prophet; *Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother*. [Jer. 9, 4] Hence it, is again written; *And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.* [Matt. 10, 36] For when the crafty adversary sees himself driven back from the hearts of the good, he seeks out those that they very much love, and he speaks sweetly to them by the words of such as are beloved by them above others, that whilst the force of love penetrates the heart, the sword of his persuading may easily force a way in to the defences of inward uprightness. Thus after the losses of his goods, after the death of his children, after the wounding and rending of his limbs, the old foe put in motion the tongue of his wife.

14. And observe the time when he aimed to corrupt the mind of the man with poisoned talk. For it was after the wounds that the words were brought in by him; doubtless that, as the force of the pain waxed greater, the froward dictates of his persuasions might easily prevail. But if we minutely consider the order itself of his temptation, we see with what craft he worketh his cruelty. For he first directed against him the losses of his goods, which should be at once, as they were, out of the province of nature, and without the body. He withdrew from him his children, a thing now no longer indeed without the province of nature, but still in some degree beyond his own body. Lastly, he smote even his body. But because, by these wounds of the flesh, he could not attain to wound the soul, he sought out the tongue of the woman that was joined to him. For because it sorely grieved him to be

overcome in open fight, he flung a javelin from the mouth of the wife, as if from a place of ambush: as she said, *Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Bless God and die*. Mark how in trying him, he took away every thing, and again in trying him, left him his wife, and shewed craftiness in stripping him of every thing, but infinitely greater cunning, in keeping the woman as his abettor, to say, *Dost thou still retain thine integrity?* Eve repeats her own words. For what is it to say, 'give over thine integrity,' but 'disregard obedience by eating the forbidden thing?' And what is it to say, *Bless* [see Book I, 31.] *God and die*, but 'live by mounting above the commandment, above what thou wast created to be?' But our Adam lay low upon a dunghill in strength, who once stood up in Paradise in weakness. For thereupon he replied to the words of his evil counsellor, saying,

Ver. 10. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

15. See the enemy is every where broken, every where overcome, in all his appliances of temptation he has been brought to the ground, in that he has even lost that accustomed consolation which he derived from the woman. Amid these circumstances it is good to contemplate the holy man, without, void of goods, within, filled with God. When Paul viewed in himself the riches of internal wisdom, yet saw himself outwardly a corruptible body, he says, *We have this treasure in earthen vessels*. [2 Cor. 4, 7] You see, the earthen vessel in blessed Job felt those gaping sores without, but this treasure remained entire within. For without he cracked in his wounds, but the treasure of wisdom unfailingly springing up within issued forth in words of holy instruction, saying, *If we have received good at the hand of the Lord, shall we not receive evil?* meaning by the *good*, either the temporal or the eternal gifts of God, and by the evil, denoting the strokes of the present time, of which the Lord saith by the Prophet, *I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and*

create evil. [Is. 45, 6. 7.] Not that evil, which does not subsist by its own nature, is created by the Lord, but the Lord shews Himself as creating evil, when He turns into a scourge the things that have been created good for us, upon our doing evil, that the very same things should at the same time both by the pain which they inflict be to transgressors evil, and yet good by the nature whereby they have their being. And hence poison is to man indeed death, but life to the serpent. For we by the love of things present have been led away from the love of our Creator; and whereas the froward mind submitted itself to fondness for the creature, it parted from the Creator's communion, and so it was to be smitten by its Maker by means of the things which it had erringly preferred to its Maker, that by the same means whereby man in his pride was not afraid to commit sin, he might find a punishment to his correction, and might the sooner recover himself to all that he had lost, the more he perceived that the things which he aimed at were full of pain. And hence it is rightly said, *I form the light, and create darkness*. For when the darkness of pain is created by strokes without, the light of the mind is kindled by instruction within. *I make peace, and create evil.* For peace with God is restored to us then, when the things which, though rightly created, are not rightly coveted, are turned into such sort of scourges as are evil to us. For we are become at variance with God by sin. Therefore it is meet that we should be brought back to peace with Him by the scourge, that whereas every being created good turns to pain for us, the mind of the chastened man may be renewed in a humbled state to peace with the Creator. These scourges, then, blessed Job names *evil*, because he considers with what violence they smite the good estate of health and tranquillity.

16. But this we ought especially to regard in his words, viz. with what a skilful turn of reflection he gathers himself up to meet the persuading of his wife, saying, *If we have received good at the hand of the Lord, shall we not*

receive evil? For it is a mighty solace of our tribulation, if, when we suffer afflictions, we recall to remembrance our Maker's gifts to us, Nor does that break down our force, which falls upon us in the smart, if that quickly comes to mind, which lifts us up in the gift. For it is hence written, *In the day of prosperity be not unmindful of affliction, and in the day of affliction, be not unmindful of prosperity*. [Ecclus. 11, 25] For whosoever receives God's gifts, but in the season of gifts has no fear of strokes, is brought to a fall by joy in his elation of mind. And whoever is bruised with scourges, yet, in the season of the scourges, neglects to take comfort to himself from the gifts, which it has been his lot to receive, is thrown down from the stedfastness of his mind by despair on every hand. Thus then both must be united, that each may always have the other's support, so that both remembrance of the gift may moderate the pain of the stroke, and misgiving and dread of the stroke may bite down the joyousness of the gift. And thus the holy man, to soothe the depression of his mind amidst his wounds, in the pains of the strokes weighs the sweetness of the gifts, saying, *If we have received good at the hand of the Lord, shall we not receive evil?* And he does well in saying first, *Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women*. For because it is the sense of a bad woman, and not her sex, that is in fault, he never says, 'Thou hast spoken like one of the women,' but 'of the foolish women,' clearly that it might be shewn, that whatsoever is of ill sense cometh of superadded folly, and not of nature so formed. The account goes on;

In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

17. We sin with our lips in two ways; either when we say unjust things, or withhold the just. For if it were not sometimes a sin also to be silent, the Prophet would never say, *Woe is me, that I held my peace*. [Is. 6, 5. Vulg.] Blessed Job, then, in all that he did, sinned no wise with his lips; in that he neither spake proudly against the smiter, nor withheld the right answer to

the adviser. Neither by speech, therefore, nor by silence did he offend, who both gave thanks to the Father that smote him, and administered wisdom of instruction to the ill-advising wife. For because he knew what he owed to God, what to his neighbour, viz. resignation to his Creator, wisdom to his wife, therefore he both instructed her by his uttering reproof, and magnified Him by giving thanks. But which is there of us, who, if he were to receive any single wound of such severe infliction, would not at once be laid low in the interior? See, that when outwardly prostrated by the wounds of the flesh, he abides inwardly erect in the fences of the mind, and beneath him he sees every dart fly past wherewith the raging enemy transfixes him outwardly with unsparing hand; watchfully he catches the javelins, now cast, in wounds, against him in front, and now, in words, as it were from the side. And our champion encompassed with the rage of the besetting fight, at all points presents his shield of patience, meets the darts coming in on every hand, and on all virtue's sides wheels round the guarded mind to front the assailing blows.

18. But the more valiantly our old enemy is overcome, the more hotly is he provoked to further arts of malice. For whereas the wife when chidden was silent, he forthwith set on others to rise up in insults till they must be chidden. For as he essayed to make his blows felt, by the often repeated tidings of the losses of his substance, so he now busies himself to penetrate that firm heart by dealing reiterated strokes with the insults of the lips. It proceeds;

Ver. 11. *Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came everyone from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.*

19. We have it proved to us how great a love they entertained both for each other, and for the smitten man, in that they came by agreement to

administer consolation to him when afflicted. Though even by this circumstance, viz. that Scripture bears witness they were the friends of so great a man, it is made appear that they were men of a good spirit and right intention; though this very intention of mind, when they break forth into words, upon indiscretion arising, becomes clouded in the sight of the strict Judge. It goes on;

Ver. 12. *And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent everyone his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.*

20. Because the scourge had altered the appearance of the stricken man, his friends 'lift up their voice and weep,' 'rend their garments,' 'sprinkle dust upon their heads;' that seeing him altered to whom they had come, their voluntary grief might likewise alter the very appearance even of the comforters also. For the order in consolation is, that when we would stay one that is afflicted from his grief, we first essay to accord with his sorrow by grieving. For he can never comfort the mourner who does not suit himself to his grief, since from the very circumstance that his own feelings are at variance with the mourner's distress, he is rendered the less welcome to him, from whom he is parted by the character of his feelings; the mind therefore must first be softened down, that it may accord with the distressed, and by according attach itself, and by attaching itself draw him. For iron is not joined to iron, if both be not melted by the burning effect of fire, and a hard substance does not adhere to a soft, unless its hardness be first made soft by tempering, so as in a manner to become the very thing, to which our object is that it should hold. Thus we neither lift up the fallen, if we do not bend from the straightness of our standing posture. For, whereas the uprightness of him that standeth disagreeth with the posture of one lying, he never can lift him to whom he cares not to lower himself; and so the friends of blessed Job, that they might stay him under affliction from his

grief, were of necessity solicitous to grieve with him, and when they beheld his wounded body, they set themselves to rend their own garments, and when they saw him altered, they betook themselves to defiling their heads with dust, that the afflicted man might the more readily give ear to their words, that he recognised in them somewhat of his own in the way of affliction.

21. But herein be it known, that he who desires to comfort the afflicted, must needs set a measure to the grief, to which he submits, lest he should not only fail of soothing the mourner, but, by the intemperance of his grief, should sink the mind of the afflicted to the heaviness of despair. For our grief ought to be so blended with the grief of the distressed, that by qualifying it may lighten it, and not by increasing weigh it down. And hence perhaps we ought to gather, that the friends of blessed Job in administering consolation gave themselves up to grief more than was needed, in that while they mark the stroke, but are strangers to the mind of him that was smitten, they betake themselves to unmeasured lamentation, as if the smitten man who was of such high fortitude, under the scourge of his body, had fallen in mind too. It proceeds;

Ver. 13. *So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great.*

22. Whether they sat with the afflicted Job for seven days and seven nights together, or possibly for seven days and as many nights kept by him in assiduous and frequent visiting, we cannot tell. For we are often said to be doing any thing for so many days, though we may not be continually busied therein all those days. And often holy Scripture is wont to put the whole for a part, in like manner as it does a part for the whole. Thus it speaks of a part for the whole, as where, in describing Jacob's household, it says, *All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were*

threescore and ten. [Gen. 46, 27] Where indeed, while it makes mention of souls, it clearly takes in the bodies also of the comers. Again it puts in the whole for a part, as where at the tomb Mary complains, saying, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him*. [John 20, 2] For it was the Body of the Lord only that she had come to seek, and yet she bewails the Lord as though His whole Person had been altogether taken away [*tultum*]; and so in this place too it is doubtful whether the whole is put for a part.

23. Yet this circumstance, viz. that they were a long while silent, and yet in speaking after all were condemned, must not be passed over carelessly. For there are some men who both begin to speak with precipitation, and follow out that unchecked beginning with still less check. While there are some who are indeed backward to begin to speak, but having once begun know not how to set limits to their words. Accordingly the friends of blessed Job, upon seeing his grief, were for long silent, yet, whilst slow to begin, they spoke with indiscretion, because they would not spare him in his grief. They held their tongue that it might not begin over-hastily, but once begun they never ruled it, that it might not let itself out from imparting consolation so far as to offer insults. And they indeed had come with a good intention to give comfort; yet that which the pious mind offered to God pure, their hasty speech defiled. For it is written, *If thou offerest rightly, but dividest not rightly, thou has sinned*. [Gen. 4, 7. lxx.] For it is rightly offered, when the thing that is done is done with a right intention. But it is not ‘rightly divided,’ unless that which is done with a pious mind be made out with exact discrimination. For to ‘divide the offering aright’ is to weigh all our good aims, carefully discriminating them; and whoso puts by doing this, even when we offer aright, is guilty of sin.

24. And so it often happens, that in what we do with a good aim, by not exercising careful discrimination therein, we know nothing what end it will

be judged withal [*quo judicetur fine*], and sometimes that becomes ground of accusation, which is accounted an occasion of virtue. But whoever considers the doings of blessed Job's friends, cannot but see with what a pious intention they came to him. For let us consider, what great love it shewed to have come together by agreement to the stricken man; what a preeminent degree of longsuffering it proved to be with the afflicted, without speaking, seven days and nights; what humility, to sit upon the earth so many days and nights; what compassion, to sprinkle their heads with dust! But yet when they began to speak, by the same means, whereby they reckoned to win the price of a reward, it was their lot to meet with the arraignment of rebuke; for to the unwary even that which is begun for the object of recompense alone, oftentimes turns to an issue in sin. Observe! by hasty speech they lost that good which it cost them so much labour to purchase. And unless the grace of God had bidden them to offer sacrifice for their guilt, they might have been justly punished by the Lord, on the very grounds whereon they reckoned themselves exceeding well-pleasing to Him. By the same proceeding they displease the Judge, whereby, as if in that Judge's defence, they please themselves through want of self-control. Now it is for this reason that we speak thus, that we may recall to the recollection of our readers, for each one to consider heedfully with himself, with what dread visitations the Lord punishes the actions which are done with an evil design, if those which are begun with a good aim, but mixed with the heedlessness of indiscretion, are chastised with such severe rebuke. For who would not believe that he had secured himself ground of recompense, either if in God's defence he had said aught against his neighbour, or at all events if in sorrow for a neighbour he had kept silence seven days and nights? And yet the friends of blessed Job by doing this were brought into sin for their pains, because while the good aim of comforting which they were about was known to them, yet they did not

know with what a balance of discretion it was to be done. Whence it appears that we must not only regard what it is that we do, but also with what discretion we put it in execution. First indeed, that we may never do evil in any manner, and next, that we may not do our good deeds without caution; and it is in fact to perform these good deeds with carefulness, that the Prophet admonishes us when he says, *Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently*. [Jer. 48, 10. Vulg.] But let these things stand us in stead to this end, that before the exact and incomprehensible scrutiny of the Awful Judge shall be, we may not only fear for all that we have done amiss, but if there be in us aught of the kind, for the very things that we have done well; for oftentimes that is found out to be sin at His Judgment, which before the Judgment passes for virtue, and from the same source, whence we look for the merciful recompense of our works, there comes upon us the chastisement of righteous vengeance.

ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

25. We have run through these particulars thus briefly considered according to the letter of the history, now let us turn our discourse to the mystical sense of the allegory. But as, when, at the beginning of this work, we were treating of the union betwixt the Head and the Body, we premised with earnest emphasis how close the bond of love was between them, forasmuch us both the Lord in fact still suffers many things by His Body, which is all of us, and His Body, i.e. the Church, already glories in its Head, viz. the Lord, in heaven; so now we ought in such sort to set forth the sufferings of that Head, that it may be made appear how much He undergoes in His Body also. For if the torments that we endure did not reach our Head, He would never cry out to His persecutor even from heaven in behalf of His afflicted Members, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* [Acts 9, 4] If our agony were not His pain, Paul, when afflicted after his conversion, would never

have said, *I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh*. [Col. 1, 24] And yet being already elevated by the resurrection of his Head, he says, *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places*; [Eph. 2, 6] in this way, namely, that the torments of persecution had enchained him on earth, yet while sunk down with the weight of his pains, lo, he was already seated in heaven, through the glory of his Head. Therefore because we know that in all things the Head and the Body are one, we in such wise begin with the smiting of the Head that we may afterwards come to the strokes of the Body. But this, viz. that it is said, “that on a day Satan came to present himself before the Lord;” that he is interrogated ‘whence he comes?’ that the blessed Job is distinguished by his Creator’s high proclaim; forasmuch as we have already made it out more than once, we forbear to explain again. For if the mind is a long time involved in points that have been examined, it is hindered in coming to those which have not been, and so we now put the beginning of the allegory there, where, after often repeated words, we find something new added. So then He says,

Ver. 3. *Though thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause.*

26. If blessed Job bears the likeness of our Redeemer in His Passion, how is it that the Lord says to Satan, *Thou moved at Me against him?* Truly the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, came to bear the scourges of our mortal nature, that He might put away the sins of our disobedience; but forasmuch as He is of one and the self-same nature with the Father, how does the Father declare that He was moved by Satan against Him, when it is acknowledged that no inequality of power, no diversity of will, interrupts the harmony between the Father and the Son? Yet He, that is equal to the Father by the Divine Nature, came for our sakes to be under stripes in a fleshly nature. Which stripes He would never have undergone, if

he had not taken the form of accursed man in the work of their redemption. And unless the first man had transgressed, the second would never have come to the ignominies of the Passion. When then the first man was moved by Satan from the Lord, then the Lord was moved against the second Man. And so Satan then moved the Lord to the affliction of this latter, when the sin of disobedience brought down the first man from the height of uprightness. For if he had not drawn the first Adam by wilful sin into the death of the soul, the second Adam, being without sin, would never have come into the voluntary death of the flesh, and therefore it is with justice said to him of our Redeemer too, *Thou movedst Me against him to afflict* [E.V. *destroy*] *him without cause*. As though it were said in plainer words; 'Whereas this Man dies not on His own account, but on account of that other, thou didst then move Me to the afflicting of This one, when thou didst withdraw that other from Me by thy cunning persuasions.' And of Him it is rightly added, *without cause*. For 'he was destroyed without cause,' who was at once weighed to the earth by the avenging of sin, and not defiled by the pollution of sin. He 'was destroyed without cause,' Who, being made incarnate, had no sins of His own, and yet being without offence took upon Himself the punishment of the carnal. For it is hence that speaking by the Prophet He says, Then I restored that which I took not away. For that other that was created for Paradise would in his pride have usurped the semblance of the Divine power, yet the Mediator, Who was without guilt, discharged the guilt of that pride. It is hence that a Wise Man saith to the Father; *Forasmuch then as Thou art righteous Thyself, Thou orderest all things righteously; Thou condemnest Him too that deserveth not to be punished*. [Wisd. 12, 15. Vulg.]

27. But we must consider how He is righteous and ordereth all things righteously, if He condemns Him that deserveth not to be punished. For our Mediator deserved not to be punished for Himself, because He never was

guilty of any defilement of sin. But if He had not Himself undertaken a death not due to Him, He would never have freed us from one that was justly due to us. And so whereas 'The Father is righteous,' in punishing a righteous man, 'He ordereth all things righteously,' in that by these means He justifies all things, viz. that for the sake of sinners He condemns Him Who is without sin; that all the Elect [*electa omnia*] might rise up to the height of righteousness, in proportion as He Who is above all underwent the penalties of our unrighteousness. What then is in that place called 'being condemned without deserving,' is here spoken of as being 'afflicted without cause.' Yet though in respect of Himself He was 'afflicted without cause,' in respect of our deeds it was not 'without cause.' For the rust of sin could not be cleared away, but by the fire of torment, He then came without sin, Who should submit Himself voluntarily to torment, that the chastisements due to our wickedness might justly loose the parties thereto obnoxious, in that they had unjustly kept Him, Who was free of them. Thus it was both without cause, and not without cause, that He was afflicted, Who had indeed no crimes in Himself, but Who cleansed with His blood the stain of our guilt.

Ver. 4, 5. *And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

28. When the evil spirit sees our Redeemer shine forth by miracles, he cries out, *We know Who Thou art, the Holy One of God*. [Luke 4, 34] And in saying this, he dreads, whilst he owns, the Son of God. Yet being a stranger to the power of heavenly pity, there are seasons when, beholding Him subject to suffering, he supposes Him to be mere man. Now he had learnt that there were many in the pastoral station, cloked under the guise of sanctity, who, being very far removed from the bowels of charity, held for very little other men's ills. And thus as though judging of Him by other

men, because after much had been taken from Him, he did not see him subdued, he so flamed against Him even to His very flesh, in applying the touch of suffering, as to say, *Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face*. As though he said in plain terms, 'He does not care to be moved by the things that are without Him, but it will then be really known what He is, if He shall experience in Himself what may make Him grieve.' This Satan expressed in his own person not by words, but by wishes, when he desired to have it brought to pass; in his members he brought it on both by words and wishes at once. For it is himself that speaks, when, according to the words of the Prophet, his followers say, *Let us put the wood in his bread, and let us raze him out from the land of the living*. [Jer. 11, 19. Vulg.] For 'to put the wood into the bread,' is to apply the trunk of the cross to His body in affixing Him thereto; and they think themselves able to 'raze out' His life from the land of the living, Whom while they perceive Him to be mortal mould, they imagine to be put an end to by death.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life.*

29. What fool even would believe that the Creator of all things was given up into 'the hands of Satan?' Yet who that is instructed by the Truth can be ignorant that of that very Satan all they are members who are Joined unto him by living frowardly? Thus Pilate shewed himself a member of him, who, even to the extremity of putting Him to death, knew not the Lord when He came for our Redemption. The chief priests proved themselves to be his body, who strove to drive the world's Redeemer from the world, by persecuting Him even to the cross. When then the Lord for our salvation gave Himself up to the hands of Satan's members, what else did He, but let loose that Satan's hand to rage against Himself, that by the very act

whereby He Himself outwardly fell low, He might set us free both outwardly and inwardly. If therefore the hand of Satan is taken for his power, He after the flesh bore the hand of him, whose power over the body He endured even to the spitting, the buffetting, the stripes, the cross, the lance; and hence when He cometh to His Passion He saith to Pilate, i.e. to the body of Satan, *Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above*; [John 19, 11] and yet this power, which He had given to him against Himself without, He compelled to serve the end of His own interest within. For Pilate, or Satan who was that Pilate's head, was held under the power of that One over Whom he had received power; in that being far above He had Himself ordained that which now condescending to an inferior condition He was undergoing from the persecutor, that though it arose from the evil mind of unbelievers, yet that very cruelty itself might also serve to the weal of all the Elect, and therefore He pitifully ordained all that within, which He suffered Himself to undergo thus foully without. And it is hence that it is said of Him at the supper, *Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments*. [John 13, 3] Behold how, when He was about to come into the hands of those that persecuted Him, He knew that those very persecutors even had been given into His own hand. For He, Who knew that He had received all things, plainly held those very persons by whom He was held, that He should Himself inflict on Himself, for the purposes of mercy, whatsoever their permitted wickedness should cruelly devise against Him. Let it then be said to him, *Behold, he is in thine hand*, in that when ravening thereafter he received permission to smite His flesh, yet unwittingly he rendered service to the Power of that Being.

30. Now he is ordered to 'save the life of the soul,' not that he is forbidden to tempt it, but that he is convicted of being unable to overcome

it. For never, as we that are mere men are oftentimes shaken by the assault of temptation, was the soul of your Redeemer disordered by its urgency. For though our enemy, being permitted, took Him up into an high mountain, though he promised that he would give Him the kingdoms of the earth, and though he shewed Him stones as to be turned into bread, yet he had no power to shake by temptation the mind of the Mediator betwixt God and man. For He so condescended to take all this upon Himself externally, that His mind, being still inwardly established in His Divine Nature, should remain unshaken. And if He is at any time said to be troubled and to have groaned in the spirit, He did Himself in His Divine nature ordain how much He should in His Human nature be troubled, unchangeably ruling over all things, yet shewing Himself subject to change in the satisfying of human frailty; and thus remaining at rest in Himself, He ordained whatsoever He did even with a troubled spirit for the setting forth of that human nature which He had taken upon Himself.

31. But as, when we love aright, there is nothing among created things that we love better than the life of our soul, and like as we say that we love those as our soul toward whom we strive to express the weight of our love, it may be that by the life of His Soul [*per animam*], is represented the life [*vita*] of the Elect. And while Satan is let loose to smite the Redeemer's flesh, he is debarred the soul, forasmuch as at the same time that he obtains His Body to inflict upon it the Passion, he loses the Elect from the claims of his power, And while That One's flesh suffers death by the Cross, the mind of these is stablished against assaults. Let it then be said, *Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life*. As if he had heard in plain words, 'Take permission against His Body, and lose thy right of wicked dominion over His Elect, whom foreknowing in Himself before the world began He holdeth for His own.'

Ver. 7. *So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*

32. No one entereth into this life of the Elect, that has not undergone the contradictions of this enemy. And they all have proved themselves the members of our Redeemer, who, from the first beginning of the world, whilst living righteously, have suffered wrongs. Did not Abel prove himself His member, who not only in propitiating God by his sacrifice, but also by dying without a word, was a figure of Him, of whom it is written, *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth*. [Is. 53, 7] Thus from the very beginning of the world he strove to vanquish the Body of our Redeemer; and thus He inflicted wounds 'from the sole of the foot to His crown,' in that beginning with mere men, he came to the very Head of the Church in his raging efforts. And it is well said;

Ver. 8. *And he took him a potsherd to scrape the humour withal.*

33. For what is the potsherd in the hand of the Lord, but the flesh which He took of the clay of our nature? For the potsherd receives firmness by fire. And the Flesh of our Lord was rendered stronger by His Passion, in so far as dying by infirmity, He arose from death void of infirmity. And hence too it is rightly delivered by the Prophet, *My strength is dried up like a potsherd*. [Ps. 22, 15] For His 'strength was dried up like a potsherd,' Who strengthened the infirmity of the flesh which He took upon Him by the fire of His Passion. But what is to be understood by *humour* [*saniem*] saving sin? For it is the custom to denote the sins of the flesh by *flesh* and *blood*. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Deliver me from blood*. [Ps. 51, 16] Humour then is the corruption of the blood. And so what do we understand by humour but the sins of the flesh, rendered worse by length of time? Thus the wound turns to humour when sin, being neglected, is aggravated by habit. And so the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, in

giving up His Body into the hands of those that persecuted Him, scraped the humour with a potsherd, forasmuch as He put away sin by the flesh; for He came, as it is written, *in the likeness of sinful flesh, that He might condemn sin of sin*. [Rom. 8, 3. Vulg.] And whilst He presented the purity of His own Flesh to the enemy, He cleansed away the defilements of ours. And by means of that flesh whereby the enemy held us captive, He made atonement for us whom He set free. For that which was made an instrument of sin by us, was by our Mediator converted for us into the *instrument of righteousness*. And so 'the humour is scraped with a potsherd,' when sin is overcome by the flesh. It is rightly subjoined;

And he sat down upon a dunghill.

34. Not in the court in which the law resounds, not in the building which lifts its top on high, but on a dunghill he takes his seat, which is because the Redeemer of man on coming to take the flesh, as Paul testifies, *hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty*. [1 Cor. 1, 27] Does not He, as it were, sit down upon a dunghill, the buildings being ruined, Who, the Jews in their pride being left desolate, rests in that Gentile world, which He had for so long time rejected? He is found outside the dwelling all in His sores, Who herein, that He bore with Judaea, which set itself against Him, suffered the pain of His Passion amid the scorn of His own people; as John bears witness, who says, *He came unto His own, but His own received Him not*. [John 1, 11] And how He rests Himself upon a dunghill, let this same Truth say for Himself; for He declared, *Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance*. [Luke 15, 7. and 10.] See, He sits upon a dunghill in grief, Who, after sins have been committed, is willing to take possession of penitent hearts. Are not the hearts of penitent sinners like a kind of dunghill, in that while they review their misdoings with bewailing, they are, as it were, heaping dung before

their eyes in abusing themselves? So when Job was smitten he did not seek a mountain, but sat down upon a dunghill, in that when our Redeemer came to His Passion, He left the high minds of the proud, and rested in the lowliness of the heavy laden. And this, while yet before His Incarnation, He indicated, when He said by the Prophet, *But to this man will I look, even to him, that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word*. [Is. 66, 2]

35. But who can think what numberless outrages He underwent at the hands of men, Who shewed to men such unnumbered mercies? Who can think how great those are which He even yet undergoes, yea now that He reigns from above over the hearts of the faithful? For it is He that endures daily all wherein His Elect are racked and rent by the hands of the reprobate. And though the Head of this Body, which same are we, already lifts itself free above all things, yet He still feels in His Body, which He keeps here below, the wounds dealt it by reprobate sinners. But why do we speak thus of unbelievers, when within the very Church itself we see multitudes of carnal men, who fight against the life of our Redeemer by their wicked ways. For there are some, who set upon Him with evil deeds, because they cannot with swords, forasmuch as when they see that what they go after is lacking to them in the Church, they become enemies to the just, and not only settle themselves into wicked practices, but are also busy to bend the uprightness of good men to a crooked course. For they neglect to lift their eyes to the things of eternity, and in littleness of mind they yield themselves up to the lust of temporal things, and they fall the deeper from eternal blessings, in proportion as they look upon temporal blessings as the only ones. The simplicity of the righteous is displeasing to these, and when they find opportunity for disturbing them, they press them to lay hold of their own duplicity. Hence also this is in just accordance, which is added,

Ver. 9. *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*

36. For of what did that mispersuading woman bear the likeness, but of all the carnal that are settled in the bosom of Holy Church, who in proportion as by the words of the Faith they profess they are within the pale, press harder on all the good by their ill-regulated conduct. For they would perchance have done less mischief, if Holy Church had not admitted in and welcomed to the bed of faith those, whom, by receiving in a profession of faith, she doubtless puts it almost out of her power to eschew. It is hence that in the press of the crowd one woman touched our Redeemer, whereupon the same our Redeemer at once saith, *Who touched Me?* And when the disciples answered Him, *The multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?* He therefore subjoined, *Somebody hath touched Me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.*

37. Thus many press the Lord, but one alone touches Him; in that all carnal men in the Church press Him, from Whom they are far removed, while they alone touch Him, who are really united to Him in humility. Therefore the crowd presses Him, in that the multitude of the carnally minded, as it is within the pale, so is it the more hardly borne with. It 'presses,' but it does not 'touch,' in that it is at once troublesome by its presence, and absent by its way of life. For sometimes they pursue us with bad discourse, and sometimes with evil practices alone, for so at one time they persuade to what they practise, and at another, though they use no persuasions, yet they cease not to afford examples of wickedness. They, then, that entice us to do evil either by word or by example, are surely our persecutors, to whom we owe the conflicts of temptation, which we have to conquer at least in the heart.

38. But we should know that carnal men in the Church set themselves to prompt wickedness at one time from a principle of fear, and at another of

audacity, and when they themselves go wrong either from littleness of mind or pride of heart, they study to infuse these qualities, as if out of love, into the hearts of the righteous. So Peter, before the Death and Resurrection of our Lord, retained a carnal mind. It was with a carnal mind that the son of Zeruiah held to his leader David, whom he was joined to. Yet the one was led into sin by fear, the other by pride. For the first, when he heard of his Master's Death, said, *Be it far from Thee, Lord*; *this shall not be unto Thee*. [Matt. 16, 22] But the latter, not enduring the wrongs offered to his leader, says, *Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?* [2 Sam. 19, 21] But to the first it is immediately replied, *Get thee behind Me, Satan*. [Matt. 16, 23] And the other with his brother immediately heard the words; *What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye are this day turned into a Satan* [So Vulg. E.V. *Adversaries*] *unto me?* [2 Sam. 19, 22] So that evil prompters are taken for apostate angels in express designation, who, as if in love, draw men to unlawful deeds by their enticing words. But they are much the worse, who give into this sin not from fear but from pride, of whom the wife of blessed Job bore the figure in a special manner, in that she sought to prompt high thoughts to her husband, saying, *Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die*. She blames the simplicity in her husband, that in contempt of all things transitory, with a pure heart, he longs after the eternal only, As though she said, 'Why dost thou in thy simplicity seek after the things of eternity, and in resignation groan under the weight of present ills? Transgress [*Excedens*], and contemn eternity, and even by dying escape from present woes.' But when any of the Elect encounter evil within coming from carnal men, what a model [*formam*] of uprightness they exhibit in themselves, let us learn from the words of him, wounded and yet whole, seated yet erect, who says,

Ver. 10. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?*

39. Holy men, when fastened upon by the war of afflictions, when at one and the same moment they are exposed to this party dealing them blows and to that urging persuasions, present to the one sort the shield of patience, at the other they launch the darts of instruction, and lift themselves up to either mode of warfare with a wonderful skill in virtue, so that they should at the same time both instruct with wisdom the froward counsels within, and contemn with courage the adverse events without; that by their instructions they may amend the one sort, and by their endurance put down the other. For the assailing foes they contemn by bearing them, and the crippled citizens they recover to a state of soundness, by sympathizing with them. Those they resist, that they may not draw off others also; they alarm themselves for these, lest they should wholly lose the life of righteousness.

40, Let us view the soldier of God's camp fighting against either sort, He says, *Without were fightings, within were fears*. [2 Cor. 7, 5] He reckons up the wars, which he underwent externa1ly, in these words, *In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils ,in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren*. [2 Cor. 11, 26] Now in this war, what were those darts which he sent against the foe, let him add, *In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness*. [ib. 27] And let him say, when caught amidst such numerous assaults, with what a watchful defence he at the same time guarded the camp too. For he forthwith proceeds, *Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches*. [ib. 28] See how bravely he takes upon himself those fights, how mercifully he spends himself in defending his neighbours. He describes the ills which he suffers, he subjoins the good that he imparts. So let us consider how

toilsome it must be, at one and the same time to undergo troubles without, and to defend the weak within. Without, fightings are his lot, in that he is torn with stripes and bound with chains; within he suffers alarm, in that he dreads lest his sufferings do a mischief, not to himself but to his disciples. And hence he writes to those same disciples, saying, *That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto*. [1 Thess. 3, 3] For in suffering himself he feared for the fate of others, lest while the disciples perceive him to be afflicted for the faith with stripes, they be backward to confess themselves to be of the faithful. Oh! bowels of boundless love! All that he suffers himself, he disregards, and is concerned lest the disciples should suffer ought of evil prompting within the heart. He slights the wounds of the body in himself, and heals the wounds of the soul in others. For the righteous have this proper to themselves, that in the midst of the pain of their own woe, they never give over the care of others' weal, and when in suffering afflictions they grieve for themselves, still by giving needful instruction they provide for others, and are like some great physicians, that being smitten are brought into a state of sickness. They themselves suffer from the lacerations of the wound, yet they proffer the salves of saving health to others. But it is very far less toilsome, either to instruct when you are not suffering, or to suffer when you are not giving instruction. Hence holy men skilfully apply their energies to both objects, and when they chance to be stricken with afflictions, they so meet the wars from without, that they take anxious thought that their neighbour's interior be not rent and torn. Thus holy men stand up courageously in the line, and on the one hand smite with the javelin the breasts advanced against them, and on the other cover with the shield their feeble comrades in the rear. And thus with a rapid glance they look out on either side, that they may at the same time pierce their daring foes in front, and shield from wounds their trembling friends behind. Therefore, because holy men then are skilled so to

meet adversities without, that they are at the same time able to correct froward counsels within, it may be well said, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.* For as it is said to the Elect, *Act like men, and He shall comfort your heart*; [Ps. 31, 24. Vulg.] so the minds of carnal men, which serve God with a yielding purpose, are not undeservedly called 'women.'

41. *What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* As though he said, 'If we are bent upon eternal blessings, what wonder if we meet with temporal evils?' Now these blessings Paul had his eye fixed on with earnest interest, when he submitted with a composed mind to the ills that fell upon him, saying, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*. [Rom. 8, 18]

In all this did not Job sin with his lips. When holy men undergo persecution both within and without, they not only never transgress in injurious expressions against God, but they never launch words of reviling against their very adversaries themselves; which Peter, the leader of the good, rightly warns us of when he says, *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an* [So Vulg.] *evil speaker*. [1 Pet. 4, 15] For the evil speaker's way of suffering is, in the season of his suffering, to break loose in abuse at least of his persecutor. But forasmuch as the Body of our Redeemer, viz. Holy Church, so bears the burthen of her sorrows, that she never transgresses the bounds of humility by words, it is rightly said of this sorrower;

In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Ver. 11. *Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came everyone from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.*

42. In the Preface to this work we said that the friends of blessed Job, though they come together to him with a good purpose, yet do for this reason bear the likeness of heretics, in that they fall away into sin by speaking without discretion; and hence it is said to them by blessed Job, *Surely I would speak to the Almighty, I desire to reason with God; but ye are forgers of lies, and followers of corrupt doctrines*. [Job 13, 3. 4.] Thus Holy Church, which is set in the midst of tribulation all this time of her pilgrimage, whilst she suffers wounds, and mourns over the downfall of her members, has other enemies of Christ besides to bear with, under Christ's name. For to the increasing of her grief, heretics also meet together in dispute and strife, and they pierce her with unreasonable words like as with a kind of dart.

43. And it is well said, *they came every one from his own place*. For 'the place' of heretics is very pride itself. For except they first swelled with pride in their hearts, they would never enter the lists of false assertion. For the place of the wicked is pride, just as reversely humility is 'the place' of the good. Whereof Solomon saith, *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place.* [Eccles. 10, 4] As though he said in plain words, 'If thou perceivest the spirit of the Tempter to prevail against thee in aught, quit not the lowliness of penitence;' and that it was the abasement of penitence that he called 'our place,' he shews by the words that follow, saying, *for healing* [ib. Vulg.] *pacifieth great offences.* For what else is the humility of mourning, save the remedy of sin. Heretics therefore come each from 'his place,' in that it is from pride that they are urged to attack Holy Church.

44. And their froward conduct, moreover, is collected from an interpretation of their names. For they are named 'Eliphaz,' 'Baldad,' 'Sophar;' and as we have said above Eliphaz is, by interpretation, rendered, 'contempt of God.' For if they did not condemn God, they would never

entertain wrong notions concerning Him. And Baldad is rendered 'oldness alone.' For while they shrink from being fairly defeated, and seek to be victorious with froward purpose, they pay no regard to the conversation of the new life, and all that they give heed to is 'of oldness alone.' And Sophar, 'dissipating prospect;' for they that are set in Holy Church humbly contemplate with true faith the mysteries of their Redeemer, but when heretics come to them with false statements, they 'dissipate the prospect,' in that they turn aside from the aim of right contemplation the minds of those, whom they draw over to themselves.

45. Now the places from whence they come are described in fitting accordance with the practices of heretics. For there is a Themanite, and a Suhite, and a Naamathite named. Now *Thema* is by interpretation 'the south;' *Suhi*, 'speaking;' *Naama*, 'come1iness.' But who does not know that the south is a hot wind; so heretics, as they are over ardent to be wise, study to have heated wits beyond what needs. For sloth goes with the torpor of cold, whilst reversely the restlessness of unrestrained curiosity accords with unabated teeming heat, and so because they long to feel the heat of wisdom beyond what they ought, they are said to come from 'the south.' Paul busied himself to cool the minds of the faithful to this heat of unrestrained wiseness, when he said, *Not to be overwise beyond what he ought to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety*. [Rom. 12, 3. Vulg.] It is hence that David smites at the *valleys of salt*, [2 Sam. 8, 13] viz. in that our Redeemer, by the piercing of His severity, extinguishes the foolishness of unrestrained wit in all that entertain wrong notions regarding Him. And *Suhi* is rendered 'talking,' for they desire to be warm-witted, not that they may live well, but that they may talk high; thus they are said to come from *Thema* and *Suhi*, i.e. from 'heat,' and 'talkativeness,' for herein, viz. that they shew themselves as studious of Scripture, they teem with words of talkativeness, but not with bowels of love. And *Naama* is interpreted 'comeliness,' for

because they aim not to be, but to appear learned, by words of deep learning they put on the guise of well living, and by their teeming wit in talk, exhibit in themselves a form of 'comeliness,' that by the comeliness of the lips they may more easily recommend evil counsels, in proportion as they commonly hide from our senses the foulness of their lives. But neither are the very names of the places set down in undistinguished order in the relation. For *Thema* is set first, then *Suhi*, and next *Naama* in that first an excessive warmth of wit sets them on fire, next smartness of speech lifts them up, and then, finally, dissimulation presents them comely to the eyes of men.

For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him and to comfort him.

46. Heretics 'make an appointment together,' when they hold in common certain false opinions contrary to the Church, and in the points wherein they are at variance with the truth agree together in falsehood. But all they that give us instruction concerning eternity, what else are they doing, save amid the tribulations of our pilgrimage administering consolation to us? And forasmuch as heretics desire to impart to Holy Church their own opinions, they come to her as though to comfort her. Nor is it strange if they who set forth a figure of enemies, are called friends, when it is said to the very traitor, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* [Mat. 26, 50] and the rich man that is consumed in the fire of hell, is called *son* by Abraham. [Luke 16, 25] For though the wicked refuse to be amended by us, yet it is meet that we style them friends, not of their wickedness, but by virtue of our own lovingkindness.

Ver. 12. *And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept.*

47. All heretics, in contemplating the deeds of Holy Church, lift up their eyes, in that they are themselves down below, and when they look at her works, the objects, which they are gazing at, are set high above them. Yet

they do not know her in her sorrow, for she herself covets to ‘receive evil things’ here, that so being purified she may attain to the reward of an eternal recompence, and for the most part she dreads prosperity, and joys in the hard lessons of her training. Therefore heretics, who aim at present things as something great, know her not amidst her wounds. For that, which they see in her, they recognise not in the reading of their own hearts. While she then is gaining ground even by her adversities, they themselves stick fast in their stupefaction, because they know not by experiment the things they see. And they rent everyone his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

48. Like as we take the garments of the Church for the whole number of the faithful; (and it is hence that the Prophet saith, *Thou shalt clothe thee with them all as with an ornament*; [Is. 49, 18]) so the garments of heretics are all they that attaching themselves with one accord to them are implicated in their errors. But heretics have this point proper to themselves, that they cannot remain stationary for long in that stage wherein they leave the Church, but they are day by day precipitated into further extremes, and by hatching worse opinions they split into manifold divisions, and are in most cases parted the wider from one another by their contention and disorderment. Thus because all those, whom they attach to their ill faith [*perfidiae*], are further torn by them in endless splitting, it may well be said that the friends who come rend their garments [*rumpunt*], but when the garments are rent, the body is shewn through; for it oftentimes happens, that when the followers are rent and torn, the wickedness of their imaginings is disc1osed, for discord to lay open the artifices, which their great guilt in agreeing together had heretofore kept close.

49. But now, they ‘sprinkle dust upon their heads to heaven.’ What is represented by *dust*, saving earthly senses; what by the head, saving that which is our leading principle, viz. the mind? What is set forth by ‘heaven,’

but the law of heavenly revelation? So, to ‘sprinkle dust upon the head to heaven,’ is to corrupt the mind with an earthly perception, and to put earthly senses upon heavenly words. Now they generally canvas the words of God more than they take them in, and for this reason they sprinkle dust upon their heads, forasmuch as they strain themselves in the precepts of God, following an earthly sense, beyond the powers of their mind.

Ver. 13. *So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights.*

50. In the day we make out the objects that we look at, but in the night, either from the blindness we discern nothing, or from the uncertainty we are bewildered. Accordingly by ‘day’ we have ‘understanding’ represented, and by ‘night,’ ‘ignorance.’ And by the number seven the sum of completeness is expressed; and hence in seven days, and no more, the whole of this transitory period is accomplished. How then is it that the friends of blessed Job are said to sit with him seven days and seven nights, saving that heretics, whether in those things wherein they admit the true light, or in those wherein they are under the darkness of ignorance, as it were feign to let themselves down to Holy Church in her weakness, while under colour of caresses, they are preparing their snares to catch her withal? and though, whether in the things which they do understand, or in those which they are unable to understand, through the swelling of a bloated self-elation, they account themselves great in their own eyes, yet sometimes in semblance they bend to Holy Church, and while they make soft their words, they insinuate their venom, ‘To sit upon the earth,’ then, is to exhibit somewhat of the figure of humility, that whilst their exterior appears humble, they may recommend the proud doctrines which they teach.

51. But it is possible that by ‘the earth’ may be also represented the Incarnation of our Mediator. And hence it is said to Israel, *An altar of earth shalt thou then make unto Me*. [Ex. 20, 24] For to make an *altar of earth* for

the Lord is to trust in the Incarnation of our Mediator. For then our gift is received by God, when our humility has placed upon His Altar, i.e. upon the belief of our Lord's Incarnation, all the works that it performs. Thus we place our offered gift upon an altar of earth, if our actions be firmly based upon faith in the Lord's Incarnation. But there are some heretics, who do not deny that the Incarnation of the Mediator took place, but either think otherwise concerning His Divinity than is true, or in the character of the Incarnation itself are at variance with us. They then that with us declare the true Incarnation of our Redeemer, as it were sit alike with Job upon the earth, and they are described as sitting upon the ground seven days and seven nights; forasmuch as whether in this very thing that they understand somewhat of the fulness of truth, or in this that they are thoroughly blinded by the darkness of their foolish minds, they cannot yet deny the mystery of the Incarnation. And so to sit upon the earth with blessed Job, is to believe in the true Flesh of our Redeemer in unison with Holy Church.

52. Now sometimes heretics wreak their animosity against us in punishments as well, sometimes they pursue us with words only. Sometimes they provoke us when quiet, but sometimes, seeing us hold our peace, they remain quiet, and they are friendly to the dumb, but hostile to them that open their lips, and hence forasmuch as blessed Job had not as yet said aught to them in converse, it is rightly added, *And none spake a word unto him*. For we find our adversaries hold their peace, so long as we forbear by preaching to beget sons of the true faith. But if we begin to speak aright, we immediately feel the weight of their reviling by their reply; forthwith they start into hostility, and burst out into a voice of bitterness against us, doubtless because they fear lest the hearts, which the weight of folly presses down beneath, should be drawn up on high by the voice of him that speaketh aright. Therefore, as we have said, because our enemies love us

when mute, and hate us when we speak, it is rightly said in the case of Job keeping silence,

And none spake a word unto him.

53. Yet sometimes when they see the hearts of believers vacant through sloth, they do not cease to scatter the seeds of error by speech. But when they see the minds of the good busied on high, seeking the way back to their country, earnestly sorrowing over the toils of this place of exile, they rein in their tongues with anxious heed; in that they see that whilst they assail those sorrowing hearts with fruitless words, they are speedily made to hold their peace. And hence whereas it is well said, *none spake a word unto him*, the cause of their silence is immediately brought in by implication, when it is said,

For they saw that his grief was very great.

54. For when our hearts are pierced with violent grief from the love of God, the adversary fears to speak frowardly at random, for he sees that by provoking the fixed mind, he not only has no power to draw it to untoward ways, but that by its being stirred up, he may chance to lose even those whom he held bound.

55. Perhaps it may influence some that we have so made out these particulars, that what was well done by the friends should denote that which was to be ill done by heretics. Yet in this way it very often happens that a circumstance is virtue in the historical fact, evil in its meaning and import, just as an action is sometimes in the doing ground of condemnation, but in the writing, a prophecy of merit, which we shall the sooner shew, if we shall bring forward one testimony of Holy Writ to prove both points. For who, that hears of it, not only among believers but of unbelievers themselves also, does not utterly loathe this, that David walking upon his solar lusteth after Beershebah the wife of Uriah? Yet when he returns back from the battle, he bids him go home to wash his feet. Whereupon he answered at

once, *The Ark of the Lord abideth in tents, shall I then take rest in my house?* [2 Sam. 11, 11] David received him to his own board, and delivers to him letters, through which he must die. But of whom does David walking upon his solar bear a figure, saving of Him, concerning Whom it is written, *He hath set his tabernacle in the sun*? [Ps. 19, 4. Vulg.] And what else is it to draw Beersheba to himself, but to join to Himself by a spiritual meaning the Law of the formal letter, which was united to a carnal people? For Beersheba is rendered 'the seventh well,' assuredly, in that through the knowledge of the Law, with spiritual grace infused, perfect wisdom is ministered unto us. And whom does Uriah denote, but the Jewish people, whose name is rendered by interpretation, 'My light from God?' Now forasmuch as the Jewish people is raised high by receiving the knowledge of the Law, it as it were glories 'in the light of God.' But David took from this Uriah his wife, and united her to himself, surely in that the strong-handed One, which is the rendering of 'David,' our Redeemer, shewed Himself in the flesh, whilst He made known that the Law spake in a spiritual sense concerning Himself, Hereby, that it was held by them after the letter, He proved it to be alienated from the Jewish people, and joined it to Himself, in that He declared Himself to be proclaimed by it. Yet David bids Uriah 'go home to wash his feet,' in that when the Lord came Incarnate, He bade the Jewish people turn back to the home of the conscience, and wipe off with their tears the defilements of their doings, that it should understand the precepts of the Law in a spiritual sense, and finding the fount of Baptism after the grievous hardness of the commandments, have recourse to water after toil. But Uriah, who recalled to mind that the ark of the Lord was under tents, answered, that he could not enter into his house. As if the Jewish people said, I view the precepts of God in carnal sacrifices, and I need not to go back to the conscience in following a spiritual meaning. For he, as it were, declares 'the ark of the

Lord to be under tents,’ who views the precepts of God as designed for no other end than to shew forth a service of carnal sacrifice. Yet when he would not return home, David even bids him to his table, in that though the Jewish people disdain to return home into the conscience, yet the Redeemer at His coming avouches the commandments to be spiritual, saying, *For had ye believed Moses, ye would* [Vulg. *would perchance*] *have believed Me: for he wrote of Me*. [John 5, 46] And thus the Jewish people holds that Law, which tells of His Divinity, whereunto that people deigns not to give credence. And hence Uriah is sent to Joab with letters, according to which he is to be put to death, in that the Jewish people bears itself the Law, by whose convicting testimony it is to die. For whereas holding fast the commandments of the Law it strives hard to fulfil them, clearly it does itself deliver the judgment whereupon it is condemned. What, then, in respect of the fact, is more foul than David? What can be named purer than Uriah? What again in respect of the mystery can be discovered holier than David, what more faithless than Uriah? Since the one by guiltiness of life prophetically betokens innocency, and the other by innocency of life prophetically represents guilt. Wherefore it is with no inaptitude that by the things that are well done by the friends of Job we have represented to us those to be done amiss by heretics, in that it is the excellency of Holy Writ so to relate the past as to set forth the future; in such wise to vindicate the case in the fact, that it is against it in the mystery; so to condemn the things done, that they are commended to us as fit to be done in the way of mystery.

MORAL INTERPRETATION

56. So then as we have completed the allegorical mysteries, unravelling them piece by piece, let us now proceed to follow out the sense of the moral truth, hastily touching thereupon, for the mind hastens forward to make out the parts of greater difficulty, and if it is for long wrapped up in the plain

parts, it is hindered from knocking as it were fit at those which are closed. Oftentimes our old enemy, after he has brought down upon our mind the conflict of temptation, retires for a time from his own contest, not to put an end to his wickedness, but that upon those hearts, which he has rendered secure by a respite, returning of a sudden, he may make his inroad the more easily and unexpectedly. It is hence that he returns again to try the blessed man, and demands pains on the head of him, whom nevertheless the Supreme Mercy while keeping fast yields up to him, saying,

Ver. 6. *Behold, he is in thine hand: but save his life.*

57. For He so forsakes us that He guards us, and so guards us that by the permitted case of temptation, He shews us our state of weakness. And he immediately *went forth from before the face of the Lord*, and by smiting him whom He had thus gotten he wounded him *from the sole of his foot even to his crown*. Thus, viz. in that when he receives permission, beginning with the least, and reaching even to the greater points, he as it were rends and pierces all the body of the mind [*corpus mentis*] with the temptations which he brings upon it, yet he does not attain to the smiting of the soul [*animam*], in that deep at the bottom of all the thoughts of the heart, the interior purpose of our secret resolution holds out, in the midst of the very wounds of gratification which it receives, so that although the enjoyment may eat into the mind, yet it does not so bend the set intent of holy uprightness as to bring it to the very softness of consenting. Yet it is our duty to cleanse the mere wounds of enjoyment themselves by the sharp treatment of penance, and if aught that is dissolute springs up in the heart to refine it with the chastening hand of rigorous severity. And hence it is rightly added immediately,

Ver. 8. *And he took him a potsherd to scrape the humour withal.*

58. For what do we understand by the 'potsherd,' saving forcibleness of severity, and what by the 'humour,' save laxity of unlawful imaginations?

And thus we are smitten, and ‘scrape off the humour with a potsherd,’ when after the defilements of unlawful thoughts, we cleanse ourselves by a sharp judgment. By the potsherd too we may understand the frailness of mortality. And then to ‘scrape the humour with a potsherd,’ is to ponder on the course and frailty of our mortal state, and to wipe off the rottenness of a wretched self-gratification. For when a man bethinks himself how soon the flesh returns to dust, he readily gets the better of that which originating in the flesh foully assails him in the interior. So, when bad thoughts arising from temptation flow into the mind, it is as if humour kept running from a wound. But the humour is soon cleansed away, if the frailty of our nature be taken up in the thought, like a potsherd in the hand.

59. For neither are these suggestions to be lightly esteemed, which though they may not draw us on so far as to the act, yet work in the mind in an unlawful way. It is hence that our Redeemer was come, as it were, ‘to scrape the humour from our wounds,’ when He said, *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*. [Matt. 5, 27. 28.] ‘The humour,’ therefore, ’is wiped off,’ when sin is not only severed from the deed, but also from the thought. It is hence that Jerubbaal saw the Angel when he was winnowing corn from the chaff, at whose bidding he forthwith dressed a kid and set it upon a rock, and poured over it the broth of the flesh, which the Angel touched with a rod, and thereupon fire coming out of the rock consumed it. [Judg. 6, 11. &c.] For what else is it to beat corn with a rod, but to separate the grains of virtues from the chaff of vices, with an upright judgment? But to those that are thus employed the Angel presents himself, in that the Lord is more ready to communicate interior truths in proportion as men are more earnest in ridding themselves of external things. And he orders a kid to be killed, i.e. every appetite of the flesh to be sacrificed, and

the flesh to be set upon a rock, and the broth thereof to be poured upon it. Whom else does the 'rock' represent, saving Him, of Whom it is said by Paul, *And that rock was Christ?* [1 Cor. 10, 4] We 'set flesh then upon the rock,' when in imitation of Christ we crucify our body. He too pours the juice of the flesh over it, who, in following the conversation of Christ, empties himself even of the mere thoughts of the flesh themselves. For 'the broth' of the dissolved flesh is in a manner 'poured upon the rock,' when the mind is emptied of the flow of carnal thoughts too. Yet the Angel directly touches it with a rod, in that the might of God's succour never leaves our striving forsaken. And fire issues from the rock, and consumes the broth and the flesh, in that the Spirit, breathed upon us by the Redeemer, lights up the heart with so fierce a flame of compunction, that it consumes every thing in it that is unlawful either in deed or in thought. And therefore it is the same thing here 'to scrape the humour with a potsherd,' that it is there to 'pour the broth upon the rock.' For the perfect mind is ever eagerly on the watch, not only that it may refuse to do bad acts, but that it may even wipe off all that is become foul and soft in it, in the workings of imagination. But it often happens that war springs up from the very victory, so that when the impure thought is vanquished, the mind of the victor is struck by self-elation. Therefore it follows that the mind must be no otherwise elevated in purity, than that it should be heedfully brought under in humility. And hence, whereas it was said of the holy man, *And he took a potsherd, and scraped the humour withal*, it is forthwith fitly added,

And he sat down upon a dunghill.

60. For 'to sit down upon a dunghill' is for a man to entertain mean and abject notions of himself. For us to 'sit upon a dunghill,' is to carry back the eye of the mind, in a spirit of repentance, to those things which we have unlawfully committed, that when we see the dung of our sins before our eyes, we may bend low all that rises up in the mind of pride. He sits upon a

dunghill, who regards his own weakness with earnest attention, and never lifts himself up for those good qualities, which he has received through grace. Did not Abraham sit by himself upon a dunghill, when he said, *Behold, now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes?* [Gen. 18, 27] For it is plain to see in what place he had set himself, who, at the very moment that he was speaking with God, reckoned himself to be 'dust and ashes.' If he then thus despises himself who is raised to the honour of converse with the Deity even, we should consider with earnest thoughts of heart with what woes they are destined to be stricken, who, while they never advance a step towards the highest things, are yet lifted up on the score of the least and lowest attainments. For there are some, who, when they do but little things, think great things of themselves. They lift their minds on high, and account themselves to excel other men in the deserts of virtue. For surely, these inwardly quit the dunghill of humility within themselves, and scale the heights of pride; herein following the steps of him, the first that elevated himself in his own eyes, and in elevating brought himself to the ground, following the steps of him, who was not content with that dignity of a created being, which he had received, saying, *I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God*. [Is. 14, 13] And it is hence that she, which is united to him by an evil alliance, even Babylon, i.e. 'the confused multitude of sinners,' says, *I am, and none else beside me, I shall not sit as a widow*. [Is. 47, 8] Whosoever then swells within him, has set himself on high by himself. Yet doth he sink himself so much the deeper below, in proportion as he scorns to think the lowest things of himself according to the truth. There are some too that labour not to do aught that is virtuous, yet when they see others commit sin, they fancy themselves righteous by comparison with them. For all hearts are not wounded by the same or a similar offence. For this one is entrapped by pride, while that perchance is overthrown by anger, and avarice is the sting

of one, while luxury fires another. And it very often chances that he, who is brought down by pride, sees how another is inflamed with anger; and because anger does not speedily influence himself, he now reckons that he is better than his passionate neighbour, and is as it were lifted up on the score of his righteousness in his own eyes, in that he forgets to take account of the fault, by which he is more grievously enchained. And it very often happens that he who is mangled by avarice, beholds another plunged in the whirlpool of luxury, and because he sees himself to be a stranger to carnal pollution, he never heeds by what defilements of the spiritual life he is himself inwardly polluted; and while he considers well the evil in another, which he is himself without, he forgets to take account in his own case of that which he has; and so it is brought to pass, that when the mind to be pronounced upon goes off to the cases of other men, it is deprived of the light of its own judgment, and so much the more cruelly vaunts itself against others' failings, in proportion as it is from negligence in ignorance of its own.

61. But, on the other hand, they that really desire to rise to the heights of virtue, whenever they hear of the faults of others, immediately recall the mind to their own; and the more they really bewail these last, so much the more rightly do they pronounce judgment on those others. Therefore, forasmuch as every elect person restrains himself in the consideration of his own frailty, it may be well said that the holy man in his sorrow sits down upon a dunghill. For he that really humbles himself as he goes on his way, marks with the eye of continued observation all the filth of sin wherewith he is beset. But we must know that it is in prosperity that the mind is oftenest touched with urgent temptations, yet that it sometimes happens that we at the same time undergo crosses without, and are wearied with the urgency of temptation within, so that both the scourge tortures the flesh, and yet suggestion of the flesh pours in upon the mind. And hence it is well, that

after the many wounds that blessed Job received, we have yet further the words of his illadvising wife subjoined also, who says,

Ver. 9. *Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.*

62. For the illadvising wife is the carnal thought goading the mind, since it often happens, as has been said above, that we are both harrassed with strokes without, and wearied with carnal promptings within. For it is hence that Jeremiah bewails, saying, *Abroad the sword bereaveth; at home there is as death*. [Lam. 1, 20] Since ‘the sword bereaveth,’ when vengeance outwardly smites and pierces us, and ‘at home there is as death,’ in that indeed he both undergoes the lash, and yet the conscience is not clear of the stains of temptation within. Hence David says, *Let them be as chaff before the wind, and let the angel of the Lord persecute them*. [Ps. 35, 5] For he that is caught by the blast of temptation in the heart, is lifted up like dust before the face of the wind; and when in the midst of these strokes the rigour of God smites them, what else is it, but the Angel of the Lord that persecutes them?

63. But these trials are carried on in the case of the reprobate in one way, and of the Elect in another. The hearts of the first sort are so tempted that they yield consent, and those of the last undergo temptations indeed, but offer resistance. The mind of the one is taken captive with a feeling of delight, and if at the moment that which is prompted amiss is displeasing, yet afterwards by deliberation it gives pleasure. But these so receive the darts of temptation, that they weary themselves in unceasing resistance, and if at any time the mind under temptation is hurried away to entertain a feeling of delight, yet they quickly blush at the very circumstance of their delight stealing upon them, and blame with unsparing censure all that they detect springing up in themselves of a carnal nature. Hence it is rightly added immediately,

Ver. 10. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

64. For it is meet that the holy mind restrain by spiritual correction whatever of a carnal nature within it utters rebellious muttering, that the flesh whether by speaking severe things may not draw it into impatience, nor yet by speaking smooth ones melt it to the looseness of lust. Therefore let manly censure, reproving the dictates of unlawful imaginations, hold hard the dissolute softness of what is base in us, by saying, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh*. And, on the other hand, let the consideration of the gifts repress the discontent of bitter thought, saying, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* And whoever desires to get the mastery of his vices, and goes forward to the eternal heights of inward recompense [*retributionis*] with the steps of a true purpose, the more he sees himself to be on every hand beset with the war of the vices, the more resolutely he arrays himself with the armour of the virtues, and fears the darts the less, in proportion as he defends his breast bravely against their assault.

65. Yet it very often happens, that whilst we are striving to stay ourselves in this fight of temptation by exalted virtues, certain vices cloak themselves to our eyes under the garb of virtues, and come to us as it were with a smooth face, but how adverse to us they are we perceive upon examination. And hence the friends of blessed Job as it were come together for the purpose of giving comfort, but they burst out into reviling, in that vices that plot our ruin assume the look of virtues, but strike us with hostile assault. For often immoderate anger desires to appear justice, and often dissolute remissness, mercy; often fear without precaution would seem humility, often unbridled pride, liberty. Thus the friends come to give consolation, but fall off into words of reproach, in that vices, cloaked under the guise of

virtues, set out indeed with a smooth outside, but confound us by a bitter hostility. And it is rightly said,

Ver. 11. *For they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.*

66. For vices make an appointment together under the cloak of virtues; in that there are certain ones, which are banded together against us by a kind of agreement, such as pride and anger, remissness and fear. For anger is neighbour to pride, and remissness to cowardice. Those then come together by agreement, which are allied to one another in opposition to us, by a kind of kinship in iniquity; but if we acknowledge the toilsomeness of our captivity, if we grieve in our inmost soul from love of our eternal home, the sins that steal upon the inopportunely joyful, will not be able to prevail against the opportunely sad. Hence it is well added,

Ver. 12. *And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept.*

67. For the vices do not know us in our afflictions, in that so soon as they have knocked at the dejected heart, being reproved they start back, and they, which as it were knew us in our joy, because they made their way in, cannot know us in our sadness, in that they break their edge on our very rigidity itself. But our old enemy, the more he sees that he is himself caught out in them, and that with a good courage, cloaks them with so much the deeper disguise under the image of virtues; and hence it is added, They lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

Ver. 18. *So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights.*

68. For by the weeping pity is betokened, discretion by the cutting of the garments, the affecting [al. 'effecting'] of good works by the dust upon the head, humility by the sitting. For sometimes the enemy in plotting against

us feigns somewhat that is full of pity, that he may bring us down to an end of cruelty. As is the case, when he prevents a fault being corrected by chastisement, that that, which is not suppressed in this life, may be stricken with the fire of hell. Sometimes he presents the form of discretion to the eyes, and draws us on to snares of indiscretion, which happens, when at his instigation we as it were from prudence allow ourselves too much nourishment on account of our weakness, while we are imprudently raising against ourselves assaults of the flesh. Sometimes he counterfeits the affecting of good works, yet hereby entails upon us restlessness in labours, as it happens, when a man cannot remain quiet, and, as it were, fears to be judged for idleness. Sometimes he exhibits the form of humility, that he may steal away our affecting of the useful, as is the case when he declares to some that they are weaker and more useless than indeed they are, that whereas they look upon themselves as too unworthy, they may fear to administer the things wherein they might be able to benefit their neighbours.

69. But these vices which the old enemy hides under the semblance of virtues, are very minutely examined by the hand of compunction. For he that really grieves within, resolutely foredetermines what things are to be done outwardly, and what are not. For if the virtue of compunction moves us in our inward parts, all the clamouring of evil dictates is made mute; and hence it follows.

And none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great.

70. For if the heart feels true sorrow, the vices have no tongue against it. And when the life of uprightness is sought with an entire aim, the fruitless prompting of evil is closed up. But oftentimes if we brace ourselves with strong energy against the incitements of evil habits, we turn even those very evil habits to the account of virtue. For some are possessed by anger, but

while they submit this to reason, they convert it into service rendered to holy zeal. Some are lifted up by pride. But whilst they bow down the mind to the fear of God, they change this into the free tone of unrestrained authority in defence of justice. Strength of the flesh is a snare to some; but whilst they bring under the body by practising works of mercy, from the same quarter, whence they were exposed to the goading of wickedness, they purchase the gains of pitifulness. And hence it is well that this blessed Job, after a multitude of conflicts, sacrifices a victim for his friends. For those whom he has for long borne as enemies by their strife, he one day makes fellow-countrymen by his sacrifice, in that whilst we turn all evil thoughts into virtues, bringing them into subjection, by the offering of the intention, we as it were change the hostile aims of temptation into friendly dispositions.

Let it suffice for us to have gone through these things in three volumes in a threefold method. For in the very beginning of this work we set firm the root of the tongue, as a provision against the bulk of the tree that should spring up, that we might afterwards produce the boughs of exposition according as the several places require.

BOOK IV.

Wherein Gregory, having in the Preface set forth in few words that the letter of Scripture is at times at variance with itself, and that the imprecations of Job, as of Jeremiah and David, cannot be understood without absurdity according to the sound which they convey, explains the words of Job in historical, mystical, and moral sense, from the commencement of the third chapter to the twentieth verse of the same.

THE PREFACE.

HE who looks to the text and does not acquaint himself with the sense of the holy Word, is not so much furnishing himself with instruction as bewildering himself in uncertainty, in that the literal words sometimes contradict themselves; but whilst by their oppositeness they stand at variance with themselves, they direct the reader to a truth that is to be understood. Thus, how is it that Solomon says, *There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink*; [Ecc. 2. 24] and adds not long after, *It is better to go to the house if mourning than to the house of feasting?* [Ecc. 7, 2] Wherefore did he prefer mourning to feasting, who had before commended eating and drinking? for if by preference it be good 'to eat and drink,' undoubtedly it should be a much better thing to hasten to the house of mirth than to the house of mourning. Hence it is that he says again, *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth*; [Ecc. 11, 9] yet adds a little after, *for youth and pleasure are vanity*. [ver. 10. Vulg.] What does this mean, that he should either first enjoin practices that are reprehensible, or afterwards reprehend practices that he has enjoined, but that by the literal words themselves he implies that be, who finds difficulty in the outward form, should consider the truth to be understood, which same import of truth, while it is sought with humility of heart, is penetrated by continuance in

reading. For as we see the face of strange persons, and know nothing of their hearts, but if we are joined to them in familiar communication, by frequency of conversation we even trace their very thoughts; so when in Holy Writ the historical narration alone is regarded, nothing more than the face is seen. But if we unite ourselves to it with frequent assiduity, then indeed we penetrate its meaning, as if by the effect of a familiar intercourse. For whilst we gather various truths from various parts, we easily see in the words thereof that what they import is one thing, what they sound like is another. But everyone proves a stranger to the knowledge of it, in proportion as he is tied down to its mere outside.

See here, for instance, in that blessed Job is described as having cursed his day, and said, *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived*; [Job 3, 3] if we look no further than the surface, what can we find more reprehensible than these words? But who does not know that the day, in which he was born, could not at that time be in existence, for it is the condition of time to have no stay of continuance. For whereas by way of the future it is ever tending to be, so in going out by the past, it is ever hastening not to be. Wherefore then should one so great curse that, which he is not ignorant hath no existence? But perchance it may be said, that the magnitude of his virtue is seen from hence, that he, being disturbed by tribulation, imprecates a curse upon that, which it is evident has no existence at all. But this notion is set aside the moment the reasonableness of the thing is regarded, for if the object existed, which he cursed, it was a mischievous curse; but if it had no being, it was an idle one: but whoso is filled with His Spirit, *Who declareth, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment*; [Matt. 12, 36] fears to be guilty of what is idle, even as of what is mischievous. To this sentence it is further added, *Let that day be turned into darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine*

upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let it be enfolded in bitterness. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein: let it look for light, and have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day. How is it that that day, which he knows to have gone by with the flight of time, is said 'to be turned into darkness?' And whereas it is plain that it has no existence, wherefore is it wished for that 'the shadow of death might stain it?' or what cloud dwells upon it, what envelopement of bitterness enfolds it? or what darkness seizes upon that night, which no stay holds in being? Or how is it desired that that may be solitary, which in passing away had already become nought? Or how does that look for the light, which both lacks perception, and doth not continue in any stay of its own self? To these words he yet further adds,

Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? For now I should have lain still and have been quiet, I should have slept, and been at rest. [Job 3, 11-13]

If he had died at once from the womb, would he have got by this very destruction a title to a reward? Do abortive children enjoy eternal rest? For every man that is not absolved by the water of regeneration, is tied and bound by the guilt of the original bond. But that which the water of Baptism avails for with us, this either faith alone did of old in behalf of infants, or, for those of riper years, the virtue of sacrifice, or, for all that came of the stock of Abraham, the mystery of circumcision. For that every living being is conceived in the guilt of our first parent the Prophet witnesses, saying, *And in sin hath my mother conceived me*. [Ps.51, 5] And that he who is not washed in the water of salvation, does not lose the punishment of original sin, Truth plainly declares by Itself in these words, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. [John 3, 5]

How is it then, that he wishes that he had ‘died in the womb,’ and that he believes that he might have had rest by the boon of that death, whereas it is clear that the rest of life could in no wise be for him, if the Sacraments of Divine knowledge had in no wise set him free from the guilt of original sin? He yet further adds with whom he might have rested, saying, *With kings and counsellors of the earth which built desolate* [Vulg. *solitudines*] *places for themselves*. Who does not know that *the kings and counsellors of the earth* are herein far removed from ‘solitude,’ that they are close pressed with innumerable throngs of followers? and with what difficulty do they advance to rest, who are bound in with the tightened knots of such multifarious concerns! As Scripture witnesses, where it says, *But mighty men shall be mightily tormented*. [Wisd. 6, 6] Hence Truth utters these words in the Gospel; *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much be required*. [Luke 12, 48] He implies besides, whom he would have had as fellows in that rest, in the words, *Or with princes that had gold, that filled their houses with silver*. [Matt. 19, 23] It is a rare thing for them that have gold to advance to rest, seeing that Truth saith by Itself, *They that have riches shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven*. [Mark 10, 23] For what joys in the other life can they look for, who here pant after increase of riches? Yet that our Redeemer might further shew this event to be most rare, and only possible by the supernatural agency of God, He saith, *With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible*. [Matt. 19, 26] Therefore because these words are, on the surface, at variance with reason, the letter itself thereby points out, that in those words the Saint delivers nothing after the letter.

But if we shall first examine the nature of other curses in Holy Writ, we may the more perfectly trace out the import of this one, which was uttered by the mouth of blessed Job. For how is it that David, who to those that rewarded him evil, returned it not again, upon Saul and Jonathan falling in

war, curses the mountains of Gilboa in the following words, *Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of Saul is vilely cast away, as though he had not been anointed with oil?* [2 Sam. 1, 21] How is it that Jeremiah, seeing that his preaching was hindered by the hardness of his hearers, utters a curse, saying, *Cursed be the man, who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee?* [Jer. 20. 15] What then did the mountains of Gilboa offend when Saul died, that neither dew nor rain should fall on them, and that the words of his sentence against them should make them barren of all produce of verdure? Why, forasmuch as Gilboa is by interpretation 'running down,' while by Saul's anointing and dying, the death of our Mediator is set forth, by the mountains of Gilboa we have no unfit representation of the uplifted hearts of the Jews, who, while they let themselves run down in the pursuit of the desires of this world, were mingled together in the death of Christ, i.e. of 'the Anointed.' And because in them the anointed King dies the death of the body, they too are left dry of all the dew of grace; of whom also it is well said, *that they cannot be fields of first fruits*. Because the high minds of the Hebrews bear no 'first fruits;' in that at the coming of our Redeemer, persisting for the most part in unfaithfulness, they would not follow the first beginnings of the faith; for Holy Church, which for her first fruits was enriched with the multitude of the Gentiles, scarcely at the end of the world will receive into her bosom the Jews, whom she may find, and gathering none but the last, will put them as the remnant of her fruits. Of which very remnant Isaiah hath these words, *For though thy people Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return*. [Is. 10, 22] However, the mountains of Gilboa may for this reason be cursed by the Prophet's mouth, that whilst, the land being dried up, no fruit is produced, the possessors of the land might be stricken with the woe of that barrenness, so that they might themselves receive the

sentence of the curse, who had obtained as the just reward of their iniquities to have the death of the King take place among them. But how is it that, from the lips of the Prophet, that man received the sentence of cursing, who brought to his father the tidings of his birth? Doubtless this is so much the more full of deeper mystery within, as it lacks human reason without. For perchance, if it had sounded at all reasonable without, we should never have been kindled to the pursuit of the interior meaning; and thus he the more fully implies something within, that he shews nothing that is reasonable without. For though the Prophet had come into this world from his mother's womb to be the subject of affliction, in what did the messenger of his birth do wrong? But what does the person of the Prophet represent 'carried hither and thither [*fluctuantis*]' except the mutability of man, which came by the dues of punishment, is thereby signified? and what is expressed by his 'father' but this world whereof we are born? And who is that man, who 'bring tidings of our birth to our father,' saving our old enemy, who, when he views us fluctuating in our thoughts, prompts the evil minded, who by virtue of this world's authority have the preeminence, to persuading us to our undoing, and who, when he has beheld us doing acts of weakness, commends these with applause [*favoribus*] as brave, and tells as it were of male children being born, when he gives joy that we have turned out corrupters of the truth by lying? He gives tidings to the father that a man child is born, when he shews the world him, whom he has prevailed with, turned into a corrupter of innocence. For when it is said to any one committing a sin or acting proudly, 'Thou hast acted like a man,' what else is this than that a man child is told of in the world? Justly then is the man cursed, who brings tidings of the birth of a man child; because his tidings betoken the damnable joy of our corrupter. Thus by these imprecations of Holy Scripture we learn what, in the case of blessed Job, we are to look for in his words of imprecation, lest he, whom God rewards after these wounds

and these words, should be presumptuously condemned by the mistaken reader for his words. As then we have in some sort cleared the points, which were to be the objects of our enquiry in the preface, let us now proceed to discuss and to follow on the words of the historical form.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Ver. 1, 2, 3. *After this Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day, And Job spake, and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born.*

1. That which is here said, *He opened his mouth*, must not be gone into negligently. For by the things which Holy Scripture premises but slightly, we are apprised that what comes after is to be expected with reverence. For as we know nothing what vessels that are closed contain inside, but when the mouth of the vessels is opened, we discover what is contained within; so the hearts of the Saints, which so long as their mouth is closed are hidden, when their mouth is opened, are disclosed to view. And when they disclose their thoughts, they are said to open their mouth, that with the full bent of our mind we may hasten to find out, as in vessels that are set open, what it is that they contain, and to refresh ourselves with their inmost fragrance. And hence when the Lord was about to utter His sublime precepts on the Mount, the words precede, *And He opened His mouth, and taught them*; [Matt. 5, 2] though in that place this too should be taken as the meaning, that He then opened His own mouth in delivering precepts, wherein He had long while opened the mouths of the Prophets. But it requires very great nicety in considering the expression, *After this*, namely, in order that the excellence of all that is done may be perceived in its true light by the time. For first we have described the wasting of his substance, the destruction of his children, the pain of his wounds, the persuasions of his wife, the coming of his friends, who are related to have rent their garments, to have shed tears with loud cries, to have sprinkled their heads with dust, and to have sat

upon the ground for long in silence, and afterwards it is acded, *After this Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day*; clearly that from the very order of the account, duly weighed, it might be concluded that he could never have uttered a curse in a spirit of impatience, who broke forth into a voice of cursing whilst his friends were as yet silent. For if he had cursed under the influence of passion, doubtless upon hearing of the loss of his substance, and upon hearing the death of his sons, his grief would have prompted him to curse. But what he then said, we have heard before. For he said, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*. [Job 1, 21] Again, if he had cursed under the impulse of passion, he might well have uttered a curse when he was stricken in his body, or when he was mischievously advised by his wife. But what answer he then gave we have already learnt; for he says, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh*. *What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* [Job 2, 10] But after this it is set forth that his friends arrive, shed tears, seat themselves, keep silence, whereupon this is immediately subjoined, that he is said to have *cursed his day*. It is, then, too great an inconsistency to imagine that it was from impatience that he broke out into a voice of cursing, no man setting him on, no man driving him thereto, when we know that amidst the loss of all his goods, and the death of his children, amidst bodily afflictions, the evil counsels of his wife, he only gave great acknowledgments to his Creator with a humble mind. It is plain, then, with what feelings he spoke this when he was at rest, who even when stricken uttered such a strain of praise to God. For afterwards, when no longer stricken, he could not be guilty of pride, whom even his pain under the rod only shewed to be full of humility. But as we know for certain that holy Scripture forbids cursing, how can we say that that is sometimes done aright, which yet we know to be forbidden by the same Holy Writ?

2. But be it known that Holy Writ makes mention of cursing in two ways, namely, of one sort of curse which it commands, another sort which it condemns. For a curse is uttered one way by the decision of justice, in another way by the malice of revenge. Thus a curse was pronounced by the decree of justice upon the first man himself, when he fell into sin, and heard the words, *Cursed is the ground for thy sake*. [Gen. 3, 17] A curse is pronounced by decree of justice, when it is said to Abraham, *I will curse them that curse thee*. Again, forasmuch as a curse may be uttered, not by award of justice, but by the malice of revenge, we have this admonition from the voice of Paul the Apostle in his preaching, where he says, *Bless, and curse not*; [Rom. 12, 14] and again, *nor revilers shall inherit the kingdom of God*. [1 Cor. 6, 10] So then God is said to curse, and yet man is forbidden to curse, because what man does from the malice of revenge, God only does in the exactness and perfection of justice. But when holy men deliver a sentence of cursing, they do not break forth therein from the wish of revenge, but in the strictness of justice, for they behold God's exact judgment within, and they perceive that they are bound to smite evils arising without with a curse; and are guilty of no sin in cursing, in the same degree that they are not at variance with the interior judgment.

It is hence that Peter flung back the sentence of a curse upon Simon when he offered him money, in the words, *May thy money perish with thee*; [Acts 8, 20] for he who said, not *does*, but *may*, shewed that he spoke this, not in the indicative, but in the optative mood. Hence Elias said to the two captains of fifty that came to him, *If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee*. [2 Kings 1, 10] And upon what reasonable grounds of truth the sentences of either of the two were established, the issue of the case demonstrated. For both Simon perished in eternal ruin, and fire descending from above consumed the two captains of fifty. Thus the subsequent miracle [*virtus*] testifies with what mind the sentence of the

curse is pronounced. For when both the innocence of him that curseth remains, and he that is cursed is by that curse swallowed up to the extent of utter destruction, from the end of either side we collect, that the sentence is taken up and launched against the offender from the sole Judge of what is within.

3. Therefore if we weigh with exactness the words of blessed Job, his cursing cometh not of the malice of one guilty of sin, but of the integrity of a judge, not of one agitated by passion, but of one sober in instruction; for he, who in cursing pronounced such righteous sentence, did not give way to the evil of perturbation of mind, but dispensed the dictates of wisdom. For, in fact, he saw his friends weeping and wailing, he saw them rending their garments, he saw how they had sprinkled their heads with dust, he saw them struck dumb at the thought of his affliction; and the Saint perceived that those whose hearts were set upon temporal prosperity, took him, by a comparison with their own feelings, for one brokenhearted with his temporal adversity. He considered that they would never be weeping for him in despair, who was stricken with a transient ill, except they had themselves withdrawn their soul in despair from the hope of inward soundness; and while he outwardly burst forth into the voice of grief, he shewed to persons inwardly wounded the virtue of a healing medicine, saying,

Ver. 3. *Let the day perish wherein was born.*

4. For what is to be understood by ‘the day of our birth,’ save the whole period of our mortal state? So long as this keeps us fast in the corruptions of this our mutable state of being, the unchangeableness of eternity does not appear to us. He, then, who already beholds the day of eternity, endures with difficulty the day of his mortal being. And observe, he saith not, ‘Let the day perish wherein I was created,’ but, let the day perish wherein I was born. For man was created in a day of righteousness, but now he is born in a

time of guilt; for Adam was created, but Cain was the first man that was born. What then is it to curse the day of his birth, but to say plainly, 'May the day of change perish, and the light of eternity burst forth?'

5. But inasmuch as we are used to bid perish in two ways, (for it is in one way that we bid perish, when we desire to any thing that it should no longer be, and in another way that we bid it perish, when we desire that it should be ill therewith,) the words that are added concerning this day, *Let a cloud dwell upon it: let it be enveloped in bitterness* [Vulg.]; clearly shew, that he wishes not this day to perish in such sort as not to be, but so that it may go ill with it; for that can never be 'enveloped in bitterness,' which is so wholly destroyed as not to be at all. Now this period of our mutable condition is not one day to perish, (i.e. to pass away,) in such a way, as to be in an evil plight, but so as to cease to be altogether, as the Angel bears witness in Holy Writ, saying, *By Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer*. [Rev. 10, 6] For though the Prophet hath it, *Their time shall endure for ever* [Ps. 81, 15], yet because time comes to an end with every moment, he designated their coming to an end by the name of 'time,' shewing that without every way ending they come to an end, that are severed from the joys of the inward Vision. Therefore because this period of our mortal condition does not so perish as to be in evil plight, but so as not to be at all, we must enquire what it means that he desires it may perish, not so that it may not be, but that it may be in ill condition. Now a human soul, or an Angelic spirit, is in such sort immortal, that it is capable of dying, in such sort mortal, that it can never die. For of living happily, it is deprived whether by sin or by punishment; but its essential living it never loses, either by sin or punishment: it ceases from a mode of living, but it is not even by dying susceptible of an end to every mode of being. So that I might say in a word, that it is both immortally mortal, and mortally immortal. Whereas then he wishes that the day may perish, and soon after it is said

that it is ‘to be enveloped in bitterness,’ whom should we think the holy man would express by the name of ‘day,’ except the Apostate Spirit, who in dying subsists in the life of essential being? Whom destruction does not withdraw from life, in that in the midst of pains eternal an immortal death kills, while it preserves, him whose perishing, fallen as he is already from the glory of his state of bliss, is still longed for no otherwise than that being held back by the punishments, which he deserves, he may lose even the liberty of tempting.

6. Yea, he presents himself as the day, in that he allures by prosperity; and his end is in the blackness of night, for that he leads to adversity; thus he displayed day when he said, *In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods*; [Gen. 3, 5] but he brought on night, when he led to the blackness of mortality; the day, therefore, is the proffered promise of better things, but the night is the very manifested experience of evils. The old enemy is the day, as by nature created good, but he is the night, as by his own deserts sunk down into darkness. He is day, when by promising good things he disguises himself as an Angel of light to the eyes of men, as Paul witnesses, saying, *For Satan himself is transformed as an angel of light*; [2 Cor. 11, 14] but he is night, when he obscures the minds of those that consent to him with the darkness of error. Well then may the holy man, who in his own sorrows bewailed the case of the whole human race, and who viewed nothing in any wise special to himself in his own special affliction, well may he recal to mind the original cause of sin, and soften the pain of the infliction by considering its justice. Let him look at man, and see whence and whither he has fallen, and exclaim, *Let the day perish wherein he was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived*. As if he said in plain words, ‘Let the hope perish, which the apostate Angel held forth, who, disguising himself as day, shone forth with the promise of a divine nature, but yet again shewing himself as

night, brought a cloud over the light of our immortal nature. Let our old enemy perish, who displayed the light of promises, and bestowed the darkness of sin; who as it were presented himself as day by his flattery, but led us to a night of utter darkness by sealing our hearts with blindness.’ It proceeds;

Ver. 4. *Let that day be turned into darkness.*

7. This day shines as it were in the hearts of men, when the persuasions of his wickedness are thought to be for our good, and what they are within is never seen; but when his wickedness is seen as it is, the day of false promises is as it were dimmed by a kind of darkness spread before the eyes of our judgment, in this respect, that such as he is in intrinsic worth, such he is perceived to be in his beguilement, and so ‘the day becomes darkness,’ when we take as adverse even the very things, which he holds out as advantageous whilst persuading them. ‘The day becomes darkness,’ when our old enemy, even when lurking under the cloak of his blandishments, is perceived by us to be such as he is when ravening after us, that he may never mock us with feigned prosperity, as though by the light of day, dragging us by real misery to the darkness of sin. It proceeds;

Let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

8. As Almighty God was able to create good things out of nothing, so, when He would, He also restored the good things that were lost, by the mystery of His Incarnation. Now he had made two creations to contemplate Himself, viz. the Angelic and the human, but Pride smote both, and dashed them from the erect station of native uprightness. But one had the clothing of the flesh, the other bore no infirmity derived from the flesh. For an angelical being is spirit alone, but man is both spirit and flesh. Therefore when the Creator took compassion to work redemption, it was meet that He should bring back to Himself that creature, which, in the commission of sin, plainly had something of infirmity; and it was also meet that the apostate

Angel should be driven down to a farther depth, in proportion as he, when he fell from resoluteness in standing fast, carried about him no infirmity of the flesh. And hence the Psalmist, when he was telling of the Redeemer's compassionating mankind, at the same time justly set forth the cause itself of His mercy, in these words, *And he remembered that they were but flesh* [Ps. 78, 39]. As if he said, 'Whereas He beheld their infirmities, so He would not punish their offences with severity.' There is yet another respect wherein it was both fitting that man when lost should be recovered, and impossible for the spirit that set himself up to be recovered, namely, in that the Angel fell by his own wickedness, but the wickedness of another brought man down. Forasmuch then as mankind is brought to the light of repentance by the coming of the Redeemer, but the apostate Angel is not recalled by any hope of pardon, or with any amendment of conversion, to the light of a restored estate, it may well be said, *Let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it*. As though it were plainly expressed, 'For that he hath himself brought on the darkness, let him bear without end what himself has made, nor let him ever recover the light of his former condition, since he parted with it even without being persuaded thereto.' It goes on;

Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it.

9. By 'the shadow of death,' we must understand 'oblivion,' for as death ends life, so oblivion puts an end to memory. As therefore the apostate Angel is delivered over to eternal oblivion, he is overclouded with the shadow of death. Therefore let him say, *Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it*; i.e. 'So let him be overwhelmed with the blindness of error, that he never more rise up again to the light of repentance by recollection of God's regard. The words follow;

Let a cloud dwell upon it [Vulg.]*: and let it be enveloped in bitterness.*

10. It is one thing that our old enemy suffers now, bound by the chains of his own wickedness, and another that he will have to suffer at the end. For in that he is fallen from the rank of the interior light, he now confounds himself within with the darkness of error; and hereafter he is involved in bitterness, in that by desert of a voluntary blindness, he is tortured with the eternal torments of hell. Let it be said then, 'What is it that he, who has lost the calm of the light interior, now endures as the foretaste of his final punishment? *Let a cloud dwell upon it*. Moreover let that subsequent doom be added also, which preys upon him without end.' *Let him be folded up in bitterness*; for every thing folded up, shews, as it were, no end any where, for as it shews not where it begins, so neither does it discover where it leaves off. The old enemy then is said to be folded up in bitterness, in that not only every kind of punishment, but punishment too without end or limit awaits his Pride; which same doom then receives its beginning when the righteous Judge cometh at the last Judgment; and hence it is well added,

Ver. 6. *As for that night, let a dark whirlwind seize upon it.*

11. For it is written, *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him*. [Ps. 50, 3] Thus [Vulg. *tenebrosusturbo*] *a dark whirlwind seizes upon that night*, in that the apostate Angel is by that fearful tempest carried off from before the strict Judge to suffer eternal woe; thus this night is seized by a whirlwind, in that his blind Pride is smitten with a strict visitation. It goes on;

Let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months.

12. By year we understand not inapplicably the preaching of supreme grace. For as in a year the period is completed by a connected series of days, so in heavenly grace is a complex life of virtue made complete. By a year too we may understand the multitude of the redeemed. For as the year

is produced by a number of days, so by the assemblage of all the righteous there results that countless sum of the Elect. Now Isaiah foretells this year of a completed multitude, in these words; *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord* [Is. 61, 1]. For 'the acceptable year of the Lord is proclaimed,' in that the future multitude of the faithful is foretold as destined to be illumined with the light of truth. Now what is meant by 'the days,' but the several minds of the Elect? What by the months, but their several Churches, which constitute one Catholic Church? *So then let not that night be joined unto the days of the year, neither let it come into the number of the months*. For our old enemy, hemmed in with the darkness of his pride, sees indeed the coming of the Redeemer, but never returns to pardon with the Elect. And hence it is written, *For verily He took not on Him the nature of Angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham* [Heb. 2, 16]. For it was on this account that our Redeemer was made not Angel, but Man, because He must needs be made of the same nature as that which He redeemed, that He might at once let go the lost angel, by not taking his nature, and restore man, by taking his nature in Himself. These days, which abide in the interior light, may also be taken for the angelic spirits, and the months, for their orders and dignities. For every single spirit, in that he shines, is a 'day,' but as they are distinguished by certain set dignities, so that there are some that are Thrones, some Dominions, some Principalities, and some Powers, according to this distribution of ranks, they are entitled 'months.' But forasmuch as our old enemy is never brought back to merit light, and is never restored to the order of the ranks above, he is neither reckoned in the days of the year, nor in the months. For the blindness of the pride that he has been guilty of is so settled upon him, that he no more

returns to those heavenly ranks of interior brightness. He no longer now mixes with the ranks of light that stand firm and erect, for that, in due of his own darkness, he is ever borne downwards to the depth. And for that he remains for ever an alien to the company of that heavenly land, it is yet further justly added,

Ver. 7. *Lo, let that night be solitary, let it be worthy of no praise.*

13. That night is made solitary, in that it is divided by an eternal separation from the company of the land above. Yet this may be also taken in another sense, viz. that he loses man, whom he had made his fellow in ruin, and that the enemy perishes alone together with his body [i.e. the wicked], while many that he had destroyed are restored by the Redeemer's grace. The night then is made solitary, when they that are Elect being raised up, our old enemy is made over alone to the eternal flames of hell. And it is well said, *Let it be worthy of no praise*. For when mankind, encompassed with the darkness of error, took stones for gods, in this, that they worshipped idols, what else did they but praise the deeds of their seducer? Hence Paul rightly remarks, *We know that an idol is nothing. But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils*. [1 Cor. 8, 4; 10, 20] How else then is it with those that have bowed themselves to the worship of idols, but that they have 'praised the darkness of night?' But, lo! we see now that that night is known to be unworthy 'of any praise,' since now the worship of idols is condemned by the human race redeemed; and that 'night is left solitary',' in that there is none that goeth with the damned apostate spirit to suffer torments. It proceeds;

Ver. 8. *Let them curse it that curse the day, that are ready to rouse up Leviathan.*

14. In the old translation it is not so written, but, *Let him curse it that hath cursed the day, even him who shall take the great whale* [so LXX]. By which words it is clearly shewn, that the destruction of Antichrist, to be at

the end of the world, is foreseen by the holy man. For the evil spirit, who by rights is night, at the end of the world passes himself for the day, in that he shews himself to men as God, while he takes to himself deceitfully the brightness of the Deity, *and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped*. [2 Thess. 2, 4] The same therefore that curseth the day, curseth the night; in that He at this present time destroys his wickedness, Who will then by the light of His coming also extinguish the power of his strength. And hence it is well subjoined, *Who will take the great whale*. For the strength of this whale is taken as a prey in the water, in that the wiliness of our old enemy is overcome by the Sacrament of Baptism.

15. But that which in the Old Translation is spoken of the Author of all things, in this translation, which we get from the Hebrew and Arabian tongues, is related of His elect Angels. For it is of them that it is said, *Let them curse it that curse the day*. For that spirit in his pride desired to pass himself for day even with the Angelic Powers, at that time when as though in the power of the Deity he exalted himself above the rest, and drew after him such countless legions to destruction. But they, truly, who with humble spirits stood firm in the Author of their being, when they saw there was night in his perverse ways; trod under foot the day of his brightness by thinking humbly of themselves, who do now point out to us the darkness of his disguise, and shew us how we should contemn his false glare. So let it be said of the night of darkness, which blinds the eyes of human frailty; *Let them curse it that curse the day*; i.e. 'Let those elect Spirits by condemning denounce the darkness of his erring ways, who see the grandeur of his shining already from the first a deceit.' And it is well added, *Who are ready to rouse up* [Vulg. thus] *Leviathan*. For 'Leviathan' is interpreted to be 'their addition.' Whose 'addition,' then, but the 'addition' of men? And it is properly styled 'their addition;' for since by his evil suggestion he brought

into the world the first sin, he never ceases to add to it day by day by prompting to worse things.

Or indeed it is in reproach that he is called Leviathan, i.e. styled ‘the addition of men.’ For he found them immortal in Paradise, but by promising the Divine nature to immortal beings, he as it were pledged himself to add somewhat to them beyond what they were. But whilst with flattering lips he declared that he would give what they had not, he robbed them cunningly even of what they had. And hence the [al. The Lord by the P.] Prophet describes this same Leviathan in these words, *Leviathan, the bar-serpent* [Vulg. *serpentem vectem*]*: even Leviathan that crooked serpen*t. For this Leviathan in the thing, which he engaged to add to man, crept nigh to him with tortuous windings; for while he falsely promised things impossible, he really stole away even those which were possible, But we must enquire why he that had spoken of ‘a serpent,’ subjoining in that very place the epithet ‘crooked,’ inserted the word ‘bar,’ except perhaps that in the flexibility of the serpent we have a yielding softness, and in ‘the bar,’ the hardness of an obstinate nature. In order then to mark him to be both hard and soft, he both calls him ‘a bar’ and ‘a serpent.’ For by his malicious nature he is hard, and by his flatteries he is soft; so he is called ‘a bar [E.V. *Piercing*],’ in that he strikes even to death; and ‘a serpent,’ in that he insinuates himself softly by deceitful acts.

16. Now this Leviathan at this present time elect Spirits of the Angelic host imprison close in the bottomless pit. Whence it is written, *And I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years*; [Rev. 20, 1-3] and cast him into the bottomless pit. Yet at the end of the world they call him back to more open conflicts, and let him loose against us in all his power. And hence it is written again in the same place; *Till the thousand*

years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed. For that apostate angel, whereas he was created so that he shone preeminent among all the other legions of the Angels, fell so low by setting himself up, that he is now prostrated beneath the rule of the orders of Angels that stand erect, whether that being put in chains by them, as they minister to our welfare, he should now lie buried from sight, or that they at that time setting him free for our probation, he should be let loose to put forth all his power against us. Therefore, because the proud apostate Spirit is restrained by those elect Spirits, who being humble would not follow him, and, they being the executioners, it is ordered, that he shall one day be recalled for the purpose of an open conflict, that he may be utterly destroyed, let it be well said, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan; but forasmuch as the artful adversary is not yet raised to wage open war, let him shew how that night now by hidden influences overshadows the minds of some men. It follows;

Ver. 9. *Let the stars be darkened with the shadow thereof.*

17. In Holy Scripture by the title of stars we have set forth sometimes the righteousness of the Saints which shineth in the darkness of this life, and sometimes the false pretence of hypocrites, who display all the good that they do, that they may win the praise of men; for if well doers were not stars, Paul would never say to his disciples, *In the midst of a crooked and perverse 11.ation, among whom ye shine like lights in the world*. [Phil. 2, 15] Again, if among those that seem to act aright, there were not some that sought by their conduct to win the reward of man's esteem, John would never have seen stars falling from heaven, where he says, *The dragon put forth his tail, and drew the third part of the stars of heaven*. [Rev. 12, 4] Now a portion of the stars is drawn by the dragon's tail, in that, in the last efforts of Antichrist to win men, some that appear to shine will be carried off. For to draw the stars of heaven to the earth is by the love of earth to involve those in the froward ways of open error, who seem to be devoted to

the pursuit of the heavenly life. For there are that as it were shine before the eyes of men by extraordinary deeds; but forasmuch as these very deeds are not the offspring of a pure heart, being struck blind in their secret thoughts, they are clouded with the darkness of this night, and these often lose the more outward deeds, which they do not practise with any purity of heart. And so because the night is permitted to prevail, whenever even amidst good works the purpose of the heart is not cleansed, let it be said with justice, *Let the stars be dark with the shadow thereof*; i.e. 'let the dark malice of our old enemy prevail against those who in the sight of men shew as bright by good works, and that light of praise, which in the eye of man's judgment they had taken, let them lay aside;' for they are 'overshadowed with the darkness of night,' when their life is brought to shame by open error, so that verily they may also appear outwardly such in practice, as they do not shrink from appearing to the Divine eye in their secret hearts. It proceeds;

Ver. 9. *Let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day.*

18. In the Gospel Truth declares, *I am the light of the world*. [John 8, 12] Now as this same Saviour of us men is one Person with the assembly of the good, for He is Himself the Head of the Body, and we all are the Body of this Head, so our old enemy is one person with the whole company of the damned; in that he as a head out-tops them all in iniquity, and they, whilst they minister in the things he prompts, hold fast to him like a body joined below to the head. And so it is meet that all that is said of this night, i.e. of our old enemy, should be applied to his body, i.e. to all wicked persons. Wherefore because our Redeemer is the light of mankind, how is it that it is said of this night, *Let it look for light, and have none*; but that there are some, who exhibit themselves as maintaining by words that faith, which they undo by works? Of whom Paul saith, *They profess that they know God,*

but in works they deny Him; [Tit. 1, 16] with these, indeed, either the things which they do are bad, or they follow after good deeds with no good heart. For they do not seek everlasting rewards as the fruit of their actions, but transitory partiality. And yet, because they hear themselves praised as Saints, they believe themselves to be really Saints, and in proportion as they account themselves unblameable according to the esteem they are in with numbers, they await in greater security the Day of strict account. Of whom the Prophet well says, *Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord*. [Amos 5, 18] To these blessed Job utters the sentence due to them, saying in the temper of one foretelling the thing, and not as the wish of one that desired it, *Let it look for light, but have none*. For that night, I mean the adversary of darkness, in his members doth look for the light, but seeth none; in that whether it be they who retain the faith without works, these, trusting that they may be saved at the final Judgment by right of the same faith, will find their hope prove vain, because by their life they have undone the faith, which in the confession of the lips they have maintained; or they, who for the sake of human applause make a display of themselves in doing well, they vainly look for a reward of their good deeds at the hand of the Judge, when He cometh; for that whereas they do them out of regard to the notoriety of praise, they have already had their reward from the lips of men. As the Truth testifies, Which saith, *Verily I say unto you, they have their reward* [Matt. 6, 2. 5.]; and here it is justly added, *Neither let it see the dawning of the day*.

19. For the dawn is the title of the Church, which is changed from the darkness of its sins into the light of righteousness. And hence the Spouse, admiring her in the Song of Solomon, saith, *Who is she that goeth forth as the morning arising?* [Cant. 6, 10] for like the dawn doth the Church of ‘the Elect arise, in that she quits the darkness of her former iniquity, and converts herself into the radiance of new light. Therefore in that light,

which is manifested at the coming of the strict Judge, the body of our enemy when condemned seeth no dayspring of the rising dawn, in that when the strict Judge shall come, every sinner, being overlaid with the blackness of his own deserts, knows not with what wondrous splendour Holy Church rises into the interior light of the heart. For then the mind of the Elect is transported on high, to be illuminated with the rays of the Divine. Nature, and in the degree that it is penetrated with the light of that Countenance, it is lifted above itself in the refulgence of grace. Then doth Holy Church become a full dawn, when she parts wholly and for ever with the darkness of her state of mortality and ignorance. Thus at the Judgment she is still the dawn, but in the Kingdom she is become the day. For though together with the renewal of our bodies she already begins to behold the light at the Judgment, yet her vision thereof is more fully consummated in the Kingdom. Thus the *rising of the dawn* is the commencement of the Church in light, which the reprobate can never see, because they are closed in upon and forced down to darkness by the weight of their evil deeds from the sight of the Righteous Judge. And hence it is rightly said by the Prophet, *Let the wicked be taken out of the way, that he see not the glory of God.* [Is. 26, 10. LXX] It is hence that these words are uttered by the Psalmist concerning this dawn, *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy Presence from the pride of men*. [Ps. 31, 20] For every Elect one at the Judgment is hid in the countenance of the Godhead in interior vision, whereas the blindness of the reprobate without is banished and confounded by the strict visitation of justice.

20. And this too we not irrelevantly interpret with reference to the present time likewise, if we minutely search the hearts of dissemblers. For the proud and hypocritical look on the deeds of the good on the outside, and they find that such are commended by men for their doings, and they admire their high repute, and they see that these receive praises for their

good deeds, but they do not see how studiously they eschew such praises; they regard the overt acts, but are ignorant that these proceed from the principle of the interior hope alone. For all that shine with the true light of righteousness are first changed from the darkness of the inward purpose of the heart, so that they wholly forsake the interior dimness of earthly coveting, and entirely turn their hearts to the desire of the light above, lest while they seem to be full of light to others, they be in darkness to themselves; thus persons that assume, because they regard the deeds of the righteous, but do not survey their hearts, imitate them in the things from whence they may obtain applause without, but not in the things whereby they may inwardly arise to the light of righteousness; and they as it were are blind to see the dayspring of the rising dawn, because they do not think it worth their while to regard the religious mind's intent.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

21. The holy man, who was filled with the virtue of the prophetic Spirit, may also have his eye fixed upon the faithlessness of Judaea at the coming of the Redeemer, and in these words he may be speaking prophetically of the mischievous effects of her blindness, as though in the character of one expressing a wish, so as to say, *Let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day*. For Judaea 'looked for the light but had none;' since by prophecy she waited indeed for the Redeemer of Man that should come, but never knew Him when He came; and the eyes of the mind, which she opened wide to the expectation, she closed to the presence of the Light; neither did she see the dayspring of the rising dawn, in that she scorned to pay homage to those first beginnings of Holy Church, and while she supposed her to be undone by the deaths of her members, was ignorant to what strength she was attaining. But as, when speaking of the faithless,

he signified the members of the wicked head, he again turns his discourse to the head of the wicked itself, saying,

Ver. 10. *Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.*

22. What the womb of his mother is to each individual man, that the primary abode in Paradise became to the whole human race. For from it came forth the family of man as it were from the womb, and tending to the increase of the race, as if to the growth of the body, it issued forth without. There our conception was cemented, where the Man, the origin of mankind, had his abode, but the serpent opened the mouth of this womb, in that by his cunning persuading he broke asunder the decree of heaven in man's heart. The serpent opened the mouth of this womb, in that he burst the barriers of the mind which were fortified with admonitions from above. Let the holy man then in the punishment which he suffers, cast the eyes of his mind far back to the sin. Let him mourn for this, which the neglect of darkness, that is, the dark suggestions of our old enemy lodged in man's mind; for this, that man's mind consented to his cunning suggestions to his own betrayal, and let him say, *Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes*. Nor let this disturb us, that he complains that he only did not shut up, whom he abhors for having opened the gate of Paradise. For 'he opened,' he calls *shut not up*; and 'he entailed it,' *nor hid sorrow from me*. For he would as it were have 'hid sorrow,' if he had kept quiet, and have 'shut up,' if he had forborne from bursting in. For he is weighing well who it is he speaks of, and he reckons that it would have been as if the evil spirit had bestowed gains upon us if he had only not entailed losses upon our heads. Thus we say of robbers that they give their prisoners their lives, if they do not take them.

[MORAL INTERPRETATON]

23. It is well to go over these points again from the beginning, and according to what we remark in practice in the present life, to review it in a moral sense. Blessed Job, observing how presumptuously mankind, after his soul fell from its original state, was lifted up in prosperity, and with what dismay it was dashed by adverse fortune, falls back in imagination to that unalterable state which he might have kept in Paradise, and in what a miserable light he beheld the fallen condition of our mortal state of being, so chequered with adversity and prosperity, he shewed by cursing the same in these words;

Ver. 3. *Let the day perish wherein I was born; and the night wherein it was said, There is a man child conceived.*

24. It seems as it were like day, when the good fortune of this world smiles upon us, but it is a day that ends in night, for temporal prosperity often leads to the darkness of affliction. This day of good fortune the Prophet had condemned, when he said, *Neither have I desired man's day* ['*diem hominis'* Vulg.]*, Thou knowest it*. [Jer. 17, 16] And this night our Lord declared He was to suffer at the final close of His Incarnation, when he declared by the Psalmist as if in the past, *My reins also instructed me in the night season*. [Ps. 16, 7] But by 'the day' may be understood the pleasures of sin, and by 'the night' the inward blindness, whereby man suffers himself to be brought down to the ground in the commission of sin. And therefore he wishes the day may perish, that all the flattering arts which are seen in sin, by the strong hand of justice interposing, may be brought to nought. He wishes also that the 'night may perish,' that what the blinded mind executes even in yielding consent, she may put away by the castigation of penance.

25. But we must enquire why man is said to be born in 'the day' and conceived in 'the night?' Holy Scripture uses the title 'man' in three ways, viz, sometimes in respect of nature, sometimes of sin, sometimes of

frailness. Now man is so called in respect of nature, as where it is written, *Let Us make man after Our image and likeness.* [Gen. 1, 26] He is called man in respect of sin, as where it is written, *I have said, Ye are all gods, and all of you are children of the Most High: but ye shall die like men*. [Ps. 82, 6. 7.] As though he had expressed it plainly, 'ye shall perish like transgressors.' And hence Paul saith, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] As though he had said, 'Ye that carry about minds at variance, do ye not still sin, in the spirit of faulty human nature?' He is called man, in relation to his weakness, as where it is written, *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man*. [Jer. 17, 5] As if he had said in plain words, 'in weakness.' Thus man is born in the day, but he is conceived in the night, in that he is never caught away by the delightfulness of sin, until he is first made weak by the voluntary darkness of his mind. For he first becomes blind in the understanding, and then he enslaves himself to damnable delight. Let it be said then, *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said, There is a man child conceived*: i.e. 'Let the delight perish, which has hurried man into sin, and the unguarded frailness of his mind, whereby he was blinded even to the very darkness of consenting to evil. For while man does not heedfully mark the allurements of pleasure, he is even carried headlong into the night of the foulest practices. We must watch then with minds alive, that when sin begins to caress, the mind may perceive to what ruin she is being dragged, And hence the words are fitly added,

Ver. 4. *Let that day be darkness.*

26. For 'the day becomes darkness,' when in the very commencement of the enjoyment, we see to what an end of ruin sin is hurrying us. We 'turn the day into darkness,' whenever by severely chastising ourselves, we turn to bitter the very sweets of evil enjoyment by the keen laments of penance, and, when we visit it with weeping, whereinsoever we sin in gratification in

our secret hearts. For because no believer is ignorant that the thoughts of the heart will be minutely examined at the Judgment, as Paul testifieth, saying, *Their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another*; [Rom. 2, 15] searching himself within, he examines his own conscience without sparing before the Judgment, that the strict Judge may come now the more placably disposed, in that He sees his guilt, which He is minded to examine, already chastised according to the sin. And hence it is well added,

Let not God require it from above.

27. God requires the things, which He searches out in executing judgment upon them. He does not require those, which He so pardons as to let them be unpunished henceforth in His own Judgment. And so 'this day,' i.e. this enjoyment of sin, will not be required by the Lord, if it be visited with self-punishment of our own accord, as Paul testifies, when he says, *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord.* [1 Cor. 11, 31] 'God's requiring our day,' then, is His proceeding against our souls at the Judgment by a strict examination of every instance of taking pleasure in sin, in which same 'requiring' He then smites him the harder, whom He finds to have been most soft in sparing himself. And it follows well, *Neither let the light shine upon it*. For the Lord, appearing at the Judgment, illumines with His light all that He then convicts of sin. For what is not then brought to remembrance of the Judge, is as it were veiled under a kind of obscurity. So it is written, *But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light*. [Eph. 5, 13] It is as though a certain darkness hid the sins of penitents, of whom the Prophet saith, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. [Ps. 32, 1] Therefore, as every thing that is veiled is as it were hidden in darkness, that which is not searched out in vengeance, is not illumined with light at the Day of final account. For all those actions of ours, which He would not then visit with justice, the mercy of God in wotting of them still hideth in some sort from

itself, but all is displayed in light, that is at that time manifest in the sight of all men. *Let*, then, *this day be darkness*, in this way, viz. that by penance we may smite the evil that we do. *Let not the Lord require this day, neither let the light shine upon it*, in this way, viz. that while we smite our own sin, He may not Himself fall thereupon with the visitations of the Final Judgment.

28. But the Judge will come Himself to pierce all things, and strike all things to the core. And because He is every where present, there is no place to flee to, where He is not found. But forasmuch as He is appeased by the tears of self-correction, he alone obtains a hiding-place from His face, who after the commission of a sin hides himself from Him now in penance. And hence it is with propriety yet further added of this day of enjoyment,

Ver. 7. *Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it.*

29. Then indeed darkness stains the day, when the delight of our inclinations is smitten through with the inflictions of penance. By darkness moreover may be signified secret decisions. For what we see in the light we know, but in the dark we either discern nothing at all, or our eyes are bewildered with an uncertain sight. Secret decrees then are like a certain kind of darkness before our eyes, being utterly inscrutable to us. And hence it is written of God, *He made darkness His secret place;* [Ps. 18, 11] and we know well that we do not deserve pardon, but, by the grace of God preventing us, we are freed from our sins by His secret counsels. *Darkness*, therefore, *stains the day*, when the joy of gratification, which is a proper subject of tears, is in mercy hidden from that ray of just wrath by His secret determinations. And here the words aptly follow, *and the shadow of death.*

30. For in Holy Scripture, the *shadow of death* is sometimes understood of oblivion of mind, sometimes of imitation of the devil, sometimes of the dissolution of the flesh. For the *shadow of death* is understood of the oblivion of the mind, in that, as has been said above, as death causes that that which it kills should no longer remain in life, so oblivion causes that

whatsoever it seizes should no longer abide in the memory. And hence too, because John was coming to proclaim to the Hebrew people That God, Whom they had forgotten, he is justly said by Zacharias, *to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*; for ‘to sit in the shadow of death,’ is to turn lifeless to the knowledge of the love of God in a state of oblivion. *The shadow of death* is taken to mean the imitating our old enemy. For, since he brought in death, he is himself called death, as John is witness, saying, *and his name is death*. [Rev. 6, 8] And so by *the shadow of death* is signified the imitating of him. For as the shadow is shaped according to the character of the body, so the actions of the wicked are cast in a figure of conformity to him. Hence when Isaiah saw that the Gentiles had fallen away after the likeness of our old enemy, and that they rose up again at the rising of the true Sun, he justly records, as though in the past, what his eyes beheld as certain in the future, saying, *They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a great light hath shined*. Moreover, *the shadow of death* is taken for the dissolution of the flesh, in that, as that is the true death whereby the soul is separated from God, so the shadow of death is that whereby the flesh is separated from the soul. And hence it is rightly said by the Prophet in the words of the Martyrs, *Though Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death*. [Ps. 44, 19] For those, who, we know, die not in the spirit, but only in the flesh, can in no wise say that they are ‘covered with the true death,’ but *with the shadow of death*.

31. How is it then that blessed Job demands *the shadow of death*, for putting out the day of evil enjoyment, but that for the obliterating of our sins in God’s sight he calls for the Mediator between God and man, who should undertake for us the death of the flesh alone, and Who by the shadow of His own death, should do away the true death of transgressors? For He comes to us, who were held in the bands of death, both of the spirit

and of the flesh, and His own single Death He reckoned to our account, and our two deaths, which He found, He dissolved. For if He had Himself undertaken both, He would never have set us free from either. But He took one sort in mercy, and condemned them both with justice. He joined His own single Death to our twofold death, and by dying He vanquished that double death of ours. And hence it was not without reason that He lay in the grave for one day and two nights, namely, in that He added the light of His own single Death to the darkness of our double death. He, then, that took for our sakes the death of the flesh alone, underwent *the shadow of death*, and buried from the eyes of God the sin that we have done. Therefore let it be truly said, *Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it*. As though it were said in plain words; 'Let Him come, Who, that He may snatch from the death of the flesh and of the spirit, us, that are debtors thereto, may, though no debtor, discharge the death of the flesh.' But since the Lord lets no sin go unpunished, for either we visit it ourselves by lamenting it, or God by judging it, it remains that the mind should ever have a watchful eye to the amendment of itself. Therefore, in whatever particular each person sees that he is succoured by mercy, he must needs wipe out the stains thereof in the confession of it. And hence it is fitly added,

Let a shade dwell upon it.

32. For because the eye is perplexed in the *shade*, therefore the perplexity of our mind in penitence is itself called *shade*, for as the shade obscures the light of day with a mass of clouds, so confusion overclouds the mind with troubled thoughts. Of which it is said by one, *There is a shame which is glory and grace*. [Ecclus. 4, 21] For when in repenting we recall our misdoings to remembrance, we are at once confounded with heaviness and sorrow, the throng of thoughts clamours vociferously in our breast, sorrow wears, anxiety wastes us, the soul is turned to woe, and, as it were, darkened with the shade of a kind of cloud. Now this *shade* of confusion

had oppressed the minds of those to their good, to whom Paul said, *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* [Rom. 6, 21] *Let shade*, then, *seize* this day of sin, i.e. 'Let the chastening of penance with befitting sorrow discompose the flattery of sin.' And hence it is added with fitness,

Let it be enfolded in bitterness.

33. For the day is enfolded in bitterness, when, upon the soul returning to knowledge, the inflictions of penance follow upon the caresses of sin. We 'enfold the day in bitterness,' when we regard the punishments that follow the joys of forbidden gratification, and pour tears of bitter lamenting around them. For whereas what is folded up is covered on every side, we wish 'the day to be folded in bitterness,' that each man may mark on every side the ills that threaten crooked courses, and may cleanse the wantonness of self-gratification by the tears of bitter sorrow.

34. But if we hear that day, which we have rendered the 'gratification of sin,' assailed with so many imprecations, that, surely, our tears poured around it may expiate whatsoever sin the soul is become guilty of by being touched with gratification through negligence, with what visitings of penitence is the night of that day to be stricken, i.e. the actual consent to sin? For as it is a less fault when the mind is carried away in delight by the influence of the flesh, yet by the resistance of the Spirit offers violence to its sense of delight; so it is a more heinous and complete wickedness not only to be attracted to the fascination of sin by the feeling of delight, but to pander to it by yielding consent. Therefore the mind must be cleansed from defilement by being wrung harder with the hand of penitence, in proportion as it sees itself to be more foully stained by the yielding of the consent. And hence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 6. *As for that night, let a black tempest seize it.*

35. For the awakened spirit of sorrow is like a kind of tempestuous whirlwind. For when a man understands what sin he has committed, when he minutely considers the wickedness of his evil doings, he clouds the mind with sorrow, and the air of quiet joy being agitated, as it were, he sweeps away all the inward tranquillity of his breast, by the whirlwind of penitence. For unless the heart, returning to the knowledge of itself, were broken by such a whirlwind, the Prophet would never have said, *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with a strong wind*. [Ps. 48, 7] For *Tarshish* is rendered, 'the exploring of joy.' But when the strong blast of penitence seizes the mind, it disturbs therein all the 'explorings' after a censurable joy, that it now takes pleasure in nought but to weep, minds nought but what may fill it with affright. For it sets before the eyes, on the one hand, the strictness of justice, on the other the deserts of sin, it sees what punishment it deserves, if the pitifulness of the sparing Hand be wanting, which is wont by present sorrowing to rescue from eternal woe. Therefore, 'a strong wind breaks the ships of Tarshish,' when a mighty force of compunction confounds, with wholesome terrors, our minds which have abandoned themselves to this world, like as to the sea. Let him say then, *As for that night, let a black tempest seize it*, i.e. let not the softness of secure ease cherish the commission of sin, but the bitterness of repentance burst on it in pious fury.

36. But we are to bear in mind, that when we leave sins unpunished, we are 'taken possession of by the night,' but when we correct those with the visitation of penitence, then we ourselves 'take possession of the night,' that we have made. And the sin of the heart is then brought into our right of possession, if it is repressed in its beginning. And hence it is said by the voice of God to Cain, harbouring evil thoughts, Thy *sin will lie at the door. But under thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him*. For 'sin lieth at the door,' when it is knocking in the thoughts, and 'the desire thereof is under,' and man 'ruleth over it,' if the wickedness of the heart,

being looked to, be quickly put down, and before it grows to a state of hardness, be subdued by a strenuous opposition of the mind. Therefore that the mind may be quickly made sensible of its offence by repenting, and hold in under its authority the usurping power of sin, let it be rightly said, *As for that night let a black tempest seize it*; as though it were said in plain words, 'Lest the mind be the captive of sin, let it never leave a sin free from penance.' And because we have a sure hope that what we prosecute with weeping, will never be urged against us by the Judge to come, it is rightly added,

Let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months.

37. The year of our illumination is then accomplished, when at the appearing of the Eternal Judge of Holy Church, the life of her pilgrimage is completed. She then receives the recompense of her labours, when, having finished this season of her warfare, she returns to her native country. Hence it is said by the Prophet, *Thou shalt bless the crown of the year with Thy goodness*. For the Crown of the year is as it were 'blessed,' when, the season of toil at an end, the reward of virtues is bestowed. But the days of this year are the several virtues, and its months the manifold deeds of those virtues. But observe, when the mind is erected in confidence, to have a good hope that, when the Judge comes, she will receive the reward of her virtues, all the evil things that she has done are also brought before the memory, and she greatly fears lest the strict Judge, Who comes to reward virtues, should also examine and weigh exactly those things, which have been unlawfully committed, and lest, when 'the year' is completed, the 'night' also be reckoned in. Let him then say of this night, *Let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months*. As though he implored that strict Judge in such words as these; 'When, the time of Holy Church being completed, Thou shalt manifest Thyself for the final scrutiny,

do Thou so recompense the gifts Thou hast vouchsafed, that Thou require not the evil we have committed. For if that 'night be joined unto the days of the year,' all that we have done is brought to nought, by the accounting of our iniquity. And the days of our virtues no longer shine, if they be overclouded in Thine eyes by the dark confusion of our night being added to the reckoning.'

38. But if we would not then have inquest made on our night, we must take especial care now to exercise a watchful eye in examining it, that no sin whatever may remain unpunished by us, that the froward mind be not bold to vindicate what it has done, and by that vindication add iniquity to iniquity. And hence it is rightly added,

Ver. 7. *Lo, let that night be solitary, and worthy of no praise.*

39. There are some men that not only never bewail what they do, but who do not cease to uphold and applaud it, and verily a sin that is upheld, is doubled. And against this it is rightly said by one, *My son, hast thou sinned? add not again thereto*. [Ecclus. 21, 1] For he 'adds sin to sin,' who over and above maintains what he has done amiss; and he does not 'leave the night alone,' who adds the support of vindication also to the darkness of his fault. It is hence that the first man, when called in question concerning the 'night' of his error, would not have the same 'night' to be 'solitary,' in that while by that questioning he was called to repentance, he added the props of self-exculpation, saying, *The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat*; i.e. covertly turning the fault of his transgression upon his Maker; as if he said, 'Thou gavest me occasion of transgressing, Who gavest me the woman.' It is hence that in the human race the branch of this sin is drawn out from that root so far as to this present time, that what is done amiss should be yet further maintained. Let him say then, *Let that light be solitary, and not worthy of any praise*. As though he besought in plain words, 'Let the fault that we have done remain

alone, lest while it is praised and upheld, it bind us a hundredfold more in the sight of our Judge. We ought not indeed to have sinned, but would that, by not adding others, we would even leave those by themselves, which we have committed.'

40. But here it is to be impressed upon our minds, that he in a true sense bears hard upon his sin, whose heart is no longer set to the love of the present state of being by any longing for prosperity, who sees how deceitful are the caresses of this world, and reckons its smiles as a kind of persecution; and hence it is well added,

Ver. 8. *Let them curse it that curse the day.*

41. As if he said in plain words; 'Let them strike the darkness of this night by truly repenting, who henceforth despise and tread upon the light of worldly prosperity.' For if we take 'the day,' for the gladness of delight, of this 'night' it is rightly said, *Let them curse it that curse the day*. In that, indeed, they do truly chastise the misdeeds committed with the visitations of penance, who are henceforth carried away by no sense of delight after deceitful goods. For of those whom other mischievous practices still delight, it is all false whereinsoever they are seen to bewail one set they have been guilty of. But if, as we have said above, we understand thereby the crafty suggestion of our old enemy, those are to be understood to curse the 'night,' that curse the 'day,' in that surely they all really punish their past sins, who in the mere flattering suggestion itself detect the snares of the malicious deceiver. But it is well added;

Who are ready to rouse up Leviathan.

42. For all they that with the spirit tread under foot the things which are of the world, and with a perfect bent of the mind desire the things that belong to God, *rouse up Leviathan* against themselves, in that they inflame his malice, by the incitements of their life and conduct. For those that are subject to his will, are as it were held in possession by him with an

undisturbed light, and their tyrannizing king, as it were, enjoys a kind of security, while he rules their hearts with a power unshaken, but when the spirit of each man is quickened again to the longing after his Creator; when he gives over the sloth of negligence, and kindles the frost of former insensibility with the fire of holy love; when he calls to mind his innate freedom, and blushes that his enemy should keep him as his slave; because that enemy marks that he is himself contemned, and sees that the ways of God are laid hold of, he is stung that his captive struggles against him, and is at once fired with jealousy, at once pressed to the conflict, at once raises himself to urge countless temptations against the soul that withstands him, and stimulates himself in all the arts of mangling, that launching the darts of temptation he may pierce the heart, which he has long held with an undisputed title. For he slept, as it were, whilst he reposed at rest in the corrupt heart. But he is 'roused,' in challenging the fight, when he loses the right of wicked dominion. Let those then curse this light, that are ready to *rouse up Leviathan*, i.e. 'let all those gather themselves resolutely to encounter sin with the stroke of severe judgment, who are no wise afraid to rouse up Leviathan in his tempting of them.' For so it is written, *My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, stand in righteousness and in fear; and prepare thy soul for temptation*. For whosoever hastes to gird himself in the service of God, what else does he than prepare against the encounter of the old adversary, that the same man set at liberty may take blows in the strife, who, when slaving in captivity under tyrannizing power, was left at rest? But in this very circumstance that the mind is braced to meet the enemy, that some vices it has under its feet, and is striving against others, it sometimes happens that somewhat of sin is permitted to remain, nevertheless not so as to do any great injury.

43. And often the mind, which overcomes many and forcible oppositions, is unable to master one within itself, and that perchance a very

little one, though it be most earnestly on the watch against it. Which doubtless is the effect of God's dispensation, lest being resplendent with virtue on all points, it be lifted up in self-elation, that while it sees in itself some trifling thing to be blamed, and yet has no power to subdue the same, it may never attribute the victory to itself, but to the Creator only, whereinsoever it has power to subdue with resolution; and hence it is well added,

Ver.9. *Let the stars thereof be overshadowed with darkness.*

44. For the stars of this night are overshadowed with darkness, when even they that already shine with great virtues, still bear something of the dimness of sin, while they struggle against it, so that they even shine with great lustre of life, and yet still draw along with unwillingness some remains of the night. Which as we have said is done with this view, that the mind in advancing to the eminence of its righteousness, may through weakness be the better strengthened, and may in a more genuine manner shine in goodness by the same cause, whereby, to the humbling of it, little defects overcloud it even against its will. And hence when the land of promise now won was to be divided to the people of Israel, the Gentile people of Canaan are not said to be slain, but to be made tributary to the tribe of Ephraim; as it is written, *The Canaanites dwelt in the midst of Ephraim under tribute*. [Jos. 16, 10. V.] For what does the *Canaanite*, a Gentile people, denote saving a fault? And oftentimes we enter the land of promise with great virtues, because we are strengthened by the inward hope that regards eternity. But while, amidst lofty deeds, we retain certain small faults, we as it were permit the Canaanite to dwell in our land. Yet he is made tributary, in that this same fault, which we cannot bring under, we force back by humility to answer the end of our wellbeing, that the mind may think meanly of itself even in its highest excellencies, in proportion as it fails to master by its own strength even the small things that it aims at.

Hence it is well written again, *Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them*. [Jud. 3, 1] For it is for this that some of our least faults are retained, that our fixed mind may ever be practising itself heedfully to the conflict, and not presume upon victory, forasmuch as it sees enemies yet alive within it, by whom it still dreads to be overcome. Thus Israel is trained by the Gentile people being reserved, in that the uplifting of our goodness meets with a check in some very little faults, and learns, in the little things that withstand it, that it does not subdue the greater ones by itself.

45. Yet this that is said, *Let the stars thereof be overshadowed with darkness*, may also be understood in another sense; for that *night*, viz. consent to the sin, which was derived to us by the transgression of our first parent, has smitten our mind's eye with such a dimness, that in this life's exile, beset by the darkness of its blinded state, with whatever force it strain after the light of eternity, it is unable to pierce through; for we are born condemned sinners after punishment has begun [*post poenam*], and we come into this life together with the desert of our death, and when we lift up the eye of the mind to that beam of light above, we grow dark with the mere dimness of our natural infirmity. And indeed many in this feeble condition of the flesh have been made strong by so great a force of virtue, that they could shine like stars in the world. Many in the darkness of this present life, while they shew forth in themselves examples above our reach, shine upon us from on high after the manner of stars; but with whatsoever brilliancy of practice they shine, with whatever fire of compunction they enkindle their hearts, it is plain that while they still bear the load of this corruptible flesh, they are unable to behold the light of eternity such as it is. So then let him say, *Let the stars thereof be overshadowed with darkness*; i.e. 'let even those in their contemplations still feel the darkness of the old night, of whom it appears that they already spread the rays of their virtues over the

human race in the darkness of this life, seeing that, though they already spring to the topmost height in thought, they are yet pressed down below by the weight of the first offence. And hence it comes to pass that at the same time that without they give specimens of light, like the stars, yet within, being closely encompassed by the darkness of night, they fail to mount up to the assuredness of an immoveable vision. Now the mind is often so kindled and inflamed, that, though it be still set in the flesh, it is transported into God, and every carnal imagination brought under; and yet not so that it beholds God as He is, in that, as we have said, the weight of the original condemnation presses upon it in corruptible flesh. Oftentimes it longs to be swallowed up, just as it is, that if it might be so, it might attain the eternal life without the intervention of the bodily death. Hence Paul, when he ardently sought for the inward light, yet in some sort dreaded the evils [*damna*] of the outward death, said, *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burthened, for that we would not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life*. [2 Cor. 5, 4. Vulg.] Therefore holy men long to see the true dawn, and, if it were vouchsafed, they would even along with the body attain that deep of inmost light. But with whatever ardour of purpose they may spring forth, the old night still weighs upon them, and those eyes of our corruptible flesh, which the crafty enemy has opened to concupiscence, the just Judge holds back from the view of His inward radiance. And hence it is well added,

Let it look for light and have none, neither let it see the dawning of the day.

46. For with whatever strength of purpose the mind, while yet in this pilgrimage, labours to see the Light as It is, the power is withheld, in that this is hidden from it by the blindness of its state under the curse. [Now the ‘rising of the dawn’ is the brightness of inward truth, which ought to be ever new to us. And this the night assuredly seeth not, because our

infirmity, blind by reason of sin, and still placed in the corruptible flesh, mounts not up to that light wherewith our fellow citizens above are already irradiated. For the rising of this dawn is in the interior, where the brightness of the Divine Nature is manifested ever new to the spirits of the Angels, and where that bliss of light is as it were ever dawning, which is never brought to an end.] [Note: this bracketed portion is found only in the Edition of Gussanville, and there without any notice to shew where it comes from. (Ben.) It is not in the Oxford Mss.] But the *rising of the dawn*, is that new birth of the Resurrection, whereby Holy Church, with the flesh too raised up, rises to contemplate the sight of Eternity; for if the very Resurrection of our flesh were not as it were a kind of birth, Truth would never have said of it, *In the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory*. [Matt. 19, 28] This then, which He called a *regeneration*, He beheld as a *rising*. But with whatever virtue the Elect now shine forth, they cannot pierce to see what will be that glory of the new birth, wherewith they will then mount up together with the flesh to contemplate the sight of Eternity. Hence Paul says, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him*. [1 Cor. 2, 9] Let him say then, *Let it look for light and have none, neither let it see the dawning of the day*. For our frail nature, darkened by its spontaneous fault, penetrates not the brightness of inward light, unless it first discharge its debt of punishment by death. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor took away sorrow from mine eyes.*

47. As has been likewise remarked above, the words, *it shut not up*, are 'it opened,' and *it took not away*, 'it brought upon me.' So that this *night*, i.e. sin, opened the door of the womb, in that to man, conceived unto sin, it unsealed the lust of concupiscence [m], whereof the Prophet says, *Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors*. [Isa. 26, 20] For we 'enter our

chambers,' when we go into the recesses of our own hearts. And we 'shut the doors,' when we restrain forbidden lusts; and so whereas our consent set open these doors of carnal concupiscence, it forced us to the countless evils of our corrupt state. And so now we henceforth groan under the weight of mortality, though we came [n] thereunto by our own free will, in that the justice of the sentence against us requires thus much, that what we have done willingly, we should bear with against our will. It proceeds; Ver. 11, 12. *Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?*

48. Be the thought far from us, that blessed Job, who was endued with such high spiritual knowledge, and who had such a witness of praise from the Judge within, should wish that he had perished in abortive birth! But seeing, what we also learn by the reward which he received, that he has within the witness of his fortitude, the weight of his words is to be reckoned within.

49. Now sin is committed in the heart in four ways, and in four ways it is consummated in act. For in the heart it is committed by the suggestion, the pleasure, the consent, and the boldness to defend. For the suggestion comes of the enemy; the pleasure, of the flesh; the consent, of the spirit; and boldness to uphold, of pride. For the sin, which ought to fill the mind with apprehension, only exalts it, and in throwing down uplifts, while by uplifting it causes its more grievous overthrow; and hence that upright frame, wherein the first man was created, was by our old foe dashed down by these four strokes. For the serpent tempted, Eve was pleased, Adam yielded consent, and even when called in question he refused in effrontery to confess his sin. The serpent tempted, in that the secret enemy silently suggests evil to man's heart. Eve was pleased, because the sense of the flesh, at the voice of the serpent, presently gives itself up to pleasure. And

Adam, who was set above the woman, yielded consent, in that whilst the flesh is carried away in enjoyment, the spirit also being deprived of its strength gives in from its uprightness. And Adam when called in question would not confess his sin, in that, in proportion as the spirit is by committing sin severed from the Truth, it becomes worse hardened in shamelessness at its downfall. Sin is likewise completed in act by the self-same four methods; for first the fault is done in secret, but afterwards it is done openly before men's eyes without the blush of guilt, and next it is formed into a habit, finally, whether by the cheats of false hope, or the stubbornness of reckless despair, it is brought to full growth.

50. These four modes of sin then, which either go on secretly in the heart, or which are executed in act, blessed Job views, and bewails the many stages of sin wherein the human race was fallen, saying, *Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?* For 'the womb of conception' at the first was the tongue of the evil suggestion. Now the sinner would 'perish in the womb,' if only man knew in the very suggestion itself that he would bring death upon himself. Yet 'he came forth from the belly,' in that, as soon as the tongue had conceived him in sin by its suggestions, the pleasure likewise, immediately hurried him forth; and after his coming forth, 'the knees prevented him,' in that having issued forth in the carnal gratification, he then completed the sin by the consent of the spirit, all the senses being made subservient like knees underneath. And 'the knees preventing him, the breasts did also give him suck.' For whereas, in the spirit's consenting to the sin, the senses were drawn into the service, the many reasonings of vain confidence followed, which nourished the soul thus born, in sin with poisoned milk, and lulled it with soothing excuses, that it should not fear the bitter punishment of death. And hence the first man waxed bolder after his sin, saying, *The women*

whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. [Gen. 3, 12] And truly, he had fled to hide himself out of fear, yet when he was called in question, he made it appear how swoln he was with pride while he feared; for when punishment is feared as the present consequence of sin, and the face of God being lost is not loved, the fear is one that proceeds from a high stomach [*timor ex tumore*], and not from a lowly spirit. For he is full of pride who does not give over his sin, if be may go unpunished.

51. But, as we have said, sin is committed in these four ways, as in the heart, so also in the deed; for he saith, *Why died I not in the womb?* For the womb to the sinner is the secret fault in man, which conceives the sinner under cover, and as yet hides its guilt in the dark. *Why did I not give up the ghost, when I came out of the belly?* For there is 'a coming out of the womb from the belly,' when the sinner does not blush to do openly as well the things, which he has been guilty of in secret, Thus they had as it were come out of the womb of their hiding place, of whom the Prophet spake it; *And they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not*, *Why did the knees prevent me?*[Is. 3, 9] In that the sinner, when he is not confounded at his wickedness, is strengthened in the same by the further stays of most heinous custom. The sinner is as it were nursed on the knees, till he grow bigger, so long as the sin is confirmed by habitual acts, till it acquires strength. *Or why the breasts that I should suck?* For when the sin has once begun to issue into habit, then, alas! the sinner feeds himself either with the fallacious hope of God's mercy, or with the open recklessness of despair, that he never may return back to self-amendment, in so far as he either extravagantly colours to himself the pitifulness of his Maker, or is extravagantly terrified at the sin that he has done. Let the blessed man, then, take a view of man's fall, and mark down what precipice he has plunged himself into the pit of iniquity, saying, *Why died I not in the womb?* i.e. 'Why would I not, in the very

secret act of sin in the heart, kill myself to the life of the flesh?' *Why did I not give up the ghost, when I came out of the belly?* i.e. 'Why, when I came forth in the overt act, died I not, was I not then at least instructed that I was undone?' For he would have 'given up the ghost' in his condemnation of himself, if he had known that he was lost. Why did the knees prevent me? i.e. 'Even after the open act of sin, why, yet further, did the custom too take me up in it, to make me stronger to commit sin, and to nurse and sustain me with habitual wicked acts?' *Why the breasts, that I should suck?* i.e. 'After I entered into the habit of sin, why did I rear myself to a more tremendous pitch of iniquity, either by reliance on false hope, or by the milk of a miserable despair?' For when the fault has been brought into a habit, the mind, even if it be inclined, by this time resists more feebly: for it becomes bound upon the mind by as many chains, as there are recurrences of the evil practice that clench it fast, Whence it happens that the mind, being sapped of strength, when it has no power to get free, turns to some resource or other of fallacious consolation, so as to flatter itself that the Judge, Who is to come, is of so great mercy, that even those, whom He shall find deserving of condemnation, He will never wholly destroy. Whereunto there is this worst addition, that the tongue of many like him abets him, since there are many who magnify with their praises these very misdeeds; whence it comes to pass that the fault is continually growing, nourished by applauses. Also then we neglect to heal the wound, which is counted worthy of the meed of praise, Hence Solomon says well, *My son, if sinners give thee suck, consent thou not.* [Prov. 1, 10. V.] For the wicked 'give suck,' whenever they either put wicked acts in our way to be done by their enticements, or applaud them with marks of favour when done. Does not he suck of whom the Psalmist says, *For the wicked man is commended in his heart's desire; and he that doeth iniquity receives a blessing,?* [Ps. 10, 3. Vulg. 9, 24]

52. We must also know, that those three modes of being sinners are more easily corrected as they come in their order downwards; but the fourth is not corrected but with difficulty. And hence our Saviour raises the damsel in the house, the young man without the gate, while Lazarus He raises in the grave; for he that sins in secret is as yet lying dead in the house, he is already being carried without the gate, whose iniquity is done openly, even to the shamelessness of commission in public; but he is pressed with the sepulchral mound, who, in the commission of sin, is over and above pressed and overlaid with the use of habit. But all these in mercy He restores to life; in that it is often the case that Divine grace enlighteneth with the light of its regard those that are dead not only in secret sins, but likewise in open evil practices, and that are overlaid with the weight of evil habit. But our Saviour knows indeed of a fourth being dead from the disciple's lips, yet never raises him to life; in that it is hard indeed for one, whom, after continuance in bad habit, the tongues of flatterers too get hold of, to be recovered from the death of the soul; and of such an one it is said with justice, *Let the dead bury their dead*. [Luke 9, 60] For 'the dead bury the dead,' as often as sinners load sinners with their approval. For what else is it to 'sin,' but to lie down in death? and to 'bury,' except it be to hide? But they that pursue the sinner with their applauses, bury the dead body under the mound of their words. Now Lazarus too was dead, yet he was never buried by the dead. For the believing women, who also gave tidings of his death to the Quickener, had laid him under the ground. And hence he forthwith returned back to the light; for when the soul is dead in sin, it is soon brought back, if anxious thoughts live over it. But sometimes, as we have likewise said above, it is not false hope that cuts off the mind, but a more deadly despair pierces it. And whereas this totally cuts off all hope of pardon, it supplies the soul with the milk of error in greater abundance.

53. Let the holy man then consider, what wickedness man has been guilty of, yet for the worse, after the first sin, and, after he had lost paradise, to what broken steeps he descended in this place of exile, and let him say, *Why died I not in the womb?* i.e. 'When the suggestion of the serpent conceived me a sinner, O that I had then known the death that would come upon me; lest the suggestion should transport me to the length of delight, and should link me more closely to death.' *Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?* As though he said, 'O that when I came out to the external gratification, I had known that I was parting with the internal light; so that I had at least died [i.e. died from sinning] at the point of this gratification only, that death might not inflict a sharper sting through the consent.' *Why did the knees prevent me?* As though he said, 'O that the consent had never caught me, my senses being made to bear up my frowardness, that my own consenting might not hurry me yet for the worse into shamelessness.' *Or why the breasts that I should suck?* As though he said, 'O that I had at least refused to flatter myself, after ill acts committed, that I might not attach myself thereby the more wickedly to my fault, the more softly I dealt with myself therein.' So then in these words of reproach, he charged himself with having sinned in our first parent. But had man never been brought down to the wretchedness of this place of banishment, by committing sin, let him say what peace he might have had. It proceeds;

Ver. 13. *For now should I have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept, then had I been at rest.*

54. For this was man set in Paradise, that, had he attached himself by the chains of love to an obedient following of his Creator, he might one day be transported to the heavenly country of the Angels, and that, without the death of the flesh. For he was made immortal in such sort, that, if he sinned, he would yet be capable of dying, and in such wise mortal, that, if he sinned not, he should even be capable of never dying, and that, by desert of a free

choice, he might attain the blessedness of those realms, wherein there is neither possibility of sinning nor of death. There then, where, since the time of the Redemption, the Elect are conveyed, with the death of the flesh intervening, to the same place our first parents, if they had remained stedfast in the state of their creation, would undoubtedly have passed, and that, without the death of the body. Man then would have lain still and been quiet, he would have 'slept and been at rest,' in that being brought to the rest of his eternal country, he would have found as it were a retreat from these clamours of human frailty. For since sin, he, as it were, is kept awake and crying aloud, who bears with struggling opposition the strife of his own flesh. This stillness of peace man, when he was created, enjoyed, when he received the freedom of his will, to encounter his enemy withal. And because he yielded himself up to him of his own accord, he forthwith found in himself what was to rise in clamours against him, forthwith met in the conflict with the riotings of his frail nature; and though he had been created by his Maker in peaceful stillness, yet, once of his own will laid low under the enemy, he had to endure the clamours of the fight. For the very suggestion of the flesh is a kind of outcry against the mind's repose, which man was not sensible of before the transgression, plainly because there was nought that he could be exposed to undergo from infirmity of his own. But since he has once voluntarily subjected himself to his enemy, now being bound with the chains of his sins, he serves him in some things even against his will, and suffers clamours in the mind, when the flesh strives against the Spirit. Did not clamours within meet his ears, who was pressed with the words of an evil law at variance with himself, saying, *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] Let then the holy man reflect in what a peace of mind he would have reposed, if man had refused to entertain the words of the serpent, and let him say, *For now*

should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept, then had I been at rest; i.e. I should have withdrawn into the retirement of my breast to contemplate my Creator, had not the fault, the first sin of consent, betrayed me out of myself to the riotings of temptation; and let him add to the joys of this state of tranquillity, whom he would have had for his fellows in the enjoyment thereof saying,

Ver. 4. *With the kings and counsellors of the earth.*

55. From things without sense we learn what to think of beings endowed with sense and understanding. Now the earth is rendered fruitful by the air, while the air is governed by the quality of the heaven. In like manner man is over the beasts, the Angels over man, and the Archangels are set over the Angels. Now that man has sovereignty over the beasts, we both perceive by the common use, and are instructed by the words of the Psalmist, who says, *Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field.* [Ps. 8, 6. 7.] And that the Angels are placed over man is testified by the Prophet, in these words, *But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me*. [Dan. 10, 13] And that the Angels are under the governance of authority in superior Angels, the Prophet Zechariah declares; *And, behold, the Angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and he said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls.* [Zech. 2, 3. 4.] For in the actual ministration of the holy spirits, if the superior Powers did not direct the inferior, one Angel would never have learnt from the lips of another what he should say to a man. Therefore, forasmuch as the Creator of the Universe holdeth all things by Himself alone, and yet for the purpose of constituting the defined order characterizing a universe of beauty, He rules one part by the governance of another; we shall not improperly understand *the kings* to be the Angelic spirits, who the more devotedly they serve the Maker of all beings, have things subject to their rule the more. He

would then have been ‘at rest with kings;’ in that, surely, man would have already had peace in company with the Angels, if he had refused to listen to the tongue of the Tempter. These too are rightly called ‘counsellors,’ for they ‘consult’ for the spiritual commonwealth, while they unite us to the kingdom as fellow-heirs with themselves. They are justly called ‘counsellors;’ for, whereas, from their lips we are made acquainted with the will of the Creator, it is in them assuredly that we find counsel to extricate ourselves from the misery that besets us here.

56. But since blessed Job is full of the Holy Spirit of Eternity, and since Eternity knows neither to have been nor to be about to be, whereto, as we know, neither things past depart, nor things future approach, as seeing all things in the present, he may, in the present inspiration of the Spirit, have his eyes fixed on the future preachers of the Church, who, when they leave the body, are separated by no intervals of delay from the inheritance of the heavenly country, as the fathers of old were. For as soon as they are parted asunder from the ties of the flesh, they enter into rest in their heavenly habitation, as Paul bears witness, who saith, *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. [2 Cor. 5, 1] But before our Redeemer by His own death paid man’s penalty, those even that followed the ways of the heavenly country, [see Book xiii. §. 49.] the bars of hell held fast after their departure out of the flesh, not so that punishment should light on them, but that while resting in regions apart, they should find the guilt of the first sin a bar to their entrance into the kingdom, in that the Intercession of the Mediator was not yet come. Whence, according to the testimony of the same Mediator, the rich man, that is tormented in hell, beholds Lazarus at rest in the bosom of Abraham. Now if these had not been in the lower regions, he, in the place of his torment, would not have seen them; and hence this same Redeemer of us men, in dying to pay the

debt of our sin, goes down into hell, that He may bring back to the realms of heaven all His followers, who had been held in that debt. But where man in a state of redemption now ascendeth, thither, if he had refused to sin, he might have reached even without the help of the Redemption. Let then the holy man consider that if he had not sinned, he would have ascended to that place, even without redemption, whereunto the holy Preachers, since the Redemption, must fain arrive at the cost of much labour, and let him shew in company with whom he would now be at peace, saying, *With kings and counsellors of the earth*. For the kings are the holy Preachers of the Church, who know both how to order aright those that are committed to them, and to regulate their own bodies; who, while they check the motions of lust in themselves, rule over their thoughts, kept in due subjection according to the law of virtue. These too are rightly entitled, counsellors of the earth. For they are 'kings' in that they rule themselves, but counsellors of the earth, because they yield lifegiving counsel to the lifeless sinner. They are kings in that they know how to govern themselves, and counsellors of the earth, in that they lead earthly minds up to heavenly things by advice of their admonitions. Was not he 'a counsellor of the earth,' that said, *Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment*; and again, *but she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment*. [1 Cor. 7, 25. 40.] It is justly added,

Which build desolate places for themselves.

57. For all that either seek forbidden things, or that desire to appear somewhat in this world, are inwardly beset with a countless throng of thoughts, and while they stir up in their own bosom a host of desires, their mind, being laid prostrate, is miserably trodden by the foot of crowded resort. Thus one man has subjected himself to the law of lust, and he paints to his mind's eye representations of impure acts, and when the execution of the deed is not in his power, the thing is the more often done in the inward

intent; the consummating of pleasure is sought, and the mind being struck powerless, borne hither and thither, disquieted at once and blinded, looks out eagerly for an opportunity of the foulest fulfilment in practice. That mind then, which is disordered by a rabble riot of thoughts, suffers as it were a kind of crowded population. Another man has submitted his neck to the dominion of Anger, and what does he employ himself about in imagination but quarrels which do not even exist? Such a man is often overlooking those that are before him, contradicting the absent, giving and receiving insults in imagination, making his reply severer than the insult received, and when there is none there to encounter him, he makes up a quarrel in his own breast with much uproar. He then that is pressed down by an intolerable weight of angry thoughts, has the misfortune of a rabble in his own bosom. Another has delivered himself over to the law of avarice, and, out of conceit with his own possessions, hankers after what belongs to another: it often happens that being unable to obtain what he longs for, he spends the day indeed in idleness, but the night in thought; he is a sluggard in useful work, because he is harassed with unlawful devices; he multiplies his schemes, and stretches his bosom the wider by all the contrivances and expedients of his invention; he is busy to reach the desired objects, and in order to obtain them he casts about for the most secret windings to serve for his occasions, and the moment that he reckons himself to have hit upon any crafty contrivance on an occasion, he is now in high glee as having obtained possession of his object, and now he is contriving what he may even add further to the thing when gotten, and is considering how it ought to be improved to a better condition; and whereas he is now in possession, and is bringing it to wear a better appearance, he is next considering the snares of those that are envious of him, and pondering what dispute they may fasten upon him, and making out what answer to give, and at the time he has nothing in his hands, the empty handed disputant is wearing himself out in

defence of the thing which he desires. Thus although he has not got a particle of the object desired, yet he has already in his breast the fruit of his desire in the troublesomeness of the quarrel; and so he, that is overcome by the tumultuous instigations of avarice, has a vast population besetting him. Another one has subjected himself to the empire of pride, and while he lifts himself up against his fellow-creatures, he submits his heart to the vice, to his great misery. He covets the wreaths of elevated honours, he aims to exalt himself by his successes, and all that he desires to be, he represents to himself in the secret thoughts of his own breast. He is already as it seems seated on the judgment-seat, already sees the services of his subjects at his command, already shines above others, already brings evil upon one party, or recompenses another for having done this. Already in his own imagination he goes forth into public surrounded by throngs, already marks with what observance he is sustained in his high position; yet while fancying this, he is creeping by himself alone. Now he is treading one set under his feet, now he is elevating another, now he is gratifying his dislikes upon those he treads under foot, now he is receiving applause from the other whom he has elevated. What else is that man doing, who has such a multitude of fanciful imaginations pictured in his heart, save gazing at a dream with waking eyes? and thus, since he undergoes the misery of so many combinations of cases, which he pictures to himself, he plainly carries about within him crowds, that are engendered of his desires. Another has by this time learnt to eschew forbidden objects, yet he dreads lest he should lack the good things of this world, he is anxious to retain the goods vouchsafed him; he is ashamed to appear inferior among men, and he is full of concern lest he should become either a poor man at home, or an object of contempt in public. He anxiously inquires what may suffice for himself, what the needs of his dependants may require; and that he may sufficiently discharge the rights of a patron towards his dependants, he searches for

patrons whom he may himself wait upon; but whilst he is joined to them in a relation of dependence, he is undoubtedly implicated in their concerns, wherein he often consents to forbidden acts, and the wickedness, which he has no mind for on his own account, he commits for the sake of other objects which he has not forsaken. For often, while dreading the diminution of his reputation in the world, he gives his approval to those things with his superiors, which in his own secret judgment he has now learnt to condemn. Whilst he anxiously bethinks himself what he owes to his patrons, what to his dependants, what gain he may make for himself, how he may promote his inclinations, he is in a manner overlaid with resort of crowds, as many in number as the demands of the cases whereby he is distracted.

58. But holy men, on the other hand, because their hearts are not set upon any thing of this world, are assuredly never subject to the pressure of any tumults in their breast, for they banish all inordinate stirrings of desire from the heart's bed, with the hand of holy deliberation. And because they contemn all transitory things, they do not experience the licentious familiarities of the thoughts springing therefrom. For their desires are fixed upon their eternal country alone, and loving none of the things of this world, they enjoy a perfect tranquillity of mind; and hence it is said with justice, *Which built desolate places for themselves*. For to 'build desolate places' is to banish from the heart's interior the stirrings of earthly desires, and with a single aim at the eternal inheritance to pant in love of inward peace. Had he not banished from himself all the risings of the imaginations of the heart, who said, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord?* [Ps. 27, 4] For he had betaken himself from the concourse of earthly desires to no less a solitude than his own self, where he would be the more secure in seeing nought without, in proportion as there was no insufficient object that he loved. For from the tumult of earthly things he had sought a singular and perfect

retreat in a quiet mind, wherein he would see God the more clearly, in proportion as he saw Him alone with himself also alone.

59. Now they, who 'build for themselves solitary places,' are very properly also called 'consuls,' for they set up the mind's solitude in themselves in such wise, that whereinsoever they have the greater ability, they never cease to consult for the good of others through charity. Accordingly let us consider a little more particularly the case of him, whom we just now noticed as 'a consul,' and see in what manner he casts abroad the counters [b] of the virtues, for the setting forth examples of a sublime life to the lines of people under him. Observe, in order to inculcate the returning good for evil, he makes confession on his own person, saying, *If I have returned on them that requited me evil, then should I deserve to fall empty before mine enemies*. [Ps. 7, 4] To excite the love of our Maker, he introduces himself saying, *But it is good for me to draw near to* [to cleave] *God*. To work an impression of holy humility, he shews the secrets of his heart, saying, *Lord, mine heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty*. [Ps. 131, 1] He excites us by his own example to imitate his unswerving zeal, saying, *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee, and am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies*. [Ps. 139, 21. 22.] To light up in us the desire of our eternal home, he laments the length of this present life, and says, *Woe is me that my sojourn is prolonged*. [Ps. 120, 5. V.] Surely he shone forth in the magnificence of the consulship, who, by the example of his own conversation, casts before us so many of virtue's counters.

60. But let this *counsellor* tell whether he too builds a solitary place for himself, For he says, *Lo, I fled far off and remained in the wilderness*. He 'fleeth far off,' in that he raises himself from the throng of earthly desires in high contemplation of God; and he 'remains in the wilderness,' in that he persists in the retiring purpose of his mind. Of this solitude Jeremiah saith

well to the Lord, *I sat alone from the face of Thy hand, because Thou hast filled me with threatening*. [Jer. 15, 17] For the ‘face of God’s hand,’ is the stroke of His righteous judgment, whereby He cast man out of Paradise, when he waxed proud, and shut him out into [*caecitatem* A.B.C.D.E.] the darkness of his present place of banishment. But ‘His threatening’ is the farther dread of a subsequent punishment. Accordingly after ‘the face of His hand,’ we are yet further terrified with ‘His threats,’ because both the penalty of our present banishment has already fallen upon us in the actual experience of His judgment, and, if we do not leave off from sinning, He further consigns us to everlasting punishments. Let the holy man then, here cast away, consider whence it was that man fell, and whither the justice of the Judge yet further hurries him, if he goes on to sin afterwards, and let him dismiss from his breast the countless hosts of temporal desires, and bury himself in the deep solitude of the mind, saying, *I sat alone from the face of Thy Hand; for Thou hast filled me with threatening*. As though he said in plain words, ‘when I consider what I already suffer in experience of Thy judgment, I seek with trembling the withdrawal of my mind from the tumult of temporal desires; for I dread even still worse those eternal punishments, which Thou dost threaten.’ Well then is it said of ‘kings and counsellors,’ *which built desolate places for themselves*. In that they, who know both how to govern themselves, and to advise for others, being unable as yet to obtain admission to that interior tranquillity, fashion a resemblance to it within themselves by pursuit of a quiet mind.

Ver. 15. *Or with princes that have gold, who fill their houses with silver.*

61. Whom does he call *princes*, but the rulers of holy Church, whom the Divine economy substitutes without intermission in the room of their predecessors? Concerning these the Psalmist, speaking to the same Church, says, *Instead of thy fathers thou hast children born to thee, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands*. [Ps. 45, 16] And what does he call gold,

saving wisdom; of which Solomon saith, *A treasure to be desired lieth at rest in the mouth of the wise?* [Prov. 21, 20] That is, he saw wisdom as gold, and therefore called it a treasure: and she is well designated by the name of 'gold,' for that, as temporal goods are purchased with gold, so are eternal blessings with wisdom. If wisdom had not been gold, it would never have been said by the Angel to the Church [p] of Laodicea, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire. For we 'buy ourselves gold,' when we pay obedience first, to get wisdom in exchange, and it is to this very bargain that a certain wise man rightly stimulates us, in these words, *If thou desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord shall give her unto thee*. [Ecclus. 1, 26] And what is signified by the 'houses,' but our consciences? Hence it is said to one that was healed, *Go unto thine house*. [Matt. 9, 16] As though he had heard in plain words, 'After the outward miracles, turn back into thine own conscience, and weigh well what kind of person within thou shouldest shew thyself before God.' And what too is represented by silver but the divine revelations, of which the Psalmist says, *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in the fire?* [Ps 12, 6] The word of the Lord is said to be like silver tried in the fire, because God's word, when it is fixed in the heart, is tried with afflictions.

62. Let the holy man then, full of the Spirit of Eternity, both sum up the things that shall be, and gather together in the open bosom of his mind all those, whom ages long after should give birth to, and consider with wonder and astonishment those Elect souls, with whom he would be enjoying rest in life eternal without the weariness of labour, had none ever been led into sin by the passion of pride, and let him say, *For now should I have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept; then had I been at rest with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves, or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver*. For as, if no decay of sin had ever ruined our first parent, he would not have begotten of

himself children of hell, but they all, who must now be saved by the Redemption, would have been born of him Elect souls, and none else, let him look at these, and reflect how he might have been at rest in their company. Let him see the holy Apostles so ruling the Church they had undertaken, that they never ceased to give it counsel by the word of preaching, and so call them kings and counsellors. After these let him behold rulers arise in their room, who by living according to wisdom should have gold, and by preaching right ways to others should shine with the silver of sacred discourse, and let him call them real princes, the houses of whose conscience are full of gold and silver. But as it is not enough sometimes for the Spirit of Prophecy to foresee future events, unless at the same time it presents to the view of the prophet the past and by-gone, the holy man opens his eyes below and above, and not only fixes them on the future, but also recalls to mind the past. For he forthwith adds,

Ver. 16. *Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.*

63. An abortive child, because it is born before the full period, being dead is forthwith put out of sight. Whom then does the holy man term 'abortives,' with whom he might 'have been at rest,' he reflects, saving all the Elect, who from the beginning of the world lived before the time of the Redemption, and yet studied to mortify themselves to this world. Those who had not the tables of the Law, 'died' as it were 'from the womb,' in that it was by the natural law that they fear their Creator, and believing the Mediator would come, they strove to the best of their power, by mortifying their pleasures, to keep even those very precepts, which they had not received in writing. And so that period, which at the beginning of the world produced our fathers dead to this life, was in a certain sense the 'womb of an abortive birth.' For there we have Abel, of whom we read not that he resisted his brother when he slew him. There Enoch, who approved himself

such that he was carried up to walk with the Lord. There Noah, who hereby, that he was acceptable to the searching judgment of God, was, in the world, the world's survivor. There Abraham, who, while a pilgrim in the world, became the *friend of God*. There Isaac, who, by reason of his fleshly eyes waxing dim, by his age had no sight of things present, but by the efficacy of the prophetic Spirit lighted up future ages even with his extraordinary luminousness of sight. There Jacob, who in humility fled his brother's indignation, and by kindness overcame the same; who was fruitful indeed in his offspring, but yet being more fruitful in richness of the Spirit, bound that offspring with the chains of prophecy. And this *untimely birth* is well described as *hidden*, in that from the beginning of the world, while there are some few, whom we are informed of by Moses' mention of them, by far the largest portion of mankind is hidden from our sight. For we are not to imagine that during all the period up to the receiving of the Law, only just so many righteous men came forth, as Moses has run through in the most summary notice. And thus, forasmuch as the multitude of the righteous born from the beginning of the world is in great measure withdrawn from our knowledge, this *untimely birth* is called *hidden*. And it is also said, *not to have been*, because a few only being enumerated, the generality of them are not preserved among us by any written record for their memorial.

64. Now it is rightly added; *As infants which never saw light*. For they, who came into this world after the Law was received, were conceived to their Creator, by the instruction of the same Law; yet, though *conceived*, they never saw light, in that these never could attain to the coming of the Lord's Incarnation, which yet they stedfastly believed; for the Lord Incarnate saith, *I am the Light of the world* [John 8, 12]; and that very Light declareth, *Many Prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them*. [Matt. 13, 17] Therefore the fruit 'conceived never saw light,' in that, although quickened to entertain

the hope of a future Mediator by the plain declarations of the Prophets, they were never able to behold His Incarnation. In all these then the inward conception brought forth a form of faith, but never carried this on so far as to the open vision of God's Presence; for that death intervening hurried them from the world before Truth made manifest had shed light thereon.

65. Thus the holy man then, full of the spirit of Eternity, fixes to his memory by the hand of the heart all that is transient; and because every creature is little in regard to the Creator, by the same Spirit, Which hath nought either in Itself or about Itself saving always to be, he views both what shall be, and what hath been, and directs the eye of his mind both below and above, and regarding things that are coming as past, he burns in the core of his heart toward eternal Being, and says, *For now I should have lain still and been quiet*. For 'now' belongs to the present time, and what else is it for one to seek a rest always placed in the present, but to pant after that bliss of eternity, whereunto there is nought in coming or in going? Which always Being The Truth, by the lips of Moses, shews to be His own attribute, so as to communicate it to us in some degree in the words, *I AM THAT I AM, and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, HE THAT IS hath sent me unto you*; and now, that he is contemplating things transient, and seeking an ever present bliss, and making mention of the light to come, and enumerating and considering the orders of the Elect children thereof, let him now shew us in a little plainer terms the rest itself that appertains to this light, and let him shew in plainer words, what is brought to pass therein every day relating to the life and conduct of the wicked. It proceeds;

Ver. 17. *There the wicked cease from disturbance, and there the weary in strength be at rest.*

66. We have already said above, that herein, viz. that the hearts of sinners are possessed with a tumult of desires, they are grievously

oppressed by a host of goading thoughts, but in this light, which the 'infants conceived' never saw, the wicked are said to 'cease from their disquietude' for this reason, that the coming of the Mediator, which the fathers under the Law had long waited for, the Gentiles found to the peace of their life, as Paul testifies, who saith, *Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it*. [Rom. 11, 7] In this light then 'the wicked cease from disquietude,' inasmuch as the minds of the untoward, when they have come to the knowledge of the truth, eschew the wearisome desires of the world, and find rest in the quiet haven of interior love. Does not the Light Itself call us to this rest when It says, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take My yoke upon You and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto Your souls*; *For My yoke is easy, and My burthen is light*. [Matt. 11, 28-30] For what heavy yoke does He put upon our mind's neck, Who bids us shun every desire that causes disquietude? What heavy burthen does He lay upon His followers, Who warns us to decline the wearisome ways of the world? Now, by the testimony of the Apostle Paul, *Christ died for the ungodly*; [Rom. 5, 6] and it was for this reason that the Light Itself condescended to die for the ungodly, that these might not continue in the disorderment of their state of darkness. So let the holy man consider with himself, that by the mystery of the Incarnation 'the Light' rescues the wicked from heavy toil, while It takes clean away all the aims of wickedness from their hearts; let him reflect how every converted person has already here below a taste, by inward tranquillity, of that rest which he desires to have throughout eternity, and let him say, *There the wicked cease from, disturbance, and the weary in strength are at rest*.

67. For all they that are strong in this world are by their might in one way strong, not *wearied out in strength*; but they that are endued with might in the love of their Maker, the more they be strengthened in the love of God,

which is their object of desire, become in the same degree powerless in their own strength, and the stronger their longing for the things of eternity, the more they are wearied as to earthly objects by a wholesome failure of their strength. Hence the Psalmist, being wearied with the strength of his love, said, *My soul hath fainted in* [al. *toward* as V.] *Thy salvation*. [Ps. 119, 81] For his soul did faint while making way in God's salvation, in that he panted with desire of the light of eternity, broken of all confidence in the flesh. Hence he says again, *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord*. [Ps. 84, 2] Now when he said 'longeth,' he added rightly, and 'fainteth,' since that longing for the Divine Being is little indeed, which is not likewise immediately followed by a fainting in one's self. For it is but meet that he who is inflamed to seek the courts of eternity, should be enfeebled in the love of this temporal state. So that he should be cold to the pursuit of this world, in proportion as he rises with soul more inflamed to the love of God. Which love if he completely grasps, he then at the same time completely quits the world, and the more entirely dies to temporal things, the higher he is made to soar after the life to come by the inspirations of Eternity. Had not that soul found itself wearied in its own strength, which exclaimed, *My soul* [so V.] *was melted when he spake*; [Cant. 5, 6] clearly in that while the soul is touched by the inspirations of the secret communication, weakened in the seat of its own strength, it is 'melted' by the desire wherewith it is swallowed up, and finds itself wearied in itself by the same step whereby it is brought to see that there is a might without itself to which it soars. Hence when the Prophet was telling that he had seen a vision of God, he adds, *And I, Daniel fainted and was sick certain days*; [Dan. 8, 27] for when the soul is held fast to the power of God, the flesh waxes faint in respect of its own strength. Thus Jacob, who held an Angel in his hold, immediately afterwards halted upon one foot; for he that regards things on high with a genuine love, already forswears to

walk in this world with a doubleminded affection. For he rests upon one foot, who is strong in the love of God alone; and it must needs be that the other should wither, for when the virtue of the soul gains increase, it behoves assuredly that the strength of the flesh wax dull. Let blessed Job, then, review the deep recesses of the hearts of the faithful, and consider the haven of inward peace that they find, while in advancing unto God they are enfeebled in their own strength, and let him say, *There the weary in strength be at rest*. As if he taught in plain words, 'there the repose of light is the reward of those, whom the advancement of inward restoration wearies here.' Nor ought it to influence us, that after naming light he did not subjoin, *in this*, but *there*, for that which he beholds encompassing the Elect, he discovers to be our place as it were. Whence then the Psalmist, when contemplating the unchangeableness of Eternity, and saying, *But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail*; [Ps. 102, 28] proclaims that this is the place of the Elect, by adding, *But the children of Thy servants shall dwell there*. For God, Who without position containeth all things, remains a place without locality to us who come to Him. And when we reach this place, our eyes are opened to see, what infinite vexation even our very repose of mind was in this life, for though the righteous by comparison with the bad already enjoy rest, yet in estimating the inmost Rest, they are altogether not at rest. Hence it is well added;

Ver. 18. *There the former prisoners are alike without vexation.*

68. For though the just are possessed by no riot of carnal desires, yet the clog of corruption binds them down in this life with hard chains; for it is written, *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things*. [Wisd. 9, 15] So herein even, that they are still mortal beings, they are weighed down by the burthen of their state of corruption, and chained and bound by its clogs, in that they are not yet risen in that liberty of an incorruptible life.

For they meet with one thing from the mind, and another from the body, and they are spent every day in the inward conflict with themselves. Are they not indeed bound with the hard chain of vexation, whose mind, without labour, is dissolved in ignorance, and is not trained without the strivings of labour? When forced it stands erect, of itself it lies prostrate, and yet as soon as raised up, it forthwith falls, by conquering itself with laborious effort, its eyes are opened to see heavenly things, but recoiling, it flees the light, which had illuminated it. Are they not bound fast with the hard chain of vexation, who when their fired soul draws them with a perfect desire to the bosom of inward peace, suffer perturbation from the flesh in the heat of the conflict? And though this now no longer encounters it face to face, as though drawn up with hostile front, yet it still goes muttering like a captive in the rear of the mind, and, though with fears, it yet defiles with vile clamouring the form of fair tranquillity in the breast. Therefore, though the Elect subdue all enemies with a strong hand, since they long for the security of inward peace, it is yet a grievous vexation to them to have something still to vanquish. And leaving these out of the question, they endure over and above those chains too, which a sore necessity outwardly fastens upon them; for to eat, to drink, and to be tired, are chains of corruption, and chains too, which can never be unloosed, save when our mortal nature is turned into the glory of an immortal nature; for we fill our body with food to sustain it, lest it fail from extenuation; and we thin it down by abstinence, lest it oppress by repletion. We quicken it by motion, lest it be killed by lying motionless, but by setting it down we soon stop its motions, that by that very activity it may not give under. We clothe it with garments as a succour to it, lest the cold destroy it, and cast off these succours so sought after, lest the heat should parch it. Exposed then to so many vicissitudes and chances, what else do we, but drudge to the corruptibility of our state of being, that howsoever the multiplicity of the services rendered to it may

sustain that body, which the fretting care of a frail nature subject to change weighs to the ground. Hence Paul says well, *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope*. *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God*. [Rom. 8, 20. 21.] For 'the creature is made subject to vanity, not willingly,' in that man, who willingly left the footing of inborn firmness, being pressed down by the weight of a deserved mortality, is the unwilling slave of the corruption of his changeful condition. But this creature is then rescued from the slavery of corruption, when in rising again it is lifted uncorrupt to the glory of the sons of God. Here then the Elect are bound with vexation, in that they are still pressed down by the curse of their corrupt condition. But when we are stripped of our corruptible flesh, we are as it were loosened from those chains of vexation, whereby we are now held bound. For we already long to come into the presence of God, but we are still hindered by the clog of a mortal body. So that we are justly called 'prisoners,' in that we have not as yet the advance of our desire to God free before us. Hence Paul, whose heart was set upon the things of eternity, yet who still carried about him the load of his corruption, being in bonds exclaims, *Having a desire to be unloosed and to be with Christ*. [Phil. 1, 23] For he would not desire to be 'unloosed,' unless, assuredly, he saw himself to be in bonds. Now because he saw that these bonds were most surely to be burst at the Resurrection, the Prophet rejoiced as if they were already burst asunder, when he said, *Thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving*. [Ps. 116, 16] Let the holy man then reflect that inward light is the haven that receives converted sinners, and let him say, *There the wicked cease from trouble*. Let him reflect, that holy men, being awearied with the exercising of desire, enjoy the deeper repose in that inmost bosom, and let him say, *And there the weary in strength are at rest*. Let him reflect, that

being absolved from all the bonds of corruption at once and together, they attain those uncorrupt joys of liberty. *And the former prisoners are alike without vexation*. And it is wel1 said, *the former prisoners*, for while that ever present bliss is in his view, all that shall be, and is going [B. 'and shall be gone'], seems as though past. For whilst the end of all things is awaited, all that passes away is accounted already to have been. But let him tell what all they, for whom the interior rest is there in store, shall meanwhile have done here. It goes on;

They have not heard the voice of the exactor. [*non exaudierunt*]

69. Who else is to be understood by the title of the 'exactor,' saving that insatiate prompter, who for once bestowed the coin of deceit upon mankind, and from that time ceases not daily to claim the debt of death? Who lent to man in Paradise the money of sin, but by the multiplying of wickedness is daily exacting it with usury? Concerning this exactor, Truth saith in the Gospel, And the Judge deliver thee to the officer [V. *'exactori'*]. [Luke 12, 58] Therefore the voice of this exactor is the tempting of persuasion to our hurt. And we hear the voice of the exactor, when we are smitten with his temptation, but we do not bear it effectually [*exaudimus*] if we resist the hand that smites, for he 'hears' that feels the temptation, but he hears effectually who yields to the temptation. So let it be said of the righteous, *They have not heard the voice of the exactor*; for though they hear his prompting in that they are tempted, they do not hear it effectually, for that they take shame to yield thereto, but because whatsoever the mind loves with great affection, it is often repeating even in utterance of the lips; blessed Job, in that he views the crowds of inward peace with fulness of affection, again employs himself about the description [al. the distinguishing of them] of it, saying,

Ver. 19. *The small and great are there; the servant is free from his master.*

70. Forasmuch as there is to us in this life a difference in works, doubtless there will be in the future life a difference in degrees of dignity, that whereas here one surpasses another in desert, there one may excel another in reward. Hence Truth says in the Gospel, *In My Father's house are many mansions.* [John 14, 2] But in those 'many mansions,' the very diversity of rewards will be in some measure in harmony. For an influence so mighty joins us together in that peace, that what any has failed to receive in himself, he rejoices to have received in another. And thus they that did not equally labour in the vineyard, equally obtain all of them a penny. And indeed with the Father are 'many mansions,' and yet the unequal labourers receive the same penny, in that the blessedness of joy will be one and the same to all, yet not one and the same sublimity of life to all. He had seen the small and great in this light, who said in the voice of the Head; *Thine eyes did see My substance, yet being imperfect, and in Thy book were all My members written*. [Ps. 139, 16] He beheld 'the small and the great together,' when he declared, *He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great*. [Ps. 115, 13] And it is well added, *And the servant is free from his master*. For it is written, *Everyone that sinneth is the servant of sin* [John 8, 34]. For whosoever yields himself up to bad desire, submits the neck of his mind, till now free, to the dominion of wickedness. Now we withstand this master, when we struggle against the evil whereby we had been taken captive, when we forcibly resist the bad habit, and treading under all froward desires, maintain against the same the right of inborn liberty, when we strike our sin by penitence, and cleanse the stains of pollution with our tears. But it oftentimes happens, that the mind indeed already bewails what it remembers itself to have done amiss, that already it not only forsakes its misdeeds, but even chastises them with the bitterest lamentations, yet while it recalls to memory the things that it has done, it is affrighted and sorely dismayed against the Judgment. It already turns itself

with a perfect intention, but does not yet lift itself up in a perfect state of security, for while it weighs the rigid exactness of the final scrutiny, it trembles with anxiety between hope and fear, for it knows not, when the righteous Judge comes, what He will reckon, what He will remit of the deeds done. For it remembers what evil deeds it has committed, but it cannot tell whether it has worthily bewailed the commission of them, and it dreads lest the vastness of the sin exceed the measure of penance. And it is very often the case that 'Truth' already remits the sin, yet the troubled soul, whilst it is full of anxiety for itself, still trembles for the pardon thereof. So that in this present life the servant already escapes from his master, yet he is not free from him, in that by chastisement and penance man already forsakes his sin, yet he still fears the strict Judge for the recompensing of it. There then 'the servant will be free from his master,' when there will be no longer misgiving about the pardon of sin, when the recollection of its sin no longer condemns the soul, now secured, where the conscience does not tremble under a sense of guilt, but exults in the pardon of the same in a state of freedom.

72. But if man is reached there by no remembrance of his sin, how does he congratulate himself that he has been saved therefrom? Or how does he return thanks to his Benefactor for the pardon, which he has received, if by an intervening forgetfulness of his past wickedness, he knows not that he is a debtor to suffer punishment? For we must not pass over negligently that which the Psalmist says, *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever*. [Ps. 89, 1] For how does he 'sing of the mercies of God for ever,' if he knows not that he has been miserable; and if he has no recollection of past misery, whence does he answer with praises the bestowal of mercy? And again, we must enquire how the mind of the Elect can be in perfect bliss, if amidst its joys the memory of its guilt reaches it? Or how does the glory of indefectible light shine out, when it is overcast by the sin that is recalled to

mind? But be it known, that just as oftentimes now in joy we call to mind sad things, so in the future life, we bring back the memory of past sin without any hurt to our bliss. For it very often happens, that in the season of health, we recall to mind past pains without feeling pain, and in proportion as we remember ourselves sick, the more we hug ourselves in health. And so in that blissful estate there will be a remembrance of sin, not such as to pollute the mind, but to attach us the more closely to our joy, that while the mind without pain remembers itself of its pain, it may the more clearly perceive itself to be a debtor to the physician, and so much the more cherish the health it has received, in proportion as it remembers what it has escaped of uneasiness. And so then, placed in that state of bliss, we so regard our evil deeds without loathing, as now being set in light, without any inward blindness of the heart, we see the darkness with our mind; for though that be dim which we perceive with the imagination, this comes from the sentence of light, not from the misfortune of blindness. And thus throughout eternity we render to our Benefactor the praise of His mercy, yet are in no degree oppressed with the consciousness of wretchedness; for whilst we review our evils without any evil betiding the mind, on the one hand there will never be ought to defile, the hearts that render praise on the score of past wickednesses, and again there will always be somewhat to inflame them to the praise of their Deliverer. Therefore, because the repose of inward light does in such sort transport the great ones into itself, that yet it does not leave the little ones, let it be rightly said, *the small and great are there*. Now forasmuch as the mind of the converted sinner is there touched by the recollection of his sin in such sort that he is not overwhelmed by any confusion at that recollection, it is fitly subjoined, *And the servant is free from his master.*

BOOK V.

He explains the remainder of chap. iii. from ver. 20. the whole of chap. iv. and the first two verses of chap. v.

1. THOUGH the appointments of God are very much hidden from sight, why it is that in this life it is sometimes ill with the good and well with the wicked, yet they are then still more mysterious when it both goes well with the good here below, and ill with the wicked. For when it goes ill with the good, and well with the bad, this perhaps is found to be for that both the good, if they have done wrong in any thing, receive punishment here that they may be more completely freed from eternal damnation, and the wicked meet here with the good things, which conduce to this life, that they may he dragged to unmitigated torments hereafter. And hence these words are spoken to the rich man, when burning in hell, *Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things*. [Luke 16, 25] But when it is well with the good here and ill with the wicked, it is very doubtfu1, whether the good for this reason receive good things, that they may be set forward and advance to something better, or whether by a just and secret appointment they receive here the reward of their deeds, that they may prove void of the rewards of the life to come; and whether afflictions for this reason come upon the wicked, in order that by correcting, they may be the means of preserving them from everlasting punishments, or whether their punishment only begins here, that, one day to receive completion, it should lead to the final torments of hell. Therefore, because in the midst of the divine appointments the human mind is closed in by the great darkness of its uncertainty, holy men, when they see this world's prosperity to be their lot, are disquieted with fearful misgivings. For they fear lest they should receive here the fruits of their labours. They fear

lest Divine Justice should see in them a secret wound, and in loading them with external blessings should withhold them from the interior. But when they exactly consider, that they never do good saving that they may please God only, nor triumph in the very exuberance of their prosperity, then indeed they less fear hidden judgments to their hurt in their good fortune, yet they ill endure that good fortune, in that it impedes the interior purpose of the heart, and they reluctantly submit to the caresses of this present life, forasmuch as they are not ignorant that they are in some degree retarded thereby in their interior longing. For honour in this world is more engrossing than the contempt thereof, and the rise of prosperity weighs upon them more than the pressure of a hard necessity. For sometimes when a man is outwardly straitened by the latter, he is the more entirely set at liberty to fix his desire upon the interior good; but by the other the mind, while forced to yield to the will of many, is kept back from the race of its own desire. And hence it is that holy men are in greater dread of prosperity in this world than of adversity. For they know that while the mind is under soft and beguiling impressions, it is sometimes apt to give itself up to be drawn away after external objects. They know that oftentimes the secret thought of the heart so beguiles it, that it does not see how it is changed. And they consider too, what the eternal blessings are which they desire, and they see what a mere nothing all is that courts and smiles upon us after the manner of things temporal, and their mind bears the worse all the prosperity of this world, in proportion as it is pierced with love of heavenly happiness; and it is planted so much the more erect in contempt of the delightfulness of the present life, the more it perceives that this is beguiling it by stealth in the disregard of eternal glory. Hence when blessed Job, having his eye fixed upon the rest above, had said, *The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master*. He therefore adds,

Ver. 20. *Wherefore is light given to one that is in misery?*

2. In holy Scripture prosperity is sometimes represented by the title of light, and this world's adversity by the name of night. Hence it is well said by the Psalmist, *As is its darkness, so also is its light*. [Ps 139, 12. Vulg.] For as holy men thus trample upon the prosperity of this state by contemning it, as also they sustain its adverse fortune by trampling upon it, by an exceeding highmindedness laying under their feet alike the good and the ill of the world, they declare, *As its darkness, so also is its light*. As though they said in plain words, 'as its griefs do not force down the resoluteness of our fixed mind, so neither can its caresses corrupt the same.' But since these last, as we have said above, though they fail to lift up the mind of the righteous, do yet cause them disquietude; holy men, who know themselves to be in misery in this wearisome exile, shrink from shining in its prosperity. Hence it is well said at this time, *Wherefore is light given to one that is in misery?* for 'light is given to those in misery,' when they, who, by contemplating things above, see themselves to be in misery in this our pilgrimage, have the brightness of transitory prosperity bestowed upon them; and when they are deploring grievously, that they are slow in returning to their country, they are over and above constrained to bear the burthen of honours. The love of eternal things is crushing them, and at the same time the glory of temporal things smiles upon them. When these reflect what the things are, which keep them down below, and what those are that they see not of the things above, what those are that set them up on earth, and what they have lost of heavenly blessings, they are stung with regret of their prosperity. For though they see that they are never wholly overwhelmed thereby, yet they anxiously consider that their thoughts are divided between the love of God, and the gifts of His hand; and hence when he says, *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery?* he subjoins forthwith,

And life unto the bitter in soul?

3. For all the Elect are bitter in soul, in that either they never cease to punish themselves by weeping for the transgressions they have committed, or they afflict themselves with regrets, that banished here far from the face of their Creator, they are not yet admitted to the bliss of the eternal country; and of their hearts it is well said by Solomon, *The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger shall not intermeddle with his joy*. For the hearts of the reprobate are likewise in bitterness, for that they are afflicted even by their very bad passions themselves. Yet they know not of this very bitterness, because having voluntarily blinded their own eyes, they cannot estimate what they are undergoing; but on the contrary the heart of a good man knoweth its own bitterness, for it knows the hard condition of this place of exile, wherein it is cast forth to be torn in pieces; and it sees how tranquil is all that it has lost, how troubled the condition it has fallen into. Yet this embittered heart is one day brought back to its own joy, and *a stranger shall not intermeddle* therewith, in that he, who now casts himself forth without, away from this sorrow of the heart, in his aims, will then remain shut out from its interior festival.

4. They then that are *in bitterness of soul*, long to be wholly dead to the world, that, as they themselves aim at nothing in this present world, so they may not henceforth be fettered by the world with any ties; and it very often happens that a person has already ceased to retain the world in his affections, but the world still ties down that person by its business, and he indeed is already dead to the world, but the world is not yet dead to him. For in a certain sense the world, still alive, regards [D. 'desires him' (as below)] him, so long as it strives to carry him away in its actions, when he is bent another way. Hence, since Paul both himself utterly contemned the world, and saw that he was become such an one as this world could not possibly desire, having burst the bonds of this life, and being henceforth at liberty, he rightly exclaims, *The world is crucified to me, and I unto the*

world. For 'the world was crucified to him,' because being now dead to his affections it was no longer an object of love to him; and he had likewise 'crucified himself to the world,' in that he studied to shew himself thereto in such a light, that, as though dead, he might never be coveted by it. For if there be a dead person, and one alive in the same place, though the dead sees not the living, yet the living person does see the dead, but if both are dead, neither can possibly see the other. Thus he, who no longer loves the world, but yet even against his will is loved by the world, though he himself being as it were dead sees nothing of the world, yet the world not being dead sees him; but if he neither himself retains the world in his affections, nor again is retained in the affections of the world, then both are mutually dead to one another; in that whereas neither seeks the other, it is as if the dead heeded not the dead. Therefore, because Paul neither sought the glory of the world, nor was himself sought out by the same, he glories both in being himself crucified to the world, and in the world being crucified to him. Now because there are many that desire this, who yet do not altogether rise up to the very extreme point of such a state of deadness, they may well lament and say; *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul*. For 'life is given to those in bitterness,' when the glory of this world is bestowed upon the sad and sorrowful, in which same life they do not spare themselves the chastening of most urgent fear; for though they do not themselves hold to the world, yet they still dread being such as the world holds to; and except they were living to it in some slight degree, it would never surely love them for their serviceableness to its interests; just as the sea keeps living bodies in her own bosom, but dead ones she forthwith casts out from herself. It proceeds;

Ver. 21. *Which long for death, but it cometh not.*

5. For they desire to mortify themselves wholly, and to be entirely extinct of the life of temporal glory, but by the secret appointments of God

they are often forced either to take the lead in command, or to busy themselves with dignities imposed on them, and in these circumstances they unceasingly look for a perfect mortification, but this expected death cometh not; in that the use of them is still alive to temporal glory even against their will, though they submit to that glory from the fear of God, and while they inwardly retain their aim after piety, they outwardly discharge the functions of their station, that they should neither quit their perfection in their inward purpose, nor set themselves against the dispensations of their Creator in a spirit of pride. For by a marvellous pitifulness of the Divine Nature it comes to pass, that, when he, who aims at contemplation with a perfect heart, is busied with human affairs, his perfect mind at once profits many that are weaker, and in whatever degree he sees himself to be imperfect, he rises therefrom more perfect to the crowning point of humility. For sometimes by the very same means, whereby holy men suffer loss in their own longings, they bear off the larger profits by the conversion of others, for, while it is not permitted them to give themselves thereto as they desire, it is their grateful office to carry off along with themselves others, whom they are associated with. And so it is effected by a wonderful dispensation of pity, that by the same means, whereby they seem to themselves to be the more undone [*destructiores*], they rise with richer resources to the building up [*constructionem*] of their heavenly Country.

6. Now sometimes they fail to attain the desires, that they have conceived, for this reason, that by the very interposing of the delay, they may be made to expand to the same objects with an enlarged embrace of the mind, and by a striking dispensation it is effected that that, which if fulfilled might perhaps become thin and poor, being kept back, gains growth. For they desire so to mortify themselves that, if it may be vouchsafed, they may already perfectly behold the face of their Creator, but their desire is delayed that it may gain increase, and it is fostered in the bosom of its slow

advancement that it may grow larger. Hence the Bride, panting with desire of her Bridegroom, justly cries out, *By night on my bed I sought him, whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not*. [Cant. 3, 1] The Spouse hides himself when He is sought, that not being found He may be sought for with the more ardent affection, and she in seeking is withheld, that she cannot find Him, in order that being rendered of larger capacity by the delay she undergoes, she may one day find a thousandfold what she sought. Hence when blessed Job said, *Which long for death, but it cometh not*; that he might the more minutely particularize this very desire of those seekers, he thereupon adds;

And dig for it as for hid treasures.

7. For all men that seek for a treasure by digging, the deeper they have begun to go, kindle to the work with the greater energy; for in the same proportion that they reckon themselves to be now, at this moment, approaching the buried treasure, they strive with increased efforts in digging for it. They, then, that perfectly desire the mortification of themselves, seek it as they that dig for hid treasures, for the nearer they are brought to their object, the more ardent they shew themselves in the work. Therefore they never flag in their labour, but increase the more in the exercise thereof; for that in the degree, that they reckon on their reward as now nearer at hand, they spend themselves the more gladly in the work. Hence Paul says well to some, that were seeking the hid treasure of the eternal inheritance, *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but consoling* [V. *consolantes*] *one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching*. [Heb. 10, 25] For to give consolation to the labourer, is to continue labouring in like manner to him, the sight of a fellow labourer being the alleviation of our own labour, as, when a companion joins us in a journey, the way itself is not shortened, yet the toilsomeness of the way is alleviated by the society of a companion. Therefore, whereas Paul looked

for their consoling one another in their labours, he added these words, *and so much the more as ye see the day approaching*. As though he said, 'let your labour increase the more, that now the reward of your labour itself is nigh at hand.' As if he expressed himself in plain words, 'Do ye seek a treasure? Then ye should dig for it with the greater ardour, that ye have by digging reached by this time close to the gold ye were in quest of.'

8. Though this, that he says, *Which long for death and it cometh not; and dig for it as for hid treasures*, may be taken in another sense also. For in that we cannot perfectly die to the world, unless we bury ourselves within the invisible depths of our own heart from all things visible, they that long for the mortifying of themselves, are well compared to those that dig for a treasure. For we die to the world by means of an unseen wisdom, of which it is said by Solomon, *If thou seekest her as silver, and diggest for her as for hid treasures*. [Prov. 2, 4] Since wisdom lieth not on the surface of things, for it is deep in the unseen. And we then lay hold on the mortification of ourselves, in attaining wisdom, if, relinquishing visible things, we bury ourselves in the invisible; if we so seek for her in the digging of the heart, that every imagination, which the mind conceives, of an earthly nature, she puts from her with the hand of holy discernment, and acquaints herself with the treasure of virtue which was hidden from her. For she soon finds a treasure in herself, if she thrust from her that heap of earthly thoughts, which lay as a wretched load upon her. Now because he describes death coveted as a treasure, he rightly subjoins;

Ver. 22. *Which rejoice exceedingly and are glad, when they can find the grave.*

9. For as the grave is that place wherein the body is buried, so heavenly contemplation is a kind of spiritual grave wherein the soul is buried. For in a certain sense we still live to this world, when in spirit we roam abroad therein. But we are buried in the grave as dead, when being mortified in

things without, we secrete ourselves in the depths of interior contemplation. And therefore holy men never cease to mortify themselves with the sword of the sacred Word to the importunate calls of earthly desires, to the throng of unprofitable cares, and to the din of obstreperous tumults, and they bury themselves within before God's presence in the bosom of the mind. Hence it is well said by the Psalmist, *And Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the strife of tongues*. [Ps. 31, 20] Which though it be not until afterwards fully brought to pass, is yet even now in a great measure accomplished, when with the feeling of delight they are caught away into the inward parts from the strife of temporal desires, so that, whilst their mind wholly expands in every part to the love of God, it is not rent and torn by any useless anxiety. Hence it is that Paul had seen those disciples as dead, and as it were buried in the grave by contemplation, to whom he said, *Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God*. [Col. 3, 3] He, then, that seeks for death rejoices when he finds the grave; for whoso desires to mortify himself, is exceeding joyful on finding the rest of contemplation; that being dead to the world he may lie hid, and bury himself in the bosom of interior love from all the disquietudes of external things.

10. But since in addition to this, that he speaks of a treasure being dug up, the finding of a grave is further introduced, it is needful that our mind's eye should keep this in view, that the ancients buried their dead with their wealth. He, then, that seeks for a treasure, 'rejoices when he has found the grave,' in that when we, in quest of wisdom, turn the pages of Holy Writ, when we trace out the examples of those that have gone before us, we as it were derive joy from the grave, for we find the mind's wealth among the dead, who, because they [several Mss. 'for they who.'] are perfectly dead to this world, rest in secret with their riches beside them. And so he is made rich by the grave, who, following the example of the righteous, is raised up in the excellency of contemplation. But when he asks, saying, *Wherefore is*

light given to him that is in misery? he intimates the reason for which he ventures to put such a question, by saying,

Ver. 23. *Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath encompassed with darkness?*

11. For ‘man’s way is hid to him,’ in that though he already takes cognizance of the kind [*qualitate*] of life that he is leading, he does not yet know to what issue it tends. Though his affections are now fixed on things above, though he seeks them with all his longings, he is yet ignorant whether he shall persevere in the same longings. For forsaking our sins we strive after righteousness, and we know whence we are come, but we know nothing whereunto we may arrive. We know what we were yesterday, but we cannot tell what we may chance to be to-morrow. ‘Man’s way then is hid to him,’ in that he so sets the foot of his labour, that, this notwithstanding, he can never foresee the issue of the accomplishment thereof.

12. Now there is also another ‘hiding of our way.’ For there are times when we are ignorant, whether the very things which we believe we do aright, are rightly done in the strict Judge’s eye. For, as we have also said a long way above, it often happens that an action of ours, which is cause for our condemnation, passes with us for the aggrandizement of virtue. Often by the same act, whereby we think to appease the Judge, He is urged to anger, when favourable. As Solomon bears witness, saying, *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.* [Prov. 14, 12] Hence, whilst holy men are getting the mastery over their evil habits, their very good practices even become an object of dread to them, lest, when they desire to do a good action, they be decoyed by a semblance of the thing, lest the baleful canker of corruption lurk under the fair appearance of a goodly colour. For they know that they are still charged with the burthen of corruption, and cannot exactly discern the things that be

good. And when they bring before their eyes the standard of the final Judgment, there are times when they fear the very things which they approve in themselves; and indeed they are in mind wholly intent on the concerns of the interior, yet alarmed from uncertainty about their doings, they know not whither they are going. Hence after he had said, *Wherefore is light given to one that is in misery?* it is with propriety added, *to a man whose way is hid?* As though the words were, 'Why has that man this life's success for his portion, who knows not of his course of conduct, in what esteem it is held by his Judge. And it is rightly subjoined, *And whom God hath encompassed with darkness*. For man is 'encompassed with darkness,' since howsoever he may burn with heavenly longings, he is ignorant how it goes with him in the interior. And he is in great fear lest aught concerning himself should meet him in the Judgment, which is now hidden from himself in the aspirations of holy fervour. 'Man is encompassed with darkness,' in that he is closed in by the clouds of his own ignorance. Is not that man 'encompassed with darkness,' who most often neither remembers the past, nor finds out the future, and scarce knows the present? That wise man had seen himself to be encompassed with darkness, when he said, *And with labour do we find the things that are before us; but the things that are in heaven who shall search out?* [Wisd. 9, 16]

The Prophet beheld himself 'encompassed with' such 'darkness,' when he was unable to discover the interior springs of His inmost economy, saying, *He made darkness His secret place*. [Ps. 18, 11] For the Author of our being, in that, when we were cast out into this place of exile, He took from us the light of His vision, buried Himself from our eyes as it were 'in the secret place of darkness.'

13. Now as often as we attentively regard this same darkness of our blind estate, we stir up the mind to lamentation. For it weeps for the state of blindness, which it is under without, if it remember in humility that it is

bereft of light in the interior, and when it looks to the darkness which surrounds it, it is wrung with ardent longing for the inward brightness, and rent with thought's whole effort, and that light above, which as soon as created it relinquished, now debarred, it makes the object of its search. Whence it very often happens that that radiance of inward joy bursts out amidst those very tears of piety; and that the mind, which had lain torpid in a state of blindness, being fed with sighs, receives strength to gaze at the interior brightness. Whence it rightly proceeds,

Ver. 24. *For my sighing cometh before I eat.*

14. For the soul's 'eating' is its being fed with the contemplations of the light above, and thus it sighs before it eats, in that it first travails with the groanings of sorrow, and afterwards is replenished with the cheer of contemplation. For except it sigh, it eats not, in that he that refuses to humble himself, in this exile we are in, by the groanings of heavenly desires, never tastes the delights of the eternal inheritance. For all they are starved of the food of truth, that take joy in the emptiness of this scene of our pilgrimage, but he 'sighs,' that 'eats,' because all who are touched with the love of truth, are at the same time fed with the refreshments of contemplation. The Prophet 'ate sighing,' when he said, *My tears have been my bread*. [Ps. 42, 3] For the soul is fed by its own grief, when it is lifted up to the joys above by the tears, which it sheds, and indeed it bears within its sorrowful sighings, but it receives food for its refreshing, the more the force of its love gushes out in weeping. And hence blessed Job still goes on with the violence of that weeping, adding,

And my roarings are poured out like overflowing waters.

15. Waters, that overflow, advance with a rush, and swell with billows evermore increasing. Now whilst the Elect set the judgments of God before the eyes of their mind, whilst they dread the secret sentence concerning them, whilst they trust to attain to God, but yet are in fear lest they should

not attain, while they call to mind their past doings, which they weep over, whilst they shrink from the events that still await them, in that they are unknown, there are gathered in them as it were a kind of billows, as of water, which spend themselves in the roarings of grief, as upon a shore beneath them. The holy man then saw how great are the billows of our thoughts in our penitential mourning, and he called the very waves of our grief overflowing waters, saying, *And my roarings are like overflowing waters*. Now there are times when the righteous, as we likewise said a little above, even in the midst of their very good works, are affrighted and give themselves to continual mourning, lest they should offend by some secret misdemeanour therein. And when God's scourges suddenly take hold of them, they imagine that they have done despite to the grace of their Maker, in that being either impeded by infirmities, or weighed down with sadness, they are not ready to perform works of mercy to their neighbours; and their heart turns to mourning, for that the body is become slack to its devout ministration. And whereas they see that they are not adding to their reward, they fear that their past deeds also have been displeasing. Hence when blessed Job described his roaring like overflowing waters, he thereupon added,

Ver. 25. *For the thing that I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I am afraid of is come unto me.*

16. The righteous therefore lament and fear, and torment themselves with bitter lamentations, because they dread to be given over, and though they rejoice in their own correction [*correptio*], the correction itself disturbs their fearful spirits, lest the evil, which they are undergoing should not be the merciful stroke of discipline, but the righteous visitation of vengeance. And the Psalmist reflecting thereupon says with justice, *Who knoweth the power of Thine anger?* [Ps. 90, 11] For the power of God's anger cannot be conceived by our faculties, in that His dispensation, by its undiscerned

provisions concerning us, often takes us up in that very point where it is counted to abandon us, and in the very thing wherein it is supposed to take us up, it forsakes us. So that very often that is rendered grace to us, which we call wrath, and that is sometimes wrath, which we account to be grace. For strokes of affliction are the correction of some men, but others they lead to a frenzy of impatience, and there are some whom prosperity, in that it soothes them, calms from a state of madness, while there are others whom, seeing that it uplifts them, it wholly turns adrift from every hope of conversion. Now vice forces all men down beneath, but some the more easily return from thence, that they take the greater shame to themselves to have fallen thereunto. And attainments in virtue in every case raise men on high, yet sometimes some men, in that swelling thoughts are engendered from their virtues, fall down by the very pathway of their rise. And so forasmuch as the power of God's wrath is little known, under all circumstances it must needs be unceasingly feared. It proceeds;

Ver. 26. *Did I not dissemble it? Did I not hold my peace? Did I not rest quiet? Yet wrath came upon me.*

17. Though in every situation of life, we sin in thought, word, and deed, the mind is then hurried along in all these three ways with the greater freedom from control, when it is lifted up with this world's good fortune. For when it sees that it surpasses other men in power, feeling proudly, it thinks high things of itself, and when no opposition is offered by any to the authority of its word, the tongue has the more uncontrolled range along precipitous paths; and while it is permitted to do all that it likes, it reckons all that it likes to be lawfully permitted it. But good men, when supported by this world's power, bring themselves under severer discipline of the mind, in proportion as they know that, from the intolerance of power, they are persuaded to unlicensed acts, as if they were more licensed to do them [vid. b. xx.c.73.]. Thus they refrain their hearts from surveying their own

glory, they check their tongues from unrestrained talk, they guard their actions from restless roaming. For it often happens that they that are in power lose the good things that they do, because they entertain high conceits, and while they reckon themselves to be of use for every purpose, they blast the merit even of the usefulness they have laid out. For in order that a man's deeds may be rendered of greater worth, they must needs always appear worthless in his own esteem, lest the same good action elevate the heart of the doer, and in elevating overthrow its author by self elation, more effectually than it helps the very persons for whom it may chance to be rendered. For it is hence that the King of Babylon, while he was secretly revolving in his own mind, in the pride of his heart, saying, *Is not this great Babylon which I have builded?* was suddenly turned into an irrational beast. For he lost all that he had been made, because he would not humbly keep back what he had done; and because in the Pride of his heart he lifted himself up above men, he lost that very human faculty, which he had in common with man. And often they that are in power burst out at random into insulting language towards their dependants, and this merit, viz. that they serve their office of authority with vigilance, they lose by reason of their forwardness of speech, plainly considering with overlittle dread the words of the Judge, that he *who shall say to his brother without cause Thou fool*, [Matt. 5, 22] makes himself obnoxious to hell fire. Often they that are in power, whereas they know not how to refrain lawful actions, slide into such as are unlawful, and unquiet. For he alone is never brought down in things unlawful, who is careful to restrain himself at times even from things lawful. It is with the bands of this selfsame restraint that Paul shewed himself to be bound for good, when he says, *All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient* [1 Cor. 6, 12]; and in order to shew in what exceeding freedom of mind he was set at large by reason of this very restraint, he thereupon added, *All things are lawful for me, but I will not be*

brought under the power of any. For when the mind pursues after the desires that it entertains, it is convicted of being enslaved to the things, by the love of which it is subdued. But Paul, 'to whom all things are lawful,' is 'brought under the power of none;' in that by restraining himself even from things lawful, those very objects, which, if enjoyed, would weigh him down, being contemned, he rises above.

18. Let blessed Job then declare for our better instruction what he was when in power, in these words, *Did I not dissemble?* For when we are in possession of power, it is both to be taken account of for purposes of utility, and to be kept out of sight because of Pride, in order that he that uses it, on the one hand, that he may render service therewith, may be aware that he has the power, and on the other, that he may not be elated, may not be aware that he has the power. Now what he was in word of mouth, let him add in these words, *Was I not silent?* What in respect of forbidden deeds, let him further subjoin, *Did I not rest quiet?* But the being *silent* and *quiet* admit of being yet more minutely examined into. Thus, to be *silent* is to withhold the mind from the cry of earthly desires, For all tumult of the breast is a strong and mighty clamouring.

19. Moreover they rest, that bear themselves well in power, in that they prefer to lay aside, at intervals, the din of earthly business for the love of God, lest whilst the lowest objects incessantly occupy the mind, it should altogether fall away from the highest. For they know that it can never be lifted up to things above, if it be continually busied in those below with tumultuous care and concern; for what should that mind gain concerning God in the midst of business, which, even when at liberty, strives with difficulty to apprehend aught that concerns Him? And it is well said by the Psalmist, *Keep yourselves aloof, and know that I am God*. [Ps. 46, 10] For he that neglects to keep himself aloof to God, by his own judgment upon himself hides the light of God's vision from his eyes. Hence moreover it is

declared by Moses, that those fish that have no fins should not be eaten. [Lev. 11, 10. 12.] For the fish, that have fins, are wont to make leaps above the water. Thus they only pass into the body of the Elect in the manner of food, who, whilst they yield themselves to the lowest charges, can sometimes by the mind's leaps mount up to things on high, that they may not always be buried in the deeps of care, and be reached by no breath of the highest love as of the free air. They, then, who are busied in temporal affairs, then only manage external things aright, when they betake them with solicitude to those of the interior, when they take no delight in the clamours of disquietudes without, but repose within themselves in the bosom of tranquil rest.

20. For men of depraved minds never cease to keep on the tumult of earthly business within their own breasts, even when they are unemployed. For they retain pictured in imagination the things, which their love is fixed on, and though they be employed in no outward work, yet within themselves they are toiling and labouring under the weight of an unquiet quiet. And if the management of these same things be accorded to them, they wholly go forth from themselves, and follow after these temporal and transient concerns by the path of their purpose of mind, with the unintermitted steps of the thoughts. But pious minds, on the one hand,. seek not such things when lacking, and on the other, they bear them with difficulty, when present, for they fear lest by the care of external things they be made to go out of themselves. Which same is well represented in the life of those two brothers, concerning whom it is written, *And Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents*. [Gen. 25, 27. Vulg.] Or it is said in the other translation [so lxx.], *he dwelt at home*. For what is represented by Esau's hunting but the life of those, who, giving a loose to themselves in external pleasures, follow the flesh? and, moreover, he is described to be *a man of the field*, for the lovers

of this world cultivate the external in the same proportion, that they leave uncultivated their internal parts. But Jacob is recorded to be *a plain man, dwelling in tents*, or *dwelling at home*, in that, truly, all, that seek to avoid being dissipated in external cares, abide plain men in the interior, and in the dwelling place of their conscience; for to 'dwell in tents,' or 'in the house,' is to restrain one's self within the secrets of the heart, nor ever to let themselves run loose without in their desires, lest, while men gape after a multitude of objects without, they be led away from themselves by the alienation of their thoughts. So let him, who was tried and trained in prosperity, say, *Did I not dissemble it? Did I not hold my peace? Did I not rest quiet?* For, as we have said above, when holy men receive the smiles of transitory prosperity, they 'dissemble' the favour of the world, as though they were ignorant of it, and with a resolute step they inwardly trample upon that, whereby they are outwardly lifted up. And they 'hold their peace,' in that they never clamour with the uproar of wicked doings. For all iniquity has its voice belonging to it in the secret judgments of God. Hence it is written, *The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great*. And they 'rest quiet,' when they are not only hurried away by no unruly appetite of temporal desires, but over and above eschew the busying themselves out of due measure with the necessary concerns of this present life.

21. But while they do this, they are still made to feel the strokes of a Father's hand, that they may come to their inheritance the more perfect, in proportion as the rod, striking in pity, is daily purifying them even from the very least sins. Thus they are unceasingly doing righteous acts, yet are perpetually undergoing severe troubles. For often our very righteousness itself, when brought to the test of God's righteous eye, proves unrighteousness, and that which is bright in the estimate of the doer, is foul in the Judge's searching sight. Hence when Paul said, *For I know nothing by myself*; he forthwith added, *Yet am I not hereby justified*; [1 Cor. 4, 4] and

immediately implying the reason wherefore he was not justified, he says, *But he that judgeth me is the Lord*. As though he said, 'For this reason I say that I am not justified herein, viz. that I know nothing by myself because I know that I am tested with greater exactness by Him, That judgeth me.' Therefore we must keep out of sight all that favours us outwardly, we must keep under control whatsoever is clamorous within, we must eschew the things that twine themselves about us as necessary, and yet in all of these we must still fear the chastisements of a strict inquisition; since even our very perfection itself does not lack sin, did not the severe Judge weigh the same with mercy in the exact balance of His examination.

22. And it is well added, *Yet indignation came upon me*. For with wonderful skilfulness of instruction, when about to tell of the chastisements, he premised the good deeds, that each man might hence be led to consider what punishments await sinners hereafter, if the righteous even are chastised here with strokes so strong. For it is hence that Peter says, *For the time is come that Judgment must begin at the house of God, And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* [1 Peter 4, 17. 18.] Hence Paul, after he said many things in commendation of the Thessalonians, straightway added, *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure; Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God*. [2 Thess. 1, 4. 5.] As if he said, 'Whilst you, that act so uprightly, undergo so many hardships, what else is it than that ye are giving examples of the righteous judgment of God, since from your punishment it is to be inferred in what sort He smites those with whom He is wroth, if He suffers you to be thus afflicted, in whom He delights; or how He will strike those towards whom He shews righteous judgment, if He thus torments your own selves, whom with pitifulness He cherishes in reproving.

23. The first words, then, of blessed Job being ended, his friends that had come in pity to comfort him, set themselves by turns to the upbraiding of him; and while they launch out to words of strife, they drop the purpose of pity, which they had come for. And indeed they do this with no bad intent, but, though they manifest feeling for the stricken man, they supposed him to be no otherwise stricken than for his wickedness; and whereas guarded speech does not follow that good intention, the very purpose of mercy is turned into the sin of an offence. For it was their duty to consider to whom and on what occasion they spake; in that he, to whom they had come, was a righteous man, and besieged with the strokes of God's hand; and so they should from his past life have estimated those words of his mouth, which they were unable to understand, and not have convicted him from present strokes, but have entertained fear for their own lives, and not as it were by reasoning have lifted themselves above, but by lamenting joined themselves to that stricken Saint, so that their knowledge might in no wise display itself in words, but that great teacher, grief, might instruct the tongue of the comforters to speak aright. And though they perchance might in any thing be of a different mind, assuredly it was meet that they should express these feelings with humility, lest by words without restraint they should accumulate wounds upon the smitten soul.

24. For it often happens that, because they cannot be understood, either the doings or the sayings of the better men are displeasing to the worse; but they are not to be rashly censured by them, inasmuch as they cannot be apprehended in their true sense. Often that is done in pursuance of policy [‘*dispensatorie,*’ in economy] by greater men, which is accounted an error by their inferiors. Often many things are said by the strong, which the weak only decide upon, because they know nothing about them. And this is well represented by that Ark of the Testament being inclined on one side by the kine kicking, which the Levite desiring to set upright, because he thought it

would fall, he immediately received sentence of death. [2 Sam. 6, 7] For what is the mind of the just man but the Ark of the Testament? which, as it is being carried, is inclined by the kicking of the kine; in that it sometimes happens that even he, who rules well, being shaken by the disorder of the people subject to him, is moved by nought else than love to a condescension in policy. But in this, which is done in policy, that very bending, that is, of strength is accounted a fall by the inexperienced; and hence there are some of those that are in subjection, who put out the hand of censure against it, yet by that very rashness of theirs they forthwith drop from life. Thus the Levite stretched forth his hand as it were in aid, but he lost his life in being guilty of offence, in that while the weak sort censure the deeds of the strong, they are themselves made outcasts from the lot of the living. Sometimes too holy men say some things condescending to the meanest subjects, while some things they deliver contemplating the highest; and foolish men, because they know nothing of the meaning either of such condescension or elevation, presumptuously censure them. And what is it to desire to set a good man right for his condescension, but to lift up the ark that is inclined with the presuming hand of rebuke? what is it to censure a righteous man for unapprehended words, but to take the move he makes in his strength for the downfall of error? But he loses his life, who lifts up the ark of God with a high mind; in that no man would ever dare to correct the upright acts of the Saints, unless he first thought better things of himself. And hence this Levite is rightly called Oza, which same is by interpretation ‘the strong one of the Lord,’ in that the presumptuous severally, did they not audaciously conclude themselves ‘strong in the Lord,’ would never condemn as weak the saying and doings of their betters. Therefore while the friends of blessed Job leap forth against him, as if in God’s defence, they transgress the rule of God’s ordinance in behaving proudly.

25. But when any of the doings of better men are displeasing to the less good, they are by no means to hold their peace about the considerations which influence their minds, but to give utterance thereto with a great degree of humility, so that the purpose of him, whose feelings are pious, may, in a genuine manner, keep the form of uprightness, in proportion as he goes by the pathway of lowliness. Thus both all that we feel is to be freely expressed, and all that we express is to be uttered with the deepest humility, lest even what we intend aright we make other than right, by putting it forth in a spirit of pride. Paul had spoken many things to his hearers with humility, but it was with still more humility that he busied himself to appease them about that humble exhortation itself, saying, *And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words*. [Heb. 13, 22] And likewise bidding farewell to the Ephesians at Miletus, who were deeply grieved and loudly lamenting, he recalls his humility to their remembrance, in these words, *Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears*. [Acts 20, 31] Again he says to the same persons by letter, *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith ye are called*. [Eph. 4, 1] Therefore let him infer from hence, if he ever thinks rightly at all, with what humility the disciple ought to address the Master, if the Master of the Gentiles himself, in the very things which he proclaims with authority, beseeches the disciples so submissively. Let everyone collect from hence in what a spirit of humility he should communicate to those, from whom he has received examples of good living, all that he perceives aright, if Paul submitted himself in a humble strain to those, whom he himself raised up to life.

26. But Eliphaz, who is the first of the friends to speak, though he came with pity to console, yet in that he departs from meekness of speech, is ignorant of the rules of consoling; and while he neglects the guarding of his

lips, he is guilty of excess, even to offering insult to the afflicted man, saying, *The tiger hath perished for lack of prey, the roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lioness* [V. thus]*, and the teeth of the young lions are broken* [Job 4, 10. 11.]: i.e. by the teeth of a *tiger* marking out blessed Job, as it were, with the fault of variedness; by *the roaring of the lion*, denoting that man's terribleness; by *the voice of the lioness*, the loquacity of his wife; and by the *broken teeth of the young lions*, signifying the gluttony of his sons brought to ruin. And hence the sentence of God rightly reproves the feeling of the friends, which had lifted itself up in swelling reproach, saying, *Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath*. [Job 42, 7]

27. But I see that we must enquire, wherefore Paul makes use of their sentiments with so much weight of authority, if these sentiments of theirs be nullified by the Lord's rebuke? For they are the words of Eliphaz which he brought before the Corinthians, saying, *For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness*. [1 Cor. 3, 19. Job 5, 13] How then do we reject as evil what Paul establishes by authority? or how shall we account that to be right by the testimony of Paul, which the Lord by His own lips determined not to be right? But we speedily learn how little the two are at variance together, if we more exactly consider the words of that same Divine sentence, which assuredly having declared, *Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right*; thereupon added, *as My servant Job*. It is clear then that some things contained in their sayings were right, but they are overcome by comparison with one who was better; for among other things, which they say without reason, there are many forcible sentences they utter in addressing blessed Job; but when compared with his more forcible sayings they lose the power of their forcibleness. And many things that they say are admirable, were they not spoken against the afflicted condition of the holy man. So that in themselves they are great, but because they aim to pierce that righteous

person, that greatness loses its weight, for with whatever degree of strength, it is in vain that the javelin is sent to strike the hard stones, since it glances off the further with blunted point, the more it comes hurled with strength. Therefore, though the sayings of Job's friends be very forcible in some points, yet, since they strike the Saint's well-fenced life, they turn back all the point of their sharpness. And therefore because they are both great in themselves, and yet ought never to have been taken up against blessed Job, on the one hand let Paul, weighing them by their intrinsic excellence, deliver them as authoritative, and on the other let the Judge, forasmuch as they were delivered without caution, censure them in respect of the quality of the individual.

28. But, as we have said above that these same friends of blessed Job contain a figure of heretics, let us now search out how their words agree with heretics; for some of the opinions which they hold are very right, but in the midst of these they fall away to corrupt notions; for heretics have this especial peculiarity, that they mix good and evil, that so they may easily delude the sense of the hearer. For if they always said wrong, soon discovered in their wrongheadedness, they would be the less able to win a way for that, which they desire. Again, if they always thought right, then, surely, they would never have been heretics. But whilst with artfulness of deceiving they engage themselves with either, both by the evil they vitiate the good, and by the good they conceal the evil, to the end that it may be readily admitted; just as he that presents a cup of poison, touches the brim of the cup with honied sweets, and while this that has a sweet flavour is tasted at the first sip, that too which brings death is unhesitatingly swallowed. Thus heretics mix right with wrong, that by making a shew of good things, they may draw hearers to themselves, and by setting forth evil they may corrupt them with a secret pestilence. Yet it sometimes happens that being collected by the preaching and admonitions of Holy Church, they

are healed from such a contradiction in views, and hence the friends of blessed Job offer the sacrifice of their reconciliation by the hands of the same holy man, and even under attainder they are restored to the favour of the Supreme Judge. Of whom we have a fitting representation in that cleansing of the ten lepers. [Luke 14, 15] For in leprosy both a portion of the skin is brought to a bright hue, and a portion remains of a healthy colour. Lepers therefore are a figure of heretics, for in that they blend evil with good, they cover the complexion of health with spots. And hence that they may be healed, they rightly cry out, *Jesus, Master* [*Preceptor,* Vulg.]. For whereas they notify that they have gone wrong in His words, they humbly call Him *Master* when they are to be healed, and so soon as they return to acknowledge the Master, they are at once brought back to the right state of health. But as on the sayings of his friends we have carried the preface to our interpretation somewhat far, let us now consider minutely the very words themselves which they spake, The account goes on ;

C. iv. 1, 2. *Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?*

29. It has been a1ready declared above, what there is set forth in the interpretation of these names. Therefore, because we are in haste to reach the unexamined parts, we forbear to unfold again what has been already delivered. According1y this is to be heedfully observed, that they, that bear the semblance of heretics, begin to speak softly, saying, *If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou, be grieved?* For heretics dread to incense their hearers at the outset of their communing with them, lest they be listened to with ears on the watch, and they carefully shun the paining of them, that they may catch their unguardedness, and what they put forward is almost always mild, while that is harsh which they cunningly introduce in going on. And hence at this time the friends of Job begin with the reverence of a gentle address, but they burst forth even to launching the darts of the

bitterest invectives; for the roots of thorns themselves are soft, yet from that very softness of their own they put forth that whereby they pierce, It goes on;

But who can hold in [thus V.] *the discourse conceived?*

30. There be three kinds of men, which differ from one another by qualities carried forward in gradation. For there are some, who at the same time that they conceive evil sentiments to speak, restrain themselves in their speech by none of the graveness of silence; and there are others, who, whereas they conceive evil things, withhold themselves with a strong control of silence. And there are some, who being made strong by the exercise of virtue, are advanced even to so great a height, that, as to speaking, they do not even conceive any evil thoughts in the heart, which they should have to restrain by keeping silence. It is shewn then to which class Eliphaz belongs, who bears witness that he cannot 'withhold his conceived discourse.' Wherein too he made known this, that he knew that he would give offence by speaking. For he would never be anxious to withhold words that he cannot, unless he were assured beforehand that he would be inflicting wounds by the same; for good men check precipitancy of speech with the reins of counsel, and they take heedful thought, lest, by giving a loose to the wantonness of the tongue, they should by heedlessness of speech pierce their hearer's spirits [*conscientiam*]; hence it is well said by Solomon, *He that letteth out water is a head of strife.* [Prov. 17, 14] For 'the water is let out,' when the flowing of the tongue is let loose. And he that 'letteth out water,' is made the 'beginning of strife,' in that by the incontinency of the lips, the commencement of discord is afforded. Thus, as the wicked are light in mind, so they are precipitate in speech, and neglect to keep silence, thoroughly considering what they should say. And what a light spirit [*conscientia*] conceives, a lighter tongue delivers apace. Hence on this occasion Eliphaz infers from his own experience a thing, which in a

feeling of hopelessness he believes concerning all men; saying, *But who can withhold his conceived discourse?* It proceeds;

Ver. 3, 4. *Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.*

31. If the text of the historical account be regarded in itself, it is of great service to the reader, that in blessed Job, instead of the ripping up of vices, proclaim is made of his virtues by his reviling friends; for the testimony to our manner of life is never so strong, as when commendable things are told by him, who aims to fasten guilt upon our head. But let us consider of what a lofty height that man was, who by instructing the ignorant, strengthening the weak, upholding the faltering, amid the cares of his household, amidst the charge of countless concerns, amidst anxious feelings for his children, amidst the pursuit of so many laborious occupations, devoted himself to putting others in the right way. And being busied indeed, he executed these offices, yet being free, he did service in the master's office of instruction. By exercising superintendence, he disposed of temporal things, by preaching, he announced eternal truths; uprightness of life, both by practice he shewed to all beholders, and by speech he conveyed to all that heard him. But all that are either heretics or bad men, in recording the excellencies of the good, turn them into grounds of accusation. Hence Eliphaz deduces occasion of reviling against blessed Job from the same quarter, whence he related commendable things of him; for it goes on,

Ver. 5. *But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest: it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.*

32. All men of froward mind assail the life of the righteous in two ways; for either they assert that what they say is wrong, or that what they say aright they never observe; and hence blessed Job is reproved by his friends further on for his mode of speech, whereas now he is torn in pieces for

having spoken right things, but not having observed them. And so at one time the speech, and at another time the practice of the good meets with the disapproval of the wicked, in order that either the tongue being rebuked may hold its peace, or the life, being convicted by the testimony of that same tongue of theirs, may give way under the charge. And mark that first they bring forward commendations of the tongue, and afterwards complain of the weakness of the life. For the wicked, that they may not openly shew themselves to be evil, sometimes say such good things of the just, as they know to be already received concerning them by others also. But as we have said above, these very points they forthwith strain to the increase of guilt, and from hence, that they spoke favourable things also, they point out that credit is to be given them in the reverse, and with more seeming truth they intimate evil things, in proportion as they commended the good with seeming zeal. Thus they wrest words of favourable import to the service of accusation, in that they afterwards more deeply wound the life of the righteous from the same source, whence a little before in semblance they vindicated it. But it often happens that their good qualities, which they first condemn when possessed, they afterwards admire, as if departed. And hence Eliphaz, as he declares them to be departed, subjoins the virtues of the holy man, enumerating them, and saying,

Ver. 6. *Where is thy fear, thy strength, thy patience, and the perfectness of thy ways?* [thus V.]

33. All which same he makes to succeed that sentence which he set before, saying, *But now a stroke is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled*. Thus he declares that they were brought to nought all of them together, in this, that he blames blessed Job's being troubled by the scourge. Yet it is to be well taken notice of, that though he chides unbefittingly, yet the ranks of virtues he fitly describes; for in enumerating the virtues of blessed Job, he marked out his life in four

stages, in that he both added strength to fear, and patience to strength, and to patience, perfection. Since one sets out in the way of the Lord with fear, that he may go on to strength; for as in the world boldness begets strength, so in the way of God boldness engenders weakness; and as in the way of the world fear gives rise to weakness, so in the way of God fear produces strength; as Solomon witnesses, who says, *In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence*. [Prov. 14, 26] For ‘strong confidence’ is said ‘to be in the fear of the Lord,’ in that, in truth, our mind so much the more valorously sets at nought all the tenors of temporal vicissitudes, the more thoroughly that it submits itself in fear to the Author of those same temporal things. And being stablished in the fear of the Lord, it encounters nothing without to fill it with alarm, in that whereas it is united to the Creator of all things by a righteous fear, it is by a certain powerful influence raised high above them all. For strength is never shewn saving in adversity, and hence *patience* is immediately made to succeed to *strength*. For every man proves himself in a much truer sense to have advanced in ‘strength,’ in proportion as he bears with the bolder heart the wrongs of other men. For he was little strong in himself, who is brought to the ground by the wickedness of another. He, in that he cannot bear to face opposition, lies pierced with the sword of his cowardice. But forasmuch as perfection springs out of patience, immediately after patience we have the perfectness of his ways introduced. For he is really perfect, who feels no impatience towards the imperfection of his neighbour; since he that goes off, not being able to bear the imperfection of another, is his own witness against himself, that he is not yet perfectly advanced. Hence Truth says in the Gospel, *In your patience possess ye your souls*. [Luke 21, 19] For what is it to possess our souls, but to live by the rule of perfection in all things, to command all the motions of the mind from the citadel of virtue? He then that maintains patience possesses his soul, in that from hence he is endued with strength to

encounter all adversities, whence even by overcoming himself he is made master of himself; and as he quells himself in a manner worthy of all praise, he comes forth unquelled with dauntless front, because by conquering himself in his pleasures, he makes himself invincible to reverses. But as Eliphaz rebuked him with reviling, so now he adds a few words, as if in exhortation, saying,

Ver.7. *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?*

34. Whether it be heretics, of whom we have said that the friends of blessed Job bore an image, or whether any of the froward ones, they are as blameable in their admonitions, as they are immoderate in their condemnation. For he says, *Who ever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?* Since it often happens that in this life both 'the innocent perish,' and 'the righteous are 'utterly cut off,' yet in perishing they are reserved to glory eternal. For if none that is innocent perished, the Prophet would not say, *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart*. [Is. 51, 1] If God in His providential dealings did not carry off the righteous, Wisdom would never have said of the righteous man, Yea, speedily was he taken away, *lest that wickedness should alter his understanding*. [Wisd. 4, 11] If no visitation ever smote the righteous, Peter would never foretell it, saying, *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God*. [1 Pet. 4, 17] They then are really righteous, who are furnished forth by the love of the Country above to meet all the ills of the present life. For all that fear to endure ills here, for the sake of eternal blessings, clearly are not righteous men. But Eliphaz does not take account either that the righteous are cut off, or that the innocent perish here, in that oftentimes they that serve God, not in the hope of heavenly glory, but for an earthly recompense, make a fiction in their own head of that which they are seeking after, and, taking upon themselves to be instructors, in preaching

earthly immunity, they shew by all their pains what is the thing they love. It goes on ;

Ver. 8, 9. *Even, as I have seen, they that plough iniquity, and* [V. so] *sow sorrows, and reap the same, by the blast of God do they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed.*

35. To 'sow griefs' is to utter deceits, but to 'reap griefs' is to prevail by so speaking. Or, surely, they 'sow griefs,' who do froward actions, they 'reap griefs,' when they ate punished for this forwardness. For the harvest of grief is the recompense of condemnation, and whereas it is immediately introduced that they that 'sow and reap griefs,' 'perish by the blast of God,' and are 'consumed by the breath of His nostrils,' in this passage the 'reaping of grief' is shewn to be not punishment as yet, but the still further perfecting of wickedness, for in 'the breath of His nostrils' the punishment of that 'reaping' is made to follow. Here then they 'sow and reap griefs,' in that all that they do is wicked, and they thrive in that very wickedness, as is said of the wicked man by the Psalmist, *His ways are always grievous; Thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them*. [Ps. 10, 5] And it is soon after added concerning him, under his tongue is labour and grief. So then he 'sows griefs,' when he does wicked things, he 'reaps griefs,' when from the same wickednesses he grows to temporal greatness. How then is it that they 'perish by the blast of God,' who are for the most part permitted to abide long here below, and in greater prosperity than the righteous? For hence it is said of them again by the Psalmist, *They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other folk*. [Ps. 73, 5] Hence Jeremiah saith, *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?* [Jer. 12, 1] For because, as it is written, *For the Lord is* [Vulg.] *a long-suffering rewarder* [Ecclus. 5, 4], He oftentimes for long bears with those, whom He condemns for all eternity. Yet sometimes He strikes quickly, in that He hastens to the succour of the pusillanimity of the

innocent. Therefore Almighty God sometimes permits the wicked to have their own way for long, that the ways of the righteous may be more purely cleansed. Yet sometimes He slays the unrighteous with speedy destruction, and by their ruin He strengthens the hearts of the innocent. For if He were now to smite all that do evil, on whom would He yet have to shew forth the final Judgment? And if He never at any time smote any man, who would ever have believed that God regarded human affairs? Sometimes then He strikes the bad, that He may shew that He does not leave wickedness unpunished. But sometimes He bears with the wicked for long, that He may teach the heedful what judgment they are reserved for.

36. Thus this sentence of the cutting off of the wicked, if it be not spoken of all men in general at the end of this present state of being, is undoubtedly to a great degree made void of the force of truth; but it will then be true, when iniquity shall no longer have reprieve. And perchance it may be more lightly taken in this sense, since neither 'the innocent perishes' nor 'the upright is cut off,' in that though here he is worn out in the flesh, yet in the sight of the eternal Judge he is renewed with true health. And they that 'sow and reap griefs,' 'perish by the blast of God,' in that in proportion as they go on here deeper in doing wickedly, they are the more severely stricken with the damnation to follow. But whereas he premises this sentence with the word, *Remember*, it is clearly evident that something past is recalled to mind, and not any thing future proclaimed. Then therefore Eliphaz would have spoken more truly, if he had believed that these things were wrought on the head of the wicked in general by final vengeance.

37. But this point, that God is said to 'breathe,' claims to be more particularly made out. For we, when we 'breathe,' draw the air from the outside within us, and, thus drawn within, we give it forth without. God then is said to 'breathe' in recompensing vengeance, in that from occasions without He conceives the purpose of judgment within Him, and from the

internal purpose sends forth the sentence without. When God ‘breathes’ as it were, somewhat is drawn in from things without, when He sees our evil ways without, and ordains judgment within. And again as if by God ‘breathing,’ the breath is sent forth from within, when from the internal conception of the purpose, the outward decree of condemnation is delivered. And so it is rightly said that they, that ‘sow griefs,’ perish ‘by the breath of God,’ for wherein they execute wicked deeds outwardly, they are deservedly stricken from within. Or, surely, when God is said to ‘breathe,’ in that the breath of His wrath is immediately introduced, by the designation of His ‘breathing’ may be denoted that very visitation of His. For when we are wroth, we kindle [d] with the breath of rage. To shew the Lord then meditating vengeance, He is said to ‘breathe’ in His indignation, not that in His own Nature He is capable of turning or change, but that after long endurance, when He executes vengeance upon the sinner, He, Who continueth tranquil in Himself, seems in commotion to them that perish. For whereas the condemned soul sees the Judge arrayed against its doings, He is exhibited to it as troubled, in that it is itself troubled by its own guiltiness before His eyes. But after he had in appearance exhorted him with clemency, he openly subjoins language of reproach, saying,

Ver. 10. *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the lioness, and the teeth of the young lions are broken.*

38. For what does he call *the roaring of the lion* but, as we have said a little above, the severe character of that man? what *the voice of the lioness*, but his wife’s loquacity? what the *teeth of the young lions*, but the greediness of his children? For because his sons had perished when feasting, they are denoted by the term of ‘teeth;’ and while unsparing Eliphaz rejoices that they are all ‘broken,’ he denounces them as deservedly condemned. And he yet further doubles the cruelty of his reproaches, when he adds;

Ver. 11. *The tiger perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lions' whelps are scattered abroad.* [Vulg. thus]

39. For whom does he denote by the name of 'tiger' but blessed Job, marked with the stamp of changeableness or covered with the spots of dissimulation? For every dissembler, in that he desires to appear righteous, can never shew himself pure in all things; for while he assumes some virtues in hypocrisy, and secretly gives way to vicious habits, some concealed vices speedily break out upon the surface, and exhibit the hide of overlaid hypocrisy, like a coat for sight, varied with their admixture, so that it is very often a marvel how one, who is seen to be master of such great virtues, should be at the same time stained with such damnable deeds. But truly every hypocrite is a tiger, in that while he derives a pure colour from pretence, it is striped with the intermediate blackness of vicious habits. For it often happens that while he is extolled for pureness of chastity, he renders himself foul by the stain of avarice. Often while he makes a fair shew by the good quality of bountifulness, he is stained with spots of lust. Often while he is clad in the bright array of bountifulness and chastity, he is blackened by ferociousness in cruelty, as if from a zealous sense of justice. Often he is arrayed in bounty, chastity, pitifulness, in a fair outside, but is marked with the interspersed darkness of pride. And thus it comes to pass, that whereas by the intermixture of vicious habits, the hypocrite does not present an unstained appearance in himself, the tiger, as it were, cannot be of one colour. And this same 'tiger' seizes the prey, in that he usurps to himself the glory of human applause. For he, that is lifted up by usurped praise, is as it were glutted with the prey. And it is well that the applause that hypocrites have is called 'prey.' For it is nought else than a prey, when the things of another are taken away by violence. Now every hypocrite, in that by counterfeiting the life of righteousness he seizes for himself the praise that belongs to the righteous, does in truth carry off what is another's. Thus

Eliphaz, who knew that blessed Job had walked in ways worthy to be praised in the period of his wellbeing, concluded from the stroke that came after that he had maintained these in hypocrisy, saying, The *tiger perisheth for lack of prey*. As if he had said plainly, 'The shifting of thine hypocrisy is at end, because the homage of applause is also taken from thee, and thine hypocrisy is in 'lack of prey,' in that being stricken by the hand of God, it lacks the favourable regards of man.'

40. But in the translation of the Septuagint, it is not said 'the tiger,' but 'the *Myrmicoleon perisheth for lack of prey*.' For the Myrmicoleon is a very little creature, a foe to ants, which hides itself under the dust, and kills the ants laden with grains, and devours them thus destroyed. Now 'Myrmicoleon' is rendered in the Latin tongue either 'the ants' lion,' or indeed more exactly 'an ant and lion at once.' Now it is lightly called 'an ant and lion;' in that with reference to winged creatures, or to any other small-sized animals, it is an ant, but with reference to the ants themselves it is a lion. For it devours these like a lion, yet by the other sort it is devoured like an ant. When then Eliphaz says, the Ant-lion perisheth, what does he censure in blessed Job under the title of 'Ant-lion' but his fearfulness and audacity? As if he said to him in plain words, 'Thou art not unjustly stricken, in that thou hast shewn thyself a coward towards the lofty, a bully towards those beneath thee.' As though he had said in plain terms, 'Fear made thee crouch towards the crafty sort, hardihood swelled thee full towards the simple folk, but 'the Ant-lion' no longer hath prey,' in that thy cowardly self elation, being beaten down with blows, is stayed from doing injury to others.' But forasmuch as we have said that the friends of blessed Job contain a figure of Heretics, there is a pressing necessity to shew how these same words of Eliphaz are to be understood in a typical sense likewise.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Ver. 10. *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the lioness, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.*

41. Forasmuch as the nature of every thing is compounded of different elements, in Holy Writ different things are allowably represented by anyone thing. For the lion has magnanimity, it has also ferocity: by its magnanimity then it represents the Lord, by its ferocity the devil. Hence it is declared of the Lord, *Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David hath prevailed*. [Rev. 5, 5] Hence it is written of the devil, *Your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour*. [1 Pet. 5, 8] But by the title of a 'lioness' sometimes Holy Church, sometimes Babylon is represented to us. For on this account, that she is bold to encounter all that withstand, the Church is called a 'lioness,' as is proved by the words of blessed Job, who in pointing out Judaea forsaken by the Church, says, *The sons of the traders have not trodden, nor the lioness passed by it*. [Job 28, 8. Vulg.] And sometimes under the title of a lioness is set forth the city of this world, which is Babylon, which ravins against the life of the innocent with terribleness of ferocity, which being wedded to our old enemy like the fiercest lion, conceives the seeds of his froward counsel, and produces from her own body reprobate sons, as cruel whelps, after his likeness. But the 'lion's whelps' are reprobate persons, engendered to a life of sin by the misleading of evil spirits, who both all of them together constitute that great city of the world which we have declared before, even Babylon; and yet these same sons of Babylon severally are called not 'a lioness' but 'a lioness's whelps.' For as the whole Church together is denominated Sion, but the several individual Saints the sons of Sion, so both the several individuals among the reprobate are called the children of Babylon, and all the reprobate together are designated the same Babylon.

42. But so long as good men remain in this life, they keep watch over themselves with anxious heed, lest the lion that goeth about surprise them

by guile, i.e. lest our old enemy slay them under some shew of virtue; lest the voice of the lioness stun their ears, i.e. lest the glory of Babylon catch away their minds from the love of the heavenly country; lest 'the teeth of the young lions' bite them, i.e. lest the promptings of the reprobate gain power in their heart. But, on the other hand, heretics are already as if secured touching holiness, because they fancy that they have surmounted all obstacles by the preeminent merit of their life. And hence it is said here, *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the lioness, and the teeth if the young lions are broken*. As though it were expressed in plain words; 'We for this reason are never beaten and bruised with any strokes, for that we tread under at once the might of the old enemy, and the lust of earthly glory, and the promptings of all the reprobate, overcoming them by the preeminence of our life.' Hence it is further added;

Ver. 11. *The tiger perisheth for lack of prey, and the lions' whelps are scattered abroad.*

43. By the title of a 'tiger' he again represents him, whom he formerly designated by the name of a 'lion.' For Satan both for his cruelty is called 'a lion,' and for the variousness of his manifold cunning he is not unsuitably designated 'a tiger.' For one while he presents himself to man's senses lost as he is, one while he exhibits himself as an Angel of light, Now by caressing he works upon the minds of the foolish sort, now by striking terror he forces them to commit sin. At one time he labours to win men to evil ways without disguise, at another time he cloaks himself in his promptings under the garb of virtue. This beast, then, which is so variously spotted, is rightly called 'a tiger,' being with the LXX called an 'Ant-lion,' as we have said above. Which same creature, as we have before shewn, hiding itself in the dust kills the ants carrying their corn, in that the Apostate Angel, being cast out of heaven upon the earth, in the very pathway of their practice besets the minds of the righteous, providing for themselves the

provender of good works, and whilst he overcomes them by his snares, he as it were kills by surprise the ants carrying their grains. And he is rightly called ‘Ant-lion,’ i.e. ‘a lion and ant.’ For as we have said, to the ants he is ‘a lion,’ but to the birds of the air, ‘an ant,’ in that our old enemy, as he is strong to encounter those that yield to him, is weak against such as resist him. For if consent be yielded to his persuasions, like a lion he can never be sustained, but if resistance be offered, like an ant he is ground in the dust. Therefore to some he is ‘a lion,’ to others ‘an ant,’ in that carnal minds sustain his cruel assaults with difficulty, but spiritual minds trample upon his weakness with virtue’s foot. Heretics then, because they are full of pride by pretension to sanctity, say as it were in exultation, *The Ant-lion*, or probably, *the tiger perisheth for lack of prey*. As though the words were plainly expressed, ‘The old foe has no prey in us, in that, as far as regards our purposes, he already lies defeated.’ Now it is for this reason that he is again mentioned under the title of ‘an Ant lion,’ or of ‘a tiger,’ who had been already set forth by the ‘roaring of the lion broken,’ because whatever is said in joy, is repeated over and over. For when the mind is full of exultation, it redoubles the expressions. And hence the Psalmist, from true joy, frequently repeats this, that he was assured that he had been heard, saying, *the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping*. *The Lord hath heard my supplications. The Lord hath received my prayer*. [Ps. 6, 8. 9.]

44. But when holy men are glad of heart that they have been rescued from some evil habits, they possess [Lit. ‘shake’] themselves with great fear even in that very gladness. For though they be now rescued from the commotion of any single storm, yet they call to mind that they are still tossing in the treacherous waves of an uncertain sea, and they so exult in hope that they tremble in fear, and so tremble in fear that they exult in confidence of hope. Whence it is said by the same Psalmist, *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling*. [Ps. 2, 11] But on the other hand, they,

whom a specious shew of sanctity fills with big thoughts, when they get the better of any one evil habit, immediately erect their heart in pride, and as it were glory in the perfection of their lives, and for this, that perchance they have been once snatched from the perils of the storm, they already forget that they are still at sea, they look upon themselves as great in all things, and imagine that they have wholly overcome their old adversary; they regard all men below them, in that they believe that their wisdom places them above all. Whence it is added;

Now a secret word was spoken to me.

45. 'A secret word,' heretics pretend to hear, that they may bring a certain reverence for their preaching over their hearers' minds. And hence they preach with a secret meaning, that their preaching may seem to be holy, in proportion as it is at the same time hidden. Now they are loath to have a common sort of knowledge, lest they should be placed on a par with the rest of their fellow-creatures, and they are ever making out new things, which whilst others know nothing of, they plume their own selves on the preeminence of their knowledge before inexperienced minds. And this knowledge, as we have said, they teach is occult; for, that they may be able to shew it to be wonderful, they affirm that they obtained it by secret means. Hence with Solomon the woman, bearing the semblance of heretics, says, *Stolen waters are* [Vulg.] *sweeter, and bread eaten in secret is more pleasant*. [Prov. 9, 17] Whence in this place too it is added;

And mine ear as it were by stealth received the veins [Vulg.] *of the whispering thereof.*

They 'receive the veins of whispers by stealth,' in that abandoning the grace of knowledge in fellowship, they do not enter thereinto by the door, as the Lord witnesses, *Who saith, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber; But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.* [John 10, 1.

2.] Therefore he ‘receives the veins of divine whispers by stealth,’ who, whilst the door of public preaching for receiving the knowledge of His excellency is forsaken, searches out the gaps and chinks of a froward understanding. But because the thief and robber, who enters by another way, both loves the darkness, and abhors the clearness of the light, it is properly added;

Ver. 13. *In the horror of a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men.*

46. It often happens, that while heretics are bent to discourse of things above them, they become their own witnesses against themselves, that what they deliver is not true. For in a vision of the night the sight is uncertain. Therefore they declare that they received ‘the inklings [*rimas*] of whispers’ in ‘the tenor of a vision of the night,’ for, that the things, which they teach, may be made to appear sublime to others, they declare that they themselves can scarcely comprehend them. But it may be inferred from hence how far that can be rendered certain to their hearers, which they themselves beheld but dubiously. And so is it marvellously ordered, that while they run on speaking of sublime things, in the exposure of folly, they are entangled in the very words of their sublimity. Now to what height they rear themselves for singularity of wisdom, is shewn, when he adds in the same breath, *when deep sleep falleth upon men*. As if it were openly said by heretics, ‘When men are asleep beneath, we wake to receive heavenly truths, in that to us all that is known, to the knowledge whereof the dull hearts of men cannot arise.’ As if they said in plain words, ‘In things, wherein our understanding rises erect, the faculties of the rest of the world lie asleep.’ But sometimes, when they see that this is disregarded by the hearer, they feign that they are themselves in fear of what they say. Whence it is added;

Ver. 14. *Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*

47. For because they desire to appear objects of wonder for the loftiness of their instructions, they affect to be awed at the accounts which they make up. And whilst it is a less difficulty to hear than to speak, they are bold enough to put forth that, which, forsooth, they feign that they the very same persons were scarcely able to hear. Whence it is added yet further;

Ver. 15, 16. *And when a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up. There stood one, but I knew not the face of him.*

48. That they may shew that they have been made acquainted with incomprehensible mysteries, they relate, not that 'a spirit' stood still, but that it 'passed by before their face.' And they pretend that they beheld a countenance they knew not, that they may prove themselves to be known to Him, Whom the human mind is not equal to know. And here it is further added;

An image was before mine eyes, and I heard the voice as it were of a light breath of air.

49. Heretics often picture God to themselves by a sensible form [*imaginaliter*], seeing that they are unable to behold Him spiritually. And they tell that they hear His 'voice as of a light breath of air,' in that for the obtaining the knowledge of His secret things, they delight to have as if a particular freedom of intercourse with Him. For they never teach the things, which God reveals openly, but such as are breathed into their ears in a secret manner. All this, then, we have said, to indicate what we are to look for in the words of Eliphaz, as he bears the semblance of heretics. But forasmuch as the friends of blessed Job would never have been the friends of one so great, unless they had evidently learned something of truth, which same, while they go wrong in uttering sentences of rebuke, yet do not altogether totter in the knowledge of the truth, let us return upon these same words a little way back, that we may make out more exactly how the things which are said concerning the perception of truth, may be delivered in a true

sense by persons viewing things aright. Now sometimes heretics utter things both true and lofty, not that they themselves receive them from above, but because they have learnt them in the controversy of Holy Church, nor do they apply them to the furtherance of conscientious living, but to the display of scientific skill. Whence it very commonly happens, that by knowing they tell high truths, yet in living they know nothing what they tell. Therefore, whether as they represent heretics, who hold, not the life, but the words of knowledge, or whether in the person of the friends of blessed Job, who, doubtless, with regard to their knowledge of the truth, might in seeing realize what they aimed in teaching to give utterance to, let us more minutely examine these sayings which we have gone through, that, while the words of Eliphaz are carefully gone into, it may be shewn what knowledge he possessed, though in that knowledge he failed to retain humility, who appropriated to himself peculiarly a benefit common to all. For he says,

Ver. 12. *Now a hidden word was spoken to me.*

50. For the invisible Son is called 'the hidden Word,' concerning Whom John saith, *In the beginning was the Word*. [John 1, 1] Which he the same person teaches to be 'hidden' in that he adds, *and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. But this 'hidden Word' is delivered to the minds of the Elect, when the power of the Only-Begotten Son is made manifest to believers. By 'the hidden word' we may also understand the communication of inward Inspiration, concerning which it is said by John, *His anointing teacheth you of all things*. [1 John 2, 27] Which same inspiration on being communicated to the mind of man lifts it up, and putting down all temporal interests inflames it with eternal desires, that nothing may any longer yield it satisfaction but the things that are above, and that it may look down upon all, that, from human corruption, is in a state of uproar below. And so to hear 'the hidden word' is to receive in the heart the utterance of the Holy

Spirit. Which same indeed can never be known save by him, by whom it may be possessed. And hence it is said by the voice of Truth concerning this hidden utterance, *And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with, you for ever; even The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive*. [John 14, 16. 17.] For as that ‘Comforter,’ after the Ascension of the Mediator, being another Consoler of mankind, is in Himself invisible, so He inflames each one that He has filled to long after the invisible things. And because worldly hearts are set upon the things that are seen alone, the world receiveth Him not, because it doth not rise up to the love of the things that are unseen. For worldly minds, in proportion as they spread themselves out in interests without, contract the bosom of the heart against the admission of Him. And because out of mankind there are few indeed, who, being purified from the pollution of earthly desires, are opened by that purification to the receiving of the Holy Spirit, this word is called ‘a hidden word,’ since, surely, there are particular persons that receive that in the heart, which the generality of men know nothing of. Or truly this same inspiration of the Holy Spirit is ‘a hidden word,’ in that it may be felt, but cannot be expressed by the noise of speech. When, then, the inspiration of God lifts up the soul without noise, ‘a hidden word’ is heard, in that the utterance of the Spirit sounds silently in the ear of the heart. And hence it is added;

And mine ear as it were stealthily received the veins of the whispering thereof.

51. The ear of the heart ‘receives stealthily the veins of heavenly whispering,’ in that both in a moment and in secret the inspired soul is made to know the subtle quality of the inward utterance. For except it bury itself from external objects of desire, it fails to enter into the internal things. It is both hidden that it may hear, and it hears that it may be hidden; in that at one and the same time being withdrawn from the visible world its eyes

are upon the invisible, and being replenished with the unseen, it entertains a perfect contempt for what is visible. But it is to be observed that he does not say, *Mine ear received as it were by stealth the whispering thereof*; but *the veins of the whispering thereof*; for ‘the whispering of the hidden word’ is the very utterance of inward Inspiration itself; but ‘the veins of the whispering’ is the name for the sources of the occasions whereby that inspiration itself is conveyed to the mind. For it is as if It opened ‘the veins of its whispering,’ when God secretly communicates to us in what ways He enters into the ear of our understandings. Thus at one time He pierces us with love, at another time with terror. Sometimes He shews us how little the present scene of things is, and lifts up our hearts to desire the eternal world, sometimes He first points to the things of eternity, that these of time may after that grow worthless in our eyes. Sometimes He discloses to us our own evil deeds, and thence draws us on even to the point of feeling sorrow for the evil deeds of others also. Sometimes He presents to our eyes the evil deeds of others, and reforms us from our own wickedness, pierced with a wonderful feeling of compunction. And so to ‘hear the veins of Divine whispering by stealth,’ is to be made to know the secret methods of divine Inspiration, at once gently and secretly.

52. Though we may interpret whether ‘the whispering’ or ‘the veins of whispering’ in another way yet. For he that ‘whispers’ is speaking in secret, and he does not give out, but imitates a voice. We, therefore, so long as we are beset by the corruptions of the flesh, in no wise behold the brightness of the Divine Power, as it abides unchangeable in itself, in that the eye of our weakness cannot endure that which shines above us with intolerable lustre from the ray of His Eternal Being. And so when the Almighty shews Himself to us by the chinks of contemplation, He does not speak to us, but whispers, in that though He does not fully develope Himself, yet something of Himself He does reveal to the mind of man. But then He no longer

whispers at all, but speaks, when His appearance is manifested to us in certainty. It is hence that Truth saith in the Gospel, *I shall shew you plainly of the Father*. [John 16, 25] Hence John saith, *For we shall see Him as He is*. [1 John 3, 2] Hence Paul saith, *Then shall I know even as also I am known*. [1 Cor. 13, 12.] Now in this present time, the Divine whispering has as many veins for our ears as the works of creation, which the Divine Being Himself is Lord of; for while we view all things that are created, we are lifted up in admiration of the Creator. For as water that flows in a slender stream is sought by being bored for through veins, with a view to increase it, and as it pours forth the more copiously, in proportion as it finds the veins more open, so we, whilst we heedfully gather the knowledge of the Divine Being from the contemplation of His creation, as it were open to ourselves the 'veins of His whispering,' in that by the things that we see have been made, we are led to marvel at the excellency of the Maker, and by the objects that are in public view, that issues forth to us, which is hidden in concealment. For He bursts out to us in a kind of sound as it were, whilst He displays His works to be considered by us, wherein He betokens Himself in a measure, in that He shews how Incomprehensible He is. Therefore, because we cannot take thought of Him as He deserves, we hear not His voice, yea, scarcely His whispering. For because we are not equal to form a full and perfect estimate of the very things that are created, it is rightly said, *Mine ear as it were by stealth received the veins of whispering*; in that being cast forth from the delights of paradise, and visited with the punishment of blindness, we scarcely take in 'the veins of whispering;' since His very marvellous works themselves we consider but hastily and slightly. But we must bear in mind, that in proportion as the soul being lifted up contemplates His excellency, so being held back it shrinks from His righteous perfectness [*rectitudinem*]. And hence it is rightly added;

Ver.13. *In the horror of a vision of the night.*

53. *The horror of a vision of the night* is the shuddering of secret contemplation. For the higher the elevation, whereat the mind of man contemplates the things that are eternal, so much the more, terror-struck at her temporal deeds, she shrinks with dread, in that she thoroughly discovers herself guilty, in proportion as she sees herself to have been out of harmony with that light, which shines in the midst of darkness [*intermicat*] above her, and then it happens that the mind being enlightened entertains the greater fear, as it more clearly sees by how much it is at variance with the rule of truth. And she, that before seemed as it were more secure in seeing nothing, trembles with sore affright from her very own proficiency itself. Though, whatever her progress in virtue, she does not as yet compass any clear insight into eternity, but still sees with the indistinctness of a certain shadowy imagining. And hence this same is called *a vision of the night*. For as we have also said above, in the night we see doubtfully, but in the day we see steadily. Therefore because, as regards the contemplating the ray of the interior Sun, the cloud of our corruption interposes itself, nor does the unchangeable Light burst forth such as It is to the weak eyes of our mind, we as it were still behold God 'in a vision of the night,' since most surely we go darkling under a doubtful sight. Yet though the mind may have conceived but a distant idea concerning Him, yet in contemplation of His Greatness, she recoils with dread, and is filled with a greater awe, in that she feels herself unequal even to the very skirts of the view of Him. And falling back upon herself, she is drawn to Him with closer bonds of love, Whose marvellous sweetness, being unable to bear, she has but just tasted of under an indistinct vision. But, because she never attains to such an height of elevation, unless the importunate and clamorous throng of carnal desires be first brought under governance, it is rightly added,

When deep sleep falleth upon men.

54. Whoever is bent to do the things which are of the world, is, as it were, awake, but he, that seeking inward rest eschews the riot of this world, sleeps as it were. But first we must know that, in holy Scripture, sleep, when put figuratively, is understood in three senses. For sometimes we have expressed by sleep the death of the flesh, sometimes the stupefaction of neglect, and sometimes tranquillity of life, upon the earthly desires being trodden underfoot. Thus, by the designation of sleep or slumbering the death of the flesh is implied; as when Paul says, *And I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep*. [1 Thess. 4, 13] And soon after, *Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him*. [ver. 14] Again, by sleep is designated the stupefaction of neglect; as where it is said by that same Paul, *Now it is high time to awake out of sleep*. [Rom. 13, 11] And again, *Awake, ye righteous* [Vulg.], *and sin not*. [1 Cor. 15, 34] By sleep too is represented tranquillity of life, when the carnal desires are trodden down; as where these words are uttered by the voice of the spouse in the Song of Songs, *I sleep, but my heart waketh*. [Cant. 5, 2] For, in truth, in proportion as the holy mind withholds itself from the turmoil of temporal desire, the more thoroughly it attains to know the things of the interior, and is the more quick and awake to inward concerns, the more it withdraws itself out of sight from external disquietude. And this is well represented by Jacob sleeping on his journey. He put a stone to his head and slept. He beheld a ladder from the earth fixed in heaven, the Lord resting upon the ladder, Angels also ascending and descending. For to ‘sleep on a journey’ is, in the passage of this present life, to rest from the love of things temporal. To sleep on a journey is, in the course of our passing days, to close those eyes of the mind to the desire of visible objects, which the seducer opened to the first of mankind, saying, *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened*. [Gen. 3, 5] And hence it is soon afterwards added, *She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat,*

and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened. [ver. 6, 7.] For sin opened the eyes of concupiscence, which innocence kept shut. But to 'see Angels ascending and descending,' is to mark the citizens of the land above, either with what love they cleave to their Creator above them, or with what fellow-feeling in charity they condescend to aid our infirmities.

55. And it is very deserving of observation, that he that 'lays his head upon a stone,' is he who sees the Angels in his sleep, surely because that same person by resting from external works penetrates internal truths, who with mind intent, which is the governing Principle of man, looks to the imitating of his Redeemer. For to 'lay the head upon a stone' is to cleave to Christ in mind. Since they that are withdrawn from this life's sphere of action, yet whom no love transports above, may have sleep, but can never see the Angels, because they despise to keep their head upon a stone. For there are some, who fly indeed the business of the world, but exercise themselves in no virtues. These, indeed, sleep from stupefaction, not from serious design, and therefore they never behold the things of the interior, because they have laid their head, not upon a stone, but upon the earth. Whose lot it most frequently is, that in proportion as they rest more secure from outward actions, the more amply they are gathering in themselves from idleness an uproar of unclean thoughts. And thus under the likeness of Judaea the Prophet bewails the soul stupefied by indolence, where he says, *The adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths*. [Lam. 1, 7] For by the precept of the Law there is a cessation from outward work upon the Sabbath Day. Thus her 'enemies looking on mock at her sabbaths,' when evil spirits pervert the very waste hours of vacancy to unlawful thoughts. So that every soul, in proportion as it is supposed to be devoted to the service of God, by being removed from external action, the more it drudges to their tyranny, by entertaining unlawful thoughts. But good men, who sleep to the

works of the world, not from inertness, but from virtue, are more laborious in their sleep than they would be awake. For herein, that by abandoning they are made superior to this world's doings, they daily fight against themselves, maintaining a brave conflict, that the mind be not rendered dull by neglect, nor, subdued by indolence, cool down to the harbouring of impure desires, nor in good desires themselves be more full of fervour than is right, nor by sparing itself under the pretext of discretion, may slacken its endeavour after perfection. These are the things she is employed withal: she both wholly withdraws herself from the restless appetite of this world, and gives over the turmoil of earthly actions, and in pursuit of tranquillity, bent on virtuous attainments, she sleeps waking. For she is never led on to contemplate internal things, unless she be heedfully withdrawn from those, which entwine themselves about her without. And it is hence that Truth declares by His own mouth, *No man can serve two Masters*. [Matt. 6, 20] Hence Paul saith, *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier*. [2 Tim. 2, 4] Hence the Lord charges us by the Prophet, saying, *Be still* [*Vacate*, be at leisure], *and know that I am the Lord*. [Ps. 46, 10] Therefore, because inward knowledge is not cognisable by us, except there be a rest from outward embarrasments, the season of the hidden word, and of the whisperings of God, is in this place rightly set forth, when it is said, *In the horror of a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men*, in that truly our mind is never caught away after the force and power of inward contemplation, unless it be first carefully lulled to rest from all agitation of earthly desires. But the human mind, lifted on high by the engine as it were of its contemplation, in proportion as it sees things higher above itself, the more terribly it trembles in itself. And hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 14. *Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*

56. What is denoted by 'bones' but strong deeds? Of which also it is said by the Prophet, *He keepeth all their bones*. [Ps. 34, 20] And it often happens that the things which men do, they reckon to be of some account, because they know not, how keen is the discernment of His inward sifting; but when, transported on the wings of contemplation, they behold things above, in some sort they melt away from the security they felt in their presumption, and quake in sight of God the more, in proportion as they do not even reckon their excellences fit for the searching eye of Him, Whom they behold. For it is hence that he, who had gained ground in doing strong deeds, being lifted up by the Spirit, exclaimed, *All my hones shall say, Lord, who is like unto Thee?* [Ps. 35, 10] As though he said, 'My flesh is without words, in that my infirmities are wholly silent before Thee, but my bones sing the praises of Thy greatness. In that the very things, which I thought to be strong in me, tremble at the view of Thee.' It is hence that Manoah shrinking at the vision of the Angel, says, *We shall surely die, for we have seen The Lord*. [Judg. 13, 22. 23.] Whom his wife immediately comforts, with these words, *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering at our hand*. But how is it that the man becomes fearful at the vision of the Angel, and the woman bold; but that as often as heavenly things are shewn us, the spirit indeed is shaken with affright, yet hope has confidence? For hope lifts itself to dare greater feats from the same cause, whereby the spirit is troubled, in that it sees the first the things that are above. Therefore because, when the mind, being lifted on high, beholds the higher depths of the secrets of heaven, all that is most solid of human strength trembles, it is well said here, Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. As though it were expressed in plain words; 'When I perceived the secrets of inmost subtlety, in that quarter where I thought myself in my own eyes strong, I faltered in the sight of the Judge.' For contemplating the strictness of

Divine Justice, we justly fear even for the very works themselves, which we flattered ourselves we had so done that they were strong. For our uprightness, when drawn parallel to the inward rule, if it meets with strict judgment, comes cross, with many sinuosities of its windings, to the inward uprightness. And hence, when Paul both perceived that he had the bones of the several virtues, and yet that these same bones trembled under the searching scrutiny, he saith, *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self; for I know nothing against myself*: [1 Cor. 4, 3. 4.] Yet because, when the 'veins' of the divine 'whispering' were heard, these same bones quaked, he thereupon added, *For I am not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord*. As though be were to say, 'I remember that I have done light things, yet I presume not on my merits; for our life is brought to the scrutiny of Him, under Whom even the bones of our strength are dismayed.

57. But when the mind is suspended in contemplation, when, exceeding the narrow limits of the flesh, with all the power of her ken, she strains to find something of the freedom of interior security, she cannot for long rest standing above herself, because though the spirit carries her on high, yet the flesh sinks her down below by the yet remaining weight of her corruption. And hence it is added,

Ver. 15. *And as a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up.*

58. 'A spirit passes before our face,' when we are brought to the knowledge of invisible things, and yet see these same not stedfastly, but with a hasty glance. For not even in the sweetness of inward contemplation does the mind remain fixed for long, in that being made to recoil by the very immensity of the light it is called back to itself. And when it tastes that inward sweetness, it is on fire with love, it longs to mount above itself, yet it falls back in broken state to the darkness of its frailty. And advancing in

high perfection, it sees that it cannot yet see that which it ardently loves, which yet it would not love ardently did it not in some sort see the same. Thus the spirit is not stationary, but ‘passes by;’ because our contemplation both discloses to us, that pant thereafter, the heavenly light, and forthwith conceals the same from us failing from weakness. And because in this life, whatever degree of virtue a man may have advanced to, he still feels the sting of corruption, *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things* [Wisd. 9, 15]; therefore it is rightly added,

The hair of my flesh stood up.

59. For ‘the hairs of the flesh’ are all the superfluities of human corruption. ‘The hairs of the flesh’ are the imaginations of the former life, which we so cut away from the mind, that we let no grief for the loss of them disturb our peace. And it is well said by Moses, *Let the Levites shave* [Vulg. thus] *all the hairs of their flesh*. [Numb. 8, 7] For a ‘Levite’ is rendered ‘taken.’ And thus it behoves the ‘Levites’ to shave all ‘the hairs of the flesh,’ in that he who is ‘taken’ into the divine ministrations, ought to shew himself clear of all imaginations of the flesh before the eyes of God, that the mind never put forth unlawful thoughts, and so deform the fair appearance of the soul as it were by sprouting hairs. But whatever perfection of holy living may have raised the condition of any man, yet there still springs up to him from his old state of life somewhat to bear. And hence the same hairs of the Levites are commanded to be shaven, not to be plucked out, for the roots still remain in the flesh to the shaven hairs, and grow again to be again cut off, in that while we are to use great diligence in cutting off all rank thoughts, yet they never can be wholly and entirely cut off. For the flesh is ever engendering a rank produce, which the spirit should ever be cutting away with the knife of heedfulness. Yet it is then that we see these things with more exactness, when we penetrate into the heights

of contemplation; and hence it is rightly said, *Whilst a Spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up.*

60. For when the human mind is lifted up on the tower of contemplation, it the more cruelly torments itself for its superfluities, in proportion as it perceives that which it loves to be infinitely refined; and when it beholds that beautiful Being, which it longs for, above its own height, it severely judges every thing infirm in itself, which it bore with tranquillity before. Therefore when 'the Spirit passeth by,' 'the hairs quake,' in that before the power of compunction, all rank thoughts flee away, that nought that is loose, nought that is dissipated, any longer gives pleasure, for severity of inward visitings kindles the inspired soul even against its own self; and when that which riseth up in the heart of an unlawful kind, is cut away with unintermitted strictness, it very often happens that the invigorated soul enters into its ray of contemplation with a somewhat larger range, and almost arrests the spirit which was 'passing by.' Yet does not this same lingering of contemplation fully discover the force of the Divine nature, for its vastness transcends all human powers thus enlarged and elevated. And hence it is well added;

Ver. 16. *There stood a certain one, but I could not discern the form thereof.* [V. thus]

61. For we do not speak of a certain one, saving surely in the case of him, whom we are either unwilling or unable to express. Now with what feeling it is here said a certain one, is clearly set forth, in that it immediately comes in, *but I could not discern the form thereof*. For the human soul, being by the sin of the first of mankind banished from the joys of paradise, lost the light of the invisible, and poured itself out entire in the love of the visible, and was darkened in the interior sight, in proportion as it was dissipated without, to the deformment of itself. Whence it comes to pass that it knows nothing, saving the things that it acquaints itself with by the

palpable touch, so to say, of the bodily eyes. For man, who, had he been willing to have kept the commandment, would even in his flesh have been a spiritual being, by sinning was rendered even in soul carnal, so as to imagine such things only as he derives to the soul through the images of bodily substances. For body is the property of heaven, earth, water, animals, and all the visible things; which he unceasingly beholds; and while the delighted mind wholly precipitates itself into these, it waxes gross, loses the fineness of the inward sense; and whereas it is now no longer able to erect itself to things on high, it willingly lies prostrate in its weakness in things below. But when with marvellous efforts it strives to rise up from the same, it is great indeed, if the soul, thrusting aside the bodily form, be brought to the knowledge of itself, so as to think of itself without a bodily figure, and by thus thinking of itself to prepare itself a pathway to contemplate the substance of Eternity.

62. Now in this way it shews itself to its own eyes as a kind of ladder, whereby in ascending from outward things to pass into itself, and from itself to tend unto its Maker. For when the mind quits bodily images, entering into itself, it mounts up to no mean height; for though the soul be incorporeal, yet because she is incorporate with the body, she is known by that property of hers, which is confined within the local bounds of the flesh. And whereas she forgets things known, acquaints herself with such as are unknown, remembers what has been consigned to oblivion, entertains mirth after sadness, is adjudged to punishment [*addicitur*] after joy; she herself shews by her own diversity in herself, how widely she is removed from the Substance of eternal Unchangeableness. Which is always the same, even as It Is; Which every where present, every where invisible, every where whole and entire, every where incomprehensible, is by the longing mind discerned without seeing, heard without uncertainty, taken in without motion, touched without bodily substance, held without locality. Now when the mind that is

used to corporeal objects represents to itself this same Substance, it is loaded with the phantasms of divers images. And whilst it banishes these from the eyes of its attention with the hand of discernment, making every thing give place thereto, it at last beholds It in some degree. And if it does not as yet apprehend what It is, it has surely learnt what It is not. And so because the mind is carried away into unaccustomed ground, when it pries into the Essence of the Deity, it is rightly said here, *A certain one stood, but I could not discern the form thereof.*

63. And it is well said, it stood still; for every created thing, in that it is made out of nothing, and of itself tends to nothing, has not the property to stand, but to run to an end. But a creature endowed with reason, by this very circumstance, that it is created after the image of its Maker, is fixed

that it should not pass into nothing. Now no irrational creature is ever fixed, but only, so long as, by the service of its appearing, it is completing the form and fashion of the universe, it is delayed in passing away. For though heaven and earth abide henceforth and for ever, still they are at this present time of themselves hastening on to nought; yet for the use of those, whom they serve, they remain to be changed for the better. To 'stand' then is the attribute of the Creator alone, through Whom all thing's pass away, Himself never passing away, and in Whom some things are held fast, that they should not pass away. Hence our Redeemer, because the fixed state of His Divine Nature could not be comprehended by the human mind, shewed this to us as it were in passing, by coming to us, by being created, born, dead, buried, by rising again, and returning to the heavenly realms. Which He well shadowed out in the Gospel by the enlightening the blind man, to whom when passing on He vouchsafed a hearing, but it was standing still that He healed his eyes. For by the economy of His Human Nature He had His passing on, but the standing by the power of His Divine Nature, in that He is every where present. Thus the Lord is said to hear the complaints of

our blind condition in passing, in that being made Man He has compassion on human misery; but He restores light to the eyes standing still, in that He enlightens the darkness of our frail state by the efficacy of His Divine Nature. It is well then that, after it has been said, *Then a spirit passed before my face*, it should be added, *but I could not discern the form thereof*. As if it were in plain words, 'Him, Whom I perceived in passing, I discovered never to pass.' He then that 'passes' is the same as He that 'stands still.' He 'passes,' in that when known He cannot be detained, He 'stands still,' in that, so far as He is known, He is seen to be unchangeable. Therefore, because He, That is ever the Same, is seen by a hasty glance, God at the same time appears both passing and standing still. Or surely His 'standing' is His never varying with any change; as it is said to Moses, *I AM THAT I AM*. And as James represents Him, saying, *With Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*. [Jam. 1, 17] Now whereas every man, that apprehends something of the Eternal Being by contemplation, beholds the Same through His coeternal Image, it is rightly subjoined;

An image was before mine eyes.

64. For the Image of the Father is the Son, as Moses teaches in the case of man at his creation; *So God created man in His own Image; in the Image of God created He him*. [Gen. 1, 27] And as the Wise Man, in the setting forth of Wisdom, saith concerning the same Son, *For She is the brightness of the everlasting light*. [Wisd. 7, 26] And as Paul hath it, *Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express Image of His Person*. [Heb. 1, 3] When then His Eternity is perceived as far as the capability of our frail nature admits, His Image is set before the eyes of the mind, in that when we really strain towards the Father, as far as we receive Him we see Him by His Image, i.e. by His Son, And by That Image, Which was born of Himself without beginning, we strive in some sort to obtain a glimpse of Him, Who hath neither beginning nor ending. And hence this same Truth saith in the

Gospel, *No man cometh to the Father but by Me*. [John 14, 6] And it is well added,

And I heard the voice as it were of a light breath.

65. For what is signified by 'the voice of a light breath,' but the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, Which proceeding from the Father, and receiving of that which belongeth to the Son, is gently imparted to the knowledge of our frail nature? Yet when It came upon the Apostles, It is demonstrated by an outward sound, like a vehement blast, where it is said, *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind*. [Acts 2, 2] For when the Holy Spirit imparts Itself to the knowledge of frail humanity, It is both represented by 'the sound of a rushing mighty wind,' and also by the 'voice of a gentle breath,' clearly, in that when It comes, It is both 'vehement' and 'gentle;' 'gentle,' in that It tempers the knowledge of Itself to our perceptions, so as to be in some sort brought under our cognizance; 'vehement,' in that however It may temper that same, yet by Its coming, It confounds while It illumines the darkness of our frail condition. For It touches us but lightly by Its enlightening influence, yet it shakes our emptiness with fearful might.

66. So God's voice is heard as if of 'a light breath,' in that the Divine Being never imparts Himself as He is to those that contemplate Him while still in this life, but to the purblind eyes of our mind He discovers His brightness but scantily. Which is well represented by the very receiving of the Law itself, when it is said that Moses ascended, and God descended upon the Mount. For 'the Mount' is our very contemplation itself, whereinto we ascend, that we may be elevated to see those things which are beyond our frail nature; but the Lord descends thereupon, in that, when we advance much, He discloses some little concerning Himself to our perceptions, if either 'little' or 'somewhat' can be said to be in Him, Who, being always One and abiding the Same, cannot be understood by parts, and

yet is said to be *participated* by His faithful servants, whereas 'part' is nowise admissible in His Substance. But because we are unable to express Him with perfect speech, being hindered by the scanty measure of our human nature, as by the impotency of the infant state, we give back an echo of Him in some sort with stammering utterance. But that when we are lifted up in high contemplation, it is somewhat refined that we attain unto in the knowledge of the Eternal One, is shewn by the words of Sacred Story, when the illustrious Prophet Elijah is instructed in the knowledge of God. For when the Lord promised him that He would pass by before him, saying, *And, behold, the Lord passeth by, a great and strong wind rending the mountains, and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord*; He thereupon added, *But the Lord is not in the wind: and after the wind a quaking, but the Lord is not in the quaking: and after the quaking a fire, but the Lord is not in the fire: and after the fire, a still small voice*. [1 Kings 19, 11. 12.] [V. *the whisper of a gentle air*] For the wind before the Lord overturns the mountains, and shatters the rocks, in that the affright, which rushes in upon us from His coming, both casts down the exaltation of our hearts, and melts their hardness. But the Lord is said not to be in the 'wind of quaking' and in the fire, but it is not denied that He is 'in the still small voice,' in that verily when the mind is hung aloft in the height of contemplation, whatever it has power to see perfectly and completely is not God, but when it sees something of great fineness, this is the same as that he hears belonging to the incomprehensible substance of the Deity. For we as it were perceive a still small voice, when by a moment's contemplation we taste with finest sense the savour of incomprehensible truth. Accordingly then only is there truth in what we know concerning God, when we are made sensible that we cannot know any thing fully concerning Him. Hence it is well added in that place, *And it was so when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood at the entering in of the cave*. After the still

small voice, the Prophet covers his face with his mantle, because in that very refined contemplation he learns in what a cloak of ignorance man is shrouded; for to draw the mantle over the face is to veil the mind by the consideration of its own infirmity, that it may never presume to seek things above it, that it never rashly open the eyes of the understanding beyond itself, but close them with a feeling of awe to that which it cannot apprehend. And he, in doing such things, is described to have *stood at the entering in of the cave*. For what is our cave but this dwelling-place of our corrupt nature, wherein we are still held fast from remaining oldness? But when we begin to take in something of the knowledge of the Divine Being, we as it were already stand 'in the entering in of our cave;' for whereas we cannot make perfect progress, yet panting after the knowledge of the truth, we already catch something of the breath of liberty. So to 'stand at the entering in of the cave,' is, forcing aside the obstruction of our corrupt nature, to begin to issue forth to the knowledge of the truth. And hence upon the cloud descending on the Tabernacle, the Israelites seeing it afar off are related to have stood at the entering in of their tents, [Ex. 33, 9] in that they, who in some sort behold the coming of the Deity, as it were already issue forth from the habitation of the flesh. Therefore because with whatever amplitude of virtue the human mind may have enlarged its compass, yet it scarcely knows the very outermost extremes that belong to the interior things, it is rightly said here, *And I heard the voice as of a light breath*; but as at the time that the knowledge of the Deity shews us after all but little concerning Itself, It is perfectly instructing the ignorance of our infirmness; let him that 'heard the voice of a light breath,' declare all that he learnt by that same hearing. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?*

67. Human righteousness compared with the righteousness of God is unrighteousness, for even a candle is seen to shine bright in the dark, but being set in the ray of the sun its light is darkened. What then did Eliphaz learn when he was transported in contemplation, saving that man cannot be justified in comparison with God? For we believe that what we do outwardly is righteous, but when we never at all acquaint ourselves with the things of the interior, we are as it were blind whilst set in the ray of the sun. But when we, little as we can, discern the one, it is not a little [*non utcunque*] that we judge the others, in that a man judges the darkness more exactly, in proportion as the brightness [A.B.C.D. 'reality'] of light is more truly manifested to him. For he, that seeth light, knoweth what to account of the darkness, as he, that is ignorant of the whiteness of light, lets pass even dark objects for light ones. And it is rightly added, *Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?* For whoso murmurs at the stroke, what does he, but charge the justice of the striker? Thus a man accounts himself more pure than his Maker, if he stirs complaint against the scourge, and without doubt he makes Him give place to himself, Whose judgment he blames in the case of his own affliction. Thus, that man may never dare charge his Judge with offence, let him humbly bethink himself that He is the Author of Nature; for He, That with marvellous skill made man out of nothing, does not pitilessly afflict him that He has made; which Eliphaz then learnt when he 'heard the voice as it were of a light breath.' For by the contemplation of the greatness of God we learn, how humbly we should abase ourselves with fear under His visitation. And he, that hath a taste of things above, bears with resignation all events below, in that he perfectly sees within, whereat he should reckon that which he does without. For he miscounts himself righteous, who knows not the rule of the Supreme Righteousness. And it often happens that a piece of wood is counted straight, if it be not applied to the rule; but so soon as it is put thereto, we discover the degree of distortion

wherewith it swells out, in that, truly, the straight line cuts off and condemns that, which the cheated eye approved as good. Thus Eliphaz, in that he beheld things above, delivered a strict judgment on all below, and though it was not rightly he reproved blessed Job, yet by comparison with the Creator of all things he rightly describes the measure of the creature, saying,

Ver. 18, 19. *Behold, His servants are not stedfast, and in His Angels He found folly: How much more in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which shall be consumed as by the moth?*

68. Though the Angelical nature, by being fixed in contemplation of the Creator, remains unchangeable in its own state, yet hereby, that it is a created being, it admits in itself the variableness of change. Now to be changed is to go from one thing into another, and to be without stability in one's self. For every single being tends to some other thing by steps, as many in number as it is subject to motions of change. And it is only the Incomprehensible Nature, which knows not to be moved from its fixed state, in that It knows not to be changed from this, that It is always the Same. For if the essence of the Angels had been strange to the motion of change, being created well by its Maker, it would never have fallen in the case of reprobate spirits from the tower of its blessed estate. But Almighty God in a marvellous manner framed the nature of the highest spiritual existences good, yet at the same time capable of change; that both they, that refused to remain, might meet with ruin, and they, that continued in their own state of creation, might henceforth be stablished therein more worthily in proportion as it was owing to their own choice, and become so much the more meritorious in God's sight, as they had staid the motion of their mutability by the stablishing of the will. Whereas then this very Angelical nature too is in itself mutable, which same mutability it has hereby overcome, in that it is bound by the chains of love to Him, Who is ever the

Same, it is now rightly said, *Behold, His servants are not stedfast*. And there is forthwith added a proof of this same mutability, in that it is brought in from the case of the apostate spirits, *And in His Angels He found folly*. And from the fall of these He rightly draws the consideration of human frailty, when he appends thereto; *How much more in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation, is earthly, which shall be consumed as by the moth*. For we inhabit houses of clay, in that we subsist in earthly bodies. Which Paul considering saith well; *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels*. [2 Cor. 4, 7] And again, *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands*. 'The earthly foundation' too is the substance of the flesh; which the Psalmist had earnestly contemplated in himself, when he said, *My bones are not hid from Thee, which Thou madest in secret, and my substance in the lower parts of the earth*. [Ps. 139, 15] Now the moth springs from the garment, and in its production destroys that very garment, whereupon it is produced. And the flesh is as a kind of garment to the soul, but this same garment has withal its moth, in that from itself there arises carnal temptation, whereby it is rent and torn. For our garment is as it were consumed by a kind of moth of its own, in that the corruptible flesh engendereth temptation, and by this is brought to destruction. Man is consumed as if by a moth, in that he has arising from himself that, whereby he is to be broken in pieces. As though it were in plain words, 'If those spirits cannot be of themselves unchangeable, which are kept down by no infirmity of the flesh, by what inconceivable temerity do men account themselves to hold on stedfastly in good, who, wherein they have their understanding elevating them on high, have the clog of carnal frailty acting as an impediment to them, so that through the evil, of a corrupting tendency they contain a cause in themselves, whence they turn old from the interior newness?

69. The holy Doctors may likewise be understood by ‘the Angels,’ according as it is said by the Prophet, *For the Priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, far he is the Angel* [*Angelus*] *of the Lord of hosts*. With whatever degree of virtue these may shine, they can never be altogether without sin, so long as they are engaged in the journey of this life, in that their step is doubtless brought into contact either with the mire of unlawful practice, or with the dust of the thought of the heart. Now they ‘dwell in houses of clay,’ who rejoice in this ensnaring life of the flesh. Paul had been brought to contemn the inhabiting this house of clay, when he said, *But our conversation is in heaven*. [Phil. 3, 20] Let him say then, *Behold, His servants are not stedfast, and in His Angels He hath found folly: how much more in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are consumed as by the moth?* As if he had said in plain words, ‘If the pathway of the present life cannot be passed through without defilement by those, who proclaiming the things of eternity, gird themselves up to encounter those of time, what evils do they undergo, who rejoice to be plunged in the delights of the fleshly habitation? ‘For His servants are not stedfast,’ for when the mind strains toward things on high, it is dissipated by the conceits of its own flesh, so that oftentimes whilst the mind pants after the things of the interior, while it looks at heavenly objects alone, smitten by a momentary carnal delight, it lies low severed from itself, and he that felt joy that he had surmounted the hindrances of his frailty, prostrated by an unexpected wound, is only filled with woe. Perverseness then is found even in His Angels, so long as those very men, who proclaim His truth, the surprisals of a deceitful life do at times lie heavy on. So then if even those are smitten by the wickedness of this world, whom a holy purpose presents erect against the same, with what strokes are not they pierced, whom nothing less than [*ipsa*] delight in their frailty brings to the ground before its darts? And these are well described to

be ‘consumed,’ as it were, ‘with a moth.’ For a moth does mischief, and makes no sound. So the minds of the wicked, in that they neglect to take account of their own losses, lose their soundness, as it were, without knowing it. For they are losing innocency from the heart, truth from the lips, continency from the flesh, and in the course of time, life from the sum of their age. But they see not one whit that they are unceasingly letting go these same, in that they are busied with all their heart in temporal concerns. Thus they are ‘consumed as it were with a moth,’ in that they suffer the canker of sin without sound, whilst they remain ignorant what losses in life and innocency of heart they are undergoing. Hence it is well added,

Ver. 20. *They shall be cut off from morning to evening.*

70. For the sinner is ‘cut off from morning to evening,’ in that from the beginning of his life to the end thereof he is ever getting wounded by the commission of sin. For the reprobate by increase in wickedness are at all times redoubling blows upon themselves, cut off by which, they may fall headlong into the pit. And it is well said of them by the Psalmist, *Bloody and deceitful men shall not halve their days*. [Ps. 55, 23] For to ‘halve our days’ is to part off the time of our life misspent in pleasure, for the purpose of penitential mourning, and in parting off to recover the same to a good use. But the wicked never ‘halve their days,’ in that not even in the end of their time do they change their frowardness of heart. Contrary whereunto Paul rightly exhorts, saying, *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil*. [Eph. 5, 16] For we ‘redeem the time,’ when by tears we recover our past life, which by rioting we had lost. It goes on,

And because none understandeth, they perish for ever.

71. That is to say, ‘none’ of those, who ‘shall be cut off from morning unto evening.’ ‘None understandeth,’ whether of those that perish, or of those who follow the lost ways of the perishing. Whence it is elsewhere written, *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and*

merciful men are taken away, none considering. [Is. 57, 1] Thus, whereas the wicked are set upon temporal things alone, and are unconcerned to learn what blessings are in store for the Elect for everlasting, while they look to the affliction of the just, but never learn what is the recompense of that affliction, they put forth the foot of their conversation into the pit, for they willingly shut their eyes to the light of understanding. For being decoyed by foolish pleasures, whilst for objects, which they see, they entertain an affection, which belongs to time, being meanwhile strangers to themselves, they never see whereunto they are hurrying for all eternity. It is possible too that by the morning may be denoted the prosperous fortune of this world, and by the evening the adverse fortune thereof. So then ‘the wicked are cut off from morning to evening,’ in that by running riot through prosperity they are brought to ruin, and being made impatient by adversity they are lifted up to madness. These would never be cut off from morning to evening, by sin, if they either took prosperity for the salve or adversity for the knife to their sore.

72. But forasmuch as the assemblage of the human race is never so forsaken, that the whole is let to go to destruction, there be some, that look down upon the enjoyments of the present life, even when they are present, consider that they are transient, and in the love of the eternal world tread them underfoot. And while they set the step of judgment on this first stage, they mount with invigorated soul to a loftier height, so that they not only contemn all temporal things, for that they must be quickly parted with, but have no desire to attach themselves thereto, even if they might last for ever. And they withdraw their love from the things created in beauty, because they stretch forth by the steps of the heart toward the Father of all Beauty Himself. And there are some that love the good things of the present life, yet never in any wise attain unto them, who pant after temporal blessings with all their hearts’ desire, who covet the glory of the world, yet never can

make themselves master thereof. For these, so to speak, the heart draws them on to seek the world, the world drives them back to search out the heart. For it often chances that, being bruised by those very adversities which they suffer, they are brought back to reason, and returning back into themselves, they consider how little there is in that, which they were seeking after, and forthwith betake themselves to weeping for the foolishness of their desire, and conceive the stronger yearnings for eternal things, in proportion to the folly in which they grieve that they once spent themselves for those of time. Hence, the wicked having been described, it is well added,

Ver. 21. *But they that have been left shall be taken away from among them.*

73. Whom else do we understand by 'the left,' but all the despised of this world? whom whilst the present life chooses not for any use of honour, it 'leaves' as being the least and most worthless. But the Lord is said to 'take away those that are left' of the world, in that He condescends to make choice of the despised of this life, as Paul bears witness, saying, *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath, chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty*. [1 Cor. 1, 26. 27.] Which is well represented in the Book of Kings by the Egyptian servant fainting in the way, whom the Amalekite abandons taken sick upon the journey, but David finds, refreshes with food, and makes the guide of his route; he pursues the Amalekite, finds him feasting, and utterly destroys him [1 Sam. 30, 13]. For what does it mean that the Egyptian servant of the Amalekite turns faint upon the journey, but that the lover of this present world, covered with the blackness of his sins, is often abandoned in weakness and contempt by the same world, so that he is no longer able to run therewith, but being broken down by adversity, grows

helpless. But David finds him, in that our Redeemer, Who is in a true sense 'strong of hand,' sometimes turns to the love of Himself those, whom He finds despised as to the glory of the world, in that He refreshes them with the knowledge of the Word. He chose him the guide of his way, in that He makes him even the preacher of Himself. And he, that had no power to follow the Amalekite, becomes the guide of David, in that he, whom the world forsook as worthless, not only when converted entertains the Lord in his affections [*suas mentes*, al. *su mente*], but by preaching Him brings Him home even to the hearts of others also. And with this same guide David discovers and annihilates the Amalekite as he feasted, in that Christ breaks up the joy of the world by those very men as preachers, whom that world scorned to have for its companions. Therefore because it very often happens that those, whom the world abandons, are chosen of the Lord, it is rightly said in this place, *Those, that may have been left, shall be taken from amongst them*. It proceeds;

They shall die, even without wisdom.

74. How is it that he set forth above the death of the wicked, saying, *Because none understandeth they shall perish for ever*; and concerning the Elect of God thereupon subjoined, *And they that have been left shall be taken away from among them*; yet forthwith adds that which cannot accord with those Elect ones, saying, *They shall die even without wisdom?* For if they be taken away from among the wicked by the hand of God, how are they said 'to die without wisdom?' Why, doubtless it is the fashion of Holy Writ, in relating any thing, after inserting a sentence that concerns another case, to return straightway to its former subject. Thus after he had said, *And because there is none that understandeth, they shall perish for ever*; he immediately brought in the lot of the Elect, saying, *But they that have been left shall be taken away from among them*. And again directing the eye of his meaning to that destruction of the wicked, which he had foretold, he

suddenly subjoined, *they shall die, even without wisdom*. As if he said, Those of whom I said that 'not understanding, they should perish for ever,' will assuredly 'die without wisdom.' But we shall the better shew that this is at times the way with Holy Writ, if we produce therefrom a similar instance to this. For when Paul the Apostle was counselling his beloved disciple for the settling the offices of the Church, that he might not by chance without due order promote any to Holy Orders, he said, *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins. Keep thyself pure*. [1 Tim. 5, 22] And forthwith directing his words to his bodily infirmities, he says, *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities*. [ver. 23] And he immediately subjoins; *Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after*. [ver. 24] What connection then has that, which he added concerning the sins of different men being hidden and manifest, with this, that he forbad him in his weak health to drink water? but that after the insertion of a clause concerning his weakness of health he came back again at the end to that, which he had said above, *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins*. For in order to shew with what anxious heed these same sins are to be inquired into, after introducing a charge to prudence directed against the annoyance of bad health, he straightway put in, that in some men they lay exposed to view, in some hidden from sight, saying, *Some men's sins are open beforehand going before to judgment, and some men they follow after*. As then in this sentence Paul does not chime in with these same words, to which, speaking of the weakness of Timothy's health, he subjoined it, but he has returned to that which he made mention of before after an interruption; so when in this place Eliphaz said concerning the Elect, *They that have been left shall be taken from among them*, by subjoining thereupon, *they die even without*

wisdom; he forthwith recurs to that, which he delivered concerning the wicked, saying, *And because none understandeth, they shall perish for ever.*

75. Now it is for this reason that the wicked look down upon the Elect, because they are going toward a life that is invisible through a death that is visible; of whom it is well said in this place, *They die even without wisdom*. As though it were said in plain words, "They equally indeed eschew death and wisdom; and wisdom they wholly get quit of, but they do not escape the snares of death. And whereas doomed, as they are, to die one day, they might in dying have received life, while they dread the death, which will most surely come, they part both with life and wisdom together." But, on the other hand, the righteous die in wisdom, for that death, which they cannot wholly avoid, when it threatens them for the sake of the truth, they refuse to put off to a later day, and whilst they undergo the same with resignation, they turn the punishment of their race into an instrument of virtue; that life may be received back from the same quarter, whence, for the deserts of the first sin, it is forced to its end. But because Eliphaz delivered these things with a true meaning against the wicked; in accounting blessed Job to be worthy of blame, he puffed himself up in pride of wisdom. And hence, after declarations so good and righteous, he subjoins words of mocking, and says,

Chap. V. 1. *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee.*

76. For Almighty God often passes by the prayer of that man in his trouble, who slights His precepts in the season of rest. Hence it is written, He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. Now for us 'to call,' is to beseech God with humble prayer; but for God to 'answer,' is to vouchsafe an accomplishment to our prayers; and so he says, *Call now, if any will answer thee*. As though he said in plain words, 'However thou mayest cry out in thy distress, thou hast not God

answering thee, in that the voice in tribulation findeth not Him, Whom the mind in tranquillity disregarded. Where he adds in yet further derision,

And turn thee to some one of the Saints?

77. As though he said in scorn, 'The Saints too thou canst never obtain for abettors in thy distress, whom thou wouldest not have for companions in thy mirth. And after this mocking he forthwith adds the sentence, saying,

Ver. 2. *For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly man.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

78. Which same sentence would have been true, had it not been delivered against the patience of so great a man. But let us weigh well the thing that is said, though it be made to recoil by the virtue of his hearer, that we may shew how right the matter is, which is put forth, if it were not unjustly put forth against blessed Job; since it is written, *But Thou, Lord, Judgest with tranquillity*. [Wisd. 12, 18] We must above all things know, that as often as we restrain the turbulent motions of the mind under the virtue of mildness, we are essaying to return to the likeness of our Creator. For when the peace of the mind is lashed with Anger, torn and rent, as it were, it is thrown into confusion, so that it is not in harmony with itself, and loses the force of the inward likeness. Let us consider then how great the sin of Anger is, by which, while we part with mildness, the likeness of the image of the Most High is spoilt. By Anger wisdom is parted with, so that we are left wholly in ignorance what to do, and in what order to do it; as it is written, *Anger resteth in the bosom of a fool* [Ecc. 7, 9]; in this way, that it withdraws the light of understanding, while by agitating it troubles the mind. By Anger life is lost, even though wisdom seem to be retained; as it is written, *Anger destroyeth even the wise*. [Prov. 15, 1. LXX] For in truth the mind being in a state of confusion never puts it in execution, even if it has power to discern any thing with good judgment. By Anger righteousness is abandoned, as it

is written, *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*. [Jam. 1, 20] For whereas the agitated mind works up to harshness the decision of its reasoning faculty, all that rage suggests, it accounts to be right. By Anger all the kindliness of social life is lost, as it is written, *Be not the companion of an angry man; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul*. [Prov. 22, 24. 25. not V.] And the same writer, *Who can dwell with* [not V.] *a man whose spirit is ready to wrath* [thus V.]? [Prov. 18, 14] For he that does not regulate his feelings by the reason that is proper to man, must needs live alone like a beast. By Anger, harmony is interrupted; as it is written, *A wrathful man stirreth up strife, and an angry man diggeth up sins*. [Prov. 15, 18. not as V. or LXX] For 'an angry man diggeth up sins,' since even bad men, whom he rashly provokes to strife, he makes worse than they were. By Anger the light of truth is lost; as it is written, *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath*. [Eph. 4, 26] For when wrath brings into the mind the darkness of perturbation, God hides therefrom the ray of the knowledge of Himself. By Anger the brightness of the Holy Spirit is shut out. Contrary whereunto, it is written according to the old translation, *Upon whom shall My Spirit rest, saving upon him that is humble and peaceful, and that trembleth at My words?* [Is. 66, 2] For when He mentioned the humble man, He forthwith subjoined the word 'peaceful;' if then Anger steals away peace of mind, it shuts its dwelling place against the Holy Spirit, and the soul being left void by Its departure, is immediately carried into open frenzy, and is scattered away to the very surface from the inmost foundation of the thoughts.

79. For the heart that is inflamed with the stings of its own Anger beats quick, the body trembles, the tongue stammers, the countenance takes fire, the eyes grow fierce, and they that are well known are not recognised. With the mouth, indeed, he shapes a sound, but the understanding knows nothing what it says. Wherein, then, is he far removed from brain-struck [*arreptitiis*]

persons, who is not conscious of his own doings? Whence it very often comes to pass that anger springs forth even to the hands, and as reason is gone the further, it lifts itself the bolder. And the mind has no strength to keep itself in, for that it is made over into the power of another. And frenzy employs the limbs without in dealing blows, in proportion as it holds captive within the very mind, that is the mistress of the limbs. But sometimes it does not put out the hands, but it turns the tongue into a dart of cursing. For it implores with entreaty for a brother's destruction, and demands of God to do that, which the wicked man himself is either afraid or ashamed to do. And it comes to pass that both by wish and words he commits a murder, even when he forbears the hurting of his neighbour with the hands. Sometimes when the mind is disturbed, anger as if in judgment commands silence, and in proportion as it does not vent itself outwardly by the lips, inwardly it burns the worse, so the angry man withholds from converse with his neighbour, and in saying nothing, says how he abhors him. And sometimes this rigorousness of silence is used in the economy of discipline, yet only if the rule of discretion be diligently retained in the interior. But sometimes whilst the incensed mind foregoes the wonted converse, in the progress of time it is wholly severed from the love of our neighbour, and sharper stings arise to the mind, and occasions too spring up which aggravate her irritation, and the mote in the eye of the angry man is turned into a beam, whilst anger is changed into hatred. It often happens that the anger, which is pent up within the heart from silence, burns the more fiercely, and silently frames clamorous speeches, presents to itself words, by which to have its wrath exasperated, and as if set in judgment on the case, answers in exasperation exceeding cruelly: as Solomon implies in few words, saying, *But the expectation of the wicked is wrath*. [Prov. 11, 23] And thus it is brought to pass that the troubled Spirit finds louder riot in its silence, and the flame of pent-up anger preys upon it the more grievously.

Hence a certain wise man said well before us, *The thoughts of the angry man are a generation of vipers, they devour the mind which is their mother*. [d]

80. But we are to know that there be some, whom anger is somewhat prompt in inflaming, but quickly leaves them; while there are others whom it is slow in exciting, but the longer in retaining possession of. For some, like kindled reeds, while they clamour with their voices, give out something like a crackle at their kindling: those indeed speedily rise into a flame, but then they forth with cool down into their ashes; while others, like the heavier and harder kinds of wood, are slow in taking fire, but being once kindled, are with difficulty put out; and as they slowly stir themselves into heat of passion, retain the longer the fire of their rage. Others again, and their conduct is the worst, are both quick in catching the flames of anger, and slow in letting them go; and others both catch them slowly, and part with them quickly. In which same four sorts, the reader sees clearly that the last rather than the first approaches to the excellence of peace of mind, and in evil the third is worse than the second. But what good does it do to declare how anger usurps possession of the mind, if we neglect to set forth at the same time, how it should be checked?

81. For there are two ways whereby anger being broken comes to relax its hold upon the mind. The first method is that the heedful mind, before it begins to do any thing, set before itself all the insults which it is liable to undergo, so that by thinking on the opprobrious treatment of its Redeemer, it may brace itself to meet with contradiction. Which same, on coming, it receives with the greater courage, in proportion as by foresight it armed itself the more heedfully. For he, that is caught by adversity unprovided for it, is as if he were found by his enemy sleeping, and his foe dispatches him the sooner, that he stabs one who offers no resistance. For he, that forecasts impending ills in a spirit of earnest heedfulness, as it were watching in

ambush awaits the assault of his enemy. And he arrays himself in strength for the victory in the very point wherein he was expected to be caught in entire ignorance. Therefore, before the outset of any action, the mind ought to forecast all contrarieties, and that with anxious heed, that by taking account of these at all times, and being at all times armed against them with the breastplate of patience, it may both in foresight obtain the mastery, whatever may take place, and whatever may not take place, it may account gain. But the second method of preserving mildness is that, when we regard the transgression of others, we have an eye to our own offences, by which we have done wrong in the case of others. For our own frailty, being considered makes excuse for the ills done us by others. Since that man bears with patience an injury that is offered him, who with right feeling remembers that perchance there may still be somewhat, in which he himself has need to be borne with. And it is as if fire were extinguished by water, when upon rage rising up in the mind each person recalls his own misdoings to his recollection; for he is ashamed not to spare offences, who recollects that he has himself often committed offences, whether against God or against his neighbour, which need to be spared.

82. But herein we must bear in mind with nice discernment that the anger, which hastiness of temper stirs is one thing, and that which zeal gives its character to is another. The first is engendered of evil, the second of good. For if there was no anger originating in virtue, Phinees would never have allayed the fierceness of God’s visitation by his sword. Because Eli lacked such anger, he quickened against himself the stirrings of the vengeance of the Most High to an implacable force. For in proportion as he was lukewarm towards the evil practices of those under his charge, the severity of the Eternal Ruler waxed hot against himself. Of this it is said by the Psalmist, *Be ye angry, and sin not*. [Ps. 4, 5 Vulg.] Which doubtless they fail to interpret aright, who would only have us angry with ourselves, and

not with others likewise, when they sin. For if we are bidden to love our neighbours as ourselves, it follows that we should be as angry with their erring ways as with our own evil practices. Of this it is said by Solomon, *Anger* [so Vulg.] *is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better*. [Ecc. 7, 3] Of this the Psalmist saith again, *Mine eye is* [V. thus] *disturbed because of anger* [*prae ira.* Vulg. *a furore*]. [Ps. 6, 8] For anger that comes of evil blinds the eye of the mind, but anger that comes of zeal disturbs it. Since necessarily in whatever degree he is moved by a jealousy for virtue, the world of contemplation, which cannot be known saving by a heart in tranquillity, is broken up. For zeal for the cause of virtue in itself, in that it fills the mind with disquietude and agitation, presently bedims the eye thereof, so that in its troubled state it can no longer see those objects far up above, which it aforetime clearly beheld in a state of tranquillity. But it is brought back on high with a more penetrating ken by the same means, whereby it is thrown back for a while so as to be incapable of seeing. For the same jealousy in behalf of what is right after a short space opens wider the scenes of eternity in a state of tranquillity, which in the mean season it closes from the effects of perturbation. And from the same quarter whence the mind is confounded so as to prevent its seeing, it gains ground, so as to be made clear for seeing in a more genuine way; just as when ointment is applied to the diseased eye, light is wholly withheld, but after a little space it recovers this in truth and reality by the same means, by which it lost the same for its healing. But to perturbation contemplation is never joined, nor is the mind when disturbed enabled to behold that, which even when in a tranquil state it scarcely has power to gaze on; for neither is the sun's ray discerned, when driving clouds cover the face of the heavens; nor does a troubled fountain give back the image of the beholder, which when calm it shews with a proper likeness; for

in proportion as the water thereof quivers, it bedims the appearance of a likeness within it.

83. But when the spirit is stirred by zeal, it is needful to take good heed, that that same anger, which we adopt as an instrument of virtue, never gain dominion over the mind, nor take the lead as mistress, but like a handmaid, prompt to render service, never depart from following in the rear of reason. For it is then lifted up more vigorously against evil, when it does service in subjection to reason; since how much soever our anger may originate in zeal for the right, if from being in excess it has mastered our minds, it thereupon scorns to pay obedience to reason, and spreads itself the more shamelessly, in proportion as it takes the evil of a hot temper for a good quality; whence it is necessary that he who is influenced by zeal for right should above all things look to this, that his anger should never overleap the mind's control, but, in avenging sin, looking to the time and the manner, should check the rising agitation of his mind by regulating it with nicety of skill, should restrain heat of temper, and control his passionate emotions in subjection to the rule of equity, that the punisher of another man may be made more just, in proportion as he has first proved the conqueror of himself; so that he should correct the faults of transgressors in such away, that he that corrects should himself first make advancement by self-restraint, and pass judgment on his own vehemency, in getting above it, lest by being immoderately stirred by his very zeal for right, he go far astray from the right. But as we have said, forasmuch as even a commendable jealousy for virtue troubles the eye of the mind, it is rightly said in this place, *For wrath killeth the foolish man*; as if it were in plain terms, 'Anger from zeal disturbs the wise, but anger from sin destroys the fool;' for the first is kept in under the control of reason, but the other lords it over the prostrate mind in opposition to reason. And it is well added,

And envy slayeth the little I one.

84. For it is impossible for us to envy any but those, whom we think to be better than ourselves in some respect. And so he is ‘a little one,’ who is slain by jealousy. For he bears witness against his very own self, that he is less than him, by envy of whom he is tormented. It is hence that our crafty foe, in envying of the first man, despoiled him, in that having lost his estate of bliss, he knew himself to be inferior to his immortality. It is hence that Cain was brought down to commit the murder of his brother; in that when his sacrifice was disregarded, he was maddened that he, whose offering God accepted, was preferred to himself; and him, whose being better than himself was his aversion, he cut off, that he might not be at all. Hence, Esau was fired to the persecution of his brother; for, the blessing of the firstborn being lost, which, for that matter, he had himself parted with for a mess of pottage, he bewailed his inferiority to him, whom he surpassed by his birth. Hence his own brethren sold Joseph to Ishmaelites, that were passing by, in that upon the mystery of the revelation being disclosed, they set themselves to resist his advancement, that he might never become superior to themselves. Hence Saul persecutes his servant David by throwing a lance at him, for he dreaded that man growing beyond his own measure, whom he perceived to be daily waxing bigger by his great achievements in the virtues. Thus he is a ‘little one,’ who is slain by envy; in that except he himself proved less, he would not grieve for the goodness of another.

85. But herein we must bear in mind, that though in every evil thing that is done, the venom of our old enemy is infused into the heart of man, yet in this wickedness, the serpent stirs his whole bowels, and discharges the bane of spite fitted to enter deep into the mind. Of whom also it is written, Nevertheless, through envy of the devil came death into the world. For when the foul sore of envy corrupts the vanquished heart, the very exterior itself shews, how forcibly the mind is urged by madness. For paleness seizes the complexion, the eyes are weighed down, the spirit is inflamed,

while the limbs are chilled, there is frenzy in the heart, there is gnashing with the teeth, and while the growing hate is buried in the depths of the heart, the pent wound works into the conscience with a blind grief. Nought of its own that is prosperous gives satisfaction, in that a self-inflicted pain wounds the pining spirit, which is racked by the prosperity of another: and in proportion as the structure of another's works is reared on high, the foundations of the jealous mind are deeper undermined, that in proportion as others hasten onward to better things, his own ruin should be the worse; by which same downfall even that is brought to the ground, which was believed to have been raised in other doings with perfect workmanship. For when envy has made the mind corrupt, it consumes all that it may have found done aright. Whence it is well said by Solomon, *A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones*. [Prov. 14, 30] For what is denoted by 'the flesh,' saving weak and tender things? and what by the 'bones,' saving strong deeds? And it is most common that some with real innocency of heart should appear to be weak in some points of their practice, whilst some now perform deeds of strength before the eyes of men, but yet towards the excellences of others they are inwardly consumed with the plague of envy; and so it is well said, *A sound heart is the life of the flesh*. In that where inward innocency is preserved, even if there be some points weak without, yet they are sometime made strong and fast. And it is rightly added, *But envy the rottenness of the bones*. For by the bad quality of envy even strong deeds of virtue go for nought before the eyes of God. Since the rotting of the bones from envy is the spoiling of the strong things even.

86. But why do we say such things concerning envy, unless we likewise point out in what manner it may be rooted out? For it is a hard thing for one man not to envy another that, which he earnestly desires to obtain; since whatever we receive that is of time becomes less to each in proportion as

there are many to divide it amongst. And for this reason envy wrings the longing mind, because that, which it desires, another man getting either takes away altogether, or curtails in quantity. Let him, then, who longs to be wholly and entirely void of the bane of envy, set his affections on that inheritance, which no number of fellowheirs serves to stint or shorten, which is both one to all and whole to each, which is shewn so much the larger, as the number of those that are vouchsafed it is enlarged for its reception. And so the lessening of envy is the feeling of inward sweetness arising, and the utter death of it is the perfect love of Eternity. For when the mind is withdrawn from the desire of that object, which is divided among a multitude of participators, the love of our neighbour is increased, in proportion as the fear of injury to self from his advancement is lessened. And if the soul be wholly ravished in love of the heavenly land, it is also thoroughly rooted in the love of our neighbour, and that without any mixture of envy. For whereas it desires no earthly objects, there is nothing to withstand the love it has for its fellow. And what else is this same charity but the eye of the mind, which if it be reached by the dust of earthly love, is forthwith beaten back with injury from its gaze at the inward light? But whereas he is ‘a little one,’ who loves earthly things, and a great one that longs after the things of eternity, it may be suitably enough rendered in this sense likewise, *And envy slayeth the foolish one*; in that no man perishes by the sickness of this plague, except him that is still unhealthy in his desires.

BOOK VI.

The whole of the fifth chapter, beginning at the third verse, is explained first in a spiritual sense, a few parts in an allegorical, and a great many in a moral sense.

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

SAVING the historical verity, I proposed to myself to make out the sayings of blessed Job and of his friends by the mystical mode of interpretation: for it is plain to all that are acquainted with the truth, that Holy Writ takes care to hold out in promise the Redeemer of the world in all its statements, and that it has aimed to represent Him by all the Elect as by His members. And hence blessed Job is in the Latin tongue rendered 'grieving,' that both by his name and by his wounds the Passion of our Redeemer might be signified, of Whom the Prophet saith, *Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*. [Is. 53, 4] And the Tempter, having robbed him of every thing, slew both his servants and his children; in that at the time of His Passion he smote with the weapon of faithlessness not only the Jewish people, that served Him out of fear, but the very Apostles also themselves, that were regenerated in His love. The body of blessed Job is mangled with wounding, for our Redeemer does not disdain to be pierced with nails upon the stock of the Cross. And he received wounds, from the sole of the foot to the very crown of his head, in that not only in her last and lowest members, but even up to the very highest, Holy Church, which is His Body, is harassed with persecution by the raging Tempter. Hence also Paul said, *And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ*. [Col. 1, 24] And his wife strives to persuade him to curse, in that all the carnal minds within the pale of Holy Church prove abettors of the cunning Tempter. For she, who prompts him to cursing, represents the life of the carnal sort; since, as we

have already said above, all persons of unchastened habits within the pale of Holy Church, in proportion as they are brought nigh to the good by their faith, pinch them harder by their life. For because they cannot be avoided, as being of the number of the faithful, they are borne by the faithful as the greater harm, in proportion [see Preface, § 14] as it is nearer home. But his friends, who come as if to administer consolation, but run out into words of bitter upbraiding, bear the likeness of heretics, who, in striving to defend God against the righteous, only offend Him.

2. These things then, which have been more fully delivered above, I have endeavoured to gather into a small compass after their mystical representation, that by this very repetition it might be recalled to the recollection of my reader, that I minister to the spiritual understanding. And yet, when occasion of usefulness demands, I also busy myself to make out with minute exactness the letter of the history, but when it is needed I embrace both at the same time, that the allegory may put forth spiritual fruit, which same nevertheless is produced by the historical verity as from the root. Now the friends of blessed Job, who, we have said, bear the likeness of heretics, we by no means condemn for their words throughout; for whereas it is delivered against them by the sentence from above, *For ye have not spoken before Me the thing that is right;* [Job 42, 7] and it is thereupon added, *Like My servant Job*; it is plainly manifest that that is not altogether set at nought, which is only disapproved by comparison with what is better. For they incautiously slip into censure of him, but yet, as they are the friends of so great a man, from familiar intercourse with him they learnt many mystical truths. Whence, as we have also said above, Paul uses their very words, and by taking these in aid of his statement, he testifies that they were delivered from a source of truth. Which same nevertheless Truth does rightly censure, in that no sentence, however full of force, should be delivered against a holy man. Accordingly the words of

Eliphaz may be considered in a mystical sense, whereby he addresses blessed Job, saying,

Ver. 3. *I have seen the foolish taking root; but suddenly I cursed his beauty.* [so V.]

3. For the Jewish people shewed itself to be 'foolish,' in that it slightly regarded the very Presence of Eternal Wisdom in the flesh. And it waxed strong, as it were, by taking root, in that it had power over the life of the Elect to the extinction thereof in time. And Eliphaz despises such an one, cursing him, in that all heretics, whom we have said the friends of blessed Job bear a figure of, while they boast themselves in the name of Christ, censure in a way of authority the unbelief of the Jews. Concerning which same foolish one it is forthwith added,

Ver. 4. *His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither shall there be any to deliver them.*

4. They all are 'the children' of this foolish man, who are generated by the preaching of that unbelief, and these 'are far from safety,' for though they enjoy the temporal life without trouble, they are stricken the worse with eternal vengeance, as the Lord says concerning these same sons of such an one, *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him twofold more the child of hell than, yourselves*. [Matt. 23, 15] It follows, *And they are crushed in the gate, neither shall there be any to deliver them*. Who else is to be understood by the name of *gate*, but the Mediator between God and Man, *Who saith, I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved*. [John 10, 9] The sons, then, of this foolish man advance without the gate, and they are 'crushed in the gate,' for the evil offspring of the Jews, before the Mediator's coming, prospered in the observance of the Law, but in the presence of our Redeemer itself they fell away from the service of the Divine Being, proving outcasts by the deserts

of their faithlessness. And verily there is none 'to rescue them,' for while they strive by their persecution to kill the Redeemer Himself, they cut themselves off from the proffered means of their rescue. And it is well added concerning him,

Ver. 5. *Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and the armed one shall seize him.*

5. Now 'the harvest' of this foolish man was the crop of Sacred Writ. For the words of the Prophets are like so many grains of the ears, which the foolish man had, but did not eat. For the Jewish people indeed held the Law as far as the letter, but, from an infatuated pride, as to the sense thereof, they went hungering. But 'the hungry eateth the harvest' of this foolish one, in that the Gentile folk eats by taking in the words of the Law, in which the Jewish people toiled and laboured without taking them in. These hungry ones of faith the Lord foresaw, when He had said by the Evangelist, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*. [Matt. 5, 6] Of these hungry ones Hannah saith prophesying, *They that were full, have hired out themselves for bread, and they that were hungry were satisfied*. [1 Sam. 2, 5] And as he lost the harvest, it is rightly added how the foolish man himself too perishes, where it is said, *And himself shall the armed one seize*. The old enemy, being 'armed,' seized the Jewish people, for he extinguished in them the life of faith by the darts of deceitful counsel, that in the very point, wherein they imagined themselves to be rooted in God, they might resist His dispensation. And Truth forewarns the Disciples of this, saying, *Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service*. [John 16, 2] It follows.

And the thirsty shall drink his riches.

6. The riches of this 'foolish' one 'the thirsty drink,' in that by the streams of Sacred Writ, which the Jewish people possessed in the display of pride, the converted minds of the Gentiles are watered. And hence it is said

to those same persons by the Prophet, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no silver, come ye*. [Is. 55, 1] For that the divine oracles are denoted by the word ‘silver,’ is testified by the Psalmist in these words, *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in the fire*. [Ps. 12, 6] They then that ‘have no silver,’ are bidden to the ‘waters,’ in that the Gentile world which had never received the precepts of Holy Writ, is satisfied with the outpouring of Divine Revelation, which they now drink of the more eagerly, in proportion as they thirsted for it long time in a state of drought. Thus the very same Divine oracles are called at once ‘harvests’ and ‘riches;’ ‘harvests,’ because they refresh the hungering soul; ‘riches,’ because they array us in a rare richness of moral excellences. The same things are said both to be ‘eaten,’ and to be ‘drunk,’ for this reason, that whereas there are certain things therein that are obscure, which we understand not without they be interpreted, these same we in a manner swallow eating; and whereas certain other things indeed, that are easy to be understood, we so take as we find them, these we drink as if unchewed, in that we swallow them unbroken. These things we have run through in brief mode under their mystical signification, lest perchance we might seem to have passed over any thing; but because they could not be the friends of blessed Job, except in some points they also shone conspicuous for high moral worth, it remains that in their words we examine the force of their import in a moral sense, that, whilst the weight and substance of their speech is made out, it may be shewn what sort of teaching they were masters of.

Ver.3. *I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his beauty.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

7. ‘The foolish’ is as it were made fast in the earth by ‘taking root,’ in that he is fixed in the love of earth with all his heart’s desire. And hence Cain is recorded to have been the first that builded a city in the earth, that it might be plainly shewn, that that same man laid a foundation in the earth, who was turned adrift from the firm hold of our heavenly country. The foolish man as it were lifts himself up by ‘taking root,’ when he is buoyed up in this world with temporal good fortune, so that he obtains whatsoever he desires, is subject to no crosses, prevails against the weak without meeting with resistance, gainsays those that do well with authority, is ever attaining to better circumstances by means of worse practices, so that from the very cause that he is forsaking the path of life, he lives for the time the happier. But when the weak see that the wicked flourish, they are alarmed, and being troubled in their own breasts by the prosperity of sinners, they inwardly falter in the mind’s footsteps. It was the likeness of these same that the Psalmist took when he declared, *But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my step, had well nigh slipped; for I was envious at the sinner, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked*. [Ps. 73, 2. 3.]

8. But when the strong see their glory, they forthwith fix their minds upon the punishment which is to follow after that glory, and with deep thought of heart within they contemn that, which swells the proud without with the bigness of empty inflation. It is then well said, *I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his beauty*. For to ‘curse the beauty’ of the fool is to condemn his glory by an advised sentence, for he is the more frightfully drowned in torments, the higher he is lifted up in sins; for the being lifted up is transient, but the being punished is perpetual; for he, that meets with honour on his road, will meet with condemnation on his arrival; and he is as it were coming to a prison through pleasant meadows, who is going on to ruin through this world’s prosperity. But it is to be observed, that, when he says that he ‘cursed the beauty of the fool,’ he

directly adds, *suddenly*; for it is the way with man's weak mind to vary according to the modification of the objects which it beholds. Thus it often happens that his judgment is led by the mere appearance of the object presented, and his bias and feeling are framed according to the thing which is before his eyes. For often persons, while they see the glory of certain individuals, are charmed with the appearances thereof, and account it something great, and heartily wish they might themselves obtain the like; but when they see the children of glory severally either overthrown of a sudden, or perchance even brought to death, they acknowledge with a sigh that human glory is altogether nought, so as to exclaim at once, 'See what a nothing is man!' Which indeed they would say with more propriety, if when they saw man in possession of glory, then thinking of his destruction, they had felt that transitory power is nought. For it is then that we are to reflect what a nothing human exaltation is, when by its successes it mounts above others; then we ought to reflect with what speed happiness will flee away, when it flourishes, as if for ever, before the eyes of men. For that the glory of a perishable being is nothing in the actual hour of death, any of the weak sort can presently consider. For then even they hold it cheap, who even until death follow after it with affection. So that it is well said*, I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his beauty*. As if he said plainly; 'Against the beauty of the foolish I admitted no delay in my cursing, for as soon as I discerned it, I saw along with it the punishment that comes after; for I should not have cursed suddenly, if any delight in that glory had kept hold of me, but I cursed without tardiness, for beholding his punishments which are destined to endure, I condemned his power without hesitating.' But because in every case the more the wicked make way in this world, the greater numbers they drag to destruction, it is rightly subjoined, *Let his children be* [al. *his children shall be*] *far from safety*. For the children of the foolish one are they, that after his copy are brought forth in this world's

ambition; who truly are so much the further from safety, in proportion as in the practice of iniquity they are stricken by no infirmity. Of these it is well added,

Ver. 4. *And they shall be crushed in the gate; neither shall there be any to deliver them.*

9. For as the entrance of a city is called the 'gate,' so is the day of Judgment the gate of the Kingdom, since all the Elect go in thereby to the glory of their heavenly country. And hence when Solomon saw this day approaching for the recompensing of Holy Church, he said, *Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land*. [Prov. 31, 23] For the Redeemer of mankind is the 'husband' of Holy Church, Who shews Himself 'renowned' in the gates. Who [a.b.c.d. 'because he'] first came to sight in degradation and in mockings, but shall appear on high at the entering in of His kingdom: and 'He sitteth among the elders of the land,' for that He shall decree sentence of condemnation together with the holy preachers of that same Church, as Himself declares in the Gospel, *Verily I say unto you, Ye which leave followed Me, in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. [Matt. 19, 28] Which same Isaiah also foretelling long before uses these words, *The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of His people*. [Is. 3, 14] Of these gates Solomon says again, *Give her of the fruit if her hands, and her own works shall praise her in the gates*. [Prov. 31, 31] For Holy Church then receives of 'the fruit of her hands,' when the recompensing of her labours lifts her up to the entertainment of heavenly blessings, for her 'works then praise her in the gates,' when the words are spoken to her members in the very entrance to His kingdom; *For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me*. [Matt. 25, 35] The children then of this foolish

man are lifted up *before* ‘the gate,’ but ‘*in* the gate they shall be crushed;’ in that the followers of this world carry themselves proudly in the present life, but in the very entrance of the kingdom they are struck with an everlasting visitation. And it is well added, Neither is there any to deliver them. For ‘Truth’ delivers from eternal woe those whom in temporal weal She straitens by discipline. He, then, that now refuses to be straightened, is left then without the means to be ‘delivered,’ For Him, Whom they care not to have as a Father in training, the wicked in the season of their calamity never find a deliverer in succouring. It proceeds;

Whose harvest the hungry one shall eat up.

10. Even the foolish man has a ‘harvest,’ when any wicked man is vouchsafed the gift of a right understanding, is instructed in the sentences of Holy Writ, speaks good words, yet never in any wise does the thing that he says; gives forth the words of God, yet does not love them; by his praise magnifies them, by his practice tramples on them. Thus because this foolish man both understands and speaks that, which is right, yet does not love this in his doings, while he has a harvest, he goes starving. Which same ‘the hungry eateth up,’ in that he, who pants after God with holy desires, learns what he hears, and practises what he has learnt. And, whilst he is invigorated by the right preaching of a wrong teacher, what else is this than that he is filled with the produce of the foolish? Did not ‘Truth’ charge His ‘hungry ones’ to eat up the ‘harvest’ of the foolish, when, they being inflamed by holy desires, He charged them concerning the Pharisees, saying, *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, observe and do; but do not ye after their works*. [Matt. 23, 3] As though He said plainly; ‘By speaking they rear the harvest of the word, but by evil living they touch it not. Let this harvest then be the refreshment for your hunger, for it is for you that they reserve it in their own infatuated loathing.’ And it is well added,

Ver. 5. *And the armed man shall seize him.*

11. For our old enemy is conquered as an unarmed man, when, by openly prompting evil things to the mind of man, he aims to destroy all the good together. But he comes 'armed,' when, leaving some good things untouched, he covertly works the ruin of others. For often he does not tempt some people in the understanding, nor oppose them in their meditation on Holy Writ, yet he undoes the life of those in practice, who, while they are praised for the excellence of knowledge, neglect to have regard to the shortcomings of their works, and while the mind is decoyed in the delightfulness of good esteem, no remedy is applied to the wounds of the life; and thus the 'armed' enemy has swallowed up this man, whom under the cloak of deceit, whilst leaving on one side, he has got the better of on another. It goes on,

And the thirsty shall drink [so. V.] *his riches.*

12. Often the foolish man has a fountain of inward liquid, but he does not drink thereof; in that he is vouchsafed parts to understand, yet he disdains to acquaint himself with the sentences of Holy Writ by the reading of them; he knows that he has ability to understand by studying, yet he gives over in disdain all study of the lessons of truth. 'The riches' of the mind too are the words of Divine utterance, yet the foolish man regards these riches with his eyes, while he never applies them to the purpose of his own adornment. For on hearing the words of the law he sees indeed that they are great, yet he does not put himself to pains to understand them with any earnestness of love. But, reversely, another man has a thirst, but has not ability; love draws him to meditation, but the dulness of his sense withstands him, and often in the science of the Divine law, he from time to time finds out that by application, which the man of parts remains ignorant of from carelessness. Thus 'the thirsty drink up the riches of this foolish man,' as often as those precepts of God, which the quickwitted know

nothing of from disdaining them, the duller sort follow after with warm affection. In these verily the eye of love lights up the shades of dulness; for thirst uncloses that to the slower sort, which disdain shuts up to the quicker. And they for this reason get to the depths of understanding, because they do not scorn to practise even the very least things that they have learnt, and while they aid the understanding with the hands, they lift themselves above the level of the clever. Hence it is well said by Solomon, *The lizard climbeth with his hands, and is in kings' palaces*. [Prov. 30, 28] For commonly 'birds,' which have a wing that lifts them up to fly, dwell in the bushes, and the 'lizard,' which has no wings for flying, 'climbing with hands,' occupies the abode of royalty, in that often any that are quickwitted, while they grow slack from carelessness, continue in bad practices, and the simple folk, which have no wing of ability to stand them in stead, the excellency of their practice bears up to attain to the walls of the eternal kingdom. Whereas then 'the lizard climbeth with his hands,' he 'is in kings' palaces;' in that the plain man, by earnestness of right practice, reaches that point, whereunto the man of ability never mounts. But having heard this, a question occurs to our mind, wherefore either the gift of understanding is bestowed on a heedless man, or any earnest mind is hindered by its slowness? To which an answer is speedily given, in that it is forthwith added,

Ver. 6. *There is nothing in the earth without cause.* [so Vulg.]

13. For on this account it often happens that even a slothful man receives ability, that he may be the more deservedly punished for his carelessness, because he scorns to acquaint himself with that which he might attain to without labour. And on this account the earnest person is straitened with slowness of understanding, that he may obtain so much the larger rewards of compensation, the more he toils in anxiety to find out. Therefore 'there is nothing in the earth without cause,' since slowness stands the earnest mind

in stead for a reward, and to the slothful quickness only thrives for punishment. But for the understanding of those things that be right, we are at one time instructed therein by earnestness of labour, at another time by pains of affliction. Hence after it has been said, *There is nothing in the earth without cause*, it is fitly added thereupon,

Neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.

14. For 'trouble springeth out of the ground,' as it were, when man, being created after the image of God, is scourged by things without sense. But because it is by reason of the hidden deserts of men's souls that the open scourges of chastisements are sent forth, it happens at the same time that 'trouble springeth not out of the ground,' since it is the perversity of our sense, which requires that it should be stricken by things that have no sense. For thus we see that for our correction the looked for rain is withheld from the parched earth, and the vaporous air is scorched by the fiery heat of the sun; the sea rages with bursting tempests, and some embarked to cross its bosom it cuts off, and others are debarred the longed-for passage by the rampant water; the earth not only yields sparingly the produce of her fertility, but also destroys the seeds she has received. In all which circumstances we clearly discern that which a wise man testifies concerning God, *And the world shall fight with Him against the unwise*. [Wisd. 5, 20] For 'the world fights with the Lord against the unwise,' when even the very contrariety of the elements does service in the chastisement of offenders. Yet neither doth 'trouble Spring out of the ground,' for each insensate thing is put in motion to our annoyance, only by the impulse of our own doings. 'Trouble does not spring out of the ground,' for chastisement never a whit springs from that creature that strikes the blow, but from that one, without doubt, which, by committing sin, drew forth the severity of the stroke. But we must take great and diligent heed, that, when in outward circumstances we are afflicted with a weight of grief, we reach forward in hope to things

above; that the mind may attain the heights above, in proportion as we are chastened by the external punishment. And hence it is justly subjoined,

Ver. 7. *Man is born to labour, and the bird to flying.*

15. For 'man is born to labour,' in that he, who is furnished with the gift of reason, bethinks himself that it is wholly impossible for him to pass through this season of his pilgrimage without sorrowing. Hence when Paul was recounting his woes to his disciples, he justly added, *For yourselves know that we are appointed thereto*. [1Thess. 3, 3] But even in that the flesh is afflicted with scourges, the mind is lifted up to seek higher things, as Paul again bears witness, saying, *But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*. [2 Cor. 4, 16] So then, 'man is born to labour, and a bird to flying,' for the mind flies free on high for the very same reason that the flesh toils the sorer below.

16. By the designation of 'man' too, may be represented the life of the carnal sort. And hence Paul says, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] Soon after which he subjoins and says, *Are ye not men?* [ver. 4, Vulg.] In this life, then, 'man is born to labour,' for every carnal person, in seeking to obtain transitory things, is overcharging himself with the burthen of his desires. For it is sore labour to be seeking this same glory of the present life, at times to win it so sought, and to guard it with diligence when won. It is sore labour, with infinite pains to lay hold of that, which he, that shall lay hold, knows can never remain for long. But holy men, forasmuch as they have no fondness for transitory objects, are not only laid under no burthen of temporal desires, but even, if crosses on any occasion arise, in these very straits and faintings are free from trouble. For what is there more severe than scourges? and yet it is written concerning the Apostles when scourged, *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name*. [Acts 5, 41] What then can be labour

to the minds of those, to whom even the chastisement of stripes is not labour? Man then is 'born to labour,' for he really feels the ills of the present state, who is agape after the good things thereof. For that mind which hangs on the attraction of things above, has beneath it whatsoever is set in motion against it from without. Therefore it is well added, *and a bird to flying*. For the soul withdraws itself from the painfulness of labour, in proportion as it raises itself through hope toward things on high. Was not Paul like a 'bird born to flying,' who in undergoing such countless crosses, said, *Our conversation is in heaven?* [Phil. 3, 20] And again, *We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. [2 Cor. 5, 1] Like a bird, then, he had mounted above the scenes below, whom, while yet lingering on earth in the body, the wing of hope was already bearing up in the heights. But forasmuch as none by his own strength can transport himself on high, so as to be raised to the invisible world, while he is borne down by visible things, it is immediately added with propriety,

Ver. 8. *Wherefore I will entreat the Lord, and unto God would I make my address*.

17. As though he said in plain words, 'Him I petition, by Whom I know that these things are bestowed.' For if he imagined that he had them by himself, he would not need to make his prayer to God. It goes on;

Which doeth great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number.

18. Who may see to the bottom of the marvellous works of Almighty God, how He made all things of nothing, how the very framework of the world is arranged with a marvellous mightiness of power, and the heaven hung above the atmosphere, and the earth balanced above the abyss, how this whole universe consists of things visible and invisible, how He created man, so to say, gathering together in a small compass another world, yet a

world of reason; how constituting this world of soul and flesh, He mixed the breath and the clay by an unsearchable disposal of His Might? A part, then, of these things we know, and a part we even are. Yet we omit to admire them, because those things which are full of marvels for an investigation deeper than we can reach, have become cheap from custom in the eyes of men. Hence it comes to pass that, if a dead man is raised to life, all men spring up in astonishment. Yet every day one that had no being is born, and no man wonders, though it is plain to all, without doubt, that it is a greater thing for that to be created, which was without being, than for that, which had being, to be restored. Because the dry rod of Aaron budded, all men were in astonishment; every day a tree is produced from the dry earth, and the virtue residing in dust is turned into wood, and no man wonders. Because five thousand men were filled with five loaves, all men were in astonishment that the food should have multiplied in their teeth; every day the grains of seed that are sown are multiplied in a fulness of ears, and no man wonders. All men wondered to see water once turned into wine. Every day the earth's moisture being drawn into the root of the vine, is turned by the grape into wine, and no man wonders. Full of wonder then are all the things, which men never think to wonder at, because, as we have before said, they are by habit become dull to the consideration of them; but when he said, *which doeth great things*, he did well in immediately adding, *and unsearchable*. For it was but little to do great things, if the things that were done could have been searched to the bottom. And it is lightly added, marvellous things without number. As it would have been but an inferior greatness, if the things, which He created 'unsearchable,' He had made [a] but few in number.

19. But herein it ought to be impressed upon us, that the Divine miracles should both ever be under our consideration in earnestness of mind, and never sifted in intellectual curiosity. For it often happens that the thought of

man, when, seeking the reason of certain things, it fails to find it out, plunges into a whirlpool of doubt. Hence it comes to pass that some men reflect that the bodies of the dead are reduced to dust, and while they are unable to infer the power of the Resurrection from reasoning, they despair of their being able to be brought back to their former condition. Things that are marvellous then are to be believed on a principle of faith, but not to be pried into by reason. For, if reason set them open before our eyes, they would no longer be marvellous, But when the mind may chance to falter in these, it is needful that such things as it knows by custom, yet does not infer by reason, should be recalled to mind, that by the weight of a similar circumstance one may supply strength to the faith, which one finds to be undermined by one's own shrewdness. For, when the dust of the human flesh is thought on, the mind of some is shaken, and despairs of the time, when dust shall return to flesh, and through the lineaments of the limbs form a body restored to life, when that dryness of earth shall flush into freshness through the living limbs, and fashion itself in distinct parts by the forms and shapes of them. This indeed can never be comprehended by reason, yet it may be easily believed from example. For who would imagine that from a single grain of seed a huge tree would rise up, unless he had it as a certain fact by experience? In that extreme minuteness of a single grain, and with next to no dissimilarity within itself, where is the hardness of the wood buried, and a pith either tender or hard compared with the wood, the roughness of the bark, the greenness of the root, the savour of the fruits, the sweetness of the scents, the variety of the colours, the softness of the leaves? Yet because we know this by experience, we do not doubt that all these spring from a single grain of seed. Where then is the difficulty that dust shall return into limbs, when we have every day before our eyes the power of the Creator, Who in a marvellous manner, even from a grain creates wood, and in a still more marvellous manner from the wood creates

fruit? *Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number*. For the greatness of the Divine works can neither be made out in respect of kind and quality, nor reckoned in respect of quantity. Hence it is still further added,

Ver. 10, 11. *Who giveth rain upon the face of the earth, and sendeth waters upon all things. Who setteth up on high those that be low; and those which mourn He exalteth with safety.*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

20. Forasmuch as we believe that the friends of blessed Job were enlightened by their intercourse with him, we must needs handle these words of Eliphaz in a mystical manner. Thus Almighty God 'gives rain upon the earth,' when He waters the withered hearts of the Gentiles with the grace of heavenly preaching, and He 'sendeth waters upon all things,' in that by the fulness of the Spirit He fashions the barrenness of lost man to fruitfulness; as 'Truth' says by His own lips, *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst*. But by the title of the universe man is denoted, in that in him there is set forth a true likeness and a large participation in common with the universe. For every thing that is either is, yet does not live; or is and lives, yet does not feel; or is and lives and feels, yet neither understands nor discriminates; or is and lives and feels and understands and discriminates. For stones are, yet do not live. Trees both are and live, yet do not feel. For their verdure is called the life of herbs and of trees, as is declared by Paul concerning seeds, *Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die*. [1 Cor. 15, 36] Brute creatures both are and live and feel, yet do not understand. Angels both are and live and feel, and by understanding they exercise discernment. Man, then, in that he has it in common with stones to be, with trees to live, with animals to feel, with angels to discern, is rightly represented by the title of the 'universe,' in

whom after some sort the ‘universe’ itself is contained. And hence ‘the Truth’ saith to His disciples, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature*. That is, He would have every creature to be taken for man only, in whom He created something common with all things.

21. Though in this place, ‘all things’ may be understood in another sense also. For the grace of the Holy Spirit in bringing the rich under its influence, does not keep back the poor; while it abases the strong, it does not forbid the weak to come to it; while it gathers together the noble, at the same time it lays hold of the base-born; while it takes up the wise, it disdains not the foolishness of the unskilful. God, then, ‘sendeth waters upon all things,’ Who by the gift of the Holy Spirit calleth to the knowledge of Himself from every class of men.

22. Again it may be that by the designation of ‘all things,’ the mere diversities of characters are set before us. For one is lifted up by pride, another is bent down by the weight of fear, one burns with lust, another pants with avarice, one lets himself sink from listlessness, another is fired with rage. But while, by the teaching of Holy Writ, humility is given to the proud man, confidence bestowed upon the fearful, the lustful cleansed from impurity by devotedness to chastity, the avaricious by moderation cooled from the heat of his covetous desires, the careless liver made erect by the uprightness of an earnest mind, the passionate man restrained from the hastiness of his headlong disposition, God ‘sendeth water upon all things,’ for He adapts the power of His Word in each severally according to the diversity of their characters, that each may find in His revelation that, whereby he may yield the produce of the virtue that he needs. Hence it is said by a wise man of the sweetness of manna, *Thou didst send them from heaven bread prepared without their labour, having in itself all delight, and the sweetness of every taste*. [Wisd. 16, 20] For the manna contained in itself all manner of delight and the sweetness of every taste, for this reason,

that in the mouth of the spiritual sort it yielded a taste, according to the eater's will, in that the Divine Word, being at the same time suited to all minds, yet never at variance with itself, condescends to the kind and character of its hearers; and whereas every elect person understands it with profit according to his own fashion, he as it were turns the manna he received into a taste at will. And forasmuch as after the toils of good practice comes the glory of compensation, it is rightly subjoined after the sending of water, *Who setteth up on high those that be low, and those which mourn He exalteth with safety*.

23. 'Those that be low are set on high,' in that they, who are now despised for the love of God, shall then come as judges along with God, as 'Truth' pledges this which we have just named to the same humble ones, saying, *Ye which have followed Me, in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. [Matt. 19, 28] Then 'those that mourn the Lord exalts with safety,' in that they who, being inflamed with desire of Him, flee prosperity, endure crosses, undergo tortures at the hands of persecutors, chasten their own selves with grieving, are then vouchsafed a safety so much the more exalted, as they now from devout affection kill themselves to all the joys of the world. Hence it is that it is said by Solomon, *The heart knoweth his own soul's bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy*. [Prov. 14, 10] For the human mind 'knoweth its own soul's bitterness,' when inflamed with aspirations after the eternal land, it learns by weeping the sorrowfulness of its pilgrimage. But the 'stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy,' in that he, that is now a stranger to the grief of compunction, is not then a partaker in the joy of consolation. Hence it is that 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *Verily, verily I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy*. [John 16, 20]

And again, *And ye therefore now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*. [ver. 21. 22] The Lord, then, is said 'to exalt with safety those which mourn,' in that to all, who for His sake are stricken with grief in time, He vouchsafes true salvation for their comfort. But at the same time nothing hinders but that this may be understood of God's Elect even in this life.

24. For those that be 'low are set on high,' in that when they abase themselves in humility, they mount above all sublunary things in the discernment of a lofty mind. And, while they reckon themselves to be worthless in all things, by the discriminating view of a right mind, they surmount and trample upon the glory of this world. Let us look at lowly Paul. Mark how he says to his disciples, *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Christ's sake*. [2 Cor. 4, 5] Let us see this 'humble man set up on high.' He says, *Know ye not that we shall judge Angels?* [1 Cor. 6, 3] and again, *And hath raised us together*, *and made us sit together in heavenly places*. [Eph. 2, 6] Perchance at that moment the chain was holding him outwardly fast bound. Yet he had been 'set on high' within, who, by the certainty of his hope, was already sitting in heavenly places. Holy men then are objects of scorn without, and as unworthy persons have every indignity put upon them, yet in sure confidence that they are meet for the heavenly realms, they look with certainty for the glory of the Eternal world. And when they are hard pressed without in the assaults of persecution, they fall back within into the fortified stronghold of their mind; and thence they look down upon all things passing far below them, and amongst them they see passing even themselves as in the body. They dread no threats, for even tortures they so endure as to set them at nought. For it is hence that it is said by Solomon, *But the righteous shall be bold as a lion*. [Prov. 28, 1] Hence it is written again by the same, *The righteous man shall not be grieved by any thing that shall happen to*

him. Prov. 12, 21] For because all the righteous are seated on the lofty height of their purposed mind, whereas in dying they are not sensible of death, it is so in a marvellous manner, that the missiles of the reprobate at the same time both strike them, and do not reach them. Those then that are 'low are set up on high,' in that from the very circumstance that they despise themselves in all things, they are rendered the more secure against them all.

25. Contrary to which it is rightly delivered by the Prophet to the lost soul under the likeness of Babylon, *Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; there is no throne for the daughter of the Chaldeans*. [Is. 47, 1] For here I think the human mind is called a virgin, not as undefiled, but as unproductive. And forasmuch as Babylon is rendered 'confusion,' the barren soul is rightly named the *daughter of Babylon*, who, in that she never puts forth good works, whilst she is framed on no method of a right life, is as it were engendered of the parentage of confusion. But if she is called a virgin not as being barren but undefiled, after that she is fallen from the state of saving health, it is only to the increase of her 'confusion' that she is called that which she once was. And it is fitly that the Divine voice, in rebuking her, saith to her, *Come down*; for the human mind is stationed on high, when it covets the rewards above; but it 'comes down' from this station, when being overcome it yields itself cowardly to decaying worldly desires. And it is immediately subjoined to her with justice, *And sit in the dust*. For 'coming down she sits in the dust,' in that quitting heavenly scenes, she grovels in the very lowest [b], being stained with earthly imaginations. And here it is yet further added by way of repetition, *Sit on the ground*. As if in uttering reproaches he said in plain words, 'Because thou refusedst to lift thyself by a heavenly conversation, laid prostrate beneath thyself, be degraded in earthly courses.' And hence it is forthwith added by a necessary consequence, *There is no throne for the*

daughter of the Chaldeans. For the Chaldeans are translated ‘fierce.’ And they are very fierce, who, pursuing their own wills, refuse to spare even their own lives. Earthly desires are ‘fierce,’ which render the mind hard and insensible not only to the precepts of the Creator, but also to the blows of stripes. But the ‘daughter of the fierce ones has no throne,’ in that the mind that is born to the love of the world by bad desires, and is by those same desires rendered obdurate, herein that she yields herself to earthly concupiscence, parts with the seat of judgment, and she sits as mistress upon no throne within her, in that she lacks the balance of discernment, and is withheld from the sitting of her judgment, because she ranges abroad among external lusts. For it is clear that that mind, which has lost the seat of counsel within, in a thousand ways dissipates itself without in desires. And because it shut the eyes to doing what it understands, it is deservedly blinded, so as not even to know what it does; and oftentimes by a deserved visitation it is left in its own will, and is set loose under those very toilsome services of the world, which it pants after with solicitude. Hence it is fitly added in that place, *For thou shall no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal*. [Is. 27, 2] It is well known that parents spare their tender daughter, nor charge her with hard and servile employments. So Almighty God as it were calls a daughter tender when He recalls the well-beloved soul of each person from the wearisome services of this world, that, whilst it is charged with external works, it be not hardened to internal desires. But the ‘daughter of the Chaldeans’ is not called ‘soft and tender,’ in that the mind, which is abandoned to evil inclinations, is left in this world’s travail, the thing which it most anxiously desires. So that like a handmaid she drudges in the service of the world without, who refuses as a daughter to love God within. Hence she is bidden to ‘take the millstone, and grind meal.’ A millstone is whirled round in a circle, and the meal is thrown out. Now each separate course of this world’s action is a mill,

which, while it heaps up a multitude of cares, as it were whirls the minds of men in a circle, and she as it were throws forth the meal from herself, in that, when the heart is turned wrong, she is ever producing infinitely little thoughts. But it sometimes happens that he, who while at rest is accounted of some worth, on being placed in any scene of action is stripped bare. Hence we have it forthwith subjoined in that place, *Uncover thy baseness, make bare the shoulder, uncover the thighs, pass over the rivers*. For in the execution of a work 'baseness is uncovered,' in that the base and abject soul is made known in the manifestation of working, whereas before while at rest, it was accounted great. The mind 'makes bare the shoulder,' when it brings to light its practice, which was kept from view. It 'uncovers the thighs,' in that it plainly discovers, by what strides of desire it reaches after the advantages of the world. Furthermore 'it passes over the rivers,' in that it unceasingly pursues the courses of this present life, which are daily running out to their end. And, whilst it gives over one set, and follows after another, it is as it were ever going on from river to river. These things we have delivered by way of discussion in few words, in order to shew where that mind lies grovelling, which has been unseated from the throne of a holy purpose. For if it ever cease to pant after the things which are above it, it plunges even unceasingly below itself. But it is fixed on high, if, abandoning the love of temporal things, it is bound fast to the hope of a changeless eternity.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

26. It is well said then, *Who setteth up on high those that be low.* And it is fitly added, *And those which mourn He exalteth with safety*. Oftentimes in this world even any that be glad of heart are 'exalted,' whilst they are swoln by the mere gloriousness of their fortune, but 'those that mourn, the Lord exalts to safety,' in that he raises His sorrowing children to glory by the

solid substance of true joy; for they are exalted by safety, and not by madness, who, set fast in good works, rejoice with a sure hope in God. For there are some, as we have said, who both do misdeeds, and yet do not cease to rejoice. Of whom Solomon saith, *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the things that be froward*. [Prov. 2, 14] And again, *There be wicked men, who are as secure, as though they had the deeds of the righteous*. [Ecc. 8, 14. Vulg.] These, truly, are not 'exalted by safety,' but by foolishness, which same are full of pride when they ought to be loaded with sorrow, and for the very reason that these wretched persons let themselves out in exultation, they are wept over by all good men. Verily not unlike to the senses of madmen, they account that insanity, in which they surpass others, to be strength. They know not that it comes from disease, that they are able to do more than the sane, and they as it were esteem themselves to have increased in powers, whilst they are drawing near to the end of life by accessions of sickness. These because they have no perception of reason, are wept for, and they laugh, and they expand in an extraordinary exultation of heart, in the very same proportion that from insensibility they are ignorant of the evil they are undergoing. Those then that 'mourn' the Lord 'exalts with safety,' in that the mind of the Elect is full of joy, derived, not from the madness of the present life, but from the certain prospect of eternal salvation. Hence it is fitly added immediately afterwards, with respect to this very destruction of the wicked,

Ver. 12. *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.*

27. The minds of the lost are ever awake to evil imaginations, but very often the Providence above counteracts them, and though not even when they are crushed with adversities do they amend the wickedness of their counsel, yet that they may never prevail against the good, He puts a check upon their power. And against these it is brought to pass by marvellous

retribution, that whilst the effect of their evil doing is lacking to them, still conscience gives them over convicted to the just sentence of the Judge. Whereas then they devise evil things, they shew what they themselves are about; but, whereas they cannot ‘perform their enterprize,’ they, against whom it was imagined, are protected; and hence is yet further added aright,

Ver. 13. *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong*.

28. For oftentimes, some that are puffed up with human wisdom, when they see that the decrees of God are contrary to their inclinations, set themselves to oppose them with crafty manoeuvres, and that they may bend the power of the dispensation of the Most High to meet their own wishes, they busy themselves in cunning contrivances, they devise schemes of excessive refinement. But they are only executing the will of God by the very way they are labouring to alter it, and whilst they strive to withstand the purpose of the Almighty, they are obeying His behests; for it often happens that that renders good service to His provident ordering, which on the part of human efforts makes a silly opposition to Him. Therefore the Lord taketh the wise in their own craftiness, when the acts of man even then conveniently serve His purposes, when they are opposed to them. Which we shall the better shew, if we bring forward a few instances of actual facts.

[Joseph’s Brethren]

29. Joseph had been visited by a dream, how that his brother’s sheaves fell down before his sheaf; he had been visited by a dream, how that the sun and moon together with the other stars worshipped him. And because he related these things guilelessly to his brethren, envy and fear of his future dominion over them forthwith smote their breasts; and when they saw him coming to them, they said with malice burning against him, *Behold this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and we shall see what good his dreams will do him*. [Gen. 37, 19. 20.] And fearing to become

subject to his dominion, they let down the dreamer into a well, and sell him to Ishmaelites that were passing by. He, then, having been brought into Egypt, subjecled to slavery, condemned on the charge of lust, being vouchsafed aid for the merits of his chastity, and set up for his judgment in prophecy, was advanced over the whole of Egypt; and by the wisdom from on high with prudent foresight he collected stores of corn, and thus met the impending peril of a scarcity. And when the famine poured itself over the earth, Jacob, being distressed for the providing of food, sent his sons into Egypt. They find Joseph, whom they did not know, master of the distribution of corn, and that they might win the favour to have food given them, they were forced to worship the distributor thereof with their necks bent down to the earth. Now then let us consider the course of the transaction; let us consider how the power of God 'took the wise in their own very craftiness.' Joseph had for this reason been sold, that he might not be worshipped, yet he was for this reason worshipped, because he was sold; for they dared to try a thing in craft, that the counsel of God might be changed; but by resisting they helped on the decree of God, which they strove to get quit of. For they were constrained to execute the will of God by the very act by which they laboured craftily to alter the same. Thus whilst the Divine purpose is shunned, it is fulfilling; thus while human wisdom resists, it is 'caught.' Those brethren feared lest Joseph should grow to an height above themselves. But that which was arranged by the Divine disposal, their precautions were the cause and occasion of bringing about. Human wisdom then was 'caught' in itself, when in the very way that its purpose was to oppose the will of God, it did service toward the completion thereof.

[Saul]

30. Thus, whereas Saul saw David, his subject, grow up in a daily advance in valorous achievements, he betrothed his daughter to him in

marriage, and demanded that an hundred foreskins of the Philistines should be given by him for her dowry, that when the soldier thus challenged sought to exceed his own measure, being delivered over to the swords of his enemies, he might bring his life to an end; according as it is written, *The king requireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hands of the Philistines*. [1 Sam. 18, 25] But David, strengthened by the favourable aid of the interior Disposal, engaged himself to give the hundred, and he brought back two hundred foreskins. By the convincing force of which deed Saul being overcome, was 'caught' in the purpose of his wisdom by Providence above; for by the very means that he looked to destroy the life of the rising soldier, he raised to the highest pitch the fame of his merits.

[Jonah]

31. But because the very Elect sometimes strive to be sharp-witted in a degree, it is well to bring forward another wise man, and to shew how the craft of mortal men is comprehended in the Inner Counsels. For Jonah desired to be sharp-witted in prudence, when being sent to preach the repentance required of the Ninevites, because he feared that, if the Gentiles were chosen, Judaea would be forsaken, he refused to discharge the office of that preaching. He sought a ship and settled to fly to Tharsis, but straightway a storm arises, the lot is cast, that it may be found out to whose fault it is owing that the sea is in commotion. Jonah is found in the offence, he is plunged into the deep, devoured by the whale swallowing him, and there he is brought by the beast carrying him, where he despised to go of his own accord. See, the tempest of God finds out the runagate, the lot binds him, the sea receives him, the beast encloses him, and because he sets himself against paying obedience to his Maker, he is carried a culprit by his own prison to that place, whither he was sent. When God commanded, man

would not administer the prophecy; when God breathed on it, the beast vomits the Prophet. God then 'taketh the wise in their own craftiness,' when He brings back even that to serve the purpose of His will, by which the will of man sets itself in contradiction to Him.

[The Jews]

32. Let us, yet further, look well into the wisdom of the Hebrews, that we may see what in its foresight it resisted, what by so resisting it brought about. Surely, when a multitude of believers was gathering together at the miracles of our Redeemer, when the priests of the people, kindled by the torches of envy, declared that all the world were going after Him, saying, *Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after Him* [John 12, 19]; that they might cut away from Him the strength of so great a concourse, they endeavoured to put an end to His power by death, saying, *It is expedient that one man die, and not that the whole nation perish*. [John 11, 50] Yet the death of our Redeemer availed to the uniting of His Body, i.e. of the Church, and not to the severing away of it. And hence it is commanded by the Law, that in representation of our Sacrifice, the throat of the turtledove or the pigeon should be cut, and not entirely severed, so that even after death the head should cleave to the body, in that verily *the Mediator between God and man* [1 Tim. 2, 5], i.e. the Head of all of us, and the Sacrifice of the true cleansing, from the very cause that He underwent death; was more truly joined to us. After the cutting, then, the head of the turtledove adheres to its body, for neither does the death that intervenes sever Christ from His Church. His persecutors then did that which they laboured after with pernicious intent, they brought death upon Him; that so they might cut off from Him the devotedness of the faithful; but faith only gained growth from thence, whence the cruelty of the faithless looked to extinguish it. And while they reckon that they are cutting off His miracles by persecuting Him, in truth they were forced to extend them without

knowing it. Therefore the Lord took the wise in their own craftiness, when He reduced even that to the service of His pitifulness, in which the fierceness of man raged against Him.

33. For the Just and Merciful One, as He disposes the deeds of mortals, vouchsafes some things in mercy, and permits other things in anger; and the things which He permits He so bears with, that He turns them to the account of His purpose. And hence it is brought to pass in a marvellous way, that even that, which is done without the Will of God, is not contrary to the Will of God. For while evil deeds are converted to a good use, the very things that oppose His design, render service to His design. For hence it is said by the Psalmist, *The works of the Lord are great, sought out unto all His wills*. [Ps. 111, 2. Vulg.] For His works are so great, that by every thing that is done by man, His Will is sought out; for it often happens that it is done by the very act, whereby it was thought to be thrown aside. Hence again it is said, *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in Heaven and in earth*. [Ps. 135, 6] Hence Solomon saith, *There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord*. [Prov. 21, 30] It remains that, in all that we do, we search out the potency of the Supreme Will, to which same, when we know it, all our conduct ought devoutly to render service, and to follow it as the guide of its course, lest it serve the same even against its will, if it declines it from pride. For the potency of the Divine purpose cannot be evaded, but he that bridles himself in under His nod, tempers it to himself with great efficacy; and he lightens the weight thereof to himself, who willingly bears it on the bowed shoulder of the heart. But as we have above made mention of His persecutors, let us proceed to shew how the words that are subjoined likewise fit their blindness. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *They shall meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noonday as in the night.*

34. They ‘meet with darkness in the day-time,’ for in the very presence of Truth, they were blinded by the deceitfulness of unbelief. For we see clearly in the day-time, but in the night the pupil of our eye is dimmed. Therefore whilst the persecutors beheld the miracles of Divine Power, and yet doubted of His Divine Nature, they were subjected to ‘darkness in the day-time,’ for they lost their eyesight in the light. Hence it is that ‘Light’ Itself admonishes them, saying, *Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you*. [John 12, 35] It is hence that it is said of Judaea, *Her sun is gone down, while it was yet day*. [Jer. 15, 9] It is hence that the Prophet again took up in himself the strain of persons in a state of penitence, in these words, *We stumble at noonday as in the night, we are in dismal places as dead men*. [Is. 59, 10] Hence again He says, *Watchman, what of the night* [b]*? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night*. [Is. 21, 11. 12] For ‘the watchman came by night,’ in that the Guardian of the human race even shewed Himself manifest in the flesh, and yet Judaea, being close pressed by the darkness of her faithlessness, never knew Him. Where it is well added in the voice of the watchman, *The morning cometh, and also the night*. For by His presence hath a new light shone out upon the world, and yet the former darkness remained in the hearts of unbelievers. And it is well said, *They shall grope in the noonday as in the night*; for we search out by groping that which we do not see with our eyes. Now the Jews had seen His undisguised miracles, and yet they still went on seeking Him, as it were groping for Him, when they said, *How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly*. [John 10, 24] See, the light of miracles was before their eyes, yet stumbling in the darkness of their own hearts, they continued to grope in seeking for Him. And this same blindness of theirs burst out into cruelty, and their cruelty even to the extent of overt acts of persecution. But

the Redeemer of mankind could not for long be held by the hands of His persecutors. Hence it is forthwith added;

Ver. 15. *But He shall save the poor from the sword of their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.*

35. For it is this very Poor Man of whom it is said by Paul, *Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor*. [2 Cor. 8, 9] And because the Jews in accusing betrayed the Lord, Whom, when so betrayed, the Gentiles put to death, by 'the sword of the mouth' may be signified the tongue of the Hebrews, that were His accusers, of whom the Psalmist saith, *Whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword*. [Ps. 57, 4] For, as the Gospel also witnesses, they cried out, *Crucify Him, Crucify Him*. Luke 23, 21; John 19, 6] But by 'the hand of the violent' may be set forth the very Gentile world itself, which crucified Him, which in our Redeemer's death fulfilled in act the words of the Hebrews; God then 'saved this Poor One both from the hand of the violent,' and from 'the sword of the mouth,' in that our Redeemer, in His human Nature, was subjected both to the powers of the Gentiles, and to the tongues of the Jews by dying, but in the power of His Divine Nature He overcame them by rising again. By which same resurrection what else is brought to pass than that our weakness is strengthened to conceive the hope of the life hereafter? And hence it is well added immediately afterwards,

Ver. 16. *And so the needy shall have hope.*

36. For when the poor man is rescued, 'the needy' is restored to hope, for the lowly people of the faithful is shaken with dismay at our Redeemer dying, but is established firm by His rising again, for the very first poor ones of His people, viz. the chosen Preachers, were smitten by the sight of His death, but restored by the manifesting of His resurrection. When, then, the poor man is saved, 'the needy' recovers hope, for by the Lord rising again in the flesh, every faithful soul is strengthened to have a confident

expectation of eternal life. But, now, the Truth has already come in an open manifestation, He has already undergone the death of the flesh, and destroyed the same by rising again, already the glory of the Ascension has ennobled His Resurrection, and yet the tongue of the Hebrews does not yet cease to urge Him with insults; and He indeed suffers them with patience, that by such sufferance He may turn some, and others that refuse to be turned He may one day visit with severer punishment. For the tongue of unbelievers will then be struck dumb from their habit of unbridled speech, when it shall see Him coming as a just Judge, Whom now it has judged unjustly. And hence it is well added,

And iniquity shall stop her mouth.

37. For now iniquity still opens wide her mouth, in that the tongue of unbelievers never ceases to urge with insults the Redeemer of the human race. But she shall then ‘stop her mouth,’ when this same, which she will not shut in good will, she shall shut in punishment. Yet this may also be well understood of the conversion of the persecutors. For when ‘the poor is saved,’ whilst ‘the needy’ returns to hope, iniquity is struck dumb, her mouth being stopped, in that by the miracle of His Resurrection shining out, whilst a full number of unbelievers is brought to the faith, it has ceased from the mocking and abuse of its Redeemer. For its mouth, which it opened in mocking God, it has now shut in the dread of Him.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

38. It is good to run through these points in a moral sense, putting aside the signification of the Jewish people, and to trace out in what manner they are transacted by wicked men in general. For the minds of the wicked, when they see some things done well by their neighbours, are strained upon the stretched rack of their jealousy, and they undergo the grievous chastisement of their own malice, when with a consuming heart they see good in others.

Therefore it is well said, *They meet with darkness in the day time*. For when their mind is grieved for the superiority of another, there is an overshadowing from the ray of the light; for oftentimes while they view the unconcealed good qualities in their neighbours, they look closely if there be any evil points lying concealed from sight, and they busy themselves in eager scrutinies, if they may chance to find somewhat with which they may be able to charge them. Sound limbs indeed are all they see, but, with the eyes of the heart closed, they seek by feeling to find a sore. And hence it is rightly subjoined, *And grope in the noonday as in the night*. The day of good deeds shines outwardly in a neighbour, but they 'grope as it were in the night,' because inwardly they are under the darkness of their jealous feeling. They busy themselves to get to some points which they may censure, they seek out an opening for detraction, but forasmuch as they are unable to find this, they search about in blindness without. Which is well set forth in that occasion, when from the Angels protecting Lot, the inhabitants of Sodom could not find the doorway in his house, as it is written, *And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door*. [Gen. 19, 9-11] What does it mean that, when the wicked are up in arms against him, Lot is brought back into the house, and defended, but that every righteous man, while he encounters the assaults of evil ones, is brought back into his interior, and abides undismayed. But the men of Sodom cannot find the door in Lot's house, because the corrupters of souls detect no opening of accusation against the life of the righteous man. For, stricken with blindness, they as it were go round and round the house, who, under the influence of envy scrutinize words and deeds; but because in the life of the just, strong and praiseworthy conduct fronts them every way,

groping at random they feel nothing else than the wall. Therefore it is well said, *And grope in the noonday as in the night*. For while the good, which they see, it is out of their power to impeach, being blinded by wickedness, they search out for impeachment evil which they see nothing of.

39. And here it is properly subjoined, *But he shall save the poor from the sword of their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty*. For the 'poor' is everyone that is not set up in his own eyes. And hence 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. [Matt. 5, 3] Now a person is drawn into sin in two ways. For either he is led on by pleasure, or overcome by fear. For 'the sword of the mouth' is the mischievousness of persuasion, but 'the hand of the mighty' is the opposition of power. But because he that is truly humble, who is here called 'the poor,' as he covets none of the good things of this world, so also undauntedly sets at nought even its adverse fortune, it is well said, *But He saveth the poor from the sword of their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty*. As if it were put plainly; 'God doth so firmly establish the souls of the humble in Himself, that neither the alluring arts of persuasion can draw them, nor the pains of punishment break them in to the practice of sin. For hope rears the spirit into the eternal world, and therefore it is not sensible of any of the ills without, that it falls under. And hence it is subjoined, *So the needy shall have hope*. Unto the fruits of which same hope, verily, when the poor man attaineth, everyone that is exalted is struck dumb; and hence it is yet further added, *And iniquity shall stop her mouth*. For the wicked man detracts from the good, and the righteous ways, which he cares not to practise, he never ceases to pull in pieces by slander, but iniquity at that time stoppeth her mouth, when her eyes are opened to see how great is the glory of the recompense provided for righteous souls. For then he is not at liberty to speak against the good, in that torments hold his tongue tied by the deserved retribution of his misdeeds. Hence it is well delivered by

Hannah, speaking in prophecy, *He will keep the feet of his Saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness*. [1 Sam. 2, 9] But that every elect soul may escape eternal woe, and the poor mount up to everlasting glory, he must be bruised here below with continual stripes, that he may be found purified in the Judgment. For we are every day borne downwards by the mere weight of our infirmity, but that by the wonderful interposition of our Maker we are relieved by succouring stripes. Hence it is added,

Ver. 17. *Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth*.

40. The highest virtue is to avoid sins, that they should never be done, and second to that, at least to amend them when they have been committed. But for the most part we not only never at all avoid sins that threaten, but we do not even open our eyes to them, when committed. And the mind of sinners is enveloped in the deeper darkness, in proportion as it does not see the deficiency of its own blindness. Hence it is very often brought to pass, by the bountifulness of God's gift, that punishment follows upon transgression, and stripes unclose the eyes of the transgressor, which self-security was blinding in the midst of evil ways. For the inactive soul is touched with the rod, so as to be stimulated, in order that he, that has lost, by being self-secure, the firm seat of uprightness, may mark, upon being afflicted; where he is laid prostrate; and thus to him [A.B.C.D. 'huic'] the very sharpness of the correction becomes the source of light; and hence it is said by Paul, *But all things that are proved* , *are made manifest by the light* [Eph. 5, 13]; for proof of saving health lies in the force of the pain. Hence it is that Solomon saith, *For healing will cause great offences to cease*. [Ecc. 10, 4. Vulg.] Hence again he saith, *For whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth*. [Prov. 3, 12] Hence the Lord addresses John by the voice of the Angel [d], saying, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*. [Rev. 3, 19] Hence Paul saith, *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it*

yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them that are exercised thereby. [Heb. 12, 11] Although therefore grief and happiness can never meet together, yet it is rightly said here, *Happy is the man whom the Lord correcteth*. For by this means, that the sinner is straitly visited with the pain of correction, he is sometimes trained to happiness, which knows no intervention of pain. It proceeds,

Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.

41. Whosoever is smitten for a fault and lifted up in murmuring against the stroke, 'reproves the chastening of the Lord.' For he lays to His charge, that he has this put upon him unjustly. But they that are stricken, not for the cleansing of guilt, but for the testing of their fortitude, when they inquire into the causes of the stroke, must by no means be said to 'reprove the correction of the Lord;' for their aim is to discover in themselves what they are ignorant of. And hence blessed Job, breaking out into a voice of liberty, amidst the visitings of the scourge, the more rightly questions the judgments of the smiter concerning him, the more he is really ignorant of causes for his suffering in himself. Eliphaz, then, forasmuch as he reckoned that he was visited, not with the trial of probation, but of purification, when he spoke with freedom amidst the stripes, supposed that he 'reproved the correction of the Lord.' And we have said that he at the same time bears the likeness of heretics with great fitness, in that whatsoever is done aright by Holy Church, is ever, in their judgment, turned and twisted awry, to some fault of crookedness. But forasmuch as it is with a good intention that he is led to speak, yet he takes no heed to discriminate who he is speaking to, he yet further subjoins, and proclaims the dispensations of the supreme governance, saying,

Ver. 18. *For He maketh sore, and bindeth up; He woundeth, and His hands shall make whole.*

42. In two ways Almighty God wounds those, whom He is minded to bring back to saving health; for sometimes He smites the flesh, and consumes the hardness of the heart by the fear of Him. Thus He recalls to saving health, by dealing wounds, when He afflicts His own Elect outwardly, that they be quickened with inward life. Whence He also says by Moses, *I will kill and I will make alive, I will wound and I will heal* [Deut. 32, 39]; for He 'kills,' that He may 'make alive,' He 'wounds,' that He may 'heal;' in that He for this reason applies stripes without, in order that He may heal the wounds of sin within. But sometimes, even if strokes without should seem to have ceased, He inflicts wounds within, in that He strikes the hardness of the heart with the desire of Himself; yet in wounding He heals, in that when we are pierced with the dart of His dread, He recalls us to a right sense. For our hearts are not well sound, when they are wounded by no love of God, when they feel not the wofulness of their pilgrimage, when they do not go sorrowing with the least degree of feeling for the infirmity of their neighbour. But they are 'wounded,' that they may be 'healed,' in that God strikes unfeeling souls with the darts of His love, and straightway makes them full of feeling, through the burning heat of charity, and hence the spouse saith in the Song of Songs, *For I am wounded with love*. [Cant. 2, 5. LXX] For the diseased soul, laid prone upon the litter of this place of banishment in blind self-security, neither beheld the Lord, nor sought to see Him. But on being struck with the darts of His love, it is wounded in its innermost parts with a feeling of pious affection, burns with the desire of contemplation; and in a marvellous manner she is made alive by wounding, who aforetime lay dead in a state of health: she glows, she pants, and yearns to see Him already, from Whom she turned. By being smitten, then, she is brought back to a state of soundness, who is recalled to a secure state of inward repose by the disturbing of her self-love. But when the wounded soul begins to pant after God, when, setting at nought all the

alluring arts of the world, it stretches forth in desire to the land above, all is forthwith turned to its trial, whatsoever aforetime was accounted pleasing and alluring in this world. For they that had a fond affection for him living in sin, cruelly assault him when he lives aright. The soul that is raised up toward God, is subject to rude assaults from the flesh, wherein it formerly lay grovelling in enjoyment, the slave of evil habits; former pleasures recur to the mind, and push hard the resisting soul with a grievous conflict. But because that, while we are afflicted with transitory labour, we are rescued from everlasting pain, it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 19. *He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.*

43. For what is denoted by the number 'six,' which is followed by 'the seventh,' saving the labour and course of the present life? For God, finishing all things on the sixth day, created man, and God rested on the seventh day; and this same seventh day is without an evening, for there is no longer any end to close the rest that followeth. When all things, then, are completed, the rest followeth, in that after the good works of the present life, the recompense of eternal rest follows. Therefore 'in six troubles the Lord delivers us,' that 'no evil may touch us in the seventh,' in that by the training of His fatherly pity, He exercises us with the labours of the present life, but at the coming of the Judge, He hides us from the scourge, that He may then bring us out the more sure for His salvation, in proportion as we are now scored the more cruelly with scourges. And immediately reckoning up with fitness both the ills of the present life, and the aids of Protection from above, adds,

Ver. 20. *In famine He shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword.*

44. As the 'famine' of the flesh is the withdrawal of the support of the body, so the hunger of the soul is the silence of divine revelation. Hence it

is rightly delivered by the Prophet, *I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord*. [Amos 8, 11] And forasmuch as when the divine communication leaves the human soul, the temptation of the flesh gains force against it, it is fitly brought in, *And in war from the power of the sword*. For we suffer a war, when we are assailed by the temptations of our flesh. Concerning which same war the Psalmist saith, *Cover my head in the day of battle*. [Ps. 140, 7] Therefore, whereas the reprobate, whilst their strength fails from a 'famine' of the word of God, are furthermore pierced with 'the sword of war,' the Lord both 'in famine redeems' His Elect 'from death,' and 'in war' He hides them 'from the sword.' For while He refreshes their souls with the food of His word, He makes them strong to resist the temptations of the body. Yet there be some, who, though they recruit themselves, out of the store of the word of God, from the famine of the interior, though they be already stayed up against the temptations of the body by the virtue of continency, yet still fear to be stricken with the slanders of their fellow-creatures, and oftentimes, whilst they dread the arrows of the tongue, they strangle themselves with the noose of sin. And hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 21, *Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue.*

45. 'The scourge of the tongue' is the taunting of insults offered. They strike the righteous 'with the scourge of the tongue,' who pursue their deeds with mockery. For oftentimes the tongue, while it utters jibes, recalls from a good deed, and puts itself out like a scourge, in that it cuts the back of the cowardly soul. Which 'scourge of the tongue,' the Prophet had seen plotting against the elect soul, when He said, promising the aid that is above, *Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter, and from the rough word*. [Ps. 91, 3. Vulg.] For 'hunters' seek nothing else than flesh, but we are 'delivered from the snare of the hunters and from the rough word,' when we overcome both the snare of carnal persons, and the reproaches of sneers, by

setting them at nought. For their words are 'rough,' which are arrayed against our righteous ways. And to 'escape the roughness of words,' is to trample down the mockings of calumniators by shutting our eyes to them, the holy soul then is hidden from 'the scourge of tongues,' in that whilst in this world it never seeks the honour of applause, neither does it feel the insults of calumny. But there be some that already set at nought the words of the scornful, already care nothing for their jeers, yet they still stand in dread of the pains and tortures of the body. For our old adversary, in order to withdraw us from a right bent of mind, assaults us in diverse modes, and prosecutes the tempting of us one while by a famine of the word, another while by the conflict of the flesh, now by the scourge of talk, now by the distress of persecution. But because every perfect person, when once he has overcome the evil habits in himself, straightway goes on to brace his mind to meet the inflictions of suffering, it is properly subjoined,

Neither shalt thou be afraid of calamity when it cometh.

46. For holy men, for that they see that they are engaged with an adversary of manifold form, equip themselves variously in their conflict. For against a famine, they have the sustenance of God's word; against the sword of war, they have the shield of continency; against the scourge of the tongue, the defence of patience; against the hurt of outward misfortune, they have the aid of inward love. Hence in a marvellous method it is brought to pass, that the more manifold the temptations which the craft of the enemy brings upon them, so much the richer in virtues are the wary soldiers of God rendered. And forasmuch as all the Elect severally, whilst they bear with courageous hearts the conflicts of the present life, are providing for themselves security under the terrors of the future Judgment, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 22. *In destruction and famine thou shalt laugh.*

47. For the lost shall then suffer ‘destruction and famine,’ when, being condemned in the last Judgment, they are parted asunder from the sight of ‘the Bread’ eternal. For it is written, *Let the wicked be taken away, that he see not the glory of God*. [Is. 26, 10. lxx.] And the Lord declares by His own lips, *I am the living Bread, Which came down from heaven*. [John 6, 51] Thus at one and the same time both ‘destruction and famine’ combine to torture those, who not only feel torments without, but farther suffer death within by the plague of starvation. Hell ‘destroys,’ in that it burns, famine kills, in that the Redeemer hides His face from them. For well and justly they have their recompense both within and without, in that the wretched people both by thought and by deed did commit offence. Whence it is well said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger: the Lord shall confound them in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them*. [Ps. 21, 9] For that, which is ‘devoured’ by fire, is kindled from the outside. But an oven is set on fire within. And so in the time of God’s anger all the unrighteous are both ‘made as a fiery oven,’ and also ‘devoured by the fire,’ in that at the appearing of the Judge, when all the multitude of them is banished from the sight of Him, both within the conscience is set on fire from the misery of want [*‘Desiderium*’], and without hell torments the flesh.

48. ‘The scourge of the tongue’ too may be understood to mean the sentence of the final doom, whereby the Just Judge saith to the lost, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*. [Matt. 25, 41] The righteous man then is ‘hidden from the scourge of the tongue,’ and from the coming woe, because in that exceeding strictness of doom, he is then comforted with the, mild voice of the Judge, when it is said, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came*

unto Me. [ver. 35, 36.] Before which it is premised; *Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*. [ver. 34.] Therefore 'in destruction and famine' the righteous man 'shall laugh;' for, when the final vengeance smites all the wicked, he himself joys in the glory of a meet reward. Nor does he at that time any longer compassionate the damned by virtue of his human nature. For, incorporated into the Divine Justice by resemblance [*per speciem*], he is, by the unshaken force of interior strictness, made thoroughly firm. For the souls of the Elect, being reared up in the clear light of the Righteousness above, are touched by no sense of compassion, in that the height of their bliss makes them strangers to misery. Hence also it is well said by the Psalmist; *The righteous also shall see this, and shall fear, and shall laugh at him, and shall say, Lo, this is the man that made not God his helper*. [Ps. 52, 6. 7.] For now the righteous see the wicked and fear, then they shall see and laugh. For because they may now fall in imitation of them, here they are holden of fear, but because they cannot then advantage the damned, there they entertain no sympathy. Therefore, that they should not commiserate those that are doomed to eternal woe, they read in that very justice of the Judge wherein they exist in bliss. For, a thing which it is not right to imagine of them, they lower the character of the happiness vouchsafed them, if, when placed in the kingdom, they wish for something which they never can accomplish. But whosoever orders himself after the precepts of life, already tastes here below the first-fruits of that secure estate which shall last for ever, so that he has no fear of our old enemy; nor at the coming on of the crisis of death in any degree dreads his violent assault. For to the righteous the beginning of their recompense is most commonly nothing else than the very security of their minds in dying. Hence it is rightly added,

Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beast of the earth.

49. For our crafty foe is called ‘a beast of the earth,’ in that he ravins with the violence of his savage nature, to seize upon the souls of sinners at the hour of their death. For those whom he deludes by flattery during their lifetime, he seizes with cruelty when they are dying. Contrary whereunto the Lord gives a promise concerning the Church of the Elect through the Prophet, The evil beast shall not go up thereon. They then in dying fear the ‘beast of the earth,’ who when living fear not the power of their Maker. For good men, because they submit themselves from the core of their heart to the dread of God, put away every weight of fear arising from the adversary’s coming. For it is hence that the Psalmist beseeches the Lord, in these words, *Lest he tear my soul as a lion*. [Ps. 7, 2] Hence again he says, *Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer, preserve my soul from fear of the enemy*. [Ps. 64, 1. 2.] For while they live they perfectly fear the Judge, that when they die they may not dread the accuser. Well then is it said, *Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beast of the earth*. As if it were in plain words, ‘Forasmuch as thou art not now overcome by the enemy in his alluring address, thou shalt not hereafter fear him in his rage. But when we live well, it is very needful to be on our guard, that the mind, looking down upon others, be not lifted up by the pride of standing alone. Hence it is that the blessing of fellowship is fitly called to mind, where the words are immediately introduced thereupon,

But with the stones of the countries shall be thy covenant.

50. The Churches of the nations are like separate countries in the world, which, while they be planted in one faith, are separated by a diversity of customs and of tongues. What then do we take the stones of the countries to mean but the Elect ones of the Church, to whom it is declared by the voice of him who was the first among the teachers, *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house?* [1 Pet. 2, 5] Concerning whom the Lord by His Prophet promises Holy Church, saying, *Behold, I will lay thy stones in*

order. [Is. 54, 11] Whoso then lives aright, joins himself in covenant 'with the stones of the countries.' For herein, that he conquers the desires of the world, without doubt he ties his life to an imitation of the Saints that have gone before. But when he is departing from the practice of the world, the assaults of malicious spirits increase, which nevertheless, the more they afflict a man in sorrow of heart, bow him the more humbly to his Creator. And hence it is added,

And the beasts of the earth shall be peacemakers to thee.

51. First it is to be observed, that he does not say, 'made peaceful,' but, 'peacemakers,' that is to say, not that they are at peace, but that they make peace; for the crafty foes in making plots distress, but the distressed soul delights the more in her return to the heavenly home, the more she lives toiling in this woful place of exile, and most truly abases herself to the gracious regard of her Helper, when she considers the most violent plots of the enemy against her. The beasts of the earth then are rendered 'peacemakers' to the Elect, in that the malignant spirits, when they bear down the hearts of the good by their hostility, drive them to the love of God against their will. Thus there arises a firmer peace with God, from the same source, whence a tougher fight is occasioned us by our adversaries.

52. By the 'beasts of the earth' too may be understood the motions of the flesh, which, while they gall the mind by prompting conduct which is contrary to reason, rise up against us like beasts. But when the heart is bowed down under the Divine Law, even the incitements of the flesh are reduced, so that, though in tempting us they give a low muttering, yet they never mount so high as to the execution of the deeds, as to the madness of open biting. For who that still subsists in this corruptible flesh, completely tames these beasts of the earth, when that preeminent Preacher that was caught up to the third heaven, says, *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the*

law of sin, which is my members. [Rom. 7, 21] But it is one thing to see these beasts raging in the field of practice, and another to hold them ravening within the door of the heart. For when they be forced back within the bars of continence, though they still roar by tempting, yet, as we have said, they go not such lengths as the bite of unlawful practice. The beasts of the field then are peacemakers, in that though the motions of the flesh beat high in the desire, yet they never assail us with the open resistance of deeds, (though by this same circumstance, that they are called 'peacemakers,' even this same that we have said of malicious spirits is not unsuitably understood.) For the motions of the flesh 'make peace' for us with God, when they offer opposition by tempting us. For the mind of the righteous man, in that his way is directed to the realms above, is sore bestead by a grievous war arising from the corruptible body. And if at any time it be hindered in heavenly aspirations by any enjoyment of this world however slight, by that very war of temptation, which it undergoes, it is urged on to set all its affections in that, which is disturbed by no opposition. Whence it comes to pass that it recalls to mind the interior repose, and fleeing from the enticements of the flesh, sighs after it with a full affection. For temptation constrains every man to mark from whence and whereunto he is fallen, who after he has forsaken the peace of God, feels a strife rise up against him from out of himself, and then he more truly sees what he has lost of the assured love of God, who having fallen down to himself, finds his own self insulted within himself. The beasts of the earth then make peace for us, in that the motions of the flesh, whilst by offering temptation they irritate us, urge us forwards to the love of the interior repose. Now it is rightly added,

Ver. 24. *And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace.*

53. In holy Scripture full peace is described in one way, and peace in its beginning in another. For 'Truth' gave to His Disciples peace in its beginning, when He said, *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you*.

[John 14, 27] And Simeon desired to have perfect peace, when he besought saying, *Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word*. [Luke 2, 29] For our peace begins in longing for the Creator, but it is perfected by a clear vision. For it will then be perfect, when our mind is neither blinded by ignorance, nor moved by the assaults of its fleshly part. But forasmuch as we touch upon its first beginnings, when we either subject the soul to God or the flesh to the soul, the 'tabernacle' of the righteous man is said to 'have peace,' in that his body, which he inhabits by his mind, is held in from the froward motions of its desires under the controlling hand of righteousness. But what advantage is it to restrain the flesh by continence, if the mind is uninstructed to expand itself by compassion in the love of our neighbour? For that chasteness of the flesh is as nothing, which is not recommended by sweetness of spirit. Whence after the 'peace of the tabernacle' it is fitly subjoined,

And thou shalt visit thy likeness, and shalt not sin.

54. For the *likeness* of man is another man. For a fellow-creature is rightly called our 'likeness,' in that in him we discern what we ourselves are. Now in the visiting of the body we go to our neighbour by the accession of steps, but in the spiritual visiting, we are led not by the footstep but by affection. He then 'visits his likeness,' whoever direct his way to one, whom he sees to be like to himself in nature, by the footsteps of love, so that by seeing his own case in another, he may collect from himself how to condescend to another's weakness. He 'visits his likeness,' who, that he may remodel another in himself, takes account of himself in another. For hence 'Truth,' in telling by the mouth of Moses what had been done, denoted what was to be done, saying, *And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, each one bearing seed after his kind*. [gen. 1, 12] For 'the tree produces seed after its kind' when our mind gathers from itself thought for another, and produces

the fructification of well doing. Hence the wise man saith, *Do not that to any, which thou wouldest not have done to thyself*. [Tob. 4, 15] Hence the Lord saith in the Gospel, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even to them*. [Matt. 7, 12] As if He said in plain words, 'Visit your likeness in another man, and from your own selves learn what conduct it behoves you to exhibit to others.' Hence Paul says, *And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.)* [1 Cor. 9, 20. 21.] And soon after, *I am made all things to all men, that I might save all.* [ib. 22] Not indeed that the great Preacher, to become like a Jew, broke away into faithlessness; nor, that he might become 'as one under the law,' did he turn back to the fleshly sacrifice; nor, that he might become 'all things to all men,' did he change his singleness of mind into variety of deceit; but by lowering himself, not by falling, he drew near to the unbelievers, to this end, that by taking each one into himself and transforming himself into each one, by sympathizing with them, he might gather what it was, that, if he himself were like them, he would justly have desired should be bestowed upon him by others; and might go along with every erring person so much the more to the purpose, in proportion as he had learnt the method of his salvation by the consideration of his own case. Well then is it said, *And thou shalt visit thy likeness, and shalt not sin*. For sin is then perfectly conquered, when everyone sees from the likeness of himself, how to expand in the love of his neighbour. But when the flesh is kept in check from evil practices, when the mind is exercised in virtuous habits, it remains that every one should by word of mouth reach the life, which in his own ways he observes. For he gathers abundant fruits of his preaching, who sows before the seeds of

welldoing. Whence after the ‘peace of the tabernacle’ and the ‘visiting of our likeness,’ it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 25. *Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be manifold, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.*

55. For after the ‘peace of his tabernacle,’ after ‘the visiting of our likeness,’ the manifold seed of the righteous man ariseth, in that after the macerating of the members and the fulness of the moral virtues, the word of preaching is bestowed upon him so much the more productive, in proportion as it is anticipated in his breast by the tillage of perfect practice. For he receives eloquence to speak well, who expands the bosom of his heart by the exercises of right living. Nor does the conscience hinder the speaker, when the life goes before the tongue. It is hence that the Egyptians, who, by Joseph’s management, were subjected to a state of public servitude, when they humble themselves by submitting their persons to the king’s power, carry away corn even for seed. For we receive, even when free, fruit to eat, when we are at the same time fed by the sacred word, and yet in the gratification of our pleasures roam after different objects, which we seek after in this world. But when we become slaves, we receive corn for seed too, in that while we are made wholly subject to God, we are replenished further with the word of preaching. And since a vast progeny of faithful souls succeeds, when holy preaching is first bestowed, after the multiplying of the seed, it is rightly subjoined, *And thine offspring as the grass of the earth*. The progeny of the righteous is compared to the grass of the earth, in that he who is born in a copy of him, while he quits the decaying glory of the present life, comes out green with hope in the things of eternity. Or truly, the progeny of the righteous springeth up like ‘the grass,’ in that while he shews forth by his living what he declares by his preaching, an innumerable multitude of followers arises. But whosoever already looks down upon all earthly objects of desire, whoever spreads himself out in the

labours of an active life, finds it by no means suffice him to do great things without, unless by contemplation he also have power to penetrate into interior mysteries. Hence too the words are thereupon fitly introduced,

Ver.26. *Thou shalt come to thy grave in fulness, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.*

56. For what is denoted by the name of the grave, saving a life of contemplation? which as it were buries us, dead to this world, in that it hides us in the interior world away from all earthly desires. For they being dead to the exterior life, were also buried by contemplation, to whom Paul said, *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God*. An active life also is a grave, in that it covers us, as dead, from evil works; but the contemplative life more perfectly buries us, in that it wholly severs us from all worldly courses. Whoever then has already subdued the insolencies of the flesh in himself, has this task left him, to discipline his mind by the exercises of holy practice. And whosoever opens his mind in holy works, has over and above to extend it to the secret pursuits of inward contemplation. For he is no perfect preacher, who either, from devotion to contemplation, neglects works that ought to be done, or, from urgency in business, puts aside the duties of contemplation. For it is hence that Abraham buries his wife after death in a double [*in spelunca agri duplici* Vulg.] sepulchre, in that every perfect preacher buries his soul, dead to the desires of the present life, under the covering of good practice and of contemplation, that the soul which aforetime, sensible of the desires of the world, was living in death, may as it were, without being obnoxious to sense, lie buried from carnal concupiscence under an active and contemplative life. It is hence that the Redeemer of mankind in the day time exhibits His miracles in cities, and spends the night in devotion to prayer upon the mountain, namely, that He may teach all perfect preachers, that they should neither entirely leave the active life, from love of the

speculative, nor wholly slight the joys of contemplation from excess in working, but in quiet imbibe by contemplation, what in employment they may pour back to their neighbours by word of mouth. For by contemplation they rise into the love of God, but by preaching they return back to the service of their neighbour. Hence with Moses, whilst a heifer is slaughtered in sacrifice, scarlet wool twice dyed is enjoined to be offered together with hyssop and cedar wood. For we slay a heifer, when we kill our flesh to its lust of gratification; and this we offer with hyssop and cedar and scarlet wool, in that together with the mortifying of the flesh, we burn the incense of faith, hope, and charity. The hyssop is of use to purify our inward parts; and Peter says, *purifying their hearts by faith*. [1 Pet. 1, 3] Cedar wood never decays by rotting, in that no end finishes the hope of heavenly things. Whence too Peter saith, *He hath begotten us again by a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*. Scarlet wool flames with the redness of its hue, in that charity sets on fire the heart she fills. Whence also 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *I am come to send fire on the earth*. But scarlet wool twice dyed is ordered to be offered, that in the sight of the internal Judge our charity may be coloured with the love both of God and of our neighbour, that the converted soul may neither so delight in repose for the sake of the love of God, as to put aside the care and service of our neighbour, nor busying itself for the love of our neighbour, be so wedded, thereto, that entirely forsaking quiet, it extinguish in itself the fire of love of the Most High. Whosoever then has already offered himself as a sacrifice to God, if he desires perfection, must needs take care that he not only stretch himself out to breadth of practice, but likewise up to the heights of contemplation.

57. But herein it is above all things necessary to know, that the compositions [*'conspersio,'* dough, paste.] of souls are infinitely varied one

with another, for there are some of such inactivity of mind, that, if the labours of business fall upon them, they give way at the very beginning of their work, and there be some so restless, that if they have cessation from labour, they have only the worse labour, in that they are subject to worse tumults of mind, in proportion as they have more time and liberty for their thoughts. Whence it behoves that neither the tranquil mind should open itself wide in the immoderate exercising of works, nor the restless mind stint itself in devotion to contemplation. For often they, who might have contemplated God in quiet, have fallen, being overcharged with business; and often they, who might live advantageously occupied with the service of their fellow-creatures, are killed by the sword of their quiescence. It is hence that some restless spirits, whilst by contemplation they hunt out more than their wits compass, launch out even to the length of wrong doctrines, and, whilst they have no mind to be the disciples of Truth in a spirit of humility, they become the masters of falsities. It is hence that 'Truth' saith by His own lips, *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes be cast into hell fire*. For the two lives, the active and the contemplative, when they be preserved in the soul, are accounted as two eyes in the face. Thus the right eye is the contemplative life, and the left the active life. But, as we have said, there be some, who are quite unable to behold the world above, and spiritual things, with the eye of discernment, yet enter upon the, heights of contemplation, and therefore, by the mistake of a perverted understanding, they fall away into the pit of misbelieve. These then the contemplative life, adopted to an extent beyond their powers, obliges to fall from the truth, which same persons the active life by itself might have kept safe in lowliness of mind in the firm seat of their uprightness. To these 'Truth' rightly addresses the warning which we said before, *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee;*

for it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. As if He said in plain words; 'When thou art not qualified for the contemplative life by a fitting degree of discretion, keep more safely the active life alone, and when thou failest in that which thou choosest as great, be content with that which thou heedest as very little, that if by the contemplative life thou art forced to fall from the knowledge of the truth, thou mayest by the active life alone be able to enter into the kingdom of heaven at least with one eye.' Hence He says again, *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea*. [Matt. 18, 6] What is denoted by 'the sea,' but this present state of being? what by 'the millstone,' but earthly practice, which while it binds down the neck of the soul by foolish desires, sends it out into the round of labour. Thus there are some, who, while they quit earthly courses and rise beyond the powers of their understanding in pursuance of the exercises of contemplation, having laid aside humility, not only cast themselves into error, but separate any that be weak from the bosom of unity; and thus 'it would be better for him, that offends one of the least, with a millstone fastened to his neck, to be cast into the sea,' in that indeed it would have been more expedient for the froward mind, if, busied with the world, it were employed in earthly matters, than, in the exercises of contemplation, to be free to work the destruction of numbers. On the other hand, if it were not that the contemplative life suited some minds more than the active life, the Lord would never say by the voice of the Psalmist, *Be still, and know that I am God*. [Ps. 46, 10]

58. But herein it is necessary to know, that often at one and the same time love stimulates inactive souls to work, and fear keeps back restless souls in the exercise of contemplation. For a weight of fear is an anchor of the heart, and very often it is tossed by the stormy sea of thoughts, but is

held fast by the moorings of its self-control; nor does the tempest of its disquietude make shipwreck of it, in that perfect charity holds it fast on the shore of the love of God [d]. Whence it is necessary that whoever eagerly prosecutes the exercises of contemplation, first question himself with particularity, how much he loves. For the force of love is an engine of the soul, which, while it draws it out of the world, lifts it on high. Let him then first examine whether in searching after the highest things he loves, whether in loving he fears, whether he knows either how to apprehend unknown truths, while he loves them, or not being apprehended to reverence them in cherishing fear. For in contemplation, if love does not stimulate the mind, the dulness of its tepidity stupefies it. If fear does not weigh on it, sense lifts it by vain objects to the mist of error, and when the door of secret things, being closed against it, is slow in being opened, merely by its own presumption alone it is forced the farther off there-from, for it strives to force a way to that which it seeks after without finding, and when the proud mind takes falsehood for truth, in proportion as it is advancing the step as if inwards, it is directing it without. Thus it is for this reason that the Lord, when about to give the Law, came down in fire and in smoke; in that He both enlightens the lowly by the clearness of His manifestation of Himself, and darkens the eyes of the highminded by the dimness of error. First then the soul must be cleansed from all affection for earthly glory, and from the gratification of carnal concupiscence, and next it is to be lifted up in the ken of contemplation. Hence too, when the Law is given to them, the people are forbidden the Mount, namely, that they who, by the frailty of their minds, still have their affections set upon earthly objects, may not venture to take cognizance of things above. And hence it is rightly said, And if a beast touch the mountain, it shall he stoned. For 'a beast touches the mountain,' when the mind, which is bowed down to irrational desires, lifts itself to the heights of contemplation. But it is 'smitten with stones,' in that being

unable to bear the highest things, it is killed by the mere blows of the weight on high.

59. Let all then that strive to lay hold of the summit of perfection, when they desire to occupy the citadel of contemplation, first try themselves, by exercising, in the field of practice, that they may heedfully acquaint themselves, if they now no longer bring mischiefs upon their neighbours, if when brought upon them by their neighbours, they bear them with composure of mind, if when temporal advantages are put in their way, the mind is never dissipated by joy, if, when they are withdrawn, it is not stung by overmuch regret, and then let them reflect, if, when they return inwardly to themselves, in this work of theirs of exploring spiritual things, they never draw along with them the shadows of corporeal objects, or when drawn along, as they may be, if they drive them off with the hand of discretion [al. *districtionis,* severity]; if, when they long to behold the unencompassed light, they put down all images of their own compass, or in that which they seek to reach unto above themselves, conquer that which they are. Hence it is rightly said here, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in abundance*. For the perfect man does 'come to the grave in abundance,' in that he first gathers together the works of an active life, and then by contemplation wholly hides from this world his fleshly sense, which is now dead. Hence too it is fitly subjoined,

Like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

60. For the season for action comes first, for contemplation last. Whence it is needful that every perfect man first discipline his mind in virtuous habits, and afterwards lay it up in the granary of rest. For it is hence that he, who was left of the legion of devils at the bidding of our Lord, seats himself at His Saviour's feet, receives the words of instruction, and eagerly desires to leave his country in company with the Author of his recovery, but That very 'Truth' Himself, Who vouchsafed to him recovery, tells him, *Return*

first unto thine own house, and shew what great things God hath done unto thee. [Luke 8, 39. &c.] For when we have the least particle imparted to us of the knowledge of God, we are no longer inclined to return to our human affairs, and we shrink from burthening ourselves with the wants of our neighbours. We seek the rest of contemplation, and love only that which refreshes without toil. But after we are cured, the Lord sends us home. He bids us relate the things that have been done with us, so as that in fact the soul should first spend itself in labour, and that afterwards it may be refreshed by contemplation.

61. It is hence that Jacob serves for Rachel, and gets Leah, and that it is said to him, *It is not the custom in our country to give the youngest before the first-born*. For Rachel is rendered ‘the beginning seen ,’ but ‘Leah,’ ‘laborious.’ And what is denoted by Rachel but the contemplative life? What by Leah, but the active life? For in contemplation ‘the Beginning,’ which is God, is the object we seek, but in action we labour under a weighty bundle of wants. Whence on the one hand Rachel is beautiful but barren, Leah weak eyed, but fruitful, truly in that when the mind seeks the ease of contemplation, it sees more, but it is less productive in children to God. But when it betakes itself to the laborious work of preaching, it sees less, but it bears more largely. Accordingly after the embrace of Leah, Jacob attains to Rachel, in that every one that is perfect is first joined to an active life in productiveness, and afterwards united to a contemplative life in rest. For that the life of contemplation is less indeed in time [i.e. age], but greater in value [merito] than the active, we are shewn by the words of the Holy Gospel, wherein two women are described to have acted in different ways. For Mary sat at our Redeemer’s feet, hearing His words, but Martha eagerly prosecuted bodily services; and when Martha made complaint against Mary’s inactivity, she heard the words, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath*

chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. [Luke 10, 41. 42.] For what is set forth by Mary, who sitting down gave ear to the words of our Lord, saving the life of contemplation? and what by Martha, so busied with outward services, saving the life of action? Now Martha's concern is not reproved, but that of Mary is even commended. For the merits of the active life are great, but of the contemplative, far better. Whence Mary's part is said to be 'never taken away from her,' in that the works of the active life pass away together with the body, while the joys of the contemplative life are made more lively at the end. Which is well and briefly set forth by the Prophet Ezekiel, when, beholding the flying creatures, he says, *And the likeness of the hands of a man were under their wings*. [Ezek. 10, 21] For what can we suppose meant by the wings of the creatures, saving the contemplations of the Saints, by which they soar aloft, and quitting earthly scenes, poise themselves in the regions of heaven? What do we understand by the 'hands,' saving deeds? For whereas they open themselves in the love of their neighbour, the good things, which abound to them, they administer even by bodily ministration; but 'the hands are under the wings,' in that they surpass the deeds of their action, by the excellence of contemplation.

62. Moreover by 'the grave' it may be that not only our contemplation in this life is understood, but the rest of our eternal and interior reward, wherein we more thoroughly rest, the more perfectly is killed in us the life of corrupt existence. He then 'goes down to the grave in abundance,' who, after he has stored up the works of the present life, being perfectly dead to his mutable condition of existence, is buried in the depth of the true light. Whence also it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence, from the provoking of men*. [Ps. 31, 20] And the comparison that is added brings this home to us with effect, where it is subjoined, *Like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season*. For corn in the field is touched

by the sun, in that in this life the soul of man is illumined by the regard of the light above. It receives the showers, in that it is enriched by the word of Truth; it is shaken by the winds, in that it is tried with temptations; and it bears the chaff 'growing' along with it, in that it bears the life of daily increasing wickedness in sinners, directed against itself; and after it has been carried away to the barn, it is squeezed by the threshing weight, that it may be parted from the bold of the chaff, in that our mind, being subjected to heavenly discipline, whilst it receives the stripes of correction, is parted from the society of the carnal sort in a cleaner state; and it is carried to the granary with the chaff left behind, in that while the lost remain without, the Elect soul is transported to the eternal joys of the mansion above. Well then is it said, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in abundance, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season*; in that, whereas the righteous after sufferings meet with the rewards of the heavenly land, it is like as if the grains after pressing and squeezing were carried away to the granary. And it is in another's season indeed that they feel the strokes, but in their own that they rest from being struck. For to the Elect the present life is another's season, whence to some that were yet unbelievers 'Truth' saith, *My time is not yet come, but your time is alway ready*. [John 7, 6.] And again, *But this is your hour, and the power of darkness*. [Luke 22, 53.] Thus 'he cometh to his grave in abundance, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season,' in that he receives the rest eternal, who, that he may be set free of the chaff, which is destined to be burnt, first feels here below the pressure of discipline. But whereas Eliphaz in the course of his address mentioned 'the tabernacle,' 'the stones,' 'the beasts,' 'the seed,' 'the herbs,' and 'the grave,' he himself intimates that he did not speak of these according to the letter, in that after all of them he thereupon subjoins;

Ver.21. *Lo this, as we have searched it, so it is.*

63. Assuredly it is clear, that in these words he says nothing upon a view of the surface, in that a thing, that is ‘searched,’ is not set before the face. He then, who shews that he had ‘searched’ these things, proves that in outward words inward things were what he had in view. And after the whole he is brought to the foolishness of boasting, in that he thereupon adds;

And now thou hast heard it, turn it in thy mind.

64. With whatever lessons of instruction the mind may be furnished, it argues great want of skill to wish to instruct one that is superior, whence the very things which are rightly delivered by the friends, are not pronounced right by the interior Judge. For they lose the efficacy of their rightness herein, that they are not suited to the hearer. For even medicines lose their efficacious properties when they be administered to sound limbs. In all, then, that is said, it is necessary that the occasion, the time, and the individual, be taken into account, whether the truth of the sentiment confirms the words delivered, whether the fitting time calls for it, whether the character of the person does not impugn both the truth of the sentiment, and the suitableness of the time. For he launches his darts in a manner to deserve praise, who first looks at the enemy that he is to strike. For he masters the horns of the strong bow amiss, who in sending the arrow with force, strikes a fellowcountryman.

BOOK VII.

He explains the whole of the sixth chapter, except the three last verses, part allegorically and in part morally.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

1. Some men's minds are more tormented by scourges than reproaches, but some are more wounded by reproaches than by scourges. For oftentimes the tortures of speech assail us worse than any pains, and while they make us rise up in our vindication, they lay us low in impatience. Whence, that no temptation whatever might be lacking to blessed Job, not only scourges strike him from above, but the sayings of his friends in talk gall him, being sorer than scourges, that the soul of the holy man, being driven hither and thither, might, burst forth in the emotion of wrath and haughtiness, and that all the purity he had lived in might be defiled by head-strong pride of speech. But when touched by the scourges, he gave thanks, when galled with words, he answered aright, and being smitten he makes it appear how little he esteemed the well-being of the body. In speaking too he shews how, wisely he held his peace. But there were a few things mixed with his words, which, in the judgment of men, might seem to transgress the limits of patience; of which we shall take a true view, if in the examination of them we weigh well the sentence of the Most High Judge. For it was He, Who both in the first instance gave blessed Job the first place in opposition to the adversary, saying, *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?* [Job 1, 8] It was He, Who after the trial rebuked his friends, saying, *For ye have not spoken before Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath*. It remains then, that when the mind wavers with uncertainty in the discoursings of blessed Job, it estimate their weight from

the beginning, and ending of that same account. For one who was to fall could never have been commended by the Eternal Judge, nor could one who had fallen be awarded the first place. If then, when we be caught in the tempest of embarrasment, we have regard to the first and last points in this history, the vessel of the soul is as it were held fast at prow and stern by the rope of its reflections, that it be not forced on the rocks of error, and so we are not overwhelmed by any storms arising from our ignorance, if we hold to the tranquil shore of the sentence of the Most High. For, mark, he says a thing which might urge the reader's mind with no slight questioning. Yet who could dare to pronounce that not right, which sounds right in God's ears?

Chap. vi. 2, 3. *Oh that my sins* [so Vulg.] *were throughly weighed, whereby I have deserted wrath, and the calamity that I suffer laid in the balances. It should be found heavier even as the sand of the sea.*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

2. Who else is set forth by the title of 'the balances,' but the Mediator between God and man, Who came to weigh the merit of our life, and brought down with Him both justice and loving-kindness together? But putting the greater weight in the scale of mercy, He lightened our transgressions in pardoning them. For in the hand of the Father having been made like scales of a marvellous balancing, in the one scale He hung our woe in His own Person, and in the other our sins. Now by dying He proved the woe to be of heavy weight, and by releasing it shewed the sin to be light in mercy's scale [a], Who vouchsafed this instance of grace first, that He made our punishment to be known to us. For man, being created for the contemplation of his Maker, but banished from the interior joys in justice to his deserts, gone headlong into the wofulness of a corrupt condition, undergoing the darkness of his exile, was at once subject to the punishment

of his sin, and knew it not; so that he imagined his place of exile to be his home, and so rejoiced under the weight of his corrupt condition as in the liberty of a state of salvation. But He Whom man had forsaken within, having assumed a fleshly nature, came forth God without; and when He presented Himself outwardly, He restored man, who was cast forth without, to the interior life, that He might henceforth perceive his losses, that he might henceforth lament the sorrows of his blind state. Man's woe then was found to be heavy in the balance, in that the ill, which he was laid under, he only knew in his Redeemer's appearing presence. For not knowing the right, he bore with delight the darkness of his state of condemnation. But after he saw a thing for him to delight in, he likewise perceived a thing to grieve over, and what he underwent he felt was grievous, in that what he had lost was made known as sweet. Let then the holy man, thrown out of the barriers of silence by the sayings of his friend in discourse, and filled with the overflowing of the prophetic spirit, exclaim with his own voice, yea, with the voice of mankind, *Oh that my sins were thoroughly weighed, whereby I have deserved wrath, and the calamity that I suffer laid in the balances together! It should be found heavier even as the sand of the sea*. As if it were in plain words, 'The evil of our condition under the curse is thought light, in that it is weighed without the Redeemer's equity [*aequitate*] being as yet known, but oh that He would come, and hang in the scale of His Mercy the wofulness of this dismal exile, and instruct us what to seek back for after that exile. For if He makes known what we have lost, He shews that to be grievous which we endure.' But this same misery of our pilgrimage is fitly compared to the sand of the sea, (for the sand of the sea is forced without by the chafing of the waters,) in that man too in transgressing, because he bore the billows of temptation unsteadily, was carried out of himself from within. Now of great weight is the sand of the sea, but the calamity of man is said to be 'heavier than the sand of the sea,'

for his punishment is shewn to have been hard, at the time when the sin is lightened by the merciful Judge. And because every man that owns the grace of the Redeemer, everyone that longs for a return to his Country, now that he is instructed, groans beneath the burthen of his pilgrimage; after the longing for the balances, the words are rightly subjoined;

Therefore my words are full of grief.

3. He that loves sojourn abroad instead of his own country, knows not how to grieve even in the midst of griefs. But the words of the righteous man are full of grief, for so long as he is subject to present ills, he sighs after something else in his speech; all that he brought upon himself by sinning is set before his eyes, and that he may return to the state of blessedness, he weighs carefully the judgments whereby he is afflicted. Whence it is added,

Ver.4. *For the arrows of the Almighty are in me.*

4. For by the epithet of 'arrows' sometimes the utterances of preaching, sometimes the arrows of visitation are denoted. Now the utterances of preaching are represented by 'arrows;' for in this, that they smite men's vices, they pierce the hearts of evil doers. Concerning which arrows it is said to the Redeemer at His coming, *Thine arrows are sharp, O Thou Most Mighty; the people shall fall under Thee in the heart*. [Ps. 45, 5. lxx.] Of Him Isaiah saith, *I will send those that escape of them to the nations, into the sea, into Africa, and into Lydia, holding the arrow, into Italy, and into Greece.* [Is. 66, 19] Again by 'arrows' is represented the stroke of visitation, as where Elisha bids king Joash, 'shoot an arrow,' and when he shoots, says, *For thou shalt smite the Syrians, till thou hast consumed them*. [2 Kings 13, 17] Whereas then the holy man surveys the sorrows of his pilgrimage, because he groans under the strokes of the visitation of the Lord, let him say, *Therefore my words are filled with grief. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me*. As though he said in plain words, 'I being under curse of

exile have no joy, but as laid under the Judgment, I am full of pain, for I see and know the force of the stroke.' But there are a great number that are chastised with tortures, but not amended. Contrary to which it is fitly subjoined,

The indignation whereof drinketh up my spirit.

5. For what else is the 'spirit of man,' but the spirit of pride? Now 'the arrows of the Lord drink up the spirit of man,' when the awards of heavenly visitation keep back the chastened soul from self-elation. 'The arrows of the Lord drink up the spirit of man,' in that, when he is intent upon outward things, they draw him within. For the spirit of David was drunk up when he said, *When my spirit failed within me, Thou knewest my ways*. [Ps. 142, 3] And again, *My soul refused to be comforted, I remembered God and was troubled, I complained and my spirit failed*. Therefore 'the indignation of the arrows drinketh up the spirit' of the righteous, for the decrees from above, in wounding, work a change in the Elect, whom they find in any sins; so that the soul being pierced, quits its hardness or heart, and the blood of confession runs down from the wound that brings health. For they consider whence and whereunto they have been cast down, they consider from how high bliss they have fallen, and to what miseries of their corrupt condition, and they not only groan in the midst of the things which they are suffering, but furthermore dread that which the strict Judge threatens sinners with concerning the fires of hell. Whence the words are rightly subjoined;

And the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

6. The mind of the righteous not only considers well what it is now undergoing, but also dreads what is in store. It sees all that it suffers in this life, and fears lest hereafter it suffer still worse things. It mourns that it has fallen into the exile of this blind state away from the joys of Paradise; it fears, lest, when this exile is quitted, eternal death succeed. And thus it already undergoes sentence in suffering chastisement, yet still dreads the

threats of the Judge to come as the consequence of sin. Hence the Psalmist says, *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; Thy terrors cut me off.* [Ps. 88, 16] For after that 'the fierce wrath of the Internal Judge goeth over, His terrors still do cut us off,' in that we already suffer one evil by condemnation, and still dread another from everlasting vengeance. Let the holy man then, weighing well the ills that he is subject to, exclaim, *The arrows of the Lord are within me, the indignation whereof drinketh up my spirit.* But being in dread of worse things to last for ever, let him add, *The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.* As if he said in plain words, 'Being stricken indeed I feel grief for my present circumstances, but this is the worst feature in my grief, that even in the midst of punishment I still fear eternal woes.' But forasmuch as he already longs for the bringing in of the balances, he already weighs the evils into which the human race has fallen, though he was placed among a Gentile people, yet because he was full of the gift of prophetic inspiration, in the following words he shews with what ardent desire the coming of the Redeemer is thirsted for, whether by the Gentile world or by Judaea, saying,

Ver. 5. *Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox at his full manger?*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

7. For what is denoted by 'the onager,' that is, the wild ass, saving the Gentile people, which, as nature has produced it without the stalls of training, so has continued roaming abroad in the field of its pleasures? What is represented by 'the ox,' saving the Jewish people, which being bowed down to the yoke of the dominion above, in gathering together proselytes unto hope, drew the ploughshare of the Law through all the hearts that it was able? But we learn from the witness of blessed Job's life to believe, that many even of the Gentiles looked for the coming of the Redeemer. And at

the birth of the Lord, we have learnt by Simeon's coming in the spirit into the Temple, with what longing desire holy men of the Israelitish people coveted to behold the mystery of His Incarnation. Whence too the same Redeemer saith to His Disciples, *For I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them*. [Luke 10, 24] The 'grass' of the wild ass then, and the ox's 'fodder,' is this very Incarnation of the Mediator, by which both the Gentile world and Judaea are together filled to the full. For because it is said by the Prophet, *All flesh is grass* [Is. 40, 6]; the Creator of the universe taking flesh of our substance, willed to be made 'grass,' that our flesh might not remain grass for ever; and so 'the wild ass' then found 'grass,' when the Gentile people received the grace of the Divine Incarnation. Then 'the ox' had not an empty manger, when to the Jewish people, looking for His Flesh, the Law shewed Him forth, Whom it prophesied to them whilst long kept in expectation of Him. Whence too the Lord, when He was born, is placed in a manger, that it might be signified, that the holy animals, which under the Law had long been found an hungred, are filled with 'the fodder' of His Incarnation. For at His birth He filled a manger, Who gave Himself for food to the souls of mortal beings, saying, *He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him*. [John 5, 56] But because both the longings of the Elect from among the Gentiles were for long deferred, and the holy men severally of the Hebrew people groaned long while in expectation of their redemption, blessed Job, in giving forth the mysteries of prophecy, rightly implies the causes of distress in the case of either people, by saying, *Will the wild ass bray while he hath grass? Or will the ox low over his full manger?* As though it were in plain speech, 'The Gentile world for this reason groans, because the grace of the Redeemer does not yet yield it refreshment, and Judaea on this account draws out her lowings, for that in holding the Law, but not seeing the author of the Law, standing

before the manger she goes hungering. And because this same Law, before the coming of our Mediator, was held not in a spiritual but in a carnal manner, it is rightly added,

Ver. 6. *Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?*

8. In the Law, the virtue of the hidden meaning is the salt of the letter. Whosoever, then, being intent upon carnal observances, refused to understand it in a spiritual sense, what else did he but eat 'unsavoury food?' But this 'salt,' 'Truth,' on being known, put into the food, when He taught that the savour of a hidden sense lay at the bottom of the Law, saying, *For had ye believed Moses, ye might* [Vulg. *forsitan*] *have believed Me, for he wrote of Me*. [John 5, 46] And again, *Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another*. [Mark 9, 50] But because before our Redeemer's coming, Judaea held the Law in a carnal way, the Gentile world refused to bend themselves to its precepts, which enjoined hard things. Thus it would not eat unsavoury meat. For before that it got the relish of the Spirit, it shrunk from keeping the force of the letter. For which of the Gentiles would bear this, which is therein enjoined, to cut their children's flesh for a religious service? to cut off the sins of speech by death? And hence it is well added yet further;

Or can anyone taste, what by being tasted brings death? [Vulg.]

9. For the Law, if tasted in a carnal way, 'brought death,' in that it seized the misdeeds of transgressors with a severe visitation; it 'brought death,' in that both by the injunction it made known the sin, and did not by grace put it away, as Paul testifies, saying, The Law made nothing perfect. And again, *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good*. And soon after, *But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good.* But the Gentile world, when turned to Christ, in that it understands Him to be sounding in the words of the Law, being straitened by its desires looks for Him, Whom it ardently loves, in a spiritual way

amongst carnal precepts. And hence in the voice of the Church it is immediately added by the Prophetic Spirit,

Ver. 7. *The things which my soul refused to touch are for straitness become my meat.*

10. For he goes very far wrong, who imagines that the words of blessed Job were delivered with an eye to the historical fact alone. For what would the holy man, and one too borne up by the proclaim of His Maker, have said, that was great, or rather what that was true, if he had said that 'unsavoury meat could not be eaten?' or who had offered deadly food for him to eat, that he should subjoin, *Or who can taste, what by being tasted brings death*? And if we imagine that was said of his friends' discourse, we are withheld from this view by the sentence that is subjoined, in which he says, *The things that my soul refused to touch are for straitness become my meat*. For never let it be thought that the holy man, when established in soundness of state, at any time looked down upon the words of his friends; who, as we learn afterwards by himself attesting it, was humble even to his servants, His words then are not void of mystica1 senses, which, as we gather from the end of the history, the internal Arbiter Himself commends. And these would never have gone on commanding such deep veneration even to the very ends of the world, if they had not been pregnant with mystical meaning.

11. Let blessed Job then, in that he is a member of holy Church, speak in her voice also, saying, *The things which my soul refused to touch are for my straitness become my meat*. For the Gentile world, after conversion, made eager by the fever of her love, hungers for the food of Holy Scripture, which being filled with pride it disdained for long. And yet these words agree with the voice of Judaea also, if they be a little more attentively made out. For from the training of the Law, and from the knowledge of the One God, she herself had salt, and looked down upon all the Gentiles as brute

creatures. But because, when instructed by the precepts of the Law, she disdained to admit to herself the communion of the Gentiles, what did she but loath to take ‘unsavoury food?’ For the Divine decree had forbidden, on the menace of death, that the Israelitish people should join in a league with strangers, and pollute the way of life in holy religion. Whence too it is added, *Or can anyone taste, what, by being tasted, brings death?* But because this same Judaea, in the portion of the Elect, was converted to the faith of the Redeemer, the light which she had become acquainted with she laboured by the Holy Apostles to deliver to the faithless of her offspring. But the pride of the Hebrew people rejected the ministry of her preaching, whence she immediately turned aside her words of exhortation for the gathering together of the Gentiles, as it is said also by the same Apostles, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing that ye have put it from you, and have judged yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*. [Acts 13, 46] Whence too in this place it is fitly subjoined, *The things which my soul refused to touch are now for my straitness become my meat*. For Judaea, having disdained the life of the Gentiles, refused as it were for long to touch her, whose society she scorned to admit; but on coming to the grace of the Redeemer, being rejected by the unbelieving Israelites, while by the Holy Apostles she stretches out herself for the gathering together of the Gentiles, she as it were takes that for food with a hungry appetite, which before with loathing she disdained as unworthy. For she underwent ‘straitness’ in her preaching, who saw that what she spoke was despised among the Hebrew people. But for her ‘straitness’ she ate the food which she had for long despised, in that being rejected by the obduracy of the Jews, she yearns to take to her the Gentile folk, whom she had contemned. Seeing then that we have delivered these points in a figurative sense, it remains that we go into them in their moral import.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

12. The holy Man, longing for the coming of the Redeemer under the name of a 'balance,' whilst he opens his mind in discourse, instructs us to earnestness of life; whilst he tells his own tale, marks some things that belong to us; whilst he brings forward what we are to acknowledge concerning himself, strengthens unto life us that be trembling and weak. For now indeed we live by the faith of our Mediator, and yet still, for the cleansing out of our faults, endure heavy scourges of inward visitation; whence also, after longing for the balance, he adds,

Ver. 4. *For the arrows of the Lord are within me, the indignation whereof drinketh up my spirit.*

13. Now see, as has been remarked above, we are at the same time pierced by the stroke of Divine correction, and yet that is still worse, which we apprehend of the terribleness of the Judge to come, and of His everlasting visitation. Whence the words are thereupon introduced, *And the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me*. But the mind ought to be dispossessed of fear and sadness, and be drawn out in aspirations after the eternal land alone. For we then shew forth the noble birth of our Regeneration, if we love Him as a Father, Whom with slavish soul we now dread as a Master. And hence it is spoken by Paul, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of the adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*. [Rom. 8, 15] Therefore let the soul of the Elect lay aside the weight of fear, exercise itself in the virtue of love, long for the worthiness of its renewal, pant after the likeness or its Maker; whom so long as it is unable to behold, it must needs await hungering after His eternal Being, i.e. after its own internal meat. Whence it is also justly added,

Ver. 5. *Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? Or loweth the ox over his full manger?*

14. Who else are denoted by the term of ‘the wild ass,’ saving they who being set in the field of faith, are not bound by the reins of any ministration? Or whom does the designation of ‘the ox’ set forth, saving those, whom within the bounds of Holy Church, the yoke of Orders taken upon them constrains to the ministry of preaching? Now the ‘grass’ of the wild ass, and the ox’s ‘fodder,’ is the inward refreshing of the faithful folk. For some within the pale of Holy Church are held after the manner of an ox by the bands of the employment taken upon them, others after the manner of a ‘wild ass’ know nothing of the stalls of Holy Orders, and pass their time in the field of their own will. But when any one in the secular life glows with aspirations after the interior vision, when he yearns for the food of the inward refreshing, when seeing himself starved in the darkness of this pilgrim state, he refreshes himself with what tears he may, it is as if ‘the wild ass brayed,’ not finding ‘grass.’ Another one too is subject to the obligation of the Order he has taken upon him, he spends himself in the labour of preaching, and longs to be henceforth refreshed by eternal contemplation; but forasmuch as he does not see the likeness of His Redeemer, it is as if the chained ox lowed at the empty manger. For because being set at the widest distance from the interior wisdom, we see nothing of the verdure of the eternal inheritance, like brute animals we go hungering after the longed for grass. Of which same grass it is said by the voice of our Redeemer, *By Me if any man enter in, he shall be sated, and shall go in and out, and find pasture*. [John 10, 9] But most often, which is wont to be a grievous woe to those that love, the life of the wicked is arrayed against the holy aims of the good, and when the soul is transported in heavenly aspirations, the purpose of mind, which we have began with well, is dashed to the ground, being crossed by the words and practices of the foolish; so that the soul, which had already soared up to things above in the efforts of

contemplation, for the defeating of the foolishness of the froward, girds itself for the encounter down below. Whence also it is added,

Ver. 6. *Or can that which is unsavoury be eaten, not seasoned with salt? Or can anyone taste, what by being tasted brings death?*

15. For the words and the practices of the carnal introduce themselves like food into our minds, so as to be swallowed up in the belly of complacence. But any of the Elect eateth not that which is 'unsavory,' for setting apart in judgment the words and the deeds of the froward, he puts them away from the mouth of his heart. Paul forbade unsavoury meat to be offered for the food of souls, when he said to his disciples, *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt*. [Col. 4, 6] And to the Psalmist also the words of the children of perdition tasted unsavoury in the mouth of the heart, when he said, *The wicked have related tales to* [so V.] *me which are not after Thy Law*. [Ps. 119, 85] But often, when the words of the wicked press themselves with importunity into our ears, they beget in the heart a war of temptation. And though both reason reject and the tongue censure them, yet that is with difficulty mastered within, which without is sentenced with authority. Whence it is necessary that that should never even reach the ears, which the mind must keep off from the avenue of the imagination by exercising watchfulness. Holy men, then, whereas their hearts pant with aspirations after Eternity, lift themselves to such an exalted elevation of life, that to hear any longer the things that are of the world they account to be a grievous burthen bearing them down. For they reckon that to be impertinent and insufferable, which does not tell of what their hearts are full of.

16. Now it often happens that the mind is already transported to the realms on high in desire, is already entirely parted asunder from the foolish converse of earthly men, but is not yet braced to prefer the crosses of the present life for the love of God; already it seeks the things on high, already

it contemns the grovelling follies below, but it does not yet turn itself to the endurance of the adversity which it has to bear. And hence it is added,

Or can anyone taste that, which by being tasted brings death?

17. For it is hard to seek after that which torments, to follow that which makes life depart. But very often the life of the righteous stretches itself up to such a height of virtue, that both within it rules in the citadel of interior reason, and without, by bearing with it, brings the folly of some to conversion; for we must needs bear with the weaknesses of those, whom we are striving to draw on to strong things. For neither does any man lift up one that is fallen, save he, who in compassion bends the uprightness of his position. But when we compassionate the weakness of another, we are the more strongly nerved as to our own; so that, from love of the things of futurity, the soul prepares itself to meet the ills of the present time, and looks out for the hurts of the body, which it used to fear. For its heavenly aspirations being enlarged, it is more and more straitened, and when it sees how great is the sweetness of the eternal land, it fervently loves for the sake of that the bitter tastes of the present life. Whence after the disdain of 'unsavoury meat,' after the impossibility of the tasting of death, it is with propriety subjoined,

Ver.7. *The things which my soul refused to touch are for my straitness become my meat.*

18. For the soul of the righteous, going on in its progress, whereas before, when it cared for its own interests alone, it loathed to bear the burthens of another, and, too little sympathizing with others, could not stand against adversities, now that it constrains itself to bear with the weakness of its neighbour, acquires strength to overcome adversity, so that for the love of truth it seeks the hurts of the present life with so much the more courage afterwards, that before it fled from them in its weakness. For by its bending it is made erect, by its drawing towards another it is stretched out, by its

fellow-feeling it is strengthened, and when it opens itself out in the love of our neighbour, it as it were gathers from reflection, with what resoluteness to lift itself up to its Maker. For charity, which lowers us according to the force of our sympathy, lifts us the higher upon the height of contemplation, and enlarged manifold it already burns with bigger desires, already beats high to attain to the life of the Spirit, even though through the torments of the body. What then aforetime he refused to touch, this same for straitness he afterwards eateth, who scarce containing his desires, now for love of his heavenly Country loves even the very pains, which for long he had feared. For if the mind is bent towards God with a strong purpose, whatever bitter betides it in this present life it accounts sweet, all that annoys it reckons rest, and it longs to pass even through death, that it may more completely possess itself of life. It desires to be utterly annihilated below, that it may more truly mount on high. But all this I may be falsely representing to be the case with the mind of a righteous man in general, and with the mind of blessed Job, if he do not himself subjoin the words,

Ver. 8-10. *Oh that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that He That hath begun would destroy me. Let him let loose His hand, and cut me off! Let this be my comfort; that He should afflict me with sorrow, and not spare.*

19. But perchance he entreats such things through stubbornness, perchance, in that he wishes to be entirely annihilated, he charges the injustice of the smiter. Far be the thought! For with what feeling he begs it, he shews in the following words, saying, *Nor will I gainsay the speech of the Holy One*. So then he never murmurs against the injustice of Him that dealeth the blow, who even amidst the strokes calls his smiter ‘the Holy One.’ But we ought to know that it is sometimes the adversary, and sometimes God that bruises us with affliction. Now by the bruising of the adversary, we are made defaulters in virtue; but when we are broken by the

bruising of the Lord, from vicious habits we are made strong in virtue. This bruising the Prophet had foreseen when he said, *Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*. [Ps. 2, 9] The Lord 'rules and breaks us with a rod of iron,' in that by the strong rule of righteousness in His dispensation, while He reanimates us within, He distresses us without. For as He abases the power of the flesh, He exalts the purpose of the spirit; and hence this bruising is compared to a potter's vessel, as is also delivered by Paul, *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels*. [2 Cor. 4, 7] And describing at the same time the dashing in pieces and the ruling [Vulg. has, *Thou shalt rule them,* for, *Thou shalt break them*], he saith, *Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*. Let the holy man who is eager to draw near to God even through strokes, exclaim in the spirit of humility,

Ver. 9. *That He That hath begun would bruise me!*

20. For very often the Lord begins to work in us the bruising of our vicious habits, but when the mind is lifted up at the very first step of its progress, and when it already exalts itself as on the ground of its virtuous attainments, it opens an entrance to the adversary, that rages against it, who penetrating into the depths of the heart, dashes in pieces all that he may find therein springing from the earnestness of a good beginning, and shews himself the more violent in the breaking of it in proportion as he is the sorer grieved that it had made progress, though but a little way. Whence too, as the Gospel is witness, by the voice of 'Truth,' the unclean spirit, which went out alone, returns with seven other spirits to the neglected dwelling-place of the conscience. Lest then, after the beginnings of divine correction, the old adversary snatch him unawares, and drag him along for the breaking in pieces of his virtues, the holy man fitly beseeches, saying, *That He That hath begun would bruise me*. As if he said in plain words, 'That which He

has begun in me may He not cease to perfect by smiting me, lest He deliver me over forsaken to the adversary to bruise me.' Hence it is fitly subjoined,

That He would let loose His hand, and cut me off.

21. For oftentimes being swoln with the confidence of lengthened prosperity, we are lifted up in a certain kind of frame of self-elation, and when our Creator sees that we are lifted up, but does not exercise His love towards us by stripes, He as it were keeps His hand hid, as to the smiting of our evil ways. Did He not tie the hand of His affection, when He said to the people, when guilty of transgression, *I will not any more be wroth with thee*; and, *My jealousy is departed from thee*. [Ezek. 16, 42] Therefore, 'That He would let loose His hand,' means, 'that He would exercise His affection.' And it is rightly added, 'and cut me off.' For whenever either the sudden pain of the scourge, or the trial of our weakness, falls upon us in a state of security, and elated with the abundance of our virtuous attainments, the pride of our hearts, being cut down, is precipitated from the height of its seat, so that it dares do nothing of itself, but levelled by the blow of its frailty, seeks the hand of one to lift it. Hence it is that, when holy men are looked upon with admiration on the grounds of the secret dispensation of God's providence towards them, they the more dread their very prosperity itself: they long to be subjected to trial, they covet to be stricken, that fear and pain may discipline the unwary mind, lest when an enemy breaketh out of ambush on this road of our pilgrimage, its self-security cause its greater downfal. Hence the Psalmist says, *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me*. [Ps. 26, 2] Hence he says again, *For I am ready for the scourges*. [Ps. 38, 17] For because holy men see that the wound of their inward corruption [b] cannot be without putridity, they gladly set them under the hand of the physician for lancing, that the wound being opened, the venom of sin may run out, which, with a whole skin, was inwardly working their destruction. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 10. *And let this be my consolation, that afflicting me with pain He spare not.*

22. The Elect, when they know that they have done unlawful things, but find upon careful examination that they have met with no afflictions in return for those unlawful deeds, with the immense force of their fear, are in a ferment with alarm, and labour and travail with dark misgivings, lest grace should have forsaken them for ever, seeing that no recompensing of their ill-doing keeps them safe in the present life; they fear lest the vengeance which is suspended be stored to be dealt in heavier measure at the end; they are eager to be stricken with the correction of a Father's hand, and they reckon the pain of the wound to be the medicine of saving health. Therefore it is rightly said in this place, *Let this be my consolation, that afflicting me with grief He spare not*. As if it were in plain words, 'May He, Who spares people here for this cause, that He may strike them for ever and ever, therefore strike me here, that, by not sparing me, He may spare me for ever. For I console myself in being afflicted, in that conscious of the rottenness of human corruption, by being wounded I gain assurance for the hope of saving health.' And that he uttered it not with a swoln but with a humble mind, he makes plain, as we have before said, by the addition, in the words,

Neither will I gainsay the words of the Holy One.

23. Most often the words of God to us are not the sounds of speech, but the enforcement of deed. For He speaks to us in that which He works upon us in silence. Blessed Job then would be gainsaying the words of God, if he murmured at His blows; but what feelings he entertains for his smiter is shewn by him, who, as we have already said, calls Him 'Holy One' from whom he is submitting to blows. It goes on;

Ver. 11. *What is my strength, that I should hold up? And what is mine end that I should deal patiently?*

24. It is necessary to bear in mind, that the ‘strength’ of the righteous is of one sort, and the strength of the reprobate of another. For the strength of the righteous is to subdue the flesh, to thwart our own wills, to annihilate the gratification of the present life, to be in love with the roughnesses of this world for the sake of eternal rewards, to set at nought the allurements of prosperity, to overcome the dread of adversity in our hearts. But the strength of the reprobate is to have the affection unceasingly set on transitory things, to hold out with insensibility against the strokes of our Creator, not even by adversity to be brought to cease from the love of temporal things, to go on to the attainment of vain glory even with waste of life, to search out larger measures of wickedness, to attack the life of the good, not only with words and by behaviour, but even with weapons, to put their trust in themselves, to perpetrate iniquity daily without any diminution of desire, Hence it is that it is said by the Psalmist to the Elect, *Be of good courage, and let your heart be strengthened, all ye that hope in the Lord*. [Ps 31, 24] Hence it is declared by the Prophet to the reprobate, *Woe unto you that are mighty to drink urine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink*. [Is. 5, 22] Hence it is declared by Solomon, that all the holy without any weakening of desire contemplate the interior rest. *Behold his bed, which is Solomon’s, threescore valiant men are about it, of the most valiant of Israel*. [Cant. 3, 7] Hence the Psalmist directing his meaning against the children of perdition in the voice of the Redeemer in His Passion, saith, *Lo, they have surprised my soul: the mighty have rushed forth against me*. [Ps. 59, 3] How well did Isaiah comprehend both sorts of strength in the words, *But they that wait upon the Lord shall change* [*mutabunt* E.V. marg.] *their strength*. [Is. 40, 31] For in that he said not they will ‘take,’ but they will ‘change,’ he clearly made known that that which is laid aside is of one sort, and that which is entered upon of another sort.

25. Are not the reprobate also 'strong,' who take such pains in running after the concupiscence of this world, boldly expose themselves to perils, welcome insults for the sake of gain, never give back from the lust of their appetites conquered by any opposition, grow obdurate with scourges, and for the sake of the world undergo the ills of the world, and so to say in seeking the pleasures thereof are parting with them, nor yet in parting with them ever weary. Whence it is well said by Jeremiah in the voice of mankind, *He hath made me drunken with wormwood*. [Lam. 3, 15] For one that is drunk knows nothing what he is undergoing. He then is 'drunken with wormwood,' who alienated from the faculty of reason through the love of the present life, whilst whatsoever he undergoes for the sake of the world he accounts but light, is blind to the bitterness of the toil which he is enduring, in that in enjoyment he is led on to the several things in which in chastisement he is wearied out. But on the other hand the righteous man makes it his aim to be weak for undergoing the perils of the world for the world's sake, looks to his own end, marks how transitory the present life is, and refuses to undergo toils without for the sake of that, the enjoyment of which he has overcome within. Let blessed Job then, pressed by the adversities of the present life, say in his own voice, yea, in the voice of all the righteous, *What is my strength that I should hold up? And what is mine end that I should deal patiently?* As if he made it known in plain words, saying, 'I cannot submit to the ills of the world for the sake of the world, for now I am no longer strong in the desire thereof. For while I look to the end of the present life, why do I bear the burthen of that, the longing for which I tread under my feet?' And because the unrighteous severally, as we have said, bear the toils thereof with stronger resolution in proportion as they feed with greater avidity on its enjoyment, therefore he rightly subjoins without delay that same strength of the reprobate, in the words,

Ver. 12. *Neither is my strength the strength of stones, nor is my flesh of brass?*

26. For what have we here denoted by 'brass' and 'stones' save the hearts of the insensate, who oftentimes even receive the strokes of the Most High, and yet they are not softened by any strokes of discipline? Contrary whereunto, it is said to the Elect through the Prophet, by promise from the Lord, *I will take the stony heart out of you, and will give you a heart of flesh*. [Ezek. 11, 19] Paul also says, *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*. [1 Cor. 13, 1] For we know that stones when struck cannot give a clear sound, but when brass is struck a very sonorous sound is made by the striking of it; which, because like stones it is without life, has no sense contained in the sound. And there be some, who, like to stones, have become so hardened as to the precepts of religion, that, when the stroke of the visitation of the Most High is proving them, they never return the sound of humble confession. But some differing in no respect from the metallic nature of brass, when they receive the strokes of the smiting of the Most High, give forth the sound of devout confession; but because they do not send out the tones of humility from the heart, when they have been brought back to a state of sound health, they know nothing what they have vowed. The one then, being struck like stones, have no tones at all, while the other in nothing omit the resemblance of brass, who when under the stroke utter good things which they do not feel. The one sort refuse even words to the worship of the smiter. The other sort, in promising what they never fulfil, cry out without any life. Let the holy man then, who amidst the scourges eschewed the hardness of the reprobate, exclaim, *Neither is my strength the strength of stones, nor is my flesh of brass*. As though he made open confession in plain words, saying, 'Under the lash of discipline I keep clear of similarity to the reprobate. For neither have I become like stones so

hardened that under the impulse of the stroke I turned dumb in the duty of confession; nor again, like brass do I give back the voice of confession, while I know not the meaning of the voice.' But because under the scourge the reprobate are strong unto weakness, and the Elect weak unto strength, blessed Job, while he declares that he is not strong of a diseased sense, makes it plain that he is strong of a state of saving health. So let him instruct us whence he received this same strength, lest if he ascribes to himself the powers that he has, he be running vigorously to death. For very often virtue possessed kills worse than if it were wanting, for while it lifts up the mind to self-confidence, it pierces it with the sword of self-elation, and while as it were it quickens by imparting strength, slays by filling with exaltation, i.e. it forces on to destruction the soul, which, through self trust, it uproots from trust in the interior strength. But forasmuch as blessed Job is both rich in virtue, and yet has no confidence in himself, and, that I may say so, in powerlessness is possessed of powers, he fitly subjoins these words, saying,

Ver. 13. *Lo, there is no help to me in myself.*

27. It is now made clear to whom the mind of the stricken man had recourse for hope, seeing that he declares that there was no hope to him in himself; but because he intimates that in himself he was weak, for the earning [or 'to (shew) the merit of.'] of yet greater strength, let him add how he was even forsaken by his neighbours, *My friends also departed from me* [V. thus]. But mark, he that was despised without, is seated within upon the throne of judgment. For at the moment that he declares himself forsaken, he forthwith breaks out into pronouncing sentence, in the words,

Ver.14. *Whoso taketh away pity from his friend, forsaketh the fear of the Lord.*

28. Who else is here denoted by the name of a friend, saving every neighbour, who is united to us in a faithful attachment in proportion as,

having received from us good service in this present time, he effectually aids us toward attaining hereafter the eternal country? For because there are two precepts of charity viz. the love of God and the love of our neighbour, by the love of God the love of our neighbour is brought into being, and by the love of our neighbour the love of God is fostered. For he that cares not to love God, verily knows nothing how to love his neighbour, and we then advance more perfectly in the love of God, if in the bosom of this love we first be suckled with the milk of charity towards our neighbour. For because the love of God begets the love of our neighbour, the Lord, when going on to say in the voice of the Law the words, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour*, prefaced it by saying, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*; [Matt. 22, 37. 39. Deut. 6, 5; 10, 12] for this reason, that in the soil of our breast He might first fix the root of His love, so that afterwards in the branches the love of our brethren should shoot forth. Again, that the love of God grows to strength by the love of our neighbour, is testified by John, where he says, *For he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, Whom he hath not seen?*[1 John 4, 20] Which love of God, though it has its birth in fear, yet it is changed by growing into affection.

29. But oftentimes Almighty God, to make known how far anyone is from the love of Him and of his neighbour, or what proficiency he has made therein, regulating all things in a marvellous order, puts down some by strokes, and sets up others by successes; and as often as He forsakes certain persons in their temporal estate and condition, He shews the evil that lurks in the hearts of certain others. For very often the persons that courted us in the season of prosperity without an equal, are the very ones to persecute us in distress. For when a man in a prosperous condition is beloved, it is very doubtful whether his good fortune or the individual be the object of love. But the loss of prosperity puts to the test the force of the affection. Whence a certain wise man saith rightly, *A friend cannot be known in prosperity;*

and an enemy cannot be hidden in adversity. [Ecclus. 12, 8] For neither does prosperity shew a friend, nor adversity hide an enemy, in that both the first is often hidden by awe for our high fortune, and the latter is disclosed to view from presuming on our adverse condition. Let the holy man then, set in the midst of scourges, exclaim, *He that taketh away pity from his friend, forsaketh the fear of the Lord*; in that doubtless he that contemns his neighbour in consequence of his adversity, is clearly convicted never to have loved him in his prosperity. And since Almighty God smites some for this reason, that He may both discipline the individuals stricken, and afford to those that are not stricken opportunity for doing good; whosoever disregards one that is smitten, puts away from him an occasion of virtue, and lifts himself up the more wickedly against his Maker, in proportion as he views Him as neither merciful in the saving of himself, nor just in the wounding of another. But we must observe that blessed Job in such sort describes his own case, that the life of all the Elect People is at the same time set forth by him. For seeing that he is a member of that People, when he describes what he himself undergoes, he is also relating what that People is subject to, saying,

Ver. 15. *My brethren have passed by me like a brook which passeth by rapidly in the hollows.*

30. Because the mind of the reprobate is set on present things alone, for the most part it proves a stranger to the scourge now, in proportion as hereafter it remains an exile from the inheritance. But oftentimes the lost hold the same faith by which we live, receive the same Sacraments of faith, are bound in the unity of the same religion, yet they are unacquainted with the bowels of compassion; of the force of that love, with which we are inflamed, both towards God and our neighbour, they know nothing. Therefore they are rightly called both ‘brethren,’ and those that ‘pass by,’ in that by faith they come forth from the same mother’s womb with ourselves,

but are not rooted in one and the same earnestness of charity towards God and our neighbour. Whence they are also fitly likened to a 'brook which passes by rapidly in the valleys.' For a brook flows from the highlands down below, and while it gathers its waters from the winter rains, is dried up by the summer heats; for they that from love of earthly objects quit the hope of the land above, seek the valley as it were from the uplands, and these are replenished with the winter season of the present life; but the summer of the Judgment to come dries them up, in that so soon as the sun of the rigour of the Most High waxes hot, it turns the joy of the reprobate into drought. Therefore it is rightly said, *Rapidly passeth by in the valleys*. Since for a torrent to pass by rapidly to the valleys, is for the mind of the froward, without any pains or hindrance to descend to the lowest aims. For all ascending is in painstaking, but all descending is in pleasure, in that in effect the step is strained to reach a higher level, but in relaxation, it is let down to a lower one. For it is a matter of much toil to get a stone up to the top of a mountain, but it is no labour to let the same down from the top to the bottom. Surely, that same is propelled down without let, which did not reach the top without mighty pains. The crop is sown by long application, it is nourished by a long course of shower and sunshine, yet it is consumed by a single instantaneous spark. By little and little buildings mount to a height, but by instantaneous falls they come to the ground. A vigorous tree lifts itself in the air by slow accessions of growth, but all that it has in a long course reared on high, is brought down at once and together. Therefore forasmuch as ascending is with pains and descending with pleasure, it is rightly expressed in this place, *My brethren have passed by me like a brook which passeth by rapidly in the valleys;* which too may be taken in another sense likewise.

31. For if we understand the valleys to be the regions of punishment below, then all the unrighteous 'pass away rapidly like a brook to the

valleys,' in that in this life, which; they go after with all the desire of their heart, they can never stay for long, since for all the days that they add to their age, they are as it were daily tending by so many steps to their end. They wish for the periods to be lengthened to them, but forasmuch as when granted they cannot hold; for as many additions as they are allowed to their life, they are losing just so many from their period of living; therefore the moments of time, in so far as they pursue, they are fleeing from; in so far as they get them, they are parting with them. Thus they 'pass away rapidly to the valleys,' who indeed draw out to a great length their desires for the pleasures, but on a sudden are brought down to the dungeons of hell. For because even that period which is protracted by any length of life whatever, if it be closed by an ending; is not long, those wretched persons learn from the end that: that was but short, which they held only in letting go. Whence also it is well said by Solomon, *But if a man live many years and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many: and when they have come, the past shall be convicted of vanity*. [Eccles. 11, 8] For when the foolish mind meets on a sudden with evil which never passes away, it is made to understand by undergoing the eternal durations thereof, that the thing which could pass away was vain. But we should know that the greater number desire to do right, but there are some things calculated to cross and thwart their weak minds arising from the present life; and whereas they fear to undergo crosses in the lowest things, they offend against the rule of right set by the decree above. Whence it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 16. *Over those that fear the frost, the snow rushes down.*

32. For the frost congeals below, but the snow falls down from above. And often there are persons, who, while they fear temporal adversities, expose themselves to the severity of everlasting visitation. Concerning whom it is rightly declared by the Psalmist, *There were they in great fear*

where no fear was. [Ps. 14, 5] For this man already longs to defend the truth with freedom, yet being affrighted in that very longing that he feels, he shrinks from the indignation of a human power, and while on earth he fears man in opposition to the truth, he undergoes from heaven the wrath of Truth. That man, conscious of his sins, is already desirous to bestow upon the needy the things which he is possessed of, yet dreads lest he himself come to need them so bestowed. When, being alarmed, he provides with reservation for his own use succours of the flesh for the future, he starves the soul from the sustenance of mercy, and when he fears want on earth, he cuts off from himself the eternal plenitude of the heavenly cheer. Therefore it is well said, *Over those that fear the frost, the snow rushes down*. In that all who apprehend from below what ought to be trodden under the feet, undergo from above what is deserving of apprehension, and when they will not pass by what they might have trodden beneath them, they meet with a judgment from heaven which they can in no sort sustain. Now by acting thus they attain the glory of the world in time, but what will they do in the hour of their call, when terror-stricken they quit at once all the things which they kept here with grievous apprehensions? And hence it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 17. *What time they be dissipated they shall perish.*

33. For all persons that are ruled by concern for the present life, are brought to nought by the loss of it, and then they are undone without, who have for long been undone within by disregarding the things of eternity. Concerning whom it is rightly added, *When they have become hot, they shall be dissolved from their place*. For every wicked man when he ‘has become hot is dissolved from his place,’ in that, in drawing near to the Judgment of the Interior Severity, when he has now begun to be heated in the knowledge of his punishment, he is severed from that gratification of his flesh whereunto he had long time clung. Hence it is that it is delivered by

the Prophet against the reprobate, *And vexation alone shall only give understanding to the hearing* [Is. 28, 19]; in that verily they never understand the things of eternity, saving when they are already made to undergo punishment for those of time without remedy. Thus the mind is heated, and inflames itself with the fires of a fruitless repentance, it shrinks from being led to punishment, and holds fast to the present life in desire, but it is dissolved from its place, in that panting from the gratification of the flesh, its hardness is melted by suffering chastisement. But seeing that we have heard what all the wicked will undergo in the hour of their removal, let us hear further some of the ways in which their course is perplexed in the career of their freedom. It goes on,

Ver. 18. *The paths of their steps are involved.* [V. *involutae*]

34. All that is involved is folded back into itself. And there are some who as it were resolve, with all the purpose of their heart, to resist the vicious habits that mislead them, but when the crisis of the temptation comes full upon them, they do not hold out in their purposed resolution. For one swoln with the bad daring of pride, when he sees that the rewards promised to humility are great, lifts himself up against himself, and as it were puts away the swelling and turgid bigness of pride, and vows to prove himself humble under whatever insults; but when he has been suddenly assailed with the injuriousness of a single word, he straight-way returns to his accustomed haughtiness, and is brought into such a swelling temper of mind, that he does not at all remember that he had made it his object to win the blessed attainment of humility. Another, fired with avarice, is out of breath with eagerness in adding to his means. When he sees that all things speedily pass away, he arrests his mind, which is roaming abroad through covetous desires, he determines henceforth not to set his heart on any thing, and to hold what he has already gotten only under the reins of great control; but when objects that delight him are suddenly presented to his eyes,

thereupon the heart beats high in the ambition to obtain them, the mind cannot contain itself, it looks about for an opportunity of getting them, and unmindful of the moderation which it had covenanted with itself, in longings for the attainment of them, disquiets itself with goading thoughts. Another is polluted by the corruption of lust, and is now bound and chained with long usage, but he sees how excellent is the pureness of chastity, and finds it a foul disgrace to be mastered by the flesh. Therefore he resolves to restrain the dissoluteness of his pleasures, and seems to set himself with all his powers to make a stand against habit; but upon the image being either presented to his eyes, or recalled to his recollection, when he is moved by a sudden temptation, at once he becomes all adrift from his former state of preparation; and the same man, that had set up against it the shield of resolution, lies pierced with the javelin of self-indulgence, and he being unstrung is overcome by lust, like as if he had never made ready any weapons of resolve against it. Another is set on fire with the flames of anger, and is uncontrolled even to the extent of offering insults to his neighbours, but when no occasion of rage comes across his spirit, he considers how excellent the virtue of mildness is, how high the loftiness of patience, and sets himself in order to be patient even against insult: but when any slight matter arises to ruffle him, he is in a moment kindled from his heart's core to words and insults. So that not only the patience he had promised never returns to his remembrance, but that the mind neither knows its own self, nor those revilings which it utters. And when he has fully satisfied his rage, it is as if he returned after exercise to a state of tranquillity, and then he calls himself in again into the chambers of silence, when not patience, but the gratification of its hastiness has given a check to the tongue. Therefore even late, and after the insults have been offered, he scarcely restrains himself, seeing that fiery horses too are often checked from their career, not by the hands of the controller, but by the limits of the

ground. Therefore it is well said of the reprobate, *The paths of their way are involved*. For in resolve they aim at right courses indeed, but are ever doubling back into their accustomed evil ones, and being, as it were, drawn out without themselves, they return back to themselves in a round, who indeed desire good ways, but never depart from evil ways. For they wish to be humble, yet without being despised; to be content with their own, yet without suffering need; to be chaste, yet without mortification of the body; to be patient, yet without undergoing insults; and when they seek to make virtuous attainments, yet eschew the toils thereof, what else is this than that at one and the same time they know nothing of the conflicts of war in the field, and desire to have the triumphs for war in the city.

35. Not but that this, that their ways are described as 'involved,' may be further understood in another sense also; for it often happens with some people that they stoutly gird themselves up to encounter some vices, but neglect to overcome others, and while they never lift themselves up against these, they are reestablishing against themselves even those which they had subdued. For one has now subdued the flesh from the dominion of lust, but he has not yet reined in the mind from avarice; and while he keeps himself in the world for the practising of avarice, and does not quit earthly courses, when the juncture of the occasion breaks out, he falls into lust also, which sin he seemed to have already subdued. Another has overcome the violence of avarice, but he has never subdued the power of lust, and when he is providing the costs of fulfilling his lustful passion, he submits the neck of the heart to the yoke of avarice too, which he had for long got the mastery of. Another has now laid low rebellious impatience, but has not yet subdued vainglory; and when for this he winds himself into the honours of the world, being pierced with the irritation of cases that chance, he is brought back a captive to his impatience, and whilst vainglory lifts up the soul to the vindication of itself, being overcome it submits to that which it had got the

upper hand over. Another has subdued vainglory, but has not yet brought down impatience. And when in impatience he utters a thousand threats to those that offer opposition, being ashamed not to execute what he says, he is brought back under the dominion of vainglory, and being subdued, by means of something else, he becomes liable to that, which he was rejoicing that he had fully conquered. Thus then the vices retain a hold over their runaway by mutual aid in turn, and they as it were receive him back, when already gone, under the rule of their dominion, and hand him over to each other by turns for vengeance. Thus 'the paths of the ways of the wicked are involved,' in that although by mastering one evil habit, they free the foot, yet, while another sways them, they entangle it in the very one, which they had conquered.

36. But sometimes while the paths of their ways are involved, at once not a single sin is overcome, and one sin is done by occasion of another. For oftentimes to theft there is joined the deceit of denial, and often the sin of deceit is increased by the guilt of perjury. Often a misdeed is committed with shameless assurance, and often (which becomes worse than any fault) there is even a glorying in the commission of the misdeed. For though self-exaltation is apt to arise on the score of virtue, yet sometimes the foolish mind exalts itself on the grounds of the wickedness it has done. And when transgression is joined to transgression, what else is this than that the steps of the froward are bound in involved ways and entangled chains? Hence it is rightly delivered by Isaiah against the froward soul, under the likeness of Judaea, *And it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a pasture for ostriches, and the demons shall meet with the onocentaurs, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow*. For what is denoted by the 'dragons,' saving malice, and what by the name of 'ostriches,' saving hypocrisy; as an ostrich has the appearance of flight, but has not the use of flying, for that hypocrisy too impresses upon all beholders an image of sanctity in connection with itself,

but knows not to maintain the life of sanctity. Therefore in the perverse mind the dragon lies down and the ostrich feeds, in that both lurking malice is cunningly covered, and the guise of goodness is set before the beholder's eyes. But what is represented by the title of 'onocentaurs,' saving those that be both lecherous [d] and high-minded? for in the Greek tongue, 'onos' signifies 'an ass,' and by the designation of an 'ass' lust is denoted, according to the testimony of the Prophet, who says, *Whose flesh is as the flesh of asses* [Ezek. 23, 20]; but by the name of a 'bull' [e] the neck of pride is set forth, as it is spoken by the Psalmist in the voice of the Lord concerning the Jews in their pride, *Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round*. [Ps. 22, 19] Thus they are 'onocentaurs,' who, being subject to vicious habits of lust, lift up their neck on account of the very same cause for which they ought to have been abased, who, in serving their fleshly gratifications, all sense of shame being put far from them, not only do not grieve that they have lost the way of uprightness, but further even exult in the working of confusion. Now 'the demons' meet with the 'onocentaurs,' in that the evil spirits readily serve to their wish all those whom they see rejoicing in the things which they ought to have bewailed; and it is fitly subjoined there, *And the hairy satyr* [Lat. *pilosus*] *shall cry to his fellow*. Now what others are represented by the title of 'the hairy one,' saving they which the Greeks call 'Pans,' and the Latins 'Incubi,' [f] whose figure begins in the human form, but terminates in the extremity of a beast? Therefore by the designation of 'the hairy one' is denoted the ruggedness of every sin, which even if in any case it begins as if in a pretext of reason, yet always goes on to irrational motions; and it is like a man ending in a beast, whilst the sin, beginning in a copy of reason, draws him out even to a result devoid of reason. Thus often the pleasure of eating is subservient to gluttony, and it pretends to be subservient to the requirement of nature, and while it draws out the belly into gluttony, sets up

the limbs in lasciviousness. Now 'the satyr crieth to his fellow,' when one wickedness perpetrated leads to the perpetration of another, and as if by a kind of voice of thought, a sin already committed invites another sin which yet remains to be committed. For oftentimes, as we have said, gluttony says, 'If you do not sustain the body with plentiful support, you can hold on in no useful labours;' and when it has kindled the mind by the desires of the flesh, immediately lust too in her turn forms words of her own prompting, saying, 'if God would not have human creatures united together in a bodily sort, He would never have made members in themselves suited to the purposes of so uniting;' and when it suggests these things as if in reason, it draws on the mind to unrestrained indulgence of the passions, and often when found out, immediately it looks out for the support of deceit and denial, and does not reckon itself guilty, if, by telling lies, its life may be protected. Thus 'the satyr crieth to his fellow,' when, under some semblance of reasoning, a sin following out of the occasion of a preceding sin ensnares the froward soul; and when harsh and rugged sins sink it low, it is as if 'the satyrs' ruled it, gathered together in it in concord; and thus it comes to pass that the ways of their paths are always involving themselves worse and worse, when sin taking occasion of sin enchains the lost soul.

37. But here it is necessary to know that sometimes the eye of the understanding is first dulled, and then afterwards the mind being taken captive roams at random amidst outward objects of desire, so that the blinded soul knows nothing where it is being led, and willingly surrenders itself to the allurements of the fleshly part; while at other times the desires of the flesh first burst forth, and after long custom in forbidden courses, they close the eye of the heart. For often the mind discerns light ways, but does not lift itself up fearlessly against bad practices, and it is overcome while offering resistance, when the very thing that it does in exercising discernment is outdone by the pleasurable emotion of its partner [*carnis*

suae] the flesh. For that it very often happens that first the eye of contemplation is parted with, and afterwards the mind is subjected to the toils of the world through the desires of this our flesh, Samson is witness on being taken captive by the Philistines [Allophylis, as usual in V. and LXX.], who after he had lost his eyes was put to the mill, because the evil spirits, after that by the piercings of temptation they force out the eye of contemplation within, send it without into a round of labour. Again, that it often happens that both right practice is parted with externally, and yet the light of reason still retained in the heart, the Prophet Jeremiah instructs us, who, while he relates the captivity of Zedekiah, tells us the course of the captivity of the interior, in these words, *Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Reblatha before his eyes; also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes.* [Jer. 39, 6. 7.] The king of Babylon is our old enemy, the master of the confusion of the interior, who first slaughters the sons before the eyes of the parent beholding it, in that he oftentimes so destroys good works, that the very man who is taken captive perceives with terror that he is parting with them. For the soul very often groans, but yet being subdued by the enjoyments of its fellow the flesh, the good things which it begot it loses while it loves them; it sees the ills, which it undergoes, and yet never lifts the arm of virtue against that king of Babylon. But whilst having its eyes open it is struck with the doing of iniquity, by being used to sin it is one day brought to this, that it is bereft of the very light of reason itself also. Whence the king of Babylon, after his sons had been first put to death, plucked out Zedekiah's eyes, in that the evil spirit, after that good deeds have been first put away, afterwards takes away the light of understanding likewise. Which rightly befals Zedekjah in Reblatha, for 'Reblatha' is rendered 'these many.' For he at last has even the light of reason too closed, who is weighed down by bad habit in the multitude of his iniquities. But in whatever way sin may

come forth, or from whatever occasion it may spring, yet the ways of the reprobate are always ‘involved,’ so that, being abandoned to depraved lusts, they either do not pursue good things at all, or pursuing them with a weak aim, they never stretch out the unimpeded steps of the mind in pursuit of them. For either they do not set out with right aims, or, breaking down in the very way, they never attain to them. Whence it generally happens that tiring of them they return to their own ways, prostrate themselves from their settled purpose of mind in the enjoyments of the flesh, mind only the things that are transitory, and take no heed of those which are calculated to abide with them. Whence it is fitly subjoined,

They shall walk unto emptiness, and perish.

38. For they all ‘walk unto emptiness,’ who bring with them nothing of the fruit of their labour. Thus one man spends himself in the attainment of honours, another is in a fever with multiplying his means, another pants after the obtaining of applause; but because everyone at his death leaves all such things here, he has lost his labour on emptiness, who has brought nothing with him before the presence of the Judge. Contrary whereto it is well delivered in the Law, *Thou shalt not appear before the face of the Lord empty*. [Ex. 23, 15] For he that has not provided for himself the wages of life earned by well doing, ‘appears before the Lord empty.’ [Deut. 16, 16] Hence it is said of the just by the Psalmist, *But they shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.* [Ps. 126, 6] For they come to the inquisition of Judgment, ‘bringing their sheaves with them,’ who exhibit in themselves those good works, whereby they may obtain life. Hence the Psalmist says again concerning every Elect person, *Who hath not taken his soul in vain*. [Ps. 24, 4] For everyone ‘takes his soul in vain,’ who, taking account of present things only, pays no heed to those that shall follow him to last for ever. He ‘takes his soul in vain,’ who, being unconcerned for the life thereof, prefers to it the care of the flesh; but the

righteous do not 'take their soul in vain,' in that whatsoever they do through the instrumentality of the body, with stedfast purpose they make all tell to its weal, that even though the deed pass away, still the cause of the deed may never pass, in that after life it procures the rewards of life. But the reprobate are indifferent to take account of these; for verily 'going walking into emptiness,' in pursuing life they flee from it, and in finding it they lose it. But we are more effectually withheld from imitating the wicked, if we calculate their losses by the end. Whence it is well added even with a charge,

Ver. 19. *Consider the paths of Tema, the ways of Sheba, and wait a little while.* [V. thus]

39. For Tema is rendered 'the south wind,' and Sheba 'a net.' What is here set forth by 'the south wind,' which dissolves the limbs it blows on with its warm breath, saving dissolute laxity of life? and what by 'the net,' save the fettering of practice? For they that aim at the things that are eternal with a dissolute mind, of their own free will fetter themselves by the irregularity of their efforts, that they should never advance towards God with a free step, and while they entangle themselves with the loose practices of their behaviour, they as it were set their feet to be held in the meshes [*maculis*] of a net. For as we said a little way above, that there are persons who are drawn back into bad habits, already got the better of, by means of other open evil habits not yet overcome, so there are some that fall back into those which they had abandoned by means of others, which are cloked with the title of respectability, or the honourableness of praise. Thus there are very many, who now no longer aim at the things of another, and who with the love of tranquillity begun are parted from the jarrings of this world, thirst to be instructed in Holy Writ, long to give themselves to heavenly contemplations, yet they do not abandon with a perfect freedom of soul all concern about their domestic affairs, and often while they are employed in

the service of the same in a lawful way, they are involved in the unlawful jarrings of this world at the same time; and while they are eager to protect their earthly interests with anxious care, they quit that repose of the heart, which they sought for; and whilst their substance, that is escaping from them, is guarded with continual caution, the word of divine knowledge which has been conceived in the heart is let loose; in that, according to the declaration of 'Truth,' the thorns choke the seed that has sprung up, when the importunate cares of earthly things put out the word of God from the recollection [Matt. 13, 22]. Therefore they are walking in a net with their steps all abroad, who, while they do not perfectly forsake the world, fetter themselves in their steppings, that they cannot step.

40. And there are very many, who not only do not covet what belongs to another, but even abandon all that they possessed in the world, who despise themselves, do not aim at any glory of the present life, sever themselves from this world's courses of action, and whatever prosperity may smile upon them, they well nigh tread it under their feet; yet being tied with the chain of earthly relationship, while they imprudently obey the dictates of the love of kindred, it often happens that by the instrumentality of relations they turn back to those habits which they had even together with self-contempt already subdued; and whereas they love their fleshly kin beyond what needs, being drawn back without, they are separated from the Parent of the heart. For we often see men, who, as far as concerns their own interest, henceforth no longer entertain any desires of the present life, who have quitted the world both in practice and in profession, yet for their inordinate affection for relations, burst into the courts of justice, busy themselves with the discord of earthly things, part with the freedom of interior repose, and restore in their hearts the interests of the world that were long undone. Whither then are those walking but into a net, whom

perfection of life commenced had already set free from the present world, but whom the excessive love of earthly kin still binds?

41. For they that fol1ow after the reward of the eternal espousals with close pursuits, and not with loose steps, as they disregard themselves for the love of God, so they lay aside every thing whereby they see they are hindered; and since it is necessary for God's sake that they should render service to all that they are able, for God's sake they refuse their private services even to their relations. Hence it is that when one said, *Suffer me first to go and bury my father*, he thereupon heard from the lips of 'Truth,' *Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God*. [Luke 9, 59. 60.] Wherein it is to be observed, that whereas the chosen disciple is withheld from the burial of his father, for the sake of God it is not permitted a devout person to do for a dead father, from carnal affection, that which, for God's sake, he ought to do for strangers likewise. Hence again 'Truth' saith, *If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple*. [Luke 14, 26] In which same place, forasmuch, as after the hatred of our kindred we have the hatred of our own life brought in, it is plainly shewn that we are bidden to hold our relations in hatred in such sort as ourselves, that urging them [A.B.E. ourselves] away to the interests of eternity, and putting aside carnal favour towards them, when it is a hindrance in the way, we might learn by a proportioned skill of discrimination, at once to love them suitably, and to hate them savingly, so that in love hatred might be so taught to arise, that we might be able to love more really in hatred. Hence again it is said by Moses, *Who said unto his father and to his mother, I know you not, and to his brethren, I recognize you not, nor knew they their own children; these have observed Thy word and Thy covenant, and kept Thy judgments*. [Deut. 33, 9] For he longs to know God more familiarly who, from love of

religion, desires to know no longer those whom he has known after the flesh. For the knowledge of God is lessened by a grievous curtailment, if it be shared with acquaintance with the flesh. Everyone then must be put without the pale of kindred and acquaintance, if he would be more genuinely united to the Parent of all, that those same ones, whom for the sake of God he makes light of for a good end, he may the more substantially love, in proportion as he renounces in them the destructible affection of carnal attachment.

42. We ought indeed, even in a temporal way, to benefit more than the rest those to whom we are more nearly united; for a flame too extends its burning to things put by it, but that particular thing, wherein it originates, it first sets burning. We ought to acknowledge the tie of earthly relationship, and yet to disown it, when it obstructs the progress of the mind, that the faithful soul, being inflamed in devotion to divine things, may at once not look with contempt on the things which are joined to it below, and that by regulating these aright in itself, it may mount above them in the love of things on high. Therefore with wise caution we must be on our guard, that no favouring of the flesh steal upon us, and divert the step of the heart from the right path, lest it hinder the efficacy of heavenly love, and sink the soaring mind; downwards under a superincumbent weight. For everyone ought so to sympathize in the wants of his kindred, that yet by such sympathy he never let the force of his purpose be impeded, so that affection indeed should fill the bowels of the heart, yet not divert it from its spiritual resolve. For it is not that holy men do not love their fleshly kin, to give them all things necessary, but they subdue this very fondness within themselves from love of spiritual things, in order so to temper it by the control of discretion, that they may be never led by it, yea in a small measure, and in the very least degree, to deviate from the straight path. And these are well conveyed to us by the representation of the kine, which going

along towards the hilly lands under the Ark of the Lord, proceed at one and the same time with fondness and with hardened feeling; as it is written, *And the men did so: and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: and they laid the Ark of the Lord upon the cart*. [1 Sam. 6, 10] And soon after; *And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and they went along by one way, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left*. [ver. 12] For observe, when the calves were shut up at home, the kine which are fastened to the waggon bearing the Ark of the Lord, moan and go their way, they give forth lowings from deep within, and yet never alter their steps from following the path. They feel love indeed shewn by compassion, but never bend their necks behind. Thus, thus must they needs go on their way, who being placed under the yoke of the sacred Law, henceforth carry the Lord's Ark in inward knowledge, so as never for this, that they take compassion on the necessities of relations, to deviate from the course of righteousness which they have entered upon. For 'Beth-shemesh' is rendered 'the house of the sun.' Thus to go to Beth-shemesh with the Ark of the Lord placed on them, is in company with heavenly knowledge to draw near to the seat of light eternal. But we are then really going on towards Beth-shemesh, when in going the path of righteousness, we never turn aside into the adjoining side-paths of error, not even for the sake of the affection we bear to our offspring; kindness to whom ought indeed to have a place in our mind, but never to turn it back, lest that mind, if it be not touched by a feeling of affection, be hard, or being too much touched, if it is turned aside, be slack.

43. It is well to look at blessed Job, in whom the yoke of God's fear had worn the neck of the heart, and see under what controlling influence of discretion he bears the Ark of the Lord's sentence. For when the calves are gone he lows, in that, when tidings of his children's death were brought 'him, 'he fell upon the ground with his head shaven,' yet he goes by the

right way whilst lowing, in that his lips in groaning are opened to utter the praises of God, whereas, he exclaims without delay, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*. [Job 1, 21] But minds that are not gifted with discretion know nothing of this rule of life, and in the degree that they seek the ways of the Lord negligently, they are turned back foolishly to the paths of the world.

44. Rightly then does the holy man after ‘the paths of Theman’ make mention of ‘the ways of Saba.’ For they whom the south wind of a mischievous warmth has relaxed, are verily held bound in the net of entanglement. But in describing the deeds of the wicked, he rightly admonishes them to ‘consider’ these things; for we delight in froward practices in doing them, but when seen in others we pass sentence upon them, and the actions, which in our own case we think to be little deserving of sentence, we learn to be as base as they really are by the conduct of others; and so it comes to pass that the mind is brought back to itself, and takes shame to do the thing that it censures. For it is as though an ugly face in a mirror caused disgust, as often as the mind sees in a similar life, what to feel abhorrence for in itself. Therefore he says, *Consider the paths of Teman, the ways of Sheba, and wait a little*. As if it were in plain words; ‘Look to the harms of another’s luke-warmness, and then you will the more surely take hope in relation to eternal things, if with the eye of the heart rightly directed you look at that which may disgust you in others.’

45. And it is well said, wait a little; for it often happens, that whereas the short period of the present life is loved as if it were to last for long, the soul is dashed from its eternal hope, and being beguiled with present objects, is thrown back by the blackness of self-despair. And when it imagines that the period is long which remains for it to live, at once upon quitting life it meets that eternity, which it may not avoid. Hence it is that it was spoken by one that was wise, *Woe unto you that have lost patience*. For truly they ‘lose

patience,' who, whilst they reckon to tarry long amongst visible things, part with the hope of the invisible. And while the mind is rivetted to present objects, life is ended, and they are suddenly brought to unlooked-for punishments, which, being deceived by their presumptuous expectations, they flattered themselves they would either never meet with, or not till late. Hence 'Truth' says, *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour*. [Matt. 25, 13] Hence again it is written, *The Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night* [1 Thess. 5, 2]; for because it is never seen drawing near to seize upon the soul, it is likened to a thief in the night. Therefore it ought to be the more apprehended as always coming, in proportion as it cannot be foreknown by us when it is about to come. Whence holy men too, in that they have their eyes incessantly fixed on the shortness of life, do as it were pass through life daily undergoing death; and prepare themselves on a more solid basis for the things that shall last, in proportion as they are ever reflecting by the end that transitory things are nought. For hence the Psalmist, seeing that the life of the sinner fleeth at a quick pace, exclaims, *For yet a little while and the sinner shall not be*. [Ps. 37, 10] Hence again he saith, *As for man, his days are as grass*. [Ps. 103, 15] Hence Isaiah saith, *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field*. [Is. 40, 6] Hence James rebukes the spirit of the presumptuous, saying, *For what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time*. [James 4, 14] Therefore it is rightly said, *wait a little*, in that both that is unmeasurable which follows after without limit, and all but little that is closed by an end. For that ought not to seem long to us, which by the course of its allotted period is tending not to be; which while it is carried on by moments, its very own moments, whilst they delay, are themselves urging forwards; and from the very same cause, from which it is seen to be in our possession, it results that it ceases to be in our possession. But blessed Job, after he had brought in the shortness of the present life in terms of

contempt, therefore in the voice of all the Elect rises up justly against the wicked, subjoining,

Ver. 20. *They are confounded, because I have hoped.*

46. When the wicked inflict evils upon the good, if they see them to be shaken from the interior hope, they are overjoyed at their deceiving taking effect, for they account the spread of their error to be the greatest gain, in that they rejoice have fellows in perdition, but whilst the good man's hope is rooted within, and never bent to the ground by outward evils, confusion seizes the soul of the wicked, in that whilst they are unable to get at the innermost parts of the distressed, they are ashamed to prove themselves cruel for no end. Therefore let the holy man say in his own voice, let him say in the endurance of the Church universal in affliction and groaning, Who, amidst the contrarieties of the wicked, without any default of mind, longs for the joy of the heavenly recompense, and by dying holds on to life; *They are confounded, because I have hoped*. As though it were in plain words, 'because the wicked by hard persecutions fail to soften the force of my rigid mind, surely being covered with shame they lose the labours of their cruel ways.' And hence at once he looks on the blessings of the Retribution to come as henceforth here, and marks what an arraignment awaits the wicked at the Judgment, adding,

They came even unto me, and were ashamed.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

47. For lost sinners 'come even to Holy Church' on the Day of Judgment, in that they are then brought even to the beholding of her glory, that for the greater punishment of their guilt they may see in their rejection what they have lost. Then shame covers the wicked, when conscience bearing witness convicts them in the sight of the Judge. Then the Judge is beheld without, and the accuser is felt within. Then every sin is called up before the eyes,

and the soul, over and above the burnings of hell, is worse tortured by its own fire. Concerning these it is rightly said by the Prophet, *Lord, let Thy hand be exalted, that they see not* [g], *let them see and be confounded*. [Is. 26, 11] For now their merits darken the understanding of lost sinners, but then the knowledge of their guilt enlightens it, so that both now they in no wise see what is to be followed, and then they perceive it, after they have lost it. For now they do not care to understand the things of eternity, or they refuse to make them their object, when understood; but then assuredly, both understanding and longing after them, they have them disclosed to their sight, when they can no longer obtain them thus longed for.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

48. Which same words of blessed Job, moreover, are in an especial manner suited to his friends, who set themselves to shake the mind of the holy man by bitter upbraidings. For he says, *They were confounded because I have hoped*. As if it were in plain words, 'Whilst they fail by foolish revilings to turn me to despair, they are themselves confounded by the madness of their fool-hardiness.' *They came even up unto me, and were ashamed*. As though he expressed it, 'Seeing the sores of my body, but ignorant of the constancy of my mind, whilst they took upon them to reproach me for unrighteousness, they did not yet 'come up unto me,' but striking with cruel reproaches, whereas they find that my soul stands firm amidst adversity, 'coming to me,' as it were, 'they are ashamed.' For herein they 'come to me,' in that they know me in the interior of my heart, and there they are 'covered with shame,' where outward loss moves me not, standing with firm mien.' Now there are some, who do not know how to fear God, saving when they are either affrighted by adversity experienced in their own person, or known in others; whom prosperity uplifts from presumptuousness, and crosses dismay from weakness. Of the number of

which same, blessed Job charged his friends with being, in that he immediately adds; saying,

Ver.21. *For now ye are come, to see my stroke, and are afraid.*

49. As though he said in plain words, 'I feared God then, when, buoyed up with prosperity, I felt no hurts of the scourge. But ye, who fear not God from love, dread Him from the stroke of the rod alone. It goes on;

Ver. 22, 23. *Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give me of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

50. If these words are referred to the person of Holy Church, as we have said that blessed Job's friends bear the likeness of heretics, he rightly declares that he does not 'want their substance.' For the 'substance' of heretics is not unsuitably taken for carnal wisdom, by which whilst they are wickedly sustained, they as it were shew themselves rich in words, which Holy Church does not go after, in proportion as she goes beyond it by spiritual understanding. But oftentimes, while heretics maintain wrong things concerning the Faith, they utter various refined sayings against our old Enemy concerning the temptations of the flesh. For sometimes they as it were shew in themselves healthy limbs of practice, in the same degree that as wounded in faith they are held in the head by the fangs of the envenomed serpent. But Holy Church is not minded to hear refined sayings concerning temptation from those, who, whilst they deliver some truths that relate to practice, are leading men onward into the falsities of misbelief. Whence it is rightly said in this place, *Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give me aught of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?* For he calls the strength of Satan, 'the enemy's hand,' and the powers of evil spirits, 'the hand of the mighty.' Whom he in

this respect calls mighty, in that whereas they were created void of fleshly infirmity, no impotency being mixed therewith obstructs their wicked efforts. But with regard to this which is subjoined,

Ver. 24. *Teach me, and I will hold my tongue, and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.*

51. It seems doubtful under the scale of what pointing this should hang, whether it be joined to what he had brought in, *Did I say*, or whether the sentence is spoken disjoined from the preceding, so that it is said thereby in reproach, *Teach me, and I will hold my tongue, and cause me to understand wherein I have erred*. Which same however agrees with either pointing, for by neither does he depart from the path of sound meaning. But since we have delivered these things in course allegorically, it remains for us to examine the words of the history in a moral sense.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

52. Blessed Job had undergone the loss of his property; being given over to the strokes of evil spirits, he was suffering the smarts of their wounds; yet in loving the wise foolishness of God, he had trodden under foot the foolish wisdom of the world with inward scorn. Therefore in opposition to the rich of this world he is called poor, in opposition to the powerful he is called oppressed, in opposition to the wise he is called a fool. He answers the three, that as poor he seeks not their substance, nor as oppressed their aid against the strong, nor as a fool does he seek the lore of earthly wisdom. For in that the holy man is carried off above himself in spirit, both being poor he is not straitened by want, and being oppressed he suffers nothing, and being of free will foolish, he does not gaze with admiration at carnal wisdom. Hence it is that another poor and oppressed man saith, *We are perplexed, yet not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken we are cast down, yet perish not*. [2 Cor. 4, 8. 9.] Hence it is that teaching the wisdom of a

holy foolishness, he says, *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.* [1 Cor. 1, 27] And, *if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise*. [3, 18] Hence making manifest both the gloriousness of oppression, and the riches of chosen poverty, he says, *As dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things*. [2 Cor. 6, 9]

53. It is well on this point to lift up the eyes of the mind, and to see in the Elect of God, who are suffering oppression without, what a fortress of strength they are masters of within. For all that is high and exalted without, in their secret view is grovelling, from the contempt they feel. For transported above themselves in the interior, they fix their mind on high, and all that they meet with in this life, they look upon as passing away far below unconnected with themselves, and so to speak, while they strive by the Spirit to become quit of the flesh, almost the very things they are undergoing, they are blind to. For in their eyes whatsoever is exalted in time, is not high. For as though set upon the summit of a high mountain, they look down upon the flats and levels of the present life, and rising above themselves in spiritual loftiness, they see made subject to themselves, within, all that swells highest without in carnal glorying; and hence they spare no Powers that are contrary to truth, but those whom they see to be uplifted by pride, they abase by the authority of the Spirit. For it is hence that Moses, coming from the wilderness, encounters the king of Egypt with authority, saying, *Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me? let My people go, that they may serve Me*: [Ex. 10, 3] and when Pharaoh, being driven hard by the plagues, said, *Go ye, sacrifice to your God in this land* [Ex. 8, 25]; he thereupon answered with increased authority, *It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians to the Lord our God*. It is hence

that Nathan encounters the king when guilty; to whom first offering a similar instance of the transgression committed, and holding him convicted by the voice of his own sentence, he thereupon added, saying, *Thou art the man, who hast done this thing*. [2 Sam. 12, 7] It is hence that the Man of God, being sent to Samaria to destroy idolatry, when king Jeroboam threw frankincense upon the altar, not fearing the king, not held back by the dread of death, with undaunted spirit, put forth the authority of a free voice against the Altar, saying, *O Altar, Altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places*. [1 Kings 13, 2] It is hence that when proud Ahab, being bowed down to the service of idols, ventured to upbraid Elijah, saying, *Art thou the man that troubleth Israel?* [1 Kings 18, 17] Elijah forthwith struck the foolishness of the king in his pride with the authoritativeness of a free rebuke, saying, *I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy fathers house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and have followed Baalim*. [ver. 18] It is hence that Elisha, following his master's true loftiness, confounded for the guilt of unbelief Joram the son of Ahab, when he came to him with the king Jehoshaphat, saying, *What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother*. [2 Kings 3, 13] And, *As the Lord of hosts liveth, before Whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee*. [ver. 14] Hence it is that the same man held Naaman fixed before the door of his house, when he came to him with horses and chariots, and did not meet him, set up as he was with abundance of talents and raiment; that he did not open the door of his house to him, but charged him by a messenger that he should wash seven times in the Jordan. Hence too this same Naaman was going away enraged, saying, *Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me*. It is hence that Peter, when the priests and elders, raging furiously even in scourging,

forbade him to speak in the Name of Jesus, straightway made answer with great authority, saying, *Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*. [Acts 4, 19. 20.] It is hence that when Paul saw the chief Priest sitting in judgment [al. making resistance] against the Truth, and when his officer had struck him a blow on the cheek, he uttered not a curse, as being moved to wrath, but filled with the Spirit, prophesied with a free voice, saying, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law*? [Acts 23, 3] It is hence that Stephen not even when doomed to die dreaded to put forth authoritativeness of voice in utterance against the power of his persecutors, saying, *Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do alway resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye*. [Acts 7, 51]

54. But that holy men burst into such high words from passionate affection for Truth, and not from the sin of pride, they themselves plainly point out, in that by other doings and other sayings they make it appear with what great humility they are adorned, and with what great charity they are inflamed toward those whom they rebuke. For pride begets hatred, humility only love. Thus the words which love makes bitter, flow, surely, from the fountain head of humility. Accordingly, how could Stephen utter reproach in pride, who with bended knee prayed for those whom he reproached, when they went on to worse and stoned him, saying, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*. [ver. 60] How did Paul in pride utter words of bitterness against the Priest and Chief of his nation, who in humility lowers himself to the service of his disciples, saying, *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus our Lord, and ourselves your servants for Christ's sake?* [2 Cor. 4, 5] How did Peter resist the rulers from Pride? when in compassion to their erring course, he as it were makes excuse for their guilt, saying, *I wot that through*

ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. [Acts 3, 17. 18.] And he draws them in pity to life, saying, *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*. [ver. 19] How was it from pride that Elisha refused to come to the sight of Naaman, who not only let himself be seen, but even be taken hold of by a woman? concerning whom it is written, *And when she came to the Man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the Man if God said, Let her alone, for her soul is in bitterness*. [2 Kings 4, 27] How was it in pride that Elijah uttered words of reproach against the proud king, seeing that he ran humbly before his chariot, as it is written, *And he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab?* How was it of Pride that the man of God disregarded the presence of Jeroboam, who out of pity straightway restored his withered right hand to its former soundness? As it is written, *And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand dried up*. [1 Kings 13, 4] And shortly after, *And the man of God besought the face of the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before*. [ver. 6] For as pride cannot give birth to miraculous powers, we are shewn, in what a Spirit of humility the voice of upbraiding issues, in that signs go along with it. How did Nathan swell high in words of rebuke against king David, who when there was sin lacking that deserved rebuke, fell on his face upon the ground in his sight? as it is written, *And they told the king, saying, Behold, Nathan the Prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground*. [1 Kings 1, 23] How could Moses, when he freely withstood the Egyptian king, indulge contempt for him, who while he held familiar communing with God worshipped with self-abasement Jethro his

relation who was following him? to whose advice he paid such ready obedience, that after the secret communications of God, he accounted that great gain, which came to him without from the lips of man.

55. From one set of deeds of the Saints, then, we learn what account we are to take of another. For holy men are neither free spoken out of pride, nor submissive out of fear. But whenever uplightness uplifts them to freedom of speech, thought of their own weakness preserves them in self-abasement. For though, in chiding them, they smite as from above the misdoings of offenders, yet judging themselves the more exactly in their own eyes, they in a manner take their place amongst the refuse, and as they pursue after wickedness in others, so much the fiercer do they return to keep themselves in check; and, on the other hand, as they never spare themselves in doing better, they are the more watchful in rebuking the deeds of other men. For what, that is derived from the powers of man without, shall strike them with wonder, who alike look down upon themselves, even at the moment that now they have well nigh gotten hold of the summit of interior height. And so for this reason it is right for them to sit in judgment on the loftiness of earthly exaltation without, for that no load of swelling humour weighs down the eye within. Hence when blessed Job disregards earthly wisdom, and powers, and substance, in those friends that were full of harsh words, saying, *Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give me of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand ? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? Teach me, and I will hold my tongue, and cause me to understand wherein I have erred*; what opinion he entertains about himself, he makes appear a little below, saying, *Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless*. Thus it is clearer than the light what a weak nature he sees himself to be possessed of, in that he calls himself *fatherless*. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *Wherefore have ye detracted from the words of truth; when there is none of you that is able to convict them?*

56. He must himself be pure from evil, who makes it his concern to correct the evil practices of other men, so as not to be taken up with earthly imaginations, not to give way to grovelling desires, in order that he may the more clearly see what things others ought to avoid, in proportion as he himself the more thoroughly eschews them by knowledge and by practice. For the eye which dust weighs upon, never clearly sees the spot upon the limb, and the hands that hold mud can never cleanse away the overcast dirt. And this according to the older of the old Translation [h], the voice of God rightly conveyed in sense to David, busied about external wars, when It says, *Thou shalt not build a temple, for thou art a man of blood*. [1 Chron. 22, 8; 28, 3.] Now he builds God's Temple, who is devoted to correcting and forming the minds of his neighbours. For we are God's Temple, who are framed to life by His indwelling, as Paul bears witness, saying, *For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are*. [1 Cor. 3, 17] But a man of blood is forbidden to build a temple to God, in that he who is still devoted to carnal practices, must needs blush to instruct the minds of his neighbours spiritually. Therefore it is well said, *Wherefore have ye detracted from the words of truth, when there is none of you that is able to convict them?* As if it were in plain words; 'With what rashness do ye blame all ye hear, who knowing nothing of the causes of my stroke, still utter words that deserve blame.' It goes on,

Ver. 26. *Ye only set in order speeches to upbraid, and ye speak words against the wind.*

57. There are two sorts of speech, which are very troublesome and mischievous to mankind, the one which aims to commend even froward things, the other which studies to be always carping even at right ones. The one is carried downward with the stream, the other sets itself to close the very channels and streams of truth. Fear keeps down the one, pride sets up the other. The one aims to catch favour by applause; anger, in order that it

may be manifested in contention, drives forward the other. The one lies grovelling at command; the other is always swelling high in opposition. Accordingly, blessed Job convicts his friends of being of this kind, when he says, *Ye do but set in order speeches to upbraid*. But he proceeded to make known whence it is that men come even to the effrontery of unjust upbraiding, when he added, *And ye speak words to the wind*. For to ‘speak, words to the wind’ is to talk idly. For often when the tongue is not withheld from idle words, a loose is even given to the rashness of foolish reviling. For it is by certain steps of its descent, that the slothful soul is driven into the pitfall. Thus while we neglect to guard against idle words, we are brought to mischievous ones, so that it first gives satisfaction to speak of the concerns of others, and afterwards the tongue by detraction carps at the life of those of whom it speaks, and sometimes even breaks out into open revilings. Hence the incitements are sown of angry passions, jars arise, the fire-brands of animosity are kindled, peace is altogether extinguished in men’s hearts. Hence it is well said by Solomon, *He that letteth out water is a beginning of brawls*. [Prov. 17, 14] For to let out water is to let the tongue loose in a flood of words, contrary to which he at the same time declares in a favourable sense, saying, *The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters*. [Prov. 18, 4] He then that letteth out water is a beginning of brawls, for he who neglects to refrain his tongue, dissipates concord. Hence it is written contrariwise, *He that silenceth a fool, softeneth wrath*. [Prov. 26, 10. Vulg.]

58. But that everyone that is given to much talking cannot maintain the straight path of righteousness, the Prophet testifies, in that he saith, *For an evil speaker shall not be led right upon the earth*. [Ps. 140, 11] Hence again Solomon saith, *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*. [Prov. 10, 19] Hence Isaiah saith, *And the cultivation of righteousness, silence*; so pointing out that the righteousness of the interior is desolated, when we do not withhold from immoderate talking. Hence James saith, *If any man*

among you think himself to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. [James 1, 26] Hence he says again, *Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak*. [1, 19] Hence he adds again, *The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison*. Hence 'Truth' warns us by his own lips, saying, *Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*. [Matt. 12, 36] For an idle word is such as lacks either cause of just occasion, or purpose of kind serviceableness. If then an account is demanded for idle speech, it is very deeply to be considered what punishment followeth after that much talking, wherein we sin even by words of pride.

59. Furthermore, be it known that they are lost to the whole estate of righteousness altogether, who let themselves go in mischievous words. For the mind of man, like water, both when closed round is collected on high, in that it seeks anew the source whence it descended, and when let loose it comes to nought, in that it dissipates itself to no purpose down below. For the mind is as it were drawn out of itself in so many streams, as it lets itself out in superfluous words from the strict control of silence. And hence it has no power to turn back within to the knowledge of itself, in that being dissipated without in much talking, it loses the strength of interior reflection. Therefore it lays itself bare in every part to the inflictions of the plotting enemy, in that it does not hedge itself about with any defence for its safe-keeping. Whence it is written, *He that hath no rule over his own spirit in his talk is like a city that is broken down and without walls*. For because it is without the wall of silence, the city of the mind lies open to the darts of the enemy, and when it casts itself forth of itself in words, it exhibits itself exposed to the adversary, and he gets the mastery of it without trouble, in proportion as the soul that he has to overcome combats against its own self by much talking.

60. But herein be it known, that when we are withheld from speaking by excess of fear, we are sometimes confined within the strait bounds of silence beyond what need be. And whilst we avoid the mischiefs of the tongue without caution, we are secretly involved in worse. For oftentimes while we are overmuch restrained in speech, we are subject to a mischievous degree of much talking in the heart, that the thoughts should be hot within, the more that the violent keeping of indiscreet silence confines them, and most often they let themselves take a wider range in proportion as they reckon themselves to be more secure, in that they are not seen by censors without. Whence the mind is sometimes lifted up in pride, and, as it were, regards as weak those persons whom it hears engaged in talk. And when it keeps the mouth of the body shut, it never knows to what degree it is laying itself open to evil by entertaining pride. For it keeps the tongue down, but it sets the heart up. And whereas it never takes heed to itself from inattention, it censures all the world more freely to itself, in proportion as it does it at the same time the more secretly. And most frequently oversilent people, when they meet with any wrongs, are driven into bitterer grief, the more they do not give utterance to all that they are undergoing. For if the tongue declared with calmness the annoyance inflicted, grief would flow away from our consciousness. For closed wounds give more acute pain, in that when the corruption that ferments within is discharged, the pain is laid open favourably for our recovery. And generally whilst over-silent men fix their eyes on the faults of any, and yet hold in the tongue in silence, they are, as it were, withdrawing the use of the salve, after the wounds have been seen. For they the more effectually become the cause of death, that they refused by speaking to cast out the poison which they might. And hence if immoderate silence were not a thing to blame, the Prophet would newer say,

Woe is me, for I have held my peace.

61. What then have we here to do, saving that the tongue must be heedfully kept in under the poise of a mighty control, but not that it must be indissolubly chained, lest either being let loose it run out into mischief, or being bound up, it be also slack to render service. For hence it is said by one, *A wise man will hold his tongue till he sees opportunity,* that when he accounts it convenient, strictness of silence being laid aside, by speaking such things as are meet, he may devote himself to answer the end of usefulness. Hence Solomon saith, *A time to keep silence, and a time to speak*. For the seasons for changes are to be weighed with discretion, lest either when the tongue ought to be restrained, it let itself out to no purpose in words, or when it might speak to good purpose, it keep itself in from sloth. Which the Psalmist considering comprehended in a brief petition, saying, *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; and a door of guard on my lips*. [Ps. 141, 3] For a door is opened and shut. He then who prayed not that a bar should be set to his lips, but a door, openly shewed that the tongue ought both to be held in by self-control, and let loose on grounds of necessity, that both the voice should open the discreet mouth at the fitting time, and on the other hand silence close it at the fitting time. And because neither the friends of Job, nor all heretics, whose likeness they bear, know how to observe this, they are said to 'utter words to the wind.' In that the sayings which the weightiness of discretion does not establish firmly, the breath of levity carries along.

BOOK VIII.

He explains part of the sixth Chapter, from verse 27, and the whole of the seventh and eighth Chapters. In the course of this exposition, from verse 11, to the end of the eighth Chapter, he speaks at length on the sin of hypocrisy.

[LITERAL AND ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. WE have already in the preceding book considered the point, that blessed Job is making known to us the force of his humility, when he says,

Ver. 27. *Yea ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye strive to overthrow your friend.*

For he shews what great weakness he considers himself to be of, who calls himself 'fatherless.' But because charity even when wounded cannot quit love, he at once complains that they would have him overthrown, and yet witnesses that he is their friend. Whose words, as we have often said already, in such wise specially apply to himself, that yet by them, in the Spirit of Prophecy, we have at the same time set forth the sentiment ['sententia.' see l. xxiii. § 31] of the faithful People, in the voice of the Church Universal. Which same People, while encountering the opposition of heretics, both regards itself as weak in humility, and yet never abandons the greatness of keeping love entire, For the People of Holy Church, as it is the child of a dead Father, is not unfitly called 'fatherless,' in that henceforth indeed through faith it follows His life of Resurrection, but does not as yet see Him by His appearing. Now heretics 'overwhelm the fatherless,' when they bear hard upon the lowliness of the faithful People, by clamorous and false charges, and yet he is a 'friend,' whom they set themselves to 'overthrow,' in that God's faithful People never cease with loving affection to call to the Truth, the very persons whom they suffer as persecutors. But herein it is necessary to be known, that holy men neither

dread from weakness to be exposed to falsehoods, nor in being harmed ever hold their peace as to the Truth. Whence it is added;

Ver. 28. *But fulfil what ye have begun; give ear, and see if I lie.*

2. For because he does not fear to endure adversities, let him say, *But fulfil what ye have begun*; and because he does not withhold the announcements of the Truth from his very persecutors themselves, let him add, *Give ear, and see if I lie*. As if he said in plain words, 'Neither do I tremble at the mischiefs done me before, nor do I withhold the succours of correction from ungrateful hearers, in that I both have exercise through being driven to straits by misfortune, and gain increase by being kindly devoted to my very persecutors themselves.' For the mind of the Saints, in this war of temptations, being at once defended by the shield of patience, and begirt with the swords of love, obtains resolution for the enduring of bad treatment, and puts forth kindness in the recompensing good, so as both to receive stoutly the weapons of enmities, and return forcibly the darts of love. For he does not in any way go armed to the wars, who either taking a shield, uses no swords, or using swords, is not protected by a shield. And hence the soldier of God, encountered by a war of adversity, ought both to hold before him the shield of patience, lest he perish, and being prompt to preach he should launch the darts of love, that he may win the victory. The sum of which armour Paul briefly informs us of, saying, *Charity suffereth long, and is kind*. [1 Cor. 13, 4] But when one of either is wanting, charity is not, i.e. if bearing with the wicked without kindness, he has no love; or again if shewing himself without patience, he neglect to bear with the wicked whom he loves. Therefore that true charity may be retained by us, it must needs be that both patience support kindness, and again kindness support patience, that building up a large edifice as it were in our breast, both patience may give strength to the tower of kindness, and kindness give grace to the firmly founded edifices of patience. Therefore let blessed Job, as being prompt to

patience, say, *But fulfil what ye have begun*; and as endued with kindness let him add*, Give ear, and see I lie,*

3. But because Holy Church, being well trained in the school of humility, does not enjoin as by authority the right instructions which she delivers to those that be gone astray, but wins acceptance for them by reason, it is well said in this place, *See if I lie*. As though it were in plain words, ‘In all that I declare, give no credence to me upon grounds of authority, but consider on grounds of reason whether they be true. And if at any time she says what cannot be comprehended by reason, she reasonably advises that human reasoning should not be looked for in hidden truths.’ But it often happens that heretics, when they meet with opportunity for reasoning, give themselves a loose in the brawlings of strife. Hence it is immediately subjoined with propriety,

Ver. 29. *Answer, I pray you, without strife.*

4. For neither do heretics try to attain truth by their investigations, but to appear to be the winners; and whereas they desire to shew for wise without, they are bound within in their foolishness with the chains of their own pride; hence it comes to pass that they look out for contests of rivalry, and concerning God, Who is our Peace, they know not how to speak with peaceableness, and by the article of peace they become contrivers of strife. To whom it is well spoken by Paul, *But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.* [1 Cor. 11, 16] Now it is rightly added,

And speaking that which is just, judge ye.

5. For everyone that speaks, whilst he waits for his hearer’s sentence upon his words, is as it were subjected to the judgment of him, by whom he is heard. Accordingly he that fears to be condemned in respect of his words, ought first to put to the test that which he delivers; that there may be a kind of impartial and sober umpire sitting between the heart and the tongue,

weighing with exactness whether the heart presents right words, which the tongue taking up with advantage may bring forward for the hearer's judgment. Therefore let blessed Job, while managing his own case against his friends, yet telling our proceedings against heretics, blame precipitancy in speakers, and gather words to suit their mind, saying, *And speaking that which is just, judge ye*. As if it were in plain words, 'If in this, that ye come out to us in the issuing forth of the tongue, ye would not be found fault with, retain within the balances of justice, that what is delivered without, may find acceptance by the weightiness of truth, the more in proportion as the scales of discretion weigh it well within, and because those put forth a right judgment about the sayings of others, who are used first to sit in judgment on their own; after that he had said, speaking that which is just, judge ye, he immediately adds with propriety,

Ver. 30. *And ye shall not find iniquity in my tongue, nor shall foolishness sound through my jaws.*

6. As if it were expressed in plain words, 'The more exactly ye weigh your own words, the more truly ye estimate those of others, and when what ye say begins to be right, ye will recognise what ye hear to be just. For my tongue never sounds of folly to you, unless it be what comes from your own inward thoughts.' Thus Holy Church makes it her aim first to prove the allegations of her enemies to be false, and then to make known the announcements of the truth, for so long as they reckon themselves to hold right notions, they obstinately assail the right things that they hear. Therefore it is necessary beforehand that heretics should feel their error, lest they gainsay the truth when it is heard. For neither if the tiller of the soil neglect to root up the briars of the field by the cutting of the share, will the earth bring to a crop the seed received into her bosom; and 'when the physician does not get rid of the corruption, by opening the wound, healthy flesh never forms in the corrupt spot. First then in destroying what is bad,

let him say, *And speaking that which is just, judge ye*; but afterwards in teaching what is right, let him add, *And ye shalt not find iniquity in my tongue, nor shall foolishness sound through my jaws*. Now it is the way with heretics to deliver some things openly, to hold others in secret, for by the 'tongue,' plain speaking is denoted, but by the 'jaws [*fauces*],' the secret harbouring.

7. Neither in the tongue then of Holy Church does 'iniquity resound,' nor 'foolishness in her jaws,' for the things that she proclaims in open utterance, at the same time she preserves in inward faith; nor does she teach one thing in public and keep another to herself in secret; but she both delivers what she thinks by giving utterance to it, and keeps what she delivers by living accordingly; and whatever is let out belonging to the feast of heavenly wisdom by the tongue of preaching, she tastes this same by the jaws of silent expectation. And let blessed Job, both as an individual member of the whole Church, in telling his own case, and as shewing what is the heart of all of the Elect, make known all that he feels, that the testimony of his speech may manifest the uprightness of his mind. It proceeds,

Chap. vii. 1. *The life of man upon earth is a warfare*.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

8. In this passage in the old Translation the life of man is not called 'a warfare' at all, but 'a trial [a],' yet if the meaning of either word be regarded, the sound that meets the ear outwardly is different, yet they make one and the same concordant meaning. For what is represented by the title of 'a trial,' saving our contest with evil spirits? and what by the designation of 'a warfare,' but an exercising against our enemies? So that trial is itself 'a warfare,' in that whilst a man is watching against the plots of evil spirits, surely he is spending himself under arms for the fight. But we are to observe that this life of man is not said to *have* 'trial,' but it is described as

itself *being* 'trial.' For having of free will declined from the upright form wherein it was created, and being made subject to the rottenness of its state of corruption, whilst out of self it begets mischiefs against self, it henceforth becomes the very thing it undergoes. For whereas by letting itself down, it relinquished the erect seat of the interior, what did it find in itself save the shifting of change? And though it now erect itself thence to seek things on high, it directly drops down to its own level from the impulse of a slippery changeableness. It desires to stand up in contemplation, but has not the strength. It strives to fix firmly the step of thought, but is enfeebled by the slippings of its frailty. Which same burthens of a changeful lot, forasmuch as it sought them out of free will, so it bears them against the will. Man might have possessed his fleshly part in quiet, if created aright as he was by his Maker, he had been willing to be possessed by Him; but, whereas he aimed to lift himself up against his Maker, he straightway experienced in himself insolency from the flesh. Now forasmuch as together with guilt [b] punishment is also inherited along with it by birth, we are born with the engrafted evil of a frail nature; and we as it were carry an enemy along with us, whom we get the better of with toilsome endeavours. And so the life of man is itself 'a trial,' in that it has that springing up to it from itself, whereby it is liable to be destroyed. And though it is ever cutting down by the principle of virtue all that it begets in the principle of frailty, yet it is ever begetting in frailty somewhat to cut down by virtue.

9. And so the life of man is in such a way 'a trial,' that though we are henceforth restrained from the commission of sin, yet in our very good works themselves we are clouded now by the recollection of evil deeds, now by the mists of self-deception [*seductionis*], now by the suspension of our own purpose of mind. Thus one man henceforth restrains the flesh from excess, and yet he is still subject to images thereof, in that the things, which he has done willingly, come to mind against his will, and what he accounted

pleasure he bears as punishment. But because he fears to be drawn again into the conquered evil habit, he restrains his greedy appetite by the forcible means of a singular abstinence, and by his abstinence his face is rendered pale; then when paleness is observed in his countenance, his life is commended as deserving of the reverential regard of his fellow-creatures, and presently with the words of commendation vainglory enters into the mind of this man of abstinence, which while the mind having received a shock cannot get the better of, it seeks to blot from the face the paleness whereby that entered in, and so it comes to pass that being tied fast with the knots of infirmity, either in avoiding the paleness of abstinence, it again dreads to be brought under the dominion of excess, by food, or subduing by abstinence the impulse to excess, it apprehends its paleness serving to vainglory. Another man getting the better of the downfall of pride, henceforth lays hold of the state of humility with all the desire of his heart, and when he sees people that are full of pride breaking out so far as to the oppressing of the innocent, being inflamed by the incitement of zeal, he is forced to lay aside in some degree the thing he determined on, he displays the force of the side of right, and withstands the evil-minded not with mildness, but with authority. Whence it is very commonly the case, that either by pursuit of humility he is led to abandon zeal for the right, or again by zeal for right he interrupts the pursuit of humility, which he maintained. And when the authoritativeness of zeal and lowliness of purpose scarcely admit of being preserved together, the man is made a stranger to himself in his embarrassment. So that he is in a great dilemma lest in a deluded mind either pride pass itself off for the high tone of zeal, or timid inactivity feign itself humility. Another man, considering how great is the sin of deceit, determines to fortify himself in the citadel of truth, so that henceforth no false word should proceed out of his lips, and that he should wholly cut himself off from the sin of lying. But it very frequently happens that, when

the truth is spoken, the life of a neighbour is borne hard upon; and whilst the person fears to bring injury upon another, he is brought back, as in an aim of pity, to that evil habit of deceit which he had for long kept under; and so it comes to pass, that though wickedness has no place in his mind, yet the shadow of falsehood dims therein the rays of truth. And hence oftentimes, because when a man is urged with questions he cannot keep silence, either by telling a falsehood he slays his own soul, or by speaking the truth bears hard upon the life of a neighbour. Another man, incited by the love of his Maker, aims by unintermitted prayer to withhold his mind from all earthly thoughts, and to place it in safety in the secret deeps of inward repose; but in the very mounting of his prayer, whilst he is striving to ascend from things below, he is struck back by the vision of them, and the eye of the mind is stretched to gaze on the light, but from bodily habit it is dimmed by the images of earthly things arising. Whence it very often comes to pass, that the mind of the person so striving, being exhausted by its own weakness, either giving over prayer, is lulled asleep in sloth, or if it continue long in prayer, the mist of rising images gathers thick before its eyes.

10. And so it is well said, *The life of man is a trial upon earth*, since there also he met with the guiltiness of a downward course, where he thought to lay hold on the advancement of an upward one, and the mind is only thrown into disorder by the same act whereby it strove to arise out of its disorder, so that it is thrown back upon itself shivered by the very means, by which it was already getting above itself collected and compacted. This man being a stranger to instruction in the Divine Law, is kept down by his ignorance, that he should do nothing for the attaining of salvation. That man being endued with the knowledge of the Divine Law, while he is delighted that understanding is vouchsafed to him beyond other men, in that he exults with a selfish delight, wastes in himself the gift of understanding which he

has received. And in the Judgment he is shewn to light worse than others by the same thing, whereby he is exhibited brighter than others for a season. The first, because he is lifted high by no gifts of extraordinary powers, eschews the more plain path of uprightness too, and as if accounting himself an alien to the heavenly benefit, does evil things as though with more security, in proportion as he has never been vouchsafed the high endowments of the heavenly gift. The other the spirit of Prophecy replenishes, uplifts to the foreknowledge of events, and shews him things to come as now present. But whilst oftentimes and in many cases he is lifted above himself, so that he does really contemplate future events, his mind being drawn off into self-confidence, fancies that that spirit of Prophecy, which cannot always be had, is always with him, and when he takes every notion that he may have for prophecy, because that he ascribes this to himself even when he has nothing of it, he even loses it in the degree that he might possess it. And so it comes to pass, that he is brought back in sorrow behind the standard of other men's merits by the very means, whereby he was advanced before it in gladness of heart in the esteem of all. And so, *The life of man is a trial upon earth*, in that either being a stranger to extraordinary powers, it is unable to mount to the heavenly prize, or enriched with spiritual gifts, it is one day ruined the worse by occasion of its extraordinary powers.

11. But whereas we have said a little above that 'a trial' is the same as 'a warfare,' it is above every thing to be borne in mind, that something more is signified to us by the title of 'warfare,' than by the name of 'trial.' For to our apprehension there is this addition made by the expression of 'a warfare,' namely, that by warfare there is made daily progress towards an end. And whilst the space of warfare goes on increasing in a regular course, the whole warfare of men [B. & C. 'of a man'] is at the same time diminishing. And so, *the life of man is a warfare upon earth*, in that, as we

have said above, each one of us, while by the accessions of time he is daily advancing to the end of life, in adding to his life, is making an end to live. For he looks for the days to come round, but as soon as they are come for the lengthening of life, they are already taken away from the amount of life; for while the step of the traveller too is advancing over the ground in front, what remains of the way is lessening. Thus our life is 'a warfare,' in that in the same degree that it is drawn out to its enlargement, it is brought to an end, so as not to be. Therefore it is well said, *The life of man is a warfare upon earth*; for whilst by the several periods of time it seeks to gain ground, by that very period which it adds but in losing, it is made to pass away as it grows. And hence the very course of a warfare itself is described in the words that are immediately added,

Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?

12. The hireling longs for his days to pass the quicker, that he may attain without delay to the reward of his toil; and so the days of man imbued with a knowledge of the Truth and of the things of eternity, are justly compared to 'the days of an hireling,' because he reckons the present life to be his road, not his country, a warfare, not the palm of victory, and he sees that he is the further from his reward, the more slowly he is drawing near to his end. Moreover we must bear in mind, that the hireling spends his strength in labours that belong to others, yet procures for himself a reward that is his own. Now it is uttered by the Redeemer's voice, *My Kingdom is not of this world*. [John 18, 36] All we, then, who being endued with the hope of heaven, wear ourselves out with the toiling of the present life, are busied in the concern of another. For it often happens that we are even compelled to serve the sons of perdition, that we are constrained to give back to the world what belongs to the world, and we are spent indeed with another man's work, yet we receive a reward of our own, and by this, that we manage uncorruptly the interests of others, we are made to arrive at our own. In

reverse of which, 'Truth' saith to certain persons, *And if ye have not been faithful to that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own*. [Luke 16, 12] Moreover it is to be remembered, that an hireling anxiously and heedfully looks to it, that never a day pass clear of work, and that the expected end of the time should not come empty for his rewarding. For in his earnestness of labour he sees what he may get in the season of recompense. Thus when his work advances, his assurance in the reward is increased, but when the work is at a stand-still, his hope sickens in respect of the recompense. And hence each of the Elect reckoning his life as the days of an 'hireling,' stretches forward to the reward the more confident in hope, in proportion as he holds on the more stoutly for the advancement of labour. He considers what the transitory course of the present life is, he reckons up the days with their works. He dreads lest the moments of life should pass void of labour. He rejoices in adversity, he is recruited with suffering, he is comforted by mourning, in that he sees himself to be more abundantly recompensed with the rewards of the life to come, the more thoroughly he devotes himself for the love thereof by daily deaths. For it is hence that the citizens of the Land above say to the Creator of it in the words of the Psalmist, *Yea, for Thy sake are we killed all the day long*. [Ps 44, 22] Hence Paul says, *I die daily, brethren, for your glory*. [1 Cor. 15, 31] Hence he says again, *For the which cause I also suffer these things; but I am not confounded, for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day*. [2 tim. 1, 12] Therefore holy men for all the labours which they now exercise, while committing them to 'Truth,' already hold so many pledges of their recompense shut up in the chamber of hope. Yet oppressive heat is now felt under toil, that one day refreshment may be had in rest. Whence it is rightly added immediately afterwards,

Ver. 2, 3. *As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the end of his work, so am I made to possess months of vanity, and I have numbered me wearisome nights.*

13. Since for 'a servant to desire the shadow,' is after the heat of trial and the sweat of labour to seek the cool of eternal repose. Which shadow that servant desired, who said, *My soul thirsteth for God, the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?* [Ps. 42, 2] And again, *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech*. [Ps. 120, 5] Who as if after hard toil retreating from the heat, and seeking a covering that he might attain the rest of coolness, says again, *For I will enter into the place of the wonderful Tabernacle, even to the house of God*. [Ps. 42, 4] Paul panted to lay hold of this 'shadow,' having *a desire to depart and to be with Christ*. [Phil. 1, 23] This shadow they had already attained unto in the fulness of the desire of their hearts, who said, *We which have borne the burthen and heat of the day*. [Mat. 20, 12] Now he that is said to 'desire' the shadow, is rightly styled 'a servant,' in that each one of the Elect, so long as he is bound fast by the condition of frailty, is held in under the yoke of corruption, in its exercising dominion over him, as though under the harrassing effect of heat; which same person, when he is stripped of corruption, is then made known to himself as free and at rest. And hence it is well said by Paul also, *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. [Rom. 8, 21] For the Elect are now, pressed down by the penalty of a corrupt state, but then they are exalted high by the glory of an incorrupt. And in the same degree that, relatively to the burthens of our present constraint, there is nought of liberty now manifested in the sons of God, relatively to the glory of the liberty to ensue, nought of servitude will then appear in the servants of God. And so the servile garb of corruption being cast off, and the nobility of liberty bestowed, the creature is turned into the gloriousness of the sons of God, in

that in being united to God by the Spirit, it is proved as it were to have surmounted and overcome this very thing, that it is a created being. Now he that still ‘desires the shadow’ is ‘a servant,’ in that so long as he is subject to the heat of temptation, he is bearing on his shoulders the yoke of a wretched condition, and it is rightly added there, *and as an hireling looks for the reward of his work*.

14. For an hireling, when he looks at the work to be done, at once resigns his spirit in consequence of the length and burthensomeness of the labour; but when he recalls his sinking spirit to take thought of the reward of his work, he immediately sets afresh his vigour of mind for the exercising of his labour, and what he reckoned a grievous burthen in respect of the work, he esteems light and easy on the grounds of the recompense. Thus, thus, do each of the Elect, when they meet with the crosses of this life, when insults upon their good name, losses in their substance, pains of the body are brought upon them, reckon the things grievous, which they are tried with; but when they stretch the eyes of the mind to the view of the heavenly country, by comparison with their reward they see how light is all they undergo. For that which is shewn to be altogether insupportable for the pain, is by forecasting reflection rendered light for the recompense. It is hence that Paul is always being lifted up bolder than himself against adversities, in that ‘as an hireling he looketh for the end of his work.’ For he accounts what he undergoes to be a heavy burthen, but he reckons it light in consideration of the reward. For he does himself declare how great the burthen is of what he suffers, in that he bears record that he was ‘in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft,’ &c. who ‘of the Jews five times received folly stripes save one.’ [2 Cor. 11. 23. &c.] Who was ‘thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, a night and a day was in the deep of the sea; who endured perils of waters, of robbers, of his own countrymen, of the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the

sea, among false brethren; 'who in weariness and painfulness, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,' had labour and toil, who sustained 'fights without, within fears,' who declares himself pressed down above strength, saying, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we were weary even of life. But in what sort he wiped off him the streams of this hard toil with the towel of his reward, he himself tells, when he says, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared, with the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us*. Thus, 'as an hireling, he looketh for the end of his work,' who while he considers the increase of the reward, reckons it of no account that he labours well nigh spent. But it is well added, *So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights have I numbered me.*

15. For the Elect serve the Creator of things, and yet are often driven to straits by the want of things; they hold fast in God by love, and yet they lack the supports of the present life. So they who do not aim at present objects by their actions, as to the profits of the world, spend 'months of vanity.' Moreover they are subject to 'wearisome nights,' in that they bear the darkness of adversity not only to the extent of want, but oftentimes to the anguish of the body. For to undergo contempt and want is not hard to virtuous minds; but when adversity is turned to the paining of the flesh, then surely wearisomeness is felt from pain. It may also be not unsuitably interpreted, that each one of the Saints as a hireling spends 'months of vanity,' in that he now already bears the toil, but does not yet hold the reward; the one he undergoes, the other he looks for; but 'he numbers him wearisome nights,' in that by exercising himself in virtuous habits, he is accumulating upon his own head the ills of the present life: for if he does not aim to advance in spirit, he finds the things of the world perchance less galling to him.

[ALLEGORICAL INTEPRETATION]

16. Yet, if this sentence be referred to the voice of Holy Church, the meaning thereof is traced out with a little more particularity. For she herself has 'months of vanity,' who in her weak members has to bear earthly actions running on to nought without the meed of life. She 'numbers to herself wearisome nights,' in that in her strong members she bears manifold afflictions. For in this life there be some things that are hard, and some that are empty, and some that are both hard and empty at one and the same time. For from love of the Creator to be tried with the afflictions of the present life, is hard indeed, but not empty. For love of the present world to be dissolved in pleasures, is empty indeed, but not hard. But for the love of that world, to be exposed to any adversities, is at one and the same time both empty and laborious, in that the soul is at once 'afflicted by adversity, and not replenished with the compensation of the reward. And so in those who being now placed within the pale of Holy Church, still let themselves out in the pursuit of their pleasures, and are thenceforth not enriched with the fruit of good works, she passes 'months of vanity,' in that she spends the periods of life without the gift of the reward. But in those who, being devoted to everlasting aims, meet with the crosses of this world, 'she numbers herself wearisome nights,' in that she as it were in the obscurity of the present life undergoes the darkness of woe. But in those who at one and the same time love this transitory world, and yet are wearied with its contradiction, she sustains at once 'days of vanity,' and 'wearisome nights,' in that neither does any recompense coming after reward their lives, and, yet present affliction straitens them. But it is rightly that she never says that she has 'days,' but 'months of vanity' in these. For by the name of 'months,' the sum and total amount of days is represented, and so by the 'day,' we have each individual action set forth: but by 'months,' the conclusion of those actions is implied. But it often happens that when we do anything in this world, being buoyed up by the eager intentness of our hope,

this particular thing that we are about, we never think empty; but when we are come to the end of our doings, failing to obtain the object of our aims, we are grieved that we have been labouring for emptiness, and so we spend not only days, but likewise ‘months of vanity,’ in that not in the beginning of our actions, but only at the end, we bethink ourselves that we have been toiling in earthly practices without fruit. For when trouble follows upon our actions, it is as if the months of vanity of our life were brought home to us: in that it is only in the consummation of our actions that we learn, how vain was all our toil therein.

17. But because in the sacred word sometimes ‘night’ is put for ignorance, according to the testimony of Paul, who saith to his disciples instructed in the life to come; *Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness*. [1 Thess. 5, 5] To which words he prefixed, *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief*. [ib. 4] In this place the voice of Holy Church may be understood in the person of those of her members, who after the darkness of their state of ignorance are brought back to the love of righteousness, and being enlightened by the rays of truth, wash out with their tears all that they have done amiss. For every one that has been enlightened looks back to see how polluted all that was that he laboured at, in love with the present life. And therefore Holy Church in the case of these, in whom there is a return to life, compares her toils to ‘a servant’ in a state of heat, and to ‘an hireling longing for the end of his work,’ in the words, *As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the end of his work; so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights have I numbered me*. For in drawing the comparison there are two things which he premised, as also in the describing of weariness there are two which he thereupon added. For to the one oppressed with heat he gave ‘months of vanity,’ in that in proportion as the refreshing

of eternity is more the object of our desire, it is more clearly seen how vainly we spend our labour for this life. But to the one in expectance he brought in ‘wearisome nights,’ in that the more that at the end of our works we look at the reward we are to have given us, the more we lament that we so long knew nothing of the thing that we now aim at. And hence the very solicitude of the penitent is carefully set forth, so that it is said, ‘that he numbered to himself wearisome nights,’ in that the more truly we return to God, the more exactly we consider, while we grieve over them, those toils which we underwent in this world from ignorance. For as everyone finds that to become more and more sweet which he desires of the things of eternity, so that which he was undergoing for the love of the present world, is made appear to him proportionably burthensome. Now if the following words be considered with reference to the historical import alone, doubtless we have the mind of one in sorrow described by them, viz. how in the different impulses of desire he is variously urged by the force of grief. For it goes on,

Ver. 4. *When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise? and again I look for the evening.*

18. For in the night, day is desired, in the day, evening is longed for; in that grief will not let the things that are before us give satisfaction, and while it saddens the heart in the experience of the present, it is ever stretching it to something beyond in expectation, as it were by a consolatory longing. But because at one and the same time the afflicted mind is drawn out in desire, and yet its grief, even though beguiled by longings, is not ended; it is rightly added, *And I shall be filled with pains even until the darkness*. But the cause of this grief is set forth, when the words are immediately introduced,

Ver. 5. *My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust: my skin is dried up and shrunken.*

19. But we shall make out these words more exactly and more applicably, if we go back to the order of the foregoing interpretation. For by sleep the torpor of inaction, and by rising the exercising of action, is represented. By the name of the evening moreover, because it accords with sleep, we have set forth again the desire of inaction. But Holy Church, as long as she is leading a life of corruption, never ceases to bewail the inconveniences of her condition of mutability. For man was created for this end, that, with mind erect, he might mount to the citadel of contemplation, and that no touch of corruption should cause him to swerve from the love of his Maker; but herein, that he moved the foot of his will to transgression, turning it away from the innate stedfastness of his standing, he immediately fell away from the love of his Creator into himself. Yet in forsaking the love of God, that true stronghold of his standing, he could not stand fast in himself either; in that by the impulse of a slippery condition of mutability, being precipitated beneath himself through corruption, he also came to be at strife with himself. And now, in that he is not secured by the stedfastness of his creation, he is ever being made to vary by the fit of alternating desire, so that both at rest he longs for action, and when busied pants for rest. For because the stedfast mind, when it might have stood, would not, it is now no longer able to stand even when it will, in that in leaving the contemplation of its Creator, it lost the strength of its health, and wherever placed is ever seeking some other place through uneasiness. And so in setting forth the fickleness of the human mind, let him say, *When I go to sleep, I say, When shall I arise? and again I shall look for the evening*. As if it were expressed in plain words; ‘Nothing it receives sufficeth the mind, in that it has lost Him, Who might have truly sufficed to it. Thus in sleep I long for rising, and at rising I look for evening, for both when at rest I aim at the employment of action, and when employed I look for the inaction of repose.’

20. Which nevertheless may be understood in another sense also, For to sleep is to lie prostrate in sin. For if the designation of 'sleep' did not denote sin, Paul would never say to his disciples, *Awake, ye righteous, and sin not*. [1 Cor. 15, 34] And hence too he charges his hearer, saying, *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*. [Eph. 5, 14] And again; *That now it is high time for us to arise out of sleep*. [Rom. 13, 11] Hence too Solomon upbraids the sinner, saying, *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?* [Prov. 6, 9] Therefore each one of the Elect, when he is oppressed with the sleep of sin, strives to rise to keep the watch of righteousness. But often when he has risen he feels himself lifted up by the greatness of his virtuous attainments. And hence after attainments in virtue he desires to be tried with the adversities of the present life, lest he fall the worse from presumption in his virtuous achievements. For if he had not known that he was preserved more effectually by trial, the Psalmist would never have said, *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me*. [Ps. 26, 2] And so it is well said here, *When I go to sleep, I say, When shall I arise? and again I shall look for the evening*; in that both in the sleep of sin, we look for the light of righteousness, and when successes in virtuous attainments elevate the mind, adversity is wanted for our aid, so that when the soul is exalted above what it ought to be in rejoicing at its own excellencies, it may be established by sorrow coming forth, through the encounters of the present life. Hence it is not said, *I shall dread the evening*, but, *I shall look for*. For we 'look for' favourable things, we dread those that are adverse to us. And so the good man 'looks for evening,' in that when he needs to be tried with affliction, adversity itself is made success to him.

21. By the designation of 'evening' there may also be understood the tempting of sin, which oftentimes assaults the mind the sharper, in proportion as the spirit transports it higher to the regions above. For never in this life is sin so entirely abandoned in the practising of righteousness,

that we continue without flinching in the self-same righteousness; in that although right principle does already drive out sin from the dwelling of the heart, yet the very sin, that is so banished, taking her seat at the doors of our thought, knocks for it to be opened to her. And this Moses too conveyed in spiritual signification, when he described the parts of time being made in a bodily way, saying, *And there was light*, and adding soon after, *And the evening was made* [Vulg. *factum est*]. [Gen. 1, 3. 5.] For the Maker of all things foreseeing man's guilt, then exhibited in Time what now passes in the human mind. For the light draws on to eventide, in that the shades of temptation follow the light of righteousness. But because the light of the Elect is not put out by temptation, not night; but evening, is recorded as made. Since it often happens, that in the heart of the righteous temptation shades the light of righteousness, but it does not put an end thereto; it forces it to the paleness of a flickering state, but does not utterly quench it. And so the Elect both after sleep long for the rising, and after rising look for evening, in that they use both to awake from sin to the light of righteousness, and when placed in that same light of righteousness, they are ever making themselves ready to encounter the snares of temptation; which same they do not dread, but look for, as they are not ignorant that even trials promote the interest of their righteousness.

22. But with whatever degree of virtue they may have striven against their corruption, they cannot have entire health, until the time that the day of their present life is ended. And hence it is added, *And I shall be full of pains even until the darkness*. For one while adversities burst upon them, at another time successes themselves beguile them by insidious joviality; at one time evil propensities making head stir up a war of the flesh, at another time being brought under, they invite the mind to pride. Therefore the life of good man is *full of pains even until the darkness*, in that so long as the period of their state of corruption is going on, it is shaken by tribulation

both internal and external; nor does it experience assurance of health, saving when it leaves behind it for good the day of temptation. And hence this same cause of these pains is brought in immediately afterwards, when it is said, *My flesh is clothed with corruption and foulness of dust*. For, as we have said a little above, man wilfully forsook his innate stability, and plunged himself into the abyss of corruption: and hence now he either goes slipping in impure works, or defiled by forbidden thoughts. For, so to speak, being judicially bowed down beneath its own sin, our nature its very self is put out of the pale of nature, and, when let loose, it is carried even to the length of bad works, while, being held in, it is dimmed by the pressing imagination of bad works. Thus in the fulfilment of a forbidden deed, 'corruption' [*putredo*] taints the flesh, while in the lightness of evil thought, dust as it were rises up before the eyes. By consenting to evil practices we are wasted with corruption, but by suffering in the heart the images of evil deeds, we are defiled with the stains of dust; and so he says, *My flesh is clothed with foulness of dust.* As if it were in plain words; 'The carnal life that I am subjected to, either the corruption of wanton practice defiles, or the cloud of wretched thought compasses about in the recollection of evil ways.

23. And yet if we take this in the voice of the Holy Church Universal, doubtless we find her at one time sunk to the earth by the 'corruption' of the flesh, at another time by 'the defilement of dust.' For she has many in her, who whilst they are devoted to the love of the flesh, turn corrupt with the putrefaction of excess. And there are some that keep indeed from the gratification of the flesh, yet grovel with all their heart in earthly practices. So let Holy Church say in the words of one of her members, let her say what she undergoes from either sort of men, *My flesh is clothed with corruption, and the defilements of dust.* As if she told in plain words, saying, 'There are very many that are members of me in faith, yet these are

not sound or pure members in practice: in that either being mastered by foul desires, they run out in the rottenness of corruption; or, being devoted to earthly practices, they are besmeared with dust. For in those, whom I have to endure, that are full of wantonness, I do plainly lament for the flesh turned corrupt; and in those, whom I suffer from, that are seeking the earth, what else is this but that I carry it defiled with dust?'

24. And hence it is properly added at the same time concerning both sorts; *My skin is dried up and shrivelled*. For in the body of the Church, those that are devoted to outward concerns alone are suitably called 'the skin,' which same by becoming dry is contracted, in that the soul of carnal men, while their hearts are set on present objects, and covet what is close at hand, have no mind, as it were, to be made to stretch out after the things of the future world in longsuffering. These, while they disregard the richness of the interior hope, are dried up that they become shrivelled; in that if hopelessness did not parch their hearts, the fever of a little mind would never contract them. Thus it was this contraction that the Psalmist dreaded, when in fear of the drought of the same he said, *May my soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness*. [Ps. 63, 5] For the soul is 'satisfied with marrow and fatness,' when it is refreshed by the infusion of heavenly hope against the heat of present longings. And so the 'skin' being dried up shrivels, when the heart being given to outward objects, and dried up in hopelessness, is not stretched out in love of its Creator, but is folded up into itself, so to say, by wrinkled thought.

25. But it is to be considered that carnal minds only delight in present things, because they never weigh well how transitory the life of the flesh is. For if they regarded the speed of its flight, they would never love it even when it smiled upon them. But Holy Church, in her elect members, daily minds how quick a flight belongs to outward things, and therefore she sets firm the foot of serious purpose in the interior. And hence it is well added;

Ver. 6. *My days are past more swiftly than a web is cut off by the weaver.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

26. By a very suitable image the time of the flesh is compared to a web. For as the web advances by threads, so this mortal life by the several days; but in proportion as it grows to its bigness, it is advancing to its cutting off. For as we have also said above, whilst the time in our hands passes, the time before us is shortened. And of the whole space of our lives those portions are rendered fewer that are to come, in proportion as those are many in number that have gone by. For a web, being fastened above and below, is bound to two pieces of wood that it may be woven; but in proportion as below the part woven is rolled up, so above the part that remains to be woven is being unwound, and by the same act, by which it augments itself in growth, that is rendered less which remains. Just so with the periods of our life, we as it were roll up below those that are past, and unwind at top those that are to come, in that in the same proportion that the past become more, the future have begun to diminish. But because not even does a web suffice for the setting forth of our span of time, for the rapid course of our life surpasses the speed and quickness even of that too, it is well said in this place, *My days are past away more swiftly than a web is cut off by the weaver*. For to the web there is a delay of growth, but to the present life there is no delay of coming to an end. For in the one when the hand of the workman is stopped, the end of the arrival is deferred, but in this latter, because we consume without end time ending every instant, even while resting we are brought to the end of our way, and along the course of our passage, we go on even in sleeping. Therefore the Elect, seeing that the moments of the present life run past at speed, never in this journey of most rapid motion fix the purpose of their hearts. And hence it is well added upon that,

And are spent without any hope.

27. The minds of lost sinners are bound fast with such love for the days of their present life, that they long to live for ever here in the same way. So that, if it were possible, they desire never to have the course of their life brought to an end. For they are too indifferent to take account of the future, they place all their hope in transitory things, they aim to have nothing but such objects as pass away. And while they think too much of transitory things, and never look forward to those that shall remain, the eye of their heart is so closed in insensible blindness, that it is never fixed on the interior light. Whence it often happens, that distress already shakes the frame, and approaching death cuts off the power of the breath of life, yet they never cease to mind the things that are of the world. And already the avenger is dragging them to judgment, and yet they themselves, occupied with the concerns of time, in the busy management of them, are only thinking how they may still live on in this world. In the act of leaving every thing, they dispose of all as if they were entering upon the possession of them, in that the hope of living is not broken, at the very moment when life is at an end. They are already being forced to judgment in feeling [*per sentemtiam*], yet they still cleave to the hold of their goods in solicitude. For by the hardened soul death is still believed to be far off, even when his touch is felt. And the soul is so separated from the flesh, that by keeping itself in excessive love for things present, when it is led to everlasting punishment, it does not know this mere thing, whither it is being led; and in leaving all that it would not love with bounds, it suddenly finds without bounds things that it never anticipated. But, on the other hand, the mind of the righteous is stretched in intentness after the eternal world, even when the present life goes smoothly along with it. It enjoys the high health of the flesh, yet the spirit is never hindered by dependence on it. No atom [*articulum*] of death as yet breaks forth, still he daily regards it as present to

him. For because life is unceasingly slipping by, the expectation of living is wholly cut short for him. Therefore it is well said of the passing days, *And are spent without hope*. As if it were declared in plain terms; 'I have not placed confidence of heart in the present life, in that all that is passing I have dismissed from my hopes, treading it under foot.' And hence it is rightly added immediately after,

Ver. 7. *O remember that my life is wind.*

28. For those men love the life of the flesh as enduring, who do not consider how infinite is the eternity of the life to come; and whereas they take no thought of the sure stedfastness of the everlasting state, they take their exile for their home, darkness for light, going for standing. Since they that know nothing of greater things can never judge rightly of the least. For the order of judging requires that we should be above that which we are striving to try. Since if the mind is not able to rise above all things, it has no certain sight at all in relation to those, by which it is surpassed. And so it is for this reason that the lost soul is inadequate to estimate the course of the present 1ife, because from love of the same it is bowed down to the admiration thereof. But holy men, in proportion as they lift their hearts towards the eternal world, bethink themselves how short-lived that is which is closed by an ending. And all that is passing is rendered worthless to their senses, forasmuch as that pours in its light through the rays of intelligence, which once received never departs. And as soon as they contemplate the infinite extent of eternity, they cease any longer to desire as great whatsoever has an end to limit it. But the mind when lifted up is carried beyond the limits of time, even when by the flesh it is held fast in time, and it looks down from a greater height on all that is to have an end, the more truly it knows the things without end. Now this very consideration of the short span of man's estate is itself an offering of singular efficacy [*virtutis*] to our Maker. Whence a sacrifice of this merit is here rightly offered

together with prayer, when it is said, *O remember that my life is wind*. As if it were said in plain words, 'Regard with loving-kindness one that is quickly gone, in that I claim to be looked upon by Thee with greater pity, even in proportion as I myself do not turn away mine eyes from the contemplation of my short span.' But seeing that when the season of our present life is cut short, there is no more return to the work of earning our forgiveness, it is rightly added,

Mine eye shall no more return to see good.

29. The eye of the dead 'no more returneth to see good,' in that for the setting forth of good works, the soul once snipped of the flesh knows no return. It is hence that the rich man, whom the fire of hell was devouring, knew that he could never restore himself by doing works; for he never turned himself to do good to himself, but to his brethren that were left; *I pray thee, father Abraham, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment*. [Luke 16, 27. 28.] For hope even though unfounded is used to cheer the stricken soul; but the lost, that they may feel their woe the keener, lose even hope as to pardon. And hence when he was given over to avenging flames, he was not anxious to help himself, as we said, but his brethren, in that he knew that he would never be without the torments of those fires, the punishment of despair being superadded. Hence Solomon saith, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest*. [Eccles. 9, 10] So 'the eye shall no more return to see good,' in that the soul, on meeting with its recompense, is never again recalled to tell to the account of practice. Therefore forasmuch as all that is seen is fleeting, and the things that follow are to endure, blessed Job rightly combined the two in one verse, saying, *O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good*. For looking at the transitoriness of things

present, he says, *O remember that my life is wind*. But contemplating the eternity of those that come after, he added, *Mine eye shall no more return to see good*. And here, furthermore, he justly proceeds to take upon him the voice of the whole race of man destitute of the benefit of redemption, saying,

Ver. 8. *The eye of man shall not see me.*

30. For 'the eye of Man' is the pity of the Redeemer, which softens the hardness of our insensibility, when it looks upon us. Hence, as the Gospel witnesses, it is said, *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter*. *And Peter remembered the word of the Lord. And he went out, and wept bitterly*. [Luke 22, 61. 62.] But the soul when divested of the flesh 'the eye of Man' doth not henceforth at all regard, in that it never delivers him after death, whom grace doth not restore to pardon before death. For hence Paul saith, *Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation*. [2 Cor. 6, 2] Hence the Psalmist saith, *For His mercy is for the present state of being* [d]; [Ps. 118, 1] for this reason, that the man whom mercy doth not rescue now, after the present state of being, justice alone consigns to punishment. Hence Solomon saith, *And if the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be*. [Eccles. 11, 3] For when, at the moment of the falling of the human being, either the Holy Spirit or the Evil Spirit receives the soul departed from the chambers of the flesh, he will keep it with him for ever without change, so that neither once exalted, shall it be precipitated into woe, nor once plunged into eternal woes, any further arise to take the means of escape. Therefore let the holy man, contemplating the ills of mankind, viz. how he is removed from the present world without the knowledge of his Redeemer, and buried in everlasting flames without remedy, and taking up their voice in his own person, give utterance to the words, *And the eye of man shall not see me*. Forasmuch as the man whom the grace of the Redeemer doth not now look upon to correct, it doth not

then visit to keep from destruction. For the Lord, when He cometh to judgment, looketh on the sinner to smite, but He doth not look on him to acknowledge him in bestowing the grace of salvation. He taketh account of sins, and knoweth not the life of those that perish. Hence after that the holy man had averred that he could no more be 'seen by the eye of Man' after the present life, he rightly added at once;

Thine eyes are upon me, and I shall not stand.

31. As though he said in plain words; 'Thou, when thou comest in severity to Judgment, both seest not, to save, and yet seest, to smite, in that him, whom Thou lookest not on in the present life with the pitifulness of Thy saving care, hereafter looking on Thou dost extinguish by Thy law of justice. For now the sinner casts away the fear of God, and yet lives, blasphemes and yet prospers, because the pitiful Creator would not in seeing punish him, whom He would rather by waiting for bring to amendment; as it is written, *And winkest at the sins of men for their repentance*. [Wisd. 11, 23] But when the sinner is then looked upon, he 'does not stand,' in that when the strict Judge minutely examines his deserts, the convicted sinner cannot bear up against his torments.

32. Not but that this likewise accords with the voice of the righteous, whose mind is ever anxiously fixed on the coming Judgment. For they have fears for every thing that they do, whilst they heedfully consider who are the persons, and before what a Judge they will have to stand. They behold the power of His Mightiness, and they consider what an amount of guilt they are tied and bound with from their own imperfection. They reckon up the evil deeds of their own doing, and multiply over against them the benefits of their Creator. They reflect how rigidly He judges wicked deeds, how minutely He examines good ones; and they foresee without a shadow of doubt that they will be lost, if they be judged apart from pity: for even this very life that we seem to live righteously is sin, if, when He takes

account of our lives, the mercy of God does not make allowance for it in His own eyes. For it is hence written in this very book, *Yea, the stars are not pure in His sight*. [Job 25, 5] For strictly judged in His sight those very persons do also bear spots of defilement, that shine bright in the purity of holiness. Therefore it is well said, *Thine eyes are upon me, and I shall not stand*. As if it were said in plain terms by the voice of the righteous man, ‘If I be sifted with an exact scrutiny, I cannot stand up in undergoing judgment, for life cannot bear up against punishment, if the mercilessness of just retribution bears hard upon it.’ Now both the sin and the punishment of that same human race is well added in few words, where it is said immediately afterwards,

Ver. 9. *As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to hell shall come up no more.*

33. For a cloud is suspended in the higher regions, but it is condensed and driven by the wind that it flies, and it is scattered by the heat of the .sun that it vanishes. Thus, thus verily is it with the hearts of men, which by the faculty of reason bestowed upon them dart on high, but driven by the blasts of the evil spirit, they are forced hither and thither by the bad impulses of their desires, but by the searching eye of the Judge above they are melted as if by the heat of the sun, and being once consigned to the regions of woe, never return for the benefit of working. Let the holy man then, in setting forth the elevation, the career, and the eclipse of the human race, exclaim, *As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more*. As if he spake in plain words, saying, ‘In flying on high he is brought to nought, who by exalting himself is advancing to destruction, whom, if sin once force to punishment, mercy never more restores to pardon.’ Hence it is yet further added,

He shall return no more to his own house.

34. As the house of the body is a bodily habitation, so that becomes to each separate mind 'its own house,' whatsoever thing it is used to inhabit in desire. And so 'there is no more returning to his own house,' because, when once a man is given over to eternal punishments, he is henceforth no more recalled thither, where he had attached himself in love. Moreover by the designation of hell the despair of the sinner may also be set forth, of which it is said by the Psalmist, *In hell, who shall confess to Thee?* [Ps. 6, 5] Whence again it is written, *When the ungodly man cometh into the pit of sinners, he contemneth*. [Prov. 18, 3] Now whosoever yields himself to ungodliness, doth assuredly quit the life of righteousness by a proper death. But when a man after sin is furthermore overwhelmed by a mountain of despair, what else is this but that after death he is buried in the torments of hell? Therefore it is rightly said, *As the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth alway, so he that goeth down to hell shall come up no more*; in that it very often happens, that with the commission of wickedness despair also is united, and the way of returning is henceforth cut off. But the hearts of the despairing are rightly compared to clouds, in that they are at once darkened with the mists of error, and thick with the number of sins; but being consumed, they vanish away, in that being lighted up by the blaze of the final Judgment, they are scattered to the winds. 'The house' too is often understood for the dwelling-place of the heart. Hence it is said to one that was healed, *Go to thine house* [Mark 5, 19]; in that it is most meet that the sinner after pardon should turn back into his own mind, so as not to do aught a second time which may justly subject him to the scourge. But he that has 'gone down to hell,' shall no more 'ascend into his own house,' in that him, that despair overwhelms, it puts forth without from the habitation of the heart. And he cannot return back within, because when he has been ejected without, day by day he falls urged on into worse extremes. For man was made to contemplate his Creator, that he might ever be seeking after

His likeness, and dwell in the festival [*solemnitate*] of His love. But being cast without himself by disobedience, he lost the seat of his mind, in that being left all abroad in dark ways, he wandered far from the habitation of the true light. Whence it is further added with propriety,

Neither shall his place know him any more.

35. For 'the place' of man, but not a local place, the Creator Himself became, Who created him to have his being in Himself, which same place man did then forsake, when on hearing the words of the deceiver, he forsook the love of the Creator. But when Almighty God in the work of redemption shewed Himself even by a bodily appearing, He Himself, so to say, following the footsteps of His runagate, came as a place where to keep man whom He had lost. For if the Creator could not in any sense be styled 'a place,' the Psalmist, in praising God, would never have said, *The children of thy servants shall dwell there* ['there' is not in V. or LXX.]. [Ps. 102, 29] For we never say *there*, except when we mark out a place in a particular manner. But there are very many, who even after they have received the succour of the Redeemer, are precipitated into the darkness of despair, and they perish the more desperately, in proportion as they despise the very offered remedies of mercy. And so it is rightly said concerning him that is damned, *Neither shall his place know him any more*. For he is not known by his Creator in His sorer severity at the Judgment, in the same degree that he is not recalled even by His gifts to the grace of restoration. And hence it is particularly to be observed, that he does not say, 'Nor shall he know his own place any more;' but, *Neither shall his place know him any more*. For whereas that 'knowing' is ascribed not to the person, but to the place, the Creator Himself is manifestly set forth, by the name of 'a place,' Who, when He cometh in strictness for the final account, shall say to all that abide in iniquity, *I know you not whence ye are*. [Luke 13, 25] But the Elect severally, in proportion as they consider that lost sinners are

unsparingly cut off, day by day purify themselves with greater diligence from the stains of the iniquity they have done; and when they see others on the brink of ruin grow cold in the love of life, they earnestly inflame themselves to tears of penitence. Hence it is well added,

Ver. 11. *Therefore also I will not refrain my mouth.*

36. For that man 'refrains his mouth,' that is ashamed to confess the evil he has done. For to put the mouth to labour is to employ it in the confession of sin done, but the righteous man doth 'not refrain his mouth,' in that forestalling the wrath of the searching Judge, he falls wroth upon himself in words of self-confession. Hence the Psalmist saith, *Let us come before His Presence with confession* [e]. [Ps. 95, 2] Hence it is delivered by Solomon, *He that coveteth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth, and forsaketh them shall have mercy*. [Prov. 28, 13] Hence it is written again, *The just man is first the accuser of himself*. [Ib. 18, 17] But the mouth is never opened in confession, unless at the thought of the searching Judgment the spirit is in straits from fear; and hence it is fitly said afterwards,

I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.

37. For 'anguish of the spirit' sets the tongue in motion, so that the voice of confession is levelled against the guilt of evil practice. Moreover it is to be borne in mind, that oftentimes even the reprobate make confession of sins, but are too proud to weep for them. But the Elect prosecute with tears of severe self-condemnation those sins of theirs which they disclose in words of confession. Hence it was well that after blessed Job had pledged himself not to spare his lips, he added directly the anguish of the spirit. As if he avowed plainly, saying, 'The tongue doth in such sort tell of guilt, that the spirit is not ever let go loose amidst other things, free of the sting of sorrow; but in telling my sins, I disclose my wound, and in thinking over my sins for their amendment, I seek the cure of the wound in the medicine of sorrow.' For he that tells indeed the evil deeds he has done, but holds

back from lamenting what he has told, he as it were by taking off the covering discovers the wound, but in deadness of mind he applies no remedy to the wound. Therefore it is needful that sorrow alone should wring out the voice of confession, lest the wound, being exposed, but neglected, in proportion as it is henceforth more freely touched through the knowledge of our fellowcreatures, fester so much the worse. Contrariwise the Psalmist had not only disclosed the sore of his heart, but was furthermore applying to it thus laid bare the remedy of sorrow, when he said, *I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and my iniquity will I think on.* [Ps. 32, 5] For by so ‘acknowledging’ he discovered the hidden sore, and by thus ‘thinking on’ it, what else did he, than apply a remedy to the wound? But to the mind that is distressed, and anxiously thinking on its own ills, there arises a strife in behalf of self against self. For when it urges itself to the sorrows of penitence, it rends itself with secret upbraiding. And hence it is justly added afterwards,

I will converse with the bitterness of my spirit.

38. For when we are in trouble from dread of God’s judgment, whilst we bewail some things done wrong, seeing that by the mere force of our bitterness alone we are stirred up to enter into ourselves more observantly, we find in ourselves other things also to bewail more largely. For it often happens that what escaped us in our insensibility, is made known to us more exactly in tears. And the troubled mind finds out more surely the ill that it has done and knew not of, and its conflict discovers to it in a true point of view how far it had deviated from the peace which is of truth, in that its guilt, which while secure it thought not of, it finds out in itself when disturbed. For the bitterness of penance gaining ground urgently brings home to the confounded heart the unlawful things it has committed, exhibits the Judge arrayed against them in severity, strikes deep the threats of punishment, smites the soul with consternation, overwhelms it with shame,

chides the unlawful motions of the heart, and disturbs the repose of its mischievous self-security, all the good gifts that the Creator has vouchsafed to bestow upon him, all the evil that he himself has done in return for the good things of His hand, are reckoned up, how that he was created by Him in a wonderful way, that he was sustained freely and for nought, that he was endowed with the substance of reason at his creation, that he was called by the grace of his Creator, that he himself even when called refused to follow, that the pitifulness of Him that calleth did not disregard him, not even when deaf and resisting, that he was enlightened with gifts, that of his own free will, even after these gifts received, he blinded himself by wicked deeds, that he was cleared from the wrong doings of his state of blindness by the strokes of fatherly solicitude, that by means of the pains of these strokes he was restored to the joys of saving health by the remedy that mercy applied, that being subject to certain bad practices, though not of the worst sort, he does not cease to sin even in the midst of these strokes; that the grace of God even when slighted did not abandon its sinner. And thus whereas it upbraids with so much keenness the agitated mind at one time by a display of the gifts of God, another time by the reproaches of its own behaviour, the bitterness of spirit has a tongue of its own in the heart of the righteous, which speaks to it the more searchingly, in proportion as it is heard within. And hence it is not at all said, ‘I will talk *in* the bitterness of my spirit,’ but *I will converse with the bitterness*; in that the force of grief, which taking each sin separately, stimulates the deadened mind to lamentations, as it were shapes words of converse to it, wherein it being chidden might find itself out, and henceforth rise up with better heed to the safe keeping of itself. And so let the righteous man say in his own voice; as bearing a figure of Holy Church, let him say in ours too; *I will converse with the bitterness of my spirit*. As if he spake it in plainer words, saying, ‘Within I hold converse with the anguish of my heart against mine own self, and without I

hide myself from the lash of the Judge.' Now the mind that is borne hard upon by the pangs of penitence is gathered up close into itself, and severed by strong resolution from all the gratifications of the flesh, it longs to advance to things above, yet it still feels opposition from the corruption of the flesh. And hence it is rightly added immediately,

Ver. 12. *Am I a sea or a whale, that thou hast compassed me about with a prison?*

39. Man is 'compassed about with a prison,' in that he very often both strives to mount on high by the strides of virtuous attainments, and yet is impeded by the corruption of his fleshly part. Of which same the Psalmist rightly prays that he might be divested, saying, *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name*. [Ps. 142, 7] But what have we set forth by the designation of 'the sea,' saving the hearts of carnal men tossed with swelling thoughts? and what by the name of 'a whale,' except our old enemy? who when in taking possession of the hearts of the children of this world he makes his way into them, does in a certain sort swim about in their slippery thoughts. But the whale is made fast in prison, in that the evil Spirit, being cast down below, is kept under by the weight of his own punishment, that he should have no power to fly up to the heavenly realms, as Peter testifies, who saith, *God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment*. [2 Pet. 2, 4] 'The whale' is fast bound in prison, in that he is prevented from tempting the good as much as he desires. The sea too is 'compassed about with a prison,' in that the swelling and raging desires of carnal minds, for the doing of the evil that they long for, are clogged by the straitness of their inability. For they often long to have power over their betters, yet by the Divine ordering, that regulates all things marvellously, they are made to bow beneath them. They desire, being exalted high, to injure the good, yet being brought under their power, they look for

consolation from them. For the sake of fulfilling the gratification of the flesh, they covet length of years in the present life, yet they are carried off from it with haste. Concerning such it is well said by the Psalmist, *And He put the waters as it were in a skin*. [Ps. 78, 13. V. thus] For 'the waters are in a skin' when their loose desires, in that they find not the execution in deed, are kept down under a carnal heart. Therefore the whale and the sea are hemmed in by the close pressure of a prison, in that whether as regards the evil spirit or his followers, in whose minds he gathers himself and sets rolling therein the waves of tumultuous thoughts, the rigour of the Most High confines them, that they should have no power to accomplish the evil things that they are set upon.

40. But holy men, in proportion as they contemplate the Mysteries of heavenly truths with more perfect purity of heart, pant after them with daily increased ardour of affection. They long to be henceforth filled to the full at that fountain head, whence they as yet taste but a little drop with the mouth of contemplation. They long entirely to subdue the promptings of the flesh, no longer to be subject to any thing unlawful in the imaginations of the heart springing from the corruption thereof. But because it is written, *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things*, [Wisd. 9, 15] therefore they henceforth rise above themselves in purpose of mind, but being still subject to the capricious motions of their imperfect nature, they lament that they are confined in the prison-house of corruption. *Am I a sea or a whale, that Thou dost compass me about with a prison?* As if it were in plain words; 'The sea or the whale, i.e. the wicked and their prime mover, the Evil Spirit, because they desire to have a loose given them for the mere liberty of committing iniquity alone, are justly held bound in the prison of the punishment inflicted on them. But I, that already long for the liberty of Thine eternal state, why am I still enclosed in the prison of mine own

corruption?' Not that this is either demanded in pride by the righteous, in that being inflamed with the love of the Truth they desire completely to surmount the narrow compass of their imperfect condition; nor yet that it is unjustly ordered by the Author of the just, in that in delaying the wishes of His Elect, He puts them to pain, and in paining purifies, that they may one day be the better enabled by that delay, for the receiving that they desire. But the Elect, so long as they are kept away from the interior rest, turn back into their own hearts, and being there buried from the tumults of the flesh, as it were seek a retreat of infinite delight. But therein they often feel the stings of temptation, and are subject to the goadings of the flesh, and there they meet with the hardest toils, where they had looked for perfect rest from toil. Hence the holy man after the prison of his state of corruption that he told of, hastening to return to the tranquil regions of the heart, seeing that he experienced in the interior also all that same strife, to escape which he fled from things without, adds immediately, saying,

Ver. 13, 14. *When I say my bed shall comfort me, I shall be eased in speaking with myself on my couch, then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.*

41. For in Holy Writ a 'bed,' a 'couch,' or 'litter,' is usually taken for the secret depth of the heart. For it is hence that under the likeness of each separate soul, the Spouse, urged by the piercing darts of holy love, says in the Song of Songs, *By night on my bed I sought him, whom my soul loveth*. [Cant. 3, 1] For 'by night and on the bed is the beloved sought,' in that the appearance of the Invisible Creator, apart from every image of a bodily appearing, is found in the chamber of the heart. And hence 'Truth' saith to those same lovers of Him, *The kingdom of God is within you*. [Luke 17, 21] And again, *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come*. [John 16, 7] As if it were in plain words; 'If I do not withdraw My Body from the eyes of your fixed regard, I lead you not by the Comforter, the Spirit, to the perception of

the unseen.’ Hence it is said by the Psalmist of the just, *The Saints shall be joyful in glory, they shall rejoice upon their beds* [Ps. 149, 5]; in that when they flee the mischiefs from things without, they exult in safety within the recesses of their hearts. But the joy of the heart will then be complete, when the fight of the flesh shall have ceased without. For so long as the flesh allures, because as it were the wall of our house is shaken, even the very bed is disturbed. And hence it is rightly said by that Psalmist, *Thou hast made all his bed in his sickness*. [Ps. 41, 3] For when temptation of the flesh moves us, our infirmity being made to tremble disturbs even the bed of the soul. But what do we understand in this place by ‘dreams’ and ‘visions’ saving the representations of the last searching Judgment? What we already have some slight glimpse of through fear, but do not see it as it really is. Thus holy men, as we have said, ever turn back to the secret recesses of the heart, when from the world without, they either meet with successes beyond their wishes, or with adversities beyond their strength, and, wearied with their toils without, they seek as a bed, or litter, the resting-places of the heart. But whilst by certain pictures of their imagination they see how searching the judgments of God are, they are as it were disturbed in their very repose on their beds by the vision of a dream. For they behold after what sort the strict Judge cometh, Who while with the power of infinite Majesty He lights up the secret recesses of the heart, will bring back every sin before our eyes. They bethink themselves what the shame of that is, to be confounded in the sight of the whole human race, of all the Angels and the Archangels. They reflect what agony is in store after that confounding, when at one and the same time guilt shall prey upon the soul imperishably perishing, and hell fire upon the flesh unfailingly failing. When, then, the mind is shaken by so terrific a conception, what else is this but that a sad dream is presented upon the bed? Therefore let him say, *When I say, My bed shall comfort me, and I shall be eased talking with myself on my couch*;

then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions. As if he confessed openly, saying, 'If fleeing from external things, I turn back into the interior, and am anxious in some sort to rest upon the bed of my heart, there, whilst Thou dost set me to [A.B.D. 'teach me'] the contemplation of Thy severity, Thou makest me to fear horribly by the mere images my foresight raises up.' Now it is well said, *And I shall be eased, talking with myself in my bed*, in that when we return wearied to the silence of our hearts, as it were holding converse on our beds, we handle the secret words of thought within ourselves. But this very converse of ours is turned into dread, in that thereby there is more forcibly presented to us in imagination the view, which holds out the terrors of the Judge.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

42. But lest anyone should be at pains to make out these words after the literal sense, it is of great importance to find out in how many ways the mind is affected by images from dreams. For sometimes dreams are engendered of fulness or emptiness of the belly, sometimes of illusion, sometimes of illusion and thought combined, sometimes of revelation, while sometimes they are engendered of imagination, thought, and revelation together. Now the two which we have named first, we all know by experience, while the four subjoined we find in the pages of Holy Writ. For except dreams were very frequently caused to come in illusion by our secret enemy, the Wise Man would never have pointed this out by saying, *For dreams and vain illusions have deceived many*, [Ecclus. 34, 7] or indeed, *Nor shall ye use enchantments, nor observe dreams*. [Lev. 19, 26. Vulg.] By which words it is shewn us how great an abomination they are, in that they are joined with 'auguries.' Again, excepting they sometimes came of thought and illusion together, Solomon would never have said, *For a dream cometh through the multitude of business*. [Eccl. 5, 3] And unless

dreams sometimes had their origin in a mystery of a revelation, Joseph would never have seen himself in a dream appointed to be advanced above his brethren, nor would the espoused of Mary have been warned by the Angel in a dream to take the Child and to fly into Egypt. Again, unless dreams sometimes proceeded from thought and revelation together, the Prophet Daniel, in making out the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, would never have set out with thought as the root; *As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter, and He That revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass*. [Dan. 2, 29] And soon afterwards, *Thou, O king, sawest and beheld a great image. This great image, that was great, and its stature lofty, stood before thee, &c*. [ver. 31] Thus while Daniel declares in awful terms the dream about to be fulfilled, and shews in what thoughts it had its rise, it is made plain and manifest that the thing very frequently proceeds from thought and revelation combined.

43. Now it is clear, that since dreams shift about in such a variety of cases they ought to be the less easily believed, in proportion as it less easily appears from what influencing cause they spring. For it often happens that to those, whom the Evil Spirit cuts off when awake through the love of the present life, he promises the successes of fortune even whilst they sleep, and those, whom he sees to be in dread of misfortunes, he threatens with them the more cruelly by the representations of dreams, that he may work upon the incautious soul by a different kind of influence, and either by elevating it with hope or sinking it with dread, may disturb its balance. Often too he sets himself to work upon the souls of the Saints themselves by dreams, that at least for a passing moment they may be thrown off the line of steady thought, though by their own act they straightway shake the mind clear of the delusive phantasy. And our designing foe, in proportion as he is utterly unable to get the better of them when awake, makes the deadlier

assault upon them asleep. Whom yet the dispensation of the Highest in loving-kindness alone allows to do so in his malevolence, lest in the souls of the Elect their mere sleep, though nothing else, should go without the meed of suffering. Therefore it is well spoken to Him that ruleth over all, *When I say, my bed shall comfort me, I shall be eased talking with myself on my couch; then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions*. Surely in that God ordereth all things wonderfully, even He Himself doth that thing, which the Evil Spirit seeks to do unjustly, whilst He letteth it not be done saving justly. Now forasmuch as the life of the righteous is at once assaulted on watch by temptation, and harassed in dreaming by illusion; undergoes without the mischiefs of its corruption, and within painfully carries in itself unlawful thoughts; what may it do in order to pluck the foot of the heart out of the mazes of such numberless entanglements? Yea, thou blessed man, with what dismay and trouble thou art every way compassed about we have learnt; now let us be informed, what plan thou dost devise to encounter the same. It goes on,

Ver. 15. *So that my soul chooseth hanging and my bones death.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

44. What is then represented by the soul but the bent of the soul, and by the bones, the strength of the flesh? Now every thing that is hung is assuredly lifted up from things beneath; therefore ‘the soul chooseth hanging that the bones may die,’ in that whilst the mind’s intent lifts itself on high, it extinguishes all the strength of the exterior life in itself. For the Saints know it for a most certain truth, that they can never enjoy rest in the present life, and so they ‘choose hanging,’ in that quitting earthly objects of desire, they raise the mind on high. But whilst hung on high they inflict death on their bones, in that for love of the land above, having their loins girt in press and pursuit after virtuous attainments, all wherein they were afore time strong in

the world, they load with the chain of self-abasement. It is well to mark how Paul had his soul suspended aloft, who said, *Nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*. [Gal. 2, 20] And again; *Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ*. [Phil. 1, 23] And, *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*. [ver. 21] Who recalling to mind the achievements of earthly strength, reckoned up as it were so many bones in himself, saying, *An Hebrew, of the Hebrews, as touching the Law a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church of God*. [Phil. 3, 5. 6.] But by that 'hanging' of his soul, how that he does to death these bones in himself, he immediately declares, in that he adds, *But what things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ*. [ver. 7] Which same bones he implies were still more mercilessly dealt with to destruction in himself, when he adds, *For whom I have made all things loss, and do count them but dung*. [ver. 8] But in what manner he hung without life and his bones all dead, he shews, in that he adds in that place, saying, *That I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Jesus Christ*. [ver. 9] But whereas by bringing together his declarations we have avouched Paul to have been suspended aloft dead to the world, let us now shew whether blessed Job, being filled with the same Spirit, eschews the concupiscence of the exterior life. It goes on,

Ver. 16. *I have given over hope, I will not live any longer.*

45. There be some of the righteous, who so entertain the desire of heavenly things, that, notwithstanding this, they are not broken off from the hope of things earthly. The inheritance bestowed on them by God they keep for the supply of necessities, the honours awarded them on a temporal footing they retain; they do not covet the things of others, they make a lawful use of their own. Yet these are strangers to those same things that they have, in that they are not bound in affection to those very goods which they keep in their possession. And there are some of the righteous, who

bracing themselves up to lay hold of the very height of perfection, whilst they aim at higher objects within, abandon all things without, who bare themselves of the goods possessed by them, strip themselves of the pride of honours, who by continuance in a grateful sorrow affect their hearts with longing for the things of the interior, refuse to receive consolation from those that are exterior, who whilst in spirit they drink of the inward joys, wholly extinguish in themselves the life of corporeal enjoyment. For it is said by Paul to such as these, *For ye are dead, and your life it hid with Christ in God*. [Col. 3, 3] The Psalmist spoke in their voice, when he said, *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord*. [Ps. 84, 2] For they 'long' but do not 'faint,' who are already imbued indeed with heavenly desires, but notwithstanding are still not tired of the enjoyments of earthly objects. But he 'longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord,' who whilst he desires the eternal world, doth not hold on in the love of the temporal. Hence the Psalmist saith again, *My soul fainteth for Thy salvation*. [Ps. 119, 81] Hence 'Truth' bids us by His own lips, saying, *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.* [Luke 9, 23] And again; *Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot he My disciple*. [Luke 14, 33] Thus the holy man, his soul parted from earthly objects of desire, sets himself in the number of such as those, when he saith, *I have given over hope, I will not live any longer*. Since for a righteous man 'to give over hope' is to quit the good things of the present life, in making choice of eternity, and to put no trust in temporal possessions. And whilst doing this, he declares that he 'will not live any longer,' in that by a quickening death he is daily killing himself to the life of passion [f]. For be it far from us to think that the holy man should despair of the bountifulness of God's mercy, that he should withdraw the step of the heart from advancing in the interior way, that forsaking the love of the Creator he should as it were stop on the road lacking a guide, and pierced with the

sword of rifling despair, be brought to ruin. But lest we seem violently to wrest his sayings according to the caprice of our own view, we ought to form our estimate of what is promised by that which follows after. For in what sense he said this, he does himself immediately point out, in that he adds,

Spare me, O Lord, [g] *for my days are nothing.*

46. For neither do the two words agree together, *I have given over hope*, and, *spare me*. For he that ‘gives over hope,’ no longer begs to be spared; and he who is still anxious to be spared, is surely far from ‘giving over hope.’ It is on one sort of grounds then that he ‘gives over hope,’ and on another that the holy man prays to be spared; in that whilst he abandons the good things of this transitory life in ‘giving over the hope’ thereof, he rises more vigorous in hope for the securing of those that shall endure. So that in ‘giving over hope,’ he is the more effectually brought to the hope of pardon, who seeks the things to come so much the more determinately, in proportion as he more thoroughly forsakes those of the present time in giving up hope. And we are to take notice, that when teaching us the strength of his heart, he delivered indeed but one sentiment about himself, but in teaching it to us he has repeated it a third time. For what he had said above, *My soul chooseth hanging*, it was in repeating this, that he added the words, *I have given over hope*, and in aiming at the blessings of eternity, and putting behind those of time, he last of all brought in this, *Spare me*. And what he said above, *And my bones death*, this same it was that he added, *I will not live longer*, and this he delivered to end with, *for my days are nothing*. But he lightly considers that his ‘days are nothing,’ because as we have often remarked already a little above, holy men, the more thoroughly they are acquainted with things above, in the same proportion they look down upon the things of earth from a loftier height. And therefore they see that the days of the present life are ‘nothing,’ because they have the

eyes of their illumined soul fixed in the contemplation of eternity. And when they return thence to themselves, what do they find themselves to be but dust? And being conscious of their frailty, they are in dread of being judged with severity; and when they regard the force of that vast Energy, they tremble to have it put to the test what they are. And hence it is further added with propriety,

V er. 17. *What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him?*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

47. God magnifieth man, in that He enriches him with the bountiful gift of reason, visits him with the inspiration of grace, exalts him with the greatness of imparted virtue; and whereas he is nothing in himself, yet through the bounty of His lovingkindness He vouchsafes to him to be a partaker of the knowledge of Himself. And the Lord 'setteth His heart upon man' so magnified, in that after His gifts He brings forth judgment, weighs merits with exactness, rigidly tries the weights of life, and exacts punishment from him afterwards the more strictly, in proportion as He prevents him here more bounteously by the benefit bestowed. So then let the holy man view the immensity of the Supreme Majesty, and recall the eye of reflection to his own frailty. Let him see that flesh cannot comprehend that which Truth through the Spirit teaches concerning Himself. Let him see that man's spirit, even when it is lifted up, is not able to bear the Judgment, which God holds over it, on a trial of strict recompensing, and let him say, *What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him?* As though he cried out in plain words, saying, 'Man is magnified with a spiritual gift, but yet he is flesh, and after Thy gifts, Thou takest strict account of his ways; yet if he be judged with pity set aside, the weight that rests over him from Thine

exactness, not even the spirit that is raised to righteousness has strength to sustain, seeing that though Thy gifts draw him out beyond his own compass, yet at the inquest of Thy strict scrutiny his own frailty contracts him.' And hence it is fitly added still further;

Ver. 18. *And that Thou shouldest visit him in the dawn, and try him suddenly?*

48. Which is there of us that does not know that it is called the 'dawn,' when the night season is now changing into the brightness of light? so we too are closed in by the darkness of night, when we are dimmed by the practice of wickedness; but the night is turned into light, when the darkness of our erring state is illuminated by knowledge of the Truth. The night is turned into light, when the splendour of righteousness lights up our hearts, which the blindness of sin lay heavy upon. This dawn Paul saw rise in the minds of the disciples, when he said, *The night is far spent, the day is at hand*. [Rom. 13, 12] And so the Lord 'visits us at the dawn,' in that He illumines the darkness of our state of error with the light of the knowledge of Himself, uplifts us with the gift of contemplation, exalts us to the stronghold of virtue. But it is to be observed, that after God 'visits him at the dawn,' He 'tries man suddenly,' in that both in drawing near He advances our souls to virtuous heights, and in withdrawing Himself He suffers them to be assaulted with temptation. For if after the bestowal of the gifts of virtue, she is never moved by any assault of temptation, the soul boasts that she has these of herself. Therefore that she may at one and the same time enjoy the gifts of a firm state, and humbly acknowledge her own state of infirmity, by the visitation of grace she is lifted up on high, and by the withdrawal of the same, it is proved what she is in herself. Which is well intimated to us in the history of the book of sacred reading, wherein Solomon is recorded both to have received wisdom from on high, and yet directly after that very wisdom was received, to have been assailed by the

disputing of the harlots. [1 Kings 3, 16, &c.] For immediately after he had received the grace of that great enlightenment, he was exposed to the strife of base women; for that oftentimes when the visiting of the interior bounty illuminates our mind with virtues vouchsafed it, even filthy imaginations forthwith disorder it, that the soul, which being lifted up exults in the immensity of the gift, being at the same time struck by temptation, may discover what she is. So Elijah both being visited at the dawn, opened the doors of heaven by a word, and yet being 'tried suddenly,' fleeing helpless through the desert, was in dread of a single woman. [1 Kings 19, 3] Thus Paul is carried to the third heaven, and penetrating into the secrets of Paradise, he is held in contemplation; and yet when he returns to himself, travails against the assaults of the flesh, and is subject to another law in his members, by whose rebellion within him he grieves to see the law of the Spirit hard bestead. [2 Cor. 12, 2] Therefore God 'visits at the dawn,' but, after this visiting, He 'tries suddenly,' in that He both lifts up by the gift vouchsafed, and by the same being for a while withdrawn, shews unaided [*ipsum*] man to himself. Which doubtless we are so long subject to, until the time, when the pollution of sin being clean taken away, we be renewed to the substance of promised incorruption. Hence it is fitly added yet further,

Ver. 19. *How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone until I swallow down my spittle.*

49. The spittle runs into the mouth from the head, but from the mouth it is carried into the belly by being swallowed. And what is our head saving the Deity, through Whom we derive the original of our being, so as to be 'creature,' as Paul bears witness, who declares, *The head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God*; and what is our belly, saving the mind, which, whilst it takes its food, i.e. heavenly perception, being invigorated, doth surely rule the members of the several actions. For except Holy Writ did sometimes describe the mind by the name of 'the belly,'

Solomon surely would never have said, *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly*; [Prov. 20, 27] forasmuch as whilst the grace of heavenly visitation illumines us, it discloses even all the depths of the mind that are hidden from our sight. What then is meant by the term ‘spittle,’ but the savour of interior contemplation, which runs down from the head to the mouth, in that issuing from the brightness of the Creator, whilst we are still set in this life, it but just touches us with a taste of revelation. And hence the Redeemer at His coming mixed the spittle with clay, and restored the eyes of him that was born blind, [John 9, 6] in that heavenly grace enlightens the carnal bent of our hearts, by a mixture of the contemplation of Itself, and from his original blindness restores man anew to perception. For whereas nature henceforth brought him forth in this place of exile, since he was banished from all the joys of Paradise, man was produced from his birth, as it were, without eyes. But, as the holy man teaches, this spittle runs into the mouth indeed, but that it should not reach into the belly, it is not swallowed down, in that the contemplation of the Divine Being grazes the sense, but does not perfectly refresh the mind, because the soul is unable perfectly to behold what as yet, the mist of corruption impeding the view, it sees by a hasty glimpse.

50. For see how the soul of the Elect already bears down all earthly desires beneath itself, already mounts above all the objects that it sees are of a nature to pass away, is already lifted up from the enjoyment of external delights, and closely searches what are the invisible good things, and in doing the same is carried away into the sweetness of heavenly contemplation; already very often it sees something of the interior world as it were through the mist, and with burning desire strives to the utmost to be admitted to the spiritual ministries of the Angels, feeds on the taste of the Light Incomprehensible, and being carried out of self disdains to sink back again into self; for forasmuch as the body, which is in the way to corruption,

still weighs down the soul, it has not power to attach itself to the Light for long, which it sees in a momentary glimpse. For the mere infirmity of the flesh by itself drags down the soul, as it mounts above itself, and brings it down, as it aspires, to provide for low cares and wants. And so spittle flowing from the head touches the mouth, but never reaches to the belly; in that our understanding indeed is henceforth watered with the dews of heavenly contemplation, but the soul is not at all fully satisfied. For in the mouth is the taste, but fulness in the belly; and so we cannot 'swallow down our spittle,' in that we are not suffered to fill ourselves with the excellency of heavenly brightness, which we taste as yet but in a sip. But whereas this very same that we are already in some slight degree made acquainted with above us, comes from the pitifulness of One that spareth, while that we cannot as yet obtain a perfect perception of it is of the punishment of the old curse still, it is rightly said now, *How long dost Thou not spare me, nor let me alone, till I swallow down my spittle?* As if it were in plain words; 'Then Thou dost perfectly spare man, when Thou admittest Him to the perfect measure of the contemplation of Thee; that being transported he may behold Thy brightness in the interior, and no corruption of his flesh without should hold him back. Then 'thou lettest me alone till I swallow down my spittle, when Thou replenishest me with the savour of Thy brightness even to the very overflow of fulness, that I should never henceforth go a hungered, with but a taste of the mouth, through lack of food, but be stedfastly stayed in Thee, the belly of my interior being watered.' But whoso would obtain the good that he desires must acknowledge the evil that he has done. The account goes on.

Ver.20. *I have sinned; what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men?*

51. Observe how he confesses the ill that he has done, but the good that he should present to God in compensation, he no where can find, in that all

virtue whatever of human practice is without power to wash out the guilt of sin, except His mercifulness in sparing foster it, and not His justice in judging press hard upon it. Whence it is well said by the Psalmist, *Because Thy mercy is better than the life*; [Ps. 63, 3] in that howsoever innocent it may seem to be, yet with the strict Judge our life doth not set us free, if the lovingkindness of His mercy loose not to it the debt of its guilt. Or indeed when it is said, *What shall I do unto Thee?* it is plainly, shewn us that those very good things, which we are commanded to practise, are not a gain to Him that imposes the command, but to ourselves. Whence it is said again by the Psalmist, *My goodness extendeth not unto Thee*. [Ps. 16, 2] Now the abjectness of our destitution is set forth, when God is called the 'Preserver of men,' in that if His preserving hand defend us not in the face of the snares of the secret adversary, the eye of our heedfulness sleeps on watch, as the Psalmist again bears record, who saith, *Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain*. [Ps. 127, 1] For it is through ourselves, that we have been brought to the ground, but to rise again by our own strength is beyond our ability. The fault of our own will laid us low once, but the punishment of our fault sinks us worse day by day. We strive by the efforts of our earnest endeavours, to lift ourselves to the uprightness we have lost, but we are kept down by the weight of our just dues. And hence it is fitly added, *Why hast Thou set me opposite to Thee, so that I am a burthen to myself?*

52. Then did God 'set man opposite to Him,' when man forsook God by sinning. For being taken captive by the persuasions of the Serpent, he became the enemy of Him, Whose precepts he despised. But the righteous Creator 'set man opposite to Himself,' in that He accounted him an enemy by pride. And this very oppositeness of sin is itself made a weight of punishment to man, that he being wrongly free, might serve his own corruption, who while serving rightly exulted in the freedom of

incorruption. For quitting the healthful stronghold of humility, he was brought by growing proud to the yoke of infirmity, and in erecting only bowed down the neck of the heart, in that he who refused to submit to the behests of God, prostrated himself beneath his own necessities; which we shall shew the better, if we set forth those burthens, first of the flesh and afterwards of the spirit, which he is made subject to after being cast down to the ground.

53. For to say nothing of this, that he is liable to pains, that he gasps with fever; the very state of our body, which is called health, is straitened by its own sickness. For it wastes with idleness, it faints with work; failing with not eating, it is refreshed by food so as to hold up; going heavily with sustenance, it is relieved by abstinence, so as to be vigorous; it is bathed in water, not to be dry; it is wiped with towels, not by that very bathing to be too wet; it is enlivened by labour, that it may not be dulled by repose; it is refreshed by repose, that it faint not under the exertion of labour; worn with watching, it is recruited by sleep; oppressed with sleep, it is roused to activity by watching, lest it be worse wearied by its own rest; it is covered with clothing, lest it be pierced by the hardship of cold; fainting under the heat it sought, it is invigorated by the blowing of the air. And whereas it meets with annoyances from the very quarter whence it sought to shelter itself from annoyances, being badly wounded, so to say, it sickens by its own cure. Therefore fevers set aside and pains not in action, our very breath itself is sickness, whereunto there is never wanting the necessity of administering a cure. Since whatever the comforts we seek out for occasion of life, we as it were meet with so many medicines of our sickness; but the very medicine itself too is turned into a sore, in that attaching ourselves a little too long to the remedy we sought, we are more brought down in that which we prudently provide for our refreshment. Thus was presumption to

be amended, thus was pride to be laid low. For whereas we once took to us a high spirit, so every day we carry the mud that runneth down.

54. Our very mind too itself being banished from the secure delight of interior secresy, is now beguiled by hope, now tormented by fear; one while cast down by grief, at another time made light by a false mirth; it obstinately attaches itself to transitory objects, and is continually afflicted by the loss of them, in that it is also continually undergoing change by a course that carries it away; and being made subject to things changeable, it is also made to be at odds with its own self. For seeking what it has not got, it anxiously obtains it, and so soon as it has begun to possess the same, is sick of having obtained what it sought after. Oftentimes it loves what it once despised, and despises what, it used to love. It learns by dint of pains what are the things of eternity, but it forgets them in a moment, if it cease to take pains. It takes a long time to seek, that it may find, but a little concerning the things above, but speedily falling, back into its wonted ways, not even for a little space does it hold on in the things it has found. Desiring to be instructed, with difficulty it gets the better of its ignorance, and being so instructed it has a harder contest against the pride of knowledge; with difficulty it subjects to itself the usurping power of its fleshly part, yet it is still subject to the images of sin within, the works whereof it has already in vanquishing bound down without. It raises itself in quest of its Creator, but being thrown back, it is bewildered by the beguiling mist of corporeal attachments [h]. It desires to survey itself, and to see how being incorporeal it bears rule over the body, and it cannot. It asks in a wonderful way what it is unable to answer itself, and remaining ignorant is at a loss under that, which it inquires with a wise purpose. Viewing itself as large and scanty at once, it knows nothing how to form a true estimate of itself, in that if it were not large it would not be seeking matters of so deep enquiry, and again if it were not little, it would at least find that which it asks of itself.

55. Well therefore is it said, *Thou hast set me opposite to Thee, so that I am a burthen to myself*, in that whilst man being banished is both subject to annoyances in the flesh, and to perplexities in the mind, surely he carries about his own self as a grievous burthen. On every side he is beset with sicknesses, on every side he is hard bestead with infirmities, that he who, having abandoned God, thought to suffice to himself for his repose, might find nought in himself but a turmoil of disquietude, and might try to fly from himself so found, but having set his Creator at nought, might not have where to fly. The burthens of which state of infirmity that wise man rightly regarding, exclaims, *An heavy yoke is upon the Sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mother's womb, till the day that they return to the mother of all things*. [Ecclus. 40, 1] But blessed Job regarding these things, and seeking with groans wherefore they were so ordered, does not reproach justice, but interrogates mercy; that in asking he may himself in self-abasement deal a blow to that, which the Divine pity might in sparing alter. As if he said in plain words; 'Wherefore dost Thou despise man set as in opposition to Thee, Who, I am assured, wouldest not that even he should perish whom Thou art thought to despise?' Whence he proceeds in a right way both to express humility in confession, and to subjoin the voice of free inquiry in the words,

Ver. 21. *And why dost Thou not take away my transgression, and remove mine iniquity?*

56. By which same words, what else is intimated but the desire of the expected Mediator, concerning Whom John saith, *Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world*. [John 1, 29] Or rather sin is then completely taken away from mankind, when our corruption is changed in the glory of incorruption. For we can never be free from sin so long as we are held fast in a body of mortality, and therefore he longs for the grace of the Redeemer, i.e. for the wholeness [*soliditatem*] of the Resurrection, who

is looking to have his iniquity entirely 'taken away.' Hence immediately after adding both the punishment which was his due by birth, and the Judgment which he dreads in consequence of his own doings, he proceeds,

For now shall I sleep in the dust, and if Thou shalt seek me in the morning, I shall not abide.

57. It was said to the first man on his sinning, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*. [Gen. 3, 19] Now by the 'morning,' is meant that manifestation of souls, which, when the thoughts are laid bare at the coming of the Judge, is as it were brought to light after the darkness of night. Of which same morning, it is said by the Psalmist, *In the morning I shall stand before Thee and shall see* . [Ps. 5, 3. Vulg.] Now God's 'seeking' is His searching man with a minute inquest, and, in searching, judging him with rigorous strictness. Therefore let blessed Job, surveying the miseries of man's fallen condition, see how that he is both already closely pressed by a present punishment, and in yet worse plight as concerns the future, and let him say, *For now shall I sleep in the dust, and if Thou shalt seek me in the morning, I shall not abide*. As if he openly lamented, saying, 'In the present life indeed I already undergo the death of the flesh, and yet still further from the Judgment to come I dread a worse death, even the doom of Thy severity. I suffer destruction for sin, yet further on coming to Judgment I dread my sins being brought up again even after my dissolution. Therefore looking at the external death, let him say, *For now shall I sleep in the dust*, and dreading the interior let him add*, And if Thou shalt seek me in the morning, I shall not abide*. For however strong in righteousness, even the very Elect by no means suffice to themselves for innocency, if they be strictly examined in Judgment. But they find it now for an alleviation of their withdrawal hence, that they know in their humility that they never can suffice. Therefore they shelter themselves under the covering of humility from the sword of such a grievous visitation, and in proportion as awaiting

the terribleness of the Judge to come, they tremble with continual alarm, so there is an unceasing progress in their becoming better prepared. It goes on,

C. viii. 1, 2. *Then answered Bildad, the Shuhite, and said, How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the breath* [V. so.] *of the words of thy mouth be multiplied?*

58. To the unrighteous the words of the righteous are ever grievous, and such as they hear spoken for edification, they bear as a burthen put upon them. As Bildad, the Shuhite, plainly indicates in his own case, when he says, *How long wilt thou speak these things?* For he that says *how long*, shews that he cannot any longer bear words of edification. But whereas unfair men are too proud to be set right, they find fault with the things that are spoken well; and hence he immediately adds, *And how long shall the breath of the words of thy mouth be multiplied?* When multiplicity is blamed in the speech, surely it is thereby denied that there is weight of meaning in the sense. For the power of speakers on the highest matters is distinguished by a fourfold quality. For there be some whom fulness in speaking and thinking combined give width and compass, and there be some whom meagreness both of thought and utterance reduces to small dimensions; and there are some who are furnished with ability in speaking, but not with penetration in thinking; and there are some, who have penetration of thought to support them, but from barrenness of expression are made silent. For we discover the same in man that we often see in things without sense. Thus it very often happens that both an abundant supply of water is obtained from the deep of the earth, and that it is conveyed by ample channels upon the surface; and very often a scanty quantity lies concealed in the heart of the earth, and hardly finding a crevice to issue by, strains itself out in scanty dimensions without. Very often too the smallest quantity springs up out of reach of the eye, and when it finds an outlet gaping wide whereby it may issue forth from an ample opening, it swells

out in a thin stream, and the big channels open themselves wide, but there is not aught for them to pour forth; and very often an ample store springs up out of sight, but being confined by narrow channels, it dribbles out in the smallest quantities. Just so in one sort the ample mouth delivers what the copious fountain of the wit supplies; in another, neither does thought furnish sense, nor the tongue pour it forth. In others, the mouth indeed is wide to speak, but for the giving out that which thought has provided for it, the tongue gets nothing at all; whilst in others, a full fountain of thought abounds in the heart, but a disproportionate tongue, like a scanty channel, confines it. In which same four sorts of speaking, the third only is obnoxious to blame, which appropriates to itself by words that, to the level whereof it doth not rise in wit. For the first is worthy of praise, in that it is powerful and strong in both particulars. The second deserves commiseration, which in its littleness lacks both. The fourth calls for aid, in that it has not power to embody what it thinks. But the third is worthy to be despised and ought to be restrained, in that while it lifts itself high in speech it is grovelling in sense; and like limbs swoln with inflation, it goes forth to the ears of the hearers big but void. And it is this which Bildad hurls as an accusation against blessed Job, saying, *And how long shall the words of the breath of thy mouth be multiplied?* For he that attributes multiplicity of words to the mouth, doubtless finds fault with the barrenness of the heart. As if he said in plain words, ‘Thou art raised by abundance of breath in word of mouth, but thou art stinted by scantiness of sense.’ But when bad men blame right things, lest they should themselves appear not to know what is righteous, the good things that are known of all men, and which they have learnt by hearsay, they deliver as unknown. And hence Bildad adds directly,

Ver. 3. *Doth God pervert judgment? Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*

59. These things blessed Job had neither in speaking denied, nor yet was ignorant of them in holding his tongue. But all bold persons, as we have said, speak with big words even well known truths, that in telling of them they may appear to be learned. They scorn to hold their peace in a spirit of modesty, lest they should be thought to be silent from ignorance. But it is to be known that they then extol the rectitude of God's justice, when security from ill uplifts themselves in joy, while blows are dealt to other men; when they see themselves enjoying prosperity in their affairs, and others harassed with adversity. For whilst they do wickedly, and yet believe themselves righteous, the benefit of prosperity attending them, they imagine to be due to their own merits; and they infer that God does not visit unjustly, in proportion as upon themselves, as being righteous, no cloud of misfortune falls. But if the power of correction from above touch their life but in the least degree, being struck they directly break loose against the policy of the Divine inquest, which a little while before, unharmed, they made much of in expressing admiration of it, and they deny that judgment to be just, which is at odds with their own ways; they canvass the equity of God's dealings, they fly out in words of contradiction, and being chastened because they have done wrong, they do worse. Hence it is well spoken by the Psalmist against the confession of the sinner, *He will confess to Thee, when Thou doest well to him*. [Ps. 49, 18] For the voice of confession is disregarded, when it is shaped by the joyfulness of prosperity. But that confession alone possesses merit of much weight, which the force of pain has no power to part from the truth of the rule of right, and which adversity, the test of the heart, sharpens out even to the sentence of the lips. Therefore it is no wonder that Bildad commends the justice of God, in that he experiences no hurt therefrom.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

60. Now whereas we have said that the friends of blessed Job bear the likeness of heretics, it is well for us to point out briefly, how the words of Bildad accord with the wheedling ways of heretics. For whilst in their own idea they see Holy Church corrected with temporal visitations, they swell the bolder in the bigness of their perverted preaching, and putting forward the righteousness of the Divine probation, they maintain that they prosper by virtue of their merits; but they avouch that she is rewarded with deserved chastisements, and thereupon without delay they seek by beguiling words a way to steal upon her, in the midst of her sorrows, and they strike a blow at the lives of some, by making the deaths of others a reproach, as if those were now visited with deserved death, who refused to hold worthy opinions concerning God. Hence Bildad the Shuhite, after he pleaded the justice of God, thereupon adds,

Ver.4-6. *Even if thy children have sinned against Him, and He have left them in the hand of their transgression; yet if thou wilt seek to God at dawn, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; if thou wilt walk pure and upright; surely now He will awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness at peace.*

61. As if the preachers of falsities were to say to afflicted Catholics, 'Provide for your lives, and learn what wrong things ye maintain from the condemnation of those that are dead from among you. For except your misbelief were displeasing to the Creator of all things, He would never take from you such numbers [k] by destruction let loose to rage against them.' For he says, *If thy children have sinned against Him, and He have left them in the hand of their transgression*. As though he said in plain speech, 'They are left in the hand of their own wickedness, that refused to follow the life of our right rule.' Yet if thou wilt arise to God at dawn, and make thy supplication to the Almighty. For inasmuch as heretics think that the light of truth rests with themselves, they bid and summon Holy Church, as being in

the night of error, to come to the dawning of the truth, that in the knowledge of God it may be led to rise, as in the dawning light, and by the prayer of penitence wash off past misdeeds. *If thou wilt walk pure and upright*; that is to say, pure in thought, upright in practice. Surely now He will awake for thee. As if it were in plain words, 'that He, Who now forbears to put forth the power of His protecting hand to thy tribulations, is as if asleep to the succouring of one going wrong.' And make the habitation of thy righteousness at peace, i.e. 'does away with the crosses of the present life, and vouchsafes without delay security in repose.' For because men that are bad reckon temporal enjoyment as a special blessing of Divine recompensing, what they themselves go after with solicitous concern, they promise to others as something great. Hence it very often happens that they either pledge themselves to regain them when lost, or draw on the minds of their hearers after still greater rewards of this world. Which Bildad openly expresses, when he adds upon that,

Ver. 7. *Insomuch that though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end shall greatly increase.*

62. But if it is counsel within the soul that he calls 'the habitation of righteousness,' the leaders of false opinions promise afflicted Catholics 'the habitation of their righteousness at peace,' in that if they draw them to their own views, then indeed they hold their peace from opposition. For those who have let themselves be drawn into that which is wrong, are the more lulled to rest in temporal peace, in proportion as they are parted the wider from eternal peace. Moreover they promise that the riches of understanding shall be increased to all that follow them. And hence it is added, *Insomuch that though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end shalt greatly increase*. Then because they do not easily obtain credit to their words, in that their life is often shewn to be worthy of contempt, they put forward the

opinions of the Fathers of old, and turn the right line they take into a proof of their own erring way, Hence it is added, .

Ver. 8. *For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and diligently search into the memory of the fathers.*

63. They give us notice that 'the former generation' and 'the memory of the fathers' are not seen but 'searched,' because they will not have that to be seen therein, which lies open before the eyes of all men. But sometimes, like good men, they give some instruction of a moral kind, and shew how the present may be gathered from the past; and from the things which are even now withdrawn from our eyes by passing away, they shew how little there is in the things that are seen before our eyes. Whence it is yet further added,

Ver. 9. *For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are but a shadow.*

64. And so the generation of old is set before us to be inquired of, that the period of the present life may be shewn to pass away like a shadow; in this way, that if we recall to mind the things that have been and are now over, we clearly see how swiftly that also will be gone which we have in our hands. But it often happens that heretics go along with us in extolling the same fathers whom we venerate; but their sense being perverted, they strike at us by those very commendations of them. Hence it is yet further added,

Ver. 10. *Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?*

65. We must mark what he had said before, *And the inspiration* ['spiritus,' as before] *of the words of thy mouth is multiplied*. But now when the fathers are brought to mind, he says, *They shall utter words out of their heart*. As though heretics abhorring the life of Holy Church said, 'Thou hast abundance of inspiration in thy mouth, in thy heart thou hast none of it. But

they are to be heard in opposition, who, in uttering words from the heart, have taught the right thing by living like it.' But oftentimes the wicked, whereas the evil of their own crookedness is unknown to them, boldly pull in pieces the uprightness of others, and while they usurp to themselves authority of pronouncing rebukes against good men, they either deliver those good sentiments, which they have imbibed not by seeing but by hearing them, or else with lying lips lay that evil to the charge of others, which they are themselves guilty of committing. But when they give utterance to good thoughts, which they scorn to observe, it is to be remarked that very frequently Truth so speaks by the lips of her adversaries, that in putting their tongue in motion it smites their life. So that in telling of the highest perfection of righteousness while they know nothing of it, they themselves are rendered at once both judges by their words and accusers by their deeds.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATON]

Hence Bildad subjoins words of wondrous truth against hypocrites, but he is running himself through with the point of his discourse. For unless he were himself in some slight degree a pretender of righteousness, he would never venture to teach a good man with so much temerity. And indeed they are words of singular force that he speaks, but they ought to have been addressed to fools, not to a wise man; to the wicked, not to a good person; in that he proclaims himself no less than insane, who, when the gardens are parched, pours water into the river. But in the mean time, laying aside the question to whom the thing is said, let us weigh well and minutely what it is that is said, that the sentiments delivered may edify ourselves, even though they assail the character of their Author. It goes on,

Ver. 11. *Can the rush grow up without moisture? can the flag grow without water?*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

To whom Bildad compares ‘the rush’ and ‘the flag,’ he himself immediately discloses, when he adds;

Ver. 12, 13. *Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish.*

66. So that by the name of ‘a rush’ or ‘a flag,’ he denotes the life of the hypocrite, which has an appearance of greenness, but has no fruit of usefulness for the services of man, which continuing dry in barrenness of practice, is green with only the colour of sanctity alone. But neither does a rush grow without moisture, nor a flag without water, in that the life of hypocrites receives indeed the infused grace of the heavenly gift for the doing of good works, but in whatsoever it does seeking praises without, it proves void of fruit of the infused grace vouchsafed it. For they often perform wonderful deeds of miraculous power, they expel demons from bodies possessed, and by the gift of prophecy, by knowing anticipate things to come, yet they are separated from the Giver of so many blessings in the bent of the thought of their heart. For through His gifts they seek not His glory, but their own applause. And whereas by the benefits vouchsafed them they raise themselves in their own praise, they are assailing their Benefactor with the very gifts of His bounty. For they behave themselves proudly against Him that gave them, from the very circumstance whereby they should have been rendered the more thoroughly humble towards Him. But a judgment the more unsparing smites them hereafter, in proportion as heavenly Goodness now pours upon them even in their ingratitude the dew of His blessing in larger measure. And the fulness of the gift turns to the increase of condemnation to them, because when they are watered they bear no fruit, but under a hue of green rear themselves on high in barrenness. These ‘Truth’ well describes in the Gospel, saying, *Many shall say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy*

Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. [Matt. 7, 22. 23.] Thus neither the rush nor the flag lives without water, because hypocrites do not take the greenness of good works, save by gift from above; but because they appropriate it to the use of their own applause, they grow green indeed in the water, but barren.

67. Now it is well added, *Whilst it is yet in his flower, nor plucked with the hand, it withereth before any other herb*. 'The rush in his flower' is the hypocrite in esteem. Now the rush springing up with sharp edges is not plucked with the hand, in that the hypocrite, having his feelings sharpened by presumption, disdains to be rebuked for his wickedness. In his flower he gashes the hand that plucketh him, in that the hypocrite in the midst of applause, that no one may dare to rebuke him, by his cutting tongue wounds the life of the rebuker without delay. For he desires not to be holy, but to be called holy; and when he may chance to be rebuked, it is as if he were lopped off in the full bloom of his reputation. He is enraged to be found out in his wickedness, he forbids the man that brings his guilt home to him to address him, in that he is as it were pained by being touched in a secret wound. Such as he was known to the ignorant, he would wish to be accounted of all men, and readier to lay down his life than to be reprimanded, he is made worse by censure, because he accounts the word of disinterested goodness as the dart of deadly smiting. Hence in exasperated passion he directly rises in abuse, and looks about for all the evil he can rake together against the life of his rebuker. He longs to prove him beyond all comparison guilty, that he may make himself out innocent, not by his own doings, but by the guilt of others; so that often the person repents that he has uttered a word of censure, and that just as from the hand of one plucking any thing, so from the mind of the person chiding, there runs out as it were the blood of sorrow, if I may say so. Hence it is well said by

Solomon, *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee*. For it is not proper for the good man to fear, lest the scorner should utter abuse at him when he is chidden; but lest being drawn into hatred, he should be made worse.

68. And here it is necessary to be known, that the excellencies of good men, as they begin from the heart, go on increasing to the very end of the present life; but the practices of hypocrites, seeing that they are not rooted in secret, often come to nought before the present life is ended. For very frequently they devote themselves to the study of sacred scholarship, and because they prosecute it not for providing a store of merits, but for procuring commendations, the moment that they get hold of the sentence of human applause, and thereby secure the boon of transitory success, they give themselves with all their heart to worldly concerns, and are completely emptied of sacred scholarship, and by their way of acting afterwards, they shew how much they love the things of time, who before only had those of eternity alone on their lips. But it is very often the case that they exhibit an appearance of maturity put on, they shew fair by the composure of silence, by the forbearance of long suffering, by the virtue of continence; but when by means of these they have reached the height of the honour that they aimed at, and when respect is henceforth bestowed on them by all men, they immediately begin to let themselves out in wantonness of self-gratification, and they are their own witnesses against themselves that they held none of their good derived from the heart, in that they parted with it so soon.

But sometimes there are persons found who give all they possess, and lavish all their goods upon the needy, yet before the end of their life, inflamed with the itch of avarice, they covet the goods of others, who seemed to be giving their own with a lavish hand; and afterwards with determined cruelty they go after that, which they had given up before with pretended piety. And hence it is rightly said in this place, *Whilst it is yet in his flower, and not yet plucked with the hand, it withereth before any other*

herb. For as to their fleshly part even the righteous are herbs, as the Prophet bears witness, who saith, *All flesh is grass*. But 'the rush' is said to 'wither before all other herbs;' in that while the righteous continue in their goodness, the life of hypocrites is dried up from the greenness of assumed uprightness. Even the rest of the herbs wither, because the deeds of the righteous come to an end together with the life of the flesh. But the 'rush' precedes the withering of the herbs, for before the hypocrite passes out of the flesh, he gives over the deeds of virtuous habits which he had manifested in himself. Concerning which same it is also well said by the Psalmist, *Let them be as the grass upon the housetop, which withereth afore it be plucked up*. [Ps. 129, 6] For 'the grass upon the housetop' springeth up aloft, but it is never set firm with a rich soil, forasmuch as the hypocrite is seen practising the highest acts, but he is not stablished therein in purity of intention. Which same grass even when not plucked up soon withereth, for this reason, that the hypocrite at one and the same time still exists in the present life, and yet already parts with the practices of holiness as with the appearance of greenness. For because he went about to do good works without the purpose of a right heart, by losing these he shews that he flourished without a root.

69. But as we have before said, who he is to whom Bildad likens 'a rush' or 'a flag,' he makes plain at the moment, where he adds, *So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish*. For what does the hypocrite hope for from all his deeds, saving the observance of honour, the reputation of applause, to be feared by his betters, to be called a Saint by all men? But the hope of the hypocrite can never endure, for, from not making eternity his aim, he hastes away from all that he holds in his hand. For the bent of his mind is not fixed in that glory which is possessed without end; but while he gapes after transient applause, he loses in the getting the thing that he toils for, as 'Truth' testifieth, Who saith, *Verily I*

say unto you, they have had their reward. [Matt. 6, 2] Now this hope of being vouchsafed a reward cannot be maintained for long, seeing that honour is bestowed for the works exhibited, but life is pressing on to its close; praises are reechoed, but then along with them the periods of time are speeding to an end. And because the soul is in no wise rooted in the love of the eternal world, it slips away together with the very objects that it is centered in. For no one can attach himself to the moveable, and remain himself unmoved. For he that embraces transitory things is drawn into transition by the mere circumstance, that he is entangled with things running out their course. Therefore let him say, *And the hypocrite's hope shall perish*. For the applause of man, which he seeks with mighty pains, being driven on by the items of time, does run to nought. And it is well added,

Ver. 14. *His own folly shall not satisfy him.*

70. For it is infinite folly to labour painfully, and pant after the breath of applause, to apply one's self to the heavenly precepts with hard toil, but to aim at the reward of an earthly kind of recompense. For that I may so express myself, he that in return for the good that he practises looks for the applause of his fellowcreatures, is carrying an article of great worth to be sold at a mean price. From that whereby he might have earned the kingdom of heaven, he seeks the coin of passing talk. His practice goes for little, in that he spends a great deal, and gets back but very little. Whereunto then are hypocrites like but to luxuriant and untended vines, which put forth fruit from their fertility, but are never lifted from the earth by tending? All that the rich branches bud forth, stray beasts tread under foot, and the more fruitful they see it is, the more greedily they devour it, thus cast away and laid low, in that the works of hypocrites while they shew fair, come forth as if rich, but whilst they aim at human praises, it is as if they were left forsaken upon the ground. And the beasts of this world, i.e. the evil spirits,

devour them, because they turn them to account to the end of perdition, and they seize upon them with greater avidity, in proportion as great things are more clearly known. Hence it is well said by the Prophet, *The standing stalk, there is no bud in them, and they shall yield no meal; if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up*. [Hos. 8, 7. Vulg.] For the stalk is without a bud, when the life lacks the merit of virtuous habits. The stalk yieldeth no meal, when he that thrives in this world understands nothing refined, and yields no fruit of good practice.

71. But very often even when it has yielded meal, strangers eat it up, in that even when hypocrites do shew forth good works, the wishes of evil spirits are satisfied therewith. For those who do not aim to please God by them, do not feed the Owner of the land, but strangers. Thus the hypocrite, like a fruitful and neglected vine, cannot keep his fruit, because the cluster of good works lies prone upon the ground. Yet he is fed by his very own insanity itself, in that on the score of good practice he is esteemed of all men, he is set before others, he holds the minds of men in subjection, he is raised to the higher posts; he is fed high with applause. Now this folly of his satisfies him in the mean season, but it shall not satisfy him, in that when the season of retribution comes, it displeases him under punishment that he was foolish. Then he will perceive that he did foolishly, when, for the gratification of applause, he receives the sentence of God’s rebuke. Then he sees that he has been senseless, when for the transitory glory that he obtained, everlasting torments are his bitter portion. Then punishments disclose the true knowledge to light, in that by them it must at once be concluded that all was nought that could pass away; and hence it is rightly added,

And whose trust shall be a spider’s web.

72. The assurance of the hypocrite is rightly called like the webs of spiders, in that all the pains and labour they spend to acquire glory, the wind

of the life of mortality blows to shreds. For as they never seek the things of eternity, they lose together with time all temporal good things. Moreover it is to be considered that spiders draw their threads in a regular order, for that hypocrites as it were regulate their works by the rule of discernment. The spider's web is woven with pains, but it is scattered by a sudden blast, in that whatsoever the hypocrite does with laborious effort, the breath of man's regard carries off; and whilst in the ambition of applause his work comes to nought, it is as if his labour went to the wind. For it often happens that the works of hypocrites last even to the very end of the present life, but, forasmuch as they do not thereby seek the praise of their Creator, they were never good works in the sight of God. Thus it is very often the case, as we have said above, that they are upheld by scholarship in the sacred Law, that they deliver lessons of instruction, that they fortify by testimonies every notion that they entertain; but they do not hereby seek the life of their hearers, but applause for themselves. For neither do they know how to put forth any thing else but what may stir the hearts of their hearers to the quick, to pay the recompense of praise, not what may kindle them to shed tears. For the heart being preoccupied with external desires, is not hot with the fire of divine love, and so words that issue from a cold heart, can never warm their hearers to heavenly affection. For neither can anyone thing that is not itself alight in itself kindle any other thing. Hence it is very often brought to pass, that at one and the same time the sayings of hypocrites fail to instruct the hearers, and make the very persons themselves that utter them worse by being exalted with praises. For as Paul bears witness, *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*. [1 Cor. 8, 1] Thus, whereas charity setteth not up in 'edifying,' knowledge in puffing up overthrows. Very often hypocrites chasten themselves with extraordinary mortification, wear down all the strength of their body, and as it were while living in the flesh utterly kill the life of the flesh, and so by abstinence verge upon death, that they

live well nigh dying every day; but they seek the eyes of men for all this, they look for the renown of admiration, as ‘Truth’ testifieth, Which saith, *For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast*. [Matt. 6, 16] For their faces become pallid, the body is made to shake with weakness, the breast labours with hard and broken breathings. But amidst all this, talk of admiration is looked for from the lips of neighbours, and nothing else is aimed at by such great pains, saving human esteem. Which same are well represented by that Simon, who in the season of our Lord’s Passion bore the Cross in compulsion, of whom it is written, *And as they came out they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, him they compelled to bear His cross*. [Matt. 27, 32] For what we do by compulsion, we do not practise from a heartfelt devotedness of love. And so for him to bear the Cross of Jesus in compulsion, is to submit to the mortification of abstinence for some other aim than needs to be. Does he not bear the Cross of Jesus under compulsion, who as after the commandment of the Lord subdues the flesh, yet does not love the spiritual Country? And hence the same Simon bears the Cross, but doth not die; in that every hypocrite chastens his body in abstinence, but yet, in the love of glory, lives on to the world.

73. Contrariwise it is well said by Paul of the Elect; *For they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the vices and lusts*. For we ‘crucify the flesh with the vices and lusts,’ if we so restrain our appetite, that henceforth we look for nothing of the glory of the world. Since he that macerates the flesh, but pants after honours, has inflicted the Cross on his flesh, but from concupiscence lives the worse to the world, in that it often happens that in the semblance of holiness, he unworthily obtains the post of rule, which except he displayed something of merit in himself, he would never attain to receive by any pains whatever. But that which he gains for enjoyment is passing, and what ensues in punishment is enduring. Now his assurance of sanctity is placed in the lips of man, but when the inward Judge tries the

secrets of the interior, no witnesses of the life are sought from without. Therefore it is well said, *Whose trust shall be a spider's web*; since on the witness of the heart appearing, all passes by wherein his confidence consists, founded without in human applause. And hence it is yet further added with justice,

Ver. 15. *He leaneth upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall prop it, but it shall not rise up.*

74. As the house of our exterior life is the building which the body lives in, so the house of our thought is any thing whatever that the mind is centered in by affection. For every thing that we love, we as it were make our dwelling-place by reposing in it. Whence Paul, because he had fixed his heart in things above, being still upon earth indeed, yet a stranger to earth, said, *Our conversation is in heaven*. [Phil. 3, 20] So the mind of the hypocrite in whatever it does minds nothing else but the fame of its own reputation, nor cares where it is carried [*'ducitur'*] after by its deserts, but what it is called ['*dicatur'*] in the mean season. Therefore his house is delight of popularity, which he as it were dwells in at rest, in that in all his works he throws himself back thereupon within his mind. But this house can never stand, because praise fleeth away with life, and the applause of man does not hold in the Judgment. Hence the foolish virgins too, who took no oil in their vessels, because their glory was in the voices of others and not in their own consciences, confounded by the presence of the Bridegroom, say, *Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out*. [Matt. 25, 8] For to seek oil from our neighbours is to beseech the fame of good works from the testimony of another man's mouth. For the empty soul, when it finds that it has retained nothing within by all its labours, looks about for testimony from without. As if the foolish Virgins said plainly, 'When ye behold us cast away without reward, say ye what ye have seen in our practice.'

75. But the hypocrite leans in vain then upon this house of applause, since no human testimony stands him in stead in the Judgment; for the same praise, which he afterwards claims in testimony, he before received in reward. Or surely the hypocrite leans upon his house, when beguiled by vain caresses, he is as it were lifted up in assurance of his holiness; for hypocrites do many things evil in secret, but a few things good in public. And when they receive praises from the good that appears, they turn away the eyes of observation from the concealed ill, and they esteem themselves such as they hear without, not such as they know themselves within. Whence it very often happens that they also come to the Judgment of the Most High with confidence, because they imagine themselves such in the sight of the Interior Judge, as they were held to be by men without. Yet 'the house of the hypocrite cannot stand,' for in the terror of a sifting search, all the foregoing assurance of holiness falls to the ground. And when he knows that the testimony of another man's lips is wanting to him, he betakes himself to reckoning up his own works. Hence it is still further added, *He shall prop it, but it shall not rise up*. For that which cannot stand by itself, is propped to make it stand; for when the hypocrite sees his life tottering in the Judgment, he sets himself to make it stand in propping it, by the enumeration of his deeds. Do not they prop the dwelling-place of their own praise on every hand, who in reckoning up their own deeds in the Judgment, as we said before, say, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many marvellous works?* [Matt. 7, 22. 23.] But the house of praise, stayed up by all these statements, cannot rise, because the Judge saith directly, *I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity*. And it is to be had in mind that any thing, that rises, lifts itself from below to a higher elevation, and so 'the house of the hypocrite cannot rise,' in that in all that he may have done after the heavenly precepts, he never lifted his soul from off the earth, so

that with justice he is not then lifted up to the meed of recompense, who in that which he sets forth now, lies prostrate in the desire of temporal glory. But whereas we have heard how the life of the hypocrite, represented by the name of ‘a rush,’ is rejected in the Judgment, let us hear what sort of person he is held by men before the strict Judge appeareth. It proceeds,

Ver. 16. *It is seen moist before the sun cometh.*

76. Oftentimes in Holy Writ the Lord is represented by the title of the Sun, as it is said by the Prophet, *But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise*. [Mal. 4, 2] And as the ungodly that are cast away in the Judgment, are described in the book of Wisdom, as saying, *We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the Sun rose not upon us*; [Wisd. 5, 6] therefore, ‘before the sun the rush is seen moist,’ in that before God’s severity burns hot in the Judgment, every hypocrite shews himself bedewed with the grace of holiness. He is seen as it were flourishing, because he is accounted righteous, he wins the post of honour, he is strong in his high repute for sanctity, reverence is awarded to him by all men, his credit for praise is magnified. Thus this rush is full of moisture in the night, but on the coming of the sun it is dried up, in that the hypocrite is accounted holy by all men in the darkness of the present life, but when the searching Judge cometh, he will appear as wicked as he is. So then let him say, He appears moist before the sun, because now he shews himself flourishing to the eyes of men, but then he shall wither up in the scorching heat of the Divine Judgment. The account goes on;

And his produce I issueth forth in his springing up.

77. For every herb in general is first raised out of the ground by springing up, it is subject to the influences of the air and heat, it is fed by the sun and showers, and then at length it is made to open itself to put forth the produce of its seed. But the rush is produced along with its flower, and

so soon as it springs out of the earth, it puts forth its produce of seed with itself. Therefore by the rest of the herbs the Saints in general are well denoted, but the hypocrite by ‘the rush,’ because the righteous, before they spring up in the practice of holy conversation, undergo the winter season of this life, and the heats of bitter persecutions press them hard; and then, when they do what is right, they never look here for the reward of their, righteousness, but when they depart forth from the labours of the present world, on coming to their eternal Country, they enter upon the enjoyment of their looked-for reward. But contrariwise the hypocrite, in that he springs up in good practice at once, goes about to win the glory of the present world. As it were like a rush he springs up with his produce, who in return for this, that he is beginning to live well, aims at the outset to be held in honour by all men. So that the ‘produce in the springing up,’ is a reward at the outset. For often there are those that abandon the paths of overt wickedness, and put on the garb of holiness, and the moment they have touched the bare threshold of good living, forgetting what they were, they will not be henceforth chastened by penance for the iniquities they have committed, but they long to be commended for goodness begun; they are eager to get above the rest, even though better men than themselves. And for the most part whilst present prosperity follows them to their wish, they become infinitely worse than they were by the wearing of sanctity; but being busied with countless concerns, and distracted by that same busying, they not only never bewail the things that they have done, but still fill up more that should be bewailed.

78. For they that quit the world, ought not to be promoted to externa1[i.e. public] offices, unless in humility they be for some long time established in the contempt of that world. For the good soon comes to an end, which is made known to the world before the time. Thus with shrubs too that have been planted, if, before they are fastened with a firm root, the hand touch

and shake them, it causes them to wither away, but, if the root be fixed deep, and, being sprinkled with the dews of the earth, be set fast, such as these the hand may even push, and not hurt: these even blasts of wind may buffet and wave, yet not overthrow. Thus, that the life of practice we have entered upon may not be uprooted, the root of the heart must be fixed long and vigorously in the deep of humility, that when from the mouths of men the breath of calumny or of applause blows strong, though it bend it a little either way, it may not root up the mind from its seat, but that after such bending it may return to its own upright standing, if it but hold strong in the root in its own self. What among things in course of growth is stronger than a rising wall? yet if, while it is in the act of erecting, it is pushed, it is at once destroyed without an effort; but if for a space of time it be allowed to dry from its wetness, often it is never a jot moved even by the strokes of the battering rams. In this way, in this self-same way, our goodness on the one hand being unseasonably displayed comes to nought, and on the other hand being longer kept hidden, is fairly secured; in that when the hand of human employment touches the recent life of our conversation, as it were it pushes the fresh brick wall, and easily destroys it, because it has not as yet got rid of the moisture of its own weakness. But when in its long lying at rest, the soul holds itself in, as it were like a dry wall, it grows hard against blows, and every thing that strikes it, now it is solid, bounds off it at once shattered. It is hence that Moses forbade the life of aught that made the beginning to be employed in services for men, saying, *Thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep*. [Deut. 15, 19] For to 'do work with the firstling of the bullock' is to display the beginning of a good conversation in the employment of public business. Moreover 'to shear the firstlings of sheep,' is to lay bare of the covering of its concealment the good we have begun before the eyes of men. And so we are forbidden to 'work with the firstling of the bullock,' and we are

hindered from ‘shearing the firstlings of our sheep,’ in that even if we begin any thing strong, we ought not to be too ready to execute it in public. And when our life commences something simple and harmless, it is meet that it quit not the coverings of its secresy, that it may not bare that thing naked to the eyes of the world, the fleece being as it were withdrawn.

79. So let the firstlings of the bullocks and the sheep avail for the Divine sacrifices alone, that whatsoever we begin strong and harmless, we may sacrifice in honour of the Judge of the interior upon the altar of our hearts. Which same we may be sure is accepted the more gladly by Him, in proportion as being kept concealed from men it is stained by no desire of applause. But it often happens that the beginnings of a new method of life have still a mixture of the carnal life, and therefore they ought not to be too ready to make themselves known, lest while the good that pleases is applauded, the soul being beguiled by the praises of itself have no power to discover in itself the evil that lies concealed. Hence it is rightly said by Moses again, *And when ye shall have come into the land that I shall give you, and shall have planted all manner of trees bearing fruit, then ye shall take off their foreskins. The fruits that are put forth shall be unclean, unto you, ye shall not eat of them*. [Lev. 19, 23] For ‘the trees bearing fruit’ are works fruitful in virtue, and so we ‘take off the foreskins of the trees,’ when suspecting ourselves of the mere weakness of a beginning in itself, we do not give our approval to the beginnings of our good practices, but the fruits that are put forth, we count unclean, and do not make them answer for good for us, in that when the beginnings of good practice are applauded, it is meet that the mind of the doer should not be fed thereby; lest whilst the praise bestowed is plucked with delight, the fruit of good works be eaten prematurely. He, then, that receives the praise of virtue in its beginning from the mouths of men, as it were eats the fruit of the tree that he has planted before the time,

80. Hence 'Truth' saith by the Psalmist, *It is vain for you to rise up before the light: rise up after ye have sat*. [Ps. 127, 2. Vulg.] For 'to: rise up before the light' is to take one's pleasure in the night-time of the present life, before the shining of Eternal Retribution is revealed. So we are to sit first, that we may rise afterwards in a right way. For whoever doth not now humble himself by his own act and deed, the glory to ensue does not exalt such an one. Therefore what it is there to rise before the light, it is here for the hypocrite to put forth the produce in his springing up, for in setting his heart on human applauses, in the self-same place, where he springs up to good works, there he desires directly to obtain the glorying of his recompense. Had not they 'put forth their produce in their springing up,' of whom 'Truth' said, *They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men Rabbi?* [Matt. 23, 6, 7] Therefore seeing that for this reason, viz. because they are beginning to do well, they endeavour to obtain honour of men, as it were, like a rush, 'in their springing up they rise with their produce.' These same, whilst they aim to practise right things, first anxiously look about for witnesses of those same works, and canvass with secret calculation, if there be persons to see the things they are about to do, or if those who see them can report them in a proper way. But if it chance to happen that no one witnesses their doings, then, surely, they reckon them to be lost to them, and they account the eyes of the interior Umpire as off them, because they have no mind to receive at His hands the reward of their works hereafter. And whereas when the hypocrite does any thing, he aims to be seen by many eyes, it is yet further added with truth concerning this same 'rush,'

Ver. 17. *His roots will be wrapped about the heap of rocks, and he will dwell among the stones.*

81. For what do we understand by the name of 'roots' save the hidden thoughts, which issue forth out of sight, but rise up in the display of works in open day? as it is also said by the Prophet concerning the seed of the Word, *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward*. [Is. 37, 31] For to 'take root downward,' is to multiply good thoughts in the secret depths, but 'to bear fruit upward,' is to shew forth by the doing of practice what one has thought that is right. Now by the title of 'stones' in Holy Writ men are denoted, as it is said to Holy Church by Isaiah, *And I will make thy battlements jasper, and thy gates of carved stones*. [Is. 54, 12] And he made it plain what it was that he called those stones, where he added, *All thy children taught of the Lord*. As it is also expressed by Peter in giving admonition, *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house*. [1 Pet. 2, 5] Here therefore, whereas they are called 'stones,' but are not in any wise called 'living stones,' by the bare appellation of stones may be set forth the lost and the Elect mixed together. Therefore this rush, 'which abideth in the place of stones, wrappeth his roots about the heap of rocks,' in that every hypocrite multiplies the thoughts of his heart, in seeking out the admiration of men; for in all that hypocrites do, seeing that in their secret thoughts they look out for the applauses of their fellow-creatures, like rushes as it were they 'send out roots into the heap of the rocks.' For on the point of acting they imagine their praises, and when applauded, they dwell upon them secretly with themselves in the thoughts of their heart. They rejoice that they have distinguished themselves first and foremost in the esteem of men; and while they are puffed up and swoln in themselves by their applause, they often themselves secretly wonder at what they are. They long to appear day by day higher than themselves, and grow to a height by extraordinary arts in practice. For as habits of virtue enfeeble every thing bad, so presumption strengthens the same. For it forces the mind to grow quick, and to be in high

condition at the expense of strength, in that what the prime quality of health withholds, the love of applause enjoins. Whence too, as we said, they look out for witnesses of their deeds; but if, it chance that witnesses of the thing are wanting, they themselves relate what they have done, and when they begin to be elated with applause, they add a little, by lying, to these works of theirs, which they describe themselves to have done. But even when they do give true accounts, by the act of telling them they are making them alien to them, in that when they are rewarded with the desired acknowledgments of esteem, they are dispossessed of their inward recompensing of them.

82. For in this, that they publish their good, they point out to the evil spirits, like enemies plotting against them, what to make spoil of. Whose life, truly, is represented by that sin of Hezekiah, which is well known to everyone, who after that by a single prayer, and in the space of a single night, he had laid low an hundred fourscore and five thousand of his enemies, by an Angel smiting them, after that he had brought back the sun close to its setting into the higher regions of the heavens, after that he had spun out the web of life to longer dimensions, now already narrowed by the end approaching, shewed to the welcomed messengers of the king of Babylon all the good treasures that he possessed, but directly heard from the voice of the Prophet, *Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house shall be carried away into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord*. [2 Kings 20, 17] In this way, in this self-same way, do hypocrites, after they are grown to a height by great attainments in virtue, because they are indifferent to guard against the plots of evil spirits, and will not remain hidden in those attainments, by displaying their good things, make them over to the enemy; and by betraying it to view, they lose in a moment whatsoever they perform by taking pains in a long course of time. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *And He delivered their strength into captivity, and their glory into the enemy's hand*. [Ps. 78, 61] For the 'strength' and 'glory' of presumptuous

men is ‘given over into the enemy’s hand,’ in that every good thing, that is exhibited in the desire of praise, is made over to our secret adversary’s right of possession; for he calls his enemies to the spoil, who reveals his treasures to their knowledge; since so long as we are severed from the safety of the Eternal Land, we are walking along a way until robbers lying in wait. He then that dreads to be robbed on the road, must of necessity bide the treasures that he carries. O wretched beings, who by going after the praises of men, waste to themselves all the fruits of their labours, and whilst they aim to shew themselves to the eyes of others, blast all that they do. Which same when the evil spirits prompt to boastfulness, taking them for a prey they strip bare their works, as we have said. Whence ‘Truth’ in setting forth by the Prophet the rancour of our old enemies, under the form of a particular people, saith, *He hath laid my vineyard waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and despoiled* [V. so.] *it; the branches thereof are made white*. [Joel 1, 7] For by spirits lying in wait the vineyard of God is made a desert, when the soul that is replenished with fruits is wasted with the longing after the praise of men. That people barks the fig-tree of God, in that carrying away the misguided soul in the appetite for applause, in the degree that it draws her on to ostentation, it strips her of the covering of humility, and ‘making it clean bare despoils it,’ in that so long as it is withdrawn from sight in its goodness, it is as it were clothed with the bark of its own covering. But when the mind longs for that it has done to be seen by others, it is as though ‘the fig-tree despoiled’ had lost the bark that covered it. And it is properly added there, *The branches thereof are made white*; in that his works being displayed to the eyes of men, turn ,white; a name for sanctity is gotten, when right practice is made appear, but whereas upon the bark being removed, the branches of this fig-tree wither, it is to be observed with due discrimination that the deeds of presumptuous men, when they are paraded before human eyes, by the same act whereby they

aim to win favour, are rendered dry and sapless. Therefore the mind that is shewn to view in boasting is rightly called a fig-tree barked, in that it is at once white, in so far as it is seen, and within a little of withering, in so far as it is denuded of the covering of the bark. The things we do, therefore, are to be kept within, if we expect to receive from the Umpire within the recompense of our work. It is hence that 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly*. [Matt. 6, 3. 4.] It is hence that it is said of the Church of the Elect by the Psalmist, *The king's daughter is all glorious within*. [Ps. 45, 13] Hence Paul saith, *For our glory* [V. so.] *is this, the testimony of our conscience*. [2 Cor. 1, 12] For the king's daughter is the Church, which is begotten in good practice by the preaching of spiritual Princes. But 'her glory is within,' in that what she does she holds not for the boasting of outward display. Paul describes his 'glory' as 'the testimony of his conscience,' in that not aiming at the applause of another's man's lips, he knows no such thing as placing the satisfactions of his life out of himself.

83. Therefore the things that we do must be kept concealed, lest by carrying them negligently on the journey of the present life, we lose them, through the invasion of the spirits that hunt for spoil. And yet 'Truth' saith, *Let them see your good works, that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven*. [Matt. 5, 16] But assuredly it is one thing when in the display of our works the glory of the Giver is our aim, and quite another when our own praise is the thing sought for in the gift of His bounty. And hence again in the Gospel the same 'Truth' saith, *Take heed that ye do not your works before men, to be seen of them*. Therefore when our works are displayed to men, we must first weigh well, in entering into the heart, what is aimed at by the prosecution of such display. For if we make the glory of the Giver our end, even our works that are made public we keep hidden in His sight.

But if we desire to win our own applause by them, they are thenceforth cast out of His sight without, even though they be known nothing of by numbers.

84. Now it belongs to those that are exceeding perfect, so to seek the glory of their Maker by the works shewn, as not to know what it is to exult in self-congratulation upon the praise bestowed upon them. For then only is a praiseworthy work displayed to men without harm, when the praise awarded is genuinely trodden under in the mind's contempt. Which same as the weak sort do not perfectly get above in contemning it, it remains of necessity that they keep out of sight the good that they do. For often from the very first beginning of the display, they seek their own praise. And often in the displaying of their works, they desire to publish the gloriousness of the Creator, but being received with applause, they are carried off into desire of their own praise. And whilst they neglect to call themselves to account within, being dissipated without, they do not know what they do, and their work ministers to their pride, and they fancy that they are rendering it in the service of the Giver. Thus 'a rush abideth among the stones,' in that the hypocrite stands there, where he sets fast the purpose of his mind. For whilst he goes about to get the testimony of numbers, he takes his stand, as it were, in the heap of stones. But the same hypocrite that is represented by the designation of 'a rush,' whilst he brings his body under by abstinence, whilst by bestowing in alms all that he possesses, he spends himself in efforts of pity, whilst he gets instruction in the knowledge of the sacred Law, whilst he employs the word of preaching; who that beheld him so filled with bounty, would account him a stranger to the grace of the Giver? And yet the Hand of heavenly Dispensation vouchsafes to him the gifts of works, and withholds the lot of the inheritance. It lavishes endowments for working, yet disowns the life of the worker. For when the

gift vouchsafed is applied toward his own praise, in the eye of the interior Light, he is darkened by the shadow of pride. Hence it is well added,

Ver. 18. *If He destroy him from his place, then He shall deny him, saying, I have not known thee.*

85. The hypocrite is 'destroyed from his place,' when he is parted from the applause of the present life, by death intervening. But the interior Witness 'denieth' him, thus destroyed, and asserts that He knows him not, in that in justly condemning the life of the pretender, 'Truth' knows him not, nor recognises the good works he has done, in that he never put them forth in a right purpose of mind. And hence when He cometh to Judgment, He will say to the foolish virgins, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not*. [Matt. 25, 12] In which same whilst He sees corruptness of mind, He condemns even incorruptness in the flesh. But would that their own ruin alone were enough for hypocrites, and that their wicked pains did not vehemently urge others to a life [al. 'a way'] of duplicity. For it is the way with everyone, to wish that, such as he is himself, others of a like sort should be joined with him, and to avoid difference in life, and to inculcate as a pattern for imitation the thing that he loves. Whence also according to the view of hypocrites every degree of simplicity of character is criminal. For they sit in judgment on open characters, and purity of heart they term stupidity; and all whom they desire to be attached to themselves, they turn out of the path of simplicity, and then, as though their folly were cast out, they reckon that they have enlightened those persons, in whom they force to a surrender that fortress of wisdom, purity of heart. But forasmuch as the hypocrite is condemned not for his own frowardness alone, but for the added ruin of his followers also, after that he is said not to be known by the Judge, the words are rightly brought in upon that;

Ver. 19. *Behold, this is the joy of his* way [al. 'of his life']*, that out of the earth others also should grow.*

86. As though it were in plain words, ‘When the Judge cometh, he is not acknowledged, but receives punishment a thousand fold, because he rejoiced in his wickedness more amply in proportion as he spread evil among others also.’ For he that is not satisfied with being wicked himself here, must be tormented There with the due of the guilt of others also. Now then let the hypocrites rejoice, and triumph to have gotten the suffrages of their fellow-creatures. Let the simplicity of good men be looked down upon, and be called foolishness by the craft of the double-dealing. Speedily doth the contempt of the single-minded pass, speedily the glorying of the double-dealing run to an end. And hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 20. *Behold, God will not cast out a perfect man, neither will He stretch out His hand to the evil.*

87. In that assuredly when the Strict One appeareth in the Judgment, He will at once lift up the despisedness of the simple by glorifying them, and break in pieces the greatness of the evil-minded [*malignorum*] by condemning them. For hypocrites are called evil-minded, who do good acts but not well, and practise every thing right only in eagerness after praise. Now anyone, to whom we stretch out our hand, we plainly lift up from below. Thus God does not stretch out His hand to the evil-minded, in that all that seek earthly glory He leaves below, and how right soever the things that they do may seem to be, He doth not advance them to the joys above. Or, as may well be, hypocrites are for this reason called evil-minded, because they make a shew of being wellminded toward their neighbours, and cover over the arts of their wicked designs. For in all that they either do or say, they shew simplicity externally, but they are inwardly conceiving in the subtleties of double-mindedness; they counterfeit purity on the outside, but they conceal an evil heart at all times under the semblance of purity. In respect of whom it is well spoken by Moses, *Thou shalt not wear a garment woven of woollen and linen together*. [Deut. 22, 11] For by ‘woollen’ is

denoted simplicity, by ‘linen’ subtlety. And it is the fact that a garment made of ‘wool and linen’ hides the linen within and shews the wool on the outside. And so he ‘puts on a garment of woollen and linen together,’ who in the mode of speech or behaviour that he adopts conceals within the artfulness of an evil purpose, and exhibits without the simplicity of an innocent mind. For whereas it is impossible to detect craftiness under the semblance of purity, it is as if linen were hidden under the thickness of wool. But after the condemnation of the double-minded, the recompensing of the righteous is duly exhibited, when it is added thereupon,

Ver. 21. *Till He fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with shouting.*

88. For the ‘mouth’ of the righteous will then be ‘filled with laughing’ when the tears of their pilgrimage being done, their hearts shall be filled to the full with exulting in eternal joy. Concerning this laughing ‘Truth’ saith to His disciples, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy*. [John 16, 20] And again, *But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*. [ver. 23] Concerning this laughing of Holy Church, Solomon saith, *And she shall laugh in the last day*. [Prov. 31, 25] Of this it is said again, *Whoso feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last*. [Ecclus. 1, 3] Not that there shall be laughter of the body, but laughter of the heart. For now from rioting in dissipation there springs a laughter of the body, but then from joy in security there will arise a laughter of the heart. Therefore when all the Elect are replenished with the delight of open vision, they spring forth into the joyousness of laughter in the mouth of the interior. But we call it shouting [*jubilum*], when we conceive such joy in the heart, as we cannot give vent to by the force of words, and yet the triumph of the heart vents with the voice what it cannot give forth by speech. Now the mouth is rightly said to be filled with laughter, the lips with shouting, since in that eternal land,

when the mind of the righteous is borne away in transport, the tongue is lifted up in the song of praise. And they, because they see so much as they are unable to express, shout in laughter, because without compassing it they resound all the love that they feel.

89. Now it is said ‘till,’ not that Almighty God so long forbears to raise up the evil until he take to Him His Elect to the joys of their jubilee, as if afterwards He saved from the punishment those whom first leaving in sin He sentences to damnation, but that He never does it even before the Judgment, when it may seem doubtful to men, whether it is to be done. For that after the jubilee of His Eject people He does not stretch out His hand to the evil-minded, is already plain from the mere severity of the final reckoning by itself. As the Psalmist also spake in this manner, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool*. [Ps. 110, 1] Not that the Lord never sat on the Lord’s right hand, after that by smiting His enemies He made them subject to His power, but that He is set over all things in eternal blessedness, even before He treads under His feet the hearts of those that rebel against Him. Wherein it is made plain that His enemies being brought under, He still rules without end even afterwards. Thus it is said in the Gospel of the espoused of Mary, *And knew her not, till she had brought forth her first-born Son*. [Matt. 1, 25] Not that he did know her after the birth of the Lord, but that he never touched her even when he did not know her to be the Mother of his Creator. For because it was impossible that he could have touched her after he knew that the Mystery of our Redemption was transacted from her womb, plainly it was necessary that the Evangelist should bear witness of that time, of which there might be misgivings entertained by reason of Joseph’s ignorance. And so it is expressed here in like manner, *Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will He stretch out His hand to the evil-minded; till He fill thy mouth with laughter, and thy lips with shouting*. As if

it were expressed in plain speech; ‘Not even before the Judgment does He abandon the life of the faithful, nor even before He appears does He forbear from smiting the minds of the evil-disposed by abandoning them.’ For that the sons of perdition He torments without end, and that after that He shall have appeared His Elect reign for evermore, assuredly there is no doubt. It goes on;

Ver. 22. *They that hate thee shall be clothed with confusion.*

90. ‘Confusion clothes’ the enemies of the good in the final Judgment; for when they see before the eyes of their mind their past misdeeds running over in excess to them, their own guilt clothes them on every side, weighing them down. For they then bear the memory of their doings in punishment, who now, as though strangers to the faculty of reason, sin with hearts full of joy. There they see how greatly they should have eschewed all that they loved. There they see how woful that was, which they now hug themselves for in their sin. Then guilt spreads a cloud over the mind, and conscience pierces itself with the darts of its remembrances. Who then can adequately estimate how exceeding great will be the confusion of the wicked Then, when both the Judge Eternal is discerned without, and sin is set in review before the eyes within? who are on this account brought to such a pass, because they loved transient things alone. And hence it is rightly added upon that;

And the tents of the wicked shall not abide.

91. For a tent is put together that the body may be preserved from heat and cold. What then is here set forth by the name of a dwelling-place, save the building of earthly prosperity, whereby the wicked are multiplying above their heads things to fall, that they may shelter themselves from the exigencies of the present life as from heat and rain. Thus they go about to rise in honours, lest they should appear contemptible. They pile up the good things of earth, and heap them high, lest they ever come to pine with the

cold of want. They scorn to take thought of what is to come, and busy themselves with all their heart, that nought may be lacking in the present scene of things. They aim to spread their name, that they may not live unknown, and if every thing is forthcoming to their hearts' content, they regard themselves as proof in all things, and blessed in their condition. Thus in the place where they rear a dwelling-place of the interior, there surely they have their tents fixed. They bear crosses with impatience, they rejoice in prosperity without restraint. They mind alone the things that are before them, nor do they draw their breath by the yearning after their heavenly home in the remembrance thereof. They are glad that the good things are theirs, which their heart is bent on having; and there, where they rest in the body, they bury the soul too, making it a thing extinct, in that being slain with the instrument of worldly solicitude, that pile of earthly things, which they heap together hunting for them without, they are always carrying on them within in thought.

92. But contrariwise the good neither take the blessings offered them here below as any thing great, nor very much dread the ills brought upon them. But both whilst they use present advantages, they forecast inconveniences to come, and when they lament for present evils, they are comforted in the love of the good things to follow. And they are cheered by temporal support, just as a wayfarer enjoys a bed in a stable; he stops and hurries to be off; he rests still in the body, but is going forward to something else in imagination. But sometimes they even long to meet with afflictions, they shrink from finding all go well in transient things, lest by the delightfulness of the journey, they be hindered in arriving at their home; lest they arrest the step of the heart on the pathway of their pilgrimage, and one day come in view of the heavenly land without a recompense. They delight to be little accounted of, nor do they grieve to be in affliction and necessity. Thus they that never fortify themselves against the adversities of the present

time, as it were will not have a tent against the heat and rain. And hence Peter is justly rebuked, because when he was not yet confirmed in perfectness of heart, upon the brightness of 'Truth' being made known, he goes about to set up a tent upon earth. [Matt. 17, 4] And thus the righteous are indifferent to build themselves up here below, where they know themselves to be but pilgrims and strangers. For because they desire to have joy in their own, they refuse to be happy in what belongs to another. But the unrighteous, the further they are removed from the inheritance of the eternal Country, fix the foundations of the heart so much the deeper in the earth. It is hence that in the very beginning of man's creation Enoch is born seventh in the elect family. It is hence that Cain calls his firstborn son Enoch, and names the city that he built after him. [Gen. 4, 17] For 'Enoch' is rendered 'Dedication.' And so the wicked dedicate themselves in the beginning. For in this life, which is first, they plant the root of the heart, that they may flourish here to their content, and wither root and branch to the Country that follows after. But to the righteous, Enoch is born the seventh, in that the festal dedication of their lives is kept for the end. It is hence, as Paul testifies, Abraham dwells *in tents* [so Vulg.], *for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*. [Heb. 11, 9] It is hence that Jacob goes humbly [Vulg. like E.V. *paullatim*] following the flocks of sheep, and Esau coming to meet him lords it with a throng of numerous attendants, in that here both the Elect are without pride, and the lost swell with satisfaction in the good things of the flesh. Hence the Lord saith to Israel, *If thou shalt choose one from the people of the land and set him for a king over thee, he shall not multiply horses and horsemen to himself*. [Deut. 17, 15. 16.] And yet the first king 'chosen from among his brethren,' so soon as he had attained the height of power, chose for himself three thousand horsemen; he immediately launched into pride, burst forth in the building up of the height he had attained, in that without he could not keep

under on a level of equality all that made his spirit within rise high above the level of others. That rich man had as it were erected for himself a fenced dwelling place, who said, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*. [Luke 12, 19] But because that dwelling is not bottomed upon the foundation of Truth, he heard at the same moment, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be, which thou hast prepared?* [ver. 20] Therefore it is well said, *And the dwelling-place of the wicked shall come to nought*. In that the lovers of this fleeting life, whilst they diligently build themselves up in present things, are suddenly hurried into eternity.

BOOK IX.

He explains the ninth Chapter, together with the whole of the tenth.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. BAD minds, if they have once broken out into the eagerness of opposition, whether what they hear from those that withstand them be right or wrong, assail it with contradictory replies; for whereas the speaker is unwelcome from being in opposition, not even what is right is welcome when he utters it. But, on the other hand, the hearts of the good, whose dislike rises not at the speaker but at the offence, in such sort pass sentence on what is amiss, as to adopt still any right things that are said. For they sit the most even umpires in deciding the sense of their opponents' words, and they so reject what is put forth amiss, that notwithstanding they set the seal upon what they recognise to be delivered in truth. For among a wilderness of thorns the ear [*spica*] is generally to be found growing up from seed good for fruit. Therefore it must be managed with care by the hand of the tiller, that, whilst the thorn [*spina*] is removed, the ear be cherished, so that he, who is eager to root up what pricks, may have sense to preserve what gives nourishment. Hence in that Bildad the Shuhite had said well in enquiry, *Doth God pervert judgment, or doth the Almighty pervert justice?* in that he had delivered true and forcible sentiments against hypocrites, blessed Job, seeing that they were delivered against the wicked in general, admirably treads under foot the prosecution of his own defence, and at once sanctions the truths he had heard, saying,

Ver. 2. *I know it is so of a truth, and that man put with God is not justified.*

2. For man being put under God receives righteousness; being put with God he loses it: for everyone that compares himself with the Author of all

good things, bereaves himself of the good which he had received. For he that ascribes to himself blessings vouchsafed to him, is fighting against God with His own gifts. Therefore by whatsoever means he being in contempt is lifted up, it is meet that being so set up he be brought to the ground by the same. Now because he sees that all the worth of our goodness is evil if it be strictly accounted of by the Judge of the interior, the holy man lightly subjoins;

Ver. 8. *If thou wilt contend with Him, thou shalt not be able to answer Him one of a thousand.*

3. In Holy Scripture, the number a thousand is wont to be taken for totality. Hence the Psalmist saith, *The word which He commanded to a thousand generations*; when it is sufficiently plain that from the very beginning of the world up to the coming of our Lord no more than seventy-seven generations are reckoned up by the Evangelist. What then is represented in the number a thousand, save, until the bringing forth of the new offspring, the complete whole of the race foreseen. Hence it is said by John, *And shall reign with Him a thousand years* [Rev. 20, 6]; for that the reign of Holy Church is made complete by being perfected in entireness. Now forasmuch as a unit being multiplied is brought to ten, and ten being taken into itself is expanded to one hundred, which again being multiplied by ten is extended to a thousand, since we set out with one to get to one thousand, what is here denoted by the designation of 'one' but the commencement of good living? what by the fulness of the number 'a thousand,' but the perfection of that good life? Now to contend with God is not to ascribe to Him but to take to one's self the glory of one's goodness. But let the holy man consider that the man who has already received even the chiefest gifts, if he is lifted up for what has been vouchsafed him, parts with all that he had received, and let him say, *If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand*. For he, that 'contends' with his

Maker, is unable to ‘answer Him one of a thousand,’ in that the man that sets himself up on the score of perfection, proves that be lacks the very beginning of good living. For we cannot ‘answer Him one of a thousand,’ since when we are lifted up for perfection of good life, we shew that we have not so much as begun this. Now we are then more really moved by our weakness, when by reflection, we are led to form an estimate how infinite is the power of the Judge.

Ver. 4. *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength.*

4. What wonder is it, if we call the Maker of the wise, ‘wise,’ Whom we know to be Wisdom itself? and what wonder is it that he describes Him to be ‘mighty,’ Whom there is none that doth not know to be this very Mightiness itself? But the holy man, by the two words set forth in praise of the Creator, conveys a meaning to us, whereby to recall us in trembling to the knowledge of ourselves. For God is called ‘wise,’ in that He exactly knows our secret hearts, and it is added that He is ‘mighty,’ in that He smites them forcibly, so known. And so He can neither be deceived by us, because He is wise, nor be escaped, because He is strong. Now, as wise, He beholds all things, Himself unseen, then, as strong, without let or hindrance, He punishes those whom He condemns. Who ordains this likewise here with mightiness of wisdom, that when the human mind exalts itself against the Creator, it should confound itself by that very self-exaltation. And hence it is added,

Who hath resisted Him, and had peace?

5. For He that creates all things marvellously, Himself regulates them, that after having been created, they should agree with themselves; and thus whereinsoever there is resistance made to the Creator, that agreement in peace is broken up, in that those things can never be well regulated, which lose the management of regulation above. For whatsoever things if subjected to God might have continued at peace, being left to themselves by

their own act work their own confusion, in that they do not find in themselves that peace, which coming from above they contend against in the Creator. Thus that highest Angelical Spirit, who being in subjection to God might have stood at the height, being banished, has to bear the burthen of himself, in that he roams abroad in disquietude in his own nature. Thus the first parent of the human race, in that he went against the precept of his Creator, was thereupon exposed to the insolence of the flesh, and because he would not be subject to His Maker in obedience, being laid low beneath himself, even the peace of the body was forthwith lost to him. Thus it is well said, *Who hath resisted Him, and had peace?* In that by the same act, whereby the froward mind lifts itself against its Maker, it works its own confusion in itself. Now we are said to resist God, when we try to oppose His dispensations. Not that our frailty does resist His unchangeable decree, but what it has not the power to accomplish, it yet attempts. For often human weakness knows in secret the power of His dispensation, and yet aims, if it might be able, to reverse it. It sets to work to resist, but shivers itself to pieces by the very sword of its opposition. It struggles against the interior disposition of things, but, being overcome by its own efforts, is bound fast. Therefore to have peace whilst resisting can never be; for whereas confusion follows after pride, that which is foolishly done in sin is marvellously disposed to the punishment of the doer; but the holy Man, being filled with the influence of the Spirit of prophecy, while he regards in general the confounding of human pride, thereupon directs the eye of the mind to the special fate of the Jewish people, and shews by the ruin of a single people the punishment that awaits all that are lifted up. For he immediately adds in these words,

Ver. 5. *Which removed the mountains, and they knew not whom He overturned in His anger.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

6. Oftentimes in Holy Writ by the title of ‘mountains,’ the loftiness of Preachers is set forth. Of whom it is said by the Psalmist, *The mountains shall receive peace for Thy people*. [Ps. 72, 3] For the Elect Preachers of the eternal Land are not unjustly called ‘mountains,’ in that by the loftiness of their lives they leave the low bottoms of earthly regions, and are brought near to heaven. Now ‘Truth’ ‘removed the mountains’ when He withdrew the holy Preachers from the stubbornness of Judaea. Whence too it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *The mountains shall be carried into the heart of the sea*. [Ps. 46, 2] For ‘the mountains were removed into the heart of the sea,’ when the Apostles in their preaching, thrust off by the faithlessness of Judaea, came to the understanding of the Gentiles. Hence they themselves say in their Acts, *It was necessary that the word should first have been spoken to you but seeing ye put it from you and Judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*. [Acts 13, 46] Now this same ‘removing of the mountains’ they themselves ‘knew nothing of, who were overthrown in the wrath of the Lord;’ for when the Hebrew people drove the Apostles from their coasts, they supposed that they had made gain, in that they had parted with the light of preaching, since as their deserts demanded, being struck with a just visitation, they were blinded by so great a delusion of the understanding, that their losing the light they accounted to be joy; but upon the rejection of the Apostles, Judaea is at once brought to destruction by the hands of the Roman Emperor Titus, and she is dispersed and scattered abroad among all nations. And hence it is rightly added to the removing of the mountains,

Ver. 6. *Which shaketh the earth out of her place and the pillars thereof shall tremble.*

7. For ‘the earth was shaken out of her place,’ when the Israelitish people, rooted out of the borders of Judaea, submitted the neck to the Gentiles, because she would not be subjected to the Creator. Which same

earth had pillars, in that the erection of her stubborness, which was to be destroyed, rose upon the Priests and Rulers, the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees. For in these she held in her the edifice of the letter, and in her season of peace, carried the burthen of carnal sacrifices like a fabric overlaid. But when 'the mountains were removed,' the 'pillars were shaken,' in that when the Apostles were withdrawn from Judaea, they were no more themselves allowed to live therein, who drove out from thence the proclaimers of life. For it was meet that they being brought into subjection should lose that earthly country, for the love of which they had not been afraid to assail the soldiers of the heavenly country. But upon the holy Teachers being drawn out, Judaea waxed altogether gross, and by the righteous inquest of Him That judgeth, she shut the eyes of the mind in the darkness of her delusion. Hence it is yet further continued;

Ver. 7. *Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and shutteth up the stars as under a seal.*

8. Now sometimes in Holy Writ by the title of 'sun,' we have the brightness of the Preachers represented, as it is said by John, *And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair*. [Rev. 6, 12] For at the end of time the sun is exhibited 'like sackcloth of hair,' in that the shining life of them that preach is set forth before the eyes of the lost as hard and contemptible. And they are represented by the brightness of stars also, in that whilst they preach right doctrines to sinners, they enlighten the darkness of our night. And hence upon the removal of the Preachers it is said by the Prophet, *The stars* [a] *of the rain are withholden*. Now whereas the sun shines in the day time, the stars illumine the shades of night. And very often in Holy Writ by the designation of *day* is denoted the eternal Country, and by the name of *night*, the present life. Holy preachers become like the sun to our eyes, inasmuch as they open to us the view of the true light; and they shine like stars in the dark, when for the purpose of helping our necessities they

manage earthly things in an active life. They, as it were, shine as the sun in the day, whilst they raise the eye of our mind to contemplate the land of interior brightness, and they glitter like stars in the night, in that even whilst they are engaged in earthly action, they guide the foot of our practice, every moment on the point of stumbling, by the example of their own uprightness. But because when the Preachers were driven out, there was none who might either shew the brightness of contemplation, or disclose the light of an active life to the Jewish people continuing in the night of their unbelief, (for the Truth, which being cast off abandoned them, when the light of preaching was removed, blinded them in reward of their wickedness,) it is rightly said, *Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and shutteth up the stars as under a seal*. For He would not let the sun rise to that people, from whom He turned away the heart of the Preachers, and He 'shut up the stars as under a seal,' in that while He kept His Preachers to themselves in silence, He hid the heavenly light from the darkened perceptions of the wicked.

9. But it is to be considered, that we shut up any thing under seal with this view, that when the time suits, we may bring it out to the light. And we have learnt by the testimony of Holy Writ, that Judaea, which is now left desolate, shall be gathered into the bosom of the Faith at the end. Hence it is declared by Isaiah, *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall be saved*. [Is. 10, 22] Hence Paul saith, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved*. [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] Therefore He That removes His Preachers now from the eyes of Judaea, and afterwards exhibits them, has as it were 'shut up the stars under a seal,' that the rays of the spiritual stars being first hidden and afterwards beaming forth, she both being now cast off may not see the night of her misbelief, and then by being enlightened may find it out. It is hence that those two illustrious Preachers were removed, but their death delayed,

that they might be brought back in the end for the purpose of preaching; of whom it is said by John, *These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth*. [Rev. 11, 4] One of whom 'Truth' by His own lips gives promise of in the Gospel, saying, *Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things*. [b] [Matt. 17, 11] They then are as if the 'stars' were 'shut up under a seal,' who both at this present are concealed that they appear not, and hereafter shall appear that they may stand Him in good stead. Yet the Israelitish people, which shall be gathered in full measure in the end, in the immediate infancy of Holy Church is pitilessly hardened. For it rejected the Preachers of the Truth, it spurned the message of succour. Yet this is effected by the marvellous contrivance of the Creator with this view, that the glory of the persons preaching, which if received might have lain hid in one people, being rejected might be spread abroad among all the nations. Hence too it is fitly added immediately afterwards ;

Ver. 8. *Which alone spreadeth out the heavens.*

10. For what is denoted by the name of 'the heavens,' but this very heavenly life of the persons preaching, of whom it is said by the Psalmist, The heavens declare the glory of God. Thus the same persons are recorded to be the heavens, and the same to be the sun; the heavens indeed, in that by interposing [*intercedendo*] they shield; the sun, in that by preaching they display the power of light. And so, upon the 'earth being shaken' 'the heavens were spread out,' in that when Judaea ravened in the violence of persecution, the Lord spread wide the life of the Apostles, for all the Gentiles to acquaint themselves withal. And whilst she in judgment being made captive is scattered over the world, they by grace are every where amplified in honour. For 'the heavens' were of small compass, so long as one people contained so many mighty preachers. For to which of the Gentiles would Peter have been known, if he had continued in the preaching

to the Jewish people alone? Who would have known of Paul’s virtues, unless Judaea by persecuting him had transmitted him to our knowledge? See how already they, that were thrust off with scourges and with insults by the Israelitish people, are held in honour throughout the length and breadth of the world. The Lord alone then ‘has spread out the heavens,’ Who, by the wondrous ordering of His secret counsel, from the very cause, that He let His Preachers be persecuted in one people, caused them to spread out even to the comers of the world. But yet neither did this Gentile folk itself, which was devoted to the present world, when the tongues of the Apostles rebuked its iniquities, gladly welcome the words of life. For it forthwith swelled up in the pride of opposition, and roused itself to the cruelty of persecution. But she that sets herself to gainsay the words of preaching, is speedily subdued in wonderment at miraculous signs. Hence too the words are fitly added in praise of the Creator,

And treadeth upon the wave of the sea.

11. For what is denoted by the title of ‘the sea,’ but this world’s bitterness raging in the destruction of the righteous? Concerning which it is said by the Psalmist too, *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as in a skin*. [Ps. 33, 7. Vulg.] For the Lord ‘gathereth the waters of the sea together as in a skin,’ when, disposing all things with a wonderful governance, He restrains the threats of the carnal pent up in their hearts. Thus ‘the Lord treadeth upon the waves of the sea.’ For when the storms of persecution lift up themselves, they are dashed in pieces in astonishment at His miracles. Since He that brings down the swellings of man’s madness, as it were treads the waters standing up in a heap. Thus when the Gentile world saw that her form and fashion was undone through the preaching of the Apostles, when the rich sons of this world beheld poor men’s deeds arrayed against their arrogance, when the wise men of this generation marked that the words of unlettered men were set in opposition to them, they swelled thereupon in a

storm of persecution. Yet they who, being moved by the opposition of words, burst out in storms of persecution, are calmed, as we have said, by wonder at the miraculous signs. So the Lord set as many steps upon these waves, as He exhibited miracles to the persecutors in their pride. Whence it is well said again by the Psalmist, *Marvellously the floods lift up their waves; marvellous is the Lord on high*. [Ps. 93, 3. 4.] For against the life of the Elect the world has lifted itself wonderfully in waves of persecution, but the Creator of things above has still more marvellously put these down in the exaltation of the Preachers' power; for He shewed that His ministers prevailed more in miracles above all that the powers of the earth had swelled unto in anger. Which the Lord moreover well delivered by the lips of Jeremiah, while relating outward things, telling of inward ones; *I have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail*: *though they roar, yet can they not pass over it*. [Jer. 5, 22] For 'the Lord has placed the sand for the bound of the sea;' in that He has made choice of the despised and poor to dash in pieces the glory of the world. 'The waves of which same sea toss themselves,' when the powers of the world leap forth in the uproar of persecution. Yet they cannot pass over the sand, in that they are broken in pieces by the miracles and the humility of the despised and scorned. But whilst the sea rages, while it is lifted up in the waves of its madness, yet whereas it is trodden upon by the manifestation of interior Power, Holy Church makes way, and by the accessions of time she rises to the station of her own rank [or 'the establishing of her own order'] Hence it is rightly added immediately afterwards,

Ver.9. *Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Hyades, and the chambers of the south.*

12. The word of Truth never follows the vain fables of Hesiod, Aratus, or Callimachus, that in naming Arcturus it should take the last of the seven

stars for the tail of the bear, or as if Orion were holding a sword as a mad lover; for these names of the stars were invented by the votaries of carnal wisdom, but Holy Scripture for this reason makes use of these words, that the things which it aims to convey instruction about, may be represented by the customariness of their usual designation. For if he had spoken of any stars he might wish by names unknown to us, man, for whom this very Scripture was made, would assuredly have known nothing what he heard. Thus in Holy Writ the wise ones of God derive their speech from the wise ones of the world, in like sort as therein God the very Creator of man, for man's benefit, takes in Himself the tones of human passion, i.e. so as to say, *It repenteth Me that I have made man upon the earth* [Gen. 6, 6. 7.]; whereas it is plain and undoubted that He, Who beholds all things before they come, after He has done any thing, never repents by feeling regret. What wonder is it, then, if spiritual men use the words of carnal men, when the Ineffable Spirit Himself, Which is the Creator of all things, in order to draw the flesh to the understanding of Him, in His own case frames His speech of the flesh? Thus in Holy Writ, when we hear the familiar names of the stars, we learn what stars the discourse runs on. And after we have well weighed what stars are described, it remains that from their motions we be led to raise ourselves to the mysteries of the spiritual meaning. For not even after the letter is there any thing strange, in that it is said that God created Arcturus, and the Orions, and the Hyades, concerning Whom it is an acknowledged truth, that there is nothing of any sort in the world but He Himself made it. But the holy man declares that the Lord made these, by which he means properly to denote things that are done in a spiritual way.

13. For what is represented by the name of Arcturus, which being set in the polar region of the heavens shines bright with the rays of seven stars, except the Church universal, which is represented in the Apocalypse of John by the seven Churches and the seven candlesticks? Which same, while

She contains in Herself the gifts of seven-fold grace, beaming with the brightness of highest virtue, as it were gives light from the polar region of Truth. And it is furthermore to be considered, that Arcturus is ever turned about, and never sunk from sight, in that Holy Church ever undergoes the persecutions of the wicked without ceasing, and yet endures without failing 'even unto the end of the world.' For oftentimes because the sons of perdition have persecuted her even to the death, they have been persuaded that they had as it were utterly extinguished her, but she returned with manifold increase to the rearing of her full growth, in proportion as she travailed in dying amidst the hands of Her persecutors. Thus while Arcturus is turned about, he is set on high, for Holy Church is then more strongly reinvigorated in the Truth, when she spends herself more fervently for the Truth.

14. Hence too after Arcturus he immediately subjoins the 'Oriones' with propriety. For they arise in the very heaviest of the winter season, and they stir up storms by their rising, and put sea and land in commotion. What then is denoted by 'the Oriones,' after 'Arcturus,' saving the Martyrs? who, while Holy Church is set on high to take her stand of preaching, destined to undergo the weight of the persecutors and harassing treatment, came into the face of heaven, as it were, in the winter season. For when they were born, the sea and the land were troubled, in that when the Gentile world grieved that its method of life was undone, on their courage appearing, it set up for their destruction not only the fiery and turbulent, but the mild among men also. And thus the winter lowered in 'the Oriones,' in that when the constancy of the Saints shone out, the frozen soul of the unbelievers lashed itself into a tempest of persecution. And so 'the heavens' gave forth the Oriones, when Holy Church sent out her Martyrs, who whilst they had boldness to speak what is right to the uninstructed, brought upon themselves every thing most heavy from the adverse bitterness of cold.

15. Now he justly subjoins the Hyades directly, which, when the springtide is waxing, go forth into the face of heaven, and, when the sun is now putting out the power of his heat, are given to sight. For they are attached to the beginnings of that sign, which the wise of this world call 'the Bull,' at which the sun begins to increase, and arises with more fervent heat, to lengthen out the periods of the day. Who, then, after 'the Oriones,' are denoted by the title of 'the Hyades,' saving the Doctors of Holy Church, who; when the Martyrs were taken away, came at that period to the world's knowledge, when faith now shines forth the brighter, and the winter of infidelity being forced back, the sun of truth flows deeper through the hearts of the faithful. These, when the storm of persecution was overpast, and the nights of long infidelity consummated, then arose to Holy Church, when the year now opens brighter in the vernal season of belief. Nor are the holy Doctors improperly denoted by the designation of 'Hyades,' for in the Greek tongue rain is called 'Hyetus;' and the 'Hyades' have received their name from the rains, surely because at their rising they bring showers. Thus they are well represented by the title of 'the Hyades,' who, brought out in the settled frame of Holy Church, as it were into the face of heaven, upon the parched earth of the human heart poured down the showers of holy preaching. For if the word of preaching were not rain, Moses would never have said, *Let my doctrine be waited for as the rain*. [Deut. 32, 2] 'Truth' would never have said by the lips of Isaiah, *I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it;* [Is. 5, 6] and that which we brought forward a little above, *Therefore the stars* [d] *of the showers are withholden*. [Jer. 3, 3] Thus while the Hyades come bringing showers, the sun is led on to the higher regions of heaven; in that, when the knowledge of the Doctors appears, while our minds drink in the showers of preaching, the heat of faith increases. And the earth being irrigated is rendered productive in fruit, when the light of the sky is fired; in that we yield the fruit of good works

the more plentifully, the brighter we burn within our breasts through the flame of sacred instruction. And while heavenly lore is displayed to view by them more and more day by day, it is as if the springtide of interior light were opened upon us, that the new Sun may glow brightly in our souls, and being by their words made known to us, may daily surpass itself in brilliancy. For the end of the world being close at hand, the knowledge from above advances, and waxes bigger with the progress of time. For hence it is said by Daniel, *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*. [Dan. 12, 4] Hence the Angel saith to John in the former part of the Revelation, *Seal up those things, which the seven thunders uttered*; [Rev. 10, 4] and yet at the end of that Revelation he bids him, saying, *Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book*. [Ib. 22, 10] For the first part of the Revelation is commanded to be sealed, but the end not to be sealed; for whatever was hidden in the beginnings of Holy Church, the end clears up day by day. But some imagine that ‘the Hyades’ are named from the Greek letter which is rendered by ‘y;’ which, if it be so, is not opposed to the sense which we have given: the Doctors are not unsuitably represented by those stars which have their name from letters; but, though ‘the Hyades’ are not unlike the look of that letter, yet it is a fact that a shower is called ‘Hyetus,’ and that those at their rising bring with them rain.

16. Therefore let the holy man, viewing the order of our redemption, feel wonder, and wondering let him cry out, in the words, *Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, the Oriones, and Hyades*. For, when the heavens were spread out, the Lord made ‘Arcturus,’ in that, when the Apostles were brought to honour, He stablished the Church in heavenly conversation, and when Arcturus was made, He framed ‘the Oriones,’ in that the faith of the Church Universal being established, He launched forth the Martyrs against the storms of the world. And when ‘the Oriones’ were launched in heaven,

He set forth ‘the Hyades,’ in that when the Martyrs proved strong against adversities, He vouchsafed the teaching of Masters, to water the drought of human hearts. These then are the ranks of the spiritual stars, which while they stand out conspicuous by the highest virtues, are ever shining from above.

17. But what remains after these things, saving that Holy Church, receiving the fruit of her toils, should attain to behold the inner depths of the Country above? And hence, whereas he had said, *Which maketh Arcturus, the Oriones, and the Hyades*; he rightly added directly, *and the chambers of the South*. For what is here denoted by the name of ‘the South,’ saving the fervour of the Holy Spirit? with which he that is replenished, kindles to the love of the spiritual Country. And hence it is said by the voice of the Spouse in the Song of Solomon, *Arise, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out*. For upon the ‘south wind’ coming, the ‘north wind’ arising departs, when our old enemy, who had bound up our soul in inactivity, being expelled by the coming of the Holy Spirit, takes himself away. And ‘the south wind blows upon the garden’ of the Spouse, that ‘the spices thereof may flow down;’ in that, whensoever the Spirit of Truth has filled Holy Church with the excellences of His gifts, He scatters far and wide from her the odours of good works. And thus ‘the chambers of the South’ are those unseen orders of the Angels, and those unfathomed depths of the heavenly Country, which are filled with the heat of the Holy Spirit. For thither are brought the souls of the Saints, both at this present time divested of the body, and hereafter restored to the same anew, and like stars they are concealed in hidden depths. There all the day, as at midday, the fire of the sun burns with a brighter lustre, in that the brightness of our Creator, which is now overlaid with the mists of our mortal state, is rendered more clearly visible; and the beam of the orb seems to raise itself to higher regions, in that ‘Truth’ from

Its own Self enlightens us more completely through and through. There the light of interior contemplation is seen without the intervening shadow of mutability; there is the heat of supreme Light without any dimness from the body; there the unseen bands of Angels glitter like stars in hidden realms, which cannot now be seen by men, in proportion as they are deeper bathed in the flame of the true Light. Thus it is altogether marvellous that, in the sending of the Apostles, the Lord stretched out the Heavens; that, in moderating the swellings of persecution He trode the waves of the sea, and kept them down; that in the stablishing of the Church, He set ‘Arcturus’ in his place; that in making the Martyrs proof against afflictions, He sent forth ‘the Oriones;’ that in the Doctors being replenished in peace, He gave forth ‘the Hyades;’ but after these it is beyond all comparison marvellous, that He should have provided for us the haven of the heavenly Land, as ‘the chambers of the South.’

18. All this is beautiful, that is seen as it were in the face of heaven of God’s ordering; but infinitely and incomparably more beautiful is that, to which we are brought without its being able to be seen. Hence the Spouse justly repeats a second time in the commendation of His Bride; *Behold thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair: thou hast doves’ eyes, besides that which lieth hidden within*. [Cant. 4, 1] He describes her ‘fair,’ and says again ‘fair,’ in that there is one sort of beauty of life and conduct, wherein she is now seen, and another beauty of rewards, wherein she will then be lifted up in the likeness of her Creator; and because her members, which are all the Elect, go about all things with simplicity, her eyes are called ‘doves’ eyes;’ which shine with extraordinary light, for that they glitter even with the signs of miraculous power. But how great is all this marvel, which is able to be seen! That marvel relating to things of the interior is more wonderful, which is not now able to be seen, concerning which it is fitly added in that place, *Besides that which lieth hidden within*. For the glory of

the visible world is great, but the glory of the secret recompensing far beyond comparison. That, then, which is denoted by the name of ‘stars’ by blessed Job, is in the words of Solomon represented by the title of ‘eyes;’ and what is described by Solomon, *Besides that which lieth within*, blessed Job conveys to us, when he extols ‘the chambers of the South.’ But see; the holy man in admiring things without, and contemplating those of the interior, telling of things manifest, and diving into things secret, aims to describe all that is done both within and without; but when shall the tongue of flesh unfold the works of the Supreme Greatness? And hence with just propriety directly afterwards, by giving up the attempt, he measures the compass of these same works the more effectually, saying,

Ver.l0. *Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number*.

19. For then we more thoroughly compass the deeds of Divine Might, when we acknowledge that we can never compass them; we then speak with greater eloquence, when we are silent on these, being struck dumb with astonishment. Since for the describing of God’s works our insufficiency finds in itself how it may put forth its tongue sufficiently, that what it cannot suitably understand, it may suitably extol by being dumb. Whence it is well said by the Psalmist, *Praise Him in His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness*. [Ps. 150, 2] For He ‘praises God according to His excellent greatness,’ who sees that he breaks down in the fulfilling of His praise. Therefore let him say, *Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number*: viz. ‘great,’ in power, ‘past finding out,’ in reason, ‘without number,’ in multitude. Therefore the works of God which he could not compass by speaking, he more eloquently defined by proving deficient. But in the review of things, why are we carried so far without ourselves, considering that we know nothing of the very thing that is done to our own selves? Hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 11. *Lo, if He come to me, I see Him not: if He passeth on, I perceive him not.*

20. For the human race being shut out from the interior joys, in due of sin, lost the eyes of the mind; and whither it is going with the steps of its deserts, it cannot tell. Thus, often that is the gift of grace which it takes to be wrath, and often that is the wrath of God's severity, which it supposes to be grace. For very commonly it reckons gifts of virtue as grace, and yet being uplifted by those gifts is brought to the ground; and very often it dreads the opposition of temptations as wrath, and yet being bowed down by those temptations, arises the more solicitous to the safe keeping of its virtuous attainments. For who would not reckon himself to be nigh to God, when he sees that he is magnified with gifts from on high, when either the gift of prophecy or the mastership of teaching is vouchsafed him, or when he is empowered to exercise the grace of healing? Yet it often happens that whilst the mind is made to sit loose by self-security in its virtues, from the adversary plotting against it, it is pierced 'with the weapon of unexpected sin, and is for ever put far away from God by the very means whereby for a time it was brought near to Him without the caution of heedfulness. And who would not look upon himself as now abandoned by Divine grace, when after experiencing purity, he sees that he is sorely pressed by the temptations of the flesh, that things unbefitting crowd on the mind, and before the eyes of fancy there pass things disgraceful and impure? Yet, when such things as these harass but not subdue, they do not slaughter by the effect of corrupting, but preserve by their effect of humbling, that the mind, finding itself weak under temptation, may wholly betake itself to the assistance of the Divine Being, and completely give over all confidence in itself; and thus it is brought to pass, that it attaches itself to God the deeper by the same thing, by which it was made to lament its having fallen away the lower from God. Therefore the coming and going of God are not at all

discoverable by our faculties, so long as the issue of alternating states is hidden from our eyes; in that there is no certainty concerning the trial, whether it be a test of virtue or an instrument of our destruction; and concerning gifts we never find out whether they are the reward here of such as are given up, or whether they are a support on the road to bring men to their native Country. Thus let man, once banished from the interior joys, view the doors of the secret place of the Spirit shut against him, and cast forth to himself without, let him groan in the flesh, and seeing the losses which his blindness entails upon him, exclaim, *Lo, if He come to me, I see Him not; if He passeth on, I perceive Him not*. As if he lamented openly, saying, 'Since I have once lost my eyes by my own act and deed, as I am bearing the darkness of a self-sought night, now I neither know the rising nor the setting of the sun.' Yet man, who is pressed down by the infliction of infirmity, and heavy laden with the darkness of his blind estate, is going forward to the Judgment of the Light above, that he may render an account of his actions. And hence it is added immediately afterwards,

Ver. 12. *If He question on a sudden, who will answer Him?*

21. God 'questions suddenly' when He calls us unexpectedly to the strict searching of His scrutiny. But man cannot answer to His questioning, for that, if he be then sifted, all pity laid aside, even the life of the righteous sinks under the scrutiny. Or, surely, He questions, when He deals us hard blows, that, when the mind entertains great thoughts of itself in peace and quiet, it may find itself out in trouble, what sort it really is of. And very commonly because it is smitten, it utters groans; but it is unable to make answer, because the very distastefulness of his stroke is displeasing to him, yet looking to himself man holds his peace, and dreads to scrutinize the Divine decrees, because he knows himself to be but dust. Hence it is said by Paul, *Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?* [Rom. 9, 20] He that is called by the name of 'man' (homo) is proved to be unable to

‘reply against God.’ For by this circumstance, that he was taken from the dust of the earth [e], he is not worthy to scrutinize the judgments of the Most High. Hence too it is fitly subjoined here,

Or, who will say unto Him, What doest Thou?

22. The acts of our Maker ought always to be reverenced without examining, for they can never be unjust. For to seek a reason for His secret counsel is nothing else than to erect one’s self in pride against His counsel. So when the motive of His acts cannot be discovered, it remains that we be silent under those acts in humility, for the fleshly sense is not equal that it should penetrate the secrets of His Majesty. He then who sees no reason in the acts of God, on considering his own weakness does see reason wherefore he sees none. Hence also it is added by Paul afterwards, *Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me so?* For in proportion as it sees itself to be ‘a thing formed’ by God’s workmanship, it rebukes itself so as not to kick back against the hand of Him that wrought it; for He, Who in loving-kindness exalted what was not, never in injustice abandons that which is. So let the mind be brought to itself under the stroke, and what it cannot comprehend, let it cease to require, lest if the cause of God’s wrath be searched out, It be called forth in larger measure for being searched out, and lest wrath, which humility might have pacified, pride kindle to an unextinguishable height. Hence it is moreover fitly added concerning this same Wrath,

Ver. 13. *God, Whose wrath none can resist, and under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down.*

23. It is very strange that it is declared that none can resist God’s wrath, seeing that the divine Oracles witness that many have withstood the wrathfulness of the visitation of Heaven. Did not Moses resist God’s wrath, when standing up for the fallen people, He restrained the very impulse of the stroke from above, by the oblation of his own death, saying, *Yet now if*

Thou wilt forgive their sin: — and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book, which Thou hast written? [Exod. 32, 32] Did not Aaron resist God's wrath, when between the living and the dead he took a censer, and assuaged the fire of visitation with the fumes of incense? [Numb. 16, 47. &c.] Did not Phinees resist God's wrath, when slaughtering them that went a whoring with strange women in the very act, he offered his zeal to the Divine wrath, and pacified fury with the sword? [Ib. 25, 11] Did not David resist God's wrath, who by presenting himself to the Angel, as he dealt destruction, won the grace of propitiation, even before the appointed time? [2 Sam. 24, 25] Did not Elijah resist God's wrath, who when the earth was now for long dried up, brought back by a word the showers withdrawn from the heavens? [1 Kings 18, 44] In what sense then was it said that none can resist the wrath of God, when it is proved by existing examples that numbers have resisted it? However, if we minutely consider both these words of blessed Job, and the deeds of those persons, we both find it to be true that there is no resisting the Divine Wrath, and also true that many have often resisted it. For all Saints that encounter the wrath of God, obtain it from Himself, that they should be thus set in the way to meet the force of His stroke; and so to say having Him with them, they lift up themselves against Him, and the Divine Power arms them in alliance with Itself against Itself. Since in that which they achieve against the wrath of Him dealing cruelly without, the grace of Him so angered encourages them within, and He bears up those serving Him inwardly, whom He submits to resisting Him outwardly. Thus He bears the supplicant's contradiction which He inspires, and that is forced upon Him as though He were unwilling, which is by Himself commanded to be done. For He saith to Moses, *Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation*. [Ex. 32, 10] What is it to say to His servant, *Let Me alone*; but to give him boldness to supplicate? As if He said in plain words,

'Consider how thou prevailest with Me, and know that thou mayest obtain whatsoever thou beseechest for the People.' And that the thing is done with this mind, is witnessed by the pardon which is immediately subjoined. But when the Wrath above moveth Itself, so to say, from the heart's core, human opposition cannot stay It; and no man's entreaty presents itself to any purpose, when once God ordains any thing whilst angered from His inward Deep. For it is hence that Moses, who blotted out by his entreaties the guilt of the whole People in God's sight, and whilst he offered himself in the way, appeased the force of the Divine indignation, when he came to the rock Horeb, and for the bringing forth the water gave way to distrust, could never enter the Land of Promise from the Lord being wroth. And oftentimes he is distressed on this score, often he is troubled by his regret making itself felt, and yet he could never remove from himself the anger of an ordained retribution, who by God's good pleasure removed it even from the very people. Hence David, who afterwards by prayer held back the sword of the Angel from the fallen People, first fled from his son with bare feet howling and lamenting, and until he received to the full the cup of vengeance for the transgression he had done, he could never abate the wrath of the Lord for himself. [2 Sam. 24, 10] Hence Elijah, that as a mortal man he might as it were feel some little of God's visitation, he, who opened the heavens with a word, fled in terror through the wilderness from a woman's indignation; and he proves weak for himself in his dismay, who appeases God's fury for others through his intercession. Thus there is both a possibility of resisting the wrath of God, when He, That is wroth Himself, vouchsafes aid; and there is no possibility at all of resisting it, when He both rouses Himself to deal vengeance, and doth not Himself inspire the prayer that is poured forth to Him. Hence it is said to Jeremiah, *Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither take to thee praise and prayer for them; for I will not hear in the time of their crying to Me*; [Jer. 7, 16] and again, *Though Moses and*

Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be toward this people. [Jer. 15, 1]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

24. Wherein it may be usefully enquired wherefore, so many more ancient fathers being set aside, Moses and Samuel alone are preferably and preeminently singled out for the utterance of prayer? Which however we easily learn, if we weigh well the claims of that charity which is bidden to love even enemies. For that prayer comes with a special recommendation to the ears of our Creator, which exerts itself to make intercession for our enemies too; and hence 'Truth' saith by His own lips, *Pray for them that despitifully use you and persecute you*. [Matt. 5, 44] And again, *When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any*. [Mark 11, 25] Now when we revolve the deeds of the fathers of old time as Holy Writ describes them, we find that it was Moses and Samuel, who prayed for their adversaries. For one of them had to fly from the persecution of that infuriated People, and yet he interceded for the persecutor's life: the other being deposed from the rule of the People, saith to his own adversaries themselves, *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you*. [1 Sam. 12, 23] Therefore in the difficult work of deprecating wrath, what is it to bring forward Moses and Samuel, but to shew the more plainly that not even they if they stood forward would stay His wrath, who might for this reason have interceded the sooner for their friends, that they were used to intercede with Him even for their enemies. Hence it is said to that same Judaea, *I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one*. And again, *Why criest thou for thine affliction? Thy sorrow is incurable*. [Jer. 30, 14. 15.] Let the holy man then regard how the wrath of God is restrained by no man's intercession, when once it is inexorably called forth, and let him say, *God, Whose wrath none can resist*.

And this we rightly reduce to a particular sense, if we reflect on the woes of that same Israelitish People, which the Saviour, Who was made manifest in the mystery of His economy; abandoned in their pride, and called the Gentiles to the grace of the knowledge of Him. And hence it is rightly subjoined directly, *Under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down*.

25. For they do bear the world, who sustain the cares and concerns of the present world. Since every one is necessitated to bear the burthens of as great things as he is a leader of in this world; and hence a ruler of the earth is not unsuitably designated in the Greek tongue 'basileus.' For 'laus' means 'people.' Basileus therefore is the title 'basis laou' which in the Latin tongue is rendered 'basis populi,' or, 'the base of the people;' since it is he that bears up the people upon himself, in that be controls its motions, himself steadied by the weight of power. For in proportion as he bears the burthens of his subjects, like a base he supports a column raised upon it. Let blessed Job, then, full of the power of the prophetic Spirit, see how Judaea is forsaken, and the rulers of the Gentiles are bowed to the worship of the Divine Being, and let him say, *God, Whose wrath none can resist, under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down*. As though he plainly owned, saying, 'Both the People, that was once subject to Thee, Thou forsakest in Thy severity, and the powers of the Gentiles, that set up their heads, Thou bendest low in Thy mercy.'

26. Though hereby, that it is said, *Under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down*; we may also understand the Angelical powers; for these bear the world, in that they execute the charges of the governing of the universe, as Paul bears witness, when he says, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation*. [Heb. 1, 14] Thus he says, God, *Whose wrath none can resist, under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down*. As if he beheld the humiliation of every created being, and said in fear and trembling, 'Which of frail mortals

resists Thy nod, before Whose might the Angelic Powers themselves bow down themselves?' Or, surely, since, when we are bowed down, we see nothing of things above us, those subtlest spirits must needs have been erect, if they completely reached the power of His Majesty; but 'they that bear the world, are bowed down under God,' for though when they are lifted up they behold the loftiness of the Divine Nature, yet not even the Angelic Powers attain to comprehend It. Which Same the righteous man failing from infirmity to fathom, and yet in some degree estimating It from the ministrations of the most exalted spirits being subject to Him, falls back to the consideration of himself with heedful humility, and makes himself little in his own eyes compared with the omnipotence of the Supreme Majesty; saying,

Ver. 14. *How great am I that I should answer Him, and talk with Him in my words?*

27. As though he said in plain words, 'If that created being is unable to take thought of Him, which is not burthened by the flesh, in what spirit do I dispute about His judgments, who am straitened by the burthen of corruption?' But as God's words to us are oftentimes His judgments, declaring the sentence of our actions, so our words to God are the deeds which we set forth; but man 'cannot reason with God in his words,' in that, in the eye of His exact judgment, he maintains no assurance in his actions. Hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 15. *Who, though I possessed any thing righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge.*

28. For, as we have often said, all human righteousness is proved unrighteousness, if it be judged by strict rules. And so there is need of prayer following after righteousness, that this, which if sifted to the bottom might be brought down, may be firmly established in the mere pitifulness of the Judge. And when this is possessed fully by the more perfect sort, it is

said that they possess a something of it. In that the human mind both with difficulty puts in practice the truths apprehended by it, and the things which it apprehends are the merest outskirts. Therefore let him say, *Who, though I possessed any thing righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge*. As if he owned in plainer words; ‘And if I should grow to the practising of virtue, I am made vigorous to life, not by merit, but of pardoning grace.’ Therefore we must be strenuous in prayer, when we do right, so that all the righteous ways we live in we may season by humility; but very often it happens that our very supplication is tost to and fro by such a multitude of temptations, that it seems almost cast off from the presence of the Judge. And often our pitiful Creator receives it, but because it cannot put forth itself undefiled, as it is minded, it dreads the sentence of condemnation upon its head. Hence it goes on,

Ver. 16. *And when I have called and He hath answered me, yet do I not believe that He hath hearkened unto my voice.*

29. For very often the mind is set on fire with the flame of Divine love, and is uplifted to behold heavenly things and secret mysteries. It is now transported on high, and pierced with full affection, is made strange to things below; but being struck with sudden temptation, the soul which with set purpose had been established erect in God, pierced with arising temptations is bowed low; so that it cannot discern itself, and being held fast between good and evil practices, cannot tell on which side it is strongest. For very often it is brought to this pass, to wonder how it so lays hold of the highest truths, when unlawful thoughts defile it; and again how it admits unlawful thoughts, when the fervour of the Holy Spirit with power transports it above itself. Which alternate motions of thought in the mind being viewed aright by the Psalmist, he exclaims, *They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths*. [Ps. 107, 26] For we mount up to the heaven, when we enter into the things above, but we go down to the

depths, when we are suddenly cast down from the height of contemplation by grovelling temptations. Thus whilst the motions of the mind alternate between vows and vices, too truly they cloud for themselves the certainty of their being heard. Therefore it is rightly said, *When I have called and He hath answered me, yet do I not believe that He hath hearkened unto my voice*. In that the mind is rendered fearful from its mere changeableness, and by that which it is unwillingly subject to, imagines itself cast off and rejected.

30. It is interesting to observe with what exactness the holy man passes judgment on himself, that the judgments of God may find nought in him to take hold of. For having an eye to his own frailty, he says, *How much less shall I answer, and talk in my words with Him?* Not relying upon the claims of his own righteousness, but betaking himself to the hope alone of entreating, he adds, *Who, though I had any thing righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge*. But apprehensive for the very entreaty itself, he adds, *And when I have called, and He hath answered me, yet do I not believe that He hath hearkened unto my voice*. Why does he shrink with so great apprehension, why does he tremble with such sore misgiving? but that his eye is fixed on the dreadfulness of the Judge, in the last strict reckoning, and not supporting the power of His searching eye, all that he does seems little worth in his account? Whence he adds thereupon,

Ver. 17. *For He shall break me with a tempest.*

31. In every case that sinner is 'broken with a tempest,' who seemed to be stablished in tranquillity, in that the man whom the long-suffering Above bears with for long, the last strict Judgment destroys. And this is rightly called 'a tempest,' because it is manifested in a commotion of the elements, as the Psalmist witnesses, when he says, *God shall come manifest, and He shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and a mighty tempest*

round about Him. [Ps. 50, 3] And hence another Prophet also says, *The Lord, His way is in the whirlwind and in the storm*. [Nahum 1, 3] In which same whirlwind the righteous man is never broken, for this reason, because here he is ever in fear and anxiety, lest he should be broken. For whilst still set in the journey of the present life, he bethinks himself how severe towards the actions of men the Requirer of works will appear, Who then condemns even without works some that are only bound with the guilt of original sin. Whence the holy man rightly adds thereupon in the voice of mankind,

And multiplieth my wounds even without cause.

32. For there be some that are withdrawn from the present light, before they attain to shew forth the good or evil deserts of an active life. And whereas the Sacraments of salvation do not free them from the sin of their birth, at the same time that here they never did aright by their own act; There they are brought to torment. And these have one wound, viz. to be born in corruption, and another, to die in the flesh. But forasmuch as after death there also follows, death eternal, by a secret and righteous judgment 'wounds are multiplied to them without cause.' For they even receive everlasting torments [f], who never sinned by their own will. And hence it is written, *Even the infant of a single day is not pure in His sight upon earth* [g]. Hence 'Truth' says by His own lips, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. [John 3, 5] Hence Paul says, *We were by nature the children of wrath even as others*. [Eph. 2, 3] He then that adding nothing of his own is mined by the guilt of birth alone, how stands it with such an one at the last account, as far as the calculation of human sense goes, but that he is 'wounded without cause?' And yet in the strict account of God it is but just that the stock of mortality, like an unfruitful tree, should preserve in the branches that bitterness which it drew from the root. Therefore he says, *For He shall break me with a*

tempest, and multiply my wounds without cause. As if reviewing the woes of mankind he said in plain words; ‘With what sort of visitation does the strict Judge mercilessly slay those, whom the guilt of their own deeds condemns, if He smites for all eternity even those, whom the guilt of deliberate choice does not impeach?’

33. Now that these same sayings are not inconsistent with the case of blessed Job in a special sense, we shall acquaint ourselves, if we pursue the enquiry, how truly they were delivered. For considering himself with exactness, and judging himself in every action, he tells us with what great dread and apprehension he views the force of the severity of the Most High, adding, *For He will break me with a tempest*. As if it were in plain words, ‘For this reason I ever fear Him even in time of quiet, because I cannot but know how He may come in the whirlwind, by His scourges:’ which same scourges he both in fearing forecast, and in forecasting underwent. Whence he adds, *And will multiply my wounds even without cause*. For as we have often said already, blessed Job was never stricken that the stroke might blot out sin in him, but that it might add to his merit. Therefore in asserting himself wounded without cause, he declares that concerning himself openly, which ‘Truth’ witnesses of him in secret, saying, *Although thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause*. The holy man then does not say from pride that which he says only in truth. Nor is he out of proportion with the rule of righteousness by those words, by which he is not at variance with the Judge. Who goes on to set forth the continuance of those wounds, when he adds,

He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

34. It is often an exercise of virtue to the just, to be subject to ills from without by themselves; but that the conflict of a complete trial may discipline their powers, sometimes at one and the same time they are rent with torments without, and chastened with temptations within. Hence the

holy man declares himself to be full of bitterness, in that whilst he is bearing scourges outwardly, there is a heavier weight, which from the adversary's tempting he carries in his interior; but withal the force of his sorrow is abated by considering the equity and the power of the Smiter. Whence he adds,

Ver. 19. *If I speak of strength, lo, He is strong; if of equity in judgment, none dareth bear witness for me.*

35. For He tries the counts of our lives, Who does not make them out by the testimony of another; in that He, Who is one day revealed as a strict inflicter of punishment, Himself was for long the silent witness of the sin. For it is on this account that the Prophet says, *I am judge and witness*. [Jer. 29, 23. Vulg.] Hence he saith again, *I have long time holden My peace; I have been still, and refrained Myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman*. [Is. 42, 12] For a woman in travail casts forth with pain, what she has long borne in her womb with burthensomeness. And so after a long silence, like a travailing woman, the Lord utters His voice, in that what He now bears silently in Himself, He one day as it were reveals with pain in the avenging of the Judgment. But it deserves our enquiry; this righteous man, if any had ventured to give testimony in his behalf, would he have cleared him of guilt? And if no other gave testimony to him, then, at least, is he himself at all events of strength to offer testimony in his own behalf? It follows,

Ver. 20. *If I desire to justify myself; mine own, mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*

36. As if it were in plain words; 'Why should I speak about others, when I cannot bear testimony concerning myself?' But whereas thou art not competent to witness to thine own innocency, dost thou know the fact that thou art innocent? He proceeds,

Ver. 21. *Though I were perfect, even this my soul shall not know.*

37. Most commonly if we know the good things that we do, we are led to entertain pride; if we are ignorant of them, we cannot keep them. For who would not, in however slight degree, be rendered proud by the consciousness of his virtue? or who, again, would keep safe within him that good, which he does not know of? what then remains as a provision against either of these evils, saving that all the good things that we do, in knowing we should not know; so that we both look upon them as right things, and as a mere nothing, that thus the knowledge of their rightness may quicken the soul to a good guard, and the estimation of their littleness may never exalt it in pride? But there are some things which are not easy to be ascertained by us, even when they are doing. For often we are inflamed with a right earnestness against the sins of transgressors, and when we are transported by passion beyond the bounds of justice, we account this the warmth of just severity. We often take upon ourselves the office of preaching, that we may in this way minister to the service of our brethren; but unless we be acceptable to the person, whom we address, nothing that we preach is received with welcome; and while the mind aims to please on useful grounds, it lets itself out after the love of its own praise in a shameful way, and the soul which was busied in rescuing others from captivity to bad habits, being itself made captive, begins to drudge to its own popularity. For the appetite for the applause of our fellow-creatures is like a kind of footpad, who as people are going along the straight road joins them from the side, that the wayfarer's life may be barbarously taken by the dagger drawn out of sight. And when the intention of purposed usefulness is drawn off to our own interests, in a way to make one shudder, sin accomplishes that identical work, which goodness began. Oftentimes even from the very beginning the thought of the heart seeks one thing, the deed exhibits another.

38. Often not even the thought itself proves faithful to itself, in that it sets one object before the mind’s eye, and is hurrying far from it after another in real purpose. For very often we find persons who covet earthly rewards, and stand up in defence of justice, and these account themselves innocent, and exult in being the vindicators of right; who if the prospect of money be withdrawn, instantly cease from their defence of justice; and yet they look upon themselves as defenders of justice, and maintain themselves right to themselves, who the while aim not at rightness but money. In opposition to whom it is well said by Moses, *That which is just, thou shalt follow justly*. [Deut. 16, 20] For he followeth unjustly that which is just, who is moved to the defence of just dealing not by his feeling for virtue, but by his love of temporal rewards. He ‘followeth unjustly that which is just,’ who is not afraid to drive a trade with that justice, which he makes his plea. And so ‘justly to follow what is just’ is in the vindication of justness to make that same justness our end and aim. We often do right things, and are far from looking for rewards, far from seeking applause from our fellowcreatures, yet the mind being set up in self-confidence, scorns to please those from whom it seeks nothing, sets at nought their opinions, and drives itself miserably free along the precipices of pride, and is the worse overwhelmed beneath sin from the same source, whence it boasts, its sins as if subdued, that it is subject to no covetous desires.

39. Often while we sift ourselves more than is meet, by our very aim at discernment we are the more undiscerningly led wrong, and the eye of our mind is dimmed, in proportion as it strives to perceive more; for he too, who determinately looks at the sun’s rays, turns darksighted, and is necessitated to see nothing from the very thing in which he strives to see too much. Therefore whereas, if we are backward in our examination, we know nothing at all of ourselves, or, if we search ourselves with an exact scrutiny, we are very often dimsighted to distinguish between virtue and vice, it is

rightly said here; *Though I were perfect, my soul shall not know it*. As if it were expressed plainly, ‘With what foolhardiness do I find fault with God’s judgments upon me, who do not know mine own self by reason of the darkness of my weak condition?’ Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *The deep uttered his voice from the height of his imagining*. [Hab. 3, 10. LXX.] For the deep sustains a height of imagining, when the human mind, dim with the immensity of thought, even in its very searching does not penetrate itself, but to ‘utter his voice from the height’ is that whilst it is unable to fathom itself, it is constrained to rise up in admiration, so that it never should venture to dive into that which is above it, in proportion as, in taking thought itself of its own incomprehensible being, it cannot make out what it is. But the hearts of the righteous, because they cannot examine themselves to perfection, with difficulty bear this exile of dimsightedness; and hence it is added, *and I shall be weary of my life*. The righteous man is weary to live, in that both by doing works he does not cease to seek after life, and yet cannot discover the merits of that same life; since he draws the balances of trial out from the bosom of interior Justice, and in himself is disabled for the effecting of discovery from the very cause that, being transported above himself, he is enlarged in the power of inquiring. But the alleviation of our darkness lies in the just and incomprehensible power of the Creator being recalled to mind, which both never leaves the wicked without taking vengeance, and surpasses the righteousness of the just by the boundlessness of its incomprehensibility; and hence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 22. *This is one thing, that I have spoken, He destroyeth both the perfect and the wicked.*

40. The ‘perfect man is destroyed’ by the Creator, in that whatever his pureness may have been, it is swallowed up by the pureness of the divine immensity. For though we take heed to preserve pureness, yet by consideration of the interior Perfection it is shewn, that this which we

practise is not purity; 'the wicked' likewise is 'destroyed' by the Creator, in that whilst God ordereth all things marvellously, his wickedness is caught in the noose of his own artifices. For he is even unwittingly involving himself in punishment on the same grounds whereon he wittingly exults in doing any thing. Whereas therefore Almighty God at once surpasses the perfection of the righteous by pureness, and penetrating the craft of the wicked condemns it, it is rightly said, *This is one thing, therefore I said it; He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked*. As if it were expressed in plain words; 'I have spoken this word of reflection to myself, that neither being perfect, shall I appear perfect, if I be strictly examined; nor being wicked, if I would lie hid in myself, am I withdrawn from the piercings of heavenly probing, in that the strict Judge in comprehending all things, penetrates the subterfuges of wickedness in a marvellous way; and in ordering for the best, condemns the same by its 'own devices.' Or, indeed, He is Himself said to destroy both the perfect and the wicked, in that though they be separated in the life of the soul, yet in due of the first sin, they are alike dragged to the death of the flesh. And hence it is said by Solomon; *The learned dieth equally as the unlearned*. [Eccl. 2, 16] And again, *All things are subject to vanity, and all go to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again*. [Eccl. 3, 20] It proceeds:

Ver. 23. *If He scourge, let Him slay once for all, and not laugh at the trial of the innocent.*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

41. Who would not suppose that this was uttered in pride, unless he heard the sentence of the Judge, Who pronounces, *For ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath*. [Job 42, 7] Therefore it follows, that no one dare to find fault with the author's words, which it appears the Judge commends. But they must be sifted in their inner sense

with the greater wariness and nicety, in proportion as they sound the harder on the outside. Thus the holy man surveying the woes of mankind, and considering whence they came, how that man, in consequence of the promise of his enemy, desiring to obtain the knowledge of good and evil, lost his very self too, so that he may say with truth, *Though I were perfect, yet my soul shall not know it;* how that after the punishment of exile he is further subject to the scourges of corruption, and even after being tormented is still tending to the death of the body, or indeed to the death of the soul, so that he may well say, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked; in opposition to this he begs the grace of the Mediator, saying, *If he scourge, let him slay once for all*. For in that we have both in spirit departed from God; and that in flesh we return to dust, we are obnoxious to the punishment of a double death. But there came unto us One, Who in our stead should die the death of the flesh only, and join His single Death to our twofold death, and set us free from either kind. Concerning which it is said by Paul, *For in that He died, He died unto sin once*. [Rom. 6, 10] Thus let the holy man survey the ills of our state of corruption, and let him seek the one Death of the Mediator, which should cancel our two deaths, and in longing for this, let him say, *If He scourge, let Him slay once for all.*

42. But mark how that seems as though it were at war with humility, which is immediately introduced, *And not laugh at the trial of the innocent*. And yet we shall easily perceive this to be a very great piece of humility, if we consider it in a humble spirit. For it is plain to all persons that desire, when deferred, is in every case a pain; as Solomon bears witness, who says, *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick*. [Prov. 13, 12] Now for God to 'laugh,' is His refusing to take pity upon the suffering of man. Hence the Lord saith again, by Solomon, to the children of perdition continuing in sin, *I also will laugh at your calamity* [Prov. 1, 26]; i.e. 'I will not compassionate you in your distress with any pity.' Thus before the coming or our Redeemer, the

Elect had all of them their pain, in that with ardent longing, they desired to behold the mystery of His Incarnation, as He Himself bears record, when He says, *For I tell you that many Prophets and Kings have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them*; [Luke 10, 24] and so the 'pains of the innocent' are the desires of the righteous. For so long then as the Lord, taking no pity, deferred the wishes of His Elect, what did He else, but 'laugh at the pains of the innocent?' Therefore let the holy man, considering the gifts of the Redeemer that should come, and enduring with pain the delay of his wishes, express himself in the words, *If He scourge, let Him slay once for all, and not laugh at the pains of the innocent*. As if he besought in plain words, saying, 'Whereas our life is every day bruised with the scourge of vengeance on account of sin, let Him now appear, Who for our sake may undergo death once for all, without sin, that God may no more 'laugh at the pains of the innocent,' if He Himself come subject to suffering in the flesh, in desire of Whom our soul chastens itself.'

43. Or indeed if He uses the expression of God's 'laughing' for His joy, the Lord is said 'to laugh at the pains of the innocent,' in that the more ardently He is sought of us, the more graciously He rejoices over us. For we as it were cause a kind of joy to Him by our pain, when by holy desires, we chasten ourselves for the love of Him. Hence the Psalmist saith, *Appoint a solemn day in frequency, even unto the horns of the altar*. [Ps. 118, 27. Vulg.] For he 'appointeth a solemn day to the Lord in frequency,' whosoever is continually chastening himself in the desire of Him; and it is enjoined that this same day of solemnity be carried even to the horns of the altar, in that it is necessary that every man chasten himself for so long time, until he attains to the height of the heavenly sacrifice, i.e. unto eternal bliss. Thus the holy man, for that he longs to have his desire fulfilled and no longer deferred, says with humility, *Nor laugh at the pains of the innocent*. As if he said, 'Let Him, gladly welcoming our petitions, no longer defer, but

by manifesting bring to light Him, who chastens us in the expecting of Himself.' Now that blessed Job prayed that He in particular might be slain once for all, Who at 'the end' of the world underwent for our sake the death of the flesh alone, he immediately makes appear, in that he at the same time subjoins the very course of His Passion; saying,

Ver. 24. *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covereth the faces of the judges thereof.*

44. For what is denoted by the designation of 'the earth,' saving the flesh? who by the title of 'the wicked,' save the devil? The 'hands' of this wicked one were they, who were the aggressors in the death of our Redeemer. Thus 'the earth is given into the hands of the wicked,' in that our Redeemer's Soul our old enemy could never corrupt, by himself tempting Him. But His Flesh he being permitted did by means of his ministers deprive of life for three days; and unknown to himself, by that very permission, he ministered to the dispensation of God's pitifulness. For assailing our Redeemer with three temptations, he had no power to defile the heart of God. But when he set on the mind of Judas to bring about the death of His fleshly part, and when he gave him a band of soldiers and officers from the Chief Priests and Pharisees, then that wicked one stretched forth his hands upon 'the earth.' The judges of this earth were the Priests and Rulers, Pilate and the scoffing soldiers; and so this wicked one 'covered the faces of the judges thereof,' in that he veiled the mind of the persecutors, that they should not know their Maker, with a cloud of wickedness. Whence it is said by Paul, *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart* [2 Cor. 3, 15]; and he says again, *For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*. [1 Cor. 2, 8] And so the face of the judges proved to be covered, in that the mind of the persecutors not even by His miracles ever knew Him to be God, Whom it had power to hold fast in the flesh. But forasmuch as our old enemy is one

person with all the wicked, Holy Scripture very often so speaks of the head of the wicked, i.e. the devil, that it suddenly goes off to his body, i.e. to his followers. Therefore it may be that by the name of 'the wicked one,' the faithless and persecuting People is denoted, with which this also which is added accords;

If it is not he, who then is it?

45. Who then shall any where be accounted wicked, if that People, which persecuted Pity Itself, be not wicked? But the holy man, after regarding the faithlessness of the Jewish People, calls back the eye of his mind to himself, grieves that he cannot behold Him Whom he loves, is sad and sorrowful that he is withdrawn from the present world, before the Saving Health of the world is manifested; and hence he adds,

Ver.25. *Now my days are swifter than a post: they are fled away, they have seen no good.*

46. For the business of a post is to tell what is coming after; and so all of the Elect that were born before the coming of the Redeemer, in that either by mode of life only, or by word of mouth likewise, they bore tidings of Him, were like a kind of post in the world. But whereas they foresee themselves withdrawn before the wished for season of Redemption, they mourn that they pass away 'swifter than a post,' and they lament that their days are short, because they are never extended so far as to see the light of the Redeemer; whence it is justly said, *They flee away, they see no good*. All things that have been created are good, as Moses bears record, who says, *And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good*. [Gen. 1, 31] But that good alone is primarily good, whereby all those are good, which are not primarily good, and of this good, 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *None is good save one, that is, God*. [Luke 18, 19] Therefore because the days of the former fathers were ended before ever God was manifested to the world in the flesh, it is rightly said of those days, that they

fled away, and saw no good. As if it were in plain words, 'They have passed away before the looked-for season, because they might not attain to the present appearing of the Redeemer.' Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 26. *They are passed away as the ships carrying fruits.*

47. They that traverse seas transporting fruits, do themselves indeed enjoy the smell of the same, but the food thereof they convey to others. What else then did the ancient Fathers shew themselves, saving ships carrying fruits? They indeed in foretelling the mystery of God's Incarnation, themselves enjoyed the sweet odour of hope, but to ourselves they brought down the fruit by the completion of that hope. For what they but smelled at in expecting, we are replenished with in seeing and receiving. And hence That same Redeemer saith to His disciples, *Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours*. [John 4, 38] And their days are likened to ships, because they pass by on their way, and very properly to those bearing fruits, for all the Elect severally, whom they carried before the Redeemer's coming, through the Spirit of prophecy, they were enabled to refresh with the expectation, but not to feed with the manifest appearing. Or, surely, whereas when ships carry fruits, they mix chaff with them, in order that they may transport them to land without injury, the days of the Fathers of yore are rightly described as like to ships bearing fruits, for in that the sayings of the Ancients tell of the mysteries of the spiritual life, they preserve these by means of the intermingled chaff of the history, and they bring down to us the fruit of the Spirit under a covering, when they speak to us carnal things. For often whilst they relate circumstances proper to themselves, they are exalted to the secrets of the Divine Nature. And often while they gaze at the loftiness of the Divine Nature, 'they are suddenly plunged into the mystery of the Incarnation. Hence it is still further added with fitness,

As the eagle that hasteth to the prey.

48. For it is of the habits of the eagle to gaze at the sun's rays with unrecoiling eye; but when it is pressed by need of sustenance, it turns the same pupil of the eye, which it had fixed on the rays of the sun, to the ken of the carcase, and though it flies high in air, it seeks the earth for the purpose of getting flesh. Thus, surely, thus was it with the old fathers, who as far as the frailty of human nature permitted it, contemplated the sight of the Creator with uplifted soul, but foreseeing Him destined to become incarnate at the end of the world, they as it were turned away their eyes to the ground from gazing at the rays of the sun; and they as it were descend from highest to lowest, whilst they see Him to be God above all things, and Man among all things; and whilst they behold Him, Who was to suffer and to die for mankind, by which same Death they know that they are themselves restored and fashioned anew to life, as it were like the eagle, after gazing at the rays of the sun, they seek their food upon the dead Body. It is good to view the Eagle gazing at the rays of the Sun, which saith, *The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*. [Is. 9, 6] But let him come down from the high flight of his lofty range to earth, and seek below the food of the carcase. For he adds a little while after, saying, *The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed*. [Is. 53, 5] And again, *And He is man, and who shall know Him?* [Jer. 17, 9. LXX] Thus the mind of the righteous man being lifted up to the Divine Nature, when it sees the grace of the Economy in His Flesh, as it were 'hasteth' suddenly from on high like an 'eagle to the prey.' 'But mark; that Israelitish People, which was for long watered with the Spirit of prophecy above measure, lost those same gifts of prophecy, and never continued in that faith, which in foreseeing it had proclaimed, and, by disowning, put away from itself that Presence of the Redeemer, which, by foretelling, it clearly delivered to all its followers. Hence, immediately, his speech is suitably made to turn, in sympathy, to their obduracy, and it is

shewn how the Spirit of prophecy is taken away from them. For it is subjoined,

Ver. 27. *If I say, I will never speak thus; I change my countenance, and am tormented with grief.*

49. For the Jewish People would not speak as before, in that it denied Him, Whom it had foretold; but with changed countenance it is tormented with grief, in that while it defiled with the foulness of unbelief the aspect of its inward man, by which it might have been known by the Creator, setting out with present evils, it brought itself under the sentence of everlasting vengeance. For its face being as it were changed, it is not known by the Creator, in that upon faith in a good conscience being gone, it is condemned. But doubtless it remains for her, that the pain of punishment torment her, whom her Creator knowing not disowns. Seeing, then, that we have gone through these points under the signification of our Redeemer, now let us go over them again, to make them out in a moral sense.

Ver.25. *Now my days have been swifter than a post, they are fled away, they have seen no good.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

50. For as we have already said, the first man was so created that by the accessions of time his life could only be extended, but not spun to an end; but because by his own act and deed he fell into sin, in that he touched that which was forbidden, he was made subject to a transitory career, which man now, oppressed by fondness for the present life, both undergoes and longs for without ceasing. For, that he may not come to an end, he longs to live on, yet by the accessions to life, he is daily advancing to his end, nor does he well discover the added portions of time, what nothings they are, when those things are done and over in a moment which seemed to be long in coming. Let the holy man then view the grounds of his position, and in the

voice of mankind bewail the woes of a transitory career, saying, *Now my days have been swifter than a post; they are fled away, they have seen no good*. As if it were in plain words, 'Man was created for this end, that he might see good,' which is God; but because he would not stand in the light, in flying therefrom he lost his eyes; for in the same degree that by sin he began to let himself run out to things below, he subjected himself to blindness, that he should not see the interior light.' And of those days it is further added with fitness, *They are passed away as the ships carrying fruits*. For ships, when they 'carry fruits,' convey the produce of the land through the waves. Now the land of man was Paradise, which might have kept him unshaken, if by force of innocency he could have stood fast, but, because by sin he fell into the waves of a changeful state, after the land he came into the seas of the present life. Furthermore the fruits of the land were the word of commandment, the power of good works vouchsafed him, the perception of his Creator implanted in his nature. But these fruits, which we refused to eat on the land, we carry through the seas, in that we would not keep unmoved in Paradise the blessings of so many benefits vouchsafed to us, and now we endeavour to preserve them in the midst of temptations. Hasting to our bourn, we are driven forward by the breath of the present life, we are worn out with the tossing of our mutable condition. But whereas by the mystery of the Cross we are made fast to the good gifts implanted in our nature, it is as if we carried fruits by means of wood. And yet this may also be understood in another sense. For ships that carry fruits have sweetness of smell, but have no gravity of weight; and man, when he became an outcast from the joys of Paradise, lost the power of contemplation, and parted with the vigour of his native strength; and when he lifts up himself to seek anew the things above, he is sweetened indeed by the perfume of the memory, but yields no weight of life in meet proportion. Thus he is filled with the odours of fruits, and yet the vessel of our soul is

lightly driven hither and thither without steadiness, in that we both call to mind the high state of Paradise with a remembrance of a sweet smell, and are subject to the troublesome waves of temptation arising from the flesh. Hence it is fitly subjoined, *As the eagle that hasteth to the prey*. For the eagle is suspended in an exceeding lofty flight, and poised in swift speeding skywards, but from the hunger of the belly, he seeks the ground, and suddenly plunges himself downward from on high. Thus, thus the race of man in our first parent fell from on high deep down below, whereas the dignity of its state by creation had hung it aloft in the high region of reason as in the freedom of the skies: but because, contrary to the commandment, he touched the forbidden fruit, he descended to the earth, through the lust of the belly; and it is as if he fed upon flesh after flying, for that he lost those free inhalings of contemplation, and now solaces himself with corporeal delights below. Thus 'as the eagle that hasteth to the prey,' our days pass swiftly by; for in proportion as we seek things below, we are hindered from maintaining ourselves in life.

51. But when we revolve such things in our mind by continual reflection, we are silently pressed with the hard questions, why did Almighty God create one, who He foresaw would perish? Why was He, Who is chief in power and chief in goodness, not so minded as to make man such that he could not perish? But when the mind silently asks these questions, it fears lest, by its very audacity in questioning thus, it should break out into pride, and holds itself in with humility, and restrains the thoughts of the heart. But it is the more distressed, that amid the ills that it suffers it is over and above tormented concerning the secret meaning of its condition. Hence here too it is fitly added; If I shall say, *I will never speak thus; I change my countenance, and am tormented with grief*. For we say, that 'we never ought to speak thus,' when transgressing the limit of our frail nature in pushing our enquiries, we reproach ourselves in dread, and are withheld by

bethinking ourselves of heavenly awe, in which same withholding, the face of our mind is altered, in that the mind, which in the first instance, failing to comprehend them, boldly investigated things above, afterwards, finding out its own infirmity, begins to entertain awe for what it is ignorant of. But in this very change there is pain, for the mind is very greatly afflicted that, in recompense of the first sin, she is blinded to the understanding of things touching her own self. All that she undergoes she sees to be just. She dreads lest in her pain she be guilty of excess from liberty of speech, she imposes silence on the lips, but the awakened grief is increased by the very act by which it is restrained. Let him say then; *If I shall say, I will never speak thus; I change my countenance, and am tormented with grief*. For we are then for the most part most grievously afflicted, when, as it were by a studied endeavour after consolation, we try to lighten to ourselves the ills of our afflicted condition; but whoever once considers with minute attention the ills of man propagated by the condemnation of our first parent, it follows that he must be afraid to add his own deeds thereto. Hence after the holy man had brought in matters of common concern, he at once subjoins those of special interest, saying,

Ver. 28. *I was afraid of all my works, knowing that Thou wouldest not spare me, when guilty of transgression.*

52. What were the works that blessed Job practised, the text of this sacred history makes plain. For he studied to propitiate his Maker by numberless burnt offerings; in that according to the number of his sons, as it is written, rising up early in the morning, he offered burnt offerings for each, and purified them not only from impure actions, but likewise from bad thoughts. Of whom it is recorded, by the witness of Scripture, *For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed* [Lat. *blessed*] *God in their hearts*. [Job 1, 5] He exercised the feeling of sympathy, in that he declares of himself, when he was importuned by the interrogations of his

friends, *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble?* [Job 30, 25] He discharged the office of pity, as he says, *I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame*. [Job 29, 15] He kept pureness of chastity in heart, in that he discovers himself openly with adjuration, saying, *If mine heart have been deceived by a woman*. [Job 31, 9] He held the very topmost point of humility, from the grounds of his heart, who saith, *If I did despise to be judged with my manservant or my maidservant, when they contended with me*. [ver. 13] He bestowed the bounties of liberality, who saith, *Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof?* [ver. 17] And again; *If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep*. [ver. 20] He displayed the kindness of hospitality, who says, *The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller*. [ver. 32] And in the midst of these things, for the consummation of his virtues, by that more excellent way of charity, he even loved his very enemies, in that he says, *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me*. [ver. 29] And again, *Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul*. [ver. 30] Why then was the holy man 'afraid for his works,' in that he ever practised these, by which God is wont to be softened towards transgressions? How then is it, that while doing works to be admired, he even fears for these same, being in alarm, when he says, *I was afraid of all my works*, save that we gather from the deeds and the words of the holy man, that if we really desire to please God, after we overcome our bad habits, we must fear the very things themselves that are done well in us?

58. For there are two particulars which must of necessity be seriously apprehended in our good works, viz. sloth and deceit. And hence it is said by the Prophet, as the old translation has it, *Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully and negligently*. [Jer. 48, 10] Now it is to be carefully noted, that sloth comes of insensibility, deceit of self-love, for

over little love of God gives magnitude to the first, while self-love, miserably possessing the mind, engenders the other. For he is guilty of deceit in the work of God, whosoever loving himself to excess, by that which he may have done well, is only making the best of his way to transitory good things in compensation. We must bear in mind too that there are three ways in which deceit itself is practised, in that, surely, the object aimed at in it is either the secret interest of our fellow creatures' feelings, or the breath of applause, or some outward advantage; contrary to which it is rightly said of the righteous man by the prophet, *Blessed is he that shaketh his hands clear of every favour*. [Is. 33, 15] For as deceit does not consist only in the receiving of money; so, no doubt, a favour is not confined to one thing, but there are three ways of receiving favours after which deceit goeth in haste. For a favour from the heart, is interest solicited in the opinion, a favour from the mouth is glory from applause, a favour from the head a reward by gift. Now every righteous man 'shaketh his hands clear of every favour,' in that in whatever he does aright, he neither aims to win vainglory from the affections of his fellow creatures, nor applause from their lips, nor a gift from their hands. And so he alone is not guilty of deceit in doing God's work, who while he is energetic in studying right conduct, neither pants after the rewards of earthly substance [*corporalis rei*], nor after words of applause, nor after favour in man's judgment. Therefore because our very good actions themselves cannot escape the sword of ambushed sin, unless they be guarded every day by anxious fear, it is rightly said in this place by the holy man, I was afraid of all my works. As if he said with humble confession, 'What I have done publicly, I know, but what I may have been secretly subject to therein, I cannot tell.' For often our good points are spoilt by deceit robbing us, in that earthly desires unite themselves to our right actions; oftentimes they come to nought from sloth intervening, in that, love waxing cold, they are starved of the fervour in which they began. And so

because the stealth of sin is scarcely got the better of even in the very act of virtue, what safeguard remains for our security, but that even in our virtue, we ever tread with fear and caution?

54. But what he adds after this presents itself as a very great difficulty to the mind; *I know that Thou wouldest not spare one that offendeth*. For if there be no ‘sparing of one that offendeth,’ who can be rescued from death eternal, seeing that there is no one to be found clear of sin? Or does He spare a penitent, but not one that offendeth, in that whilst we bewail our offences we are no longer offending? Yet how is it that Peter is looked at, while he is denying, and that by the look of his denied Redeemer he is brought to tears? How is it that Paul, when he was bent to do out the name of our Redeemer upon earth, was vouchsafed to hear His words from heaven? Yet was sin punished both in the one and in the other. In that of Peter on the one hand it is written, as the Gospel is witness, *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, and went out, and wept bitterly*. [Luke 22, 61. 62.] And of Paul, that very same ‘Truth’ Which called him, saith, *For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name’s sake*. [Acts 9, 16] Therefore God never doth ‘spare him that offendeth,’ in that He never leaves his sin without taking vengeance on it. For either man himself in doing penance punishes it in himself, or God in dealing [h] with man in vengeance for it, visits it with His rod, and thus there is never any sparing of sin, in that it is never loosed without vengeance. Thus David after his confession obtained to hear, *The Lord also hath put away thy sin*. [2 Sam. 12, 13] And yet being afterwards scourged ‘with numberless afflictions, and a fugitive, he discharged the obligation of the sin which he had been guilty of. So we by the water of salvation are absolved from the sin of our first parent; and yet in clearing off the obligations of that same sin, although absolved, we still undergo the death of the flesh. Therefore it is well said, *I know that thou wouldest not spare one that offendeth*. In that either by ourselves or by

His own self He cuts off even when He lets off our sins. For from His Elect He is studious to wipe off by temporal affliction those spots of wickedness, which He would not behold in them for ever. But it oftentimes happens that when the mind is fearful more than behoves, when it is shaken with alarm, when it is pressed with ill-omened misgivings, it feels weary that it should live, in that it questions the attaining to life even through pains and labour. And hence it is thereupon added,

Ver.29. *But if even so I be wicked, why, then, have I laboured in vain?*

5. For if we be examined pity set aside, our work which we look to have recompensed with a reward is deserving of punishment. ‘Therefore the holy man shrinking under secret judgment, says, *But if even so I be wicked, why, then, have I laboured in vain?* Not that he repents of having laboured, but that it grieves him even amidst labours to be in uncertainty about the reward. But we must bear in mind that the Saints so doubt that they trust, and so trust that notwithstanding they do not slumber in security. Therefore because it is very often the case that the mind, even when bent upon right courses, is full of fears, it follows that after the good deed is done, deprecating tears be had recourse to, in order that the humility of entreaty may bear up the deserts of right practice to eternal rewards. But yet we must bear in mind that neither our life nor our tears have power to make us perfectly clean, so long as the mortal condition of our state of corruption holds us fast bound. And hence it is rightly added,

Ver. 30, 31. *If I wash myself with snow water, and if my hands shine as if never so clean; yet shalt Thou stain me with filthiness, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.*

56. For ‘snow water’ is the weeping of humility; which same, in that it excels all other virtues in the eyes of the strict Judge, is as it were white by the colour of preeminent merit. For there are some to whom there is lamenting but not humility, in that when they are afflicted they weep, yet in

those very tears, they either set themselves in disdain against the life of their neighbours, or they are lifted up against the dispensation of their Maker. Such have water, but not 'snow water,' and they can never be clean, because they are not washed in the tears of humility. But he had washed himself clean from sin with snow water, who said with confidence, *A broken and a humbled heart, O God, Thou shalt not despise*. [Ps. 51, 17] For they that afflict themselves with tears but turn rebels by murmuring, 'break' their heart indeed, but disdain to be 'humbled.' Though 'snow water' may also be understood in another sense. For water of the spring and stream issues out of the earth, but snow water is let fall from the sky. And there are very many, who torment themselves in the wailings of supplication, yet with all their pains in bewailing they spend themselves upon earthly objects of desire alone. They are pierced with anguish in their prayers, but it is the joys of transitory happiness that they are in search of. And so these are not washed with 'snow water,' because their tears come from below. For it is as if they were bathed in water of earth, who are pierced with grief in their prayers, on account of earthly good things. But they who lament for this reason, because they long for the rewards on high [or 'from on high'], are washed clean in snow water, in that heavenly compunction overflows them. For when they seek after the everlasting land by tears, and inflamed with longing for it lament, they receive from on high that whereby they may be made clean. Now by 'the hands' what else is denoted saving 'works?' Whence it is said to certain persons by the Prophet; *Your hands are full of blood*, [Is. 1, 15] i.e. 'your works are full of cruelty.'

57. But it is to be observed, that the holy man does not say, And make my hands shine ever so clean, but as if never so clean. For so long as we are tied and bound by the penalty of a corrupt state, we never by whatsoever right works appropriate real cleanness to ourselves, but only imitate it, And

hence it is fitly added, *Yet Thou shalt stain me with filth*. For God 'to stain us with filth' means His shewing us to be stained with filth; in that in proportion as we more truly rise up to Him by good works, the more exactly we are made to know the filthiness of our life, by which we are rendered at variance with His pureness. Thus he saith, *If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands shine as if never so clean; yet shalt Thou stain me with filthinesses*. As if it were expressed in plain words, 'Though I be steeped in tears of heavenly compunction, though I be exercised in the courses of good works, yet in Thy pureness I perceive that I am not pure.' For the flesh itself, which is still subject to corruption, beats off the spirit when it is intent on God, and stains the beauty of the love of Him by foul and unhallowed movements of thought.

58. Hence too it is added, *And mine own clothes shall abhor me*. For what is denoted by the name of 'clothes' saving this earthly body, with which the soul is endued and covered, that it may not be seen naked in the subtleness of its substance? For hence Solomon saith, *Let thy garments be always white*, [Eccl. 9, 8] i.e. the members of the body clean from filthy acts. Hence Isaiah saith, *A garment mixed in blood shall be for burning*. [Is. 9, 5. Vulg.] For to 'mix garments in blood' is to defile the body with fleshly desires; which same the Psalmist dreaded to be defiled with, when he said, *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou That art the God of my health*. [Ps. 51, 16] Hence it is delivered to John by the voice of the Angel, *Thou hast a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments*. [Rev. 3, 4] But according to the way of Holy Writ, our clothes are said 'to abhor us,' in that they make us to be abhorred; in like manner as it is also said of Judas by Peter, *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity.* [Acts 1, 18] For Judas never could have purchased the potter's field, which was bought with the price of blood, in that restoring the thirty pieces of silver, he straightway punished the guilt of the betrayal by a death

with greater guilt inflicted on himself, but ‘he purchased’ is rendered, he ‘was the cause of purchasing.’ So in this place, Mine own garments shall abhor me, means, ‘shall make me to be abhorred.’ For whilst the members set themselves up against the spirit, whilst they break in upon the engagements of holy desire, ‘by the tumult of temptations that are caused by them, the soul being set in its own conflict learns how meanly it is still regarded by the Divine Being, in that while it fully desires to go through with the chastising of self and is not able, it is defiled by the dust of filthy thoughts. He felt this ‘abhorrence of the clothes,’ who said, *But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members*. [Rom. 7, 23] These very garments, in which he could not be entirely pleasing, he anxiously desired to lay aside, one day to be resumed much better, saying, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* [Rom. 7, 24] Therefore let the righteous man say, *If I wash myself as with snow water, and make my hands shine as if never so clean, yet shalt Thou still stain me with filthiness, and mine own clothes shall abhor me*. In that howsoever he might have been transported on high in the compunctious visitings of contemplation, however he might have braced himself in practice by the exercise of pains, yet he is still sensible of somewhat unmeet derived from a body of death, and sees himself to be abominable in many things, which he bears about him from his load of corruption. And this too becomes a worse affliction to him, that he often cannot make out by what means he is an offender. He undergoes scourges, but knows nothing what in him is greater, or what less, that displeases the severe Judge. And hence it is added,

32. *For He is not a man, such as I am, that I should answer Him, or that He can be heard with me in Judgment on an equal footing.*

59. When we 'contend with another in judgment on an equal footing,' we both learn what is urged against us, and in all we allege we are heard, and in proportion as we apprehend the points openly objected, we reply with boldness to the points propounded. In this way forasmuch as the invisible Judge sees all that we do, it is as if He hears things that we say. But because we never know fully the thing that displeases Him, it is as if what He Himself says, we know not. Thus the holy man, considering the 'abhorrence of his own clothes,' is the more filled with fears, that he cannot 'be heard with Him in judgment on an equal footing.' In that so long as he is burthened with the load of his corruption, he meets with this worst evil in his punishment, that he does not even know the view that his Reprover takes. As though he said in plain words; 'Herein I am not heard on an equal footing, in that while all that I do is open to view, yet I myself cannot tell under what liabilities I am arrested.' It goes on,

Ver.32. *Neither is there any that is able to convict both of us, and to lay his hand upon us both.*

60. It sounds hard that any should be sought who might convict God, but it will not be hard, if we recall to mind what He Himself says by another Prophet; for He charges us by Isaiah, *Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow*. *Come, and convict* [*arguite*] *Me, saith the Lord*. [Is. 1, 16 — 18.] For one whom we convict, we encounter with the authority of reason. And what is this, that when the Lord bids us do holy actions, He adds, *Come, and convict Me*, but that He plainly intimates the great assurance He vouchsafes to good works? As if it were said in plain words, 'Do right, and then no longer meet the motions of My displeasure by the groan of entreaty, but by the confident voice of authority.' For it is hence that John saith, *If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God*. [I John 3, 21] It is hence that Moses, in that he is acceptable in rendering service, is

heard while keeping silence, where it is said to him when he was silent, *Wherefore criest thou unto Me?* [Ex. 14, 15] It is hence that he withholds Him waxing wrath, when he hears the words, *Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against this people*. [Ex. 32, 10] It is hence that the Lord complains that He had no one to convict Him, where it is said by the Prophet, *And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the way against Me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none*. [Ez. 22, 30] It is hence that Isaiah laments bitterly, saying, *And we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away*. *And there is none that calleth upon Thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee*. [Is. 64, 6. 7.]

61. Now any of the righteous may sometimes be able to resist the visitations of a present judgment, by the merits of a derived innocency, but they have no power by their own goodness to rid mankind of the woes of the death to come. Therefore let the holy man bethink himself whereunto the human race has run out, let him cast his eye on the woes of eternal death, which it is plain that human righteousness can never withstand, let him see how frowardly man has offended, let him see how severely the wrath of the Creator is directed against man, and let him call for the Mediator between God and man, God and Man in one, forasmuch as he beholds Him destined to come long after; let him lament and say, *Neither is there any that is able to convict both of us, and to lay his hand upon us both*. For the Redeemer of Mankind, who was made the Mediator between God and Man through the flesh, because that He alone appeared righteous among men, and yet, even though without sin, was notwithstanding brought to the punishment of sin, did both convict man, that he might not sin, and withstand God, that He might not smite; He gave examples of innocency that He took upon Him the punishment due to wickedness. Thus by suffering He convinced both the One and the other, in that He both rebuked

the sin of man by infusing righteousness, and moderated the wrath of the Judge by undergoing death; and He 'laid His hand upon both,' in that He at once gave examples to men which they might imitate, and exhibited in Himself those works to God, by which He might be reconciled to men. For before Him there never was forthcoming One, Who interceded for the guiltinesses of others in such wise, as not to have any of His own. Therefore none could encounter eternal death in the case of others, in the degree that he was bound by the guilt of his own. Therefore there came to men a new Man, as to sin a rebuker, as to punishment a befriender. He manifested miracles, He underwent cruel treatment. Thus He laid His hand upon both, for by the same steps by which He taught the guilty good things, He appeased the indignant Judge. And He did this too the more marvellously by His very miracles themselves, in that He reformed the hearts of offenders by mildness rather than by terror. Hence it is added,

Ver.34. *Let Him take away His rod from Me, and let not His fear terrify me.*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

62. For in the Law God held the rod, in that He said, 'If any man do this or that, let him die the death.' But in His Incarnation He removed the rod, in that He shewed the paths of life by mild means. Whence it is said to Him by the Psalmist, *Set forward, go forth prosperously and rejoice, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness*. [Ps. 45, 3] For He had no mind to be feared as God, but put it into our hearts that as a Father He should be loved; as Paul clearly delivers; *For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father*. [Rom. 8, 15] Hence too it is fitly added here,

Ver.35. *Then would I speak, and not fear Him.*

63. For the holy man, because he beholds the Redeemer of the world coming in meekness, does not assume fear towards a Master, but affection towards a Father. And he looks down on fear, in that through the grace of adoption he rises up to love. Hence John says; *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.* [1 John 4, 18] Hence Zachariah says, *That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear*. [Luke 1, 74] Therefore fear had no power to raise us from the death of sin, but the infused grace of meekness erected us to the seat of life. Which is well denoted by Elisha when he raised the child of the Shunamite. [2 Kings 4] He, when he sent his servant with a staff, never a whit restored life to the dead child; but upon coming in his own person, and spreading himself upon the dead body, and contracting himself to its limbs, and walking to and fro, and breathing several times into the mouth of the dead body, he forthwith quickened it to the light of new life through the ministering of compassion. For God, the Creator of mankind, as it were grieved for His dead son, when He beheld us with compassion killed by the sting of iniquity. And whereas He put forth the terror of the Law by Moses, He as it were sent the rod by the servant. But the servant could not raise the dead body with the staff; because, as Paul bears witness, *The Law made nothing perfect*. [Heb. 7, 19] But when He came in His own Person, and spread Himself in humility upon the dead body, He contracted Himself to match the limbs of the dead body to Himself. *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and found in fashion as a man*. [Phil. 2, 6 — 8.] He 'walks to and fro' also, in that He calls Judaea nigh at hand, and the Gentiles afar off. He breathes upon the dead body several times, in that by the publishing of the Divine gift, He bestows the Spirit of sevenfold grace upon those that lie prostrate in the death of sin. And afterwards it is raised up alive, in that the child, whom the

rod of terror could not raise up, has been brought back to life by the Spirit of love. Therefore let him say in himself, and in the voice of mankind, *Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me*. Then would I speak, and not fear Him. Where it is fitly added,

For I cannot respond whilst I fear.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

64. We are said to respond to any one, when we pay back deeds worthy of his doings. Therefore to 'respond' to God, is to render back our services in return for His previous gifts. And hence it is that certain of the Psalms, in which holy practice is set forth for imitation are prenoted as written 'to respond.' Thus God created man upright, and bore with him in long-suffering, when he let himself out to do froward deeds. Every day He beholds sin, and yet does not quickly cut off the periods of life. He lavishes His gifts in loving-kindness, and exercises patience towards evildoers. Man ought to respond to so many benefits, yet 'he is not able to respond whilst he fears,' in that everyone that continues to dread with a slavish fear the Creator of mankind, assuredly does not love Him. For we then only render real services to God, when we have no fear of Him through the confidence of our love, when affection, not fear, directs us to good works, when sin is now no longer pleasing to our mind, even if it were allowed us. For everyone that is restrained by fear alone from the practice of evil, would gladly do evil things if liberty were given him. He then is in no whit really righteous, who is still not free from the hankering after evil; and so it is well said, *For I cannot respond while I fear*. In that we do not render real service to God, so long as we obey His commandments from fear, and not much rather from love. But when the love of His sweetness is kindled in our mind, all desire of the present life goes for little, fondness is turned into weariness, and the mind endures with sorrow this same, which she formerly

served, under the dominion of an accursed love. Hence it is added with propriety,

Chap. x. 1. *My soul is weary of my life.*

65. Now whensoever the present life has once begun to grow tasteless, and the love of the Creator to become sweet, the soul inflames itself against self, that it may accuse self for the sins, wherein it formerly vindicated itself, being ignorant of the things above. Whence he yet further adds with propriety,

I will let my speech go against myself.

66. He as it were employs his speech in behalf of himself, who tries to defend by excuses the evil things he has done. But he 'lets his speech go against himself,' who begins to accuse himself of that which he has done amiss. Now very frequently even when we commit sin, we go on to try the things we have done. The mind of itself brings what it does to trial; but forasmuch as it does not at all forsake this in the desire, it is ashamed to acknowledge what it has done; but when it now comes down upon the indulgence of the flesh with the whole weight of its judgment, it lifts itself with a bold voice in the acknowledgment of that self-accusing. Whence it is rightly said here, *I will let my speech go against myself*; in that the resolute mind begins to let loose against itself words of abhorrence, which aforetime from a feeling of shame it kept to itself through weakness. But there be some that confess their sins in explicit words, but yet know nothing how to bewail in confessing them. And they utter things with pleasure, that they ought to bewail. Hence it is further added with propriety;

I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

67. He that tells his sins abhorring them, must needs likewise 'speak of them in the bitterness of his soul,' that that very bitterness may punish whatsoever the tongue accuses of in the warrant of conscience. But we must bear in mind, that from the pains of penitence, which the mind inflicts upon

itself, it derives a certain degree of security; and rises with the greater confidence to meet the inquest of the heavenly Judge, that it may make itself out more thoroughly, and ascertain how each particular is appointed towards, it. Hence it is forthwith added;

Ver. 12. *I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore Thou so judgest me.*

68. Whereas he declares himself a sinner 'in the bitterness of his soul,' what else does he say to God, but that he may not be condemned, in that the bitterness of his present penance does away with the pains of ensuing wrath? Now God judgeth man in this life in two ways, seeing that either by present ills He is already beginning to bring upon him the torments to come, or else by present scourges He does away with the torments to come. For except there were some whom the just Judge, as the due of their sins, did both now and hereafter visit, Jude would never have said, *The Lord afterwards destroyed them that believed not*. [Jude 5] And the Psalmist would not say of the wicked, *Let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a lined cloak* [*diploide*]. [Ps. 109, 29] For we mean by 'a lined cloak' a double garment. And so they are 'clothed with confusion as with a double garment,' who according to the due reward of their sin are at once visited with both a temporal and an everlasting judgment. For chastisement delivers those alone from woe, whom it alters. For those whom present evils do not amend, they conduct to those which are to ensue. But if there were not some whom present punishment preserves from eternal woe, Paul would never have said, *But when we are Judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world*. [1 Cor. 11, 32] Hence it is spoken to John by the voice of the Angel, *As many as I love I rebuke and chasten*. [Rev. 3, 19] Hence also it is written, *For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.* [Heb. 12, 6]

69. Therefore it often happens that the mind of the righteous man, in order to be made more secure, is the more penetrated with fear, and when he is beset with scourges, he is troubled with misgivings about the Judgment of the Most High. He fears lest all that he suffers should be the forerunner of the doom to ensue, and in his heart he questions the Judge, in that under His visitation he is full of doubts about the merit of his life. But when the goodness of his life is brought before the eyes of the mind, it is as if comfort were given in answer by the Judge, in that He never strikes to destroy him, whom by so striking He keeps in innocency of life and conduct. Therefore it is justly said here, *Shew me wherefore Thou so judgest me*. As if it were expressed in plain words, 'Whereas Thou exercisest judgment upon me by scourging me, shew me that by these scourges Thou art making me secure against the Judgment.' Which same however may also be understood in another sense. For very often the righteous man receives scourges for trial, and examining his life with the keenest eye of enquiry, though he both feel and own himself to be a sinner, yet for what particular sin he is smitten he cannot at all make out, and he trembles the more under the rod, in proportion as he knows nothing the reasons of his being smitten. He prays that the Judge would shew him to himself, that what He in striking aims at, he may himself also chastise in himself by weeping. For he is well assured that That most just Avenger never afflicts anyone of us unjustly, and he is moved with excessive alarm, in that he is both put to pain under the lash, and cannot entirely discover in himself what there is for him to lament. Hence it is further added;

Ver. 3. *Is it good unto Thee that Thou shouldest calumniate and oppress the poor* [Vulg. *me*]*, and the work of Thine hands, and help the counsel of the wicked?*

70. This same is so said by way of interrogation, that it is denied. As though it were in plain terms; 'Thou That art supremely good, I know dost not hold it good to oppress the poor man by calumny. And therefore I know that that is not unjust that I am suffering, and I am the more grieved, that cannot tell the causes of its justness.' But observe that he does not say, *That Thou shouldest oppress the innocent*, but, *the poor man*. For he who doth not represent his innocency, but his poorness to the severity of the Judge, does not now put on a bold front on the ground of his own life, but shews of how little strength he sees himself to be. Where also he fitly subjoins, *The work of Thine hands*. As if he said plainly, 'Thou canst not ever unfeelingly oppress him, whom Thou rememberest Thyself to have made of Thy mere grace.'

71. Now the words are excellently put in, *And help the counsel of the wicked*. For whom does he here call wicked, save the malignant spirits, who as they cannot themselves return back to life, mercilessly look out for fellows in destruction. Whose counsel it was that God's stroke should visit blessed Job, that he who shewed himself righteous while at peace, might at all events commit sin under the scourge. Now the Lord did not 'help the counsel of the wicked,' in that whilst He gave up the flesh of the righteous man to their arts of temptation, He withheld his soul. It is this counsel that the evil spirits incessantly persevere in against the good, that those, whom they see serving God in innocency while at rest, on being stricken by misfortune may go headlong into a whirlpool of sin. But the sharpness of their counsel is brought to nought, in that our pitiful Creator qualifies the strokes in accordance with our powers, that the infliction may not exceed our virtue, and by the craftiness of the strong ones man's weakness be thrown out of course. Hence it is well said by Paul, *But God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*. For

except the merciful God tempered His trials to correspond with our powers, there is surely no man who could sustain the cunning plots of evil spirits without being brought to the ground, in that excepting the Judge assign a measure to our temptations, by this alone He at once throws down one standing, in that He puts upon him a burthen too much for his strength. Now blessed Job, in the way of denying, so put in a question the things which he uttered, even as in asking he denies the things which he thereupon subjoins, saying,

Ver.4-7. *Hast Thou eyes of flesh? or shalt Thou see as man seeth? Are Thy days as the days of man? Are Thy years as the time of man, that Thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin? To know that I have done nothing ungodly.*

72. Eyes of flesh see not the deeds of the periods of time, save in time, in that both they themselves came out with time to see, and are closed with time, and man's sight follows any deed and does not prevent it, seeing that it but just glimpses at things existing, and sees nothing at all of things to come. Moreover the days and years of men differ from the days and years of Eternity, in that our life, which is begun in time and ended in time, Eternity, whilst it frames it within the boundlessness of its bosom, doth swallow up. And whereas the immensity of the same extends beyond us on this side and on that side, His 'to be eternally' spreads without beginning and without end: whereunto neither things gone by are past, nor things still to come, as though they did not appear, are absent; in that He, Who hath it always to be, seeth all things present to His eyes, and whereas He doth not stretch Himself by looking behind and before, He changes with no varieties of sight. And so let him say; *Hast thou eyes of flesh? or shalt Thou see as man seeth? Are Thy days as the days of man? Are Thy days as the days of man, that Thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin? To know that I have done nothing ungodly*. As if, humbly inquiring, he said,

'Wherefore dost Thou search me by scourges in time, when even before time was Thou didst know me perfectly in Thine own self? Wherefore dost Thou make inquest concerning my sins by smiting, whom by the mightiness of Thine eternity Thou didst never but know before Thou fashionedst me?' The weight of Whose power he immediately goes on to describe, where he adds; *And there is none that can deliver out of Thine hand.*

73. As if he expressed it in plain words; 'What is left to Thee, saving to spare, Whose power no man can resist? For in proportion as there is none who might stay Thy visitation by the merits of his own excellence, let Thy pitifulness the more easily obtain from Thee [lit. 'from Itself.'] to spare.' But because being conceived in sin, and born in wickedness, we either do evil things of malice, or even in doing good things go wrong out of heedlessness, we have not wherewith the strict Judge may be rendered propitious towards us; but while we are unable to present our work as worthy of His regard, it remains that for the propitiation of His favour we offer to Him His own work. Hence it is added;

Ver. 8. *Thine hands have made me and fashioned me,altogether round about: and dost Thou thus suddenly cast me down?*

74. As if He said to Him in humility; 'Whereas that which I have done being submitted to a just examination is not meet for the propitiating of Thee, consider in Thy mercy lest that should perish which is Thy doing [*quod fecisti*].' By which same words too the wicked doctrine of Manichaeus [some Mss. 'of Manes.'] is destroyed, who feigning that there are two Principles, strives to maintain that the spirit was made by God, but the flesh by Satan. For the holy man, being full of the grace of the prophetic Spirit, views events to come long afterwards, and foreseeing the shoots of divers errors, treads them underfoot, saying, *Thine hands have made me and fashioned me altogether round about*. For he, who declares himself both 'made and fashioned altogether round about' by God, leaves to the race of

darkness no part either in his spirit or in his flesh. For he described himself as 'moulded' [*plasmatum*] in virtue of the interior image, but he spoke of being 'fashioned together round about' in so far as he consists of a covering of flesh.

75. But it is to be observed, that herein that he declares himself made by the hands of God, he is setting before the Divine Mercy the dignity of his creation; for though all things were created by the Word, Which is coeternal with the Father, yet in the very account of the Creation, it is shewn how greatly man is preferred above all animals, how much even above things celestial, yet without sense. For, *He commanded, and they all were created*. [Ps. 148, 5] But when He determines to make Man, this which is to be thought of with awe is premised; *Let Us make man in Our Image, after Our Likeness*. [Gen. 1, 26] Nor yet is it written concerning him as it is of the rest of things created; *Let there be, and it was so*. [ver. 6. 7.] Nor as the waters the fowl, so did the earth produce Man; but before he was made it was said, *Let Us make*; [ver. 20] that whereas it was a creature endowed with reason that was being made, it might seem as if it were made with counsel. As if by design he is formed out of earth, and by the inspiration of his Creator set erect in the power of a vital spirit in this way, that he who was made after the image of his Creator, might have his being not by word of command, but by the greater eminence of action. That, then, which Man in the work of his creating received preeminently upon earth above all other creatures, this, being laid under the scourge, he represents to the pitifulness of his Artificer, saying, *Thine hands have made me and fashioned me altogether round about: and dost Thou thus suddenly cast me down?* As if it were in plain words; 'Why dost Thou despise me with such light esteem, when Thou createdst me with such circumstances of dignity? and him whom by reason Thou settest above all other things, why dost Thou by sorrow set below them?' Yet this preeminence, that we possess, shines bright by reason of the

‘Likeness,’ but is very far removed from the perfection of blessedness by reason of the flesh, in that whilst the spirit mixes with dust, it is in a certain measure united with weakness. Which weakness blessed Job presents to the pitifulness of the Judge, when he subjoins;

Ver. 9. *Remember, I pray Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay.*

76. The spirits of the Angels did for this reason sin without forgiveness, because they might have stood the stronger in proportion as no mixture with flesh held them in bonds. But man for this reason obtained pardon after sin, that in a body of flesh he got that wherein he should be beneath himself. And hence in the eye of the Judge this frailty of the flesh alone is a ground for shewing pity; as where it is said by the Psalmist, *But He is full of compassion, and will forgive their iniquity, and not destroy them; yea, many a time turned He His anger away from them, and did not stir up all His wrath, and remembered that they were but flesh*. [Ps. 78, 38. 39.] And so man was ‘made as the clay’ in that he was taken out of clay, for the making of him. For clay is made, when water is sprinkled [*se conspergit*] in with earth. Therefore man is made as clay, in that it is as if water moistened dust, while the soul waters the flesh. Which name the holy man excellently represents to the pitifulness of the Judge, when he beseeches saying, Remember, I pray Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay. As if he said in plain words; ‘Consider the frailty of the flesh, and remit the guilt of my sin.’ Where moreover the death of that flesh is openly added, in that the words are immediately brought in;

And wilt Thou bring me unto dust again?

77. As if he begged openly, saving, ‘Remember, I pray Thee, that by the flesh I came from earth, and by the death thereof, I tend to earth, Thus regard the substance of my origin, and the penalty of my end, and be the readier to spare the sin of a transient being;’ but as he has given out the sort

and kind of man as created, he now subjoins the order of man as propagated, saying,

Ver. 10, 11. *Hast Thou not poured me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin, and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.*

78. For man when fashioned was moulded like clay, but being propagated he is 'poured out like milk' in the seed, and is 'curdled like cheese' in the flesh, and he is 'clothed with skin and flesh,' and is rendered firm by bones and sinews. Therefore by clay we have set forth to us the character of the first creating, but by milk the order of the subsequent conception, in that by the stages of curdling, it goes on little by little to be wrought strong into bones. But the account of the body as it was created is but slender praise of God, unless at the same time there be afterwards set forth the marvellous inspiration of its quickening. Hence it is added,

Thou hast granted me life and mercy.

79. But the Creator vouchsafes to us blessings in vain, except He Himself keep safe all whatsoever He giveth. It follows, *And Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit*. Now all this that we have spoken of the exterior man, in what sense it may accord with the interior man, it is well to unfold and exhibit in few words,

Remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

80. For our interior man proves like clay, in that the grace of the Holy Spirit is, infused into the earthly mind, that it may be lifted up to the understanding of its Creator. For the thinking faculty in man, which is dried up by the barrenness of its sin, through the power of the Holy Spirit grows green, like land when it is watered. Now it very often happens that whilst we use without let or hindrance the endowments of virtue by gift from

above, by being used to such uninterrupted prosperity we are lifted up to self-confidence. Whence it very often happens that the same Holy Spirit, Which had exalted us, leaves us for a time, in order to shew mere man to himself. And this is what the holy man immediately sets forth, when he adds, *And wilt Thou, bring me into dust again?* For as by the withdrawal of the Spirit the soul is left for a space under temptation, it is as if the ground were dried of its former moisture; that by being so forsaken it may be made sensible of its weakness, and learn how man was dried up without the infusion of heavenly grace. And he is fitly described as being 'brought into dust again,' in that when he is left to himself he is caught up by the breath of every temptation. But whereas on being left we are exposed to shocks, those gifts which we knew when we were inspired, we now think of more nicely. Whence he adds, *Hast Thou not poured me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese?* For when by the grace of the Holy Spirit our mind is withdrawn from the way of its former conversation, it is as if 'milk poured out,' in that it is formed in the sort of tenderness and delicacy of a new beginning. And it is 'curdled like cheese,' in that it is bound up in the consistency of consolidating thought, never from henceforth to let itself go loose in desires, but concentrating itself in a single affection, to rise up into a substantial remoulding. But it very often happens that the flesh, from old habit, murmurs against this spiritual embryo, and the soul meets with war from the man which it bears about without it. And hence he adds, *Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh*. For the interior man is 'clothed with skin and flesh,' since wherein it is raised up to things above, it is straitly blockaded with the besieging of fleshly motions. Now one that is going on to righteousness our Creator never forsakes under temptation, Who by the inspiration of His Grace preventeth even him that is sinning; but the soul that is lifted up He both lets loose to wars without, and endues with strength within. And hence it is yet further fitly subjoined, *And hast fenced me with*

bones and sinews. With 'flesh and skin we are clothed,' but we are 'fenced with bones and sinews,' in that though we receive a shock by temptation assaulting us from without, yet the hand of the Creator strengthens us within, that we should not be shattered. And so by the promptings of the flesh, He abases us in respect of His gifts, but by the bones of virtue He strengthens us against temptations. Therefore he says, *Thou, hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews*. As if it were in plain words, 'Without Thou dost abandon me to undergo trial, yet within, that I may not perish, Thou keepest me by bracing me with virtue.' And for this reason He gives us righteousness to live as we ought, because in His loving-kindness He spares the past misdeeds whereby we have done amiss. And hence it is further added with propriety,

Thou hast granted me life and mercy.

81. For 'life' is granted, when goodness is inspired into evil minds, but 'life' cannot be had without 'mercy,' in that the Lord does not aid us to obtain the endowments of righteousness, unless He first in mercy remit our past iniquities. Or surely, He 'grants us life and mercy,' in that by the same mercy, with which He prevents us that we may lead a good life, continuing on afterwards He keep us safe. For except He add mercy, the life which He vouchsafes cannot be preserved; since we are daily growing old by the mere customariness of our human life, and by the impulse of the outward man we are carried out of interior life by loose thought; so that unless heavenly visiting either by piercing our hearts quicken us in love, or by scourging us renew us in fear, the soul is wholly and entirely ruined by a sudden downfall, when it seemed to be made new by a long course of devotion to virtue. Hence he subjoins, *And Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit*. For the visitation of the Most High preserves man's spirit, when, it being richly endowed with graces, He does not cease either to scourge it with the rod, or to pierce it with love. For if He bestows gifts, but does not raise it up by

continually restoring it, the blessing is speedily lost, which is not preserved by the Giver. But mark how the holy man, whilst he views himself in a humble light, discovers the secrets of Divine mercy destined to be universally bestowed, and whilst he truly confesses his own weakness, he is suddenly transported on high to learn the calling of the Gentiles. For he forthwith adds,

Ver. 13. *Though Thou hide these things in Thine heart; yet I know that Thou rememberest all.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

82. As if it were in plain words; 'Why do I tremble for myself, who know that Thou dost gather in one even all nations? Which nevertheless Thou 'hidest in Thine heart,' in that Thou dost not yet make it known by open revelation, but Thou That 'rememberest all,' givest me, doubtless, assurance of pardon.' But it is to be borne in mind, that in certain deeds we are both made certain of pardon, and after the commission of the sins are strengthened to have confidence of our absolution by subsequent chastisement and penance, yet we are still touched with the remembrance of the wickedness we have committed, and, unwilling and abhorring it, are preyed upon by unlawful thoughts. And hence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 14. *If I have sinned, and Thou sparedst me at the hour, wherefore dost Thou not let me be clean from mine iniquity?*

83. The Lord 'spareth sin at the hour,' when the moment that we yield tears, He does away with the guilt of sin. But He doth not 'let us be clean from our iniquity,' in that of free will indeed we committed the sin, but sometimes against our will we undergo the remembrance of it with a sense of pleasure; for often that, which has been put away from the sight of the just Judge by tears intervening, recurs to mind, and the conquered habit strives to insinuate itself again for the entertaining of delight, and is

renewed again in the former contest with revived assault, that what it once did in the body, it may afterwards go through in the mind by intruding thought; which same that spiritual wrestler knew how to regard with heedful eye, who said, *My scars* [V. *cicatrices*] *stink, and are corrupt through my foolishness*. For what are 'scars' but the healings of wounds? And so he who lamented his scars, beheld his pardoned wickednesses return to his remembrance for the entertaining of delight. Since for scars to grow corrupt is for wounds of sins, already healed, again to insinuate themselves in the tempting of us, and at their suggestions, after the skin of penitence has grown over; to be sensible of the stench and pain of sin again. Wherein there is at once both nothing done outwardly in deed, and sin is committed within in the thought alone, and the soul is laid under a close bond of guilt except it do away with it by heedful lamentation.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

84. Whence it is well said by Moses, *If there be among you any man that is not clean by reason of a dream that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad without the camp, he shall not come within the camp: but it shall be when evening cometh on he shall wash himself with water: and when the sun is down he shall come into the camp again*. [Deut. 23, 10. 11.] For 'the dream that chanceth by night' is the secret tempting, whereby there is something foul conceived in the heart in dark thought, which nevertheless is not fulfilled in the deed of the body. Now, if there be any that is 'not clean by reason of a dream that chanceth him by night,' he is bidden to go abroad without the camp, in that it is meet that he that is defiled with impure thought, should look upon himself as unworthy the society of the faithful, that he should set before his eyes the deserts of his sin, and look down upon himself in the scale of good men. And so for 'one unclean to go abroad out of the camp' is for one hard bestead by the assaults of impurity, to look

down upon himself by comparison with men of continency. And ‘when evening cometh on he washes himself with water,’ in that seeing his offence he has recourse to tears of penitence, that by weeping he may wash out every thing that hidden defilement brings home to the soul’s charge. ‘And when the sun is down he shall come into the camp again,’ in that when the heat of temptation has subsided, it follows that he should again take confidence to join the company of the good. For after washing with water, when the sun is set, he returns to the camp, who after tears of penance, when the flame of unlawful thought is quenched, is restored to assume the claims of the faithful, that he should not any longer account himself far removed from others, who rejoices that he is clean by the departure of the inward burning.

But herein be it known that it is for this reason that we are sometimes driven to straits by the impulse of unlawful thought, because we are ready to employ ourselves in certain courses of earthly conduct, though not unlawful. And when even in the very least things we come in contact with earthly conduct in desire, the might of our old enemy gaining strength against us, our mind is defiled by no little urgency of temptation. And hence the Priest of the Law is enjoined to consume with fire the limbs of the victim cut into pieces, the head, and the parts about the liver; but the inwards and the legs he is to wash with water first. [Lev. 1, 5. 12.] For we offer our own selves a sacrifice to God, when we dedicate our lives to the service of God, and we set the members of the sacrifice cut into pieces upon the fire, when we offer up the deeds of our lives dividing them in the virtues. The head and the parts contained about the liver we burn, when in our faculty of sense, whereby all the body is governed, and in our hidden desire we are kindled with the flame of divine love. And yet it is bidden, that the feet and the inwards of the victim be washed with water. For with the feet the earth is touched, and in the inwards dung is carried, in that it

very often happens that already in the desire of our hearts we burn for eternity, already with an entire feeling of devotion we pant in longing desire for the mortification of ourselves; but whereas by reason of our frailty there is still a mixture of earth in what we do, even some of the things forbidden which we have already subdued, we are subject to in thought, and while unclean temptation defiles our thoughts, what else is this than that ‘the inwards’ of the victim carry dung? But that they may be fit to be burnt, let them be washed, in that it is necessary that tears of fear wash out the impure thoughts of the heart, for [o] love from on high to consume them in acceptance of the sacrifice, and whatever the mind is subject to, proceeding either from untried conflict, or from the remembrance of former practice, let it be washed, that it may burn with so much the sweeter odour in the sight of its Beholder, in proportion as when it begins to draw near to Him, it sets upon the altar of its prayer along with itself nought earthly, nought impure. Therefore let the holy man regard the wretchedness of the human mind, how often it defiles itself with unhallowed thoughts, and after the Judge’s remission of the guilt of our doings, even whilst he bewails his own case, let him shew to us ours, for ourselves to bewail, saying, *If I have sinned, and thou sparedst me at the hour, wherefore dost thou not let me be clean from mine iniquity?* As if he said in plain words; ‘If Thy forgiveness has taken away my sin, why does it not sweep it from my memory also?’ Oftentimes the mind is so shaken from its centre at the recollection of sin, that it is prompted to the commission thereof far worse than it had been before subjected to it, and when entangled it is filled with fears, and being driven with different impulses, throws itself into disorder. It dreads lest it should be overcome by temptations, and in resisting, it shudders at this very fact, that it is harassed with the long toils of conflict. Hence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 15. *If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head: I am full of affliction and misery.*

85. Yea, the wicked man has ‘woe,’ and the righteous man ‘affliction,’ in that both everlasting damnation follows the lost sinner, and each one of the Elect is purified by the pains of temporary affliction. The wicked man lifts up his head, yet when so lifted up he cannot escape the woe that pursues him. The righteous man, faring ill with the toils of his conflict, is not suffered to lift up his head, but while hard pressed, he is freed from everlasting affliction. The one sets himself up in pleasure, but is plunging himself into the punishment that succeeds. The others sinks himself to the earth in sorrow, yet hides himself from the weight of eternal visitation. Thus let the holy man consider how man either in striving against evil, is afflicted with present trouble, or giving up the contest, he is delivered over to eternal anguish, and let him say, *If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head: I am full of affliction and misery*; as if he lamented openly, saying, ‘Either bowed down under the desires of the flesh, I am exposed to eternal punishment, or if I fight against unlawful impulses, I am tormented with present woe, seeing that I am not quit of the toils of the fight.’ But the Providence of the Most High does for this reason suffer us who serve Him with all the bent of the mind, to be buffeted by the assaults of our flesh, lest our mind, by presuming on its own security, dare to lift itself up in pride, that whereas, when a shock comes it is filled with fears, it may set the foot of hope the stronger, in the aid of its Maker alone. Hence it is further added fitly,

Ver. 16. *And by reason of pride, Thou wilt take me like a lioness.*

86. When a lioness hunts for food for her whelps, she rushes with ravening jaws into the pitfall. For as the account goes from certain countries, they make a pit in her path, and deposit a sheep in it, that the lioness in her ravening appetite may be provoked to precipitate herself into it, and they make it both narrow and deep at the same time, that she may have room to tumble into it in circling round it, but never get out by taking

a leap. There is another pit too dug, which is to be close to the former, but which is joined to the one in which the sheep is, by the opening of the part at the bottom. And in this is put a cage, that the lioness tumbling in, forasmuch as she is pressed by terrors from above, when she goes about as it were to hide herself in the more secret part of the pit, may of her own will go into the cage; her savage temper being now no longer an object of fear, seeing that she is lifted up enclosed in the cage. For the beast that threw itself of its own accord into the pit is brought back to the regions above hedged round with bars. Thus, thus is it that the mind of man is taken, which being created in the liberty of free will, whilst it craved to feed the desires of the flesh, was like a lioness seeking food for her cubs, and fell into the pit of self-deception, in that at the suggestion of the enemy it stretched forth the hand to take the forbidden food, but it quickly found a cage in the pit, in that coming by its own act to death, it exposed itself at once to the prison house of its own corruption, and is brought back to the free air by grace intervening. But whereas it tries to do many things, and has no power, it is bound by the hindrances of that same corruption, as though by the bars of a cage. It is now free of that pit of damnation into which it had fallen, in that receiving help from the hand of Redemption, in being brought back to pardon, it has got above the punishment of the death to follow. But yet, being shut in close, it feels the cage, in that it is encircled by the bands of heavenly discipline, that it may not roam through the desires of the flesh. And she that of her own will went down into the pit; returns to the free air in confinement, in that she both fell into sin by the liberty of the will, and yet the grace of the Creator holds her in by constraint, and against her will, from following her own motions. And so after the pit she has the cage to bear, in that being rescued from eternal punishment, she is withheld from the motions of a froward liberty, under the controlling hand of the heavenly Artificer. Therefore he says aright, *And by*

reason of pride, Thou wilt take me like a lioness; in that both when free, man brought death upon himself through food, and on being brought back to pardon, he lives shut up under discipline for his greater good. Therefore like a lioness he was taken by reason of pride, in that the discipline, that belongs to his corrupt condition, now keeps him down from the very same cause, that not fearing the transgression of the commandment he boldly leapt into the pit.

87. But if for a short space we turn aside the eye of our mind from the sin of our first parent, we find that we ourselves are every day taken like the lioness, by the evil habit of pride. For it often happens that by the virtues that have been vouchsafed him, man is lifted up into the boldness of self-presumption, but by a wonderful ordering of Providence, some object is set before his eyes for him to fall therein. And whilst he seeks something in sin, what else is this but that he longs for the prey in the pit? With open mouth he falls by his own act, but has no power to rise by his own strength. And whereas he sees that of himself he is nothing, assuredly he learns Whose aid he must seek. Yet the heavenly Compassion draws him, thus taken out of the pit, as it were, in that as soon as his weakness is known, It restores him to pardon. And so like a lioness, by reason of pride that man hastes back to the upper regions within the cage [p], who when he is lifted up in the score of virtuous attainments, after he has fallen into evil desires, is bound fast in humility. For whereas he had in the first case brought himself to destruction by his presuming on self, it is brought to pass by wonderful pitifulness, that he now lives walled in by the knowledge of his own weakness. And because the holy man sees that this often happens to his fellow creatures, he adopts in his own person the cry of peril that belongs to us, that when we read of his lamentations, we may be instructed what the things are in ourselves that we ought to lament. Now when pride uplifts the mind, the piercing sense of love for the Highest departs from us, but when grace from above descends

upon us, immediately it prompts us to longings for itself in tears. And hence it is fitly subjoined,

And returning, Thou dost torture me marvellously.

88. When we are forsaken by our Creator, we do not at all feel even the very ills of our abandonment. For in proportion as our Creator goes far off from us, our mind becomes more hardened in insensibility, loves nothing that is of God, entertains no longing for things above, and because it has no warmth of interior love, it lies frozen towards the earth, and in a pitiable way it becomes every day the more self-secure, in proportion as it becomes worse; and whereas it no longer remembers whence it has fallen, and no longer dreads the punishments to come, it knows nothing how deeply it is to be bewailed. But if it be touched by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, at once it wakes up to the thought of its ruin, rouses itself in the pursuit after heavenly things, glows with the hot emotions of love towards the Highest, takes thought of the ills which every way beset it round about, and she weeps while making progress, who before was going to ruin in high glee. Therefore it is well said to the Creator, *And returning Thou dost torture me marvelously.* For by the same act whereby Almighty God in visiting our soul lifts it to the love of Himself, He makes it the more to sorrow in tears. As if it were in plain words, 'In going from me Thou dost not influence me, because Thou renderest me insensible, but when Thou returnest, Thou dost torture me, because whilst Thou dost cause Thyself to enter into me, Thou shewest to me mine own self, and how deeply I am to be pitied.' And hence he never says that he is tortured judicially, but 'marvellously,' since while the mind is transported on high in weeping, with a feeling of joy it marvels at the pains of its piercing sorrow, and it is its joy to be so touched, because it sees that by its anguish it is lifted up on high. But often when heavenly Pity sees us slacken in the exercising ourselves in holy desires, It presents to our view the example of those that cleave to Itself, that the mind which is

unbraced by indolence, in proportion as it observes in the case of others the advancement of minds well awake, may take shame for the dulness of sloth in itself. Hence it is rightly added,

Ver. 17. *Thou renewest Thy witnesses against me, and multipliest Thy wrath: and pains war in me.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

89. For ‘God’s witnesses’ are they, who bear witness by the practice of holy works, what are the rewards of Truth that shall overtake the Elect. Hence too those, whom we see to have suffered for the sake of the Truth, we style in the Greek tongue, ‘Martyrs,’ i.e. witnesses. And the Lord says by John in the Angel’s voice, *Even in those days, wherein Antipas was my faithful witness, who was slain among you*. Now the Lord ‘renews His witnesses against us’ when He multiplies the lives of the Elect to confront our wickedness, for the purpose of convicting and of instructing us. And so His ‘witnesses are renewed against us,’ in that all things that they do are opposed to the ends and aims of our wickedness. Hence too the word of Truth is called ‘an adversary,’ where it is said by the voice of the Mediator in the Gospel, *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him*. [Matt. 5, 25] And the sons of perdition in their persecutions say concerning that same Redeemer, *And He is clean contrary to our doings*; and soon afterwards, *For His life is not like other men’s*. [Wisd. 2, 12. 15] Thus the Lord ‘renews His witnesses against us,’ in that the good things which we neglect to do ourselves, He shews us to be done by others to our upbraiding, that we who are not inflamed by precepts, may at least be stirred up by examples, and that in longing after righteousness, our mind may account nothing to be difficult to itself, that it sees to be done perfectly by others; and it is very commonly brought to pass, that while we behold the good actions of another man’s life, we are more anxiously afraid of the

deficiencies of our own, and it is made appear the plainer by what a weight of judgment we are afterwards assailed, in proportion as we are now widely at variance with the ways of the good.

90. Hence after the renewal of the witnesses has been mentioned it is thereupon fitly added, *And multipliest Thy wrath upon me*. God's wrath is said to be 'multiplied upon us,' in proportion as it is shewn to be manifold, since by the very lives and labours of the good we are instructed, if, whilst we have time, we will not amend our ways now, what a terrible visitation shall be dealt us hereafter. For we see the Elect of God at one and the same time leading godly lives and undergoing numberless sore hardships. And therefore we collect from hence with what rigour the strict Judge will There smite those whom He condemns, if he so torments here below those whom He loves; as Peter witnesses, who says, *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?* [1 Peter 4, 17] Therefore Almighty God, when He 'renews His witnesses' against us, 'multiplies His wrath,' in that in proportion as He sets before our eyes the life of the good, He shews with what severity He will smite obduracy in the commission of sin at the Judgment. Now whereas He multiplies His gifts to those alone that follow Him, He shews that He has already forsaken those that go on in sloth. Thus when we see good things in others, it is very necessary to mix exultation with the dread that we feel, and dread with our exultation, that both charity may rejoice for the proficiencies of other men, and conscience tremble for its own frailties. But when we are gladdened with the proficiency of a brother, when we calculate the severity of the interior Judge against us for our mere slothfulness by itself, what is there left but that the mind turn back to search into itself, and that whatever it meets with in itself, that is blameworthy, whatever that is bad, it should chastise? Hence it is fitly subjoined, *Pains fight in me*. For upon considering the witnesses of God,

‘pains fight in us,’ in that whilst we behold their deeds, that command our admiration, our own life, which by comparison with theirs is displeasing in our eyes, we visit with serious self-chastening, that whatever pollution our deeds may have caused in us, our tears may wash clean, and if the guilt of taking pleasure therein still somewhat defiles us, the chastening of a sorrowful heart may cleanse away the stain. Therefore because blessed Job has his eye fixed on the life of the fathers of old time, he ascertains more exactly what he ought to bewail in himself. And by the preceptorship of extraordinary sorrow, whilst he bewails his own case, he instructs us to lamentation, that in proportion as we perceive excellencies in other men, we may anxiously fear for our own offences in the sight of the strict Judge. It goes on,

Ver. 19. *Wherefore then hast Thou brought me forth out of the womb. Oh that I had been consumed, and no eye had seen me.*

91. Which same sentiment he had already uttered in his first speech, saying, *Why died I not from the womb?* [Job 3, 11] and whilst he subjoins that which he adds here, *I should have been as though I had not been, I should have been carried from the womb to the grave*; he adds in other words, but no other sense, saying, *Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been, as infants which never saw light*. [Book IV, §48 &c.] But forasmuch as we have made out these particulars very much at length above, to avoid wearying the reader we forbear to unfold points already explained. It goes on,

Ver. 20. *Will not the small number of my days be finished in a short time?*

92. He shews himself to live with good heed and circumspection, who, in considering the shortness of the present life does not look to the furtherance but to the ending of it, so as to gather from the end, that all is nought that delights while it is passing. For hence it is said by Solomon, *But if a man*

live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the time of darkness, and the days that shall be many; and when they come, the past shall be convinced of vanity. [Eccles. 11, 8] Hence again it is written, *Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember thine end, and thou shalt never do amiss*. [Ecclus. 7, 36] Therefore when sin tempts the mind, it is requisite that the soul should regard the shortness of its gratification, lest iniquity hurry it on to a living death, when it is plain that a mortal life is quickly speeding to an end. But often the eye of our contemplation is bewildered, while our pain is heightened by thickening scourges. It is good to bewail the exile of the present life, yet for mere anguish alone the mind cannot take account of the ills of its blind state. Hence he directly adds,

And let me go, that I may bewail my sorrow a little.

93. For as moderate distress gives vent to tears, so excessive sorrow checks them, since that grief itself is as it were made void of grief, which by swallowing up the mind of the person afflicted, takes away the sense of grief. Therefore the holy man shrinks from being stricken more than he is equal to bear, saying, *And let me go, that I may bewail my sorrow a little*. As if it were in plain words, ‘Qualify the strokes of Thy scourging, that, my pains being made moderate, in weeping I may have power to estimate the miseries I endure.’ Which same nevertheless may likewise be understood in another sense. For oftentimes the sinner is so bound by the chains of his wickedness, that he bears indeed the burthen of his sins, and knows not that he is bearing it. Often if he does know with what an amount of guilt he is burthened, he strives to break loose and cannot, so as to hunt it down in himself with free spirit and full conversion. Thus he is unable to ‘bewail his sorrow,’ for at once he sees the guilt of his sinful state, and by reason of the weight of earthly business, is not at liberty to bewail it. He is unable to ‘bewail his sorrow,’ who strives indeed to resist evil habits, yet is weighed down by the still increasing desires of the flesh. The presence of this sorrow

had inflicted anguish upon the spirit of the Prophet, when he said, *My sorrow is continually before me; for I will declare my iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin*; [Ps. 38, 17. 18.] but the bands of his sin being loosed, he knew that he was 'let go,' who gave vent to his exultation, saying, *Thou hast loosed my bonds, I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.* [Ps. 116, 16. 17.]

94. Therefore God then 'lets us go' to bewail our sorrow, when He both shews us the evil things that we have done, and helps us to bewail the same, when we know them; He sets our transgressions before our eyes, and with the pitying hand of grace unlooses the bands of the heart, that our soul may lift itself up to liberty for the work of repentance, and loosed from the fetters of the flesh, may with free spirit stretch out towards its Maker the footsteps of love. For it very commonly happens that we the same persons blame our course of life, and yet readily do the very thing that we justly condemn in ourselves. The spirit lifts us up to righteousness, the flesh holds us back to habit; the soul struggles against self-love, but quickly overcome with delight is made captive. Thus it is well said, *Let me go that I may bewail my sorrow a little*. For except we be 'let go' in mercy from the guilt of sin, with which we are tied and bound, we cannot lament that which we grieve for in ourselves being set against ourselves. But the woe of our guiltiness is then really bewailed, when that dark retribution of the place below is fore-reckoned with lively apprehension. Hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 21. *Before I go whence I shall not return, even to a land of darkness, and covered with the shadow of death.*

95. For what is denoted by 'the land of darkness' saving the dreary caverns of Tartarus, which are covered by the shadow of eternal death, in that it keeps all the damned for evermore severed from the light of life. Neither is the place below improperly called a land. For all they that have been made captive by it, are held fast and firm. As it is written; *One*

generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever. [Eccl. 1, 4] Thus the dungeons of hell are rightly designated ‘a land of darkness,’ for all, whom they receive doomed to punishment, they torment with no transient infliction or phantasm of the imagination, but keep in the substantial vengeance of everlasting damnation. Yet they are sometimes denoted by the title of ‘a lake,’ as the Prophet bears witness, when he says, *They have borne their shame with them that go down into the lake*. [Ezek. 32, 24. 25] Thus hell is both called ‘a land,’ because it holds stedfastly all that it takes in, and ‘a lake,’ because it swallows up those whom it has once received, ever tossing and quaking in weltering floods of torment; but the holy man, whether in his own voice or in the voice of mankind, beseeches that he may be ‘let go’ before he departs, not because he that bewails his sin is to ‘go to the land of darkness,’ but because everyone that neglects to bewail it doth assuredly go thither, according as the creditor says to his debtor, ‘Pay thy debt, before thou art put in bonds for the debt;’ whereas he is not put in bonds, if he delays not to pay all that he owes. In which place too it is rightly added, *Whence I shall not return*, in that His pity in sparing never any more sets them free, whom His justice in judging once assigns their doom in the places of punishment, which same places are yet more minutely described, where it is said,

Ver. 22. *A land of misery and darkness.*

96. ‘Misery’ has relation to pain, ‘darkness’ relates to blindness. That land then which holds all those that are banished the presence of the strict Judge, is entitled ‘a land of misery and darkness,’ for pain without torments those, whom blindness darkens within, severed from the true Light. Not but that ‘the land of misery and darkness’ may be understood in another sense also. For this land too, in which we are born, is indeed ‘a land of misery,’ but not ‘of darkness,’ in that we here suffer the many ills of our corrupt

condition, yet whilst we are in it, we are still brought back to the light through the grace of conversion; as Truth counsels us, Who saith, *Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you*. [John 12, 35] But that land is 'a land of misery and darkness' together, for everyone, that has gone down to suffer the woes thereof, never any further returns to the light; for the describing of which same it is further added,

Where is the shadow of death, without any order.

97. As external death divides the flesh from the soul, so internal death severs the soul from God. Thus the 'shadow of death' is the darkness of separation, in that every one of the damned, whilst he is consumed with everlasting fire, is in darkness to the internal light. Now it is the nature of fire to give out both light and a property of consuming from itself, but the fire that is the avenger of past sins has a consuming property but no light. It is hence that 'Truth' saith to the lost, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*. [Mat. 25, 41] And representing in one individual the whole body of them all, He saith, *Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness*. [Mat. 22, 1] Accordingly, if the fire that torments the lost could have had light, he that is cast off would never be said to 'be cast into darkness.' Hence too the Psalmist hath it; *Fire hath fallen upon them, and they have not seen the sun*. [Ps. 58, 8. Vulg.] For 'fire falls' upon the ungodly, but 'the sun is not seen' on the fire falling; for as the flame of hell devours them, it blinds them to the vision of the true Light, that at the same time both the pain of consuming fire should torment them without, and the infliction of blindness darken them within, so that they, who have done wrong against their Maker both in body and in heart, may at one and the same time be punished in body and in heart, and that they may be made to feel pangs in both ways, who, whilst they lived here, ministered to their depraved gratifications in both. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Which are gone*

down to hell with their weapons of war. [Ezek. 32, 37] For the arms of sinners are the members of the body, by means of which they execute the wrong desires they conceive. Hence it is said rightly by Paul, *Neither yield ye your members as instruments if unrighteousness unto sin*. [Rom. 6, 19] And so to 'go down into hell with the weapons of war' is together with those same members, with which they fulfilled the gratifications of self-indulgence, to undergo the torrents of eternal condemnation, that at that time woe may every way swallow them up, who being now subjected to their gratifications, every way fight against His justice, Who judgeth justly.

98. But that is very wonderful that is said, *without order*, since Almighty God, Who punishes evil things well, never permits even the torments to be 'without order;' because [read '*quia*'] the very punishments that proceed from the scales of justice, cannot in any way be inflicted 'without order.' For how is it that there is no order in His punishment, since according to the measure of his guilt is likewise the recompense of vengeance which pursues everyone of the damned. For hence it is written, *But mighty men, shall be mightily tormented, and stronger torment shall come upon the stronger ones*. [Wisd. 6, 6. 8.] Hence it is uttered in the sentence of Babylon, *How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her*. [Rev. 18, 7] If then the infliction is marked out according to the measure of the sin, it is undeniably true that there is order preserved in the punishments, and except the acts of desert did distribute His aggregate of torment, the Judge that shall come would never declare that He will say to the reapers, *Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them*. [Mat. 13, 30] For if there were no order observed in dealing punishment, why are the tares that are to be burnt bound in bundles? But doubtless to bind up the bundles for the burning, is to unite like to like of those that are destined to be given over to everlasting fire, that all whom a like sin pollutes, an equal punishment may bind in one, and that they who

were defiled by iniquity in no degree dissimilar, may suffer by torments not dissimilar either, that condemnation may dash to the earth together those whom pride uplifted together, and that all, whom ambition made to swell in no unlike proportion, no unlike proportion of suffering may wring hard, and a like flame of punishment torment those whom a like flame of sin kindled in the fire of lust. For as in the house of our Father there are 'many mansions' [John 14, 2] according to the diversities in virtue, so a difference in guilt subjects the damned to a difference of punishment in the fires of hell, which hell, though it be one and the same for all, by no means burns all men in one and the same sort. For as we are all reached by one sun, yet we do not all glow beneath it in one class; for it is according to the kind of the body that the burthen of the heat too is felt, in the same way there is to the damned, but one hell that torments all, yet not one that consumes all men in one kind of manner, for what on the one side an unequal degree of healthiness in bodies occasions, that same on the other an unequal case of merit produces. How then is it said that there is 'no order' in the punishments, wherein without doubt every man is tormented after the measure of his sin?

99. But after the holy man brought in the shadow of death he adds what great disorder there is in the souls of the damned, since the very punishments, which come well ordered by justice, are doubtless far from well ordered in the heart of those undergoing death. For as we have said above, whilst every one of the damned is consumed with flames without, he is devoured by the fire of blindness within, and being in the midst of woe, he is confounded both within and without; so that he is worse tormented by his own confusion. Thus to rejected souls there will be 'no order' in their punishment, because their very confusion of mind torments most cruelly in their death; which same His equity in judging appoints by His wonderful power, that a punishment as it were 'without order' may confound the soul.

Or, verily, order is said to be wanting to His punishments, in that when things arise for their punishment, their proper character is not preserved to them. Whence the words are forthwith introduced;

And everlasting horror dwells.

100. In the torments of this life fear has pain, pain has no fear, in that pain never torments the mind, when it has already begun to suffer what it feared. But hell both 'the shadow of death' darkens and 'everlasting horror inhabits;' in that they all, that are given over to its fires, both in their punishments undergo pain, and, in the pressure of pain coming upon them, they are ever stricken with fear, so that they both suffer what they dread, and unceasingly dread What they are suffering. For it is written concerning them, *For their worm shall not die, neither their fire be quenched*. [Is. 66, 24] Here the flame that burns gives light; There, as we have shewn by the words of the Psalmist, the fire that torments veils the light. Here fear is gone so soon as the thing that was feared has begun to be suffered; There pain rends at the same time that fear pinches. Thus in a horrible manner there will then be to the damned pain along with terror, a flame together with dimness. Then, then, alas! the weight of heavenly equity must be felt by the damned, that they who whilst they lived were not afraid to be at variance with the Will of the Creator, may one day in their destruction find their very torments at variance with their own properties, that in proportion as they are at strife with themselves, their torments may be increased, and as they issue in diverse lines may be felt in many ways. And these punishments doth torture those that are plunged therein beyond their powers, and at the same time preserve them alive, extinguishing in them the forces of life, that the end may so afflict the life, that torment may ever live without end, in that it is both hastening after an end through torments, and failing holds on without end. Therefore there is done upon the wretches death without death, an end without ending, failing without failing; in that both death lives, and

the end is ever beginning, and the failing is unable to fail. Therefore whereas death at the same time slays and does not extinguish, pain torments but does not banish fear, the flame burns but does not dispel the darkness, for all that is gathered from a knowledge of the present life, the punishments are without order, in that they do not retain their own character through all particulars.

101. Though there the fire both gives no light for comfort, yet, that it may torment the more, it does give light for a purpose. For the damned shall see, by the flame lighting them, all their followers along with themselves in torment, for the love of whom they transgressed, that whereas they had loved the life of such in a carnal manner against the precepts of the Creator, the destruction of those very persons may also afflict them for the increase of their condemnation. Which doubtless we gather from the testimony of the Gospel, wherein, as 'Truth' declares, that rich man, whose lot it was to descend into the torments of eternal fire, is described as remembering his five brethren, in that he asked of Abraham that he would send to them for their instruction, lest a like punishment should torment them coming thither at some future time. Therefore it is plain without doubt that he who remembers his absent kindred to the increase of his pain might a little while after even see them present to his eyes to the augmentation of his punishment. But what wonder is it if he beholds the damned also burnt along with himself, who to the increase of his woe saw that Lazarus whom he has scorned in the bosom of Abraham. He, therefore, to whom the very Elect Saint appeared, that his pangs might, be added to, why are we not to believe that he might behold in punishment those, whom he had loved in opposition to God? From which it is collected, that those whom the sons of perdition now love with inordinate affection, by a marvellous disposition of judgment, they will then see their fellows in torment; that the carnal tie, which was preferred to their Maker, may increase the pangs of their own

punishment, being cursed before their eyes by a like retribution. Thus the fire that torments in darkness must be supposed to preserve light for torture. And if we cannot prove this from testimonies by the expression of the very thing, then it remains that we shew it from the reverse.

102. For the Three Children of the Hebrew People, when the fire of the furnace was kindled by command of the king of Chaldaea, were cast into it with hands and feet tied. Yet when that king commiserating them sought them in the fire of the furnace, he saw them walking about with untouched garments. Where it is plain to infer, that by the wonderful dispensation of our Creator, the property of fire, being modified into an opposite power, at the same time never touched their garments, and yet burnt their chains, and for those holy men the flame was both cooled for the infliction of torment, and burnt out for the service of unbinding. And so as fire knows how to burn to the Elect in consolation, and yet knows not how to burn in punishment, so in the reverse case, at the same time that the flame of hell yields no light to the damned in the grace of consolation, it does yield light in punishment, that the fire of punishment may both glow with no brightness to the eyes of the damned, and for the increase of their pain may shew how the objects of their affection are tormented. And what wonder is it if we suppose that hell fire contains at the same time the infliction of darkness and of light, when we know by experience that the flame of torches too burns and is dark. The devouring flame then consumes those, whom carnal gratification now pollutes. The gaping and immeasurable gulf of hell swallows up Then all whom vainglory exalts now, and they who by any sinful practice fulfilled here below the will of the crafty counsellor, then being cast off are brought to torments along with their leader.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

103. And though there is a great difference between the nature of men and angels, yet those are involved in one and the same punishment, who are bound by one and the same guilt in sin. Which is well and shortly conveyed by the Prophet, when he says, *Asshur is there and all his company: his graves are about him*. [Ezek. 32, 22] For who is set forth by the title of Asshur, the proud king, saving that old enemy who fell by pride, who for that he draws numbers into sin, descends with all his multitude into the dungeons of hell. Now 'graves' are a shelter for the dead. And what other suffered a bitterer death than he, who, in setting his Creator at nought, forsook life? And when human hearts admit him in this state of death, assuredly they become his graves. Now 'his graves are about him,' in that all in whose souls he now buries himself by their affections, hereafter he joins to himself by torments. And whereas the lost now admit evil spirits within themselves by committing unlawful deeds, then the graves will burn together with the dead.

104. See how we are informed, what punishment is in store for the damned, and, by Holy Writ instructing us, have no reason to question, how great may be the fire in damnation, how great the darkness in that fire, how great the terror in that darkness. But what does it advantage us to foreknow these things, if it is not our lot to escape them? Therefore with the whole bent of our mind, we must make it our business, that when the opportunity of being at liberty is ours, by application to living well, we escape the avenging torments of evil doers. For it is hence said by Solomon, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest*. [Eccles. 9, 10] Hence Isaiah saith, *Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near*. [Is. 55, 6] Hence Paul says, *Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation*. [2 Cor. 6, 2]

Hence he says again, *Whilst we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men*. [Gal. 6, 10]

105. But very often the soul girds itself up to walk in the way of uprightness, shakes off sloth, and is so transported into heavenly realms in affection, that it well nigh seems that there is nothing of it left here below; and yet when it is brought back to take account of the flesh, without which the course of the present life can never be accomplished, this keeps it weighed down below, as if it had not as yet reached aught of things above. When the words of the heavenly oracle are heard, the soul is uplifted into love of the heavenly land; but when the occupation of the present life rises up anew, it is buried under the heap of earthly cares, and the seed of the hope above comes to nothing in the soil of the heart, because the thorn of care below grows rank. Which same thorn 'Truth' uproots with the hand of holy exhortation by Himself, saying, *Take therefore no thought for the morrow*. [Matt. 6, 34] And in opposition to this, it is said by Paul, *Make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*. [Rom. 13, 14] But in, these words of the Captain and the soldier we see that the soul is then pierced thereby with a mortal wound, when a balance of measure is not kept therein.

106. For whilst we still live in mortal flesh, concern for the flesh is not wholly cut away from us; but it is regulated so that it should serve the mind as discretion dictates. For whereas 'Truth' forbids us to be anxious for the morrow, He does not deny us to take thought in a certain way for the present things, which He does forbid us to extend to the time that succeeds. And truly while Paul will not let provision be made for the flesh in the lusts thereof, most certainly he does permit it to be made in things of necessity. Thus the care of the flesh must be restrained under the discreet guidance of a complete control, that it may always obey and never rule, that it may not as a mistress bring the soul under its power, but being subjected to the

dominion of the mind, may like a handmaid wait in attendance, that it may come when bidden, and when repressed dart off at a beck of the heart; that it may scarcely shew itself in the rear of holy thought, and never present itself to one front to front when full of right thoughts. Which is well conveyed to us in the account contained in the sacred Lesson, when Abraham is related to have met the three Angels. [Gen. 18, 2. 9. &c.] For he met them by himself, as they were coming, without the door of the tent, but Sarah stood behind the door; for the Man and the master as it were of the spiritual house, i.e. our understanding, ought, in the acknowledgment of the Trinity, to issue out of the close chamber of the flesh, and, as it were, to go forth out of the door of his dwelling-place below; but let care of the flesh, as a woman, not shew herself out of doors, and let her be ashamed to display herself ostentatiously, that being as it were behind the back of the husband, under the discreet guidance of the Spirit, busied with necessary things alone, she may learn never to go wantonly uncovered, but to be regulated by modesty. But oftentimes, when she is charged never to presume on herself, but to resign herself wholly to undoubting hope in God, she turns away her ear, and disbelieves that, her exertions ceasing, the means of life can be forthcoming to her. And hence this same Sarah, upon hearing the promises of God, laughs, and for laughing is chidden, and still, so soon as she is chidden, she is made a fruitful mother. And she who in the vigour of youth had no power to conceive, when broken by the years of age, conceived in a withered womb; in that when care of the flesh has ceased to entertain confidence in self, by promise from God it receives against hope that which from human reasoning it doubted its ever obtaining. Hence he that is begotten is well called Isaac, i.e. ‘laughing,’ in that when it conceives sureness of hope in the Highest, what else does our mind give birth to but joy? Therefore we must take heed lest care of the flesh either transgress the limits of necessity, or in that which it discharges with moderation, presume

on itself. For oftentimes the mind is betrayed to account that to be necessary, which it desires for pleasure, so that it reckons all that takes its fancy to be ‘the useful’ that we owe to life. And often because the effect follows the forecasting, the mind is lifted up in self-confidence. And when that is in its hand which is lacking to the rest, it exults in secret thought for the greatness of its foresight, and is so much the further removed from real foresight, in proportion as it is ignorant of the exaltation that it is feeling. Therefore we ought to bethink ourselves, with a heedful earnestness of vigilance, whether of what we execute in deed or what we revolve in heart, lest either earthly care, to the incumbrand of the mind, be multiplied without, or at least lest the spirit be lifted up within for its control thereof; that whilst we dread the judgment of God with temporal heed, we may escape the woes of ‘everlasting horror.’

BOOK X.

The whole of the eleventh chapter of the Book of Job, and the five first verses of the twelfth, being made out, he closes the Second Part of this work.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. As often as a mighty wrestler is gone down into the arena of the lists, those who prove no match for him in strength by turns present themselves for the working of his overthrow, and as fast as one is overcome another is directly raised up against him, and, he being subdued, another takes his place, that they may sooner or later find his strength in wrestling more yielding, in that his repeated victory by itself wears it out, so that as each fresh opponent comes to the encounter, he who cannot be overcome by the nature of their powers, may at least be got the better of by the changing of the persons. Thus, then, in this theatre of men and Angels, blessed Job approved himself a mighty wrestler, and how he prevailed against the charges of his adversaries, he shews by his continuance in unabated force; to whom first Eliphaz presents himself, and next Bildad, and finally Zophar puts himself forward in their place in the overthrow of him, and these lift up themselves with all their might to deal him blows, yet never reach so far as to strike the height of that well-fenced breast. For their very words plainly imply that they deal their blows upon the air, in that as they do not rebuke the holy man aright, the words of smiting being uttered in empty air are lost; and this is clearly shewn, whereas the answer of Zophar the Naamathite begins with insult, in that he says,

Chap. xi. 2. *Should not he that talketh much hear in his turn? and should a man full of words be justified?*

2. It is the practice of the impertinent ever to answer by the opposite what is said aright, lest, if they assent to the things asserted, they should seem inferior. And to these the words of the righteous, however small in number they have been heard, are ‘much,’ in that as they cut their evil habits to the quick, they fall heavy upon the hearing, whence that is even wrested to a crime, which by a right declaration is pronounced against crimes. For the very person, who had delivered strong sentences on grounds of truth, Zophar rebukes and calls full of words, in that, whereas wisdom reprimands sins by the mouth of the righteous, it sounds like superfluity of talkativeness to the ears of the foolish. For froward men account nothing right, but what they themselves think, and they reckon the words of the righteous idle in the degree that they find them differing from their own notions. Nor yet did Zophar deliver a fallacious sentiment, ‘that a man full of words could never be justified,’ in that so long as anyone lets himself out in words, the gravity of silence being gone, he parts with the safe keeping of the soul. For hence it is written, *And the work of righteousness, silence*. [Is. 32, 17] Hence Solomon saith, *He that hath no rule over his own spirit in talking, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.* [Prov. 25, 28] Hence he says again*, In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.* [Prov. 10, 19] Hence the Psalmist bears witness, saying, *Let not a man full of words be established upon the earth*; *but the worth of a true sentence is lost, when it is not delivered under the keeping of discretion*. [Ps. 140, 11. Vulg.] Thus it is a certain truth, that ‘a man full of words cannot be justified,’ but a good thing is not well said, because there is no heed taken to whom it is spoken. For a true sentence against the wicked, if it is aimed at the virtue of the good, loses its own virtue, and bounds back with blunted point, in proportion as that is strong which it hits. But that the wicked cannot hear good words with patience, and that wherein they neglect the amending of

their life, they brace themselves up to words of rejoinder, Zophar plainly instructs us, in that he subjoins;

Ver. 3. *Should men hold their peace at thee only? and when thou mockest at others, shall no man confute thee?*

3. The uninstructed mind, as we have said, is sorely galled by the sentences of truth, and reckons silence to be a punishment; it takes all that is said aright to be the disgrace of mocking at itself. For when a true voice addresses itself to the ears of bad men, guilt stings the recollection, and in the rebuking of evil practices, in proportion as the mind is touched with consciousness within, it is stirred up to eagerness in gainsaying without; it cannot bear the voice, in that, being touched in the wound of its guilt it is put to pain, and by that which is delivered against the wicked generally, it imagines that it is itself attacked in a special manner; and what it inwardly remembers itself to have done, it blushes to hear the sound of without. Whence it presently prepares itself for a defence, that it may cover the shame of its guilt by words of froward gainsaying. For as the righteous, touching certain things which have been done unrighteously by them, account the voice of rebuke to be the service of charity so the froward reckon it to be the insult of mockery. The one sort immediately prostrate themselves to shew obedience, the other are lifted up to shew the madness of self-defence. The one sort take the helping hand of correction as the upholding of their life, by means of which whilst the sin of the present life is corrected, the wrath of the Judge that is to come is abated; the other, when they find themselves assailed by rebuke, see therein the sword of smiting, in that whilst sin is unclothed by the voice of chiding, the conceit of present glory is spoilt. Hence 'Truth' says by Solomon in commendation of the righteous man, *Give instruction to a wise man, and he will hasten to receive it* [Prov. 9, 9]; hence he makes nothing of the obstinacy of the wicked, saying, *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself wrong* [ver.

7]. For it generally happens that when they cannot defend the evils that are reproved in them, they are rendered worse from a feeling of shame, and carry themselves so high in their defence of themselves, that they rake out bad points to urge against the life of the reprover, and so they do not account themselves guilty, if they fasten guilty deeds upon the heads of others also. And when they are unable to find true ones, they feign them, that they may also themselves have things they may seem to rebuke with no inferior degree of justice. Hence Zophar, for that it stung him to be as it were mocked at by reproof, forthwith subjoins with lying lips,

Ver. 4. *For Thou hast said, My speech is pure, and I am clean in Thine eyes.*

4. Whoso remembers the words of blessed Job, knows how falsely this charge is fastened upon his voice. For how could he call himself pure, who says, *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me* [Job 9, 20]; but there is this in the wickedness of the unrighteous, that, while it refuses to bewail real evil things in itself it invents them in others, for it makes use of it as a solace of evil doing, if the life of the reprover can be also stained with false accusations. But we must know that for the most part the wicked wish what is good so far as the lips, in order that they may shew that that is bad which we have at present, and as if from the good will they bear others, they pray for favourable circumstances, in order that they may appear full of kindly affection. Whence too Zophar forthwith subjoins, saying,

But oh that God would speak with thee, and open His lips unto thee!

5. For man by himself speaks to himself when in all that he thinks he is not withdrawn by the Spirit of the Divine Being from the sense of carnal wisdom; when the flesh puts forth a sense, and inviting the mind as it were to the understanding of it, sends it forth abroad. And hence 'Truth' saith to Peter, who was still full of earthly notions, *For thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men*. [Mark 8, 33] Yet, when he

made a good confession, the words are spoken, *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven*. [Mat. 16, 17] Now what do we understand by 'the lips' of God saving His judgments? For when the lips are closed the voice is kept in, and the meaning of the person keeping silence is not known; but when, the lips being opened, speech is put forth, the mind of the person speaking is found out. So 'God opens His lips' when He, manifests His will to men by open visitations. For He as it were speaks with open mouth, when the veil of interior Providence being drawn aside, He declines to conceal what is His will. For as it were with closed lips He forbear to indicate His meaning to us, when by the secresy of His judgments He conceals wherefore He does any thing. Zophar therefore, in order that he might reprove blessed Job on the grounds of a carnal understanding, and shew what kindness of disposition he himself was of, wishes good things for him, which even when they are there present he does not know to be so, saying*, But oh that God would speak with thee, and open His lips with thee*. As if he were to say in plain words, 'I feel for thy uninstructedness more than for thy chastening, in that I know thee to be endued with the wisdom of the flesh alone, and void of the Spirit of Truth. For didst thou discern the secret judgments of God, thou wouldest not give utterance to such daring sentences against Him.' And because when Almighty God raises us to take a view of His judgments, He forthwith puts to flight the mists of the ignorance that is in us, what instruction comes to us by His lips being opened, he forthwith shews by adding in the words,

Ver. 6. *And that He would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, and that her law is manifold.*

6. The public works of Supreme Wisdom are when Almighty God rules those whom He creates, brings to an end the good things which He begins, and aids by His inspiration those whom He illumines with the light of His visitation. For it is plain to the eyes of all men, that those whom He created

of His free bounty, He provides for with lovingkindness. And when He vouchsafes spiritual gifts, He Himself brings to perfection what He has Himself begun in the bounteousness of His lovingkindness. But the secret works of Supreme Wisdom are, when God forsakes those whom He has created; when the good things, which He had begun in us by preventing us, He never brings to completion by going on; when He enlightens us with the brightness of His illuminating grace, and yet by permitting temptation of the flesh, smites us with the mists of blindness; when the good gifts which He bestowed, He cares not to preserve to us; when He at the same time prompts the desires of our soul towards Himself, and yet by a secret judgment presses us with the incompetency of our weak nature.

7. Which same secrets of His Wisdom, but few have strength to investigate, and no man has strength to find out; in that it is most surely just that that which is ordained not unjustly above us, and concerning us, by immortal Wisdom, should be bidden from us while yet in a mortal state. But to contemplate these same secrets of His Wisdom is in some sort already to behold the power of His incomprehensible nature, in that though we fail in the actual investigation of His secret counsels, yet by that very failure we more thoroughly learn Whom we should fear. Paul had strained to reach these secrets of that wisdom, when he said*, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His Judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?* [Rom. 11, 33] He, in a part above, turning faint even with the mere search, and yet through faintness advancing to the knowledge of his own weakness, saith beforehand the words, *Nay but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?* [Rom. 9, 20] He, then, that being unable to attain to the secrets of God, returned back to the recognition of his own weakness, and by thus falling

short, recalled himself to the instructing of himself, in not finding out the secrets of wisdom, so to say, he did find them out. For when his strength failed him for the investigation of the counsels of the most High, he learned how to entertain fear with greater humility, and the man whom his own weakness kept back from the interior knowledge, humility did more thoroughly unite thereto. Thus Zophar, who is both instructed by the pursuit of knowledge, and uninstructed by the effrontery of highswoln speech, because he has no weight himself, wishes for a better man that thing which he has, saying, *But oh that God would speak with thee, and open His lips unto thee; that He might shew thee the secrets of wisdom*. And by wishing he also shews off that wisdom wherewith he reckons himself to be equipped above his friend, when he thereupon adds, *And that her law is manifold*. What should the 'law' of God be here taken to mean, saving charity, whereby we ever read in the inward parts after what manner the precepts of life should be maintained in outward action? For concerning this Law it is delivered by the voice of 'Truth,' *This is My commandment, that ye love one another*. [John 15, 12] Concerning it Paul says, *Love is the fulfilling of the law*. [Rom. 13, 10] Concerning it he saith again, *Bear ye one another's burthens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*. [Gal. 6, 2] For what can the Law of Christ be more fitly understood to mean than charity, which we then truly fulfil when we bear the burthens of our brethren from the principle of love?

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

8. But this same Law is called 'manifold;' in that charity, full of eager solicitude, dilates into all deeds of virtue. It sets out indeed with but two precepts, but it reaches out into a countless number. For the beginning of this Law is, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour. But the love of God is distinguished by a triple division. For we are bidden to love our Maker 'with all our heart' and 'with all our soul' and 'with all our might.'

Wherein we are to take note that when the Sacred Word lays down the precept that God should be loved, it not only tells us with what, but also instructs us with how much, in that it subjoins, ‘with all;’ so that indeed he that desires to please God perfectly, must leave to himself nothing of himself. And the love of our neighbour is carried down into two precepts, since on the one hand it is said by a certain righteous man, *Do that to no man which thou hatest.* [Tob. 4, 15] And on the other ‘Truth’ saith by Himself, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*. [Mat. 7, 12] By which two precepts of both Testaments, by the one an evil disposition is restrained, and by the other a good disposition charged upon us, that every man not doing the ill which he would not wish to suffer, should cease from the working of injuries, and again that rendering the good which he desires to be done to him, he exert himself for the service of his neighbour in kindness of heart. But while these same two are thought on with heedful regard, the heart is made to open itself wide in innumerable offices of virtue, lest whether for the admitting of things which it ought not, the mind being agitated be heated by passions; or for the setting forth of whatsoever it ought, being undone by indolence, it may be rendered inactive. For when it guards against doing to another what it would not on any account itself undergo at the hands of another, it looks about itself on every side with a heedful eye, lest pride lift it up, and while cutting down set up the soul even to contempt of our neighbour; lest coveting mangle the thought of the heart, and while stretching it wide to desire the things of another, straitly confine it; lest lust pollute the heart, and corrupt it, thus become the slave of its passions, in forbidden courses; lest anger increase, and inflame it even to giving vent to insult; lest envy gnaw it, and lest jealous of the successes of others it consume itself with its own torch; lest loquacity drive on the tongue beyond all bounds of moderation, and draw it out even to the extent of license in

slander; lest bad feeling stir up hatred, and set on the lips even to let loose the dart of cursing. Again, when it thinks how it may do to another what it looks for at the hands of another for itself, it considers how it may return good things for evil, and better things for good; how to exhibit towards the impertinent the meekness of longsuffering; how to render the kindness of good will to them that pine with the plague of malice, how to join the contentious with the bands of peace, how to train up the peaceable to the longing desire of true Peace; how to supply necessary things to those that are in need; how to shew to those that be gone astray the path of righteousness; how to soothe the distressed by words and by sympathy; how to quench by rebuke those that burn in the desires of the world; how by reasoning to soften down the threats of the powerful, how to lighten the bands of the oppressed by all the means that he is master of; how to oppose patience to those that offer resistance without; how to set forth to those that are full of pride within a lesson of discipline together with patience; how, with reference to the misdeeds of those under our charge, mildness may temper zeal, so that it never relax from earnestness for the rule of right; how zeal may be so kindled for revenge, that yet by kindling thus it never transgress the bounds of pity; how to stir the unthankful to love by benefits; how to preserve in love all that are thankful by services; how to pass by in silence the misdoings of our neighbour, when he has no power to correct them; how when they may be amended by speaking to dread silence as consent to them; how to submit to what he passes by in silence, yet so that none of the poison of annoyance bury itself in his spirit; how to exhibit the service of good will to the malicious, yet not so as to depart from the claims of righteousness from kindness; how to render all things to his neighbours that he is master of, yet in thus rendering them not to be swelled with pride; in the good deeds which he sets forth to shrink from the precipice of pride, yet so as not to slacken in the exercise of doing good; so to lavish the things

which he possesses as to take thought how great is the bounteousness of his Rewarder, lest in bestowing earthly things he think of his poverty more than need be, and in the offering of the gift a sad look obscure the light of cheerfulness.

9. Therefore the Law of God is rightly called manifold, in this respect, that whereas it is one and the same principle of charity, if it has taken full possession of the mind, it kindles her in manifold ways to innumerable works. The diverseness whereof we shall set forth in brief if we go through and enumerate her excellencies in each of the Saints severally. Thus she in Abel both presented chosen gifts to God, and without resistance submitted to the brother's sword; Enoch she both taught to live in a spiritual way among men, and even in the body carried him away from men to a life above. Noah she exhibited the only one pleasing to God when all were disregarded, and she exercised him on the building of the ark with application to a long labour, and she preserved him the survivor of the world by the practice of religious works. In Shem and Japhet she humbly felt shame at the father's nakedness, and with a cloak thrown over their shoulders hid that which she looked not on. She, for that she lifted the right hand of Abraham for the death of his son in the yielding of obedience, made him the father of a numberless offspring of the Gentiles. She, because she ever kept the mind of Isaac in purity, when his eyes were now dim with age, opened it wide to see events that should come to pass long after. She constrained Jacob at the same time to bewail from the core of his heart the good child taken from him, and to bear with composure the presence of the wicked ones. She instructed Joseph, when sold by his brethren, both to endure servitude with unbroken freedom of spirit, and not to lord it afterwards over those brethren with a high mind. She, when the people erred, at once prostrated Moses in prayer, even to the beseeching for death, and lifted him up in eagerness of indignant feeling even to the extent of

slaying the people; so that he should both offer himself to die in behalf of the perishing multitude, and in the stead of the Lord in His indignation straightway let loose his rage against them when they sinned. She lifted the arm of Phinees in revenge of the guilty souls, that he should pierce them as they lay with the sword he had seized, and that by being wroth he might appease the wrath of the Lord. She instructed Jesus the spy, so that he both first vindicated the truth by his word against his false countrymen, and afterwards asserted it with his sword against foreign enemies. She both rendered Samuel lowly in authority, and kept him unimpaired in his low estate, who, in that he loved the People that persecuted him, became himself a witness to himself that he loved not the height from whence he was thrust down. David before the wicked king she at once urged with humility to take flight, and filled with pitifulness to grant pardon; who at once in fearing fled from his persecutor, as his lord, and yet, when he had the power of smiting him, did not acknowledge him as an enemy she both uplifted Nathan against the king on his sinning in the authoritativeness of a free rebuke, and, when there was no guilt resting on the king, humbly prostrated him in making request. She in Isaiah blushed not for nakedness of the flesh in the work of preaching, and the fleshly covering withdrawn, she penetrated into heavenly mysteries. [Is. 20, 2] She, for that she taught Elijah to live spiritually with the earnestness of a fervent soul, carried him off even in the body also to enter into life. She, in that she taught Elisha to love his master with a single affection, filled him with a double portion of his master's spirit. Through her Jeremiah withstood that the people should not go down into Egypt, and yet by cherishing them even when they were disobedient he even himself went down where he forbad the going down. She, in that she first raised Ezekiel from all earthly objects of desire, afterwards suspended him in the air by a lock of his head. She in the case of Daniel, for that she refrained his appetite from the royal dainties, closed for him the very

mouths of the hungry lions. She, in the Three Children, for that she quenched the flames of evil inclinations in them whilst in a condition of peace, in the season of affliction abated the very flames in the furnace. She in Peter both stoutly withstood the threats of frowning rulers, and in the setting aside of the rite of circumcision, she heard the words of inferiors with humility. She, in Paul, both meekly bore the violence of persecutors, and yet in the matter of circumcision boldly rebuked the notion of one by great inequality his superior. ‘Manifold’ then is this Law of God, which undergoing no change accords with the several particulars of events, and being susceptible of no variation yet blends itself with varying occasions.

10. The multiplicity of which same law, Paul rightly counts up, in the words, *Charity suffereth long, and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth*. For charity ‘suffereth long,’ in that she bears with composure the ills that are brought upon her. She ’is kind,’ in that she renders good for evil with a bounteous hand, She ‘envieth not,’ in that from her coveting nought in the present life, she thinketh not to envy earthly successes. She ’is not puffed up,’ in that whereas she eagerly desires the recompense of the interior reward, she does not lift herself up on the score of exterior good things. She ‘doth not behave herself unseemly,’ in that in proportion as she spreads herself out in the love of God and our neighbour alone, whatever is at variance with the rule of right is unknown to her. She is not covetous, in that as she is warmly busied within with her own concerns, she never at all covets what belongs to others, ‘She seeketh not her own,’ in that all that she holds here by a transitory tenure, she disregards as though it were another’s, in that she knows well that nothing is her own but what shall stay with her. She ’is not easily provoked,’ in that even when prompted by wrongs she never stimulates herself to any motions of self avenging, whilst for her great

labours she looks hereafter for greater rewards. She ‘thinketh no evil,’ in that basing the soul in the love of purity, while she plucks up all hatred by the roots, she cannot harbour in the mind aught that pollutes. She ‘rejoiceth not in iniquity,’ in that as she yearns towards all men with love alone, she does not triumph even in the ruin of those that are against her, but she ‘rejoiceth in the truth,’ in that loving others as herself, by that which she beholds right in others she is filled with joy as if for the growth of her own proficiency. ‘Manifold,’ then, is this ‘Law of God,’ which by the defence of its instructiveness is proof against the dart of every sin which assaults the soul for its destruction, so that whereas our old enemy besets us with manifold encompassing, she may in many ways rid us of him. Which Law if we consider with heedful attention, we are made to know how greatly we sin each day against our Maker. And if we thoroughly consider our sins, then assuredly we bear afflictions with composure, nor is anyone precipitated into impatience by pain, when conscience gives itself up by its own sentence. Hence Zophar, knowing what it was that he said, but not knowing to whom he said it, after he had premised the words, That He would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, and that her Law is manifold, forthwith adds,

And that thou mightest know that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

11. For, as we have said, the pain of the stroke is mitigated, when the sin is acknowledged; for everyone too bears the knife of the leach the more patiently, in proportion as he sees what he cuts to be gangrened. He therefore that comprehends the manifold character of the Law, reflects how much too little all is that he is suffering; for from this, that the weight of the sin is acknowledged, the pain of the affliction is made less.

12. But herein we must know that it was not without great iniquity that Zophar reproached the righteous man even to the charging him with iniquity. And thus Truth with justice reproves their boldness, but mercifully restores them to favour; for with the merciful Judge a fault never goes without pardon, when it is done through the heat of zealous feeling in the love of Him. For this oftentimes happens to great and admirable teachers, that in proportion as they are inflamed with the depth of charity, they exceed the due measure of correction, and that the tongue utters somewhat that it never ought, because love inflames the heart to the degree that it ought. But the word of offered affront is the more readily spared, in proportion as it is considered from what root it comes, whence the Lord rightly commanded by Moses, saying, *As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour merely to hew wood, and the wood of the axe flieth from his hand, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die, he shall flee unto one of these cities and live: lest perchance the kinsman of him whose blood hath been shed pursue the slayer while his heart is hot, and overtake him, and slay him*. [Deut. 19, 5. 6.] For we 'go to the wood with a friend,' whensoever we betake ourselves with a neighbour to take a view of our transgressions, and we 'merely hew wood,' when with pious purpose we cut away the evil doings of offenders; but the 'axe flieth from his hand,' when rebuke carries itself into severity beyond what ought to be, and the 'head slippeth from the helve,' when the speech goes off too hard from the act of correcting, and it 'lighteth upon a neighbour, that he die,' in that the offered insult kills its hearer as to the spirit of love. For the mind of the person reproved is instantly hurried into hate, if unmeasured censure condemn it beyond what ought to be. But he that heweth wood carelessly, and kills a neighbour, must take refuge in three cities, that he may live unharmed in one of them, in that if betaking himself to the lamentations of repentance, he be hidden in the unity of the

Sacrament under hope faith and charity, he is not held guilty of the manslaughter that has been done; and when the ‘kinsman of the slain’ has found him he slayeth him not, in that, when the strict Judge comes, Who has united Himself to us by fellowship with our own nature, He doubtless never exacts retribution for guilt of sin from him, whom faith hope and charity hide beneath the shelter of His pardoning grace. Quickly then is that sin done away which is not committed of the set aim of malice. And hence, Zophar both calls him iniquitous, whom a sentence from above had extolled, and yet he is not rejected and shut out from pardon, in that he is prompted to words of contumely by zeal in the love of God, Who, for that he does not know the merits of blessed Job, further added in ill instructed mockery, saying,

Ver. 7. *Canst thou find out the footsteps of God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?*

13. What does he call ‘the footsteps of God,’ saving the lovingkindness of His visitation? by which same we are stimulated to advance forward to things above, when we are influenced by the inspiration of His Spirit, and being carried without the narrow compass of the flesh, by love we see and own the likeness of our Maker presented to our contemplation that we may follow it. For when the love of the spiritual Land kindles the heart, He as it were gives knowledge of a way to persons that follow it, and a sort of footstep of God as He goes is imprinted upon the heart laid under it, that the way of life may be kept by the same in right goings of the thoughts. For Him, Whom we do not as yet see, it only remains for us to trace out by the footsteps of His love, that at length the mind may find Him, to the reaching the likeness contemplation gives of Him, Whom now as it were, following Him in the rear, it searches out by holy desires. The Psalmist was well skilled to follow these footsteps of our Creator, when he said, *My soul followeth hard after Thee*. [Ps. 63, 8] Whom too he busied himself that he

might find even to attaining the vision of His loftiness, when he said, *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before the face of God?* [Ps. 42, 2] For then Almighty God is found out by clear conception, when the corruption of our mortality being once for all trodden under our feet, He is seen by us that are taken up into heaven in the brightness of His Divine Nature. But at this present time, the grace of the Spirit which is poured into our hearts lifts the soul from carnal aims, and elevates it into a contempt for transitory things, and the mind looks down upon all that it coveted below, and is kindled to objects of desire above, and by the force of her contemplation she is carried out of the flesh, while by the weight of her corruption she is still held fast in the flesh; she strives to obtain sight of the splendour of uncircumscribed Light, and has not power; for the soul, being burthened with infirmity, both never wins admittance, and yet loves when repelled. For our Creator already exhibits concerning Himself something whereby love may be excited, but He withdraws the appearance of His vision from those so loving. Therefore we all go on seeing only His footsteps, in that only in the tokens of His gifts we follow Him, Whom as yet we see not. Which same 'footsteps' cannot be comprehended, in that it is all unknown, when, where, and by what ways the gifts of His Spirit come, as 'Truth' bears record, saying, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and ye cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*. [John 3, 8] Now in the height of the rewarding the Almighty may be found out in the appearance [*per speciem*] afforded to contemplation, yet He can never be found out to perfection. For though sooner or later we see Him in His brightness, yet we do not perfectly behold His Essence. For the mind whether of Angels or men, whilst it gazes toward the uncircumscribed Light shrinks into little by this alone, viz. that it is a created being; and by its advancement indeed it is made to stretch above its own reach, yet not even when spread wide can it compass the splendours of Him, Who at once

in transcending, in supporting, and in filling, encloses all things. Hence it is yet further added,

Ver. 8, 9. *He is higher than heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? His measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.*

14. In that God is set forth as ‘higher than heaven,’ ‘deeper than hell,’ ‘longer than the earth,’ and ‘broader than the sea,’ this must be understood in a spiritual sense, inasmuch as it is impious to conceive any thing concerning Him after the proportions of body. Now He is ‘higher than heaven,’ in that He transcends all things by the Incomprehensibility of His spiritual Nature. He is ‘deeper than hell,’ in that in transcending He sustains beneath. He is ‘longer than the earth,’ in that He exceeds the measure of created being by the everlasting continuance of His Eternity. He is ‘broader than the sea,’ in that He so possesses the waves of temporal things in ruling them, that in confining He encompasses them beneath the every way prevailing presence of His Power. Though it is possible that by the designation of ‘Heaven’ the Angels may be denoted, and by the term ‘hell,’ the demons, while by the ‘earth’ the righteous, and by the ‘sea’ sinners are understood. Thus He is ‘higher than the heaven,’ in that the very Elect Spirits themselves do not perfectly penetrate the vision of His infinite loftiness? He is ‘deeper than hell,’ in that He judges and condemns the craft of evil spirits with far more searching exactness than they had ever thought, He is ‘longer than the earth,’ in that He surpasses our long-suffering by the patience of Divine long-suffering, which both bears with us in our sins, and welcomes us when we are turned from them to the rewards of His recompensing. He is ‘wider than the sea,’ in that he every where enters into the doings of sinners by the presence of His retributive power, so that even when He is not seen present by His appearance, He is felt present by His judgment.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

15. Yet all the particulars may be referred to man alone, so that he is Himself 'heaven,' when now in desire he is attached to things above; himself 'hell,' when he lies grovelling in things below, confounded by the mists of his temptations; himself 'earth,' in that he is made to abound in good works through the fertility of a stedfast hope; himself 'the sea,' for that on some occasions he is shaken with alarm, and agitated by the breath of his feebleness. But God is 'higher than heaven,' in that we are subdued by the mightiness of His power, even when we are lifted above our own selves. He is 'deeper than hell,' in that He goes deeper in judging than the very human mind looks into its own self in the midst of temptations, He is 'longer than the earth,' in that those fruits of our life which He gives at the end, our very hope at the present time comprehends not at all. He is 'wider than the sea,' in that the human mind being tossed to and fro throws out many fancies concerning the things that are coming, but when it now begins to see the things that it had made estimate of, it owns itself to have been too stinted in its reckoning. Therefore He is made 'higher than heaven,' since our contemplation itself fails toward Him. Hence the Psalmist too had set his heart on high, yet he felt that he had not yet reached unto Him, saying, *Thy knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is mighty, I cannot attain unto it*. [Ps. 139, 6] He knew One deeper than hell, who when sifting his own heart, yet dreading His more searching judgment, said, *For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord*. [1 Cor. 4, 4] He saw One 'longer than the earth,' when he was brought to reflect that the wishes of man's heart were too little for him, saying, *Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*. [Eph. 3, 20] He had beheld One 'broader than the sea,' who considered whilst he feared that the human mind may never know the immeasurableness of His severity, however it may toss and fret in enquiring after it, saying, *Who*

knoweth the power of Thine anger, and for fear can tell Thy wrath? [Ps. 90, 11] Whose Power the inimitable teacher rightly gives us the knowledge of, when he briefly says, *That ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*. [Eph. 3, 18] For God has 'breadth,' in that He extends His love even to gathering in the very persecutors. He has 'length,' in that He leads us onwards by bearing with us in long-suffering to the country of life. He has 'loftiness,' in that He far transcends the understanding of the very beings themselves that have been admitted into the heavenly assemblage. He has 'depth,' in that upon the damned below He displays the visitation of His severity in an incomprehensible manner. And these same four attributes He exercises towards each one of us, that are placed in this life, in that by loving, He manifests His 'breadth;' by suffering, His 'length;' by surpassing not only our understanding, but even our very wishes, His 'height;' and His 'depth,' by judging with strictness the hidden and unlawful motions of the thoughts. Now His height and depth how unsearchable it is no man knows saving he, who has begun either by contemplation to be carried up on high, or in resisting the hidden motions of the heart to be troubled by the urgency of temptation. And hence the words are spoken to blessed Job, *He is higher than heaven what canst thou do? deeper than hell, whence canst thou know?* As if it were said to him in open contempt, 'His depth and excellency when mayest thou ever discover, who are not taught either to be lifted up on high by virtue, or to deal severely with thyself in temptations. It goes on,

Ver. 10. *If He overturn all things, or shut them up together, then who shall gainsay Him? Or who can say to Him, Why doest Thou so?*

16. The Lord 'overturns heaven,' when by His terrible and secret ordering He pulls down the height of man's contemptations. He 'subverts hell,' when He allows the soul of any affrighted under its temptations to fall

even into worse extremes. He ‘overturns the earth,’ when He cuts off the fruitfulness of good works by adversities pouring in. He ‘overturns the sea,’ when He confounds the fluctuations of our wavering spirit, by the rise of a sudden panic. For the heart, disquieted by its own uncertainty, fears horribly for this alone, that she goes thus wavering; and it is as if the sea were overturned, when our very trembling towards God is itself confounded on the terribleness of His judgment being thought on. Whereas therefore we have described in brief, in what sort heaven and hell, earth and sea, are overturned, now the somewhat more difficult task awaits us, to shew how these may be ‘shut up together.’

17. For it very often happens that the spirit already lifts the mind on high, yet that the flesh assails it with pressing temptations; and when the soul is led forward to the contemplation of heavenly things, it is struck back by the images of unlawful practice being presented. For the sting of the flesh suddenly wounds him, whom holy contemplation was bearing away beyond the flesh. Therefore heaven and hell are shut up together, when one and the same mind is at once enlightened by the uplifting of contemplation, and bedimmed by the pressure of temptation, so that both by straining forward it sees what it should desire, and through being bowed down be in thought subject to that which it should blush for. For light springs from heaven, but hell is held of darkness. Heaven and hell then are brought into one, when the soul which already sees the light of the land above, also sustains the darkness of secret temptation coming from the warfare of the flesh. Yea, Paul had already gone up to the height of the third heaven, already learnt the secrets of Paradise, and yet being still subject to the assaults of the flesh, he groaned, saying, *But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members*. [Rom. 7, 23] How then was it with the heart of this illustrious Preacher, saving that God had ‘shut

up together’ heaven and hell, in that he had both already obtained the light of the interior vision, and yet continued to suffer darkness from the flesh? Above himself he had seen what to seek after with joy, in himself he perceived what to bewail with fear. The light of the heavenly land had already shed abroad its rays, yet the dimness of temptation embarrassed the soul. Therefore he underwent hell together with heaven, in that assurance set him erect in his enlightenment, and lamentation laid him low in his temptation.

18. And it often happens that faith is now vigorous in the soul, and yet in some slight point it is wasted with uncertainty, so that both being well-assured, it lifts itself up from visible objects, and at the same time being unassured it disquiets itself in certain points. For very often it lifts itself to seek after the things of eternity, and being driven by the incitements of thoughts that arise, it is set at strife with its very own self. Therefore the ‘earth and sea are shut up together,’ when one and the same mind is both established by the certainty of rooted faith, and yet is influenced by the breath of doubt, through some slight fickleness of unbelief. Did not he experience that ‘earth and sea were shut up together’ in his breast, who both hoping through faith and wavering through faithlessness, cried, *Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief?* [Mark 9, 23] How is it then that at the same time he declares that he believes, and begs to have the unbelief in him helped, saving that he had found out that earth and sea were shut up together in his thoughts, who both being assured had already begun to implore through faith, and being unassured still endured the waves of faithlessness from unbelief.

19. And this is allowed by secret providence to be brought about, that when the soul has now begun to arise to uprightness, it should be assailed by the remnant of its wickedness, in order that this very assault may either exercise it if it resist, or if it be beguiled by enjoyment may break it down.

Therefore it is well said here, *If He overturn all things, or shut them up together, who shalt gainsay Him? Or who can say to Him, Why doest Thou so?* For God's decree can neither lose any thing by opposition, nor be ascertained by enquiry, when He either withdraws the good graces which He had vouchsafed, or not entirely withdrawing them, lets them be shaken by the assault of evil inclinations. For oftentimes the heart is lifted up in highmindedness when it is established strongly in virtue by instances of joyful success, but when our Creator beholds the motions of presumption lurking in the heart, He forsakes man for the shewing him to himself, that his soul thus forsaken may discover what she is, in that she wrongly exulted in herself in a feeling of security. Hence whereas it is said that 'all is overturned and shut up together,' he therefore adds,

Ver. 11. *For He knoweth the vanity of men; when He seeth wickedness also, doth He not consider it?*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

20. As if he were subjoining in explaining the things premised, saying, 'Because He sees that by suffering them evil habits gain growth, by judging He brings to nought His gifts.' Now the right order is observed in the account, in that vanity is first described to be known, and afterwards iniquity to be considered. For all iniquity is vanity, but not all vanity, iniquity. For we do vain things as often as we give heed to what is transitory. Whence too that is said to vanish, which is suddenly withdrawn from the eyes of the beholder. Hence the Psalmist saith, *Every man living is altogether vanity*. [Ps. 39, 5] For herein, that by living he is only tending to destruction, he is rightly called 'vanity' indeed; but by no means lightly called 'iniquity' too. For though it is in punishment of sin that he comes to nought, yet this particular circumstance is not itself sin, that he passes

swiftly from life. Thus all things are vain that pass by. Whence too the words are spoken by Solomon, *All is vanity*. [Eccles. 1, 2]

21. But 'iniquity' is fitly brought in immediately after 'vanity.' For whilst we are led onwards through some things transitory, we are to our hurt tied fast to some of them, and when the soul does not hold its seat of unchangeableness, running out from itself it goes headlong into evil ways. From vanity then that mind sinks into iniquity, which from being familiar with things mutable, whilst it is ever being hurried from one sort to another, is defiled by sins springing up. It is possible too that 'vanity' may be taken for sin, and that by the title of 'iniquity' weightier guilt may be designated; for if vanity were not sometimes sin, the Psalmist would not have said, *Though man walketh in the image of God, surely he is disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.* [Ps. 29, 6. Vulg.] For though we preserve the image of the Trinity in our natural constitution, yet being disturbed by the vain motions of self-indulgence, we go wrong in our practice; so that in ever-alternating forms lust agitates, fear breaks down, joy beguiles, grief oppresses. Therefore from vanity, as we have also said above, we are led to iniquity, when first we let ourselves out in light misdemeanors, so that habit making all things light, we are not at all afraid to commit even heavier ones too afterwards. For while the tongue neglects to regulate idle words, being caught by the custom of engrained carelessness, it fearlessly gives a loose to mischievous ones. Whilst we give ourselves to gluttony we are straightway betrayed into the madness of an unsteady mind, and when the mind shrinks from overcoming the gratification of the flesh, it very often plunges even into the whirlpool of unbelief. Hence Paul, looking at the mischiefs that befel the Israelitish people, in order to keep off from his hearers threatened ills, was justly mindful to relate in order what took place, saying, *Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink,*

and rose up to play. [1 Cor. 10, 7. Ex. 32, 6] For eating and drink set them on to play, and play drew them into idolatry; for if the offence of vanity is not restrained with care, the unheeding mind is swiftly swallowed up by iniquity, as Solomon testifies, who says, *He that despiseth small things falleth little by little*. For if we neglect to take heed to little things, being insensibly led away, we perpetrate even greater things with a bold face; and it is to be observed, that it is not said that iniquity is 'seen,' but that it is 'considered.' For we look more earnestly at those things which we consider. Thus God 'knoweth the vanity of men, and considereth their iniquity,' in that He leaves not even their minor offences unpunished, and prepares Himself with greater earnestness to smite their worse ones. Therefore whereas men set out with lighter misdeeds, and go on to those of a graver order, vanity overcasts while iniquity blinds the mind, which same mind, so soon as it has parted with the light, presently lifts itself so much the higher in swoln pride, in proportion as being taken in the snares of iniquity, it withdraws further from the truth. Hence also he fitly sets forth whereunto vanity forces men joined with iniquity, in that he forthwith adds,

Ver. 12. *For the vain man is exalted in pride.*

22. For it is the end of vanity, whereas it mangles the heart by sin, to render it bold by the offence, so that, forgetful of its guiltiness, the soul which feels no sorrow to have lost its innocency, blinded by a righteous retribution, should at the same time part with humility also; and it very often happens, that, enslaving itself to unlawful desires, it rids itself of the yoke of the fear of the Lord; and as if henceforth at liberty for the commission of wickedness, it strives to put in execution all that self-indulgence prompts. Hence when the vain man is said to be exalted in pride, therefore it is brought in,

And thinketh himself free born like a wild ass's colt.

23. For by 'a wild ass's colt' is set forth every kind of wild animals, which being left free to the motions of nature, are not held by the reins of persons ruling them. For the fields leave animals in a state of liberty both to roam where they list, and to rest when they are wearied; and though man is immeasurably superior to insensate beasts, yet that is very often not allowed to man, which is granted to brute creatures. For those animals, which are never kept for any other end, assuredly never have their movements held in under the bands of discipline; but man, who is being brought to a life hereafter, must of necessity be held in all his movements under the controlling hand of discipline, and like a tame animal render service, bound with reins, and live restricted by eternal appointments. He then that seeks to put in practice in unrestrained liberty all the things that he has a desire for, what else is this but that he longs to be like the wild ass's colt, that the reins of discipline may not hold him in, but that he may boldly run at large through the forest of desires?

24. But oftentimes Divine mercy breaks by the encounter of sudden adversity those, whom it sees going into the unruliness of lawless freedom, that being crushed they may learn with what damnable exaltation they had been swoln, that being now tamed by the experience of the scourge, they may like tame animals yield the mind's neck to the reins of the commandments, and go along the ways of the present life at the ruler's beck. With these reins he knew well that he was bound, who said, *I am as a beast before Thee, and I am continually with Thee*. [Ps. 72, 22] Whence too that raging persecutor, when he was brought away from the field of unbelieving self-indulgence to the house of faith, being pricked by the spurs of his ruler, heard the words, *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*. [Acts 9, 5] It remains then, if we would not henceforth be like the wild ass's colt, that in all that we desire we first look out for the token of the interior appointment, so that our mind in all that it strives at may be held in by the

bridle of the Supreme control, and may fulfil its wishes the more effectually to the obtaining of life, by the very same act, whereby even against its will it treads under foot the aims and objects of its own life. Zophar delivered many forcible sayings, but he is not conscious that he is addressing them to a better than himself; whence he still further subjoins in words of upbraiding,

Ver. 13. *Thou hast set firm thine heart, and stretched out thine hands towards Him.*

25. The heart is not here said to be ‘set firm’ by virtue but by insensibility, for every soul that submits itself to the consideration of the interior severity, is directly softened by the fear thereof; and the shaft of divine dread enters into him, in that he carries weak bowels through humility. But he that is hardened by obstinacy in insensibility, as it were sets his heart firm, that the darts of heavenly fear may not pierce it. Whence the Lord says mercifully to some by the Prophet, *And I will take away the stony heart out of you, and I will give you a heart of flesh*. [Ezek. 36, 26] For He ‘takes away the stony heart,’ when He removes from us the hardness of pride. And He ‘gives us a heart of flesh,’ when He thereupon changes that same hardness into sensibility. Now by ‘hands’ as we have often taught are denoted works. To stretch out the hands to God, then, with sin, is to pride ourselves upon the excellency of our works to the prejudice of the grace of the Giver. For he that, speaking in the presence of the Eternal Judge, ascribes to himself the good that he does, stretches out his hands to God in a spirit of pride. It is in this way truly that the lost ever let themselves loose against the Elect, and so heretics against Catholics; that when they are unable to abuse their doings, they set themselves to blame the good for pride in those doings, that those, whom they cannot upbraid for weak points in practice, they may charge with the guilt of high-mindedness. And hence the good things which are done outwardly, they now no longer

reckon to be good, in that they are set forth as it were in the prosecution of swelling conceit. And these oftentimes with swelling thoughts rebuke lowly deeds, and know not that they are dealing blows against themselves by their words. But whereas Zophar had hitherto chidden the righteous man with reproof, now, as giving him lessons of instruction, he subjoins,

Ver. 13, 14, 15. *If the iniquity which is in thine hand thou put far from thee, and wickedness dwell not in thy tabernacle, then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, yea thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear.*

26. Every sin is either committed in thought alone, or it is done in thought and deed together. Therefore 'iniquity in the hand' is offence in deed; but 'wickedness in the tabernacle,' is iniquity in the heart; for our heart is not unfitly called a tabernacle, wherein we are buried within ourselves, when we do not shew ourselves outwardly in act. Zophar therefore, in that he was the friend of a righteous person, knows what he should say, but in that he reproached a righteous person, bearing the likeness of heretics, he does not know how rightly to deliver even the things which he knows. But let us, treading under our feet all that is delivered by him in pride of spirit, reflect how true his words are, if they had but been spoken in a right manner. For first he bids that 'iniquity' be removed from the 'hand,' and afterwards that 'wickedness' be cut off from the 'tabernacle;' for whosoever has already cut away from himself all wicked deeds without, must of necessity in returning to himself probe himself discreetly in the purpose of his heart, lest sin, which he no longer has in act, still hold out in thought. Hence too it is well said by Solomon, *Prepare thy work without, and diligently work thy field, that afterwards thou mayest build thine house*. [Prov. 24, 27] For what is it when the 'work is prepared,' to 'till the field diligently without,' saving when the briars of iniquity have been plucked up, to train our practice to bearing fruits of recompense? And after the tilling of the field, what else is it to return to the building of our

house, than that we very often learn from good deeds the perfect purity of life which we should build up in our thoughts. For almost all good deeds come from the thoughts, but there be some fine points of thought which have their birth in action; for as the deed is derived from the mind, so on the other hand the mind is instructed by the deed; for the soul taking the first beginnings of divine love dictates the good things which should be done, but after the deeds so dictated have begun to be fulfilled, being practised by its own actions, it learns how little it saw when it began to dictate good deeds. Thus the 'field is tilled without, that the house may afterwards be built;' for very often we gain from outward practice what an extreme nicety of righteousness we should keep in our hearts; and Zophar was well minded to observe this order, in that he spake first of 'iniquity being put away from the hands,' and afterwards 'wickedness from the tabernacle;' for the mind can never be completely set upright in thought when it still goes astray in deed.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

27. Now if we thoroughly wipe away these two, we then directly 'lift our face without spot' to God. For the soul is the inner face of man, by which same we are known, that we may be regarded with love by our Maker. Now it is to lift up this same face, to raise the soul in [al. 'to'] God by appliance to the exercises of prayer. But there is a spot that pollutes the uplifted face, when consciousness of its own guilt accuses the mind intent; for it is forthwith dashed from all confidence of hope, if when busied in prayer it be stung with recollection of sin not yet subdued. For it distrusts its being able to obtain what it longs for, in that it bears in mind its still refusing to do what it has heard from God. Hence it is said by John, *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatsoever we ask we shall receive of Him.* [1 John 3, 21. 22.] Hence Solomon saith, *He that*

turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. [Prov. 28, 9] For our heart blames us in offering up our prayers, when it calls to mind that it is set in opposition to the precepts of Him, whom it implores, and the prayer becomes abomination, when there is a ‘turning away’ from the control of the law; in that verily it is meet that a man should be a stranger to the favours of Him, to Whose bidding he will not be subject.

28. Wherein there is this salutary remedy, if when the soul reproaches itself upon the remembrance of sin, it first bewail that in prayer, wherein it has gone wrong, that whereas the stain of offences is washed away by tears, in offering up our prayers the face of the heart may be viewed unspotted by our Maker. But we must be over and above on our guard, that the soul do not again fall away headlong to that, which it is overjoyed that it was washed away by tears; but whilst the sin that is deplored is again committed, those very lamentings be made light of in the eyes of the righteous Judge. For we should call to mind what is said, *Do not repeat a word of thy prayer*; [Ecclus. 7, 14] by which same saying the wise man in no sort forbids us to beseech pardon oftentimes, but to repeat our sins. As if it were expressed in plain words; ‘When thou hast bewailed thy misdoings, never again do any thing for thee to bewail again in prayer.’

29. Therefore that ‘the face may be lifted up in prayer without spot,’ it behoves that before the seasons of prayer every thing that can possibly be reproved in the act of prayer be heedfully looked into, and that the mind when it stays from prayer as well should hasten to shew itself such, as it desires to appear to the Judge in the very season itself of prayer. For we often harbour some impure or forbidden thoughts in the mind, when we are disengaged from our prayers. And when the mind has lifted itself up to the exercises of prayer, being made to recoil, it is subject to images of the things whereby before it was burthened of free will whilst unemployed.

And the soul is now as it were without ability to lift up the face to God, in that the mind being blotted within, it blushes at the stains of polluted thought. Oftentimes we are ready to busy ourselves with the concerns of the world, and when after such things we apply ourselves to the business of prayer, the mind cannot lift itself to heavenly things, in that the load of earthly solicitude has sunk it down below, and the face is not shewn pure in prayer, in that it is stained by the mire of grovelling imagination.

30. However, sometimes we rid the heart of every encumbrance, and set ourselves against the forbidden motions thereof, even at such time as we are disengaged from prayer, yet because we ourselves commit sins but seldom, we are the more backward in letting go the offences of others, and in proportion as our mind the more anxiously dreads to sin, the more unsparingly it abhors the injuries done to itself by another; whence it is brought to pass that a man is found slow to grant pardon, in the same degree that by going on advancing, he has become heedful against the commission of sin. And as he fears himself to transgress against another, he claims to punish the more severely the transgression that is done against himself. But what can be discovered worse than this spot of bitterness [*doloris*], which in the sight of the Judge does not stain charity, but kills it outright? For every sin stains the life of the soul, but bitterness maintained against our neighbour slays it; for it is fixed in the soul like a sword, and the very hidden parts of the bowels are gored by the point thereof; and if it be not first drawn out of the pierced heart, no whit of divine aid is won in prayer. For the medicines of health cannot be applied to the wounded limbs, unless the iron be first withdrawn from the wound, Hence it is that ‘Truth’ saith by Itself, *If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father Which is in Heaven forgive you your trespasses*. [Matt. 6, 15.] Hence He enjoins, saying, *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any*. [Mark 11, 25] Hence He saith again, *Give, and it shall be given unto you;*

forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. [Luke 6, 38] Hence to the form of petition, He affixed the condition of pity; saying, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*: [Matt. 6, 12] that truly the good which we beg from God being pierced with compunction, we first do with our neighbour, being altered by conversion. Therefore we then truly 'lift our face without spot,' when we neither commit forbidden misdeeds, nor retain those which have been committed against ourselves from jealous regard for self; for in the hour of prayer our soul is overwhelmed with sore dismay, if either its practice still continue to pollute it, or bitterness kept for the injuring of another lay charge against it; which two when anyone has cleansed away, he forthwith arises free to the things which are subjoined, *Yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear*, in that doubtless he fears the Judge the less, the more stedfast he stands in good deeds. For he gets the mastery of fears, who retains possession of stedfastness, in that whilst he anxiously busies himself to do what our Creator tenderly enjoins, he bethinks himself in security of that which He threatens with terribleness.

31. Moreover it should be known, that there are some good deeds wherein we persevere unwearied, and again, there are some from which we are continually giving over and falling away, and we are restored to these, not without great endeavours at intervals of time; for in the active life the mind is stablished without failing, but from the contemplative, being overcome by the load of its infirmity, it faints away. For the first endures the more stedfastly in proportion as it opens itself to things about it for our neighbour's weal; the latter falls away the more swiftly, in proportion as passing beyond the barriers of the flesh, it endeavours to soar up above itself. The first directs its way through level places, and therefore plants the foot of practice more strongly; but the other, as it aims at heights above itself, the sooner descends wearied to itself. Which is well and briefly conveyed by Ezekiel, when he relates the motions of the living creatures

which he had seen, saying, *They turned not when they went*; and soon after he subjoins in addition, *And the living creatures went and returned*. [Ez. 1, 9. 14.] For sometimes the holy 'living creatures go and return not,' and sometimes they 'go and return forthwith;' for when the minds of the Elect, through the grace of an active life being vouchsafed them, abandon the paths of error, they never return to the evil courses of the world which they have forsaken; but when through the gaze of contemplation they are led to stay themselves from this same active life, they 'go and return,' in that hereby, that they are never able to continue for long in contemplation, they again let themselves out in action, that by busying themselves in such things as are immediately near them, they may recruit their strength, and may be enabled by contemplation again to soar above themselves. But while this practice of contemplation is in due method resumed at intervals of time, we hold on assuredly without failing all its entireness; for though the mind being overcome by the weight of its infirmity fall short, yet being restored again by continual efforts it lays hold thereof. Nor should it be said to have lost its firmness in that, which, though it be ever failing in, it is ever pursuing, even when it has lost the same. It proceeds;

Ver. 16. *Thou shalt also forget thy misery, and no more remember it, as waters that pass away.*

32. The mind feels the ills of the present life the more severely, in proportion as it neglects to take account of the good that comes after; and as it will not consider the rewards that are in store, it reckons all to be grievous that it undergoes; and hence the blinded imagination murmurs against the stroke of the scourge, and that is taken for an immeasurable woe, which by the days flowing on in their course is daily being brought to an end. But if a man once raise himself to things eternal, and fix the eye of the soul upon those objects which remain without undergoing change, he sees that here below all whatsoever runs to an end is almost nothing at all. He is subject to

the adversities of the present life, but he bethinks himself that all that passes away is as nought. For the more vigorously he makes his way into the interior joys, he is the less sensible of pains without. Whence Zophar, not being afraid with boldfaced hardihood to instruct one better than himself, exhorts to righteousness, and shews how little chastening appears in the eyes of the righteous man. As if it were in plain words; 'If thou hast a taste of the joy which remains within, all that gives pain without forthwith becomes light.' Now he does well in likening the miseries of the present life to 'waters that pass away,' for passing calamity never overwhelms the mind of the Elect with the force of a shock, yet it does tinge it with the touch of sorrow. For it drops indeed with the bleeding of the wound, though it is not dashed from the certainty of its salvation. But it often happens that not only stripes inflict bruises, but that in the mind of each one of the righteous the temptings of evil spirits come in force, so that he is grieved by the stroke without, and is in some sort chilled within by temptation. Yet grace never forsakes him, which same the more severely it smites us in the dealings of Providence, so much the more does it watch over us in pity; for when it has begun to grow dark through temptation, the inward light kindles itself again. Whence too it is added;

Ver. 17. *And the noonday splendour shall rise to thee at eventide.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

33. For 'the noonday splendour at eventide' is the renewing of virtue in the season of temptation, that the soul should be reinvigorated by the sudden heat of charity, which but now was full of fear, that the light of grace had sunk to it; which Zophar further unfolds with more exactness, when he subjoins,

Ver. 18. *And when thou thinkest thyself consumed, thou shalt arise like the morning star*.

34. For it often comes to pass that so many temptations beset our path, that the very multitude of them almost inclines us to the downfall of desperation. Hence for the most part, when the mind is turned to weariness, it scarce takes account even of the hurts that its virtue sustains, and notwithstanding that it is wholly filled with pain, it is as if it were now dislocated from the sense of pain, and were unable to reckon up with what a tumult of thoughts it is overrun. It sees itself momentarily on the point of falling headlong, and grief itself withstands it worse, that it should not lay hold of the arms of resistance. Mists encompass the eyes, wherever turned about, and whereas darkness ever obstructs the sight, the sad soul sees nought else than darkness; but with the merciful Judge it often happens that this very sadness, which even weighs down the effect of prayer, intercedes for us the more piercingly. For then our Creator sees the blackness of our sorrow, and pours back again the rays of the light withdrawn, so that the mind being immediately braced up by His gifts becomes full of vigour, which same a little before contending evil propensities kept down under the heel of pride. At once it shakes off the load of torpor, and bursts with the light of contemplation after the darkness of its troubled state. At once that is raised to the joy of advancement, which amidst temptations was well nigh driven by despair to a sorer fall. Without a conflict of the heart it looks down upon present things, without let of misgiving it trusts in the retribution to come. Therefore when the righteous man ‘thinks himself consumed, he arises like the morning star,’ in that so soon as he has begun to be benighted with the blackness of temptations, he is restored anew to the light of grace, and he in himself manifests the day of righteousness, who the moment before, on the point to fall, dreaded the night of guiltiness. Now the life of the righteous is rightly compared to the ‘morning star.’ For the morning star, being precursor of the sun, proclaims the day. And what does the innocency of the Saints proclaim to us, saving the brightness of the

Judge, That cometh after? For in our admiration of them we see what we are to account of the Majesty of the true Light. We do not yet behold the power of our Redeemer, but we admire His goodness in the characters of His Elect. Therefore in that the life of the good presents to our eyes on the consideration of it the force of Truth, the 'morning star' arises bright to us heralding the sun.

35. But be it known that all that we have made out, proceeding upon the opposition of spiritual temptations, may without hindrance be interpreted by external ills, for holy men, because they love the things above from the bottom of their heart, encounter hardships in things below; but at the end they find the light of joy, which in the span of this passing life they care not to have. Whence it is said on this occasion by Zophar, *And the noonday splendour shall arise to thee at eventide*. For the sinner's light in the daytime is dimness at eventide, in that he is buoyed up with good fortune in the present life, but is swallowed up by the darkness of calamity at the end; but to the righteous man the noonday splendour ariseth at eventide, in that he knows what exceeding brightness is in store for him when he has already begun to set. Hence it is written; *Whoso feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last*. [Ecclus. 1, 13] Hence it is declared by the Psalmist; *When He giveth His beloved sleep, this is* [*hoec est,* V. *ecce*] *the heritage of the Lord*. [Ps. 127, 2. 3.] He, while he is still set in the strife of this present life as well, 'when he thinketh himself consumed, ariseth like the morning star;' because whilst falling outwardly he is renewed inwardly. And the more that he encounters crosses without, the more richly he gleams with the light of his virtues within, as Paul testifies, who saith, *Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. [2 Cor. 4, 16] And it ought to be observed, that he never says, 'when thou art consumed,' but, 'when thou thinkest thyself

consumed,' in that both that which we see is doubtful, and that which we hope for certain. Whence too the same Paul did not know, but thought, that he was consumed, who even when falling headlong into sufferings and tribulations, shone bright like the morning star, saying, *As dying, and, behold, we live; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich.* [3 Cor. 6, 9. 10.] And we should know that the worse plight the mind of the good is reduced to for the love of the truth, the more sure and certain its hope of the rewards of eternity. Whence too it is justly added;

Ver. 18, *And thou shalt have confidence, because hope is set before thee,*

36. For hope lifts itself the more firmly rooted in God, in proportion as a man has suffered harder things for His sake, since the joy of the recompensing is never gathered in eternity, which is not first sown here below in religious sorrowing, Hence the Psalmist saith, *They went forth and wept as they went, bearing precious seed, but they shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them*. [Ps. 126, 6] Hence Paul saith, *If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him*. [2 Tim. 2, 11. 12.] Hence he warns his disciples, saying, *And that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*. [Acts 14, 22] Hence the Angel, shewing the glory of the Saints to John, saith, *These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*. [Rev. 7, 14] Therefore because we now sow in tribulation that we may afterwards reap the fruit of joy, the heart is strengthened with the larger measure of confidence in proportion as it is pressed with the heavier weight of affliction for the Truth's sake. Whence it is therefore fitly added,

Yea, being dug to the bottom [V. *defossus*]*, thou shalt rest secure.*

37. For just as present security begets toil to the wicked, so present toil begets perpetual security to the good. Hence he already knew that it was his 'to rest secure after he had been dug to the bottom,' who said, *For I am now*

ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: I have kept the faith Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day. [2 Tim. 4, 6. 8.] For as he had striven without giving over against transitory ills, doubtless he reckoned without misgiving on enduring joys.

38. Not but that the expression, 'been dug to the bottom,' may be understood in another sense also: for oftentimes being busied with transitory matters, we neglect to consider in what great things we go wrong; but if the eye of reflection being brought in, the pile of earthly thoughts be discharged from the recesses of the heart, what lay hid from sight within is disclosed to view; whence holy men never cease to explore the secret hiding places of their souls; minutely searching themselves, they throw off the cares of earthly things, and their thoughts being thoroughly dug up from the bottom [*effossis*], when they find that they are not cankered in any wise by the guilt of sin, they rest secure in themselves as upon the bed of the heart. For they desire to be hid apart from the courses of this world. They are always thinking on their own concerns, and when they are not at all tied by the harness of government, they decline to pass judgment on what concerns others. Therefore 'having been dug to the bottom they rest secure,' in that whilst with wakeful eye they dive into their inmost recesses, they withdraw themselves from the toilsome burthens of this world under the disengagement of repose. And hence it is yet further added,

Ver. 19. *Also thou shalt lie down, and there shall be none to make thee afraid.*

39. Whosoever seeks present glory doubtless dreads contempt. He, who is ever agape after gain, is ever surely in fear of loss. For that object, the receiving of which is medicine to him, the loss thereof is his wounding, and as he is rivetted under fetters to things mutable and destined to perish, so he

lies grovelling beneath, far apart from the stronghold of security. But, on the other hand, whoever is rooted in the desire of eternity alone, is neither uplifted by good fortune nor shaken by adverse fortune; whilst he has nought in the world which he desires, there is nought which he dreads from the world. For it is hence that Solomon saith, *It shall not grieve the just whatsoever shall happen unto him*. [Prov. 12, 21] Hence he says again, *The righteous as a bold lion shall be without alarm*. [Prov. 28, 1] Therefore it is rightly said here; *Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid*, in that everyone the more completely casts away from himself the fear that cometh from the world, the more thoroughly he overcomes in himself the lust of the world. Did not Paul lie down and rest in heart without fear, when he said, *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor strength* [So Vulg.], *nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*. [Rom. 8, 39] The force of which same love is commended by the true voice of the Holy Church, where it is said in the Song of songs, *For love is strong as death.* [Cant. 8, 6] For love is compared to the force of death, in that that soul which it has once taken possession of, it wholly kills to the delightfulness of the world, and sets it up the stronger in authority, that it renders it indifferent towards objects of terror. But herein it is to be known, that when bad men deliver right sentiments, it is very hard for them not to let themselves out upon that, which they are going after in secret within. Hence Zophar forthwith adds;

Yea, many shall make suit unto thee.

40. For the righteous do not keep themselves in the narrow paths of innocency with this view, that they may be implored by others, but whether heretics or any that be perverse, all of them, in that they live with an appearance of innocency among men, have the desire to shew themselves as

intercessors in behalf of men, and when in talk they convey holy truths, what they themselves are hankering after, they promise to others as something great; and whilst they tell of heavenly things, they soon shew by their pledges what their hearts are bent on. But lest by long continuing to promise earthly things, they may be made appear what they are, they quickly return to words of uprightness. Whence it is immediately added;

But the eyes if the wicked shall fail and refuge shall perish from them.

41. That by the designation of 'eyes' the energy of the intention is set forth to us, 'Truth' testifies in the Gospel, saying, *If thine eye shall be single, thy whole body shall be full of light*. [Matt. 6, 22] Forasmuch as if a pure intention have preceded our action, howsoever it may seem otherwise to men, yet to the eyes of our interior Judge, the body of the deed that follows after is presented pure. Therefore the 'eyes' of the wicked are the intentions of carnal desires in them, and these fail for this reason, that they are careless of their eternal interests, and are ever looking for transitory advantages alone. For they aim to get themselves an earthly name, they wish above all things to grow and increase in temporal goods, they are daily advancing with the tide of transient things to the goal of death; but they think not to take account of the things of mortality upon the principles of their mortal nature. The life of the flesh is failing minute by minute, and yet the desire of the flesh is growing; property gotten is snatched off by an instant end, yet the eagerness in getting is not ended the more; but when death withdraws the wicked, then indeed their desires are ended with their life. And the eyes of these fail them through the Avenging of the Most High, for that they would not fail here by their own determination to earthly gratification. These same eyes of such persons the Psalmist had seen closed to their former enjoyment, when he said, *In that day all their thoughts perish*. [Ps. 146, 4] For they meet at once with eternal woes they had never thought on, and on a sudden lose the temporal goods, they had long while

held and dealt with. And for these ‘all refuge shall perish,’ in that their iniquity finds not where to hide itself from the visitation of the searching Judge. For now, when the wicked undergo some slight mishaps or evil chances, they find a hiding-place for refuge, in that they forthwith have recourse to the enjoyment of earthly objects of desire. For that poverty torment them not, they beguile the spirit with riches. Or lest the contempt of their neighbours sink them, they exalt themselves with titles. If the body is cloyed with satiety, it is pampered with the variety of viands set before it. If the mind is weighed down by any impulse to sadness, it is immediately relieved by the beguilements of sportiveness being introduced. Here therefore they have as many places of refuge as they make for themselves entertainments of delight; but one time ‘refuge shall perish from them,’ in that their soul, when all these are gone, sees only itself and the Judge. Then the pleasure is withdrawn, but the guilt of pleasure is preserved; and ere long the miserable wretches learn by their perishing that they were perishable things they had possession of. Yet these as long as they live in the body never cease to seek after things of a nature to do them harm. Whence it is still further added,

And their hope shall be the abomination of the soul.

42. What does the sinner hope for here in all his thoughts saving to surpass others in power, to go beyond all men in the abundance of his stores, to bow down his rivals in lording it over them, to display himself as an object of admiration to his followers, to gratify anger at will, to make himself known as kind and gracious when he is commended, whatever the appetite longs for to offer to it, to acquiesce in all that pleasure dictates by the fulfilling of the thing? Well then is their hope said to be ‘the abomination of the soul,’ for the very same objects which carnal men go after, all spiritual persons abominate, according to the sentence of righteousness. For that which sinners account pleasure, the righteous,

surely, hold for pain. Therefore the hope of the wicked is the abomination of the soul, for the spirit is wasted while the body is at ease. For as the flesh is sustained by soft treatment, so is the soul by hard dealing; soothing appliances cherish the first, harsh methods exercise the last. The one is fed with enjoyment, the last thrives on bitterness. And as hardships wound the flesh, so softness kills the spirit, as things laborious kill the one, so things delightful destroy the other. Therefore the hope of carnal men is said to be the abomination of the soul; in that the spirit perishes for ever by the same means whereby the flesh lives pleasantly for a while.

43. Now Zophar would have said this aright, if blessed Job had not proclaimed it all more fully even by living accordingly. But whereas he sets himself to give an holier man admonition concerning the way of living, and to instruct one more skilled than himself with the tutorage of wisdom, he by his own act makes the weight of his words light, in that by letting in indiscreetness he undoes all that he says; in that he is pouring on the liquid element of knowledge into a full vessel. For the treasures of knowledge are possessed by the indiscreet just as treasures of corporal substance are often in the possession of fools. For some that are sustained by a full measure of earthly goods at times give largely even to those that have, that they may themselves seem to have them in fuller measure than all men. So the wicked, since they are imbued with truth, speak in some respects right even to those that are more light than they are, not that they may instruct others that hear them, but that they may make it appear with what a fund of instruction they are furnished. For they hold that they excel all men in wisdom, therefore they imagine that there is nothing that they can say to any man beyond the measure of their greatness. Thus all the wicked, thus all heretics are not afraid to instruct their betters with a high tone, in that they look upon all as inferior to themselves. But Holy Church recalls everyone that is high minded from the height of his self esteem, and

fashions him anew by the hand of discretion in the jointing of equality. Whence blessed Job, who is a member of the same Holy Church, seeing that the mind of his friend was swoln and big in words of instruction which he delivered, thereupon answered, saying,

Chap. xii. 2. *No doubt but ye are the only men, and wisdom shall die with you.*

44. Whosoever reckons himself to excel all men in the faculty of reason, what else does such a man but exult that he is the 'only Man?' And it often happens that when the mind is borne on high through pride, it is uplifted in contempt of all men, and in admiration of self. For self-applause springs up in the imagination, and folly is itself its own flatterer for singularity of wisdom. It ponders all that it has heard, and considers the words that it utters; and it admires its own, and scoffs at those of others. He then, who thinks that he only is wise, what else is this but that he believes that that same 'wisdom dies with him?' For what he denies to be with others, ascribing to himself alone, he doth, in truth, confine within the period of his brief span. But we are to consider what exact discretion the holy man employs, in order that the arrogance of his friends in the fulness of pride might be brought within bounds, in that he adds forthwith,

Ver.3. *But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you.*

45. For who is ignorant how greatly the practice and the knowledge of blessed Job excels the knowledge that his friends have? Now in order to correct their pride, he asserts that he is 'not inferior' to them, and lest he should transgress the limits of his own humility, he keeps to himself that he is superior to them; not by setting himself above, but by equalling himself to them, he points out what they should learn concerning themselves, who are far unlike to him; that whereas that wisdom which is high is voluntarily bowed down, the knowledge which lies grovelling may never erect itself against the nature of its powers, and he does well that he immediately

recalls these to a sense of their equal condition, reflecting that they are swoln to excess as if for singurality in greatness, when he afterwards proceeds,

Yea, who knoweth not such things as these that ye know?

46. As though he said in plain words; Since what ye say is known to all men, wherefore are ye puffed up by the knowledge contained in your sayings, as of singular merit? Therefore whereas in bringing back the pride of the self-conceited to a common level of equality, he has reproved with a full correction, he now breaks out into statements of instruction; that his friends having been humbled first might learn the weightiness of Truth, and how reverently they should hear it. It proceeds,

Ver. 4. *He that is mocked of his neighbour as I am, calleth upon God, and He answereth him.*

47. Oftentimes the frail mind, when it is welcomed by the breath of human regard on the score of good actions, runs out into outward delights, so that it lays aside what it inwardly desires, and willingly lies all loosely in that which it gives ear to without. So that it does not so much delight to become as to be called blessed; and whereas it gapes after the words of applause, it gives over what it had begun to be; and so it is severed from God by the same means by which it appeared to be commendable in God. But sometimes it presses forward in good practice with a constant heart, and yet is pushed hard by the scoffs of men; it does admirable deeds, and gets only abuse; and he that might have been made to go forth without by commendations, being repulsed by insults, returns back again into himself; and stablishes himself the more firmly in God, that he findeth no place without when he may rest in peace: for all his hope is fixed in his Creator. And amidst scoffs and revilings, the interior Witness is alone implored. And his soul in his distress becomes God's neighbour, in proportion as he is a stranger to the favour of man's esteem. He forthwith pours himself out in

prayer, and being pressed without, he is refined with a more perfect purity to penetrate into all within. Therefore it is well said at this time, *He that is mocked of his neighbour as I am, will call upon God, and He will hear him*. For whilst the wicked reproach the soul of the good, they are shewing them Whom to seek as the Witness of their actions. And while their soul in compunction braces itself in prayer, it is united within itself to the hearing of the Most High, by the same act whereby it is severed from the applause of man without itself. But we ought to note how thoughtfully the words are inserted, *as I am*. For there be some men whom both the scoffings of their fellow-creatures sink to the ground, and yet they are not such as to be heard by the ears of God. For when mocking issues against sin, surely no virtuous merit is begotten in that mocking. For the priests of Baal, when they called upon him with clamorous voices, were mocked by Elijah, when he said, *Cry aloud; for he is a god either he is talking, or he is staying on a journey*. [1 Kings 18, 27] But this mocking was conducive to the service of virtue, in that it came by the deserts of sin. So that it is advisedly said now, *He that is mocked of his friend, as I am, calleth upon God, and He heareth him*. For the mockery of his fellow-creatures makes Him God's neighbour, whom innocency of life keeps a stranger to his fellow-creatures' wickednesses. It proceeds,

For the upright man's simplicity is laughed to scorn.

48. It is the wisdom of this world to overlay the heart with inventions, to veil the sense with words; things that are false to shew for true, what is true to make out fallacious. This is the wisdom that is acquired by the young by practice. This is learnt at a price by children, they that are acquainted with it are filled with pride, despising other men; they that know nothing of it, being subdued and browbeaten, admire it in others; for this same duplicity of wickedness, being glossed over by a name, is their joy and delight, so long as frowardness of mind goes by the title of urbanity. She dictates to her

followers to seek the high places of honour, to triumph in attaining the vain acquisition of temporal glory; to return manifold the mischiefs that others bring upon us; when the means are with us, to give way to no man's opposition; when the opportunity of power is lacking, all whatsoever he cannot accomplish in wickedness to represent in the guise of peaceable good nature. But on the other hand it is the wisdom of the righteous, to pretend nothing in show, to discover the meaning by words; to love the truth as it is, to eschew falsehood; to set forth good deeds for nought, to bear evil more gladly than to do it; to seek no revenging of a wrong, to account opprobrium for the Truth's sake to be a gain. But this simplicity of the righteous is 'laughed to scorn,' in that the goodness of purity is taken for folly with the wise men of this world. For doubtless every thing that is done from innocency is accounted foolish by them, and whatever truth sanctions in practice sounds weak to carnal wisdom. For what seems worse folly to the world than to shew the mind by the words, to feign nothing by crafty contrivance, to return no abuse for wrong, to pray for them that speak evil of us, to seek after poverty, to forsake our possessions, not to resist him that is robbing us, to offer the other cheek to one that strikes us? Whence that illustrious Wise one of God speaks well to the lovers of this world, *We shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God* [Exod. 8, 26]. For the Egyptians loathe to eat the flesh of sheep, but that which the Egyptians loathe, the Israelites offer up to God; for that singleness of conscience, which the unrighteous one and all scorn as a thing most mean and abject, the righteous turn into a sacrifice of virtue, and the just in their worshipping sacrifice purity and mildness to God, which the sons of perdition in abomination thereof account weakness. Which same simplicity of the righteous man is briefly yet adequately expressed, in that the words are forthwith introduced;

Ver. 5. *A lamp despised in the thought of the rich.*

49. What is denoted in this place by the title of the 'rich,' but the highmindedness of the proud, who have no respect for the judge that shall come, while they are swollen with proud thoughts within themselves? For there are some that by a fortune are not lifted up in pride, but elevated thereby through works of mercy. And there are some who, while they see that they overflow with earthly resources, do not look for the true riches of God, and have no affection to the eternal land, for they think that this is enough for them, that they are set up with temporal goods. The fortune then is not in fault, but the feeling. For all things that God created are good, but he who uses good things amiss, assuredly brings it about that as it were through gluttonness of greedy appetite, he perishes by the bread whereby he ought to live. The beggar Lazarus attained to rest, but torments racked the proud rich one. And yet Abraham was rich, who held Lazarus in his bosom. Yet holding commune with his Maker, he says, *I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes!* [Gen. 18, 27] How then did he know to set a value on riches, who accounted himself to be *dust and ashes*? or how could his possessions even exalt him, who entertained such poor notions about himself who was the owner of them?

50. Yet again there are some, to whom earthly property is not vouchsafed, and yet they are set up in their own eyes, in height of swollen pride. At the same time that there is no fortune at all to uplift these to the display of power, yet the frowardness of their ways assigns them a place among the lost children of riches. All, then, that love of the life to come does not fill with abasement, the sacred word here calls rich. For in the avenging of Judgment, there is no difference to them whether they be swollen with goods, or only in disposition. These, when they see the life of the simple sort in this world to be lowly and abased, forthwith scoff at them with proud scornings; for they mark that that is wholly wanting to them without, which they pant after themselves with their best endeavours.

Therefore they look down upon them as fools, who are without those things, by the having or merely loving of which they themselves in truth are perishing; and they take those for dead, whom they observe in no sort to live with themselves after the flesh. For he that dies from the desires of this world, is of course held by earthly minds to be utterly dead. Which is well represented by the miracle of our Redeemer when He frees a man from an unclean spirit, concerning which same it is written: *And the spirit cried and rent him sore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, he is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose*: [Mark 9, 26. 27.] for he looks like one dead that is set free from the power of an evil spirit. For whosoever has already got the better of earthly desires, makes the life of carnal conversation extinct in himself; and he seems dead to the world, in that he lacks the wicked one that possessed him, who urged him by impure desires; and many call him dead, in that they who know not how to live spiritually, look upon him who does not follow carnal good to be wholly lifeless.

51. But because the very scoffers at the simple ones are themselves too enrolled under the name of Christians, being overruled by reverence for religion, they are ashamed to make a display of the sin of open scoffing. Whence it happens that full of pride in themselves, and in silence, they scoff at those whom they take to be utterly mean and abject from their simplicity. Therefore it is well expressed, *A lamp is despised in the thought of the rich*; for all the proud, whereas they are unskilled to estimate the blessings to come, as we have said above, account him almost as nothing whom they do not see to be possessed of that which they are devoted to. For it often happens that each one of the Elect, who is being conducted to eternal bliss, is overwhelmed here with unintermitted calamity, there is no plentifulness of stores that buoys him up, no lustre from titles that makes him conspicuous, no crowd of followers falls to his lot, no pomp of raiment

makes him a figure in the eyes of men, but he is regarded as an object of contempt by all men, and accounted unworthy of the regard of this world. Yet in the eyes of the hidden Judge he is bright with virtues, and full of lustre from the merits of his life; he dreads to be honoured, he never shrinks from being despised, he disciplines the body by continence, he is fattened by love alone in the soul, he ever sets his mind to bear with patience, and standing erect on the ground of righteousness, he exults in the insults he receives, he compassionates the distressed from his heart, he rejoices in the successes of the good as in his own, he carefully ruminates the provender of the sacred word in his heart, and when examined he is unskilled to give a double answer; 'a lamp' because he is bright within, 'despised' because he is not luminous without. Inwardly he glows with the flame of charity, without he shines with no gloriousness of luster. Therefore he shines and is despised, who, while he glows with virtue, is accounted vile. Hence it is that his own father looked down upon holy David, when he refused to present him to the eyes of the Prophet Samuel, He, when he had brought cut seven sons to receive the grace of anointing, being questioned by the Prophet whether he had gone through the whole number of his children, answered with despair enough, *There remaineth yet a little boy that keepeth the sheep*; and when he was brought forward and chosen, he heard the words, *Man looketh in the face, but the Lord searcheth the heart*. [1 Sam. 16, 10. &c.] Thus David was a lamp by his innocency, but yet a lamp greatly despised, in that he gave no light to those that regard the outside appearance. But be it known that every righteous man is either without temporal glory, or if he has it, he breaks it beneath himself, that he may freely rise on high above his own honour, lest overcome by enjoyment he be brought down beneath it. It is hence that that illustrious Preacher lowered the glory of his Apostleship before the eyes of men, saying, *We have not used this power, when we might have been burthensome as the Apostles of*

Christ, but we made ourselves little children among you. [1 Thess. 2, 6. 7.] But the swelling of the neck still remained in the heart of the hearers of that same person, when they said, *For his letters say they are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.* [2 Cor. 10, 10] For him who they knew could say such things they determined could not live in common with themselves, and when they both saw him lowly in his mode of life and high in his tone of speech, their pride drove them on, that him whose writings had made him to be feared, his words in presence should make an object of little account. What then was Paul, saving 'a lamp despised in the thought of the rich,' who by the same act whereby he set forth a lesson of humility, got the affronts of highmindedness from ill-instructed disciples. For in a dreadful way, the sickness of those so filled with pride was increased by the same means, whereby it ought to have subsided; while the proud mind of carnal persons rejected, as if it were worthy of scorn that which their master set forth as deserving of imitation. Was not he 'a lamp despised,' who when he shone forth with so many virtues, underwent such adverse treatment at the hands of his persecutors? He discharges his mission in chains, and his bonds are made known in all the palace, he is beaten with rods, he is beset with numberless dangers from his own race and from the Gentiles; at Lystra he is battered with stones, he is dragged by the feet without the city, in that he is taken for dead. But to what point is this 'lamp despised?' Up to what point is it held contemptible? Does it never at any point unveil its lustre? Does it never shew, with what excess of brightness it glows? It does shew clearly. For when it is said that the 'lamp is despised in the thought of the rich,' it is therefore added,

Prepared for an appointed time.

52. For the 'appointed time' for 'the despised lamp' is the predestined Day of final Judgment, wherein it is shewn how each one of the righteous, who is now contemned, shines bright in greatness of power. For then they

come as judges with God, who now are judged unjustly for God's sake. Then their Light shines over so much the wider space, the more cruelly the persecutor's hand confines and fetters them now. Then it will be made clear to the eyes of the wicked, that they were supported by heavenly power, who forsook all earthly things of their free will. Whence Truth saith to His own Elect; *Ye which have followed Me, in the Regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. [Mat. 19, 28] Not that the court of the interior Assize will have no more than twelve judges, but, surely, that by the number twelve the amount of the whole is described; for whosoever being urged by the incitement of divine love, has forsaken all that he possessed here, shall doubtless attain there to the height of judicial power; that he may then come as judge in company with the Judge, who now by consideration of the Judgment chastens himself with voluntary poverty. For hence it is that it is said by Solomon concerning the spouse of Holy Church, *Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land*. [Prov. 31, 23] Hence Isaiah says, *The Lord will come to judgment, with the elders of His people*. [Is. 3, 14] Hence Truth proclaims these same Elders now no longer servants but friends. *Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends*. [John 15, 15] And the Psalmist regarding these same saith, *Honourable also are thy friends unto me, O God*. [Ps. 139, 17] And whilst he beheld their loftiness of mind, and how they trod down with the heel of the foot the glory of the world, he thereupon added, *How stablished is their rule!* And that we might not think that they be few, who we learn thus advance even to the summit of such high perfection, he thereupon added, *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand*. For as many persons, then, as now wittingly abase themselves for the love of the Truth, so many lamps shall then blaze forth in the Judgment. Therefore let it be justly said, *A lamp despised in the thought*

of the rich, prepared for the appointed time; for the soul of every righteous man is despised as abject, when in passing through life he is without glory; but he is beheld as an object to admire, when he shines from on high.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

53. Amid these things it is good to lift the eye of the mind to the paths of our Redeemer, and to proceed step by step from the members to the head. For He did Himself prove truly 'a lamp' to us, Who by dying upon the Cross for our redemption, poured light through the wood into our benighted minds. John had attained to see that we are lightened by this Lamp, when he said, *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*. [John 1, 9] Yet he saw it 'despised in the thought of the rich,' when he soon after brought in, *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not*. [ver. 11] Herod desired to examine into the flames of this Lamp, when he longed to see the miracles of that One, as it is written, *For he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him, and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by Him*. [Luke 23, 8] But this Lamp did not shine forth before his eyes with a single ray of light, in that to him, who sought Him not from piety but from curiosity, He exhibited nothing wonderful concerning Himself. For our Redeemer when He was questioned held His peace, when He was looked for, He scorned to shew forth His miracles, and keeping Himself to Himself in secret, those whom He found looking for outward things He left in their ingratitude without, rather choosing to be openly despised by those who were led by pride, than to be commended with empty voice by those that did not believe. And hence this 'Lamp' is straightway 'despised,' according to what is there added, *And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe.* [Luke 23, 11]

54. Yet the ‘despised lamp,’ which is subject to scoffings on earth, flashes judgment from heaven. Hence it is justly added here, *prepared for an appointed season*. Concerning which same season He saith by the Psalmist, *When I shall receive the time, I will judge uprightly*. [Ps. 75, 2] Hence in the Gospel ‘Truth’ declareth, saying, *My time is not yet come*. [John 7, 6] Hence Peter saith, *Whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things*. [Acts 3, 21] Therefore the ‘Lamp’ which is now ‘despised’ is ‘prepared’ for its coming ‘at the appointed season.’ For He by Himself judgeth sin on the last Day, Who now bears with the scoffs of sinners, and then He brings out severity the more rigorously, the more mildly He now spreads low His patience in calling sinners. For he that awaits long while for some to be converted, if they be not converted, torments them without revoke. Which same truth he conveys by the Prophet in few words, saying, *I have long time holden my peace, I have been still and refrained myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman*. [Is. 42, 14] For as we have already before said, a woman in travail with pain gives forth that which she bore for long in her inner parts, He then that for long time held his peace, ‘crieth like a travailing woman,’ in that the Judge that shall come, who for long bore with the deeds of men without taking vengeance, sooner or later brings to light with hotness of examination, as if with pain of mind, the sentence of direful visiting which He kept within. Therefore let none despise this Lamp, when it is out of sight, lest He burn up His despisers when He shineth from heaven. For to whomsoever He does not now burn to give pardon, He shall then assuredly burn to award punishment. Therefore because by grace from above we are vouchsafed the season of our calling, whilst there is still the room left, let us by altering our ways for the better flee from the wrath of Him, Who is every where present. For him alone that visitation fails to find, whom correction keeps in hiding.

55. Let it suffice for us by the Lord's bounty to have now run through these particulars in two volumes [*corporibus*]. For because we cannot embrace in a brief exposition the following parts of the sacred book, drawn out in the stream of mysteries, we must of necessity reserve them for other sheets, that the reader may return the more ardent to the task of reading, in proportion as he has breathing given him by the interruption of what is read.

BOOK XI.

In which the twelfth chapter, from the sixth verse, the thirteenth, and the first four verses of the fourteenth, are explained, a different style being adopted for the time.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. THOUGH in a long work variableness of style ought not to be a matter of blame, yet lest any should censure me for change in my way of expressing myself, in the Epistle which was prefixed to these books, I gave the reasons 1 why I never brought the third part of this Work up to a likeness and accordance with the others by amending it. And while these are omitted, there is this added further, that the interpretation of this same part begins from the verse in which it is said, *The tabernacles of robbers have plenty, &c.* and reaches down in the handling thereof to that which is written, *Their sweetness shall be through the worm, &c.* which in fact includes so much, that it is impossible all should be comprised in one volume, except it be reduced to great brevity; and so let anyone that is free from other employments read the other parts that are given in a multiplied form, but for him, who has no time to read with diligent application, the shortness of this part may be to his mind, wherein we do not so much deliver what we have in our mind, as mark what there is to deliver. Therefore, whereas I have herein left many things such as they were received from me by word of mouth, take kindly, reader, this change of style, in that to people eating often the same meats, a difference in the mode of cooking is acceptable. But as you take the several parts to read, make it your business ever to recall to mind that original of the case which I have set forth; how that both by blessed Job, who is called 'Grieving,' are denoted the sufferings of our Lord and of His Body, i.e. the holy Church,

and that his friends bear the likeness of heretics, who, as we have often said already, whilst they strive to defend, only offend God; and these, whilst they falsely abet, forcibly wound the souls of Saints. Yet not that in all which they say they are void of understanding in knowledge of the truth, but for the most part they blend what is wise with what is foolish, and the true with the false; that while they first propose somewhat on the side of truth, they may easily draw aside into falsehood. And hence too, what the friends of blessed Job utter is one while worthy of contempt, and at another time deserves admiration, which same the holy man whilst sometimes discarding he condemns it, sometimes approving admits, and turns to the account of righteousness even the very things, which, though right, are not by them rightly delivered; and so he scorns them, when they scorn his destitution, and, placed upon a dunghill in the body, he shews on how high a summit of virtue he is seated within, when he records that this life's riches are nought, which he describes to be abundantly bestowed even on the sons of perdition, saying;

Ver. 6. *The tabernacles of robbers have plenty, and they provoke God with boldness; when He hath given all into their hand.*

2. It is easy for a man, at the time, to despise riches, when he has them, but it is hard to hold them worthless, when he lacks them. Hence it is clearly shewn, how great a contempt of earthly things was lodged in the breast of blessed Job, who then declares that all is nought which the lost enjoy in plenty, at the time when he had lost every thing. Thus he says, The tabernacles of robbers have plenty, and they provoke God with boldness; for it very commonly happens that bad men set themselves up the more against God, even the more they are enriched by His bounty contrary to their desert, and they that ought to be impelled by good gifts to better conduct, are rendered worse men by the blessings.

3. But we have to make out how they are called ‘robbers,’ whereas it is thereupon added, *When He hath given all into their hands*. For if they are robbers, then they took by force, and there is no doubt that God is no abettor of those that use force. In what sense then does He Himself bestow what they that are robbers carry off by wicked means? We are to know then that what Almighty God in His mercy vouchsafes is one thing, and another thing what in His wrath He suffers men to have; for that which robbers do contrary to right the Equal Dispenser no otherwise than justly permits to be done by them, that both the man who is let to rob being blinded in mind may increase his guilt, and that he who suffers from his robbing, may now in the mischief thereof be chastised for some sin, which he had been guilty of before. For look, a man taking post in the pass of a mountain lies in wait for travellers passing by; now he that is taking his journey perchance has done some wickedness at one time or another, and Almighty God requiting him his evil-doing in the present life, and giving him into the hands of the lier-in-wait, suffers him either to be spoiled of his goods, or even to be killed. And so what the robber unjustly aimed at, the same the Equitable Judge justly permitted to be done, that both the one might be repaid what he had done contrary to justice, and the other might one time or another receive the worse chastisement, by whose voluntary deed of atrocity Almighty God brought just vengeance for sin upon the head of another. He is cleansed that suffers the wrong: in the case of him that does the wrong guilt is accumulated; that either from the very depth of wickedness he may one day be brought back to repentance, or else be visited with eternal damnation, aggravated in proportion as he was borne with for long in his sin. With the first He deals in mercy that he may bring his sins to an end, with the other in severity that he may greatly add thereto, unless he betake himself to repentance; in the one evil deeds are wiped away while he suffers violence, in the other they are accumulated while he offers it. Therefore it is

meet and right that Almighty God suffer that to be done which He forbids to be done, that by the very same act, whereby He now awaits and bears with the unconverted for long, He may one day smite them the worse. Therefore it is rightly said, *The tabernacles of robbers are in plenty, and they provoke God with boldness; when He giveth all into their hand*; for what the wicked take away, He does Himself give them, Who might have withstood them in their rapine, if He had been minded to pity them.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

4. Yet this may likewise be understood of spiritual things. For it very often happens that some have gifts of teaching vouchsafed them, yet they are swoln with the same, and have a desire to appear great by comparison with others. And to 'provoke' Almighty God is to be lifted up amongst our neighbours on the score of His gifts. Which same also are not unjustly called 'robbers,' in that whilst they speak what they never do, they take away the words of the righteous to serve the turn of their own speech. But because those very words heavenly Grace vouchsafes to some persons, whose lives notwithstanding it leaves in a course of wickedness, in themselves they are 'robbers;' but yet the good that is theirs they have gotten from above. It goes on;

Ver. 7, 8. *But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fouls of the air, and they shall tell thee. Or speak to the earth, and it shall answer thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.*

5. What are we to understand by 'the beasts,' but men of slow parts; and what by 'the fowls of the air,' but those that are skilled in high and sublime truths? For of 'the beasts,' i.e. the dull of sense, it is written; *Thine animals* [V. so] *shall dwell therein*. [Ps. 68, 10] And forasmuch as those, who have minds for sublime themes, soar among the words of the Redeemer, it is written, *So that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.*

[Matt. 13, 32] And what by 'the earth,' saving men whose taste is for earthly things? Hence too it is said to the first man on his forsaking the things of heaven, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*. [Gen. 3, 19] What are we to understand by 'the fishes of the sea,' but the inquisitive ones of this world, concerning whom the Psalmist saith, *The fish of the sea, that pass through the paths of the seas*. [Ps. 8, 8] Which same busy themselves in large researches into things, as it were in undiscoverable floods. Now what all these teach upon being so interrogated, he adds, saying,

Ver. 9. *Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?*

6. As if he said in plain terms; 'Whether you ask the dull of understanding, or persons full of the loftiest subjects, or those devoted to earthly ways, or the men busied with investigations that belong to this world, all of them acknowledge God to be the Creator of all things, and with one consent agree about His Power, though they do not with one consent live in submission to it. For that which the righteous man speaks by his way of living too, that the unrighteous man generally is constrained to own concerning God by his voice alone, if not otherwise; and it comes to pass that evil-doers, by attesting Him, do homage to the Creator of all things, Whom by their deeds they rebel against, in that Him, Whom they have dared to fight against by their lives, they cannot deny to be the Creator of all things.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

Yet this same may also be understood to good purpose after the mere form of the letter alone; in that every creature, when it is looked at, as it were utters a voice of its own, bearing witness by that mere form which it has. We ask 'the beasts,' or 'the fowls of the air,' 'the earth,' or 'the fish,' whilst

we view them, and these answer us with one accord, that ‘the Hand of the Lord hath wrought all things,’ in that whilst they present their lineaments to our eyes, they bear witness that they are not from themselves. For by the mere circumstance that they are created, by the figure they present, they render as it were the voice of confession to their Creator, Who, as He created all things, likewise ordained how they should be conducted. Hence it is added,

Ver.10. *In Whose Hand is the soul of every living thing, and the spirit of all flesh of man.*

7. For by the ‘Hand’ Power is denoted. Thus ‘the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind,’ is in the Power of Him, from Whom it has its being, that He Himself should appoint in what condition it should be, Who vouchsafed that to be, which was not. But by ‘the soul of every living thing’ may be denoted the life of beasts. Now Almighty God quickens the soul of beasts to the extent of the corporeal senses, but man’s spirit He draws out to a spiritual understanding; and thus ‘in His Hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all flesh of men,’ in that both the one, He bestows this power on the soul that it should give life to the flesh, and in the other He quickens the soul to this degree, that it should attain to the understanding of eternity. But we are to bear in mind that in Holy Writ ‘the spirit of man’ is wont to be put in two ways. For sometimes ‘the spirit’ is put for the soul, sometimes for spiritual agency. Thus ‘the spirit’ is put for the soul, as it is written of our own Head Himself, *And He bowed His Head, and gave up His Spirit* [*spiritum,* Vulg.]. [John 19, 30] For if the Evangelist had called any thing else ‘the spirit’ saving the soul, then surely upon that spirit departing, the soul would have remained. Moreover, the term ‘spirit’ is used for spiritual agency, as where it is written, *Who maketh His Angels spirits, His Ministers a flaming fire*. [Ps. 104, 4] For Preachers are occasionally called ‘Angels,’ i.e. ‘bearers of tidings,’ in Holy Writ, as

where it is said by the Prophet, *The priest's lips keep knowledge, and they seek the law from his mouth: for he is the Angel* [V. *Angelus*] *of the Lord of Hosts*. [Mal. 2, 7] Thus Almighty God 'maketh His Angels spirits,' in that He changeth His Preachers into spiritual men. But in this passage, if by 'the soul of every living thing,' the mere life of the body is denoted, by the 'spirit of all flesh of man,' there is set forth the agency of a spiritual understanding. It goes on;

Ver. 11. *The ear trieth words, and the mouth of the eater savour.*

8. There is scarce a person that is ignorant that the five senses of our body, viz. of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, in all their operations of perceiving and discriminating derive the power of perception and discrimination from the brain. And whereas there is but one judge that presides within, viz. the percipient faculty of the brain, yet by their proper passages he keeps five senses distinct, God causing great marvels, so that neither the eye should hear, nor the ear see, the mouth take in scent, the nose taste, nor the hands smell; and whereas all things are determined by the one faculty of the brain. Yet no one of the senses can do aught but what it received by the Creator's appointment. And so by these corporeal and external arrangements we are left to gather the interior and spiritual ones; so that by that which is open to the eye in us, we ought to pass on to the secret thing that is in us, and escapes our eyes. For we are to observe, that whereas there is one Wisdom, it dwells in one man less, in another more. To one it gives this function, to another that; and in the manner of the brain, it uses ourselves like so many senses, that though in itself it bears no dissimilitude to itself, yet by us it is ever working different and dissimilar operations, so as for this man to receive the gift of wisdom, and that the gift of knowledge; one to have kinds of tongues, and another the grace of healing.

9. But in these words wherein blessed Job saith, *The ear trieth words, and the mouth of the eater savour*, he seems likewise to imply something

about the Elect and the damned; for the words of wisdom, which the children of perdition hear, the Elect not only hear but taste too, that that should have a savour for them in the heart, which conveys no sound to the minds of the damned, but only to their ears. For it is one thing to hear food named only, and another thing to taste of it also; then the Elect so hear of the meat of wisdom, that they taste of it, in that what they hear is full of relish to them in their very marrow [*medulitus*] from love; but the knowledge of the reprobate extends only to the cognizance of the sound, so that they hear indeed of virtues, but yet from coldness of heart they know nothing what a relish they have. By which same words blessed Job condemns the inexperience of his friends, and the presumption of all that are puffed up for their learning in wisdom, in that it is one thing to know somewhat concerning God, and another to taste with the mouth of understanding the thing that is known. Therefore it is well said, *Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth of the eater savour?* As if it were said to the presumptuous in plain words, 'The words of instruction, which came to you only so far as to the ear, to me touch the mouth of understanding likewise in the inward savour.' But because a weak age, even when it hath a right sense, should not spring forth with incautious haste to preach, it is rightly added;

Ver. 12. *With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding.*

10. For these sayings are set fast in the root of wisdom, which by continuance in living, are also made strong by the practice of deeds. But because there are many to whom at once longer life is given, and yet no grace of wisdom vouchsafed, it is further shewn with propriety on whose decision the gifts themselves depend, whilst it is added;

Ver. 13. *With Him is wisdom and strength: He hath counsel and understanding.*

11. We not unfitly interpret these words of the Only begotten Son of the Supreme Father, so as to understand Him to be Himself 'the Wisdom and Strength of God.' For Paul also bears testimony to our interpretation, in the words, *Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God*. [1 Cor. 1, 24] Who is ever 'with Him,' in that, *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. [John 1, 1] But God 'hath counsel and understanding;' 'counsel,' in that He orders His own matters, 'understanding,' in that He knows ours. By the naming of 'counsel' may also be denoted the mere delay of secret judgment alone, as that He is sometimes slow in striking offenders, not because the sin of bad men is not seen, but that their sentence of condemnation, which is delayed for the practising of penance, may seem as if out of counsel slow to issue forth. And so what the public declaration one day reveals without, that lay hid with the Almighty Lord in counsel before the world began. It proceeds;

Ver. 14. *If He break down, there is none that can build again: if He shut up a man, there is none that can open.*

12. Almighty God 'breaks down' the heart of man, when He forsakes it; He 'builds it up,' when He fills it. For He does not destroy man's soul by consummation of war, but by withdrawing Himself from it; in that when it is left to itself, it wants nothing to its own ruin. Whence it commonly happens, that when the heart of the hearer, in due of his sins, is not filled with Almighty God's grace, it is in vain that he is outwardly admonished by the preacher. For every mouth that speaks is but mute, if He does not utter a voice in the heart within, Who inspires the words that are admitted into the ears. Hence the Prophet saith, *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it*. [Ps 127, 1] Hence Solomon saith, *Consider the work of God; for who can set him right whom He hath despised?* [Eccles. 7, 13] Nor is it strange, if the preacher is not attended to by the reprobate soul, since it sometimes happens that the Lord Himself, in the things which He speaks, is

withstood by the tempers of those that withstand Him. For hence it is that Cain could be admonished even by the voice of God, yet could not be changed, because as due to the sin of his evil heart, within God had already forsaken the soul, to which outwardly He addressed words to serve for a testimony. And it is well added, *If He shut up a man, there is none that can open*; in that every man, whereinsoever he does wrong, what else does he but make for himself a prison-house of his own conscience, that guiltiness of soul may oppress him even though no man accuse him without? And when by the judgment of God he is left in the blindness of his evil heart, he is as it were shut up within himself, that he may never find a place of escape, which he never deserves to find. For it often happens that there are persons who long to quit their bad practices, but because they are weighed to the ground by the burthen of them, being shut up in the prison-house of bad habit, they are unable to go forth of themselves. And there are some that anxiously desiring to visit their own offences with punishment, turn into worse offences what they reckon themselves to be doing aright; and it is brought to pass in a lamentable way, that what they take for their going out they find to be their imprisoning. Thus the reprobate Judas, when he inflicted death upon himself to spite sin, was brought to the punishment of eternal death, and repented of sin in a more heinous way than he had committed sin.

13. Therefore let it be said, *If He shutteth up a man, there is none that can open*. For as no man withstands His bountifulness in calling, so no one withstands His justice in forsaking; and so for God to 'shut up' is, not to open to those that are shut up; and hence it is said to Moses concerning Pharaoh, *I will harden his heart*. [Gen. 27, 5] For God is said to harden the heart in executing justice, when He does not soften the reprobate heart in bestowing grace. And so He 'shuts up' the man, whom He leaves in the darkness of his own practices. For Isaac desired to open this shutting up to

his first-born son, when he endeavoured to set him before his brother in blessing him. But the son whom the father desired, the Lord rejected; and him, whom the Lord desired, the father blessed even against his will; that he, who had sold his birthright to his brother for a meal, might not get the blessing of the first-born, which he had relinquished through a gluttonous appetite; who, whilst that aiming at earthly objects, following after transitory things, he desired to inherit the blessing, was rejected. For *he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears* [Heb. 12, 17]; for tears have no fruit, which are spent on regretting with sighs things destined to perish. And so Isaac could not open even to his son, whom Almighty God by a just judgment shut up in the prison-house of his evil heart. It proceeds;

Ver. 15. *If He withholdeth the waters, all things are dried up. If He sendeth them out, they will overturn the earth.*

14. If 'water' be understood of knowledge for preaching, as when it is written, *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as an overflowing brook* [Prov. 18, 4]; when 'water is withheld, all is dried up,' in that if the knowledge of the preacher is withdrawn, the hearts of those that might have flourished in eternal hope, are forthwith 'dried up,' that they should remain in hopeless barrenness, whilst, in love with transitory things, they care not to look for those which shall abide. But if by the term of 'water' the grace of the Holy Spirit is denoted, as it is said by the voice of truth in the Gospel, *He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water* [John 7, 38]; in which place the Evangelist immediately added*, But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe in Him should receive*; a suitable sense is laid open in these words wherein he saith, *Behold He withholdeth the waters, and all things are dried up*; in that if the grace of the Holy Spirit be withdrawn from the hearer's mind, the sense is at once

‘dried up,’ which already through hope seemed to be green in the hearer. But forasmuch as he does not mention ‘water’ but ‘waters,’ by the plural designation, he refers to the sevenfold grace of spiritual gifts, inasmuch as everyone is filled, so to speak, with as many waters as he is replenished with gifts, of which it is fitly added,

Also if He sendeth them out, they will overturn the earth.

15. For what is ‘the earth’ taken for, but the sinner, to whom it is said in sentence, *Dust* [Lat. *Terra*] *thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return?* Thus the earth remains immoveable when the sinner scorns to obey the precepts of the Lord, when he erects the neck of pride, and shuts the mind’s eyes to the light of truth. But whereas it is written, *His feet stood, and the earth was moved* [Hab. 3, 6. see lxx]; in that when Truth is rooted in the heart, the immoveableness of the mind is stirred; if the grace of the Holy Spirit, by bestowal from above, is infused according to the voice of the preacher, instantly the earth is ‘overturned,’ in that the obduracy of the guilty soul is changed from the stubbornness of its immobility, that it should afterwards bow down itself in weeping to the precepts of the Lord, as much as it afore time erected the neck in swelling high against the Lord. For you may see that the earth of the human heart, when the water of God’s blessing is poured upon it, afterwards gladly bears injuries, which before it outrageously inflicted; afterwards even gives its own, whereas before it even laid hands on the things of others; afterwards tortures the flesh by practising abstinence, whereas before, in the plenishing of the flesh, it let itself loose in the deadly gratifications of gross sensualities; afterwards loves its very persecutors, whereas before it refused to love even those that loved itself. When, then, the human soul watered by God’s bounty begins to act contrary to what was its wont, ‘the earth is overturned,’ in that the part is put down, which before reared itself on high, and the face is lifted upwards, which was before weighed down deeply below.

16. It seems well in illustration of this point to bring forward Paul as one among many. Who when he was on his way to Damascus armed with letters against Christ [Acts 9, 1], being on his journey watered with the grace of the Holy Spirit, was changed on the spot from that bloodthirsty purpose which he had, and afterwards received those strokes in Christ's behalf, which he was journeying with the intention of inflicting upon Christians; and he who before, when living after the flesh, strove to deliver the Saints of the Lord over to death, is afterwards rejoiced to offer the sacrifice of his flesh for the life of the Saints. Those cold-blooded purposes of cruelty are turned into the warmth of pity; and he that aforetime was a blasphemer and a persecutor, afterwards becomes a humble and compassionate preacher. [1 Tim. 1, 13] He, who accounted it great gain to him to slay Christ in His Disciples [Acts 9, 1], now holds 'Christ to be his life, and to die gain;' [Phil. 1, 21] and so when He 'sendeth out the waters, the earth is overturned,' in that the mind of Paul, the moment he received the grace of the Holy Spirit, altered the fixture of his stubbornness and cruelty. Contrary to which the Lord utters the complaint against Ephraim, by the Prophet, saying, *Ephraim is a cake under the ashes* [V. so] *not turned*. [Hos. 7, 8] For a cake under the ashes, that hath ashes upon it, lays the cleaner side flat to the ground, and has the upper side the fouler, in proportion as it carries the ashes upon it. And so with the mind that harbours earthly thoughts, what else does it carry upon itself but a load of ashes? But if it will be 'turned,' the clean surface, which it had kept downwards, it brings back to the top, when it has shaken off the ashes that it had upon it. If therefore we shake off from the mind the ashes of earthly thoughts, as it were we 'turn the cake under the ashes,' that that bent of our mind may henceforth go to the rear, which the ashes of grovelling thought before overlaid, and the clean face come to the top, that our right bent of mind may not henceforth be surcharged with the weight of earthly desire. Which we can never do,

except we be bedewed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, in that when Almighty God 'sendeth out the waters, they will overturn the earth.' It proceeds;

Ver. 16. *With Him is strength and wisdom.*

17. A little above it had been said, *With Him is wisdom and strength*; but now it is said, *With Him is strength and wisdom*. For because Almighty God, when in the mystery of pitifulness He was made Man, first gave the lesson of mildness, and afterwards at the Judgment He shews what strength He is of; it is rightly done that in the place above Wisdom is mentioned before Strength, when the thing is spoken of the Only Begotten Son of the Father, With Him is Wisdom and Strength. But forasmuch as when He cometh to judge, He will appear in the terribleness of His power, and the damned being cast off, will manifest to His Elect in His everlasting kingdom, how He is 'the Wisdom' of the Father, it is lightly said in the subsequent sentence, that with Him is first 'strength' and then 'wisdom.' Thus in the first words wherein he saith, *With Him is wisdom and strength*; he plainly shews, that what He taught in mildness how to believe, in the power of the Judgment He will exhibit in terribleness. But in the subsequent words, wherein He saith, *With Him is strength and wisdom*; He makes it clearer than the day, that He first destroys reprobate men in the Judgment by dint of power, and afterwards shines into the souls of the Elect with the perfect light of the eternal kingdom. But because before the day of final Judgment, He never ceases daily to judge the deeds of mortal men by His secret awards, He comes back to that which is done in this present time, where it is added;

Ver. 16, 17. *He knoweth both the deceiver and deceived, He bringeth counsellors to a foolish end, and the judges to dulness.*

18. Whereas every man that strives to deceive his neighbour is wicked, and 'Truth' saith to the wicked, *I never knew you, depart from Me ye that*

work iniquity [Matt. 7, 23]; in what sense is it said here, that 'the Lord knoweth the deceiver?' But forasmuch as God's 'knowing' sometimes means His taking cognizance, sometimes His approving, He at once knows a wicked man, in that in taking cognizance He judges him, (for He would never judge any wicked man, if He did not take cognizance of him,) and yet He does not know a wicked person, in that He does not approve his doings. And so He both knows him, in that He finds him out, and knows him not, in that He doth not acknowledge him in a likeness to His own Wisdom. As it is said of any truthful man, that he does not know falsehood, not because, when any thing false is said even by others, he is too blind to find fault with it, but this very falsehood he at once knows in the tracing out, and knows not in the affection of the heart, so as not to do that himself, which he condemns the doing of in others. And it may often happen that persons, busy in artful contrivances, spread the nets of their wickedness for another's life, and when he, in ignorance of it, is seen to be taken by the snares, perchance it is questioned whether such things are seen from above, and men wonder, why it is, if God does see them, that He suffers them to be done. *But He knoweth the deceiver and the deceived*. For 'He knoweth the deceiver,' in that generally He sees former sins of his, and by a just judgment suffers him to fall into others also. 'He knoweth the deceiver,' in that, left in the hand of his own doings, He forsaketh him, that he may be precipitated into worse ones, as it is written, *He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him, be filthy* [Lat. g*row filthy*] *still*. [Rev. 22, 11] Moreover 'He knoweth the deceived' too, in that men often do evil things that they know; and therefore they are suffered to be 'deceived,' so as further to fall into evil things which they know not. However, this is used to be done to the deceived sometimes for their purifying, sometimes as the beginning of vengeance.

19. He bringeth counsellors also to a foolish end, when they do any thing good even, with no good purpose, but are going after the recompensing of a temporary reward. For, if the Only-begotten Son of the Most High Father, because hereby, that He was made Man, He preached eternal truths, is therefore called the *Angel of great counsel*, we rightly interpret 'the counsellors,' those preachers, who furnish the 'counsel' of life to their hearers. But when any preacher preaches the truths of eternity for this, that he may acquire temporal gains, assuredly he is 'brought to a foolish end,' in that he is aiming to reach that point by laborious effort, whence he ought to have fled in uprightness of mind.

20. And it is rightly added, *And the judges to dulness*. For all that are set over the examination of other men's conduct, are rightly called 'judges;' but when he that has this oversight does not diligently examine the lives of those under his authority, nor acquaint himself whom he should correct, and how, 'the judge is brought to dulness,' in that he, who should have judged things that were ill done, never finds out those things which are to be judged. It proceeds;

Ver. 18. *He looseth the belt of kings, and girdeth their reins with a cord.*

21. They that know how to regulate aright the motions of their members, are not unjustly called 'kings.' But when the mind is touched with pride on the grounds of that very continence, it very often happens that Almighty God, deserting its pride, suffers it to fall into uncleanness of practice. And so 'He looseth the belt of kings,' when in the case of those who seemed to regulate their members aright, on account of the sin of pride he undoes the girdle of chastity. Now what is meant by 'a cord,' but sin? As Solomon says, *His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins*. [Prov. 5, 22] And because fleshly gratification has its dominion in the 'reins,' the strict Judge of the conscience, Who 'looseth the belt of kings,' 'girdeth their reins with a

cord,’ that, when the girdle of chastity is undone, then the gratification of sin should have dominion over their members, so that those whom pride pollutes in secret, He may shew even publicly to be as abominable as they are. It goes on,

Ver. 19. *He leadeth the priests inglorious, and overthroweth the mighty.*

22. The great glory of the priest is the righteousness of those that are subject to him. Whence the excellent preacher saith well to his disciples; *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord?* [1 Thess. 2, 19] But when the priests neglect the lives of their charge, and bring no fruit from their advancement before the presence of the Lord, what else is this but that they are called [b] ‘inglorious?’ Since before the strict Judge they do not then find glory, who do not now seek it out in the lives of those subject to their charge by urgency in preaching. And it is well said, *And overthroweth the mighty*. In that, when, by a righteous judgment, He forsakes the heart of those that rule, it does not look for the inward recompensing of the reward, and it is overthrown in that whereby it is deceived, so as to rejoice in temporal superiority instead of eternal glory. Therefore ‘the mighty are overthrown,’ in that while they lose sight of the real rewards of the heavenly country, they are brought to the ground here in their own pleasures. It goes on,

Ver. 20. *Who changeth the lip of the truthful, and taketh away the instruction of the aged.*

23. When the priest does not do the good that he tells, even the very word of his lips is withdrawn from him, that he may not dare to speak what he does not practise; as where it is said by the Prophet, *But unto the wicked God saith, ‘What hast thou to do, to declare My statutes, or that thou takest My covenant in thy mouth?* [Ps. 50, 16] Whence also he beseeches, saying, *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth*. [Ps. 119, 43] For he reflects that Almighty God gives the word of truth to those that do it, and

takes it away from those that do it not. He then that prayed that he might not have it 'taken out of his mouth,' what did he else than pray for the grace of good practice? As if he said in plain words, 'Let me not go astray from good works, lest, while I lose the regularity of good living, I also part with the right rule of speaking.' And for the most part the teacher, who ventures to teach what he neglects to practise, when he ceases to speak the good which he scorned to do, begins to teach his charge the evil things that he does, that, by the righteous judgment of the Almighty, that man may not henceforth have a tongue for a good theme, who will not have a good life; so that whilst his mind is inflamed with the love of earthly things, he should be ever speaking of earthly things. Whence 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things*. [Matt. 12, 34. 35.] Hence also John saith, *They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world.* [1John 4, 5] Therefore it is well said, *Who changeth the lip of the truthful, and taketh away the instruction of the aged*. In that while they, who were aforetime 'truthful' in preaching heavenly things, setting their affections on those of time, are sunk down to the same, 'the lip of the truthful is changed, and the instruction of the aged taken away;' in that being in love with temporal things, they never follow the precepts of their predecessors, so as to be occupying the place of authority as if but for the fruit of pleasure, and for no good end of labour.

[PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION]

24. Which nevertheless may be understood more plainly of the Jews, who before the Lord's Incarnation were 'truthful,' in that they believed that He was to come, and proclaimed the same; but when He appeared in the flesh, they denied that it was He. Therefore 'the lip of the truthful was changed,'

in that Him, of Whom they had told that He was about to come, they denied when present; ‘and the instruction of the aged was taken away,’ in that they never followed in believing the things, which they remembered their fathers to have foretold. Whence too at the coming of Elijah it is promised, that he shall ‘turn the hearts of the children to their fathers;’ that ‘the instruction of the aged,’ which is now ‘taken away’ from the heart of the Jews, upon the Lord taking compassion on them, may then be brought back, when the children begin to understand that concerning the Lord, which their fathers foretold. But if by ‘the aged’ we understand likewise those same Jews, who, by the persuasions of unbelief, set themselves to oppose the word of ‘Truth,’ then ‘the instruction of the aged was taken away,’ when the Church consisting of the Gentiles, being indeed young, received it, as she saith by the Psalmist, *I understand more than the ancients*. [Ps. 119, 100] And because she kept this same in practising it, in what way she came to understand more than the ancients, she makes plain, whereas she adds directly, *Because I keep thy precepts*. For whereas she aimed to fulfil in practising that thing which she learnt, it was vouchsafed her to understand what she might teach. Whence it is still further added with propriety,

Ver.21. *He poureth contempt upon princes, and lifteth up those that were oppressed.*

25. For whilst the Jewish people continued in the precept of the Law, and the whole Gentile world knew nothing of the precepts of God, both the former seemed to be as ‘Princes’ by faith, and the latter lay borne down in the depth by unbelief. But when Judaea denied the mystery of our Lord’s Incarnation, and the Gentile world believed it, both ‘the princes’ fell into contempt, and they that had been borne down in the sin of unbelief, were ‘lifted up’ in the liberty of true faith. But Jeremiah seeing this fall of the Israelites long before, says, *The Lord is become as it were an enemy; He hath swallowed up Israel; He hath thrown down all his palaces; He hath*

destroyed his bulwarks. [Lam. 2, 5] Now 'palaces' in cities are for ornaments, but the 'bulwarks' are for defence. And the gifts that keep us safe are one thing, those that ornament us are another. For prophetical teaching, different kinds of tongues, the power of working cures, are a kind of 'palaces' of the mind, which though a man have not, yet he is able to stand fast defended by faith and righteousness, though he does not shew himself at all adorned with the towering height of the gifts of virtue; but faith, hope, and charity, are not our 'palaces,' but our 'bulwarks,' which, if we neglect to possess ourselves of, we lie exposed to the snares of the enemy. In the case of Judaea, therefore, seeing that He took away from her prophecy, and teaching, and miraculous signs, 'He overthrows all her palaces.' And because, for her hardness of heart, He let faith, hope, and charity, be taken away from her, He was bent to 'destroy her bulwarks.' Now we have the right order observed, in that the 'palaces' first, and then the 'bulwarks,' are described as destroyed, because, when the sinful soul is forsaken, first the gifts of miraculous powers, which were given in manifestation of the Spirit, are destroyed, and afterwards the foundations of faith, hope, and charity. All which, being taken away from the unfaithful, the Lord bestowed upon the Gentile world, and by the things, which He took from the unbelievers, He adorned the believers' minds. Whence it is written, *And to divide the spoils of the beauty of the house*. [Ps. 68, 12] For when He took away from the Jews the spoils of the powers of virtue, He imparted the beauty of His gifts to the house of the heart of the Gentiles, which He deigned to dwell in by faith. Which same was brought to pass, when the words of God were on the one hand interpreted by the Jewish people after the mere 'letter,' which 'killeth,' and on the other, by the converted Gentiles penetrated in the 'spirit, which maketh alive.' [2 Cor. 3, 6] Whence it is directly added,

Ver. 22. *Who discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death*.

26. For when the several mystical truths are recognised in the secret words of the Prophets by them that believe, what else is it, than that 'deep things are discovered out of darkness?' Whence too 'Truth' Himself, speaking in parables to the disciples, saith, *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light*. [Matt. 10, 27] For when by explaining we unravel the mystical knots of allegories, then we as it were 'speak in light, what we have heard in darkness.' Now 'the shadow of death' was the hardness of the old Law, which made every one that sinned liable to be punished with the death of the body. But when our Redeemer tempered by mildness the harshness of the sanctions of the Law, nor any longer ordained death of the flesh to be inflicted for sin, but shewed how greatly the death of the spirit was to be dreaded, then, surely, 'He brought out to light the shadow of death.' For this death, wherein the flesh is severed from the soul, is a 'shadow' of that death, wherein the soul is severed from God, and so 'the shadow of death is brought out to light,' when, upon the death of the spirit being understood, the death of the body is no whit feared. Which may likewise be understood in another sense also.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

For those are not unjustly called 'princes,' who with great judiciousness of counsel rule the thoughts of their hearts at all times, and by the power of wisdom keep down all the motions of folly. But it very often happens that the mind is in secret lifted up on the grounds of its very wisdom to the topmost pitch of pride, and is brought to the ground under those evil habits, over which it was rejoicing to have gained the victory. Therefore it is well said, *He poureth contempt upon princes*. But because it sometimes happens that they who appear to lie prostrate in evil ways have recourse to tears of

penitence, and gather themselves up against the sins, to which they were subjected, it is fitly added, *And lifteth up those that were oppressed*. For there are some, who, being enlightened by the gift from on high, see in what exceeding filthiness of their sinful doings they lie grovelling, wash with tears the stains of their misdeeds, and henceforth keep down beneath them the motions of the flesh, by which they were aforetime weighed to the ground.

27. Which same is brought to pass by the excellent disposal of Almighty God, that so in this life every thing should be accounted uncertain, and no man be set up for possessing chastity, seeing that *He poureth contempt upon princes*, and no man despair from his evil habits weighing him down, seeing that *He lifteth up those that were oppressed*. And because, when these things are done, there is brought forth out of the secret counsels of God an open sentence upon each individual, it is lightly subjoined, *And revealeth deep things out of darkness.*

28. For the Lord 'revealeth deep things out of darkness,' when He manifests an open sentence from His secret counsels, so as to shew what He thinks concerning each individual. For because now the Creator seeth all things, and Himself is not seen in His counsels, it is well said of Him by the Psalmist, *He made darkness His secret place*. [Ps. 18, 11] But it is as if He issued out from that darkness into light, when He shews what are His thoughts concerning the actions of each individual. And whereas when he, who was sunk down by the weight of his sins, is brought to the setting up of uprightness, he for the first time sees that very death, wherein he was going on ruining himself, and at the same time too blind to take account of it; it is lightly added, *And bringeth out to light the shadow of death*. For 'the shadow of death' is evil doing, which is drawn as if in bodily lineaments by a copy of our old enemy. Concerning whom too, in the character of a certain one, it is said, *And his name was Death*. [Rev. 6, 8] And it very often

happens that his evil instigation escapes the minds of men, and by this circumstance, that it is not known, is the more successful. And so 'the shadow of death is brought to light,' in that the evil doing of our old enemy is revealed to the minds of the Saints that it may be made an end of. It goes on:

Ver. 23. *Who multiplieth the nations and destroyeth them, and them that are overturned He restoreth entire.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

29. We may understand it, viz. that 'the Lord multiplieth the nations and destroyeth them,' in this way, that day by day men are born destined to die, and that 'them, that be overturned, He restoreth entire,' in that they, who were dead, shall rise again; which however we shall interpret in a better sense, if we think how it is that this is done in their souls.

[PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

For 'He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them,' in that He both enlarges them by fruitfulness of offspring, and yet leaves them in their own infidelity; but 'them, that were overturned, He restoreth entire,' in that those, whom He had left in the downfall of infidelity, He one time or another reestablishes in the seat of faith. And these being restored in a whole state of mind, that ancient People, which seemed faithful to God, being reprobate was cast away in heart, so that, being deceived by its own misbelief, it should afterwards rise up against Him, Whom it had before preached. It goes on;

Ver. 24, 25. *Who changeth the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and deceiveth them, that they wander in vain where there is no way, they shall grope in the dark without any light, and He shall make them to stagger like a drunken man.*

30. For ‘the heart of the chief of the earth was changed,’ when the chief priests and elders of the people in Judaea set themselves to withstand Him by their counsels, Whom they beforehand proclaimed, that He was to come. And when they strove to put out His Name by persecuting Him, being deceived by their own wickedness they vainly essayed to ‘wander where there is no way,’ because it was impossible that a ‘way’ could be open to their cruelty directed against the Creator of all things. They saw the miracles, they were made to fear by His power *, but refusing to believe, they still sought signs, whilst they said, what sign shewest Thou then, that we may see and believe Thee?* [John 6, 30] Therefore it is well said, *They grope in the dark without light?* For he that hesitates in the midst of so many manifest miracles, as it were ‘gropes in the dark,’ in that he sees not what he is touching. But every man that ‘staggers,’ is borne now hither, now thither: And because they were shewn at one time to believe, as when they said, *If this man were not of God He could do nothing* [John 9, 33], and at another time denied that He was from God, as when they said contemning Him, *Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? and His brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?* [Matt. 13, 55. 56.] it is rightly added, *He maketh, them to stagger like a drunken man*. For they saw both that He raised the dead, and yet that He was a mortal being. Who would not believe that He was God, Whom they beheld raise the dead to life? But on the other hand, when they saw that He was mortal, they scorned to believe that He was immortal God, and so herein, viz. that Almighty God manifested Himself such to their eyes as to be both capable of exhibiting divine signs and of undergoing human sufferings, He ‘made them to stagger like drunken men,’ that their pride, which chose rather to spurn the mystery of the Incarnation, than to follow it, should at one and the same time lift itself up against His human nature, and wonder at the power of His Divine nature shining within.

And because all these were made present to the eyes of blessed Job by the spirit of prophecy, it is rightly added;

Chap. xiii 1. *Lo, all!*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

31. For what was to follow he saw as present in Him, Whom neither things future come to, nor things past go from; but all things are present at once and together before His eyes. And because the very things that were to come he saw were part in works and part in words, it is rightly said, *All this mine eye hath seen, mine ear hath heard*. But words are without use, if they lack the understanding of them. Whence it is fitly added, *And I have understood every whit*. For when any thing is shewn or heard, if the understanding of it be not bestowed, it is little of a prophecy. Thus Pharaoh saw in a dream things that were to come upon Egypt, but, because he could not understand what he saw, he was no prophet. King Balthasar 'saw the fingers of the hand that wrote' upon the wall; but he was no prophet, because he did not attain to the understanding of that thing which he saw. Therefore, that blessed Job might testify that he had the spirit of prophecy, he declares not only that he had 'seen and heard,' but also that he had 'understood all this.' And that he is not elated on the grounds of such understanding, his words subjoined bear witness, when he says,

Ver. 2. *What ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior to you.*

32. By which same words he made known what exceeding humility he had, who says that he was 'not inferior' to them, whose life by holy living he very far surpassed. For he makes good that 'what they knew he knew,' who by knowing the things of heaven transcended their earthly thoughts through the spirit of prophecy in addition. It goes on;

Ver 3. *Yet still I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.*

33. We ‘speak with the Almighty,’ when we beseech His pity; but we ‘reason with Him,’ when uniting ourselves to His righteousness, we sift our actions with minute investigation. Or otherwise, to ‘reason with God,’ is for him who obeyed His commandments here, to come with Him hereafter as Judge to judge the people. As it is said to the Preachers that leave all things, *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. [Matt. 19, 28] Whence the Lord saith by Isaiah too, *Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together*. [Is. 1, 17. 18.] For it is light that they should reason with God concerning their charges [d] in the Judgment, who, at the words of God, entirely give up the present world. Thus the ‘speaking’ has to do with prayer, and the ‘reasoning’ has to do with judgment, Therefore the holy man ‘speaks’ to the Almighty now, that he may ‘reason’ with the Almighty hereafter, in that He cometh with God afterwards as a judge, who here in this present time was familar with Him in prayer. But Holy Church, whom we have already said that blessed Job bears the likeness of, not only then judges the wicked, when the day of final Judgment shall come, but even now doth not cease to judge all that either act wickedly, or think foolishly. And hence it is added;

Ver. 4. *First shewing that ye are builders of lies, and votaries of wrong doctrines.*

34. By which same words it is clearly shewn that his friends as in the likeness of heretics oppose the decisions of the holy man’s judgment. For it is clear that they do not hold the figure of Catholics, who are termed ‘votaries of wrong doctrines.’ Wherein this likewise ought to be marked, that they are called ‘builders of lies.’ For as an edifice is ‘built’ with stones, so a lie is ‘built’ with words. For when there is not deceitful speech, but a

meaning of truth, it is like a fortified mound, arising not by fabrication, but by nature. It goes on,

Ver. 5. *O that ye would altogether hold your peace, and ye should be accounted wise!*

35. As in a house, when the door is shut, it is not known what members there are hidden within, so, generally speaking, if a fool hold his peace, it is hidden whether he be wise or foolish, only, however, if no other works come to light, which may speak the mind even of one that is silent. For this reason the holy man, seeing that his friends were anxious to appear what they were not, charged them to hold their peace, that they might not appear what they were. And hence it is said by Solomon; *Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise.* [Prov. 17, 28] But because when a fool speaks, from this, that he brings in his own words, he is unable to reflect on the words of the wise, after he had bidden silence, he yet further adds lightly,

Ver. 6. *Hear now my reproofs, and hearken to the judgment of my lips.*

36. Now he did well first to bring forward 'reproof,' and afterwards 'judgment.' For except by reproof first the swelling of the fool be put down, the judgment of the righteous is not by comprehension at all understood. It goes on;

Ver. 7. *Doth God need your lie, that ye should talk deceitfully for Him?*

37. God doth not 'stand in need of a lie,' in that Truth does not seek to be stayed up by the aid of falsehood. But because Heretics are unable to defend on principles of truth the things which they erroneously conceive about God, it is as if they sought for the shadow of falsehood, to shew the ray of light. And they 'speak deceitfully for Him,' in that weak minds, by being senselessly seduced, they deceive in the understanding of Him. It goes on;

Ver. 8. *Will ye take His person? will ye strive to judge for God?*

38. For when foolish men behold the doings of the wise, they all seem to them to be worthy of blame; who, forgetting their own emptiness and deficiency, pass judgment on the concerns of others the more eagerly, in proportion as they are more deeply ignorant of their own. But on the other hand, when the righteous reprove the deeds of the wicked, ever conscious of their own weakness, they administer reproof, though in launching forth against them outwardly, yet in sympathizing with them inwardly; in that it belongs to Him alone to scrutinize the sins of men without fellow-feeling, Who by the omnipotence of His nature knows not to commit sin. Therefore, as the friends of blessed Job had so reproved his deeds as if they had nothing in themselves to be reproved, it is well said in this place, *Will ye take His face? Will ye strive to judge for God?* For to 'take the face of God' is to assume His authority in the act of judging; and he as it were 'strives to judge for God,' who when he reproves the several weak points in another, does not feel weak in himself within from fellow-feeling. It goes on;

Ver.9. *Or shall it please Him, from Whom nothing can be concealed* [*celare*]*? Or like as a man will He be deceived by your deceits.*

39. Heretics shew God deceit in that they fabricate such things as cannot be pleasing to the very Being, in Whose behalf they say them. And whilst they set themselves as if to defend, they only offend Him, in that they are brought to the ground in [A.B.C.D.M. 'fall into'] fighting against Him, Whom they appear by preaching to be serving. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *That Thou mightest still the enemy and the defender.* [Ps. 8, 2] For every heretic is to Almighty God an 'enemy and defender,' for wherein he strives in his way to defend Him, therein he fights against His truth. But because nothing can escape God's sight, He judges according to that in them, which they think within their heart, but not by their appearing without to be doing Him service. Therefore since by their frauds 'as a man is deceived, God is not so deceived,' it is lightly added,

Ver. 10, 11. *He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly take His face. Presently when He ariseth He shall make you afraid; and His dread shall fall upon you.*

40. This part, wherein He declares that 'the face of God is taken in secret,' may be understood in two ways. For there be some, who at one and the same time perceive truth in their hearts, and yet utter outwardly concerning God things that are false. For lest they should appear to be subdued, they both know the truth within, and yet assail it without. Hence it is well said in this place, *He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly take His face*. As if it were expressed in plain words; 'Ye are the more to be blamed in His sight for falsehood, as ye see in yourselves what is true.' And there become, who when they turn back into the interior, contemplate the justice and righteousness of God, and in praying and weeping tremble with fear, but after the hour of contemplation has passed by, they return with as much boldness to their wickednesses, as if, being placed behind His back, they were not seen by the light of His righteousness. And so these with themselves in secret 'take God's face' as if it saw with a bodily sight, in that both, when they are present to Him, they flatter Him with their tears, and, when they are as it were gone from His sight, they make slight of Him by their practices. And these deserve to be beaten more for their evil doings, even in proportion as in the secret of their hearts they know the righteous judgments of God. And hence it is added; *As soon as He stirreth up Himself, He will trouble you, and His dread shall fall upon you.*

41. Seeing that Almighty God is of a nature unchangeable, in the wrath of judgment He is not capable of being moved; but by the expression proper to man, of God's being 'moved,' is understood nothing else than that enforcement of His rule of righteousness, by which the wickedness of man is chastised. Now righteous men conceive a dread of God before His indignation is stirred up against them; they fear Him at rest, lest they should

feel Him as moved. But, on the other hand, the wicked then for the first time fear to be smitten, when they are under the rod, and terror then rouses them from the sleep of their insensibility, when vengeance is troubling them. And hence it is said by the Prophet, *And only the vexing alone shall supply understanding to the hearing*. [Is. 28, 19] For when they have begun to be stricken in vengeance for the contempt and neglect of God's precepts, then they understand the thing that they heard. And the Psalmist saith, *When He slew them, then they sought Him*. [Ps. 78, 34] Therefore it is well said, *As soon as He stirreth up Himself, He will trouble you, and His dread will fall upon you*; in that the hearts of the children of perdition have not fear producing repose, but punishment producing fear. It goes on;

Ver. 12. *Your remembrances are like unto ashes.*

42. All that are confounded to this present state of being by an earthly temper of mind, mean, by all that they do, to leave the remembrance of themselves to the world. Some in the toils of war, some in the towering walls of edifices, some in eloquent books of this world's lore, they are eagerly toiling and striving and building up for themselves a name of remembrance. But whereas life itself runs on to an end with speed, what is there in it that will stand stedfast, when even its very self by nature running rapidly speeds away. For a breath of air seizes the ashes, as it is written; *The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff, which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth*. [Ps. 1, 4] And so the remembrance of fools is rightly compared to 'ashes,' in that it is placed there, where it is liable to be carried away by a breath of air. For howsoever a man may toil to achieve the glory of his name, he has placed his 'remembrance like ashes,' in that the wind of mortality hurries it away in a moment. Contrary to which it is written of the just man, *The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance*. [Ps. 112, 6] For by the very circumstance, that he imprints

his deeds upon the eyes of God alone, he sets firm the name of his remembrance in the eternal world. It goes on;

And your necks shall be brought down to the mire.

43. As the sight is used to be denoted by the eye, so is pride by the 'neck.' Thus 'the neck is brought down to the mire,' when every proud man is humbled in death, and the flesh that was lifted up rots in corruption. For let us contemplate how and like what the carcases of the rich lie in their graves, what that form of death is in the lifeless flesh, what the rottenness of corruption. And surely these were the very persons who were lifted up with honours, swollen with the things gotten by them, who looked down upon others, and exulted to stand as it were alone. Yet, while they never considered whereunto they were going, they knew nothing at all what they were. But 'the neck is brought down to the mire,' in that they lie neglected in rottenness, who swelled high in emptiness. 'The neck is brought down to the mire,' because what the might of flesh is good for, the rottenness of corruption evidences. It goes on;

Ver. 13. *Hold your peace for a little, that I may speak whatsoever my mind shall bid me.*

44. He shews that they spoke with the perception of the flesh, whom he therefore binds to silence, that he may speak that which 'his mind bids him.' As if he said in plain words, 'I do not speak in a carnal, but in a spiritual way, because; hear by the perception of the Spirit things that I bring forth by the service of the body. Whence he at once mounts up on high, and lifts himself aloft in mysteries, and changes into mystical discourse the reproofs which he had delivered, saying, .

Ver. 14. *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand?*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

45. In Holy Scripture 'teeth' are sometimes used to be understood for the holy preachers, and sometimes for the interior senses [f]. Thus of the holy preachers it is said to the Bride, *Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing*. [Cant. 4, 2] And hence it is said to one of them, when the Gentiles were represented to him in a figure, *Kill and eat* [Acts 10, 13], i.e. 'crush their oldness, and convert it into the body of the Church, i.e. into your own members.' Again, that 'teeth' are wont to be understood of the interior senses, is testified by the Prophet Jeremiah, when he says, *He hath broken my teeth by number*. [Lam. 3, 16] For by the 'teeth' the food is broken in pieces, to allow of its being swallowed. Hence we not unjustly understand the interior senses by 'teeth,' which as it were chew and mince small the several particulars that occur to the mind, and transfer them to the belly of the memory, which the Prophet declares to be 'broken by number,' in that according to the measure of each particular sin there is blindness of understanding engendered in our perception, and in proportion to that which each person has committed outwardly, he is made dull of sense in that, which he might have understood of the inward and invisible. Whence too it is rightly written, *Everyone that hath eaten the sour grape, his teeth shall be numbed*. [Jer. 31, 30] For what is 'the sour grape,' saving sin? for a 'sour grape' is fruit before the time. So whosoever desires to be satisfied with the enjoyments of this present life, is as it were in a hurry to eat fruit before the time. Thus 'the teeth of him that eateth the sour grape are numbed,' in that he who feeds in the gratification of the present life, has the interior perceptions tied fast, that they should no longer be able to eat, i.e. to understand spiritual things; in that from the very self-same cause that they gratify themselves in outward things, they are rendered dull in those of the interior. And whereas the soul is fed with sin, it is unable to eat the bread of righteousness, in that the teeth being tied fast by the custom of sin, can never at all chew such good, as has a relish in the

interior. In this place then, because, as we have said, we understand ‘the teeth’ to be the interior perceptions, we ought to consider very heedfully what the righteous are wont to do. Who, commonly, if they detect in themselves any points of a carnal sort however slightly, going over these in the interior senses, vehemently prosecute them in their own person, afflict themselves with selfchastisement, and with excessive self-inflictions visit in judgment the very least things wrong in them, and condemn them by penitence. Which same they do for this reason, that in the sight of the eternal Judge, both they may themselves be found as far as may be without blame, and that those, who see them thus judge themselves, may be kindled to reform themselves from worse offences. And this blessed Job had done in the presence of his friends, who kept fast temporal glory, and extolled transitory blessings. Yet he could not bring their sense to see the usefulness of the scourge with which he was afflicted, that so they might bethink themselves that Almighty God not only bestows prosperity, but likewise brings down adversity upon us, when He is favourable. Whence he says well in this place, *Wherefore do I tear my flesh with my teeth?* As if he said in plain words, ‘Why with my interior perceptions do I hunt out things carnal, if there be any such thing done in me, if I cannot thereby benefit my spectators?’ Where too it is fitly added,

And carry my life in my hand?

46. To ‘carry our life in our hands’ is to shew forth the bias of the heart in practice. For the righteous have this thing proper to them, that in all that they do, and all that they say, they not only seek their own increase, but the edification of their neighbours likewise. Sometimes they judge themselves in some point, that they may recall indolent hearers to the consideration of themselves. Sometimes they exhibit good works, that their spectators may be ashamed not to imitate what they see. For it is written, *That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven*. [Matt. 5, 16]

Thus he that exhibits the bent of his mind by his works, 'carries his life in his hand;' but when any good man, whether by judging himself or by exhibiting good works, furthers not his neighbour's welfare by what he has done, he returns to words of sorrow. Whence it is rightly said in this place, *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth? and carry my life in my hand?* i.e. 'Why do I either judge myself strictly before men, or shew in practice what my heart is bent on, if I do not advance my neighbour's good either by passing judgment on my evil things, or exhibiting good ones?' But yet the righteous, even while they speak so, never give over setting their neighbour a good example. Hence blessed Job, still further exemplifying and exhibiting the excellence of patience before the eyes of his friends, saith,

Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

47. There is no room for the virtue of patience in prosperous circumstances. He is really patient, who is at once bruised with misfortune, and yet not bowed down from the erectness of his hope. Concerning the temper of mind of the reprobate man it is written, *He will praise Thee, when Thou doest well to him*. [Ps. 49, 18. Vulg.] Hereby, then, the righteous mind is distinguished from the unrighteous, that even in the midst of affliction the former acknowledges the praise to Almighty God, that he is not broken down together with his worldly fortune, does not fall together with the fall of outward glory, but hereby proves the more, what he was with worldly goods, who even without worldly goods stands the stronger. It goes on;

Ver. 15, 16. *But I will rebuke mine own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation.*

48. Whereas Paul the Apostle saith; *For, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged*, [1 Cor. 11, 31] the Lord is found to be our 'Salvation' Then, in proportion as our sin is now rebuked by ourselves, from fear of God.

Whence the Elect are used never to spare their own sins, that they may find the Judge of sin rendered propitious; and they look to find Him hereafter truly their 'Salvation,' Whom they now strictly fear as their Judge. For, he that spareth himself now in sin, is not spared hereafter in punishment, So let him say, *But I will rebuke mine own ways before Him*. And what use and advantage results from such rebuking, let him add, *He also shall be my salvation*. It goes on;

For an hypocrite, shall not come before Him.

49. Whereas we know that the Judge, when He cometh, will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left, with what reason is it now said, 'that the hypocrite shall not come before Him,' when, if he be among the goats, he will appear on the left hand of the Judge? But we are to bear in mind that we come before the Lord in two ways. One, whereby taking exact account of our offences here we punish and judge ourselves before Him with weeping. For as often as we recall to our perception the power of our Creator, we as often, as it were, stand before Him.' Hence too it is well said by Elijah, the man of God, *The Lord God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand* [1 Kings 17, 1]. In another way we 'come before God,' when at the last Judgment we present ourselves before His Tribunal. And thus the hypocrite in the last reckoning does come before the Judge, but because now he shuts his eyes to consider and bewail transgressions, he refuses to 'come before' the Lord. For as righteous men, when they fix their eyes on the severity of the Judge that shall come, recall their sins to remembrance, bewail the things that they have done, and judge themselves severely that they be not judged; so hypocrites, as they outwardly please the world, hence omit to look inwardly into themselves, and wholly engross themselves in the words of their neighbours, and account themselves to be holy, because they consider that they are so accounted by their fellow-creatures. And when they have dissipated their mind in the words that sound their own

praises, they never recall it to the cognizance of sin, never mark wherein they offend the interior Judge, entertain no fears concerning His severity, for they believe that they have pleased Him as they have their fellow-creatures. Yet if they but brought His terribleness to mind, this very circumstance, that fixed in a wrong bias they are making themselves pleasing to their fellow-creatures, would cause them to fear the more. Therefore it is well said, *For an hypocrite shall not come before Him*; in that he does not set before his eyes the severity of God, so long as he is ambitious to please the eyes of men. Who, if he set himself in the presence of God in searching his own conscience, would then assuredly no longer be a hypocrite. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *Hear my speech, and take in my riddles with your ears*

50. Herein, that he names 'riddles,' he shews that he has parts of his speech framed in figures. Whence too it is fitly added by the voice of the faithful People;

Ver. 18. *If I shall be judged, I know that I shall be found just.*

51. Which too is not at variance with the person of the self-same blessed Job, since he is only telling that concerning himself without, which 'Truth' had inwardly declared to his enemy concerning him; *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?* And yet it is much less that the holy man records concerning himself, than what the Lord declared concerning him. For it is one thing to be 'just,' and another to have 'none like him.' Therefore he thought humbly of himself, who, whereas he was just beyond comparison with another, described himself not just above others, but simply able to be 'found just.' It seems however to furnish this ground for raising a question in his words, viz. that he who said above, *I will rebuke mine own ways before Him;* and again says further on, *Thou wouldest consume me in the inquities of my youth* [ver. 26]; and seeing his sins with a distinct eye, says still further on, *My transgression is sealed up*

in a bag, now saith, *If I shall be judged, I know that I shall, be found just*. [Job 14, 17] For it is impossible for sin and righteousness to meet together. But the holy man, attributing wickedness to himself, and the purifying of him to Almighty God, at once sees that he is a sinner in himself, and knows that he is made righteous by free gift. Who even in the midst of good practice earned in superabounding grace to have stripes put upon him. And he already rejoices to be 'found just' in Judgment, who beheld himself before Judgment smitten with the rod. Hence too when he says long afterwards, *My transgression is sealed up in a bag*, he adds directly; *but Thou hast healed mine iniquity*. He, then, that describes himself as 'found just' in Judgment, says not at all that he is not justly smitten, although the Lord did not intend to obliterate sins by the scourge, but to increase his merits. It proceeds;

Ver. 19. *Who is he that will plead with me? Let him come.*

52. Holy men so guard themselves in their good works, with God for their aid, that there can be no where found, without, grounds, whereon to accuse them; but within, in the secret thoughts of their own hearts, they watch over themselves with such good heed, that, if it might be, they may at all times stand blameless before the eyes of the interior Judge. But what they are able to effect, that they never should slip outwardly in act, they are unable to effect inwardly, that they never should make a false step in thought. For man's conscience, from the very fact that it withdraws [g] from the things deepest within, is always on slippery ground. Whence it comes to pass, that even holy men often slip in them. So let holy Job, speaking as well in his own voice as in the voice of the Elect, say, *Who is he that will plead with me? Let him come*. For, seeing that in external actions there is no occasion for which to fasten a blame upon him, he freely looks about for an accuser. But because the consciences even of the righteous sometimes have

to charge themselves with foolishness of thought, it is on this account perhaps that it is added;

Why am I consumed in silence?

53. For he is 'consumed in silence,' who, in blaming himself for foolishness of thought, is gnawed in his own heart by the tooth of conscience. As if he said in plain words, 'As I have so lived that I should never fear any accuser without, would that I had so lived that I should never have my conscience for mine accuser within me.' For he is 'consumed in silence,' who discovers in himself within cause whereby the fire should gnaw him [*unde uratur*]. It goes on;

Ver. 20. *Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from Thy face.*

54. What are we to understand here by the 'face of God,' saving His visitation? In which, whilst He beholds, He also punishes our sins, from which no just man even is hidden, if the two things, which he entreats, be not removed; concerning which he adds;

Ver. 21. *Withdraw Thine hand far from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid.*

[PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

55. By which same two what else does he ask in a voice of prophecy, but the season of grace and redemption? For the Law held the people obnoxious to the stroke of vengeance, that whoso committed sin under its yoke, should be forthwith punished with death. Nor did the Israelitish people serve God from a principle of love, but of fear. But righteousness can never be perfected [*impleri*] by fear, seeing that according to the voice of John, *perfect love casteth out fear*. [1 John 4, 18] And Paul comforts the children of adoption, by saying, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba,*

Father. [Rom 8, 15] Therefore in the voice of mankind, longing for the hardness of the stroke of the Law to pass away, and eagerly desiring to advance from fear to love, he names in prayer what 'two things God should put far from him,' saying, *Withdraw Thine hand far from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid*; i.e. remove from me the hardness of the stroke, take away the weight of dread, and while the grace of love illumines me, pour upon me the spirit of assurance, in that if I be not removed far from the rod and from dread, I know that I shall not be withdrawn from the strictness of Thy searching. Since he cannot be justified before Thee, who serves Thee not on a principle of love, but of fear. Hence he seeks the very presence of his Creator itself, as it were familiarly, and in a bodily sort, that he may thereby both hear what he is ignorant of, and be heard in the things that he knows. For he adds directly;

Ver. 22. *Then call Thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer Thou me.*

56. Who at the time, when He did appear by the assumption of the flesh to the eyes of mankind, disclosed to men their sins, which they were doing and knew not. Whence it is added;

Ver. 23. *How many are mine iniquities and my sins? make me to know my crimes and my offences.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

57. Though the 'calling' and 'answering' may likewise be understood in another way. For God's 'calling' us is His having respect to us in loving and choosing us, and our 'answering' is the yielding obedience to His love by good works. Where it is fitly added, *Or let me speak, and answer Thou me*. For we 'speak,' when we beg for God's face in desire, and God answers our speaking, when He appears to us that love Him. But because whoever pants with longing for the eternal world, examines his doings, taking himself to

task with great exactness, and searches lest there be aught in him, whereby he might offend the face of his Creator, he rightly adds, *How many are mine iniquities and my sins? Make me to know my crimes and offences*. This is the task of the righteous in this life, to find out themselves, and on finding out to bring themselves to a better state by weeping and self-chastening. And though John the Apostle tells us that there is no odds between iniquity and sin, when he says, *iniquity is sin* [1 John 3, 4]; yet in the simple usage of speech, 'iniquity' sounds something more than 'sin,' and every one confesses himself a 'sinner,' but he is sometimes ashamed to call himself an iniquitous person. Now between 'crimes' and 'offences' there is this difference, that 'crime' over and above exceeds the weight and measure of sin, but an 'offence' does not exceed the weight of sin; for thus, when a sacrifice is commanded to be offered under the Law, it is doubtless enjoined, as for a 'sin,' the same for an 'offence' too. And crime is never done but in deed, whereas offence is most commonly committed in thought alone. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Who call, understand his offences?* [Ps. 19, 12] seeing that sins of practice are known the quicker, in proportion as they appear externally, but sins of thought are the more difficult to apprehend, that they are committed out of sight. Hence anyone, who being made solicitous by the love of Eternity, has it at heart to appear clean before the Judge that shall come, examines himself so much the more exactly now, in proportion as he bethinks himself how he may then present himself free to His terribleness; and he beseeches to have it shewn him, wherein he offends, that he may punish that thing in himself by penance, and by judging himself here, may be rendered unobnoxious to judgment.

58. But herein it is needful to observe, how great is the punishment of our pilgrimage which has fallen upon us, who have been brought to such a degree of blindness, that we do not know our own selves. We do evil, and yet do not quickly find it out, even when done. For the mind, being

banished from the light of truth, finds in itself nothing else than darkness, and very often puts out the foot into the pit of sin, and knows it not. Which it is subject to from the blindness of the state of exile alone, seeing that, being driven away from the illumining of the Lord, it even lost the power to see itself, in that it loved not the face of its Maker. Hence it is added;

Ver.24. *Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and holdest me for Thine enemy?*

59. Man enjoyed the light of inward contemplation in Paradise, but by gratifying himself as he departed from himself, he lost the light of the Creator, and fled from His face to the trees of Paradise, seeing that, after his sin, he dreaded to see Him, whom he had used to love. But mark, after sin he is brought into punishment, but from punishment he returns to love, because he finds out what was the consequence of his transgression, and that face, which he feared in sin, being awakened to a right sense, he seeks afresh by punishment, that he may henceforth flee the darkness of his blind condition, and shrink with horror from this alone, that he does not behold his Creator. Pierced with which longing the holy man exclaims, *Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and takest me for Thine enemy?* 'since, if Thou didst regard me as a friend, Thou wouldest not deprive me of the light of Thy vision.' And going on, he adds the fickleness of the human heart, saying,

Ver. 25. *Wilt Thou shew Thy power against a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?*

60. For what is man but a leaf, who fell in Paradise from the tree? what but a leaf is he, who is caught by the wind of temptation, and lifted up by the gusts of his passions? For the mind of man is agitated as it were by as many gusts, as it undergoes temptations. Thus very often anger agitates it; when anger is gone, empty mirth succeeds. It is driven by the goadings of lust, by the fever of avarice it is made to stretch itself far and wide to compass the things which belong to the earth. Sometimes pride lifts it up,

and sometimes excessive fear sinks it lower than the dust. Therefore seeing that he is lifted and carried by so many gusts of temptation, man is well likened to a 'leaf.' Hence it is well said too by Isaiah, *And we all have fallen as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away*. For 'our iniquity like a wind has taken us away,' in that being steadied by no weight of virtue, it has lifted us into empty self-elation. And it is well that, after a leaf, man should be called 'stubble' likewise. For he that was a 'tree' by his creating, was by himself made a 'leaf' in his tempting, but afterwards he appeared 'stubble' in his fallen estate. For in that he fell from on high, he was a leaf, but, whereas by the flesh he was fellow to the earth, even when he seemed to stand, he is described as 'stubble.' But because he lost the greenness of interior love, he is henceforth 'dry stubble.' So let the holy man reflect both what meanness man is of, and what severity God is of, and let him say, *Wilt Thou shew Thy power against a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?* As if he openly bewailed, saying, 'Why dost Thou run him down with so much force of righteousness, whom Thou knowest to be so frail in temptation?' It goes on;

Ver. 26. *For Thou writest bitter things against me.*

61. For seeing that every thing we speak passes away, but what we write remains, God is said not to 'speak,' but to 'write bitter things,' in that His scourges upon us last for long. For it was said once to man, when he sinned, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return?* And Angels many times appearing gave commandments to men. Moses, the lawgiver, restrained sins by severe means. The Only-Begotten Son of the Most High Father, Himself came to redeem us, He swallowed up death by dying, He announced that everlasting life to us, which He exhibited in Himself; yet that sentence which was given in Paradise concerning the death of our flesh remains unaltered from the very first beginning of the human race up to the end of the world. For *what man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?* which

the Psalmist considering well saith again, *Thou, even Thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry?* Who being ‘once angry,’ when man sinned in Paradise, fixed the sentence of the mortality of our flesh, which now even to the very last may never be changed a whit. Therefore let him say, Thou writest bitter things against me. Hence it is further added;

And wouldest waste me with the iniquities of my youth.

62. Observe, that whereas the holy man finds not that he has ever sinned in his manhood [*juventute*], he dreads the sins of his youth [*adolescentiae*]. Now it is necessary to know, that as in the body, so are there advances of age in the mind also. Thus the first age of man is infancy, when, though he lives in innocence, he cannot speak [h] the innocence which is in him; and then follows boyhood, in which he has henceforth the power of speaking what he wishes; to which youth succeeds, which we know is the first age in active life, which is followed by manhood, i.e. that which is suited to hardihood; and afterwards old age, which from mere time even is now fellow to maturity of mind. Therefore, as we have called the first age fit for good actions ‘youth,’ and as the righteous when they are far advanced in perfect maturity of mind, sometimes recall to recollection the beginning of their deeds, and blame themselves for their first commencement in an equal degree as they have advanced deeper in gravity of mind, because they find that they were once void of discretion, in proportion as they afterwards more thoroughly attain possession of the stronghold of discretion, it is rightly that now, in the words of the holy man, the sins of his youth are dreaded. But if this is to be held after the bare letter, we ought from this consideration to infer how grievous the sins of grown men and the aged are, if the just so greatly fear even that which they did wrong in the years of weakness. It goes on;

Ver. 27. *Thou puttest my foot also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly into all my paths; Thou markest the prints of my feet.*

63. God 'set man's foot in the stocks,' in that he bound fast his wickedness with the strong sentence of His severity. And He 'looketh narrowly into all his paths,' in that He judges with minute exactness all the several particulars that belong to him. For a 'path' is usually narrower than a 'way;' but as by 'ways' we understand actions, so by 'paths' we not unjustly understand the mere thoughts of them. So God 'looketh narrowly into all our paths,' in that in all our several actions He takes account of the thoughts of the heart too; and He 'marketh the prints of our feet,' in that He examineth the intentions of our works, how far they are placed aright, lest that which is done a good work, be not done with a right object. But it is possible that by the prints of the feet the several things done badly may be understood. For a foot in the body is a print in the way. And very commonly, when we do some things wrong, whereas our brethren see it, we are setting them a bad example, and our foot being as it were turned out of the way, we leave to those that follow our footsteps all awry, while by our own deeds we lead the way for other men's consciences to stumble. But it is very hard for man to keep on his guard, that he never presume to do evil, that in his good actions he be not unsteady in the intention, and amidst upright deeds let no wrong purpose deceive him. Yet all these particulars Almighty God minutely examines, and weighs each one of them in judgment. But when can man, bound about as he is by the frailty of the flesh, have power to rise up against all of them with exact particularity, and to maintain the line of uprightness with the thought of the heart unmoved? Hence it is properly added;

Ver. 28. *Who am as a rotten thing to be consumed, and as a garment that is moth eaten.*

64. For as a garment is eaten by the moth sprung out of itself, so man containeth rottenness in himself, whereby he consumeth, and that which he is, is that whereby he consumeth that he should not be. Which may be taken in another sense also, if it be said in the voice of man when tempted; *And I as a rotten thing am to consume, as a garment that is moth eaten*. For man 'as a rotten thing consumeth,' in that he is wasted by the corruption of his flesh. And because impure temptation springs up to him from no other source than from himself, like a moth, temptation consumes the flesh, as a garment from which it issues. For man contains in himself the occasion whence he is tempted. Therefore as it were 'the moth consumeth the garment,' whilst it proceeded from that very same garment. However, we ought to bear in mind that the moth digs its way through the garment without any sound, and it very often happens that thought pierces the mind in such a way, that the mind itself is not sensible of it, until after it has been pierced by its sting. Therefore it is well said that man 'consumeth like a garment that is moth eaten,' for sometimes we do not know the wounds of temptation, unless after we be pierced thereby within our souls. Which same frailty of ours the holy man yet further considering justly adds;

Chap. xiv. 1. *Man that is born of a woman liveth a short time, and is full of many miseries.*

65. In Sacred Writ 'woman' is taken either for the sex, or else for 'frailty.' For the 'sex,' as where it is written, *God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law* [Gal. 4, 4]. But for frailty, as where it is said by the Wise Man, *Better is the iniquity of a man than a woman doing well*. [Ecclus. 42, 14] For 'a man' is the term for every strongminded and discreet person, but 'a woman' is understood of the weak or indiscreet mind. And it often happens that even the discreet person suddenly falls into a fault, and that another weak and indiscreet man exhibits good practice. But he that is weak and indiscreet is sometimes lifted up the more on the

score of what he has done well, and falls the worse into sin; but the discreet person even from that which he sees that he has done amiss, takes occasion to recall himself with closer application to the rule of strictness, and advances the further in righteousness from the same act, whereby he seemed to have fallen from righteousness for a time. In which respect it is rightly said, *Better is the iniquity of a man than a woman doing well;* in that sometimes the very fault of the strong becomes occasion of virtue, and the virtue of the weak occasion of sin. In this place then by the name of 'a woman,' what else but 'frailty' is denoted, when it is said, *Man that is born of a woman?* As if it were said in plainer words, 'What strength shall he have in himself, who was born in frailty?'

66. *Liveth a short time, and is full of many miseries*. Observe by the holy man's words we have the punishment of man briefly set forth, in that he is at once stinted in life and filled out in misery. For if we consider with exactness all that is done here, it is punishment and misery. For to minister to the corruption of the flesh by itself in things necessary and permitted is misery, in such measure that clothing should be sought out against cold, food against hunger, coolness against heat. That the health of the body is kept only with great care, that even when kept it is lost, when lost it is recovered not without great difficulty, and yet after being restored is always in risk; what else is this than the misery of the life of mortality? That we love our friends, mistrusting lest they may be offended with us; that we dread our enemies, and truly are not secure touching those whom we dread; that we often talk to our enemies as confidentially as to friends, and often take the sincere words of our friends, and those, perhaps, that love us very much, as the words of enemies; and that we, who wish never either to be deceived or to deceive, err the more by our caution; what, then, is all this but the misery of man's life? That after the heavenly country has been lost, banished man is delighted with his exile, that he is weighed down with

cares, and yet shuts his eyes to considering how great the burthen is, in that he is full of a multitude of thoughts; that he is deprived of the interior light, and yet in this life wishes to prolong his state of blindness; what else is this but misery, the offspring of our punishment? Yet though he desire to stay here for long, still he is driven on by the mere current of his mortal life to depart out of it. Hence the holy man lightly adds;

Ver. 2. *He cometh forth like a flower, and is crushed: he fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state.*

67. For, ‘as a flower, he cometh forth,’ in that he shews fair in the flesh; but he is ‘crushed,’ in that he is reduced to corruption. For what are men, as born in the world, but a kind of flowers in a field? Let us stretch our interior eyes over the breadth of the present world, and, lo, it is filled as it were with as many flowers as there are human beings. So life in this flesh is the flower in grass. Hence it is well said by the Psalmist, *As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth*. [Ps. 103, 15] Isaiah too saith, *All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof is as the flower of the field*. [Is. 40, 6] For man cometh forth like a flower from concealment, and of a sudden shews himself in open day, and in a moment is by death withdrawn from open view into concealment again. The greenness of the flesh exhibits us to view, but the dryness of dust withdraws us from men’s eyes. Like a flower we appeared, who were not; like a ‘flower’ we wither, who appeared only in time.

68. And whereas man is daily being driven into death moment by moment, it is rightly added, *He fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state*. But as the sun is unceasingly going through his course, and never stays himself in a state of stedfastness, why is the course of man’s life likened to ‘a shadow’ rather than to the ‘sun,’ excepting that, when he parted with the love of the Creator, he lost the heat of the heart, and remained in the coldness of his iniquity alone? Since according to the

voice of Truth, *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*. [Matt. 24, 2] He, then, who hath not warmth of the heart in the love of God, and yet keepeth not the life, which he loves, assuredly he 'fleeth like a shadow.' Hence it is well written concerning him, *that he hath followed a shadow*. [Ecclus. 34, 2] Now it is well said, *and never continueth in the same state*. For whereas infancy is going on to childhood, childhood to youth, youth to manhood, and manhood to old age, and old age to death, in the course of the present life he is forced by the very steps of his increase upon those of decrease, and is ever wasting from the very cause whence he thinks himself to be gaining ground in the space of his life. For we cannot have a fixed stay here, whither we are come only to pass on; and this very circumstance of our living is to be daily passing out of life. Which same flight the first man could not have known before the transgression, seeing that times passed, himself standing. But after he transgressed, he placed himself on a kind of slide of a temporal condition, and because he ate the forbidden fruit, he found at once the failure of his stay. Which liability to change man suffers, not only without, but also within him, when he strives to arise to better works. For by the weight of its changeableness the mind is always being driven forwards to some other thing than it is, and, except it be kept in its stay by stringent discipline in self-keeping, it is always sliding back into worse. For that mind which deserted Him, Who ever standeth, lost the stay in which she might have continued.

Henceforth now when he strives after better things, he has as it were to strain against the force of the stream. But when he relaxes in his bent to ascend, without effort he is carried back to the lowest point. Thus whereas in ascent there is effort, in descent rest from effort, the Lord warns us that we have to enter by a narrow gate, saying, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate* [Luke 13, 24]; for when about to mention 'the entering in of the narrow gate,' He premised, *Strive*, since unless there be an ardent striving

[k] of the heart,’ the water of the world is not surmounted, whereby the soul is ever being borne down to the lowest place. And so whereas man ‘springeth up like a flower and is cut down, and fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in his place,’ let us hear what he further subjoins in this train of reflection. It goes on;

Ver. 3. *And dost Thou deign to open Thine eyes upon such an one, and to bring him into judgment with Thee?*

69. For he surveyed above both the power of Almighty God and his own frailty; he brought before his view himself and God, he considered Who would come into judgment, and with whom. He saw on the one side man, on the other side his Creator, i.e. dust and God; and he lightly exclaims, *Dost Thou deign to open Thine eyes upon such an one?* With Almighty God, to open the eyes is to execute His judgments, to look whom to smite. For as it were with eyes closed He does not wish to look at him, whom He does not wish to smite. Hence it is immediately added also about the judgment itself, *To bring him into judgment with Thee?* But whereas he had viewed God coming to judgment, he again takes a view of his own frailty. He sees that he cannot be clean of himself, who, that he might be able to be, came forth out of uncleanness. And he adds,

Ver. 4. *Who can make clean a thing conceived of unclean seed? Is it not Thou, Who only Art?*

70. He That alone is clean in Himself can cleanse the unclean thing. For man, who lives in a corruptible flesh, has the uncleannesses of temptation engrained in him, seeing that he derived them from his birth. For his very conception, for the sake of fleshly gratification, is uncleanness. Hence the Psalmist saith, *Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me*. [Ps. 51, 7] Hence it is therefore that he is very often tempted even against his will. Hence it is that he is subject to impurities in imagination, even though he strive against them by reason, because being

conceived in uncleanness, whilst he follows after cleanness, he is striving to get the better of that which he is. But whoever has mastered the motions of secret temptation, and overcome uncleanness of thought, must never ascribe his cleanness to himself, in that none can make clean a thing conceived of unclean seed, save He Who alone is clean in Himself. Let him, then, that has already reached in mind the place of cleanness, cast his eye upon the way of his conception, which he came by, and thence satisfy himself, that in his own power he has no cleanness of life, the beginning of whose existence was made in uncleanness. But the meaning here may be that blessed Job, regarding the Incarnation of the Redeemer, saw that That Man only in the world was not conceived of unclean seed, Who so came into the world from the Virgin's womb, that He had nothing derived from unclean conception. For He did not proceed from the man and the woman, but from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. He only then proved truly clean in His Flesh, Who was incapable of being affected by the gratification of the flesh, seeing that it was not by the gratification of the flesh that He came hither.

BOOK XII.

Wherein after the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Job has been explained, beginning at the fifth verse, the fifteenth chapter entire is explained for the most part in a moral sense.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

IT is the practice of the righteous, to think of the present life, how transitory it is, so much the more heedfully in proportion as they are taught more earnestly to take thought of the eternal blessings of the heavenly Country; for by those things, which they see lasting within, they more exactly mark the flight of things passing away without. Whence blessed Job, when he had delivered a sentence on the transition of man's time, saying, *Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live*; and again, *He seeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state*; further adds of the shortness of his life;

Ver. 5. *The days of man are short, the number of his months is with Thee.*

1. For he sees that that as it were is not with us, which runs by with such great rapidity, but seeing that even things passing away stand with Almighty God, he declares that 'the number of our months is with Him.' Or, indeed, by the 'days,' the shortness of time is denoted, but by the 'months' the spaces of the days are multiplied. Thus to ourselves 'the days are short;' but seeing that our life is further extended afterwards, 'the number of our months' is recorded 'to be with God.' Hence also it is said by Solomon, *Length of days is in her right hand*. [Prov. 3, 16] It goes on;

Thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass.

2. Of the things that happen to men in this world, none come to pass without the secret counsel of Almighty God; for God, foreseeing all things that should follow, before the ages of the world decreed how they should be

ordered in the ages of the world. Since it is already appointed to man both to what extent the prosperity of the world shall attend him, or in what degree adversity shall fall upon him, that His Elect neither unbounded prosperity may exalt, nor overmuch adversity sink them too low; moreover it is appointed in this very life of mortality how long he shall live with the conditions of time. For although Almighty God added fifteen years to the life of King Hezekiah, yet at that moment that he suffered him to die, He foresaw he would die. Wherein a question presents itself, viz. how it is that it should be said to him by the Prophet, *Set thine house in order for thou shalt die, and not live?* [2 Kings 20, 1] For he, to whom sentence of death was declared, immediately upon his tears had life added to him. Now, the Lord said by the Prophet at what time he in himself deserved to die, but by the bountifulness of mercy, He kept him for the undergoing death at that time, which He Himself foreknew before the ages began. Nor even therefore was the Prophet deceptive, because he made known the time of death, at which that man deserved to die, nor were the appointments of the Lord rent and torn, forasmuch as this also, that the years of life should be added to by the bountifulness of God, was foreordained before the ages began; and the period of life, which was added contrary to expectation without, was inwardly appointed without increase upon foreknowledge; and so it is well said, *Thou hast appointed his bounds which he cannot pass*.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

3. Which may also be taken according to the spirit, in that we sometimes endeavour to advance in virtuous attainments, and some gifts we are vouchsafed, but being kept off from some, we lie prone in things below. For there is no man who masters that degree of goodness which he desires, in that Almighty God, Who discerneth the inward parts, sets bounds to the very spiritual attainments themselves; that by reason of that which man tries

to master, and is unable, he may not exalt himself in those things, in which he has the power. Whence too that great Preacher, that had been carried up into the third heaven, and penetrated the secrets of Paradise, after that revelation, was not left the power to be at rest, and without temptation; but whereas Almighty God has 'appointed man his bounds, which he cannot pass,' he both exalted him to know things on high, and set him down again to be subject to weak things, that he looking at the measure of his compass, whilst he endeavoured to lay hold on security, and could not, that he might not be carried out of himself in pride, might be forced in humility ever to return back within his own bounds. It proceeds;

Ver. 6. *Turn from him a little while, that he may rest, till his longed for day come, as an hireling's.*

4. In this place, *Turn from him*, means, 'remove from him the force of the stroke,' for who can rest when He turns away from him, when He Himself alone is rest, and the further off a man is from Him, he is also rendered void of rest in proportion? Thus it is in such sort said, *Turn from him*, that you should understand, 'from smiting;' for it is fitly added, *till his longed for day come as an hireling's*. In proportion as an hireling is far from the end of his work, so is he far from the recompense of his wages. Thus every holy man being set in this life, whilst he sees that he is far from departing out of the present life, laments that he is far from the eternal bliss. What then is it to say, *Turn from him a little while, that he may rest*; but, 'withdraw now the strokes of the present life, and shew the blessings of eternal rest?' Whence too it is added concerning that rest itself; till his longed for day come, as an hireling's; for then the longed for day as of an hireling comes to man, when he receives eternal rest in compensation for his labour. But as far as relates to the aspect of the present life, how despicable is the race of man, so full of miseries, blessed Job yet further tells, and describes how greatly the very things without sense seem to surpass him, when he says;

Ver. 7-10. *For there is a hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will be green again; and that the tender branches thereof will sprout forth. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth foliage as when it was planted. But man, when he is dead, and stripped, and consumed, where is he?*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

5. Now because this is self-evident according to the letter, we must refer the sense to the things of the interior, and search how they are to be made out after the spiritual signification. Thus in Holy Scripture by the name of 'tree' we have represented sometimes the Cross, sometimes the righteous man, or even the unrighteous man, and sometimes the Wisdom of God Incarnate. Thus the Cross is denoted by 'the tree,' when it is said, *Let us put the tree into his bread* [Jer. 11, 19, V.]; for to 'put the tree into the bread' is to apply the Cross to the Body of our Lord. Again by the title of 'the tree' we have the just man, or even the unjust man, set forth, as the Lord saith by the Prophet, *I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and exalted the low tree*. [Ez. 17, 24] Forasmuch as according to the word of the self-same Truth, *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased*; *and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted* [Luke 14, 11]: Solomon also saith, *If the tree fall towards the South, or toward the North, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be*. [Ecc. 11, 3] For in the day of their death the just man does 'fall to the South,' and the unjust 'to the North,' in that both the just man in favour of the Spirit is brought to joy, and the sinner, together with the apostate Angel, who said, *I will sit also upon the mount of the testimony, in the sides of the North* [Is. 14, 13], is cast away in his frozen heart. Again, the Wisdom of God Incarnate is represented by 'the Tree,' as where it is written thereon, *She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on Her*. [Prov. 3,

18] And as She Herself says, *If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* [Luke 23, 31] And so in this place whereas a tree is preferred before man, what is man taken for but every carnal person? and what is denoted by the title of 'the tree,' but the life of the righteous? For there is a hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will be green again. For when in a death of painful endurance the just man is hard bestead for the truth, in the greenness of everlasting life he is recovered again; and he who here proved green by faith, there becomes green in actual sight [*speciem*]. 'And his branches shoot,' in that it is most often the case that by the sufferings of the just man, all faithful persons are redoubled in the love of the heavenly country, and they receive the greenness of the spiritual life, while they are glad that he did courageously here in God's behalf. It goes on;

Ver. 8, 9. *Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the dust; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth leaves as when it was first planted.*

6. What is 'the root' of the righteous, but holy preaching, since it is that he springs out of, and that he holds on in? and what is meant by the name of 'the earth' or of 'dust,' but the sinner? to whom it is said by the voice of the Creator, *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return* [m] [Gen. 3, 19]. Or, indeed, as our Translation reads, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*. [so V.] Thus 'the root of the righteous waxes old in the earth, and his stock dies in the dust,' in that in the hearts of the wicked his preaching is despised, and thought dried of all goodness, and 'his stock dies in the dust,' in that amidst the hands of the persecutors his body is bereft of life; for according to the words of Wisdom, *In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery*. [Wisd. 3, 2] But this one, whose 'root waxed old in the earth, and whose trunk died in the dust,' *through the smell of water, buddeth;* in that through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by

the example of his conduct he causes the budding of virtue in the hearts of the Elect. For by the designation of water sometimes the watering of the Holy Spirit is used to be understood, as where it is written, *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.* [John 7, 37] *But whosoever drinketh of the water that shall give him, shall never thirst*. [John 4, 14] It follows; *And bring forth foliage as when it was first planted*. To 'bring forth foliage on the stock being cut down' is, when the just man is put an end to in the body, by the mere example of his suffering to raise up the hearts of many, and out of a right faith to shew forth the greenness of truth. And it is well said, *As when it was first planted*. All that is done by the righteous here is a second planting; in that clearly the first planting does not consist in the practice of the good, but in the foreknowledge of the Creator; and whereas all that the Elect do, as it is first seen and settled interiorly, so afterwards is executed outwardly, it is well said, *And bring forth foliage as when it was first planted*, i.e. it shews its greenness in the executing of practice, such as it had before in the foreknowledge of the Creator.

7. The 'root of the righteous' may also be taken for the very nature itself of a human being, by virtue whereof he subsists, which same root waxes old in the earth, when the natural frame of flesh comes to nought being reduced to dust, whose 'stock dies in the dust,' in that the body dismantled of its own form and fashion crumbles to nought; but at the 'scent of water it buds,' in that through the coming of the Holy Spirit it rises again; and it will bring forth boughs as when it was first planted, in that it returns to that form, which it was created to receive, if, when he was set in Paradise, he had refused to sin.

[PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

8. Which perhaps may also be taken of the Lord Himself, Who is the Head of all the good; for according to that which we have said before, whereas

He saith of Himself, *For if they have done these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?* [Luke 23, 31] He said that Himself was the green tree, and we the dry tree, forasmuch as He contained in His own Person the power of the Divine Nature, but we that are mere men are called a dry tree. And so 'there is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,' in that even if He was able to be put to death by His Passion, yet by the glory of His Resurrection, He came to the greenness of life again; 'His branches shoot,' in that the faithful being multiplied by His Resurrection grew out far and wide; His root as it were waxed old in the earth, in that the preaching of Him was to the unbelief of the Jews a despicable thing; 'and His stock dried in the dust,' in that in the heart of those that persecuted Him, which was uplifted by the wind of their unbelief, He was held as an object of scorn and contempt, in that He was capable of being put to death in the flesh; but 'at the scent of water He budded,' in that through the power of God His Flesh after demise returned to life, according to that which is written, *Whom God hath raised from the dead.* [Acts 3, 15] For in that God is a Trinity, the Holy Trinity, i.e. the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, raised up to life the extinct Flesh of the Only-Begotten Son. And 'It brought forth foliage as when It was first planted,' in that the feebleness of the Apostles, which in the season of His death was afraid and denied, and by denying turned dry, by the glory of His Resurrection was again quickened in faith. In comparison with which Tree what is every man but dust? Hence it is added;

Ver. 10. *But when man is dead, and stripped, and consumed, where, I pray, is he?*

9. There is no man without sin, save Him Who came not into this world by sin; and whereas all we are tied fast in the bonds of guilt, we die by the mere loss of righteousness. Of the robe of innocence given us aforetime in Paradise, we are stripped naked, and we are yet further consumed by the subsequent dissolution of the flesh. Thus man being a sinner dies in guilt, is

stripped bare of righteousness, is consumed in punishment. This nakedness of his erring son the Father vouchsafed to cover, who said, on his returning to him, *Bring forth quickly the first robe*. For 'the first robe' is the robe of innocence, which man being created aright received, but being persuaded wrongly by the serpent forfeited. Against this same nakedness it is said, *Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked*. For we 'keep our garments,' when we keep the precepts of innocency in our hearts, that whereas guilt strips us naked to the Judge, penance should cover us returning to the innocence we had forfeited. And it is well said, *Where, I pray, is he?* in that the sinner, man, refused to stand there where he was created; while here, where he fell, he is forbidden to stay for long. Willingly he forfeited his country, unwillingly he is driven forth from his exile, which he delights in. Where then is he, who is not in His love, where only it is truly to be? It proceeds;

Ver. 11, 12. *As if the waters fail from the sea, and the river being emptied drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not.*

10. The mind of man is the sea, and the thoughts of his mind, as it were, a wave of the sea; which sometimes swell in anger, are made calm by grace, and from hatred run out in bitterness; but when man dieth, 'the waters of the sea fail,' in that according to the words of the Psalmist, *In that very day his thoughts perish*. [Ps. 146, 4] And again it is written concerning the dying soul, *Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy shall perish together*. [Eccl. 9, 6] Thus 'the river being emptied drieth up,' in that, when the soul is withdrawn, the body remains empty. For the lifeless body is as it were the empty channel of a river, wherein it is to be marked with an attentive eye that the present life, i.e. the time while the soul stays in the body, is likened to the sea and to a river, for the water of the sea is bitter, of a river sweet. And because we that are living here are at one time under the influence of certain bitternesses, and at another time are seen to be serene and gentle

with sweetness, the course of the present life is set forth by the similitude of the sea and a river.

11. But herein that seems to be exceedingly hard which is added, *So man lieth down, and riseth not*. Wherefore do we so toil and labour, if we are not straining after the recompense of the Resurrection? And how is it said, and riseth not, when it is written: *We shall all rise again, but we shall not all be changed?* [1 Cor. 15, 51 Vulg.] And again, *If in this life only we have hope of life in Christ, we are of all men most miserable* [ver. 19]: and when 'Truth' says by Itself, *All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation*. [John 5, 28. 29.] But the sentence subjoined points out what distinction there is concealed in the sentence preceding. For it is added;

Till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

12. For it is plain that they shall not rise again, that is, till the heavens be no more, in that except the end of the world come, the race of mankind shall not wake to life from the sleep of death. Not, then, that he shall not rise again at all, but that before the crumbling of the heavens the human race shall not rise again, is what he teaches. Moreover it is a thing to be marked, why after he had called man dead above, below he designates him not dead, but sleeping, and tells that he shall never rise again from his sleep until the heaven be crumbled in pieces, which is no otherwise than that it is plainly given us to understand, that by the likeness of the tree quickened afresh to life, he designates man a dead sinner, i.e. extinct from the life of righteousness; but when he speaks of the death of the flesh, he preferred to call this not death but sleep, teaching us surely the hope of the Resurrection; in that as a man quickly awakes out of sleep, so shall he rise in a moment at the nod of his Creator from the death of the body. For the name of death is

horribly feared by weak minds, but the title of sleep is not feared. Hence Paul in charging his disciples saith, *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as men without hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring again with Him*. [1 Thess. 4, 13. 14.] How is it that the great Preacher calls the death of the Lord death, but the death of the servants of the Lord he names not death, but sleep; but that, having regard to the weak hearts of his hearers, he mixes the medicine of his preaching with wonderful art, and Him, Whom they knew to have risen already, he does not doubt to teach them was dead, while those, who had not as yet risen again, that he might teach the hope of the Resurrection, he calls not dead, but sleeping? For he did not fear to call Him dead Whom his hearers knew to have already risen, and He was afraid to call those dead, whose rising again they scarcely believed. Thus blessed Job, seeing that he does not doubt of those that are dead in the flesh waking again to life, calls them sleeping rather than dead. It goes on;

Ver. 13. *O that Thou wouldest defend me in hell!*

13. That before the coming of the Mediator between God and man, every person, though he might have been of a pure and approved life, descended to the prisons of hell, there can be no doubt; in that man, who fell by his own act, was unable by his own act to return to the rest of Paradise, except that He should come, Who by the mystery of His Incarnation should open the way into that same Paradise. For hence after the sin of the first man it is recorded, that a flaming sword was placed at the entrance of Paradise [Gen. 3, 24], which is also called 'moveable,' [*versatilis,* V.] in that the time should come one day, that it might even be removed. Nor yet do we maintain that the souls of the righteous did so go down into hell, that they were imprisoned in places of punishment; but it is to be believed that there

are higher regions in hell and that there are lower regions apart, so that both the

righteous might be at rest in the upper regions, and the unrighteous be tormented in the lower ones. Hence the Psalmist, by reason of the grace of God preventing him, says, *Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell*. [Ps. 86, 13] Thus blessed Job before the coming of the Mediator, knowing of his going down into hell, implores the protecting hand of his Maker there, in order that he might be a stranger to the places of punishment; where, while he is brought to enjoy rest, he might be kept hidden from punishment. Hence he subjoins;

That thou wouldest keep me secret, until Thy wrath quite [*pertransiit,* V.] *pass by.*

14. For the wrath of Almighty God does herein execute the force of its severity every day, that those who live unworthily it swallows up in most worthy punishments. Which wrath now indeed 'passes by,' but at the end it 'quite passes by,' in that now it is executed, but at the end of the world it is finally consummated. Yet this wrath as to the souls of the righteous 'quite passed by' on the coming of our Redeemer, in that those the Mediator between God and man brought back from the prisons of hell to the joys of Paradise, when He did Himself go down there in pity. And on this subject it is necessary to be known, that the term 'wrath' does not suit the Divine Being, in that no disquieting influence disorders the simple nature of God. Whence it is said to Him, *But Thou, Ruler of power, judgest with tranquillity, and orderest us with exceeding great regard*. [Wisd. 12, 18] But because the souls of the righteous were one day to be set free by the coming of the Mediator from the regions of hell, though not the places of punishment, this too the righteous man foresees, and beseeching adds;

And appoint me a set time, when Thou shouldest remember me.

15. *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law*. [Gal. 4, 4. 5.] Thus the man of the Lord foreseeing this redemption, wherein many of the Gentile world as well were destined to be set free, as he himself says; *Though these things Thou dost hide in Thine heart, yet I know that Thou dost remember all things*; [Job 10, 13] prays for a time for the remembering of him, to be appointed him with Almighty God. For it is hence that the Lord saith in the Gospel, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto Me* [John 12, 32], i.e. 'all things Elect;' for neither did the Lord, when He returned from hell, draw the Elect and the lost together, but He bore off all those things from thence, which He did foreknow would have attached themselves to Him. Hence He also says by the Prophet Hosea, *I will be thy death, O death; I will be the biting of thee, O hell*. [Hos. 13, 14] Now what we put to death, we do our best that it should not be at all, and of that which we bite, a part we take away, and a part we leave. Therefore whereas the Lord wholly destroyed death in His Elect members, He proved Himself the 'Death of death;' but whereas He took a part from hell, and left a part, He did not wholly destroy but did 'bite hell.' Therefore He says, *I will be thy Death, O death*; i.e. 'in Mine Elect, I utterly destroy thee. — *I will he the biting of thee, O hell*; in that in taking those away, I pierce thee in part.' And so let blessed Job, knowing of this coming of our Redeemer to hell, pray for what he foresaw in the future, and let him say, *And that Thou shouldest appoint me a set time wherein Thou wouldest remember me*. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *Thinkest thou that a dead man shall live again?*

16. It is common with righteous men, in that which they themselves feel to be sure and well grounded, to urge something as if in doubting, so as to put the words of the weak into their own lips; and again by a strong sentence they gainsay utterly him that halts in doubtfulness, that by that

which they are seen to put forth doubtfully, they may in some degree condescend to the weak, and hereby, that they deliver a sure sentence, they may draw the doubtful minds of the weak to firm ground. Which whilst they do, they are following the pattern of our Head. For our Lord, when He was near to His passion, took up the voice of those that were weak in Himself, saying, *O My Father, if it be Possible; let this cup pass from Me;* [Matt. 26, 39] and that He might remove their fear, He took it in Himself. And again shewing by obedience the force of strength, He saith, *Nevertheless, not as I wilt, but as Thou wilt*. That so when that thing threatens us which we would not have take place, we should so in weakness pray that it may not, as that in strength we may be ready for the will of our Creator to be done, even in opposition to our own will. After this pattern, then, the words of weakness are sometimes proper to be adopted by the strong, that by their strong preachings afterwards the hearts of the weak may be more acceptably strengthened. Hence blessed Job when he uttered words as of one in doubt, saying, *Thinkest thou that a dead man shall live again?* presently added the sentence of his sure belief, whereby he saith,

All the days that I now serve militant will I wait, till my change come.

17. He that waits for his change with such ardent longing, shews how great his certainty was of the Resurrection, and he makes it appear how greatly he looks down upon the course of the present life, who designates it a 'service militant.' For in the militant state there is the going on continually to an end, day by day the finishing of the conclusion is expected. Thus he despises the course of this life, and looks for the settling of fixedness, who hereby, that he is serving subject to changeableness, is in haste to attain to his change. For to the just man in this life the very load of his corruption is burthensome. Because watchings exhaust with weariness, sleep is sought, that the labour and harassing effect of watchings may be moderated: but sometimes even sleep kills. Hunger wastes the body, and that its craving

may be banished, victuals are sought after: but frequently even the very victuals oppress, which had been sought in order to banish the oppression of debility. And so the load of corruption is a heavy burthen, which except it were so heavy, Paul would never have said, *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.* [Rom. 8, 20 — 22] So let the holy man, longing for the state of incorruption, say, *All the days that I now serve militant will I wait till my change come*. In which same change what it is that takes place, he adds;

Ver. 15. *Thou shalt call me, and I will answer Thee.*

18. We are said to answer anyone, when we do works in turn answerable to his deeds. Thus in that change the Lord 'calls,' and man 'answers,' in that, before the brightness of The Incorrupt, man is shewn forth incorrupt after corruption. For now so long as we are subject to corruption, we do not in any wise 'answer' our Creator, seeing that whereas corruption is far from incorruption, there is no similarity suitable to our answering. But of that change it is written, *When He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is*. [1 John 3, 2] Then therefore we shall truly 'answer God,' Who 'calleth,' when at the bidding of the Supreme Incorruption we shall arise incorruptible; and because the creature is not able to earn this by itself, but it is brought to pass by the gift of Almighty God alone, that it should be changed to that exceeding glory of incorruption, it is rightly subjoined;

Thou wilt stretch forth Thy right hand to the work of Thine hands.

19. As if he said in plain words; 'For this reason Thy corruptible creature is able to hold fast unto incorruption, because he is lifted up by the hands of Thy power, and is kept by the grace of Thy regard, that he should hold fast.' For the human creature by this alone, that it is a creature, has it inherent in

itself to sink down below itself, but man has obtained it from his Creator, that he should both be caught above himself by contemplation, and held fast in himself by incorruption. And so that the creature may not fall away beneath himself, but hold on in incorruption, he is lifted to the stedfastness of immutability by the right hand of His Maker. Moreover it may be that by the title of ‘the Right Hand’ the Son may be designated; in that, *All things were made by Him*. [John 1, 3] Thus Almighty God ‘stretched out His Right Hand to the work of His hands,’ because, that He might lift on high the human race, become refuse and grovelling in the lowest things, He sent the Only-Begotten One, made Incarnate for this end. By Whose Incarnation it has been vouchsafed to us that we, who fall into incorruption of our own will, should one time be enabled to answer God when He calls us in the glory of incorruption. Wherein who can estimate the bountifulness of Divine Mercy, that He should bring man after sin to such a height of glory? God takes account of the bad things we do, yet by the grace of His lovingkindness He remits them to us in mercy. And hence it is added;

Ver. 16. *For now Thou numberest my steps, but Thou sparest my sins.*

20. God ‘numbers our steps,’ when He marks each one of our several deeds for the recompensing them. For what is denoted by the steps, but each particular act of ours? Thus Almighty God both ‘numbers our steps’ and ‘spares our sins,’ in that He at once surveys our actions with exactness, and yet remits them in mercy to those that repent, Who both sees obduracy in those that sin, and yet softens it into penitence by preventing grace. Thus He ‘numbers sins,’ in that He turns us ourselves to bewail the several things which we have done. And He remits them in mercy, in that whilst we our own selves punish them, He Himself never judges them in the last reckoning, as Paul testifies, who saith, *For if we should judge ourselves, we should not be judged*. [1 Cor. 11, 31] Hence it is further added;

Ver. 17. *Thou hast sealed up as it were in a bag my transgressions; but Thou hast healed mine iniquity.*

21. Our 'transgressions are sealed up as it were in a bag,' in that that thing which we ourselves do in outward act, except we wash away by penance in the mean while, is kept in the secresy of God's judgments under a kind of hiding, that one day it may also come forth out of the bag of secresy into the publicity of the Judgment. Hence it is said by Moses too; *Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasures? In the day of vengeance I will repay them*. [Deut. 32, 34] But when for the evil things that we have done, we are bruised with the stroke of discipline, and lament the same by penance, He 'sealeth up,' and 'healeth' our iniquity, in that He neither leaves things unpunished here, nor reserves them to be punished in the Judgment. Thus He 'seals transgressions,' in that He marks them with exactness here, to chastise them with the rod, but He 'heals' them, in that He wholly remits them in the stroke. Hence the iniquity of that persecutor of Him, whom He laid prostrate on the ground, He did also by sealing heal, seeing that He said concerning him to Ananias; *He is a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake*. [Acts 9, 15] For to that man, whom on account of past transgressions He still threatens with future sufferings, what he had done wrong, surely He kept sealed in the heart; but as surely in so sealing He had healed his transgressions, in that He called him 'a chosen vessel.' Or, surely, 'our transgressions are sealed in a bag,' when the evil things we have been guilty of, we reflect on continually with a heedful heart. For what is the heart of man, but God's 'bag?' wherein whilst we earnestly look to see how much we transgress, we carry our sins as it were 'sealed up in God's bag.' Did not David keep his sin 'sealed up in a bag,' when he said, *For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me*. [Ps. 51, 3]

And because the faults, which we are made acquainted with in reviewing and repeating, the pitiful Creator remits to us, after the 'transgressions being sealed in a bag,' it is rightly subjoined, *But Thou hast healed mine iniquity*: as if he said in plain speech, 'What things Thou dost now seal, so that I in repenting should see, doubtless Thou doest it, that in the retribution they should never be seen.' It follows;

Ver. 18, 19. *And surely the mountain falling slippeth away, and the rock is removed out of his place. The waters wear the stones, and by washing little by little the earth is consumed, and so Thou wilt in a like way destroy man.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

22. This is very often the case, that upon rocks falling, a piece of rock is removed to other places; that waters wear stones, and little by little the ground is wasted by the washings of the flood: but we have need to make out with great diligence that which is brought in; *and man Thou wilt in a like way destroy*. For what is that, that to a mountain falling, a rock removed, a stone worn hollow, and ground consumed by the washing of the flood, the ruin of man is likened, but this, which we are plainly given to understand, that there are two sorts of temptations, one sort, which passes in the mind even of the good man by sudden accident, that he should be so tempted of a sudden, that by the unexpectedness of the event it should make him reel, and bring him to the ground, and that he does not see his falling, until after he has fallen; while there is another which comes by little and little into the mind, and by gentle suggestions corrupts the resisting soul, and not by its excessiveness but by its importunity wastes all the powers of righteousness therein? And so, whereas there is one sort of temptation, which by a sudden assault very often brings the good down to the ground, let it be said, *And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the*

rock is removed out of his place, i.e. the holy mind, whose place was righteousness, is by a sudden impulse removed into sin. Again, because there is another sort of temptation, which infuses itself gently into the heart of man, and wears and wastes all the hardness of its resolution, let it be said, *The waters wear the stones*; in this way, viz. that the unremitted and soft flatteries of lust suck away the hardness of the soul, and the slow and penetrating evil habit corrodes the hard and forcible purpose of the mind. Hence it is added, *And by washing the ground is consumed little by little*. For as when water flows in, ‘the ground is consumed little by little,’ so when bad habit creeps on [n] by gentle degrees, even the strong mind is engulphed. Hence it is well added, *And Thou wilt in a like way destroy man*, i.e. in this way, that when Thou by a righteous appointment sufferest temptation of a sudden to get the dominion over the mind of him, who is seen to have his stand on high, Thou causes; ‘the mountain to fall and slip away,’ and when the will is changed to evil, it is as if ‘the rock were removed to a new place,’ but whilst Thou lettest a gentle and fine yet unremitting temptation prevail over the minds of those, who are accounted strong, ‘the waters in a manner wear the stones, and by washing, the ground is consumed little by little,’ in that the hardness of the mind being subdued by gentle suggesting is made soft.

23. Let us see how that David was a ‘high mountain,’ who was enabled to contemplate such great mysteries of God by the Spirit of prophecy; but let us mark how he ‘slipped down,’ by a sudden fall, who whilst walking on the solar, lusted after and carried off another man’s wife, and killed her husband with loss to his own army. Then ‘fell a mountain with a sudden fall,’ when that mind which was used to dwell with heavenly mysteries, was overcome by sudden temptation, and brought under to such most monstrous pollution. And so ‘the rock was removed from its place,’ when the mind of the prophet being shut out from the mysteries of prophecy came to imagine

filthy things. Let us see moreover how 'the waters wear the stones, and by washing the ground is consumed little by little,' in that Solomon by an immoderate intercourse and frequency with women was brought to this pass, that he built a temple to idols: and he who had before erected a temple to God, by frequency of lust, being even bowed down under misbelief, was not afraid to erect idol temples. And so it came to pass, that by unremitting wantonness of the flesh, he was brought even to misbelief of the spirit. What else then, but that the 'waters did wear away the stone, and by washing the ground was consumed little by little,' in that by the encroaching [*surripiente*] of sin as it flowed in little by little, the ground of his heart crumbled away unto wasting? Thus let blessed Job consider both sorts of temptation, whether the sudden and excessive, or the gentle and prolonged sort, let him contemplate the falls of his fellow-creatures, and from those things which take place outwardly let him catch the keynote of his contemplation within, saying, *And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place*: the waters wear the stones, and by washing little by little the earth is wasted; and Thou wilt in like manner destroy men; i.e. 'as these things without sense at one time are brought to the ground suddenly, at one time are worn little by little by the softness of water being let in; so likewise him, whom Thou hast created a reasoning creature, Thou dost either overthrow by sudden temptation, or permittest to be worn and wasted by a long and gentle one;' and that reasoning creature he directly describes in the following words, saying,

Ver. 20. *Thou hast strengthened him for a little space, that the might pass by for ever.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

24. Man has been 'strengthened here for a little space,' in that he has received here powers of living for a while, that he should for ever pass

away thither, where no end should bound and shut in his life, but in this moment's space where he has been 'strengthened,' he extracts that wherefrom in the everlasting world he may either find how always to have joy, or not ever escape the punishments he has entered upon. And for this reason, that 'he has been strengthened for a little space,' to 'pass away for everlasting,' it is fitly added immediately;

Thou wilt change his countenance, and send him away.

25. 'The face of man is changed,' when his form is wasted by death; but 'he is sent away,' in that from those things which he kept willingly he is necessitated to pass away to the eternal world against his will, and while he is brought thereunto, these things which he held long and thought on, how it will be with them now left behind him he knows nothing. Hence it is added;

Ver. 21. *Whether his sons be in honour or dishonour, he perceiveth not.*

26. For as they, who are still living, know nothing of the souls of the dead, in what place they are held; so the dead, concerning the life of those living after them in the flesh, know not at all how it is ordered; in that both the life of the spirit is far from the life of the flesh, and as the corporeal and incorporeal are things different in kind, so are they parted in knowledge. Which however is not to be imagined concerning holy souls, in that they which behold the brightness of Almighty God within, we cannot for a moment suppose that there is any thing without that they know not [b]. But because carnal persons bestow their chief affection on their children, blessed Job declares that they are hereafter ignorant of that, which they loved here with all their heart, so that 'whether their sons be in honour or dishonour they know not,' whereas their care for these was always preying upon their minds.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

Which however if it is to be understood in a spiritual sense, with no unfitness by the title of sons we have works denoted, as Paul saith of woman, *Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing*. [1 Tim. 2, 15] Not that a woman, who being devoted to continency never bears children, shall not be saved, but she is said to be 'saved by childbearing,' because by the operation of good works she is united to everlasting salvation. Thus the children in honour are good deeds, and the children in dishonour are bad deeds. And often man strives to do things with a good intention, yet by reason of the many occasions that creep upon him, how his actions are accounted of in the sight of Almighty God is a thing uncertain. And so 'whether his sons be in honour or dishonour he perceiveth not,' in that his works being sifted with a searching scrutiny, whether they be approved or condemned he cannot tell. Thus here man is placed in the painfulness of labour, and thither he is brought in the fearfulness of misgiving. Hence it is yet further subjoined concerning the labour of the present life itself,

Ver. 22. *But his flesh while he liveth shall have pain, and His soul shall mourn over himself*.

27. Concerning the married Paul saith, *Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh*. [1 Cor. 7, 28] But they may 'have trouble in the flesh here,' who are even now leading spiritual lives. Wherefore then is it said as it were in a special sense, that there is 'trouble of the flesh' to married persons, seeing that it is not far removed even from the life of the spiritual; excepting that those commonly meet with worse troubles from the flesh, who delight themselves with the pleasures of the flesh? And it is well said, *And his soul within him shall mourn over himself*; in that whosoever desires to rejoice in himself, by this alone is henceforth in woe, viz. that he has gone far from the true joy. For the true joy of the soul is the Creator. Therefore it is meet that man should ever find in himself sorrow, who, forsaking His Creator, sought joy in himself. It proceeds;

Chap. xv. 1. *Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said, Should a wise man answer as if speaking into the wind, and fill his belly with burning?*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

28. We have already said frequently that blessed Job bears a type of the Holy Church universal, and that his friends bear the likeness of heretics, who as it were on the plea of defence of the Lord find occasion of foolish talking, and let loose insulting words against good men; to whom all is displeasing that is thought by the faithful, as though it were uttered to the wind. Whence it is said now, *Should a wise man answer as if speaking into the wind?* Nor do they account the words of the good as the sayings of reason, but as the stingings of madness. Whence it is added, *And shall he fill his belly with burning?* in that those things even which they know themselves to say by way of insult, they are ever bent to palliate, as has been said, on the ground of defending the Lord. Whence Eliphaz adds;

Thou reprovest with words him that is not equal to thee, and thou speakest what is not expedient for thee.

29. Now they suppose that no one has the fear of the Lord, saving him whom they can draw into the foolishness of their own confession. Hence he adds, *Yea, thou castest off fear, and hast taken, prayer before God*. 'Taken' means 'taken away;' as if he said in plain terms, 'Presuming on Thine own righteousness, thou scornest to implore the grace of Thy Creator.' For when heretics do not find real evils to urge against the good, they feign things to reproach them with, that they may seem righteous, and it very often happens, that they come to open words of insult. Whence it is still further added,

For thine iniquity teacheth, thy mouth, and thou followest the tongue of the crafty.

30. 'Iniquity teaches the mouth,' when there is conceived by a bad life somewhat to be spoken of a worse kind. Now because blessed Job was free in speech in proportion as he was holy in action, by his friends, who hold the type of heretics, he is found fault with at once on the grounds of a wicked life and of a bold mouth, so that it should be said, *Thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth*. As if it were said to him in plain words, 'What thou speakest wickedly, thou hast learnt of a more wicked life.' But it often happens that heretics, whilst in seeming they venerate God, oppose His mysteries, and they think it humility if they deny the truth. For there are some, who imagine that they are bringing injury upon God, if they confess that He took true flesh, or if they should think that He was capable of really dying for us in the flesh. And whilst they endeavour as it were to bestow upon God a greater degree of honour, they are enforced to deny the real praises of His goodness. For in praise of His charity what is there more efficacious, than that in our behalf He should make those things meet to Himself for the undertaking them, which seem for Him unworthy. But Holy Church confesses His very and true Flesh, His very and true Death, but in declaring these things she is thought by Heretics to put an indignity upon God. Whence it is said now, *And thou followest the tongue of them that blaspheme*. And if any piece of adversity befall her in this world, they say that it was brought upon her by this very injuriousness of her confession. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 6. *Thine own mouth shall condemn thee, and not I; yea, thine own lips shall answer thee.*

31. For because they suppose that the evils of adversity break out in consequence of the erroneousness of confession; that say that 'her own lips shall answer her,' so that fault of utterances should be the cause of the scourge. But sometime they desire to repress it as if by reasoning; whence

Eliphaz sets himself to reprove blessed Job as it were on principles of reason, saying,

Ver. 7, 8. *Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills? Hast thou heard the secret of God? and shall His wisdom be inferior to thee?*

32. As if He said in plainer words, 'Thou, who speakest of the Eternal One, consider that thou art a creature of time. Thou that arguest concerning His wisdom, remember that Thou knowest not His counsel.' But that Heretics for this take up the words of the defence of the Lord, that they may appear to be learned, and whilst they seem to defend the glory of God, are making known their knowledge to men, the very words of Eliphaz subjoined bear witness, who began indeed to speak of the wisdom of God, but immediately fell into self-elation, saying,

Ver. 9. *What knowest thou that we know not? What understandest thou which is not in us?*

Which same sentences plainly shew in what exaltation of mind all that comes forth, which sounds as if it were for defence of the Lord. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *With us are both the gray headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father.*

33. That all Heretics are gone out of the Holy Church Universal, John testifies, when he says, *They went out from us, but they were not of us*. [1 John 2, 19] But that those things which they maintain they may recommend to the weak minds of their fellow-creatures as on the grounds of antiquity, they testify that they have ancient fathers, and the very Doctors of the Church themselves they declare are the masters of their school; and whilst they look down upon present preachers, they pride themselves with unfounded presumption on the tutorage of the ancient fathers, so that they avouch that the things they themselves assert the old fathers held as well, in order that what they are not able to build up in truth and right, they may strengthen as

by the authority of those. But because it is written, *Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*, oftentimes Holy Church travails with countless adversities in this life, and the life of the children of perdition is let to go free of the scourge, in proportion as it is not reserved for any rewards. But Heretics seeing the tribulations of Holy Church, look down upon her, and fancy that she is bruised by such a multitude of strokes, in due of a false creed [*professionis*]. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 11. *Is it a great thing that God should console thee? But thine evil words prevent this.*

34. As if he said to him in plain words; ‘If thou wouldest amend thy profession of faith, thou mightest long ago have had consolation in thy scourges.’ It goes on;

Ver. 12. *Why does thine heart lift thee up, and hast thou thine eyes astonished as thinking of great things?*

35. Often the mind of the righteous is so suspended in contemplating things on high, that outwardly their face seems to have been struck with stupefaction. But because Heretics are not taught to enforce the power of contemplation in secret, they think that it is done by the just, and those that are imbued with a right understanding, more in hypocrisy than in truth, in that what they cannot themselves obtain the possession of, they do not suppose exists in others in a genuine way. It goes on;

Ver. 13. *Why dost thy spirit swell against God, that thou lettest such words go out of thy mouth?*

36. Very often when the righteous are afflicted with any woes, they are forced to confess their works, as blessed Job had done, who after just living was pressed down by the strokes of the rod; but when the unrighteous hear their sayings, they think that they are uttered in self-exaltation rather than in truth. For they weigh the words of the righteous by their own feelings, and

do not think that good words can be said in a humble spirit. For as it is a great sin, for a man to ascribe to himself what there is not, so it is commonly no sin at all if he speaks with humility the good that there is. Hence it often happens that the just and unjust have words that are like, but always a heart that is widely unlike, and the same sayings for which the Lord is offended by the unrighteous, He is even propitiated by the righteous. Thus the Pharisee when he entered the temple said, *I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.* [Luke 18, 12] But the publican went out justified more than he. Hezekiah too, the king, when he was afflicted with sickness of the body, and brought to the last point of life, said with his heart pierced in prayer, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, Nor yet did the Lord disregard this confession of his perfectness, or refuse him, whom He immediately heard effectually in his prayers. See, the Pharisee justified himself in act, and Hezekiah maintained himself to be just in thought as well, and by the same act by which the one offended, the other propitiated God. Wherefore then was this, but that Almighty God estimates the words of each by the thoughts within, and in His ear those are not high, which are uttered with a lowly heart? Hence blessed Job, where he put forward his deeds, did not in the least degree swell out against God, in that those things which he had really done, he spoke with a humble spirit. Now Heretics are accustomed to mix some true points with the statements of their erroneous persuasions. And the friends of blessed Job, though in the reproving of him they are altogether deceived, may yet even say some things true, which they learnt by frequent communication with him, whose words were they all to be contradicted, the Apostle Paul would never have brought forward the sentence of Eliphaz saying, *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness*. [1 Cor. 3, 19] And so, because those things which they say right, they do not rightly say against blessed Job, let us in their sayings at once

tread under our feet the mischief of indiscretion, and sift the marrow of rightness. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *What is man, that he should be clean?*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

37. For hereby alone that he is called 'man' he is described as earthly and weak; for man is so named ['homo' from 'humus,' as Hebrew 'Adam'] from the earth. And how is it possible for him to be free from stain, who being made of earth of his own will fell into infirmity? where it is added; *And he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?* For the first piece of unrighteousness the woman proffered to the man in Paradise. And so how shall he appear righteous, who was born of her that proved the bidder of unrighteousness? It goes on;

Ver. 15. *Behold, among His saints there is no one that is unchangeable; the heavens are not clean in His sight.*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

38. He repeated that with the title of 'the heavens,' which he before denoted by the appellation of the 'Saints.' For it is written concerning those very Saints; *The heavens are telling the glory of God* [Ps. 19, 1]; all of whom have by nature in themselves changeableness proper to them, but while they earnestly desire to attach themselves always to the unchangeable 'Truth,' in attaching themselves they bring it to pass that they become unchangeable; and whilst they keep themselves fixed thereto with a full affection, they one day obtain that being carried above themselves, they get the better of this, that in themselves they were changeable. For what is changeableness but a kind of death? which while it changes one thing into another, as it were kills that which was, that that should begin to be which was not. And it is written concerning the Author of all things, *Who only hath unchangeableness* [1 Tim. 6,

16], in that He only is unchangeable in Himself. Concerning whom it is written by James; *With Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of changing* [Jam. 1, 17]. For changeableness itself is a shadow, which if it altered the light by any changes, would as it were obscure it. But because in God changeableness entereth not, 'no shadow of changing' intercepts His Light. Now it is well said, *the heavens are not clean in His sight*, in that by themselves before the strict cognizance of God not even they can be clean to perfection, who are preachers of cleanness, as John testifies, who saith, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves*. [1 John 1, 8] If then 'among His Saints there is no one unchangeable, and the heavens are not clean in His sight,' who may presume in himself upon the practice of righteousness? Hence it is further added;

Ver. 16. *How much more abominable and useless is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?*

39. He who first said it was impossible that man should of himself be clean from sin, and righteous, calls him 'abominable' and 'useless;' 'abominable' on account of the uncleanness of his stain, but 'useless' on account of the unrighteousness of an imperfect life; who however may be understood as 'abominable and useless' in another sense. For often a bad man seems to do some things rightly, but by those things which are wrong, even those which are right belonging to him are brought to nought; and because the evil ones are very displeasing to God, neither are those pleasing which seem to be good. And so he, that is 'abominable' before God in his evil things, is 'useless' in the good; in that whilst he shews himself an object of execration to God by wicked deeds, neither is that which seems right proceeding from him well-pleasing. And it is well said, *Which drinketh iniquity like water*. For what is eaten is swallowed not without delay, seeing that it is chewed in order to be swallowed; but what is drunk has no hindrance to be swallowed, in proportion as it hath again no need to

be chewed. And so because sin is committed by the foolish man without any drawing back, iniquity is drunk like water. For because he does unlawful things without fear, he swallows the draught of iniquity without let or hindrance. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *I will shew it thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare to thee.*

40. All arrogant persons have this proper to them, that when they have a right notion, though the thing be little, they wrest it to serve the turn of pride, and by the same act whereby from understanding they might to themselves be raised higher, from swoln pride they only fall into the pit of self exalting, account themselves better instructed than the learned, and they exact respect for themselves from their betters, and stand upon it to teach as with authority those that are holier men. Hence it is now said, *I will shew thee, hear me*. And because he teaches with less authority who tells things that he has heard, than he who tells those things which he has seen, in order that Eliphaz may claim to himself the stronger kind of authority, he says, *And that which I have seen I will declare*. But because Heretics are sometimes confounded by their fathers being condemned, and yet bring forward as it were with authority the sentences of those, by whose folly they are deservedly rejected; the very audacity of Heretics is itself rightly introduced, when it is said,

Ver. 18. *Wise men confess, and do not hide their fathers.*

41. And at once they leap out in praise of them, and boast that they had been as it were the only rulers of the Church. Hence it is yet further added, *Unto whom alone the earth was given, and the stranger passed not among them*. They think that 'the earth was given to their fathers alone,' in that the masters of their erroneous teaching alone really had rule in the Church. And who is termed 'the stranger,' but the Apostate Angel? Whence too it is said by the Psalmist concerning all the wicked spirits together; *For strangers are*

risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul. [Ps. 54, 3] And so Heretics, because they think that the hearts of their doctors were not subject to the Apostate Angel, say that 'the stranger passed not among them.' For which same stranger to pass through each individual, is his putting wicked thoughts into his heart. And hence it is said by the voice of the Prophet of the evil spirits arrayed against the soul standing erect, *Which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over*. [Is. 51, 23] But whereas Eliphaz the Temanite, when going to tell some things, wishes to be heard, though he knows many things which were proper to be said, and yet does not know that they were not proper to be said to blessed Job, let us hear the sentences which he uttered against blessed Job. For neither ought we to consider the person to whom, but only what it was that he said. It goes on;

Ver. 20. *The wicked man feels proud all his days.*

[LITERAL AND MORAL INTERPRETATION]

42. The Elect also are apt to feel pride in some of their thoughts and actions. But because they are Elect persons, they cannot feel pride all their days, because before they end their lives, they turn their hearts from self-exaltation to the fearing of humility. But 'the wicked man feels pride all his days,' in that he so brings his life to an end, that he never departs from self-exalting. He looks round him on all that is flourishing in time, and he neglects to consider whither he is being carried for ever. He puts his trust in the life of the flesh, and thinks that those things continue for long, which he holds at the moment. His mind is set firm in self-exaltation, every one of his kin is brought into contempt, how suddenly death creeps upon him he never takes thought, how certain his happiness he never reflects; whereas if he did but turn his eyes to the uncertainty of fleeting life, he would never keep for a certainty things uncertain. And hence it is well added;

And the number of the years of his tyranny is uncertain.

43. For he ought not to have felt pride at all, even if he might have had the number of his years assured, so that knowing how long he should live, he might know beforehand when to withdraw himself from self-exaltation. But since the present life is always uncertain, death's creeping upon him ought always to be apprehended the more, insomuch as it can never be foreseen. And he rightly calls the pride of the wicked, 'tyranny.' For he is justly styled a tyrant, who in the commonwealth takes the lead without right. And be it known that every proud man, according to his several measure, exercises tyranny. For what sometimes one person practises in the commonwealth, in this case, by power of high office accorded to him, another in a province, another in a city, another in his own family, this same another by concealed wickedness practises to himself in the thought of his own heart. Nor does the Lord regard what amount of evil each person may be able to do, but what amount he may have the mind to do. And when the power is wanting without, he is, a tyrant within himself, whom iniquity lords it over within; for though he does not oppress his neighbours outwardly, yet inwardly he seeks to possess power, in order to oppress them; and because Almighty God considers the hearts of men, the wicked man has already done in his eyes the thing that he conceived. Now our Creator willed that our end should be hidden from us with this view, that whereas we are uncertain when we may die, we may always be found ready for death. Hence after it has been said, *All his days the wicked man feels proud*, he rightly adds, *and the number of the years of his tyranny is uncertain.* As if it were said in plain words, 'Wherefore is he lifted up as if on the grounds of a certainty, the tenure of whose life is held under the penalty of uncertainty?' But Almighty God not only reserves future punishments for those that live wickedly, but even here, where they go wrong, he besets their hearts with punishments, that by this alone, viz. that they sin, they should be smiting themselves, and that always trembling,

always full of suspicion, they should be afraid of meeting with those mischiefs from others, which they remember themselves to have done to others. Whence it is yet further added of this wicked one;

Ver. 21. *A dreadful sound is alway in his ears, and when there is peace, he suspecteth plots.*

44. But there is nothing more happy than simplicity of heart, in that in proportion as it shews forth innocency towards others, there is nothing it dreads to meet with from others. For it has its simplicity as a kind of citadel of strength, nor is it suspicious of undergoing what it has no remembrance of having itself done. Whence it is well said by Solomon, *In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence*. Who also says again, *A secure mind is like a perpetual feast*. For the mere repose of security is like the continuance of refreshment. Whereas, on the other hand, the evil mind is always set in pains and labours, since it is either contriving mischiefs that it may bring down, or fearing lest these be brought down upon it by others; and whatever plot it hatches against neighbours, it is afraid of being hatched by neighbours against itself. It is on every side full of suspicions, on every side full of alarms. Everyone that occurs to mind is supposed to be making out things hostile to him, and so he, to whom the repose of security is wanting, has surely 'a dreadful sound in his ears' always. And it often happens that his neighbour, whoever he be, speaks to him with a single intention, and designs nothing hostile, but 'when there is peace, he suspecteth plots;' in that he, who is always dealing craftily, calculates that there is not single dealing towards himself. And whereas it is written, *When the wicked man cometh into the pit of sinners*, *he contemneth*, he being encompassed with the darkness of his iniquity henceforth despairs of light. Hence too it follows;

Ver. 22. *He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.*

45. For because he believes himself to be on all sides stricken from ambush, despairing of salvation, he is ever growing on in wickedness. Now there are times too when this ungodly man turns his eyes to judgments from above as well, and dreads their coming upon him. But whilst he seeks the wages of the present life, these same judgments which he had begun to fear, being conquered by the madness of avarice, he sets at nought. And be thinks indeed that it is possible he may die in sin, but yet he does not cease from sin. Hence it is subjoined;

Ver. 28. *When he has stirred himself to seek bread, he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready in his hand.*

46. For 'bread' is the wages of the present life, and 'the day of darkness' is taken for the time of vengeance. And so in the course of his conduct, the wicked man at times weighs well the present wrath of the Judge Above, but he is not diverted from wickedness, so that it too should be itself diverted from his destruction. But his conscience accusing him, he fears to be smitten, yet be is ever increasing that whereby he should be smitten. He makes slight of his return, he despairs of pardon, he carries himself high in sin, yet he has fear within, a witness of his wickedness. And though he seem outwardly to be doing wicked things with a bold front, yet for these in his own heart he is untrained to tremble. Whence it is written; *For whereas wickedness is timorous, she gives witness to condemnation*. [Wisd. 17, 11] For when a man does unlawful things, he is in dread of the thing that he does; and the open witness for his condemning is the very fearfulness of wickedness itself, in that both the thing that is done is feared, and yet the evil that is feared is not overcome. Of which it is yet further added,

Ver. 24. *Trouble shall make him afraid, straits shall besiege him, as a king ready to the battle.*

47. In all that the wicked man does, he is hedged in with anguish, and tribulation, and straits; in that his soul is confounded with anxiety and

misgiving. One man secretly longs to seize another’s goods by force, and he toils and strains in the thoughts of his heart, that he may not be found out. Another man, forsaking truth, makes up his mind to tell a lie, that he may deceive the mind of those that hear him; but what great labour it is to guard with sufficient heed, that his deceit itself may not be found out! For he sets before his eyes what answer may be made to him by those that know the truth, and with great effort of thought he makes out how by the appliances of falsehood he may surpass the evidences of truth. He cloaks himself about on this side and on that, and against that wherein he might have been found out, he looks about for an answer resembling truth, whereas if he had been minded to tell the truth, assuredly he might have done it without pains. For the path of truth is smooth, and the road of falsehood grievous. And hence it is said by the Prophet, *They have taught their tongue to speak lies, and wearied themselves to commit iniquity*. [Jer. 9, 5] Therefore it is well said, *Trouble shall make him afraid, and straits besiege him*; in that in himself he is undone in the toilsomeness of fear, who forsakes the way of truth, which is the companion of security. And he is rightly compared to a king prepared for battle, seeing that in that very evil that he does he is at once alarmed and presses on; at once made to tremble by conscience, and to pant from desire; fears, and swells high; is scared with misgivings, and lifts up his spirit in audacity. Moreover, we are to know that ‘a king who is prepared for battle’ is so apprehensive against the enemy, that he also fears for that very army which he is leading, lest it should be seduced, lest by the desertion of his soldiers he be laid open to the darts of the enemy. And so ‘the wicked man is besieged with straits, like a king ready to the battle;’ in that whilst practising false things and uttering false words, he dreads lest he should lose his own soldiers; i.e. the appliances of falsehoods; and lie exposed to the darts of truth, if it chance that that be lacking to him, which he might have to oppose on the side of deceit. But though the Spirit trembles, though

conscience accuses, yet the wicked man is mastered by his own passion; and forcing under fear, he assumes hardihood from his iniquities. And often when revenge is set before his mind, he lifts himself up against God; he determines to undergo any inflictions at His hands, so long as in this life, while he has the power, he may do all that he pleases. And hence it is added;

Ver. 25, 26. *For he hath stretched out his hand against God, and is strengthened against the Almighty; He runneth upon Him with erected neck, and he is armed with a stout neck.*

48. These things are more plainly understood of the head of the wicked himself, i.e. Antichrist, who, while lifting up his hand against God, is said to be 'strengthened,' in that for a little time he is permitted to be exalted; that in proportion as he is let to glory for a while, he may be punished the more pitilessly for everlasting; but seeing that all the wicked are his members, this, which he then in the end of the world shall do alone in a preeminent way, let us see how it is done now by each one of the wicked severally. Thus there are some who even if they do ever set themselves to do things in opposition to the judgment of Almighty God, disabled by the very impossibility of putting their will in execution, look to themselves, are made to turn themselves to Him Whom they were minded to despise, and they, who might have gone far from Him, if they had been able to execute what they were minded to do, are sometimes hereby saved, because they could not execute what they wickedly had the mind for; and hence being brought back to themselves, they see what condition they are of, and mourn that they had the mind to do things contrary to 'Truth.' And there are some who by the just judgment of God are suffered to execute with worse wickedness that which they wickedly desire to do in opposition to God. And whilst an evil disposition inflames, and power strengthens them, they are henceforth unable to attain to know themselves in their erring course, in

proportion as in the affluence of their fortunes they are by power ever being drawn out of themselves. Concerning the bent of whose mind it is here said, *For he stretcheth forth his hand against God, and is strengthened against the Almighty*. For 'to stretch forth the hand against God,' is to persevere in evil doing, setting at nought the judgments of God. And because God is then more wroth, when He suffers that to be fulfilled, which thing ought not to have been conceived at all in thought, this wicked man is 'strengthened against the Almighty,' in that he is suffered to prosper in his wicked course of conduct, so that he should both do wicked things, and yet live in happiness, Of whom it is yet further added, *He runneth upon Him with erected neck.*

49. To 'run against God with erected neck' is to commit with shamelessness such things as are displeasing to the Creator. Of whom it is rightly said, *He ran*, i.e, in doing evil, he had no let or hindrance from adversity. Concerning whom it is yet further added; *And he is armed with a stout neck* [*pingui cervice*]. 'A stout neck' is wealthy pride, as being buttressed up with overflowing stores, as it were with a quantity of flesh. And so the bad man with power 'is armed against God with a stout neck,' in that swollen with temporal good things he is set up as by a great bulk of flesh against the precepts of truth. For what is poverty but a sort of leanness, and what is the abundance of stores but the fatness of the present life? And so he lifts himself up 'with a stout neck against God,' who takes temporal abundance to serve the end of pride. For the powerful and wicked have this thing proper to them, that being engrossed with deceitful riches they neglect the true riches of God, and in proportion as they investigate the less what is true, they are the more lifted up by false acquisitions. For the care and concern of earthly things, because it engrosses, utterly blinds the sight. Whence it is yet further added with justness,

Ver. 27. *Fatness hath covered his face.*

50. For the sight is in the face, wherein too is the first more honourable part of the body. Therefore the best of the mind is not unjustly denoted by the face, which wherever we turn it, there we see. And so 'fatness covers the face,' in that the earnestly coveted abundance of earthly good things presses down the eyes of the mind, and that which should be honourable [A.B.C.D. more honorable] in them, it makes foul in the eyes of God, in that it weighs it to the earth with a multitude of concerns. Who do not however find it enough that they themselves should be full of pride, unless those too that are united to them, themselves also are made boastful by their fatness. For there are some who on being countenanced by the patronage of the greater ones, are set up with pride, and on the strength of their power uplifted against the destitute. Hence it is yet further subjoined;

And the fat hangs from his sides.

51. Because the fat is the richness of the flesh, and we are accustomed to call those persons the 'sides' [*latera*] of the rich, whom we see united to them, 'the fat hangs down from his sides,' in that every one that attaches himself to the powerful and wicked man is by his power himself also as it were swollen with the fatness of good things, so that following the wickedness of an evil patron he has no fear of God, he distresses the poor, whom he is able, and as much as he is able, and uplifts his heart on the strength of temporal glory. So when there is such an one who is attached to a powerful wicked man, 'from his side,' surely enough, 'the fat hangs down.' Concerning whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 28. *And he dwelleth in desolate communities, and in deserted houses, which are become heaps*.

52. For as a 'community' has its name from the intercourse of persons living together in common, 'desolate communities' are the actual throngs of wicked followers, by whose shouts this bad man is commended, when he is hurried away by his wickedness into evil deeds. Whence it is written; *The*

sinner is commended in the desires of his soul, and he that doeth unrighteousness is blessed. [Ps. 10, 3] But 'deserted houses' are bad thoughts, which this wicked man inhabits, in that by all that he does he seeks to please the thoughts of the wicked. Which communities are rightly called 'desolate,' and houses 'deserted,' in that except Almighty God had abandoned the dealings and thoughts of such on account of their previous sins, they would never arrive at, the commission of worse ones. And it is well said, *Which are reduced to heaps*. For the ruined buildings of houses and cities make heaps; in that whilst the wicked severally are joined to one another for wicked deeds in confused courses of conduct, they shew without doubt, that they have fallen from the edifice of life. It goes on;

Ver. 29. *He shall not be inhabited, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he send forth his root into the earth.*

53. That which is here expressed, *He shall not be inhabited*, I have found in some copies, *He shall not be enriched*; but the sense is not at variance, though the phraseology is at variance. For he is 'enriched' with virtuous attainments whose mind is 'inhabited' by Almighty God. But because the thought of the proud man is not 'inhabited' by the grace of his Maker, hereby surely he is not 'enriched' with virtues. On this account then that he is empty within, let it be said, *He shall not be inhabited*. But in respect to that which is swollen up without, being of a transitory nature, it is rightly added, *Nor shall his substance continue*. As though it were said in plain speech, 'This which he seems to have outwardly passes away, and what was not capable of passing away, he has not within.' And hence it is fitly subjoined, *Neither shall he send his root into the earth*. Which if we take as spoken of this earth, doubtless it is plain, that the tree which has no root in the earth, is brought to the ground on being shaken by the very slightest gales of wind; and every proud man while he is 'strengthened against the Almighty Lord,' while he 'runs with erected neck,' and is 'uplifted with a

stout neck against his Maker,’ is seen to stand like a tree; but his standing is without root, in that as it were at a light breath, so at the stirring of the secret sentence, his life is rooted up. But if in this passage we take ‘the earth’ for the recompensing of the Eternal Country, concerning which the Prophet saith*, My portion is in the land of the living* [Ps. 142, 5], this wicked man does not ‘send forth his root in the earth,’ in that he never plants the thoughts of his heart into the desire of the eternal life. For what the root is to the tree, the same is the thought of his own heart to each one of mankind; for in the case of that which is seen outwardly, there is a holding by that which is not seen outwardly [al. ‘which (being) within is not seen.’]. And hence it is said by the Prophet, *Shall again take root downwardly, and bear fruit upwards*. [Is. 37, 31] For when we stretch our thought in sympathizing with a poor neighbour; ‘we as it were send a root downwards, that we may bear the fruit of recompense above.’ It follows;

Ver. 30. *He shall not depart out of darkness.*

54. If this proud man had been minded to turn back from sin to righteousness, he might ‘depart out of darkness.’ But because he seeks not the light of righteousness, he does not depart out of darkness. After whose example, those likewise, who ‘attach themselves to him out breathe themselves in making earthly advancements, are kindled with the torches of avarice, and scorched with the fires of carnal desires. And hence it is added,

The flame shall dry up his branches.

55. For if he united to himself any that were searching after the Eternal Country, he would have green ‘branches’ in himself. But because they that are joined to him, are also heated with earthly passions, and the flame of passions kindles the hearts of his followers, it doth surely ‘dry up his branches,’ that they should not bear the fruit of good works, seeing that for the chace after the lowest objects they pant in wickedness. And it is well added,

And by the breath of his mouth shall he be taken away.

56. For the proud man, in proportion as he is more strong in this life, the more shamelessly lets loose for himself the reins of his tongue, so as to utter bad things of every sort, to apprehend no man for his words, to wound these with insults, to cast at those with curses. But sometimes he is carried away into blasphemy against his Creator, as it is said by the Psalmist of such persons, *They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth*. [Ps. 73, 9] And hence the rich man, being set in the fire, implores to have water dropped for him on his tongue by the finger of Lazarus. By which circumstance it is perceived that in that part where a man has sinned most, there he was the more fiercely burned. Therefore it is rightly said now, *And by the breath of his mouth shall he go away*; in that he received sentence of smiting, in proportion as he did not restrain the breath of his mouth under the fear of God. It goes on;

Ver. 31. *Let him not believe, being vainly deceived, that he is to be redeemed with any price.*

57. As often as we do alms after sin, we as it were pay a price for bad actions. Whence too it is said by the Prophet concerning him who doeth these things not, *He will not give God his propitiation, nor the price of the redemption of the soul*. [Ps, 49, 7. 8.] But sometimes the rich being elated oppress those below them, seize on the things of another, and yet in a certain way give somewhat to others, and whilst they bear down multitudes, they sometimes render the support of defence to particular persons, and for the iniquities which they never abandon they seem to offer a price. But the price of alms then frees us from sins, when we lament and renounce things we have been guilty of. For he who would both always be sinning, and as it were always bestowing alms, gives a price in vain, in that he does not redeem his soul, which he does not keep from evil habits. Hence it is now said, *Let him not believe, being vainly deceived, that he is to be redeemed*

with any price. For the alms of the rich and proud man has no efficacy to redeem him, seeing that his robbery of the poor man committed at the same moment, will not allow it to rise up before the eyes of God. Which same may likewise be understood in another sense; in that it often happens that proud men of riches, when they bestow alms, do not give it for the desire of the eternal life, but for the extending of the temporal life; they think that they can put off death by gifts, but let him not think, being vainly deceived, that he is to be redeemed with any price; in that he is not able to secure by the gift bestowed, that he should escape the end that is due to him, when his very wickedness cuts asunder his life. Hence too it is added;

Ver. 32. *Before his days are fulfilled he shall perish, and his hands shall wither.*

58. The days foreordained to each individual by the Divine Prescience can neither be increased nor lessened, except it happen that they be so foreknown as either to be longer if they be accompanied with the most perfect works, or shorter with the most wicked, just as Hezekiah obtained increase of days by the bestowing of tears, and as it is written concerning the wicked, *Death meets the undisciplined*. [Ed. Ben. suggests that this may be taken from Ecclus. 20, 9] Yet oftentimes the wicked man, though in the secret foreknowledge of God no protracted periods of life may be predestined him, himself, forasmuch as he desires to live after the flesh, sets length of days before his imagination. And because he cannot attain to that time that he looks forward to, he, as it were, ‘perishes before his days are fulfilled.’ Which same we may likewise understand in another sense also. For very commonly we see persons that both lead wicked lives, and attain to the very extreme of old age. How then is it said, *Before his days are fulfilled, he shall perish*; when in the case of particular persons we often see, that their limbs already fail from age, and yet their passions do not cease to carry out their wickedness?

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

59. For there are some, who after a lost way of life turn back to themselves, and their conscience accusing them, forsake their froward ways, alter their doings, withstand their old wickedness, flee earthly courses, and pursue heavenly aims, but before they be firmly rooted in those holy aims, from deadness of mind they return to the things which they began to pass sentence on, and fall back to the evil habits which they had determined to eschew. For whereas it often happens that for the profit of many, even holy men bow their necks to external actions, and are busied with the governance of a people, the weak seeing this, and, from their former pride still by them, seeking to follow their example, set themselves in outward ways of action; but in proportion as they do not come thereto well imbued with the things of the Spirit, they execute them in a carnal manner. For except the heart be first confirmed in heavenly desires by long application and a continued conversation, when it is poured back again for the executing of things exterior, it is rooted out from all its standing in good practice. Whence too it is rightly said of this wicked man, *Before his days are fulfilled, he shall perish*. In that even if he begin perchance to do any thing good, before he is strengthened therein by length of time, he falls back to outward things, and wickedly abandons what he appeared to have entered upon rightly. And hence it is fitly added; *And his hands shall wither*; in that whilst he is prematurely involved in exterior actions, he is dried up of all good practice. Hence it is yet further added aright;

Ver. 33, 34. *His cluster shall be spoilt like a vine in the first flower, and like an olive casting its flower. For the congregation of the hypocrite shall be barren.*

60. It is to be observed that the Divine Word so speaks of this wicked man in general terms, that yet it comes down to his particular wickedness. For he that on saying, *His cluster shall be spoilt like a vine in the first*

flower, and like an olive casting its flower; directly adds, *For the congregation of the hypocrite shall be barren*, plainly makes it appear that in this wicked man it is against his hypocrisy that he passes sentence of condemnation. Now we have to consider how it is that the hypocrite is 'spoilt like a vine in the first flower, or like an olive casting its flower.' If the vine in flowering be touched by excessive cold in an inequality of the weather, it forthwith makes it dry of all moistness of verdure. And there are some, who after bad courses long to follow ways of holiness, but before that good desires are confirmed in them, as we have said, some piece of good fortune of the present life comes upon them, which entangles them with outward concerns, and whilst it withdraws their mind from the heat of interior love, as it were puts it out by cold, and whatever seemed to be shewing itself of the blossom of virtue in them, it kills. For in earthly courses of action the mind grows very cold, if it be not yet by the interior gifts firmly settled. Whence it follows that higher stations or exterior works, which are intended to be of use to the necessities of man, those persons should take upon them to put them in execution, who have skill to judge of them, and to force them to bow beneath themselves in the power of interior virtue. For when any frail person is drawn away either to the post of government or to execute exterior employments, in proportion as he is as it were carried out of himself, he is rooted up, in that the tree, which does not first send roots deep below, is the sooner laid low by the impulse of the winds, if it lifts itself on high in its top; and is the more speedily brought down to the very lowest, in proportion as it grew higher in the air without roots. But sometimes the vine in flower is dried, not by the cold but by the heat, and when it is touched by excessive heat, its flower being shed, the cluster is made to wither. And it very often happens that they who do not come to good works with a right intention, when they see that they please their fellow-creatures, are the more vehemently inflamed to execute the

same good works, anxiously set themselves to do what is calculated to please the eyes of men, and are as it were heated in a holy devotedness. What then but heat in the time of the blossom has come upon these, whom the appetite of human applause has made bare of fruit? Hence it is well added, *And like the olive casting his flower*. For when the olive is in flower, *If it be touched by an immoderate fog, it is bared of the fulness of fruit*. And as often as people that are entering on good works, begin to be extolled by, those that behold them, and to take delight in the commendations of themselves, there is caused a mist of the understanding in the thoughts, that they can now no longer discern with what intention they do a thing, and lose the fruit of practice as it were by the fog of applause. Hence it is well said by Solomon, *Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vines flower, if the blossoms bear fruit*. 'The vines flower,' when the minds of the faithful put forth good works; but they do not 'bear fruit,' if in what they may have purposed, they are disabled, from being overcome by certain erring practices.

61. We have not then to look whether the vines flourish, but if the blossoms are strong for the bearing of fruit, in that it is not any thing to admire if a man begins good works, but it is much to be admired, if with a right intention he holds on in good works. Whence it very often happens that if in good practice a right intention is not kept, even the very work itself which is supposed good is lost. For we have often seen persons abandon the earthly things which they possessed, and henceforth seek nought transitory, and be mixed up with no jarrings for the sake of this life. When then the believing mind exhibits this in itself, it is as if the olive put forth blossom, but when any of this sort begin to seek the glory of the world which they, had contemned, and to pant with insatiable desire after the earthly things which they appeared to have disdained, to give themselves to brawls, to seek out mischiefs upon their neighbours; then indeed the olive has cast her

flower, which she put forth, in that she never brought to perfect works the beginnings of a good purpose. But we are to bear in mind that such things are often happening to those who do not follow God with a pure and single aim. Hence it is rightly added, *For the gathering of the hypocrite is barren*. For the good things he has begun he would not lose, if he had not been a hypocrite. Now hypocrites gather together good works, but their gathering itself is barren, in that in the things they do they never make it their object to receive fruit in the eternal recompensing. They look fruitful and green to the eyes of their fellow-creatures, but in the sight of the hidden Judge they appear unfruitful and blasted. But oftentimes, being inflamed with the fever of avarice, they display greater works of their own before the eyes of men, in proportion as they desire to have larger rewards offered them by their fellow-creatures. Hence it is yet further added;

And fire shall consume the tabernacles of those who are ready to take rewards.

62. For as the body dwells in a tabernacle, so the mind dwells in thought. But the 'fire consumes the tabernacles,' when the heat of avarice wastes the thoughts. And it very commonly happens that the hypocrite scorns to receive gold, or the several good things of the body, at the hands of his fellow-creatures, but because he does not take these, he aims to win greater commendations from them; and perhaps he does not reckon that he has 'received a reward,' because he refuses to take the good things of the body. Hence it is proper to be known that a gift is sometimes proffered by the hand, and sometimes by the mouth. Thus one who presents money, has given a reward with the hand; but he that bestows the word of applause, has put forward a reward from the mouth. Though, then, the hypocrite refuse to take external gifts, which may perhaps answer earthly necessity, yet that is a greater thing which he aims to have paid him in return, when desiring to be extolled beyond his desert, he seeks a reward from the mouth. And because

in the mere appetite of praise his heart is kindled with overmuch heat, let it be rightly said, *And fire shall consume the tabernacles of those that are ready to take rewards*.

63. But if we are to understand by their ‘tabernacles’ the bodies which their souls inhabit, then the fire consumes the ‘tabernacles,’ because those who here are on fire in the soul with the flames of avarice, are there consumed in the flesh too by the fires of hell, and because the mind of the hypocrite is never at rest from the thinking of wickedness, in that whether he goes after the things of earth, or applause, he grudges those things to others, which he pants to have awarded to himself, and strives to make others appear wicked in proportion as he desires to appear more holy to all the world, so that by means of this, that others are rendered contemptible, he may himself at all times appear more worthy of respect. Whence it comes to pass, that as touching his credit with his neighbour, he spreads out the nets of his tongue before the judgments of his fellow-creatures, that he by himself may catch the good opinion of those whom he seeks to please. Whence too it follows;

Ver. 35. *They conceive woe, and bring forth iniquity, and their womb prepareth deceit.*

64. For he conceives ‘woe,’ when he devises wicked things; he ‘brings forth iniquity,’ when he has begun to fulfil what he has devised; by entertaining envy, he ‘conceives woe;’ by uttering slanders, he ‘brings forth iniquity.’ For it is grievous wickedness when he who is wicked strives to make others appear wicked, that he may himself thereby appear as holy, because he has shewn that others are not holy. But we ought to bear in mind, that in Holy Writ by the title of the ‘belly’ or the ‘womb’ the mind is used to be understood. Hence it is that it is said by Solomon, *For the candle of the Lord is the breathway of man, searching all the inward parts of the belly*. [Prov. 20, 27] For the light of grace, which comes from above, affords

a 'breathway' to man unto life, which same light is said to 'search all the inward parts of the belly,' in that it penetrates all the secrets of the heart, that the things which were hidden from the soul touching itself it may bring back before the eyes thereof with weeping. Hence Jeremiah saith, *My bowels! my bowels! I am pained.* [Jer. 4, 19] Who, that he might shew what he had called his belly, added, *the senses of my heart are troubled*. So by the title of the womb the mind is rightly understood, in that like as the offspring is conceived in the womb, so is thought engendered in the mind. And as meats are contained in the belly, so are thoughts in the mind; and so the 'womb' of the hypocrite 'prepares deceits,' in that he is ever conceiving in his mind the greater wickedness against his neighbours, in proportion as he aims to appear by himself above all men innocent. Eliphaz therefore put forward these things, in that he looked upon blessed Job as stricken with that great scourge on account of his hypocrisy. But his words, though they apply to many, are at odds with him alone, for whom alone they were said, in that the holy man had nought of double-dealing in his conduct, whom Truth being witness to him praised for the singleness of his heart.

BOOK XIII.

Wherein is contained a short exposition, moral and typical, of the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of the book of Job.

[HISTORICAL AND ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. This is found to be a peculiar way with the wicked, viz. to urge their own bad points slanderously against the good, before they are themselves truly accused of them; and while they dread to be reproached for the things which they do, they testify that the righteous who withstand their wickednesses commit the same. Now holy men hear with forbearance, even what they never remember to have done, although those wrong things which they see to be urged against themselves, they know to be committed by their very accusers; and when they cannot correct them by preaching, they suffer them by submitting to the evil, that if they cannot attain the fruit of their conversion, they may at least-win by those very persons the reward of long endurance. Hence Holy Church says in the words of the Prophet David, sinners have plowed upon my back, in that whilst she puts up with heretics, or lost persons of any kind, whom she is not able to correct, she bears upon her back the deeds of those that commit iniquity. Thus blessed Job, seeing Eliphaz his friend making much complaint against him out of hypocrisy, in that from words of comfort he had broken out into bitterness of upbraiding, and shewed himself a feigned comforter, does by his own patience maintain a type of the Church, which is wont to endure such things in hearing them, and when her discourse is received, by reasoning to bring them to nought; and he says,

Ver. 2. *I have heard many such things.*

2. For the Elect often hear the wrong things of others, as if they belonged to themselves, and guilt is charged upon them by those, by whom the

charges so fastened on them are done. Now by this reply, blessed Job denotes that season of the Church, when, under oppression from her adversaries, she is looked upon as cast to the ground by their temporal power. Whence it follows; burthensome comforters are ye all. Whether they be heretics, or whether any of the wicked, when they see the good travailing in adversity, herein that they aim to console them, they endeavour to prompt wrong things to their minds. Whence not without reason their consoling is rendered burthensome to the mind of good men, in that amongst words of sweetness, they are bent to proffer the poison of error, and whilst in seeming they lighten their griefs by soothing words, they are in haste to put upon them a load of sin. But Elect persons, even when they are bereft of temporal glory, do not lose the forcibleness of interior judgment. For they are taught both to endure crosses without, and yet unimpaired within to uphold what is right without being daunted. Whence it is added,

Ver.3. *Shall windy words have an end?*

3. For those are 'windy words,' which serve the end of temporal inflating, rather than the end of righteousness. Now oftentimes the wicked speak even good things, but because they do not say them well, they are putting forth 'windy words:' for their words, even if they be at any time sound in the sentence, are yet blown out in self-elation. But in this that is said, viz. *burthensome comforters are ye all*; what else are we taught by the tutorage of blessed Job, but that everyone should learn to look to it heedfully, that in the season of sorrow he never urge words of upbraiding? For if there be some points which might be justly found fault with in time of distress, they ought to be put aside, lest the comforter by rebuking heighten the sorrow, which he had it in view to alleviate. It goes on;

Or is there any thing troublesome to thee, if Thou speakest?

4. When bad men utter abusive words to those that are like to themselves, they are the more quickly silenced, in proportion as they in a

moment hear concerning themselves the like to what they say to their hearers. But when they assail good men by words of contumely, nought of annoyance is occasioned them by their abuse, in, that they speak against those that hold their peace, nor are made to hear what they are, seeing that the righteous never return abuse, even when they are made to bear what they are not. And so it is well said, *Or is there any thing troublesome to thee if thou speakest?* As if it were said in plain words to him; 'Thou speakest the more, that thou hearest not from me any thing unpleasant concerning the conduct.' Hence it is added, *I also could speak as ye do*. The just man tells what he had the power to do, but lest he should depart from righteousness, he forbears what he might have done. It goes on;

Ver. 4-6. *And O that your soul were for my soul! I too would comfort you with speeches, and move my head over you: I would strengthen you with my mouth, and move my lips as if sparing you.*

5. It is sometimes necessary that wicked minds, which are incapable of being corrected by man's preaching, should have the strokes of God wished for them, in a spirit of kindness; and while this is done with great earnestness of love, then plainly not the punishment but the correction of the guilty person is the thing aimed at, and it is shewn to be a prayer rather than a curse. And in these words blessed Job is shewn to aim at this, that the friends, who knew not how to sympathize in his grief through charity, might learn by experience how they ought to have pitied the affliction of another, and, being subdued by griefs might draw from their own suffering, how to minister consolation to others, and then live the more healthfully within, when they are made sensible of something of frailty without. Observe that he does not say*, O that my soul were for your soul*; but, *O that your soul were for my soul*; in that he would have been cursing himself, if he had wished himself to be made like to them; but it was for them he wished better things in that he sought they should be made like to himself. Now we

‘comfort’ bad men, placed under the rod, when we point out that by the exterior infliction the interior health is established within them. Moreover, we ‘move our head,’ when the mind, which is our leading part, we bend to sympathy; and we ‘strengthen’ these in the midst of strokes of affliction, when we soothe the force of their grief with gentle words; for there are some persons, who, forasmuch as they know nothing of the things of the interior, are overwhelmed with despair by external afflictions; of whom it is said, by the Psalmist, *They shall not hold up in afflictions*; [Ps. 140, 10] for he is well instructed to holdup in outward afflictions, who knows how to exult always in the hope that belongs to the interior.

6. But whereas he says, not, ‘sparing,’ but, *as if sparing you*; I think that this point ought not to be passed by carelessly, in that Holy Church, while keeping vigorousness of discipline together with an union of gentleness, sometimes even while ‘as if sparing,’ is far from sparing the wicked, but sometimes, when ‘as if not sparing’ does spare them; which we shall exhibit the more effectually, if we bring forward the very things themselves which are not unfrequently happening. So then let us place before the eyes of the imagination, two bad men set within the pale of Holy Church, of whom let the one be powerful and insolent, and the other mild and under government. If a fault has stolen upon the one that is gentle and under government, the preacher directly, by rebuking the thing follows hard upon him, and corrects him; and by correcting frees him from guilt, and resets him again in the way of righteousness. What did he then to this man, but spare in sparing not? in that, forasmuch as he did not hold back the word of correction, he the more speedily set him free from sin. For in freely charging him home, he did not spare him; but in this respect, that he rebuked him, he did spare him. But on the other hand, the powerful and insolent man, when he is discovered to have been guilty of any thing, there is an opportunity sought, in order that he may be rebuked for the evil he has committed. For except the preacher

wait till such time as he may be able to bear correction in a proper way, he increases in him the evil that he is prosecuting. For it is very often the case that he is of such a character as to receive no words of rebuke. What then is the preacher to do in the case of the sin of this person, but that in the charge of admonition, which he makes for the general wellbeing of all his hearers, he should bring forward such fault, as he sees that he has been guilty of, who is by, and cannot as yet be charged on his own account individually, lest he be rendered worse? and while invective in general is aimed against the fault, the word of rebuke is readily brought home to the mind, in that the powerful bad man does not know that it is delivered against himself in particular. What then did his preacher to this person, but in sparing not spare? against whom he at once brought not words of rebuke with any special reference, and yet hit his wound under a general admonition; and hence it is very often brought to pass that he bewails the sin committed so much the more bitterly, in proportion as even when he feels himself struck, he supposes his guilt not to be known.

7. Therefore it must be managed with wonderful art in preaching that those who are made worse by open rebuke, may by a certain abatement of rebuke be brought to a state of saving health. Whence too Paul saith, *And those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon those we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; for our comely parts have no need*. [1 Cor. 12, 23. 24.] For as there are uncomely members in the body, so there are persons within the bosom of Holy Church, powerful and insolent, who, whereas they do not admit of being stricken with open upbraiding, are as it were cloked with the respectfulness of a covering. But this we speak of the secret transgressions of the powerful; for when they sin and others know of it, they are also to be rebuked, and others should know of it; lest, if the preacher hold his peace, he seem to have sanctioned the sin, and this which the tongue of the pastor

does not cut off, going on increasing, should come to be an example. Thus while Holy Church by her preachers rebukes particular deeds of wicked men under the covert conveyance of a general reproof, she ‘moves her lips, as if sparing;’ but yet while sparing spareth not, in that she does not in general hold her peace to the reproving of a fault, which in the special case she does. It goes on;

Ver. 7. *But what am I to do? Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, it will not depart from me.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

8. How this accords with the person of blessed Job, there is no one that is ignorant; but if it be drawn into a type of Holy Church, she both when she speaks ‘has not her grief assuaged,’ since she does not see the wicked amended by her speaking; and ‘when she holds her peace, her grief does not depart from her;’ in that though she turns away and holds her peace, this very circumstance of her being silent she laments the more, in that while she is silent, she sees the sin of the wicked grow to a height: It proceeds;

Ver. 8. *But now my grief has oppressed me, and my limbs are brought to nought.*

9. Holy Church is oppressed by her grief, when she beholds the wicked grow to a height in their wickedness; and whereas while the wicked increase, the weak too that are in her are set on to follow the bents of wickedness, it is rightly added, *And all my limbs are brought to nought*. For as the strong by ‘bones,’ so by ‘limbs’ the weak sort are wont to be denoted, and so ‘the members of the Church are brought to nought,’ when by the imitating of the wicked that are increased in this world, all the weak are worse weakened. For on seeing the prosperity of the wicked, they often slide away from their very stand in faith itself, they seek after temporal good things, and are in a manner ‘brought to nought;’ in that while they

abandon the Being of God that is lasting, loving things that are transitory, they are, as it were, on their way to be not. And it is well said, *But now my grief has oppressed me*; in that the season of the grief of the Church is now, and the time of her joy shall follow hereafter. Now it often happens that Holy Church not only meets with unbelievers and those without her borders as her adversaries, but with difficulty bears with the plots and opposition of those too, whom she has within her. Whence it is fitly said directly by the voice of the blessed man;

Ver. 10. *My wrinkles speak a testimony against me.*

10. What is denoted by ‘wrinkles,’ but doubledealing? and so all they are wrinkles of Holy Church, who therein live in doubledealing, who avouch the faith with their voices, disown it by their works. These persons doubtless in time of peace, because they see that with the powers of this world that faith is an honour, falsely feign themselves of the number of believers; but when a sudden storm of adversity disquiets Holy Church, they thereupon shew what they are going after in their heart of unbelief. Now these ‘wrinkles’ Holy Church has not in her Elect, in that they have not the art to shew one thing in themselves on the outside, and to hold another withinside. Whence the great Preacher says truly, *That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle*. [Eph. 5, 27] For she ‘has not spot or wrinkle,’ in that she is without both foulness of practice, and doubleness of tongue; but because now she holds within the bosom of the faith numbers even of the children of perdition, when the time of persecution blazes out, she bears those very persons for her enemies, whom she seemed before to be nourishing with words of preaching. Therefore let her say, *My wrinkles speak a testimony against me*; i.e. those very persons, while they persecute, inveigh against me, who now, being fixed in my body, do not mind in themselves the wickedness of their doubledealing. Whence it is rightly added yet further;

And the liar is lifted up against my face, gainsaying me.

11. Even in her time of peace Holy Church is subject to the ‘liar,’ in that there are numbers in her, who disbelieve in the promise of eternal life, and yet falsely feign themselves to be of the faithful. And as they do not dare openly to gainsay her preaching, she is exposed to the liar, not, as it were, ‘before her face,’ but behind her back; but when the time of wickedness breaks out, he who now disparages being full of apprehension, comes ‘before the face to gainsay,’ in that he withstands by open sentences of the voice the words of true faith. But it is to be known that when we meet with such things at the hands of carnal men, it is not so much they individually that rage cruelly in our death, as the evil spirit who rules their minds, as it is said by Paul, *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood; but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world*. [Eph. 6, 12] Whence, whereas here also he is speaking of lying [A.B.D. ‘the liar’], with propriety he turns his words directly to tell of the prince of that lying, and says;

Ver. 9. *He gathered his fury against me; and threatening me he gnashed against me with his teeth; mine enemy looked on me with terrible eyes.*

12. What else are all wicked men but members of the devil? Therefore he himself does by them, whatever he puts it into their hearts that they ought to do. For the devil even now entertains fury against Holy Church, but his fury is scattered, in that he sets afoot his secret temptations through the agency of individuals; but when he bursts out against her in open persecution, ‘he gathers his fury against her,’ in that in the afflicting of her he knits up himself with the entire bent of his efforts. But his members in this time of peace have not ‘fury gathered’ against the Elect in this way, because they feel that they have less power to fulfil their wickedness than they have will; but when they see full range of wickedness at their command, they smite at her the more boldly, in proportion as they are

drawn to a head against her in unanimity. And so it is rightly said now; *He gathered up his fury against me*. And that his fury might be still more fully set forth, it is said, *And threatening me, he gnashed upon me with his teeth*. Of whom too it is added, *mine enemy looked on me with terrible eyes.* For that ancient enemy of the Church 'gnashes against her with the teeth,' and 'looks on her with terrible eyes,' in that he executes cruelties by one set, and by another provides cruelties to execute.

13. For 'the teeth' of this enemy are the persecutors and executioners of the good who mangle her members, while they distress her elect ones by their persecutions. But the 'eyes' of this enemy are those, that provide measures to her hurt, which they may put in practice, and by their counsels light up the cruelties of her persecutors. Thus her old enemy 'gnashes upon her with his teeth,' so long as by the cruel children of perdition in her he hunts down the life of good men within her. He 'looks on her with terrible eyes;' in that, by the counsels of bad men, he never ceases to make out schemes of mischief, by which he may torment her even worse and worse; for as Incarnate 'Truth' in His preaching chose poor common persons and simple men, so on the other hand that accursed man, whom the Apostate Angel will take on him at the end of the world, shall choose for the preaching of his falsity, the cunning and doubleminded, and such as have this world's knowledge. Hence it is said by Isaiah, *Woe to the land, the cymbal of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. Which sendeth ambassadors by the sea even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters.* For the land, that has woe pronounced against it, is principally that accursed man, who is called a 'cymbal of wings,' in that they who in pride soar up into the height of imagination, by preaching sound forth that man of iniquity. Which same land is rightly described as being 'beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,' for Ethiopia sends forth a black people, and whereas this world brings forth every man a sinner, Ethiopia as it were bears a black people. And the land

that has woe pronounced against it, is described as being ‘beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,’ in that that accursed man is so exceedingly and beyond all measure bad, that he goes beyond the sins of all that commit iniquity; and he ‘sends ambassadors by the sea,’ in that he spreads his preachers over the world; and it is rightly told of them how they are sent, when it said, *in vessels of papyrus upon the waters,* for from the ‘papyrus’ paper is made. What then is denoted by the ‘papyrus’ but secular knowledge? and so the vessels of papyrus are the hearts of the learned of the world. Therefore ‘to send ambassadors upon the waters in vessels of papyrus,’ is to put the preaching of him in the brains of the carnally wise, and to call the people running out into sin. Those very persons then who are there denoted by ‘vessels of papyrus,’ here, in that they see with a carnal sight, are denoted by ‘eyes.’ Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 10. *They have gaped upon me with their mouth, reproaching me.*

14. Lost sinners open their mouths ‘in reproaching,’ when they at once do not fear to proclaim the mischiefs of their errors, and laugh to scorn the announcements of the right faith: with regard to whom be it known that they chiefly prosecute those in Holy Church, whom they see likely to be of service to many, who bruise the life of the carnal by the word of correction, and change them spiritually into the body of the Church. Hence it is added;

They have smitten me upon the cheek; they have taken their fill of my punishments.

15. For ‘the cheek’ of the Church, are the holy preachers, as where it is said under the figure of Judaea, by Jeremiah, *She weepeth sore in the night, and the tears are on her cheeks.* [Lam. 1, 2] For in the adversities of the Church those mourn the most, who are used to crush the life of the carnal by preaching; for by these very persons Holy Church breaks and bruises the wicked to bad habits, and as it were swallowing them converts them into members of herself. Hence it is said to the first preacher himself too, as to a

‘cheek’ of the Church, *Kill and eat* [Acts 10, 13]. It is hence too that Samson laid hold of the jawbone of an ass, and destroyed his enemies [Judges 15, 16]; in that our Redeemer, with the Hand of His power laying hold of the simplicity and submissiveness of these that preach, killed the carnal to their bad habits. And the jawbone thrown down upon the earth, afterwards poured out water, in that the bodies of the preachers given over to death, shewed great miracles to the people. So the wicked ‘smite the cheek’ of Holy Church, when they persecute good preachers; and whereas lost sinners thus reckon themselves to have done something great, when they do put an end to the life of the preachers; after the striking of ‘the cheek,’ it is properly added, *They have taken their fill of my punishments*, for that punishment does fill them to satisfaction, which chastises the mind of the Church in an especial manner. It goes on;

Ver. 12. *God hath shut me up with the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.*

16. The people of the Elect is ‘shut up with the ungodly man,’ when its flesh is given up in this present time to the persecutions of our old adversary; and it is ‘turned over,’ not to the spirit, but ‘the hands of the wicked;’ in that in proportion as they cannot take it captive in mind, they are the more pitilessly inflamed against the flesh thereof. But the People of Holy Church, when it begins to suffer adversities to an extreme degree, and sees the weak ones in her going off to worse and worse, recalls to mind the times of her peace, when she fed her faithful children with the richness of her preaching. Hence it is fitly added;

Ver. 13. *I, the same that was once rich, am crushed on a sudden.*

17. Herein, viz. that he declared himself to be ‘crushed on a sudden,’ he denoted the unguarded mind of weak persons: who, whilst they are not skilled to foresee the evils which are destined to come, find them more severe in proportion as they also undergo them contrary to expectation. But

to stedfast minds adversities do not come on a sudden, in that they are foreseen before they come. And this Holy Church too does now undergo in certain backsliding people, who, after the richness of instruction, are sometimes so crushed by sudden assaults of evil, that they fall as deeply in certain wicked practices, as if they had never been vouchsafed the food of the word. It proceeds;

He hath held my neck, and broken me in two, and set me up for His mark.

18. As in evil the ‘neck’ denotes pride, so in good it denotes the lifting up in freedom; whence it is sometimes the case that ‘pride’ itself is also put for the authority belonging to that lifting up; as when the Lord says by way of promise to Holy Church by the Prophet, *I will set thee for the pride of ages*. [Is. 60, 15] And because in time of persecution some that are weak do not dare to preach with freedom the truths they have a sense of, it is rightly said of this enemy, *He hath held my neck, and broken me in two*. But perchance those are denoted by the appellation of ‘neck,’ who, in the season of her peace, are lifted up more than befits, and by occasion of defending the cause of right minister to the evil of self-exalting; which same in time of persecution feel adversity the more sensibly on this account, that they are elevated by prosperity. Concerning whom it is rightly said, *He hath held my neck, and broken me in two*; i.e. the pride which she had in her weak members, He bowed down by the severity of His smiting. *And set me up for His mark*. It is known that ‘a mark’ is for this reason ‘set up,’ that it may be hit by the sending of the arrow. And so the faithful people is ‘set as a mark’ to its enemy, in that he is ever assaulting it with his blows and afflicting it with his persecutions: for he that undergoes perpetual ills in this life, as if set for a mark, receives blows from one striking him; and hence the great Preacher, when he was suffering the ills of persecution, and groaning beneath the persecuting efforts of his enemies, to comfort the tender soul of

the disciples touching his troubles, says, *For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto*. [1 Thess. 3, 3] As if be said to them in plain words; 'Wherefore at this season do ye wonder at my wounds, when, if we seek the joys of the eternal world, we have come hither for this, even to be stricken?' It proceeds;

Ver. 13. *He hath compassed me about with His lances, He hath wounded my loins together, He hath not spared, and He hath poured out my bowels upon the ground.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

19. These particulars would seem to accord with blessed Job after the letter, in that it is said, *He hath compassed me with His lances, He hath wounded my loins together, He hath not spared*; if that were not added, which is not read as written about him, *he hath poured out my bowels upon the ground*. From which circumstance it follows, that whereas we cannot find this after the letter, we should investigate after the spirit those points, which in his words sound as of the fact of history. Holy Church is 'beset with lances' by her enemy, whensoever she is in her members assaulted by the cunning assailant with the darts of temptation; and it is well said that we are 'encompassed with lances,' in that our old enemy assails us on every side with the wounding of temptation. Thus oftentimes whilst the appetite is restrained, that lust may be brought under, the dart of vainglory strikes the mind; but if the body is not worn down by the infliction of abstinence, the flame of lust kindles itself against the soul: often whilst we strive to observe economy, we fall into stinginess; and often whilst we give profusely the things we possess, we are led into avarice, in that we seek to make up again what we may have to give. Whereas then the darts of the old enemy assail us in every direction, it is rightly said now, *he hath compassed me about with his lances*. And because, in the case of every sin, the crafty enemy

indeed recommends it, but we by consenting to his recommendations execute it, it is fitly subjoined, *he hath wounded my loins together*, for in the loins lust is seated. Hence he who desired to eradicate the delight of lust from the heart, preached the words, *Gird up the loins of your mind*. [1 Pet. 1, 13] And so when our old enemy draws the faithful people into lust, surely he smites that people 'in the loins;' in which place it is deserving of observation, that he does not say 'he has wounded ['*vulneravit*' '*convulneravit'*],' but, *he hath wounded my loins together*. For as to talk is sometimes an act of one person, but to 'talk together' of two or perhaps of many, so our old enemy, in that he does not hurry us into sin without our own will, is never said 'to wound our loins,' but, 'to wound our loins together:' in that what he prompts us amiss we fulfil by following of our own will; and, as it were, 'wound ourselves together' in unity with him, because we are at the same time led to commit the evil deed of free will. It goes on; *he hath not spared*; as if he said, 'he hath not ceased;' *and he hath poured out my bowels upon the ground*. What else are we to understand by 'the bowels' of Holy Church, save the minds of those who contain in themselves certain of her mysteries, who are devoted to the interior Sacraments? But our old adversary, when he draws over to secular concerns any of the faithful, who appeared to be devoted to the interior sacraments, does, surely, 'pour out her bowels upon the ground;' in that he treads those down in things below, who were before buried from sight in secret and spiritual practices. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *He hath broken me with breach upon breach.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

20. In her weak members Holy Church is 'broken with breach upon breach,' when sin is added to sin, that transgression should be brought to a more dreadful pitch. Thus for him, whom avarice forces to robbery and

robbery leads into deceit, so that the sin committed is further defended by falsehood, how else is it with this man, but that he is *broken with breach upon breach?* When too it is well said by the Prophet; *Cursing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, adultery, have overflowed, and blood toucheth blood*. [Hos. 4, 2] For by the title of 'blood' sin is used to be denoted; whence one who longs to be set free from sin exclaims in penitence, *Deliver me from blood* [*sanguinibus*]. [Ps. 51, 14] So 'blood toucheth blood,' when sin has heaped on sin; and whereas when breach is added to breach, the powers of our old enemy are the more terribly increased against us, it is rightly added;

He runneth upon me like a giant.

21. The enemy is easy to be resisted, if he is not consented to, whether in many backslidings, or in one for a continuance. But if the soul has been accustomed to submit to his persuasions, the oftener it subjects itself to him, it makes him the harder to itself to bear, so that it has not the power to struggle against him; in that our wicked adversary, 'like a giant,' fights against it, when it is vanquished by bad habit: yet very often Holy Church, even after sins have been committed, brings back the minds of the faithful to penitence, and cleanses away the sins of practice by the efficacy of a voluntary self-chastening. Whence it is well added;

Ver. 15. *I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and covered my flesh with ashes.*

22. What ought to be understood by 'sackcloth and ashes,' but penance; what by 'the skin' and 'the flesh,' but sin of the flesh? And so whereas there are persons who after the backsliding of the flesh are brought back to penance, it is as if 'sackcloth were sewn upon the skin,' and 'the flesh covered with ashes;' because the guilt of the flesh is 'covered with ashes' by penance, that it should not be seen for its avenging in the inquest of the strict Judge. But Holy Church, when she withdraws her weak members

from sins, and conducts them to the remedy of penance, these she surely aids with her tears, that they may recover strength to receive the grace of their Maker, and in the strong she bewails what she has not done, which yet in her weak members she has as it were done herself. Hence it is well added yet further;

Ver. 16. *My face is swelled with weeping.*

23. For 'the face' of Holy Church are those, who being set in posts or governorships appear the foremost, that in their goodly appearance should be the honour of the faithful people, even if there were aught deformed in the body hidden from sight. Which same persons that are set over the people bewail the sins of those that go weakly, and so chasten themselves for the downfall of others as if for their own. And often when they see some returning to pardon after sin, and others persisting in wickedness, they marvel at the secret counsels of Almighty God, but cannot fathom them. For they are dumb at the things which they do not understand. And hence it is fitly added;

And mine eyelids have become darkened.

24. For they are rightly entitled 'eyelids,' who are on their watch for the fore-ensuring the paths of the feet; but when not even the rulers on the watch can understand the secret judgments of God, 'the eyelids' of Holy Church are 'darkened;' but, as I remember that I have already often said, blessed Job, while bearing a type of Holy Church, uses at one time the voice of the body, and at another time the voice of the Head; and while he is speaking of her members, he is raised on a sudden to speak the words of her Head. Whence here too it is added;

Ver. 17. *I have suffered this without the wickedness of mine hand, whilst I made pure prayers to God.*

25. He suffered without the wickedness of His hand; *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*, [1 Pet. 2, 22] and yet endured the pain of

the Cross for our redemption. Who only above all others 'made pure prayers to God,' in that even in the very anguish of His Passion He prayed in behalf of His persecutors, saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. [Luke 23, 24] For what can be described, what can be conceived more pure in prayer, than when the mercifulness of intercession is vouchsafed even those, from whose hands pain is undergone? Whence it was brought to pass, that that Blood of our Redeemer, which His persecutors in raging had spilt, afterwards in believing they drank, and proclaimed Him to be the Son of God. Concerning which same Blood it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 18. *O earth, cover thou not my blood; and let my cry find no place to lie hid in thee.*

26. It was said to man on his committing sin, *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return*; [Gen. 3, 19] and this 'earth' does not 'cover the blood' of our Redeemer: in that each several sinner taking to himself the price of his redemption makes confession and sings praise, and publishes it to all of his neighbours that he is able. Moreover, 'earth did not cover His blood,' in that Holy Church has now preached the mystery of His redemption in all parts of the world. And observe what is added: *And let my cry find no place to lie hid in thee*. For the very blood of redemption that is taken is itself 'the cry' of our Redeemer. Hence Paul too says, *And to the Blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better than that of Abel*. [Heb. 12, 24] It had been said of the blood of Abel; *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground*. [Gen. 4, 10] But 'the Blood of Jesus speaketh better things than the blood of Abel,' because the blood of Abel brought the death of his fratricidal brother, but the blood of the Lord won life for His persecutors. So then that the Sacraments of our Lord's Passion may not be ineffectual in us, we are bound to imitate that which we take, and to preach to others what we adore. For 'His cry does find a place to lie hid in us,' if

what the mind has been brought to believe the tongue is silent about. But that His cry may not lie hid in us, it remains that each one of us according to his small measure should make known to his neighbours the mystery of his own quickening. It is good to recall the eyes of the interior to the hour of the Lord's Passion, when the Jews raged against Him in persecution, and the Disciples fled from Him in alarm. For He that appeared to die in the flesh was not in any wise believed to be God. Hence it is properly added in this place,

Ver. 19. *Also, now, behold my witness is in heaven, and my heart's associate* ['*conscius meus'* lit. '*my accomplice,' 'he who knows my mind'*] *is on high.*

27. For when the Son was brought to His downfall on earth, there was a witness to Him in heaven. Since the Father is the witness of the Son; concerning Whom He Himself saith in the Gospel, *And the Father Himself, Which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me*. [John 5, 37] Who is also rightly called 'mine heart's associate,' in that with one will, and with one counsel, the Father acts always in union with the Son. Whose witness too He is, in that *no man knoweth the Son but the Father*. [Matt. 11, 27] Thus He had then 'a witness in heaven,' and His 'heart's associate' on high, when they, who saw Him dying in the flesh, had their eyes closed to see the power of His Divine nature; and whereas men did not know, yet in the hour of death the Mediator between God and man did know, that the Father was working together with Himself. Which perhaps may be likewise applied to the voice of His Body. For Holy Church for this reason undergoes the miseries of this life, that the grace above may lead her on her way to the rewards of eternity. She slights the death of her flesh, because she is intent on the glory of the resurrection; and what she suffers is transitory, what she expects everlasting, concerning which same everlasting blessings she has no misgiving, in that she has already a faithful testimony in the glory of her

Redeemer. For she sees with the mind the resurrection of His flesh, and is strongly fortified to have hope, in that what she sees already brought to pass in her Head, she hopes without doubting will also follow in His Body, which is herself. Which same Church the Psalmist seeing destined to continue in everlasting perfection, describes her under the title of the moon. *A perfect moon for everlasting*. [Ps. 89, 37] And whereas the Resurrection of the Lord heartens her to entertain the hope of a Resurrection, he properly added, *And a faithful witness in heaven*. Forasmuch as that she may not tremble for her own resurrection, she has Him in heaven for a witness, Who rose again from the dead; and so let the faithful People when it suffers adversity, when it is harassed with sore tribulations, lift up the mind to the hope of the glory to follow, and trusting in the resurrection of the Redeemer, let it say, *Also now behold my witness is in heaven*, *and mine associate on high*. Who is also rightly called 'an associate,' in that He was acquainted with our nature, not only by creating, but by taking it upon Himself. For His knowing is His having undertaken what belongs to us. Whence too it is said by the Psalmist, *For He knoweth our frame*. [Ps. 103, 14] For what wonder is it if He is said emphatically 'to know our frame,' when it is plain that there is nothing that He does not know? But His 'knowing our frame,' is His having taken it upon Himself out of pitifulness.

[MORAL/HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

28. Yet this voice may together with blessed Job suitably apply to each one of ourselves as well; for every man who in what he does aims at human praises, seeks a 'witness' on earth: but he that is eager to please Almighty God by his deeds, takes thought that he has a 'witness in heaven.' And it often happens that the very good things themselves in us are found fault with by inconsiderate men; but he that 'has a witness in heaven,' has no need to fear men's reproofs. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 20. *My friends are full of words; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.*

29. For what is denoted by the eye, but the intent of the heart? as it is written, *if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light*. [Matt. 6, 22] For when any thing is done with a good intention, the enacting of that intention contracts no soil in the sight of God; and so when friends are full of words, i.e. when the very same persons detract that are joined with us in faith, 'the eye' must needs 'pour out tears to God,' that so the whole bent of our heart may run out in the piercing of interior love, and lift itself up to the things of the interior, the more exactly that being forced back by external reproaches, it is driven to turn back within, lest it should vanish away without. It proceeds;

Ver.21. *Oh! that a man were so judged with God, as a son of man is judged with his fellow!*

30. We acknowledge indeed always that we are sinners, yet often, when laid under the rod, we do not know for what sin in particular we are stricken, and we sift ourselves with minute examining, that if we might in any way be able we might trace out the cause of our being struck; and whereas this is for the most part hidden from us, our blindness becomes a load upon us, and we are the more pained at what we are suffering. But anyone that 'comes to judgment with his neighbour,' both says what he thinks, and knows what answer is made in return, and strikes a blow where he will, and knows from what quarter he is struck. But he that is smitten with the visitation of God, while he knows indeed that he is beaten, but knows not why he is beaten, as it were himself says what he thinks, but does not know what may be said against him; seeing that he himself indeed groans under the rod, but God does not declare openly for what cause of vengeance He strikes him. Therefore it is said now, *Oh! that a man were so judged with God, as a son of man is judged with his neighbour!* As if it

were expressed in plain words; 'As in all, that I say, I am heard, so would that I heard all that is said concerning me.' Which, nevertheless, can never be brought about in this life, in that there is a great obstruction before the eyes of our heart, against our beholding the subtle nature of God, even our mere frailty by itself; but we shall then see Him with clearness by Whom we are now searchingly beheld, when this frailty laid aside, we attain to the grace of the interior contemplation, of which Paul saith, *For then shall I know, as also I am known*. [1 Cor. 13, 12] Hence blessed Job, seeing that that knowledge can never be in the fullest way perfected here, groans indeed over the blindness of the present life; yet consoles himself by the shortness thereof, saying,

Ver.22. *When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.*

31. Every thing that passes is short, even though it should seem slow in being finished, but in the way of death we 'go, and do not return by it,' not because we are not brought back by rising again to the life of the flesh, but because we do not come again to the labours of this mortal life, or to earn rewards by our labours.

Chap. xvii. Ver. 1. *My spirit shall be wasted to thinness.*

32. 'My spirit is wasted to thinness,' by the fear of judgment; in that the minds of the Elect, the more they feel themselves to be approaching the final Judgment, tremble so much the more fearfully in the searching of their own selves; and if they ever find in themselves any carnal thoughts, they consume them by the fervour of their penance; nor do they suffer their thoughts to expand with carnal delight, in that they pass sentence and inflict punishment on themselves more rigorously in proportion as they are awaiting the strict Judge close at hand; whence it comes to pass, that they look upon their departure as always near. For the minds of the lost do many things wickedly on this account, because they suppose themselves living

here for long; and so 'the spirit of the righteous is wasted to thinness,' but the spirit of the wicked is thickened. For in proportion as they swell out in self-elation, they have not the wearing down of the spirit: but the righteous, whilst they consider the shortness of their life, eschew the sins of pride and impurity. And hence it is added;

My days shall be shortened, and the grave only is left me.

33. For he that bethinks himself what he will be in death, is always rendered fearful in practice, and from the very cause that henceforth he does not as it were live in his own eyes, he does genuinely live in the eyes of his Creator; he goes after nothing of a nature to pass away, he withstands all the desire of the present life, and views himself as almost dead, in that he is not unaware that he is destined to die. For a perfect life is an imitation of death, which while the righteous diligently enact, they escape the snares of sins. Whence it is written, *Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember thy latter end, and thou shalt never do amiss*. [Ecclus. 7, 36] And hence blessed Job, because he sees that his 'days are shortened,' and reflects that 'the grave only is left him,' fitly subjoins,

I have not sinned, and mine eye abideth in bitternesses.

34. As if he expressed himself in plain words; 'I have not been guilty of sin, and I have undergone scourges.' But on this point, seeing that in many passages of this history he confesses himself to have been guilty of sinning, is the mind moved by the thought with what reason he now denies himself to have committed sin? But with reference to this the reason quickly occurs, in that neither did he sin to such an extent as to deserve strokes of the rod, nor yet was capable of being without sin. For that he was stricken not for the correcting of sin, but the increasing of grace, the Judge Himself bears witness, Who praises while He strikes. And again, that he was not without

sin neither does he himself deny, who is commended by the Judge, and therefore commended because he denies it not.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But I think that we shall make out these words the better, if we understand them as spoken in the voice of the Head. For our Redeemer, in coming for our Redemption, at once did not sin and did 'undergo bitterness,' in that being without sin He undertook the punishment of our sin, in Whose voice it is added,

Ver. 3. *Set me free, and put me beside thee, and let the hand of anyone fight against me.*

35. For *He* did not sin either in thought or deed: *He* was made to 'abide in bitterness' by His Passion, *He* was 'set free' by the Resurrection, He was 'put beside' the Father by His Ascension; in that having gone up into heaven He sitteth on the right hand of God. And because, after the glory of His Ascension, Judaea was stirred up in the persecuting of His Disciples, it is rightly said here, *Let the hand of anyone fight against me*. For the madness of the persecutors did then rage on His members, then the flame of cruelty blazed out against the life of the faithful; but where should the wicked go, or what should they do, whilst He Whom they persecuted on earth was now seated in heaven? Concerning whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 4. *Thou hast removed their heart far from discipline.*

36. For if they had been acquainted with the keeping of discipline, nor ever despised the precepts of our Redeemer, the mere mortal condition of their flesh by itself would have excited them to the love of the life immortal; for this very thing, even our being subject to corruption in this life, is of the scourge of discipline. For to be made to feel annoyance from heat and cold, from hunger and thirst, to be afflicted with diseases, and one day even to be put out of existence, what else are all these, but the scourges

of sin? Now there are some that both undergo scourges, and yet never fashion anew their life by the fear of Him Who scourges them. Whence it is rightly said now, *Thou hast removed their heart far from discipline*; in that though the body is under discipline, yet the heart is not under discipline, so long as a person is stricken with the rod, and yet not brought back to humbleness of mind. Nor yet is this spoken in such a sense, as if the Almighty and Merciful God 'removed the heart of man far from discipline,' but that having fallen away of his own accord, there in executing judgment He suffered him to remain, where he had fallen; as we also say to Him in praying, *And lead us not into temptation*. i.e. 'do not ever suffer us to be led into temptation.' It proceeds;

Therefore they shall not be exalted.

37. For if the heart were under discipline, it would seek after things above, it would not be openmouthed to obtain transitory good things. Of those, then, whose heart is not under discipline, it is rightly said, *Therefore they shall not be exalted*, in that while let go at large in the lowest enjoyments, they are ever longing for the good things of earth, they never lift the heart to the delights of heaven; for they would be exalted, if they lifted their minds to the hope of the heavenly country; but they, who do not make it their business to guard their way by discipline, ever in their desires lie grovelling in things below and what is more grievous, in lying low set themselves up, in that they are uplifted on the ground of things transitory. And they may be uplifted, but cannot be exalted, in that they are sunk the deeper below, by the very act by which they are rendered higher to themselves; and so the heart that is without discipline cannot be exalted, in that the human mind, as when elevated amiss it is forced down below, so forced down aright is lifted up on high. It proceeds;

Ver. 5. *He promiseth prey to his friends; and the eyes of his children shall fail.*

38. After that blessed Job had uttered a sentence relating to the multitude of the wicked, i.e. the body of our old enemy; he directly shifts the sentence to the very leader of them, i.e. the head of all the children of perdition, and returns from the plural to the singular number: for the devil and all wicked people are so one body, that it very often happens that the body is rated with the name of the head, and the head designated by the title of the body. Thus the body is rated with the name of the head, when it is said of a bad man, *And one of you is a devil*. [John 6, 70] And again the head is designated by the title of the body, when it is said of the apostate Angel himself, *A man* [Vulg. '*inimicus homo'*] *that is an enemy hath done this*. [Matt. 13, 28] Thus the prince of all the wicked has some for 'associates' and some as 'children.' For who are his associates, but those apostate Angels, who fell with him from the seat of the heavenly country? or what others has he as children, saving bad men, who are begotten by his evil persuading in the practice of wickedness. Whence too it is said by the voice of Truth to unbelievers, *Ye are of your father the devil.* [John 8, 44]

39. So that evil author of error promises 'prey' to his 'associates,' in that he promises the evil spirits the souls of bad men to be seized at their latter end; and the eyes of his children shall fail, in that while he sets on the aims of men to look for earthly things only, he causes them to love that which they cannot keep for long: for neither can the bent of misdirected love remain, when it appears that both that which he loves, and he himself, who loves it, are tending to nought at a rapid rate. It may also be, that by 'the associates' perhaps are understood all those that are most cruel and already full of every kind of wickedness; but by the sons, those who being still deluded by beguiling promises, are being nourished up to increasing of wickedness; that henceforth the devil should as it were by the title of wickedness, have these as his 'associates,' who now no longer have whereunto to grow in perdition, while these he has as sons, whom he

suckles with promises, that they may go on advancing to worse. But ‘the eyes of his children shall fail,’ in that the aims of the wicked fall to the ground, when all that they go after here, they leave behind, and there suffer without end what is fitted to fill them with grief. It proceeds;

Ver.6. *He hath made me, as it were, a byword of the people, and I am an example before them.*

40. This let blessed Job say in his own person, yea and in the voice of all of the Elect. For everyone that is stricken with the rod, is, as it were, ‘made a byword of the people,’ in that every fool, when he desires to curse anyone, takes up his cursing in a likeness to him, whom he sees stricken with a temporal stroke, and wishes that punishment for his adversary, which he sees to have befallen the righteous man. And so it comes to pass that with persons not endowed with a right perception, the uptight man is brought into an example, while both the punishment of the just passes current for the condemnation of him, and the glory that is in store for him is not foreseen by any expectance of faith. It proceeds;

Ver. 7. *Mine eye is dim, for indignation, and all my members are as it were brought to nothing.*

41. For ‘the eye is dim for indignation,’ when those very persons likewise, who in the Lord’s Body, i.e. in the Church, are endued with the light of truth, whilst they see themselves too long despised and disdained by the wicked, are confounded in astonishment at the inscrutable judgment, and fail to fathom the secret of God; for what reason it is that the wicked are suffered to prevail against the innocence of the good? For who is not amazed, when Herodias by her daughter’s dancing obtains at the hands of the drunken king, that the head of that *Friend of the Bridegroom*, that ‘*Prophet, and more than a Prophet*,’ should be brought before the faces of his guests upon a charger? Now when the just are ‘dimmed in indignation,’ the weak very commonly go headlong into actual infidelity; whence it is

added, *And any members are as it were brought to nothing*. For by the term of 'members,' we have the tenderness of the weak set forth, who, while they behold bad men flourishing, and good men tormented, are sometimes brought to this pass, that they regret that they even began in good things, and so speedily fall back to doing evil things, as if the good they had begun were a detriment to their life. But this that he says, *Mine eye is dimmed in indignation*, he unfolds in plainer words, when he adds;

Ver. 8. *Upright men shall be astonied at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

42. In this place, 'the innocent' is taken for the as yet imperfectly righteous, who, as yet but commencing in good ways, though he is not minded to do mischief to others, yet is not at all able himself to do things that are perfect; and because the hearts of the little ones, while they see the wicked flourishing in the present life, are set on fire with the brands of envy; (for a man the more envies others present good in proportion as he less despises it himself. Since of that which cannot be possessed by all men all of it together, what this one has would be so much lacking ['*desit'* al. '*defit,'* or '*deficit'*] to the other.) Now 'the innocent is kindled against the hypocrite,' when even he who is not used to injure anyone, envies the glory of the dissembler. But if in this passage the innocent means any one perfect in goodness, 'the innocent is moved against the hypocrite;' when he both sees him flourishing, and contemns him and all his flourishing, and by preaching the things that are right plainly says that he ought to be despised by others, the more in proportion as he sees him eagerly in quest of things, which cannot abide with him for long, and in this point of view it is yet further added;

Ver. 9. *The righteous also shall hold on his way, and to clean hands he shall add strength.*

43. On considering the hypocrite, 'the righteous holds on his way,' in that whilst he sees that it is by a wicked will that he obtains the things that are of the world, he is himself tied and bound the stronger to the love of heavenly things, knowing that to good desires eternal rewards shall not be wanting, whereas both to bad and double hearts the good things of time are not denied; from which circumstance it comes that 'to clean hands he adds strength,' in that seeing bad men win temporal glory, he brings his good works to perfection, and looks down upon temporal things from the loftier height in proportion as he sees them to abound even to the wicked. For he sees how much those things deserve to be despised, which Almighty God vouchsafes even to bad men: for if they were primarily great, the Creator would never vouchsafe them to His adversaries; and hence he considers that it is to himself an unworthy thing, that he should go after that good, which he sees to abound even to the wicked; but he applies his mind to the winning of heavenly blessings, which can never be shared with him by the children of perdition. Thus after he had introduced the outward advancements of the wicked, and the interior advancements of the good, he brought forward words of exhortation, saying,

Ver. 10. *But as for you all, do ye turn and come now.*

44. Which same words of exhortation he properly frames to the Elect, whom he calls to the eternal world; who are bidden in two ways, viz. that they should 'turn,' and that they should 'come;' 'turn' by faith, 'come' by practice. Or indeed that they 'turn' by abandoning evil deeds, and 'come' by doing good ones; as it is written, *Depart from evil, and do good*: [Ps. 37, 27] but that is wonderful which is added,

And may I not find one wise man among you.

45. For what does this mean, that he bids them to wisdom, and yet wishes that he may not find them wise, saving that they cannot come to true wisdom, who are deceived in confidence in their own false wisdom? Concerning whom it is written, *Woe unto you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight* [Is. 5, 21]; and to whom it is said again, *Be not wise with your own selves* [Rom. 12, 16]; whence that same great preacher sought that those, whom he found carnally wise, in order that they might attain true wisdom, should first become foolish; saying, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise*. [1 Cor. 3, 18] And 'Truth' saith by Itself, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes*. [Matt. 11, 25] And so because they that are wise in themselves cannot come to true wisdom, blessed Job, being anxious for the conversion of his hearers, rightly desires that he may not 'find any wise man among them.' As if he said to them in plain speech; 'Learn to be foolish in your own selves, that ye may be truly wise in God.' It goes on;

Ver. 11. *My days are past away, my thoughts are scattered, racking my heart.*

[ALLEGORICAL / MORAL INTERPRETATION]

46. The Holy Church of the Elect sees that the spaces of her life pass in periods of day and night, in that it is hers in adversity to have 'a night,' and in prosperity, 'a day.' For there riseth as it were light unto her from the tranquillity of peace, and night from the grief of persecution. Now as often as after the pauses of rest she returns to the toilsomeness of persecution, growing to a head against her, she testifies that her 'days have past;' in which days, however, she is accustomed to be weighed down with so much the heavier cares, in proportion as she bethinks her that for that very

tranquillity of rest a more exact reckoning is required of her by the Judge. For in the tranquil state of peace, at one time she is employed with the profits of souls, at another time she attends to the ministrations of earthly things, which same ministrations of earthly affairs are more burthensome to the minds of good men, in proportion as by the act of looking at them they are torn away though but for a brief space from looking at the things of heaven. Whence blessed Job, whether in his own voice, or the voice of the Church Universal, after testifying that 'his days were past,' thereupon subjoined, *My thoughts are scattered, racking my heart*; in that when temporal glory is gone to the minds of the good, even that charge of earthly stewardship is likewise removed from them, which seemed to be torturing them within their thoughts; for while they aim to be always bent upward for the perception of the things of heaven, by this very circumstance that sometimes in their earthly stewardships they are made to descend to take thought of the lowest matters, they feel themselves to be put to torture. Whence it is brought to pass, that the very hostility of persecution is itself too changed into a mighty exultation of joy, on account of the repose of the heart that is obtained. Hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 12. *They have changed the night into day.*

47. For 'the thoughts being scattered change night into day,' in that it is sometimes more grateful to the righteous through adversity to undergo sufferings, rather than as the effect of prosperity to be harassed with the charge of earthly ministering. But because they have learnt by paying attention that both adversity passes away, and prosperity dawns again, it is fitly added;

And again after darkness I look for light.

48. For 'the light is looked for after darkness,' in that after the night of the present life, the light eternal is discerned, or adversity and prospersity do so alternate here, that they do not cease to succeed one another by turns.

Whence it comes to pass that even in the light night is suspected, and in the night light is presumed on; as when it is written, *In the day of prosperity be not forgetful of affliction, and in the day of affliction be not forgetful of prosperity*. [Ecclus. 11, 25] But mark, forasmuch as we have been redeemed by the grace of our Maker, we henceforth have this boon of heavenly bestowal, that when we are removed from dwelling in our flesh, we are at once carried off to receive heavenly rewards; in that since our Creator and Redeemer, penetrating the bars of hell, brought out from thence the souls of the Elect, He does not permit us to go there, from whence He has already by descending set others free. But they who were brought into this world before His Coming, whatsoever eminency of righteousness they may have had, could not on being divested of the body at once be admitted into the bosom of the heavenly country [a]; seeing that He had not as yet come, Who by His own descending should unloose the bars of hell, and place the souls of the righteous henceforth in their everlasting seat. Hence blessed Job, both feeling the stroke of affliction, and knowing that the recompensing of the righteous was as yet delayed, fitly subjoins;

Ver. 13. *If I wait, hell is mine house; and I have made my bed in the darkness.*

49. For the former Saints could undergo adversity, and yet could not, when brought out of the body, be at once freed from the regions of hell; in that He had not yet come, Who should descend thereinto without sin, that He might set free those, who were there bound by right of sin. And man then ‘made his bed in darkness,’ when he forsook the light of righteousness by consenting to the crafty Prompter: and whereas in those very regions of hell the souls of the righteous were kept imprisoned without torment, so that both on behalf of original sin they should still go down thereunto, and yet by light of their own deeds not undergo punishment; to have ‘made their bed in the darkness,’ in a manner, is to have prepared themselves rest in

hell. For it was sad weariness [*grave taedium*] to the Elect, after the dissolution of the flesh, not yet to see the likeness of the Creator. Which wearisomeness blessed Job not improperly designates 'darkness.' But whereas this came in the punishment of infirmity, he rightly adds that same infirmity directly, saying,

Ver. 14. *I have said to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.*

50. What does this mean, that he *said to corruption, Thou art my father*; saving that every man descends from an already corrupted origin? and hence it is added, *And to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister*; in this way, viz. that we come into this world once from corruption itself, and along with corruption itself. For as regards the matter of corruptible flesh, the worm is our 'mother and sister,' in that we both come forth out of corruption, and come with corruption which we carry about us. And if we may understand it in a spiritual sense, nature is not unappropriately called our 'mother,' and habit too a 'sister,' in that we are from the one, and along with the other; which same 'mother and sister' are 'worms,' in that in virtue of a corrupt nature and evil habit we are necessitated, as by a kind of 'worms,' so by disquieting thoughts to be gnawed in the mind. For the corrupted nature of the flesh, and bad habit, in that they generate numberless cares in the heart of our frailty, are well called 'worms our mother and sister.' For cares gnaw the mind, while they disquiet it. For righteous men do not cease either heedfully to take thought and counsel what they are to do, or thoughtfully to look into it, whither they are destined to be led after the present life. And so because the Elect then, before the Coming of the Lord, both saw that they were in the toils of the present life, and still after the present life did not as yet receive the heavenly blessings, they were made to smart [*urebantur*] with many thoughts of heart. For they

waited for the grace of the Redeemer, and yet by living in the flesh could not attain thereto: whence it is fitly added,

Ver. 15. *Where then is now my expectation?*

51. What could be the 'expectation' of the righteous, but God who justifieth the righteous, Who should freely go down to (what was) the punishment of mankind, and by the efficacy of His righteousness set free the captives of death? For they never ceased to expect His appearing with intent expectation; they knew that it was to come, but they sought for it to come quickly. Wherefore he does not say, 'Where, then, is my expectation?' but, where then is now my expectation? For in that he adds, *now*, he shewed that what was to come one day, he desired might come without delay. It goes on,

And who considereth my patience?

52. He expressed the longing desire, wherewith whilst set in the flesh he hastes to be redeemed, and brought back from hell to the regions above. And indeed it belonged to but few men to enter into the consideration of these things, that they, should learn to think of the labours of the present life, or of the subsequent delay after death. Both of which the just grieved to be subject to before the coming of our Redeemer. And hence it is rightly said, *And who considereth my patience?* Verily, there is not lacking One, to 'consider patience.' But when God does not hear quickly, He is said, as it were, not 'to consider.' For the Redemption of mankind itself, which came at the beginning of the world, by those who came before from the beginning of the world was accounted slow, in that during a long period of time they were severed from the recompensing of the heavenly things, as Truth testifies, Which saith, *Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them*. [Luke 10, 24] And so as to that which is now said, *Who considereth my patience?* the breathings of fervent desire are laid open. For neither, as we said before, does God

forbear to consider the patience of the righteous; but not ‘to have regard,’ in a manner, means to appear less quickly answering to the aspirations of longing desire, and by lengthened periods of time to delay the grace of His Dispensation. Therefore let him say, *Who considereth my patience?* in that what is short to Him that ordereth, is long to him that loves. Hence, still reflecting on the privations of his delay, he repeats that which he had already said before; and being destined to descend below, he redoubles the voice of his grief, saying,

Ver. 16. *All of mine shall descend into the lowest hell.*

53. Whereas it appears that among those below the righteous are held bound not in places of punishment, but in the bosom of tranquillity above, an important question springs up before us, why it is that blessed Job declares, saying, *All of mine shall descend into the lowest hell*; who even if before the Advent of the Mediator between God and man he had to descend into hell, yet it is plain that into the lowest hell he had not to descend. Does he call the very higher regions of hell, ‘the lowest hell?’ Plainly because in relation to the loftiness of heaven, the region of this sky may not unappropriately be called the lower region. Whence when the Apostate Angels were plunged from the seats of heaven into this darksome region of the air, the Apostle Peter says, *For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, but delivered them, dragged down with infernal chains, into hell, to be reserved for torments in the Judgment.* [2 Pet. 2, 4] If then relatively to the height of heaven this darksome air is infernal, relatively to the elevation of this air, the earth which lies below may be taken both as infernal, and as deep; and relatively to the height of that earth, even those parts of hell which are higher than the other mansions of the place below, may in this place not unsuitably be denoted by the designation of the lowest hell; in that what the sky is to heaven, and the earth to the sky, the same is that higher hollow of the regions below to the earth.

54. But that is very wonderful which he subjoins, *All of mine shall descend;* for whereas the soul alone shall descend into the regions of hell, how is it that the holy man tells that 'all of his' shall descend there, but that he saw himself to be there entire where he perceives the great weight of his recompense? seeing that this which he leaves of himself without sense on the earth, until he returns to the incorruption of the resurrection, he does not feel to be himself. And so he declares that 'all of his will descend into the lowest hell,' whither he sees his soul only shall descend; in that the whole of him is there, where he is capable of having a sense of that which he has got. Or, surely, 'all of his did descend into hell,' in that the recompensing of all his toils was as yet expected to be received only in the rest of hell; and all that he has done as it were 'descends' there, in that there he finds rest in his recompensing for all things. Whence also the expected rest is itself added, when the words are thereupon introduced,

Dost thou think at least there will be rest for me there?

55. By which same words he both makes known what he desires, and yet marks that he is still doubtful of receiving the rest, lest he whose holy works so many scourges followed, should by the hidden judgment of the heavenly Judge, after temporal scourges, have lasting torments likewise following him. Wherein it behoves ourselves to consider with exceeding fear which of us is now secure of the everlasting rest, if even he still trembles for it, proclaim of whose virtue the very Judge, Who smites, does Himself sound*: For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?* [1 Pet. 4, 18] For blessed Job knew that he should attain to rest after the strokes of affliction, but that he might shake our hearts with fear, he himself seemed to doubt about the recompensing of Eternal rest, when he says, *Dost thou think?* plainly that we might think well with what exceeding apprehension we ought ever to dread the Judgment to come, if

even he, who was commended by the Judge, was not yet in his own words secure of the rewards of the Judgment.

BOOK XIV.

Wherein S. Gregory unfolds the historical, allegorical, and moral sense of the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the Book of Job.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. In a former part of this work we have handled the point, that Almighty God, in order to amend the hearts of those under the law, brought forward the life of blessed Job for a testimony, who knew not the law and yet kept it, who observed the precepts of life, which he had not received in writing. This man's conduct is first extolled by God's bearing witness to it, and is afterwards suffered to be put to the proof by the devil's plotting against it, that he might prove by the trials of tribulation, how much he had attained before in a state of peace. This man's life the adversary of the human race, evil disposed after his manner, both knew to be commended by the attestation of God, and yet asked for to prove it. And when he could not succeed in bringing him to the ground, smitten with so many losses in his substance, so many bereavements, he set on his wife against him in the goading of mispersuasion, that at all events by the words of his own household he might ruin him, whom he could never bring down by so many torments of tidings. But whereas what by woman's aid he won against Adam first in paradise, he could not make good against this second man sitting on a dunghill, he betook himself to other appliances of tempting, that he should bring in his friends as if administering consolation, and yet stir up their feelings in bitterness of upbraiding, that him whose patience scourges had failed to subdue, at least bitter words in the midst of those scourges might succeed in overcoming. But the adversary, while laying his plots with craft, was a victim to the deceit, which he had contrived against the holy man, in that for all the occasions of ruin that he brought upon the holy man,

he supplied him with as many occasions of victory. For against torments he maintained patience, against words, wisdom, in that he at once sustained the pains of stripes with resignation, and restrained the foolishness of ill advisers with wisdom. But whereas in those very sufferings and well-instructed speeches he bears a figure of Holy Church, by his friends, as we have already often said, uttering some things right and some foolish, heretics are not unjustly represented who in respect of this, that they are friends of the holy man, say many things right of the wicked, but in respect of this, that they bear a likeness of heretics, very often transgress in the excesses of the lips, and they smite the breast of the holy man with the darts of their words, but are tired out by their very own smiting against his indomitable spirit. So then it is our business to distinguish with exact discrimination, both what there is in their words that they think aright concerning the lost, and what that they sound that is foolish as directed against blessed Job.

Ver. 1, 2. *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, Unto what end will ye cast abroad words? understand first, and so let us speak.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

2. All heretics think that in some things that are known to her Holy Church is full of pride, while some things they fancy that she does not even understand. Whence Bildad the Shuhite, as it were, asserts that blessed Job had broken out into pride, when he declares [*fatetur* is used thus] that he 'casts abroad words.' But he gives a token with what pride he was himself swoln, who supposed that blessed Job spoke things that he did not understand; and whereas all heretics complain that they are despised by Holy Church in her estimate of them, it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 3. *Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed as vile in your sight?*

3. It is natural to the human mind to suppose that the thing that it does is done to itself. Thus they believe themselves to be despised, who are used to despise the ways of the good; and whereas in such things as are capable of being understood by reason, the Church proves against heretics that what they make up is unreasonable, they imagine themselves to be counted as 'beasts' in her view. On which supposition of their being despised, they directly break out in disdain, and are urged to abuse of that Church. Whence it is added;

Ver. 4. *Why dost thou ruin thy soul in thy fury?*

4. Heretics esteem whether a strong feeling for the rule of right, or the spiritual grace of holy preaching, not as good weight of virtue, but as the madness of fury. By which same fury they believe that 'the souls of the faithful are ruined,' in that they imagine that the life of the Church is destroyed by the very same means whereby they see she is made to kindle against themselves. It goes on;

Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?

5. For they think that they themselves worship God every where, that they themselves have occupied the whole world. What is it then to say, *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?* but what they often say to the faithful, viz. 'that if this thing which you say be true, all the earth is forsaken by God, which we ourselves already occupy from the multitude of us.' Now the holy Church universal proclaims that God cannot be truly worshipped saving within herself, asserting that all they that are without her shall never be saved. But conversely heretics, who are confident that it is possible for them to be saved even without her pale, maintain that the Divine aid is rendered to them in every place. Whence they say; *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?* i.e. 'is it so, that whosoever is out of thee cannot be saved?' Whence it is added further;

And shall the rocks be moved out of their place?

6. Heretics call those persons ‘rocks’ who in their views by the sublimity of their thoughts stand out in the human race, which same they glory that they have for teachers. But when Holy Church addresses herself to the task of gathering together the different erring preachers within the bosom of the right faith, what else is this but that she ‘removes the rocks from their places,’ that having a right view of things, they may lie down in humility within her, who aforetime were standing stiff in their own wrong notions? But heretics altogether make against the doing of this, and withstand the ‘rocks being moved out of their places’ on account of her voice, because they are averse that they, who among themselves, being lifted up in their thoughts, were embued with false doctrine, by coming to her should think what is true in a humble spirit.

7. Now, it very often happens that heretics, when they see any persons within the bosom of Holy Church travailing whether with want or calamities, lift themselves up directly in the presumption of righteousness, and whatsoever they see to have happened of an adverse kind to the faithful, they suppose it is done for their iniquities, not knowing doubtless that the complexion of the present life does not in the least degree prove the worth of men’s conduct. For very often both good things befal the bad, and bad ones befal the good, on the very principle that real goods are reserved for the good, and real ills for the bad, in the season of the eternal recompensing. Thus Bildad bearing a figure of heretics, who lift themselves up on the grounds of this life’s good fortune, swells against the strokes of blessed Job, as if with their voice in opposition to the reproach of the righteous, and expressly he is arguing against the ungodly indeed, but how wickedly he speaks in such terms against a good man, he is not aware. Thus he added, saying,

Ver. 5. *Shall not the light of the wicked be put out, and the flame of his fire cease to shine?*

8. If he says this in describing the present life, he is mistaken; in that very often both the light of prosperity is seen in the ungodly, and the darkness of ignominy and poverty envelopes the godly. But if his discourse points to this, viz. to shew what the ungodly meet with in their end, it is said with truth, *Shall not the light of the wicked be put out, and the flame of his fire cease to shine?* Which if it might have been rightly spoken in regard to an ungodly man, ought never to have been delivered against a holy man set fast in the midst of scourges. But let us, considering well the powers of his arm in delivering sentences, reflect how strongly be hurls the darts, and let us cease to look at him whom, while so hurling them, he aims to hit, knowing surely that he strikes a stone with foiled blows. So let him say; *Shall not the light of the wicked be put out?* For even the ungodly have their 'light,' i.e. the good fortune of the present life. But 'the light of the wicked shall be put out,' in that this present life's good fortune is speedily terminated along with life itself. Whence it is fitly added; *and the flame of his fire shall not shine.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

9. For every ungodly man has a 'flame of his own fire,' which he kindles in his heart from the heat of temporal desires, whilst he burns now with these now with those lusts, and fans his thoughts into a bigger flame by the diverse flatteries of the world. But if a fire has no flame, it does not shine by shedding any light. And so the flame of the fire is his outward beauty or power, which comes from his burning within. For what he anxiously desires to get, he very often wins, to the heaping up of his own ruin; and whether in the power of the loftiest pitch, or in the wealth of multiplied increase, he as it were shines in external glory. But 'the flame of his fire shall not shine,' in that, in the day of his departure hence, all the fair shew without is removed, and he is consumed by his own burning within alone. And 'so the flame' is

removed from the ‘fire,’ when his exterior glory is separated from his interior burning. Even the righteous too have a flame of their fire, but one doubtless to shine bright, in this respect, that their desires give light in good works. But the light of the wicked does not shine in the least, in that hereby, viz. that they aim at what is evil, they are forced to darkness. And hence it follows ;

Ver. 6. *The light shall be dark in his tabernacle.*

10. If we very frequently take darkness for sorrow, we ought without unfairness to take light for joy. And so ‘the light is dark in his tabernacle,’ in that in his conscience, which he inhabits in wickedness, the joy which he had from things temporal is brought to an end. Whence too it is fitly added;

And the candle that is over him shall be put out.

For to speak in language grounded on the usage of many, a ‘candle [*lucerna*]’ is a light in an earthen vessel, but a light in an earthen vessel, is delight in the flesh. And so ‘the candle that is over him is put out,’ in that when the recompensing of his wickednesses comes upon the ungodly man, carnal delight is brought to nought in his heart. Now it is well that it is not said of this candle, ‘which is by him,’ but ‘which is over him,’ in that earthly enjoyments possess the mind of the bad, and so swallow it up in delight, that they are ‘over’ it, and not ‘by’ it. But the righteous even when they have the good fortune of the present life, are taught to force it to bow beneath them, that this, viz. that they are made glad in themselves with good things, they may get above by the counsel of a steadied mind, and surmount by the control of virtue. And so ‘the candle’ of the wicked man, ‘which is over him, is put out,’ in that his joy is quickly brought to an end, which possessed him wholly in this life, and the man, who now wickedly lets himself out at large in pleasures, punishment hereafter closely encompasses round about in woe. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 7 *The steps of his strength shalt be straitened.*

11. For now as it were he puts forth ‘the steps of his strength,’ as often as he executes the violent acts of his power. But ‘the steps of his strength shall be straitened,’ in that the resources of his wickedness, which he now displays in his own gratification, punishment hereafter binds fast. It goes on;

And his own counsel shall cast him down.

12. Every bad man makes it his counsel now to aim at present things, to abandon the things of eternity, to do what is unjust, to sneer at what is just; but when the Judge of the just and unjust shall come, every ungodly person is ‘cast down by his counsel,’ in that for this that he chose to go after here with bad intent, he is drowned in the darkness of eternal woe. For that man whom temporal glory uplifts here, punishment without end there sinks down. He who here revels in self-gratification, is there tortured with everlasting vengeance. And it often happens that the very prosperity of this life, which is so eagerly hankered after by the ungodly, so clogs their steps, that even when they have the mind to return to good works, they are scarcely able: in that they have not the power to do what is right, while they fear to displease the lovers of this world. Whence it is brought to pass, that through that glory which the ungodly man derives from sin, his sins are yet further doubled and redoubled. Which Bildad rightly sets forth, when he adds;

Ver. 8. *For he hath put his own foot into the net, and he walketh in the meshes* [*masculis*] *of it.*

13. He, who ‘puts his feet into a net,’ cannot get them out, when he has a mind; so he that lets himself down, into habits of sin, cannot rise up the moment he wishes it; and he ‘that walketh in the meshes of a net,’ entangles his steps in walking, and when he tries to extricate himself to walk, he is tied and bound that he cannot. ‘For it very often happens that a man, beguiled by the delightfulness of this world, reaches after the gloriousness

of the honour thereof, that he attains to the effecting of his desires, and rejoices to have attained the object which he sought after; but seeing that the good things of this world, when not possessed, are objects of love, and very often, when possessed, grow worthless, he learns by the act of obtaining how worthless that is which he sought after. Whence being brought back to himself, he looks out how without sin to get quit of that which he sees himself to have gotten with sin; but the very same dignity which entangled him, holds him fast, and he cannot without further sins flee from thence, whereunto he came not without sin. And so he has 'put his feet into the net, and walketh in the meshes thereof,' in that when he strives to get quit, he then sees in a true light with what hard knots he is held bound. For we do not even know of our binding in a true sense, save when in striving to get free, we as it were try to lift our feet. And hence he makes known this same binding, by adding,

Ver. 9. *The gin shall take him by the heel;*

in that the end shall be made fast in sin. And because the enemy of mankind, when he binds up in sin the life of each individual, eagerly pants after his death, it is rightly added;

And thirst shall burn furiously against him.

14. For our old enemy, when he ensnares the life in sin, thirsts that he may drink the death of the sinner. Which however may also be understood in another sense. For the evil mind when it sees that it has been brought into sin, seeks with a certain superficialness of thought to escape out of the snares of sin; but fearing either the threats or reproaches of men, it chooses rather to die for ever, than to undergo a little of adversity for a season, whence it abandons itself wholly to evil ways, in which it perceives itself to be already once bound. And so he whose life is bound fast in sin even to the end, has his 'heel held by the gin.' But forasmuch as in the same degree that he minds that he is tied and bound with evil habits, he is in despair of his

return, by that very despairing he henceforth kindles more fiercely to the lusts of this world, the heat of desire arises within him, and the mind having been ensnared by previous sins, is inflamed to even worse transgressions. And hence it is added; *And thirst shall burn furiously against him.* For in his mind there is a 'thirst that burns out against him,' in that in proportion as he is used to do wicked things, he is the more vehemently on fire to drink down evil. Since for the ungodly man to 'thirst' is to lust after the good things of this world. And hence our Redeemer cures the man with the dropsy before the Pharisee's house, and when he was arguing against avarice, it is written, *And the Pharisees also who were covetous heard all things; and they derided Him.* [Luke 16, 14] What does it mean then that the man with the dropsy is cured before the house of the Pharisee, but that by the sickness of one man's body the sickness of heart in another is represented? For one sick of a dropsy, the more he drinks, thirsts the more, and every covetous person redoubles his thirst by drinking, in that when he has got the things he desires, he pants the more in desiring others. For he that by getting is made to long for more, has his thirst increased by drinking. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *His snare is buried in the earth, and his trap upon the way.*

15. His 'snare is buried in the earth,' when sin is hidden under earthly interests. For our enemy in executing his plots shews to the human mind something to long after in earthly gain, and hides the snare of sin, that it may bind his soul tight, so that he should see indeed what he might set his heart on, and yet never see in what a snare of sin he is putting his foot. Now a trap [*decipula*] has its name from entrapping. And 'a trap is' then 'placed' by our old enemy 'upon the way,' when in the course of this world's practice, which the mind is bent to follow, the snare of sin is prepared, which same would not so easily entrap, if it were possible to be seen. For a trap is so set, that, while the meat is displayed, it is not itself seen by the

passers by. For like to meat in a trap is gain with sin, and the prosperity of this world with wickedness; and so when gain is sought after by one with a covetous view, it is as if the trap which is not seen laid hold of the foot of the mind. Thus there are often set before the mind along with sin, honours, riches, health, and temporal life, which, while the weak mind sees like food, and does not see the trap, by the meat, which on seeing it longs after, it is caught fast in the sin, which is not seen. For there are kinds of tempers which border upon certain bad qualities. Thus harsh tempers are usually found to be united either to cruelty or to pride; but tempers that are soft, and joyous beyond what is becoming, are sometimes allied to lust and dissoluteness. Therefore the enemy of mankind surveys the tempers of each individual," to see what bad quality they are allied to, and he sets those objects before the face, which he sees the mind is most readily inclined to, so that to the soft and joyous tempers he often proposes dissoluteness, and sometimes vainglory, but to harsh dispositions he proposes pride or cruelty, and so there he sets a trap, where he sees the path of the mind to be, in that he there introduces peril by deception, where he has found that there is the 'way' of a kindred turn of thought. And, whereas all that the bad man does, he fears to undergo too, and reckons that to be doing by all others toward himself, which he himself prepares for all others, whom he is able, it rightly follows;

Ver. 11. *Terrors shall make him afraid on every side.*

16. For he imagines all men to be such toward himself, as he himself strives to be towards all. And what effect these same terrors have in his conduct, is brought in, when it is said;

And shall entangle his feet.

For if 'the feet be entangled,' they cannot have free steps, and are not able to accomplish any journey; in that their own entanglements hold them fast. Therefore bad desires force into vilest practice, and vilest practice

holds fast in terror; which same terror entangles the feet, that they should have no power to step out into right practice. And it often happens that a person for this reason fears to be good, that he may not himself suffer that at the hands of the wicked, which he remembers himself to have done to the good; and whereas he dreads to undergo that thing which he has himself done, on every side affrighted, on every side full of misgiving, he as it were has his feet entangled, who is ensnared by fear; he is able to do nothing freely; in that he has in a manner lost his going in good practice by the same act, whereby he stepped out of the 1ine into the evil which he set his heart on. It goes on;

Ver. 12. *Let his strength be hungerbitten, and starvation invade his ribs.*

17. After the manner of Holy Scripture, he has the appearance of wishing that which he foresees will be, not surely in the spirit of one uttering curses, but of one pronouncing prophesies. Thus every man, in that he consists of soul and flesh, is as it were made up of strength and weakness. For by virtue of that part, by which he was created a reasoning spirit, he is not improperly called 'strong,' but in respect of that, by which he is of a fleshly substance, he is weak. And so 'the strength' of man is the reasoning soul, which is able to resist by reason the tendencies to evil that assail it. And hence it is said again by blessed Job, *Thou hast strengthened him for a while, that he might pass through for evermore*. [Job 14, 20] Since from a reasoning soul man derives it, that he should live for evermore. And so this wicked man's 'strength is hungerbitten,' in that his soul is not fed by any refreshment of the interior food. Of which same hunger God saith by the Prophet; *I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord. [*Amos 8, 11]

18. And it is well added, *And starvation invade his ribs.* For the ribs lace in the bowels, that lying out of sight within they should be fortified by their solidity. And so the 'ribs' of every one are the senses [*Vide* b. xi. c. 45.

note.] of the mind, which fence the hidden thoughts. Therefore 'starvation invades the ribs,' when all spiritual refreshment being removed, the senses of the mind fail, and cannot either rule or guard their thoughts. 'Starvation invades the ribs' of the wicked man, in that the interior hunger debilitates the senses of the mind, that they may not rule their thoughts at all. For when the senses of the mind are dulled, the thoughts issue forth to things without, and, as it were, the ribs being weak, the bowels which might have lain in secret in a sound state, are poured forth without. Hence it comes that when the thoughts are spread abroad without, the mind being deceived goes after the image of exterior glory, and is pleased with nothing save what it beholds beautiful without; against whom the words yet further subjoined are fitly directed;

Ver. 13. *Let it devour the beauty of his skin; and let the firstborn death consume his arms.*

19. 'The beauty of his skin' is temporal glory, which whereas it is coveted as an object without us, is retained as a beauty on the skin. But by the title of 'arms' works are not unfitly set forth, in that the work of the body is done by the arms. And what is death but sin, which kills the soul to the interior life? Whence it is written; *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection* [Rev. 20, 6], in that he shall hereafter rise again joyfully in the flesh, who whilst set in this life has risen again from the death of his soul. If then sin is death, 'the firstborn death' may not unsuitably be taken for pride; in that it is written, *Pride is the beginning of all sin*. [Ecclus. 10, 13] And so 'the beauty of his skin and his arms the firstborn death devoureth,' in that the glory or the practice of the bad man is overthrown by Pride. For he might have been glorious even in this life without sin, if be had not been proud. He might in the judgment of His Creator have been commended for some works, if before His eyes pride had not overturned those very works. Thus we often see rich people, which

might have had wealth and glory without guilt, if they would have had them with humility. But they are uplifted by possessions, they are flushed with honours, they disdain the rest of the world, and place their life's whole hope and trust in the mere abundance of good things alone. Hence a certain rich man said, *Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry*. [Luke 12, 19] Which thoughts of their hearts when the Judge above beholds, He plucks them away for this very confidence of theirs by itself. Hence in this place too it is fitly added;

Ver. 14. *Let his confidence be rooted out of his tabernacle, and let death as a king trample on him.*

20. In this place by the title of 'death' we have denoted the enemy of the human race himself, who brought in death, who is set forth by a particular minister of his, of whom it is said to John, *And his name was Death*. [Rev. 6, 8] And so this 'death,' in the day of departure hence, 'tramples upon the wicked man as a king,' in that him, whom he before deceived by soft persuasions, at the last he carries off to punishment in bonds of violence, and forces him down the more cruelly, in proportion as he ties him the stronger in bad deeds. And here too while he possesses the heart of the lost sinner, he 'tramples' upon it, in that as often as he pressed it with feelings of delight, he as it were set upon it the feet of his tyrannical dominion.

21. But if by the title of 'death,' we are to understand not the devil explicitly, but sin, in consequence of which the lost meet with the doom to be dragged to death, then indeed such 'death tramples on the mind like a king,' when it possesses the same making no resistance. For temptation to sin cannot be away from man whilst set in this life. But it is one thing to resist sin tempting us, and another to be enthralled by it tyrannizing over us. And so the wicked man, because he is not taught to resist the persuasions of sin, and is not afraid to be subdued to its dominion, has it rightly said of him, *Death as a king shall trample on him.* For it was the reign of this death

that Paul was keeping off from the hearts of his disciples, when he said, *Let not sin there reign in your mortal body.* [Rom. 6, 12] Since be does not say, ‘let it not be,’ but, *let it not reign*, in that it cannot help but be, but *reign* it may not, in the hearts of the good. And so whereas, when a sin strikes the heart of the bad man, it does not find it resist, but bows it under its dominion, let it rightly be said, *Let his confidence be rooted out of his tabernacle, and let death as a king trample on him*. And so ‘his confidence is rooted out of the earth,’ when the man, who in this life had provided for himself many goods after his mind, is brought to nought by death in an instant. And ‘death as a king tramples on him,’ in that he is either pressed upon here by evil habits, or at the time of his death, hereby, viz. that he is carried off to punishment, he is brought under to the power of the devil. Which is thus done in the minds of the wicked on this account; because, even when the opportunity of committing sin is lacking, the suggestions of the desire are not in the least lacking to their minds. And whereas they do always follow the devil in practice, yet do they doubly bind themselves fast to him in thought. And so there is first sin in thought, and afterwards in act. Whence it is said to the daughter of Babylon, *Come down and sit in the dust, O Virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the earth*. [Is. 47, 1] For whereas dust is always earth, earth is not always dust. What then are we to understand by dust but thoughts, which, while they perseveringly and silently fly up in the mind, blind its eyes? And what is denoted by ‘the earth,’ but an earthly way of acting? And whereas the mind of the lost sinner is first cast down to imagine wicked things, and afterwards to do them, to the daughter of Babylon, who came down from the judgment of interior uprightness, it is rightly said in a wounding sentence, that first she should ‘sit in the dust,’ and afterwards ‘in the earth,’ in that except she had lowered herself in thought, she would never have settled fast in bad practice. It goes on;

Let his fellows dwell in his tabernacle, because he is not.

22. i.e. In his mind apostate angels shall have their haunt by vilest thoughts, they being 'his fellows,' who for this reason no longer 'is,' because he has departed from the Supreme Essence, and for this is, by a daily augmented declension, as it were tending 'not to be,' in that he has once fallen from Him Who truly is; who moreover is rightly said 'not to be,' in that he has lost well-being, though he has not lost natural being. Still, yet further setting forth these thoughts of the bad man with more minuteness, he subjoins, saying,

Let brimstone be scattered upon his habitation.

23. What is 'brimstone' but the fuel of fire, which, however, so cherishes the fire, that it sends out the very foulest stench. What then do we understand by 'brimstone,' but carnal sin, which, while it fills the mind with wicked thoughts like a kind of ill savours, is kindling everlasting fires for it; and whilst it spreads the cloud of its stench in the lost soul, it is as it were providing against it fuel for the flames to come after. For that the ill savour of the flesh is understood by brimstone, the mere history of Holy Writ by itself hears record, which relates that the Lord 'rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom.' Who, when He had determined to punish her carnal wickednesses, by the very character of the punishment marked out the stain of her guilt: since 'brimstone' hath stench, and fire burning; and so, forasmuch as they had been kindled to bad desires in the ill savour of the flesh, it was meet that they should perish by fire and brimstone combined; that by their just punishment they might be taught what they had done in unjust desire. And so this 'sulphur is scattered upon the habitation' of the wicked man, as often as the corrupt indulgence of the flesh exercises dominion within him; and whereas bad thoughts unceasingly occupy him, and forbid his bringing forth the fruit of good practice, it is rightly added;

Ver. 16. *Let his roots be dried up beneath, and above let his crop be spoiled.*

24. For what do we understand by the title of 'roots,' which are set out of sight, and bring forth a shoot into open view, but the thoughts, which, while they are not seen in the heart, produce visible works? And hence by the title of a 'crop' there is denoted the same visible practice, which is thus produced from a hidden root. And whereas every bad man first dries up in the imaginings of temptation and afterwards dies off from good deeds, it is rightly said by Bildad, *Let his roots be dried up beneath, and above let his crop be spoiled*, in that, whereas the wicked man sets his thoughts in things below, and neglects to seek the delights of everlasting greenness, what is this but that he lets his 'roots be dried beneath?' Whose 'crop too is spoiled above,' in that all his practice is counted as nothing in the view of the judgment above, even if it seem good in the eyes of man. Thus the 'roots' are at the bottom, and the 'crop' above, in that we first send out good thoughts here, that we may one day deserve to receive the fruit of our good works in eternal recompensing; but every wicked person when he abandons good thoughts, and pours himself forth upon the things that are without, has 'his roots dried up below:' but 'above his crop is spoiled,' in that he, who persists barren here, after this life is bidden to no rewards. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *Let his remembrance perish from the earth, and let not his name be repeated in the streets.*

[PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

25. It is deserving of our notice, that Bildad the Shuhite so expresses himself of each one of the wicked, that his words are secretly directed against the head of all the wicked; for the head of the wicked is the devil. And he in his own person having in the last times entered into that vessel of perdition, shall be called 'Antichrist,' who will endeavour to spread his

name far and wide, which same every individual now likens himself to, when, by the memorial of an earthly name, be strives to extend the gloriousness of his praise, and exults in transitory reputation. Therefore let these words be so understood of each one of the wicked, that they be referred in a particular manner to the head of the wicked himself. Therefore let him say, *Let his remembrance perish from the earth, and let not his name be repeated in the streets*. For streets [*platea* from platuv 'broad'] are called by a Greek term from width, and so Antichrist aims to settle the remembrance of himself upon earth, when he longs, if it were possible, to remain for ever in temporal glory He delights to have 'his name celebrated in the street,' whilst he spreads the working of his wickedness far and wide. But whereas this wickedness of his is not permitted to be reared to a height for a long time, let it be said, *Let his remembrance perish from the earth, and let not his name be repeated in the street*; i.e. that he should both quickly part with the fame of his earthly power, and lose all the pleasures of his name, which he had spread far and wide in the shortlived prosperity of time. It goes on;

Ver. 18. *He shall drive him from light into darkness.*

26. He is led 'from light to darkness,' when for honour in the present life, he is condemned to eternal punishments. And hence it is more plainly added,

And translate him out of the world.

For he is 'translated out of the world,' when upon the Judge above appearing, he is taken away from this world, in which he wickedly glories; and for this, that when the end of the world breaks in upon him, he is condemned with all his followers, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 9. *There shall neither be seed of him, nor offspring in his people, nor any remnant in his parts.*

For it is written*, that the Lord Jesus shall consume him, with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of His coming*. [2 Thess. 2, 8] And so, then, whereas his wickedness is ended together with the settled constitution of the world, there shall be 'no offspring of him left in his people,' in that both he himself and his people along with him are equally forced to punishment; and all the wicked, who by his evil advising were born in bad courses, by the brightness of the Lord's coming are struck with eternal destruction together with that head of theirs. And there is 'no offspring of him remaining in the world,' in that the strict Judge ends the iniquities of that one simultaneously with the end of the world. Now that these words are to be understood expressly of Antichrist is shewn, when it is added;

Ver. 20. *In his days the last shall be astonied, and horror shall seize on the first.*

27. For he will then let himself loose against the righteous with such a measure of iniquity, that even the hearts of the very Elect shall be struck with no small consternation. Whence it is written, *Insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very Elect*. [Mat. 24, 24] Which, clearly, is said, not because the Elect shall fall, but because they shall tremble with terrible alarms. Now at that time both the latest Elect and the first Elect are described as maintaining the conflict for righteousness against him, in that both they that shall be found among the Elect at the end of the world, are destined to be laid low in the death of the flesh, and they too who proceeded from the former divisions of the world, i.e. Enoch and Elijah, shall be brought back amongst men, and shall be exposed to the savageness of his cruelty still in their mortal flesh. This one's forces let loose in such terrible power, 'the latest are astonied at, and the first do dread,' in that, though in respect of this, viz. that he is lifted up by a spirit of pride, they despise all his temporal power, yet in respect of this, that they are themselves still in

mortal flesh, wherein they are liable to suffer temporal anguish, they dread the very punishments, which they bear with resolution; so that there is in them at one and the same time both constancy derived from virtue, and alarm proceeding from the flesh; in that though they be of the number of the Elect, so that they cannot be overcome by torments, yet from this only that they are men, they fear the very torments, that they overcome. So let it be said, *In his days the last shall be astonied, and terror shall seize on the first*. In that he shall then shew forth such signs, and do things so cruel and hard hearted, as to force them to astonishment, whom he shall find at the end of the world, and to pierce with the pang of carnal death the first fathers, who are reserved for his extirpation. Therefore whereas he has described many particulars relating to all the wicked, or to the head of the wicked himself, he immediately adds with a general description,

Ver. 21. *Surely, such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

28. For he had said above; He shall drive him from fight into darkness, and translate him out of the world; and upon subjoining his miseries, he added; *Surely, such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God*. In that he who is now lifted up from not knowing God, is then brought to his own 'dwellings,' when his own wickedness plunges him into woes; and one day he finds 'darkness his place,' who, while he made himself glad here in the counterfeit light of righteousness, was occupying the place of another. For bad men in all that they do in dissimulation, are striving to possess themselves of the righteous man's name of credit, as of another's place. But they are then brought to their own place, when they are tormented with everlasting fire, as the desert of their iniquity. For here in all that they do they are ministering to their desire of winning praise, and by

the semblance of good works, they are opening wider the bosom of the mind to avarice. So let the wicked man go now, and full blown with complete equipments, let him build his habitations here below, let him spread a name of glory, let him multiply estates, and delight himself in abundant stores, but when he shall be brought to everlasting punishments, then surely he shall know that 'such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.' Now Bildad said this rightly, but he did not know who it was that he was saying it to. But the heart of a good man is seriously afflicted, when sentences are pronounced against him upon an unfair estimate. Whence blessed Job directly answered, saying;

How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

29. The sayings of the holy man, as we have already often said, are to be understood as spoken sometimes in his own person, sometimes in the voice of the Head, and sometimes in a figure of the Church Universal. Now the soul of the righteous is deeply distressed, when those persons launch severe sentences against the good, who have not learned to lead good lives, and by the words of the mouth claim righteousness to themselves, to which in practice they are enemies. Whence to the friends of blessed Job, who, as we have already often said, bear a type of heretics, himself rightly answers, *How long will ye vex my soul, and wear me with words?* For good men are 'worn' with the words of the wicked, when those swell out against them in words of the lips, who lie low either in a corrupt faith, or in bad habits. It goes on;

Lo, these ten times ye confound me.

30. On enumerating the successive times of the speeches of Job's friends, we learn that as yet they had spoken but five times. But for this reason, that he had five times heard rebukes from them, and five times himself replied

to their rebukes, he says that he had been ten times confounded; because both herein, viz. that he had been causelessly reproached, he suffered deeply, and in this, that he uttered words of instruction to those that gave no ear, he underwent confusion. And so, while in hearing he held his peace, and in speaking was not heard, that person had trouble put upon him, who both in holding his peace submissively, and in speaking to them fruitlessly, experienced pain within his heart; and hence he says above, What shall I do? If I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, it will not depart from me.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But if we make these words refer to a type of Holy Church, it is well known that it is her great delight to keep the precepts of the Ten Commandments; and the wicked 'confound her ten times,' in that by all that they do wrong in their wicked principles, they forsake the precepts of the Ten Commandments, and cause confusion to the good as often as they set themselves against the words of God in their doings, It goes on;

And ye are not ashamed that ye oppress me.

31. There are some persons, whom bad principle suddenly springing up invites to the commission of wickedness, yet respect for their fellow-creatures recalls again. And very often from this, viz. that they are made ashamed outwardly, they are brought back into their own interior heart, and pass an inward judgment upon themselves; in that if they are afraid to do what is evil on man's account, how much more ought they not even to have longed after what is evil, on God's account, Who sees all things? And in the case of these persons it is brought to pass, that they correct greater evil by inferior good, i.e. interior sin by exterior shame. Again, there are some, who, when once they have brought themselves to contemn God in their hearts, despise the judgments of their fellow-creatures much more, and all

the evil that they long after, they do not blush to execute boldly, which persons secret wickedness invites to the commission of sin, and outward shame holds not back; as it is said also of a certain wicked judge, *Which feared not God, neither regarded man*. [Luke 18, 2] Hence too it is said of certain persons sinning with shameless effrontery; *And they have declared their sin as Sodom*. [Is. 3, 9] Thus very often there are such persons enemies of Holy Church, persons who are not withheld from committing wicked things, either by the fear of God, or regard of man; and it is well said to these by blessed Job, *And ye are not ashamed that ye oppress me*; seeing that though it was wrong to have wished bad things, it is worse not to be ashamed of things wrongly desired. It goes on;

Ver. 4. *And be it indeed that I have been ignorant, my ignorance remaineth with myself.*

32. Heretics have this about them, that they are swoln by the empty pretensions of their knowledge, and often turn to ridicule the simplicity of those that believe rightly, and account the life of the humble to be of no worth. On the other hand Holy Church, in all that she has really wise in her, keeps low the level of her view in humility, that she be not puffed up by knowledge, nor be made to swell high on the seeking out of things hidden, and venture to dive into points, that are above her powers. For with more profit to herself she is anxious not to know things she is unable to fathom, rather than boldly to define things she does not know. As it is written; *It is not good to eat much honey*: *so he that is a searcher of majesty, shall be overwhelmed by glory.* [Prov. 25, 27] For if the sweetness of honey be taken in greater measure than there is occasion for, from the same source whence the palate is gratified, the life of the eater is destroyed, The 'searching into majesty' is also sweet; but he, that seeks to dive into it deeper than the cognizance of human nature admits, finds the mere gloriousness thereof by itself oppress him, in that, like honey takes in excess, it bursts the sense of

the searcher which is not capable of holding it. Now that is said to be ‘with’ us, which is for us; and on the other hand that is said not to be with us, that is against us; and so, because his own knowledge puffs out the heart of the heretic, while his perception of his own ignorance abases the faithful, let blessed Job say in his own voice, let him say also in the confession of the Church Universal, *And be it indeed that I have been ignorant, my ignorance shall be with me*. As if it were said in express words to Heretics; ‘All your knowledge is not with you, since it is against you, so long as it uplifts you in foolish pride; but my ignorance is with me, because it is for me; since, whereas I do not dare to search into any thing relating to God in pride of heart, I keep myself in the truth in a spirit of humility.’ And because these very same things that heretics seek to know, they apply perforce to the furtherance of self-elation only, that they may seem learned in contrast to the faithful and humble, it is rightly added;

But ye are set up against me.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

33. But perhaps we shall consider these words more thoroughly, if we point out how they apply to the friends of blessed Job personally in a special sense. For they, when they saw the righteous man smitten, ought to have turned back into their own deepest interior, and not to have persecuted blessed Job with words of upbraiding, but to have bewailed their own case; seeing that, if he was so stricken, who served as he did, with what vengeance did they deserve to be smitten, who had not served like him? And it is rightly said to them, *Ye are set up against me*; as if it were said to them in plainer terms; ‘Ye who ought by occasion of my being smitten to have been set up against your own selves,’ this being the order of such setting up on the side of goodness, viz. that we be first set up against ourselves, and afterwards against the wicked. For he that is set up against

the good, is blown out in pride. Thus we are set up against ourselves, when, reviewing our own evil deeds, we smite ourselves with the severe avenging of penance, when we do not spare ourselves at all in our sins, and are not biassed by any fond thoughts towards ourselves, who, if we first rigidly follow up our evil things in ourselves, it is likewise fair, that we should be set up against the evil in others too for their good, and that the evil which we punish in ourselves, we should subdue in others too, by charging it home to them.

34. But this sort of setting up the wicked know nothing of, because they leave themselves, and attack the good; they incline themselves towards themselves, in their secret heart, by the softness of fond flattering, and they are set up against the lives of good men by the severity of harshness, whence it is now rightly said to the friends of blessed Job swelling against him under his scourge, *Ye are set up against me*: i.e. 'Your own selves, that deserve to be rebuked, ye leave, and me ye rebuke with severe sentences.' For he that does not judge himself first, is ignorant what to judge right in another; and if perchance he did know by the hearing what to judge right, yet he is not able to judge rightly the merits of another, who has no rule of judging supplied him by the consciousness of his own innocence. Hence it is that it is said to certain persons dealing deceitfully, when they brought an adulteress to receive punishment; *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her*. [John 8, 7] For they went for the punishing of others' sins, and they had left their own behind; and so they are called back to their conscience within them, that they should first correct their own faults, and then reprove those of others. It is hence that, when the tribe of Benjamin was deep sunk in the guilt of carnal sin, all Israel banded together would have avenged that wickedness, yet was once and again itself smitten down in the conflict of war; but on the Lord being consulted whether they should go to take vengeance, it was commanded them. [Judges 20] The

People, that went according to the bidding of God’s voice, fell both once and again, and then at length effectually smiting the sinning tribe, almost wholly extirpated it. How is it that it is first kindled to the revenge of sin, and yet afterwards itself brought down; but that those are to be chastised first themselves, by whose means the sins of others are chastised; that they may themselves now come cleansed through vengeance, who are forward to chastise the evil of others? Whence it follows that when the vengeance of God’s inquest is at rest towards us, our own conscience should reprove its own self, and by its own act lift itself up against self, to sorrows of penance, neither being set up towards the good, and humble towards itself, but unbending towards itself, and bowed low towards all the good. Thus to proud men administering reproof, it is rightly said; *Ye are set up against me, and ye charge me with my reproaches*. All persons that are set up, account temporal afflictions to be a grievous reproach, and they think every individual to be the more despised by God, in proportion as they see him scourged with the rod of affliction. For they look for nothing in principles, they look for nothing in practices; but whomsoever they see to be stricken in this life, they imagine to be already condemned by God’s sentence; whence it is well said on this occasion by the voice of blessed Job;

And ye charge me with my reproaches.

35. In that they, who knew him to be righteous before his strokes, were now judging him to be unrighteous by the mere fact of his being stricken, and hence it very often happens that Heretics, because they see persons within the bosom of Holy Church suffering affliction; (for it is written of God, *And scourgeth every son whom He receiveth* [Heb. 12, 6];) fancy that the sorrows of the faithful arise from nothing but sin, and themselves they for this reason conclude to be righteous, because being left in the thoughts of their evil ways, lacking the rod, they have become hardened. It proceeds;

Ver. 6. *Know now at least that God hath afflicted me with no just judgment.*

36. O, how hard does the voice of the righteous man sound, suffering under the infliction of the rod! Which same, however, not pride, but grief gave vent to! Now he is not righteous, who gives up righteousness under sorrow; and blessed Job, because he had a meek spirit, did not sin even by a hard word. For, if we say that he did err by this voice, we make out that the devil accomplished what he purposed, when he said, *Touch his bone and his flesh, and see if he have not blessed Thee to Thy face*. [Job 2, 5] Therefore a serious question arises; for if he did not sin in that he says, *Know now at least that God has not afflicted me with a just judgment*; we agree to God's having done something unjustly, which it is profane to say; but if he did sin, then the devil made appear concerning him the thing that he promised. And so it must be asserted both that God acted rightly in His dealings with blessed Job, and yet that blessed Job herein, viz. that he says that he 'was not afflicted by a just judgment of God,' did not speak an untruth, and that our old enemy in respect of that which he promised of sin in the blessed man did speak an untruth. For sometimes the words of the good are for this reason supposed wrong, because they are not ever considered in their interior signification. Thus blessed Job had turned his eyes to his own life, and he estimated the strokes which he was undergoing, and saw that it was not just that upon such a life such strokes should be dealt. And when he says that he was not afflicted by a just judgment, he spoke that with unreserved voice, which God in His own secresy had said concerning him to his adversary, *thou movedst Me against him, to afflict him without cause* [v. 3]. For what God expresses, that He 'had afflicted blessed Job without cause,' this blessed Job asserts again in the words that he was not 'afflicted of the Lord by a just judgment?' Wherein then did he sin, who was in nothing at odds with the sentence of his Maker?

37. But perhaps some one will say, that for us to speak that good concerning ourselves, which the Judge may have said in secret concerning us, cannot be done without sin. For he whom the Judge praises, it cannot be doubted, is justly praiseworthy; but if he in his own person praises himself, his righteousness is henceforth supposed to be no longer deserving of praise; and this is said rightly, if what the just Judge delivers in impartial sentence, the person in question should venture to say afterwards concerning himself in pride of heart. For if he himself too continuing in a humble frame, when the occasion or his grief brings it out, has uttered good that is true in his own praise, he has not departed from the line of righteousness, in so far as he was not at all at variance with truth.

38. Whence Paul the Apostle also related many brave things of himself for the edification of his disciples, but he did not commit sin by relating these things, in that both by an undeniable attestation, and a humble mind, he did not depart from the pathway of truth; and so let blessed Job, conscious of his own life being just, say that he is not afflicted by a just judgment; neither yet does he sin by that voice, wherein he is not at variance with His Maker, in that he whom God 'smote without cause,' himself also asserts that he was not 'afflicted by a just judgment.' But again there arises another question, which I remember has been already solved in the beginning of this work, viz. whereas Almighty God does nothing without cause, why does He bear witness that He had afflicted blessed Job without cause? For our just Creator by those many strokes inflicted upon blessed Job did not aim to do away with evil qualities in him, but to increase his merits; and so that was just, which He did in the heightening of his good deserts; but it did not seem equitable, because it was thought to be the punishing of instances of sin. Now blessed Job believed that sins of his doing were obliterated by those scourges, not that his merits were added to, and therefore he calls it 'not a just judgment,' because he tests his life side

by side with the scourges: thus, if the life and the scourges be weighed in the scales, that was not equal dealing, which blessed Job, as I have said, supposed to be done to him in the wrathfulness of severity; but if the mercifulness of the Judge be looked to, seeing that by the punishment of the just man the merits of his life are heightened, it was an equal or rather a merciful judgment: therefore at once Job spoke what was true, so long as he balanced his life with the stroke; and God did not afflict Job with an unjust judgment, in that he heightened his merits by the stroke; and the devil did not achieve what he promised; seeing that blessed Job, amidst words which sound hard, was neither removed from a true sentence nor a humble mind. But perhaps we shall understand these words of blessed Job less well, if we are not acquainted with the sentence of the Judge; Who, when He was delivering sentence between the two parties, says to the friends of Job; *Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath*. [Job 42, 7] Who then is there so foolish [ABCD 'tam.'] in mind as to own that blessed Job had been guilty in his way of speaking, when he is declared to have spoken rightly by the very voice of the Judge itself? Which same voice, indeed, if we refer to the person of Holy Church, we not unsuitably apply it to her weak members, which while, in the season of her persecution, they weigh both her merits and her scourges, forasmuch as they see that the unjust thrive, and the just perish, have no notion that this is just. Now it is well added by the voice of the blessed man,

And compassed me with his scourges.

39. For it is one thing to be smitten, and another thing to be 'compassed with scourges.' Thus, we are smitten with scourges, when even in our sorrows we have a consolation derived from other sources; for when affliction lies so heavy on us that the spirit can no longer take breath by consolation from anyone thing; we are now no longer smitten only, but even 'compassed with scourges,' in that we are every way surrounded by the rod

of affliction. Thus Paul had been compassed with scourges, when he said, *Without were fightings, within were fears*. [2 Cor. 7, 5] He had been compassed with scourges, when he said, *In perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness* [2 Cor. 11, 26], with the other particulars, which he so enumerates, as to shew that he no where had rest. But when Holy Church is 'compassed with the scourges' of her tribulation, all the weak in her are brought down in the fall of littleness of mind, so that they now suppose themselves disregarded, in proportion as they see that they are the more slowly heard with effect. And it is rightly added yet further likewise in a figure of them by the voice of the holy man,

Ver. 7. *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no one to Judge.*

40. Almighty God, knowing what has in it efficacy to prove our good, shuts His ears to hear the voice of persons mourning, that He may add to their advantage, that their life may be purified by punishment, that the tranquillity of rest which can no where be found here, may be sought for elsewhere. But there are some of the faithful even that know nothing of this grace of Providential ordering, in whose person too it is now said; *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no one to judge*; for it is said, 'there is no one to judge,' when He veils His eyes to judge, in that beside Him 'there is not any to judge' our cause against our adversary. Nor yet is this very thing void of judgment, viz. that judgment is delayed; seeing that at the very time that blessed Job said this, both the merits of the holy man and the punishment of his adversary were increased: so then this very deferring of judgment is the act of a judge. But what God settles justly within is one thing, and what the soul bruised by scourges without seeks after is another. Whence he still further adds of that sinking under scourges,

Ver. 8. *He hath fenced up my way, that I cannot pass: and He hath set darkness in my paths.*

41. He saw his 'way fenced up' with strokes, when anxiously desiring to pass into a state of security, he was not able to escape the scourges, and whereas he saw himself smitten, and yet did not find in himself a life worthy of such smiting, as it were 'in the paths' of the heart he met with 'the darkness' of his own ignorance, in that he could not fathom the cause wherefore he was so scourged. And this is not unfitly applied to the weak members of Holy Church too, when from this which they remember to have done wickedly, they are made backward in good practice as well, and, frightened by their own weakness, do not venture to attempt strong acts of goodness to match them. For they fear to begin great acts of goodness, who call to mind that they are infirm in their ways; and whereas they very often do not know the very good, which they should choose, they, as it were, shrink from the 'darkness placed in their paths.' For the mind often becomes so doubtful of its own doings, as not to know at all which is the virtue and which the fault. Thus he 'finds darkness in his path,' who in those things which he desires to do, is ignorant what he ought to choose. Therefore seeing that there is sin often from infirmity, and sometimes from ignorance, it is said in the person of the members that go weakly, *He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass*. While in the person of those who see not clear as to the very good work itself which they should choose, it is added; *and He hath set darkness in my paths*. For it is punishment of sin, to see the good which we ought to do, and yet not to have the power to fulfil it; and again it is in still worse punishment of sin, not even to see what we ought to do; and hence against both of these it is said by the voice of the Psalmist, *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom then shall I fear?* [Ps. 27, 1] For against the darkness of ignorance the Lord is a 'Light;' against weakness 'Salvation,' whilst He both shews what ought to be

desired for the doing it, and supplies the powers, that what He shews may be fulfilled. It goes on;

Ver. 9. *He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

42. That all this suits the person of the blessed man set in the midst of tribulation, there can be no doubt; but, since the words of the historical account are plain, they do not require explaining after the letter, therefore they have to be traced out in their mystical senses. Thus he says, *He hath stripped me of my glory*. For the glory of each individual is his righteousness. Now just as a garment protects from the cold, so does righteousness defend from death; hence righteousness is not improperly likened to a garment, where it is said by the Prophet; *Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness*. [Ps. 132, 9] But seeing that in the season of her tribulation this garment of righteousness, which covers her in the sight of God, is lost to Holy Church in her members that go weakly, let it be rightly said; *He hath stripped me of my glory*, i.e. righteousness has been taken away from the weak, whereas it could never possibly have been taken away from them, if it had been infixed in them from the ground of the heart, but for this reason it was possible to be taken away from them, because it was attached to them outwardly, like a garment. Wherein the question offers itself, how they could be called members of Holy Church, who were capable of losing the righteousness which they seemed to maintain. But it is necessary for us to know, that very often righteousness is lost for a while by her weakly members, but when they are afterwards brought back to penitence in the acknowledgment of their fault, they attach themselves to that very righteousness which they had lost more strongly than was supposed credible. And it is yet further added thereby, *and taken the crown*

from my head. As the head is the first part of the body, so the leading part of the interior man is the mind. Now the crown is the reward of victory, which is set from Above, in order that he that has contended should be rewarded; and so because many persons, under the pressure of adversities, do not hold out in the contest, in these Holy Church as it were 'loses a crown from her head:' for 'a crown on the head' is the reward from Above in the mind; there are a great many who whilst they are pressed with adversities, neglect to take thought of the rewards above, and cannot reach to the completion of victory; in such, then, 'the crown is taken from the head,' in that the heavenly and spiritual reward is taken away from the aim of the mind, that they should henceforth go after the externally peaceful, nor look out for the eternal rewards, which they used to have at heart.

43. Or otherwise, 'the head' of the faithful is not inappropriately taken to mean the priests, in that they are the first part of the Lord's members; and hence it is expressed by the Prophet, that 'the head and the tail' are rooted out, in which same place both by the title of the 'head' we have the priests denoted, and by the designation of the 'tail' the reprobate prophet. Therefore 'the crown is taken from the head,' when even they abandon the heavenly rewards, who seemed to have the lead in this body of the Church; and it generally happens that, when the leaders fall, the army, that followed, is the wider worsted; and hence directly after the ills to the greater ones, going on about the manifold undoing of the Church, he added;

Ver. 10. *He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone; and He hath removed mine hope like as with a tree torn away.*

44. The Church is, as it were, 'destroyed on every side,' and undone in her weak members, when those very ones that seemed strong, are brought to ruin; when 'the crown is taken away from the head,' i.e. when the rewards of eternity are neglected even by those set at the head; and it is well added concerning weak ones falling, *And mine hope hath He removed like as with*

a tree torn away; for a tree is pushed by the wind that it falls, and with him whom threats so terrify, as to make him go headlong into unrighteousness, what else is it, but that a tree met with a blast of the wind, and lost the standing of its uprightness? For he has, as it were, lost hope by the wind, who, subdued by the threats and persuasions of the wicked, has parted with those eternal rewards, which he looked forward to; and because it very often happens that a person, from fear of punishment, gives over righteousness, it is brought to pass by God's decreeing it, that even in giving up righteousness he does not get quit of the punishments, which he was afraid of, and that he who did not fear at all the destruction of the soul, meets even with the ills of the flesh, which he apprehended. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 11. *He hath also kindled His wrath against me, and He counteth me unto Him as one of His enemies.*

45. For we have, been taught by the excellent Preacher attesting it, that 'God is faithful, Who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.' [1 Cor. 10, 13] Moreover the Lord says by the Prophet, *For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel chastisement*. [Jer. 30, 14] He then that is so stricken that his powers are overcome by that striking, the Lord no longer now smites him as a son in the course of discipline, but as an enemy in indignation. Thus when the strokes exceed the power of our patience, it is very much to be feared, lest, our sins demanding it, we are now no longer stricken as sons by a Father, but as enemies by the Lord; and whereas it very often comes to pass that evil spirits too press home many things to the hearts of the afflicted, and amidst the scourges which strike them outwardly, infuse bad thoughts into their hearts, after the wrath of the Lord it is rightly added;

Ver. 12. *His robbers come together, and make themselves a way through me.*

46. For ‘his robbers’ are evil spirits, who busy themselves in hunting out the deaths of men; and these ‘make themselves a way’ in the hearts of the afflicted, when, amidst the adversities that are undergone outwardly, they do not cease to infuse bad thoughts likewise; of whom it is yet further added;

And encamp round about my tabernacle.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

For they ‘encamp round about our tabernacle,’ when they encircle the mind on every side with their temptings; which by most wicked prompting they persuade one while to mourn for things temporal, at another time to despair of things eternal, now to go headlong into impatience, and to cast words of blasphemy against God. Yet these words, as we have already said before, agree with blessed Job even taken historically; who, whilst he heaped before his eyes the ills he was enduring, judged himself to be not like a son that must be corrected, but as an enemy stricken with affliction. Through whom even ‘His robbers made themselves a way,’ in that the evil spirits obtained against him the leave to smite. ‘Round about whose tabernacle they encamped,’ in that after his substance and his children were taken away, they bruised his whole body too with wounds. But it is very extraordinary, why, when he spoke of the ‘robbers,’ he added *His*, clearly with a view to shew that these same robbers belonged to God; on which point, if we make a distinction between the power and the will of evil spirits, it is made evident, why they are called ‘God’s robbers;’ for evil spirits incessantly pant to do us mischief; but while they have a bad will derived from themselves, they have not the power of doing mischief, except the Supreme Will vouchsafes them permission; and while of themselves indeed they long to hurt us unjustly, yet by Almighty God they are not

suffered to hurt anyone saving justly; and so whereas the will is unjust in them and the power just, they are at once called ‘robbers,’ and ‘God’s robbers,’ that it should come from themselves, that they aim to bring down evil things unjustly, and from God that the things so desired they do not consummate saving justly; but because, as we have often said already, the holy man set in the midst of the pain of punishment, one while speaks in his own accents, at another time in the accents of the Church, at another time of our Redeemer, and very frequently so describes his own circumstances, that in a figure he delivers those that belong to the Holy Church and to our Redeemer, concern for historical fact being for a little space put aside, let us shew in these things, which he subjoins, how he accords with the accents of our Redeemer, It goes on;

Ver. 13, 14. *He hath put my brethren far from me; and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk, have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

47. We shall shew this the better, if we bring forward the testimony of John, who says, *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not* [John 1, 11]; for His ‘brethren were put far from Him,’ and His ‘acquaintance were estranged’ from Him, Whom the Hebrews that held the Law were taught to prophesy, and never knew to acknowledge when present; whence it is rightly said: *My kinsfolk have failed me, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.* For the Jews; ‘kinsfolk’ in the flesh, ‘acquaintance’ by the teaching of the Law, as it were forgot Him, Whom they had foretold, in that Him they both sung of in the words of the Law, as destined to be made Incarnate, and when made Incarnate denied Him by the words of unbelief. It proceeds;

Ver. 15. *They that dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger.*

48. The inmates of God's house were the Priests, whose race [*origo*] once set apart in the service of God, was henceforth by office continued in that state. But the 'maids' are not improperly taken for the souls of the Levites, servants to the hidden parts of the tabernacle as it were by a more familiar service to the interior of the bedchamber. Therefore let him say of the Priests, serving with sedulous care, let him say of the Levites attending on the interior of the house of God. *They that dwell in my house, and my maids, have counted me for a stranger*; in that the Incarnate Lord, Whom they had for long foretold in the words of the Law, they refused to acknowledge and to reverence. And he yet more plainly shews that He was not known by their wicked will, when he adds;

And I was as it were an alien in their sight.

49. For our Redeemer whereas He was not recognised by the Synagogue, was rendered 'as it were an alien' in His own house, Which the Prophet plainly witnesses, saying, *Wherefore shalt thou be as a settler in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry?* [Jer. 14, 8] For whereas He was not heard as the Lord, He was taken not as the owner but for 'a settler of the land;' and He only 'turned aside to tarry as a wayfaring man,' in that He carried off but few out of Judaea, and going on to the calling of the Gentiles finished the journey He had begun; and so 'He was an alien' in their sight, in that while they thought only of the things they could see, they were unable to perceive in the Lord the things they could not see; for whilst they contemn the flesh that was to be seen, they never reached to the unseen Majesty; therefore let it be rightly said; *And I was as it were an alien in their sight*. Concerning which people it is yet further fitly added;

Ver. 16. *I called my servant, and he gave me no answer.*

50. For what was the Jewish people but a ‘servant,’ which never obeyed the Lord with the love of a son, but the fear of a slave? Contrariwise it is said to us by Paul, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.* [Rom. 8, 15] And so this ‘servant’ the Lord ‘called,’ in that by benefits vouchsafed, as by voices given out, He strove to bring it to Himself; but it ‘answered not,’ in that it was indifferent to render back deeds corresponding to His gifts. For God ‘calls’ us, when He presents us with His gifts; and we ‘answer’ to this calling, when we serve Him worthily according to the benefits we have been vouchsafed; therefore because He prevented the people with so many benefits, let him say, *I called my servant*, and because even after such numberless benefits, it contemned Him, let him add; *and he gave me no answer*. It goes on;

I entreated him with my own mouth.

51. As though he said more plainly; ‘I, the Same that before My Incarnation had given it in charge so many precepts to be practised, by the mouths of the Prophets, coming to it Incarnate, entreated it with my own mouth.’ And hence Matthew, when he was telling of precepts being delivered by Him on the Mount, says, *And He opened His mouth, and taught*. [Matt. 5, 2] As if he said in plain speech; ‘Then He opened His own mouth, Who before had opened the mouths of the Prophets;’ it is hence too that it is said of Him by the Spouse longing for His presence, *Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth* [Cant. 1, 2]; since for all the precepts which she learnt by His preaching, Holy Church, as it were, received so many ‘kisses of his mouth.’ Now it is well said, I entreated; in that being exhibited in the flesh, whilst He spoke the precepts of life with humility, He, as it were, besought His servant filled with pride that he would come; and hence it is fitly added;

My wife shuddered at my breath.

52. What does the ‘wife’ of the Lord mean save the Synagogue, subject to Him in the Covenant of the Law with a carnal perception? Now the breath is from the flesh, and the unbelieving people understood the incarnation of the Lord in a carnal manner; in that it took Him for mere man; and so His ‘wife shuddered at His breath,’ in that the Synagogue was afraid to take Him for God, Whom it saw to be man; and when it heard the words from His mouth by bodily utterance, it refused to perceive in Him the mysteries of the Divine Nature, and would not believe Him to be Creator, Whom it saw to be created; and so the carnal ‘wife shuddered at the breath’ of the carnal body, in that being given over to carnal senses, it did not take knowledge of the mystery of the Incarnation. It goes on;

I entreated the children of mine own womb.

53. In God, Who is not circumscribed by the figure of a body, the members of the body, i.e. the hand, the eye, the womb, are named in such a way, that by the designation of the members, the effects of His Power are represented. As He is said to have eyes, in that He sees all things; He is described as having hands, in that He works all things. Now in the womb the offspring is conceived, which is brought forth in this life; what then are we to take the ‘womb’ of God for, but His counsel, wherein before time we were conceived by predestination, that being created in time we might be brought into the world? And so God, Who abides before time, ‘besought the children of His womb;’ in that those, whom He created with power by His Divine nature, coming Incarnate He besought with humility; but because in that same flesh, wherein He appeared, He was contemned in their estimation, it is subjoined;

Ver. 18. *The foolish too despised me.*

54. The wise falling away from faith in the truth, there is an addition rightly made concerning ‘fools’ as well; in that when the Pharisees and the Lawyers despised the Lord, the rabble of the people too followed the

example of their incredulousness, which herein, that it saw Him a man, slighted the announcements of the Redeemer of the world. For often by the title of fools, are denoted those who are poor among the common people; whence too it is said by Jeremiah, *Therefore I said, perchance these are poor, and foolish ones, that know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God*. [Jer. 5, 4] But leaving the rich and wise of the world, our Redeemer came to seek the poor and foolish, whence it is now said, as if for the heightening of grief, *The foolish despised me*. As if it were expressed in plain speech; 'Even those very persons despised Me, for whose healing I took to Me the foolishness of preaching.' As it is written, *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*. [1 Cor. 1, 21] For the 'Word' is 'the Wisdom of God,' but 'the foolishness' of this 'Wisdom,' the Flesh of the Word is called; that whereas the carnal severally could not by craft of the flesh attain to the wisdom of God, by the foolishness of preaching, i.e. by the incarnation of the Word, they might be healed. Therefore he says, *The foolish too despised me*. As if it were expressed in plain words; 'Even by those very persons I was despised, for whose sake I was not afraid to be counted foolish.' And whereas the Jewish multitude, when it saw the miracles of our Redeemer, honoured Him for His miracles, saying, *This is the Christ* [John 7, 41. 12.]; but when it beheld the infirmities of His human nature, it disdained to account Him the Creator, saying, *Nay, but He deceiveth the people*; it is rightly subjoined;

And when I departed from them, they spake against me.

55. For the Lord as it were drew near to the hearts of people, when He displayed miracles to them; and He as it were 'departed from them,' when He shewed them no signs; but they spake against the Lord so 'departing,' when they refused to yield their faith to Him thus resting from miracles; but what wonder that He met with such treatment from the common folk, when

those very persons, who appeared to be teachers of the Law, who gave it out that He was to be made Incarnate in the words of Prophecy, both beheld Him made Incarnate, and yet were parted from Him by the disjoining of unbelief? Concerning whom it is added;

Ver. 19. *They that were once my counsellors abhorred me, and he whom I loved most turned away from me.*

56. It is plain to all people, that God does not stand in need of counsellors, Who to man's very counsellors themselves too vouchsafes the counsel of wisdom. Of whom moreover it is written, *Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?* [Hom. xi. 34. from Is. 40, 13] but as when bread or clothing is bestowed on one that lacks them, the Lord bears witness that He Himself has received them; so when right counsel is given to one that is ignorant of it, He Himself receives it, of Whom that man is a member, who is so instructed; for all we, that are of the number of the faithful, are members of our Redeemer; and as He Himself is fed in our persons by the pitying of liberality, so He is Himself aided in our persons by the counselling of instruction; and so the scribes and doctors of the Law Who used to instruct the people with respect to life, what else were they but 'counsellors' of the Redeemer, Who was to come? Who, nevertheless, when they beheld the Lord become Incarnate, separated numbers from faith in Him by their counsels, though before they had seemed to teach numbers by the words of the Prophets to believe the mystery of His Incarnation; and because with God he is more in His love, who draws the greatest number to the love of Him, it is further added of that same order of the doctors of the Law and the Pharisees; *and he whom I loved most, turned away from me*. For that very order, through the prompting of unbelief was turned aside from faith in the truth, which before, while serving in the labours of preaching, was most beloved, which same not only to the extent of not believing the Lord, but even of

persecuting Him as well, the rabble of the common people followed, and was kindled with the firebrands of cruelty to the very deed of His Passion; in which very Passion too the hearts of the disciples were troubled; whence also it is here added;

Ver. 20. *My bone cleaveth to my skin, through my flesh being wasted.*

57. By 'bone' we have strength, and by flesh weakness of the body denoted; therefore, whereas Christ and the Church are one person, what is signified by the 'bone' but the Lord Himself? what by the 'flesh' save the disciples, who in the hour of His Passion were weakly disposed? but by the 'skin,' which in the body remains more outward than the flesh, what is represented but those holy women, who with the view to furnish the stays of the body, served the Lord by outward offices of ministration? for when His disciples, though not yet firm, were preaching faith to the people, the flesh kept close to its bone; and when the holy women prepared the outward things that were necessary, they as it were like 'a skin' remained on the body outwards; but when it came to the hour of the Cross, exceeding great fear, caused by the persecution of the Jews, took possession of His disciples: they severally fled, the women 'stuck close,' and so, the 'flesh,' as it were, 'being consumed,' 'the bone of the Lord clave to its skin,' in that His strength, when the disciples fled in the hour of the Passion, had the women close beside it. Peter indeed stood for some time, but yet afterwards being affrighted he denied Him. John too stood, to whom at the very time of the Cross it was said, *Behold thy mother*. [John 19, 27] But he could not persevere; since it is also written concerning him [a], *And there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and the young men laid hold of him. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked*; [Mark 14, 51. 52.] who although afterwards, to hear the words of his Redeemer, he returned at the hour of the Cross, yet first he was affrighted and fled; but the women are related not only not to have been

afraid nor to have fled, but even to have stood fast even to the sepulchre; and so let him say, *My bone cleaveth to my skin, through the flesh being wasted*; i.e. 'they that ought to have attached themselves closer to My strength, in the season of My Passion were consumed with dread; and those whom I set to external ministrations, in My Passion I found attached themselves faithfully to Me without fear.' And here it is plainly implied that these words are delivered in mystery, in that it follows;

And the lips only are left about my teeth.

58. For what do we have 'about our teeth,' but 'lips,' even if we suffer no scourges of affliction? but what is signified by 'the lips' but talk, what by 'teeth' but the holy Apostles? who are with this intention set in this body of the Church, that they may bite at the life of the carnal by correction, and break it in pieces from the hardness of its obstinacy; and hence it is said to that first of the Apostles, as being set, as a tooth in His Body, *Kill, and eat*. [Acts 10, 13] But because, at the time of His Passion, these 'teeth' from fear of death lost the biting of correction, lost the assurance of strength, lost the efficiency of practice of every sort, so that two of them as they walked, after His death and resurrection, talked by the way and said, *But we trusted that it should have been he which should have redeemed Israel*; [Luke 24, 21] it is rightly said here, *And the lips only are left about my teeth.* They were still conversing about Him, but now they no longer at all believed in Him; and so 'the lips only remained about His teeth,' in that they had parted with the efficiency of good practice, and only retained words of converse about Him. They had lost the bite of correction, and possessed the mooting of speech. Therefore, 'the lips only were left about the teeth,' in that to talk about Him indeed they knew still, but to preach Him now, or to bite the bad ways of unbelievers, they were afraid. Therefore these particulars being finished, which he spoke in the voice of the Head, blessed Job is brought back to his own words, saying;

Ver. 21. *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

59. The mind of godly men is used to have this peculiar to itself, that when it suffers unjust treatment at the hands of enemies, it is not so much moved to wrath as to prayer; that if the wickedness of those persons could be made to subside to a calm, they would choose rather to beseech than to be wroth; whence it is rightly said in this place, *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends*; *for the hand of God hath touched me*. Observe, those by whom he sees that he is ever being treated with insults, he calls 'friends,' in that to godly minds the very things that seem contrary are made favourable; for any that are wicked are either converted by the sweetness of the good so as to turn back, and by this alone they are friends, viz. that they are made good, or they persevere in their wickedness, and herein also even against their will they are 'friends,' in that, if there be any transgressions of the good, by their persecutions they purge them away even unknowingly. Observe too, that with these things which are done with God in secret, the words of the blessed man openly spoken are quite of a piece. Thus he had been smitten by Satan, yet he did not ascribe his being smitten to Satan, but he calls himself 'touched by the hand of God,' as Satan himself too had said; *But put forth thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and see if he bless Thee not to Thy face*. [c. 2, 5] For the holy man knew that in that very thing which Satan had done towards him with an evil will, he derived his power not from himself, but from the Lord. It goes on;

Ver. 22. *Why do ye persecute me as God; and are filled with my flesh?*

60. It is not at variance with the style of piety that he tells that he is persecuted by God. For there is a good persecutor; as when the Lord says of Himself by the lips of the Prophet, *Him that privily slandereth his*

neighbour, him did I persecute. [Ps. 101, 5] But when any Saint is suffered to be stricken, he knows that he is undergoing persecution, sent against evil he has been guilty of, from the interior ordering. Now the savage minds of the persecutors, when they desire the power to smite, are inflamed against the life of the good not with the ardour of purifying, but with the firebrands of envy; and they do that indeed, which Almighty God allows to be done; in that while there is one cause with God transacted too by their agency, yet there is not one will maintained in that cause, since whilst Almighty God, in loving, is enforcing purification, the wickedness of the unjust is exercising malice in raging. This then that is said, *Why do ye persecute me as God?* he spoke with reference to the external smiting, not to the interior intention, in that though they execute that externally which God ordained to be done, yet in their doing it they do not seek that which God does, viz. that good men should be purified by means of affliction. Which too may likewise be understood in another sense also. For Almighty God chastens the evil qualities of others so much the more justly in proportion as He has no whit of evil qualities in Himself; but men when they strike others in the course of discipline, ought so to chasten the frailty of another, that they should at the same time have learnt the habit to recall their eyes to their own frailty, so as to consider from themselves how they ought to spare in smiting others, seeing that they are not unaware that they themselves too are worthy of stripes. And so it is said in this case, *Why do ye persecute me as God?* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'Ye do so afflict me on the grounds of my frailties, as if ye yourselves after the manner of God owned nought of infirmity:' whence it is to be considered, that if perchance there be persons that need sharpness of correction, hard correction is then to be used to them by us, when the hand of God ceases from using the rod; but when strokes from above are upon them, from us there is now due no longer correction

but consolation, lest, while in their grief we join our reproach, we put smiting to smiting.

61. Now it is well added, *And are filled with my flesh?* The mind which hungers for the punishing of a neighbour, surely seeks to be ‘filled with the flesh’ of another. Moreover it is necessary to be known, that those also who feed on the slander of another’s life, are as surely ‘filled with the flesh’ of another. Whence it is said by Solomon; *Be not in the feastings of winebibbers; nor eat with those, who bring together flesh to eat*. [Prov. 23, 20] For to ‘bring together flesh to eat,’ is, in the parlance of disparagement to tell by turns the bad qualities of neighbours; concerning whose punishment it is directly added there, they that are given to cups, and that give a contribution, shall be consumed, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. They are ‘given to cups’ who make themselves drunk [*se debriant*] with slander of another’s life; but to ‘give a contribution [*symbolum*],’ is in the same way that each individual is used to contribute provisions for his share to be eaten, so in the parlance of slander to contribute words. But ‘they that are given to cups and that give a contribution shall be consumed,’ in that as it is written, *Every slanderer shall be rooted out* [Ben. Ed. refers to Prov. 15, 5 perhaps Ps. 101, 5]; but ‘drowsiness shall cover a man with rags,’ in that his death finds him an object of contempt and empty of all good works, whom the sickly habit [*languor*] of detraction took possession of here for the raking out the misdemeanours of another man’s life. But all those hardships which blessed Job undergoes it is not meet should be let pass in silence, and that the obscurity of ignorance should cover them from man’s knowledge; for so many may be edified for the preserving of patience, as they who, by grace from above replenishing them, may be made acquainted with the achievements of his patience. And hence the same blessed Job would have

the strokes which he feels carried into an example, in that he immediately adds, saying;

Ver. 23, 24. *O that my words were now written! O that they were graven in a book with an iron pen, and a plate of lead, or surely that they were hewed in the flint!*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

62. Whereas all that blessed Job underwent, that heavy Jewish people, being instructed by the strong declaration of the Fathers, was brought to know, they were written with 'an iron pen' and 'a plate of lead;' but whereas the hard hearts of the Gentiles also were made acquainted with them, what is this but that we see them 'hewn in the flint?' And observe, that what is written on lead, by the mere softness of the metal, is quickly obliterated; but upon the flint letters may be more slowly stamped indeed, but more hardly obliterated. Therefore it is not unsuitably that by 'the plate of lead' Judaea is represented, which at once received the precepts of God without labour, and lost them with speed; and rightly by 'the flint' the Gentile world is represented, which could with difficulty receive the words of sacred revelation to keep, but kept them when received fixedly. Now by the 'iron pen' what else is denoted save the strong sentence of God? Whence too it is said by the Prophet, *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron on a diamond nail* [*ungue*]. [Jer. 17, 1] The end of the body is in the nail, and a diamond is so hard a stone, that it cannot be cut with iron. Now by 'an iron pen' there is denoted a strong sentence, but by a 'diamond nail' the eternal end; so the sin of Judah is said to be written with a 'pen of iron upon a diamond nail,' in that the guilt of the Jews is reserved by the strong sentence of God for an end that is endless.

63. Rightly too by 'a plate of lead' we understand those, whom the load of avarice weighs down, to whom it is said by the Prophet with upbraiding,

O ye sons of men, how long heavy in heart! For by lead, the nature whereof is of a heavy weight, the sin of avarice is in a special manner denoted, which renders the mind it has infected so heavy, that it call never be raised to aim at things on high. Hence it is written in Zechariah, *Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth*. *And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah* [Lat. *amphora*] *that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their eye throughout all the earth. And behold there was lifted up a talent of lead, and, lo, one woman sitting in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is wickedness; and he cast her into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the weight of lead on her face* [or *into the mouth thereof*]. [Zech. 5, 5-8] And with reference to this vision of 'the ephah,' and 'the woman,' and 'the lead,' that he might shew more fully what he had been made to know, he yet further added going on, *Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold there came out two women, and a spirit was in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a kite, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said, To build it an house in the land of Shinar*. [v. 9-11] Which testimony of the Prophet we have brought forward as a proof of the lead to no purpose, if we do not also explain it going over it again. Thus he says, *Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth; and I said, What is this? And he said, It is an ephah that goeth forth.* God desiring to shew to the Prophet, by what sin above all others the human race fell away from Him, by the figure of an ephah as it were denoted the wide-opened mouth of avarice. For avarice is like an ephah, in that it keeps the mouth of the heart open and agape on the stretch [*in ambitu*]. And he said, *This is their eye through all the world*. We see many men of dull sense, and yet we see them sharp in bad practices, as the Prophet too testifies, who saith, *They are wise to do evil; but to do good they have no knowledge*. [Jer. 4, 22] And so these are dull in sense, but in those things which they desire,

they are urged on by the goads of avarice; and they that are blind to see good, under the incitements of rewards are quick-eyed to the doing evil things. Hence it is rightly said of this same avarice, *This is their eye in all the world. And behold there was lifted up a talent of lead.* What is 'a talent of lead' but the weight of sin from that very avarice. *And, lo, one woman sitting in the midst of the ephah.* Which same woman, lest perchance we should doubt who she was, the Angel thereupon made known; for it follows there immediately, *And he said, This is impiety; and he cast her into the midst of the ephah.* Impiety is 'cast into the midst of the ephah,' in that in avarice there is always impiety taken in. *And he cast the weight of lead on her face*. The mass of lead is cast on the woman's face, in that the impiety of avarice is borne down by the very weight of its own sin; for if it did not reach after things that are below, it would never prove impious towards God and our neighbour.

64. *Then, lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold there came out two women and a spirit was in their wings*. What do we understand by these 'two women' but the two principal vices, i.e. pride and vain glory, which are without any doubt united to impiety? Which two are described as having 'a spirit in their wings;' in that they are subservient to the will of Satan in their actions; for the Prophet calls that one 'a spirit,' concerning whom Solomon saith, *If the spirit if him that hath power rise above thee, leave not thy place*; [Eccles. 10, 4] and of whom the Lord saith in the Gospel; *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places*. [Mat. 12, 43] 'A spirit is in their wings,' in that in whatsoever they do, pride and vain glory render obedience to the will of Satan. And they had wings like the wings of a kite. Now the kite is always busied in plotting against the chicken kind. So these women have 'wings like the wings of a kite,' in that surely their doings are like the devil, who is always plotting against the life of the little ones. *And they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the*

heaven. Pride and vain glory have this peculiar to them, that whosoever is infected by them, they lift up in his own conceit above the rest of his fellow creatures: at one time by pursuit of the gifts of fortune, at another time by the desire of dignities, the man whom they have once gotten captive, they, as it were, lift up into the height of honour. And he that is between the earth and the heaven, at once leaves things below, and fails altogether to attain the things on high.

65. These women, then, 'lift up the ephah between the earth and the heaven,' in that pride and vain glory so exalt the mind taken captive through greediness of honour, that looking down upon all their neighbours, men do, as it were, leave things below, and in proud boasting seek high things. But all such persons, while they give themselves up to pride, at once in imagination mount above those, with whom they are placed, and are far from ever being united to the citizens above. Thus the ephah is said to be 'lifted up between earth and heaven,' in that all covetous persons through pride and vain glory at once despise their neighbours at their side, and never lay hold of the things above, which are beyond them; and so they are carried 'between the earth and the heaven,' in that they neither keep equality of brotherhood in this lower world by charity, nor yet are able to attain the world above by setting themselves up. *And I said to the Angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? and he said, To build it an house in the land of Shinar.* That same ephah has a 'house built it in the land of Shinar,' for 'Shinar' is rendered 'their ill savour;' and as there is a sweet savour from virtue, as Paul bears witness, who saith; *and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place; For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ*; [2 Cor. 2, 14] so reversely there is an ill savour from vice. *For covetousness is the root of all evil.* [1 Tim. 6, 10] And whereas every thing evil is engendered by avarice, it is meet that the house of avarice should be erected in 'ill savour.' Moreover it is necessary to be known that 'Shinar' is

a very wide valley, wherein the tower was begun to be built by men giving themselves to pride, which, when the diversity of tongues was brought to pass, came to destruction; which same tower was called Babylon, forsooth on account of that very confusion of minds and tongues: nor is it inappropriately that the ‘ephah’ of avarice is placed there, where ‘Babylon,’ i.e. ‘confusion,’ is building, in that whereas it is certain that from avarice and impiety all things bad have their origin, this same avarice and impiety are rightly described as dwelling in confusion.

66. We have said these things in few words out of course, that we might shew that the weight of sin is set forth by the ‘plate of lead.’ Yet these very words of blessed Job are also applicable to Holy Church, who while keeping the two testaments of sacred revelation, as it were begs a second time that her words should be written, saying, *Oh! that my words were now written! Oh! that they were printed in a book!* Which same, in that she speaks with a strong sentence at one time to hearts heavy from the weight of avarice, at another time to hardened hearts, ‘writes with a pen of iron upon a plate of lead,’ or, surely, ‘upon the flint.’ Now we say with justice that blessed Job uses the accents of our Redeemer and His Church, if we find any thing that he says explicitly of that same Redeemer of us men; for how is it to be believed that he teaches us any thing connected with Him in a figure, if he does not point Him out to us in express words? But now let him disclose to us what he is sensible of concerning Him, and let him take away from us all misgivings in our thoughts. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *For I know that my Redeemer liveth.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

67. For he who does not say, ‘Creator,’ but ‘Redeemer,’ expressly tells of Him, Who after He created all things, appeared Incarnate amongst us, that He might redeem us from a state of bondage, and by His Passion set us free

from death everlasting; and mark with what sure faith he makes himself secure in the power of His Divine Nature, of Whom it is said by Paul, *For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God*. [2 Cor. 13, 4] For he says, *For I know that my Redeemer liveth*. As if he said in express terms; 'The unbelievers may know that He was scourged, mocked, struck with the palms of the hand, covered with a crown of thorns, besmeared with spittings, crucified, dead: I, with sure faith, believe Him to live after death; I confess with unreserved voice, 'that my Redeemer liveth,' Who died by the hands of wicked men.' And how, O blessed Job, through His Resurrection, thou trustest to the resurrection of thine own flesh, declare, I pray, in open speech. It goes on;

And that I shall rise at the last day from the earth.

68. That is, because the resurrection which He manifested in His own Person, He will one day bring to pass in ourselves as well; for the resurrection, which He exhibited in Himself, He pledged to us; seeing that the members follow the glory of their Head. Thus our Redeemer underwent death, that we might not fear to die; He manifested the resurrection, that we might have a sure hope that we are capable of rising again. And hence He would not have that death to be of more than three days' duration, lest if the resurrection were deferred in Him, it should be altogether despaired of in ourselves; and this is rightly said of Him by the Prophet; *He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head*. [Ps. 110, 7] For He in a manner condescended to drink of that current as it were of our suffering, not in an abiding place, but 'in the way,' in that He met death in a transitory way, i.e. for three days, and in that death which He met He did not, like ourselves, remain unto the end of the world. And so, whereas He rose again on the third day, what then is to come after in His body, i.e. in the Church, He makes appear; for He shewed in example, what He promised in reward, that as believers knew and owned that He had Himself risen again,

so they might hope for the rewards of the resurrection in themselves at the end of the world. Lo, we, through the death of the flesh, remain in the dust until the end of the world, but He on the third day budded into life from the dryness of death, that by the very renewal of His flesh by itself He might shew the power of His Divine Nature. Which is well shewn in Moses by the twelve rods placed in the Tabernacle: for when the priesthood of Aaron, who was of the tribe of Levi, was despised, ‘and the tribe was not accounted worthy to offer up burnt-offerings, twelve rods according to the twelve tribes were ordered to be put in the Tabernacle, and, lo, the rod of Levi budded, and shewed what efficacy Aaron had in the office. [Num. 17, 8] By which same sign what is conveyed, but that all we who lie in the arms of death until the very end of the world, remain like the rest of the rods in a state of barrenness? But when all the rods remained in a state of dryness, the rod of Levi returned to flowering, in that the body of our Lord, i.e. our true Priest, being set in the dryness of death, burst into the flower of the Resurrection. By which same flowering Aaron is rightly known to be the Priest, in that by this glory of the Resurrection our Redeemer, Who sprung from the tribe of Judah and Levi [Luke 1; 5, 36], is shewn to be an Intercessor in our behalf. And so, lo! the rod of Aaron buds now after dryness, but the rods of the twelve tribes remain in a dry state, in that already indeed the body of the Lord lives after death, but our bodies are kept back from the glory of the resurrection until the end of the world. Whence he carefully introduced this same delay, by saying, *And that I shall rise at the last* [*novissimo*] *day from the earth.*

69. Therefore we have a hope of our own resurrection, by considering the glory of our Head. But lest anyone say perhaps merely in the secret thought of his heart, that it was in this way that He rose again from the dead, viz. that being God and Man in one and the same Person, the death, which He underwent in His Human Nature, He overcame by His Divine

Nature, while we, who are mere men, are not able to rise from the curse of death; it happened rightly that, in the season of His resurrection, the bodies of many of the Saints arose at the same time, that both in Himself He might shew us an example, and by the resurrection of others who were like to ourselves in respect of a mere human nature, He might give us a sure confirmation, that whereas man despaired of his obtaining what He that was God and Man had exhibited in His own Person, he might presume that that was capable of being brought to pass in his own case, which he knew to have been brought about in the case of those very persons, who he doubted not were but simple human beings.

70. But there are some who, observing that the spirit is parted from the flesh, that the flesh is turned into corruption, that its corruption is reduced to dust, that this dust is so dissolved into elementary parts that it is incapable of being seen by the eyes of man, despair of the possibility of the resurrection being brought to pass, and whilst they gaze on the dry bones, they distrust its being possible for these to be clothed with flesh, and again flushing into life; which persons, if they do not hold the resurrection of the body on the principle of obedience, ought certainly to hold it on the principle of reason. For what does the universe every day, but imitate in its elements our resurrection? Thus by the lapse of the minutes of the day the temporal light itself as it were dies, when, the shade of night coming on, that light which was beheld is withdrawn from sight, and it daily rises again as it were, when the light that was withdrawn from our eyes, upon the night being suppressed is renewed afresh. For the progress of the seasons too, we see the shrubs lose the greenness of their foliage, and cease from putting forth fruit; and on a sudden as if from dried up wood, by a kind of resurrection coming we see the leaves burst forth, the fruit grow big, and the whole tree clothed with renewed beauty; we unceasingly behold the small seeds of trees committed to the moistness of the ground, wherefrom

not long afterwards we behold large trees arise, and bring forth leaves and fruit. Let us then consider the little seed of any tree whatever, which is thrown into the ground, for a tree to be produced therefrom; and let us take in, if we are capable of it, where in that exceeding littleness of the seed that most enormous tree was buried, which proceeded from it? where was the wood? where the bark? where the verdure of the foliage? where the abundance of the fruit? Was there any thing of the kind perceived in the seed, when it was thrown into the ground? [Comp. S. Chrys. on 1 Thess. 4, 15] And yet by the secret Artificer of all things ordering all in a wonderful manner, both in the softness of the seed there lay buried the roughness of the bark, and in its tenderness there was hidden the strength of its timber, and in its dryness fertility of productiveness. What ‘wonder, then, if that finest dust, which to our eyes is resolved into the elements, He, when He is minded, fashioneth again into the human being, Who from the finest seeds resuscitates the largest trees? And so, seeing that we have been created reasoning beings, we ought to collect the hope of our own resurrection from the mere aspect and contemplation of the objects of nature. But forasmuch as the faculty of reason was deadened in us, the grace of the Redeemer came in for an example. For our Creator came, He took death upon Him, He exhibited the Resurrection, in order that we, who would not hold the hope of the Resurrection by reason, might hold it by His succour and example; and so let blessed Job say; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise at the last day from the earth.* And let any one that despairs of the possibility that the power of the Resurrection should be brought to pass in himself, blush at the words of a believing person set in the midst of the Gentile world, and let him reflect with what a weight of punishment he deserves to be stricken, if he still does not believe his own resurrection, who now knows the resurrection of the Lord which has taken place, if even he

believed his own, who as yet expected the resurrection of the Lord Jesus to be brought to pass.

71. But see, I hear of the resurrection, but it is the effect of the resurrection that I am searching out. For I believe that I shall rise again, but I wish that I might hear what kind of person; since it is a thing I ought to know, whether I shall rise again perhaps in some other subtle or ethereal body, or in that body wherein I shall die. But if I shall rise again in an ethereal body, it will no longer be myself, who rise again. For how can that be a true resurrection, if there may not be true flesh? so that plain reason suggests, that if it shall not be true flesh, assuredly it will not be a true resurrection; for neither can it be rightly termed a resurrection, when it is not what fell that rises again. But in this too for us, O blessed Job, do thou remove these clouds of misgiving, and whereas through the grace of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed thee thou hast begun to speak to us of the hope of our resurrection, shew in plain words if our flesh shall really rise again. It follows,

Ver. 26. *And I shall be again encompassed with my skin.*

72. Whereas the 'skin' is expressly named, all doubt of a true resurrection is removed; in that our body will not, as Eutychius the Bishop of Constantinople wrote, in that gloriousness of the resurrection be impalpable, and more subtle than the wind and air: for in that gloriousness of the resurrection our body will be subtle indeed by the efficacy of a spiritual power, but palpable by the reality of its nature; whence also our Redeemer, when the disciples doubted of His resurrection, shewed them His hands and feet, and offered His bones and flesh to be touched, saying, *Handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have*. [Luke 24, 39] And when, being placed in the city of Constantinople, I brought before Eutychius this testimony of truth from the Gospel, he said, 'For this reason the Lord did this, that He might take away all doubt of the

resurrection from the hearts of the disciples.' To whom I said; 'This is a very extraordinary thing that you assert, that doubting should arise to ourselves from the same quarter, whence the hearts of the disciples were cured of doubting.' For what can be said worse than that that is made doubtful to us relating to His true flesh, whereby His disciples were restored anew to faith from all doubting? For if He is declared not to have had that, which He manifested; from the same source, from whence the faith of His disciples is confirmed, ours is destroyed. And he further added, saying, 'He had that body which He shewed a palpable body; but after the hearts of those that handled it were confirmed, all that in the Lord which was capable of being handled, was reduced into a certain subtle quality.' To which same I answered, saying; 'It is written, *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him*. [Rom. 6, 9] If then there was aught in the Body which was capable of being altered after His resurrection, contrary to the truly spoken declaration of Paul, the Lord after His resurrection returned into death; and what fool even would venture to say this, save he that denies the true resurrection of His flesh?' Then he objected to me, saying, 'Whereas it is written; *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*, [1 Cor. 15, 50] by what means is it to be supposed that the flesh truly rises again?' To whom I say; 'In Holy Writ flesh is named in one way according to nature, and in another way according to sin or corruption.' For there is flesh according to nature, as where it is written, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.* [Gen. 2, 23] And, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* [John 1, 14] But there is flesh according to sin, as where it is written, *My Spirit shall not always abide in those men, for that they are flesh*. [Gen. 6, 3] And as the Psalmist saith; *For He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again*. [Ps. 78, 39] Whence too Paul said to the disciples; *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit*. [Rom. 8, 9] For it was not that these

persons were not in the flesh, to whom he was sending letters, but for that they had subdued the motions of carnal passions, henceforth, free through the efficacy of the Spirit, they 'were not in the flesh.' Therefore in respect to what Paul says, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, he would have flesh to be understood as applied to sin, not flesh as applied to nature. Hence directly afterwards that he was speaking of flesh after sin he makes plain, by adding; *Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*. Therefore in that glory of the heavenly kingdom there will be flesh according to nature, but not flesh according to the desire of the passions; in that the sting of death being overcome, it will reign in eternal incorruptibility.'

73. To which words the same Eutychius directly answered that he assented, yet still he denied that the body could rise again a palpable body. Who in the treatise too which he had written concerning the resurrection, had put in the testimony of the Apostle Paul, when he says; *That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain*. [1 Cor. 15, 36. 37.] Being eager to shew this, that the flesh will either be impalpable [Nearly all MSS. read, 'palpabilis,' which, if right, must come under the following negative], or will not be itself identically, seeing that the holy Apostle, when treating of the glory of the resurrection, says that 'it was not sown the body that it shall be.' But the answer to this is soon made. For the Apostle Paul, when he says, *Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain,* is telling us of what we see; viz. that the grain, which is sown without a stalk or leaves, springs up with a stalk and leaves; so that he, in heightening the glory of the resurrection, did not say that what it was is wanting to it, but that what it was not is present: but this man, whereas he denies the real body to rise again, does not say that what was wanting is there, but that what it was is wanting.

74. Upon this, then, we being led on in long disputing on this point, we began to recoil from one another with the greatest animosity, when the Emperor Tiberius Constantine, of religious memory, bringing myself and him to a private audience, learnt what dispute was being carried on between us, and weighing the statement of both sides, and by his own allegations as well disproving that same book which he had written concerning the resurrection, determined that it ought to be consumed in the flames. Upon our leaving whom, I was seized with a grievous sickness, while to that same Eutychius sickness and death shortly followed. And when he was dead, because there was well nigh no one who followed his statements, I held back from prosecuting what I had commenced, lest I should seem to be darting words at his ashes, but while he was still alive, and I sick of violent fever, I if any of my acquaintance went to him for the sake of greeting him, as I learnt from their relation, he used to take hold on the skin of his hand before their eyes, saying, 'I confess that we shall all rise again in this flesh;' which as they themselves avowed he was before wont altogether to deny.

75. But let us, laying aside these considerations, minutely search out in the words of blessed Job, if there will be a true resurrection, and the true body in that resurrection; for, lo, we are no longer able to doubt of the hope of the resurrection, in that he says, *And that I shall rise at the last day from the earth.* Moreover he has removed all doubting of the true renewal of the body, in that he says, *And I shall be again encompassed with my skin*. And he still further adds, with the view of removing the misgivings of our thought;

And in my flesh shall I see God.

76. Mark, he owns the resurrection, 'the skin,' 'the flesh,' in explicit words. What is there left then, by which our mind should have occasion to doubt? If this holy man then before the fact of the Lord's resurrection, believed in the flesh being destined to be brought back to its entire state,

what will be the guilt of our doubting, if the true resurrection of the flesh not even after the proof of our Redeemer obtains credit? For if after the resurrection there will not be a palpable body, surely another person rises again than dies: which is profane to say; viz. to believe that it is I who die, and another that doth rise again [ABCD, ‘another shall rise.’]. Wherefore I entreat thee, blessed Job, add how thou art minded, and remove from us all ground of scruple on this point. It follows;

Ver. 27. *Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*

77. For if, as certain votaries of false opinions believe, after the resurrection there shall be no palpable body, but the subtle quality of an invisible body shall be called the flesh, though there be no substance of flesh, then surely he that dies is one person, and he that rises again is another. But blessed Job destroys this assertion for them by a truthtelling voice, in that he says, *Whom I shall see for myself; and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.* But we, following the faith that blessed Job held, and truly believing the palpable Body of our Redeemer after His resurrection, confess that our flesh after the resurrection will be at once both the same and different, the same in respect of nature, different in respect of glory, the same in its reality, different in its power. Thus it will be subtle, in that it will be incorruptible; it will be palpable, in that it will not lose the essence of its very and true nature. But that same assurance of the resurrection the holy man subjoins with what sure hope he holds it, with what certainty he awaits it. It goes on;

This my hope is laid up in my bosom.

18. We suppose that we hold nothing more surely than what we have in our bosom; and so he kept ‘hope laid up in his bosom,’ in that he laid hold beforehand on true certainty concerning the hope of the resurrection. But whereas he made known that the day of the resurrection would come, he

now, whether in his own voice, or in a figure of the holy and universal Church, reproves the deeds of the wicked, and foretells the Judgment which ensues on the day of the resurrection. For he straightway adds;

Ver. 28, 29. *Wherefore then do ye now say, Let us persecute him, and find out the root of the word against him? Fly therefore from the face of the sword, for the sword is an avenger of wickedness; and know that there is a judgment.*

79. For in the first sentence he reproved the deeds of the wicked, while in the following he made known the punishments proceeding from the Divine judgment, Thus he saith, *Wherefore then do ye now say; Let us persecute him and find out the root of the word against him?* Wicked persons, because they hear with wrong earnestness things well put forth, and seek to find in the tongue of the righteous an inlet for accusation, what else do they but 'seek the root of the word against him,' from which same they may take the commencement of speaking, and in the accusing of him expand the branches of evil talkativeness? But when the holy man meets with such things at the hands of wicked men, it is not against them but rather for them that he feels sorrow, and reproves the things wickedly harboured in the heart, and shews them evil for them to escape, saying, *Fly therefore from the face of the sword; for the sword is the avenger of wickedness; and know that there is a judgment.* Everyone that does wicked things, even herein, that he is too indifferent to fear this, does not know of there being a judgment of God. For if he did know that this was a thing to be feared, he would never do things that are destined to be punished in it. For there are very many who know that there is a final Judgment as far as the words go, but by acting wickedly they bear witness that they do not know it. Since whereas he does not dread this as he ought, he does not yet know with what a tempest of terror it will come. For if he had [al. 'he who had'] been taught to estimate the weight of the dreadful scrutiny, surely in

fearing he would guard against the day of wrath. Moreover, ‘to fly from the face of the sword,’ is to propitiate the sentence of the strict visitation before it appears. For the terribleness of the Judge cannot be avoided saving before the Judgment. Now He is not discerned, but is appeased by prayers. But when He shall sit on that dreadful inquest, He is both able to be seen and not able any longer to be propitiated; in that the doings of the wicked which He bore long while in silence, He shall pay back all of them together in wrath. Whence it is necessary to fear the Judge now, while He does not yet execute judgment, while He bears patiently for long, while He still tolerates the wickedness that He sees, lest when He has once plucked out His hand in the awarding of vengeance, He strike the more severely in judgment, in proportion as He waited longer before judgment.

BOOK XV.

In which there is a brief explanation given of the twentieth and twenty-first chapter of the Book of Job.

THAT the friends of blessed Job could never have been bad men, the words of Zophar the Naamathite bear witness, who on hearing from his lips the terribleness of the Judgment to come, adds directly;

Ver. 1. *Therefore do my thoughts changefully succeed one another, and my mind is transported diverse ways.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

1. As though he said in plain words; 'Because I see the terribleness of the last Judgment, therefore I am confounded in a state of consternation by the tumults of my thoughts.' For the mind spreads itself wider in its range of thought, the more it considers how dreadful that is which threatens it. And 'the mind is transported diverse ways,' when with anxious alarm she weighs and considers, one while the evil she has done, at another time the good she has left undone, now all the blameable practices that she remains in, and now the right habits that she sees to be lacking to her. But though the friends of blessed Job, instructed by habituation to his life, knew how to live well, yet, being uninstructed to form an exact estimate of God's judgments, that anyone of the righteous can be susceptible of ills here below, they did not believe possible. And hence they imagined that holy man to be wicked, whom they saw scourged, and, in consequence of this suspicion, it came to pass that they slipt aside into the upbraiding of him as well, whereunto nevertheless they do not descend, save under the guise of a kind of respect. Hence Zophar adds in these words;

Ver. 3. *The lesson whereby thou dost reproach me I will hear; and the spirit of my understanding wilt answer me.*

2. As though he said in plain words; 'Thy words indeed I hear, but whether they were delivered aright, I discern by the spirit of my understanding.' For they that disregard the words of the teacher, employ his teaching not for an assistance but for an occasion of contention, rather that they may criticise the things heard than to follow them. This then being premised with a sort of restraint, he now springs out into the open reviling of the blessed man, when he adds;

Ver. 4, 5. *I know this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment.*

3. Now it is clear to be seen that being puffed up with the spirit of his understanding, he warps the sentences, which he pronounces against the ungodly, to the reproving of blessed Job. For in him whom he first saw following right ways, and afterwards undergoing punishment, he reckons all that he saw to have been but hypocrisy, in that he did not believe it possible for a just servant to be put to distress by a just God. But those same sentences, which, being right, he did not pronounce in a right way, let us go through, weighing them with earnest intentness of mind; and setting at nought what he says untrue against blessed Job, let us consider how true are the things he speaks, if he were speaking them against the ungodly. *I know this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short*. Going to tell the shortness of the present life, he carried back the eye of the interior to the outset of the commencement, in order to collect from the past how nothing all things are, that while they continue to be, seem to be something. For if we carry the eyes of our imagination from the very commencement of the human race up to the present time in which we now are, we see how short all was that was of a nature to come to an

end. Let us imagine a man to have lived from the first day of the world's creation to this present day, yet on this day to end the life, which he seemed to have continued to so great a length, lo, the end is come, the things past are already become nought, in that every thing has passed away. For the future in this world is nought, in that not a moment, or the very shortest particle of time remains to our life. Where then is that long time, which, comprehended between the beginning and the end, is so wasted in substance, just as if it had not ever been even short in duration?

4. Therefore because the wicked have their heart centered in this life, surely they set themselves up therein and seek to win applause. They are lifted up by the flattery of the lips, having no desire to be good, but only to be called so. Which praise they think is of a great length while they receive it, but understand to have been brief when they lose it. Whence it is well said against these wicked persons, *This I know of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short*; and it is well added, *And the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment.* It often happens that while the hypocrite passes himself off for holy, without a fear of letting himself appear wicked, he is honoured of all men, and the high credit of holiness is awarded to him, by those who can make out the outside, but have no eyes to look into the interior of things. Whence it happens, that he triumphs in having the first seat, is overjoyed in getting the first couch, filled with pride at receiving the first invitation, elevated at the respectful address of his followers, swoln in the pride of his heart at the observance of his dependents, as is said of such by the voice of Truth Himself. *But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi*. [Matt. 23, 5] But all this joy of theirs, compared with eternity, what will become of it, when, the crisis of

death being upon them, it perishes, as though it had never been? Of which same joy the mirth is all gone, the punishment remains, and when the thing is lost, the guilt [*causa, aitia*?] endures. And it is well said; *The joy of the hypocrite like a point*. For in making a point the style is lifted up as soon as set down, and there is no lingering, that it may be drawn along a line to be described. And so the joy of the hypocrite 'is like a point,' in that it appears for a moment, and is gone for ever; and just as the style, in the case of a point, while set down is lifted up in one, so the hypocrite, whilst he touches, parts with the joys of the present life. Concerning whom it is also added;

Ver. 6, 7. *Though his pride mount up unto the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds: Yet he shall perish at last like the dunghill.*

5. The pride of the hypocrite is said to 'mount up unto the heavens,' when his high-mindedness has the appearance of leading a heavenly life; and his 'head as it were reaches unto the clouds,' when the leading part, i.e. his intellect, is thought to equal the merits of the Saints that have gone before. Yet he 'perishes at last like the dunghill,' because at his death, when he is led to torments, being full of the dung of evil habits, he is trodden under foot of evil spirits. For the joys of the present life, which the unrighteous account great good, righteous men look upon as dung. Whence it is written; *A slothful man is stoned with the dung of oxen.* [Ecclus. 22, 2] Thus he that will not follow God is made slothful in the love of the life everlasting. And as often as he is stricken with the loss of temporal goods, he is surely troubled on the score of those things, which the righteous look down upon as 'dung:' what else is it with him, then, that is bruised with the buffeting of things earthly, than that he 'is stoned with the dung of oxen' And the hypocrite is justly described like a dunghill, in that while he aims to obtain temporal glory, at one time in the imagination of his heart he swells within himself, at another time he grudges that same glory to some, and laughs at others having it really. For all the evil qualities then that he is

full of, his breast as it were is defiled with so much dung, in the eye of the Eternal Judge. Therefore it may be said, *Though his pride mount up unto the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish at last like the dunghill*. Which same, though he feign to lead a heavenly life, though he shew his view of truth to accord with the true preachers, yet he 'perishes like a dunghill in the end,' in that his soul is damned for the stench of his evil qualities. It goes on;

They which had seen him shall say, Where is he?

6. It generally happens that the life of the hypocrite is even by all men discovered at the end to be damnable, for it to be made appear by plainer marks now what sort they were of. They then that saw him elate at this present time shall say of him when dead, Where is he? For neither is he seen here where he was elated, nor yet in the rest of eternity, which he was supposed to be of. Concerning the shortness of whose life it is yet further added with fitness;

Ver. 8. *He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.*

7. What else is the life of the hypocrite but the vision of a phantom, which exhibits that in semblance which it does not possess in truth? Whence too it is justly likened to 'a dream,' in that all praise and glory is, as it were, gone from him whilst it is being held. For oftentimes in a 'vision of the night,' some that are poor are full of wonder that they are made rich, they see honours awarded to them, they behold heaps of riches, a multitude of attendants, the most beautiful garments, abundance of food presented to them. They are delighted to have escaped poverty, which they bore with a grieved spirit; but on a sudden, when they wake, they find how false all the joy was which they felt, and they are sad that they have awoke, in that real want gripes them awake. Thus the minds of hypocrites, whilst what they do is one thing, and what they exhibit to men another, win applause by the

mere exhibiting of holy living; in the esteem of men they are set before numbers that are better, and whilst they are highminded with the secret thought within, they exhibit themselves without as humble. And whereas they are excessively commended by men; they imagine that in the eyes of God also they are such, as they delight to make themselves known to be to their fellow-creatures. Hence it comes to pass that they assume that they will likewise obtain the rewards of eternal life, and they who triumph here below, upon the commendations of their fellow-creatures, doubt not for a moment that they will have rest there; but in the midst of this the secret hour of their call creeps upon them, and while they shut the eyes of the flesh they open those of the spirit, and so soon as they have gotten eternal punishments, they there see, that they were rich in the repute for virtues only in sleep. Well then is it said of such a hypocrite, *Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.* For this, that he sees himself for a brief space rich in man's esteem, is of the show of a phantasm, not of the substance of virtue [al. *of reality*]. For when his soul wakes up at the dissolution of the flesh, it learns, assuredly, that it was in a sleeping state that it saw the partial regards of men about it. It goes on;

Ver. 9. *The eye also which saw him shall see him no more: neither shall his place any more behold him.*

8. What is the 'place' of the hypocrite, saving the heart of his flatterers? For there he rests, where he finds partialities towards him. Therefore 'the eye that saw him shall see him no more,' because being removed by death, he is hidden from his foolish lovers, who were wont to behold him, admiring him. 'Neither shall his place any more behold him,' because the tongues of his flatterers do not follow him with their partialities to the Judgment. Yet so long as he lives he does not cease to teach his followers likewise the things that he practises himself; and through the frowardness of

his erring way he begets others also in a likeness to that false pretension which he shews forth. Concerning whom it is fitly added in this place,

Ver. 10. *His children shall be wasted with poverty.*

9. It is written, *For into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter* [Wisd. 1, 4]; and it is declared by the Psalmist, *The rich have lacked and been a hungred* [Ps. 34, 10]. For if their want and hunger were spoken of outward starving, then surely they would be any thing but rich, who were in want of the bread of the body. But forasmuch as whilst they are increased without, they are rendered void within, they are described as rich and needy at one and the same time, in that they never entitle themselves to be filled with the bread of wisdom. And so the children of this hypocrite are 'worn down with want,' because they that are born in hypocrisy in mimicry of him, whilst they do not hold the substance of truth, are brought to nought in the penury of the heart.

And his hands shall repay him his own grief.

10. What is denoted by 'hands,' saving works? Thus 'his hands will repay him grief,' because he will reap just damnation from his wicked course of life. Now it is well said, not 'give,' but 'repay,' in that his froward deeds shall pay him back eternal punishment like a kind of debt. But before he is brought to eternal punishment, let him add more fully the sort of character that he shews himself here. It goes on,

His bones shall be full of the sin of his youth, and shall sleep with him in the dust.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

11. The origin of a bad beginning by preoccupying further multiplies the causes of sin. For when a man has begun to do evil, by custom he now grows to a worse height in that which he had begun. What then is the 'youth' of this hypocrite, but the beginning of wickedness, since in youth

passion now begins to kindle? And the hypocrite then has youth, when he begins to long for and to embrace the passion for glory. Which same, whilst the soft salves of flatterers redouble it, they give strength to, and as it were turn it into bones. For what he begins badly, he is daily strengthening for the worse by custom. Therefore let it be said; *His bones shall be full of the sin of his youth*; in that the rigid habits of evil practices in him are taken from the sin of an ill beginning. Hence it is written in the Proverbs, *The young man according to his own way, when he is old, will never depart therefrom*. [Prov. 22, 6] Which same 'bones' truly 'will sleep with him in the dust,' for so long do evil practices endure in him, until they drag him to the dust of death. Since for his 'bones,' or evil habits, to 'sleep with him in the dust' is for these never to quit him even to the very dust, that is, never to cease from sin even until death. Therefore bad habits, which are once begun, keep hold of him, and daily become more hardened. And they 'sleep with him in the dust,' because they are never ended but with his life. But this may be taken in another sense also.

12. For the hypocrite occasionally has something in practice that is strong and vigorous, but whilst he makes believe to have many good points that he is without, he loses even these which he has. Whence it is well said now; *His bones shall be full of the sin of his youth*. For whereas in his levity and fickleness he does many things like a child, even in strong ones which he may do he is enervated in sin. Which same 'bones shall sleep with him in the dust,' because as all that hypocrisy which he carries on is dust, so too whatever he has in him that is strong is robbed of all its solidity, so that by pretension to virtue he loses that also which there might have been in him of a virtuous nature. And so for 'his bones' to 'sleep with him in the dust' is even if there be things done well, for them to come to nought together with his evil deeds. It proceeds;

Ver. 12. *For when wickedness shall be sweet in his mouth, he will hide it under his tongue.*

13. 'Wickedness is sweet in the mouth' of the hypocrite, in that evil tastes sweet to him in the thought. For 'the mouth' of the heart is the thought, whereof it is written; *Deceitful lips spake evil in a double heart*. [Ps. 12, 2] Now the evil that is thus sweet in the mouth of the hypocrite is hidden under the tongue, in that the harshness of an evil disposition, which lies hidden in the mind, is concealed under the cloak of a mild address. For the evil would be on the tongue and not under it, if the hypocrite in speaking disclosed the mischievousness of his froward heart. But as is the case with most of the righteous, when they see any persons acting badly, who deserve to be visited with severe rebukes, they put harshness on the tongue, but under the tongue cover the kindness of their feelings; (whence too it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the Spouse; *Honey and milk are under Thy tongue*. [Cant. 4, 11] For they that shrink from disclosing the sweetness of their inward feeling to the weak, and so in speaking strike them with a degree of harshness, and yet amongst their harsh words secretly as it were let drop a sprinkling of sweetness, these persons clearly have sweetness not on the tongue, but under the tongue, in that amidst the hard words which they utter, they give out some that are sweet and softened, whereby the wounded mind may be cheered and refreshed by kindness;) so with the wicked severally, because they have evil not upon the tongue, but under the tongue, in the words of their mouth they hold out sweet things, and in the thoughts of their heart are plotting mischiefs. For it is hence that Joab held the beard of Amasa with his right hand, whilst secretly putting his left hand to his sword, he shed out his bowels. [2 Sam. 20, 9] For to hold the chin with the right hand is to caress as if in kindness. But he puts his left hand to his sword, who in secret strikes in malice. Hence too it is written concerning their head himself; *Under his tongue is mischief and pain*. [Ps.

10, 7] For he that doth not display openly the ill that he designs, does not put forth on the tongue the mischief and pain of those, whose destruction he aims at, but keeps them close under the tongue. Now it is rightly added of this hypocrite,

Ver. 13. *He will spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his throat.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

14. For the evil that he delights in he 'spares,' because he does not, by practising penance, hunt it down in himself. Whence too it is added; *and forsake it not*. For if he had the mind to 'forsake,' he would not 'spare' it, but would pursue it closely. Now he 'keeps it within his throat;' because he so retains it in thought, that he never utters it in speech. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *His bread in his belly shall be turned into the gall of asps within him.*

15. What bread is in the belly, the same is fulness of earthly gratification in the mind. So let the hypocrite now be filled to the full with the praises tendered him, let him revel in honours, 'his bread in his belly is turned into the gall of asps,' because the fulness of transitory enjoyment, in the final Retribution, will be turned to bitterness, in that what here passed for the praise of greatness is discovered to have been 'the gall of asps,' i.e. the prompting of evil spirits. For the wicked then perceive that they are infected with the venom of the old serpent, when, being delivered over to avenging flames, they are tormented along with that prompter of theirs. And so this 'bread' has one sort of taste in the mouth, and another in the belly, in that the joy of transitory pleasure is sweet, while it is tasted here by a chewing of teeth, as it were, but it turns bitter in the belly, because when the joy is past it is swallowed to his ruing.

16. Or indeed forasmuch as bread is not unsuitably taken for the sense of the Holy Scriptures, which refreshes the mind and furnishes it with the sinews of right practice, and the hypocrite generally makes it his object to be well instructed in the mysteries of Holy Writ, not that he may live by them, but that it may appear to the rest of the world how learned he is, his 'bread in his bowels is turned into the gall of asps,' in that whilst he boasts of the knowledge of the Sacred Law, he converts the draught of life into a cup of poison to himself, and dies in a state of reprobation from the same cause, whence he appeared to derive instruction unto life. Nor is this again unfitly taken to be the meaning, that while the hypocrite sometimes applies himself to the word of instruction for display, being blinded by God's judgment, he takes in a wrong sense that very word which he seeks in a wrong spirit. But when he falls into heretical error, it is his fate, that as by the 'gall of asps,' so the unhappy wretch perishes by 'bread;' and in his own self instruction he finds death, because in the words of life he never sought life. But it often happens that the sentences of divine warning, even if they be understood rightly by the hypocrite, forasmuch as he neglects to observe them in practice, are lost to him even before the course of the present life is at an end, so that it is taken from him to know, what while he knew he refused to practise. Hence it is added;

Ver. 15. *The riches he hath swallowed down, he shall vomit up, and God shall cast them out of his belly.*

17. The hypocrite desires to know the revelations of God, yet not to practise them. He would speak sagely, but not live so. For this reason, then, that he does not do what he knows, even that which he knows he loses, that forasmuch as he does not unite pure practice with his knowledge, contemning purity of right practice he loses the knowledge also. Therefore the 'riches' of the Sacred Law, which he 'swallowed' in reading, he vomits in forgetting, and God 'casts them out of his belly,' in that what he would

not observe to do, by a righteous judgment He roots out of his recollection, that at all events he should not keep the precepts of God in the tongue, which he kept not in his life. Whence it is said by the Prophet; *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, and that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?* [Ps. 50, 16] Which words of instruction if it ever at any time chance that the hypocrite should seem to retain in his mouth until the end, he will be condemned the more on the very grounds, whereon not even a bad man is ever deprived of the good gift of God. For it is written; *To those that remember His commandments to do them.* [Ps. 103, 18] He then that keeps His commandments in mind, but never does them, such an one holds in the words of instruction the sentences whereby he is condemned.

18. For hence it is written in Zechariah; *What seest thou, Zechariah? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. This said he to me; This is the curse that goeth over the face of the whole earth. For everyone that stealeth shall be judged as on this side according to it.* [Zech. 5, 2. 3.] For what is a 'flying roll' saving Holy Writ, which whilst it tells us of heavenly themes, lifts up the bent of the mind to things on high; for while we see that it is above us, we leave minding, i.e. desiring things below. And it is described as having 'a breadth of ten cubits' and a 'length of twenty cubits,' in that the breadth of our practice is single, and the long expectance of hope is extended to double, since in return for our good practice both here there is peace of mind, and there eternal joys in store for us, as Truth bears witness, Who saith; *And everyone that hath forsaken houses or lands, &c. shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life*. [Matt. 19, 29] For the number one hundred is completed by the number ten multiplied ten times. Thus he gets back an hundredfold [perhaps 'an hundredfold *here.'* (reading Hic.)], who, though he has nothing, by the mere perfection of his mind

alone, no longer seeks to possess any thing in this world. And in this way, since by this same we have a double measure paid back to us for a single one, that roll is justly drawn out through twenty cubits in length, which is carried out in breadth through ten. But because these very sacred oracles stand for eternal condemnation to those who either will not acquaint themselves with them, or in any wise when made acquainted with them set them at nought, it is rightly said of this roll, *This is the curse, which goeth forth over the face of the whole earth*. And wherefore it is called a curse is added; *For everyone that is a thief*, as it is therein written, *shall be judged*. Therefore the hypocrite, as he cares not to live after the words of the law which he knows, and seeks golden opinions by store of instruction, will be 'a thief to be judged,' since by this, that he speaks just words, he usurps to himself the praise of the just man's life. Concerning whom it is still farther added rightly,

Ver.16. *He shall suck the head of asps: the viper's tongue shall slay him.*

19. The 'asp' is a small serpent, but the 'viper' hath more length of body. And asps produce eggs, and their young are hatched from the eggs. But when vipers have conceived, their 'young ravin in their womb, which bursting the parents' sides issue out of their bellies. Hence too it is called the 'viper,' because it is a 'parent [*vi parit.*] by violence.' Thus the viper is so produced that it comes forth by violence, and is brought into the world by the killing of the mother. What then is represented by the little asps, saving the hidden suggestions of impure spirits, who steal upon [Ben. 'surripiunt,' Steal from, both others 'surrepunt.'] the hearts of men by slight prompting at first, and what by the 'viper's tongue' save the violent temptation of the devil? For at first he steals upon them gently, but afterwards he drags them even by force. And so he 'sucks the poison of asps,' in that the little beginning of secret suggestion is first produced in the heart, but 'the viper's tongue slayeth him,' in that afterwards the captive

soul is killed by the venom of violent temptation. In the first case unclean spirits speak to the heart of man with their crafty counsels, and these, while they persuade with gentleness, as it were infuse the poison of asps. Whence it is written, *They break asps eggs, and weave the spider's web; He that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is hatched breaketh out into a basilisk*. [Is. 59, 5] Since to 'break asps' eggs,' to wicked men is, to manifest by evil deeds the counsels of evil spirits, which lurk in their hearts. Moreover, to 'weave spiders' webs' is, on account of the lust of this world, to be busied in any temporal employments. Which, whilst they are established with no stedfastness, assuredly are carried off by the wind of a mortal life. And it is well added; *He that eateth of their eggs dieth.* In that he that admits the counsels of impure spirits kills the life of his soul in him. 'And that which is hatched, breaketh out into a basilisk,' in that the suggestion of the bad spirit which is covered up in the heart, is nursed unto full iniquity. For 'basilisk' ['Regulus,' which is a translation of the Greek Basiliscov. see Plin. viii. 21.] means the king of serpents, and who is the head of the sons of perdition, save Antichrist? Therefore 'that, which is hatched, will break out into a basilisk,' in that he who harbours in himself the counsel of the 'asp' to nourish them to life, being made a member of the wicked head, is engrafted into the body of Antichrist. Of which hypocrite it is said, *He shall suck the head of asps, and the viper's tongue shall slay him*, in that when he gladly welcomes the evil suggestion of our old enemy, afterwards he surrenders himself vanquished to his forcible temptations. Hence too in Paradise, to man when he was standing, he brought in words of soft suggestion, but him whom he once caught away to the act of consent, now henceforth he forces on even resisting him, and conquered by the gratifications of his corrupt state of being, kills him well nigh by dint of violence. But perhaps we may be able to make out the meaning of these same sentences by a contrary mode of interpretation. Thus because the 'asp'

kills quickly by its venom, but the ‘viper’ more slowly, by the ‘asp’ we have denoted a violent and instantaneous temptation, but by the ‘viper’ a gentle and prolonged one. And hence to the one death is said to lie in the ‘sucking of the head,’ but to the viper ‘in the tongue,’ in that a sudden temptation often as soon as it arises kills the soul off its guard, but a lengthened temptation, because it is longer recommending evil things by the suggesting of them, kills as does a viper with its tongue. And because every hypocrite, being penetrated with the suggestion of evil spirits, as with the poison of serpents, never considers what are the gifts from above of the Holy Spirit, while he spreads abroad the bent of the heart in golden opinions without, it is rightly added;

Ver. 17. *He shall not see the streamlets of the torrent river of honey and butter.*

20. The Lord saith in the Gospel; *He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*. [John 7, 38. 39.] Where the Evangelist subjoins, saying, *But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive*. And so ‘the streamlets of the river’ are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Charity is ‘a streamlet of the river,’ faith is ‘a streamlet of the river,’ hope is ‘a streamlet of the river.’ But because no hypocrite ever loves either God or his neighbour, when he makes the transitory glory of the world his aim, he does not see the streamlets of the river, in that he is not watered with the overflowing of charity. Whereas the hypocrite goes after present gains, he disregards future blessings, and not having faith, he sees not in the mind ‘the streamlet of the river,’ inasmuch as *faith is the evidence of things not seen*. [Heb. 11, 1] And while the hypocrite clings to the things that are seen, he makes light of those, which are not seen, therefore he does not see the ‘streamlets of the river’ in desire, in that he is taken up with visible things alone. And it is written, *For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*

[Rom. 8, 24] He then would have seen 'streamlets of the river' if he had shut his eyes to the glory of this world, and opened them to the love of the heavenly country. And observe that he does not say 'streams,' but 'streamlets.' For the 'streamlets of the river' may be taken for those spiritual gifts, which trickle in such fine streams from heavenly sources into the soul of him that loveth, that they can never be compassed by the mouth of the flesh. For it is often the case that the spirit of him that loves is filled with such a mighty gift of contemplation, that it has power to see what it has not power to utter. Now the 'torrent river' is the inundation of the Holy Spirit itself, which in exuberant outpouring is gathered in the soul of him in contemplation, when his mind is full beyond what he is able to comprehend. And it is necessary to be known, that when the grace of the Holy Spirit bathes us, it fills us with 'honey and butter' equally. For 'honey' falls from above, but 'butter' is drawn from the milk of animals, and so 'honey' is from the air, 'butter' from the flesh. But the Only-begotten Son of the Most High Father, while He is God above all things, was made Man one among all things. Who when he replenished us with the sweetness of His Divine Nature and the mystery of His Incarnation, satisfied us with 'honey and butter' at once. And so seeing that the Holy Spirit rejoices the soul It has filled, at once with the sweetness of His divinity and the belief of His Incarnation, these are described as 'the streamlets of the torrent river of honey and butter' together, in that they both refresh the soul with sweetness by the exalted knowledge of God, and anoint it with the mystery of the Benefit [*Charismatis*] by the grace of the Incarnation. But whereas this hypocrite, being dissipated in outward regards, does not taste these interior gifts, he adjoins to what after punishments he is tending, in that it is added;

Ver. 18. *He shall pay for all the things that he hath done, nor yet shall he be consumed.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

21. For he ‘pays’ in torment for those desires, which he retained here contrary to right, and being consigned to avenging flames, he is always dying, in that he is always kept alive in death. For he is never consumed in death, in that if his life in dying were consumed, his punishment likewise would be brought to an end together with his life; but that he may be tormented without end, he is forced to live on without end in punishment, that he whose life here was dead in sin, may have his death there living in punishment. Let him say then; He shall pay for all the things that he hath done, nor yet shall he be consumed, forasmuch as he is tormented, and not put out, he dies and lives, he is falling away and holding on, always finishing, without being finished. These things are very terrible in the healing of the ear only, how infinitely more terrible in the enduring of them! Now because the multiplicity of his wickedness demands that he should never be without punishment, it is fitly added;

According to the multitude of his inventions shall he also suffer.

22. For whereas he found out many things in order to sin, he is tormented with new inventions in punishment. Since what he could not have suspected here, he is made sensible of there, when he is given over to vengeance. For as the Elect in exercising themselves in good works, sometimes set themselves to do more than the Lord thought fit to bid them, (for virginity of the flesh is no where commanded, but only commended; since if it were commanded, then it would follow that wedlock must henceforth be deemed sin, and yet there are many strong in the virtue of virginity, so as to render more in service than they received in command,) so very commonly the wicked are each practised in bad ways, so that they find out in evil doing more for them to do than by the practice of the lost they received examples of wickedness. And hence they are stricken with the torments of an ampler retribution, in that they too of their own heads invented practices on an ampler scale, which they deserve to be stricken for.

And so it is well said, According to the multitude of his inventions shall he also suffer. For he would not find out new wickedness, except he also sought it; and he would not seek it, except he was eager to do it of set purpose. Therefore in his tormenting the excessiveness of evil devising is taken into account, and he receives the pain of a worthy recompense. And although the woe of all the damned is infinite, yet they have worse torments inflicted upon them, who invented many things in wicked ways by their desires as well. Now since Zophar has brought in the punishment of this hypocrite, he immediately adds his sin, nor does he describe anyone in particular, but that from which all sins have their origin. For it is written, *Covetousness is the root of all evil*. [1 Tim. 6, 10] He then, whom covetousness is described as having dominion over, surely is proved to be subject to all evil propensities. Thus he subjoins,

Ver. 19, 20. *Because he hath broken down and laid bare the house of the poor, because he hath violently taken it away and not builded it, neither is he satisfied in his belly.*

23. He 'breaks in pieces and lays bare the house of the poor,' who is not ashamed as well to rob out of avarice him whom he crushes by power. 'He violently taketh it away and doth not build it.' As if it were expressed in plain words; 'He that ought to have builded it, he over and above takes it away.' For the Lord Who is to come in judgment, shall say to the reprobate, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye covered Me not, &c*. [Matt. 25, 42. 43.] as the consequence of which sin it is added, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*. If then he is sentenced to so great a penalty, who is convicted merely of not having given away his own, with what punishment does not that man deserve to be stricken, who is proved to have taken the things of others also? And so he 'took it away and did not build it up,' in

that he not only never gave any thing of his own, but also took away what was another's. Now it is well added; *Surely his belly shall not be satisfied*. For the 'belly' of the wicked man is avarice, in that there is collected together in it whatsoever is swallowed with wrong desire. But it is plain that avarice is not extinguished, but increased by the objects desired. For like fire, when it has got fuel to feed on, it increases; and from the same cause that the flame appears to be restrained for a moment, it is seen a little while after to spread itself out. And it often happens that when Almighty God is greatly wroth with the covetous soul, He first lets all things accrue to it according to its wish, and afterwards takes it away in vengeance, that it may undergo eternal punishments on account of them. And hence it is added;

And when he shall have that which he desired, he shall not be able to possess it.

24. For it is a mark of greater indignation, when that thing is given which is desired amiss, and therefrom there ensues sudden retribution, because he got that likewise, which he went after when God was wroth the while. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, where the people are described as having lusted after flesh for food in a wrong way; *But while their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the most of them*. [Ps. 78, 30. 31] For the judgments of God are used to be slower in appearing, when wrong wishes are hindered that they should not be put in execution. For the quicker that a bad wish is suffered to be fulfilled, it is usually punished the more speedily in proportion. And so by the very act, whereby the hypocrite is aggrandized in haste to become powerful, it is brought to pass with proportionate rapidity, that he should not be. For the trees too that grow slower, last to number many years, and those which make way in a short space of time, wither the sooner, and in a manner, whilst they are hasting to be, they are going the way not to be. It goes on;

Ver. 21. *There shall none of his meat be left.*

25. ‘His meat’ is all that he coveted with wrong desire; but when the hypocrite is struck, ‘there is none of his meat left,’ in that when he is himself carried to eternal punishments, he is parted from all the good things that he had gotten here. And hence it is yet further added;

Therefore shall nought remain from his goods.

For if ‘aught did remain of his goods,’ he would take along with him the things that he had possession of. But because while going after every thing, he would not fear the Judge, upon being removed out of this life, he goes naked to the Judge. To which same wicked man, it is but little for his recompensing that he is tormented in after punishment, if only in this life he is let to go free. But there is no liberty in sin, seeing that it is written; *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*; [2 Cor. 3, 17] and to the wicked soul usually its very own sin becomes its own punishment. And hence it is rightly added;

In the fulness of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits.

26. For first from avarice he pants to heap together things he covets, and when he has gathered together a great multitude as it were in a kind of belly of avarice, ‘in the fulness of his sufficiency, he is in straits,’ in that whilst he is full of anxiety how he may keep the things he has gotten, his own fulness itself straitens him. For the field of a certain rich man had brought abundant fruits, but because he had not where to lay up such stores, he said, *What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits*. *And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater*. [Luke 12, 17. 18.] He then who from being straitened by his abundance said, What shall I do? was in a fever as if oppressed with a quantity of food. Let us consider with what longings he desired his land might produce abundant crops. Behold now his wishes are completed, seeing that the land did bring him abundant fruits. But forasmuch as there are not places enough to stow it away, the rich man being greatly aggrandized knows not what he should do.

O straitness caused by ‘fulness of sufficiency!’ By the abundance of his land the mind of the covetous man is straitened. For when he says, *What shall I do*? he clearly shews that, surcharged with the engrossments of his desires, he went heavily under a kind of bundle of stores; and so it is well said, *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.* Since the mind of the covetous man, which had before looked for rest from plenty, was afterwards put to worse trouble for the keeping thereof. And hence it is also yet further added;

He shall burn with heat, and every woe shall come down upon him.

27. For first he had sorrow in the mere wearying of his own concupiscence how to snatch hold of the things coveted, how to secure one sort by arts of flattery, another sort by means of threats; but after that having possessed himself of the gifts of fortune he has attained his desire, another annoyance wears him down, viz. that it is with fear and anxiety he keeps safe that which he remembers it cost him infinite trouble to acquire. On every side he dreads conspirators, and fears to be himself subjected to the very thing that he has done to others. One more powerful he is afraid of, lest he be exposed to violence from him; a poor man, when he sees one, he looks on as a thief. The things themselves which he has hoarded up, he is at great pains about, lest by the failure of their own inherent nature they be consumed by neglect. In all these particulars then, because fear by itself is punishment, the unhappy wretch suffers things as great as he fears to suffer. And after this he is yet further brought to hell, and given over to eternal torments. Therefore ‘every woe cometh down upon him,’ who is at once consumed first here by the punishment of coveting, afterwards by the trouble of safe keeping, and there at some future time by the punishment of retributive wrath.

28. But it is wonderful security of the heart, not to seek what does not belong to us, but to rest content with each day’s sustenance day by day.

From which same security it is that the Rest everlasting also arises, seeing that from a good and quiet frame we pass to eternal delights. Contrariwise lost sinners are at once worn down here in desires, and there in torments. And from the labour of taking thought there arises to them the labour of pain, in that by the fever of avarice they are drawn into the fire of hell. And because, as we have already often said, it often happens that the wicked man, the sooner he attains his object, is the more easily carried off to torment, it is added in the form of a wish.

Ver. 23. *Would that his belly might be filled, that God might cast the fury of His wrath upon him, and rain His war upon him.*

29. The Lord 'rains His war' upon this hypocrite, when he smites his deeds with the swords of His judgments. Thus for God to 'rain war,' is His pressing hard to destruction the life of the wicked man by His strict sentences from on high. God 'raining war' is His smiting the hearts that are lifted up against Himself, and His wounding the blasted soul with the darts of His judgments, as with a kind of thickening drops of rain, that when he is now carried off to judgment, one while he should remind himself how he coveted wickedly, and more wickedly set himself to heap together the things he coveted, at another time grieve that he is parted from the things thus heaped together, and one day feel the very fire of retribution, which, that he might not live well, he was too indifferent to foresee. It goes on;

Ver. 24. *He shall flee from the iron weapons; and rush upon the bow of brass.*

30. We ought to know, that avarice sometimes steals upon men from pride, and sometimes from apprehension. Thus there are some who whilst they aim to appear with greater power, are kindled to the going after the things of others; and there are some, who while they are afraid lest the necessaries of the aids of life should be wanting to them, freely give their minds to covetousness, and go after the things of others when they fancy

that their own may not be enough for them. Now all necessity is not unaptly termed 'iron,' in that it pains the life of him that wants with the wound of grief, as it is likewise expressed concerning the necessities of him, who, being sold by his brethren, led an afflicted life; *The iron entered into his soul*. [Ps. 105, 18] What then are 'the iron weapons' but necessities of the present life, which press hard upon, and push to extremity, the life of the needy? Since iron is consumed by rust, but brass is naturally more difficult to be consumed by it. Therefore by 'iron' there is represented present necessity which is transient, but by 'brass' the eternal doom. And whereas the judgment Above is not heeded by the mind of the wicked man, it is justly likened to a 'bow,' since it strikes as it were out of ambush, whilst the person that is struck does not observe it. And thus, He shall flee from the iron weapons, and rush upon the bow of brass; in that whilst from dreading present necessities, he seizes things without number, through maliciousness he is exposing himself before the severe strokes of the final judgment; and, while he 'fleeth the weapons of iron,' he is encountered by the arrows from the bow of brass, in that, while foolishly providing against the ills of time, he is struck by eternal doom. For whosoever with guilt fleeth the hardness of need here, meets there an everlasting duration of just retribution. But before the time that he is hurried off to judgment, what are the things which this wicked man is busied in here, he yet further informs us. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *He is drawn and cometh out of his sheath, yea, lightening in his bitterness.*

31. This wicked man lays plots in arts of robbery on his neighbours. And whilst he is plotting mischief in the thoughts of his heart, it is as if 'the sword were still in its sheath;' but when he wickedly executes the mischief, which he has contrived, he 'cometh out of his sheath,' in that he is brought out to view, from the secresy of his thoughts, in the wickedness of evil doing. He is shewn to light in the deed, such as he was, hidden from view,

in the thought. And observe that he says, drawn and cometh out; i.e. ‘drawn’ by the deceiver, but ‘coming out’ by the act of his own free will. For he that is ‘drawn’ unquestionably follows one that draws him. But he that ‘cometh forth,’ seems to act according to his own will. That man, then, who is at once drawn to the several wicked practices by our old enemy, and yet fast bound in the desire of them by his own free will, is described as ‘drawn and coming forth from his sheath,’ since this thing, that he issues forth from the bad thought to the worst enacting, belongs at once to the wickedness of that spirit that prompted, and of him that consented by an act of his own will.

32. The terribleness of whose power is further shewn, where it is immediately added, *Yea, lightening in his bitterness*. For when the lightning comes suddenly from above, when it shines with terribleness before our eyes, it displays shining brightness, and strikes the object before it. Thus, thus is it with the wicked man, when he has secured to himself the glory of the present life: by the same cause by which he is shewn to view bright by power in the present world, it is brought to pass that he is blasted at the last. For the wicked man’s as it were ‘lightening,’ is his shining in this life’s honour; but whereas the splendour of that glory is consigned to the eternal woes of hell, it is rightly said in this place, ‘Yea, lightening in his bitterness.’ For he that now seems as though he took delight in striking by terribleness and brightness, for this cause afterwards undergoes punishments for everlasting. And indeed it is written of a certain rich man that he ‘fared splendidly’ every day. Now it is one thing to shew ‘splendidly,’ and another to ‘lighten;’ for sometimes there is splendour without striking, but splendour with striking is described by the title of ‘lightning.’ He then who being placed in power does injury to others, is not unaptly entitled ‘lightening,’ in that from the same means whereby he is

himself exalted against the good, as it were by the light of glory, the life of the good is made to feel torture. It goes on;

Terrible ones shall come and go over him.

33. Who are here called ‘terrible ones’ except evil spirits, who are to be feared and avoided by godly minds? And whereas those same evil spirits are to be believed to attach themselves severally to certain particular vices, when this wicked man seems to quit for a moment one set of faults, and begins to commit another, then surely ‘the terrible ones come and go over him,’ in that the soul of the bad man though one set of bad habits abandons, yet another takes possession of it. For you may often see the bad man, who is set in earthly power, agitated with furious passion, and executing all that his rage suggests; and when his fury is gone, then directly lust ravages his soul; when lust is stopped for a time, self-exaltation as on the ground of continency is immediately made to take its place in his heart, and that he may be feared by others, he aims to shew himself as an object of terror. But when the occasion requires that he should say any thing with double-dealing, laying aside in a certain sort the terribleness of pride, he flatters with an easy address, and when he ceases to shew himself proud, he does not dread to turn double-dealing. And so it is rightly said of him, in whose mind one vice continually takes the place of another, *Terrible ones come and go upon him*; since for all the evil habits that he is borne down with departing and taking each other’s place, his soul is as it were overrun by as many evil spirits going and returning. But it is these things which he does in act, that issue outwardly by parts and pieces, for on his soul he has all things bad tied fast at once and together. Hence it is added;

Ver. 26. *All darkness is hid in his secret places.*

34. For though the hypocrite exhibits good actions on the surface, yet a certain ‘darkness’ of evil deeds appears in him; yet it less comes forth in act, than lies buried in his secret thought. For he who does not fulfil all

things at once in execution, does in his heart in silence hold all things that may do mischief. Thus 'all darkness' is said to be 'hid in his secret places,' in that though he does not exhibit to view all things evil in himself, yet he aims to bring down all upon his fellow-creatures. Now let him add the retribution, which this soul so reprobate shall be visited with. It goes on;

A fire that is not kindled shall consume him.

35. Most wonderfully in these few words is the fire of hell set forth! For bodily fire, in order to become fire, stands in need of bodily fuel; and when it is necessary for it to be preserved, as we well know, it is nourished by wood heaped upon it, neither can it be, except by being kindled, nor live, save by being cherished. But contrarily the fire of hell, whilst it is a bodily fire, and bodily consumes the children of perdition that are cast into it, is neither kindled by human effort, nor kept alive by wood, but being once made to be, it lasts unextinguishable: at one and the same time it needs no kindling, and lacks not heat. And so it is well said of this wicked one; *A fire not kindled shall consume him*; in that the justice of the Almighty, foreseeing future events, did from the very beginning of the world create the fire of hell, which should once begin in the punishment of the wicked, but never end its heat even without fuel. But it is necessary to know, that all the children of perdition, as they sinned in Spirit and flesh conjointly, are there tormented in spirit and flesh alike. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger*. [Ps. 21, 9] The Lord shall confound them in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them. For an 'oven' is heated within; but he who is 'devoured by fire' begins to be consumed from the outside. Thus that holy Scripture might shew that the lost burn both within and without, it testifies that they are at once 'devoured by fire,' and 'made as a fiery oven,' that by fire they should be tormented in the body, and by grief burn in spirit. Hence in this place too, when it is

declared of the ungodly man that *a fire that is not kindled shall consume him*, it is forthwith added concerning his spirit;

Being left in his tabernacle, it shall go ill with him.

36. The ‘tabernacle’ of the wicked man is his flesh, in that he inhabits it in joyfulness, and, if it were possible, wishes he might never quit it. But the righteous, as they place their delight in the prospect of heavenly rewards, and have their conversation in heaven, while they are still in the flesh are as if they were no longer in the flesh, in that they are not fed with any gratification of the flesh. And hence it is said to some persons; *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit* [Rom. 8, 9]: not that they were not in the flesh, who by the epistles of their master received charges of exhortation; but it is in a manner to be no longer ‘in the flesh,’ not to own aught connected with the love of fleshly objects. But on the other hand this wicked man, because he set all his delight in a fleshly life, ‘dwelt in the tabernacle’ of the flesh. Which very flesh when he shall receive back in the resurrection, he shall burn along with it delivered over to the fires of hell. Then be longs to be brought out of it; then he seeks, if he might be able, to escape from his torments; then be begins to wish he could get quit of that which he loved: but because he preferred that flesh to God, it is brought to pass by the judgment of God, that by it he is more fully tormented in the fire. Here then he has no mind to leave it, and yet is severed from it, and there he wishes to leave it and yet is kept in it for punishments. And so for the increase of his torments, he is at once both removed out of the body here against his will, and held fast in the body there when he would not. Therefore because his spirit in torment longs [So A.B.C.D. — Ben. ‘shall long.’ *lewpetrian* Sept.] to get rid of the flesh, which it set before itself in loving amiss, and has not the power, it is lightly said here, being left in his tabernacle it shall go ill with him. Of whose accusing it is directly said;

Ver. 27. *The heavens shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.*

37. What do we understand by 'the heavens,' but the righteous, and what by 'the earth,' but sinners? And hence in the Lord's prayer we pray; *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*, meaning this, that the will of our Creator, in the same way as it is accomplished in all the righteous, may also be fulfilled in all sinners as well. Moreover of the righteous it is said, *The heavens declare the glory of God* [Ps. 19, 1]. And to man when he sinned the sentence is pronounced, *Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt return*. And so of this ungodly man, when dragged to that awful judgment; 'the heavens reveal his iniquity, and the earth rises up against him,' that that man, who here never spared either the good or the bad, should in that tremendous inquest have the life of the righteous and of sinners alike accusing him. And of the two indeed it is worse if a man injure the good rather than sinners; and hence it is said by the Prophet, *For her blood is in the midst of her: she poured it upon the smoothest rock* [*super limpidissimam petram* V.]*; she poured it not upon the ground to cover it with dust*: [Ez. 24, 7] by 'the ground' and 'the dust' indeed denoting sinners, but by the 'very smooth rock,' the righteous man, who is not made rough by the hard grazes of sins; and so 'the blood is poured upon the very smooth rock,' when the wickedness of a bloodthirsty mind rages in the afflicting of the righteous soul. While then it is worse unjustly to distress the righteous than the unrighteous, yet it is much worse to hurt the righteous and unrighteous together; and therefore whereas the wicked have injured both the good and the bad alike, in the accusing to damnation, 'the heavens shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him, because he at one and the same time set himself against those who savoured the things of heaven, and oppressed those who savoured of things below. But it may be that by 'the earth' we have denoted not the sinful and reprobate, but

those that being busied in earthly courses, by the help of alms and of tears attain to eternal life. Concerning whom it is said by the Psalmist, when the Lord is proclaimed as coming to Judgment, *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that He may Judge His people*. [Ps. 50. 4] For He 'calls the heavens from above,' when they, who, leaving all that they had, held on the tenour of the heavenly life, are called to sit with Him in judgment, and come with Him as judges; but 'the earth is called from above,' when they who were tied down to earthly courses of action, yet sought therein for heavenly more than for earthly profit and advantage, to which persons it is said, *I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed Me*. So 'the heaven reveals the wickedness' of the hypocrite, and 'the earth rises up against him,' in that both they who come in company with God as judges, and they who through the ordeal of the Judgment are set free, become the witnesses of his iniquity. Thus nought of the things he has committed is hidden from sight in the time of condemnation, and if indeed many of his deeds are now concealed from his fellow-creatures by double-dealing, yet in the day of condemnation; whatever there was that lay hidden within him, it is brought to light. Hence it is fitly added;

Ver. 28. *The shoot of his house shall be disclosed, and he shall be taken away in the day of God's wrath.*

38. 'The shoot of his house is disclosed,' when every thing bad that sprung up in his consciousness is shewn to view. For now the 'shoot of the hypocrite's house' remains hidden from sight, in that though his practice appears good in the delineation, yet the intent lies hidden. Since it is one thing what he does, and another thing what he has in view. But when, at the coming of the Judge, each man's conscience shall be brought forward for its testimony, (whence it is written, *Their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another*, [Rom. 2, 15]) then the 'shoot of the hypocrite's house is herein disclosed,' because the evil design is laid bare in his heart.

‘And he shall be taken away in the day of God’s wrath,’ in that when the indignation of the Judge is revealed, being given to avenging fires, he is parted from His sight. For he that, whilst he lived, would not take thought of the highest things, being forced down by the weight of his sins, shall fall from the face of the Judge into the depths of punishment. But now the Judge both sees and bears with the sinner in his sins, and because it is the day of forbearance and not as yet the day of fury, He waits for each one for his conversion. Now in this day of forbearance the hypocrite as it were remains unmoved, whilst he both commits many evil deeds, and is chastised by no scourges; but ‘in the day of fury he shall be taken away,’ in that being carried off to punishment in the season of vengeance he is cut off from the countenance of the eternal Judge. It goes on;

Ver. 29. *This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage of his words from the Lord.*

39. For if, while placed in this life, he had been minded to act rightly, he would have had for his ‘portion’ with the Lord fellowship in the kingdom of heaven; but because he chose to be subjected to bad desires, his ‘portion from the Lord’ he found in torment, because he did not seek to obtain a share in the grace of that Lord. But it is well said, *And the heritage of his words from the Lord*. For he that is immersed in punishment for enormous deeds of wickedness perchance it was thought would never be judged for the words which he had spoken amiss. But when the strict justice of Almighty God exacts punishment from lost sinners for their froward deeds, it renders evil things to them even to the recompensing of their words, that they who are debtors for great transgressions, being consigned to punishment, may pay even the very last farthing. For they are spared the least misdemeanours, who rigorously lamented the greater evils in themselves. And those whom great sins weigh down even the very least alike put to pain in hell. Now holy men desire not to receive a portion from

the Lord, but to have the Lord Himself for their portion. Hence the Prophet prays, saying, *God is my portion forever* [Ps. 73, 26]: but the wicked man, because he sought not to have the Lord Himself for his ‘portion,’ found fire for his ‘portion’ without the Lord, that being shut out from His face, because he did not seek to find joy in Him, he might be tormented beneath Him. These things Zophar brought forward in such a way, that by what he spoke against the hypocrite, he might strike a blow against the life of blessed Job, thinking that he who was stricken by the Lord, had not done with a simple heart all the good things which he had done. For him, whom he saw beneath the rod, he supposed to have displeased God. But the friends of blessed Job likewise maintain a likeness of heretics in this particular, in that whilst they see, in Holy Church, some, that live aright, groaning beneath the rod, they reckon that they have not good merit in good deeds, and set them down as bad men, whom they see afflicted with the scourge of God; not knowing, that is to say, that *Many are the afflictions of the righteous* [Ps. 43, 19], and that He *scourgeth every man whom He receiveth*. [Heb. 12, 6] But blessed Job, after the manner of the Holy and Universal Church, which bears with patience the darts of words at the hands of the froward, and, when she hears the sayings of the proud, never leaves the pathway of her humility, made answer with great humility of heart, saying,

C. xxi. Ver. 2. *Hear I pray you my speech, and practise penitence.*

40. For he that when he said *Hear*, added, *I pray you*, shews how humbly he speaks, whilst he entreats persons, swelling with pride against him, to bring back their thought to the teaching of saving truth. But whereas holy men, within the pale of the Universal Church, are not only ready to teach what is right, but also to undergo things that are done against them, they do not dread being laughed at. Hence it is added;

Suffer me that I may speak; and after my words, if it shall seem so, laugh.

41. For when good men speak, there are two points, which they regard in their discourse, viz. that they should be of use to themselves and their hearers, or to themselves alone, if they are unable to be of use to their hearers. For when the good things they deliver are heard to good purpose, they benefit both themselves and their hearers; but when they are turned to ridicule by the hearer, doubtless they were of use to themselves, whom they made quit of the sin of silence. And so let blessed Job, that he might serve both himself and his hearers, speak the words; *Hear I pray you my speech, and practise repentance*. But that he may discharge himself of the obligation which he owes, even if he is unable to avail his hearers, he adds, *Suffer me that I speak; and after my words, if it shall seem so, laugh.* I observe that whereas he added, and practise repentance, he first premised, *Hear*, but when he added the words, *and after my words*, *if it shall seem so, laugh*, he premised*, Suffer me that I may speak*; for 'hearing' is of one who acts of free will, but 'bearing' of one who acts against his own inclination. And so if his friends desire to be taught, let them 'hear,' but if they are ready to mock, let them 'suffer' the things that are said; seeing that to a proud mind, instruction in humility is a grievous and onerous weight. It goes on;

Ver. 4. *As for me, is my dispute against man, that I should not be justly sad?*

42. Whosoever in pleasing God displeases man, has no grounds for sadness. But he, who in pleasing man displeases God, or thinks that he displeases both God and man together, if sadness does not come upon him, proves a stranger to the excellency of wisdom. Now blessed Job believed that he had displeased God in the midst of his strokes, and therefore he called back his mind to sadness, in that He was not to be disregarded,

Whom he was afraid that he had displeased. Now, if he had been pleading against man concerning the merits of his life, he would have had no occasion to feel sadness, but seeing that by his present strokes he was made doubtful of his past life, he justly sought for sadness under the scourge. Hence too it is added;

Ver. 5. *Mark me, and be astonished.*

43. i.e. Consider what I have done, and be astonished at the things that I undergo under this infliction of the rod. And he yet further rightly introduces the words;

And lay your finger upon your mouth.

As if he had said in plain speech; ‘Knowing the good things that I have done and seeing the ills that I am subjected to, your own selves keep even from offence in words, and in my strokes dread your own hurts.’ Or indeed seeing that by our fingers we distinguish things severally, discretion is not unfitly represented by the fingers; and hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Blessed be the Lord my God, Which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight* [Ps. 144, 1]; i.e. by the ‘hands’ denoting practice, and by the ‘fingers,’ discretion. And so the finger is laid to the mouth, when the tongue is bridled by discretion, that by what it utters, it may not fall into the sin of foolishness. And therefore he says, *Lay your finger upon your mouth*; i.e. ‘join the virtue of discretion to your speech, that in those things which ye say light against the hypocrite, ye may see to what persons they are proper to be said.’ It goes on;

Ver. 6. *Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my flesh.*

44. That blessed Job was not forgetful of his deeds, the last utterance of his lips proves. Wherefore this which he now says to his friends, *Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my flesh*, must clearly be said in mockery. As if it were in plain words; ‘If I remember that I have

had any thing of the hypocrite in me, directly I tremble in tears of penitence.' And 'if he remembered, his flesh was shaken with trembling' he declares, i.e. that the weakness of practice was disheartened by the dread of vengeance. But as Zophar said many things about the sudden condemnation of the wicked man, whereby he snapped at the powerful estate of blessed Job, the holy man subjoins in answer to his words, saying,

Ver. 7. *Wherefore do the wicked live, are lifted up, and strengthened by riches?*

45. For except the patience of God bore with them, they would never live long in their sins. For they are 'lifted up by riches,' when they first begin to be powerful, but they are 'strengthened,' when they are permitted to continue long in this life. Since those whose substance uplifts them, length of days strengthens in the pride of their power. Or surely they are said to be lifted up and strengthened, in that they are 'lifted up' by honours, 'strengthened' by substance. But there are very many, who while they are both 'lifted up' by honours and 'strengthened' by riches, are vouchsafed the things which they covet in this life, but deprived of the succession of children. To these their very power is punishment, when they see themselves possessed of a large inheritance, but not possessed of heirs to whom they may leave it. What good then, if every thing be forthcoming, but children be wanting who may become their heirs? It proceeds;

Ver. 8. *Their seed is established in their sight with them.*

46. For the increase of exceeding happiness, together with a large patrimony, they have heirs too given them; and that no unavoidable temporal circumstance either may remove from their eyes those in whom their soul delights, it is said of this seed of theirs, *Their seed is established in their sight*. But what if children are vouchsafed, yet the children themselves stricken with barrenness? The family is made extinct in them, in

like sort as it was feared it would be made extinct by the barrenness of their parents. It goes on;

And a crowd of kinfolk and grandchildren before their eyes.

Observe, life is theirs, honours and riches are theirs, children are theirs, grandchildren are theirs. What if any secret fancy gall the mind, and domestic discord pierce the joys of their security? What is the prosperity of this world, if it be not joyful? It goes on;

Ver. 9. *Their houses are secure and at peace, neither is the rod of God upon them.*

47. Their 'houses are secure and at peace,' in that they live on committing sin, they do things to be mourned over, and they never leave their joys. And the 'rod' of discipline from Above 'does not smite them,' and they go on the more unrestrainedly in sin, in proportion as they are punished less for sin. But as we have heard the things, which go prosperously within, what prosperity smiles on them in the field too, let us see. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *Their ox conceiveth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and loseth not her calf:*

It is the usage of common talk to call 'ox [*bos*]' masculine, and 'cow' feminine, but literary phraseology designates 'ox' of the common gender. Hence it is now said, *Their ox conceiveth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and loseth not her calf*. For to the owner of flocks, the first good fortune is that the flocks being free from barrenness conceive, next that the conception come to the birth, and the third that the thing which is produced be by nourishment reared to a growth. And so in order to shew that the wicked had them all together, blessed Job declares that 'their flocks had conceived and not miscarried, that they had brought forth and were not deprived of their own offspring.' But it is inferior good fortune, if whilst the flocks increase, the keepers of them do not thrive at the same time. And hence to

the fruitfulness of the flocks we have the fruitfulness of their household [*familiae*] made to succeed immediately. For it is said,

Ver. 11. *Their little ones go forth like flocks, and their children revel in sports.*

48. That as there are greater stores bestowed on them to have the possession of, so great numbers may spring up to keep them safe. But whereas he said, revel in sports, lest we should imagine that the mere sport of the children in the house of the wicked by itself was too mean and poor, he adds, saying;

Ver. 12. *They take the timbrel, and harp, and rejoice at the noise of the organ.*

As if he said in plain speech; 'Whilst the masters swell with honours and substance, the dependants rejoice in festive sports.' But, O blessed man, wherefore dost thou tell us all these many things of the delights of the wicked? It is now a long time that thou runnest on in the description of them; after much said, in one word point out what thou thinkest. It goes on;

Ver. 13. *They spend their days in wealth, and in a point of time go down to the lower parts.*

49. Yes, O blessed man, thou hadst for long dilated on their joys, how dost thou now declare that 'in a point of time they go down to the lower parts,' saving that all length of time of the present life is then known to be but a 'point,' when it is cut short by the end? For when a person is brought to the last end, he no longer keeps aught of the past, seeing that all the periods of time have elapsed, he has nought in the future, in that there remain not to him the moments of a single hour. So the life, which could be thus narrowed, was but a 'point' of time. For as we have before said, we set down the style in a point, and lift it up; and so he as it were touched life by a point who received and lost it. By a 'point' it is possible that this also may be understood, that it often happens that they that were long borne with in

wickedness, are seized by sudden death, that it should not even be granted them to bewail before death the things they have done wrong, but seeing that occasionally the life of the righteous also is cut short by a sudden end, we shall understand it better, if we take the words of their temporal life, in that whatever was capable of passing away was sudden. But the friends of blessed Job, who believed him to be unrighteous on this account that they saw him afflicted with scourges, rightly have the truth shewn them by the voice of that holy man concerning the blooming and ruin of the wicked, in that prosperity in the present life is no witness to innocency, since many are brought back to everlasting life by scourges, and very many die without a scourge to be dragged to infinite woes. Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 14. *Who say unto God, Depart from us.*

50. To say this in words even foolish men have not the boldness, yet all wicked persons say to God, not by their words but by their ways, *Depart from us*. For they that do those things which Almighty God forbids, what else are they doing but shutting up their soul against the Almighty. For just as to think of His precepts, is to introduce Him into one's self, so to resist His commandments is to keep Him away from the dwelling-place of the heart. And so they say, *Depart from us*, who refuse to yield Him an approach to them; and assail Him with wicked deeds, even if they seem to praise Him in words. Moreover they say;

For we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.

51. And that by this alone, that they are too indifferent to acquire the knowledge of Him. For there be some who from this that 'Truth' saith; *And that servant, which knoweth not his Lord's will, and doth things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. But he that knoweth his Lord's will, and did not according to it, shall be beaten with many* [Luke 12, 47. 48.]; choose not to know what they should do, and reckon as if they will be beaten less, if they are ignorant of what they ought to have put in practice.

Yet it is one thing not to have known, and another thing not to have chosen to know. For he knoweth not, who is willing to make the acquisition, but is not able. But he who, that he may not know, turns away his ear from the voice of truth, such a person is brought in, not one in ignorance, but a despiser. Now 'the way' of God is peace, 'the way' of God is humility, 'the way' of God is patience. But whilst the wicked disregard all these, they say, *We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways*. For whilst they are big with pride in this life, whilst they are swollen with honours, whilst, even if they have not, they covet, they slight 'the ways' of God in the thoughts of their hearts. For because God's way in this world was humility, this very Lord and God, the Redeemer of us men, came to reproaches, to mockery, to the Passion; and He underwent the adverse treatment of this world with patience, resolutely eschewed its good fortune, that He might both teach the prosperity of the eternal life to be aimed at, and the adversities of the present life not to be dreaded. But because the wicked covet the glory of the present life, and eschew disgrace, they are described as saying, *We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways*. For they are unwilling to know, what they scorn to do. Whose words are further continued, where it is said;

Ver. 15. *Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?*

52. For the mind of man being miserably discharged without, is so dissipated in things corporeal, as neither to return to itself within, nor to be able to think of Him, Who is invisible. Thus carnal men setting at nought spiritual commands, because they do not see God with bodily sight, one time or another come to this pass, that they even imagine Him not to be. Hence it is written, *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*. Whence also it is said now, *Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?* [Ps. 14, 1] For it very often happens that men make it more their aim to serve their fellow-creatures, whom they see with bodily sight, than to serve God, Whom they do not see. For in all that they do, they stretch towards the

reach of their eyes, and because they cannot stretch the eyes of the body to God, they either scorn to pay Him homage, or if they begin they grow wearied. For, as has been said, they do not believe Him to be, Whom they do not behold with bodily sight. These, did they but seek God the Author of all things in a spirit of humility, would in themselves experience that a thing which is not seen is better than an object which is seen. For they themselves subsist in being by virtue of an invisible soul and a visible body; but if that which is not seen be withdrawn from them, at once that perishes which is seen. And the eyes of the body indeed are open, but they cannot see or perceive any thing. For the sense of sight is gone, because the indweller has quitted, and the house of the flesh remains empty, since that invisible spirit has departed which was wont to look through its windows. Therefore that invisible things are better than visible ones, all carnal persons ought severally to conclude from themselves, and by this ladder of reflection (so to speak) to mount towards God, seeing that He is even herein that He continues invisible, and continues supreme in proportion as He can never be comprehended. But there are some, who do not doubt either that God is, or that He is incomprehensible, who notwithstanding seek from Him not Himself, but His external gifts. And when they see that these are wanting to those that obey Him, they scorn to obey Him themselves. In relation to whose words it is further added;

And what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?

53. When, in praying, God is not the object we seek, the mind is soon wearied in praying, in that when a man asks those things, which it may be that God of His secret counsel refuses to bestow, He is Himself brought into loathing, Who will not give the thing which is loved. Now the Lord desires that He may be loved Himself, more than the things which He has made, and that things eternal should be rather prayed for than temporal ones; as it is written, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all*

these things shall be added unto you. [Matt. 6, 33] For in that He saith not, 'shall be given,' but *shall be added unto you* he plainly shews that what is given as principal is one thing, and what is added over and above, another. For whereas to us the eternal world ought to be in the thought and intent, but the world of time in the use, both the one is 'given' and the other 'added' over and above in superabundance. And yet it very often happens, that when men pray for temporal good things, but do not look for eternal rewards, they seek the thing that is added, and do not want that whereunto it should be added. Nor do they reckon it to be the worth of their prayer, if here they be poor in things temporal, and there live for everlasting rich in blessedness; but having their eyes fixed on visible things alone, as has been said, they refuse to purchase for themselves the invisible by the labour of beseeching it. Who if they but sought objects above, would ply their labour already with fruit, in that when the mind, employed in prayers, pants after the form and fashion [*speciem*] of its Maker, burning with divine longings, it is united to that which is above, disjoined from that below, opens itself in the affection of its fervent passion, that it may take in, and while taking in kindles itself: merely to love things above is already to mount on high; and whilst with longing desire, the soul is agape after heavenly objects, in a marvellous way it tastes the very thing it longs to get. It goes on;

Ver. 16. *But because their good things are not in their hand, may their counsel be far from me.*

54. He 'holds his good things in his hand,' who in despising temporal things, forces them under the dominion of the mind. For whoever loves them over much, subjects himself more to them, than them to himself. For many of the righteous were rich in this world; sustained by their substance, and by their honour, they seemed to possess many things; yet forasmuch as their mind was not possessed by the excessive enjoyment of these things, which were theirs, 'their good things were in their hand,' because they were

held subordinate to the authority of the soul. But on the other hand the wicked so discharge themselves with all their hearts in aims at outward things, that they do not themselves so much hold the things possessed, but are holden with minds in bondage by the things they possess. Therefore because 'their good things are not in their hand,' it is rightly added, *let their counsel be far from me*. For what is 'the counsel of the wicked,' saving to seek earthly and neglect eternal glory, to aim at temporal well-being at the cost of interior detriment, and to change away transitory sorrows for eternal woes? Let the holy man, then, regarding these aims of the wicked, turn from them and say, *Let their counsel be far from me*. Because he sees it to be good beyond comparison, as it is, he had rather for a brief space groan here beneath the rod, than undergo the woes of eternal vengeance. But not even in this life do they, that are bent to make their way prosperous therein, enjoy an uninterrupted course of prosperity. But many times their joys are broken off by groans arising. Whence it is added;

Ver. 17. *How often shall their candle be put out? and how oft shall a flood come over them, and shall He divide sorrows in His fury?*

55. It often happens that the wicked man reckons the life of his children as a 'candle,' but when the son, that is loved overmuch, is taken away, what seemed the 'light' of the wicked is 'put out.' Often the wicked man reckons the credit of present honour his 'candle,' but, whilst, his dignity gone, he is cast down from his height, his candle is extinguished, which shone for him according to his desire. Often the wicked man thinks that the resources of earthly substance are his, like a great candle for light, but when upon ruin falling on him, he loses the riches which he loved more than himself, what else with this man but that he has lost the candle, in the light of which he was rejoicing? And so he that has no wish to rest his joy on the things of Eternity, neither here, where he is minded to establish himself, can he rejoice uninterruptedly. For as often as the 'candle of the wicked is put out,'

at once there 'cometh a flood upon them, and God divideth sorrows in His fury.' 'A flood cometh' upon the wicked when they undergo the waves of sorrow from adversity of some kind. For Almighty God, when He sees Himself contemned, and that delight is taken in earthly concupiscence, smites that with woes which He sees is preferred before Himself in the thoughts of the wicked man. Now it is well said, *And divideth sorrows in His fury*. For He that reserves eternal woes for the wicked man in retribution, and sometimes smites through his soul even here with temporal woe, because both here and there too He smites, 'divideth sorrows in His fury' upon the head of the ungodly. For neither does present punishment, which does not turn the mind of the wicked man from his bad desires, set him free from eternal chastisements. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and blasts of storms; this shall be a portion of their cup*. [Ps. 11, 6] In mentioning 'snares, fire, and brimstone, and blasts of storms,' he introduced indeed a multitude of woes; but because the sinner that is not amended by them is called to eternal punishments, he consequently called these woes no more his whole cup, but 'a portion of his cup,' seeing that their suffering is begun indeed here in woes, but is consummated in everlasting vengeance. Concerning whose end it is yet further added;

Ver. 18. *They shall be as chaff before the wind, and as ashes that the storm scattereth.*

56. When the wicked man is seen in power, when he is utterly without check or restraint in his acts of oppression and violence, by the imaginations of the weak he is accounted too well ballasted, and as rooted in this world. But when the sentence of the strict Judge cometh, 'all the wicked shall be as chaff before the wind,' because, if I may say so, all they are by the sudden blast of wrath lifted and carried to the fire, whom here once in their hasty judgments the tears of the distressed were as unable to

move as a superincumbent mass of a stubborn weight. And to the hands of griping Judgment those are light, who by injustice were heavy upon their neighbours. *And as ashes that the storm scattereth*. Before the eyes of Almighty God, the life of the wicked man is ashes, in that though he appear green for a moment, yet is he already seen consumed by His judgment, seeing that he is set aside for everlasting burning. These ashes the storm disperses, in that, God shall come in state, even our God, and shall not keep silence. *A fire shall devour before Him, and there shall be a mighty tempest round about Him*. [Ps. 50, 3] For by the furiousness of this tempest the wicked are carried away from the sight of the eternal Judge. And those that here had set their mind firm with evil desire, will then appear but 'chaff' and 'ashes,' because those persons the storm seizes and transports to eternal punishment. It goes on;

Ver. 19. *God shall lay up for his children the grief of their father. And when He repayeth, then he shall know it.*

57. We know that it is written; *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth generation.* [Ex. 34, 7] And again it is written, *What mean ye that ye make this a proverb among you concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord, ye shall not have this for a proverb any more in Israel. Behold all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die*. [Ezek. 18, 2-4] Thus in these two sentences whereas there is found a dissimilar meaning, the mind of the hearer is instructed, that it should search out with minute care the way of discernment. Since original sin we derive from our parents, and, except by the grace of Baptism we be loosed from it, we bear with us the sins of our very parents, seeing that surely we are still one with them. And so 'He visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,' when on account of

the guilt of the parent, the soul of the offspring is polluted by original sin. And again He does not 'visit the sins of the fathers upon the children,' in that when we are freed from original guilt by Baptism, we no longer own the sins of our fathers, but those which we have ourselves been guilty of. Which however may be understood in another way as well, in that whosoever imitates the wicked ways of a bad father, is bound in his sins also. But whosoever does not follow the wickedness of his parent, is never burthened by his offence. And hence it comes to pass that the bad son of a bad father not only pays for his own sins, which he has added; but the sins of his father as well; seeing that to the evil practices of his father, which he is not ignorant that the Lord is angry with, he is not afraid to add yet further his own wickedness too. And it is meet that he who being liable to a strict Judge does not fear to follow the ways of a wicked parent, should be compelled in this present life to pay for even his parent's misdeeds. And hence it is there said, *The soul of the father is Mine, and the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die*, because in the flesh by the sin of the father the sons too are sometimes ruined. But now that original sin has been done away, they are not bound in the soul by the parent's wickedness. For how is it that little children are very often seized by devils, saving that the flesh of the son is mulcted in punishment of the father? For the bad father is stricken in his own person, and is too stubborn to feel the force of the blow. Very often he is stricken in his children, so as to be more sharply stung, and the sorrow of the father is rendered to the flesh of the children, to the end that the evil heart of the parent may be chastened by inflictions on the children. But when not little children, but such as are now more advanced in years, are stricken by the parent's sin, what else are we given clearly to understand, but that they likewise pay the penalties of those whose deeds they have imitated? And hence it is rightly said, *Even unto the third and fourth generation*. For whereas it is possible that 'even to the third

and fourth generation,' children may witness the life of their father, which they copy, vengeance extends even to them, who witnessed what they might mischievously imitate.

58. And because sin shuts the eyes of the ungodly, but punishment opens them wide at the last, it is rightly subjoined; *And when He repayeth, then he shall know it*. For the ungodly man knows not the evil things he has done, except when he has already begun to be punished for those same evil deeds. Hence it is said by the Prophet; *And the vexation alone shall give understanding to the hearing.* For he then 'understands' what he has heard, when he now grieves that he is 'vexed' for the neglect of it. Hence it is said by Balaam concerning himself; the man whose eye is shut hath said: *He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, which shall fail, and so his eyes shall be opened*. [Num. 24, 3. 4.] For he gave counsel against the children of Israel, but he saw afterwards in punishment what it was he had been guilty of before in sin. Now the Elect, forasmuch as they see beforehand so that they should not sin, the eyes of these surely are open before their fall. But the wicked man opens his eyes after his fall, because after his sin he now in his own punishment sees that he ought to have avoided that ill which he did. Concerning the knowledge of which man, at that time useless from henceforth, the words are next introduced;

Ver. 20. *His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.*

59. This man, if whilst placed in this life he had been willing to open his eyes to his sin, would not hereafter 'drink of the wrath of the Almighty.' But he that here turns away his eyes from the sight of his guilt, cannot there avoid the sentence of condemnation. But often those that do not fear eternal punishments, at all events on account of temporal chastening are afraid to do what is bad. But there are some that have become so hardened in

wickedness that they do not fear to be stricken even in the very things that they love, if only they can accomplish what they have iniquitously planned. Hence it is here added concerning the obduracy of the wicked man,

Ver. 21. *For what doth it concern him about his house after him? or if the number of his months be halved?*

60. Not that we ought so to understand it as that this wicked one, after he is condemned to everlasting punishment, shall never think of 'his house,' i.e. of his relations, whom he has left; since 'Truth' tells us by His own lips, that the rich man, who was buried in hell, even in the midst of punishment had care and concern touching his five brethren, whom he had left. [Luke 16, 28] For every sinner will turn wise in punishment, who continued foolish in sin, because being now wrung with anguish there, he opens his eyes to reason, which here being devoted to pleasure he kept shut; and under the torturing of punishment it is forced from him to learn wisdom, who here by pride blinding him made himself foolish. Which person, however, his wisdom will then no longer avail, in that here, where he ought to have acted after the dictates of wisdom, he lost the opportunity. For he covets as the sovereign good here to have progeny of his race, to fill his house with servants and with substance, and to live long in this corrupt condition of the flesh. But if perchance any thing has come into his wishes, which however he cannot obtain except with the offending of his Creator, his mind is disturbed for a while, and he considers that, if he does aught here to incur his Creator's being offended, he is smitten in his house, children, life. But prompted by his pride, he directly hardens himself, and whatever infliction he may feel in his house, or whatever infliction in his life, he minds it nothing, so long as he can accomplish the things he has projected, and whilst he lives, he never ceases to compass his pleasures. For see, his house is struck on account of sin; but what does it concern him about his house after him? See, for the avenging of his evil doing, the length

of life, which he might have had, is shortened; but what does it concern him of the number of his months be cut off in the midst? Even in that thing therefore the sinner sets himself stiffly against God, in which Almighty God breaks in pieces his stiffness; and not even the smiting inflicted brings down the mind, which stubbornness on deliberation hardens in resistance to God. And observe how heavy the heinousness of the sin, at once to set before the mind punishment for sin, and yet not even from fear of torment to bend the neck of the heart beneath the yoke of our Maker! But see, when we hear these things said, the question occurs to our mind, why the Almighty and Merciful God permitted the faculty of reason in the human mind to fall into such blindness? But lest anyone presume to sift beyond what he ought the hidden judgments of God, it is rightly added;

Ver. 22. *Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing that He judgeth those that are high.*

61. When in the things, which are done concerning us, we have doubts, we ought to look at others, which are well known to us, and to pacify that murmuring of the thought, which had arisen to us in consequence of our uncertainty. For see, whereas scourges recover the Elect to life, and not even scourges keep the wicked from bad deeds, Almighty God's judgments upon us are very secret and are not unjust. But if we stretch the eye of our mind to the things above, we see by those that touching ourselves we have nought to complain of with justice. For Almighty God discerning the merits of Angels, ordained some to abide in eternal light without falling, others, fallen of free will from the standing of their loftiness, He laid low in the vengeance of eternal damnation. By us, then, He doth nothing unjustly, Who judged justly even a nature more refined than ours. So let him say; *Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing that He judgeth those that are high.* For He that doeth wonderful things above our level, it is surely plain that touching ourselves He ordereth all things with knowledge. This then being

set first, he adds, where it is the mind of man is wearied in making research. For it is added;

Ver. 23-25. *One dieth in his full strength, being rich and prosperous. His inwards are full of fatness, and his bowels are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and hath never any wealth.*

62. These things being so, who may investigate the secrets of Almighty God, to find out wherefore He permits them so to be? Now to the Elect and the Lost, their life indeed is unlike, but the corruption of the flesh in death is no way unlike. Hence it is added;

Ver. 26. *And yet they shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.*

What wonder then if those persons for a moment run a course unlike in the prosperity and adversity of this world, who through the corruption of the flesh return alike to the earth? So that life alone is to be thought on, wherein together with the resurrection of the flesh there is the arrival at an unlike end of recompensing. For what is 'strength and ease' to the wicked, what 'marrow and riches,' seeing that all is left here in a moment, and There that retribution, which may never be left, is found? For as the mirth of this wicked one passes on to woe, so the woe of the innocent soul in affliction passes on to joy. So neither ought riches to lift up the soul, nor poverty to disturb it. Hence blessed Job in the midst of hurts in substance receives to the mind no hurts in thoughts; but to them that despise him under the infliction of the rod, he adds rebuking them, saying,

Ver. 27, 28. *Behold I know your thoughts, and the devices that ye wrongfully imagine against me. For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwellings of the wicked?*

63. For they had imagined him a wicked man, whom they saw, his substance gone, in a temporal way ruined. But the holy man judges them with a lofty review in proportion as amidst the losses which he had met

with, he was standing with undiminished uprightness. For how had his losses of substance without hurt him, who had not lost That Being, Whom he loved within?

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

64. But this that is said, *They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them*, if anyone wish to take in the way of allegory, we may shortly accomplish [see cap. xvi. of this Book.] it, if what has been already said concerning this bad rich man, we repeat again. Thus it is said, *His inwards are full of fatness, and his bones are moistened with marrow*. [v. 30.] For as 'fat' arises from much food, so does pride from abundance of goods, which fattens his mind in his riches, while his spirit is lifted up in his proud behaving. For the pride of the heart is like a kind of richness of fat. Whence, because very many commit sins from abundance, it is said by the Prophet, *Their iniquity has come out as it were from fatness*. [Ps. 73, 7] It follows, *And his bones are moistened with marrow*. The lovers of this life have 'bones' as it were, when in this world they possess the strong stay of dignities. But if in the outward dignity there lack earthly private wealth, as to their judgment they have 'bones' indeed, but 'marrow' in the bones they have not. Whereas then that lover of this world is so stayed up by outward power that he is likewise at the same time stuffed to the full with the inward abundance of his earthly house, it is said, *And his bones are moistened with marrow*. Or otherwise the 'bones' of the rich man are bad and stubborn practices, but the 'marrow in the bones' are the mere desires of bad living alone, which not even in the satisfying of wickedness are filled to the full. Which marrow as it were moistens the bones, when bad desires keep on their evil habits in the gratification of pleasures.

65. And there are some that in this world have not riches, but long to have, and seek to be exalted, though in this world they are unable to get the

thing they desire, and whilst they have no substance or dignity to support them, yet by bad desires conscience declares them guilty in the sight of the interior Judge. For every such person is very often in this accounted distressed, because he cannot be rich and carry himself proudly. Concerning whom it is also added, *And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and without any wealth*. Observe from the same cause whence the rich man emptily rejoices with a proud heart, another that is poor more emptily sorrows with a proud heart. Now it is rightly added concerning both, *And yet they shall lie down together in the dust, and the worms shall cover them*. For to 'lie down in the dust' is to close the eyes of the mind in earthly desires; hence it is said to every individual living in sin, and lying asleep in his wickedness, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.* [E, 14] But the 'worms' that spring from the flesh cover them alike, in that carnal cares overlay the mind whether of the rich man or of the poor man carrying himself proudly. For in the things of earth the poor and the rich children of perdition, though they be not sustained by a like share of prosperity, are yet troubled by a like degree of solicitude, in that what the one already possesses with alarm the other longs for with anxiety, and because he is unable to get it he is grieved. So let it be said; *They shall lie down together in the dust, and the worms shall cover them*. In that though they be not alike lifted up by temporal good things, yet in care of temporal good things they are both alike lulled asleep by insensibility of mind. And the worms cover them together, because whether this one, that he may possess what is coveted, or that one, that he may not lose what is possessed, carnal thoughts overlay both.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

66. But blessed Job, who neither when he had substance was elated, nor when it was taken from him sought it with anxiety, as he was devoured by

no thoughts of outward loss, had no worms of the heart covering him;' and because he had not sunk his mind in earthly care, he did not 'lie asleep in the dust.' It goes on*; Behold I know your thoughts, and your wrongful sentences against me*. [1 Cor. 2, 11] As it is written, *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?* on what principle is it said here, *Behold I know your thoughts?* But the spirit of a man is then unknown to another, when it is not shewn forth either by words or deeds. For whereas it is written, *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them*; [Matt. 7, 20] it is by the thing that is done outwardly that whatever lies concealed within is brought to sight. Whence too it is rightly said by Solomon, *As in water the faces of beholders shine bright, so the hearts of men are plain to the wise*. [Prov. 27, 19] Again blessed Job, when he declared that he knew the thoughts of his friends who were talking with him, thereupon added, *and your unjust sentences against me*: that by a thing open to view he might shew he had found out that which lay concealed in them. Hence he adds their very wicked sentences themselves as well, saying, *For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?*

67. The weak, that desire to thrive in this world's fortune, and as evils of great magnitude so dread scourges, in the case of those, whom they see smitten, measure offence by the punishment; for those, whom they see struck with the rod, they suppose have displeased God. Hence blessed Job's friends were persuaded that he, whom they be held under the rod, had been ungodly, i.e. as reckoning that if he had not been ungodly, his 'dwelling-places would have remained:' but no man thinks so, saving he who still travails with the weariness of infirmity, who sets fast the footstep of his thoughts in the gratification of the present life, who is not taught to pass on with perfect desires to the eternal land. Hence it is well added;

Ver. 29, 30. *Ask everyone of them that go by the way; and ye will know that he understands this same. Because the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, and he is brought to the day of wrath.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

68. For often the patience of God bears for long with those, whom it already condemns to punishments foreknown; it suffers those to go on thriving, whom it sees still committing worse things. For whereas He sees to what pit of condemnation they are going on, He esteems to be as nothing to them, that the wicked multiply here things which must be abandoned. But he that is wedded to the glory of the present life, counts it great happiness to thrive here according to his wish, though he be driven hereafter to undergo eternal punishment. Therefore that man only sees it to be nothing for the wicked man to thrive, who has already removed the step of his heart from the love of the present world. Hence, in speaking of the after condemnation of the wicked man, it is rightly premised, *Ask anyone of the wayfarers, and ye shall "now that he understandeth these same things*. For he is called a 'wayfarer,' who minds that the present life is to him a way and not a native land, who thinks it beneath him to fix his heart on the love of this passing state of being, who longs, not to continue in a transitory scene of things, but to reach the eternal world. For he that does not aim to be a wayfarer in this world, is far from setting at nought this world's good fortune, and when he sees those things which he himself covets abounding to others, he wonders. Hence the Prophet David, as he had already passed in heart from the love of the present world, in describing the glory of the wicked man, said; *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading like a green bay tree*. [Ps. 37, 35. 36.] But because he did not submit his heart to this world, he justly looked down upon him, saying; *I passed on, but, lo, he was not*. For the wicked man would have been something in his esteem, if he had not himself

passed on in the bent of his mind from this present scene. But this man, who [Oxf. Mss. read 'qui'] to one not 'passing by' would have been something great, to one 'passing by' in mind, how little he was, was shewn; in that whilst everlasting retribution is thought on, it is seen how little present glory is. Hence Moses, when he was seeking the glory of heavenly contemplation, said, *I will now pass on, and see this great sight*. [Ex. 3, 3] For except he had withdrawn the footstep of the heart from the love of the world, he would never have been able to understand things above. Hence Jeremiah entreating for the sorrow of his heart to be taken thought on, saith, *All ye that pass by, Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!* [Lam. 1, 12] For they who do not pass through the present life like a way, but think on it as their country, are unskilled to take in with the mind's eye the sorrow of heart of the Elect. These persons therefore the Prophet looks out, that they may view his sorrow, whose it was not to have set fast their mind in this world. Hence it is said by Solomon, *Open thy mouth for the dumb, and in the cause of all such as are passing by.* For those are called 'the dumb,' who never set themselves against the Preacher's words by gainsaying them; who are also persons 'passing by,' in that they disdain to fix the bent of their mind in the love of the present life. Therefore that the bad man is being 'reserved for the day of perdition,' and 'brought to the day of fury,' this thing there is none but he who is 'a wayfarer' that understandeth, in that he that has set his heart in the present scene of things does not find out the punishments that follow the wicked man. Of whom it is still further added;

Ver. 31. *Who shall reprove his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done?*

69. Often that wrath of God, which the wicked man is to suffer for ever, even while placed in this life too he is made to experience, whilst he loses the good fortune that he loves, and meets with the adversity that he dreads.

And though even in prosperity he may be rebuked for his wickednesses by the tongue of the righteous, yet we know that it is when his evil deeds bring the bad man to the earth, that the reproof of the righteous gains force. But in what sense is it now said, *Who shall reprove his way to his face?* seeing that the righteous even holding their peace this too is well known, that so often is ‘the way of the wicked man reproved to his face’ here, as often as his prosperity is disturbed by adversity intervening. But blessed Job, while he was speaking of the body of all the wicked, suddenly turns his words to the head of all the wicked.

[PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

For he saw that at the end of the world Satan entering into the man, whom Holy Scripture calls Antichrist, is lifted up with such exaltation, lords it with such power, is exalted with such wonderful signs and marvels in the exhibiting of holiness, that his deeds cannot be charged home to him by man, in that with the power of terribleness he likewise unites the signs of holiness which is exhibited, and he says, *Who shall reprove his way to his face?* ‘Who,’ that is to say, ‘of mankind may dare to rebuke him? whose face does he dread to endure [or, ‘the sight of whom he dreads’]? Yet not only Elijah and Enoch who are brought forward for the rebuking of him, but even all the Elect ‘reprove his way to his face,’ whilst they shew contempt, and whilst by excellence of mind they oppose his wickedness. But because this they do by divine grace and not by their own powers, it is rightly said now, *Who shall reprove his way before his face?* For ‘who’ is there save God, by whose aid the Elect are supported to have power to withstand him? For sometimes in Holy Scripture, when in asking a question the word ‘who’ is put, the Almighty is denoted. Hence it is written, *Who shall raise him up?* [Gen. 49. 9] Of Whom it is said by Paul, *Whom God raised from the dead*. [Gal. 1, 1] In respect then that holy men oppose themselves to his

wickedness, it is not themselves, that 'reprove his way,' but it is He, by Whose grace they are strengthened, and whereas his presence, wherewith he will come in man, will be much more dreadful in persecution than it is now, when he is not seen at all, in that he is not as yet preeminently borne by that special vessel of his, it is well said, *before his face*. For there are many now who judge and rebuke the ways of Antichrist, but this they do as it were in his absence, in that they rebuke him whom they do not as yet in a special manner see. But when he shall come in that damned man, whoever withstands his presence, 'reproves his way before his face,' the powers of whom he at once sees and sets at nought. Or surely, to 'reprove his way before his face' is to disturb the prosperity of his course by the interrupting of eternal punishment. Which thing because the Lord alone is to do by His own might, of Whom it is written, *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming,* [2 Thess. 2, 8] it is rightly said, *Who shall reprove his way before his face?* And hence the words follow, *And who shall repay him what he hath done?* Who, truly, save the Lord, Who alone shall 'repay that lost man what he hath done,' when by His coming He shall dash in pieces his exceeding mighty power with eternal damnation? But what this exalted prince of the wicked is about, as long as he is in this life, let us hear. It goes on;

Ver. 32. *He shall be brought to the graves, and in the heap of the dead bodies he shall watch.*

70. Whereas graves cover dead bodies, what else is denoted by 'the graves' but the lost, in whom their souls extinct of the life of blessedness lie as in graves? Thus this wicked one shall be 'brought to the graves,' in that he shall be admitted in the hearts of the wicked, in that they only admit him, in whom are found souls dead to God, concerning whom it is rightly said by the Prophet likewise where his punishments are described, *His graves are about him, all the slain, and those that felt by the sword*. For they in hell

‘are about him,’ in whom that evil spirit lies dead, which same fell, having been slain by the sword of his wickedness. Whence it is written, *Who hast delivered David Thy servant from the hurtful sword.* And it is rightly said, in the heap of the dead bodies he shall watch, in that now in the assembly of sinners he puts forth the artifices of his cunning. And on this account, that in the world there is a scarcity of good men, and a multitude of bad, it is rightly called ‘the heap of dead bodies,’ that the very multitude of the wicked might be denoted. *For broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat*. [Matt. 7, 13] So Satan’s ‘keeping watch in the heap of dead bodies,’ is his exercising the wiles of his wickedness in the hearts of the children of perdition. Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 33. *He was sweet to the pebbles of Cocytus.*

71. ‘Cocytus’ in the Greek tongue is the term for ‘lamentation,’ which is used to be taken for the lamentation of women, or any persons going weakly. Now the wise of this world being shut out from the light of truth, endeavoured by making search to hold a kind of shadows of truth. Hence they thought that the river Cocytus ran amongst the dead below, clearly denoting that they that commit deeds worthy of painful inflictions, run to an end into hell unto lamentation. But for ourselves let us make little of the shadow of carnal wisdom, who now hold the light relating to the truth, and let us see that in the utterance of the holy man ‘Cocytus’ means the lamentation of the weak sort. For it is written, *Be of good courage, and let your heart be strengthened.* [Ps. 31, 24] For they who refuse to be ‘strengthened’ in God, are going the way to lamentation through weakness of the mind. Now we are used to call by the name of pebbles the little stones of rivers, which the water in running away carries along with it. What then is denoted by *the pebbles of Cocytus*, but the lost, who, being devoted to their gratifications, are as it were ever being dragged by the river

down to the lowest depth. For they that refuse to stand strong and stedfast against the pleasures of this life, become ‘pebbles of Cocytus,’ who by their slippings day by day are going the way to lamentation, that they may hereafter mourn for everlasting, who now indulgently give themselves a loose in their pleasures. And whereas our old enemy, having entered into his vessel, that son of perdition, whilst he bestows gifts on the wicked, whilst he exalts them with honours in this world, whilst he exhibits marvels to their eyes, has all drifting souls admiring and following him in his marvels, it is said well of him here, *He was sweet to the pebbles of Cocytus.* For whilst the Elect despise him, whilst they spurn him with the foot of the mind, those love while they follow him, who are as it were drawn by the water of pleasure to everlasting lamentation, who from earthly concupiscence roll down to the lowest depth like gravel, by slippings day by day. For to some he proffers the taste of his sweetness through pride, to others through avarice; to one set by envy, to another by deceitfulness, and to another by lust, and for all the kinds of evil that he forces men to, he presents to them so many draughts of his sweetness. For when he prompts any thing proud in the heart, the thing becomes sweet that he says, because the wicked man longs to appear advanced above the rest of the world. Whilst he strives to infuse avarice into the mind, that which he speaks in secret becomes sweet, because by abundance need is avoided. When he suggests any thing to do with envy, what he says is rendered sweet, in that when the froward mind sees another go off, it exults in not appearing at all inferior to him. When it prompts any thing to do with deceitfulness, what it says is made sweet, seeing that by this alone, that it deceives the rest of the world, it appears to itself to be wise. When it speaks lust to the seduced soul, what it recommends is rendered sweet, in that it dissolves the soul in pleasure. Therefore, for all the evil propensities that it insinuates into the hearts of carnal men, it as it were holds out to them so many draughts of its

sweetness; which same sweetness, however, as I have before said, none receive save they, who being devoted to present gratifications, are drawn to everlasting lamentation. And so it is well said, *He was sweet to the pebbles of Cocytus*; seeing that he is bitter to the Elect and sweet to the lost. For them only does he feed with his delights, whom by daily slippings he is urging to lamentations, It goes on;

Ver. 33. *And he draweth every man after him, as there are innumerable before him*.

72. In this place by ‘man’ is meant one whose taste is for things human. But whereas ‘everyone’ is more than an ‘innumerable’ quantity, we have to enquire, wherefore he is said before him to draw an ‘innumerable’ quantity, and after him ‘every man’ saving that our old enemy, having then entered into the man of perdition, drags under the yoke of his sovereignty all the carnal ones that he finds; who even now before his appearing ‘draws an innumerable quantity’ indeed, yet not ‘everyone’ of the carnal, in that there are many that are daily recalled to life from carnal practice, and some by a short, others by a long course of penitence return to the state of righteousness. And now he seizes on an ‘innumerable quantity,’ when he does not exhibit the miracles of his falseness for men to marvel at. But when he performs his prodigies before the eyes of the carnal for them to wonder at, he then draws after him not an ‘innumerable quantity,’ but ‘everyone,’ in that they who delight themselves in present good things, submit themselves to his power without repeal. But as we before said, because it is more to ‘draw every man’ than an ‘innumerable quantity,’ wherefore is it first said that he draws every man, and afterwards in augmentation an innumerable quantity is added? For reason requires that first what is least should be spoken of, and afterwards in augmentation that which is more. Now we are to know that in this passage it was more to say, ‘an innumerable quantity’ than ‘every man.’ For he after him ‘draws every

man,’ in that in three years and a half all that he may find busied in the pursuits of a carnal life he binds fast to the yoke of his dominion; but before him he draws an innumerable quantity, in that during the successive stages of five thousand years and more, though he could never succeed in drawing all the carnal, yet in so long a period the innumerable quantity whom he carries away before him, are many more in number than ‘all’ whom he finds to carry off in that so short time. And so it is well said, *And he draweth every man after him, also innumerable before him*; in that he both takes away less then, when he takes away ‘every man,’ and he gets a bigger booty now, when he assails the hearts of an ‘innumerable quantity.’ Whereas blessed Job then delivered these things excellently against the prince of the wicked, who is permitted to be exalted in this life, but will be destroyed in the coming of the Lord,

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

touching himself he plainly shews that he received the scourges of the Lord not by his offending, since if the bad man is permitted to prosper ‘in this life, it is necessary that the elect of God should be held fast under the reins of the scourge. From which circumstance he reproves his friends, saying,

How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing your answer is shewn to be against Truth?

73. The friends of blessed Job could not console him, in whom they gainsaid the truth by their discourse, and when they called him a hypocrite or ungodly, hereby that they themselves by lying were guilty of sin, assuredly they augmented the chastisement of the righteous man chastened with wounds. For the minds of the Saints, because they love the truth, even the sin of another’s deceit wrings. For in proportion as they see the guilt of falsehood to be grievous, they hate it not only in themselves, but in others also.

BOOK XVI.

After going through the twenty-second and twenty-third chapters of the Book of Job, and the twenty-fourth to the middle of verse twenty with a brief explanation, he brings the third Part to a close.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

THOSE persons, who being opposed to the words of truth, get the worst in making out a case, often repeat even what is well known, lest by holding their tongue they should seem defeated. Hence Eliphaz, being pressed closely by the sayings of blessed Job, utters things which no one but is aware of. For he says,

Ver. 2. *Can a man be compared unto God, even when he has perfect knowledge?*

1. By comparison with God, our knowledge is ignorance, for it is by participation, and not by comparison, with God that we become imbued with wisdom. What wonder then when that is said, as if in the way of instruction, which might have been known, even if it had been kept silent? And yet further he subjoins the power of God as defending it.

Ver. 3 *Is it any profit to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?*

2. For in all that we do well, we are doing good to ourselves and not to God. And hence by the Psalmist it is said, *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God, seeing that Thou needest not my goods.* [Ps. 16, 2] For He is truly 'Lord' to us, because He is also assuredly 'God,' Who needs not the good in him that serveth Him, but bestows the goodness which He receives, so that the goodness which is offered up should avail not Himself, but those that first receive and afterwards render back. For though the Lord, when He cometh for Judgment, saith, *Inasmuch as ye have*

done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me; it is with extraordinary pitifulness that He says this, by sympathy with His members. And He the same Being hereby, viz. that He is our Head, aids, Who by our good deeds in His members is aided. Yet further Eliphaz adds what there is no man but is aware of, saying,

Ver. 4. *Will He reprove thee for fear of thee? Will He enter with thee into judgment?*

3. Who that was out of his senses even would think this, that from fear the Lord reproves us, and from dread sets His judgment against us? But they who do not know how to mete their words, doubtless slip down to idle discourse. Wherein if they never at all take themselves to task, without delay they leap forth to words mischievous and insulting. Hence Eliphaz, who brought in idle words, immediately burst out into abusive ones, saying,

Ver. 5. *Is it not for thy wickedness that is great, and thine iniquities that are infinite?*

4. Observe how from a deadened heart he came to idle words, and from idle words in the heinousness of lying he blazed out into insults. For these are the descents of increasing sin, that the tongue when not restrained should never there where it has fallen lie still, but be always descending to what is worse; but these things that are subjoined, because they are very plain taken after the history, do not need to be set forth after the letter.

5. But whereas we have said that the friends of blessed Job bear the likeness of heretics, but that he himself bears the representing of Holy Church, the words of Eliphaz how they fit the falseness of heretics, let us now at once point out. For it proceeds;

Ver. 6-8. *For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary, thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. In the might of thine arm thou didst possess the land, and as the most powerful thou didst hold it.*

6. In Holy Scripture by the term of ‘a pledge’ sometimes the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and sometimes the confession of sin, are denoted. Thus pledge is taken as the gift of the Holy Spirit, as where it is said by Paul, *And given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.* [2 Cor. 1, 22] For we receive a pledge for this, that we may hold an assurance touching the promise that is made to us. And so the gift of the Holy Spirit is called a pledge, in that by this our soul is strengthened to assuredness of the inward hope. Again by the name of a ‘pledge’ confession of sin is used to be intended, as it is written in the Law; *If thy brother oweth thee aught, and thou takest away a pledge from him, restore the pledge before the setting of the sun.* [Ex. 22, 25. 26.] For our brother is made a debtor to us, when any fellow-creature is proved to have done any thing wrong against us. For sins we call ‘debts.’ Whence it is said to the servant when he sinned, *I forgave thee all that debt.* [Matt. 18, 32] And in the Lord’s Prayer we pray daily, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* [Matt. 6, 12] Now we ‘take a pledge’ from our debtor, when from the lips of him who is found to have sinned against us, we have now gotten a confession of his sin, whereby we are entreated to remit the sin, which was committed against us. For he that confesses the sin that he has done, and begs pardon, has already as it were given a ‘pledge’ for his debt, which pledge we are bidden to ‘restore before the sun set,’ because before that in ourselves through pain of heart the Sun of righteousness shall set, we are bound to render back the acknowledgment of pardon to him, from whom we receive the acknowledgment of transgression, that he who remembers that he has done amiss towards us, may be made sensible that what he has done amiss is by us at once remitted. Therefore whereas Holy Church, when it receives back any returning from heretics to the truth of the faith, first persuades them that they must confess the sin of their error, it is said by Eliphaz as under the likeness of heretics; *For thou hast taken away*

a pledge from thy brother for nought, i.e. 'From those, that come to thee from us, thou didst exact a confession of error to no purpose.' But, as we said before, if we suppose a 'pledge' the gifts of the Holy Spirit, heretics say that Holy Church has 'taken away the pledge of her brothers,' because they imagine that those that come to her, lose the gifts of the Spirit. Hence it follows, *And stripped the naked of their clothing.*

7. Those whom they draw after them by their perverted preaching, heretics count to have the precepts of their teaching as a kind of garments, and they esteem them to be clothed so long as the things which they themselves preached they witness observed by them, and when any persons return to Holy Church from them, they immediately fancy that they have lost the garments of instruction. But whereas one that is naked cannot he spoiled, we have to enquire how they are first mentioned as 'naked,' and afterwards as 'stripped?' Now it is necessary to know that every one that enjoys purity of mind, by the very circumstance that he has not the cloak of double-dealing, is 'naked.' And there are some among the Heretics, who have purity of heart indeed, but yet take up the corrupt tenets of their teaching. These same are at once by their own purity 'naked,' and by the preaching of those persons they are as it were clothed. And whereas all such are easily brought back to Holy Church, for this reason that they do not use the wickedness of doubledealing, those persons heretics acknowledge as naked, whom they call stripped by her of their clothing, because they look upon all the simple-minded as slow and dull, who, they see, have parted with their own corrupt tenets.

8. It follows; *Thou hast not given water to the weary, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry*. Heretics in proportion as they hold not the solid substance of truth, so sometimes they busy themselves, that they may appear full of discourse, and against the faith of Catholics they are boastful as of the knowledge of learning; all that they see they seek to draw

to them by their wicked discoursings, and by the very same act, whereby they are joining others to themselves for destruction, they think themselves doing something conducive to life. Now we call those 'weary' that are worn down under the wearisome load of this world. And hence Truth saith by Himself, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and will give you rest.* Matt. 11, 28] And so whereas heretics never cease to preach their own doctrines, they mock at Holy Church as if for ignorance. *Thou hast not given water to the weary, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry*. For themselves they think they 'give water to the weary' when to persons travailing under their earthly load they supply the cup of their own error. And they look upon it that they themselves have not 'withholden bread from the hungry,' in that when questioned even touching things invisible and incomprehensible, they answer with pride and boldness; and they then set themselves down as learned above all men, when they most miserably presume to speak on things unknown. But Holy Church when she sees anyone hungering for that which it would not be for his good to get, either on the one hand if they be things already known to her keeps them back with reserve, or if they appear to be unknown as yet, confesses it with humility; and such she recalls to a sense of well-regulated humility, when she bids everyone of them by her Preacher, *not to be wise of himself above that he ought to think, but to think soberly*. [Rom. 12, 3] And again, *Be not highminded, but fear*. [Rom. 11, 20] And again, *Seek not out the things that are too deep for thee; neither search the things that are above thy strength*. [Ecclus. 3, 21] And again, *Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest perchance thou be filled therewith, and vomit it*. [Rrov. 25, 16] For to 'find honey,' is to taste the sweetness of holy intelligence. Which is eaten enough of then, when our perception according to the measure of our faculty is held tight under control. For he is 'filled with honey, and vomits it,' who in seeking to dive deeper than he has

capacity for loses that too from whence he might have derived nourishment. And so, seeing that Holy Church forbids it to feeble minds to dive into deep truths, it is said to blessed Job, *And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.*

9. And her greatness also because heretics envy, because she keeps the companies of people every where in the true faith, when they meet with a season of earthly prosperity, they launch out against her in terms of pride, and by their upbraiding disclose how greatly before they secretly envied her power. Thus it follows; *For in the might of thine arm, thou didst possess the earth, and as the most powerful thou didst hold it.* As if he said in plain words, ‘Whereas thou didst take possession of the earth every where in thy preaching, it was the power of might, and not the reasonableness of truth. For whereas they see that Christian princes hold fast her preaching, all the credit which is given to her by the people, they look upon not as the efficacy of righteousness, but the account of secular power. It goes on;

Ver. 9. *Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless hast thou broken.*

10. The common multitudes that are brought under to heretics on their preaching by a carnal understanding conceive the corrupt seeds of their false doctrine, and are joined to them in their condemnation. But when the preachers of errors themselves, Holy Church either receives into her bosom subdued by reason, or binds in under the fetters of her discipline, being hardened by attachment to evil; heretics, being deserted, when they see that the people remain left with themselves without preachers, what else do they but lament the ‘widows’ left empty by Holy Church? And whereas when the masters of heretics are withdrawn, they imagine that their disciples are enfeebled in their practice, they complain that the arms of the fatherless are broken by Holy Church as it were. Or in another way, because when Holy Church receives persons coming to her from heretics, it is plain without a

doubt that she stands up against their former error. Thus there are some that are so attached to virginity of the flesh, that they condemn marriage, and there are some who so extol abstinence, that they abhor those that take necessary nourishment. Concerning whom it is said by Paul, *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain, from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe.* [1 Tim. 4, 5] Those persons then seeing she recalls from the carnal bias of their superstitious belief, when heretics see such living otherwise than they taught them, they bear witness that to the way of acting which they before maintained, their 'arms are broken' by Holy Church. And hence in this period of discipline, if any piece of misfortune chance to befall her, they suppose that it has come in meet retribution for her sins. For it is added;

Ver. 10. *Therefore snares are round about thee; and sudden fear troubleth thee.*

11. That man 'sudden fear doth trouble,' who neglects to consider what there is hanging over his head from the severity of the Judge, when He comes. Therefore, whereas heretics look upon the faithful people as borne down by sins of misbelief, they make it a charge that 'snares are round about them.' And because they believe that it does not foresee the future, they suppose this people under the smiting to be 'troubled with sudden fear;' which persons adding yet further insult subjoin,

Ver. 11. *And thou thoughtest* [*V. And thoughtest thou?*] *thou wouldest not see darkness; and that thou wouldest not be borne down with the force of overflowing waters.*

As if he said in plain speech; 'Thou didst promise thyself security of peace in hope, and therefore thou wast glad for thine assurance as for the light, nor ever thoughtest for thyself to be oppressed with tribulation. But see, whilst thou art afflicted with evils coming upon thee, whether what thou maintainest be right, the very darkness of trouble which weighs upon

thee makes plain; which same troubles Eliphaz compares to 'overflowing waters,' in that whilst one set rushes in over another, as in swoln waters waves follow waves. It goes on,

Ver. 12-14. *Dost thou bethink thee that God is in the height of heaven, and high above the height of the stars? And thou sayest, How doth God know? and, He judgeth as in the dark. Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not our matters; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven.*

12. There are very many so dull that they cannot dread aught, saving what they see in a bodily form. Whence it is brought to pass that they do not fear God, in that they cannot see Him. But heretics because they think themselves wise utter words of insult against Catholics, and imagine that He is not feared by them, because they are unable to see Him in a bodily shape, so that as it were from deadness of perception they think that their Maker, because He is higher than heaven and exalted above the tops of the stars, is not able to see from a distance, and that because between ourselves and the seat of heaven the regions of the air are interposed, He, 'as it were buried in a cloud passes judgment out of the darkness,' and intent upon things above, the less considers those below, and whilst He holds together the binges of heaven by encircling them, doth not see into the interior parts. But who that was out of his right mind even, could suspect such things of God. Who indeed, whereas He is always Omnipotent, so minds all things that He is present to each one individually, and so present to each that His Presence is never wanting to all together. For though He forsakes persons when they sin, yet to those very persons He is present in respect of judgment, to whom He is seen to be wanting in respect of aidance. Therefore He so encircles what is without that He yet fills what is within, so fills what is within that He yet encircles what is without, so rules the heights above that He does not quit the depths below, is in such sort present to the parts beneath that He

does not depart from those above, is so concealed in His own appearance that nevertheless He is known in His working, so known in His work that yet He cannot be comprehended by the calculation of the person knowing Him; He is in such a way present that yet He cannot be seen, in such a way impossible to be seen that yet His very own judgments bear witness to His Presence, so yields Himself to be understood by us that yet the very ray of the perception of Himself He overclouds to us, and again so holds us in by the darkness of ignorance that notwithstanding He shines into our minds with the rays of His brightness, so that at once by being lifted up it may see something, and made to recoil may tremble all over, and because such as He is it is impossible to see Him, may yet know Him by seeing Him some little. But all this heretics do not reckon Holy Church to be acquainted with, because by a foolish judgment they suppose that they alone are wise. In a type of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 15. *Wouldest thou mark the old way, which wicked men have trodden?*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

13. As the ‘way’ of our Redeemer is humility, so the way of the world is pride. And so wicked men tread the way of the world, in that by the desires of this world they walk in self-exaltation. Of which same wicked persons it is yet further added;

Ver. 16. *Which were taken away before their time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood.*

14. Whereas the period of our life is assuredly foreordained for us in the foreknowledge of God, it is a very important question on what principle it is said now, that the wicked are withdrawn from the present world ‘before their time.’ For Almighty God though He often change His sentence, yet His counsel never. At that time, then, is every man ‘taken away’ from this

life, at which by Divine power he is foreknown to be before all times. But it is necessary to be known, that Almighty God in creating and disposing of us, according to the deserts of each one also appoints his bounds too, so that either that bad man should live a short time, lest he do mischief to numbers doing right; or that this good man should last longer in life, that he may prove a helper of good practice to numbers; or again that the bad man should be detained longer in life, to add yet more to his wicked deeds, purified by the testing whereof the righteous may live a truer life; or that the good man should be withdrawn more speedily, lest if he were to live long here, wickedness should spoil his innocence. Yet it is to be borne in mind, that it is the loving-kindness of God, to vouchsafe to sinners space for repentance. But because the times vouchsafed they do not turn to the fruits of penance, but to the service of iniquity, what by the mercifulness of God they might have obtained, they let go out of their hands. Although Almighty God foreknows that time of each individual for death, at which his life is brought to an end; nor could any one ever have died at any time, saving at that actual time when he does die. For if to Hezekiah fifteen years are related to have been added for life, the time of his life was increased from that end, indeed, in which of himself he deserved to die; for God's providence foreknew his time at that point whereat He afterwards withdrew him out of the present life. This then being so, what does it mean that it is said, that *the wicked were cut down before their time,* but that all they that love the present life, promise to themselves longer periods of that life? But when death coming on withdraws them from the present life, the spaces of their life, which they were wont as it were in imagination to draw out to themselves longer, it cuts asunder. Of whom it is rightly said, *whose foundation was overflown with a flood.*

15. For the wicked while they neglect in heart to go on to the things of eternity, and do not observe that all things present are fleeting, fix their

heart on the love of the present life, and as it were therein construct for themselves the foundation of a long abode, because by desire they are established in earthly things. Thus Cain is described the first to have constructed a city upon earth, who thereby is plainly proved an alien, in that the same set a foundation upon earth, who was alien to the stedfastness of the eternal world; for being a stranger to the things above, he has settled his foundation in things beneath, who has placed the settling of his heart in earthly delight. And hence, in the stock of that man, Enoch, which is by interpretation 'dedication,' is born the first. But in the offspring of the Elect Enoch is described to have been the seventh, in this way, because the sons of perdition by building dedicate themselves in this life which comes first, but the Elect await the dedication of their building up in the end of time, i.e. the seventh number. For one may see great numbers minding temporal things alone, seeking after honours, open-mouthed after the compassing of good things, look out for nothing after this life. What then do these but 'dedicate themselves' in the first generation? One may see the Elect seeking nothing of present glory, gladly bearing want, undergoing the ills of this life with a composed mind, that they may be crowned at the end. And so to the Elect Enoch is born in the seventh generation, in that the dedication of their joy they look for in the glory of the last retribution. [Gen. 5, 21] And whereas by the daily lapse of time the mortal state in the present life itself runs to an end, and destroys the dedication of the children of perdition by removing those very children of perdition, it is rightly said of the wicked, *Whose foundation was overflown with a flood*; i.e. the mere course of changeableness overthrows in them the settlement of wicked rearing. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *Which said unto God, Depart from us.*

16. That this too blessed Job had said, who can doubt? But what we have unfolded in his words, on account of wearying the reader, we forbear to

repeat. [Job 21, 14] It goes on;

And as though the Almighty could do nothing, so reckoned concerning Him.

In this part likewise the wording, and not the statement, is changed. For what was expressed by blessed Job; *What is the Almighty that we should serve Him?* [Job 21, 15] is expressed by Eliphaz, *And as though the Almighty could do nothing, so reckoned concerning Him*. It goes on;

Ver. 18. *Yet He has filled their houses with good things*.

17. The Lord 'filleth the houses of the wicked with good things,' in that even to the unthankful He refuses not His gifts, that either they may blush at the loving-kindness of their Creator and be brought back to goodness, or altogether despising to return thereto, may from the same cause be there worse punished, that here they rendered an evil return for God's more bounteous good, so that severer woes should there chastise those whose wickedness here not even gifts overcame. It goes on;

But let their sentence be far from me.

This too was expressed by blessed Job. For he says, *Whose counsel be far from me.* [Job 21, 16] Though 'sentence' may be taken for one thing and 'counsel' for another; for 'sentence' is in the mouth, 'counsel' in the thoughts. And so whereas Eliphaz wished himself far from the 'sentence' of the wicked, and blessed Job from the 'counsel,' it is plain without denial, that the first desires to be unlike the words of the wicked, but the other unlike their way of thinking even. It goes on;

Ver. 19. *The righteous shall see it and be glad; and the innocent one shall laugh them to scorn.*

18. The righteous when they see the unrighteous erring here cannot be glad for the error of persons ruining themselves. For if they rejoice in errings, they cease to be righteous. Again, if in the feeling of triumph they be glad, for this that they are not such as they see others are, they are

altogether full of pride. Hence the Pharisee lost his justification, because being glad he set himself above the merits of the Publican, saying, *I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican.* Again, if we say that the righteous can triumph with a perfect joy over the death of the wicked, what sort of thing is joy for vengeance on sinners in this world, wherein the life of the righteous is still uncertain? Let us then distinguish between the times of trembling and exulting. For the righteous see the unrighteous now, and pine at their wickedness; and when they see those smitten, they are made distrustful touching their own life too. When then shall the righteous see the destruction of the wicked and be glad, saving when with the strict Judge they incorporate henceforth with perfect sureness of triumphing, when in that final Inquest they shall see the condemnation of those, and shall now no longer have aught to fear for themselves? Now therefore they see the children of perdition and groan, then they shall see them and laugh them to scorn, because in triumphing they shall set at nought those, whom now they neither see doing wickedness without groaning nor dying for their wickedness without fearing. Hence by that which is added it is proved that the thing is spoken as concerning their final condemnation. For the sentence is directly introduced,

Ver. 20. *Is not their erecting cut down, and the remnant of them the fire hath consumed* [al. shall comsume]*?*

19. For here the wicked are erected, in that they are lifted up in bad deeds. For they both do wickedly, and yet for their wicked deeds they are not stricken. They sin and thrive, they add to their sins, and multiply earthly good. But 'their erecting is cut down' then, when they are either dragged from the present life to destruction, or from the sight of the Eternal Judge to the eternal burning of hell. Which people, though here they quit their dead flesh, yet that same in the resurrection they receive again, that together with

that flesh they may burn, in which flesh they did their sin. For as their sin was in mind and body, so the punishment shall be in spirit and flesh alike. Therefore, whereas not even that shall be quit of torment to them, which here they leave dead, it is rightly said now, *the remnant of them the fire hath consumed*. It goes on;

Ver. 21, 22. *Be at one then with Him, and be at peace; thereby thou shalt have the best fruits. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.*

20. There is the sin of pride in teaching one better than one's self, which heretics are often guilty of, who touching things which they have wrong notions of, take upon them as if to instruct Catholics. For such they think are then 'at one with God,' if it chance for them to assent to their bad ways; and to those thus 'at one' they promise peace in that they henceforth cease to quarrel with those who agree with themselves. Now 'the best fruits' they promise to those agreeing with themselves, in that they believe that they only do good works, whom they triumph in themselves drawing in to their own tenets; which persons this also suits that he adds, *Receive, I pray, the law out of His mouth*; because the things they think of their own heads, they fancy proceed from the mouth of God. *And lay up His words in thine heart*; as if he asserted it in plain words, saying, 'which up to this present time in thy mouth thou hast held, and not in thine heart.' For because he [al. Holy Church] rejected their corrupted tenets, they allege against him [al. her, &c.] that the words of God he had held not in the feeling, but in the shewing off. Whence, as if under a certain appearance of sweetness, they insinuate the poison of pestilent persuading, so as to admonish the Church to lay up the words of God in the heart; which words, if they had ever departed from her heart, from those persons she would never have heard such things. It follows;

Ver. 23. *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle.*

21. That the faithful people have gone away from God is the opinion of heretics, because they see it opposed to their preachings; which same, when they see it afflicted with present calamities, they endeavour, as if by admonition, to draw to their Maker's Grace, saying, *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up*. As if they said in plain words; Whereas by gainsaying our doctrines thou hast gone away from the Lord, therefore to the building up of righteousness thou art undone. Now by a tabernacle we understand sometimes the habitation of the body, and sometimes the habitation of the heart; for as by the soul we inhabit the body, so by the thoughts we inhabit the mind. Therefore 'iniquity in the tabernacle' of the mind is an evil bent in the attachment of the thought. But 'iniquity in the tabernacle' of the body is carnal doing in the fulfilment of the deed. Thus Eliphaz, forasmuch as he was the friend of a blessed person, seeing some things true, and yet in those points in which he departs from the right line, holding the likeness of heretics, not knowing that it was in consequence of good qualities blessed Job was stricken, fancied that he had erred whom he saw smitten, and makes him promises if he would return to Almighty God, saying, *Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles*. As if he said in plain speech, 'Whosoever after erring ways is brought back to God, is purified both in thought and in deed together.' It follows;

Ver. 24. *He shall give the flint for earth, and for the flint golden torrents.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

22. What is denoted by 'earth' but weakness in conduct, what by the hardness of the flint but strength, what do we understand by 'the golden torrents,' but the instruction of interior brightness? Now to those that turn themselves to Him Almighty God 'gives for earth the flint,' in that for weak

conduct He bestows the strength of vigorous practice. He also gives ‘for the flint golden torrents,’ in that for vigorous practice He redoubles the instruction of bright preaching, that every converted sinner may from weak be enabled to prove strong, and in his strength rise up even to the uttering forth words of the inner brightness, so that in that person, both weakness of conduct, in which like earth he is crumbled, by strength of good living may be firmly settled, and whereas perception is derived from the life, from that same firmness torrents of gold may run out, seeing that in the mouth of those that live well brightness of teaching runs over. It follows;

Ver. 25. *Yea the Almighty shall be against thine enemies, and thou shalt have heaps of silver.*

23. What other enemies are we more subject to than evil spirits, who in our thoughts besiege us, that they may break into the city of our minds, and hold it, taken captive, under the yoke of their dominion? Now by the name of ‘silver,’ the Psalmist testifies the sacred oracles are denoted, when he says, *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth*. [Ps. 12, 6] And often when we apply ourselves to the sacred oracles, we are more grievously subject to the artifices of evil Spirits, in that they sprinkle upon our mind the dust of earthly thoughts, that the eyes of our heeding they may darken to the light of the interior vision. Which same the Psalmist had undergone when he said, *Depart from me, ye evil ones, and I will search into the commandments of my God*; i.e. plainly teaching us that he could not search into the commandments of God, when he was suffering in mind the snares of the evil spirits. Which thing in the work of Isaac too we know to he represented under the evil doing of the Philistines, who with a heap of earth filled up the wells which Isaac had dug. For these very same wells we ourselves dig, when in the hidden meanings of Holy Scripture we penetrate deep. Which wells however the Philistines secretly fill up, when to us advancing to deep things unclean spirits bring in earthly thoughts, and

as it were take away the water of divine knowledge which has been discovered. But because no one can overcome these enemies by his own power, it is said by Eliphaz, *Yea the Almighty shall be against thine enemies, and thou shalt have heaps of silver.* As if it were said in plain words; 'While the Lord drives away from thee the evil spirits by His power, the shining talent of divine revelation within gains growth.' It proceeds;

Ver. 26. *Then shalt thou abound with delicacies over the Almighty.*

24. To 'abound with delicacies over the Almighty' is in the love of Him to be filled to the full with the banquet of Holy Scripture. In Whose words surely we find as many delicacies, as for our profiting we obtain diversities of meaning, so that now the bare history should be our food, now, veiled under the text of the letter, the moral allegory refresh us from our inmost soul, and now to the deeper things contemplation should hold us suspended, already, in the darkness of the present life, shining in upon us from the light of eternity. And it is necessary to be known, that whosoever 'abounds with delicacies,' is released in a kind of loosening of himself, and slacks from devotion to labour as it were from weariness, because the soul when it has begun to abound with the interior delicacies, henceforth consents not ever to give itself to earthly employments, but being captivated by the love of the Creator, and by its captivity henceforth free, for the contemplating of His likeness fainting it draws breath, and as it were wilst giving over, is invigorated; because whereas sordid burthens it is now no longer able to bear, unto Him through rest it hastens Whom it loves within. Hence also in admiration of the spouse it is written, *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness abounding with delicacies?* [Cant. 8, 5. Vulg.] in that truly except Holy Church 'abounded with the delicacies' of God's words, she could not mount up from the deserts of the present life to the regions above. Thus she 'abounds with delicacies and comes up,' in that whilst she is fed by mystical senses, she is lifted up for the contemplating day by day the

things above. Hence likewise the Psalmist says, *Even the night shall be light about me in my delicacies*; [Ps. 139, 11. Vulg.] in that while by mystical perception the earnest mind is regaled, henceforth the darkness of the present life is lighted up in her by the radiance of the day to come. So that even in the blindness of this state of corruption the force of the future light should break out into her understanding, and she being fed with delicacies of words, might learn by thus foretasting what to hunger for of the food of truth. It goes on;

And shall lift up thy face unto God.

25. To 'lift up the face to God' is to raise the heart for the searching into what is loftiest. For as by the bodily face we are known and distinguishable to man, so by the interior figure to God. But when by the guilt of sin we are weighed to the earth, we are afraid to lift the face of our heart to God; for whereas it is not buoyed up by any of the confidence of good works, the mind is full of affright to gaze on the highest things, because conscience of itself accuses self. But when by the tears of penance sin is now washed out, and things committed are so bewailed that nothing to be bewailed is any more committed, a great confidence springs up in the mind, and for the contemplating the joys of the recompensing from above 'the face of our heart is lifted up.' Now these things Eliphaz would have spoken aright, if he had been admonishing one that was weak; but when he looks down upon a righteous man on account of his scourges, what is this, but that he pours out words of knowledge in not knowing? Which same words if we bring into a type of heretics, they are they that with false promises engage for us to 'lift our face to God.' As if they said plainly to the faithful people, 'As long as thou dost not follow our preaching, thine heart thou sinkest down in things below.' But whereas Eliphaz charged blessed Job to return to God, from Whom observe that same blessed man had never departed, he yet further subjoins, as promising;

Ver. 27. *Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee.*

26. For they make their prayer to God, but never obtain to be listened to, who set at nought the precepts of the Lord, when He enjoins them. Whence it is written, *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* [Prov. 28, 9] So long then as Eliphaz believed that blessed Job was not heard, he determined that that person had surely done wrong in his practice. And hence he adds further,

And thou shalt pay thy vows.

He that has vowed vows, but is unable from weakness to pay the same, has it dealt to him in punishment of sin, that whilst willing good, the having the power should be taken away from him. But when in the sight of the interior Judge, the sin which hinders is done away, it is immediately brought to pass, that the being able attends upon the vow. It goes on;

Ver. 28. *Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee.*

27. This is used to be the special conclusion of those going weakly, that in such proportion they esteem a man righteous as they see him obtain all that he desires; whereas in truth we know that earthly goods are sometimes withheld from the righteous, while they are bestowed with liberal bounty upon the unrighteous; seeing that to sick persons also when they are despaired of, physicians order whatever they call for to be supplied, but those whom they foresee may be brought back to health, the things which they long for they refuse to have given them. Now if Eliphaz introduced these declarations with reference to spiritual gifts, be it known that 'a thing is decreed and is established' to a man, when the virtue which is longed for in the desire, is, by God's granting it, happily forwarded by the carrying of it out as well. And hence it is yet further added;

And the light shall shine upon thy way.

[LITERAL AND MORAL INTERPRETATION]

28. Since for ‘light to shine in the ways’ of the righteous, is by extraordinary deeds of virtue to scatter the tokens of their brightness, that wherever they go in the bent of the mind, from the hearts of those beholding them they may dispel the night of sin, and by the example of their own practice pour into them the light of righteousness; but whatever justness of practice there may be, in the eye of the interior Judge it is nothing, if pride of heart uplifts it. Hence it is added;

Ver. 29. *For he that has been abased shall be in glory, and he that has bent down his eyes, the same shall be saved.*

29. Which same sentence is not at variance with the mouth of ‘Truth,’ when It says, *For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*. [Luke 14, 11] And hence it is said by Solomon, *Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.* [Prov. 18, 12] But it is properly said, *For he that has bent down his eyes, the same shall be saved*; in that so far as it is to be discovered through the ministering of the members, the first manifestation of pride is used to be with the eyes. Hence it is written, *And wilt bring down high looks.* [Ps. 18, 27] Hence it is said of the very head himself of those that behave proudly, *He beholdeth all high things.* [Job 41, 34] Hence it is written concerning her, who by unbelief attached herself to him, *There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.* [Prov. 30, 13] So to ‘bend down the eyes, is no man on looking upon him to look down upon, but one’s self to look upon as inferior and below all one sees. He then that ‘bends down his eyes shall be saved’; because he who quits the false height of pride, scales the loftiness of truth. It goes on;

Ver. 30. *The innocent shall be saved, but he shall be saved by the cleanness of his hands.*

30. Which same sentence now if it be delivered touching the recompense of the kingdom of heaven, is supported by truth, in that whereas it is written

concerning God, *Who rendereth to every man according to his deeds* [Rom. 2, 6], that man in the Last Inquest the justice of the Judge Eternal saveth, whom here His pitifulness sets free from impure deeds. But if a man is to this purport supposed to be here saved by the cleanness of his own hands, that by his own powers he should be made innocent, assuredly it is an error; for if Grace above do not prevent him when faulty, assuredly it will never find anyone faultless to recompense without fault. Whence it is said by the truth-telling voice of Moses; *And no man of himself is innocent in Thy sight.* [Exod. 34, 7] And so heavenly pity first works something in ourselves without the help of ourselves, that, our own free will following it up as well, the good which we now desire, it may do along with ourselves; yet the good coming by grace bestowed, in the Last Judgment, He so rewards in ourselves, as if it had proceeded only from ourselves. For whereas the Goodness of God prevents us to make us innocent, Paul says, *But by the grace of God I am what I am.* [1 Cor. 15, 10] And whereas our free will follows that grace, he adds, *And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all.* Who whereas he saw that he was nothing of himself, says, *Yet not I*, and yet forasmuch as he saw that he was something in union with grace, he added, *but the grace of God with me.* For he would not have said, *with me*, if together with preventing grace he had not had free will following it up. Therefore in order to shew that he was nothing without grace, he says, *Yet not I*, but that he might shew that along with grace he had worked by free will, he added, *but the grace of God with me*. Thus 'the innocent man shall be saved by the cleanness of his hands,' in that he who is here prevented by the gift, that he may be made innocent, when he is brought to judgment, is rewarded of merit. All which things, as was before said, Eliphaz though he delivered rightly, yet to whom he was delivering them he knew not; because one better than himself it was not his business to teach, but to hear. All which particulars however agree in

a figure with the promises of heretics, who when they find any of the faithful afflicted in the present life suppose them stricken for the sin of misbelief, and promise them if they will follow their doctrine the saving health of innocency by cleanness of good works. But the mind of the faithful looks down upon them so much the deeper down, in proportion as it does not see them to possess the innocency which they promise. Whence it is well said by Solomon, *Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any winged fowl*. For the 'winged fowl' are the spirits of good men, which whilst in the hope of truth they soar up to the higher regions, shun the nets of bad men set for their deceiving. It goes on;

Chap. xxiii. 1, 2. *Then Job answered and said, Now also is my complaint bitter: and the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

31. In his own way blessed Job sets out with the plainer sort of words, but his declaration he closes by the deep following on of mystery. For the pain of the afflicted man ought to have been healed by the consoling of his friends, but because their consoling broke out into the soothings of deceit, the pain of the stricken man was made harsher. For whereas Eliphaz was not afraid to promise him better things on being converted, it was as if by a poisonous remedy the wound were increased. Hence it is rightly said, *Even to-day is my complaint bitter, and the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning*, in this respect, viz. that the straining of unregulated consoling increased the stroke manifold, which it ought to have diminished; by which same words taken in a type of Holy Church, the pain of the faithful is likewise set forth, who groan the more, the more they see the wicked using the acts of flattery, who, according to the declaration of Paul, by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

32. Which words may also be rightly applied to the viewing with greater exactness the mind of the faithful, who can never be without bitterness even if they seem to prosper in this world. Which persons when adversity too befalls, it redoubles that pain which it finds. Whence it is rightly said, *Now also is my complaint bitter*, that it might be plainly shewn that even in prosperity the mind of the Elect should not be without bitterness. And it is well said, *And the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning.* For 'the hand of a stroke,' is the force of the striking. For their first striking the Elect see to be, that from the vision of their Creator they are parted, that the brightness of the interior illumining they never enjoy, but groan as being banished in the exile of the present life as in a place of darkness. Thus they always have their groaning in this 'hand of their stroke;' but when over and above adversities also befall them in this life, 'the hand of their stroke is heavier than their groaning.' For there was groaning for the stroke even when the adversities of the present life were away. But the bitterness of the original stroke is increased over and above by the trial of adversity. Therefore he says, *And the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning?* In that any just man adversity did not smite whilst happy in this life, but came to redouble in him the pain of the wound. Yet it happens by the extraordinary governance of Almighty God, that when in this life the spirit of the righteous man travails most in adversities, he thirsts the more ardently after the beholding of his Maker's face. Hence it is fitly subjoined here,

Ver. 8. *O that one would grant me that I might know and find Him, that I might come even to His seat!*

33. An elect person if he did not know God, assuredly would not love Him. But it is one thing to 'know' by faith, and another to know by His own Form, one thing to find by trustfulness, another to find Him by contemplation. In consequence whereof it is brought to pass that Him

Whom they know by faith, all of the Elect long to see by His own Form as well. With the love of Whom they burn and glow because the honey of His sweetness they already taste of in the mere certainty of their faith. Which that person in the country of the Gerasenes cured of the devils well represents, who wishes to depart with Jesus; but by the Master of health it is, told him, *Return to thine own house, and shew what great things God hath done unto thee*. [Luke 8, 39] For on him that loves delay is still imposed, that by the longing of love delayed the title to rewarding may be heightened. And so to us Almighty God is made sweet in miracles, and yet in His own loftiness remains hidden from our eyes, that both by shewing something of Himself, He may by secret inspiration set us on fire in the love of Him, and yet by hiding the gloriousness of His Majesty may increase the force of that love of Him by the heat of longing desire. For except the holy man sought to see This Being in His Majesty, surely he would not bring in the words, *that I might come even to His seat*? For what is the 'seat' of God but those angelical Spirits, who as Scripture testifies are called 'Thrones?' He then that desires to 'come to the seat of God,' what else does he long for but to be among the Angelic spirits, that no failing moments of the periods of time he henceforth be liable to, but rise up to abiding glory in the contemplation of eternity.

[LITERAL AND ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

34. Which words nevertheless are likewise appropriate to the righteous whilst placed in this life. For when they see any thing done against their wish and desire, they have recourse to the hidden judgments of God, that therein they may read that that is not irregularly ordered within, which seems to pass irregularly without. For when they behold with the eyes of faith the Creator of all things, ruling over the Angelical Spirits, then they 'come to His seat.' And whereas they observe that He, Who rules the

Angels in a wonderful manner, does not dispose of man in any way contrary to justice, then indeed the principles of cases they see to be as just as they are, whilst the cases themselves externally seem to be unjust. And whereas they do this with humility, they often lay blame to themselves in their will, and their own wishes they sometimes judge in themselves, whilst they ponder that those things are better which the Creator appoints. Hence it is well added in addition,

Ver. 4. *I will order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with reproaches.*

35. To 'order our cause before God' is within the secret depth of our mind by the contemplating of faith to open the eyes of our view to the awful inquisition of His Majesty, to mark what man as a sinner deserves, of the now hidden and secret Judge to take thought how terrible He will hereafter appear. In consequence of which it happens, that the soul is recalled to the knowledge of itself with greater exactness, and in proportion as it sees its secret Judge the greater object of alarm, is so much the more horribly wrung with fears for its actions. It trembles with anxious alarm; its offences it prosecutes with lamentation; in repenting it charges home what it remembers itself to have been; whence now too after it had been said*, I will order my cause before Him*, it is rightly subjoined, *And fill my mouth with reproaches*. For he who 'orders his cause before God,' does 'fill his mouth with reproaches,' in that while he beholds the exact scrutiny of the awful Judge directed against himself, he pursues himself with the charges of bitter repentance. Now it often happens that whilst we neglect to take account of our faults, what blaming of them may follow in the Judgment we are left ignorant of: but whilst we pursue them by exercising repentance what the Judge in His Inquisition may say to us concerning them, we find out. Whence it is further added with propriety,

Ver. 5. *That I may know the words that he will answer me, and understand what he will say unto me.*

36. For we then bewail our sins, when we begin to weigh them; but we then weigh them the more exactly, when more anxiously we bewail them, and by our lamentations it rises up [one Ms. ’is known’] more perfectly in our hearts, what the severity of God threatens those with that commit sin, what will be those rebukings upon the children of perdition, what the terror, what the abhorrence of the unappeasable Majesty. For so great things shall the Lord then being angry ‘say’ to the lost, as great as He permits them of justice to undergo. Which same words of His visitation, the righteous, because now they anxiously fear them, escape free from. But who in that inquisition might be found righteous, if God according to the Majesty of His Might, so sifted the life of man? Therefore it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 6. *I would not that He should contend with me with great power, nor oppress me with the weight of His mightiness.*

37. For the soul of one however righteous, if he be judged with strictness by Almighty God, is borne down by the weight of His mightiness. In which same words this is likewise to be understood, that whereas the holy man shews the might of God, what else of Him does he desire, but His weakness? And it is written, *the weakness of God is stronger than men.* [1 Cor. 1, 25] Whence too he directly adds,

Ver. 7. *Let Him put forth equity against me, and my judgment shall come unto victory.*

[PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

For who else saving the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, is denoted by the title of ‘equity?’ Concerning Whom it is written, *Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness.* [I Cor. 1, 30] And whereas this same righteousness came into this world against the ways of

sinners, we get the better of our old enemy, by whom we were held captive. So let him say, *I would not that He should contend with me with great power, nor oppress me with the weight of His mightiness*. *Let Him put forth equity against me, and my judgment shall come unto victory*. i.e. 'for the rebuking of my ways, let Him send His Incarnate Son, and then the plotting foe, by the sentence of mine absolving, I as victor will turn out.' For if the Only-begotten Son of God had so remained invisible in the strength of the Divine Nature, as not to have admitted aught derived from our weakness, when could weak men ever have found the access of grace to Him? For the weight of His greatness, being considered, would rather have oppressed than aided him; but the Strong above all things came weak among all things, that whereas He agreed with us by assumed weakness, He might elevate us to His own abiding strength. For in Its loftiness the Divine Nature could never have been apprehended by us, inasmuch as being too little, but He bowed Himself down to man through human nature, and we as it were mounted up on Him laid low; He rose, and we were lifted up. Whence this too is added directly, whereby the Divine Being may be shewed invisible and incomprehensible. Thus it goes on;

Ver. 8, 9. *If I go to the East, He appeareth not; if I go to the West, I shall not understand Him; if I go to the left hand, what shall I do? I shall not comprehend Him; if I turn myself to the right hand I shall not see Him.*

38. For the Creator of all things is not in a part, inasmuch as He is every where. And then He is found the less, when He, That is whole every where, is sought in a part. For the Incomprehensible Spirit containeth all things within Itself, Which at the same time both while filling encompasseth, and while encompassing filleth, both in supporting overtops, and in overtopping supports; and it is well that after it had been said, *if I go to the East, He appeareth not; if I go to the West, I shall not understand Him; if I go to the left hand, what shall I do? I shall not comprehend Him; if I turn myself to*

the right hand I shall not see Him; he thereupon added, *But He knoweth the way that I take*. As if he said in plain words, 'I am unable to see Him, Who seeth me, and Him that beholdeth me most minutely, I have no power to behold:' that is to say, that he might shew that He is so much the more heedfully to be feared, in proportion as He is not discernible. For He Who so beholds us that He may not be by us beheld, is so much the more to be dreaded in proportion as in seeing all things He is not seen in the least degree. For when we believe that there is anyone hidden in ambush to assault us, we dread him the more that we do not at all see him; and when we do not at all discover his ambush where it is placed, we apprehend it even there where it does not exist. And our Creator, Who is whole every where, and while discerning all things is not discerned, is the more to be dreaded in proportion as continuing invisible, what He may determine concerning our actions and at what time is not known. Which words, too, may be understood in another sense also. For we 'go to the East,' when we lift up our mind in thinking of His Majesty. But 'He appeareth not,' seeing that such as He is in His own Nature, by mortal thought He cannot be seen to be. *If I go to the West, I shalt not understand Him*; we 'go to the west,' when the eye of the heart that is lifted up in God, but made to recoil by the mere immensity of the light, we bring back to our own selves, and being spent with labour, we learn that the thing is very much above us which we were seeking; and viewing our own mortal condition find out that as yet we are creatures unfit to have the power to behold One that is Immortal. *If I go to the left hand what shall I do? I shalt not comprehend Him.* To 'go to the left hand' is to yield one's self to the enjoyments of our sins. And it is surely plain, that he cannot 'apprehend God,' who still in the gratification of sin lies prostrate along the left side. If I turn myself to the right side I shall not see Him. He truly is 'turned to the right hand,' who is lifted up on the ground of virtuous attainments. But he cannot see God, who is glad with

selfish joy for his good deeds; because in that man the swelling of pride weighs down the eye of the heart. Whence it is well said elsewhere, *Thou shalt not decline to the right hand nor to the left*. [Deut. 17, 11] In all which particulars the soul very often searches out itself, nor yet is able perfectly to find out itself. Whence it is fitly added here,

But He Himself knoweth the way that I take.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

39. As if he said in plain terms, 'I for mine own part both search myself strictly, and am not able to know myself thoroughly; yet He, Whom I have not power to see, seeth most minutely all the things that I do.' It goes on; *And He shall try me like gold which passeth through the fire.*

Gold in the furnace is advanced to the brightness of its nature, whilst it loses the dross. And so like 'gold that passeth through the fire' the souls of the righteous are tried, which by the burning of tribulation through and through, both have their defects removed, and their good points increased. Nor was it of pride that the holy man likened himself as set in tribulation to gold, in that he who, by the voice of God, was pronounced righteous before the stroke, was not for this reason permitted to be tried that bad qualities might be cleared off, but that excellences might be heightened; but gold is purified by fire; less then than he was did he think of his own self, in that, being delivered over to suffer tribulation, he believed that he was being purified, whereas he had not any thing in him to be purified.

40. Now it is necessary for us to know, that though the mind of the righteous entertains humble thoughts touching itself, yet the several things that they do, they see to be as right as they are, while they never presume on the rightness of them. Whence it is yet further added; *My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined. Neither have gone back from the commandment of his lips, and I have hid the words of his mouth in my*

bosom. But in the midst of all this let us see whether he thinks himself to be any thing. It follows; *But He is Himself alone*. By the subjoining of which sentence, he shews that amidst all the good things which he had done he believed himself to be nothing. But taking up these same words from the beginning, let us run over them as well as we are able.

Ver. 11. *My foot hath held His steps.*

41. For as a kind of footsteps of God are His doings which we see, by which doings both the good and bad man is governed, by which the righteous and unrighteous are arranged in their classes, whereto both everyone that is subject is led on day by day to better things, and he that is in rebellion against them is borne with going headlong into worse. Concerning which same footsteps the Prophet said, *Thy goings have been seen, O God.* [Ps. 68, 24] And so we, when we behold the efficacy of His long-suffering and pitifulness, and upon so beholding strive to imitate the same, what else do we but follow the 'footsteps of His goings,' in that we imitate some outskirts of His method of proceeding. Thus these footsteps of His Father 'Truth' gave it in charge to imitate when He said, *Pray for them which persecute you and falsely accuse you; that ye may be the children of your Father Which is in heaven. For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good.* [Matt. 5, 44. 45.] It may be too that blessed Job who had already said with assured faith, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall arise at the latter day from the earth* [Job 19, 25]; so dwelt on the future working of Wisdom Incarnate to be, in like manner as we behold by faith the works of that Wisdom now past, how that the Mediator between God and man should be kind to give, humble to bear, patient to afford an example. Whose life while blessed Job, filled with the Spirit from above, regarded with heedful intentness, foreseeing the future lowliness of His mild character, he refers as it were to a pattern set before him, so that whatever he did in this life he might bind fast to His footsteps in imitating,

that so he who was incapable of seeing the high things of His secret ordering, as it were looking on the ground, might keep His footsteps for imitation. Of which same 'footsteps' of Him it is said by Peter, *Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His footsteps*. [1 Pet. 2, 21] Concerning whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 11. *His way have I kept, and not declined.*

42. For he 'keeps the way and does not decline,' who practises the thing whereon his mind is bent. Since to 'keep' in the bent is 'not to decline' in the practice. For this is the anxiety of the righteous, that day by day they should try their actions by the ways of truth, and proposing these as a rule to themselves, they should not decline from the track of their right course. Thus day by day they strive to get above themselves, and in proportion as they are lifted up upon the summit of virtues, they judge with heedful censure, whatever there is of themselves left remaining below themselves. And they are in haste to draw the whole of themselves there, where they find that they have been brought in part. It goes on;

Ver. 12. *Neither have I gone back from the commandments of His lips.*

43. As servants that serve well are ever intent upon their masters' countenances, that the things they may bid they may hear readily, and strive to fulfil; so the minds of the righteous in their bent are upon Almighty God, and in His Scripture they as it were fix their eyes on His face, that whereas God delivers therein all that He wills, they may not be at variance with His will, in proportion as they learn that will in His revelation. Whence it happens, that His words do not pass superfluously through their ears, but that these words they fix in their hearts. Hence it is here added;

I have hid the words of His mouth in my breast.

44. For we 'hide the words of His mouth in the bosom of our heart,' when we hear His commandments not in a passing way, but to fulfil them in practice. Hence it is that of the Virgin Mother herself it is written, *But Mary*

kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. Which same words even when they come forth to the practising lie hidden in the recesses of the heart, if through that which is done without, the mind of the doer be not lifted up within. For when the word conceived is carried on to the deed, if human praise is aimed at herein, the word of God assuredly is not 'hidden in the bosom of the mind.' But I would know, O blessed man, wherefore thou examinest thyself with so much earnestness, wherefore thou takest thyself to task with so much anxiety? It goes on,

Ver. 13. *But He is Himself alone, and no man can turn away His thought.*

45. Are there not angels and men, the heavens and the earth, the air and the waters of the ocean, all the winged creatures, quadrupeds, and creeping things? And surely it is written, *Which God created that they should be.* [Gen.2, 3] Whereas then there is such a multitude of things in the circle of nature, wherefore is it now said by the voice of the blessed man, *He is Himself alone?* Why, it is one thing to be, and another thing to BE primarily, one thing to be subjectly to change, and another thing to BE independently of change. For these are all of them in being, but they are not maintained in being in themselves, and except they be maintained by the hand of a governing agent, they cannot ever be. For all things subsist in Him by Whom they were created, nor do the things that live owe their life to themselves, nor are those that are moved, but do not live, by their own caprice brought to motion. But He moveth all things, Who quickens some with life, whilst some that are not so quickened He preserves, disposing them in a wonderful way for last and lowest being. For all things were made out of nothing, and their being would again go on into nothing, except the Author of all things held it by the hand of governance. All the things then that have been created, by themselves can neither subsist nor be moved, but they only so far subsist, as they have obtained that they should be, are only so far moved, as they are influenced by a secret impulse. For see the sinner

is ordained to be scourged by human accidents; the earth is parched in his toilings, the sea tossed in the shipwreck of him, the air on fire in his sweating, the heavens are darkened in floods upon him, his fellow creatures burn with fire in oppressions of him, and the angelical powers are made active in his troubling. Are all these things which we have named being inanimate, or which we have named endued with life, put into activity by their own instincts, or rather by impulses from God? Whatever therefore it be that is arrayed against us outwardly, in that thing That Being is to be regarded Who ordains it inwardly. In every case then He is to be regarded as alone, Who IS primarily, Who also saith to Moses, *I AM THAT I AM, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, He that IS hath sent me unto you*. [Ex. 3, 14] And so, when we are scourged by the things that we see, we ought anxiously to fear Him Whom we do not see. And so let the holy man look down upon all that alarms him without, all that in respect of its being would go on to nothing except it were ruled, and with the eye of the mind, all else being kept back, let him see Him only in comparison with Whose Being for ourselves to be is not to be, and let him say*, He only is Himself alone*.

46. Concerning Whose unchangeableness it is directly after added with propriety, *No man can turn away His thought*, for as He is unchangeable in Nature, so He is unchangeable in Will. For 'none turneth away His thought,' in that no man has power to resist His secret judgments. Since though there have been persons who might seem to 'have turned away His thought,' yet His interior thought was this, that they should by praying have power to avert His sentence, and that they should obtain from Him what to effect with Him. So let him say, *and no man turneth away His thought*, in that His judgments once fixed can never be altered. Whence it is written, *He hath made a decree which shall not pass.* [Ps. 148, 6] And again, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* [Mark 13, 31]

And again*, For My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways as My ways*. [Is. 55, 8] And so whenever outwardly the sentence appears to be altered, inwardly the counsel is not altered, in that in relation to each particular thing that is unalterably established within, whatever is done alterably without. It goes on;

And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth.

47. Whereas God is exterior to all bodies, interior to all minds, that identical power of His, whereby He penetrates all things, and regulates all things, is called His 'soul.' Whose will not even those things oppose, which appear to be done contrary to His will, seeing that even what He does not order, to this end He sometimes suffers to be done, that so through this thing that which He does order may be the more surely done. For the will of the Apostate Angel is bad, yet by God it is wonderfully ordered, so that even his very artifices as well should promote the welfare of the good, whom they purify whilst they try. So then 'whatever His soul desireth, that He doeth,' that from the same source as well He might fulfil His will, whence there seemed to be a resisting of His will. Therefore let the holy man be filled with alarm, and contemplating the weight of that great Majesty, let him find himself out to be weak.

48. But it is well to put the question amidst these words, and to say, 'O blessed Job, wherefore in the midst of such scourges dost thou dread still further afflictions?' Thou art already encompassed with sorrows, by innumerable calamities thou art already straitly beset. Misfortune is to be apprehended, which is not yet entered upon. Thou being in the midst of such great sorrow, what dost thou apprehend? But mark how the holy man satisfying our questioning adds;

Ver. 14. *For when He hath accomplished His will in me, there are many other such things with Him.*

49. As if he said in plain words, ‘Already I weigh well what I am suffering, but I still dread things that I may undergo.’ For He accomplishes His will in me, in that He afflicts one with many strokes, but ‘there are many like things with Him,’ in that if He is minded to strike, He sees yet further where the stroke may be added to. Hence we may collect how fearful he was before the scourge, who even after being scourged still dreads lest he should be farther stricken. For seeing the incomprehensible force both of power and penetration that resides in Him, the righteous man would not even on the ground of the scourge upon him be secure. And hence fearing still more He adds;

Ver. 15. *Therefore am I troubled at His presence; when I consider I am afraid of Him.*

50. He is rightly ‘troubled at the presence of the Lord,’ who sets before the view of his eyes the terribleness of His Majesty, and is throughly shaken by dread of His Righteousness, whilst he sees that he is not fit to render his accounts if he be judged with severity. Now it is rightly said, *When I consider I am afraid of Him*, because the force of the Divine visitation when a man considers little, He dreads but little, and in this life is as it were secure, in proportion as he is a stranger to the consideration of the interior strictness. For the righteous are ever turning back into the secret chamber of the heart, contemplating the power of the hidden strictness, presenting themselves to the judgment of the interior Majesty, that they may one day be the more secure, in proportion as they would not make themselves secure here so long as they lived. For when the minds of evildoers refuse to consider what they have to fear, sooner or later by rejoicing they are brought to that, which they do not by fearing in any way escape. But see in regard to blessed Job, we know that he was devoted to frequent sacrifices to God, that he was given up to acts of hospitality, to the necessities of the poor, that he was humble towards his own dependants even, kind towards

those that opposed him, and yet he received such numberless scourges, nor now became secure amidst them, but still entertained fear, still thinking of the power of the Divine strictness he is made to tremble. What then shall we miserable creatures say? what shall we sinners say, if he so fears, who so acted? But let him make known whether the weight of this great fear he has from himself. It goes on;

Ver. 16. *For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.*

51. By divine gift the heart of the righteous man is said to be made soft, in that it is penetrated with the fear of the judgment from Above. For that it is soft, which is capable of being penetrated, but that is hard, which cannot be penetrated. Whence it is said by Solomon, *Happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.* [Prov. 28, 14] And so the merit of his dread he ascribes not to himself but to his Creator, who says, *For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.* Now the hearts of good men are not secure but troubled, in that whilst they think of the heavy weight of the future reckoning, they do not seek to enjoy rest here, and they interrupt their security by the thought of the interior severity. Which persons nevertheless, in the midst of the very chastenings of fear, often recall their mind to the gifts, and that by comforting they may cheer themselves, amidst this which they fear, they bring back the eye to the gifts which they have received, that hope may buoy up him whom fear bears down. Hence too it follows;

Ver. 17. *Because I have not perished on account of the overhanging darkness; neither hath the darkness covered my face.*

52. For he, being set under the scourge, dies off from the health of the body ‘on account of the overhanging darkness,’ who is for this reason smitten for the past that he may be shielded from future punishments. For scourges inflicted on the good either wipe out evil things done, or parry off future ones which might have been done. But blessed Job, forasmuch as

when set under the rod he was neither purified from foregoing sins nor shielded from those that threatened, but only had his goodness increased under the stroke, says with confidence, *Because I have not perished on account of the overhanging darkness, neither hath the darkness covered my face*. For he that always had before his eyes the weight of divine dread, the face of his heart the darkness of sin never covered. And he whom no punishments followed, did not lose the health of the body 'on account of the overhanging darkness.'

53. And it is to be noted, that in his own person telling what had gone before, he never says 'neither hath darkness touched my face,' but 'neither hath darkness covered my face;' for often even the hearts of the righteous do thoughts arising defile, and affect them with the gratifications of things earthly, but whereas they are speedily put away by the hand of holy discretion, it is quickly brought to pass that darkness should not cover the face of the heart, which was already touching it by unlawful enjoyment; for often in the very sacrifice of prayer urgent thoughts press themselves on us, that they should have force to carry off or pollute what we are sacrificing in ourselves to God with weeping eyes. Whence when Abraham at sunset was offering up the sacrifice, he was subject to birds setting on, which he diligently drove away, that they might not carry off the sacrifice which had been offered. So let us, when we offer to God a holocaust upon the altar of our hearts, keep it from unclean birds, that the evil spirits and bad thoughts may not seize upon that which our mind hopes that it is offering up to God to a good end. It goes on;

C. xxiv. 1. *Times are not hidden from the Almighty; they that know Him, know not His days.*

54. What are called 'the days' of God, save His very Eternity itself? which is sometimes described by the announcement of 'one day,' as where it is written, *For one day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.* [Ps. 84,

10] But sometimes on account of its length it is represented by the expression of a number of days, whereof it is written, *Thy years are throughout all generations.* [Ps. 102, 24] We then are wrapped up within the divisions of time, through this that we are created beings. But God, Who is the Creator of all things, by His Eternity encompasses our times. And so he says, *Times are not hidden from the Almighty*; *they that know Him, know not His days;* seeing that He, indeed, sees all of ours to the comprehending thereof, but all that is His we are in no degree able to comprehend. But whereas the nature of God is simple, it is very much to be wondered at why he should say, *They that know Him, know not His days*. For it is not that He Himself is one thing and His 'days' another; since God is that thing which He hath. For He hath eternity, yet He is Himself Eternity. He hath Light, yet He is Himself His own Light. He hath brightness, yet He is Himself His own Brightness. And so in Him it is not one thing to be, and another thing to have. What does it mean then to say, *They that know Him, know not His days,* except that even they that know Him, do not know Him as yet? For even they who already hold Him by faith, as yet know Him not by appearance. And whereas He, Whom we truly believe, is Himself eternity to Himself, yet in what way there is that eternity of Him we know not. For in the thing that we hear touching the power of the Divine Nature, we are sometimes used to imagine such things as we know by experience. Thus every single thing that begins and ends, is bounded by the beginning and ending. And if it be by any little delay stayed from being ended, it is called long; on which same length whilst a man carries back the eyes of his mind in recollection, and stretches them out before in anticipation, as it were over a space of time he expands them in imagination. And when he hears the eternity of God mentioned in human sort, to his mind on the stretch he sets forth long spaces of life, in which same he may ever measure both what has

gone away in the rear as a thing to be retained in the memory, and what remains before as a thing to be looked forward to in the intention.

55. But as often as in the case of eternity we have such thoughts, we do not as yet know eternity. For that which is neither commenced by a beginning nor finished by an ending, is there, where neither is there looked forward to that which shall come, nor does there pass by that which may be recalled to mind, but that alone is, which is everlasting BEING. Which though we and the Angels with a beginning begin to see to be, yet we see it to be without beginning, where it is to be always without end, in such a way, that the mind never extends itself to things following in a sequence, as if things that are were multiplied and made long. For though by the Spirit of Prophecy it is said, *The Lord shall reign for ever and* [LXX so.] *for worlds and further* [Exod. 15, 18]; after the manner of Holy Writ, the Spirit spoke in man’s way to men, so as to speak of ‘further’ there, where looking forward could not enter. For eternity has no ‘further,’ which has it always to be, wherein no part of its length goes by that another part should take its place, but the whole at once is Being, that nothing should seem to be wanting to it, which it may not see, in which eternity every thing that is the mind sees to be at once not slow and long. But in speaking such things of the days of eternity we are trying to see something more than we do see. And so let it be rightly said, *They that know Him know not His days*; in that though we already know God by faith, yet how His Eternity is at once without a past before all ages, without a future after all ages, long without delay, and everlasting without looking forward, we do not see. Thus blessed Job, whilst bearing a type of Holy Church, (because he restrains himself under a great bridling of knowledge, so as not to be wiser than he ought to be,) and testifying that the days of God can never be understood, directly brings back the view of the mind to the pride of Heretics who aim to be

deeply enlightened, and what they are incapable of taking in at all, they boast that they know in perfect measure, Thus it goes on;

Ver. 2. *Others remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed them.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

56. Whom does he denote by the title of 'others,' saving Heretics, who to the bosom of Holy Church are strangers? For they the same persons remove landmarks, in that the constitutions of the Fathers they by walking awry do overstep. Concerning which same constitutions it is written, *Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.* [Prov. 22, 28] And these violently take away the flocks, and feed them, in that all the inexperienced, by wicked persuasions, they draw to themselves, and with baneful lessons nourish them for slaughtering. For that the ignorant multitudes are represented by the designation of 'flocks,' the words of the Spouse bear witness, Who addresses His Espoused, in the words, *Except thou know thyself, O beautiful amongst women, depart forth, and go after the footsteps of the flocks;* i.e. 'excepting that by living well, thou knowest thine honour whereby thou art created after the likeness of God, depart forth from the sight of the contemplation of Me, and follow the life [al. 'the way'] of the uninstructed multitudes. It goes on;

Ver. 3. *They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.*

57. Whom do we understand by the fatherless in this place, but the Elect of God, who are set in tenderness of mind, are nourished with the efficacious grace of faith, and do not yet see the face of their Father, Who has already died in their behalf. And there are very many in the Church, who see certain persons aiming at the things of heaven, having all earthly things in contempt, and though they themselves are toiling with all their

strength in this world's labours, yet to those whom they see panting after heavenly things, from the goods which they possess in this world, they bring this life's aid and support. And though they cannot themselves follow a spiritual life, yet to those reaching forth to the things above they gladly yield means of support. For an ass is used to bear the burthens of men. He then is as it were a kind of ass of the Elect, who whilst yielding himself to earthly courses, carries loads for the uses of men. And often when Heretics turn aside any such person from the bosom of Holy Church, they are as it were driving off the ass of the fatherless, in that when they force him into their own misbelief, they drive him away from tendance on the good.

58. But who is to be understood by the 'widow' saving Holy Church, who is bereft in the mean seas out of the sight of her slain Husband? Now 'the ox' of this 'widow' is every individual preacher. And it often chances that Heretics by their perverted tenets draw over even those very persons that appeared to be preachers. And so they 'take the widow's ox,' when they carry off from Holy Church even a person preaching. And it is rightly added here *for a pledge*. For when a pledge is taken away, one thing indeed is held in our hands, but another yet further is sought for. And very often Heretics for this reason try to carry off those that preach, that they may draw to them their followers likewise. Thus 'the widow's ox is taken away for a pledge,' when the same person that practised preaching is for this reason carried off, that others may follow after him. By whose downfall it is very often brought about, that they also go forth from the bosom of Holy Church, who, imbued with godly habits in her, seemed to be meek and humble. Hence it is added;

Ver. 4. *They have turned the needy out of the way; and have oppressed together the meek of the earth.*

59. For by the term of 'poverty,' humility is very often denoted, and very often they that appear gentle and humble, if they have not learnt to maintain

discretion, fall by the examples of other men. But there are some Heretics, who eschew to mix themselves with the multitudes, and seek the retirement of a life of greater privacy, and these very often with the bane of their persuasion poison those that they meet with the more, in proportion as by the claims of their life they the more seem deserving of respect. Concerning whom it is subjoined;

Ver. 5. *Others as wild asses in the desert go forth to their work.*

60. For the ‘onager’ is a wild ass; and in this place Heretics are rightly likened to ‘wild asses,’ in that being let loose in their pleasures, they are strange to the fetters of faith and reason. Hence it is written; *A wild ass used to the wilderness that snuffeth up the wind of his love at his pleasure.* For he is a wild ass used to the wilderness, who whilst he does not cultivate the ground of his heart with excellence of discipline, there dwells, where there is no fruit. Since he ‘snuffeth up the wind of his love at his pleasure,’ in that the things that from the desire of knowledge he conceives in his mind, are efficacious to puff up but not to edify. Against whom it is said, *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.* [1 Cor. 8, 1] Hence here too the words are suitably brought in; *they go forth to their work*. For it is not the work of God, but their own work that they do, whereas they follow not right doctrines, but their own desires. For it is written, *He that walketh in a perfect way, he served me.* [Ps. 101, 6] So he that does not walk in a perfect way, serves himself more than the Lord. It goes on;

Watching for a prey, they provide bread for their children.

61. They ‘watch for a prey,’ who are always trying to seize the words of the righteous according to their own perception, that by them they may provide the bread of error for evil minded children. Of which some bread it is said in Solomon, in the words of the woman that bears the figure of heretical wickedness, *Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.* [Prov. 9, 17] It goes on ;

Ver. 6. *They reap a field not their own, and the vineyard of him whom they have oppressed by violence they gather.*

62. By the name of a 'field' may be denoted the wide compass of Holy Scripture, and Heretics 'reap' it not being their own, in that they carry away from it sentences which are infinitely removed from their own notions; which same is furthermore described by the title of a 'vineyard,' in that through the sentences of truth it puts forth the clusters of the virtues; the owner of which vineyard, i.e. the originator of Holy Scripture, they as it were 'oppress with violence,' because they endeavour violently to twist and turn a sense of His upon [L. only reads 'in the words'] the words of Holy Writ; as He saith, *But thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast given Me labour in thine iniquity*. [Is. 43, 24] And they 'reap the vintage of that vineyard,' in that they heap together therefrom clusters of sentences after the bent of their own understanding. It may be that by the title of a 'field' or of a 'vineyard' the Church Universal is set forth, which corrupt preachers 'reap,' and by oppressing in His members the Author of it, 'gather the vintage,' in that in bearing down upon the grace of our Creator, whilst they seize off therefrom persons who seemed to be righteous, what else is this but that they carry off 'ears' or 'clusters' of souls? Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 7. *They send men away naked, taking away their garments, who have no covering in the cold.*

63. As garments cover the body, so do good works the soul. Whence it is said to one, *Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame*. [Rev. 16, 15] So Heretics, when in the minds of any they destroy good works, manifestly take away the garments of clothing; and it is well said, *who have no covering in the cold*. For 'covering' has relation to righteousness, 'cold' to sin. And there are some that in some points commit sin, but in some points follow good works. He

then that does wrong by one set of actions, and practises righteousness by another, what is this man but clothed in the cold? He is cold, and he is covered, in that in one part of practice he is made warm for righteousness, in another he is made cold for sin. But whenever Heretics take away their good works from such persons, they bring it to pass that they have not in the cold wherewith to clothe themselves. Therefore it is rightly said, *They send men away naked, taking away their garments, who have no covering in the cold*; that is, for the cold of sin by itself to kill those whom the warmth of a different practice in some degree covered. But it may be, that by the cold there is denoted desire, by the garment practice. And there are great numbers who are still agitated with wrong desires, but striving with themselves in the spirit, they fight against themselves by right works, and with good actions cover that which they perceive through temptation to spring against them of the wrong sort. And so these from the cause that they desire what is evil are cold, and by the act by which they practise what is good, they are clothed. But when Heretics by wrong statements do away with the works of a right faith, what else do they bring to pass but that those that still feel the cold of carnal desires should die without the clothing of good works? It proceeds;

Ver. 8. *They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the stones for want of a garment.*

64. ‘The showers of the mountains’ are the words of the learned. Of which same ‘mountains’ it is delivered by the voice of Holy Church; I lifted up mine eyes unto the hills: and so those persons, ‘the showers of the mountains wet,’ in that the streams of the holy fathers fill them to the full. But as we have already said before, ‘the garment’ we take for the covering of good practice, with which a man is covered, that in the eyes of Almighty God the filthiness of his depravity should be clothed over. Whence it is written, *Blessed are they whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is*

covered. [Ps. 32, 1] Whom do we understand by the title of 'the stones' but the strong ones within the bounds of Holy Church, to whom it is declared by the first shepherd; *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house*. [1 Pet. 2, 5] And so those who on the grounds of their own practice have no reliance, fly to the protection of the holy Martyrs, at their sacred bodies set themselves to tears, and entreat, at their intercessions, to obtain pardon [a]. What then do these do by such self-abasement, but because they lack the covering of good practice 'embrace the stones?' It goes on;

Ver. 9. *They have done violence in preying on the fatherless, and have spoiled the common folk of the poor* [*vulgus pauperum*].

65. When Heretics lack the good fortune of the present life, to weak minds they recommend by words of soft persuasion things that are wrong; but if the good fortune of the present time at all smiles upon them, they do not cease even by violence to draw those they are able. So that by the title of 'fatherless' they are denoted who are still delicate, being set within the pale of Holy Church, whose life their merciful Father by dying preserved, who are already brought forward to a good purpose of mind, but are not yet confirmed with any efficacy in good deeds. The Heretics, then, 'do violence in preying on the fatherless,' in that upon the weak minds of the faithful they make assault with violence in words and deeds. But 'the common folk of the poor' are the uninstructed multitude, which, if it had the riches of true knowledge, would never part with the covering of its faith. For genuine teachers are like a kind of senators within the bounds of Holy Church, who, while they multiply knowledge in the heart, abound in the true riches in themselves. But Heretics 'spoil the common sort of the poor,' in that whilst the learned they cannot, all the unlearned by their pestilent preaching they strip naked of the covering of the faith. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *From the naked, and those going without clothing and a hungered, they have taken away the ears of corn.*

66. What he calls naked he repeats in the words *without clothing*, but it is one thing to be naked and another thing to go naked. Thus every person that does neither what is good nor what is bad is naked and idle; but he that does what is evil 'goes naked,' in that without the covering of good practice he is going by the road of wickedness. But there are some who, as knowing the evil of their wickedness, are in haste to be filled with the bread of righteousness, and hunger to receive the sayings of Holy Scripture; and these, as often as they turn over in thought the sentences of the Fathers for the improvement of the mind, as it were from a good crop they carry ears of corn. And so 'from the naked and those going without clothing and a hungered, Heretics take away ears of corn;' in that whether any persons be idle and never exercise themselves in any thing good, or whether they are going by the way of shamelessness without the covering of good practice, even if they at any time have now the desire to return to repentance, and long for the food of the word, from those same being a hungered they take away the ears of corn, because in the minds of those persons by mischievous persuasions they destroy the sentences of the Fathers. Nor do we improperly say that the ears of corn signify the sentences of the Fathers, in that often whilst they are delivered in forms of figurative diction, we remove the covering of the letter from them like the chaff of corn, that we may be regaled with the marrow of the Spirit. It goes on;

Ver. 11. *They rest at mid-day amid the heaps of those that thirst with the winepresses being trodden.*

67. All those that persecute Holy Church, what else do they but 'tread the winepress?' Which is allowed to be by the Divine appointment, that the clusters of souls may flow out into spiritual wine, and being divested of the corruptible flesh run into the heavenly realms as into a receptacle. For whilst the unrighteous bear down the righteous, they as it were put clusters of the grape beneath their feet. And the clusters being squeezed run over for

the fulness of the heavenly feast, which were before as if hanging in the freedom of this air. Thus David the Prophet, regarding the chastening of Holy Church [b], writes the Psalm 'for the winepresses.' Now all that bear hard upon the life of the faithful, tread and thirst, in that by doing things that are cruel they are rendered the more savage; being blinded by just deserts of their ungodliness, they go about to do things more grievous the more they have already done grievous things. But Heretics, when they have not themselves the power of persecuting, stir up the men of this world that have power, and incline their minds for the exercising persecution, and inflame them with what persuasions they are able. And when they see these pursuing cruel measures against the lives of the Catholics, they as it were rest in the very fervour of the sun. Therefore it is well said now, *They rest at mid-day amidst the heaps of those that thirst with the winepresses being trodden*, in that they join the multitude of those whom they see already employed in hard measures and still thirsting after harder ones. And whilst the fervour of these satisfies their desires, they rest in the deeds of such as in the mid-day. It goes on ;

Ver. 12. *They have caused men to groan out of the cities.*

68. Whereas cities (*civitates*) are so called from the people living together, (*conviventes,*) by the designation of 'cities' the churches of the true faith are not unfitly represented, which being settled in the different parts of the world constitute one Catholic Church, in which all the faithful thinking what is right concerning God live together in harmony. For this very harmony of people living together the Lord even by the distinguishing of places set forth in the Gospel, when being about to satisfy the people with five loaves, He bade them lie down by fifties or hundreds in ranks, so that the crowd of the faithful might take its food at once separate in places, and united in ways. For the rest of the jubilee is contained in a mystery of the number fifty, and fifty is carried twice to be brought to a hundred.

Therefore because there is first rest from bad practice, that the soul may afterwards rest more perfectly in the thoughts, some lie down by fifties and some by hundreds, since there are some that already enjoy the rest of practice from evil deeds, and there are some that already enjoy the rest of the soul from evil thoughts. Wherefore since Heretics often, attaching themselves to the powerful evil-doers of this world, bear down upon the united life and harmony of the good, it is rightly said in this place, *They have caused men to groan from the cities.* Whom blessed Job rightly describes as 'men,' in that Heretics rather go about to put an end to those, who with perfect steps run in the way of God not effeminately and loosely but manfully; who when they see the wound of misbelieve inflicted in the mind of the faithful little ones, always fall back to crying out and groaning. And hence it is rightly said,

And the soul of the wounded crieth, and God suffereth him not to go unavenged.

69. For the soul of the righteous is 'wounded,' when the faith of the weak is unsettled, unto whom this identical thing 'to cry' is to be now consumed for the downfall of another. But God does not suffer him to go unavenged, in that though by just appointment he suffers an unjust thing to be done, yet He does not let that unjust thing go unavenged which He has justly permitted to be done, seeing that at once by the injustice of the sons of perdition He smites certain sins of the Elect, which He sees to be in them, and yet by Eternal Justice does not neglect to smite the injustice of those smiters. It goes on,

Ver. 13. *They are rebellions against the light.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

70. Very often wicked people at once know the right things that they ought to follow, and yet neglect to follow what they know; and so they are

‘rebellious against the light,’ in that following their desires, they contemn the good that they know. They then that do wrong not from ignorance, but pride, present the shield of their exaltation against the darts of truth, that they may not be stricken in heart to their good. By which same pride of theirs it is brought to pass, that whereas they will not do the things that they know, neither do they now know the good they should do, but that their own blindness should utterly exclude them from the light of truth. And hence it is fitly subjoined,

They know not the ways thereof, nor have returned by the paths thereof.

71. For they that are first rebels knowing it, are afterwards blinded so as not to know; as it is said of certain, *Because that when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful*. [Rom 1, 21] Of whom it is added a little while afterwards, *God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient*. [v. 28] For because they would not glorify Him Whom they knew, being given over to a reprobate sense, they were left to this fate, that they should not any longer know how to estimate the evil things they did. And it is well said, *They know not the ways thereof, neither have returned by the paths thereof.* For a ‘path’ is narrower than a ‘way.’ Now those that care not to do the plainer good works, never attain to the understanding of the more refined. But Almighty God waited that they might go ‘by the paths thereof.’ And would that they had been minded even to have ‘returned’ by them, that the paths of life which they would not keep by innocency they might at least keep by repentance. Wherein of what great mercifulness are the bowels of God is shewn, in that those whom He sees departing from Him, He seeks that they may return. Hence after the sins; of those doing wrong having been enumerated, He calls back the Synagogue by the voice of Prophecy, saying; *Therefore at least from this time cry unto Me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth*. [Jer. 3, 4] It proceeds;

Ver. 14. *The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

72. Whereas the murderer in the killing of his neighbours is wont to come upon them chiefly in the silence of the night, why is it that he is said in this place to 'rise with the light' in order to 'kill the poor and needy,' whilst 'in the night' he is described 'to be as a thief?' Now forasmuch as the letter in the bare words alone is not consistent with itself, we are called back for the investigating the hidden meanings of the Spirit. In Holy Scripture the 'morning' is sometimes used to be put for the coming of the Lord's Incarnation, sometimes for the coming of the henceforth dreadful and searching Judge, sometimes for the prosperity of the present life. Thus the coming of the Lord's Incarnation proved a 'morning,' as the Prophet saith, *The morning cometh, and also the night*; [Is. 21, 12] in that both the beginnings of the new light shone forth in the appearing of our Redeemer, and yet the shades of their misbelief were not cleared off from the hearts of the persecutors. Again, by the 'morning' the coming of the Judge is denoted. Whence it is said by the Psalmist, *Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land.* [Ps. 101, 8] As also when personating the Elect, he says, *In the morning will I stand in Thy presence, and will look up*. [Ps. 5, 3] Again, by the 'morning' this life's prosperity is represented. as where it is said by Solomon, *Woe to thee, O land, when thy King is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning*. [Ecc. 10, 16] For whereas the morning is the first part of the day and the evening the last, we ought not ever to be regaled by this life's prosperity which goes first, but by those things which at the end of the day, that is at the termination of the world, follow after. Thus those 'eat in the morning,' who by this world's successes are lifted up, and whilst they passionately interest themselves with present things, pay no

heed to the things of the future. For *whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer*. [1 John 3, 15] So the 'murderer rises up with the earliest dawn,' in that every wicked man is set up in the glory of the present life, and bears down the life of those, who whilst they thirst after the glory to follow, as it were anxiously look out to be filled in the evening. For the bad man in this world whilst seizing on the dignity of transitory power spreads himself out the more cruelly for the enacting of what is evil, in proportion as there is no man he loves in the bowels of charity. For as often as in the thoughts of his heart he is maddened against the good, so often does he kill the life of the innocent.

73. And if, God ordaining it, he suddenly lose the glory of the power he has gotten, he changes his place but not his disposition, for he directly falls away to that, which is subjoined, *And in the night is as a thief*. For in the night of his tribulation and sunkenness, though he has no power to put forth the hand of cruelty, yet to those whom he sees to be empowered, he recommends counsels of wickedness, and goes about hither and thither, and prompts whatever things he is able toward the injuring of the good. And he is rightly called 'as a thief,' because in all those very evil counsels of his he dreads lest he should be caught out. He then that towards the poor and needy is a murderer in the morning, in the night like a thief is hidden out of sight, in that every bad man, who in this life's prosperity by bearing down kills the life of the humble, being in adversity and abasement, by evil counsels does mischief in a concealed way, and what he is unable to accomplish by himself, that he puts in practice by attaching himself to the powerful ones of this world. It goes on;

Ver. 15. *The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me.*

74. There is nothing to hinder but that this may be understood even after the latter, seeing that he who desires to commit adultery, seeks out the dark.

But whereas it is a sentence uttered against Heretics, it is meet that this thing which is declared be understood in a mystical sense. Thus Paul says, *For we are not as many that adulterate* [Vulg. *adulterantes*] *the word of God*. [2 Cor. 2, 17] For the adulterer seeks not offspring, but pleasure in the act of carnal copulation. And every bad man, and that is also a slave to vain-glory, is rightly said to 'adulterate' the word of God, because by the sacred word of Revelation he desires not to beget children to God, but to exhibit his own knowledge. For he that is drawn to speak by lust of glory, bestows his pains rather on gratification than the production of children. And it is rightly added there, *No eye shall see me*; because the adultery which is committed in the interior is very hard indeed that it should be penetrated by the eye of man. Which same the froward soul commits with the more assurance, in proportion as it does not fear being seen by men, whom it may blush at. Moreover it is to be known that as he that commits adultery joins to himself unlawfully the flesh of another man's wife, so all heretics, while they carry off the faithful soul into their own error, are as it were bearing off another's wife, in this way; because the soul which is spiritually wedded to God and joined to Him as if in a kind of bridechamber of love, when by wicked persuasions it is led on into corruptness of doctrine, is as it were like the wife of another defiled by the corrupter. And it is well added;

And disguiseth his face.

75. It is for this reason that the adulterer 'disguises his face;' that he may not be known. Now every man who either in thinking or in acting lives badly, 'disguises his face,' because by corruptness in doctrine or in practice he is tending to this, that he should not be able to be recognised in the Judgment by Almighty God. Hence He shall say to certain persons at the end, *I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity*. [Matt. 7, 23] And what is the 'face' of the human heart, save the likeness of God? which same face the bad man 'disguiseth,' that he may not be able to be known,

when his life discomposes either by bad deeds, or by the error of misbelief. But every such person when he sees the righteous upheld by this world's good fortune, never ventures to prompt what is wrong to them, but if any storm of adversity falls upon those persons, he directly breaks out into words of pestilent persuasion. And hence it is added;

Ver. 16. *In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day time; they know not the light.*

76. For what is there here denoted by the title of 'houses' but consciences, wherein we dwell, when we do any thing, busying ourselves with it? Whence it is said to one on being healed, *Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee* [Luke 8, 39]; i.e. henceforth, secure from the evil habit of sin, turn back to thy conscience, and be thou roused into the voice of preaching.' And so when in the present world the righteous are brightened by the day of prosperity, to those persons the leaders of false tenets are afraid to recommend what is wrong. But they search out counsels, with all care they await the abasement of their prosperity, that in the darkness of adversity they may by their persuading dig through the minds of those, to whom whilst living prosperously they never presumed to speak wrong things, whom as soon as they see under adversity they rise up and maintain, that no otherwise saving in desert of their sins those suffer such things; because loving the glory of the present life alone, the stroke they take for condemnation. So 'in the dark they dig through houses,' in that the minds of the good by their mere misfortune alone to corrupt is their endeavour. Now it is well said, *which they had marked in the day time*, in that when they saw the righteous to have been made to shine with the light of prosperity, because they were prevented speaking, they were only at liberty for concocting malevolent designs against them. But whether it be heretics or any bad persons, they rejoice when they see the righteous in a depressed condition, whereas when

they see those break forth to the height of power for ruling, they are confounded, they are filled with fears, they are consumed with misery. And hence it is added,

Ver. 17. *If the morning suddenly appear, it is to them even as the shadow of death.*

77. For the wicked look for the afflicting of the righteous, and long to see them in distress, and 'in the dark they dig through houses,' when the heart of the innocent but weak ones they corrupt in the season of their casting down by the worst mode of discourse. But it commonly happens that when they see the good in a sunken state, on a sudden, by the secret appointment of God, any righteous one that seemed to be borne down is upheld by some share of the world's power, and the prosperity of the present life smiles on him, whom the darkness of adversity before overlaid. Which same prosperity of that man when the wicked behold, as it has been said, *they are troubled*. For directly they turn back to their own hearts, they bring back before their minds' eye whatever they remember themselves to have done amiss, they fear for every particular sinful habit to be avenged in them, and by the same means by which he that receives power is made to shine the bad man who dreads to be corrected is darkened in sorrow. And so it is well said, *If the morning suddenly appear, they think it is the shadow of death.* For 'the morning' is the mind of the righteous man, which quitting the darkness of its sin, now breaks out unto the light of eternity, as it is said of Holy Church likewise; *Who is she that looketh forth as the morning?* [Cant. 6, 10] Therefore in the same measure that every righteous person shining with the light of righteousness is in the present life reared to a height with honours, in the same measure before the eyes of the wicked comes the 'darkness of death,' in that they who remember that they have done bad things are in fear of being corrected. For they desire always to have a loose given them in their iniquities, to live free from correction, and

from sin to have delight; whose fatal mirth is itself appropriately described in the words that are directly introduced,

And they walk so in darkness, as in the light.

78. For with a froward mind they delight in deeds of wickedness, through their sin they are day by day being dragged to punishment, and are full of assurance. Hence it is said by Solomon, *And there are wicked men that are as secure as if they had the deeds of the righteous*. Concerning whom it is written again, *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the most wicked doings.* Thus 'they walk in darkness as in the light,' in that they so delight in the night of sin as if the light of righteousness spread around them. Or otherwise, whereas darkness not inappropriately represents the present life, wherein the consciences of other men are not seen, whilst our light is the eternal land, in which when we look at faces, our hearts within us we mutually see; and because the wicked so love the present life, and embrace these times of exile, as if they already reigned in their native country, it is rightly said, *They walk in darkness as in the light*, in that they are as full of gladness in the present state of blindness, as if they already enjoyed the light of the eternal country. It goes on;

He is light above the face of the water.

79. From the plural number he returns to the singular because most frequently one person begins what is bad, and numbers by imitating him follow after, but the fault is primarily his, who to the bad men following after furnished examples of wickedness; and hence the sentence frequently returns to him who was the leader in sin. Now the surface of water is carried hither and thither by the breath of the air, and not being steadied with any fixedness is put in motion every where. And so the mind of the wicked man is 'lighter than the surface of water,' in that every breath of temptation that touches it, draws it on without any retarding of resistance. For if we imagine the unstable heart of any bad man, what do we discover but a

surface of water set in the wind? For that man one while the breath of anger drives on, now the breath of pride, now the breath of lust, now the breath of envy, now the breath of falsehood forces along. And so he is ‘light above the surface of the water,’ whom every wind of error when it comes drives before it. Whence too it is well said by the Psalmist, *O my God, make them like a wheel, as the stubble before the wind.* For the wicked are ‘made like a wheel,’ in that being sent into the round of labour, whilst the things that are before they neglect, and those which ought to be given up they follow, in the hind parts they are lifted up, and in the fore parts they fall. And they are likewise rightly compared to ‘stubble before the face of the wind,’ in that, when the breath of temptation comes upon them, having no principle of gravity to rest upon, they are only lifted up to be dashed to the ground, and they often account themselves of some merit in proportion as the blast of error bears them on high. It goes on;

Let their portion be cursed in the earth; and let him not walk by the way of the vineyards.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

80. Whoever in the present life does what is right and meets with misfortunes, is seen indeed to travail in adversity, but for the blessing of the everlasting inheritance he is finished complete; but whoever does what is bad and yet meets with good fortune, and does not even by the bountifulness of blessings withhold himself from wicked deeds, is seen indeed to prosper, but is tied fast by the bond of everlasting cursing. Hence it is rightly said now, *Let their portion be cursed in the earth*, in that though he is blessed for a time, yet he is held fast in the bond of cursing. Concerning whom too it is fitly added, *He walketh not by the way of the vineyards.* For ‘the way of the vineyards,’ is the rightness of the Churches. Wherein nothing hinders but that we understand either the heretic or every

carnal man, because ‘the way of the vineyards,’ i.e. the rightness of the Churches, is parted with, when either the right faith or the right rule of just living is not held. For he ‘walks by the way of the Vineyards,’ who taking to heart the preaching of the Holy Catholic Church, deviates neither from the right line of faith nor of good deeds. Since to ‘walk in the way of the vineyards’ is to behold the Fathers of Holy Church as hanging clusters of the vine, whose words whilst he heeds in the toils of the journey, he is intoxicated with the love of Eternity. It goes on;

Ver. 19. *Let him pass to excessive heat from the snow waters.*

81. Iniquity is on this account likened to cold, because the mind that sins it binds up with insensibility. Hence it is written; *As a fountain has made her waters cold, so she has made her wickedness cold.* Contrariwise charity is ‘heat,’ in this respect that it fires the soul it fills. Of which ‘heat’ is written, *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* And there are some who while they shun the cold or their wickednesses come to true faith or to the wearing of sanctity, but because they presume on their own faculties for perceiving more than should be, oftentimes in the faith which they receive they are minded to pry curiously into the things that they do not take in, so as to be held fast in God rather by reason than by faith. But because the mind of man has not power to dive into the mysteries of God; all that they cannot get to the bottom of by reason, they care not to believe, and by overmuch investigation they fall into error. So these, when they did not as yet believe, or were still busied for works of wickedness, were ‘snow waters;’ but when abandoning carnal deeds, in the faith to which they have been brought they aim to dive deeper than they have capacity for, they are hot beyond what they ought to be. And so touching this wicked kind of person the sentence of one prophesying only and not wishing the thing is rightly delivered. *Let him pass in overmuch heat from the snow waters.* As if it were said in plain speech; ‘he that is not restrained

in humility under the fetters of self-discipline, from his unbelief, or from the coldness of bad practice, through immoderate wisdom falls into error. Whence too the great Preacher getting quit of this excessive heat of too refined wisdom from the hearts of his disciples saith well, *Not to be wise of himself above that he ought to be wise; but to be wise unto sobriety*. [Rom. 12, 3] Lest perchance excessive heat might destroy those, of whom 'snow waters,' i.e. unbelief, or the fruits of deadened actions, held possession in the way to die. And because it is very difficult for him who accounts himself wise to bring down his mind to humility and believe those that preach right things, and reject the view of his own wrong thought, it is rightly said;

Ver. 19. *And his sin even to hell.*

82. For sin is 'brought even to hell,' which before the end of the present life is not by chastening reformed unto repentance. Of which same sin it is said by John, *There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it.* For 'a sin unto death' is a sin even until death in this way, that the pardon of that sin is sought in vain which is not corrected here. Concerning which same it is yet further subjoined;

Ver. 20. *Let mercy forget him.*

Almighty God's mercy is said to 'forget him,' who has forgotten Almighty God's justice, in that whoever does not fear Him now as just, can never find him merciful afterward. Which same sentence is not only held out against him, who abandons the preachings of true faith, but against him likewise, who being in the right faith lives a carnal life, in that the vengeance of eternal condemnation is not got quit of, whether sin lie in faith or practice. For though the kind of condemnation be unequal, yet guilt which is not wiped away by repentance, there is no means supplied for the absolving thereof. It goes on;

The worm is his sweetness.

83. Whoever desires to make his way prosperous in this world, to surpass the rest of the world, to swell high with substance and honours, to this man no doubt worldly business is a delight, and repose a labour. For he is very much tired if the business of the world be lacking wherewith to be tired. Now because it belongs to the nature of worms to be put in motion unceasingly every moment, restlessness of thoughts is not unjustly denoted by the name of 'worms.' And so 'the worm is the sweetness' of the wicked soul, in that he is fed to his satisfaction from the same source whence he is unceasingly agitated in restlessness. Moreover it may be that by the title of the 'worm' the flesh may be more plainly denoted. Hence it is said further on, *How much less man that is a worm? or the son of man which is a worm?* [c.17, 14. and 25, 6] And so of everyone that is full of lust and devoted to the pleasures of the flesh, how great is the blindness is shewn, when it is said*, The worm, is his sweetness*. For what is our flesh but 'rottenness' and 'the worm?' And whosoever pants with carnal desires, what else does he but love 'the worm?' For what the substance of the flesh is, our graves bear witness. What parent, what faithful friend can bear to touch the flesh of one however beloved fraught with worms? And so when the flesh is lusted after, let it be considered what it is when lifeless, and it is understood what it is that is loved. For nothing has so much efficacy to subdue the appetite of carnal desire, as for every one to consider, what that which he loves alive will be when dead. For when we consider the corruption of the flesh, we see in a moment, that when the flesh is unlawfully lusted after, corruption is desired. Therefore it is well said of the mind of the lustful man, *the worm is his sweetness*, in that he who is on fire with the desire of carnal corruption, pants after the stink of rottenness.

All this, as I remember that I promised in the beginning of this third part, I have run over in brief, that the things which follow after in this work, as

they are involved in great obscurity, may with God's aid be more fully gone into.

BOOK XVII.

What remains of the twenty-fourth chapter beginning from the middle of verse 20, together with chapters twenty-five and twenty-six entire, he sets forth chiefly in a moral sense.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

As often as in the history of the holy man we betake ourselves in a new book to unravel the mystery of the typical explanation, it must be either from that man's name or course of suffering that we mainly draw out the mystical interpretation, so that after the manner of dwelling houses, whilst we set forth a superscription of the title on the very front of the door post, whereas it is known whose house it is, one may enter with greater security. Now I remember that I have often said that blessed Job, both by his course of suffering and his name, marked out the sufferings of our Redeemer, and of His Body, i.e. Holy Church. For 'Job' is by interpretation 'Grieving.' And who else is represented in this grieving one saving He, concerning Whom it is written, *Surely He hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows.* [Is. 53, 4] Concerning Whom again it is written, *And with His bruise we are healed?* [ib. 5] But his friends bear the likeness of heretics, who, as we have often said already, while they set themselves to defend, only offend God. Thus let the holy man by words and wounds so tell things of his own as at the same time to set forth ours also, and most often, by the spirit of prophecy, relate things to come, surmount things present, yet sometimes so tell of those present as to be silent touching those future, The keeping then of this exercise of discernment being understood in accordance with the altering of his voice, let our understanding likewise turn about, that it may agree the more truly with his ideas in proportion as it also shifts itself with his accents. Thus by the preceding words the holy

man, in sentences eloquently formed by the art of wisdom, set forth the offences of the bad man of whatever kind, and represented how damnable his conduct was, of whose punishment he directly adds, saying,

Let him not be in remembrance; let him be crushed like an unfruitful stump.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

2. For he is not brought back into the 'remembrance' of his Creator, whosoever to the very end of his life is in subjection to evil habits. Since if the recollection of the regard from Above did make itself felt on such an one, assuredly it would recall him from his wickedness. For his deserts require that he should be utterly blotted out from his Maker's remembrance. But it is to be borne in mind that God can never strictly be said to 'remember;' for One Who cannot forget, in what way is it possible for Him to remember? But whereas it is our way that those whom we remember we embrace, but those whom we forget we part far from, after the usage of man God is both said to 'remember,' when He bestows gifts, and to forget, when He forsakes one in guilt. But because He weighs all things, views all without any alternating of intermission, He both remembers the good, whom still He never forgets, and no wise remembers the bad, whom nevertheless in judgment He does ever behold. For He as it were returns to the recollection of the good, which same nevertheless He never quitted, and as it were He never regards the bad, whose deeds howsoever He has an eye on, but reserves for the last scene the judgment of condemnation thereupon. For hence it is written, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*. [Prov. 15, 3] Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *The face of the Lord is upon them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* [Ps. 34, 16] Therefore the persons for Him to punish He does regard, but those very persons before He did not see, in that He 'knows

them not.' For He shall say to some at the end, *I know You not whence ye are; depart from me, ye that work iniquity*. [Luke 13, 27] Thus, in a wonderful way, He both beholds and forgets the life of bad men, in that those whom by severity of sentence He judges, as regards the remembrance of mercy He is ignorant of.

3. And these same, because they do not come into His remembrance, like an unfruitful slump are broken to pieces by His judgment. For the earth supported them with a temporal outfitting, the shower of preaching poured down on them from above. But because their life never put forth the fruit of good works, the husbandman in anger cut it clean away, that according to the sentence of Truth it might not cumber the space, which another may occupy for fruit. Of which same 'unfruitful stump' it is said by John, *And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire*. [Matt. 3, 10. Luke 3, 9] But in this place, in order that the eternal punishments of the lost sinner may be denoted, the tree is not said to be cut away, but to be broken to pieces, in that the death indeed of the flesh cuts off the reprobate, but the punishment ensuing breaks them in pieces. For here it is as it were cut down, when he is severed from the present life. But in hell it is broken in pieces, when he is tortured with everlasting damnation. But the holy man, as he set forth the strict punishment of the froward one, at once falls back to the sin, that by the immensity of the unjustness he may effectually teach that that excessive damnation of him was not unjust. It goes on;

Ver. 21. *For he fed the barren and her that beareth not, and to the widow he did not do good.*

4. Who is it in this place that is denominated 'barren' saving the flesh, which while it goes after things present alone is not able to engender good thoughts? and who is styled 'a widow' but the soul, which same because the

Maker was minded to unite to Himself, He came to the marriage chamber of the carnal womb, as the Psalmist testifies, who saith, *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber?* [Ps. 19, 5] And she is rightly called ‘a widow,’ in that her Husband underwent death in her behalf, and now in the retreats of heaven hidden from her eyes as in the tract of another region He lives. Thus the wicked man ‘feeds the barren’ and scorns to ‘do good to the widow,’ because in obeying the desires of the flesh, he makes little of the care of the soul and its life. For with the whole bent and with every effort he considers how without necessities of any kind the flesh which is to die may be made to hold on, and he is indifferent to concern himself for the life of the soul, which either in death or in bliss most surely lives for evermore. Now it is rightly done that when it is said, *He fed the barren*, it is directly added*, and her that beareth not*. For certain women we know from sacred history were found ‘barren,’ but yet in the end of their days brought forth. But the flesh is not only called barren, but also she that beareth not, in that of her own wit not even at the last is she capable of begetting good thoughts. For from her own vigour she is now already going off, and yet things transitory she still ceases not to long for, and being now spent of original force, is well nigh thrown off by that very world which she loves, yet by mischievous endeavour still strives to acquire what is temporal. She now no longer has the ability to do wicked things, yet does not a whit cease to mind in thought even the things which she does not in act. Rightly therefore is she called not only ‘barren,’ but also ‘one that beareth not,’ in that of her own wit, as we said, for the offspring of good thought, not even when she has become powerless does she conceive.

5. Which same may likewise be understood of heretical persons preaching. For every single preacher of error, while he teaches a people set without the pale of the Church’s unity, is surely ‘feeding the barren, and her that cannot bear,’ seeing that he is bestowing the serviceableness of his

labour upon her, who never makes any return of spiritual fruits. 'Neither does he do good to the widow,' forasmuch as for that Holy Church Universal, whose Husband suffered the adverse treatment of death, he scorns to live to and to serve. For to 'do good to the widow' is to take much pains in the consoling of her, who by the love of her dead Husband is crushed to the ground. And hence by the voice of the Psalmist this same widow, i.e. Holy Church, makes complaint, saying, *I looked for comforters, but I found none*. Since then only does she 'find a comforter,' when from that death which her husband underwent, she beholds many within herself arise to life. Now very often the preacher of error is allied with the rich of this world, who for this reason, that they strain over earthly employments, are too blind to detect the crafty tricks of the things delivered, and whereas they go about to be powerful without, they are taken without labour by the noose of froward preaching. Hence too it is added;

Ver. 22. *He took away the mighty in his might.*

6. Since in the might of his wickedness the mighty he severally takes away, whilst by the craftiness of his error he carries off the great ones of this world. In opposition to whom it is said by Paul, *God hast chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty*. [1 Cor. 1, 27] Now the 'might' of the corrupt preacher is the high-flown science of his speaking, puffed up with which he despises all the rest of the world, and in contempt of all men, as being preeminently proficient in himself, he swells big. Who whilst thinking what is great of himself, and not knowing what is true of God, is parted far from knowledge of the faith, and yet endeavours to make himself appear a preacher thereof. Whence it is further added;

And when he standeth, he will not believe his like.

7. Every evil preacher 'standeth' in this world, so long as he lives in an earthly body. But he refuses to 'believe his life,' because he is too proud to open his eyes to what is true relating to God. For he would 'believe his life,'

if he had right notions concerning the Substance of his Creator. These things, then, we were describing above as spoken of every bad man, but we suddenly made the meaning turn to the preacher of error. Whence it is to be noted, that we are so drawn on to the special case as not yet in any wise to be quite taken off from the general. For every bad man, even if he seem to maintain the faith in the bosom of the Church Universal, ‘standeth and believeth not his life,’ because they are right things indeed which by faith he understands of his Creator, yet the works of faith he cares not to maintain; and he is convicted of unbelief, in that, even from that which he sets forth as his creed, by his way of living he is condemned. For hence it is said by John, *He that saith he knoweth God, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar*. [1 John 2, 4] Hence Paul saith, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him*. [Tit. 1, 16] Hence James saith, *Faith without works is dead*. [Jam. 2, 20. 26.] But amidst all this the Creator by a wonderful economy of counsel at once has an eye to offences, and bestows periods of living, that the lengthened portions of temporal life may to the person either being converted be turned into the furtherance of reward, or not being converted to the heightening of condemnation. Hence it is yet further subjoined,

Ver. 23. *God hath given unto him room for repentance, and he abuseth it in pride.*

8. Whosoever commits sin and lives, such a person Divine Appointment for this reason bears with in iniquity, that it may withhold him from iniquity. But he that is borne with for a longer time, and yet is not withholden from iniquity, is vouchsafed indeed the benefit of the patience Above, yet with the chains of his guilt is by that very benefit binding himself the tighter. For because the times of repentance vouchsafed he diverts to sin, the strict Judge in the end converts the instances of mercy bestowed into punishment. Hence it is said by Paul; *Or knowest thou not*

that the longsuffering of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. [Rom. 2, 4.5.] Hence Isaiah saith, *For the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed*. [Is. 65, 20] As though he deterred us in plain words, saying, 'The life of a child indeed is drawn to a great length, in order that he may be corrected of childish doings, but if he be not even by length of time restrained from the commission of sin, this very length of life, which he received in pitifulness, is made to grow to him into an aggravation of cursing.' Whence it is necessary that the longer time that we see ourselves to be waited for, we fear the very seasons of pitifulness before granted [*praerogatae*] as the grounds of condemnation, lest by the clemency of the Judge the punishment of the sinner should be heightened, and by the same means whereby anyone might have been rescued from death, he should tend to death in a manner the more disastrous. Which is for this reason very often brought to pass, because the eye of the mind is not in the least degree weaned from things present. For the sinner is careless to regard the ways of the Redeemer, and so he grows old in his own paths without stopping. Hence it is added;

For his eyes are upon his ways.

9. For the sinner 'regards his own ways,' because he sets himself to mind only, to have an eye only for, things which may stand him in stead for temporal advantage. Thus it is hence Paul saith, *All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's*. [Phil. 2, 21] For the way of the highminded is pride; the way of the robber, avarice; the way of the lecherous, carnal concupiscence. Thus every bad man bends his eyes down on his own ways, in that he is intent on vicious pursuits alone, that by these he may satisfy his mind. Whence it is said by Solomon, *The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth*; because that only they regard with the whole bent of the heart,

whereby they may attain to the end of earthly desire. Now the sinner would never fix the gaze of his looking on earth, if he lifted up the eyes of the mind to the holy paths of his Redeemer. Whence it is again said by Solomon, *The wise man's eyes are in his head*; [Eccl. 2, 14] in this way, viz. that with undivided intentness the wise man regards Him, of Whom he reflects by faith that he is a member. For these ways of man's walk and conversation, he had deemed it little worth to have in his eye, who said, *I will meditate in Thy statutes, and have respect unto Thy ways*. [Ps. 119, 15] As if he gave his word in plain terms, saying, 'The things which are mine own I henceforth eschew the seeing of, in that by the path of the imitating of Thee I burn to go on in the steps of behaviour.' For he who henceforth withstands the present world, by the continual inciting of love presents the ways of his Redeemer to the eyes of the heart, that so the mind may eschew what is prosperous, be in readiness for what is adverse, desire nought that soothes down, dread nought that is supposed to dismay, account sorrow joy, estimate the delights of the present life as the ills of woe, not fear the diminutions of a state of scorn, but thereby-seek room for enduring glory. For these ways Truth shewed to the eyes of those that were following Him, when He said, *If any man serve Me, let him follow Me*. [John 12, 26] To these ways he recalled the swelling hearts of the Disciples, when they were already seeking room for glory, but knew not the pathway of that glory, saying, *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?* For they had been seeking the height of that session with Him on the right hand and on the left hand, but how great the narrowness of the pathway thereunto they did not see; and hence the cup of the Passion is at once presented to their eyes as a thing for them to imitate, that, surely, if they were making for the joys of exaltedness, they should first find the way of humility. And therefore because the sinner is careless to have an eye to the ways of God, but is bent on those only wherein he may be made to delight in a carnal

manner, it is rightly said in this place, *For his eyes are upon his ways*. It proceeds;

Ver. 24. *They are exalted for a little while, but they shall not hold on.*

10. The glory of bad men, whilst it is for the most part extended into a multitude of years, is by the minds of the weak reckoned to be long and as it were stable; but when an instantaneous end cuts it off, surely it proves to its face that it was short, because the end by putting a limit makes it known that that which was capable of passing away was little. And so ‘they are exalted for a little while, and do not hold on,’ because from the mere circumstance that they seek to appear high, they are by self-exalting made far removed from the true essence of God. For they are not able to hold on, because they are severed from the solid basis of the Eternal Essence, and they undergo this first ruining, that by glorying in self they fall in themselves. For hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou castedst them down, when they were lifted up* [Ps. 73, 18]; because they are brought down within, in proportion as they arise wrongly without. Regarding this shortness of temporal glory, he saith again; *I have seen the wicked above measure exalted, and lifted up like a cedar of Libanus; I passed by, and lo, he was gone*. [Ps. 37, 35] Hence again he saith, *For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be*. [ib. 10] Hence James says, *For what is Your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time*. Hence the Prophet reflecting on the shortness of carnal glory, tells it forth, saying, *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of hay*. [Is. 40, 6] For the power of the wicked is likened to the ‘flower of hay,’ because the glory of the flesh, whilst it shines bright, it falls, whilst it is exalted in itself, cut off by a sudden end it is brought to a close. For in the same way by the blowing of breezes the stubble is caught on high, but by an instantaneous fall it is brought back to earth below. Thus the smoke is lifted up to the clouds, but suddenly whilst swelling out it is scattered to nought. Thus the

vapour from beneath thickening lifts itself on high, but the ray of the sun when risen clears it away, as though it had not been. Thus on the surface of the herbs the moisture of the dew of night is sprinkled, but by the sudden heat of the light of day it is dried away. Thus the foamy bubbles of water, raised on showers beginning, come forth racing from within, but being burst asunder they come to nought the more quickly in proportion as being inflated they are raised higher, and when they grow to a head, so as to appear, in growing they make it that they should 'not hold on.' Therefore concerning the wicked that are swoln with the exaltation of temporal glory, and yet not enduring with any stedfastness in this glory, let it be rightly said, *they are exalted for a little while, but they shall not hold on*. Of whom it is yet further added;

And they shall be brought low as all things, and shall be taken away.

11. Such should be the advancement of contemplation, that it should be carried off from few things to the taking a view of many, from many to taking a view of all things, so that being led forth step by step it should advance; and whilst judging all things transitory should by comprehending itself grow forth well nigh incomprehensibly. Hence the holy man, whilst he was sifting the glory and the failing of the wicked, stretched to 'all things' presently the eye of the mind, saying, *they shall be brought low as all things, and shall be taken away*; 'all things' earthly assuredly. As though he said in plain words; 'They cannot any way stand, because the very things flee away as well whereon they rest for support, and while they are in love with things temporal, along with these by the currency of time they run to an end.' But it may be asked, whereas it is said by Solomon, *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever* [Eccl. 1, 4]; why does blessed Job declare that all things 'are brought low, and taken away?' Yet this we easily sift out, if we keep distinct how earth and heaven either pass away or remain. For both these in

respect of that figure which they now have pass away, yet in respect of their essence they are held in being without end. Hence it is said by Paul, *For the fashion of this world passeth away.* [1 Cor. 7, 31] Hence Truth saith by Itself, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away*. [Mat. 24, 35] Hence it is told John by the voice of the Angel, *There shall be a new heaven and a new earth*. [Rev. 21, 1] Which indeed are not to be created other things, but these very same are renewed. And thus heaven and earth at once 'pass away' and 'shall be,' seeing that both by fire from that fashion which they now have they are clean wiped out, and yet in their own nature are ever preserved. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed.* [Ps. 102, 26] Which same final changing of themselves they do now announce to us by those very successions, whereby for our services they unceasingly shift about. For the earth by the dryness; of winter falls off from its fashion, by the moisture of spring it is made green. Heaven is every day overlaid by the darkness of night, and renewed by the brightness of day. Hence, then, hence let every believer gather that these things both perish, and yet by renewal are restored, which it is plain are now perpetually as it were from decay being refitted. In the midst of all this then the holy man, whilst he beholds the course of the wicked, makes it known with what a visitation they are one day to come to nought, when he forthwith adds;

And as the tops of the ears of corn they shall be crushed.

12. For the tops of the ears of corn are the beards; now the beards come out joined in an ear of corn, but going on growing little by little they are separated from one another bristly and rough. Thus, verily, thus, as to this world's glory do the evil-minded rich ones rise up. For by a fellowship of nature they are joined to one another, but going on increasing they are in turn divided against one another. For one looks down upon another, and a second is inflamed against a third with the torches of envy; they then who

by the swelling of the mind separate themselves from the unity of charity, as it were after the way of beards stand bristling against one another. What then might I have called the evilminded rich ones of this world but a kind of beards of the human race, who while they are lifted high against one another, but with one consent press hard upon the life of the good, are indeed divided against themselves, yet with one accord bear down the grains beneath.

13. At this present time then the beards spring up on high, the grains lie hidden; because both the power of lost sinners towers high, and the glory of the Elect does not appear. The one shew themselves off in the high estate of honours, the others lower themselves in humility. But the time of winnowing will arrive, which is calculated both to break the bristling of the beards, and not to bruise the solid grains. For then the pride of the wicked is broken in pieces, then the life of the Elect is shewn to view, with what faultlessness it shines bright; in that while the unrighteous are undone, by this very crushing of the beard it is brought to pass that the grains should appear, which were holden out of sight; and when the beards are broken, the whiteness of the grains is made to appear, because upon the wicked falling into everlasting punishments, the righteousness of the Saints is manifested, with what truth it is shining white. Whence too it is rightly said by John, *Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner: but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*. [Matt. 3, 12] So let blessed Job mark with what awful visitation the pride of bad men shall be broken, and comparing them to beards that perish, let him say, *Like the tops of ears of corn they shall be crushed*. Surely because the bristling of the proud is broken by the stress of the final winnowing, whereas now looking down upon the life of the Elect it is lifted up. It proceeds;

Ver. 25. *And if it be not so now, who will convict me of having lied, and set my words before God?*

14. If it be not so as he tells, then surely all people are able to convict him of falsehood. Why then is it said, *And if it be not so now, who will convict me of having lied?* i.e. whilst we know that, one who is false, it is allowed anyone to find fault with? But if we sift out the sense of the speaker with exact questioning, how light the things are that he put forth, we speedily discover. For the righteous man, though he does ever speak any thing wrong, yet it is far from meet that he should be judged by the unrighteous and ill living. Whence the holy man lowering the pride of his friends, not even if it be so, but even 'if it be not so' as he set forth, is confident that he can never be found fault with, because assuredly those are able rightly to reprove things that are false, who are not taught to do things that are false. For the daring of reproof against deceit those persons lose, who still live on principles of deceit. Therefore he says, *And if it be riot so now, who will convict me of having lied?* As if he said in plain words; 'All things are so as I have set forth, but if they were not so, I could not a whit be charged home with them by you; for whilst ye still give way to your own deceit, ye are not able to find fault with the deceit of another.'

15. In which place it is fitly added; *And to set my words before God*. For whoever really finds fault with false sayings in the true way, in thinking on the things he has heard and estimating them by the rule of truth 'sets words before God,' because to himself in the eye of Truth he makes proof what he should outwardly decree against falsehood. Since 'to set words before God' is with the interior Judge kept in view to estimate the exterior sayings. Thus the holy man does not reckon it possible for his 'words to be set before God' by friends behaving with pride. As if he said in plain terms, 'The things which I utter ye are for this reason unable to set before the Judge, because by committing sin ye hide His face from you?' Which same,

however, nothing hinders from being understood in type of Holy Church as well, which whilst for her weak members she is found fault with by the scoffing of heretics, laughs to scorn that same craftiness of their scoffing, because with God it is more tolerable that a man should be prostrated in weakness and in ignorance, in conjunction with humility, than that he should compass high themes with self-exaltation. But forasmuch as the holy man had uttered many words against those, who by transitory power are made proud, and with windy honours swell themselves out; by his rebuke Bildad the Shuhite gaining ground has his eyes opened to see with Whom true power is deposited; saying,

Ver. 2. *Dominion and fear are with Him; Who maketh peace in His high places.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

16. As though he expressed himself in plain words; 'He only truly terrifies the hearts of mortals, who by the power of His Divine nature truly possesses these.' For what terror does the power of man infuse, which knows not when it may lack the light of that power? Now it is rightly said, *He maketh peace in His high places.* Because there are many things at variance with themselves below, but they run answerably to the harmonious fulness of things above, and by the causing of the interior peace it is brought to pass, that oftentimes the things that are without are ordered without peace. Thus the good, Almighty God is advancing to merit, when He permits the bad to rage against their life; and things above are made to fit together in harmony, whilst those below are thrown into confusion; because in the heavenly world He joins His Elect to the choirs of the Angels by the same means, whereby in the earthly and lowest scene of things, He bears the practices of lost sinners opposing His behests.

17. But herein it is of interest to us to enquire, if the highest peace is maintained 'in the high places,' what that is which is said to Daniel by the Angel, *I am come for thy words; but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me*. [Dan. 10, 13] And a little afterward; *And now will I return to fight with the prince of the Persians. For when I was going forth there appeared the prince of the Greeks coming*. [v. 20] Whom else then but Angels does he call the 'Princes' of the nations, that could have had the power to resist him as he went forth? Accordingly what peace can there be 'in the high places,' if even among the Angelical spirits themselves also there is a conflict of warring carried on, who are always standing present to the view of Truth? But because there are fixed charges of the Angels set to superintend the regulating of the several particular nations, when the practices of the subject peoples deserve the assistance of the presiding spirits against one another, the spirits themselves that are set in charge are said to come against one another. Thus the Angel that spake to Daniel is known to have been appointed over the captives of the Israelitish People established in Persia, but Michael is ascertained to be the ruler of those who remained in the land of Judaea from among the same people. And hence it is said a little afterwards to Daniel by this same Angel; *And there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael, your prince*. [v. 21] Concerning whom he says this too which we have before said, *but, to, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me*. Who whereas he is never said 'to be with,' but to 'come to help' is plainly seen to be set over that people which was held captive in another part. What then is it for the Angel to say, *I am come for thy words, but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me,* but to tell his doings to those under him? As if he said in plain words; 'The claims [*merita*] of thy prayers indeed demand that the Israelitish People should be loosed from the yoke of their captivity, but

there is still in that same people that which must be purged by the dominion of the Persians; so that touching the liberation of that people the prince of Persia should by rights withstand me, though to thy prayers the tears of those too who were left in Judaea come in aid.' Whence he subjoins that too which we said; *But, lo, Michael, your prince, came to help me.* And when he goes forth in order to fight against the prince of the Persians, there appeareth to him the prince of the Greeks coming towards him. By which circumstance it is implied that against the Greeks too Judaea had been guilty of somewhat, on account of whom without a doubt it was that he withstood the rescuing of her. So the Angel hears effectually the prayers of the Prophet, but the prince of Persia withstands, because though the life of the righteous one making supplication already claims the rescue of the People, yet the life of that same People still withstands, that whereas those that had been brought into captivity were not yet completely purified, Persia should rightfully have the dominion over them still. Michael gives aid, but the prince of Greece comes to battle, because that lengthened captivity of the People suffering oppression might indeed have merited pardon, but to the benefit of their liberation that also stood opposed, which they had done wrong against the Greeks. Therefore it is rightly said that the Angels come against each other, because the claims of the nations under them are reciprocally at odds with one another. For the lofty Spirits that are princes to those nations never fight in behalf of those that act unjustly, but justly judge and try their deeds. And when either the guilt or guiltlessness of each separate nation is brought into the debate of the Court Above, the ruling Spirit of that nation is said to have won in the conflict or not to have won; the one identical victory of all of whom, however, is the Supreme Will of their Maker above them, which Will whilst they ever have before their eyes, what they have not the power they have not the mind to obtain. Therefore it is well said, *Who maketh peace in His high places*. It follows;

Ver. 3. *Is there any number of His soldiers?*

18. In the cognizance of human reason there is not any number of the spirits above, in that it cannot tell how great is that concourse of the Invisible Host, whereof it is said by Daniel, *Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him*. [Dan. 7, 10] The number of the citizens above is represented as infinite and definite, in order that that which relatively to God is capable of being numbered may be shewn relatively to man to be incapable of being numbered. Though it is one thing 'to stand before,' and another thing to 'minister to.' For those Powers stand before Him without a doubt, which never go forth for the communicating things to men. But those 'minister to' Him, who come for discharging the offices of bearers of tidings; yet these same beings also, by the act of contemplation, are not withdrawn from the interior world. And because they are more in number that 'minister' than those that preeminently 'stand before Him,' the number of those so 'standing in presence' is represented as being definite, but of those that 'minister' as indefinite.

19. Now the Angelical spirits we rightly call 'the soldiers' of God, because we are not unaware that those war against the powers of the air, which same conflicts however they carry on not by labour but by authority; for whatsoever thing, in acting against impure spirits, they desire for, by the aid of Him Who ruleth all things, they are equal to. So of this army when our King was born it is written, *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host*. [Luke 2, 13] Unto which same heavenly host the number of the Elect of men too is joined, who by the lofty aspirations of the mind are set free from the bondage of an earthly conversation. Concerning whom it is said by Paul, *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life*. Which same though now they be shewn few in number, yet in the invisible country they reign innumerably many, in

that though by comparison with the evil-minded they are few, yet in the concourse of their assemblage they cannot be any way measured. But because the goodness of those soldiers is set firm not by their own powers, but by the inspiration of grace from Above, it is rightly added,

And upon whom doth not His light arise?

20. For ‘the light’ of God is preventing grace, which if it never arose of free gift in our heart, assuredly our mind would remain dim in the darkness of its sins. And hence it is added;

Ver. 4. *Can a man be justified being compared with God? or can he be found clean that is born of a woman?*

21. This verse is spoken above by blessed Job, and is now repeated in the upbraiding of him; since every just man is just by illumination from God, not by comparison with God. For man’s righteousness when compared with the Maker is unrighteousness, since, even although man had held fast in his own estate of creation, the creature could never be equalled to the Creator. To which creature howsoever, unto heavier burthens of deficiency, there accrued sin also, which the serpent by plotting brought in, and woman proving frail recommended. Hence now, forasmuch as man is born by the agency of woman who is made subject to sin, the frailty of the first guilt is inherited in the offspring; and because the branch of the human race was made rotten in the root, it does not hold up in the greenness of its creation. Hence it is rightly said now, *Can a man be justified being compared with God? or can he be found clean that is born of a woman?* As if it were expressed in plain terms, ‘Let not man entertain pride against his Creator, let him reflect whence he came hither, and understand what he is.’ But observe, there are those that when by the gift of the Spirit they are holpen against the frailty of their flesh, are made to erect themselves, gleam forth in virtues, yea, flash out in the marvels of miraculous signs as well, yet is

there no man who may pass through life free from sin, so long as he bears upon him flesh of corruption. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 5. *Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in His sight.*

22. What is denoted by 'the moon' but the whole Church together? what by 'the stars' but the souls of the several persons that live rightly? who amidst the practices of wicked men, whilst they are conspicuous by rare virtues, as it were shine in the darkness of night. Whence likewise it is said by Paul to the disciples; *Among whom ye shine like lights in the world*. [Phil. 2, 15] For that Holy Church is represented by the designation of 'the moon,' the Prophet bears witness, saying, *The sun was lifted up, and the moon stood in her order*. [Hab. 3, 11] For on 'the sun being lifted up, the moon is established in her order,' in that on our Lord ascending into the heavens, Holy Church is thereupon made strong in the authoritative function of preaching. And that by the title of 'stars' the Elect are represented, Paul again informs us, by saying, *For one star differeth from another star in glory*. [1 Cor. 15, 41] So 'the moon doth not shine, and the stars are not clean in His sight,' because neither doth Holy Church by her own power shine forth in so many miracles, except the gifts of preventing grace fall in showers upon her, nor are the minds of the several persons that live rightly clean of the stains of sinful practices, if they be judged apart from pity; because in the eyes of the strict Judge every single individual his own proneness to corruption doth pollute, unless the grace of One sparing day by day wipe this away. For the mind of the Elect strives to go forth to the liberty of righteousness, but is still bound and tied with the fetters of frailty, and it longs indeed perfectly to get the better of offences, but so long as it is fettered by the corruption of the flesh, it is tied with the chains thereof, even when it would not be. Hence therefore let him collect with what a load of sins they are borne down, who neglect to war against the same, if not even

they entirely get the better of evil doing, who strenuously fight against it. And hence it is said, *Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not, and the stars are not pure in His sight*; it is directly added;

Ver. 6. *How much more is man rottenness, and the son of man a worm?*

23. As if it were in plain words; 'If those very persons also cannot be void of contagion, who amidst the darkness of the present life shine bright by virtuous attainments, with what guilt of wickedness are they bound, who still live after the flesh? If those persons cannot be free from sin, who are already walking in the way of heavenly desires, what they who still lie under the loads of sinful habits? who whilst they are abandoned to the gratifications of their fleshly part, still bear the yoke of rottenness? Hence Peter saith; *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* [1 Pet. 4, 18] Hence it is said by Isaiah, *Upon the land of My people shalt come up thorns and briars; how much more upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city*. [Is. 32, 13] For by 'the land of His People,' the Lord meaneth the mind of all of the Elect. Upon which He tells of 'thorns and briars coming up;' because He sees that not even that very mind is free from the prickles of bad habits. But 'the house of joy in the joyous city' is the mind of the wicked, which whilst it neglects to regard the punishments that are destined to come, in the gratification of the flesh going away from itself, revels in empty mirth. Thus he saith; *Upon the land of My people shalt come up thorns and briars, how much more upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city.* As if He said in plain words; If evil habits sink low even the minds of those, who for desire of the heavenly country put themselves to pain, what guilty courses are they brought under, who without any apprehension abandon themselves in the gratification of the flesh?

24. But it is a point to be noticed in his discourse how Bildad observed the order of our creation and of our birth, in that he calls 'man' not 'a

worm,’ but ‘rottenness,’ but ‘the son of man’ ‘a worm.’ For the first parent of the human race was ‘man,’ not ‘the son of man;’ from whom whosoever came forth, was not only ‘man,’ but ‘the son of man’ as well. As then from man springs the son of man, so from rottenness springs the worm. Whence man is lightly called ‘rottenness,’ but the son of man ‘a worm.’ For the first man was ‘rottenness’ not ‘a worm,’ in that though by death he turned to ‘rottenness,’ yet he did not come by a birth out of rottenness. But he that is the son of man is called ‘a worm,’ because he is henceforth propagated from the corruption of mortal bodies.

25. Therefore because the words of his friends are concluded, blessed Job sets on with a more penetrating acuteness of the suing, and his words are proportionably strong as they are the last; seeing that even in the same way it is the usage of lawyers, that the argument, by which they beforehand see that they are above their adversaries, they reserve for the conclusion of the suit. It follows;

C. xxvi. 1, 2. *But Job answered and said, Of whom art thou the helper? whether of one that is powerless? or dost thou sustain the arm of him that is not strong?*

26. To help one that is weak is an act of charity, to wish to help one that is powerful, of Pride; and so because his friends, whilst bearing the likeness of heretics, on the plea of helping God, endeavoured to make a display of their own wisdom, Bildad is justly found fault with, that it should be said, *Of whom art thou the helper? whether of one that is powerless? or dost thou sustain the arm of him that is not strong?* As if he said in plain words; ‘While thou settest thyself to help Him, under Whose greatness thou dost sink to the earth, all the encouragement which thou affordest comes of ostentation, not of piety.’

27. But herein it is requisite to be known, that even God, Who surely is not ‘powerless,’ we help whilst acting with humility. And hence it is said by

Paul, *For we are helper's of God*. [1 Cor. 3, 9] For when to him, whom He doth Himself by interior grace pervade, we by the voice of exhortation contribute, this which He through the Spirit brings to pass within, we outwardly by the office of the voice do assist, and then only is our exhortation brought to completion, when God was in the heart, to be aided. Hence He saith elsewhere; *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase*. [ib. 7] For to 'plant' and 'water' is to 'help,' both which will be but a void ministration, if in the heart God 'giveth not the increase.' But they who have high thoughts of their own power of mind, will not be helpers of God with humility; because whilst they reckon themselves to be of use to God, they are making themselves strangers to the fruit of usefulness. And hence it is said to the disciples by the voice of Truth, *When ye shall have done all those things that are commanded you say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do*. [Luke 17, 10] It proceeds;

Ver. 3. *To whom hast thou given counsel? perchance to him that hath not wisdom?*

28. To 'give counsel to one that is foolish' is an office of charity, to give it to one that is wise, of ostentation; but to give it to Wisdom Itself, of wrongmindedness; and because those who we have said bear the likeness of heretics, by their mode of speech, were administering to ostentation rather than to usefulness, it is yet further added rightly against Bildad,

And shewn thine own prudence overmuch.

To one to whom there is right prudence it is not overmuch, because according to Paul's declaration, he seeketh *not to be wise above the degree that he ought to be wise*. But to whomsoever there is overmuch prudence, there is not right prudence. For whilst it is carried beyond due measure, it is made to turn off on one side or another of offence. Now they shew their prudence to be 'overmuch,' who aim to appear fuller of prudence in

comparison of others; whence it very frequently happens that whilst they have not the art to be wise in moderation, they even speak things that are foolish. On account of which circumstance, the actual excess of prudence is yet further subjoined, that it should be said,

Ver. 4. *Whom wouldest thou have taught? Was it not Him Who made the breathway?*

29. By the 'breathway' we live, by prudence we are wise. But it is ours first to live, and afterwards to be imbued with wisdom; because in order that we have the power to be wise, it is first brought to pass that we should have being. He, then, Who bestowed life, the same doubtless gave prudence as well. But because Bildad thought blessed Job was scourged for sin, that secret judgment of God which he should have adored in humility, he set himself with overweening temerity to penetrate to the bottom. And so that very One he preferred himself before in respect of prudence, Whose judgment without understanding it he judged. That very One he preferred himself before in prudence, from Whom he received the breathway of life, as though he were wise more than He, the very Being from Whom he had it given it him that he should be. But because blessed Job whilst bearing a type of Holy Church delivered a few things in the rebuking of proud men, who, he was not ignorant, bore a likeness of heretics, according as he said above; *I desire to reason with God; first shewing that ye are forgers of lies, and followers of wrong tenets* [Job 13, 3. 4.]; he suddenly lifts himself up to instruction, and in opposition to the ignorance of the highminded, he opens wide the breadth of his knowledge in sentences, saying,

Ver. 5. *Lo, the giants groan under the waters.*

30. For it was fitting that by rebuking he should first beat down the swelling of earthly wisdom, and by instruction afterwards pass on to words replete with mysteries. Thus by 'giants,' either apostate Angels, or all proud men may without objection be understood. For hence it is said by the

Prophet, *The dead shall not live, the giants shall not rise up again*. [Is. 26, 14] For whom does he call 'the dead' saving sinners, and whom does he designate 'giants' save those, who over and above take pride in sin. Now the former do 'not live,' because by sinning they have forfeited the life of righteousness; these latter too 'cannot rise up again' after death, because, after their transgression being swoln with pride, they do not have recourse to the remedies of penitence. Hence it is written again, *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead*. [Prov. 21, 16] For whosoever forsakes the way of righteousness, to whose number does he join himself, saving to the number of the proud spirits? Now it is well said in opposition to the high-minded, *Lo, the giants groan under the waters*. As if it were expressed in plain speech; 'Wherefore on the score of knowledge should man be proud, when the abyss of ignorance keeps at the bottom the very proudest of the spirits of the Angels?'

31. But if by the name of 'the giants' the powerful ones of this world are denoted, in 'the waters' we may have the multitudes represented, as John beareth witness, who saith, *The waters, which thou seest, are peoples*. [Rev. 17, 15] Now against him that is filled with pride it is well spoken; *Lo, the giants groan under the waters*; because all that are high and lifted up, while in this life they long to attain the highest pitch of honours, groan under the burthens of peoples. For in proportion as a man is the higher lifted up here, he is burthened with so much the heavier cares. And to those very same people in mind and thoughts he is put under, whom in dignity he is put over. And by these words it is well shewn in brief that all pride lies prostrate on the ground by the mere act by which it lifts itself up on high, so as to be the more effectually bowed down beneath all things from the same cause, that it would fain be set above all. For man when he is lifted up in high stations, bears so many in number over him, as he rules persons put beneath him. But

those, that are associated with such persons, are by fellowship in their labour themselves also weighed to the ground. For together with them they likewise bear the toilsomeness of the burthen, whilst along with them they go after the gloriousness of the honour. Hence whereas he said, *Lo, the giants groan under the waters;* he directly added;

And they that dwell along with them.

32. As though he said; 'Equally with them do they groan,' who by taking delight are associated to their glory. Now the very employment of worldly dignities is borne down with readier vices in proportion as it is charged with heavier cares. For would that the mind of man even at rest might be able to see and eschew sins! And so because he saw that the longed for heights of affairs cannot be administered without sins, and because it is not hidden from the wrath of God, whatsoever is committed of an unlawful kind, he fitly subjoined in pursuance;

Ver. 6. *Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering.*

33. Which same Paul likewise saith, *But all things are naked and opened unto His eyes*. [Heb. 4, 13] But by the title of 'hell' and 'perdition' he denoted the devil and all the associates of his condemnation; but Who that One is before whom 'hell is naked,' he goes on with telling;

Ver. 7. *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place.*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

34. By the title of the 'north,' in Holy Writ the devil is used to be designated, who with the thought to bind up the hearts of the nations with the iciness of insensibility, said, *I will sit also upon the mount of the Covenant, in the sides of the north*. [Is. 14, 13] And he is 'stretched over the empty place,' because he has possession of those hearts, that are not filled with the grace of the love of God. Yet is it competent to Almighty God, that even those vessels of the devil, empty of every virtue, He may fill with the

gift of His grace, and deposit the solid substance of Divine fear in those persons, whom He does not see stablished by any conduct of righteousness. Hence it is fitly added;

And hangeth the earth upon nothing.

35. For what is denoted by the title of ‘earth,’ saving Holy Church; who, whilst she receives the words of preaching, renders back the fruit of good works? Whereof it is said by Moses, *Let the earth hear the words out of my lips, let my speech be looked for like the rain*. [Deut. 32, 1. 2.] And what but the several gentile peoples are denoted by ‘nothing,’ of whom it is spoken by the Prophet, *All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted to Him less than nothing*. [Is. 40, 17] In that ‘nothing,’ then, is ‘the earth hung suspended,’ which before, being a void place, was occupied by the ‘north;’ because those hearts of the Gentiles became filled with the love of God, which had been aforetime weighed down by a deadness of the devil. But it may be that both by this ‘empty place,’ the infidelity of Judaea is denoted, and by ‘the earth,’ as we said, the propagation of Holy Church. Thus let the holy man look at the fall of Judaea in her perishing, and espy the privileges of the gentile world brought back to pardon, and let him say, *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing*. For because the hearts of the Gentiles, being void of faith, were made subject to the devil, ‘He stretched the north over the empty place;’ and because, there being no merits forthcoming, (as it is said, *For nothing shalt Thou save them,* [Ps. 56, 7. Vulg.]) upon the Gentiles the Lord founded His Church, which same Gentiles are by the Prophet called ‘nothing,’ in pursuing the subject he rightly adds, *And hangeth the earth upon nothing*. Now in what order this thing was done, he continues in subjoining with wonderful method. For he saith,

Ver. 8. *He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, that they should not burst forth alike beneath.*

36. For what does he call ‘the waters’ in this place but knowledge; what ‘clouds’ but the Preachers? For that in Holy Writ ‘water’ may sometimes be a term used for knowledge, we have been taught by Solomon bearing witness to it, who says, *The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook.* [Prov. 18, 4] That, by water knowledge is denoted, the Prophet David bears witness, saying, *Dark water in clouds of the sky*, [Ps. 18, 11] i.e. secret knowledge in the Prophets, who before the Advent of the Lord, whilst, pregnant with secret sacraments, they were bearing in them boundless mysteries, to the eyes of beholders had their meaning obscured. But by the name of ‘clouds,’ what else is denoted in this passage but the holy Preachers, i.e. the Apostles, who being dispatched in every direction through the regions of the world, both knew how to shower in words, and to flash forth [*coruscare*] in miracles? Whom the Prophet Isaiah beholding long before, said, *Who are these that fly as clouds?* [Is. 60, 8] Thus because this man, filled with the spirit of prophecy, in this utterance of his voice longs that for the praise of God the rise of Holy Church may commence, he betakes himself to tell the order of her rise from the preaching of the Apostles, who took the greatest pains to preach to uninstructed people what was plain and comprehensible, not what was high and arduous. For holy knowledge, which is here set forth by the title of water, if in the same way that they drew it from the heart, so they poured it forth from the lips, by the immensity thereof they would overwhelm rather than water their hearers. Hence his knowledge being unbound within, that it should not burst forth alike beneath, in nourishing his hearers with the dropping of words, that ‘cloud’ spake, saying, *And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat*. [1 Cor. 3, 1. 2.] For who could have borne it if he that was caught up to the third heaven, that was caught into paradise, even hearing unutterable words, which it was not permitted to

man to speak, had opened such unbounded depths of celestial knowledge? or what hearer's power would he not overwhelm, if all that he might have been able to draw within, as far as tongue of flesh may suffice, overflowing without the mighty flood of this water had poured forth?

37. But that uninstructed hearers might be comforted not by an inundation of knowledge, but by the tempered dropping of preaching, *God tieth up the waters in the clouds, that they may not burst forth alike beneath*. Because He tempers the preaching of the teachers, that so the infirmity of the hearers, being nourished by the dew of the things spoken, may be made strong. Which is well described in the Gospel by a mystical mode of representation, where it is said, *Jesus entered into the boat of Peter, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land; and he sat down thus, and taught the people*. [Luke 5, 3] By Peter's ship what else is denoted but the Church committed to Peter? and that the Lord may preach to the crowds flocking together out of this ship, He orders it to be 'thrust out a little from the land.' Which same he neither bids to be carried into the deep, and yet does bid that it be thrust out from the land, signifying, surely, that to uninstructed people His preachers ought not to preach either what is too deep relating to the heavenly world, nor yet what is earthly. And so 'water is bound up in the clouds,' because the knowledge of the Preachers, speaking to the minds of the frail, is forbidden to teach as much as it is able to see.

38. Since, for the most part, if the heart of the hearers is spoilt by the vastness of the utterance, the tongue of the persons teaching is mulcted in the damage of indiscretion. Whence it is written; *And if a man shall open a cistern, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the owner of the pit shall make it good.* [Ex. 21, 33. 34.] For what is it 'to open a cistern,' saving with strong understanding to penetrate the mysteries of Holy Writ? And what is understood by an 'ox' and an 'ass,'

viz. a clean and an unclean animal, save every believer and unbeliever? Accordingly, let him that 'diggeth a cistern cover it, lest an ox or an ass tumble headlong therein,' i.e. let him, who already makes out deep things in Holy Writ, by silence cover over his lofty perceptions before those that do not reach that compass, lest by a stumbling-block to the soul he kill either the believing little one, or the unbelieving, who might have been led to believe. For upon the death of the beasts of burthen there are damages due, plainly because he is convicted of having done that, whereby he is held a debtor for the exercising of penance [a]. Accordingly, 'the cistern must be covered,' in that before little minds, deep knowledge requires to be veiled, lest by the same cause that the heart of the teachers is lifted up to the highest things, the infirmity of the hearer fall away to the lowest. Accordingly let it be said with justice, *He bindeth up the waters in His clouds, that they should not burst forth alike beneath.* For 'the waters would burst forth alike,' if, in the presence of weak hearers, the knowledge came forth from the lips of the speaker as great as it is, if all the whole fulness of preaching poured itself out at once, and reserved nought to itself together with those making progress. For it is fitting that he that preaches should have an eye to the measure of him that hears him, so that the preaching itself may grow with his hearers' stages of growth. For so does it behove every single preacher to do, as it is dealt with himself from heaven; never to tell to the weak all that he has the perception of, because he himself too, so long as by flesh of mortality he is weak, does not perceive all those things that belong to heaven. And therefore he ought not to preach to the ignorant as much as he is acquainted with, because even he himself, touching heavenly mysteries, cannot have his eyes open to see how great they are. For hence it is that Paul the Apostle, after he was admitted to the mysteries of heaven, saith, *For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face.* [1 Cor. 13, 12] And hence it here follows in continuation;

Ver. 9. *He holdeth back the face of His Throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

39. In the face there is wont to be shewn forth acquaintanceship. Thus ‘the face of His Throne is held back,’ in that by us in this life the gloriousness of His kingdom is not perceived, so great as it is had within; ‘upon which the cloud’ is rightly said ‘to be stretched;’ because that glory of the heavenly kingdom is not seen such as it is. *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul; and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things*. [Wisd. 9, 15] And so against seeing it we are besprinkled with a mist, for we are darkened by the mere cloudiness of our ignorance. Whence it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *And darkness was under His feet; and He rode above the Cherubim, and did fly; He did fly above the wings of the wind: He made darkness His secret place*. [Ps. 18, 9–11] For there is ‘darkness to Him under His feet,’ in that by those beneath He is not seen in that brightness, wherewith He exercises dominion among those above. For He ‘rode above the Cherubim, and did fly;’ since the ‘Cherubim’ is a term used for the fulness of knowledge. By consequence he is said above the fulness of knowledge to have ‘ridden, and to have flown,’ because the loftiness of His Majesty there is no knowledge doth compass. ‘He did fly,’ because He transported Himself on high, far from the reach of our understanding. ‘He did fly above the wings of the wind,’ because He transcended the knowledge of souls. He made darkness too His secret place, because whereas we are dimmed with the mists of our infirmity, by virtue of our ignorance He is hidden from us, that He should not be seen by us now in eternal and interior Brightness. Hence in the Song of Songs also it is said to Him by the Spouse, *Escape, my Beloved, escape*. [Cant. 8, 14] ‘It escapes us,’ we say, as often as that does not occur to our minds which we wish to

remember. ‘It escapes us,’ we say, when that which we wish we do not retain in our recollection. So Holy Church, after that she sets forth the Death and Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord, cries out to Him, full of the Spirit of Prophecy, *Escape, my Beloved, escape*. As though she said; ‘Thou That art made by the flesh comprehensible, do Thou by Thy Divine Nature transcend the comprehension of our perception, and in Thine own Self remain to us Incomprehensible.’ And so He ‘holdeth back the face of His throne,’ because He hideth the power of His Majesty from mortal beings.

40. But if we render His ‘throne’ the Angelical Powers, for on these same Powers He sitteth enthroned as on a royal seat, ‘He keeps back the face of His Throne’ from us, because so long as we have our subsistence in this mortal flesh, what and how wonderful those ministrations of the Angels are, we do not perceive. ‘And He spreadeth His cloud upon it’ assuredly because He both lifts up our heart for making search, and yet it is brought to pass by a secret mode of control, that by the very endlessness of its searching it is kept back. Whence it is written, *The deep uttered its voice at the loftiness of its imagining*. [Hab. 3, 10] For the mind of man is forced to cry out in admiration, when, in loftiness of survey, it is straitened in its searchings by the very act by which it is enlarged. Or, surely, because we are ourselves the ‘throne’ of God, He is said not unjustly to ‘keep back the face of His throne,’ when our knowledge is prevented advancing to things of a higher range. Upon which same throne God is said ‘to spread His cloud,’ because remaining Himself invisible, He puts forth secret judgments upon us, that at once a thing should be done in prominency, that we should be able to see, and yet the origin of the deed be hidden in concealment, so that the reason wherefore it be done, we should needs not know. Hence too it is fitly added;

Ver. 11. *He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the light and darkness come to an end.*

41. Because very often in Holy Writ, as we said above, by the name of ‘waters’ peoples are denoted; *the Lord compasseth the waters with bounds*; because He so tempers the knowledge of mankind: that until the successions of the changing seasons pass away, it cannot perfectly attain to the knowledge of the Interior Brightness. But if by the name of ‘light’ we understand the righteous, and by the designation of ‘darkness’ sinners; (and hence Paul saith, *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light*, [Eph. 5, 8]) there is nothing to hinder this same thing that we said being understood, ‘that the perfect knowledge of eternity is vouchsafed to no one, until the course of the righteous and of the unrighteous is brought to an end.’ But because it is not wonderful that carnal people know nothing of things above, the holy man lifts himself up in astonishment at that same Divine power, and considers that it surpasses the very knowledge of Angels and perfect men as well, saying,

The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his nod.

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

42. What else does he call ‘the pillars of heaven’ but the holy Angels, or the principal preachers of the Church, over whom in the heavenly world the whole structure of the spiritual edifice increasing arose, as Holy Scripture elsewhere bears witness, saying, *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God*. [Rev. 3, 12] For whoever is established firmly by a right purpose of mind in the work of God, is set up as a pillar in the structure of the spiritual edifice; that being placed in this temple, which is the Church, he should be both for usefulness and ornament. But Job calls those ‘pillars of heaven’ whom the Apostle calls ‘pillars’ of the Church,

saying, *Peter, and James, and John, which seemed to be pillars, gave me the right hand*. [Gal. 2, 9]

43. We may also not inappropriately interpret the 'pillars of heaven' the Churches themselves, which being many in number, constitute one Catholic Church spread over the whole face of the earth. Hence too the Apostle John writes to the seven Churches, meaning to denote the one Catholic Church replenished with the Spirit of sevenfold grace, and we know that Solomon said of the Lord, *Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars*. [Prov. 9, 1] And the same, to make known that it was of the seven Churches he had spoken that, in going on sedulously introduced the very Sacraments themselves too, saying, *She hath killed her sacrifices, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also set forth her table; she hath sent forth her maidens, that they may cry to the citadel and to the walls of the city*. *If any be a little one, let him come to me*. [Prov. 9, 2–4] For the Lord 'killed the sacrifices' by offering Himself on our behalf. He 'mingled the wine,' blending together the cup of His precepts from the historical narration and the spiritual signification. Whence it is elsewhere written*, For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture.* [Ps. 75, 8] And 'He set forth His table,' i.e. Holy Writ, which with the bread of the word refreshes us when we are wearied, and come to Him away from the burthens of the world, and by its effect of refreshing strengthens us against our adversaries. Whence too it is elsewhere said by the Church; *Thou preparest a table before me, against them that trouble me*. [Ps. 23, 5] He 'sent forth His maidens,' i.e. the souls of the Apostles, being in their actual beginning infirm [i.e. thence called *maidens,* see on Job 1, 2 Bk I. §. 20. T. 1.], 'that they might cry to the citadel and the walls of the city;' in that whilst they tell of the interior life, they lift us up to the high walls of the City Above, which same walls, surely, except any be humble they do not ascend. Whence it is there added by that same Wisdom; *If any be a little*

one, let him come unto Me. As if she said in plain words; ‘Whosoever accounts himself great in his own eyes, contracts the avenue of his approach unto Me; for there is a loftier reaching unto Me in proportion as the mind of each one is in himself the more truly abased.’

44. But with whatever degree of goodness a man may be advanced, with whatever knowledge he may be made to grow, he cannot fathom to the bottom, what a governance of judgments the Lord rules us with. Therefore let him say, *The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his nod*; because in most things not those even are able to reach the lofty height of His will, who whilst announcing see the rewards of that will. Which, as we said above, there is nothing hinders being interpreted of the Holy Angels as well; because the very Powers of the heavenly world themselves, which behold Him without ceasing, in that very contemplation of theirs are made to tremble. But that that should not be a trembling of woe to them, it is one not of fear, but of admiration. Now because he had brought in how great the consternation of his wonderment was, he now relates the order of our salvation. It follows;

Ver. 12. *In His might the seas are suddenly gathered together, and His wisdom hath struck the proud one.*

45. What else is denoted by the title of the sea save the present world, wherein the hearts of men seeking after earthly things swell with the diverse billows of the thoughts? which same being stirred up by the exaltation of pride, whilst with cross sway they thwart one another, do as with confronting waters dash themselves together. But henceforth ‘the seas are gathered together in His might,’ because on the Lord being made Incarnate, the discordant hearts of worldly men believe in agreement. Henceforth Peter ‘walks on the sea,’ because to the preachers of Christ, these once swelling hearts are by lowly hearing bowed down to the earth, so that in the Gospel too it justly represented the gentleness of this world, that the stormy

water of the sea, its swelling being forced down, was trodden by the feet of the Lord. Now in what manner that was done is disclosed, when it is said, *His wisdom hath struck the proud one.*

[PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

46. Who else is here called 'proud,' saving he who said, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High* [Is. 14, 14]; and concerning whom it is spoken by the voice of God, *Who is made that he should fear none, and himself is king over all the sons of pride*. [Job 41, 24. 25.] With reference to whom moreover the prophet David agrees with this sentence, saying, *Thou hast abased the proud man, like one wounded*. [Ps. 89, 10] But though to the simple nature of Deity it is not one thing to be, and another thing to be wise, nor one thing to be wise, and another to be strong, forasmuch as the strength is identically the same that the wisdom, and the wisdom that the essence of the Deity is, yet I consider it a thing to be regarded with lively attention, that this man being filled with the prophetic spirit, chose to describe the proud devil as stricken by 'the wisdom' rather than the power of God. For he saith not, 'His might,' but, 'His wisdom hath struck the proud one.' For, as we have said, although by right of simple Nature, the Might of God is the Wisdom of God, yet as to the appearance, the Lord overcame the devil, not by power, but by reason; for the devil himself, by overthrowing us in that root of our first parent, as it were rightfully held man under his thraldom, who whilst he was created with free will, yielded consent to him, when he prompted what was unjust. For when created to life in the freedom of his own will, he was of his own accord made the debtor to death. Therefore such a transgression was to be done away; but saving by sacrifice it could not be done away. A sacrifice was to be sought after, but what sacrifice could be found "for the setting men free? For neither was it just that for reasoning man there should be

slain sacrifices of brute beasts. Whence the Apostle says, *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these*. [Heb. 9, 23] And so if brute creatures on behalf of a rational animal, i.e. in the stead of man, were not proportionate victims, a man was to be sought out, who should be offered for men, that for a reasoning being committing sin there might be offered a reasoning victim. But what of the fact, that a man without sin could not be found? And the victim offered in our stead, when could it cleanse us from sin, if the actual victim itself was not without sin's contagion? Since it being defiled could never have cleansed the defiled. Therefore that it might be a rational victim, Man was to be offered, but that it might cleanse man from his sins, Man and that Man without sin. But who might there be man without sin, if he was descended from a combination in sin? Thereupon in our behalf the Son of God came into the womb of the Virgin; there for our sakes He was made Man. Nature, not sin, was assumed by Him. He offered a sacrifice in our behalf, He set forth His own Body in behalf of sinners, a victim void of sin, that both by human nature He might be capable of dying, and by righteousness be capable of purifying. This One, then, when the ancient enemy saw after the Baptism, then directly fell upon Him with temptations, and by diverse avenues strove to insinuate himself into His interior; he was overcome and laid prostrate by the mere sinlessness of His unconquerable mind.

47. But because to the interior his strength did not reach, he betook himself to His outward man, that because he was subdued by the prowess of the soul, Him, Whom he had not the power to deceive by temptation, he might at all events by the death of the flesh seem to vanquish. And, as it has been said before us, he had leave granted to him against that, which the Mediator had taken from us mortals. But where he had power to do something, there he was vanquished utterly on every side; and from the

same cause that he obtained the power outwardly to kill the flesh of the Lord, his interior power, whereby he held us fast, was killed. For he was himself vanquished within, whilst in seeming he vanquished without; and he, who of right held us the debtors of death, of right lost in us the right of death; because by means of his ministers, he sought for the flesh of Him to be done to death, in Whom he found no whit of the debt of sin. Thus our Lord did in our behalf pay death not due, that death due might not injure us; and so it is well said, *And His wisdom hath struck the proud one*; because our old enemy by the excess of his presumption lost even him, whom by the law of wicked persuasion he got possession of; and whilst he audaciously went after Him, in Whom there was nought at his command, by right he lost him, whom he as it were justly held bound. Therefore he was 'stricken by wisdom,' and not by power, in that while he is let loose for the tempting God, he is unfastened from possessing man; so that him that was under him, he should lose by the same act, whereby he had ventured to come to an encounter with Him, Who is over him. But upon the Lord being killed in the flesh, what gloriousness of powers came upon his Preachers is related, when it is added,

Ver. 13. *His Spirit garnished the heavens.*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

48. What 'heavens,' saving those concerning whom it is written, *The heavens are telling the glory of God?* [Ps. 19, 1] Which 'heavens His Spirit garnished' then, when It 'filled' them. Which we have learnt by Luke's relating, who saith, *Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance*. [Acts 2, 2–4] From

Him, then, they received the adornments of prowess, whom an exceeding disfigurement of fear before had possession of. For we know that first one of the Apostles, i.e. of the 'heavens,' how often, before the grace of the Holy Spirit was vouchsafed, whilst he feared to die, he denied 'the Life;' who not by punishments, not by inflictions, not by the dreadful power of anyone, but by the simple interrogation of a single slave, was brought to the ground. And truly that that slave the sterner sex might not exhibit as an object to cause alarm, it was by a maidservant putting the question that he was tried. Again, that the weakness of such a sex, by the lowness of her office as well might be made contemptible, he was questioned not by a maidservant only, but by a maidservant keeper of the door. See how contemptible the person is that is sought out for the purpose of trying him, that it might be plainly brought to light, what excessive weakness of fear possessed him, who even before the voice of a maidservant of the door could not stand fast.

49. But this one a little before so full of affright, what after the Coming of the Holy Spirit he became, let us now see. Surely we have learnt by Luke's attesting it, with what an authoritativeness he preached the word, in opposition to the priests and rulers. For when upon a miracle being wrought inquiry had arisen, and the rulers from among the priests, the elders, and the scribes laid their hands together in the persecution of the Apostles, setting those persons in the midst, they busied themselves to ask in what power they had wrought the miracle. Unto whom Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit spake, *Ye rulers of the people and elders; if we be this day examined of the deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom ye crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole*. [Acts 4, 8. &c.] And when the rage of the persecutors against this grew to a head, and

the priests and rulers forbade those men to preach Jesus, with what independent power Peter rose in height against the wrath of the rulers, is made plain, when it is there added directly, *But Peter and the Apostles answered and said unto them, It is right to obey God rather than man.* [v. 19] But when the commands of those withstanding did not repress the influence of the persons preaching, it comes to scourges. For it is added, *And when the chief priests had beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the Name of Jesus, and let them go.* [Acts 5, 40] But that the prowess of the Apostles not even scourges had power to restrain, is openly shewn, when it is immediately introduced next, *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus*. And immediately even after the rejoicing of their scourges what they did we have pointed out; *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ*. Mark, that man, a little while before full of fears, now speaks with tongues, flashes forth with miracles, with free voice rebukes the unbelief of the priests and rulers, gives to the rest for the preaching of Jesus an example of independence. That he should not speak in His Name, he is restrained by scourgings, and yet is not withheld. He sets at nought the strokes of those that scourged him, who a little while back had dreaded the words of those that questioned him. And he that when asked a question shrunk in consternation from the powers of a maidservant, when beaten with the rod forces back the powers of the rulers. For being henceforth established by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, the heights of this world he trod down with the heel of liberty, that he should see that that was low down on the earth, whatever it was that swelled high against the grace of the Creator.

50. These are the ornaments of the heavens, these are the gifts of the Spirit, that are used to be manifested by divers powers, which as divided by the bestowal of secret distribution Paul reckons up, saying, *For to one is*

given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same' Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. [1 Cor. 12, 8–10] All which directly afterwards including in one by a general statement he says, *But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.* Of these 'heavens' too it is said in the Psalm, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens set fast*. [Ps. 33, 6] Of these ornaments of the Spirit also it is added, *And all the power of them by the Spirit of His mouth.* Therefore it is well said, *His Spirit hath garnished the heavens*; because the holy Preachers, except they received the gifts of the Paraclete, that were promised to them, would not have shone with any comeliness of might. But because when the Holy Apostles were beautified with the grace of the gifts of virtue, the preaching of life gained ground against the hearts of unbelievers, and our old enemy being expelled by the voices of the preachers, abandoned the minds of the unbelievers, which he had close beset; after the ornaments of the heavens it is fitly subjoined;

And by the midwifery of His hand the crooked serpent is brought forth.

[PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

51. For who is described by the designation of the 'serpent,' but our old enemy, at once slippery and crooked, who for the deceiving of man spake with the mouth of a serpent? Of whom it is said by the Prophet, *Leviathan the bar-serpent, the crooked one* [Is. 27, 1]; who was for this reason allowed to speak with the mouth of a serpent, that by that very vessel of his man might learn what he was that dwelt within. For a serpent is not only crooked but slippery as well; and so because he stood not in the uprightness of truth, he entered into a crooked animal, and because if to his first suggestion

resistance be not made, in a moment whilst it is not perceived he slips in entire into the interior of the heart, he made speech to man by a slippery animal. Now 'the dens' of this serpent were the hearts of wicked men. Which same because he drew on to his own depravity, he as it were rested in the dwelling place of them. But 'by the midwifery of the Lord's hand, the crooked serpent is driven out of his own dens,' in that whilst the Divine grace heals us, he that had held possession of us, our old enemy, is cast out of us, as Truth Incarnate says, *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* [John 12, 31] Hence all the Saints now already he does not possess by holding, but persecutes by trying. For because he does not reign in them within, he fights against them without, and because he has lost his dominion in the interior, he sets on foot wars in the exterior. For him That One drove forth from the carnal hearts of men, Who for the sake of men came to the state of Incarnation; and whereas He took seisin of the hearts of unbelievers, He as it were put His hand to the dens of the serpent. Whence it is rightly said by the Prophet; *And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My Holy Mountain.* [Is. 11, 8. 9.] For whom does he call 'the sucking child,' or 'the weaned child,' saving the Lord? And what did he denote by 'the hole of the asp,' and 'the cockatrice den,' saving the hearts of wicked men? Because our old enemy, whereas he gat himself wholly into their consenting, as a crooked serpent in his own hole, he gathered and wound up the coils of his craftiness; whom he both designates with the title of 'asp' as covertly ravening, and of a 'cockatrice' as openly wounding. And so the Lord 'put His hand upon the hole of the asp and the cockatrice,' when He took seisin of the hearts of the wicked by Divine power. And the asp and the cockatrice, being seized, i.e. the devil, he drew away therefrom a captive, that 'in His Holy Mountain,' which is the Church, he might not 'harm' His Elect believers.

Thus it is hence said in the Song of Songs, on the coming of the Spouse; *Thou shalt be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens*. [Cant. 4, 8] For what else is denoted by the title of the lions but the devils, which rage against us with the fury of the deadliest cruelty? And because the sinners are called to faith, whose hearts were once 'the dens of lions,' when by their confession the Lord is believed to have overcome death, it is as if He were 'crowned from the lions' dens.' For a crown is the recompense of victory. So often then do the faithful offer a crown to Him, as they confess that He has overcome death by virtue of the Resurrection. And so 'the lion is driven from his den,' because 'by the midwifery of the Lord's hand,' 'the crooked serpent is hindered from dwelling in the dens,' which he had possession of. For he went forth defeated from the hearts of believers, who had aforetime ruled over them with the sceptre of unbelief.

53. Observe how in a few short sentences the holy man related the order of the Lord's Advent, set forth its weighty charges, and in admiring described what by His Incarnation was possible to be done. But He, Who wrought marvellous things when He came in humility, cannot be viewed with all the great terribleness He shall come with, when He appeareth in the mightiness of His Majesty. The order of His first Advent might be viewed and estimated, in so far as in coming to redeem carnal beings, He abated the greatness of His Divinity to carnal eyes. But who might bear the terrors of His Highness, when with the power of the Second Advent in exercising judgment by fire, He shall glow in the Majesty of His power? Whence the holy man describes His first Advent, but is exhausted for the second, saying,

Ver. 14. *Lo, these things have been spoken for part of His ways; and whilst we scarcely hear a little drop of His words, who shall be able to look on the thunder of His Majesty?*

54. What is meant in this place by the designation of the ‘ways,’ but the Lord’s modes of acting? Hence too the Lord saith by the Prophet; *For My ways are not as your ways*. [Is. 55, 8] Accordingly in telling of the Advent of the Lord, he had described the ways of God in part; because His method of acting by which He created us was one thing, and that by which He redeemed us another. Thus those things, which he told touching the Lord’s way of acting, making light of by comparison with the final Judgment, he says, *Lo, these things are spoken for part of His ways*. Which he also calls ‘a little drop of His words,’ for whatsoever thing that is high, whatsoever thing that is terrible, we whilst set in this life are brought to know by the contemplation of Him, from the vast ocean of the secrets of Heaven wells out to us like a slight drop of the liquid element Above. *And who shall be able to look on the thunder of His Majesty?* As though he expressed himself in plain words; ‘If we scarce endure the wonders of His humility, the loud and dreadful Advent of His Majesty with what nerve do we encounter?’ This thundering of His Advent the Psalmist also sounds out, saying, *Our God shall come in state, our God, and shall not keep silence, a fire shall devour before Him, and a mighty tempest round about Him*. [Ps. 50, 3] Hence Zephaniah the Prophet tells it out, saying, *The Great Day of the Lord is near; it is near and hasteth greatly*. *The voice of the Day of the Lord is bitter: the mighty man shall be troubled there. That Day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of cloud and whirlwind, a day of the trumpet, and of a dreadful sound*. [Zeph. 14–16] The terror then of the Strict Inquest, which Zephaniah calls ‘the Trumpet,’ blessed Job designates ‘thundering.’ Which Joel also viewing saith, *Let all the inhabitants of the land be troubled; for the Day of the Lord cometh; for it is nigh at hand, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of cloud and whirlwind. For the Day of the Lord is great, and very terrible, and who shall sustain it?* [Joel 2,

1–3] But how incomprehensible and unimaginable that Greatness wherewith He shall come in His Second Manifesting, in some degree we estimate aright, if we consider with heedful reflection the weighty particulars of His first Advent. Surely that He might redeem us from death, the Lord came to die, and the impoverishment and punishments of our flesh He underwent in His own Body; Who before He came to the stock of the Cross, suffered Himself to be bound, to be spit on, to be mocked and to be beaten with blows on His cheek. Observe to what disgraceful treatment He for our sakes consented to come, and yet, before He permitted Himself to be laid hold of, He questioned His persecutors, saying, *Whom seek ye?* To Whom they thereupon gave answer, *Jesus of Nazareth*. And when He said to them directly, *I am He*, He only uttered a voice of the mildest answer, and at once prostrated His armed persecutors to the earth. What then shall He do when He cometh to judge the world, who by one utterance of His voice smote His enemies, even when He came to be judged? What is that Judgment which He exercises as immortal, Who in a single utterance could not be endured when He was about to die? Who may sustain His wrath, Whose very mildness even could not be sustained? So then let the holy man consider it and say, *And whilst we scarcely hear a little drop of His words, who shall be able to look on the thundering of His Majesty?*

BOOK XVIII.

Contains the exposition of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of the Book of Job, to the twenty-first verse and half through it, after manifold senses.

IT is the case for the most part in Holy Writ that there are things of a mystical nature so represented, that nevertheless they seem put forth in accordance with the historical relation. But oftentimes such sort of descriptions are mixed together in that same historical relation, whereby the whole outside of history is rendered null [*cassetur*]; which same whilst they sound of nothing belonging to the history, oblige the reader to look for something else in them. For things being spoken that we suppose plain, when we find any particulars interspersed with a more obscure meaning, we are as it were pricked by a kind of spurs, that we should both be alive for the understanding some things in a deeper sense, and that we should take even those things as put forth in a more obscure sense, which we looked upon as spoken in their plain import. Whereas, then, blessed Job was speaking of the Word of the Lord, and the greatness of His thundering, next in order to these words it is directly introduced;

Chap. xxvii. 1. *Moreover Job added taking up his parable, and said.*

2. By which same verse it is shewn in how great mystery the words of this most saintly man are delivered, when ‘a parable,’ i.e. a simile, is described as ‘taken up’ by him, who utters nothing below in the way of simile or comparison. For be it far from us in this place to interpret a ‘parable’ that musical instrument [‘We know of no musical instrument so called either now or formerly; but one may imagine some so named from their parabolic figure.’ Ben.]. Since neither is it allowable to suppose that under infliction of chastenings he used music, when Truth saith by His

Scripture, Music in mourning is as a tale out of season. The word 'parable,' then, having been named, see how we now learn, the text itself telling it, not by the text only to estimate his words. And so every thing must be drawn to turn to that likeness, by which the Church is denoted in a figure. And indeed in the very beginning of his speaking, the things said are put forth in a plain sense, but they are entwined with more obscure ones subjoined. For he begins as he is used, with a plain mode of speech, but he finishes his words with a description pregnant through mystical significations. And so he saith,

Ver. 2. *As God liveth, Who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty, Who hath brought my soul to bitterness.*

3. By which same words blessed Job at once tells his own circumstances, and represents the times of Holy Church under affliction, wherein she is borne down by the open frowardness of unbelievers, and vexed by the bitterness of persecution. For in two ways the Church is subject to be tried by her adversaries, viz. that she should suffer persecution either by words or swords. Now Holy Church aims with the greatest diligence to possess wisdom and patience. And her wisdom is exercised when she is tried with words, her patience is exercised when she is tried with swords. Now, however, he is speaking of that persecution, wherein she is provoked not by swords, but by false statements. Now we know numbers, who when they encounter some things adverse in this life, do not believe that God is, but there are some that hold that God is, but does not concern Himself in the least with the affairs of men. For of the one it is said by David, *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*. [Ps. 14, 1] But the latter say in him, *How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High'!* And again; *Yet they say again; The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it*. [Ps. 94, 7] Thus this person who bore a type of Holy Church, whilst set fast in the very bitterness of his affliction, made answer against them both, For as life has 'being,' but death has not, to avow that

God is, he saith, *As God liveth*, but that he might tell that God concerns Himself with the affairs of mortals, he added, *Who hath taken away my judgment, and hath brought my soul to bitterness*. For these ills which he suffers he bears record that he suffers not by accident, but by God Who ordereth all things, nor does he attribute the power for his bitterness to his tempter, but to his Creator.

4. For he knows that the devil, though he is ever aiming at the afflicting of the just, yet if he do not receive the power from our Maker is not empowered in the least degree for any tittle of temptation. And hence all the devil's will is unjust, and yet whilst God permits it, all his power is just. For of himself he does unjustly seek to try men indifferently, but those that require to be tempted, in so far as they require to be tried, God does not permit to be tried otherwise than justly. Whence also in the Books of the Kings it is written of the devil, *That the evil spirit of the Lord came upon Saul*. [1 Sam. 18, 10] Where the question justly occurs, 'If it was the Spirit of the Lord, why should it be called an evil spirit? and if an evil spirit, why the Lord's?' But in two words there is comprehended at once the just power and the unjust will in the devil. For both he himself is called an evil spirit in respect of a most evil will, and the same spirit is called the Lord's spirit in respect of the most just power bestowed on him. And so it is well said; *God liveth, Who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, Who hath brought my soul to bitterness*. For though the enemy rage furiously, who longs to deal the blow, yet it is the Creator, Who permits him to have power for any thing. But forasmuch as the holy man by invoking the life of God bound himself to somewhat, let us hear what in so obliging himself he subjoins. It follows;

Ver. 3, 4. *All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in, my nostrils, my lips shall not speak iniquity, nor my tongue meditate falsehood.*

5. What he first calls 'iniquity,' this repeating afterwards he calls 'falsehood.' For both all 'falsehood' is 'iniquity,' and all 'iniquity' 'falsehood,' because, whatever thing is at variance with truth is surely at odds with equity. But between this which he expresses, 'to speak' and that which he adds afterwards, to 'meditate,' there is a wide difference. For sometimes it is a worse thing to 'meditate' falsehood than to speak it. For to speak is very frequently a matter of precipitation, but to 'meditate' of purposed wickedness. And who could be ignorant by what great difference the sin is distinguished, whether a man tell a lie by precipitation or of set purpose? But the holy man, to be entirely attached to the truth, tells that he would neither lie of set purpose, nor by precipitation. For all lying is very seriously to be guarded against, though sometimes there is a certain sort of lying which is of lighter complexion, if a man lie in rendering good [b]. But seeing that it is written, *The mouth that belieth slayeth the soul*. [Wisd. 1, 11] And, *Thou shalt destroy all them that speak leasing.* [Ps. 5, 7] This kind of lying also those that are perfect eschew with the greatest care, so that not even the life of any man should by deceit of theirs be defended, lest they hurt their own souls, whilst they busy themselves to give life to another's flesh; though the same particular kind of sin we believe to be very easily remitted. For if any sin is 'by godly practice ensuing after to be done away, how much more is this easily wiped off, which pitifulness, the mother of good works, herself accompanies?

6. But there are some that from the deceit of the midwives endeavour to establish that this species of lying is not sin, chiefly because, upon those midwives lying, it is written, *That the Lord made them houses*. [Exod. 1, 21] By which mode of recompensing it is rather learnt what the offence of lying earns; for the profits of their kindness which might have been repaid them in everlasting life, on account of the sin of lying mixing in are diverted into an earthly recompense, that in their own life, which they were

ready to defend by lying, they should receive back the good which they did, and not have any reward of their recompensing, that they might look forward to beyond. For if the thing be weighed with exactness, it was from the love of the present life they lied, not from the being bent on the recompense; for by the act of sparing, they endeavoured to protect the life of the infants; but by the act of lying, their own life.

7. And though in the Old Testament a few such cases may possibly be discovered, yet almost on no occasion will the attentive reader there find this or a like kind of lying practised by those that were perfect, although the lie might seem to bear some sort of semblance of truth; and perchance it might be an offence of a lighter complexion under the Old Testament, wherein by victims of bulls and goats, the sacrifice was not the very Truth itself, but a shadow of the truth. For in the New Testament, after Truth has been manifested by flesh, we are advanced by a higher scale of precepts, and it is meet and right that certain actions which in that People were instrumental to a shadow of the Truth, we should give over. But if there be any man, who would defend his lying by the Old Testament, because there perhaps it was less detrimental to particular persons, he must needs be compelled to say that the robbing of another's property, and the retaliation of an injury, which were there allowed to those in a weak state, cannot be injurious to himself. All of which it is plain to all men with what severe strictures Truth doth visit. Which 'Truth' now henceforth, the shadow of the betokenment of Him set aside, is brought to light in very flesh. But as the holy man gives his word neither to 'speak' nor 'meditate falsehood,' these actual particulars, wherein he agrees with the truth, he subjoins, carrying it on;

Ver. 5. *God forbid that I should justify you; till I die, I will not depart from mine innocency.*

8. For he would 'depart from his innocency,' if he reckoned good things of bad persons; as Solomon bears witness, who saith, *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord*. [Prov. 17, 15] For there are persons, who, whilst they extol with commendation deeds of men ill done, heighten that which they ought to have rebuked. For hence it is said by the Prophet, *Woe to those that sew pillows under every elbow of the hand, and make cushions under the head of every age*. [Ez. 13, 18] For a 'pillow' is put for this, that we may rest the easier. Therefore whoever flatters persons doing wrongly is putting a pillow under the head or the elbow of one lying, so that the man that should have been chidden on account of sin, being stayed up therein by commendations, should rest at his ease. Hence again it is written, *And one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it*. [ib. 10.] For by the term of 'a wall,' the hardness of sin is denoted. And so 'to build up a wall' is for a man to rear against himself barriers of sin; but they' daub the wall,' who flatter those that commit sins, that what the first by doing wickedly build, those same persons by spreading their flatteries should as it were make of bright colour. But the holy man, as he does not think what is bad of the good, so he refuses to judge what is good of the bad; saying, *God forbid that I should Judge you just: till I die, I will not depart from mine innocency*. Where he subjoins in plain words;

Ver. 6. *My righteousness, which I began to hold fast, I will not abandon.*

For 'his righteousness' that he had 'begun with,' he would 'abandon,' if he went out of the way into the praising of persons committing sin. But because we then more truly keep away from the sins of others when we first keep ourselves safe from our own, why he is so afraid to be guilty touching those, he gives the grounds of the principle, when he adds; For neither doth mine heart reproach me in all my life.

9. As if he expressed himself in plain words; ‘On your account I ought not to be drawn into guilt, in that I have dreaded to commit sin in my own affairs.’ But it is a thing to be known, that everyone that is at variance with the precepts of the Lord in practice, as often as he hears them, is reproached and confounded by his own heart, because that which he has never done is brought to recollection. For whereinsoever it sees itself to have done amiss, the conscience by itself secretly accuses self. Whence the prophet David beseeches, saying, *Then may I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments*. [Ps. 119, 6] For greatly ‘ashamed’ is every man, when either by reading or hearing them he turns his eye to the precepts of God, which by his way of living he has disregarded. Thus it is hence declared by the voice of John, *If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him*. [1 John 3, 21. 22.] As if he said in plain speech, ‘If that He bids, we do, that we ask, we shall obtain.’

10. For with God both these two do of necessity match with one another exactly, that practice should be sustained by prayer, and prayer by practice. Thus it is hence that Jeremiah saith; *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens.* [Lam. 3, 40. 41.] For to ‘search our ways’ is to sift what is inmost in the thoughts. But he ‘lifts up his heart with his hands,’ who strengthens his prayer by good works. For he that prays, but shuts his eyes to practice, ‘lifts up the heart,’ but does not ‘lift up the hands.’ But whosoever practises, but does not pray, ‘lifts up the hands,’ but does not ‘lift up the heart.’ And so according to the voice of John, the heart then acquires confidence in prayer, when no wickedness of life withstands it. Of which same confidence it is rightly said now by the holy man; *For neither doth mine heart reproach me in all my life.* As though he said in plain speech, ‘It never remembers to have been guilty of that, whereby it might be made ashamed in its prayers.’ But it may be asked, on what principle he

declares that he is not reproached by his heart, seeing that he accuses himself above of having sinned, saying, *I have sinned: what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men?* [Job 7, 20] Or surely*, If I would justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me.* [Job 9, 20]

11. But it is requisite to be known that there are sins that by righteous men are possible to be avoided, and there are some sins which even by righteous men are not possible to be avoided. For what man's heart, whilst bound up with this corruptible flesh, does not slip in ill bent thought, even if be not plunged into the very pit of consenting? And yet to think these same wrong thoughts is to commit sin. But while there is a resisting of the thought, the soul is freed from being confounded. And so the mind of the righteous, though it be free from bad practice, yet sometimes it falls to the ground in bad thinking. Thus then into sin too it slips, because in the thought of the heart at all events it is made to swerve, and yet it hath not that whereon to upbraid itself afterwards in weeping, because it recovers itself before that it falls by consenting. And so with just propriety he who confessed himself a sinner, declares that he is never upbraided by his heart, because though perhaps by thinking unlawful thoughts he ever fell short of righteousness, yet the resolute struggle of the soul, he resisted the thought. It follows;

Ver. 7. *Let mine enemy be like the ungodly, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.*

12. In Holy Writ, the words' like as' and' as if' are sometimes put not for a likeness, but for the reality. Whence we have that; *And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father*. [John 1, 14] And thus here also 'like,' and 'as' seem to be said rather for the sake of affirmation than similitude. Now between the ungodly and the wicked man there is wont to be this difference sometimes, that every ungodly man is unrighteous, but not every unrighteous man ungodly. For the' ungodly' is

put instead of unbeliever, i.e. a stranger to the godliness of religion. But a man is called unrighteous, who by wrongness of practice is at variance with righteousness, even if he does perhaps bear the name of the Christian Faith. Therefore by the typical voice of blessed Job, Holy Church, which is subject to some gainsaying the right Faith, avouches that she has an 'ungodly man her enemy.' But because she has to bear others under the cloke of the faith within her pale living in bad practices, she abhors the 'unrighteous' man as being her adversary. But if' like' and 'as' it is right we should understand as put on account of 'likeness,' Holy Church brands by a likeness to the ungodly those whom she is subject to living in a carnal manner within her pale. For within her bounds he is an enemy to her, who whilst he maintains himself a believer by professions, denies it by practices. And because he accounts him as an unbeliever, who, whilst set within her pale in semblance, only assails her with mischief of evil doing, he rightly says, Mine enemy is like the ungodly, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous. As though he said in plain speech; 'He is at variance with me in faith as well, who does not agree with me in practice.' It follows;

Ver. 8. *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, if he seize with covetousness, and God free not his soul?*

13. The hypocrite, who in the Latin language is termed pretender [*simlator*], aims not to be but to appear just, and therefore he is a covetous robber, because whereas while doing wickedly he desires to be revered for sanctity, he seizes on the praise of a life not his own. But it is said to be the aim of hypocrites, that both what they are they may keep back, and what they are not they may make themselves known to men as being; so that they should surpass their own measure in esteem, and by credit for conduct shew themselves to excel the rest of the world. They eschew the seeming to be that which they are, and before the eyes of men they clothe themselves with a kind of overlaid respectability of innocency. Hence in the Gospel they are

rightly upbraided by the voice of our Redeemer, when the words are spoken to them, *Woe unto you, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear to men beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of covetousness and iniquity.* [Mat. 23, 27. 28.] Contrariwise all that are Saints really not only do not ever at all covet glory that is beyond their measure, but do also eschew appearing that very thing, which they have obtained to be. And hence that great Preacher of truth, in speaking against the false apostles; while he was relating the extraordinary excellences of his practice for the instruction of his disciples; whilst he was describing that he had undergone such countless perils in accumulated persecution, and after this made mention of his having been carried up to the third heaven, and into Paradise again, where he had power to learn things so 'great, as he had not power in any degree to tell; was on the point perhaps of telling things still more marvellous of himself, yet holding himself in from human applause by deep reflecting he adds, *But now I spare, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.* [2 Cor. 12, 6] He then had somewhat yet further to be declared concerning himself, who' forbears' to speak. But the great Preacher did both, that both by telling the things which he had done he might instruct his disciples, and by being silent keep himself safe within the bounds of humility. For he would have been over ungracious, if he had withheld all relating to himself from the disciples; and perhaps incautious over much, if even to the disciples he had uttered all about himself. But in a wonderful way, as has been said, he did both the one and the other, so that by speaking he might instruct the life of those that heard him, and by holding his peace preserve his own.

14. Now it deserves to be known, that holy men as often as they communicate any thing concerning themselves to their followers, are

imitating the custom of their Creator. For God, Who forbids us that we never be commended by our own lips, in Holy Writ does utter His own praises; not that He Himself needs them, Who cannot be a gainer by praises; but whilst He relates to us His greatness, He lifts up our ignorance to Himself, and by telling His own good He teaches us; whereas man would never know Him, if He had been minded to be silent about Himself. And so He for this reason shews His own praises, that we may be able by hearing to know, by knowing to love, by loving to follow, by following to obtain, and by obtaining to enjoy the vision of Him. Whence the Psalmist saith, *He will tell the people the power of His works, and that He may give them the heritage of the heathen*. [Ps. 111, 6] As if he expressed himself in plain terms; 'For this reason He tells the mightiness of His doing, that he that heareth thereof may be enriched with His gifts.' Therefore holy men, imitating the way of their Creator, sometimes reveal things that concern themselves, that those who hear them they may instruct, not that they may themselves be gainers, and yet in these things they keep guard over themselves by bethinking themselves deeply, lest whilst they lift up others from an earthward bent, they should themselves be sunk in the coveting of earthly applause. Whose statements hypocrites for the most part follow, but the meaning of their statements they are wholly blind to, because what the righteous do with a view to the advantaging of their neighbour, this these same do with a view to the extending of their own name. But the holy man beholding that hypocrites seek not at all after future glory, but desire to possess themselves of present glory, says, *What is the hope of the hypocrite?* in that while he loves the present things, he hopes not for the future. For it is written, *For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* [Rom. 8, 24] And so for this reason there is on the part of the hypocrite no advancing in any degree to the eternal rewards by hope, because that which required to be sought elsewhere, he makes it his pride to have in possession

here. And because his offence was set forth, the punishment too is subjoined, when it is forthwith brought in next;

Will God hear his cry, fchen trouble cometh upon him?

15. 'His cry in the time of his straits God heareth not,' because in the time of tranquillity he did not himself hear the Lord crying in His precepts. For it is written; *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination*. [Prov. 28, 9] And so the holy man seeing that all they that are indifferent to practise what is light now, in the time at the end betake themselves to words of beseeching, saith; Will God hear his cry? By which words assuredly he follows close upon the words of our Redeemer, Who saith, *Last of all come the foolish virgins also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. And it is answered them, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* [Matt. 25, 11] Because great severity is exercised then, in proportion as now greater mercy is prolonged [al. granted beforehand], and He does then with strictness put forth judgment upon persons not corrected, Who now patiently bestows pity upon them going on transgressing. For hence it is the Prophet saith, *Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found; call ye upon Him, while He is near.* [Is. 55, 6] Now He is not seen, and' is near,' then He shall be seen, and shall not' be near.' He hath not yet appeared in judgment, and if He be sought, He is found. For in a wonderful way, when He appeareth in judgment He is at once able to be seen, and unable to be found. Hence Solomon describes Wisdom at once caressing sweetly, and judging dreadfully, saying, *Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets.* Whose language he also tells, adding, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and fools delight in their own harm, and silly ones hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto yow 1 will make known my words unto you*. [Prov. 1, 20-28] Mark with what kind of words her sweetness in calling is expressed. Let us see now in what ways her severity in upbraiding is told, that in the end sooner or later

her strictness in punishing may have free scope. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand; and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof.* Let her now say how she will smite those, whom she bears with so much longsuffering, never turning back to her: *I also will laugh at your destruction, I will mock when your fear cometh, when sudden calamity falleth on you, and your destruction riseth as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They shall rise up early, but they shall not find me.* By the mouth of Solomon then, the wisest of men, all particulars are carefully set forth relating to the Judgment from Above: because she both at first calls us sweetly, and afterwards upbraids us terribly, and at the last condemns us irretrievably. And so it is well said; *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?* Surely because the hypocrite then findeth not a remedy in crying, who now lets slip the fitting opportunity of crying. Concerning whose wickedness it is yet further added;

Ver. 10. *Or will he be able to delight himself in the Almighty?*

16. For he that is overcome by the love of earthly things, in no degree delights himself in God. The soul indeed can never exist without its delight, for it delights itself either in things below or in things above, and in proportion as it is employed with higher devotion towards those above, it grows deadened with the greater loathing towards those below, and as it glows with a keener interest for those below, it cools in proportion with an accursed illsensibility from those above. For both cannot possibly .be loved together and alike. Hence the Apostle John, well knowing that amongst the thorns of worldly attachments the crop of heavenly charity can never shoot, before he produces the seeds of the love eternal, with the holy hand of the word eradicates from the hearts of his hearers the thorns of worldly affections, in the words, *Love not the world, neither the tleings that are in the world.* And he directly subjoins, *If any man love the world, the love of*

the Father is not in him. [1 John 2, 15] As if he said in express terms; 'Both these loves cannot contain themselves in one and the same heart, nor does the crop of charity from Above shoot in that heart, wherein the thorns of gratification down below kill it.' And he reckons up all the prickles arising from that gratification below, saying, *For all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof*. [v. 16. 17.] And so the' hypocrite cannot delight himself in God,' because heavenly desires never spring forth in his mind, seeing surely that the thorns ofea11hly love overlay it. Of whom it is fitly added;

Will he always call upon God?

17. For it is then that the hypocrite' calls upon God,' when the wretchedness of earthly circumstances wrings him hard. For when in this world he has obtained the carrying out of the good fortune sought for, his Maker, Who vouchsafed him this same good fortune, he asks not for; But because, as we said before, the art of those that teach should be, that in their hearers' minds they should first aim to destroy what is wrong, and afterwards to preach what is right; (lest the hearts that are full of evil things should not contain the good seed of holy preaching, whence it is said to Jeremiah, *See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant*. [Jer. 1, 10] For it is first bidden him that he should pull down, and afterwards that he should build, first to pluck up, and afterwards to plant; because the foundation of rightful truth is not laid, except the edifice of error be first pulled down;) blessed Job after that he had mane the case of the Universal Church his answer to the statements of his friends as if in opposition to words of heretics, and that by a manifold rejoinder he had destroyed their pride, describes himself henceforth to teach; that is, that he

might be plainly seen in those things which he added to plant what is right, but in those that he premised to have plucked up what is wrong. It goes on;

I will teach you by the hand of God, that which is with the Almighty; I will not conceal.

18. In such a way does blessed Job speak in his own words as to denote something connected with what relates to us. For Holy Church in teaching, in so far as it is expedient to know it, hides not a particle of truth. Thus because 'the Hand of God' is a name for the Son; for, *by Him were all things made* [John 1, 3]; she tells that by the Hand of God she teaches those, whom she sees continuing foolish in their own wisdom. As if she said in plain words; 'I know not any thing of myself; but whatever I perceive of the Truth, this I comprehend by the bountifulness of that same Truth. Ye for this reason are not embued with right wisdom, because this same wisdom that you have yon ascribe not to the Hand of God, but to your own selves.' For the adversaries of Holy Church, if they do at times perceive any thing true, this they attribute to their own powers, and they deprive themselves so much the more of the Wisdom from Above, in the same proportion as they wish to have it appropriated to themselves as being derived from their own wits. Unto whom it is sometimes vouchsafed for their judgment, that they should indeed know some things aright, but by this very same knowledge be rendered the more obnoxious to punishment. Whence it is fitly added;

Ver. 12. *Behold, all ye yourselves know: why then do ye utter vain things without cause?*

19. It is written; *And that servant, 'Which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself; neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes*. [Luke 12, 47. 48.] But he that knew not, and did not worthily, shall be beaten with few stripes. And again it is written; *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*. [Jam. 4, 17] And so for the heightening of greater guilt Holy Church tells it that her enemies

at once know what they ought to follow, and will not follow what they may know. Of which same persons it is elsewhere said; *Let them go down quick into hell*. [Ps. 55, 15] Those are' quick' that are sensible of the things that are done towards them. For the dead neither know nor are sensible at all, and so 'the dead' who do not feel are used to be put for persons that know not, but' the quick,' who are sensible, for those that know. Therefore to 'go down quick into hell' is for persons to sin knowing and being sensible of it. It goes on; *This is the portion of an ungodly man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty*. Which same' portion' and' inheritance' he thereupon gives, when he adds;

Ver. 14. *If his children be multiplied, it is in the sword; and his grandchildren shall not be satisfied with bread.*

20. The title of the 'ungodly' is not without meaning given to heretics, who through the erroneousness of false doctrine are far removed from the knowledge of the truth; whom in the words following he calls 'violent' as well, as being persons who set themselves to wrest by violence to a wrong meaning the sentences of Holy Scripture containing right articles of doctrine. And so they are 'violent' if not in the goods of men, at all events in the senses of precepts. But the 'sons of violent men', are the follower's of heretics, who while they consent to their error, are as It were engendered by their preaching. But while being' multiplied' 'they shall' be in the sword,' for though now they grow up in an immense multitude in a ruinous liberty, yet they are smitten by the sentence of the Judge to come, Whence the Lord saith by Moses, My sword shall devour flesh. For 'the sword of God devours flesh,' because in the Final Judgment His sentence destroys those, who are carnally wise, On which point it is to be made out why it should be said that the wicked' receive this portion' and inheritance of theirs from the Almighty? Yet to those taking a right view it is plain that though they had it from themselves to act unjustly, yet it comes before the Equity Above, what

is unjustly done justly to judge; so that the sentence of God should orderly appoint for punishment those whom their ill-ordered conduct drew into sin, Concerning whom it is fitly subjoined; And his grandchildren shall not be satisfied with bread.

21. For 'the grandchildren' of Heretics are they that are born by the preaching of children in error. And these 'bread fails to satisfy;' because while in the provender of the sacred Word they seek to perceive more than they take in, they are ever a hungering to the knowledge of the truth; and the preachings of instruction, which they are busy to seek for questioning, they are incapable of having for refreshment. But because from the number of these heretics some Holy Church gathers in, some she leaves obstinate in their wickedness, it is thereupon added;

Ver. 15. *Those that remain of him shall be buried in death.*

22. Doubtless' the persons left' of that tribe of heretics 'are buried in death,' for whereas they return not to the light of truth, assuredly they are sunk down in everlasting punish. ment by an earthly perception. And because it is sometimes the case, that whilst the leader of the common herds in error is carried off to punishment, the common herds that were led astray are new set to a knowledge of the truth, and then the persons under them return to true knowledge, when these persons are brought to eternal punishments, who had been wrongly set over them, it is fitly added;

And his widows shall not weep.

23. Whom do we take for 'his widows' but the subject common herds left deserted for their happiness by his death? For oftentimes, as has been said, when the preacher of error is carried off to everlasting punishments, his subject multitudes are brought back to the grace of a true acquaintance. For these multitudes the wicked preacher was set over like a husband, because the seducer of the soul did cleave joined to them for the worse. Or, indeed, 'the widows do not weep,' because whilst continuing in their erring

belief, whereas they hold their preacher to have been holy, they are beguiled by a deceitful hope, that they should not mourn. It follows;

Ver. 16, l7. *Though he heap up silver as the earth, and prepare raiment as the mud; he may prepare, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.*

24. Silver is used to be interpreted the clearness of sacred Writ, as it is elsewhere said; *The words of the Lord are pure wo1.ds: as silver tried in a furnace of earth*. [Ps. 12, 6] And because there are those that long to have the Word of God not inwardly in the exemplifying but externally in the displaying, therefore it is said by the Prophet, All they that are clothed in silver a1.e cut off, being those, who by the word of God do not fill themselves with the interior refreshment, but array themselves in the outward exhibition. Hence their ‘silver,’ i.e. the word of heretics, is compared to ‘earth,’ because touching the subject of Holy Writ, that there may be something that they know, they toil and strain from the coveting of earthly applause. And these, too, ‘prepare raiment as the mud,’ because they make up testimonies of Holy Scripture loosely and bedaubingly, whereby they would defend themselves, He shall ‘prepare’ indeed, ‘but the just shall put them on,’ because the person who is full of right faith, which is used to be accounted to the Saints for righteousness, gathers together those selfsame testimonies of Holy Writ, which the heretic adduces, and therefrom he charges home the obstinacy of that one’s error. For whereas they fetch against us the testimonies of the Sacred Law, they bring with them unto us that whereby they may be defeated. And hence David representing a type of the Lord, but Goliath the pride of Heretics, they spake that in deeds, which we are disclosing in words. Thus Goliath came to battle with a sword, but David with a shepherd’s scrip, but David, defeating that same Goliath, with his own sword slew him. Which thing we likewise do, who by His deigning have obtained to be made members of the

promised David [al. ‘the promised members of David.’]. For when heretics full of pride, and advancing sentences of Holy Writ, we defeat by the same words and sentences, which they bring forward, we as it were behead Goliath in his pride with his own sword. And so ‘the just puts on those same garments,’ which the unjust man ‘prepares,’ because the holy man employs in the service of truth those same sentences by which the bad man strives to exhibit himself a master of learning in opposition to the truth.

25. *And the innocent shall divide the silver*. For ‘the innocent to divide the silver’ is to set forth the revelations of the Lord piece by piece and with discrimination, and to apply to each individual what may be proportionately suitable. For the Word of the Lord which is here entitled ‘silver’ or ‘garments,’ this same is elsewhere denominated ‘spoils.’ Which the Psalmist likewise witnesses in the way of comparison, saying, *I rejoice at Thy Word as one that findeth great spoils*. [Ps. 119, 162] Which spoils are so called for this reason, because on the Gentile world passing over to the faith of the Lord, the Jews are spoiled of the Sacred Oracles with which they had been invested. And of this division of the silver or of spoils it is elsewhere said, *Benjamin is a ravening wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoils*. [Gen. 49, 27] By which words, no doubt, the Apostle Paul is designated, as being descended from the stock of Benjamin, who ‘in the morning devoured the prey,’ because in his first beginnings seizing upon all the believers he was able, he glutted his own cruelty. But ‘in the evening he divided the spoils,’ because afterwards being made a believer, he portioned out the sacred oracles by interpreting them.

26. Though this’ silver,’ which’ the innocent divides,’ may be understood in another sense as well. For Heretics, that they may be easily able to recommend what is wrong, mix with their statements things that are right, that the minds of those that hear them by right views they may attract,

and ‘by wrong ones wound. Which same persons, because, in the precepts of God, they are pied with a sound and unsound mode of speech, are, in the Gospel, well represented by the appearance of the’ ten lepers,’ with whose healthy colour whereas an evil whiteness is intermixed, by this excessive whiteness they are rendered foul. Hence we are warned, *Not to think of ourselves more than we ought to think, but to think soberly*. [Rom. 12, 3] And these too, because they do not as yet love either God, of Whom they entertain wrong notions, nor yet their neighbour, from whom they are separated, are opposed to the precepts of the Decalogue, and therefore for the beseeching of the Lord they come ten in number. Now for this cause, that they mixed what is sound with what is unsound, they are pied with a difference of colour; but because they offended in His precepts, they call Him that whereby they had so offended, saying, *Jesus, Preceptor*; and hereby they directly obtained to be healed. And so because the Catholic makes out the things that are thought rightly, or that are thought wrongly by them, ‘the innocent divideth the silver,’ i.e. distinguisheth what may have been by them delivered either with wholesome or baneful effect. I t goes on;

Ver. 18. *He buildeth his house as a moth.*

27. ‘The moth builds a house’ for itself by corrupting. Nor could the heretic have been shewn by a better comparison, who makes a dwelling for his misbelief no where else save in the minds which he has corrupted, who also engages for his followers to be free from everlasting fire. For he pledges to them ‘the refreshment of eternal rest, but his words ‘have no solidity, because they lack the fulness of truth. Whence it is added, *And as the keeper he maketh a booth*. For’ the booth of the keeper’ is not set firm by any foundation, but the time passing it is directly destroyed. And the rest promised by heretics is destroyed together with the time, in that after this life it is not found at all. And because oftentimes Heretics in contempt of the Church Universal are supported by the patronage of the powerful ones

of the world, and the rich do not cease to aid them with all the countenance of active agency that they are empowered with, that identical person also, whoever he be, that is made to swell against the face of his Maker by temporal good things, is now touched by the sentence of the holy man, and from the particular ruin of heretics, the discourse is drawn off to a general characterizing of all the self-exalted, when it is added;

Ver. 19. *When the rich man sleepeth, he shall take nothing away with him, he shall open his eyes and shall find nought.*

28. In harmony with which same sentence the Psalmist saith, *All the foolish in heart are troubled, they have slept their sleep, and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands*. [Ps. 75, 5] For in order that the rich after death may 'find something in their hand,' it is told to them before death, in whose hands they should place their riches. Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye .fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations. When the rich man sleepeth, he shall take nothing away with him. His goods when he dieth he would take away with him, if whilst he lived, at the voice of him that besought him, he had taken them home to himself; for all things earthly, which we part with by keeping, we keep by bestowing; our patrimony which retained is lost, whilst paid out of hand it remains. For we cannot long continue together with our goods. Since either we by dying abandon them, or they by perishing as it were abandon us while living. And so it remains for us to manage that things doomed unreservedly to perish we may compel to pass over into a reward that does not perish.

29. But that is very much to be wondered at that is spoken, *When he sleepeth, he shall open his eyes and shall find nothing.* For in order to sleep we close our eyes, and on waking up open them. But on this point, forasmuch as man consists of soul and body, while it is called sleep of one subject, the waking of the other is shewn to view; because when the body

falls asleep in death, then the soul wakes up in a true acquaintance. And so 'the rich man sleeps, and opens his eyes,' because, when he dies in the flesh, his soul is compelled to see what it despised to foresee. Then indeed it wakes up in true acquaintance; then it sees that all is nothing that it possessed; then it finds itself empty; whereas it used to rejoice in being full of good things above the rest of the world. It' sleeps, and takes away nothing along with it,' nothing surely, of the goods that it possessed. For the sin of the goods is carried on along with it, though every thing for the sake of which sin was committed be left behind here. So then let him go now, and swell himself out with good things gotten, let him lift himself up above the rest of the world, and Pride himself in having what his neighbour has not. The time will come sooner or later that he shall awake, and then learn how empty that was which he had possessed in sleep. For it often happens to the needy whilst sleeping that he sees himself lich in a dream, and on the strength of those acquisitions uplifts his mind, is overjoyed that he has what he had not, and now counts to be disdainful of those whom ,it grieved him to be disdained by; but that suddenly waking up he is grieved that he has woke up, in that meanwhile though but while sleeping he possessed the semblance of riches. For he groans directly under the weight of poverty, and is wrung by the straitness of his indigence, and this so much the worse, as though but for the shortest space of time he was even thus emptily lich. Thus, thus, too surely is it with the rich ones of this world, who are bloated with good things acquired. They have no knowledge to do right by their abundance; as persons asleep .they are rich; but on waking up they find their poverty, because they 'bring nothing with them' to that Judgment, that is calculated to remain, and in proportion as they are now lifted up the higher for a brief space, the more heavily they groan against themselves for everlasting. So then let him say, *He shall open his eyes, and shall find nothing*. Because he then 'opens those eyes' to punishments, which here he

kept closed to mercy. He 'opens his eyes' and he 'finds not' the fruit of pity, in that he kept them shut here, when he did 'find' it. Those also are slow in 'opening their eyes,' who, as Wisdom is witness, are described as going in the time of their condemnation to say, *What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with, our vaunting brought us? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by.* That the things which they possessed were worthless and transitory they now learn by their loss, which same, so long as they were theirs, seemed to their foolish hearts at once great and lasting. It was late that the rich man 'opened his eyes,' when he saw Lazarus at rest, whom he scorned to see lying at his door. He understood There the thing that here to do he refused: by his condemnation he was forced to learn what it was that he lost, when he did not own his neighbour being in want. Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 20. *Want shall take hold of him like water; a tempest shall overwhelm him in the night.*

30. Let us look now at the want of the rich man as burning, whose abundance was so great as feasting. For he says, *Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame.* [Luke 16, 24] By which same words it is not this that is made known to us, that there in that excessive burning a single drop of water is then asked for as a sufficiency of refreshment, but that he who has sinned by abundance should there be consumed by a want burning to excess. For we see in the words of the rich man, resulting from the exactest judgment of God, how proportionate a punishment answered such sin. For moved by want, he is there driven to beg for the very least, who here, moved by covetousness, went so far as to refuse the very least. What can be paid back more exactly, what more strictly? He begged a drop of water, who refused crumbs of bread; and so 'want taketh hold of him like water.' That want is then not

unsuitably likened to water, because there is that tormenting in hell, which, as swallowing up those it receives in the depths below, is used to be denoted by the title of a' lake.' Whence it is delivered by the Prophet in the voice of mankind, *My life is fallen into the lake*. [Lam. 3, 53] But by the triumphing of those that are escaped it is sung*, O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee and Thou hast healed me. O Lord, Thou hast b1'ough't up my sold from the grave: Thou hast kept me from them that go down into the lake*. [Ps. 30, 2. 3.]

31. A tempest shall overwhelm him in the flight. What in this place does he call' the night,' but the hidden time of sudden departing? And by the name of 'tempest' he represents the whirlwind of the Judgment. Which the Psalmist also testifies, in the words, *Our God shall come in state, our God, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and round about Him a mighty tempest*. [Ps. 50, 3] Of which same 'tempest' Wisdom also saith by Solomon; *I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind.* [Prov. 1, 26. 27.] And because the very ignorance of the coming departure is itself called 'Night,' 'in the night a tempest shall overwhelm him,' i.e. the whirlwind of Divine Judgment, whilst he is ignorant, shall seize upon Him. For it is hence that Truth saith by Itself, *But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready. For in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh*. [Mal. 24, 43. 44.] Hence also it is spoken against the 'evil servant;' But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. Hence Paul says to the disciples, *But ye, brethren, are not in*

darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light and the children of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. [1 Thess. 5, 4. 5.] Hence to the rich man, 'giving loose to pride, it is said by the voice of God, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* [Luke 12, 20] In the night he is described as giving up his soul, who whilst not seeing death beforehand is carried off in darkness of the heart. Thus then he saith, *A tempest shall overwhelm him in the night*. For because he is not minded to do the good things that he sees, he is caught by the tempest of his destruction which he seeth not. Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 2 *The scorching wind shall carry him off, and take him away.*

32. Who is in this place called the 'scorching wind' but the evil spirit, who stirs up the flames of divers lusts in the heart, that he may drag it to an eternity of punishments? And so 'the scorching wind' is said to 'carry off' any bad men, because the plotter, the evil spirit, who inflames a man whilst living to evil, 'drags him when dying to torments. For that 'the scorching wind' is wont to be meant for the unclean spirit, who by the breath of evil suggesting kindles the hearts of the wicked to earthly desires, the prophet Jeremiah testifies, saying, *A pot kindled I see, and the face thereof by the face of the North*. [Jer. 1, 13] For 'the pot kindled' is the heart of man boiling with the heatings of worldly concerns, and with the restlessness of desires. Which is kindled by 'the face of the North,' i.e. set on fire by the suggestions of the devil. For that very being is used to be called by the title of 'the North,' who said, *I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds*. [Is. 14, 13] Thus by the burning effect of this scorching wind the mind of each one of the Elect is cooled down, when the heat of evil inclinations is extinguished therein, and the flame of carnal desires turned to ice. And hence Holy Church in the praises of her spouse cries out with exultation, *I*

sat down under the shadow of him, whom I had desired. [Cant. 2, 3] Of the abatement of this heat it is said to her by Isaiah, by promise of the Lord, *Instead of the ground willow shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle tree.* [Is. 55, 13] For ‘instead of the ground willow there comes up in her the fir-tree,’ when in the heart of the Saints, instead of the sunkenness of earthly thought, the elevation of heavenly contemplation rises up. Now the nettle is altogether of a fiery nature. But the myrtle is said to be of cooling virtue, and therefore’ instead of the nettle there comes up the myrtle tree,’ when the minds of the righteous are brought from the irritation and heat of bad habits to coolness and quietness of the thoughts, while they now no longer seek earthly things, while they extinguish the flames of the flesh by heavenly aspirations.

33. In reference too to this cooling of the soul, which is given from heaven, it is said to Mary, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee* [Luke 1, 35]; though on this point, by the term of’ the overshadowing,’ either Nature of God to be made Incarnate might have been denoted. For a shadow is followed by light and body. Now the Lord is Light in respect of the Divine Nature, Who, by means of a soul intervening, vouchsafed in her womb in respect of human nature to become a body. And so because the Incorporeal Light was in her womb to be made corporeal, to her, who conceived the incorporeal for corporality, it is said, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*; i.e. The Incorporeal Light of the Divine Nature shall in thee take the corporeal substance of Human Nature. But now let us carry to an end what we began relating to any wicked man. Accordingly’ the scorching wind takes him away,’ in this way, viz. that him whom the evil spirit now kindles with the fire of evil concupiscence, he afterwards carries off to the flames of hell. It goes on;

And as a whirlwind shall carry him out of his place.

34. ‘The place’ of the wicked is the gratification of the life of time, and the enjoyment of the flesh. Therefore every single individual is in a manner’ carried out of his place by a whirlwind,’ when overwhelmed with affright on the Last Day he is severed from all his gratifications. Of which same Last Day it is directly added with justice,

Ver. 22. *For He shall let loose upon him, and not spare.*

35. God, as often as He chastens the sinner by smiting him, for this reason’ lets loose’ the scourge, that He may ‘spare.’ But when by smiting He brings his life to an end whilst remaining in sin, He ‘lets loose’ the scourge, but never at all ‘spares.’ For the Same, Who ‘let loose’ the scourge that He might ‘spare,’ one day ‘lets it loose’ with this view that He may not spare. For in this life the Lord busies Himself so much the more that He may spare, in proportion as He scourges the more in awaiting; as He Himself saith to John by the voice of the Angel, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten* [Rev. 3, 19]; and as it is elsewhere spoken, *For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth*. [Hab. 12, 6] But reversely it is written of the scourge of condemnation, *The wicked is taken in the work of his own hands* [Ps. 9, 16]. Of whom the Lord saith by Jeremiah, when He sees the multitudes transgressing irreclaimably, whom He now no longer regards as sons under discipline, but as enemies under unmitigated scourging, *For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel chastisement.* [Jer. 30, 14] And what is said here, *and not spare*, is there likewise brought out in other words; *Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable*. [ver. 15] Whence the Elect always make this provision, that they should return to righteousness before the wrath of the Judge is inextinguishably kindled, lest being caught by the last stroke, they find life ended to them, together with sin, For the rod will then do away with the sin, when it alters the life, since whosesoever ways it does not change, his doings it does not atone for. Therefore all smiting from God is either a purifying of the present

life in us, or a commencement of the punishment that follows. For with reference to those who profit by the scourge it is written, *Who framest pain in the commandment* [Ps. 94, 20]. For in that case when the wicked man is scourged and amended, to the commandment he would not give ear; to the pain he does. And so there is ‘pain framed in the commandment’ to him, who by pain as it were in the stead of the commandment is kept back from evil practices, But touching these persons to whom scourges are a curse, not a clearance, it is said, *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction*. [Jer. 5, 3] With these, their scourges commence in this life, and last on in everlasting smiting, Whence the Lord saith by Moses, *For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell* [Deut. 32, 22]. For so far as regards the present smiting it is rightly said, *A fire is kindled in Mine anger*. But as regards the eternal damnation, it is immediately added with propriety, *And shalt burn unto the lowest hell*. Though by some persons that is used to be alleged, which is written, *God judgeth not twice upon the same thing* [Nah. 1, 9. LXX]. Which persons, howsoever, do not pay regard to this that is spoken by the Prophet of the wicked; *And crush them with double confusion* [Jer. 17, 18]. And that, which is written elsewhere; *Jesus in saving the People out of Egypt, a second time destroyed them that believed not* [Jude 5]. To which persons, however, if we yield assent, that any sin cannot be twice visited with punishment, this must be ,judged of those persons smitten for sin and dying in their sin, that their smiting begun here is completed there, that so to the unreformed there should be one and the same scourge, which begins here in time, but is consummated in eternal punishments, that to those that wholly refuse to be amended, the dealing of present scourges now should be the beginning of the torments to ensue. And so *God shall let loose upon him, and not spare.* It goes on;

Fleeing he shall flee out of His hand,

36. For he ‘flees out of the hand’ of the Smiter, who amends the wickedness of his behaviour; or otherwise, because in Holy Writ the hand is used to be taken for acting, he ‘flees from the hand of the smiter,’ who, whilst he marks the destruction of the wicked man, forsakes the path of wickedness. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 23. *He shall bind up his hands over him.*

37. For to ‘bind up the hands’ is to establish the practices of his life in uprightness, Whence Paul too saith; *Wherefore lift up the loosed hands, and the unstrung knees* [Heb. 12, 12]. While, then, they behold the destruction of another, they are made to turn back to the conscience, to remind themselves of their own, and by the very same cause whereby one man is carried to torments, another is freed from torments, And so ‘he binds up his hands over him,’ because he observes in the punishment of another what to be afraid of; and whilst he sees one living in transgression so smitten, he binds fast his own too loose practices with the sinews of righteousness. And so it is brought to pass that he who, being a bad man, whilst living, had drawn numbers into transgression by the delightfulness of sin, in dying recovers some from transgression by the terribleness of torments. Which same the Psalmist bears witness to be of advantage to the good as well, saying, *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash has hands in the blood of sinners*. [Ps. 58, 10] For ‘in the blood of sinners,’ when dying, ‘the righteous do wash their hands,’ because, when their punishment is seen, the life of the person seeing it is cleansed. It goes on;

And he shall hiss upon him, beholding his place.

38. What is expressed in the hissing, but the straining of wonderment? But if in the hissing there is some other meaning ought, when the sinner dies, these that witness his death draw tight the mouth in hissing, in that they are converted to those spiritual words, which they had contemned, so

that they henceforth begin to believe and to teach, what before, while they perceived the wicked man thriving, they need not to believe. For it very often happens that the mind of the weak is the more unsteadied from the hearing of the truth, as it sees the despisers of the truth flourishing; but when just vengeance takes away the unjust, it keeps others away from wickedness. Whence it is said by Solomon; When the pestilent man is punished, the little one will be wiser. Thus the holy man after he had adequately filled up the punishments of the men of power that are lifted up in the world, again directs his words to the pride of heretics, who are lifted up in speech, saying ;

Chap. xxviii. ver. 1. *The silver hath the beginning of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.*

39. In silver the power of speaking, in gold brightness of life or of wisdom is used to be denoted. And because heretics are so filled with pride for the brilliancy of their speaking, that they are not based firmly by any authority of the sacred books, (which books are for speaking like a kind of veins of silver to us, because from those identical books we derive the spring and source of our speaking,) he recalls them to the pages of sacred authority, that if they have a desire to speak in a true way, they may from that source draw forth what to say. And he saith, *The silver hath the beginning of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.*

As if he said in plain words; 'He that is fitting himself for the words of true preaching, the originals of the cases he must of necessity derive from the sacred page, so as to bring round every thing that he speaks to a foundation of divine authority, and in that set firm the edifice of his own speaking. For, as we before said, oftentimes heretics, whilst they are eager to prop up what is bad of their own, broach things which assuredly are not maintained in the page of the sacred books. And hence the great Preacher admonishes his disciple, saying, *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to*

thy trust, avoiding profane novelties of speaking [1 Tim. 6, 20], for whereas heretics long to be extolled as if for excellency of wit, they as it were bring out new things which are not maintained in the old books of the ancient Fathers, and thus it follows, that whilst they desire to appear wise, they scatter seeds of foolishness to their wretched hearers.

40. And it is well added; *And to the gold there is a place, where they fine it*. As if he said in plain terms; 'The true wisdom of believers, which has the Church Universal for its place, undergoes tribulation by you persecuting her, but from all the dross of sins by the fire of your persecution she is purified.' Whence it is written; *For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity*. [Ecclus. 2, 5] In which passage this too may be appropriately taken for the meaning, that for their foolish suffering heretics might seem to be rebuked. For oftentimes for the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, they suffer much, and by those same sufferings they look for themselves to become His martyrs. To which persons it is now said by the voice of the holy man; and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it. For according to that which has been already said even before us, he that suffers out of the unity of the Church, punishments he may suffer, but a Martyr he cannot be made; for 'to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.' What then, ye heretics, say ye to these things? Ye are minded to be 'fined' by the afflicting of the flesh, nay even by martyrdom, but the place where ye must be fined, ye know not. Hear ye what is spoken by the voice of the holy preacher. 'To the gold there is a place, where they fille it.' So then, seek ye this 'place for the fining,' this furnace, wherein the gold may be fitly purged, find ye out.

41. There is one Church, .in which he that may have attained to be fined, may likewise be purified from all the dross of sins. If for the sake of God ye undergo aught of bitterness, if aught of tribulation, being without her pale, ye can only be burnt, ye cannot be purified. Let Jeremiah tell, let him tell in

what way the fire of your fining is void of all efficacy. *The finer melteth in vain; for their wickednesses are not done away* [Jer. 6, 29]. See how the fire externally melting at once administers a punishment of hard suffering, and yet does not clear off the sin of misbelief; it both furnishes torments of cruel punishments, and does not cause additions of good merits. Moreover the fire of this fining which is undergone out of the Catholic Church, how utterly it is void of all efficacy the Apostle Paul instructs us, when he says, *And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*. [1 Cor. 13, 3] For some think wrong things touching God, and others hold what is right about the Creator, but do not maintain unity with their brethren; the one are sundered by erroneousness of faith, and the others by the commission of schism. And hence in the very first part of the Decalogue the sins of both sides are checked, seeing that it is said by the voice of God, *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*. [Mark 12, 30. 31. Deut. 6, 5] And it is immediately added, *And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. For whoso imagines what is wrong about God, surely it is evident that he does not 'love God.' But he who while he entertains right notions about God is divided from the unity of the Holy Church, it is plain that he does not love his neighbonr, whom he refuses to have for his fellow.

42. Whosoever, then, is divided from this unity of the Church our Mother, either through heresy in entertaining wrong notions concerning God, or by the erroneousness of schism in not loving his neighbour, is bereft of the grace of that charity, concerning which Paul saith what we have before given; *And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*. As if he expressed himself in plain utterance; 'Without the bounds of its place, the fire of fining being applied to me only afflicts me with torment, and does not purify me by its cleansing.' This place all they that are lovers of holy peace seek with

heartiest endeavours, this on seeking they find, this finding they keep, knowing the remission of sin, as to where, or when, or to what sort it is vouchsafed. For where is it, save in the bosom of our Catholic Mother? When, but before the day of coming departure? Because, *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*. [2 Cor. 6, 2] And, *Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near*. [Is. 55, 6] To what sort of persons, but to the converted, who after the imitating of little children are fashioned by humility as their mistress? To whom it is said; *Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven*. [Matt. 19, 14] And, *Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*. [Matt. 18, 3] And therefore, because there are no true martyrs made saving in the Catholic Church, it is rightly said, *To the gold there is a place where they fine it*. Because the soul would not be made bright in the radiance of everlasting beauty, except, so to say, it were first burnt here in the workshop of charity.

43. Moreover, we are to consider that there are some whom Almighty God by His secret counsel preserving in innocency from their very beginnings promotes to the topmost heights of virtuous attainments, that, as their age increases, both numerousness of years and loftiness of merits should simultaneously advance in them. But others abandoning in their outset He suffers to go with bad habits fermenting by headlong ways. . Yet for the most part even these He has regard to, and for the following after Him He kindles them with the fire of holy love, and the itchings of bad propensities engrained in their hearts He converts into a fervour of virtue, and they are the more set on fire to the desire of beseeching the pitifulness of God, in proportion as they are the more ashamed at the recollection of their own wickedness; as it often happens, that in the conflict of the fight the soldier, who is placed before the eyes of his leader, basely yields to the

enemy's valour, and that whilst he powerlessly turns his back he is struck; yet nevertheless being ashamed of this very thing that he has done [2 Mss. 'yeilded.'] disgracefully before his leader's eyes, from the mere sense of shame he gathers greater force; and afterwards executes deeds of Prowess, to so high a degree that he may at once achieve present credit of his valour, and cover past disgrace of weakness. In a like way, these persons are sometimes more actively established in the service of God by consequence of past weakness, and such persons for the keeping of His commandments both the desire of things future draws on, and the remembrance of things past urges forward, that on the one side affection to that which is to come should stimulate, and on the other shame for that which is past spur on. Which same however, while the enemies of the Church see to be endowed with the highest virtues, and in their present life cannot any way find out that whereby they may derogate from their merit, they set themselves to impeach them of the past, as the Manichaean assails our Moses, in whom he endeavours to soil with the sin of a past homicide the grace of subsequent virtuous attainments; in whom he heeds not how patient he was afterwards to endure, but how precipitate he was before to strike. Such adversaries as these blessed Job encountering with the exactest eye of observation, after that he said, *Silver hath the beginning of its veins; and to gold there is a place where they fine it*; he justly added;

Iron is taken out of the earth.

44. Heretics are used to pride themselves against us by the self-priding of their righteousness, and to boast high their practices with the swelling of ostentation, and ourselves, as we have said, they impeach either for being or having been bad persons. Accordingly in a most humble confession, and in a truthful defence against those, the holy man speaks, saying, *Iron is taken out of the earth*. As if he said in plain speech; 'men of strength, who by the sharpest swords of their tongues are become iron in this pitched battle of the

defending of the faith, were one time but' earth 'in the lowest sphere of actions.' For to man on his sinning it was spoken; *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return*. But 'iron is taken out of the earth,' when the hardy champion of the Church is separated from an earthly course of conduct, which he before maintained. Accordingly he ought not to be contemned in any thing whatever, that he was, who has already begun to be that which he was not. Was not Matthew found in the earth, who, involved in earthly matters, served the business of the receipt of custom? But having been taken out of the earth, he was strengthened into the forcibleness of iron, in that by his tongue, as by the sharpest sword, the Lord in the enforcing of the Gospel pierced the hearts of unbelievers. And he that before was weak and contemptible by his earthly occupations, was afterwards made strong for heavenly preachings. Hence it is yet further subjoined;

And the stone being melted with heat is turned into brass.

45. Then is 'the stone dissolved with heat,' when the heart that is hard and cold to the fire of divine love is touched by that same fire of divine love, and melted in the glowing warmth of the Spirit, that to the life that follow's it should bum with the heat of its longings, which life on hearing of before, it remained uninfluenced. By the power of which same heat, he is at once softened down to love and invigorated to practice, that as before he was hard in the love of the world, so he should afterwards give himself out strong unto the love of God, and what he declined to give ear to before, he should henceforth begin both to believe and to preach. And so, the stone being dissolved with heat is turned into brass, because the hardened mind, being melted by the fire of love from Above, is changed to true strength. So that the sinner that was before unmoved should afterwards be made at once strong in respect of authority, and sounding in respect of preaching. Which is well spoken by Isaiah; *They that trust in the Lord shall change their strength*. [Is. 40, 31] We 'change our strength,' when being converted, we

eschew the present scene of things with as much power and might as we before were seeking it. But because the foregoing life is unfairly by adversaries counted to the character of Catholics, it is rightly added;

Ver. 3. *He hath set a time to darkness, and Himself vieweth the end of all and everyone.*

46. He hath Himself 'set a time to the darkness,' i.e. bounds to the wicked, where they should cease to be wicked. Whence it is said to them by the Apostle; Ye-were sometimes darkness, but 1l0W are ye light in the Lord. Like as to the other disciples as well the same great teacher saith, The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore put off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day. Hence also in the Song of Songs on the coming of the Church it is said, Who is she that cometh forth as the morning in rising?

For fitly is the Church described by being compared with 'the morning,' in that, by the knowledge of the faith she is changed from the darkness of sins to be in the bright light of righteousness. By the term of 'all and every one,' he would have both the Elect and the damned to be comprehended. For God both in doing and ordering what is good, yet not doing what is bad, but what by the wicked is done Himself so regulating that the things should not come forth irregularly, 'vieweth the end of all and every one,' and bears all things patiently, and beholds the goal of the Elect, how that from evil they are changed to good. He sees, too, the end of the damned, how that for bad practice they are dragged to a punishment worthy of them. He saw the end of Saul when persecuting, wherein prostrated on the earth he should say, Lora, what wilt Thou have me to do? He saw the end of the seeming-obedient disciple, that for the guilty deed he had committed he should tie his throat with a noose, and both punish himself when guilty of sin, and by thus punishing, betray himself the worse. He saw the Ninevites transgressing, but beheld the end of the transgressing in the repentance of

the reformed. He saw likewise Sodom transgressing, but He beheld the end of the burning of lust in the fire of hell. He saw the end of the Gentile world, how that whilst occupied by the darkness of iniquities, it should be one day brightened with the light of faith. He also saw the end of Judaea, how that from that light of faith, which it held, it should blind itself with the darkness of hardened unbelief. Whence it is yet further added with just applicability, Ver. 4. *The stone likewise of darkness, and the shadow of death, the torrent divides from the people on travel.*

47. What was that people of the Jews, hard by unbelief, that refused to behold by faith that Author of life, whom it foretold by prophecy, but 'a stone of darkness?' because it proved at once hard by cruelty, and clouded by unbelief. Which same is also called by another term 'the shadow of death.' For a shadow is drawn such and of the same sort as the outlines were of that object, from which it is derived, And who is designated by the name of' death' but the devil? Of whom in a kind of mode of representation by his minister' it is said, *And his name was Death*. [Rev. 6, 8] Of whom that people was a shadow, because in following his wickedness, it presented in itself a semblance of him. But what is named by the title of the 'torrent,' save that fire that issues forth from the sight of the Awful Judge in the final Inquest, and divides the Elect and the damned? Whence too it is said by the Prophet, *A fiery and rapid stream came forth from before Him.* [Dan. 7, 10]

48. But what People is 'on travel' in this world, but that which hastening to the inheritance of the Elect knows well that it has its native country in the heavenly world, and expects that it will there find its own the more, in proportion as here it reckons all things that pass away to be unconnected with itself? Thus the 'pilgrim People' is the number of all the Elect, who accounting this life a species of exile to themselves, pant with the whole bent of the heart after their native country Above; of which persons Paul saith, *And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For*

they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. [Heb. 11, 13. 14.] This pilgrim state that same Apostle also was undergoing when he said, *Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we go pilgrims* [*peregrinamur*] *away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight*. [2 Cor. 5, 6. 7.] The woes of this pilgrim state he was in haste to get quit of when he said, *Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ*; [Phil. 1, 23] and again, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*. [ver. 21] The burthen of this pilgrimage the Psalmist felt lying heavy upon him, when he said; *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in ,the tents of Kedar! My soul hath been much a sojourner*. [Ps. 120, 5. 6.] From this he was panting to be extricated as speedily as possible, when inflamed with heavenly aspirations he said, *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God!* [Ps. 42, 2] But this desire they are strangers to, who rivet their heart on earthly gratifications. For whilst they love only the things that are visible, surely the invisible things, even if they believe them to exist, they do not love, in that whilst they follow themselves too much with the outward following, even in the interior they become carnal. Thus both people run together in this life, but do not together attain to the life everlasting, because, the stone of darkness and the shadow of death the torrent divides from the people on travel. As if he said in plain speech, ‘Those whom in this present time either infidelity makes blind, or cruelty makes hard, the fiery stream that issues from before the Judge Eternal doth then sever from the People of the Elect, that thus from the company of good men the fire of the strict Inquest should part those, whom the darkness of evil habits makes blind in their lusts.

49. Perhaps by the designation of the ‘torrent,’ the actual whatering of holy preaching may be understood, according to that, that is said by Solomon; *The eye that sneereth at his father and despiseth the travail of his mother, lo the ravens from the torrents shall pick it out*. [Prov. 30, 17] For

bad men, while they find fault with the judgments of God, do ‘sneer at their father,’ and heretics of all sorts whilst in mocking they contemn the preaching of Holy Church, and her fruitfulness, what else is this but that they ‘despise the travail of their mother?’ whom we not unjustly call the mother of them as well, because from the same they come forth, who speak against the same, as John bears witness, who says, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us*. [1 John 2, 19] But ‘the ravens from the torrents come,’ when the true Preachers come forth for the defence of Holy Church from the streams of the Sacred Books. Which same also are rightly termed ‘ravens,’ because they never pride themselves on the light of their righteousness, but by the grace of humility confess in themselves the blackness of sins. Whence too, it is spoken by the Church of Elect souls, I am black, but comely. And John says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. Which same ravens, no doubt, ‘pick out the eyes’ of him that ‘sneereth,’ because they overcome the aim of bad and froward men. Thus by this testimony, if here as well ‘the torrent’ is to be taken for preaching; the stone of darkness, and shadow of death, the torrent divides from the people on travel; because the preaching of the Saints gives over the hardened minds of the lost, and betakes itself to the pious hearts of the lowly. Hence it is yet further subjoined,

Those whom the foot of the needy man forgot, a1~d the inaccessible ones.

50. What other in this place is taken to be the needy man, saving Him concerning Whom it is said by Paul, *Though He was rich, yet .for your sakes He became poor*. [2 Cor. 8, 9] The ‘feet’ of which ‘needy man’ were the holy Preachers, by the presence of which same compassing the Gentile world, He went round about the whole globe. Of whom it is said by the Prophet, *And I will walk in them*. [Lev. 26, 12] Was not he His foot, who

whilst held fast in fetters, said, *For which I am an ambassador in bonds?* [2 Cor. 6, 16. Eph 6, 20] But those, who proved themselves 'a shadow of death and a stone of darkness,' 'the foot of the needy Man forgot,' because in the very outset of the new born Church, whereas the holy Apostles were minded to have preached the kingdom of heaven to Judaea, seeing that they profited for nothing at all, they went off for the preaching to the Gentiles, as they themselves say in their Acts; *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it ,from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* [Acts 13, 23] Concerning whom also it is said by the Psalmist, *The mountains shall be carried into the heart of the sea* [Ps. 46, 2]; because the Apostles, being thrust off by Judaea, were 'carried' into this scene of the Gentile world. Who then are those, that by unbounded hardness and from dimsightedness of heart, like a kind of' stone of darkness and the shadow of death,' are divided from the People of the Saints going on travel, saving those whom' the foot of the needy Man forgot,' i.e. whom the Preachers of the Lord, poor as He was, that is, in respect of human nature, abandoned on account of the swelling of their pride; and those they wholly forgot, whilst they transferred the seeds of their preaching to the getting fruit of the Gentiles only? Whom moreover he rightly calls' inaccessible' also, because while they were hardened in their infidelity, they refused to give the words of life access to their heart. But this Judaea which grows thus hardened, whether what she was for 1ong, or what she underwent afterwards, let us listen to. It goes on;

Ver. 6. *The earth from which bread arose, is overturned in its place by fire.*

51. Judaea was wont to give bread, in that she used to set before men the words of the Law. Which same Law because the children of perdition could now no longer understand and interpret, the prophet Jeremiah bewails in the Lamentations, saying, *The young children asked bread, and there was no*

man to break it unto them [Lam 4, 4]; but this 'earth is overturned in its place with fire,' because on beholding the miracles of the faithful it consumed itself with the firebrand of envy. For because envy is always used to be engendered from pride, she 'perished in her place by fire,' who for this reason burned with envy, because she did not abandon pride. And so 'the earth, which first had bread, was afterwards overturned by fire,' because the Synagogue, which set before men the commandments of God in the Law, by persecuting the new-born Church consumed itself with the fire of envy. Was it not in flames with the brands of its jealousy when on seeing the miracles of our Redeemer; it said by certain of its own, *What do we? for this Man doeth many miracles?* [John 11, 47] Or, surely, *Ye see that we gain nothing; yea, the whole world goeth after Him*. [ib. 12, 19] They saw that whereby they should have been converted, and they were thereby rendered the more froward. They sought to stifle Him, Whom they beheld give life to the dead. They held the Law in the mouth, but persecuted the Author of the Law. Therefore *the earth, from which bread arose, was overturned in its place by fire*. Because Judaea had in her own self first the Law that should refresh, and afterwards envy that should consume her. For the describing of whom it is further added,

Ver. 6. *The stones of it are the place of sapphire, and her clods gold.*

52. The proclaim of the glory going before adds to the guilt of the sin following after. For the fall of every individual is of worse criminality, in proportion as before he fell he had the power to be of greater excellency. Thus let it be told of Judaea, let it be told what she was, and let the greatness of the excellencies going before grow into the heightening of the delinquencies succeeding afterwards, Her stones were the place of sapphires, arid her clods of gold, What do we understand in this place by 'gold,' but the minds of the Saints and strong ones? For in Holy Scripture 'stones' are wont to be taken sometimes on the side of bad and sometimes

on the side of good, For when a' stone' is put for insensibility, by 'stones' we have hard hearts denoted. Whence also it is said by John; *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham* [Matt. 3, 9]; who, surely, by the name of' stones' denotes the hearts of the Gentiles, at that time hard and insensible in respect of unbelief, And by the Prophet the Lord promises, saying, *And I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh*. [Ez. 11, 19] Again by 'stones' the minds of the strong ones are used to be denoted. And hence it is said to the Saints by Peter, *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood*. [1 Pet. 2, 5] And by the Prophet the Lord promises to the Church when she comes, saying, *Behold, I will lay down thy stones in order, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy bulwarks jasper, and thy gates in cut stones, and all thy borders into pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord*. [Is. 54, 11-13] For He did 'lay down in her the stones in order,' in that He distinguished the holy souls in her by the diverseness of merits, He 'laid her foundation in sapphires,' which same stones retain in themselves the likeness of the colour of the air, because the strength of the Church is firmly based in souls seeking after heavenly things. And because a jasper is of a green hue, He 'made his bulwarks of the jasper,' because they are advanced against her adversaries in the defence of Holy Church, who growing green and fresh by interior desires, do not die off by any drying up of damnable lukewarmness. But He 'set her gates in cut stones.' For those are the 'gates' of the Church, by whose life and teaching the multitude of those that believe enter into her, Who also for this reason, that they are rich in great deeds, and that-what by speaking they declare, by living they exhibit, are described to be not plain but' cut stones.' For in whosesoever life right practice is seen, there is as it were represented in those same persons what they have done. Where also embracing all the number of the Elect in a general roll, he added, *and all thy borders in*

pleasant stones. And as though we, on hearing these things, begged that he would make known those stones that he spoke of, he added, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* And therefore because from out of Judaea there were never wanting holy souls, to lead a heavenly life, it is said, he?' stones are the place of sapphires. And because with an extraordinary brightness of life and of wisdom she shone forth by faith, it is added, *and her clods gold*. What is denoted by 'clods,' but the assemblages and multitudes of the several orders? Now clods are compacted of moisture and dust; and so all they that being watered with the dew of grace confessed with a true-sighted knowledge that by the debt of death they are dust, whilst they were made to shine bright by excellency of life, lay in her like' clods of gold.' 'Clods' this earth had in the Prophets,' clods' she had in the teachers, 'clods' in the Ancient Fathers, who by an extraordinary infusion of grace kept themselves close in unanimity of profession and of practice. Therefore let him say, *And the clods of it gold*; because therein the multitude of the spiritual souls shone with greater perfection, in proportion as it bound itself up in God and its neighbour with greater unanimity.

53. But this gold was afterwards dimmed by the darkness of unbelief. Whose blackness, surely, the Prophet Jeremiah surveying laments, saying, *How is the gold become dim? how is the most fine gold changed!* For 'the gold is become dim,' in that that ancient brilliancy in them of faith and innocency, upon unbelief coming upon them, dulled itself with the night of wickedness. Therefore, what it was since we have heard, even that her stollen are the place of sapphires, now let us bear next wherefore that People so beloved of God lost these great blessings. It goes on;

Ver. 7. *The pathway of the bird it knew not, nor beheld the eyes of the vulture.*

54. Who is denoted in this place by the title of' the bird,' saving He, Who in ascending poised sky wards the fleshly body, which He took to

Him. Who furthermore is fitly designated by the title of the 'vulture' as well. For the 'vulture' while it is flies if it sees a carcase lying, drops itself down for the devouring of the carcase, and very often it is in this way taken in death, when it has come from on high after the dead animal. Rightly therefore is the Mediator between God and Man, our Redeemer, denoted by the appellation of a 'vulture,' Who whilst remaining in the loftiness of His Divine Nature, marked as it were from a kind of flight on high the carcase of our mortal being down below, and let Himself drop from the regions of heaven to the lowest places. For in our behalf He vouchsafed to become man, and while he sought the dead creature, He found death among us, Who was deathless in Himself. Now 'the eye' of this 'vulture' was the actual aiming at our Resurrection, because He Himself being dead for three days set us free from everlasting death. And so that faithless people of Judaea saw Him in the state of mortality, but how by His death He should destroy our death, it noted not. It beheld, indeed, the vulture, but' the eyes of the vulture it did not behold.' Which People, whereas it refused to regard the ways of His humility, whereby He lifted us up on high, 'knew not the pathway of the bird.' For neither did it betake itself to consider that His humility would lift us to the heavenly heights, and the aim of His death renew us to life. Therefore the pathway of the bird it knew not, nor beheld the eyes of the vulture. For though it saw Him Whom it held bound in death, it refused to see what wonderful glory by His death followed our life [al. 'what glory in our life should follow from His death']. And hence it was kindled to the cruelty of persecution likewise; it refused to receive the words of life; the Preachers of the kingdom of heaven, by forbidding, by evil entreating, by smiting it thrust from it. Which same, being so thrust off, abandoning Judaea whereto they had been sent, were dispersed for the gathering together of the Gentile world. And hence it is further added;

Ver. 8. *The children of the dealers have not trodden it, nor hath the lioness passed through it.*

55. In all the Latin copies we find the word ‘Instructors’ [*Institutores*] put down, but in the Greek we find ‘traders,’ [*negotiatores*] whereby it may be inferred that in this passage the several copyists from being ignorant put ‘instructors’ (‘institutors’) instead of ‘institores’ (‘ dealers’). For we call traders ‘institores’ on this account, that they are ‘instant in plying work.’ But both the one phrase and the other, though they disagree in utterance, yet are not at variance in meaning, because all those who instruct the practice of the faithful, carryon a spiritual dealing, that while they supply preaching to their hearers, they should receive back from them faith and right works; as where it is written touching Holy Church, She maketh fine linen, and selleth it. Concerning whom it is likewise said a little after in that place*, She perceiveth that her trading is good*. [Prov. 31, 24] Who in this place are called ‘instructors’ but the holy Prophets, who busied themselves by prophesying to instruct the ways of the Synagogue unto faith? ‘Sons’ of whom, assuredly, the holy Apostles are styled, who that they should believe God Man were begotten to the same faith by the preaching of those. Concerning whom it is said to the Church by the Psalmist; *Instead of thy fathers are born to thee children, whom thou mayest make princes over all the earth*. [Ps. 45, 16] But because the Apostles being thrust off went out from the borders of the Synagogue, it is lightly said now, *The children of the dealers have not trodden it*. Since the ‘children of the dealers’ would have ‘trodden it,’ if the holy Preachers had borne down the badness of the Synagogue with the heel of goodness. But if those same ‘dealers’ we take for the Preachers of Holy Church, then the ‘children’ of the dealers, nothing hinders us taking for the Shepherds and Teachers who followed the way of the Apostles. Which did not ‘tread’ the Synagogue, because whilst their

fathers, i.e. the Apostles, were thrust off by that Synagogue, they themselves too ceased from the calling of her.

56. Which same Synagogue' the lioness passed not by,' because Holy Church, being devoted to the assembling together of the Gentiles, never any longer employed itself upon that people of Judaea. Now the Church is lightly called' a lioness,' in that persons living amiss in bad habits, it kills with the mouth of holy preaching. Hence to the first Shepherd himself it is said as to the mouth of this lioness; *slay and eat*. [Acts 10, 13] For what is 'slain' is killed out of life, whilst that which is eaten is changed into the body of the person eating. Accordingly it is said, 'Slay and eat;' i.e. 'Kill those to the sin wherein they are living, and convert them from themselves into thine own members.' And because this Church is the body of the Lord, the Lord likewise Himself by the voice of Jacob is called' a lion' in respect of Himself, a 'lioness' by the body, when it is said to him under the likeness of Judah, *To the prey, my son, art thou gone up. Thou hast couched as a lion, and as a lioness. Who shall rouse him up?* [Gen. 49, 9] Accordingly this lioness it is never said' passed not' Judaea, but' passed not through.' For upon the Apostles preaching, in the first instance three thousand out of her, and afterwards five thousand, believed. And so the Church' passed by' the way of the Synagogue, but' passed not through,' because a few from out of her it carried off to faith, but yet that faithless people it did not utterly make extinct to misbelief. But, what we have already often said, being cast off by the infidelity of the Jews it turned away to the calling of the Gentiles. Hence it is yet further said of that same lioness;

Ver. 9. *He stretcheth out his hand to the flint; He overturneth the mountains by the roots.*

57. For 'he stretched out his hand to the flint,' because He put forth the arm of His preaching to the hardness of the Gentiles. Hence the same blessed Job, forewarned of the history of his suffering being destined to be

made known to the Gentiles, says, *Let these things be graven with an iron pen in a plate of lead, or hewn in the flint*. [Job 19, 24] But whom in this place do we understand by the' mountains' saving the powerful ones of this world, who on account of earthly substance swell themselves high? Concerning whom the Psalmist saith, *Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke* [Ps. 144, 5]; but the mountains are overturned from the roots, because, on Holy Church preaching the highest powers of this world fell from their inmost thinking into the adoring of Almighty God. For 'the roots' of the mountains are the inmost thoughts of the proud. And 'the mountains fall from the roots,' because for the worshipping of God, the powers of the world are laid level with the earth from the lowest thoughts. For by a root the hidden thought is rightly denoted, because by means of that which is not seen, being within, there bursts out what should be seen without. And hence on the side of good it is said by the Prophet, *And the remnant that is escaped of the House of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward*. [Is. 37, 31] As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'Deep down below the thought springs up, that up on high the reward may be rendered back.' So then let him say, *He stretcheth out his hand to the flint, and overturneth the mountains from the roots*. For whilst the sacred preaching sought the hardness of the Gentiles, it entirely frustrated the loftiness of the proud. But because those whom it empties of earthly thoughts, it fills with heavenly gifts, and those, whom it drains of interest below, it waters with streams from Above, it is directly added;

Ver. 10. *He cutteth out streams in the rocks.*

58. i.e. in the hard hearts of the Gentiles he opened the rivers of preaching; as it is likewise spoken by the Prophet of watering the dryness of the Gentiles; *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs*. [Ps. 107, 35] And in the Gospel the Lord promises, saying, *He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of*

his belly shall flow rivers of living water. [John 7, 38] What we then heard promised, we now see fulfilled. For see how in the holy preachers, not sprung from Judaea, through the universal Church spread over the whole world, streams of heavenly precepts flow forth in abundance from the mouths of the Gentiles. Thus because in the rocks He opened streams, from hard hearts too there flowed forth the river of holy preaching. It goes on;

And his eye hath seen every precious thing.

59. It is a thing to be especially borne in mind, that each individual soul is rendered the more precious in the sight of God, by bow much it is for Jove of the truth the more despised in its own eyes. *When thou wast little in thine own sight, did I not make thee the head of the tribes of Israel?* [1 Sam. 15, 17] As if he said in plain terms, "Thou wast great with Me, because thou wast contemptible to thyself, but now because thou art great to thyself, thou art become contemptible to Me.' And hence it is said by the Prophet; *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!* Thus every man becomes the more worthless to God, in proportion as he is more precious to himself, so much the more precious to God as he is for His sake more worthless to himself; because *He regardeth the lowly, and knoweth the high afar off. Every precious thing, therefore, His eye saw*. [Ps. 138, 6] In Holy Scripture God's 'seeing' is put for 'choosing,' as it is written in the Gospel; *When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee*, [John 1, 48] i.e. I chose thee whilst placed under the shadow of the Law.' Therefore He 'saw every thing precious,' because He chose the lowly. God hath chosen the weak things of the world to co1ifound the things which are mighty. He' saw the precious thing' when the human soul, having base views of itself, He visited with the illumination of His grace. Of which same soul it is said by the Prophet; *If thou separatest the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth*. [Jer. 15, 19] For the present world is vile with God, but the soul of man is precious to Him. He, then, that 'separates

the precious from the vile' is called 'as the month of God,' because by that man God deals forth His words, who by speaking the things that he is able to speak, plucks out the soul of man from the love of the present world. And because the teachers of the New Testament are brought to this, that even the hidden darkness of allegories in the Old Testament they search out, it is rightly added;

Ver. 11. *The depths also of the floods He hath searched, and the hidden things He hath brought to light.*

60. For what else are here called 'floods' but the sayings of the ancient Fathers. For who might be able to estimate how vehement a flood, whilst he was founding the Law, burst forth from the very breast of Moses? how vehement a flood gushed from the heart of David? what mighty streams of floods flowed out from the lips of Solomon and all the Prophets? Now of these 'floods' Judaea held the shew, when in keeping the surface of the letter she knew not the depths thereof. But we, who, on the Lord coming, seek therein interior spiritual things, search their 'depths.' And this thing the Lord is Himself said to do, because by Himself vouchsafing it we are enabled to do it; and so by us, who follow not the letter which killeth, but the spirit which maketh alive, the Lord 'searcheth the depths of. the floods, and bringeth the hidden things into light,' because the statements of the Law, which the too dark history makes obscure, a spiritual interpretation now lights up. And hence 'Truth' when speaking in parables in the Gospel bade the Disciples, saying, *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house tops*. [Mat. 10, 27] For the plainly spoken words of these interpreting have made the sentences of the ancient Fathers henceforth clear to us. Hence the Prophet Isaiah viewing the words plain by the interpretation of Holy Church, not obscured by the darkness of allegories, exclaimed, saying, *The place of rivers, the broadest and open streams*. [Is. 33, 21] For the sayings of the

Old Testament were as narrow and close streams, which bound up the sentences of their lore in the darkest gathering together. But on the other hand the teaching of Holy Church are' streams both broad and open,' because her declarations are at once many in number to those that find them, and plain to those that seek. Therefore he says, *The depths of the floods he hath searched, and the hidden things he hath brought to light*. Because when He poured into His interpreters the spirit of understanding, He set open the ancient obscurities of those prophesying. And that Holy Church henceforth knows and sees by the Spirit, which the Synagogue before was not at all able to understand by the letter.. Whence Moses also, while he spoke to the people, veiled his face; surely, in order to denote that that People of the Jews knew the words of the Law, but did not at all see the clearness of that Law. And hence it is rightly said by Paul; *But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart*. [2 Cor. 3, 15] But because the declarations of God are, without His wisdom, never fathomed at all, (for except him who hath received His Spirit, none knoweth in any sort His words,) the holy man adds words touching the subject of searching out that same Wisdom of God, saying;

Ver. 12-15. *But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof: neither is it found in the land of them that live pleasantly. The depth saith, It is not with me, and the sea saith, It is not with me. Fine gold shall not be given for it: neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof:*

61. It is first to be noted, that two points be proposed to himself, and two he adds making answer. For to this that he said above*, Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?* he answered in this verse, The depth saith, It is not with me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. But in answer to that which he had said, *Man knoweth not the place thereof; neither is it found in the land of them that live pleasantly*; he gave the lower

verse, saying, *Fine gold shall not be given for it; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.* So then he answered to both questions, yet in adding to what he had objected, not in solving it. For when he enquired the place of Wisdom, and then answered below, *The depth saith, It is not with me*; he pointed out not where it was, but where it was not. Again when he said that' the price thereof was not known by man,' and rejoined to this below, *fine gold shall not be given for it*; he shewed not what was the price of it, but what was not. For it is plain to all that neither can this wisdom of man be held in a place, nor be bought with riches. But the holy man being full of mystical ideas sends us on for the making out other things, so that we should look for not wisdom created, but Wisdom creating; for except in those words we search the secret depths of allegory, surely those things that follow are utterly deserving of disregard, if they be estimated according to the historical narration alone. For a little afterwards he saith, *Gold and glass cannot equal it*; and while, as we know, glass is far and incomparably of lower price than gold, wherefore after the name of gold, which is unquestionably a precious metal, byway of unlimited praise did he say that 'glass' too is not equal to wisdom? So by the mere difficulty of the letter, we are forced that we be quick sighted to the mystical sentiments in these words. So then what wisdom is it, the holy man is contemplating, but that of which Paul the Apostle saith, *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God?* [1 Cor. 1, 24] Concerning which it is written by Solomon; *Wisdom hath builded her house* [Prov. 9, 1]; and of which the Psalmist saith; *In wisdom hast Thou made all things*. [Ps. 104, 24] Of this same Wisdom 'man knoweth not the price,' because he findeth nothing worthy of the estimate thereof. Now this price of Wisdom is not said at once 'to be,' and not 'to be known,' but as for this reason 'not to be known,' because it is wanting, in that manner of speaking by which a person caught in a strait, when he finds no remedy of succour, is wont to confess that' what to do he knows not.'

62. So then 'not to know the price of this Wisdom,' is to find no meriting of meet practice whereby to obtain it. For we give a price with this object, that instead of it we may possess ourselves of that object which we long after. But what have we given, that we should deserve to obtain this Wisdom, which is Christ? Since it is by grace we are redeemed. For those works alone by living badly have we given, for which if a ,just return were reserved, not Christ but punishments would be rendered back . But man deserved one thing in the way of justice, and obtained another in respect of grace. Let Paul bear witness, before the time that his mind received the seed of unbought truth, with what briars of error he was overlaid. *Who was before*, he says, *a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief*. [1 Tim. 1, 13] Let him testify for what sort of persons Christ deigned to die, *While we were yet sinners*, he says, *Christ in due time died for the ungodly*. [Rom. 5, 8. 6.] We, then, who on Wisdom's coming were found ungodly, what title of good practice have we given, whereby we might obtain to receive that Wisdom? 'The price of this Wisdom man knoweth not,' because whoso is separated from brute animals by the understanding faculty of reason, understands that he is not saved by his own merits, knows and sees that he had not given any thing of good practice that he might come to faith. For it is as it were to give a price for the obtaining of Wisdom, to anticipate the coming to the knowledge of God by the merchandize of one's conduct.

63. He had learnt that of this Wisdom there is 'no price,' who said, *Who hath first given unto Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again*. [Rom. 11, 35] Hence it is written again, *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God*. [Eph. 2, 8] Not of works, lest any man should boast. Hence concerning himself he again speaks, saying, *By the grace of God I am what I am*. [1 Cor. 15, 10] And as by the inspiration of this same grace, the practices of the parts of virtue are at once

engendered in the heart, so that from free will also conduct should follow, which after this life the Eternal Recompensing should answer to, he thereupon added, *And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain*. But there are those who exult that they are in a sound state by their own powers, and pride themselves that by their own merits going before they have been redeemed, whose declaration, surely, is found to be contradictory to themselves, because, while they maintain themselves at once 'innocent' and' redeemed,' this very name of redemption they make null and void in themselves. For everyone that is redeemed is doubtless set free from some sort of captivity. Whence then is this said person redeemed, if he was not before captive under sin? It is plain then that he greatly misjudges who judges so. For heavenly grace does not find desert of man, in order to make it come, but after it has come, causes the same; and God, when He comes to the undeserving mind, at once sets it forth to Himself deserving by so coming, and causes therein merit for Him to recompense, whereas He had found only that for Him to punish.

64. It is good herein to recall the eyes of the mind to that robber, who from the jaws of the devil ascended the Cross, and from the Cross mounted to Paradise. Let us behold what sort of person he came to the stock of the Cross, what sort of person he went from the Cross. He came bound by his brother's blood, he came bloodstained, but by interior grace he was changed on the Cross; and he who inflicted death upon a brother, of the Lord when dying proclaimed the life, saying, *Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom*. [Luke 23, 42] On the Cross the nails had bound fast his hands and feet, and there remained nought in him that punishment left free, but the tongue and the heart. But God inspiring it, he offered all to Him that he found free in himself, so that according to that which is written, he should *with the heart believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation*. [Rom. 10, 10] But that in the hearts of the

faithful there are three virtues in a special inner abiding, the Apostle testifies, saying, *And now abideth faith, hope, charity* [1 Cor. 13, 13]; all of which the robber being filled with instantaneous grace both received and kept on the Cross. For he had faith, who believed the Lord was about to reign, when he saw Him dying equally with himself; he had hope, who begged for admission into His kingdom, saying, *Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom*. Charity also in his death he livingly retained, who at once charged home for his iniquity a brother and fellow robber dying for the like crime, and preached to him the life which he had learnt, saying, *Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss*. [Luke 23, 40. 41.] He that came such to the Cross by sin, see what he departed from the Cross by grace. He confessed the Lord, Whom he beheld dying along with himself by human frailty, at the time that the Apostles denied Him, Whom they had seen doing miracles by divine power.

65. But they who make out that man is saved by his own powers, fancy that that same confession of man is from the efficacy of man by himself. Which if it were so, the Psalmist would not say in praise of God, *Confession and great doing are His work*. [Ps. 111, 3] So that from Him we receive it to confess what is right, by Whom it is granted us to practise what is great also. Therefore because we have not given aught of good practice, whereby we might deserve to be vouchsafed this Wisdom, let it be rightly said, *Man knoweth not its price*. Inasmuch as he that henceforth uses reason looks down upon himself under the perception of this Wisdom so much the deeper, in proportion as he more truly knows the interior depth of that Wisdom, so as to see that he has attained to her being unworthy, by the which it is brought to pass without price, that he should be made worthy. Concerning which it is well said;

Neither is it found in the land of those that live sweetly.

66. What is denoted in this passage by the title of the 'land,' saving the soul of man? Concerning which the Psalmist saith, *My soul thirsteth after Thee, as a land without water*. [Ps. 143, 6] But this wisdom cannot be 'found in the land of those that live sweetly;' because the man that is still fed with the pleasures of this life, is severed from the perception of Eternal Wisdom. For if he were truly wise-minded, being banished from the interior delights, he would mourn over that blind estate of his exile, whereinto he has fallen. For hence it is said by Solomon; *He that addeth knowledge, addeth pain also*. [Eccl. 1, 18] For the more a man begins to know what he has lost, the more he begins to bewail the sentence of his corruption, which he has met with. For he sees whence and whereto he has fallen; how that from the joys of Paradise he has come to the woes of the present life, from the companyings of the Angels to carings for necessities; he considers in what a number of perils he now lies prostrate, who before without peril disdained to stand; he bewails the exile which being accursed he undergoes, and sighs after the state of heavenly glory, which he might be enjoying in security, if he had not had a mind to commit sin. Which same the Psalmist regarding rightly, saith, *I said in my fear, I am cast out from the face of thine eyes*. [Ps 31, 22] For after contemplating the interior joys of the vision of God, and the assemblage in fellowship of the Angels holding fast, he brought back his eyes to things beneath, he saw where he was laid low, who was created for this end that he might have been able to stand in heavenly realms; he considered where he was, and where he was not he grieved to think, he mourned for himself as 'cast out from the face of God's eyes,' because by comparison with the interior light, he had felt the darkness of his exile, that he was undergoing, to be the heavier. Hence it is that he admits not to his soul the solace of any favouring from the present life, saying, I refused my soul to be comforted. For oftentimes the rich ones of this world,

being afflicted with weariness of spirit, are used to regard the good gifts bestowed on them in time, and to soften down their sadness. For when they feel themselves affected with something of sadness, they look at their horses, they survey the vessels of their gold and their silver, they go the round of their estates. And while they gladly carry their eyes through the range of these temporal things, they get the better of the sadness of soul that has risen up. And hence Truth saith to them also in the Gospel; *But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have your comfort here*. [Luke 6, 24] But the holy man, who mourns for this, that he has fallen from everlasting joys, does not admit consolation on the ground of things temporal, saying, *I have refused my soul to be comforted*. As though he said in plain speech; 'I, who do not grieve for the loss of temporal things, am utterly unable to be comforted by the abundance thereof.' And as though we ourselves on hearing these things said to him, 'What then dost thou seek, who refusest to find comfort in those things that are of the world?' he thereupon added; *I remembered God, and was delighted*. As if he said in plain terms; 'Me not even the abundance of things earthly doth cheer, but even able to see, gives me delight.' So then, this is the bitterness the remembrance only of my Maker, Whom as yet I am not of the wise, that whilst they are lifted up on high in hope, they do not bow down the mind here to any delights. For hence it is written; *The heart of the wise is where there is sorrow, and the heart of fools where there is mirth*. [Eccl. 7, 4] Hence James saith: *Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness*. [James 4, 9] Hence 'Truth bears witness by Itself, saying, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*.' [Matt. 5, 4] So wisdom cannot be 'found in the land of those that live sweetly;' because they are the more really foolish, in proportion as whilst parting with the greater things they delight themselves in the least. Hence Peter blames that same folly of the wicked, saying, *That count for pleasure the*

indulgence of the day of defilement and stain [Reading *'coinquinationis,' 'coinquinationes.'* Vulg. as ours.]. [2 Peter 2, 13] Hence Solomon saith, *I counted laughter an error; and said to mirth, Why art thou vainly deceived?* [Eccl. 2, 2] Accordingly let the holy man say concerning Wisdom, *Neither is it found in the land of those that live sweetly*. In this way plainly, that those who in this world live sweetly, are still so besotted, that this very thing too they know not, viz. Whence they have fallen. It follows;

Ver. 11. *The bottomless pit saith, It is not with me.*

67. What does he call 'the bottomless pit' but the hearts of men, which are at once by the fall all floating, and by the mistiness of double-dealing full of darkness? Which same 'bottomless pit' declares that this Wisdom 'is not with' it; because the wicked mind, while it longs to be wise in a carnal way, shews itself foolish as to things spiritual. For because as Paul testifies, *the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*, so much the more completely is every one rendered foolish within, as he endeavours to appear wise without. Concerning this abyss it is said by John, *And I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him, into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled*. [Rev. 20, 1–3.] For by the number of a thousand, he denoted not the quantity of time but the universality, with which the Church exercises dominion. Now the old serpent is bound with a chain and cast into the bottomless pit, because being tied up from the hearts of the good, while he is shut up in the minds of lost sinners, he rules over them with worse cruelty. And a little while afterwards he is described as brought up out of the hollow of the bottomless pit, in that from the hearts of the wicked which now rage secretly, having then gotten power against the Church, he shall

break out into the violence of open persecution. And so this bottomless pit, wherein the devil is now kept hidden, ‘saith that Wisdom is not with it,’ because by wicked deeds it shows itself a stranger to true wisdom. For, whilst a man covers wickedness in the heart, but with the mouth gives forth flatteries, whilst he overshadows his purposes with double-dealing, whilst he eschews words of singlemindedness as foolishness, whilst he shuns the ways of simple innocency, it is as if the Abyss denies that she has the Wisdom of God. And because minds that are devoted to this world, are disturbed by the cares and anxieties of the present life, and therefore are quite unable to enjoy the repose of that Wisdom, it is rightly added;

And the sea saith, It is not with me.

68. For what is there denoted by the name of the sea having the bitter disquietude of worldly minds, which while they fall foul of one another in enmities by turns, dash themselves together like encountering waves? For the life of worldly persons is rightly called ‘a sea;’ because, whilst it is agitated by the tempestuous stirrings of actions, it is parted from the tranquillity and stedfastness of interior Wisdom. Contrary to which it is well said by the Prophet, *Upon whom shall My Spirit rest but upon him that is humble and quiet, and that trembleth at my words?* [Isa. 66, 2] But from earthly minds the Spirit flies the further in proportion as He findeth no rest with them. For it is hence that it is said of certain by the Psalmist; *Bruising and unhappiness is in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known*. [Ps. 13, 7. Vulg. 14, 7. Com. Pr.] From which same bruising of disquietude the Lord calls us back, saying, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls*. [Matt. 11, 28. 29.] For what is more toilsome in this life than to be fevered with earthly desires? or what is there more full of repose here, than to long for nought of this world? It is hence that the Israelitish people

received the keeping of the Sabbath in gift; it is hence on the opposite side that Egypt was smitten with a multitude of flies. For the people, that follows God, receives the Sabbath, i.e. the rest of the spirit, that it should not be worn out in this life by any craving of carnal passions. But Egypt, which bears a likeness of this world, is stricken with flies. For the fly is an excessively intrusive and restless creature. Wherein what else is there represented but the intrusive solicitations of carnal desires. Whence it is said elsewhere, *Dying flies destroy the sweetness of the ointment*. [Eccl. 10, 1] Because superfluous thoughts, which in the mind taken up with things carnal are for ever both springing into life and dying away, destroy that sweetness, with which each individual has been inwardly anointed by the Spirit; because they do not suffer him to enjoy the unadulteratedness thereof. And so Egypt is smitten with flies, because the parts of those persons that love an earthly life, while they are stricken with the disquietudes of their desires, are by the swarms of carnal imaginations borne down beneath, so that they cannot be lifted up to the desire of interior rest. Whence when Truth comes to the heart with the wonderful help of His pitifulness, He first banishes therefrom the fevers of carnal thoughts, and afterwards distributes in it the gifts of the parts of virtue. Which same the sacred history of the Gospel excellently conveys to us; in which when the Lord being besought was led by the way in order to restore the daughter of the ruler to life, it is added directly, *But when the crowd were put forth He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose*. [Matt. 9, 20] So the crowd is cast forth without, in order that the damsel may be raised up; because if the importunate throng of worldly cares be not first expelled from the inner recesses of the heart, the soul, which lies dead in the interior, cannot rise up. For whilst it lets itself loose amongst the countless imaginings of earthly desires, it never in any degree gathers itself up to the consideration of self. Thus then, knowing and seeing that in these waves of

perturbations Wisdom cannot dwell, he says, *And the sea saith, It is not with me.* For no man receives her fully, saving he who strives to withdraw himself from all the drifting to and fro of carnal courses. And hence it is said elsewhere, *Write wisdom in the time of leisure*. *And he that is lessened in doing, even he shall win her.* [Ecclus. 38, 24] And again, *Be still, and know that I am God.* [Ps. 46, 10]

69. But how is it that we know that most of the old Fathers at once interiorly held fast this Wisdom in its life, and outwardly administered the affairs of the world in ordinary? Do we call Joseph deprived of the attainment of this Wisdom, who in the time of dearth taking upon himself the affairs of all Egypt not only furnished provisions to the Egyptians, but by the skilfulness of his administration preserved the life of foreign people as well that came to him? Did Daniel prove a stranger to this Wisdom, who, when he was made by the king of the Chaldeans in Babylon chief of the governors, was busied with greater charges in proportion as by a higher pitch of dignity he was likewise set above all? Whereas then it is plain that very often even the good are engaged in earthly charges with no interest, we plainly see that in this way the citizens of Jerusalem sometimes render services [*angarias*] to Babylon, in like manner as oftentimes the citizens of Babylon pay suit and service to Jerusalem. For there are some persons who preach the word of life for the displaying of wisdom alone, they minister the succour of alms from the passion of vain-glory; and indeed the things they do seem to be proper to Jerusalem, but yet are they citizens of Babylon.

70. In this way then it sometimes happens, that they who love the heavenly Country alone, seem to be subjected to the charges of the earthly country. Whose ministration however is distinguished from the practices of the wicked for the most part in act, but sometimes before the Judge Above in thought only. For being full of wisdom from Above, they distinguish how they may at once be free to one thing inwardly, and busied with another

thing outwardly; so that if perchance by God's secret appointment aught of the concerns of this world is charged upon them, they coveting it not, they may yield to God Whom they delight in, and from the love of Him, may interiorly desire His Vision only, but from the fear of Him externally discharge the course imposed upon them with humility, that they should at once desire to be disengaged to God by force of the free attachment of loving affection, and again fulfil the charges imposed upon them by force of the constitution of servitude; and when the affairs of business make a din without, within the most peaceful repose is maintained in love; and the turmoils of employments outwardly clamouring, reason as presiding judge disposes of within, and with tranquil governance regulates the things, which all around it are too little tranquil. For as force of mind is at the head for bridling the motions of the flesh, so very often the love of tranquillity regulates aright the imposed turmoils of business; because exterior charges, if they be not desired with a wrong affection, may be executed with a mind not disordered but regulated. For holy men never court them, but lament them when put upon them by secret appointment, and though in respect of a better aim they shun them, yet in respect of a submissive mind they bear them. Which same they are above every thing eager to avoid if it might be, but fearing the secret dispensations of God, they lay hold of that they eschew, and execute what they avoid. For they go into their conscience, and they there take counsel what the secret will of God would have, and being conscious that they ought to be subject to the Appointments on high, they humble the neck of the heart to the yoke of Divine Providence. But he that is such as this, whatever turmoils are at work without, they never reach to his interior parts. And so it comes to pass that there is one thing maintained within in wish and another thing maintained without in office, and that with this Wisdom their hearts are filled, being no longer troubled and disordered, but in a state of tranquillity. Well, then, is it said thereof, that the depth

saith, *It is not with me, and the sea saith, It is not with me*. As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'The troubled minds of the worldly cry out by the mere circumstance of their not being quiet, that they are widely separated from true Wisdom. But because this Wisdom of God, abiding with the Father before the ages of the world, was to be made Incarnate in the end thereof, so that in order to redeem the human race, It should send not the holy Angels, not just men, but in the manifestation of very sight comes by Its own Self, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 15. *Fine gold shall not be given for it.*

71. For what is denoted by 'fine gold,' save the holy Angels, who are rightly called both 'gold,' and 'fine [*obrysum*];' 'gold,' because they shine with brightness of righteousness; 'fine,' because they never had any defilement of sin. But for just men, so long as they are in this corruptible flesh with the conditions of mortality, 'gold' they may indeed be, 'fine gold' they cannot be in any wise; because the *corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind, that museth upon many things*. [Wisd. 9, 15] For though in this life they may shine by an extraordinary brightness of righteousness, yet they never purely lack the dross of sins; as John the Apostle bears witness, who says, *if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* [1 John 1, 8]; and as James affirms, who puts a proof, saying, *For in many things we all offend*. [James 3, 2] As the Prophet likewise beseeches, who says, *Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified*. [Ps. 143, 2] Those then are termed 'fine gold' who whilst holding fast in that innocency, wherein they were created, at once shine with the brightness of righteousness, and are stained with no dross of sins, no not the very least.

72. But because in the stead of this Wisdom no one of the Angels was to be sent as the Redeemer of the human race, lest in those Angels, who, we

have been taught, have often appeared in aid of men, any man should rest his hope, it is said, *Fine gold shall not be given for it*. As though it were expressed in plain speech; ‘By Its own Self shall Wisdom be manifested, in order that the human race may be redeemed from sin.’ There is no Angel sent in His stead; because it must needs be that by the Creator the creature should be set free. And hence the Lord said in the Gospel, *If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*. [John 8, 36] But the holy man, being filled with the Spirit of that same Wisdom, foresaw that there would not be wanting in Judaea some that should put their hope in the Lawgiver, and make Moses the author of their salvation, even as to the man that had been healed, speaking evil, they say, *Be thou His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples*. [John 9, 28] Whence it is yet further introduced with propriety,

Nor shall silver be weighed in exchange thereof.

73. For because the divine revelations are often denoted by ‘silver,’ by the term of silver it may be that the writers of that revelation are also understood, whose life shone amidst the crowds of their fellow-creatures with the light of virtuous attainments. But because the Law was able to point out sins, but not able to take them away, it was not anyone of the ancient Fathers, nor the Lawgiver Moses, that became the Redeemer of mankind. So ‘silver is not weighed in exchange of this Wisdom,’ because all that have had power to be holy, by comparison with the Only-begotten Son of God are accounted to have been of no worth, who except they had known and seen that they were servants of that ‘Wisdom,’ could never at all have been holy. For to this end were they sent, that in the hearts of men they might by preaching prepare a way for this ‘Wisdom,’ neither yet that for her, but by her they might govern the peoples under their charge. For because it was certain that by the accession of periods of time, the ailments of the waning world should grow to a height, it was brought about that in the end of ages the Eternal Wisdom of God should by Its own Self come to

this full grown sick one, with his over great infirmity, i.e. to the human race lying sick, throughout the whole world, that preachers having been dispatched beforehand, like a kind of visitors, the power of the physician might afterwards come so much the more efficacious, in proportion as the sickness of the diseased had more grown to a head. But because there is no one sent in the stead of Him for the saving of us, let it be rightly said, *Nor shall silver be weighed in the exchange thereof*. Forasmuch as the life of the just men who preached, with whatever light of holiness it might abound, doth not by its presence make exchange for the coming of Heavenly Wisdom to us. But there were multitudes of the Gentiles, who being attached to the systems of discipline of this world's wise ones, observed those things which are honourable among men, and believed that, honourable dealing being observed, they were sure to be saved, nor any longer sought a Mediator between God and man, since they held the teaching of the philosophers as being sufficient for them. In contempt of whom it is directly added;

Ver. 16. *Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India.*

74. For what is meant by India, which furnishes a black people, saving this world, wherein the life of man is engendered dark in respect of sin? Now 'the dyed colours of India' are the wise ones of this world, who though in respect of infidelity, and oftentimes in respect of behaviour, they be foul, yet before the eyes of men are stained with the hue of overlaid honourableness. But the coeternal Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the dyed colours of India,' in that he, who really takes It in, discovers how widely it differs from those human beings whom the world has worshipped for wise ones. And the very words of His precepts differ from the wise ones of this world, in that while they strain after eloquence, their sayings appear as if fair in shew and in the staining of the dye, and while they lack the power of realities, feign themselves to be something else than what they are

by combination of words as by overcoated colours. But on the other hand the instruction of Wisdom is at once fair by preaching and shining by unadulterated truth, nor does it by deceit set itself forth one thing outwardly, and retain another thing inwardly, nor in its sayings aim to appear fair by brilliancy of speech, but by uncorruptness of truth. Therefore in its precepts the Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the dyed colours of India,' since whereas it has not the stained adornments of eloquence, it pleases like a robe without dye. Which staining of the dye Paul rightly despised, when he said, Which things also we speak not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. For he chose rather to display this 'Wisdom' by the simple transparency of truth alone, but not to stain it with thy dyeing of speech.

Nor to the most precious sardonyx stone, nor to the sapphire.

75. That the sardonyx and sapphire are not precious stones, who would be ignorant? And whereas there be many other precious stones, which immeasurably exceed these in the account of greatness, why is the sapphire or the sardonyx especially called precious, when either stone by comparison with other stones is most contemptible? except that those stones which are described as precious, when we know not to be precious, we look out for some other thing in the meaning of them. For the sardonyx bears the likeness of red earth, but the sapphire has an aereal appearance. And so it may be that in the sardonyx by the red earth human beings are denoted, in the sapphire by the aereal appearance the Angels are denoted. For whereas the sardonyx stone bears the appearance of red earth, it not improperly denotes man; because 'Adam' himself, who was created the first, is called in the Latin tongue 'Red earth.' What does it mean then that it is said that this Wisdom is not 'compared to the sardonyx nor to the sapphire,' but that He, Who is the 'Power of God and the Wisdom of God,' i.e. the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, surpasses all things by such

preeminent greatness that neither the first man on the earth, nor the Angels in heaven, can be compared to Him. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of God* [‘Sons of God’ was a common expression for Angels] *can be likened unto the Lord?*

76. But it is possible that by the sardonyx stone the Fathers of the Old Testament, while by the sapphire the Preachers of the New Testament, are set forth. For the first, though they maintained an extraordinary life of righteousness, yet lent themselves to carnal procreation. Therefore whereas it is plain that they did some things of an earthly kind, they are not inappropriately denoted by the sardonyx stone, which as we before said bears the appearance of ‘red earth.’ But by the sapphire, which is of an ethereal blue, we suitably understand the Preachers of the New Testament, who laying aside the desires of carnal gendering, followed after the things of heaven alone. And hence the Prophet beholding the holy Apostles mounting above all the desires of the flesh with spiritual fervency, being struck with admiration, saith, *Who are these that fly as clouds?* [Is. 60, 8] As though he expressed it in plain speech; ‘We go along by the way of earth, in that we are still involved in marryings and employ acts of the flesh upon the propagating offspring; but these walk not on earth, but they ‘fly as clouds,’ who whilst they aim at heavenly things touch nought connected with earthly desires.’ Therefore he says that the Wisdom of God is not ‘compared to the sardonyx or the sapphire stone.’ As though he told in plain terms, saying, ‘To Him, Who is seen Man among men, neither any in the old Fathers nor any in the new is equalled, in that from His Godhead He derives it that in His Manhood He hath not any like to Him.’ Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 17. *The gold and the glass cannot equal it.*

77. Who that is sound of perception would deem it worthy to understand this according to the letter? For 'glass,' as we said above, is of much less worth than 'gold,' and after it was said that 'gold is not equal' to this Wisdom, it is yet further, as if heightening, subjoined, that 'glass' too cannot equal it either. But the bare letter failing us in the historical sense, sends us to investigating the mystery of the allegory. For we know that the metal gold shines with a superior brightness to all the metals. But it is of the nature of glass that whilst seen without it shines with perfect transparency in the inside. In every other metal whatever is contained within is hidden from sight, but in the case of glass, every liquid, such as it is contained within, such is it shewn to be without, and, so to say, all the liquid in a glass vessel, whilst shut up is open. What other thing, then, do we understand by 'gold and glass,' but that heavenly Country, that society of blessed citizens, whose hearts mutually one with another at once shine with brightness, and are transparent by pureness; which John in Revelations had beheld, when he said, *And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was of pure gold like unto clear glass*. [Rev. 21, 18] For because all the Saints shall shine in the supreme brightness of bliss, it is described as constructed of gold.

78. And because their very brightness itself is reciprocally open to them in each other's breasts, and when the countenance of each one marked his conscience is penetrated along with it, this very gold is described as like pure glass. For there the mind of every person no bodily frame of limbs will hide from the eyes of his fellow, but the interior will be given to view, the very harmony of the body too will also be plain to the eyes of the body, and each one will be in such wise distinguishable to another, as now he cannot be distinguishable to himself. But now our hearts, so long as we are in this life, because they cannot be seen in one by another, are enclosed not within glass vessels, but within vessels of earthenware; in which same clay in

respect of the mind being affected the Prophet dreaded to stick, when he said, *Deliver me out of the clay, that I may not stick fast*. [Ps. 69, 14] Which very tabernacle of bodies, Paul calls 'our earthly house,' saying, *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. [2 Cor, 5, 1] Therefore in this earthly house so long as we live, the mere partition wall of our corrupt state, so to say, we do not penetrate with the eyes of the mind, and the hidden things in each other we cannot see. Hence Holy Church desiring to see the form of her Spouse in the Godhead, yet not being able, because the fashion of His Eternal Being, which she longed to behold, His Manhood, which He took upon Him, hid from her eyes, says mourning in the Song of Songs; *Behold he standeth behind our wall*. [Cant. 2, 9] As if she said in plain speech, 'I desire to see HIM now already in the appearance of His Godhead, but I am still shut out from the sight of Him by the wall of the flesh He has assumed.' Therefore so long as we live in this corruptible flesh, we see not the thoughts of the hearts in one another. Whence it is said by the same Paul, *For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him?* [1 Cor. 2, 11] And again; *Therefore Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts*. [1 Cor. 4, 5] So then that City, which manifests the hearts of them that are in it to each severally and reciprocally, is described 'of gold like to pure glass,' that by the gold it may be represented bright, and by the glass transparent.

79. But though all the Saints therein glitter with such wonderful brightness, and shine through with such extraordinary transparency, yet that Wisdom, by a likeness of Which they have all that they are, they 'cannot equal.' Therefore it is well said, *The gold and the glass cannot equal it*. For it is for this that all the Saints are brought to those eternal joys, that they may be like to God, as it is written, *When He shall appear, we shall be like*

Him, for we shall see Him as He is. [1 John 3, 2] And yet it is written, *O Lord God of hosts, who is like unto Thee?* [Ps. 89, 9] And again; *Who shall be like unto God among the sons of God?* [ib. v. 6] Whence then shall they be like, and whence not like, but that to this 'Wisdom' they at once be like for a semblance and not like for equality? For by gazing on the Eternity of God, it is brought to pass upon them that they should be eternal, and while they receive the gift of seeing Him, by the receiving of Blessedness they copy the thing that they see. They are both like, then, because they are made blessed; and they are not like to the Creator, because they are a creature. And thus they both have a certain likeness to God, because they are without end; and yet they have no equality to the Incomprehensible One, because they have comprehensible being. Therefore let it be justly said, *The gold and the glass is not equal to it*. For with whatever brightness and transparency the Saints may shine, it is one thing for men to be wise in God, and another thing for a Man to be the Wisdom of God. Which same Wisdom he was truly acquainted with, who never ventured to liken any one of the Saints to the Mediator between God and man. And hence it is added;

.

Neither shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged instead of it.

80. For a 'lofty vessel of gold' did Elijah prove, 'a lofty vessel of gold' Jeremiah, 'lofty and overtopping vessels of gold' the old Fathers were. But this Wisdom of God, in order that It might redeem us from a carnal kind of life, appeared in the flesh, and he, who did not see that Wisdom in a true light, supposed that the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, was one of the Prophets, which Christ the eyes of the Elect held for God, when they saw by Him but Man. Hence it is said by Him to the holy Disciples, *Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?* [Matt. 16, 13, &c.] And when they thereupon answered Him, *Some say that Thou art John the*

Baptist; some Elias: some Jeremias, or one of the prophets; they were immediately interrogated touching their own perception; *But whom say ye that I am?* To whom Peter, answering directly in the voice of the whole Church, says, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God*. Thus, then, forasmuch as according to the declaration of Paul we 'know Christ, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God,' for this Wisdom Peter refused to 'exchange vessels of gold lofty and overtopping,' because he understood concerning it no other thing than it was. For as has been said, a great 'vessel of gold' was John, a great 'vessel of gold' Elijah, a great vessel of gold 'Jeremiah. Now whoever accounted that That God was anyone of these, did 'exchange a vessel of gold high and overtopping' for this 'Wisdom.' But for this Wisdom the Church doth not 'exchange vessels of gold high and overtopping,' because it holds that Christ the Son of God is not one of the Prophets, but the One Lord of the Prophets. For seeing that 'Wisdom' Itself had come to her, she refused to keep herself fixed in those golden vessels, but was eager with certainty of faith to pass on into that Wisdom. Whence she saith in the Song of Songs; *The watchmen that keep the city found me; to whom I said, Saw ye him, whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him, whom my soul loveth*. [Cant. 3, 3. 4.] For whom do we take 'the watchmen that go about the city' to be, but the former fathers and prophets who set themselves to watch by the voice of holy preaching for our safe keeping? but when the Church sought her Redeemer, she would not fix her hope in those same ancient preachers, in that she says, *It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth.* For Him she had not been able to find, if she had been unwilling 'to pass by through these.' For the unbelievers had rested themselves in those warders, who believed that Christ the Son of God was anyone of those. With the voice then and the faith of Peter, Holy Church passed by the watchmen she found, in that she disdained to believe the Lord

Who had been prophesied to be anyone of the number of the prophets. Thus, let it be said, *nor shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged for it*. Because the Elect severally both venerate the life of the Saints for their loftiness, and yet do not take up with it for error. For those whom they know to be simple men they do not all compare to God-Man. Whence it is further added;

Ver. 18. *Nor shall they be mentioned in comparison with her.*

81. For all the Elect of the Country Above are indeed holy and righteous, but by a participation of Wisdom, not by comparison therewith. For what are men compared with God? Now 'Light' Wisdom is used to be called, 'light' also the servants of Wisdom are wont to be called; but She as light lighting up, they as light lighted up; as it was written; *That was the true Light, Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*. [John 1, 9] But to these it is only said, *Ye are the light of the world.* [Matt. 5, 14] 'Righteousness' indeed Wisdom is called 'righteousness,' the servants of 'Wisdom' as well are called: but She righteousness that maketh righteous, they righteousness that is made righteous. For of God, Who is 'Wisdom,' it is said, *That He might Himself be just and the Justifier*; [Rom. 3, 26] but these say, *that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*. [1 Cor. 5, 21] So then it is after one sort that the 'Light lighting' is to be reverenced, after another that the 'light lighted' is to be; in one way the Righteousness that maketh righteous, in another way the righteousness that is made righteous. Now Wisdom both is and is wise, nor has She for one thing to be, and for another thing to be wise; but the servants of 'Wisdom' are indeed able to be wise men, but yet they have not their being the same thing as being wise. For they may be, and not be wise. Wisdom hath life, but She hath not one thing, and is another thing, inasmuch as, to Her it is that to be that it is to live. But the servants of 'Wisdom' whilst they have life are one thing and have another, inasmuch as to whom to be is not the identical thing it is to

live. For they may be after a sort, and yet not live. For to them it is one thing to be, and a different thing to live; for in the very first parent they had being by a beginning, and life by an addition, since man was first made of the earth, and afterwards as it is written; *He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.* [Gen. 2, 7.] Now Wisdom hath being, She hath life; but this, which She hath, She Her own Self is. Wherefore She lives unchangeably, because she lives not by contingency, but essentially. He then alone Is truly with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to Whose Being ours compared, is not to Be. To this Wisdom if we be joined, we are, we live, we are wise. If we be compared to Him, we neither are wise, nor live at all, nor are.

82. Hence it is that all the Saints, when they advance in the vision of God, the more they view the interior depths of the Divine Nature, see so much the more that they themselves are nothing. For it is no where read that Abraham confessed that he was dust and ashes except when he obtained to enjoy the converse of God. For he says, *I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes*. [Gen. 18, 27] For he would perchance have thought that he was something, if he had not perceived at all the true Essence that is above himself. But when for the contemplating of the Unchangeable One he was transported above himself, being filled with so mighty a power of contemplation, when he saw Him, he saw that he himself was nought but 'dust.' Hence it is that the Prophet being filled with the same Wisdom crieth out, *Remember, O Lord, that we are but dust*; [Ps. 103, 14. lxx.] who again viewing the unchangeableness of that Essence, saith, *Yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail*. [Ps. 102, 26. 27.] Hence it is said to Moses, *I AM THAT I AM*: *Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, HE THAT IS hath sent me unto you.* [Ex. 3, 14.] For He alone truly IS, Who alone unchangeably continues. For every thing that now is after this way, and now

after another way, is near to not being. For to continue in its standing, it is not able. And in some manner there is a going on not to be, whilst from that which was, it is by the enfarings of time ever being led away to some other thing. In order then that in the partaking of His Body we may be something, let us know and see our own selves, that we are well nigh nothing. Therefore it is well said, *Nor shall they be made mention of in comparison with her*; because vessels of gold high and overtopping, which by participation of Wisdom are fit objects of reverence to us, in comparison of Wisdom are not even fit to be made mention of. But because this Wisdom is by secret means poured into the hearts of men, (as it is likewise said of the Holy Spirit, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth*; [John 3, 8]) for this reason it is added,

For wisdom is drawn from out of sight.

83. ‘Wisdom is drawn from out of sight;’ because whereas She is invisible, She cannot be found saving in an invisible way. And She is rightly said to be ‘drawn’ also, because like as we draw the breath, that the body may live, so from the interior depths of Wisdom the Spirit is derived, that the soul may hold on to life. Whence the Psalmist says, *I opened my mouth, and drew in the spirit.* [Ps. 119, 131.] Which very Wisdom, taking human flesh together with [al. ‘by the medium of.’] a rational soul, when It had presented Itself from the interior depths close at hand, because this world could not behold its invisible Maker, Him Whom it saw visible Man, it also knew as invisible God as well. The Gentile world was converted from the darkness of its unbelief, being before full of pride by its avertedness; signs and wonders being exhibited, faith gained ground; and the faith being spread abroad, the summit of Holy Church shone forth in reverence with all men. To which same when there were wanting open adversaries, she began to be tried by her own members. For numberless

heresies springing up in her, they arrayed against her wars of cruel conflict. For she must be exercised at this time by toiling, who is on the way to her recompensing in that which follows. Whereby it has come to pass that some in her should come forth who should call the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, created mere man, but one by grace made God, and should attribute so much of holiness to him as they knew in the rest of the Saints, the same being His servants. Which persons blessed Job being inspired with the spirit of prophecy, reproves by the laying out of his sentence, saying,

Ver. 19. *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it.*

84. What do we take 'Ethiopia' for, save the present world, which same by darkness of hue denotes a sinning people in the foulness of its merits. But sometimes by the name of Ethiopia the Gentile world in a special manner is used to be denoted, as being before black by the sins of unbelief. Which same on the Lord's coming, the Prophet Habakkuk beheld affrighted with fear, and says, *The tents of the Ethiopians tremble with dread, the tents of the land of Madian*. [Hab. 3, 7] David also, the Prophet, seeing that the Lord should come for the redeeming of Judaea, but that first the Gentile world should believe, and afterwards Judaea should follow, (as it is written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved,* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.]) says, *Ethiopia, her hand shall be first to God;* [Ps. 68, 31] i.e. 'before that Judaea believes, the Gentile world being black with sins offers itself to Almighty God to be saved.' Now the topaz is a precious stone, and because in the Greek tongue *to pan* is the word for 'every thing,' on this account, that it shines bright with every colour, it is called 'topazium,' as if 'topantium.' But when the Gentile world being turned to God believed, numbers from out thereof were so enriched with the gift of His Spirit, that as with many colours, so with many virtues they shone bright. But lest any man be lifted up by the virtues he has received, it is now

said by the holy man, *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it*. As though he said in plain words; ‘No one of the Saints, with however many virtues he may be filled, yet as being gathered out of this blackness of the world can equal Him, concerning Whom it is written, *That holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*. [Luke 1, 35] For we, though we are made holy, yet are: not born holy, because by the mere constitution of a corruptible nature we are tied and bound, that we should say with the Prophet, *Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me*. But He only is truly born holy, Who in order that He might get the better of that same constitution of a corruptible nature, was not conceived by the combining of carnal conjunction.

85. To this Wisdom as it were a kind of ‘topaz from Ethiopia wished to equal itself,’ when a certain heresiarch [Nestorius, *Ben.*] said, ‘I do not envy Christ being made God, because, if I wish even I myself may be made so.’ Who imagined our Lord Jesus Christ to be God, not by the mystery of His conception, but by the promotion of grace, arguing by misconstrued proofs that He was born simple man, but in order to be God that He had advanced by merit, and on this account reckoning that both himself and any others might be made coequal with Him, which same are made the children of God by grace, not understanding nor minding that *the topaz from Ethiopia is not equal to Him*. For it is one thing for those born men to receive the grace of adoption, and another for one by the power of Godhead preeminently to have come forth God from the very conception. Neither is it possible that to the glory of the Only-begotten, possessed by nature, another glory should be equal, received by grace. *For the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus*, [1 Tim. 2, 5] is not as this one raves one person in His human nature, and another person in the Divine nature. Not conceived and brought forth simple man, did he afterwards obtain of merit that He should be God. But the Angel announcing it, and the Spirit coming, at once the Word in the

womb, at once within the womb the Word made flesh, (that unchangeable Essence likewise remaining to Him which He has coeternal together with the Father and the Holy Spirit;) did take upon Him within the bowels of the Virgin that whereby He might both being Impassible suffer passion, and Undying suffer death, and whilst Eternal before the world be a temporal being in the end of the world, that through an unutterable mystery, by a holy conception and an inviolate birth, in accordance with the verity of both natures, the same Virgin should be at once the handmaid and mother of the Lord. For so is it said to her by Elisabeth; *Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* [Luke 1, 43] And the Virgin herself at her conception said, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word.* [v. 38] And though He the same Being is one thing from the Father, and another thing from the Virgin, yet He is not one Person from the Father, and another Person from the Virgin. But the same Person is Eternal from the Father and the same a temporal being from the Mother, the same Who made is the same That was made, the same *beautiful in form above the children of men* [Ps. 45, 2] in respect of the Divine nature, and the same of whom it is written; *We saw Him, and there was no shew, and He hath not form nor comeliness*, [Is. 53, 2] in respect of the human nature. The same before the world from the Father without mother, and the same at the end of the world from the Mother without father. The same a Temple, the same the Builder of the Temple. The same the Maker of the work, and the same the Work of the Maker, remaining one Person from both and in both natures, neither being confounded by the conjunction of natures, nor doubled by the distinctness of natures. But because it is not these points that we have taken upon us to treat of, let us return to our course of interpreting.

86. We are to take note that the holy man, in order to shew that the Angels are, widely distant from this Wisdom, says, *Fine gold shall not be given for it*. Which same that he might exhibit the ancient Fathers likewise,

dealers with sacred Revelation, as inferior, added, *Nor shall silver be weighed in exchange thereof*. Moreover that he might point out that the wisdom of the philosopher is far beneath this Wisdom, he brought in; *Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India*. And he subjoined, *Nor to the most precious sardonyx stone, nor to the sapphire*. Furthermore in order that he might shew that in that city Above no one attains to equality with the Only-begotten, he added; *The gold or the glass cannot equal it*. That he might make it appear that the Prophets likewise were beneath It, he added; *Neither shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged instead of it. Nor shall they be mentioned in comparison with her*. *For Wisdom is drawn from out of sight*. Whilst at the last, that he might rebuke the very heretics in the Church themselves as well, who on coming from the error of the Gentile world, split through pride the faith which they receive, he added; *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it*. As though he taught in plain words, saying; These, who from the blackness of sin come to conversion, cannot equal God-Man, though they may seem to shine bright with many virtues for colours. And that their pride might be thrown over, it is fitly added,

Neither shall the purest dyes be brought into comparison.

87. For those are called ‘the purest dyes’ who are genuinely humble, and genuinely holy, who know that from themselves indeed they have not the shew of virtuous attainments, but that they hold this by the gift of accessory grace. For they would not be ‘dyed,’ if they had possessed holiness by nature. But they are ‘the purest dyes’ because they keep in themselves with humility the superinduced grace of virtues which they have been vouchsafed. Hence it is that it is said by the voice of the Spouse concerning Holy Church; *Who is this that cometh up blanched?* [Cant. 6, 10] For because Holy Church has not a heavenly life by nature, but on the Spirit adding Itself is arrayed with beautifulness of gifts, she is described not as

white but as ‘blanched.’ And observe, that when he said above, *Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India*, those same colours he did not bring in ‘pure;’ but in this place that he might distinguish the dye of true virtues from that staining of the philosophers, whilst speaking of dyes, he added ‘the purest.’ For those are rightly called ‘the purest dyes,’ who were aforetime foul through wicked deeds, yet, the Spirit coming upon them, are clothed with the brilliancy of grace, that they should appear to be far other than they were. Whence also ‘Baptism,’ i.e. ‘dyeing [*tinctio*],’ is the name given to our own descending into the water itself. Since we are dyed, and we, who were before unsightly by the deformity of bad habits, on the faith being received are rendered beautiful by grace and the adornment of virtues. It goes on ;

Ver. 20, 21. *Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living.*

88. It deserves to be especially considered, that it is asked by the holy man, whence Wisdom cometh. For It ‘comes’ from Him from Whom It sprung. Now because It is born of the Invisible and Coeternal Father, the way thereof is hidden. Whence too it is said by the Prophet, *And who shall declare His generations?* [Is. 53, 8] Now ‘the place of the understanding of her’ is the mind of man, which mind the Wisdom of God when it has filled makes holy. And so because both He is invisible, from Whom It came forth, and it is doubtful to us in whose mind It rests as being understood, it is rightly said now, *Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?* But this is very wonderful that it is directly brought in; *seeing that it is hidden from the eyes of all living.* For if the Wisdom, which is God, had been ‘hidden from the eyes of all living,’ then surely this Wisdom no one of the Saints would have seen. But see, I hear John agreeing with this sentence, who says, *No man hath seen God at any time*. [1 John 4, 12] And again, when I look at the Fathers of the Old Testament, I learn

that many of those, as the very history of the Sacred Reading is witness, did see God. Thus Jacob saw the Lord, who says, *For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.* [Gen. 32, 30] Moses likewise saw God, of whom it is written, *And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man Speaketh unto his friend.* [Ex. 33, 11] This very Job saw the Lord, who says, *I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee*. [Job 42, 5] Isaiah saw the Lord, who saith, *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up*. [Is. 6, 1] Michaiah saw the Lord, who saith, *I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left*. [1 Kings 22, 19] What does it mean then that so many Fathers of the Old Testament have witnessed that they have seen God, and yet concerning this Wisdom, which is God, it is said, *Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living?* And John saith, *No man hath seen God at any time.* Seeing this, which is plainly given us to understand, that so long as we live here a mortal life, God may be seen by certain semblances, but by the actual appearance of His Nature He cannot be seen, so that the soul being inspired with the grace of the Spirit should by certain figures behold God, but not attain to the actual power of His Essence? For hence it is that Jacob, who bears witness that he had seen God, saw Him not save in an Angel. Hence it is that Moses who 'talked with God face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,' in the midst of the very words of his speaking, says, *If I have found grace in Thy sight, shew Thyself manifestly to me, that I may see Thee*. [Ex. 33, 13. Vulg. *Shew me Thy face.*] For assuredly if it were not God with whom he was talking, he would have said, 'Shew me God,' and not 'Shew me Thyself.' But if it was God, with Whom he was speaking 'face to face,' wherefore did he pray to see Him, Whom he was seeing? But from this requesting of his, it is inferred that Him he was athirst to perceive in the brightness of His Incomprehensible nature, Whom he had already begun to

see by certain semblances, that so the heavenly Essence might be present to the eyes of his mind, in order that for the vision of Eternity there might not be interposed to him any created semblance with the circumstances of time. And so the Fathers of the Old Testament saw the Lord, and yet according to the voice of John, *No man hath seen God at anytime*; and according to the sentence of blessed Job, the Wisdom Which is God is 'hid from the eyes of all living,' because by persons settled in this mortal life He was both able to be seen in certain comprehensible images, and not able to be seen in the Incomprehensible Light of Eternity.

89. But if it is so, that by some while still living in this corruptible flesh, yet growing in incalculable power by a certain piercingness of contemplation, the Eternal Brightness is able to be seen, this too is not at variance with the sentence of blessed Job, who says, *Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living*; because he that sees 'Wisdom,' Which is God, wholly and entirely dies to this life, that henceforth he should not be held by the love thereof. For no one has seen Her, who still lives in a carnal way, because no man can embrace God and the world at one and the same time. He who sees God dies by the mere circumstance alone, that either by the bent of the interior, or by the carrying out of practice, he is separated with all his mind from the gratifications of this life. Hence yet further it is said to that same Moses too; *For there shall no man see Me, and live*. [Ex. 33, 20] As though it were plainly expressed, 'No man ever at any time sees God spiritually and lives to the world carnally.' Hence Paul the Apostle too, who as yet had learnt the invisible things of God, as he himself testifies, *in part*, [1 Cor. 13, 12] related that henceforth he was dead all over to this world, saying, *By Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world*. [Gal. 6, 14] For as we have already said far above, it is not enough for him to say, *I am crucified to the world*, except he also first out with, *The world is crucified to me*, that he might not only bear witness that he was dead to the world, but

also that the world was dead to himself, so that neither he himself should covet the world, nor the world henceforth covet him. For if perchance there be two in one place, of whom one is alive, and the other dead, though the dead person does not see the living, yet the live one does see the dead. Now the Preacher of God, in order that he might shew that by the abasement whereby he had cast himself down in humbling himself he was now become such, that neither he himself longed after the world, nor the world after him; not only says that he was crucified to the world, that he himself as one dead should not see the glory of the world, that he might long after, but likewise declared the world crucified to him, wherein he had cast himself down to the ground with such humility, that the world itself likewise, as if dead to him, could not now at all see Paul as being humble and despised.

90. But we are to know that there were some persons, who said that even in that region of blessedness God is beheld indeed in His Brightness, but far from beheld in His Nature. Which persons surely too little exactness of enquiry deceived. For not to that simple and unchangeable Essence is Brightness one thing, and Nature another; but Its very Nature is to It Brightness, and the very Brightness is Nature. For that to Its votaries the Wisdom of God should one day display Itself, He Himself pledges His word, saying, *He that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him*. [John 14, 21] As though He said in plain terms, 'Ye who see Me in your nature, it remains that ye should see Me in Mine own nature.' Hence He says again; *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*. [Matt. 5, 8] Hence Paul says, *For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, then shall I know even as also I am known.* [1 Cor. 13, 12]

91. But because it is said concerning God by the first preacher of the Church, *Whom the Angels desire to look upon*, [1 Pet. 1, 12] there are some who imagine that even the Angels never see God; and yet we know that it is

spoken by a sentence of Truth, *In heaven their Angels do always behold the face of My Father, Which is in heaven*. [Matt. 18, 10] Does, then, Truth sound one thing and the preacher of truth another? But if both sentences be compared together, it is ascertained, that they are not at all at variance with one another. For the Angels at once see and desire to see God, and thirst to behold and do behold. For if they so desire to see Him that they never at all enjoy the carrying out of their desire, desire has anxiety without fruit, and anxiety has punishment. But the blessed Angels are far removed from all punishment of anxiety, because never can punishment and blessedness meet in one. Again, when we say that these Angels are satisfied with the vision of God, because the Psalmist too says, *I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness*, [Ps. 17, 15] we are to consider that upon satisfying there follows disgust. So then, that the two may rightly agree together, let Truth say, *that they always see*; and let the excellent Preacher say, *that they always desire to see*. For that there be not anxiety in desire, in desiring they are satisfied, and that there be not disgust in their satisfying, whilst being satisfied they desire. And therefore they desire without suffering, because desire is accompanied by satisfying. And they are satisfied without disgust, because the very satisfying itself is ever being inflamed by desire. So also shall we too one day be, when we shall come to the fountain of life. There shall be delightfully stamped upon us at one and the same time a thirsting and a satisfying. But from the thirsting necessity is far absent, and disgust far from that satisfying, because at once in thirsting we shall be satisfied, and in being satisfied we shall thirst. Therefore we shall see God, and it shall be the very reward of our labour, that after the darkness of this mortal state we should be made glad by His light being approached unto.

92. But when we talk of His light being approached, that presents itself to the mind which Paul says, *Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, Whom no man hath seen, nor can see*. [1 Tim. 6, 16] And again, I

hear what the Psalmist says; *Approach unto Him, and be enlightened*. [Ps. 34, 5] How then by approaching are we enlightened, if we see not the very Light by which we are able to be enlightened? But if by approaching to Him we see the very Light whereby we are enlightened, how is it declared to be unapproachable? Wherein it deserves to be considered that he called it unapproachable, but to every man that minds the things of men. Since sacred Scripture is used to mark all the followers of carnal things with the designation of the being 'men.' Whence the same Apostle says to certain persons at strife, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal; and walk as men?* [1 Cor. 3, 3. 4.] To which he soon afterwards appends, *Are ye not men?* And hence he elsewhere brought forward the testimony; *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him*. [1 Cor. 2, 9] And when he had described this as hidden from 'men,' he added directly, *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit*; [1 Cor. 2, 10] separating his own self from the designation of 'man' in that having been transported above man he now tasted what is divine. So also in this place, when he told of the light of God being unapproachable, that he might shew to what persons unapproachable, he added, *Whom no man hath seen, no nor can see*. After his manner calling 'men' all whose taste is for things of man. Because they who have a taste for what is divine, are doubtless above men. Therefore we shall see God, if by a heavenly conversation we obtain to be above men. Not yet that we shall so see Him as He Himself sees His very own Self. For the Creator sees Himself in a way far unlike to that in which the creature sees the Creator. For as to the unmeasurableness of God there is a certain measure of contemplation set to us, because we are limited by the mere weight that we are a creature.

93. But assuredly we do not so behold God, as He sees Himself, as we do not so rest in God, as He rests in Himself. For our sight or our rest will

be to a certain degree like to His sight or His rest, but not equal to it. For lest we should be prostrate in ourselves, the wing of contemplation, so to say, uplifts us, and we are carried up from ourselves for the beholding Him, and being carried away by the bent of the heart and the sweetness of contemplation, in a certain manner go away from ourselves into Himself, and now this very going away of ours is not to rest, and yet so to go is most perfectly to rest. And so it is perfect rest because God is discerned, and yet it is not to be equalled to His rest, Who doth not pass on from Himself into another, that He may rest. And therefore the rest is, so to say, like and unlike, because what His rest is, our rest imitates. For that we may be blessed and eternal for everlasting, we imitate the Everlasting. And it is a great eternity to us to be imitating eternity. Nor are we heritless of Him Whom we imitate, because in seeing we partake, and in partaking imitate Him. Which same sight is now begun by faith, but is then perfected in Appearance, when we drink at the very springhead the Wisdom coeternal with God which we now derive through the lips of those that preach, as it were in running streams.

BOOK XIX.

The interpretation being carried on from the last part of the twenty-first verse of the twenty-eighth chapter to the twenty-first verse of the following chapter exclusive, various meanings are laid open not less learnedly than piously, chiefly concerning Christ and the Church.

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. WHAT wonder is it if the Eternal ‘Wisdom’ of God is not able to be seen, when the very invisible things themselves as well, which were created thereby, cannot be embraced by the eyes of men? So then by things created we learn with what self-abasement to revere the Creator of all things; so that in this life the human mind should not dare to usurp to itself aught belonging to the Appearance of Almighty God, which He reserves for His Elect only as their reward in the ensuing Recompensing. Whence after it was said, *It is hid from the eyes of all living*, we have the words thereupon introduced next;

Chap. xxviii. 21. *And is kept close also from the fowls of the air.*

2. For in Holy Scripture ‘birds’ are sometimes given to be understood in a bad sense, and sometimes in a good sense. Since by the birds of the air occasionally the powers of the air are denoted, being hostile to the settled purposes of good men. Whence it is said by the mouth of Truth, *And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it;* [Matt. 13, 4] in this way, because evilspirits besetting the minds of men, whilst they bring in bad thoughts, pluck the word of life out of the memory. Hence again it is said to a certain rich man full of proud thoughts; *the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head.* [Matt. 8, 20. Luke 9, 58.] For foxes are very cunning animals, that hide themselves in ditches and caves;

and when they face the light, they never run in straight courses, but always by crooked doublings. But the birds as we know with lofty flight lift themselves into the air. So, then, by the name of ‘foxes,’ the crafty and cunning demons, and by the title of the ‘birds of the air’ these same proud demons are denoted. As if he said, ‘The deceitful and uplifted demons find their habitation in your heart; i.e. in the imagination of pride,’ ‘but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head,’ i.e. ‘My humility findeth not rest in your proud mind.’ For as by a kind of flight that first bird lifted itself up, which said in the uplifted imagination of the heart; *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 13] Mark how he in flying sought the regions on high with pride. Which same flight also he recommended to the first of human kind as well. For they themselves by flying as it were tried to go above their own selves, when it was told them that they should taste and be like gods. And while they seek after the likeness of the Deity, they lost the blessings of immortality, which same would not by dying have gone into the earth, if they had been willing to stand with humility upon the earth.

3. But, on the other hand, ‘the birds of the air’ are wont to be put in a good sense, as in the Gospel the Lord, when He was declaring a likeness of the kingdom of heaven by a grain of mustard seed, said, *Unto what is the kingdom of heaven like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and waxed a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it*. [Luke 13, 18. 19.] For He is Himself ‘a grain of mustard seed,’ Who, when He was planted in the burial place of the garden, rose up a great tree. For He was ‘a grain,’ whereas He died, but ‘a tree,’ whereas He rose again. ‘A grain,’ through the abasement of the flesh, ‘a tree,’ through the mightiness

of His Majesty. ‘A grain,’ because *we have seen Him, and He was not regarded* [Is. 53, 2]; but ‘a tree,’ *because fairer in form than the children of men*. [Ps. 45, 2] The branches of this tree are the holy preachers. And let us see how wide they are stretched out. For what is said concerning them? *Their sound is gone forth into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world*. [Ps. 19, 4] In these ‘boughs the birds of the air rest,’ because the holy souls, which by a kind of wings of virtues lift themselves up from earthly thinking, do in the word and consolations of these take breath from the wearying of this life. And so in this place after it was said of ‘Wisdom,’ *It is hid from the eyes of all men*; it is rightly added, *It is kept close also from the fowls of the air*: because being settled in the corruptible flesh, these very persons do not in seeing penetrate the mightiness of His Nature, who earn by holy contemplation even now to fly with wings. Where it is well added,

Ver.22. *Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.*

[ii.]

4. Who are denoted by the title of ‘destruction and death,’ save the evil spirits, who proved the inventors of ‘destruction and of death,’ as of their leader himself under the appearance of his minister it is said by John, *And his name was Death*. [Rev. 6, 8] Unto whom all spirits of pride being subject, say concerning this ‘Wisdom,’ Which is God, *we have heard the fame thereof with our ears*, in this way, that the vision thereof doubtless they could not have with complete blessedness. For perfectly to see the Wisdom coeternal with God, is the same thing as to ‘have.’ Hence it is said to John of the reward of one conquering, *I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*. [Rev. 2, 17] For in this life we are able either to know or see sometimes a thing even which we have not received; but to have ‘a new

name written on a white stone' is in an eternal recompense to have the knowledge of God strange to the faculties of men, which no man can know saving he that receiveth it. Therefore as we have said, because to see God is the same thing that it is to have, therefore the evil spirits do not see this 'Wisdom,' because being cast off through pride they were never able to have It. For they shut the eyes of the heart to the light of It, resisting the rays thereof shed abroad over them, as that may be also understood of the same evil spirits, which is written, *They are of those that rebel against the light*. [Job 24, 13] And so for evil spirits to have 'heard of the fame of Wisdom,' but not to have seen that Wisdom, is at once to have ascertained the power thereof by its efficacy, and yet to have been unwilling to stand humbly under it. Hence it is said by the voice of Truth of the actual head of evil spirits, *He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth*. [John 8, 44] It follows;

Ver. 23, *God understandeth, the way thereof; and He knoweth the place thereof.*

[iii.]

5. This Wisdom coeternal with God has 'a way' in one sense, and in another sense 'a place;' but only a 'place,' if a person understand it a place not local. For God is not capable of being held close after the manner of a body. But as has been said, a place not local is meant. The 'place' of 'Wisdom' is the Father, 'the place' of the Father is 'Wisdom,' as, Wisdom Herself bearing testimony, it is said, *I am in the Father, and the Father in Me*. [John 14, 10] So then the same identical Wisdom has 'a way' in one sense, and 'a place' in another sense; 'a way' by the passing of the manhood, 'a place' by the settledness' of the Godhead. For She passes not by in the respect that She is eternal, but She does pass by in the respect that for our sakes She appeared subject to time. For it is thus written in the Gospel, *And as they departed from Jericho, the Lord passed by. And,*

behold, two blind men, sitting by the way side, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David. [Matt. 20, 29. 30.] At whose voice, as it is there written, *Jesus stood still*, [ver. 32] and restored light. Now what is it to hear passing by, but to restore sight standing still, but that by His manhood He compassionated us, Who by the power of His Godhead banished from us the darkness of our souls? For in that for our sakes He was born and suffered, that He rose again and ascended into heaven, it is as if Jesus passed by, because surely these are doings in time. But He touched and enlightened them standing still, because not as that temporal economy doth likewise the Word's Eternity pass by, Which while remaining in Itself renews all things. For God's standing is His ordering all things mutable by immutable purposing. He, then, Who heard the voices of those imploring Him while 'passing by,' restored light standing still. For though for our sakes He underwent things temporal, yet He bestowed light upon us by the same thing that He knows not to have the passing of mutability. Therefore because when He should through flesh appear to men was an uncertain thing, it is rightly said now, *God understandeth the way thereof; and He knoweth the place thereof*. As though it were expressed in plain words; 'To the thought of man the two are hidden, whether the time when by flesh Wisdom may come to men, or the mode bow, even when he appears without, He continues invisible with the Father.

6. Although this may also be understood in another sense. For 'the way thereof' is not inappropriately taken to be that actual thing that comes into the mind, and infuses itself into us in the interior. And 'the place thereof' the heart becomes, coming unto which She abides. Thus of this Her way it is said, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord* [Matt. 3, 3]; i.e. 'Open in your hearts an entrance to Wisdom at Her coming;' as it is elsewhere said; *Make a way for him, that ascendeth above the setting*. [Ps. 68, 4. Vulg.] For to 'ascend over the setting,' was by rising

again to have got the mastery over that very death, He had undergone. And so he says, *For him, that ascendeth above the setting, make ye a way*; i.e. ‘To the Lord on His rising again make a way in your hearts by faith.’ Hence it is said to John by the Spirit; *Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His way*. [Luke 1, 76] For everyone that by preaching cleanses the hearts of those that hear him from the defilements of bad habits, prepares a way for Wisdom on Her coming. Thus, this ‘Wisdom’ hath ‘a way,’ and hath ‘a place;’ ‘a way’ whereby She comes, ‘a place’ wherein She abides; as She Herself saith; *If any man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him*. [John 14, 23] So then there is ‘a way’ by which She comes, ‘a place’ wherein She abideth. But whereunto does She come, Who is every where? Is it for Wisdom to come, by the enlightening of our mind to make the presence of Her mightiness to appear? And because it is doubtful to men both into what person’s heart She comes, or in what man, after She has come, She rests in abiding there, it is rightly said now, *God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof*. Because it appertains to the Divine sight alone to see, whether by what methods the perception of Wisdom may come to the heart of man, or whose soul shall not lose by deadly imaginations the understanding of life, which it has been vouchsafed. And because this same ‘Wisdom’ made manifest by the graciousness of the Manhood was destined in all the regions of the world to fill to the full the hearts of the Elect, it is rightly added;

Ver. 24. *For he regardeth the ends of the earth, and seeth all things that are under the heaven.*

[iv.]

7. For God’s ‘regarding’ is the renewing to His grace the things that were lost and undone; whence it is written, *A King that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with His eyes*. [Prov. 20, 8] For by

regarding He restrained the evils of our lightness, and bestowed great worth of maturedness. Whence it is further added;

Who made the weight for the winds.

[v.]

8. For in the Holy Scripture, by the rapidity and subtlety of the winds souls are used to be denoted, as it is spoken by the Psalmist of God; *Who walketh above the things of the winds*; [Ps. 104, 3. Vulg.] i.e. ‘Who passes above the virtues of souls.’ Accordingly ‘He made the weight for the winds,’ in that whilst Wisdom from above fills souls, it renders them weighty with imparted maturity, not with that weightiness, of which it is said, *Ye children of men, how long with a heavy heart*. [Ps. 4, 2] For it is one thing to be weighty in respect of counsel, and another in respect of sin; it is one thing to be weighty, by constancy, another to be weighty by offence. For this latter weightiness has weight of burthen, the other weight of merit. Thus, therefore, souls receive weight, that they should not henceforth with light motion glance off from their aim at God, but be made to settle into Him with immoveable weightiness of constancy. Still was that people lightly moved to and fro, of which it is said by the Prophet, *And he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart. I have seen his ways: and I let him go.* [Is. 57, 17, 18] But weighty counsel in heart banishes all inconstancy of wandering. And because there are souls, that with light motion are now after one set of objects, now after another, Almighty God, because these very light waverings of men’s minds He does not estimate lightly, by abandoning passes judgment on the wandering of the heart. But when through grace He regards the wandering mind, He fixes it into stedfastness of counsel. And so it is rightly said now, *And made weight for the winds*; because the light motions of the mind, when He deigns to regard with mercifulness, He directly fashions that mind to maturedness of constancy. Or otherwise to ‘make weight for the winds,’ is to qualify with intermixed

infirmity the glory resulting from virtuous achievements, which is vouchsafed to the Elect here. Whence it is also subjoined;

And he weigheth the waters by measure.

[vi.]

9. ‘Waters’ in Holy Scripture are wont sometimes to denote the Holy Spirit, sometimes sacred knowledge, sometimes wrong knowledge, sometimes calamity, sometimes drifting peoples, sometimes the minds of those following, the faith. Thus by water we have the Inpouring of the Holy Spirit represented, as when it is said in the Gospel, *He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*. Where the Evangelist following on added; *But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive*. [John 7, 38. 39.] Again, by water sacred knowledge is denoted, as it is said; *And give him the water of wisdom to drink.* [Ecclus. 15, 3] By water likewise bad knowledge is wont to be designated, as when the woman in Solomon, who bears a type of heresy, charms with crafty persuasion, saying, *Stolen waters are sweet*. [Prov. 9, 17] By the term of waters too tribulation are used to be signified, as it is said by the Psalmist, *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul*. [Ps. 69, 1] By water peoples are denoted, as it is said by John, *Now the waters are peoples*. By water likewise not only the tide of peoples drifting away, but also the minds of good men that follow the preachings of faith, are denoted, as the Prophet saith, *Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters*. [Is. 32, 20] And it is said by the Psalmist; *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters*. [Ps. 29, 3] In this place, then, what is denoted by the title of ‘waters,’ saving the hearts of the Elect, which by the understanding of Wisdom, have now received the hearing of the heavenly voice? Touching whom it is rightly said; *And weigheth the waters by measure*. Because the very Saints, who by the Holy Spirit bearing them up are transported on high, so long as they are in this life, that they may not

swell high with any self-elation, are kept down by certain temptations, that they may never have the power to advance as much as they have the wish, but lest they should be exalted by pride, there takes place in them a kind of measure of their very virtues.

10. It is hence that Elijah, after that by so many achievements he had advanced on high, was suspended aloft by a kind of measure, when he afterwards fled from Jezebel, though a queen, yet only a weak woman. For I consider with myself that this man of marvellous power drew down fire from heaven, and once and again by momentary beseeching consumed the captains of fifty with all their men, by a word shut up the heavens from rain, by a word opened the heavens to rain, raising the dead, foreseeing the several things to come, and, lo, again it occurs to mind, with what dismay he fled before a single weak woman. I see the man, as being stricken with fear, from the hand of God seeking death, yet not obtaining it, from the hand of a woman shunning death by taking to flight. For he sought death, whilst he fled, saying*, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.* [1 Kings 19, 4] Whence then was he so powerful as to perform those so numerous miracles? whence so weak as to be dismayed at a woman, except that 'the waters are weighed with measure;' that the very Saints of God should at once prevail greatly through the power of God, and again be limited by a kind of measure through their own infirmity. In those powers Elijah learnt what he had received 'from God, in these weaknesses what he had power to be by himself. That mightiness was power, this weakness the keeper of power. In these powers he shewed what he had received, in these weaknesses that which he had received he kept safe. In the miracles Elijah was to be brought out to view, in the weaknesses he was to be preserved secure.

11. In the same way I see that Paul, encountering the perils of rivers and robbers, of the city and the wilderness, of sea and land, bridling the body by

fasts and watchings, undergoing the ills of cold and nakedness, exercising himself watchfully and with pastoral care to the safe-keeping of the Churches, [2 Cor. 11, 26] being caught up into the third heaven, and again caught up into Paradise, at once heard secret words which it is not permitted to man to utter, and yet is given over to an angel of Satan to be tempted; he prays that be might be released, and is not heard. And when I look to the mere beginnings of his conversion, I consider with myself that heavenly pity opens the heavens to him, and Jesus shews Himself to him from on high. He that lost the light of the body for a time, received the light of the heart for evermore. He is sent to Ananias, he is called *A chosen vessel*, [Acts 9, 15] and yet from that same city, which he had entered after the vision of Jesus, he departs in flight, as he himself bears witness, saying, *In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept guard over the city of the Damascenes, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands.* [2 Cor. 11, 32. 33.] Unto whom I will take leave to say, 'O Paul, already seest thou Jesus in heaven, and still dost thou fly man on earth? Art thou carried into Paradise, art thou made acquainted with secret words of God, and still art thou tempted by a messenger of Satan? Whence so strong, that thou art caught up to heavenly places, whence so weak that thou fliest from man on the earth, and still sufferest hard handling from a messenger of Satan, saving that the Same, Who lifts thee on high, again limits thee with the minutest measuring, that both in thy miracles thou shouldest preach to us the power of God, and again in thy fear cause us to remember our own infirmity?' Which same infirmity, however, that it may not draw us on into despair when it buffets us, whilst thou wert beseeching God touching thine infirmity, because thou wert not heard, to us also thou hast told what thou didst hear; *My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.* [2 Cor. 12, 9]

12. Thus by the plain voice of God it is shewn that the guardian of power is frailty. For we are then kept to good effect within, when by God's appointment we are tempted to a bearable degree without, sometimes by bad propensities, sometimes by pressing misfortunes. For to these likewise, whom we know to have been men of mighty virtues, there were not wanting temptations and conflicts from the vices. Hence it is that for our encouragement the same great Preacher condescends to bring to view things of that kind concerning his own case, saying, *I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] For the flesh forces down below, that the Spirit may not uplift, and the Spirit draws up on high, that the flesh may not bring to the ground. The Spirit lifts up, that we may not lie grovelling in the lower world, the flesh weighs down, that we should not be lifted up on account of the things on high. If the flesh tempted us, while the Spirit did not uplift us, too surely by the absoluteness of its tempting it would cast us down below. But again, if the Spirit lifted us above, while the flesh did not tempt, It would by that very uplifting prostrate us the worse in the fall of pride. But by a certain regulating method it takes place, that whilst each one of the Saints is already indeed transported on high inwardly, but is still tempted outwardly, he "neither incurs the downfall of desperation, nor of self-exaltation; seeing that neither does outward temptation bring transgression to its accomplishment, because the interior bent draws upwards; nor again does this interior bent lift up into pride, because the exterior temptation abases whilst it weighs down. Thus by a high appointment we see in the interior advancement what we receive, in the exterior shortcoming what we are, and by a strange method it is brought to pass that a man should neither be lifted up on the ground of virtue, nor despair on the ground of temptation, because while the Spirit draws, and the flesh draws back, by the exactest regulating of the Interior

Judgment, the soul is balanced in a kind of mean above the things below, and below the things above. Therefore it is well said,

Ver. 26, 27. *When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the sounding tempests, then did He see it and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out.*

[vii.]

13. By 'rain' the sayings of those that preach are used to be denoted. Whence it is said by Moses; *Let my doctrine be waited for as the rain*; [Deut. 32, 2] whose words, that is to say, when they gently persuade are 'rain,' but when they thunder out terrible things touching the Judgment to come, they are 'sounding tempests.' And it deserves to be noted, that 'a decree is made for the rain,' in order that 'a way may be opened for the sounding tempests.' For a decree has been set to the preachers themselves, that by living they fulfil what by uttering they are forward to recommend. For the authoritativeness of speaking is lost, when the voice is not supported by the practice. For here it is said by the Psalmist, *But unto the wicked God saith; What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee.* [Ps. 50, 16. 17.] For the words of God the preacher does cast behind himself, when the same that he says he thinks scorn to do. But when may another obey his sayings, whilst he himself rejects in practice what he preaches with the voice, and shews not to hear that he tells? Of this law of preaching it is written; *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoso shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 5, 19] 'The kingdom of heaven,' we see, He calls the present Church; concerning which it is written, *And they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend*. [Matt. 13, 41] For in the Kingdom Above 'offences' that should

have to be gathered out thereof do not take place. He then that breaks in practice, and teaches the like in words, in this kingdom of heaven shall be the least, in the other not even the least. Now ‘He set a way to the sounding tempests,’ when for His preachers He made access to the hearts of men stricken with dread of the Judgment to come. So first ‘a law is set,’ that afterwards ‘a way may be opened,’ because that voice pierceth the heart of him that heareth, which maintains by practice the thing that it has sounded with the lips. Now it was then when ‘He set a law to the showers, and a way to the sounding tempests,’ that God ‘saw, declared, prepared, and searched’ this ‘Wisdom.’ By a mode of speech customary to Holy Writ, for God to see is a phrase for causing us to see, as the Lord saith to the righteous man, *Now I know that thou fearest God*. [Gen. 22, 12] And the Israelites are forewarned; *The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God*, [Deut. 13, 3] i.e. ‘that He may make you to know.’ At that time, then, when ‘He set a law to the showers,’ i.e. gave the precept of watching to the preachers, this ‘Wisdom’ made Incarnate He caused to be ‘seen and declared’ by the preachers, to be ‘prepared and searched’ by the hearers. Since he ‘prepares’ Her for himself, whosoever by living aright is procuring Her favourable against the Day of Judgment. And observe that there are four particulars spoken respecting her. For he says, *He did see it and declare it, He prepared it, yea, He searched it.* Thus He ‘saw,’ in that She is ‘a Likeness;’ He ‘declared it,’ in that She is ‘the Word;’ ‘prepared it,’ in that She is a remedy; and ‘searched it,’ in that She is a thing hidden from sight. But this, viz. that the Eternal Wisdom of God is ‘the Likeness’ and ‘the Word’ of the Father, when is it penetrated by the mind of man? For who might understand either a Word apart from time, or a Likeness apart from limiting. Therefore there was need for something to be said, which man might recognise concerning Her by himself; whence it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 28. *And unto man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*

[viii.]

14. As though it were spoken in plain speech; 'Man, turn back to thine own self; sift thoroughly the secrets of thine own heart. If thou findest out that thou dost fear God, surely it is plain that of this Wisdom thou art full. Which same if thou art not able to learn what in herself She is, meanwhile thou henceforth findest what She is in thyself. For She that is feared in herself by the Angels, in thee is called 'the fear of the Lord.' Because it is certain that thou possessest Her, if it is not uncertain that thou dost fear God.' Hence also it is said by the Psalmist; *The beginning of Wisdom is the fear of the Lord*, [Ps. 111, 10] because She then begins to penetrate the heart, when She disturbs it by the dread of the final Judgment. Therefore the Word of God draws Itself in to our littleness; just as a father, when he speaks to his little child, in order that he may be able to be understood by him, talks stammeringly of his own accord. For because we are unable to penetrate the nature of Wisdom, what She is in herself, by the condescension of God, we have heard what She is in us, when it is said, *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom.* But because he really understands the force of Divine fear, who keeps himself from all bad practices, it is rightly subjoined; *And, to depart from evil is understanding.* So then the things that come after, that they are full of the spirit of prophecy, the words of the sacred history themselves bear testimony, whereas it is said,

C. xxix. l. *Moreover Job continued his parable, and said.*

[ix.]

15. For because a parable is a name for a likeness, it plainly appears that through a form of exterior words he speaks mysteries, who with reference to speaking is recorded to have 'taken up a parable.'

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

For when he relates his own circumstances, he is telling all the things that are to come to Holy Church, and through the thing that he himself undergoes he points out what she should undergo. But sometimes he so mixes the words of his own history, that he sounds not of any thing allegorical, while sometimes he so utters his own sorrows as though he were giving utterance in the voice of the sorrowing Church. But in the last part of his discourse, he designates the last time of the Church, when her adversaries, i.e. carnal persons, or heretics and pagans, whom she now busies herself to repress by the authority of wisdom, being set up with unbridled boastfulness, she is obliged to put up with, while derided. Whence in this discourse likewise it is said; *But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.* [Job 30, 1] And the very principle of the arrangement requires that by the last words of blessed Job, the last days of Holy Church should be denoted, when, persecution increasing, she is forced to bear the undisguised voices of heretics, when those motions of their hearts, which they now cover up within the depths of their thoughts, they then disclose in the utterance of error made manifest. For now, as it is said by John, the dragon is imprisoned and held fast in the *bottomless pit* [Rev. 20, 3], because the wickedness of the devil is hidden from sight in their crafty hearts. But, as is there said, the dragon shall be brought forth out of the bottomless pit, because whatsoever is now covered over from fear, then against the Church openly out of the hearts of the wicked is all that serpent's venom brought to light. For now the envenomed feeling hides itself from sight under a flattering tongue, and malevolence of craft as it were covers itself with a kind of bottomless pit of dissembling. Now the Lord, as it is expressed by the voice of the Psalmist, *gathereth the waters of the sea as in a skin.* [Ps. 33, 7] For the 'skin' is carnal thinking. So 'the

waters of the sea are gathered in a skin,' when the bitterness of a froward mind does not burst forth outwardly into the voice of unhallowed liberty. Surely the time shall come, when the froward and the carnal speak forth against her with unreserved voice that which they now go about with secret thought. The time shall come when they shall oppress the Catholic Church not only with unjust words, but with cruel wounds.

16. For from her adversaries the Church suffers persecution in two ways, viz. either by words or by swords. Now when she bears persecution by words, her wisdom is put in exercise, when by swords, her patience. Now persecutions of words we do now too as well daily undergo at the hands of heretics, when heretics themselves flatter us with crafty tongues and with feigned humility, but the persecutions of swords are destined to follow towards the end of the world, that the grains to be stored up in the heavenly granaries may be the more genuinely cleared of the chaff of sins, the more straitly they are bruised with affliction. Then all the Elect, that may be caught in that tribulation, call to mind these times when now the Church secures the peace of the faith, when she holds under the proud necks of heretics, not by the potency of her highness, but by the yoke of reason. They call to mind ourselves, who are passing quiet times of faith, who, though we be straitened in the wars [Alluding to the hostilities of the Lombards especially.] of the nations, yet are not driven to extremity in the sayings of Fathers. Thus blessed Job bearing a type of Holy Church, which is then found in these straits, and yet remembers herself of our tranquillity, as I said, describes the particulars of himself past, and tells the particulars destined to come to others, saying;

Ver. 2. *Who would give me that I might be as in the months past?*

[x.]

17. For Holy Church being borne down with sorrows is to say many like things. For it shall be for her to be besieged with such great tribulations, as

with great sighing to long for these times, which we undergo with great sorrow. So then let her say, let her say in the voice of blessed Job, *Who would give me that I might be as in the months past?* For because an appointed number of days has the name of 'months,' what else does he signify by the title of months, but the gatherings of souls? For days, while they are gathered in months, are removed away, because in this time as well Holy Church, while she gathers in souls shining bright with the light of truth, hides them in the interior depths. Sometimes also a month is put for perfection, as when the Prophet says, *It shall be a month from a month*; [Is. 66, 23] i.e. perfection in rest to those, to whom there may now be perfection in practice. So let her remember her perfection of old, let her bring back to mind with what preaching of hers, by souls gathered in, she carried off her gains, and being straitened by tribulations, let her say, *Who would give me that might be as in the months of old?* In which same months, who and what he was, he subjoins in telling over, saying;

Ver. 3. *As in the days when God preserved me; when His lamp shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness.*

[xi.]

18. For then, persecution forcing thereto, she sees multitudes of the frail fall from her, whom now as a mother she cherishes as her little ones within the bosom of peace, and keeps close within the quiet cradles of faith, seeing that being mixed with the strong they are nurtured by the very tranquillity of the faith. But then many such are destined to fall, and through the bowels of charity, whatever it sustains in the damage of the little ones, the mind of the perfect laments that itself undergoes. For every damage of the weak is by compassion made to pass to the hearts of the strong, Whence it is said by Paul, *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* [2 Cor. 11, 29] For a man is perfect in such proportion as he perfectly feels the sorrows of others. Whence Holy Church, being brought to a pass by the

weak ones falling at that time, shall say with right, *As in the days when God preserved me*; because herself she then accounts to fall in those, who now sees herself in these to be kept safe. And it is well said, *When His lamp shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness*. For by the term of a 'lamp' the light of Holy Scripture is represented, whereof the Shepherd of the Church himself saith, *We have also the word of prophecy more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts*. [2 Pet. 1, 19] And the Psalmist saith, *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* [Ps. 119, 105] Now because our topmost part is the mind, the mind is rightly styled by the designation of 'head.' Whence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou hast anointed my head with oil.* [Ps. 23, 5] As if he said in plain terms, 'Thou hast filled my soul with the fatness of charity.' And so now 'the lamp shines upon the head' of the Church, because the sacred Oracles enlighten the darkness of our minds, that in this darksome place of the present life, whilst we receive the light of the word of God, we should see what things are to be done. Now she 'walks by His light in darkness,' because the Holy Church Universal, though it penetrate not the secrets of another's thought, because as it were it does not know the face in the night, yet it sets the steps of good practice, being governed by the light of Heavenly Revelation. It goes on;

Ver.4. *As I was in the days of my youth, when God was secretly in my tabernacle.*

[xii.]

19. As of each individual man, so is the age of Holy Church described. For she was a little one, when fresh from the birth she was unable to preach the Word of Life. Hence it is said of her, *My sister is a little one, and she hath no breasts*; [Cant. 8, 8] in this way, that Holy Church, before she made progress by accessions of virtue, was not able to yield the teats of preaching

to the weak ones her hearers. But the Church is called ‘adult’ when being wedded to the Word of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, by the office of preaching she is with young in the conception of children, with whom by exhorting she travails, whom by converting she brings forth. Of this age of hers it is said to the Lord; *The young maidens have loved Thee*. [Cant. 1, 3] For all the Churches, which constitute one Catholic Church, are called young maidens, not now aged by sin, but young ones by grace, not barren by old age, but by the age of the soul fitted for spiritual fruitfulness. Accordingly then, when in those days being as it were enfeebled by a kind of old age she hath not strength to bring forth children by preaching, she calls to mind the bygone fruitfulness, saying, *As I was in the days of my youth.* Though after those days wherein she is borne down, yet, this notwithstanding, now at length towards the actual end of times, she is empowered with a mighty efficacy of preaching. For the Gentiles being taken in to the full, all the Israelitish people that shall then be found she draws into the bosom of the faith. Since it is written; *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] But before those times there shall be days, in the which she shall appear for a little while borne down by her adversaries, when too she remembers these days, saying,

As I was in the days of my youth; when God was secretly in my tabernacle.

20. What in this place do we take the ‘tabernacle’ for but the dwelling-place of the mind? Because by all that we do with taking thought, we dwell in the counsel of our heart. But whoever in silence thinks of the precepts of God, to him ‘God is secretly in his tabernacle.’ For he had seen the dwelling-place of his heart to be before the eyes of God, who said, *And the meditation of my heart always in Thy sight*. [Ps. 19, 14] For outward deeds are open to the eyes of men, but widely and incomparably more our interior

and minutest thoughts are open to the eyes of God. *For*, as it is written, *all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him*. And oftentimes in the outward deed we are afraid to appear disordered before the eyes of men, and in the interior thought are not afraid of the regard of Him, Whom, whilst He sees all things, we see not. For we are much more discernible by God within than we are by men without. And hence all the Saints scan themselves both within and without on every side, and are in fear of either shewing themselves blameworthy outwardly, or wicked inwardly to the invisible seeing. It is hence that the living creatures, which are seen by the Prophet, are recorded to be 'full of eyes round about and within.' [Ez. 1, 18. &10, 12. Rev. 4, 6. & 8.] For he that orders his outward circumstances respectably, but disregards the inward, has eyes 'round about' but not 'within.' But all the Saints, because they at once scan their exterior ways round and round that they may furnish good examples in themselves to their brethren, and watchfully mark their interior ways, because they are providing themselves irreproachable for the regarding eye of the Interior Judge, are described as having eyes both 'round about and within;' and that they may please God, even more do they make themselves complete within their interior self, as it is said by the Psalmist as well of Holy Church, *All the glory of her, the king's daughter, is from within*. [Ps. 45, 13] But because she keeps her outward things also irreproachable, he added with justice concerning her; *Clothed about in clothing of wrought gold with embroidery*. That she should be at once beautiful to herself 'within,' and to others 'without,' both advancing herself by interior glory, and instructing others by the outward examples of deeds. Thus then let blessed Job say in himself, yea, let him say in the person of the Church Universal, *When God was secretly in my tabernacle*. For that he may make it evident how much he had advanced within, he tells, that 'God was secretly in his tabernacle.'

That he may also shew the deeds of righteousness to what extent he outwardly kept them, he adds;

Ver. 5. *When the Almighty was yet with me; and when my servants were about me.*

[xiii.]

21. Now all that stand in awe of the divine precepts become God's 'tabernacle.' Hence as we have already said above, 'Truth' saith by Himself of the man that keeps His commandments, *I and My Father will come and make Our abode with him*. [John 14, 23] Contrariwise the wicked severally, whereas they do not aim at the things within, pour themselves forth without in the thoughts of their hearts. Whence it is said to them by the Prophet, *Turn back to the heart within, O ye transgressors.* [Is. 46, 8] And again, *Woe to you that devise a vain thing.* [Mic. 2, 1] Since in their actions they are afraid of men, whom they see with bodily sight, and God, Whom they do not see, they do not account to be present to them. Contrary whereunto it is said in commendation of a righteous person, seeing that he disregarded the king of Egypt, and obeyed the commandments of God, *For he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible.* [Heb. 11, 27] For the wicked ruler of the earth he as it were saw not, in that he banished him from the eyes of the heart. But the King Invisible 'as seeing,' 'he endured,' because from the regarding of His fear he turned not aside the eye of the soul. So Holy Church being taken then in great tribulations, when she sees many by evil imagining depart from God, surely she sees the tabernacle of their mind on God's departing to remain empty, and justly lamenting, she says, *When God was secretly in my tabernacle*. By which words, and not inappropriately, the feigning of religion is likewise bewailed, because there are those even now that aim not to be, but to seem Christians. These without question have God in public, not 'in secret.' But Holy Church desires to have God 'in secret,' because He regards those really faithful ones, whom He knows to be

holding on to the life of faith with complete affection. Which same, as well also with reference to the external uprightness of her activity, saith, *When the Almighty was yet with me: when my servants were about me*. 'Servants' surely those are called, who do the bidding of the heavenly precepts. Whence the Lord saith by the Prophet, *Behold I, and my servants which the Lord hath given me*. [Is. 8, 18] And again in the Gospel, *Servants* [*Pueri* Vulg. The Greek diminutive hardly bears this.], *have ye any meat?* [John 21, 5] And so now 'the servants are round about her,' because in all nations almost there are found those that keep the commandments of heaven, and obey the rules of spiritual discipline. Which servants, too truly, shall then be lacking to do her service, when the wicked doers, that shall be found, despise her spiritual precepts. It goes on;

Ver. 6. *When I washed my feet with butter.*

[xiv.]

22. Whereas we have already frequently said that Christ and the Church are one person, He, that is to say, the Head of that Body, and She the Body of that Head; these words are to be understood after the voice of the Head in one way, after the voice of the Body in another way. Whom then do we take for 'the feet' of the Lord, but the holy Preachers. Of whom He saith, *And I will walk in them*. [Lev. 26, 12] Thus 'the feet are washed with butter,' because the holy Preachers are filled to the full with the fatness of good works. For, as we have already said above, scarcely is the mere preaching itself carried on without something being done wrong. For any man preaching is either drawn on into some slight indignation, if he is despised, or into some little glorying, if he is reverenced by those that hear him. Whence the Apostles too had their feet washed, that from any slight defilement contracted in the act of preaching itself they might be cleansed as from a sort of dust collected by a journey. And blessed James saith, *My brethren, be not many masters.* And a little after, *For in many things we*

offend all. [Jam. 3, 1. 2.] Thus 'the feet are washed with butter,' because the dust gathered by glory in preaching is steeped and cleansed by the fatness of good works. Or otherwise 'the feet are washed with butter,' when the wages owing are paid to the holy Preachers by those that hear, and those whom the imposed labour of preaching exhausts, the richness of good practice exhibited by the disciples cheers; not that they preach for this that they may be fed, but that they are therefore fed, that they may preach; i.e. that they may hold up to preach; not so that the action of the preacher should pass into the aim of getting support, but that the ministering of support should be made subservient to the usefulness of preaching. Whence by good preachers it is not for the sake of the means of living that preaching is rendered, but for the sake of preaching that the means of living are accepted. And as often as what is wanted is bestowed on those that preach by those that hear them, they are not used to take delight in the benefit of the good things, but in the reward of those bestowing them. Whence it is said by Paul, *Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit.* [Phil. 4, 17.] For the 'gift' is the actual thing that is bestowed; but the fruit thereof is if with a kindly disposition a thing be bestowed in the pursuit of the future recompense. So we receive the gift in the thing, the fruit thereof in the heart. And because the Apostle was fed rather by the recompense of his disciples than by the benefaction, he avouches that he 'seeks not a gift,' but 'fruit.' Hence he straightway added, saying, But I have all and abound. Therefore 'the feet are washed with butter,' when the holy preachers, as we said, worn out by the actual preaching itself, are regaled with the good deeds of their hearers. For the weary 'feet' he had 'anointed with butter,' who heard, *Because the bowels of the Saints are refreshed by the brother*. [Philem. 7.] With this 'butter the foot was anointed,' which was held fast in fetters, saying, *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.* [2 Tim. 1, 16] So then if by

the voice of the Head we form our estimate of the words, we do rightly as has been said in taking ‘the feet’ for preachers.

23. But if we are to interpret these words in the voice of the Body alone, then the feet of the Church are the ministers of inferior works, which whilst they enforce the things that are without for necessary purposes, by the lowest ministration stick to the ground like feet. But they that are at the head, who are intent on the pursuit of instruction, ought with heedful care to question the hearts of the busied, and by the voice of frequent admonition to administer to them that pouring in of richness which they themselves as disengaged receive, For because in one body the members are interested for one another reciprocally, just as our outermost parts are stayed up by their ministrations, so it is necessary that their interior parts should be filled by our pursuits. When then to persons devoted to the extremest offices the holy doctors preach the anointing oil of our Lord’s Incarnation, they ‘wash the feet with the butter’ of utterance, Moreover the feet are accustomed to be lacerated by the mere ruggedness of the way; whence it is altogether difficult at once to go a journey in the earthly actions of this life, and not sustain any wounds at all from the exertion of the journey. And so when the rulers keeping watch call back to their heart within their hearers engrossed with exterior concerns, that they may ascertain what evil things they have committed amidst the very deeds allowed to be done, and that what they find out they may bewail, ‘they wash the feet with butter;’ because to the wounds of these persons they administer the ointments of penitence. Therefore let Holy Church being unspeakably afflicted remember how in the time of her peace she purified by the word of exhortation even the furthest members in herself, and let her say, *When I washed my feet with butter*.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Which it is wonderfully interesting to view in the case of blessed Job, who amidst so many cares of property, so many interests for children, so many engagements of sacrifices, preached to his dependents, howsoever the very farthest, the good things of the life ensuing, that those he might inoculate touching heavenly things, who were working for him at earthly services. What do we Bishops say to all this, who to those committed to us care not to render the word of life, when a wedded husband, neither the secular garb, nor the management of large means were able to debar the office of preaching.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But saving the historical verity, let us now return to the words of Holy Church, who tells by blessed Job, i.e. by the mouth of a Member of her own, how great are the things that she shall suffer in the last time, when she remembers her past fortunes, when by that same richness of the word the life of those in action was cleansed. Who in more fully following out that same watchfulness of her preachers adds;

And the rock poured me out rivers of oil.

[xv.]

24. That by the title of a rock Christ is denoted, the great Preacher avouches, saying, *And that rock was Christ*. [1 Cor. 10, 4] Which very 'rock' doth now 'pour out rivers of oil' for the use of Holy Church, because the Lord by speaking therein gives out the preachings of the interior anointing. 'From this Rock that river of oil issued forth,' the book of Matthew, the book of Mark, the book of Luke, and the book of John. In the several regions of this world for all the preachings she put forth, this 'Rock poured out' as many 'rivers of oil' by the mouths of the Apostles. As many times still 'a river of oil is poured out from this Rock,' as often as to the minds of the hearers, to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, those things are explained

which are spoken concerning Christ in the old Books. And they are called ‘rivers of oil,’ because they run out and anoint; in which same he that is dipped is anointed, and he that is anointed is fattened within. Of which fatness doubtless it is that the Psalmist saith, *Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness*. [Ps. 63, 5] It may be that by the designation of oil the actual anointing of the Holy Spirit is denoted, whereof it is said by the Prophet; *And the yoke shall rot at the presence of the oil*. [Is. 10, 27.] For ‘the yoke doth rot at the presence of the oil,’ because whilst we are anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are set free from the bondage of our captivity; and whereas the proud dominion of the evil spirit is thrown off, the yoke is broken in pieces, wherewith the necks of our liberty were borne down. Of this oil again it is written; *A vineyard was made to my beloved on the horn, a child of oil*. [Is. 5, 1.] For ‘a child of oil,’ the faithful people is called, which is engendered to the faith of God by the interior anointing of the Holy Spirit. And so at that time let Holy Church, being borne down by countless sorrows, recal to remembrance the gifts of the Spirit and the marvellous preachings which are her’s now, and let her bewail her own silence, saying, *The rock poured me out rivers of oil*. To which words he fitly subjoins;

Ver.7-10. *When I went out to the gate of the city, and in the street they prepared me a chair? The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men rose up and stood. The princes ceased to speak, and laid the finger on the mouth. The rulers held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their mouth.*

[xvi.]

25. It was the custom of the ancients, that the elders should sit together in the gates, and judge the cases of those entering in, that so the people of the city might be the more peaceful, in proportion as it was not allowed to those at variance to enter in. Now we in revering the sacred history hold it

certain that all this blessed Job did for the sake of the observance of just dealing, and we are led to the investigating the mysteries of the allegory. What then is denoted by 'the gate of the city' saving every good action, by which the soul enters in to the company of the heavenly Kingdom? Hence the Prophet saith; *Thou, that liftest me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all Thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion*. [Ps. 9, 13. 14.] For 'the gates of death' are bad actions, which drag to destruction; but because 'Sion' is the word for 'a viewing,' 'the gates of Sion 'we interpret good actions, by which we enter into the Country Above, that we may view the glory of our King. But what is denoted by the seat but the authority of mastership. Now 'a street' in the Greek tongue is equivalent to 'breadth.' And so now Holy Church goes forth to the gate of the city, because that she may obtain access to the heavenly country, she puts herself out in holy actions. For whom there is 'a seat prepared in the street,' because in the breadth of high authority she displays the freedom of her mastership. For she that proclaims with public announcement the right things she has a perception of as it were 'sits in the street on the seat,' in that she fears no one for her preaching, and oppressed by alarms for no man buries herself under silence. Does not she in public sit in command to teach, whom at one and the same time truth in perceiving and power in teaching bear up? But whilst he 'went forth to the gate, and sat in the street on the seat,' what was done by the light-minded, what by the grave, he adds, saying;

Ver. 8. *The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men rose up and stood.*

[xvii.]

26. If we give heed to the history, the things that he said we believe, if to the allegory, we see the things that he foretold; for those use to be called 'young men' who are not burdened with any weightiness of counsels. But Holy Scripture is used to call those 'elders,' not who are ripe by amount of

years alone, but by ancientness of character. Hence it was said by one that was wise; *For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years; but the understanding of a man is grey hairs, and a spotless life is old age.* [Wisd. 4, 8. 9.] Whence the Lord also rightly saith to Moses; *Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest that they are elders of the people.* [Num. 11, 16] In whom what else is required saving the old age of the heart, when such sort of persons are bidden to be chosen who are known to be elders? For if it were the old age of the body that were sought for in them, they might have been known by as many as they might have been seen by. But whereas it is said, *whom thou knowest that they are elders of the people*; doubtless it is clear that the old age of the mind and not of the body is told as fit to be chosen. Thus now 'the young men see Holy Church, and hide themselves, and the old men rise up and stand,' because her activity and uprightness the immature are afraid of, the aged magnify. They that are light of mind flee, but the grave and perfect do homage to her by rising up to the merits of her life. Since the discipline thereof the perfect sort love, the imperfect ones blame. And so 'the young men see her and hide themselves,' because they are afraid to be detected in their hidden courses of conduct. But 'the elders rise up and stand,' because all the perfect make it appear by humility how much they have gained ground in good practice. But because he describes all this of his own people, let him describe as well how he is feared by foreign people.

Ver. 9, 10. *The princes ceased to speak, and laid the finger on the mouth. The rulers held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat.*

[xviii.]

27. Who else in this place can be understood as leaders or princes, but the framers of heretical evil? Concerning whom it is said by the Psalmist, *Strife was poured out upon their princes, and they led them aside in the pathless place, and not in the way*. [Ps. 107, 40] For these identical persons,

while they are not afraid to interpret the dispensation of God in a wrong sense, assuredly draw the common herds subject to them not into that way which is ‘Christ,’ but into ‘a pathless place:’ over whom ‘strife also is lightly said to be poured out,’ because by their statements they contradict mutually themselves. For Arius in receiving three Persons in the Divine Nature believed three Gods as well. Contrary to whom Sabellius taking up one God believed there was one Person. Between whom Holy Church unswervingly holding the right pathway of her preaching both in proclaiming one God, asserts against Sabellius three Persons, and in asserting three Persons, confesses against Arius one God. Again, because in sacred Revelation Manichaeus found virginity to be commended, he condemned marriage. But on the other hand Jovinian, because he knew marriages to be allowed, despised the pureness of virginity. Whence it takes place that, heretics being always at cross purposes by a wrong apprehension, reciprocally their wickedness is at once in accordance with itself in sin, and at variance with itself in opinion. But on the other hand Holy Church midway between the disputes of either side moves with composed peace, and knows so to receive the higher good, that she also knows to venerate [note: He probably uses this strong word on account of the *sanctity* of marriage] the lower, so that she should neither equal the highest to the lowest, nor again despise the lowest whilst she venerates the highest. And so now the rulers of heretical multitudes considering well the authority of Holy Church cease to speak, and as it were ‘put the finger on their mouth,’ whilst with false complaints they signify that they are restrained not by the reasoning of the voice but by the hand of power. ‘The rulers hold their peace,’ because those same persons who endeavour to draw after them the people going wrong, that they should not now dare to utter what is wrong, are checked at once by the weight of authority and the efficacy of reason. Whose ‘tongue cleaveth to their throat,’ because though

they dare not to speak what is bad with an unrestrained utterance, yet they inwardly cover up in themselves all the things which they go to work to propound untrue against the true faith; therefore these times, the Church, being seized by the tribulation ensuing, calls to mind and laments, saying, *When I went out to the gate through the city, and when they prepared me a seat in the street; the young men saw me and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up; the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouths. The leaders held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat.* As though she said in plain speech; 'When there was an opportunity given me to preach with a voice publicly raised, everyone who was not in subjection to the truth dreaded me.' For at that time, when Holy Church is weighed down by adversity, license of speech is afforded to all the bad preachers severally. Which Jeremiah beholding long while beforehand, saith, *Even the sea-monsters bare the breasts; they give suck to their young ones.* For what else does he designate 'monsters,' [lamiae] saving heretics bearing the face indeed of a human being, but the hearts of brute creatures through impiety? Which same then 'bare the breast,' when they freely preach their error. Then they 'give suck to their young' in that the misattached souls of the young ones, while they insinuate therein what is wrong, by nourishing they confirm in impiety. It follows;

Ver. 11. *The ear hearing me, blessed me; and the eye seeing, gave witness to me.*

[xix.] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

28. Whereas blessed Job avouches himself to be 'blessed by those that heard him,' and to 'have witness given to him by those that saw him,' what he was in speech and what in practice, we have shewn us. For neither is he henceforth perfect in practice, whom wickedness of the tongue still withstands, or praiseworthy in speech who does not exhibit in practice the

thing that he utters. Therefore that blessed Job being found out by the reproaches of his own friends, might declare that he had both these, he shews himself to have been an object of veneration both to the persons bearing and the persons seeing him. Which if we refer to the voice of Holy Church, that man 'blesses her words,' who completes in practice the things he has heard.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

That person 'gives testimony to her,' who in patterns of life responds to her by living well. For he in a true sense sees Holy Church, whose life bears witness that he sees her. For to this end the righteousness of the good is seen within her, that all that see her may be corrected of their wickednesses. Not yet, then, does he see the good within the pale of Holy Church, who is not reformed from evil habits. But whence 'the testimony is rendered to him,' is shewn, in that he subjoins;

Ver. 12, 13. *Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I comforted the widow's heart.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

[xx.]

29. Great mercifulness these deeds are proofs of, to 'deliver the poor that crieth,' to minister aid to the 'fatherless,' to rescue one on the point to perish, to 'cheer the heart of the widow.' For above it was said what he put forth in respect of instruction. For he says; *The ear hearing blessed me*; but now he relates what he rendered in respect of mercifulness, saying, *Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him*. Since the voice along with the deed of necessity accords with itself.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

These things blessed Job both exhibited to those under him, and thus notwithstanding represented them as destined to be exhibited by Holy Church. Who doth now unceasingly enact both one and the other, that is to say, that her children she should at once feed by speaking, and protect by shielding, so that she should at once by words replenish the good, and by her patronage defend them from the evil. Now it is well written; *Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind*. [Gen. 1, 11] Which really and truly happened in such a way, that it was a sign of something really and truly to happen, For by 'the earth' the Church is represented, which both regales us with the provender of the word, and keeps us safe by the shadow of her patronage; which both by speaking feeds and by aiding protects, so that she should not only bring forth the herb of refreshment, but also along with the fruit of the deed, the tree of protection.

[Historical Interpretation]

30. I see that it also deserves to be well considered by those who head the governments of the common herds, that in saying above, *The young men saw me and hid themselves*; he now affirms, *I comforted the widow's heart*. What great discipline of rule, that before his presence 'the young men' should 'hide themselves!' What great mildness of pitying that by him 'the widows' hearts should be cheered!' For there are some persons so severe that they lose even all gentleness of kindly affection, and there are some so mild, that they part with the lights of strict rule. Whence by all rulers both are with all diligence to be maintained, that neither in the rigorousness of discipline they abandon the loving-kindness of a mild disposition, not again in gentleness abandon severity of discipline, so that they may neither grow

hard to the fellow-feeling of pitifulness, when they chastise the contumacious, nor enervate the strong arm of discipline when they cheer the hearts of the weak. Thus, then, let vigour of discipline control mildness, and mildness adorn vigour, and so let the one be recommended by the other, that neither vigour become hard, nor mildness unstrung.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

31. Now these works of pitifulness, which we have named above, Holy Church at once exhibits corporally, and ceases not to exhibit spiritually. For she 'delivers the poor that crieth,' when to the sinner imploring pardon she remits those sins which he has been guilty of. Since it is of such poor that it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 5, 3] And the cry of such poor ones is the cry of those saying in the voice of the Psalmist, *Let Thy tender mercy speedily prevent us*; *for we are made very poor*. [Ps. 79, 8] Now she 'delivers the fatherless who hath no helper,' in that everyone who now flying the desires of a persecuting world, his old father the devil being dead, runneth to the bosom of Holy Church, finds therein the help of exhortation. It may be that by the title of 'the fatherless,' any believer may be understood even with reference to the death of a good father, of the sight of whom he is deprived for a while, though not deprived of solace. And 'the blessing' too 'of him that was ready to perish' comes upon her, when she anticipates the destruction of a sinner, and when by holy admonitions she brings him back from the pit of sin. Whence it is written; *He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*. [Jam. 5, 20] For if it is a thing of great recompense to rescue from death the flesh sooner or later to die, of what high merit is it to free the soul from death, to live without end in the heavenly country? Now 'the heart of the widow' she 'comforteth,' in that to each faithful soul he that describes the recompenses of the Lord, as it

were recalls to remembrance the blessings of her husband. Unto Whom as the soul is spiritually united, He being dead, she is called ‘a widow,’ but is cheered by the declarations of Holy Church in consequence of His Resurrection. Great consolation therefore doth the heart of the widow receive, when the faithful soul learns by the words of the Church somewhat concerning the Coming of Him, to Whom she is spiritually united. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *With righteousness was I clothed, and arrayed myself as with raiment.*

[HISTORICAL / MORAL INTERPRETATION]

[xxi.]

32. Surely, when we are clothed with a garment, we are surrounded on every side, and so he is ‘clothed with righteousness as with a garment,’ who defends himself on every side with good practice, and leaves no part of his conduct naked to sin; for he that is just in some deeds and unjust in others, it is as if he covered over this side, and exposed that one naked; nor are those henceforth good deeds, which are defiled by other evil deeds springing up. For hence it is said by Solomon, *He that offendeth in one thing, shall lose many that are good.* [Eccl. 9, 18. Vulg.] Hence James saith, *But whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he shall be guilty of all.* [Jam. 2, 10] Which same sentence of his be himself diligently unfolded, when he added, *For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.* [Jam. 2, 11]

33. And so with the eyes of the heart stretched out roundabouts, watching must be enforced by us on every side. Hence it is rightly said by Solomon also, *Keep thy heart with all watching, for out of it are the issues of life.* [Prov. 4, 23] For going to say *watching*, he put first *all*, without

question that each one might scan himself diligently on this side and on that side, and as long as he is in this life know that he is set in pitched battle against spiritual enemies, lest the reward which he is making up by one set of actions, he should lose by another set, lest on this side he bar the door against the enemy, but on another side open an entrance. For if against plotting enemies a city be encompassed by a great rampart, be girt with strong walls, on every side defended by a sleepless watch, yet a single opening only be left therein undefended through neglect, from this quarter surely the enemy enters in, who seemed to be every way shut out. For that Pharisee who went up into the Temple to pray, with what fortifying he had begirt the city of his soul, let us hear. *I fast twice in the week, he says, I give tithes of all that I possess.* [Luke 18, 12] He that set out with *I thank Thee,* did, surely, employ extraordinary defences. But let us see where he left an opening undefended for a plotting enemy; *Because I am not as this publican.* See how he opened the city of his heart to plotting enemies through self-exalting, which city he fruitlessly shut close by fasting and almsgiving. Vainly is all the rest defended, when one spot by which an entrance lies open to the enemy is not defended. He rightly gave thanks, but wrongly exalted himself above the publican. The city of his heart by being lifted up he betrayed, which by living abstemiously, and by giving alms, he guarded. The greedy appetite was subdued by abstinence, the gluttony of the belly was destroyed, a grasping inclination was got the better of, by bountifulness covetousness was kept down. With what great pains do we suppose this to have been done? But, alas! what a series of painful efforts being struck by one bad point fell to the ground! What great excellencies were killed by the sword of one sin! Whence it is needful with great diligence both always to be doing good things, and to keep ourselves heedfully in the thought of the heart from the very good things themselves,

lest, if they uplift the mind, they be not good, which are enlisted not to the Creator, but to pride.

34. With reference to which particular we are not acting irregularly, if from the books, though not Canonical [Note: Cited by Cosin, Scholast. Hist. of Canon, c. viii. art. xcix. where some attempts at reconciling such statements with the decree of the Council of Trent are discussed. The same work contains a general review of authorities on the Canon of H. S. a subject too extensive for a mere note.], yet brought out for the edifying of the Church, we bring forward testimony. Thus Eleazar in the battle smote and brought down an elephant, but fell under the very beast that he killed. [1 Macc. 6, 46] Whom, then, does this one represent, whom his own victory bore down, but those persons who overcome bad habits, but by being lifted up are brought down under the very things they bring under? For it is as if he died under the enemy he lays low, who is lifted up by the sin that he subdues. Accordingly it deserves above every thing to be considered, that good points cannot avail, if bad ones that creep in unawares are not guarded against. All that is done perishes, if it be not heedfully preserved in humility. Hence too it is well said of the first parent himself; *And the Lord put the man into the Paradise of pleasure, to work and to keep it.* [Gen. 2, 15] For he 'worketh,' who does in act the good that is enjoined. But what he has wrought he keepeth not, whom that creepeth upon which is forbidden. Therefore let blessed Job, because he had covered himself on every side with good practice, say, *With righteousness I was clothed, and arrayed myself as with a garment.* Where it is forthwith added,

And my judgment a diadem.

35. The judgments of the righteous are rightly compared to a 'diadem,' because by the gloriousness of great practice, they lead to a crown of rewarding. Which same judgments they carry on with themselves day by day in the interior, what they owe to God, what to their neighbour, they look

to with quick discernment, and they kindle themselves with ardour to the doing of what is good, and rebuke themselves with severity for the evil things committed. Hence it is well said by Solomon as well; *The thoughts of the righteous are judgments*. [Prov. 12, 5] Since within they are brought back to their own hearts from all the tumult of the world, and then they mount the tribunal of the mind, and set before the eyes themselves, and their neighbour, and bring forward in the midst the rule of the Testament, wherein it is said, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.* [Matt. 7, 12] They transfer into themselves the person of their neighbour, and heedfully mark what to themselves, had they been so circumstanced, they would justly have wished done or left undone, and so with strict justice and judgment, they try the cause of themselves and their neighbour by the tables of the Divine Law, in the court of the heart. Therefore it is well said, *The thoughts of the righteous are judgments*, because the very interior motion of their heart is itself as it were a kind of scales of judicial power. Which things being done, because they do not look for recompensing below, their judgments are rightly compared to ‘a diadem.’ For a diadem is set upon the upper part of the body; and so the judgment of the righteous is styled a ‘diadem,’ because they do not thereby covet to find their reward by it in things below and of this earth, but up above. It follows;

Ver. 15, 16. *I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out.*

[xxiii.] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

36. Herein the mind of the reader might perchance put the question, wherefore it is that blessed Job reckons up his own virtue with so much particularity. For it is a mark of holy men to conceal the good things they may have done, lest it chance that they bring upon themselves the downfall

of exaltation. Whence Truth saith by Itself, *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them*. [Matt. 6, 1] It is hence, too, that in giving light to the two blind men sitting by the way-side, He charged them, saying, *See that no man know it*. [Matt. 9, 30] Of which persons it is thereupon said, that they 'departed and spread abroad the fame of Him throughout all that region.' Now it is a question for us to consider, what this means, that the Almighty Himself, unto Whom to have the will is the same thing as to have the power, both wished that His extraordinary powers should be kept secret, and notwithstanding by those that were illumined with sight as it were against His will He is made manifest. Which is nothing else than that to His servants following after Him He gave an example, that of themselves indeed they should desire to have their extraordinary endowments kept hidden from sight, and yet, that others might profit by their example, they should be brought to view against their will, and indeed by concealing their own achievements keep themselves safe, but whilst they are brought to view against their will, convey good examples on to their neighbours. So then let them be hidden in set purpose, and made public by necessity, and let the hiding of them be the safe keeping of self, and the making them public usefulness to others. Again, because it is written, *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but in a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, Which is in heaven.* [Matt. 5, 15. 16.] There are times when holy persons are compelled to do good things even in the presence of their fellow-creatures, or else to tell these very deeds of theirs to their fellow-creatures, but only to this end relating every thing, viz. that by those works not they themselves, but their Father, Which is in heaven, may be glorified. For whilst they preach things holy, the very preaching itself perhaps goes for nought, of those whose life is not known. So they are forced to tell their

own life, that they may be able to change the life of their hearers. And they relate their deeds that they may be held in veneration, and they seek to be venerated, that they may be listened to with awe. Since it is written; *And when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them*. [Ez. 1, 21] Because it is so that when the minds of the hearers take in the life of those that preach, surely they necessarily admire the force of the preaching as well.

37. Hence it is therefore that good preachers at once eschew honour on account of being set up, and yet wish to be honoured on account of being imitated. In the same way surely Paul the Apostle, when speaking to the disciples, at once flees honour, and yet shews how greatly he deserved to be honoured. For when he said to the Thessalonians; *For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know; nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness:* he adds going on; *Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor of others, when we might have been, burthensome to you as the Apostles of Christ; But we were gentle among you.* [1 Thess. 2, 5. 6. 7.] Again to the Corinthians, avoiding honour he saith; *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus Christ's sake.* [2 Cor. 4, 5] Which same however he seeing to be led aside from the track of the true faith by the persuasions of false apostles, with the greatest pains shews to them how much he was worthy to be held in reverence, saying, *Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more.* [2 Cor. 11, 22. 23.] To which particulars he likewise adds how that to him the secrets of the third heaven also were set open, how that being caught up he even penetrated the mysteries of Paradise. See, how eschewing honour he proclaims himself the servant of the disciples. See how for the use of his hearers seeking honour, he advances the claims of his life above the false

apostles. Since the great teacher acted with this view, that whilst he himself is seen and known for what he was, both the life and the tongue of those that preached amiss might by comparison with him be made worthless. Therefore in a wonderful way he both exhibits the grace of humility, and seeks accessions of usefulness, so as both to proclaim himself a servant of the disciples, and prove himself better than the adversaries. He displays to the disciples what he had been vouchsafed of humility, he displays to the opponents what he had been vouchsafed of loftiness. He makes appear in opposition to adversaries what he had by gift, he makes appear to disciples what he remains in himself in thought, he makes known to opponents what he is presented without in practice. So holy men, when they are constrained to relate the good things that they do, do not lend themselves to exaltation but usefulness. Whence to his friends, unjustly upbraiding him, and so not knowing the good things in him, blessed Job telling reveals them, that surely they might learn, not whilst upbraiding him to lift themselves up against his life, but holding their peace to copy the same. Though, as we have already often said above, the despair urged on him by those upbraiding him, forced him to recall his own deeds to remembrance. For amidst so many pains of wounding and words of despair, when he tells the things which he did, his mind as it were sunk down by words and wounds he sets anew to hope. So let him say the good things that he has done, that he may not be forced in the midst of so many evil things that he hears to despair of himself. *I was eyes to the blind, feet was I to the lame.*

38. When we are estimating the examples of holy practice, we ought first to mark what a right order is observed in relating them, so that first works of righteousness, next works of mercy should be described. For that man does well what is pitiful, who is taught first to observe what is just, so that the stream of mercy bestowed on our neighbours be brought from the fountain-head of righteousness. For there are many that in a manner render

works of mercy to their neighbours, but do not abandon the deeds of unrighteousness, which same if they are anxious truly to shew mercy to their neighbours, ought first by living justly to have shewn pity to themselves. Whence it is written; *Have mercy upon thine own soul by pleasing God*. [Ecclus. 30, 23. (Vulg. 42)] He then that would pity his neighbour must needs derive the original of pitying from himself. For it is written; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* [Matt. 19, 19] How, then, is he pitiful to another by shewing mercy, who by still living unjustly becomes pitiless to himself? Whence it is also said by one that was wise; *He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?* [Ecclus. 14, 5] Since for shewing forth mercy, that it may be rendered to the needy outwardly in perfection, two things necessary agree together, i.e. the man that is to give, and the thing to be given. But the man is by far and without comparison better than the thing. And so he who gives up his outward substance to his neighbour in want, but does not keep his own life from doing evil, gives his estate to God, but himself to sin. The thing which is the lesser he offered to the Creator, and that which is the greater he reserved to wickedness. And so it is well said first by blessed Job, *With justice I was clothed and arrayed myself as with a garment, and with my judgment as with a diadem*: and is next added; *I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame*. Because there is then in God's sight the offering of true righteousness, when from the root of righteousness the branches of pitifulness proceed. But because in the very work of mercy itself the spirit is wont to be thought more of with the interior Judge than the thing done, observe that he declares that to 'the blind he had been eyes, to the lame feet.' For by saying these things assuredly he points out that both to the one he had held out a hand by himself, and that the other he bore up by carrying. From which it is gathered how greatly the bowels of his mercy were poured out upon the weak and needy. Whence it is added; *I was a father to the poor.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

39. Which same words if we refer to the utterance of Holy Church by a typical mode of interpretation, the same is ‘eyes to the blind,’ because she gives light by the Word, and the same ‘feet to the lame,’ because she stays them up by support. For by preaching she enlightens the blind, while the lame by helping she supports. For ‘the blind’ is he that as yet seeth not whither he is going, but ‘the lame’ is he who has not the power to go there where he sees. For frequently sin is committed either by ignorance or weakness, so that either the man knows not what he ought to desire, or cannot do every thing that he has the desire to do. Contrarily it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *The Lord is my light and my salvation.* [Ps. 27, 1] For because the Lord bestows both knowledge and force, at once in opposition to ignorance He is called ‘Light,’ and in opposition to weakness ‘Saving Health.’ It is hence that it is said of the wicked, *Let their way he dark and slippery* [Ps. 35, 6]; that is to say, that through the darkness they may not see where they should go, who even if they did see what was right, yet by reason of the slippery quality they should not be able to stand fast therein. And so the one sort through the slipperiness halt in the midst of good things, and the other sort through the darkness, are ignorant what good things to follow. Thus then Holy Church, being seized by tribulations at the end, calls to mind the old times when she was accustomed both to enlighten by teaching and to stablish by helping, and speak with the lips of her foregoing member, saying,

I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame.

40. And whereas she has gathered together two Peoples in herself, viz. the Jewish and the Gentile, by the ‘blind,’ the Gentile People may also be rightly denoted, and by ‘the lame’ the Jewish. Since the Gentile People had as it were no eyes, because the Law not being received it saw not where it ought to have gone. But on the other hand the Jewish People having eyes

was lame, because the Law indeed in knowing it held, but did not stretch forth the step of right practice therein. For if the Gentile People had not been blind, the Prophet would not say, *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light*. [Is. 9, 2] Again, if the Israelitish People had not gone lame to good practice, the Psalmist would never have said in the voice of the Lord, *The strange children have lied to me: the strange children have waxed old, they have gone lame out of their paths*. [Ps. 18, 44. 45.] Which doubtless is for this reason termed a lame People, in that it had not a sound step in practice, since it would not use both feet, while it admitted one Testament, and spurned the other. Which People when Holy Church receives coming to her, because to the same, already holding the Old Testament, she introduces the New Testament as well, for the directing the steps thereof, she as it were joins on another foot. Which faithful People of Holy Church still further adds aright, I was a father to the poor, because surely the humble, who are called 'poor in spirit,' are begotten by her preaching. But it is necessary for us in all these particulars to weigh with exactness the actual words of the history. For he says;

Ver.16. *I was a father of the poor, and the cause, which I knew not, I searched out.*

[xxiv.] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

41. For very often men give much to the poor, not because they love those poor, but because if they do not give, they dread the indignation of the Judge Above; which persons, if they were not afraid of God, would have had no mind to give the things they possess. And indeed in good deeds it is the first step of beginners, that he who does not yet know how to love his neighbour as himself, nevertheless should yet henceforth begin to dread the judgments from Above. Thus because it is one thing to do a good deed by command and another to do it from affection as well, that the holy man may

teach us the inward spirit of his practice, let him say, *I was a father to the poor*. For not a patron, or a neighbour, or an helper to the poor, but ‘a father’ he testifies that he had been; in this way, because by the great attentiveness of his charity he converted the purpose of mercy into the affection of nature, that he should look on those as children by love, whom he was the head of as a father by protecting. Therefore because the force of his mercy had copied nature, he records himself to have been a father to the poor. Where he likewise adds;

And the cause that I knew not, I most carefully searched out.

[xxv.]

42. In which words we have to consider all the particulars how distinctly they are related, and that no profit is passed over by him. Since he is just in his actions, pitiful in his neighbours’ infirmities, active in the concerns of the poor. For he that takes thought of the blessings of the eternal recompensing, must needs extend himself to every occasion of the repayment to follow after. For hence it is said by Solomon; *He that feareth God, neglecteth nothing*. [Eccl. 7, 18] Hence also Paul saith; *prepared unto every good work*. [2 Tim. 2, 21] But herein we ought to bear in mind that occasionally in our actions lesser good things are to be let pass for the usefulness of greater ones. Thus who could be ignorant that it has the merit of a good work to bury the dead: and yet Lo one, who had prayed to be let go in order to the burying of his father, it was said; *Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God*. [Luke 9, 60] Thus the dutifulness of this service was to be made to give place to the office of preaching, because by the first he would be burying persons dead in the flesh in the earth, by the other he would be raising up persons dead in the soul to life. By the Prophet likewise it is said to the chiefs of the Synagogue; *Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed.* [Is. 1, 17] And yet Paul the Apostle says; *Set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the Church*. [1

Cor. 6, 4] For he was kindling his hearers' hearts to the excellency of wisdom, to different kinds of tongues, to the investigating the mysteries of prophecy also, saying, *Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy*. But because they would not be capable of 'spiritual gifts,' if earthly matters had weighed them to the ground, he premised long before, saying, *Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church.* As though he said in plain words; 'they that are of least worth in the Church, and not enriched with any power of extraordinary gifts, let these only judge concerning earthly matters, that by whom extraordinary good cannot be supplied, the lesser good may be.' Whom he at once styles 'contemptible,' and yet calls 'wise,' when he says; *Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? no one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?* [1 Cor. 6, 5] From which point what else is concluded but that they are to try earthly causes, who have received wisdom in things external? But they that have been enriched with spiritual gifts surely ought never to be entangled with earthly concerns, that while they are not compelled to manage the good things beneath, they may by being exercised be enabled to serve the interests of the good things Above.

43. But above every thing it needs to be looked to, that they who shine forth with spiritual gifts should never entirely abandon the affairs of their neighbours of weak condition, but that they should entrust the same to be managed by others, whom it is meet for. Whence also Moses appointed to the people seventy persons in the stead of himself, that in proportion as he buried himself out of the way of external causes he might with the greater fervour go into the things of the interior. And so it comes to pass, that those that are the highest advance more to Spiritual gifts, when things that are lowest do not trample on their minds, and again the persons that are the last in the Church do not live without good practice, while in matters external they find right things which they may do. For Holy Church is so compacted by a unity of the faithful, as our body is made one by the jointing of the

limbs. Thus there are some members in the body which are subservient to beholding the light, others which are never parted from the contact of earth. Since the eye is set intent on the light, and that it may not be made blind, it is kept safe from the dust. But the foot then rightly discharges its office, when it does not shrink from taking on it the dust of the earth. Which same members of the body, however, are, by imparting their functions to one another, reciprocally united in one, so that the foot should run for the eyes, and the eye look out for the feet.

44. Thus, then, thus ought the members of Holy Church to be at once distinct in office and united in charity, that the highest persons may look out the way of those, who go at liberty in the concerns of earth, so that the foot may as it were walk by the light of the eyes, and again that whatever they execute, being busied with the affairs of earth, this they may apply to the use of the greater sort, so that the foot, whose way is looked out, may step not for itself only but for the eyes as well. And so whilst they suit one another by turns, by reciprocal ministering, in a wonderful way it is brought about, that whereas all the Elect, by bestowing labour on one another, do what they are able, those works too become their own, which they cannot do themselves.

45. But herein we ought to bear in mind, that when those are wanting, who might fitly minister to the exterior occasions of their neighbours, those too who are full of spiritual gifts ought to lower themselves to their inferiority, and, as far as they may with propriety be able, lend themselves with the condescension of charity to the earthly necessities of those persons. Nor should it weary the mind, if its perception, being ever intent on the contemplation of the spiritual, is sometimes as it were bent down, diminished in managing the least concerns, when that Word, by Which all things created are held together, in order that He might benefit mankind, having taken to Him the nature of man, was willing to be ‘made a little less

than the Angels.' What wonder, then, if man for man's sake draws himself in, when the Creator of men and Angels for man's sake took upon Him the form of man? Not however that the perception is diminished when it is thus drawn in; because it penetrates the things above with more exact penetration, in proportion as with more abundant humility for the love of the Creator it does not even despise the things beneath. What is there that is unworthy of us or difficult, if we carry the mind above and below, when of the body we wash the face with the same hand, with which we shoe the foot? Therefore let blessed Job, because when he was doing great things he did not think the least things beneath him, let him say, *And the cause that I knew not I very carefully searched out.*

[HISTORICAL / MORAL INTERPRETATION]

46. Wherein I see it is to be noted, that for delivering sentence we should not ever be precipitate, that things not examined into we should not rashly judge, that any thing heard of a bad nature should not affect us, that what is reported every where about we should not credit without proving. Which same, without doubt, we shall be afraid of committing, if we consider the doings of our Creator with some degree of minuteness. For that very Creator, that He might withhold us from a precipitate delivery of sentence, whereas 'all things are naked and open to His eyes,' [Hev. 4, 13] yet refused to judge the evil deeds of Sodom when heard, in that He saith; *Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is very great, and because their cry is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know.* [Gen. 18, 20. 21.] Thus God, Who is Almighty and knowing all things, wherefore does He before the proving seem to doubt, but in order to set forth to us an example of gravity, that the evil of our fellow-creatures we should never venture to believe before we prove it? Observe how by His

Angels He comes down for the ascertaining of the evil, and immediately smites the culprits; and He That is patient, He Who is gentle, He, of Whom it is written; *But Thou, Lord, judgest with tranquillity*. [Wisd. 12, 18] He, of Whom it is written again; *The Lord is a patient Rewarder*, [Ecclus. 5, 4] finding them involved in such enormous guilt, as it were overlooked patience, and would not await the day of Final Judgment for vengeance, but with the fire of judgment prevented them before the Day of Judgment. See, the evil He in seeming believed with difficulty when He heard it, but visited without backwardness when acquainting Himself He found it true; surely that He might give us an example that worse climes are both to be believed with difficulty, when they are heard, and to be punished more quickly when they are truly ascertained. For this heedfulness accordingly blessed Job entertaining anxious interest, saith, *The cause that I knew not, I very carefully searched out.* Which same words we may likewise apply not inappropriately in the voice of the Church to a typical way of interpretation. For that same Church by her elect members does when she judges the evil deeds of carnal men 'search out that, which she knows not,' in that the evil things which she knows not in doing them, she searches out in correcting them in judgment. And so Holy Church, when she shall be cramped for a time by the villainy of the unjust, remembers, saying, *The cause that I knew not, I very carefully searched out*. As though she said in plain speech; 'The evil that in mine Elect I knew not in doing, in wicked Men I did, by judging, chasten with severity.' And because She now bruises the devil by the power of her preaching, and carries off out of his mouth the soul of every one that she receives, he goes on in the words;

Ver. 17. *And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.*

[xxvi.] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

47. Oh what a spoil did “he take from the mouth of the devil, when by converting she carried off Saul himself the spoiler; when *still breathing threats* he was on his way to Damascus, *having received letters,* and whereas by persecuting the faithful he was gathering prey for the devil, he was, by being made acquainted with the faith, himself gathered to Christ. [Acts 9, 12] As many times did the Church ‘pluck the spoil out of the mouth of the wicked,’ as often as by preaching she snatched off a soul from the gripe of error. For who can be more truly called a wicked one than the devil? whose ‘jaws we break,’ as often as by arguing against his deceits, we bring to light his secret contrivances. And so we ‘pluck the spoil out of his teeth,’ because the soul, which he had already bitten by breaking it to sin, by converting we recover to the saving health of life. Since by ‘the jaws’ are exhibited his hidden plots, while by the teeth the now open commission of sin. Of which same jaws and teeth it is said by the Psalmist; *But God shall break their teeth in their mouth; the Lord shall break the jaw bones of the lions.* [Ps. 58, 6] But the holy man declares Himself to ‘break the jaws’ first that he might afterwards be able to ‘carry away the spoil from the teeth’ of that one; because we then truly snatch the prey from his teeth, when we first know how to break his jaws. For it is necessary first to bring to light the secret artifices of his contrivances, that afterwards we may be able to recover the soul of our hearer from open falling. The jaws of this wicked one the chief pastor of the Church himself did by preaching break in pieces, when he said, *Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, stedfast in the faith.* [1 Pet. 5, 8. 9.] Against this ‘lion’ Holy Church, because she sees his plottings, guards the folds of the faith. Whose ‘jaws she breaks’ as often as she destroys the arguments of heretics, and as many times ‘seizes the spoil out of his teeth,’ as she by preaching converts a man from error. And because there shall then be many of the just, who reckoned

that they would depart out of this world in the time of the Church's peace, blessed Job, while he tells his own case, likewise points out the voices of the just coming after him, saying;

Ver. 18. *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm.*

[xxvii.]

48. What else is set forth in this place by the title of a 'nest,' but the tranquil rest of the faith whereby every infirm soul is nourished? For that multitude of the good, which shall be overtaken by the times of persecution, thought to accomplish the days of its nourishings, as in a nest, so in a place of repose. For except that Holy Church now nourished up the weak children severally in the nest of peace, the Psalmist would not say, *Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the turtle a nest where she may lay her young*. [Ps. 84, 3] Since henceforth 'the sparrow hath found her an house,' because our Redeemer has entered into the Eternal dwelling-place of heaven. And 'the turtle hath found a nest,' because Holy Church, influenced by love of the Creator, makes use of frequent sighings, and as it were builds up a 'nest' for herself, i.e. the most peaceful rest of the Faith, wherein her growing children, like callow young, till they fly up to the regions above, she fosters, cherished warm in the bosom of charity. And so because there shall then be those, who thought in the time of peace to take their passage to the regions on high, i.e. to soar away from the nest, their voice is anticipated by the voice of blessed Job, when he says, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest*. But because this same quietness of peace they promised themselves in a length of many days, he rightly subjoins, saying, *And I shall multiply my days as a palm*. For the palm advances slowly, but holds on long in greenness. But with many difficulties Holy Church comes to the firm standing of the Faith, and for the gathering together of very many she desires to be set the longer in the glory of that Faith. And so as 'a palm' she thought 'to multiply her

days,’ who on the crisis of sudden temptation emerging upon her, grieves for the boon of peace at once slowly gotten by the faithful, and quickly intercepted by the unbelievers.

49. Nor is it unfairly that the life of the righteous is likened to a ‘palm,’ in this respect, that the palm below is rough to be touched, and in a manner enveloped in dry barks, but above it is fair with fruit even to be looked at; below it is compressed by the enfoldings of its barks, above it is spread out in amplitude of beautiful greenness. For so is the life of the Elect, despised below, beautified above. Down beneath the one is as it were enfolded in many barks, in that it is straitened by innumerable afflictions. But on high the other is as it were spread out with the foliage of beautiful greenness in the amplitude of the rewarding. The palm too has another thing as well, by which it differs from all kinds of trees. For every tree holds, in its timber, large sized towards the ground, but in growing it is narrowed above, and in proportion as it is by degrees higher, it is rendered so much the minuter on high; but the palm sets out of less circumference from the bottom, and arises with wider timber towards the boughs and fruit; and that which goes on slender from the bottom grows up more huge to the top. Accordingly to what but earthly minds are other trees found to be like, expanded below, narrowed above? because surely all the lovers of this world are strong in the things of earth, but feeble in the things of heaven. Thus for temporal glory they long to spend themselves even to death itself; and for the everlasting hope they do not though but a little hold on in exertion. For the sake of earthly gains they submit to any injuries, and for the sake of the heavenly reward they refuse to bear the insults even of the most trifling word. They are strong enough to stand before an earthly judge even a whole day through, but in praying in the presence of God they are tired even with the space of a single hour. Oftentimes they bear nakedness, abjectness [*dejectionem*], hunger, for the sake of acquiring riches and honours, and

they torment themselves with the stinting of those things, which they are in such haste to obtain; but from seeking with hearty endeavour the things that are above, they excuse themselves the more, in proportion as they imagine them to be more slowly paid back. So these as it were after the manner of the rest of the trees are wide spread below, narrow above, because they hold strong towards the parts below, but go off towards the parts above. But on the other hand by the character of palm trees the progressive life of the righteous is represented, who are never strong in earthly pursuits, and weak in heavenly ones, but exhibit themselves devoted to God with a farther and wider extension [*longius atique distantius*] than they remember to have been to the world. For whereas it is said to certain persons by our Preacher, *I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness*; [Rom. 6, 19] without doubt there is a condescending to their infirmity, as though it were said to them in plainer terms; 'If ye cannot any way do more, at all events be ye such in the fruit of good works as ye were for long in the practising of bad habits, so that the holy freedom of charity may not possess you weaker persons, whom the habit of earthly pleasure possessed strong ones in the flesh.

50. But there are some who, while they aim at heavenly things, and forsake the pernicious doings of this world, by the littlemindedness of inconstancy fall away day by day from their setting out. To what but to the rest of the trees should I call these like, who never rise such persons above as they spring up below? For these when they are brought to conversion do not hold on such as they began; and as it were after the way of trees, they are of large size in the beginning, but they grow slight, because little by little through the accessions of the divisions of time they suffer the diminutions of the attainments of virtue. For imperceptibly heavenly desires

fade away in them, and they who had proposed to themselves things vigorous and strong, achieve only weak and feeble ones, and whilst they progress by increase of age, grow as it were easy to be bent. But the palm, as has been said, is of vaster extent in the summit than it began with being from the root; because oftentimes the conversion of the Elect accomplishes more in finishing than it purposes on setting out; and if it begins the first things somewhat lukewarmly, it completes the last with more ardour; that is to say, it reckons itself to be always beginning, and therefore it lasts unwearied in newness. It was this constancy of the righteous that the Prophet regarding said, *But they that trust in the Lord shall change their strength; they shall take to them wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint*. [Is. 40, 31] For they 'change their strength,' because they are earnest to be strong in spiritual practice, who were for long strong in the flesh. And they 'take to them the wings as of an eagle,' because by exercising contemplation they fly; 'they walk, and do not faint,' because they hold in the rapidity of their understanding, that they may condescend to the slower sort. But under all circumstances in proportion as the good things they receive they gladly adapt to others, so much the more do they hold on themselves unchangeable in newness; and they that proceed small from the root of the beginning are consolidated as strong in the finishing of the topmost point. So then let blessed Job say in his own person, let him say in the voice of Holy Church in behalf of those whom in the time of peace she had owned, converted to herself, and imagined would persevere in good ways, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm*. For 'as a palm' she thought to 'multiply her days,' in that she supposed that the minds of the faithful would rise up stronger even to the very last. For when the hearts of multitudes worn out with persecutions begin to turn soft, she henceforth grieves that those in her as it were tend to weakness, whom she used to

admire for their having purposed strong things. And because in mind she is always intent upon spiritual knowledge, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 19. *My root is opened beside the waters.*

[xxviii.]

51. For 'by the waters the root is opened,' when, for receiving the streams of truth, secretly the thought of the mind is spread out. For as we have already said in a former book, in Holy Writ by the term of 'the root' the hidden thought is used to be denoted. Therefore "our root we open by the waters," when to the Interior watering we stretch the thought of the secret heart. Which same words if we carry on to the voice of Holy Church, her 'root' must be taken for the very Incarnation our Redeemer itself. Which 'root is opened by the waters,' in that God Invisible by the assumption of His Manhood was laid open to the regardings of our sight. Since the Creator, Who was not able to be seen in the Godhead, took to Him from us that whereby He might by us be seen. So 'the root is opened by the waters,' because the Author of the human race by means of His human nature is manifested to human beings. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *And he shall be like a tree that is planted beside the runnings of waters.* [Ps. 1, 3] For 'the runnings of waters' are the daily passings by of peoples dying off. And Truth saith concerning Itself, *If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* [Luke 23, 31] And so there 'is a tree beside the runnings of waters,' because, whilst putting forth fruit and the covering of His shade for us, the Creator appeared in the flesh, that by a rising again He might stay the human race, which by a falling off was day by day going on into death. It goes on;

And the dew shall stay on my harvest.

[xxix.]

52. Understand, *I said*. For the harvest of Holy Church is not inappropriately taken to be, when perfect souls withdrawn from their

bodies, like ripe crops cut away from the ground, are transported into the heavenly granaries; which same because it takes place not by our own power, but by heavenly grace vouchsafing it, he saith well, *And the dew shall stay on my harvest*. For the dew falls from above, but the harvest is gathered in from below. And so 'the dew stays on the harvest,' because grace coming from above causes it, that we should be meet persons to be gathered in from the world below. For by that same grace watering us from above, we bear the fruit of good practice. Whence also it is rightly said by Paul, *But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain.* [1 Cor. 15, 10] For if it be enquired what is the dew coming from above, he tells us, *By the grace of God I am what I am*. If we look at the crop growing up beneath the dew, he says, *And His grace was not in vain in me, but I laboured more abundantly than they all*. It proceeds;

Ver. 20. *My glory shall always be fresh, in me, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.*

[xxx.]

53. Understand, *I said*; since all is joined on to the sentence above, that is introduced next in a continuous thread of discourse, when he says, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the palm*; and afterwards it is subjoined, *My root is opened by the waters, and the dew shall stay on my harvest; my glory shall ever be fresh in me, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand*. To all that know what is true it is clear, that to the old life qualities of evil are proper, to the new qualities of virtue. Thus it is hence that Paul saith, *Putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man*. [Col. 3, 9] Hence he says again, *Our old man was crucified with him*. [Rom 6, 6] Hence the Psalmist speaking in a type of man, as being caught in the midst of evil spirits, saith, *I have waxed old amongst all mine enemies*. [Ps. 6, 7] For unto fervour of mind, whether

amidst spiritual enemies, or in the midst of our several carnal neighbours, in some degree by the mere habituation of living 'we wax old,' and the form of newness taken upon us we soil. Against which same oldness, however, if our earnest pains after heedfulness be daily on the watch, by praying, by reading, and living well we are renewed afresh; because our life, while it is washed with tears, exercised in good works, drawn out by holy meditations, is without ceasing restored to its newness. Blessed Job then so tells his own case that he represents ours, because Holy Church, when she sees her faithful ones return to the transgressions of the old life, is forced to lament for those whom she sees lose the newness of the interior. Since the great Preacher says to his disciples, *For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord?* [1 Thess. 2, 19] And so Holy Church bewails her glory departed, when she sees her faithful ones return to the old life. Thus she says, *I said, My glory shall always be made fresh*; because those whom she believed were enlisted within her to the new life, she sees to be lending themselves to old desires.

54. Now by the name of a 'bow' in Holy Scripture, sometimes the plots of evil men, sometimes the Day of Judgment, while sometimes the actual sacred Oracles themselves are denoted. Since by a bow plots are denoted, as where it is said by the Psalmist, *And have bent their bow, a bitter thing*. [Ps. 64, 3] Moreover by 'a bow' the Day of the Last Judgment is denoted, as where it is said again by the same Psalmist, *Thou hast shewed Thy people hard things, Thou hast made us to drink the wine of remorse, Thou hast given a token to them that fear Thee, that they may fly from before the bow.* [Ps. 60, 3. 4.] For in a bow in proportion as the string is drawn out far, the arrow flies off the keener from it. Thus, yes, thus the Day of Judgment, in proportion as it is delayed for long that it should come, when it does come, the keener the sentence goes forth therefrom. But for this reason we are now stricken with sundry losses, in order that being amended thereby, we may

then be found more prepared. Whence it is there premised, *Thou hast shewed Thy people hard things*, i.e. the scourges of the present state, which are forerunners of the Day of Judgment, to follow far worse. Thou hast made us to drink the wine of remorse, so that earthly joys should be converted into tears. Thou hast given a token to them that fear Thee, that they may fly from before the bow. As though he said in plain terms; 'This is the season of mercy, that shall be the time of Judgment.' Thus by these scourges of this present time Thou dost betoken how Thou wilt then strike when Thou judgest not sparing, Who dost now strike so sharply when Thou sparest.

55. But sometimes by a 'bow' Holy Scripture is denoted as well. For that is the 'bow' of the Church, that is the 'bow' of the Lord, wherefrom like arrows striking, so do terrifying sentences come to the hearts of men. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *He hath bent His bow, and made it ready; He hath also prepared in it the vessels of death, He hath made His arrows for the burning ones*. [Ps, 7, 12. 13.] For the Lord hath 'bent His bow,' because to all sinners He hath set forth threats in sacred Revelation. In which same bow He 'prepares the vessels of death,' because according to the sentence of His Revelation, those that neglect to be reformed now, He condemns as reprobate. In which bow also He 'made His arrows for the burning ones,' because against those persons, whom He amends by terror, He sends forth the kindled sentences of words. Concerning this bow of the preachers it is declared by Isaiah; *With arrows and with bows they enter in thither*; [Is. 7, 24] in this way, because the holy Apostles came for the smiting the hardness of the Gentiles' life with the keen dartings of words. What then in this place is to be understood by the name of the bow but sacred Revelation? For by the string the New Testament, while by the bow the Old Testament, is understood. Now in a bow, when the string is drawn, the horn is bended: so in this same sacred

Revelation, when the New Testament is read, the hardness of the Old is rendered pliant. For to the spiritual and mild precepts of this, the rigidness of the letter of the other bends itself; because whilst the New Testament as it were by a kind of arm of good practice is drawn, in the Old Testament the claims of severity are relaxed. Nor do we improperly say that the string accords with the New Testament, which it is certain came out by the Incarnation of the Lord. And so as it were the string is drawn and the horns bent; because when in the New Testament the Incarnation of our Mediator is seen, the rigidness of the Old Testament is made to bend to a spiritual signification. Therefore the holy man says, *I said, My glory shall always be fresh, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.*

56. 'A bow in the hand' is Holy Writ in the practising. For he holds 'a bow in his hand,' who performs by the practising the divine revelations which he learns by apprehension. Thus the 'bow is renewed in the hand,' in that whatever is learnt belonging to Holy Revelation by studying is fulfilled by living accordingly. Hence also Solomon when he was describing the strong warriors of the spiritual fight, says, *All holding swords, being well instructed for wars.* [Cant. 3, 8] For what is represented in Divine Writ by 'a sword,' Paul laid open by saying, *And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* [Eph. 6, 17] Now Solomon saith not 'all having' but 'all holding swords;' surely because not only to know the word of God is admirable, but likewise to do it. For he has but does not 'hold' a sword, who knows indeed Divine Revelation, but neglects to live according to it, and he cannot now any longer be 'well instructed to wars,' who never exercises the spiritual sword that he has. For he is altogether not equal to resist temptations, who by living badly puts it behind him to hold this sword of the word of God. So then let Holy Church, which is weighed down by subsequent persecution, taking thought of the multitude of bad and the scarcity of good ones, by the accents of blessed Job foreannounce her own

woes, saying, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm. My root is opened wide by the waters, and the dew shall stay on my harvest. My glory shall ever be fresh, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand*. Which same, whilst taking a view of all things, was never imposed on by a false hope. For they that be perfect now see many her supporters, but doubtless they reflect that on the crisis of temptation coming forth, the greater number of these become her enemies, who in the time of peace seem to be her citizens. But they do not despair of all in like manner, yet nevertheless it very frequently falls out that those persons, touching whom they had entertained more confident assurance as to the Faith, themselves become fiercer enemies of the Faith, so that they then see those acting against the sacred Oracles, by whose working they had thought to restore those same sacred Oracles to the benefit of preaching. Which same times, however, we lament have now already commenced, when we see numbers, set within the pale of the Church, who either refuse to practise what they understand, or this very sacred Revelation likewise disdain to see into and to know. For turning away the hearing from the truth, they are turned to fables, whilst all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's. The written words of God every where found are presented to their eyes, but men disdain to acquaint themselves with these, scarce one seeks to know what he has believed. So then let the multitude of good men going before grieve to have their 'bow destroyed,' which same always thought to have sacred Revelation restored by the efforts of those coming after.

BOOK XX.

The five concluding verses of chapter twenty-nine of the Book of Job are more largely explained, together with the whole of chapter thirty, chiefly on the subject of heretics and carnal persons distressing the Church.

1. ALTHOUGH all knowledge and all lore Sacred Scripture without all comparison far excels, to say nothing that it tells forth what is true; that it bids to the heavenly country; that it changes the heart of him that reads it from earthly desires to the embracing of things Above; that by its obscurer statements it exercises the strong, and by its humble strain speaks gently to the little ones; that it is neither so shut up, that it should come to be dreaded, nor so open to view as to become contemptible; that by use it removes weariness, and is the more delighted in the more it is meditated on; that the mind of him, who reads it, by words of a low pitch it assists, and by meanings of a lofty flight uplifts; that in some sort it grows with the persons reading, that by uninstructed readers it is in a manner reviewed, and yet by the well instructed is always found new; so then to say nothing of the weightiness of the subjects, it goes beyond all forms of knowledge and teaching even by the mere manner of its style of speaking, because in one and the same thread of discourse, while it relates the text, it declares a mystery, and has the art so to tell the past, that merely by that alone it knows how to announce the future, and the order of telling remaining unaltered, is instructed by the very self-same forms of speech at once to describe things done before, and to tell things destined to be done, just as it is with these same words of blessed Job, who while he tells his own circumstances foretels ours, and while he points out his own sorrows in respect of the phrase, sounds of the cases and occasions of Holy Church in respect of the meaning. For he says;

Ver. 21-23. *They that heard me awaited my sentence, and listening kept silence at any counsel. They dared not to add any thing to my words, and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as the rain, and opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.*

2. For this awe of those under him we unquestionably believe to have been towards blessed Job. But as we have already often said, Holy Church being driven to extremities by the inflictions of heretics or carnal persons, remembers the times past, in which all that is spoken by her is listened to with fear by the faithful, and lamenting the frowardness of her adversaries, she says, *They that heard me awaited my sentence, and listening kept silence at my counsel*. As though she expressed herself in plain speech, 'Not like these forward and swoln ones, who whilst they refuse to admit the words of truth, do as it were in teaching forestall the sentences of my preaching.' Whose disciples now 'intent upon her counsel keep silence,' because her words they dare not to impugn, but take on faith. For that they may be able to profit by these same words, they hear them, doubtless, not with a view to judge them, but to follow them.

3. Of whom it is rightly added, *To my words they dared not to add any thing*; surely because heretics, at that time when against her they are in liberty the most mischievous, free of all check, do 'dare to add something to her words,' in that they busy themselves as if to correct the rightness of her preachings. Which same still further adds touching the good hearers, *And my speech dropped upon them*.

4. By this dropping of speech, what else is understood but the measure of holy preaching? because it is requisite that the boon of exhortation be bestowed to each according to the capacity of his parts. And in respect of this that is said, *To my words they dared not to add any thing*; the reverential feeling of the persons hearing is extolled; but in respect of this, that is added, *And my speech dropped upon them*; the masters' distributing is

pointed out. For one who teaches ought to look exactly, that he be not forward to preach more than is comprehended by the one who hears him. For it is his duty by contracting himself to let himself down to the infirmity of his hearers, lest whilst he speaks to little persons lofty things, which for that reason will not profit them, he be more minded to make a display of himself than to benefit his hearers. Now at the Lord's bidding, there are not only flagons but likewise, cups prepared for the table of the Tabernacle. [Ex. 25, 29. 37, 16.] For what is denoted by 'flagons' but ample preaching, and what by cups but the smallest and slightest speaking about God? Therefore on the table of the Lord there are both flagons and cups made ready, in this way because in the teaching of sacred Revelation there are not only to be set forth things great and mysterious that intoxicate, but also little and minute ones, which afford knowledge as it were in a tasting. So then let Holy Church being borne down in the last times remember this most discriminating disposal of hers, and let her say, *And my speech dropped upon them*.

5. Where too it is fitly added, *They waited for me as the rain, and opened their mouth as for the latter rain*. For the words of holy preaching we undergo as rain, when by true humility we learn the dryness of our hearts, that we may be watered by the draught of holy preaching. Whence also it is rightly said to God by the Psalmist, *My soul is like earth without water to Thee*. [Ps. 143, 6] The Prophet charges us to be bathed with these streams of teaching, saying, *Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters*. [Is. 55, 1] Who whilst in the final portion of the world we now receive the words of holy preaching, as it were 'open the mouth of the heart to the latter rain.' For if there were not in the heart 'a mouth,' the Psalmist would not say, *Crafty lips in heart, and with the heart they have spoken evil things*. [Ps. 12, 2] The mouth of the heart, then, because we apply ourselves to the word of the preaching at the end, this, I say, we as it were open to the latter streams.

Which same preaching came forth to us by the sacrifice of Him, Who says by the Psalmist, *And the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice*. [Ps. 141, 2] For because our Redeemer at the end of the world underwent the violence of those that persecuted Him, Himself He 'gave an evening sacrifice for us.' Of this 'latter rain' it is elsewhere written, *I will give you rain, both the early, and the latter rain*. [Jer. 5, 24] For He 'gave the early rain,' because in the former period He bestowed on His Elect the knowledge of the Law. [Deut. 11, 14] He 'gave the latter rain,' because He caused the mystery of His Incarnation to be preached in the last days. Which same mystery because Holy Church ceases not to tell forth day by day, she waters the mouths of her hearers' hearts as it were by 'the latter rain.' It goes on;

Ver. 24. *If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance fell not on the ground.*

6. If we understand this according to the words of the history, it must be imagined that the holy man had shewn himself such to those under him, that even in laughing he was able to be feared. But whereas he relates above that he had been 'a father to the poor, and the comforter of the widows'; the case needs very great penetration to discriminate how and in what way in such terribleness of government there was likewise so much gentleness and mildness of pity there present. For without extraordinary gentleness of loving-kindness there was not this, viz. that he describes himself 'the father of the poor, and comforter of the widows'; whilst again without great severity he could not even when 'laughing' be feared: on which point what else are we taught, but that such ought to be the management of governance, that he who is in command should rule himself towards those under him by this measure, that both while laughing he may be feared, and when angered be loved, that neither excessive mirth should render him contemptible, nor unlimited severity make him hated? For oftentimes we

break in pieces those under our charge when we maintain the energy of justice beyond what is just, which energy will surely now no longer be that of justice, if it do not keep itself under just control. And often those under us we unloose from the fear of discipline, if to our rule we let go the reins of mirth, because whilst they behold us joyful as it were at our liberty, they are themselves boldly let loose to what they are not at liberty. But that the countenance of the ruler may even when joyful be feared, it is necessary that he should himself unceasingly fear the countenance of his own Maker. For credit then is with difficulty given to that mind as to gladness, which it is known by those under its charge chastens itself continually for the love of God. For he who with an unintermitted fever of spiritual desire seeks after things above, has this come into very great doubt concerning him, that he is sometimes glad of heart before men. And hence that same blessed Job was not long afterwards to say, *For I always feared God as waves swelling over me*. For he so feared his Judge as immediately impending assaults of waves, now, now on the point to die. He then into whose mind the sadness of the fear of God had poured itself, rightly did those under him not believe his joyfulness; because they were forced not to believe him when he laughed, whose heart they knew what unremitting sadness possessed under the fear of his Creator.

7. That also may not unsuitably be understood after the history, which is next brought in directly; *And the light of my countenance fell not on the ground*. Since it is written; *But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth*. [Prov. 17, 24] And again it is said by the same Solomon, *The wise man's eyes are in his head*. [Eccl. 2, 14] Paul also said; *The head of every man, is Christ*. [1 Cor. 11, 3] So 'the wise man's eyes are in his head,' in that he is ever contemplating the works of his Redeemer that he should imitate them. So 'the light of his countenance fell not on the ground,' because those things that are of the earth he beheld not in concupiscence.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

8. But whereas we have made out the outside of the history in brief, what lies concealed in the points belonging to mystical meaning let us consider well. That Christ and the Church are one Person, we have very frequently said already, and it oftentimes happens that the voice of the Head passes to the voice of the Body, and often that the voice of the Body passes over to the voice of the Head. For they that consist in one flesh, nothing hinders but that they also accord in one voice. So then let her say in the voice of the Head touching His Elect members, let the Church say, *If I laughed on them they believed it not*; since for God to 'laugh' is for the ways of the Saints to be made to prosper by His favour following them. As it is also expressed by common usage of those, whom in this world the caresses of good fortune accompany; 'The time smiled upon them.' Whence reversely it is called the wrath of God to be disabled from good practice. As it is written; *Lest the Lord be angry, and ye perish from the right way*. [Ps. 2, 12] If then the Lord is said to be 'angry' when men lose the way of righteousness, the Lord is rightly described as 'smiling' when our good works the favour of grace from Above accompanies on the way. But all the Elect so long as they are in this life never hold out to themselves the assurance of security. For being at all times alive to suspicion against temptations, they dread the plottings of the hidden enemy, who even on temptation ceasing, are greatly disturbed even by the mere suspecting only. For oftentimes to many heedless security has proved great hazard, so that the plots of the crafty enemy they should be made acquainted with, not when tried, but when already laid low. For we have always to be on the watch, that the mind unceasing in its solicitude never be slackened in its heavenly bent, that abandoning what is painful, laid low in loose thoughts as in a kind of soft litters, the mind be not all undone and prostitute itself to that corrupter the devil on his coming. But the soul must always be gathered up for the encounter of the adversary,

always there must be caution provided against secret snares. For hence the Prophet Habakkuk saith; *I will stand upon my watch*. [Hab. 2, 1] Hence again it is written; *Set thee up a watch tower, make thee bitternesses*, [*thou that preachest glad tidings to Sion*. (not in text)] [Jer. 31, 21] Hence it is said by Solomon, *Happy is the man that always feareth; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief*. [Prov. 28, 14] Hence he saith again; *Every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fears in the night*. [Cant. 3, 8] The 'fears in the night' are the hidden snares of temptation. But 'the sword upon the thigh' is watch on guard, keeping down the enticements of the flesh. So then that 'the fear by night,' i.e. secret and sudden temptation, may not creep upon us, it is always necessary that the 'sword' of watching placed thereon should press our thigh. For holy men are so assured touching hope, that nevertheless they are ever mistrustful touching temptation, as being those to whom it is said; *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling*: [Ps. 2, 11] so that by hope rejoicing should be produced, and by mistrust 'trembling.' In whose voice the Psalmist saith again, *Let my heart rejoice that it may fear Thy Name*. [Ps. 86, 11] Wherein it is to be noted, that he does not say, 'Let it rejoice that it may be assured'; but, 'let it rejoice that it may fear.' For they remember that though their course of conduct be made to succeed, they are still in this life, touching which it is said by that same Job; *The life of man upon earth is trial*. [Job 7, 1] They remember again that it is written; *For the corruptible body presseth, down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth, down the mind, that museth upon many things*. [Wisd. 9, 15] They remember and they stand in fear, and they do not dare to promise to themselves in themselves assuredness, but being set between the joy of hope and the fear of temptation, they trust and they fear, they are heartened and they falter, they are assured and they are distrustful. Therefore it is well said by the voice of the elect member under a figure of our Head, *If I*

laughed on them, they believed it not. Because our Redeemer as it were smiling on us we do not believe when His many gifts now bearing their testimony, we at once receive the boon of His favour, and yet still go faltering under His judgment for our own frailty.

9. Let us see how to Paul there is henceforth both a 'smiling' through grace from Above, and he himself still 'believes not' as it were through the fear of misgiving. Already the Lord as it were speaking to him from Heaven, and whilst opening his eyes inwardly, closing them outwardly, had displayed the power of His Majesty: already He had said to Ananias concerning Him; *For he is a chosen vessel unto Me*. [Acts 9, 15] Already he had been transported to the third heaven above himself. [1 Cor. 12, 2] Already carried into Paradise he had heard mystic words, which he might, not tell, and yet being still fearful he says, *But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I should be a castaway*. [1 Cor. 9, 27] See how to Divine grace smiling on him he already trusts in respect of hope, and yet trusts not in respect of self-assurance. For that these words agree perfectly with the words of our Redeemer, those subjoined do also declare, when it is said, *And the light of my countenance did not fall upon the earth*. For what is styled 'the earth' but the sinner, to whom it was said by the first sentence; *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return*? [Gen. 3, 19] So 'the light of the Lord's countenance does not fall to the earth,' because the brightness of His Vision does not appear to sinners. Thus it is written; *Let the ungodly man be removed away that he see not the glory of God*. [Is. 26, 10] For light would as it were fall upon the earth, if when He comes in the Last Judgment, He manifested the brightness of His Majesty to sinners.

10. But if we receive these words in the voice of Holy Church, we may not unsuitably understand that 'the light of her countenance does not fall upon the earth,' because to them that are busied in earthly courses she

forbids to preach the highest mysteries of her contemplation. For what is strong she forbids to be spoken to the weak, lest whilst they hear things incapable of being comprehended, they be borne to the ground by the words of preaching by which they should have been lifted up. For the mere corporeal light, which illumines sound eyes, darkens weak ones, and whilst by weak seeing eyes the gaze is set on the brightness of the sun, there is very frequently darkness produced to them from light. Thus let Holy Church being borne down in the time of her persecution, but bearing in mind her foregoing discrimination, say, *The light of my countenance did not fall upon the earth*. But because these words we began to take as from her Head, let us in the Same still follow out what comes after. For it is added:

Ver. 25. *If I was minded to go to them, I sat chief.*

11. Because in the heart of lost sinners, the actions of the flesh are in the first place, and of the soul in the second, surely in their thoughts Christ 'sits' not 'first' but 'last.' But each of the Elect, because above all others they mind the things that are eternal, and if there be any things of a temporal kind, they manage them with an after and the least concern; to whom it is also said by the preceptress voice of Truth, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*; [Matt. 6, 33] in their heart the Lord 'sits first.' In which place it is fitly prefaced, *If I had been minded to go to them*. For because, as has been said, He doeth all things according to the counsel of His Will, not in answer to our desert, but because He is Himself so minded, the Lord enlightens us with His visitation. And so He both comes 'when He is minded,' and when He comes He 'sitteth first,' because both His Coming in our heart is gratuitous, and the longing of the desire of Him in the thought of our heart is not the same as the rest of our desires. It goes on;

And when I sat as a king with an army standing round, nevertheless I was the Comforter of those that mourned.

12. The Lord 'sits as a king in the heart,' because He rules the clamouring motions of the heart in our thinking. For in the soul which He inhabits, whilst He stirs up the dull, bridles the restless, inflames the cold, tempers the inflamed, softens down the hard, and binds up the loose, by this mere diversity of thoughts, a kind of 'army,' as it were, 'stands around Him.' Or surely He 'sitteth as King with an army standing around Him,' because that King, whilst He presides over the minds of the Elect, a host of virtues surround. And He too is 'the comforter of those that mourn,' by that promise, by which He says, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*. [Matt. 5, 4] And again; *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you*. [John 16, 22] But the things which we have delivered concerning the Head of Holy Church, there is nothing hinders us if we should apply to the voice of the same Church as well. For in her the order of the teachers presides like a king, whom the crowd of her believing ones surrounds. Which same multitude of believers is also rightly called 'an army', [Exercitus] because it is unceasingly making ready day by day against the wars of temptations in the array of good works. The hearts of them that mourn Holy Church also comforts, whilst she considers the souls of the Elect borne down by the wofulness of the present pilgrimage, and gladdens them with the promise of the Eternal Country. Moreover she sees that the hearts of the faithful are stricken with divine dread, and those whom she sees have heard concerning God strict things that they should stand in fear, she likewise brings it to pass that they should also hear the gentleness of His pity, that they may have boldness.

13. For thus does Holy Church mix hope and fear to her believers, touching the pity and justice of the Redeemer, in the continued course of her ministry; so that they may not either heedlessly rely on Mercy, nor hopelessly dread justice. For with the words of her Head she cheers up those that are alarmed, saying, *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's*

good pleasure to give you the kingdom. [Luke 12, 32] And again, those that are presuming she affrights, when she says, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation*. [Mark 14, 38] Again, those that are in dread she cheers, saying, *Rejoice, because your names are written inn heaven*. [Luke 10, 20] But those presuming in themselves she affrights, when she says, *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*. Those in dread she cheers when she says, *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand*. [John 10, 27. 28.] But those presuming in themselves she affrights, saying, *And shall skew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very Elect*. [Matt. 24, 24] Those in dread she cheers, when she says, *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved*. [vs. 13] The presuming she affrights, when she says, *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?* [Luke 18, 8] The fearing she cheers, when He says to the robber, *To-day shall thou be with Me in paradise*. But she frightens the presuming, when Judas falls from the glory of the Apostleship into the pit of hell. Concerning whom it is said, in the laying down of a declaration, *I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil*. [John 6, 70] One in dread she cheers, when she says, *If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again'? Shall not that woman be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord*. [Jer. 3, 1] But one presuming she affrights, when she says; *Why criest thou upon thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable*. [Jer. 30, 15] One dreading she cheers, saying, *From this time at least call me, My father, thou art the guide of my virginity*. [Jer. 3, 4] But the presuming one she frightens, saying, *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite*. [Ez. 16, 3] One in dread she cheers, when she says, *Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will*

not cause mine anger to fall from you; for I am holy, saith the Lord; and I will not keep anger for ever. [Jer. 3, 12] But one presuming she affrights, when she debars her prophet from interceding, in the words, *Lift not up cry nor prayer for them; for I will not hear in the time of their crying to me, in the time of their affliction: for though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my soul is not toward this people*. [Jer. 14, 11] Thus her hearer's mind Holy Church both lifts up touching the lovingkindness of mercy, and disquiets touching the strictness of judgment, that in her preaching, whilst she rightly blends both, her Elect may neither presume on the score of righteousness set forth, nor despair on the ground of bygone iniquity.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

14. Yet this which he says, *And when I sat as a King with an army around, nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned*, it is necessary for us to know that even taken according to the history it may very greatly edify the reader, if he considers well how with good rulers both authoritativeness of ruling and loving-kindness of consoling are mixed together. For he says; *And when I sat as a King with an army around*; see the authoritativeness of governance; *nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned;* mark the service of pitifulness. For discipline or mercy is much bared, if the one be maintained without the other. But towards their subjects there ought to be in the hearts of rulers both mercy giving comfort in justice, and justice dealing wrath with pitifulness. It is hence that to the wounds of that half-dead man, who was carried by the Samaritan into the inn, there is both wine applied and oil, that by the wine the wounds should be bitten, and by the oil they should be soothed; that so every one who has the charge over the healing of wounds may by wine apply the biting of strictness, and by oil the softness of pitying; that by the wine what is putrid may be made clean, and by the oil what is to be healed may be soothed. Thus then gentleness is to be mixed

with severity, and a certain qualifying process by both to be performed, that those under charge may not either be made sore by much sharpness, nor be relaxed by overmuch kindness. This surely that ark of the tabernacle betokens, in which along with the tables there are the rod and manna together; because when there is the knowledge of sacred Scripture in the breast of a good ruler, if there is the rod of severity, let there also be the manna of sweetness. Hence also David says, *Thy rod and Thy staff comforted me*. [Ps. 23, 4] For we arc stricken by the rod, and we are sustained by the staff. If then there be the strictness of the rod that it may smite, let there also be the comfort of the staff that it may sustain. So then let there be love, but not that softens, let there be vigour, but not that grates, let there be zeal, but not that storms to excess, let there be pitifulness that does not spare more than may be expedient. It is good to regard in the breast of Moses mercy united with severity. Let us see him loving pitifully and venting himself severely. Surely when the people of Israel before the eyes of God contracted an almost unpardonable offence, so that its Ruler heard, *Get thee down; thy people have sinned*; [Ex. 32, 7] as though the Voice of God said to him, 'That people which has fallen in so great a sin, is henceforth no longer Mine,' and subjoined, *Now therefore let Me alone, that My fury may wax hot against them, and that I may destroy them, and I will make of thee a great nation*; once and again in behalf of the people that he was set over presenting himself as a bar to the assault of God in His indignation, he saith, *Either forgive them this sin; or if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written*. Let us reflect then with what bowels he loved that people, for whose life he begged to have himself 'blotted out of the book' of life. But yet this one who is tied and bound with such great love of his people, let us consider with what warmth of righteousness he is inflamed against its sins. For directly that by the first request he obtained pardon of the offence, that they should not be blotted

out, coming to that people he says, *Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And there fell of the people that day about twenty three thousand men*. [Ex. 32, 27. 28.] See, he who begged for the life of all even with his own death, killed the life of a few with the sword. Within he burned with the fire of love, without he was inflamed by the warmth of severity. So great was his pitifulness, that he did not hesitate to offer himself to death in the sight of the Lord in their behalf, such was his severity, that those whom he had feared to have stricken by divine power, he did himself strike with the sword of judgment; he so loved those whom he was set over, that in their behalf he did not even spare himself, and yet the persons offending, whom he loved, lie so persecuted, that even when the Lord spared them, he laid them low. Both ways a forcible ambassador, both ways an incomparable mediator; the cause of the people he pleaded before God by prayers, the cause of God he pleaded before the people with swords. Within loving he withstood the wrath of God by entreating, without venting himself he consumed sin by smiting. He succours all quickly by the death of a few being manifested. Therefore Almighty God listened the sooner to His faithful servant dealing in behalf of the people, because He saw what he was of himself about to do upon the people in behalf of God. In the governance therefore of the people Moses blended both, that neither should discipline be lacking to mercy, nor mercy to discipline. Hence here also it is said answerably to either excellency; *And when I sat as a King with an army around, nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned*. For to ‘sit with an army around’ is the vigour and discipline of governance, but ‘to comfort the hearts of them that mourn’ is the ministration of pitifulness.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But because in the midst of all this it is necessary that the line of interpretation should fall back to the spiritual meaning, Holy Church when borne down by her adversaries in the last times, calls to mind the laws of her past governance, calls to mind too what great benefits of pitifulness she displayed to them that were afflicted. Whose discipline and mercy are then derided by the light of mind. And hence it is added;

Chap. xxx. 1. *But now they that are younger than I have me in derision.*

15. All heretics when compared to the age of the Church Universal are fitly called 'younger' in time, because *they* went forth out of her, not *she* out of them. Whence it is rightly also said by John; *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us*. [1 John 2, 19] For 'they that are younger in time deride Holy Church,' when they that went out from her, set at nought the words of her instruction; concerning whom it is further added;

Whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock.

Who is the 'flock' of Holy Church saving the multitude of the faithful? Or who else are called 'the dogs' of this flock, but the holy Teachers, who became the guardians of those believers? Which same whilst in behalf of their Lord they cried aloud, given up to daily and nightly watchings, uttered, so to say, loud barks of preaching. Concerning whom it is said to that Church by the Psalmist, *The tongue of Thy dogs from the enemies by the same*. [Ps. 68, 23] Since there are some that being recalled from the worshipping of idols are made the preachers of God. So 'the tongue of the dogs' of the Church goeth forth from enemies, because the Gentiles that are converted the Lord makes even preachers. Whence the slowness of the Jews, who refused to speak in God's behalf by the Prophet upbraiding them is made matter of blame, where he says, *they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark*. [Is. 56, 10]

16. Now we speak of the fathers of Heretics meaning those whom we style 'Heresiarchs,' by whose evil preaching, i.e. by the seed of speaking, the peoples following them were begotten in error. So then Holy Church 'disdains to set the fathers' of heretics 'with the dogs of her flock,' because the founders of erring tenets on trying she rejects, and contemns to number them among the true Fathers. Which persons though they seemed to have recalled some from the erroneousness of heathenism, to have trained the practices of some to the doing what is right, yet for this that they did not think right things of God, she does not 'set them with the dogs of the flock,' because she does not rank them with right preachers. For it is plain that Arius; Photinus, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Dioscorus, Severus, and numbers like to these, endeavoured by teaching and persuading to appear fathers. But their errors the Holy Church Universal trying with strict severity, does not 'number those persons among the keepers of' her flock,' whom she condemns as breaking up the unity of that flock. Of which same it is said to the Ephesians by the voice of Paul, *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock*. [Acts 20, 29] And because it sometimes happens that heretics in proportion as they fall away more into the erroneousness of misbelief, guard themselves the more fully in outward practising, so that they may appear to do great things above the rest of the world, the Holy Church Universal sets at nought all their works, which she observes do not come forth by the authority of faith. Whence also it is rightly added by the voice of blessed Job,

Ver. 2. *The power of whose hands was nothing to me, and of life itself they were accounted unworthy.*

17. 'Power in the hand' is greatness in practising. But 'the power of the hands' of Heretics is reckoned 'as nothing to' Holy Church, because she sees that, the true faith being lost, whatsoever they do it is of no merit. For

the charity of God and our neighbour they forsake, who both imagine what is false concerning God, and by wrangling are separated from their neighbours. But 'the strength of the hands' without charity the great preacher bears witness is of no avail, in that he says, *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*. [1 Cor. 13, 3] But sometimes Heretics perform signs and miracles as well, but in order that they may here receive back the rewards of their chastening and abstinence, i.e. the praises, which they go after. And hence it is said by the voice of the Redeemer, *Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me, ye that work iniquity*. [Matt. 7, 22] By which same sentence what is there given to be understood, but that in man it is the humbleness of charity and not the signs of miraculous virtues that ought to be revered? Whence Holy Church now, even if there be any miracles of heretics performed, sets it at nought, because she sees that these are no proof of holiness. Since the way to prove holiness is not to perform miracles, but to love every man as one's self; and concerning God to think what is true, and of his fellow-creature to think better things than of himself. For that true power lies in love, and not in the manifesting of a miracle, 'Truth' shews, Who says, *By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another*. [John 13, 35] For He Who says not, 'in this shall it be known that ye are My disciples, if ye shall perform miraculous signs,' but Who saith, 'if ye have love one to another,' plainly proves that it is not miracles but charity alone that proves the true servants of God. So the witness to the heavenly discipleship is the gift of brotherly charity. Which same love, because all heretics refuse to have, whilst they are divided from the Unity of the Church Universal, it is justly said concerning them; *the strength of*

whose hands was nothing to me. And because to these same signs, that they set forth, they do not accord themselves by any humility, it is rightly added, *And of life itself they were accounted unworthy*. Or indeed, all heretics Holy Church declares unworthy of life itself, for this reason, because under the Name of Christ, they fight against the Name of Christ. Of whom it is yet further added;

Barren by want and hunger.

18. All heretics, whilst in sacred Revelation they make it their aim to dive into secrets of God beyond what they are capable of, by their hunger become barren. For they do not seek those things, whereby they may train themselves to humility, may order their ways in tranquillity, keep patience, shew forth long suffering, but those alone which may prove them learned and talkers; they aim to know those things, by which they may seem to be in a special manner instructed. For they very often treat with boldness of the nature of the Divine Being, whilst, wretched as they are, they know not their own selves. And so they become 'barren by want and hunger,' because they desire to dive into those things, by which they should not bring forth the buddings of a good life. For the things which they dive into are beyond themselves. And whilst they make for that which they are unable to comprehend, they neglect to acquaint themselves with those things, by which they might have been instructed. Which same boldness of theirs the great Preacher rightly checks, saying, *not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly*. [Rom. 12, 3] Hence Solomon says, *Set bounds to thine own wisdom.* [Prov. 23, 4] Hence again he says, *Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it*. [Prov. 25, 16] For the sweetness of spiritual meaning he who seeks to eat beyond what he contains, even what he had eaten he 'vomiteth'; because whilst he seeks to make out things above, beyond his powers, even the things that he had made out aright, he forfeits.

Hence he says again; *As for one to eat much honey is not good, so he that would search out Majesty shall be crushed with, glory*. [v. 27] For the glory of the Invisible Creator, which when searched into with moderation lifts us up, being dived into beyond our powers bears us down. Therefore heretics, because in proportion as they aim to be more completely filled by sublime perception, so much the more entirely they become empty, have it rightly said concerning them, *barren by want and hunger*. Since by unbounded attempts the more they go after the knowledge of heavenly acquaintanceship, the more they lose it.

19. But, on the other hand, they that in Holy Church are truly humble, and truly instructed, are taught touching heavenly mysteries, both some things when viewed to understand, and some things not understood to reverence, that so what they understand they may hold with reverence, and what they do not as yet understand they may look forward to with humility. Whence it is said to us by Moses, that in eating the lamb, *that which remaineth of it* we should *burn, with fire*; [Ex. 12, 10] for we 'eat the lamb,' when in understanding many particulars of the Lord's human Nature, we deposit them in the belly of the mind. Wherefrom there are some things left to us, which cannot be eaten; because many particulars still remain concerning Him, which can by no means be understood. Which same nevertheless are to be 'consumed with fire,' because the things which we are unable to understand concerning Him, we reserve with humility for the Holy Spirit. Which same humility very often reveals even those things to the perceptions of the Elect, which appeared to be things impossible to be understood. For the froward minds of heretics, whilst they proudly attribute understanding to themselves, as it were presume to deliver fixed decisions even touching what is unknown. Whence it comes to pass, that the self-elation itself which lifts them up in themselves within, should without drive them off from the truth, and that in the declarations of God they should

hardly even comprehend the outward things, who thought that they had in an especial manner gone to the bottom of spiritual secrets. Whence it is also added here;

Ver. 3, 4. *Who gnawed in solitude, being scurvy with calamity and misery, and chewed herbs and the barks of trees.*

20. That is wont to be ‘gnawed,’ which cannot be eaten. Now heretics because they apply themselves to make out Scripture by their own power, assuredly never can comprehend it, which same whilst they do not make out, they, as it were, do not eat. And because, not being aided by grace from on high, they are unable to eat it, they as it were ‘gnaw’ it with certain efforts. Since they handle it outwardly, when indeed they endeavour but do not attain to the interior parts of it. Which same because they are separated from the society of the Church Universal, are mentioned as gnawing not any where, but ‘in solitude.’ To which same ‘solitude’ that the false teachers draw their followers, Truth long before forewarned, saying, *If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth*. [Matt. 24, 26] And these are rightly recorded as ‘scurvy with affliction and misery,’ because they are despicable at once by the destructiveness of their practices, and the badness of their perceptions. Who do also ‘eat herbs and the barks of trees,’ because being kept off by the bar of self-exaltation, they are unable to perceive in sacred Revelation what is great and interior, but with difficulty discover therein a few things that are tender and exterior. Since by ‘herbs’ the plainer statements, and by ‘the barks of trees’ the exterior declarations of the Fathers are betokened. Those then who seek to know those things, by which they may not at all *be* learned, but seem to be, whilst in the sacred volumes they do not from the heart’s core search out the force of charity towards God and our neighbour, are as it were ‘fed by the herb and the bark,’ because they are either the lowest or the outer things which nourish the souls of those who carry themselves proudly. Or surely to ‘eat herbs’ is

touching Holy Scripture to observe the least precepts, and to disregard the greater ones. Whom Truth rightly rebukes, saying, *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law*. [Matt. 23, 23] Who do also 'eat the barks of trees,' because there are some who in the sacred volumes respect the outside of the letter only, nor keep in safety any thing belonging to the spiritual meaning, whereas they imagine that there is nothing more in the words of God, but that which they may hear on the outside. Which persons nevertheless the passion of vain glory possesses in all their errors, and the thirst after honour holds them captives, and generally by the very things that they speak they seek after nothing else but earthly profits. Concerning whom it is said by Paul, *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly*. [Rom. 16, 18] Whence too it is rightly subjoined;

And juniper roots for their meat.

21. For the juniper tree has prickles instead of leaves, for so bristly is that which they put forth, that like to thorns it is able to prick the person handling it. Now a thorn is all sorts of sin; because whilst it draws into self-gratification, as it were by pricking it wounds the soul. Whence it is spoken by the voice of one righteous and penitent, *I was turned in my calamity, while the thorn is broken*, [Ps. 32, 4] surely because the mind is turned to lamenting, that the prick of sin may be broken by repenting. But in another translation, the thorn is described not as 'broken' ['confringi'],' but 'fixed,' ['configi'] which same is not at variance with the same sense, because the mind of the penitent is brought to sorrow when the sin that has been committed is retained fixed fast in the recollection. What then is there denoted by the 'root of the juniper' saving avarice, from which the thorns of all the sins are produced? Concerning which it is said by Paul, *For the love of money is the root of all evil*. [1 Tim. 6, 10] For that springs up covertly in the

mind, and brings forth openly the prickles of all sin in the practice. Which same prickles arising from this root the great preacher immediately implies, when he subjoins, *Which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows*. For he who spoke of ‘many sorrows’ made known as it were the prickles arising from this root. So by ‘junipers’ we understand sins, but by ‘the root of junipers’ what else do we understand, but avarice, i.e. the material of sins? So then because heretics in their words generally go after external gains alone, yet are not ignorant that they make up what is wrong, but do not abandon the preachings of error, whilst they wish to receive their emoluments as teachers, it is well said of them now by the voice of the holy man, *and juniper roots for their meat*, because whilst they think of avarice with all the faculties of their minds, they are as it were fed by that nourishment, wherefrom assuredly the prickles of sins ensuing are used to be produced. Which persons if ever in sacred Revelation they seemingly discover things with sagacity, which while they do not understand, they fancy make for their statements, they directly scatter these vociferating them to their wretched hearers, whom they covet not the souls of but the substance. Whence it is fitly brought in next,

Ver. 5. *Who carrying these same off from the valleys, when they found each of then, ran to them with clamour.*

22. They ‘carry them off from the valleys,’ because with a high spirit they gather them from the lowly sayings of the Fathers. Which same whilst they exult to have found making for their cause, they run to them with outcries, because every thing that they have a perception of, by the appetite of praise they strive to cry abroad to the ears of men. It goes on;

Ver. 6. *They shall dwell in the desert places of the torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the ground.*

23. We give the name of ‘torrents’ to the brooks, that are gathered by the winter rains, which likewise at certain seasons are dried up. Thus with justice the framers of wrong doctrines are called ‘torrents’; because being cold to the warmth of charity, they grow to a height in the deadness of the winter season; because they do not flow out with perpetual fulness, but by the pleadings of Catholics, as by summer suns, are dried up. And indeed the fabricators of wrong doctrines springing up against Holy Church, are already made an end of by the heat of truth, yet notwithstanding the things which they taught their disciples do not cease to maintain and to defend. Thus then they that follow the errors of those persons ‘dwell in the desert places of torrents,’ i.e. put their trust in the preaching of those, whose effusions are already by the answering and reasoning of Catholics dried up. Now what else do we take ‘the caves of the earth’ for, but the hidden preachings of heretics? For heretics meet together in secret conclaves in such sort, that the reverence, which they cannot invest their erring belief with by reason, they may by concealment, and that to weak souls the speech of pervertedness may appear more to be treated with awe in proportion as it is secret. Hence in Solomon the woman as a type of heresy persuades, saying, *Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant*. [Prov. 9, 17] Which self-same secret preachings ‘Truth’ abhors, saying, *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not*. And again; *Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; Behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West: so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be*. [Matt. 24, 23. 26. 27.] So then that is ‘in the secret chambers’ there, which here is phrased in ‘caves.’ Thus heretics ‘dwell in caves,’ because they generally conceal their error by preachings in secret; that in the degree that they forbear to shew themselves to the more learned and wiser sort, they may the more irresistibly draw to

them the uninstructed. Whence also the words are rightly brought in next; *Or upon the gravel*. For we call by the name of 'gravel' those very little stones which the water of the river draws along. Accordingly, the teachers of perverted doctrines 'dwell upon the gravel,' because they draw after them those minds of men which are not established with any stedfastness of gravity, which the streams of errors are as it were ever carrying from place to place. And hence the great preacher, whereas he desired that his hearers should not be led by the chances of time, but that they might be established by firm gravity, charged them, saying, *That we henceforth be no more like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine*. [Eph. 4, 14] Thus Holy Church, being borne down by her adversaries for a space, when she sees the bold minds of those in error insulting over her, recalls to remembrance what the behaviour of those was, saying, *They shall dwell in the desert places of torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the gravel*. For because their wrong preaching, the fire of charity being gone, gained power by coldness of feeling, surely it 'dwelt in the desert places of torrents.' And because it was not open and at large, it 'lay hid' in caves. And because it held the people not fixed but lightly moved, it remained not upon the rock but 'upon the gravel.' Concerning which it is yet further added;

Ver. 7. *Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under brambles.*

24. What do we understand by the name of 'brambles,' but those 'piercings' [§. 21] of sins, which we have already described above. Now because froward minds delight in wickednesses, which they should have bewailed, all heretics uplift themselves with vain joy in proportion as they gain power for worse acts; and they 'reckon there are delights under the brambles,' because they lift up the froward mind to joy, from the same cause that they bear the thorns of sins. For if ever they have been able to

draw any one to their error, they plume themselves in glee; and by the same act, whereby they are daily heaping to themselves sins, even by ruining others, they exult that they are as it were leaders to righteousness. And so it is well said; *Who rejoiced amongst the like, and reckoned that there are delights under brambles.* For they drag all that they are able to their own destruction; and to be under sins, or to add offences to offences, they imagine their heaping up a superabundance of virtuous acquirements.

Ver. 8. *They were children of fools, yea, children of base men; and in the earth not appearing at all.*

25. That is to say, the children of those, who were the masters of errors. So they are called 'children,' not as engendered by the seed, but by the imitating of those, who by teaching what is wrong were 'fools' in respect of ignorance, and by living wicked lives 'base men' in respect of conduct. Who are not allied to our Redeemer by any relationship of wisdom, or by any of life. Concerning which it is said by the voice of Solomon in commendation of Holy Church, *Her husband is noble in the gates*. [Prov. 31, 23] So these, because they followed the froward examples of those going' astray, were recorded as being 'the children of fools and of base men.' Now it is rightly subjoined, *and on the earth not appearing at all*. Because whilst they aim to appear something here, surely from the land of the living they are made outcasts.

26. But this which we have delivered in a type of heretics, nothing is at all in the way, if we understand it as well of persons froward and carnal, though set in the right faith. For neither does Holy Church account those only adversaries to her, who, as placed without, dissent from her faith, but those also who by living amiss inwardly stifle her life. So then let her, afflicted with the wofulness of adversity coming down upon her, survey how in the season of her prosperity, by the wickedness of evil-doers living within her even she was burthened. Let her consider that in due of the

deserts of some, the life of all was not unjustly disturbed in her, and let her say, *Who gnawed in solitude, scurvy with affliction and misery*. As I before said in the first part of this work, the solitude of the interior is sometimes used to be understood in respect of the excellency of contemplation. But in this place, where ‘solitude’ is mentioned in the way of reproach, what else is there demonstrated but a barrenness of goodness? And hence, under the type of Judaea, Jeremiah mourns over the soul of the sinner, saying, *How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!* [Lam. 1, 1] But when it is said by blessed Job respecting the evil-doers, *they gnawed in solitude*, it is well to look at that also which is delivered by the Psalmist, *His enemies shall lick the dust*. [Ps. 72, 9]

27. For there are two sorts of men that lend themselves to their own ambition, i.e. one which always employs the flatteries of the tongue to serve to avarice, another which is bent on robbery by open force. For we ‘gnaw’ when we wear away any thing outwardly with strong effort. For there is ‘licking’ when that which cannot be eaten with ease is tasted by the lightness of the tongue being pressed upon it. All persons then who even under a guise of faith live wickedly, who long after what belongs to another, but are not any way able to seize upon the object that they long after, but try by flattering speeches, and as it were by the softening of sweetness, to carry off the things coveted, what else do they save ‘lick the ground?’ because the several things of earth, which they cannot by power, they strive to make away with by the softness of the tongue. But they who are sustained in this world by any degree of power, and whilst coveting the things of others, scorn indeed to cozen by deceit, because they are able even by unjust strength to fulfil what they have a mind for, the thing that they long for these persons do not ‘lick’ but ‘gnaw’; because they demolish the life of their fellow-creatures by the forcibleness of power as by the effect of teeth. So then let Holy Church regard the true riches of the Eternal Country, let

her behold the throng of the citizens Above, let her discern in her Elect Children the culture of the mind, and the excellencies of countless virtues, and from these let her recall the eye of the mind to the life of the wicked, which is made void of all goodness, and by comparison with them let her see how and in what way that life is destitute of all virtuous attainments, because it has abandoned the things on high, and coveted those beneath. Let her see how very often that thing which he longs for, if perchance he has power, he even seizes by violence. Let her see that she has long been subject to such persons as set within her pale, and that by their offences she has come even to the very jeopardy and hurts of the good too, and let her say, *Who gnawed in solitude*. As though she complained openly, saying, 'The things of others they would not gnaw, even by seizing them by violence, except they themselves first remained in their own interior solitary, and bare of the culture of virtues.' But she rightly explains the kind and sort of those, saying, *Scurvy with affliction and misery*. For unhealthy flesh, if it be overlooked to be heedfully taken care of, is by foulness growing over it worse pressed with disease, and whilst to the misfortune of sickness the wretchedness of neglect is superadded, heavier inconvenience is undergone by scurf arising.

28. Therefore Human Nature having been created aright, but having sunk into disease by the demerit of its own will, it fell into utter overthrow, because being pressed by countless necessities, it found nought in this life save that whereby it should be beaten down; but whereas those same necessities of our nature we generally minister to beyond what is advisable, and overlook the care of the soul, by the wretchedness of neglect we add to our infirmity the foulness of sin. For the necessities of nature are such as to have this in them fraught with the greatest danger, that often there is no discerning therein, what there is done relating to them in the aim at usefulness, and what in the evil of self-gratification. For very frequently

occasion of beguilement being met with, whilst we render the things due to necessity we are doing service to the evil of self-gratification, if our self-excusing cloaks itself with the veil of infirmity before the eyes of discernment, and as it were hides itself under the countenance of discharging the useful. But to let loose the frailty of our nature by neglect is nothing else than to add misery to affliction, and by that misery to redouble the foulness of the vices. Whence holy men, in every thing they do, discriminate with the most earnest aim, that the frailty of their nature exact not from them more than is owed, and that under the cloak of necessity there grow not up in them the evil of gratification. For they undergo one thing from infirmity, and another thing from the prompting of temptation, and being appointed as a kind of most equitable umpires between necessity and pleasure, they lift up the one by comforting, and bridle the other by keeping down. Whence it comes to pass, that even if they are exposed to the affliction of their infirmity, yet they never descend from neglect to the foulness of misery. For this mere thing, to be in affliction, is to be subject to the necessities of nature from the frailty of flesh still liable to corruption. Which same necessities he longed to get quit of, who said, *Deliver me from my necessities*. [Ps. 25, 17] For he knew that, for the most part, the sins of the pleasures break forth by occasion of necessities, and that he might not of his own will commit aught unlawful, he was busy to have that itself plucked up which he was subject to unwillingly in the roots. [An example of this case is found in St. Augustine's Confessions, B. x. § 43 — 47.]

29. But on the other hand, the evil-minded take delight in those necessities of their corrupt state, because they force them back to serve the occasion of gratifications. For while they minister to nature by recruiting their bodies with food, through the gratification of the palate they are swelled out in the glutting of delight. When they seek clothing for covering the limbs, they look out not only for things that may cover, but also may

uplift, and against the numbness of cold not only what may defend by thickness, but likewise delight by softness; not only what may soothe the touch by softness, but also beguile the eyes by the colour. So then, to turn occasion of necessity to the use of pleasure, what other thing is it but to join the foulness of misery to his affliction? Thus let the Church, being borne down in the season of adversity, call to mind those by whose deserts she undergoes these things, and let her say, *Who gnawed in solitude, scurvy with affliction and misery*. They indeed would not be made foul by affliction, if they did not superadd to inherent necessities the misery of gratifications. Which same necessities we have earned by the offence of the first parent. But they who add misery to their affliction, from the torture of punishment, break forth into augmentations of guilt. But would that such persons, whilst they scorn to be changed for the better, did things wrong in such a way as not to proffer them to others as well. Would that their own death only were enough for them, and that by their baneful persuasions they did not kill another's life likewise. For they grudge others being what they are not, they grieve for others to obtain the thing that they lose; for if by chance they perceive any good points springing up in the acts of others, they directly pluck them up with the hand of mischievous reviling. Whence too it follows, *And they did eat herbs and the barks of trees.*

30. For what is denoted by 'herbs,' but the life of those beginning well tender and close to the ground? and what by the barks of trees, but the outward deeds of those who henceforth seek after things aloft? For bad men, when they see persons beginning what is right, either by deriding or as if counselling them, offer opposition. But when they now think with themselves that certain persons are making way to the highest things, because they cannot wholly and entirely scatter to the winds their advancements, they divert those persons from some of their deeds. Thus then to 'eat herbs and the barks of trees,' is by pestilent persuasions as by a

kind of teeth of their evil-mindedness to scatter to nought, whether the aims of those beginning aright, or the doings of persons now henceforth after the manner of trees making towards that which is above. The children of perdition ‘eat herbs,’ when by scoffing they consume the beginnings of the frail sort. Likewise they ‘eat the barks of trees,’ when with the hand of evil counsel they withdraw from the life of those growing rightly the covering of good deeds. Now these latter they strip like trees in particular actions, but those because like herbs they drag whilst despising them, they as it were eat what they tread under them. The strength of some now rising on high they in part make away with, but the tenderness of some even still placed below they utterly break in pieces. So then let him say, *they eat herbs and the barks of trees*, because by wicked mockings in some they broke up piecemeal external deeds, and in some hearts in hope growing lively.

31. Or surely to ‘eat herbs’ is to copy some things light and tender belonging to the ancient Fathers. Whilst to ‘eat the barks of trees’ is to practise their deeds so far as the outside, but in these same works not to maintain a right intention. For there are some persons who, whereas they cannot obtain the glory of the present world by that world’s courses of conduct, seek after a semblance of sanctity, assume the garb of reverence, long to appear imitators of the old Fathers, and some few things indeed, little and light, they do employ themselves upon, but their strong things, and such as come forth from the root of charity alone, they are indifferent to imitate. These truly ‘eat herbs,’ because they overlook what is great, and are filled with what is worthless. Yet very often they put in execution even some deeds seemingly more vigorous, but they do not hold a right intention in those same deeds. To which persons surely to ‘eat the barks of trees’ is to take to them the outward acts of the Elect, and not to have a good intention in good acts. For whilst for the sake of human applause they search out right deeds, but are indifferent to imitate the heart of those doing rightly,

they are filled ‘by the barks of trees’ alone. For with all the desire they seek after the glory or abundance of the present life. Whence too it is rightly subjoined, *And the root of junipers was their meat.*

32. For being set within by faith, whilst they for the most part lend themselves to thoughts of avarice, they as it were ‘eat’ that, whereby in the final close of life the roughnesses of punishments are put forth. Which persons, while they do not long after the fruitage of divine revelation, but make themselves subservient for the going after things temporal, are never filled with the bread of wheat, but with the ‘root of the juniper.’ For the mere things springing up from what is beneath and lowest engross them, that they may prick them afterwards after the manner of the juniper by the hardness of recompensing, as by the sharpness of leaves. For whilst they despise God here, they are never made sensible what great evil it is that they do. For still they are ‘eating the root of the juniper,’ but how sharp the branches of this root are they do not give heed; because verily bad conduct now as it were in the root gives delight in sin, but afterwards as it were in the branches it pricks in punishment. Where also it is well subjoined; *Who, carrying these same off from the valleys, when they found each one, did run thereto with clamour.*

33. In comparison surely with things above, all the present life is a ‘valley.’ But these, because they know not to contemplate the heights of mountains, i.e. the strong deeds of the Saints, are always busied in the lowest gratification as in ‘the valleys,’ and when they find any gain, even of a slight acquisition, they run with clamouring, because they strive even by wrangling to make off with this, for ‘upon each being found in the valley to run with clamour,’ is on the occasions of cases arising to wrangle even for small payment. Now it very often happens that him, whom good conduct exhibits as holy, occasion of earthly advantage springing up puts to the proof. For you may see persons already employed on what is lofty, already

in the practice of abstinence, already in the work of instruction, following after the patterns of the fathers that went before; but when they suddenly find the gain of the present life, as the fruit of the valley, they 'run thereto with clamour'; because the quiet of overlaid sanctity being broken through they spring forth to that.

34. It may be too that by 'herbs and the barks of trees' not only the deeds of the good are meant, as has been said before, but consolations and blessings in this life. For oftentimes Almighty God, when He enriches His Elect with interior gifts, uplifts them with external honours as well. And while He renders them objects of honour by advancing them above others, He exhibits them the wider as objects of imitation; and sometimes the evil-minded despise indeed the life of those, but long to attain their good success in this world. And so because they seek here below the flatteries of transitory comfort, they 'eat herbs'; because in their thoughts they dwell on the external glory of these persons, they 'chew the barks of trees'; and because in all these they minister to avarice alone with the entire bent of their mind, they are filled with the 'root of the juniper.' All which things they 'carry off from the valleys,' because from love of this low corruptible life they are made to burn with boundless lusts. And 'when they find each one, they run thereto with clamours,' because surely of the holy Fathers, whose merits they never seek to acquire, they are busy to lay hold of the posts and governments, and when they very frequently cannot attain these by quiet means, they even try it by bursting asunder the peacefulness of concord.

35. And for this that these are widely separated from the conduct of the Fathers going before, it is rightly subjoined; *They dwelled in the desert places of torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the gravel*. For on the side of good we rightly take the 'torrents' for the holy preachers, who whilst in the present life they flow into us by divine effusions, are as it were

collected by a concourse of waters in the winter season. Who also withdraw themselves on the summer sun appearing, because when the light of the Eternal Country shines forth, they will cease to preach. ‘The desert places of these torrents’ are the benefits of the life of time. For these they abandon, and betake themselves to the obtaining of heavenly gains. But all these that ‘torrent’ had forsaken who said; *For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung*. [Phil. 3, 8] But because the minds of the wicked seek to obtain those things in this life, which the righteous abandon despising them, they are related to ‘dwell in the desert places of the torrents.’ For those things which are unworthy of the Saints, those same long to win as great. But the ‘caves of the earth’ are wicked thoughts, in which they bury themselves from the eyes of their fellow-creatures. For as they are evil, they shun being seen by men, and whilst they pretend themselves something else than what they are, they conceal themselves in the lurking places of their conscience, as ‘in caves of the earth,’ which persons would not do all these things, unless they were hopeless of an eternal and substantial life, unless they set their mind in this uncertainty of the temporal state. Whence it is well added, *Or upon the gravel.*

36. For the ‘gravel’ is the present life, which by the mere failure of mutability, as by the impulse of a river, is unceasingly being brought to its end. Hence to ‘dwell upon the gravel’ is to attach one’s self to the tide of the present life, and there to set the bent of the mind, where it cannot stablish the step by standing firmly. There is another circumstance ‘in gravel,’ which ought in no wise to be passed over in silence, namely, that when the foot is set upon the top of it, it slips by the mere rolling tendency thereof, and is made to roll down to the bottom. From which circumstance the life of the wicked is in nothing at variance, because whilst for love of the world they set themselves to do some things lawful and respectable, they in a manner set the foot flat upon the top, but suddenly the foot slips to

the bottom, because their course of conduct, whilst it ever seeks after more, descends even to what is wicked and unlawful. So then, when Holy Church meets with the crosses of this period, let her in remembrance have recourse to the life of the carnal, whom even in her prosperity she bore as adversaries to her, and by whose deserts it is that she suffers these things let her see and know, saying, *They dwelled in the desert places of torrents, and in caves of the earth, and upon the gravel*. For because they are bared of the teaching of the Fathers, they are related to 'dwell in the desert places of the torrents'; because they cover themselves up in the hidden thoughts of the heart, they are related to 'dwell in caves of the earth'; whilst because they desire to fix their aim in the changeableness of the present state of being, they are related to 'dwell upon the gravel.' But would that such, seeing that sins when they tempt they have no mind to do violence to, even after they have been committed, cleansed them away by weeping: would that at all events, when done, they acquainted themselves with their evil deeds, 'and applied to the barren fig-tree the basket of dung, i.e. to the unfruitful soul the richness of lamenting.

37. But the mind of man has for the most part this thing proper to it, that as soon as ever it falls into transgression, it is still further removed from the knowledge of self. For this very evil, that it commits, inserts itself to the soul as a bar before the eye of reason. Whence it comes to pass, that the soul, being first encompassed by voluntary darkness, afterwards does not any longer even know the good it should seek. For the more it attaches itself to evil things, the less does it apprehend the good ones that it loses. Since the light of truth, because it minutely tries the offences of lost sinners, in the same degree that it is neglected when had, so does it, judging rigidly, allow it to be, that not even when lost it should be sought back, and when it is banished from the act, it departs from the perception; that that whereof the face, as it were, is slighted in practice, should now no longer have its very

hinder parts appear in the remembrance. Thus, hence it is that lost sinners, whilst subject to sins to be lamented, rejoice; concerning whom it is said by Solomon, *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the worst things*. [Prov. 2, 14] Hence it is that occasions of lamentations they go through dancing; hence it is that the business of their death they carry on laughing. Whence here also it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. *7. Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under the brambles.*

38. 'They rejoice in the midst of the like,' because, surely, they give heed to the transitory things which they receive, and neglect to look at the lasting blessings which they lose. And whilst they are on fire with the love of things temporal, they are willingly ignorant of the true joy. Which same if they earnestly sought to acquaint themselves with, how greatly the delights which they seek after are to be wept for, they would see. But, while they are unconcerned to know what are better, they choose those alone for themselves, as the highest, which flatter the eyes in the visible by a fleeting beguilement. That is to say, they fix fast their heart, following after the visible, and rejoice so much the more outwardly, in proportion as they are without the remembrance of themselves inwardly. Yet, generally, there are mixed with their joys calamities, and by the actual things, by which they are filled with pride, they are scourged. For neither can they, without grievous inconveniences of anxieties, either seek when not possessed, or retain when sought, the temporal things that they desire; among their equals aim at superior glory; from inferiors exact respect beyond what is meet, and to superiors shew forth the same less than they ought; for the most part display the mastery by masterfulness; ever do what is wicked, and yet, that they may not have the credit of wickedness, guard themselves with dread. All these things surely sting the wretched persons, but those same stings they do not feel, from being overcome by the mere love of the things of time.

And hence it is rightly said now*, And reckoned there were delights under the brambles*; because, being closely encompassed by the enjoyments of sins, from the affecting of the present life, how sharp the things they are that they undergo they are not aware.

39. Therefore they 'rejoice,' but 'under brambles'; because they delight in earthly things indeed, but yet, whilst they are unable to manage those same things of time without trouble, the wretched persons are stung by that same care which they are pressed by. They continue 'under the brambles,' and this very thing they account delight, because they at once endure hardships indeed from the love of the present life, but yet, being bound about by the absorption of over-great desire, they account the trouble of that endurance to be pleasure. Hence Jeremiah, rightly taking upon himself the likeness of all human conduct, complains in lament, saying, *He has made me drunken with; wormwood*. [Lam. 3, 15] For as we have already said before in a part above, any one drunk knows nothing what he is undergoing. But he that is made 'drunk with wormwood,' both has the thing that he has taken bitter, and yet does not understand that same bitterness which he is filled with. So the race of man, being by the right judgment of God left to themselves in their pleasures, and by those same pleasures consigned to voluntary sufferings, is 'drunk with wormwood'; because both these are bitter things which it endures for the love of this life, and yet that same bitterness, by the blindness of concupiscence, as by the insensibility of drunkenness, it remains ignorant of. For thirsting after the glory of the world, whilst it finds instead thereof numberless tribulations, what it drinks is bitter. But because it took this too eagerly, from mere drunkenness it is not now able to discern the evil of that bitterness. For bad men, for the sake of the glory of this world, love tribulations even, and on account of it willingly lend themselves to all toils, and most devotedly submit their necks to the yoke of heavy labours. Which is well described by Hosea whilst

prophesying, under the likeness of Ephraim, saying, *And Ephraim is a heifer that is taught to love threshing*. [Hos. 10, 11] For a heifer accustomed to the labours of threshing, very often, when loosed, returns even not forced to the same customariness of labour. So the mind of the wicked being devoted to the services of this world, and accustomed to the wearyings of temporal things, even if it be allowed to be freely at liberty to itself, yet is eager to submit itself to earthly pains and toils, and seeks the usage [al. 'from usage'] of a wretched way of life, 'the threshing' of labour, that it should not be acceptable, even if it were allowable, to give over the yoke of worldly servitude. Which same yoke the Lord loosed from the neck of the disciples, when He said, *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness*; and straightway added, *and cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares*. [Luke 21, 34] And again, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart*. [Matt. 11, 28] What is it for the Lord to call Himself 'meek and lowly' in preceptorship, save leaving behind the difficulties for exercising self-exaltation, to point out some plain ways of living well? But because the minds of the wicked are more pleased by what is harsh in self-exalting than by what is gentle in mildness and humility, they 'suppose there are delights under brambles.' For from love of the world they are ready to bear what is hard as things soft and delightful, whilst they try in this life to lay hold of the topmost pinnacles of affairs.

40. The Lord bids ceasing from the labours of the world, He prompts the sweetness of holy tranquillity, and yet the frenzied mind of the wicked is more rejoiced to obtain what is harsh in the carnal way than to hold what is mild in the spiritual way. It is more fed by the bitterness of wearisomeness than by the sweetness of tranquillity. Which the Israelitish people openly shews us in itself, which same, whilst it received the refreshment of manna

from above, lusted after the flesh-pots, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, from Egypt. [Numb. 11, 5] For what is denoted by the ‘manna,’ but the food of grace, having a sweet savour, given from Above for the refreshment of the interior life to persons rightly free? And what by the ‘flesh-pots,’ saving carnal works, which are with difficulty to be dressed by the toils of tribulations, as by fires? What by ‘melons,’ but earthly sweets? What by ‘leeks and onions,’ which those who eat very often shed tears, excepting the hardness of the present life, which is both gone through by the lovers of it not without mourning, and notwithstanding is loved with tears? Therefore, forsaking ‘manna,’ together with melons and fleshmeats they sought leeks and onions, surely because bad minds despise the gifts of tranquillity, sweet by grace, and for the sake of carnal pleasures they covet the wearisome ways of this life, even though full of tears; they scorn to have where they may rejoice in a spiritual manner, and ardently seek where they may even groan in a carnal way. So then, let Job with a truth-telling voice rebuke the madness of these persons, for no other reason than that by a perverted judgment they set the troubled before the tranquil, the hard before the gentle, the harsh before the mild, the transitory before the eternal, the suspicious before the assured. The madness of such let Holy Church call to remembrance, when she is encompassed with cruel adversities without, which persons she held within herself as if believers, but for long endured their life opposing the faith, and let her say, *Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under brambles*; surely, because the evil things that they do, they learnt by the badness of the wicked going before. Whence also it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 8. *They were children of fools, yea children of base men.*

41. It is right for us to know that some within the pale of Holy Church are styled ‘fools,’ but yet ‘noble,’ whilst others are ‘fools’ and ‘base.’ For they are called ‘fools,’ but cannot be ‘base,’ who contemning the wisdom of

the flesh, desire foolishness that shall stand them in stead, and after the newness of the interior descent are exalted by the nobility of virtue, who set at nought the foolish wisdom of the world, and covet the wise foolishness of God. Since it is written, *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men*. This 'foolishness' Paul charges ourselves to lay hold of, when he says, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise*. [1 Cor. 1, 25] This 'foolishness' they that perfectly followed obtained to hear from the voice of Wisdom, *Ye which have followed Me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel*. [Matt. 19, 28] Mark how by abandoning temporal things they purchased the glory of eternal power. Accordingly what is there more foolish in this world than to abandon one's own? And what more noble in the eternal world than to come with God as judges? Verily the nobility of these judges is made mention of by Solomon bearing record, where this which I have already spoken before is said, *Her husband is noble in the gates, when he sitteth among the senators of the land*. [Prov. 31, 23] For noble above measure does he regard those, whom he calls 'senators.' This 'nobility' Paul had beheld in himself, when being united by the spirit to the relationship of the Creator, he said, *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art or man's device*; [Acts 17, 29] i.e. we are styled 'the offspring of God,' not as being brought forth in His Nature, but as being by His Spirit both created by His Will and made anew by His adoption. So much the more then is each one lifted up to this nobility, in proportion as he is renewed in the image he has received to the likeness of That Being in a copy.

42. But contrariwise they are 'fools and base men,' who while, in following themselves, they flee from the wisdom Above, are lulled to sleep in their ignorance as in the vileness of an abject descent. For in proportion

as they do not understand that for which they were made, in the same measure they lose the relationship of high birth vouchsafed then in the Likeness. So they are 'fools and base men,' whom the slavery of the soul withholds from the fellowship of the Eternal Inheritance. As it is written, *Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.* [John 8, 34] And it is spoken by the voice of the great preacher, *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*. [1 Cor. 3, 19] They then, who whilst they were wise in earthly things were held back from the interior nobility, were 'fools and base men' at once. Whose actions while very many imitate they are rendered 'the children of fools and base men,' and whilst they follow these in notions and practices, they are at once 'fools,' because they do not understand true wisdom, and 'base men,' because they are not renewed by any freedom of the Spirit. But these persons though they may practise the arts of the wicked, yet very often in this life occupy the places of the just, and they account themselves the children of those, whose offices from lust of honour they outwardly discharge. Which persons holy correction recals to the knowledge of themselves, i.e. that being settled in bad desires, they should mind whose children they are. For they are not the children of those whose places they occupy, but whose deeds they execute: Therefore let it be rightly said, *The children of fools and base men*. Where it is fitly subjoined;

And on earth utterly not appearing.

43. For as there are very many persons upon earth, and they are hidden from the knowledge of their fellow creatures by the lowness of their vile condition, as by a kind of overlaying of a cloak, so there are some in the Church, who whilst they submit themselves to the degradation of wicked deeds, are not known to the Divine sight. To which persons it is one day to be said, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not*. So, 'to be on earth and appear' is in a right faith through the excellency of practice to display the nobility of the soul. 'To be on earth and utterly not appear,' is to be set fast

in the Church indeed by faith, but to show forth nothing worthy of faith in practice. These then being within the pale of Holy Church, to the eyes of the Divine Being both ‘appear’ in respect of judgment, and yet do ‘not appear’ in respect of the deserts of a good life, because those things, which by confessing they hold, by living they do not shew forth. Concerning whom Paul saith, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him*. [Tit. 1, 16] These persons in Holy Church bear down rather than venerate the faith which they protest that they hold, whereas by her name they covet rather to secure their own profits than her’s. But the Elect, whilst they take care to preserve the deservingness of faith by right deeds, are brought near to the knowledge of their Maker even amidst the throngs of lost sinners. Which is well denoted in the Gospel by the woman suffering from the bloody flux. Concerning whom the Lord says, *Who touched Me?* Peter answered reasoning, *Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?* [Luke 8, 45. 46.] But he obtained to hear the causes in true reason, when the Lord said to him, *Somebody hath touched Me, for I likewise perceive that virtue is gone out of Me*. See how the throng ‘pressed’ the Lord, but she only ‘touched’ Him, who came to Him in humility, because surely even many lost sinners in Holy Church by learning ‘press’ the truth, which same they neglect to ‘touch’ by living well. They ‘press’ and are far off, because by professions they follow Divine knowledge, by habits flee it. They ‘press,’ I say, and are far off, because by acting they contradict that faith, which by speaking they assert. As then we are instructed by this testimony, that by touching some do not ‘touch’ the Lord, so some are not ‘seen’ by the Lord, even when they are seen; because to His secret regards, and for the punishment of condemnation, they do appear, but for the claim of Election they do not appear. Therefore let it be rightly said, *And on earth utterly not appearing*, because though the Church held them to the extent of seeming, yet those being within her the Creator

did not see, in that He did not know them. Who in the season of peace for this reason maintain the faith to the extent of words, because they see that that faith flourishes generally. But when a sudden storm of adversity rises up against that Church, they are directly parted from her by a public denial; and whatever they before held as if venerating her, they afterwards fight against the same as deriding her. Whence it is fitly added;

Ver. 9. *And now am I their song, yea, I am become their byword.*

44. By which same words that time of Holy Church is set forth, when she is openly derided by the lost; when the wicked gaining ground, faith shall be for a reproach, and truth shall be for a ground of accusation. For so much the more contemptible shall each individual be in proportion as he may be more righteous; and the worse object of abhorrence, the more worthy object of praise. Therefore the Holy Church of the Elect in the time of calamity 'becomes a proverb' to the wicked, because when they see the good die by torments, they take their likeness of cursing from those. For in proportion as they see a passing death, but do not see a lasting life, so much the more in scoffing do they flee present ills, in proportion as by the understanding interiorly they do not reach to lasting goods. But the particulars that are subjoined because they are not involved in obscurer sorts of sentences, we must run through in brief, that we may be able to come the sooner to those parts, wherein we have to labour. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.*

45. All the wicked 'fly far' from Holy Church, not by the paces of footsteps, but by the characters of practices; they fly far not in place, but desert, whereas, pride gaining ground, they contemn her with open upbraiding. For 'to spit in his face' is not only to detract from the good in absence, but to give the lie to each one of the just even in presence. And these then whilst the wicked by openly deriding set at nought, they as it

were let out in insults upon them loose words, like streams of spittle running down. But Holy Church knows how to gain ground in sufferings, and in the midst of reproaches to maintain an honourable life; she is taught neither to be cast down by adversities, nor to glory in prosperity. She is instructed, in meeting prosperity, to lay low the mind in downcasting; she is taught, in meeting adversity, to lift up the soul to the hope of the height above. She knows how to ascribe her good things to the mercifulness of the Redeemer, she knows how to ascribe her evil things to the justice of the Judge, that both what is good she has by His bestowing, and what is bad she suffers by His permitting. And hence He immediately adds touching the Lord, saying,

Ver. 11. *Because He hath opened His quiver and afflicted me.*

46. What is denoted by 'the quiver' of God, but secret counsel? Now the Lord casts the arrow from the quiver, when from His secret counsel He sends forth an open sentence. For that any man is scourged, we know, but for what cause the scourge comes, we know not. But when after the scourge amendment of life follows, the actual power of counsel is itself disclosed as well. So the quiver shut is hidden counsel. But we are chastened by an open quiver, when by that which follows after the scourge, we see with what counsel we are stricken. When the Lord beholds sins, and yet does not move the hand to vengeance, He as it were holds the quiver shut, but by striking He shews, how greatly that displeased Him in us, which He bore long beholding it. Therefore let the Holy Church of the Elect being pressed by tribulations say, *For He hath opened His quiver, and afflicted me*. Which same on meeting with the insolent voices of her adversaries, when she sees that her preaching is not received, giving over the hardness of some, restrains the words of her preaching. For reflecting that her persecutors are rendered worse at the voice of her exhortation, she rather prefers to hold her

peace. And when she sees them persons unworthy to hear, she binds up her preaching with silence drawn over. Whence he fitly adds;

And put a bridle into my mouth.

47. They were acquainted with ‘a bridle put upon themselves’ before certain persons, who said, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*. [Acts 13, 46] Holy men see ‘the bridle’ of silence put upon themselves with the hard hearts of lost sinners, when they say by the Prophet, *How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?* [Ps. 137, 4] Paul also charged ‘a bridle to be put,’ who enjoined the disciple, saying, *A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth condemned of himself*. [Tit. 3, 10] For holy teachers very often by lofty ken survey the hearts of those that oppose them, and when they see those hearts forsaken by God, afflicted and groaning they hold their peace. Doth not Solomon sometimes ‘put a bridle’ upon the teachers, who saith, *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee*, [Prov. 9, 8] but if we hold our peace from rebuking for this reason, because we are afraid for the scorner’s hates to rise up against us, we no longer seek God’s profits, but our own. Wherein it requires to be known that sometimes when bad men are reproved they become worse. Them therefore we spare, and not ourselves, if from the love of those we cease from the rebuking of them. Whence it is needful that we sometimes endure keeping to ourselves what they are, in order that they may learn in us by good living [al. ‘by seeing’] what they are not. Therefore because Holy Church, who ever gives forth her words in a spirit of charity, sometimes also withholds them on the principle of charity, let her say, *He hath put a bridle in my mouth*. As though he confessed openly, saying, ‘Because in some I did not see the advancement of preaching, from those I refrained assault, that my life at all events by

patience they might be taught, whereas my words they would not by the preaching proffered consent to receive.' But very often this grieves us most in tribulations, that we meet with them from those, in whom we trusted with the love of kin. And hence it is added;

Ver. 12. *At the right hand of the East my calamities on the spot arose.*

48. For 'calamities' would 'rise to the left,' if at the hand of any persons set without the pale of Religion, and openly denying Christ, she met with the adverse dealings of persecution. But when she undergoes from persons seemingly believers the trial of tormentings, it is as if calamities arose to her at the right hand, because they who are enlisted under Christ's name, assail Christ's name in her. For by the very usage of speech we speak of having as 'on the right' what we account as great, and as on the left that which we look down upon, which Zechariah openly teaches, saying, *And he shewed me Jesus the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him*. [Zech. 3, 1. 2.] Who that he might the more plainly shew this that he set before, added going on; *And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Jesus was clothed with filthy garments*. 'Jesus was [al. 'is spoken of as'] clothed with filthy garments,' because though He was a stranger to all sin, yet He came into the likeness of the flesh of sin. And to Him on His coming Satan stood on His right hand. For the Lord appeared to hold the Jewish People as great, and the Gentiles as nought. But after that He appeared Incarnate, the Gentile world, which had been held as 'on the left' believed, whilst the Jewish People swerved aside to unbelief. Thus 'Satan stood on the right hand to Him'; because he carried off from Him that People, which had been for a long while beloved. But because that same Jewish people, being now lost, shall in the end one day believe, as the Prophet testifies, who says, *The remnant shall be saved*; [Is. 10, 21] the

Lord removes Satan from His right hand, saying, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan*. And betokening the deliverance of that same people, he adds, *because He hath chosen Jerusalem*. Which same people because under the guidance of unbelief it let itself run down to the burnings of hell, but whilst it is brought back to faith, is set free from that same burning of everlasting fire, has it directly added there concerning it, *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*

49. So then as there for 'the right hand' the Jewish people is denoted, so in this place by the term of 'the right hand,' the faithful people of Holy Church is denoted. And hence the Judge that is to come 'shall set the goats on His left Hand, and the sheep on His right Hand.' But when these very persons too fret Holy Church in the time of adversity, who seemed to be of the faithful, surely 'calamities arise to her on the right hand.' Now rightly is this same called 'the right hand of the East'; since it is written of the Head itself of the same, *The East is His Name*. [Zech. 6, 12 Vul.] For seeing that the light springs from the East, He is rightly called 'the East,' by the light of whose righteousness the night of our unrighteousness is enlightened. So 'calamities arise to the right hand of the East'; because these likewise leap forth to persecution, who were supposed to be Elect Members of our Redeemer. Which same calamities he rightly declares 'arise on the spot,' because whereas they who persecute were not persons without her pale, evils are brought about by them suddenly and on the spot. But if 'the right hand' is a designation of those who are truly believers, 'calamities arise to the right of the East,' because on the crisis of persecution breaking forth, the righteous undergo the cruel assaults of the wicked. It follows;

Ver. 12. *They overturned my feet, and oppressed with their footpaths as with waves.*

50. What are denoted by the Church's 'feet,' but her outermost members? which while they lend themselves to earthly deeds, are able to be

the sooner deceived by adversaries in proportion as they do not understand things on high. Therefore these 'feet adversaries overturn,' that is to say, when they draw her outermost members to the error of their doctrine. The 'feet overturned' cannot keep the way, in that all the weak being either persuaded by the promises of their persecutors, or affrighted by their threats, or broken by their tortures, swerve from the right path. Now 'the paths' of adversaries are rightly likened to waves, when it is said, *and they oppressed with their footpaths as with waves*; in this way, because the life of the evil-minded, mischievous with wayward restlessness, comes down as a tempest for the overwhelming the ship of the heart, so to say. Concerning which same tempest it is said by Solomon, *As a tempest passing, the wicked shall not be*. [Prov. 10, 25] And when the weak man sees the froward flourishing, that man the wave of wretched imitation plunges into the sea of frowardness. It follows;

Ver. 13. *They did away with my paths, they plotted against me, and prevailed, and there was not any to bring help.*

51. Let blessed Job tell these things of evil spirits, i.e. of secret enemies. Let the Church Universal speak them of bad men persecuting, i.e. of open adversaries. For these 'do away with her paths,' when in the souls of certain weak ones they interrupt the ways of truth by crafty persuading. These in 'plotting prevail, when those, whom they cannot openly force to evil, they turn aside by pretending what is good, but that is very wonderful, which he subjoins, *And there was not any one to bring help*, when the Psalmist exclaims touching the help of God; *A helper in seasons, in tribulation*. And, *Let them hope in Thee, who know Thy Name, for Thou, Lord, wilt not forsake those that seek Thee*. [Ps. 9, 9. 10.] And when it is written again, *Did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded? or did any abide in His commandments, and was forsaken? Or whom did He ever despise, that called upon Him?* [Ecclus. 2, 10] On what principle, then, is it now said;

And there was not any to bring help, excepting that those, whom Almighty God loves for all eternity, He sometimes leaves for a time? Whence it is written; *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, and with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment, and with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee*. [Is. 54, 7. 8.] Hence too the Psalmist besought, saying, *O forsake me not utterly*. [Ps. 119, 8] He then knew that he might be left for a little while with advantage, who prayed that he might not be 'utterly forsaken.' For the Lord by coming helps His Saints, by 'leaving' puts them to the proof, by gifts he establishes, by tribulations he tries. Whence too it is rightly said by one of Wisdom, *For at the first she will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline until she try him in his thoughts*. [Ecclus. 4, 17] Since the soul of the righteous grace calls, trial puts to the question. And Almighty God allows the adversaries of His Elect to grow to a height in time, that the life of the good may be purified by the pitilessness of the bad.

52. Since the Lord would never suffer them to be hostile to the good except he also saw what great good they did. For whilst the unrighteous deal cruelly, the righteous are purified, and the life of the wicked is enlisted to the advantage of the innocent, in that this same both by bearing down it abases, and by abasing ever fashions to better. Hence too it is rightly said by Solomon; *the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart*. [Prov. 11, 29] And yet we often see the wise subordinate, and fools occupying the stronghold of dominion, wise men paying obedience in servitude, and fools lording it with tyrannical exultation. How then by the marking out of God's sentence is 'the fool servant to the wise,' when generally speaking he keeps him down by the right of temporal dominion? But it is to be borne in mind, that whilst against the life of the wise man the fool being uppermost enforces the terribleness of power, whilst he wearies him out with labours, rends him

with insults, such a person surely by burning he purges from all the rust of bad habits. Thus the fool even in ruling is ‘servant to the wise,’ in that by bearing him down he advances him to a better state. In this way it is sometimes the case that over masters under age servants are set for the tutorage of discipline, they frighten, they bear hard upon them, strike them, yet do not at all cease to be servants, because they are appointed to this very end, that to their masters whilst progressing they should render service even by striking them. Therefore because the ills of the children of perdition purify whilst they torment the good, even the power of the wicked is enlisted to the welfare of the just. But very often the just when seized by tribulation account the hand of Him Who helps them slow, when the barbarity of those persecuting them wrings them somewhat too long. And the remedies of the deliverer indeed are quickened, but that which is done quickly by the deliverer, appears slow to him that is in grief. And when there is sought help to present itself to the supplicating voice, if it does not follow the voice directly, it is reckoned that it is wanting. Whence it is said now; *And there was not any one to bring help*. In which same utterance we have set forth the actual force of the suffering, because help from Above, though it is there as to the appointed providence of the protector, yet is thought to be wanting as to the quickened wishes of the sufferer. It follows;

Ver. 14. *As by a wall being broken, and a door being opened, they rushed in upon me, and were rolled down to my miseries.*

53. What is in this place designated by the title of ‘a wall,’ but the Redeemer of the human race, concerning whom it is said by the Prophet for the edifying of Holy Church, *There shall be set in her a wall and a bulwark?* [Is. 26, 1] For that same Redeemer is ‘a wall’ to us, Who forbids the rushing of evil spirits to reach to our hearts. Who also set ‘a bulwark’ as well to our faith, because before that He shewed Himself in flesh, He sent prophets as preachers of His mystery. Since they are rightly entitled by the

name of ‘a bulwark,’ [‘antemurale’] because, whereas they preached the Lord coming after, they stood as it were ‘before the wall.’ But it is as if ‘the wall were broken,’ when by the promptings of the wicked, faith, which is in our Redeemer, is done away in the hearts of some. And when power is awarded to the perverse in this life, what else but ‘a door’ of error is opened? And so it is as if the wall being burst asunder and the door opened the wicked rush in upon the good, when power being received temporally, the corrupt set themselves to pull down the very defences of faith too in the hearts of some. Concerning whom it is fitly said; *And were rolled down for my miseries*; that is to say, because in the first instance to their own miseries. For except that by living corruptly they fell before to their own ‘miseries,’ they would never afterwards persuade others also to those miseries. But after their own the children of perdition are ‘rolled down to our miseries’ also, when to those evil things wherein they are themselves already involved, they draw persons as well who are linked to ourselves.

54. It is possible too that by the title of a wall may be understood the defence of discipline, as Solomon bears witness, who says, *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. And lo, it was all grown over with nettles, and thorns had covered the face thereof; and the stone wall thereof was broken down*. [Prov. 24, 30. 31.] For to ‘pass by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding,’ is to look into the life of any careless liver, and to take a view of his deeds. Which same ‘nettles or thorns fill up,’ because in the hearts of the careless, itching earthly desires and the prickles of bad habits sprout forth, since it is written, *In desires is every one that is idle*. ‘The stone wall was pulled down,’ i.e. the discipline of the Fathers was loosened from his heart. For because ‘the stone wall being pulled down’ he saw that discipline was loosened, he directly added in that place going on; *Then I saw and laid it up in my heart; and by example I learned instruction*. And

therefore as it were the wall being burst the enemy enters in, when by the crafty persuading either of evil spirits, or of bad men, the defences of discipline in the heart are scattered away. But when the vigour of that same discipline is relaxed in the heart of the lost, in their eyes all the deeds of the good are had in contempt, and they account it nothing, whatever they see relating to virtues in the Elect. And hence it is added;

Ver. 15. *I was reduced to nought.*

55. For in the reckoning of the wicked we are 'brought to nought,' when those temporal goods, which they themselves love as chief, we do not retain in our bands. Because the promises from Above being disregarded they desire the things of earth, and if ever aught rises up in the mind of those persons in the way of longing after the Eternal world, it is quickly done away by transitory gratification springing up. And hence it is directly subjoined;

As the wind thou didst take away my desire.

Since the faithful People declares that itself suffers that, wherein those whom it loves it grieves should suffer. Thus 'the wind takes away desire,' when any transitory object does away the longing after Eternity. And hence it is yet further fitly subjoined; *And as a cloud my health hath passed away*. Since the cloud towers on high, but the breath of wind drives it into career. Thus, surely, then is it with the temporal good things of the wicked. They appear as it were by loftiness of honour to pass their time as on high, but they are daily driven on to the career of life as by a kind of blasts of their mortality. So 'health passes as a cloud,' because the glory of the wicked, in the degree that it is lofty, is not fixed. But after the desires and the courses of persons going weakly have been finished, the discourse is made to turn to the voice of the Elect, when it is forthwith introduced,

Ver. 16. *But now my soul in mine own self is withered, and the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.*

56. Since 'the soul' of the Elect 'withers now,' because it is afterwards made green in that eternal triumphing. 'Now, the days of affliction take hold upon them,' because the days of joy follow afterwards. As it is written, *To him that feareth God it shall go well at the last*. [Ecclus. 1, 13. 19.] And again it is delivered touching the Church, *And she shall laugh in the last day*. [Prov. 31, 25] For now is the time of affliction to the good, that one day exulting may follow them apart from tears. Hence it is elsewhere said by those, *Thou hast humbled us in the place of affliction*. [Ps. 44, 19] Since 'the place of affliction' is the present life, so the righteous here below, i.e. 'in the place of affliction,' are 'humbled,' because in the eternal life, i.e. in the place of delight, they are elevated. But when he said that 'the soul was withered,' he rightly put before too, *in mine own self*; because in our own selves, indeed, our soul is afflicted, but in God refreshed, and it is become far removed from the greenness of joy, in proportion as still being withheld from the light of the Creator, it draws back to itself. But then it attains to the greenness of true joy, when being lifted up by the grace of eternal contemplation it even transcends its very self. Now these particulars which we have run through by allegorical investigating, it is requisite that we hold in all points after the history as well. Which particulars however I now for this reason pass over, because I am not unaware that they are plain to those that read them. Now in the days of final persecution, because there are many that are lost and a small number that are saved, for this reason the holy man, in the time of his suffering, both utters few particulars touching the good, and a great many touching the wicked. And hence he directly turns his words to the person of those who are brought to the ground, and so conveys his own circumstances, that the things he relates may accord with those that fall. Thus it follows;

Ver. 17. *In the night season my bone is pierced with pangs, and they that eat me sleep not.*

57. If we mark the history by itself, the case appears plain, because the body of the holy man, through the hollows of ulcers, a swarming multitude of worms was wounding. But if we dive into the mystery of the allegory, what are denoted by 'the bones,' but the strong ones severally in the body of Holy Church? Who, as it were, by their solidity hold together the members, while they bear with stedfastness the practices of those going weakly. But when the heat of the last tribulation is grown to a head against her, *in the night season her bone is pierced with pangs*; because sometimes being overcome with torments, even the very persons let themselves run off to faithlessness, who seemed to be keeping fast others to the faith. Therefore she says, *In the night season my bone is pierced with pangs*. As though she said in plain words, 'Pressed with the darkness of tribulation, they are so penetrated with affliction, that even the very persons, who had within me the firmness of strength, have now, as it were, a kind of piercing of fear.' And it is well said, *And they that eat me take no sleep*; because the evil spirits, that 'eat up' all the carnal out of the Church, know not how to rest from tempting in proportion as they are not burthened with any weight of flesh. But the persecutors of Holy Church, because they are very corrupt, would that they were few in number! It goes on;

Ver. 18. *In, the multitude of them is my garment consumed, and they have bound me about as with the collar of my coat.*

58. If we give heed to the history, what else do we take 'the garment' of blessed Job for, but his body? whose 'garment indeed is consumed' when the flesh is put to torment. But according to the mystery of allegory, 'the garment' of Holy Church is the life of the faithful. For as the whole Church together is 'the garment' of Christ so the faithful severally are accounted 'garments' of that same Church. For if Holy Church were not Christ's 'garment,' Paul surely would not say, *That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle*; [Eph. 5, 27] i.e. neither in

respect of sin 'having spot,' nor in respect of a double mind 'having wrinkle,' because both by righteousness she is clean, And by a single bent stretched. She then that is washed that she should not 'have spot,' and stretched that she should not 'have wrinkle,' assuredly is a 'garment.' Therefore as the clothing of Christ is the name given to the whole Church in general, so the clothing of the Church are the souls of the several persons which being converted from error, by believing that same Church, encircle her by attaching themselves with faithfulness to her. Concerning which same the Lord saith to that Church by the Prophet, *As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely be clothed with them all, as with an ornament*. [Is. 49, 18] But when the storm of cruel persecution arises, very many of the faithful are separated from the love thereof, who seemed to have themselves attached to her heartily. So then let her *say, In the multitude of them is my garment consumed*; because whilst there are many that torment, the greatest number are brought to an end, who were attached to her by the binding tie of love.

59. Now it is well added, *And have bound me about as with the collar of my coat*. Since 'the collar of a coat' encircles the neck of the wearer, but if the neck is tied up, the use of the voice and the puff of life is done for. Holy Church, then, do the children of perdition 'tie up as with a collar of a coat,' because they endeavour by their persecutions to put out in her the life of faith, and the voice of preaching. Since this thing her persecutors are in a special manner wont to essay, that before all things they may take away from her the word of preaching. And hence these persons who withstood the first beginnings of the holy faith told the Apostles beaten with rods, saying, *Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine*. [Acts 5, 28] So the body of Holy Church they had as it were girded with 'the collar of a coat,' who, the preachers being tied up, as it were pressing her neck, wished to shut up the way of the voice in her. But the several Elect are more

ready to die in the time of their persecution than to hold their peace. Who whilst they are brought down in death in the body, are accounted despicable and mean by all the foolish and the carnal, because when the lost are unable to see what good things the Elect hold in the spirit, these whom they see brought to an end in the flesh, they account unhappy. And hence it is added;

Ver. 19. *I was likened to mire, and became like dust and ashes.*

60. Since in the judgment of lost sinners the Holy Church of the Elect is 'likened to mire,' because it is trodden under and despised in time; it is 'compared to dust and ashes,' because while they do not see her interior good things, they calculate that she has been brought to those bad things alone, which they see brought to view in her in the body. But the faithful people of the Elect, while it sees many fall from itself, wishes, if it might obtain this, to have the times of its adversities reversed. Because the prayer of this people is delayed, its groaning is increased. Hence it is further added;

Ver. 20. *I will cry unto Thee, but Thou wilt not hear me; I stand, and Thou regardest me not.*

61. Since Holy Church in the time of her persecution 'stands' by faith, and 'cries' by longings. But she is grieved that she is 'not regarded' as it were, when she sees her wishes under tribulations delayed. For by a high counsel, Almighty God, when His Saints are wrung tightly by the persecutions of adversaries, and when they cry with never ceasing entreaties that they may be set free, is wont to put off their voices in entreating Him, that their merits in suffering may be increased, in order that they may be the more heard in answer to merit, the more they are not heard quickly in answer to wishing. Whence it is elsewhere written, *O my God, I cry in the day time, but Thou hearest not, and in the night season*. [Ps. 22, 2] And the very usefulness itself resulting from the delay of hearing is immediately added, when it is there brought in directly, *And not for foolishness to me*.

Since for redoubling the wisdom of the Saints it is beneficial, that what is prayed for they receive slowly, that by delay desire may increase, and by desire the understanding may be augmented. But when the understanding is stretched to the full, there is opened a more ardent affection thereof towards God. And the affection is made large for obtaining the things of heaven, in proportion as it was long suffering in expecting. Yet in the midst of these things grief prompts the patience of the Saints to utterance, and whilst being delayed they gain ground, they dread lest their powers failing they should being despised be rejected. It goes on;

Ver. 21. *Thou art changed to cruel unto me; and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou opposest Thyself against me.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

62. The old translation is widely at variance with this sense, because what is spoken in this concerning God, is related in that of adversaries and persecutors. Yet because this new translation is said to have transferred every thing from the Hebrew and Arabic more truly, we should believe whatever is delivered in it, and the right way is that into the word of it our interpretation should search with exactness. Accordingly he says, *Thou art changed to cruel unto me, and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou opposest Thyself to me*. In Holy Scripture when any thing is said of God unworthy, the mind of the reader is affected, as if it were ever the case that any thing that is worthy were spoken of God. Since well nigh every thing that is spoken touching God, is by this alone henceforth unworthy, that it admitted of being spoken. But for Him to Whose praise the conscious faculty, being astounded, is not equal, when may the tongue by speaking suffice? But the Holy Spirit teaching to men that understand this same truth, how unutterable are the things above and the things of God, sometimes uses even those words concerning God, which amongst men are held as a fault,

that from these things which seem unworthy of men, and yet are spoken concerning God, men should be admonished to know that neither are those things even worthy of God, which whilst they are accounted worthy among men, are thought worthy of God.

63. For God is called 'jealous,' as it is written, *The Lord, his Name is 'jealous.'* [Ex. 34, 14] He is called 'wroth,' whence it is written, *The Lord was wroth against Israel*. [Numb. 32, 13.] The Lord is called 'repentant,' as where it is written, *It repenteth Me that I have made man upon the earth*. [Gen. 6, 7] And again; *It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king over Israel*. [1 Sam. 15, 11] He is entitled compassionate, as where it is written, *Merciful and pitiful is the Lord, patient and full of compassion*. [Ps. 86, 15.] He is called 'foreknowing,' as the Apostle saith concerning Him, *For whom He did foreknow, He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son*. [Rom. 8, 29] Whereas neither 'jealousy,' nor 'wrath,' nor 'repentance,' nor strictly speaking 'compassionateness,' nor 'foreknowledge,' can be in God. For all these particulars are derived into Him from human qualities, while there is a descending to words expressive of infirmity, that as it were a kind of steps being made for us, and set beside us, by the things which we see close to us, we may one time be enabled to mount up to the high things of Him. For He is said to 'feel jealous,' who guards the chastity of his wife with torment of mind. 'He is said to be 'wroth,' who is inflamed with heat of spirit against evil that deserves to be punished. He is said to 'repent,' to whom that which he has done is displeasing, and contrarily by changing does some other thing. He is called 'compassionate,' who is moved with pity towards his neighbour. Now 'misericordia' ('commiseration') is so called from 'miserum cor,' ('a miserable heart,') for this reason, because each individual sees a person wretched, and sympathizing with him, while he is affected with grief of mind, he himself makes his heart miserable, that he may free from misery

the man that he is set on. He is said to ‘foreknow,’ who sees each particular event before it comes, and that which is future foresees before it becomes present. How then is God described as being ‘jealous,’ Who in watching over our chastity, is not affected by any torment of mind? How is He ‘wroth,’ Who in taking vengeance on our evil ways is not stirred by any agitation of mind? How is He ‘repentant,’ Who what He has once done is never at all sorry that He has done? How is He ‘commiserating,’ Who has not ever a heart of misery? How is He foreknowing, whereas nothing but what is future can be foreknown? And we know that to God there is nothing future, before the Eyes of Whom things past there are none, things present pass not by, things future come not; seeing that all that to us was and will be is in His sight at hand, and all that is present He is able to know rather than foreknow. And yet He is called ‘jealous,’ He is called ‘wroth,’ He is called ‘repentant,’ He is called ‘commiserating,’ He is called ‘foreknowing,’ that because He watches over the chastity of each individual soul, He should after man’s method be called ‘jealous,’ though He be not touched by torment of mind. And because He smites sins, He is said to be ‘wroth,’ though He be not affected by any agitation of the spirit. And because Himself unchangeable He changes that that He is minded, He is said to ‘repent,’ though it is the thing He changes, not His counsel. And when He succours our misery, He is called ‘commiserating,’ though He succours the miserable, and has not ever a heart of misery. And because the things which to us are future He sees, which same however to the Same Being are always at hand, He is styled ‘foreknowing,’ though He does not in any way foresee the future, which He sees as present. For even whatsoever things are, in His Eternity are not therefore seen because they are, but therefore they are because they are seen. Whilst therefore there is a coming down to the words of our changeableness, by those, as being made a kind of steps, let him, who is able, mount up to the unchangeableness of God, that he may see One

shewing jealousy, without jealousy, One wroth without wrath, One repentant without sorrow or repentance, full of commiseration without a miserable heart, foreknowing without foresight. For in Him can neither the past nor the future be found, but all things changeable last unchangeably, and things, which in themselves cannot exist together, are all of them at once and together present to Him, and nothing that goes by passes away in Him, because in His Eternal Being, in an incomprehensible manner, all the rolls of ages whilst passing remain, whilst running a race stand still.

64. As then we understand Him 'jealous' without jealousy, 'wroth' without wrath, so He might by the holy man be also called 'cruel' without cruelty. Since he is called 'cruel,' who while smiting with severity spares not; that is to say that in this passage 'cruel' should be taken for one striking with severity, and not sparing the avenging of sin. Hence also Isaiah, when he saw the day of final Judgment was destined to come not henceforth with pardon but with rigour, *says, Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath, and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it*. [Is. 13, 9] Therefore the holy man, that he might declare that this same cruelty is more suited to himself than to God, says, *Thou art changed to cruel unto me*. As though he said in plain terms, 'Thou, Who hast in Thine own Self nought of cruelty, to me, whom Thou sufferest not to draw breath from persecution, Thou seemest cruel.' For so God is not capable of being cruel, just as He is not in the least degree capable of being changed. But because in God there comes not either cruelty or changeableness at any time, whilst He says 'unto me,' he shews that he is sensible that God is in Himself neither 'cruel' nor 'changeable.' But because as concerns ourselves things prosperous and things adverse shift to and fro, in this that we ourselves are changed, we as it were imagine as concerns ourselves His mind changed. But He the same Being remaining unchangeable in Himself, in the thought of men's hearts comes to be felt

now one way and now another, according to the character of their minds. For the light of the sun too, whereas it is not at all unlike to itself, seems to weak eyes harsh, but to sound eyes gentle; that is to say, by their changing, not by its own. Therefore as we before said, in saying, *Thou art changed*, he added *unto me*, that this very 'cruelty' and 'changing' might be not in the attributes of the Judge, but in the mind of the sufferer. Which he laid open by other words also, saying, *And in the hardness of Thine hand Thou opposest Thyself to me*. For 'the Hand' of the Lord is thought 'hard,' when being opposed to our will, that thing which displeases Him in us, it follows hard upon by striking; and He redoubles the strokes, when the soul of the sorrower looks for clemency.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Which words, howsoever, according to the mystery of the allegory, suit well the words of Holy Church speaking in the accents of the weak, who very often reckon themselves to be smitten more than they fancy they deserve, and esteem as cruelty of the Judge the severity of the lancing howsoever most just, seeing too that when the wound of the sick man is cut away by the chirurgeon's steel, the operator is called cruel, who however by the hardness of the hand that cuts is opposed to the wound, but in concert with the health. It proceeds;

Ver. 22. *Thou liftedst me up, and as it were setting me upon the wind, thou dashedst me down strongly.*

65. Because the glory of the present life is seen as on high, but is not set firm by any stedfastness, one is as if he were 'lifted up and set upon the wind,' who rejoices in earthly prosperity, because the breath of fleeting happiness lifts him up only for this end, that it may in a moment prostrate him the worse below. For whereas Holy Church is high in honour with all persons, the weak ones in her, who rejoice in transitory successes, [Some

read ‘successibus,’ others ‘successionibus,’ which last may mean ‘advancements occurring in the change of things.’] whereunto do they seem lifted up but as set upon the wind? Because in the succeeding season of persecution, when the breath of prosperity is gone by, their ‘lifting up’ is brought to the earth in a moment, if instantly they learn by falling, that, whilst lifted up before they were seated upon the wind. Which very words in a peculiar manner accord with the person of the holy man also, not as to the thing that was, but as to the thing that seemed to be. For never had fleeting prosperity ‘lifted up’ his mind, which mind in the midst of such overflowing stores of good things he ever kept down by a wonderful weight of virtue. But according to that which might have externally appeared, he who was little in his own eyes, was exalted in the eyes of others, and as it were ‘placed upon the wind,’ he was ‘dashed down strongly,’ because being buoyed up by outward goods, by the same means, whereby he was accounted to rise, he appeared to have fallen. Which same fall in the interior the holy man did not undergo, because no bad fortune throws down the man, whom no good fortune corrupts. For he who is attached to the truth, is in no degree brought under to vanity, because, whereas he has planted with a firm foot the bent of the thought within, all that is brought to pass in change without, reaches not in the least degree to the citadel of the interior. It goes on;

Ver. 23. *I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living.*

66. In the preceding part of this work [Book xiii. §. 48 &c.] the point was treated of, that before the Coming of the Lord even the righteous did descend to the abodes of hell, though they were kept not in woes but in rest. Which thing we omit to prove by testimonies now, because we think it is already sufficiently proved there. This, then, that is said, *I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living*, is

rightly suited to blessed Job even according to the history, whereas surely it appears that before the grace of the Redeemer even the just were carried to the caverns of hell. For the mere entering [‘admissio’] of ‘hell’ is itself called ‘the house of all living,’ because no one came hither, who before the Advent of the Mediator did not pass by thereunto by the simple constitution of his state of corruption. No one came hither, who did not go on to the death of the flesh, by the steps of that same corruption belonging to him. Of which selfsame death it is evidently said by the Psalmist; *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?* [Ps 89, 48] For though Elijah is related to have been transported to heaven, nevertheless he delayed, and did not escape death. For by the very mouth of Truth it is said; *Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things*. [Matt. 17, 11] For he shall come to ‘restore all things,’ since for this end surely is he restored to this world, that he may both fulfil the functions of preaching, and pay the debt of the flesh.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Which sentence however of the holy man suits the accents of Holy Church in the person of the weak sort, who hold the faith to the extent of the word of the lips, but contrary to the precepts of faith act the slave to their desires. For she says; *I know that thou will deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living*. For because she sees multitudes in her devoted to pleasures, and already foresees the destruction of those, she reflects that in the course of the present life they serve their desires indeed, but yet all are brought to the house of death, who in that same course live carnally. But there are some that are brought down into the pit of their gratifications, yet by the tears of repentance quickly recover the foot from below, which persons the strokes of smiting from Above cut rather for instruction than destruction. In the person of whom it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 24. *Howbeit Thou dost not put forth thine hand for the destroying of them; and if they are brought to the ground, Thou wilt save them Thyself.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

67. In which words assuredly this ought to be perceived with penetration, that blessed Job, while he is telling his own circumstances transfers others into himself.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

For he as it were in a special manner said of himself; *Thou liftedst me up, and as it were setting me upon the wind dashedst me down with strength: I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living*; and yet he adds not concerning himself but others, *Howbeit Thou dost not put forth Thine hand for the destroying of them*. For whereas whilst speaking of himself in arguing, he subjoins cases applying to others, he shews how many he represents the persons of in himself. Accordingly the Lord 'puts not forth His hand for the destroying' of those that sin, when by striking He reforms from sins, and 'He saves those that are falling to the ground,' when those falling into transgression He wounds as to the health of the body; that being brought low outwardly they should arise inwardly, in order that lying prostrate in the body those should be brought back to the standing of the interior, who whilst standing outwardly lay low to the standing of the soul. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *I wept of old over him that was in trouble; my soul suffered with the poor.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

68. Though it is true compassion to concur with the suffering of a fellow creature by bountifulness, yet sometimes when the several outward things are abundantly provided for us to bestow, the hand of him that gives finds the act of giving more quickly than the feeling does sorrow. Hence it is necessary for us to know that he gives in a perfect way, who together with that, which he reaches forth to the afflicted, takes in himself the feeling of the afflicted as well; that he should first transfer the suffering of the person sorrowing into himself, and then, to meet the sorrow of that person by the act of service render concurrence. For often, as we said before, the abundance of good things creates the bestower of a benefit, and not the excellence of compassion. For he, who perfectly compassionates the afflicted, generally even gives that to the persons in want, wherein he himself, if he gives it, is brought to shifts. And then the compassion of our heart is to the full, when we are not afraid to take upon ourselves the evil of want in behalf of a fellow creature, in order that we may set him free from suffering.

69. Which model of pitifulness in very deed the Mediator between God and Man gave to us. Who when He could have succoured us even without dying, yet was minded to come to the aid of mankind by dying, because plainly He would have loved us too little, except He took upon Him our wounds as well; nor would He exhibit the face of His love to us, unless the thing that He was to take away from us, He did Himself undergo for a time. For He found us subject to suffering, and mortal beings, and He, Who caused us to exist out of nothing, doubtless had the power to restore us from suffering even without death. But that He might shew how great the virtue of Compassion is, He deigned to become in our behalf what He would not have us to be, that He should take upon Him death temporally in His own Person, which death He should banish for evermore from ourselves. Could not He, while continuing invisible to us in the riches of His own Godhead,

have been able to enrich us with wonderful powers? But that man might be brought back to the interior riches, God deigned to appear poor without. Hence also the great Preacher, that he might kindle to the kindness of bounty the bowels of our compassion, said, *For our sakes He became poor, when He was rich*. [2 Cor. 8, 9] Who speaks in this way also; *Not that to others there should be a releasing, but to you tribulation*. [ib. v. 13] These things doubtless he brought in condescending to the weak, because some not having the strength to bear want, it is better borne to give less, than after one's bounty to murmur on account of straitness of poverty. For that he might kindle the minds of those that heard him to great affections for giving, a little while after he introduced the words, saying, *But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly*. [2 Cor. 9, 6] But we sometimes say that it is more to sympathize in heart than it is to give; because every one who perfectly sympathizes with one in want, reckons as less all that he gives. For except that good will surpassed the hand of a person in giving, that same great Preacher would not have said to the disciple, *Who have begun before not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago*. [2, Cor. 8, 10] Since it is easy in good deeds to obey even against one's will. But this great excellence had appeared in the disciples, that the good that was enjoined them, they had been forward to even before.

70. Thus because the holy man knew that with Almighty God greater sometimes is the gift of the mind than of the benefit, let him say, *I wept of old over him that was in trouble, and my soul compassionated the poor man*. For in bestowing outward things, he rendered an object without himself. But he who bestowed upon his neighbour weeping and compassion, gave him something even from his very self. But on this account we say that compassion is more than the gift, because for the most part some sort of thing even he gives who does not entertain compassion,

but never does he, who feels true compassion, withhold that which he sees to be necessary for his neighbour.

71. Which sentence surely is well suited to the accents of Holy Church, who while she sees persons afflicted in the tears of penitence, joins her own tears thereto by continual prayer, and sympathizes with the needy person as often as by the entreaties of her intercession she helps the mind bared of virtues. Since we lament over the afflicted sympathizing with him, when we reckon the hurts of others as our own, and by our tears strive to cleanse away the sins of those guilty of transgression. In the doing which, indeed, we very often help ourselves more than we do those in whose behalf it is done, because before the Inmost Umpire, Who also breathes into us the grace of charity, he perfectly washes out his own several acts, who disinterestedly bewails those of others. Therefore let Holy Church, being seized in the time of the last persecution, recall to remembrance the good things which she has done in the time of peace, saying, *I wept of old over him that was afflicted, and my soul compassionated the poor man*. Who longing for the eternal delights of the interior light, yet still delayed, because she is beset with outward ills, may subjoin in the accents of the holy man;

Ver. 26. *When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there broke forth darkness.*

72. For the faithful people 'looks for good,' but receives evil, and it 'waits for light,' and meets with 'darkness,' because by the grace of the recompensing it hopes to be now already admitted to the joys of the Angels, and yet being delayed for a longer time here below, it is exposed to the hands of those that persecute it; and he who calculates to enjoy as quickly as possible the recompensing of the Light Eternal, is still forced to suffer here the darkness of his persecutors. Which same ills of those persecuting them would grieve them the less, if they arose from unbelievers and

adversaries. But they torture the mind of the Elect the worse in proportion as they proceed from those, upon whom they were foreassuring good. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 27. *My bowels boiled, and rested not.*

Since for ‘the bowels’ of Holy Church ‘to boil’ is for her to endure in the fierceness of persecution, these very persons too, whom she had before in the love of the faith carried as ‘bowels.’ Which same first acquainting themselves with her secrets, in the same proportion as they know where she suffers the greatest pain, to so much the worse degree never rest from the afflicting of her; which persons however even in the time of her peace she bears heavily with, because she takes thought of their ways as opposite to her own preachings. For she groans when she espies the life of those as unlike to herself. Concerning whom also it is fitly subjoined;

The days of affliction prevented me.

For the Holy Church of Elect persons knows that in the last persecution she shall suffer many ills, but ‘the days of her affliction prevent her’; because even in the time of peace she bears within herself the life of the wicked with a heavy spirit. For though in the last days there follow the open persecution of the unbelievers, yet this same even before it comes to light, those in her who are believers to the extent of the word only by bad practices forerun. It goes on;

Ver. 28. *I went mourning: without rage rising up, I cried out in the crowd.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

73. I see that it is a thing to be carefully noted historically considered, that the holy man who a little before said, *Thou hast lifted me up*, added below, *I went mourning*. For by a wonderful arrangement at one and the same time there is wont to meet together in the courses of good men, at once without,

the honour of the highest pitch, and within, the mourning of afflicted abasement. Hence the holy man likewise, whilst lifted to a height by substance and by honours; 'went mourning'; for though this man the high credit of power displayed advanced above his fellow-creatures, yet inwardly he offered to the Lord by his mourning the secret sacrifice of a contrite heart. Since *the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit*. [Ps. 51, 17] Now all the Elect are taught by inward reflecting to fight against the temptations of outward superiority. Which persons, if they set their heart to their outward good fortune assuredly would cease to be righteous. But because it cannot be that upon the mere grounds of the successes of fortune alone the heart of man should never be at all tempted with however slight a degree of pride, holy men strive hard within against their very good fortune itself; I do not say, lest in self exaltation, but lest in the love of that prosperity at all events they should be brought to the ground. And it is most effectually to have been brought under this, to have surrendered the mind in a state of captivity to the desires thereof. But who that has a taste for earthly things, who that embraces temporal objects, would not look upon blessed Job as happy amidst so many circumstances of prosperity, when the health of the body, the life of his children, the preservation of his household, the completeness of his flocks, were all vouchsafed to him? But that in all these circumstances he did not take delight, he is his own witness, in that he says, *I went mourning*. For to the holy man still placed in this state of pilgrimage, all that is full of abundance, without the Vision of God, is destitution; because when the Elect see that all things are theirs, they lament that they do not see the Author of all things, and to them all this is too little, because there is still wanting the appearance of One. And in such sort does the grace of Heavenly Appointment exalt them without, that nevertheless, within, the sorrow of the instructress charity holds them under discipline. By which same they learn, that for the things which they receive outwardly, they

should ever be the more humbled to themselves, should keep the mind under the yoke of discipline, should never by the liberty of power be made to break out into impatience. Whence also it is fitly subjoined, *Without rage rising in the crowd, I cried out*. For it often happens that the tumults of seditious men provoke the spirit of their rulers, and by disorderly emotions they transgress the limit of their orderliness.

74. And very often they who are set at the head, except in the mouth of the heart they be held in with the bridle of the Holy Spirit, leap forth into the fierceness of enraged retribution, and as much as they are able to do, reckon themselves to be at liberty to do with those under them. For impatience is almost always the friend of power, and that power when evil it even rules over as subject to it. For what that same feels, power executes. But holy men bow down themselves much more to the yoke of patience inwardly, than they are above others outwardly, and they exhibit without the truer governance, in proportion as they maintain within more lowly servitude to God: and they for this reason often endure persons the more fully, the more they have it in their power to revenge themselves upon them, and lest they should ever pass over into things unlawful, they very often will not put in execution in their own behalf even what is lawful; they are subject to the clamours of those under their charge, they rebuke in love those, whom they bear in mildness. Whence it is rightly said now, *Without rage rising up in the crowd, I cried out*; in this way, because against the clamours of the unruly the good have 'crying out,' but they have not 'rage,' because those whom they bear with gently they do not cease to teach.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But these particulars which after the historical view we have delivered concerning one individual, it remains that we understand after the allegorical view concerning diverse Elect ones of Holy Church. For she too

in her Elect 'goes mourning,' even in prosperous circumstances. For she accounts nothing truly prosperous to her, until the good, which she is preeminently seeking after, she may lay hold of. Since her faithful ones enjoy temporal peace indeed, but sigh evermore; they are honoured, and afflicted: because very often they are seen at the highest pitch there, where they are not citizens. She too 'rises in the crowd without rage, and cries out,' because she presses upon the life of the evil doers with the eagerness of right jealousy, not with the frenzy of rage. She is angry and loving, she deals wrathfully and is tranquil, that so her weak members she may reform by zealousness, and cherish in pitifulness. It goes on;

Ver. 29. *I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches.*

75. What is there denoted by the title of 'dragons,' but the life of evil minded men? Of whom also it is said by the prophet, *They drew up the wind like dragons*. [Jer. 14, 6] For all wicked men 'draw in wind like dragons,' when they are swoln with evil minded pride. But who are used to be understood by the designation of 'ostriches,' saving pretenders? For the ostrich has wings, but has not flight; because all pretenders have an appearance of sanctity, but the goodness of sanctity they have not. For those persons the appearance of good conduct adorns, but the wing of virtue never lifts them from the earth. So let the Elect people of Holy Church, because in the time of its peace it suffers within itself persons that are evil minded and pretenders, say the words, *I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches*. Which too in a special manner accords with the words of blessed Job, who to the highest pitch of great fortitude was a good man amongst bad. For no one is perfect who amidst his neighbours' evil things is not patient. For he who does not bear others' evil with composure, is by his impatience witness to himself that he is very far removed from the plenitude of goodness. For he refuses to be Abel, whom the malice of Cain does not exercise.

76. Thus in the threshing of the floor the grains are squeezed under the chaff; thus the flowers come forth between thorns, and the rose that smells grows along with the thorn that pricks. Thus the first man had two sons, but one was elect, the other refuse. The three sons of Noah too did the ark contain, but while two continued in humility, one went headlong into the mocking of his father. Two sons Abraham had; but one was innocent, the other the persecutor of his brother. Two sons also Isaac had, one saved in humility, while the other even before that he was born was cast away. Twelve sons Jacob begat, but of these one was sold in innocency, while the rest were through wickedness the sellers of their brother. Twelve Apostles too were chosen in Holy Church; but that they might not remain untried, one is mixed with them, who by persecuting should try them. For to a just man there is joined a sinner together with wickedness, just as in the furnace to the gold there is added chaff along with fire, that in proportion as the chaff burns the gold may be purified. So then those are truly good men, who are enabled to hold on in goodness even in the midst of bad men; herein too it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the Spouse; *As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters*. [Cant. 2, 2] Hence the Lord saith to Ezekiel And *thou, son of man, unbelievers and overturners are with thee, and thou dwellest among scorpions*. [Ez. 2, 6] Hence Peter magnifies the life of blessed Lot, saying, *And delivered righteous Lot, when oppressed, from the wrongful conversation of the wicked. For to be seen and to be heard he was righteous, living among, those, who from day to day vexed the soul of the righteous man by wicked works*. [2 Pet. 2, 7. &c.] Hence Paul magnifies the life of his disciples, and in magnifying strengthens it, saying, *In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding the word of life*. [Phil. 2, 15. 16.] Hence by John, the Angel of the Church of Pergamus is borne witness to in the words, *I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast My*

name, and hast not denied My faith. [Rev. 2, 15] So then let blessed Job, that he may evince what firmness he is of, tell with whom he lived, saying, *I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches*. Because it would have been but little that he himself did good things, except that for the heightening of his goodness he likewise sustained what was evil at the hands of others. It goes on;

Ver. 30. *My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.*

77. This we forbear to take account of after the history, for this reason, that the force of the speech appears from the pain of the suffering. But because, as we have already often said, blessed Job very frequently so relates things done, as to foretell things to be done, this excellently agrees with the accents of Holy Church, who in her weak members grievously feels the pain of the last persecution. And when others die off from her, all the stronger ones are wrung with sorrow. For her outward concern is earthly dispensing, but the interior is a heavenly charge. And so by the name of the 'skin' the weak are denoted, who now do service in her to exterior usefulness. While by the bones the strong are represented, in that in them the whole jointing of her body is cemented. And therefore because either being invited by bribes, or distressed by persecutions, many weak persons in her fall from the standing of faith, and themselves after they have fallen persecute her, what is it but that she suffers a 'blackness of her skin,' that in those very ones she should afterwards appear foul, in whom she before shewed fair. For whilst they who had been before accustomed to manage outward things aright, afterwards rage against the Elect of God, as it were 'the skin' of the Church has lost the hue of foregoing righteousness, in that it has come to the blackness of iniquity. Which Jeremiah also bewails under the likeness of the principal metal, saying, *How is the gold become dim; how is the fine colour changed*? [Lam. 4, 1] The froward, therefore, when they go forth from her sacraments, very often take a place of honour

amongst the children of perdition, so that the very persons should rage against Holy Church with authority, who as it were in knowing despise this Church more cruelly. And hence when he said, *My skin is black*, he added, *upon me*; because those whom she before had as it were white as to the beautifulness of righteousness, she afterwards carries 'black' the worse. But when 'the skin' is turned to 'blackness,' the strong that are in her are consumed with jealousy of the faith. And hence he fitly subjoins; *And my bones are dried up with heat*. For in this way in the time before too that strongest bone of Holy Church, Paul, burned with a certain dryness of weariness, when he said to some persons on their falling; *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* [2 Cor. 11, 29] And so 'the skin is made black, and the bones are dried up with heat;' because while the weak leap forth to iniquity, all the strong are tortured with the fire of their zeal. It goes on;

Ver. 31. *My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.*

78. Whereas the organ gives its sounds by means of pipes, and the harp by chords; it may be that by the 'harp' right practising is denoted, and by the 'organ' holy preaching. For by the pipes of an organ we not unsuitably understand the mouths of persons preaching, and by the chords of the harps the bent of those living aright. Which whilst it is stretched to another life by the afflicting of the flesh, it is as if the thin drawn chord in the harp sounded in the admiration of those beholding. For the chord is dried that it may give a suitable note on the harp; because holy men also chasten their body, and subject it to service, and are stretched from things below to those above. Moreover it is to be considered that the chord in the harp, if it be strung too little, does not sound, if too much, it sounds harsh; because doubtless the virtue of abstinence is altogether nothing if a man does not tame his body as much as he is able; or it is very ill ordered if he wears it down more than he

is able. For by abstinence the imperfections of the flesh are to be done away, and not the flesh, and every one ought to rule himself with such great control, that both the flesh may not carry itself high for sin, and yet that it may be upheld in practice for the carrying out of righteousness. It is a satisfaction herein to look at the great preacher, with what great skill of preceptorship the souls of believers like chords strung on the harp, one set by stretching the more, he draws fine, another by loosening from their stretch he preserves. For to some he says; *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness*. [Rom. 13, 13] And again he says; *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth*. [Col. 3, 5] And yet to the most beloved preacher he writes, saying, *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine, for thy stomach's sake, and for thine often infirmities*. [1 Tim. 5, 23] Thus those chords by drawing thin he stretches, lest by not being stretched they altogether give no sound. But this chord he abates of its stretching, lest whilst it is stretched more, the less it should sound.

79. But whether it be the holy preachers in the Church, or the simpleminded and temperate generally, as far as they are vouchsafed powers, they render to their neighbours in her the song of goodly exhortation. For both the wise sort severally keep discreetly on the watch to the fruit of preaching, and that they may draw others to life they ply themselves with a sound of mighty persuading; and they that appear to be of slower wit within her, by the mere merit of their lives, to the extent that they see that they are able, take upon them authority of exhortation towards others, and cease not to draw to the heavenly Country those whom they are able. But Holy Church being borne down by the last persecutions, when she sees her words to be set at nought by the children of perdition, shapes the goodness of her love to lamentations alone, because surely she bewails those whom she is not able by exhorting to draw. Let her say then, *My harp also is turned to mourning, and mine organ into the voice of them that*

weep. As though she avowed in plain words, saying, ‘In the season of my peace, indeed, by some I preached little things after the manner of a harp, whilst by others things great and sounding after the manner of an organ; but now ‘my harp is turned into mourning and mine organ into the voice of them that weep,’ because whilst I see myself to be despised I mourn over those who hear not the song of preaching.’ Such things is Holy Church to do by certain persons in the end, these things has she already done by certain in her beginnings. For the first martyr Stephen endeavoured by preaching to benefit the Jews that persecuted him, which persons when he saw, notwithstanding, after the words of preaching to have flocked together to throwing stones, he prayed with his knees set fast, saying, *Lord Jesus, lay not this sin to their charge*. [Acts. 7, 60] How then was it to him who for long had told things both small and great, but that the melody of his ‘harp and of his organ’ was already mute, and they were ‘turned into mourning,’ because those whom he had not drawn in preaching, he wept for in loving? Which same Holy Church ceases not daily to do, because she already sees that the word of preaching is almost every where become mute. For some close their mouths from speaking, others scorn to hear right things. But the mind of the Elect whilst it sees the song of preaching to be stilled, returns groaning and in silence to lamentations. Therefore let her say, *My harp is turned into mourning, and mine organ into the voice of them that weep*, because every elect person in proportion as the voice of holy preaching has been stilled, so much the more sorely does he bewail the woes of the Church.

Thus far blessed Job has described the evils that he underwent; but from this place he begins to relate with more particularity the good things that he did. Now the words of grief we have run through by an historical and allegorical explanation: but the deeds of virtuous qualities we in great measure hold according to the text of the history alone, lest if we draw these

to the exploring of mysteries, we should perchance appear to be making void the verity of the deed.

BOOK XXI.

The thirty-first chapter of the Book of Job is explained to verse twenty-four, exclusive, and chastity, humility, and mercifulness being first commended, many particulars are especially taught relative to the avoiding of the occasion of sin.

1. The sense of Sacred Revelation requires to be weighed with so exact a balancing between the text and the mystery, that the scale of either side being adjusted, this latter [‘hune,’ which seems to agree with ‘intellectus’ referred to ‘mysterium.’] neither the weight of over-curious scrutinizing should sink down, nor again the deadness of unconcern leave void. For many sentences thereof are pregnant with such a conception of allegories, that any one who strives to hold them after the history alone, is deprived of the knowledge of them by his indifference. But there are some that are so made subordinate to external precepts, that if a man desires to penetrate them with greater particularity, within indeed he finds nothing, whilst even that too which they tell of without, he hides from himself.

2. Whence it is well said also in historical relation by a method of representing; *And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the almond and plane-trees, and pilled them in strakes, and when the bark was off, where they were stripped, the white appeared, and the parts that were whole remained green; and after this manner the colour was made variegated.* [Gen. 30, 37-39] When it is further added, *And he set them in the gutters in the watering-troughs, that when the flocks came to drink they should have the rods before their eyes, and should conceive in looking on them. And the flocks when they conceived looked on the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, spotted, and speckled.* For what is it to set before the eyes of the cattle ‘rods of green poplar, and of the almond and plane-trees,’ but

through the course Holy Scripture to furnish for an example to the people the lives and sentences of the Ancient Fathers, which same because by the testing of reason they are in a right line, are styled 'rods.' From which he 'peels the bark' in part, that in those which are stripped the inward whiteness may appear, and in part he keeps the bark, that just as they were outwardly, they should remain in greenness. And the colour of the rods is made pied, whereas the bark is in part stripped off, in part retained. Since before the eyes of our reflection the sentences of the foregoing Fathers are placed, like pied rods, in which whereas we very often avoid the sense of the letter, we are as it were withdrawing the bark, and whereas we very often follow the meaning of the letter, we as it were preserve the bark. And when from those same the bark of the letter is removed, the interior whiteness of the allegory is brought to view, and when the bark is left, the green grown examples of the outward meaning are shewn. Which Jacob did well to 'set in the watering-troughs,' because our Redeemer set them in the books of the Sacred Lore by which we are inwardly watered. 'The rams mix with the sheep looking at these,' because our reasoning spirits when they are fixed in the earnest minding of those mingle themselves with the several particular actings, that they should begot such a progeny of works as they see examples of precepts going before in words, and the progeny of good practice may have a different colour, because both sometimes, the bark of the letter being removed, it sees what is within with acuteness, and sometimes, the covering of the history being preserved, it moulds itself well in the outward.

3. For because the Divine sentences require sometimes to be explored internally, and sometimes to be viewed externally, it is said by Solomon also, *He that strongly presseth the udder for the drawing forth milk squeezeth out butter, and he that wringeth* ['emungit,' al. 'emulget.'] *violently draweth out blood.* For we 'press the udder strongly,' when we

weigh with minute understanding the word of Sacred Revelation, by which way of ‘pressing whilst we seek ‘milk,’ we find ‘butter,’ because whilst we seek to be fed with but a little insight, we are anointed with the abundance of interior richness. Which, nevertheless, we ought neither to do too much nor at all times, lest while milk is sought for from the udder there should follow blood. For very often persons whilst they sift the words of Sacred Revelation more than they ought, fall into a carnal apprehension. For ‘he draws forth blood, who wringeth violently.’ Since that is rendered carnal which is perceived by an over-great sifting of the spirit. Whence it is requisite that the deeds of blessed Job, which he for this reason relates amidst the words of upbraiding friends, that his afflicted soul might not fall away in despair, we should examine into according to the weight of the history, lest if the mind explain these in a spiritual sense above what is necessary, from the udder of his words there be blood answering us instead of milk. But if he does sometimes relate some things mystical in the relation of his works, it is necessary that the mind with quickened speed return to these considerations, whereunto as is given to be understood the very order of the person speaking itself bids that mind. For the holy man, after he had told the things that had been inflicted on him by the scourge of God, now by enumerating in order his own virtues makes it known what sort of person he was before the scourge, so constructing the history of his life, as to insert therein a something very rare which might be understood in an allegorical way, that both in a large proportion they should be historical facts that he records, and yet occasionally, by means of these same, he should rise up to a spiritual meaning. Thus with what strength he had bound up his exterior conduct from all falling by the training of inward safe-keeping, he tells, saying,

Ver. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes that I should not even think upon a maid.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

4. Whereas the soul is invisible, it is in no degree affected by the delightfulness of things corporeal, except that, being closely attached to the body, it has the senses of that body as a kind of opening for going forth. For seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, are a kind of ways of the mind, by which it should come forth without, and go a lusting after the things that are without the limits of its substance. For by these senses of the body as by a kind of windows the soul takes a view of the several exterior objects, and on viewing longs after them. For hence Jeremiah saith; *For death is come up through our windows, and is entered into our palaces;* [Jer. 9, 21] for 'death comes up by the windows and enters into the palace,' when concupiscence coming through the senses of the body enters the dwelling-place of the mind. Contrary whereunto that which we have often already said touching the righteous is spoken by Isaiah; *Who are they that fly as clouds, and as the doves at their windows?* [Is. 60, 8] For the righteous are said to fly as clouds, because they are lifted up from the defilements of earth, and they are 'as doves at their windows,' because through the senses of the body they do not regard the several objects without with the bent of rapacity, and carnal concupiscence does not carry those persons off without. But he who through those windows of the body heedlessly looks without, very often falls even against his will into the delightfulness of sin, and being fast bound by desires, he begins to will what he willed not. For the precipitate soul, whilst it does not forecast beforehand, that it should not incautiously see what it might lust after, begins afterwards with blinded eyes to desire the thing that it saw. And hence the mind of the Prophet, which being uplifted was often admitted to interior mysteries, because he beheld the wife of another without heed, being darkened afterwards joined her to him without right. But the holy man, who as a kind of judge of greatest equity is set over the senses granted

him in the body, as over subject officers, sees offences before they come, and closes the windows of the body as against a plotting enemy, saying, *I made a covenant with mine eyes that I should not even think upon a maid.* For that he might preserve the thoughts of the heart with chastity, he 'made a covenant with his eyes,' lest he should first see without caution what he might afterwards love against his will. For it is very greatly that the flesh drags downwards, and the image of a shape once bound on the heart by means of the eye is with difficulty unloosed by the hand of great struggling. So then that we may not deal with things lascivious in thought we have need to take precaution because it is not befitting to look at what is not lawful to be lusted after. For that the mind may be preserved pure in thought, the eyes must be forced away from the wantonness of their pleasure, like a kind of ravishing unto sin. For neither would Eve have touched the forbidden free, except she had looked on it first without taking heed; since it is written, *And the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree delightful to look upon, and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat.* [Gen. 3, 6] Hence, therefore, it is to be estimated with, what great control we who are living a mortal life ought to restrain our sight towards forbidden objects; if the very mother of the living came to death through means of the eyes. Hence too under the voice of Judaea, who, whereas by seeing she coveted external things, parted with interior blessings, the Prophet says; *Mine eye hath robbed mine heart.* [Lam. 3, 51] For by lusting after things visible, she lost the invisible virtues. She, then, who lost the interior fruits by the exterior sight, did by the eye of the body endure the 'robbing of the heart.' Hence by ourselves, for safely keeping purity of heart, there ought also to be preserved the disciplining of the exterior senses. For with whatever degree of excellency the mind may be enriched, with whatever amount of gravity it may be invigorated, yet the carnal senses ring outwardly with a something childish, and except they

were restrained by the weight of interior gravity, and as it were by a sort of manly energy, they drag the soul unstrung to things loose and light.

5. Let us then see in what manner blessed Job kept in by a manly ['juvenili.'] vigour of wisdom all that the flesh might breathe of in him of loose and childish. For he says, *I made a covenant with mine eyes,* and because he quenched not only the doing but also the thinking of lust in himself, going on he added; *that I should not even think on a maid.* For he knew that lust has need to be checked in the heart, he knew by the gift of the Holy Spirit that our Redeemer on His coming would go beyond the precepts of the Law, and put away from His Elect not only lustful indulgence of the flesh, but also of the heart, saying, *It hath been written, Thou shall not commit adultery? But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* [Matt. 5, 27. 28.] For by Moses lust perpetrated, buy by the Author of purity lust imagined, is condemned. For hence it is that the first Pastor of the Church says to the disciples; *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope perfectly in the grace that is offered to you.* [1 Pet. 1, 13] For to 'gird up the loins' of the flesh is to withhold lust from accomplishment, but 'to gird up the loins of the mind,' is to restrain it from the imagining thereof as well. Hence it is that the Angel who addresses John is described as being 'girt above the paps with a golden girdle.' [Rev. 1, 13] For because the purity of the New Testament puts restraint upon lust of the heart likewise, the Angel who appeared therein, came 'girt' in the breast. Whom a golden girdle rightly binds, because whoever is a citizen of the country Above does not now forsake impurity from dread of punishment, but from the love of charity. Now the wickedness of lust is committed either in thought or deed. For our crafty enemy when he is driven away from the carrying out of the deed, makes it his business to defile by secret thought. Hence too it is said to the serpent by the Lord, *Thou shall creep on the*

breast and belly. That is, 'the serpent creeps with his belly,' when the gliding enemy by the human members subject to him calls lust into exercise even to the fulfilling of the deed; but 'the serpent creeps with the breast,' when those whom he cannot pollute in the deed of lust, he does pollute in the thought. Thus one man now perpetrates lust in act of doing, to this man the serpent creeps by the belly. But another man entertains it in the mind as to be committed, and to him the serpent 'creeps by the breast.' But because through the thought we are brought to the fulfilling deeds, the serpent is rightly described first as 'creeping upon the breast,' and afterwards 'upon the belly.' Hence blessed Job because he maintained discipline even in the thought, by a single guarding mastered both 'the breast and belly of the serpent,' saying, *I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even, think on a maid.* Which same purity of heart whoever does not aim at acquiring, what else does he but drive away from himself the Author of that purity? whence blessed Job too directly adds;

Ver. 2. *For what portion would God have in me from above, and what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high?*

6. As though he said in plain words; 'If I defile, my mind in thought, I can never be the 'inheritance' of Him, Who is the Author of purity.' For the rest are no good things at all, if to the eyes of the secret Judge they be not approved by the testimony of chastity. For all the virtues lift themselves up in the sight of the Creator by reciprocal aid, that because one virtue without another is either none at all or the very least one, they should be mutually supported by their alliance together. For if either humility forsake chastity, or chastity abandon humility, before the Author of humility and chastity, what does either a proud chastity, or a polluted humility avail to benefit us? And so that the holy man might obtain to be owned by his Maker in the remaining particulars of good, keeping purity of the heart, let him say, *I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even think on a maid.*

For what portion would God have in me from above, and what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high? As though he made the confession in plain words, saying, The Creator of the things on high refuses to own me for his possession, if in His sight my mind rots in the lowest desires.

7. But herein it should be known that that is one thing which the mind meets with from the tempting of the flesh, and another thing, when by consent it is tied and bound with gratifications. For very often it is struck by wrong thinking and resists, but very often when it conceives any thing wrong, it revolves this within itself even in the way of desire. And certainly impure thought never in the least defiles the mind when it strikes it, but when it subdues the same to itself by the taking delight. Thus it is hence the great Preacher says, *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man.* [1 Cor. 10, 13] For that is 'temptation common to man,' by which we are very often reached in the thought of the heart even against our will, because this, viz. that even things forbidden sometimes occur to the mind, this assuredly we have in our own selves derived from the burthen of human nature as subject to corruption. But henceforth it is devilish and not 'human' temptation, when to that which the corruptibility of the flesh prompts, the mind attaches itself by the consent. Hence again he says, *Let not sin reign in your mortal body.* [Rom. 6, 12] For he forbad not that sin should 'be' *in our mortal body,* but that it should 'reign in our mortal body.' Because in flesh subject to corruption it may not 'reign,' but cannot help but 'be.' For this very thing to be tempted touching sin, is sin to it, which same because so long as we live, we are not perfectly and altogether without, holy preaching seeing that it could not wholly banish the same, took away from it its 'reign' from the dwelling-place of our heart, that the unlawful longing, though it very often secretly insinuate itself as a thief in our good thoughts, at all events should not, if it should even win an entrance, exercise dominion. Accordingly the holy man in saying, *I made a covenant with*

mine eyes, that I should not even think upon a maid, would not at all be understood, that sin did not touch his mind in thought, but that it never mastered him by the consent. For he defends his soul as the most entire possession of God against the adversary's making a prey of it, who directly subjoins, *For what portion would God have in me from above, or what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high?* As though he said in plain words; 'In my mortal flesh indeed I am subject to the constitution of corruption; but wherein do I serve the Maker, if to Him I do not defend my mind whole and entire from the consent to sin? It goes on;

Ver. 3. *Is not destruction to the wicked? and estrangement to the workers of iniquity?*

8. The speedy comforting of the good is the end of the wicked had regard to. For while by the destruction of those they see the evil that they escape, they account as light whatever of adversity they undergo in this life. So then let the lost sinners now go, and satisfy the desires of their gratifications; in the sentence of their end they are destined to feel that in living badly they were in love with death. But let the Elect be chastened with a temporary infliction of the rod, that strokes may reform from their wickedness those whom fatherly pitifulness keeps for an inheritance. For now the righteous man is scourged und corrected by the rod of discipline, because he is being prepared for the Father's estate of inheritance. But the unjust man is let go in his own pleasures, because temporal good things are supplied to him in the same degree that eternal ones are denied him. The unjust man, whilst running to a deserved death, enjoys pleasures unrestrained; inasmuch as the very steers too that are destined to be slaughtered are left in free pastures. But on the other hand the righteous man is restrained from the pleasantness of transitory gratification, because doubtless the steer too which is assigned to life for the purpose of labour, is held under the yoke. To the Elect, earthly good in this life is denied; because sick persons too, to whom there is a

hope of their living, never have allowed them by the physician every thing they long for. But to the lost sinners the good things are granted, which they long after in this life, because to the sick too who are despaired of there is nothing denied that they desire. So then let the righteous weigh well, what are the evils that await the wicked, and never envy their happiness which runs past. For what is there that they should admire about the joys of those, when both themselves are by a rough road making their way to the Country of Salvation, and those as it were through pleasant meadows to the pit? Therefore let the holy man say, *Is not destruction to the wicked? and estrangement to the workers of iniquity?* Which same term of estrangement [‘alienatio.’] would have sounded harder, if the interpreter had retained it in the parlance of his own tongue. For what with us is called ‘estrangement’ is among the Hebrews termed ‘anathema.’ And so there will then be ‘estrangement’ to the wicked, when they see that they are an ‘anathema’ to the inheritance of the Strict Judge, because here they set Him at nought by wicked practices. So then let the wicked flourish, strange to the flowering of the Eternal Inheritance. But let the righteous look to themselves with discreet attention, and in all their actions be in dread for that they are seen by the Lord. Whence it is fitly added directly;

Ver. 4. *Doth not He see my ways, and count all my steps?*

9. What does he tell of by the title of ‘ways’ but ways of acting? Thus it is hence said by Jeremiah; *Make your ways and your doings good.* [Jer. 7, 3] But what do we understand by the name of ‘steps,’ but either the motions of men’s minds or the advancements of merits? By which ‘steps’ indeed Truth calls us to Itself, saying, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.* [Matt. 11, 28] For the Lord bids us ‘come to Him’ not surely by the steps of the body, but by the advances of the heart. For he Himself says, *The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.* [John 4, 21] And a little after, *the true*

worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father also seeketh such to worship Him. [ver. 23] Thus he implies that the steps are in the heart, when He both bids us that we should come, and yet declares that it is not at all by the motion of the body that we pass to other things. Now the Lord so 'views the ways' of each one, and so 'counts all his steps,' that by His Judgment not even the minutest thoughts or the very slightest words, which have become insignificant in our eyes from use, remain unexamined into. Thus hence He says, *Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Boca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* [Matt. 5, 22] 'Raca' in the Hebrew speech is a word of interjection, which indeed shews the temper of one who is angry, but does not give forth a full word of anger. Thus anger without utterance is first blamed, then anger with utterance, but not yet shaped by a complete word, and at last also when it is said, *Thou fool,* anger is reproved, which, along with excess of the voice, is fulfilled by the perfecting of speech as well. And it is to be noted that He tells that by anger he is 'in danger of the judgment;' by a voice of anger, which is 'Raca,' 'in danger of the council,' and by a word of the voice, which is 'Thou fool,' in danger of hell fire. For by the steps of offence, the order of the sentence increased, because in 'the judgment' the case is still under examination, but in the council the sentence of the case is now determining, while 'in the fire of hell' the sentence, which proceeds from the council, is fulfilled. And therefore because of human actions 'the Lord counts up the steps' with exact scrutiny, anger without the voice is made over 'to the judgment,' but anger in the voice 'to the council,' and anger in speech and voice to 'the fire of hell.' This exactness of His scanning the Prophet had beheld, when he said, *O most strong, Great One, Mighty Lord of hosts is Thy Name, Great in counsel, and Mighty in work, for Thine eyes are open*

upon all the ways of the sons of Adam; to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his devices. [Jer. 32, 18. 19.]

10. Thus the Lord scans those ways with exact scrutiny, that in each one of us He should neither pass over those good points that there are for Him to recompense, nor leave without rebuke the evil things, that are doubtless displeasing to Him. For hence it is that the Angel of the Church of Pergamos He at once commends in some things, and in some rebukes, saying, *I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith.* [Apoc. 2, 13. 14.] And a little while after; *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam.* Hence it is said to the Angel of the Church of Thyatira, *I know thy works, and thy charity, and faith, and service, and thy patience; and thy last works to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee; because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* [ver. 19. 20.] Observe how He records good things, nor yet lets go without penance evil things, that require to be cut off, surely because He so views the ways of each, and so takes account of their steps, 'counting them up,' that by exact counting He thoroughly estimates both how far each one is advancing to what is good, or how far, by deviating to what is evil, he may contravene his advances. For the increase of merits which is heightened by the aims of a good life, is very often held back by a mixture of evil, and the good which the mind builds up by practising it overthrows by committing other things. Whence holy men tie themselves up with greater nicety in the thought of the heart in proportion as they see that they are more searchingly scanned by the Judge Above. For they sift the mind through and through, they seek to find if they have done wrong in aught, that they may be rendered the more unblameable

to the Judge, in proportion as daily and without ceasing they blame their own selves. Not, however, that they already derive from this circumstance the delights of security, because they see that they are beheld by Him, Who beholds in them those things as well, which they are not themselves able to see in themselves. And indeed blessed Job among those of old lime maintained the life of perfectness, but because by the spirit of prophecy the stretch of his eye breaks forth to the Advent of the Redeemer, in that Redeemer's precepts he for himself reflects how many things belonging to perfection he is short of. Whence he also adds;

Ver. 5, 6. *If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit, let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know mine integrity.*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

11. 'God to know' is said for His making us to know by a customary mode of our speech, who speak of 'a happy day,' by which it happens that we are made happy. For hence it is the Lord saith to Abraham, *Now I know that thou fearest God.* [Gen. 22, 12] For it is not that the Creator of the periods of time learnt any thing from time, but His knowing is His affording the knowledge to us by the instant of each particular case emerging. But who is there represented by the name of 'balances,' saving the Mediator between God and man? in Whom all our merits are weighed with an even scale, and in Whose precepts we find what we have short in our own life. Now we are weighed in these balances as often as we are incited after the examples of His life. Thus it is hence that it is written; *Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; Who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not.* [1 Pet. 2, 21-23] Hence it is said by Paul, *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us: looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who for the glory set before*

Him endured the Cross, despising the shame. [Heb. 12, 1. 2.] Accordingly to this end the Lord appeared in the flesh, that the life of man he might by dealing admonitions arouse, by giving examples kindle, by suffering death redeem, by rising again renew. And so whereas blessed Job finds in himself nothing justly deserving to he blamed, he extends the eyes of the mind to the life of the Redeemer, which surpasses all things, that he may learn by that how much he comes short, where he says, *If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know my simpleness.* As though he said in plain speech; 'If I have ever done aught lightly, if ever mischievously, may the Mediator between God and man appear, that in His life I may read whether I myself am really and truly simple.' For as we have said, he who had surpassed the men of his own times, sought for the Mediator between God and man, that by being weighed in Him he might find out whether he truly maintained a life of simplicity. Therefore let him say, *Let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know my simpleness,* which means, 'let Him cause me to know.' As though he made open confession, saying, 'As far as to the measure of man's life, I see now no points in myself deserving to be found fault with, but except the Mediator between God and man appear accompanied with the precepts of an exacter life, I discover not how much I am at variance with true simplicity.' Now the right order is observed if the foot be said first to have 'hasted on in vanity,' and afterwards 'in deceit.' For 'vanity' bears relation to levity, but 'deceit' to wickedness. And there are often persons, who are brought afterwards to things mischievous, because they do not in the first instance avoid what is light. It goes on;

Ver. 7. *If my step hath turned out of the way.*

12. So many times does 'the step go out of the way,' as our thought quits the way of the right, by the consenting of wandering. Now we as it were set as many 'steps out of the way,' as we are parted by bad desires from the

delightfulness of the heavenly life. For as we have before stated, being still borne down by the load of corruptible flesh, we are not able to live in such a manner as that not any enjoyment of sin should be able to strike us. But it is one thing for the mind to be touched against its will, and another to be killed whilst consenting. But holy men guard themselves with more watchful solicitude in proportion as they take shame for being assaulted by the misdirected motions even of passing gratification. And hence it is yet further added;

And if mine eye hath followed mine heart.

[HISTORICAL/MORAL INTERPRETATION]

13. See again how by the keeping of inward vigour he returns to the training of the outward members, that if the heart should perchance covet aught forbidden, the eye being kept down by the tutorage of discipline may refuse to look at it. For as it often happens that temptation is derived through the eyes, so sometimes being conceived inwardly it forces the eyes to do service to it outwardly. Thus very often an object is regarded by a mind in a state of innocence, but by that mere look the mind is pierced through by the sword of concupiscence. For it was not (as we have already remarked for the sake of illustration) that David in this way looked of purpose on the wife of Uriah, because he had entertained the desire of her; but rather he lusted after her for this cause, because he beheld her without caution. But it happens by an inquest of right recompensing, that he who employs the external eye carelessly, is not unjustly blinded in the interior eye. Now oftentimes concupiscence rules in the interior, and the mind being seduced, after the manner of a despotism requires the senses of the body to drudge to its occasions, and obliges the eyes to serve its pleasures, and so to say opens the window of light to the dark of blindness. Hence holy men, when they feel themselves to be assailed by a wrong enjoyment, by the tutorage of

discipline they withhold the very eyes themselves by which the likeness of the shape is introduced into the mind, lest the sight acting the pander should do the bidding of unhallowed thought. Which same if it ever be forborne to be guarded with nice particularity, uncleanness of thought presently passes into execution. Hence too it is directly added;

And if any blot hath cleaved to my hands.

14. Thus the holy man, knowing well that very often wrong thought comes into the mind through the eyes, said a little above; *I made a covenant with mine eyes that I would not even think on a maid.* Reflecting likewise that sometimes it springs up in the mind, while on its springing up so the eyes wickedly do service to it, he says, *If mine eye hath followed mine heart.* As though he said in plain speech, 'Neither did I wish to see in general things I might long after, nor in looking did I ever follow after the things that I longed for.' So then let him say, *If mine eye hath followed mine heart.* Because even if his mind as being human ever did conceive aught unlawful, his eyes, bound down by the tutoring of higher discipline, it would not should follow it in things forbidden, and drudge to its service. Let us consider our own consciences with reference to these points, and what height this man was of let us see from the sunkenness of our own breast. See, if he did occasionally imagine things unlawful, because he speedily dispatched them within the depths of the heart with the sword of holy vigour, he suffered them not to reach so far as to deeds. Hence as we have set down before, he thereupon adds; *And if any blot hath cleaved to my hands.* For when does a blot cleave to the hands, i.e. sin to the actions, which sin the censorship of discipline did not suffer to make progress in thought? For neither is sin permitted to issue into act, if it be despatched inwardly where it has its birth. But if there is not a speedy resisting of temptation springing up in the heart, it is strengthened by that very delay by which it is fed, and coming forth without in deeds, it is with difficulty able

to be overcome, because the very mistress of the members, the mind within, it holds a captive. Now because the holy man had brought forward all the particulars conditionally, *if* had ever been guilty of these, he binds himself with a sentence of malediction, saying;

Ver. 8. *Then let me sow, and let another eat; let my offspring be rooted out.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

15. After the manner of Sacred Revelation we call it to ‘sow’ to preach the words of life. Thus it is hence the Prophet says, *Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters.* [Is. 32, 20] For the preachers of Holy Church he saw to ‘sow upon all waters’ because they bestowed the words of life, like grains of heavenly bread, upon all peoples far and wide. But to ‘eat’ is to be filled to the full with good works. Hence Truth saith by Itself; *My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me.* [John 4, 34] So then, if the things that he gave forth, he forbore to do, he says; *Then let me sow, and another eat.* As though he said in plain words; ‘What my mouth utters let not me but another man put in practice.’ For the preacher who in his ways is at variance with his own words, sows going hungry what another may eat; because he is not himself fed by His own seed, when by wrong conduct he is made void of the rightness of his word. And because it very often happens that the disciples hear what is good to no purpose, when by the life of the master it is destroyed by the example of actions, it in rightly subjoined; *yea, let my offspring be rooted out.*

16. For ‘the offspring’ of the teacher is ‘rooted out,’ when he who is born by the word, is killed by the example, because him whom the heeding tongue begets, heedlessness of the life kills. For neither should we pass over with an insensible mind, that in Solomon the woman killed in sleeping the child, whom she was used to suckle being awake; [1 Kings 3, 19] in this way,

because masters awake indeed in knowledge, but asleep in life, upon their hearers, whom they nourish by the watches of preaching, whilst they neglect to do the things that they say, through the sleep of insensibility inflict death, and by neglecting overlay those whom they appeared to be feeding with the milk of words. Hence generally whilst they live themselves in a blameable way, they are at once unable to have disciples of a praiseworthy life, and endeavour to draw over the disciples of others to themselves, that so, whilst they shew themselves to have good followers, in the judgments of men they may excuse the evil things that they do, and as it were by the life of those under them cover their deathdealing negligence. Whence in that place the woman, because she had killed her own, sought for another’s child. Yet the sword of Solomon discovered the true mother, because surely what man’s fruit may live or what man’s die, the wrath of the Strict Judge in the final Judgment brings to light. Where this too is to be regarded with a discreet eye, that the child is first bidden to be divided whilst living, in order that afterwards it may be restored to the mother only, because in this life the disciples’ life is in a manner allowed to be divided, whereas it is sometimes the case that from that life one man is permitted to have merit with God, and another man to have praise with men.

17. But the feigned mother did not fear for him to be put to death, whom she did not bear; because masters that are presumptuous and unacquainted with charity, if they are not able to win the fullest character of praise from the disciples of others, hunt down their life with cruelty. For being set on fire with the firebrand of envy, they are not minded for those to live to others whom they see that they cannot themselves possess. Whence in that place the bad woman cries out, *Let it be neither mine nor thine.* [ib. v. 26] For as we said, those whom they do not see to be at their command for temporal glory, they grudge should live to others through truth. But the true mother is at pains that her child may at least be with a stranger woman and

live, because genuine masters yield it that by their disciples others indeed should have the praise of preceptorship, if, this notwithstanding, those same disciples do not lose wholeness of life. Through which same bowels of pitifulness this same true mother is known, because all tutorage is tested in the trial of charity, and she alone has earned to receive the whole, who as it were gave up the whole; because the faithful rulers, for this that they not only do not envy others' praise derived from their own good disciples, but also implore for them usefulness for advancement, do themselves receive back the children at once whole and living, when in the Last Inquest from the lives of those they obtain the joys of perfect recompensing. These things we have delivered in few words out of course, that we might point out in what way the offspring of hearers is through the negligence of the teachers made to be extinct; because whosoever does not live according to that which he speaks, uproots by practice from the stedfastness of righteousness those whom he has begotten by speech. But blessed Job never by his way of acting put an end whilst sleeping to those whom by his preaching he had brought forth whilst awake; and therefore he says with confidence, *Then let me sow and another eat, let my offspring be rooted out;* which same still examining himself touching the defilement of bad practice, adds;

Ver. 9. *If mine heart has been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

18. Though it sometimes happens that the sin of fornication is not at all different from the guilt of adultery, seeing that Truth saith; *Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* [Matt. 5, 28] (For whereas an adulterer is called by the Greek word, 'moechus,' whilst not another man's wife but a woman is forbidden to be looked at, 'Truth' openly shews that by the mere look alone, when

only one that is unmarried is vilely lusted after, adultery is perpetrated.) Yet generally speaking the thing is differenced according to the situation or order of the person lusting, that is to say in this way, that purposed concupiscence in like sort defiles one in sacred orders, as the sin of adultery defiles that other. Nevertheless in persons not dissimilar, the same guilt of lust is made different, in whose case that the sin of fornication is distinguished from the guilt of adultery, the tongue of the great Preacher bears witness, who asserts amongst the rest, saying, *Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers — shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.* [1 Cor. 6, 9] For whereas he subjoins sentence to severally distinguished guilt, he shews how very greatly it differs from itself. By this then that is spoken, *If my heart hath been deceived by a woman,* the holy man is proved not even to have entertained a thought connected with the defilement of fornication. But by this that he adds; *Or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door,* he openly makes known that he was clear of the guilt of adultery. But perchance a person may say to this, 'What does the holy man assert extraordinary about himself, if he did preserve himself clear not only from the guilt of adultery, but likewise from the defilement of fornication?' But we rate these things at little, if we fail to consider the times of his virtuous achievements. For there had not as yet gone forth for the restraining of the flesh the stricter monitorship of revealed grace, which not only blames wantonness of the body, but also of the heart. There had not as yet gone forth the excellencies of chastity of numbers living in continence as patterns for our imitation, yet did blessed Job afford examples of purity, which he had not received. But by numbers even now after the prohibition of God there is impurity of the flesh committed. Accordingly it ought to be inferred from hence, seeing that so great an offence now even after the commandment is perpetrated in heavy matters, with what great praiseworthiness was abstinence kept before

in heavy matters. And if he ever had done this thing, he prays for that sin to be turned into punishment to him, saying;

Ver. 10. *Then let my wife be a harlot unto another, and let others bow down upon her.*

19. And because it is generally the case that that thing which in the doing of, we do not well consider how heinous it is, in the suffering it we do consider this; the force of that atrocity which, if he were guilty, he declares that he himself ought to undergo, he makes plain by expressing it, saying;

Ver. 11, 12. *For this is an heinous crime; and the chiefest iniquity. For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and that rooteth out all increase.*

There is this difference between ‘sin’ and ‘crime,’ that all crime is sin, but not all sin is crime. And in this life there are numbers without crime, but no one can be without sins. And hence the holy preacher, when he was describing a man worthy of the grace of the priesthood, never said, ‘if any be without sin,’ but *if any be without crime.* [Tit. 1, 6] But who can be without sin, when John saith, *If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* [1 John 1, 8] In which same distinction of sins and crimes it deserves to be considered, that occasional sins pollute the soul, while crimes slay it; whence blessed Job in characterizing the crime of lust says, *It is afire that consumeth to destruction,* in this way, that the heinousness of this atrocity not only stains to the length of defilement, but devours to the extent of destruction. And because howsoever many other good deeds there may be, if the enormity of lust is not washed out, they are overwhelmed by the immensity of this crime, he added going on, *and rooting out all offsprings,* for ‘the offsprings’ of the soul are good practices. Which soul, nevertheless, if the right order being reversed, the flesh exercises dominion over, all the things that are put forth well are consumed by the fire of lust. For before the eyes of Almighty God the works of righteousness and of pitifulness are none at all, which are shewn to view

unclean by the infection of corruptness. For what does it profit, if a man heartily ['pie'] compassionates the need of his neighbour, whilst he heartlessly ['impie'] destroys himself, being the habitation of God? So then if by purity of the heart the flame of lust be not quenched, any virtues whatever spring up in vain, as it is spoken by Moses; *For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth, with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.* For 'a fire consumes the earth and her increase,' when lust consumes the flesh, and all things done well thereby. For whatsoever comes forth belonging to the fruitage of righteousness, this, surely, the flame of corruption burns up. So, then, let him say, *For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and that rooteth up all increase.* Because if there be no stand made against the mischief of corruptness, even those things assuredly come to nought, which seemed to be good. But some there are whom bad qualities are apt to bring down to humility, and good ones exalt to pride of heart. So then it is necessary for us to enquire, whether blessed Job in this extraordinary pureness of chastity was at the same time humble? Now the holy man, whilst he held the highest range of virtues, plainly discourses what low thoughts he entertained of himself, when he subjoins,

Ver. 13. *If I despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me.*

20. For he who did not refuse to be 'judged with menservants and maid-servants,' clearly shews that against no fellow-creature was he at any time swoln with pride in himself. But herein it is interesting to remark with what circumspection the holy man preserved his life in all respects. For not far above he said, *The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat.* [Job 29, 8. &c.]While now he says; *If I have despised to submit to*

judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me. Who might be able proportionately to view these high counterpoises of virtues in this holy man? In whom there is so great authority of governance that princes are bound to silence, such lowliness of heart, that 'maid-servants' are permitted to come to 'judgment' on an equal footing. See how in a wonderful way he appears in power superior to princes, in contest on a level with servants; in the assemblage of princes mindful of his office, in contest with domestics mindful of his creation. For he beholds himself a servant under the real Lord, and therefore he does not in loftiness of heart lift himself up above servants. And hence he adds directly;

Ver. 14. *For what shall I do, when God riseth up to judge; and when He seeketh, what shall I answer Him?*

21. He who thinks on the Judge to come, is unceasingly day by day preparing the cases of his accounts for the better: he who views the Eternal Lord with trembling of heart, is forced to abate the rights of temporal lordship over those under him. For he considers well that it is nothing that he is set above others in time, when for the rendering account he is beneath Him, Who exercises dominion without end. For oftentimes transitory power hurries away the soul along the sleeps of self-exaltation. And because every one is lifted up in the degree that he sees that he is himself above any persons, it is needful that he ever have regard to Him, Who is above himself, that by the fear of Him, Who is above all things, he may keep down the growing inflation of mind within. For he knows who they are beneath himself, but let him consider under Whom he himself is, that by the considering of the true Lord, the swelling of counterfeit lordship may die off. Hence blessed Job, because he feared the Judgment of Him, Who is above all things, here comes to temporal judgment the equal of servants, saying, *If I despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my*

maid-servant, when they contended with me. For what shall I do, when God riseth up to judge? and when He seeketh, what shall I answer Him? Which same, that he might always keep down the heart in humility, never in these servants sees that the condition is unlike to himself, but that the nature is common. Whence also he adds,

Ver. 15. *Did not He Who made me in the womb make him? And did not One make us in the womb?*

22. To persons possessed of power, the equality of creation kept in the thoughts is great goodness of humility. For all of us men are equal by nature, but it has been added by a distributive arrangement, that we should appear as set over particular persons. So then if we keep down from the imagination that thing which has accrued temporarily, we find out the sooner that which we are naturally. For very often the power vouchsafed presents itself to the mind, and deceives it by high-swoln thoughts. And so by the hand of lowliest reflection the inflation of self-exalting must be kept under. For if the mind in itself descends from the top of the height, it quickly finds the level of the equality of nature. For as we have before said, nature has begotten all of us men equals, but, the order of merits varying, the secret appointment sets some above others. But the very diversity, which has been added from defect, is rightly ordered by the judgments of God, that whereas every man does not go the way of life in a like way, one should be governed by another. But holy men, when they are in authority, do not look to the power of station in themselves, but to the equality of creation, nor do they rejoice to be above, but to be of use to their fellow-creatures. For they know well that our old fathers are recorded to have been not so much kings of men, as shepherds of flocks. And when the Lord said to Noah and to his sons, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and, replenish the earth,* He adds, *and the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast*

of the earth. [Gen. 9, 1] For He says not ‘be upon the men who were to be,’ but, *be upon every beast of the earth.*

23. Since man is by nature set over the irrational animals, but not over the rest of mankind, and therefore it is said to him that he should be feared by the beasts and not by men; because it is to swell with pride against nature, to desire to be feared by an equal. Though very often even holy men desire to be feared by those under their charge, only however when they discover that by those their subjects God is not feared, that by dread of man at least they may fear to sin, who do not dread His judgments. Never then do they being set in authority swell with pride from this fear being sought, in that they seek therein not their own glory but the righteousness of those under their charge. For in this, viz. that they exact for themselves fear from persons living badly, they as it were rule not men but brute animals; because surely, in whatsoever respect those under authority are bestial, in that respect they ought also to be bowed down under fear.

24. But when there is wanting evil, that may have to be corrected, they rejoice, not for the eminency of power, but for the equality of constitution, and they not only shrink from being feared by them, but also from being honoured beyond what is necessary. Nor yet do they think that it is a light loss to humility which they undergo, if perchance for their merit they be reckoned by them of too much rank. It is hence that the chief Shepherd of the Church, when on Cornelius worshipping him, he saw honour offered him which was above him, quickly refers to the equality of his creation, in the words, *Stand up, I myself also am a man.* [Acts 10, 26] For who does not know that man should be bowed down to his Creator, and not to man? Therefore because he saw that his fellow-creature humbled himself to him beyond what he ought, that the mind might not be made to swell beyond the boundaries of human nature, he owned himself to be ‘a man,’ that he might dash down the exaltation of the honour offered to him, by the equality of his

creation being had an eye to. Hence the Angel, on being worshipped by John, owned himself to be a creature, saying, *See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren.* [Rev. 19, 10] Hence the Prophet, when he is caught away to see sublime things, is called 'Son of man,' that being carried to the heavenly scenes, he might remember that he was man. [Ez. 3, 1] As though the divine voice admonished him in plainer words, saying, 'Remember what thou art, lest thou be exalted by those things, whereunto thou art caught up, but moderate the loftiness of the revelation by the remembrance of thy creation.' So then from this it is to be gathered, with what remembrance of a common nature the swelling of earthly power ought to be kept under in the heart, if by the name of man's nature it is effected that elevation of the heart should not be engendered by heavenly mysteries. Which same human nature blessed Job effectually kept the recollection of at all times, in that he says, *Did not He that made me in the womb, make him? And did not One fashion us in the womb?* As though he said in plain words, 'Wherefore should not we be examined on an equal footing in the trial of any matter, who are made with equal conditions by the power of the Creator? But whereas we have made ourselves acquainted with the achievements of his chastity and of his humility, let us now acquaint ourselves with the deeds of his munificence. It goes on;

Ver. 16. *If I have denied what they wished for to the poor, or have caused the eyes of the widow to wait.*

25. By these words the holy man is shewn not only to have ministered to the need of the poor, but also to their desire of having. But what if the poor wished those very things, which perchance it might not be for their good to receive? Is it that, because in Sacred Scripture the lowly are used to be called 'poor,' those only are to be accounted the things the poor wish to receive, which the humble seek? And surely it is required, that every thing should be unhesitatingly given that is asked for with true humility; i.e.

whatsoever is begged for not from desire but from necessity. For it is to be henceforth very full of pride, to desire any thing beyond the limits of want. And hence it is said to persons asking with pride, *Ye ask, and ye receive not, because ye ask amiss.* [James 4, 3] Because then they are genuinely poor, who are not blown out through the spirit of pride; which same 'Truth', plainly represents, when He says, *Blessed are the poor in spirit;* [Matt. 5, 5] it is well said in this place by the holy man, *If I have denied what they wished for to the poor.* Because they that wish those things, which same it is clear are not expedient for them, by this alone, that they are overflowing with a spirit of pride, are not henceforth poor. But blessed Job, seeing that he called the humble 'poor,' refused not whatsoever the poor man was minded to receive from him, because every truly humble person did not even wish to have what it could not be that he ought to have.

26. But whereas he points out the bountifulness of his spirit, because he shews that he had met the poor to the wish, it is necessary that we enquire whether he had obscured the light of mercifulness by backwardness in the giving. Hence he subjoins; *Or caused the eyes of the widow to wait.* He would not have the widow that besought him 'to wait,' that not only by the gift, but likewise by the speediness of the gift he might increase the merits of good deeds. Hence it is written elsewhere; *Say not unto thy friend, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.* [Prov. 8, 28] Now there are some that are used to bestow as much outwardly, but rejecting the favour of a life in common, they shrink from having the poor their fellows in domestic intercourse. Hence blessed Job, that he might teach not only that he had given much without, but also to his own presence had received all the needy in domestic intercourse, adds directly;

Ver. 17. *Or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof.*

27. That is to say, reckoning that he prejudiced his pitifulness, if he ate alone what the Lord of all created in common. Which same fellowship of intercourse should be carried on within the domestic walls with those persons, by whom the rewards of eternal retribution may be promoted. Whence the holy man describes himself as having had not any indifferent person, but, for eating, the 'fatherless' as his companions. But these extraordinary bowels of pitifulness whether he had derived from himself, or obtained them by the grace of his Creator, let him make known. It proceeds;

Ver. 18. *For from my infancy compassion grew up with me, and from my mother's womb it came forth with me.*

28. For though commiseration was a thing at his own command, that it should gain growth with himself, yet it is plain that it was not a thing at his own command that it should 'come forth from the womb along with himself.' Therefore it is plain that he attributes nothing to his own goodness, in that surely he bears witness that he received this same by the gift of his creation. The good then which he implies that he had derived from his creation, it is assuredly plain that he tells to the praise of the Creator, shewing that it was from Him and no other that he had obtained that he should he pitiful, from Whom he obtained that he should be; because as by his own act he was not created in the womb, so neither by his own goodness was he full of pity from the womb. But it is to be taken thought of by us that he declares; *it grew up with me.* For there are some who as they grow to years, go off from innocency. But whilst to the Elect the age of the body increases without, within, if it may be allowed to say so, the age of virtue increases. It goes on;

Ver. 19, 20. *If I despised any passing by, because he had no covering, and a poor man without clothing, if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep.*

29. Because he did not despise the poor, he displayed the virtue of humility; and because he covered him, of pitifulness. For these two virtues ought to be so linked together, as to be even supported by reciprocal practice; that so neither humility, when it reverences a fellow-creature, should abandon the grace of free giving, nor pity, when it gives, be made to swell high. Thus towards the need of a fellow-creature, let pity sustain humility, humility sustain pity, so that when thou seest one who is a sharer of thine own nature lacking the necessaries of life, thou shouldest neither through pitilessness cease to cover him, nor from pride cease to reverence him, whom thou dost cover. For there are persons who the moment they are entreated for necessaries by their brethren in need, afterwards intending to bestow gifts on them, first let loose words of insult against them. Which persons though in things they execute the office of pity, yet in words lose the grace of humility, so that for the most part it seems that they are now paying satisfaction for an injury inflicted, when after abuse they bestow gifts. Nor is it a thing of high practice, that they give the things that are begged for, because by the very boon of their giving they scarcely cover over that transgression of speech. To which persons is it well said by the book of Ecclesiasticus, *To every gift give not the bitterness of an evil word.* And again; *Lo, a word is better than a gift? and both are with a man that is justified,* [Ecclus. 18, 15. 16.] i.e. that a gift should be exhibited through pitifulness, and a good word bestowed through humility. But on the other hand, others are not forward to support their needy brethren with things; but only to cherish them with soft words. Which persons the holy preaching of James strongly rebukes, saying, *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body: what shall it profit you?* [Jam. 2, 15. 16.] Which persons the Apostle also admonishes, saying, *My little children, Let us not love in word,*

neither in tongue: but in deed and in truth. [1 John 3, 18] For our loving affection must always be shewn forth at once by respectfulness of speech, and by the service of almsgiving.

30. But it has very great efficacy for taming down the pride of a person in giving, if when he gives earthly things, he considers with good heed the words of the Heavenly Master, Who says, *Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.* [Luke 16, 9] For if by the friendships of those we obtain everlasting habitations, assuredly we ought to reflect when we give, that we are rather offering presents to patrons, than bestowing gifts on the needy. Hence it is said by Paul, *That now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, and their abundance also may be a supply for your want.* [2 Cor. 8, 14] That is, that we may heedfully consider, that those whom we now see in need, we shall one day see in abundance, and we, who are beheld abounding, if we neglect to bestow alms, shall one day be in need. He then who now gives temporal support to the poor man, hereafter to receive from him everlasting supports, so to say, for fruit as it were cultivates land, which pays back more abundantly what it has received. It remains then that exaltation should never spring up by benefaction, since, surely, the rich by that which he bestows on the poor man, brings it to pass that he should not be poor for everlasting. Accordingly, blessed Job, that he might carefully shew with what reflection humility and mercifulness were united together in him, says, *If I despised any passing by, because that he had no covering, and a poor man without clothing: if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep.* As though he said in plain words; 'In the love of a fellow-creature, keeping down by one and the same appointments both the evil of pride and of unpitifulness; any one passing by both humbly, on beholding him, I despised not, and mercifully I warmed him. For whosoever lifts himself

above him that he gives any thing to with the height of self-exaltation, achieves a greater offence by carrying himself proudly within than a recompense by giving alms without, and he himself is made bare of interior good, when in clothing the naked he, despises him, and so brings it to pass that he is rendered worse than his very own self, in proportion as he fancies himself better than his neighbour in need. For he is less in need who is without a garment, than he who is without humility. Whence it follows, that when we see those who are sharers of our own nature without external things, we should reflect how many good things of the interior are wanting to ourselves, that so the thought of our heart may not exalt itself above the needy, in that it sees with an eye of penetration that we ourselves are the more really in want, in proportion as it is more inwardly.

31. And because there are some who cannot stretch the bowels of their compassion so far as to persons unknown to them, but pity those only whom they have learnt to pity by constancy of acquaintance, with whom, in fact, intimacy avails more than nature, whilst to particular persons they give things necessary, not because they are men, but because they are acquaintance, it is well said by blessed Job in this place; *If I despised any passing by because that he had no covering.* For to a fellow-creature unknown he shews himself compassionate, in that he calls him 'any passing by,' because, surely, with a pitiful mind nature has more avail than acquaintance. Since even every individual who is in want, by this mere circumstance, that he is a man, is not any longer unknown to him. It goes on;

Ver. 21. *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, even when I saw myself uppermost in the gate.*

32. It was the custom with those of old that the elders should sit at the gate to make out by judicial trial the quarrels of persons at strife, in order that the city, in which it was befitting that they should dwell in concord,

they should never enter at variance. And hence the Lord saith by the Prophet, *Establish judgment in the gate.* [Amos 5, 15] In this place then what is set forth by the title of the 'gate' but that thing which was used to be done in the gate? For as we talk of the 'camp fighting' instead of this, that there is fighting from the camp, so judgment that used to be tarried on in the gate, is called 'the gate.' Thus he 'sees himself uppermost in the gate,' who sees that by the title of just dealing he is of the better side in judgment. Accordingly, blessed Job, because he did not even then put forth his hand against the fatherless, when even by the claim of justice he saw himself the better one, teaching to us the rule of fear, says, *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, even when I saw myself uppermost in the gale.* As though he said in plain words, 'Not even then had I the mind to enforce by power the interests of my own advantage against the fatherless, when I saw myself even by justice the better one in judgment.' For holy men, when they are subject to matters of disputings with inferior persons, whilst they are afraid to bear heavily even in the least circumstances, never shun to be themselves pressed upon contrary to justice. For they know that all human justice is charged to be injustice, if it be judged strictly by God. Whence that thing which is at their command, they guard against exacting with passionateness, lest it chance that the Righteousness Above try their actions with exactness. But that they may be able to be found just in the Divine Inquest, very often before the judgments of men they suffer themselves to be borne hard upon even unjustly. Now in relating the lofty height of his life, they are many and wonderful things that blessed Job delivered. But because it very often happens that the human mind refuses to believe the good things that it does not know how to put in practice, he directly adds the sentence of a curse upon himself, if aught of those things which he had spoken he did not fulfil in act, saying,

Ver. 22. *Then let my shoulder fall from its joining, and mine arm be broken in pieces along with its bones.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

33. Because bodily action is carried on by the shoulder and the arm, if the good things which he put forth with the lips he did not fulfil in deed, he wishes to himself 'the shoulder to fall,' and 'the arm to be broken in pieces.' As though he said in plain words, 'If the things that I said I refused to do, this very member of my body, which was given to me for working withal, may I lose, that surely that may fall from the body which I would not exercise to advantage.' But if this sentence of a curse is to be referred to a spiritual meaning, it is doubtless plain that the arm is joined to the body by the shoulders, and as by the arm good practice, so by the shoulder the knitting together of social life, is denoted. Whence too the Prophet, regarding the holy peoples of the Church universal, that should serve God in concord, says, *And they shall serve Him with one shoulder.* [Zeph. 3, 9] Herein then that he says, *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw myself above in the gate.* He declares that he had preserved a wonderful force of patience, who declined not the being borne hard upon by the least considerable persons, no not when it was contrary to that which might justly be open to him. Which thing if he had not done, he adds, *May my shoulder fall from its joint.* Because, undoubtedly, he who is indifferent to observe patience, soon gives up a social life from impatience. For 'the shoulder falls from its joining,' when the mind, not being able to bear aught of contradiction, abandons brotherly concord, and it is as if a member were severed from the body, when he who might do what is good is cut off from the general unity of all the good. For never can concord be preserved excepting through patience only. For frequently there arises in human conduct occasion whereby the minds of men are liable to be reciprocally

separated from their union and affection. And except the mind prepare itself for the undergoing things that are contrary, surely the shoulder does not hold fast to the body. Thus hence it is that Paul says, *Bear ye one another's burthens, and so ye shall fulfil the law of Christ.* [Gal. 6, 9] Hence Truth says by Itself, *In your patience ye shall possess your souls.* [Luke, 21, 19]

34. Now upon the 'shoulder falling,' it is rightly subjoined, *Let mine arm be broken in pieces with its bones;* because without doubt all our practice, with whatsoever virtues it may seem to be accompanied, is undone, except that through the bond of brotherly love patience be preserved safe. For he foregoes to do good deeds of his own, who refuses to bear evil deeds of others. Since on being wounded by the heat of an angry spirit, a person recoils from loving, and when he does endure to be borne hard upon outwardly, he darkens himself inwardly by the light of charity being lost; nor does he now see where to stretch out the foot of good practice, who has lost the eye of love. But 'the shoulder of the holy man does not fall from its joining,' in this way, because his loving affection does not depart from the concord of social life through impatience. And his arm is not broken, because all his practice is preserved in the joining of the shoulder, i.e. in the binding together of charity. Now with what thought present to him he did these good things of such great magnitude, and kept himself from all bad ones, he adds, saying,

Ver. 23. *For I always feared God like waves swelling over me, and I could not endure the weight of Him.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

35. From the terror that belongs to such a likeness let us reflect what wonderful force of fear there was in the holy man. For when waves swelling hang over us from on high, and when they threaten that death, which they bring down, there is then no concern for temporal things with the voyagers,

no enjoyment of the flesh is brought back to mind. Those very things as well they cast forth from the ship, for the sake of which they took long voyages; all things are brought into contempt to their mind by love of living. Accordingly he 'fears God as waves swelling over him,' who whilst he desires the true life, despises all things that here he carries possessing. For when caught by a tempest, we as it were cast out the freight of the vessel, when from the soul that is overborne we remove earthly desires. And it comes to pass that the vessel being lightened floats, which by being loaded was sinking, seeing that doubtless the cares that weigh down in this life, drag the mind into the depth. Which mind is borne so much the higher amidst the billows of temptations, in proportion as it is more heedfully emptied of thought of this world. But there is another circumstance also that ought to be viewed with a regardful eye relating to the tossing of the sea. For when a storm arises, first slight waves, and afterwards greater billows are stirred up, finally the waves lift themselves up on high, and by their very height overturn all them that are at sea. Thus, thus surely does that last tempest of souls hasten that it may overwhelm the whole world. For now it shews us its beginnings by wars and havocs as by a kind of waves, and in proportion as we are daily made nearer to the end, we see heavier billows of tribulations rushing in upon us. But at the last all the elements being in commotion, the Judge from Above when He comes bringeth the end of all things, because at that time surely the tempest lifts the waves to the heavens. Whence too it is said, *Yet a little while and I will shake not only the earth, but heaven also.* Which same tempest because holy men regard with lively attention, they as it were dread 'the waves swelling over them' day by day, and by these tribulations, which strike the world, they forecast what things may follow.

30. Now it is well added; *And I could not bear the weight of Him,* because he who views with mind engrossed the coming of the final

Judgment, sees doubtless that such great terror is impending as he not only dreads then to see, but even now dreads that he foresees beforehand. For by the beholding of that great terribleness the soul quivers with dread, and turning aside the eyes of its attention, it refuses to behold that which it foresees. Therefore it is well said, *And the weight of Him I could not bear.* Because the power of the Majesty Above when It comes to Judgment, and the terribleness of that great Inquest, when the mind by considering endeavours to make out, directly falling back to itself, it is afraid at its having found it out. But herein it is to be considered that blessed Job says these things concerning himself after having been pained and smitten. If then at all events for the advancement of his merits he was so stricken, who so feared, how is he to be stricken, who despises? How shall the judgments of God weigh down those who lift themselves up, if even those they weigh down for a time, who always dread these things in humility? How shall he be able to endure the weight of God, who contemns, if this same weight even he underwent under the rod, who foresaw in fear. Whence with the utmost earnestness we ought to dread that inquest of so great strictness. Now it is plain that in this life, when he smites, if amendment follows the stroke, it is the discipline of a Father, not the wrath of a Judge, the love of One correcting, not the strictness of One punishing. And so by that very present scourge itself the eternal judgments ought to be weighed. For hence we ought with the greatest pains to reflect, how that anger may be borne that casts away, if that anger of His which purifies may scarcely now be borne.

BOOK XXII.

All that remained of chapter thirty-one of the Book of Job is explained, and submissiveness of mind, and moderation, patience, charity, and earnest interest for those under our charge, are especially commended.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. That which has been often said by me already it is not troublesome for me to repeat many times, since the great Preacher too says, *To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is necessary.* [Phil. 3, 1] Blessed Job for this reason relates virtues achieved, because whilst caught between the words of rebuke and the wounds of the rod, he sees that his mind is being loosened from the assurance of hope. For he had heard from his friends upbraiding him that he had done numberless wicked things even, and lest his soul being driven hard by words and scourges simultaneously should break down into despair, by the recollection of his virtuous attainments he resets the same to hope, that it might never cast itself down in woe, in that if remembered that in the season of its repose it had done such lofty deeds. And so whereas we have told the reason of his purpose, it remains that we weigh with exactness his virtues so heard.

2. But this we are to have impressed upon us first of all, that he, who is supposed to be strong in any particular virtue is then really strong when he is not subject to evil habits in another quarter. For if he be under the dominion of evil habits in another thing, not even that is firm and solid wherein he was believed to stand fast. For each separate virtue is of less worth in proportion as the others are wanting. For very often it has happened to us to see some modest indeed but not humble, some seemingly humble but not pitiful, some seeming pitiful but not at all just, some in appearance just, but trusting in themselves rather than in the Lord. And it is

certain that there is not even genuine chastity in the heart of him who lacks humility, since by pride corrupting him within he commits fornication, if from loving himself he departs from the love of God. Nor is that true humility that has not pitifulness joined to it, because that has no right to be called humility which refuses to bend itself to sympathy with the affliction of a brother. Nor is that true mercifulness which proves a stranger to the right line of justice, for that which is able to be defiled by injustice, knows not assuredly how to have compassion on its own self. Neither is it real righteousness, which puts its trust not in the Creator of all things, but in itself perhaps, or in things created; since while one withdraws his hope from the Creator, himself overturns to himself the order of the highest justice. And so one virtue without another is either none at all or but imperfect. For that (as it has seemed best to some persons) I may speak of the four first virtues, viz. prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, they are severally so far perfect, in proportion as they are mutually joined to one another. But separated they can never be perfect. For neither is it real prudence which has not justice, temperance, fortitude, nor perfect temperance which has not fortitude, justice, and prudence, nor complete fortitude which is not prudent, temperate, and just, nor genuine justice which has not prudence, fortitude, and temperance.

3. Accordingly blessed Job, because he had not one without another, but the virtues united together in himself, going over them severally makes them known. For telling the excellences of chastity, he says, *If mine heart have been deceived upon a woman.* [c. 31, 9] And that he might shew that to that chastity the grace of humility was in no degree wanting, he adds after the rest, *If I did despise to undergo judgment with my man servant.* [v. 13] And that he might shew that to his humility, mercy was joined, he says a little after, *If I have withheld the poor from their desire.* [v. 16] And that he might shew that his mercy was descended from the root of justice, he

promised a little above, saying, *If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted in deceit.* [v. 5] And that it might be shown how alarmed he was at all things, how guarded towards all, he declares below, saying, *For I always feared the Lord as waves swelling over me.* Which same if whilst placed in prosperous circumstances, and buoyed up by the abundance of good things, he had placed hope either in his own doings, or in the good things about him on every side, assuredly he would not be just. But when did this holy man place hope in himself, who says in express terms, *Lo, there is no help to me in myself?* [c. 6, 13] What then now remains but that what feeling he held those very riches with, he should make known. Thus he says,

I have made gold my strength, or have said to bullion, Thou art my confidence.

4. We give the name of 'bullion' ['obryzum'] to gold in the rough. So then the holy man neither supposed 'gold' to be 'his strength,' nor that to him the 'bullion,' i.e. the mass of rude gold, was 'his confidence,' because resting his hope and satisfaction in the grace of his Creator alone, he sinned neither for the quantity of gold, nor yet in the kind thereof. For it would have been to have given up hope in the Creator, to have placed hope in the creature. But in uncertain objects that rich man had fixed his hope, who said, *Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* But the Voice Above rebukes this man, saying, *Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided.* [Luke 12, 19. 20.] For the same night he was taken off, who had looked for long times in the abundance of good things to him, that in this way he who, whilst hoarding up means for himself, was looking forward a long way, should never see the next day though but a single one. For it is in a manner to lay a foundation in running waters, to wish to settle an assurance of hope in things fleeting. For God for evermore standing still, all things pass away. What then is it to fly from One

standing, but to attach ourselves to passing things. For who ever being seized by the swoln eddies of running waters could himself remain fixed, the water racing on downwards? Whosoever then shuns to run to nought, it remains that he eschew that, that does run to nought, lest by that thing which he loves he be driven to go on into that which he avoids. For he that attaches himself to things slipping away, is surely drawn thither, where that is making its way, which he holds. And so it requires first to be looked to that a man love not things temporal, and next in those very temporal things, which he reserves to himself not for gratification, but for use, that he put not his confidence; seeing that by being united to objects running off the soul directly loses its own stay. For the wave of the present life draws away the man whom it lifts up; and he is wholly out of his senses, who is tossed adrift in the water, and yet tries to fix the sole of his feet. But there are very many who while they never place confidence in things transitory, yet when they are supplied to them in abundance for necessary purposes, are full of joy in secret feeling. Whence there is no doubt that every one is the less grieved that the things of eternity should be lacking, the more he is rejoiced that those of time are supplied to him; and he who grieves the less that temporal things are wanting, looks the more surely that eternal ones should be his. Accordingly this joy derived from things of earth, blessed Job, while testifying that he had not, adds, saying,

Ver. 25. *If I rejoiced over my great wealth, and because mine hand found much.*

5. For holy men in the wofulness of this pilgrimage, because that Appearance of their Creator, which they long after, they are not yet suffered to contemplate at all, account all the fulness of the present life as destitution, because nothing out of God suffices the mind which really seeks after God; and it is very often the case that to such persons their very abundance itself becomes exceedingly burthensome, because this thing

alone they bear as a grievance, that in hastening to their country they carry many things on the journey. Whence it comes to pass that these things they devotedly share with their neighbours who are in want, in order that while this one gets what he has not, the other may lay aside what he had too much of, that neither the fellow-traveller may walk empty, nor that man whom it might delay on the way an overgreat burthen weigh down. And thus the Elect never rejoice for their great abundance, which same for love of their heavenly inheritance they either in bestowing distribute out of their hands, or by contemning forsake. It follows;

Ver. 26 — 28. *If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath secretly rejoiced, and I have kissed my hand with my mouth; which is an exceeding iniquity, and denial against the Most High God.*

6. There is no doubt that both these two luminaries, which are commissioned to ministrations for man, are called 'the hosts of heaven.' Into the worshipping whereof we know that numbers have fallen, as Scripture is witness; as where it is written, *And worshipped all the host of heaven.* [2 Kings 17, 16] And because the sun and moon are seen in one way for use, and in a different way for worshipping, in that way in which they are wont to be worshipped by their votaries blessed Job tells that he had never 'seen the sun and moon, neither had his heart rejoiced; nor had he kissed his hand with his mouth.' By which act of kissing what else but the gratefulness of adoration is set forth? which thing if he had ever done, he calls it 'the highest iniquity and denial of God.' But after that he had related of himself in passages above such great heights of virtuous qualities, what does he now tell so strange, if he shews that he had not 'adored the sun and moon?' Whence it deserves to be considered, that after he testifies that he had not had confidence in gold, nor had rejoiced in much riches, he is further led on to things of a higher pitch, that he might instruct so much the more, the

more exactly he tells things touching himself. Thus he says, *If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath secretly rejoiced.* What is called to 'see' in this passage, but to behold with desire? Whence the Psalmist saith, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.* [Ps. 66, 18] Which iniquity, surely, could never be set forth in the mouth, if it were not 'regarded in the heart.' But it is one thing to see in the way of judgment, and another thing to see in the way of desire. Thus then blessed Job tells that 'the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in its brightness, he had never seen,' that he might shew that he had not sought after the appearance of the present light. As though after contempt of his earthly abundance, he plainly told us; 'why should I say, that I never at all rejoiced in gold, who in the very corporeal light itself never took delight? For holy men after that they set at nought all the enjoyments of the present life, in consideration of the sweetness of the light interior, turn away the mind from this light exterior as if from darkness; and they strive much with themselves within, that they be not carried away by the delightfulness of this light which shines outwardly. For if the visible light be incautiously delighted in, the heart is blinded to the invisible light, because in proportion as the soul is poured out in gazing out of itself, so much the more is it made to recoil in the interior regards. Hence all the wise-hearted, that by their corporeal senses they may not too much fall away to things without, by continual effort gather themselves up within the interior self by the hidden discipline of self-guarding, that they may be found the more whole within, in proportion as they are the less poured forth without. Thus by this vigorousness of discipline he had bound himself up within the depths of his own heart, who in fleeing the desire of the outward life, said, *The day of man I have not desired, Thou knowest.* [Jer. 17, 16] The same, then, that by the Prophet is expressed, *The day of man I have not desired, Thou knowest,* this blessed Job declares concerning his own self in other words, viz. that he

had not ‘seen the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in its brightness,’ and that he did not ‘rejoice in these in the secret depths of his heart,’ surely because he could not possibly ‘rejoice’ for those things which he ‘saw’ not in the desire of delighting.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

7. But if these several particulars, which we have gone through, handling them according to the history, we also examine into in respect of the mysteries of allegory, what else do we in this place take the gold to be, saving the wit of a bright understanding? what ‘fine gold’ but the mind, which whilst it is fined clear by the fire of love, ever preserves in itself the brightness of beauty, by a daily renewal of fervour? For the mind knows not to wax old by inertness, which is bent by desire ever to be beginning. Thus it is hence that it is said by Paul, *renewed in the spirit of your mind.* [Eph. 4, 23] Hence the Psalmist, who had already reached to the height of perfection, said as if beginning, *I said, now I begin;* [Ps. 77, 10] in this way, because that, if we are not minded to flag and go off from good begun, it is very requisite that we should believe ourselves to be daily beginning. Nor is it at variance with the order of reason that we say that by ‘gold,’ man’s wit is denoted; for as in ornamenting gold is laid under, that the order of the gems may be arranged above, so the bright talents of the Saints are humbly laid below the benefits of God, and receive the gifts of graces set out in order upon them. And excepting that gold had a something of a like sort with wisdom, that wise man would never have said, *Wisdom hidden from sight, and a treasure, that is not seen, what use is there in either?* [Ecclus. 20, 50] Now holy men do not account ‘gold’ to be their ‘strength,’ because let them shine out with ever so great ability, they take thought that by their own powers they are nothing. And whilst they are powerfully able to see into all things, they desire first to understand themselves, that the light of

their wit, like the sun, may first illumine the place where it arises, and afterwards all the other things to which it is made to open out in going on; lest if by applying themselves to know others they know not their own selves, the ray of the sun should there be darkened, where it rises. Accordingly, the goodness of their natural parts they apply to acquainting themselves with their own infirmity, and by acquaintance with their own infirmity they are the more effectually endued with power. And so the gold is not taken for 'strength,' if there is not confidence had in the wit wherewith they are endowed. Which Solomon rightly advising of saith, *Put confidence in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not on thine own understanding.* [Prov. 3, 5] So then let him say, *If I have made gold my strength, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.* As though he avowed in plain terms; 'Neither what I really understood did I ascribe to my own parts, nor, if it chanced that I did any whit that was good, did I reckon such things primarily to my own mind:' who still more particularly telling us the humility of his heart, adds, saying,

Ver. 25. *If I rejoiced over my great riches, and because mine hand had found very many things.*

8. What do we fancy the 'great riches' so called in signification, but the abundant subtleties of counsels, which same 'the hand' of him that seeks 'finds,' in that the thought of him who deals thereunto produces them. For it was these 'riches' of wisdom that Solomon having before his eyes, saith, *The crown of the wise is their riches.* [Prov. 14, 24] Which same person, because it is not metals of the earth but understanding that he calls by the name of 'riches,' thereupon adds by way of a contrary; *But the foolishness of fools is imprudence.* For if he called earthly riches 'the crown of the wise,' surely he would own the senselessness of fools to be poverty rather than imprudence. But whereas he added 'the foolishness of fools imprudence, he made it plain that he called prudence 'the riches of the

wise.' These 'riches' of wisdom Paul viewing in himself and lowering his view by the thought of human infirmity, says, *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.* [2 Cor. 4, 7] Accordingly we find much riches in ourselves, when in searching into the sacred oracles, we receive the gifts of abundant understanding, and therein see a number of things, yet not at variance with one another. But it is not safe rejoicing to learn in the pages of God things either forcible or many in number, but rather to keep safe the things that we learn. For he that understands aright, sees what by so understanding he owes as a debt. Since the more he is enlarged in perception, the more heartily he is tied and bound to fulfilling deeds. Whence Truth saith in the Gospel; *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.* [Luke 12, 48]

9. Therefore let us reckon understanding given like borrowed money, because the more we have entrusted to us in lovingkindness, the more we are held debtors in practice; and it very often happens that the same money of understanding received, when it is bestowed upon hearers for usury, is lost except it be given in a cautious spirit. For neither should it be slightly regarded in the book of Kings, that while the sons of the prophets were hewing wood on the Jordan, to one of them his ax-head having slipped off the handle into the deep water, disappeared from sight. For the iron on the handle is the gift of understanding in the heart: but to cut down wood thereby is to rebuke persons doing wickedly. Which same sometimes whilst it is done loosely, whilst the downfall of vain-glory in that same knowledge vouchsafed us is not avoided, the iron is lost in the water, because understanding is made witless by undone practice, which same understanding assuredly we know to be given for this end, that before the eyes of the Giver it may be rendered back by good conduct. Whence it happened rightly that he who had lost the iron exclaimed, *Alas, alas, my*

master, for it was borrowed. [2 Kings 6, 5] For the Elect have this proper to them, that if at any time a furtive sin of vain glory creep upon them in their knowledge, they speedily turn back into their heart, and whatever they find in themselves worthy of condemnation before the eyes of the strict Judge, they follow hard upon with tears. Who whilst weeping, not only heedfully scan the evil things they have been guilty of, but what good ones as well they ought to have paid back for the benefit vouchsafed them, because surely they the more fuel themselves sinners, in proportion as they are held debtors in the neglected good that they ought to have done. Rightly then did he who lost the iron cry out, *Alas, alas, my master, for it was borrowed.* As though he said, 'That by the undoing of negligence have I lost, which thing in order that I should pay it back by good works I received from the grace of the Lender.' But God never abandons the soul which owns itself in its sins in a true way. Hence too Elisha immediately on coming sends the wood down below, and raises the iron upon the surface, because surely our Redeemer regarding us with pity humbles the heart of a sinner, and fashions anew for him the understanding, which he had lost. He sinks the wood, and lifts up the iron, because He chastens the heart, and restores the knowledge. Whence it is well said in another translation, that he 'broke in pieces the wood' and cast it in, and so raised up the iron. For 'to break the wood in pieces' is to break up the heart from self-exaltation; to cast the wood below is to abase the uplifted heart in acquaintance with its own infirmity, as we said. And thereupon the iron is brought back to the top, because understanding returns for the service of the former mode of employment.

10. Therefore because the gift of understanding that is obtained, is with such numberless difficulties hardly kept safe (for there must be care taken that it be not deadened by inactivity, there must be care that in the exercising of practice it do not go out by the evil of self-elation,) holy men do not exult, when they learn the things for them to do, but when they do

the things they have learnt. And if in understanding they congratulate themselves in the benefaction of the Giver, yet sorrowing they take thought of the debt of practice, that is to say, that they may discharge by conduct what has been advanced to them in knowledge. For he is a foolish debtor, who receives rejoicing the money lent, and never minds the time when he must pay it back. But the joy of receiving is abated, when with prudential foresight the appointed season for paying back is thought on as well. Therefore because just men in the things which they perceive by lively attention are not lifted up by assured rejoicing, let it be said aright, *If I rejoiced over my great riches, and because my hand found very many things.* As though it were put in plain words; 'Never did I account myself rich by righteousness in this respect, that I knew right things, which I ought to do, even many in number; nor did understanding lift up the heart, because that the thought of the practice owed in debt kept down.' But it is to be borne in mind, that it very frequently happens that when a high pitch of understanding is received, the mind being very full of anxiety about itself is kept from the downfall of self-exaltation. But when the wonderful things it understands it begins to put in practice likewise, sometimes by the mere circumstance that it is made to display itself without, it slips, and glories that itself excels in its doings all the rest of the world. As, then, the 'gold' of understanding did not uplift blessed Job, so neither did the light of extraordinary practice either before the eyes of men lift him to a height. Hence too he fitly adds;

If I saw the sun when it shined.

11. Since 'the sun in brightness,' is good practice in outward manifesting. For it is written, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven.* [Matt. 5, 16] And again, *Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning.* [Luke 12, 35] For what in this passage is denoted by the 'sun

shining,' is in the Gospel denoted by 'lamps burning.' For when good practice shines in the midst of faithless persons, 'a lamp burns' in the night, but when it shines out in the Church, 'the sun shines' in the day. For good practice if it be as yet such as bad men only wonder at, is doubtless a 'lamp' in the night; but if it so makes way that it may be admired by the good and more perfect kind, then it is the sun in the day time. When good practice shines by the active life of the body, it is as if after the manner of a candle light shineth out of an earthenware vessel. But when by the excellence of the mind alone it is raised up in contemplation, it is as if after the manner of the sun light is seen coming from heaven. Therefore because blessed Job had told of himself many good things appertaining to hospitality and mercifulness, which same surely he knew as still the least, in proportion as done in the bodily way of doing; recalling the eye of the mind to the topmost height of spiritual virtues, he remembered his own perfectness, and the light of examples which he gave to others in himself, he called 'the sun.' But there are some persons who when they do any good things, directly forget their wickednesses, and they fix the eye of the mind in the contemplation of the good practices which they exhibit; and henceforth account themselves holy, in the degree that amidst the good things that they do they shun the recollection of their evil deeds, in which perchance they are still entangled. Which same persons if with lively attention they marked the strictness of the Judge, would fear more for their evil things than exult for their imperfect good ones, would more look to it that for things that are still to be done they are held debtors, than that by practising some things they are already paying a portion of the debt. For neither is the debtor quit who pays back much, but who pays back all; nor does he attain to the prize of victory, who in a large proportion of the exhibition runs with speed, if on nearing the goal, in that which is left he goes off. Nor to persons going to any destined places does it avail when setting out to despatch a long way, if

they are not at the same time able to achieve the whole of it. We then who are seeking the Eternal Life, what else are we about but performing a kind of journeys, whereby we are hastening onward to our country. But what does it matter that we despatch so many, if the rest which remain for our arriving we neglect?

12. Thus after the manner of travellers we ought not ever to look how much way we have already gone through, but how much there remains for us to carry through, that by slow degrees that may become past and over, which is unceasingly and fearfully marked as still to be. Therefore we ought much more to survey what good things we have not yet done, than those good things which we are glad that we have already done. But human frailty has this belonging to it, that it is more attractive to it to look at that which pleases it in itself, than that which displeases it in itself. For the sick eye of the heart, while it dreads to be put to pains in its contemplation, as it were asks for a kind of bed of delight in the mind, where it may lie softly; and for this reason it makes out what benefits it has secured by the good things it has done, but what losses it sustains from those which it has left undone it is blind to. For it very often happens that even the Elect are tried by this evil, very often it is put to the hearts of those, that the several good deeds which they have done they should recall to mind, and exult now in the joyfulness of security. But if they be really Elect persons, from that in which they are pleasing to themselves they turn away the eyes of the mind, and force down in themselves all joyfulness for the good things they have done, and for those which they perceive that they have never done they seek out sorrowfulness, they account themselves unworthy persons, and are almost the only ones that do not see the good things, which they afford in themselves to be seen for an example to all men. It is hence that Paul, when he was putting behind him the good things completed in himself, and thinking of those only still remaining, that had to be completed, said, *I*

count not myself to have apprehended. [Phil. 3, 13] It is hence that in order that he might abase himself as to the good things he was doing, he set himself to recall to mind the evil things that were past, saying, *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious.* [1 Tim. 1, 13]

13. And even if he at any time said, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;* [2 Tim. 4, 7] we ought above every thing to turn our eye to the fact, that he brought the thing forward at that time when he knew that he was now about to depart out of the body. For he there premised, saying, *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* [v. 6] For then he recalled to his recollection the perfectness of his practice, when he now foresaw time for practising no more to be his as to a field of large extent. For as whilst we live we are bound to drive out of our recollection our good deeds, that they may not lift us up, so on our departure drawing nigh, we very often bring them again to our recollection, that so they may afford us confidence, and keep down despairing fear. Who though in reckoning up he related his good points to the Corinthians, was bent to confirm them, and not to make a display of himself. For that he paid no regard to the same good points in himself, he taught by the affliction of his own tempting being laid open, which being set forth, he added; *Therefore I take pleasure in mine infirmities.* [2 Cor. 12, 10] So then that he might instruct the disciples, he told what was most high of himself, while that he might keep himself in humbleness, he had fixed the eye of his observation not in his virtues but in his weaknesses. Accordingly, holy men have this proper to them, that the good things they do they see indeed, yet when they have done them they turn away their eyes from the remembrance thereof. Whence it is rightly said by blessed Job, *If I saw the sun when it shined.* As though he said in plain speech; 'My practice, even when it afforded the light of examples to others, I minded not for the boon

of foreassurance; because whilst I feared to be uplifted on the grounds thereof, I turned mine eyes away from regarding it.' It goes on;

And the moon walking in her brightness.

14. After the sun had been premised, he justly likewise added, 'the moon walking in her brightness,' because after good practice there follows the praiseworthy report whereby a name of renown is won in this night season of the present life. But if that be true which some think, that the moon through his hidden circuit receives illumination from the ray of the sun, so that she should be able to display light by the courses of the night, this supposition likewise is not at variance with the order of this representation. For fame gains its means from good practice, and it spreads the esteem of applause like the brightness of light. There is also another thing in the moon, which may agree in likeness with fame spreading good. For the light thereof even in the season of darkness shews the road to persons going afoot, because both whilst the light of praise shines out from another's life, it lightens others for the exercising of good practice; and when the esteem of the one is seen in a clear light, to the other as it were going his way upon a journey the light of example is afforded. But it sometimes happens that the practice which is derived from the esteem of another man is framed with an aim not duly pure in the mind. For weak minds when they hear good things of others, sometimes kindle themselves to right practice not by the love of virtue, but the delightfulness of applause. And indeed it is evident that as it is the nature of the sun that whatsoever things it touches it burns and dries up, so it is the property of the fire of the moon that whatever it touches, it burns indeed, but in so burning renders the thing moist. Thus then to a good life, some an affecting of good practice for the love of God kindles and inflames, whilst others the love of praise. But when we are set on fire with an affection to right practice, we are as it were dried up by the fire of the sun from the humidity of evil habits. While him whom the love

of praise prompts to good practice, fame coveted touches like the moon, because his mind it at once inflames and unlooses. That is to say, it inflames him to the exercising of practice, but unlooses him to the desire of applause. Yet very often for the exercising of good deeds the examples of others influence us to good effect. And when we adopt the good of another's reputation with a humble mind, we either advance our own good things for the better, or change the bad to good; and when the brightness of fame from the life of our neighbour sheds its rays on ourselves, our mind, as we before said, which is guiding itself with a view to winning the way of virtue, sets the steps as it were in the light of the moon. But as we make way by the esteem of another, so it very often occurs that if we give heed to the praises of our own fame, we are emptied of virtue, because when the mind is made to take delight in that which it sees to be held without concerning it, it loses sight of that, which it was panting for within.

15. Therefore because the understanding of knowledge did not corrupt the holy man, he held it beneath him to rejoice in his great riches. Now because the greatness of his practice did not puff him up, he 'saw not the sun when it shined;' and because neither did the credit of applause uplift 'him, he never' regarded the moon walking in its brightness.' For there are some persons who are brought down into self-exalting in the degree, that by a nice understanding they find out good things even that they do not do. These, surely, 'rejoice over great riches,' when by making out they discover any things of the highest, and by those self-same discoveries are spoilt in self-exaltation. But there are some persons whom understanding does not indeed uplift, but the practice set forth exalts, who whilst they regard their own doings in their own heart by shewing disdain, set the rest of the world in the background to themselves. These same, though they do not rejoice in great riches, yet 'see the sun when it shineth,' because upon the greatness of good practice alone, they as it were swell themselves out despising others.

And there are some whom not even their own practice uplifts, but when they begin to be commended by their fellow-creatures for that same good practice, being overcome by the mere applause of men, by themselves they view themselves as certain great ones in their own imagination, and are unbound from the safe keeping of the heart. These, surely, though they refused to 'see the sun when it shineth,' yet 'behold the moon walking in its brightness;' because amidst the darkness of this world, while they fasten the mind on the brightness of their reputation, as it were by the light of the night they lose the grace of humility, and, whilst beholding the moon, they see not themselves, in that they begin to be blind to themselves, while they fix the eyes of the mind on transitory applause.

16. Now so is the progress of men, as we see the growths of trees to be. For the essence of the future tree is first in the seed, afterwards in the springing, and at last it is carried out into boughs. Thus then, surely the goodness of every one doing works grows up. For it is sown in understanding, it springs up in practising, and at last it is consolidated to the full width of great advancement. But when his understanding uplifts any one, the tree that might have sprung up rots in the seed. And when after good practice he is spoilt by the bane of self-exaltation, it is as if, having already sprung up, it withered. But when neither understanding nor practice corrupt, but its greatness growing up, when the applause of persons commending follows, and overturns from its seat the mind of him that doeth rightly, the tree has encountered the winds of the tongues, and all that had grown up strong in it, the tempest of fame has plucked up by the roots. For in proportion as the tree has risen higher to the regions above, forcibly does it feel the violence of the winds; because the more a man is lifted to a height in good practices, with so much the greater blast is he oppressed by the mouth of those that praise him. Therefore if the tree is still in the seed, there is need to fear lest it should be made rotten by the mere acquaintance with

knowledge; if it has now already issued into a shoot, we have to be on our guard that the hand of self-exaltation touch it not, and parch it of the greenness of its conduct; but if it already lifts itself up on high with vigorous strength, it is very greatly to be dreaded lest the over strong wind of praise that is applied pluck it up from the roots.

17. But herein it is necessary to be borne in mind, that, to the end that we be not rooted up by immoderate praises, very often, by the marvellous regulating of our Ruler, we are allowed to be torn in pieces by calumnies even, that so when the voice of one commending lifts up the heart, the tongue of one calumniating should abase it, because the tree too oftentimes, which is so driven by the impulse of one wind as to seem now that it might well nigh be rooted out of its place, is set up again by a blast of another wind from an opposite quarter; and the tree which suffered bending from this side, is brought back from another to its standing position. And hence that tree, being deeply rooted, had as it were stood fixed amidst contending winds, which said, *By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report.* [2 Cor. 6, 8] For it often happens that praise being unwonted brought home to the ears of the well doer, whilst it echoes in talkings without, engenders to the mind within a kind of tempest in silence, and it comes to happen that this thing, that the soul is delighted by the applause of men, it does not easily display outwardly, but yet it feels the force of corruption in no slight degree inwardly. And there are some whom praise so puffs up that it forces them on even to words of self-exalting. But some, as we said before, are ashamed to lay open this same thing, that they are lifted up, and their encomiums being heard by them they are exalted, but yet do not come forth to the extent of words of exaltation, and never shew openly that they delight in such things. Hence blessed Job, because he knew that he had not been arrogant not only at all in words, but also in the secret thought of the

heart as well, after that he said, *If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in its brightness;* therefore added;

Ver. 27. *And my heart rejoiced in secret.*

18. By which same recording, what else is conveyed to us, but that there is need of great fear and circumspection, lest our mind at any time rejoice even in secret on the grounds of its commendations. For that man who looks on the greatness of his fame as 'the brightness of the moon,' and creates delight to himself in the secret of the heart, to whom but to the Maker did such a man prefer himself, by Whose gift he obtained it that he should practise aright, and yet in His benefit is made glad upon the favour of his own praise? For the honour of his Creator being disregarded, he is convicted of loving himself more, by the proclaims of whom he is so gladdened. Though sometimes even holy men rejoice in their own good repute; but when they reflect that through this good repute those that hear them advance to better things, they now no longer rejoice in their own reputation, but in the profiting of their neighbours; because it is one thing to seek marks of favour, and another thing to exult on the ground of advancement. Wherein it follows, that when it does not advance the welfare of the hearers, fame for credit should not lift up, but oppress our mind. For when we are commended by the witnessing of the human tongue, we are asked by a secret smiting what we think concerning our own selves. For the uplifted soul, even when false good is told concerning it, exults, because it makes out in thought not how it lives with God, but how it makes itself known with men. For disregarding the judgment of Almighty God concerning itself, and only seeking after that of men, it is lifted up amidst the praises it hears, and the soul which had looked out for this alone is gladdened as if by the prize of its practice. But on the contrary if the heart be really humble, the good things that it hears of itself it either does not at all acknowledge, and is afraid that false things are said, or otherwise if it

knows that they are really there to it, dreads lest they should be lost to the eternal recompensing of God, by this alone that it sees them to be published abroad to men; and it fears very greatly lest the hope of the future reward should be changed into the wages of transitory applause.

19. From which circumstance it takes place that the soul of the Elect is tortured by a great fire of their own praises, and by sorrowfulness of thought fined clear of all the rust of its inertness. For by heedful taking thought it is filled with fear lest either for those things, in the which it is praised, and they do not exist, it should meet with a worse judgment of God, or for those things wherein it is praised, and they do exist, it lose the suitable reward. Whence it most commonly takes place that like as the unjust man is defiled by his praise, so the just person is purified by his praise reaching his ear. For when the good things he has done he finds out are put forward by men, he dreads, as has been said, the exact inquest of the Final Judgment upon himself, and full of affright flees to the conscience, and whatever there is therein worthy of blame, he corrects. For while he dreads to have his good things made known, fearing greatly the exactness of the Inquest to follow, if there be any hidden evil things in him, he cuts them away. For he is alarmed if he be not exhibited at least such to God, as he is held by men, neither is he satisfied that in that state in which he may have been made known to men he should continue to remain. For already he reckons compensation as it were made to him for his good things, except he add thereto others also which are not known by men. Whence it is well said by Solomon; *As silver is tried in the fining pot and gold in the furnace, so man is tried by the mouth of him that praises.* [Prov. 27, 21] For silver and gold if it be refuse is consumed by the fire, but if proof, it is brought out by the fire. Thus surely is the mind also of him that worketh. For what sort of man he is, is shewn herein that he is praised; for if when his praises reach his ears, he is uplifted, what else was such an one but refuse gold or silver,

whom surely the furnace of the tongue consumed? But if on hearing the marks of favour towards him, he returns to the consideration of the Judgment Above, and entertains fear lest he should be heavily charged for these things in the sight of the secret Arbiter, as it were by the fire of purifying he is made to grow to greatness and splendour, and from the same source whence he undergoes the burning of affright, he shines so much the brighter. Therefore blessed Job, because he never preferred himself on the ground of practice, says with confidence, *If I saw the sun when it shined.* And because fame to his credit never diverted this man from the regarding of the Interior Judgment, he adds, *And the moon walking in her brightness.* And because he never suffered, not even in secret thought, that his mind should be mastered by the boon of his repute, he directly added, *And if my heart rejoiced in secret.* And because it very often happens that the unheeding mind, when it does not set itself against transitory applause, is drawn on even to this pass, that it praises itself what it does, to the condition which was set before it is in a manner fitly annexed ,

And have kissed my hand with my mouth.

20. For by the ‘hand’ doing is denoted, and by the ‘mouth’ speaking; as when it is said by Solomon, *A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and it is labour to him to bring it to his mouth.* [Prov. 19, 24] To the slothful man it is a labour to stretch his hand to his mouth,’ because the slothful preacher has no mind to practise even the very thing that he says, Since to stretch the hand to the mouth, is to harmonize with his voice in practice. And so he ‘kisses his hand with his mouth,’ who praises the thing that he does, and by the testimony of his own speech awards to himself meritoriousness of practice. In which case who is there that is despised, saving He Who bestows the very gifts for practising themselves? Whence it is well said by the great Preacher; *And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst*

not received it? [1 Cor. 4, 7] Now holy men know themselves to be sprung since the fall of our first parent from a corruptible stock, and that not by their own goodness, but by grace from above preventing them they are changed to better wishes and works, and whatever of evil they find to be in them, they feel is earned by mortal derivation, but whatever of good they espy in themselves, they acknowledge as the gift of immortal grace, and they are made debtors to Him for the benefit vouchsafed, Who both by preventing vouchsafed to them to will the good that they willed not, and by following after vouchsafed them to be able to do the good which they will. Whence it is well said by John; *And worshipped Him That liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne of the Lord.* [Rev. 4, 10] For 'to cast their crowns before the throne of the Lord' is to attribute not to themselves but to the Maker the victories of their conflicts, so as to refer the glory of praise to Him, from Whom they know themselves to have received powers for the conflict. And so blessed Job, because he so tells the good things that he had practised, that, nevertheless, he never attributes them to his own doing, but goes back to the praise of his Creator, denies that he had 'kissed his hand with his mouth.' As though he said in a plain way, 'I do not bring forward my deeds as mine own; because he is proved to disown the grace of his Creator, whoever attributes to himself the thing that he does in practice.' And hence he adds directly;

Ver. 28. *Which is the chiefest iniquity, and denial against the Most High God.*

21. For it is clear that he does deny Him, when setting at nought His grace, he claims to himself the powers of good practice. Which too is rightly called as well 'the chiefest iniquity' because every act of sin which is from infirmity destroyeth not hope, seeing that it asks forgiveness from the Judge Above. But presuming on our own goodness is so much the worse in desperateness, the further it is removed from humility. And when it

ascribes the strength of practice to itself, it does not have recourse to the aid of the Maker, and it is brought to pass that the sinner perishes so much the worse, for that even this very thing, that he is a sinner, he is ignorant of. It follows;

Ver. 29. *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found me.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

22. That we are disciples of Almighty God, the keeping of charity is the only proof. For it is hence that Truth saith by Itself, *By this shall all men know that ye are My Disciples, if ye have love one toward another.* [John 13, 35] Which same love, if it really fills our heart, is wont to be exhibited in two ways; viz. if we at once love our friends in God, and our enemies for God. But it needs to be known that the love of our enemy is then really kept, when we are neither given up to suffering [‘addicimur’] upon his advancement, nor rejoiced at his destruction. For very often in a semblance of love with reference to an enemy, the mind is deceived, and such an one it reckons that it loves, if it do not prove a foe to his life; but the efficacy of love either the promotion, or the fall of an enemy, secretly and really puts to the proof. For on this point the mind of man knows not itself to the full, except that him whom he takes for an enemy to him, he finds whether by advancement or diminution to have changed the measure of his standing. For if he is given over to suffer by the prosperity, and rejoiced by the calamity of him who hates him, it is plain that he does not love him, whom he does not wish to be better; and him he persecutes, even when standing, in wish, about whoso fall he congratulates himself.

23. But herein it is needful to know that it very often happens that without charity being lost, both the destruction of an enemy rejoices us, and again his glory without any sin of envy saddens us, when both he falling to

ruin, we believe that there are persons rightly set up, and he being advanced we dread very many being unjustly borne down. In which case neither does his diminution now lift up our mind, nor his aggrandisement give it over to suffer, if the right thought of our heart regard not what is done in the individual, but what is done by the individual towards others. But for preserving these things a scrutiny of the exactest discrimination is absolutely requisite, lest when we are carrying out our own hatred, we be deceived under the appearance of the utility to another. For if there were not to be any rejoicing at all for the death of an enemy, the Psalmist would never say, *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance on the ungodly.* [Ps. 58, 10] For it is one thing to bear an ungodly man, and another thing to bear an enemy. For there are a great many enemies that are not ungodly, and there are some ungodly persons who seem not in any special manner enemies to us. But the mind of man accounts every one whom it bears as an enemy, to be ungodly and wicked as well, because the faults of that man spleen as his accuser heightens in its own thinking. But with whatever wickednesses he may be sunk down, he little passes for wicked, if he is not felt to be an adversary. In which point there must be the distinguishing, that it is one thing wherein our enemy harms ourselves, and another thing wherein he harms himself and the rest of the world. For if he is good to others, perchance it may be that it is not without our fault that he is bad to us; nor should there be altogether a rejoicing in his ruin now, whoso hostile treatment it is certain we alone have undergone. But when the enemy of ourselves and a great many persons is destroyed, it must needs be that our heart should be glad for the escape of our neighbours, rather than for the destruction of our enemy.

24. For it is requisite that when an adversary perishes we should minutely consider both what we owe to the destruction of the sinner, and what to the justice of the smiter. For when Almighty God smites any bad

man, there must be sorrowing in unison with the wretchedness of the ruined, and rejoicing in unison with the justice of the Judge, so that both the punishment of our neighbour dying should be a sorrow to us, and again the equity exhibited by God in judging should be an occasion of joy, that so we may neither prove enemies to a man in his perishing, nor be found unthankful to God in His judging. And so because he perfectly trod down all feelings of hatred in opposition, let blessed Job say, *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him.* Who, that is to say, in loving even his enemy, whereas he sympathized with an adversary when ruined, by that one's evil things was himself advanced to good, that this one should go on growing to loving-kindness by the same cause that the evil that he deserved had found that other. But because often there are persons who because they cannot with power, assail with cursing those whom they account enemies to themselves, in which persons it appears plain what evil things they would do if they could, who never cease to imprecate those which they cannot do, blessed Job exhibiting himself free from the sin of cursing as well, added, going on,

Ver. 30. *Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.*

25. For he would sin, if he were to desire that to be done by God, which he himself either could not at all be able to do, or if he could it would not be in any wise right. For they who assail an enemy with curses, what other thing do they wish God to do in his case, but what they are either unable or ashamed to do themselves? For they wish death to their enemy, which same even if they have the power, they are afraid to bring upon him; lest they should either be bound as guilty of murder committed, or shew themselves wicked even when they are. What then is it to say to God, 'Kill the man whom I hate,' but to cry out to him in audible accents; 'Do Thou that to mine enemy, which it is not proper for me to do towards him even as a

sinner.' In which same words it is to be thought where had this person read, *Love your enemies?* [Luke 6, 27] where had he read, *Bless, and curse not?* [Rom. 12, 14] and again, *Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing?* [1 Pet. 3, 9] But the precepts of grace from above, not heard with the outward ears he observed, because the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote them in the heart of that man. To whom however it would have been but little that he loved those adversaries situated without, excepting he had to bear these also living within, and holding daily converse with him, even those of his household, as adversaries. Whence he adds,

Ver. 31. *If the men of my tabernacle said not, O that we had of his flesh, that we might be satisfied!*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

26. Which same sentence may also be taken in mystery of

the voice of our Redeemer. For 'the men of his tabernacle' longed to be 'satisfied by his flesh,' i.e. whether the Jews in persecuting or the Gentiles in believing. For both the one set themselves as it were by consuming it to put an end to His Body, and the latter desire to satisfy their hungering soul with His flesh, by the daily sacrifice of His immolating.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But now following the gist of the history alone let us reflect with what strenuousness the mind of the holy man, full of concern for all things, is divided within and without; who to those acting unjustly had he either submitted in silence, or not withstood in righteous living, assuredly he would never have had them as adversaries. But hereby, that he kept the paths of life, he found hearty desires of his death. Adversaries he met with, shewing themselves outwardly, lurking inwardly. Now it is inferior goodness in a conflict for a man to see without evils that he has to get the

better of, and not to have within aught that he may have to bear. But it is the praise of perfect greatness to meet hostile treatment, without bravely, and within mercifully. For there are some things in the actual common dealing of those of a household, that cannot be corrected without sin in the corrector, and therefore when they either defile him who corrects them, or do not weigh heavily on him who does them, with a great skill of tutoring they require to be winked at, and by this very winking to be borne with, which same when put upon ourselves are the more quickly dismissed from our hearts, if we know our own misdemeanours against our neighbours. Whence it is well said too by Solomon; *Take no heed to all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself also hast cursed others.* [Eccles. 7, 21, 22] For whilst we reflect what we have been towards others, we are the less concerned that others should have proved such persons towards ourselves, because the injustice of another avenges in us what our conscience justly accuses in self. It proceeds;

Ver. 32. *The stranger did not lodge in the street; but my door was open to the traveller.*

27. Whereas, Paul being witness, charily is described as patient and kind, by patience it bears with composure the ill turns of others, by kindness it also renders with mercifulness its own good ones. Whence blessed Job at once patiently bore those of his own household cursing him, and received to him kindly the travellers and strangers, to the first affording examples of morals, the other meeting with the succour of external things. For the holy man viewing by the Spirit of prophecy the Redeemer of mankind, also kept his pardoning words in practice, whereby He warns us, saying, *Let go, and it shall be let go to you*; *give and it shall be given unto you.* [Luke 6, 37] For our giving relates to the things which we have outwardly, but our letting go to the dismissing the grief, which we have inwardly contracted by the

offence of another. But it requires to be known, that he who ‘lets go’ but does not ‘give,’ though he has not done to the full, yet has observed the better part of mercifulness. But he who ‘gives’ but never ‘lets go’ does not execute mercy at all; because by Almighty God the gift is not accepted from the hand, which is proffered by a heart tied and bound in wickedness.

28. For there is need for the soul that offers alms first to be made clean, because every thing that is given to God is reckoned according to the feeling of him who gives it. Therefore every stain of evil must be wiped clean from our interior man by the changing of the thought, because the offering has it not to appease the wrath of the Judge, except it be acceptable by the purity of him who offers it. Whence it is written; *And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offerings; but unto Cain and to his offerings He had not respect.* [Gen. 4, 4. 5.] For it is not that sacred Revelation says that ‘He had respect to the offerings of Abel, but to the offerings of Cain He had not respect;’ but he first says, that *He had respect to Abel,* and afterwards subjoined, *And to his offerings.* And again he says that *to Cain He had not respect,* and next added, *nor to his offerings.* For according to the heart of the giver is the thing that is given received. Therefore not Abel by virtue of his offerings, but by virtue of Abel the gifts offered were well pleasing. For it is read that the Lord had regard first to the person who gave, before the things which he gave. Hence blessed Job going on to tell us his bountifulness in the boon of hospitality did right in bringing forward first his patience and kindness towards enemies, how that he did not ‘exult in the destruction of his enemy;’ that he did not ‘assail his persecutors with words of cursing;’ that those enraged against him within, he bore with equanimity; and then at last he brought forward the bountifulness of his hospitality, that, namely, by the order of his relation being listened to, we might learn that exterior gifts are seasoned by the interior pureness of the heart, that the

combination of his virtues might teach the reader what sort of person he ought to be in himself, when he administers external good to others.

29. But who would not account himself to be a holy man in the midst of such heights of his virtues? Who would not be in some measure tempted by his mere merits alone being so many in number, so that if at any time as being but man he went wrong, he would not have his transgression made known to men; and would account it as trivial if he did any thing wrong in lesser things; and would rather prefer to cover his offence by silence than disclose it by the voice of confession? For it often comes to pass that the mind being lifted up by virtuous attainments, when it knows that many good things are scattered abroad concerning it in the esteem of neighbours, does not wish it to be known, if there is any thing that it does deserving of blame. Which same darkness of mistaking the mind is for this reason exposed to, because high-swelling clogs the eye of the heart. Hence blessed Job, in the midst of so many distinguished achievements in virtues, who became so lofty in practice, in order to shew how lowly in mind he was, added directly;

If I covered my transgression as man, and did hide mine iniquity in my bosom.

30. For these are the proofs of true humility, both for a man to ascertain his own wickedness, and on being ascertained to discover it by the voice of confession; but on the contrary it is the accustomed evil practice of man's race, at once to commit sin keeping himself hidden from sight, and when committed to hide it by denying, and when brought home to him, to multiply it by standing up for it. For from that fall of the first man we draw these accessions of wickedness, from which we also draw the very original of sin. For thus he, when he had touched the forbidden tree, hid himself from the face of the Lord amidst the trees of Paradise. In which hiding, because surely he could not escape the eye of God, it is not the effecting of

self-concealing that is related, but the affecting thereof is betokened. Who when he was charged by the Lord, how that he had touched of the forbidden tree, thereupon answered; *The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* [Gen. 3, 12] The woman likewise on being asked, answered, saying, *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* [v. 13] For to this end they were enquired of, that the sin, which by transgressing they had been guilty of, they might by confessing wipe out. Whence too the serpent, that prompter, inasmuch as he was not to be brought back to pardon, was not asked concerning the sin. Thus man was asked the question 'where he was,' that he might review the offence committed, and by confessing it take knowledge how far he had departed from the face of his Creator. But both preferred to take to themselves the cordials of defence rather than of confession. And whilst the man was minded to palliate the sin through the woman, and the woman through the serpent, they added to the sin, which they endeavoured to vindicate; Adam by indirectly glancing at the Lord, how that he had Himself proved the author of their sin, in that He had made the woman; and Eve in referring the sin to the Lord, Who had placed the serpent in Paradise. For they who had heard from the mouth of the devil deceiving them, *Ye shall be as Gods;* [v. 5] because they were not able to be like to God in Godhead, for the heightening of their error endeavoured to make God like to themselves in transgression. In this way then, whilst they set themselves to defend their guilt, they made the addition that the sin should be rendered more heinous when examined, than it had been when committed.

31. Hence now also the branches of the human race derive bitterness still from this root, so that when a man is charged home for the evil in him, he hides himself under words of self-defence, as under a kind of leaves of trees, and as it were flies the face of his Creator to a kind of darkened retreats of self-exculpation, whereas he has no mind to have that known that

he has been guilty of. By which same concealment he has not hidden himself from the Lord, but the Lord from himself. For he manages that he should not see Him Who sees all things, not that he himself should not be seen. Contrarily to every sinner the first step now of enlightenment is the humility of confessing, in that he now refuses to spare himself, who does not blush to avow the evil that he has done, and he who by defending himself might have been laid open to be accused, by accusing himself defends himself most quickly. And hence to dead Lazarus, who was kept down by a great weight, it is not said, ‘be thou restored to life;’ but, *Come forth,* [John 11, 43] by which same rising again, which was carried on in the body of that man, it is signified in what way we ourselves rise again in the heart, i.e. when it is said to the dead man, *Come forth;* that is to say, that man being dead in his sin, and through the mass of bad habit already buried, because he lies hidden from sight within his own conscience by wickedness, should go forth from himself without by confession. For to the dead man it is said, *Come forth,* that from the excusing and concealing of sin he may be called forth to come out to the accusing of himself with his own lips. Whence David the Prophet, in coming to life from that death of his great guilt, as it were went forth at the voice of the Lord, when being rebuked by Nathan he brought accusation of what he had done.

32. Therefore because this sin of concealing grew to a dreadful excess in the human race, blessed Job, when he was saying, *If I covered my transgression,* rightly inserted the words *as man,* because he sees that to be proper to man, which descends by the copying of our old parent. Whence it is fitly subjoined; *And did hide mine iniquity in my bosom.* For sacred Scripture is very often used to put the ‘bosom’ for the mind; as where in the voice of Holy Church it is said by the Psalmist of our persecutors, who are joined to us indeed in nature, but disjoined in life, *And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom.* [Ps. 79, 12] As though he said in

plain speech; ‘Let them receive that in their minds, which in raging against us they practise over our bodies, that whereas they punish us outwardly in part, they may themselves be punished inwardly to a complete degree.’ And so because the ‘bosom’ is interpreted the privacy of the mind, to ‘conceal iniquity in the bosom’ is to hide it in the recesses of the conscience, nor to uncover it by confession, but to veil it by defence. Contrarily James says, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be saved.* [James 5, 16] Solomon also says, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* [Prov. 28, 13]

33. But herein it is necessary to be known that men very often both confess their sins and are not humble. For we know many who when no man charges them confess that they are sinners, but when perhaps they are rebuked for their sin, they seek the support of defence that they may not seem to be sinners; which persons, if, when they say the thing of their own accord, they did then with genuine humility see themselves to be sinners, when they are charged home by others would never deny that they are what they had confessed. In which case the tokens of true confession are, if when a man calls himself a sinner, he does not contradict another as well advancing that about him. For because it is written, *The just man in the beginning is the accuser of himself;* [Prov. 18, 17] he does not rather aim to appear a sinner, but a just man, when any one confesses himself a sinner, no man charging him. But when another inveighs against the evil that we have done, he proves the truth of confession. Which same if we defend in a proud spirit, it is clear that it is feignedly that of ourselves we called ourselves sinners. Whence it is above every thing to be taken care of that the evil things we have done, we both confess of our own accord, and do not deny them when others charge us home with them. For it is the evil of pride that

the thing which a man as if by his own act deems it meet to confess about himself, this he should disdain to have said to him by others.

34. Thus blessed Job shewed what singular humility he was of, in that he both knew that he was living amongst adversaries, and yet was not afraid to disclose his offences with the voice of confession. But observe that above he tells his virtuous qualities, lower down he confesses his sin. For hence he clearly proves what truth he had spoken of the good in him, in that he would not hold his tongue concerning the evil. One while he points out his virtues, at another time transgressions; that he had both committed sin, and had not kept it silent, he makes plain. Whence it appears without all doubt what extraordinary purity he was of in the sight of Almighty God, who both avoided evil things that he should not commit them, and yet what things it did chance to him to commit he did not conceal from men; so that to him there should at once be the high credit of righteousness to have shunned sin, and the safe keeping of righteousness to have brought to light what he was not able to shun. Let this man seem to any one great in his virtues, to me without doubt he appears most grand even in his sins. Let those, who are so minded, admire in him the self-control of chastity, let them admire the faithfulness of justice, let them admire the bowels of pitifulness; I do not less admire in him the humblest confession of sins, than such lordly achievements of virtue. For I know well that through the shame of infirmity it is generally a worse conflict, to bring to light the sins we have committed, than it is to avoid them not being committed, and each instance of evil, though it may be avoided with more vigorousness, is yet brought to view with greater humility. Thus blessed Job, who whilst supported by so many great practices was not ashamed to confess his sin, shewed in the midst of his virtues, how humble he was. But because from true humility there ever springs secure authority, so that the soul should dread nothing without, in proportion as by the longing of self-elation it does not pant after the

topmost height of affairs, the confession of sin having been set forth, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 34. *Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of neighbours terrify me, and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door?*

35. It is great assuredness of heart to have nought of worldly concupiscence. For if the heart pants after attaining earthly things, it can never be secure and tranquil, because either things not possessed it desires, in order that it may possess them, or things obtained it is afraid for lest it should lose them, and whilst in adverse circumstances he dreads prosperous ones, so in prosperous circumstances he dreads such as are adverse, and he is tossed hither and thither as it were by a kind of waves, and is hurried about in various fashions by the changeableness of shifting affairs. But if once the mind is fixed with strong stedfastness in the longing after the Country Above, it is less distressed by the annoyance of earthly things. For from all outward commotions it seeks that its aim, like a kind of most secret retreat, and there attaching itself to the Unchangeable, [al. 'Unchangeably attached,' which however would be a hyperbolic expression.] and mounting above all changeable things, by the mere calmness of its repose, while in the world, it is henceforth without the world. It goes beyond all things below by its stressing after the highest, and all the objects which it does not go after it feels itself by a certain liberty to get above, nor within is it subject to the tempest of things temporal, which it views without, for all earthly things which being longed after might have borne down the mind, being looked down upon lie beneath it. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Set a look out for thyself;* [Jer. 31, 21] that whilst a man views things above, he may rise high above things beneath. Hence likewise Habakkuk says, *I will stand upon my watch.* [Hab. 2, 1] For he 'stands upon his watch,' who by wise policy of discipline, does not bow down beneath,

but rises high above earthly desires, that while he aims at Eternity, which is ever stedfast, he should have beneath his feet every thing that passes by.

36. Yet because with whatever goodness the holy man has advanced, the infirmity of the flesh still outwardly bears him down whilst set in this life, as it is written, *Though man walk in the image of God, yet he is disquieted in vain:* [Ps. 39, 6] it very often takes place that he is at once disquieted without, and holds on not subject to disquietude within, and that he is liable to be 'disquieted in vain' comes from the infirmity of the flesh, though that he 'walks in the image of God' is from the excellency of the mind, in order that he should both be inwardly strengthened by the Divine aid, and yet be still pressed down without by the human burthen. Whence Habakkuk again has well delivered a single sentence serving for both particulars. For he says, *And trembling entered into my bones, and my power* [virtue] *was disquieted underneath me.* [Hab. 3, 16] As though he said; 'It is not my power, wherein being transported above, I remain free from liability to disquietude, but it is my own power wherein I am disquieted below.' And so the same is free from disquietude above himself, and the same exposed to disquietude below himself; because he had mounted above himself, in so far as he was caught away to things on high; and he was beneath himself, in so far as he still dragged a remains into that which is below. The same above himself is free from liability to disquietude, because he had now passed away into the contemplation of God: the same under himself is liable to be disquieted, because beneath himself he still remained a frail human being. The Prophet David according with this sentence saith; *I said in the excess of my mind, All men are liars.* [Ps. 116, 11] To whom the answer may be made; 'If every man, then thou too; and the sentence will henceforth be false, which thou being a liar hast uttered, because whilst thou art true-spoken, every man is not found out a liar.' But observe that it is prefaced, *I said in the excess of my mind.* And so by 'excess of the mind' he

transcended himself even, when he determined about the character of man. As though he said in plain speech; 'I delivered a true sentence respecting the falseness of all men from the same cause, whereby I was myself above man;' being now so far himself a 'liar' as far as he was himself man, but so far altogether not a 'liar,' as 'by excess of the mind' he was above man.

37. Thus, therefore, thus all the perfect, though they are still subject to something disquieting from the infirmity of the flesh, ret already enjoy within the calmest privacy by the contemplation of the mind, so that whatsoever thing happens without, it should in nought disquiet them within. Whence blessed Job, exhibiting the security of a holy mind, after he had delivered so many announcements of the parts of virtue with reference to himself, following that which we have set before, added; *If I feared at an exceeding great multitude, or the contempt of neighbours terrified me, and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door.* As though he said in a plainer manner; 'While others were disquieted against me without, I myself remained in mine own self free from being disquieted within.' For what else ought we in this place to take 'the door' to be, but the mouth? For by this we as it were go forth, when with what words we are able, we disclose the secrets of our hearts; and what we remain within in the conscience, such we go forth without by the tongue.

38. But there are some persons who are altogether afraid to be despised, and lest they should chance to be judged as contemptible, aim to appear wise. These are driven to 'go forth out of the door,' because when assailed with insults, how great in themselves they lie buried from sight, they give out telling it. And when being overcome by impatience they put forth things about themselves, which were unknown, they as it were 'go forth by the door' of the mouth. And so blessed Job being about to say, that he had never 'gone forth out of the door of the lips,' justly set before; *I kept silence;* i.e. because agitated by impatience he would have gone forth out of

the house of the conscience, if he had not known how to keep silence. For holy men, when they are under the trial of being perturbed, shun wholly and entirely to exhibit themselves to view, and when they cannot benefit those that hear them, they are willing by keeping silence to be even despised, lest they pride themselves upon the exhibition of their own wisdom. And when they say any thing with good understanding, they seek not their own glory, but the life of their hearers. But when they see that they cannot by speaking gain the life of their hearers, by keeping silence they hide their own knowledge. For we hide to the imitating the life of the Lord, as to a kind of mark set before us. For He Himself, because he saw that Herod sought not advancement, but that he desired to wonder at His signs or His knowledge, on being asked by him held His tongue, and because He kept silence with constancy, He went forth derided by him. For it is written; *And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by Him:* [Luke 23, 8] where it is also added; *Then he questioned with Him in many words, but He answered him nothing.* [v. 9] But how greatly the Lord in holding His peace was despised, is shewn when the words are brought in there directly; *And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him.* [v. 11] Which same transaction we ought to hear and learn, in order that as often as our hearers desire to be made acquainted with things of ours, as things to be praised, and not to alter what is wrong of their own, we should altogether hold our peace; lest, if we speak the Word of God with the design of display, both the fault of those persons, which then was, should not cease to be, and our own fault, which was not, should be brought to pass.

39. A person will perhaps say,' How do we know with what feelings of the heart a man will hear?' But there are a number of things that bring to light the mind of him who hears; first and foremost, if our hearers both

always praise what they hear, and never follow the thing that they praise. This vain glory of speaking the great Preacher had shunned, when he said, *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as from God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.* [2 Cor. 2, 17] For to 'corrupt the Word of God' is to think of Him otherwise than He is, or to seek from it not spiritual fruits, but the corrupt offspring of human praise. But 'to speak as of sincerity,' is not to seek for aught in Revelation beyond what behoves. Now he 'speaks as from God,' who knows that he himself hath not from himself, but that he hath received from God what he says. And he speaks 'before God,' who in all that he speaks seeks not human regards, but minds the presence of Almighty God, and who looks for, not his own glory, but the glory of his Creator. But he who indeed knows well that he has himself received from God the thing that he speaks, and yet in speaking seeks his own glory, speaks 'as from God,' but not 'before God,' because Him he considers as absent, Whom he docs not set before his heart, when he preaches Him. But holy men at once 'speak as from God' and 'before God,' in that they both know that they have from Him the thing that they say, and they see that He is Himself present at their discoursings, their Judge and their Hearer. Hence it comes to pass, that whereas they know themselves to be set at nought by their neighbours, and that their words do not advantage the life of the persons hearing them, they hide from sight what great goodness they are of, lest if the speech delivered disclose the secret of the heart to no purpose, it should break forth into vain glory.

40. Therefore blessed Job in the midst of stubborn hearts not aiming to shine forth by the disclosure of his virtue, says, *And if the contempt of neighbours terrified me and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door.* For he who being stedfast through humility never feared to be despised, him never did impatience master, that the tongue should cast him forth out of doors. When it is rightly put first, *If I feared at an exceeding*

great multitude; that it might be seen and known what great constancy he was of, in this respect, because no number of men ever terrifies without, whom no rout of bad habits lays waste within. For in this life he who seeks nothing that has to do with prosperity, doubtless dreads nothing that has to do with adversity.

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

41. Which same words if we carry on to a mystical meaning, we directly find therein the Redeemer's mode of practice. For *He* was not 'afraid at an exceeding great multitude,' Who smote with a single answer only His persecutors coming with swords and staves, saying, *I am He.* [John 18, 6] 'Him the contempt of His neighbours did not terrify,' Who, in freeing us from eternal punishments, received strokes on the face with a composed mind. '*He* kept silence, and did not go forth out of the door,' Who in the very hour now of His Passion, when He was undergoing the weak conditions of humanity, refused to call into action the power of Divinity. For to the Mediator between God and man it would have been 'to go forth out of the door,' if when He was held as Man He had been minded to display the power of His Majesty, and by the mightiness of His Divinity to surmount the weak conditions of the flesh taken upon Him. For that He might die manifest to man, He remained hidden God. *For had they known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory.* [1 Cor 2, 8] And so He did not 'go forth out of the door,' Who even when questioned by Pilate kept silence; and in the midst of the hands of the persecutors He both offered His Body to suffering, which He had taken upon Him in behalf of the Elect, and would not display to those that were against Him What He was. Whence also it is said by the Psalmist, *They have made Me an abomination unto them, I was given up, and I went not forth.* [Ps. 88, 8] For when He was despised because He appeared man, He would have 'gone forth,' if He had

been minded to display His hidden Majesty. But because he brought infirmity to view, and hid power from sight, herein, that He remained unknown to His persecutors, to those persecutors He did not ‘go forth.’ Who, however, does ‘go forth’ to the Elect, because to those that seek for it, He discloses the sweetness of His Divine Nature. Whence it is said to Him by the Prophet, *Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, that Thou mightest save Thine Anointed.* [Hab. 3, 13] It goes on:

Ver. 35. *Who would give me a helper that the Almighty might hear my desire.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

42. The holy man after he related so many high achievements of the virtues in him, knowing well that he cannot attain to the things on high by his own deserts, seeks for a helper. And whom verily does he fix his eye on but the Only-begotten Son of God, Who whereas He took upon Him human nature travailing in this mortal state, did give help? For *He* helped man, being made Man; that because to mere man there was no way open of returning to God, there should be made a Way of returning by means of The God-Man [Homo-Deus.]. For we were far removed from the Righteous and Immortal One, being mortal and unrighteous. But between the Immortal and Righteous One and ourselves the mortal and unrighteous, appeared the Mediator of God and man, mortal and righteous, Who might at once own death with mortals, and righteousness with God; that whereas by our things below we were far removed from things above, He might in Himself singly unite the things below with the things above, and that herein there might be a Way made for us of returning to God, in the degree that He joined ours beneath with His own on high. This One then blessed Job, in his personating of the whole Church, asks for as Mediator, who when he had said, *Who would give me a helper,* suitably added, *that the Almighty might*

hear my desire. For he knew that for the rest of Eternal deliverance, the prayers of man can never be heard excepting through his Advocate. Concerning Whom it is said by the Apostle John; *If any one sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.* [1 John 2, 1. 2.] Concerning Whom Paul likewise saith; *It is Christ Jesus that died for us, yea, rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.* [Rom. 8, 34] For, for the Only-begotten Son to 'intercede' for man, is to shew Himself Man in the presence of the Coeternal Father, and for Him to have besought for human nature, is to have taken upon Him that same nature in the loftiness of the Divine Nature. And so the Lord intercedes for us not with the voice but by the act of compassionating; because that which He would not should be condemned in the Elect, he set free by taking upon Himself. And so a helper is sought for, that 'the desire may be heard;' because except that the intercession of the Mediator were employed in our behalf, surely the accents of our prayers would remain silent to the ear of God.

43. Moreover it requires to be noted that it is not said, 'my prayers, but, *my desire, that the Almighty might hear.* For true beseeching does not lie in the accents of the lips, but in the thoughts of the heart. For the stronger accents in the deepest ears of God it is not our words that make, but our desires. For if we seek eternal life with the mouth, but yet do not desire it with the heart, in crying out we keep silence. But if we desire in the heart, even when we are silent with the mouth, in being silent we cry out. It is hence that in the wilderness the people clamour with their voices, and Moses is still to the clamouring of words, and yet whilst keeping still he is heard by the ear of divine Pity, whereas it is said, *Wherefore criest thou unto Me?* [Exod. 14, 15] Thus within in the desire is the secret cry, which does not reach to the ears of men, and yet fills the hearing of the Creator. It

is hence that Anna going to the temple was silent indeed with the lips, and yet uttered so many accents of her desire. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, *Enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father Which is in secret, and thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.* [Matt. 6, 6] For 'the door being shut he prays in his chamber,' who while his mouth is silent, pours forth the affection of the heart in the sight of the Pitifulness Above. And the voice is 'heard in secret,' when there is a crying out in silence by holy desires. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor; Thine ear hath heard the preparing of their heart.* [Ps. 10, 17] Now blessed Job in the subjoined words discloses whom he seeks for himself as a helper, in the 'hearing of his desire,' saying,

And that he himself who judgeth would write a book !

44. For because to the People still fearing, the Law was committed by the hands of a Servant, but upon the loving Children, the grace of the Gospel was bestowed by the Lord, Who as coming for our Redemption, instituted the New Covenant for us, but in examining as touching the precept of that Covenant one day cometh as Judge also, it is not requisite that by explaining it should be made clear, that He Who Judges is the Same Who writes a book. For Truth Itself says by Itself, *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.* [John 5, 22] And so He will then be the Enacter of judgment Who is now the Composer of the 'book;' that He should then demand in strictness, what He now bids in mildness. For thus we see every day that masters set children the rudiments of their letters caressing them, but exact those of them dealing hardly with them; and what they give with gentleness, they require back with the rod. For now the precepts of Divine Revelation sound gentle, but they shall be to be thought harsh in the exacting of them. Now, there is a gentle warning of One calling, but then there shall come the strict justice of the Judge,

because it is certain that no whit even of the very least commandment will pass without scrutinizing. By which same it is apparent that He that 'judgeth is the Same That wrote the Book,' Which same 'Book' of the New Testament, that the Redeemer of man should Himself frame in His own Person at the last, the Prophet Ezekiel rightly tells forth, saying, *And behold six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn at his reins.* [Ez. 9, 2] For what else is there denoted in the 'six men coming' but the six ages of mankind? [St. Gregory's division of ages, Him. in Ev. xix. §. 1. from Adam to Noah, Noah to Abraham, Abraham to Moses, Moses to Our Lord, and then to the end, will not suit this place. What is meant is probably that in St. Isidore of Seville, Etym. lib. v. c. 39. De Discretione temporum, where two more divisions are made, at David, and the Captivity. He compares these ages to the days of Creation. The same division is given in the beginning of his Chronicon.] Who 'come from the way of the higher gate,' because from the state of Paradise as from the beginning of the world, they are unwound from the upper generations. Which 'gate looks to the North' in this way, because the mind of man lying open to evil, except that, abandoning the warmth of charity, it had courted the numbness of the interior, would never have gone out to this breadth of mortality. *And every man a slaughter weapon in his hand;* because each particular generation being evolved by the several respective ages, before the Coming of the Redeemer, had in its practice that wherefrom it took the punishment of condemnation. *And one man among them was clothed with linen.* Because our Redeemer deigned to have parents even of the priestly Tribe ['Tribu,' perhaps 'nation,' but Elizabeth, 'of the daughters of Aaron,' was a kinswoman of the Blessed Virgin. Luke 1, 5. and 36.] after the flesh, he is described as coining 'clothed with linen.' Or, surely, because linen is from the earth, and is not

like wool produced from the corruptible flesh, seeing that He derived the covering of His Body from a Virgin mother, and not by the corruptness of copulation, therefore He came to us 'clothed with linen.' *And a writer's inkhorn at his reins.* In the 'reins' is the hind part of the body. And because the Lord Himself after that He died for our sakes, and rose again, and ascended up into heaven, then wrote the New Testament through the Apostles, this man had an 'inkhorn at his reins.' For He Who after He departed framed the writing of the New Testament, as it were, carried an 'inkhorn' behind him. Thus this 'inkhorn' he sees to hold fast to the man 'clothed with linen,' who says, *And that the same who judges would write a book.* But wherefore, blessed Job, desirest thou that a book should be written by Him, Who is Judge? It goes on;

Ver. 36. *That I might bear it upon my shoulder, and put it round me like a crown.*

45. To 'bear the book upon the shoulder,' is by practising to carry out Holy Scripture. And observe how orderly it is described both first as being 'carried on the shoulder,' and afterwards 'put round' him 'as a crown;' because, that is to say, the precepts of Sacred Revelation, if they be now borne in practice, afterwards set forth for us the crown of victory in the recompensing. But why does blessed Job beg for 'the book to be written by the Judge,' who was not able to attain to the times of the New Testament? But, as has been often said already, he uses the accents of the Elect, and in the personifying of them begs that, which he foresaw would benefit them in all respects. For he himself by the Spirit had for long had that book with him, which by the grace of Inspiration he had obtained, that both by living he should be made acquainted with, and by foreseeing he should announce.

But herein it requires to be known that when we take thought of the precepts of Sacred Revelation, and when we draw off the mind from love of the life of corruption, we as it were hasten on by a kind of footsteps of the

heart, to the interior scene of things. Now no man, in abandoning things below, is directly made at the top; because for earning the title to perfection, whilst the soul is day by day being led forward on high, doubtless there is an attaining thereto as it were by a kind of steps of ascending. Whence in this place also it is fitly added;

By my several steps I will declare it.

46. Since concerning these 'steps' of merits it is said by the Psalmist, *They go from virtue to virtue.* [Ps. 84, 7] Concerning these, again, regarding Holy Church he says; *God is distinguished in her steps, what time He shall receive her.* [Ps. 48, 3. not as V.] For neither is there any attaining suddenly to things above, as has been said, but to the topmost pitch of virtuous attainments the soul is led on by accessions. For hence it is that the same Prophet saith again; *I was exercised, and my spirit failed little by little.* [Ps. 77, 3] What does he mean, then, that he says, *my spirit,* but the spirit of man, i.e. the spirit of exaltation? And because by secret grace we advance to the love of God by a measure regulated from above, in proportion as virtue is daily increased in us by the Spirit of God, our own spirit proportionally goes off. Which spirit of error, because it is not at once cut clean away from us, is justly recorded to have 'failed little by little.' But we then make complete advance in God, when we have wholly and entirely fallen away from ourselves. Thus these measures of growing virtues by the words of the holy man are styled 'steps.' For every elect person sets out from the tenderness of his embryo in the first instance, and afterwards comes to firmness for strong and vigorous achievements. Which thing Truth plainly shews in the Gospel, saying, *So is the kingdom of heaven, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how.* Which same seed describing the growths of he adds; *For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* The

end of whose progress too he also makes to succeed, saying, *But when it has brought forth the fruits from itself, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.* [Mark 4, 26-29] Observe, by the voice of Truth the accessions of merits are marked out by the characters of fruits. For He *says, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* Was not Peter still a 'blade' then, when by the mouth of a maid he was in a moment bent down by the blast of a single speech, already green indeed through devotedness, but still tender through infirmity. But he was found 'full corn in the ear' when he withstood the rulers persecuting him, saying, *We ought to obey God rather than men.* [Acts 5, 29] For he was found 'full corn in the ear' when, in the winnowing of persecution, he underwent such numberless wounds, but yet he was never made small after the manner of chaff, but continued whole grain. For little by little in each several soul, so to say, the moisture of interior grace abounds, that the blade may grow into fruit. So let no one when he sees any neighbour still a 'blade' despair of the 'full corn.' Since from the leaves of the blades, which hang softly, flowing hither and thither, the rising grains of fruitage come to firmness.

47. Now the Prophet Daniel, whereas, when the Lord was speaking to him, he made it his business to tell us the posture of his body, did rightly represent those stages of merits. Thus he says; *Yet heard I the voice of his words, and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I dismayed upon my face, and my face clave to the ground. And, behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the joints of my hands. And he said, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent: and when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling; and he said unto me, Fear not.* [Dan. 10, 9-12] Which same posture of his body, whilst he was listening to the words of one speaking inwardly, he would never set forth to us with so much pains, if he had known it to be void of mysteries. For in Sacred Writ

not only what holy men say is prophecy, but also very often what they do. Thus the holy man, being pregnant with interior mysteries, by the posture of his body, likewise represents the power of the voice; and by this that he first lay prostrate on the earth, by this that he afterwards set himself up on the joints of his hands and on his knees, by this that at last he stood fast erect indeed, yet trembling, he makes known to us in his own person all the order of our progress. For the words of God we hear ‘lying on the ground,’ when being settled in our sins, allied to earthly pollution, we are made acquainted with spiritual precepts from the voice of the Saints. At which precepts, we are as it were set up upon our knees and the joints of our hands, because withdrawing ourselves from earthly defilements, we as it were henceforth lift up our mind from things below. For as he wholly cleaves to the ground, who lies dismayed, so he who is bent down upon his knees and the joints of his fingers, his advancement commencing, is already in a great measure hung aloft from earth. But at the last by the voice of the Lord we stand there erect indeed, yet trembling, in that being perfectly lifted up from earthly objects of desire, the more fully we know the words of God, the more we are afraid. For he as it were still lies prostrate on the ground, who by desires after the earthly cares nothing to be lifted up to the heavenly. But it is as if he being lifted up still ‘rested upon his hands and knees,’ who already forsakes some defilements, but does not yet withstand some earthly practices. But he now stands there present erect at the words of God, who perfectly lifts up the mind to things aloft, and scorns to be bent down by impure desires.

48. Now he rightly shews that he ‘stood trembling;’ because the scrutiny of interior exactness is the more fearfully dreaded, the more advanced the progress in respect thereto. Where it is fitly subjoined by the voice of God, *fear not;* because the more that we ourselves learn what we should have occasion to fear, the more we have infused in us from God by interior grace

what may call for love, so that both our contempt little by little may pass away into fear, and fear pass away into charity; that wherein God when He seeks us, by contempt we withstand, and by fear flee from, both contempt and fear being one day set aside, we should be joined to Him by love only. For little by little we learn even the very fear of Him [The readings vary. The Ben. Editor seems not to have seen that noticed in the Italian reprint, which is also in the Merton and Trin. Coll. MSS. and others at Oxford, 'Eum timere didiscimus, eique vi solius &c.' 'we unlearn fearing Him, and are attached to Him by the force of love alone.'], to the love of Whom only we are attached. And thus as it were there being placed a kind of steps of our advance, the foot of the mind first by fear we set below, and afterwards by charity lift it to the heights of love, that from that wherewith a man is puffed up he may be checked, so that he fear, and from that, which he now dreads he may be lifted up, that he may have boldness. Now these steps of virtuous attainments it is no great labour to lay hold of, since there is the passing from one to another.

49. But the subject requires the nicest handling, when the mind strives to estimate in the case of one and the same virtue with what steps of advancement it is lifted up. For to mention the first elements of virtue, i.e. faith and wisdom, they cannot be severally gained, except we ascend thereto by marked and ordered methods as by a kind of steps. For faith itself which imbues us for taking in hand in a perfect manner what else there is good, very often in its beginnings both totters and is firmly based, and it is now held most surely, and yet touching the assurance thereof there is still trembling under the effects of misgiving. For a part of it is received first, that it may be afterwards perfectly completed in us. For if there were not an advancing by a sure step in the mind of one who believes, the father of the child to be healed would not have said on being questioned, in the Gospel, *Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.* [Mark 9, 24] And so he was still

ascending upwards as to the faith which he had already received, who at one and the same time both cried out that he already believed and still doubled from unbelieving. Hence it is also that it said to our Redeemer by His disciples, *Increase our faith,* that that which had been already received in beginning, might by the accessions of steps arrive at perfection.

50. Moreover Wisdom herself, who is required to be the mistress of good works, is vouchsafed to the panting soul by degrees of increase, that surely the ascending thereto should be by the steps of wonderful regulation. Which some the Prophet Ezekiel well describes in a figurative relation, who concerning that man whom he had seen on a high mountain tells, saying, *He measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the water up to the ancles; again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the water up to the knees; again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the water up to the reins. Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a torrent that I could not pass over, for there swelled deep waters of a torrent, which could not be passed over.* [Ez. 47, 3-5] For what is denoted by the number of a 'thousand,' but the fulness of the benefit vouchsafed? Thus the man who appeared 'measures a thousand cubits,' and the Prophet is led through the waters 'up to the ancles,' because our Redeemer, when to us on our being converted to Him He bestowed the fulness of a good beginning, bathed the first treadings of our practice by the gift of spiritual wisdom. For the water's reaching up to the ancle is our henceforth maintaining the treadings of longed-for righteousness by wisdom being vouchsafed to us. Again, he 'measures a thousand cubits,' and the Prophet is led through the water 'up to the knees,' because when the fulness of good practice is bestowed, our wisdom is increased even to this degree, that there is not henceforth any bending in bad deeds. Thus it is hence said by Paul, *Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with your feet.* [Heb. 12, 12] Thus 'the water reaches to the

knees,' when the wisdom that is is obtained perfectly braces us to uprightness of good practice. And again, he 'measures a thousand,' and the Prophet is 'led through the water up to the reins' in this way, because the fulness of good practice then grows to a height in us, when the wisdom vouchsafed has killed in us as far as it is possible all the gratification of the flesh as well. For except the gratification of the flesh was seated in the reins, the Psalmist would never have said, *Burn my reins and my heart.* [Ps. 2, 26] Therefore the water comes up 'to the reins,' when the sweetness of wisdom destroys the very incitements of the flesh too, so that the burnings of the flesh that might have scorched up the soul are cooled down. And he still further 'measured a thousand,' 'and it was a torrent which the Prophet could not pass,' of which he also says, *Because there swelled deep waters of a torrent, which could not be passed over.* For perfectness of practice having been received, we come to contemplation; in which same contemplation while the mind is carried up on high, being uplifted it sees in God that the thing that it sees it cannot fathom, and as it were it touches the water of the torrent, which it cannot pass through, because at once it beholds in gazing what it may be pleased to behold, and yet is not able perfectly to behold that very thing that it pleases. And so the Prophet sooner or later comes to the water 'which he cannot pass through,' because when we are at last brought to the contemplation of wisdom, the mere immensity thereof, which by itself lifts man to itself, denies the human mind a full acquaintance, so that it should at once by touching love this wisdom, and yet never by passing through penetrate it.

51. Thus blessed Job called these, increasings of virtues by the title of 'steps,' because he saw them to be in distinct divisions, bestowed on men by gift from above; seeing that by them only do we ascend so as to come to the attaining of heavenly things. And so in making mention of the Sacred Book, i.e. of Divine Revelation, he says; *By my several steps I will declare*

it, in this way surely, because he really ascends to the teaching of God, who has broken forth to the attaining thereof by the steps of holy practice. And he as it were 'by his several steps declares the book' who proves that he has been vouchsafed the knowledge of it not in respect of words only, but also of deeds. Whence it is yet further added;

And as to a prince I will offer it.

For every thing that we offer, we hold in our hands. And so 'unto the Prince' coming to Judgment 'to offer the book' is to have held the words of His precepts in our behaviour. It proceeds;

Ver. 38 — 40. *If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain: if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof; let the thistle grow for me instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

52. For what is it for the 'land to cry,' for 'the furrows to weep,' and to have 'eaten one's own fruits buying them?' To whom is it necessary to buy what is his own? who has heard 'the land crying?' Who has seen 'the furrows weeping?' And whereas the furrows of the land are always of the land, why is it that by a separate declaration it is both said that the land did not cry, and that the furrows thereof did not weep along with it? For whereas a furrow of the earth is nothing else but earth, it does not need the accounting of much difference, that he adds; *And along with it the furrows thereof weep.* In which same point because the order of the history falls to the ground, the mystical meaning displays itself to us, the doors as it were being now set open. As though it exclaimed in plain speech; 'Whereas ye know that the reasonableness of the letter has dropped dead, doubtless it remains that ye should fall back to me without misgiving. For every one who either by private right rules a domestic household, or for the common

advantage is set over faithful multitudes, herein that he possesses the rights of government over the faithful committed to him, what else does he but hold the land to cultivate it? Since it is for this end that each individual is advanced above the rest, by Divine distribution, that the mind of those under him, like land subdued, may be made fruitful by the seed of his preaching. But 'the land crieth against' its possessor, if it chance that against him, who is set at the head, either a private family, or Holy Church utters any just murmur. Since for 'the land to cry,' is for those under charge to grieve with reason against the injustice of him who rules them; where it is rightly subjoined, *And along with it the furrows thereof weep.* For the land even when not cultivated by any works generally produces something of sustenance for the service of man, but when ploughed it bears fruits to superabundance. And there are some persons, who 'not being cleft by any ploughshare of reading, or any of exhortation, do yet of themselves produce some good things, though but the least, like land not yet ploughed up. But there are some who for always hearing and retaining, applying themselves to holy preachings and meditations, as it were cleft with a kind of ploughshare of the tongue, as to the former hardness of the heart, receive the seed of exhortation, and by the furrows of voluntary chastening render the fruits of good practice. But it is very often the case that those who are set at the head do things unjust, and it comes to pass that the very persons injure those under them, who were bound to do them good. Which when uninstructed persons see, being enraged they murmur against their ruler, and yet do not by sympathy grieve violently for their neighbours. But when these who are already broken in pieces by the plough of reading, and dressed for the fruitage of practice, see innocent persons borne down even in the least things, they are forthwith turned by sympathy to tears of sorrow, because they bewail as their own the things that their neighbours suffer unjustly. For the perfect, whereas they are ever affected with regard to what

is spiritual, are taught to lament for the bodily hurts of others, so much the more in proportion as they are now instructed not to lament for their own. And so every one who is set in authority, if he executes what is bad in the case of those under him, ‘the earth crieth against him and the furrows weep,’ because against his injustice the uninstructed peoples indeed break out in accents of murmuring, while all the perfect severally chasten themselves in tears for his wicked practice, and for what the inexperienced cry out and do not grieve, those under authority of a more tried life bewail and hold their peace. And so for ‘the furrows to bewail along with the land crying out,’ is by that thing whereas the multitude of the faithful complains with justice against the ruler, for persons of a more fruitful life to be brought to tears of sorrow. Thus the furrows are both of the earth, and yet are distinguished from the term of ‘the earth,’ because those in Holy Church, who cultivate their mind with the labour of holy meditation, are as much better than the rest of the faithful, in proportion as by the seeds received they render more abundant fruits of deeds. And there are some who being set over holy peoples obtain the payments of livelihood by the bountifulness of the Church, but do not pay the ministrations of exhortation that are due. In opposition to whom the example of the holy man is yet further subjoined aright, when it is directly added by him;

If I have eaten the fruit thereof without money.

53. For to ‘eat the fruit of the land without money’ is to receive indeed our charges from the Church, but not to yield to that Church the price of preaching. Of which same preaching it is said by the voice of the Creator, *Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.* [Matt. 25, 27] And so he ‘eats the fruits of the earth without money,’ who receives the Church’s benefits for the service of the body, but does not pay to the people the ministry of exhortation. What do we pastors say to these things, who

while we are the forerunners of the Advent of the Strict Judge, take upon us the function of a herald indeed, but devour the Church's supplies with dumb mouths? We exact all that is owed to our own body, but we do not pay back what we owe to the soul of those committed to our charge. Mark how the holy man, tied down by so many pledges in this world, in the midst of numberless employments, was free for the pursuit of preaching. And he never 'ate the fruits of the earth without money,' because surely he paid back the word of good warning to those under his charge, from whom he received the fruit of bodily serving. For this every one who is set over the people owes to Almighty God, he who is set over many, and he who is set over a smaller number, that he should in such sort exact the due ministration from those subject to him, that he may himself mind with heedful regard what of warning he at all times owes. For all we who subject to the appointment of the Creator are joined amongst ourselves by a vicarious ministry in obedience to our true Lord, what else are we but servants to one another? Whereas, then, he who is subordinate serves in obeisance, assuredly it remains that he who is set over him should serve to the word. Whereas he who is subordinate yields obedience to orders, it is required that he who is at the head should bestow the care and concern of solicitude and of pity. And so it comes to pass, that whilst we studiously endeavour to serve one another now by charity, we may one day rule together with the true Lord in common rejoicing. But there are some, who herein, that they discharge the office of preaching, grudge others the good that they have, and so do not any longer have it in a true sense. To whom it is rightly said by James, *But if ye have bitter envying among yourselves, and strife in your hearts, this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* [James 3, 14. 15.] Hence here also when it is said, *If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money,* it is rightly subjoined;

Or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof.

54. For they are the ‘tillers’ of the land, who, being placed in a lower situation, with what earnestness they are able, with the best practice that they can, cooperate in the grace of preaching to the instructing of Holy Church. Which same ‘husbandmen of this land’ not to afflict, is this, viz. not to envy their labours; that the ruler of the Church, while he vindicates to himself alone the right of preaching, should not, by envy gnawing him, gainsay others also that preach in a right way. For the religious mind of the pastor, because it seeks not its own glory but the glory of the Creator, desires to have all that it does aided by all persons. For the faithful preacher wishes, if it might be brought to pass, that the truth which he is not able to give utterance to alone, the mouths of all should sound out. Whence when Joshua would have withstood the two who remained in the camp and prophesied, it is rightly said by Moses, *Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!* [Numb. 11, 29] For he was willing for all to prophesy, in that he envied not others the good that he had. Thus because blessed Job introduced all those things as under suspension, and if he had not done them, binds himself with the sentence of cursing, it goes on;

Ver. 40. *Let the thistle grow for me instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.*

55. As though he said in plain words; ‘If I have done aught unjust towards those under me, if I have exacted the debts due to me, and have not myself paid what I owed, if I have envied others the executing of good practice, for the good things which refresh for ever and ever, may evil things that sting be repaid me in the Judgment.’ Since ‘instead of the wheat there springs up the thistle, and instead of barley the thorn,’ when in the final Retribution, wherefrom the recompensing of our labour is looked for, the piercing of pain is met with. And observe, that as barley is different from wheat, though both regale, so the thorn differs from the thistle, though

either be a thing that pricks, because the thistle is softer, and the thorn always the harder as to pricking. Thus he says, *Let the thistle grow instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.* As if he said plainly and openly; 'I know indeed that I have both done great good acts and lesser ones; and if it is not so, may lesser evils match me for my great good acts, and the greater evils for the lesser good ones.' Though this may also be understood in another sense. For in 'wheat' there is denoted in spiritual action which regales the mind, but in 'barley' the disposal of earthly things. Wherein while we are often forced to serve the weak and carnal, we as it were prepare their food for the beasts of burthen, and the very practice of our deeds after the manner of barley has somewhat of a mixture of chaff. And it very often happens, that the ruler who is set at the head, while he enforces what is unjust against those under his charge, while he cheers not the good with any soothing, whilst, that which is more grievous, all those acting rightly he distresses out of envy, still some good things he sometimes does, as if he sowed corn, and mixed in the disposing of earthly things at times not in the passion of avarice, but for the use of the carnal, and so looks for the fruit of that labour as a crop of barley. But the several persons under his charge, in consideration of this, that they are borne hard upon in the chief things, cannot feel joy in his lesser good things; because neither is this practice well pleasing in the sight of God, which is defiled by the injustice of other practice, nor yet is the very disposal of earthly things believed to be undertaken for the service of those under his charge, when he who is over them is seen to pant with avarice. Whence it happens that even in answer to the few good things themselves, which they see to be done in the midst of a multitude of evil ones, they give back not praises but groans, and that those that go weakly murmur, while they take thought that that which they see is not a thing of pure practice. And so he says, *If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; if I have eaten the fruits thereof*

without money, or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof: let the thistle grow instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley. As if he said plainly, 'If the great things which I owed I have not needfully performed, may I receive the prickings of murmuring from those under me, even with reference to the good that I have done. If I have omitted to set forth what might cheer, may their tongue springing forth into complaint with justice pierce me.'

56. Wherein it requires always to be minded with heedful consideration, that neither they that are set at the head offer examples of bad practice to those under them, and kill the life of those by the sword of their evil doing, nor they that are subject to the control of another presume to judge lightly the deeds of their rulers, and from this, that they utter murmurs touching those who are placed over them, set themselves not against a human appointment but against that Divine Appointment, which disposes all things. For to those it is said, *And as for My flock they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet: they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.* [Ez. 34, 19] For 'the sheep drink what is fouled with the feet,' when those under charge for example of living seek after things, which the persons over them severally corrupt by bad practice. But on the other hand these persons hear from those in command; *And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.* [Ex. 16, 8] For he that murmurs against power established over him, it is plain reproves Him Who gave that power to man.

At length, God vouchsafing it, we have explored those sentences of blessed Job, full of mystical force, in which he made answer to the words of his friends. Now it remains that we come to the words of Elihu, which are to be weighed with so much the graver caution, in proportion as they are also put forward through the boldness of youth with a hotter spirit.

BOOK XXIII.

The thirty-second chapter, and the thirty-third, as far as the twenty-second verse, are expounded; in which, while Job keeps silence, Eliu, a younger person, enters on many right and sound topics, though not rightly, or with sound intention.

1. It is necessary for me to repeat the preface of this work, as often as I divide it into separate volumes, by making a pause in my observations, it order that when it is again begun to be read, the subject of the Treatise may be at once brought afresh to the memory; and that the edifice of teaching may rise the more firmly, the more carefully the foundation is laid in the mind, from considering the first beginning of the subject. Blessed Job, known to God and himself alone in his state of tranquillity, when he was to be brought before our notice, was smitten with a rod, in order that he might scatter more widely the odour of his strength, the more sweetly he gave forth his scent, as spices, from the burning. He had learned in his prosperity to rule over his subjects with gentleness, and to guard himself strictly from evil. He had learned how to use the things he had got: but we could not tell whether he would remain patient under their loss. He had learned to offer daily sacrifices to God for the safety of his children, but it was doubtful, whether he would also offer Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving when he was bereft of them. For fear then that sound health should conceal any defect, it was proper that pain should bring it to light. Permission then to practise temptation against the holy man is given to the crafty foe. But he, in seeking to destroy his goods which were known to many, brings to light the virtue of patience also which was lying hid, and whom he believed he was pressing hard by his persecutions, he magnified him by his scourges, and far extended him in example. And he exercised with great skill the permission

he had received. For he burnt his herds, destroyed his family, overwhelmed his heirs, and, in order to launch against him a weapon of severer temptation, he kept in store the tongue of his wife: that thus he might both lay low the bold and firm heart of the holy man with grief, by the loss of his goods, and pierce it through with a curse, by the words of his wife. But by the many wounds he inflicted in his cruelty, he unintentionally furnished as many triumphs to the holy man. For the faithful servant of God, involved in wounds and reproaches at one and the same time, both endued with patience the sufferings of the flesh, and reproved with wisdom the folly of his wife. The ancient enemy, therefore, because he was grieved at being foiled by him in his domestic trials, proceeded to seek for help from abroad. He summoned, therefore, his friends, each from his own place, as if for the purpose of displaying their affection, and opened their lips, under the pretence of giving consolation. But, by these very means, he launched against him shafts of reproach, which would wound more severely the heart of him who securely listened to them, inasmuch as they were inflicting an unexpected wound beneath the cover of a friendship which was professed and not observed. After these, also, Eliu a younger person is urged on even to use insult, in order that the scornful levity of his youth might at all events disturb the tranquillity of such great gentleness. But against these many machinations of the ancient enemy his constancy stood unconquered, his equanimity unbroken. For at one and the same time he opposed his prudence to their hostile words, his conduct to their doings. Let no one then suppose that this holy man (although it was expressly written of him after his scourging, *In all these things Job sinned not with his lips* [Job 1, 22]) sinned afterwards, at least, in his words in his dispute with his friends. For Satan aimed at his temptation, but God, Who had praised him, took on Himself the purport of that contest. If any one, therefore, complains that

blessed Job sinned in his words, what else does he do, but confess that God, Who pledged Himself for him, had been the loser.

2. But since the ancient fathers, like fruitful trees, are not merely beauteous in appearance, but also profitable through their fertility, their life must be so considered by us, that when we admire the freshness of their history, we may learn also how fruitful they are in allegory, in order that, since the smell of their leaves is pleasant, we may learn also how sweet is the taste of their fruits. For no one ever possessed the grace of heavenly adoption but he who has received it through the knowledge of the Only-begotten. It is right then that He should shine forth in their life and words, Who so enlightens them that they may be able [mereantur] to shine. For when the light of a candle is kindled in the dark, the candle, which causes other objects to be seen, is first seen itself. And so, if we are truly endeavouring to behold the objects which are enlightened, it is necessary for us to open the eyes of our mind to that Lightening which gives them light. But it is this which shines forth in these very discourses of blessed Job, when the shades of allegory too have been driven away, as though the gloom of midnight had been dispelled, a bright light as it were flaming across them. As when it is said, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in my flesh I shall see God.* [Job 19, 25] Paul had doubtless discovered this light in the night of history, when he said, *All were baptized in Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual meat, and all drank the same spiritual drink. But they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, but the Rock was Christ.* [1 Cor. 10, 2-4] If then the Rock represented the Redeemer, why should not blessed Job suggest the type of Him, since he signified in his suffering Him Whom he spake of in his voice? And hence he is not improperly called *Job,* that is to say, “grieving,” because he sets forth in his own person the image of Him, of Whom it is announced long before by Isaiah, that He Himself *bore our griefs.* [Is. 53, 4] It should be

further known, that our Redeemer has represented Himself as one Person with Holy Church, whom He has assumed to Himself. For it is said of Him, *Which is the Head, even Christ.* [Eph. 4, 15] And again it is written of His Church; *And the body of Christ, which is the Church.* [Col. 1, 24] Blessed Job therefore, who was more truly a type of Christ, since he prophesied of His passion, not by words only, but also by his sufferings, when he dwells on setting forth the Redeemer in his words and deeds, is sometimes suddenly turning to signify His body; in order that, as we believe Christ and His Church to be one Person, we may behold this signified also by the actions of a single man.

3. But what else is signified by his wife, who provokes him to words of blasphemy, but the depravity of carnal men? For placed, with yet unreformed manners, within the pale of the Holy Church, they press harder on those of faithful lives, the nearer they are to them; because when they cannot as being faithful be avoided by the faithful, they are endured as a greater evil, the more inward it is. But his friends, who while pretending to advise, inveigh against him, represent to us heretics, who under the pretence of advising, carry on the business of leading astray. And thus while speaking to Job on behalf of the Lord, they hear His reproof; because all heretics in truth while endeavouring to maintain God's cause, do in fact offend Him. Whence also it is properly said to them by the same holy man, *I desire to reason with God, first shewing that ye are forgers of lies, and followers of corrupt doctrines.* [Job 13, 3. 4.] It is plain then that they typify heretics, since the holy man accuses them of being devoted to the profession of false doctrines. And since Job is by interpretation grieving, (for by his grief is set forth either the passion of the Mediator, or the travails of Holy Church, which is harassed by the manifold labours of this present life,) so do his friends also by the very word which is used for their names set forth the nature of their conduct. For Eliphaz signifies in Latin

“contempt of God;” and what else is the conduct of heretics than a proud contempt of God by the false notions they entertain of Him? Bildad is interpreted “oldness alone.” And well are all heretics termed oldness alone, in the things they speak of God, since they are anxious to appear preachers, not with any honest intention, but with an earnest desire after worldly honour. For they are urged to speak not by the zeal of the new man, but by the evil principles of their old life. Sophar too is called in Latin ‘dissipation of the prospect,’ or a ‘dissipating of the prospect.’ For the minds of the faithful raise themselves to the contemplation of things above: but when the words of the heretics endeavour to draw them aside from the right objects of contemplation, they do their best to dissipate the prospect. In the three names then of Job’s friends, there are set forth three cases of the ruin of heretics. For did they not despise God, they would never entertain false notions respecting Him; and did they not contract oldness, they would not err in their estimate of the new life; and unless they marred the contemplation of the good, the divine judgments would not have reproved them with so strict a scrutiny, for the faults which they committed in their words. By despising God then, they keep themselves in their oldness: but by remaining in their oldness, they obstruct the view of them that are right by their crooked discoursing.

4. After these also, Eliu, a younger person, is joined to them in their reproaches of blessed Job. In his person is represented a class of teachers, who are faithful, but yet arrogant. Nor do we easily understand his words, unless we consider them by the help of the subsequent reproof of the Lord. *Who is he that involves sentences in unskilful words?* [Job 38, 2] for when He uses the word ‘sentences,’ but does not immediately subjoin of what nature they are, He intends the word without doubt to be understood favourably. For when ‘sentences’ are spoken of, unless they are said to be bad, they cannot be understood in a bad sense. For we always take the word

in a good sense, if no unfavourable addition is made; as it is written, *A slothful man seems wiser in his own opinion than seven men uttering sentences.* [Prov. 26, 16] But by its being said that his sentences are involved in unskilful language, it is plainly shewn that they were uttered by him with the folly of pride. For it is a great unskilfulness in him, to be unable to express himself with humility in what he says, and to blend with sentiments of truth the words of pride.

5. For the nature of every thing that is said can be distinguished by four different qualities. If, for instance, either bad things are said badly, good things well, bad things well, or good things badly. A bad thing is badly said, when wrong advice is given; as it is written, *Curse God, and die.* [Job 2, 9] A good thing is well said, when right matters are rightly preached; as John says, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* [Matt. 3, 2] A bad thing is well spoken, when a fault is adduced by the speaker, simply to be reproved; as Paul says, *The women changed their natural use into that which is against nature.* [Rom. 1, 26] In which place he subjoined too the execrable doings of men. But he related these unseemly things in a seemly way, that by telling of things unbecoming, he might recal many to the practice of what is becoming. But a good thing is ill spoken, when what is proper is brought forward with an improper object; as the Pharisees are reported to have said to the blind man who had received his sight, *Be thou His disciple;* [John 9, 28] for they said this for the express purpose of reproaching him, not as wishing what they said; or as Caiaphas says, *It is expedient that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not.* [John 11, 50] It was a good thing which he said, but not with good view; for while he longed for His cruel death, he prophesied the grace of redemption. And in like manner Eliu also is reproved for saying right things in a wrong way: because in the very truths which he utters he is puffed up with arrogance. And he represents thereby the character of the

arrogant, because through a sense of what is right he rises up into words of pride.

6. But what is meant by the Divine Voice directing that the three friends should be reconciled by seven sacrifices, while it leaves Eliu only beneath the reproof of a single sentence; except it be that heretics, when bedewed with the superabundance of Divine grace, sometimes return to the unity of Holy Church? This is excellently set forth by the very reconciliation of the friends, for whom nevertheless blessed Job is directed to pray. Because in truth the sacrifices of heretics cannot be acceptable to God, unless they be offered for them by the hands of the Church Catholic, that they may gain a healing remedy by her merits, whom they used to smite, by attacking her with the shafts of their reproaches. And thence is it that seven sacrifices are said to have been offered for them, because whilst they receive on confession the Spirit of sevenfold grace, they are atoned for, as it were, by seven oblations. Wherefore in the Apocalypse of John, the whole Church is represented by the sevenfold number of the Churches: [Rev. 1, 11] and hence is it that Solomon speaks thus of Wisdom, *Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.* [Prov. 9, 1] The heretics then on their reconciliation express, by the very number of the sacrifices, their own former character, since it is only by their returning that they are united to the perfection of sevenfold grace. But they are properly represented as having offered for themselves bulls and rams. For in a bull is designated the neck of pride, in a ram the leading of the flocks that follow. What then is the offering of bulls and rams on their behalf, but the destruction of their proud leadership, that they may think humbly of themselves, and not seduce any longer the hearts of the innocent to follow them? For they had started aside with swelling neck from the general body of the Church, and were drawing after them the weakminded, as flocks following their guidance. Let them come then to blessed Job, that is, let them return to the Church, and offer

bulls and rams to be slaughtered for a sevenfold sacrifice, who in order to be united to the Church Catholic, by the coming in of a spirit of humility, have to put an end to whatever swelling thoughts they before used to entertain from their haughty leadership.

7. But Eliu (by whom are designated those lovers of vain-glory who, living within the pale of the Church, scorn to state in a humble way the sound views which they hold) is not directed to be reconciled by sacrifice. For those who are proud, and yet faithful, because they are already within the pale, cannot be brought back by seven sacrifices. Yet the divine wisdom reproves these people in the person of Eliu, and blames in them not their sentences of truth, but their temper and language of pride. But what is the meaning of the reproof, except that the chiding of the divine severity chastens them with scourges as placed within the Church, or by a righteous judgment leaves them to themselves? For such as these preach the truth within the Church, but, in the judgment of God, deserve to hear an unfavourable sentence, because by the sound truths which they state, which are not their own, they seek not the glory of their author, but their own credit. We must therefore carefully weigh this passage, in which it is said by the Divine Voice respecting Eliu, *Who is he?* An interrogation of this kind is but the beginning of a reproof. For we say not, *Who is he,* except of a person of whom we are ignorant. But God's ignorance is the same as His rejection: whence He will at the end say to some whom He rejects, *I know you not whence you are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [Matt. 7, 23] To ask then of this haughty man, *Who is he?* what is it but plainly to say, I know not the haughty? that is, In the excellence of My wisdom I approve not of their doings, because, by being puffed up by human praise, they are bereft of the true glory of eternal reward. By not rejecting then his sentiments, but blaming the person who uttered them, He plainly teaches, as it were saying, I know what he says, but I know not the speaker: I approve

of whatever is stated in accordance with truth, but I acknowledge not him who is elated by the truths he utters.

8. But to shew more plainly how disgracefully Eliu falls away in boastfulness of pride, we ought in the first place to set forth the character of a sound teacher; that from the straightness of this standard the deformity of his distortion may be clearly manifested. Every spiritual preacher then of the Church Catholic carefully examines himself in every thing he says, lest he should be elated with the sin of pride on account of his sound preaching; lest his conduct should be at variance with his words; lest that very peace which he preaches in the Church he should lose in his own person, by sound speaking and evil living. But it is his chief endeavour against the calumnious rumours of the adversaries to defend his conduct by his preaching, and to adorn his preaching by his life. And in all this he seeks not his own glory, but that of His Maker; and considers that every gift of wisdom he has received for the purpose of preaching, as bestowed not for his own deserts, but through the intercessions of those for whom he speaks. And thus while he casts himself down, he rises higher and higher; because he doubtless makes greater progress in gaining his own reward, by ascribing to the merits of others the good gifts he is able to exercise. He counts himself unworthy of all men, even when he lives more worthily than all together. For he is aware that the good qualities which are known to the world at large, can hardly exist in him without great peril. And though he feels himself to be wise, he would wish to be really wise without appearing so: and is especially afraid of that which is spoken of and gets abroad. And he seeks, if possible, to be silent, from perceiving that silence is safer for many, and considers that they are happier, whom a lower part in Holy Church conceals in silence; and though, in defence of the Church, he takes on himself of necessity the duty of speaking, because he is urged by the force of charity, yet he seeks with earnest longing the rest of silence. The

one he maintains as a matter of wish, the other he exercises as a matter of duty. But of such ways of speaking the proud are ignorant. For they speak not because causes arise, but seek for them to arise in order that they may speak. Of such Eliu is now a type, who in what he says sets himself up beyond measure, through the sin of pride. When the words then of blessed Job were ended it is added, *These three men ceased to answer Job, because he seemed just in his own eyes.* [Job 32, 1]

In the expression, *because he seemed to be just in his own eyes,* the author of this sacred history intended to refer to the opinion of Job's friends, and did not himself accuse him of being puffed up with pride. It follows:

Ver. 2. *And Eliu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram, was wroth and indignant.*

9. The names either of himself, or of his parent, of his ii. home, or kindred, furnish a mark of his own conduct. For Eliu being interpreted means, "That my God," or, "God the Lord." By whom, as we said to you, is designated the sound faith of proud men placed within the Church. Whence this very name of his is suited to them also. For though they live not according to the commandments of the Lord, they yet recognise God as their Lord, because in the truth of His flesh they realize also the form of the Godhead, as is said by the Prophet, *Know ye that the Lord He is God.* [Ps. 100, 3] But Barachel, signifies when interpreted, "The blessing of God," but Buzite, "contemptible." And either of these expressions is well suited to proud preachers: because in the eloquence of their speech they enjoy the blessing of Divine Grace, but in their proud manners they shew that it is to be despised. For the gifts which they have received they render contemptible, by not knowing how to use them rightly. But he is fitly said to be also of the kindred of Ram. For Ram signifies "lofty." For lofty is the assembly of the faithful, which despises the low and abject things of this life. Lofty are they who can say with Paul, *Our conversation is in heaven.*

[Phil. 3, 20] Eliu therefore is said to be ‘of the kindred of Ram,’ because every haughty preacher within the bosom of the Church Catholic, is united to the holy People in the verity of the faith, however he may be separated from them in conduct by the sinfulness of his pride. It follows,

But he was angry against Job, because he said he was just before God. Moreover against his friends was he wroth, because they had not found reasonable answers, but had merely condemned Job.

10. It must be carefully observed, that he blames blessed Job for professing himself just before God, but his friends because in condemning him they gave no reasonable reply. For it is plainly inferred, from these marks, that in him are characterized the lovers of vain glory. For he convicts Job of presuming on his righteousness, his friends of making a foolish answer. For all lovers of vain glory, while they prefer themselves to all other, accuse some of folly, others of obtaining what they do not deserve: that is, they consider some to be ignorant, others to be evil livers. And though they may justly accuse of heresy all who are external to the Church, yet they despise those who are within for the meanness of their life, and pride themselves against the one from high notions of their sound faith, against the others as if from the merits of their good living. But Eliu is well said to reprove at one time blessed Job, and at another time his friends: because the lovers of vain glory, living at times within the pale of Holy Church, both crush her opponents by preaching the truth, and oppose the customs of the same Holy Church in boasting of their preaching. They overwhelm the opponents of the Church by the power of their words, they oppress Holy Church by the way in which they utter them. They assail the one by preaching the truth, the other by their sin of pride. It follows,

Ver. 4, 5. *Elihu therefore waited while Job was speaking, because they who were speaking were his elders. But when he had seen that the three were not able to answer, he was very wroth.*

11. Though Holy Church is unquestionably older than her adversaries, (for they went forth from her, not she from them, as is said of them by John, *They went out from us, but they were not of us,* [1 John 2, 19]) yet Eliu is properly described as having been younger than these same adversaries. Because in truth after the contests which arose with heretics, haughty men began to have place in the Church, puffed up with the pride of learning. For when more grievous contests commenced with the enemy, there were certainly required some subtle dart-points of thought, oppositions of arguments, and a more involved research of words. And while men of glowing genius invent these weapons to suit the circumstances, they are frequently puffed up with pride, and (as is generally the case in the sin of pride) they are themselves made to fall by the same subtle meanings with which they assail the foe, while in what they think aright concerning God, they seek not God's glory, but their own. And hence is it that though Eliu says many things aright, he is yet reproved by the Divine voice, as though he had stated errors. But when it is said that Eliu waited while Job was speaking, because they who were speaking were his elders, it is plain that he observed this respect to blessed Job not out of reverence for him, but for his friends; because, namely, haughty men though dwelling within Holy Church, despise that very body which they defend; and it is commonly the case that they pay greater respect to the abilities of those who are wise to an evil purpose, than to the simple life of the innocent; and that they shew greater regard to the eloquence of those without, than to the deserts of those within. And this, though they are opposed to both in opposite ways, as differing from the one in the soundness of their opinion, and from Holy Church in the perverseness of their character. It proceeds,

Ver. 6, 7. *And Eliu the son of Barachel, the Buzite, answered and said, I am younger in age, but ye are more ancient. I therefore held down my head,*

and feared to shew you my opinion. For I was hoping that greater age would speak, and that a multitude of years would teach wisdom.

12. All these words, which are uttered by him through swelling pride, must be rather glanced at by the way than expounded more attentively. For whatsoever is deficient in solid gravity, needs not any elaborate exposition. But I think I need only suggest in a few words, that Eliu was more wise, as long as he remained silent on account of his age, but that in despising a multitude of years in others, and setting himself above them, he shewed plainly his childish folly. For both greater age speaks, against his opinion, and wisdom is taught by multitude of years. Because, though length of life does not confer intelligence, yet it gives it much exercise by constant practice. It follows,

Ver. 8. *But, as I see, there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding.*

13. He would be right in saying this, did he not arrogate to himself this same wisdom above all others. For it is no slight [Ben. 'prava,' a misprint for 'parva.'] condemnation for a man to boast within himself of that advantage which is given to him in common with others, to know whence he has received a good gift, and to know not how to use the good he has received. For there are four marks by which every kind of pride of the arrogant is pointed out, either when they think that they possess any good quality from themselves, or if they believe that it is given them from above, yet that they have received it in consequence of their own merits, or unquestionably when they boast of possessing that which they have not, or when they despise others, and wish to appear the sole possessors of what they have. For he boasted that he possessed his good qualities from himself, to whom it is said by the Apostle, *But what hast thou which thou didst not receive? why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* [1 Cor. 4, 7] Again, the same Apostle warns us not to believe that any gift of grace is

given us for our precedent deserts, when he says, *By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, but it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any one should boast.* [Eph. 2, 8. 9.] Who says also of himself, *Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and contumelious: but I obtained mercy.* [l Tim.1, 13] For in these words he plainly declares, that grace is not given according to desert, when he taught us both what he deserved of himself for his evil deeds, and what he obtained by God's benevolence. But again, some persons boast that they have that which they really have not, as the Divine Voice speaks of Moab by the Prophet; *I know his pride and his arrogance, and that his virtue is not according to it.* [Jer. 48, 30] And as is said to the Angel of the Church of Laodicea, *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* [Rev. 3, 17] Some again wish, in contempt of others, to appear to be the sole possessors of the good qualities which they have. Whence also the Pharisee went down from the temple without being justified, because by ascribing to himself as if in a singular manner the merit of good works, he preferred himself to the suppliant publican. [Luke 18, 9-14] The holy Apostles also are warned against this sin of pride; for on returning from their preaching, and saying with pride, *Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name,* [Luke 10, 17] to keep them from rejoicing in this singular gift of miracles, the Lord at once replied to them, saying, *I beheld Satan as lightning falling from heaven.* For he had himself said with special pride, *I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven, I will sit in the mount of the covenant, in the sides of the north; I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 13. 14.] And the Lord, in order to bring down pride in the hearts of His disciples, related with wondrous wisdom the judgment of downfal, which the prince of pride himself underwent, that they might learn, from the author of pride, what they had to apprehend from the sin of haughtiness. In

the fourth kind of pride then, namely, the boasting of the sole possession of any thing it possesses, the mind of man equally suffers a fall. But it is in this that it approaches more closely to a resemblance of Satan, because whoever rejoices at the singular possession of any good thing, whoever wishes to appear more exalted than others, plainly imitates him who in despising the blessing of the society of Angels, and placing his seat at the north, and proudly desiring to be like the Most High, endeavoured by his evil longing to shoot up to some singular preeminence. Eliu then, though confessing that wisdom is given by God, yet falls in this species of pride, so as to rejoice that he is wiser than others, and foolishly to pride himself on possessing, as it were, a singular advantage. Which he points out in the words which follow, when he says,

Ver. 9, 10, 11. *Old men are not wise, neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I will say, Hearken to me, I will shew you my wisdom. For I waited for your words, I heard your wisdom, whilst ye were disputing in words: and as long as I thought that ye said something, I considered.*

14. As far as regards the literal meaning, Eliu proves to us, when he speaks, how proudly he remained silent. For when he says, *For I waited for your words, and I was thinking that ye would say something,* he plainly shews that he remained silent, while the aged were speaking, rather with the desire of judging, than with the wish of learning from them. Though these expressions are even a better description of the conduct of proud men, who, when at length brought within Holy Church, are accustomed on looking at her opponents, to consider not so much the years of their age, as the intention of their words. For however older the heretics may be than these same haughty men, they boldly overbear those persons in whose words they reprove false doctrine. It follows,

Ver. 12, 13. *But, as I see, there is no one of you who can convince Job, and reply to his words. Lest ye should perchance say, We have found out*

wisdom; God hath cast him down, not man.

15. Heretics, from the fact that they are wont to appear contemptible even to men, when they behold Holy Church reverenced by well-nigh all nations, endeavour to impugn the opinion entertained of her by every possible objection; and say that she enjoys all abundance of temporal goods, because the gifts of eternal rewards are taken from her. Eliu meets the objections of such people, by saying, *Lest ye should perchance say, We have found out wisdom; God hath cast him down, not man.* As if they who are found within the Church, but are yet faithful, should say against the heretics, Because ye see that the Church stands high in this world, through the high opinion of men, ye must believe that God hath not cast her aside. For her Redeemer well knows how to administer comfort to her as she is travelling on in this her journey, and to keep in store for her the rewards of heaven, when she arrives at her eternal home. In vain then do ye assert that God hath cast her down, and not man, when ye behold her venerated by almost all men; because the aid of worldly distinction is conferred on her in order that she may be assisted thereby in manifold ways to gain also the rewards of heaven. It follows,

Ver. 14. *He spake nothing to me, and I will not reply to him according to your word.*

16. What is meant by his saying, *He spake nothing to me?* For does holy Church, when she detects haughty men within her, ever omit to instruct and reprove them by preachers of righteousness? She exercises these duties, and ceases not to exercise them daily. But let Eliu, who had heard blessed Job speaking openly, say, *He spake nothing to me;* because doubtless, all haughty men, though they hear indeed the words of Holy Church, yet pretend that they are not addressed to them, when they make light of correcting the sin of pride. Nor do they think that they are reproved for their pride, for they look on themselves as humble; and they also make light of

reproof, when they count themselves much wiser even than their reprovers. But in saying, *I will not answer him according to your words,* he well says that he does not answer blessed Job with their speeches. For proud men within the pale of Holy Church reply against her, but yet not as heretics who are without. For they oppose her not by false teaching, but by evil living, because they do not think unworthily of God, as do heretics, but more highly than is necessary of their own selves. It follows,

Ver. 15. *They were afraid, they answered no more, they removed speech from themselves.*

The friends of Job are well said to have been afraid of the words of Eliu, since frequently proud defenders of the Church, though they do not observe due order in what they say, yet confound the adversaries by the very virtue of their words. It follows,

Ver. 16. *Because therefore I have waited, and they have not spoken, they have stood, and have answered no more.*

17. Wise men are accustomed to make it the limit of their speaking, to speak so far as to silence their adversaries. For they wish not to display their own powers, but to put down the teachers of heresy. But after it is said of the friends of Job, *They were afraid, they answered no more, they removed speech from themselves,* Eliu subjoins and says, *I have waited, and they have not spoken; they have stood, and have answered no more.* Even when they are already silent, he yet multiplies his words, because, being an arrogant man, and representing the character of the arrogant, he is in haste not merely to refute the arguments of his opponents, but to display his own wisdom. Whence it also follows,

Ver. 17. *I will also answer my part, and I will display my knowledge.*

For every proud man considers this to be his part, if he does not so much possess, as make a show of, knowledge. For all proud men are anxious not to possess knowledge, but to make a display of it: against whom Moses well

says, *Every vessel which hath not a cover nor binding over it shall be unclean.* [Numb. 19, 15] For the covering or the binding is the reproof of discipline, and every one who is not kept under by it is rejected as an unclean and polluted vessel. And was not Eliu a vessel without a cover, who had considered it to be his part to make a show of the wisdom which he possessed? For he who lays himself open by his desire of display, and is not covered by the veil of silence, is polluted as a vessel without cover or binding. But holy preachers consider that they are performing their part, if they rejoice in themselves at their own wisdom within, and if they outwardly keep back others from error. Nor do they so far go out of themselves in speaking, as to place the delight of their mind in an outward display of eloquent language. But they meditate on the benefits of wisdom in the secret of their heart, and there rejoice when they perceive it; and not when they are obliged to make it known amidst the snares of so many temptations. Although when they make known the good which they receive, yet charity steps in, and they rejoice at the progress of their hearers, and not at their own display. But the arrogant on gaining any knowledge think that they have gained nothing, if it so happens that they keep it concealed. For they place their happiness no where but in the praise of men. It is hence that the foolish virgins are said to have taken no oil in their vessels; [Matt. 25, 3] because such as be arrogant, if perchance they keep themselves from any vices, cannot confine to their own consciences the credit of the glory. But Paul had taken oil in his own vessel, who said, *Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience.* [2 Cor. 1, 12] To carry then an empty vessel, is with a heart empty within to seek for the judgment of men's lips from without. Because Eliu, then, when seeking for glory from without, has not oil within his vessel, he well says, *I will answer my part, and I will display my learning.* And in the words which follow he shews what are his sufferings, from vain-glory raging within, saying,

Ver. 18 — 20. *I am full of words, the spirit of my womb constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as new wine without a vent, which bursts in sunder new vessels. I will speak, and will take breath awhile; I will open my lips and answer.*

18. When boastful men observe that holy preachers speak eloquently, and are reverenced for their eloquence, they frequently imitate the loftiness of their language, and not their useful intention. They are far from loving what the others desire, but are especially anxious to gain great renown amongst men. For it is frequently the case that wise men, when they find that they are not listened to, impose silence on their lips. But frequently when they see that the sins of the ungodly gain strength when they are silent, and cease to reprove, they endure a kind of violence in their spirit, so that they burst forth in language of open reproof. And hence when the Prophet Jeremiah had imposed on himself silence in preaching, saying, *I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name;* he immediately added, *And there was made as it were a burning fire in my bosom, and shut up in my bones: and I was wearied, not being able to bear it; for I have heard the insults of many.* [Jer. 20, 9] For, seeing that he was not listened to, he wished to hold his peace; but when he beheld evil increasing, he no longer persisted in the same silence. For when he ceased to speak without, from being wearied of speaking [Comma after ‘locutionis,’ as the rhythm and the sense both require.], he felt a flame kindled within him by the zeal of charity. For the hearts of the just burn within them, when they behold the deeds of the ungodly gain strength from not being reproved, and they believe that they are themselves partakers in the guilt of those, whom they allow, by their own silence, to go on in iniquity. The prophet David, after he had imposed silence on himself, saying, *I have set a guard upon my mouth, while the sinner stood against me. I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silence even from good things:*

[Ps. 39, 1] in the midst of his silence blazed forth with this zeal of charity, when he

immediately subjoined; *My sorrow was renewed, my heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out.* [Ps. 39, 3] His heart grew hot within him, because the flame of charity refused to burst forth in words of admonition. The fire burned in the meditation of his heart, because his reproof of the ungodly had ceased to flow on with the chiding of his lips. For the zeal of charity tempers itself with wonderful consolation, as it gains strength, when it bursts forth in words of reproof against the deeds of the ungodly, in order that it may not cease to reprove the faults which it cannot amend, lest it should convict itself of partaking in their sins, by consent of keeping silence.

19. But because certain vices frequently assume the guise of virtues, as, for instance, lavishness wishes to appear like pity, stinginess like frugality, cruelty like justice; in like manner, a desire for empty glory, being unable to keep itself within the bounds of silence, inflames like the zeal of charity, and the powerful desire of ostentation impels a person to speak without restraint, and the desire of display breaks out, as if with the wish of offering advice. For it cares not what good it can effect by its speaking, but what show it can make: nor is it anxious to correct the evil which it beholds, but to display the good which it feels. Hence Eliu also, swollen by the spirit of pride, and unable to keep himself within the barriers of silence, says, *I am full of words, the spirit of my womb constraineth me; behold, my belly is as new wine without a vent which bursts in sunder new vessels.* [ver. 18]

20. If we must understand this passage spiritually, by ‘belly’ he means the secret recesses of the heart. But by new wine is understood the warmth of the Holy Spirit, of which the Lord says in the Gospel, *They put new wine into new skins.* [Matt. 9, 17] For when the Apostles were filled suddenly therewith, and were speaking in every tongue, it was said by the Jews, who

knew not the truth and yet bare witness to it, *These men are full of new wine.* [Acts 2, 4] But by vessels we understand not inappropriately either consciences which are weak from their very estate of humanity, or certainly those earthly vessels of our bodies; of which the Apostle Paul says, *We have this treasure in earthen vessels.* [2 Cor. 4, 7] But because Eliu, as we before observed, was so puffed up and swollen with pride, as though he were kindled within, to speak through the grace of charity, by the fire of the Holy Spirit, compares the spirit, which he felt within him when silent, to new wine without a vent. And he well says, *Which bursts asunder new vessels,* because the fire of the Holy Spirit is scarcely kept in by the new life, much less by the old. The new wine then bursts asunder new vessels, because by its violent heat it is too much even for spiritual hearts. *I will speak, and I will take breath a little; I will open my lips and answer.* [ver. 20] He well says, *I will take breath,* for as it is a distress to the holy to behold wickedness, without amending it; so is it a heavy distress to the boastful, if they do not display the wisdom they possess. For they can scarcely endure the violence which boils within them, if they are rather behindhand in making known every thing which they think. And hence, when any good deed is taken in hand, all pride on account of it must first be overcome in the heart, lest, if it should proceed from the root of a bad motive, it should bring forth the bitter fruits of sin.

21. These then, who are as yet engaged in a contest with their sins, ought never to undertake to rule over others by exercising the office of preaching. And this is the reason, why, according to the command of the Divine dispensation, the Levites serve the tabernacle from their twenty-fifth year, but from their fiftieth become the guardians of the sacred vessels. [Numb. 8, 24] For what is meant by the five and twentieth year, when youth is in its full vigour, but the contests against each separate sin? And what is expressed by the fiftieth, in which is signified also the rest of the Jubilee,

but the repose of the mind within, when the contest has come to an end? But what is shadowed forth by the vessels of the tabernacle, except the souls of the faithful? The Levites, therefore, serve the tabernacle from their five and twentieth year, and take charge of the vessels from their fiftieth, to shew that they who endure, through pleasurable consent, the contest with sins which still assault them, should not presume to take the charge of others: but that when they have been successful in their contests with temptations, by which they are assured of inward tranquillity, they may then undertake the care of souls. But who can perfectly subdue these assaults of temptations, when Paul says, *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin?* [Rom. 7, 23] But it is one thing boldly to endure contests, another to be unnerved by them and overcome. In the first case virtue is kept in exercise, to secure it from being puffed up; in the other, it is quite quenched that it cease to be. He then who knows how to endure with boldness the temptation of the contest, even when he feels its shock, sits on high in the lofty citadel of peace. For he sees that the assaults of sin are, even when within him, subject to his power, since he does not yield his consent to them, from being overcome by any pleasure. It follows:

Ver. 21, 22. *I will not accept the person of man, I will not equal God to man; for I know not how long I shall continue, or whether after a while my Maker may take me away.*

22. Most judiciously he does not make God equal to man, since he knows not how long he may continue, or when in the judgment of God be taken away. And he well says, *After a while my Maker may take me away;* for however long is the period of the present life, it is short, from the very fact, that it is not enduring. For that which is confined within circumscribed limits has no claim to be considered lasting. But in the midst of these

sentences which he utters, based on solid truth, he again bursts out into words of pride, saying,

Chap. xxxiii. ver. 1, 2. *Wherefore, Job, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold, I have opened my*

mouth; let my tongue speak in my throat.

23. Let us consider from what a height of pride he comes down in admonishing Job to listen to him, in saying that he had opened his mouth, in promising that his tongue would speak in his throat. For the teaching of the boastful has this peculiarity, that they cannot modestly suggest what they teach, and cannot communicate in a right manner the truths they hold rightly. For they make it plain by their words that they fancy themselves, when teaching, to be seated on some lofty eminence, and that they look upon their hearers as standing far beneath them, as on lower ground, as persons whom they hardly deign to address, not in the tone of advice, but of authority. Well does the Lord address them by the Prophet, *But ye ruled them with austerity and power.* [Ez. 34, 4] For they rule with austerity and power, who are eager to correct "those under them, not by calmly reasoning, but to bend them by the severity of command.

24. But sound teaching, on the other hand, the more earnestly avoids this sin of pride in thought, the more eagerly it assails with the shafts of its words the teacher of pride himself. For it takes heed lest it be rather preaching him by a haughty demeanour, whom it assails with holy words in the hearts of its hearers. For it endeavours to state in its words, and to set forth in its doings, humility, which is the mistress and mother of all virtues, in order that it may enforce it on the disciples of truth more by its conduct than by its words. Whence Paul in speaking to the Thessalonians, as if he had forgotten the height of his own Apostleship, *We became as children in the midst of you.* [1 Thess. 2, 7] Whence the Apostle Peter, when saying, *Ever ready to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,*

[1 Pet. 3, 15] asserted that in the science of teaching the manner of one's teaching is to be strictly attended to, by subjoining, *But with modesty and fear, having a good conscience.* [ib. 16] But in that which the Apostle Paul says to his disciple, *These things exhort and teach with all authority;* [1 Tim. 4, 11] he does not recommend the tyranny of power, but the authority of his life. [Tit. 2, 15] For that is enjoined with authority which is practised before it is advised. For when conscience makes the tongue falter, it detracts from the authority of one's talking. He did not recommend him therefore the authority of haughty words, but the confidence of good conduct. Whence it is said of the Lord, *He was teaching as having authority, not as the Scribes and Pharisees.* [Matt. 8, 29] For He alone in a singular and peculiar manner spoke with sound authority, because He had committed no sins from infirmity. For He possessed that from the power of His Godhead, which He has bestowed in us through the sinlessness of His Manhood.

25. For we, because we are feeble men, when we come to speak of God to our fellows, should first of all call to mind our own nature, and thus consider from our own infirmities in what order we should offer advice to our weakly brethren. Let us consider then that we are either now such as some of those whom we are correcting, or were heretofore such, though by the operation of Divine Grace we are so no longer: that in humility of heart we may correct them with greater forbearance, the more truly we recognise ourselves in the persons of those whom we correct. But if we are neither now such, nor have been such as those still are whom we are anxious to improve; for fear our heart should perchance be proud, and should fall the more fatally by reason of its very innocence, let us recal to our eyes the other good qualities of those whose faults we are correcting. If they have not any such, let us fall back on the secret judgments of God. Because as we have received this very good, which we possess, for no deserts of our own; so is He able to pour on them the grace of power from above, so that though

roused to exertion after ourselves, they may be able to outstrip even those good qualities which we received so long before. For who could believe that Saul, who kept at his death the raiment of those that were stoning him, would surpass Stephen who had been stoned, by the honour [‘meritum’ (or service)] of the Apostleship. Our heart ought then to be first humbled by these thoughts, and then the sin of offenders should be reproved. But as has been often said, Eliu is shewn to be unacquainted with this mode of speaking, who is puffed up in his words, by the haughtiness of pride, as if by the power of a kind of authority, saying, *Wherefore Job hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold I have opened my mouth, let my tongue speak in my throat.*

26. To speak in the throat is to speak softly, and not to vociferate loudly. In which words he designates haughty men living within holy Church. For these are said to speak as if in the throat, when they do not clamour against the adversaries who are without, but reprove some within the bosom of holy Church, as if they were neighbours and placed near them. But haughty men often make a show of avoiding that very pride, which they entertain; and while they do all things so as not to escape the notice of any one, they privately mention them to particular persons, in order that they may boast not merely of their sense of wisdom, but also of their contempt of arrogance before men. Whence it is now said, *Let my tongue speak in my throat.* As if it were plainly said, Behold, I whisper that which I think wisely against thee. But they sometimes break out into such a height of impudence, as, when others are silent, to be accustomed to praise their own sayings. Whence he subjoins,

Ver. 3. *My words are from my simple heart, and my lips shall speak a pure sentence.*

27. To say that speech is simple, is a praise of great weight. But because the haughty possess it not, they assert the more anxiously that they possess

it, in order that they may be heard with less apprehension. And they declare that they are going to speak with pure intention, because they are afraid of their wicked duplicity being discovered. But they often also blend together truth and falsehood, that their falsehood may be the more speedily believed, from its being discerned that they speak the truth. Because then Eliu both said that he would speak with pure intention, and by calling his words ‘sentences’ ushered them in with applause, he subjoins the same ‘sentence’ which he promised, saying,

Ver. 4. *The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*

28. Intending to subjoin truth, he first uttered boastful words, and being about to state the sound opinions he held, he first made known how huge was his swelling. The minds of the arrogant are doubtless so very mad, that even in what they think rightly, they are disfigured by the deformity of their pride. And hence even their sound opinions do not instruct their hearers, because in truth they lead them by their haughty sentiments not to reverence but to despise them. And when words of folly are blended with wise sayings, even their wisdom is not kept in mind, because their folly is despised by him who hears it. For hence it is said by Moses, *A man who suffers a running of seed shall be unclean.* [Lev. 15, 16] For what are our words but seed? And when this is poured forth in due measure, the mind of the hearer, as the womb of her who conceives, is made fruitful for an offspring of good works. But if it escapes at improper times, polluting him that emits it, it loses its generating power. For if words were not seed, the Athenians would never have said of Paul, as he was preaching to them, *What would this word-sower* [‘seminiverbius] *say?* [Acts 17, 18] of whom Luke says, *He was the chief speaker.* [Acts 14, 12] Seed, then, which is intended for the purpose of procreation, when it escapes in an improper manner, pollutes the other members: and speech also, by which learning

ought to be implanted in the hearts of the hearers, if uttered out of due order, brings disgrace even on the truths it utters. And hence Eliu also pollutes even the truths he is able to entertain, when he is ignorant of what he is saying, or to whom he is saying it, and suffers, as it were, discharge of seed, when he employs his tongue, which is fitted to answer useful purpose, in words of empty sound. But he speaks in proper order of his being made, and receiving life. For he says, that he was made by the Spirit, and that he received life by the breath of God. For it is written of Adam when created, *He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man was made into a living soul.* [Gen. 2, 7] But let us listen whether he proceeds properly with what he has well laid down. It follows,

Ver. 5. *If thou canst, answer me, and stand before my face.*

29. Behold how in relating the true order of his creation, he suddenly bursts forth into the pride of haughty arrogance, and, in other words, repeats the same statement, by saying, Ver. 6, 7. *Behold, God made me as well as thee, and I am also formed of the same clay; yet let not my wonder terrify thee, and my eloquence be burdensome to thee.* What then is meant by Eliu acknowledging the order of his true creation, and not knowing the limits of proper speech? What by his putting himself on a level with Job when created, and setting himself above him when about to speak? What but this, that though haughty men remember that they are equal in nature to other men, yet that through the pride of knowledge they do not deign even to believe that they have even their equals [The text seems scarcely grammatical, but the sense cannot be far from what is given.]: and that though they compare themselves with them, in the condition of their nature, they place themselves above them from pride in their wisdom. They decide that though they were made equal by birth, yet they have not continued so, in their way of life. And from their not being equal to them as it were in their way of life, they count it a greater marvel that they were equal to them

when they were born. And hence Eliu says, when inflated with pride, *Behold, God made me as well as thee, and I also was formed from the same clay; yet let not my wonder terrify thee, nor my eloquence be burdensome to thee.* For it is peculiar to the arrogant, that they always believe, even before they speak, that they are going to say some wonderful thing, and that they anticipate their own words by their own admiration, because, with all their acuteness, they are not sensible how great a folly is their very pride. We must observe also that Paul, when he was giving the Hebrews some striking warnings, subjoined, *I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of consolation, for I have written to you in few words.* [Heb. 13, 22] But Eliu uttered empty words, and afterwards added, as if for consolation, *Let not my wonder terrify thee, nor my eloquence be burdensome to thee.* The one called his sayings the word of consolation, the other called them eloquence, and a marvel. Behold, how different in taste are the fruits which spring forth from diverse roots of thought. The one thinks humbly of his high qualities, the other exalts himself without reason on his scanty endowments. What then is specially to be observed in all this, but that those who are about to rise, think themselves low, and that they who are soon to fall, ever stand on high ground? As Solomon bears witness, *The heart is exalted before destruction, and is brought low before honour.* [Prov. 16, 18] It follows,

Ver. 8. *Thou hast spoken then in mine ears, and I have heard the voice of thy words.* And subjoining the very words, he says,

Ver. 9 — 11. *I am clean, and without spot of sin, and there is no iniquity in me, because He hath found complaints in me, therefore He hath counted me as His enemy, He hath placed my feet in the stocks, He hath guarded all my ways.* And in answer to these words which he said blessed Job had spoken, he immediately states his own opinion, saying,

Ver. 12. *This is the thing then in which thou art not justified.*

30. Blessed Job had indeed truly said, that he had been scourged without any fault. [Job 27, 6] For he said of himself exactly what the Lord had said of him to the devil, *Thou hast moved Me against him to afflict him without cause.* [Job 2, 3] But Eliu did not believe, that his fault doing nothing in it, he could be scourged as a matter of grace. For he did not know that by his scourgings his fault was not corrected, but his merits increased, and because he had said that he had been scourged without any fault, he reproves him in these words, saying, *This is the thing then in which thou art not justified.* For it is the special fault of the arrogant, to be more eager to convict, than to console; and to consider that whatever sufferings they see befal men, have befallen them solely from their sins. They know not how to enquire deeply into the secret judgments of God [some Mss. add 'Dei.'], and humbly to investigate that which they cannot understand: for while pride at their knowledge raises them on high, it frequently casts them down from the secret investigation of God's judgments.

31. For suffering of mind is an impediment in the way of truth: because while it puffs us up, it obscures our view. For if these persons ever seem to acquire wisdom, they feed, as it were, on the husks of things, and not on the marrow of their inmost sweetness; and with their brilliant abilities, they frequently reach only to the outside of things, but know not the savour of their inward taste; for, in truth, though sharp-sighted outwardly, they are blind within. Nor do they form such a notion of God, as tastes secretly within, but such as when thrown outward gives a sound. And though they gain in their understanding a knowledge of some mysteries, they can have no experience of their sweetness: and if they know how they exist, yet they know not, as I said, how they savour. And so it is frequently the case, that though they speak boldly, yet they know not how to live up to what they profess. Whence a certain wise man well said, *May God, grant me to speak these things according to my sentence.* [Wisd. 7, 15] For sentence is derived

from sense [‘sententia,’ ‘sensu.’]. And a man who wishes not merely to speak from outward knowledge, but to feel and experience what he says, is anxious to give utterance to the truths he holds, not as a matter of mere knowledge [‘scientia’], but of real feeling [‘sententia’]. But the mind of haughty men does not penetrate the meaning of its own words; because by a righteous judgment it is driven away from the inward taste of things, and is wrecked by that applause which it desires from without. But real knowledge influences without elating; and makes those whom it has filled, not proud, but sorrowful. For when any one is filled therewith, he is in the first place anxious to know himself: and conscious of his own state, he acquires thereby a greater savour of strength, the more truly sensible he is of his own weakness therein. And this very humility opens to him more widely the pathway of this knowledge, and when he beholds his own weakness, this very knowledge opens to him the hidden recesses of sublime secrets; and pressed down by this knowledge, he is made more subtle to press forward into things hidden. Eliu then does not in the scourgings of blessed Job discover their true reason, because he knows not how to search for it with humility: and being more ready to reproach than to console, he says, *It is in this thing, then, that thou art not justified.*

32. We must observe further, that blessed Job said that his foot was placed in the stocks, [Job 13, 2] but that he never said that he was clean, in the way in which is objected to him, or free from sin, or without spot, and iniquity. But Eliu, in his desire to reprove austerely what has been said, falsely added what had not been said. For they who are ever eager to reprove and not to encourage, frequently state many falsehoods in their reproofs. For in order to appear clever in reproving, they frequently invent statements, for the sake of reproving them, and, being eager, as horses, to run their course of ostentation, they clear the way for assailing those who are subject to them by inventing charges of iniquity. It must be understood

besides, as I said above, that haughty men often blend forcible words with their words of boasting, and that sometimes they do not consider how they live, but studiously weigh what they teach. Of such Eliu is a specimen in the present case, who is not so anxious to live well, as to teach well. Since then he speaks, though arrogantly, yet with knowledge, let us pass over the pride of his conduct, and consider the solidity of his teaching. After all these boastful words, then, he begins at length to display his knowledge, and says,

Ver. 12. *I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.*

33. Some one may perhaps observe, Who knows not that, even without being told it? But no wonder if this remark is believed to be of little value, if it is not considered in the very root of its meaning. He was speaking to one who had been scourged, who had both felt the blows of smiting, and was ignorant of the reason of them. And therefore he remarked, *I will answer thee, that God is greater than man;* that man, when scourged, yet considering that God is greater than himself, may submit himself to the judgment of Him, to Whom he has no doubt he is inferior, and may believe that that which he suffers from his superior is just, even though he does not know the grounds of its justice. For whoever is smitten for his sins, unless he murmurs and struggles against it, begins at once to be a righteous man, from not impugning the justice of Him who smites him. For man is created inferior to God, and returns to the order of his creation, when he submits himself to the equity of his Judge, even when he cannot comprehend it. It is therefore well said, *I will answer thee, that God is greater than man,* in order that on considering the power of the Creator, the swelling of the mind may cease to rage, through the thought of the condition in which it was created. Whence David the Prophet, when compelled by the weight of the blows to burst forth into extravagant words, says on bringing himself back to the consideration of his own origin, *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, since Thou hast made me.* [Ps. 39, 9] For he considered in what rank

he was created, and learned the justice of the blow; for He Who kindly created him who as yet was not, surely smote him only with justice when he was now in being. It follows.

Ver. 13, 14. *Thou contendest against Him, because He hath not replied to thee to all thy words. God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing a second time.*

34. It is natural to the afflicted heart, when it beholds any thing going contrary to its wishes, to wish to gain an answer, if possible, by the voice of God, why things are in this way, and not in that: to consult God in this whole matter under debate, and to acquiesce on learning the meaning of His reply. But Eliu, foreseeing that the Lord was composing holy Scripture, for the purposes of replying therein to the open or secret enquiries of all men, says, *Thou contendest against Him, because He hath not replied to all thy words. God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing a second time.* As if he were to say, God does not reply in private speaking to the hearts of men one by one; but fashions His word in such a manner, as to satisfy the enquiries of all men. For if we look for our own cases one by one, we are sure to find them in the teaching of His Scriptures; nor is there need to seek for a special answer from the voice of God, in our own special sufferings. For there a general reply is given to all of us in our own special sufferings: there the conduct of those who go before is a model for such as come after. To take one instance out of many. We are labouring under some suffering or annoyance of the flesh. We wish perhaps to know the secret reasons of this suffering or annoyance, in order that we may be comforted in our trial from the very knowledge. But because no special reply is given to us one by one, concerning our own special trials, we betake ourselves to holy Scripture. And there is it that we find what Paul heard when tried by the infirmity of the flesh. *My grace is sufficient for thee; for strength is made perfect in. weakness.* [2 Cor. 12, 9] And this was spoken to him in his own

peculiar suffering, that it might not be spoken to us one by one. We have heard therefore in holy Scripture the voice of God to Paul in his affliction, in order that we may not seek to hear it one by one, for our own private consolation, if perchance we are afflicted. God does not then reply to all our words, because *He will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing again;* that is, He has provided for our instruction, by what He stated to our fathers in holy Scripture. Let the teachers then of Holy Church, let even these men of arrogance, announce, (on beholding some within her sinking from faintheartedness,) that God does not reply to all our words, that *God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing twice.* In other words, He does not now satisfy the doubts and perplexities of individual men by the voice of the Prophets on every side, or by the ministry of Angels. Because He includes in holy Scripture whatever can possibly befal each one of us, and has provided therein for regulating the conduct of those who come after, by the examples of those who have gone before.

35. But yet this remark, *God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing twice,* may be understood in a deeper meaning; that the Father begat His Consubstantial, Only-begotten Son. For God’s speaking is His having begotten the Word. But for God to speak once, is for Him to have no other Word beside the Only-begotten. And hence it is fitly subjoined, *And He will not repeat the same thing twice,* because this very Word, that is, the Son, He begat not otherwise than only-begotten. But in that He says not, “He spake,” but “will speak,” using, namely, not the past tense but the future, it is plain to all, that neither past nor future time is appropriate to God. Any tense is therefore the more freely used in speaking of Him, since no one is used with strict truth. But any tense whatever could not be freely used, if one at least could be used properly. It is allowable then for any tense to be boldly used in speaking of God, since no one is strictly proper. For the Father begat the Son without regard to time.

36. And who can worthily speak of that ineffable nativity, that the Coeternal is begotten from the Eternal, that He who existed before all ages begat His Equal, that the Son was not posterior to Him Who begat Him? We can marvel at these things, but it is beyond our power to look into them. But to be able to wonder at that mighty nativity is in a certain degree to see it. But how do we see that which we do by no means comprehend? But we must borrow an instance from the habits of the body to illustrate the feelings of the mind. If any one is lying down in a dark place, with his eyes closed, and the light of a candle suddenly flashes before him, his eyes, though closed, are so struck by the very approach of the light, that they open. Why are they thus affected, if they saw nothing when closed? And yet it was not any thing perfect which they could see when closed. For if they had seen the whole object perfectly, why should they when opened seek for something to look at? And thus, thus are we, when we endeavour to behold ought of the incomprehensible nativity. For even in this, that the mind is struck with surprise at the shining, and sees in a manner what it is not able really to see, it beholds as if in darkness the power of the light with closed eyes [Here the older Edd. have a passage which Ben. omits, as it is not in the MSS. 'For Eliu says, *God speaketh once;* but David, looking to the nativity of the only-begotten Word, says, *God spake once.'* For since the only-begotten Son and Word of the Father is both called 'Born' in respect of perfection, and in respect of eternity is even said to be in birth; Holy Scripture useth to say freely of God that He 'hath spoken,' and 'speaketh.' For in that He begat the Word perfect, God 'hath spoken,' and in that He ever begetteth, He surely 'speaketh;' though this which we called 'perfect' we do not say with strictness. for that which is not effected (factum) cannot be strictly said to be 'perfected,' (perfectum.) But we express His fullness with a somewhat straitened form of speech; as also of the Father the Lord saith, *Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect,* (Matt. v. 48) It

looks like a note on the former paragraph, which may have been written at the foot of the page.]. But because the secret admiration of the Divine Nature is not easily made known to minds which are occupied with worldly desires, he very fitly suggests the way in which God speaks to us, by saying,

Ver. 15. *In a dream, in a vision of the night, when sleep falleth upon men, and they sleep on their bed.*

37. What is meant by the word of God being made known to us in a dream, except that we do not learn the secret things of God, if we are kept awake by worldly desires? For in a dream the outward senses are at rest, and inward objects are discerned. If we wish then to contemplate things within, let us rest from outward engagements. The voice of God, in truth, is heard as if in dreams, when, with minds at ease, we rest from the bustle of this world, and the Divine precepts are pondered by us in the deep silence of the mind. For when the mind is at rest from outward employments, the weight of the Divine precepts is more fully discerned. It is then that the mind penetrates, in a more lively manner, the words of God, when it refuses to admit within the tumult of worldly cares. But a man is awake to little good purpose, when the turmoil of worldly business gives him unusual disturbance. For the crowd of earthly thoughts, when it clamours around, closes the ear of the mind. And the voice of the presiding judge is less plainly heard in the secret tribunal of the mind, the less the sound of tumultuous cares is kept still. For a man when distracted is not fully equal to attend to both together. But while he seeks for inward instruction, but so as yet to be engaged in outward employments; by opening his ear to things without, he becomes deaf within. Moses, when living amongst the Egyptians, was, as it were, awake, and so when dwelling in Egypt he did not hear the voice of God. [Ex. 2, 11. 12.] But after that he had fled into the desert, after the slaughter of the Egyptian, and dwelt there forty years, he

fell asleep as it were from the disquieting tumults of worldly desires; and therefore it was vouchsafed him [‘meriut’] to hear the voice of God, because the more indifferent he became through Divine grace to outward objects of desire, the more was he really awake to discern truths within. And again, when appointed to rule over the people of Israel, he is taken up into the Mount, to learn the precepts of the Law, and is preserved from tumults without, that he might penetrate into mysteries within. [Ex. 19, 3]

38. And hence is it that holy men, who are obliged by the necessity of their employments to engage in outward pursuits, are ever studiously betaking themselves to the secrets of their hearts; and there do they ascend the height of secret thought, and learn (as it were) the Law in the Mount: when they put aside the tumults of worldly business, and ponder, on the height of their thought, the sentence of the Divine will. And hence is it that the same Moses frequently retires to the Tabernacle on doubtful points; and there secretly consults God, and learns what certain decision to come to. For to leave the crowd, and retire to the Tabernacle, is to put aside the tumults of outward objects, and to enter into the secret recess of the mind. For the Lord is there consulted, and we hear inwardly and in silence, what we must do openly and without. This course wise rulers daily pursue; when they are aware that they cannot settle doubtful points, they betake themselves to the secret recesses of their mind, as if to a kind of tabernacle. By looking into the Divine Law, they consult the Lord, as it were before the Ark. And what they first hear in silence, they afterwards make known to the world in their conduct. For in order that they may engage in outward employments without injury to themselves, they constantly take care to withdraw to the secrets of their heart. And they thus hear the voice of God, as it were, in a dream, while they withdraw themselves in the thoughts of their mind from the influence of carnal things. Hence is it that, in the Song of Songs, the Bride who said, *I sleep, and my heart is awake,* [Cant. 5, 2] had heard the

voice of the Bridegroom in dreams. As if she were saying, While I give my outward senses rest from the anxieties of this world, I have a more lively perception of inward truths, when my mind is unemployed. I am asleep to outward things, but my heart is awake within, because, when I am insensible as it were to outward objects, I have a keen apprehension of inward secrets.

39. Well then says Eliu, that God speaketh by a dream; and fitly did he add, *In a vision of the night.* For a vision of the night usually presents itself to the contemplation of the mind under certain images. But we perceive objects more plainly by daylight, we see less quickly in a vision of the night. And because all holy men, as long as they are in this life, behold the secrets of the Divine Nature only under certain resemblances, (since they do not, as yet, gain a clearer sight of them as they really are;) after Eliu had said that God speaks to us in a dream, he rightly adds, *in a vision of the night.* For 'night' is this present life, and as long as we are in it, we are covered with a mist of uncertain imaginations as far as the sight of inward objects is concerned. For the Prophet was sensible that he was held by a certain mist in his sight of the Lord, when he says, *My soul longed for Thee in the night.* [Is. 26, 9] As if he were to say, I long to behold Thee in the obscurity of this present life, but I am still surrounded by the mist of infirmity. David also wishing to avoid the gloom of this life, and waiting for the brightness of the true light, says, *In the morning I will stand before Thee, and will see.* [Ps. 5, 3] He who longs for the approach of morning, in order to behold God, perceives that he can still see but imperfectly, in the night. But because, as we said, sleeping is ceasing from outward action, Eliu rightly adds, *When sleep falls upon men.* And because holy men, when unemployed in outward action, rest within the chambers of their mind, he fitly subjoins, *and they sleep on their bed.* For holy men to sleep in their bed, is for them to take rest in the chamber of their mind. Whence it is

written, *The saints shall exult in glory, they shall rejoice in their beds.* Let it be said then that *God speaks once to us through a dream in a vision of the night, when sleep falls upon men, and they sleep in their bed.* [Ps.149, 5] Because we then doubtless discern the secrets of the Godhead, when we withdraw ourselves into the chambers of our minds from the tumultuous desires of this world. But because, as we have already frequently said before, the turmoil of worldly business closes the ear, and the rest of secret contemplation opens it, he properly subjoins,

Ver. 16. *Then He openeth the ears of men, and teaching, instructeth them with discipline.*

40. For when they are dead to outward objects, they hear with open ears the causes which come before their inward judgment. And when they consider minutely with themselves either their open punishments, or their secret judgments, they cease not to afflict themselves with tears. Whence it is well said, *And teaching, He instructeth them with discipline,* because to a mind which reflects and wounds itself with penitence, the sorrows of compunction are like the stripes of a blow. Whence Solomon also rightly uniting together the force of these kinds of blows, says, *The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil, and blows in the secret parts of the belly.* [Prov. 20, 30] For by the blueness of a wound he implies the discipline of blows on the body. But blows in the secret parts of the belly are the wounds of the mind within, which are inflicted by compunction. For as the belly is distended when filled with food, so is the mind puffed up when swollen with wicked thoughts. The blueness then of a wound, and blows in the secret parts of the belly, cleanse away evil, because both outward discipline does away with faults, and compunction pierces the distended mind with the punishment of penance. But they differ from each other in this respect, that the wounds of blows give us pain, the sorrows of compunction have good savour. The one afflict and torture, the others restore, when they afflict us.

Through the one there is sorrow in affliction, through the other there is joy in grief. But because the very act of compunction wounds the mind, he not unfitly calls it discipline.

41. For there are four modes in which the mind of a righteous man is strongly affected by compunction: when he either calls to mind his own sins, and considers Where He Hath Been; or when fearing the sentence of God's judgments, and examining his own self, he thinks Where He Shall Be: or when, carefully observing the evils of this present life, he reflects with sorrow Where He is; or when he contemplates the blessings of his heavenly country, and, because he does not as yet enjoy them, beholds with regret Where He Is Not. Paul had called to mind his former sins, and was afflicting himself by the sight of what he had been, when he said, *I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.* [1 Cor. 15, 9] Again, from carefully weighing the Divine sentence, he was afraid that it was bad for him in prospect, when he says, *I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perchance, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.* [1 Cor. 9, 27] And again, he was considering the evils of this present life, when he said, *While we are in this body, we are absent from the Lord:* [2 Cor. 5, 6] and, *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me captive to the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* [Rom. 7, 23] And again, he was considering the blessings of his heavenly country, when saying, *We see now through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known.* [1 Cor. 13, 12] And again, *We know that if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2 Cor. 5, 1] And looking at the blessings of this house, he says to the Ephesians, *That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His*

inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who have believed. [Eph. 1, 18. 19.] But blessed Job, considering the evils of this present life, says, *The life of man upon the earth is a temptation.* [Job 7, 1] Whence David says, *Every man that liveth is altogether vanity; and though man walketh in the image of God, yet will he be disquieted in vain.* [Ps. 39, 6] But again, on contemplating his heavenly home, and weighing the evils in which he then was, and considering the good things which he did not as yet enjoy, he says, *Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged;* [Ps. 120, 5] and, *I said in my fear, I am cast out from the sight of Thine eyes.* [Ps. 31, 22] Being raised up in an ecstasy, which our translators properly interpreted *fear,* he saw that he was cast out from the sight of the eyes of God. For after beholding that inward light, which flashed within his mind with bright rays through the grace of contemplation, he returned to himself; and discerned, by the knowledge he had gained, either the blessings which were there, of which he was deprived, or the evils with which he was here surrounded. For no one is able to look on the ills of life as they really are, if he is unable by contemplation to gain a taste of the blessings of the eternal country. Whence also he knew that he had been cast out of the sight of the eyes of God. For when he was raised up in a trance, he saw that which, when he fell back on himself, he lamented that he could not of himself behold.

42. For that compunction with which it dispels all bodily imaginations which crowd upon it, and annoy it, and with which it strives to fix the eye of the heart on the very ray of the boundless light, is wont in truth more deeply to affect a perfect mind. For these appearances of bodily figures it has attracted to itself within, through infirmity of the flesh. But when it is completely filled with compunction, it is here specially on its guard, lest the imagination of circumscribed vision should delude it, when it is searching after truth; and it rejects all imaginations which present themselves to it. For

since it has fallen, by their means, beneath itself, it endeavours to rise above itself, by escaping from them: and after it has been distracted, in an unseemly manner, by many objects, it endeavours to gather itself again together; that prevailing by the mighty power of love, it may contemplate one single and incorporeal Being.

43. And hence it is admitted, at times, to taste some unusual savour of sweetness within, and is suddenly in a measure refreshed, when breathed on by the glowing Spirit; and is the more eager, the more it gains a taste of something to love; and it desires that within itself, which it feels to taste sweetly within, because it has in truth, from the love of its sweetness, become vile in its own sight; and after having been able, in whatever way, to enjoy it, it has discovered what it had hitherto been without it. It endeavours to cling closely to it, but is kept from approaching its strength, by its own remaining weakness; and because it is unable to contemplate its purity, it counts it sweet to weep, and, sinking back into itself, to make its bed in the tears of its own weakness. For it cannot fix the eyes of its mind on that, of which it has only taken a hasty glance within; because it is compelled by its own old habits to sink downwards. It meanwhile pants and strives and endeavours to rise above itself, but sinks back, overpowered with weariness, into its own familiar darkness. But because a mind thus affected, has to endure itself as the cause of a stubborn contest against itself, and because all this controversy about ourselves causes no small amount of pain, when we are engaged in it, whatever pleasure may be blended therewith; Eliu, after having said that God speaks to us in a dream, and that our ears are opened by His words, calls this same opening of the ears a discipline, and with good reason. Because the more the sound of inward wisdom by the grace of its secret inspiration bursts forth upon us, the more does it affect us with distress. For no one would outwardly lament that which he is, if he had not been able to perceive within, that which as yet he

is not. For on seeing that we ourselves were created aright, but that we were deceived by giving a fatal consent to the persuasions of the devil, we observe in our own case, that what we made ourselves is one thing, and what we were made is another: that by nature we were sound, but that we became corrupted through our own fault. And therefore when we are pinched by conscience, we seek to escape from what we ourselves have done, that we may be refashioned after the pattern in which we were first made. Whence it fitly follows,

Ver. 17. *That He may withdraw man from the things that he has done, and may deliver him from pride.*

44. For what has man done of himself but sin? And it is written, *Pride is the beginning of all sin.* [Ecclus. 10, 13] It is rightly said, then, that when man is withdrawn from what he has done, he is freed from pride. To transgress the commands of our Creator by sin, is to be haughty against Him; because a man casts off, as it were, the yoke of His authority, to Whom he scorns to submit by obedience. On the other hand, he who wishes to avoid what he has done, calls to mind what he was made by God: and humbly returns to the order of his creation, when flying from his own deeds, he loves himself as he was at first created by God. But because eternal glory is obtained, and eternal punishments are avoided, by this wisdom, it is appropriately subjoined,

Ver. 18. *Rescuing his soul from corruption, and his life from passing to the sword.*

45. For every sinner, in consequence of his corruption by sin here, is compelled to pass thither to the sword of punishment; that he may be justly punished in that world, by the very sins in which he delighted in this.

We must observe therefore, that God, speaking to us in a dream, delivers us first from corruption, and afterwards from the sword: because in truth He delivers the 'life' of that person from avenging punishment there, whose

mind He here withdraws from the allurement of sin. Nor has he any thing to fear there from the sword of judgment, whom the pollution of guilt has not here corrupted after his amendment. It is well said then, *Rescuing his soul from corruption, and his life from passing to the sword.* For to pass from corruption to the sword, is, after the commission of sin, to arrive at the punishments which have to be endured. It follows,

Ver. 19. *He chastens him also with pain upon his bed, and makes all his bones to waste away.*

46. By bed, or pallet, or couch in holy Scripture, is understood, sometimes carnal pleasure, sometimes a resting in good works, sometimes temporal rest; for what is meant by what our Lord said in the Gospel to a certain one who was healed, *Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house,* [Matt. 9, 6; Mark 2, 11; Luke 5, 24] except that bodily pleasure is signified by bed? And he is specially commanded, when restored to health, to carry that on which he had lain when sick, since every one, who still delights in sin, lies overpowered with fleshly pleasures. But he carries that, when healed, on which he had lain when sick, because when rescued by Divine assistance from his sins, he afterwards endures the insults of that very flesh, in the indulgence of which he used to rest content. But again, by bed, or couch, is designated a resting in good works. Whence the Apostle Peter says, in the Acts of the Apostles, *Aeneas, may the Lord Jesus Christ make thee whole; arise, and make thy bed.* [Acts 9, 34] For what is meant by *rise,* but leave off the sins which thou hast committed? and what by *make thy bed,* but engage in those means of grace, in which thou oughtest to rest? So that by rising he was to forsake what he had done, and by making his bed, find after what he should have done. And both these points the Prophet briefly sums up, in saying, *Turn aside from evil, and do good.* [Ps. 37 27] For to turn aside from evil is to rise from that whereon he lay; but to do good, is to make ready those works that win reward, in which he should

rest. But he who turns aside from evil, but does not as yet do what is good, has risen from that whereon he lay, but has not yet made for himself a place wherein he is to rest. And again, bed, or couch, is taken for temporal rest; as it is written, *Thou hast turned all his bed in his sickness.* [Ps. 41, 3] For when any one, worn out by secular cares, is urged on by Divine grace to forsake the toilsome ways of this world, he is wont to consider how to avoid the attractions of the present life, and to rest from its labours. He presently seeks for himself the station of rest which he desired, and wishes to find a place of cessation from all his labours, as though it were a kind of bed. But because a man while still in this life, in whatever situation, cannot in the secresy of any retirement whatever live without temptations; the pain of temptation is found to press more heavily on that spot, which is contrived for the sake of rest. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Thou hast turned all his bed in his sickness.* As if he were to say, All that he has here contrived for himself for the sake of rest, Thou hast by secret judgment converted to his disturbance. And this is so ordained by the merciful design of God, in order that, in the season of his sojourning, the life of the Elect may be exposed to confusion.

47. For our present life is the road by which we journey on to our home ['patriam']: and we are harassed here by frequent disturbances, in the secret judgment of God, expressly that we may not love our road instead of our home. For some travellers, if they see by accident some pleasant meadows on their road, are wont to delay, and to turn aside from the straight path on which they have entered. And the beauty of the road delays their steps, while it affords them pleasure. The Lord then makes the way of this world rugged to His Elect, who are journeying towards Him: in order that no one when enjoying the rest of this present life, as if it were some beauteous road, might take greater pleasure in prolonging the journey than in speedily arriving at its end; or forget, when delighted by the way, what he used to

long for in his home. But because all the rest, which we have happened to secure for ourselves in this world, is liable to disturbance, it is well said, *He chastens him also with pain upon his bed,* that is, He disturbs us in the rest of this world, either by the stings of temptation, or by the affliction of the scourge. For if the mind of man has been engaged in virtuous pursuits for ever so short a time, without temptation, it is often, in consequence of those very pursuits, in which it is tranquilly engaged, soon elated by those very virtues, which it is endeavouring to multiply within, from being conscious of the progress it is making. It is therefore exposed to the assaults of temptations, by the merciful dispensation of our Ruler, that thus pride, at the advance it is making, may be checked within it. Wherefore after he had said, *He chastens him also with pain on his bed,* he fitly subjoined, *And makes all his bones to waste away.*

48. By bones in holy Scripture we understand virtues; as it is written, *The Lord keepeth all his bones; not one of them shall be broken.* [Ps. 34, 20] Which is specially understood not of the bones of the body, but of the powers of the mind. For we know assuredly, that the bones of many Martyrs were broken in a bodily sense, and the persecutors of the Lord broke the bones of that thief, [John 19, 32] to whom it was said, *To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise,* [Luke 23, 43] as well as those of the other thief on the cross. When He chastens us then with pain on our bed, He makes all our bones to waste away; because when we are assailed with the scourge of temptation, in that rest which we secure for ourselves from this world, we, who might perhaps have been puffed up by our virtues, are brought low by being sore vexed at the knowledge of our infirmity. For when we are advancing as we wish towards God, if no temptation checked our progress, we should believe that we were persons of some strength. But since the Divine dispensation thus deals with us, in order that we may remember our infirmity when tempted, because we forget it when we are advancing, we

learn when we advance what we are by the divine gift; and in our temptation what we are by our own strength. But this temptation would in truth entirely hurry us away, did not heavenly protection keep us up. But it strikes us without breaking, it presses on us without moving us, it staggers, but does not cast us down: that we may feel that it is all owing to our own weakness that we are shaken, but that it is the gift of God that we stand firm. But because a soul which is conscious of any good quality in itself, frequently revels in a kind of delight, on calling its virtues to mind, and is bloated as it were by congratulating itself on its own fulness, it is well said that the bones waste away under the assault of temptation. Because while our own weakness is ascertained by the questionings of temptation, all that, as it were, bloated and florid self-congratulation on our own strength, is dried up by the sudden pain of anxiety. And we who, on weighing our good deeds, believed them to be of some value, when smitten somewhat more heavily are afraid that we are about to perish immediately. It is then that all satisfaction at our goodness is changed into fear of punishment. We then discover ourselves to be guilty, though, but just before, we believed ourselves to be saints. Our mind wastes away, our eyes become dull, all the prosperity which used to smile on us vanishes away; the light itself is loathsome, and the darkness of sorrow alone spreads itself over the mind. We see nothing to please us, every thing which comes before us is full of sorrow. Whence it also properly follows,

Ver. 20. *His bread becomes abominable to him in his lips, and to his soul the food which before it desired.*

49. As if he were to say in so many words; A mind under affliction believes that every thing which used easily to satisfy, and give it pleasure, is turned into bitterness. For by bread is understood in holy Scripture sometimes the Lord Himself, sometimes spiritual grace, sometimes the instruction of divine teaching, sometimes the preaching of heretics,

sometimes sustenance for this present life, sometimes the agreeableness of worldly pleasure. The Lord is signified by bread, as He Himself says in the Gospel, *I am the living Bread, Who came down from heaven.* [John 6, 51]

Again, by bread is understood the grace of spiritual gifts, as is said by the Prophet, *Who stoppeth his ears, that he should not hear of blood, and shutteth his eyes that he should not see evil, he shall dwell in high places, his high place shall be the munitions of rocks, bread is given to him.* [Is. 33, 15. 16.] For what is to close his ears, not to hear blood, except to refuse consent to those persuasive sins which spring from flesh and blood? or what to close his eyes, not to behold evil, but to disapprove of every thing which is contrary to uprightness? Such an one will dwell in high places; for though the flesh still confines him to things below, he has already fixed his mind on things above. His high place is the munitions of rocks, because he who tramples beneath his feet his longings for worldly conversation, raises himself to his heavenly country by the patterns of the fathers who have gone before. And because he is satisfied with spiritual grace through the gift of contemplation, it is rightly subjoined, *Bread is given him;* that is, he enjoys the refreshment of spiritual grace, because he has raised himself above the goods of the world, by hoping for those of heaven. Hence also the Lord says of Holy Church by David, *I will satisfy her poor with bread;* [Ps. 132, 15] because the humble-minded who dwell therein are filled with the refreshment of spiritual gifts. Again, by bread is set forth the instruction of heavenly doctrine, as is said by the Prophet, *Ye who dwell in the land of the South, meet with bread him that is flying away.* [Is. 21, 14] For they dwell in the land of the South who, placed within Holy Church, are breathed upon by the love of the Spirit from on high. But he is flying, who is wishing to escape from the evils of this world. He then who dwells in the land of the South, should meet with bread him that is flying; that is, he who is already full of the Holy Spirit within the Church, should console with words of

instruction the man who is endeavouring to escape from his evil ways. To meet with bread him that is flying, is surely to offer the food of sound doctrine to one who is in fear of eternal punishments, and at one while to restrain his pride by fear, and at another to comfort his fears by encouragement. But because by bread is not unfitly understood the refreshment of holy Scripture, it is said by the same Prophet to the Jews who looked only to the letter, *Wherefore do ye spend your money, but not in bread.* [Is. 55, 2] As though he were saying, Ye consider the holy words, but not for refreshment, because while ye carefully guard the outward letter alone, ye lose that richness of inward refreshment which results from the spiritual meaning. Whence it is properly subjoined in that passage, *And your labour for that which satisfieth not.*

But again by bread is designated the preaching of heretics; as by Solomon the woman who typifies the congregation [‘ecclesiae’] the heretics, and calls together the foolish, says, *Eat ye gladly bread in secret.* Or, as is written in our translation, *Stolen waters are sweeter, and hidden bread is more pleasant.* [Prov. 9, 17] For there are some heresies which are afraid to preach their views openly, and give a greater flavour [‘condiunt’] to their words in the minds of the weak the more they keep them back, as if through greater reverence. Whence it is not improperly said, *Eat ye gladly bread in secret.* For the secret words of the heretics are more relished by miserable hearts, the more they are not possessed by them in common with other people.

But again, by bread is understood the support of this present life; as Jacob, on his way to Laban, says, *O Lord God, if Thou shalt have given me bread to eat, and raiment to put on.* [Gen. 28, 20] And as the Lord says in the Gospel to the crowds which were following Him, *Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.* [John 6, 26] For they had been filled of the seven loaves. And in their

persons the Lord expresses His detestation of those within Holy Church, who approaching to the Lord by holy ministrations, do not by those ministrations seek to gain higher virtue, but only sustenance for this present life: nor do they think what example they should imitate in their conduct, but what gains they may obtain so as to be satisfied. For to follow the Lord from being filled with the loaves, is to have gained temporal support from Holy Church. And to seek the Lord not for the miracles' sake, but for bread, is for people to be eager for religious offices, not for the sake of increasing their virtues, but of acquiring a means of support.

Again, by bread is understood the agreeableness of human pleasure. Whence the Prophet Jeremiah said, while lamenting the abandoned habits of the congregation; *All her people sighs and seeks for bread; they have given all their precious things for food to revive the soul.* [Lam. 1, 11] For the people sighs and seeks for bread, whilst the wicked multitude of men is afflicted, because it is not satisfied, to its heart's desire, with the pleasantness of the present life. And it gives all its precious things for food, because it bows down the virtues of its mind to the desire of transitory pleasure. And it endeavours to revive the soul: because it strives to satisfy its own perverse desires. And hence he immediately well adds in the words of that elect multitude, *See, O Lord, and consider, that I am become vile.* For the People of God becomes vile, when, as the number of the ungodly increases, it engages, in their persons, not in high and heavenly employments, but in worthless and worldly pursuits.

50. What else then does Eliu mean by bread, but the pleasures of this life? For after having stated the power of temptation, he immediately subjoined, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired:* because, in truth, all the sweetness he used before to enjoy from the prosperity of his life, afterwards becomes bitter by the power of temptation. For sometimes whatever joy, and whatever virtue

seemed to smile on him, is suddenly lost through fear of temptation, and the sorrowful mind, as if deprived of these very virtues, is possessed by grief alone. For when it is assailed somewhat more violently by the force of temptation, because it cannot put forth the strength of its usual courage, it laments for it as if it were already lost; and feeling itself emptied of itself, it learns its own weakness, from this its emptiness. And thence it is immediately broken off, as it were, from every pleasure, and loathing the dainty morsels of former delight, takes its fill of that grief which alone it eagerly desires. For every one, when success in holy living smiles favourably on him, is full of mirth: and this very mirth refreshes the mind like pleasurable food. But when he is assailed more sharply by imminent temptation, all joy is through the loathing of grief rejected by his mind, though it used before to rejoice as though fully satisfied with that very joy. Because then a man, when tempted, casts out from the mouth of his heart all pleasurable food, and nothing else gives him pleasure but knowing and lamenting himself, it is well said, *Bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired.*

51. But, as we said before, we are allowed to be thus tempted under the government of the secret dispensation, in order that we, who by the Divine gift are making progress in virtue, may call to mind what we are by our own natural infirmity: and that all who produce the deeds of virtue, from having received of the gift, may offer the sacrifice of humility from a remembrance of our own weakness. But sometimes, after we have increased in strength, not only are we assailed by sins, but chastised by scourges. But when we are assailed by sins, we are dealt with by a merciful dispensation, to keep us from being elated by those virtues, in which we are making progress. But when we are scourged with the rod, we are warned, by the chastisement of evil, not to be led away with the blandishments of the world. Whilst our sins tempt us, they bring low the virtues, which are gaining strength within us;

whilst scourges try us, they root out the pleasures of this world which are rising in our heart. We learn by our sins, which tempt us, what we are of ourselves; by the scourges, which smite us, what we should avoid in this world. We are restrained by the one from inward pride, we are kept back by the other from desiring any thing without us. As long then as we are in this life, we must needs be scourged by the rod, and at times tempted by our sins. For both in the tortures of the scourge, and in our struggle with our sins, not only does our weakness become known to us, but we learn also what progress we have made in virtue. For no one, when at rest, is conscious of his powers. For if there is no contest, no opportunities arise for making trial of our virtues. He who boasts of his bravery in peace, is but a short-sighted warrior. Since then the quality of our strength is often made known by sufferings of the rod, Eliu appropriately adds, saying,

Ver. 21. *His flesh shall waste away, and his bones which were covered shall be laid bare.*

52. For when every outward pleasure is worn away by the pressure of the rod, the bones of inward firmness are laid bare. For what is meant in this place by the word flesh, but fleshly pleasure itself? Or what by bones, but the virtues of the soul? The flesh therefore wastes away, and the bones are laid bare, because while carnal pleasure is brought to nought by the reproof of scourges, those sturdy virtues are laid open, which had long been concealed, as it were, beneath the flesh. For no one learns what progress he has made, except in adversity. For in prosperity, the evidences of strength cannot be discerned. Whence it is written elsewhere, *The Lord commanded His loving kindness in the day time, and declared it in the night.* [Ps. 42, 8] Because, in truth, it is in tranquil rest that each man obtains the grace of the heavenly gift, but it is in trouble and adversity that he gives proof how much he has received. Let our flesh then waste away, that our bones may be laid bare. Let us be smitten with the reproofs of a father, that we may know

what progress we are making. For by the scourge of the Lord the rankness of carnal pleasure is worn down, but the bones of our virtues are laid bare. Our outward beauty is tarnished by this world's sufferings, but that which was concealed within is made manifest. For when the Apostles had been scourged, they were directed to speak no more in the Name of Jesus. [Acts 5, 40, 41] But they rejoiced with exceeding joy, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus: and they confidently replied to their adversaries, *We ought to obey God rather than man.* [Acts 5, 29] See how the strength of their faith shone forth more vigorously in adversity. See how the soundness of the flesh was cut through, but the bones of their virtues were laid open. It is hence said of them by Wisdom, *God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself.* [Wisd. 3, 5] For, though tried by the blows of adversity, they are found worthy by the laying bare of their bones. For that the trial of their scourging is here meant, is plainly declared by what follows, *As gold in the furnace He tried them, and received them as a victim of a burnt offering.* [ib. 6] Because, then, each man's strength is made known only by adversity, it is well said, *His flesh shall waste away, and his bones which were covered shall be laid bare.* For the flesh wastes away, while every thing which is perishable and weak is worn away by the scourge. The bones are laid bare, while by these means our latent strength is also made manifest. As we have before said, not merely is the strength of our resolution made known, but also the weakness of our nature laid bare, by the very trials of adversity; and every one shews indeed under trial the progress he has made through God, but also confesses under the very inflictions of the scourges, how weak he is in himself; because not only are the bones laid bare, but the flesh also wastes away. It is appropriately subjoined,

Ver. 22. *His soul shall draw near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.*

53. For the soul of every just man when tempted is said to draw near to corruption, when, for fear his virtue should elate him, he is compelled by the rod to feel what he is in his own natural infirmity. He approaches, in truth, to corruption, because he learns that by his own strength he is not far from destruction, in order that he may ascribe not to himself but to the Lord, that he is far from that destruction. But he approaches to the destroyers, because he sees that, through the infirmity of the flesh, he is very near to sins which cause death: and from these he is the farther removed by the Divine goodness, the more he is conscious that by his own deserts he is very near them. By contemplating his own condition, David had drawn near to corruption, when he said, *Remember, Lord, that we are dust; as for man his day is grass.* [Ps. 103, 14. 15.] Paul also had, by contemplating his own infirmity, approached the destroyers, when he said, *I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched wan that I am I who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* [Rom. 7, 23. 24.] To approach then to corruption, and to the destroyers, is for a man, on considering the infirmity of our human nature, to see that he is a sinner, as far as concerns his deserts, and that he possesses, of his own strength, no ground of boasting [‘arrogantiam’] in himself. For what are we, when bereft of the protection of our Maker? a protection which is considered to be less necessary, if always enjoyed. But it is withdrawn, generally, for our good, that it may be shewn to a man’s own self how worthless he is without it. The hand of God, then, which bears us up, even when we know it not, in prosperity, brings us to a true knowledge of ourselves in adversity. And when we begin to fall, from being deprived of it, we are yet supported by its aid. It is a warning to us, that we are trembling to our fall, and His protection, that we remain stedfast.

54. Let no one consider then that he has any real virtues, even if he is able to display any resolution: since, if Divine protection leave him to himself, he is suddenly unnerved and overpowered in that very point in which he used to boast that he was standing firm. For what is meant by the man of God, when directed to prophesy against the altar at Samaria, exerting in the king's presence the authority of bold speaking, by his miraculously withering the extended arm of the rash king, which he afterwards restored to health of his tender pity? by his refusing when invited, to eat in his house, because he kept the commands of the Lord, which forbade him to eat by the way? But yet he was afterwards seduced to eat on the same way, and perished when he had eaten. [1 Kings 13, 1-34] What do we gather from an accurate examination of this matter, what (if I may so speak) do we fear and suspect, except that he was perhaps silently boasting in himself that he had put contempt on the king in obeying the commands of the Lord? Hence it was that he was soon shaken from his inward stedfastness, and that sin stole on him in his work, from the same source as pride sprang up in his heart; in order that he might learn when deceived by the false prophet, that it was not of his own strength that he had withstood the commands of the king. But he rightly received the sentence of death from the mouth of that very person, by whose seduction he had turned away from the precept of life, in order that he might receive the true announcement of his punishment, from the same quarter by which he had through carelessness admitted a fault. Because then the grace of God more especially guards and instructs each of His Elect, at the very time when He seems to smite and forsake them, let it be rightly said, *His soul shall approach to corruption, and his life to the destroyers;* that so the more he is led by adversity to consider that he is in his own strength nigh unto death, he may, in all cases in which he has acted with resolution, have surer ground of life, by flying to the protection which comes from trust in God.

BOOK XXIV.

The last eleven verses of the thirty-third chapter and the eighteen first verses of the thirty-fourth chapter are expounded, and striking truths are taught concerning Christ the Mediator, contemplation, the course of conversion, and the pastoral office.

1. It was in speaking of the power of the Divine dispensation, that Eliu observed of the sufferings of each of the Elect, saying, *His soul will draw nigh to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.* And in speaking of the trials of a single person, he shews in what condition of trial the whole human race is placed; and in mentioning what specially befals individuals, he plainly intimates what takes place generally in all. For he so described the temptation of certain persons, taken in themselves one by one, that the temptation of all men in a body might be also understood thereby. For the whole body of the Elect suffers in this life under the pain of this labour. He therefore immediately introduced a general remedy to cure this general malady, saying,

Ver. 23, 24. *If there shall be an Angel, speaking for him one of like things to shew the righteousness of man, he will pity him.*

2. For who is this Angel, but He who is called by the Prophet, *The Angel of mighty counsel?* [Is. 9, 6. lxx.] For because to declare is called “evangelize” in Greek, the Lord in announcing Himself to us is called ‘Angel.’ [as Is. 63, 9] And he well says, *If there shall be a messenger* [*or Angel*] *speaking for him;* [Rom. 8, 26] because, as the Apostle says, He even intercedes for us. But let us hear what he says for us; *One of like things.* It is the way with medicine to cure disease sometimes by similar, sometimes by contrary, remedies. For it has frequently been wont to cure the hot by warm, and the cold by cold, applications; and on the contrary, the

cold by warmth, the hot by cold. Our Physician then, on coming to us from above, and finding us oppressed with such great diseases, applied to our case something of a like, and something of a contrary, nature. For He came to us as Man to men, but as a Just One to those who were in sin. He agreed with us in the truth of His nature, He differed from us in the power of His righteousness. For sinful man could not be amended, except by God. But it was necessary that He who was healing him, should be an object of sight; in order that He might amend our former sinful lives, by setting a pattern for us to imitate. But it was not possible that God could be seen by man; He therefore became man, that He might be seen. The Holy and Invisible God appeared therefore as a visible man, like ourselves; that while He seemed to be of like nature, He might teach us by His holiness. And while agreeing with our condition in verity of nature, He might put a stop to our sickness by the might of His skill.

3. Because then the Lord, when coming in the flesh, did not bear our guilt for His own fault, nor our punishment as a matter of necessity, (for untainted by spot of sin, He could not be involved in our condition of guilt, and therefore voluntarily underwent our death, when He so willed, every kind of necessity lying beneath His feet [‘calcata’],) it is rightly said, that that messenger speaks, in behalf of man when tempted, ‘one of like things,’ because He was neither born as other men, nor was like them in His dying, or His rising again. For He was conceived, not by the cooperation of natural intercourse, but by the Holy Spirit coming on His Mother. [Luke 1, 35] And when born He proved the fecundity of His Mother’s womb, though preserving its virgin purity. But again, we all die when we do not wish it; because we are constrained through the sinfulness of our nature to pay the debt of punishment. But He, from having no admixture of sin, did not submit to any punishment as a matter of necessity. But because He subdued our guilt by triumphing over [al. ‘condemning’] it, He underwent our

punishment out of pity for us; as He Himself says, *I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again.* [John 10, 18] Who had also said before, *No one taketh it from Me; but I lay it down of Myself.* But again, He was not raised again like other men; because our resurrection is deferred to the end of the world, while His was celebrated on the third day. And we indeed rise by Him, for He rises by Himself. For He Who was God needed not, as we, to be raised up by any one else. In this then does His resurrection differ from ours, that we do not rise again of ourselves, as He did. For since we are simply men, we need some superior assistance to enable us to rise. But He as God displayed the same power of raising [Oxf. Mss. 'resuscitationis.' edd. 'rising.'] again with the Father and the Holy Spirit, though He alone in His human nature had experience of it. Because then the Lord, though truly born, truly dead, and truly raised again, differs from us, in all these points, in the greatness of His power, but agrees only in the verity of His nature, it is well said that that Messenger speaks for us *one of like things.* For since He surpasses us in all His doings with His immeasurable power, yet in one point, the verity of His nature, He does not differ from us.

4. He speaks in our behalf to the Father, through that in which He shews Himself to be like us. For His speaking or intercession is His proving Himself to be very Man for man's sake. And well, when he had said, *He says one of like things,* he immediately added, *that he might declare the righteousness of man.* Because, if He had not become like unto men, man would not appear just before God. For He announces our righteousness, by the very fact 'that He deigned to take on Himself our infirmity. [Heb. 2, 16, 17] For that fatal persuasion had polluted us all with the infection of sin from our very origin; [Gen. 3, 3] and there was no one who, in speaking to God in behalf of sinners, could appear free from sin; because an equal guilt had involved all alike who were created from the same lump. Therefore the

Only-begotten of the Father came to us, and assumed our nature without committing sin. [Rom. 5, 12] For it was requisite that one who could intercede for sinners should be free from sin, because doubtless He could not wipe away the infection of others' guilt, if He had to bear His own. It is well said then, that in appearing in our likeness He announced righteousness to men. For He proved Himself, in interceding for sinners, to be so righteous a Man as to merit forgiveness for others. It follows,

Ver. 24. *He will pity him, and will say, Deliver him from going down to corruption; I have found a way to propitiate for him.*

5. The Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, shews mercy on man, by having assumed the form of a man. Through this compassion He says to His Father on behalf of redeemed man, *Deliver him from going down to corruption.* For as we before said, His saying, *Deliver him,* is His shewing forth man's nature free by taking it upon Him. For by that flesh which He assumed, He proved the freedom of this also which He redeemed. This ransomed flesh is, in truth, ourselves, who are fettered by the consciousness [al. 'condition.'] of our guilt. But by the righteousness ['aequitate.'] of so mighty a Redeemer are we set free, as He says Himself, *If the Son hath set you free, ye shall be free indeed.* [John 8, 36] And in behalf of this ransomed man it is well said, *That he go not down to corruption.* For it had been said above, *His soul shall draw near to corruption.* It is declared afterwards, *That he go not down to corruption.* As if He were to say, Because he is aware, from a sense of his infirmity, that he is not far from corruption, therefore let him not descend to the death of corruption. For he would rightly go down to corruption, if he were to consider that by his own strength he was far removed from it. But because he has approached thereto with humility, he ought to be mercifully delivered therefrom; that the more he confesses he is weak by nature, he may be the more strengthened against the sins which assail him. For

whoever extols himself above his proper condition, is weighed down by the very burden of his pride, and plunges himself the lower, the more he has rushed into the sin of pride, and has separated himself far from Him Who is truly exalted; [Luke 14, 11] and he sinks the more to the bottom, from the very fact, that he considered himself in union with the highest; as is said by the Prophet to the soul which exalts itself, *The more beautiful thou art, go down, and sleep with the uncircumcised.* [Ez. 32, 19] For every one who neglects to consider the hideousness of his infirmity, but looks through haughtiness of pride to the credit of his virtue, sinks the lower, from his being more beautiful. Since from priding himself on his merits, he falls into the lowest depths of destruction, on account of the very qualities, for which he considered himself worthy of honour. And he descends and sleeps with the uncircumcised, because he perishes in eternal death with other sinners. Because then this man humbly confessed that he was near to corruption, it is well said of him, *Deliver him from going down to corruption;* in order that he may the more escape punishment, from his not turning his eyes towards what is wrong. But because there was no one for whose merits the Lord could have needs been reconciled to us, the Only-begotten of the Father, taking on Himself the form of our infirmity, alone appeared just, in order that He might intercede for sinners.

6. And the Messenger, when speaking in behalf of this ransomed man, well says, *I have found a way to propitiate for him.* As though the Mediator between God and man were plainly to say, Because there was no one to appear before God as a righteous intercessor in behalf of man, I have made Myself a Man, to gain propitiation for mankind; and in manifesting Myself as a Man, I found a way of justly propitiating for him. And because the Lord, in taking on Him infirmity, when He endured our punishment in His death, reversed our corruption by His rising again, that Messenger fitly subjoins the sufferings of our mortal state, and shews pity on them, saying,

Ver. 25. *His flesh is consumed by punishments, let him return to the days of his youth.*

7. For when that first man fell from God, we were driven from the joys of Paradise, and were involved in the miseries of this mortal life; [Gen. 3, 23. 24.] and we feel, by the pain of our punishment, what a grievous fault we committed by the persuasion of the serpent. For having fallen into this state, we have found nothing, out of God, except affliction. And because we have followed the flesh, through the sight of the eyes, we are tortured by that very flesh which we preferred to the commands of God. For in it we daily suffer sorrow, in it torture, in it death; that the Lord by a marvellous economy might convert that, by which we committed sin, into a means of punishment; and that the severity of punishment might spring from the same source as that which had given rise to sin; so that man might be disciplined to life by the bitter suffering of that very flesh, by the pride of delighting which he had drawn near to death.

8. Since then the human race was oppressed by the innumerable sufferings of this life in the flesh, but both the guilt and punishment of our sin were blotted out by the coming of our Redeemer, let it be said of redeemed man, *His flesh is consumed with punishments; let him return to the days of his youth.* As if he were to say, Through the punishment of his mortality, he is cast down, as it were, by the age of his old condition; let him return to the days of his youth; that is, let him be renewed in the integrity of his former life, that he may not remain in the state in which he has fallen, but return on his redemption to that for the enjoyment of which he was created. For Holy Scripture is frequently accustomed to put youth for newness of life. Whence it is said to the Bridegroom on his approach, *The young damsels have loved Thee:* [Cant. 1, 3] that is, the souls of the Elect, renewed by the grace of Baptism, which do not yield to the practices of the old life, but are adorned by the conversation of the new man. For he

in truth was bewailing the age of the old man which was wasting away in the midst of sins, who says, *I have become old amongst all mine enemies:* [Ps. 6, 7] and some one also on the other hand, advising a person to rejoice in virtue, says, *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth.* [Eccles. 11, 9] As though he were saying, Let each man who is strong rejoice in his renewal; that is, let him place his joy not in the pleasures of his old life, but in the virtue of his new conversation. But since we are brought back to this strength of new life, not by our own powers, but by the mediation of the Redeemer, let the Messenger say, in interceding for this man under the rod, *Let him return to the days of his youth.* And because, as our Redeemer intercedes to the Father in our behalf, we ourselves shake off the torpor of our former life, and are inflamed with a thirst for prayer, it is well added of ransomed man,

Ver. 26. *He shall pray unto God, and He will he favourable unto him.*

9. He says that the Messenger implores first, and man afterwards; for did not the Lord first intercede with the Father through His Incarnation, and pray for our life, our insensibility would never rouse itself to ask for those things which are eternal. But the entreaty of His Incarnation came first, that our awakening from sloth might afterwards follow. But because the light of truth bursts forth with secret joy in our hearts, after temptations, and frequently after great griefs, it is rightly added of this man thus tempted, and imploring God,

And he shall see his face in exultation.

10. It was stated above, how God bears us down [‘afficit’] by manifesting Himself to us. But it is now stated how He cheers us, while He thus makes Himself known. For a man hath compunction in one sort, when on looking within he is frightened with dread of his own wickedness, and in another when on looking at heavenly joys he is strengthened with a kind of hope and security. The one emotion excites tears of pain and sorrow, the

other tears of joy. For it is called exultation [‘jubilum’], when joy unspeakable is conceived in the mind, a joy which can neither be concealed, nor yet expressed in words. It betrays itself however by certain motions, though not expressed in any suitable words. And hence David the Prophet, on seeing that the souls of the Elect conceive a joy too great for them to bring out in words, declares, *Blessed is the people that knoweth exultation.* [Ps. 89, 15] For he says not “that speaketh,” but “that knoweth,” because exultation can be known in the understanding, though it cannot be expressed in words. For that which is too high for feeling, is felt therein. But since the mind of him who feels it is scarce sufficient for its contemplation, how can the tongue of the speaker suffice to tell of it? Because, then, when the light of truth pierces our hearts, it makes us at one time full of sorrow, from its display of strict justice, and delights us at another by disclosing inward joys: after the bitternesses of temptations, after the sorrows of tribulations, it is fitly subjoined, *He shall see his face in exultation.*

11. For the fire of tribulation is first darted into our mind, from a consideration of our own blindness, in order that all rust of sins may be burnt away. And when the eyes of our heart are purged from sin, that joy of our heavenly home is disclosed to them, that we may first wash away by sorrow that we have done, and afterwards gain in our transports a clearer view of what we are seeking after. For the intervening mist of sin is first wiped away from the eye of the mind, by burning sorrow; and it is then enlightened by the bright coruscations of the boundless light swiftly flashing upon it. At which sight, seen after its measure, it is absorbed in a kind of rapturous security; and carried beyond itself, as though the present life had ceased to be, it is refreshed in a manner by a kind of new being. The mind is then besprinkled with the infusion of heavenly dews from an inexhaustible fountain. It there discerns that it is not sufficient for that

enjoyment, to which it has been hurried, and from feeling the truth, it sees that it does not discern how great that truth is. And it counts itself to be further removed from this truth, the nearer it approaches to it, because unless it beheld it in a certain degree, it would never feel that it was unable really to behold it.

12. The effort therefore of the mind is driven back, when directed towards it, by the bright encircling of its boundless nature. For filling all things with itself, it encircles all things; and our mind does not expand itself to comprehend that boundless object which encircles it, because the imperfection of its own circumscribed state keeps it within narrow bounds. It accordingly falls back at once to itself, and having seen as it were some traces of truth before it, is recalled to a sense of its own lowliness. But yet this unsubstantial and hasty vision, which results from contemplation, or rather, so to speak, this semblance of a vision, is called the face of God. For we, who recognise a person by his face, not unnaturally call the knowledge of God, His face. Whence Jacob says, after he had struggled with the Angel, *I have seen the Lord face to face.* [Gen. 32, 30] As though he were to say, I know the Lord, because He Himself has deigned to know me. But Paul declares that this knowledge will take place most completely in the end, when he says, *Then shall I know, even as I am known.* [1 Cor. 13, 12] Because then, after the contests of labours, after the waves of temptations, the soul is often caught up in rapture, in order that it may contemplate a knowledge of the Divine Presence, (a Presence which it can feel, but which it can never fully enjoy,) it is well said of this man who is tempted, after his many labours, *He will see His face in exultation.* But because the more a man contemplates heavenly things, the more does he amend his earthly doings, after the grace of contemplation he fitly adds the righteousness of his doings.

And He will render to man his righteousness.

13. It is called our righteousness, not as being of ourselves, but as made ours by the Divine bounty: as we say in the Lord's prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread.* [Matt. 6, 11] See we both call it ours, and yet pray for it to be given us. For it becomes ours, when we receive it: but yet it is God's, because it is given by Him. [Luke 11, 3] And it is therefore God's, as of His gift, and it becomes truly ours, by virtue of our accepting it. It is in this way then that God in this place renders to man his righteousness: not that which he had of himself, but that which he received, having been so created as to have it; and in which, having fallen, he would not continue. God therefore will render to man that righteousness unto which he was created, that he may take delight in clinging to God, that he may dread His threatening sentence, that he may no longer trust the alluring promises of the crafty serpent.

14. For our ancient enemy ceases not daily to do the very same thing which he did in Paradise. For he endeavours to pluck out the words of God from the hearts of men, and to plant therein the false blandishments of his own promising. He day by day softens down the threatenings of God, and invites to the belief of his false promises. For he falsely promises temporal blessings, to soften down in men's minds those eternal punishments which God threatens. For when he promises the glory of this life, what else does he do but say, *Taste, and ye shall be as gods?* [Gen. 3, 5] As if he said plainly, Lay hold on worldly desires, and appear lofty in this world. And when he endeavours to remove the fear of the Divine sentence, what else does he say but the very words he used to our first parents, *Why hath God commanded you that ye should not eat of every tree of paradise?* [Gen. 3, 1] But because man has, by the Divine gift, recovered on his redemption that righteousness, which he lost long since after his creation, he exerts himself more vigorously against the allurements of crafty persuasion, because he has learnt by experience how obedient he ought to be; to the Divine

command. And him whom sin then led to punishment, his own punishment now restrains from sin: in order that he may be the more fearful of offending, the more, through the fear of punishment, he blames the evil he has done. Whence it follows,

Ver. 27. *He will look on men, and will say, I have sinned.*

15. He would not know himself to be a sinner, if he had not righteousness. For no one detects his own deformity, except when he has begun to be upright. For he who is altogether deformed, cannot perceive what he really is. But he who is conscious that he is a sinner, has begun in some measure to be righteous; and from being righteous, blames his conduct when yet unrighteous. And by this accusation of himself he begins to cleave to God; when, passing a righteous sentence against himself, he condemns that in himself, which he perceives to be displeasing to Him. This man then, having regained his righteousness, exclaims, *I have sinned.* And the expression which precedes deserves notice, *He will look on men;* and it is then subjoined, *and will say, I have sinned.* For some persons know not that they have sinned, because they do not observe men. For were they to observe men, they would more readily acknowledge how much they had fallen beneath men by sin. And though Holy Scripture is sometimes accustomed to put "men" for those who savour the things of men, as the Apostle says, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal,* immediately subjoining, *Are ye not men?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] Yet sometimes it calls those 'men,' whom reason distinguishes from the beasts, that is, whom it shews to be unaffected by the bestial influence of passions. To whom the Lord says by the Prophet, *Ye, the flock of My pasture, are men.* [Ez. 34, 31] For the Lord in truth feeds them, whom carnal pleasure does not affect as it does the beasts. But, on the other hand, they who yield to the desires of the flesh, are no longer called men, but beasts. As is said by the Prophet of some who were dying in their sins, *The beasts rolled in their*

dung [E.V. *The seed is rotten under their clods.*] [Joel 1, 17] For for beasts to rot in their dung, is for carnal men to finish their life in the filth of lust. For they are said to be no longer men, but beasts, of whom it is said by the Prophet, *Every one was neighing after his neighbour's wife;* [Jer. 5, 8] and of whom another Prophet says, *Their flesh is as the flesh of asses, and their issue the issue of horses.* [Ez. 23, 20] And hence it is said by David, *Man, when he was in honour, did not understand, he has been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them.* [Ps. 49, 20] Since then those are called men, who are supported by reason and justice, and those are termed irrational animals, who are slaves to carnal pleasure, it is well said of this penitent, *He will look on men, and will say, I have sinned.* As though it were said, He beholds the examples of holy men, and considering himself in comparison with them, he discovers that he is sinful. For if a person is desirous of most completely learning his real character, he ought no doubt to look at those who are different from himself: that from the comeliness of the good he may measure the extent of his own deformity, by that of the goodness he has left. For by those who possess every good quality in abundance, he rightly considers of what he is in want. And he beholds in their beauty his own deformity, which he is able to endure within himself, but not to perceive. For a man who wishes to judge of darkness ought to look at the light, in order to see by it what to think of that darkness, by which he is prevented from seeing. For if a sinner looks at himself, without having learnt the character of the righteous, he in no way comprehends himself to be a sinner. For he cannot really see himself; for not knowing the brightness of the light, what else, on looking at himself, does he behold but darkness? We ought then to look at the conduct of the righteous, in order to gain an accurate knowledge of our own. For what they seem to be, is proposed as a kind of model for our imitation.

16. The life of good men is a living study; whence the same righteous men are not undeservedly termed books in the language of Scripture; as it is written, *The Books were opened, and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Books.* [Rev. 20, 12] For the Book of Life is the very sight of the approaching Judge. In this are written as it were, all His commands, for whoever beholds it, soon understands by the testimony of conscience what he has omitted to do. The Books also are said to be opened, because the conduct of just men, in whom the commands of heaven are seen impressed in act, is then made manifest. And the dead were judged out of those things which are written in the Books; because in the conduct of the righteous, which is set forth, they read as in an open book the good which they refused to do themselves, and are condemned on comparison with those who did it. In order therefore that each one then beholding them may not lament his own omissions, let him now observe in them what he should imitate. And this the Elect do not cease to do. For they study the conduct of their betters, and leave off their more depraved course of conduct.

17. And hence in the Song of Songs it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the bridegroom, *Thy two breasts are like two twin kids of the she goat, which feed among the lilies, until the day breathe, and the shadows incline.* [Cant. 4, 5. 6.] For what are the two breasts, except the two peoples coming from Jewry and from among the Gentiles, who are implanted in the body of Holy Church, by the purpose of wisdom, upon the secret of the heart. And they who are elected from these people, are compared to the young of the she-goat, because they are conscious through their humility that they are weak and sinful; but if any obstacles meet them in the way of worldly impediment, as they are hastening on by the power of love, they bound over them, and with the leaps of contemplation climb to the knowledge of heavenly things. And in order to do this, they study the

examples of the Saints who have gone before. Whence they are said to feed amongst the lilies. For what is meant by lilies, but the conduct of those who say with all truth, *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ?* [2 Cor. 2, 15] The Elect, therefore, in order to gain strength to attain the highest eminence, feed themselves to the full by beholding the sweet-scented and pure life of the just. They even now thirst to know the Lord, they burn with the fires of love, to be satiated with the contemplation of Him. But because they are unable to do so while still in this life, they feed meanwhile on the examples of the fathers who preceded them. And hence the time of their feeding on the lilies is appropriately defined by the words, *Until the day breathe, and the shadows incline.* For as long as we are passing along the shades of this mortal state, till the dawn of the eternal day, we need to be refreshed with the examples of the righteous. But when the shade of this temporal corruption has inclined, when this mortal state has passed away, because we behold the light of the day itself within us, we do not seek to be kindled with the love of it by the examples of others. But now, since we cannot as yet behold it, it is specially necessary for us to be roused by looking at the conduct of those who have followed it perfectly. Let us see then how beauteous is the activity of those who pursue their course, and learn how disgraceful is the sloth of the sluggish. For as soon as we behold the conduct of the virtuous, do we condemn ourselves with the punishment of confusion within. Shame presently assails the mind; soon does guilt condemn us with just severity: and we are sore displeased even with that, in which perchance we still disgracefully feel pleasure.

18. Whence it is well said by Ezekiel, *Son of man, shew the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be confounded by their iniquities, and measure the fabric, and blush for all that they have done.* [Ez. 43, 10, 11] For the temple of God. is shewn to the children of Israel to their confusion; when it is shewn to sinners to their confusion, with what great sanctity the

soul of each righteous person shines forth, which God inhabits by His inspiration; in order that they may see therein the good which they slight, and blush in themselves at the evil which they commit. But to measure the fabric, is accurately to weigh the conduct of the righteous. But while we measure the fabric, we must needs blush at all that we have done: because the more accurately we consider and enquire into the conduct of the good, the more severely do we reprove in ourselves all our iniquity. But the Prophet is rightly told, to shew the temple. For since a sinner makes shifts not to consider the righteousness of the just, he should learn it at all events by the voice of the preacher. But to shew the temple to sinners, is to relate the deeds of the virtuous to those who refuse to consider them of their own accord. They then, as we said, who desire to attain to the highest eminence, must necessarily always attend to the progress of their superiors, in order that they may condemn their own fault with greater severity, as they behold in them a higher object of admiration.

19. But why do we say this of sinners, when we see the workers of righteousness themselves also carried forward with so high a dispensation? For one receives the gift of wisdom, and yet reaches not the grace of extraordinary abstinence. Another is endowed with great power of abstinence, but yet is not enlarged in the loftiest contemplation of wisdom. Another is able to foresee all future events by the spirit of prophecy: but yet cannot alleviate the evils of present annoyance, by the gift of healing. Another by the gift of healing alleviates the evils which immediately annoy us, but yet, from not possessing the spirit of prophecy, is ignorant of the future. Another is able to give liberally to the indigent much of what is his own, but yet cannot boldly confront the evil doers. Another boldly confronts evil doers, in God's behalf, but yet refuses to give all his goods to the needy. Another by already constraining himself even from idle talk, subdues the wantonness of the tongue, but yet does not trample down the

emotions of anger which still rise within him. Another now perfectly controls his rising passion, but still allows his tongue full range in pleasantry. What is it then, that this man needs that good quality, in which another is strong, and that another, though powerful in many ways, yet sighs for the lack of those excellencies, which he observes others abundantly enjoying? Except it be that we are so dealt with by a marvellous dispensation, that by means of this which another enjoys, and this man has not, the one may be shewn to be superior to the other: so that the more a man considers, from the virtues which he has not, that he is inferior to those that possess them, he may the more eagerly advance towards humility. And thus it comes to pass, that while they behold in each other something to admire, their separate virtues both keep them from loftiness of pride, and kindle in them a desire after greater progress. For we prepare ourselves with great anxiety to undertake our own improvement, when we observe in others that virtue which we have not ourselves. Whence the prophet Ezekiel, when he had described the flying animals, subjoined, *And I heard behind me a voice of a great commotion,* saying, *Blessed be the glory of the Lord, from His holy place, and the sound of the wings of the living creatures, striking one against the other.* [Ez. 3, 12, 13] For what must we understand by the wings of living: creatures, but the virtues of the Saints? For when they despise the things of earth, they rise on their wings to heaven. Whence it is rightly said by Isaiah, *They who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall lake wings as eagles.* [Is. 40, 31] The flying creatures then strike one another with their wings, because the minds of the Saints, in their desires after heavenly things, are urged on by the mutual consideration of each other's virtues. For a man strikes me with his wing, who kindles me with desire of better things by the example of his own holiness. And I strike with my wing the next living creature, if ever I present to another person a good deed for him to imitate.

20. But since we have said that the conduct of holy men is signified by these living creatures, let us raise our eyes to the light, and consider attentively with what mutual beating of their wings they excite each other. For Paul, when he surpassed the carefulness of other holy men, by labouring more vigorously in preaching, that he might keep himself from pride, and nourish his strength in the bosom of humility, declares in remembrance of his former cruelty, and on contemplating the innocence of all the Apostles, *For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.* [1 Cor. 15, 9] And yet the chief ['primus,' 'principatus.'] of these same Apostles, as though in forgetfulness of the preeminence conferred on him, as if he were endowed with less wisdom, admires the wisdom which was in Paul, saying, *As our most beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood.* [2 Pet. 3, 15. 16.] Lo, Paul admires innocence in the Apostles; lo, the chief of the Apostles admires wisdom in Paul. What then is this, except that holy men who mutually prefer others to themselves, from a consideration of their virtues, as flying animals touch each other with the stroke of their wings, in order that they may excite each other to higher flights, the more humbly they observe something in each other to admire? We must therefore infer from hence how anxiously we, who are lying in the lowest depth, should study the lives of those who are our superiors; if even they, who have already arrived at 'such a height of sanctity, are ever looking out for something to admire and imitate in others, in order that by walking in humility they may advance to greater things.

21. But of these things the reprobate are ignorant: for they ever fix their eyes on the lowest objects. And if ever they come into the way of the Lord, they proceed not to trace the footsteps of those who are better, but always to

look at the examples of those who are worse than themselves. Nor do they look at the conduct of those to whom they may humbly consider themselves inferior, but of those to whom they may proudly prefer themselves. For they look at those who are worse than themselves, to whom they boast that they are preferable, and therefore they cannot advance to better things, because they consider it sufficient for them that they surpass the very worst. Wretched men! they go on in their way, and yet look backward. In their hope indeed they do as it were put a foot before; but in looking to evil examples they turn their eyes behind them. They are anxious to appear upright, but take a crooked standard by which to find that they are such. For if they wish to know themselves as they really are, they should look at the examples, not of those who are worse, but of such as are better, than themselves. And therefore they are not conscious that they are sinners, because they do not look at 'men.' For were they to look at men, they would discover how far removed they were from good men, by their sins. Of this penitent then, who considers the examples of good men, in order to make it clear to himself how grievously he has departed from goodness, it is well said,

Ver. 27. *He will look on men, and will say, I have sinned, and have truly done wrong, and I have not received as I deserved.*

22. Those even who do not believe that they have sinned, generally confess themselves sinners. For it is frequently the case, that men openly confess themselves sinners, but on hearing a true account of their sins, when other persons attack them, they boldly defend themselves, and endeavour to appear innocent. Every one, then, of this character, if he says that he has sinned, speaks untruly; inasmuch as he proclaims himself a sinner not from the inmost heart, but in words only. For since it is written, *The just man in the beginning accuseth himself* [E.V. He that is *first in his own cause* seemeth *just.*], [Prov. 18, 17] he wished to gain credit, not to be humbled,

by confessing his sin: he desired, by accusing himself, to appear humble, without being so. For did he really wish to be humble, by confessing his sin, he would not attack others when convicting him of the commission of it. The righteous then, in passing sentence on his own conduct, knows from the bottom of his heart, by the examples of holier men, that he really is what he professes to be. For he says, *I have sinned, and have truly done wrong.* And adds further of the very pain which he is enduring, *and have not received as I deserved.*

23. For every one when under the rod, thinks still less of his sins, if he considers that he has been smitten either as, or more than, he deserved. But this man, because the more he considers the examples of greater men, the more strictly does he weigh and test himself, acknowledges that he was smitten less than he deserved. Because he sees, from their righteousness, how heinous is the guilt of his own erring, and does not feel his suffering to be severe, from having learned to pass a severe sentence on his own conduct. But it is very easy for a man, when suffering nothing on account of his sins, to confess himself a sinner. We fearlessly call ourselves unrighteous, when we feel no vengeance for our unrighteousness. For in a time of tranquillity we call ourselves sinners, but when chastened for these very sins, by the blow which falls on us, we murmur. Punishment then puts us to the test, whether we truly acknowledge our fault. Let a righteous man then, from regarding his fault severely, say, even under the rod, *I have not received as I deserved.* It follows,

Ver. 28. *For he hath delivered his soul from going onwards to destruction.*

24. Because when Divine Grace goes before us in good works, our free will follows it, we, who yield our consent to God Who delivers us, are said to deliver ourselves; and hence Paul when saying, *I laboured more abundantly than they all,* [1 Cor. 15, 1] for fear he should seem to ascribe his

labours to himself, immediately added, *Yet not I, but the grace of God* which was *with me.* For since he had followed with his free will the preventing grace of God in him, he properly adds, *with me,* that he might neither be unthankful for the Divine gift, nor yet remain a stranger to the merit of free-will. But of him, who by gaining a knowledge of himself consented to Him Who set him free, he rightly says [al. 'it is rightly said.'], *He hath delivered his soul from going onwards to destruction.* It follows,

But that it should live, and see the light.

That is to say, the light of truth, which he could not see when dead in heart. Or certainly, because the Lord has said, *I am the Light of the world,* [John 8, 12] even the dead also shall behold the light, when all the ungodly shall have seen Him coming to judgment in the form of Manhood. But he lives, or beholds the light at that time, who has the eyes of his heart set free, and beholds Him in the form of the Godhead. It follows,

Ver. 29. *All these things God worketh three times with every man.*

25. Of this man tempted and beaten by the scourge it had been said before, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and his soul hath drawn nigh to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.* [ver. 22] But it was subsequently added, *He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him, and he will see His face with joy; and he hath delivered his soul from going onward to destruction, but that it should live, and behold the light.* [ver. 26] In these expressions, then, now collected and accumulated together, the bitterness of sorrow precedes, the joy of security comes after. And it is presently added, *All these things God worketh three times with every man.* As if he were to say, What I have said once of one person only, takes place three times in every person. But we must carefully consider what are these three times, wherein each man is affected with anxiety and sorrow, and is immediately after sorrow called back to the security of joy. For, as I before said, he had stated above, that grievous sorrow first

depresses [‘afficit’] us, and that great delight raises us up afterwards. If we watch then attentively, we find that these three stages of sorrow and joy succeed each other, in the mind of each of the Elect, in these following ways, that is to say, in his conversion, his temptation, and his death.

26. For in that first occasion of conversion, which we have mentioned, great is the sorrow of a man, when, from considering his own sins, he wishes to burst the fetters of worldly cares, and to walk in the way of God along the course of a secure conversation, to cast aside the heavy burden of temporal anxieties, and to bear the light yoke of the Lord, in a bondage akin to freedom. For as he thinks on these things, there occurs to his mind that old familiar carnal pleasure, which, from having become inveterate, binds him the closer, the longer it has held him; and is the more loath to permit him to escape. And then what pain is there, and what anxiety of heart, when the Spirit calls him on one side, the flesh calls him back on the other, his love for his new life invites him on the one hand, his old depraved habits assail him on the other: on the one side he glows with longings for his heavenly country, and on the other has to bear in himself that desire of the flesh, which pleases him to a certain degree, even against his will? Of a man thus embittered it is rightly said, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and his soul hath drawn near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.* But because Divine Grace does not suffer us to be long exposed to these difficulties, it bursts the chains of our sins, and leads us quickly by its consolation to the liberty of our new life; and the joy which succeeds makes up for the former sorrow. And thus the mind of every one when converted rejoices the more on attaining its wishes, the more it remembers the pain it has endured in its endeavours after them. Unbounded is the joy of the heart: because in its hope of security it now draws near to Him, Whom it desires; so that it can rightly be said of it, *He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him, and he shall see His face with joy.* Or

without question, *He hath delivered his soul from going onwards to destruction, but that it should live, and see the light.*

27. But for fear a man should believe himself holy immediately on his conversion, and security should overthrow him, whom the contest with pain could not overpower, he is permitted, in the dispensation of God, after his conversion, to be wearied with the assaults of temptations. The Red sea was already crossed by his conversion, but enemies still oppose him to the face while in the wilderness of this present life. We leave already our past sins behind us, as the Egyptians dead on the shore. But destructive vices still assail us, as fresh enemies to obstruct the way on which we have entered to the land of promise. Our former offences, as enemies who were pursuing us, have been already laid low by the power of God alone. But the assaults of temptations meet us to our face like fresh enemies, to be overcome with our own endeavours also. Conversion in truth produces security: but security is commonly the parent of negligence. To keep security from generating carelessness, it is written, *My son, in coming to the service of God, stand in justice and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation.* [Ecclus. 2, 1] For he says, not for rest, but for temptation, because our enemy is the more eager to conquer us as long as we are in this life, the more he discerns that we are rebelling against him. He cares not to buffet those, of whom he perceives that he can hold quiet possession. But he is excited the more vehemently against us, inasmuch as he is expelled from our hearts, as if from the rightful possession of his own habitation. It was this, which the Lord, in a kind of economy, typified in His own person. For he did not permit the devil to tempt Him till after His Baptism: suggesting to us thereby as a kind of sign of our own future conversion, [Matt. 4, 1] that His members would have to endure more severely the wiles of temptation, after they were beginning to advance Godwards. After the first occasion then of sorrow and joy, which every one feels in his endeavour after conversion, does this

second time succeed. Because a man is assaulted with the attack of temptations, in order that he may not become relaxed by the carelessness of security. And he is generally welcomed with great sweetness of consolation, at the beginning of his conversion, but he experiences afterwards the severe labour of probation.

28. There are in truth three states of the converted; the beginning, the middle, and the perfection. But in this commencement they experience the charms of sweetness, in the mid-time the contests of temptations, but in the close the plenitude of perfection. Sweets then are first their portion, to comfort, afterwards bitternesses to exercise, and at last transcendent delights to confirm them. For every man too first soothes his bride with sweet blandishments, though he tries her when now united to him, with sharp reproofs, and possesses her, when she is proved, with thoughts of security. And hence also the people of Israel, on being summoned out of Egypt, when God betrothed Himself to the sacred marriage of the soul, was vouchsafed at first, in the place of pledges, the allurement of miracles; but, after marriage, is exercised with trials in the wilderness, and after trial, is confirmed in the land of promise with the plenitude of virtue. It first then tasted in the miracles that which it was to seek for; afterwards it was tried by hard trial, to prove whether it could keep safely what it had tasted; and at the last it also deserved to obtain a fuller enjoyment of that, which it had kept safe when put to the test of suffering. A gentle commencement therefore thus soothes the life of every convert, a rugged course proves it in the way, and afterwards full perfection gives it strength.

29. For converts are frequently granted either the most perfect tranquillity in the flesh, or the gifts of prophecy, or the preaching of doctrine, or signs and wonders, or the grace of healing, immediately on their first commencement. But after this they are harassed by the severe trials of temptations, from which, when they first began, they believed

themselves entirely free. And it is thus ordained in the dispensation of Divine Grace, to keep them from being assailed with sharp temptations at their first beginning. For, if bitter temptations were to befal them at the first, they would fall back with ease on the sins they bad abandoned, as having removed but a little distance from them. For they would be again involved from their very nearness, in the sins they first despised. Whence it is also written, *When Pharaoh had let the people go, the Lord led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, which is near, thinking lest perhaps they would repent, if they had seen war rising up against them, and might return to Egypt.* [Ex. 13, 17] War [read 'bella'] then is removed out of the way of those who were coming out of Egypt: because, to those who leave the world, there is presented at first a kind of tranquillity, lest from being alarmed in the tenderness of their first beginning, they should return, through fear, to that world from which they have escaped. They feel, then, first the sweetness of security, they are first nurtured in quietness and peace. But having tasted this sweetness, they endure more patiently the contests with temptations, as they have found in God a higher object of affection. Whence also Peter is first led up into the mountain, first beholds the brightness of the Lord's transfiguration, [Mat.17, 1] and then is afterwards suffered to be tempted by a maid who questioned him; [Mat.26, 69] in order that, having become conscious of his state by his weakness under trial, he might recur with sorrow and love to the sight which he had beheld; and that, when the wave of fear was sweeping him onwards to the ocean of guilt, there might be an anchor of former sweetness, to keep him back. But the struggles with temptations frequently last as long, as the allurements on the first commencement. But frequently there is greater pleasure given at first, and less trial in the season of labour: and frequently again less pleasure at first, and greater trial in the time of labour. But a disproportionate perfection of strength never succeeds the labour of temptation: because every one is

rewarded with the plenitude of perfection, according to the result of the contest. But a convert commonly fails, from believing that he has received the confirmation of perfection, when he is welcomed with certain gifts of grace, in the sweetness of his first beginning: and, from not knowing that they are only the comforts given to beginners, he regards them as the consummation of fulness. Whence it happens, that if assailed by any sudden storm of temptation, he suspects that he is overlooked by God, and lost for ever. But if he were not to place such full reliance on his first commencement, he would, when still prosperous, be preparing his mind for adversity, and would afterwards resist the assaults of sin with the more firmness, as having also foreseen them with greater sagacity. For, by foreseeing these evils, he bears them with greater calmness. But though he foresees, he does not at all decline the contest with them, for the course of our journey is not brought to a close without going through the dust of temptation.

30. But every convert is generally assailed with such temptations, as he never remembers to have been attacked with, before the grace of conversion: not because this same root of temptation did not then exist, but because it did not shew itself. For the mind of man, when engaged with numberless thoughts, frequently remains in a manner unknown to itself, so as to be quite ignorant of what it is suffering: for while it is distracted with many matters, it is diverted from the inward knowledge of itself. But if it desires to have leisure for thinking upon God, and lops off the branches of distracting thought, it then beholds without obstruction, that which springs forth from the inmost depths of the flesh. For if a thistle is growing in the road, it is crushed by the feet of those who journey along it, and its surface is worn away by the constant passing of travellers, so as not to appear. But though the thorns do not shew themselves above and bear fruit, yet the root still remains concealed beneath. But if the feel of travellers have ceased to

bruise and tread it down, whatever living power remained buried in the root soon rises to the surface, and shews itself. It advances in its growth, and comes into view by the thorns that it bears. So also in the heart of the worldly minded, some secret root of temptations seems to grow up with difficulty; for placed as it were in the pathway of daily life, it is crushed by the feet of thoughts which pass over it, and is so trodden down by countless cares, as if by many travellers, as not to be seen. But if the crowd of anxieties is removed by the grace of conversion from the pathway of the heart, so that no importunity of business wears, nor any tumultuous thoughts oppress it, then that which was before concealed is discerned, then the thorn of temptation, springing from the root of sin, freely inflicts its wound. But the hand of the righteous so acts against it, that, as far as may be, it is not covered and concealed, but torn up by the very roots. But till this is done, this thorn so troubles the mind of every convert, that he frequently feels as if nearly overwhelmed by sudden temptation, and fears that its wound has been inflicted with fatal effect to the very quick.

31. But these assaults of temptation are frequently prolonged when they become common, and become, not sharper, but of longer duration. And then they cause less pain, but do more hurt: for the longer they keep hold of the mind, the less terrible do they become, the more usual they are. The mind therefore, when involved in these trials, is distracted here and there, and is confused by the manifold assaults of temptations, and frequently, when summoned from one point to another, it knows not which assailing sin to oppose, or which first to assault itself. It is hence frequently the case that, while rebellious sins severely torture, while they drive to the very brink of desperation the mind of the person who withstands them, a convert is afraid of this very heavenward path, which he chooses as a remedy, and that he stumbles, as it were, when brought to the summit, who used to stand more firmly at the bottom. But he is so hard pressed by the movements of

temptations, which rage around him, that it may be rightly said of him, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired;* [ver. 22] or without question, *His soul hath drawn near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.* But because God in His mercy suffers us to be proved by our temptations [‘probari reprobari’], not to be cast away, (as it is written, *But God is faithful, who does not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,* [1 Cor. 10, 13]) He speedily succours us with the aid of consolation, assuages the rising pangs of temptations, and calms with inward peace the emotions of the thoughts which rise up against Him. And then the mind soon derives great delight from its hope of heaven, on beholding the evil, which she had endured, overpowered. So that of this man tempted and delivered it may be justly said, *He shall see His face with joy;* and, *He hath delivered his soul from going onward to destruction, but that it should live and behold the light.* When these two stages then, that is of conversion and probation, have been passed in sorrow and in joy, there yet remains the third, whose sorrow he has still to fear, and whose pleasures he has to obtain.

32. For after the struggle of conversion, after the pain of probation, there still remains a hard temptation; because he cannot arrive at the joys of perfect liberty, without the debt of human nature is first paid. But every convert, being careful and anxious for himself, ceases not to consider secretly with himself, with what strictness the eternal Judge is coming, and he daily looks forward to his own end, and before the approach of such severity of justice, considers what account he will have to render for his conduct. For though he has avoided all evil deeds, which he could tell to be such, yet as having to come before a strict Judge, he is the more afraid of those faults, of which he is not conscious in himself. For who can understand how many evils we commit every instant, by the irregular

motions of our thoughts? For it is easy enough to avoid deeds of wickedness, but very difficult to cleanse the heart from unlawful thoughts. And yet it is written, *Woe to you who think on that which is unprofitable.* [Mic. 2, 1] And again, *In the day when the Lord shall Judge the secrets of men,* [Rom. 2, 16] after having said before, *Their thoughts mutually accusing or excusing one another.* [ib. 15] And again, *Crafty lips in heart, and in heart they have spoken evil.* [Ps. 12, 2] And again, *For in your heart ye work iniquity on the earth.* [Ps. 58, 2] But when the soul has once forsaken the stability of eternity, and has sunk down to the instability of temporal things, it is obliged against its will to endure, in endeavouring to rise, that fluctuation of alternating emotions, which it sought of its own accord when willing to fall. And thus it is punished by its former pleasures, because it endures, as converted, the labour of the contest, in the very same things in which it sought while perverted the delight of pleasure. And frequently that very sin, which they skilfully detect in themselves, and of whose grievous guilt they are conscious in the sight of God, steals into the thoughts of the Elect against their will. And though they are ever afraid of a strict judgment for all these things, they then especially dread it, when on coming to pay the debt of nature, they see that they are drawing near the severe Judge. And their fear is the more acute, the nearer their eternal retribution approaches. But no empty imagination from the fancy of the thought flits at that time before the eyes of the heart: because when every thing else has been removed, they think of themselves only, and of Him, Whom they are approaching. Their fear increases, as the retribution of righteousness approaches nearer. And as the dissolution of the flesh is hastening on, the more the strict judgment comes, as it were, within their reach, the more mightily is it dreaded by them. And though they never remember to have passed over the things they know, they are yet afraid of those sins of which they are ignorant. Because, namely, they are unable

fully to understand, and pass sentence on themselves, and, as their end draws nigh, they are harassed by more subtle fear. Whence our Redeemer, approaching His dissolution, and maintaining a resemblance to His members, fell into an agony, and began to pray at greater length. For what could He be asking for Himself when in agony, Who used, when on earth, to confer heavenly gifts with power? But on the approach of death, He represented in His own person the struggle which exists in our minds; who suffer a violent fear and dread, on approaching, through the dissolution of the flesh, to the eternal judgment. Nor is a man's mind at that time unseasonably alarmed, when it finds, after this brief state of being, that it must remain unchanged for ever.

33. For we consider, that we have by no means been able to pass through the course of this present life without guilt. We consider also, that even what we have done creditably, is not exempt from a degree of guilt, if we are judged without mercy. For who of us can surpass or even equal the doings ['pietate'] of the fathers who have gone before us? And yet David says, *Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.* [Ps. 143, 2] Paul when saying, *I am conscious of nothing to myself,* cautiously added, *Yet am I not hereby justified.* [1 Cor. 4, 4] James says, *For in many things we offend all.* [James 3, 2] John says, *If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* [1 John 1, 8] What will then the planks do, when the columns tremble? Or how will the shrubs remain unmoved, if even the cedars are shaken with the whirlwind of this fear? The soul then even of the righteous is frequently disturbed with the dread of punishment, as it approaches the dissolution of the flesh. And though it may have lasted some tranquillity in this life, it is staggered when the instant of its death comes on; so that it may be rightly said of him, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired.* Or certainly, on account of the

punishment of fear, that which is there subjoined, *His soul hath drawn near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.*

34. But because the souls of the righteous are frequently purified, through the mere fear of death, from every trifling pollution, and enjoy the pleasures of eternal recompense from the very moment of the dissolution of the flesh; nay very often they rejoice at the sight of the inward recompense, even before they are stripped of the flesh; and because even while paying the debt of their old nature, they enjoy the satisfaction of the new gift, it is therefore rightly said, *He shall see His face with joy.* Or certainly, *He hath delivered his soul from going onward to destruction, but that it should live and see the light.* The soul of the righteous beholds the face of God with joy, because it feels so much of inward happiness, as it can scarce contain even when taken up to God. It therefore lives there and beholds the light, because it fixes its spiritual gaze on the rays of the eternal sun. It lives there and beholds the light, because having trampled under foot all the vicissitudes and shadows of mutability, it clings to the reality of eternity. And by clinging thus to Him Whom it beholds, it attains to a resemblance of His unchangeableness, and as it gazes at the unalterable nature of Him Who made it, it assumes it to itself. For that which has fallen through its own act into a state of change, is transformed to an unchangeable condition by beholding the Unchangeable. Eliu therefore, because he first spoke of the bitterness of sorrow, and afterwards of the joy of consolation, fitly added of this man thus afflicted and thus delivered, *All these things God worketh three times in every man,* that is to say, in conversion, in probation, and in death. For in these three states, a man first suffers under sharp pangs of sorrow, and is afterwards comforted by great pleasures of security. But because the mind of each of the Elect suffers in each of these three stages, that is, in the pain of conversion, the trial of probation, or the dread of

dissolution, and is purified and set free by this very suffering, it is appropriately added,

Ver. 30. *That he may recal their souls from corruption, and enlighten them with the light of the living.*

35. For that is the light of the dying which we behold with our bodily eyes. But they who still live for this world, are in darkness in the light of the dying. But they are enlightened with the light of the living, who despising the light of the world, return to the splendor of the inward brightness, that they may live in that place where they may see, by feeling it, the true light, where light and life are not different from each other, but where the light itself is life also; where the light so encircles us from without as to fill us within; and so fills us within, as, being itself uncircumscribed, to circumscribe us without. They are enlightened therefore with this light of the living, which they behold at that time the more clearly, the more purely they now live by its aid.

36. Eliu has uttered great and very powerful words. But it is a characteristic of every boastful person, that, while giving utterance to truths and mysteries, he suddenly blends with them, through pride of heart, some foolish and proud expressions. For he endeavours to please the world without, in that which he thinks with truth; and is soon despoiled of the truth, just as through haughtiness of pride he goes back from what is inward. For, because he seeks to be approved of outwardly as a man of learning, he loses inwardly the fulness of wisdom, in which he was instructed. Whence also Eliu, (who, as we have often said, represents the arrogant,) having put forth many profound and wise sayings, as soon as he has uttered these sentiments of truth and mystery, is elated by being puffed up with pride at his wisdom. And as his pride rightly deserved, his feeling soon vents itself in empty words. For he subjoined, saying,

Ver. 31 — 33. *Attend, O Job, and hearken unto me, and hold thy peace while I speak. But if thou hast any thing to say, answer me; speak: for I wish thee to appear just. But if thou hast not, hearken unto me; hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.*

37. He shews what opinion he has of himself by this expression in which he says, *Attend, O Job, and hearken unto me, and hold thy peace while I speak.* For it is enormous pride to exact respect from one's elder, and to impose silence on one better than one's self. But because holy preachers, when reproving others, frequently turn back to their own inmost thoughts, through the grace of humility, and seek to ascertain if perchance they are mistaken, in the very thing which they reprove, and give those, whom they reprove, the liberty of stating, in their own behalf, whatever they think more just, haughty men also sometimes wish to imitate this plan. For putting aside, for a while, their pride in words, they seek for a justification of those whom they reprove, if perchance they are able to find one. Not because it is their real feeling, but they wish to set themselves off by a show of humility. For they are afraid of appearing to be proud and haughty, because they are so. Whence Eliu immediately subjoined, saying, *But if thou hast any thing to say, answer me; speak, for I wish thee to appear just.* But because he did not say this sincerely, he did not wait to hear that which he had asked for. For he added immediately, *But if thou hast not, hear me; hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.* For those who sincerely seek to hear what is just, patiently wait to hear what they seek for. But Eliu, because he did not sincerely put forth the words of request, did not allow his question to be answered, but immediately burst forth with that, of which he was full within, and shewed how he stood in his own eyes, by saying, *Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.* For when proud men say any thing which has a humble sound, they do not long remain in the semblance of this same humility. If they perchance ask to have an answer, they immediately

avoid being instructed, by beginning to speak; because the desire of display which springs up from its root in the heart soon checks the words which they had spoken superficially. And they soon prove that this form of humility, which they have assumed in appearance only, is foreign to their character, by being unable any longer to maintain it. Behold how Eliu, when he seeks to learn righteousness, offers to teach it. Behold how his tongue, in seeming to enquire for what is just, had spoken in humble strain. But it was soon unable to restrain his swelling consciousness of pride. For he added immediately. *Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.* But because haughty men are puffed up by swelling pride in what they say, and placed, as it were, on high, assume the appearance of learned men, just as if their words were poured forth from heaven by a kind of condescension, over undeserving persons, a verse is rightly inserted by the writer of this history, in order to observe,

Chap, xxxiv. 1. *Eliu also pronounced and said these things likewise.*

38. For what is meant by this word "pronounced" but the puffing up of pride? in order that his words, which spring from the deep root of pride, might come forth as it were with a degree of majesty and distinction. It is thus in truth that all men of arrogance are wont to speak. For they bring forth with a kind of assumption that which they believe they have gained a special understanding; and perhaps are preaching humility at the very time, when they are giving an example of haughtiness by being puffed up with pride. And hence it is that their preaching cannot remain consistent with itself; for by their perverse pride they impugn that truth, which they disseminate when they speak properly. For they impart their words to their humble auditors, not as if entering into their feelings, but as if barely condescending to them. For they consider that they are exalted on high, and, as if they were far superior, they hardly deign to turn towards their hearers, from their high eminence, a glance of doctrine. But the words of the just

spring, on the other hand, from the root of humility, in order to be able to bear the fruit of piety: and they impart whatever sound advice they can, not by boasting, but by sympathising with others. For, by words of love, they so put either themselves into the place of their hearers, or their hearers into theirs, as if their hearers were teaching by their aid that, which they are being taught, and they were learning from their hearers that, which they are putting forth and teaching themselves. Let us hear then what Eliu says, representing as he does the boastful, and commencing with the display of pronouncement. It follows,

Ver. 2, 3. *Hear my words, O ye wise men, and listen to me, ye learned. For the ear trieth words, and the throat discerneth meats by the taste.*

39. As if he were to say, as the ear does not discern meats, nor the throat words, so a fool does not understand the sentence of the wise. Hear therefore what I say, ye wise and learned, who can understand the meaning of what has been said. Let us see then how great is his pride, who imagines that his words can be fitly heard only by the wise. But the true preacher of wisdom says, *I am a debtor both to the wise, and to the unwise.* [Rom. 1, 14] But the arrogant, on the other hand, in his preaching looks only for the ears of the wise. And this not because he preaches for the purpose of making men wise, but he seeks for wise men, in order that he may proudly display his sentiments. For, as was said before, he does not seek to instruct them, but to display himself. Nor does he consider how righteous those that hear him become, but how learned he appears, when listened to by the learned. But since no one would listen to the preaching of the proud, if they did not throw in some semblance of humility; Eliu, after having extolled himself with swelling words, again condescends, as it were, to put himself on a level of equality; saying,

Ver. 4. *Let us choose to us judgment, and let us see among ourselves what is the best.*

40. But we easily learn, by considering the words which follow, whether he sought for this judgment from humility of heart. It follows,

Ver. 5, 6. *For Job hath said, I am just, and God hath subverted my judgment. For in judging me there is falsehood: and mine arrow is violent without any sin.*

He complains that Job had spoken these things, [See cha, 2] which the words of the sacred history prove on examination that he had never said. But he, who had sought for a judgment on equal terms, proceeds to promulgate a sentence from a fault of his own invention. For it follows,

Ver. 7, 8. *What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water, who goeth with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men?*

Behold, in seeking a judgment, he has pronounced a judgment; and after his own allegation, without waiting for any statement of blessed Job, he condemned him as deserving of condemnation from his intercourse with the wicked. For he says, *What man is like Job?* That we may be sure to understand, No one. And he subjoins, *Who drinketh up scorning like water.* For water, when drunk, is so liquid a draught, that it is not kept from being swallowed by any clamminess that it has. But to drink up scorning as water, is to mock God without any impediment in one's thoughts, so that no fear opposes the pride, which the tongue or the mind displays. But how far this judgment of his upon blessed Job errs from the roadway of truth, we learn from that solemn declaration of God, in which He says to the devil, *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth?* [Job 1, 8] Behold how Eliu declares him to be a sinner beyond comparison, whom the Truth pronounces to be righteous beyond comparison. But it is the peculiar way with haughty preachers, that they are more desirous of strictly reproving their hearers even when distressed, than to cherish them in a kindly manner. For they study more to chide and reprove faults, than to encourage goodness with praise. For they are anxious to appear superior to

other people, and they are better pleased when anger raises their feelings than when charity brings them down. They ever wish to find something, to smite sharply with reproof. Whence it is written, *In the mouth of the, foolish is a rod of pride,* [Prov. 14, 3] because in truth he knows how to smite sharply, but not to sympathize with humility.

41. Holy preachers are also accustomed to reprove their hearers with sharp words, and to rage with strict severity against their sins: as it is written, *The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened deep.* [Eccles. 12, 11] But their words are rightly called nails, since they do not know how to handle gently the sins of offenders, but how to pierce them through. Were not the words of John nails, when he said, *O generation of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come'?* [Matt. 3, 7] Were not the words of Stephen nails, when he said, *Ye have always resisted the Holy Ghost?* [Acts 7, 51] Were not the words of Paul, when he said, *O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you?* [Gal 3, 1] and again when saying to the Corinthians, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] But it is necessary for us to look carefully: for when righteous preachers observe on the other hand any good deeds in those whom they reprove, with what just consideration do they proceed to use these same words of reproof. Behold! Paul, when instructing the Corinthians, and seeing them guilty of the sin of schism, began by saying, *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God, which is given you in Christ Jesus, that in every thing ye are enriched by Him.* [l Cor. l, 4, 5] He praised them much in saying, that they were enriched in Christ in all things. And, lo! he again multiplies his soothing expressions, by saying, *In all utterance, and in all knowledge, as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.* [1 Cor. 5, 6] He said, the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, as though they had carried out in their conduct, what they had learned from his teaching. And he subjoined just

after, in summing up their praises, *So that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.* [1 Cor. 1, 7] I pray thee, O Paul, inform us what art thou aiming at by these numerous words of favour? And, lo! it follows shortly after, *But I beseech you, brethren, by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you. For it hath been signified unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.* [1 Cor. 1, 10. 11.] Of which contentions he afterwards added, saying, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] See with what praises he comes down to plain words of reproof; see with how gentle a hand of kindness he has opened the way for strict rebuke in the hearts of his hearers. For he first endeavoured to bind the arms of the proud by the bands of blandishments, in order to cut afterwards into the sore of their pride with the knife of correction. The Corinthians in truth possessed qualities which deserved praise, and such also as deserved reproof. The skilful physician then first caressed with praises the sound limbs about the wound, and afterwards pierced with a blow the putrid cavity of the wound. This rule of teaching has its weight with holy preachers on either side, so that they favour and cherish what is right, and cut off with punishment what is wrong.

42. But frequently holy preachers too strike severely. But it is one thing when justice urges on, another when pride puffs up. The righteous, when severely correcting, do not lose the grace of inward sweetness. For they frequently adopt the harshness of strict vigour, in order to keep in check the disorderly passions of the wicked, but they melt within with the fire of charity, and glow with affection towards those, against whom they are raging with severe reproof. And they humble themselves moreover beneath them in the secret of their heart within, while they seem to scorn and chasten them in the sight of men with the sharp stings of punishment. But

they frequently both despise by not despising them, and despair by not despairing, in order that they may lead them to fear, and to shrink back the more speedily from sin, the more they point out to them that the pit of destruction is, as it were, nearer to them. But they frequently also point out their own faults to their disciples, in a kind of graceful temperament, in order that they may hear and learn, how strictly they censure themselves for their own conduct. But they regulate themselves with such judgment, as not to be severe within, even when they exalt themselves; nor again, when humbling themselves, outwardly remiss: for they keep up humility in their discipline, and discipline in their humility. Paul maintained discipline, when saying to the Corinthians, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] But even when maintaining discipline he lost not his humility; because he began by deprecation, saying, *I beseech you, brethren, by the mercy of God, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you.* [1 Cor. 1, 10] Again he maintained humility, when, on speaking somewhat more at length than perhaps he had wished to the same Corinthians, he reproves himself, saying, *I am become a fool.* [2 Cor. 12, 11] Yet in this humility he did not give up discipline, since he immediately ‘added, *Ye have compelled me.* He exhibited an instance of great humility, when he said to his disciples, *For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord; and ourselves your servants through Christ.* [2 Cor. 4, 5] But he lost not in this humility the justness of discipline, for he says to the same, offending, *What will ye? shall I come to you with a rod?* [1 Cor. 4, 21] and so on. Holy preachers therefore well know how to regulate their skill in teaching by moderation on either side, and when they detect the faults of offenders, they have the art to reprove severely at one time, and humbly to deprecate at another. But when haughty men seek to imitate them, they adopt from them their sharp words of reproof, but know not how to adopt from them with sincerity the entreaties

of humility. For they are better able to be terrific, than gentle; and they learn accordingly reasons for setting themselves up, though they neglect to learn humility. And since they do not know how to admonish offenders with gentleness, from their habit of being over severe in angry invective, they let themselves loose even against good doers. And this Eliu, as representing such persons, does not comfort Job, but reproves him, saying, *What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning as water, who goeth with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.* And because pride is ever a stranger to truth, he presently launches out even in falsehood, saying,

Ver. 9. *For he hath said, A man will not please God, even though he run with Him.*

43. But that he never said so, every one acknowledges who reads the words of blessed Job. But yet what wonder, that he who speaks for the sole purpose of proudly setting himself off, invents something to find fault with in another person? For how can he adhere to “truth in his words of reproof, whom pride of mind within removes far away from the same truth? It follows,

Ver. 10. *Therefore hearken unto me, Ye men of understanding.*

Behold again that, puffed up by pride and haughtiness, he seeks for those only who are able to follow him, by understanding him properly; and thus bursts out with what he was thinking of, saying,

Ver. 10, 11. *Let unmercifulness* [‘impietas’] *be far from God, and iniquity from the Almighty: for the work of a man shall He render unto him, and will restore to them according to the ways of every man.*

44. He well said, that iniquity or unmercifulness is not in Almighty God. But that which he added is by no means always the case in this life, namely, that He renders to each man according to his work, and according to his own ways. [see Rev. 22, 12. 2 Cor. 5, 10.] For both many who commit unlawful and wicked deeds He prevents of His free grace, and converts to

works of holiness: and some who are devoted to good deeds He reproves by means of the scourge, and so afflicts those who please Him, as though they were displeasing to Him. As Solomon bears witness, saying, *There are just men to whom many things happen, as though they had done the deeds of the wicked; and there are wicked, who are as secure as though they had the deeds of the just.* [Eccles. 8, 14] God doubtless so ordains it of His inestimable mercy, that both scourges should torture the just, lest their doings should elate them, and that the unjust should pass this life at least without punishment, because by their evil doings they are hastening onwards to those torments, which are without end. For that the just are sometimes scourged in no way according to their deserts, is shewn by this very history which we are considering. For the same blessed Job had not been scourged for any fault, who was praised by the attestation of the Judge Himself before the smarting of the scourge. Eliu therefore would speak more truly, if he had said, That there is not unmercifulness and iniquity in God, even when He seems not to render to men according to their own ways. For even that which we do not understand, is brought forth from the righteous balance of secret judgment. But because haughty preachers, when they scatter abroad many follies, also frequently utter many things that are true and solid, Eliu rightly subjoins,

Ver. 12. *For truly God will not condemn without cause, nor will the Almighty subvert judgment.*

45. The Lord said to the devil, *Thou hast moved Me against him to afflict him without cause.* [Job 2, 3] But Eliu says, *That the Lord will not condemn without cause.* A statement which is believed to be at variance with the words of Truth, unless weighed with careful consideration. For to condemn is one thing, to afflict another. He afflicts therefore in some respect without cause, but does not condemn without cause. Had He not afflicted Job in some respect without cause, since sin was not blotted out, but merit

increased thereby? For He cannot condemn without reason, inasmuch as condemnation cannot take place partly for a certain purpose: since it punishes at the end all the ungodliness which any one has here committed. Nor does Almighty God subvert judgment: because, although our sufferings seem to be unjust, yet they are rightly inflicted in His secret judgment. It follows,

Ver. 13. *Whom else hath He appointed over the earth, or whom hath He placed over the world which He hath made?*

46. In order, namely, that thou mayest understand, No one. For He governs indeed by Himself the world which He created by Himself: nor does He need the aid of others in governing, Who needed it not for creating. But these points are brought together, in order that he might plainly point out, that if Almighty God does not neglect to govern by Himself the world which He created, He most certainly governs aright that which He created aright; that He does not order in unmercifulness that which He fashioned in mercy; and that He Who provided for their being before they were made, does not forsake them after their creation. Because then He is present to rule, Who was the First Cause at their creation, He therefore does not omit to take care of us. Whence also he fitly subjoins,

Ver. 14. *If he hath directed his heart towards Him, He will gather to Himself his spirit, and his breath.*

47. The heart is crooked, when it seeks for things below. It is made straight when it is raised to things above. If a man therefore direct his heart to the Lord, the Lord draws to Himself his spirit and his breath. He uses, namely, spirit for inward thoughts, but breath, which is drawn through the body, for outward actions. For God, then, to draw the spirit and breath of man to Himself, is for Him so to change us both within and without, to turn towards Him in our desires, that nothing outward may any longer please the mind, and that the flesh (even if it wishes it) may not endeavour to attain

any inferior object; but that the whole man may have its inward desires kindled towards Him from Whom it springs, and may bind itself closer to Him without, by self-control. Whence also he fitly subjoins,

Ver. 15. *All flesh shall fail together, and man shall return to ashes.*

48. For all flesh fails together, when it is no longer a slave to its own emotions; because the spirit presiding therein restrains all its waverings, and destroys as it were with the sword of Its severity all evil which lived therein. Jeremiah had, in truth, slain himself with this sword of discipline, when he said, *After Thou hadst converted me, I did penance, and after Thou hadst shewed to me, I smote my thigh.* [Jer. 31, 19] For what is understood by the thigh, but carnal pleasure? And what his saying, *After Thou hadst shewed unto me, I smote my thigh,* except that after he spiritually beheld heavenly things, he extinguished every infirm carnal desire which used to live in him: that as heavenly objects opened upon him, he might feel less pleasure in those inferior things which he had possessed? For the more a man begins to live to things above, does he begin to die to things below. For as far as concerns the love of carnal doings, the whole flesh of Paul had perished together, when he said, *I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me.* [Gal. 2, 20]

49. Eliu also properly subjoined in this place, *And man shall return to ashes.* For every one who is involved in sin, forgets his mortal condition, and while he is still puffed up with pride, remembers not that he is earth. But when, after the grace of his conversion, he is touched with the spirit of humility, what does he call to mind that he is, but ashes? David had already returned to ashes, when he said, *Remember, Lord, that we are dust.* [Ps. 103, 14] And Abraham had returned to ashes, saying, *I will speak to my Lord, though I am dust and ashes.* [Gen. 18, 27] And though death had not yet dissolved their living flesh unto earth, yet in their own opinion they were that, which they foresaw without doubt they were about to be. Hence it is

said in another place, *Thou wilt take away their breath, and they will fail, and will return to their dust.* [Ps. 104, 29] But what is meant by their breath, but the breath of pride? Let their breath then be taken away, that they may fail; that is, feel themselves to be nothing in themselves, when the breath of pride is withdrawn. And let them return to dust, that is, let them be humbled by their infirm condition. It is on account of this very dust, to the recollection of which those are recalled who consider themselves, that it is said by Wisdom, *The righteous shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds.* [Wisd. 3, 7] For holy men while they mix with sinners, kindle them by the fire of their example, and reduce to ashes all their brilliancy. For consumed by the flame of holiness, they discern themselves, on looking at the infirmity of their condition, to be nought but ashes. So that when loosened from the hardness of their pride they may use the words before quoted, *Remember, O Lord, that we are dust.* It is well said then that when God draws the breath of a man to Himself, all flesh will fail together, and man will return to ashes. These words of Eliu are true and important. But he betrays in the words which follow that he was soon wickedly puffed up by that which he thought rightly, saying,

Ver. 16. *If then thou hast understanding, hear what is said, and listen to the voice of my words.*

50. All haughty men have this peculiarity, that when they perchance entertain any acute sentiment, they soon launch out in consequence into the sin of pride, that they despise the opinion of every one else in comparison with their own, and prefer themselves in their own judgment to the merits of others. It is the fate of these wretched men, to be more in the dark the more they see; for while they look at subtleties, they overlook themselves; and the more acutely they perceive their wisdom, the more fatally do they fall through pride. But they would look into subtleties to some use, if in what they bring forward they were to see themselves. For Eliu said above, *If thou*

hast any thing to say, answer me; speak, for I wish thee to appear just. [Job 33, 32] But now he says, *If thou hast understanding, hear what is said.* See how his pride gradually advances in increase of expression. He doubted above whether blessed Job could bring forward what was just. He now makes it a question if he can even hear what is said. He said there, *If thou hast any thing to say, answer me.* As though he were to say, Say something, if at least thou wilt be able to speak worthily. But here he says, *If thou hast understanding, hear what is said.* As though he said plainly, Hear me, if thou wilt be able to hear worthily. These are the daily declensions which take place in the heart of the wicked, by which they are unceasingly sinking to worse; because while they carelessly neglect smaller faults, they break out wickedly into greater. It had already resulted from his pride that he doubted whether blessed Job could say what was just. But through neglecting to watch this fault in himself, he arrived at greater wickedness: so as not only to doubt that he could possibly say what was just, but even to despair of his understanding himself when speaking what was just. Wherefore the sin of pride must be cut up at once by the very roots, that when it springs up secretly it may be cut off vigilantly, so that it may not gain vigour by growth, or strength by habit. For it is a hard matter for a man to detect in himself inveterate pride, because in truth, the more we suffer under this sin, the less do we see of it. For pride is generated in the mind exactly as darkness in the eyes. For the wider it spreads itself, the more does it contract the light. Pride then grows up gradually in the heart, and when it has extended itself wider and wider, it closes entirely the sight of the mind which suffers from it, so that the captive mind can both suffer from the haughtiness of pride, and yet be unable to behold that under which it suffers. But because haughty men, as we have said, sometimes hold sound views in an unsound way, and know how to invent good arguments, but

scorn to state them aright; Eliu, after the haughty pride with which he had said, *If thou hast understanding, hear what is said,* subjoins, saying,

Ver. 17. *Can he be healed that loveth not judgment? How dost thou so much condemn him that is just?*

51. He uttered a proper sentiment, but it ought not to have been uttered to blessed Job. For in every thing which is said we must by all means consider, what is said, to whom it is said, where it is said, how it is said. But Eliu considered only what he was saying, but did not consider to whom he was saying it. For blessed Job loved judgment, since he knew how to weigh his causes carefully with the Lord. Nor had he condemned Him that is just: but humbly enquired, when involved in grief, why he had been smitten when without sin. He loves judgment, whoever examines his own ways minutely, and enters into the secret chambers of his heart, and there considers what the Lord bestows on him, and what he owes to the Lord. But how had blessed Job not acted thus, who used to offer such frequent sacrifices in expiation for his sons, even on account of their thoughts? Because then Eliu said, that he that loveth not judgment cannot be healed, accusing blessed Job of not loving judgment, and of having condemned Him who is just, he immediately subjoins the righteousness of that same righteous One, that is, the Lord, saying,

Ver. 18. *Who saith to a king, Apostate: who calleth leaders ungodly.*

52. We know often that most of those who rule exact an inordinate degree of dread from their subjects, and that they wish them to venerate them not so much for the Lord's sake, as in the Lord's place. For they exalt themselves with pride of heart within, and despise all under them in comparison with themselves, nor do they advise them with condescension, but oppress them with authority: because, in truth, they set themselves up with lofty thoughts, and do not acknowledge themselves to be equal with those over whom they happen to rule. Against this pride it is said in the

Book Ecclesiasticus, *Have they appointed thee a ruler? Be not lifted up, but be among them as one of them.* [Ecclus. 32, 1] This pride the Lord also reproving by the Prophet in shepherds, saith, *But ye ruled over them with austerity and with power.* [Ez. 34, 4] For the good advice which they offer to their subjects, they bring out as ordering, rather than as advising with them: for the very reason, that to say any thing to them as if they were on equal terms, they consider a degradation. For they rejoice in their singular preeminence, and not in the equality of their creation. But because the Lord carefully considers those swelling hearts of rulers, it is well said against them, *Who saith to a king, Apostate.* For every haughty ruler falls into the sin of apostasy, as often as, through pleasure at his ruling over men, he rejoices in his peculiar distinction. For he considers not under Whom he himself is, and exults over his equals, for that he is as it were not their equal. But whence is it that this root of evil springs up in the heart of rulers, unless it be in imitation of him, who, having scorned the society of angels, said, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, and will be like the Most High?* Since then every ruler, as often as he prides himself on ruling over others, is cut off, by falling into pride, from dependence on the Chief Ruler of all: and, because when he despises his equals who are subject to him, he does not acknowledge the supreme dominion of Him under Whom all are equal; it is rightly said, *Who saith to a king, Apostate.*

53. But since by domineering over others they lead their subjects to impiety by the example of their pride, it is fitly subjoined, *Who calleth leaders ungodly.* For they would lead them into the way of piety, if they did but present a pattern of humility to the eyes of their subjects. But he is an ungodly *leader,* who diverges from the path of truth, and who, when falling headlong himself, invites his followers to the precipice. He is an ungodly *leader* who points out the way of error by setting examples of pride. Paul was afraid of being an ungodly *leader,* when he brought down the loftiness

of his power, saying, *Not seeking glory of men, neither of you nor yet of others, when we might have been a burden as the Apostles of Christ, but we became as children in the midst of you.* [1 Thess. 2, 6] He had become as a child in the midst of them, because he was afraid lest he should set example of pride, if he claimed, among his disciples, the honour due to his high station. He was afraid, in truth, lest if he were to seek for himself the power of pastoral authority, the flock committed to him should follow him along precipitous places, and lest he, who had undertaken an office of piety, should be leading to ungodliness those who followed him.

54. It is therefore necessary for a person in high place to take special care what example he sets his subjects, and to know that he is living for all those, over whom he knows he is placed. He should be especially watchful not to pride himself on his being set above others, lest he should exact too immoderately the privileges of rightful authority, lest the rule of discipline should be converted into the severity of pride, and lest by the power he possessed of restraining his subjects from wickedness, he should pervert the more the hearts of those who behold him; and lest (as was before observed) he should become a leader of impiety by means of his pious office. A man, however, ought not to undertake to guide others, who does not know how to lead them in holy living; lest he, who has been appointed to reprove others' faults, shall himself commit the sin which it was his duty to cut off. Let rulers therefore take special care to live for themselves and those under them: to hide in the bosom of their mind the good which they do, and yet furnish thereby an example of good behaviour for the benefit of those who follow them; to correct the faults of their subjects by doing judgment, and yet not pride themselves at the severity of this same punishment; to be content with slightly reproving certain faults, and yet not to relax the bonds of discipline by this lenity; to overlook, and bear with other evils, and yet not to suffer them to make head by their overlooking them. These things are

laborious, and, unless Divine grace support, hard to keep. But it is rightly said by the Book of Wisdom of the coming of the strict Judge, *Horribly and speedily will He appear, for a very sharp judgment shall be to them who are in high places.* [Wisd. 6, 5] Since therefore people too commonly launch out into pride from the power of rule, and pride itself is counted as an impiety by the strict Judge, it is well said by Eliu of the Lord, *Who calleth leaders ungodly.* For when they are proud of their authority, they lead by their example those under them to impiety.

55. A person then who is appointed to rule over men, must be especially careful, within the secret chambers of his mind, to preside in the seat of humility. And when others stand before him without, as he gives his sentence, he should with watchful eye behold Him, before Whom he is hereafter to stand to be judged for these very matters: that so he may behold Him with greater confidence, when he has seen Him, the more anxiously he trembles now before Him, Whom he does not behold. Let him consider then, that he who is hardly able perhaps to satisfy so strict a Judge for his own soul, has, from his ruling over so many subjects, so many souls (so to speak) singly to answer for to Him, at the time for rendering his account. And if this thought continually penetrates the mind, it crushes all the swelling of pride. And a careful ruler will be called neither an apostate king, nor an ungodly ruler, the more anxiously he regards the power he has received not as an honour, but as a burden. For he that is well pleased at being a judge now, feels no pleasure at beholding the Judge then. For the faults which are committed from the desire of obtaining power, cannot be numbered. But authority is then alone properly exercised, when it is held not in love of it, but in fear. And in order that it may be properly administered, necessity, and not our own desire, should, in the first place, impose it on us. But it neither ought to be abandoned through fear when once undertaken, nor, again, embraced as an object of desire; for fear a

person should, as if by reason of humility, be guilty of greater pride, in contemning and shrinking from the course of the Divine dispensation: or should cast off the yoke of his Heavenly Ruler, the more his own private authority over others gives him pleasure. When power then is possessed it must not be greedily loved, but patiently endured; in order that then, at the judgment, it may be a light burden to our comfort, as we know it now for a service which is heavy to be borne.

BOOK XXV.

In explanation of the thirty-fourth chapter from the nineteenth to the thirtieth verse, the punishments of the reprobate, and the secret judgments of God are discussed.

1. The very mode of man's creation shews, how far he surpasses all things beside. For the reason which has been conferred on man proclaims how far a rational nature surpasses all things which are deficient in either life, or sense, or reason. And yet, because we close our eyes to inward and invisible objects, and feast them on those which are seen, we most commonly esteem a man, not for what he is in himself, but from what is accidental to him. And since we do not look at what a man is in himself, but what he can do, in our acceptance of persons we are influenced, not by the persons themselves, but by what accidentally belongs to them. And thus it comes to pass, that even that person is inwardly despised by us, who is outwardly held in honour; for whilst he is honoured for that which is about him, he is, from his own doings, placed low in our judgment. But Almighty God examines the conduct of men, solely on the nature of their deserts, and frequently inflicts severer punishment, from the very fact, that He has here given greater opportunities of serving Him. As the Truth Itself bears witness, saying, *To whom much is given, of him much will be required.* [Luke 12, 48] Whence it is now well said by Eliu, (ver. 19.) *Who accepteth not the person of princes, and hath not regarded a tyrant, when disputing against the poor.*

2. But by prince, or tyrant, may be understood every proud person; but the humble may be designated by the poor. He does not regard then a tyrant, when disputing against the poor, because He declares that He knows not, in the judgment, any proud men who now oppress the life of the humble,

saying, *I know you not, whence ye are.* [Luke 13, 25] And because He thus destroys him, when He wills, by His power, as He created him, when He willed, by His power, is fitly added in argument,

For they are all the work of His hands.

And it is immediately added,

Ver. 20. *Suddenly shall they die, and the people shall bow down at midnight, and pass away.*

3. However long it be before the ungodly are taken out of this life, they are taken away suddenly, and at an instant, since they know not how to foresee their end by thinking on it. That is sudden to any one, which he has not been able to think of beforehand. That rich man was taken away suddenly, who left the barns which he was preparing, and found the place of hell, which he was not looking for. He was employing his soul in thinking in one direction, he parted with it in another by his sentence. He fixed his thoughts on one object when alive, he experienced another when he was dying. For he left those temporal things, which he had long engaged in, and he found eternal things which he did not look for. Whence, in consequence of this his blind ignorance, it is well said to him by the Divine sentence, *This night do they require thy soul of thee.* [Luke 12, 20] For that soul was taken away by night, which was lost in blindness of heart. That was taken away by night, which refused to enjoy the light of consideration, in order to foresee what it would suffer. Whence the Apostle Paul rightly says to his disciples who are thinking on future things, *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and children of day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.* [1 Thess. 5, 4. 5.] For the day of death seizes as a thief in the night, when it casts out the souls of foolish men, which do not look onward to the future. Whence it is here also fitly subjoined, *And the people shall bow down at midnight, and pass away.* They bow down and pass away at midnight, who

are brought low and swept away by the darkness of their negligence. They will then be bowed down by the sentence of the Judge, who now refuse to bend with humility of heart. But the Elect bow themselves of their own accord in humility, that they may not be bowed down against their will in death. Whence is it said to Holy Church, of the converted children of her persecutors, *The sons of them who humbled thee, shall come bending to thee.* [Is. 60, 14]

4. And he says properly of dying peoples, not that “they will pass along,” but *pass away,* because simply by living in the world we are daily coming to an end, and we pass along this present life, as though wearing a track in a road. But that men live subject to death, is a kind of journeying deathwards. And every day we pass of our life, we are approaching as it were on our journey by as many steps to the appointed spot. But the very increase of our years, is a wearing them away; for the length of our life begins to be not so much as it was at first. But the first man was so fashioned, that, as time passed on, he remained stationary, so as not to journey on together with it. For he remained still, as the moments hasted away; since he did not approach to the end of his life, through the increase of his days. And he stood the firmer, the closer he clung to Him who is ever stationary. But after he touched the forbidden thing, having offended his Creator, he began to pass onward together with time. Having lost, namely, the stability of an immortal condition, the stream of mortal being engulphed him. And, while borne along by youth to age, and by age to death, he learned, as he journeyed on, what he was when he remained stationary. And because we are sprung from his stock, we retain, like shoots, the bitterness of our root. For because we derive our origin from him, we inherit his course of life, at our birth, so that every moment of every day that we live, we are constantly passing away from life, and the length of our life decreases by the very means by which it is believed to increase. Since then we are daily

proceeding, as our years increase, to the issue of death, it is well said of the dying, not that they pass along, but pass away. For they pass along, even while they live, but pass away, as they die. It follows,

And they will take away the violent without hand.

5. Thou understandest, ‘The divine judgments.’ But they will take him away without hand, who was violent with his hand. They will take him away without hand, because, namely, he is snatched away, by the violence of a sudden death, invisibly, who used visibly to spoil others. He beheld those whom he spoiled, but beholds not him who hurries him away in death. The violent therefore is taken away without hand, because he both beholds not his spoiler, and yet is hurried along. And there follows him a severer sentence, the longer great forbearance is extended [al. ‘was first granted.’] to him when sinning: because the severity of God punishes a sinner the more strictly, the longer it has borne with him. But it is frequently the case, that while the Divine mercy is waiting for sinners, they plunge into greater blindness of heart. Whence it is written, *Knowest thou not that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up for thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?* [Rom. 2, 4. 5.] Observe, then, that while the man of violence is spoiling those whom he is able, is oppressing the weak, and indulging a long time all his sinful desires; because he is not smitten at once, and because his punishment is deferred to the end, his most wicked conduct is believed not to be observed by God. After then he had spoken of his death, he immediately rightly added concerning the Lord,

Ver. 21. *For His eyes are over the ways of men, and He considers all their steps.*

6. For He was then believed not to observe them, while this man of violence was committing, unpunished, all the wickedness he could. God

was supposed not to behold the deeds of the ungodly, because He was delaying to condemn them justly; and His great forbearance was regarded as a kind of carelessness. The wicked also himself believed that he was not observed by God in the commission of sin, as often as he sinned without being punished. To whom it is said by a certain wise man, *Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath happened to me?* [Ecclus. 5, 4] He does not wish to correct the wickedness, for which he has not suffered the punishment it deserved: and the more mercifully he is spared, the more sinfully is he urged on to wickedness: and, despising the long-suffering of the Divine forbearance, he has added to his faults, from the very circumstance that should have led him to correct them. As is said by this very Job, *God gave him a place for repentance, but he misuses it in his pride.* [Job 24, 23] Frequently, also, because he does not suffer immediately the punishment he deserves, he considers that his conduct is not displeasing to God. Let him go then now, and launch forth presumptuously into every kind of blasphemy. Let him take his fill of his sinful pleasures; let him spoil others' goods, and satiate himself with the oppression of the innocent. And, because he is not yet smitten, let him consider that his ways are not observed by God, or, what is worse, that they are approved of by Him. There will fall on him, full surely, there will fall on him, a sudden and everlasting blow. And he will then acknowledge, that every thing is observed by God, when he sees himself condemned, by an unexpected death, in retribution for all his guilt. He will then open, in his torment, the eyes which he long kept closed in sin. He will then perceive, that the righteous Judge has observed every thing, when he is now unable, by perceiving it, to escape the due deserts of his sins. The ungodly, then, who is long spared, is swept away suddenly, because *the eyes of the Lord are over all the ways of men, and He considereth all their steps.* As though he were to say, Because He does not at last leave those sins unpunished, which

He long looks on with forbearance. For, behold! He has suddenly swept away the violent man, and his sins which He endured with patience, He has cut off with punishment. Let no one say then, when he beholds any ungodly man heaping up sin without restraint, that God does not notice the conduct of men. For he who is long tolerated, is swept away suddenly.

7. But he calls the steps of men, either our separate actions on which we are engaged, or the alternating motives of our inmost thoughts, by which, as if by steps, we either depart far from the Lord, or approach near to Him by holiness. For the mind approaches by so many steps nearer to God, as it makes progress in so many holy emotions. And, again, it departs so many steps further from Him, as it becomes depraved by so many evil thoughts. Whence it is frequently the case that, though the emotion of the mind does not come forth in action, yet the sin is already perfected, by reason of the guilt itself of the thought. As it is written, *Hand in hand, the wicked shall not be innocent.* [Prov. 11, 21] For hand is wont to be joined with hand, when it rests at ease, and no laborious employment exercises it. *Hand* therefore *in hand, the wicked shall not be innocent.* As though he were saying, Even when the hand rests from sinful deeds, yet the wicked, by reason of his thoughts, is not innocent. Because then we know that not merely our actions, but even our thoughts, are strictly weighed, what will befal us for our walking in wicked action, if God judges so minutely the steps of the heart? Behold, no man witnesses the secret courses of our mind, and yet, in the sight of God, we are making as many steps, as many affections as we put in motion. We fall before Him, as often as we stumble away from the straight path by the foot of unstable thought. For unless this frequent stumbling of our minds increased in His sight, He would not in truth exclaim by the Prophet, *Put away the evil of your thoughts from before Mine eyes.* [Is. 1, 16] But speaking thus, He witnesses that He cannot endure, as it were, the intensity of our secret wickedness. But it cannot be

hidden from Him, because, namely, every unlawful thought which is conceived in secret by us, is thrust offensively before His sight. *For,* as it is written, *all things are naked and open to His eyes.* [Heb. 4, 13] Whence it is here also properly subjoined,

Ver. 22. *There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they who work iniquity may be hid.*

8. What did he intend to designate by darkness but ignorance, and what by the shadow of death, except oblivion? For it is said of the ignorance of certain persons, *Having their mind obscured with darkness.* [Eph. 4, 13] And it is written again of the oblivion which comes on us at death, *In that day all their thoughts shall perish.* [Ps. 146, 4] Since then whatever is thought of during life is utterly consigned to oblivion by death, oblivion is a kind of shadow of death. For as intervening death puts an end to the doings of life, so does intervening forgetfulness destroy that which existed in the memory. It is rightly, therefore, called its shadow, inasmuch as it is modelled upon it, as it were, while it imitates its power in lulling the senses to rest. But, since God is neither unacquainted with men's evil thoughts, nor forgetful of their evil deeds, (except indeed they are blotted out of His sight by penitence,) it is appropriately observed, *There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they who work iniquity may be hid.* As though he were to say, No one is hidden from His judgment, for this reason, that it is impossible for Him either not to behold what we do, or to forget what He beholds.

9. Although 'darkness,' or 'the shadow of death,' can be understood likewise in another sense. For every change is a kind of resemblance of death. For that which changes any thing, cuts it off, as it were, from what it was before: that so it ceases to be what it was, and begins to be what it was not. Because then the true Light, our Creator, I mean, is obscured by no vicissitude of change, and overshadowed by no defects in His own nature;

but it is His nature to shine forth unchangeably, darkness and the shadow of death are said not to exist in Him. Wherefore it is written elsewhere, *With Whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.* [James 1, 17] And hence again, Paul the Apostle says, *Who only hath immortality, and dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.* [l Tim. 6, 16] But since we all know that both the soul of man and angelic spirits were created immortal, why is God alone said by the Apostle to have immortality, unless it be that God alone truly dies not, since He alone is never changed?

10. For the soul of man would not fall, if it had not been changeable. And, banished also from the joys of Paradise, if it were not capable of change, it would never return to life. But, in endeavouring to return to life, it is compelled to bear with its defects, from its alternation and change. Because then it was fashioned out of nothing, it is of itself ever sinking beneath itself, unless kept up by the hand of its Maker to a condition of holy desire. Since then it is a creature, it has a downward tendency. For it considers, that of its own strength, it is able only to fall headlong; but it holds firmly to its Creator, with the hand of love, lest it should fall, until it passes over to unchangeableness, and lives really immortally, because unchangeably.

11. The Angelic spirits also were made changeable by nature, so as to fall of their own accord, or to stand from their own will. But, because they humbly chose to cling to Him, by Whom they were created,* they overcame the changeableness which was in them, by remaining immutably at the firm, so that they deservedly rose above the liability to change, to which they would have been subject in the order of their nature.

[**Note:* Ben. here notes that after the words ‘they were created,’ one Vatican Ms. is quoted as adding, ‘They received from the vision of their Ruler that they should abide in themselves without falling. Hereby, however, their wonderful method of standing is formed, in that while they

know what they can do of their own stedfastness, they consider what they owe to the government of their Ruler. And the more easily they see that they, as changeable, can fall, the more close do they draw themselves, that they may not fall, to the love of their Ruler. Of their own stedfastness, they know they may still tumble down headlong, but they hold them fast by their Creator with the hand of love, that they may not fall.’]

Since then it is the property of the Divine Nature alone, not to suffer the shades of ignorance and change, let it be justly said, *There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they, who work iniquity, may be hid.* For the more unchangeably that eternal light shines, which is God Himself, the more piercingly does It see, and It is neither ignorant of what is hid, since It penetrates all things, nor does It forget the things It has penetrated, because It lasts on without change. And consequently, as often as we conceive in our mind any unworthy thought, so often do we sin in the light. Because It is present to us though not present to It; and when we walk wickedly we offend against It, from which we are deservedly far away. But, when we believe that we are not seen, we keep our eyes closed in the sun light: that is to say, we conceal Him from ourselves, not ourselves from Him. Let us then, now while we are able, blot out our evil thoughts, and more evil deeds, from the sight of the eternal Judge. Let us recal to the eyes of our heart whatever evil we have committed through the sin of presumption. Let not our weakness flatter itself, and handle itself delicately in those sins, which it calls to mind. But the more it is conscious to itself of evil, let it be the more kindly severe against itself. Let it set before itself the future judgment, and whatever sins it is conscious must be severely smitten by the sentence of the Judge, let it mercifully smite in itself by the penitence of conversion. Whence, after the punishment of this man of violence has been described, it fitly follows,

Ver. 23. *For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment.*

12. This verse requires the greater discussion, the more painful is that which it speaks of, if it is neglected. Here doubtless that judgment is not designated which punishes by eternal retribution, but that which, conceived by the mind, cleanses through our conversation [al. 'conversion.']. For whoever is afraid of being condemned by the first of these does not desire to approach near it. By its being said then, *For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment,* it is pointed out at once that there is a kind of judgment, which is at last desired even by the damned and reprobate. And what is that, but this of which Paul the Apostle speaks, *For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged?* [l Cor. 11, 31] and of which it is said by the Prophet, *There is no judgment in their goings,* [Is. 59, 8] and of which David says, *The honour of a king loveth judgment,* [Ps 99, 4] namely, that he who now knows God by Faith, should carefully judge what he owes Him in his works. Whence it is written again, *Be judged before the Lord, and wait for Him.* [Job 35, 14] He in truth is judged before the Lord, who beholds the Lord in his heart, and examines into his conduct with anxious enquiry, beneath His presence. For a man waits for Him the more confidently, the more he daily examines his life with suspicion. For he, who comes to His final judgment, is no longer judged before Him, but by Him. Of this judgment also the Lord speaks by the Prophet to the forgetful soul, *Put Me in remembrance, that we may plead together; tell me, if thou hast any thing, that thou mayest be justified.* [Is. 43, 26]

13. For the mind of every one ought anxiously to enquire into its pleas before God, and the pleas of God against itself. It should weigh carefully either what good things it has received from Him, or what an ill return it has made for His goodness by wicked living. And this the Elect never cease to do day by day. Whence Solomon well says, *The thoughts of the righteous*

are judgments. [Prov. l2, 5] For they, approach the secret chambers of the Judge, in the recesses of their own heart; they consider how sharply He smites at last, Who long patiently bears with them. They are afraid for the sins which they remember they have committed; and they punish by their tears the faults which they know they have perpetrated. They dread the searching judgments of God, even in those sins, which they perchance cannot discover in themselves. For they see that that is observed by Divine Power, which they, through human weakness, do not see in themselves. They behold the severe Judge, Who strikes a heavier blow the slower He is in coming. They contemplate also the assembly of the holy Fathers seated with Him in judgment, and blame themselves for having slighted either their words or their examples. [2 Cor. 6, 2] And, in this secret chamber of inward judgment, constrained by the sentence of their own conscience, they chasten with penitence, that which they have committed through pride. For they there count over whatever comes against, and assails them. There do they crowd before their eyes every thing they should weep for. There do they behold whatever can be searched out by the wrath of the severe Judge. There do they suffer as many punishments as they are afraid of suffering. And, in the sentence thus conceived in the mind there is present every agency which is needed for the fuller punishment of those convicted by it. For the conscience accuses, reason judges, fear binds, and pain tortures. And this judgment punishes the more certainly, the more inward is its rage; because it does not come to us from any thing without. For when any one has begun to enter on this business of examination against himself, he is himself the prosecutor who arraigns, he is himself the accused who is arraigned. He hates himself, as he remembers himself to have been: and in the person of his present self persecutes his former self. And a contest is raised by a man in his mind against himself, bringing forth peace with God. This struggle of the heart the Lord required, when He said, by the Prophet, *I*

attended and hearkened: no man speaketh what is good, there is no one that doth penance for his sin, saying, What have I done? [Jer. 8, 6] He was appeased by this struggle of the heart, when He spake to His Prophet, of King Ahab, reproving himself, saying, *Hast thou seen Ahab humbled before Me? therefore because he hath humbled himself for My sake, I will not bring the evil in his days.* [1 Kings 21, 29]

14. Since then it is now in our power to undergo an inward judgment of our mind against ourselves, let us examine and accuse our own selves, and torture our former selves by penitence. Let us not cease to judge ourselves, while it is in our power. Let us carefully attend to what is said, *For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment.* For it is a property of reprobates to be ever doing wrong, and never to repent of what they have done. For they pass over, with blinded mind, every thing that they do, and do not acknowledge what they have done, except when they have been punished. But it is the custom of the Elect, on the other hand, to examine daily into their conduct from the very first springs of their thoughts, and to drain to the bottom, whatever impurity flows forth from thence. For as we do not notice how our limbs grow, our body increases, our appearance changes, our hair turns from black to white, (for all these things take place in us, without our knowing it,) in like manner is our mind changed from itself, by the very habit of anxiety every moment of our life; and we do not perceive it, unless we sit down to carefully watch our inmost condition, and weigh our advances and failures day by day. For in this life, to stand still, is, in itself, to go back, as it were, to our old state, and when the mind is left undisturbed, it is overpowered by an old age, as it were, of torpor: because by neglecting itself, and by losing insensibly its proper strength, it wastes away, unknown to itself, from the appearance of its former power. Whence it is said by the Prophet, under the character of Ephraim, *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knew it not, but even*

gray hairs are sprinkled on him, and he himself was ignorant of it. [Hos.7, 9] But when the mind enquires into itself, and examines itself carefully with penitence, it is renewed from this its old nature, by being bathed with tears, and kindled with grief; and, though it had been well nigh frozen with the chill of age, it glows afresh by a supply of the zeal of inward love. Whence the Apostle Paul warns his disciples, who were growing old by contact with this mortal life, saying, *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.* [Eph. 4, 23]

15. But both the examples of the Fathers, and the precepts of holy Scripture, assist us much in acting thus. For if we look at the doings of the Saints, and lend an ear to the Divine commands, the sight of the one and the hearing of the other inflames us. And our heart is not benumbed with torpor, when it is urged on by imitation of them. Whence it is well said to Moses, *The fire on the altar shall always burn, which the priest shall feed, putting wood on it every day in the morning.* [Lev. 6, 12] For the altar of God is our heart, in which the fire is ordered always to burn: because it is necessary that the flame of love should constantly ascend therefrom to God. And the priest should put wood thereon every day, lest it should go out. For every one who is endowed with faith in Christ, is made specially a member of the Great High Priest, as Peter the Apostle says to all the faithful, *But ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.* [1 Pet. 2, 9] And as the Apostle John says, *Thou hast made us a kingdom and priests to our God.* [Rev. 1, 6] The Priest therefore feeding the fire on the altar, must place fuel on it every day; that is, every faithful person must never cease to collect together in his heart as well the examples of those who have gone before, as also the testimonies of Holy Scripture, that the flame of love may not be extinguished within it. For to make use of, either the examples of the Fathers, or the precepts of the Lord, in exciting our love, is, as it were, to supply fuel to the fire. For since our new life within daily grows old, by its very converse with this world, fire must be fed by a supply of wood, so that while it wastes itself away by

the habits of our own condition, it may revive by means of the examples and testimonies of the Fathers. And it is there rightly ordered, that wood should be thrown on every day in the morning. For these things are not done, unless when the night of blindness is extinguished. Or certainly, because the morning is the first part of the day, every one of the faithful must put aside the thoughts of this life, and consider in the first place, that he must enkindle by every means in his power, that zeal which is even now as it were failing within him. For this fire on the altar of the Lord, that is, on our heart, is speedily extinguished, if it is not carefully renewed by an application of the examples of the Fathers, and the testimonies of the Lord.

16. But it is rightly subjoined in this place, *And when the burnt offering is placed upon it he shall burn the fat of the peace offerings.* [Lev. 6, 12] For whoever kindles within himself this fire of love, places himself upon it as a burnt offering, because he burns out every fault, which wickedly lived within him. For when he examines the secrets of his own thoughts, and sacrifices his wicked life, by the sword of conversion, he has placed himself on the altar of his own heart, and kindled himself with the fire of love. And the fat of the peace offerings smells sweetly from this victim: because the inward fatness of new love, making peace between ourselves and God, emits from us the sweetest odour. But since this self-same love continues inextinguishable in the heart of the Elect, it is there fitly subjoined, *This is that perpetual fire, which shall never go out on the altar.* [Lev. 6, 13] This fire in truth will never go out on the altar, because the glow of love increases in their minds even after this life. For it is the effect of eternal contemplation, that Almighty God is loved the more deeply, the more He is seen.

17. But that we are delivered from the depths of this life, when aided by the Divine warning, and the examples of those who have gone before, is also well signified by Jeremiah the Prophet being lowered into a well; [Jer.

38, 11] for ropes and old rags are let down, in order to raise him out of it. For what is typified by the ropes but the precepts of the Lord? For since they both bind us fast, and snatch us away when involved in evil doings, they tie, as it were, and draw us, they confine and raise us up. But for fear he should be cut, when bound, and dragged by the ropes, old rags are at the same time lowered down: because the examples of the old fathers strengthen, that the Divine commands may not alarm us. And, by comparing ourselves with them, we presume that we are able to do that, which we shrink from, through our own weakness. If then we are anxious to be raised from the depth, let us be fastened with ropes, that is, let us be bound by the precepts of the Lord. But let old rags also be placed between, for the ropes to be held better by their means: that is, let us be supported by the examples of those of old times, that the subtle precepts may not, as they raise up, wound us who are infirm and timid. The Apostle Paul used to apply, as it were, some old rags, when he adapted the examples of the ancients to his spiritual precepts, in order to raise up his disciples, saying, *The righteous had trial of mockings and scourging, moreover also of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword.* [Heb. 11, 36, 37] And shortly after, *Having therefore so great a cloud of witnesses placed over us, laying aside every weight, and the sin which surrounds us, let us run with patience to the contest set before us;* [Heb. 12, 1] and again, *Remember those who are placed over you, who have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith imitate, looking to the end of their conversation.* [Heb. 13, 7] He had, namely, in a former passage, lowered ropes, as it were, while announcing spiritual precepts. But afterwards he applied old rags, as it were, when mentioning the examples of ancestors.

18. Roused then by the voices of so many precepts, and aided by the comparison of so many examples, let us turn back to our hearts, and

examine carefully all our doings. And let us blame whatever within us offends against the will of Divine rectitude, in order that this very accusation may excuse us with our strict Judge. For we are the more quickly acquitted in this judgment of our conscience, the more strictly we regard ourselves as guilty. And we must not omit the opportunities which are afforded us for this purpose, because, after the season of this life, there is no time for so doing. For it is not, indeed, said without reason, *For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment.* For we are reminded of what we cannot do then, in order that we may not neglect, now, what we can do. But behold, engagements occupy our minds, and, from their constant contact with us, turn away the eye of our mind from self consideration. For our mind is distracted by those visible things, which it beholds, and when it is employed outwardly, it forgets what is going on in itself within. But the Divine voice pierces it with its terrible sentences, like so many nails, to keep it vigilant; that man may, at least when startled with fear, tremble at the secret judgments hanging over him, which he pretends not to see, when overwhelmed by torpor. For, as we said above, the mind is weighed down, by being fatally accustomed to the habits of the old life, and is lulled as in sleep on these outward objects which it beholds; and after having once wasted its strength in seeking after visible things without, it has lost all its power for contemplating invisible things within. Whence it is now necessary that the mind which is detached by visible objects, should be smitten with invisible judgments, and that, since it has laid itself low by its evil indulgence in these outward objects, it should seek, at least when smitten, that which it has forsaken. But behold, Holy Scripture transfixes drowsy hearts with a kind of dread, in order that they may not cling to those things which come to nothing without, but which have eternally ruined them within. It points out to us what is decreed by the secret sentence, in order that these outward things may not be too much thought of. It informs

us what is doing above us with regard to us, in order that we may turn the eyes of our heart from these outward and temporal objects, to the secret of the inward disposal. For after much had been said, concerning the punishment of the wicked, there is suddenly introduced the secret judgment, mercifully and justly passed upon us: how some lose that which they appeared to hold fast, and some receive that which others deservedly lose. For he says,

Ver. 24. *He shall break in pieces many and without number, and shall make others to stand in their stead.*

19. This is daily occurring. But because the end of both parties is not seen as yet, it is less dreaded. For the reprobate never acknowledge their fault, excepting when under punishment. And because punishment is deferred, the fault is made light of. But they fall from a state of righteousness, and others, on their fall, obtain the place of life. But they think not of their fall, since they do not consider the death which awaits them for ever. For did they but turn their eyes to what they are about to suffer there, they would tremble at what they are doing here. But it is plain to all that Almighty God will make a public enquiry at that final ordeal, so as to give up some to torments, and admit others to a participation of the heavenly kingdom. But that is now daily taking place by a secret, which is then made manifest by a public, judgment. For either searching, or ordering, the hearts of men, one by one, with justice and mercy, He casts forth some of them to outward pursuits, and leads others on to those which are within. He inspires these to seek for inward joys, and leaves those to think, for their pleasure, on outward things. He raises the mind of these to heavenly objects, and immerses the pride of the others in the basest desires. But the hearts of other men are shut up from human sight, and it is not known who is rejected; since the thoughts of each man cannot be penetrated. For oft times, though the heart be evilly disposed, the deliberation of thought has

not been carried into effect, and a man is perhaps still constrained within by habit, who already wanders abroad in his mind. But such an one, whoever he be, fell in the sight of the inward Judge, as soon as he departed in desire from seeking for things within. But others, sometimes, after a course of evil living, revive, with sudden affection, to a hope of heaven, and they who had dissipated themselves by sinful conduct, bring themselves back, by self reproof, to the bosom of inward repentance. And men still looking back to this conduct, think them still to be such, as they knew them to be in behaviour. But they themselves, on the other hand, by the examination of strict consideration, attack their former life as they remember it to have been; and it is known what they were, but what they have now begun to be is not known. In both then of these classes it is frequently the case, that both they who in the judgment of men seem to stand, are already fallen in the sight of the Eternal Judge: and that those who are still fallen before men, already stand firm in the sight of the Eternal Judge. For what man could suppose that Judas, even after the ministry of the apostleship, would lose his portion in life? And who would believe, on the other hand, that the thief would find a means of life even at the very instant of his death? But the Judge secretly presiding, and discerning the hearts of these two persons, mercifully established the one, and justly crushed the other. He cast forth the one with severity, He drew the other within of His mercy. And hence in announcing even by His Prophet, that some would fall and others be raised up at the time of His passion, He well says, *I mingled My drink with weeping.* [Ps. 102, 9] For drink is drawn in from without, but weeping pours out from within. For the Lord then to mingle drink with weeping, is for Him to draw some within, from outward things, and to cast off others from an inward to an outward condition. *He shall break in pieces,* then, *many and without number, and shall make others to stand in their stead.*

20. But, as was said before, this breaking is first wrought within, in order to its being afterwards displayed without. By this breaking the outward parts of some sometimes appear to be still sound, while the inward parts have already rotted away. For it is written, *Before ruin the heart is exalted.* [Prov. l6, 18] They are smitten then on the very point in which they are proud. Whence it is written, *I have broken their heart which committeth fornication, and which departeth from Me.* [Ez. 6, 9] For to delight outwardly in forbidden objects, is to commit fornication within. But this very pride of the haughty man is a great crushing of his heart. For he falls from the integrity of sound health, just as he is puffed up with pride, on account of any virtue. For proud men despise God, and, forsaking the glory of the Creator, seek their own. And, for them to have lost the support of their superior, and to have sunk back on themselves, is for them to have already fallen. They are crushed too because, having abandoned the things of heaven, they seek the earth. For what greater crushing can there be, than, having forsaken the Creator, to seek the creature, having forsaken the joys above, to be eager only for things below? Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *But He humbles sinners even to the earth.* [Ps. 147, 6] For when they have lost heavenly things, every thing which they thirst after is earthly, and while they endeavour to seem greater, that which they seek after is of less value. Of whom it is well said by Jeremiah, *Departing from Thee they shall be written in the earth.* [Jer. 17, 13] But it is said on the other hand of the Elect, *Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.* [Luke 10, 20] This crushing, then, first steals on in the mind, in order that it may afterwards advance in outward act. It shakes first the foundation of the thoughts, in order to smite afterwards the fabric of conduct. We must labour therefore with the greatest care, in order that it may be avoided in the place where it takes its rise. For it is written, *Keep thy heart with all watchfulness, because life proceedeth from it.* [Prov. 4, 23] And it is written again, *From*

the heart proceed evil thoughts. [Matt. 15, 19] We must watch, therefore, within, lest the mind should fall, when it is exalted. Let us guard within all that we do without. For, if once the rottenness of pride has eaten into the marrow of the heart, the empty husk of outward appearance speedily falls. But we must observe, that, while some are said to receive strength to stand firm, when others fall, the number of the Elect is shewn to be fixed and definite. Whence it is said also, to the Church of Philadelphia, through its Angel, *Hold fast that which thou hast, that another take not thy crown.* [Rev. 3, 11]

21. By this announcement then, in which it is said, that the life of some is exalted, and that of others is crushed, both the hope of the humble is cherished, and the pride of the haughty brought low: since those can forfeit the good qualities of which they are proud, and these enjoy the good things, which they were despised for not possessing. Let us tremble, then, at the blessings we have received, and not despair of those who have not yet obtained them. For we know what we are to-day; but we know not what we may become after a little while. But these persons whom, perchance, we despise, can begin late, and yet surpass our conduct, by their more fervent zeal. We must fear, therefore, lest he should rise, even on our fall, who is now derided by us, who are standing firm: although, indeed, he knows not how to stand firm himself, who has learned to ridicule him, who is yet unsteady. But the Apostle Paul, enforcing this dread of heavenly judgments, into the hearts of his disciples, says, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* [l Cor. 10, 12] But by saying, *He breaketh in pieces,* and by adding immediately, *without number,* he desired either to express the number of the reprobate, which surpasses the amount of human calculation; or he, certainly, wished to point out, that all who perish are not reckoned in the number of the Elect, and that they are therefore innumerable, as running beyond the number. Whence the Prophet, on beholding that as many, at this

period of the Church, believe only in appearance, as it is doubtless certain exceed the number and amount of the Elect, declares, *They are multiplied above number.* As though he were saying to many who are entering the Church, Even those come to the faith in appearance only, who are excluded from the number of the kingdom, because in truth they surpass by their multiplicity the number of the Elect. Whence also it is said by the Prophet Jeremiah, *The city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Ananehel, even to the gate of the corner, and it will go forth beyond the standard of measure.* [Jer. 31, 38] For no one in truth is ignorant that Holy Church is the city of the Lord. But Ananehel is interpreted the grace of God, and two walls meet together in a corner. The city of the Lord is said therefore to be built from the tower of Ananehel, even to the gate of the corner: because Holy Church, beginning from the loftiness of Divine grace, is built up, as far as to the entrance of both peoples, namely, Jew and Gentile. But because, as its members increase, reprobates also are included therein, it is fitly added, *And it will go forth beyond the standard of measure:* because it is extended even to those who, transgressing the standard of justice, are not within the number of the heavenly measure. Whence it is said also to the same Church by Isaiah, *For thou shall spread forth on the right hand, and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles.* [Is. 54, 3] For it is extended in so great a multitude of Gentiles, to the right hand, when it admits some to be justified. And it is extended to the left also, when it admits into itself some who will even remain in sin. On account of this multitude, which lies beyond the number of the Elect, the Lord says in the Gospel, *Many are called but few are chosen.* [Matt. 20, 16] But, because some are crushed, while others are chosen, in consequence of the deserts of the sufferer, and not from the injustice of Him who punishes, (for *God is not unjust, Who inflicteth wrath* [Rom. 3, 5]) it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 25. *For He knoweth their works, and therefore will He bring night on them, and they shall be crushed.*

22. It is specially to be understood, that every sinner is, in two ways, crushed in the night; either when he is struck by the suffering of punishment from without, or when he is blinded by a secret sentence within. He falls at night, when he loses for ever the light of life, by the last judgment. Whence it is written, *Bind him hands and feet, and send him into outer darkness.* [Matt. 22, 13] For he is then sent of force into outer darkness; because he is now blinded of his own will with darkness within. But, again, the sinner is crushed at night, when, condemned by the overthrow of former sinners, he finds not the light of truth, and knows not what he ought to do for the future. For every sin, which is not speedily wiped out by penitence, is either a sin, and a cause of sin, or else a sin, and the punishment of sin. For a sin which penitence does not wash away, soon leads on, by its very weight, to another. Whence it is not only a sin, but a sin, and a cause of sin. For, from that sin, a succeeding fault takes its rise, by which the blinded mind is led on to endure greater bondage from another. But a sin which arises from a sin, is no longer merely a sin, but a sin, and a punishment of sin. Because Almighty God obscures, by a just judgment, the heart of a sinner, that he may fall into other sins also, through desert of his former sin. For the man whom He willed not to set free, He has smitten by forsaking him. That, then, is not improperly called the punishment of sin, which, in consequence of a just blindness having been inflicted from above, is committed by way of punishment for former offences. And it is the result of a system, ordained indeed above, but thrown into confusion by men's wickedness below, that a preceding sin is the cause of that which follows, and, again, a subsequent sin the punishment of that which precedes it. This seed, as it were, of error, Paul had clearly observed in the unbelieving and unstable, when saying, *Who when they had known God, glorified Him not as God, neither were*

thankful, but became vain in their thoughts. [Rom. l, 21] But he immediately added that which sprang up from this seed of error, saying, *Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their own heart unto uncleanness, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.* [Rom. l, 24] For because, though knowing God, they wittingly committed the sin of pride, they are also so blinded as not to be aware of the sin they are committing. And they who are unwilling to follow their own understanding in sin, that is the cause of sin, are deprived of the light of understanding in sin, that is the punishment of sin. The pitfal of subsequent sins is covered over by the demerits of former sins, in order that he, who knowingly commits sin, may afterwards fall, even unwittingly, in other sins.

23. It is provided, in fact, that some faults are smitten with other faults, in order that their very growth in sin may be the punishment of sinners. For because Almighty God grants time for repentance, which human wickedness perverts, nevertheless, to the practice of its own iniquity, our guilt is doubtless permitted to increase by the just judgment of God, in order that it may be heaped up, for Him to strike it at last a heavier blow. For hence the Apostle Paul says again of certain persons, *To fill up their sins alway.* [1 Thess. 2, 16] Hence it is to John by the voice of the angel, *He that hurteth let him hurt still, he that is filthy let him be filthy still.* [Rev. 22, 11] Hence David says, *Add iniquity unto their iniquity, that they may not enter into Thy righteousness.* [Ps. 69, 27] Hence again it is said of the Lord by the same Psalmist, *Suggestions* [‘Immissiones’] *by evil angels He made a way for the path of His anger.* [Ps. 78, 49. 50.] For the Lord justly permits the heart which has been weighed down by former demerits, to be deceived also by the subsequent persuasions of malignant spirits, for, when it is deservedly led into sin, its guilt is increased in its punishment. Whence also the Lord is said to have made a way for His wrath out of a path. For a way is broader than a path. But to make out of a path a way for His wrath, is, by

strictly judging to extend the causes of His wrath, that they who refused, when enlightened, to act rightly, may, when justly blinded, still so act as to deserve a greater punishment. Hence it is said by Moses, *The sins of the Amorites are not yet full.* [Gen. 15, 16] Hence the Lord says by the same Moses, *For their vine is of the vineyard of Sodom, and their stock is of Gomorrah. Their grape is a grape of gall, and the cluster of bitterness is in them. Their wine is the fury of dragons and the rage of asps, which cannot be healed. Are not all these things stored up with Me, and sealed up in My treasures? In the day of vengeance I will repay them.* [Deut. 32, 32-35] How many of their sins has He revealed, and yet He immediately subjoins, *In the time when their foot shall have stumbled.* Behold, their most abominable misdeeds are described, and yet for the day of vengeance, their subsequent fall is looked forward to, whereby their faults are to be heaped up to the full. They already have enough to deserve punishment; but their sin is still suffered to increase, in order that, sinning, a heavier punishment may torture them. Sin, the cause of sin, already deserves punishment; but it is still deferred, in order that sin, the punishment of sin, may supply an increase of suffering.

24. But frequently one and the same sin is also a sin such as is both a punishment, and a cause of sin. We shall make this more plain, by bringing forward some instances. For unrestrained gluttony excites the fulness of the flesh to the heat of lust. But lust, when committed, is frequently concealed either by perjury or murder, for fear it should be punished by the vengeance of human laws. Let us suppose to ourselves then, that a man has given the reins to his gluttony, that, being overcome by his gluttony, he has committed the sin of adultery, that being detected in adultery, he has secretly murdered the husband of the adulteress, lest he should be brought to judgment. This adultery then, standing between gluttony and murder, springing from the one, and giving being to the other, is a sin, and both the

punishment, and the cause of sin also. It is in truth a sin of itself, but the punishment of sin, because it has increased the guilt of gluttony; but it is the cause of sin, because it also gave birth to the subsequent murder. One and the same sin, then, is both the punishment of the preceding, and the cause of the subsequent, sin: because it both condemns past sins, while it adds to their amount, and sows the seeds of future sins, to deserve condemnation. Because then the eye of the heart is blinded by previous sins, that blindness which confuses the mind of the sinner, by condemning him for his former offence, is properly designated ‘night:’ because by this the light of truth is concealed from the eye of the sinner. It is therefore well said, *For He knoweth their works, and therefore will He bring night on them, and they shall be crushed.* Because, as has been often observed, they doubtless commit previous offences, in order that they should be involved again in sin by the darkness which follows, so that they are now as unable to behold the light of righteousness, as they were unwilling to behold it when they were able. But the Lord is said to bring night on them, not because He Himself brings on the darkness, but because He does not enlighten in His mercy the darkened hearts of sinners. So that His having blinded men in the night is His not having willed to deliver them from the gloom of blindness. It follows,

Ver. 26. *He hath smitten them as ungodly men, in the place of beholders.*

25. In holy Scripture the word ‘as,’ is wont to be used, sometimes for resemblance, sometimes for reality. For it is for resemblance, as when the Apostle says, *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing:* [2 Cor. 6 10] but for the reality, as John says, *We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father.* [John 1, 14] But in this passage it makes no difference, whether it is put for resemblance, or reality: for, in whatever way it is taken, the evil life of the wicked is plainly signified. But holy Scripture specially calls unbelievers ‘ungodly.’ For sinners are distinguished from ungodly by this

difference, that though every ungodly man is a sinner, yet every sinner is not ungodly. For even a man who is godly in the Faith can be called a sinner. Whence John says, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.* [1 John 1, 8] But a man is properly called 'ungodly' who is estranged from the holiness of religion. For of such the Prophet says, *The ungodly shall not rise up in the judgment.* [Ps. 1, 5] But Holy Church is called *the place of beholders.* For people rightly assemble therein, in order that the True Light, which is God Himself, may be seen. Whence it is said to Moses, *There is a place by Me, and thou shall stand upon a rock, when My Majesty passeth by.* [Ex. 33, 21. 22.] And shortly afterwards, *I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back parts.* [ib. 23.] For, by the place, is typified the Church, but by the rock, the Lord, but by Moses, the multitude of the people of Israel, which did not believe, when the Lord was preaching upon earth. It stood, therefore, on the rock, beholding the back of the Lord, as He was passing by: because in truth having been brought into Holy Church, after the Passion and Ascension of the Lord, it obtained a knowledge of the faith in Christ, and beheld the back parts of Him, Whose presence it had not seen. Let it be said, then, of those whom Divine Vengeance finds within Holy Church, still persisting in their iniquities; let it be said of these, whose conduct Paul describes thus, *Who confess that they know God, but in words they deny Him:* [Tit. 1, 16] let it be said of these, *He hath smitten them as ungodly in the place of beholders.* For they were standing in that place, where they seemed to see God. They loved darkness in that very place, where the light of truth is beheld. And although they had had their eyes opened in faith, yet they kept them closed in their works. Whence it is also well said of Judaea, *Her watchmen are blind,* because, namely, they did not behold in works that which they saw in profession. Whence it is written also of Balaam, *Who falling hath his eyes open.* [Num. 24, 16] For, falling in works, he kept his eyes open in contemplation. In like

manner these also, who open their eyes in faith, and who see not in works, who are placed, from their appearance of piety, within the Church, are found, by their ungodly conversation, without the Church. Of whom it is well written in another place, *I saw the ungodly buried, who when they were alive, were in the holy place, and were praised in the city, as men of just works.* [Eccles. 8, 10]

26. But the very tranquillity of the peace of the Church conceals many under the Christian name, who are beset with the plague of their own wickedness. But if a light breath of persecution strikes them, it sweeps them away at once as chaff from the threshing floor. But some persons wish to bear the mark of Christian calling, because, since the name of Christ has been exalted on high, nearly all persons now look to appear faithful, and from seeing others called thus, they are ashamed not to seem faithful themselves; but they neglect to be that which they boast of being called. For they assume the reality of inward excellence, to adorn their outward appearance: and they who stand before the heavenly Judge, naked from the unbelief of their heart, are clothed, in the sight of men, with a holy profession, at least in words.

27. But some persons maintain the faith in their inmost heart, but are not careful to live faithfully. For they assail in their conduct that which they reverence in profession. And it frequently happens that they lose, by Divine judgment, even that which they wholesomely believe, through the wickedness of their lives. For they unceasingly pollute themselves by wicked deeds, and do not believe that the vengeance of just judgment can fall in retribution upon this conduct. And frequently, when they neglect to live strictly, they fall into unbelief, even when no one persecutes them. For they who do not believe that a strict judgment is hanging over them, who imagine that they can sin, without being punished for it; how can they either be, or be called, faithful? For to believe that due punishment cannot be

inflicted on their unrepented wickedness, is to have lost their faith. Because then they scorn to maintain works worthy of faith, they lose even the faith which they seemed to possess. And the language of destroying enemies over these is fitly mentioned by the Prophet, under the character of Jerusalem. For it is said by them, *Make her void, make her void, even to the foundation thereof.* [Ps. 137, 7] For Paul says, *Other foundation can no man lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.* [l Cor. 3, 11] Destroying enemies, then, make Jerusalem bare, even to the foundation, when evil spirits, having first destroyed the edifice of good works, draw away also the firm foundation of religion from the hearts of the faithful. For works are built on faith, as a building on a foundation. To have laid bare then even to the foundation, is, after having overthrown good works, to have scattered the strength of faith. Hence also it is said to Judaea by Jeremiah, *The sons also of Memphis and Taphnis have polluted thee even to the head.* [Jer. 2, 16] For to be polluted even to the head, is, after a habit of evil deeds, to be corrupted in the very sublimity of the faith. For when abandoned spirits involve the soul of any one in wicked works, but cannot pollute the integrity of his faith, they pollute, as yet, the inferior members, as it were, but reach not to the head. But whoever is corrupted in the faith, is at once defiled even to the head. For a malignant spirit reaches, as it were, from the inferior even to the higher members, when, defiling the outward conduct, it corrupts with the disease of unbelief the pure loftiness of the faith. Because then all these things are hidden from the eyes of men, but are open to the sight of God, and many die, without faith, in this abode of faith itself, let it be rightly said, *He hath smitten them as ungodly men, in the place of beholders.* For they exhibit themselves, before men in the Church, as godly persons, but because they cannot escape the Divine judgments, they are smitten as ungodly. And it tends to increase their punishment, that each of them, having been thrown together with the faithful in the Church, wittingly

despised the verity of the faith. And a heavier punishment follows them, as the knowledge of good living also attends them in the examples of righteous men. For the righteous and faithful brethren who are now set before them, are so many witnesses to assail them in the coming judgment. They know, therefore, that which they neglect to follow. Whence it is also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 27. *Who departed from Him, as it were on purpose.*

28. For we must understand that a sin is committed in three ways. For it is perpetrated either through ignorance, or infirmity, or of set purpose. And we sin more grievously from infirmity than through ignorance, but much more grievously of set purpose than from infirmity. Paul had sinned from ignorance, when he said, *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because 1 did it ignorantly in unbelief.* [1 Tim. 1, 13] But Peter sinned through infirmity, when the single word of a damsel shook in him all that strength of faith, which he had spoken of to the Lord, and when he denied, with his voice, the Lord Whom he held firm in his heart. [Matt. 26, 69. and 33.] But because a sin of infirmity or ignorance is wiped away the more easily, as it is not wilfully committed, Paul amended by knowledge the points on which he was ignorant: and Peter strengthened the root of faith which was moved, and, as it were, withering away, by watering it with his tears. [Ib. 75.] But those persons sinned intentionally, of whom the Master Himself said, *If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.* [John 15, 22] And a little after, *They have both seen, and hated, both Me and My Father.* [Ib. 24] For not to do good is one thing, to hate a teacher of goodness another: as it is one thing to sin from precipitancy, and another thing to sin deliberately. For a sin is often committed from precipitation, which yet is condemned on thought and deliberation. For it frequently happens that a man through infirmity loves what is right, and

cannot perform it. But to sin deliberately is neither to love nor to do what is good. As it is therefore sometimes a heavier offence to love sin than to commit it, it is, in like manner, more sinful to hate righteousness, than not to have performed it. There are some then in the Church, who so far from doing good, even persecute it, and who even detest in others, what they neglect to do themselves. The sin of these persons is in truth not committed from infirmity or ignorance, but of intention alone: because, namely, if they wished to do what is right, and were unable, they would at least love in others, what they neglect in themselves. For were they but only to wish for it themselves, they would not hate it when done by others. But because they despise in their lives, and persecute with severity the very same good qualities which they know and hear of, it is rightly said, *Who departed from Him of purpose.* Whence also it is rightly subjoined,

And would not understand any of His ways.

29. For he says not, they understand not through infirmity, but they would not understand; because men frequently also despise the knowledge of those things, which they are too proud to do. For since it is written, *The servant that knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes, and the servant which knew his Lord's will, and did not according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes,* [Luke 12, 47. 48.] they consider that their ignorance secures impunity for their sin. But they are doubtless overwhelmed with the darkness of pride alone, and therefore discern not, because it is one thing to have been ignorant, another to have refused to learn. For not to know is only ignorance, to refuse to learn is pride. And they are the less able to plead ignorance in excuse, the more that knowledge is set before them even against their will. Whence it is said by Solomon, *Doth not wisdom cry, and prudence put forth her voice, standing on the top of lofty places, above the way, in the middle of the paths?* [Prov. 8, 1. 2.] We might perhaps be able to

pass along the way of this present life, in ignorance of this Wisdom, if She had not Herself stood in the corners of the way.

30. If It had wished to be concealed, it would have been necessary to search after It. But after It has publicly displayed the mysteries of the Incarnation, after It has exhibited to the proud a pattern of humility, It placed Itself, as it were, in the middle of the way as we were passing along it; in order, namely, that we might strike against that which we are unwilling to look for, and touch and stumble over that which we neglect to observe as we are passing by it. Let it be said then, *And they would not understand any of His ways.* For the way of Incarnate Wisdom is every action which He did in time. His ways are the courses of life, which He has laid down for those who are coming to Him. He has marked out as many ways for those who come to Him, as many patterns as He has set forth of holy living. The Prophet had beheld His ways of humility, when he sighed, saying, *I will exercise myself in Thy commands, and I will consider Thy ways.* [Ps. 119, 15] Hence again it is said of every righteous man who takes care to walk after the pattern of the Lord. *The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and he desireth greatly His way.* [Ps. 37, 23] Because then all haughty men despise the doings of the Lord's humility, it is rightly said, *They would not understand His ways.* For these ways are mean in appearance, but are to be reverenced in understanding; since that which is seen in them is one thing, that which is looked for is another. For what else does it present in this life to the eyes of beholders, but degradation, spitting, insults, and death? But we pass through this lowliness to the highest glory. By these disgraces, which precede, eternal and glorious things are promised to us. Haughty men then have seen the ways of the Lord, but have refused to understand them, because by despising the mean appearance they present in themselves, they have lost the sublime promises which they offer. To understand, then, the ways of the Lord, is both to endure humbly what is transitory, and steadily

to wait for that which is to abide; in order that, after the pattern of the Lord, coeternal glory, which is purchased by temporal disgrace, may be sought for, and that a person may not fix his mind on that which he suffers here, but on that which he looks for. Haughty men, then, have kept their eyes closed to these things, because while they pride themselves on the glory of this present life, they have not seen the loftiness of the Lord's humility. For humility discloses to us the light of understanding, pride conceals it. For it is a kind of secret blessing of a holy life: and the mind attains to it the less, the more it is puffed up: because it is driven away from it, the more madly it is inspired. It follows,

Ver. 28. *That they might cause the cry of the needy to come to Him, and that He might hear the voice of the poor.*

31. For when these men are proud, they who are oppressed by their pride, cry aloud to God. Or certainly, it is said that they have caused the cry of the poor to come to God, because, on their fall, the poor, that is, the humble in spirit, are appointed in their room. And because this has taken place on their fall, they are said to have done it themselves: by the very same mode of expression with which we say that a camp fights, because men fight out of it. Or certainly, because every thing which has been stated above, can also be referred to the rulers of the Church, who give up the office of preaching, and are involved in worldly business, on occasion of exercising authority, it is fitly subjoined, *That they might cause the cry of the needy to come to Him, and that He might hear the voice of the poor.* For certainly while, from being engaged in worldly cares, they abandon the duty of preaching, they compel the flock which is under them to burst out into clamorous complaint. So that each of those under them complains, as if justly, of the conduct of the pretended pastor, why doth he hold the place of a teacher, who doth not exercise the office? Although, by 'the pride of mighty men,' the haughtiness of the Jews, and by 'the cry of the poor,' the

longings of the Gentiles, are perhaps more appropriately typified. Just as by the rich man feasting sumptuously, [Luke 16, 19-31] as the Truth Itself witnesses, the Jewish people is designated, which makes use of the fulness of the Law, not for the needful purpose of salvation, but for the pomp of pride, and which does not refresh itself moderately with the teaching of the commandments, but makes a boastful display of them. And by the wounded Lazarus, (which is by interpretation, 'Assisted,') is set forth the condition of the Gentile people, whom the Divine assistance exalts the more, the less it relies on the resources of its own strength. And he is described as poor and full of wounds, because the Gentile world has, with humble heart, laid open the confession of its sins. For as in a wound the venom is drawn towards the skin from within, so, in like manner, while secrets are disclosed by the confession of sin, evil humours, as it were, break forth from the inmost parts of the body. When they sin then, the cry of the poor is heard; because, while the Jews are proud against God, the prayers of the Gentiles are come up to God. Whence also, from his awe at those boundless and unfathomable judgments, he does not care to discuss them with reasoning, but to venerate them with admiration, and says,

Ver. 29. *For when He giveth peace, who is there to condemn? since He hath hidden His face, who is there that can look on Him?*

32. Let no one then discuss, why the Gentile world lay so long in unbelief, while the Jewish people was yet standing, and why the sin of unbelief overthrew the Jewish people, as the Gentile world rose to belief. [Rom. 11, 20] Let no one discuss, why one is drawn on, as of a free gift, and the other repelled according to its deserts. For if thou art surprised at the adoption of the Gentiles, *When He giveth peace, who is there to condemn?* If thou art startled at the loss of the Jews, *Since He hath hidden His face, who is there that can look on Him?* So the counsel of supreme and hidden power becomes the satisfaction of evident reason. Whence also the

Lord in the Gospel says, when speaking on the subject of this matter, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father.* [Matt. 11, 25] And He immediately adds, as a kind of reason for this concealment and revealing, *For so it hath seemed good before Thee.* [Matt. 11, 26] In which words, in truth, we learn a pattern of humility, that we may not rashly presume to discuss the Divine counsels concerning the call of the one and the rejection of the others. For after He had mentioned both points, He did not at once give a reason, but said that it was thus well pleasing to God; pointing out, namely, this very point, that that cannot be unjust, which has seemed good to the Just One. Whence also He says, when paying the labourers in the vineyard, on equalling in compensation those who were unequal in work, and when he who had toiled longest asked for greater pay, *Didst thou not agree with Me for a penny? I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own?* [Matt. 20, 13-15] In all things then which are outwardly disposed by Him, the righteousness of His secret will is an evident cause of reason. Let it be said therefore. *For when He giveth peace, who is there to condemn? since He hath hidden His face, who is there that can look on Him?* And because God judges the least, in the same way as the greatest, things, and the doings of individuals, as those of all men, it is fitly subjoined, *Both over a nation, and over all men.*

33. As if we were plainly directed to observe, that this judgment which is spoken of over a single nation, is also exercised over all men, by an invisible examination; so that one man is secretly elected, and another rejected, but no one unjustly. This then which we see happening in the greatest cases, let us also anxiously fear in ourselves separately. For the Divine judgments are displayed in the same manner over a single soul as over a single city; and again in the same way over a single city, as over a

single nation: and over a single nation, as over the whole multitude of the human race. Because the Lord is as attentive to particular persons, as though unconcerned with the world at large; and again so directs His attention to all at once, as though unconcerned with individuals. For He Who fills all things with His dispensation, rules by filling them, and when ordering one single thing, is still present in all, and again, when ordering the world at large, is present with each individual; in fact, works all things without moving, by the power of His own nature. What marvel, then, that He, when intent on any thing, is not confined to it, Who works still at rest? Let it be said then that He exercises this searching judgment both over a nation, and over all men. Because he has passed then from species to genus, he now turns himself from genus to species, and shews what Judaea properly deserves, saying,

Ver. 30. *Who maketh a man that is a hypocrite to reign for the sins of the people.*

34. For Judaea was unwilling that the true King should reign over it, and therefore obtained a hypocrite, as its merits demanded. As the Truth Itself says in the Gospel, *I have come in My Fathers name, and ye received Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.* [John 5, 43] And as Paul says, *Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, therefore God shall send them the operation of error, that they should believe a lie.* [2 Thess. 2, 10. 11.] In that, then, which is said, *Who maketh a man that is a hypocrite to reign for the sins of the people,* may be designated Antichrist, the very chief of all hypocrites. For that seducer then pretends to sanctity, that he may draw men away to iniquity. But he is permitted to reign for the sins of the people, because, in truth, they are preordained to be under his rule, who are foreseen before all ages to be worthy of being his subjects, who by their subsequent sins, claim to be placed under him by antecedent judgments. That Antichrist then reigns over

the ungodly arises not from the injustice of the Judge, but from the sin of the sufferer. Although most of them have not beheld his sovereign power, and yet are enslaved to it, by the condition in which their sins have placed them. Because they, doubtless, reverence even him by their evil lives, whom they do not see tyrannizing over them. Are not they his very members, who seek by a shew of affected sanctity to seem what they are not? For he in a special manner assumes a false guise, who though a lost man, and an evil spirit, falsely announces himself to be God. [2 Thess. 2, 4] But they unquestionably now come forth from his body, who conceal their iniquities under the cloak of sacred honour, in order to seek to seem to be that in profession, which they refuse to be in their doings. For since it is written, that *whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,* [John 8, 34] the more freely they now commit the sins which they desire, the more strictly are they bound down to his service. But let no one who suffers such a ruler, blame him whom he suffers: because his being subject to the power of a wicked ruler was doubtless of his own desert. Let him therefore rather blame the fault of his own evil doings, than the injustice of his ruler. For it is written, *I will give thee kings in Mine anger.* [Hos. 13, 11] Why then do we scorn their being set over us, whose authority over us we endure from the anger of the Lord? If then we receive rulers, according to our deserts, from the wrath of God, we infer from their conduct, what to think in our estimate of ourselves. Although even the Elect are frequently placed under the reprobate. Whence also David for a long time endured Saul. But it is proved by the subsequent sin of adultery, that he then deserved to be thus heavily oppressed by the cruelty of him who was set over him. [2 Sam. 12, 11]

35. The characters, then, of rulers are so assigned according to the deserts of their subjects, that frequently they who seem to be good are soon changed by the acceptance of power. As holy Scripture observed of the same Saul that he changed his heart with his dignity. Whence it is written,

When thou wast little in thine own eyes, I made thee the head among the tribes of Israel. [1 Sam. 15, 17] The conduct of rulers is so ordered with reference to the characters of their subjects, that frequently the conduct of even a truly good shepherd becomes sinful, in consequence of the wickedness of his flock. For that Prophet David, who had been praised by the witness of God Himself, who had been made acquainted with heavenly mysteries, being puffed up by the swelling of sudden pride, sinned in numbering the people. And yet, though David sinned, the people endured the punishment. [2 Sam. 24, 1-17] Why was this? Because in truth the hearts of rulers are disposed according to the deserts of their people. But the righteous Judge reproved the fault of the sinner, by the punishment of those very persons, on whose account he sinned. But because he was not exempt from guilt, as displaying pride of his own free will, he himself endured also the punishment of his sin. For that furious wrath which smote the people in their bodies, prostrated the ruler of the people by the pain of his inmost heart. But it is certain that the deserts of rulers and people are so mutually connected, that frequently the conduct of the people is made worse from the fault of their pastors, and the conduct of pastors is changed according to the deserts of their people.

36. But because rulers have their own Judge, subjects must be very careful not to judge rashly the conduct of their rulers. For the Lord Himself did not without a reason scatter the money of the changers, and overthrow the seats of them that were selling doves, [Matt. 2l, 12] signifying doubtless that He judges the conduct of people by their rulers, but that He examines into the doings of rulers in His own person. And yet even those sins of subjects, which are put off from being judged, or which cannot be judged by rulers, are doubtless reserved for His judgment. Therefore whilst all is done in good faith, it is a worthy part of virtue, if whatever is in a superior is tolerated. Yet it ought to be humbly suggested whether any thing which

displeases can be amended. But great care must be taken that an inordinate maintenance of justice does not degenerate into pride: lest humility, the mistress of what is right, should be lost, while what is right itself is loved without due caution; lest a man should slight him as his superior, whom he may perhaps happen to blame in some part of his conduct. But the mind of subjects is trained to guard its humility against this swelling pride, if its own weakness is constantly watched. For we neglect to examine honestly our own strength, and because we believe ourselves stronger than we really are, we consequently judge those severely who are set over us. For the more we neglect to know ourselves, the more clearly do we see those whom we endeavour to blame. These are the several evils which are often committed by subjects against their rulers, and by rulers against their subjects. Because both rulers consider all their subjects to be less wise than themselves, and subjects, again, judge the conduct of their rulers, and think that they could do better, if they perchance possessed the power. Since it is frequently the case that rulers see less judiciously what is to be done, because the mist of pride obscures their sight, and that a subject, when raised to high power, sometimes does the very same thing, which he used to complain of when a subject; and that, having committed the very faults which he has condemned, he is ashamed at all events that he condemned them. As rulers then must take care that their higher position does not puff up their minds, with a notion of their singular wisdom, so must subjects be careful not to be offended at the conduct of their rulers.

37. But even if the conduct of rulers is justly blamed, yet it is the duty of subjects to pay them respect, even when they displease them. But thou must carefully observe not to be anxious to imitate a person whom it is necessary for thee to reverence, and not to scorn to reverence him whom thou despisest to imitate. For the narrow path of rectitude and humility must be so maintained, that, though offended with the reprehensible conduct of their

rulers, the mind of subjects may not depart from observing respect for their office. Which is well set forth in Noah when drunk, the nakedness of whose secret parts his sons came and covered with averted looks. For we are said to be averse from that which we reprobate. What is meant then by his sons' coming with averted looks, and covering the shame of their father with a cloak thrown over their backs, except that good subjects, while offended with the misdeeds of their rulers, nevertheless conceal them from others? They bring a covering with averted looks, because judging the deeds, and reverencing the office, they do not wish to behold the sin which they conceal.

38. But there are some, who if they have made ever so small a beginning in spiritual conversation, on observing that their rulers fix their thoughts only on worldly and temporal objects, begin to blame the disposition of supreme Providence as if they were improperly appointed to rule, since they set an example of worldly conversation. But these persons, from not being careful to keep themselves from censure of their rulers, (as their fault justly demands,) proceed to blame even the Creator. For His dispensation is understood to be more right by the humble, for the very same reason that it is not judged to be right by the proud. For because the power of office cannot be exercised without our engaging in worldly cares, therefore Almighty God, in His marvellous dispensation of mercy, frequently imposes the burden of rule on hard and laborious hearts; in order that the tender minds of spiritual men may be released from worldly cares: in order that the one may be more safely concealed from the bustle of the world, the more willingly the others employ themselves in worldly anxieties. For hard are the ways of worldly slavery, in the discharge of a burden that has been undertaken even for the good of others.

39. And frequently, as has been said, as the Merciful God tenderly loves His own, so does He anxiously conceal them from outward employments.

For often the father of a family appoints his servants to that work, from which he releases his delicate [‘subtiles.’] sons; and his sons are comely and free from annoyance, from the fact that the servants are defiled with dust. And how properly this is ordered in the Church by Divine appointment is signified by the very construction of the tabernacle. For Moses is commanded by the voice of God to weave curtains of fine linen, and scarlet, and blue, for the covering of the Holy of Holies within. And he was ordered to spread, for the covering of the tabernacle, curtains of goats’ hair, and skins, to sustain the rain, and wind, and dust. What then do we understand by the skins and goats’ hair, with which the tabernacle is covered, but the gross minds of men, which are sometimes, hard though they be, placed on high in the Church by the secret judgment of God? And because they are not afraid of being employed in worldly concerns, they must needs bear the winds and storms of temptation which arise from the opposition of this world. But what is signified by the blue, scarlet, and fine linen, but the life of holy men, delicate, but brilliant? And while it is carefully concealed in the tabernacle under goats’ hair and skins, its beauty is preserved entire. For in order that the fine linen may shine, the scarlet glitter, and the blue be resplendent with azure brilliance, the skins and the goats’ hair endure the rains, the winds, and the dust from above. They then who advance in great excellence within the bosom of holy Church, ought not to despise the doings of their rulers, when they see that they are engaged in the business of the world. For that they penetrate in safety into secret mysteries, is owing to the help of those who buffet with the storms of this world from without. For how would the fine linen retain the grace of its brightness, if the rain were to touch it? Or what splendour and brightness would the scarlet or blue display, should the dust light on, and defile them? Let the strong texture of the goats’ hair, then, be placed above, to resist dust; the brightness of the blue, fitted for ornament, be placed beneath. Let those who are engaged in

spiritual pursuits alone, adorn the Church. Let those guard her, who are not wearied even with the labours of the world. But let not him who now gleams with spiritual brightness within Holy Church, murmur against his superior, who is employed in worldly business. For if thou glitterest securely within, like scarlet, why dost thou blame the goats' hair with which thou art protected?

40. But some persons enquire, why it is that [perhaps 'complain because.'], while rulers are engrossed in worldly concerns, solely for the benefit of those under them, many in the Church are made worse by their example. For who can deny that this is very true, when he sees worldly concerns more anxiously attended to by pastors, than heavenly objects? But this is not unjust, if, as we said before, the circumstances of rulers are ordered in accordance with the deserts of those under them. For the sins, which they commit secretly and wilfully, demand a bad example to be set them by their pastors: in order that by a righteous judgment the haughty man, who departs from the way of God, may stumble, through the guidance of his pastor, in the way in which he is walking. Whence it is said by the Prophet also, with the zeal of one who is announcing, not with the wish of one who is cursing, *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not, and ever bow Thou down their back.* [Ps. 69, 23] As if he were to say, Let those who are appointed to mark out, as it were, the courses of human actions, not enjoy the light of truth, in order that their subjects, who follow them, may be bent down by the burden of their sins, and lose entirely their state of uprightness. And this we know was unquestionably the case in Judaea, when, at the coming of our Redeemer, the multitude of the Pharisees and Priests closed the eyes of their mind against the True Light, and the people, walking after the example of its rulers, wandered in the darkness of unbelief.

41. But it can be reasonably asked, How it is said in this place that the Lord makes the hypocrite to reign, when by the Prophet He complains especially of this thing, saying, *They have reigned, but not of Me: they have become princes, and I know them not?* [Hos. 8, 4] For, who that thinks rightly, can say that the Lord does that of which He knows nothing? But, because God's knowledge is approval, His ignorance is disapproval. Whence He says to some whom He rejects, *I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [Luke 13, 27] And sometimes God's doing a thing, is His allowing in His anger that which He forbids to be done. Hence He asserted that He hardened the heart of the king of Egypt, because He, in truth, allowed it to be hardened. In a marvellous manner then does God make hypocrites to reign, and knows them not. He makes them, by suffering; He knows them not, by rejecting them. Whence it is necessary, with reference to every thing, which is desired in this life, that the Inner [i.e. the Divine] Will should be first enquired into. And when the ear of the heart is anxious to catch Its sound, let it know that It speaks, not in words, but in deeds. When then a post of authority is offered, it is necessary for a man first to question with himself, whether his conduct is suited to the place, whether his doings are at variance with the distinction it confers; lest, perchance, the just Ruler of all should, afterwards, not regard his prayers in tribulation, because He knows not his very entering on that high office, which is the source of all his tribulation.

BOOK XXVI.

The holy Doctor expounds the seven last verses of the thirty-fourth chapter, the whole of the thirty-fifth, with the first twenty-one verses of the thirty-sixth chapter; and launches out, at very great length, into both allegorical and moral meanings.

1. Haughty men are wont to display this peculiarity in what they say, that, when they know that they have said any thing in a praiseworthy manner, they then enquire of their hearers, whether they have by chance said any thing out of the way. And this they do, not because they doubt of what they say, but because, namely, they seek for approval, in the judgment of their hearers. For the object of their enquiry will be easily discovered, if when any one praises their good qualities, he also blames their faults. For it is certain, that as they are puffed up by praises, so are they inflamed by reproofs; and when they see that they are blamed, even justly, by any one, they seek at once in their faults for materials of self-defence. How then do they humbly doubt of their own good qualities, who even perversely endeavour to defend their bad ones? For he is really humble in his good doings, who does not defend himself in his evil ones. For he who is reproved for his faults, and fires up against the words of his reprover, when he hesitates, as if humbly, in speaking of his good qualities, seeks, by his words of humility, for compliments, and not for instruction. Eliu therefore, as representing the conduct of the haughty, after having stated many spiritual and sublime sentiments, behold, assumes in words an appearance of humility, and under a kind of show of being his disciple, addresses blessed Job with a fair proposal, saying,

Ver. 31, 32. *Because I have spoken to God, I will not hinder thee also. If I have sinned, teach thou me; if I have spoken iniquity, I will add no more.*

2. As it is frequently the case, that even wicked men say what is right, Eliu called to mind that he had made a little before many noble statements, and therefore confidently enquired of him if perchance he had erred. For he would not have thus asked, if he had believed that he had erred. For, as I said, it is a craft peculiar to the boastful to be eager to enquire about their erring, when they know that they have not erred. And, again, they disdain to make this enquiry, and to be convicted of error, whenever they plainly foresee that they have done wrong. For they seek not to be, but to appear, humble, and they assume an appearance of humility, by then making the enquiry, when they are praised the more from the very enquiry itself. But, because it is very difficult for the pride, which reigns in the heart, not to break out in the voice, if the hearers of these haughty men wait for a while, and consider their sayings in silence, the words, which follow, too soon make manifest their hearts. For they cannot continue long in that guise of humility, which they assume in appearance only. For to haughty minds humility is lofty; and when they endeavour to climb up to its beauty they stumble, as if from abrupt and rugged paths, with the weary steps of their mind. For that which they wish to appear is foreign to them: and they cannot therefore long cling close to its resemblance. They count it a heavy burden, when they bear it only in appearance, and they suffer a kind of constraint in their heart, till they cast it aside. Because in truth they are slaves to the habit of pride, which fatally rules over them, and are compelled by its authority to shew what they are, so that they cannot appear, for any time, that which they are not. Whence Eliu also, after he requested to be informed of his error, after he promised that he would no longer speak iniquity, suddenly broke out, from an appearance of humility, into words of proud arguing. For he added, saying,

Ver. 33. *Doth God require it of thee, because it hath displeased thee?*

3. As though he were saying, I am about to give reasons, in the sight of God, why my iniquity is now blamed by thee, though it is plain that it is not required of thee in judgment. When good men are unrighteously assailed by the world, they appeal to the judgment of heaven. Whence also it is said by the same blessed Job, *Behold, my witness is in heaven, and He Who knoweth me is on high.* [Job 16, 19] And because they especially desire to please Him, they seek for the witness of Him only. Wicked men also, because they forsake the life of the just, but sometimes imitate their words, when reproved for their misdeeds adopt that, as a ground of defence, which the righteous urge, as an evidence of their purity. Whence it has become already a custom with them, when any one blames them for their doings, to seek the judgment of God rather than of men. For, even when they know that they will be condemned by God, they are not afraid of being judged by Him, and are ashamed of being judged by men. They prefer, therefore, the greater, which they fear not, in order to be able to avoid the less, of which they are ashamed. For it is written, *Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* [Rom. 14, 12] Because then the condemnation of every one is then manifest, the ungodly now gather from it, that, even the wicked conduct of every one is out of danger, that the righteous should now refute and expose that conduct, with which, it is plain, he has no concern in the judgment. But the consciences of the holy consider on the other hand, that a great reward is conferred on them, when they are now convicted of some of their unlawful deeds. For, they set it before the eyes of their heart, that the strict judgment of God will then be more surely mitigated towards them, the more severely it is now anticipated by the reproofs of man. And they consider as a gain the temporal wrath upon them, by which they know well that they can escape the wrath eternal. Let Eliu, therefore, (as representing all haughty men, and choosing rather to be smitten with eternal severity, than to be reproved in this life,) say, *Doth God require it of thee, because it*

hath displeased thee? But since those who speak first in a dispute are usually more to blame than those who reply, he subjoins,

For thou didst begin to speak, not I.

4. He believed himself to be so far innocent, in as much as he burst forth only on being struck, being doubtless ignorant that innocence is not defended on the score of time, but on that of reason. For what support does it give to his defence, that, though he did not revile him when silent, when he began properly, he replied to him revilingly? But after he displays himself in words of pride, lo, he again conceals himself under the pretext of a demand, and proceeds to say,

But if thou knowest any thing better, say on.

Although, while he does not say, because thou knowest better, but, *If thou knowest any thing better, say on,* it was itself too proud of him, that he had doubted of the knowledge of his superior. But he signified that he had exhibited his humility, in having given blessed Job an opportunity of speaking. But, as was before stated, that every thing in the doings of the proud, which is concealed by a covering of words, is brought to light, when the boastful purpose again breaks forth, Eliu speedily made known, with what purpose he required blessed Job to speak. For it follows,

Ver. 34, 35. *Let men of understanding speak to me, and let a wise man hear me. But Job hath spoken foolishly, and his words sound not of discipline.*

5. Lo, how he lays open that, which he was cherishing within, when, as if humbly, he allows blessed Job to speak; saying, *Let men of understanding speak to me.* For if blessed Job were to presume to speak, he would have disdained him, as though he could not understand his words. And, because he considered that blessed Job was unworthy not only to speak with, but even to hear, him, he immediately added, *Let a wise man hear me.* As if he were to say, This man is unfairly permitted to speak, who is not worthy

even to hear the words of wise men. And he presently shews plainly, how contemptibly he thinks of him, saying, *But Job hath spoken foolishly, and his words sound not of discipline.* He believed that blessed Job had spoken without discipline, because he said, that he had been just in his doings. Eliu would perhaps be speaking truly, if the Author of discipline had not Himself agreed with what blessed Job had said of himself. For Job asserted that he had been scourged undeservedly, whom God declared also to have been smitten without reason. What haughtiness then did the voice of the sufferer utter, which did not at all differ from the sentence of the Smiter? Those persons are inconsiderately humble, who, whilst they avoid pride, ensnare themselves in falsehood. Nay rather, they shew pride in their falsehood; because they set themselves up against the truth, which they abandon. For he, who states of himself good qualities, which are true, when necessity compels, the more closely is united to humility, the more he adheres also to truth. Was not Paul humble, when from zeal for the truth against false Apostles, he related to his disciples so many bold deeds concerning himself? For he would doubtless be an enemy of truth, if, by concealing his own good qualities, he had allowed the preachers of errors to gain strength.

But because proud men, in that they haughtily examine the sayings of the righteous, consider rather the surface of the words, than the order of the matters, Eliu believed that the sentiments of blessed Job had not sounded of discipline. But since the asperity of haughty men extends sometimes as far as to the severity of cursing, he immediately, as if speaking to God, subjoins against blessed Job,

Ver. 36. *My Father, let Job be tried even to the end.*

6. Lo! how he lifts up even in words of cursing, that which he had before conceived of the swellings of arrogance. But he would perhaps wish for the force of a merciful probation, if he had believed that he had stood firm in probation. In order then that the malice of his cruelty may openly appear, he

prays, that he may still be tried by scourges, who he complains had already fallen during his scourges. He first stated what he thought, in order that what he wished might be more plainly understood. He requires him to be still smitten, whom he accuses of having sinned already under the hand of the Smiter. These are wishes peculiar to the haughty, to pray that the lives of those who are suffering may be more severely examined, because the more just they are in their own eyes, the more hardened are they in others' sufferings. For they know not how to take to them the feeling of the other's infirmity, and to feel pity for their neighbour's weakness, as they do for their own. For since they think highly of themselves, they do not at all condescend to the humble. Eliu believed that blessed Job had been smitten for his sin, and therefore believed that no bowels of compassion were to be shewn to him, even in the midst of so many sorrows. But when men, who are truly holy, behold any one smitten, even for his faults, though they reprove some of his inordinate doings, yet they sympathize with some of his sufferings; and they are so skilled in keeping down swellings, as yet to know how to relieve wounds, in order that when their hardnesses are softened, their infirmities may be strengthened. But because, on the other hand, haughty men have no bowels of love, they not only do not sympathize with the righteous when suffering, but moreover afflict them, under pretence of proper reproof, and they either exaggerate trifling faults, if there are any in them, or pervert by wrong construction those points which are really good.

7. Although even holy teachers are frequently wont to exaggerate the vices of offenders, and from some outward signs to dive into secret faults, in order from the smallest defects to discover greater. Whence it is said to Ezekiel, *Son of man, dig in the wall.* Where he presently subjoined, *And when I had digged in the wall, there appeared a door; and He said unto me, Go in, and see the most wicked abominations that they do here. And I went*

in and saw, and behold every likeness of creeping things, and the abominations of animals, and all the idols of the house of Israel, were painted on the wall. [Ez. 8, 8-10] For by Ezekiel is represented the person of rulers; by the wall the hardness of subjects. And what is the digging into the wall, except laying bare hardness of heart by sharp reproofs? For when he had dug into it, there appeared a door; because when hardness of heart is opened by sharp reproofs, a kind of door appears, through which all the secret thoughts of the person, who is reproved, can be seen. Whence it also well follows in that place, *And He said to me, Go in, and see the most wicked abominations which they do here.* A person enters as it were to behold abominations, who on examining certain signs which appear outwardly, so penetrates the hearts of those under him, that all their unlawful thoughts are made plain to him. Whence he added, *And I went in and saw; and behold every likeness of creeping things, and the abomination of animals.* By reptiles are especially understood worldly thoughts: but by animals, those which rise a little above the earth, but still seek for the rewards of an earthly recompense. For reptiles cling to the earth with the whole of their body, but though animals are in their belly suspended from the earth, yet they are by the appetite of gluttony ever bending to the earth. Reptiles therefore are within the wall, when thoughts which are never elevated from worldly desires, are revolved in the mind. Animals also are within the wall, when if any just and becoming thoughts are conceived, they subserve the pursuit of worldly gains and honours, and of themselves indeed they are already suspended, as it were, from the earth, but by their ambition, they still bring themselves down to the basest objects, as by gluttonous desire. Whence it is also well subjoined, *And all the idols of the house of Israel were painted on the wall.* For it is written, *And covetousness which is idolatry.* [Col. 3, 5] After the animals, therefore, the idols are properly described, because, though they arise themselves, as it were, from

the earth by becoming conduct, yet they bring themselves down to the earth again by dishonourable ambition. But it is well said, *Were painted;* because while the appearances of outward objects are drawn inward, whatever is thought in imagination is painted, as it were, on the heart.

8. We must therefore observe, that first a hole, and afterwards a door, is seen in the wall: and that then at last the secret abomination is laid open: because, doubtless, the signs of every sin are first observed without, next the door of detected iniquity is laid open; and then at last all the evil is disclosed, which is lurking within. Therefore even holy teachers are wont to examine severely into minute points, in order to arrive at greater hidden faults, from outer faults at the very surface. They utter words of sharp reproof, in order to root out the thorns of deadly thought, and when they act thus, they rage with the love of charity, and are not puffed up with the swelling of pride. For they are ready to die for those, whom they afflict as if raging even to the death. In their thoughts they retain this affection, while they assume persecution in appearance. They insinuate sound truths in their preaching, they announce and warn against evils, and do not as Eliu pray for, and desire them. They are sometimes so prompt in reproof against those committed to their care, as though they had nothing of calmness: but are so tranquil in affection, as though no warmth could kindle them. For they greatly fear, that if they should cease to reprove the wicked, they would be punished themselves for their damnation. And when warmed into words of reproof, they unwillingly have recourse to them, but yet prepare them, as a defence for themselves, before their strict Judge.

9. Whence it is said again also to the same Ezekiel, *Son of man, take thee a brick, and thou shall place it before thee, and thou shall describe on it the city Jerusalem, and thou shalt build munitions, and heap up a mound, and set a camp against it, and place battering rams around it. And take thou an iron pan, and thou shalt place it as an iron wall between thee and the city.*

[Ezek. 4, 1-3] For whom does Ezekiel represent, but rulers? And to him it is said, *Take thee a brick, and thou shall place it before thee, and thou shalt describe on it the city Jerusalem.* For holy teachers take to themselves a brick, when they lay hold of the earthly heart of hearers, in order to instruct it. And they place this brick before them, because they guard it with the entire attention of their anxiety. And they are ordered also to describe the city Jerusalem thereon, because they earnestly endeavour in their preaching to shew to earthly hearts, how great is the vision of heavenly peace. And it is well said to him also, *And thou shalt set in array the siege against it, and thou shall build munitions.* For holy teachers set the siege in array against the brick, on which the city Jerusalem is described, when they shew to an earthly mind, now seeking after its heavenly country, what an opposition of sins assails it in the season of this life. For when it is pointed out, how each separate sin lays ambush against the mind, the siege is set, as it were, against Jerusalem by the voice of the preacher. But because they suggest not only how sins lay wait and assault the mind, but also how virtues, when guarded, strengthen it, it is rightly subjoined, *And thou shall build munitions.* For a holy preacher builds munitions, when he ceases not to teach what virtues oppose what vices. And because the contests of temptation frequently become stronger as virtues increase, it is still rightly added, *And thou shalt heap up a mound, and set a camp against it, and place battering rams around it.* For every preacher raises up a mound, when he points out the mass of increasing temptation. And he raises a camp against Jerusalem, when he points out to the right disposition of his hearers the circumventions of the crafty enemy, as snares which are beyond their understanding. And he places battering rams around, when he makes known the stings of temptations which surround us on every side in this life, and pierce through the wall of virtues.

10. Where it is well added, *And take thee an iron pan, and thou shalt place it as an iron wall between thee and the city.* For, by the pan is set forth parching, and by the iron, strength. But what so parches and tortures the mind of a ruler and teacher as zeal for the Lord? Whence also Paul was burned by the parching of this pan, when saying, *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* [2 Cor. 11, 29] And because whoever is kindled with a zeal for God against sinners, is constantly protected by a strong guard within, in order that he may not be condemned for neglecting his charge of preaching and ruling, it is well said, *Thou shall place it as an iron wall between thee and the city.* For the iron pan is placed as an iron wall between the Prophet and the city, because when teachers now display a resolute zeal, they hold afterwards the same zeal, as a strong bulwark, between themselves and their hearers; that they may not then be given up to punishment, if they have been now negligent in reproof. The same Prophet heard that he was to hold this pan between himself and his hearers, when the voice of God addressed him before, saying, *If thou hast announced to the wicked, and he have turned not from his wickedness, and from his evil way, he himself shall die in his wickedness, but thou hast delivered thy soul.* [Ez. 3, 19] Paul had placed this pan, as a wall between himself and his disciples, when saying, *I am pure from the blood of all of you: for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.* It is, therefore, necessary that teachers should seek to be burned up now with ardent zeal, that they may not be compelled to suffer torments in the fire of hell for the sloth of negligence.

11. But we owe one duty to those who are unrighteous and subject to us, and another to those who are righteous and not subject to us. For fear should enkindle us to reprove those, and to take good care of the accounts we have to render. But the thought of equity should incline us to reverence these. But haughty men, because they know not this kind of discretion,

exhibit the same conduct to those who are righteous, and not subject to them, as they see good preachers display towards those who are unrighteous, and subject to them. And when they unjustly launch out into warmth of invective, they venture even on words of malediction. For, because they do not love their neighbours as themselves, they cease not to wish for their neighbours that, which they are afraid of befalling themselves. Whence Eliu, venting his secret hatred in open malediction, exclaims, *O my Father, let Job be tried even to the end, cease not from the man of iniquity.* He calls him a man of iniquity, whom God, by a testimony from on high, pronounces righteous above all men. And because many things are still subjoined, from this want of discrimination, I think that they must be run through briefly. For sayings, which are wanting in weight, do not require any careful exposition. It follows,

Ver. 37. *Who hath added blasphemy upon his sins.*

12. He accuses him of having deserved scourges for his sins, and of having sinned after the scourges. But the Lord judges far otherwise, Who both asserts that he was scourged without reason, and conferred on him double goods, after his scourges. Blessed Job, then, is proved to have spoken without sin, whom rewards follow after his speech. Because, therefore, Eliu, when speaking in the Lord's defence, thinks of blessed Job differently from the Lord, he is at variance with the truth, while multiplying, as it were, his words in behalf of the truth. It follows,

Let him be bound meanwhile amongst us, and then let him provoke God to judgment with his words.

13. As though he were saying, Let him know from our assertion, that he is by no means able to bear the examination of God. And, because haughty men strive to say not only foolish, but also many, things, the verse which follows is frequently well introduced respecting him.

Chap. xxxv. Ver. 1. *Eliu therefore spake these words again.*

14. Every one, who says many things, is anxious to be always beginning, in his speech, in order, by this very beginning, to keep his hearers in suspense, so that they may be the more attentively silent, the more they expect, as it were, to hear some new thing. But Eliu, finishing one subject, begins another without delay, in order that his loquacity may be continued without limit, by beginnings being constantly joined on. It follows,

Ver. 2. *Doth thy thought seem right to thee, that thou saidst, I am more righteous than God.*

15. Every one observes, who reads the text of the history, that blessed Job did not say that he was more righteous than God. But he says, *Let Him put forth equity against me, and my judgment shall come to victory.* [Job 23, 7. Vulg.] Examining namely his life, and not knowing the reasons of his smiting, as has been often observed, he believed that he was scourged for the sake of washing away his sins, and not of increasing his merits. And he was therefore confident, that his judgment would come to victory, because he found in himself no fault, for which he deserved to be smitten. Which thing indeed the Lord also said of him to the devil; *Thou hast moved Me against him, to afflict him without cause.* [Job 2, 3] What had he sinned then, by speaking thus, who, unknowingly, agreed, in these words, with the divine and secret sentence upon himself? Or what harm is there, if, in the judgment of men, our words differ, on the surface, from the exactness of truth, when, in that on which they turn in the heart, they are closely joined to, and agree with, it. [‘cordis cardine’] The ears of men consider our words to be such as they sound outwardly, but the divine judgments hear them as they are uttered from our inmost heart. Among men, our heart is judged of from our words, but with God, our words are judged of from our heart. Whilst blessed Job, then said without, that, which God said within, he justly uttered every thing which he said, inasmuch as he, piously, did not differ from the Inner sentence. Although in that which he said, filled by the spirit

of Prophecy, *Let Him put forth Equity against me, and my judgment shall come to victory,* he might be looking for the presence of our Redeemer. For He, Who is the Virtue and the Wisdom of the Father, may be, not improperly, considered as His Equity. Whence it is written, *Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification.* [1 Cor. 1, 30] And because, namely, God has placed this Equity against sinners who fly from Him, by exhibiting It Incarnate, He recalled them at once from their iniquity; and, in that judgment in which it found the Equity of God opposing its ways, mankind has overcome its ancient opponent. It follows,

Ver. 3. *For thou saidst, that which is right doth not please thee, or what will it profit thee, if I shall have sinned.*

16. If the whole course of the book is attended to, blessed Job is proved to have said none of these things. But haughty men, as we have also said before, are wont to have this peculiarity, that while they go on in violent invective, they also speak falsely in their inveighing, and that, when they cannot justly blame the things which exist, they reprehend, in their falsehood, those which do not exist. It follows,

Ver. 4. *I will therefore answer thy words, and thy friends with thee.*

In his former saying, he mentioned culpable words, as if those of blessed Job, and derived from them matter for his remarks. But, in the words which follow, he examines, with great acuteness, that, which he craftily invented as matter to speak upon. And the sentiments which follow are powerful, but are not applicable to the character of blessed Job; and the shafts of this reproof strike him the less, the more unjustly they are launched against him. It follows,

Ver. 5 — 7. *Look unto the heaven, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou. If thou hast sinned, what wilt thou hurt Him? If thine iniquities have been multiplied, what wilt thou do against Him? If,*

moreover, thou hast acted justly, what wilt thou give Him, or what will He receive of thy hand?

17. Although these words ought not to have been said to blessed Job, who knew greater truths, yet the things, which are said, are true, namely, that neither do our sins hurt God, nor our good deeds assist Him. Whence he followed, and added, (ver. 8.) *Thine iniquity will hurt a man that is like thee, and thy righteousness will profit the son of man.* But amongst these things we must carefully notice that which he says, *Look into the heavens, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou.* For from speaking in this way he doubtless signifies, that Job should consider, how much less he could either benefit, or injure, God by his conduct, since he could neither benefit, nor injure, the loftiness of the heaven, or of the sky. For although we can understand by the heaven, or the sky, the heavenly powers, who are ever steadily gazing on the sight of the Godhead, (in order that, when we behold that the angelic spirits are still far distant from us, we may acknowledge how far we are distant below, from the Creator and Lord of spirits Himself,) yet nothing prevents our understanding by them in this place the material substance of heaven and sky. For if we look attentively at outward things, we are recalled by their very means to inward things. For the wonderful works of the visible creation, are the footsteps of our Creator. For we cannot as yet behold Him Himself; but we are yet tending to a sight of Him, if we admire Him in these things which He has made. We call, therefore, the creation His footsteps, because we journey onwards towards Him by-following up those things which proceed from Him. Whence Paul says, *The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.* [Rom. 1, 20] Whence also it is written in the Book of Wisdom, *For by the greatness and beauty of the creatures the Maker of them can be intelligently seen.* [Wisd. 13, 5] For to our mind, which is through sin scattered abroad, God is not as

yet made known within, as He really is. But while He sets before us from without the beauty of His creation, He gives us, as it were, certain hints, and shews what to follow within. He leads us on wonderfully by these same outward forms to inward things, He intimates with boundless admiration what He is, by shewing us these marvels without, which are not Himself. For hence it is written of Wisdom, *She sheweth herself cheerfully unto them in the ways, and meeteth them in all forethought.* [Wisd. 6, 16]

18. For the works of the creation are, when considered, ways to the Creator. For when we see these things, which are made, we admire the power of their Maker. In these ways we are met by Wisdom, with all forethought, because the power of our Maker is set before us, to be enquired into, in every thing, which appears to have been wonderfully wrought. And wherever the soul turns itself, if it looks attentively, it finds God in the very same objects, through which it forsook Him; and again acknowledges His power, from a consideration of those objects, for the love of which it abandoned Him. And it is recalled, when converted, by those things, by which, when perverted, it fell. For we make efforts to rise on the very spot where we fell, and in rising, we place, as it were, the hand of consideration on the spot, where, falling with the foot of slippery love, we were lying prostrate through neglect. But because we have, by visible things, fallen from invisible, it is right that we should again strive, by visible things, to reach invisible; in order that what was to the soul a fall to the bottom, may be a step in turn to the summit, and that it may rise by the same paces by which it fell: while, as was before said, those objects, rightly considered, recal us to God, which, when improperly chosen, separated us from Him. Eliu, therefore, in order to apply the force of consideration, and to shew from bodily objects, how far higher is God than man, well observed, *Look unto the heaven, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou.* For we learn from these created and corporeal objects, how far we are distant

from the loftiness of our Creator: because, by every thing which we behold, we are warned to be humble; in order that the beauty of the creature, when considered, may be, as it were, a kind of lesson to our mind. Let him say then, *Look unto the heaven, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou. If thou hast sinned, in what wilt thou hurt Him? If thine iniquities have been multiplied, what wilt thou do against Him? If, moreover, thou hast acted justly, what wilt thou give Him, or what will He receive of thy hand?* As if he were saying, Understand from the very creatures, which thou seest by thy bodily senses, to be higher than thyself, how far thou art removed from the loftiness of the Divine Power, and conclude, from this thy consideration, that thou canst neither benefit God by thy good living, nor, again, injure Him by thy evil deeds.

19. But if, as we before said, we understand the superior Powers by 'heaven,' or the 'sky,' Eliu, in these words, warns us to consider, that, because the angelic spirits themselves cannot fully contemplate the power of our Creator, (though it is certain that they are higher than ourselves, as not having fallen into the lowest depths,) we should hence infer, how far we are inferior to God, who are beneath even those sublime creatures, who are yet far His inferiors. As if he were to say, Lo ! how widely thou art separated from the loftiness of the Godhead, from Whose might even those powers shrink in their humility, who surpass thee with immeasurable loftiness; and how far inferior thou art to the Most High, who discernest that thou art inferior to those, who are inferior to Him. But, by pointing out the highest objects, he brings to an equality, and says,

Ver. 8. *Thine iniquity will hurt a man, who is like thee, and thy righteousness will profit the son of man.*

20. The iniquity of man hurts him, whom it pollutes by perversion. And, again, our righteousness profits him, whom it converts from his wickedness. For those things cannot either hurt, or profit, which cannot either corrupt

from what is good, or change from what is evil. The powers above, then, cannot be either hurt, or profiled, because they have already received to be free from change. But they who are involved in earthly desires, cannot consider these things. For it is difficult for minds, which are scattered abroad, to return to themselves; because evil ways detain them, more pleasurably, when once ensnared, the more every thing, which pleases them, is therein permitted. For no wall of discipline stands in the way to confine them, no punishment of retribution is looked forward to, to frighten them. But, when the eyes of the heart are closed, the soul is plunged the more surely into the lowest abyss, as it is shut out from the highest objects, and commits temporal sins more fearlessly, the more obstinately it despairs of eternal blessings.

21. But that wickedness of the reprobate, separating the life of the Elect, as corn from the chaff in threshing, oppresses, that it may purify. For the wicked, whilst they afflict the good, release them the more from the desires of this world; because, while they heap on them many cruelties here, they compel them to hasten heavenwards. Which is well signified by the Jewish people, when Moses was summoning, and king Pharaoh raging against, them. For Moses was then sent to call them, when Pharaoh had been already urged to oppress them by hard labours: in order that the one, while summoning, might draw away, as it were, the minds of the Israelites disgracefully clinging to Egypt, and the other might urge them on, as it were, while raging: and that the people, which was disgracefully held in bondage, might be moved, either by being invited by blessings, or driven by sufferings. [Ex.16, 3] This occurs daily, while the reprobate are allowed to rage against the Elect, when heavenly rewards have been announced to them; in order, that, if we neglect to go forth, when called, to the land of promise, we may be compelled at least by raging oppressions; and, that this Egypt, that is, our present life, which oppressed us, when flattering, may

aid, when pressing, us: and that, that which, when cherishing, crushed us with the yoke of bondage, may shew the way of liberty, while it tortures. This is the special reason, why the righteous are allowed to be afflicted by the wicked, in order, namely, that while they hear of future blessings to desire, they may also suffer present evils to shudder at; and that, while love invites, torture may drive them to an easier escape. Whence Eliu, going on to speak of the same sufferings of the Elect, under the oppressions of the reprobate, says,

Ver. *9. They will cry out, by reason of the multitude of oppressors* [*'calumniatores.' 'wrongful clamants.'*]*, and will wail on account of the force of the arm of tyrants.*

22. We can rightly term all the ungodly 'oppressors,' not those only, who spoil our outward goods, but those, also, who endeavour by their wicked habits, and by the example of their reprobate life, to scatter our inward treasures. For those go about to attack the things, which are without us, but these seek to prey on us within. The one cease not to rage with love for our goods, the other with hatred of our virtues. The one envy what we possess, the others the way we live. The one desire to spoil our outward goods, because they like them, the others are busy in squandering our inward goods, because they dislike them. As the life, then, of our habits is superior to the substance of our goods, he is the greater oppressor, who assaults our virtues, by wicked conduct, than he who injures our goods, by violently oppressing us. For though he has withdrawn nothing from our support, yet he has set before us examples of perdition. He has inflicted on us, therefore, a heavier oppression, since he has roused our heart, when quiet, by temptation. And though he has not persuaded us to the works of his conduct, he has yet imposed on us a contest of temptation. We suffer therefore a heavy oppression from his life, because, doubtless, we suffer that within, which we must overcome with difficulty. And because the life

of the wicked abounds in this world, to torture us, it is well said, *They will cry out by reason of the multitude of the oppressors.*

23. But because they sometimes endeavour to extort even by unrestrained violence, that which they cannot persuade by words, it is rightly subjoined, *And will wail on account of the force of the arm of tyrants.* For whoever compels us, by his example, to live wickedly, uses in our case, as yet, the voice of the oppressor. But whoever desires to frighten us also, when persuading us to sin, now rages against us with the arm of tyranny. For, to recommend vices by one's conduct, is one thing, to enforce it by terrors, is another. When we look then at patterns of evil doing, we hear, thus far, as it were, the noise of the oppressor; but when we are by force compelled to sin, we endure at once a tyrant in our heart. ['vi cogimur']

24. But the minds of the strong, which are stedfastly fixed in God, despise all these assaults, the more they discern that they rise up against the commands of their Creator. For waiting for the rewards of eternity, they gain strength from their adversities, because, as the fight grows strong, they doubt not that a more glorious victory awaits them. Thus while the desires of the Elect are kept down, they make progress by adversity, just as the fire is blown back by the blast, in order to increase, and gains strength by the means, by which it appears to be extinguished. For we shew in this way, with what great desire for God we are inflamed, if we pass over to Him, not merely by tranquil and smooth, but even through rugged and hard paths. For hence the Prophet says, *Who hath made my feet like harts' feet.* [Ps.18, 33] For, when a hart climbs mountain ridges, it passes over, with a bound, whatever rugged places it beholds, whatever spots, entangled with briars, oppose themselves, and rises up to higher ground, without any obstacle to its course. So also the minds of the Elect leap over, with the bound of contemplation, whatever they see obstructing, or opposing them in this

world, and, despising the thorns of worldly anxieties, raise themselves, like hinds, to things above. Hence he says again, *And by my God, I shall pass over a wall.* [Ps. 18, 29] For 'a wall' is every thing thrown in our way, 'that we pass not over to Him, Whom we love. But we pass over a wall, when we trample down, for love of our heavenly country, whatever things have, in this world, been placed in our way. Hence the Lord says, by the same Prophet, to a struggling soul; *I heard thee in the hidden place of the tempest, I proved thee at the waters of contradiction.* [Ps. 81, 7] For it is 'the hidden place of the tempest,' when the waves of tempting thoughts swell up in the contrite heart, when the tumults of worldly cares dash themselves against the zeal of holy love. He is heard, then, in the hidden place of the tempest, because this very agitation of tribulation, is the cry of suppliants. But, because there are never entirely wanting such, as endeavour to advise evil to those who are seeking for good, the waters of contradiction are opposing people. And because our desire is then proved, when it is opposed by any adversity, it is rightly said, *I have proved thee at the waters of contradiction.* By these efforts of virtues, then, the strong make progress, from adversity: but the weak, if any obstacles have been placed against them, often languish in their desires, and, when assaulted by mighty tribulation, fail from cowardice. Whence Eliu, inflicting on blessed Job reproaches for his cowardice, having first mentioned the oppressions of the wicked, proceeds immediately to speak of the cowardice of the weak, saying,

Ver. 10. *And He said not, Where is God, Who made me?*

25. It is the practice of Holy Scripture, to pass suddenly from the singular to the plural, and to turn itself from the plural to the singular. Whence Eliu, when saying, *They will cry and wail,* did not subjoin, *They said not, Where is God?* but, *He said not, Where is God?* For, coming from the plural to the singular, he suddenly passed over to the person of each of

the weak. Perhaps because that is better discerned by individuals, which is heard spoken of them individually: so that each of them returns to his own heart, and blames in himself that, which is stated of each man one by one. He, therefore, retained the singular number, saying, *He said not, Where is God, Who hath made me?* For, whoever is crushed by the tribulation of adversities, does not look at Him, by Whom He was made. For He, Who made that, which was not, leaves it not, when made, without guidance: and He Who made man mercifully, does not permit him to be tormented unjustly. Nor does He carelessly suffer that, which is, to perish, Who also created that which was not, that it might be. When we ask, then, the cause of our tribulation, and perhaps too slowly discover it; there is this consideration, we can suffer nothing unjustly, because if, God being our Creator, we exist, who before were not, God being our Ruler, we, who are, are not unjustly afflicted. It follows,

Who hath given songs in the night.

26. A 'song in the night' is joy in tribulation; because, though afflicted with worldly oppressions, we yet now rejoice in the hope of eternity. Paul was announcing songs in the night, saying, *Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation.* [Rom. 12, 12] David had taken up his song in the night, who was saying, *Thou art my hope from the oppression which hath surrounded me, my Exultation, deliver me from those who surround me.* [Ps. 32, 7] Lo! he calls oppression 'night,' and yet amidst his straitnesses, he calls his Deliverer, his Exultation. There was 'night' indeed without, in the encompassing of oppressions, but 'songs' were resounding within, from the consolation of joy. For, because we cannot return to eternal joys, except through temporal losses, it is the whole object of Scripture, that the hope of the joys, which will abide, should strengthen us, amid these passing adversities. Whence also the Prophet Ezekiel witnesses, that he had received a book, in which were written, *lamentations, a song, and woe.*

[Ezek. 2, 10] For what is signified by this ‘book,’ except the words of God? For since they enjoin on us tears and sorrow, lamentations are said to be written therein. They contain also a song and woe; for they so set forth joy from hope, as yet to announce oppression and difficulties in this present life. They contain a song and woe, because though we seek for what is sweet there, it is yet first necessary for us to endure bitternesses here. The Lord was preaching a song and woe to His disciples, when He was saying, *These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation.* [John 16, 33] As though He were plainly saying, May you have an inward refreshment and consolation from Me, because cruel and heavy oppression will befal you from the world without. Because then, every feeble person, when oppressed, has, by reason of his great weakness of heart, but faint hope of joy, and, when suffering adversities without, forgets that, in which he used to rejoice within, it is well said, *He said not, Where is God Who made me, Who hath given songs in the night?* For, were he to say these words, he would moderate the violence which he suffers, and, by the lasting good he was seeking within, would consider, that the transitory pain he endures, is not intolerable. It follows,

Ver. 11. *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of heaven.*

27. The beasts of the earth are they, who seek the lowest things, from the habit of a carnal life. But the fowls of the heaven are they, who search into lofty things, with the eagerness of a proud curiosity. These degrade themselves, by their conduct, below what they are in themselves; these exalt themselves, by their enquiries, beyond what they are able. The pleasure of the flesh casts down those to the very bottom, the lust of curiosity exalts these, as it were, in things above them. To those it is said by holy Scripture, *Be ye not as the horse, and the mule, which have no understanding.* [Ps. 32,

9] The proud labour of these is blamed, when it is said, *Seek not out the things that are higher than thou, neither search the things that are above thy strength.* [Ecclus. 3, 21] To those it is said, *Mortify your members which are upon the earth, forni*cation, *lust, evil concupiscence.* [Col. 3, 5] To these it is said, *Let no man deceive you through philosophy and vain deceit.* [Col. 2, 8] God teaches us, therefore, more than the beasts and the fowls of the air, because, while we understand what we are, neither does the infirmity of the flesh cast us down, nor does the spirit of pride raise us up. We do not, by sinking down, fall beneath the lowest things, nor are we puffed up, by pride, as to those above us. For he, who falls in the flesh, is overcome by the appetite of beasts, but he, who is exalted in mind, is raised up, like the fowls, as if with the wing of lightness.

28. But if we keep strict watch, that both humility of mind and chastity of body be preserved, we soon know that the one is preserved by the other. For pride has often been to many a seed-plot of lust; for, whilst their spirit raised them, as it were, on high, their flesh plunged them in the lowest depths. For they are first secretly raised up, but afterwards they fall openly; for while they swell in the secret motions of the heart, they fall with open lapses of the body. Thus, thus, elated, they required to be smitten with righteous retribution; in order that, since they set themselves above men by pride, they might be brought down, by their lust, even to a resemblance of beasts. For, *man when he was in honour, understood not, he hath been compared to the senseless beasts, and made like them.* [Ps. 49, 20] For the wing of knowledge had raised them, as it were, on high, of whom Paul said that which we before mentioned; *Because, when they had known God, they glorified Him not as God, or gave Him thanks, but became vain in their thoughts.* [Rom. 1, 21] But how they fell into bestial and more than bestial pleasure, he added, saying, *God gave them up to the desires of their hearts, unto uncleanness.* [ib. 24.] Lo! the flesh overwhelmed those, whom boastful

learning had raised up, and, from the flying of birds, they fell beyond the appetite of beasts, and sank beneath themselves, by the very means by which they appeared to rise above themselves. We must take heed then, and the mind must be kept, with all care, from the swelling of pride. For our thoughts fly not in vain, before the eyes of God; and no moments of time pass in thought, without an abiding of retribution. God then beholds what elates the mind within; and therefore permits that which is to bring it down to gain strength without. That which is afterwards to be struck down without by the pollution of lust, is first raised up within us. Open punishment, namely, follows a secret fault, in order that our inward evils may be punished, by those from without, and that the heart, which was secretly pulled up, may fall openly. For hence it is said by Hosea, against the Israelites, *The spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord.* [Hos. 5, 4] Who, in order to shew that the cause of lust sprung from the sin of pride, proceeded to say, *And the pride of Israel will answer to his face.* [ib. 5] As if he were saying, The sin, which through pride of mind lurked in secret, openly replied by the lust of the flesh. Wherefore the cleanness of chastity is to be preserved, by guarding humility. For, if the spirit is piously humbled before God, the flesh is not raised unlawfully above the spirit. For, the spirit holds the dominion over the flesh, committed to it, if it acknowledges the claims of lawful servitude to the Lord. For if, through pride, it despises its Author, it justly takes on itself a contest with its subject flesh. Whence also that first disobedient one, as soon as he had sinned through pride, covered his shameful parts. [Gen. 3, 7] For, because his spirit had put an insult on God, it soon experienced the insult of the flesh. And, because it refused to submit to its Creator, it lost its right over the subject flesh, which it used to rule: in order, namely, that the confusion of its own disobedience might redound upon itself, and that it might learn, when vanquished, what it had lost through pride.

29. Let no one, then, after he has begun to aim at things above him, consider, if overcome by carnal pleasure, that he is only then defeated, when he is openly overpowered. For, if the poison of lust frequently springs from the root of pride, the flesh then triumphed, when the spirit was secretly proud. The soul then fell, as to the beginning of its fault, into the wantonness of beasts, when, by raising itself, like the fowls, it soared higher than it ought. For it is hence, that long-maintained continence is suddenly broken through, hence, that virginity, though preserved even to old age, is frequently violated. For, since humility of heart is neglected, the righteous Judge despises even chastity of body, and at last proclaims, by an open sin, those to be reprobates, whom He endured in secret, though long ago rejected. For he, who has suddenly lost a long-treasured good, has retained, in himself within, another evil, from which a further evil has suddenly burst forth, by which he was, even then, estranged from God, though he shewed that he cleaved to Him by cleanness of body. Because, therefore, pride of mind leads to the pollution of the flesh, the heart of the reprobate is, from the flight of birds, plunged into the wantonness of beasts. But holy men, that they may not be carried down into the whirlpool of lust, through bestial appetite, carefully guard the thoughts of their mind from the flight of pride; and, that they may not sink, through folly, into the lowest depths, humbly keep down all their high notions. It is therefore rightly said, *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of heaven.* Thou understandest, 'this he also said not.'

30. He says, therefore, that he does not remember in tribulation, that he is superior to the beasts, and to the fowls. As if he were to say, Every one who is weak, does not strengthen himself when in perturbation, because he does not moderate himself, when in tranquillity; and he therefore knows not how to endure adversities, because, when prosperous, he knew not how to keep himself down in thought from the flight of birds, nor to raise up the

motions of his flesh from the gluttony of beasts. But this was the more unfitly said to blessed Job, as his life is wonderfully kept in the mean, between things high and low. But it can also be understood in another way; *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of heaven.* For as the life of men, still subject to the motions of the flesh, is signified by the word 'beasts;' so is the pride of haughty spirits set forth by the appellation 'fowls;' in order that earthly men may be designated by 'beasts,' but the devils by 'fowls.' Whence, when the Lord said that the seeds had fallen by the way side, He adds, *The fowls of the air came and devoured them up;* [Matt. 13, 4] signifying doubtless by fowls, the powers of the air.

31. But because holy persons neither follow the lowest examples of men, nor, again, are deceived by the subtlety of devils, they rise, by the virtue of their instruction, both above the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of heaven. For they are taught more than the beasts of the earth, because they despise whatever can be desired below: and they are instructed more than the fowls of the air, because they understand all the stratagems of unclean spirits. They are taught above the beasts of the earth, because they seek not any thing, which passes away in this life. They are instructed more than the fowls of the air, because they trample down even now, by the merits of their life, the powers of the air, which they still tolerate through the infirmity of the flesh. Paul had been already taught above the beasts of the earth, when saying, *For many walk;* and shortly afterwards, *Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, who savour of earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven.* [Phil. 3, 18-20] And again he knew that he was instructed above the fowls of the air, when he said, *Know ye not that we shall Judge angels?* [1 Cor. 6, 3] He perceived that the beasts were beneath him, because, namely, though still dwelling on earth, he was trampling down the habits of men, who engage in grovelling pursuits. And again he had surpassed the

flying of fowls, by the dignity of his merits, because, when now about to enter heaven, he was not ignorant that we would judge Angels. In the one he was treading under the basenesses of the impure, in the other the loftinesses of the proud. For the minds of holy men despise all transitory objects, and behold every thing that is proud, and every thing that passes away, sink beneath them. And placed on a lofty eminence, they see all things the more subject to them, the more truly they submit themselves to the Author of all; and they transcend all things, just as they prostrate themselves in true humility before the Creator of all things. Let him say then, *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of the heaven.* As if he were saying, The weak man, overcome by his cowardice, said not thus, and therefore the adversity of temptation smote him: because in the season of tranquillity he did not overcome all these transitory objects, by any perfection. For he would not dread the adversities of this life, if he had trampled even its prosperity under foot, by the merit of his perfection. It follows,

Ver. 12. *There they will cry, and He will not hear, because of the pride of evil men.*

32. There; namely, in tribulation: as it is written on the other hand of joy, *The children of thy servants shall inhabit there.* [Ps. 102, 28] But it seems doubtful whether he says, Because of the pride of evil men He will not hear, or, they will cry because of the pride of evil men. But it can be better understood, if they are rather said not to be heard, than to cry out, because of the pride of evil men. For, that they cry out, because of the pride of evil men, is already stated, in the verse in which it is said, *They will cry out by reason of the multitude of the violent.* [ver. 9] Something is therefore suggested to us in this verse, to be attended to a little more minutely. Because often, when the oppressed have cried out, they deserve indeed to be heard, for their own sake; but yet their desires are deferred, on account of

the pride of their oppressors. For the Just God allows His own people to be oppressed in their worldly goods, and the malice of the violent sinfully to increase; in order that, while the life of these is wasted away in purification, the wickedness of those may be consummated. But it frequently happens, that the righteous, when involved in tribulation, enjoy, even in this life, heavenly consolation, which they do not ask for in this life. For they wish to be saved not for their own sakes, but for the salvation of their adversaries; in order that, while Almighty God delivers them, by working a kind of miracle, from their boundless dangers, He may manifest His might, even to their persecutors; and may deliver the adversaries for eternity, by the same means, as He rescues His own people in this world. As the Prophet also, taking up the language of martyrs, says, *Deliver me, because of mine enemies.* [Ps. 69, 18] As if he were saying; For myself indeed, I seek not to be delivered from temporal tribulation; but yet I wish to be delivered, on account of my adversaries; in order that, while my life is seen to be miraculously preserved, the hardness of my enemies may be converted at the very sight of the miracles. As the Lord then frequently rescues the life of His own people, in this world, for the conversion of His enemies, so does He frequently not listen to the cry of His own people, for the sake of the condemnation of their persecutors; in order, namely, that they may add to their guilt, from the fact that they wickedly rejoice that they have prevailed. For they, who despise invisible things, can sometimes be moved by visible miracles. But frequently no visible miracle is worked in behalf of the righteous, because their adversaries do not deserve to be invisibly enlightened. Let it be said then, *There will they cry, and He will not hear, because of the pride of evil men.* As if he were saying, The guilt of the oppressors prevents His hearing the voice of the oppressed: and the righteous are not visibly rescued, because the unrighteous do not deserve to be invisibly saved. Hence it is again said by the Prophet, *When he shall see*

the wise dying, the simple and the foolish shall perish together. [Ps. 49, 10] For those, whom they behold dying visibly, they do not believe can live invisibly, and they add to the guilt of their unbelief, as they despair of eternity, when they behold the death of the faithful. The violent, then, fail the more fatally, from the very fact, that they outwardly prevail against the life of the innocent. And the inmost Truth drives them forth the more from Itself, the more It suffers them to work their will, in this world, against those who are Its own.

33. Whoever, then, persecutes the life of the good, is then condemned with more fearful vengeance, when he is opposed by no adversity; and he is then exposed to the risk of more fearful wrath, when he prosecutes successfully his sinful desires. Because, namely, the vengeance of the Divine Judgment has given up, by reserving for future punishment, him, whom It has here not cared to oppose in his wickedness. For hence the Lord says by the Prophet, *I gave them up according to the desires of their heart, and they will go on in their own wills.* [Ps. 81, 12] Hence it is said again, *The rod of God is not upon them.* [Job 21, 9] Hence also it is written of their chief himself, *He will do, and prosper.* [Dan. 8, 12] Hence again it is said of the same person, *And craft shall be guided aright in his hand.* [ib. 25] For craft is guided aright, in the hand of Antichrist, because he is not hindered by any adversity, in this world, from fulfilling that, which he has purposed against the good. Hence again it is said by Solomon, *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* [Prov. 1, 32] It is, then, a manifest token of perdition, when subsequent success favours much-wished for iniquities, and when no obstacle hinders that, which a perverse mind has conceived. For frequently, while the wishes of sinful men are delayed, they are changed, and, while they feel the difficulty of performing an evil action, they learn its guilt; and they, who are thwarted at first against their will, shrink afterwards, of their own accord, from that which they had conceived. Because then the Lord,

when He forsakes the wicked, allows them to prevail, and, because the wickedness of the proud is perfected, by the same means, as the long-suffering of the humble is consummated, let it be rightly said, *There will they cry, and He will not hear, because of the pride of wicked men.* It follows,

Ver. 13. *For God will not hear without reason, and the Almighty will behold the causes of men one by one.*

34. We must observe that two points are stated: both that He does not hear without reason [or, 'in vain,' (with different punctuation.)] him, who cries to Him, and yet regards his sufferings; and pretends not to hear his cry, and still is not ignorant what each one suffers. Let no one, then, who is not speedily heard, believe that he is not cared for by God's providence. For our desires are often heard, because they are not speedily granted: and that, which we wish to be soon fulfilled, is the better prospered by the very delay. Our prayer is frequently made good, the more it is deferred; and when our request is, in appearance, neglected, our wishes are more fully carried out in the depth of our thoughts. As the seeds of harvest are firmly compressed by frost, and spring up in greater number, to bear produce, the slower they come forth to the surface. Our desires, therefore, are deferred, in order that they may make progress; they make progress, in order to gain strength for that which they are about to enjoy: they are exercised in the contest, in order that greater rewards may be heaped on them, in recompense. The labour of the contest is protracted, in order that the crown of victory may become greater. When the Lord, then, does not speedily hear His own people, He draws them to Himself, just as He is believed to repel them. For He is, in truth, our spiritual Physician, and cuts out the infection of vices, whose existence within us He utterly reprobates. He extracts the poison of corruption with the knife of tribulation; and the more He pretends not to hear the cries of His patient, the more is He providing for the ending of his

sickness. For hence the Prophet exclaims, *O my God, I will cry through the day, and Thou wilt not hear; and in the night, and not to my folly.* [Ps. 22, 2] As if He were saying, It tends not to my folly, that Thou dost not hear me, when I cry to Thee, day and night, without ceasing; because Thou trainest me the more in heavenly wisdom, by seeming, as it were, to desert me in my temporal affliction. Hence also he says, *A helper opportunities, in tribulation.* [Ps. 9, 9] Intending to speak of tribulations, he first mentioned opportunities; because we are frequently bruised by tribulation, and yet it is not a fit season for our being assisted according to our desire for deliverance. Let it be said then, *For God will not hear without reason, and the Almighty will behold the causes of men one by one.* But because some persons are frequently broken down by this very delay of assistance, he fitly subjoins,

Ver. *14. Even when thou shall say, He doth not consider, judge thyself before Him, and wait for Him.*

35. For perhaps when our cry seems to be disregarded, the hope, which was in our heart, is weakened, and we believe that assistance from above will fail us, because we are too slow in asking: and we lament that the unavenged wrongs we are enduring are almost disregarded by God. But when this storm of despair agitates us, our disordered mind sooner takes shelter in the harbour of hope, if it weighs accurately its causes with the Lord; if it recals to its memory His favours, if it does not artfully excuse in itself the evils it has returned for His goodness; if it balances what it has justly deserved, and what it has received of His mercy; if it actively [‘vivaciter’] searches its own conduct; if, examining all its doings in God’s sight, it conceals not itself from itself; if it remembers that it was brought into being, which before was not; if it reflects that though it was lying in darkness, it was illumined, and raised up. Bringing then all these points together in itself, while it considers the blessings it has received, it blames

not the ills it is suffering; and, strengthened with the consolation of so many gifts, it is not crushed with despair. Because, when it calls to mind past mercies, it derives hope for the future. Let him say therefore, *Even when thou shall say, He doth not consider, judge thyself before Him, and wait for Him.* As though he were to say, When God is believed not to regard, because He is slow in shewing compassion, enter into thy most secret thoughts, and there undertake the judgment of thy cause before His eyes, and discern both what thou hast conferred on Him, by thy conduct, or what thou hast mercifully received. And then thou returnest to the confidence of hope, when thou art ashamed at the mercies of such great goodness: so that thou mayest confidently look for Him in adversities, Whom thou rememberest to have been gracious to thee, even after thine offences. For thou hadst reason to hope for assistance from above, even though no favours had preceded. And thou must feel sure that God does not unjustly reject man, whom He mercifully created.

36. We must consider, therefore, how dangerous it is to behold past gifts, and to despair of future: how dangerous, if in this storm of tribulations, we suffer shipwreck from despair, bound as we are to the harbour of hope by the boundless ties of past favours. Let it then be said rightly, *Judge thyself before Him, and wait for Him.* For he who judges not himself before God, does not wait for Him when afflicted. For he despairs that assistance can hereafter come from Him, Whose preceding kindnesses He does not admit: and when he forgets those that are past, he is deprived also of a bounteous supply of subsequent blessings. But behold, while we are afflicted, while we patiently wait for the grace of consolation, the wicked break out into greater wickedness, and proceed the more in adding to their iniquities, as they are left unpunished. And yet the Almighty mercifully bears with sinners, and grants them time for repentance, which He converts, if they are

not converted, into an evidence of greater guilt; He patiently restrains the wrath, which at length He pours out irrevocably.

Whence it is fitly subjoined,:

Ver. 15. *For He doth not now bring on His fury, nor severely punish wickedness.*

37. For God in truth bears a long while with him, whom He condemns for ever; and forbears now to bring on His wrath, because He reserves it to be poured forth, hereafter, without end. For suffering is here the portion of the Elect, in order to their being trained for the rewards of their heavenly inheritance. It is our portion to receive stripes here, for whom an eternity of joy is reserved. For hence it is written, *He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.* [Heb. 12, 6] Hence it is said to John, *I rebuke and chasten those whom I love.* [Rev. 3, 19] Hence Peter says, *It is time, that judgment must begin at the house of God.* [1 Pet. 4, 17] Where he immediately adds with astonishment, *But if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that believe not the Gospel of God?* For the severity of God permits not sins to remain unpunished; but the wrath of judgment commences with our punishment here, in order that it may cease to rage at the damnation of the reprobate. Let the reprobate proceed then, and accomplish the desires of their pleasures, with unpunished iniquity: and let them feel no temporal scourges, since eternal punishments await them. But their unpunished wickedness, is well signified by the sin of Ham: to whom it was said by his father, *Cursed be thy son Canaan, a servant shall he be to his brethren.* [Gen. 9, 25] For Canaan was the son of Ham. And what is signified by his son Canaan receiving the sentence of punishment, when Ham offended? What is meant by his being smitten, not in himself, but in his posterity, except that the sins of the reprobate go on unpunished in this world, but are smitten hereafter? Let it be said then, *For He doth not now bring on His fury, nor severely punish wickedness.*

38. But it must be noticed, that he inserted the word “severely;” for, although He patiently endures some wickednesses, yet some He punishes even in this life: and He sometimes begins to smite even here, what He intends to destroy with eternal damnation. Therefore He smites some sins, and leaves some unpunished: for, if He were to be severe with none, who would believe that God regarded the doings of men? And again, if He were to smite all of them here, for what reason would the last judgment still remain? Some are, therefore, smitten, in order that we may tremble at the attentive care of our Ruler over us. But some are still left unpunished, in order that we may feel that judgment still remains. It is well said then, *He doth not severely punish sin:* because while some small portion of iniquity is punished, the sentence of eternal judgment is even now foretasted by unconverted souls.

39. All this then that Eliu says is right, if it were said rightly. For he knows what he ought to say, but knows not to whom he is speaking. For the things which he said are true, but are out of place, in reproving blessed Job; because he the less needed this reproof, as he had not sinned, even from any cowardice. But, because the pride of haughty men is often an occasion of virtues for the righteous, blessed Job is so dealt with in the secret judgment, in order that, after the scourges of punishments, he may gain strength also, by the words of the arrogant. For, lo! the more he is despised by the minister of pride, the more is he comforted by the truth teaching him within. For, after Eliu knew that he had said so many powerful words, he disclosed what pride he bore within, and despised blessed Job, by thinking highly of himself, saying;

Ver. 16. *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain, he multiplieth words without knowledge.*

40. By introducing these words, he doubtless asserts, that blessed Job both knew nothing, and had said much; and, though he introduces his own

opinions loquaciously, he accuses him of the fault of loquacity. But this seems also to be a peculiar fault of the arrogant, that they believe the much, which they have said, to be little, and the little, which is said to them, to be much. For, because they always wish to speak their own words, they cannot hear the words of others; they think that they suffer violence, if they do not pour forth their own immoderate opinions more immoderately. And, although blessed Job was silent at his words, yet Eliu finds cause for invective, in the speech, in which he had replied to his friends; in order to get himself larger space of his silence, and that he himself might answer many things, he asserts that he had multiplied words. For he immediately begins the commencement of a tedious speech, and endeavours to commence, as though he had as yet said nothing at all. Whence it is subjoined,

Chap. xxxvi. Ver. 1, 2. *Eliu also added, and spake thus; Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee.*

41. He had already said much, and hopes that he will be borne with yet a little longer; because, namely, haughty men consider that they suffer a heavy loss, if they confine their skill by speaking within brief limits. For they believe, that they shew themselves to be more learned, the more they have been able to lay open their minds in multiplicity of much speaking. But, because they frequently perceive that the respect of silence is not paid to them, they mention, at times, the power of the Lord, from Whom they seem to be speaking; and, under pretence of Him, they exact that silence for themselves, which they by no means deserve; and, while in appearance they bring God forward, when exacting a hearing for themselves from reverence for Him, they strive more to display themselves, than to set forth His doings. Whence also Eliu subjoins, saying,

Ver. 2. *For I have yet somewhat to speak on God's behalf.*

Because holy teachers sometimes frequently repeat any things they state rather obscurely, in order to instil these hidden sayings into the hearts of their hearers, by the language of repetition; haughty men also wish to imitate this practice, and the things they have said they repeat in an insolent manner, not because they seek to insinuate the subjects into the hearts of their hearers, but because they wish to appear eloquent in their judgment. Whence Eliu subjoining, says,

Ver. 3. *I will repeat my knowledge from the beginning.*

But because, on the mention of knowledge, his pride of heart hath displayed itself in his voice, he is plainly discovered to be a haughty person, if he does not quickly conceal himself by some disguise. Whence in concealing his own arrogance, he immediately introduces the righteousness of the Lord, and says,

And I will prove my Maker just.

In order that, while he speaks as if in behalf of God's righteousness, whatever escapes from him arrogantly, may be excused in the judgment of man. It follows,

Ver. 4. *For truly my words are without falsehood.*

42. Even righteous men, when they see that they cannot be understood by their feeble hearers, are frequently wont to praise the things they say. Not because they are eager for their own praise, but to inflame their hearers with an anxious desire of listening to them; in order that, while they are uttered by their voice, they may be embraced, with more ardent affection, by the hearts of their hearers. Whence Paul, when he had spoken to the Corinthians things wonderful and many, says, *Our mouth is opened unto you, O ye Corinthians, our heart is enlarged.* [2 Cor. 6, 11] But haughty men, while they know not the heart of the good, and imitate only their words, from time to time, are hurried forward in praising what they say, not because the listlessness of their hearers displeases them, but because they

eagerly please themselves. They imitate and feign the voice of the righteous, but know not the power of their voice. They see what the righteous put forward, but know not what they seek for. For, when holy teachers set forth the praise of their preaching, they raise, as it were, the hearts of their hearers from grovelling thoughts, by the hand of their voice; in order that, having been suddenly roused, they may run, as if to meet the words which follow, and may hold them the more firmly in the embrace of their understanding, the more they had loved them, by the voice of their praiser, even before they beheld them. But, as I said, haughty men know not these things. For since that, which they seek for, is without, they cannot feel what is desirable within. For it is written of the Church of the Elect, *All the glory of her, the daughter of kings, is from within.* [Ps. 45, 13] And the wise virgins are said to carry oil in their lamps. [Matt. 25, 4] Whence it is said by the voice of the Saints, *Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience.* [2 Cor. 1, 12] But haughty men, because they have no testimony of their conscience before God, seek the testimony of another's voice before men; and, when they slowly obtain it, they burst forth into shameless praise of themselves. For if they find not the applause of men, which they eagerly look for, they themselves speak in praise of their own wisdom. Whence also Eliu adds, saying,

And perfect knowledge shall be proved to thee.

43. He doubtless felt that he was about to utter great things, but he could not conceal his lofty estimate of himself, in his swelling heart; and therefore preceded by his praises his sound opinions; because he would be already indeed guilty in God's judgment, if he had merely felt in silence great things of himself. For we are by no means safe, before the searching examination of the Truth, even though we have nothing in ourselves which deserves blame, in the judgment of men. For, frequently, when careless in our thoughts, we are assaulted by the pride, which yet we suppress in silence.

But unless our secret pride is extinguished, by awakened repentance, in the chamber of the heart, in which it takes its rise; all the merit of our conduct is extinguished before our strict Judge. We must, therefore, hence consider, with what great punishment that pride will be condemned, which is cherished till it is boldly uttered, if even that is inexcusable which springs up secretly in the heart. We must consider also with what power that pride reigns within, which is so far encouraged, as not to be ashamed even to break forth without. Because then Eliu felt great things, he could not humbly control himself, he maintained the loftiness of knowledge, he spurned the grace of humility. And while following after the gift by which he desired to speak well, he lost the grace by which he might have lived well. *For knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.* [1 Cor. 8, 1] But let him now state that right thing, which he still knows not how to speak rightly. For, after he had breathed forth the proud thoughts of his mind, in words of pride, he added a noble sentiment, saying,

Ver. 5. *God rejecteth not the mighty, though He Himself is mighty.*

44. Some things in the course of this mortal life are hurtful in themselves, some are such from circumstances. Some are hurtful of themselves; as sins and wickednesses. But some things are, now and then, hurtful from circumstances, as temporal power, or the bond of wedlock. For marriage is good, but those things which grow up around it, through the care of this world, are evil. Whence Paul says, *He that is with a wife, thinketh of the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.* [1 Cor. 7, 33] Whence also, recommending to certain persons a better course, he dissuades them from marriage, and says, *But this I say, not that I may cast a snare on you, but for that which is comely, and which may give you power to pray to the Lord without impediment.* [ib. v. 35] While that then which is not hurtful is retained, something hurtful is commonly committed from attendant circumstances: as frequently we journey along a straight and

clear road, and yet we are entangled by our clothes in briars which grow by its side. We do not stumble in a clear road, but something grows by the side to wound us. For great is that temporal power, which, from being well administered, has its special reward from God: and yet sometimes from being preeminent over others, it swells with pride of thought. And while all things for its use are at its service, while its commands are speedily fulfilled, according to its wish, while all its subjects praise its good deeds, if there are any, but do not oppose its evil doings with any authority, while they too commonly praise, even that which they ought to blame; the mind, being led astray by those things that are beneath it, is raised above itself, and while it is encircled with unbounded applause without, is bereft of truth within. And, forgetting itself, it scatters itself after others' speech, and believes itself to be really such, as it is spoken of without, and not such as it ought to see itself to be within. It despises those beneath it, and does not acknowledge them to be its equals in order of nature, and believes that it has exceeded those also in the merits of its life, whom it has surpassed by the accident of rank. It considers that it is far wiser than all those, than whom it sees itself greater in power. For it places itself in truth on a lofty eminence, in its own opinion, and, he that is confined within the same natural condition as others, scorns to look on them as his equals, and is in this way led even to resemble him, of whom it is written, *He beholdeth every high thing, and is a king over all the children of pride;* [Job 41, 34] and of whose body it is said, *A generation, whose eyes are lofty, and their eyelids are raised up on high.* [Prov. 30, 13] It is led to a resemblance of him, who aiming at singular loftiness, and scorning a life in company with angels, says, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.* By a marvellous judgment, then, it finds the depth of downfal within, whilst it raises itself without, in loftiness of power. For a man is in truth made like an apostate angel, when he disdains to be like his fellow

men. Thus Saul grew up, from meritorious humility, into swelling pride, by his height of power. He was in truth raised up in consequence of his humility, and rejected through his pride: as the Lord bears witness, Who says, *When thou wast little in thine own eyes, did not I make thee the head of the tribes of Israel?* [1 Sam. 15, 17] Before he attained to power he had seen that he was little, but supported by temporal authority he no longer saw himself to be so. For preferring himself, in comparison with others, he counted himself great in his own judgment. But marvellously, when little in his own sight, he was great in the sight of the Lord, and when great in his own sight, in the Lord's sight he was little. The Lord forbids us, by His Prophet, to be great in our own sight, saying, *Woe unto you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight.* [Is. 5, 21] And Paul admonishes us not to be great in our own opinions, saying, *Be not wise in your own conceits.* [Rom. 12, 16] While the mind then is puffed up, through the number of those that are subject to it, it falls into the lust of pride, the very height of its power pandering to it.

45. But for this and that not to be good is one thing, for any not to know how to use the good aright is another. For power is good in its proper place, but it requires careful conduct in a ruler. He therefore exercises it aright, who has learned both how to retain, and how to overcome it. He exercises it aright, who knows how to raise himself, by its means, above his faults, and, with it, to keep himself down on a level with others. For the mind of man is frequently elated, even when not supported by any power. How much more then does it exalt itself, when power joins itself unto it? And yet it is prepared to correct the faults of others with due punishment. Whence also it is said by Paul, *For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.* When then the administration of temporal power is undertaken, a person must watch with the greatest care, in order to learn how to select from it what is of use, and to withstand its temptations, and to

feel himself, even with it, on an equality with others, and yet, by his zeal for revenge, to set himself above those who do wrong. We gain a fuller knowledge of this discretion, if we look also at some instances of ecclesiastical power. Peter then, though holding the Chief power [‘principatum’] in the Church by Divine authority, refused to be reverenced unduly by Cornelius, who was a righteous man, and was prostrating himself before him, and acknowledged himself to be but his equal, saying, *Arise, do it not, I myself am also a man.* [Acts 10, 26] But on discovering the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, he soon displayed with what great power he had risen above others. [Acts 5, 1-11] For by a word he smote their life, which he detected by the searching of the Spirit; and called to mind that he held within the Church the chief power against sinners, which, when the honour had been violently thrust on him, he refused to acknowledge before his righteous brethren. In the one case holiness of conduct deserved a communion of equality, in the other his zeal for vengeance displayed his rightful power. Paul did not acknowledge that he was superior to his righteous brethren, when he said, *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.* [2 Cor. 1, 24] And he immediately added, *For by faith ye stand.* As if he were saying, We have not dominion over your faith, for this very reason, because ye stand by faith. For we are your equals, in a case where we know that you are standing firm. He seemed not to know that he was superior to his brethren when he said, *We have made ourselves as little ones among you;* [1 Thess. 2, 7] and again, *And ourselves your servants through Jesus Christ.* [2 Cor. 4, 5] But when he discovered a fault, which needed correction, he immediately remembered that he was their master, and said, *What will ye? shall I come to you with a rod?* [1 Cor. 4, 21]

46. A high place is therefore rightly discharged, when a ruler exercises his authority rather over sins, than over his brethren. For nature has made us all equal; but that some are committed to others to rule over them, it is not

nature, but their own fault which places them beneath. Rulers, therefore, ought to raise themselves above the vices, on account of which they are placed above others: and, when they correct offenders, they should attend carefully to smite their faults with discipline, by the right of their power, but, by guarding their humility, to acknowledge, that they are equal with those very brethren, who are corrected. Although it is frequently even right, that we should, in our secret thought, prefer those, whom we correct, to ourselves. For their faults are smitten, through us, with the vigour of discipline, but, in the faults we ourselves commit, we are not wounded by any one, with an attack of even a word. We are, therefore, the more indebted to the Lord, the more we sin without punishment from man. But our discipline the more exempts those under it from Divine punishment, the more it leaves not their faults unpunished here. We must maintain then both humility in our heart, and discipline in our work. And we must, meanwhile, keep careful watch, lest the rights of discipline should be relaxed, while the virtue of humility is unduly guarded, and lest, while a ruler humbles himself more than is becoming, he should be unable to bind beneath the bond of discipline the life of his subjects. Let us outwardly, then, keep up that office, which we undertake for others' benefit. Let us keep, within, the estimate we entertain of ourselves. But yet even those committed to us may properly learn, by some evidences which break forth, that we are such to ourselves within, in order to see what to dread from our authority, and to learn what to imitate from our humility. Having maintained the authority of our office, let us return unceasingly to our heart, and assiduously consider, that we are created on an equality with others, not that we have been temporally placed above others. For the more eminent is our power outwardly, the more ought it to be kept down within, lest it should overpower our thought, lest it should hurry the mind to be delighted with it, and lest the mind should soon

be unable to control that power, to which it submits itself from desire of authority.

47. David had well learned to govern his kingly power, who used to overcome, by humbling himself, all pride at this power, saying, *O Lord, my heart is not exalted.* [Ps. 131, 1] And who subjoined, to increase his humility, *Nor mine eyes lofty.* And added, *Neither have I walked in great things.* And examining himself still further, with most searching enquiry, *Nor in wonderful things above me.* And drawing forth also all his thoughts from the bottom of his heart, he subjoins, saying, *If I have thought not humbly, but if I have exalted my soul.* Lo! he frequently repeats the sacrifice of humility, offered from his inmost heart, and, by again and again confessing, ceases not to offer it, and brings it before the eyes of his Judge, by repeatedly speaking of it. What is this? and how had he learned, that this sacrifice was pleasing to God, which he was offering, in His sight, with so great a repetition of words? Except that pride is ever wont to attend on the powerful, and that haughtiness is almost always associated with prosperity; because also abundance of humour often causes the hardness of a tumour.

48. But it is very wonderful, when humility of manners reigns in the hearts of the lofty. Whence we must consider, that whenever powerful persons think humbly, they attain to an eminence of strange, and, as it were, far distant virtue: and they rightly appease the Lord, the more readily, with this virtue, because they humbly offer Him that sacrifice, which the powerful can scarcely meet with. For it is a most difficult art of living, for a man to possess a high place, and to keep down boasting; to be indeed in power, and yet not to know that he is powerful; to know that he is powerful, for conferring favours, not to know all the power he possesses for requiting wrongs. It is therefore rightly said of such, *God rejecteth not the mighty, though He Himself is mighty.* For he, in truth, desires to imitate God, who administers his lofty power with a view to the benefit of others, and is not

elated with his own praises; who, when placed above others, desires to serve, and not to rule over, them. [prodesse, præesse] For it is swelling pride, and not position of power, which is to blame. God confers power, but the wickedness of our mind causes haughtiness at our power. Let us take away, then, what we have contributed of our own, and those things, which we possess of God's bounty, are good. For because not lawful power, but wicked deeds are condemned, it is fitly subjoined.

Ver. 6. *But He saveth not the wicked, and giveth judgment to the poor.*

49. Holy Scripture is frequently wont to call the humble, 'poor.' Whence they are mentioned in the Gospel, with the addition, 'spirit,' when it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 5, 3] For, because riches visibly manifest the powerful, those are poor in their own sight, who are not puffed up in their own minds. But he calls those 'wicked,' who are either cut off from the piety of the faith, or who else contradict themselves, by their wicked habits, in that which they faithfully believe. Because then Almighty God condemns pride of wickedness, not loftiness of power; after it was said, *God rejecteth not the mighty, though He is Himself mighty;* it is rightly subjoined, *But He saveth not the wicked, and giveth judgment to the poor.* That is, He destroys the proud, but sets free the humble, by His judgment. Or certainly He gives judgment to the poor, because those who are now wickedly oppressed, then come themselves as judges over their oppressors.

50. There are in truth two classes, namely, of the Elect and the reprobate. But two ranks are comprised in each of these classes. For some are judged and perish; others are not judged and perish. Some are judged and reign; others are not judged and reign. They are judged and perish, to whom it is said in our Lord's declaration, *I hungered, and ye gave Me not to eat; I thirsted, and ye gave Me not drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye covered Me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not.*

[Matt. 25, 42. 43.] To whom it is before said, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* [ib. v. 41] But others are not judged in the last judgment, and yet perish. Of whom the Prophet says, *The ungodly do not rise again in the judgment.* [Ps. 1, 5] And of whom the Lord declares, *But he that believeth not is judged already.* [John 3, 18] And of whom Paul says, *They who have sinned without the Law, shall perish without the Law.* [Rom. 2, 12] Therefore even all unbelievers rise again, but to torment and not to judgment. For their case is not then examined; because they come into the presence of their strict Judge, with the condemnation already of their own unbelief. But those, who retain their profession of faith, but have not works in accordance with it, are convicted of sin, in order to their perishing. But they, who have not enjoyed even the sacraments of the faith, do not hear the reproof of the Judge at the last ordeal; for, condemned already by the darkness of their own unbelief, they do not deserve to be condemned by the open reproof of Him, Whom they had despised. Those hear at least the words of the Judge, because they have retained at least the words of His faith. These hear not in their condemnation the sentence of the eternal Judge: because they would not retain their reverence for Him even in words. Those perish by the Law, because they have sinned under the Law; whilst no mention of the Law is made to these, in their condemnation; because they made no effort to have any thing of the Law. For a prince, who administers an earthly commonwealth, punishes in different ways a citizen, who offends at home, and an enemy who makes war abroad. In the first case, he considers his rights, and condemns him in language of just reproof. But against an enemy he wages war: he wields instruments of destruction, and inflicts the tortures his wickedness deserves. But he does not enquire what the law provides for his offence. For it is not necessary for him to be destroyed by Law, who could never be held by the Law. Thus, therefore, in the last judgment, both a

lawful reproof smites him down, who has departed in his conduct from that which he held in profession; and he is destroyed without a judicial sentence, who is not held by the law of faith.

51. But of the class of the Elect, some are judged and reign. As those, who wipe away with their tears the stains of their life, who, atoning their former misdeeds by their subsequent conduct, conceal from the eyes of their Judge, with the cloak of alms deeds, whatever unlawfulness they may have ever committed. To whom, when placed at His right hand, the Judge says at His coming, *I hungered, and ye gave Me to eat. I thirsted, and ye gave Me to drink. I was a stranger, and ye took Me in, naked, and ye covered Me; sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came to Me.* [Matt. 25, 35. 36.] To whom he speaks before, saying, *Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* [ib. v. 34] But others are not judged, and yet reign; as those, who surpass even the precepts of the Law in the perfection of their virtues; because they are by no means satisfied with fulfilling that which the Divine Law enjoins on all, but with surpassing eagerness desire to perform more, than they would learn from general precepts. To whom it is said by the voice of the Lord; *Ye which have left all and have followed Me, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His Majesty, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* [Matt. 19, 28] And of whom the Prophet says, *The Lord will come to judgment with the. elders of His people.* [Is. 3, 14] And of whom Solomon, when speaking of the Bridegroom of holy Church, observed, saying, *Her husband is noble in the gates, when he sitteth with the elders of the land.* [Prov. 31, 23] These, therefore, are not judged in the last judgment, and yet reign, because they come as judges together with their Creator. For, leaving all things, they performed, from ready devotion, more than they heard ordered in general terms. For that, which the rich young man heard, was said by a special command to the more perfect, and

not generally to all, *Go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me.* [Matt. 19, 21] For if a general command bound all persons under this precept, it would be at once a fault for us to possess any thing of this world. But a general direction to all persons in Holy Scripture is one thing, a command specially to the more perfect is another. These then are rightly not bound by the general judgment, who in their conduct have far surpassed even general precepts. For as they are not judged, and yet perish, who, from the persuasion of unbelief, scorn to be bound by the Law; so, they are judged not, and yet reign, who, from the persuasion of godliness, advance even beyond the general precepts of the Divine Law. Hence is it, that Paul, far surpassing even special precepts given him, performed more in deed, than he received by the appointment of permission. For when he had received, that preaching the Gospel he should live of the Gospel, he both communicated the Gospel to his hearers, and yet refused to be maintained at the expense of the Gospel. [l Cor. 9, 14. 15.] Why then should he be judged in order to reign, who received a less obligation, but found out a higher mode of life? Let it be said then rightly, *He giveth judgment to the poor:* because, the more they are despised, by this world, for their great humility, the more do they then rise up, with greater height of power, to the seats which have been assigned them. Whence it also follows;

Ver. 7. *He will not withdraw His eyes from the righteous, but establisheth kings on the throne for ever, and there are they exalted.*

52. For God is perhaps believed to have withdrawn His eyes from the righteous, because they are here wounded by the injustice of the unrighteous, and are unavenged. But He then more regards His servants, when the iniquity of their persecutor unjustly afflicts them. For, beholding what they here humbly endure, He doubtless even now looks forward to the recompense He is there mercifully to bestow on them. He does not therefore

withdraw His eyes from the righteous. Behold how the one groans in his humility; the other is proud, and flourishes in his wickedness. The one bruises his heart, the other is exalted with pride at his iniquity. Which then of these is far withdrawn from the sight of God, the one who has suffered injustice, or the one who has inflicted it on the sufferers? The one, who has kept hold of Divine grace, amid the gloom of sorrow, or he who, amidst external pleasure, has lost the light of righteousness within?

53. But holy men are properly termed ‘kings,’ in the language of Scripture; because having been raised above all the motions of the flesh, at one time they control the appetite of lust; at another, they moderate the heat of avarice; at one time, they bow down the boastfulness of pride; at another, they crush the suggestion of envy; at another, they extinguish the fire of passion. They are ‘kings’ then, because they have learned not to give way to the motions of their temptations, by consenting to them; but to gain the mastery, by ruling over them. Since, therefore, they pass, from this power of authority, to the power of retribution, let it be rightly said, *He establisheth kings on the throne for ever.* For they are wearied for a time, by ruling themselves, but they are placed for ever on the throne of the kingdom of eternal elevation; and they there receive the power of justly judging others, just as they are here unskilled in unjustly sparing themselves. For it is hence said in another place; *Until righteousness be turned into judgment.* [Ps. 94, 15] Paul says of himself and his fellows; *That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.* [2 Cor. 5, 21] Righteousness, then, is turned into judgment, because they, who now live righteously and blamelessly, then obtain the power of judging others. Hence the Lord says to the Church of Laodicea, *To him that hath overcome I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I have overcome, and have sat with My Father on His throne.* [Rev. 3, 21] The Lord asserts, that He had sat as a conqueror with His Father on His throne, because after the struggles of His passion, after the

reward of His resurrection, He pointed out more clearly to all, that He was equal to the Power of the Father, and He made it known that He was not inferior to Him by having trampled under foot the sting of death. Hence He says to Mary, who did not as yet believe that He was like His Father, *Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father.* [John 20, 17] For, for us to sit on the throne of the Son, is for us to judge with the authority of the Son Himself. For, because we derive, from His virtue, the power of judgment, we sit, as it were, on His throne. Nor is it inconsistent, that He declares, in another place, that His disciples will come on twelve thrones, and that here He says, that they will sit on His throne. [Matt. 19, 28] For, by twelve thrones is set forth the universal judgment, but by the throne of the Son, the special preeminence of judicial power. One and the same thing then is designated by twelve thrones, and by the single throne of the Son, because, namely, the universal judgment is undertaken, by the intervention of our Mediator. Let it be said then, *He establisheth kings on the throne for ever.*

54. But by suitably subjoining *"for ever*," he suggests, what he plainly means. For if he were speaking of the throne of an earthly kingdom, he would not have added *"for ever:"* since they who seize hold of that throne, are placed in it, not for ever, but only for a time. But he properly subjoined, *And there they are exalted.* As if he were suggesting to the mind of his hearer, saying, Because they are here brought low, they are there raised up. For to holy men this is a place of humiliation, as that is to be one of exaltation. Whence it is written in another place, *Thou hast humbled them in the place of affliction.* [Ps. 44, 19] For this present life is a place of affliction. They then, who are journeying to their eternal home, now despise themselves in the place of affliction for a time, that they may then be truly exalted in the place of joy. It follows:

Ver. 8, 9. *And if they shall be in chains, and bound with the cords of poverty, He will shew them their works, and their wickednesses, because they have been violent.*

55. The chains of bondage, are the very detention of their present pilgrimage. Paul had seen, that he was bound by these chains, when he was saying, *I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* [Phil. 1, 23] He perceived that he was bound with the cords of poverty, when, beholding the true riches, he entreated them also for his disciples. *That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints.* [Eph. 1, 18]

But after this it is rightly added, *He will shew them their works, and their wickednesses, because they have been violent.* For when, by loving, we learn more of heavenly glory, we then feel the sins we have committed to have been more burdensome. Whence also Paul, after having felt the grace of heavenly things, found that what he had believed to be in him a zeal for virtue, was but wickedness; saying, *Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* [1 Tim. l, 13] Or certainly, when saying, *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* [Phil. 3, 7] Whence it is also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 10. *He will open also their ear, to correct them, and will speak to them that they return from iniquity.*

56. To 'open the ear from iniquity,' is to lay open the understanding of knowledge. But a man is reproved, and his ear opened, when he feels within him a desire after eternal goods, and acknowledges the sins which he has outwardly committed. But temporal punishment can also be understood by the chains and cords of poverty. For they who hear not the words of their Ruler, are frequently warned by the blows of the Smiter; in order that punishments, at least, may lead them onwards to good desires, whom

rewards do not invite. Whence it is said by the prophet, *Bind with bit and bridle the jaws of those who do not draw near to Thee.* But if they despise even scourges, it is plain that they there feel the sufferings of heavier punishments, the more they here trample down the grace of greater consideration. Whence also it follows,

Ver. 11, 12. *If they shall hear and observe Him, they shall fulfil their days in good, and their years in glory; but if they shall not hear, they shall pass away by the sword, and shall be consumed with folly.*

57. By ‘good,’ is designated right conduct, but by ‘glory,’ heavenly recompense. They, then, who study to obey the Divine commands, fulfil their days in good, and their years in glory. Because they pass the course of this life in right deeds, and perfect their consummation by a blessed retribution. *But if they shall not hear, they shall pass away by the sword, and shall be consumed in their folly.* For vengeance smites them in tribulation, and the end shuts them up in folly. For there are some, whom not even torments keep back from their abandoned habits. Of whom it is said by the Prophet, *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast scourged them, and they have refused to receive correction.* [Jer. 5, 3] And of whom it is said under the figure of Babylon, *We have cured Babylon, and she is not healed.* [Jer. 51, 9] Of whom it is said again, *I have slain and destroyed My people, and yet they have not returned from their ways?* [Jer. 15, 7] These sometimes become worse by the scourge, because, when attacked by pain, they are either more hardened in their contumacious obstinacy, or, what is worse, launch out into even the exasperation of blasphemy. It is well said, then, that they pass away by the sword, and are consumed with folly; for through their scourges, they increase those sins, which they ought, in consequence of them, to correct. And they both feel even here the punishments of the blow, and do not escape there the sufferings of righteous retribution. For it is the infatuation of folly that

iniquity so fetters them, that not even punishment keeps them from offending. It follows,

Ver. 13. *Hypocrites and crafty men provoke the wrath of God.*

58. When mentioning hypocrites, he appropriately subjoins, ‘and crafty.’ For unless they are crafty in wit, they cannot consistently make pretence of that which they wish to appear. For there are certain faults, which are easily perpetrated even by those of duller sense. For any one even of dull understanding is able to swell, for instance, with pride, to be eager with the desires of avarice, and to yield to the assaults of lust. But a person is unable to carry on the falsity of simulation, unless he is one of more subtle wit. For whoever is such, is distracted in truth by constant observation, in watching two points; so as to skilfully learn, both to conceal what he really is, and to make a show of what he is not; to suppress his real faults, and to display unreal goods; not to boast himself openly of that, which he seems to be; and to pretend often to decline glory, in order to obtain the greater glory. For, because he cannot attain it by pursuing it before the eyes of men, he generally studies to secure it by shrinking from it. These things then do not at all suit the simple; for if they do, they are no longer simple.

59. But when mentioning hypocrites and crafty men, he very properly added, not that they deserve, but that they *provoke the wrath of God.* For to sin even through ignorance, is to deserve the wrath of God. But wilfully to contradict His commands, to know what is good, but to make light of it, to be able and yet unwilling to do good, is to provoke it. For these are darkened within by the commission of iniquity, and are whitened outwardly by their display of righteousness. To whom it is declared by the voice of the Lord, *Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which appear to men beautiful without, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*

[Matt. 23, 27-18] They preserve, then, in outward display, that which they assail in their inward conduct. But, by thinking evil within, they increase those sins, which they conceal outwardly, by assuming another character. They cannot therefore now have any excuse, before the strict Judge, from ignorance; because, while they display every kind of sanctity before the eyes of men, they are a witness against themselves, that they are not ignorant how to live aright. Let it be rightly said then, *Hypocrites and crafty men provoke the wrath of God.* But he adds what befals them at last, saying,

Ver. 13. *Neither shall they cry, when they are bound.*

60. Every wicked person, who, though he is wicked, does not seek to appear holy, when smarting under the infliction of the scourge, is not ashamed to confess that he is wicked. But a wicked person, who intercepts the judgments of men by a shew of sanctity, even when he is smitten with the rod, shrinks from exposing his iniquity, because he has been accustomed to appear holy. But if he is ever hard pressed, he scarcely confesses, even superficially, that he is wicked; because he is confounded at disclosing his inward character by sincere confession. But we are, as it were, free, when we are not chastened by any reproofs; but we are 'bound,' when we are constrained by the blows of the rod. We cry, then, the more loudly when bound, the more sincerely we confess our sins, when placed beneath the blow. For devout confession is a loud cry in the ears of God. Because then the blows of the rod, even when they chastise hypocrites, do not bring them to honest confession; (for they shrink from being discovered to be sinners, because they were counted holy in the opinion of all men;) though the scourges now smite them to the utmost, though they are aware that they are being led on to eternal punishments, they yet wish to remain the same in the opinion of men, as they had always studied to display themselves. Though smarting, then, even under the blow of the extremest suffering, because they neglect to put forth an honest confession, even when afflicted, they scorn, as

it were, to cry out, even when bound. It is well said then, *Neither shall they cry, when they are bound.*

61. Although it can be understood in another way also. For every one, who, although he is wicked, fears not to be called holy by men, though he blames himself as wicked, in his secret thought, yet when he begins to hear of himself frequently as righteous, loses that which he used to hold of himself within. For he pours forth his heart without; and because he willingly receives a false testimony of himself without, he does not enquire what he should think of himself within. Whence it comes to pass, that he seeks even for the solaces of empty praise, if they are wanting, and that, forgetting what he is, he seeks to appear what he is not. While they who are such, then, pretend to be righteous in the judgment of men, and display their praiseworthy actions to the eyes of beholders, they are dealt with justly in secret, so that, the more they endeavour to deceive others, the more are they even themselves deceived as to themselves within. For they lose all eye for anxiously searching into their own state. For they excuse themselves from searching into, and examining their own conduct, but believe themselves to be the persons they are said to be; and they consider themselves to be holy, not because they so live, but because they are so called. But they neglect God's searching judgment, and to look into themselves; for they rest their belief in their merit on the testimony of another's mouth. But when they are smitten by a sudden blow, they are unable either to confess that they are wicked, or to discover themselves as they really are: because, namely, they believed themselves to be holy from the profession of men. It is well said, then, *Neither shall they cry, when they are bound.* For they trust, with vain hope, that they are coming before their heavenly Judge, such as they know they appeared in the sight of men. And the wretched men do not find themselves out, even in the midst of torments; and, while they look for the testimony of untrue praise, they lose the remedy of true confession. They

are said even to be bound, and yet to cry not; for, overcome by the importunity of human applause, the wretched men consider themselves holy, even when they are dying in sins. To whom it is well said by the Prophet, *Return ye transgressors to your heart.* [Is. 46, 8] For were they to return to their heart, they would pour out themselves in words of outward profession. For what is nearer to us than our heart? What is nearer to us, than that thing which is within us? And yet, when it is distracted with wicked thoughts, our heart wanders far away from us. The prophet then sends the transgressor a long way, when he compels him to return to his heart: for the more he has distracted himself with outward things, the more does he hardly find out the means of returning to himself. But since, because the mind of hypocrites is diverted from the single consideration of eternity, it is ravaged by the inundation of manifold thoughts, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 14. *Their soul shall die in a tempest.*

62. For they were seeming to live as if in calm, when they were taking care to rejoice in the credit of holiness. But their soul, which used to rejoice in the fatal tranquillity of human praise, dies by a sudden tempest. For most commonly an unexpected tempest suddenly produces a change in all the calm blandishment of the air, and danger cannot be avoided, inasmuch as it could not be foreseen. Whence hypocrites, who neglect to watch over their conduct, are said to die in a tempest. For the sudden whirlwind of an inward shock casts them forth hence, whom the pride of outward applause exalts on high; and, while they embrace in their praise that which they are not, they suddenly find in vengeance what they are. But it is well said by Solomon, *As silver is proved in the fining-pot, and gold in the furnace, so is a man proved by the mouth of him that praiseth him.* [Prov. 17, 3] For praise of one's self tortures the just, but elates the wicked. But while it tortures, it purifies the just; and while it pleases the wicked, it proves them to be

reprobate. For these revel in their own praise, because they seek not the glory of their Maker. But they who seek the glory of their Maker, are tortured with their own praise, lest that which is spoken of without, should not exist within them; lest, if that, which is said, really exist, it should be made void in the sight of God by these very honours; lest the praise of men should soften the firmness of their heart, and should lay it low in self-satisfaction; and lest that, which ought to aid them to increase their exertions, should be, even now, the recompense of their labour. But when they see that their own praises tend to the glory of God, they even long for and welcome them. For it is written, *They may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* [Matt. 5, 16] They make themselves, therefore, a path for men to follow, as often as they manifest any thing in themselves, by which God can be recognised; because they seek not to attract the praises of men to themselves, but wish they should pass on, through their means, to the glory of their Maker. But haughty men prostitute their effeminate hearts to human praise, because they are corrupted by self-love. Of whom it is said in another place, *Men shall be lovers of their own selves.* [2 Tim. 3, 2] But of this very corruption of theirs it is here fitly subjoined,

And their life among the effeminate.

63. For, if they were living as men, transitory praise would not infect them with any corruption. Whence the Prophet persuades the Elect, saying, *Do manfully; and let your heart be strengthened.* For when saying, *Do manfully,* he immediately subjoined, *and let your heart be strengthened.* As if he desired to secure the sex of the heart. For the mind of a luxurious man is corrupted, if it is delighted with transitory objects. The life of hypocrites then perishes among the effeminate, because it is found to be corrupted with the luxury of praise. But in another translation, [LXX.] it is not rendered, *Their life among the effeminate,* but, *Let their life be wounded by angels.*

But though these expressions differ in words, they agree in sense; for angels wound the life of the effeminate, when the messengers of truth assail it with the shafts of holy preaching. Because we have heard then what occurs in the damnation of the reprobates, let us hear what follows, respecting the deliverance of the humble.

Ver. 15. *He will deliver the poor from his straitness.*

64. The poor is delivered from his straitness, when any humble person is set free from this affliction of his pilgrimage. For he is here oppressed with even continual tribulations, in order that he may be excited to seek for the joy of real consolation. Whence it follows also,

And will open his ear in tribulation.

To open the ear in tribulation, is to open the hearing of the heart, by the affliction of blows. For when we despise commands, we are treated with a merciful severity, in order that we may fear the rod. Tribulation then opens the ear of the heart, which this world's prosperity often closes. For it is said by Solomon, *The turning away of the little ones shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* [Prov. 1, 32] It follows,

Ver. 16. *He will therefore bring thee safely from a narrow opening into a broad place.*

65. Every one who forsakes the way of life, and casts himself down into the darkness of sins, plunges himself, as it were, into a well or pitfall. But if, through long commission he is also so weighed down by a habit of sin, as to be unable to rise upward, he is pent in, as it were, in the narrow opening of a well. Whence David the Prophet entreats in the person of sinners, saying, *Let not the tempest of water drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the well press its mouth upon me.* [Ps. 69, 15] For a tempest of water has, as it were, hurried away him, whom the iniquity of evil doing has moved from stability in goodness. But if it has not yet prevailed by long custom, it has not overwhelmed. He has already fallen into a well, who has

done that, which the law of God forbids. But if long custom does not yet weigh him down, the well has not contracted its mouth. He escapes therefore with greater ease, the less closely he is pent in by habit. Whence the prophet Jeremiah, when beholding that Judaea had been overwhelmed, through long habit, by iniquities, bewails himself in his lamentations, under her person, and says, *My life is fallen into a well, and they have placed a stone over me.* [Lam. 3, 53] For one's life falls into a pit, when it is denied with the pollution of iniquity. But a stone is placed over, when the mind is also consumed by sin, through long habit, so that, though willing to rise, it is quite unable to do so, because the weight of evil habit presses on it from above. But because it submits to the power of God, and is brought back to the large room of good deeds, after the confinement of evil habit, it is said, *He will bring thee safely from a narrow opening into a broad place.* For he is safely brought from a narrow opening into a broad place, who, after having borne the yoke of iniquity, is brought back by penitence to the liberty of good works.

66. For it is, as it were, the narrowness of a confined opening, to wish, and yet to be unable to rise from an overpowering evil habit; to tend, in desire, to things above, but yet still to remain in deed in things below, to advance in heart, but not to follow in act, and to endure one's self as a kind of self-contradiction within one's self. But when a soul, proceeding thus, is assisted by the hand of grace to raise it up, it arrives from a narrow opening to a broad place: because, having overcome its difficulties, it performs the good works which it desires. The prophet David had beheld the enclosure of a narrow opening, when he said, *Thou hast delivered my soul from necessities, and hast not shut me up into the hands of the enemy.* [Ps. 3l, 7. 8.] But he found that he had been brought safely into a broad place, when he added, *Thou hast set my feet in a large room.* [ibid.] For our feet are firmly placed in a large room, when we journey to those good things which

are fitted for us, and are not impeded by any difficulty. For we are proceeding, as it were, through a wide place whither we please, because we are not hard pressed by any difficulties placed in our way.

67. But Eliu would say this rightly, if his opinion were but suitable to blessed Job. For he believed, that he had been scourged for his faults, and therefore decided that he had fallen into a narrow opening. For with the heavier blows he beheld him afflicted, with the more abominable iniquities he believed him to be weighed down; being surely ignorant that his scourges were an increase of his merits, not a punishment for his sin. But when he declares that he had fallen into a narrow opening, he proceeds, as it were, to speak more fully of the profound depth in which Job is plunged: and says,

And which hath no foundation beneath it.

68. Every sin has no foundation; because it has no subsistence in its own proper nature. For evil has no substance. But that which any how exists, unites with the nature of good. The narrow opening is said, then, to have no foundation beneath it, because the pollution of sin has no power of subsisting by itself. But since foundation is derived from *fundum,* (bottom,) we may without impropriety understand that ‘foundation’ is put for bottom, as hearing is derived from ear, and yet the ear itself is frequently designated by the word hearing. When speaking then of a narrow opening, he added, as wishing fully to describe the profound abyss, *And which hath no foundation* (or bottom) *beneath it.* For the infernal pit swallows up him, whom iniquity hurries away. But the infernal pit is rightly believed not to have a bottom; because every one who is swept away by it, is devoured by the boundless profound. For the Prophet, wishing to describe fully its boundless immensity, says, *The infernal pit hath enlarged its soul, and hath opened its mouth without measure.* [Is. 5, 14] As therefore that is said to be enlarged without measure which attracts very many to itself, so it is not improperly

believed to be deep, and without a bottom, because it absorbs, as it were, into the boundless abyss of its immensity those, whom it receives into itself. And therefore when saying, *He will bring thee safely from a narrow opening into a broad place,* he fitly subjoined, *And which hath no foundation beneath it.* As if he were saying, He will bring thee safely from a narrow opening, which has no bottom under it. For since it is through sin that we tend to the pit, He brings safely from a narrow opening him whom He delivers from sin. But him whom He rescues from the narrow opening, He withdraws from the depths of hell.

69. Though it can also be understood in another sense. For as he who is plunged into a well, is confined in the bottom of it; so would the mind fall in, and remain, as it were, at the bottom, if, after having once fallen, it were to confine itself within any measure of sin. But when it cannot be contented with the sin into which it has fallen, while it is daily plunging into worse offences, it finds, as it were, no bottom to the well into which it has fallen, on which to rest. For there would be a bottom to the well, if there were any bounds to his sin. Whence it is well said in another place, *When a sinner hath come into the lowest depth of sins, he contemneth.* [Prov. 18, 3] For he puts by returning, because he has no hope that he can be forgiven. But when he sins still more through despair, he withdraws, as it were, the bottom from the well, so as to find therein no resting place. It follows,

But the rest of thy table shall be full of fatness.

70. The rest of the table, is the refreshment of inward satiety: which is said to be full of fatness, because it is set forth with the delight of eternal pleasure. The Prophet was hungering after the feasts of this table, when saying, *I shall be satisfied, when Thy glory shall be manifested.* [Ps. 17, 15] He was thirsting for the cups of this table, when saying, *My soul thirsted for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?* [Ps. 42, 2] Eliu, therefore, wishing to console the temporal sufferings of blessed

Job, by an eternal compensation, promises him, as if freely, from himself, that which was justly due to him as his desert, saying, *But the rest of thy table shall be full of fatness.* It follows,

Ver. 17. *But thy cause hath been judged as the cause of the ungodly, thou shall receive thy cause and judgment.*

71. The cause of the good, is righteousness. And their cause is judged, as the cause of the ungodly, because their righteousness is here smitten with fatherly correction, that they may be taught to exercise greater vigilance, not only by the injunction of commands, but by the infliction of blows. But they receive their cause and justice, because from that righteousness, with which they now live, they hereafter [‘tune’] shine forth in the height of judicial power; so that they are then able to judge all things the more powerfully, the more strictly all their conduct is now judged. But these points, which blessed Job ever maintained with stedfast faith, Eliu mentioned, as if he were making some new promise. For haughty men have these peculiarities: they falsely exaggerate what is wrong, and if ever they state that which is good, they bring it forward as something unknown. Whence it comes to pass that they venture to teach those who are wiser than themselves, because, namely, they believe that they alone are acquainted with such subjects. But when they condescend to any words of consolation, they consider that they have been at once degraded, and by the harshness of proud reproof, they reestablish, as it were, their ability; in order that they who seemed to have condescended in soothing speech [‘blandientes testes’ *Ben.* ‘testes’ seems a misprint.], may be dreaded when reproof has suddenly sprung up. Whence also Eliu immediately added, saying,

Ver. 18-21. *Let not then anger overcome thee, to oppress any one, neither let the multitude of places bow thee down. Lay down thy greatness without tribulation, and all the mighty in strength. Prolong not the night,*

that people may go up for them. Take heed that thou decline not to iniquity, for thou hast begun to follow this after misery.

72. In most manuscripts we find ‘gifts;’ [‘donorum’] in a few, however, but more ancient, we find ‘places.’ [‘locorum’] But since the expression, *Let not the multitude of gifts turn thee aside,* needs no explanation, we have thought good that that expression should be rather expounded, which seems to be explained with some slight difficulty. But the pride, which uttered these words, proves of how great haughtiness they are. But, because we have said that Eliu is a type of the arrogant, and blessed Job of the Elect, if we examine them more accurately, we demonstrate how appropriate they are even now to haughty men within the Church. Holy men wonder at the doings of others, even when trifling, but make light of their own doings, even when great. But haughty men, on the other hand, make light of other persons’ doings, even when great, and wonder at their own even when trifling, and generally think well of their own misdeeds, but cease not to think ill of the good qualities of others. For while they seek their own glory, they are mischievously desirous, that whatever virtue is performed by others, should be scarred with the brand of iniquity, and a weighty deed of goodness they pervert into a taint of guilt. For frequently, when they behold the wicked severely punished by the Church, they unjustly make a kind of complaint that the innocent are afflicted, and they miscall the splendour of its discipline by the appellation of iniquity. Whence Eliu, representing the arrogant, as if admonishing Job, says, *Let not anger overcome thee, to oppress any one.* For whatever is done by Holy Church with the censure of discipline, haughty men consider as an emotion of anger. And because, from their desire of human praise, they are ever anxious to appear kind, they consider that none should be corrected with strictness and severity. Whence also, as was before observed, they consider that those are

oppressed, whom they see restrained from sin, against their will, even by righteous rulers.

73. But the Lord having been the cause that Holy Church has grown up with a height of religious power in all parts of the world; they assail, and ascribe to sinful pride this very temporal power, which it exercises rightly. Whence Eliu subjoins, saying, *And let not the multitude of places bow thee down.* As if it were said by the tongue of haughty men to Holy Church herself, preserving her humility more in prosperity. Because thou art every where regarded with the reverence of faith, beware that thou art not elated with the power [‘fascibus,’ al. ‘fastibus’] this reverence bestows. For they behold certain persons, who under the guise of religion, are puffed up with the sin of pride: and the fault which they justly blame in these, they unjustly bring forward as a charge against all. Not at all considering, namely, that there are those within her, who know how to exercise temporal power aright, though yet despising it, and to love and look forward to eternal objects with full desire; who can discharge the high office which has been committed to them, and carefully fulfil their duty of inward humility; so that neither do they neglect all care for the office they have undertaken, on account of their humility; nor, again, does their humility swell into pride by reason of their office. And if there are perhaps some within her, who serve not God, but their own glory, under pretext of religion, yet she endeavours either severely to correct them, if possible; or, if otherwise, to endure them with patience. And she either, in correcting them, embraces them as her children, or, through tolerating, is harassed by them as her enemies. For she knows that the life of the just is wounded by their pride; she knows that whatever sin is committed through the wickedness of such persons is brought forward as a charge against her. But she is the less afraid of bearing the blame of others’ sins, since she is aware that even her Head endured such wrongs as this. For it is written of Him, *And He was numbered with*

the wicked. [Is. 53, 12] Of Him it is said again, *He Himself hath borne our weaknesses, and He Himself hath carried our sorrows.* [Mark 15, 28; Is. 53, 4] Let haughty men then pursue their course, and by their estimate of the wicked, vex the life of the innocent. The Church of the Elect knows how to tolerate the deeds of the one, and the words of the others: and to convert the minds of the wicked by bearing with them. And even though they are not able to be converted, yet she patiently endures their disgrace. For she considers that it tends to secure her a twofold reward, that she is scorned without for the merits of those, by whose life she is wounded even within.

74. But it must be observed that he does not say, *Let not the multitude of places elate thee,* but, *Let not the multitude of places bow thee down.* For every one who is raised up in this world, is turned aside by his very exaltation; because when he exalts himself outwardly, he falls within. Eliu, therefore, beholding the fall of a heart in its pride, says, *And let not the multitude of places bow thee down.* As if it were said to Holy Church, by the voice of haughty men, Take heed, thou art not diverted from thy inward intention, if thou art exalted by the veneration of the whole world. It follows,

Ver. 19. *Lay down thy greatness without sorrow, and all the mighty in strength.*

75. Whom else do we understand by the mighty of Holy Church, except those, who both by their lofty attempts, and by successful designs have strength to overcome the desires of this world? Its greatness therefore consists in the life of its mighty ones; because it is then rendered more glorious, when its Elect contend, even to the death, with constant resolution, in defence of the Faith. Haughty men, therefore, when Apostles have been withdrawn from this world, and Martyrs withdrawn also to heavenly places, because they perhaps perceive that more learned and powerful rulers are greatly wanting, suspect that they have remained the only ones within the

Church. And hence, while they prefer themselves, they insult, under pretence of advising, her, and say, *Lay down thy greatness without sorrow, and all the mighty in strength.* As if they said in open reproaches, “Be not confident, that thou possessest greatness, for, since the old fathers have been taken away, thou hast no longer any in whose life thou canst boast.” They say these things in truth, as not knowing that Almighty God does not leave His Church without proper government. For when He summons the strong to their reward, He strengthens, in their place, the weak for the contest: when He rewards the one by bearing them away, He supplies to the others strength for their labours, for Him to recompense. Of whom it is said to the same Holy Church, *Instead of thy fathers, children are born to thee; thou shall make them princes over all the earth.* [Ps. 45, 16] For those who are afterwards preferred, are appointed to supply the virtue of the old fathers, because also when aged trees are felled, tender shoots grow up in the place of their strength. But haughty men believe not that they are strong, whom they knew at one time to be weak: and they disdain to reverence those when changed, whom they remember to have been contemptible.

76. But since they see that the more righteous are few, and the ungodly the largest body therein, just as in threshing the fruits, the quantity of the chaff is greater; they despise even the life of the righteous from their estimate of the wicked. They see in truth that some of its rulers, supported by temporal power, revel in the pride of that power. They see that that reverence for religion, which their fathers preserved [so old Mss. al. ‘sowed’] to this world by dying, these sweep away, by exulting in worldly joys; and consider that they are mighty, but not with strength. For while they are supported by temporal power, they are strengthened, as it were, by a kind of weakness. For the stronger they are without, the more are they bereft of all the might of strength within. And therefore it is said to her by haughty men, *Lay down the mighty in strength.* As if it were plainly said,

They once clung to thee, truly strong, who maintained, in their lives, that which they taught in words. But now they who are thy rulers, are mighty in appearance, not in strength. For they cease not to set themselves forth as worthy of honour, but are the more weak and contemptible, the more they are afraid that respect for their honour is set aside, in comparison with the truth. Haughty men rightly think thus of most persons, but plunge headlong into the sin of pride, the more they suppose all persons whom they behold above them, to be such. For the evil conduct of the many ought not to lead them to form an opinion of all. For although those whom they know, and decide upon, are wicked; yet some, whom they know not, are holy. For now is the season of threshing, and the grains are, as yet, concealed beneath the chaff. No fruit then will be expected from the threshing floor, if that alone, which is seen on the surface, is supposed to be therein. Because, therefore, they despise those whom they behold, and sneer at those, whom they know, being put in the place of the old fathers, it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 20. *Prolong not the night, that people may go up for them.*

77. As if the arrogant openly said; Act not so in the darkness of thy ignorance, as to substitute a host of infirm persons in the place of the strong. For by the name ‘people’ [Lat. ‘peoples’] are designated those, who, given up to the common practice, live without restraint in all that they desire. But to ‘prolong the night, that people should go up in the place of the strong,’ is, if it is caused by negligence, that the unlearned and weak occupy the place of the learned and strong. People go up in the place of the strong, when they who have learned to live wickedly, obtain the place of pastors. And this would be rightly said, if it were spoken humbly. For haughty men, even when they give good advice, exercise their wicked over-bearingness [‘superstitionis.’ vide Ducange]. For, as was before stated, they more desire to smite with reproof, than to cherish with consolation. Whence it is presently subjoined,

Ver. 21. *Decline not to iniquity; for thou hast begun to follow this after misery.*

Haughty men in truth call this the misery of the Church, because they suspect that its main body is despised by God: and they scorn it with loftier pride, the more they suspect that it is utterly despised by God.

Having given rapidly a figurative exposition of these words, we must now gather their moral meaning; that, having learned the figure of the Church, which we believe to be generally described, we may learn what we may specially gather from these words in each single case. He says therefore,

Ver. 18. *Let not, therefore, anger overcome thee, to oppress any one.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

78. Every one, who is required to correct the vices of others, ought first of all to look carefully into himself; lest, while punishing others' faults, he himself should be overcome by his zeal for punishment. For furious anger, under the guise of justice, frequently ravages the mind; and while it seems to rage with zeal for righteousness, it gratifies the fury of its wrath, and considers that it justly performs, whatever its anger wickedly dictates. Whence also it frequently transgresses the due limits of punishment, because it is not restrained by the measure of justice. For it is right, that when we correct others' faults, we should first measure our own; that the mind should first cease to glow with its own warmth, should first control within itself the impulse of its zeal with calm moderation ['æquitate']; lest we should sin ourselves, in the correction of sin, if we are hurried on with headlong fury to punish offences, and lest we, who are deciding on, and punishing, a fault, should commit one by punishing it immoderately. For there follows not the correction, but rather the oppression of the delinquent, if, in punishment, our anger extends further than the offence deserves. For,

in the correction of faults, anger ought to be under the control of the mind and not its master, so as not to take the lead in the execution of justice, as though imposing a command, but to follow after, as though obeying directions, and to carry out, as if employed, the sentence which has been made known to it, and not go first as if an employer. It is well said therefore, *Let not anger overcome thee, to oppress any one.* Because, namely, if he, who is endeavouring to correct, is overcome by anger, he oppresses before he corrects. For, whilst he is more inflamed than he ought to be, he rushes unchecked into enormous cruelty, under the pretence of just punishment. And this is frequently the case, for this reason, because the hearts of rulers are too little intent on the love of their Creator alone. For whilst they desire many things in this life, they are distracted with countless thoughts. And when they suddenly discover the faults of their subjects, they are unable to judge them aright, in agreement with God; because they cannot suddenly bring back to the height of severity, their hearts which have been scattered abroad in transitory cares. They therefore discover less readily, when excited, the balance of moderation for the punishment of sins, the less they seek for it in their season of tranquillity. Whence, when Eliu was saying, *Let not anger overcome thee to oppress any,* in order to express that the causes of injustice and of overpowering anger were the same, he immediately added,

And let not the multitude of places bow thee down.

79. We are turned aside into as many places, as are the cares with which we are distracted. For as the space of the body is the place of the body, so is each intention of thought the place of the mind. And if, while it is impelled hither and thither, it is pleasingly occupied with any delightful thought of its own, it is, as it were, put to rest in a certain place. For as often as, overcome by weariness, we are led from thought to thought, we migrate, as it were, with weary mind from place to place. As many thoughts then as spring up

and dissipate the unity of good intention, so do as many places bend down the loftiness of the mind. For the mind would stand upright, if it always clung close to that one thought to which it ought. The mind would stand upright, if it did not, by its countless motions, prostrate itself in fluctuating change. But when it now takes up these things, and now passes off to others, it is turned aside, as it were, from its state of uprightness through a multitude of places; and while it extends itself through many things, it detaches itself from that one intention, to which it ought to adhere. But yet this habit of change has become a nature to us ever since the guilt of the first sin. For when the mind endeavours to stand in itself, it is somehow or other drawn away from itself, without knowing it. For the soul of man is diverted by an impulse of disgust, from every object to which it directs its thoughts. But whilst it eagerly seeks for subjects to think upon, and suddenly loathes those it has thought upon, it teaches us, that that which does not continue at rest, wherever placed, depends on something elsewhere. For it does, in truth, depend on Him, by Whom it was created. And because it was made to seek after God alone, and since every thing which it seeks beneath Him, is less than He; that which is not God, justly does not satisfy it. Hence it is that it is scattered hither and thither, and turns away, as we said, under the impulse of loathing, from every object. For being eagerly desirous of satisfaction, it seeks a place wherein to rest; but it has lost that One, Whom it might have had to its satisfaction. Whence it is now led through many objects, that it may be satisfied with their variety at least, since it cannot be satisfied with their quality.

80. But holy men watch themselves with careful observation, so as not to be separated, through changeableness, from the object of their thoughts; and, because they desire to be ever the same, they carefully confine themselves to the thought with which they love God. For, in the contemplation of their Creator, they are about to obtain this, that they enjoy

always the same stability of mind. No changeableness then dissipates them; because, namely, their thought ever continues without any difference in itself. They endeavour, therefore, now to imitate that, with labour, which, afterwards, they receive with joy as a gift. To this unchangeable state had the Prophet attached himself by the virtue of love, when saying, *One thing I have asked of the Lord, this I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord.* [Ps. 27, 4] To this unity Paul had adhered in his intention, when saying, *But one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I follow after for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ.* [Phil. 3, 13, 14] For, if there is any human weakness in their hearts, a severe examination speedily checks it, and when their thought wanders as if childishly, they are soon kept in restraint by manly correction. Whence it is, that they collect at once their distracted mind; and fix it, as far as they are able, in one single thought. Because then the position of the mind is bent down by the changeableness of thoughts, it is rightly said by Eliu, *Let not the multitude of places turn thee aside.*

81. But frequently, while the mind of a righteous man stands firm in the stronghold of its resolution, while it recovers itself from every dispersion of change, and keeps down whatever superfluously arises within; it is smitten by the very glory of its own rectitude, and is raised up with the pride of presuming on itself. For he who performs great deeds, though he may think humbly of himself, yet knows that his doings are great. For, if he knows not that they are great, he doubtless keeps but little watch over them. And while he neglects to watch them, he either makes less progress in them, or loses them altogether. Whilst then it is necessary to know our good deeds, in order to guard them; from the very knowledge of them, a way is opened to our pride, and the hand of sin, by whose ravages they are to be snatched away, is admitted to the heart of him who does them. But it is brought about

by a marvellous dispensation, that our Creator suffers a mind which is elated by prosperity, to be smitten with sudden temptation; in order that it may, in infirmity, behold itself more truly, and may descend, already improved, from that haughtiness of pride, which it had assumed from its virtues. Whence it is now rightly subjoined;

Ver. 19. *Lay down thy greatness without tribulation, and all the mighty in strength.*

82. For the motions of the heart are mighty, when they feel only those things which are virtuous. But we lay down our greatness and our mighty motions, when we are compelled, by the assaults of sin, to consider what we are. We lay aside our mighty motions, when we are no longer raised up by our virtue, but when, by consenting to sin, we are fearful of being overwhelmed by that infirmity, with which we are assaulted. For the mind has great confidence in itself, when it sees that its strength is adequate to its wishes. It arrogates at once to itself the assurance of sanctity, and thinks that it is now equal even to all the heights of virtues, which it has conceived in thought only. But when a temptation suddenly arises and pierces it through, it utterly confounds those lofty thoughts, which had sprung up from its virtues. For an unexpected enemy enters, as it were, an unsuspecting city; and the necks of haughty citizens are smitten with a sudden stroke. There is nothing then at that time but continual lamentation, whilst the captured city of the mind is, by means of slaughter, bereft of the glory of its great ones. Whence it is now said, *Lay down thy greatness without tribulation, and all who are mighty in strength.* As if it were plainly said, Repress all the pride thou hadst conceived within, at thy good deeds, and lay down those mighty motions of the heart, which thou hadst from thy just doings; because thou now considerest, in the assault of adversity, how vainly thou before entertainedst high thoughts of thyself in thy pride. Which greatness, it is said, must be laid aside without tribulation, doubtless, because when

humility makes progress through temptation, that very adversity, which secures the mind from pride, is itself prosperous. But yet this is not effected without great tribulation, when the tranquil mind is assailed by the inroads of temptations, as if by a sudden enemy. For, when the adversity of temptation forces itself into the mind, it produces therein a kind of darkness, and confounds, with the gloom of its bitterness, that soul which had long been enlightened, within itself, by the radiant sweetness of its virtues. Whence it is also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 20. *Prolong not the night, that people should go up for them.*

83. For the night is indeed prolonged, when the sorrow, that springs from temptation, is not ended by the rising up of consolation. The night is protracted, because the sorrow of the mind is prolonged by confused thoughts. For whilst the mind, placed in temptation, considers that it is driven away from the former solidity of its virtue, it is blinded by superinduced sorrows, as by a kind of gloom. And its eye is closed to every ray of joy, whilst it anxiously trembles, lest it should entirely lose that which it had before begun to be. Whence it is also well said, that, in this night, people go up in the place of the strong; because, namely, in this sorrow of temptation, instead of bold emotions, unworthy and manifold thoughts spring up in the heart. For whilst it sees, in this perturbation, that it has already almost lost that which it had been, it heaps up in itself countless waves and tumults. At one time it sorrows that it has lost its tranquillity; at another, it is afraid lest it should fall into evil deeds. At one time it calls to mind on what a height it had stood, at another, it observes in what a depth of vices it is lying, by means of its pleasure. At one time it prepares itself to recover its strength, at another, as though already defeated and crushed, it despairs that it can recover it.

84. When such manifold thoughts then come forth over the convicted mind, people, as it were, rise and press it down in the night. Which people

the Prophet had doubtless presumed he could overcome, not by himself, but by the aid of the Divine protection, when he was saying. *My Protector, and in Him will I hope, subduing people under me.* [Ps. 144, 2] For people are subjected to holy minds, when foolish thoughts start away from them, at the presence of strict severity; so as not to hurry them through headlong fancies, but, subjected to reason, humbly to cease from the heart. Hence, therefore, the mind which used, in prosperity, to presume greater things of itself, endures, when placed in temptation, the tumults of hope and despair, it is now well said, *Prolong not the night, that people should go up for them.* As if it were openly said, Disperse at once the darkness of sorrow, when involved in temptation, lest thou, who hadst thought highly of thyself in tranquillity, shouldest overwhelm thyself more fatally in trouble also, with the gloom of thy thoughts. Which Eliu would properly say, if, however, he knew to whom he was saying it. For these sayings are the less suited to blessed Job, the more deeply all things are known by him. But because, as we have often said, haughty men fall even into insulting words of reproaches, while they presume to teach those, whom they ought not, it is added;

Ver. 21. *Take heed that thou decline not to iniquity, for thou hast begun to follow this after misery.*

85. He follows iniquity after misery, who, after the evils which he endures for his correction, inflames himself, in his glowing heart, with the torches of impatience. Which Eliu believed that blessed Job had done, having heard him speak in bold words, when in the midst of scourges: being ignorant, namely, that every thing which he said, he uttered not from the sin of impatience, but from the virtue of truth, who did not, even when justifying himself, differ from the sentence of the inward Judge. But we must greatly consider how, when saying, *Decline not to iniquity,* he

immediately subjoined of this very iniquity; *For thou hast begun to follow this after misery.*

86. What is this, that, while he forbids him to decline to it, he condemns him for it, at once, as if he had already declined to it; except that arrogant men wish rather to appear judges, than consolers? Whence also, they sometimes smite, with severe sentences, those faults, which they suspect have arisen in the heart. And, before the fault of the offenders is certain, severe invective of words is brought forward; and a person is struck by their sentence, before any thing appears, to be smitten.

87. Although even just men commonly oppose, by reproof, wicked and secret thoughts; but, when any preceding doings make plain these thoughts, they frequently root out from the hearts of their hearers, by the hand of reproof, those sins which have not shewn themselves. But then they perceive that they are already following from others, which precede. For as physicians of the body discern that some diseases have already appeared, but heal others, that they may not appear; so do holy teachers sometimes restore to health the wounds they have discovered, and sometimes so deal with men's minds that they are not wounded. In whom we must carefully observe, that as they generally reprove known faults with severity, so do they speak against doubtful thoughts, even with calmness. The undoubted they chastise with blows: the doubtful they ward off by taking precautions. But because arrogant men know not their rule of discrimination, they wound, with the shafts of their sentences, known and unknown, certain and uncertain faults alike. Whence it is now said by Eliu, *Take heed that thou decline not to iniquity, for thou hast begun to follow this after misery.* But because the remarks which follow are drawn out with longer allegation, we conclude this book with this close, that it may not be too immoderately extended.

BOOK XXVII.

The last twelve verses of the thirty-sixth chapter are expounded, with the whole of the thirty-seventh, and their meanings ingeniously examined, for the sake of establishing a system of Christian doctrine, and ethics.

1. Whoever is endeavouring to gain knowledge from the mighty words of the arrogant, ought carefully to secure himself from imitating their pride of learning, lest, with the words of virtue, he should acquire the vices of their habits, and in attaining to skill in speaking, should wound himself through unskilfulness in living. For when we hear these persons speaking powerful words, and yet observe them proud of their powerful words, we enter, as it were, the garden of learning, and pluck roses from thorns. We need, therefore, careful discrimination, to cull that which is sweet scented, and to avoid that which pricks us: lest the incautious hand of the gatherer should be wounded with the thorn of their habits, if the flower of their words happens to be carelessly gathered. Eliu, therefore, being both learned and arrogant, produces at one while something to give a sweet scent, and at another, something to wound. We must then so gather what is fragrant from his teaching, as yet to carefully guard against the wounds of his pride. He introduced, indeed, many remarks above with a moral object, and yet in the words which follow he raised himself solely to the mysteries of prophecy. For he abandons the low ground of morality, and rises to the heights of prophecy.

2. Nor is it to be wondered at, that a haughty man could be filled with the prophetic spirit, when Saul also was in the number of the prophets. [1 Sam. 10, 11] But why do we say this of Saul, when we know that even a she ass learned rational words from the sight of an Angel? [Num. 22, 28; 2 Pet. 2, 16] But as the irrational animal uttered rational words, and yet went not so

far as to take a rational nature in exchange; thus does an unworthy person often receive holy words by the spirit of prophecy, but yet does not attain to deserve the glory of sanctity; so as to rise above himself in his words, and listlessly to sink beneath himself in his life. Whence Eliu, though not now humble, beholds the humble advent of our Redeemer: and announces, in prophecy, Him, Whom he assails with his haughty manners, saying,

Ver. 22. *Behold, God is lofty in His strength, and none is like Him among lawgivers.*

3. As if he said plainly, He, Who will appear humble in weakness, remains lofty in strength, Paul also witnessing this, who says, *For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.* [2 Cor. 13, 4] Of Whom it is rightly subjoined, *None is like Him among lawgivers.* Moses was a lawgiver, Joshua a lawgiver, the Prophets lawgivers also. We can term all lawgivers, who, we know, admonish the people rightly from the Law. But there is no one like to this Mediator among lawgivers. For they, having been called by grace from their sins, return to innocence, and, from what they have experienced in themselves, bring back others by their preaching. But our Redeemer is Man without sin, a Son without adoption, and has never committed any thing which He has disapproved. And He so speaks to the world by His Manhood, as yet to be still the Lord of the same world before all ages by His Godhead. Hence certain persons believed that the Mediator between God and men was like the lawgivers. For when He asked, *Whom do men say that the Son of Man is,* the disciples answered and said, *Some say that He is John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.* [Matt.16, 13. 14.] But He doubtless disclosed to Peter how lofty He was in strength; for looking on Him truly, he separated Him from an equality with lawgivers, saying, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.* [ib. 16] Whence the Bride rightly says of Him in the Song of Songs, *By night on my bed I sought Him Whom my soul loveth, I sought*

Him, and I found Him not. [Cant. 3, 1] And a little after, *The watchmen who guard the city found me.* [ib. 3] Of Whom she says again, *They wounded me, they took my cloak.* [ib. 5, 7] And she asks them again, saying, *Saw ye Him Whom my soul loveth? When I had passed by them but a little, I found Him Whom my soul loveth.* [ib. 3, 4]

4. For the Beloved is sought for by night on the bed; because He is longed for in tribulation of spirit, in the secret chambers of the heart. Whom yet the Bride, though seeking, finds not; because every Elect soul is already kindled with the torches of His love, but the sight of Him, which is sought for, is still denied, that the longing of the lover may increase; and water is, as it were, withdrawn in thirst, that the heat of the thirst may be augmented, and that the longer a person thirsts, and longs for it, the more eagerly may he seize it at last when he has found it. But the watchers find her when seeking for Him; and wound her, and take away her cloak: because when anxious teachers meet with any soul, already seeking for a sight of its Redeemer, they wound it, by the word of preaching, with the darts of heavenly love: and if it has any covering of its former conversation, they take it away; in order that the more it is stripped of the burden of this world, the more quickly may He, Who is sought for, be found by her. But it is well added, *When I had passed by them but a little, I found Him Whom my soul loveth?* because the mind, eager for the sight of Him, would not find Him, Who is above man, unless it were to go beyond the estimate of the Prophets, the loftiness of the Patriarchs, and the standard of all men. To pass by the watchers, then, is to postpone, in comparison of Him, those even whom the soul admires. And He, Who was sought for, is then beheld, if He is believed to be a Man, but yet above the measures of men. Whence it is now well said, *None is like Him among lawgivers.* But He in truth, appearing to our sight through the infirmity of the flesh, as He rejects some, and calls others, has displayed marvellous judgments, which can be thought upon, and yet

not be comprehended by us. For He says, *For judgment have I come into this world, that they which see not, might see, and that they which see might be made blind.* [John 9, 39] And again, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* [Matt. 11, 25] In which judgments the Jews are doubtless rejected, the Gentiles gathered. Which fact in truth we can certainly wonder at, but are not at all able to search into. Whence it is now also well subjoined by Eliu,

Ver. 23. *Who will be able to search out His ways? Or who dareth to say to Him, Thou hast wrought iniquity?*

5. As if he said; 'How can He be blamed, Whose doing cannot be searched into? For no one judges properly of that, which he knows not. We ought, therefore, to rest the more silent under His judgments, the more we see that we perceive not the reason of His judgments. Whence it is also well subjoined.

Ver. 24. *Remember that thou knowest not His work, of Whom men have sung.*

6. In Holy Scripture sometimes Angels, and sometimes persons ['homines'] of perfect life, are called 'men.' ['viri.'] For that an Angel is sometimes called a man, the Prophet Daniel bears witness, saying, *Behold, the man Gabriel.* [Dan. 9, 21] And again, that persons of perfect life are called by the name of 'men,' Wisdom declares in the Proverbs, saying, *Unto you, O men, I call.* [Prov. 8, 4] Men then sing of the Lord, when either spirits from above, or perfect teachers, make known to us His power. But yet His work is not known; because doubtless even they who preach Him, venerate His unpenetrated judgments. They, therefore, both know Him, Whom they preach, and yet know not His works: because they know, by grace, Him, by Whom they were made, but yet cannot understand His judgments, which are wrought by Him even above their understanding. For

that Almighty God is not clearly seen in His doings the Psalmist bears witness, saying, *Who hath made darkness His secret place.* [Ps. 18, 11] And again, *Thy judgments are a great deep.* [Ps. 36, 6] And again, *The deep like a garment is His clothing.* [Ps. 104, 6] Whence also it is well said by Solomon, *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones grow together in the belly of her that is with child, so thou knowest not the works of God, Who is the Maker of all things.* [Eccles. 11, 5]

7. For to state one thing out of many, two little ones come to this light: but to one it is granted to return to redemption by Baptism; the other is taken away before the regenerating water bedews it. And the son of faithful parents is often taken off without faith, while that of unbelievers is renewed by the grant of the Sacrament of faith. But some one may perhaps say, that God knew that he would act wickedly even after Baptism, and that He did not, on that account, bring him to the grace of Baptism. But if this is the case, the sins of some persons are without doubt punished even before they are committed. And who, that thinks rightly, would say this, that Almighty God, Who releases some from the sins they have committed, condemns, in others, these very sins, even when not committed? His judgments are, therefore, hidden; and they ought to be reverenced with an humility, as great as the obscurity by which they cannot be seen. Let him say then, *Remember that thou knowest not His work, of Whom men have sung.* As if he were to say plainly, The works of Him, of Whom mighty men have spoken, are concealed from the eyes of thy mind; because they surpass the measure of thy knowledge, inasmuch as thou art circumscribed by thy humanity. It follows,

Ver. 25. *All men see Him, every one beholdeth afar off.*

8. Every man from the fact that he is created rational, ought to conclude from reason that He Who made him is God. And to see Him at this time, is doubtless to behold, through reason, His sovereign power. But when it is

said, *All men see Him,* it is rightly subjoined, *Every one beholdeth afar off.* For, to behold Him afar off, is to behold Him at present not in Person, but to think of Him as yet, solely from admiration of His works. Even the Elect behold Him here afar off; because they do not as yet discern His brightness with the keenness of inmost vision. For although they are near Him now by love, yet they are separated from Him by the burden of their earthly habitation; and although they cling close to Him by good living, yet they sigh that they are far removed from the sight of His contemplation. And when the reprobate also see Him coming to judgment, they doubtless behold Him afar off, because they behold Him not in the form of His Godhead, but in His Manhood only, in which alone He could even be comprehended. Because, namely, their own evil deeds, being then brought back to their memory, strike against their sight: and while they behold the Manhood of Him, Whose Godhead they see not, they are, in a wonderful manner, far away from the sight of Him Whom they behold. But when it is said, *Remember that thou knowest not His work,* and it is then subjoined, *All men see Him,* (and to behold Him, is, as we before said, to infer from reason His all-transcendent essence,) it is a great marvel that we behold God Himself, and yet know not His work. For we cannot doubt of His essence, and yet we remain uncertain of His judgments. That which is highest is plain to us, that which is least is concealed. For His works are surely less than Himself; and yet we behold the Doer, but are in darkness as to His doing: from the very fact, that the reason why any thing is done is uncertain, but Who it is that acts thus uncertainly, is not uncertain. Let him say then, *Remember that thou knowest not His work, of Whom men have sung; all men see Him, every one beholdeth afar off.* Because we see by reason that He exists, Whose judgments we by no means comprehend. But yet, at present, we behold Him afar off, because we are separated from His strength by the mist of our own infirmity. It follows,

Ver. 26. *Behold, God is great, surpassing our knowledge.*

9. He had said above, *Behold, God is lofty.* [ver. 22] He now says again, *Behold, God is great.* Why is it, that when speaking of God he says, 'Behold,' and again repeats, 'Behold,' if it be not that we say, 'Behold' of that thing, which we point out as present? And since God is every where present, when 'Behold' is said of Him, He is said to be present even to those who see Him not. But he well says, that He surpasses our knowledge, Who he had said before was seen by all men. Because, though He is beheld by reason, yet His greatness is not penetrated by any subtlety of our senses. For whatever we know of the brightness of His greatness, is beneath Him; and the more we suspect that we comprehend His power, the more are we driven far away from the knowledge of Him. For though our mind is caught up on high, yet it is transcended by the immensity of His greatness. Of Whom we know as it were something in part, when we feel that we are not able to know Him worthily. It follows,

The number of His years cannot be reckoned.

10. He wished, in some way or another, to speak of eternity, and he called the very length of eternity, 'years.' For when we wish to expand the briefness of time, we extend our moments through hours, our hours through days, our days through months, and our months through years. Since then he wished to speak of something very large, but did not find what wider thing to speak of, he multiplied years in God without reckoning their number, saying, *The number of His years cannot be reckoned;* in order that while he multiplies those things which are long in themselves, human weakness may learn that it cannot measure the length of eternity. Stretch therefore thine eye into eternity, that thou mayest see God, either when He is from the beginning, or how far He extends. And there is no boundary any where above, because He begins not to be; no boundary any where below, because He ceases not to be. All things are bounded together within Him;

but He is extended around all things without space, is spread abroad without place. Behold all things which are made, by the very circumscription of their creation, are encircled by a boundary both above and below. For by their own law, because they begin from not being, they are hastening not to be.

11. But some things have marvellously received this, that, though a boundary commences them above, yet no boundary confines them below; and that though they begin to be, yet that they do not cease to be for ever. But their eternity is unlike the highest eternity, because they began to be eternal. When we look at their extremes, we do not comprehend that end of theirs which is altogether wanting; but when we carry our mind back, we behold their commencement. And while we turn our thoughts below and above in them, we do not at all understand how far they extend, but we see from whence they begin. But since God has a kind of length of being through eternity, which neither commences with a beginning, nor is terminated by an end, and which does not admit in itself the from whence, nor until when; let it be said then, *The number of His years cannot be reckoned.* By the number of His years being mentioned, His Being is shewn to be of long duration. But by its being said to be beyond number, this same Being is pointed out as infinite and incomprehensible. But we have learned, that He is known to the minds of men, when all men see Him; and that we behold and admire His greatness, when the number of His years is considered beyond number; it now remains for us to hear, what are His doings. It follows,

Ver. 27. *Who taketh away the stars of rain, and poureth forth showers like whirlpools.*

12. There are two kinds of just persons in this life; one, namely, of those who live uprightly, but teach nothing; another, of those who live uprightly, and teach accordingly. As in the face of heaven some stars come forth,

which no storms succeed: and others come forth, which water the thirsty earth with great showers. As often then as persons live uprightly in Holy Church, but yet know not how to preach this same uprightness, they are stars indeed, but produced in the dryness of the air: because they can give light to others by their example of good living, but cannot rain by their word of preaching. But when certain persons both live uprightly therein, and distil this uprightness into others by their word of preaching, stars appear, as it were, in heaven, to bring on rain, which are so to enlighten others by the merits of their life, as also to rain with the word of preaching. Did not Moses appear in this heaven, as a star of rain; who, when he shone forth from above, watered also the hearts of sinners with the rain of holy exhortation as the thirsty ground beneath, to make it bring forth grass abundantly? Did not Isaiah appear as a star of rain, who in foreseeing and holding up the light of truth, watered the drought of the unbelieving by announcing the words of prophecy? Were not Jeremiah, and the other Prophets, placed as it were in heaven, like stars of rain, who, when exalted on the high eminence of preaching, while they dared boldly to reprove the depravity of sinners, kept down as it were the dust of human blindness, by watering it with the drops of their words? But since, namely, the judgments of heaven take away from this present life the souls of these persons, enclosed in this corruptible flesh, the stars of rain are withdrawn as it were from the face of heaven. And the stars return into their hidden places, when the souls of the Saints, having completed their courses, are laid up in the treasuries of the Inner Disposal.

13. But since the earth would be dried up, if the streams of rain from above were to cease entirely, when the stars were withdrawn, it is rightly said, *Who taketh away the stars of rain, and poureth forth the showers like whirlpools.* For, when the Lord had taken away the Prophets, He sent the Apostles in their place; to rain like whirlpools, after the external preaching

of the Law had ceased, when the old fathers had been withdrawn. He conceals therefore the stars of rain, and pours out showers like whirlpools, because after He withdrew the preachers of the Law to His inmost and secret mansions, a more exuberant power of preaching poured forth, by the words of those who came after.

14. By stars of rain can be designated also the holy Apostles, of whom it is said by Jeremiah to rejected Judaea, *The stars of rain have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain.* [Jer. 3, 3] The Lord, therefore, has withdrawn the stars of rain, and has poured forth showers like whirlpools; because, when He took away from Judaea the Apostles who were preaching, He watered the world with the doctrine of new grace. Both of which things can be understood, not improperly, to have been done in the Church. For when He withdrew the souls of the Apostles to the secret recesses of the regions above, on the dissolution of their bodies, He hid, as it were, from the face of heaven the stars of rain. But, when the stars of rain had been taken away, He gave showers like whirlpools; for, when the Apostles had been withdrawn to the regions above, He disclosed, in more abundant profusion, by the tongues of subsequent expositors, the streams of Divine knowledge which had been long concealed. For that which they stated briefly, they manifoldly increased by expounding it. Whence this very preaching of expositors is not improperly compared to whirlpools, since, while they collect the sayings of many who precede them, they spread themselves out to a greater depth in what they accumulate. For whilst they unite testimonies to testimonies, they make, as it were, whirlpools from drops. And whilst the Gentile world is daily taught by their words, because the mind of sinners receives heavenly wisdom, the water standing on the earth exhibits, as it were, whirlpools. But let not these expositors prefer themselves in any way to the same Apostles in wisdom, when they speak at greater length in exposition. For they ought constantly

to remember through whom they have received the discoveries of this very wisdom. Whence it is also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 28. *Which flow from the clouds.*

15. For these whirlpools do indeed flow from the clouds; because, if the power of understanding did not begin with the holy Apostles, it would not flow more fully through the mouths of teachers. For by 'clouds' in Holy Scripture, sometimes fickle men, sometimes Prophets, sometimes Apostles, are designated. By clouds the fickleness of the human mind is expressed; as Solomon says, *He that observeth the wind, doth not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds, doth never reap.* [Eccles. 11, 4] He doubtless calls the unclean spirit, 'wind,' but men who are subjected to him, 'clouds;' whom he impels backwards and forward, hither and thither, as often as his temptations alternate in their hearts from the blasts of suggestions. He, therefore, who observes the wind, does not sow; since he who dreads coming temptations, does not direct his heart to good works. And he who regards the clouds, does not reap, since he who trembles from the dread of human fickleness, deprives himself of the recompense of an eternal reward. By 'clouds' are Prophets set forth, as is said by the Psalmist; *Dark water in the clouds of the air;* [Ps. 18, 11] that is, hidden wisdom in the Prophets. By 'clouds' also Apostles are designated, as is said by Isaiah, *I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.* [Is. 5, 6] They are 'stars' then, because they shine with the merits of their life; they are 'clouds,' because they water the parched ground of our heart with the streams of heavenly knowledge. For if they were not 'clouds,' the Prophet would not have said, when looking on them, *Who are these that fly as clouds?* [Is. 60, 8] The whirlpools of showers pour then from the clouds, because the profound instructions of those that follow derived the origin of their wisdom from the holy Apostles. Of which clouds it is still further fitly subjoined,

Which cover all things above.

16. When the clouds cover the air above, if we lift up our eyes to the heaven, we behold not the heaven, but them; nor does our sight penetrate the ethereal regions, because its own infirmity conceals them from it. And when the sun shines forth from the heaven, it first feeds itself on the air which is poured between, that so it may afterwards contemplate the rays of the sun in the sky. Because, therefore, we are carnal men, when we endeavour to attain to heavenly things, we raise, as it were, our eyes to heaven, and direct our gaze thither; for oppressed by our connection with bodily things, we wish to teach it spiritual things. But because our intellect is not permitted to pass over to Divine objects, unless it be first fashioned by the examples of preceding Saints, our eye, as it were, now looks up to heaven, but beholds clouds; because it seeks to comprehend those things which are of God, but is barely able to admire those things which have been given to men. Whence it is said in another place, *Thou enlightenest wonderfully from the eternal mountains.* [[illegible]. Vers. LXX. Ps. 76, 4] For he, who cannot behold the rising sun, looks at the mountains tinged with his rays, and discovers that the sun has risen. God enlightens us, therefore, from the eternal mountains, because He illuminates us with the ray of His brightness, by our admiring the doings of former fathers. Behold we are kindled with zeal of devotion and love for the Lord; but we are the better moulded in this devotion and love by our contemplation of these clouds. For what was more devoted than Peter? What more full of love than John? The one through his devotion feared not to tread the watery ridges of the sea. [Matt. 14, 28. 29.] The other rested through love on the very breast of our Maker: and he who had come to the refreshment of a bodily feast, derived spiritual food from the bosom of the Redeemer. [John 13, 23-25]

17. But because we have said, that Prophets also are signified by 'clouds,' it is necessary for us still to bring forward the examples of the ancient fathers. Behold when we are wishing to submit, through obedience, to heavenly precepts, we are assisted by considering the footsteps of the old fathers. For what was more obedient than Abraham, who at one word from the Lord, forsakes his kindred, and his country; [Gen 12, 1-4] and for the sake of obtaining his eternal inheritance, fears not to smite him, whom he had received as his heir, when now old and almost ready to die? When we are endeavouring to gain hold of the virtue of patience, we look at the examples of those who precede us. For what is more patient than Isaac, who carries the wood, asks about the burnt offering, and is, shortly afterwards, bound, and speaks not: is placed upon the altar, and resists not? [Gen. 22, 6-9] What then can be spoken of, more patient than this man? who is led, as if for consolation, and makes an enquiry; who is bound ready for the blow, and is silent; who speaks when about to offer a burnt offering, but when about to be offered as a burnt offering speaks not? When we are endeavouring to gird ourselves for endurance of toils, we are supported by preceding examples. For what is more laborious than Jacob, who though near to Laban by the rights of kindred, discharged for so long a time servile offices in his family, and obeyed him in the place of a servant, that he might enjoy the rewards of the heir? [Gen. 29, 15-30] When we are striving to ascend the citadel of continence and chastity, we are supported by the examples of those who precede us. For what is more chaste than Joseph, who could not, even though a captive, be brought under the yoke of lust at the desire of his wanton mistress? [Gen. 39, 7. 8.] And he was indeed a slave to men, but was, even in slavery, free from the power of dominant wickedness. When we are wishing to be filled with gentleness, we are assisted with the examples of those who precede us. For what was more gentle than Moses, who bears with the sedition of the people committed to

his care, and yet entreats the Lord when angry, in behalf of these his persecutors, and exposes himself in their stead to the Divine wrath; because love glows in his holy breast even from persecution? [Numb. 16, 20-22] When we are endeavouring to fashion the constancy of our mind against the adversities of the world, we are supported by the consideration of those who precede us. For what is more constant than Joshua, who, when sent to search out the nature of the nations, feared not either the hugeness of their height, nor the multitude of their numbers? [Numb. 14, 6-9] Whence he subdued in battle those very same nations which he feared not in searching them out. When we are endeavouring to reach the height of kindness, we are instructed by the examples of those who go before us. For what is more kind than Samuel, who when deposed from his office of governing the people, humbly seeks for his successor; and anoints him when found to be king, and soon endures him when anointed as his persecutor? He is afraid of dying by his hands, and yet entreats the Lord not to be angry with him. For he himself says when he was sent, *Saul will hear, and will kill me.* [1 Sam. 16, 2] And the Truth says to him by Itself; *How long dost thou mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him.* [ib. 1] What then can be mentioned more kind than that man, who wishes not that even he should be smitten by God, by whom he is afraid of being killed? When we are advancing to the height of mercifulness and humility, we are supported by the examples of those who go before us. For what can be mentioned more merciful than David, what more humble, who received from the reprobate king insults for his victories, who by his strength rescued the nation of the Israelites from the hand of their enemies, and yet fled away himself lest he should die, as one of no strength? He knows that he himself was elected by the Divine sentence, and that his persecutor was rejected; and yet he submits himself to this very same persecutor of his, with the humility of frequent satisfaction, who takes away the spear of his persecutor, cuts off the border of his cloak, [1 Sam. 24,

4] and hastens at once to the top of the mountain, and at one and the same time shews that he has had the power of slaying, and prays that he might not be slain. [ib. 26, 12-16]

18. Because then we are instructed by preceding examples, in all things which we spiritually desire, it is well said of these clouds, *Which cover all things above.* For we are covered by the life of the fathers spread over us, like clouds, in order that we may be watered, to bear the produce of a fruitful growth. And we behold, as it were, the clouds first, when looking up to heaven; because we first behold, with admiration, the doings of the good, and we afterwards penetrate, by our experience, those things which are heavenly. But because the life and the virtue of these clouds, that is, of these ancient fathers, would not be open to us, unless other clouds, that is the Apostles, disclosed it with the light of their preaching, let our discourse turn back to those clouds, which go about the world with their preaching; and let it shew what the Lord has done by their means in the world. It follows,

Ver. 29, 30. *If He will spread out clouds as His tent, and lighten with His light from above, He will cover also the ends of the sea.*

19. The Lord 'spreads out the clouds,' when, opening the way of preaching to His ministers, He disperses them in every direction, through the breadth of the world. But it is well said, *As His tent.* For a tent is wont to be pitched, on a journey. And, when holy preachers are sent into the world, they make a way for God. Whence it is written, *Behold, I send My Messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee.* [Mal. 3, 1] And hence also it is said by the Psalmist, *Make a way for Him Who ascendeth over the west.* [Ps. 68, 4] And again, *O God, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people, when Thou passedst through the desert, the earth was moved.* [ib. 7] For God, Who of Himself is, not locally, in every place, walks locally into the regions of the world, by means of His preachers. Whence also it is said by the Prophet, *And I will walk in them.* [Lev. 26, 12]

For He does in truth walk through them, whilst He pours Himself into the hearts of men by their teaching. And in this journey the tents of God are these self-same hearts of the Saints, by which He is covered, as it were, in resting on the way. Whilst coming through them to the minds of men, He effects what He has ordained, and is not beheld. Hence it is that all the synagogue together is called a 'tent,' when the Lord complains by Jeremiah that the priests had ceased from preaching, saying, *There is none to stretch forth My tent any more, and to set up My curtains.* [Jer. 10, 20] Hence again it is said of its extermination, *He hath destroyed His tent, as a garden, He hath thrown down His tabernacle.* [Lam. 2, 6] For since the Lord at that time dwelt secretly among men in the worship of a single people, He called that self-same people His tent. Whence also these clouds are now rightly called His tent, because God, when coming to us by His grace, is concealed within the hearts of His preachers. Was not Paul His tent, when coming to the hearts of men, from Jerusalem round about into Illyricum, the Lord was resting in his mind? [Rom. 15, 19] For he was a cloud for men, but a tent for God; because he was invisibly retaining Him in his heart, Whom he was by his preaching pouring into the hearts of his hearers. When the same Paul was proceeding towards Rome, bound in chains, to take possession of the world, God, concealed in his breast, was journeying as if in a tent. [Acts 27, 28] Because He could not be seen, from being concealed, and yet, disclosed by the words of preaching, He was prosecuting without ceasing the course of grace which He had begun. Moses appeared as His cloud, when, before he undertook the leadership of the Jewish people, he was dwelling for forty years in the wilderness, and aiming at lofty things, lived separated from the converse of the people. [Ex. 3] But he was made the tent of God, when, on being sent into Egypt, to bring back the people, he was going on, bearing in his heart the invisible truth; and when Almighty God, Who was manifested in his work, was lying concealed in his heart. And He who is ever present,

and containing all things, coming into Egypt was journeying thither in His servant. Whence it is written, *God went into Egypt, that He might ransom His people.* [2 Sam. 7, 23] Behold He is said to journey, by Whose uncircumscribed presence all things are contained, because He, Who is every where by His Majesty, places, as it were, His steps in the way, by preaching.

20. But words only are by no means sufficient for these same holy preachers, for persuasion, unless miracles are also added. Whence it is said, *When He will spread out the clouds as His tent,* it is rightly subjoined, *And lighten with His light from above.* For what else but miracles ought we to suppose lightnings to mean? Of which it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou wilt multiply Thy lightnings, and confound them.* [Ps. 144, 6. LXX] By these clouds then He lightens from above with His light; because by holy preachers He illumines the gloom of our insensibility even by miracles.

21. And when these clouds rain down with words, and when they disclose, by miracles, the power of their glittering light, they convert to divine love even the farthest boundaries of the world. Whence it is rightly subjoined, *He will cover also the ends of the sea.* A thing which we heard by the voice of Eliu was to take place, but which we at this time see performed by the power of God. For the Almighty Lord has covered, with His lightening clouds, the ends of the sea; because, by the brilliant miracles of preachers, He has brought even the ends of the world to the faith. For, lo! He has now penetrated the hearts of almost all nations; lo! He has joined together in one faith the boundaries of the East and of the West; lo! the tongue of Britain,

[This special mention of Britain was probably added after the publication of the work, as the Saxons were not converted till St. Gregory had been some years Pope. See his Eps. to St. Augustine, Bertha, and Edilberthus. Lib. xi. Ind. iv. 28. 29. 64. 65. 66. *Ben.* (St. Gregory was not, however,

unaware of the existence of the *British* Church, and may have referred to it. *Ed.*)]

which knew only how to grate barbarian sounds, has begun long since to resound in the Divine praises the Hebrew Alleluia. Behold the ocean, which before was swelling, is now calmed beneath, and subject to, the feet of the saints: and its barbarous motions, which the princes of the earth had been unable to control with the sword, do the mouths of priests bind with simple words through fear of God: and he who, when unbelieving, had not dreaded the bands of combatants, now fears, when faithful, the tongues of the humble. For because the virtue of Divine knowledge is poured into him, by the heavenly words which he hears, and by the brightness also of miracles, he is so restrained by his dread of this same Divine power, as to fear to do wrong, and to long with all his desires to attain to the grace of eternity. Whence it is here also appropriately added,

Ver. 31. *For by these things judgeth He the people, and giveth food to many mortals.*

22. By these words of preachers, that is drops of the clouds, by these lightnings of miracles, God doubtless judges the peoples; because He invites their terrified hearts to repentance. For when they hear heavenly things, when they attend to marvellous works, they soon return into their own hearts, and afflicting themselves for their former wickednesses, dread eternal torments. But food is given too by these same clouds by which terror is inflicted: since mighty is the trust committed to preachers to know how so to afflict the minds of the haughty, as yet to be skilful in cherishing them when afflicted, with words of consolation; so as to alarm sinners with eternal punishments, and support penitents with the joys of the kingdom of heaven. Whence the very course of this dispensation is well observed, so that Eliu said, in proper order, that God first judges the people by these, clouds, and afterwards gives them food. Because, in truth Almighty God

first reproves and rouses us from our evil deeds, by means of His preachers, and afterwards cherishes and consoles us by hope. For if the Divine dispensation did not act the part of a judge, by these clouds, He never would have said to these same clouds, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* [John 20, 22. 23.] And again, if He did not feed by them our famished hearts, the Lord would never say to His disciples, of the hungering people, *Give ye them to eat.* But we believe that that was then done thus by their hands, that we may see that this is daily taking place without ceasing by their words. [Mat. 14, 16] For what does Peter effect, when he speaks by his Epistles, unless it be, that our miserably hungry hearts may be fed with the food of the word? What are Paul and John labouring at, when speaking by their Epistles, except that our minds may enjoy heavenly food, and overcome that loathing of hunger with which they were dying? Let it be said then, *When He will spread out the clouds as His tent, and lighten with His light from above, He will cover also the ends of the sea; for by these things He judgeth the people, and giveth food to many mortals.* As if he were plainly saying, If He sends forth His Saints for the ministry of preaching, and aids their words by miracles, He summons the boundaries of all the world to the faith; and by these means He first judges the proud, and afterwards cherishes with hope, and strengthens the humble by the word of consolation.

23. But when he was saying, that He gives food to mortals, we must observe that he does not say to all, but ‘to many.’ Because, namely, it is written, *All men have not faith.* [2 Thess. 3, 2] And to certain persons it is said, *Ye therefore hear not, because ye are not of God.* [John 8, 47] And again, *No man can come to Me, except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him.* [John 6, 44] And again, *The Lord knoweth them that are His.* [2 Tim. 2, 19] Whence most persons, even in Holy Church herself, retain faith, and yet

retain not the life of faith: they partake of the Sacraments of the Lord's humility, but scorn to be humbled in imitation of the Lord. They partake the gentle preaching of the Divine Word, but continue, in themselves, mighty in pride. Whence here also, after the breadth of the whole collected Church has been signified by the ends of the sea, it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 32. *He hideth the light from the mighty.*

24. For those in truth are 'mighty,' who exalt themselves with lofty thoughts. Against whom it is said by Isaiah; *Woe unto you, who are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight.* [Is. 5, 21] Against whom also Paul says, *Be not wise in your own conceit.* [Rom. 12, 16] But the light is hidden from these mighty ones, because, doubtless, the knowledge of the truth is denied to haughty men. Whence the Truth says by Its own self, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.* [Matt. 11, 25] Calling, namely, the haughty, wise and prudent. For He, Who did not subjoin, 'Thou hast revealed them to fools,' but, 'to little ones,' made it plain that he condemned their pride, and not their wisdom. Whence it is said in another place, *The Lord guarding the little ones.* [Ps. 116, 6] And in order to shew what is meant by this littleness ['parvitas'], it is added, *I was brought low, and He set me free.* Because then there are many in the Church, who scorn to be little ones, they cease not to be great in their own sight, even in the place of humility. You may frequently see them raised high in honours, enjoying pleasures, and spreading abroad with the multiplicity of their goods. These often specially desire nothing, except to rule over others, are pleased at being feared by many; neglect to live uprightly, and wish to have the credit of an upright life; court flattery, and are puffed up by applause. And since they are abundantly supplied with goods ready at hand, they do not seek for the joys which are to come. And, because manifold employments engage them, they prove them to be

strangers even to themselves. And yet if any trial of their faith arise, because they are contained therein though but in appearance, they defend it by words, they defend it by their exertions, and claim their heavenly country, and yet love it not.

25. And these do the sons of Reuben, and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, well represent in Moses; who possessing many flocks and herds, whilst they desire that plain country which they had seen beyond Jordan, refused to receive an inheritance in the land of promise, saying, *The country which the Lord smote before the sight of the children of Israel, is of a region most fertile for the pasture of animals, and we thy servants have many blasts; and we pray thee, if we have found grace in thy sight, to give it unto us thy servants for a possession, and make us not to pass over Jordan.* [Numb. 32, 4. 5.] They therefore who possess very many beasts of burden, avoid passing over Jordan, because they, whom many worldly engagements occupy, do not seek for the abode of their heavenly country. But that faith, which they hold in appearance, urges them on; lest they should become inactive from the delight of ease, and should deter others, by their example, from the endurance of toil, and from studying to be patient. Whence it is said to them by Moses, *Shall your brethren go to battle? and shall ye sit here? Why do ye subvert the minds of the children of Israel.* [Numb. 32, 7] But because they are ashamed not to defend that which they confess, they hasten to contend for that faith which they have professed; and secure it, not for themselves, but for their neighbours. Whence they say to Moses, *We will build sheepfolds, and stalls for our beasts, and fortified cities for our little ones; but we ourselves will go armed and ready for battle before the children of Israel.* [Numb. 32, 16. 17.] And they go boldly forth at once in behalf of others, and free the land of promise from their enemies, and leave it, and return to feed their herds beyond Jordan. For many persons, although faithful, being engaged in present cares, feed, as it were, their herds beyond

Jordan; because, contrary to the faith of Baptism, they are enslaved with all their heart, and with every desire, to perishing objects. But yet, as we have said, when a trial of their faith arises, they gird themselves with the arms of defence. They overcome and slaughter the enemies of the faith, and love not the inheritance of the land of promise, that is, the fruit of faith. And they so fight in its behalf, as yet to deposit their pledges outside of it. For because they have their children without, they do not place their affection in dwelling therein. Whence they return to the plain country, because they descend from the lofty summits of the mountains, as if from the hope of heavenly things, to rear brute animals without the land of promise. Because they labour diligently to supply the irrational motions of their mind with various objects of desire: because they, who are blinded with transient pursuits, know not how great is the brightness of the eternal light; and whilst they are proud of worldly things, they close up for themselves the access of the light of heaven. Whence it is now rightly said, *He hideth His light from the mighty.* But yet grace from above sometimes looks upon these mighty men, and afflicts them by the very employments caused by their abundant goods, and intersperses with their prosperity, adverse, but profitable, tribulations: in order that, when sorrowful, they may turn to their heart, and learn how vainly they are engaged in perishable pursuits. Whence here also, after the light is said to have been withdrawn, it is fitly subjoined,

And ordereth it to return again.

26. Because the light of truth, which is concealed from proud and overbusied minds, is revealed to the afflicted and humbled. For light approaches, when the afflicted mind discerns the gloom of tribulation which it is enduring from perishable pursuits: for, if it had not some perception of the light within, it would not even see that it had lost the light. But this can be specially understood also of the Jews, who dared for this reason to speak against our Redeemer, coming in the flesh, because they were mighty in

their own thoughts. But the light was hid from these mighty men; because, while they are persecuting in their pride the light of truth, they lost it. But because they are to be admitted to the faith at the end of the world, it is rightly subjoined, *And ordereth it to return again.* Whence also it is said by Isaiah, *If the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.* [Is. 10, 22] For the light then returns to them when they themselves return to confess the power of our Redeemer.

27. But if we take '*in manibus,*' not as one noun, in the dative case, but as two parts of speech [That is, not *inmanibus*, but *in manibus*, as Heb.]; it can be understood that the light is concealed *in the hands,* when the unjust are blinded in their own works in the presence of the righteous Judge. But yet it is ordered to return again. Because, when sinners have learned that they cannot be saved by their own strength, they receive the light of grace, and are enlightened with the rays of inward protection, so that they afterwards love their heavenly country with greater zeal, than they used before to glow with in earthly pleasure. But when we are speaking thus of our heavenly country, (in which we hear that there are hosts of Angels endowed with wondrous brightness; over which the Maker of all things presides, which He refreshes and fills with the sight of Himself, of which light is the true inheritance, and there is no failure in its brightness;) we turn our thoughts back to ourselves, and reflect that we bear about us earthly members; we consider that born in darkness, and estranged from the rays of the light within, we have lived the more sinfully, the more we were given up to bodily pursuits, and dwelt far away from spiritual objects. But a heart affected with this thought, and conscious to itself of sin, is alarmed, and despairs of becoming a citizen of that mighty country, of which it hears. Whence it is here also fitly subjoined, how the fearful mind is restored to confidence. For of this light it is immediately added,

Ver. 38. *He declares of it to His friend, that it is his possession, and that he may come up to it.*

28. The friend of truth is a lover of upright conduct. Whence the Truth Itself says to Its disciples, *Ye are My friends, if ye have done what I command you.* [John 15, 14] For a friend is named as ‘the keeper of the soul;’ [‘amicus, quasi animi custos.’ Isid. Etym. x. 14] and hence he who endeavours to guard the will of God in His precepts is, not undeservedly, called His friend. Hence is it that the Truth again says to the same disciples, *But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.* [John 15, 15] Of this light then of the eternal country, God announces to His friend, that it is his possession, that he should not despair of himself from the frailness of his own infirmity; that he should not think what he was made, but what he was new made; but should know more certainly that he possesses this light, the more truly he is now trampling down the gloom of assailing sins. But it is well subjoined in promise, *And that he may come up to it.* For what is more difficult than for a man born on the earth, and bearing about earthly and fragile members, to ascend the heights of heaven, and to penetrate the secrets of the spirits above?

29. But the Maker of these very spirits has come to us, and exhibited Himself as a man, even beneath them, as is said of Him to the Father by the Prophet, *Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels.* [Ps. 8, 5] And because He found between these selfsame spirits and ourselves the stumbling-block of a discordant life, with wonderful power, and with still more wonderful kindness, creating the higher, and taking on Him the lower nature, He united the highest and lowest together. Hence is it that, on the birth of this selfsame King, the bands of Angels come forth to announce Him, sing a hymn, and, the discordance of their evil conduct being overcome, acknowledge those, as citizens, of whom they before despaired:

proclaiming with harmonious voice, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.* [Luke 2, 14] As if they said plainly; Those whom wickedness had separated, let the Goodness now born on earth unite to us. Hence is it, that before His Incarnation we read in the Old Testament, that a man adored an Angel,

[Hom. 8. in Evang. he names Lot and Joshua. The former, perhaps, only bowed as to guests. In judging of the latter instance Deut. 34, 10. must not be forgotten. See also Dan. 12, 1]

and was not forbidden to adore him. [Gen.19, 13-16] But when after the coming of the Redeemer, John had prostrated himself to adore the Angel, he heard, *See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren.* [Rev. 19, 10] For what is meant by the Angels first patiently allowing themselves to be adored by man, and afterwards refusing it; except, that at first the more abject they knew man to be, who had been given up to carnal corruptions, and was not yet delivered from this condition, the more justly did they despise Him, but that afterwards they could not keep human nature in subjection under them, inasmuch as they beheld it, in their Maker, exalted even above themselves? For that nature ought no longer to be despised, and degraded in the members, which, exalted in the head of the members, deserved to be venerated. He then, Who became lower than the Angels for our sake, made us equal to the Angels by the virtue of His humiliation. [Heb. 2, 7] Whence He also taught us by dying, that death is not to be dreaded, by His rising again, to be confident of life, by His ascension, to exult in our inheritance of the heavenly country. That so the members also may rejoice, that they are following to the same place, where they see that their Head has gone before. Whence it is well said by this our Head Himself, *Wheresoever the carcase is, there will also the eagles be gathered together.* [Matt. 24, 28] Whence Peter says, *To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens.*

[1 Pet. 1, 4] Whence Paul says, *We know that if our earthly house this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2 Cor. 5, 1]

30. But if we also, who are born on the earth, ascend into heaven, where is that which the Truth again says, *No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man Which is in heaven?* [John 3, 13] For to this sentence, that which the same Truth says is directly opposed, *Father, I will that where I am, they may be with Me also.* [John 17, 24] But yet It is not at variance with Itself in Its words, but It inflames the zeal of our mind to enquire into these things, which seem at variance. For all we, who are born in His faith, are doubtless His body. Because then the Lord has, by a marvellous dispensation of condescension, been made the Head of His own members, He is alone, even when with us, the multitude of the reprobate having been cast off. *No man,* therefore, *ascends into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man Who is in heaven.* For, since we have been already made one with Him, He returns alone, even in us, to that place, from whence He came alone in Himself; and He Who ever is in heaven, ascends daily to heaven; because He Who remains in His Godhead above all things, draws Himself up daily to heaven, in the body of His Manhood. Let not then human weakness despair of itself; let it consider the Blood of the Only-begotten, and in its own price behold how great that is, which costs so much. Let it consider anxiously, whither its Head has gone before; and let that which is bound by His precept to good living, be strengthened to hope by His example. Let it feel sure of heaven; let it hope for the heavenly country; let it know that it is the companion of Angels, and rejoice that in its Head it has been preferred even to Angels. Let it be rightly said then of this light of the eternal country, *He declares of it to His friend that it is his possession, and that He may come up to it.* But these things are very marvellous, and very awful, that a man, born on the

earth, and condemned, as his deserts demand, to separation from his heavenly country, is not only brought back to the state of his creation, but is even exalted to a more glorious condition; that he who has lost paradise obtains heaven, and that so far from the guilt of his debt being binding on him, gifts are heaped upon him more abundantly even after his sin; and that that despiser of God, and imitator of the devil, if he returns to fruitful penitence, ascends even to the loftiness of contemplating the inward light. Whose heart then would not leap in admiration of such graciousness? Whose sloth would not be startled at the elevation of so high a thought? Whence it is filly subjoined,

Chap. xxxvii. ver. 1. *At this my heart trembled, and was moved from its place.*

31. Because, while fear strikes the mind, it estranges it from itself, the Latin translations sometimes call an ecstasy fear, as is said by the Psalmist, *I said in my fear, I am cast out from the sight of Thine eyes*; [Ps. 31, 22] Where, namely, it could have been called not fear, but a transport [‘excessus’]. But fear is in that place used for transport, because the mind is estranged from itself in fear, as it is a transport. Whence also, in this place, after considering the light of the eternal country, it is rightly subjoined, *At this my heart trembled.* As if he said, It went beyond itself in transport of admiration, and because the mind is inspired with the spirit of new hope, it has deserted itself as it used to be in its old thought.

32. But it is well said, *And was moved from its place.* For the pleasure of this present life is the ‘place’ of the human heart. But when the place of our heart is touched with a divine aspiration, there comes a love of eternity. The mind, therefore, is moved from its place by a consideration of its eternal home, because it leaves those things which are below, and fixes itself in thoughts of things above. For before it knew not what things were eternal, it had become stupified by the delight of present things, and, transient itself,

used to embrace with love transitory things. But after it knew what things were eternal, after it reached the rays of the heavenly light, by a hasty glance, being roused by its admiration of the highest objects, it raised itself from things below; so that it now feels no pleasure except in the things of eternity, and despising transitory objects, it seeks only for those which endure. It is well said then, *At this my heart trembled, and was moved from its place.* For when the sluggish heart, which has been long given up to earthly thoughts, suddenly, by going beyond itself, attaches itself to the highest objects, it has left the place of lowest thoughts. But because the mind slumbers of itself, overcome by the love of this present world, and sleeps, in its delights, cold and insensible, unless it is aroused by the breath of Divine grace, it is necessary for him to add, how it is affected by its inward thoughts, or rather how it is restored to a sense of spiritual truths. It follows,

Ver. 2. *It will hear a hearing in the terror of His voice, and a sound going out of His mouth.*

33. It is the habit of Holy Scripture, that, when it informs us that any thing is heard with the hearing [‘read ‘audivi.’], it says that this hearing is heard. As Habakkuk says, *O Lord, I have heard Thy hearing, and was afraid.* [Hab. 3, 1] Whence it is said here also, *It will hear a hearing in the terror of His voice.* But we must observe that the voice of God is said to be heard, not in joy, but in terror. Because, doubtless, while every sinner thinks of earthly things alone, and bears a heart overwhelmed with degrading thoughts, if he is suddenly touched by the aspiration of Divine grace, he understands this, above all things, that all his doings are punished by the judgment of the eternal Judge. The hearing, therefore, of the voice of the Lord, first takes place in terror, that it may afterwards be changed into sweetness. Because it first chastises us with the dread of the strict judgment, in order that it may refresh us, when chastised, with the consolation of

heavenly sweetness. For when the overpowering delight of temporal objects possesses our minds, and oppresses the eyes of our mind with the sleep of sloth, if we are roused suddenly by the hand of the Divine favour, we open at once those eyes, which have been long closed, to the light of truth: we call to mind the sins we have committed, we see how strictly the Judge is coming against them; it is considered within, how great is the coming of so mighty a Judge; how great is that assembly then of men and angels: how mightily even the burning elements contend against the reprobate; how terribly that eternal sentence comes forth from the mouth of the strict Judge, with which it is said to the reprobate, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.* [Matt. 25, 41] The punishment of these reprobates is presented to the eyes, and the thought occurs with a heavy gloom of bitterness, what is the darkness of hell? Because then the proud heart is first shaken with terror, in order that, when shaken, it may be established in love, it is now rightly said, *It will hear a hearing in the terror of His voice.* Where it is also well subjoined, *And a sound going forth from His mouth.*

34. The sound from the mouth of God, is the power of fear, rushing into us from heavenly inspiration. Because when God, by breathing on us, fills us with thoughts of the future, He doubtless alarms us, for our past misdeeds. But by the 'mouth of God' can be designated, the Only-Begotten Son, Who, as He is said to be His arm, because God works is all things by Him, (of whom the Prophet says, *To Whom is the arm of the Lord is revealed?* [Is. 53, 1] of whom John says, *All things were made by Him;* [John 1, 3]) so is He also called His mouth. For hence is that which the Prophet says, *For the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken these things.* [Is. 1, 20] By Whom He speaks all things to us. As if the Word was plainly spoken of under the name of "mouth;" as we also are accustomed to say "tongue" instead of "words," as when we speak of the Greek or Latin "tongue" we

indicate Latin or Greek words. We therefore rightly understand Him, by the 'Mouth of the Lord.' Whence the Bride says to Him in the Song of Songs, *Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth.* [Cant. 1, 1] As if She said; Let Him touch me with the presence of the Only Begotten Son my Redeemer. But, by the sound of His Mouth, can be designated the Holy Spirit of the same Lord. Whence it is written in another place also, as signifying the same Spirit, *Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind approaching.* [Acts 2, 2] A sound, therefore, proceeds from the Mouth of the Lord, when His Consubstantial Spirit, coming to us through His Son, breaks through the deafness of our insensibility. As the Mouth of the Lord speaks of this same uncircumscribed and incorporeal sound, and says, *He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you.* [John 16, 14] By the terror of His voice, then, can be understood the power of fear, and by the sound of His mouth the sweetness of consolation; for those, whom the Holy Spirit fills, He first alarms at their earthly doings, and afterwards consoles with the hope of heavenly objects; in order that they may afterwards rejoice the more in confidence of their rewards, the more they were before afraid on beholding only the punishments. Hence is it that Paul speaks of this Spirit of the Only Begotten, as of this sound of His mouth. *For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of the adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba, Father.* [Rom. 8, 15] Hence the Truth says by His own mouth, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever ye retain, they are retained.* [John 20, 22. 23.] Lo! the terror of the converted is turned into power; because while they punish their sins by penance, they ascend up even to the exercise of judgment; so as to receive this power from God, which before they used themselves to fear at His hands. For they in truth become judges, who feared greatly the judgment of heaven; and they now begin to remit the sins of others, who had before been afraid that their own

would be retained. But because this very judgment, which takes place spiritually, is not now seen by the carnal; there are some who consider that God is not concerned about human affairs, and think that they are carried on by accidental movements. Against whom it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 3. *He himself considereth under all the heavens, and His light is over the ends of the earth.*

35. As if it were plainly said; He who rules over the highest things, forsakes not even the most remote. Because His watchful rule is so directed towards the greatest concerns, as not to be kept from those which are little. For He Who is every where present, and every where equal, is not unlike Himself, even in unlike circumstances. He therefore equally regards all things, equally disposes all things, Who, though present in all places, is not locally confined, nor varied by attending to various concerns. But if we understand by the heavens, holy preachers, (as the Prophet attests who says, *The heavens declare the glory of God;*) [Ps. 19, 1] after the coming of the Holy Spirit is designated by the sound of the mouth, it is rightly subjoined, *He Himself considereth under all the heavens, and His light is over the ends of the earth.*

36. For there are some, who, when they hear the wonderful works of the Apostles, (that they raised the dead by the Holy Spirit which they had received, cast out devils from the possessed, removed infirmities by their shadow, foretold future events by prophecy, and, speaking in the tongue of all nations, preached the Only Begotten Word of God;) because they do not see these powers now in the Church, suspect that the grace of heaven has been already withdrawn from the Church, forgetting to consider that it is written, *An assister in needful times, in tribulation.* [Ps. 9, 9] For Holy Church required then the assistance of miracles, when the tribulation of persecution oppressed her. For after she has overcome the pride of unbelief, she requires no longer the signs of miracles, but the merits of deeds alone,

though she displays even them by many persons, when opportunity demands. For it is written, *Tongues are for a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not.* [1 Cor. 14, 22] Where then all are faithful, what cause demands signs to be displayed? On which head perhaps we the more readily give satisfaction, if we make some mention of the Apostolic dispensation.

37. For Paul, the illustrious preacher, coming to Melite, and knowing the island to be full of unbelievers, healed by his prayers the father of Publius, afflicted with dysentery and fevers; [Acts 28, 8] and yet advised Timothy when sick, saying, *Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.* [1 Tim. 5, 23] Why is it, O Paul, that thou restorest the sick unbeliever to health by thy prayers, and yet healest so great a defender of the Gospel by food, like a physician? except that outward miracles are wrought, in order that the minds of men may be brought to inward truths; that so by the wonder which is visibly displayed, those invisible truths, which are more wonderful, may be believed? For the father of Publius required to be healed by a sign of power, in order that he might revive in mind, while returning to health by a miracle. But no miracle needed to be manifested outwardly to Timothy, because he was already full of life within. What wonder is it then, that miracles are not frequently displayed, when the faith has been spread abroad, when even the Apostles themselves performed them not in the case of some who already believed? The heavens, then, having been raised up, the Lord considers inferior objects; because, when the greatest preachers have been taken away, He constantly regards even the lowliness of our infirmity. And His light beholds, as it were, the ends of the earth, under the heavens; because, after the sublime doings of those who have gone before, He embraces the ways and doings even of sinners by the illumination of His grace. And though He does not now frequently manifest miraculous signs, by the life of believers, He yet departs not from these same believers by the virtue of works. But His light over the ends of the earth can also be thus

understood; that whilst the preaching of heavenly Grace gathers the nations to the faith, it has embraced within itself the boundaries of the world.

38. Or, certainly, the ends of the earth are the ends of sinful men. And it is often the case, that many forsake God, and waste the seasons of their life in carnal desires. But yet, when looked down upon by Divine Grace, they turn to God at their latter end, they learn what are the eternal judgments, and punish with tears all the evil deeds they remember to have committed; and prove by their upright conduct that they are sincerely prosecuting these. And when righteousness succeeds, their former sin is surely entirely forgiven. For hence Hannah says by the spirit of prophecy, *The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth*; [1 Sam. 2, 10] because doubtless God does not judge the former life of sinners, when, by a look of affection from above, He enlightens their latter end. Hence Moses says, *The firstling of an ass thou shall exchange for a sheep.* [Ex. 13, 13] For, by an ass is designated uncleanness, but by a sheep, innocence. To exchange then the firstling of an ass for a sheep, is to convert the beginnings of an impure life into the simplicity of innocence; in order that a sinner, after having committed those deeds which the Lord rejects as unclean, may now display such conduct, as He can offer to God as a sacrifice. Because then a sinner is converted after his sins, and is brought back at last from the darkness of his misdeeds, at the end of his life, it is now rightly said, *And His light is over the ends of the earth.* But that very grace, which fills the mind after sins, affects it with great grief. For it recals evil deeds to the memory, and shews a man how justly he is to be condemned. Whence it comes to pass, that he bewails with daily floods of tears every sin which he remembers to have committed, and the more he is now able to discern what is righteous, the more ardently does he desire to punish his own wicked self with groans. Whence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 4. *After Him a sound will roar.*

39. For the Lord doubtless turns into sorrow the life of him whom He has filled with His illumination; and the more He suggests to the enlightened mind eternal punishments, the more cruelly does He weary it with sorrow for its past wickedness; and a man grieves at what he was, because he now begins to discern the good which he was not. He hates himself, as he remembers himself to have been. He loves himself as he discerns he ought to have been; and now loves only the bitterness of penitence; because he carefully considers in what great pleasures he has sinned through self-indulgence. It is well said then, *After Him a sound will roar.* Because when God enters the mind, it is doubtless plain, that the sorrow of repentance immediately follows, in order that that soul may now delight in wholesome sorrow, which used to rejoice in its iniquity with a lamentable mirth. But the more abundantly a sin is lamented, the higher is the knowledge of the truth attained. Because the conscience, before polluted, is renewed by a baptism of tears, to behold the light within. Whence after the roaring of repentance, it is fitly subjoined,

He will thunder with the voice of His greatness.

40. For God thunders with the voice of His greatness, when, to us who have been now well prepared by sorrow, He makes known, how great He is in His doings above. For thunder proceeds, as it were, from heaven, when the look of grace strikes us slumbering in carelessness and neglect, with sudden fear; and when lying on the ground we hear a sound from above: for thinking of things of earth, we are suddenly alarmed at the sentence of terror from above; and our mind, which used to slumber with evil security in things below, is now properly alarmed and anxious for things above. But we know not, in what way the terror of this secret visitation enters into us: nor is it discerned by the eye of the very mind, whose purpose is changed for the better. Whence it is fitly subjoined,

And He will not be enquired into, when His Voice hath been heard.

41. The voice of the Lord is heard, when the breathing of His grace is conceived within the mind; when the insensibility of our inward deafness is broken through, and the heart, excited to zeal for the noblest love, is pierced by the voice of inward power. But even the mind, which has been enlightened by the voice of the supervenient Spirit, which insinuates Itself into the ears of the heart, does not trace it out. For it is unable to consider by what openings this invisible power flows into it, in what ways it comes to, or recedes from, it. Whence it is well said by John, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth.* [John 3, 8] For to hear the voice of the Spirit, is to rise up to the love of the invisible Creator, by the power of inward compunction. But no man knows whence it cometh; because we are not told on what occasions it pours itself forth on us by the mouths of preachers. And no man knows whither it goeth; because when many hear one and the same preaching, it doubtless cannot be understood, whom It forsakes and casts off, or into whose heart It enters and takes its rest. For but one thing is taking place without, but the hearts of those who behold are not penetrated by it in one way: because He who invisibly modifies visible things, plants incomprehensibly the seeds of events in the hearts of men. Hence is it that some believed, when Lazarus was raised from the dead: while yet the greater number of the Jews were roused to zeal in persecution by this very resurrection. [John 12, 10. 11.] That one and the same miracle, then, which conferred on some the light of Faith, deprived others of the light of the mind, by the darkness of envy. Hence is it that each of the thieves beheld that same death of our Redeemer, which was like his own; but the one feared not in his pride to assail Him with contumely, Whom the other honoured by fearing Him. In the same circumstance the thoughts of each was not the same; because the inward Arbiter, by invisibly modifying, made it to differ. But as these secret modes of breathing on us cannot be

comprehended by our thoughts, the traces of the Divine voice are doubtless unknown to us. Whence it is still further subjoined,

Ver. 5. *God will thunder marvellously with His voice.*

42. God thunders marvellously with His voice, because He penetrates our hearts incomprehensibly with His secret might. For while with its secret motions it overpowers us with fear, and fashions us in love, it proclaims in some silent manner how eagerly He is to be followed, and a violent impulse arises in the mind, though nothing sounds in the voice. And it sounds the more loudly within us, the more completely it deadens the ear of our heart to every outward sound. Whence also the soul, as soon as it is brought back to itself by this inward call, wonders at what it hears, because it feels the force of unknown compunction. And this its admiration is well signified in Moses by the manna coming from above. For the sweet food which is received from above is called 'manhu.' For manhu means, *What is this?* [Ex. 16, 15] And we say, 'what is this,' when we ignorantly wonder at that which we behold. The soul then perceives the manna from above, when, roused by the voice of compunction, it is surprised at this unusual kind of inward refreshment; so that filled with Divine sweetness, it rightly responds, *What is this?* For while it is kept from the thought of lower objects, it feels unusual wonder at what it beholds from above. But because the habit of our former life is immediately changed, when the deafness of our slumber is burst through, by this voice; so that the soul, inspired by the Spirit from above, desires as highest the things which it had despised, and contemns as lowest what it used to desire, it is rightly subjoined,

Who doeth great things and inscrutable.

43. For that a man who was given up to earthly objects, and overpowered by sinful desires, becomes suddenly ardent for new pursuits, and cold to his former habits, that he renounces outward cares, and is eager for inward contemplation; who can be sufficient to consider this power of the voice

from above? who can comprehend it on consideration? Great are the things which God effects by His voice; but they would be less great, if they could have been searched out. *He doeth,* therefore, *great things and inscrutable:* because He exhibits outwardly the result of His work, but the nature of the work is itself concealed within. He sounds abroad with His voice, even by Apostles, but He illumines the hearts of the hearers within, by Himself: as Paul bears witness, who says, *I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. For neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.* [l Cor. 3, 6. 7.] But though they do not themselves confer on our minds the hearing of the Divine voice, they are yet sent to condescend to us by words from without. Whence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. *6. Who ordereth the snow to descend on the earth, and the rains of the winter, and the showers of His strength.*

44. Because the Psalmist says, *Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;* [Ps. 51, 7] what do we understand by snow in this place, but the hearts of the Saints made white by the light of righteousness? But waters are taken up, and congealed above, in order to become snow. But when this snow descends to the earth, it is changed again into liquid waters. Waters therefore are the minds of preachers; which are confirmed in a higher sense of things, when they raise themselves to contemplate heavenly objects. And when they are hurried along in the consideration of lofty things, they receive the strength of confirmation. But because they are still retained on earth by love of the brethren, they bring themselves down from their lofty understanding, and preaching humbly to the weak, they melt like snow, and water their thirsty hearts. Snow then descends to the earth, when the lofty hearts of the Saints, which already feast on solid contemplation, condescend to humble words of preaching through love of the brethren. For as snow covers the ground, when it lies on it, but waters it, when it melts; so the

virtue of the Saints protects the life of sinners by its strength with God, and by its condescension melts, as it were, and waters the thirsty earth, to bear fruits. And because water is first brought up from below, that it may afterwards be returned in showers from above; so do holy men, when placed on the lofty eminence of their virtues, consider from whence they are elevated, for fear of despising the meanness of others' infirmity. Waters, then, return, as it were, to the earth from which they have been raised, when righteous men, condescending to sinners, cease not to remember what once they were. Paul had certainly been hitherto but water on the earth, when he knew the Law carnally. But when raised up to heavenly knowledge, he was converted into snow; because he changed his former feeble knowledge into the solidity of true wisdom; and yet, condescending to his brethren, he returned as snow to the earth. For even after his heights of virtue, he acknowledges how unworthy he was, saying, *Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, &c.* [1 Tim. 1, 13] Behold how considerately he calls to mind his own weakness, so as to bear with equanimity the weaknesses of others. For Paul returned, as water, after being in heaven, to the earth from which it had been taken, when, after the great secrets of his contemplation, he called to mind that he was a sinner, in order that he might benefit sinners by his humility. Let us see therefore how this water, which is to be turned into solid snow, is drawn up to its highest level. He says, *Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God.* [2 Cor. 5, 13] Let us see how the snow returns to the ground, to water it, while melting. He says, *Or whether ice be sober, it is for your cause.* [ibid.] Let us see with what hand it is guided, and can be raised up, when low, and be brought back again when raised up. He says, *For the love of Christ constraineth us.* [ibid. 14] Because therefore the love of Christ, which raises the minds of Saints to heavenly things, shapes them by its considerate control even to humble condescension, for the love of the brethren, it is rightly said, *Who ordereth the snow to descend on the earth.*

Where it is also fitly subjoined, *And the rains of the winter, and the shower of His strength.*

45. For this present life is indeed winter: in which though hope even now raises us up to things above, yet the cold torpor of our mortality still binds us. Because it is written, *The corruptible body weigheth down the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the sense that museth on many things.* [Wisd. 9, 15] But this winter has rains, which are doubtless the preachings of rulers. Of which rains it is in truth said by Moses, *Let my speech be expected as the rain, and my words descend as the dew.* [Deut. 32, 2] These rains doubtless are suited to the winter, and will cease in the summer; because now that the heavenly life is hidden from the eyes of the carnal, it is necessary for dew to be poured on us by the preachings of holy men. But when the heat of eternal judgment has glowed, no one will then find the words of preachers necessary. Because every one is brought back to his own conscience, on the coming of the Judge, so as to understand what is holy, when he cannot any longer perform it, and to learn from the punishment of his perverseness the right which he ought to have pursued. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Gather them together as a flock for a sacrifice, and sanctify them in the day of slaughter.* [Jer. 12, 3] For the reprobate are sanctified in the day of slaughter: for they then perceive the holiness, which they ought to have pursued, when they cannot now avoid the punishments which their depravity deserves. But since holy preaching will cease with this present life, that is the rains with the winter; to the soul which is departing, and hastening to the summer regions of eternal happiness, it is rightly said by the voice of the Bridegroom persuading it; *Arise, haste, my beloved, my fair one, and come: for the winter hath past, the rain hath passed and is gone.* [Cant. 2, 10. 11.] For as the winter passes away, the rain departs: because when the present life is over, in which the torpor of the corruptible flesh had surrounded us with a mist of ignorance, all the

ministry of preaching ceases. For we shall then behold that more clearly with our own eyes, which we now hear more obscurely by the voices of the Saints. The Lord therefore orders the snow, and the rains of the winter, to descend on the earth, while He humbles the hearts of the Saints to the ministry of preaching, for the correction of sinners, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Where it is rightly added, *And the shower of His strength.*

46. For the shower of the strength of God, is the preaching His Godhead; for the shower of His weakness is the preaching His Manhood, of which it is said by Paul, *The weakness of God is stronger than men.* [1 Cor. 1, 25] And again, *Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.* [2 Cor. 13, 4] But holy men so preach the weakness of His Manhood, as to pour also into the hearts of their hearers the strength of His Godhead. Let us hear, through the thunder of the cloud, the shower of His strength; *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* [John 1, 1] Let us hear also the shower of His weakness; *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* [ibid. 14] Let us hear the shower of His strength; *All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. What was made in Him was life.* [ibid. 3] Let us hear also the shower of His weakness; *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.* [ibid. 11] He commands therefore the shower of His strength to descend on the earth, because He so preaches to us the weaknesses of His Manhood by the voices of His Saints, as to make known to us also the wonders and the strength of His Godhead. But when we hear the power of our Maker, we are immediately brought back to our own hearts by the compulsion of fear, and, considering that so great a Judge is over us, we examine what we have done (worthily, and what) [Mss. vary.] unworthily. Whence it is well subjoined,

Ver. 7. *Who sealeth the hand of all men, that every one may know his works.*

47. For men scorn to think of the sins they commit. But when they hear the power of heavenly severity, they discern this burden of misdeeds which weighs them down. For being roused by the words of preaching, they keep on the watch, in order to consider to what punishments the merit of their former doings is leading them. When, then, the shower of His strength descends on the earth, a seal is made in the hand of each one, for him to know his works; because when the Virtue of His Incomprehensible Majesty is acknowledged, his own life is weighed more carefully by each person.

48. But this can also be understood in another sense. For the Almighty Creator has made man a rational creature, distinguished from all which are void of sense and reason; in order that he should not be ignorant of what he has done. For he is compelled by the law of nature to know whether what he is doing is right or wrong. For why is he brought to judgment for his conduct, if he could be ignorant of what he has done? And therefore even they, who scorn to be instructed by the precepts of the Lord, know whether the things they are doing are good or evil. For if they do not know they are doing good, why do they ostentatiously boast of some of their doings? Again, if they know not that they are doing wrong, why do they shrink from the eyes of others in these very doings? For they are witnesses to themselves, that they know what they are doing is wrong, because they are ashamed of being seen by others. For if they did not really believe it to be wrong, they would not be afraid of its being seen by others. Whence it is well said by a certain wise man; *When wickedness is fearful, it beareth testimony to its own condemnation.* [Wisd. 17, 11] For when fear assails and convicts the conscience of what it has done, it furnishes testimony against itself, that its conduct is deserving of condemnation. The contrary to which is said by John, *If our heart condemn us not, we have confidence toward God.* [1 John 3, 21] Let the wicked fly then from the eyes of men; they certainly cannot fly from themselves. For that they know the sin which they commit,

they have their conscience as a witness, they have their reason as a judge. In the sin therefore which they commit, they first find the judgment of their reason against them, and they are afterwards brought to the strictness of the eternal judgment. And this is perhaps that which is said by the Psalmist, *Deep calleth unto deep with the voice of Thy water-spouts.* [Ps. 42, 7] Because, when by a wondrous course of secret dispensation, the evil which is committed is not suffered to be unknown, a sinner both condemns himself at once in his conscience by his own sentence, and after his own condemnation hastens to the sentence of the eternal Judge. For deep then to call on deep, is to pass from one judgment to another. Let holy preachers proceed then to reprove the conduct of sinners, but let wicked hearers despise the words of the righteous. Let them defend their wickedness as much as they please, and multiply their shameless deeds by a more shameless defence. They are certainly witnesses to themselves in their conscience that they are without excuse. For by the very fact that God has created man a rational being, He puts a seal in the hand of all men, that every one may know his own works. But because Eliu has stated his opinion of the wickedness of men one by one, he turns at once the eyes of his mind to the author of wickedness himself, by whose means each separate wickedness takes its rise; that, because he had assailed in this one verse the members of a wicked head, he might also briefly describe the head himself of these members. Or certainly, because he had mentioned above the virtues of the clouds of God, he now proceeds to set forth also the assaults of the adversary against the life of the righteous. For it follows,

Ver. 8. *The beast will enter his covert, and will abide in his den.*

49. Who else is understood by the name of the beast, except our ancient enemy, who cruelly aimed at the deception of the first man, and mangled by his wicked advice the integrity of his life? against whom it is promised by the words of the Prophet, concerning the restoration of the Church of the

Elect to its ancient condition, *And no evil beast shall pass through it.* But when after the coming of the Redeemer, after the voices of preachers, after the thunder, as it were, of the clouds, this beast has seized that accursed person, Antichrist, what else does he do but enter his covert, in order to abide in his own den? For that vessel of the devil is the den and covert of the beast, so that, when lying in ambush against men who are journeying through this life, he both escapes their notice by his wonders, and kills them by his malice, in his person. But yet he possesses even now the hearts of all reprobates, before he manifests himself openly; and occupies them by his secret wickedness, as though they were his own den; and conceals himself in their gloomy minds, in order to effect all the hurt he desires against the good. Were not the hearts of the persecuting Jews, the den of this beast; in whose designs he long lurked secretly, but suddenly burst forth with the voices of those who cried, *Crucify, Crucify?* [John 19, 6] And because he could not reach so far in his temptation, as to wound the mind of our Redeemer, he was eager for His death in the flesh. This beast doubtless possessed the hearts of many of the Elect, but the Lamb has, by His death, expelled him from them. Whence also He says in the Gospel, *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* [John 12, 31] For while He has, by a wonderful and righteous judgment, enlightened and accepted the confessions of the humble, He has forsaken and closed the eyes of the proud. Whence it is said to Him by the Psalmist, *Thou hast appointed darkness, and it became night, in it all the beasts of the woods will pass through: the young of lions roaring to seize their prey, and to seek their food from God.* [Ps. 104, 20. 21.] For God in truth appoints darkness, when, in inflicting judgment in requital for sins, He withdraws the light of His wisdom. And it is made night, because the mind of wicked men is blinded with the errors of their own ignorance. In which all the beasts of the field pass through, when malignant spirits, lurking under the gloom of deceit,

pass through into the hearts of the reprobates, by fulfilling their evil purposes. In which also the young of lions roar, because spirits rise up with importunate temptations, as the ministers of most wicked, but yet preeminent, powers. But yet they seek their food from God; because doubtless they are unable to catch souls, unless by a just judgment they are permitted by God to prevail. Where it is also fitly subjoined, *The sun hath arisen, and they are gathered together, and have laid them down in their dens.* [ibid. 22] Because, when expelled from the minds of the faithful, by the Light of the Truth manifested in the flesh, they returned, as it were, to their dens, when they held the hearts of unbelievers only. That then which is there called the den of lions, is here termed the den of the beast.

50. But I think it ought to be specially observed, that this beast is said, not only to enter his den, but to abide therein. For he sometimes enters even the minds of the good, he suggests unlawful thoughts, he wearies them with temptations, he endeavours to turn aside the uprightness of the spirit to the pleasure of the flesh; he also strives to carry out delight as far as to consent: but yet he is kept from prevailing by the opposition of aid from on high. He can enter therefore into the minds of the good, but cannot abide therein, because the heart of the righteous is not the den of this beast. For he doubtless abides in and occupies the minds of those, whom he possesses as his own den: because he first leads on their thoughts to wicked desires, and afterwards leads their wicked desires even to the commission of most sinful deeds. For the reprobate do not endeavour to repel, with the upright hand of judgment, the suggestions of him, to whose wishes they desire to yield, by submissive delight. And when any evil thought arises in their hearts, it is cherished at once by the eagerness of delight; and when no resistance is made to him, he is strengthened immediately by consent, and consent is instantly carried into outward act, but outward act is also made worse by habit. This beast then is well said to abide in his cave; which keeps hold of

the thoughts of the reprobate, till it also pierces their life with the sting of evil deeds. Whence the Lord well says to Judaea by the Prophet, *How long shall hurtful thoughts abide in thee?* [Jer. 4, 14] For He does not blame for their coming, but for their remaining there. And unlawful thoughts come even unto good hearts, but they are forbidden to remain; because the righteous, in order to keep the house of conscience from being taken, drive away the enemy from the very threshold of the heart. And if he has ever secretly crept [Oxf. Mss. 'subrepit'] by sudden suggestions in front of the entrance, yet he does not reach to the gate of consent. It was to this beast doubtless that Peter, overcome by the impulse of sudden fear, opened the gate of his heart, by denial, but he withstood it by a speedy discovery, he closed it by his tears. [Luke 22, 57-62] But because the ancient enemy has not only entered and occupied the hearts of persecutors, but has also occupied and possessed them, let it be rightly said, *The beast will enter his covert, and will abide in his den.* For we learn how much he dwelt in the minds of the Jews, when we hear their plans, on the evidence of the Gospel narrative. For therein it is described, with what eager cruelty they raged for His death, when they beheld our Lord quickening the dead; how many evil designs they ardently wished to carry out against Him, but yet feared the people; how many opportunities they sought of killing Him, and could not find them; how many hands of aliens they used to carry out their cruel wishes; because they gave Him up to the Gentiles to be killed, Whom they themselves were not able legally to put to death; in order that the Roman governor might perform that by his mere power, which they eagerly insisted ought to be done, merely from their malice. Whence it is also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 9. *A tempest will come forth from the inner parts, and cold from Arcturus.*

51. When Holy Scripture mentions the inner parts, in opposition to Arcturus, it designates the quarter of the South, opposite to the parts of the North. Whence it is written in this same book; *Who maketh Arcturus, and the Orions, and the inner parts of the South.* [Job 9, 9] Because then the sun pervades with greater warmth the inner parts of the South, but does not pursue its course at all in the North [‘in Arcturo.’], by the word ‘inner parts’ in this place is expressed the Jewish people, but by the term ‘Arcturus’ the Gentile people. For they who had known the One and Invisible God, and obeyed His Law, at least carnally, were kept, as it were, in the warmth of faith, under the glow of the midday sun. But because the Gentiles had not attained to any knowledge of heavenly wisdom, they were remaining, as it were, in the cold, without the sun, under the North. But because a tempest impels, but cold oppresses with torpor; it is now rightly said, *A tempest will come forth from the inner parts, and cold from Arcturus.* As if it were plainly said; From the Jews there arises persecuting malice, and from the Gentiles oppressing power. For the precepts of the Law had not forbidden the performance of miracles, and yet the Jews sought to kill the Redeemer of the human race on account of these very miracles. And hence when unable to fulfil what they had begun, they flocked to the hall of Pilate, in order that he, whom no law could restrain when murdering unjustly, might himself put Him to death. A tempest therefore came forth from the inner parts, and cold from Arcturus, whilst the Gentile judge perpetrated with the authority of Rome, that which the Jews requested through envy. Whence it is well subjoined still further against this same envy,

Ver. 10. *When God bloweth, the ice congeals.*

52. Because, as the Holy Spirit breathed on the hearts of the faithful, and conferred greater miracles of power, benumbing envy grew up the more in the sluggish hearts of the faithless; and the unbelieving multitude became hardened against God, from the same causes, as the humble people softened

the obduracy, with which it had bound itself. For when God blew on them, they were turned into ice, who said, through envy of the miracles they had witnessed; *Behold, the whole world hath gone after Him.* [John 12, 19] They were beholding the signs, perceiving the miracles performed by His ministers, and foreseeing, that the whole world was now about to follow the preaching of the faith; and yet, the more the Holy Spirit had filled the world, the more firmly was the malice of envy binding their minds. The water therefore had been turned into ice, when sluggish Judaea was still remaining in envy, as the whole world was going after God. But because Divine Power was sufficient to soften the hardness even of such great cruelty, and to melt the hearts of unbelievers to love Him, after this ice it is immediately well subjoined;

And the waters are again poured forth abundantly.

53. For the Lord has in truth poured forth the waters abundantly, after this ice; for after He had endured the hardness of the Jews, even unto death, He immediately melted their hearts from the hardness of unbelief, by breathing on them the love of Himself; in order that they might afterwards run the more eagerly to obey Him, the more obstinately they had before resisted His commands. Whence it is well said by a certain wise man, *As ice in fair weather, so shall thy sins be melted away.* [Ecclus. 3, 15] The Prophet had desired to be freed from the ice of this torpor, when saying, *Turn our captivity, O Lord, as the stream in the South.* [Ps. 126, 4] Of these waters, that is, of people flocking together to the Lord, it is said again, *He will send forth His word, and will melt them: His breath will blow, and the waters will flow.* [Ps. 147, 18] Waters run from ice, because many great preachers are made out of hard persecutors. Ice therefore melts in water, when the numbness of inward cold is changed into the irrigation of preaching. Was not Paul ice, who when going to Damascus, after he had received letters, was seeking to check the seeds of the word of God, which

had been scattered in the heart of the faithful, as if in the earth that they might not spring up to the perfection of good deeds? [Acts 9, 2] But this ice returned in water; because he afterwards watered with the streams of holy exhortation those whom he before endeavoured to oppress with persecution, in order that there might arise a more abundant harvest of the Elect, in so much as the shower of God was watering it from the mouth even of a persecutor. Whence it is well subjoined; Ver. 11. *The corn desireth clouds.*

54. For what are all the Elect, but the corn of God, to be treasured up in the heavenly garners? Which now bear with the chaff in the threshing of the floor; because in this purification of Holy Church, they endure the contrary habits of the reprobate, till the inward Husbandman separates them with His fan of judgment, and taking His Elect, as grains now cleaned, into the heavenly habitations, consigns the chaff to eternal fires. Whence it is well said by John, *Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* [Matt. 3, 12] But this corn, till it attain to the perfection of its fruits, looks for the rains of the clouds, in order to its growth. Because the mind of good men is watered with the words of preachers, lest it should be drained of the moisture of charity by the sun of carnal desires. The heavenly Husbandman had beheld this corn growing up in the world, and desiring the clouds, when He was saying, *The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the labourers are few. But pray ye the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into His harvest.* [Matt. 9, 37. 38] Those therefore which here are called 'corn,' are there called 'harvest,' but they who are here called 'clouds,' are there called 'labourers,' because holy preachers are both clouds and labourers; clouds, namely, by their doctrine, labourers by their life; clouds because they flow into us by their words,

labourers, because they cease not to do what they speak. Whence it is subjoined;

And the clouds scatter their light.

55. For, for clouds to scatter their light, is for holy preachers to spread abroad examples of conduct, both by their words and actions. But though they scatter the light of their inward message, yet they do not attain to the conversion of all the hearts which they desire. For it follows;

Ver. 12. *Which traverse all things in a circuit, whithersoever the will of their Ruler shall lead them.*

56. For holy preachers often wish to exhort some persons, but cannot do so. Some they often wish to avoid, but are yet most urgently compelled, by the impulse of inward instigation, to exhort them. Let us behold the cloud of God, how it is led by the hand of Him Who guides it, even to those things which it does not seek after: and is, again, kept from following its own impulse, by the hand of Him who governs it. When Paul was shaking his raiment, and was wishing to depart from the Corinthians, he surely heard, *Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city.* [Acts 18, 9, 10] Again, when he had wished to go to the Thessalonians, he was kept back, and said, *I wished to come unto you, even I Paul, both once and again, but satan hindered me.* [1 Thess. 2, 18] For satan could not of himself hinder the journeys of so mighty an Apostle; but, while opposing, he ignorantly subserved the design of the secret dispensation; in order that Paul, while he wished to visit other persons, and was unable, might more suitably benefit those, from whom he could not depart. The clouds of God, therefore, traverse all things in a circuit, because they illuminate the ends of the world with the light of preaching. But, because being subject to the Divine will, they cannot fulfil their own wishes, they cannot go any where,

except where the will of their Ruler shall lead them. Whence it is still further subjoined;

To every thing which He shall command them upon the face of the earth.

57. For often when they are led by the will of their Ruler, they seek to do one thing, but are disposed otherwise. For they frequently desire to correct some of their hearers in a gentle way, and yet their speech is turned into sharpness. They frequently seek to be severe with others, but yet their vigour is restrained by the spirit of gentleness. As, therefore, they cannot go whither they will, so also they cannot act as they will. For because the inward Judge keeps hold of them, when He sends them, so also does He modify and take them up, when He leads them on, so that sometimes they arrange one thing in their thought, but carry another into effect; they sometimes begin in one way, but end in another. Because then they serve according to that which is commanded them, let it be rightly said, *Whithersoever the will of their Ruler shall lead them, to every thing which He shall command them upon the face of the earth.* For they find the way of their preaching the more open, in that they are guided to it, not by their own will, but that of their Teacher. Whence it is still further subjoined;

Ver. 13. *Whether in one tribe, or in His own land, or in whatsoever place of His mercy He shall order them to be found.*

58. The one tribe of Judah is certainly meant, which is mentioned in Holy Scripture plainly and repeatedly above the rest. For it received a special gift above them all, in that it brought forth from itself the flesh of our Redeemer. But all Judaea together is called the land of the Lord. [Deut. 32, 42] Because it then produced to Him the fruit of faith, when the whole world was in error, the Gentiles having fallen under the worship of idols. But the place of the mercy of God is the Gentile world itself, for if the strict Judge were justly to punish its faults, it would never come to the reconciliation of grace. For, when it had no merits before God, it yet

received the grace of reconciliation of His sole mercy. Whence it is well said by Paul, *And that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy.* [Rom. 15, 9] Whence it is written again, *Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.* [1 Pet. 2, 10] God therefore leads His clouds, either in one tribe, or in His own land, or in whatsoever place of His mercy He shall order them to be found; because at one time He conferred preachers of the Old and New Testament on the tribe of Judah only, and rejected nearly the whole of Israel by the wicked governing of their kings. At one time, He makes these clouds to rain, even in His own land, because He recalled this same people of Israel to His former favour, after correction in captivity. At another, He wished them to shine forth from the place of His mercy; because He made known by holy preachers even to the Gentiles the miracles of His power, in order by His sole mercy to free those from the yoke of error whom His wrath in their innate unbelief was weighing down. But behold, because Eliu has perceived future events by the spirit of prophecy, because he has uttered many sublime truths; the haughty man, wearied with the weight of his pride, is unable to bear the burden of what he says. For he adds at once in a boastful manner,

Ver. 14. *Hearken unto these things, O Job, stand, and consider the wondrous works of God.*

59. He saw him to be lying down, as it were, in comparison with himself, whom he directed to stand at the words of so great preaching. Although even by this word, "*Listen*" which he uses, he inflicts a grievous insult upon Job: because, as we have already said of him also before, it is arrogance for an inferior, to wish to extort for himself a hearing from his superior. But although Eliu does not consider to whom he is saying the truths that he utters, yet we, who seek to be instructed by all things, ought carefully to examine the words of his teaching. For perhaps it is said with great skill in virtue, *Stand, and consider the wondrous works of God.* For there are some

who consider the wondrous works of God, but lying down; because they do not follow and admire the power of His doings. For to ‘stand,’ is to act uprightly. Whence also it is said by Paul, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* [1 Cor. 10, 12] And they often indeed admire the judgments of heaven, love the announcements of their heavenly country, when they hear them, are astounded at the wondrous operations of His inward ordaining, but yet neglect to attain to these words by their love and their lives. They then lie, and consider the wondrous works of God, who think of God’s power in their understanding, but do not love it in their lives. They turn indeed their eyes in consideration, by thinking on them, but yet do not raise themselves from the earth by their intention. Whence it is well said in reproach of Balaam, *Who falling, hath his eyes open.* [Numb. 24, 4] For he had said many things of the coming of the Redeemer, and was foreseeing what things were to come to pass in the last days. But yet he was unwilling to rise up to Him in his life, Whom by foreseeing he announced. He was lying then, and had his eyes open, when prophecy was directing his mind to heavenly things, and covetousness was confining it to earth. He was lying and had his eyes open, because he was able to behold Him from above, Whom, grovelling below, he loved not. Eliu therefore, who did not believe that blessed Job had maintained in his life that, which he professed, says, as if advising him, *Stand, and consider the wondrous works of God.* He still further examines him as to future events, and adds, as if humbling him for his ignorance;

Ver. 15. *Dost thou know when God commanded the rains to shew forth the light of His clouds?*

60. If ‘clouds’ are holy preachers, the rains from the clouds are the words of their preaching. But when clouds fly through the air, unless rain descends from above, we know not what an immensity of waters they carry. Unless the glittering sun breaks forth amidst the rain, we cannot understand, what

brightness also is concealed within them. Because doubtless if holy preachers are silent, and shew not by their words, how great is the brightness of heavenly hope, which they bear in their hearts, they seem to be like other men, or far more despicable. But when they have begun to lay open by their preaching, what is the reward of the heavenly country, which they possess within; when, oppressed by persecution, they make known in what a height of virtue they have made progress; when, despised in outward appearance, they point out by their words what makes them feared; the rains themselves, which pour from the clouds, shew us the light of these very clouds. For we learn by the words of preachers to reverence in them, with great humility, the brightness of life which they seek after. Paul was doubtless displaying this light to his disciples, when he said, *That ye may know, what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe.* [Eph. 1, 18. 19.] This light the Corinthians had known by the words of his writings, as by drops of rain, when they said, *His letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.* [2 Cor. 10, 10] But holy preachers frequently desire to display themselves, in order to do good, but yet are unable: they frequently desire to be concealed, in order to be quiet, and are not permitted. No one therefore knows when the rains shew the light of the clouds, because no one comprehends when God grants the virtue of preaching, that the glory of the preachers may shine forth. He says therefore, *Dost thou know, when God commanded the rains, to shew forth the light of His clouds?* As if he said plainly, If thou now beholdest preachers about to come to the world, dost thou understand, when God urges them on to preach, by filling them with His Holy Spirit, or in what way He makes known their brightness to the world? Whence it is also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 16. *Dost thou know the mighty paths of the clouds, and their perfect knowledge?*

61. These clouds have most subtle paths, namely, the ways of holy preaching. For *narrow is the gate, which leadeth unto life.* [Matt. 7, 14] They confine then those by paths, who do not depart from the track of their purpose by wandering through the wide desires of the world. For the strict censure of holy living is not a broad way, but a path, in which each preacher is studiously confined: because he is carefully hemmed in by the defence of precepts. Is it not, as it were, a kind of narrowness of way to live indeed in this world, but to have no desires for this world, not to seek for another's goods, not to retain one's own, to despise the praises of the world, to love reproaches for God's sake, to avoid glory, to court contempt, to despise flatterers, to honour our despisers, to banish from our hearts the wrongs of those who hurt us, and to retain towards them the unchangeable grace of affection in the heart? All which namely are paths, but paths of greatness. For the narrower they are in this life, for guarding our conduct, the more are they enlarged to greater width in eternal retribution. Whence also it is well subjoined,

And their perfect knowledge.

62. For it is indeed perfect wisdom, for a man to do all these things with anxious care, and to know that he is nothing in his own deserts. Whence even the clouds themselves are instructed in this perfect wisdom, when it is said to them by the voice of Truth; *When ye have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.* [Luke 17, 10] It is perfect wisdom to know all things, and yet in a certain way to be ignorant of one's knowledge; by which though we already know the precepts of God, though we are now weighing with anxious attention the power of His words, though we are doing those things, which we believe we have understood; yet we still know not with what strictness of

examination these deeds will hereafter be enquired into, nor do we as yet behold the face of God, nor see His hidden counsels. How great then is our knowledge; which, as long as it is pressed down with the weight of mortality, is darkened by the very mist of its own uncertainty? Of which it is well said by Paul, *He who thinketh that he knoweth any thing, knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* [1 Cor. 8, 2] While we live, therefore, in this world, we then know perfectly what ought to be known, when, as we make progress in wisdom, we learn that we know nothing perfectly. He says therefore, *Dost thou know the mighty paths of the clouds, and their perfect knowledge?* As if he said openly, Dost thou now behold the lofty acts of preachers, who after raising themselves on high by their wisdom, humbly bow themselves down through knowledge of their ignorance? But since it is caused by the gift of the Holy Spirit alone, that the heart of man is perfectly informed not merely of its knowledge, but also of its ignorance; and that it glows with fervent love for things above, while it considers here below that its knowledge is of less worth, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 17. *Are not thy garments warm, when the earth hath been blown upon by the south wind?*

63. We have often said already that blessed Job stands for a type of Holy Church. But all they, who are joined to it by the unity of the Faith, are the garments of the Church. Of which the Lord says to the same Church by the Prophet, *As I live, thou shall be clothed with all these, as with an ornament.* [Is. 49, 18] But by the south wind, which is doubtless warm, is designated, not improperly, the Holy Spirit, for when any one is touched by It, he is freed from the torpor of his iniquity. Whence it is well said in the Song of Songs, *Arise, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, and let its sweet spices flow out.* [Cant. 4, 16] For the north wind is ordered to arise, in order, doubtless, that the opposing spirit, who binds the hearts of mortals, may fly away. For the south wind comes, and blows through the

garden, that its sweet spices may flow abroad; because, while the mind of man is filled by the coming of the Holy Spirit, a notion of their virtues is soon scattered abroad from it, that the tongue of the Saints, like a garden which is blown upon by the south wind, may now justly say, *We are unto God a sweet odour of Christ.* [2 Cor. 2, 15] The garments, therefore, of Holy Church are warm, while the earth is breathed upon by the south wind; because they, who cling to her by faith, glow with fervent zeal of charity, while their mind is streamed through by the breath of the Holy Spirit. But nothing hinders this being understood of this same blessed Job; because we so speak of these things in the Church in general terms, as yet specially to confine them to its separate members.

64. For every one; who lives uprightly, and has been wont also to teach this to others, has, as it were, as many garments, as the hearers who cling to him in agreement. For it is the nature of garments, that they cannot be warm of themselves; but that, when applied to a living body, they cover the exuding pores of the limbs, they keep back the heat which flows forth from within, and from this heat they doubtless become warm: but when they have become warm, by retaining the heat they have received, they return it to the body. What then is signified by garments adhering to the living body, but the life of disciples closely united to teachers who live well? Which receives, as it were, warmth through the pores; because it is kindled with the love of God, both by the example of action, and the impulse of exhortation. Which expels, as it were, its own cold, when it departs from its former iniquity; retains the warmth it has received, because it gains strength in that warmth which it has obtained from preaching. But when holy preachers perceive that their hearers are advancing towards the love of God, they themselves glow the more in power of teaching: and from seeing that they are burning and glowing for the highest objects, they are themselves more mightily kindled to announce the good things of the heavenly country.

And if at any time, because they are still passing this corruptible life of human infirmity, they are assaulted by any fault, however slightly, in deed, word, or thought, they look at the progress of their disciples, and are ashamed of being themselves blameable, even in the smallest matters: lest they should by chance set a crooked example to those, whom they are calling to the rule of inward rectitude by the voice of preaching. When hearers then are kindled by the word of their teachers, garments, as it were, become warm from a living body. But when the conduct of the teachers also is improving, from the progress of their hearers, the heat returns, as it were, to the body from the garments which have been warmed. But let not the teachers attribute it to themselves, that they see their hearers advancing to the highest things, through their exhortation: because, if the Holy Spirit fill not their hearts, the voice of teachers sounds in vain to the bodily ears. For teachers can shape their voice without, but cannot impress it within; *For neither is he who planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God Who giveth the increase.* [1 Cor. 3, 7] Let it be said then, *Are not thy garments warm, when the earth hath been blown upon by the south wind?* Because, namely, hearers, who now adhere to teachers who live aright, receive the warmth of heavenly love, when they are roused by the breath of the Holy Spirit. As if he were saving plainly to blessed Job; Thou in vain attributest it to thyself, if thou beholdest that any have made progress in virtue by thy means; because these, whom thou supposest to have become warm through thee, would be still remaining cold, in their own insensibility, if the warmth of the Holy Spirit did not touch them. But after he spake these things forcibly, he immediately subjoins words of derision, being influenced with levity by arrogance, saying,

Ver. 18. *Thou perchance madest with Him the heavens, which are most solid, as if cast in brass.*

65. By ‘heavens,’ those who are created in the heavens, the angelic spirits, can be designated. Whence also we are instructed by the voice of Truth to say in our Prayer, *Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth.* [Matt. 6, 10] That the will of God may be doubtless observed in all things even by human infirmity, as it is done by the higher creation. Of whom it is well said, *They are most solid, as if cast in brass.* For it is of the nature of brass, that it is difficult to be consumed by rust. And the angelic powers, which stood fixed in Divine love, when the proud angels fell, received this, as their reward of retribution, that they are no longer consumed by any rust of sin stealing upon them, that they continue in the contemplation of their Creator, without end to their felicity, and exist with eternal stability, in that which they were created. Which the very words of the history in Moses concerning the origin of the world will attest, when both the heaven is said to have been first made, and this is after wards called the firmament. [Gen. l, 17] Because, namely, the nature of Angels was both first fashioned more subtilly, in the regions above, and was afterwards still more wonderfully strengthened, that it might never fall. But, as we have often said, by the ‘heavens’ can be expressed the minds of the Elect, raised up by inward love from all earthly pollutions. For though, in the body, they dwell below, yet, because they cleave in their heart, even now, to the highest objects, they truly say, *Our conversation is in heaven.* [Phil. 3, 20] Who *are most solid, as if cast in brass,* because they are not wasted away from the integrity of their original strength, by any rust of changeableness. To whom, boldly bearing up against adversities, it is said by the voice of their Maker, *Ye are My friends, which have continued with Me in My temptations.* [John 15, 14; Luke 22, 28] But though this learned and haughty one, when endeavouring to make a jest of this holy man, blends noble sayings with his derision, yet he ever falls back, from those noble sayings, into empty words. For he again subjoins deridingly,

Ver. 19. *Shew us what to say to Him; for we in truth are involved in darkness.*

66. As if He said; Thou, who enjoyest the great light of wisdom, oughtest to teach us, who are involved in the darkness of ignorance. But soon starting away from his derision, he subjoins contemptuously;

Ver. 20. *Who will tell Him the things which I say?*

As if he plainly said; The unheard truths which I declare to Him, from an acute sense of His praises, who can repeat, even after he has heard them? But because, when learning and arrogance contend together in the habitation of the same mind, there sounds forth from the mouth of the speaker not merely levity of behaviour, but also gravity of sentiment; after Eliu had been puffed up in levity by arrogance, saying, *Who will tell Him the things which I say?* he presently subjoined, through his learning,

Even if a man shall speak, he shall he swallowed up.

67. Every thing which devours any thing, draws it inwards, and conceals it from the eyes of beholders, and hurries into the deep an object which could be seen on the surface. A man, therefore, when he is silent about God, seems to be something on account of the reason with which he was made. But if he begins to speak about God, it is at once shewn how nought he is; because he is devoured by the immensity of His greatness, and is hurried, as it were, into the deep, and is concealed. For wishing to speak of the Ineffable, he is swallowed up by the narrowness of his own ignorance. For flesh speaks of the Spirit, the circumscribed spirit of the Uncircumscribed, the creature of the Creator, the temporal of the Eternal, the mutable of the Immutable, the mortal of the Quickener. And since, being placed in darkness, he knows not the inward light, as it really is, a man wishing to discourse of eternity, speaks as a blind man of the light. *If then a man shall speak, he shall be swallowed up*: because if a man wishes to speak of eternity as it is, he takes away also from himself even the sense he has of it

when silent. But, behold! eternity then became truly known to men, when It shewed Itself to them by assuming man's nature. But because this had not yet been revealed, it is rightly subjoined of the same men;

Ver. 21. *But now they see not the light.*

68. Of which light doubtless it is said even by the Prophet, *The people which was sitting in darkness, saw a great light.* [Is. 9, 2] But he shews how this light is seen by men, when he immediately adds;

The air will suddenly be gathered into clouds.

For the air is so diffused by its own tenuity, as not to be consolidated with any firmness. But clouds are firmer, the denser they are. What then is designated by the 'air,' but the minds of worldly men, which, given up to the countless desires of this life, are, being fluid, scattered hither and thither like the air? But the air is collected into clouds, when unstable minds are, by the grace of the Divine regard, strengthened with the solidity of virtue, in order that, by thinking of what is right, they may gather themselves within the bosom of their heart, and may not melt away in empty thoughts.

69. Peter had been air, when the occupation of fishing for the life of the flesh used, as a transient breeze to agitate him, distracted still with earthly desires. The Apostles had been air, who had already learned exalted truths by the Law, but who as yet savoured not of strength by faith. But the air was suddenly gathered into clouds, because, through the look of divine grace, the unstable hearts of fishermen were turned into the solidity of preachers, in order that their infirm thoughts might become firm, by thinking boldly, that they might hold like clouds the waters of wisdom, and irrigate with the words of their preaching the earth lying beneath; and that, when this ministry was completed, they might return to the secret abodes of heaven, and attain, when their labour was passed, to eternal rest. Whence it is presently well subjoined;

And the wind passing over will drive them away.

70. For the wind that passes over is the present life. The wind then passes over, and drives the clouds away; because mortal life, passing along, conceals holy preachers from our bodily eyes. The passing wind drives away the clouds: because the onward course of temporal life withdraws the Apostles from the flesh, and conceals them, from the surface of the earth, in secret rest, as if in the centre of the heavens. But because they cease not to preach even to their death, and pass through the space of this present life, like clouds, with the shower of their words, he adds what is wrought by their labours in Holy Church, when he immediately subjoins;

Ver. 22. *Gold will come from the north.*

71. What is designated by the 'north,' but the Gentile world, fast bound in the cold of sin? Which he held under the yoke of his tyranny, who proudly said, *I will sit in the mount of the covenant, in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 13. 14.] And what is expressed by 'gold,' but faithful souls? Of which it is said by Jeremiah, *How is the gold become dim? the finest colour is changed?* [Lam. 4, 1] For he lamented that the gold was dimmed, because he beheld in some persons the brightness of innocence changed into the blackness of sin. Gold, therefore, is said to come from the north; because through the favour of the grace of the Redeemer, the life of the faithful, which is precious before God, is increased within Holy Church, from the Gentile world, which had been long frozen in the torpor of unbelief. For gold comes from the north, when the true faith in God shines forth from the very worshippers of idols. But when the Gentiles were converted to the faith, the Jewish people gainsays them; and scorns to admit to the recompense of eternal rewards, those who had been so long worshippers of idols. Whence it is said to Peter, after the conversion of the Gentiles, *Wherefore wentest thou in, to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them?* [Acts 11, 3] In contradiction to which, the Lord rightly says by Isaiah, *I will*

say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back. [Is. 43, 6] For as the Gentile world is signified by the 'north,' so is the Jewish People signified by the 'south,' which was warmed, as it were, by the mid-day sun, because when our Redeemer appeared in the flesh, it first received the warmth of faith. *Give up,* then, is said to the north, when the Gentile world is ordered to offer to God the gifts of its faith. But the south is commanded *not to keep back,* because the Hebrews who stood firm in the faith were ordered not to condemn and reject the life of the Gentiles. Whence here also, because it was said, *Gold cometh from the north;* it is fitly subjoined;

And from God fearful praise.

72. For fearful praise is said to come from God, as if it were said to come from those who are on the side of God, that is, the faithful. When gold then comes from the north, fearful praise proceeds from God; because, while the Gentiles offered the brightness of their faith, the multitude of the faithful Hebrews praised with fear the Divine judgments. But how gold comes from the north, and how fearful praise bursts forth from those who are under God, the sacred history itself informs us. For it is written, *Cornelius, a centurion of the band, which is called Italian, a religious man, and fearing God with all his house, giving much alms to the people, and praying to God always, saw in a vision manifestly, about the ninth hour of the day, an Angel of God coming in to him, saying unto him, Cornelius. But he looking on him, being seized with fear, said, Who art thou, Lord? But he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms have come up as a memorial in the sight of God.* [Acts 10, 1-4] Gold therefore came from the north, when prayer with alms went up from the Gentiles in the sight of God. But when Peter had related to the brethren, either how Cornelius had seen an Angel, or he himself had seen a linen cloth let down from heaven to him with beasts, and creeping things and birds, or how the Holy Spirit had bedewed the hearts of the Gentiles, even before Baptism, [Acts 11, 5-17] Who had never come

into the minds of the Jews, excepting after the water of Baptism, it is immediately written, *When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, God hath therefore granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life.* [ib. 18.] The multitude therefore of the faithful, which, on the salvation of the Gentiles, restrained itself from its murmurs, by admiring the gifts of heavenly grace offered fearful praise to God. Whence Peter himself also wonders, saying, *I have found in truth, that God is no acceptor of persons.* [Acts 10, 34]

73. But when the Gentiles receive the faith, why is fearful praise said to come from those who are already believers, when it ought to come from them, joyful rather than fearful? But fearful praise came from the Hebrews who already believed, on the conversion of the Gentiles, doubtless, because Judaea was justly rejected, while the Gentiles were called in mercy; and feared the loss of its own rejection, while it beheld the gain of the others' calling. Whence we also, when we suddenly behold the wicked raised up to an unexpected eminence of life, daily rejoice with fear under the secret judgments of God, lest God should desert by His secret judgments some who are counted worthy, Who calls thereby those to Himself who are considered unworthy. It follows,

Ver. 23. *We cannot worthily find Him out.*

74. Even if we can now find Him out, yet not worthily. For whatever we perceive in Him, is of faith, and not of sight. But yet he adds that which he considers he has found, saying;

He is great in power, and judgment, and justice, and cannot be spoken of.

For He is great in power, because He overcomes the powerful adversary, and taking from his house the vessels of dishonour, changes them into vessels of mercy. [Matt. 12, 29] Great in judgment; because, though He here brings down His Elect by adversity, yet He raises them at last in the glory of

eternal prosperity. Great in justice: for though He here bears long with the reprobate, yet He at last condemns them for ever. But it is well subjoined; *And cannot be spoken of*. For if He cannot worthily be thought of, how much less can He be spoken of? But we speak of Him far better, in a measure, if we hold our peace with admiration through fear of thinking upon Him. It follows,

Ver. 24. *Therefore men will fear Him, and all who seem to themselves to be wise, will not dare to contemplate Him.*

75. Eliu in this place calls those who are strong of understanding 'men.' ['viros'] And we must note that he says not, 'And wise men will not dare to contemplate Him,' but, *They who seem to themselves to be wise*. By which words, namely, he implies those who are skilful, but arrogant. Eliu, therefore, while he has many forcible sentiments, has touched himself in the close of his speech. For when men, who are learned and arrogant, do not live rightly, but are compelled by the force of doctrine to say right things, they become in a measure the heralds of their own condemnation, because while they enforce in their preaching that which they scorn to do, they proclaim with their own voices that they are condemned. Against whom it is well said by the Psalmist, *They were turned into a crooked bow.* [Ps. 78, 57] For a crooked bow strikes the very person, by whom it is aimed : but the tongues of arrogant men are in their sayings like a crooked bow ; because when they speak against pride, they fix their arrows in their own makers. Whence we must watch with the utmost care, lest the wisdom we receive should take away the light of humility, when it illuminates the darkness of ignorance, and should not any longer be wisdom. [Acts 10, 1-4] For though it shines forth in might of speech, yet it obscures the heart of the speaker with a covering of pride.

76. For some goods are of the highest, others of a mixed, kind. The highest goods are faith, hope, charity. Which, when they are really

possessed, cannot be turned into evil. But prophecy, doctrine, the power of healing, and the rest, are goods of a mixed nature. For they are so placed between each extreme, that at one time the heavenly country only, and at another earthly glory, is sought by their means. We term these, then, virtues of a mixed nature, which we turn to whatever object our mind wishes for; which the mind can use when possessed, just as it does worldly riches. For through earthly riches, some pride themselves in boastful ostentation, others perform offices of mercy upon their indigent neighbours. When outward praise then is sought for by doctrine and prophecy, the height of earthly glory is aimed at, as if by bodily riches. But when doctrine and prophecy are employed for gaining souls, the riches we have received are distributed as it were to our needy brethren. Because then the mind, through want of care, keeps itself aloof from the hand of the Giver, by means of those very gifts which it boasts of possessing, we must with vigilant forethought take care, that our vices are first overcome, and our gifts afterwards secured with circumspection. For if the mind, when amongst them, incautiously forsakes itself, it is not assisted and supported by them, but is rejected, as if already repaid for its former labours. Whence also it happens, that when the virtue we possess is employed in the service of transitory praise, it is no longer virtue, because it takes service with vice. For since humility is the source of virtue, that virtue truly shoots up in us, which remains firm in its proper root, that is, in humility. For if it is torn from it, it doubtless withers away, because it loses the moisture of charity, which quickens it within.

77. But because secret pride of heart is reproved by this, which Eliu says, *All who seem to themselves to be wise will not dare to contemplate Him;* it seems good to observe what great gifts of virtues David had obtained, and in all these with how firm a humility he maintained himself. For whom would it not puff up, to break the mouths of lions; to rend asunder the arms of bears; to be chosen, when his elder brethren had been despised; to be

anointed to the government of the kingdom, when the King had been rejected; to slay with a single stone Goliah who was dreaded by all; to bring back, after the destruction of the aliens, the numerous foreskins proposed by the King; to receive at last the promised kingdom, and to possess the whole people of Israel without any contradiction? And yet, when he brings back the Ark of God to Jerusalem, he dances before the Ark, mingled with the people, as though forgetful that he had been preferred to them all. And because, as is believed, it had been the custom of the common people to dance before the Ark, the king wheels round in the dance, in service to God. Behold how he whom the Lord preferred specially above all, contemns himself beneath the Lord, both by equalling himself with the least, and by displaying abject behaviour. The power of his kingdom is not recalled to his memory; he fears not to be vile in the eyes of his people, by dancing; he remembers not, before the Ark of Him Who had given him honour, that he had been preferred in honour above the rest. Before God he performed even the extremest vilenesses, in order to strengthen, by his humility, the bold deeds he had performed in the sight of men. What is thought by others of his doings, I know not; I am more surprised at David dancing, than fighting. For by fighting he subdued his enemies; but by dancing before the Lord he overcame himself. And when Michal, the daughter of Saul, still mad with pride at her royal descent, despised him when humbled, saying, *How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, uncovering himself before the handmaids of his servants, and made himself naked, as though one of the buffoons were naked:* [2 Sam. 6, 20] she immediately heard, *As the Lord liveth, I will play before Lord, Who hath chosen me rather than thy father.* [ibid. 21] And a little after he says, *And I will play, and I will become more vile than I have been, and I will be humble in mine own eyes.* [ibid. 22] As if he plainly said, I seek to become vile before men, because I seek to keep myself noble before the Lord, through my humility.

78. But there are some who think humbly of themselves; because, when placed in honour, they consider that they are nothing but dust and ashes; but yet they shrink from appearing contemptible before men, and, contrary to what they think of themselves within, they cover themselves, as it were, with a rigid cloak of beauty without. And there are some who seek to appear vile before men, and contemn every thing that they are, by exhibiting themselves as lowly; but they are yet puffed up in themselves within, as if by the very merit of the mean look they have displayed; and they are the more elated in their heart, the more they seemingly suppress pride. But both these warrings of the one sin of pride, David detected with great circumspection, overcame with wonderful virtue. For he teaches that, though thinking humbly of himself within, he seeks not honour from without, saying, *I will play, and I will become more vile.* And since he does not swell with pride within, because he made himself vile without, he adds, *And I will be humble in mine own eyes.* As if he said, Such as in self-contempt I represent myself without, such also do I keep myself within. What then should they do, whom teaching elates, if David knew that our Redeemer was to come from his flesh, and announced His joys in prophecy, and yet kept down in himself the neck of his heart, by the strong heel of discretion, saying, *And I will be humble in mine own eyes?*

79. It is well said therefore by Eliu, *Therefore men will fear Him, and all who seem to themselves to be wise will not dare to contemplate Him.* For they who seem to themselves to be wise, cannot contemplate the wisdom of God; because they are the more removed from His light, the more they are not humble in themselves. Because while the swelling of pride increases in their minds, it closes the eye of contemplation, and by considering that they outshine others, they thence deprive themselves of the light of truth. If, therefore, we seek to be truly wise, and to contemplate Wisdom Itself, let us humbly acknowledge ourselves to be fools. Let us give up hurtful wisdom,

let us learn praiseworthy folly. For hence it is written, *God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.* [1 Cor. l, 27] Hence again it is said, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* [ib. 3,18] Hence the words of the Gospel history attest, that when Zaccheus could see nothing for the crowd, he ascended a sycamore tree, to see the Lord as He passed by. [Luke 19, 4] For the barren [lit. 'foolish'] fig is called a sycamore. Zaccheus therefore, being small of stature, ascended a sycamore, and saw the Lord, because they who humbly choose the foolishness of the world, do themselves minutely contemplate the wisdom of God. For the crowd hinders smallness of stature from beholding the Lord, because the tumult of worldly cares keeps the infirmity of the human mind from looking at the light of truth. But we prudently ascend a sycamore, if we carefully maintain in our mind that foolishness which is commanded by God. For what is more foolish in this world, than not to seek for what we have lost; to give up our possessions to the spoilers, to requite no wrong for the wrongs we have received, nay more, to exhibit patience, when other wrongs have been added? For the Lord commands us, as it were, to ascend a sycamore, when He says, *Of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again;* [ib. 6, 30] and again, *If any man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.* [Matt. 5, 39] The Lord is seen, as He passes along, by means of the sycamore, because though the wisdom of God is not yet steadily beheld, as it really is, by this wise folly, yet it is seen by the light of contemplation, as though passing by us. But they, who seem to themselves to be wise, according to the words of Eliu, cannot see it; for, hurried away in the haughty crowd of their thoughts, they have not yet found a sycamore, in order to behold the Lord.

BOOK XXVIII.

The first eleven verses of the thirty-eighth chapter are explained, in various senses, but especially in a moral sense.

PREFACE.

1. After the loss of his goods, the death of his children, the wounds of his body, the words of his wife persuading him to evil, the insulting language of his comforters, and the darts of so many sorrows boldly received, blessed Job ought to have been praised by his Judge for such great power of constancy, if he had been now going to be called out of this present world. But after he is here about to receive back yet two-fold, after he is restored to his former health, to enjoy longer his restored possessions, Almighty God is obliged to reprove with strict justice him, whom He preserves alive, lest his very victory should lay him low with the sword of pride. For what commonly slays a soul more fatally than consciousness of virtue? For while it puffs it up with self-consideration, it deprives it of the fulness of truth; and while it suggests that it is sufficient of itself for the attainment of rewards, it diverts it from the intention of improvement. Job, therefore, was just before his scourges, but he remained more just after his scourges; and, having been praised before by the voice of God, he afterwards increased from the blow. For as a ductile tube is lengthened by being hammered, so was he raised the higher in praise of God, as he was smitten with heavier chastisement. But he who stood thus firm in his virtues, when prostrated by wounds, needed to be humbled. He needed to be humbled, lest the weapons of pride should pierce that most sturdy breast, which it was plain that even the wounds that had been inflicted had not overcome. It was doubtless necessary to find out a person, by comparison with whom he would have been surpassed. But what is this, which is said of him by the voice of the

Lord; *Thou hast seen My servant Job, that there is no man like him upon the earth.* [Job 1, 8; 2, 3] By comparison with whom then could he be surpassed, of whom it is said, on the witness of God, that he cannot be equalled, on comparison with any man? What then must be done, except for the Lord Himself to relate to him His own virtues, and to say to him, *Canst thou bring forth the morning star in its season, and canst thou make the evening star to rise over the sons of men?* [Job 38, 32] And again, *Have the gates of death been opened to thee, and hast thou seen the gloomy doors?* [ib. 17] Or certainly; *Hast thou commanded their dawn after thy rising, and hast thou shewn the morning its place?* [ib. 12] But who can do these things, but the Lord? And yet a man is asked, in order that he may learn that he is unable to do these things; in order that a man, who has increased with such boundless virtues, and is surpassed by the example of no man, may, that he should not be elated, be surpassed on comparison with God. But O how mightily is he exalted, who is so sublimely humbled! O how great is the victory of the man, to have been foiled on comparison with God! O how much greater is he than men, who is proved by testimony to be less than God! For he is very mighty, who is proved by such questioning not to be mighty. But since we are being led to discuss very obscure questions, let us now come to the words of the text.

Chap, xxxviii. ver. 1. *But the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said.*

1. I see it must be observed, that if the speech were said to have been addressed to one in health and safety, the Lord would not be described as having spoken out of the whirlwind. But because He speaks to one who has been scourged, He is described as having spoken out of the whirlwind. For the Lord speaks to His servants in one way, when He improves them inwardly by compunction, and in another, when He presses on them with severity, lest they be puffed up. For by the gentle address of the Lord, is

shewn His affectionate sweetness, but by His terrible, is pointed out His dreadful power. By the one the soul is persuaded to advance, by the other, that which is advancing is checked. In the one it learns what to desire, in the other what to fear. By the one He says, *Be glad and rejoice, O daughter of Sion, for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee.* [Zech. 2, 10] By the other it is said; *The Lord will come in a tempest, and in the whirlwind are His paths.* [Is. 66, 15] For He in truth is gentle, Who comes to dwell in the midst of us. But when He makes His way by the tempest and whirlwind, He doubtless disturbs the hearts which He touches; and puts Himself forth to tame their pride, when He is made known as mighty and terrible.

2. It should also be known, that the Divine mode of speaking is distinguished in two ways. For either the Lord speaks by Himself, or His words are adapted to us by means of an angelic creature. But when He speaks by Himself, He is disclosed to us, solely by the power of His inward inspiration. When He speaks by Himself, the heart is instructed in His word, without words and syllables; because His power is known by a kind of inward elevation. At which the mind when full is raised up, when empty is weighed down. For it is a kind of weight, to raise up every mind which it fills. It is an incorporeal light, to both fill the inner parts, and circumscribe them without, when filled. It is a discourse without noise, which both opens the ears, and yet knows not to utter a sound. For in that which is written concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit; *Suddenly there was made a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind approaching, and it filled the whole house, where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them*;) [Acts 2, 2. 3.] the Lord appeared indeed by the fire, but He spake to them by Himself within. And neither that sound nor that fire was God; but by that which He displayed outwardly, He expressed what He performed inwardly. For because He made the Disciples both to glow with zeal, and to be skilful in speech

within, He displayed tongues of fire without. The elements, therefore, were applied with significance, that their bodies might feel the fire and the sound, but that their hearts might be instructed by the invisible fire, and the voice without a sound. The fire then which appeared was outward, but that which gave knowledge was inward. And when the eunuch of queen Candace was sitting in his chariot, and journeying, and was holding Isaiah in his hands, without understanding him, the Spirit had doubtless said to Philip in his heart, *Join thyself to the chariot.* [Acts 8, 29] And when Cornelius had sent soldiers who feared God to summon Peter, Peter doubtless heard in his mind by the Spirit, *Behold three men seek thee. Arise therefore, get thee down, and go with them.* [Acts 10, 19] For, for the Spirit of God to say, as it were, certain words to us, is for Him to intimate by His hidden power what is to be done, and to instruct in an instant, without the medium of sound or the slowness of speech, the unlearned heart of man in hidden mysteries. For because the hearing does not comprehend at once all the sayings which are addressed to it; since it understands reasons by means of words, and words separately by syllables; but our sight apprehends suddenly and at once the whole object, by turning itself towards it; the words of God addressed to us from within are seen, rather than heard; because, while He insinuates Himself, without the delay of words, He illumines by His sudden light the darkness of our ignorance. Whence also when Baruch the son of Neriah was explaining, when demanded, how he had heard the words of Jeremiah prophesying, he said, *He pronounced all these words from his mouth, as if he were reading, and I wrote them.* [Jer 36, 18] For he who speaks when reading, looks in one direction, but utters his words in another; because he speaks that which he sees. The Prophets of God then, because they rather see than hear His words in the heart, speak as if reading.

3. But when God declares His will by an Angel, He points it out sometimes by words, sometimes by things, sometimes by words and things

together, sometimes by images presented to the eyes of the heart, sometimes by images taken for the time from the air and presented even before the eyes of the body sometimes by heavenly substances, sometimes by earthly, and sometimes by earthly and heavenly together. But sometimes God so speaks even by an Angel to the hearts of men, that the Angel Himself is presented to the sight of the mind.

4. For God speaks in words by an Angel, when nothing is displayed in outward appearance, but the words of the Heavenly saying are heard; as on the Lord saying, *Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee;* [John 17, 1] it is immediately replied, *I have glorified, and will glorify Him again.* [John 12, 28] For God, Who speaks without time, by the power of inward impulse, uttered not in time that voice by His own Substance, which voice, circumscribed by time, He made plain by human words. But speaking doubtless from "heavenly places, He fashioned, by the ministry of a rational creature, those His words which He wished to be heard by men.

5. But sometimes God speaks through Angels by things, when nothing is said in word, but future events are announced by an object taken from the elements; as Ezekiel, hearing no words, saw the appearance of amber in the midst of the fire; [Ezek. 1, 4] in order, namely, that while he was looking on this single object, he might understand the things which were to come to pass in the last times. For amber ['electrum'] is a mixture of the metals of gold and silver, by which admixture the silver indeed is rendered more brilliant, but the brightness of the gold is softened down. What then is pointed out by amber, but the Mediator between God and men? For while He presented Himself to us as a union of the Divine and human natures, He both rendered His human nature more glorious by His Godhead, and tempered the Divine Nature to our sight by His Manhood. For since human nature shone forth with so many miracles by the virtue of the Godhead, the silver was improved by the gold; and because God could be recognised

through the flesh, and because He endured therein so many adversities, the gold was, as it were, tempered by the silver. And it is well represented also in the midst of the fire, because the flame of the judgment which follows attends the mystery of His Incarnation. For it is written, *The Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son.* [John 5, 22]

6. But sometimes God speaks by Angels in words and deeds at once, when He teaches by certain gestures, that which He declares in words. For neither could Adam, after his sin, hear the Lord in the Substance of His Divinity, but he heard the words of reproof by the Angel, of whom it is written; *When he had heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden at the wind after mid-day, he hid himself among the trees of the garden.* [Gen. 3, 8] For what is it, that God after the sin of man no longer stands, but walks in the garden, except that He points out that He has been driven from the heart of man, by the inroad of sin? What by His so doing at the wind after mid-day, except that the more glowing light of truth had departed, and the frosts of his sin were congealing his sinful soul? He reproved, therefore, Adam, when walking, that He might make known to benighted souls their wickedness, not by words only, but also by His doings; so that sinful man might both hear by His words what he had done, and perceive, by His walking, the inconstancy of his changeableness, on having lost the stability of eternity, and by the wind might observe his own torpor, when the warmth of charity had been driven away, and learn by the declining of the sun that he was drawing near to darkness.

7. Sometimes God speaks through Angels by images presented to the eyes of the heart; as Jacob when sleeping saw a ladder leaning against heaven. [Gen.28, 12] As Peter caught up in trance saw a linen cloth full of reptiles and quadrupeds; [Acts 10, 10. 11.] for he would not have been in a trance, unless he were beholding these things with other than bodily eyes. As a man of Macedonia appeared to Paul in a vision of the night, who asked

him to come over into Macedonia. [ib.16, 9] Sometimes God speaks through Angels by images taken for the time from the air, and presented before the eyes of the body. As Abraham was able not only to behold three men, but also to receive them into an earthly habitation, and not only to receive them, but to supply also food for their use. [Gen. 18, 2] For unless the Angels, when announcing some inward truths, assumed for a time their bodies from the air, they would not, in truth, appear to our outward sight; nor would they take food with Abraham, unless they were bearing for our sake some solid substance from the heavenly element. Nor is it any wonder that they who are there received, are called, at one time 'Angels,' and at another 'the Lord,' because they, who were ministering outwardly, are designated by the word 'Angel;' and He Who was ruling them within, is pointed out by the appellation 'Lord ;' that by this the power of Him Who was ruling, and by the latter the office of these who were ministering might be clearly displayed. [Exod. 3, 2. 4.]

8. Sometimes God speaks through Angels by heavenly substances, as it is written, that when the Lord had been baptized, a voice sounded from the cloud, saying, *This is My beloved Son, in Whom I have been well pleased.* [Matt. 3, 17] Sometimes God speaks through Angels by earthly substances, as when He reproved Balaam, He formed human words in the mouth of a she ass. [Numb. 22, 28] Sometimes He speaks through Angels by earthly and heavenly substances together. As when He declared to Moses the words of His command in the Mount, He brought together the fire and the bush, and added one from above, and the other from below. [Exod. 3, 2] But this is done, only when something is signified by this very conjunction. For what else did He point out by addressing Moses, through the burning bush, except that He would become the ruler of that people, which would feel the flame of the Law, and yet would not avoid the thorn of sin? or that there would come forth from that people, He Who would take away by the fire of

His Godhead the sins of our flesh, as the thorns of the bush; and would preserve the substance of our manhood unconsumed, even in the very flame of the Godhead?

9. But sometimes God pours the virtue of His inspiration into the hearts of men, through Angels, by their secret presence. Whence also Zechariah says, *And the Angel who was speaking in me, said to me.* [Zech. 1, 14] By saying that the Angel was speaking in him, and yet to him, he clearly proved that he who was speaking to him, was not without him by any bodily appearance. Whence also he added a little after, *And, behold, the Angel that was talking in me was going out.* [ibid. 2, 3] For often they appear not outwardly, but, as they are angelic spirits, they make known the will of God to the senses of the Prophets, and raise them up to sublime thoughts, and whatever events are still future they set forth as present in their original causes. For the heart of man, burdened with the very weight of corruptible flesh, enduring this its bodily part as an obstacle, penetrates not into inward things, and lies as a heavy burden without; because it has no hand within to raise it up. Whence it results, as has been said, that the subtilty of angelic virtue appears itself, as it really is, to the senses of the Prophets, and that their mind is raised up as it is touched by the subtle spirit, and that it is no longer slothful and sluggish below, but, filled with inspiration within, ascends on high, and thence beholds, as from a lofty eminence, the things which are to come, beneath it. But lest any one should think that, in the aforesaid words of Zechariah, either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, is designated by the word 'Angel,' if he considers the text of Holy Scripture, he quickly amends his opinion. For it never calls the Father, or the Holy Spirit, an 'Angel,' nor the Son, except when preaching His Incarnation. Whence it is plainly shewn in the words of the same Zechariah, that an Angel, that is a creature, was really speaking in him, when it is said, *And, behold, the Angel that was talking in me was going*

out. And it is immediately subjoined, *And another Angel was going on to meet him, and he said to him, Speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall he inhabited without a wall.* [Zech. 2, 3. 4.] The Angel therefore who is sent, who is ordered by an Angel what words he ought to speak, is not God. But because, in the sight of their Creator, the ordained ministrations of Angels are distinguished by the position of their ranks, (in order that after the common happiness of their blessed state they may rejoice together beholding their Creator, and yet minister to each other according to the position of their dignity,) an Angel sends an Angel to the Prophets, and both teaches and directs him, whom he beholds rejoicing in God in common with himself; because he surpasses him both by his superior wisdom, in power of knowledge, and, by more distinguished grace, in height of power.

10. These points then have been stated, to show in what ways God talks with men. But when the Lord is said to have answered Job from the whirlwind, it is disputed, whether He spoke to him by Himself, or by an Angel. For commotions of the air could have been made by an Angel, and these words, which are subjoined, could have been delivered by him. And again, both an Angel could agitate the air in a whirlwind without, and the Lord could sound into his heart without words the force of His sentence by Himself within; in order that it may be believed that he, who when filled with God, heard these things without words, himself uttered in words the sayings of the Lord which follow. It is therefore said,

Ver. 2. *Who is this that involves sentences in unskilful words?*

11. As we have said also in the former part, an interrogative of this kind, in which it is said, *Who is this?* is the beginning of a reproof. For Eliu had spoken arrogantly. And we say not, *Who is this,* excepting expressly of him whom we know not. But knowledge on God's part is approval; His not knowing is rejection. Whence He says to certain whom He rejects, *I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [Luke 13,

27] What then is the enquiring about this haughty man, *Who is this?* except saying openly, I know not the arrogant: that is, I approve not of their life in the loftiness of My wisdom. Because while they are puffed up by human praise, they are deprived of the true glory of eternal retribution. But in that He said *sentences,* and added not of what kind, we certainly understand them to be good. And He asserts that these were involved in unskilful words, because they had been brought forward with language of boasting. For it is a fault of unskilfulness, to hold what is right in a wrong way, that is, to pervert the heavenly gift to a desire for earthly praise. For as it often happens that good things are stated badly and bad things properly, so the arrogant Eliu brought forward right truths not rightly, because, in defence of God he uttered humble sentiments unhumbly. Whence he deservedly serves as a type of those who within the Catholic Church are studious of vain-glory: for while they believe themselves to be skilful beyond others, they are in the Divine judgment convicted of unskilfulness; because, as the Apostle said, *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* [1 Cor. 8, 2] For since the original folly of the Angel was pride of heart, humility in his own estimation becomes the true wisdom of man. And whoever abandons this by even thinking great things, is the more outrageously foolish, the more he knows not himself. Whence Eliu both uttered sentences, and those involved in unskilful words, because he both knew the truth which he was speaking about God, and yet his silly pride was making foolish the things he said of himself. Having then glanced with contempt on this man, His words are directed to the instruction of Job.

Ver. 3. *Gird up thy loins as a man.*

12. Holy Scripture is wont to call those persons ‘men,’ who follow, doubtless, the ways of the Lord with firm and steady steps. Whence it is said by the Psalmist, *Do manfully, and let your heart be strengthened.* [Ps. 31, 24] Whence Paul says, *Lift up the hands which hang down, and the*

feeble knees. [Heb. 12, 12] Whence also Wisdom in the Proverbs, *Unto you, O men, I call.* [Prov. 8, 4] As if She were saying openly, I do not speak to women, but to men: because they who are of an unstable mind, cannot at all understand My words. But to gird up the loins is to restrain lust either in work, or in thought. For the delight of the flesh is in the loins. Whence it is said to holy Preachers, *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.* [Luke 12, 35] For by the loins is designated lust, but by lights the brightness of good works. They are commanded therefore to gird their loins, and to hold their lights. As if they heard openly; First, restrain lust in yourselves, and then set forth from yourselves examples of good works to others. But since we have known that blessed Job was endowed with such great chastity, why is it said to him after so many scourges, *Gird up thy loins as a man,* (that is, as a bold man restrain thy lust,) except that there is one lust of the flesh, with which we pollute our chastity, but another lust of the heart, by which we boast of our chastity? It is said therefore to him, *Gird up thy loins as a man:* in order that he who had first overcome the lust of corruption, should now restrain the lust of pride; and that he might not, from priding himself on his patience or his chastity, become more fatally lustful before the eyes of God within, the more patient and chaste he appeared before the eyes of men. Whence it is well said by Moses, *Circumcise the foreskins of your heart;* [Deut. 10, 16] that is, after ye have restrained lust in the flesh, lop off also the superfluities of thoughts. It follows,

I will question thee, and answer thou Me.

13. Our Maker is wont to question us in three ways; when He strikes us with the severity of the rod, and shews what great patience either exists in, or is wanting to, us. Or when He enjoins certain things which we dislike, and lays open our obedience, or disobedience. Or discloses to us some hidden truths, and conceals others, and makes known to us the measure of

our humility. For He questions us by the scourge, when He assails with afflictions the mind which has been properly subject to Him in a time of tranquillity. As the same Job is both praised, on the evidence of his Judge, and yet is given up to the blows of the smiter, in order that his patience might be the more truly manifested, the more severely it had been examined. But He questions us by enjoining hard things, as Abraham is ordered to go out of his own country, and to go whither he knew not; [Gen. 12, 1] to lead his only son to the mountain, and to offer up him, whom he had received, when old, as a consolation. For it is doubtless said to him, when making a good reply to the question, that is when obedient to the command, *Now I know that thou fearest God.* [ib. 22, 12] Or as it is written, *The Lord your God trieth you, to know if ye love Him.* [Deut. 13, 3] For God's trying us, is His questioning us with mighty commands. His knowing also, is His making us know our own obedience. But God questions us by disclosing some things to us, and shutting out others, as is said by the Psalmist, *His eyelids question the sons of men.* [Ps.11, 4] For, when our eyelids are open, we see; when they are closed, we behold nothing. What do we understand then by the eyelids of God, but His judgments? Which in one respect are closed to men, and in another are opened, in order that men who know not themselves, may become known to themselves; so that, while they comprehend some truths in their understanding, and are not at all able to understand others, their hearts may secretly examine themselves, whether the Divine judgments do not stimulate them, when concealed, or puff them up when laid open. For Paul was proved by this questioning, who after he had tasted inward wisdom, after the barrier of paradise had been opened, after the ascent of the third heaven, after the mysteries of *Heavenly words,* still says, *I count not myself to have apprehended.* [Phil. 3, 13] And again; *I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle.* [1 Cor. 15, 9] And again; *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as*

of ourselves; *but our sufficiency is of God.* [2 Cor. 3, 5] Paul then, when questioned by the open eyelids of God, answered rightly, for he both reached to heavenly secrets, and yet stood sublimely in humility of heart. And again, when he was discussing the secret judgments of God concerning the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, and could not attain to them, he was questioned, as it were, by the closed eyelids of God. But he returned a thoroughly right answer, who in his ignorant state, wisely bowed himself down to God, saying, *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how incomprehensible are his judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?* [Rom. 11, 33. 34.] For, lo! when questioned by mysteries hidden, as with closed eyelids, he gave fitting and right answers. For knocking at the entrance of the mystery, because he could not through his knowledge be admitted to inward things, he stood before the gates in humble confession, and that which he could not comprehend within, he praised with dread without. Whence blessed Job is now also, after the questioning of the rod, examined by the questioning of the word, to make him consider the things which are above; and in order that, when he does not comprehend them, he may turn back to himself, and learn how he is almost nothing, in comparison with heavenly things. Let him hear therefore, *I will question thee, and answer thou Me.* As if it is more plainly said, I rouse thee by My words to consider sublime truths, and whilst thou perceivest that thou knowest not those things that are above thee, I make thee better known to thyself. For then thou answerest Me truly, if thou understandest what things thou knowest not. It follows,

Ver. 4, 5, 6. *Where wast thou when I was laying the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measure of it, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened.*

14. Behold all things are put together in historical narration, as if concerning the origin of the world. But something is immediately subjoined, which seems to be said of the creation, not of the world, but of the Church. For it is said;

Or who hath laid the corner stone thereof?

For by this, which was not done at the beginning of the world, it is shewn that that former expression was not used of the creation of the world. For some obscure subjects of a different character are blended with those that are plain and obvious, for this very purpose; that in consequence of that which agrees not with the literal meaning, that also may be examined mystically, which sounds as if spoken literally. For as, by some things which are opened we learn others which are closed; so are we compelled by those which are closed, to knock with a deeper understanding at those which we believed to be open. Let Him say then; *Where wast thou, when I was laying the foundations of the earth?* In Holy Scripture what else do we understand by foundations but holy preachers? For since God had placed them first in the Church, the whole structure of the subsequent fabric has risen up upon them. Whence also the priest is ordered, when he enters the tabernacle, to bear twelve stones on his breast. [Ex. 28, 21] Because, namely, our High Priest, in offering Himself a sacrifice for us, when He set forth mighty preachers at the very beginning, carried twelve stones under His head in the front of His body. The holy Apostles therefore are stones on the breast, to be displayed as an ornament in front, and foundations in the ground for the first firm basis of the edifice. And hence when David the Prophet beheld Holy Church established and built on the lofty minds of the Apostles, he says; *Her foundations are on the holy hills.* [Ps. 87, l] But when in holy Scripture 'foundations' are not spoken of, but 'a foundation,' in the singular number, no one is designated, except the Lord Himself, by

the power of Whose Divinity the tottering hearts of our infirmity are made strong. Of Whom also Paul says; *Other foundation can no man lay, but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* For He is in truth the foundation of the foundations, because He is the first commencement of beginners, and the constancy of the strong. Because then they who have borne the freight of our iniquities are our foundations, lest blessed Job should be puffed up with pride by the power of his own virtues, he is, in the very commencement of the Lord's address, tested by the mention of holy preachers; in order that the more worthy of admiration he beheld them approach, the more vilely he might think of himself in comparison with them. But that is described by the Lord, as if already passed: for the very reason that, whatever is outwardly still future in act, has been already effected within by predestination. It is said therefore to him, *Where wast thou, when I was laying the foundations of the earth?* As if it were openly said; Consider the virtue of the mighty, and think on Me their Maker before all ages: and when thou beholdest those wonderful beings whom I made in time, consider how entirely thou oughtest to be subject to Me, Whom thou acknowledgest as the Author of Wonders without time. It follows;

Ver. 4, 5. *Tell Me, if thou hast understanding, who hath laid the measures of it, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?*

15. Lines of measures are stretched forth in the partition of lands, in order that fairness of dimension may be observed by their very extension. But the Lord, coming to the Church in the flesh, measured out the measures of the earth with lines, because He marked out the boundaries of the Church with the subtlety of His secret judgment. The secret measures or lines of this earth were being stretched out, when holy preachers were called by the agency of the Spirit to go into some parts of the world, but were kept from approaching other parts. For when Paul the Apostle was neglecting to preach in Macedonia, a man of Macedonia appeared to him in a vision, to

say, *Come over into Macedonia and help us.* [Acts 16, 9] But on the other hand, as it is written, *The Apostle essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.* [ibid. 7] When holy preachers then are called to Macedonia, and are kept from going into Asia, this line of secret measure is drawn on that side, and removed from this. It is extended there, that Macedonia may be brought within the limits of Holy Church. It is drawn in from hence, that Asia may be left without the bounds of the faith. For there were then some therein who were not to be gathered in: but, when they had been lost according to their desert, Asia has now been embraced within the measures of the Church, by the bounty of God.

16. Within these measures then are all the Elect, without them are all the reprobate, even if they seem to be within the limit of faith. Whence it is written in the Apocalypse; *The court which is without the temple, cast out, and measure it not.* [Rev. 11, 2] For what else does the court signify but the breadth of the present life? And they who are designated by the court are rightly without the temple: and they are therefore not to be measured, because *narrow the gate that leadeth unto life;* [Matt. 7, 14] and the breadth of the life of the wicked is not admitted to the measures and rules of the Elect. These spiritual lines were being stretched in hidden judgment, when to a certain person who said, *Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,* [Matt. 8, 19] it was replied by the voice of the same Master, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.* [ibid. 20] Those measures and lines were being stretched forth, when to a certain person who said, *Lord, suffer me to go and bury my father,* [Luke 9, 59] it was replied by the voice of the same Master, *Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.* [ibid. 60] Lo! one promises that he will follow Him, and is rejected; another demands to be released, and is retained. Whence is this? Except that the lines of heavenly judgments were being stretched over the hidden spaces of

the heart, in order that their incomprehensible measures might enclose the one within, and that the other might, not unjustly, remain without. But since no one is ignorant that God stretches forth these lines of hidden judgments, why is it said to Job, *Tell Me, if thou hast understanding, who hath placed the measures of it, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?* Is the question put to remind him of that which he might know, and yet forget; that he should consider more anxiously the weight of the secrets of God, namely, that the ordering of man depends not on human strength, but on the power ['manu'] of the Creator, that so, while considering Who is invisibly performing these works, he may attribute nothing to himself, and no longer attempt any thing of himself, when he dreads the secret judgments of God? But that, considering the measures and lines incomprehensibly stretched out from above, he may remain more firm in the humility of fear, the more he sees every thing depending on the power of the Measurer. It follows;

Ver. 6. *Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened?*

17. What else do we understand by the foundations of this earth, but the teachers of Holy Church? For columns are raised on the bases, but on the columns the weight of the whole fabric is raised. Holy teachers are then not improperly designated by the name of bases. For while they preach what is right, and in life accord with their preaching, they uphold the whole weight of the Church by the fixed gravity of their manners; they endure sharp assaults from unbelievers, and, whatever is dreaded by the faithful as difficult in the precepts of God, they shew to be easy by the examples of their works. Whence also, when the tabernacle was being fixed as the type of the Church, it is well said to Moses, *Thou shalt make four columns, and their bases thou shalt cover with silver.* [Ex. 26, 32] For what else is understood by silver but the brightness of the Divine word? As it is written; *The words of the Lord are pure words, silver tried in the fire, purged from*

the earth, purified seven times. [Ps. 12, 6] Bases therefore covered with silver support the four columns of the tabernacle; because preachers of the Church, adorned with the Divine word, in order to set themselves forth as an example to all, bear the words of the four Evangelists in their mouth, and in their works.

18. Prophets also can be signified by bases; for when they first spoke openly of the Incarnation of the Lord, we behold them rising as bases from the foundation, and bearing the weight of the superimposed fabric. Whence also, when the Lord ordered the boards of the tabernacle to be erected, He ordered Moses that their bases should be cast in silver. For what are signified by the boards, but Apostles spread out in their extended preaching to the world, and what by the bases of silver but the Prophets: who being themselves firm and molten sustain the boards placed upon them? Because while the life of the Apostles is instructed by their preaching, it is also strengthened by their authority. Whence also the bases put together in pairs are placed under the separate boards. Because when the holy prophets agree in their words concerning the Incarnation of the Mediator, they edify without doubt the subsequent preachers of the Church: and when they disagree not with themselves, they establish them more firmly on themselves. But it is not improperly ordered that the bases, by which the Prophets are signified, should be cast of silver. For the brightness of silver is preserved by its being used; when not used it is turned into blackness. The sayings also of the Prophets, because they were not held in the use of spiritual knowledge, remained, as it were, in blackness before the coming of the Mediator, because they could not be understood by reason of their obscurity. But after the Mediator, on His coming, wiped them before our eyes with the hand of His Incarnation, whatever light was lurking therein shone forth, and He brought into use the meaning of preceding fathers, because He expounded words by events. Whether He signifies then the

prophets, or the teachers who succeed them in the latter times, by the expression 'bases,' let Him say; *Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened?* Thou understandest, except upon Me, Who hold all things marvellously together, and confer at the first an inward existence on things that are good without. For he who attributes what is good to himself, is not a solid basis; for whilst he rests not on the foundation, he is by his own weight precipitated to the bottom. But since many things are now being said concerning the building of Holy Church, the mind seeks to hear, with what virtue hostile nations are united together, that is, with what skill the different buildings of this house are fitted together. It follows;

Or who hath laid the corner stone thereof?

19. It is now clear to all by Divine grace, Whom Holy Scripture calls the corner Stone. Him in truth, Who taking into Himself from one side the Jewish, and from the other the Gentile people, unites, as it were, two walls in the one fabric of the Church; Him of Whom it is written, *He hath made both one;* [Eph. 2, 14] Who exhibited Himself as the corner Stone, not only in things below, but in things above; because He united on earth the nations of the Gentiles to the people of Israel, and both together to Angels in heaven. For at His birth the Angels exclaimed, *On earth peace to men of good will.* [Luke 2, 14] For they would not offer their joys to men of peace as a great thing at the birth of the King, if they were not at variance with each other. Of this Stone it is said by the Prophet; *The Stone which the builders rejected, is made the head of the corner.* [Ps. 118, 22] Jechonias the king typified the Stone, whom Matthew when describing fourteen generations, reckoned twice. [Matt. 1, 11. 12.] For him, whom he had inserted as the end of the second generation, he inserted again at the beginning of the third. For he himself was removed into Babylonia with the people of Israel; for while he is led from one to the other, he is not improperly counted twice over for the side of each wall. And by the

bending of this migration he designates the corner stone. For where the order is diverted from its right course to go into a different direction, it makes, as it were, a corner. He could therefore rightly be counted twice; for he shewed as it were two sides of himself along either wall. Whence also he properly represented Him, Who born in Judaea, and gathering together the Gentiles, went as it were from Jerusalem to Babylonia, and bound together in His own Person, by the art of charity, that building of faith which before was rent asunder by the animosity of discord.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

But these things which have been said, as descriptive of Holy Church, it seems good to repeat briefly in a moral sense. For it is right for us to be brought back to our own hearts by those things which we know were said to blessed Job; because the mind then understands more truly the words of God, when it searches for itself therein. For behold it is said,

Ver. 4. *Where wast thou when I was laying the foundations of the earth?*

20. If the mind of a sinner is dust, which is borne on the surface, and is swept away by the breeze of temptation, (whence it is written, *Not so are the ungodly, not so; but as the dust, which the wind driveth away from the face of the earth;*) [Ps. 1,4] nothing prevents the earth being understood to mean the soul of a just man, of which it is written, *For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth the herbs meet for those by whom it is dressed, receiveth a blessing.* [Heb. 6, 7] But the foundation of this earth is faith. The foundation of this earth is laid, when the first cause of firmness, the fear of God, is breathed in the secret places of the heart. This man does not as yet believe the eternal truths which he hears; when faith is given him, a foundation is now laid for the building up of the subsequent work. He now believes eternal truths, but yet fears them not; he despises the terror of the coming judgment: he boldly involves

himself in sins of the flesh and of the spirit. But when the fear of future things is suddenly infused into him, in order that the edifice of a good life may rise up, the foundations are now erected. When the foundation then of a wholesome dread has been laid, and the fabric of virtue is being raised on high, it is necessary for every one to measure his strength, as he is making progress. So that though he has already begun to be great by the Divine building, he may without ceasing look back to what he was; in order that humbly remembering what he was found in merit, he may not arrogate to himself what he has been made by grace. Whence also blessed Job is now brought back to himself by the voice from above, and, that he may not dare to boast of his virtues, he is reminded of his past life. And it is said to him, *Where wast thou when I was laying the foundations of the earth?* As if the Truth openly said to the justified sinner; Attribute not to thyself the virtues which were received from Me. Exalt not thyself against Me by reason of My own gift. Call to mind where I found thee, when I laid the first foundations of virtue in thee, in My fear. Call to mind where I found thee, when I confirmed thee in My fear. In order then that I may not destroy in thee that which I have built up, thou must not cease to consider with thyself, what I found thee. For whom has the Truth not found either in sins or excesses? But after this we can well preserve that which we are, if we never neglect to consider what we were. But pride is yet sometimes wont to steal secretly even into careful hearts, so that the thought of good deeds, though slight and feeble, as it advances to a great height of virtue, forgets its own infirmity, and does not recall to mind what it was in sins. Whence also Almighty God, because He sees that our weakness is increased even by salutary remedies, places limits to our very progress, that we may have some excellencies of virtues, which we have never sought for, and that we may seek after others, and yet be unable to possess them. In order that our mind, when unable to attain these things which it desires, may understand

that it possesses not of itself those even which it does possess, and that, from those which are present, those which are wanting may be thought of, and that, by means of those that are profitably wanting, those goods that are present may be humbly preserved. Whence also it is rightly subjoined, concerning His dealings towards this earth, that is, this righteous soul;

Ver. 4, 5. *Declare to Me if thou hast understanding, who hath laid the measure thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?*

21. For who, but our Creator, lays the measures of this earth? Who, by the secret ordering of His inward judgment, gives to one the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another perfect faith, to another the grace of healing, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of speeches; in order that one man may by one and the same Spirit be mighty in the word of wisdom, and yet not be strengthened with the speech of knowledge, that is, of doctrine, (for he is able to understand and discover even that truth which he does not attain to by study and learning;) and that another may shine with the word of knowledge, and yet not be strong in the word of wisdom, because he is able fully to understand all that he has learnt, and yet cannot rise by himself to understand any subtle question. One man by faith commands the elements, and yet cures not bodily infirmities by the gift of healing. Another removes diseases by the aid of prayer, and yet restores not by his word the rain to the thirsty earth. This man restores even the dead at once to present life, by the working of miracles, and yet, not possessing the gift of prophecy, knows not what things are to befal him. Another beholds all future events as if present, and yet does not display himself in any working of miracles. One man by the discerning of spirits subtilly discerns the minds of men in their doings, but yet knows not tongues of divers kind; another examines into tongues of divers kind, but yet observes not dissimilar hearts in similar doings. One

person skilfully examines by interpretation the value of words in one language which he knows, and yet patiently goes without the other goods which he has not.

22. Thus, therefore, does our Creator and Disposer order all things; that he who might be puffed up by the gift which he has, may be humbled by that virtue which he has not. He so regulates all things, that when He exalts any one by the grace bestowed, He also, by a different gift, makes one person inferior to another, and makes every one to look on him who is beneath him, as superior to him in some other gift, and though he feels that he is even in some respects superior, to place himself in others below the very person whom he surpasses. He so regulates all things, that while all possess separate gifts, they become, all of them, the property of each person separately, by a connecting bond of charity, and that every one so possesses in another that which he has not himself, that he humbly confers on the other that which he received as his own possession. For it is hence said by Peter, *As every one hath received the gift, ministering, the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* [l Pet. 4, 10] For the manifold grace of God is then well dispensed, when the gift which has been received is believed to belong even to him who does not possess it, when it is considered to have been given to a man's self on account of him in whose behalf it is exerted. Hence it is said by Paul, *By love serve one another.* [Gal. 5, 13] For charity then sets us free from the yoke of blame, when it engages us through love in mutual service, when we both believe that the goods of others belong to ourselves, and present our goods to others as though offering them their own. Hence it is again said by Paul, *For even the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am therefore not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Became I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the*

hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? And a little after, *But if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.* [l Cor. 12, 14-17. 19. 20.]

23. For what is Holy Church, except the Body of its own heavenly Head? Wherein one is the eye, by beholding lofty things; another a hand, by performing right things; another a foot, by running to and fro at command; another an ear, by understanding the voice of the precepts; another a nose, by discerning the foulness of wicked, and the fragrance of good, deeds. And, while they receive and discharge mutual offices, like the limbs of the body, they make of themselves together one single body, and, while they perform different offices in charity, they keep that from being different, in which they are bound together. But were they all to do one and the same work, they would assuredly not be a body, which is composed of many members; because, namely, it would not exist, as compacted of many parts, if this harmonious diversity of members did not bind it together. Because then the Lord divides to the holy members of His Church the gifts of virtues, He places the measures of the earth. Whence Paul says again, *As God hath divided to every one the measure of faith.* [Rom. 12, 3] And again, *From Whom the whole body compacted and connected by that which every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every member, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.* [Eph. 4, 16]

24. But since our Creator and Disposer with wonderful wisdom confers gifts on one, which He refuses to another, and refuses to one those gifts which He bestows on another; whoever aims at doing more than he has received, endeavours to exceed the limits assigned to him. As if, perchance, he, to whom it has been only given to discuss the secret meanings of precepts, should attempt also to dazzle with miracles; or, as if he, whom the gift of heavenly virtue strengthens only for miracles, should strive, besides, to lay open the mysteries of the Divine Law. For he puts forth his foot on a

precipice, who regards not the limits of his own measures. And he who boldly hastes to grasp those subjects which he is unable to reach, commonly loses that power which was his. For we then use aright the services of our limbs, when we distinctly preserve for them their own offices. For with the eyes we behold the light, with the ears we hear a voice. But if any one, having inverted the order, applies his eyes to the voice, and his ears to the light, both are to him open in vain. If any one wishes to distinguish scents with his mouth, to taste flavours with his nose, he does away with the service of both senses, because he perverts them. For when they are not applied to their proper uses, they both give up their own offices, and do not attain to those which are foreign to them.

25. The Prophet David, then, had rightly confined the foot of his heart within the measure he had received by the Divine bounty, when he said, *I have not walked in great matters, nor in things too wonderful for me.* [Ps. 131, 1] For he would in truth walk in things too wonderful for him, if he sought to appear mighty beyond his power. For a man is raised above himself in wonderful things, if he endeavours to appear capable even in those things, to which he is unequal. Paul also was rightly confining himself within these limits, even in the wide range of his preaching, when he said, *For I do not dare to speak of any of those things, which Christ worketh not by me.* [Rom.15, 18] But the measure which has been received is then rightly preserved, when the life of spiritual men is viewed as set before the eyes. Whence it follows;

Ver. 5. *Or who hath stretched the line upon it?*

26. For a line is stretched over this earth, when the examples of preceding Fathers are pointed out to each Elect soul, as a rule of life to be adopted; in order for it to consider from their life what to maintain in its own doings; that so, by observing the track of the proper path, it may neither, through neglect, fall short of the smallest matters, nor, through

pride, stretch forth beyond the greatest; nor endeavour to do less than it is able, nor grasp at more than it has received; lest it should either not attain to the measure which it ought, or should, by forsaking this measure, fall beyond its limit. For narrow in truth is the gate which leadeth to life, [Matt. 7, 14] and he enters therein, who is, on account of it, carefully confined in all his doings, by his subtlety of discernment. For he who with fearless mind spreads himself abroad through his own wishes, condemns himself to exclusion from the narrow gate. In order, then, for the measure of this earth to be preserved, a line is extended over it from heaven; because the discriminating life of the Saints is spread out before us in Holy Scripture, in order that, either our defects may be corrected, or our excesses moderated; and both what, and how much, is to be done, is marked out by their discrimination which is set before us.

27. Behold a person, fearing either the loss of goods, or bodily affliction, dreads the threats of worldly power, and presumes not to maintain the truth against the might of opponents. Because Peter beholds him hard pressed with fear, he brings him back to the wide space of virtue, by putting before him the line of his examples. For when he had been scourged by the chiefs of the people, and perceived that he had been set free, on condition that he should cease from preaching, when he was commanded not to speak for the future, he did not yield even for the time. [Acts 4, 18; 5, 40] For he immediately answered and said, *We ought to obey God rather than men.* [Acts 5, 29] And again, *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* [Acts 4, 20] But he, who before was weak, and fearing present loss, when he contemplates examples of such great courage, now follows the course of Peter, through the authority of the word, now fears not any adversity, and contemns, even with laceration of body, the powers of the world, which oppose God. But yet the more he overcomes the strength of his persecutors by bold endurance, and the more, in the midst of

adversities, he yields not to any terms, the more does he in general set himself above others, even in the opinions he has held, when placed among the faithful; the more does he choose his own schemes, and trust himself, rather than others. He doubtless, while exerting himself in virtue, by not yielding to unrighteous opposition, places his foot beyond the proper limit, by not adopting even the right advice of others. Him does Peter recall within the line of measure, who, after he had overcome the authority of rulers by the freedom of his words, listened, through humility of heart, to Paul's advice about not circumcising the Gentiles. For he desired so to raise himself up against the adversaries by his authority, as yet not to trust himself in those points in which he was wrong; in order that he might overcome haughty powers by the freedom of his boldness, and might exhibit by the humility of his gentleness submission in good counsel even to his younger brethren; and thus at one time oppose himself to others, and at another together with others oppose himself. In the conduct then of Peter a line of authority and humility is extended as it were before our eyes, lest our mind should not attain to the standard through fear, or should exceed the limit through pride.

28. It has been stated, how the line is extended, lest we should fall into a fault in another case, through the boldness of some of our doings. Let it be now stated how we abandon the line of discretion in one and the same virtue, if we know not how to perform it at one time, and how to defer it at another. For a virtue is not always one and the same thing, for the merits of actions are often changed by circumstances. It is hence the case, that when we are properly engaged in any pursuit, we often more properly desist from it; and that the mind more creditably abandons that employment for a time, in which it was creditably employed at its own proper time. For if in consequence of our lesser virtues, (by performing which we make progress, but by intermitting which we are not endangered,) greater evils and trials

threaten our neighbours, we necessarily put aside our advance in virtue, lest we should cause losses to the faith in our weaker neighbours; lest what we do should so far not be a virtue, the more it overthrows the foundations of the faith in the hearts of others, for the sake of itself.

29. Which line of sound judgment Paul rightly extended before the eyes of the beholders, who both ordered the Gentiles who were coming to the liberty of the faith not to be circumcised, [Gal. 5, 2] and yet, when at Lystra, and passing through Iconium, himself circumcised Timothy, who had been born of a Gentile father. [Acts 16, 3] For, seeing that he would excite the rage of the Jews even against those who were then present as his companions, if he did not shew that he observed the commands of the letter, he deferred enforcing his assertion, and secured himself and his companions from fierce persecution without loss to the faith. He did that which he ordered not to be done from love to the faith; but he brought back to the service of the faith that which he did as it were unfaithfully. For a virtue is frequently lost, when it is maintained indiscreetly, and when it is discreetly intermitted, it is held the more firmly. And it is no wonder if we understand that that takes place in incorporeal, which we see taking place also in bodily, things. For a bow is intentionally unstrung, in order that at its proper time it may be usefully bent. And if it receives not the rest of being unstrung, it loses its power of striking, from being kept on the stretch. And thus sometimes when a virtue, which is in exercise, is suspended through discretion, it is reserved; in order that it may afterwards strike vices the more powerfully, the more it prudently abstains meanwhile from striking. The subtle line of sound judgment is, therefore, then extended over the earth, when, by setting before each soul the examples of preceding fathers, a virtue is both profitably excited to action, and is sometimes also more profitably restrained.

30. But when boldness of zeal is withdrawn for a while from employment, great consideration is needed, lest we should perchance cease from the exercise of virtue, not from regard to the common good, but through fear for ourselves, or for the sake of some object of ambition. For when this is the case, a man no longer gives way to dispensation, but to sin. Hence when a person so dispenses the work he has undertaken as to cease from virtuous exertion, he must take anxious care, and examine himself first in the depth of his heart, lest he should by this greedily seek something for himself, by this should spare himself alone through fear; and lest the result of his work should turn out ill, as not produced from a proper intention of thought. Whence the Truth well says in the Gospel, *The light of thy body is thine eye; if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.* [Matt. 6, 22. 23.] For what is expressed by the 'eye,' except the intention of the heart going before its work? which, before it exercises itself in action, already contemplates that which it desires. And what is designated by the expression 'body,' except each single action, which follows its intention as the eye with which it sees? *The light of the body,* therefore, *is the eye,* because the merits of an action are enlightened by the ray of good intention. *And if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light,* because, if in the singleness of our thought we intend rightly, a good work is produced, even though it seem not good. *And if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness,* because, when even any thing that is right is performed from a wrong intention, though it seem brilliant before men, it is yet obscured by the sentence of the inward Judge. Whence it is rightly subjoined, *Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?* [Luke 11, 35; Matt 6, 23] Because, if we obscure by bad intention that which we believe we are doing rightly, how great are those

evils, which we are ignorant are evils even when we are doing them? And, if we see nothing in that case, when we hold, as it were, the light of discernment, how blindly do we stumble against those sins which we commit without discernment? Through all our doings then our intention must be considered with watchful care, that it choose not, in what it does, any thing temporal, but that it fix itself entirely on the solid foundation of eternity; lest the fabric of our deeds, if built out beyond the foundation, should be rent asunder by the yawning earth. Whence it is here also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 6. *Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened?*

31. For the bases of each single soul are its intentions. For as the fabric rests on columns, but the columns on bases, so is our life based upon its virtues, but our virtues on our inmost intention. And because it is written, *Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;* [1 Cor. 3, 11] the bases are then on the foundation, when our intentions are firmly fixed on Christ. But in vain do the bases raise upon themselves lofty edifices, if they themselves do not stand firm on the solid foundation, because men doubtless perform in vain their deeds, however great, if the intentions of their hearts are turned aside beyond the certainty of eternity, and if they seek not the rewards of the true life, and they raise up upon themselves heavier losses of ruin, the loftier edifices they pile up beyond the foundation. For when they aim not at the rewards of eternal life, the more they raise themselves, as it were, in virtue, the deeper do they fall into the pitfall of vainglory. We must not consider then what the bases support, but where they are supported: because in truth the hearts of men examine, by Divine help, not only what they do, but what they aim at in their doings. Whence, when Paul was describing the strict Judge, and was speaking of the goodness of actions, saying, *Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to these indeed according to their patience in well-doing, glory*

and incorruption; [Rom. 2, 6. 7.] because, having spoken of patience in well doing, he had mentioned the whole fabric, as it were, of Elect actions, he immediately enquired accurately where the bases of this fabric rested, saying, *To those who seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life.* As if he were plainly saying, Although certain persons exhibit patience in well-doing, yet they receive not glory and incorruption, if they place not the intentions of their heart, that is the bases of the fabric, on the foundation. Because, namely, God dwells not in the edifice even of an honest life, which, placed without Himself, He Himself does not support.

32. Because, therefore, the intentions of every Elect soul rest on the hope of eternity, it is rightly said of this earth by the voice of the Lord, *Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened?* As if He were plainly saying, Except upon Me. For while every righteous soul aims at this, every thing it does temporally, it doubtless builds on Me for no temporal purpose. But since we are then more solidly built on the foundation, when we both follow the words of God in their outward precepts, and consider them with deeper understanding in their inmost meanings, it is rightly subjoined,

Or who hath laid the corner stone thereof?

33. For the 'corner stone' is a twofold understanding of Holy Scripture. And it is laid by Divine power, when it is not, by strict judgment, bound with the darkness of its ignorance, but enjoys a kind of liberty, whereas it knows sufficiently the precepts of God, either to follow their outward commands, or to learn by contemplation their inner meaning. To which our understanding would never attain, if He, our Creator, did not come to take our nature. For He is called in one sense 'a corner stone,' because He united in Himself two peoples, and in another, because He set forth in Himself patterns of both lives, that is, the active and the contemplative, united together. For the contemplative life differs very much from the active. But our Redeemer by coming Incarnate, while He gave a pattern of both, united

both in Himself. For when He wrought miracles in the city, and yet continued all night in prayer on the mountain, [Luke 6, 5] He gave His faithful ones an example, not to neglect, through love of contemplation, the care of their neighbours, nor again to abandon contemplative pursuits, from being too immoderately engaged in the care of their neighbours; but so to keep together their mind, in applying it to the two cases, that the love of their neighbour might not interfere with the love of God, nor again the love of God cast out, because it transcends, the love of their neighbour. Because then the Mediator between God and man was manifested to the heart of man, when it knew not what it was doing, in order by His doings to set in order things transitory, and to shew by contemplation whence all things depended, it is rightly said, *Or who hath laid the earner stone thereof?* As if the Lord were openly saying, Except Myself, Who manifested in time for the salvation of men, Him Whom I begat as My only Son without time, that men might learn in His life that even diverse pursuits are not discordant. And it must be observed, that He does not state that He sent Him out, but that He sent Him away ['non emisisse, sed dimisisse.']. Because in truth the Son, in taking human nature, descended from a lofty, to the lowest, estate. But since even the Elect Angels, who are not redeemed by this mystery, yet marvelled at the mystery of this Incarnation, [1 Pet. 1, 12] it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 7. *When the morning stars were praising Me together.*

34. For because the nature of rational spirits is believed to have been created first in time, the Angels are, not improperly, called 'morning stars.' But if this is so, whilst the earth was invisible, and in disorder, whilst darkness was over the abyss, they anticipated in their existence the coming day of the following age through the light of wisdom. Nor must we hear negligently the word 'together' which is added; because the morning stars doubtless praise, together with those of the evening, the power of the Redeemer, while the Elect angels glorify even with redeemed men in the

end of the world the bounty of heavenly grace. For in order to excite us to praise our Creator, when the Light arose in the flesh, they proclaimed this which we before mentioned; *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.* [Luke 2, 14] They praise then together, because they adapt to our redemption the words of their exultation. They praise together, because when they behold us admitted, they rejoice that their own number is filled up. But they are therefore perhaps also termed 'morning stars,' because they are frequently sent to exhort men, and while they announce the coming morn, they drive away from the hearts of men the darkness of the present life. But behold Angels praise the Divine Power, because the very sight of such great brightness expands them. But with what virtue do we, who though ransomed, are yet weighed down by the corruption of the flesh, praise the gift which we receive? For how will our tongue be able to speak of that, which our mind is unable to understand? It follows,

And all the sons of God exulting for joy.

35. For it is called 'exultation,' when the joy of the heart is not fully expressed by the power of the voice, but when he who rejoices makes known in certain ways the joy which he can neither conceal, nor fully express. Let Angels therefore praise, who now behold above the loftiness of such great brightness. But let men exult, who still suffer here below the straitness of their speech. But because the Lord knew that these things would certainly happen, He does not speak of them as about to occur, but rather relates them as having occurred. But how is it that, when the good exult in the mystery of their redemption, envy inflames the wicked, and that whilst the Elect make progress, the reprobate are roused to furious madness, and persecute their rising virtues, because they do not wish to imitate them? And yet he Who has redeemed, forsakes us not even among these trials. For it is written; *But God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted*

above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. [1 Cor. 10, 13] For our Creator knows when to suffer the storm of temptation to arise, when to restrain it on rising. He knows how to restrain, in order to our protection, that which He allows to come forth against us for our exercise; that the raging storm may wash over, and may not overwhelm us. Whence also it follows;

Ver. 8. *Who shut up the sea with doors, when it was breaking forth, as if proceeding from the womb?*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

36. For what do we understand by the 'sea,' but the world, and what by the 'womb,' but the corruption of carnal thoughts? For in this place by the word 'womb' is designated the secret and evil thought of carnal things. And this womb conceives not a bodily substance in order to produce offspring, but a cause of sorrow, in order to fulfil its wickedness. Of this womb of the heart of the wicked it is said in another place, *He hath conceived sorrow, and hath brought forth iniquity.* [Ps. 7, 14] By this womb do the wicked conceive when they think evil things. By this womb do they bring forth, when they execute the evils they have thought. The sea then was bursting forth, as if proceeding from the womb, when the waves of worldly threats, conceived in the iniquity of carnal thoughts, were raging for the destruction of Holy Church. But, by God's help, this sea was shut up with doors, because holy men were opposed as a kind of door, against the pride of persecutors, in order that the wrath of persecutors might be crushed by their miracles, and reverence. For when the princes of this world had been brought low, the Lord exalted Holy Church, by their means, above the height of the world, and restrained the assaults of the raging sea, by having raised up the power of the same Church. But let us hear what the Lord did to this raging sea. It follows;

Ver. 9. *When I was making a cloud the garment thereof, and was covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes.*

37. The raging sea is covered with a 'cloud,' because the cruelty of persecutors is covered with the veil of their own folly. For it is unable to behold the clear light of truth, from the interposed darkness of their unbelief; and through the desert of its own blindness, it knows not what it is doing by the impulse of cruelty. *For had they known,* as says the Apostle, *they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.* [1 Cor. 2, 8] This cloud is wont to cover not only the unbelievers who are placed without the Church, but also to obscure those who live in a carnal manner within it. Whence holy men, who sympathize even with others' negligence, and think that they themselves are also suffering that which they perceive others enduring, pray to God, and say, *Thou hast placed a cloud before Thee, that our prayer should not pass through.* [Lam. 3, 44] As if they openly said, To our mind accustomed to worldly pleasures Thou presented, by a righteous judgment, the phantoms of its cares, by which Thou confusest it, in the very earnestness of its prayer; and that which Thou art not ignorant is given up to the most degrading desires, Thou rightly repellest, when blinded, from beholding the brightness of Thy light; so that when it reaches towards Thee, it is turned away from beholding Thee, by the cloud of its own thoughts; and that that which constantly thinks on these worldly subjects, because it wishes for them, may endure them also in its prayer, when it does not wish for them. Because then the very wickedness of persecutors is so restrained by God's ordering, as not to burst forth as much as it wishes against holy men; after He said, *When I was laying the cloud as the garment thereof,* He fitly subjoined, *And was covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes.* For the feet and arms are bound with swaddling clothes, lest they should be thrown about hither and thither with unrestricted liberty. Because, therefore, the persecutors of Holy Church, restless from their instability of

heart, and devoted to this world, savour not the things of age, but of childhood; they who are fast bound by darkness and obscurity, (not by a sense of the Divine judgment,) so as to be unable to persecute as much as they wish, are said to be wrapped in swaddling clothes. Because, as has been said, they savour of childish things, and yet, constrained by the Divine dispensation they do not stretch forth their arms wherever they please; and if they desire lightly to perpetrate every kind of sin, yet they are by no means permitted to fulfil all they wish. It follows,

Ver. 10. *I surrounded it with My boundaries.*

The Lord surrounds the sea with His boundaries, because He so restricts the wrath of persecutors by the dispensation of His judgments, that the swelling wave of their mad wrath is broken on the level shore of His secret dispensation. It follows;

Ver. 10,11. *And I set a bar and doors, and said, Hitherto shall thou come, and thou shalt not proceed further, and here shall thou break thy swelling waves.*

38. What is designated by 'doors,' but holy preachers, and what by the 'bar,' except the Lord Incarnate? For He has in truth opposed these doors as a firmer barrier against the force of the swelling sea, the more He has strengthened them by barring them Himself. For because these doors of Holy Church are strengthened by this bar being placed against them, they could be battered indeed by the waves, but they could not be broken through: so that though the wave of persecution might dash on them from without, yet it could not penetrate to the centre of their heart. And because holy Preachers open themselves by their preaching to their followers, but close themselves by their authority against those who oppose them, they are, not improperly, called 'doors,' that is, open to the conversation [al. 'conversion'] of the humble, and closed to the terrors of the proud. They are, not improperly, called 'doors:' because they both open an entrance for

the faithful, and again oppose themselves to the entrance of the unbelieving. Let us consider what a door of the Church was Peter, who admitted Cornelius, when enquiring into the faith, and rejected Simon when seeking miraculous powers for a price; saying to the one, *I have found in truth that God is no respecter of persons,* [Acts 10, 34] he graciously opened the secrets of the kingdom. Declaring to the other, *Thy money perish with thee,* [Acts 8, 20] he closes the entrance of the heavenly court by a sentence of strict condemnation. What are all the Apostles but doors of Holy Church, when they hear by the voice of their Redeemer, *Receive the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained?* [John 20, 22. 23.] As if it were plainly said to them; By you, those to whom ye open yourselves shall come in to Me; and those to whom ye close yourselves, shall be rejected. Whilst then the sea rages, the Lord opposes His bar and doors; because whilst the storm of persecution spreads itself out in the world from bitter and faithless hearts, God exalts the glory of His Only Begotten, and the reverence of His preachers; and while He makes known the mysteries of the Divine strength, He breaks in the ungodly the waves of wrath.

39. But it is well said, *Hitherto shall thou come, and thou shall not proceed further.* Because there is doubtless a limit of the secret judgment, both when the storm of persecution should burst forth, and when it should cease, lest, if not aroused, it should not discipline the Elect, or, if unrestrained, should overwhelm them. But when the knowledge of the faith reaches as far as to the persecutors, the swelling of the troubled sea is appeased, and there does the sea break its waves, because on coming to the knowledge of the truth, it blushes at every thing it has done wickedly. For the broken wave in truth glides back on itself; because wickedness when overcome is accused even by the thought of its own heart; and suffers, as it were, the very violence which it had inflicted, because it feels the stings of

guilt, from the depravity which it had committed. Whence it is said to certain persons by Paul, *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* [Rom. 6, 21] As if it were said; Why did the waves of ‘your wickedness raise themselves aloft, which being now broken in themselves, overwhelm you when converted, by the same means with which they puffed you up when perverted. It is therefore rightly said, *And here shall thou break thy swelling waves.* But that the doors are spoken of a second time, in this shutting up of the sea, after the manner of Holy Scripture, a thing once mentioned is repeated by way of confirmation.

40. But if we ought to understand by the ‘sea’ in this place, not specially the crowd of persecutors, but the world in general; the Lord set up gates against the sea a second time, because He first gave to the human race the precepts of the law, and afterwards the testament of new grace; He a second time confined the violence of this sea by the gates He set against it, since those, whom He chose to obey His will, He first kept from idols, by giving the law, and afterwards delivered from the carnal understanding of things by the revelation of grace. The sea a second time received gates, because God first prohibited mankind from works of iniquity, but afterwards restrained them from the sin of thought. Let us see how God first imposed gates on the swelling sea. For behold it is said by the law, *Thou shall not kill. Thou shall not commit adultery. Thou shall not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness.* [Ex. 20, 13-16; Deut 5, 17-20] Let us see how the Lord confines this sea with second gates. Behold He says in the Gospel, *Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* [Matt. 5, 27. 28.] And it is said again, *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you.* [ib. 43. 44.] He therefore Who first prohibits

wickednesses of deeds, and afterwards does away with the faults of the heart, doubtless twice imposes gates on the swelling sea, that it pass not over the shores of justice which have been drawn around it.

41. But when He was saying, *Who hath shut up the sea with doors?* He immediately also subjoined the time, *When it was breaking forth, as if proceeding from the womb.* Because, namely, he then opposed mankind by the precepts of the Law, when the world, though little removed from its first beginning, was going forth even from its very birth to make progress in the carnal life. For to proceed from the womb, is to appear in the flesh in the light of present glory. And it is rightly subjoined, *When I was laying the cloud as the garment thereof.* Because, doubtless, God did not then present Himself to men in open sight, but while He rescued them from the error of unbelief, and yet laid not open to them the brightness of His own light, He withdrew them, as it were, from darkness, and yet covered them with a cloud, in order that they might forsake their former deeds of wickedness, and yet see not more clearly at present future blessings. Whence also it is filly subjoined, *And covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes.* For when He taught not ignorant people by the open preaching of the Spirit, but bound them, in figurative language, with the literal precepts, He enveloped them, while yet weak in knowledge, with the darkness of His words, as if with swaddling clothes; in order that they might gain strength by being bound by grosser commands, lest they should perish, through a fatal freedom, in their own pleasures. And since not love, but fear, was confining them to the way of righteousness, the Divine dispensation kept them close, as it were, in order to nourish them. For when the feeble people unwillingly endured the swaddling bands of precepts, it attained to a stronger condition from its very bondage. For because fear first restrained it from sin, it came forth afterwards, in a fitting condition, into the liberty of the Spirit. These swaddling clothes which He gave to beginners, the Lord

Himself blames by the Prophet, saying, *I gave them precepts that were not good.* [Ez. 20, 25] For evil things cease, as it were, to be evil, by comparison with worse, and good things are, so to say, not good, in comparison with better. For as it is said of Sodom and Gomorrah, to guiltier Judah, *Thou hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done,* [Ex. 16, 51] so are the good precepts, which were given to the ignorant, spoken of as not good, by reason of the better precepts of the New Testament which succeed them. For neither would minds which were clinging to the practice of the carnal life be raised from their low condition, unless they advanced through a gradual course of preaching. For hence is it, that when they were settled in Egypt, their secret love of gain is condescended to by a considerate and righteous forbearance, and they are ordered to depart, after having first taken away the gold and silver vessels of their neighbours. But when brought to Mount Sinai, they hear at once, on receiving the Law, *Thou shaft not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's.* [Ex. 20, 17] And hence it is, that in the same law they are directed to exact an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, [Exod. 21, 24] and yet at last, on the revelation of grace, they are commanded, when struck, to offer the other cheek. [Matt. 5, 38. 39.] For because anger exacts more in vengeance than it has suffered in wrong; while they learn not to requite their wrongs in a manifold manner, they would learn at last to bear them of their own accord, even when multiplied. Hence it is that He prohibited this same ignorant people certain observances, but preserved others after their original use, though He applied them so as to prefigure a better condition. For they used to sacrifice brute animals to idols in Egypt, and He afterwards retained the sacrifice of animals, for their observance, but forbade the worship of idols; in order that, while losing a portion of their customs, their weakness might be comforted by retaining something of them. But by a marvellous dispensation of wisdom the Lord converted into a mightier figure of the

Spirit, that carnal custom which He retained. For what do the sacrifices of those animals designate, except the death of the Only-Begotten? What do the sacrifices of those animals signify, except the extinction of our carnal life? The weakness then of an ignorant people is condescended to, by the same means as the greater strength of the Spirit is announced through the shadowy forms of allegories. It is therefore rightly said, *And I was covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes;* because He bore with the weaknesses of its tenderness, by the same means as He raised a lofty cloud of spiritual significations.

42. But because He kept them by the limits of the precepts from unrestrained wanderings of mind, He rightly subjoins; *I surrounded it with My boundaries.* And because He restrained the motions of this human race by sending the Mediator, He fitly subjoins; *And I set a bar and doors.* For He set in truth a bar and doors; because He confirms the preaching of the new life, by sending our Redeemer to oppose the sins of the guilty. For doors, when closed, are strengthened by a bar being placed against them. God, therefore, placed against them a bar, because against the wanton motives of the human race He sent the Only-Begotten, Who confirmed in His actions the spiritual precepts, which He taught in words. But it is well subjoined; *Hitherto shalt thou come, and thou shall not proceed further, and here shall thou break thy swelling waves.* For this sea had in truth passed over its former doors, because the wave of human pride used to overleap the barriers of the door opposed to it. But after the world found the Only-Begotten opposed to it, it broke the force of its pride, and could not pass over, because it found the boundary of its fury closed up by His strength. Whence it is rightly said by the Prophet, *The sea saw and fled.* [Ps. 114, 3] By doors, also, His sufferings which were seen can, not unfitly, be understood. And He secretly placed a bar against them, because He strengthened them by the invisible Godhead. Against which the waves of

the world come, but they break and are scattered: because haughty men despise them when they see them, but by experience dread their strength. For when the human race first derided, and then trembled at, the sufferings of the Only-Begotten, it came swelling with pride, like the sea which is about to dash against the opposing doors, and was broken and scattered by their power.

But because this is said to blessed Job, in order that the glorying of his heart, at his many virtues, might be kept down, (lest he should perchance attribute to himself what he knows of his lofty position,) if we consider these words in a moral sense also, we learn how much they were said for his edification. Let Him say therefore,

Ver. 8. *Who shut up the sea with doors?*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

43. What is this sea, except our heart, agitated by fury, embittered by strife, swelling with the haughtiness of pride, darkened by the deceit of wickedness? And how mightily this sea rages, any one observes, who understands in himself the secret temptations of thoughts. For behold we are now abandoning our perversities, we are adhering to proper desires, we are now cutting off, outwardly, our wicked works. But yet we are secretly harassed within, by that tempest of our former life, with which we have come thus far; and unless the barriers of unbounded fear were confining it, with the thought of the judgment, and dread of eternal torment, all the foundations of the work which has been raised up in us would have utterly fallen. For if that which rages within in suggestion, were to burst forth in deliberate act, the whole fabric of our life would have lain utterly overthrown. For being conceived in iniquity and born in sin, we bring with us into this world a contest, through the plague of innate corruptions, which we must strive hard to overcome. Whence it is rightly said also of the sea;

When it was breaking forth, as if proceeding from the womb. For youth is the womb of evil thought. Of which the Lord says by Moses, *For the sense and thought of the human heart is prone to evil from its youth.* [Gen. 8, 21] For the evil of corruption which each one of us has acquired from the springing up of his carnal desires, he exercises as he advances in years; and unless the hand of Divine fear speedily repress it, sin quickly swallows up all the goodness of created nature. Let no one then attribute the victory over his thought to himself, since the Truth says, *Who shut up the sea with doors, when it was breaking forth, as if it was proceeding from the womb?* For did not Divine grace restrain the waves of our heart, from the very first beginning of our thoughts, the sea, raging with the storms of temptations, would doubtless have overwhelmed the land of the human heart, so that, washed by the briny waves, it would have become barren; that is, it would have been charmed by the fatal pleasures of the flesh, and have perished. The Lord then alone shuts up the sea with doors, Who opposes to the evil motions of our hearts the barriers of inspired fear. But because we are prohibited following those things which we behold, because we are debarred from the enjoyment of bodily pursuits, we delight to raise the eyes of our mind even to things invisible, and to behold those very things we are ordered to follow. But what do we? These things are not yet open to our feeble sight. Behold we are invited to their love, and yet are restrained from their sight, because even if we ever see them by stealth and partially, we are in darkness from our still too imperfect sight. Whence it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 9. *When I was laying the cloud as the garment thereof, and was covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes.*

44. This tumultuous sea, (our heart, namely, agitated by thoughts,) is covered with a cloud; because it is so obscured by the confusion of its own restlessness, as not clearly to behold inward peace. This sea is covered with darkness as with swaddling clothes, because it is still kept from the

contemplation of sublime truths, by its weak and tender senses. Let us behold Paul covered as it were with a kind of darkness, as with swaddling clothes, when he says, *We now see through a glass darkly: but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.* [1 Cor. 13, 12] For did he not perceive that he was a child in the understanding of heavenly things, he would not have first mentioned, on this point, a comparison of his age, saying, *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.* [1 Cor. 13, 11] We therefore then attain to the strength of youth, when we behold with strong sight that life to which we are tending. But now, since the keenness of our sight is dazzled, through its infirmity, by the light within, our mind is, as it were, held bound by swaddling clothes. Where it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 10. *I surrounded it with my boundaries.*

45. For the Lord surrounds this sea with His boundaries, because He keeps low within the limits of contemplation our heart which is still agitated by the plague and trouble of its corruption; that (though it desires more) it may not ascend higher than the limit assigned to it. Or certainly the Lord surrounds this sea with His boundaries; because He calms by the secret distributions of His gifts our heart swelling with temptations: at one time keeping a wicked suggestion from arriving at pleasure, and at another a wicked pleasure from breaking out into consent. He then, Who watches the unlawful motions of the heart, and in some cases keeps them from coming as far as to consent, but in others restrains them even from delight, doubtless imposes boundaries on the raging sea, that it burst not forth in act, but that the gently murmuring wave of temptation may dash itself within the secret recesses of the mind. But because it is then mightily restrained, when it is opposed by delight in God and by inspired virtues, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 10, 11. *And I set a bar and doors, and said, Hitherto shall thou come, and thou shalt not proceed further, and here shall thou break thy swelling waves.*

46. For what do we understand by ‘doors,’ in a moral sense, but virtues, and what by a ‘bar,’ but the strength of charity? These doors, therefore, that is, these virtuous deeds, the raging sea rends asunder, unless charity of mind, secretly placed against them, holds them together. But all the goodness of virtues is easily destroyed by a temptation of the heart rushing upon them, unless it be kept firm by charity rooted within. Whence also when Paul was, in his preaching, opposing certain doors of virtues to the sea of temptation, he immediately added to them, as it were, the strength of a bar, saying, *But above all these things having charity, which is the bond of perfectness.* [Col. 3, 14] For charity is called the bond of perfectness, because every good deed which is done, is doubtless fastened thereby, so as not to perish. For any work is speedily plucked up by the tempter, if it is found free from the bond of charity. But if a mind is constrained by the love of God and of its neighbour, when the motions of temptations have suggested to it any wicked thoughts, this very love opposes itself to their progress, and breaks the waves of sinful persuasion by the gates of virtues, and the bar of inmost love. Because therefore the Lord restrains the sins which spring up in the heart, by the strength of inspired charity, He checks the onset of the rising sea, by barriers barred against it. Anger, it may be, exasperates within, but, that heavenly peace may not be lost, the aid of the tongue is not lent to the agitation of the mind, so that that which sounds tumultuously in the recesses of the heart does not vent itself in words. Lust is kindled in the secret thoughts, but, that it lose not its heavenly purity, thy mind chastens those limbs, which could help to further the uncleanness conceived within; lest the filthiness of the heart should exhale to the corruption of the body. Avarice excites; but, that it lose not the kingdom of

heaven, the mind, contented with its own lot, confines itself within the bounds of parsimony, lest it should break out in wicked deeds, and lest the heat of inward desire should ooze forth into outward acts. Pride puffs up a man; but, that he lose not his true dignity, by considering that he is dust, he brings himself down from the loftiness of his conceived pride; striving, doubtless, that that which he endures in the suggestion of thought, may not burst forth into outward exercise. It is well said, therefore, *I set a bar and doors, and said, Hitherto shall thou come, and thou shall not proceed further, and here shalt thou break thy swelling waves,* because while each of the Elect is both assaulted by sin, and yet refuses to act upon evil suggestions, the sea is kept, as it were, within bounds. And though it lashes the mind within, with the tumultuous waves of thoughts, yet it passes not over the appointed bounds of holy living. This sea indeed swells itself up, but when it is dashed against the firm deliberation of the heart, it is broken and retires. That blessed Job, then, may not ascribe it to himself that he stands firmly against the storms of his heart, let him hear by the voice of God; *Who shut up the sea with doors, when it was breaking forth as if proceeding from the womb?* and the rest: as if it were plainly said to him; In vain thou regardest thyself in thy good deeds without, if thou dost not consider Me within, Who calm in thee the waves of temptation. For that thou art able to withstand the waves in act, is of My might, Who break the waves of temptation in the heart.

BOOK XXIX.

Twenty-two verses of the thirty-eighth chapter, from the twelfth to the thirty-third inclusive, are explained; and many truths are taught, especially concerning the arts and snares of Satan, grace,predestination, reprobation, and the secret judgments of God.

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in that He is the Power and Wisdom of God, is born of the Father before all times, or rather, because He neither began, nor ceased to be born, let us say more truly that He was ever born [‘natus’]. Yet we cannot say, He is ever being born [‘nascitur’], lest He should seem imperfect. But in order that He may be designated both eternal and perfect, let us say that He was even ever born, so that ‘born’ may relate to His perfection, and ‘ever’ to His eternity. In order that, in some way or another, that Essence which is without time may be able to be described in words of time. Although in calling Him perfect, we deviate much from the expression of His truth, since that which has not been made [‘factum’], cannot be called perfect [‘pertectum’]. And yet the Lord says, condescending to our words of infirmity, *Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.* [Matt. 5, 48] In that Divine Sonship therefore He could not be discerned by the human race, wherefore He came in human nature, to be seen; He wished to be seen, in order to be imitated. Which birth of the flesh appeared contemptible to the wise ones of the world; for they despised the weaknesses of His humanity, judging them unworthy of God. And man was the more His debtor, the more God took on Himself indignities for his sake. *For since the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* [1 Cor. 1, 21] As if He were saying, When the world by its wisdom found not God, Who is Wisdom itself, it seemed good that it should behold God made Man

through the foolishness of humanity, in order that His Wisdom might come down to our folly, and that our darkness, when enlightened by means of the clay of its own flesh, might behold the light of heavenly Wisdom. [John 9, 6. 7.] Born therefore of the Father, before all time, He deigned to be born of His Mother in time, in order that by confining His birth between a beginning and an end, He might disclose to eyes of the human mind that birth, which neither rises from a beginning, nor is bounded by an end. Whence it is now well said to blessed Job,

Ver. 12. *Hast thou commanded the morning since thy birth, and hast thou shewn to the day-spring its place?*

2. Thou understandest, as I. For the origin of His Divinity has no before and after. And while Its ever being is through all eternity, while It circumscribes every thing which passes away, It bounds within Itself the ebbings and flowings of times. But because the origin of His Humanity began and ended, It received from time a before and after. But because, when He took on Himself the shadows of our temporal being, He shed on us the light of His eternity, after this beginning which the Creator made for Himself in time, the day-spring rightly learned its own place without time. For because the dawn, or day-spring, is turned from darkness into light, the whole Church of the Elect is, not improperly, designated by the name of dawn, or day-spring. For whilst it is brought from the night of unbelief to the light of faith, it is laid open to the splendour of heavenly brightness, as the dawn bursts into day after the darkness. Whence it is also well said in the Song of Songs, *Who is she that cometh forth as the rising dawn?* [Cant. 6, 10] For Holy Church, seeking for the rewards of the heavenly life, is called the dawn, because, while it leaves the darkness of sin, it shines with the light of righteousness.

3. But we have a deeper point to examine, on considering the nature of the dawn, or day-spring. For the day-spring, or dawn, announces that night

has already passed, but yet does not present to us the full brightness of day: but whilst they dispel the one, and take up the other, they keep the light intermingled with darkness. What then are all we who follow the truth in this life, but day-spring, or dawn? Because we now both do some things which are of the light, and yet are hitherto not free from some remains of the darkness. For it is said to God by the Prophet, *In Thy sight shall no man living he justified.* [Ps. 143, 2] And it is written again, *In many things we offend all.* [James 3, 2] Paul also says, *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] Where then the law of sin is contending with the law of the mind, there is surely still day-break; because the light, which has already shone forth, has not yet entirely overpowered the passing darkness. It is yet day-break; because while the law of the flesh assails the law of the mind, and the law of the mind that of the flesh, light and darkness are contending one against the other. Whence, when Paul was saying again, *The night is far spent*; [Rom. 13, 12] he did not subjoin, ‘The day has come,’ but, *The day is at hand.* For he who says, after the departure of night, not that the day ‘has arrived,’ but that it is ‘at hand,’ doubtless proves that he is still in twilight before the sun, and after the darkness.

4. But the Church of the Elect will then be fully day, when the shade of sin will be no longer blended with it. It will then be fully day, when it has been brightened with the perfect warmth of the inward light. It will be then fully day, when tolerating no longer the seducing remembrance of its sins, it will conceal from itself even all the remains of darkness. Whence also this dawn is well pointed out as still only in progress, when it is said, *And hast thou shewn to the day-spring its place?* For that, whose place is pointed out, is certainly being called from one condition to another. For what is the place of dawn but the perfect brightness of the eternal vision? And when it has been conducted and has arrived thither, it has no longer any of the darkness

of the past night. But now, when it is still enduring the annoyances of temptations, because the Church is in intention of heart hastening to another condition, the dawn is proceeding to its place. But if it did not behold this spot with its mind, it would still remain in the night of this life. But when it is daily striving to be perfected, and daily to be increased in light, it already beholds its place, and seeks for the sun to shine fully upon it. The dawn considers its place, when a holy soul is burning to contemplate the sight of its Creator. The dawn was busily engaged in reaching its place, when David was saying, *My soul thirsteth for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?* [Ps. 42, 2] The Truth was pointing out its place to the dawn, when It was saying by Solomon, *For what hath the wise more than the fool? and what the poor, except to go thither where there is life?* [Eccles. 6, 8] And this place our Lord after His birth doubtless manifested even to the Patriarchs who preceded His Incarnation; because unless they knew, by the spirit of Prophecy, that the King of their heavenly country was to become Incarnate, they would not see how desirable are the goods of this same country. The Truth made known its place to the dawn, when in the presence of His disciples He asked His Father, saying, *Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.* [John 17, 24] He pointed out its place to the dawn, when saying, *Wheresoever the carcase is, there will also the eagles be gathered together.* [Matt. 24, 28] The dawn was hastening to arrive at this place, which it had known, when Paul was saying that *he had a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* [Phil. 1, 23] And again, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* [ib. 21] And again, *We know that if our earthly house of this habitation were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2 Cor. 5, 1] But He well says that He shewed its place to the dawn after His birth, because before He Himself made known the blessedness of future retribution by His own Body, He confined it in the

knowledge of a few. But when He took the infirmities of a human birth, He extended the knowledge of coming glory in the love of a countless multitude. But because compassion so carries on the mystery of the Divine work, that anger still attends it, in order that the secret Judge may look favourably on and ransom some, and pass over and ruin others, since we have learnt how He enlightens the Elect by His Incarnation, let us now hear how He condemns the reprobate. It follows;

Ver. 13. *Hast Thou held and shaken the ends of the earth, and hast Thou shaken the wicked out of it?*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

5. The Lord 'held the ends of the earth,' because He came in the end of the world to the synagogue which was now forsaken and subject to foreign kings: and He shook the wicked out of it, because He cast out even from the glory of the carnal sacrifice, those who denied the spiritual preaching of the faith. Or He certainly held the ends of the earth, because He chose out of Judaea a few abject and humble men. He held the ends of the earth, because He forsook the doctors of the law, and chose fishermen. And while He holds the ends of the earth, He shakes the wicked out of it, because while He strengthens weak believers, He condemns the sturdy unbelievers therein. But the word 'shaking,' He also rightly added: because by His coming He stirred up even the hearts of the reprobates with immeasurable fear. For they in truth were shaken who were saying, *We prevail nothing, behold, the whole world is gone after Him.* [John 12, 19] But a thing which is shaken is wearied out by being drawn hither and thither. Judaea therefore had been shaken, which was saying of Christ by some, *That He is a good Man,* and was resisting Him by others, saying, *Nay; but He deceiveth the people.* [John 7, 12] It was saying by some, *If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing.* [John 9, 33] And at last it exclaims by others, *If this Man were*

not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee. [John 18, 30] The reprobate were shaken indeed but not prostrated, when at one time they beheld the miracles with wonder, and at another despised and derided the disgraces of His weakness. Had not they been shaken, who were saying, *How long dost Thou hold our soul in suspense? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* [John 10, 24] Or He certainly shook and held the ends of the earth, because when He terrified the feeble hearts of the humble with pious fear, He did not abandon them to strict judgment. For the multitude of the believers in God stood more firmly, from the same reason that it was alarmed when humbled in itself. For that God holds firm the person whom He shakes, He teaches by the Prophet, saying, *On whom shall My Spirit rest, but on the humble and quiet, and Him who trembleth at My words?* [Is. 66, 2. see LXX.] That He holds the person whom He shakes, is intimated by the testimony of Solomon, who says, *Happy is the man who feareth alway, but he that is of a hard heart shall fall into mischief.* [Prov. 28, 14] Because therefore the Lord held the ends of Judaea in the Apostles, and rejected therefrom the Scribes, and Pharisees, and High Priests, as the merit of their iniquity demanded, let us hear what is still added respecting their condemnation. It follows;

Ver. 14. *The seal shall be restored as clay, and shall stand as a garment.*

6. What else but ‘clay’ did the Lord find the people of Israel, whom He came unto when given up to the practices of the Gentiles, and toiling at bricks in Egypt? And whilst He led it forth by so many miracles to the land of promise, and filled it, when brought thither, with the knowledge of His wisdom, whilst He conferred on it so many secret mysteries by means of Prophecy, what else did He make it but a ‘seal’ for preserving His mystery? For Divine Prophecy itself kept secret, whatever the Truth revealed of Itself at the end. But when, after so many Divine secrets, after the many miracles which it witnessed at the coming of our Redeemer, it loved its land, in

preference to the truth, (saying by the Priests, *If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation*;) [John 11, 48] it returned, as it were, to those bricks, which it had left in Egypt: and that which had been made the seal of God, turned back again to that which it had abandoned. And, having been a 'seal,' it appeared as 'clay' in the eyes of the Truth, when it lost, through the wickedness of impiety, the mysteries of the word, which it had received, and chose to savour only of the things of earth, which pollute.

7. Where it is fitly subjoined, *And shall stand as a garment.* For because garments which are unfinished and of thicker texture, even when put on, do not adhere, nor are well fitted to the limbs of the wearer, they are said to stand. Judaea therefore, even when it seemed to be labouring in the knowledge of the truth, stood as a garment; because it professed to serve God in external commands, but refused to cling to Him by the understanding of love. While it observed the letter only, in the precepts of God, and did not through the Spirit unite itself to their inmost meanings, it did not cling, so to speak, to Him Who had put it on. Where it is also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 15. *From the wicked their light shall be taken away.*

8. Because, while they refuse to believe the truth, they lose for ever the knowledge of the Law, and while they boast of having received the Law, they are, doubtless, blinded by boasting of their knowledge. For it is written, *Let their eyes be darkened that they see not.* [Ps. 69, 23] And again it is written, *Blind the hearts of this people, and make their ears heavy.* [Is 6, 10] And again it is written, *For judgment I have come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.* [John 9, 39] And because they boasted themselves in the works of the Law against the Giver of the Law, it is fitly subjoined;

And the high arm shall be broken.

9. For the high arm is broken, when the proud works of the Law are reproved, by preaching the grace of faith, when it is said, *By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified.* [Rom. 3, 20]

10. But all these words can be understood in another sense also. For Holy Scripture is wont to call the Church 'earth.' The Lord therefore holds and shakes the ends of the earth, because He allows the ends of His Church to be agitated by most cruel persecution through the coming of Antichrist, and yet forsakes her not, by permitting it. Sometimes the Lord holds this earth, and shakes it not; sometimes He holds and shakes it; because He possesses it at one time with the tranquil peace of faith, at another orders it to be disturbed with the assault of persecution.

11. But when saying, *Hast thou held and shaken the ends of the earth,* He rightly added immediately, *And hast thou shaken the wicked out of it?* For as Paul bears witness, there are many therein, *who profess that they know God, but in works deny Him.* [Tit. 1, 16] The Lord therefore shakes the wicked out of it, because those, whom deep-seated sins possess, will then fall into the gulph of open unbelief, and pass over to the heap of chaff, when moved by the breath of that temptation. And though they now conceal themselves within the bosom of the threshing floor, under the semblance of faith, they will then, doubtless, bound forth from the heap of grain, by the fan of strict judgment.

12. Whence it is also fitly subjoined, *The seal shall be restored, as clay.* As if he were openly saying; They who now appear in the bosom of the Church as a 'seal,' will then in the sight of all men be restored as 'clay:' that is, they deceive not the judgments of men concerning their profession of religion, but it is proved that they savour of earthly things. For Holy Scripture is wont to use the word 'seal' for faith, and 'clay' for iniquity. For the younger son, who returned to his father, having consumed his substance, received a ring as a present. [Luke 15, 22] For the Gentile people, which

returns to ‘God, by penitence, having lost its immortality, is defended by the seal of faith. Whence also it is said to the Church by its Bridegroom, *Set Me as a seal upon thine heart.* [Cant. 8, 6] For a seal is placed on things for the very purpose that they may not be violated by any boldness of plunderers. The Bridegroom therefore is placed as a seal on the heart, when the mystery of His faith is imprinted for the safe keeping of our thought; in order that that unfaithful servant, namely our adversary, observing our hearts sealed by faith, may not presume to break in upon them with temptation. But by ‘clay’ worldly infection is set forth, as the Psalmist bears witness, who says, *He brought me up out of the pit of misery, and the deepest clay.* [Ps. 40, 2] Because many then who are found in worldly infection, are sealed, when brought to the Church, with the sacrament of heavenly faith, and yet depart not from their wicked deeds, and conceal themselves now under the cloke of faith, and yet shew what they really are, when they have found an opportunity, it is rightly said, *The seal shall he restored as clay.* For those whom we now believe to be faithful, we shall then find to be the very enemies of the faith; and though, when not tempted, they appear to be a ‘seal,’ they will doubtless, when tempted, be ‘clay.’ Whence also it is rightly said, *Shall be restored:* for their reprobate life proves them afterwards to be such, as their conscience could have done before their faith. Of whom it is fitly subjoined, *And shall stand as a garment.*

13. For Holy Church is now clothed as it were with garments, as many in number as the faithful, by whose veneration she is honoured. Whence also when the Gentiles were shewn to her, it is said by the Lord through the Prophet; *As I live, saith the Lord, thou shall surely be clothed with all these, as with an ornament.* [Is. 49, 18] But she is now arrayed, in appearance only, with many who seem to be faithful, but when the assault of persecution strikes them, she will be stripped of them and laid bare; of whose fate it is said, *And it shall stand as a garment.* But to ‘stand’ is put in

this place for persisting in sin. Whence it is written, *And stood not in the way of sinners.* [Ps. 1, 1] Or certainly every reprobate is said to 'stand as a garment,' to shew that he cannot stand at all. Because, as a garment, when put on, is stretched by the body, in displaying its appearance, but when taken off is bent and folded together; so every one, who has fallen back from the stability of Holy Church, was stretched out, as it were, and beautiful, while being worn, but will lie afterwards, when stripped off, broken down and cast aside. But if by 'standing' we understand 'continuance,' every reprobate person who endures a short time in this life, which he loves, stands as a garment. Whence also it is said by the Prophet, *All shall wax old as a garment, and as a covering shall thou change them, and they shall be changed.* [Ps. 102, 26] These points therefore, which he introduced veiled in a cloud of allegory, he now makes known in plainer words, adding, *From the wicked their light shall be taken away.*

14. For neither does the light of God now illumine those, who veil the malice of their iniquity with the name of faith. For while they neglect to live according to the preaching of faith, and yet in appearance reverence it, they seek for the honour of this present life under the name of religion; and they gain this light from faith, as faith cherishes them in the sight of men. But there are some who sincerely believe the eternal truths which they hear, and yet contradict by evil living the very faith which they profess. These also have their light in darkness, for while they act perversely and yet think rightly about God, they are illumined in a measure by the shining of a light, so as not to be quite in darkness. And while they love the things of earth more than those of heaven, those that they see more than those they hear of, when the season of persecution assaults them, they lose that sound belief they seemed to possess. And this is specially the case, in a greater degree, at that time, when the head of the wicked himself arising, in the last persecution, against Holy Church, his boldness attacks it with unrestrained

strength. Then is the heart of each one laid open, when whatever lay concealed is exposed, and they who are now holy in words, but unholy in heart, fall headlong, on their wickedness being made public, and lose the light of faith which they had in appearance possessed. But it is necessary, amidst all this, for each of us to return to the hidden recess of his heart, and to fear at the fatal results of his doings, lest he fall, as his merits demand, into the number of such men, by the strict justice of the judgments of God.

15. But let no one inconsiderately flatter himself, and believe that he therefore is exempt from such a fall, because he thinks that he does not reach to the storm of this tempest. O how many have beheld not the times of that temptation, and yet are involved in the storm of his temptation. Cain saw not the time of Antichrist, and yet was deservedly a limb of Antichrist. Judas knew not the fierceness of that persecution, and yet yielded to the might of his cruelty, by the persuasion of avarice. Simon was far removed from the times of Antichrist, and yet joined himself to his pride, by perversely seeking for the power of miracles. [Acts 8, 19. 20.] Thus a wicked body is united to its head, thus limbs to limbs, when they both know not each other in acquaintance, and yet are joined together by wicked doings. For neither had Pergamos known the books or the words of Balaam, and yet, following his wickedness, it heard in a voice of reproof from above; *Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat and to commit fornication.* [Rev. 2, 14] Both times and places separated the Church of Thyatira from the knowledge of Jezebel; but because equal guilt of life had enthralled it, Jezebel is said to dwell therein, and to persist in perverse doings, as the Angel bears witness, who says; *I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* [ib. 20] Behold, because

they could be found, who followed the conduct of Jezebel in their reprobate deeds, Jezebel is said to have been found there: because an agreement of habits makes a corrupt body one, even if times or places sever it asunder. Whence it is that every wicked person, who has already gone by, survives in his perverse imitators, and that the author of iniquity, who has not yet come, is already visible in those who do his works. Hence John says; *Now are there become many Antichrists,* [1 John 2, 18] because all wicked persons are even now his members, which being in truth born in wickedness, have prevented their head, by evil living. Hence Paul says, *That he might be revealed in his time; for the mystery of iniquity doth already work.* [2 Thess. 2, 6. 7.] As if he were saying; Then Antichrist will be manifestly seen; for he now secretly works his hidden works in the hearts of the unrighteous. For, to say nothing of more open crimes, behold one man secretly envies his brother in his heart, and if he find an opportunity, strives to supplant him. Of what other is he a member, but of him, of whom it is written, *Through envy of the devil came death into the world?* [Wisd. 2, 24] Another, thinking himself a person of great desert, preferring himself to all, through swelling of heart, believes all to be inferior to him. Of what other is he a member, but of him of whom it is written, *He beholdeth every high thing, and is a king over all the children of pride?* [Job 41, 34] Another seeks for the power of this world, not that he may profit others, but that he may not be subject to another. Of what other is he a member, than of him, of whom it is written, *Who said, I will sit in the mount of the testament, the sides of the north: I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High?* [Is. 14, 13. 14.] For the Most High alone so rules over all things, as to be unable to be subject to another. Whom the devil perversely wished to imitate, when seeking dominion of his own, he refused to be subject to Him. Whoever therefore seeks for power of his own, imitates the devil, because he loathes to submit to him who is placed over him by Divine ordinance.

16. There are many things besides, to proclaim certain persons to be faithless, though established in the peace of the Church. For I see that some persons so accept the person of the powerful, as not to hesitate, when requested by him, to deny, for his good will, the truth in the cause of a neighbour. And who is Truth, but He who said, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life?* [John 14, 6] For John the Baptist died not, when questioned about his confession of Christ, but about the truth of justice; but because Christ is the Truth, he therefore went even to death for Christ, because namely for the truth. Let us suppose that a person has, when questioned, accepted the person of the powerful, and has denied the truth, that he might not suffer the wrong even of a word. What, I pray you, would he do in the pain of punishments, who was ashamed of Christ among the scourges of words? Behold, even after this he is still a Christian before the eyes of men, and yet if God resolved to judge him strictly, he is one no longer.

17. But I see others, to whom are assigned, through their position as teachers, the duties of exhorting and reproving, who behold some unlawfulness committed, and who yet, when afraid of losing the good will of certain powerful persons, presume not to reprove it. What else doth he, whoever he be, but see the wolf coming, and flee away? He flies, because he was silent; he was silent, because he despised eternal grace, and preferred temporal glory. Behold he hid himself within the concealments of his silence before the face of a powerful man, and gave way as to open persecution, so also to secret fear. It is well said of such; *They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* [John 12, 43] If these things are strictly judged, whoever is such, even though public persecution was wanting, yet denied Christ by his silence. There are not wanting then, even in the peace of the Church, the temptations of Antichrist. Let no one then dread those times of the last persecution, as though the only ones. For the cause of Antichrist is continually promoted among the ungodly, because he

is even now secretly working his mystery in their hearts. And even if many, now seemingly established within the Church, pretend to be what they are not, they will yet at the coming of the Judge be exposed, as they are. Of whom Solomon well says, *I saw the wicked buried, who even when they lived here, were in the holy place, and were praised in the city, as men of just works.* [Eccles. 8, 10] After it was said then of the wicked; *The seal shall be restored as clay, and shall stand as a garment, and their light shall be taken away from the wicked,* (which is certainly to take place in that persecution of Antichrist,) he presently, consoling us concerning the destruction of the same Antichrist, says;

And the high arm shall be broken.

18. For, for what else is the high arm taken, but the proud loftiness of Antichrist, who is so exalted over the reprobate minds of men with the pride of worldly glory, that though a sinful man, and yet scorning to be counted a man, he pretends falsely that he is God above men? Whence the Apostle Paul says; *So that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself, as if he were God.* [2 Thess. 2, 4] And to shew his pride more fully, he stated before, *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.* For even a man can sometimes be called God, according to that which is said to Moses, *See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.* [Exod. 7, 1] But a mere man cannot be worshipped as God. But because Antichrist sets himself up over all holy men, and over the power of the Godhead Itself, he endeavours to surpass that which is called God, and that which is worshipped as God, by demanding for himself the name of glory. But we must observe into what a depth of pride he has fallen, who remained not in that degree of ruin, in which he fell. For both the devil and man fell, by pride, from the state of their own creation, either for him to say, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High,* [Is. 14, 14] or for the other to hear and to believe, *Your eyes shall be opened, and ye*

shall be as gods. [Gen. 3, 5] They fell, therefore, both of them, because they desired to be like God, not by righteousness, but by power. But man who had fallen, by perversely aiming at the likeness of God, discerning, when freed by grace, that he was very different from God, through the guilt of sin, exclaims, *O Lord, who is like unto Thee?* [Ps. 89, 8] But the devil, having been justly cast aside in his sinful lapse, continued not in his own degree of ruin; but the longer he was deprived of the grace of the Almighty, the more did he add to the guilt of his sins. For he who fell, because he wished, inverting the order of things, to be like God, was brought so far, that entering into Antichrist, he scorned to seem like God, and, when condemned, counts Him as his inferior, Whom he could not in his pride regard as his equal. For when this, which we have stated before, is said of him; *Exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;* [2 Thess. 2, 4] it is openly shown, that by seeking at first the likeness of God, he wished, as it were, to exalt himself against God, but that increasing in the sin of pride, he now sets himself up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. Because then this his pride will be smitten by the coming of the strict Judge, (as it is written, *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming,*) [1 Thess. 2, 8] it is rightly said, *And the high arm shall be broken.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

19. But all these expressions, which have been twice discussed, can be still understood in another sense. For the words of God are conserves [‘pigmenta’], as it were, to give us strength. And just as, the more a conserve is ground, the more does its virtue increase in the cup; so the more we bruise the Divine words by expounding them, the more, when we hear them, are we benefited, as if by the draught. Because therefore the merciful God long bears with the sins of men, and frequently converts the minds of

sinners, when He sees the end now approaching, He rightly says of Himself, as suggesting the might of so great affection,

Ver. 13. *Hast thou held and shaken the ends of the earth, and hast thou shaken the wicked out of it?*

20. For by 'earth' is designated man, who savours of things below; to whom it was said in his sin; *Earth thou art, and to earth shall thou go.* [Gen. 3, 19] But because the merciful Creator forsakes not His own work, He both bears with the sins of men, by His wisdom, and at last remits them by their conversion. But, when He beholds hard and insensible minds, He scares them at one time with threats, at another with blows, at another with revelations: in order that those which had become hardened by most fatal security may be softened by wholesome fear, so that they may, though at last, return, and blush at least at this, that they have long been waited for. For thus the Lord, because He judges more severely the ends of our life, therefore purges also His Elect more carefully at the close. For it is written; *God shall judge the ends of the earth.* [1 Sam. 2, 10] He therefore watches more anxiously over our closing deeds, the more He considers that the beginnings of our coming life depend upon them. And because He does this of His mercy; by bringing forward His tenderness, with which He receives even those sinners who have been converted at the last, He instructs the righteousness of blessed Job, saying; *Hast thou held and shaken the ends of the earth, and hast thou shaken the wicked out of it?* Thou understandest, As I, Who frequently arouse sinners by alarming them at their last moments, hold them fast by converting them, and pluck from their hearts the wicked motions of their thoughts. And the Lord rightly teaches blessed Job, how He converts sinners at the end. As if He openly said, Observe the power of My mercy, and bring down the pride of thy righteousness. But, that that punishment of former sin accompanies these closing hours of a

man, through the death of the flesh, even when he is converted, He immediately teaches, saying;

Ver. 14. *The seal shall be restored as clay, and shall stand as a garment.*

21. For the Lord made man, whom He fashioned after His own likeness, as a kind of seal of His power. But yet it shall be restored as clay; because, though he may by conversion escape eternal sufferings, yet he is condemned by the death of the flesh, in punishment of the pride he has committed. For man, who has been formed from clay, and adorned with the likeness of the Divine image, having received the gift of reason, forgets, when swelling with pride of heart, that he was formed of the basest materials. Whence it hath been ordered by the marvellous justice of the Creator, that, because he became proud in consequence of that reasonable sense which he received, he should again by death become earth, which he was unwilling humbly to regard himself. And because he lost the likeness of God by sin, but returns by death to the substance of his own clay, it is rightly said; *The seal shall be restored as clay.* And because, when the spirit is summoned from the body, it is stripped, as it were, of its kind of covering of flesh, it is fitly subjoined of the same clay; *and shall stand as a garment.* For, for our clay to stand as a garment is for it to remain empty and stripped off, even till the time of the resurrection. But because even they do not escape this punishment of pride, who overcome this very pride by living humbly, He subjoins what is the special punishment of the proud, saying;

Ver. 15. *From the wicked their light shall be taken away, and the high arm shall be broken.*

22. For the death of the flesh, which restores the Elect to their light, takes away their light from the reprobate. For the light of the proud is the glory of this present life. And that light is then withdrawn from it, when it is called by the death of the flesh, to the darkness of its own retributions. For then is the high arm there broken, because loftiness of heart, which has been

violently seized on, beyond the order of nature, is scattered by the weight of Divine justice which overwhelms it, in order that how [Oxf. Mss. 'quam'] wickedly it had exalted itself for a while, it may learn when it is crushed forever by the weight of judgment. But none of us would know what was to follow after death, did not the Creator of our life come even to the punishment of our death. For did He not of His own mercy seek the lowest condition, He could not justly bring back to the highest, us, who were lost after we had received His likeness. Whence it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 16. *Hast thou entered into the depth of the sea, and hast thou walked in the lowest parts of the abyss?*

23. As if He said, As I, Who not only sought the sea, that, is this world, by assuming the flesh and soul of a man, but also descended by that flesh voluntarily subjected to death, to the bottom of the pit, as if to the depths of the sea. For if the 'sea' must be understood to mean the world after the manner of Scripture language, nothing hinders the 'depths of the sea' from meaning the bars of the pit. But the Lord sought this depth of the sea, when He entered the lowest parts of the pit, in order to rescue the souls of His Elect. Whence also it is said by the Prophet, *Thou hast made the depths of the sea a way, for the ransomed to pass over.* [Is. 51, 10] For this depth of the sea was, before the coming of the Redeemer, not a way, but a prison, because it confined within it even the souls of the good, though not in places of punishment. But the Lord made this depth a way, because He, by coming thither, granted His Elect to pass over from the bars of the pit to heavenly places. Whence it is there fitly said, *for the ransomed to pass over.* But that which He had called the depths of the sea, repeating in other words He calls the lowest parts of the abyss: because as the abyss of waters is not comprehended by our sight, so are the secrets of the pit not penetrated by us with any sense of our understanding. For we behold who are withdrawn

hence, but we see not what retribution of punishments awaits them according to their desert.

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

24. But we must carefully notice, that He says that He had walked in the lowest parts of the abyss. For to walk belongs not to one who is bound, but to one who is free. For fetters impede to a like extent the steps of him whom they bind. Because then the Lord endured no bonds of sin, He walked in the pit. For He came unfettered to those who were bound. Whence it is written, *I am become as a man without help, free among the dead.* [Ps. 88, 4. 5.] For the Lord then to walk in the lowest parts of the abyss is for Him to find nothing to detain Him in the place of damnation, as Peter bears witness, who says, *Having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible for Him to be holden of it.* [Acts 2, 24] Or certainly, (because, when we are led in walking from place to place, we are found present here and there,) the Lord is said to have walked in the pit, in order to shew that He was present to Elect souls in their several places, by the power of His Godhead. Whence also the spirit of wisdom is described as full of motion, [Wisd. 7, 24] that by means of that which is no where absent, He might be described as meeting us every where. And this descent of His, our Lord regards as more marvellous the more frequently He makes mention of it to ransomed man. For repeating it again, He subjoins;

Ver. 17. *Have the gates of death been opened unto thee, and hast thou seen the gloomy doors?*

25. For the ‘gates of death’ are the adverse powers. Which the Lord descended and opened, because by dying He overcame their strength. Which are by another appellation called the ‘gloomy doors,’ because while they are not seen, by reason of their crafty concealment, they open to deceived minds the way of death. Which gloomy doors the Lord beholds;

because He both observes and represses the crafty malice of unclean spirits. And did He not, by beholding, restrain them, while we know them not, our mind would both know nothing of their snares, and would be taken and perish by them. But even we behold these gloomy gates, when we are illumined with rays of heavenly light. Whence also it is said by the Prophet, *The Lord is my helper, and I shall see mine enemies.* [Ps. 118, 7] He therefore Himself beholds our enemies, Who by His gift makes our enemies visible to us. Or certainly, the Lord then beheld the gloomy gates, when penetrating the barriers of the pit, He smote the cruel spirits, and by His death condemned them that presided over death. Which is here spoken of no longer as of a future, but as of a past event; for this reason, because that which He intended to do in deed, He had already done in predestination. But because the Church increased after His death and resurrection, and was extended in all nations, it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 18. *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?*

26. For whilst the Lord sought the narrowness of death, He spread abroad His faith in the nations, and extended Holy Church to numberless hearts of believers. To whom it is said by the Prophet, *Enlarge the place of thy tent, and extend the curtains of thy tabernacles; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt penetrate to the right hand and to the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles.* [Is. 54, 2. 3.] But this breadth of the earth would surely not exist, had He not first despised, in dying, the life which we know, and pointed out by His rising again, the life which we know not. For He opened by His death the eyes of our minds, and shewed us what was the life which was to follow. Whence also, observing this order in the Gospel, He says to His disciples, *Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name through all nations.* [Luke 24, 46. 47.] For few of the people of Israel believed at His preaching,

but numberless peoples of the Gentiles followed the way of life, on His death. For He endured the proud, while He was still living in a suffering condition, but He overthrew them when dead to a life of suffering. Which Samson long before well typified in himself, for he slew but few during his life; but on the destruction of the temple he slew a host of enemies, at his death. [Judges 16, 30] Because the Lord doubtless killed but few from their pride and haughtiness [as we say, 'dead unto sin.'] when alive, but more, when the Temple of His body was broken in pieces: and the Elect from the Gentiles, whom He endured in His life, He subdued all at once by His death. After then He had taught us that He had penetrated the regions below, He rightly subjoined immediately the breadth of the earth to be considered, *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?* As if He were saying to man when scourged, Think on what I have endured, and consider what I have purchased; and complain not thyself of the rod, when thou art ignorant what rewards await thee, in retribution. In the midst then of these words of the Creator, I think it worth while for us to turn away our eyes for a while from the common and public good, and to observe what He secretly does with each of ourselves. For He says;

Ver. 16. *Hast thou entered the depth of the sea?*

[MORAL INTEPRETATION]

27. For the 'sea' is the mind of man, and God enters its depths, when it is roused from its inmost thoughts to lamentations of penitence through its knowledge of itself, when He calls to its memory the wickednesses of its former life, and rouses the mind which is agitated by its own confusion. God penetrates the depth of the sea, when He changes hearts, which are even despaired of. For He goes into the sea, when He humbles a worldly heart; He enters the depth of the sea, when He disdains not to visit minds which are even overwhelmed with sins. Whence it is rightly added in a question; *And hast thou walked in the lowest parts of the abyss?* For what

abyss is there, but the human mind, which while unable to comprehend itself, is like an obscure abyss, hid from itself, in every thing that it is. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *The abyss uttered its voice from the depth of its thought.* [Hab. 3, 10] For whilst the human mind does not dive into itself, it praises more humbly, by comparison with itself, the power of the Divine nature, which it is unable to comprehend.

28. For God then to walk in the lowest parts of the abyss, is for Him to convert the hearts even of the wickedest men, and, by touching minds which are despaired of, with traces of His visitation, wonderfully to refashion them. For when any one feels compunction after enormous sins, what else is beheld but God walking in the lowest parts of the abyss? For God walks, as it were, in the abyss, when He penetrates the gloomy heart, and tramples down the invisible waves of sins. For we frequently lament some sins past, and are being assaulted by others present; so that we are harassed at one time by pride, at another by anger, at another by lust, and at another by avarice tempting us. But when the Lord suppresses all these in our heart by the fear of His secret visitation, what else doth He but place His steps in the abyss? Which steps we behold with the mind, when we consider how the gifts of His fear stand up to oppose these rebellious sins. For the Prophet had beheld these steps, when He was saying, *Thy goings were seen, O God, the goings of my God, my King, is in His holy place.* [Ps. 68, 24] For He who beholds the inordinate motions of his mind restrained within him by the memory of the Divine judgments, beholds, as it were, the steps of God walking within him. Let it be said, therefore, to blessed Job; *Hast thou entered the depth of the sea, and hast thou walked in the lowest parts of the abyss?* Thou understandest, as I, Who with wondrous pity trample down in the hearts of sinners, at one time anger, at another lust, at another avarice, at another rising pride. As if it were plainly said to him, If thou seest that I alone suppress the lurking vices of the heart, thou wilt

cease to be puffed up with self-justification. And because when we are visited by God, we are led to confession concerning even the secret and unlawful motions of our mind, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 17. *Have the gates of death been opened unto thee?*

29. For the gates of death are wicked thoughts: which we open to God, when we confess them with weeping in penitence. For He beholds them even when not confessed; but enters into them, when confessed. For He then in truth opens a way for Himself in the gates of death, when we have put aside evil thoughts, and He comes to us after confession. And they are called the gates of death for this reason, because the way to death is always opened through evil thoughts. Which is again repeated, when it is subjoined;

And hast thou seen the gloomy doors?

30. For the gloomy doors are the lurking evils of the mind, which can both exist within, and yet not be observed by another. Which yet the Lord beholds, when He destroys them by the secret look of grace. For it is written, *The King Who sitteth in the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with His sight.* [Prov. 20, 8] And because every vice contracts, and every virtue enlarges the mind, after the destruction of vices it is rightly subjoined, *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?* For did not virtue enlarge the mind, Paul would not say to the Corinthians, *Be ye also enlarged, and be not yoked with unbelievers.* [2 Cor. 6, 13. 14.] But we must observe carefully that which is said;

Ver. 18. *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?*

31. For the extent of the inwardly good is not at all comprehended, unless it is carefully considered. For poverty frequently humbles them outwardly, the torture of punishment straitens them; but yet, in the midst of these things, their inward resolution expands itself ever to hope for heavenly rewards. The Apostles had outwardly been straitened, when they

were enduring scourges; but they were standing at liberty in great width within, who had turned, in themselves, these very scourges into joy. For it is written, *The Apostles departed from the presence of the council; rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus.* [Acts 5, 41] Paul had found this width, in his straits, who said, *But I wish you to know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel, so that my bonds in Christ were made manifest in all the palace.* [Phil. l, 12. 13.] David was possessing this width, in the midst of narrowness, when saying, *Thou hast enlarged me in tribulation.* [Ps. 4, 1] This earth, therefore, that is the conscience of holy men, is then enlarged when it is pressed outwardly with the adversities of this world. For when it is driven away from security in this life, it is beaten inwardly on itself, so as to stretch toward the hope of heavenly things. And when it is not allowed to wander abroad, being brought back, as it were, into its own bosom, it is enlarged. We however behold what misfortunes good men endure, but see not how much they rejoice within. We learn, on consideration, the breadth of their mind, sometimes in their words, sometimes in their deeds: but yet we know not how great is the range of that breadth in them. Let human wisdom hear then, *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?* and let it learn its own folly. As if he said, As I, Who alone fully consider the secret rejoicing of the holy, when surrounded with scourges, because I alone mercifully fashion them. Or certainly, blessed Job is asked whether he has considered the breadth of the earth, in order that he might be humbled by the example of another's enlargement. As if it were openly said to him, Consider those whom the countless evils of this world cannot confine, and cease to boast, amid thy blows, of the state of thy own heart. It follows;

Ver. 18 — 20. *Tell Me, if thou knowest all things, in what path the light dwelleth, and what is the place of darkness? that thou mayest take each of*

them to the bounds thereof, and understand the paths to the house thereof.

32. Blessed Job is tried with a weighty question, in that he is examined as to the way of light and the place of darkness, whether he should bring them each to their boundaries, and should understand the paths to the house thereof. For what is understood by the word 'light' but righteousness? and what is designated by 'darkness' but iniquity? Whence it is said to some who had been converted from the wickedness of sins, *Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.* [Eph. 5, 8] And it is stated of some who continue in sin, *They that sleep, sleep in the night.* [1 Thess. 5, 7] It is said therefore to blessed Job, *Tell Me, if thou knowest all things, in what path the light dwelleth, and what is the place of darkness?* As if it were said to him, If thou imaginest that thou hast perfect wisdom, tell Me, either into whose heart that innocency, which is now wanting, is coming, or in whose heart that wickedness, which now exists, remains. *In what path the light dwelleth:* that is, whose mind righteousness comes and fills. *And what is the place of darkness,* that is, in whom does blind iniquity remain. *That thou mayest take each of them to the bounds thereof,* that is, that thou mayest decide whether he who is now seen to be wicked, finishes his life in iniquity, and whether he who is now seen to be righteous, terminates the conclusion of his life with the perfection of righteousness. *And understand the paths to the house thereof:* that is, that thou mayest consider and discern, either for whom perseverance in good deeds secures an eternal mansion in the Kingdom, or whom evil habits, binding to the end, condemn to eternal punishment. For 'house' is put for resting place, and 'path' for conduct. A path therefore leads to a house, because our doings lead on to our resting place. But what man could speak when questioned on these points? who could hear them at least without fear? For we daily see many who shine forth with the light of righteousness, and who are yet at their close obscured with the darkness of wickedness. And we behold many

involved in the darkness of sins, and yet at the end of their life suddenly set free and restored to the light of righteousness. We also know that many have preserved entire, even to the end, the path of righteousness which they have once found, and we have beheld that most men have heaped up without ceasing, even to the end, their wickedness which they have once begun.

33. But who, amid these clouds of secret judgments, can so dart forth the light of his mind, as to distinguish with any discernment, either who continues in sin, or who perseveres in righteousness, or who is converted from the highest to the lowest condition, or who relapses from the highest to the lowest? These points are hid from men's senses, nor is aught known of the end of any one, because the abyss of the divine judgments is not at all penetrated by the eye of the human mind. For we see that that Gentile world which was opposed to God was overspread with the light of righteousness, and that Judaea, long beloved, was darkened with the night of unbelief. We know also that the thief passed from the cross to the kingdom, and that Judas sank into hell from the glory of the Apostleship. And again, because destinies once commenced are sometimes not changed, we know that the other thief arrived at punishment, and that the Apostles enjoyed the appointed kingdom, which they had longed for. Who then can examine in what path light dwells, and what is the place of darkness, to bring each of them to its own bounds, and to understand the paths to the house thereof? I see Paul called from that cruelty of persecution to the grace of Apostleship; and yet he is so alarmed in the midst of secret judgments, as to fear that he be cast away, even after he had been called. For he says, *I chasten my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, perchance, having preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away.* [1 Cor. 9, 27] And again, *I count not myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and stretching forth myself unto those things which are*

before, I follow the destined mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. [Phil. 3, 13. 14.] *I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which also I am apprehended.* [ibid. 12] And it certainly had been already said of him by the voice of the Lord, *He is a chosen vessel to Me;* [Acts. 9, 15] and yet he still chastens his body, and is fearful of being rejected.

34. Alas for our wretched selves, who have known as yet no voice of God concerning our election, and are still slumbering in ease, as if from security. But there ought, there ought doubtless to be not only security in our hope, but also fear in our conversation, that the one may encourage us in the contest, the other sting us when listless. Whence it is rightly said by the Prophet, *Let them that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord.* [Ps. 115, 11] As if he were openly saying; He presumes in vain on his hope, who refuses to fear God in his doings. But why is blessed Job questioned on so mighty an enquiry, which is utterly unknown by men, how he understands the end of the just and of the unjust, except that he should turn to his own end, from being unable to understand that of others; and that from being ignorant of his own end, as well as others', he might be afraid at his ignorance, be humbled through his fear; from being humbled might not be elated at his own doings; and from not being elated, might remain stedfast in the citadel of grace? Let it be said then to him, *Tell Me, if thou hast understanding, in what path the light dwelleth, and what is the place of darkness, that thou mayest take each of them to the bounds thereof.* As if it were said; As thou knowest not who are converted from sin to goodness, nor who turn back from goodness to sin; so also thou dost not understand what is doing towards thyself, as thy merits deserve. And as thou dost not at all comprehend another's end, so art thou also unable to foresee thine own. For thou knowest now what progress thou hast made thyself, but what I still think of thee in secret, thou knowest not. Thou now thinkest on thy deeds of

righteousness; but thou knowest not how strictly they are weighed by Me. Woe even to the praiseworthy life of men, if it be judged without mercy, because when strictly examined, it is overwhelmed in the presence of the Judge, by the very conduct with which it imagines that it pleases Him. Whence it is rightly said to God by the Prophet, *Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.* [Ps. 143, 2] Whence it is well said by Solomon, *There are righteous and wise men, and their works are in the hand of God: and yet no man knoweth whether he is deserving of love, or of hatred; but all things are kept uncertain for the time to come.* [Eccles. 9, 1] Hence again it is said by the same Solomon, *What man will be able to understand his own way?* [Prov. 20, 24] And any one doing good or evil is doubtless known by the testimony of his conscience. But it is said that their own way is not known to men, for this reason, because even if a man understands that he is acting rightly, yet he knows not, under the strict enquiry, whither he is going. After He has alarmed him then with this consideration of his end, He goes back to examine his beginning: and, that he may not complain wherefore knows he not his end, He mentions also that he does not even understand with what beginning he came hither. For it follows;

Ver. 21. *Didst thou know then that thou wast about to be born, and didst thou know the number of thy days?*

35. As if He were openly saying, What wonder if thou understandest not thine end, since thou dost not comprehend thy beginning? And since thou knowest not with what beginning thou camest hither, what wonder, if thou canst not tell with what end thou art taken away? If therefore it was My work to bring thee forward from secresy to sight at thy beginning, it will be Mine also to bring thee back from sight to secresy. Why complainest thou aught of the dispensation of thy life, who, ignorant of thyself, art supported by the hand of thy Creator? Thou oughtest therefore to boast thyself the less

in what thou dost, the more thou art confined within the bosom of eternity, and knowest not either in what order thou earnest hither, nor when, or how thou art taken hence.

36. But these words can yet be understood in another sense also; *Didst thou know then that thou wast about to be born, and didst thou know the number of thy days?* Thou understandest, As I, Who knew that I was about to be born, because, even before the birth of My Manhood, I always existed substantially in the Godhead. For men begin then to exist, when they are born in the womb of their mothers. For even the very conception is called nativity, according to that which is written, *That which is born in her is of the Holy Ghost.* [Matt. 1, 20] And they therefore know not that they are about to be born, because they do not exist, before they are created. But God, Who ever existed without beginning, foresaw this of Himself, that He assumed a beginning in the womb of the Virgin; and because He foreknew, He ordained it; and because He ordained, He doubtless endured nothing in human form, except of His own free will. Let man then, who could not foresee his own birth, be reproved for complaining of his scourges, if even He, Who foresaw and ordained His own birth, prepared Himself for scourges amongst men. It follows,

Ver. 22, 23. *Hast thou entered into the treasures of snow, or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war?*

37. What else must be understood by the 'snow' or 'hail,' but the cold and hard hearts of the wicked? For as charity is designated by warmth, so also in Holy Scripture wickedness is wont to be designated by cold. For it is written, *As a cistern maketh its water cold, so doth its own wickedness make cold the soul.* [Jer. 6, 7] And again, *Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold.* [Matt. 24, 12] What then can be more fitly understood by the cold of snow, or the hardness of hail, than the life of the wicked,

which both waxes cold by torpor, and strikes with the malice of hardness? Whose life the Lord yet tolerates, because He keeps them for the probation of His just ones. Whence also He rightly subjoined, *Which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war.* In order that, when our adversary the devil endeavours to tempt us, he may make use of their habits as his weapons against us. For by them he tortures us in his rage, but unwittingly purges us. For they become scourges to our sins, and when we are smitten by their life, which is such, we are freed from eternal death. Whence it is so ordered, that even the abandoned life of the reprobate benefits the life of the Elect, and that whilst their ruin furthers our interest, it is thus marvellously ordained, in order that even every thing which is lost, may not be lost to the Elect of God.

38. This also can be understood in another way, so as not to differ from the exposition of the former verse, since it seems connected with the words that precede it. For because He had pointed out that either the good can be changed to sin, or the wicked to goodness, He immediately proceeded to add, *Hast thou entered into the treasures of snow, or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war?* By either cold, or hard, snow, or hail, we understand, as has been said, the hearts of the wicked. But because Almighty God has chosen His Saints from such, and knows how many of the Elect He has still stored up amongst the life of the wicked, He fitly says, that He has His treasures in snow or hail. For ‘thesaurus’ (treasure) is so called from □□□□□, that is, from its being placed away. And He beholds many long concealed in a life of coldness, whom He brings out, when He orders it, and exhibits glittering with the brightness of righteousness, through grace from on high. For it is written, *Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* [Ps. 51, 7] And He hides them for a long while beneath the seal of His foreknowledge, prepared against the day of war and

of battle, but the moment He brings them out, He strikes the opposing breast of the adversaries, with their words and refutations, as if with hailstones. Whence it is written elsewhere, *Through the brightness in His presence the clouds passed away, hailstones and coals of fire.* [Ps. 18, 12. See S. Aug. ad loc.] For coals pass away through brightness, because holy preachers traverse the whole compass of the world with the brightness of their miracles. And they are called, moreover, hailstones, and coals of fire; because they both strike with their reproof, and kindle with the flame of charity. The bold reproof of the Saints is also fitly represented by the nature of hail. For hail strikes as it falls, and waters when it melts. But holy men both strike the hearts of their hearers with dread, and bedew them with comfort. For the Prophet bears witness how they strike, saying, *They shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts, and they shall tell of Thy greatness.* [Ps. 145, 6] And he has proceeded to subjoin, how they bedew with gentleness; *They shall utter the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness, and shall exult in Thy righteousness.* [ib. 7] Treasures, therefore, are kept in the snow or hail, because many who were frozen in the torpor of iniquity, when taken up unto heavenly grace, shine forth in Holy Church with the light of righteousness, and smite with the blows of their doctrine the evil wisdom of their adversaries. Whence also it is fitly subjoined, *Which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war.* For Saul in truth had been snow or hail through cold insensibility; but he became snow and hail against the breasts of his adversaries, either by the brightness of righteousness, or by the reproof of his keen eloquence. O what a treasure did the Lord keep him, stored up in snow or hail, when He already secretly beheld him as His own Elect, though placed among the life of the wicked. And to smite how many breasts of His adversaries did He grasp in His hand this hailstone, by which He laid prostrate so many hearts which resisted Him.

39. Let no one then boast himself of his own deeds; let no one despair of those, whom he sees still cold. For he sees not the treasures of God in snow and hail. For who could believe that that very person, who at his death kept the raiment of all those who stoned, could go before the martyred Stephen through the grace of apostleship? [Acts 7, 58] If therefore we refer to these secret gifts, or judgments, while not desparing utterly of any, we do not prefer ourselves in our hearts to those, to whom for a time we have been preferred. For though we now observe how much we have outstripped them, yet we know not how much we may be surpassed ourselves, when they begin the race. It is well, therefore, said to blessed Job, *Hast thou entered the treasures of snow, or hast thou beheld the treasures of the hail, which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war?* As if it were openly said, Prefer not thyself to any one, by reason of thy doings; for of these, whom thou beholdest still frozen in sin, thou knowest not what mighty workers of righteousness, and defenders of sound faith I intend to create. But because this is effected by the coming of the Mediator, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 24. *By what way is the light scattered?*

40. For He in truth is the way, Who says, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* [John 14, 6] The light is, therefore, scattered by this way, because all the Gentile world is enlightened by His presence. But He rightly said, *Is scattered,* because the light of preaching was not contracted or confined, but shone forth with its brightness far and wide by the voices of the Apostles. But because the power of love glows within, when the light of conversion has been received, in order that either our past sins may be anxiously lamented, or future blessings be most ardently sought for, it is suitably added, *The heat is divided over the earth.*

41. For when the light is spread abroad the heat is divided over the earth; because when righteousness is openly preached, the anxious desire of the

heart to seek God is spread forth in the practice of virtues; so that one person shines forth in the word of wisdom, another in the word of knowledge; one is mighty in the grace of healing, another in the working of mighty deeds; and that thus, while they severally receive unequally the gifts of the Spirit, they are all necessarily united to each other, and unanimously inflamed. But after the light is said to be spread abroad, it can readily be understood that persecution is designated by 'heat:' because as the light of preaching shone brightly, so the heat of persecution immediately blazed forth from the hearts of the unbelievers. For, that persecution is described by 'heat,' the discourse of the Lord bears witness, speaking of the seeds which had been cast on the rocky ground, *When the sun arose they were all scorched, and because they had not root, they withered away.* [Matt. 13, 6] And when He expounded it a little after, He called 'heat,' persecution. The heat therefore is divided over the earth, when the light is spread abroad, because, as the life of the faithful became bright, the cruelty of the faithless was kindled. For the heat was divided, when persecution was raging, now at Jerusalem, now at Damascus, and now in other countries far away. For it is written, *At that time there arose a great persecution in the Church, which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria.* [Acts 8, 1] And it is written again; *Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters for him to take to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he had found any of this way, men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.* [Acts 9, 1. 2.] Because then persecution had increased, now here, now there, they who had known the light of truth, were panting, as it were, under the burning of the divided heat.

42. But because we have heard blessed Job questioned in the former words, respecting the secret judgment; it now behoves us to examine more

accurately this which is said of the scattered light, or divided heat. For he is still examined with lofty questioning, in order that he may at least learn that he is ignorant, and that it may be said to him, *By what way is the light spread, the heat divided over the earth?* For what is designated by the word 'light' but righteousness? Of which it is written; *The people which was sitting in darkness, saw a great light.* [Is. 9, 2] But every thing which is scattered, is thrown, not continuously, but with a kind of intermission. And light is therefore said to be 'scattered,' because, though we already behold some things as they really are, yet some things we see not, as they are to be seen. For scattered light had possessed the heart of Peter, who had shone forth with such great brightness of faith, and of miracles, and yet, while he was imposing the weight of circumcision on the converted Gentiles, he knew not what to say aright. [Gal. 2, 11-14] Light, therefore, is 'scattered' in this life, because it is not continuously possessed, to the understanding of every thing. For whilst we comprehend one thing as it is, and are ignorant of another, we both see as it were partially in scattered light, and remain partially in darkness. But our light will then no longer be scattered, when our mind, caught up entirely to God, will shine forth.

43. And because it is not known in what ways this light is insinuated into the heart of man, it is rightly said in a question; *By what way is the light scattered?* As if it were openly said; Tell Me, in what order I pour My righteousness into the secret recesses of the hearts, when I am not seen, even in My approach, and yet I invisibly change the visible doings of men, when I irradiate one and the same mind, at one time with this, and at another with that virtue, and yet I permit it, through scattered light, still to remain, in a measure, in the darkness of temptation. Let ignorant man be asked, by what way the light is scattered. As if it were openly said, While I soften the hard hearts, bend the rigid, smooth the rough, warm the cold, strengthen the weak, establish the wandering, confirm the wavering, come,

if thou canst, incorporeally, and behold, on what minds I shed this light. For all these things we behold when done; for we know not how they are wrought within. The Truth shews in the Gospel, that this way of light is invisible to us, saying; *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, and knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.* [John 3, 8]

44. But because, when the light is scattered, temptations presently spring up from the hidden adversary against the enlightened mind, it is rightly subjoined; *The heat is divided over the earth.* For the crafty foe strives to inflame with unlawful desires the minds of those whom he sees shining forth with the light of righteousness; so that they frequently feel themselves more assaulted with temptations, than at the time when they beheld not the rays of inward light. Whence also the Israelites, after they had been called, complain against Moses and Aaron of their increasing labour, saying; *Let the Lord see and judge, because ye have made our savour to stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have given him a sword to slay us.* [Exod. 5, 21] For when they wished to depart from Egypt, Pharaoh had taken away the straw, and yet required works of the same amount. The mind, therefore, secretly murmurs, as it were, against the law, after the knowledge of which it endures sharper stings of temptations, and when it beholds its labours increasing, because it is displeasing to its adversary, it grieves that it stinks, as it were, in the eyes of Pharaoh. Heat, therefore, follows after light; because after the illumination of the heavenly gift, the contest of temptation is increased.

45. But the heat is rightly said also to be ‘divided: doubtless, because separate persons are not assailed by all vices, but by certain ones which are near, and placed close to them. For the ancient enemy first beholds the character [‘conspersionem’] of each person, and then applies the snares of temptations. For one person is of a cheerful, another of a morose, another of

a timid, another of a proud disposition. Our secret adversary, in order then to catch us easily, prepares deceptions closely connected with our several characters. For because pleasure borders on mirth, he holds out lust as a bait to cheerful dispositions. And because moroseness easily slides into anger, he offers the cup of discord for the morose. Because the timid dread punishments, he threatens terrors to the fearful. And because he beholds the proud elated with praises, he draws them on to whatever he pleases, by flattering applause. He lays snares therefore against men one by one, by vices adapted to them. For he would not easily lead them captive, if he were either to offer bribes to the lustful, or bodily pleasures to the covetous, or if he were to assail the greedy by the pride of abstinence, or the abstinent by gluttonousness, or if he were to seek to seize the gentle by eagerness for the contest, or the angry by the dread of fear. Because then, when in the heat of temptation, he craftily lurks in ambush against each one by himself, and secretly lays the snares which are akin to their habits, it is rightly said; *The heat is divided over the earth.*

46. But when it is first stated, *By what way the light is scattered:* and is there immediately subjoined, *The heat is divided over the earth,* it is doubtless indicated that the heat is also divided by the same way, by which the light is scattered. For when the lofty and incomprehensible grace of the Holy Spirit irradiates our minds with its light, it also so disposes and modifies the temptations of the adversary, that either they do not come upon us many together, or else that those only which can be endured, assail the mind already illuminated by God; so that they do not burn us with the fire of their full strength, when they torture us with the heat of their touch. As Paul bears witness, who says, *But God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* [1 Cor. 10, 13] This heat then our crafty supplanter divides in one way, and our merciful Creator in another.

The one divides, in order thereby to slay more speedily; the other, to make it more tolerable. And, because, when we are harassed with temptation, we are not only instructed with the Spirit of God within, but are also assisted with the words of preachers without, after the divided heat, it is rightly added,

Ver. 25. *Who hath given a course for the most violent shower?*

47. But if, as we said before, that persecution in the regions of Judaea is designated by the name of divided heat, because this very fierceness of persecution kept not from their office of preaching, through any fear, the holy preachers, who were assisted by the gift from on high, He fitly subjoins; *Who hath given a course for the most violent showers?* As if He were saying, Except Myself. For to have given a course to the most violent showers, when the heat was divided, is to have strengthened the force of preaching, amid the very difficulties of persecution, in order that the power of preachers might the more increase, the more the cruelty of persecutors stood in their way, so that they might bedew the thirsty hearts of their hearers with drops of rain, and water more abundantly the drought of unbelief; and that though the heat of cruelty was glowing against them, yet the voice of grace might not through them be silent. Paul was both enduring and watering this heat of persecution, when saying, *I labour even to bonds, as an evil doer, but the word of God is not bound.* [2 Tim. 2, 9] Of this shower it is said elsewhere; *I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.* [Is. 5, 6] Of this course of the shower which is going on in the hearts of the Elect, the Psalmist witnesses, saying; *His word runneth swiftly.* [Ps. 147, 15] But it is generally a shower only, and has no course; because preaching comes to the ears, but inward grace not acting, it passes not through to the hearts of the hearers. And of the words of this preaching it is said, on account of the Elect; *For thine arrows passed through.* [Ps. 77, 17] For the arrows of God pass through, when the words of His preaching descend from

the ears to the hearts. And because this is effected solely by Divine grace, the Lord witnesses that He has given a course to the shower.

48. But I see it must be observed, that He calls this same shower not ‘violent,’ but ‘most violent.’ A violent shower is great force; but a most violent one, is the boundless power of preaching. For it was a violent shower, when holy preachers were advising the belief of eternal joy. But ‘most violent,’ when they were advising men that on account of their hope their interest should be abandoned, all visible objects despised on account of invisible, and that the pains and tortures of this present world should be tolerated for the sake of the joys they have heard of. But when so many of the Elect, having learned the faith, abandoned their possessions, when the heat of persecution was raging, forgot their carnal affection, and exposed their limbs to torture for joy of spirit; what else did the Lord do, but make a course for even the most violent shower, which by bodily words so watered the invisible recesses of the heart, that it performed even the highest commands? Where it is also fitly subjoined;

And a way for the sounding thunder?

49. For what is understood by ‘thunder’ except the preaching of heavenly terror? And when the hearts of men feel this terror, they are shaken. But sometimes by thunder is set forth the Incarnate Lord Himself, Who was brought to our knowledge by the concurrent prophecy of the ancient fathers, as if by the clashing together of clouds; Who, appearing visibly among us, sounded forth awfully those things which were above us. Whence also the Holy Apostles themselves begotten by His grace were called Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder. [Mark 3, 17] But sometimes, as has been said, ‘thunder’ is taken for their preaching, by which the terror of the heavenly judgments is heard. But because any preacher can present words to the ears, but cannot open the hearts, and since, unless Almighty God alone grant the words of preachers a hearing invisibly by inward grace

in the hearts of their hearers, that preaching is received in vain by the ear of the hearer, which is prevented by his deaf heart from reaching to his inmost soul; the Lord asserts that He grants a way to the sounding thunder: for when He vouchsafes the words of preaching, He pierces the heart with terror. Paul, the illustrious preacher, when he was awfully sounding forth the heavenly mysteries, seeing that he could not possess this way by himself, admonished his disciples, saying, *Withal praying also for us that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ.* [Col. 4, 3] He therefore who was speaking mysteries, but was praying for a door to be opened by the Lord for these same mysteries in the heart of his hearers, possessed indeed the thunder already, but was seeking for a way to be granted it from above. John, who was saying, *Ye need not that any man teach you, but as His anointing teacheth you of all things,* [1 John 2, 27] knew that he could not give this way. Paul again taught Who could give this way, saying, *For neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.* [1 Cor. 3, 7] Let us hear then what this shower and thunder effect, when the way has been granted them. It follows;

Ver. 26. *That it should rain upon the earth without man, in the desert, where no mortal dwelleth.*

50. To rain upon the earth without man in the desert, is to preach the word of God to the Gentile world. For whilst it retained no worship of the Godhead, and shewed in itself no appearance of good works, it was plainly a desert. And because there was therein no lawgiver, nor any one who could seek God in a reasonable way, there was, as it were, 'no man;' and it remained as if occupied by beasts alone, void of men. Of this land of the desert it is said elsewhere, *He made a way in the desert.* [Is. 43, 19] Of this preaching vouchsafed to the Gentiles, the Psalmist witnesses, saying, *He made rivers in the desert.* [Ps. 107, 33] But we must observe, that after the heat was divided over the earth, the most violent shower received its course,

that it might rain in the desert. Because after the harshness of persecution became dreadful in Judaea, so as not only not to receive the faith, but even to assail it with the sword, every preacher who had been sent to Israel, turned aside to summon the Gentiles. Whence the holy Apostles say to the persecuting Hebrews whom they abandon, *We ought first to preach the word of God to you, but because ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* [Acts 13, 46] When the heat, then, has been divided, the land which is desert, and without man, is watered; because, when the persecution of the faithful had spread abroad in Judaea, the Gentile world, long since abandoned, and estranged, as it were, from the infusion of reason, is watered by the drops of preaching. But in what state the Gentile world was still found by the preachers, is shewn, when it is added;

Ver. 27. *That it should fill the pathless and desolate land.*

But what it produced when rained on, is shewn, when it is immediately subjoined, *And should produce green herbs.*

51. For the Gentile world, to which a way was not open for the word of God, was a long while pathless. For on the coming of our Redeemer it so received the calling of grace, as that there had not been in it before the way of Prophecy. It is also rightly called desolate; namely, as being destitute of either the wisdom of counsel, or of the fruit of good works. The Lord therefore gave a course to the most violent shower, and a way to the sounding thunder, that it should rain in the desert, and fill the pathless and desolate land, and should produce green herbs. That is, He added to outward preaching inward inspiration; that the parched hearts of the Gentiles might become green, the closed might be opened, the empty filled, the unfruitful germinate.

52. For in holy Scripture 'grass' is sometimes taken for the verdure of temporal glory, sometimes for the food of the devil, sometimes for the

support of preachers, sometimes for good works, sometimes for the knowledge and doctrine of eternal life. For it is taken for the verdure of temporal glory, as the Prophet says, *Let it pass away in the morning like grass, in the morning let it flourish and pass away.* [Ps. 90, 6] For to flourish and to pass away in the morning like grass, is in the prosperity of this world for the beauty of temporal glory speedily to dry away. Grass is taken for the food of the devil, as it is said of him by the Lord, *For him the mountains bear grass.* [Job 40, 20] As if He were saying, Whilst proud and haughty men exalt themselves in unlawful thoughts and actions, they feed him with their iniquities. Grass is pointed out to be the support of preachers, when it is said, *He produceth grass on the mountains, and herbs for the service of men.* [Ps. 147, 8; Ps. 104, 14] For grass is produced on the mountains, and herbs for the use of men, when the lofty ones of this world, being called to the knowledge of the faith, bestow on holy preachers, in the journey of this life, food for their sojourn. Grass is put for good works, as it is written, *Let the earth bring forth the green grass.* [Gen. l, 11] And though we hold that it thus took place historically in the creation of the world, yet we suppose, without impropriety, the earth to have been a type of the Church, which brought forth the green grass, in that it produced, at the command of God, fruitful works of mercy. We sometimes take 'grass' for the knowledge and doctrine of eternal verdure; as it is said by Jeremiah, *The wild asses did stand on the rocks, they snuffed up the winds as dragons; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass.* [Jer. 14, 6] By which expression the proud and most wicked persecution of the Jews was prophesied. For they are called in truth wild asses, for their pride of mind, and dragons, for their virulent thoughts. And they stood on the rocks, because they trusted, not in God, but, in the chief powers of this world, saying, *We have no king but Caesar.* [John 19, 15] They snuffed up the winds as dragons, because being puffed up by the spirit of pride they were

swollen with malicious haughtiness. Their eyes failed, because in truth their hope fell short of that which it was aiming at. For loving temporal things, it neglected to wait for eternal, and lost earthly goods, because preferred them to God. For they said, *If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come, and take away both our place and nation.* [John 11, 48] They were afraid lest they should lose their place, if the Lord had not been slain, and yet they lost it, when He was slain. But he adds the reason why these things befel the wretched men, *Because there was no grass:* that is, because the knowledge of eternity was wanting in their hearts, and did not refresh them with the food of the verdure of inward doctrine. In this place then what else do we understand by green herbs, but the knowledge of heavenly doctrine, or works in accordance? The desert earth then is watered by the rain, for the green herbs to be produced from it, because when the Gentile world enjoyed the shower of holy preaching, it budded forth with both the works of life, and the herb of doctrine. This verdure is promised to the desert land by the voice of the Prophet, when it is said, *In the dens, in which the dragons dwelt before, shall rise up the verdure of the reed and bulrush.* [Is. 35, 7] For what is designated by the reed but preachers: and what by the bulrush, which always grows by the moisture of water, but weak and tender hearers of the sacred word? The verdure of the reed and bulrush grows up then in the dens of the dragons, because in those peoples, which the malice of the old enemy used to possess, both the knowledge of teachers and the obedience of hearers is collected together.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

53. But these things which have been stated generally of the Gentile world, we see taking place, if we carefully examine, in individuals within the bosom of Holy Church. For there are many, grievously insensible to the

words of God, who are counted under the name of faith, who hear the words of life with their ears, but suffer them not to pass through to the inward places of the heart. What else are these than desert land? Which land in truth has not a man, because their mind is void of the sense of reason. And no mortal dwells in this land, because if thoughts of reasonable meanings ever spring up in their conscience, they do not remain there. For evil desires find a resting-place in their hearts, but if good desires have ever come there, they pass away, as if urged on. But when the merciful God deigns to give a course to His shower, and a way to the sounding thunder, being stung with grace within, they open the ears of their heart to the words of life. And the pathless land is filled: for while it grants a hearing to the word, it is overwhelmed with mystery. And it brings forth green herbs: because when watered by the grace of compunction, it not only willingly receives the words of preaching, but returns them back with abundant increase; so that it is now eager to speak what it could not hear, and that that which had become dry, even within, through not listening, feeds with its verdure as many as are hungry. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created, and Thou shall renew the face of the earth.* [Ps. 104, 30] For thus, thus, the face of the earth is changed by the virtue of renewal, when the mind which before was dry, is watered by the coming of grace, and is, after its former barrenness, arrayed with the verdure of knowledge, as though by grass which it had brought forth. Which grace of our Creator is commended still more highly, when it is subjoined;

Ver. 28. *Who is the father of the rain? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

54. As if He were saying, Except Myself, Who sprinkle, of My free grace, the barren earth of the human heart with drops of knowledge. For of this

rain is said elsewhere, *Thou wilt set apart, O God, a voluntary rain for thine inheritance.* [Ps. 68, 9] For God sets apart a voluntary rain for His inheritance, because He grants it to us, not for own deserts, but from the bounty of His own benignity. And He is in this place called the father of this rain, for this reason, because His heavenly preaching is begotten in us, not for our merits, but from His grace. For the drops of dew, are the holy preachers themselves, who water the fields of our breast, (parched amid the evils of the present life, as though amid the gloom of a dry night,) with the grace of bounty from above. Of these drops it is said to obstinate Judah; *Therefore the drops of rains have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain.* [Jer. 3, 3] For the drops of dew are the same as the drops of rains. For when they soften down their preaching by any accommodation, they sprinkle, as it were, the tender dew. But when they say what they think of heavenly things, with the power with which they are strong, they pour forth, as it were, the flowing rain abundantly. Paul was sprinkling the dew, when saying to the Corinthians, *For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.* [1 Cor. 2, 2] And again he was pouring forth the rain, saying, *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is opened unto you, our heart is enlarged.* [2 Cor. 6, 11] Hence it is, that Moses, who knew that he would say bold things to the strong, and gentle to the weak, observed, *Let my speech be waited for as the rain, and let my words descend as the dew.* [Deut. 32, 2]

But, lo! we have heard with what favour the Gentiles are called, let us now hear with what severity Judah is rejected. We have heard how He cultivates what is desert, and waters what is barren: let us now hear how He casts forth those which seem to be, as it were, within. For He does not so gather His Elect, as not also to judge the reprobate; nor does He so forgive faults to some persons, as not to punish them in some also. For it is written, *For mercy and wrath come from Him.* Whence here also, after He had

introduced so many gifts of grace, He conceals not the judgments of His wrath. For it follows;

Ver. 29. *Out of whose womb came the ice, and the frost from heaven, who hath gendered it?*

55. For what else do we understand by 'frost' or 'ice,' but the hearts of the Jews frozen and bound with the torpor of unbelief? Who formerly by the receiving of the Law, by the keeping of the commandments, by the ministry of sacrifice, by the mysteries of prophecy, were so kept within the bosom of grace, as if within the womb of the Creator. But because, on the coming of the Lord, being hard bound with the frost of unbelief, they lost the warmth of faith and charity, being cast forth from the secret bosom of grace, they came forth like ice from the womb of the Creator. *And the frost from heaven, who hath gendered it* What else ought 'heaven' to be here understood to mean but the lofty life of the saints? To which heaven it is said, *Give ear, O heaven, and I will speak.* [Deut. 32, 1] Of which abode it is elsewhere written, *The soul of the just is the seat of wisdom* [Perhaps Prov. 12, 23. LXX. where it is read, *A prudent man is the throne of sense,* In the Syriac version, *A cautious man is the seat of wisdom. Ben.* On Hom. 38, in Ev. they suggest Wisd. 7, 7, or 27.]. Because then God is wisdom, if the abode of God is heaven, and the soul of the just is the seat of wisdom, the soul of the just is certainly heaven. Abraham was heaven, Isaac was heaven, Jacob was heaven. But because the persecutors of the Lord, the high priests of the Jews, who were frozen with the torpor of unbelief, sprang from the race of those ancestors, the frost came, as it were, from heaven, because the frozen herd of unbelievers came forth from the lofty offspring of the saints. For when Caiaphas was born from Abraham, what else was it, but that ice came forth from heaven? Yet this frost the Lord says that He had gendered, for this reason, because He permitted the Jews, whom He Himself naturally created good, to go forth from Him, by a just judgment, frozen through their

wickedness. For the Lord is the Author of nature, not of sin. He engendered therefore, by naturally creating, those whom He suffered, by patiently enduring, to remain in sin. And because those hearts of the Jews, which before were tender, and easily penetrated by faith, were afterwards hardened in the obstinacy of unbelief, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 30. *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone.*

56. For I remember that I have often taught already that 'waters' are taken for peoples. But by a 'stone,' by reason of its very hardness, the Gentile peoples are sometimes designated. For they themselves worshipped stones. And of these it is said by the Prophet, *Let them, that make them, become like unto them, and all who trust in them.* [Ps. 115, 8] Whence John, beholding that the Jews boasted themselves in their pedigree, and foreseeing the Gentiles passing over to the stock of Abraham, by the knowledge of the faith, says, *Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up sons to Abraham.* [Matt. 3, 9] Certainly calling 'stones' the Gentiles, who were hardened in unbelief. Because then Judaea first believed in God, while all the Gentile world was remaining in the obstinacy of its unbelief, and because the hearts of the Gentiles were afterwards softened to receive the faith, and the unbelief of the Jews was hardened, it is well said, *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone.* As if He were saying, Those soft hearts of the Jews, easily penetrated by faith, are converted into the insensibility of the Gentiles. For when God in His mercy drew to Him the Gentiles, He repelled Judaea in His wrath. And it came to pass, that as the Gentiles had been at first hardened against the reception of the faith, so, when the Gentiles were afterwards admitted to the faith, was the people of Judaea hardened in the torpor of unbelief. Whence the Apostle Paul says to these very Gentiles, *As ye in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so have these not believed, in*

your mercy, that they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all. [Rom. 11, 30-32] And accurately considering this his opinion, first concerning the calling of the Jews, and the rejection of the Gentiles, and afterwards concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, and reflecting that he could not comprehend the secret judgments of God, he subjoined in exclamation, *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how incomprehensible are His judgments, and His ways unsearchable.* [Rom. 11, 33] Whence here also when the Lord was saying of the unbelief of the Jews, *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone,* to shew that His judgments concerning their rejection were secret, He fitly subjoined;

And the surface of the deep is congealed.

57. Because the eye of the human mind does not at all penetrate the incomprehensibleness of the Divine judgment, from a kind of veil of our ignorance having been thrown over it. For it is written, *Thy judgments are a great deep.* [Ps. 36, 6] Let no one then seek to investigate, why, when one is rejected, another is chosen, or, why, when one is chosen, another is rejected, because the surface of the deep is congealed, and as Paul witnesses, *His judgments are inscrutable, and His ways unsearchable.* [Rom. 11, 33]

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

58. But by that which is said, *Out of whose womb came the ice, and the frost from heaven, who hath gendered it?* (ver. 29.) nothing prevents Satan being understood by the frost and ice. For he came forth as if ice from the womb of God, because the teacher of iniquity came forth, frozen with the torpor of sin, from the warmth of His mysteries. He was gendered as frost from heaven, because he was suffered to fall from the highest to the lowest condition, and to go and bind the hearts of the reprobate. And having been

fashioned rightly in heaven, when he fell, he bound as frost the hearts of his followers, in the coldness of sin. And what he did amongst men, on coming to the earth, is fully stated, when it is added, *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone.* For by ‘waters’ peoples are designated, but by a ‘stone’ the hardness of this very Satan. The waters therefore were hardened after the likeness of a stone, when he came on earth, because men, imitating his wickedness, lost the soft bowels of charity. And because his crafty designs cannot be detected by men who have been led astray, it is rightly subjoined; *And the surface of the deep is congealed.* For one thing lies concealed within him, and another he presents without. For he transforms himself as an angel of light, and with his cunning art of deception frequently proposes laudable objects, in order to lead on to unlawful. The surface of the deep is therefore congealed; for while the fair appearance of his persuasion appears, as it were, like solid ice on the surface, his wickedness, lurking in the depth, is not observed.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

59. But we can understand all these in another sense also, if we enquire into them, in their moral meaning. For whilst Almighty God fashions the minds of men in His fear, He conceives them, as it were, and brings them forth to open virtues, when He advances them onwards. But if they are elated by the virtues they have received, He abandons them. And we often know persons to be smitten by consideration of their sins, to glow with fear of the Divine dread, and, commencing in fear, attain to the highest virtues. But when they are elated by these virtues which they receive, being bound with the snare of vain glory, they return to their former torpor. When God therefore casts off such persons, He rightly says, *Out of whose womb came the ice?* For the ice comes forth, as it were, from the womb of God, when those who had before been warm within, become cold, by reason of the gift of virtue, and,

being torpid, seek after outward glory, for the very reason by which they ought to glow with greater warmth to love things within. And whilst one man is powerful in signs, another in knowledge, another in prophecy, and another in mighty works, and seeks by these gifts to please men, he turns all his former inward warmth into torpidity, from loving outward praises. He comes forth therefore as ice from the womb, when, after the favours of gifts, he is separated from the bowels of heavenly compassion. Are not they 'ice,' who in the virtues they receive seek praise from men? And yet they say to the Judge on His coming, when recalling His own gifts to His mind; *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name have done many mighty works?* [Matt. 7, 29] But He shews how the Lord casts out this ice, saying, *I know you not whence ye are. Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [ib. 23] The Lord now bears this ice in His womb, because He tolerates it within the bosom of the Church. But He then openly casts it out, when He banishes such from the secret abodes of heaven by the last and public judgment. What is then the plain object: of these words, except that Job should be brought down from his lofty virtues, that he should not, in consequence of his former warmth in good living, grow cold through pride, and be repelled and go forth from the womb of the Godhead, by being swollen up within the bosom of his own heart?

60. And because by a righteous judgment He permits haughty minds to go forth to commit sin, from the virtue they have received, it is rightly added, still farther; *And the frost from heaven, who hath gendered it?* For He frequently vouchsafes the knowledge of Holy Scripture, but when he who receives it is elated by this knowledge, he is, by the anger of the strict Judge, so blinded in the Scripture itself, that he no longer sees its inward meaning, from seeking thereby for outward applause; and that, though he could be warm by remaining within, he goes forth and becomes frozen, and

that he who before, when easily led to the knowledge of God, remained unfrozen at the top, becomes hardened, and sinks to the bottom. Is not Holy Scripture 'heaven,' which opening to us the day of understanding, illuminates us with the Sun of righteousness, and which, while the night of the present life surrounds us, shines for us with the stars of the commandments. But since there must be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest, [1 Cor. 11, 19] when the proud mind is kept back from a sound understanding of Scripture, frost is generated from heaven by the judgment of the strict Judge; in order that, when Holy Scripture itself glows in the hearts of the Elect, it may cast forth from itself in a frozen condition, those who proudly seek to know it. For they err in the very point, in which they should have corrected their faults; and while they fall away from the heavenly understanding of the resplendent Word, both hardened themselves, and about to deceive others, they sink to the bottom, as ice, and bind others also. But yet the Lord says that He Himself genders this frost, not because He Himself fashions the minds of the wicked to sin, but because He does not liberate them from sin. As it is written; *I will harden the heart of Pharaoh.* [Exod. 4, 21] For because He refused to soften it in His mercy, He plainly announced that He had hardened it in His severity.

61. But, because the image of virtue is retained for the sake of human praise, when the virtue of Divine fear, which has begun, is itself lost, it is rightly subjoined; *The water are hardened after the likeness of a stone, and the surface of the deep is congealed.* For waters are hardened by ice at the surface, but remain fluid underneath. And what do we understand by waters but the unstable hearts of the reprobate? For when they are deliberately forsaking virtue, they shew themselves forth, in their hypocrisy, as resolute in good works, and whilst they are inwardly gliding down into sins, they outwardly feign themselves imitators of the holy and resolute. *The waters*

are hardened after the likeness of a stone, and the surface of the abyss is bound together, because their weak and unstable conscience is concealed from men, by a superinduced appearance of sanctity. For when they are inwardly foul in their own sight, they are arrayed before the eyes of others with a kind of comeliness of living.

62. But, lest any one should wish these words of the Lord to be understood in a good sense, we ought to add it, for those also who thus look for it, provided we are not [perhaps, 'so as we be not.' ('dummodo')] considered to have neglected points which needed to be examined. For it is said in the former verse, *Who is the father of rain? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?* And it is immediately added, *Out of whose womb came the ice? and the frost from heaven who hath gendered it?* If therefore the following sentence is connected with the preceding words with a similar sense, its meaning is clearly laid open without any obstacle of difficulty even in a good sense. For when the earth is watered by rain, the seeds which have been cast in are pressed down more productively. But again, if the rain waters it too immoderately, it changes the richness and virtue of the corn in the stalk. But if the seed which has been thrown in, is after rain checked by the frost, the more it is kept from appearing too quickly above ground, the more productively does it root itself beneath: and the more it is forbidden to grow, the more it is compelled to multiply: because, when it is kept from too early a growth, being expanded by the slowness of its conception, it is filled more abundantly for fruit. What is meant then by the Lord first speaking of Himself as the father of the rain, but afterwards saying that the ice comes forth from His womb, and declaring that He genders the frost from heaven? Except that He first waters in a wondrous manner the soil of our hearts for the reception of the seeds of the word, by the secret rain of His grace, and that He afterwards keeps it down by the discipline of His secret dispensation, lest it should bring forth too luxuriantly with the virtues

it has conceived, in order that the rigor of discipline may likewise bind that which the rain of grace received irrigates, lest it turn its fruit into grass, if it produce its virtues, either before it ought, or more than is necessary. For, frequently, when a good work is displayed before it ought by beginners, it is emptied of the grain of perfection, and while virtues are more exuberant than is necessary, they frequently dry up. Whence the Lord either refuses the desires even of His Elect, before the fit time, or again restrains at the fit time their unlimited progress, lest, if they advance either sooner, or farther, than they ought, they should fall into the defect of pride by the greatness of their proficiency. For when the heart is pricked with compunction after sin, the earth, which had been dry, is watered by the pouring of rain upon it; and when it proposes to abandon its iniquities and to follow after good works, it receives, as it were, seed after the rain. And many persons, when they conceive holy desires, are burning to exercise themselves at once in the sublimest virtues, so that sin may not only not infect their doings, but may not even assail their thoughts. They are still indeed living in the body, but they wish to suffer no further from their connexion with the present life. They seek to aim at inward stability of mind in their intention, but are driven back by interrupting temptations, in order, namely, that they may remember their own infirmity, and may not be elated at the virtues which they receive. And when this is effected by the wonderful constraint of discipline, what else but frost is gendered from heaven over the watered earth? What but ice is produced from the womb of God, when the dispensation comes forth from its secret place within, and our wills are restrained even in their good desires?

63. Let us see with what ice of discipline Paul (that is, the watered earth) is weighed down, when he says, *To will is present with me, but to perform what is good I find not.* [Rom. 7, 18] For he who asserts that he has the will, makes known what seeds are even now concealed within him by the

pouring of grace upon him. But whilst he finds not to do good, he certainly points out how much ice of the heavenly dispensation weighs on him. Had not this ice pressed their hearts, to whom he was saying, *So that ye cannot do the things that ye would?* [Gal. 5, 17] As if he were plainly saying, The secret seeds of your heart are now seeking to break forth into fruit, but they are kept down by the ice of the heavenly dispensation, in order that they may afterwards shoot forth more productively, the more patiently they bear the weight of the Divine judgment pressing on them.

64. And because the hearts of men, since they are unable to break out into those virtues which they desire, are frequently harassed with the stings of temptation, so far as they shrink back from carrying out their intention, but yet repress these same temptations of their thoughts, and fashion themselves, by the habit of discipline in a kind of strictness of living, it is well subjoined; *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone.* Because, though unstable thoughts harass within, yet they do not at all lead to consent in wicked doings. But the mind conceals, under an habitual custom of good living, as if under a kind of exterior hardness, whatever is softened within by the assault of temptation. Whence it is well subjoined; *And the surface of the deep is congealed.* Because, even if an evil thought comes as far as to suggestion, it does not break out into consent, because the superinduced rigour of holy discipline suppresses the fluctuating motions of the mind.

65. But by ‘frost’ or ‘ice’ can also be designated the adversity of this present life, which while it keeps down the holy by its asperity, makes them stronger. For while Almighty God permits us to be exercised with annoyances, and carries us on to the condition of a better life by the intervention of sorrow, He genders with wonderful wisdom the frost and ice over the coming fruit; in order that each of the Elect may endure in this present life, as if in winter, the adversities of winds and frosts, and may

exhibit afterwards, as in the serenity of summer, the fruits which he has here conceived. Whence it is said by the voice of the Bridegroom to every soul which is hastening after the whirlwind of this life to those joys of eternity, *Arise, hasten, My beloved, My fair one, and come. For the winter has already passed, the shower has departed and gone.* [Cant. 2, 10. 11.] But because we are relaxed, if prosperity alone attends us, but are the better strengthened for virtues by means of adversities, it is rightly subjoined, *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone.* For minds, which had softly melted away through prosperities, become firm when hard pressed by adversities. And water is brought to the likeness of a stone, whenever any one who is weak imitates the sufferings of his Redeemer by endurance received from above. For water had, in truth, hardened after the fashion of stone, when Paul, that former impatient persecutor, was saying, *I fill up those things which are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.* [Col. 1, 24]

66. And because persons, when depressed by adversities, guard more carefully their inward gifts, it is rightly added; *And the surface of the deep is congealed.* For joy is wont to lay open the secrets of the mind, and, by laying open, to lose them. But when adversities depress us outwardly, they make us more careful within. After frost then or ice, the surface of the deep is congealed, because our mind is strengthened by adversities, to preserve those deep gifts which it has received. For Isaiah had congealed the surface of his abyss, when he was saying; *My secret to myself, my secret to myself.* [Is. 24, 16. marg.] Paul had congealed the surface of his abyss, who labouring under so many dangers and adversities, under cover of some one else, speaks of himself, saying; *I have heard secret words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* [2 Cor. 12, 4] And again, *But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or heareth any thing of me.* [ib. 6] What then had he done, who, when enduring adversity without,

was afraid to open the secrets of his heart, lest he should perchance vent himself in praises; what, but covered the abyss of his inward secrets by a congealed surface? It follows,

Ver. 31. *Will thou be able to join together the shining stars, the Pleiades, or wilt thou be able to break up the circuit of Arcturus?*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

67. The stars Pleiades, are so called from □□□□□□□□, that is, from plurality. But they were made so near to each other, and yet so distinct, that they can be near together, and yet cannot possibly be united, since they are united in nearness, but disunited as to contact. But Arcturus so illuminates the seasons of night, as placed in the axis of heaven, to turn itself in divers ways, and yet never to set. For it does not revolve out of its orbit, but placed in its own position, it inclines to all quarters of the world, though it will never set. What then is it, that man, who was formed from the earth, and placed upon the earth, is questioned as to the government of heaven, that he cannot join together the Pleiades, which he sees were made close to each other and almost united, and that he cannot break up the circuit of Arcturus, though he can behold it almost dissipated by its own rapidity of motion? Is it not, that considering in those His servants, the power of their Creator, he should remember his own weakness, and consider how beyond our comprehension is He, in the very government of His heavenly ministers, Whom he cannot as yet behold in His own majesty?

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

68. But why do we say these things, who are urged by the stimulus of reason, to learn the sense of these words pregnant with mystical meaning? For what else do the shining Pleiades, which are also seven in number, indicate, but all the Saints, who amid the darkness of this present life,

illumine us with the light of the Spirit of sevenfold grace, who, from the first beginning of the world, even to its end, sent at divers times to prophesy, are in some degree united, and in some degree separate from each other? For the stars the, Pleiades, as was before said, are united to each other in their contiguity, and disunited as to contact. They are situated indeed together, and yet pour forth separately the rays of their light. In like manner all the Saints appearing at different times for the purpose of preaching, are both disunited in our sight of their person, and united in their intention of mind. They shine together, because they preach One; but they touch not each other, because they are divided by different times.

69. At what different times did Abel, Isaiah, and John appear! They were separated indeed in time, but not in the subject of their preaching. For Abel offered up a lamb in sacrifice, typifying the passion of our Redeemer; of Whose passion Isaiah says; *As a lamb before its shearer He will be dumb, and will not open His mouth.* [Is. 53, 7] Of whom John also says; *Behold the Lamb of God; behold, Who taketh away the sins of the world.* [John 1, 29] Behold they were sent at different ‘times indeed, and yet agreeing in their thought of the innocency of our Redeemer, they spake of the same Lamb, John by pointing to Him, Isaiah by foreseeing, and Abel by offering; and Him, Whom John set forth by pointing to Him, and Isaiah set forth in his words, Abel held, in signification, in his hands.

70. Because then we have said how the Pleiades accord together concerning the Humanity of our Redeemer, let us now point out how they shine in concord in setting forth the Unity of the Trinity. For David, Isaiah, and Paul appeared at different periods of the world. But yet none of them thought differently from another; because, though they knew not each other in face, yet they had learned one and the same thing by Divine knowledge. For David, in order to set forth God in Trinity as the Creator of all things, said, *Let God bless us, our God, let God bless us.* [Ps. 67, 6. 7.] And for fear

he should be considered to have spoken of three Gods, from his mentioning God three times, he immediately added, teaching thereby the Unity of the same Trinity; *And let all the ends of the earth fear Him.* For by adding not 'them,' but 'Him,' He intimated that the Three whom He had named were One. When Isaiah also was uttering praises of the Unity of the Trinity, he says, in describing the words of the Seraphim, *Holy, Holy, Holy.* [Is. 6, 3] But lest he should seem by mentioning 'Holy' thrice, to sever the unity of the Divine Substance, he added, *Lord God of hosts.* Because then he added not 'Lords,' 'Gods,' but 'Lord God,' he pointed out that that Being, Whom he had thrice called Holy, existed as One. Paul also, to set forth the operation of the Holy Trinity, says; *Of Him, and through Him, and in Him are all things.* [Rom. 11, 36] And in order to teach the Unity of this same Trinity, he immediately added; *To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* By adding then not 'to them,' but *to Him,* he made Him known as One in nature, Three in Persons, Whom he had thrice addressed by the same word. The Pleiades therefore are both situated as it were in one place, because they think alike concerning God; and yet they touch not each other, because, as has been said, they are distributed through different periods of this world.

71. Which the Prophet Ezekiel well and briefly describes, who, when saying that he had beheld living creatures of different kinds, added; *Their wings were joined one to another.* [Ez. 1, 9] For the wings of living creatures are joined one to another; because though the things which they do are different, yet the voices and the virtues of the Saints are united together in one and the same sense. And though one may be a man, from doing all things rationally, another, who is bold in suffering, may be a lion, from not fearing the adversities of the world; another, from offering himself through abstinence as a living victim, may be a calf; another, from soaring on high on the wing of contemplation, may be an eagle; yet do they touch

each other with their wings, whilst they fly, because they are united to each other by the confession of their words, and the accordance of their virtues. But because it belongs to the power of God alone both to join together in the preaching of the faith those who were sent at different times, and to unite in brightness of intention those that were endued with dissimilar virtues, it is rightly said; *Wilt thou be able to join together the shining stars, the Pleiades?* As if He said, As I, Who alone fill all things, and Who by filling the minds of the Elect join them in a sense of unity.

72. But by Arcturus, which illumines the night season in its orbit, and never sets, is designated, not the doings of the Saints separately manifested, but the whole Church together, which suffers indeed weariness, but yet does not incline to fall from its own proper position, which endures a circle of toils, but hastens not to set together with time. For Arcturus comes not with the night season to the lowest part of the heavens, but even while it is revolving itself, night is brought to a close. Because doubtless, while Holy Church is shaken with numberless tribulations, the shade of the present life comes to an end; and the night passes by, as it continues stationary, because while the Church remains in her own original condition, the life of this mortal state passes away. There is in Arcturus a point for us to observe more carefully. For it revolves with seven stars, and at one time raises three to the highest point, and depresses four to the lowest; at one time raises four on high, and depresses three below. Holy Church also, when she preaches at one time to unbelievers the knowledge of the Trinity, and at another the four virtues, that is, prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice, to believers, changes, as it were, by a kind of rotation in its preaching, the appearance of its position. For when she strips of confidence in their own doings those who boast of their own works, and exalts faith in the Trinity, what else does Arcturus, but elevate three stars, and depress four? And when she forbids some, who have no good works, to presume on their faith, and orders them

to work out more earnestly the things which are commanded, what else does Arcturus do, but raise up four stars, and bring down three? Let us see how it elevates three, and depresses four. Behold it is said by Paul to those who were priding themselves on their works in opposition to faith; *If Abraham were justified by works he hath glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* [Rom. 4, 2. 3.] Let us see how it elevates four and depresses three. Behold it is said by James to those that were boasting of faith in opposition to works; *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* [James 2, 26] Arcturus therefore revolves, because Holy Church turns herself on different sides with skill in preaching, according to the minds of her hearers. Arcturus revolves, because she is whirled round in the tribulations of this night. But the Lord breaks up at last this circuit of Arcturus, because He turns the labours of the Church into rest. Then does He also more entirely join the Pleiades, when He destroys the orbit of Arcturus, because all the Saints are then doubtless joined to each other even in outward appearance, when Holy Church at the end of this world is released from those labours which she now endures. Let Him say then; *Wilt thou be able to join together the shining stars the Pleiades, or wilt thou be able to break up the circuit of Arcturus?* Thou understandest As I, Myself, Who then unite the life of the Saints even in outward appearance, when I bodily dissolve the circuit of the Church Universal. And what man is ignorant that this is the act of Divine power alone? But let man, in order that he may know what he is himself, be constantly reminded what it is that God alone can effect.

73. We have still some other meaning to give of the stars the Pleiades, and Arcturus. For the Pleiades rise from the East, but Arcturus on the side of the North. But wherever Arcturus turns itself in its circle, it presents to view the Pleiades; and when the light of the day is now approaching, the

order of its stars is extended. By Arcturus, then, which rises in the quarter of the cold, can be designated the Law; but by the Pleiades, which rise from the East, the grace of the New Testament. For the Law had, as it were, come from the North, which used to alarm those subject to it with such asperity of rigor. For while it was ordering some to be stoned for their faults, others to be punished by the death of the sword, it was, like a frozen region, far removed, as it were, from the light of charity, rather nipping the seeds of its precepts with cold, than nourishing them with warmth. Peter had shuddered at the weight of this oppression, when saying; *Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?* [Acts 15, 10] Nor is it any wonder that the Old Testament is set forth by the seven stars of Arcturus, because both the seventh day was held in veneration under the Law, and the vows of the appointed sacrifice were extended through the whole week. But the Pleiades, which themselves are also seven, as we have before said, point out the more plainly the grace of the New Testament, the more clearly we all see, that by it the Holy Spirit enlightens His faithful ones with the light of the sevenfold gift. Wherever therefore Arcturus turns, it presents the Pleiades to view, because by every thing the Old Testament says, the works of the New Testament are announced. For under the text of the letter it conceals the mystery of prophecy. And Arcturus inclines itself, as it were, and points them out, because while it bends itself to the spiritual sense, the light of sevenfold grace, which is signified thereby, is laid open. And as the light of day approaches, the order of its stars is extended, because after the Truth became known to us by Itself, It released the precepts of the letter from carnal observance.

74. But our Redeemer, coming in the flesh, joined together the Pleiades; because He possessed the operations of the sevenfold Spirit all at once, and abiding in Himself. Of Whom it is said by Isaiah: *There shall come forth a*

rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall grow up from his root, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of godliness, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill Him. [Is. 11, 1-3] Of Whom Zechariah says; *Upon one stone are seven eyes.* [Zech. 3, 9] And again, *And on the golden candlestick seven lamps.* [ib. 4, 2] But no man ever possessed all the operations of the Holy Spirit at once, except the sole Mediator between God and man, [1 Tim. 2, 5] Whose is the same Spirit, Who proceedeth from the Father [see Note at end of Book XXIX.] before all ages. It is well said, therefore, *Upon one stone are seven eyes.* For, for this Stone to have seven eyes, is to possess at once in operation every virtue of the Spirit of sevenfold grace. For one receives prophecy, another knowledge, another virtues, another kinds of tongues, another the interpretation of tongues, according to the distribution of the Holy Spirit. But no one attains to the possession of all the gifts of the same Spirit. But our Creator, in taking our weakness, because He taught us that by the power of His Godhead He possessed all the virtues of the Holy Spirit at once, doubtless joined together the shining Pleiades. But whilst He joins the Pleiades, He breaks up the circuit of Arcturus. Because, when He made it known that He, having become Man, possessed all the operations of the Holy Spirit, He loosened in the Old Testament the burden of the letter, that each of the faithful may now understand that in the liberty of the Spirit, which he used, amid so many dangers, to serve with fear. Let blessed Job therefore hear; *Wilt thou be able to join together the shining stars the Pleiades?* As if it were openly said, Thou canst indeed possess the light of certain virtues, but art thou able to exercise at once all the operations of the Holy Spirit? Behold Me, therefore, uniting the Pleiades in all virtues, and be kept from boasting thyself of a few only. Hear what is said, *Or wilt thou be able to break the circuit of Arcturus?* As if it were openly said to him; Even

if thou thyself now understandest what is right, canst thou do away by thy power, even in the hearts of others, the labour of grosser understanding? Consider Me therefore, who correct the follies of the carnal, whilst I manifest myself in the foolishness of the flesh, that thou mayest the more bring down these, which thou countest the mightinesses of thy virtues, the more thou canst not apprehend even the footsteps of My weakness. But, because, in the very mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, the light of truth is manifested to some, but the hearts of others are darkened by an offence; it is lightly subjoined;

Ver. 32. *Dost thou bring forth the morning star at its time, and dost thou make the evening star to rise over the sons of earth?*

75. For the Father brought forth the morning star in his season, because, as it is written; *When the fulness of the time was come, God sent His Son born of a woman, made tinder the Law, to redeem them that are under the Law.* [Gal. 4, 4] Who being born of a Virgin, appeared as the morning star, amid the darkness of our night, because, having put to flight the obscurity of sin, He announced to us the eternal morn. But He made Himself known as the morning star, because He arose in the morn from death, and overcame, by the brightness of His light, the hideous darkness of our mortality. Who [Oxf. Mss. 'Qui.'] is well called by John; *The bright and morning star.* [Rev. 22, 16] For, appearing alive after death, He became our morning star; because while He furnished us in His own person an instance of resurrection, He pointed out what light comes after. But the Lord makes the evening star to rise over the sons of earth, because He permits Antichrist to hold sway over the unbelieving hearts of the Jews, as their desert demands. And they are therefore justly subjected by the Lord to this evening star, because they chose of their own accord to be the sons of earth. For by seeking after earthly, and not heavenly things, they were so blinded as not to behold the brightness of our morning star; and while they seek for

the evening star to rule over them, they are plunged in the eternal night of subsequent damnation. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, *I came in My Father's name, and ye received Me not; another will come in his own name, and him ye will receive.* [John 5, 43] Hence Paul says; *Because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them the operation of error, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but consented to iniquity.* [2 Thess. 2, 10-12] The evening star therefore would never rise over them, if they had wished to be the sons of heaven. But while they seek after visible things, having lost the light of the heart, they are in darkness under the prince of night.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

76. But if we examine this in a moral sense, we find how it is daily occurring; because both the morning star doubtless rises on the Elect, and the evening star, by God's permission, rules over the reprobate. For there is one and the same word of God in the mouth of the preacher. But while these hear it with joy, and those with envy, they change for themselves the brightness of the morning star into the darkness of the evening. Whilst these humbly receive the voice of holy preaching, they open, as it were, the eyes of the heart to the light of the star. But whilst those feel envy at one who advises them well, and seek not the cause of their salvation, but the glory of boasting, when the evening of their iniquity bursts forth, they close their eyes in the sleep of death. By a secret sentence, therefore, he who is the morning star to elect, is the evening star to reprobate hearers. Because by that holy exhortation, with which the good come back to life, the reprobate perish more fatally in sin. Whence it is well said by Paul; *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish, to the one the savour of death unto death, but to the other the savour of life*

unto life. [2 Cor. 2, 15. 16.] He saw then that his word, by which he beheld some roused from their iniquity, and others on the contrary lulled to sleep in their iniquity, was both the morning and the evening star to its hearers. And because this takes place by the secret judgment of God, which cannot be comprehended by men in this life, he rightly there subjoined; *And who is sufficient for these things?* As if he were saying; We are sufficient indeed to consider that these things occur, but we are not sufficient to investigate why they occur. Whence also, the Lord in this place, because He had said that the morning star is brought forth for some, but that the evening star rises for others, that man might not dare to scan the secret judgments of God, immediately subjoins;

Ver. 33. *Knowest thou the course of heaven, and wilt thou set down the reason thereof on the earth?*

77. To know the course of heaven, is to see the secret predestinations of the heavenly disposals. But to set down the reason thereof on the earth is to lay open before the hearts of men the causes of such secrets. To set down, namely, the reason of heaven on the earth, is either to examine the mysteries of the heavenly judgments, by consideration, or to make them manifest in words. Which certainly no one can do who is placed in this life. For, to pass from little to greater things, who can understand what is the secret reason, that a just man frequently returns from a trial, not only unavenged, but even punished besides, and that his wicked adversary escapes, not only without punishment, but even victorious? Who can understand why one man, who plots for the deaths of his neighbours, survives, and another, who would be likely to preserve the lives of many, dies ? One man, who is only eager to do hurt, attains the height of power, another only desires to defend the injured, and yet he himself is lying under oppression. One man wishes for leisure, and is involved in innumerable occupations, another wishes to be engaged in employments, and is compelled to be disengaged. One

beginning badly is drawn on from worse to worse, even to the end of his life; another beginning well, proceeds through a long period of time to the increase of his merits. But, on the other hand, one, who is an evil liver, is spared for a long time, in order that he may improve; but another seems to be living properly, but continues in this life till he breaks out into evil ways. One, who has been born in the error of unbelief, perishes in his error; another, who has been born in the soundness of the Catholic faith, is perfected in the soundness of the Catholic faith. But, on the other hand, one, who has come forth from the womb of a Catholic Mother, is swallowed up, at the close of his life, in the gulph of error, but another terminates his life in Catholic piety, who, born in misbelief, had sucked in the poison of error with his mother's milk. One both wishes, and is able, to aim at the loftiness of holy living; another is neither willing nor able. One wishes, and is not able; another is able, and is not willing. Who then can examine into these secrets of the heavenly judgments? Who can understand the secret balance of hidden equity? For no one attains to understand these recesses of secret judgments. Let this be said then to a man, that he may learn his own ignorance; let him know his own ignorance, that he may fear; let him fear, that he may be humbled; let him be humbled, that he may not trust in himself; let him trust not in himself, that he may seek for the assistance of his Creator, and that he who is dead from trusting in himself, may seek the assistance of his Maker, and live. Let the righteous man, then, who knows himself indeed, but who still knows not those things which are above him, hear the words, *Knowest thou the course of heaven, and wilt thou set down the reason thereof upon the earth?* That is, Dost thou comprehend the secret courses of the heavenly judgments, or art thou able to disclose them to the ears of men? Blessed Job therefore is questioned concerning his investigation of the incomprehensible judgments, as if it were plainly said to him, All things which thou sufferest, thou oughtest to endure the more

patiently, the more, in thy ignorance of heavenly secrets, thou knowest not why thou sufferest them.

BOOK XXX.

Contains an exposition of the last eight verses of the thirty-eighth chapter, and of the same number of the thirty-ninth: where the holy Doctor discusses very many questions in a pious and learned manner, especially concerning the preaching of the Gospel.

1. Blessed Job is asked by God, Who questions him, whether he has done such things as man is surely unable to do; in order that, when he discovers that he cannot do them, he may fly for refuge to Him, Whom he understands to be the only One Who is able to do them, and that he may appear more powerful before the eyes of his Judge, if he learns more truly his own infirmities. Of that then which is well known to be wonderfully wrought by God, Job is questioned by the Divine Voice; and it is said to him;

Ver. 34. *Wilt thou lift up thy voice in the cloud, and shall the force of the waters cover thee?*

2. For God in truth lifts up His voice in the cloud, when He frames His exhortation to the darkened hearts of unbelievers, by the tongues of His preachers. And the force of the waters covers Him, when the crowd of opposing people oppresses His members who are acting rightly. For hence is that which is written, *The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, Stand in the court of the Lord's house, speaking to all the cities of Judah, from which men come to worship in the Lords house, all the words that I have commanded thee.* [Jer. 26, 1. 2.] And a little after, *And the priests, and the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord. And when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking, the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, took him, saying, Let him surely die, why hath he prophesied in the name of the Lord?* [ib. 7-9]

Behold, the Lord lifted up His voice in a cloud, because He reproved the darkened minds of the haughty by sending the Prophet against them. Behold, the face of the waters covered Him immediately; because He Himself, Who commanded the words of reproof, suffered all things in the person of Jeremiah from the people who rose against him, and were provoked by reason of their reproof. The Lord also raised up His voice in a cloud by Himself, when on exhibiting Himself before us in His assumed body, He preached many things to His persecutors, but veiled in enigmatical figures. He raised up His voice in a cloud, because He uttered His truth, as if in darkness, to unbelievers who would not follow Him. Whence also it is well written in the Books of Kings, *The cloud filled the house of the Lord, and the priests were not able to minister because of the cloud.* [1 Kings 8, 10. 11.] For while the proud high priests of the Jews hear the divine mysteries in parables, as their merits demand, the priests were unable, as it were, to minister in the house of the Lord on account of the cloud. For when they scorn to examine, amid the obscure darkness of allegories, the mystical meanings which are covered with the veil of the letter in the Old Testament, they lost on account of the cloud the ministry which they deserved by their faith. To whom the Lord even now uttered His voice in a cloud, when He spoke even plainly concerning Himself. For what is plainer than, *I and My Father are One?* [John 10, 30] What plainer to utter, than, *Before Abraham was, 1 am?* [John 8, 58] But because the darkness of unbelief had filled the minds of His hearers, an intervening cloud was concealing, as it were, the ray of the sun which had been shot forth.

3. For the face of the waters immediately covered Him, at this elevation of voice, because the raging crowd of the people at once rose up against Him. For it is written, *Therefore the Jews sought to kill Him, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.* [John 5, 18] Of this force of waters He exclaims by

the Prophet, *They came round about Me all the day like water, they compassed Me about together.* [Ps. 88, 17] And again, *Saw Me, O God, for the waters have come in even unto My soul.* [Ps. 69, 1] Which waters He surely endured in Himself before His death, but in His own people, even after His Ascension. For hence is that which He exclaims from above, *Said, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* [Acts 9, 4] Behold, He had already ascended into heaven, and yet Saul, still pursuing Him with the force of unbelieving waters, was touching Him, even as a wave swelling above the rest. For it is He in truth Who speaks right things by the good, He Who is wounded in the sufferings of the godly. In order then to shew, by the wondrous unity of charity, that it is He Who preaches by the mouths of His Saints to unworthy hearers, the Lord says, *Wilt thou lift up thy voice in the cloud?* But to shew that it was He Who was enduring all kinds of adversity in His Saints, He subjoined, *And shall the face of the waters cover thee?* Thou understandest, As Myself, Whom all the wicked neither understand to be speaking by holy men when preaching, nor see to be suffering by them when dying. The Lord relates therefore what He suffers from men, that the pain of the afflicted man may be mitigated, as if He openly said to him, Weigh carefully My sufferings, and temper thine own with patience. For it is much less for thee to bear wounds, than for Me to bear the sufferings of men. [‘humans’]

4. But we can consider these words still more minutely, if we anxiously examine our hearts, in the midst of heavenly gifts. We are at this time indeed faithful, we now believe the heavenly truths which we hear, we now love the things which we believe. But when we are oppressed by some unnecessary cares, we are darkened by a confusion spread over us; and when God suggests to us, even when such, some wonderful notions respecting Himself, He lifts up, as it were, His voice in a cloud. While He speaks of Himself to our benighted minds, He, Who is not seen, is heard, as

it were, in a cloud. For most exalted are the truths which we know of Him, but we do not yet behold Him by that secret inspiration, with which we are instructed. He therefore Who speaks indeed to our hearts, but conceals His shape, forms His voice, as it were, in a cloud. But, lo! we now hear the words of God speaking of Himself within, and we now know with what perseverance and with what zeal we ought to cling to His love; and yet we fall back from the height of inward consideration to our usual ways, from the very changeableness of this mortal condition, and are assaulted by the perverse importunity of impending sins. When, therefore, He insinuates subtle thoughts of Himself in our darkened minds, He raises up His voice in a cloud.

5. But when our very notion of God is overpowered by the temptation of sins, God is covered, as it were, in His voice, by the force of waters. For we cast as many waters over Him, as many forbidden thoughts as we dwell on in our heart, after the inspiration of His grace. But yet He 1 ‘op- forsakes us not even when overwhelmed [‘oppressos,’ al. ‘oppressus.’]; for He returns immediately to our mind, He disperses the mists of temptations, He pours on us the shower of compunction, and brings back the sun of subtle understanding. And He thus shews how much He loves us, Who forsakes us not, even when He is rejected; in order that the human mind may, at least when thus instructed, blush to admit temptation within, since its Redeemer ceases not to love it even when wandering. This He endures in us by Himself, this does He daily hear from unbelievers through His preachers. For His gift is cast out by the rising of temptation within us, and yet He is not kept back by our infirmity from pouring into us His gifts. His words are publicly rejected, and yet He is not restrained, by any wickedness of unbelievers, from bestowing the abundance of His grace. For when wicked men despise preaching, He adds miracles also, for them to reverence.

Whence after the voice has been uttered, and the force of the overwhelming waters, it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 35. *Wilt thou send lightnings, and will they go, and will they return and say to thee, Here we are?*

6. For lightnings come forth from the clouds, just as wonderful works are displayed by holy preachers. Who, as we have often said, are therefore wont to be called 'clouds,' because they flash forth with miracles, and rain with words. And that the hearts of men, after being unmoved by preaching, are confounded by these flashes of miracles, we have learned by the witness of the Prophet, who says, *Thou with multiply Thy lightnings, and with discomfit them.* [Ps. 18, 14] As if he were saying, Whilst they hear not the words of Thy preaching, they are confounded by the miracles of the preachers. Whence it is written elsewhere, *Thine arrows will go in the light, in the splendour of the glittering of Thine arms.* [Hab. 3, 11] For the arrows of God to go forth in light, is for His words to resound with manifest truth. But because men frequently despise the words of life, even when understood, miracles are likewise added. Whence he there subjoined, *For the splendour of the glittering of Thine arms.* For the glittering of arms is the brightness of miracles. For we protect ourselves with arms, we destroy our opponents with arrows. Arms then, with arrows, are miracles together with preaching. For holy preachers strike their adversaries with their words, as if with darts, but they protect themselves with arms, that is, with miracles; in order that as far as they are to be heard, they may sound forth by the force of their darts, and as far as they are to be reverenced, glitter with the arms of miracles. It is said therefore to blessed Job, *Wilt thou send lightnings, and will they go, and will they return and say to thee, Here we are?* Thou understandest, 'As to Me.' For the lightnings go forth when preachers glitter with miracles, and transfix the hearts of their hearers with heavenly awe. But they return and say, Here we are, when they attribute not

to themselves, but to the strength of God, whatever they know they have done powerfully. What is then their saying to God, ‘Here we are?’ For a kind of obedience is declared in this word. For holy preachers then to return and say, ‘Here we are,’ is for them to ascribe the glory of grace to Him, from Whom they feel that they have received victory in the contest; lest they attribute to themselves that which they do. And lightnings can go forth in doing their work, but they cannot return in pride.

7. Let us see then the lightning going forth. Peter says to a certain lame man; *Silver and gold have I none, but what I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and soles received strength, and he leaping up stood, and walked.* [Acts 3, 6-8] But when the multitude of the Jews had been disturbed by this which had been done, let us now see the returning lightning, which says; *Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this, or why look ye on us, as though by our own strength or power we have made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus.* [ibid. 12] And a little after; *Whereof we are witnesses; and His name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, Whom ye have seen and known; and the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.* [Acts 3, 15. 16.] The lightning therefore went forth, when Peter worked a miracle, it returned when he attributed what he had done, not to himself but to its Author. The lightnings go forth when holy preachers display wonderful deeds, but they say on their return, ‘Here we are,’ when, in that which they do, they refer to the power of its Author.

8. But this can he understood in another sense also. For holy men, as was said before, are sent and go forth as lightnings, when they come forth from the retirement of contemplation, to the public life of employment. They are

sent and they go, when, from the secresy of inward meditation, they spread forth into the wide space of active life. But they return and say to God; ‘Here we are,’ because after the outward works which they perform, they always return to the bosom of contemplation, there to revive the flame of their zeal, and to glow as it were from the touch of heavenly brightness. For they would freeze too speedily amid their outward works, good though they be, did they not constantly return with anxious earnestness to the fire of contemplation. Whence it is well said by Solomon, *Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return, to flow again.* [Eccles. 1, 7] For they are there called rivers, who are here called lightnings. For because they water the hearts of the hearers, they are called rivers, but because they kindle them, they are called lightnings. Of whom it is written elsewhere, *The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice.* [Ps. 93, 3] And again, *His lightnings enlightened the world.* [Ps. 97, 4] The rivers therefore return to the place from which they go forth; because holy men, (though they come forth, for our sakes, from the sight of their Creator, Whose brightness they endeavour to behold with their mind, to the ministry of active life,) yet unceasingly recur to the holy study of contemplation, and if in their preaching they pour themselves into our ears by bodily words from without, yet do they ever return in their silent thoughts to consider the Fount of life Itself. Of whom it is also well said, *to flow again.* For did they not constantly return with anxious mind to the contemplation of God, their inward drought would doubtless dry up even their outward words of preaching. But while they thirst unceasingly to behold God, rivers are ever springing up, as it were, within, to flow forth without, in order that they may there derive by love the means of flowing down to us in preaching. Let it be said therefore rightly; *Wilt thou send forth the lightnings, and will they go, and will they return and say to thee, Here we are?* Thou understandest, as Myself, Who adapt My preachers, when I will, after the grace of

contemplation, to the ministry of active life. And yet I ever call them back from outward good deeds, to the inward height of contemplation, in order that they may one while go forth, when commanded, to perform their tasks, and that at another they may dwell with Me more familiarly when recalled to the pursuit of meditation. They return therefore and say, 'Here we are,' because, though they may seem through their outward acts to be deficient for a little in contemplation, yet by the ardent desires which they ever kindle in their minds, they make known their presence to God, by obeying Him. For to say, 'Here we are,' is to shew that they are present by their love. It follows;

Ver. 36. *Who hath placed wisdom in the inward parts of a man? or who hath given the cock understanding?*

9. Who else are designated in this place by the name of the cock, but these same holy preachers, mentioned again in another way, who strive amid the darkness of this present life to announce by their preaching, as if by their notes, the approaching light? For they say; the *night is far spent, but the day is at hand.* [Rom. 13, 12] Who by their voices arouse the sleep of our sluggishness, exclaiming; *It is now the hour for us to arise from sleep.* [ib. 11] And again; *Awake, ye righteous, and sin not.* [1 Cor. 15, 34] Of this cock it is written again; *There be three things that go well, and a fourth which goeth prosperously: a lion, the strongest of beasts, will not be afraid at the onset of any; a cock girt in the loins; and a ram, whom there is no king who can resist.* [Prov. 30, 29-31] For He is in this place mentioned as a lion, of Whom it is written; *The lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed,* [Rev, 5, 5] Who is called the strongest of beasts, because in Him the weakness of God is stronger than men. Who is not afraid at the onset of any one; for He says; *The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.* [John 14, 30] The cock girt in the loins, that is, holy preachers announcing the true morn amid the darkness of this night. Who are girt in the loins,

because they keep away from their members the looseness of lust. For it is in the loins in truth that there is lust. Whence it is said to the same persons by the Lord: *Let your loins he girt about.* [Luke 12, 35] And a ram, whom there is no king who can resist. Whom else in this place do we understand by a ram, but the first rank of priests in the Church? Of whom it is written: *Bring to the Lord the offspring of rams;* [Ps. 29, 1] who lead the people which is walking after their examples like a flock of sheep following them. And whom, if they live spiritually and rightly, no king is at all able to resist; because whatever persecutor may stand in their way, he is not able to hinder their intention. For they know both how to run anxiously to Him, Whom they long for, and to come to Him by dying. The lion is therefore placed first, the cock second, the ram last. For Christ appeared, next the holy preachers, the Apostles, and then at length the spiritual fathers, the rulers of the Churches, the leaders, namely, of the flocks, because they are the teachers of the peoples who follow them.

10. But we enforce these points still better, if we subjoin an exposition of the remainder of the same passage. For since after these things Antichrist will also appear, he added there a fourth point, saying; *And he who appeared a fool, after he had been lifted up on high. For if he had understood, he would have laid his hand on his mouth.* [Prov. 30, 32] For he in truth will he lifted up on high when he will feign that he is God. But he will appear a fool when lifted up on high, because he will fail in his very loftiness through the coming of the true Judge. But if he had understood this, he would have laid his hand on his mouth: that is, if he had foreseen his punishment, when he began to be proud, having been once fashioned aright, he would not have been raised up to the boastfulness of such great pride. And let not that move us which has been said of him above; *A fourth, which goeth prosperously.* For he said that three went well, and a fourth prosperously. For not every thing which goeth 'prosperously' goeth 'well,'

nor in this life does every thing which goeth 'well,' go 'prosperously.' For a lion, a cock, and a ram, go indeed well: but not prosperously here, for they suffer the assaults of persecutions. But the fourth goeth prosperously, and not well: because Antichrist will go on in his craft, but his craft will be prosperous for a short space of this present life, as was said of him under the person of Antiochus by Daniel; *Strength was given him against the continual sacrifice by reason of transgression, and truth shall be cast down in the earth, and he shall do and shall prosper.* [Dan. 8, 12] That which Solomon says, *goeth prosperously:* this Daniel says, *shall prosper.* According to this testimony therefore which is stated by Solomon, *A cock girt in its loins,* we fitly understood in this place also holy preachers by the cock. The Lord therefore referring all things to Himself, says; *Who hath placed wisdom in the inward parts of a man? or who hath given the cock understanding?* As if He were saying, Who hath infused into the heart of a man, who savours of human things, the grace of heavenly wisdom? Or who, but Myself, hath given understanding even to holy preachers themselves, to know when, or to whom, they ought to announce the coming morn? For they understand both what to do, and when, for the very reason that they know it, through My revealing it, within. But it must he observed, that divinely inspired wisdom is placed in the inward parts of a man; because, doubtless, as far as concerns the number of the Elect, it is given not in voices only, but also in the thoughts, in order that the conscience may live according to what the tongue speaks, and that its light may shine forth the more brightly on the surface, the more truly it glows in the heart.

11. But it is a matter of great labour to examine with still more minute exposition, that which is added; *Or who hath given the cock understanding?* For the understanding of teachers ought to be the more subtle, the more it exercises itself in penetrating things invisible, the more it discusses nothing material, the more, even when speaking by the voice of the body, it

transcends every thing which is of the body. For it would not, in truth, be at all suited to the loftiest subjects, did not the Creator Himself of things above, bestow it on the cock which crows, that is, on the teacher who preaches. The cock also received understanding, first to distinguish the hours of the night season, and then at last to utter the awakening voice. Because, in truth, every holy preacher first considers in his hearers the quality of their life, and afterwards frames the voice of preaching, fitted to instruct them. For to decide on the qualities of sins is, as it were, to distinguish the hours of night, to reprove the darknesses of actions with fit voices of reproof is, as it were, to distinguish the hours of night. Understanding is therefore given to the cock from above, because to the teacher of truth there is given from above the virtue of discretion, for him to know to whom, what, when, or how to introduce his instruction.

12. For one and the same exhortation is not suited to all; because the same kind of habits does not bind all. For those things that benefit some, often hurt others. For frequently even herbs, which refresh some animals, kill others, and a gentle hiss pacifies horses, urges on dogs; and medicine which lessens one disease, gives strength to another: and bread which strengthens the life of the strong, destroys that of the young. The speech therefore of teachers ought to he fashioned according to the quality of the hearers, in order to suit each class according to their own case, and yet never to fail in the art of general edification. For what are the attentive minds of hearers, but certain strings which are strained tight in a harp? which the skilful performer touches in different ways, that they may not produce a discordant sound. And the strings give back an harmonious sound, because they are struck with one plectrum, but with different force. Whence also every teacher, in order to build up all in one virtue of charity, ought not to touch the hearts of his hearers with one and the same exhortation.

13. For men must he admonished in one way, and women in another; the young in one way, the old in another; in one way the poor, and in another the rich; in one way the cheerful, and in another the gloomy; in one way subjects, in another rulers; in one way servants, in another masters; in one way the wise of this world, in another the dull; in one way the shameless, in another the modest; in one way the insolent, in another the retiring; in one way the impatient, in another the patient; in one way the well-wishing, in another the envious; in one way the pure, in another the unclean; in one way the healthy, in another the sick; in one way those who fear the rod, and therefore live innocently, in another way those who have become so hardened in iniquity, as not to be corrected by the rod; in one way those who are over silent, in another those who give themselves to much talking; in one way the timid, in another the bold; in one way the sluggish, in another the hasty; in one way the gentle, in another the angry; in one way the humble, in another the haughty; in one way the obstinate, in another the inconstant; in one way the gluttonous, in another the abstinent; in one way those who mercifully give away their own, in another those who strive to seize others' goods; in one way those who neither seize the goods of others, nor yet give away their own; and in another those who both give away their own goods which they have, and desist not from seizing those of others; in one way those who are at variance, in another those who are reconciled; in one way those who sow strifes, in another the peaceful. Those who do not rightly understand the words of the sacred Law must be admonished in one way, in another those who understand them rightly, but speak not of them humbly; in one way those who though they are able to preach in a worthy manner, are afraid from excessive humility, in another those whom imperfection or age excludes from preaching, and whom yet precipitation urges on; in one way those who prosper in their temporal desires, in another way those who desire indeed the things of the world, but who yet are

wearied with the toil of adversity: in one way those who are bound in wedlock, in another way those who are free from the bonds of wedlock; in one way those who have had experience of carnal commixtion, in another way those who are ignorant of it; in one way those who deplore the sins of their deeds, in another those who deplore the sins of their thoughts; in one way those who lament their sins and yet do not abandon them, in another those who abandon but yet do not lament them: in one way those who even praise the unlawful deeds which they commit, in another those who blame their misdeeds, and yet do not avoid them; in one way those who are overcome with sudden concupiscence, in another those who are deliberately fettered with sin; in one way those who commit frequently unlawful deeds though most trifling, and in another those who guard themselves against trifling faults but are sometimes overwhelmed in grievous ones; in one way those who do not even begin good courses, in another those who do not complete what they have begun; in one way those who sin secretly and do right publicly, in another those who conceal the good deeds which they do, and who yet by some things they do publicly allow people to think evil of them. We ought indeed to mention minutely what course of advice should be observed in each particular case, but are hindered by fear of prolixity in our remarks. [S. Greg. Naz. Or. 2. §. 28.] But we are anxious to carry that out in another work [The 'Pastorale.'], by God's help, if some small portion of this painful life still remains to us.

14. But we have another point which we ought to consider concerning this understanding of the cock, namely, that it is accustomed to utter its louder and longer-drawn strains in the deeper hours of the night, and that when the hour of morn is now approaching, it utters altogether more gentle and feeble notes. And a consideration of the discretion of preachers shews us what the understanding of this cock in these respects suggests to us. For when they are preaching to minds which are still wicked, they declare the

terrors of eternal judgment with loud and great voices, because, namely, they cry out, as it were, in the darkness of the profound night. But when they know that the light of truth is already present to the hearts of their hearers, they turn the loudness of their cry into the gentleness of sweetness; and bring forth, not so much the terrors of punishment, as the allurements of rewards. And they sing at that time even with diminished tones, because as the morn approaches, they preach all the subtlest mysteries, that their followers may hear more minutely of heavenly things, the nearer they approach to the light of truth, and that the shorter note of the cock may charm those when awake, whom its long drawn note had aroused from sleep; in order that every one who has been corrected, may delight in knowing minutely the sweets of heaven, who used before to dread adversities from the judgment. Which is well expressed by Moses, when the trumpets are ordered to sound a shorter note, for the summoning forth the host. For it is written, *Make thee two trumpets of beaten silver.* [Numb. 10, 2] And a little after, *When a short blast hath sounded, the camp shall be moved.* [ib. 5] For the army is led by two trumpets, because the people is called by two precepts of charity to the girding of faith. But they are commanded to be made of silver, in order that the words of preachers may be clear with the brightness of light, and may not confuse the mind of their hearers, by any obscurity of their own. But to be hammered out, for this reason; because it is necessary that they who preach the life to come, should grow up by the blows of present tribulations. But it is well said, *When the short blast hath sounded, the camp shall be moved:* doubtless, because when the word of preaching is more subtilly and minutely enforced, the hearts of the hearers are more warmly excited to meet the contests of temptations.

15. But there is something else to be carefully observed in the cock, namely, that when it is preparing to utter its note, it first flaps its wings, and

striking itself, makes itself more wakeful. And this we behold plainly, if we look carefully at the life of holy preachers. For they, when they utter the words of preaching, first exercise themselves in holy actions, that they may not, while themselves slothful in act, arouse others with their voice. But they first rouse themselves by lofty deeds, and then they render others anxious for well-doing. They first strike themselves with the wings of their thoughts, because whatever is slumbering uselessly within them, they discover by anxious examination, they correct with severe punishment. They first take care to punish their own faults by tears, and then denounce those doings of others which demand punishment. They flap with their wings, therefore, before they utter their song, because, before they put forth the words of exhortation, they proclaim by their deeds all that they intend to say: and when they are perfectly awake in themselves, they then summon others who are slumbering to awake.

16. But whence is this great wisdom of the teacher, that he is both perfectly awake in himself, and that he also summons the slumberers to awake with a certain elevation of voice; that he first carefully dispels the darkness of sins, and afterwards manifests discreetly the light of preaching, that he suits each one singly, in manner and in time, and that he shews to all at the same time the result of their doings? Whence is it directed to such great subjects, and with such subtlety, unless it be taught inwardly by Him, by Whom it was created? Because then the credit of such great understanding is not the merit of the preacher, but of his Creator, it is rightly said by the same Creator, *Or who hath given the cock understanding?* As if He were saying, Except Myself, Who have instructed the minds of teachers, which I marvellously fashioned out of nothing, more marvellously, to understand those things which are secret. Whence also, to shew that He is not only the Inspirer of wisdom in the sayings of teachers, but also the Author of their words, he well adds;

Ver. 37. *Who will declare the system of the heavens?*

But because He withdraws their words, when He presents Himself to us in outward form, He immediately subjoined;

And who will make the harmony of heaven to sleep?

17. For in this life the Lord has spoken to our weakness, not by the outward manifestation of His majesty, but by the voice of His preachers; in order that the carnal tongue might strike those hearts which are still carnal, and that they might the more readily receive unusual things, the more they heard them by the sound of an accustomed voice. But after that the flesh is resolved into dust by death, and the dust is animated by the resurrection, then we seek not to hear words from God, because we now behold in outward appearance that One Word of God, Which fills all things. Which sounds to us still louder, the more it penetrates our minds by the power of inward illumination. For when those words are taken away, which begin, and end, the very image of the inward vision becomes to us a kind of sound of eternal preaching. Whence the Lord now also says rightly to blessed Job; *Who will declare the system of the heavens, and who will make the harmony of heaven to sleep?* For what is meant by the system of the heavens, but the inward power of secrets? What is signified by the harmony of heaven, but the accordant language of preachers? When our Creator therefore has begun to relate the system of the heavens, He makes the harmony of heaven to sleep; doubtless, because when He is manifested to us in visible appearance, the words of preachers are withdrawn. For hence the Lord says by Jeremiah; *A man shall no longer teach his neighbour and his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest, saith the Lord.* [Jer. 31, 14] Hence Paul says, *Whether prophecies, they shall be made void; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it shall be destroyed.* [1 Cor. 13, 8] Or certainly the system of the heavens is that very vivifying power which forms the spirits of angels.

For as God is the Cause of causes, and as He is the Life of the living, so is He the Reason [‘Ratio.’] of reasonable creatures. The Lord therefore then declares the system [‘Rationem’] of the heavens, when He brings Himself before us, as to the way in which He rules over Elect spirits. He then relates the system of the heavens, when the mist of our mind is wiped away, and He manifests Himself to us in bright vision. Whence the Lord also says in the Gospel; *The hour cometh when I shall no longer speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.* [John 16, 25] For He asserts that He shews plainly of the Father, because by the appearance of His Majesty, which was then manifested, He shews both how He springs from the Father not unequal to Himself, and how the Spirit of Both proceeds coeternal with Both. For we shall then openly behold, how That Which Is by an origin, is not subsequent to Him from Whom It springs; how He Who is produced by procession, is not preceded by Those [Plural. see note at end of Book XXIX] from Whom He proceeded. We shall then behold openly how both The One is divisibly Three, and the Three indivisibly One. The tongue of God then Who then speaks, is the visible brightness of God exalting us. And the harmony of heaven will then sleep, because when the Rewarder of our works appears in judgment, the words of exhortations will at once cease. Whence also the very period of the resurrection is openly subjoined, when it is stated immediately;

Ver. 38. *When the dust was hardened into earth, and the clods were bound together.*

18. For the sacred language describes, after its custom, things still future, as though already passed: observing, namely, in itself, that which is said by it; *Who made the things that are to come.* [Is. 45, 11] The dust is therefore hardened at that time into earth, because it is brought back to solid limbs. And the clods are bound together, doubtless, because solid bodies arise together gathered from the dust. But after we have stated how these words

of the Lord are to be understood of the future, let us now point out what they mean concerning the present.

19. *Who will declare the system of the heavens, and who will make the harmony of the heaven to sleep?* The Lord declares the system of the heavens, whilst He now illuminates the minds of His Elect by teaching heavenly secrets. But He makes the harmony of heaven to sleep, whilst by a righteous judgment He conceals from the hearts of the reprobate the harmonious hymns of angels, and those joys of heavenly virtues. For this harmony of heaven, though inwardly wakeful in itself, yet slumbers outwardly through the very ignorance of the reprobate. The system of the heavenly mystery is therefore proclaimed, and yet the harmony of heaven is permitted to sleep; because to some the knowledge of the heavenly retribution is disclosed by inspiration, and what is the sweetness of inward praise is concealed from others.

20. The system of the heavens is set forth, because to the minds of the Elect there is unceasingly laid open what is the recompense of heavenly rewards; in order doubtless that they may unceasingly advance, and, passing over visible things, may stretch themselves forward to invisible. For every visible object which arrests the reprobate in this life, urges the Elect onward to other things. For whilst they behold the good deeds which have been done, they burn with love towards Him by Whom they have been done; and they love Him the more surpassingly, the more they consider that He was prior to that which He Himself created good. For the silently sounding invisible tongue of compunction speaks this to them within. And they hear it the louder within, the more entirely they turn away from the din of outward desires. To these then the harmony of heaven sleeps not, because their mind learns, by applying the ear of love, how great is the sweetness of heavenly praise. For they hear within that which they desire, and are, by their very longing for the Godhead, instructed in the rewards of heavenly

blessings. Whence also they bear this present life, not only when opposing, but even when favouring them, as a heavy burden; because every thing which they behold is burdensome to them, whilst they are kept from enjoying that which they hear within. Every thing which is near them they deem heavy, because it is not that for which they pant. But their mind which is unceasingly wearied by the very labours of this temporal condition, hangs on the hope of being taken up to that heavenly joy, while, as the harmony of heaven bursts forth within on the ear of the heart, they daily expect for themselves the society of the heavenly citizens. That harmony of heavenly praise had burst forth in the ear of him, who was saying, *I will enter into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God, in the voice of exultation and confession, the sound of a feasting city.* [Ps. 42, 4] What else therefore but the harmony of heaven was awakening him, who had heard within the voice of exultation and confession, and the sound of a feasting city?

21. But this harmony sleeps for the reprobate, because it does not at all make itself known to their hearts by the voice of compunction. For they do not strive to think of that much longed for multitude of heavenly citizens, they behold with no ray of warmth those banquets of inward revelry, they are not borne up within by any wing of contemplation. For they are enslaved to visible objects alone, and therefore they hear within nought of inward sweetness; because, as we said before, the deafening tumults of worldly care oppress them in the ear of their hearts. Because then in the dispensation of the secret judgment that, which is laid open to some, is closed to others; and that which is disclosed to some is concealed from others, let it he rightly said; *Who will declare the system of the heavens, and who will make the harmony of heaven to sleep?* But this was then more fully disclosed to us, when our Redeemer, appearing in the mystery of the

dispensation, both conferred mercy on the unworthy, and excluded those from Him, who seemed to be worthy. Whence it is here also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 38. *When the dust was hardened into earth, and the clods were bound together.*

22. Whom do we understand by dust but sinners, who, steadied by no weight of reason, are hurried away by the blast of any temptation? Of whom it is written; *Not so the ungodly, not so, but as the dust which the wind sweepeth away from the face of the earth.* [Ps. 1, 4] The dust therefore was hardened into earth, when sinners, having been called in the Church, were confirmed by the system of transmitted faith: in order that they, who before, being fickle through inconstancy, were raised up by the breath of temptation, might afterwards remain unmoved against temptations, and, constantly adhering to God, might hold a firm weight of good living. But clods are composed of moisture and of earth. The clods therefore are bound together in this earth, because sinners, when called and watered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, are joined together in the union of charity. These clods are therefore bound together in the earth, when people, who were before of different sentiments, as it were, in the dispersion of the dust, having received afterwards the grace of the Spirit, so agreed in that most peaceful concord of unanimity, that, when there were three thousand, or again five thousand, it was said, as Scripture witnesses, *That there was in them one heart and one soul.* [Acts 4, 32] The Lord therefore daily binds together these clods in the earth, of one dust indeed, but distinguished, as it were, by different size; because, having preserved the unity of the sacrament, He collects together faithful people in the Church according to the difference of their customs and languages. The Lord already designated these clods at that time, when He ordered them to sit down fifty or a hundred together, to eat the bread and fishes. [Mark 6, 4]

23. But if we observe these clods in the Church according to the diversity of their merits, we are perhaps able to distinguish them still more minutely. For while there is one order of preachers, another of hearers; another of rulers, and another of subjects; one of the married, another of those who abstain from marriage; one of penitents, another of virgins; there is, as it were, a diversely distinguished form of clods from the same earth, when in the one faith, and in the one charity, the merits of good workers are shewn to be unequal. That people, who with the same zeal offered different gifts for the construction of the tabernacle, signified these clods; of which it is written; *Whatever was necessary for the worship of the tabernacle, and for the holy garments, men with women furnished, bracelets and earrings, rings and armlets. Every golden vessel was set apart for the offerings of the Lord. If any man had blue, purple, and twice dyed scarlet, fine linen, and goats' hair, &c.* [Ex. 35, 21, 23]

24. For the adorning, therefore, of the tabernacle men offer gifts together with women, because in fulfilling the service of Holy Church, both the lofty deeds of the strong and the lowliest works of the weak are reckoned. But what is designated by bracelets which bind the arms, except the works of sturdily labouring rulers? And what is expressed by earrings, but the obedience of subjects? What by rings, but the seal of secrets? For teachers commonly put a seal on that which they consider cannot be understood by their hearers. And what is spoken of by armlets, but the ornaments of the first works? What is understood by a golden vessel set apart for the offerings of the Lord, except the understanding of the Godhead? which is the more detached from the love of inferior objects, the more it is raised to love those things only which are eternal. What by blue, but the hope of heavenly things? What by purple, but blood, and endurance of sufferings, displayed from love of the eternal kingdom? And what is pointed out by the twice dyed scarlet, but charity, which is twice dipped in order to its

perfection, because it is adorned with the love of God, and one's neighbour? What by fine linen, but the immaculate purity of the flesh? And what is designated by the goats' hair, of which the roughness of the hair cloths is woven, except the hard affliction of penitents? Whilst some therefore exercise their resolute authority by bracelets and rings, and others by earrings and armlets display devoted obedience, and upright conduct; some by the golden vessel which has been set apart possess a surpassing and more accurate knowledge of God; others by the blue, purple, and scarlet, cease not to hope for, believe, and love the heavenly things they have heard of, even those which they do not yet understand with more accurate knowledge; some by the fine linen offer the purity of the flesh; others by the goats' hairs bewail with severity that which they have committed with pleasure; innumerable clods are produced, as it were, from one earth, because unlike actions of the faithful proceed from one and the like obedience. But these clods would doubtless not be bound together and rise from the dust, did not the dust first receive water, and become solid from the moisture it has imbibed: because if the grace of the Holy Spirit did not bedew sinners, the unity of charity would not keep them firmly bound to deeds of faith. Let the Lord then make known when He will declare the system of the heavens, or make the harmony of heaven to sleep. For He says; *When the dust was being hardened into earth, and the clods were being bound together.* As if He were saying, My calling and My choice being then first manifested, I both disclosed, not without compassion, spiritual secrets to some, and hid them, not without justice, from others, when I was rejecting some, and was uniting others within the Church in the concord of unity. But because this Holy Church, when rejected by the unbelief of the Jews, betook herself to spoil the Gentiles, and to convert them in her own body, (which she did indeed not in her own strength, but that of the Lord,) it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 39. *Wilt thou seize the prey for the lioness, and fill the soul of her whelps?*

25. She is doubtless that lioness, of which Job was saying, when he saw proud Judaea passed over by the preaching of the Church; *The children of the dealers have not trodden it, nor hath the lioness passed through it.* [Job 28, 8] The Lord therefore seizes the prey for this lioness, to fill the soul of her whelps, because for the increase of this Church, He has carried off many from the Gentile world, and has, by the gain of souls, satisfied the ravenous wishes of the Apostles. For they are in truth called whelps from the tenderness of their mind, and the weakness of their fear, because, after the Lord had suffered, they used to sit with closed doors, as is written of them; *When it was late on that day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst of them.* [John 20, 19] Whence it is here also fitly subjoined of these same whelps;

Ver. 40. *When they couch in their dens, and lie in wait in their caves.*

26. For when the holy Apostles did not at all rise up against the limbs of the devil in the voice of bold preaching, and, not being yet strengthened after the Lord's Passion with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, did not preach their Redeemer with firm authority, they were still lying in wait, as it were, in dens against their adversaries. For when the doors were closed, the whelps who were about to ravage the world were couching, as it were, in certain secret caves: in order that they might afterwards boldly seize the prey of souls, of whom it was then certain, from their very concealment, that they were afraid of the assault of the world on themselves. These whelps in ambush with those closed doors sought for the death of our death, that so they might destroy our guilt, and kill all the life of sin within us. To the chief of these, that famished, but still vigorous whelp, it is said, when the Gentiles had been set before him by the linen sheet, as though the prey

had been pointed out to him, *Kill and eat.* [Acts 10, 13] These whelps, as though they were still weak, are ordered to couch in their dens, when it is said to them by the voice of the Lord, *Tarry ye here in the city until ye be endowed with power from on high.* [Luke 24, 49] Are not they rightly called the whelps of the lioness, who, having been born in the Church, seized with their mouth the opposing world?

27. And these things we know were done by the holy Apostles, these also we now see done by perfect teachers. For though they are the fathers of the people that follow them, yet are they the sons of those who go before; whence they are not improperly called whelps. Or certainly because though they are the teachers of certain of the faithful, yet they boast that they are the disciples of the Church universal. The Lord, therefore, seizes the prey for the lioness, because by the virtue of His inspiration He seizes the life of offenders from error; and He fills the soul of her whelps, because by the conversion of many He satisfies the holy longings of teachers. Of which whelps it is well subjoined; *When they couch in their dens, and lie in wait in their caves.* For all seasons are not fitted for teaching. For the value of sayings is commonly lost, if they are brought forward out of season. And frequently even that which is said gently, is animated by the concurrence of a fitting season. He therefore knows how to speak well, who knows also how to be silent at proper times. For of what use is it to reprove an angry man, at the time when with estranged mind he is not only unable to listen to the words of others, but is hardly able to hear himself. For he who reproves an angry man by inveighing against him, inflicts, as it were, blows on a drunken man who feels them not. Teaching therefore, in order to be able to reach the hearts of the hearers, must consider what seasons are suitable to it. It is therefore well said of these whelps, *When they couch in their dens, and lie in wait in their cares.* For when holy teachers perceive things to be reproved, and yet confine themselves in their thoughts by silence, they lurk,

as it were, in caves, and cover themselves, as if in dens; because they are concealed in their own thoughts. But when they have found a fit season, they suddenly leap forth, they suppress nothing which ought to be said, and seize with the grasp of severe reproof the neck of the haughty. The Lord is therefore daily seizing the prey for this lioness, whether by Apostles, or by teachers whom He has appointed in the place of the Apostles; and by those whom He has seized, He ceases not to seize others also. For the righteous seize the sinners of this world for this purpose, that others also may be snatched from the world by them when they are converted. Whence the Gentile world itself also, which was seized by the holy mouth of the Apostles, is now ravenous after others, with the same hunger, as it knows that it was itself desired by the Apostles. Wherefore it is also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 41. *Who prepareth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry to God, wandering because they have not meat?*

28. For what is designated by the name of the raven, and its young ones, but the Gentile world blackened with sin? Of which it is said by the Prophet; *Who giveth to beasts their food, and to the young ravens which call on Him.* [Ps. 147, 9] For the beasts receive food, when minds before brutal, are satiated with the food of Holy Scripture. But food is given to the young ravens, namely, to the sons of the Gentiles, when their longing is refreshed by our conversion [al. 'conversation.']. This raven was food, while Holy Church was seeking for it. But it now receives food, because it seeks out others for conversion.

29. And its young, that is, the holy preachers which are sprung from it, truly trust not in themselves, but in the strength of their Redeemer. Whence it is well said: *When his young ones cry to God.* For they know that they can do nothing by their own strength. And though in their pious wishes they hunger for the gain of souls, yet they desire these effects to be wrought by

Him Who works all things within. For they understand by true faith, that *neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth,* but *God Who giveth the increase.* [1 Cor. 3, 7]

30. But in that which is said, *Wandering because they have no meat,* nothing else is designated by this wandering but the wishes of eager preachers. For while they desire to receive people into the bosom of the Church, being kindled with great warmth, they put forth their desire now to gather in these, and now those. For this very agitation of thought is, as it were, a kind of wandering; and they pass over as if to different places, with change of will, whilst they run here and there with ravenous mind, in numberless ways, and into different parts, for uniting souls together.

31. This wandering the young ones of the ravens, that is the sons of the Gentiles, learned from the teacher of the Gentiles himself. For in proportion to the strong love with which he burns, does he pass with rapid wandering from place to place; he wishes to pass from one place to another, because the love itself which fills him, urges him on. For when placed far away from the Romans, he writes, *I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come to you: for I long to see you.* [Rom. l, 9-11] When kept at Ephesus, he writes to the Corinthians, *Behold this third time I am ready to come to you.* [2 Cor. 12, 14] Again, when tarrying at Ephesus, he speaks to the Galatians, saying, *I desire to be with you now, and to change my voice.* [Gal. 4, 20] When he was shut up also at Rome in the close keeping of the prison, because he is not permitted to go himself to the Philippians, he promises to send a disciple, saying, *I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good heart, having known your state.* [Phil. 2, 19] When bound also in chains, and detained at Ephesus, he writes to the Colossians, *For though I be absent in body, yet am I with you in the Spirit.* [Col. 2, 5] Behold how he wanders, as it were, in his

holy longing; he is detained here in body, he is led thither in the Spirit; and exhibits the affection of fatherly love to those who are present, makes it known to those who are absent; bestows his labours on those who are before him, expresses his wishes for those who only hear him [so nearly all copies. Ben. prefers 'the absent.']; efficaciously present to those with whom he was, and yet not absent from those with whom he was not. But we gain a better notion of his wandering, if we consider still further his words to the Corinthians; for he says, *I will come to you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia* ; *for I shall pass through Macedonia; but I shall perhaps remain with you, or even winter.* [1 Cor. 16, 5. 6.] Let us consider, I pray you, what is this wandering. For behold in one place he remains for a while, in another he says that he will go, and in another he promises that he will turn aside. Why is it that he so anxiously distributes himself through so many places, except that he is bound around all with one love? For love, which is wont to unite things that are divided, compels the one heart of Paul to be divided amongst many things. And yet he gathers it together the more closely in God, the more widely he scatters it forth in holy longings. Paul therefore wishes to say all things at once in his preaching, to behold all men at once through his love; because he both wishes, by remaining in the flesh, to live for all, and, by passing out of the flesh, to profit all by the sacrifice of faith. Let therefore the young ones of the ravens wander, that is, let the sons of the Gentiles imitate their master, let them shake off the torpor of their mind, and when they find not the gain of souls, that is, their food, let them not rest; let them stretch themselves forth to advancement after advancement; and, toiling for the benefit of many, let them wander, as it were, and hunger for their own refreshment. But because, in running to and fro by the works of preaching, they cease not to feed the Gentile world with the refreshment of faith, let it be rightly said, *Who prepareth for the raven*

his food, when his young ones cry to God, wandering because they have no meat.

32. But by the name of 'raven,' the people of the Jews, black with the demerit of unbelief, can also he designated. For its young ones are said to cry to God, that food might be prepared for this very raven by the Lord; doubtless, because the holy Apostles, begotten of the flesh of the people of Israel, while they were pouring forth prayers to the Lord for their nation, fed with spiritual wisdom their parent people, as the young ravens feed him from whom they are sprung in the flesh. While therefore his young ones cry out, food is provided for the raven; because, while the Apostles entreat, the people, which was before unbelieving, is led to the knowledge of the faith: and from the preaching of its sons is fed, as it were, by the voice of its young ones. But we ought in this verse carefully to notice that point, that food is said to be prepared for this raven, first when his young ones are crying, and afterwards when they are wandering. For food is prepared for the raven, at the cry of his young ones, while at the preaching of the Apostles, Judaea, on hearing the word of God, was filled with spiritual wisdom, at one time in three, and at another in five thousand persons. But when, through the multitude of the reprobate, it was exercising its cruelty against the preachers, and was destroying, as it were, the life of the young ravens, they were dispersed also into every quarter of the world. Whence also they say to these their fathers in the flesh, who were opposing their spiritual preaching, *We ought to speak the word of God to you first, but since ye reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles;* [Acts 13, 46] knowing full surely that after the Gentiles believed, Judaea also would come to the faith. Whence also it is written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved.* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] Because therefore the holy Apostles especially endeavoured, first to preach to those who heard them, and afterwards to set

before those that resisted the example of the converted Gentiles; the hungry young ones sought its food for this raven, first by crying, and afterwards by wandering. For the raven finds food from the quarter where the young ones wander; for whilst the Jewish people beholds the Gentiles converted to God by the labour of preachers, it blushes sometime at the last, at the folly of its own unbelief, and then understands the sentences of Holy Scripture, when it perceives that they were known to the Gentiles before they were known to itself. And the wandering of its young ones having been fulfilled, it opens the mouth of its heart to take in the holy word; because when the courses of the Apostles through the world have been completed, it at last spiritually understands those things, from which it had long abstained through the bondage of unbelief. But because the virtue of Divine Power alone effects all these things, it is rightly said, *Who prepareth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry to God, wandering because they have no meat.* Thou understandest, Except Myself, Who both bear with the unbelieving people, when its sons entreat, and feed it by their preaching, and support it, to be converted at length in the end, when they wander to other places.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

33. There is something further, which can be understood of this raven in a moral sense. For when its young are hatched, it declines, as is said, to give them food to the full, before they become dark in their plumage, and allows them to suffer from want of food, until its own resemblance appears in them, through the blackness of their wings. But they wander hither and thither in the nest, and seek for the support of food with open mouth. But when they have begun to get black, it seeks the more eagerly for food to be given them, the longer it has deferred feeding them. Every learned preacher, who cries with a loud voice, whilst he carries the memory of his own sins and the knowledge of his own infirmity, as a kind of black shade of colour,

is doubtless a raven. To whom disciples indeed are born in the faith, but perhaps they still do not know how to consider their own infirmity: perchance they turn away their memory from their past sins, and thus display not that blackness of humility which ought to be assumed against the pride of this world. But they open their mouth, as it were, to receive food, when they seek to be instructed in sublime secrets. But their own teacher supplies them the more scantily with the food of sublime instruction, the more he perceives that they bewail inadequately their past sins. He wails for them in truth, and warns them, first to become black, from the brightness of this life, by the lamentations of penitence, and then to receive afterwards the suitable nourishment of most subtle preaching. The raven beholds in the young ones their gaping mouths, but he first looks for their bodies to be covered with the blackness of wings. So too a discreet teacher imparts not inward mysteries to the understanding of those, whom he considers to have not yet in any way cast themselves off from this world. The less black then his disciples are, as it were, outwardly, through devotion to the present life, the less are they filled with the food of the word within: and the less they strip themselves of bodily glory, the more are they bereft of spiritual refreshment.

34. But if in the confession of their past life, they put forth the groans of their lamentation, as darkening plumage, the teacher immediately flies in contemplation, to bring down food from on high, as a raven thinking of the refreshment of its young ones; and brings back to them in his mouth the food they are gaping for: whilst with that wisdom which he has begun [al. ‘gotten’], he supplies by his teaching the food of life to his hungry disciples. And he refreshes them the more eagerly from above, the more truly he perceives that, by the lamentation of penitence, they are turning black from the brightness of the world.

35. But whilst the young are clothing themselves in the dark hue of their wings, they also give promise of flying; because the more disciples think meanly of themselves, the more they despise and afflict themselves, the more do they hold out the hope of advancing to higher things. Whence also the teacher takes care to feed those more speedily, whom by certain marks he now foresees to be capable of assisting others. For hence Paul admonishes Timothy to nurture, as it were, with greater anxiety the newly fledged young, while he says; *And the things that thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* [2 Tim. 2, 2] And while this discretion in teaching is carefully preserved by a preacher, a more abundant power of preaching is given him from above. For whilst he knows through love how to sympathize with his afflicted disciples, whilst through discretion he understands the fit season for teaching, he enjoys the greater gifts of his understanding, not only for himself, but for those also, to whom he devotes the efforts of his labour. Whence it is here also fitly said; *Who prepareth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry to God, wandering because they have no meat.* For when the young ones cry to be filled, food is prepared for the raven; because while good hearers hunger after the word of God, greater gifts of understanding are given to their teachers for their refreshment. It follows ;

Chap, xxxix. ver. 1. *Knowest thou the time when the wild goats (ibices) bring forth in the rocks, or hast thou observed the hinds when they calve?*

36. The southern part of the world calls birds, which inhabit the streams of the Nile, ‘ibices.’ But the eastern and western quarters term small quadrupeds, ‘ibices,’ whose custom also it is to bring forth in the rocks, because they know not how to dwell except in the rocks. And if they ever fall down, even from the lofty tops of the mountains, they catch themselves without hurt on their own horns. For in falling they strike their head, and while they present the tips of its horns, the whole body is exempt from the

injury of the fall. But it is the custom with hinds to destroy the serpents which they have found, and to mangle their limbs with their bites. But it is said that, if ever they cross rivers, they rest the weight of their heads on the backs of those in front, and that, succeeding in turn to each other, they do not feel at all the labour of the weight. Why is it then that blessed Job is questioned concerning the bringing forth of the wild goats, and the hinds, except that by wild goats, and hinds, is signified the character of spiritual masters? For they in truth bring forth as wild goats in the rocks; because by the teaching of the fathers, who are called rocks for their solidity, they bring forth souls to conversion. They, like wild goats, feel not the losses of any fall, when they are caught on their own horns; because whatever temporal ruin befals them, they support themselves on the testaments of Holy Scripture, and are saved, as it were, by being caught on their horns. For of these testaments it is said, *Horns are in His hands.* [Hab. 3, 4] They fly therefore to the consolation of Scripture, when they are struck with the loss of any temporal fall. Did not Paul, when sinking through the adversities of this world, catch himself, like the wild goats, on his horns; when he was saying, *Whatsoever things were written were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* [Rom. 15, 4] They are also called hinds, as is said by Jeremiah of teachers carelessly deserting the children who were born to them; *The hind calved in the field, and forsook it.* [Jer. 14, 5] They, like hinds, live on destroyed sins, as on dead serpents; and from this very destruction of their sins are they more eagerly ardent for the fountain of life. Whence the Psalmist says, *As the hart longeth for the fountains of water, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God.* [Ps. 42, 1] They also, while they pass over the gliding moments of this temporal state, as if they were streams, place their burdens each on the other, being compassionate from love; because they keep with careful observation that which is written; *Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so ye*

will fulfil the law of Christ. [Gal. 6, 2] But because after the coming of the Lord, spiritual teachers were scattered through the world, who were able by their preaching to travail with souls in conversion; and because this very season of the Lord's Incarnation was not known, before the voices of the Prophets, though His coming Incarnation was foreknown to all the Elect, blessed Job is well questioned concerning the time when the wild goats and hinds bring forth, and it is said to him; *Knowest thou the time when the wild goats bring forth in the rocks, or hast thou observed the hinds when they calve?* As if it were said to him; Thou believest thyself to have acted in some sublime manner, because thou foreseest not, as yet, that time, when spiritual masters, sent into the world, beget children by the doctrine of the ancient fathers, and by their labours gather together for Me the gain of souls. For wert thou to behold their fruit, like the offspring of wild goats and hinds, thou wouldest think very humbly of thine own virtue. For the great things which we do, we regard as the very least, when we balance them with nobler examples. But they then increase in their merits with God, when through our humility they become less to ourselves.

37. But teachers can he understood by the designation of 'hinds,' but hearers by the term 'wild goats,' which are very small animals. But the wild goats bring forth in the rocks, because they are made fruitful in order to the performance of good works, by the examples of preceding fathers, in order that, if they hear perchance sublime precepts, and, conscious of their own infirmity, doubt their ability to fulfil them, they may look to the doings of their elders, and from considering their boldness, bring forth the offspring of good works. For to speak of a few instances among many, that the studious reader may learn much in few words, when such an one is hard pressed with insulting words, and is unable to maintain the virtue of patience, let him recal to his memory the conduct of David, who, when Semei was assailing him with so many insults, and the armed chieftains

were striving to avenge him, says, *What have I to do with you, ye sons of Saruia? Let him curse; for the Lord hath ordered him to curse David; and who is there who dareth to say, wherefore hath he done so.* [2 Sam. 16] And a little after, *Let him alone, that he may curse according to the command of the Lord, if perchance the Lord may look on my affliction, and requite me good for this cursing to-day.* [ibid. 11, 12] In which words he plainly shews, that, when flying from his son rebelling against him, in consequence of the sins committed with Bethsabee, he recalled to his mind the evil which he had committed, and patiently submitted to what he heard, and that he believed insulting words to be not so much reproaches, as means of assistance, by which he considered that he could be purified, and have pity shewn to him. For we then bear patiently reproaches heaped on us, when we recur in the secrecy of our mind to what we have done wrong. For it will seem a light thing that we are assailed undeservedly, when we perceive in our conduct that what we deserve is much worse. And thus it comes to pass that the insults deserve our thanks rather than our anger, by whose occurrence we trust that a greater punishment can he avoided in God's judgment.

38. Behold, while another person is advancing in worldly prosperity, he feels himself assaulted with the provocations of lust, as the joy of his heart panders to his wishes; but he recals to his memory the conduct of Joseph, and maintains himself in the stronghold of chastity. For he, when he saw that he was persuaded by his mistress to forfeit his chastity, says; *Behold my master, having given all things to me, knoweth not what he hath in his house, nor is there any thing which is not in my power, or which he hath not delivered to me, except thee, who art his wife; how then can I do this wickedness, and sin against my lord?* [Gen. 39, 8. 9.] By which words there is shewn one who suddenly brought to mind the good things he had obtained, and overcame the evil which was assailing him; and who, by

bringing to mind the favour he had received, crushed the power of imminent sin. For when slippery pleasure assails us in prosperity, this very prosperity must be opposed to the sting of temptation; in order that we may be the more ashamed at committing sin, the more we call to mind that we have as a free gift received good things from God, and that we may convert the gift of outward blessings which has been conferred, into arms of virtues; that the goods we have received may be before our eyes, and that we may overcome those things that allure us. For because pleasure itself arises from prosperity, it must he struck down by a consideration of the same prosperity, in order that our enemy may perish by that same from which he takes his rise. For we must use consideration, lest we should turn into sin the gift we have received, and so, lest the whirlpool of wickedness should swallow us up, through the favour of life. For we kindle inextinguishably against us the wrath of the Heavenly Judge, if, even from His very bounty we fight against His goodness.

39. Another, seeking after the sweetness of inward knowledge, and unable to attain its secrets, looks at the life of Daniel as a pattern, and attains the desired eminence of wisdom. For he in truth who is afterwards called, by the voice of the angel, in consequence of his eagerness after inward knowledge, *a man of desires,* [Dan 10, 11] is said to have first tamed within him the desires of the flesh in the king's court, so that he touched none of the delectable meats, but preferred a harder and rougher fare to that which was sumptuous and more delicate, [ib. 1, 8] in order that he might attain to the delight of inward nourishment, while taking from himself the pleasures of outward food, and that he might 'enjoy more eagerly the taste of wisdom within, the more firmly he had outwardly restrained his fleshly taste, for the sake of this same wisdom. For if we cut off a pleasure from the flesh, we presently find a spiritual delight. For if outward wandering is shut out, an inward retreat is laid open to the earnestness of the mind. For the

more the mind is unable, on account of its discipline, to spread itself beyond itself, the more is it able to extend and advance above itself: because even a tree is compelled to grow in height, which is prevented from spreading out into branches: and when we obstruct the streams of a fountain, we provoke the streams to rise to a higher level. Whilst then thoughtful persons look at the life of Saints as a model, the wild goats drop their young on the rocks. Hence it is that Paul was exhorting his hearers to bring forth as wild goats in the rocks, when, after having enumerated the virtues of their ancestors, he was saying; *Having so great a cloud of witnesses placed over laying aside every weight, and the sin which surrounds us, let us run with patience to the contest set before.* [Heb.12, 1] And again; *Whose faith imitate, considering the end of their conversation.* [ib. 13, 7]

40. But when we conceive in our heart the Divine precepts, we do not bring them forth at once, as if already compacted solidly by thought. Whence also blessed Job is questioned not as to the bringing forth of the wild goats, but as to the time of their bringing forth. For if in truth we hardly comprehend this time in ourselves, we are much more ignorant of it in the mind of another. For the seeds of heavenly fear having been first conceived in the womb of the heart, are consolidated by studious meditation in order to remain; after that, when, having been kept firm by strict attention of thought, they proceed to reasonable discretion, they are formed, as it were, into distinct limbs; next, having been conformed by a habit of perseverance, they come, as it were, to the solidity of bones, but lastly, when strengthened by perfect authority, they proceed, as it were, to the birth. But no one observes these growths of the Divine seeds in another's heart, save Him Who creates it. For though we know, from the evidence of certain facts, that a person has conceived the might of heavenly desire, yet, when it comes forth to the birth, we cannot tell.

41. But the seeds which have been conceived in the mind frequently cannot arrive at perfection; because they precede, in their coming forth, the proper time of their birth. And because they come before the eyes of men not yet fully fashioned in thought, they die as if born out of due time. For the tongue of man frequently extinguishes virtues which are still tender, when it praises them as though already strong. For they perish the more rapidly, the more unseasonably they come forth to the knowledge of applause. But sometimes, when our imperfect and feeble thought is brought too soon before men, it is dissipated by the assault of opponents, and when it endeavours to appear to exist before the time, it causes itself not to be. But because holy men take care that all their good thoughts gain strength in secret, and first form within the womb of their mind the offspring which is about to be produced, blessed Job is rightly questioned concerning the season for bringing forth; because, namely, it is not known to any one, excepting to the Creator, what is the fitting season in each case. But He, when He looks to the secret recesses of the heart, discovers at what time our good deeds are properly brought forth to the knowledge of men. It is therefore well said; *Knowest thou the time when the wild goats bring forth in the rocks?* As if He openly said, As I, Who therefore cause the progeny of the Elect to live, because I bring them forth at the time foreknown. But when the birth of the hearers has been completed, it is well subjoined; *Or hast thou observed the hinds when they calve?* For to observe the hinds when they calve, is to examine with careful consideration those labours of fathers, who beget spiritual children.

42. For it should be carefully noticed, that this language is so strictly attended to, that it is said, *Hast thou observed?* Because it is in truth the habit of very few to consider what labour there is in the preachings of the fathers, with what great pains, and efforts, as it were, they bring forth souls in faith and conversation; with what careful circumspection they watch

themselves, that they may be resolute in their commands, sympathizing in infirmities, fearful in threats, gentle in exhortations, humble in displaying their authority, overbearing in their contempt for temporal goods, unbending in the endurance of adversity, and yet weak, when they ascribe not to themselves their own strength; how great is their pain for those that fall, how great their fear for those who stand, with what ardour they seek to gain some things, with what anxiety they preserve others which they have gained. Because, therefore, it is the habit of very few to consider these things, it is well said to him,

Or hast thou observed the kinds when they calve?

43. But it is no objection, that God, when speaking of teachers, describes them under the type, not of stags, but of hinds. Because, doubtless, they are true teachers, who, while they are fathers through the vigour of their discipline, know how to be mothers through their bowels of compassion. Who endure the labours of holy conception, and bear within the womb of love children to be brought forth to God. For in the production of offspring mothers endure the greater labour, who bear for a long period of months the growing conception within their womb, and who deposit it, not without great pain, when it comes forth from the womb. Whence it is here also subjoined with fit consideration;

Ver. 2. *Hast thou numbered the months of their conception?*

44. For when holy men think of the improvement of their hearers, they bear already a conception, as it were, in their womb. But when they put off some things which ought to be said, and seek a season fit for their exhortations, they are detained, as it were, by a weary length of months, from that birth which they wish to take place. And frequently when they are unwilling to express some of their sentiments to their hearers unseasonably; by this very slowness in declaring their opinion they are strengthened with greater wisdom, whether for giving this advice, or for reproving these

faults. And while the life of their children is considered, but the tongue utters not the thoughts of the mind before the time, the offspring which has been already conceived grows, as it were, within the womb; in order that the sentiment of their heart may then come forth to the knowledge of the hearers, when being usefully uttered it can live, as if at the fit season for its birth. But since men are ignorant when, or how, these things take place in the mind of teachers, but God, in order to the glory of retribution, considers not only the effects, but also the seasons of thoughts, it is rightly said to blessed Job, *Hast thou numbered the months of their conception?* Thou understandest, As I, Who count in holy preachers not only the fruits of their outward doings, but their long-continued meditations themselves; Who reserve them also for retribution.

45. By months, because they are an aggregate of days, multiplied virtues can be likewise understood. In months also the moon is new born; and there is no hindrance, if the new creating of regeneration is understood by months. Of which the Apostle Paul says, *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* [Gal. 6, 15] When holy men, therefore, prepare themselves for preaching, they first renew themselves within with virtues, in order to accord in their living with that which they teach in words. They first consider their own internal state, and cleanse themselves from all the filth of sin; taking special care to shine forth against anger with the light of patience, against the lust of the flesh to glitter with cleanness even of the heart, against torpor, to be bright with zeal, against the confused motions of precipitation to glow with serene gravity, against pride to shine with true humility, against fear to be brilliant with the rays of authority. Because therefore they first accumulate such attention on themselves, months of virtues pass, as it were, in the conception of holy preaching. And the Lord alone numbers these months, because no one but He Who has given these virtues, values them in their

hearts. And because the produce of fruit follows according to the measure of their virtues, it is rightly subjoined;

And hast thou known the time when they bring forth?

46. Thou understandest, As I, Who, when I number months in the thought of virtues, know when they are able to bring forth that which they wish to perform; because, doubtless, whilst I behold the secrets of the heart, I judge from the weight of thought within, the future result of the work without. It follows;

Ver. 3. *They bow themselves for the birth, and bring forth, and utter roarings.*

47. For they roar in truth, whilst by bending themselves down, they bring forth the souls of their hearers in the conversation of light; because they cannot release us from eternal punishments, except by tears and pain. For holy preachers sow in tears now, that they may afterwards reap a crop of joys. They are now like hinds in the pangs of bringing forth, that they may afterwards be fruitful in spiritual offspring. For, to speak of one out of many, I see Paul, like a hind, uttering roarings of great pain in his pangs of birth. For he says, *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you, I desire to be with you now, and to change my voice, since I am perplexed for you.* [Gal. 4, 19. 20.] Lo, he wishes to change his voice in his child-birth, that the voice of preaching may he turned into the roaring of pain. He wishes to change his voice, because those whom he had already brought forth by preaching, he was again bringing forth with groans in forming them anew. What a roaring did this travailing hind utter, when he was compelled to exclaim to these same persons, returning after him, saying, *O senseless Galatians! who hath bewitched you? and are ye so foolish, that when ye have begun in the Spirit, ye are now made perfect by the flesh?* [Gal. 3, 1. ib. 3] Or certainly; *Ye did run well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?* [Gal. 5, 7]

What a roaring was there in the birth-pains of this hind, which brought forth with so many difficulties her young so long conceived, and which knew they had returned, when at length brought forth, to the womb of wickedness? Let us consider what pain, what labour she suffered, who after she had had strength to bring forth what she had conceived, was, again, obliged to resuscitate them when dead.

48. But it must be particularly observed, that these hinds bow down to bring forth; doubtless, because they would not have strength to bring forth, if they were standing erect. For unless holy preachers were to come down from that boundlessness of inward contemplation which they embrace, by bending, as it were, to our infirmity, in the humblest preaching, they would surely never beget sons in the faith. For they could not benefit us, if they continued in the uprightness of their own height. But let us see the hind bending herself to bring forth. It says, *I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal; as unto babes in Christ, I have given you milk and not meat.* [1 Cor. 3, 1. 2.] And presently it mentions the causes of this bending, *For hitherto ye were not able, neither yet now are ye able.* [ibid.] But this hind, which has been bent on our account, let us, I pray you, behold erect says; *We speak wisdom among them that are perfect.* [1 Cor. 2, 6] And again, *Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God.* [2 Cor 5, 13] But when it is beside itself to God, we do not at all understand its transport. It therefore bows down to us, in order to gain us. Whence it fitly subjoins in that place, *Whether we be sober, it is for your cause.* [ibid.] For if holy men were to choose to preach to us those things which they hear, when they are intoxicated with heavenly contemplation, and did not rather temper their knowledge with some moderation and sobriety, who could receive those streams of the heavenly fount, in the still contracted channel of his understanding? But these bended hinds are called elsewhere ‘heavens,’ of which it is said, *Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down.* [Ps. 144, 5] For

when the heavens are bowed down, the Lord descends, because, when holy preachers bend themselves in their preaching, they pour the knowledge of the Godhead into our hearts. For the Lord would not at all descend to us, if His preachers were to remain inflexible in the rigour of contemplation. The heavens are therefore bowed down, for the Lord to descend, the hinds are bent, for us to be born in the new light of faith. These bended hinds are in the Song of Songs called the breasts of the Bride, as it is written, *Thy breasts are better than wine.* [Cant. 1, 2] For they are the breasts, which, fixed on the casket of the bosom, feed us with milk; because they themselves clinging to the secrets of loftiest contemplation nourish us with subtle preaching. In order therefore to bring us back from eternal groaning and pain, the hinds are now bent down, and utter roarings as they bring forth. But because those very persons who are born by the holy preaching of fathers, sometimes precede their teachers in suffering, so that while these are still remaining in this life, they themselves are already consummated by martyrdom, it fitly follows;

Ver. 4. *Their young ones are weaned, and go to their pasture; they go forth, and return not unto them.*

49. Holy Scripture terms ‘pasture’ that food of eternal verdure, where our refreshment will no longer waste away with any dryness of failing. Of which pasture it is said by the Psalmist, *The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing; He hath placed me there in a place of pasture.* [Ps. 23, 1] And again, *But we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.* [Ps. 96, 7] And of these pastures, doubtless, the Truth says, by Itself; *By Me, if any one hath entered in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture.* [John 10, 9] They go therefore to the pasture; because, on going forth from their bodies, they find those refreshments of eternal verdure. They go forth, and return not unto them; because, when they have been caught up in that contemplation of joys, they no longer need to hear the

words of teachers. Having gone forth, therefore, they do not return to them; because, escaping the difficulties of this life, they require no longer to receive from teachers the preaching of life. For then that is fulfilled which is written, *Each man shall no longer teach his neighbour, and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Me, from the least of them even unto the greatest, saith the Lord.* [Jer. 31, 34] Then is fulfilled that which the Truth says in the Gospel, *I shall declare to you plainly of My Father.* [John 16, 25] For the Son in truth plainly declares of the Father; because, as we have said before, in that He is the Word, He enlightens us by the nature of the Godhead. For men seek not then for the words of teachers, which are streamlets, as it were, from the tongue of man, when they are themselves already derived from the fount of Truth Itself.

After much then had been said, under the figurative bending down of hinds, concerning the virtue of teachers, His words are now directed to the conduct of those, who seek for the secresy of retired conversation; to whom, since they obtain their very rest of cessation by the Divine aid, and not by their own strength, it is said by the Lord;

Ver. 5. *Who hath sent out the wild ass free, and who hath loosed his bands?*

50. Understand, Except Myself. For the wild ass, who dwells in solitude, signifies, not inaptly, the life of those who dwell far removed from the crowds of people. And it is fitly also called free, because great is the drudgery of secular pursuits, with which the mind is grievously wearied, though it toil therein of its own accord. And to be freed from the condition of this slavery is no longer to desire any thing in this world. For prosperity while sought for, and adversities also while dreaded, oppress, as it were, with a kind of servile yoke. But if any one has but once freed the neck of his mind from the dominion of temporal desires, he enjoys already a kind of liberty even in this life, whilst he is affected by no longing for happiness,

and is constrained by no dread of adversity. The Lord beheld this heavy yoke of slavery set hard on the necks of worldly men, when He was saying, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for My yoke is sweet, and My burden light.* [Matt. 11, 28-30] For it is, as we have said, a rough yoke, and weight of heavy bondage, to be subject to temporal concerns, to court the things of earth, to retain things which are gliding away, to wish to stand in things which stand not, to seek after passing objects, but yet to be unwilling to pass away with what are passing. For while all things, contrary to our wish, fly away, those things which had previously distressed the mind from its longing to acquire them, oppress it afterwards with the fear of loss. He therefore is set free, who, having trampled down earthly desires, is exonerated, in security of mind, from seeking after temporal things. *And who hath loosed his bands?* Thou understandest, Except Myself.

51. But the bands of each one are loosed, when by Divine help the inward bonds of carnal desires are burst asunder. For when a holy intention calls to conversion, but the infirmity of the flesh still calls back from this intention, the soul is fettered and impeded, as it were, by certain bonds. For we often see many desiring indeed a life of holy conversation, but fearing at one time the onset of present mishaps, and at another future adversities, so as to be unable to attain it. And while they look forward, as if with caution, to evils which are uncertain [read ‘incerta.’], they are incautiously retained in the bands of their own sins. For they place many things before their eyes, on the occurrence of which in their course of life, they are afraid that they can not stand firm. Of whom Solomon well says; *The way of the slothful is as an hedge of thorns.* [Prov. 15, 19] For when they seek the way of God, the suspicions of their fears stand in their way, and wound them, as the thorns of hedges which oppose them. But since this obstacle is not wont to

oppose the Elect, he there proceeds to add, *The way of the righteous is without an obstacle.* [ibid.] For whatever adversity may have fallen in their way of life, the righteous stumble not against it. Because with the bound of eternal hope, and of eternal contemplation, they leap over the obstacles of temporal adversity. The Lord therefore looses the bands of the wild ass, when He tears off from the mind of each of His Elect the bonds of weak thoughts, and kindly rends asunder every thing which was binding his enchanted mind. It follows ;

Ver. 6. *To whom I have given a house in the solitude, and his tabernacles in the land of saltness.*

[xyi]

52. Ought we in this place to understand the solitude of the body, or the solitude of the heart? But what avails the solitude of the body, if the solitude of the heart be wanting? For he who lives bodily removed from the world, but yet plunges into the tumults of human conversation with the thoughts of worldly desires, is not in solitude. But if any one be bodily oppressed with crowds of people, and yet suffers from no tumults of worldly cares in his heart, he is not in a city. To those therefore of good conversation solitude of mind is first granted, in order that they may keep down within the rising din of worldly desires, that they may restrain by the grace of heavenly love the cares of the heart which bubble up from its lowest depths, and drive away from the eyes of the mind with the hand of gravity, all the motions of trifling thoughts which importunately present themselves, as flies which are flitting around them: and may seek for themselves some secret spot with the Lord within, there to speak with Him silently by their inward longings, when the noise is still from without.

53. Of this secret place of the heart it is said elsewhere; *There became silence in heaven for about half an hour.* [Rev. 8, 1] For the Church of the Elect is called ‘heaven,’ which, as it rises to eternal and sublime truths by

the elevation of contemplation, abates the tumults of thoughts which are springing up from below, and makes a kind of silence within itself for God. And since this silence of contemplation cannot be perfect in this life, it is said to have been made for half an hour. For whilst the tumultuous noises of thoughts force themselves into the mind against its will, they violently draw the eye of the mind, even when steadily fixed on things above, to view again those of earth. Whence it is written; *The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly habitation weigheth down the sense that museth on many things.* [Wisd. 9, 15] This silence is therefore well described as having been made not for a whole, but for 'a half hour:' because contemplation is never perfected here, however ardently it be begun. Which is also suitably described by the Prophet Ezekiel, who witnesses that he saw in the hand of a man, for the measure of the city built on the mountain, a reed of six cubits and a span. [Ez. 40, 5] For the Church is in truth situated on the mountain of the Elect, because it is not founded on the lowest desires. But what is pointed out by the cubit, except work, and what by the number six but the perfection of the work, because the Lord also is said on the sixth day to have completed all His works? What therefore does the span beyond the six cubits suggest, but the power of contemplation, which shews to us already the beginning of the eternal and seventh rest? For because the contemplation of eternal things is not here perfected, the measure of the seventh cubit is not completed. Because therefore the Church of the Elect completes all things which require to be done, the city presents itself as placed in six cubits on the mountain. But because it here beholds as yet only the beginnings of contemplation, of the seventh cubit it reaches only the span.

54. But it ought to be known that we do not at all reach the height of contemplation, if we cease not from the oppression of outward care. We do not at all look into ourselves, so as to know that there is within us one

rational part that rules, another animal part which is ruled, unless we are made dead to all outward disturbance by returning to the secresy of this silence. Which silence of ours Adam also when sleeping rightly typified, out of whose side the woman presently came. [Gen. 2, 21. 22.] Because, whoever is hurried forward to the understanding of things within, closes his eyes to visible objects: and he then distinguishes in himself those qualities which ought either to rule manfully, or those which, as being weak, can submit: that there is one part of him which has power to rule as a man, another to be ruled, as a woman. In this silence of the heart, then, while we are awake inwardly by contemplation, we are sleeping, as it were, outwardly. Because then men who are separated, that is who are freed from carnal desires, inhabit this silence of the heart, the Lord gave to this wild ass a house in the solitude, that he might not be oppressed with a crowd of temporal desires.

55. It follows, *And his tabernacles in the land of saltness.* Saltness is wont to kindle thirst. And because holy men, as long as they dwell in the tabernacles of this life, are inflamed by the daily warmth of their desire to seek their heavenly country, they are said to have their tabernacles in the land of saltness. For they are in truth incessantly inflamed, in order to thirst, they thirst to be satisfied, as it is written, *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.* [Matt. 5, 6] It follows;

Ver. 7. *He scorneth the multitude of the city.*

56. To scorn the multitude of the city, is to avoid the evil employments of human conversation, so as no longer to take pleasure in imitating the abandoned manners of earthly men, who, through the abundance of iniquity, are many. For they desire to enter, with the few, the narrow gate, and seek not, with the many, to enter the broad roads which lead to destruction. For they carefully behold by Whom, and for what, they are created; and from a right consideration of the image they have received, they disdain to follow

the vulgar herd. Whence it is said by the voice of the Bridegroom to the Bride, in the Song of Songs, *If thou knowest not thyself, O beautiful among women, go forth, and go thy way after the footsteps of the flocks, and feed thy kids.* [Cant. 1, 8] For she who is beautiful among women knows herself, when every Elect soul, though placed amongst sinners, remembers that it was fashioned after the image and similitude of its Creator, and goes on, in accordance with the similitude it has perceived. But if it knows not itself, it goes forth; because, being expelled from the secret recess of its own heart, it is dissipated by outward objects of desire. But when it has gone forth, it goeth after the footsteps of the flocks, because namely, forsaking its own inward thoughts, it is led to the broad way, and follows the examples of the peoples. And it no longer feeds lambs, but kids, because it strives to nourish, not the harmless thoughts of the mind, but the evil motions of the flesh. Because then every Elect and continent person scorns to go after the footsteps of the herds, let it be rightly said, *He scorneth the multitude of the city.* Where it is also fitly subjoined; *He heareth not the cry of the exactor.*

57. What other exactor can be understood, but the devil, who once offered to man in paradise the coin of evil persuasion, and seeks to exact from him daily the guilt of this debt? The word of this exactor is the beginning of evil persuasion. The cry of this exactor is temptation, no longer gentle, but violent. This exactor cries out, when he tempts mightily. Not to hear then the voice of the exactor, is not at all to consent to the violent emotions of temptations. For a man would hear, if he were to do the things which he suggests. But when he scorns to do perversely, it is rightly said, *He heareth not. the cry of the exactor.*

58. But some persons in this place wish the belly to be understood by the exactor. For it exacts from us a kind of debt; because it requires even by nature the daily fruit of human labour to be spent on it. Whilst abstinent men, then, who in this place are typified by the word ‘wild ass,’ repress by

force the desires of the appetite, they contemn, as it were, the words of the clamouring exactor. But since many contests of virtues against innumerable vices befal the continent man, why, in speaking of the cry of the exactor being despised, is it said of the belly alone, that he restrains its impulse and assault, except that no one gains the palm of the spiritual contest, unless he has first conquered the incentives of the flesh, by afflicting the concupiscence of the belly? For we cannot stand up to the conflict of the spiritual contest, unless the enemy who is posted within, that is to say, the appetite of gluttony, is first conquered; because if we overthrow not those evils which are nearer to us, we doubtless proceed in vain to attack those which are further off. For war is in vain waged in the plain against outward foes, if a treacherous citizen is retained within the very walls of the city. The mind also of the combatant is itself kept back, by the grievous disgrace of confusion, from engaging in the spiritual contest, when, feeble in its battle with the flesh, it is wounded and overcome by the swords of gluttony. For when it sees itself defeated by trifles, it is ashamed to engage in greater dangers.

59. But some, ignorant of the order of the contest, neglect to tame their appetite, and proceed at once to spiritual battles And though they sometimes display many acts of great bravery, yet from the sin of gluttony ruling over them, they lose, by the allurement of the flesh, all that they have done boldly; and, while the belly is not restrained, all their virtues are overwhelmed at once by the lust of the flesh. Whence it is written also of the victory of Nahuchodonosor, *The chief of the cooks destroyed the walls of Jerusalem.* [2 Kings 25, 8] For what does Scripture signify and express by the walls of Jerusalem, but the virtues of a soul which is tending to the vision of peace? [Jer. 52, 12. Oxf. Mss. om. ‘de.’] Or who is understood by the chief of the cooks, but the belly, which is served with most diligent care by cooks? The chief of the cooks then destroys the walls of Jerusalem, because

the belly, when it is not restrained, destroys the virtues of the soul. Hence is it that Paul was withdrawing the strength of the chief of the cooks, who was contending against the walls of Jerusalem, when he was saying, *I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perchance having preached to others, I myself become a cast-away.* [1 Cor. 9, 27] Hence he also premised, saying, *I so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as if beating the air.* [ib. 26] Because when we restrain the flesh, we beat with these blows of our abstinence not the air, but unclean spirits; and when we subject that which is within us, we inflict blows [‘pugnos’] on adversaries set without. Hence is it that when the king of Babylon orders the furnace to be kindled, he commands a heap of bitumen, tow, pitch, and firebrands to be furnished. But yet he consumes not in this fire the abstinent youths; [Dan. 4, 27] because, though the ancient enemy presents to our view innumerable desires of dainties, to increase the fire of lust, yet the grace of the Holy Spirit breathes into holy minds, in order that they may remain uninjured by the heats of carnal concupiscence: so that though the flame may burn so far as to tempt the heart, yet the temptation may not blaze forth as far as to consent.

60. It should also be known, that the vice of gluttony tempts us in five ways. For it sometimes anticipates the seasons of want: but sometimes does not anticipate them, but seeks for daintier food. Sometimes it looks for those things, which must be taken, to be prepared more carefully; but sometimes it agrees with both the quality of, and the season for, its food, but exceeds, in the quantity of what is to be taken, the measure of moderate refreshment. But sometimes that which it longs for is even of a baser kind, and yet it sins more fatally through the heat of unbounded desire. For Jonathan deserved in truth the sentence of death from the mouth of his father, because in staking honey he anticipated the time which had been fixed for eating. [1 Sam. 14, 44] And the people which had been brought out

of Egypt, died in the desert, because it despised the manna, and sought for fleshly food, which it counted more delicate. And the first fault of the sons of Eli arose from this, that the servant, at their desire, would not receive cooked meat for the priest, after the ancient custom, but sought for raw flesh, for him to serve up with greater daintiness. [1 Sam. 2, 15] And when it is said to Jerusalem, *This was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance,* [Ez. 16, 49] it is plainly shewn that she forfeited her salvation, because, with the sin of pride, she exceeded the measure of moderate refreshment. And Esau lost the glory of the birth-right, because he desired mean food, namely, lentils, with great eagerness of longing; and when he preferred this, even to selling his birth-right, he shewed with what eagerness he was panting after it. [Gen. 25, 34] For it is not the food, but the desire that is in fault. Whence also we frequently take some delicate fare without blame, and take a taste of meaner food, not without guilt of conscience. For this Esau, whom we have spoken of, lost in truth his birth-right, through lentils, and Elias preserved the virtue of his body by eating flesh in the desert. Whence also the ancient enemy, because he knows that it is not food, but the desire of food, that is the cause of damnation, both subjected the first man to himself, not with flesh, but an apple; and tempted the second Man not with flesh, but with bread. Hence it is that the fault of Adam is commonly committed, even when mean and worthless food is taken. For it is not Adam alone who has received the prohibiting command to abstain from the forbidden fruit. For when God points out certain aliments as injurious to our health, He, by a kind of sentence, forbids us to use them. And while we desire and taste noxious food, what else do we do in truth but eat of what is forbidden?

61. Those things must therefore be taken, which the necessity of nature requires, and not those which gluttony suggests. But it is a great effort of discretion to give this exactor something, and yet to refuse him something:

both to restrain gluttony by not giving, and by giving to support nature. And this discretion is perhaps suggested, when it is said; *He heareth not the cry of the exactor.* For the word of this exactor is the necessary demand of nature. But his cry is the appetite of gluttony going beyond the measure of necessity. This wild ass then hears the word of this exactor, and hears not his cry; because a discreet and abstinent man both supplies his belly so far as to temper his need, and restrains it from pleasure.

62. But it should be known that pleasure so veils itself under necessity, that a perfect man can scarce discern it. For whilst necessity asks for a debt to he paid, pleasure secretly demands a longing to be fulfilled; it hurries the appetite onward the more fearlessly, the more it conceals itself under the creditable profession of relieving a necessity. But frequently pleasure secretly attached follows behind in the very course of eating; though sometimes impudently free it endeavours even to go first. But it is easy to discover when pleasure anticipates its necessity, though very difficult to discern when it secretly connects itself with that very eating which is necessary. For because it follows the natural appetite which goes first, it seems, as it were, to advance slowly behind. For at that time, when the demand of necessity is paid, because pleasure is, through eating, blended with necessity, it is not known what necessity demands itself, and what (as has been said) pleasure secretly demands. But we frequently both distinguish them, and yet, from knowing that they are mutually connected together, take pleasure, when hurried beyond proper bounds, in being wittingly deceived: and whilst the mind flatters itself on the necessity, it is deceived by pleasure. For it is written; *Make not provision for the flesh in the desires thereof.* [Rom. 13, 14] That therefore which is forbidden to be done in desire, is yielded in necessity.

63. But often, whilst we incautiously condescend to necessity, we are enslaved to desires. And sometimes, while we endeavour to oppose our

desires too immoderately, we increase the miseries of necessity. For it is necessary for a man so to maintain the citadel of continence, as to destroy, not the flesh, but the vices of the flesh. For frequently, when the flesh is restrained more than is just, it is weakened even for the exercise of good works, so as to be unequal to prayer also or preaching, whilst it hastens to put out entirely the incentives of vices within itself. For this very man, whom we hear outwardly, we have as the assistant of our inward intention, and both the motions of wantonness are within it, and there also abound in it the appliances of good works. But often, whilst we attack an enemy therein, we kill a citizen also whom we love; and often while we spare, as it were, a fellow-citizen, we nurture an enemy for battle. For our vices become proud upon the same food, on which our virtues are nourished and live. And when a virtue is nourished, the strength of our vices is frequently increased. But when unbounded abstinence weakens the power of vices, our virtue also faints and pants. Whence it is necessary for our inward man to preside, as a kind of impartial arbiter between itself, and him whom it hears without: in order that its outward man may both be always able to serve at its appointed ministry, and never proudly oppose it with unshackled neck; nor be moved if it whispers any suggestion, provided it always tramples it down with the heel of authority stamped upon it. And thus, whilst we allow our vices, when checked, to struggle against us, and yet prohibit their engaging with us on equal terms, it comes to pass that neither our vices prevail against our virtue, nor does our virtue again settle down to rest with entire extinction of our vices. In which way alone our pride [or ‘pride alone’] is utterly extinguished, because though it may serve for victory, yet a continual fight is reserved for us, to keep down the pride of our thoughts. And hence, because every abstinent person both complies with the demands of necessity, and yet opposes violent pleasure, it is well said in this place also by the voice of the Lord, *He heareth not the cry of the exactor.* But

since a discreet person raises himself the more to the understanding of higher things, the more he chastises in himself the incentives of the flesh, after his scorning the cry of the exactor, it is rightly subjoined ;

Ver. 8. *He looks round on the mountains of his pasture.*

64. The mountains of his pasture are the lofty contemplations of inward refreshment. For the more holy men abase themselves outwardly with contempt, the more abundantly are they supported within with the contemplation of revelations. Whence it is written; *He hath disposed the ascents in his heart in the valley of tears;* [Ps. 84, 6] because those, whom the valley of humility outwardly imprisons in tears, the ascent of contemplation elevates within. The mountains of pasture are also the lofty powers of angels: which therefore refresh us here by ministering and assisting, because they are fattened there with the inward dew of contemplation. And because, by the bounty of God, they protect us in every contest, they are well said to be beheld around. For we behold them present on all sides around us, by whose defence we are protected against our adversaries on every side. The mountains of pasture can be taken, still further, for the lofty sentences of Holy Scripture, of which it is said by the Psalmist; *The high hills for the stags,* [Ps. 104, 18] because those who know already how to make the leaps of contemplation, ascend the lofty summits of the Divine sentences, as the tops of mountains. And because the feeble cannot reach in truth to these tops, it is there rightly subjoined, the *rock is a refuge for the urchins,* because, namely, their understanding does not sublimely exercise the feeble, but faith alone in Christ humbly keeps them in. It follows;

He searcheth after every green thing.

65. For parched in truth are all things, which, fashioned for a time, are dried up from the sweetness of the present life by the coming end, as if by the summer sun. But those are called green, which fade not away by any

shortness of existence. For this wild ass then to seek every green thing, is for each holy man, despising transitory things, to long for those which are to endure for ever.

But all these things which have been said of the wild ass, can be understood in another way also. Which we explain, having repeated the former verse, in order to leave to the judgment of the reader what he believes is to be preferred. After, then, the dispensation of preachers has been described under the figure of hinds, to shew by Whom this same virtue of preaching is given, the mention of our Lord's Incarnation is immediately subjoined, so that it is said,

Ver. 5. *Who hath sent out the wild ass free?*

66. Nor let any consider it unbecoming that the Incarnate Lord can be typified by such an animal; whilst it is admitted by all that He is spoken of, in Holy Scripture, as, in a certain sense, both a worm and a beetle. As it is written; *But I am a worm, and no man.* [Ps. 22, 6] And as it is said by the Prophet in the Septuagint, *A beetle cried out from the wood.* [Hab. 2, 11. LXX.] Since then He is typified by the mention of such vile and abject things, what is said offensively of Him, of Whom it is admitted that nothing is said appropriately? For He is called a lamb, but it is for His innocence. He is called a lion, but it is for His might. He is also sometimes compared to a serpent, but it is for His death, or for His wisdom. And He can therefore be spoken of figuratively by all these, because none of all these can be essentially believed of Him. For were He to be really one of these essentially, He could no longer be termed another. For were He properly called a lamb, He could no longer be called a lion. If He were properly called a lion, He would not be signified by a serpent. But we say all these things of Him in figure, with the greater latitude, the further removed they are from His essence. The wild ass can therefore designate the Incarnate Lord. For the wild ass is an animal of the fields. And because the Incarnate

Lord profited the Gentiles more than the Jews, when, assuming a living body [‘corpus animale’], He went, as it were, not into the house, but rather into the field. Of which field of the Gentiles it is said by the Psalmist; *The beauty of the field is with Me.* [Ps. 50, 11] The Incarnate Lord therefore, Who in the form of God is equal to the Father, is in the form of a servant less than the Father, in which He is also less than Himself. Let it be said therefore by the Father of the Son in the form of a servant; *Who hath sent out the wild ass free, and who hath loosed his bands?* For every one who sins is the servant of sin. And because the Incarnate Lord was made partaker of our nature, not of our sin, He is said to have been sent forth free, because He is not held under the dominion of sin. Of Whom it is written elsewhere; *Free among the dead.* [Ps. 88, 5] He is said to have been sent forth free, because taking our nature, He is not at all held by the yoke of iniquity. And though the stain of our guilt touched Him not, yet the suffering of our mortality bound Him. Whence also after He is said to have been sent forth free, it is rightly added of Him; *And who hath loosed His bands?*

67. For His bands were then in truth loosened, when the infirmities of His Passion were changed into the glory of His Resurrection. For the Lord had those infirmities of our mortal state, which we endure as the desert of our iniquity, as a kind of bands with which He wished of His own accord to be bound, even to death, and which He loosed marvellously by His Resurrection. For to be hungry, to thirst, to be weary, to be bound, to be scourged, and to be crucified, was the bond of our mortality. But when on the completion of His death the veil of the temple was rent, the rocks were cleft, the tombs were opened, the barriers of hell were laid bare, what else is shewn by so many arguments of such mighty power, but that those bands of our infirmity were loosened, that He, Who had come to take on Him the form of a servant, might return in freedom to heaven even with His

members? Of which bonds of His the Apostle Peter witnesses, saying, *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of hell, because it was not possible for Him to be holden of it.* [Acts 2, 24] And because after His Death and Resurrection He deigned to call the Gentiles to the grace of faith, after His bands are said to have been loosened, it is fitly subjoined ;

Ver. 6. *To Whom I have given a house in the solitude, and His tabernacle in the land of saltness.*

68. For in the Gentile world, in which there was no Patriarch, no Prophet, there was hardly a man to exercise his reason to gain a knowledge of God. Of this solitude it is said by Isaiah; *The desert and the pathless land shall rejoice, and the solitude shall exult and blossom as the lily.* [Is. 35, 1] And again it is said of the Church; *He will make her desert as delights, and her solitude as the garden of the Lord.* [Is. 51, 3] But this same solitude, which, before it knew the true wisdom of God, had brought forth saltness, is mentioned again as a land of saltness; because it produced no verdure of good understanding, and savoured only of what was wrong. He receives therefore his house in the solitude, and His tabernacle in the land of saltness, because God when Incarnate for men, forsook Judaea, and possessed the hearts of the Gentiles. Whence it is said to Him by the voice of the Father, through the Prophet; *Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Thy possession.* [Ps. 2, 8] Who, as He is God, gives all things with the Father, as He is Man, receives of the Father among all things, as it is written; *He hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.* [John 5, 27] And it is written again; *Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands.* [John 13, 3] Or as He Himself says; *All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me.* [John 6, 37] But if it is now asked what is the difference between a house and a tabernacle; a house is for a dwelling place, a tabernacle for a journey. He possessed therefore on His coming the

hearts of the Gentiles as if they were tabernacles, but, strengthening them by righteousness, He made them His house by inhabiting. And because He scorned to imitate the conduct of those to whom He had come, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 7. *He scorneth the multitude of the city.*

69. That is, He despises the customs of human conversation. For having been made a Man amongst men, He refused to observe the practice of men. For He was therefore made a Man amongst us, not only to redeem us by the shedding of His blood, but also to change us by setting an example. He found therefore one thing in our conversation at His coming, and taught us another by His life. For all the progeny of the haughty race of Adam were striving to seek after the prosperity of the present life, to avoid its adversities, to escape disgrace, to follow glory. The Incarnate Lord came amongst them courting adversity, scorning prosperity, embracing insults, flying from glory. For when the Jews had wished to make Him their king, He shrunk from being a king. But when they were endeavouring to kill Him, He came of His own accord to the scaffold of the cross. He therefore avoided that which all seek after, He sought after that which all avoid; He caused all to marvel that both He Himself rose again when dead, and by His death raised others from death. For there are in truth two lives of a man who exists in the body, one before death, the other after the resurrection; one of which all practically knew, but knew not the other; and mankind were directing their thoughts to that only which they knew. The Lord came in the flesh, and while He took on Himself the one, He pointed out the other. While He took on Himself that which was known to us, He pointed out to us that which was unknown to us. For by His dying He practised that life which we possess, by rising again He disclosed that life for which we are to seek, instructing us by His example, that this life which we pass before our death, is not to be loved on its own account, but to be tolerated on account

of the other. Because then, by practising a new conversation amongst men, He followed not the customs of Babylon, it is well written of Him, *He scorneth the multitude of the city.*

70. Or certainly, because He forsook the many who were wandering along the broad way, and chose the few who were walking through narrow paths. For to 'scorn the multitude of the city,' is to reject from a share in His Kingdom that portion of mankind which enters the broad way, which also through the abundance of iniquity is many. It follows;

He heareth not the cry of the exactor.

71. As was said before, what exactor can be understood in this place, but the devil? who by his wicked persuasion held out the hope of immortality, but by deceiving exacted the tribute of death; who by his persuasion introduced sin, by his cruelty exacts punishment. The word of this exactor is his crafty persuasion of man before death, but his 'cry' is his violent seizure of him after death. For those whom he secretly intercepts before death, he violently hurries to share with him his punishment after death. But because the Lord when drawing near to death feared not the violent assaults of this exactor, (as He Himself says, *For the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me,)* [John 14, 30] it is well said, *He heareth not the cry of the exactor.* For the exactor of mankind came to Him, because he saw Him to be a man. But Him Whom He believed to be a man despised for His weakness, he felt, by his power, to be above man.

72. Laban doubtless represented this exactor, when coming with wrath, he demanded his idols which were with Jacob. [Gen. 31, 30] For Laban is interpreted 'whitening.' But the devil is appropriately understood by whitening, who though dark through his deserts, transforms himself into an angel of light. [2 Cor. 11, 14] Him did Jacob serve, that is, the Jewish people, on the part of the reprobate, from whose flesh the Lord Incarnate came. But by Laban can this world also be represented, which follows Jacob with fury,

because it endeavours to oppress by persecution all the Elect, who are members of our Redeemer. Jacob carried off the daughter of this person, that is, either of the world or of the devil, when Christ united to Himself the Church from the Gentile world. Whom he takes away also from the house of her father, because He says to her by the Prophet; *Forget thine own people, and thy father's house.* [Ps. 45, 10] But what is designated by idols but avarice? Whence it is said by Paul; *And covetousness, which is idolatry.* [Col. 3, 5] Laban therefore on coming found not the idols upon Jacob, because when the devil displayed the treasures of the world, he found not in our Redeemer the traces of earthly concupiscence. [Gen. 31, 33] But those idols which Jacob had not, Rachel covered by sitting. [ib. 34] For by Rachel, which also means 'a sheep,' is typified the Church. But to sit, is to seek after the humility of penitence, as it is written; *Arise, after ye have sat down.* [Ps. 127, 2] Rachel therefore covered the idols by sitting, because Holy Church, by following Christ, covered, with penitence, the vices of earthly concupiscence. Of this covering of vices it is said by the Psalmist; *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* [Ps. 32, 1] That Rachel then signified us, who press down idols by sitting, if we condemn the sins of covetousness by penitence. But this covetousness is not wont to befal those, who run like men in the way of the Lord, to whom it is said; *Do manfully, and let your heart he strengthened;*[Ps. 31, 24] but those especially who walking, as it were, with effeminate step, are relaxed by the blandishments of the world. Whence also in that place these are the words of this same Rachel, *According to the custom of women it now is happening to me.* [Gen. 31, 35] Laban therefore finds not the idols upon Jacob, because the crafty exactor found nothing to blame in our Redeemer. Of which exactor it is said to our Redeemer by the Prophet, when He was delivering the Gentile world from his dominion; *For thou hast overcome the yoke of his burden, and the rod of his shoulder, and the sceptre of his*

oppressor, as in the day of Madian. [Is. 9, 4] For the Lord in rescuing the Gentile world, overcame the yoke of its burden, when He delivered it, by His coming, from that bondage to the tyranny of the devil. He overcame the rod of its shoulder, when He kept his blow, which was oppressing it heavily in consequence of wickedness, from redeemed mankind. He overcame the sceptre of its oppressor, when He swept away from the heart of the faithful, that kingdom of the same devil, who had been wont to exact the due tribute of punishments for the fatal perpetration of sins.

73. But let us hear how these things were done. It is immediately subjoined, *As in the day of Madian.* I think it will not be amiss if we consider at greater length this war of the Madianites, which was intentionally introduced by the Prophet in comparison with the coming of the Lord. For in the book of Judges Gedeon is described as having fought against the Madianites. [Judg. 7, 1-22] When he was bringing forth the multitude of the army to war, he was ordered by a Divine admonition, to remove from the conflict of battle all whom on coming to the water he beheld drinking the water with bended knees. And the result was, that only three hundred men remained, who had drunk the water in their hands, standing. With these he proceeds to the battle, and he equipped them not with arms, but with trumpets, lamps, and pitchers. For, as is there written, they placed the lighted lamps in the pitchers, and held their trumpets in their right hand, but their pitchers in their left, and on coming close to their enemies, they sounded with the trumpets, they brake the pitchers, the lamps appeared: and their enemies alarmed on one hand with the sound of the trumpets, and on the other by the glittering of the lamps, were turned to flight. Why then is it that such a battle is brought forward by the Prophet, and why is victory in that battle compared to the coming of our Redeemer? Did the Prophet intend to point out to us that that victorious battle under the command of Gedeon was a type of the coming of our Redeemer? Such

deeds were doubtless there wrought, which, the more they exceed the usual mode of fighting, are the less removed from the mystery of prophecy. For who ever went forth to battle with pitchers and lamps? Who, when going against arms, ever abandoned his arms? These things would have been truly absurd to us, had they not been terrible to the enemies. But we have learned by the evidence of the victory itself, not to regard these things which were done as of little account. Gedeon, therefore, coming to the battle, signifies to us the coming of our Redeemer, of Whom it is written; *Lift up, O princes, your gates, and be ye lift up,? ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty. The Lord mighty in battle.* [Ps. 24, 7. 8.] He prophesied of our Redeemer, not only by his doings, but also by his name. For Gedeon is interpreted ‘going about in the womb.’ For our Lord embraces all things by the power of His majesty, and yet He came, through the grace of the dispensation assuming man’s nature in the womb of the Virgin. Who then is He Who goes about in the womb, except Almighty God, redeeming us by His own dispensation, embracing all things by His Godhead, and taking man’s nature in the womb? In which womb He was both Incarnate, and not confined; because He was both within the womb by the substance of His infirmity, and beyond the world by the power of His majesty. But Madian is interpreted ‘from judgment.’ For that His enemies were to be repulsed and destroyed, was not from the imperfection of their conqueror, but from the judgment of Him, Who judgeth rightly. And for this reason they are called ‘from judgment:’ because, being aliens from the grace of the Redeemer, they bear, even in their designation, the desert of just condemnation.

74. Against these Gedeon proceeds to battle with three hundred men. The plenitude of perfection is usually understood by the number ‘hundred.’ What then is designated by the number hundred taken thrice, except the perfect knowledge of the Trinity? For with those our Lord destroys the

adversaries of the faith, with those comes down to the contests of preaching, who can understand Divine truths, who know how to think accurately of the Trinity, Which is God. But we must observe, that this number three hundred is comprised in the letter Tau ["T" or in the Greek but not in the Hebrew character], which bears a resemblance of the cross. For if there were added over the transverse line, the projecting part of the cross, it would no longer be a resemblance of the cross, but the cross itself. Because then that number of three hundred is comprised in the letter Tau, and by the letter Tau, as we have said, a resemblance of the cross is set forth, by those three hundred followers of Gedeon, those persons are not inappropriately designated, to whom it is said, *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.* [Luke 9, 23] And these take up the cross more truly, as they follow the Lord, the more severely they both tame themselves, and are tortured with the compassion of charity towards their neighbours. Whence it is said also by the prophet Ezekiel, *Mark Tau upon the foreheads of the men that groan and lament.* [Ez. 9, 4] Or certainly, by these three hundred who are comprised in the letter Tau, it is expressed that the sword of the enemy is overcome by the wood of the cross. And they are brought to the river, to drink the waters; and whoever drank the waters with bended knees, were removed from the struggle of war. For by the waters is designated the doctrine of wisdom, but by the unbended knee righteous conduct. They therefore who are reported to have bent their knees, while drinking the water, retired from the strife of battles, having been forbidden; because Christ proceeds to battle against the enemies of the faith, with those who when they drink the streams of doctrine, distort not the uprightness of their actions. For all are said at that time to have drunk the water, but not all to have stood with unbended knee. And they who bent their knees, while they were drinking the waters, were rejected, because, as the Apostle witnesses, *For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers*

of the law will be justified. [Rom. 2, 13] For since dissoluteness of conduct is, as we have said, signified by this very bending of the knees, it is rightly again said by Paul, *Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with your feet.* [Heb.12, 12] They therefore proceed, under Christ as their leader, to battle, who exhibit in their conduct that which they profess with their mouths, who drink spiritually the streams of doctrine, and yet are not carnally distorted by wicked works; because, as it is written, *Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner.* [Ecclus. 15, 9]

75. They go forth therefore to battle with trumpets, with lamps, and with pitchers. This, as we have said, was an unusual order of battle. They sounded with the trumpets, and the pitchers were held in their left hands. But lamps were placed within the pitchers; but, when the pitchers were broken, the lamps appeared, and by their flashing light the affrighted enemies are put to flight. By the trumpets is designated therefore the loud voice of preachers, by the lamps the brightness of their miracles, by the pitchers the frailness of their bodies. For our Leader led forth with Him, to the contest of preaching, such as by making light of their bodily safety, would overthrow their enemies by dying, and would overcome their swords, not by arms, not by words, but by patience. For our Martyrs came armed under their Leader to battle, but armed with trumpets, with pitchers, with lamps. And they sounded with their trumpets, when preaching; they broke their pitchers, when exposing their bodies to dissolution by the swords of the enemy in their suffering; they shone forth with lamps, when after the dissolution of their bodies they flashed forth with miracles. And their enemies were presently put to flight, because, when they beheld the bodies of dead Martyrs glittering with miracles, they were overpowered by the light of truth, and believed that which they had impugned. They sounded therefore with the trumpets, that the pitchers might he broken; the pitchers were broken, that the lamps might appear; the lamps appeared, that the

enemies might be put to flight. That is, the Martyrs preached, till their bodies were dissolved in death; their bodies were dissolved in death, that they might shine forth with miracles; they shone forth with miracles, that they might overthrow their enemies with divine light; so that they might no longer stand up and resist God, but submit to, and be afraid of, Him.

76. And it must he observed, that the enemies stood firm before the pitchers, but fled before the lamps; doubtless because the persecutors of Holy Church resisted the preachers of the faith while yet in the body, but were put to flight by the miracles which were manifested after the dissolution of their bodies, because, terrified by fear, they ceased from persecuting the faithful. They were afraid, in truth, at the lamps of miracles which appeared, when the pitchers of their bodies had been broken, at the preaching of the trumpets.

77. We must also notice that which is there written; that they held the trumpets in their right hand, but the pitchers in their left. For we are said to have on the right hand, whatever we consider a great thing; but on the left, that which we regard as nothing. It is therefore well written in that place, that they held the trumpets in their right hand, but the pitchers in their left; because the Martyrs of Christ consider the grace of preaching as a great thing, but the benefit of their bodies as of the least moment. But whoever thinks more of the benefit of the body, than of the grace of preaching, holds the trumpet in his left hand, but the pitcher in his right. For if the grace of preaching is attended to in the first place, and in the next place the benefit of the body, it is certain that the trumpets are held in the right hand, and the pitchers in the left. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, *Neither do they light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick.* [Matt. 5, 15] For by a bushel is understood temporal advantage, but by a candle the light of preaching. To place therefore a light under a bushel, is, for the sake of temporal advantage, to conceal the grace of preaching, which none of the

Elect surely does. And it is well there added, *But upon a candlestick.* For by a candlestick is designated the position of the body, on which a candle is placed above, when the duty of preaching is preferred to the body. It is therefore well said by the Prophet, *Thou hast overcome the sceptre of his oppressor, as in the day of Madian.* [Is. 9, 4] But since we have made a long digression for the sake of expounding the testimony of the Prophet, let us return to the regular order of our work. After, therefore, it was said, *He heareth not the cry of the exactor;* because, namely, our Lord when manifested in the flesh despised the snares of the great enemy, He rightly subjoins what He did further in behalf of His Elect, saying;

Ver. 8. *He looketh around on the mountains of His pasture.*

78. Mountains we understand to be all the lofty ones of this world, who were swollen in their hearts with earthly loftiness. But since the Lord engrains [‘inviscerat’] even such, when converted, into the body of His Church, and, turning them from their former pride, transforms them into His own members, these are mountains of His pasture; doubtless, because He is satisfied with the conversion of the wandering, and the humility of the proud. As He Himself says, *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.* [John 4, 34] And as He commanded the Apostles, when sent forth to preach, saying, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto eternal life.* [John 6, 27] Of these mountains it is said by the Prophet, *The Lord will not reject His people, for in His hand are all the ends of the earth, and the heights of the hills He beholdeth.* [Ps. 95, 4. LXX.] For the heights of the mountains are surely the loftinesses of the proud. Which the Lord is said to behold, that is, to change from their iniquity for the better. For the Lord converts the person whom He looks on. Whence it is written, *The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny Me thrice; and he went out, and wept bitterly.* [Luke 22, 61.

62.] And as Solomon says, *A King that sitteth on the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with His look.* [Prov. 20, 8] Of this looking at the mountains it is said again by the Prophet, *The mountains melted like wax from the face of the Lord;* [Ps. 97, 5] because, after the hardness of their perversity, they were melted by the Divine fear, and subsided from their former rigid swelling.

79. But we must observe, that He does not say, 'beholdeth,' but *looketh round on the mountains of His pasture.* For the Lord was in truth Incarnate in Judaea, which was placed in the midst of the nations. And He therefore looked round on the mountains, because He gathered together, from the whole body of the Gentiles, the proud of this world situated every where around. He feeds therefore in these mountains; because He is satiated with the good works of the converted, as if with green herbs. Hence is it that it is said to Him by the voice of the Bride in the Song of Songs, *Shew me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest at noon.* [Cant. 1, 7] For the Lord is fed, when He is delighted with our good deeds. But He lies down at noon, when, after the heart of the reprobate burning with carnal desires, He finds the cool refreshment of holy thought in the breasts of His Elect. For Matthew had been a kind of mountain, when he was swelling with the profits of the custom house; of whom it is also written, that after he believed, he invited our Lord into his house, and made a great feast. [Luke 5, 29] This mountain therefore produced for this wild ass the herbs of green pasture, because he fed Him outwardly with a feast, and inwardly with banquets of virtues. And this is set forth still more fully, when it is subjoined;

He searcheth after every green thing.

80. For He deserts the parched places, and searches for every green thing. For parched are those hearts of men, which, planted in the perishing hope of this world, have no assurance of eternity. But those flourish, which cling to that inheritance of which the Apostle Peter says; *To an inheritance*

incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. [1 Pet. 1, 4] For they are more truly green, the more they plant the root of thought in the portion of an inheritance that fadeth not away. Let every one therefore, who dreads being parched within, fly from the barren desires of this world without. Let every one who longs to be sought for by the Lord, seek for his eternal home, and become verdant in the inward plantation of his heart.

81. Let this twofold exposition of the wild ass he sufficient. But it must he left to the judgment of the reader, which he thinks best to select. But if he chance to scorn the meaning of either exposition, I will willingly myself follow my reader, as a pupil his master, if he thinks more accurately and truly. Because whatever I find he knows better than myself, I believe it to be vouchsafed as a special gift to myself. For all we, who endeavour, full of faith, to utter something concerning God, are organs of truth: and it is in the power of this same Truth, whether It utters Its voice through me to another, or through another to me. For dwelling in the midst of us it deals alike with all, even though they live not alike, and often touches one person to hear plainly what It has spoken by another, but often touches another, to utter something clearly to be heard by others.

82. Power of speech is often given to a teacher, for the sake of his hearer, and skill in speaking is often taken away from a teacher, on account of the guilt of his hearer. Let not the teacher then be puffed up with pride in these cases in which he preaches copiously, lest his tongue be perchance filled, not for his own, but for his hearers' sake; and let not a hearer be angry, in cases in which a teacher speaks barrenly, lest the tongue of the teacher perchance be dumb, not for his own, but his hearers' rejection. For power of speech is given even to bad teachers for the sake of a good hearer, just as words of preaching were able to abound to the Pharisees, though it was written of them, *All therefore whatsoever they have said to you, observe and do: but do not after their works.* [Matt. 23, 3] But skill in speaking is taken

away even from good teachers, for the rejection of their hearers. As is said to Ezekiel against Israel; *I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be as a man reproving, for it is a provoking house.* [Ez. 3, 26]

82. But the word of preaching is sometimes granted on account of both, sometimes withdrawn on account of both. For it is given on account of both, as is said by the voice of God to Paul amongst the Corinthians; *Be not afraid, but speak.* [Acts 18, 9] And a little after, *For I have much people in this city.* [ibid. 10] But it is withdrawn on account of both, as Eli the priest both knew the wicked conduct of his children, and exercised not the fitting language of reproof, when these the guilt of their sin, and him the punishment of his silence, was plainly about to mulct with the suffering of death. When we know not therefore, amongst these cases, either for whom the fervour of speech is given, or on whose account it is withdrawn, the one safe remedy is, neither to pride ourselves on those gifts which we have received beyond others, nor yet to make jest of another for having received less: but to walk gravely and steadily, with the firm-fixed foot of humility. Because we are in this life the more truly learned, the more we know that our learning cannot be supplied to us from ourselves. Why should therefore any one be proud of his learning, who knows not either when it is given to any one by a secret sentence, or when it is withdrawn? For though fear seems to be always far removed from security; yet there is nothing safer for us than ever to feel fear, under the prevalence of hope, lest our mind should from want of caution plunge itself into sin through desperation, or fall headlong through boasting of its gifts. For the more humbly a man trembles for himself, together with hope, before the eyes of the strict and merciful Judge, the more firmly does he stand in Him.

BOOK XXXI.

The ninth, with the remaining verses of the thirty-ninth chapter, is explained, the last three only being omitted; and the efficacy of Divine Grace, in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the conversion of sinners, is especially demonstrated.

1. The devil, through envy, inflicted the wound of pride on healthful man in Paradise; in order that he, who had not received death when created, might deserve it when elated. But since it is competent for Divine power, not only to make good things out of nothing, but also to refashion them from the evils which the devil had committed; the humility of God appeared amongst men, as a remedy against this wound inflicted by the proud devil, that they who had fallen through imitation of their haughty enemy, might rise by the example of their humbled Creator. Against, therefore, the haughty devil, God appeared amongst men, having been made a humble Man. The mighty of this world, that is, the members of the haughty devil, believed Him to be as despicable, as they saw Him to be lowly. For the more the wound of their heart swelled up, the more it despised the soothing remedy. Our medicine therefore being spurned by the wound of the proud, came to the wound of the humble. For*, God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.* [1 Cor. 1, 27] And a work was wrought upon the poor, for the wealthy proud ones afterwards to wonder at. For while they behold in them new virtues, they were afterwards astounded at the miracles of those, whose life they before despised. And thence, returning immediately with fear to their own hearts, they dreaded that sanctity in miracles, which they had scorned in precepts. Mighty things were therefore confounded by the weak; because while the life of the humble rises to veneration, the pride of the haughty has fallen. Because therefore blessed

Job is a type of Holy Church, and Almighty God foresaw that, in the early times of the rising Church, the mighty of this world would refuse, with the stubborn neck of their heart, to undertake its light burden, let Him say;

Ver. 9. *Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee?*

2. For the rhinoceros is quite of an untamed nature, so that, if it is ever taken, it cannot in any way be kept. For, as is said, it dies immediately from being unable to bear it. But its name when interpreted means in the Latin tongue, 'a horn on the nostril.' And what else is designated by the nostril, but folly; what by the horn, but pride? For that folly is usually understood by the nostril, we have learned on the evidence of Solomon, who says; *As a ring of gold in a swine's nostrils, so is a beautiful and foolish woman.* [Prov. 11, 22] For he saw heretical doctrine shining with brilliancy of eloquence, and yet not agreeing with the proper understanding of wisdom, and he says, *A ring of gold in a swine's nostrils;* that is, a beautiful and involved expression in the understanding of a foolish mind: from which gold depends, through its eloquence, but yet, through the weight of earthly intention, like a swine, it looks not upwards. And he proceeded to explain it, saying, *A beautiful and foolish woman:* that is, heretical teaching; beautiful in words, foolish in meaning. But, that pride is frequently understood by a horn, we have learned on the evidence of the Prophet, who says; *I said to the wicked, deal not wickedly, and to the sinners, lift not up your horn.* [Ps.75, 4] What is, therefore, designated by this rhinoceros, but the mighty of this world, or the supreme powers themselves of the kingdoms therein, who, elated by the pride of foolish boasting, whilst they are puffed up by false honour without, are made inwardly destitute by real miseries? To whom it is well said; *Why boastest thou, O dust and ashes?* [Ecclus. 10, 9] But at the very beginning of the rising Church, when the might of the wealthy was raising itself against her, and was panting for her death, with the unboundedness of so great cruelty, when, anxious from so many

tortures, and pressed by so many persecutions, she was giving way; who could then believe that she would subdue those stiff and stubborn necks of the haughty, and would bind them, with the gentle bands of faith, when tamed by the yoke of holy fear? For she was tossed about, for a long while, in her beginnings, by the horn of this rhinoceros, and was struck by it, as though to be utterly destroyed. But by the dispensation of Divine grace, she both gained life and strength by death, and this rhinoceros, wearied with striking, bowed down his horn. And that which was impossible to men, was not difficult to God, who crushed the stubborn powers of this world, not by words, but by miracles. For behold we observe daily the rhinoceroses becoming slaves, when we see the mighty of this world, who had before, with foolish pride, relied on their own strength, now subject to God. The Lord was speaking, as it were, of a certain untamed rhinoceros, when He was saying; *A rich man will hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 19, 23] And when it was replied to Him; *And who will be able to be saved?* He immediately added; *With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.* [ib. 25. 26.] As if He were saying; This rhinoceros cannot be tamed by human strength, but yet it can be subdued by Divine miracles. Whence it is here also fitly said to blessed Job, as representing Holy Church; *Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee?* Thou understandest, As Myself, Who bore for a long while with his resisting the preaching of men, but yet suddenly overpowered him with miracles, when thus I willed it. As if He said more plainly; Are they who are proud with foolish haughtiness, subjected to thy preaching, without My assistance? Consider therefore by Whom thou prevailest, and in every thing wherein thou prevailest bow down thy feeling of pride. Or certainly, what wondrous works are wrought at last by the Apostles, who subject the world to God, and bend the pride of the mighty of this world, when subdued to His power, is brought before the notice of blessed Job, to bring down his confidence, in

order that blessed Job may think the less highly of himself, the more he beholds such stubborn souls gathered together to God by others, Let Him say then; *Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee?* Thou understandest, As it will serve Me, by means of those, whom I shall have sent. It follows;

Or will it abide by thy crib?

3. By 'crib' in this place, Holy Scripture itself is, not unfitly, understood; in which holy animals are fed with the food of the word. Of whom it is said by the Prophet; *Thine animals will dwell therein.* [Ps. 68, 10] Hence also our Lord, when born, was found by shepherds in a manger, because His Incarnation is learned in that Scripture of the Prophets, which refreshes us. This rhinoceros therefore, that is to say, every haughty person, in the beginning of the rising Church, when it heard the sayings of the Patriarchs, the mysteries of the Prophets, and the secrets of the Gospel, made jest of them; because it scorned the more to be confined and fed in the manger of the Preachers, the more it gave itself up to its own pleasures, and occupied the wide plain of its own desperation. It is this wide plain of the proud that Paul well speaks of, when saying, *Who despairing, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* [Eph. 4, 19] For every one gives himself wider range in present evil, the more he despairs of attaining eternal blessings after this life. But Almighty God bore for a long time with this rhinoceros, wandering through the plain of sinful pleasure, and yet, when He willed, suddenly fastened it to His own manger, that being safely confined it might receive the food of life, lest it should entirely lose its life through fatal liberty? For behold we now see that the mighty men of this world, and its chief rulers, willingly hear the preachings of the Lord, that they constantly read them, and every where depart not from His manger; because they transgress not, in their conduct, the precepts of the Lord, which they know either by reading or by hearing, but contentedly submit to stand confined, as it were, near the food of the word,

that by feeding and abiding there, they may become fat. But, when we behold this wrought by God's agency, what else do we behold but this rhinoceros abiding at the manger? But since this rhinoceros, after it has received the food of preaching, ought to display the fruit of good works, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 10. *Wilt thou bind the rhinoceros with thy band to plough?*

4. The bands of the Church, are the precepts of discipline. But to plough, is to cleave with the ploughshare of the tongue the soil of the human breast by earnestness of preaching. This rhinoceros therefore, which was before proud and stubborn, is now bound and fastened by the bands of faith; and he is led from the manger to plough, because he endeavours to make known to others also that very preaching, with which he has himself been refreshed. For we know with what cruelty this rhinoceros, that is to say, this earthly prince, raged against the Lord; and now we know with what humility he prostrates him beneath Him, by the power of the Lord. This rhinoceros was not only bound, but bound to plough: because, in truth, when bound by the bands of discipline, he not only keeps himself from wicked works, but also exercises himself in preaching the holy faith. For behold, as was before said, when we see the rulers and chiefs themselves of human concerns fearing God in their actions, what else do we see them than bound with bands? But when, by the enacting of laws, they cease not to preach that faith which they recently assaulted with persecution, what else do they, but toil at the labours of the plough?

5. We are permitted to see this rhinoceros, that is, this prince of the earth, bound with the bands of faith; how he both wears his horn, by the power of the world, and bears the yoke of faith, by the love of God. This rhinoceros were greatly to be feared, unless he were bound. For he has in truth a horn, but yet he is bound. The lowly have therefore something to love in his bands, the proud have something to fear in his horn. For, as fast bound with

thongs, he preserves the gentleness of meekness; but, as supported by the horn of earthly glory, he exercises the dominion of power. But frequently, when he is hurried on by the provocation of anger to strike, he is recalled by heavenly fear. And he rouses himself to fury, by his power being provoked; but because he calls to mind the eternal Judge, he bends himself down with fastened horn. I remember, that I myself have frequently seen, that when this rhinoceros was rousing himself to strike a heavy blow, and was threatening, as it were, with elevated horn, death, banishment, and condemnation to the smaller animals, who were suffering under unbounded dread, he extinguished all the blaze of fury within, on the sign of the cross being suddenly imprinted on his brow, that he was converted and laid aside his threats, and, as bound, acknowledged that he could not proceed to his resolutions. And not only does he subdue all wrath within himself, but he hastens to implant also every thing which is right, in the feelings of his subjects; in order to shew himself, by the example of his own humility, that all should reverence Holy Church from their inmost thoughts. Let it be said therefore to blessed Job; *Wilt thou bind the rhinoceros with thy band to plough?* As if He plainly said; Dost thou direct the mighty ones of this world, trusting in their foolish pride, to the labour of preaching, and restrain them under the bonds of discipline? Thou understandest, As Myself, who did that, when I willed; Who made My very persecutors, whom I first endured as enemies, to be afterwards themselves the defenders of sound faith. It follows;

Or will he break the clods of the valleys after thee?

6. The overlying clods of cultivated land are wont to press down the seeds which have been thrown in, and to stifle them when springing up. By which clods are signified in this place those, who through their own hardness, and deadly life, neither receive themselves the seeds of the word, nor yet allow others to bring forth fruits of the seeds they have received. For

every holy preacher, on coming into the world, had, by preaching the Gospel to the poor, ploughed, as it were, the soft lands of the valleys. But the Church, unable to break down the hardness of some of the haughty, was bearing them when oppressed, as clods thrown upon her labours. For many of perverse mind, relying on this very unbelief of earthly princes, were oppressing the rising Church with the weight of evil living, when they were destroying, for a long while, those whom they could, at one time by their damnable examples, at another by threats, at another by blandishments, lest the cultivated soil of the heart of their hearers should attain to the fruit of spiritual seed. But when Almighty God subdued this rhinoceros with his bands, He broke at once by his aid the hardness of the clods. For He presently subjugated the princes of the earth to His faith, and crushed the hard hearts of persecutors, that the broken clods might, as it were, no longer oppress with their hardness, but might crumble and bud forth on receiving the seeds of the word. Whence He now rightly says; *Or will he break the clods of the valleys after thee?* As if He were saying, As after Me, Who, after I enter the mind of any lofty power, not only render it subject to Me, but also train it to crush the enemies of the faith, that the mighty of this world, being bound with the bands of My fear, may not only continue believers in Me, but may also from zeal for Me crush the hardness of another's heart.

7. But this, which we have said of unbelievers, we observe also in many who are reckoned by the name of faith. For many, placed in the midst of lowly brethren, hold the faith in word only, but while they abandon not the swelling of pride, while they oppress those, whom they can, by the infliction of violence, while they themselves receive not at all the seeds of the word, while others are bearing fruit, but turn the ear of their heart from the voice of the adviser, what else are they, but hardened clods lying in the cultivated valleys? Who are the more wicked, inasmuch as they neither

bring forth themselves the fruit of humility, and, what is worse, oppress the lowly who are producing it. To break down the hardness of these, Holy Church, because she suffices not with her own strength, sometimes seeks the assistance of this rhinoceros, that is, of an earthly prince, for him to break down the overlying clods, which the humility of the Churches, like the level of the valleys, is bearing. These clods, therefore, the rhinoceros presses and crushes with his foot, because the religion of the prince crumbles, by its power, the hardness of the wicked and powerful, which the humility of the Church is unable to withstand. And since it is the effect of Divine power alone, that the loftinesses of earthly sovereignty are bowed down, to advance the kingdom of heaven, it is now rightly said, *Or will he break the clods of the valleys after thee?* But that Job may think humbly of his virtues, and, under the name of the rhinoceros, still discern sublime truths concerning the powers of this world, it follows;

Ver. 11. *Wilt thou have confidence in his great strength, and wilt thou leave to him thy labours?*

8. The Lord asserts that He has confidence in the strength of the rhinoceros; because He inclined the powers, which He had conferred for a temporal purpose on an earthly prince, to minister to His reverence, in order that by the power he had received, through which he had, heretofore, been puffed up against God, he might now bestow on God religious obedience. For the more powerful he is toward the world, the more does he prevail for the Creator of the world. For because he is himself dreaded by his subjects, he persuades them the more readily, the more he points out with his power, Who is truly to be feared. Let it be said then; *Wilt thou have confidence in his great strength?* As if it were said, As I, Who see, that the powers of earthly princes are about to submit to My worship. For I regard those things which thou art now doing, as of so much the less consequence, the more I now foresee, that I shall bend down to Myself even the greater powers of

this world. But it is well subjoined; *And wilt thou leave to him thy labours?* For the Lord left His labours to this rhinoceros, because He entrusted to an earthly prince, on his conversion, that Church which He purchased by His own death, because, namely, He committed to his hand the great anxiety of preserving the peace of the faith. It follows;

Ver. 12. *Wilt thou trust him, to bring back thy seed to thee, and to gather thy floor?*

9. What else is meant by ‘seed,’ but the word of preaching? As the Truth says in the Gospel, *A sower went forth to sow;* [Matt. 13, 3] and as the Prophet says; *Blessed are ye who sow upon all waters.* [Is. 32, 20] What else but the Church, ought to be understood by the threshing floor? Of which it is said by the voice of the Forerunner; *And He will throughly purge His floor.* [Matt. 3, 12] Who therefore could believe, in the beginning of the rising Church, when that unconquered sovereignty of the world was raging with so many threats and tortures against her, that this rhinoceros would bring back seed to God, that is, repay by his works the word of preaching which he had received? Which of the infirm could then believe, that he would gather His floor? For behold, he is now promulgating laws for the Church, who was before raging against it with various torments. Behold, whatever nations he has been able to seize, he brings by persuasion to the grace of faith; and points out eternal life to those, to whom, when captured, he secures their present life. Why is this? Because he is now, in truth, gathering the floor, which before he used to winnow, by scattering it with his proud horn. Let blessed Job therefore hear what the princes of the Gentiles do, and not exalt himself in himself with the glory of his own so great virtue. Let the powerful prince hear also, with what devotion the mightier princes of this world become the servants of God, and let not him who has a pattern in others, pervert his virtue, in consequence of its

singularity, into the sin of pride. For though God beheld no one like him at that time, yet He foresaw many, by whom to repress his boasting.

10. Because, therefore, earthly princes prostrate themselves before God with great humility, wicked men, who were before ranked in unbelief against the Church, and were raging with open hostility, now turn to other arguments of fraud. For since they see that those reverence religion, they themselves adopt a respect for religion, and under a despicable garb oppress the conduct of the good, by their wicked habits. For they are in truth lovers of the world, and make a show of that in themselves which man can admire, and unite themselves, not in heart, but in garb, to those who truly despise themselves. For since, though loving present glory, they cannot attain to it, they follow it, as if despising it. But they would manifest what they think against the good, if they were to find a fitting opportunity for their wickedness. But even these devices of the wicked tend to the purification of the Elect. For Holy Church cannot pass through the season of her pilgrimage, without the labour of temptation, and though she has no open enemies without, yet she endures false brethren within. For she is ever in array against sin, and, even in the season of peace, has her own contest. And she is perhaps more grievously afflicted, when she is assaulted, not by the blows of strangers, but by the manners of her own children. Whether therefore at that, or this time, she is always engaged in a struggle. For, both in the persecution of princes she is afraid that the good should lose, what they really are, and in the conversion of princes she bears with the wicked pretending to be good, which they are not. Whence Almighty God, because He stated that this rhinoceros had been bound with thongs, immediately subjoined the hypocrisy of the wicked, saying;

Ver. 13. *The wing of the ostrich is like the wings of the heron, and of the hawk.*

11. Who can be ignorant how much the heron and the hawk surpass all other birds in the swiftness of their flight? But an ostrich has the likeness of their wing, but not the celerity of their flight. For it cannot in truth rise from the ground, and raises its wings, in appearance as if to fly, but yet never raises itself from the earth in flying. Thus, doubtless, are all hypocrites, who, while they simulate the conduct of the good, possess a resemblance of a holy appearance, but have no reality of holy conduct. They have, in truth, wings for flight, in appearance, but in their doing they creep along the ground, because they spread their wings, by the semblance of sanctity, but, overwhelmed by the weight of secular cares, they are not at all raised from the earth. For the Lord in reprobating the appearance of the Pharisees, reproves, as it were, the wing of the ostrich, which did one thing in action, and made a show of another in its colour; saying, *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful to men outwardly, but are within full of dead men's bones; even so do ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of covetousness and iniquity.* [Mat 23, 27. 28.] As if He were saying: The beautiful show of your wings seems to raise you up, but the weight of your conduct weighs you down to the lowest depths. Of this weight it is said by the Prophet, *Ye sons of men, how long will ye be heavy in heart?* [Ps. 4, 3] The Lord promises that He will convert the hypocrisy of this ostrich, when He says by the Prophet; *The beasts of the field shall honour Me, the dragons and the ostriches.* [Is. 43, 20] For what is expressed by the word 'dragons,' but minds openly wicked, which ever creep along the earth in most grovelling thoughts? But what is designated by the word 'ostriches,' but those, who pretend that they are good, who retain a life of sanctity in appearance, as a wing for flight, but use it not in act? The Lord, therefore, says that He is glorified by the dragon, or by the ostrich, because He frequently converts both the openly wicked, and the pretendedly good, to

obey Him from their inmost thought. Or certainly, the beasts of the field, that is the dragons and ostriches, glorify the Lord, when that Gentile people, which had before been a member of the devil in this world, exalts the faith which is in Him. And this He both upbraids with the name of ‘dragon,’ on account of its wickedness, and brands with the term ‘ostriches,’ on account of its hypocrisy. For the Gentile world received, as it were, wings, but was unable to fly; which both possessed the nature of reason, but knew not the operation of reason.

12. We have still something to examine more attentively, respecting the hawk and heron, in considering this ostrich. For the bodies of the hawk and the heron are small, but they are supported with thicker wings; and they therefore fly along with swiftness; because there is little in them which weighs them down, and much which supports them. But the ostrich, on the other hand, is endowed with scantier wings, and is weighed down with a huge body, so that though it desires to fly, yet the very fewness of the feathers supports not in the air the mass of so huge a body. The character of the Elect is, therefore, well signified by the heron and the hawk; for as long as they exist in this life, they cannot be without some infection of sin, however small. But since there is little in them which weighs them down, they have abundant virtue of good doing which exalts them on high. But the hypocrite, on the contrary, though he does many things to raise him up, yet perpetrates many things to weigh him down. For it is not, that the hypocrite does no good things, but he commits many wickednesses, with which to weigh them down. Its few feathers, therefore, raise not up the body of the ostrich, because a multitude of evil doings weighs down the little virtue of the hypocrite. This very wing of the ostrich has also a resemblance in colour to the wings of the heron and the hawk, but has no resemblance to their power. For the wings of these are close and firmer, and in flying can press down the air by the power of their solidity. But the loosely-formed wings of

the ostrich, on the contrary, are unable to take flight, because they are overpassed by the very air, which they ought to keep down. What else then do we observe in these, except that the virtues of the Elect fly forth solid, so as to beat down the winds of human applause? But however right the conduct of the hypocrites may appear, it is not able to fly, because, namely, the breath of human praise passes through the wing of unstable virtue.

13. But behold, when we observe the garb of the good and the evil to be one and the same, when we see the very same appearance of profession in the Elect and the reprobate, whence is our understanding able to discern in its comprehension the Elect from the reprobate, the true from the false? But we learn this the sooner, if we stamp upon our memory the words of our Teacher which have been intimated to us, Who says; *By their fruits ye shall know them.* [Matt. 7, 20] For we must not consider what they display in appearance, but what they maintain in conduct. Whence after having mentioned in this place the appearance of this ostrich, He immediately subjoins its doings, saying;

Ver. 14. *Which leaveth her eggs in the earth.*

14. For what is expressed by 'eggs,' but the still tender offspring, which must be long cherished, in order to be brought to a living bird? For eggs are, in truth, insensible in themselves, but yet when warmed are changed into living birds. And so, doubtless, it is certain, that young hearers and children remain cold and insensible, unless they are warmed by the earnest exhortation of their teacher. That they may not, therefore, when abandoned, become torpid in their own insensibility, they must be cherished by the frequent instruction of their teacher, till they have strength, both to live in understanding, and to fly in contemplation. But because hypocrites, though they are ever working perversity, yet cease not to speak right things, but bring forth children in faith and conversation by speaking rightly, though they cannot nourish them by good living, it is rightly said of this ostrich,

Who leaveth her eggs in the earth. For the hypocrite neglects the care of his children, because he gives himself up, with his inmost love, to outward objects, and the more he is elated by them, the less is he pained at the loss of his children. To have left eggs, therefore, in the earth, is not to raise above earthly actions the children which have been born by conversion, by interposing the nest of exhortation. To have left the eggs in the earth, is to furnish to his children no example of heavenly life. For, since hypocrites glow not with the bowels of charity, they never grieve at the torpor of the offspring which has been born to them; that is at the coldness of their eggs; and the more willingly they engage in worldly pursuits, the more carelessly do they permit those, whom they beget, to pursue earthly courses. But, because the care of heaven deserts not the forsaken children of hypocrites, for it warms some even of such, foreknown in secret election, by the regard of grace bestowed, it is rightly subjoined;

Wilt thou perchance warm them in the dust?

15. As if he said, As I, Who warm them in the dust;

because, namely, I kindle with the fire of My love the souls of the young, even when placed in the midst of sinners. What is understood by 'dust,' but the sinner? Whence also that enemy is satiated with the perdition of this sinner, of whom it is said by the Prophet, *For the serpent, dust is his bread.* [Is. 65, 25] What is pointed at by dust but the very instability of the wicked? Of which David says, *Not so the ungodly, not so, but as dust which the wind sweepeth away from the face of the earth.* [Ps. 1, 4] The Lord therefore warms the eggs, which have been left in the dust; because He kindles, with the fire of His love, the souls of His little ones, bereft of the anxious care of their preachers, even when dwelling in the midst of sinners. Hence is it, that we behold many, both living in the midst of multitudes, and yet not adopting the conduct of the sluggish people. Hence is it, that we behold many both not flying the crowds of the wicked, and yet glowing with

heavenly ardour. Hence is it, that we behold many, if I may so speak, glowing in the midst of cold. For whence do some, living amidst the sluggishness of earthly men, burn with desires of heavenly hope; whence are they kindled, even amidst frozen hearts, except that Almighty God knows how to warm the forsaken eggs even in the dust, and, having dispelled the insensibility of their former coldness, so to animate them with the feeling of spiritual life, that they no longer lie torpid on the earth; but changed into living birds, raise themselves by contemplation, that is, by their flight, to heavenly objects? But we must observe, that in these words not only is the wicked conduct of hypocrites reprobated, but the pride of even good teachers, if any has crept in, is also kept down. For when the Lord says of Himself, that He Himself warms the forsaken eggs in the dust; He certainly plainly indicates, that He Himself works inwardly by the words of a teacher, Who, even without the words of any man, warms whom He will, in the cold of the dust. As if He openly said to teachers; That ye may know that I am He, Who work by you when speaking, behold, when I will, I speak even without you to the hearts of men. When the thoughts then of teachers have been humbled, His discourse proceeds to describe a hypocrite, and, with what folly he is stupified, is pointed out still more fully by the doings of the ostrich. For it follows;

Ver. 15. *She forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the beast of the field may break them.*

16. What is understood by ‘foot,’ but the passing over of active work? What is signified by the ‘field,’ but this world? Of which the Lord says in the Gospel, *But the field is the world.* [Matt. 13, 38] What is expressed by the ‘beast,’ but the ancient enemy, who, lying in wait for the spoils of this world, is daily satiated with the death of men? Of which it is said by the Prophet, the Lord promising; *No evil beast shall pass through it.* [Is. 35, 9] The ostrich, therefore, deserting her eggs, forgets that the foot may crush

them; because, namely, hypocrites abandon those whom they beget as their children in conversation [al. 'in conversion.'], and care not at all, lest the examples of evil in doings should lead them astray, when deprived of either the earnestness of exhortation, or of the care of discipline. For see next did they love the eggs, which they produce, they would doubtless be afraid, lest any one should crush them by pointing out evil doings. This foot Paul was fearing for his weak disciples, as for eggs which he had laid, when he said, *Many walk, of whom I told you often, but now I tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.* [Phil. 3, 18] And again, *Beware of dogs; beware of evil workers.* [ib. 2] And again, *We command you, brethren, in the name of our 'Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.* [2 Thess. 3, 6] This foot John was dreading for Caius; for when he had mentioned before many wickednesses of Diotrephes, he added, *Dearly beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good.* [3 John 11] This the leader of the Synagogue himself was fearing for his feeble flock, saying, *When thou hast entered the land, which the Lord thy God shall give thee, take heed that thou wish not to imitate the abominations of those nations.* [Deut. 18, 9] She forgets also, that the beast of the field may break them, because the hypocrite doubtless cares not at all, if the devil raging in this world carries off his children who are brought forth in good conversation. But this beast of the field Paul was fearing for the eggs, which he had laid, saying, *I fear, lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your senses should be corrupted from the love that is in Christ Jesus.* [2 Cor. 11, 3] This beast of the field Peter was fearing for his disciples, saying, *Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, stedfast in the faith.* [1 Pet. 5, 8. 9.] Faithful teachers therefore have over their disciples the bowels of fear, from the virtue of charity. But hypocrites fear the less for those committed to them, the more

they discover not what they ought to fear for themselves. And because they live with hardened hearts, they acknowledge not even the sons whom they beget, with any affection of the love which is due to them. Whence it is added still further under the figure of the ostrich;

Ver. 16. *She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers.*

17. For he whom the grace of charity bedews not, looks upon his neighbour as a stranger, even though he has himself begotten him to God. As doubtless are all hypocrites, whose minds in truth, while ever aiming at outward objects, become insensible within: and while they are ever seeking their own, in every thing they do, they are not softened by any compassion of charity, for the feelings of their neighbour. O what bowels of tenderness was Paul bearing, when he was panting for his children, with so great a warmth of love, saying, *We live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.* And, *God is my witness, how I wish for you all in the bowels of Christ Jesus.* [1 Thess. 3, 8] To the Romans also he says, *God is my witness, Whom I serve in my spirit, in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request, if by any means, now at length, I may have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come to you; for I long to see you.* [Rom. 1, 9-11] He says also to Timothy, *I thank my God, Whom I serve from my forefathers in pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers, night and day desiring to see thee.* [2 Tim. 1, 3. 4.] He says also, pointing out his love to the Thessalonians, *But we, brethren, being taken away from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, hastened the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.* [1 Thess. 2, 17] Who when pressed by hard persecutions, and yet anxious for the safety of his children, added, *We sent Timotheus our brother, and minister of God in the Gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to exhort you concerning your faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions.*

For ye yourselves know that we were appointed thereunto. [1 Thess. 3, 2. 3.] He says also to the Ephesians, *I desire that ye faint not in my tribulations for you, which is your glory.* [Eph. 3, 13] Behold, when in the midst of tribulations, he exhorts others, and in that which he himself endures, he strengthens others. For he had not, like the ostrich, forgotten his children, but was greatly afraid, that his disciples, observing so many reproaches of persecutions in their preacher, would in him despise the faith, against which innumerable insults of sufferings were prevailing. And therefore he felt less pain at his torments, but was more afraid for his children, from the temptation of his torments. He was lightly regarding the wounds of his body in himself, whilst he was fearing for his children the wounds of the heart. He was himself patiently enduring the wounds of torments, but, by consoling his children, he was healing the wounds of their hearts. Let us consider, therefore, of what charity he was, to have feared for others, in the midst of his own sorrows. Let us consider of what charity he was, to seek for the welfare of his children, amidst his own losses, and to guard, even from his own abject condition, firmness of mind in those who were near him.

18. But hypocrites know not these bowels of charity. Because the more their mind is let loose on outward subjects by worldly concupiscence, the more is it hardened within, by its want of affection. And it is frozen by benumbing torpor within, because it is softened by fatal love without; and is unable to consider itself, because it strives not to think of itself. But a mind cannot think on itself, which is not entirely at home in itself. But it is unable to be entirely at home in itself, because by as many lusts as it is hurried away, by so many objects is it distracted from itself; and scattered, it lies below, though with collected strength it might rise, if it willed, to the greatest heights.

19. Whence the mind of the just, because it is restrained, by the guardianship of discipline, from the shifting desire of all visible objects, is compacted in itself and inwardly entire; and it fitly beholds how it should conduct itself towards God, or its neighbour, because it leaves nothing of its own without, and the more it is withdrawn and restrained from outward objects, the more is it increased and kindled within; and the more it burns, the more brightly does it shine for the detection of vices. For hence it is, that while holy men gather themselves within themselves, they detect even the secret faults of others, with a wonderful and penetrating keenness of sight. Whence it is well said by the prophet Ezekiel, *The likeness of a hand was put forth, and took me by a lock of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me, in the vision of God, into Jerusalem, by the inner door, that looked towards the north, where was placed the idol of jealousy to provoke jealousy.* [Ez. 8, 3] For what is a lock of the head, but the thoughts of the mind gathered together, so as not to be scattered and dispersed, but to remain bound by discipline? A hand is therefore put forth from above, and the Prophet is lifted up by the lock of his head; because when our mind collects itself by watchfulness, a heavenly power raises us upward from things below. He therefore well says, that he was lifted up between earth and heaven; because every holy man, when living in mortal flesh, does not as yet indeed fully arrive at heavenly objects, but yet at once abandons those that are below. But he is brought in the vision of God into Jerusalem, because in truth every one who is making progress through the zeal of charity, beholds what the Church ought to he. It is also well added, *By the inner door, that looked towards the north:* doubtless, because, while holy men look through the approach of inward contemplation, they detect more evil than good going on within the Church. And they turn their eyes in the quarter of the north, that is, to the left of the sun, because they warm themselves with the stimulants of charity against

the frosts of sins. Where it is also rightly subjoined; *Because there was there placed the idol of jealousy to provoke jealousy.* For when they behold rapine and wickedness perpetrated within Holy Church, by some, who are faithful only in appearance, what else do they see, but an idol in Jerusalem? And it is called the idol of jealousy, because by this the jealousy of heaven is provoked against us: and it smites offenders the more severely, the more affectionately the Redeemer loves us.

20. Hypocrites, therefore, because they collect not the thoughts of their mind, are not held by a lock of their head. And when do they, who are ignorant of their own faults, detect the faults of those committed to them? These are therefore dead to heavenly things, for which they ought to burn; and burn anxiously for earthly objects, to which they would laudably have been dead. For thou mayest often behold them, having put aside the care of their children, prepare themselves for dangers of immense labour, cross seas, approach tribunals, assail princes, burst into palaces, frequent the wrangling assemblies of the people, and defend with laborious watchfulness their earthly patrimony. And if it is perchance said to them, Why do ye, who have left the world, act thus? they immediately reply, that they fear God, and that therefore they labour with such zeal in defending their patrimony. Whence it is well added still further concerning the foolish labour of this ostrich;

Ver. 16. *She hath laboured in vain; no fear compelling her.*

21. For, *There they trembled with fear, where no fear was.* [Ps. 14, 5] For behold it is commanded by the voice of God; *If any one hath taken thy coat, and wished to contend with thee in judgment, give up to him thy cloak also.* [Matt. 5, 40] And again; *If one hath taken away that which is thine own, ask it not again.* [Luke 6, 30] The Apostle Paul also, when he was wishing his disciples to despise outward things, in order to be able to retain those that are within, admonishes them, saying; *Now there is utterly a fault in you,*

because ye have trials among yourselves. Why do ye not rather take wrong, why do ye not rather suffer fraud? [1 Cor. 6, 7] And yet a hypocrite, having assumed the garb of holy conversation, abandons the charge of his children, and seeks to defend, even by wrangling, all his temporal goods. He is not afraid to ruin their hearts by his example, and is afraid of losing his earthly patrimony as if by negligence. His disciple falls into error, and yet the heart of the hypocrite is wounded with no sorrow. He beholds those committed to him plunging into the gulph of iniquity, and passes by these things, as though he had not heard them. But if he has felt any temporal loss slightly inflicted on him, how does he suddenly burst forth, from his inmost soul, into the anger of revenge. His patience is soon broken down; the grief of his heart is soon let loose in words. For while he hears with equanimity the loss of souls, but hastens, even with agitation of spirit, to repel the loss of temporal goods, he truly indicates to all, by this evidence of his emotion of mind, what he loves. For great earnestness of defence is there exercised, where the power of love is also mightier. For the more he loves earthly things, the more vehemently is he afraid of being deprived of them. For we learn not with what feeling we possess any thing in this world, except when we lose it. For, whatever is possessed without love, is lost without pain. But those things, which we ardently love, when possessed, we sigh for heavily when taken away. But who can know not that the Lord created earthly things for our use, but the souls of men for His own? A person is, therefore, convicted of loving himself more than God, who protects those things which are peculiarly his own, to the neglect of what are His. For hypocrites fear not to lose those things which belong to God, that is, the souls of men, and, as if about to render an account to a strict Judge, are afraid of losing those which are their own, things namely which are passing away together with the world. As if they would find Him favourably disposed, for Whom they preserve senseless and undesirable objects, having lost those which are

desirable, that is, which are rational. We wish to possess something in this world, and behold the Truth exclaims, *Unless a man hath renounced all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.* [Luke 14, 33]

22. How then ought a perfect Christian to defend by disputing those earthly goods, which he is not ordered to possess? When we lose therefore our own possessions, we are lightened of a great burden in this journey of life, if we perfectly follow God. But when the necessity of this same journey imposes on us the care of possessions, some persons are only to he submitted to, while they seize them from us, but others are to he prevented, without violation of charity, not however merely from anxiety lest they should take away from us our goods, but lest they should ruin themselves by seizing what are not their own. For we ought more to fear for the plunderers themselves, than to be eager in defending irrational possessions. For these we lose, at our death, even though not stolen from us; but we are one with the others, both now in the rank of creation, and, if they strive to amend, after their reception of the gift. But who can he ignorant that we ought to love the goods, which we use, less, and that, which we are ourselves, more. If therefore we speak to plunderers, even for their own benefit, we now no longer merely claim for ourselves those things which are temporal, but, for them also, those that are eternal.

23. But we must in this matter carefully watch, that covetousness steal not on us, through fear of necessity; and that a prohibition, kindled by zeal, when strained by immoderate force, may not break out into the disgracefulness of hateful contention. And whilst peace with our neighbour is torn from our hearts, for the sake of an earthly good, it appears plainly, that our property is loved better than our neighbour. For if we have no bowels of charity even towards our neighbour who plundered us, we persecute ourselves worse, than the spoiler does himself, and ravage ourselves more fatally, than the other could do; because by abandoning, of

our own accord, the blessing of love, we lose for ourselves that which is within, though we lost, through him, those only which are without. But a hypocrite knows not this form of charity; for, preferring earthly to heavenly possessions, he inflames himself with furious hatred, in his inmost heart, against him who spoils his temporal possessions.

24. But it ought to be known, that there are some, whom mother Church tolerates, nursing them in the bosom of charity, and whom she would carry on even to the advanced growth of spiritual age, who sometimes both wear the garb of sanctity, and yet cannot attain to the merit of perfection. For they rise not to spiritual gifts, and therefore they assist those who are connected with them, in the preservation of earthly goods, and sometimes transgress in anger in this defence. But we must not believe that these persons fall into the numbers of hypocrites, for it is one thing to sin from infirmity, and another from wickedness. There is therefore this difference between these persons and hypocrites, that these, conscious of their own infirmity, prefer being reproved by all for their faults, to being praised for pretended sanctity. But those are both sure that they are doing wrong, and yet in the judgments of men are puffed up with the name of sanctity. These fear not to displease wicked men, even by a virtuous action, provided only they are approved by the judgments of heaven; but those never consider what they are doing, but how by every action they can please men. These, according to the measure of their understanding, contend for the causes of God, even in things of the world; but those subserve the design of the world, even in the causes of God; because in the very midst of the holy deeds they make a shew of doing, they seek not the conversion of men, but the breath of applause.

25. When therefore we behold any persons of no mean conversation defending worldly interests passionately or immoderately, we ought to reprove this fault of theirs charitably, and yet not to despair of them, while reproving them. Because there frequently exist in one and the same person

certain censurable points which are apparent, and great qualities which lie concealed. But in ourselves our great qualities often come forth openly, and those which are reprehensible are sometimes concealed. Hence, therefore, our pride of mind must be brought low, because, both their weaknesses are public, and ours are secret: and again, their strong points are concealed, and ours are divulged and made public. Those therefore, whom we blame for their open weakness, it remains for us to venerate from our opinion of their hidden strength, and if our own mind is elated at their open weakness, let it keep itself down in humility, from considering its own secret infirmities. For some persons frequently obey many precepts, and pass over a few; and we pass over many, when we keep but a few. Whence it is frequently the case that, when we see others neglect a command, which we know we observe ourselves, our mind immediately exalts itself with pride, forgetting how many commands it passes over, when there are very *few* which it observes. It is therefore necessary for us in cases where we reprove others, to bring down the pride of our anxious thought. For if our mind sees that it is more exalted than others, being led, as it were, to headlong heights of singularity, it falls the more fatally. But why the hypocrite abandons heavenly lucre, and labours for that of earth, He still subjoins, under the description of the ostrich, saying:

Ver. 17. *God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He given her understanding.*

26. Although to deprive is one thing, and not to give is another, yet His first expression 'deprived,' He repealed by subjoining, 'hath not given.' As if He were saying, My expression 'deprived' means not that He has unjustly taken away wisdom, but that He has justly not given it. Whence the Lord is described as having hardened the heart of Pharaoh, not because He Himself inflicted hardness, but because, according as his deserts demanded, He softened it not by any sensibility of heaven-infused fear. But now, because

the hypocrite pretends that he is holy, and conceals himself under the semblance of good works, he is kept down by the peace of Holy Church, and is therefore, before our eyes, arrayed with the appearance of religion. But if any temptation of his faith springs up, the rabid mind of the wolf strips itself of its garb of sheep's skin; and shews by persecution, how greatly it rages against the holy. Whence it is also rightly subjoined;

Ver. 18. *When the time shall be, she raiseth her wings on high, she scorneth the horseman and his rider.*

27. For what do we understand by the wings of this ostrich, except the thoughts of the hypocrite, kept close at this time as if folded together? But when the time shall come, he raises them on high; because when an opportunity is found, he makes them manifest by his pride. To raise the wings on high, is to disclose his thoughts with unbridled haughtiness. But now, because he pretends that he is holy, because he confines what he thinks to himself, he folds, as it were, his wings on his body, by humility. But it must be observed, that He says not, *The horse and his rider,* but, *The horseman and his rider.* For the horse is the body which belongs to each holy soul, which it knows in truth both how to restrain from unlawful pursuits by the bit of continence, and again to let loose by the impulse of charity, in the exercise of good works. By the name, therefore, of 'horseman' is expressed the soul of a holy man, which keeps the body, its beast of burden ['jumentum corporis.'], under good control. Whence also the Apostle John, in the Apocalypse, having beheld the Lord, says; *And the armies which are in heaven, were following Him on white horses.* [Rev. 19, 14] For he rightly calls an army, the multitude of the Saints, which had toiled in this war of martyrdom. And they are said, for this reason, to sit on white horses, because their bodies doubtless were brilliant with both the light of righteousness, and the whiteness of chastity. The hypocrite therefore scorns the horseman, because, when he has burst forth in open iniquity, he

despises the sanctity of the Elect; and in his pride calls those fools, whom he used to imitate with cunning art, when kept down by the peace of the faith. But who else is the rider of this horseman, but Almighty God, Who both, foreseeing, created those things which were not, and possessing, rules over those which are? For he surely mounts the horseman, because He possesses the soul of every holy man, who possesses his own members aright. For this hypocrite then to scorn the horseman, is for him to despise the saints: but to scorn the rider of the horseman, is for him to leap forward even to do wrong to the Creator.

28. For since in every lapse, men always begin with the smallest faults, and as defects secretly grow up, attain to more grievous sins, the iniquity of this hypocrite is rightly distinguished by a statement of his losses, so that he is said first, to set himself forth as the good thing, which he is not; that he afterwards openly scorns the good; and lastly, that he leaps forth even to do wrong to his Creator. For a soul never lies in the spot where it has fallen; because having once fallen of its own accord, it is carried on to greater sins by the weight of its own iniquity, so that, as it sinks into the deep, it is ever overwhelmed still deeper. Let the hypocrite then go, and seek for his own praises, let him afterwards oppress the life of his neighbours, and exercise himself at last in deriding his Creator: in order that, as he ever cherishes prouder thoughts, he may overwhelm himself thereby in more awful punishments. O how many such does Holy Church now tolerate, whom open temptation makes manifest, when the time has suddenly arrived. But because they do not now put forth their wills against her, they meanwhile press close, as it were, the folded wings of their thoughts. For since this life is passed in common by the good and the evil, the Church is now visibly made up of a number of each of these. But it is distinguished in God’s invisible judgment, and, at its end, is separated from the society of the wicked. But at present the good cannot exist therein without the wicked, nor

the wicked without the good. For at this time the two parts are necessarily united and fitted to each other, in order that both the wicked may be changed by the examples of the good, and the good be purified by the temptations of the wicked. And therefore, the Lord, after having introduced under the image of the ostrich many remarks on the rejection of the hypocrites, immediately turns to speak of the lot of the Elect, in order that they who had heard in those what to fly from and endure, might hear in these what to imitate and love. It follows;

Ver. 19. with *thou give the horse strength, or with thou surround his neck with neighing?*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

29. But perhaps before we discuss this strength and neighing of the horse, some persons are desirous of having both the strength of the rhinoceros, and the folly of this ostrich explained in another way, putting aside their moral meaning. For the word of God is manna, and gives, in truth, that taste in the mouth of the eater, which the wish of him who partakes it rightly desires. The word of God is the earth, which produces fruit more abundantly, the more the labour of the enquirer demands. The meaning, therefore, of Holy Scripture should be sifted with manifold enquiry, for even the earth, which is often turned by the plough, is fitted to produce a more abundant crop. We therefore briefly touch upon our other view of the rhinoceros and ostrich, because we are hastening onward to unravel those questions which are more complicated. This rhinoceros, which is called also the 'monoceros' in Greek copies, is said to be of such great strength, as not to be taken by any skill of hunters. But, as those persons assert, who have striven with laborious investigation in describing the natures of animals, a virgin is placed before it, who opens to it her bosom as it approaches, in which, having put aside all its ferocity, it lays down its head, and is thus suddenly found as it were

unarmed, by those by whom it is sought to be taken. It is also described as being of box colour, and whenever it engages with elephants, it is said to strike with that single horn, which it bears on its nostrils, the belly of its opponents, in order to easily overthrow its assailants, when it wounds their softer parts. By this rhinoceros, or certainly monoceros, that is, the unicorn, can therefore be understood that people, who when it adopted, not good works, but merely pride among all men, at its reception of the Law, carried, as it were, a singular horn among other beasts. Whence the Lord, foretelling His Passion by the voice of the Prophet, says; *Save Me from the lion's mouth, and My humility from the horns of the unicorns.* [Ps. 22, 21] For as many unicorns, or certainly rhinoceroses, existed in that nation, as many as were those who with singular and foolish pride confided in the works of the Law, in opposition to the preaching of the truth. It is said therefore to blessed Job, as a type of the Church;

Ver. 9. *Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee?*

30. As if it were said more plainly; Dost thou bend under the rule of thy preaching that people whom thou beholdest boasting, with its foolish pride, in the death of the faithful? Thou understandest, As Myself, Who both behold it raised against Me with its single horn, and yet subdue it to Myself, at once, whenever I will. But we set forth this point the better, if we pass from generals to particulars. Let that Paul therefore be brought before our notice, out of this people, both first in his pride, and afterward as a striking witness in his humility; who when he unwittingly exalted himself against God, as if on his keeping the Law, carried a horn on his nostril. Whence also, when afterwards he was bowing down this horn of his nostril by humility, he says; *Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly.* [1 Tim. 1, 13] He who trusted that he would please God by his cruelty, carried a horn on his nostrils, as he himself afterwards says, when condemning himself; *And*

profited in the Jews' religion, above many my equals in years, in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. [Gal. l, 14] But every hunter feared the strength of this rhinoceros; because every preacher dreaded the cruelty of Saul. For it is written; *Saul yet breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way, men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.* [Acts 9, 1. 2.] When a breath is drawn in by the nostril in order to be given back, it is called 'breathing,' and we often detect by its smell with our nostril that which we behold not with our eyes. This rhinoceros was therefore carrying a horn on his nostril, with which to strike; because, breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, after he had killed those who were present, he was seeking for those who were absent. But behold every hunter hides himself before him; that is, every man, who savours of what is reasonable, is put to flight by his opinion of his terror. In order then that he may take this rhinoceros, let the virgin open her bosom, that is, let the Wisdom of God Itself, inviolate [al. 'enveloped'] in the flesh, of Itself, disclose to him Its mystery. For it is written, that, when he was journeying to Damascus, suddenly there shone round him, at mid-day, a light from heaven, and a voice was uttered, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* [Acts 9, 4] And he, prostrate on the earth, answered, *Who art Thou, Lord?* And it is immediately said to him, *I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest.* [ib. 5] The Virgin doubtless opened her bosom to the rhinoceros, when the Uncorrupted Wisdom of God disclosed to Saul the mystery of His Incarnation by speaking from heaven and the rhinoceros lost its strength, because, prostrate on the ground, he lost all his swelling pride and when, having lost the sight of his eyes, he is led to Ananias, it is now discovered with what hands of God this rhinoceros is bound: because, namely, he is bound at once with blindness, with

preaching, and with Baptism. And he abode by the manger of God, because he scorned not to ruminate on the words of the Gospel. For he says; *I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. But I went up by revelation, and communicated my Gospel with them.* [Gal. 2, 1, 2] And he, who had first heard, when famished, *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,* [Acts 9, 5] having been afterwards tamed by the wonderful power of his rider, obtained strength from the food of the word, and lost the heel of pride.

31. But he is not only restrained from violence by the hands of God, but, what is more wonderful, is bound to plough; so as not only not to attack men with the horn of cruelty, but, ministering also to their support, to draw the plough of preaching. For he himself speaks of those who are preaching the Gospel, as if they were ploughing: *For he that ploweth should plow in hope, and he that thresheth, in hope of partaking the fruit.* [1 Cor. 9, 10] He therefore, who had just inflicted tortures on the faithful, and afterwards willingly endures scourges for the faith, who also, by writing his Epistles, preaches in lowliness and contempt the truth which before he fiercely assailed, is doubtless firmly fastened to the plough, and labours for the crop, who used to live in the plain, fatally exempt from fear. Of whom it is rightly said;

Ver. 10. *Or will he break the clods of the valleys after thee?*

32. The Lord had, in truth, already entered the minds of some, who believed Him to be truly the Redeemer of mankind. But yet, when they departed not from their former observance, when they kept to the harsh preaching of the letter, the illustrious preacher says to them; *If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.* [Gal. 5, 2] What else then did he, who in the humble mind of the faithful crushed by refutation the harshness of the law, but break the clods in the valley after the Lord? in order, namely, that the grains of the seeds, which the furrow of the heart,

cleft by the plough of faith, was receiving, might not perish by being kept down by the observance of the letter. Of whom it is still rightly subjoined,

Ver. 11. *Wilt thou have confidence in his great strength, and wilt thou leave to him thy labours?*

33. The Lord had confidence in the strength of this rhinoceros; because the more He endured him cruelly inflicting hardships upon Him, the more firmly He foresaw him enduring adversities for His sake. To whom also He left the labours, which He Himself had endured in the flesh; because He led him when converted even to the imitation of His own Passion. Whence also it is said by the same rhinoceros, *I fill up those things which are lacking of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.* [Col. 1, 24] Of whom it is further added;

Ver. 12. *Wilt thou trust him to bring back thy seed to thee, and to gather thy floor?*

34. Let us consider what Saul was, when, from his very youth, he was engaged in aiding those who stoned, when he was laying waste some places of the Church, and, having received letters, was seeking for others to lay waste, when no single death of the faithful sufficed him, but, after the destruction of some, he was ever panting for the death of others: and we know for certain, that none of the faithful, at that time, believed that God would bend to the yoke of His fear the might of such haughty pride. Whence also Ananias, even after he had heard by the voice of the Lord that he had been converted, was afraid, saying, *Lord, I have heard by many of this man, what evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem.* [Acts 9, 13] And yet, suddenly changed from being an enemy, he is made a preacher: and in all quarters of the world announces the name of his Redeemer, endures punishments for the truth's sake, exults at suffering himself what he had inflicted; invites some by allurements, and recals others by terrors, to the faith. To these he promises the kingdom of the heavenly country, to those he threatens the fire of hell. The one he corrects by authority, the

others he attracts by humility to the path of rectitude: and bends himself on every side to the hand of his ruler, and collects the threshing floor of God with as great skill, as he used before to winnow it with pride.

35. But not even is this at variance with Paul, that the rhinoceros is said to be of box colour, and is stated to strike with his horn the bellies of elephants. For, because he was wont to live under the rigour of the Law, the observance of every virtue grew up more strictly in him than in others. For what is expressed by box colour, but the paleness of abstinence? To which he himself witnesses, that he tenaciously adheres, saying; *I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perchance, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.* [1 Cor. 9, 27] Who, when, being endowed with knowledge of the Divine Law, he reproves the greediness of others, strikes elephants in their belly with his horn. For he had in truth struck elephants in the belly, when he was saying; *Many walk, of whom I told you often, but now I tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame.* [Phil. 3, 18. 19.] And again, *They that are such serve not the Lord Christ, but their own belly.* [Rom. 16, 18] This rhinoceros, therefore, no longer strikes men, but beasts, with his horn; when Paul no longer assaults the humble who are to be destroyed with that might of his doctrine, but slays the proud worshippers of their belly. It remains for us, therefore, to believe that those things, which we know were written of Paul, were done in others also. For many in truth were converted from the pride of that people, to the grace of humility; and whilst the Lord made their cruelty to submit to the yoke of His inspired fear, He doubtless subjected to Himself the might of the rhinoceros. But since we have heard what God's marvelous power has wrought with His Elect, let us now hear what His marvellous forbearance has endured in those whom He rejects.

Ver. 13. *The wing of the ostrich is like the wings of the heron and the hawk.*

36. What is signified by the name ‘ostrich,’ but the synagogue, which had indeed the wings of the law, but from grovelling in its heart in things below, never raised itself from the earth? But what is expressed by the ‘heron’ and the ‘hawk,’ but the ancient fathers, who had power even in their living to soar to those truths, which they were able to perceive by understanding? The wing, therefore, of the ostrich is like the wings of the heron and the hawk; because the voice of the synagogue maintained in its words the doctrine of the early teachers, but knew it not in its living. Whence also the Truth warns the people of this same synagogue against the Scribes and Pharisees, saying; *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat; all therefore whatsoever they have said to you, observe and do: but do not ye after their works.* [Mat. 23, 2] We could say much of the habits of the heron, but since its wing only is brought to our memory, we are prevented speaking of its habits.

Ver. 14. *When she leaveth her eggs in the earth, wilt thou perchance warm them in the dust?*

37. In ‘eggs’ there is one thing which is seen, another which is hoped for: and hope cannot be seen, as Paul witnesses, who says, *What a man seeth, why doth he hope for?* [Rom. 8, 24] What then is designated by the ‘eggs’ of the ostrich, but the Apostles born of the flesh of the synagogue? who whilst they present themselves as despised and lowly in the world, teach us to look for glory in heavenly places. For regarded by the haughty as abject, and as if of no account, they lay, like eggs on the ground; but the power of living, and of soaring to heavenly places, upborne by the wings of hope, lay hid within them. Which eggs the ostrich leaves in the earth; because the synagogue, scorning to listen to those Apostles, whom it had begotten in the flesh, gave them up to the Gentiles who were to be called.

But the Lord with wonderful power warms these very same eggs in the dust; because He roused to life the progeny of the Apostles, in that Gentile world, which had hitherto been cast off; and they, whom the synagogue had despised as void of sense and life, now live and soar aloft, in the veneration of the Gentiles, by the authority of doctrine. The ostrich leaves her eggs in the dust; because the synagogue raised not from earthly desires those whom it begat by preaching. And because the ancient enemy finds those desires conceived in the heart, he doubtless hurries the minds assailed by them even into sins. Whence it is also subjoined;

Ver. 15. *She forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the beast of the field may break them.*

38. The foot crushes, and the beast of the field breaks, the eggs at the time, when they are forsaken on the earth; because, namely, while the hearts of men seek to be ever thinking on earthly things, ever to be employed on things below, they throw themselves down for the beast of the field, that is, the devil, to trample on: so that, after they have been long degraded by the basest thoughts, they are at length crushed by the perpetration of even greater crimes. The synagogue, therefore, neglected to raise up from the earth by good living the eggs which it laid. But, though Almighty God found many of its children dead and chilled by earthly desires, yet he animated them with the warmth of His love. But that life, which the synagogue gave not its children, it grudged them afterwards, when it was striving to extinguish by persecution, those whom it remembered not to have by cherishing brought forth to good works. Whence it is also fitly added of this ostrich;

Ver. 16. *She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers.*

39. It despises, as though they were not its own, those whom it discovers to be living otherwise than it has itself taught, and, as its cruelty becomes

obdurate, it applies terrors, and exercises itself in torturing them, and, inflamed by the firebrands of envy, it labours that they should perish, for whom it laboured not that they should live. And, when it persecutes the members of the Lord, it suspects that by this it is pleasing God. Whence also the Truth says to the same eggs of the ostrich, *The hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, thinketh that he doeth God service.* [John 16, 2] Because, therefore, when the synagogue is led by cruelty to persecution, it thinks that it is acting thus by the impulse of divine fear, it is rightly subjoined;

She hath laboured in vain, no fear compelling her.

40. For not fear, but cruelty, has compelled it to pant in the labour of persecution. But because vices, when tinged with the colour of virtues, are commonly the more abominable, the less they are known even to be vices; the synagogue was more harsh in persecution, as it believed that it was becoming more religious by the deaths of the faithful. And therefore it could not at all discern what it was doing, because it shut out from itself the light of understanding, by putting pride in the way. Whence it is also well subjoined;

Ver. 17. *God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He given her understanding.*

41. For strict is the enquiry of secret retribution; and because it knowingly lost its humility, it also lost, unwittingly, the understanding of the truth. But the wounds, which it inflicted on the faithful at the coming of the Redeemer, are much less than those with which it still aims to smite the Church, by the coming of Antichrist. For it is preparing itself for that time, in order to oppress the life of the faithful with accumulated strength. Whence it is also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 18. *When the time shall come, she raiseth her wings on high, she scorneth the horseman, and his rider.*

42. The ostrich raiseth her wings on high, when the synagogue opposes its Creator, not as before by dreading, but by now openly withstanding, Him. For being changed into the limbs of the devil, and believing the man of lies to be God, it exalts itself the higher against the faithful, the more it boasts also, that it is itself the body of God. And because it despises, not only the Manhood of the Lord, but also His very Godhead, it scorns, not merely the horseman, but the rider of the horseman also. For, without violating the unity of the Person, it can be understood that the Word of God then mounted the rider, when he created for Himself a living Body within the womb of the Virgin. He then mounted the horseman, when, by creating Himself, He brought under the yoke of Divine worship a human soul, possessing power over its own flesh. For the Godhead assumed the flesh, by the intervention of the soul, and by this means He held together the whole horseman; [S. Aug. de Fid. et Symb. §. 10.] because He joined together in Himself, not that only which was ruled, but that also which ruled. Judaea therefore, because, having been caught in the snare of seduction, by the coming of haughty Antichrist, it scoffs at our Redeemer, for having been lowly among men, scorns the horseman. But because it, in every thing, denies His Godhead, it scorns equally his rider also. But our Redeemer is, in one and the same person, both the horseman and the rider of the horseman; and, when He came into the world, He set forth mighty preachers against the world; and when, in the end of the world, He endures the craft of Antichrist, He supplies strength to those, who contend in His behalf: that so, when our ancient enemy is set free in that liberty of his which is speedily to be terminated, our faithful ones may receive so much greater strength, the more they have to fight against an adversary who has been let loose. Whence in this place, when the ostrich is described as raising her wings, and scorning the horseman and his rider, the mention of mighty preachers is immediately subjoined, and it is said;

Ver. 19. *Wilt thou give the horse strength, or wilt thou surround his neck with neighing?*

43. In Holy Scripture there is sometimes expressed under the term 'horse,' the slippery life of the wicked, sometimes temporal dignity, sometimes this present world itself, sometimes the preparation of right intention, sometimes a holy preacher.

For under the term 'horse' is signified the slippery life of the wicked, as it is written; *Be ye not as the horse and mule.* [Ps. 32, 9] And as is said by another Prophet, *They were made wanton horses, and stallions, every one was neighing after his neighbour's wife.* [Jer. 5, 8]

By the name 'horse' is understood temporal dignity, as Solomon witnesses, who says, *I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.* [Eccles. 10, 7] For every one who sins is the servant of sin, and servants are upon horses, when sinners are elated with the dignities of the present life. But princes walk as servants, when no honour exalts many who are full of the dignity of virtues, but when the greatest misfortune here presses them down, as though unworthy. Hence it is said again; *They have slumbered who mounted horses.* [Ps. 76, 6] That is, in the death of the soul, they, who trusted in the honour of the present life, have closed the eyes of their mind to the light of truth.

Under the name of 'horse' is designated this present world, as is said by the voice of Jacob; *Let Dan be a serpent by the way, a horned snake in the path, that biteth the horses' hoofs, that his rider falleth backward.* [Gen. 49, 17] In which testimony we set forth more plainly what 'horse' signifies, if we consider the circumstances somewhat more minutely. For some say, that Antichrist is coming out of the tribe of Dan, because in this place Dan is asserted to be a serpent, and a biting one. Whence also, when the people of Israel were choosing their position, in the partition of the camp, Dan most rightly first pitched his camp to the north; signifying him in truth, who had

said in his heart; *I will sit upon the mount of the testament, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the height of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 13. 14.] Of whom also it is said by the Prophet; *The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan.* [Jer. 8, 16] But he is called not only a serpent, but a horned serpent, (cerastes.) For □□□□□□ in Greek are called 'cornua' in Latin. And this serpent, by whom the coming of Antichrist is fitly set forth, is said to be horned: because, together with the bite of pestilent preaching, he is armed also against the life of the faithful with the horns of power. But who can be ignorant that a path is narrower than a way? Dan therefore becomes a serpent in the way, because he compels those, whom he flatters by seeming to spare them, to walk in the broad way of the present life: but he bites them in the way, because he destroys with the poison of his error those on whom he confers liberty. He becomes a horned serpent in the path, because those whom he finds to be faithful, and to be confining themselves to the narrow paths of the heavenly precept, he not only assails with the wickedness of crafty persuasion, but also oppresses with the terror of his power. And, after the kindness of pretended sweetness, he employs the horns of his power in the torture of persecution. In which passage, the 'horse' signifies this world, which foams through its pride in the lapse of passing times. And, because Antichrist strives to seize the latter end of the world, this horned serpent is said to bite the horses' hoofs. For, to bite the horses' hoofs, is to reach the ends of the world by striking them; *That its rider falleth backward.* The rider of the horse, is every one who is exalted in worldly dignities; who is said to fall backwards, and not on his face; as Saul is said to have fallen. For, to fall on his face, is for each one to confess his own faults, in this life, and to bewail them with penitence. But to fall backward, where one cannot see, is to depart suddenly out of this life, and to know not to what punishments he is being led. And because Judaea, entangled with the snares of its own error, is

looking for Antichrist, instead of Christ, Jacob, in the same passage, rightly turned round suddenly in the language of the Elect, saying; *I will wait for Thy salvation, O Lord;* [Gen.49, 18] that is, I do not, as the infidels, believe in Antichrist, but I faithfully believe Him, Who is about to come for our redemption, even the true Christ.

By the name ‘horse’ is understood the preparation of right intention, as it is written, *The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but the Lord giveth safety*; [Prov.21, 31] because the mind prepares itself indeed against temptation, but contends not healthfully, unless it he assisted from above.

By the name ‘horse’ is understood each holy preacher, as the Prophet witnesses, who says; *Thou sentest Thine horses into the sea, disturbing many waters.* [Hab. 3, 15] For the waters, in truth, lay quiet, because the minds of men were lulled to rest a long while, beneath the torpor of their sins. But the sea was disturbed by the horses of God; because, when holy preachers had been sent, every heart which was benumbed with fatal security, was alarmed by the shock of wholesome fear. In this place, therefore, a holy preacher is understood by the name ‘horse,’ when it is said to blessed Job; *Wilt thou give the horse strength, or with thou surround his neck with neighing?*

44. But what is meant by the Lord’s saying, that He first gives strength to this horse, and afterwards surrounds his neck with neighing? For by neighing is set forth the voice of preaching. But every true preacher receives, first, strength, and afterwards neighing, because, when he has first extinguished sin in himself, he then attains to the voice of preaching, for the instruction of others. This horse hath strength, because he firmly endures adversity. He hath neighing, because by blandishment he invites to heavenly things. The Lord declares, that He gives both strength and neighing to this horse, because unless both life and teaching meet together in His preacher, the virtue of perfection will never appear. For it avails not much, though he

is supported by the doings of an exalted life, if he is yet unable to rouse others by his words to his own sentiments. Or, what avails it to kindle others by his speaking well, if he makes it plain that he has himself become slothful by living ill. Because therefore it is necessary for both these to meet together in a preacher, for his perfection, the Lord confers on His horse both the neighing of voice, with boldness of action, and boldness of action, with neighing of voice. And we must observe, why neighing, which is doubtless uttered inwardly through the throat, is said to be placed round the neck of the horse, that is, to be drawn in a circle outwardly. Because, namely, the voice of preaching emanates from within, but encircles from without. For as it rouses others to good living, it binds also the conduct of the preacher to good deeds, in order that his conduct may go not beyond his words, nor his life contradict his speech. The neighing then is placed round the neck of the horse, because the life of a preacher is restrained, even by his own words, from breaking forth into deeds of wickedness. Hence is it, that a collar is given as a reward to men who fight with all their power; in order that they may ever perform greater deeds, because they bear the tokens of valour; and may fear to incur the charge of weakness, while that, which they display on themselves, is already the reward of their bravery. Whence it is rightly said by Solomon to every hearer, in praise of wisdom; *Thou shall receive a crown of grace for thy head, and a collar of gold for thy neck.* [Prov. 1, 9] It follows,

Ver. 20. *Will thou rouse him as the locusts?*

45. By the name 'locusts' is sometimes signified the Jewish people, sometimes the converted Gentiles, sometimes the tongue of flatterers, but sometimes, by comparison, the Resurrection of the Lord, or the life of preachers.

For, that locusts express the people of the Jews, the life of John points out to us; of whom it is written; *He did eat locusts and wild honey.* [Mark 1,

6] For John proclaims, even in the kind of his food, Him, Whom he foretells with the authority of prophecy. For in himself he designated the Lord, Whom he preceded. And He, doubtless, coming for our redemption, ate wild honey, because He took of the sweetness of the unfruitful Gentiles. But, because He partly converted the people of the Jews, in His own body, He took locusts for food. For the locusts, which give sudden leaps, but fall immediately to the ground, signify them. For they were leaping, when they were promising to fulfil the precepts of the Lord; but they were falling speedily to the ground, when, by their wicked works, they were denying they had heard them. Let us behold in them a kind of leaping of locusts; *All the words, which the Lord hath said, will we both do and hear.* [Ex. 19, 8] But let us see how they speedily fall to the ground; *Would we had died in Egypt, and not in this vast wilderness. Would we may perish, and that the Lord may not lead us into that land.* [Numb. 14, 2] They were therefore locusts, because they used to leap in their words, but fall in their doings.

46. By the name of 'locusts' is the Gentile people also designated, as Solomon witnesses, who says; *The almond tree shall flourish, the locust shall become fat, the caper tree shall he destroyed.* [Eccles. 12, 5] For the almond shews its blossom before all other trees. And what are designated by the flower of the almond, except the beginnings of Holy Church? which expanded the primitive flowers of virtues in her preachers, and, in order to bring forth the fruits of good works, preceded the saints which were to come, as shrubs which were to follow. And in this was the locust soon made fat; because the dry barrenness of the Gentile world was watered by the fatness of heavenly grace. The caper tree is destroyed; because when the Gentile world attained, on its call, the grace of faith, Judaea, remaining in its barrenness, lost the course of good living. Hence it is said again by the same Solomon; *The locust hath no king, and they go forth, all of them, by their bands.* [Prov. 30, 27] Because, namely, the Gentile world was

forsaken, while it continued estranged from the Divine government, but yet, afterwards marshalled in order, it proceeded to the battle of faith against opposing spirits.

47. By the word ‘locust’ is expressed the tongue of the flatterer; as the plagues of Egypt, displayed from heaven, attest; which were once inflicted in a bodily manner, as their deserts demanded; but signified spiritually, what evils smite day by day the minds of the wicked. For it is written; *A burning wind was bringing up the locusts, which went up over all the land of Egypt, and covered the whole face of the earth, laying waste all things. The herb of the land, therefore, was devoured, and whatever fruit was on the trees.* [Ex. 10, 13-15] For Egypt was affected by these plagues, in order that being roused, and smarting thereby from an outward blow, it might consider, what losses of devastation it was enduring by inward neglect, and that, while it beheld things most trifling, but more highly esteemed, perishing without, it might feel, through looking at them, the heavier losses it had sustained within. But what do locusts, which injure the fruits of men more than any other smaller animals, portend by their signification, but the tongues of flatterers, which corrupt the mind of earthly men, if they ever observe them producing any good fruits, by praising them too immoderately? For the fruit of the Egyptians is the doings of the vain-glorious, which locusts destroy, when flattering tongues incline the heart of him who does them to seek for transitory praises. But the locusts eat up the grass, whenever any flatterers extol with applauses the words of speakers. They devour also the fruits of the trees, when by empty praises they weaken even the doings of some who now seem to be strong.

48. By the name ‘locust’ is designated by comparison the Resurrection of our Redeemer. Whence it is said also by the Prophet in His voice; *I am cast out as the locust.* [Ps. 109, 23] For He submitted to be held by His

persecutors, even unto death, but He was cast forth as a locust, because He flew away from their hands by the leap of a sudden resurrection.

49. Which can be referred also to the body of preachers. For He was cast out in them as a locust, because, while Judaea was raging in its persecution, as they fly into different directions, they leaped, as it were, into their retreat. But because that preacher is raised to the height of perfection, who is made firm, not only by the active, but also by the contemplative life; this very perfection of preachers is rightly expressed by ‘locusts,’ which, as often as they endeavour to raise themselves into the air, first impel and raise themselves with their legs, and afterwards fly with their wings. Thus doubtless are holy men, who, when they aim at heavenly things, rely in the first place on the good works of active life, and afterwards raise themselves in flight to sublime truths by the spring of contemplation. They plant their legs firmly, and spread their wings, because they strengthen themselves by good doings, and are exalted to lofty things by their way of life. But, while dwelling in this life, they cannot remain long in divine contemplation, but, as if like locusts, they catch themselves on their feet from the leap they have given, when, after the sublimities of contemplation, they return to the necessary doings of active life; but yet are not content to remain in the same active life. But when they eagerly spring forth to contemplation, they again, as it were, seek the air in flight: and they pass their life, like locusts, soaring up and sinking down, while they ever unceasingly endeavour to behold the highest objects, and are thrown back on themselves by the weight of their corruptible nature.

50. There is a still further resemblance which locusts bear to holy preachers. For, in the morning hours, that is, at the time of moderate heat, they hardly raise themselves from the earth. But, when the heat has blazed forth, they soar aloft, the higher the more cheerfully they fly. But every holy preacher, when he beholds quiet periods of the faith, appears lowly and

contemptible, and, like a locust, hardly rises, as it were, from the earth. But if the heat of persecution should wax warm, clinging in his heart to heavenly things, he soon shews how great is his sublimity: and he who seemed before to have quietly sunk to rest below, now flaps his wings, and is hurried aloft. Of that horse, therefore, that is, His preacher, the Lord says to blessed Job, *Wilt thou rouse him as the locusts?* Thou understandest, As I, Who by exciting raise him up to higher objects, as I suffer him to be tortured by a fiercer fire of persecution; in order that his virtue may be more strong and wakeful, when the cruelty of unbelievers dashes itself against him more furiously.

But when a holy preacher suffers many things without, when he is tortured by the dire assault of persecutions; who can discern what it is that he beholds within, who feels not his many losses without? For were there not wonderful encouragements to supply him with health within, those torments, which are applied outwardly, would doubtless reach to his heart. But his mind raises itself aloft on the citadel of hope, and therefore it fears not the weapons of the siege which has been laid to it. Whence also in this place, the Lord, in order to shew what sweet odours this horse inhales within, when suffering outwardly so many adversities, rightly adds,

The glory of his nostrils is terror.

51. In Holy Scripture by the word ‘nostrils,’ is understood sometimes folly, sometimes the instigation of the ancient enemy, but sometimes foreknowledge. For folly is sometimes designated by ‘nostrils,’ as we have already taught before, on the evidence of Solomon; who says; *A ring of gold in a swine’s nostril is a beautiful and foolish woman.* [Prov. 11, 22] By the name ‘nostrils’ are understood the exhaling snares and instigation of the ancient enemy; which the Lord witnesses concerning him in this very book, saying; *From his nostrils proceedeth smoke.* [Job 41, 20] As if He said, From his perverse instigation arises a mist of most wicked thought in the

heart of men, by which the eyes of those who see are darkened. Foreknowledge is also designated by ‘nostrils,’ as is said by the Prophet; *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; because he himself is counted lofty.* [Is. 2, 22] For we often detect by the smell that, which we see not, so that some things, even when lying far off, become known to us by the fragrance of their nature. And, when we draw our breath through our nostrils, we frequently foreknow some things, even when not seen. The breath of our Redeemer is, therefore, said to be in His nostrils; in order, namely, that His knowledge might be pointed out to exist in foreknowledge; because whatever things He declared that He knew in the nature of His Manhood, He doubtless foreknew before all ages by His Godhead. And, whence He possessed the breath in His nostrils, He immediately subjoined by the Prophet, saying; *Because He Himself is counted lofty.* As if He were saying; He foresaw from above, what would come to pass below; because He came from heaven to earth. Holy men likewise, because they have believed what they heard from Him, foresee themselves also what things are to come; and, while they faithfully obey His precepts, wait for His coming with certain hope. Whence also in this place, by the nostrils of this horse are designated the foreknowledge and expectation of a holy preacher. For while he seeks for the last judgment to arrive, for the heavenly country to be manifested, and for the rewards to be paid to the righteous, he draws, as it were, through his nostrils a breath from what is to come.

52. But *the glory of his nostrils is terror;* because the unrighteous dreads the coming of the vision of the strict Judge, which the righteous earnestly expects. For he, considering his labour, looks for the reward of retribution, and, knowing the merit of his cause, seeks for the presence of his Judge; and most ardently desires Him to come in flame of fire, inflicting vengeance on the ungodly, and granting the godly, in recompense, the sight of His contemplation. But he, who calls to mind his unrighteousness,

shudders at coming to judgment, and dreads the examination of his actions: because he knows, that, if they are inquired into, he is convicted. The glory, therefore, of his nostrils is terror; because the righteous glories on the same ground as the sinner is convicted. Let us behold the horse, how he already draws through his nostrils a breath from those things which as yet he sees not; let us behold with what glory he is elated, when he is waiting for things that are yet to come. Behold the illustrious preacher, in looking at his labours, exclaims; *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day.* [2 Tim. 4, 6-8] Where also he fitly subjoins; *But not to me only, but to those also who love His coming.* As if he said; But to all also, who are conscious to themselves of good works. For none love the coming of the Judge, except those who know that they have in their cause the merit of righteousness. Because, therefore, the righteous boasts for the same reason, that the unrighteous is alarmed, let it be rightly said; *The glory of his nostrils is terror.* But let us hear, how this holy preacher meanwhile acts when placed in this life, whilst he is waiting for the coming glory, whilst striving to come before the face of his Judge, and whilst he is still put off from the reward of his labour. It follows;

Ver. 21. *He diggeth up the earth with his hoof.*

53. By the 'hoof of the horse,' the strength of labour is usually understood. What then is designated by the 'hoof,' except the perfection of virtues in a holy preacher? And with this hoof he, in truth, digs up the earth, when, by the example of his own works, he ejects worldly thoughts from the heart of his hearers. With his hoof he digs up the earth, because, when a good teacher shews by his conduct that the world is despised, he empties the minds of his hearers of secular cares. Let us see Paul, with what hoof of

displayed virtue he digs the soil of the hearts of his hearers. For he himself says to his disciples; *Think on these things, which ye hate received, and heard, and seen in me, do these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.* [Phil. 4, 8. 9.] And again; *Brethren, be ye imitators of me, as I also am of Christ.* [1 Cor. 11, 1] He therefore, who corrects others by the example of his own conduct, doubtless digs up the earth with his hoof. We have another point, to treat still more minutely, concerning the digging of this hoof. For though holy men watch with the eye of their mind intent on heavenly things, though they spurn with the foot of hard contempt all things, which flow by and sink beneath: yet from the corruption of the earthly flesh, to which they are still bound, they frequently endure in their heart a thick dust of thoughts. And when they persuade others without to seek for the things of heaven, they ever examine, with searching enquiry, themselves within, that they may not be polluted by any degrading thought long abiding in them. This horse, therefore, digs up the earth with his hoof, when every preacher examines with bold enquiry earthly thoughts within him. The horse digs up the earth with his hoof, when he, over whom the Lord now rules, considers the mass which is heaped on him from his former thoughts, and ceases not to empty himself of it by tears. Whence also Isaac is well described, as having dug wells in a strange nation. [Gen. 26, 18] By which example we learn, in truth, when dwelling in the sorrow of this pilgrimage, to penetrate the depths of our thoughts; and that, until the water of true wisdom comes in answer to our efforts, the hand of our enquiry should not desist from clearing away the soil of the heart. Yet the aliens lying in ambush, fill up these wells, because doubtless, when unclean spirits behold us studiously digging into our heart, they pile upon us the accumulated thoughts of temptations. Our mind must accordingly be always emptied out, and unceasingly dug up, lest the soil of our thoughts, if left undisturbed, should be heaped upon us, even to a mound of evil deeds. Hence it is said to

Ezekiel; *Son of man, dig in the wall:* [Ez. 8, 8] that is, break through hardness of heart by frequent blows of examination. Hence the Lord says to Isaiah; *Enter thou into the rock, hide thyself in a ditch in the ground, from the face of the fear of the Lord, and from the glory of His Majesty.* [Is. 2, 10] For we enter the rock, in truth, when we penetrate the hardness of our heart; and we are hid in a ditch in the ground from the face of the fear of our Lord, if, casting out worldly thoughts, we are concealed from the wrath of the strict Judge in the humility of our mind. For the more the earth is thrown out by digging, the lower is the surface always laid open beneath. Whence also, if we carefully cast out from ourselves earthly thoughts, the humbler spot do we find, in which to lie hid within ourselves.

54. For behold, because the day of divine judgment is imminent, the very face of His fear is already visible; and it is the more necessary for every one to fear Him with greater dread, the more the glory of His Majesty is now approaching. What then must be done, or whither must we fly? For which way can any one be concealed from Him, Who is every where? But behold we are commanded to enter the rock, to be concealed in a ditch in the ground; in order, namely, that breaking through the hardness of our heart, we may escape the invisible anger, as we withdraw, in our heart within ourselves, from the love of visible objects: and that, when the soil of evil thought is cast out, our mind may be concealed within itself, the more safely, the lower it is. Hence the people of Israel were commanded by the Lord through Moses, to place a paddle in their belt, when they went out for the necessities of nature, and to cover in a ditch in the ground, whatever had been voided. For burdened as we are by the weight of a corruptible nature, certain superfluities of thought burst forth from the womb of our mind, like the heavy burden of the belly. But we ought to carry a paddle under our belt, in order, namely, that being always ready to reprehend ourselves, we may have about us the sharp sting of compunction, to pierce unceasingly

the soil of our mind with the pain of penitence, and to conceal the fetidness which breaks forth from us. For the voidance of the belly is concealed by a paddle, in a ditch in the ground, when the superfluity of our mind, examined with minute conviction, is concealed, before the eyes of God, by the sting of its own compunction. Because, therefore, holy men cease not to blame, and to sentence whatever useless thoughts they entertain, let the Lord say of His horse; *He diggeth up the earth with his hoof,* that is, whatever earthly thought he beholds dwelling in his mind, he doubtless breaks, with the hard blows of superinduced penitence. But when they judge themselves within with strict minuteness, there is no longer any thing for them to fear without. For they are less alarmed at present evils, the more fully they provide themselves with future goods. Whence it is also added;

He exulteth boldly, he goeth on to meet the armed men.

55. He exults boldly; because he is not broken by adversity, just as he is not elated by prosperity. For adversities cast not down him, whom no prosperities corrupt. This horse is, therefore, both bold and under the rein; he has the strength of boldness, so as not to be weighed down by adversity; he has the weight of a rider, so as not to be elevated by prosperity. For times pass on, but they are therefore unable to draw along the righteous man, because they cannot raise him up. They, doubtless, lead those along, whom they elevate: they cast down, in their wrath, those whom they exalt by their blandishments. But a man, who is thoroughly subject to God, knows how to remain fixed, among transient things, knows how to plant firmly the footsteps of his mind, amid the lapses of passing years, knows how to be neither elated at victories, nor to be afraid of opposition. But frequently, because he knows that he is more profitably exercised with the pains of his contrition, he is cheerful in adversity, and while he endures them with firmness, for the truth's sake, he rejoices that the merit of his virtue is increased. Hence it is that we read, that the Apostles then rejoiced, when it

befel them to have endured scourges for Christ's sake, as it is written; *They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus.* [Acts 5, 41] Hence, when Paul had been oppressed by hard persecutions in Macedonia, in insinuating that he had been afflicted, he proves that he had also been filled with joy, by saying; *For when we had come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest.* [2 Cor, 7, 5] As if he were plainly saying; because my spirit had rest, when my flesh endured the punishments of persecutions, through the advancement of the soul. Against this horse, therefore, there are prepared swords, by the adversaries of Holy Church, from the agony of punishments; there are prepared arms, from the patronage of secular powers. For heretics are wont to protect themselves, with the defences of the powerful of the world, as if by a kind of arms: all unbelievers are wont to impugn the preaching of the faith, by rousing also the powers of the world. But the horse of God exults boldly, and fears not outward torments, because he seeks inward delight; he dreads not the wrath of the powers of the world, because, by the rapture of his mind, he tramples down the desire even of the present life itself. Hence it is said by Solomon; *Whatever shall befal the just, it will not make him sad.* [Prov. 12, 21] Hence it is again written of him; *The righteous, confident as a lion, will be without fear.* [Prov. 28, 1] The lion is therefore not afraid in the onset of beasts, because he knows well that he is stronger than them all. Whence the fearlessness of a righteous man is rightly compared to a lion, because when he beholds any rising against him, he returns to the confidence of his mind; and knows that he overcomes all his adversaries, because he loves Him alone, Whom he cannot in any way lose against his will. For whoever seeks after outward things, which are taken from him even against his will, subjects himself, of his own accord, to outward fear. But unbroken virtue is the contempt of earthly desire, because the mind is both placed on high, when it is raised above the meanest

objects, by the judgment of its hopes, and is the less affected by all adversities, the more safely it is fortified by being placed on things above.

56. This horse, therefore, not only fears not those who come against him, but even goes forth to meet them. Whence it is here properly added; *He goeth on to meet the armed men.* For we frequently are left in peace, and unassailed, if we are not eager to oppose the wicked in behalf of righteousness. But, if the mind has ever glowed with the desire of eternal life, if it beholds already the true light within, if it kindles in itself the flame of holy fervor; we ought, as far as the place admits, as far as the cause requires, to expose ourselves in defence of righteousness, and to oppose the wicked, who are breaking forth into deeds of unrighteousness, even when we are not sought after by them. For when they assail in others the righteousness which we ourselves love, they wound us equally with their assault, even if they seem to reverence us. Because then a holy man opposes himself to the wicked and evil doers, even when he is not sought after, it is rightly said of the horse of God; *He goeth on to meet the armed men.*

57. Let us behold him urged on, by the spurs of his rider, against the armed enemies; what fervour had inflamed Paul, when the flame of zeal was hurrying him on at Ephesus to break through the crowds of the theatre. For it is written, *They were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians, and the city was filled with confusion; and having caught Caius and Aristarchus, Paul's companions, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.* [Acts 19, 28. 29.] And it is immediately subjoined; *And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. But some also of the chiefs of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.* [ib. 30. 31.] In which words we, doubtless, learn with what fury he would rush against the opposing array, unless the reins of love had restrained him, by means of his friends and disciples.

58. But if we ought to go to meet our enemies, of our own accord to seek the contest, and always to abandon ourselves in the course of our zeal, why is it that this same illustrious preacher confesses of himself, saying, *At Damascus, the governor of the nation under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes, in order that he might apprehend me; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands?* [2 Cor. 11, 32. 33.] Why is it, that this horse attacks at one time, of his own accord, the ranks of armed men, and at another retires, as if through fear, from the armed enemies; except this, that it is necessary for us to learn, from his cunning valour, both at one time resolutely to seek for battle with our adversaries, and at another prudently to avoid it? For it is necessary for us, during every thing we do, to consider that there is placed in the balance of our mind on one side the weight, and on the other the fruit of our labour, and that when the weight outweighs the benefit, any one may innocently decline the labour; provided he employs himself on other pursuits in which the weight of the labour is outweighed by the gain of the benefits. But when the amount of labour is either equalled, or outweighed, by the subsequent amount of benefits, the labour is not avoided without great blame. Whence the holy preacher, when he perceived that the minds of his persecutors at Damascus were grievously obstinate, was unwilling to engage with their opposition; because he saw that he himself, who, he knew, would be profitable to many, could fall, and that he could be of use to none or but few there. He, therefore, sought for a retreat from the contest, and reserved himself for other battles, to fight with greater success. For courage was not wanting to the opportunity, but an opportunity for his courage; and therefore the most courageous soldier sought, from the closeness of the siege, the field of battle. But, wherever he beheld many necks of his adversaries to be brought into subjection to his own King, he feared not to engage in battle even with death, as he himself, (when he was going to Jerusalem, and the

disciples were hindering him, having foreknown his suffering by prophecy,) witnesses to himself, saying, *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.* [Acts 21, 13] *Neither count I my life dearer than myself.* [ib. 20, 24] He therefore who sought undauntedly, in this place, the ranks of the enemy, even when he foreknew his suffering, taught in the other that it was of dispensation, not of fear, that he fled.

59. On which subject we must consider that he, who boldly endures other greater labours for God's sake, laudably declines certain labours, through the judgment of dispensation. For feeble fear is often called, by men, cautious dispensation; and they declare that they have avoided the onset as if through prudence, when, flying disgracefully, they are wounded in their backs. Whence it is necessary in a cause of God, when a question of dispensation is discussed, for the fear of the heart to be weighed most accurately in the balance; lest fear should steal in through infirmity, and feign itself to be reason, through a semblance of dispensation; lest a fault should term itself prudence, and the mind should return no more to penitence, when it calls that which it does wrong, a virtue. It remains, therefore, for every one involved in doubts, when any adversity hangs over him, to contend first within himself against fear and precipitation; in order that he may neither withdraw himself through fear, nor yet precipitately oppose himself. For he is very precipitate, who always opposes himself to adversities; and he is very cowardly, who always hides himself.

60. But we learn these things the better in contests of the spirit, if we adopt our form of exercise from contests of the body. For he is not a wise leader, who always precipitately advances his army against the ranks of the enemy; nor is he a bold leader, who always withdraws it, through caution, from the face of the enemy. For a general ought to know how, at one time carefully to withdraw his army from the assault of the enemy, and at

another, to press him close by drawing his wings around him. And perfect preachers doubtless carefully exhibit this skill, when at one time, avoiding the rage of persecution, they know how to retire, wisely, but not weakly; and when at another, despising the assault of persecution, they know how to meet it boldly, but not precipitately. But, because a holy man, when he sees it fitting, exposes his breast to blows, and beats back, even when dying, the shafts that are coming against him, it is righty said, *He goeth on to meet the armed men.* Of whom it is still further rightly subjoined;

Ver. 22. *He mocketh at fear, and yieldeth not to the sword.*

61. Let us see how he mocks at fear, who, as he counts, tramples under foot the swords of the adversaries. For he says, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or persecution?* [Rom. 8, 35] In fear, coming punishment is dreaded; but in the sword, pain is felt already from a present blow. Because therefore a holy man dreads not coming evils, he despises fear: but because he is not overcome even by a blow as it comes upon him, he yields not at all to the sword. Against this horse then there are as many swords of enemies as there are kinds of persecutions, all which he meets and overcomes, because from the love of life, he prepares himself for destruction. But since we have heard how so very sturdy a breast exposes itself to the shafts, let us now hear what is done by the adversaries. It follows;

Ver. 23. *Over him will rattle the quiver.*

62. In Holy Scripture by the word 'quiver' is designated, sometimes the just and hidden counsel of God; but sometimes the clandestine machination of the wicked. By 'quiver' is expressed the just and hidden counsel of God, as this same blessed Job in a former part bears witness, saying, *Because He hath opened His quiver, and afflicted me.* [Job 30, 11] That is, He has disclosed His hidden counsel, and has wounded me with an open blow. For as arrows lie hid in the quiver, so do sentences lie hid in the secret counsel

of God: and an arrow is drawn, as it were, from the quiver, when God launches forth an open sentence from His secret counsel. The machination of the wicked is also designated by the word ‘quiver,’ as is said by the Prophet, *They have made their arrows in the quiver, that they may shoot in darkness at the upright in heart.* For when the wicked conceal by secret machinations the schemes, which they plan against the good, they prepare, as it were, arrows in the quiver, and in this gloom of the present life, as if in darkness, they strike the upright in heart; because their malicious shafts can both be felt by their wound, and yet cannot be discovered as they are coming. Because therefore the horse of God is alarmed by no adversity, and the more he is opposed, the more ardently is he led against the armed enemies by the power of his intention; his persecutors, who perceive that they are defeated even when striking him, being confounded, have recourse to skill, prepare stratagems, and conceal, as it were, their wounds by launching them from a distance; whence it is now rightly said, *Over him will rattle the quiver;* that they may strike him from a distance, by secret machination, whom they approach in vain with open onset. This quiver had rattled over the horse of God, when forty men who had conspired for his death, were seeking for Paul to be brought out of prison; that they might kill him, with the blows of their designs, as though secretly, by the craft of arrows, whom they could not at all overcome by the attack of public persecution. The quiver therefore rattled; because the cause of secret machination came to Paul.

63. Although if we attentively enquire, we find a still deeper meaning in the sound of the quiver. For adversaries frequently enter into designs against the good, rely on wicked inventions, betake themselves to devise schemes; but yet themselves engage, themselves send persons, who should disclose these same schemes to the good; in order that, while the preparation of punishment is secretly, as it were, made known to the credulous, it may be

the more dreaded; and that wounds suspected may the more disturb the mind of the bearer, than if inflicted. For, while arrows are concealed, and rattle in the quiver, they threaten death even though unseen. The quiver, therefore, rattles against the horse, when the hidden machination of the wicked against a holy preacher discloses, even more fraudulently, the design which it fraudulently conceals; in order that, by launching its threats beforehand, it may frighten, as if by the sound of the quiver, when the preacher of God fears not open insults, as weapons which strike him close at hand. But when he is not alarmed by these same threats, the cruelty of persecutors soon proceeds to open punishments. Whence, after it is said, *Over him will rattle the quiver,* it is immediately rightly added;

The spear will shake.

64. The spear is shaken against the preacher of God, after the rattling of the quiver, when, after terrors have been displayed, open punishment is now brought forward, striking near at hand. But holy preachers, when they are undergoing punishments in defence of the faith, cease not, even in the midst of blows, to seize those, whom they are able, to the same faith. And when they patiently receive wounds, they skilfully return the arrows of preaching against the hearts of unbelievers. Whence it is sometimes the case, that the very persons who are raging in persecution, grieve not so much, because they do not soften the heart of the preacher, as because, by his words, they lose others also. Because then they do not overcome him by striking him, lest others who hear him should forsake them, they soon prepare, against the words of the speaker, the shield of reply. Whence when He was saying, *The spear will shake,* He rightly subjoins;

And the shield.

65. For, after the raging persecutor smites with punishment the body of the preacher, he protects the heart of his hearers with the words of his disputation, as if with a shield. The spear, then, is shaken, that the holy man

may be smitten; but the shield is placed in the way, that he may not be heard. For the defenders of God have their own arrows in the battle, which they launch more speedily into the hearts of their hearers, as they draw them from the bow of the spirit, that is, from the inmost tension of the heart. For Paul had armed himself with these, in the contest of faith, when saying, *I suffer, even to bonds, as an evil doer; but the word of God is not bound.* [2 Tim. 2, 9] As if he were saying; I am struck indeed with the spear of punishments, but yet cease not to launch forth the arrows of my words. I receive the wounds of cruelty, but I transfix the hearts of the unbelievers, by speaking the truth. Let it be said therefore; *Over him will rattle the quiver, the spear will shake, and the shield.* For the quiver rattles against the horse of God, because the counsels of the wicked resound about him; because open punishment is sought for, the spear is shaken; but because he is opposed by disputation also, the shield is wielded before him. But is he at all restrained from his warmth by these means? For with the greater persecution a holy man is oppressed, the more eagerly is he urged on to preach the truth; and, while he submits patiently to his persecutors, he eagerly hastens to attract his hearers to himself. Whence it is still further rightly added concerning the horse of God,

Ver. 24. *Raging and snorting he swalloweth the earth, neither believeth he that the blast of the trumpet soundeth.*

66. For it was said to the first man when he sinned; *Earth thou art, and to earth shalt thou go.* [Gen. 3, 19] But the trumpets sound, when the powers of this world awfully prohibit holy men from preaching. Because, therefore, a preacher, inflamed by the zeal of the Holy Spirit, ceases not, even when set in the midst of punishments, to attract any sinners whomsoever to himself, he doubtless in his rage swalloweth the earth, but because he fears not at all the threats of persecutors, he believeth not that the blast of the trumpet soundeth. For what else is the 'trumpet,' which

announces the peril of the contest, but the voice of worldly powers, which prepares when contemned the contest of death for those who resist?

67. This trumpet had been sounded by the chief priests, when they commanded the Apostles, when scourged, not to speak of God; as it is written; *They commanded them, when they had been scourged, that they should not preach in the name of Jesus.* [Acts 5, 40] But let us see how the blast of the trumpet frightens not the horse of God. Peter says; *We ought to obey God, rather than men.* [ib. 29] Who says also to others who were persecuting him; *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* [Acts 4, 20] The horse of God, therefore, fears not the blast of the trumpet, because the illustrious preacher, having despised the powers of the world, fears not the sounds of any threats.

68. Let us see how another horse of God swalloweth the earth, and how no dread of the trumpet reaches him. For it is written; *There came down certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, and, having persuaded the multitude, they stoned Paul, and drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. But, as the disciples stood about him, he rose up, and came into the city, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the Gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned to Lystrum, and Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples.* [Acts 14, 19-22] Let us consider, therefore, what threats could check this horse, when even death itself cannot keep him from his intention. Behold, he is overwhelmed with stones, and yet is not moved away from the word of the truth. He can be killed, he cannot be overcome. He is cast forth without the city as though he were dead. But he is found within the city another day an uninjured preacher. Oh ! what a noble weakness is there in this man! how victorious his punishment! how triumphant his endurance! He is by repulse stimulated to action: he is roused by blows to preach salvation, he is refreshed by punishment to cast off the weariness of toil.

What adversity then can overcome him, whom punishment refreshes. But this horse of God both despises the arrows of the quiver, because he contemns the counsels of wickedness; he overcomes the brandished spear, because he strengthens his breast even against the wounds of open persecution; he breaks through the opposed shield, because he subdues by reasoning the disputation of opponents; he swalloweth the earth, because, by exhortation, he converts sinners into his own body: he believeth not that the blast of the trumpet soundeth, because he tramples down every voice of terrible prohibition. But that which is said of him, that he boldly perseveres in labours, is a smaller matter; he, besides, (which is a greater thing,) exults in adversities. Whence it follows;

Ver. 25. *When he heareth the trumpet, he saith, Vah.*

69. By which words this also is plainly shewn, that, in this place, nothing is said by the Lord of the irrational horse. For a brute animal cannot say, ‘Vah;’ but while it is said to say that, which it is quite unable to say, it is pointed out whom it designates. For ‘Vah’ is a word of exultation. The horse, therefore, says ‘Vah,’ on hearing the trumpet, because every bold preacher, when he thinks the contest of suffering approaching, exults in the exercise of virtue: and is not alarmed at the peril of the contest, because he rejoices in the triumph of victory. For the horse, therefore, to say, ‘Vah,’ is for a holy preacher to rejoice in his approaching suffering. But if a bold preacher seeks the glory of suffering, if he seeks with joy to undergo the peril of death for the Lord’s sake; why is it that the Truth declared to Peter, that boldest preacher, who from his sturdy heart, adopted his virtue in his name; *When thou shall be old, thou shall stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldest not?* [John 21, 18] How does he rejoice in his suffering, who being girt by another, will not go whither he is led? But if we consider how the mind is shaken by the approach of suffering, and the fear of death, and yet rejoices at the coming

reward of the kingdom, we understand how it is willingly unwilling to undergo the peril of a glorious contest: because it both considers in death what to endure and fear, and it beholds in the fruit of death what to long and seek for.

70. Let us see how Paul loves what he shrinks from, how he shrinks from what he loves. For he says, *I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* [Phil. 1, 23] And, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* [ib. 21] And yet he says, *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.* [2 Cor. 5, 4] Behold he both longs to die, and yet is afraid of being stripped of the flesh. Why is this? Because, though victory makes him joyful for ever, punishment nevertheless disturbs him for the present: and though the love of the subsequent gift prevails, yet the blow of sorrow grazes the mind, not without pain. For as a bold man, when he girds himself with arms, as the strife of battle is now approaching, both palpitates, and is in haste, trembles, and is wroth; seems, through his paleness, as if afraid, but is urged on vehemently by his anger; in like manner a holy man, when he sees himself drawing near to his suffering, is both agitated by the weakness of his nature, and strengthened by the firmness of his hope; both trembles at approaching death, and yet exults at living, through his death, a truer life. For he cannot pass over to the kingdom, except by the intervention of death; and is therefore doubtful, as it were, in his confidence, and confident, as it were, in his doubts; both fears with joy, and rejoices with fear; because he knows that he cannot arrive at the prize of rest, without passing with labour that which intervenes. Thus we, when we wish to repel diseases from our body, take with sorrow, indeed, the bitter cup of purgation; but rejoice as being certain of subsequent health. For since our body cannot otherwise attain to health, we are pleased even with that which is offensive in the draught. And when the

mind beholds that life dwells in the bitterness, it rejoices when agitated with sorrow. Let it be said then, *when he heareth the trumpet, he saith, Vah;* because a bold preacher, on hearing tidings of the contest, though, as a man, he trembles at the violence of persecution, yet, through the certainty of hope, exults at the reward of the recompense. But he would not remain unmoved at this contest of suffering, if he did not anticipate this same suffering by meditating intently in thought upon it. For an evil, which is anticipated by wisdom, is, by reason, overcome by the mind which is struggling against it. Because a person is less overcome by adversity the more he is found prepared against it, by knowing it beforehand. For a heavy burden of fear is frequently made lighter by habit. Death itself, as it frequently startles when unexpected, so does it give us joy when anticipated by deliberation. Whence it is also rightly subjoined concerning this horse;

He smelleth the battle afar off.

71. As if it were said more plainly; He overcomes in every contest whatsoever, because before the contest he prepares his mind for the contest. For to 'smell the battle afar off,' is so to foresee in thought misfortunes when yet far distant, that they may not, by being unexpected, be able to overcome him. Paul was admonishing his disciples to smell this battle afar off, when he was saying, *Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves.* [2 Cor. 13, 5] As if he were openly charging them, saying, Call to mind the contests of persecutions, and considering the inmost and secret thoughts of your hearts, discover, what ye are able to continue in the midst of sufferings. Holy men smell this battle from afar, when dwelling even in the peace of the Church Universal, they behold either contests with heretics, or the tortures of persecutions hanging over them from unbelievers. Who while they live uprightly, often receive evil for good, and bear contentedly the insults of detractions, in order that if an occasion of persecution should arise, their open enemies may find them the more

resolute, the more the shafts of false brethren also within the Church overcome them not. For he, who falls from a state of patience before the wounds of tongues, witnesses for himself, that he stands not firm against the swords of open persecution. Because therefore a man of God, being exercised by present trials contends against future, and exercised by the smallest trials contends against greater; it is rightly said of the horse of God, that he smelleth the battle afar off. It follows;

The exhortation of the captains, and the howling of the army.

72. The captains of the adverse part are the authors of error, of whom it is said by the Psalmist, *Contention is poured forth over their princes, and their vain things led them astray, and He caused them to wander in the pathless place, and not in the path.* [Ps. 107, 40] Of whom the Truth says by Itself, *If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch.* [Matt. 15, 14] But an army follows these captains, that is to say the crowd of the wicked, which obeys their unjust commands. It must also be observed, that He says that the captains exhort, and that the army howls; because, namely, they who rule over unbelievers or heretics enforce, as if by reason, the wicked practices they order to be observed. But the crowd subject to them, because it follows their commands without judgment, whilst it clamours through the madness of confusion, is said to howl with bestial mind. For howling properly belongs to wolves. And, because the bands of the reprobate are eager with rapacity alone, against the life and habits of the faithful, they shout as if with howling. The horse of God, therefore, smelleth afar off the exhortation of the captains, and the howling of the army, when each holy preacher considers long beforehand, either what the authors of errors are able to command against the Elect, or how fiercely the crowd which is subject to them can rage. Paul was smelling this exhortation of the captains, when saying, *By sweet words and fair speeches they seduce the hearts of the innocent.* [Rom. 16, 18] He was smelling this howling of the army,

when saying, *After my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you.* [Acts 20, 29] Peter had smelled out the exhortation of the captains, when he was warning the disciples against certain persons, saying, *Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandize of you.* [2 Pet 2, 3] He was smelling the howling of the army, when he was premising, saying, *And many will follow their lasciviousnesses, by whom the way of truth is evil spoken of.* [ib. 2]

73. Because, therefore, we have related, what kind of person each holy preacher, and leader of the faith in the war of persecution, is able to display himself, let us now describe, under the figure of this horse, each single soldier of Christ: that he also, who considers that he has not yet arrived at the height of preaching, may yet know, that he is described by this voice of the Lord, if he has already begun to live aright; in order to infer from hence, how much he may be known to God, if he attain to greater things, if God omits not to speak of him significantly, even in his smallest deeds. Let us repeat, therefore, the particulars which have been mentioned of the horse, and make known how the soldier of God advances from his original conversation, how he increases, from the least to greater things, or by what steps he arrives from the lowest to the highest. Let it be said, then,

Ver. 15. *Wilt thou give the horse strength, or wilt thou surround his neck with neighing.*

74. Upon every soul, over which the Lord mercifully rules, He confers, above all things, the strength of faith: of which Peter says, *Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist, strong in the faith.* [l Pet. 5, 8. 9.] But neighing is joined to this strength, when that takes place which is written, *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* [Rom. 10, 10] It follows;

Ver. 20. with *thou rouse him as the locusts?*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

75. Every one, who follows God, is, at his beginning, roused as a locust, because, though in some of his doings he clings to the earth, like the locusts, with bended knees, yet in some of them he raises himself up into the air with expanded wings. For the beginnings of conversions are a mixture of good and evil habits, whilst both the new life is carried on in intention, and the old life is still retained from habit. But we are so much the less injured by the evil being meanwhile mixed up with us, the more we daily contend against it without ceasing. Nor does the fault, whose evil habit our mind anxiously opposes, claim us any longer as its own. And therefore, worldly pursuits injure us less, when beginners; because they are forbidden to remain any longer within us. Accordingly, because the Lord mercifully tolerates some weaknesses in us in the very beginning of our conversion, that He may lead us at length to heavenly things, by perfection, He rouses us at first as locusts; because though He raises us aloft by the flight of virtue, He yet despairs not at our falling by worldly doing. It follows;

The glory of his nostrils is terror.

76. Because a thing, which is not seen, is detected by its smell, by the word ‘nostrils’ are expressed, not improperly, the thoughts of our hope; by which we already foresee in hope the coming judgment, though we as yet behold it not with our eyes. But every one, who begins to live righteously, on hearing that the righteous are, by the last judgment, summoned to the kingdom, is joyful; but because he considers that some evils are still remaining within him, he dreads the approach of this very judgment, about which he is beginning to rejoice. For he beholds his life to be a mixture of good and evil, and confuses his thoughts, in a measure, with hope and fear. For when he hears what are the joys of the kingdom, happiness immediately elevates his mind; and again when he considers what are the torments of

hell, fear immediately disturbs his mind. The ‘glory of his nostrils’ is therefore well called ‘terror:’ because being placed between hope and fear, whilst he beholds in his mind the future judgment, he dreads the very thing, from which he glories. His own glory is itself his terror; because, having commenced good deeds, he rejoices in hope at the judgment, and, not having yet put an end to his evil doings, he is not entirely free from anxiety. But he meanwhile anxiously turns back to his own mind, casting away the storms of so great strength, and, composing himself in the calmness of peace alone, endeavours with all his powers to be found free by the strict Judge. For he counts it slavish to dread the presence of the Lord; and, that he may not fear the sight of his Father, he does those things, by which He may recognise him as His son. He learns therefore, to love his Judge with full expectation, and, so to speak, through fear he casts away fear. But he considers, that fear arises in the heart, by reason of carnal conduct, and therefore, before all things, he chastens his flesh with firm discipline. Whence, after it has been said, *The glory of his nostrils is terror*; it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 21. *He diggeth up the earth with his hoof.*

77. For to dig the earth with the hoof, is to tame the flesh by strict abstinence. But the more the flesh is kept down, the more fearlessly does the mind rejoice, from the hope of heaven. And hence, when the earth has been dug out, it is fitly subjoined; *He exulteth boldly.* For since he firmly represses that which contends against him, he exults boldly at those things, which he longs for in everlasting peace; and his mind is the better disposed to seek for heavenly objects, the more strictly the body is restrained from unlawful pursuits. Whence it is rightly said by Solomon, *Diligently cultivate thy field, that thou mayest afterwards build thine house.* [Prov. 24, 27] For he rightly builds the house of his mind, who first cleanses the field of his body from the thorns of vices; that the whole fabric of virtues may not be

destroyed within, as the famine of good works increases, if the thorns of desires make head in the field of the flesh. But any one, who is engaged in the very height of the battle, discerns more skilfully the fraud of the enemies, the more strictly also he keeps under his own body, as though it were a confederate of the foe. Whence also after the bruising of the body, after the joy of the heart, it is rightly subjoined;

He goeth on to meet the armed men.

78. Armed enemies are unclean spirits, girded with count- less frauds against us. For, when they cannot persuade us to what is wrong, they present it to our sight under the guise of virtues, and cover themselves, as it were, under certain arms, that they may not appear before us in their own naked wickedness. And we proceed to meet these armed men, when we foresee their stratagems afar off. To go forth, therefore, to meet the armed enemies, after the earth has been dug up, is, after the pride of the flesh has been tamed, to search out wonderfully the crafts of unclean spirits. To go forth to meet the armed enemies, after the earth has been dug up, is, after the wickedness of the flesh has been overcome, to engage in contest with spiritual vices. For he, who as yet contends but feebly with himself, vainly rouses against himself contests from without. For how does he, who subjugates himself to sins of the flesh, contend against those of the spirit? Or how does he seek to triumph from the labour of an outward contest, who still gives way in himself to the inward battle with lust?

79. Or certainly we go out to meet armed enemies, when, by zeal of exhortation, we prevent their stratagems even in the heart of another. For we go, as it were, from the place in which we were, to another place, to meet our enemies, when we put aside the care of ourselves in regular course, and keep off the approach of evil spirits from the mind of our neighbour. Whence it is frequently the case, that crafty enemies tempt the more terribly, concerning himself, the soldier of God, who is already victorious in

the contest within, the more they see that he is mightily prevailing against them even in the heart of another; in order that, when they call him back to defend himself, they may the more freely attack the hearts of others, which were protected by his exhortation. And since they cannot overcome, they endeavour, at least, to employ him, so that, while the soldier of God is staggered about himself, not he himself, but he, whom he had been wont to defend, may perish. But his mind, immovably fixed on God, despises the darts of temptations, and fears not the shafts of any terror. For, relying on the aid of grace from above, he so tends the wounds of his own infirmity, as not to neglect those of others. Whence it is also well subjoined concerning this horse;

Ver. 22. *He mocketh at fear, and yieldeth not to the sword.*

80. He mocketh at fear, because he is not so far alarmed by fear of any temptation, as to keep silence. And he yieldeth not to the sword; because though violent temptation assails him, it yet drives him not away from the care of his neighbour. Whence also Paul, teaching us an example of resolute conversation, both states what swords he endures from the enemy, and shews how he yields not to these same swords. For he had endured from the enemy the sword of carnal temptation, after every contest with the works of the flesh had been already overcome, who said; *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin, which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] But to that sword, which he had overcome in himself, he yielded not in others also, when saying in truth, to those about him; *Let not sin reign in your mortal body, to obey the desires thereof.* [Rom. 6, 12] And again; *Mortify your members, which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence.* [Col. 3, 5] There smote him more heavily the sword of those temptations, of which he himself says, *In more numerous labours, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the*

Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, by night and by day I have been in the deep of the sea. [2 Cor. 11, 23-25] And other sufferings, which he was able to endure, and we are weary of enumerating. But how, from love to his neighbour, he yields not to this sword, after stating many things, he himself subjoins; *Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.* [ib. 28] The horse of God is therefore smitten with the sword, and yet is not, by this blow, kept from his course, whilst the bold soldier in the spiritual contest both receives himself wounds from the enemy, and yet binds [or 'smites.' (strength)] others, for their salvation. But, against this so hard breast of the heavenly soldier, the ancient enemy seeks the more for sharper weapons, as he beholds himself more resolutely despised. Whence it also follows;

Ver. 23. *Over him will rattle the quiver, the spear will shake, and the shield.*

81. For since he sees that the zeal of a holy mind helps others also against him, he labours to wound it with multiplied temptation. Whence it frequently happens, that they who rule over others under them, endure severer struggles with temptations; in order, that when the leader himself is put to flight, after the manner of bodily contests, the associated unanimity of the resisting host may be dispersed without an effort. Therefore the crafty enemy, devising divers wounds of blows against the heavenly soldier, wounds him at one time by stratagem, by an arrow from the quiver, at another brandishes a spear before his face; because, namely, he both conceals some vices under the guise of virtues, and presents others to his sight openly as they are. For where he perceives the soldier of God to be weakened, he there requires not the veil of deceit. But where he observes that he firmly opposes him, he there doubtless contrives stratagems against his strength. For when he sees any one weak in an allurement of the flesh,

he openly sets before his sight the appearance of a body capable of being desired. But if perchance he sees that he is mighty against avarice, he importunately suggests to his thoughts the want of those of his family; in order that, while the mind is directed, with seeming piety, to the care of providing for them, it may be secretly seduced and hurried into sin by seeking after wealth. The arrow then insidiously assails the horse of God, when the crafty enemy conceals for him a vice beneath a virtue. But the spear wounds in close combat, when open wickedness tempts him, even aware of it.

82. But the heavenly soldier is often opposed by the enemy in both ways, at one and the same time; in order that he may be destroyed by some one blow. For the crafty adversary endeavours to strike at the same time, both raging openly, and lurking in ambush; in order that while the arrow is dreaded from a secret spot, the spear may be less feared before his face; or that, while he withstands the spear before his face, the arrow may not be observed when coming from a secret place. For he often puts forward the temptation of lust, and suddenly desisting, more craftily suggests pride at chastity having been preserved. And there are some, who when they observe that many have fallen, from the stronghold of chastity, into the pit of pride, neglecting to watch over their life, are plunged into the filthiness of lust. But there are some, on the other hand, who, while they avoid the uncleanness of lust, plunge, through the height of chastity, into the gulph of pride. A fault therefore, which springs from a vice, is, as it were, a spear striking openly; and a fault which springs from a virtue, is, as it were, an arrow from the quiver wounding in secret. But the horse of God both overcomes the spear before his face, when he tramples down lust; and looks round at the arrow on the side, when, in the cleanness of chastity, he keeps himself from pride. Whence also it is well said by Solomon to one engaged in both contests; *The Lord shall be on thy side, and will keep thy foot, that*

thou be not taken. [Prov. 3, 26] For the foot stretches out to things in front. But he, who beholds those things which are on the side, sees not those things which are before him. And again, he, who from looking forward to guard his foot, beholds what are before, gives up keeping watch at his side. But whilst we perform any act of virtue before our face, we look forward, as it were, where our foot ought to be placed; but when a fault secretly rises up from this virtue, whilst we look forward, as it were, our side is laid open to the arrow. But frequently, when we are afraid of a rising fault, we decline the virtue, which ought to be put in act; and when the side is, as it were, looked round upon, we see not how the foot is to be placed in front. It is, therefore, well said, *The Lord shall be on thy side, and will keep thy foot that thou be not taken;* because the soldier of God, protected by the shield of Divine grace, both observes, by looking round, what dangers can come forth on the side, and, by advancing forwards, ceases not to place his footsteps before his face. And the crafty enemy who envies him, because he sees that he prevails not at all by quiver and spear, opposes to him his shield; in order that, if he pierces not the breast of his opponent by striking it, he may at least obstruct his onward course by some obstacles. For to his efforts he opposes certain difficulties; and when he is unable to overcome, he however resists him. But let us hear, what the horse of God does against the arguments of so many contests;

Ver. 24. *Raging and snorting, he swalloweth the earth, neither believeth he that the blast of the trumpet soundeth.*

83. The blast of the trumpet sounds against the horse, when any sin, placed nigh, fearfully assails the mind of an Elect one, in that which he does boldly. But raging and snorting he swalloweth the earth, because he rouses himself by his violent ardour; and consumes, by daily advancing, whatever earthly things he finds within him. And he believeth not that the blast of the trumpet soundeth; because he carefully avoids, by firm consideration, all

evil which arises from the glory of his virtue. For he would believe that the blast of the trumpet soundeth, if he were, perchance, to be afraid of doing other things which are right, on account of something else which wickedly springs from them. Because, therefore, he is not afraid of acting boldly, even in the presence of temptations sounding against him; he does not, when in his rage, dread the blast of the trumpet. But often, when he sees that he is prosperous in virtues, lest that very prosperity of virtues should exalt him, he rejoices that he is assaulted with temptations. Whence it is also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 25. *When he heareth the trumpet, he saith, Vah.*

84. For their own good fortune has more fatally over-thrown many, and a long-continued peace has rendered many slothful; and the unexpected enemy has struck them the more heavily, the more he has found them careless, from being long used to quiet. Whence holy men, when they observe that they are advancing in great prosperity of virtues, rejoice that they are exercised also with temptations, by a kind of adjustment of heavenly dispensation; because they guard the more firmly the glory received in their virtues, the more humbly they acknowledge their own infirmity, from being assaulted with the shock of temptation. The horse, therefore, says, ‘Vah,’ when he has heard the trumpet, because, namely, the warrior of God, when he beholds the force of temptation pressing on him, considering the benefit of the heavenly dispensation, is more firmly confident, from his very adversity. And the assaults of this adversity therefore do not overcome him, because they never attack him unexpectedly. For he marks long beforehand, from each circumstance, of what vice the assault is coming on. Whence it also follows;

He smelleth the battle afar off.

85. For, to ‘smell the battle afar off,’ is to discern from preceding causes, what contests of vices succeed. For because, (as has been already frequently

said,) a thing which is not seen, is discerned by its smell, to smell the battle afar off is to search out lurking wickedness, by the looking forward of our thoughts, as if by the breath of our nostrils. Of which power of scent the Lord rightly says in the praise of His Church, *Thy nose is as the tower, which is in Libanus.* [Cant. 7, 4] We distinguish also by the nose between odours and foul smells. And what is designated by the nose, but the farseeing discernment of the saints? But a watch-tower is placed on high, that the approaching enemy may be seen from far. The nose of the Church is therefore rightly said to be like the tower in Libanus; because while the far-seeing discernment of the saints, being placed on high, looks anxiously on all sides, it discovers a fault before it arrives; and as it watchfully marks it beforehand, so it boldly avoids it. Hence Habakkuk says, *I will stand upon my watch.* [Hab. 2, 1] Hence Jeremiah, admonishing the soul of each Elect one, says, *Set thee up a watch-tower, place thyself bitternesses.* [Jer. 31, 21] For, to set one's self a watch-tower, is to foreknow by lofty considerations the approaching struggles of vices. And the soul of an Elect person places itself bitternesses, when firmly rooted even in the peace of virtues, it consents not to rest secure, on beholding evils in ambush.

86. But he takes thought, first, not to commit any evils, and secondly, not to do good things inconsiderately; and, after he has subdued wickednesses, he strives also to subject to himself his very virtues, lest they should be converted into the sin of pride, if they should get beyond the control of the mind. For since, as has before been said, evils frequently spring from good deeds, through the vice of negligence; he observes with watchful zeal how arrogance rises from learning, cruelty from justice, carelessness from tenderness, anger from zeal, sloth from gentleness. And, when he performs these good deeds, he observes that these enemies are by these means able to rise against him. For when he is labouring diligently in acquiring learning, he anxiously prepares his mind for the struggle with arrogance. And when

he desires to punish justly the faults of offenders, he most skilfully avoids the severity of punishment exceeding the measure of justice. When he endeavours to restrain himself by tenderness, he carefully provides not to be overcome by any relaxation of discipline. When he rouses himself by the stimulants of right zeal, he specially takes care, that the flame of anger may not kindle him more than is necessary. When he controls himself with great tranquillity of gentleness, he keeps careful watch, not to be chilled by torpor. Because, therefore, in the thought of the spiritual soldier every vice is detected before it can steal in secretly, it is rightly said of the horse of God; *He smelleth the battle afar off.* For he considers what a crowd of iniquities would rush on him, were he to allow ever so few sins to enter within him. Whence it also follows;

The exhortation of the captains, and the howling of the army.

87. For the tempting vices, which fight against us in invisible contest in behalf of the pride which reigns over them, some of them go first, like captains, others follow, after the manner of an army. For all faults do not occupy the heart with equal access. But while the greater and the few surprise a neglected mind, the smaller and the numberless pour themselves upon it in a whole body. For when pride, the queen of sins, has fully possessed a conquered heart, she surrenders it immediately to seven principal sins, as if to some of her generals, to lay it waste. And an army in truth follows these generals, because, doubtless, there spring up from them importunate hosts of sins. Which we set forth the better, if we specially bring forward in enumeration, as we are able, the leaders themselves and their army. For pride is the root of all evil, of which it is said, as Scripture bears witness; *Pride is the beginning of all sin.* [Ecclus. 10, 1] But seven principal vices, as its first progeny, spring doubtless from this poisonous root, namely, vain glory, envy, anger, melancholy, avarice, gluttony, lust. For, because He grieved that we were held captive by these seven sins of

pride, therefore our Redeemer came to the spiritual battle of our liberation, full of the spirit of sevenfold grace.

88. But these several sins have each their army against us. For from vain glory there arise disobedience, boasting, hypocrisy, contentions, obstinacies, discords, and the presumptions of novelties. From envy there spring hatred, whispering, detraction, exultation at the misfortunes of a neighbour, and affliction at his prosperity. From anger are produced strifes, swelling of mind, insults, clamour, indignation, blasphemies. From melancholy there arise malice, rancour, cowardice, despair, slothfulness in fulfilling the commands, and a wandering of the mind on unlawful objects. From avarice there spring treachery, fraud, deceit, perjury, restlessness, violence, and hardnesses of heart against compassion. From gluttony are propagated foolish mirth, scurrility, uncleanness, babbling, dulness of sense in understanding. From lust are generated blindness of mind, inconsiderateness, inconstancy, precipitation, self-love, hatred of God, affection for this present world, but dread or despair of that which is to come. Because, therefore, seven principal vices produce from themselves so great a multitude of vices, when they reach the heart, they bring, as it were, the bands of an army after them. But of these seven, five namely are spiritual, and two are carnal.

89. But they are, each of them, so closely connected with other, that they spring only the one from the other. For the first offspring of pride is vain glory, and this, when it hath corrupted the oppressed mind, presently begets envy. Because doubtless while it is seeking the power of an empty name, it feels envy against any one else being able to obtain it. Envy also generates anger; because the more the mind is pierced by the inward wound of envy, the more also is the gentleness of tranquillity lost. And because a suffering member, as it were, is touched, the hand of opposition is therefore felt as if more heavily impressed. Melancholy also arises from anger, because the

more extravagantly the agitated mind strikes itself, the more it confounds itself by condemnation; and when it has lost the sweetness of tranquillity, nothing supports it but the grief resulting from agitation. Melancholy also runs down into avarice; because, when the disturbed heart has lost the satisfaction of joy within, it seeks for sources of consolation without, and is more anxious to possess external goods, the more it has no joy on which to fall back within. But after these, there remain behind two carnal vices, gluttony and lust. But it is plain to all that lust springs from gluttony, when in the very distribution of the members, the genitals appear placed beneath the belly. And hence when the one is inordinately pampered, the other is doubtless excited to wantonness.

90. But the leaders are well said to exhort, the armies to howl, because the first vices force themselves into the deluded mind as if under a kind of reason, but the countless vices which follow, while they hurry it on to every kind of madness, confound it, as it were, by bestial clamour. For vain glory is wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, Thou oughtest to aim at greater things, that, as thou hast been able to surpass many in power, thou mayest be able to benefit many also. Envy is also wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, In what art thou inferior to this or that person? why then art thou not either equal or superior to them? What great things art thou able to do, which they are not able to do! They ought not then to be either superior, or even equal, to thyself. Anger is also wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, The things that are done to thee cannot be borne patiently; nay rather, patiently to endure them is a sin; because if thou dost not withstand them with great indignation, they are afterwards heaped upon thee without measure. Melancholy is also wont to exhort the conquered heart as if with reason, when it says, What ground hast thou to rejoice, when thou endurest so many wrongs from thy neighbours? Consider with what sorrow all must

be looked upon, who are turned in such gall of bitterness against thee. Avarice also is wont to exhort the conquered mind, as if with reason, when it says, It is a very blameless thing, that thou desirest some things to possess; because thou seekest not to be increased, but art afraid of being in want; and that which another retains for no good, thou thyself expendest to better purpose. Gluttony is also wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, God has created all things clean, in order to be eaten, and he who refuses to fill himself with food, what else does he do but gainsay the gift that has been granted him. Lust also is wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, Why enlargest thou not thyself now in thy pleasure, when thou knowest not what may follow thee? Thou oughtest not to lose in longings the time thou hast received; because thou knowest not how speedily it may pass by. For if God had not wished man to be united in the pleasure of coition, He would not, at the first beginning of the human race, have made them male and female. This is the exhortation of leaders, which, when incautiously admitted into the secresy of the heart, too familiarly persuades to wrong. And this a howling army in truth follows, because when the hapless soul, once captured by the principal vices, is turned to madness by multiplied iniquities, it is now laid waste with brutal cruelty.

91. But the soldier of God, since he endeavours skilfully to pursue the contests with vices, smells the battle afar off; because while he considers, with anxious thought, what power the leading evils possess to persuade the mind, he detects, by the sagacity of his scent, the exhortation of the leaders. And because he beholds the confusion of subsequent iniquities by foreseeing them afar off, he finds out, as it were, by his scent the howling of the army.

Because, then, we have learned, that either the preacher of God, or any soldier in the spiritual contest, is described in the account of the horse, let us

now behold the same person under the signification of a bird; that we, who have learned his strength by the horse, may learn his contemplation also by the bird. For since we have heard in the description of the greatness of the horse, how much a holy man endures through patience against the assaults of vices, let us now learn by the appearance of birds, how high he soars by contemplation. It follows;

Ver. 26. *Doth the hawk gel feathers by thy wisdom, stretching her wings toward the South?*

92. That the hawk casts off its old feathers every year, as the new grow up, and gets a plumage without intermission, hardly any one is ignorant. But that time of plumage, when it is clothed in the nest, is not here spoken of; because, namely, at that time, being doubtless yet but young, it is not able to stretch its wings towards the South. But that annual plumage is described, which is renewed, as the old feathers become loose. And for domesticated hawks, moist and warm spots are sought out, for them to get their plumage the better. But it is the custom, with wild hawks, to stretch their wings, when the south wind blows, in order that by the mildness of the wind their limbs may become warm, so as to loosen the old feathers. But when there is no wind, they make for themselves a warm air by stretching and flapping their wings against the rays of the sun, and when the pores have thus been opened, either the old feathers fall out, or the new ones grow up. What is it then for the hawk to get its plumage in the south, except that every Saint glows, when he is touched by the breath of the Holy Spirit, and, casting off the habit of his old conversation, assumes the form of the new man? Which Paul advises, saying, *Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man.* [Col. 3, 9] And again; *Though that outward man of ours be corrupted, yet that which is within is renewed day by day.* [2 Cor. 4, 16] But to cast off the old feathers, is to give up the inveterate pursuit of crafty conduct; and to assume the new, is, by good living, to

maintain a gentle and simple feeling. For the feather of old conversation weighs down, and the plumage of the new change raises up, to render it the lighter for flight, as it makes it newer.

93. And He well says, *It stretches its wings towards the South.* For to stretch out our wings towards the South, is, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, to open our hearts in confession, so as no longer to take pleasure in concealing ourselves by defence, but in exposing ourselves by accusation. The hawk, therefore, then gains its plumage, when it has stretched out its wings towards the South, because every one then clothes himself with the feathers of virtues, when, by confession, he subjects his thoughts to the Holy Spirit. For he, who lays not open his old deeds by confession, brings not forth the works of a new life. He who knows not how to lament that which weighs him down, is unable to produce that which raises him up. For the very power of compunction opens the pores of the heart, and pours forth the plumage of virtues. And, when the mind studiously convicts itself of a sluggish old age, it gains the fresh newness of youth. Let it be said then to blessed Job, *Doth the hawk get plumage by thy wisdom, stretching her wings towards the South?* That is, Hast thou conferred understanding on any of the Elect, to expand the wings of his thoughts, at the breath of the Holy Spirit, in order to cast off the weight of the old conversation, and assume the feathers of virtues for the purpose of a fresh flight? In order, namely, for him to gather from hence, that the vigilance of sense which is in him he has not of himself, who is unable to confer it from himself on others. But, by this hawk the renewed Gentile people can also be designated. As if it were plainly said to blessed Job; Behold the future plumage of virtues in the Gentiles, and cast off the old feathers of pride. It follows;

Ver. 27. *Will the eagle mount up at thy command, and make for thee her nest in high places.*

94. In Holy Scripture, by the word ‘eagle’ are sometimes designated malignant spirits, the spoilers of souls, sometimes the powers of the present world, but sometimes either the very subtle understandings of the Saints, or the Incarnate Lord, swiftly flying over things below, and presently seeking again those on high.

By the name ‘eagle’ are set forth the spirits, which lie in wait, as Jeremiah witnesses, who says, *Our persecutors were swifter than the eagles of the heaven.* [Lam. 4, 19] For our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven, when malignant men perform so many things against us, as to seem to surpass even the powers of the air themselves in the inventions of their malice.

By the word ‘eagle,’ earthly power is also typified. Whence it is said by the Prophet Ezekiel, *A great eagle, of great wings, long limbed, full of feathers and variety, came to Libanus, and took away the marrow of the cedar, and plucked off the top of his branches.* [Ez. 17, 3. 4.] For by this eagle who else is, in truth, designated but Nabuchodonosor, the king of Babylon? Who, in consequence of the immensity of his army, is described as of great wings; in consequence of the length of his continuance, as of long extent of limbs; for the multitude of his riches, as full of feathers, and because of the countless things that made up his earthly glory, as full of variety. Who came to Libanus, and took away the marrow of the cedar, and plucked off the top of his branches, because he attacked the loftiness of Judah, and carried off the nobility of its kingdom, as the marrow of the cedar. And whilst he took away captive the most delicate offspring of kings from the lofty height of their power, he plucked off, as it were, the top of his branches.

By the word ‘eagle’ is expressed either the subtle understanding of the Saints, or the flying of the Lord’s Ascension. Whence the same Prophet, when describing that he had seen the four Evangelists under the appearance

of living creatures, declares that in them there had appeared to him the face of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle. Doubtless designating by an eagle, the fourth living creature, John, who left the earth in his flight, because, through his subtle understanding, he penetrated, by beholding the Word, inward mysteries. With which sentence of the Prophet concerning himself, John himself, in his Revelation, does not disagree, saying, *The first beast was like a lion, the second beast like a calf, the third beast having a face as of a man, the fourth beast like a flying eagle.* [Rev. 4, 7] And though these several points are well suited to each particular Evangelist, (while one teaches the order of His human Nativity; another, by the offering of the sacrifice of the world, suggests, as it were, the death of the calf; another the might of His power, as the roaring of the lion; another, beholding the Nativity of the Word, gazes like the eagle at the risen sun;) yet these four living creatures can signify Him their very Head, of Whom they are members. For He Himself is both a Man, because He truly took our nature; and a calf, because He patiently died for our sakes; and a lion, because, by the strength of His Godhead, He burst the band of the death He had undergone; and, lastly, an eagle, because He went back to heaven, from whence He had come. He is called therefore a man, from His being born; a calf, from His dying; a lion, from His rising again; an eagle, from His ascending to the heavens. But in this place under the name 'eagle' is typified the subtle understanding of the Saints, and their sublime contemplation. For the sight of the eagle surpasses the vision of all birds, so that the sun's ray does not, by striking on its eyes, which are fixed upon it, close them by any coruscation of its light. The eagle therefore mounts up at the command of God, when the life of the faithful, obeying the Divine commands, is suspended on high. And it is also said to place its nest in high places, because, despising earthly desires, it is already nourished, in hope, with heavenly things. It places its nest on high; because it constructs not the

habitation of its mind in abject and grovelling conversation. Hence is that which is said to the Cinite, by Balaam when prophesying, *Strong indeed is thy dwelling place, but if thou hast placed thy nest in the rock.* [Numb, 24, 21] For Cinite is interpreted ‘possessor.’ And who are they who possess present things, except those who are skilled in the ability of worldly wisdom? And they truly build themselves therein a strong dwelling place, if becoming, by humility, as little children in their own sight, they are nourished in the sublimity of Christ; if they feel themselves to be weak, and give up the confidence of their mind, to be cherished by the lofty humility of the Redeemer Who is known to them; if they seek not after things below; if they pass over, with the flight of their heart, every thing which passes away.

95. Let us behold the eagle building itself the nest of hope in high places. He says; *Our conversation is in heaven.* [Phil. 3, 2] And again; *Who hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in heavenly places.* [Eph. 2, 6] He has his rest in high places, because in truth he fixes his thought on things above. He wishes not to degrade his mind to the lowest objects, he wishes not, by the baseness of human conversation, to dwell in things below. Paul was, perhaps, then confined in prison, when he was witnessing that he was sitting together with Christ in heavenly places. But he was there, where he had already fixed his ardent mind, not there, where the sluggish flesh was still necessarily detaining him.

96. For this is wont to be a special mark of the Elect, that they know how so to travel along the journey of the present life, as well aware, by the certainty of hope, that they have already attained to things above; so that they see all things which flow by to be beneath them, and trample down, through love of eternity, all that is eminent in this world. For hence it is that the Lord says, by the Prophet, to the soul which follows Him; *I will raise thee above the high places of the earth.* [Is. 58, 14] For losses, insults,

poverty, contempt, are, as it were, some lower places of the earth, which even the very lovers of the world, as they walk along the level of the broad way, cease not to trample down, by avoiding them. But the high places of the earth are, gain of goods, flattery of inferiors, abundance of riches, honour, and loftiness of dignities; along which whoever walks with his desires still grovelling, he considers them high, just as he counts them great. But if the heart is once fixed on heavenly things, it is seen at once how lowly are those things which seemed to be high. For as he, who ascends a mountain, looks down for a little while on all other objects which lie beneath, the more he advances his step to higher ground, so he who strives to fix his attention on things above, as he finds by the very effort that the glory of this present life is nothing, is raised above the high places of the earth: and that which at first he believed to be above him, when plunged in grovelling desires, he afterwards discerns to be beneath him, as he advances in his ascent. The things then which the Lord there promises that He will do, saying, *I will raise thee above the high places of the earth,* these very things He witnesses to blessed Job, that He alone is able to do, saying; *Will the eagle mount up at thy command, and make for thee her nest in high places?* As if He were saying; As at Mine, Who inspire within by the grace of hidden bounty, that which I command from without. It follows;

Ver. 28. *She abideth in the rocks.*

97. In Holy Scripture, when a 'rock' is mentioned in the singular number, who else is understood but Christ? As Paul witnesses, who says, *But the rock was Christ.* [1 Cor. 10, 4] But when 'rocks' are spoken of, in the plural number, His members are described, namely, holy men, who are confirmed by His strength. Whom the Apostle Peter doubtless calls stones, saying, *Ye as lively stones are built together as spiritual houses.* [1 Pet. 2, 5] This eagle, therefore, which raised the eyes of her heart to the rays of the true sun, is said to abide in the rocks, because she is planted, in the firmness of

her mind, in the sayings of the ancient and mighty fathers. For she recals to memory the life of those, whom she sees to have gone before in the way of God; and by studying in the loftiness of their strength, she builds herself a nest of holy meditation. And when she thinks silently on their deeds and words, when she considers the glory of the present life, how mean it is in comparison with eternal excellence, she sits, as it were, on the rocks, and beholds the lower places of the earth to be beneath her.

98. Rocks can also be understood to be the lofty powers of heavenly virtues, which the wind of our mutability now bends not hither and thither, like trees. Because being like rocks, placed on high, they are exempt from every motion of mutability, and fastened to the solidity of their height, they have become firm, by the very eternity to which they adhere. When a holy man, therefore, despises the things of earth, he raises himself, like an eagle, to higher things; and, elevated by the spirit of contemplation, waits for the eternal glory of Angels, and, being a stranger in this world, by seeking after the things he beholds, is already fixed on things above. It is therefore rightly said, *She abideth in the rocks;* that is, by intention of heart she dwells among those heavenly virtues, which are already, even by the strength of their eternity, fixed with such great solidity, as not to be bent on any side to sin by the variableness of change. Whence also it fitly follows;

And she dwelleth in the abrupt flints, and in the inaccessible rocks.

99. For who else are those abrupt flints, but those firmest choirs of Angels, who, though not in their integrity, yet remained firmly fixed in their own estate, when the devil fell with his angels? For they are abrupt, because part of them fell, part remained firm. Who stand indeed entire, as to the quality of their deserts, but broken off, as to the quantity of their number. This breaking off the Mediator came to restore, that, having redeemed the human race, He might repair these losses of the angels, and might perhaps heap up more richly the measure of the heavenly country. By reason of this

breaking off it is said of the Father: *He purposed in Him, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to restore all things in Christ, which are in heaven, and which are on earth, in Him.* [Eph. 1, 9. 10.] For in Him are restored those things, which are on earth, when sinners are converted to righteousness. In Him are restored those which are in heaven, when humbled men return to that place from which apostate angels fell by pride. But in that He says, *In inaccessible rocks,* those doubtless, who are abrupt flints, are themselves inaccessible rocks. For the brightness of Angels is very inaccessible to the heart of sinful men, because the more it has fallen down to bodily attractions, the more it has closed its eyes to spiritual beauty. But, whoever is so rapt by contemplation, as, being raised up by Divine grace, already to engage his thought on the choirs of Angels, and, fixed on things above, to keep himself aloof from every grovelling deed, is not contented with beholding the glory of angelic brightness, unless he is able to behold Him also, Who is above Angels. For the vision of Him is alone the true refreshment of our mind. And hence, when He had said, that this eagle abides in the rocks, and remains in the abrupt flints and inaccessible rocks, He immediately added;

Ver. 29. *From thence she beholdeth her food.*

100. That is, from these choirs of Angels he directs the eyes of his mind to contemplate the glory of the Majesty on high: and, not seeing it, he is still hungry: and seeing it, at length, he is satisfied. For it is written, *Because his soul, hath laboured, he shall see and be satisfied.* [Is. 53, 11] And again, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.* [Matt. 5, 6] But who is the food of our mind is plainly pointed out, when it is said; *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* [Matt. 5, 8] And because, from being weighed down by the interposition of the corruptible flesh, we cannot behold God as He is, it is rightly subjoined;

Her eyes behold afar off.

101. For whatever progress any one may have made, when placed in this life, he cannot as yet behold God in His real appearance, but darkly, and through a glass. But when we look close at hand, we see more truly, but when we turn our sight further off, we are darkened by our uncertain sight. Because, therefore, holy men raise themselves up to lofty contemplation, and yet cannot behold God as He is, it is well said of this eagle; *Her eyes behold afar off.* As if He were saying; They resolutely direct the keenness of their intention, but they cannot, as yet, behold Him nigh, the greatness of Whose brightness they are not at all able to penetrate. For the mist of our corruption darkens us from the incorruptible light, and when the light can both be seen in a measure, and yet cannot be seen as it is, it shews how distant it is. But if the mind were not to see it in any way, it would not see that it was far off. But if it were already to behold it perfectly, it would not in truth see it through a mist. Because then He is neither completely seen, nor again completely hidden, it is rightly said, that God is beheld from far.

102. Let us bring forward the words of Isaiah, and point out how they and these are uttered by the same Spirit. For when he was describing the virtues of active life, saying; *Who walketh in righteousnesses, and speaketh the truth, who casteth off the gain from oppression, and shaketh his hand from every bribe, that stoppeth his ears, lest he hear blood, and shutteth his eyes not to see evil;* [Is. 33, 15] he immediately added to what heights of contemplation he can ascend by these steps of active life, saying; *He shall dwell in high places, his loftiness shall be the munitions of rocks; bread is given him, his waters are sure. His eyes shall see the King in His beauty, they shall behold the land afar off.* [ib. 16] For to dwell in high places, is to set our heart on heavenly things. And our loftiness is the munitions of rocks, when we look back to the precepts, and examples of mighty fathers, and separate ourselves from grovelling thoughts. Our loftiness is the

munitions of rocks, when we are joined in mind to the choirs and camp of heaven, and, standing in the citadel of our heart, expel, as though placed beneath us, the malignant spirits who lie in wait. Then also bread is given to us; because our attention, raised to things above, is refreshed with the contemplation of eternity. Our waters are also sure, because that, which the teaching of God here promises through hope, it then offers as a gift. For the wisdom of this world is not trustworthy, because it is not likely to remain after death. Our waters are sure, because that, which the words of life teach us before death, the same they point out to us also after death. Our eyes behold the King in His beauty, because our Redeemer is, in the judgment, beheld as Man, even by the reprobate; but those alone who are Elect are exalted to behold the loftiness of His Divinity. For, to behold the servile form alone, in which He is despised by the wicked, is to see, as it were, a kind of deformity of the King, But the King is seen, by the Elect, in His beauty; because, being rapt above themselves, they fix the eyes of their heart on the very brightness of His Godhead. And because, as long as they are in this life, they cannot behold that land of the living, as it really is, it is rightly added; *They shall behold the land afar off.* That then, which He says here; *The eagle will mount up, and make its nest in high places,* is there expressed, *He shall dwell in high places.* That which is here said, *She abideth in the rocks, and dwelleth in the abrupt flints, and inaccessible rocks,* is there added, *His loftiness shall be the munitions of rocks.* That again which is here introduced, *From thence she beholdeth her food,* is here also subjoined, *Bread is given him, his waters are sure, his eyes shall see the King in His beauty.* And that which is here subjoined, *Her eyes behold afar off,* is there fitly added, *They shall behold the land afar off.*

103. Let us consider, what a lofty eagle was Paul, who flew even to the third heaven, yet, when dwelling in this life, he still beholds God afar off, who says, *We now see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.* [1 Cor. 13, 12]

And again; *I count not myself to have apprehended.* [Phil. 3, 13] But, though he himself beholds eternal things much short of what they really are, though he knows that he cannot perfectly understand them; yet he cannot instil by preaching, into his weak hearers, those very things, which he is able to behold only through a mirror and an image. For he speaks of himself, as if of another person, saying, *He heard secret words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.* [2 Cor. 12, 4] Although therefore the smallest, and most extreme, inward truths are seen, yet to mighty preachers they are most exalted, but beyond the capacity of weak hearers. Whence also holy preachers, when they see that their hearers cannot receive the statement of His Divinity, come down to speak only of the Lord's Incarnation. And hence here also, when the eagle is said to be raised on high, and to see from far, it is immediately rightly subjoined;

Ver. 30. *Her young ones suck up blood.*

104. As if it were plainly said; She herself indeed feeds on the contemplation of His Godhead, but because her hearers cannot understand the mysteries of the Godhead, they are satiated with hearing of the blood of the Lord Crucified. For to suck up blood, is to reverence the weaknesses of the Lord's Passion. Hence it is, that the same Paul, who, as we said a little before, had soared to the secrets of the third heaven, said to his disciples; *For I have determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.* [1 Cor. 2, 2] As if this eagle were plainly saying; I indeed behold as my food the power of His Godhead afar off, but to you, who are still young, I give the blood only of His Incarnation to be sucked up. For he, who in his preaching had been silent as to the loftiness of the Godhead, and informs his weak hearers of the Blood alone of the Cross, what else does he do, but give blood to his young ones? But, because the soul of every holy preacher is, when stripped of the corruption of the flesh, led directly to Him,

Who of His own accord submitted to death for us, and rose from death, it is fitly added of this eagle,

And wheresoever the carcase shall be, she is immediately present.

105. For a carcase is so called from its fall [cadaver, a casu]. And the body of the Lord is, not undeservedly, called a carcase, on account of the fall of death. But that which is here said of this eagle; *Wheresoever the carcase shall he, she is immediately present;* this same thing the Truth has promised will take place, in souls as they depart from the body, saying, *Wheresoever the body shall he, thither will the eagles also be gathered together.* [Luke l7, 37] As if He plainly said, I, your Incarnate Redeemer, Who preside over the heavenly abode, will exalt the souls of the Elect also, to heavenly places, when I shall have released them from the flesh.

106. But this which is said of this eagle; *Wheresoever the carcase shall be, she is immediately present,* can be understood in another sense also. For every one, who has fallen into the death of sin, will be able, not inappropriately, to be called a carcase. For he, who has not the quickening spirit of righteousness, lies, as it were, without life. Because, then, every holy preacher anxiously flies to the spot, where he thinks there are sinners, to shew the light of revival to those who are lying in the death of sin, it is well said of this eagle; *Wheresoever the carcase shall be, she is immediately present.* That is, he proceeds to the place, where he foresees the utility of preaching; in order that, because he already lives a spiritual life, he may benefit others who are lying in their death, whom he devours, as it were, by reproving, yet, by converting them from iniquity to innocence, he changes them, as it were, by eating them, into his own members. Lo, the very Paul, whom we have already frequently brought forward for a testimony, when he was going at one time to Judaea, at another to Corinth, at another to Ephesus, at another to Rome, at another to the Spains, that he might announce the grace of eternal life to those who were lying in the death of

sin; what else did he prove himself to be but an eagle; which, swiftly flying over every thing, was seeking for the carcase wheresoever lying; in order that, while he was performing the will of God, in having gained sinners, he might find, as it were, his own food in the carcase? For the food of the righteous is the conversion of sinners, of which it is said, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto eternal life.* [John 6, 27] Having heard, therefore, such numerous virtues of holy men, blessed Job is understood to have been astonished, and to have been silent, from the awe of admiration. For it follows,

Ver. 31, 32. *The Lord added, and spake to Job; Doth he that contendeth with God, so easily remain quiet? He that reproveth God, ought certainly also to answer Him.* [E.V. 40, 1. 2.]

107. The holy man did not consider that his merits were being increased, but that his vices were being cut away by this so great severity of the scourge. And since he knew that there were no vices within him, he believed that he was unjustly smitten; and, to murmur at the blow, is altogether to reprove the Smiter. But the Lord, considering that what he brought forward, he had gathered, not from the swelling of pride, but from the character of his life, gently reproves him, saying, *Doth he that contendeth with God, so easily remain quiet? He that reproveth God, ought certainly also to answer Him.* As if He were plainly saying; Why hast thou, who hast said so much of thy own conduct, remained silent on hearing of the life of the Saints? For to doubt of My smiting, whether it was just or not, was to reprove Me. And thou hast stated thy own good qualities truly, but thou hast not known the tendency of these scourges. For though thou hast no longer any thing to correct, yet thou hast still something in which to increase. But, behold, thou hast learned from My narrative, to what a height of virtue I exalt very many. Thou wast considering thine own loftiness, but wast ignorant of that of others. Having heard then the virtues of others,

answer Me, if thou canst, concerning thine own. But we know that he, who, when he acts rightly, omits looking at the merits of his betters, extinguishes the eye of his heart, by the darkness of pride. But, on the other hand, he who carefully weighs the good qualities of others, enlightens his own deeds, by a powerful ray of humility; because when he sees the things he has done himself, done by others also without, he keeps down that swelling of pride, which strives to break forth within from singularity. Hence is it that it is said by the voice of God to Elias, when thinking that he was solitary, *I have left Me seven thousand men, who have not bent their knees before Baal;* [1 Kings 19, 18] in order that by learning that he remained not solitary, he might avoid the boasting of pride, which might arise in him, from his singularity. Blessed Job therefore is not blamed for having done any thing perversely, but he is informed of the good deeds of others besides, in order that while he considers that he has others also equal to him, he may humbly submit himself to Him, Who is specially the Highest.

BOOK XXXII.

The two last verses of the thirty-ninth chapter having been explained, the first fourteen verses of the fortieth chapter are expounded, and many things are taught, both concerning the infinite power of God, and the hurtful designs of Satan against men.

1. The higher holy men advance with God, in the dignity of virtues, the more accurately do they discover that they are unworthy; because while they become close to the light, they find out whatever escaped their notice in themselves, and they appear to themselves the more deformed without, in proportion as that is very beautiful, which they see within. For every one is made known to himself, when he is illumined with the touch of the true light, and by the same means as he learns what is righteousness, he is also instructed to see what is sin. Hence is it that though our mind is often benumbed with cold in converse with men's doings, though it sins and is ignorant in some points, though it regards some sins as though they were none; yet when it raises itself by the compunction of prayer to aim at things above, having been roused by the eye of its compunction, it returns to observe itself with greater vigilance after its tears. For when it deserts itself in neglect, and is torpid with fatal lukewarmness, it fully believes that idle words or unprofitable thoughts are of lesser guilt. But if warmed by the fire of compunction, and touched by the sudden breath of contemplation, it starts from its lukewarmness, it soon begins to dread, as grave and deadly offences, those things which but a little before it believed to be trifling. For it avoids, as most atrocious, all things which are in the very least degree hurtful; because, namely, being pregnant with the conception of the Spirit, it no longer allows any vanities to enter in unto it. For from that which it beholds within, it feels how dreadful are those sins which clamour without;

and the more it has advanced when raised up, the more does it shrink from the grovelling pursuits, in which it sank prostrate. For nothing in truth supports it, but that which it has beheld within, and it endures the more heavily whatever thrusts itself on it from without, the more it is not that which it beheld within; but from those inward objects which it has been able to catch a glance of, it forms a standard for judging of those outward things which it has to bear with. For it is rapt above itself, when it contemplates sublime objects, and now beholding itself, by going out of itself more freely, it comprehends more minutely whatever remains to it, of itself, under itself. By which means it is wonderfully brought to pass, as was before said, that it appears the more unworthy to itself, by the very means by which it is rendered more worthy; and that it then feels itself far removed from uprightness, when it is approaching near it. Whence Solomon says, *I have tried all things by wisdom, and said, I will become wise, and it departed the farther from me.* [Eccles. 7, 23] For wisdom which is sought after is said to depart far off, because it seems higher to a person approaching it. But those who do not seek it, think themselves the nearer it, the more they know not also its standard of uprightness; because, living in darkness, they know not how to admire the brightness of the light, which they have never seen, and since they do not tend towards the comeliness of its beauty, they willingly become more deformed every day in themselves. For whoever is touched by its rays, his deformity is more manifestly pointed out to him, and he finds the more truly how much he is distorted in sin, the more keenly, from considering the highest objects, he beholds how far distant he is from uprightness. Whence blessed Job, surpassing in virtues the race of men, overcame his friends in speaking; but when instructed more highly, by God speaking to him, on knowing himself, he remained silent. For he overcame those who spoke unjustly, but at the words of the voice within he knew that he was justly condemned. And he knows not

indeed why he was scourged, but yet he proved by silence why he reverenced not the scourges. For when the Divine judgments are not known, they are not to be discussed with bold words, but to be venerated with awful silence; because even when the Creator of all things discloses not His reasons in inflicting the scourge, He shews them to be just, by pointing out that He inflicts them Who is perfectly just. Let the holy man, then, who has been reproved both first for his words, and afterwards for his silence, make known what he thinks of himself. For he says;

Ver. 34. *I who have spoken lightly, what can I answer?* [E.V. 40, 4]

2. As if he said, I would defend my speech, if I had uttered it with weight of reason. But after a tongue is convicted of having used levity, what remains for it but to be restrained with silence? It follows,

I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

In the usage of Holy Scripture, work is wont to be understood by the hand, speech by the mouth. To lay therefore the hand upon the mouth, is by the virtue of good living to conceal the faults of incautious speech. But who can be found, however perfect, who has not offended in idle words? As James witnesses, who says, *Be not many masters, for in many things we offend all.* [James 3, 1] And again, *The tongue can no man tame.* [ib. 8] And the Truth, exposing its faults by Its own mouth, says, *But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall have spoken, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* [Matt. 12, 36] But holy men study to conceal before the eyes of God the faults of the tongue by the merits of their life, they study to keep down their immoderate words by the weight of good works. Whence in Holy Church the hand is laid upon the mouth, when the sin of idle talk is daily covered in its Elect by the virtue of good actions. For it is written; *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* [Ps. 3. 21] But since it is written again; *All things are naked and opened unto His eyes,* [Heb. 4, 13] how can they be concealed which

can never be at all hid from the eyes of Him, to Whom all things are naked? But since we place lower, that which we conceal, and doubtless spread that over, with which we cover it, in order to cover that which is placed beneath, we are said to cover our sins, which we place, as it were, beneath, when we give them up; and we draw something else over them, when we choose afterwards to prefer for this end the work of good deeds. He therefore who abandons his former evil deeds, and afterwards does good works, by this addition covers his past iniquity, over which he spreads the merits of good deeds. Let blessed Job therefore, as typifying Holy Church, and in what he says alleging his own circumstances, but designating ours, say for us; *I will lay mine hand upon my mouth:* that is, that of my words in me which I consider to have displeased the strict Judge, I conceal before His eyes under the veil of upright conduct. It follows;

Ver. 35. *One thing have I spoken, which I would I had not said; and another, to which I will add no further.* [E.V. 40, 5]

3. If we examine the former words of blessed Job, we find that he has said nothing wickedly. But if we distort his words, which were uttered with truth and freedom, into a sort of sin of pride, there will no longer be two only; because there will be many. But since our speaking is the laying open to men our secret meaning in words; but our speaking to the ears of God is the exhibiting the motion of our mind even by an expressive action; blessed Job, on weighing himself by the balance of most accurate examination, confesses that he had a second time offended in his speech. For to 'say one thing' unlawfully, is to do things worthy of the scourge, to 'say another' is to murmur too at the scourge. He therefore, who was preferred above men in all his doings before the reproof of the Lord, rising higher by this very reproof, acknowledged that he was in the first place far from right in his conduct, and afterwards far from patient under the rod. Whence he reproves himself, saying, *One thing have I spoken, which I would I had not said; and*

another, to which I will add no further. As if he said, I believed myself to be righteous indeed among men, but, as Thou wert speaking, I found myself to be both wicked before the scourges, and stubborn after the scourges. *To which I will add no further,* because now, the more accurately I understand Thee speaking, the more humbly I search out myself.

4. And because blessed Job typifies Holy Church, these words of his can be applied to all the Elect, who knowing the Lord, feel that they have offended in one and another point, because they understand that they have sinned either in thought and deed, or in neglecting the love of God and their neighbour. To which they promise to add no further, because through the grace of conversion, they take care to purge away daily by penitence even their former deeds. And yet blessed Job, by convicting himself in his penitence of two points, plainly shews, that every sinner ought in his penitence to have two groans, because, in truth, he has both not done the good which he ought, and has done the evil which he ought not. For hence is it that it is said by Moses, of him who took an oath to do any thing, either evil or good, and has transgressed it through forgetfulness, *Let him offer a she lamb from the flocks, or a she goat, and the priest shall pray for him, and for his sin. But if he is not able to offer a lamb, let him offer two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering.* [Lev. 5, 6. 7.] For to take an oath is to bind ourselves with a vow of servitude to God. And when we promise good works, we pledge ourselves to do well. But when we vow abstinence and the torture of our flesh, we swear to do ill to ourselves for the present. But because no one in this life is so perfect, however devoted to God, as not to sin in ever so small a degree in the midst of these pious vows, a she lamb of the flocks, or a she goat, is ordered to be offered for his sin. For what is signified by the she lamb, except the innocence of active life? what by the she goat, which often feeds as it is hanging on the summits and extremities of the rocks, but a life

of contemplation? He therefore who sees that he has not fulfilled what he has promised and proposed, ought the more studiously to prepare himself for the sacrifice of God, either by the innocence of good works, or by the lofty food of contemplation. And a she lamb is well ordered to be offered from the flocks, but a she goat not from the flocks; because an active life is the lot of many, a contemplative of few. And when we do those things which we see many are doing, or have done, we offer, as it were, a she lamb from the flocks. But when the power of the offerer is not equal to a she lamb, and she goat, it is added as a remedy for the penitent, that two young pigeons or two turtle doves may be offered. We know that young pigeons or turtle doves utter moans instead of a song. What then is designated by two young pigeons, or two turtle doves, except the twofold groaning of our penitence? That so when we rise not to the offering of good works, we may bewail ourselves in two ways, both because we have not done right, and have also wrought evil things. Whence also one turtle dove is ordered to be offered for a sin offering, but the other for a burnt offering. For a holocaust means ‘entirely burnt.’ We offer therefore one turtle dove for a sin offering, when we groan for our fault, but we make a holocaust of the other, when, because we have neglected good works, thoroughly inflaming ourselves, we glow with the fire of grief. Because therefore a twofold groaning is required in penitence, blessed Job, making progress by the chiding of God’s voice, and increasing in self-reproach, confesses with penitence that he has said one and another thing. As if he openly said, I have through negligence been slothful in good works, and through audacity have broken out into evil.

Chap. xl. ver. 1, 2. *But the Lord answered unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins as a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me.* [E.V. 6, 7]

What is the Lord answering out of the whirlwind, what blessed Job girding up his loins, what the demand of God, and the declaration of man,

has been already treated of in the first address of the Lord. Because therefore we forbear to weary our reader, we are especially careful not to repeat our words. It follows;

Ver. 3. *Wilt thou disannul My judgment, and condemn Me, that thou mayest be justified?* [E.V. 8]

5. Whoever strives to defend himself against the scourges of God, endeavours to set aside the judgment of Him Who inflicts them. For when he says that he is not smitten for his own fault, what else does he but accuse the injustice of the Smiter? The scourges of heaven therefore smote not blessed Job to extinguish in him his faults, but rather to increase his merits, in order that he who in the season of tranquillity had shone forth in so great sanctity, might also manifest from the blow what virtue of patience lay concealed within him. But he, not detecting his fault during the scourges, and yet not discovering that those very scourges were the cause of increasing his merit, believed that he was unjustly smitten, when he found nothing in himself which required to be corrected. But, lest his very innocence should be puffed up into the swelling of pride, he is reproved by the Divine voice; and his mind, free from iniquity, but weighed down by scourges, is recalled to the secret judgments; in order that the sentence of heaven, though not understood, may not be considered unjust: but that he may at least believe that every thing which he suffers is just, as it is doubtless plain that he is suffering at the hands of God. For the righteous will of our Maker, is a great satisfaction for the blow. For since it is wont to do nothing unjust, it is acknowledged to be just even though hid. For when we are smitten for the sin of injustice, if we are conjoined to the Divine will in our smiting, we are soon released from our injustice by this very conjunction. For whoever now endures the blow, but still knows not the causes of the blow, if he welcomes this very sentence against him, believing it to be just, he is at once released from his unrighteousness, just as he

rejoices that he has been justly smitten. For by associating himself with God in his own punishment, he sets up himself against himself; and great already is his righteousness, because he accords with the will of God in his punishment, from which he differed in sin. The holy man, therefore, because he had not disagreed with God through any sin, with difficulty, as it were, agreed with Him when in the midst of his punishments. For he believed not that the scourges, which commonly extinguish vices, were in him only increasing his merits. Whence he is now justly reproved, in order that even unwittingly he might be brought under the Divine judgments: and it is said to him; *Wilt thou disannul My judgment, and wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be justified?* As if it were plainly said; Thou considerest indeed thine own good deeds, but thou knowest not My secret judgments. If therefore thou disputest against My scourges, on account of thy merits, what else dost thou, but hasten to convict Me of injustice, by justifying thyself? It follows;

Ver. 4. *Hast thou an arm like God, and dost thou thunder with a voice like Him?* [E.V. 9]

6. Because blessed Job transcended in merits the race of men, his merciful Creator and Teacher challenges him to consider the resemblance of His greatness, in order that, having known the great dissimilarity, he may keep himself down in humility.

7. But when a voice and arm are spoken of in God, we must take the greatest care that our mind imagines nothing corporeal in Him. For to confine Him within the lineaments of a body, Who without circumscription fills and embraces all things, is to fall into the heresy of the Anthropomorphites. But Almighty God, in drawing us to His own things, humbles Himself even to ours, and, to teach lofty, condescends to lowly things; in order that the mind of little ones, being nourished with the things it knows, may rise to enquire into those it knows not, and hearing from Him

Who is far above it, some truths nigh itself, may move, as it were, some steps towards Him. Whence it happens, that in His own Scripture He sometimes from the bodies of men, sometimes from their minds, but sometimes from birds, and sometimes even from insensate objects, applies to Himself some very unlikely resemblances. For He frequently applies to Himself a resemblance from the bodies of men, as the Prophet says of Him to the Israelites, *He that hath touched you, toucheth the apple of His eye.* [Zech. 2, 8] And as it is said again of Him by the Prophet to a man who trusts in Him; *He will make a shadow for thee with His shoulders.* [Ps. 91, 4] It is doubtless admitted that God in His own nature has neither eye, nor shoulders; but since we see with our eye, but support burdens on our shoulders, God, because He sees all things, is said to have an eye; but because He carries us, and by carrying preserves us, He is said to make a shadow for us with His shoulders. For he says, *He will make a shadow for thee with His shoulders.* As if He were saying to man who was a sinner, and, after his sin asking pardon, The Lord protects thee with the same affection, with which He endured thee. For He shadows thee with His shoulders, because while He carries, He defends thee. But sometimes He applies to Himself a resemblance from our minds, as He *to,* says by the Prophet to Israel; *I have remembered thee, having pity on thy youth.* [Jer. 2, 2] And again speaking by the comparison of a wife, He says; *Even if she shall have forgotten, yet will I not forget thee.* [Is. 49, 15] For who can be ignorant, that the memory of God is neither broken off by oblivion, nor yet repaired by recollection? But when He neglects and passes over some things, He is said, after the manner of minds, to forget, and when, after a long time, He visits the things He wills, He is said, after the fashion of our changeableness, to have remembered. For how does oblivion weaken the strength of that Godhead, with Which even praiseworthy memory itself has no essential agreement. For men remember no things, except those which

are either past or absent. How then does God remember past things, when the very things which in themselves pass away, stand ever present at His beck? Or how does He call to mind things absent, when every thing that is, is present to Him, from the fact that it exists in Him? For if it were not present to Him, it would not exist at all; for things nonexistent He creates, by looking on them, things existent He keeps together, by looking on them. Whatever, therefore, the Creator beholds not, is bereft of the essence of subsistence. But sometimes a resemblance is applied to Him from birds, as is said by Moses, *He spread abroad His wings, and took them.* [Deut. 32, 11] And the Prophet says; *Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.* [Ps. 17, 8] For because when we are young He nourishes us, as He protects us, and cherishes us with no heavy and burdensome, but with light and gentle, protection, when He puts forth His mercies towards us, He extends His wings over us, as if after the manner of birds. He sometimes, with deep condescension, compares himself, on account of our infirmity, with objects without sense; as He says by the Prophet, *Behold, I will shriek over you, as a cart creaketh laden with hay.* [Amos 2, 13] For since the life of the carnal is hay, as it is written, *All flesh is hay;* [Is. 40, 6] in that the Lord endures the life of the carnal, He declares that He carries hay as a cart. And to creak under the weight of the hay is for Him to bear, with murmuring, the burdens and iniquities of sinners. When therefore He applies to Himself very unlike resemblances, we must carefully observe that some things of this kind are sometimes spoken of concerning God, on account of the effect of His doings, but sometimes to indicate the substance of His Majesty. For when an eye, shoulders, a foot, and wings, are said to be in God, the effect of His operation is set forth. But when hand, arm, right hand, or voice, is said to belong to God, by these words His Consubstantial Son is pointed out. For He is in truth both hand, and right hand, of Whose Ascension the Father speaks by Moses, saying, *I will lift up My hand to heaven, and I will swear*

by My right hand. [Deut. 32, 40] He is the arm, of Whom the Prophet says, *And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* [Is. 53, 1] He is the voice, because the Father said when He begat Him, *Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.* [Ps. 2, 7] And of Whom it is written, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* [John 1, 1] By this Word David declares that the Father made all things, saying, *He spake, and they were made.* [Ps. 33, 9] For God, therefore, to have an arm, is for Him to beget a Son that worketh; to thunder with His voice, is for Him to manifest fearfully to the world His Consubstantial Son. When therefore the Lord says to blessed Job, *Hast thou an arm like God, and dost thou thunder with a voice like Him?* by a wonderful dispensation of mercy He exalts, while He reproves him. Because He proves him to be superior to all, whom He surpasses only by comparison with Himself. To whom He subjoins with this proposal;

Ver. 5. *Surround thyself with beauty, and raise thyself on high, and be full of glory, and array thyself with beautiful garments.* [E.V. 10]

8. Thou understandest, As I. For He surrounds Himself with beauty, of Whom it is written, *The Lord hath reigned, He hath put on beauty.* [Ps. 93, 1] He is raised aloft in us, when He is proved to be in His own Nature unsearchable by our minds. But He is glorious, Who while He enjoys Himself, needs not any added praise. He is arrayed in beautiful garments, because He assumed for the service of His beauty, the choirs of the holy Angels, whom He created, and sets forth His Church as a kind of glorious garment, not having wrinkle or spot. Whence it is said to Him by the Prophet, *Thou hast put on confession, and beauty, clothed with light as with a garment.* [Ps. 104, 1. 2.] For here He puts on confession, there beauty; because those whom He has here made to confess by penitence, He will there set forth refulgent with the beauty of righteousness. He is clothed, therefore, with light as with a garment, because in that eternal glory He will

be clothed with all the Saints, to whom it is said, *Ye are the light of the world.* [Matt. 5, 14] Whence also it is said by the Evangelist, that when the Lord was transfigured in the mountain, His raiment became white as snow. In which transfiguration what else is announced but the glory of the final resurrection? For in the mountain His raiment became as snow, because in the height of heavenly brightness all Saints will be joined to Him, refulgent with the light of righteousness. But since He teaches, under the expression beautiful garments, how He unites the righteous to Himself, He shews also how He separates from Himself the unrighteous. It follows;

Ver. 6. *Scatter the proud in thy wrath.* [E.V. 11]

9. Thou understandest, As I, Who in the season of tranquillity bear with them united against Me, and when I come at last with severity, I scatter them in My wrath. But we must carefully observe on these subjects, that a grievous error of misbelief is admitted, if any one perchance thinks, that in that Substance of the Godhead, wrath and tranquillity are variable. For the Creator of all is supremely immortal, in that He is not changeable, like a creature. Hence it is said of Him by James, *With Whom is no variableness, nor shadow of change.* [James 1, 17] Hence again it is written, *But Thou, O Lord, judgest, with tranquillity.* [Wisd. 12, 18] Hence the Prophet says, *The land is made desert from the face of the anger of the Dove, from the face of the fury of the Lord.* [Jer. 25, 38] For that which he had first called the anger of the dove, he afterwards called the fury of the Lord. For the dove is a very simple animal; and because no inequality of fury steals in upon God, He called the fury of the Lord the anger of the dove. For to point out the inalterable might of the Divine severity, he termed it both ‘anger,’ and that of ‘the Dove.’ As if he were saying more plainly; He Who still continuing gentle punishes the unrighteous, inflicts unmoved a severe judgment. Whence also in the last Judgment, remaining immutable in Himself, He is not altered by any vicissitude or change; but yet He is not manifested to the

Elect and reprobate under the same appearance of unchangeableness, because He will appear calm to the righteous, but wrathful to the unrighteous. For by the witness of conscience within they bring themselves to a point, from which their minds behold alike One Person, but are not alike affected, because to the one their former righteousness represents Him as gentle, and to the others their sin represents Him as terrible. But who can explain their dread, when it falls to the lot of these wretched men, both to discern faults within themselves, and to see the righteous Judge before themselves? And it is doubtless the case in the daily course of the present life, that the hearts of men are being instructed in the character of the coming Judge. For when two persons are going to trial, the one conscious of his innocence, the other of his fault, even before the sentence is passed, they both look at the judge when still silent, and yet the guilty one suspects that this very silence of the judge is heavy wrath against him. Which wrath, his remembrance of his wickedness, and not the passion of the Judge, denounces against him: for though the sentence does not as yet outwardly proclaim him guilty, yet his conscience heavily accuses him within. But, on the other hand, the friend of justice beholds the countenance of him who is giving sentence, but rejoices within from the testimony of a good conscience, and as he has had nothing to fear in himself, he looks on every thing which is done to him as kind. In this place then the wrath of God means not any agitation of the Substance of the Godhead, but the enquiry of righteous vengeance upon sinners conscious of their guilt. For though they see Him to be calm in judgment, yet, from not doubting that they will be smitten by Him, they think that He is agitated in their emotions. It follows;

And behold every one that is arrogant, and abase him.

10. As if He said, As I. But as to the order of punishment, the sin of the proud is fitly mentioned before the arrogant; because in truth pride is not generated by arrogance, but arrogance by pride. But every sinner is looked

upon in two ways by the Lord, when he is either converted from sin, or punished for sin. Of looking in order to conversion it is said, that *the Lord looked upon Peter; and Peter, remembering the word of Jesus, wept bitterly.* [Luke 22, 61] With regard to punishment it is said again; *The countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil, to destroy the remembrance of them from the earth.* [Ps. 34, 16] But in both ways is the arrogant brought down in humility, because he either acknowledges his fault with penitence, or by perishing suffers punishment.

Ver. 7. *Look on all the proud, and confound them, and I tread down the wicked in their place.* [E.V. 12]

11. Thou understandest, As I. For the proud are confounded at the look of the Lord, either here, by His mercy, when acknowledging and condemning their faults, or there, by suffering punishments from His justice. But pride itself is the place of the wicked; for, since it is written, *Pride is the beginning of all sin,* [Ecclus. 10, 13] it is comprised in that place, whence impiety arises; although impiety hardly differs from pride. For to be very proud is to think impiety of our Maker. The impious then is trodden down in his place, because he is crushed by that very pride, by which he is raised up; and when by boasting he raises himself in his thoughts, he hides from himself the light of righteousness, which he ought to find. But frequently when he is outwardly advancing his false glory against God, he is inwardly wasting away in real misery. Whence the Prophet says; *Thou castedst them down while they were being raised up.* [Ps. 73, 18] For he says not, Thou castedst them down after they were raised up, but while they were being raised up; because the very fact, that the proud happen to be exalted outwardly by false glory, is their being cast down within. For in the course of the divine judgment here, one thing is not their fault, and another their punishment; but their very fault is to them converted into punishment, so that when they are exalted with the

haughtiness of pride, that which appears outwardly their progress, is itself in truth their inward fall. It follows;

Ver. 8. *Hide them in the dust, and at the same time plunge their faces into the pit.* [E.V. 13]

12. As if He said, As I. For God by a just judgment hides the proud and impious in the dust, because He permits their hearts to be overwhelmed with those earthly employments, which they choose, having scorned the love of their Creator. Whence also when He enquires into their conduct, He acknowledges it not, as though it were hid from Him saying; *I know not who ye are.* [Luke 13, 27] The life of the wicked is hidden under the dust, because it is weighed down by mean and grovelling desires. For whoever still desires these things that are of the world, appears not, as it were, before the face of the true light, because he is in truth concealed under the dust of earthly thought. The burdened mind endures this dust of wicked thoughts, which the wind of most evil temptation brings with it. For hence it is that it is said by the Prophet, of every soul which is weighed down by earthly desires, under the character of Ephraim, *Ephraim has become as bread under the ashes, which is not turned.* [Hos. 7, 8] For by nature our intention is well fashioned, to rise towards God; but from an evil habit of conversation pleasure arises, to weigh us down towards the present world. But bread under the ashes, is cleaner on that side, which it conceals beneath, and dirtier on that, on which it bears the ashes from above. Whoever therefore neglects the effort with which he ought to seek God, presses down the cleaner side, like bread under the ashes, and when he willingly endures the cares of the world, he bears, as it were, above him a heap of ashes. But the bread under the ashes would be reversed, if he were to throw off the ash of carnal desires, and display above that good intention, which he had, by neglecting it, kept under in himself. But he refuses to be turned, when a mind, weighed down with the love of secular cares, neglects to throw off

the mass of ashes which lies upon it; and when it seeks not to rise up to a good intention, it presses under the cleaner surface.

13. But it is fitly subjoined; *And at the same time plunge their faces into the pit.* As if He said, As I. For by a just judgment the Lord plunges the faces of the proud into the pit; because He casts down the intention of their heart, when it raises itself above men. For he whose face turns to the pit, looks towards things below. And it is well said of the proud, that their faces are plunged into the pit; because they are sinking lower, when through pride they are seeking higher things; and the more they raise themselves in their exaltation, the lower do they tend in their fall. For they seek earthly glory, and the things to which they look forward are of the basest kind, whilst they follow after high things in their pride. Whence it comes to pass in a wonderful and contrary manner, that the humble seek after heaven, whilst they cast themselves down the lower, and that the proud pursue the lowest objects, while by despising others they are raised, as it were, higher. The one, while they despise themselves, are united to heavenly things, the latter, while they exalt themselves, are separated from higher things. And, so to speak, the one, by elevating, depress, the other, by depressing, elevate themselves. And it is well said of the proud by the Psalmist; *But He humbleth the sinners even to the earth;* because by seeking after those things that are below, while they raise and extol themselves, what else do they, but, having lost heaven, fall to the earth? For their having already fallen to the bottom is their having sought after things below, having forsaken things above. Their faces are therefore rightly said to be plunged into the pit, because by following after things below, they tend to the pit of hell. For it comes to pass by a just judgment, that those whom wilful aversion benightens here, the well-deserved pit of punishment there excludes from the view of the true light. Because therefore the holy man is questioned with so great a dread of Divine Power, as to have it said to him,

Hast thou an arm like God, or dost thou thunder with a voice like Him? Scatter the proud in thy wrath, and behold every one that is arrogant, and abase him, and other things which God is able to do, but man is hardly able to hear; the Lord shews with what intention He first spoke of all these things, by the end of the conclusion subjoined; saying,

Ver. 9. *And I will confess that thy right hand can save thee.* [E.V. 14]

14. As if He were openly saying, If thou art able to do these terrible things, which I Myself have displayed, I attribute to thee, and not to Myself, all the good things thou hast done. But if thou canst not destroy others, that sin, by a look, it is plain that thou canst not set thyself free from the guilt of wickedness, by thy own power. Behold! it is said by the Divine voice to blessed Job, that he is not saved by his own right hand, and yet certain men, who are far from the strength of this man, despising the assistance of God, trust that they can be saved by their own strength. And for these what else ought we to pray, except that, if they have already received the gifts of good works, they may receive also this gift, to know from Whom they have received them? But since the Lord in the preceding words mentioned the greatness of His power, He now in what follows points out the wickedness of the ancient enemy: in order that the good servant, having first heard of the virtues of the Lord, might know how much to love, and having known afterwards the craft of the devil, might learn how much to fear. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *The lion will roar, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who will not prophesy?* [Amos 3, 8] For after the power of his Creator has been made known to him, the strength of his adversary ought not to be concealed from him, in order that he might submit himself the more humbly to his defender, the more accurately he had learned the wickedness of his enemy, and might more ardently seek his Creator, the more terrible he found the enemy to be, whom he had to avoid. For it is certain that he who less understands the danger he has escaped, loves his

deliverer less; and that he who considers the strength of his adversary to be feeble, regards the solace of his defender as worthless. Whence the Prophet rightly said, ascribing his deliverance to the Lord; *I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength,* [Ps. 18, 1] plainly saying, that is, I love Thee the more, the more, feeling my own infirmity, I acknowledge Thee to be my strength. Hence he says again, *Make Thy loving-kindness marvellous, O Thou that savest them that trust in Thee:* [Ps. 17, 7] because the loving-kindnesses of the Lord doubtless then become wonderful to us who are delivered, when, by the same loving-kindnesses, it is found how grievous were the perils we have escaped.

15. And because the Lord, in the preceding part of His speech, disclosed to blessed Job the marvellous works of subsequent Saints, that he might learn, on hearing them, how humbly he ought to think of the height of his own virtues; it is now shewn him with what enemy he is waging war, and his strength and his crafts are more accurately pointed out, in order that he who has been led to converse with his Maker, may know plainly the arguments of the adversary. For in the words which follow, the Lord makes known to His faithful servant all the machinations of the crafty enemy, all wherein he seizes by oppressing, all wherein he flies around with insidiousness, all wherein he frightens by threatening; all wherein he allures by persuasion, all wherein he crushes by desperation, all wherein he deceives by promising. He commences therefore all his contests of craftiness, saying;

Ver. 10. *Behold Behemoth, which I made with thee.* [E.V. 15]

16. Whom does He suggest, under the name 'Behemoth,' except the ancient enemy? which being interpreted from the Hebrew word, means 'Animal' in the Latin tongue. For when his malice is added below, his person is plainly pointed out. But since it is written of God that He made all things together, why does He declare that He made this animal at the same

time with man, when it is plain that He made all things at once? Again, we must enquire how God created all things at once, when Moses describes them as created separately with the varying change of six days. But we learn this the more readily, if we enquire minutely into the actual cases themselves of their beginnings. For the substance of things was indeed created at once, but the form was not fashioned at once: and that which existed at the same time in the substance of matter, appeared not at the same time by the figure of its shape. For when heaven and earth are described as made at the same time, it is pointed out that things spiritual and things corporeal, whatever arises from heaven, and whatever is produced from earth, were created all of them together. For the sun, the moon, and the stars, are said to have been created in the heaven on the fourth day: but that which on the fourth day came forth in appearance, existed on the first day in the substance of heaven by the creation. The earth is said to have been created on the first day, and the trees and all the green things of the earth are described as being made on the third. But that which on the third day put itself forth in appearance, was doubtless created on the first day in the substance of the earth, from which it sprung. Hence it is that Moses distinctly related the creation of all things in separate days, and yet added that all were created at the same time, saying, *These are the generations of the heaven and the earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord made the heaven, and the earth, and every plant of the field, before it sprung up in the earth, and every herb of the region.* [Gen. 2, 4, 5] For he who had related that the heaven, and the earth, the trees and herbs, were created on different days, now declares that they were made on one day; in order clearly to point out that every creature began to be at the same time in substance, although it came not forth at the same time in appearance. Hence also it is written there, *God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them.* [Gen. 1, 27] For

Eve is not as yet described as having been made, and yet man is already said to be male and female. But because woman was certainly about to come forth from the side of Adam, she is already reckoned as being in him in substance, from whom she was hereafter to come forth in form. But we can consider these points in the smallest matters, in order from the smallest to consider greater. For when the herb is created, neither fruit, nor the seed of its fruit, as yet appears in it. But fruit and seed exist therein, even when they appear not; because they doubtless exist together in the substance of the root, which appear not together in the increase of time.

17. But because we say that those things are created at the same time in substance, which we find come forth the one from the other, in what way is Behemoth declared to be created together with blessed Job, when, neither is the substance of an angel, and of a man the same, and man springs not forth from an angel, nor an angel from a man? But if Behemoth is said to be created together with blessed Job, because every creature is without question created at the same time by a Maker, Who is not spread out in His doings in extent of time, why is that specially said of Behemoth, which is possessed in common with all creatures in general? But if we weigh the causes of things with accurate enquiry, we learn that Angels and men were created together; together, that is, not in unity of time, but in the knowledge of reason; together, by receiving the image of wisdom, and not together by the union of the substance of their form. For it is written of man, *Let us make man after Our image and likeness.* [Gen. 1, 26] And it is said to Satan by Ezekiel, *Thou wast a seal of similitude, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty in the delights of the Paradise of God.* [Ez. 28, 12] In the whole creation, then, men and angels came into being together, because they came forth distinct from every irrational creature. Because then in all the creation there is no rational being but men and Angels, whatever can not exercise reason, is not made together with Man. Let it be said then to man, let it be

said of the angel, who although he lost the power of his high estate, yet lost not the subtlety of a rational nature; *Behold, Behemoth, which I made with thee.* In order that while man considers that he who was made together with him in reason has perished, he may, from the ruin of him who is near him, fear that the fall of pride is nigh himself also. But we must carefully notice that in these words, the wicked doctrine of Manichæus is plainly reproved by the voice of the Lord; for he, when he speaks of two principles, endeavours to establish that the 'race of darkness' was not created. For how is that most wicked race said to have not been made, when the Lord declares that He created that Behemoth, the author, namely, of wickedness, who was rightly fashioned by nature? But because we have heard with whom that Behemoth was made, let us hear what he does, when ruined. It follows;

He will eat hay as an ox.

18. If we carefully examine the words of the Prophets, we discover that these and they were put forth by the same Spirit. For when Isaiah observed the life of sinners devoured by the ancient and insatiable enemy, he said, the *lion shall eat straw like the ox.* [Is. 11, 7] But what is signified by the words hay, and straw, except the life of the carnal? Of which it is said by the Prophet, *All flesh is hay.* [Is. 40, 6] He then who here is 'Behemoth,' is there a 'lion;' they who are here called 'hay,' are there called 'straw.' But the mind strives to enquire why this lion in Isaiah, or Behemoth as he is called by the voice of the Lord, is in both passages compared not to a horse, but an ox. But we ascertain this the sooner, if we consider what is the difference of foods in the two animals. For horses eat hay, however dirty, but drink clean water only. But oxen drink water, however filthy, but feed only on clean hay. What then is it, for which this Behemoth is compared to an ox, which feeds on clean food, except that which is said of this ancient enemy by another Prophet; *His food is choice.* [Hab. 1, 16] For he rejoices not in

seizing those whom he beholds lying of their own accord in the lowest depths with himself, involved in wicked and filthy actions. He therefore seeks to eat hay as an ox, because he seeks to wound with the fang of his suggestion the pure life of the spiritual.

19. But I see we must enquire, how this Behemoth, who eats hay like an ox, is said to destroy the life of the spiritual, when, as was before said, by the word 'hay' is designated the life of the carnal. His food also will no longer be choice, if, in eating hay, he seizes the carnal. But it occurs at once in reply, that some men are both hay in the sight of God, and among men are counted under the name of holiness, when their life displays one thing before the eyes of men, and before the Divine judgment their conscience intends another. They therefore in the opinion of men are 'choice,' ['electi'] but in the accurate judgment of the Lord are 'hay.' Was not Saul hay in the sight of God, of whom the Prophet Samuel said to the people, *Ye surely see him whom the Lord hath chosen,* [1 Sam. 10, 24] and of whom it is said just above, *He is choice and good?* [ib. 9, 2] For he whom the sinful people deserved, was both reprobate in the sight of God, and yet in the order of causes was choice and good. That many are hay, and suspect that they are Elect from the opinion of men, is well said by Solomon; *I saw the wicked buried, who even while they were still living were in the holy place, and were praised in the city as if of good works.* [Eccles. 8, 10] That many are hay, but yet are protected by the favour of sanctity, a certain wise man well points out, saying, *Pass over, O stranger, and furnish a table.* [Ecclus. 29, 26] For a stranger is said by passing over to furnish a table; because if any one standing at the altar of God seeks his own glory by good works, both the praise of the altar is extended by the display of his sanctity, and yet he himself is not counted by God in the number of the citizens. His opinion advances with others, and yet he himself 'passes over as a stranger' from God. He therefore 'adorned the table in passing over,' because he would not

remain at the sacrifice, who in all he studied to do descended in thought to the praises of men. Because then some persons studiously lead a clean life, but seek not thereby to approve themselves within, his food is both rightly said to be choice, and yet this Behemoth is said to eat hay as an ox. For clean hay lies, as it were, on the ground, and below, before the mouth of this Behemoth, when both a life is passed, as it were, in innocence through keeping the commandments, and yet in the midst of conduct which is set forth as good, the heart is not raised to seek after things above. What useful purpose then does he effect, who guards purity of life in himself, if by his base intention, he leaves himself on the earth to be found by the mouth of this Behemoth? Because therefore Almighty God informs us what our enemy is doing, let Him now make known to us how he prevails, in order that the more the wickedness of his cunning is known, the more easily it may be overcome. It follows;

Ver. 11. *His strengthen is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.*

20. The places for the seed of coition are said to be in the loins with men, but in the navel with women. For hence it is that the Truth says to His disciples; *Let your loins be girded about.* [Luke 12, 35] Hence Peter, when keeping away lust from the heart, admonished, saying, *Girded up in the loins of your mind.* [1 Pet. 1, 13] Hence Paul, when saying that the priesthood of Levi was tithed by the sacrifice of Abraham in the time of Melchisedec, said, in shewing where Levi was then concealed in the body of his father; *For he was yet in the loins of his father.* But that the seed-vessel of lust is with women contained in the navel, the Prophet witnesses, who, reproving the wantonness of Judaea, under the character of a prostituted woman, says; *In the day of thy birth thy navel was not cut.* [Ez. 16, 4] For to cut the navel in the day of birth, is to cut off the lust of the flesh at the time of conversion. For since it is difficult to correct evil beginnings, and to mould

into a better shape things that have once been shapen amiss, Judaea is blamed from her birth, as having, while born of God, retained her navel unsevered, because she lopped not off the loosenesses [‘fluxa’] of lust. Because therefore both sexes are grievously overcome by the infirmity of lust, through the power of the devil, his strength is both said to be in his loins, against men, and his force in his navel, against women.

21. But why, when He had first mentioned this Behemoth as eating hay, did He subjoin the fatal effects of lust, as the first arguments of his deception? Except that it is plain to all, that after pride has once seized the spirit of a man, he immediately stretches forth to the pollution of the flesh. Which we observe even in the first man and woman; who, by covering their shameful parts, after the commission of pride, plainly shewed that after they had endeavoured in themselves to grasp at high things within, they presently were subject in the flesh to what bringeth shame without. This Behemoth therefore, who rages insatiably, and seeks to devour the whole man at once, at one time exalts his mind to pride at another corrupts his flesh with the pleasure of lust. But his strength is well said not to be in the loins or the navel of them who are overcome; but, *his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.* As if it were plainly said, His strength is in his own loins, and his force is in the navel of his own belly; because they doubtless specially become his body, who, being deceived by the blandishments of base suggestions, submit to him through the loosenesses of lust. It follows,

Ver. 12. *He setteth fast his tail, like a cedar.* [E.V. 17]

22. There are in these words many points, to be brought forward for moral instruction. But we examine in the first place the violences of this Behemoth, in order afterwards to detect more accurately his crafts. In Holy Scripture under the name ‘cedar,’ sometimes the lofty excellence of heavenly glory is expressed; but sometimes the stubborn pride of the

wicked is designated. By the name ‘cedar’ is expressed the loftiness of heavenly glory, as the Psalmist witnesses, *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall be multiplied like a cedar in Libanus.* [Ps. 92, 12] Again, under the name ‘cedar’ is designated the haughty power of the wicked, as is said by the same Prophet; *The voice of the Lord breaking the cedars.* [Ps. 29, 5] But what is meant by the tail of this Behemoth, except that latter end of the ancient enemy, when he enters, doubtless, that ruined man, his peculiar vessel, who is specially called Antichrist? For since he is permitted, at one time by the honours of the world, at another by signs and prodigies of pretended sanctity, to be elevated to the swelling of power, his tail is rightly compared by the voice of the Lord to a cedar. For as a cedar leaves behind other trees by increasing in height, in like manner will Antichrist, possessing in temporal things the glory of the world, surpass at this time the standard of man both in the height of his honour, and in the power of his miracles. For there is in him a spirit, who having been created in high estate, lost not, even when cast down, the power of his nature. But his power is at present very little displayed, because it is held bound by an exercise [‘dispensatione’] of Divine strength. Whence it is said by John; *I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand: and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand gears, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him.* [Rev. 20, 1-3] For he is said to be bound, and cast into the bottomless pit; because he is thrust back and bound in the hearts of the wicked by Divine power, so as not to be unchecked, as far as he is able to hurt; that, though he may secretly rage by them, he may not break forth into the violent ravages of pride. But it is there intimated how he is to be loosed at the end of the world; *And after the thousand years shall have been completed, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out, and seduce the nations.* [ib. v.

7] For by the number ‘thousand,’ on account of its perfection, is expressed this whole period, whatever it be, of Holy Church. On the completion of which the ancient enemy, given up to his own strength, for a short time, but with much power is let loose against us.

23. But though his fierceness makes him break forth into cruelty, yet the Divine pity confines him with fewness of days. For hence the Truth says by Itself, *Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, nor shall be.* [Matt. 24, 21] Hence again It says, *Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.* [ib. v. 22] For since the Lord beholds us to be both proud and weak, those days, which He spoke of as singularly evil, He, in His mercy, says were shortened; in order doubtless to alarm our pride by the adversity of the time, and to comfort our weakness by the shortness of the days.

24. But it must be greatly considered, in what way that Behemoth, when he raises his tail as a cedar, arises with greater fierceness than he now exerts himself. For what kinds of punishments do we know, at which we rejoice not as having already exercised the strength of Martyrs? For the sword plunged in the neck prostrated some with a sudden blow; the cross torturing [‘crucis patibulum’] fastened some, in which death is both repelled when courted, and courted when repelled; some the saw ground with its rugged teeth; some the iron-armed hoof trampled on and mangled [‘carpsit,’ al. sparsit,’ ‘dashed in pieces’]; some the rage of beasts tore limb from limb with their bite; some the force of blows imprinted through the skin pierced from their inmost entrails; some the deep dug earth buried alive; some the precipice crushed when hurled headlong to death; some the water drowned and swallowed up when plunged into it; some the devouring flame fed upon and consumed to ashes. When therefore this Behemoth expands his tail more fatally, in the end of the world, what greater cruelty can spring up in these torments, except that which the Truth says Itself in the Gospel; *There*

shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, so that, if possible, even the Elect may be led into error. [Matt. 24, 24] For now our faithful ones do wonders, when they suffer wrongs, but at that time the ministers of this Behemoth are about to do wonders, even when they inflict wrongs. Let us consider therefore what will be that temptation of the mind of man, when both the pious martyr submits his body to tortures, and yet his torturer works miracles before his eyes! Whose resolution would not then be shaken, from the very bottom of his thoughts, when he who tortures with the scourges, glitters also with miracles? Let it be rightly said then; *He setteth up his tail as a cedar,* because he will doubtless be exalted from reverence for the prodigy, and harsh with the cruelty of his torture.

25. For he is then not exalted only in power, but is supported also by the display of miracles. Whence is it also said by David; *He lieth in wait in secret, as a lion in his den.* [Ps. 10, 9] For for open power, it would have sufficed, if he had been a lion, even though he had not lain in wait: and again for secret craft, it would have sufficed for him to have spoiled secretly in ambush, even if he had not been a lion. But because this ancient enemy is unchecked in all his strength, he is permitted to rage in both ways, so as that he is let loose in contest against the Elect both by fraud and strength; in strength by his power, in fraud by his miracles. He is therefore rightly said to be both a lion, and lying in wait: lying in wait by the splendour of his miracles, a lion by his secular power. For in order to draw those who are openly wicked, he displays his secular power; but in order to deceive even the just, he pretends sanctity by his miracles. For he persuades the one by the height of his greatness, he deceives the others by a display of sanctity. Of this tail of this Behemoth, it is said by John, under the form of a dragon; *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth.* [Rev. 12, 4] For heaven is the Church, which in this night of the

present life, when it contains within it the countless virtues of the Saints, glitters from above with radiant stars. But the tail of the dragon casts down the stars to the earth, because that latter end of Satan, exalted by the boldness of the man it has assumed, by gaining possession of some, whom it finds in the Church as if the Elect of God, shews them to be reprobates. For stars therefore to fall from heaven, is for some, having abandoned the hope of heavenly things, to be eager, under his guidance, for the pursuit of secular glory.

26. Hence Daniel speaks against this tail of the dragon in the person of Antiochus, saying, *It cast down some of the strong host, and of the stars, and stamped upon them, and magnified himself even to the prince of the strong host, and took away from him the perpetual sacrifice, and cast down the place of his sanctification. But strength was given him against the perpetual sacrifice, by reason of transgressions; and truth will be cast down in the earth, and he will do, and prosper.* [Dan. 8, 10-12] For he casts down some of the strong host [‘de fortitudine’], and of the stars, when he crushes some who both are resplendent with the light of righteousness, and strong through the virtue of their works. And he magnifies himself as far as to the prince of the host, because he sets himself up against the Author of virtue Himself. He takes away the perpetual sacrifice; because he breaks off the desire of conversation in the Church in those whom he has seized. But strength is given him against the perpetual sacrifice by reason of transgressions; because unless the deserts of those who are perishing demanded it, the adversary would never be able to gain possession of those who were believed to be righteous. Truth is cast down in the earth, because belief in heavenly things is then perverted into a longing for temporal life. And he will do and prosper; because he will then do his violence not only on the minds of the reprobate, but also on the bodies of the Elect with incalculable cruelty, without any opposition. Hence again it is said by

Daniel, *A king of shameless face, and understanding dark sentences shall rise up, and his power shall be rendered strong, but not in his own strength.* [Dan. 8, 23. 24.] For the power of that man is not strengthened by his own strength, because by the might of Satan he is exalted to the glory of perdition. Hence again he says; *He shall slay the mighty and the holy people, according to his will, and craft shall be directed aright in his hand.* [ib. 24. 25.] For he slays the mighty, when he overcomes, in their bodies, those who are unconquered in mind. Or he certainly slays the mighty, and the people of the Saints, according to his will, when he draws at the beck of his will those who were believed to be mighty and holy. And craft is directed aright in his hand, because in him craft is helped on by his doings. For that which he says in his craft, be supports by working wonders; for whatever his lying tongue pretends, that does the hand of his work set forth, as if true.

27. Hence again he says; *He will rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken without hand.* [ib. 25.] Hence Paul says, *So that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself, as if he were God.* [2 Thess. 2, 4] Hence again he says; *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.* [ib. 8] For that which is said by Daniel, *He will rise up against the Prince of princes,* is expressed by Paul, *So that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself as if he were God.* And that which is subjoined by Daniel, *He shall be broken without hand,* is expressed by Paul, *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth.* For he will be broken without hand, because he will be smitten with eternal death, not in battle with the Angels, not in contest with the Saints, but through the coming of the Judge, by the breath of His mouth alone. Of the pride of this Behemoth it is also said by Paul, *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.* [2 Thess. 2, 4] Of whom Daniel, when saying that the fourth beast

was strengthened with ten horns, immediately added, *I was considering the horns, and behold there came up from the midst of them another little horn, and three of the first horns were plucked up from before its face, and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.* [Dan. 7, 8] He is described in truth as the eleventh horn of this beast, because the power of his kingdom is strengthened by iniquity. For every sin belongs to the number eleven, because while it does perverse things, it goes beyond the precepts of the decalogue. And because sin is bewailed in goats' hair, hence it is that in the Tabernacle there are made eleven veils of goats' hair. [Ex. 26, 7] Hence it is said in the eleventh psalm, *Save me, Lord, for the godly man hath ceased.* [Ps. 12, 1] Hence Peter, being afraid of the Apostles continuing in the number eleven, sought, by casting lots, for Matthias as the twelfth. [Acts 1, 15-26] For unless he observed that fault was signified by the number eleven, he would not be so hastily anxious for the number of the Apostles to be completed to that of twelve. Because therefore transgression is expressed by the number eleven, the author of transgression himself is indicated by the eleventh horn of this beast. Which springs up of small size in truth, because he is born a mere man; but it increases hugely, because he advances even to the power of angelic strength united to himself. And it plucks up the three horns, which are before its face, because he subjects to his power the same number of kingdoms which are near him. And its eyes are like the eyes of a man, but its mouth speaketh great things, because there is seen in him the form indeed of a man, but in his words he is exalted above men. That then which is said by Paul, *Exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped,* [2 Thess. 2, 1] this the Prophet Daniel witnesses, saying, *A mouth speaking great things.* [Dan. 7, 8] But Daniel's declaring that he speaks great things, or Paul that he is exalted above the worship of the Godhead, is the very thing which in the words of God to blessed Job is compared to a cedar. For, like a cedar, he

strives after high things, when, in all the pride of deceit, he prospers both in strength of might, and in height of elevation. But he is well said to set fast his tail, because his whole power is brought together and condensed in that one ruined man, in order that he may the more perform mighty and marvellous things through him, the more he urges him on by his collected strength. But since we have heard of what kind is the head of the wicked, let us now learn what members cleave to this head. It follows;

The sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

28. This Behemoth has as many ‘stones,’ as he possesses preachers of his iniquity. Are not they who corrupt the hearts of men with evil persuasions, by pouring in the poisonous seeds of their error, his stones? But it is fitly said, that the sinews of his stones are wrapped together, because, namely, the arguments of his preachers are bound together with cunning assertions, as to pretend to be right, which persuade perverse things, so that though the entanglement of their assertions can be seen, like the wrapping together of sinews, yet it cannot be unravelled. His ‘stones’ have their ‘sinews wrapped together,’ because the acuteness of his preachers is concealed beneath ambiguous assertions. But generally when they infect hearts with their words, they display innocency in their conduct. For they would not attract the good to them by their persuasion, if they were to exhibit themselves as perverse in their conduct also. But because they are the stones of this beast, and are bound by sinews wrapped together, they both display themselves as upright in order to escape notice, and preach perverse things in order to corrupt, imitating, doubtless, their head, who, as a lion in ambush, both rages by the power of earthly dignity, and flatters by a show of sanctity. But would that this beast were acting thus then only, and that he had not now also these testicles of lust to corrupt the inner parts of the faithful. For not only is that which is evil infused with the speaking of the mouth, but that which is worse is held by more in the example of

conduct. For how many have not beheld Antichrist, and yet are his testicles: because they corrupt the hearts of the innocent by the example of their doings! For whoever is exalted with pride, whoever is tortured by the longings of covetousness, whoever is relaxed with the pleasures of lust, whoever is kindled by the burnings of unjust and immoderate anger, what else is he but a testicle of Antichrist? For while he willingly engages himself in his service, he furnishes by his example the progeny of error to others. The one works wickedly, the other cleaves to those who work wickedly; and so far from opposing, even favours them. What else then but a testicle of Antichrist is he, who having cast aside the authority of the faith he has pledged to God, witnesses in favour of error? But if any reprove these persons, they presently conceal themselves under some cloke of defence; for since their sinews are wrapped together, and entangled for evil, they cannot be released from corruption. It follows;

Ver. 13. *His bones are as pipes of brass.* [E.V. 18]

29. In the body they are bones which hold the members together, and members which are held together. This beast then has flesh, it has bones also; because there are some wicked persons, who are yet retained in error by others, and others still more wicked who retain others also in error. What else then do we understand by the bones of Antichrist, but some more powerful persons in his body? in whose hearts while iniquity has become greatly hardened, the whole framework of his body is held together by them. For there appear to be many rich in this world, who while relying on their possessions and wealth, are consolidated, as it were, by strength, but by lavishing these goods by which they were supported, they lead others into their own error. At one time they allure others by their gifts to become wicked, at another they bind others by their presents to continue in wickedness. What then are these but bones of Antichrist, who while they multiply the wicked by keeping them together, support the flesh in his

body? These sometimes exhibit a sweetness of speech in deceiving their hearers, because even thorns produce flowers, and that in them which smells sweetly is seen, that which wounds is hid. They blend the sweet with the bitter, the soothing with the hurtful, and though they strive to be admired, by reason of their power, yet through their skill in deceiving, they abase themselves, as if humbly, by their easy address, and by their speech insinuate that of themselves, which they deny by their outward conduct.

30. Whence also the ‘bones’ of this Behemoth are rightly compared to pipes of brass, because doubtless like insensible metal, they have the sound of right speech, but not the sense of right living. For they assert, as if humbly, that in words, which they set at nought by living haughtily. Whence it is well said by Paul; *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charily, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.* [1 Cor. 13, 1] For he who speaks good things, but pursues not the same good things through love, utters a sound like brass or a cymbal; because he himself feels not the words which he utters. But there are some in the body of this beast, not illustrious from honours, not supported by riches, not adorned with the beauty of virtues, not skilled in the science of cunning, who yet aim at appearing such as they are not, and who are therefore more hurtful to the life of the righteous. Of whom it also follows,

His cartilage as plates of iron.

31. For cartilage has indeed the appearance of bone, but has not the strength of bone. What is meant then by his cartilage being compared to plates of iron, except that those in him who are most feeble, are more evilly disposed for the perpetration of wickedness? For other metals are cut by iron, and his cartilage is said to be like iron, because those in his body who are unequal to the display of mighty powers, are the more violently inflamed to cause the death of the faithful. For because they consider that they cannot with him work signs and prodigies, they prove themselves

faithful to him by their cruelty, and instead of being able to corrupt by their persuasion the hearts of the innocent, they glory in destroying the bodies of the good manifoldly more than others. It is therefore well said; *His cartilage is as plates of iron;* because that which any one would believe to be the weaker part of his body, is the very thing which wounds the more fatally. And they are rightly compared not to iron only, but to 'plates of iron,' because while they go about to spread themselves out on every side in cruelty, they extend themselves, as it were, into plates of iron.

32. It seems good to us to examine with a stricter hand of enquiry these same words of the Creator, which seem already discussed, and to gather more abundant fruits of understanding for moral instruction. For since we have heard what the ancient enemy effects against men, by the man he has assumed, it remains for us now to examine what he works in men even by himself, without the aid of men. For behold it is said,

Ver. 12. *He setteth fast his tail, like a cedar.* [E.V. 17]

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

33. The first suggestion of the serpent is soft indeed, and tender, and easily to be crushed by the foot of virtue. But if it is carelessly allowed to gain strength, and access is freely allowed it to the heart, it increases itself with such great power, as to weigh down the enslaved mind, and to increase to intolerable strength. He is said therefore to set fast his tail like a cedar, because his temptation when once received in the heart, in all subsequent assaults, rules as if by right. The head of this Behemoth therefore is grass, his tail a cedar, he fawns and humbles himself at this first suggestion, but gaining great strength by habit, he is hardened in the increasing close of temptation. For every thing which he suggests at first is easily overcome; but thence there follows, that which can hardly be overcome. For he first addresses the mind in gentle terms, as if advising it: but when he has once

fastened on it the fang of pleasure, he is afterwards bound to it almost indissolubly, by powerful habit. Whence also he is well said to ‘set fast his tail.’ For he wounds with his tooth, but binds with his tail; because he strikes with the first suggestion, but binds the mind, once struck, with the increasing close of temptation, that it cannot escape. For since sin is admitted in three ways, namely, when it is perpetrated by the suggestion of the serpent, with the pleasure of the flesh, with the consent of the spirit; this Behemoth first puts forth his tongue, suggesting unlawful thoughts, afterwards alluring to delight, he infixes his tooth; but lastly, gaining possession by consent, he clenches his tail. Hence it is that some persons blame in themselves sins which have been committed through long habit, and avoid them in judgment, but cannot even though contending against them avoid them in act; because when they do not crush the head of this Behemoth, they are frequently, even against their will, bound by his tail. And this has become as hard as a cedar against them, because it has grown up from the alluring pleasure of its beginning even to the violence of retention. Let it be said then; *He clencheth his tail like a cedar;* in order that every one should the more avoid the beginnings of temptation, the more he understands that it cannot be easily escaped from at the last.

34. It should be known also, that to those whom he has seized, he commonly suggests more grievous sins, when he knows that they are drawing near the close of this present life: and that the more he considers that he is about to consummate the temptation, the more heavy burdens of iniquities does he heap upon them. Behemoth, therefore, clenches his tail like a cedar, because those whom he has seized by evil beginnings, he makes worse at the end; in order that the sooner his temptations are to cease, the more mightily they may be fulfilled. For since he is busied to make their suffering equal to his own punishment, the more ardently does he strive to exaggerate every sin, before their death. But frequently this

Behemoth possesses a heart already fatally subject to him, but yet Divine grace repels him; and the gift of mercy ejects him whom the captive will brought in to itself. And when he is expelled from a heart, he strives to inflict sharper wounds of sin, in order that the mind may feel, when assaulted by him, those waves of temptations, which it knew not even when possessed by him. Which is well expressed in the Gospel, when the unclean spirit is said at the Lord's bidding to go forth from a man. For when the boy, which was possessed by the spirit, was presented to Him, it is written; *Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, saying, Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And it cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him.* [Mark 9, 25. 26.] Behold, it had not rent him, when it possessed him, it rent him when it came out; because he doubtless then harasses the thoughts of the mind more fearfully, when, compelled by Divine power, he draws near his departure. And him whom he had possessed as a dumb spirit, he was leaving with cries: because frequently, when in possession, he inflicts smaller temptations; but when he is expelling from the heart, he disturbs it with sharper assaults. It is therefore well said, *He clencheth his tail like a cedar,* both because when possessing a heart, he always increases in malice at the end; and when leaving a heart, he smites it with severer wounds of thoughts. But, through the wonderful compassion of the Creator, the more subtle arguments of this Behemoth are also laid open, when it is subjoined;

The sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

35. The sinews of his stones are the deadly arguments of his machinations. For by these he rouses the strength of his cunning, and corrupts the unstable hearts of men. His stones are wicked suggestions, with which he rages in the corruption of the mind, and begets in the debauched soul the progeny of wicked works. But the sinews of these stones are wrapped together, because the arguments of his suggestions are bound

together by complicated devices; so as to make many sin in such a way, that, if they wish perchance to escape a sin, they cannot escape it without being entangled in another sin; and that they commit a fault in avoiding it, and that they are unable to release themselves from one, unless they consent to be bound by another. A point which we make clearer, by bringing forward some instances of this ensnaring from the common doings of men. But because Holy Church consists of three orders, namely, the married, the continent, and rulers, (whence both Ezekiel saw three men set free, namely, Noah, Daniel, and Job, [Ez. 14, 14] and the Lord in the Gospel, by saying that there were some in the field, some in the bed, and some in the mill, [Luke 17, 34-36] doubtless points out three orders in the Church,) it is plainly sufficient for us to select an instance out of each class.

36. For, behold, one man, while seeking the friendships of the world, binds himself by an oath to another, leading a similar life, to conceal his secrets with perfect silence; but he, to whom the oath has been sworn, is discovered to be guilty of adultery, so as even to endeavour to kill the husband of the adulteress. But he who has taken the oath, turns back to his own mind, and is assailed by different thoughts on one side and the other, and is afraid of being silent in this matter, lest by silence he should be an accomplice in adultery and homicide at the same time; and is afraid to disclose it, lest he should involve himself in the guilt of perjury. He is bound therefore by the sinews of stones wrapped together, because to whichever side he inclines, he is afraid of not being free from the taint of transgression.

37. Another, forsaking all worldly things, and seeking in all things to crush his own will, wishes to submit himself to the authority of another. But he does not carefully enquire into and discern the character of him who is to rule over him in the Lord. And when he, perhaps, who is injudiciously selected, has begun to rule over him, he forbids the things of God to be

done, and enjoins the things of the world. The person under him considering, therefore, either what is the sin of disobedience, or what is the pollution of secular life, both trembles to obey, and fears to disobey; lest by obeying he should forsake God in His commands, or again by disobeying should despise God in the superior he has chosen; and lest by obeying unlawful commands, He should exercise against God that which he chooses for God’s sake; or again, by disobeying, should postpone to his own judgment him whom he had sought for as his own judge. He is, therefore, through the fault of his indiscretion, bound by the sinews of stones wrapped together, because either by obeying, or certainly by disobeying, he is bound with the sin of transgression. He was studying to break down his own will, and he takes care even to strengthen it by despising his superior. He resolved entirely to abandon the world, and he is compelled to return to the cares of the world even through the will of another. The sinews, therefore, are wrapped together, when the arguments of the enemy so bind us, that the knots of sins hold the firmer, the more they are sought to be disentangled.

38. Another, neglecting to think of the weight of ecclesiastical distinction, ascends by bribes to a place of rule. But because every eminent position in this world is more affected by griefs, than delighted by its honours, when the heart is weighed down by tribulations, its fault is recalled to its memory: and a man laments that he has attained to a laborious post by wrong means, and he learns how wrong is his conduct, by being crushed by the very difficulty. Acknowledging, therefore, that he is guilty with the bribes he has expended, he wishes to abandon the lofty position he has gained: but he is afraid it should be a more grievous sin to have resigned the charge of the flock he had undertaken. He wishes to take care of the flock committed to him, but he is afraid it should be a greater fault to hold the authority of pastoral grace which he purchased. He perceives therefore that, through seeking for distinction, he is hampered by sin on every side. For he

sees that neither course is without the imputation of guilt, if either the flock he has once taken charge of be abandoned, or again if a sacred office be retained, when purchased in a secular way. He is afraid in every direction, and is suspiciously fearful on every side, either lest remaining in his purchased office he should not properly bewail his not correcting his fault by even abandoning it, or certainly, lest, while endeavouring to lament one fault, by resigning his authority, he should again commit another, by this very forsaking of his flock. Because, therefore, this Behemoth binds with such entangled knots, that a mind, when brought into doubt, binds itself firmer in sin by the very means it attempts to free itself from sin, it is rightly said; *The sinews of his stones are wrapped together.* For the more the arguments of his machinations are loosened, as if to release us, the more are they entwined to hold us fast.

39. There is, however, a plan which may be usefully adopted to overthrow his craft, namely, that when the mind is held in bondage between less and greater sins, if no outlet for escape is open without sin, the less evils should always be preferred: because even he who is shut in by a circuit of walls on every side, lest he escape, there throws himself down in flight, where the wall is found lowest. And Paul when he observed certain incontinent persons in the Church, conceded the smallest faults, in order that they might avoid greater, saying, *On account of fornication, let every man have his own wife.* [1 Cor. 7, 2] And because married people are then only without sin in their connection, when they come together, not for the gratification of lust, but for the begetting of children, in order to shew that this which he had conceded was not without sin, though of least degree, he immediately added, *But I speak this by indulgence, not by commandment.* [ib. 6] For that which is pardoned, and is not commanded, is not without fault He surely saw that to be a sin, which he foresaw he was able to concede [al. ‘could be excused.’]. But when we are constrained by doubts,

we profitably yield to the least, for fear of sinning unpardonably in great, faults. The entanglement of the sinews of this Behemoth is therefore frequently unravelled, when we pass to the greatest virtues through the commission of smaller faults. It follows,

Ver. *19. His bones are as pipes of brass.* [E.V. 18]

40. What are designated by the 'bones' of this Behemoth, except his counsels? For as the uprightness ['positio'] and strength of the body subsist in the bones, so does his whole malice exalt itself in crafty designs. For he does not oppress any one by force, but he destroys him by the craftiness of his deadly persuasion. And again, as the marrow strengthens the bones which it moistens, so also does the subtlety of his genius, infused by the power of a spiritual nature, strengthen his designs. But in this his 'testicles' differ from his 'bones,' that is, his suggestions from his designs, that by the former he openly inserts what is noxious, but by the latter, when counselling as if for good he leads into sin; by the former he overcomes in fight, but by the latter he supplants by advising. Whence also his 'bones,' that is, these very designs, are well compared to pipes of brass. For pipes of brass are usually adapted to sonorous tunes, and when on being applied to the ears they delicately utter a soothing strain, they attract the mind within to outward delights; and when the sound is sweet which they utter to the cars, they weaken the manliness of the heart with the flow of pleasure. And when the hearing is drawn on to delight, the understanding is relaxed from the firmness of its strength. So also when his crafty designs counsel, as it were, with gentle forethought, they withdraw the heart from its resolute intention, and when they utter sweet sounds, they dispose to hurtful things. They are like pipes of brass then, which when heard with pleasure plunge the mind from its inward resolution into the pleasure of outward life. For it is this, which this Behemoth specially labours at in prosecuting his deception, to be able to utter sweetly what he says, when he puts forth his

scheme of wickedness as if for our good, in order that he may beguile the mind by putting forward its usefulness, and corrupt it by concealing its iniquity.

41. And we make this plainer in every respect, by briefly laying open a few of the arguments of his counsels. For behold, a person, content with his own possessions, has resolved not to be entangled with any of this world's occupations, being greatly afraid of losing the advantages of his ease, and utterly disdaining to accumulate wealth with sin. The crafty enemy in approaching him, in order to undermine his intention of sincere devotion, secretly offers a suggestion as if for his benefit, saying, Those things which thou hast are sufficient at present, but what dost thou intend to do when these fail? For if nothing is provided after these, thou hast what must be expended at once on thy children, but yet goods must be acquired to be laid up in store. Even what thou hast can soon fail, if anxious forethought ceases to provide what is wanting. Cannot worldly business be discharged, and yet sin be avoided in the doing it, in order that it may both furnish outward means, and yet not pervert inward rectitude? He insinuates these thoughts, and flatters the while; and is already secretly concealing the snares of sin in the worldly business, which he provides. His bones are therefore like pipes of brass, because his pernicious suggestions flatter their hearer with the sweetness of a voice which is giving them counsel.

42. Another also has resolved not merely not to seek for worldly advantages, but even to resign all that he possesses, in order to exercise himself the more freely in the discipline of heavenly training, the more he has disburdened himself, and abandons and tramples under foot the things which could weigh down their possessor. The lurking enemy addresses his heart with secret suggestion, saying, Whence has arisen the boldness of such great temerity, as for thee to dare to believe that thou canst subsist, by resigning every thing? Thy Creator formed thee in one way, and thou

disposest of thyself in another: He would make thee more strong and robust, if He had wished thee to follow His footsteps with the neediness of want. Do not most men never give up their earthly patrimonies, and yet purchase by these, through works of compassion, the eternal goods of a heavenly inheritance? He suggests these things with flattery; but secretly in his deceit annexes deadly pleasures to the very things he advises him to retain, before the eyes of him who retains them, in order that he may attract the deluded heart to outward pleasures, and may draw aside its secret vows of perfection. His bones, therefore, are like pipes of brass, because when his crafty designs utter outwardly a soothing sound, they inflict deadly destruction within.

43. Another having given up all his outward possessions, prepares also to crush his inmost wishes, in order that, by submitting himself to the sounder judgment of another, he may renounce not merely his evil desires, but, (to add to his perfection,) himself also even in good resolves, and may observe all his duties at the will of another. The crafty enemy addresses him the more gently, the more ardently he endeavours to push him down from his loftier position, and presently, fawning on him with deadly suggestions, he says, O what great marvels thou wilt be able to perform by thyself, if thou dost not submit thyself in any way to the judgment of another. Why dost thou check thy progress, from a desire for improvement? Why dost thou crush the goodness of thy intention, when thou endeavourest to extend it further than is necessary? For what wickednesses didst thou perpetrate, when exercising thy own will? Why then dost thou require the judgment of another over thee, since thou wilt be of thyself fully sufficient for holy living? He suggests these things in a flattering tone, but he secretly prepares, in the indulgence of his own will, causes for the exercise of pride, and, while he praises his heart for its inward rectitude, he craftily seeks out where to undermine it with sin. His bones are, therefore, like pipes of brass,

because his clandestine designs, by the very means with which they flatter, as it were, and delight the mind, fatally divert it from its right intention.

44. Another, having entirely subdued his will, has already corrected many sins of the old man, both by change of life, and by the lamentation of penitence; and is inflamed with greater zeal against the sins of others, the more he is entirely dead to himself, and is not held captive by his own iniquities. The crafty enemy, observing that by his zeal for righteousness he is benefiting others besides himself, attacks him with words which advise him as if for his advantage, saying, Why dost thou extend thyself to attend to others' concerns? Would thou mayest have strength to consider thine own! Dost thou not consider, that when thou art stretched forth to the concerns of others, thou art found unequal to attend to thine own? And of what use is it to wipe off the blood of another's wound, and by neglect to extend the corruption of thine own? While he speaks thus, as if giving advice, he takes away the zeal of charity, and destroys, with the sword of secretly instilled sloth, all the good which could result from charity. For if we are commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves, it is right for us to be kindled against sin, with zeal for them, as for ourselves. Because then he estranges the mind from its own resolution, while he pleasingly offers advice, it is rightly said, *His bones are as pipes of brass.* For when by his crafty designs he utters a pleasing sound to the mind of the hearer, he sings, as it were, with a pipe of brass, so as to deceive by means of his allurements. But this Behemoth engages much more gently in the contest, when, under the cloke of infirmity, he exercises himself in ambush. But he then arouses harder temptations, when he conceals the sources of iniquity, before the eyes of him who is tempted, under the semblance of virtue. Whence it is also rightly subjoined,

His cartilage as plates of iron.

45. For what but his simulation is understood by cartilage? For cartilage presents the appearance of bone, but it has not the strength of bone. And there are some vices which present an appearance of rectitude, but which proceed from the weakness of sin. For the malice of our enemy clokes itself with such art, as frequently to make faults appear as virtues before the eyes of the deluded mind; so that a person expects, as it were, rewards, for the very conduct for which he deserves to meet with eternal punishments. For cruelty is frequently exercised in punishing sins, and it is counted justice; and immoderate anger is believed to be the meritoriousness [‘meritum’] of righteous zeal; and when sinners ought to be carefully made straight from their crooked habits, they are snapped by being violently bent. Frequently negligent remissness is regarded as gentleness and forbearance, and while delinquents are spared temporally more than is proper, they are cruelly reserved to eternal punishments. Lavishness is sometimes believed to be compassion, and though it is a fault to be over saving, there is no fear of that which has been given being more wickedly lavished. Tenacity is sometimes considered frugality, and since it is a grievous fault not to give, it is considered a virtue to retain what has been received. The pertinacity of the wicked is often termed constancy, and when a mind does not submit to be turned from its wickedness, it glories as if in defending what is right. Inconstancy is often regarded as tractability, and because a person does not keep his word to any one, he considers himself on that account a friend to all men. Sometimes incompetent fear is believed to be humility, and when any one, oppressed by temporal fear, shrinks in silence from the defence of the truth, he thinks, that, according to the order of God, he demeans himself humbly to his superiors. Sometimes haughtiness of voice is counted freedom for the truth; and when through pride the truth is spoken against, forwardness in speaking is thought a defence of the truth. Sloth is frequently looked upon as a maintenance of peace, and though it is a

grievous fault not to be zealous in doing what is right, it is believed to be a most meritorious virtue, merely to abstain from evil conduct. Restlessness of spirit is frequently termed a watchful solicitude, and when a person cannot endure rest, he thinks that he performs an exercise of virtue which is due from him, by doing what he likes. Incautious precipitation in things which must be done, is believed to be the warmth of praiseworthy zeal, and though a desired advantage is marred by unseasonable acting, it is considered that the quicker a thing is done, the better. Slowness in promoting goodness, is counted judgment, and when progress is expected to le made by reconsideration, delay lurks in ambush and disappoints it. When a fault then appears like virtue, we must needs consider that the mind abandons its fault the more slowly, in proportion as it does not blush at what it is doing; and that the mind abandons its fault the more slowly, in proportion as, having been deceived by the semblance of virtue, it seeks therefrom the recompense of rewards. But a fault is easily corrected, which is also blushed at; because it is felt to be a fault. Since, therefore, error is corrected with more difficulty, when it is believed to be a virtue, it is rightly said, *His cartilage as plates of iron.* For the more craftily this Behemoth exhibits his cunning under the cloke of virtue, the more firmly does he enthral the mind in sin.

46. Hence it is that sometimes those who seek after the way of holiness, when they have fallen into error, are improved but slowly. For they consider what they do to be right, and devote their perseverance to the practice of vice, as they do to the cultivation of virtue. They consider what they do to be right, and therefore promote the more earnestly their own judgment. Accordingly when Jeremiah said, *Her Nazarites were whiter than snow, purer than milk, more ruddy than old ivory, more beautiful than the sapphire: their visage is made blacker than coals*; *and they are not known in the streets;* he rightly added immediately, *Their skin cleared to their*

bones, it is withered, and has become as a stick. [Lam. 4, 7. 8.] For what is signified by the word ‘Nazarites’ but the life of the abstinent, and continent, which is said to be whiter than snow and milk? For snow is congealed from water, coming as it does from above; but milk is squeezed from flesh which is nourished by things below. What then is pointed out by ‘snow’ but the brightness of the heavenly life, and what by ‘milk’ but the ordering of the temporal stewardship? And because continent men in the Church frequently perform such wonderful works, that many who have maintained a heavenly life, many who have dispensed aright the things of earth, seem to be surpassed by them, they are said to be both whiter than snow, and purer than milk. And since they sometimes appear by the fervour of their spirit to surpass the conduct of the ancient and mighty fathers, it is rightly subjoined, *More ruddy than old ivory.* For where the word ‘ruddiness’ is used, the flame of holy desire is signified. But we are not ignorant that ivory is the tusk of great animals. They are therefore more ruddy than old ivory, because they frequently appear before human eyes as of more fervent zeal than some of the preceding fathers. Of whom it is added, that the whole may be set forth at once; *More beautiful than the sapphire.* For the sapphire is of the colour of the heaven. And because they surpass many who precede them, and who are aiming at things above by a heavenly conversation, they are said to have been more beautiful than the sapphire. But when the abundance of virtues increases more than is expedient, the mind is frequently led to a kind of self-confidence, and, deceived by presuming on itself, is suddenly darkened by sin stealing it away. Whence it is rightly subjoined; *Their visage is made blacker than coals.* For they become black after whiteness, because having lost the righteousness of God, when they presume about themselves, they fall soon even into those sins which they understand not; and because, after the fire of love, they come to the chill of numbness, they are, in comparison, preferred to extinguished coals. For

sometimes when they lose the fear of God through self-confidence, they become even colder than cold minds. Of whom it is rightly subjoined; *They are not known in the streets.* For a street (platea), according to the Greek tongue, is put for breadth [platea from □□□□□□.]. But what is straiter for the mind of man, than for it to crush its own will? Of which crushing the Truth says; *Enter ye in at the strait gate.* [Matt. 7, 13] But what is broader than not to struggle against any of our wills, and to spread one's self forth without restraint, wherever the impulse of choice may have led? They, therefore, who through confidence in their holiness follow themselves, and put aside the opinion of their betters, proceed as it were along the broad streets ['plateas.']. But they are not known in the streets, because they had made their life appear different, when by crushing their own wills they used to keep themselves in the narrow path. And it is well added; *Their skin cleaved to their bones.* What is expressed by 'bone,' but the hardness of strength; what by 'skin,' but the softness of infirmity? Their skin is said, therefore, to cleave to their bones, because through their depraved judgment the infirmity of vice is considered by them the hardness of virtue. For their doings are weak, but from being deceived by the confidence of pride, they connect them with notions of strength, and because they think highly of themselves, they scorn to be reformed of their wickedness. Whence it is also rightly added; *It hath grown dry, and is become as a stick.* For their fault is rendered the less perceptible, the more it is considered by them to be even deserving of praise. And He rightly declares that it is 'dry,' because it never grows green by self-reflection. That then which by Jeremiah is called 'skin' by reason of its weakness, is called 'cartilage' by blessed Job by reason of its frailness; and that which there is termed 'bones' from its hardness, is here said to be 'plates of iron.' But let us hear of what nature, and what origin ['conditionis'] is this Behemoth, who by his members exerts himself against the Elect of God with such skill in iniquity at the last

time, and who also in his own person displays himself with such great craftiness of stratagems. For he would not be able to work such wonders even in working wickedness, if he did not exist from some mighty origin. Whence also the Lord, as if accounting for such great cunning, and such mighty strength, added with great consideration, saying,

Ver. 14. *He is the chief of the ways of God.* [E.V. 19]

47. As if He were plainly saying, He has strength sufficient for so many purposes, because in the nature of things the Creator made him first, when creating him in his substance. For what do we understand by the 'ways' of God, but His doings? Of which He says by the Prophet; *For My ways are not as your ways.* [Is. 55, 8] And Behemoth is said to be the chief of the ways of God, because doubtless when He was performing all the work of creation, He created him first, whom He made more eminent than the other Angels. The Prophet is looking at the eminence of this superiority ['primatus.'], when he says, *The cedars in the paradise of God were not higher, the fir trees equalled not his summit, the plane trees were not equal to his branches, nor any tree in the paradise of God was like him and his beauty, since He made him beautiful with his many and thick branches.* [Ez. 31, 8. 9.] For who can be understood by cedars, fir trees, and planes, unless those bands of heavenly virtues of lofty height, planted in the verdure of eternal joy? But these, though created lofty, were yet neither preferred nor equalled to him. And he is said to have been made beautiful with his many and thick branches, because when set above the other legions, a comeliness, as great as the subject multitude of Angels which adorned him, rendered him the more beautiful. This tree in the paradise of God had, as it were, as many crowded branches, as were the legions of heavenly spirits, it beheld placed beneath it. And therefore, when sinning, he was condemned without pardon, because he had been created great beyond comparison. Hence it is again said to him by the same Prophet, *Thou wast a seal of the likeness of*

God, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty in the delights of the paradise of God. [Ez. 28, 12. 13.] For having many things to say of his greatness, he comprehended all in the first word. For what good had he not, if he was the seal of the similitude of God? For from the seal of a ring such a likeness is impressed in image, as exists in essence in the seal itself. And though man was created after the likeness of God, yet as if ascribing something greater to an Angel, he says not that he was made after the likeness of God, but that he was the very seal of the likeness of God; in order that, as he is more subtle in nature, the likeness of God may be believed to have been more fully impressed on him.

48. Hence it is that the same Prophet, still speaking of the power of his superiority, subjoins; *Every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, and topaz, and jasper, the chrysolite, the onyx, and the beryl, the sapphire, the carbuncle, and the emerald.* [Ez. 28, 13] He mentioned nine kinds of stones, doubtless because there are nine; orders of angels. For when in the very words of Scripture, Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Princedoms, Powers, Cherubim, and Seraphim, are plainly spoken of and mentioned, it is shewn how great are the distinctions of the citizens of heaven. And yet this Behemoth is described as being covered by them, because he had those as a vesture for his adornment, by comparison with whom he was more brilliant, when he transcended their brightness. Of whose description he further adds in that passage, *Gold the work of thy beauty, and thy holes* [read 'foramina.'] *were prepared in the day that thou wast created.* [Ez. 28, 13] Gold existed as the work of his beauty, because he shone forth with the brightness of the wisdom, which he received when created aright. But holes are made in stones in order that when bound together by gold, they may be united in the composition of an ornament, and that they may not be separated from each other, which the gold binds together by being poured between and filling the holes. The holes of this

stone were prepared then in the day of its creation, because, namely, he was created capable of love. And had he wished to be filled therewith, he would have been able to cling firm to the Angels who stand, as to stones placed in the ornament of a king. For had he given himself up to be penetrated by the gold of charity, when associated with the holy Angels, he would still be remaining, as we said, a stone firmly fixed in the ornament of a king. This stone then had holes, but, through the sin of pride, they were not filled with the gold of charity. For since they are fastened with gold, so as not to fall, he therefore fell, because, even though perforated with the hand of the artificer, he scorned to be bound with the bands of love. But now, the other stones, which had been perforated similarly with him, were bound together by charity mutually penetrating them, and obtained, on his fall, this, as a gift, that they should now be never loosened by falling from the ornament of the King. The same Prophet, still gazing on the loftiness of his superiority [‘principatus.’], subjoins, *Thou, the outspread and covering Cherub in the holy mountain of God, hast walked perfect in the midst of the stones of fire.* [Ez. 28, 14] For Cherub is interpreted, ‘Plenitude of knowledge,’ and he is therefore called a Cherub, because he is not doubted to have surpassed all in his knowledge. And he walked in perfection in the midst of the stones of fire, because he dwelt amid the hearts of Angels, which were kindled with the fire of love, bright with the glory of his creation. And he rightly speaks of him as *outspread and covering.* For we overshadow every thing which we protect when stretched out. And because he is believed to have overshadowed the brightness of the others, through comparison with his brightness, he is said to have been himself *outspread and covering.* For he who transcends the greatness of others by his great excellence, has covered them, as it were, by overshadowing. That then which is said in one place to be beautiful with branches, in another a seal of similitude, in another a Cherub, and in another covering, is in this place

declared by the voice of the Lord to be this Behemoth, the chief of the ways of God.

49. But He mentions these wondrous things of him, in what he had, and in what he lost, expressly to shew to awestruck man, what, if guilty himself of pride, he is likely to suffer from the sin of his haughtiness; if He would not abstain from smiting him, whom He exalted at his creation to the glory of such great brightness. Let man then consider what he deserves for his pride on earth, if even an Angel, placed above other Angels, is cast down in heaven. Whence it is also well said by the Prophet, *My sword is made drunk in heaven.* [Is. 34, 5] As if He were plainly saying, Consider with what wrath I shall smite the haughty of the earth, if I have not forborne to smite for the sin of pride, those even, whom I have created next to Myself in heaven. Having heard then these many powers of the ancient enemy, having known the greatness of the state in which he was made; who would not fall down with unbounded fear, who would not sink under the blow of desperation? But because the display of our enemy's power keeps down our pride, the Lord comforts our infirmity also by disclosing the dispensation of His grace. Hence when calling him 'the chief of His ways,' He immediately added;

He that made him, hath bended up his sword.

50. For the 'sword' of this Behemoth is his malice in doing hurt. But his sword is bended by Him, by Whom he was created naturally good. Because his malice is so restrained by Divine dispensation, as not to be permitted to strike the minds of men, as much as he wishes. Because, therefore, our enemy both has great power, and strikes a less blow, the kindness of our Creator restrains his sword, so that it is bent back, and lies hid in his own conscience, and that his malice does not extend itself further for the death of men, than it is righteously ordered from above. The great strength therefore which he has for many things, he possesses from the original ['principio']

of his mighty creation; but so far as he is defeated by some, his sword is doubtless bent back by his Creator. For when this Behemoth, who is the chief of the ways of God, received permission to practise temptation against the holy man, he roused the nations, he took away the flocks, he cast down fire from heaven, he agitated the air and roused the winds, he shook and overthrew the house, he killed his sons, when feasting together, [Job 1, 19] he employed the mind of the wife in the craft of evil persuasion, he pierced the flesh of the husband with the wounds he inflicted. [ib. 2, 9. 10.] But his sword is bent back by his Creator, when it is said, *Save his life.* [ib. 6.] And how great is his weakness, when his sword has been bent back, is described by the witness of the Evangelist, that he was not able to continue in the man he had possessed, and again that he presumed not, unbidden, to assail the brute animals, saying, *If Thou cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.* [Matt. 8, 31] For it is shewn how much his sword of malice is bent back, since he would not be able to assail even the herd of swine, unless the supreme Power gave him permission. When then can he venture of his own accord to injure men who are made after the likeness of God, of whom is it doubtless quite plain, that he cannot presume to touch the swine, without permission? [‘non jussus.’]

51. We must observe also, that when Behemoth is called the chief [‘principium’] of the ways of God, the insane doctrine of Arius is overthrown by plain reason. For he confesses that the Son of God is a creature, and behold Behemoth is set forth as the first created in the creation of things. It remains therefore for Arius either to assert that the Son is not made, or to believe in his folly that he was created after Behemoth. But since every thing which is folded [‘applicatur.’] is turned back on itself, Behemoth is rightly said to be a sword bent back. For his malice is steeped in itself, when, on being forbidden, it does not exert itself according to its wish, against the life of the Elect. But it is permitted to strike many, as their

merits deserve, in order that when they forsake God they may serve His cursed enemy. But he is defeated the more powerfully by the Elect, the more they bow themselves with greater humility before the sole Author of all things. Since therefore from being called the chief of the ways of God, from being proved to be very insupportable, when the Lord permits it, we know plainly with how strong an enemy we are fighting; it remains therefore for each of us, to subject himself more entirely to his Maker, the more truly he considers the mighty power of his adversary against him. For what are we but dust? But what is he, but one of the heavenly spirits, and what is still greater, their chief? What then can he venture on his own strength, when he contends, though dust, against the chief of angels? But because the Creator of heavenly spirits has assumed an earthly body, lowly dust now rightly overcomes the haughty angel. For by adhering to True Strength he gains powers, which the apostate spirit lost by following himself. And it is meet for him, who believed that he was strong, when he had forsaken his Creator, to be conquered by dust, in order that he may learn on defeat, that he has failed through pride. But he pants with furious rage, because when sufferings torture him below, man ascends to the highest happiness; because flesh is exalted to, and abides in, that loftiness, from which he, that great spirit, lies cast forth for ever. But their relative deserts changed the positions of their minds. Thus, thus did pride deserve to be cast down, thus humility to be exalted, so as that a heavenly spirit might endure hell, by exalting himself, and earth, through humility, reign for ever above the heavens.

BOOK XXXIII.

Sets forth an exposition of the fifteenth, and remaining verses of the fortieth chapter, and also of the first twelve verses of the forty-first chapter: where the various arts of the devil are exposed, and predestination of free grace is taught, and reconciled with free will.

1. The proud become the more familiarly devoted to the ancient enemy, who is described by the voice of the Lord, under the name Behemoth, the higher they swell with pride within, at the successes of this life. For their pride increases with their distinction, but with their pride is added care; the mind is distracted hither and thither, because their desires also increase together with their possessions. And when they bring forth thoughts without number as the hay of the field, they feed the hunger of this Behemoth with these thoughts, as if with food which he longed for. Whence it is now rightly said;

Ver. 15. *The mountains bring him forth grass.* [E.V. 20]

2. In Holy Scripture, when 'mountain' is put in the singular number, there is designated sometimes the Incarnate Lord, sometimes Holy Church, sometimes the covenant of God, sometimes the apostate angel, sometimes any particular heretic. But when 'mountains' are named in the plural number, there is expressed sometimes the high estate of Apostles and Prophets, but sometimes the pride of worldly powers. For a mountain designates the Lord, as it is written, *And in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains.* [Is. 2, 2] For the mountain on the top of the mountains is the Incarnate Lord, transcending the loftiness of Prophets. Again, by a mountain is designated Holy Church, as it is written, *They that trust in the Lord are as mount Sion.* [Ps. 125, 1] For Sion means looking out, and by this looking out is typified

the Church contemplating God. Again, by a mountain is expressed the covenant of God, as Habakkuk says, *God will come from Libanus, and the Holy One from the shady and thick mountain.* [Hab. 3, 3] For He Who by the pages of His covenant has promised that He will come, came, as it were, from that by which He held Himself, as it were, under a promise. And this covenant is well said to be a shady and thick mountain, because it is darkened by the thick obscurities of allegories. Again, by a mountain is designated the apostate angel, as is said to preachers concerning the ancient enemy under the character of the king of Babylon, *Lift ye up a banner upon the gloomy mountain.* For holy preachers lift up a banner above the gloomy mountain, when they exalt the virtue of the cross against the pride of Satan, which is frequently concealed under the mist of hypocrisy. Again, by a mountain any kind of heretic is expressed, as the Psalmist says with the voice of the Church, *In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Pass over as a sparrow to the mountain?* [Ps. 11, 1] For when a faithful soul is bidden to abandon unity, and to trust in the swelling doctrine of an heretical preacher, it is persuaded, as it were, to forsake the Lord, and to migrate to the mountain. Again, by mountains is designated the loftiness of Apostles and Prophets, as it is written, *Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God.* [Ps. 36, 6] And it is said by the voice of Paul, *That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.* [2 Cor. 5, 21] Or as the Psalmist again says by the voice of the Church in hope, *I have lifted up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence will come my help.* [Ps. 121, 1] Again, by mountains is expressed the pride of secular powers, of whom the Psalmist says, *The hills melted like wax from the presence of the Lord:* [Ps. 97, 5] because many, who had before been swollen up with stubborn pride, were melted through penitence with great fear, when God was manifested in the flesh. Or as the same Prophet says again, *They go up, mountains and go down, plains.* [Ps. 104, 8] For many persecutors of the Lord come against Him in pride, but

return from Him in humility. And these go up, mountains, by the swelling of power; but come down, plains, namely, by becoming level, through acknowledgment of sin.

3. But because some continue in the height of their pride, and disdain to bend humbly to the Divine commands, and that, because they cease not to think and perpetrate wickedness according to the desire of the ancient enemy; it is rightly said of Behemoth in this place; *The mountains bring him forth grass.* For the proud men of the world bring forth grass to this Behemoth, because they refresh him by that which they work wickedly. They bring forth grass to this Behemoth, because they offer him their unstable and treacherous pleasures. *For men,* says the Apostle, *shall be lovers of their own selves.* [2 Tim. 3, 2] And he summed up their description, saying; *Lovers of pleasures more than of God.* [ib. 4] What then is the grass of the mountains, except unstable pleasure, which is begotten from the heart of the proud? For if they did not despise God in their pride, they would never commit so many wantonnesses ['lubrica'] in their lasciviousness, by which grass this Behemoth is doubtless fed; because by hungering in them after the punishment of eternal death, he is pampered with their evil habits. For the proud of this world, even if ever, hindered by the course of God's dispensation, they desist from fulfilling their wicked works, yet multiply wickednesses in thought; at one time to make themselves appear superior to others in wealth and honour; at another, to exercise this very power in endeavouring to injure others; at another, to melt away in light deeds and pleasures, when influenced by wanton emotions. For since they never think of doing right, but always wrong, things, from the favours they have received from God, what else do they but fight against God with His own gifts? Because then this Behemoth always discerns in the minds of the proud his own desires, he finds, as it were, grass on the mountains, with

which he replenishes and swells the belly of his malice. But it is well subjoined,

All the beasts of the field will play there.

4. What are designated by 'beasts' but unclean spirits, what by the 'field,' but the present world? Whence it is said against Ephraim, of the chief of the malignant spirits himself; *The beasts of the field shall tear them.* [Hos. 13, 8] Or as Isaiah says; *No evil beast shall go up thereon.* [Is. 35, 9] But that the world is understood by the word field, the word of the Lord witnesses in the Gospel, which says, *But the field is the world.* [Matt. 13, 38] The beasts of the field, then, play in the grass of the mountains, because in this world the devils, who have been cast forth from above, delight in the evil doings of the proud. The beasts play in the grass, when the reprobate spirits draw away the hearts of men into unlawful thoughts. Is it not sport for evil spirits, to deceive at one time by false promises the minds of men which were made after the image of God, at another to make mock at them with empty terrors, at another to urge upon them transitory pleasures as if lasting, at another to make light of lasting punishments as if transitory? He had doubtless feared being the sport of these beasts, who said, *O my God, I trust in Thee, let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies make a jest of me.* [Ps. 25, 2] Because then the heart of the proud is overcome by every sin, so as to be ready for every malignant spirit which assails it with evil thoughts, it is rightly said of the grass of the mountains, *All the beasts of the field will play there.* For since the proud pass over no wickedness in their thoughts, there is no beast of the field which is not satiated with the grass of these mountains. For even if at any time they avoid the lust of the flesh, yet they commit the sin of inward lust by boasting of their very chastity. If at any time they do not covetously grasp at any thing without them, they are by no means free from the allurement of avarice; for though they are not eager after any thing, yet they strive to grasp at praise, for their forbearance,

from human applause. The mountains, therefore, bring forth grass for this Behemoth, and all the beasts of the field play there, because every malignant spirit feeds at greater liberty in the heart of the proud, in proportion as every sin is generated from pride. But since we have heard what this Behemoth feeds on, we must now needs hear where it is that he rests meanwhile through his evil desire. It follows,

Ver. 16. *He sleepeth under the shadow, in the covert of the reed, in moist places*. [E.V. 21]

5. Overshadowing is sometimes used in Holy Scripture for the Incarnation of the Lord, or the cooling of the mind from the heat of carnal thoughts; whence by the expression ‘shadow’ this cooling of the heart in consequence of heavenly protection is usually spoken of. But sometimes ‘shadow’ is taken to mean the numbness of the frozen minds when charity departs. For that the Incarnation of the Lord is signified by the term overshadowing, still preserving the truth of the history, the word of the Angel attests, who says to Mary, *The Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* [Luke 1, 35] For because a shadow is caused in no other way than by a light and a body, the Power of the Highest overshadowed her, because the incorporeal Light assumed a body in her womb. By which overshadowing in truth she received in herself every refreshment of mind. Again, by ‘shadow’ is expressed the refreshment of the heart by reason of heavenly protection, as the Psalmist says, *Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.* [Ps. 17, 8] Or as the Bride in the Song of Songs, having waited for the coming of the Bridegroom, announces, saying, *I sat down under the shadow of Him, Whom I had longed for.* [Cant. 2, 3] As if she said, I rested under the protection of His coming from the heat of carnal desires. Again, by ‘shadow’ is expressed the numbness of the frozen mind, when charity departs, as is said of sinful man, that he sought the shadow. For man, flying from the warmth of charity, has forsaken the sun of truth, and hid himself

under the shade of inward cold. Whence it is said by the voice of the same Truth, *Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold.* [Matt. 24, 12] Whence the first man, after his sin, is found hid amidst the trees of paradise at the cool after midday [‘ad auram’]. [Gen. 3, 8] For since he had lost the midday warmth of charity, he was already benumbed beneath the shadow of sin, as if under the cold of the air.

6. Because then this Behemoth finds a kind of rest in those, whom he chills by withdrawing from the light of the true Sun, he is said to sleep under the shadow. But sometimes by ‘shadow,’ if used with the addition of the word ‘death,’ is expressed either the death of the flesh, or any reprobates, who by their eagerness in evil doing imitate the darkness of the ancient enemy. Whence it is said by the Psalmist with the voice of the Martyrs; *Thou hast humbled us in the place of affliction, and the shadow of death hath covered us.* [Ps. 44, 19] For the shadow of death covers the Elect of God, when the death of the flesh, which is the image of eternal death, cuts them off from this life; because as that separates the soul from God, so does this separate the body from the soul. Or certainly the shadow of death covers them, because it is written of the ancient enemy, *His name was death.* [Rev. 6, 8] All reprobates are therefore the shadow of death, because they imitate the malice of his wickedness, and shadow forth his image, as it were, when they take in themselves a resemblance of his malice. And they cover the Elect of God, when they gain strength against them for a time, in the cruelty of persecution. But in this place ‘shadow’ is taken for the slumber of wickedness, and this Behemoth slumbers therein, because he watches anxiously against hearts glowing with charity, but lies securely in minds benumbed with cold. For he cannot slumber in the minds of Saints, because, even if he places himself therein for a short moment, the very warmth of heavenly desires wearies him, and he is pricked, as it were, to make him depart, as often as they sigh after eternal things with inmost love.

And as many holy thoughts as cry aloud from their minds unto heaven, are as so many voices to rouse him. Whence it is, that, frightened by the arms of good deeds, and smitten with the darts of sighs, he takes his flight, and that, returning to the frozen hearts of the reprobate, he seeks for that shadow of wickedness to occupy in security. And where it is found by him, is shewn by its being immediately subjoined, *In the covert of the reeds.*

7. In Holy Scripture, by the expression 'cane' ['calamus'] or 'reed' ['arundo'] is sometimes understood the Abiding Word, sometimes the skill of the learned, sometimes the changeableness of the mind, sometimes the brightness of temporal glory. For by 'cane' is designated the eternity of the Word, when it is said by the Psalmist with the voice of the Father, *My tongue is the reed* ['calamus'] *of a swift writer.* [Ps. 45, 1] For since that which we speak passes away, but that which we write remains, the tongue of the Father is called the reed of a writer, because from Him is the Word Coeternal with Himself, and begotten without transition ['transitu']. Again, by 'reed' is expressed the learning of writers, as the Prophet promises concerning Holy Church, saying, *In the lairs in which dragons used before to dwell, there will spring up the greenness of the reed, and rush.* [Is. 35, 7] For in this sentence, as we said a long way above in this work, by 'reed' is expressed the doctrine of writers, by 'rush' the freshness of hearers [see Bk. 29, §. 51]. Again, by 'cane,' or certainly by 'reed,' is expressed changeableness of mind, as is said by the Lord to the crowds of the Jews in praise of John, *What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind?* [Matt. 11, 7] in order, namely, that it should be understood, 'No.' For John was not in truth a reed shaken with the wind, because no breath of tongues inclined on different sides his mind, which was made firm by the Holy Spirit. Again, by 'rush' or 'reed' is expressed the brightness of temporal glory, as is said of the righteous by Wisdom, the *righteous shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks in the reed-bed.* [Wisd. 3, 7] For He

terms a ‘reed-bed’ the life of the worldly, who like reeds, outwardly increase to a height by temporal glory, but are inwardly bereft of the solidity of truth. Whence also the kingdom of the Jews is compared to a reed, when it is said by the Prophet, on the Lord appearing in the truth of the flesh, *A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.* [Is. 2, 43] For what does he set forth by the name ‘reed’ but the temporal kingdom of the Jewish people, brilliant indeed without, but empty within? And because in this people the royal race had already failed, and a stranger was possessing its kingdom, He fitly calls the same kingdom a broken reed. But what is expressed by ‘flax,’ except it be its priesthood, which doubtless wore linen vestments? And because at the coming of the Lord, it had lost the warmth of charity, it was not burning but smoking, having already lost, as it were, the fire of faith. But the Incarnate Lord broke not the bruised reed, and quenched not the smoking flax, because He smote not with the might of judgment the kingdom of Judæa, which had been already well nigh destroyed, and its priesthood which retained not the fire of faith, but endured them with the long-suffering of patience.

8. What else, therefore, is designated in this place by the term ‘reed’ but the minds of the worldly, which are devoted to temporal glory? For they are the more empty in themselves within, the more they appear tall and beautiful without; for while they melt away into external glory on the surface, they are not strengthened by any solidity within. For like reed they are, through their folly, hollow within, but are outwardly beautiful through show and appearance; but the more studiously outward glory is sought for by them, the more are their minds agitated with sharper pangs of thought. Whence this Behemoth is now rightly said to slumber in the covert of the reed, because he silently possesses the hearts of those, whose desires he excites to seek after temporal splendor and dignity; and he himself sleeps, as it were, quietly in that spot, where he does not allow those whom he

possesses to remain at rest. For whilst they go about to surpass others by the loftiness of their goods, while through the brightness of outward cleanliness they surpass the righteous in appearance, as a reed surpasses the bark of solid trees; by remaining hollow within, they make a fitting place for this Behemoth to rest within them. Whence also the Lord says in the Gospel, that the spirit who went forth and found no rest in barren and dry places, because he found the house which he had left empty, and swept clean, entered it in more abundant measure. [Matt. 12, 43-45] For because the earth which is watered becomes moist, the barren and dry places are the hearts of the righteous, which by the power of discipline are drained dry of all the moisture of carnal concupiscence. Whence here also the place where this Behemoth slumbers is still further pointed out, where it is immediately added, *In moist places.*

9. For 'moist places' are the minds of earthly men, which the moisture of carnal concupiscence makes fluid, because it fills them. In which this Behemoth plants deeper the footsteps of his iniquity, the more as in passing he sinks ['pertransitus ejus'] in their minds as in wet earth. For 'moist places' are voluptuous deeds. For the foot does not slip on dry ground, but when planted in slippery ground it is hardly supported. They therefore journey through this life in moist places, who cannot herein stand upright in righteousness. Behemoth, therefore, sleeps in these moist places, because he rests in the slippery doings of reprobate men. But some suppose that by 'moist places' are meant the genitals. But if this is so, what else is plainly designated by moist places but lust, so that by a 'reed' is expressed the glory of pride, and by 'moist places' the lust of the body? For these in truth are two sins, which hold cruel sway over the human race, one, namely, of the spirit, and the other of the flesh. For pride exalts the spirit, lust corrupts the flesh. The ancient enemy, therefore, specially oppressing mankind either by pride or by lust, sleeps in the covert of the reed, and in moist places,

because he holds ruined man under the sway of his domination, either by pride of spirit, or by corruption of flesh. But some he possesses in both ways, because when the spirit of pride exalts them, not even shame for their corruption brings them down from pride at their high estate. But are not the teachers of virtues continually watchful against them within the bounds of Holy Church? Do they cease to reprove grovelling pleasures, and to recommend the joys of the heavenly country? But the minds of the wicked refuse the more obstinately to listen to the highest things, the more closely they have cleaved to those that are basest. Nor are they contented with merely perishing themselves, but, (which is worse,) when they see others convinced and improved, they also oppose the reproofs of the righteous, to keep others at least from being corrected. Whence it is well subjoined;

Ver. 17. *The shadows cover his shadow.* [E.V. 22]

10. For all the wicked are in truth shadows of the devil: for while they give themselves up to imitate his iniquity, they derive, as it were, a form of resemblance from his body. But as the reprobate are his 'shadows' in the plural number, so each separate sinner is his 'shadow' in the singular. But when the wicked gainsay the teaching of the just, when they do not permit any wicked person to be corrected by them, the shadows of this Behemoth cover his shadow; because sinners, whenever they are conscious to themselves of sin, support another sinner in the same course. His shadows cover his shadow, when the more wicked support by their misdirected patronage the doings of the most wicked. And this they doubtless do with this object, that, while the fault, with which they themselves are bound, is corrected in others, they may not at last be reached themselves. They cover themselves therefore, when they protect others, because they foresee that their own conduct is attacked, by the same means as they see others confounded with bold reproof. And thus it happens, that while the aggregate of sins is defended, it is also increased, and that the guilt of each person is

more easy of commission, the more difficult it is of punishment. For the evil doings of sinners derive so much greater increase, the longer they are permitted, through the defence of the powerful, to remain unpunished. But such persons, whether they seem to be within or without Holy Church, display themselves more openly as the enemies of God, the greater patrons they are of sins. For in defending themselves they fight against Him, Who is displeased with those doings, which they multiply, by defending them. Which conduct the Lord by the Prophet well reproves, under the character of Babylon, saying; *Thorns and nettles shall spring up in her houses, and the bramble in the fortresses thereof.* [Is. 34, 13] For what do we understand by 'nettles,' but the irritations of thoughts, and what by 'thorns,' but the piercings of sins? Nettles therefore and thorns spring up in the houses of Babylon, because in the disorder of a reprobate mind there arise longings of thoughts which exasperate, and sinful deeds which wound. But they who act thus have others also more wicked than themselves as their defenders. Whence he there fitly subjoined immediately, *And the bramble in the fortresses thereof.* For the bramble is crowded with such a circle of thorns, that it can hardly be touched from its roughness. The nettle and the thorn therefore spring up within, but both of them are fortified without by the bramble: because, namely, smaller offenders commit any kinds of evil, but greater and most abandoned ones defend them. Whence it is here also well said, *His shadows protect his shadow.* For whilst a greater sinner defends a wicked person, a shadow, as it were, darkens a shadow, that it be not irradiated with the light of truth. It follows;

The willows of the brook will compass him about.

11. 'Willows' are trees which bear indeed no fruit; but are of such great greenness, as hardly to dry up, even when cut off by the roots and torn up. Whence in Holy Scripture by the name 'willows,' the good are sometimes designated, from their greenness, and sometimes the reprobate from their

sterility. For unless by their continual greenness they typified the life of the Elect, the Prophet would not have said concerning the children of Holy Church, *They shall spring up among the grass, as willows by the water courses.* [Is. 44, 4] For the children of Holy Church spring up as willows among the grass, when amidst the withering life of carnal men, they last on in manifold numbers, and perpetual greenness of mind. And they are well said to spring up by the water courses, because each of them derives its fruitful productiveness from the teaching of Holy Scripture, which runs along in this temporal state. And again, if the life of sinners were not signified by the sterility of willows, the Psalmist would not have said against Babylon by the voice of preachers; *We hanged our instruments upon the willows in the midst thereof.* [Ps. 137, 2] For the willows are described as being in the midst of Babylon, doubtless because the unfruitful, and those estranged from the love of their heavenly country, are rooted with all the affections of their heart in this confusion of the world. Whence also holy preachers do not play, but hang their instruments in these willows, because when they see minds unfruitful and reprobate, they display not the power of their preaching, but rather weep and are silent. What also is expressed by the brook except the course of this mortal life? Of which it is said again by the Prophet, *He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up his head.* [Ps. 110, 7] Because, namely, our Redeemer tasted the punishment of mortal life, as though in a passage through it, and therefore did not long abide in that death to which he had yielded of his own accord. Whence on the third day he lifted up at His resurrection that Head which He had laid down at His death. What then is the meaning of that which is said of this Behemoth, the *willows of the brook will compass him about?* except that lovers of this mortal life, unfruitful in good deeds, cleave the closer to him, the more abundantly the delight of transitory pleasure waters them. For a brook waters them, as it were, at their roots, when the love of a carnal life

intoxicates them in their thoughts. And like willows they bring forth in truth no fruit, but are green in their leaves, because they sometimes utter words of propriety, which are not burdensome to be said, but display by their good works no weight of life. It is therefore well said, *The willows of the brook will compass him about,* because when they who bear no fruit devote themselves to the love of this temporal life, they comply too familiarly with the depraved customs of the ancient enemy. But since we have heard what is rendered him by his clients, let us now hear what he works in them. It follows;

Ver. 18. *He will drink up a river, and will not wonder, and trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth.* [E.V. 23]

12. For what is in this place designated by the name of 'river,' except the downward course of the human race, which rises at its birth, as if from the source of its fountain, but passes down, as if flowing to its lowest level at its death? But who are signified by the expression 'Jordan,' except those who have been already imbued with the sacrament of Baptism? For since our Redeemer deigned to be baptized in this river, all who have been baptized must needs be expressed by the name of that stream, in which this very sacrament of Baptism happened to be begun. Because, therefore, this Behemoth has drawn to himself like a river the human race flowing downward from the beginning of the world, even to the times of redemption, but a few Elect ones escaping him, it is now well said; *He will drink up a river, and will not wonder.* But since even after the coming of the Mediator he seizes some even of the faithful, who neglect to live righteously, it is rightly subjoined; *And trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth.* As if it were plainly said, Before the coming of the Redeemer of the world, he drank up the world without wondering, but, which is far worse, even after the coming of the Redeemer, he trusts that he is able to swallow up some, who have been sealed with the sacrament of Baptism. For

he devours some who have been placed in the profession of Christians, because he supplants them by causing error in their faith itself. But others he does not turn aside from the uprightness of the faith, but inclines to the practice of wicked works. Others he is unable to bend as much as he wishes in deeds of impurity, but he inwardly turns them aside from the zeal of their intention; so that, when they sever their minds from charity, whatever they may do outwardly may not be right. And they retain the faith, but they retain not the life of faith; because they either openly do those things which are unlawful, or else from their perverted heart, their doings are wicked, even though they seem to be holy. For since some persons are faithful in their professions, but not in their lives, it is said by the voice of the Truth, *Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt 7, 21] Hence He says again; *But why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* [Luke 6, 46] Hence Paul says, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.* [Tit. 1, 16] Hence John says, *He that saith that he knoweth God, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar.* [1 John 2, 4] Hence it is that the Lord complains of His own ancient people; *This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.* [Mark 7, 6; Is. 29, 13] Hence also the Psalmist says, *They loved Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongue.* [Ps. 78, 36] But it was no wonder that this Behemoth before the water of the laver, before the heavenly sacraments, before the corporeal presence of the Redeemer, drank up, with the yawning gulph of his deep persuasion, the river of the human race. But it is very wonderful, it is very terrible, that even after the knowledge of the Redeemer, he seizes many with his open mouth, that he pollutes them after the water of the laver, that after heavenly sacraments he hurries them away to the depth of hell. Let it be said then, let it be said fearfully by the voice of the Truth; *He will drink up a river, and will not wonder, and trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth.* For the

devil counted it not a great thing that he seized unbelievers, but he now rouses himself with all his efforts to destroy those, whom he pines at seeing regenerated against him. Let no one then trust that faith without works can be sufficient for him, when we know that it is written; *Faith without works is dead.* [James 2, 20] Let no one think that he has entirely escaped the bite of Behemoth by a mere confession of faith. Because he has already drunk up a river, but still thirsts after Jordan. And Jordan flows into his mouth as often as any Christian sinks down into iniquity. We have now escaped his mouth, by the aid of faith, but we must take earnest heed, not to fall therein by slippery doings. If care in walking is neglected, it is in vain that we keep the straight road by faith. Because the way of faith leads indeed to the heavenly country, but it does not carry to the close those who stumble therein.

13. We have another point to consider more minutely on this head. For those who we said were expressed by 'Jordan,' can also be designated by the 'river.' For they who have already confessed their belief in the truth, but neglect to live faithfully, can rightly be called a 'river:' namely, because they flow downwards. But 'Jordan' in the Hebrew word means 'the descent of them.' And there are some who in seeking the way of truth cast away their own selves, and come down from the pride of their former life. And when they desire eternal things, they entirely estrange themselves from this world, by not only seeking after the goods of others, but even abandoning their own. And so far from seeking glory therein, they despise it even when it offers itself. For hence is that which is said by the voice of the Truth, *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.* [Luke 9, 23] For a man denies himself, if, having trampled down the haughtiness of pride, he shews before the eyes of God that he is strange to himself. Hence the Psalmist says, *I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites.* [Ps. 42, 6] For Jordan, as I said, is interpreted 'Descent,' but Hermonites,

Anathema, that is, ‘Alienation.’ He therefore remembers God from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, who by humbling himself, and by living estranged from himself, is recalled to think on his Creator. But the ancient enemy considers it no great matter, that he holds under the rule of his tyranny those who seek after earthly things. For we know, as the Prophet witnesses, that *His food is choice.* [Hab. l, 16] Nor does he count it a wonderful thing if he swallows up those whom pride exalts, covetousness wastes away, pleasure relaxes [‘dilatat’], wickedness contracts [‘angustat’], anger inflames, discord separates, envy exulcerates, lust pollutes and kills. He will therefore swallow up a river, and will not wonder, because he counts it no great thing, when he devours those, who by the very pursuits of their life run downwards. But he earnestly endeavours to seize those whom he sees already united to heavenly things, from their contempt of the things of earth. And hence, when the river has been swallowed up, it is rightly subjoined, *And he trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth,* because he is anxious to lurk in ambush, and seize those, whom he sees casting themselves down from the glory of the present life through love of their heavenly country. For some in truth forsake the world, abandon the vanities of transient honours, and, seeking the lowliness of humility, transcend by good living the custom of human conversation; and advance in such lofty pursuits [‘tanta studiorum arce’], as even now to perform mighty wonders. But because they neglect to protect themselves by circumspection, they are wounded by the shaft of vain glory, and fall the more fatally from on high. For hence it is that the eternal Judge, Who weighs the secrets of the heart, foretells this same fall and ruin, and threatens, saying, *Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them that I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity, I know not who ye are.* [Matt. 7, 22. 23.] Hence

also it is said by the Prophet, *The Lord called judgment to the fire, and it devoured the great abyss, and will eat up a part of the house of the Lord.* [Amos 7, 4] For judgment is called to the fire, when the sentence of justice is already displayed for the punishment of eternal burning. And it devours the great abyss, because it consumes the wicked and incomprehensible minds of men, which now conceal themselves from men even under the miracles of signs. But a part of the house of the Lord is eaten up; because Gehenna devours those also, who now boast, as it were, by their holy deeds, of being in the number of the Elect. They therefore who are here called 'Jordan,' are there called 'a part of the house of the Lord.' The ancient enemy therefore trusts that even Jordan can flow into his mouth, because he sometimes destroys, by the stratagems of his cunning, those even who are now considered Elect. But whose hardness of heart would not these words of the Lord arouse? Whose firmness of mind would not be shaken from the inmost depths of his thoughts, when our enemy is shewn to be of such great power against us? Will there be no aid of consolation? There will surely be, for it is subjoined;

Ver. 19. *In his eyes He will take him as with a hook.* [E.V. 24]

14. It is much to be observed, that the Lord, tempering in His mercy the words of His Scripture, alarms us at one time with sharp excitements, comforts us at another with gentle consolations, and blends terror with comforts, and comforts with terror; in order that, while they are both tempered towards us with wonderful skill of management, we may be found neither to despair through fear, nor yet incautiously secure. For when He had pointed out in manifold expressions the cunning crafts, and the unrestrained strength of Behemoth, He immediately sets forth the coming of His Only-begotten Son our Redeemer, and teaches in what way this Behemoth is to be destroyed; in order that, having oppressed our heart by recounting his might, He might speedily alleviate our sorrow by pointing

out his destruction. Therefore, after He had said, *He will drink up a river, and will not wonder, and trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth,* He immediately announces the coming of the Lord's Incarnation, saying, *In his eyes He will take him as with a hook.* Who can be ignorant that in a 'hook' a bait is shewn, a point is concealed? For the bait tempts, that the point may wound. Our Lord therefore, when coming for the redemption of mankind, made, as it were, a kind of hook of Himself for the death of the devil; for He assumed a body, in order that this Behemoth might seek therein the death of the flesh, as if it were his bait. But while he is unjustly aiming at that death in His person, he lost us, whom he was, as it were, justly holding. He was caught, therefore, in the 'hook' of His Incarnation, because while he sought in Him the bait of His Body, he was pierced with the sharp point of His Divinity. For there was within Him His Humanity, to attract to Him the devourer, there was there His Divinity to wound; there was there His open infirmity to excite, His hidden virtue to pierce through the jaw of the spoiler. He was, therefore, taken by a hook, because he perished by means of that which he swallowed. And this Behemoth knew indeed the Incarnate Son of God, but knew not the plan of our redemption. For he knew that the Son of God had been incarnate for our redemption, but he was quite ignorant that this our Redeemer was piercing him by His own death. Whence it is well said, *In his eyes He will take him as with a hook.* For we are said to have in our eyes that which we see placed before us. But the ancient enemy of mankind saw placed before him the Redeemer, Whom he confessed in knowing, feared in confessing, saying, *What have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of God? Hast Thou come to torment us before the time?* [Matt. 8, 29] He was taken therefore with a hook in his eyes, because he both knew, and seized it; and he first knew Whom to fear, and yet afterwards feared Him not, when hungering in Him for the death of the Flesh, as if it were his proper bait. Because then we have heard what our

Head has done by Himself, let us now hear what He is doing by His own members. It follows;

And bore through his nostrils with stakes.

15. What else do we understand by stakes [‘sudes’], that is, poles [‘palos’], (which are sharpened indeed in order to be fixed in the ground,) but the sharp counsels of the Saints? And these perforate the nostrils of this Behemoth, while they both watchfully behold on every side his most ingenious stratagems, and pierce, by overcoming them. But a scent is drawn through the nostrils, and by drawing our breath deep, an object is detected even when placed at some distance. By the nostrils of Behemoth are, therefore, designated his cunning stratagems, by which he most ingeniously endeavours both to learn the secret good qualities of our heart, and to scatter them by his most fatal persuasion. The Lord, therefore, perforates his nostrils with stakes, because, penetrating his crafty stratagems by the acute senses of the Saints, He takes from them their power. But he often hovers about the paths of the righteous with such insidious art, as to seek to approach them for their hurt, even by means of the good qualities which he knows to exist in them. For from observing the liberality of one person, he inflames another with the fire of discord; and when he sees one person compassionate, he persuades another to be angry, in order that, by suggesting that a good deed has not been done in common, he may cut off accordant minds from the benefit of a common favour. For since he is not able to break down the resolutions of the just by persuading them to sin, he is busy in sowing evils therein by means of their good deeds. But holy men overcome these his stratagems the more speedily, the more acutely they detect them. A point which we set forth the better, if we bring forward Paul, one of many maintainers of the truth in evidence. For when a certain Corinthian under his care had committed the sin of incest, the illustrious teacher delivered him up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, for the

satisfaction of penance, and reserved his spirit to be saved to the day of the Lord Jesus. [1 Cor. 5, 5] For by great skill in discipline he was forcibly delivered for punishment to the very person, to whom he had in his sin voluntarily submitted; in order that he who had been the author of the sin of wickedness, might himself become the scourge of discipline. But when this penance had been well gone through, on learning that the Corinthians had been already moved with compassion towards him, he says, *To whom ye forgive any thing, I also; for I forgave any thing, for your sakes I forgave it in the person of Christ.* [2 Cor. 2, 10] As thinking of the blessing of communion, he says, *To whom ye forgive any thing, I also.* As if he were saying, I agree with your good doings; may whatever you have done be counted as mine. And he immediately added, *And if I forgave any thing, for your sakes I forgave it.* As if he were saying, Whatever I have done compassionately, has added further good to your doings. My goodness is, therefore, your profit, your goodness is my profit. And he immediately added and subjoined that binding of hearts [‘compagem cordium’], in which he is thus held, *In the person of Christ.* For as if we were presuming to say to him, Why dost thou so carefully couple thyself with thy disciples? why dost thou so anxiously conform either thyself to them, or them to thyself in thy doings? he immediately subjoined, *That we may not be circumvented by Satan.* [ib. 11] And with what acuteness he penetrates his crafty stratagems, he teaches, adding, *For we are not ignorant of his devices.* As if he said in other words, We are sharp stakes of the Lord’s making, and we penetrate the nostrils of this Behemoth by subtle circumspection, lest he should pervert to an evil end that which the mind enters on aright.

16. By ‘stakes’ can be signified the acute words of Wisdom Himself manifested in the flesh, so that by the nostrils of Behemoth may be typified (since scent is drawn in by the nostrils) that prying search of the ancient enemy. For when he doubted whether God were incarnate, he wished to

ascertain this by tempting and asking of Him miracles, saying, *If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.* [Matt. 4, 3] Because then he wished to learn the scent of His Divinity from the evidence of miracles, he drew in the breath, as it were, by his nostrils. But when it is immediately said to him in answer, *Man liveth not by bread alone,* and, *Thou shall not tempt the Lord thy God,* [ib. 4, 7] because the Truth repelled the searching enquiry of the ancient enemy by the sharpness of his sayings, he pierced his nostrils, as it were, with stakes. But because this Behemoth spreads forth with various arguments of deceit, he is marked still further by the addition of another name; for it is subjoined,

Ver. 20. *Wilt thou be able to draw out Leviathan with a hook?* [E.V. 41, 1]

17. For Leviathan means 'their addition.' Of whom, in truth, but of men? amongst whom he introduced once for all the guilt of sin, and carries it onward to eternal death by the most evil suggestions day by day. And while he multiplies their guilt by the usury of sin, he doubtless without ceasing adds to their punishment. He can also be called Leviathan by way of mocking. For he declared in his cunning persuasion that he would confer a divine nature on the first man, but he took away immortality. [Gen. 3, 4. 5.] He can therefore be called ironically 'The addition to men,' for when he promised them to bestow that which they were not, he even took away by his craft that which they really were. But this Leviathan was caught with a hook, because when in the case of our Redeemer he seized through his satellites the bait of His Body, the sharp sting of His Godhead pierced him through. For a hook held as it were the throat of its swallower, when both the bait of the flesh appeared for the devourer to seize, and at the time of His passion His Godhead was concealed, in order to kill him. For in this abyss of waters, that is, in this boundlessness of the human race, this whale was rushing hither and thither with open mouth, eager for the death, and

devouring the life of almost all. But a hook for the death of this whale was suspended by a marvellous arrangement in this gloomy depth of waters. The line of this hook, is that genealogy of the ancient fathers recorded in the Gospel. For when it is said, *Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob,* and the other descendants are described, with the insertion of the name of Joseph, down to Mary, the betrothed Virgin, a kind of line is spun, for the Incarnate Lord, that is to say, this hook to be bound to the end of it; [Matt. 1, 2-16] Whom this whale would catch at with open mouth when hanging in these waters of the human race, but when it was bitten by the cruelty of his satellites, he would no longer have power to bite. That this whale then, who is lying in ambush for the death of men, might no longer devour whom he wished, this hook held firm the jaws of the spoiler, and wounded him that bit it. God, therefore, as pointing out to his faithful servant the Incarnation of His Only-begotten Son, says, *Wilt thou be able to draw out Leviathan with a hook?* Thou understandest, As I; Who send My Only-begotten Son in the flesh for the death of the spoiler; in Whom while mortal flesh is seen, and the power of His immortality is not seen, a kind of hook destroys, as it were, him who swallows it, by concealing the keenness of the power, with which He wounds. It follows;

And wilt thou bind his tongue with a cord?

18. Thou understandest, As I. For Holy Scripture is wont to designate by a ‘cord,’ sometimes measured allotments, sometimes sins, sometimes faith. For on account of the hereditary measured allotments, it is said, *The lines have fallen unto me in goodly places, for I have a goodly heritage.* [Ps. 16, 6] For lines fall for us in goodly places, when through humility of life the lot of a better country awaits us. Again, because sins are signified by a ‘cord,’ it is said by the Prophet; *Woe unto you that draw iniquity with the cords of vanity.* [Is. 5, 18] For iniquity is drawn with cords of vanity, when sin is drawn out by increase. Whence it is also said by the Psalmist; *The*

cords of sins [or, *sinners*, as S. Aug. ad loc.] *have twined about me.* [Ps. 119, 61] For since a cord, when added to, is twisted, in order to increase, sin is not unfitly figured by a cord, since it is frequently multiplied, when it is defended with a perverse heart. Again, by a 'cord' faith is expressed, as Solomon witnesses, who says; *A threefold cord is not easily broken;* [Eccles. 4, 12] because faith in truth which is woven by the mouth of preachers from the knowledge of the Trinity, remaining firm in the Elect, is broken ['dissipatur'] only in the heart of the reprobate. In this place, therefore, nothing prevents either faith or sin being understood by the word 'cord.' For our Incarnate Lord bound the tongue of Leviathan with a cord, because He appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemned all his erroneous preaching. Whence it is said, as Paul witnesses; *And from sin He condemned sin.* [Rom. 8, 3] He bound his tongue with a cord, because by means of the likeness of sinful flesh He swept away all his deceitful arguments from the hearts of His Elect. For behold, when the Lord appears in the flesh, the tongue of Leviathan is bound, because, when His truth had become known, those doctrines of falsehood were silenced.

19. For where is now the error of the Academicians, who endeavour to establish on sure grounds that nothing is sure, who with shameless brow demand from their hearers belief in their assertions, when they declare that nothing is true? Where is the superstition of the Mathematicians, who, looking up at the courses of the constellations, make the lives of men to depend on the motions of the stars? Though the birth of twins often scatters their doctrine to the winds; for though born at one and the same moment, they do not abide in the same kind of conversation. Where are those many false teachings, which we abstain from enumerating, for fear of digressing far from the course of our commentary? But every false doctrine has now been silenced, because the Lord has bound the tongue of Leviathan by the cord of His Incarnation. Whence it is also well said by the Prophet; *And the*

Lord shall lay waste the tongue of the Egyptian sea. [Is. 11, 15] For the 'tongue of the sea,' is the knowledge of secular learning. But it is well called 'the Egyptian sea;' because it is darkened with the gloom of sin. The Lord, therefore, laid waste the tongue of the Egyptian sea, because by manifesting Himself in the flesh, He destroyed the false wisdom of this world. The tongue of Leviathan is, therefore, bound with a cord, because the preaching of the old sinner was bound by the likeness of sinful flesh.

20. But if faith is signified by a 'cord,' the same meaning is again suggested to us; because when faith in the Trinity became known to the world by holy preachers, the doctrine of the world ceased to break forth against the mind of the Elect. Whence it is well said to the Lord by the Prophet; *Thou hast cloven fountains and torrents, Thou hast dried up the rivers of Ethan.* [Ps. 74, 15] For Ethan is interpreted 'strong.' And who is this strong man, except him of whom the Lord says in the Gospel; *No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, unless he first bind the strong man.* [Mark 3, 27] The Lord, therefore, clave the fountains and the torrents, when He spread in the hearts of His Apostles the streams of truth. Of whom it is said again by another Prophet; *With joy shall ye draw water from the fountains of the Saviour.* [Is. 12, 3] For we go in our thirst to their teaching, that we may bring back the pitcher of our hearts full of truth. But He dried the rivers of Ethan by the springing forth of His own fountains, when He withered the doctrine of the mighty and malignant spirit by displaying the ray of His own truth. The tongue, therefore, of Leviathan is bound with a cord, because by the spreading of faith in the Trinity, the preachings of errors were silenced. But since he cannot now raise himself openly, he goes about hither and thither, and bites by stealth. But the Lord watches against him in our behalf with wonderful pity, and defeats him even in his treacherous designs. Whence it is subjoined;

Ver. 21. *Wilt thou put a ring into his nostrils?* [E.V. 41, 2]

21. As stratagems are signified by ‘nostrils,’ so by a ‘ring’ is designated the omnipotence of Divine Power. For when it keeps us from being seized by temptations, it encircles around and holds firm in wondrous ways the snares of the ancient enemy. A ring is, therefore, put into his nostrils, when by the strength of heavenly protection drawn around us, his cunning is so restrained, as not to prevail so far against the weakness of man, as far as it secretly searches out its fatal arguments. But by the name ‘ring’ can be designated also the aid of the secret judgments, which is put into the nostrils of this Behemoth when he is restrained from his artful cruelty. Whence it is well said by the Prophet to the King of Babylon, when he is kept from injuring the Israelites; *I will put a ring in thy nostrils.* [Is. 37, 29] As if it were plainly said; Thou breathest hard with thoughts of guile; but from being unable to fulfil thy desires, thou bearest in thy nostrils the ring of My omnipotence, in order that when thou pantest more eagerly for the death of the righteous, thou mayest return unsatisfied from their life. But that which Holy Scripture calls in this place a ‘ring,’ it calls a ‘sickle’ by John in the Apocalypse. For he says, *I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.* [Rev. 14, 14] For the power of Divine judgment is called a ‘ring,’ because it binds on every side; but because in its cutting it embraces all things within it, it is marked out by the term ‘sickle.’ For whatever is cut by a sickle falls within it, in whatsoever direction it is turned. And because the power of the heavenly judgment cannot be in any way avoided, (for we are in truth within it, wherever we may endeavour to escape,) when the Judge Who is to come is represented, He is rightly said to hold a sickle. Because when He comes to meet all things in His might, He surrounds them in cutting them off. The Prophet saw that he was within the sickle of judgment, when he said, *If I ascend into heaven. Thou art there: if I descend into hell, Thou art present. If I take my wings before the light, and*

dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. [Ps. 139, 8. 9.] He saw himself to be within a kind of sickle, when he knew that there was no way of escape open to him from any place, saying, *For neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the desert mountains,* [Ps. 75, 6] thou understandest, 'a way of escape is open.' And he proceeded immediately to speak of this all-embracing comprehension of the Divine power, saying, *For God is the Judge.* [ib. 7] As if he were saying, A way of escape is wanting on every side, because He judges Who is every where. Therefore as the Divine judgments are signified by a sickle, because they encircle and cut down, so are they expressed by a ring, because they bind on every side. A ring is, therefore, put by the Lord in the nostrils of Leviathan, because he is restrained by the power of His judgment from prevailing as much as he wishes in his stratagems. Let it be said then, *Wilt thou put a ring into his nostrils?* Thou understandest, As I, Who restrain by Almighty judgment his crafty stratagems, so that he neither attempts as much as he wishes, nor succeeds as far as he attempts. It follows,

Or wilt thou bore through his jaw with a bracelet?

22. A 'bracelet' differs not in meaning from a 'ring,' because this also binds and encircles the spot where it is placed. But because a bracelet extends wider, by a bracelet is designated the more careful protection of His secret judgment over us. The Lord, therefore, bores through the jaw of this Leviathan with a bracelet, because by the ineffable power of His mercy He so thwarts the malice of the ancient enemy, that he sometimes loses even those whom he has seized, and they, as it were, fall from his mouth, who after the commission of sin return to innocence. For who that had once been seized by his mouth would escape his jaw, if it were not bored through? Had he not seized Peter in his mouth, when he denied? Had he not seized David in his mouth, when he plunged himself into such a gulph of lust? But

when they returned each of them through penitence to life, this Leviathan let them escape, as it were, through the holes of his jaws. Those, therefore, are withdrawn from his mouth through the hole of his jaw, who after the perpetration of such great wickednesses have come back with penitence. But what man can escape the mouth of this Leviathan, so as not commit any thing unlawful? But hence we know how much we are indebted to the Redeemer of mankind, Who not only restrained us from falling into the mouth of Leviathan, but granted us also to return from his mouth; Who bereft not the sinner of hope, because He pierced his jaw that He might make a way to escape, so that he, who at first was incautious and not afraid of being bitten, might at least escape after the bite. The heavenly remedy, therefore, every where comes to our aid, because He both gave man precepts, that he should not sin, and yet furnished him with remedies when in sin, that he should not despair. There must, therefore, be exercised the greatest caution; that no one through pleasure in sin be seized by the mouth of this Leviathan. And yet, if he has been seized, let him not despair, because if he thoroughly bewails his sin, he finds a hole in his jaw, by which to escape. He is even now being crushed with his teeth; but if a way of escape is still sought for, a hole is found in his jaw. He who would not keep a look out, so as not to be taken, has, even when taken, a place to escape at. Let every one then who is not yet taken, avoid his jaw; but let every one who has been already taken, seek for a hole in his jaw. For our Creator is merciful and just.

23. But let no one say, Because He is merciful, I sin venially. And let no one who has sinned say, Because He is just, I despair of the remission of my sin. For God looses the sin which is bewailed; but let every one be afraid of sinning, because he knows not whether he can worthily bewail it. Before sinning then, let him fear His justice; but after sinning, let him presume on His mercy; and let him not so fear His justice, as not to be strengthened by

any consolation of hope, nor be so confident of His mercy, as to neglect to apply to his wounds the medicine of worthy penitence. But let him always think also, that He Who he ventures to hope spares him in mercy, judges also with severity. Let the hope of the sinner then rejoice in His mercy, but let the correction of the penitent tremble under His severity. Let the hope, therefore, of our confidence have also a sting of fear, in order that the justice of the Judge may frighten into the correction of his sins him whom the grace of the Forgiver invites to the confidence of pardon. For hence it is said by a certain wise man; *Say not, the mercies of the Lord are many, He will not be mindful of my sins.* [Ecclus. 5, 6] For he immediately speaks of His mercy and justice, saying, *For mercy and wrath are from Him.* [ib. 7] The Divine clemency, therefore, by piercing the jaw of this Behemoth, comes to the aid of mankind on every side, both mercifully and powerfully, because it did not abstain from giving them caution and admonition when free, nor took from them the remedy of escape when they had been captured. For the sins of such persons, that is, of David and Peter, are recorded in Scripture for this end, that the fall of their betters may be a caution to inferiors. But the penitence and the pardon of both are alike inserted to this end, that the recovery of the lost may be the hope of the perishing. Let no one boast then of standing firm himself, when David falls. Let no one also despair of his own fall, when David rises. Behold how marvellously Holy Scripture humbles the proud with the same word with which it raises up the humble. For it recorded but one circumstance, and recalled, by a different effect, the proud to the fearfulness of humility, and the humble to the confidence of hope. O the surpassing value of this new kind of remedy! which applied in one and the same manner, dries up the swollen by pressing on it, and restores the withered by upraising it. For it alarmed us at the fall of our superiors, but strengthened us by their restoration.

24. For thus, in truth, thus does the mercy of the Divine dispensation ever check us when proud, and support us from sinking into despair. Whence He also warns us by Moses, saying, *Thou shalt not take either the upper or the nether millstone to pledge.* [Deut. 24, 6] For by 'take' we sometimes mean 'take away.' Whence also those birds which are eager in seizing other birds are called hawks [accipitres, ab accipio]. Whence the Apostle Paul says, *For ye suffer, if a man devour you, if a man take.* [2 Cor. 11, 20] As if he said, If any one takes away. But the pledge of the debtor is the confession of a sinner. For a pledge is taken from a debtor, when a confession of sin is obtained from a sinner. But the upper and nether millstone are hope and fear. For hope raises up the heart, but fear weighs it down lower. But the upper and the nether millstone are so necessarily joined together, that one is possessed in vain without the other. Hope and fear, therefore, ought to be unceasingly united in the breast of a sinner, because he hopes in vain for mercy, if he does not also fear justice; he in vain fears justice, if he does not also rely on mercy. The upper or the nether millstone is, therefore, ordered not to be taken as a pledge; because he who preaches to a sinner, ought to order his preaching with such management, as not in leaving hope to remove fear, nor yet in withdrawing hope, to leave him in fear only. For the upper or the nether millstone is removed, if by the tongue of the preacher, either fear is severed from hope, or hope from fear, in the breast of the sinner.

25. But since on having brought forward David, as the case demanded, we have made mention of so great a sin, the mind of our reader is perhaps moved to enquire, why Almighty God does not keep uninjured by bodily sins, those whom He has elected for ever, and has also taken up to the height of spiritual gifts. To which, because we believe they will be speedily satisfied, we give a brief reply. For some through the gifts of virtues they have received, through the grace of good works bestowed on them, fall into

the sin of pride, but yet know not whither they have fallen. Accordingly, the ancient enemy, because he already rules over them within, is permitted also to rage against them from without, in order that they who are elated in thought, may be brought down by the lust of the flesh. But we know that it is sometimes much less to fall into corruption of body, than to sin in our silent thought from deliberate pride. But when pride is believed to be less disgraceful, it is less avoided. But men are more ashamed of lust, the more they all alike know it to be disgraceful. It is hence frequently the case that some persons on falling into lust after pride, are, from their open fall, ashamed of the guilt of their latent sin. And they then also correct their greater faults, when they are more sorely confounded from having been overcome in those that are less. For they who believed that they were free when living in greater sins, behold that they are guilty even amid smaller ones. This Behemoth then, when let loose by the merciful dispensation of God, leads on from sin to sin, and while he strikes the more heavily, loses thereby him whom he has seized, and is conquered by the very means by which he seems to have triumphed. It is pleasing to consider within the well guarded bosom of grace, with what great favour of compassion God surrounds us. Behold! he who prides himself on his virtue, through sin comes back to humility. But he who is puffed up by the virtues he has received, is wounded not with a sword, but, so to say, with a remedy. For what is virtue but a remedy, and what is vice but a wound? Because, therefore, we make a wound of our remedy, He makes a remedy of our wound; in order that we who are wounded by our virtue, may be healed by our sin. For we pervert the gifts of virtues to the practice of vice; He applies the allurements of vices to promote virtues [‘in artem virtutem’], and wounds our healthy state in order to preserve it, and that we who fly from humility when we run, may cling to it at least when falling. But it should be understood in these matters, that the more the greater number of men fall in

many things, the more firmly are they bound; and that when this Behemoth smites them with one sin to make them fall, he binds them also with another to keep them from rising. Let a man, therefore, consider with what an enemy he is waging war; and if he perceives that he has already offended in any matter, let him at least be afraid of being drawn from sin to sin, in order that the wounds may be carefully avoided, with which he frequently destroys. For it is very seldom that our enemy subserves the salvation of the Elect by actual wounds.

26. But the perforated jaw of this Behemoth can be understood in another sense also; so that he may be said to hold in his mouth not those whom he has already completely entangled in sin, but those whom he is still tempting by the persuasions of sin: so as that his chewing any one may be his tempting him with the pleasure of sin. He had received Paul to be chewed, but not swallowed, when he was harassing him, after so many sublime revelations, with thorns of the flesh. [2 Cor. 12, 7] For when he received permission to practise temptation against him, he then held him in his jaw, which yet had been pierced through. But he who could perish through pride, was tempted, that he might not perish. That temptation was, therefore, not an abyss of vices, but a protection of his merits; because this Leviathan by wearying him crushed him with affliction, but did not devour by involving him in sin. But he would not lose men who were elated by their sanctity, unless he tempted them. For they would not be holy, if they boasted of the glory of their sanctity, and would fall the more under his power, the more they extolled themselves for their virtues. But by the wonderful course of the dispensation, when they are tempted, they are humbled; when they are humbled, they cease at once to be his. The jaw of this Behemoth is, therefore, well said to have been pierced through, because he loses the Elect of God by crushing them, by attempting to destroy, he keeps them from perishing. The ancient enemy, therefore, subserving the secret dispensations

of God, willingly tempts the souls of the holy to their ruin, but, by tempting, unwillingly preserves them for the kingdom. His jaw is, therefore, pierced through, because those whom he crushes by tempting, that is, by chewing them, he loses as it were, when he goes to swallow. But since it is the work not of human, but divine, forethought, that the very craft of the ancient enemy promotes [‘suffragetur’] the benefit of the just, (so that when he tempts the Elect he protects them the more by his temptation,) it is well said to blessed Job; *Or wilt thou bore through his jaw with a bracelet?* Thou understandest, As I; Who providently disposing all things, preserve My Elect more firmly in their integrity, by permitting them to be moved [‘labefactari’] in a measure from their integrity by the jaw of this Leviathan. It follows;

Ver. 22. *Will he multiply prayers to thee, or will he speak soft words to thee?* [E.V. 41, 3]

27. Thou understandest, As to Me. For if these words are referred to the person of the Son, he spake soft words to Him Incarnate, when he said, *I know Thee, Who Thou art, the Holy One of God.* [Luke 4, 34] And this Leviathan multiplied prayers to Him, when he said by the legion which was subject to him; *If Thou cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.* [Matt. 8, 31] Although it can be understood in a still more plain manner, because he multiplies prayers to the Lord, when the wicked, who are his body, pray, on the day of the last judgment, that they may be spared; when his members, that is, the reprobate, cry out too late, and say, *Lord, Lord, open unto us.* To whom it is said immediately, *I know you not, whence ye are.* [Luke 13, 25] Then also he will say by his members soft words to the Lord, when many of his body are about to say, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name have done many wonderful works?* [Matt. 7, 22] They say soft words in deprecation, when they say in reply what they have done in His Name, but when they did these

very deeds with hard heart, they claimed them for their own credit. Whence they shortly hear, *I know you not, who ye are.* It follows;

Ver. 23. *Will he make a covenant with thee?* Thou understandest, As with Me. *And wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?* [E.V. 41, 4]

28. Thou understandest, As I. But it must be carefully observed, that this Leviathan makes a covenant with the Lord, in order to be counted His servant for ever. For in a covenant the wishes of parties who are at variance are fulfilled, that each attains to what it desires, and terminates its quarrels by the desired result. The ancient enemy, therefore, when kindled by the torch of his malice, is at variance with the purity of the Divine innocence, but even in his variance, disagrees not with His judgment. For he is ever maliciously seeking to tempt righteous men. But yet the Lord permits this to take place, either mercifully, or righteously. This liberty to tempt is, therefore, called a 'covenant,' wherein the desire of the tempter is effected, and yet the will of the righteous Dispenser is thereby wonderfully fulfilled. For, as we have lately said, the Lord frequently subjects His Elect to the tempter, in order to be instructed; just as after the barriers of Paradise, after the secrets of the third heaven, an angel of Satan was given to Paul that he might not be exalted by the greatness of the revelations. [2 Cor. 12, 7] But, as we have said before, it is so ordered in this very temptation, that they who could perish from pride, are, by being humbled, preserved from destruction. In the secret course, therefore, of the dispensation, by the iniquity of the devil being permitted to rage, the kindness of God is brought about in mercy. And from this covenant which he is said to make with God, he is rightly described as being taken for a servant. Because he obeys the commands ['nutibus'] of the heavenly grace, just as he exercises the wrath of his most evil will. He is, therefore, a servant by agreement, who when permitted to fulfil his own will, is restrained by the will of the counsel of

heaven, so as willingly to tempt the Elect of God, as was before said, and unwittingly to prove them by his temptation.

29. But because he promotes in this life the interests of the Elect, as long as he is able to exercise in temptations the evil of his malice; but is said in this place to be taken by the Lord not merely as a servant under an agreement, but a servant for ever; we are compelled to investigate how we can prove that even after the close of the present life, he is a servant of the Lord for ever. For he is no longer permitted to tempt the righteous who are powerful in heavenly happiness, when he is condemned before their eyes to the eternal fires of hell. Because in that heavenly country, in which they are now rewarded for the labours of their temptations, they need not to be disciplined by temptations. But at that time this Leviathan with his body, namely all the reprobate, is consigned to the avenging flames, to be tortured therein for ever. And while the just behold these torments, they praise God in truth more and more, because they both see in themselves the blessing with which they have been rewarded, and in the others witness the punishment which they have themselves escaped. For so will the universe be full of beauty, when both hell justly tortures the ungodly, and eternal felicity justly rewards the righteous. For as a black colour is put as the back ground of a picture, in order that the white or red which is put over it may seem more beautiful; so at that time, God by rightly disposing even of the wicked, increases the happiness of the blessed, by displaying before their eyes the sufferings of the reprobate. And although the joy they derive from the vision of the Lord is not of a kind to increase, yet they feel themselves to be more indebted to their Creator, when they both behold the good with which they perceive they have been justly rewarded, and the evil they have overcome from having been mercifully assisted. If then the temptation of this Leviathan here, and his damnation there, contributes to the benefit of

the just, he is a servant for ever, when he unwittingly promotes the glory of God; yea both his just punishment there, and his unjust will here. It follows;

Ver. 24. *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?* [E.V. 41, 5]

30. Why is it that our adversary is first called Behemoth, afterwards Leviathan, but is now compared to a 'bird,' in ridicule at his destruction? For Behemoth, as we have said, is interpreted 'monster,' ['bellua'] and it is shewn to be a quadruped, when it is said to eat hay as an ox. But Leviathan, as he is taken with a hook is doubtless set before us as a serpent in the waters. But now he is brought into comparison with a bird, when it is said, *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?* Let us examine, therefore, why he is called a 'monster,' or a 'beast,' why a 'dragon,' and why a 'bird.' For we learn more quickly the meaning of his names, if we accurately examine the craft of his cunning. For he comes from heaven to earth, and no longer raises himself by any aspiration to the hope of heavenly things. He is, therefore, an irrational and four-footed animal by the folly of his unclean doings, a dragon by his malice in doing hurt, a 'bird' by the levity of his subtle nature. For because he knows not what he is doing against himself, he is a monster with brute sense; because he maliciously seeks to hurt us, he is a 'dragon;' but because he exalts himself haughtily on the subtlety of his nature, he is a 'bird.' Again, because he is in his wicked doings employed by the Divine power for our benefit, he is a 'beast;' because he secretly bites, he is a 'serpent;' but because he sometimes through his indomitable pride feigns himself to be an Angel of light, he is a 'bird.' For though he harasses mankind with his inexplicable skill in wickedness, yet he specially tempts by three sins; in order, namely, to subdue to himself some by lust, some by malice, and some by pride.

31. He is, therefore, deservedly designated by the very name of his doings, in what he attempts to do, when he is called a 'beast,' a 'dragon,' or a 'bird.' For in those whom he excites to the folly of lust, he is a 'beast;' in

those whom he inflames to do malicious injury, he is a ‘dragon;’ but in those whom he exalts to the haughtiness of pride as though they understood high things, he is a ‘bird.’ But in those whom he pollutes equally with lust and malice and pride, he exists as a ‘beast,’ [‘jumentum’] a ‘dragon,’ and a ‘bird’ at the same time. For he has insinuated himself into the hearts of those deluded by him in as many shapes as the wickednesses in which he entangles them. He is, therefore, called by the name of many things, because he is changed into various kind of shapes before the eyes of those who are deluded by him. For when he tempts this one by the lust of the flesh, and yet does not overcome him, he changes his suggestion, and kindles his heart into malice. Because, therefore, he was unable to approach him as a ‘monster,’ [‘bellua’] he comes near as a ‘dragon.’ He is unable to corrupt him with the poison of malice, but yet he places his good qualities before his eyes, and exalts his heart to pride. He could not, therefore, steal up to this man as a dragon, but yet by bringing before him the phantom of vain glory, he flew before the sight of his thought as a bird. And this bird is doubtless raised up the more cruelly against us, the less it is impeded by any weakness of its own nature. For because it is not overcome by the death of the flesh, and saw our Redeemer was mortal in the flesh, it was puffed up with greater haughtiness of pride. But where it raised itself against its Maker with the wing of pride, it there found the snare of its death. For he was overcome by that very death of His flesh, which in pride he sought, and suffered from the snare by his very seeking the death of the Just One, as the prey of his malice. Let it he said then, *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?* For the Lord in truth played with him as with a bird, when in the passion of His Only-Begotten Son He shewed him the bait, but concealed the snare. For he saw that which he was taking in his mouth, but he saw not what he was holding in his throat. For though he had himself confessed Him to be the Son of God, yet he believed that He was dying as a mere man, for

whose death he had roused the minds of the persecuting Jews. But he is understood to have learnt at last too late, at the very moment of His betrayal, that he would be punished by that His death. Whence also he frightened the wife of Pilate by dreams, in order that her husband might desist from the persecution of the Just One. [Matt. 27, 19] But the plan which had been by the secret dispensation ordained, could not he by any machination overthrown. For it was expedient that the death of a Just Man dying unjustly should be a ransom for the death of sinners dying justly. But because this Leviathan was ignorant of this even to the time of His passion, he was deluded as a bird, and suffered from the snare of His Godhead, when he seized the bait of His Manhood. It follows;

Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?

32. Thou understandest, As I. Though the condition of male servants is despicable, their manhood is strong. But in maid servants their sex lies low, together with their condition. The Lord, therefore, well declares that He binds this Leviathan not for his male servants, but for his maidens. Because when He came for our redemption, and sent His preachers against the pride of the world, He chose the foolish, and left the wise; the weak, and left the strong; the poor, and left the rich. The Lord, therefore, bound the strength of this Leviathan for His maidens, because, as Paul witnesses, *God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty.* [l Cor. 1, 27] Whence it is well said by Solomon; *Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out seven pillars, she hath slain her victims, she hath mingled wine, she hath set forth her table, she hath sent her maidens to summon to the citadel, and to the walls of the city.* [Prov. 9, 1-3] For Wisdom in truth built her a house, when the Only-Begotten Son of God, through the intervention of His soul [Note: ‘Mediante anima.’ He means to say, not that the Human Soul of our Lord was the means of *creating* the Body, but that it is the medium through which that Body is personally united with the

Godhead. See Bk. xxxi. §. 42], created Himself a human body within the womb of the Virgin. For the body of the Only-Begotten is called the house of God, just as it is also called a temple; but so, that that one and the same Son of God and Man, is Himself the Inhabitor, Himself the Inhabited. But this can be rightly understood in another sense also, if the Church is called the house of Wisdom. And She hath hewn out Herself seven pillars, because She has severed the minds of preachers from the love of the present world, and has raised them up to bear the fabric of this selfsame Church. And these, because they are supported by the virtue of perfection, are designated by the number seven. She hath slain her victims, because she allowed the life of preachers to be sacrificed by persecution. She hath mingled her wine, because she has announced to us the mysteries of the Godhead and Manhood alike. She hath also set forth her table, because She hath laid open and prepared for us the food of Holy Scripture. She hath likewise sent her maidens, to summon us to the citadel and to the walls of the city, because she studied to have weak and abject preachers, to gather the faithful people to the heavenly edifices of their spiritual country. Whence the Lord praises Nathaniel in the Gospel, [John 1, 47] but yet does not number him in the class of preachers, because such as had nothing praiseworthy of their own, ought to come to preach Him; in order that that which they were doing might be known more surely to be of the truth, the more plainly it was also seen that they were not sufficient of themselves to effect it. In order then that His wonderful power might shine forth by the tongues of His preachers, it was first ordered still more wonderfully, that these preachers should have no merit of their own. The Lord, therefore, sent 'maidens' and bound the strength of this Leviathan, because He set forth to the world feeble preachers, and confined with the bond of His terror all the mighty, who had been of his body. And this Leviathan is bound in His own person by maidens, when, on the light of truth shining forth by weak preachers, the

ancient enemy is not permitted to rage, at his will, against the minds of the Elect, but is restrained by signs and mighty wonders from holding all whom he desires under the bondage of unbelief. He, therefore, who gives strength against him to the weak, works this mightily by Himself. But because the Lord informs us whom He sends against him, He now also adds what they do who are sent. It follows;

Ver. 25. *His friends shall cut him in pieces; the merchants shall divide him.* [E.V. 41, 6]

33. This Leviathan is cut in pieces, as often as his members are severed from him by the sword of the Divine Word. For when wicked men hear the word of truth, and, smitten with holy fear, suspend their imitation of the ancient enemy, he, from whom those who wickedly adhered to him are withdrawn, is himself divided in his own body. But He terms those His 'friends,' whom before He calls 'maidens,' those also He calls 'merchants,' whom He had termed 'friends.' For holy preachers are first 'maidens' through their fear, afterwards 'friends' through faith, at last 'merchants' also through their actions. For it is said to them when weak; *Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased the Father to give you a kingdom.* [Luke 12, 32] It is said to them again, growing strong, *But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you.* [John 15, 15] Lastly, they are ordered when going forth to carry on their business; *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* [Mark 16, 15] For in the preaching of the faith a kind of traffic is, as it were, carried on; when the word is given to, and faith received from, the hearers. They make as it were a kind of traffic, who make a venture ['prærogant'] with their preaching, and bring back faith from the people. They impart to them faith, and immediately receive back their holy life. For if the preaching of the righteous had not been a traffic, the Psalmist surely would not be saying, *Take a psalm, and give a timbrel.* [Ps. 81, 2] For in a timbrel,

leather is dried, in order that it may sound. What is meant then by saying, *Take a psalm, and give a timbrel,* except this? Take ye the spiritual song of the heart, and give back the temporal maceration of the body. If heavenly preaching had not been a traffic, Solomon would never say of Holy Church under the type of a virtuous woman, *She made fine linen, and sold it, and delivered a girdle to the Canaanite.* [Prov. 31, 24] For what is signified by a garment of fine linen, but the subtle texture of holy preaching? In which men rest softly, because the mind of the faithful is refreshed therein by heavenly hope. Whence also the animals are shewn to Peter in a linen sheet, [Acts 10, 11. 12.] because the souls of sinners mercifully gathered together are inclosed in the gentle quiet of faith. The Church, therefore, made and sold this fine garment, because she imparted in words that faith which she had woven by belief; and received from unbelievers a life of upright conversation. And she delivered a girdle to the Canaanite, because by the might of the righteousness she displayed, she constrained the lax doings of the Gentile world, in order that that might be maintained in their doings which is commanded, *Let your loins be girded about.* [Luke 12, 35] The Lord, therefore, in searching out for His preachers finds them as ‘maidens,’ by changing them He makes them ‘friends,’ by enriching sets them forth as ‘merchants.’ For they who in their infirmity were at first afraid of the threats of the world, ascend afterwards to know the Divine counsels. But when enriched with virtues, they are led as far as to carry on the traffic of faith, in order that by their threats and persuasions they may smite the members of this Leviathan the more severely, the more truly, having become even friends, they unite themselves to the love of the Truth; and that they may withdraw from him more quickly the souls of sinners, the more, having become skilful traffickers, they display in themselves the most ample treasures of virtues. For that the possession of this Leviathan is, much to their praise, taken from him by the preachers of God, the voice of

Truth promises by the Prophet, saying, *And if thou wilt separate the precious from the vile, thou shall be as My mouth.* [Jer. 15, 19] For he in truth separates the precious from the vile, who cuts off the minds of men from accursed [‘reproba’] imitation of the ancient enemy. He is rightly called the mouth of God, because by him doubtless the divine words are uttered. It follows,

Ver. 26. *Wilt thou fill nets with his skin, and the cabin of fishes with his head?* [E.V. 41, 7]

34. What is designated by ‘nets,’ or a ‘cabin of fishes,’ except the churches of the faithful which make one Catholic Church? Whence it is written in the Gospel, *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea, and gathering of every kind of fishes.* [Matt. 13, 47] The Church is in truth called the kingdom of heaven, for while the Lord exalts her conduct to things above, she already reigns herself in the Lord by heavenly conversation. And it is also rightly compared to a net cast into the sea, gathering of every kind of fishes; because when cast into this gentile world, it rejected no one, but caught the wicked with the good, the proud with the humble, the angry with the gentle, and the foolish with the wise. But by the ‘skin’ of this Leviathan we understand the foolish, and by his ‘head,’ the wise ones of his body. Or certainly by the ‘skin,’ which is outermost, are designated those who serve him as inferiors in these meanest offices, but by the ‘head’ those placed over them. And the Lord observing the proper order rightly declares that He will fill these ‘nets,’ or ‘cabin of fishes,’ that is, His Church, and the wishes of the faithful with his ‘skin’ first, and afterwards with his ‘head.’ Because, as we said before, He first chose the weak, that He might confound the strong afterwards. [l Cor. l, 27] He chose in truth the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise. For He gathered together the unlearned first, and philosophers afterwards; and He taught not fishermen by means of orators, but with wondrous power He subdued

orators by means of fishermen. He says therefore, *Wilt thou fill nets with his skin, or the cabin of fishes with his head?* Thou understandest, As I, Who first gather within the Church of the faithful the most distant, and the lowest, as the 'skin' of the devil, and afterwards subdue to Myself his 'head,' that is, wise adversaries. It follows; *Wilt thou lay thine hand upon him?* That is, As I, Who restraining him by My mighty power, permit him not to rage more than is expedient, and Who, as far as I shall have permitted his cruelty, turn it to the benefit of My Elect. For certainly to lay a hand upon him, is to subdue him by the might of virtue. It is said then to blessed Job in a question;

Ver. 27. *Wilt thou lay thine hand upon him?* [E.V. 41, 8]

As if it were openly said, wilt thou restrain him with thine own strength? Whence it is also fitly subjoined;

Remember the battle, and speak no more.

35. The deep dispensation of God's judgment for this reason often either assails His well-deserving servants with threats, or presses on them with scourges, or weighs them down by some superimposed burdens, or entangles them in laborious employments, because it foresees with wonderful power, that if they were to remain quiet, and in freedom under tranquillity, they would sink beneath the wounds of the mind from being unable to endure the temptations of the adversary. Whilst then it engages them in scourges or burdens to be endured without, it protects them from receiving the darts of temptations within. For it is frequently a practice for a physician to draw out the inflammation of the bowels into an itching on the skin; and he often effects a cure within, by causing an outward wound. In like manner the medicine of the Divine dispensation frequently causes the removal of an inward wound by outward pains, and the throwing out of that inward corruption of sins, which would otherwise occupy the mind, by the deep wounds of scourges. And yet frequently, when men are not conscious

to themselves of an open sin, and are either tortured by pain, or weighed down by labours, they break out into complaints against the Just and Almighty Judge; from not observing against how mighty an adversary they are waging war. But did they but observe anxiously his irresistible strength, they would not murmur at the outward sufferings they endure.

36. But these seem to us grievous, for the very reason that we do not like to consider our still more grievous contests with our secret adversary. From which assaults, as we said, we are frequently defended, when scourged, and concealed when afflicted. For if our flesh is afflicted with no pain, before it is strengthened with the incorruption of the resurrection, it is unchecked in temptations. But who can be ignorant that it is much better to burn with the heat of fevers, than with the fire of sins? And yet when we are seized with a fever, because we neglect attending to the heat of sins, which might possess us, we murmur at the blow. Who can be ignorant, that it is much better to be held in bondage by cruel men, than to be under the power of the flattering spirits of devils? And yet when we are galled by the yoke of our human condition [perhaps 'of subjection to man'], in the deep judgment of God, we break out into complaint, doubtless because we do not consider that if no condition of bondage oppressed us, our mind, more fatally free, would perchance be in bondage to many iniquities. We believe then the sufferings we endure to be weighty, because we see not how severe and irresistible are the assaults of the crafty enemy against us. For every weight would be as nothing to our mind; if it considered the assaults of the secret adversary which might oppress it. But what if Almighty God were to lighten the burdens we suffer, and yet withdraw from us His assistance, and leave us amid the temptations of this Leviathan? Where shall we betake ourselves, when so mighty an enemy is raging against us, if we are not defended by any protection of our Creator? Because, therefore, blessed Job was not conscious to himself of a fault, and yet was enduring severe scourges, lest

he should haply exceed in the sin of murmuring, let him be reminded what to fear, and let it be said to him, *Remember the battle, and speak no more.* As if it were plainly said to him, If thou considerest the contest of the secret enemy against thee, thou dost not blame whatever thou sufferest from Me. If thou beholdest the sword of the adversary assailing thee, thou dost not at all dread the scourge of a Father. For thou seest with what scourge I smite thee, but thou omittest to look from how great an enemy I keep thee free by My scourging. *Remember* therefore *the battle, and speak no more:* that is, keep thyself the more silent under the discipline of a Father, the more thou seest that thou art weak for the assaults of the enemy. Whilst then thou art smitten by My correction, in order that thou mayest bear it with patience, recal thine enemy to mind, and consider not that every thing thou sufferest is hard, when by outward tortures thou art freed from inward suffering. But because this Leviathan flatters himself with a false promise of the Divine compassion, after He had spoken of the terror of his strength, and had roused the mind of blessed Job with circumspection towards Him, (saying, *Remember the battle, and say no more;)* in order to shew his unpardonable guilt, He immediately added;

Ver. 28. *Behold, his hope shall disappoint him.* [E.V. 41. 9]

37. But this ought to be so understood, as to be referred to his body also; because all wicked men who fear not the strictness of Divine justice, flatter themselves in vain on His compassion. And He presently returns to console us, and foretels his coming destruction at the last judgment, saying; *And in the sight of all he shall be cast down.* For he will be cast down in the sight of all, because when the eternal Judge then terribly appears, when legions of Angels stand at His side, when the whole ministry of heavenly Powers is attending, and all the Elect are brought to behold this spectacle, this cruel and mighty monster is brought captive into the midst, and with his own body, that is, with all reprobates, is consigned to the eternal fires of hell,

when it is said, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.* [Matt. 25, 41] O what a spectacle will that be, when this most huge monster will be displayed to the eyes of the Elect, which at this time of contest, could he but be seen, might have too much terrified them! But it is so ordered by the secret and wonderful judgment of God, that he is now conquered by His grace, though not seen by the combatants, and that then he is beheld by the joyful victors as already captive. But they then learn more fully how much they are indebted to the Divine assistance, when they have once seen so mighty a beast, whom they have now conquered in their weakness; and behold in the huge size of their enemy, how much they owe to the grace of their Defender. For our soldiers then return from this battle bringing back the trophies of their virtues; and when, having recovered their bodies, they are now about to obtain, in that judgment, an admission to the heavenly kingdom, they behold first the most monstrous strength of this ancient serpent, that they may not esteem lightly the danger they have escaped. It is therefore well said; *And in the sight of all he will be cast down,* because the sight of his death then causes joy, whose life, being now endured, daily engages with tortures in contest with the just. But as if we should immediately complain on hearing these things, and should say to the Lord, 'O Lord, Who art not ignorant that this Leviathan is of such great strength, why dost Thou arouse him to engage in contest with our weakness?' He immediately added;

Chap. xli. ver. 1. *I will not rouse him as one that is cruel.*

And as if the ground of the reason were immediately asked by us, 'How dost Thou not arouse him, as one that is cruel, since we know that Thou permittest him to devour and to destroy so many?' He immediately added, saying,

Ver. 2. *For who can resist My countenance? and who hath first given to Me that I should repay him?* [E.V. 10. and 11.]

38. In which two verses He fully stated both the might of His own power, and the whole weight of the reason. For on account of His power He said, *For who can resist My countenance?* And on account of the reason He added; *Who hath first given to Me, that I should repay him?* As if He said, I do not rouse him up as one that is cruel, because I both rescue by My might My Elect from his power, and again, I condemn the reprobate not unjustly, but with good reason. That is, I am both able to rescue marvellously those whom I mercifully elect, and those whom I reject, I do not unjustly abandon. For no one has first given any thing to God, in order that the Divine Grace should follow him. For if we have prevented God by our good works, where is that which the Prophet says; *His mercy shall prevent me?* [Ps. 59, 10] If we have given any good works, in order to deserve His grace, where is that which the Apostle says, *By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, but it is the gift of God, not of works?* [Eph. 2, 8] If our love prevented God, where is that which John the Apostle says; *Not that we loved God, but that He first loved us?* [1 John 4, 10] Where is that which the Lord says by Hosea; *I will love thee of My own accord?* [Hos. 14, 4] If without His gift, by our own strength we follow God, where is that which the Truth protests in the Gospel, saying, *Without Me ye can do nothing?* [John 15, 5] Where is that which He says; *No man can come to Me, except the Father, Which hath sent Me, hath drawn him?* [ib. 6, 44] Where is that which He says again; *Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you?* [ib. 15, 16] If we only prevent the gifts of good works by thinking aright through our own strength, where is that which is again said so salutarily by Paul, that all self-confidence of the human mind might be cut away from the very root of the heart, when he says; *Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God?* [2 Cor. 3, 5] No one therefore prevents God by his merits, so as to be able to hold Him as his debtor. But the All-just Creator has in a wonderful

manner both chosen some beforehand, and justly leaves some in their own wicked habits.

39. But yet He does not display to His Elect mercy without justice, because He here weighs them down with hard afflictions. Nor again does He exercise on the reprobate justice without mercy, because He here patiently endures those, whom He condemns hereafter for ever. If therefore both the Elect follow the grace which prevents them, and the reprobate receive according to that which they deserve; both the Elect find something to praise in His mercy, and the reprobate have nothing to blame in His justice. It is, therefore, well said; *Who hath first given to Me, that I should repay him?* As if it were plainly said; I am not compelled by any reason to spare the reprobate, because I am not bound to them as a debtor by any doings of theirs. For they therefore receive not the eternal rewards of the heavenly country, because now, when they could deserve, they have of their free will despised them. But this very free will is fashioned aright in the Elect, when their mind is raised above earthly desires, by the inspiration of grace.

40. For the good which we do belongs both to God, and to ourselves. It is God's by preventing grace, our own by the free will which follows. For if it is not of God, why do we return Him thanks for ever? Again, if it is not our own, why do we hope for rewards to be conferred on us? Because then we do not give thanks undeservedly, we know that we are prevented by His grace. And again, because we do not seek for recompense undeservedly, we know that by the compliance of free will, we have chosen good deeds to perform. It follows; *All things that are under heaven are Mine.* It is clear to all persons, that not only those things that are under heaven, but that those very things, which from being created above the heavens, are called heavenly, subserve the will of Him by Whom they remember they were created. Why then does He speak only of things below and say,

All things that are under the heaven are Mine?

41. But because He is speaking of Leviathan, who no longer dwells in the abode of the ethereal heaven, He asserts that all things that are under the heaven are His, in order to teach that he also who has fallen from heaven, is subject to His power. As if He said, This Leviathan has lost indeed My blessedness, but he has not escaped My authority: because even those very powers, which oppose Me by their evil doings, are subservient to Me. It follows;

Ver. 3. *I will not spare him, nor his mighty words, and framed for entreaty.* [E.V. 12]

42. Who can think this, which he knows he has never read, that the devil is about to ask pardon for his faults? But perhaps that man, whom this Leviathan in the end of the world makes his peculiar vessel, *(whom,* as Paul attests, *the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming,)* [2 Thess, 2, 8] alarmed at the presence of such great majesty, because he is unable to exercise his strength, bends himself ['inclinatur'] to prayer. But this can be more fitly understood of his body, that is of all the wicked, who have recourse at last to words of supplication, because they now scorn to perform its deeds. Whence the Truth says in the Gospel, *Last of all come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.* [Matt. 25, 11] To whom it is immediately replied, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* [ib. 12] But when he is said to compose words mighty for entreaty, he urges us the more to understand at this time that which we have said of his body in time to come.

43. For there are some within Holy Church who offer to God long prayers, but have not the conduct of those who entreat. For they follow after heavenly promises in their petitions, but avoid them in their deeds. These sometimes feel even tears in their prayer, but when after the seasons of prayer pride has struck their mind, they immediately swell up with the

haughtiness of high-mindedness; when avarice urges them, they frequently glow with the heat of covetous thought; when lust has tempted, they pant at once with unlawful desires; when anger has persuaded them, the flame of madness soon consumes their gentleness of mind. As we have said then, they both experience tears in prayer, and yet at the close of their prayers, when they are assaulted with the suggestions of sins, they remember not that they had wept for desire of the heavenly kingdom. Which Balaam openly stated concerning himself, who says, on beholding the tabernacles of the just, *Let my soul die with the death of the just, and let my last end be like theirs.* [Numb. 23, 10] But when the time of compunction passed, he gave counsel against the life of those, to whom he had asked to be made like even in death; and when he found an occasion of avarice, he immediately forgot whatever he had wished for himself in the way of innocence. A prayer, then, which the perseverance of continual love does not hold fast, has not the weight of virtue. And, as the contrary of this, it is well said of Hannah when weeping, *And her countenance was no more changed to a different form*; [1 Sam. 1, 18] namely, because her mind lost not after her prayers, by wantoning in foolish joy, that which at the season of its prayer, it sought for with hardness of groans. But by some the labour of prayer is turned to the purpose of traffic. Of whom the Truth says in the Gospel, *Which devour widows houses under the pretence of long prayers. These shall receive greater judgment.* [Mark 12, 40] Because therefore the prayers of the wicked, who are the body of this Leviathan, are in no way spared, when their prayers are destroyed by their conduct, it is now rightly said, *I will not spare him, nor his mighty words, and framed for entreaty.* Although from the words being said to be mighty, and framed for entreaty, the emptiness of their prayer is plainly pointed out. For truly to pray is to utter bitter groans in compunction, and not well arranged words. But because the more severely the ancient enemy is crushed, the more does he expand in

wickedness by manifold arguments; and because the Lord manifests his snares the more mercifully, the more artfully He observes them to be concealed, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 4. *Who will uncover the face of his garment?* [E.V. 13]

44. This Leviathan tempts in one way the minds of men which are religious, and in another those which are devoted to this world. For he presents openly to the wicked the evil things they desire; but he secretly lays snares for the good, and deceives them under a show of sanctity: he presents himself to the one more manifestly as wicked, as though they were his friends, but to the others he covers himself, as it were, with a cloke of comeliness, as if they were strangers, in order to introduce secretly, concealed beneath the cover of a good action, the evils which he cannot publicly effect. Whence also his members, when they are unable to injure by open wickedness, often assume the guise of a good action, and display themselves to be wicked in conduct, but yet deceive by their appearance of sanctity. For if the wicked were openly evil, they would not be received at all by the good. But they assume something of the look of the good, in order that while good men receive in them the appearance which they love, they may take also the poison, which they avoid, blended with it. Whence the Apostle Paul, on beholding some men under the cloke of preaching devoting themselves to the service of the belly, says, *For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. What wonder then if his ministers are transformed as the ministers of righteousness?* [2 Cor. 11, 14] Joshua feared this transformation when, on seeing an Angel, he asked him on which side he was, saying, *Art thou ours, or our adversaries?* [Josh. 5, 13] in order, namely, that if he were of the adverse force ['virtutis'], he might, from knowing that he was suspected, shrink from practising deception. Because therefore this Leviathan, in attempting a work of iniquity, frequently clothes himself with a semblance of sanctity, and because the garb of his simulation

cannot be detected except by Divine grace, it is well said, *Who will uncover the face of his garment?* Thou understandest, except Myself, Who inspire into the minds of My servants the grace of most subtle discernment, in order that, on the unveiling of his malice, they may see his face exposed, which he conceals closely covered under the garb of sanctity. And because he endeavours to corrupt the minds of the faithful sometimes by openly shewing himself, sometimes by suggestion, (for he acts at one time by deed, at another by persuasion,) it is rightly subjoined;

And who will enter into the midst of his mouth?

45. Thou understandest, But I, Who by the discreet minds of the Elect examine the words of his suggestions, and prove that they are not such as they sounded. For they seem to promise what is good, but they lead to a fatal end. To enter, therefore, into the middle of his mouth is so to penetrate his words of cunning, as to make, not their sound, but their meaning, to be considered. Adam would not enter into the middle of his mouth, when he neglected to consider carefully the purpose of his persuasion. For he believed in truth that he was receiving Divinity through him, and he lost his immortality. From incautiously remaining then external to the meaning of his words, he utterly exposed himself to be devoured by his mouth. It follows;

Ver. 5. *Who will open the gates of his face?* [E.V. 14]

46. The 'gates of his face' are wicked teachers, who are called the gates of his face for this reason, because, every one enters through them, in order that this Leviathan may be seen, as it were, in the princedom of his power. For as sacred Scripture is wont to call holy men gates of Sion, [Ps. 87, 2] (for Sion is by interpretation, 'watching,' and we deservedly call holy preachers the gates of Sion, because by their life and doctrine we enter the secrets of heavenly contemplation,) so also are the teachers of errors signified by the gates of this Leviathan; for when their false preaching is

received, the way of perdition is opened to their wretched hearers. But these gates are generally opened before the eyes of men, in order to admit, but yet are closed in order to seize; because in appearance they present right things, but in their doings they persuade evil things. They are closed therefore in order to seize, because they are kept by outward hypocrisy from being discerned within. But yet the Lord opens them with wonderful power; because He makes the hearts of hypocrites comprehensible to His Elect. *Who,* therefore, *will open the gates of His face?* Thou understandest, except Myself, Who make manifest with clear understanding to My Elect the teachers of errors who are concealed beneath the semblance of sanctity. And because Antichrist, who rages with a twofold error, and endeavours both to draw the hearts of men to himself by sending his preachers, and to bend them by exciting the powers of the world, will also gain possession of these chief powers, the Lord well added concerning this Leviathan, saying,

In a circle is the terror of his teeth.

47. For He wished to change the expression, and, in another phrase, to call these his 'teeth,' whom He had above called 'gates.' For false preachers are his 'gates,' because they open the entrance to perdition. They are his 'teeth,' because they break down from the solidity of truth those whom they seize in error. For as by the teeth of Holy Church we understand those who crush by their preachings the hardness of sinners, (whence it is said to her by Solomon, *Thy teeth as flocks of sheep that have been shorn, coming up from the washing;* [Cant. 4, 2] and they are deservedly compared to shorn and washed sheep, because when assuming an innocent life they laid aside the old fleeces of their former conversation in the laver of Baptism,) so also the teachers of errors are typified by the teeth of this Leviathan. Because they mangle with their bite the life of the reprobate, and offer them, when withdrawn from the integrity of truth, in the sacrifice of falsehood. Their

preaching might easily be despised by their hearers, but the additional terror of worldly powers exalts it in the judgment of men.

48. It is, therefore, rightly said, *In a circle is the terror of his teeth,* that is, the corrupted powers of this world protect the wicked preachers of Antichrist. For many of the powerful strive to alarm by cruelty those whom they seek to seduce with their words. In a circle, therefore, is the terror of his teeth. As if it were openly said, These false preachers crush some by their persuasions, because there are others around them, who afflict with their terrors the minds of the weak. What a season of persecution will that appear, then, when some rage with words, and others with swords, to pervert the piety of the faithful? For who would not despise, even if he were weak, the teeth of this Leviathan, if terror did not defend them by a circle of worldly powers? But they are proceeded against with twofold cunning, because that which is said to them by some with nattering words, is enforced by others with the blows of swords. And the conduct of both of these, that is, of the powerful, and the persuasive [‘potentium atque loquentium’], is summed up in the Apocalypse of John, in a short sentence, wherein it is said, *The power of the horses was in their mouth, and in their tails.* [Rev. 9, 19] For by the ‘mouth’ is typified the knowledge of the learned, but by the ‘tail’ the power of men of the world. For by the ‘tail’ which is behind is designated the temporal condition of this world which must be put behind us, of which the Apostle Paul says, *But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.* [Phil. 3, 13] For every thing which passes by, is *behind;* but every thing which coming abides, is *before.* The power therefore of these horses, that is, of most evil preachers, who are hurrying on every where by carnal impulse, is in their mouth and their tail. Because they themselves indeed preach perverse things in their persuasion, but, by relying on temporal powers, exalt themselves by means of those things

which are behind. And because they themselves may possibly appear despicable, they exact respect to themselves from their wicked hearers, by means of those, by whose patronage they are supported. Whence in this place also fear is rightly described as being in the circle of his teeth, because it is caused by many terrors that temporal power, though not the sentence of truth, is certainly dreaded in their perverse preachings. Whence the Psalmist well described this same Antichrist, saying, *Under his tongue is labour, and sorrow: he sitteth in ambush with the rich in secret places.* [Ps. 10, 7, 8] For, on account of his perverse doctrines, labour and sorrow is under his tongue. But on account of his display of miracles he sitteth in ambush; but on account of the glory of secular power, with the rich in secret places. But because he uses at the same time both the craft of miracles, and earthly power, he is said to sit both in secret places, and with the rich.

Ver. 6. *His body as molten shields.* [E.V. 15]

49. Holy Scripture is wont to use the word 'shield,' sometimes in a favourable, sometimes in an unfavourable way. For the defence of a shield is often put for Divine protection, but it is sometimes used for the opposition of man. For it is put for Divine protection, as is said by the Psalmist, *Thou hast crowned us with the shield of Thy good will.* [Ps. 5, 12] The Lord is said to crown as with a shield, because those whom He assists by protecting, He crowns by rewarding. Again, a 'shield' is put by the same prophet for the opposition of man, as he says elsewhere, *There brake He the horns, the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle.* [Ps. 76, 3] For by 'horns' is designated the haughtiness of the proud, by the 'bow' the snares of those who strike from far; but by a 'shield' obstinate hardness in defence, by a 'sword' a blow near at hand; but in 'battle' the movement of the mind itself against God. And the whole of this is doubtless crushed in Holy Church, when the minds of those who resist God are tamed by the yoke of humility placed upon them. Hence it is again said by the same Psalmist, *He*

will break the bow, and snap the arms, and burn the shields in the fire. [Ps. 46, 9] For the Lord breaks the bow, when He scatters the secret machinations of those who lie in wait. He snaps the arms, when He crushes the patronage of man, which had been raised up against Him. He burns the shields in the fire, when by the heat of the Holy Spirit He kindles into the warmth of penitence and confession the minds of sinners which defend themselves with stubborn hardness. But because the body of this Leviathan is in this place compared to 'molten' shields, it is suggested to us to enquire, that every vessel which is molten is indeed hard, but yet when it falls it is usually fragile. If shields then are molten, they are strong in bearing the blows of arrows, but are fragile when they fall. They are not indeed penetrated by the blow of those that strike them, but shiver into fragments by their own fall. The body therefore of this Leviathan, that is, all the wicked, because they are hardened by obstinacy, but fragile in their life, are compared to molten shields. For when they hear the words of preaching, they permit not any shafts of reproof to penetrate them; because in every sin which they commit they oppose the shield of proud defence. For when any one of such persons is reproved for the guilt of his iniquity, he does not think at once how to correct his fault, but what to oppose in aid of his defence. He is therefore not penetrated by any arrow of truth; because he receives the words of holy reproof on the shield of proud defence. Whence it is well said by Jeremiah concerning the Jews who were guarding themselves against the precepts of the Lord by a proud defence, *Thou wilt render unto them* a *recompense, O Lord, according to the work of their hands.* [Lam. 3, 64] And he immediately mentioned this same recompense more expressly, saying, *Thou wilt give them a shield of heart, Thy labour.* [ib. 65] For the labour of the Lord which appeared among men was His passible Humanity, which the Jews despised, when they beheld it, with their proud thoughts; and they scorned to believe Him to be immortal, Whom in

His passible nature they saw to be mortal. And when they beheld His humility, being hardened with the haughtiness of pride, they laboured with the greatest care that the holy words of preachers should not penetrate their minds. Whilst the Lord then was rendering them a recompense for their evil deeds, He 'gave them as a shield of heart His labour:' because by a righteous judgment He proved them to be obstinately proud against Him, by His very labouring in infirmity for our sakes. For they rejected in truth the words of preachers, because they disdained in the Lord the weaknesses of His sufferings. They had therefore the labour of the Lord as a shield of heart against the Lord Himself, because He appeared despicable to men of haughty thoughts, even in that He became humble for their sake.

50. This shield, as we have already said above, that first sinner held up; who, when the Lord asked him, why he had touched the forbidden tree, referred not the fault to himself, but answered that he had received it from the woman whom the Lord had given him; in order indirectly to throw back his guilt on his Maker, Who had given him a woman to offer such advice. The woman also when questioned held up this shield, when she also referred not the blame to herself, but replied that it was by the persuasions of the serpent, saying, *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat;* [Gen. 3, 13] in order that she also might indirectly refer her guilt to her Maker, for having permitted the serpent to enter in thither to persuade them thus. But the serpent is not questioned at this time, because his repentance was not sought for. But they, whose repentance was sought for, held up the shield of most sinful defence against the words of most righteous reproof. Whence it is now become even a habit with sinners, for a fault to be defended, when it is reproved, and for guilt to be increased by the very means by which it ought to be terminated. It is therefore well said, *His body as molten shields;* because all the wicked prepare shields of defence as if against the shafts of

enemies, that the words of their reprovers may not reach them. But He lays open to us still more expressly this very body of his, when He subjoins;

Compacted with scales pressing each other.

51. It is said that the body of the dragon is covered with scales, to keep it from being quickly penetrated with shafts. In like manner the whole body of the devil, that is, the multitude of the reprobates, when reproved for its iniquity, endeavours to excuse itself with whatever evasions it can, and opposes, as it were, some scales of defence, that it may not be transfixed with the arrow of truth. For whoever, when reproved, seeks to excuse rather than to lament his sin, is covered, as it were, with scales, when assailed by holy preachers with the sword of the word. He has scales, and therefore the sword of the word has no way of reaching his heart. For the spiritual sword is kept by the hardness of the flesh from being plunged into him.

52. Saul had become hardened against the Lord with carnal wisdom, when no arrow of Gospel preaching penetrated his heart. But after he had been smitten by severe reproof from heaven, and blinded by the heavenly vision, (for he had lost light in order to receive it,) on coming to Ananias he is illuminated. And because in this illumination he lost the stubbornness of his defence, it is well written of him; *There fell from his eyes as it had been scales.* [Acts 9, 18] The hardness of a carnal integument had in truth pressed upon him, and therefore he saw not the rays of the true Light. But after his haughty resistances were overcome, the scales of his defences fell off. They fell indeed under the hands of Ananias from the eyes of his body, but they had already fallen before, at the reproof of the Lord, from the eyes of his heart. For when he was lying wounded with the shaft of deep reproof, he asked with heart already humble and penetrated, saying, *Lord, what Wilt thou have me to do?* [Acts 9, 6] The arrow of truth had already reached the inmost parts of the heart, on the removal, namely, of the scales, when he had laid aside the haughtiness of pride, confessing that Lord Whom he had

assailed, and not knowing what to do, was thus enquiring. Let us behold, where is that cruel persecutor, where the ravenous wolf. Behold, he is already turned into a sheep, which asks for the path of the shepherd in order to follow it. And it is to be observed, that when he said, *Who art Thou, Lord?* [ib. 5] the Lord does not reply to him; I am the Only-Begotten of the Father, I am the Beginning, I am the Word before all ages. For because Saul scorned to believe in the Incarnate Lord, and had despised the weaknesses of His Humanity, he heard from heaven that which he had despised; *I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest.* [ib.] As if He were saying, Hear from Me this from above, which thou despisest in Me below. Thou hadst scorned the coming of the Maker of heaven on earth, therefore learn from heaven of the Man from earth, in order that thou mayest more greatly fear in Me the mysteries of My infirmity, the more thou beholdest even them exalted in heavenly places to excellence of power. In humbling thee, therefore, I teach thee not that I am God before all worlds; but thou hearest from Me that which thou disdainest to believe of Me. For after He had said, *Jesus,* He added, still farther to express His earthly abode, *of Nazareth.* As if it were openly said, Bear with the infirmities of My humility, and lose the scales of thy pride.

53. But it should yet be known, that though these scales of defences cover nearly the whole of mankind, yet that they specially weigh upon the minds of hypocrites, and crafty men. For they shrink the more vehemently from confessing their own faults, the more they are foolishly ashamed of appearing as sinners before men. When their pretended sanctity is therefore reproved, and their hidden wickedness is detected, it opposes the scales of defence, and repels the sword of truth. Whence it is well said by the Prophet against Judaea, *There the lamia hath lain down, and hath found rest for herself, there the hedgehog had its hole.* [Is. 34, 14. 15.] For by the ‘lamia’ are designated hypocrites, but by the ‘hedgehog’ all the wicked who protect

themselves by divers defences. For the ‘lamia’ is said to have the face of a man, but the body of a beast. Thus also in the first appearance which all hypocrites present, there is a kind of fashion of sanctity; but that which follows is the body of a beast, because the deeds which they attempt under the show of goodness, are very wicked. But under the name of ‘hedgehog’ is designated the defence of wicked minds; because, namely, when a hedgehog is being seized, his head is seen, and his feet appear, and all his body is beheld; but presently, as soon as he has been seized, he gathers himself up into a ball, draws his feet inward, hides his head; and the whole which was before seen at once, is lost at once in the hands of him that holds it. Thus, doubtless, thus are wicked minds, when they are caught in their own excesses. For the head of the hedgehog is seen, because it is seen with what beginnings the sinner made his approach to sin. The feet of the hedgehog are seen, because it is seen with what footsteps his wickedness has been perpetrated; and yet the wicked mind, by suddenly adducing its excuses, draws its feet inward, because it conceals all the footsteps of its iniquity. It withdraws its head, because, by its extraordinary defences, it shews that it has never even begun any thing wicked; and it remains as a ball in the hand of him that holds it, because he who reproves a sinner, suddenly losing all which he had before known, holds the sinner involved within his conscience, and he who had before seen the whole, by detecting it, being deceived by the evasion of a wicked defence, is equally ignorant of the whole. The hedgehog therefore has a hole in the reprobate, because the wicked mind, gathering itself within itself, hides in the darkness of its defence. But the Divine discourse shews us also how the sinner, in thus excusing himself, and in thus clouding over, by his defences which serve to obscure [‘caliginosis’], the eye of his reprover which is fastened upon him, is supported by those who are like him. It follows;

Ver. 7. *One is joined to another, and not even a breath comes between them.* [E.V. 16]

54. These scales of sinners are both hardened and joined together, so as not to be penetrated by any breath of life from the mouth of preachers. For those whom a like guilt associates, the same does a perverse defence also crowd together in obstinate agreement, in order that they may protect each other with mutual defence for their sins. For every one fears for himself, when he beholds another admonished or corrected, and therefore arises with the like feeling against the words of reprovers, because, in protecting another, he protects himself. It is therefore well said; *One is joined to another, and not even a breath comes between them;* because while they mutually shield each other in their iniquities by their proud defence, they suffer not the breath of holy exhortation in any way to reach them. But He added still more plainly their deadly agreement, saying;

Ver. 8. *They will adhere one to another, and holding each other they will not be separated.* [E.V. 17]

55. For they who might be corrected, if divided, persevere, when united, in the obstinacy of their iniquities: and are day by day the more easily separable from the knowledge of righteousness, the more they are not mutually separated from each other by any reproach. For as it is wont to be injurious if unity be wanting to the good, so is it fatal if it be not wanting to the wicked. For unity strengthens the perverse, while it makes them accord; and it makes them the more incorrigible, the more unanimous. Of this unity of the reprobate it is said by a wise man; *The congregation of sinners is tow gathered together.* [Ecclus. 21, 9] Of this the Prophet Nahum says; *As thorns embrace each other, so is the feast of those who drink together.* [Nahum 1, 10] For the feast of the reprobate is the delight of temporal pleasures. In which feast they doubtless drink together, who make themselves drunk alike with the allurements of their delight. Because

therefore an equal guilt unites, for their own defence, the members of this Leviathan, that is, all the wicked, whom the word of God compares to scales compacted together, it is well said; *They will adhere one to another, and holding each other, they will never be separated.* For they cannot be separated when holding each other, because they are the more bound together for their mutual defence, the more they remember that they are like each other in all things. Having described then his body, the discourse goes back to his head, and what power the ancient enemy exercises by himself in the time of the closing persecution, is set forth. For it follows;

Ver. 9. *His sneezing is the splendour of fire.* [E.V. 18]

56. This passage we expound the better, if we first enquire, how sneezing is produced. For in sneezing the breath rises up from the breast, and when it finds no pores open for its escape, it touches the brain, and, passing out condensed through the nostrils, it shakes at once all the head. In this body therefore of Leviathan, that is, in either malignant spirits, or reprobate men, who have adhered to him through resemblance in their guilt, a breath rises, as it were, from the breast, when pride exalts itself through the power of the present world. And it finds as it were no pores for escape; because in this raising up of itself against the just, it is kept, by God's provision, from prevailing as much as it desires. But it ascends and touches and shakes the brain, because the collected pride of Satan strikes the sense more closely at the end of the world, and disturbs the head, when it excites more vehemently the author himself of malignant spirits to the persecution of the faithful, by him who is called Antichrist. Then does the condensed breath come forth through his nostrils, because the iniquity of his pride is fully set forth by the open blasts of his malice. Because therefore sneezing especially shakes the head, that last commotion of this Leviathan, with which he enters into that accursed man, and by him rules over the reprobate, is called his 'sneezing.' And he rouses himself at that time with such power, as to

confound, if possible, even the Elect members of the Lord: he makes use of such signs and prodigies, as to seem to glitter with the power of miracles, as if with a kind of light of fire. Because his head then strives, when aroused, to shine forth with miracles, his sneezing is rightly called the splendour of fire. For in rousing himself to persecute the just, he shines forth before the eyes of the reprobate with mighty signs. And because the wise ones of the world adhere to his tyranny, and he exercises by their advice every evil which he attempts, it is rightly subjoined,

And his eyes as the eyelids of the morning.

57. For by his ‘eyes,’ which are fixed in his head, and serve the purpose of sight, his counsellors are not improperly designated, who, when they foresee in their perverse machinations in what manner what things are to be done, point out to his evil workers a way, as it were, for their feet. And they are rightly compared to the eyelids of the morning. For by the ‘eyelids of the morning’ we understand the last hours of the night, in which the night opens, as it were, its eyes, when now setting forth the beginnings of the coming light. The prudent then of this world, who adhere to the perverse counsels of the malice of Antichrist, are, as it were, the eyelids of the morning, because they declare that the faith in Christ which they meet with is, as it were, the night of error, and profess that veneration for Antichrist is the true morning. For they promise to banish the darkness, and to announce the light of truth by brilliant miracles; because they cannot persuade what they wish, unless they profess to offer better things. Whence also this very snake, when speaking to our first parents in paradise, by pretending to provide something better for them, opened as it were the eyelids of the morning, when he reproved in their innocent minds the ignorance of humanity, and promised the knowledge of Godhead. For he banished, as it were, the darkness of ignorance, and announced the divine morning of eternal knowledge, saying; *Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as*

gods, knowing good and evil. [Gen. 3, 5] In like manner when coming then in that accursed man, his eyes are compared to the eyelids of the morning, because his wise ones reject the simplicity of the true faith, as if the darkness of the night which is past, and display his lying wonders as the rays of the rising sun. But because this Leviathan not only has eyes to foresee evil things with malignant designs, but also opens his mouth to pervert the minds of men, (since by his wicked preachers he inflames the hearts of his hearers to love the deceit of error,) it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 10. *Out of his mouth proceed lamps.* [E.V. 19]

58. For those who look forward are called his 'eyes,' but those who preach, his 'mouth.' But lamps proceed from this 'mouth,' because they inflame the minds of their hearers to the love of misbelief, and from seeming to shine by wisdom, they doubtless thence burn with wickedness. But what kind of light their wisdom is, is shewn, when it is immediately subjoined,

As kindled torches of fire.

59. Behold the hypocrisy of those is now plainly described, whose preaching is compared to lamps of torches. For when a torch is lighted, it has a sweet scent, but a dismal light. And so because these preachers of Antichrist claim to themselves a show of sanctity, but yet practise works of iniquity, the smell, as it were, which they emit is pleasant, but the light they give is dark. For they smell sweetly through their pretence of righteousness, but burn gloomily by their perpetration of iniquity. The malice of their hypocrisy John sums up in a brief description in the Apocalypse, saying; *I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb's, and he spake as a dragon.* [Rev. 13, 11] He had spoken indeed of the first beast, that is, Antichrist, in a former description; after whom this other beast is said to have also come up, because the multitude of his preachers after him boasts in his earthly power. For to come up from the

earth is to boast in earthly glory. And it has two horns like a lamb, because, through his pretended sanctity, he falsely asserts that that wisdom and conduct exist in him, which the Lord truly possessed in Himself in a special manner. But because under the appearance of a lamb he infuses into his reprobate hearers the poison of serpents, it is there rightly subjoined; *And he spake as a dragon.* If this beast therefore, that is, the multitude of preachers, were to speak openly as a dragon, he would not appear like a lamb. But he assumes the appearance of a lamb, in order to perform the works of a dragon. Both of which points are here expressed by lamps of torches; because they both burn mistily by their malicious doings, and smell, as it were, sweetly, by the hypocrisy of their life.

60. But we must not suppose that the preachers of Antichrist will appear then only, and that now they take no part in the deception of men. For even now, before he appears himself, some preach him in words, but most by their conduct. Are not they the preachers of his hypocrisy, who while they hold the holy orders of God, grasp with all their desires the fleeting world, who profess that all their doings are virtues, but every thing they do is sin? But the more the mind of the Elect keeps close to the light, the more keenly does it see how it should distinguish virtues from vices. But what wonder is it that we do that spiritually, which we see money-changers daily performing in the body? Who, when they receive a coin, examine first its quality, afterwards its shape, but last of all, its weight, lest either brass should be concealed under the appearance of gold, or lest the shape of counterfeit coin should disgrace that which is truly gold, or lest deficient weight should prove that to be light, which is both gold, and of the proper shape. When therefore we behold the wonderful works of men whom we know not, we ought, as skilful money-changers, to betake ourselves to the scales of our heart, in order for our judgment first to weigh the gold, lest sin should conceal itself under the cloak of virtue, and lest that which is done

with evil intention should be veiled under the appearance of what is right. And if the character of its intention is approved, we must next look for the shape of the stamp which has been impressed on it, whether it is stamped by approved moneyers, that is, by the ancient fathers, and is not distorted, by any error, from a resemblance to their life. But when both its quality is ascertained by its intention, and its right shape by a model, it remains for us to examine its full weight. For if a good deed which is brilliant with signs and miracles, possesses not the full amount of perfection, it ought to be anxiously considered with careful circumspection, lest an imperfect thing, when taken for a perfect one, should turn to the loss of the receiver. How then do the preachers of Antichrist, who know not in what they do the power of right intention, possess the quality of a true coin? For they seek not thereby their heavenly country, but the height of temporal glory. How do they, who, by persecuting the just, disagree with all the piety of the just, differ not from the shape of a true coin? How do they, who have not only not attained the perfection of humility, but have not even reached its threshhold, display in themselves the weight of full amount? Hence, then, hence let the Elect know how to despise the wonders of those persons, whose conduct plainly impugns every thing which is said to have been done by the holy fathers. But even the very Elect, on beholding so many wonders, and in trembling at his many miracles while they despise his life, suffer in their heart a kind of mist of doubt. Because while his wickedness exalts itself by prodigies, their clearer sight is in a measure obscured. Whence it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 11. *Out of his nostrils goeth smoke.* [E.V. 20]

61. For the sight of the eyes is pained by smoke. Smoke is therefore said to go out of his nostrils; because by the craft of his miracles a darkening doubt is generated for an instant even in the heart of the Elect. A smoke goes out of the mouth of Leviathan, because, on account of his lying

wonders, a mist of alarm confuses the eyes even of good minds. For when his terrible signs have been seen, then do gloomy thoughts crowd together in the hearts of the Elect. It is hence that that which we have already brought forward is spoken by the mouth of Truth in the Gospel; *False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, so as even for the Elect, if possible, to be led into error.* [Mark 13, 22] In which subject it must be specially enquired, how either those who are Elect can be led into error, or why the words '*if possible'* are subjoined, as if doubtingly, when the Lord, Who foresees all things, looks forward to what is to be done. But since both the heart of the Elect is shaken with anxious thought, and yet their constancy is not moved, the Lord included both points in this one sentence, saying, *So as even for the Elect, if possible, to be led into error.* For to stagger in thought is, as it were, to err already. But it is immediately subjoined, *If possible;* because it is without question impossible for those who are Elect to be fully involved in error. But in this mist of smoke the warmth of their minds is also well expressed, when it is immediately subjoined;

As of a heated and boiling pot.

62. For at that time every soul is as a boiling pot, sustaining the assaults of its thoughts, like the foam of boiling waters, which both the fire of zeal puts in motion, and temporal oppression, after the manner of a pot, keeps confined within. Whence John also, when relating the wonders of this beast, added, *So that he maketh fire come down from heaven.* [Rev. 13, 13] For for fire to come down from heaven, is for flames of zeal to pour forth from the heavenly souls of the Elect. But because this Leviathan is called in another place not merely a serpent, but also a basilisk [quasi 'little king.'], because he rules over unclean spirits, or reprobate men, as Isaiah says, *Out of the serpent's root shall come forth a basilisk,* [Is. 14, 29] must attentively observe how a basilisk destroys, that by the doings of the basilisk, his

malice may be more plainly made known to us. For a basilisk does not destroy with its bite, but consumes with its breath. It often also infects the air with its breath, and withers with the mere blast of its nostrils whatever it has touched, even when placed at a distance.

63. We are hence then, we are hence compelled to consider, because smoke is said to proceed from his nostrils, even before he appears openly, what he is daily working in the hearts of men by the smoke of his pestilent breath. For because, as we said also above, the sight of the eyes is weakened by smoke, smoke is rightly said to proceed from the nostrils of him, by whose hurtful inspirations an evil thought arises in the hearts of men, by which the keenness of the mind is blunted, so that the inward light is not seen. For he breathes forth darkness, as it were, from his nostrils, because from his crafty inspirations he heaps up, in the hearts of the reprobate, the heat of many thoughts, from love of this temporal life. And he multiplies, as it were, clouds ['globos'] of smoke, because he crowds together in the mind of earthly men the most trifling anxieties of this present life. This smoke, which comes forth from his nostrils, sometimes affects for a time the eyes even of the Elect. For the Prophet was enduring this smoke within, when he said, *Mine eye is disturbed because of anger.* [Ps. 6, 7] He was oppressed by its pouring in upon him, saying, *My heart is troubled within me, and the light of mine eyes is not with me.* [Ps. 38, 10] For this smoke deadens in truth the keenness of the heart, because with the cloud of its darkness it disturbs the serenity of inward peace. But God cannot be recognised, except by a tranquil heart. Whence it is again said by the same Prophet, *Be still, and see that I am God.* [Ps. 46, 10] But that mind cannot be at ease ['vacare'], which is oppressed with inundations of this smoke; because volumes of earthly thoughts are crowded therein from love of the present life. The light of inward rest is therefore lost through this

smoke, because the eye of the heart is darkened, when it is confused by the irritation of cares.

64. But this smoke annoys the minds of the Elect in one way, and blinds the eyes of the reprobate in another. For it is dispersed from the eyes of the good by the breath of spiritual desires, so as not to become dense, through the prevalence of wretched thoughts. But in the minds of the reprobate the more freely it collects itself by means of foul thoughts, the more entirely does it remove from them the light of truth. This smoke as it crowds into the hearts of the reprobate so many unlawful desires, swells out, as it were, into so many clouds before them.

65. And we certainly know that in clouds of smoke, when some are fading away ['inanescunt'] above, others rise up from below: so too in carnal thoughts, though some evil desires pass away, yet others succeed. But frequently the wretched mind beholds what has already passed, but does not behold where it is still detained. It rejoices in being no longer subject to some sins, but neglects to be careful, and to lament, because others have succeeded in their place, to which perhaps it yields more sinfully. And so it is that, while some sins pass away, and others succeed, the heart of the reprobate is possessed without intermission by this serpent. Whence it is well said by the Prophet Joel, *That which the palmer-worm hath left, the locust hath eaten; and that which the locust hath left, the canker-worm hath eaten; and that which the canker-worm hath left, the mildew hath eaten. Awake, ye drunkards, and weep.* [Joel 1, 4] For what is designated by the palmer-worm ['eruca'], which creeps with all its body on the ground, except it be lust? which so pollutes the heart which it possesses, that it cannot rise up to the love of heavenly purity. What is expressed by the locust, which flies by leaps, except vain glory, which exalts itself with empty presumptions? What is typified by the canker-worm ['bruchus'], almost the whole of whose body is gathered into its belly, except gluttony in

eating? What but anger is indicated by mildew, which burns as it touches? That therefore which the palmer-worm hath left, the locust hath eaten, because, when the sin of lust has retired from the mind, vain glory often succeeds. For since it is not now subdued by the love of the flesh, it boasts of itself as if it were holy through its chastity. And that which the locust hath left, the canker-worm hath eaten, because when vain glory, which came as it were from holiness, is resisted, either the appetite, or some ambitious desires are indulged in too immoderately. For the mind which knows not God, is led the more fiercely to any object of ambition, in proportion as it is not restrained by any love even of human praise. That which the canker-worm hath left, the mildew consumes, because when the gluttony of the belly is restrained by abstinence, the impatience of anger holds fiercer sway, which, like mildew, eats up the harvest by burning it, because the flame of impatience withers the fruits of virtues. When therefore some vices succeed to others, one plague devours the field of the mind, while another leaves it.

66. But it is there well subjoined; *Awake, ye drunkards, and weep.* [Joel 1, 5] For they are called 'drunkards,' who, confused with the love of this world, feel not the evils which they suffer. What then is meant by saying; *Awake, ye drunkards, and weep,* but 'shake off the sleep of your insensibility, and oppose by watchful lamentations the many plagues of sins which succeed one to the other in the devastation of your hearts?' The smoke therefore rises in as many clouds from the nostrils of Leviathan, as are the plagues by which he consumes the fruit of the reprobate heart with his secret breathing. But the Lord carefully explains still further the power of this smoke, when He immediately subjoins; *As of a heated and boiling pot.* For the pot is heated when the mind of man is instigated by the persuasion of the malignant enemy. But the pot boils, when it is already inflamed by consent with the desires of evil persuasions. And it throws out,

as it were, as many waves in boiling, as are the wickednesses by which it extends itself into outward action. For the Prophet had beheld this heat of carnal concupiscence (that is, of the pot) arising from the smoke of Leviathan, when he said; *I see a heated pot, and its face from the face of the north.* [Jer. 1, 13] For the pot of the human heart is heated from the face of the north, when it is inflamed with unlawful desires by the instigation of the opposing spirit. For he who says; *I will sit on the mount of the covenant, in the sides of the north,* [Is. 14, 13] inflames with the malignant blasts of his persuasion, as with fires placed beneath it, the mind of which he has once gained possession; in order that being discontented with what is before it, it may be so unceasingly agitated by desires, as to seek some things presently to be contemned, and to contemn other things which it has obtained; at one time to be eager for its own profit, at another to oppose another's advantages, even to its own loss; at one time to satisfy the allurements of the flesh, and at another to be hurried as it were on high by pride of thought, to put aside all concern for the flesh, and to raise itself up altogether with the haughtiness of exaltation. Because then a heart, which is inflamed by the instigations of this Leviathan, is led astray by various desires, its smoke is rightly said to be like a heated and boiling pot. Because its conscience, being blasted by his temptations, rouses itself by as many boilings, as are the thoughts by which it is puffed up within. But this point the Truth proceeds to speak of more plainly in other words, when it is subjoined;

Ver. 12. *His breath kindleth coals.* [E.V. 21]

67. For what does He call 'coals,' but the minds of reprobate men, kindled with earthly desires. For they are on fire when they seek after any temporal object; doubtless because their longings, which suffer not their mind to be quiet and whole ['integrum'], inflame them. The breath of Leviathan therefore kindles the coals, as often as his secret suggestion allures the minds of men to unlawful pleasures. For it inflames some with

the torches of pride, some with those of envy, some with those of lust, some with those of avarice. For he applied in truth the torch of pride to the mind of Eve, when he instigated her to despise the words of the Lord's command. [Gen. 3, 6] He kindled the mind of Cain with the flame of envy, when he was grieved at his brother's sacrifice being accepted, and in this way arrived as far as the sin of fratricide. [Gen. 4, 5] He inflamed the heart of Solomon with the torches of lust, whom he overcame with such great love for women, that by having been led to the worship of idols, he forgot the reverence due to his Maker, when he was pursuing the pleasure of the flesh. [1 Kings 11, 4] He also burnt up the mind of Ahab with the fire of avarice, when he urged him with impatient desires to seek for the vineyard of another, and drew him on in this way even to the guilt of homicide. [ib. 21, 2] This Leviathan therefore blows on the coals, with a breath as great as the effort of secret suggestion with which he inflames the minds of men to aim at what is forbidden. Whence also it is immediately subjoined;

And a flame goeth out of his mouth.

68. For the flame of his mouth is in truth the very instigation of secret suggestion. For he addresses the words of evil persuasion to the mind of each person, but that which goes out of his mouth is a flame; because the mind burns with desires, when it is instigated by his suggestions. These he daily suggests, these he ceases not to suggest even to the end of the present life: but he then expands himself more wickedly when coming in that accursed man, he displays himself more openly in the glory of this world. A mightier smoke proceeds then from his nostrils, because a greater instigation assails the hearts of men when frightened at the marvels of his wonders. Then does his breath make the coals to burn more fiercely, because, on finding the minds of the reprobate already warm with the love of temporal glory, he inflames them with the breath of his suggestion, even to the wickedness of exercising cruelty. Then does a flame go forth from his

mouth, because whatever he says by himself or by his preachers, is a fire with which unfruitful trees are burnt up. But the mind of those who do not at all wish to become precious metals, is touched by the fire of earthly concupiscence. Whosoever therefore wishes not to suffer from the flame of his mouth should take care, according to the expression of the teacher of truth, to be found, not *wood, hay, stubble,* but *gold, silver, and precious stone.* [1 Cor. 3, 12] Because the fire of his persuasion burns them the more fiercely, the softer every one has rendered himself to yielding his consent. But because a mind, when placed in this corruptible flesh, is in no way permitted not to be touched by the heat of his persuasion, it remains for it, when parched by its malignant blasts, to betake itself unceasingly to the aid of prayer. For a wave of tears quickly extinguishes the flame of his suggestions.

BOOK XXXIV.

The thirteenth, with the remaining verses of the forty-first chapter is explained, chiefly with reference to the pride of the Devil, and the most cruel persecutions of Antichrist against the Saints.

1. Because we bear about us a body from this world, let us consider the end of the universe, from the part of it in which we ourselves are [al. ‘which we are’]. For we learn more quickly of what kind is the end of the world, if we carefully consider that which we bear about us from the world. For our age flourishes more vigorously in our youthful years, but in the time of old age it is shrivelled up by increasing diseases, and while its existence is extended to greater length, instead of dying it daily fails every moment of its life. So also as the duration of the world increases in years, it suffers under increasing evils, and it feels the loss of its health, as it obtains increase of age. For its tribulations increase together with its years, and it endures with greater weakness the losses of life, the more it lasts on, as it were, to a more advanced age. For the ancient enemy is let loose against it with all his strength, who, although he has already perished, as having lost the happiness of his heavenly condition, is yet at that time more fully extinguished, when he is deprived of his permission to tempt, and is fast bound in eternal fires. He is about, accordingly, to assail the ends of the world with severer temptations, because he becomes more raging in his cruelty, the nearer he perceives himself to punishment. For he considers that he is just about to lose his privilege of most fatal liberty. And the more he is confined by the shortness of the time, the more does he spread forth with multiplicity of cruelty, as is said of him by the voice of the angel to John; *Woe to the earth, and to the sea, because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.* [Rev. 12, 12] He

then spreads himself forth into the fury of great wrath, in order that he, who could not remain in his state of happiness, may not fall into the pit of his damnation with a few only. He then searches out with greater craft whatever power of iniquity he has gotten, he then exalts more highly his neck of pride, and by means of that accursed man whom he wears, displays for the purpose of evil, all the temporal power he possesses. Whence also it is now rightly said by the Divine voice;

Ver. 13. *In his neck will remain strength.* [E.V. 22]

2. For what is designated by the 'neck' of that Leviathan, except the stretching out of his pride, with which he raises himself up against God, when, with pretended sanctity, he is exalted also by the pride of power? For that pride is expressed by the 'neck,' the Prophet Isaiah witnesses, who reproves the daughters of Jerusalem, saying, *They have walked with stretched forth neck.* [Is. 3, 16] Strength then is said to remain in the 'neck' of this Leviathan, because power is also subjoined and ministers to his pride. For all his haughty pride, all his crafty machinations, he prosecutes at that time by the strength also of secular power. Which the prophet Daniel observing, says, *Craft will be directed aright in his hand.* [Dan. 8, 25] For craft in his hand, is fraud in his strength; for all his wicked designs he is able also, for the time, to carry out with strength. But his craft is said to be 'directed,' because the malice of his fraud is impeded by no difficulty. For this Leviathan or his vessels are wont frequently to possess this peculiarity, that, to add to their iniquity, they are able to carry out more wickedly what they wickedly desire.

3. For when the Elect perchance are weakened, and rush headlong in their unlawful desires, they are frequently restrained by the hand of the Divine gift, so as to find no results from their wretched will. And when a strong opposition arises to their wishes, they are frequently corrected by the very impossibility, and by the wonderful course of the inward disposal, a

change of their evil will succeeds through conversion, while through their infirmity perfection [or ‘through their weakness fulfilment’] is denied them. For hence is that which the Lord says, under the character of every soul, to Judæa who is weak, and walking in evil ways; *Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and I will hedge it up with a wall, and she shall not find her paths, and she shall follow after her lovers, and she shall not overtake them, and she shall seek them, and not finding them shall say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now.* [Hos. 2, 6. 7.] For the ways of the Elect are hedged up with thorns, when they find the pain of piercing in that which they desire in this world. He obstructs, as it were, by interposing a wall, the ways of those, whose desires the difficulty of attainment opposes. Their souls truly seek their lovers, and find them not, when by following malignant spirits, they do not gain hold of those pleasures of this world, which they desire. But it is well added that she says immediately in consequence of this very difficulty; *I will go and return to my former husband, for then it was better with me than now.* For the Lord is the first husband, Who united to Himself the chaste soul, by means of the love of the Holy Spirit. And the mind of each one then longs for Him, when it finds manifold bitternesses, as thorns in those delights, which it desires in this world. For when the mind has begun to be stung by the adversities of the world which it loves, it then understands more fully, how much better it was for it with its former husband.

4. Those then, whom an evil will perverts, adversity frequently corrects. Whence also it is much to be feared, lest prosperity should follow, when unjust things are longed for, because an evil, which is supported also by the prosperity of attainment, is with more difficulty corrected. Both craft then is directed aright in the hand of this Leviathan, who with his members is consigned to eternal tortures, and strength remains in his neck, because that which he longs for in this world with evil resolve against the good, he

consummates with more evil ability, in order that no present adversity may oppose him, in proportion as no prosperity awaits him for the future. And because every one who, from depraved habits, is familiar with his friendship, loses first the true riches of the mind, it is fitly subjoined;

And want will go before his face.

5. For acquaintance is wont to be designated by the 'face.' Whence it is written; *And My Face shall go before thee,* [Ex. 33, 14] that is, knowledge of Me will give thee guidance. But it should be known, that the want of the Elect is used in one sense in Holy Scripture, the want of the reprobate in another. For it is the want of the Elect, when the true riches of the heavenly country recur to their mind, and when, placed in the sorrowful banishment of this present life, they remember that they are poor. For they sigh in truth unceasingly after those riches, of which Paul says; *That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints.* [Eph. 1, 18] And because as yet they do not behold them, they earnestly groan, the mean while, in the sorrow of this poverty. Jeremiah had doubtless gained a sight of this poverty, when he was saying; *I am a man who behold my poverty by the rod of His indignation.* [Lam. 3, 1] For the rod of the indignation of God is the blow of severity. And man then endured this indignation, when he was expelled from Paradise, and lost the true riches of inward joy. But because all the Elect continually behold that they have fallen into the poverty of the present life from that faculty of innate strength, it is well said, *I am a man who behold my poverty.* For whoever still longs after these visible things, understands not the misery of his pilgrimage, and has not skill to see the very evil which he is suffering. The prophet David, beholding this poverty, says, *My strength is weakened in my poverty.* [Ps. 31, 10] For strength is said to be weakened in poverty, because the mind which has fallen in this pilgrimage,

and has been assaulted by the annoyances of its own corruption, is hindered from beholding that which it has lost.

6. But the reprobate know not how to think of this poverty, because, while they pursue those things which they behold, they neglect to think of the invisible things which they have lost. Whence it is rightly called their 'want;' for while they are filled with sins, they are emptied of the riches of virtues. And it is frequently their lot, that, when, from being lifted up by the madness of pride, they consider not the losses of their fall, they discern not that they are poor also in good deeds. Whence it is said by the voice of the Angel to the preacher of Laodicea; *Thou sayest that I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* [Rev. 3, 17] He who is elated through pride at his sanctity, declares himself, as it were, to be rich, but is proved to be poor, blind, and naked. Poor, assuredly, because he has not the riches of virtues; blind, because he sees not the poverty which he is suffering; naked, because he has lost his first garment, but in a worse way, because he knows not that he has lost it. Because then, as we have said, the 'want' of the reprobate is their being stripped of their merits, it is rightly said of Leviathan; *Want will go before his face.* For no one is joined to the knowledge of him, unless he is first stripped of the riches of virtues. For he first steals away good thoughts, and afterwards infuses in them a clearer knowledge of his own iniquity. Want is therefore said to go before his face, because the faculty of strength is first destroyed, in order that a knowledge of him may be afterwards gained, as if through familiarity. Or certainly, because he steals upon many in so crafty a manner, that he cannot be detected by them, and so makes void their virtues as not to display the evil design of his cunning, want is said to go before his face. As if it were openly said, Because when he tempts by lying in ambush, he spoils men before he is perceived. For hence is that which is said of

Ephraim by the Prophet, *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he hath known it not.* [Hos. 7, 9] For by ‘strangers’ are usually understood apostate angels, who devour our strength, when they consume the virtue of the mind by perverting it. Which Ephraim both endured, and knew it not, because through the temptation of malignant spirits he both lost the strength of his mind, and understood not that he had lost it. Want therefore goes before the face of Leviathan, because he spoils by his temptation the minds of the careless, before he who is tempted knows his snares. By this then which is said, *In his neck will remain strength,* is set forth the power of his violence. But by this which is added, *And want will go before his face,* is designated the subtlety of his craft.

7. Although with regard to our knowing that want goes before his face, there is another point for us to expound in a more melancholy manner. For by the awful course of the secret dispensation, before this Leviathan appears in that accursed man whom he assumes, signs of power are withdrawn from Holy Church. For prophecy is hidden, the grace of healings is taken away, the power of longer abstinence is weakened, the words of doctrine are silent, the prodigies of miracles are removed. And though the heavenly dispensation does not entirely withdraw them, yet it does not manifest them openly and in manifold ways as in former times. And this is so caused by a wonderful dispensation, in order that the Divine mercy and justice may be fulfilled together by one and the same means. For when Holy Church appears as if she were more abject, on the withdrawal of signs of power, both the reward of the good increases, who reverence her for the hope of heavenly things, and not on account of present signs; and the mind of the wicked is the more quickly displayed against her, who neglect to pursue the invisible things which she promises, when they are not constrained by visible signs. When therefore the humility of the faithful is deprived of the manifold manifestation of wonders, by the terrible judgment of the secret

dispensation, there is heaped up more abundant mercy for the good, and just anger for the evil, by the same means. Because these signs of power cease, in great measure, in Holy Church, before this Leviathan manifestly and visibly comes, it is now rightly said; *Want will go before his face.* For the riches of miracles are first withdrawn from the faithful, and then that ancient enemy displays himself against them with visible prodigies, in order that as he boasts himself on his wonders, he may be overthrown more mightily and more honourably by the faithful without wonders. For though signs will not be wanting to the faithful in their contest with him, yet his will be so great, that those of our people will seem to be rather few or none at all. But their virtue doubtless becomes mightier than all signs, when it crushes with the heel of inward resolution all his terrible deeds which it beholds. But the malignant enemy displays himself against them with so much the fiercer cruelty, the more he grieves that he is despised even with the brightness of his miracles. He therefore gathers himself together for their destruction, and unites all the reprobate with unanimous cruelty for the death of the faithful; in order that he may put forth his cruelty with so much greater power, in proportion as all the members of his body agree with him in the things he seeks perversely to effect. Whence also it is rightly said;

Ver. 14. *The members of his flesh cling to each other.* [E.V. 23]

8. The ‘flesh’ of this Leviathan are all the reprobate, who rise not in their longing to a knowledge of their spiritual country. But the ‘members of his flesh’ are those, who are united to these very persons, when acting wickedly, and preceding them in the way to iniquity. As is said on the other hand by Paul to the Lord’s body; *Ye are the body of Christ, and members of a member.* [1 Cor. 12, 27] For a member of a body is one thing, a member of a member is another. For a member of the body is a part referred to a whole, but a member of a member is a particle to a part. For a member of a member is a finger to the hand, the hand to the arm, but a member of the

body, is the whole of this together to the body at large. As therefore in the spiritual body of the Lord we term 'members of a member' those who in His Church are governed by others; so, in that reprobate congregation of this Leviathan, those are the 'members of his flesh,' who by their wicked deeds are joined to some more wicked than themselves. But because the malignant enemy agrees with himself in his perverse doings from first to last, the Divine discourse speaks of the members of his flesh clinging to each other in him. For they so agree in their wicked opinions, as not to be divided by any mutual disputations with each other. No quarrel of disagreement then divides them, and they therefore prevail mightily against the good, because they keep themselves together with close agreement in evil. For as we have already said above, that it is fatal if unity is wanting to the good, so it is more fatal if it is not wanting to the evil. For the unity of the reprobate obstructs more firmly the path of the good, the more firmly it opposes itself to it by being collected together.

9. Paul had beheld this unity of the reprobate destructive to himself, when being seized in the midst of the Sadducees and Pharisees he was saying; *Of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am judged.* [Acts 23, 6] And struck by this voice, the crowd of his hearers immediately mutually started asunder against itself. And when the tumultuous multitude is divided into two parts, a way of rescue is opened to Paul, because the crowd of persecutors when divided released him whom it had held fast when united together. The righteous are therefore rescued, when the unrighteous are divided, and the wishes of the Elect arrive at completion, when the hosts of the reprobate are confounded by discord. And this is also well designated by the dividing of the Red Sea. [Ex. 14, 21] For when the wave is divided into two parts, the Elect people journeys on to the land of promise, because, when the unity of the wicked is rent asunder, holy minds attain to, that which they desire. If the unity of the wicked had not been hurtful, Divine

Providence would never have divided the tongues of the proud with such great diversity. [Gen. 11, 9] If the unity of the wicked had not been hurtful, the Prophet would not say of the enemies of Holy Church; *Cast down, O Lord, and divide their tongues.* [Ps. 55, 9] Because then this Leviathan is then let loose in his might against the Elect of God, to increase his power of hurting, he is permitted also to have unity among the reprobate, in order that he may put forth his might more powerfully against us, the more he assaults us not merely with the blow of strength, but also with the weight of unity. But who can be sufficient against these things? What mind must not tremble at the weight of such pride and compactness, from the very bottom of his thought? Whence, because the Divine Clemency sees that we are trembling through weakness, It immediately adds what It does for us, by Itself. For it follows; *He shall send lightnings against him, and they shall not be carried to another place.*

10. What is designated by the appellation of 'lightnings,' except those tremendous sentences of the last judgment? And they are, therefore, called 'lightnings,' doubtless, because they consume for ever those whom they strike. For Paul had beheld lightnings coming down on him, when he was saying, *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.* [2 Thess. 2, 8] But these lightnings which are sent against him, are not carried to another place, because they then smite the reprobate only, while the righteous rejoice. For after the threshing of the present life, in which the wheat now groans beneath the chaff, such a separation is made by that fan of the last judgment between the wheat and the chaff, that neither does the chaff pass into the garner of the wheat, nor do the grains of the garner fall into the fire of the chaff. Those lightnings then touch not another place, because, namely, they burn with their fire not the grains, but the chaff. But He teaches us, that punishment does not correct this Leviathan, when he adds;

Ver. 15. *His heart shall be hardened as a stone.* [E.V. 24]

11. For the heart of the ancient enemy will be hardened as a stone, because it will never be softened by any penitence of conversion. And because he will be fitted only for the blows of eternal punishment, it is rightly immediately added;

And he will be bound as the anvil of the hammerer.

For the hammerer puts up an anvil fitted to receive blows only. For an anvil is erected for the very purpose of being struck with frequent blows. Leviathan therefore will be bound as the anvil of the hammerer, because he will be confined by the chains of hell, in order to be beaten with the continual blows of eternal punishment. And he is struck also even now, when any of the just are saved, as he is watching in ambush, but wasting away with pain. But in an anvil other vessels are wrought into shape, while the anvil itself by its many blows is not changed into a vessel of another kind. This Leviathan is therefore rightly compared to an anvil, because we are wrought into shape by his persecutions, but he is both always struck, and is never changed into a useful vessel. We abandon him to eternal blows, and we, who have been smitten through his temptation by the hand of the heavenly Artificer, come out by his means properly shaped vessels. For on him we are beaten, but it is that we may come into use for the House above. But he is bound as an anvil, because, though he now goes about the world with his temptations, yet when placed in the pit, under the blow of his sentence, he wanders no more. It follows;

Ver. 16. *When he shall be taken away, the angels shall fear, and being affrighted shall be purified.* [E.V. 25]

12. Holy Scripture often so mixes up past and future times, as sometimes to use the future for the past, sometimes the past for the future. For it uses the future for the past, when there is pointed out to John a woman, who is about to bring forth a male child, to rule the Gentiles with a rod of iron.

[Rev. 12, 5] For since this had already taken place by the coming of the Lord in the flesh, an event which had occurred was being announced. Again, it was the past for the future, as the Lord speaks by the Psalmist, saying; *They have dug My hands, and My feet, they have numbered all My bones.* [Ps. 22, 16. 17.] For by these words in truth, the nature of the Lord's Passion is described as already past, but yet it is announced as still far future. In this place then in which it is said; *When he shall he taken away, the angels shall fear,* nothing prevents its being understood, that past events are described under the form of the future tense. Nor do we give up the sense of its true meaning, if we believe that when this Leviathan was falling from the height of blessedness, the Elect Angels also were greatly terrified at his fall, in order that, as the fall of pride was casting him out from their number, their very fear might give them strength to stand more firmly. Whence it also follows;

And being affrighted shall be purified.

13. But they are purified; doubtless because, when he went forth with his reprobate hosts, they alone, who were to live in happiness for ever, remained in the abodes of heaven. His fall then alarmed and purified them; it alarmed them, in order that they might not proudly despise their Creator. But it purified them, because it was so ordered, that when the reprobate went forth, the Elect alone remained. And because God, the Maker of all things, knows how to apply even the evil doings of the reprobate to the protection of the good, He converted the lapse of those who fell to the benefit of those who remain; and the fault of the proud is punished, by the same means by which the increased merits of the humble Angels were discovered and confirmed. For on the fall of these, it was granted as a special gift to those that they should never in any wise fall. For while the holy Angels behold in them the ruin of their own nature, they stand with greater caution and firmness in their own persons. Hence it is ordered, by

the Lord the Maker of all, marvellously arranging all things, that even the losses of its ruin are of service to that abode of Elect spirits, when it is more firmly built up, in consequence of its having been partially destroyed.

14. But because Holy Scripture is frequently accustomed to designate the preachers of the Church, by the name of ‘Angels,’ because they announce the glory of the heavenly country, we can in this place understand ‘Angels’ to mean holy preachers. For this cause it is that John, in the Apocalypse, writing to the seven Churches, speaks to the Angels of the Churches, that is, to the preachers of the peoples. [Rev. 2, and 3] Hence the Prophet says; *And the angels of peace shall weep bitterly.* [Is. 33, 7] Hence again the Prophet Malachi says; *The priest’s lips keep knowledge, and they seek the law at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of hosts.* [Mal. 2, 7] Hence Paul says; *Great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit, appeared unto angels, hath been preached unto the Gentiles, is believed on in this world, is received up into glory.* [1 Tim. 3, 16] He therefore, who, after he had said that the mystery of the dispensation appeared to Angels, added also that it had been preached unto the Gentiles, certainly by the name ‘Angels’ designated holy preachers, that is, the messengers of truth.

15. If therefore the expression, *When he shall be taken away, the angels shall fear, and being affrighted shall be purified,* is referred to future time, there is here pointed out the last damnation of this Leviathan, in this world, on the coming of the strict Judge. Because he, who is now tolerated by the wonderful longsuffering of gentleness, is taken out of this world by the wrath of judgment. But he is cast out from thence with so great a weight of terror, that even the strength of holy preachers is disturbed; *For when he shall he taken away, the angels shall fear.* Because when he is swept away with the whirlwind of judgment, even those messengers of the heavenly country, who shall be found in their bodies, are staggered with unbounded

fear, and tremble. For though they now are strong and perfect, yet, as still living in the flesh, they cannot fail of being agitated with fear, at the whirlwind of such great terror. But when this Leviathan is swept away, and when all the elements are shaken at his destruction, the hope of the approach of the kingdom fills those holy preachers with joy, whom, as I have said, that time of judgment shall find still in their bodies, and the infirmity of their flesh alarms them at the display of wrath. There will therefore be in them, in a certain way, a joyful trembling, and a fearless fear; because they are sure of being rewarded in the heavenly kingdom, and through fear of so great a whirlwind they tremble from the infirmity of the flesh.

16. Let us consider therefore how greatly the conscience of the wicked is then agitated, when the life even of the just is disturbed. What will they do, who hate the coming of the Judge, if even they who love tremble at the terror of so great a judgment? And because, whatever rust of slight sins could possibly exist in holy preachers, is burnt out by this dread, after He had said, *When he shall be taken away, the angels shall fear,* He fitly subjoined immediately; *And being affrighted shall be purified.* But because we have learnt these things concerning the end of this Leviathan, let us hear what he does meanwhile, before he perishes. It follows;

Ver. 17. *When a sword has reached him, it will not be able to remain, nor a spear, nor a breastplate.* [E.V. 26]

17. In Holy Scripture by a 'sword' is sometimes designated holy preaching, sometimes eternal damnation, sometimes temporal tribulation, sometimes the wrath or persuasion of the ancient enemy. For a 'sword' is put for holy preaching, as Paul says, *And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* [Eph. 6, 17] By the word 'sword' is designated eternal damnation, as is written of an heretical preacher; *If his children be multiplied, they will be in the sword;* [Job 27, 14] because in whatever great

number they here shoot forth, they are consumed with eternal damnation. A ‘sword’ is taken for temporal tribulation, as is said to Mary concerning tribulations which are about to follow; *And a sword shall pass through thine own soul.* [Luke 2, 35] Again, by ‘sword’ is expressed the wrath or persuasion of the malignant enemy, as the Psalmist says; *Who hast delivered David Thy servant from the malicious sword.* [Ps. 144, 10] For kind is the sword of holy preaching, with which we are struck that we may die from sin. But the sword of diabolical persuasion is malicious, with which a man is fatally wounded, that he may he deprived of rectitude of life. The sword then of the ancient enemy is, at that time, that accursed man, assumed for the purpose of his service. For he sharpens him through the malice of cunning, and pierces the hearts of the feeble. The sword therefore of this man reaches Leviathan, when his own accursed man has taken him up. But if by the word ‘sword’ his wrath is designated, he is rightly described, not as seizing the sword, but as seized by the sword. For he is then turned into such madness, that, seeking to rule over all, he is unable to control his own anger. For we, when we assume wrath in the exercise of justice, hold a sword; because we control it by keeping it under the moderation of judgment. But he, because he is hurried on through the precipices of fury, is said not to seize his sword, but to be seized by his sword. For he does not keep and control his anger, but, in his fury, is possessed by his anger.

18. But it is plain to all, that we strike our adversary with a spear, but are protected from our adversary by a breastplate. By a spear we inflict wounds, by a breastplate we are protected from wounds. What therefore is designated by a ‘spear’ but the shaft of preaching; what by a breastplate but the strength of patience? This Leviathan then, because by taking that reprobate man to himself, he is let loose in the wrath of every kind of cruelty, is said to be ‘seized by a sword.’ For by the display of his immense strength, he then exhibits whatever power of wickedness he possesses. And

neither the spear nor the breastplate will be able to stand, because entering into Antichrist, he will seem to be of such great strength, as (if heavenly assistance were wanting) to blunt the keenness of preachers, and to overthrow the long-suffering of the patient. For unless heavenly grace strengthens the life of the righteous, the spear does not stand, because the strength of preachers is broken; the breastplate does not resist, because the patience of the constant is burst through and penetrated. Whence it is also subjoined,

Ver. 18. *For he shall esteem iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.* [E.V. 27]

19. That which above He called a 'spear,' he mentioned again below under the appellation of 'iron:' and that which He spoke of as a 'breastplate,' He again designated by mentioning it as 'brass.' For iron is sharpened, that the adversary may be wounded; but brass is hardly destroyed by any rust. Whence also it is said by Moses of Holy Church under the character of Asher; *His shoe is iron and brass.* [Deut. 33, 25] For by 'shoe' is understood in Holy Scripture the defence of preaching; as it is written, *Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.* [Eph. 6, 15] Because then strength is expressed by 'iron,' but perseverance by 'brass;' her shoe is said to be iron and brass, when her preaching is protected by sharpness, and firmness at the same time. For by iron she penetrates opposing evils, but by brass she patiently preserves the blessings she has set before her. Whose perseverance he there in truth more plainly points out, saying, *As the days of his youth, so also shall his old age be.* [Deut. 33, 25] But when this Leviathan has taken that sword, whom the Holy Scriptures call Antichrist, for the sake of practising his iniquity, he will esteem both iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood; because, unless Divine grace gives protection, he will both consume with the fire of his wickedness the strength of preachers as straw, and will reduce to dust the constancy of the

patient like rotten wood. And therefore the keenness of iron and the strength of brass fail, when by the violence of his might both the understanding of preaching is blunted, and the long-suffering of patience is scattered.

20. Unless then the Divine assistance strengthens its Elect, where will the weak then be, if the strong are counted as straw? What will this Leviathan then do with the straw, if he will count the iron as straw? What is he about to do with the rotten wood, if he will break as rotten wood the strength of brass? But O! how many who think that they are in their own strength iron or brass, in that fire of tribulation then find that they are straw; and how many who from their own infirmity are afraid that they are straw, when supported by the Divine help are strengthened with the solidity of brass or iron, so as to be the stronger in God against their adversary the more they remember that they are weak in themselves. But the higher this Behemoth rises against the Elect of God by miracles, the more earnestly do the saints gird themselves for the words of preaching against him. But yet he so possesses the minds of the reprobate, as not to leave them though he is wounded by all the darts of the truth. Whence it is also subjoined,

Ver. 19. *The archer shall not put him to flight.* [E.V. 28]

21. For what do we understand by ‘arrows’ but the words of preachers? For when they are drawn forth by the voice of holy livers, they transfix the hearts of the hearers. With these arrows Holy Church had been struck, who was saying, *I am wounded with love.* [Cant. 2, 5] Of these arrows it is said by the voice of the Psalmist, *The arrows of children are made their wounds;* [Ps. 64, 7] because, that is, the words of the humble have penetrated the minds of the proud. Of these arrows it is said to the coming champion, *Thine arrows are sharp, O Thou most mighty, people shall fall under Thee in their heart.* [Ps. 45, 5] An ‘archer’ then is he, who by the bow of holy intention fixes in the hearts of his hearers the words of sound exhortation. Because then this Leviathan despises the words of preachers, and when he

has wounded the minds of the reprobate by his evil persuasions, does not, in his hardness, in any wise abandon them even in the midst of darts, it is rightly said, *The archer shall not put him to flight.* As if it were plainly said, The arrow of a holy preacher does not dislodge him from the hearts of the reprobate; because, whoever is seized by him, scorns at once to listen to the words of preachers. Whence the Lord, being deservedly angry for their former sins, says by the Prophet of those whom He abandons in the hands of the ancient enemy, *I will send among you serpents, basilisks, for whom there is no charm.* [Jer. 8, 17] As if He were saying, I will deliver you up by just judgment to such unclean spirits, as cannot be shaken off by you, by the exhortation of preachers, as if by the word of charmers. But because this Leviathan is not driven from the hearts of the reprobate by the darts of holy preaching, his very contempt for holy men is also added, when it is immediately observed;

The stones of the sling are turned with him into stubble.

22. What is typified by the 'sling,' but Holy Church? For when a sling is whirled round, so do stones fly out of it, for the breasts of the adversaries to be struck therewith. In like manner when Holy Church is led through a circuit of tribulations, in the whirl of time, mighty men come forth from her, by whom the hearts of the wicked are to be beaten as if by the blows of stones. Whence the Lord says to the Prophet concerning good teachers, *They shall devour, and subdue with sling stones.* [Zech. 9, 15] For holy teachers who train others also in virtue, devour their enemies, when they change them within [one Ms. 'into'] their own body by the power of conversion. And they subdue them with sling stones, because while they train all the mighty men in Holy Church, they crush by their means the hard breasts of proud adversaries. Whence also the giant Goliath is killed by the stone of the sling; [1 Sam. 17, 49] because the lofty height of the devil is overcome by a single stone of Holy Church. Because then this Leviathan,

when he has assumed that accursed man, despises all the mighty ones of the Church, as if they were weak, and crushes their strength for a season, is it now rightly said, *The stones of the sling are turned with him into stubble.* As if it were plainly said, He reduces as it were into the softness of stubble the strength of Saints, whose tongue before smote his breast with hard blows. For then putting forth all the strength of his iniquity, the more he grieves at being vanquished by them spiritually, the more fiercely does he prevail against them bodily. And because he considers that he has no power against their spirit, he carries out in their flesh all the methods of his cruelty. But what wonder if he despises the strength of men, since he scorns even the very torments of the heavenly judgment against him. Whence it is also subjoined,

Ver. 20. *He will esteem the hammer as stubble.* [E.V. 29]

23. As if he were saying, He despises even the weight of that reproof, which strikes him by a punishment coming from above. For in Holy Scripture by the name ‘hammer’ is sometimes designated the devil, by whom the faults of offenders are now smitten. But it is sometimes taken for the smiting of heaven, by which even the Elect feel blows from above, in order to amend their evil ways: or it strikes the reprobate with just indignation, in order that by now anticipating eternal punishments, it may shew them what they also deserve hereafter. For that the ancient enemy is expressed by the term ‘hammer’ the Prophet witnesses, when he observes the power of the last judgment upon him, and says, *How is the hammer of the whole earth broken and crushed?* [Jer. 50, 23] As if he were saying, Who can imagine with what a whirling stroke, at the coming of the last judgment, the Lord shatters him with eternal damnation, by whom He smites those vessels of His which are to he fashioned for the use of His service? Again, by a ‘hammer’ is expressed a blow from heaven, which is signified by Solomon building the temple, when it is said, *And the house*

when it was in building, was built of stones hewn, and made ready, and neither hammer, nor hatchet, nor any tool of iron was heard in the house, while it was in building. [1 Kings 6, 7] For what did that house typify but Holy Church, which the Lord inhabits in heavenly places? To the building of which the souls of the Elect are brought, as if they were some polished stones. And when it is built in heaven, no hammer of discipline there any longer resounds, because we are brought thither, as stones hewn, and made ready to he arranged in places fitted for us according to our desert. For here we are beaten outwardly, in order that we may arrive thither without reproach. Here does the hammer, here the hatchet, here do all the iron tools of blows resound. But in the house of God no blows are heard, because in the eternal country the noises of smitings are now hushed. There the hammer strikes not, because no punishment afflicts. The hatchet cuts not, because no sentence of severity casts out those who have been once received within. The instruments of iron resound not, because not even the slightest scourges are any longer felt. Because then the weight of the heavenly blow is expressed by a hammer coming down from above, what is meant by this Leviathan despising the hammer, except that he scorns to dread the blows of the heavenly punishment? And he counts the hammer as stubble, because he prepares himself for the weight of just wrath, as if against the lightest alarms. Whence it is also added still more expressly;

And will laugh at Him that shaketh the spear.

24. For the Lord shakes a spear against Leviathan, because He threatens a severe sentence in his destruction. For to ‘shake a spear’ is to prepare for him eternal death through strict punishment. But the apostate spirit, despising the Author of his life, even with his own death, laughs at Him that shaketh the spear; because whatever severe, whatever horrible fate he foresees approaching from the strict judgment, he fears not to suffer it: but the more he perceives that he cannot escape eternal torments, with the

greater cruelty does he rise up in practising his wickedness. And when the wise ones of this world behold him made firm with such perseverance, and such might, in all that he desires, they, most of them, incline their hearts to yield to his tyranny; and all that they know by the gift of God, do they turn against Him and apply to the service of His enemy. Whence it is also rightly subjoined;

Ver. 21. *The rays of the sun will be under him.* [E.V. 30]

25. For in Holy Scripture when the 'sun' is used figuratively, there is designated sometimes the Lord, sometimes persecution, sometimes the display of an open sight of any thing, but sometimes the understanding of the wise. For by the 'sun' the Lord is typified, as is said in the Book of Wisdom, that all the ungodly in the day of the last judgment, on knowing their own condemnation, are about to say; *We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun rose not upon us.* [Wisd. 5, 6] As if they plainly said: The ray of inward light has not shone on us. Whence also John says; *A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.* [Rev. 12, 1] For by the 'sun' is understood the illumination of truth, but by the moon, which wanes and is filled up every month, the changeableness of temporal things. But Holy Church, because she is protected with the splendour of the heavenly light, is clothed, as it were, with the sun; but, because she despises all temporal things, she tramples the moon under her feet. Again, by the 'sun' is designated persecution, as the Truth says in the Gospel, that the seeds which sprang up without roots withered when the sun arose. [Matt. 13, 6] Because, namely, the words of life which flourish for a moment of time in the heart of earthly men, are dried up by the heat of persecution coming upon them. Again, by the 'sun' is designated the setting forth of a clear view, as the Prophet announces the Lord of all things appearing to our eyes, saying; *He hath set His tabernacle in the sun.* [Ps. 19, 4] As if he were saying, He

displayed in the light of clear vision the mystery of His assumed humanity. And as it is said to the same Prophet by the Divine voice by Nathan; *For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing in the sight of all Israel, and in the sight of the sun.* [2 Sam. 12, 12] For what does he mean by the sight of the sun, except the knowledge of manifest vision. Again, by the name ‘sun’ is expressed the understanding of the wise, as it is written in the Apocalypse; *The fourth angel poured forth his vial upon the sun, and it was given unto him to afflict men with heat and fire.* [Rev. 16, 8] To pour forth a vial upon the sun is in truth to inflict the punishments of persecution on men shining with the splendour of wisdom. *And it was given unto him to afflict men with heat and fire.* Because when wise men, overcome by tortures, are smitten with the error of evil living, the weak, being persuaded by their example, burn with temporal desires. For the falls of the strong increase the destructions of the weak. That the acuteness of wisdom is designated by the ‘sun,’ is said also in the way of comparison by Solomon; *A wise man continueth as the sun, a fool changeth as the moon.* [Ecclus. 27, 11] What then is pointed out in this place by the rays of the sun, but the acuteness of wise men? For because many, who seemed to be resplendent in Holy Church with the light of wisdom, either caught by persuasions, or alarmed by threats, or overpowered by tortures, submit themselves at that time to the power of this Leviathan, it is rightly said, *The rays of the sun will be under him.* As if it were plainly said, These, who within Holy Church seemed by the acuteness of wisdom to shed, as it were, rays of light, and by the authority of rectitude to be resplendent from above, submit themselves under the power of this Leviathan by their evil doings, so as no longer to shine from above by sound preaching, but to submit to him by obeying him in perverse ways. The rays therefore of the sun are under him, when some, even learned men, do not exalt the acuteness of their wisdom by acting freely, but bend themselves down, both by the perversity of their doings,

and by the fawning of adulation, to the steps of this Leviathan; so that their understanding, which by the gift of heaven was like a sun to them from above, is cast down, by earthly desire, beneath the feet of the ancient enemy. And accordingly even now when any of the wise or learned, for the sake of advantage, or of the glory of temporal life, submits, by falling into flattery, to the powers of the world who work wickedness, a ray of the sun casts itself, as it were, beneath the feet of the coming Antichrist. And Behemoth humbles, as it were, beneath himself the light of heaven, when he tramples under foot, through their fatal assent, the minds of the wise. The rays, therefore, of the sun submit themselves to the feet of this Leviathan, as often as those who seem to be resplendent with the light of doctrine derive, through excessive acuteness, wrong opinions from Holy Scripture, and by their perverse opinions yield themselves up to his errors. For when they set themselves up against the faithful preaching of the truth, they follow by their false opinions the footsteps of this Leviathan. The rays of the sun are under him, as often as those who are learned, or powerful with the light of understanding, either exalt themselves in pride, to the contempt of others, or putting aside the lofty thoughts they feel, are polluted with the filthy desires of the flesh, or, forgetting heavenly things, pursue those of earth, or, not remembering that they are earth, boast vainly of their knowledge of heavenly things. Whence it is there also rightly subjoined,

He will strew gold under him like clay.

26. For by the term ‘gold’ in Holy Scripture is understood sometimes the brightness of Divinity, sometimes the splendour of the heavenly city, sometimes charity, sometimes the brightness of secular glory, sometimes the beauty of sanctity. For by the name ‘gold’ is designated the very inmost brightness of Divinity, as the appearance of the Bridegroom is described in the Song of Songs; *His head is the most fine gold.* [Cant. 5, 11] For because God is the Head of Christ, but in metals nothing is brighter than gold, the

Head of the Bridegroom is said to be gold, because His Humanity rules over us from the brightness of His Divinity. Again, by the name 'gold' is understood the splendour of the heavenly city, as John bears witness that he saw it, saying; *The city itself was of pure gold, like unto clear glass.* [Rev. 21, 18] For the gold of which that city consists is said to be like glass, in order that by the gold it may be described as being bright, and by the glass as being clear. Again, by the name 'gold' charity is suggested, as *the Angel,* whom the same John beheld talking with him, he saw girt at the paps with a golden girdle. [Rev. 1, 13]] Doubtless because when the breasts of the citizens of heaven are no longer subject to the fear of punishment, and are not separated by any rent the one from the other, they bind themselves together by charity alone. [see Bk. xxi. §5. comp. Acts 7, 30] But to 'have a golden girdle about the paps,' is to restrain all the movements of our changeful thoughts by the hands of love alone. Again, by the name of 'gold' is expressed the brightness of secular glory, as is said by the Prophet, *Babylon is a golden cup.* [Jer. 51, 7] For what is designated by the name of Babylon, but the glory of this world? And this 'cup' is said to be 'golden,' because while it shews the beauty of temporal things, it so intoxicates foolish minds with its concupiscence, that they desire temporal display, and despise invisible beauties. For in this golden cup Eve was the first who was made drunken of her own accord, of whom the history of truth says, that when she desired the forbidden tree, she saw that it was beautiful to the sight, and delightful to the look, and ate thereof. [Gen. 3, 6] Babylon is therefore a golden cup; because while it displays a look of outward beauty, it steals away the feeling of inward rectitude. Again, by the name of 'gold' is understood the splendor of sanctity, as Jeremiah deplores the change of the Jewish people from the splendor of righteousness to the gloom of wickedness, saying, *How is the gold become dim, the finest colour is changed?* [Lam. 4, 1] For as we said before, gold is dimmed, when the

beauty of righteousness is forsaken, as the darkness of iniquity succeeds. The finest colour is changed, when the splendour of innocence is turned into the foulness of sin.

27. By the name also of ‘clay ’is designated in Holy Scripture sometimes the multiplicity of earthly goods, sometimes wicked teaching which savours of filth, sometimes the allurement of carnal desire. For by ‘clay’ is typified the multiplicity of earthly goods, as is said by the Prophet Habakkuk, *Woe to him that multiplieth those things which are not his; how long doth he heap against himself the thick clay?* [Hab. 2, 6] For he weighs himself down with thick clay, who multiplying earthly goods by avarice, confines himself with the oppression of his sin. Again, by the name of ‘clay’ is designated teaching which savours of faith, as is said to the Lord by the same Prophet; *Thou madest a way in the sea for thy horses, in the clay of many waters.* [Hab. 3, 15] As if he were saying, Thou hast opened a way for thy preachers amid the doctrines of this world which savour of filthy and earthly things. By ‘clay’ is designated also the desire of filthy pleasure, as the Psalmist says in entreaty; *Take me out of the clay, that I stick not.* [Ps. 69, 14] For to stick in the clay, is to be polluted with the filthy desires of carnal concupiscence.

28. In this place therefore ‘gold’ is taken for the brightness of sanctity; but nothing hinders our understanding by ‘clay,’ either covetousness in earthly things, or the infection of wicked doctrines, or the filth of carnal pleasures. For because this Leviathan subjects at that time to himself many, who seemed within Holy Church to be resplendent with the brightness of righteousness, either by the desire of earthly things, or by the infection of erroneous doctrine, or by carnal pleasures, he doubtless strews the gold under him like clay. For to strew gold as clay, is to trample down in some persons purity of life by unlawful desires; so that even they may follow his filthy footsteps, who used before to flash forth against him with the

splendour of their virtues. The ancient enemy then deceives some at that time under a show of sanctity, but intercepts others by the foul sins of a carnal life. But he will then openly attack in these ways, but now he rules secretly in the hearts of many, as the Apostle Paul says, *That he may he revealed in his time; for the mystery of iniquity doth already work.* [2 Thess. 2, 6. 7.] He therefore even now throws gold under him as clay, as often as he overthrows the chastity of the faithful through the sins of the flesh. He tramples on gold as clay, as often as he distracts the understanding of the continent by unclean desires. And this he performs the more vehemently at that time, the more unrestrainedly he perpetrates all that he desires, as given up to his own abandoned liberty.

29. And it may perhaps disturb some one, why the merciful Lord permits those things so to happen, that this Leviathan either now by crafty suggestions, or then by that accursed man whom he fully possesses, subjects to himself even the rays of the sun, that is, the learned and wise, or strews gold (that is, holy men refulgent with the brightness of sanctity) as clay beneath him, by polluting them with sins. But we reply at once, that the gold which could be strewed as clay by his evil persuasions, was never gold before the eyes of God. For they who can at any time be seduced so as never to come back again, seem in the eyes of men to lose the sanctity they possessed; but they never had it in the sight of God. For a man is often involved secretly in many sins, and he seems great in some one virtue. And this virtue itself also becomes weak and fails, because, when it is observed by men, it is doubtless praised, and its praise is eagerly sought after. Whence it comes, that even that very virtue is no virtue in the eyes of God, while it conceals that which displeases, puts forward that which pleases Him. What merits then can there possibly be with God, when both sins are concealed, and good qualities made public? For frequently, as we have said, pride is hidden, and chastity is publicly known; and therefore the chastity

which has been long made a shew of, is lost towards the end of life, because the concealed pride is sustained unamended even to the end. Another is busy in almsgiving, he distributes his own goods; but he is yet a slave to many acts of injustice, or perhaps employs his tongue in detraction. And it is frequently the case, that he, who had been compassionate, is inflamed, at the end of his life, with the stimulants of rapacity and cruelty. And it is the effect of a most righteous judgment, that he loses before men, even that by which he pleased men, who was never careful to amend that, by which he was displeasing to God. Another studies patience; but while he does not avoid envying others, and keeping malice in his heart, he at last becomes impatient, who for a long while grieved in secret. These therefore are in some measure 'gold,' and in some measure 'clay.' And this 'gold' is strewed as 'clay,' when even the virtue, which had shone brightly before men, is scattered by the force of secret sins. But we think it worth while to consider more accurately the excellence of the heavenly dispensation in these cases.

30. For Almighty God often tolerates the secret sins of some persons, in order that He may so make use of their known virtues as to promote the interests of His own Elect. For some persons do not entirely forsake the world, and lay hold on the narrow way, not so as to persevere. But yet by their example they inflame those, who are about to persevere, to seek the narrow way. Whence it frequently happens that this good life which they seem to live, they live not for themselves, but rather for the Elect alone, when, though not about to persevere themselves, they excite others, who will persevere, to zeal in holy living. But we often behold some persons enter on a way, and hasten to the proposed spot; and others follow them, because they see them on the way, and they go on together to the same place. But it frequently happens that when any difficulty assails them, those who were going before, return back, and that those who were following

reach the appointed spot. So doubtless are those who lay hold on the way of holiness, though not about to persevere. For they enter on the way of virtue, though not about to reach its end, for the very purpose of shewing to those who are about to reach it, the way in which they should walk. And even the fall of these promotes, with no slight benefit, the advancement of the Elect. Because while they behold their fall, they tremble for their own state, and the ruin which condemns those, humbles these. For they learn to trust in the protection of heavenly assistance, when they see that many have fallen from their own strength. When therefore the reprobate seem to be acting rightly, they are pointing out as it were a level road for the Elect who are following them; but when they fall and lapse into wickedness, they shew, as it were, to the Elect who are journeying after them, the pitfall of pride to be guarded against. Let this Leviathan then go his way, and 'put beneath himself the rays of the sun,' and 'cast under him the gold like clay.' Almighty God knows how to use aright the sin of the reprobate for the comfort of His own Elect, when they who are about to reach Him, both advance toward Him by their own merits, and are frequently corrected in their proud thoughts by the lapses of others. But if this Leviathan acts thus even with those whom some virtue distinguishes, what is he likely to do with those whose mind is not in any degree raised up above earthly desires? These persons however the divine discourse plainly mentions, when it subjoins,

Ver. 22. *He will make the deep sea to boil like a pot.* [E.V. 31]

31. What is expressed by the 'sea' but the life of the worldly, what by the 'deep' ['profundum'] but their deep and hidden thoughts? And this deep sea this Leviathan makes to boil like a pot, because it is doubtless quite plain, that in the time of the last persecution he studies to excite the minds of the reprobate against the life of the Elect by the flame of cruelty. Then does the deep sea boil as a pot, when he inflames with strong heat the hearts of the lovers of this world, and when those who in this time of peace kept their

malice close within itself, then boil over with the heat of most savage persecutions, and with the headlong liberty of open cruelty breathe forth that hatred of ancient envy, which they had long suppressed. But because, when persuaded by deadly error they so serve Antichrist in these doings, as to imagine that they are the more truly doing service to Christ; after he had said, *He will make the deep sea to boil like a pot,* be fitly subjoined,

He will make it as when ointments boil.

32. For ointments when they boil give forth the fragrance of sweetness. Because then this Leviathan will so seduce the hearts of the reprobate, that, whatever they do from the wickedness of unbelief, they imagine they are doing it for the truth of the right faith, that which they do with zeal for religion, smells, as it were, sweetly to them. Whence the Truth says to His disciples in the Gospel; *That every one that killeth you, will think that he doeth God service.* [John 16, 2] They, therefore, boil as a pot, while they cruelly persecute: but this very persecution smells, to their sense, with the fragrance of ointments, when their mind, deceived by vain imaginations, thinks that it is doing God service. For in Holy Scripture by the sweet smell of ointments is usually signified an opinion of virtues. Whence the Bride in the Song of Songs, longing for the Bridegroom, says, *We run in the odour of Thy ointments.* [Cant. 1, 3] And hence the Apostle Paul, knowing that he was fragrant with the praise of virtues, says, *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ.* [2 Cor. 2, 15] Because, therefore this Leviathan involves the ministers of that accursed vessel of his in deeds of cruelty, under the notions of praise, and the pretext of virtue, after He had said, *He will make the deep sea to boil as a pot:* He immediately rightly adds, *He will make it as when ointments boil.* For the sea which boils with the fire of cruelty, He shews to boil as ointments, in the judgment of those same persons, who are excited by the feigned name of virtue; in order that they may become more atrocious in their cruelty, the more they believe that they even deserve

rewards for their zeal for religion. And in the Divine judgment it is just that they, who neglect to consider and guard the power of piety, should be deceived by the odour of their own fancy. Whence, to increase the illusion, signs also and prodigies attend them when committing their cruelties, as it is also rightly subjoined;

Ver. 23. *A path will shine after him.* [E.V. 32]

33. For a 'path' is said to shine after Leviathan, because wherever he passes along, he leaves behind him great astonishment from the brightness of his miracles, and wherever he goes forth, either by himself or by his ministers, he glitters with lying wonders. Whence the Truth says in the Gospel, that which we have already frequently quoted; *There will arise false Christs, and false prophets, and will give signs and wonders, so as even for the Elect, if possible, to be led into error.* [Mark 13, 22] A path, therefore, shines after Leviathan, because he enlightens by prodigies the deeds of those, whose hearts he penetrates; in order, doubtless, to keep their minds more deeply involved in the darkness of error, the more powerfully he displays, as it were, by their means the light of miracles without. But there are some, who retaining in their memory both the words of the Prophets, and the precepts of the Gospel, know that both the wonders he displays are false, and that the punishments, to which he leads them on by his deceit, are true. Because, therefore, this Leviathan does not deceive their hearts by a display of sanctity, he presents himself to them with another illusion. For he observes some persons, though knowing these things, yet loving the present life; to whose minds he proceeds to make light of future punishments; he asserts, that the sentence of severity will at length terminate; and hurries them on, when craftily deceived, to present pleasures. Whence it is also immediately fitly subjoined;

He will esteem the deep ['abyssum'] *as growing old.*

34. That the eternal and incomprehensible judgments are usually designated by the name ‘deep’ the Psalmist witnesses, saying, *Thy judgments are a great deep.* [Ps. 36, 6] But old age is sometimes put for the approach of the end. Whence the Apostle says, *That which decayeth and waxeth old, is near to destruction.* [Heb. 8, 13] This Leviathan, therefore, will look on the deep as growing old, because he so infatuates the hearts of the reprobate, as to infuse in them a suspicion that the approaching judgment may come, as it were, to an end. For he considers that the abyss is growing old, who thinks that the heavenly infliction of punishment will ever he brought to a close. This ancient deceiver, therefore, makes light in his members, that is, in the minds of the wicked, of future punishments, which he bounds, as it were, by a certain limit, in order that he may prolong their faults without any limit from reproof, and that they may not here put an end to their sins, the more they imagine that the punishments of sins will be there brought to a close.

35. For there are those even now, who neglect to put an end to their sins, for the very reason that they suspect that the future judgments upon them will, some time or another, have an end. To whom we briefly reply; If the punishments of the reprobate will at any time be ended, the joys of the blessed will also be ended at last. For the Truth says by His own mouth, *These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* [Matt. 25, 46] If, therefore, this is not true which He has threatened, neither is that true which He has promised. But they say, He threatened eternal punishment to sinners, in order to restrain them from the perpetration of sins; because He ought to threaten, not inflict, eternal punishments on His creature. To whom we reply at once: If He has made false threats in order to withdraw [‘corrigere’] from unrighteousness, He has also made false promises, in order to encourage to righteousness. And who can tolerate this madness of theirs, who, while they assert in their fair

offers that the punishments of the reprobate are terminated, overthrow by their assertion the rewards, and recompenses, of the Elect also? Who can tolerate their madness, who endeavour to establish that that is not true which the Truth has threatened concerning eternal fire, and who, while busy in declaring God to he merciful, are not ashamed to proclaim Him to be false?

36. But they said, A fault, which has an end, ought not to he punished without end. Almighty God is doubtless just, and that which is not committed with eternal sin, ought not to be punished with eternal torment. To whom we reply at once, that they would say rightly, if the just and strict Judge at His coming considered not the hearts, but only the doings of men. For the wicked have sinned with a limit, because their life had a limit. For they would have wished to live without end, in order that they might continue in their sins without end. For they are more eager to sin than to live; and they therefore wish to live for ever here, in order that they may never cease to sin, as long as they live. It pertains then to the justice of the strict Judge, that they should never be free from punishment, whose mind desired when in this life never to be free from sin; and that no end of punishment should be granted to the wicked, because as long as he was able he wished to have no end to his sin.

37. But they say, No just person revels in cruelty, and an offending servant is ordered by his just master to be scourged, in order to be corrected of his wickedness. He is, therefore, scourged for some object, when his master delights not in his tortures. But to what end will the wicked ever burn, who have been consigned to the fires of hell? And because it is certain that the Merciful and Almighty God revels not in the tortures of the wicked, why are the wretched put to torture, if they make not expiation? To whom we reply at once, that Almighty God, because He is merciful, revels not in the torture of the wretched; but because He is just, He ceases not, even for

ever, from punishing the wicked. But all the wicked are punished with eternal suffering, and indeed by their own iniquity; and yet they are burnt for some purpose, in order, namely, that all the just may behold in God the joys they experience, and may see in them the punishments they have escaped; in order that they may acknowledge that they are the more indebted to Divine grace, the more they see the eternal punishment of the sins, which by His help they were able to avoid.

38. But they say, And where then is their saintship, if they will not pray for their enemies, whom they will then see burning, though it is expressly said to them, *Pray for your enemies?* [Matt. 5, 44] But we reply at once, They pray for their enemies at that time when they are able to convert their hearts to fruitful penitence, and save them by this very conversion. For what else must we pray for our enemies, except that which the Apostle says, *That God may give them repentance, and that they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive unto his will?* [2 Tim. 2, 25. 26.] And how will prayers be made at that time for them, when they can no longer be in any degree turned from iniquity to works of righteousness? There is, therefore, the same reason for not praying then for men condemned to eternal fire, as there is now for not praying for the devil and his angels who have been consigned to eternal punishment. And this is now the reason for holy men not praying for unbelieving and ungodly men who are dead; for they are unwilling that the merit of their prayer should be set aside, in that presence of the righteous Judge, when in behalf of those whom they know to be already consigned to eternal punishment. But if even now the just when alive do not sympathize with the unjust who are dead and condemned, (when they know that they themselves are still enduring from their flesh that which will be called into judgment,) how much more severely do they then regard the torments of the wicked, when, stripped of every sin of corruption, they will themselves cleave more closely and firmly

to righteousness? For the power of severity so absorbs their minds, by means of their cleaving to the most righteous Judge, that they take no pleasure whatever in any thing which is at variance with the strictness of that inward rule. But because we have made these brief remarks against the followers of Origen [See Huetii Origeniana, B. 2. q. 11.], as the opportunity occurred, let us go back to the course of exposition, from which we have digressed. After the merciful Lord had pointed out the crafty machinations of this Leviathan, openly announcing all the fierce oppressions he inflicts outwardly on the Elect, and every thing which he infuses into the reprobate within by his flattering suggestion, He immediately subjoins, in speaking briefly of the hugeness of his strength;

Ver. 24. *There is no power upon earth, which can be compared to him.* [E.V. 33]

39. His power upon earth is said to be preeminent over all, because though he has fallen below men by the merit of his doings, yet he transcends the whole human race by the condition of his angelic nature. For though he has lost the happiness of eternal felicity, yet he has not lost the greatness of his nature; by the strength of which he still surpasses all human things, though he is inferior to holy men, by the baseness of his deserts. Whence also the meritorious recompense of the Saints, who are contending against him, is the more increased, the more he is defeated by them, who boasts that, by the power of his nature, he has as it were a right to rule over men. It follows;

Who was made to fear no one.

40. He was indeed so made by nature, as to be bound to feel a chaste fear for his Creator; that is to say, with a subdued and fearless fear, not with the fear which love casts out, but with the fear which remains for ever and ever, that is, which love begets. For a loving wife fears her husband in one way, an offending handmaid fears her master in another. He had therefore been

so created, as, with joyful dread, to fear his Maker with love, and to love Him with fear. But by his own perversity he was made such as to fear no one. For he scorned to be subject to Him by Whom he had been created. For God is in such way above all, as to be Himself subject to no one. But this Leviathan, beholding the height of His loftiness, aimed at the privilege of the fatal liberty of ruling over others, and being subject to no one, saying, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, and I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 14] But he lost His likeness, because he proudly desired to be like Him in loftiness. For he who was bound to imitate His charity, in subjection, aimed at gaining His loftiness, and lost through pride that which he was able to imitate. He would, doubtless, have been lofty, if he had been willing to cleave to Him Who is truly lofty. He would have been lofty, if he had been contented with a participation in true loftiness. But while he proudly aimed at high estate by himself, he rightly lost that which was participated. For having left that First Cause, to Whom he was bound to adhere, he aimed at being, in a sense, his own first cause [‘principium’]. Having forsaken Him, Who was able truly to be sufficient for him, he decided that he was able to be sufficient for himself, and fell the more beneath himself, the more he raised himself up against the glory of his Creator. For him, whom a slavery akin to freedom exalted, a slavish freedom cast down. With which liberty he is so let loose, as to fear no one, but he is grievously restrained by this very want of restraint. For, by the heavenly judgment which wisely ordains all things, the liberty which he desired, fettered him; because he, who was able to subdue even the elements, if he had been willing to fear the One Whom he ought, is now, though in every way not fearing, subject to every punishment. He doubtless would fear One with possession of all things, who now, by not fearing One, suffers all things.

41. He was therefore made to fear no one, no one, that is, because not even God. But he neither feared that which he was about to suffer. But it had been doubtless more blessed for him to avoid punishments, by fearing them, than by not fearing, to endure them. He changed therefore his desire after high estate into hardness of heart, in order that he, who sought in his ambition to rule over others, might feel not, through hardness of heart, that he has wrought wickedly. For because he did not obtain the right of the power he sought for, he found the madness of insensibility a kind of remedy for his pride; and because he was not able, by going beyond, to surpass all things, he, by making light of these, prepared himself to meet all things. But his pride is still further carefully described, when it is immediately observed;

Ver. 25. *He beholdeth every high thing.* [E.V. 34]

42. That is, he looks down as if from above on all, who are, as it were, placed beneath him; because while he strives in his intention against his Maker, he scorns to think any one like himself. And this fitly suits his members also, because all the wicked, elated through swelling of heart, despise with the haughtiness of pride all whom they behold. And if they ever respect them outwardly, yet within, in the secret of their heart, where they are great in their own estimation, they consider the life and the merits of others inferior to themselves. And they look on them as beneath themselves, because, through the lofty thought of their heart, they have placed themselves on a kind of high eminence. To whom it is well said by the Prophet; *Woe unto you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight.* [Is. 5, 21] Hence also Paul says; *Be not wise in your own conceits.* [Rom. 12, 16] Hence it is said to Saul by the Divine reproof; *When thou wast little in thine own eyes, did I not make thee a head in the tribes of Israel?* [1 Sam. 15, 17] For he is little in his own eyes, who in considering himself, regards himself as inferior to the merits of others. For whoever in

the loftiness of his thought extends himself above the merits of others, looks, as it were, on himself as great. But the reprobate Saul remained not in the good which he had begun, because he was swollen with pride at the power he had received. But, on the other hand, David, ever thinking humbly of himself, and counting himself inferior, in comparison with the same Saul, after he had met with an opportunity of striking, and spared this same raging adversary, prostrated himself with humble profession, saying; *Whom dost thou pursue, O king of Israel? whom dost thou pursue? A dead dog, and a single flea.* [1 Sam. 24, 15] And he had been already certainly anointed as king, and had already learned by Samuel praying, and pouring the oil upon his head, that Divine Grace, having rejected Saul, was preserving him to hold the helm of the kingdom. And yet with humble mind he was prostrating himself to his persecuting adversary, to whom he knew that he had been preferred in the Divine judgment. He therefore humbly placed himself beneath him, to whom he knew that he was incomparably superior through the grace of election. Let those then, who are still ignorant in what rank they are held by God, learn in what way they should humble themselves to their neighbours, if even His Elect thus humble themselves before those, to whom they know they are already preferred in His secret judgments.

43. But it is a usual mark of the Elect, that they ever think more meanly of themselves than they really are. For hence it is said by the same David; *If I did not think humbly, but exalted my soul.* [Ps. 131, 1] Hence Solomon invites the little ones to wisdom, saying; *If any is a little one, let him come to her.* [Prov. 9, 4] But he who as yet despises not himself, does not lay hold of the humble wisdom of God. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel; *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.* [Matt. 11, 25] Hence again the Psalmist says; *The Lord keeping little ones.*

[Ps. 116, 5] Hence the teacher of the Gentiles says; *We became little ones in the midst of you.* [1 Thess. 2, 7] Hence advising his disciples, he says; *Each esteeming others better than themselves.* [Phil. 2, 3] For, because every wicked person considers every one whom he knows, to be inferior to himself, the righteous, on the contrary, endeavours to regard all his neighbours as superior to himself. And lest, when one person humbles himself before another, this humiliation should tend to the pride of the other, he rightly admonished both parties, saying; *Each esteeming others better than themselves:* in order that in the thoughts of the heart I should prefer him to myself, and he in return should prefer me to himself; so that, when the heart is kept down on either side, no one may be elated by the honour bestowed on him.

44. But the reprobate, because they are members of this Leviathan, scorn either to know or to maintain this form of humility. Because, though they sometimes shew themselves outwardly humble, yet they neglect to maintain the power of humility within. And it often happens to them that if they ever perform one single good thing, however trifling, they immediately turn away the thought of their mind from all their faults, and ever look with all their attention at even this last good thing they may have done, and that from this they regard themselves as already holy, forgetting all the wickedness they have committed, keeping in mind only their one good action, which perhaps they were able but imperfectly to execute. As, on the other hand, it is usually the case with the Elect, that though powerful in the grace of many virtues, one sin, however inconsiderable, greatly harasses and assails them, in order that, by considering that they are weakened in one quarter, they may not pride themselves on those virtues in which they are powerful. And while they tremble at their weakness, they also maintain more humbly that point in which they are strong. The wicked, therefore, by thus incautiously looking at their one inconsiderable good quality, discern

not the many and grievous sins in which they are plunged. And it is so ordered by a marvellous dispensation, that the Elect from the fear of being weakened by even their most minute sin, lose not the great virtues to which they have advanced.

45. It is so ordered then by the rule of the righteous and secret judgment, that their evils are of service to the one, and that their good things are injurious to the others; when these make use of their slight sins for their advance in virtue, and those avail themselves of their smallest good deeds to add to their sin. For these advance to greater perfection in virtue from the fact that they are tempted to sin. But those fall back into greater sin, from the fact that they boast of then goodness. The reprobate therefore applies what is good to a bad purpose, and the virtuous applies what is had to a good purpose. As it frequently happens that one person falls into the evil of sickness from wholesome food taken improperly, and that another, by taking the poison of a serpent in a medicine of proper composition, gets the better of his troublesome sickness. He therefore who would not use his wholesome food aright, perishes fatally by the very means from which others live in health. But he who took care to use the serpent's poison cautiously, lives in health by the very means by which others perish fatally. We call then not the wickedness itself, but the suggestion of wickedness, with which we are often tempted against our will and efforts, the poison of the serpent. But this is then turned into a remedy, when the mind which is raised on high by its virtues, is brought low by the temptations it sees ranged against it. Whatever works then the wicked, and those who are rejected from the approval of inward examination, may perform, with whatever virtues they may shine forth, they are utterly ignorant of the sense of humility; doubtless because they are members of this Leviathan, of whom it is said by the voice on high, *He beholdeth every high thing.*

Because not only by himself, but by the hearts of those whom he has possessed, he looks down as from an high place on all beneath him.

46. But it must be observed, that this Leviathan, who is described by a beast which possesses a body, is described as looking on high, because, namely, when pride of heart extends outwardly as far as to the body, it is first indicated by the eyes. For they, being puffed up by the swelling of pride, look, as it were, from on high, and the more they depress, the higher they raise, themselves. For unless pride shewed itself through the eyes, as if through certain outlets [‘fenestras’], the Psalmist would never say to God, *Thou wilt save the humble people, and wilt bring down the eyes of the proud.* [Ps. 18, 27] Unless pride poured forth through the eyes, Solomon would not say also concerning the pride of Judaea; *A generation, whose eyes are lofty, and their eyelids lifted up on high.* [Prov. 30, 13] Because then this Leviathan is designated by an animal possessing a body, and pride, when it comes forth into the body, more plainly rules over the eyes, the ancient enemy is described as seeing all men, as it were, from on high. But because many points are brought forward to set forth the enemy of the human race, the mind is very desirous, that some one point should be more plainly stated, in the end of the Lord’s speech, by which his members can be pointed out by a brief description. It follows;

He is a king over all the children of pride.

47. This Leviathan, in order to fall in all the points mentioned above, smote himself with pride alone. For he would not wither up, through those many branches of sins, had he not first, through this, become rotten in the root. For it is written, *Pride is the beginning of all sin.* [Ecclus. 10, 13] For by this he himself fell, by this he overthrew men who followed him. He assaulted the health of our immortality with the same weapon as he destroyed the life of his own blessedness. But God introduced it at the end of His speech, for this reason, that by mentioning the pride of this Leviathan

after all his sins, He might point out what was worse than all sins. Although further, from the fact of its being placed at the bottom, it is pointed out to be the root of vices. For as a root is covered over beneath, but yet branches expand outwardly from it, so pride conceals itself within, but open vices immediately shoot forth from it. For no evils would come forth to view, if this did not fetter the mind in secret. This is that which makes the mind of this Leviathan to boil as a pot. And by this he agitates also the minds of men with a kind of glow of madness, but he shews by their outward deeds how he subverts the mind of the person he agitates. For that first boils with pride within, which afterwards foams forth in works without.

48. But because an opportunity has offered itself of speaking about pride, we ought to examine into it with greater minuteness and anxiety, and to point out with what power or in what way it enters the minds of men, and on whom, and in what way, it commits ravages. For other sins assail those virtues only by which they themselves are destroyed; as, namely, anger patience, gluttony abstinence, lust continence. But pride, which we have called the root of vices, far from being satisfied with the extinction of one virtue, raises itself up against all the members of the soul, and as an universal and deadly disease corrupts the whole body. So that whatever is doing when it makes its assaults, even if it appears to be a virtue, vain-glory alone, and not God, is served thereby. For when pride assaults the mind, a kind of tyrant closely invests, as it were, a besieged city: and the wealthier is any one he has seized, the more harshly does he rise up in his authority; because the more largely the business of virtue is transacted without humility, the more widely does pride exercise its sway. But whoever has with enslaved mind admitted its tyranny within, suffers this loss first of all, that from the eye of his heart being closed, he loses the equitableness of judgment. For even all the good doings of others are displeasing to him, and the things which he has done, even amiss, alone please him. He always

looks down on the doings of others, he always admires his own doings; because whatever he has done, he believes that he has done with singular skill; and for that which he performs through desire of glory, he favours himself in his thought; and when he thinks that he surpasses others in all things, he walks with himself along the broad spaces of his thought, and silently utters his own praises. But the mind is sometimes brought to such haughtiness, as in his pride to be unrestrained even in boastfulness of speech. But ruin follows the more easily, the more shamelessly a man is puffed up in his own mind. For hence it is written, *The heart is exalted before a fall.* [Prov. 16, 18] Hence it is said by Daniel, *The king was walking in the palace of Babylon, and he answered and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, in the glory of my beauty?* [Dan. 4, 29] But how vengeance swiftly aroused repressed this pride, he immediately added, saying, *While the word was yet in the king's mouth, there fell voice from heaven, To thee it is said, O king Nabuchodonosor, the kingdom shall depart from thee, and they shall drive thee out from men, and thy habitation shall be with cattle, and wild beasts: thou shalt eat hay as an ox, and seven times shall be changed over thee.* [ib. 31] Behold, because the pride of mind vented itself even in open words, the forbearance of the Judge immediately burst out in his sentence; and smote him the more severely, the more immoderately his pride exalted itself; and because he enumerated and mentioned the goods in which he flattered himself, he heard the evils enumerated with which he was to be smitten.

49. But it should be understood, that this very pride, of which we are speaking, possesses some persons in secular, and others in spiritual concerns. For one prides himself on gold, another on eloquence, one on weak and earthly things, another on the highest and heavenly virtues. And yet one and the same thing is going on before the eyes of God, though, as it

comes to the hearts of men, it is clothed in their sight with a different garb. For when he who was at first proud of earthly glory, is afterwards elated at his sanctity, pride has never forsaken his heart, but, coming to him as usual, it has changed its garment, that it may not be recognised.

50. It should be known also, that it attacks rulers in one way, and subjects in another. For it suggests to the thoughts of a ruler, that he has by the sole merit of his life risen above others; and if he has ever done any things well, it suggests them unseasonably to his mind. And when it suggests that he has specially pleased God, in order the more easily to enforce its suggestion, it brings forward in evidence, the recompense of the power entrusted to him; saying, That unless Almighty God perceived thee to be better than these men, He would not have given them all under thy power. And it presently exalts his mind, points out that those who are under his power are vile and worthless, so that he no longer regards any body as fit for him to speak to on equal terms. And hence the calmness of his mind is soon turned into wrath; because when he despises all, when he blames without any moderation the understanding, and the conduct of all, he swells out the more unrestrainedly into anger, the more he considers that those who are committed to his charge, are not worthy of him.

51. But, on the other hand, when pride urges on the heart of subjects, it strives especially to make them neglect entirely the consideration of their own conduct, and in their silent thoughts always to become judges of their ruler. For when they look unseasonably for what they ought to blame in him, they never notice what to correct in themselves. And hence they perish the more dreadfully, the more they avert their eyes from themselves; because they stumble and fall in the journey of this life, while they fix their attention elsewhere. They declare that they are sinners indeed, but not to such a degree that they should be delivered up to the control of so hurtful a person. And while they despise his doings, while they scorn his precepts,

they are plunged into such madness, as to think that God does not care for the concerns of men; because they grieve that they have been put under the charge of one, who is, as it were, deservedly blamed. And while they are thus proud against their ruler, they also rise up against the sentence of their Maker. And whilst they pass sentence on the conduct of their pastor, they impugn also the wisdom of Him who orders all things. But they often oppose the commands of their ruler impertinently, and term this haughtiness of language, liberty. For pride frequently thus presents itself, as if it were proper liberty, just as fear frequently puts itself in the place of humility. For, just as many are silent through fear, and yet consider that they are silent from humility, so do some speak from the impatience of pride, and yet think that they are speaking with rightful freedom. But sometimes inferiors utter not the impertinencies which they feel; and they whose loquacity is hardly restrained, are sometimes silent solely from the bitterness of their inward rancour. But, by suppressing through grief of mind their words of impertinence, though they are wont to speak wickedly, they are more wickedly silent. Because when on having sinned they hear any correction, they keep back, through indignation, the words of reply. Whenever they are treated harshly, they frequently break out into words of complaint at this very harshness. But when their teachers prevent them with gentleness, they are more grievously indignant at this very humility, with which they are prevented. And their mind is the more vastly inflamed, the more considerately it is regarded as weak. These doubtless, because they are ignorant of humility, which is the parent of virtues, lose the benefit of their labour, even if there are any good things which they seem to do; because the height of the rising fabric is not strongly fixed, which is not by the strength of its foundation made fast on the rock. That then which they build rises up only to fall, because before they erect the fabric they do not first prepare the

foundations of humility. But we thoroughly lay open their inmost character, if we shew what they are in a few outward points.

52. For to all who swell within with proud thoughts there is noisiness in their speech, bitterness in their silence, dissoluteness in their mirth, wrath in their sorrow, unseemliness in their conduct, comeliness in their appearance, erectness in their gait, rancour in their reply. Their mind is ever strong in inflicting, weak in enduring, contumely; sluggish in obeying, importunate in provoking others; slothful in those things which it ought, and has power, to do, but ready for those which it neither ought, nor is able, to do. In that which it seeks not of its own accord, it is turned by no exhortation, but it seeks to be compelled to do that which it secretly longs for, because while it fears to become cheap from indulging its desire, it wishes to suffer compulsion even in its own will.

53. Because then we have said that the minds of men are tempted in one way by carnal, and in another by spiritual, concerns, let those hear; *All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of grass.* [Is. 40, 6] And let these hear that which is said to some persons after their miracles; *I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [Luke 13, 27] Let those hear; *If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.* [Ps. 62, 10] Let these hear that the foolish virgins, who come with empty vessels, are shut out from the marriage within. [Matt. 25, 12] Again, because we have said before, that rulers are tempted in one way, and subjects in another, let those hear that which is said by a certain wise man; *Have they made thee a ruler? Be not lifted up, but be among them as one of them.* [Ecclus. 32, 1] Let these hear; *Obey them that have the rule over you, and be subject to them, for they watch as if about to give an account for your souls.* [Heb. 13, 17] Let those, when they boast of the power they have received, hear that which is said by the voice of Abraham to the rich man in flames; *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things.* [Luke 16, 25]

Let these, when they break into complaints against their rulers, hear that answer which is given to the murmuring people by the voices of Moses and Aaron; *Nor is your murmur against us, but against the Lord. For what are we?* [Ex. 16, 8] Let those hear; *They shall be troubled in the sight of Him Who is the Father of orphans, and the Judge of widows.* [Ps. 68, 4] Let these hear what is said against the contumacy of subjects; *Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.* [Rom. 13, 2] Let all together hear; *God resisteth the proud,* but *giveth grace to the humble.* [James 4, 6] Let all hear; *Every one that exalteth his heart is unclean before God.* [Prov. 16, 5] Let all hear; *Why art thou proud, O earth and ashes?* [Ecclus. 10, 9] Against the plague of this sickness, let us all hear that, which the Truth our Instructor teaches, saying; *Learn of Me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart.* [Matt. 11, 29]

54. For for this end the Only Begotten Son of God took on Him the form of our infirmity; for this the Invisible appeared not only visible, but even despised; [Phil. 2, 5-8] for this He endured the jests of contumely, the reproaches of derisions, and the torments of sufferings, that God in His humility might teach man not to be proud. How great then is the virtue of humility, since for the sole purpose of truly teaching it, He Who above estimation is great, became little, even to suffering? For since the pride of the devil caused the origin of our fall, the humility of God was found out as the instrument of our redemption. For our enemy who was created great among all things, wished to appear exalted above all things. But our Redeemer remaining great above all things, deigned to become little among all things.

55. But we both detect more readily the cause of pride, and lay bare the foundations of humility, if we briefly mention and run over what the author of death, and what the Creator of life declare. For the one says; *I will ascend into heaven.* [Is. 14, 13] But the Other says by the Prophet, *My soul*

is filled with evils, and My life hath drawn nigh unto hell. [Ps. 88, 4] The one says; *I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven.* [Is. 14, 13] The Other says to mankind expelled from the abodes of Paradise; *Behold, I come quickly, and I will dwell in the midst of thee.* [Zech. 2, 10] The one says; *I will sit in the mount of the testament, on the sides of the north.* [Is. 14, 14] The Other says; *I am a worm, and no man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.* [Ps. 22, 7] The one says; *I will ascend above the height of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 14] The Other; *When He was in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant;* [Phil. 2, 6] and He speaks by His members, saying; *Who is like unto Thee, O Lord?* [Ex. 15, 11] The one speaks by his members, saying; *I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* [Ex. 5, 2] The Other says by Himself; *If I should say I know Him not, I shall be a liar, like unto you: but I know Him, and keep His saying.* [John 8, 55] The one says; *The rivers are mine, and I have made them.* [Ez. 29, 9] The Other says; *I can of Mine own Self do nothing.* [John 5, 30] And again; *My Father that abideth in Me, He doeth the works.* [John 14, 20] The one, when shewing all kingdoms, says; *All this power will I give Thee, and the glory them, for they are delivered to me, and to whom I will give them.* [Luke 4, 6] The Other says; *Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, but to sit on My right hand, or on My left, is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.* [Matt. 20, 23] The one says; *Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* [Gen. 3, 5] The Other says; *It is not for you to know the times or the moments which the Father hath put in His own power.* [Acts 1, 17] The other, in order that the Divine Will might be despised, and his own enforced, says; *Why hath God commanded you, that ye should not eat of every tree of Paradise?* [Gen. 3, 1] And a little after; *For God doth know, that in whatsoever day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened.* [ib. 5] The Other says; *I seek not Mine own will, but the*

will of Him Which hath sent Me. [John 5, 30] The one speaks by his members, saying; *Let there be no meadow, which our luxury does not pass through, let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered, let us leave every where tokens of our joy.* [Wisd. 2, 2] The Other announces to His members, saying, *Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.* [John 16, 20] The one teaches the minds who are subject to him nothing else but to aim at the height of loftiness, to transcend all their equals in swelling of mind, to surpass with lofty pride the society of all men, and to exalt themselves even against the might of their Creator: as is said of these very persons by the Psalmist; *They have passed into the affection of the heart, they have thought and spoken wickedness, they have spoken iniquity on high.* [Ps. 73, 7] The Other when approaching the spitting, the palms of the hands, the buffets, the crown of thorns, the cross, the spear, and death, admonishes His members, saying; *If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.* [John 12, 26]

56. Because then our Redeemer rules the hearts of the humble, and this Leviathan is called the king of the proud, we know plainly, that pride is a most evident token of the reprobate, but humility, on the contrary, of the Elect. When it is known then which any one possesses, it is found out under what king he is fighting. For every one bears as it were a kind of inscription [‘titulum’] in his work, to shew thereby easily under the power of what ruler he is serving. Whence it is also said by the Gospel; *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* [Matt. 7, 16] Lest then the members of this Leviathan should deceive us by performing even wonders, the Lord has pointed out a plain token by which they can be detected, saying; *He is a king over all the children of pride.* For though they sometimes assume a pretended appearance of humility, yet they cannot conceal themselves in every point. For since then pride cannot bear to be long concealed, when it is concealed by one action it is exposed by another. But they who war under the king of

humility, ever fearful, and circumspect on every side, fight against the darts of pride, and specially guard, as it were, the eye only of their body against the coming blows, when in themselves they principally defend their humility.

BOOK XXXV.

In which many things already said are repeated in recapitulation, and this immense work is brought to a close by a most lowly confession of human infirmity.

Because this is the last book of this work, and since, the more difficult places having been treated, those which remain are less obscure, it seems good to run through it with less attention and care. For as if we had traversed a mighty ocean, we now gain sight of the shore, and lowering the sails of our intention, are not borne along with the same force as before, but yet we still hold our way from the impulse of the former blast. The storm of our anxiety has, so to speak, abated, but its violence, through now moderated, yet still wafts us on to our station on the shore. After then the Lord had shewn to His faithful servant how strong and crafty is Leviathan His enemy, while He carefully disclosed his strength and craft, blessed Job replied to both, saying,

Chap. xlii. ver. 2. *I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no thought is hid from Thee.*

2. For against his huge strength he observed; *I know that Thou canst do all things;* but against his hidden machinations he subjoined; *And no thought is hid from Thee.* Whence he immediately upbraids the same Leviathan, saying;

Ver. 3. *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?*

For Leviathan hides counsel without knowledge, because, though he is concealed from our infirmity by many frauds, he is yet disclosed to us by the holy inspiration of our Protector. He hides counsel without knowledge, because though he escapes the notice of those who are tempted, yet he cannot escape the notice of the Protector of the tempted. Having heard

therefore the power and craft of the devil, having heard also the power of our Creator, which both mightly represses him, and mercifully protects us, we entreat thee, O blessed Job, not to conceal from us that which thou thinkest of thyself. It follows;

Therefore I have spoken foolishly, and things that above measure exceeded my knowledge.

3. All human wisdom, however powerful in acuteness, is foolishness, when compared with Divine wisdom. For all human deeds which are just and beautiful are, when compared with the justice and beauty of God, neither just nor beautiful, nor have any existence at all. Blessed Job therefore would believe that he had said wisely what he had said, if he did not hear the words of superior wisdom. In comparison with which all our wisdom is folly. And he who had spoken wisely to men, on hearing the Divine sayings, discourses more wisely that he is not wise. Hence it is that Abraham saw, when God was addressing him, that he was nothing but dust, saying; *I speak unto my Lord, though I am dust and ashes.* [Gen. 18, 27] Hence it is that Moses, though instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, as soon as he heard the Lord speaking, discovered that he was a person of more hesitating and slower speech, saying; *I beseech Thee, O Lord, I am not eloquent; for from yesterday, and the day before, since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant, I am of a more hesitating and slower tongue.* [Ex. 4, 10] Hence it is that Isaiah, after he saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, after he beheld the Seraphim covering their face with two wings, and their feet with two, and flying with two, after he heard them crying one to the other, That Which He is, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts,* he returned to himself, and said; *Woe is me, because I have held my peace, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people that hath unclean lips.* [Is. 6, 5] And he immediately added, whence he had learned this pollution, and said; *And I have seen with mine eyes the*

King, the Lord of Hosts. Hence also Jeremiah, on hearing the words of God, found that he had no words in himself, saying; *Ah, ah, ah, Lord God, behold I know not how to speak, for I am a child.* [Jer. 1, 6] Hence Ezekiel speaking concerning the four animals, says; *When there was a voice above the firmament, which was over their heads, they stood, and let down their wings.* [Ez. 1, 25] For what is designated by the flying of the animals but the sublimity of evangelists and doctors? Or what are the wings of the animals, but the contemplations of saints raising them up to heavenly things? But when a voice is uttered above the firmament which is over their heads, they stand, and let down their wings, because when they hear within the voice of heavenly wisdom, they drop down, as it were, the wings of their flight. For they discern, in truth, that they are not able to contemplate the loftiness itself of truth. To drop down their wings then at the voice which comes from above, is, on learning the power of God, to bring down our own virtues, and from contemplating the Creator, to think but humbly of ourselves. When holy men, therefore, hear the words of God, the more they advance in contemplation, the more they despise what they are, and know themselves to be either nothing, or next to nothing. Let blessed Job then reply to the words of God, and, as he advances in wisdom, find himself to be a fool, saying; *I have spoken foolishly, and things that above measure exceeded my knowledge.* Behold, he reproved himself the more, the more he advances, and believed that he had beyond measure exceeded his knowledge, because in the words of the Lord he discerned, more than he had imagined, the secrets of His wisdom. It follows;

Ver. 4. *Hear, and I will speak; I will question Thee, and answer Thou me.*

4. To hear, is, with us, to adapt our ear which is in one place to a sound which comes from another. But with God, on the other hand, to Whom nothing is external, hearing is properly for Him to perceive our longings which are rising up beneath Him. For us then to speak to God, Who is

acquainted with the hearts even of those that hold their peace, is not for us to utter what we think with the words of our throat, but to long for Him with eager desires. And because a person asks a question in order to be able to learn that of which he is ignorant, for a man to question God, is for him to acknowledge that he is ignorant in His sight. But for God to reply, is for Him to instruct with His secret inspirations him who humbly acknowledges his ignorance. Blessed Job then says; *Hear, and I will speak.* As if he were saying, Mercifully understand my desires, in order that, while Thy mercy receives and furthers them, they may rise up to Thee in greater number. For as often as good wishes obtain their effect, they are multiplied. Whence it is written in another place; *I have called, for Thou hast heard me.* [Ps. 17, 6] For he says not, Because I called, Thou hast heard me: but, *I have called, for Thou hast heard me.* For he who had been heard when speaking, when he had been heard, and his wishes had been successful, exclaimed; *I will question Thee, and answer Thou me.* As if he were saying, From the contemplation of Thy knowledge I acknowledge myself to be ignorant. Answer me therefore when I question Thee, that is, teach me who humbly confess my own foolishness. For that he himself was questioning God from his longing after humility, and was seeking for God to answer him by the instruction of inspiration, is declared in the following words. For he announced that he would put a question, and yet added nothing in the shape of a question. For as thinking only humbly of himself, and as acknowledging the favours he had mercifully received from God, he immediately subjoins;

Ver. 5. *I have heard Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee.*

5. By these words he doubtless plainly declares, that as far as sight is superior to hearing, so far does the progress also he had made through suffering differ from that which he was before. And because he had beheld

more plainly the light of truth with the eye within, he more clearly discerned and beheld the darkness of his humanity. Whence it also follows;

Ver. 6. *Wherefore I reproach myself.*

6. For the less a person sees himself, the less is he displeased with himself; and the more he discerns the light of greater grace, the more blameworthy does he acknowledge himself to be. For when he is elevated within, by all that he is, he endeavours to agree with that standard which he beholds above him. And because human weakness still impedes him, he perceives that he differs therefrom in no slight degree, and every thing within him is burdensome, which does not agree with that inward standard. This standard blessed Job more fully beholds, as he was making progress after his suffering, and with great self-reproach is at variance with himself, saying; *Therefore I reproach myself.* But because there is no knowledge of reproach, if the lamentations of penitence do not also follow, it is rightly added, after the reproach,

And do penance in dust and ashes.

7. For to do penance in dust and ashes, is, after having contemplated the supreme Essence, to acknowledge himself to be nothing else but dust and ashes. Whence the Lord in the Gospel says to the reprobate city, *If the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have done penance long ago in sackcloth and ashes.* [Mat. 11, 21] For by 'sackcloth,' is set forth the roughness and the piercing of sin, but in 'ashes' the dust of the dead. And therefore both of these are wont to be used in penance, in order that by the piercing of sackcloth we may know what we have done through sin, and that in the dust of ashes we may consider what we have become through judgment. Let piercing sins then be considered in sackcloth, let the just punishment of sins, which succeeds by the sentence of death, be considered in ashes. For since insults of the flesh have sprung up after sin, let man behold in the roughness of the

sackcloth what he has done through pride, let him behold in the ashes how far he has gone through sin. But by sackcloth can be designated also the very compunction of grief which arises from remembrance and penitence. For blessed Job in saying, *I reproach myself,* is wounded as it were by a kind of sackcloth, when he is galled in his mind by the sharp stings of reproaches. But he does penance in ashes; because he carefully observes what he has been made by a just judgment after his first sin, saying, *I do penance in dust and ashes.* As if he plainly said, I do not boast myself of any gift of my Creator, because, having been taken from the dust, I know that I return to dust by the sentence of death which has been inflicted on me.

8. Having heard then all the words of Job, having known also all the answers of his friends, let us turn the sight of our mind to the sentence of the inward Judge, and say to Him; Behold, Lord, we have heard both the sides of those who are disputing in Thy sight, and we know that Job, in this contest, goes through his virtuous deeds, and that his friends maintain against him the glory of Thy justice. But Thou knowest what amid these things is the opinion of our mind. For we cannot possibly blame the sayings of those whom we know to be contributing to Thy defence. But, behold, the parties are present, and wait the sentence; bring forth therefore, O Lord, from Thine invisible rule the most discriminating sentence of Thy judgment, and shew us which has spoken most rightly in this contention. It follows;

Ver. 7. *But after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, He said to Eliphaz the Themanite, My anger is kindled against thee and thy two friends, because ye have not spoken before Me* the thing that is *right, as My servant Job.*

9. O Lord, the sentence of Thy judgment declares how much our blindness is at variance with the light of Thine uprightness. Behold, we know that in Thy judgment blessed Job is victorious, whom we believed to

have sinned against Thee by his words. In Thy judgment those are condemned, who believed that they surpassed the merits of blessed Job by speaking in Thy behalf. Since then we have learned by the Divine sentence what to think of the parties, let us now examine a little more minutely the words of this sentence. For how is it that blessed Job is blamed above, if, in comparison with his uprightness, his friends are said not to have spoken that which is right before the Lord? Is not this decision concerning him still further confirmed, in which it is said to the ancient enemy, *Hast thou seen My servant Job, that there is none like him upon the earth?* [Job 1, 8] But what is this, that he is praised to the enemy, and reproved in his own person; reproved in his own person, and yet preferred to the friends who spake to him? Unless it be that the holy man surpassed all men by the virtue of his merits, and yet, inasmuch as he was man, could not possibly be without blame before the eyes of God. For in a holy man sojourning in this temporary state, the rule of the Divine judgment has still something to judge, though in comparison with the rest of men it has even now something to praise. Blessed Job therefore believed that he was scourged for his fault, and not as a favour; he considered that his sins were lopped off, not that his merits were increased. And he is blamed for imagining that the intention of the scourging was different, and yet is preferred, in the decision of the inward judgment, to his friends who opposed him. Whence it is plainly gathered how great was his justice, in establishing the innocence of his doings against the arguments of his friends, since he is preferred in the Divine judgment even to those very persons who defended the Divine judgment. But we learned in the beginning of this Book [Bk. 3. § 15] that Satan had said of him to the Lord; *Put forth Thy hand and touch him, and see if he do not bless Thee to Thy face.* [Job 2, 5] At which request blessed Job is permitted to be touched with losses, with bereavement, with wounds, and with offensive words, because, in truth, He Who had praised

him was certain, that the holy man would never, according to the assertion of the devil, fall into the sin of cursing. As we have then said also above, [Preface cha] whoever considers that blessed Job sinned in his words after he had been scourged, plainly decides that the Lord had been the loser in His pledging. And though the Lord in speaking to the devil, brought forward his present good qualities, but did not promise his perseverance, it should yet be known that He would not have put forward his righteousness by permitting it to he tempted, if He foresaw that he would not he able to continue righteous under temptation. Since the devil then had been permitted by God to tempt him, if any one considers that he sank under temptation, he blames the ignorance of Him who permitted it.

10. Let us then truthfully approve of blessed Job in his sayings, lest we should sinfully blame God in His providence. And although, as far as concerns human judgments, his friends might be believed to have said in their words many things better than himself, yet Truth bringing forth another rule from the secret place, says; *Ye have not spoken before Me* the thing that is *right, as My servant Job.* Before Me, He says, that is, within, where the conduct of many often displeases, even if outwardly it is pleasing to men. Whence it is said with great judgment, in praise of the righteous married people; *They were both righteous before God.* [Luke 1, 6] For it is no safe praise to appear just before men. For the opinion of man often approves of a person as if mighty before God, but Almighty God knows not him, who is approved of as if by Him. For hence is it that the Psalmist watchfully prays, saying; *Direct my way in Thy sight.* [Ps. 5, 8] Doubtless, because even that way is frequently believed to be right in the sight of men, which is turned aside from the way of truth. And it is observable, that it is not said, *Ye have not spoken before Me* the thing that is *right as Job,* but, *as My servant Job.* In order, namely, that by speaking of him as if in some sort in a peculiar character, by introducing the mention of his being a *servant,*

He might point out that all that had been urged in his defence, he had said not with haughty pride, but with humble truth. But because God is just and merciful, He both reproves his friends strictly with His justice, and graciously converts them by His mercy. For it follows;

Ver. 8. *Take unto you seven bulls, and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a whole burnt offering. But My servant Job shall pray for you; his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you.*

11. Behold the just and merciful God neither passes over their faults without reproof, nor yet leaves their guilt without conversion. For since He is our inward Physician, He first made known the corruptions of our wound, and afterwards pointed out the remedies for obtaining health. But we have already often said, [Pref. cha] that the friends of blessed Job represent heretics, who offend God, while they endeavour to defend Him; for they are in their words rebels against the truth, which they imagine they are serving by their false assertions. Because therefore Almighty God frequently incorporates them into the body of Holy Church, through the knowledge of the truth; their conversion also, which is often mercifully effected, is well designated by this pardon which the friends of Job obtain.

12. But it must be specially observed, that they are ordered to offer to the Lord the sacrifice of their conversion, not by themselves, but by Job. Heretics doubtless, when they come back from their error, cannot appease the wrath of God towards them by a sacrifice offered by themselves, unless they are converted to the Catholic Church, which blessed Job designates; that so they may obtain their salvation by her prayers whose faith they used to impugn with their false assertions. For He says; *My servant Job will pray for you; his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you.* As if He openly said to heretics. I accept not your sacrifices, I hear not the words of your petitions, except through the intercession of her, whose words of confession concerning Me I acknowledge true. And do ye indeed bring

down bulls and rams to offer the sacrifices of your conversion, but ask of Me your salvation through the Catholic Church, which I love. For I wish to remit to her the sin which ye have committed against Me in her, in order that she may obtain your recovery, who used to suffer from your sickness.

13. For it is she alone through whom God willingly accepts a sacrifice, she alone who intercedes with confidence for those who are in error. Whence also the Lord commanded concerning the sacrifice of the lamb, saying; *In one house it shall be eaten, neither shall ye carry forth of the flesh thereof out of the house.* [Ex. 12, 46] For the lamb is eaten in one house, because the true Sacrifice of the Redeemer is immolated in the one Catholic Church. And the Divine law orders its flesh not to he carried forth abroad, because it forbids that which is holy to be given to dogs. [Matt. 7, 6] It is she alone in whom a good work is fruitfully carried on, whence they only who had laboured in the vineyard received the reward of a penny. [Matt. 20, 10] It is she alone who guards those who are placed within her by the strong bond of charity. Whence also the water of the deluge raised the ark indeed aloft, but destroyed all those whom it found out of the ark. It is she alone in whom we truly contemplate the heavenly mysteries. Whence also the Lord says to Moses; *There is a place by Me, and thou shall stand upon a rock.* [Exod. 33, 21] And a little after; *I will take away Mine hand, and thou shall see My back parts.* [ib. 23] For since the truth shines forth from the Church Catholic alone, the Lord says that there is a place by Him, from which He is to be seen. Moses is placed on a rock, to behold the form of God, because if any one maintains not the firmness of the Faith, he discerns not the Divine presence. Of which firmness the Lord says; *Upon this rock I will build My Church.* [Mat. 16, 18] What is then in this place the saying to the friends of Job, *Go ye to Job,* except, ‘Ascend ye the rock?’ What is, *His face I will accept for you, that folly be not imputed to you,*

except that which is there said, *Thou shalt see My back parts?* that is, thou shalt understand the mysteries of that Incarnation which is hereafter to be.

14. But heretics, because they disdain to stand on the rock, behold not the back parts of God as He passes by; because, being situated without the Church, they discern not the mysteries of His Incarnation, as they really are. For, as we have said before, by ‘bulls’ is expressed the neck of pride; [Pref. cha] but by ‘rams,’ the leadership which is exercised by heretics, when people are persuaded by them, as flocks that are led astray. For of proud heretics, who corrupt the minds of the weak by their evil persuasion, it is said; *The congregation of the bulls amongst the kine of the people.* [Ps. 68, 30] And because they lead like flocks the people that follow them, they are sometimes called ‘rams.’ For rams in truth lead the flock. Whence Jeremiah says by way of reproof; *Thy princes are like rams.* [Lam. 1, 6] Because then heretics, when they return to the Church, abandon the haughtiness of pride, and lead not the multitude of the people to destruction, like herds that follow them, the friends of blessed Job are ordered to offer bulls and rams. For to offer bulls and rams in sacrifice, is to sacrifice proud leadership with the humility of conversion, so that they, who before endeavoured to take the lead in teaching, may tame the neck of pride, and learn to follow by obedience. This their pride is also rightly expiated by seven sacrifices; because heretics, on returning to the Church, receive through the offering of humility the gifts of the Spirit of sevenfold grace, in order that they who had wasted away through their old habit of pride, may be formed afresh by the newness of grace.

15. But the number seven is among the wise of this world considered to be perfect on some special grounds of its own, because it is the sum of the first even, and the first uneven number. For the first uneven number is three, and the first even number is four. Of these two numbers that of seven is composed, which, by multiplying together these very parts rises up to the

number twelve. For whether we multiply three by four, or four by three, we arrive at that number. But we, because we enjoy the preaching of truth by a gift from above, tread under foot and look down on these matters which are fixed on the loftiness of knowledge, doubtless retaining this with unshaken faith, that those, whom the Spirit of sevenfold grace has filled, it makes perfect; and imparts to them not merely the knowledge of the Trinity, but also the performance of the four virtues, that is, prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice. And It is increased, in a manner, in its parts, within those also whom It enters, when both the performance of the four virtues is received through the knowledge of the Trinity, and by the performance of the four virtues we attain even to the manifest sight of the Trinity. And therefore among ourselves the number seven is perfect, but in a very different way; because it rises fully and with no deficiency to the number twelve, when it both perfects works by faith, and again faith by works [i. e. four by three and three by four]. The holy Apostles also, who were to be filled with the Spirit of sevenfold grace, were chosen twelve in number. For they were sent in the four quarters of the world to make known the Trinity, Which is God. They were therefore chosen in number twelve, that even by the nature of the number itself, the cause might be plain, why they preached the three highest, through the four lowest things.

16. Whether then from this, or perhaps from some other reason, in Holy Scripture, by the number seven is designated sometimes the secure rest of eternity, sometimes the whole of this present time, but sometimes the whole body of Holy Church. For by the number seven the perfection of eternity is suggested, when the seventh day is called sanctified for the rest of the Lord. [Gen. 2, 3] And no evening is said to belong to it, because the rest of eternal blessedness is confined by no limit. Hence also it is that, on the giving of the Law, the seventh day is ordered to be one of rest, in order that eternal rest may be designated by it. [Ex. 20, 8-11] Hence it is, that in the course of

years, the number seven multiplied seven times, with a unit added, amounts to fifty, in order that the most holy rest of the Jubilee, signifying perpetual blessedness, might be observed. [Lev. 25, 10] Hence it is, that the Lord, rising again and frequently appearing, is said at His last feast to have eaten with seven disciples; [John 21, 2] because they who are now perfected in Him, are filled by Him with eternal refreshment.

17. Again by the number 'seven' is understood the whole of this temporal condition. For hence it is that the whole season of this present life is passed over in periods of seven days. Hence it is, that in type of Holy Church, which at all times traverses this world with her preaching, the Ark of the Lord, carried round for seven days with the sound of trumpets, overthrew the walls of Jericho. [Josh. 6, 12-20] Hence the Prophet says; *Seven times a day have I praised Thee.* [Ps. 119, 164] And as signifying that he had said this for the whole and entire season of his supplication, he says; *His praise shall he ever in my mouth.* [Ps. 34, 1] But that the whole of the present life is designated by the number 'seven' is shewn more plainly, when the number 'eight' is mentioned after it. For when another number besides follows after seven, it is set forth by this very addition, that this temporal state is brought to an end and closed by eternity. For hence it is that Solomon advises, saying; *Give portions to seven, and also to eight.* [Eccles. 11, 2] For by the number seven he expressed the present time, 'which is passed by periods of seven days. But by the number 'eight' he designated eternal life, which the Lord made known to us by His resurrection. For He rose in truth on the Lord's day, which, as following the seventh day, that is, the Sabbath, is found to he the eighth from the creation. But it is well said; *Give portions to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be on the earth.* As if it were plainly said; So dispense temporal goods, as not to forget to desire those that are eternal. For thou oughtest to provide for the future by well-doing, who knowest not

what tribulation succeeds from the future judgment. Hence it is, that the Temple is ascended with fifteen steps, in order that it may be learned by its very ascent that by seven and eight our worldly doings may be carefully discharged, and an eternal dwelling may be providently sought for. Hence also it is that, by increasing a unit to ten, the Prophet uttered a hundred and fifty Psalms. For on account of this number 'seven' signifying temporal things, and the number 'eight' eternal things, the Holy Spirit was poured forth upon a hundred and twenty of the faithful, sitting in an upper room. For fifteen is made up of seven and eight, and if in counting from one to fifteen we mount up by adding the sums of the numbers together, we reach the number a hundred and twenty. By this effusion of the Holy Spirit they learned in truth both to pass through with endurance things temporal, and eagerly to seek after those that are eternal.

18. Again, by the number 'seven' is designated the whole body of Holy Church. Whence John in the Apocalypse writes to seven Churches: [Rev. 1, 20] but what else but the Church universal did he wish to be signified by them? And in order that this universal Church might be signified to be full of the Spirit of sevenfold grace, Elisha is described as having breathed seven times over the dead child. [2 Kings 4, 35] For the Lord, coming to a lifeless people, opens his mouth seven times, because He confers on it in His mercy the gifts of the Spirit of sevenfold grace. Because then the whole body of Holy Church is typified by the number 'seven,' let the friends of blessed Job come to him, and offer the whole burnt offering commanded by God. But let them guard with all watchfulness the mysteries of the number seven; in order, namely, that they who are living without may first unite themselves to the general body of Holy Church, and then at length seek pardon for the guilt of their former pride. Let them offer for their fault seven sacrifices, because they receive not the washing away of their guilt, unless by the Spirit of sevenfold grace they are united to that universal peace, from which

they had been cut off. Let it be said then, *Take unto you seven bulls, and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer for yourselves a whole burnt offering. But My servant Job shall pray for you; his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you.* As if it were plainly said to heretics on their return; Unite yourselves to the universal Church by the humility of penance, and obtain from Me through her prayers that pardon, of which of yourselves ye are not worthy: for when through her ye learn to be truly wise, ye are the first to blot out before Me the foolishness of your wisdom. It follows;

Ver. 8. *For ye have not spoken before Me* the thing which is *right, like My servant Job.*

19. The Lord used these words a little before, and yet He again repeats and adds the same words. What is this, except that, by again repeating, He confirms the sentence which He had already pronounced in judgment? And, in order that the righteousness of blessed Job and the unrighteousness of his friends might be the more manifestly displayed, the praise of the one and the reproof of the other is brought forward by a repetition of the words, so that by being repeated outwardly, it might appear how firmly fixed they are held within. For when the king of Egypt had known in two visions the fearful seasons of the coming famine under the figure of kine and of ears of corn, he heard by the voice of the holy interpreter; *For that thou hast seen a second time a dream pertaining to the same thing, it is a token of the certainty.* [Gen. 41, 32] From which it is plainly collected, that whatever is repeated in the word of God, is more strongly confirmed. But since we have heard what the Judge has decreed, let us hear also what they do who are convicted. It follows;

Ver. 9. *Therefore Eliphaz the Themanite, and Baldad the Suhite, and Sophar the Naamathite, went and did according as the Lord had spoken to them: and the Lord accepted the face of Job.*

20. We say nothing concerning the interpretation of these names, because we remember that we discussed it at greater length in the beginning of this work. But it must be noticed, that the order of the pardon they received is so carefully observed, as had been announced, that the Lord is said to have accepted in their sacrifices not their face, but the face of blessed Job. But, because whoever endeavours to intercede for others, promotes still more his own interest from this very love, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 10. *The Lord also was turned at the penitence of Job, when he prayed for his friends.*

21. For he is before shewn to have been heard in behalf of his friends, when the circumstance, which we before mentioned, is stated; *They did according as the Lord had spoken, and the Lord accepted the face of Job.* But when it is immediately observed, *The Lord also was turned at the penitence of Job, when he prayed for his friends;* it is plainly shewn, that a penitent has deserved to be heard the more quickly in his own behalf, the more devoutly he has interceded for his friends. For he makes his prayers more powerful in his own behalf, who offers them also in behalf of others. For that sacrifice of prayer is more willingly received, which, in the sight of the merciful Judge, is flavoured with love for one's neighbour. And a person then truly adds to its amount, if he offers it even for his enemies. For hence is that, which the Truth Who is our Teacher says; *Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.* [Luke 6, 28] Hence again He says, *When ye shall stand to pray, forgive if ye have ought against any, that your Father also Who is in heaven may forgive you your sins.* [Mark 11, 25] But how much he obtained for himself, who interceded for others, is immediately pointed out, when it is subjoined,

The Lord added all that had been to Job, twofold.

22. He received twofold all that he had lost, because through the tenderness of the merciful Judge the assistance of consolations far surpasses

the loss of our temptation. But the temptation tries us less than the reward consoles us; in order that he, who used from the weight of the blow to consider that he had suffered some heavy trial, may learn from the recompense he has earned [‘retributionis merito’], that what he endured was but light. Whence it is said also to afflicted Judæa; *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, and in great mercies will I gather thee.* [Is. 54, 7] But sometimes the measure of consolation is dispensed in proportion to the weight of affliction. Whence it is written elsewhere, *According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have rejoiced my soul.* [Ps. 94, 12] For he, who exclaims that he had been made joyful according to the multitude of his sorrows, points out that he was consoled in the same measure as he had been afflicted. But the reader is not slightly instructed, if he considers the very order of the remuneration. For correction follows excess, penitence correction, pardon penitence, gifts pardon. But because he who had been smitten by permission of Divine Providence, was afflicted also by the words of his friends, when he is consoled by the gifts of the Divine mercy, he deserves to be cherished also with human love; in order that to him, whom the sorrows and adversities of pains wounded on every side, the joys of consolation may on every side correspond. Whence also it is added,

Ver. 11. *But there came to him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all that knew him before, and did eat bread with him in his house, and moved the head over him.*

23. What is designated by the eating of bread but charity, and what by the moving of the head but admiration? But it is well subjoined, *And comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him.* For to console the grief of one that had been smitten, is to rejoice with him on his pardon after he had been smitten. For the more a person is seen to rejoice on

the restoration of his neighbour's health, the more does he give proof that he had grieved at its loss.

And they gave him each one sheep, and one earring of gold.

24. Although all these things are truly stated according to the history, we are yet compelled by the very gifts which were offered to go back to the mystery of allegory. For we ought not to hear in a listless manner that they offered a sheep, and a single one, and a golden earring, and a single one. And if perhaps it is not wonderful in the mere letter why the sheep which was offered was one, yet it is very wonderful why the earring was one. But what reference has a sheep to an earring, or an earring to a sheep? We are compelled therefore, by the very definiteness ['fine'] of the gifts, to examine in the mysteries of allegory the former statements also, which we have run through and treated superficially according to the mere history. Because therefore Christ and the Church, that is, the Head and the body, are one person, we have often said that blessed Job sometimes typifies the head, sometimes the body. Preserving then the truth of the history, let us understand that as performed under the type of the Church, which is written, *The Lord added all that had been to Job twofold.* For though Holy Church now loses many by the stroke of temptation, yet in the end of this world she receives those things that are her own, twofold, when, having received the Gentiles in full number, all Judaea also which shall then be found, agrees to run to her faith. For hence it is written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved.* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] Hence the Truth also says in the Gospel, *Elias shall come, and he shall restore all things.* [Matt. 17, 11] For now the Church has lost the Israelites, which she was unable to convert by preaching, but when, at that time, on the preaching of Elias, she gathers together as many as she shall have found, she receives as it were in fuller measure that which she has lost.

25. Or certainly, for Holy Church to rejoice over each of us at both the blessedness of our soul, and the incorruption of our body, is for her to receive double at her end. For hence is that which is said of the Elect by the Prophet, *In their land they shall possess the double.* [Is. 61, 7] Hence it is that the Apostle John says of the Saints who were seeking for the end of the world; *While robes were given, unto every one of them one, and it was said unto them that they should rest yet a little season, until the number of their fellow-servants and of their brethren should be filled up.* [Rev. 6, 11] For as we have said a great way above, [Pref. cha] the Saints receive a single garment before the resurrection, because they enjoy the happiness of their souls alone; but in the end of the world they are about to have, each of them, two, because, together with blessedness of mind, they will possess also the glory of the flesh.

26. But these words which are subjoined attest that they rather announce the conversion of the Jewish people at the end of this world. For it is added; *There came to him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all that knew him before, and did eat bread with him in his house.* For then do His brethren and sisters come to Christ, when as many as shall have been found of the Jewish people are converted. For from that people He took the substance of His flesh. His brethren and sisters therefore then come to Him, when from that people which is united to Him by kindred, either those who are about to be strong, as brethren, or weak, as sisters, flock to Him with devout congratulation through the knowledge of the Faith. They then set forth in His house a banquet of most crowded festivity, when they no longer despise Him as a mere man, and, mindful of their relationship, rejoice together in cleaving to His Godhead. They then eat bread in His house, when they put aside the observance of the letter which is inferior, and feed, as it were, on the marrow of the grain of mystical teaching in Holy Church. But it is well subjoined; *All who knew Him before.* For they knew Him before, Whom

they scorned in His Passion as if unknown to them. For no one who completely learned the Law was ignorant that Christ would be born. Whence even Herod the king, when alarmed by the coming of the Magi, endeavoured to enquire diligently of the priests and riders, where they knew Christ would be born; to whom they immediately answered; *In Bethlehem of Judah.* [Matt. 2, 5] They therefore knew Him before, Whom they knew not, when they despised Him at the time of His Passion. And both their former knowledge and their subsequent ignorance is well and briefly signified by the dimness of Isaac. For when he was blessing Jacob, he both foresaw what would afterwards happen, and knew not who was standing before him. [Gen. 27, 1] Thus in truth was the people of the Israelites, which received the mysteries of prophecy, but yet had eyes which were dim in contemplation, because it saw not Him when present, of Whom it foresaw so many things in the time to come. For it was unable to see Him when standing in its presence, the might of Whose coming it had long before announced. But, behold! they come at the end of the world, and recognise Him Whom they knew before. Behold! they eat bread in His house, because they feed on the grain of sacred doctrine in Holy Church, and shake off all the insensibility of their former torpor. Whence it is subjoined; *And they moved the head over him.* For what is understood by the head but the ruling power [‘principale’] of the mind? As is said by the Psalmist; *Thou hast made fat my head with oil.* [Ps. 23, 5] As if it were plainly said, Thou hast watered with the unction of charity my mind which is dried up in its thoughts. The head therefore is moved, when the mind, smitten with dread of truth, is roused from its insensibility. Let the kinsmen [‘parentes’] then come to the banquet, and having shaken off their drowsiness, let them move their head; that is, let those who are connected with our Redeemer in the flesh, enjoy at last the refreshment of the word by faith, and lose the hardness of their former insensibility. Whence it is well

said by Habakkuk; *His feet stood, and the earth is moved.* [Hab. 3, 6] For the earth is doubtless moved when the Lord stands, because when He imprints on our heart the footsteps of His fear, every earthly thought in us trembles. In this place, therefore, to move the head, is to shake off the immoveableness of the mind, and to approach to the knowledge of the faith by the steps of belief.

27. But because Holy Church suffers now from the estrangement of the Hebrews, and then is relieved by their conversion, it is rightly subjoined; *And comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him.* They, namely, console Christ, they console the Church, who repent of the error of their former unbelief, and abandon the depravity of life by which they had opposed the teachers of the truth. Is it not a weighty sorrow to preach fruitlessly to hard hearts, to endure labour in setting forth the truth, but to find no fruit of our labour from the conversion of our hearers? But the subsequent progress of their hearers is on the other hand a great consolation to preachers. For the conversion of a learner [‘proficientis’] is a consolation to his teacher. And it is to be observed that they would not console him when exposed to the scourge, but that they come to console him after the scourge; doubtless because the Hebrews, despising at the time of His Passion the preaching of the faith, disdained to believe Him to be God, Whom they had proved to be a man by His death. Whence the Lord says by the Psalmist, *I looked for one to lament with Me, and there was none; I sought for one to comfort Me, and I found none.* [Ps. 69, 20] For He found no one to comfort Him in His Passion, because in His contempt of death He endured even His very enemies, for whom He came to death. After his scourging, then, his neighbours come to console him; because the Lord now also suffers in His members, but in the last times all the Israelites flock together to the faith, on hearing the preaching of Elias, and return to the protection of Him from Whom they had fled; and then is celebrated that

splendid banquet by the manifold assemblage of the people. At that time Job is shewn, as it were, to be in health after his scourging, when, to those who are converted and believe, the Lord is by the certainty of faith known to live, after His passion and resurrection, immortal in the heavens. At that time Job is as it were seen to be rewarded, when in the power of His Majesty He is believed to be God, as He is, and those who before resisted Him are seen to be subjected to the faith. Let the believing Hebrews therefore assemble together at the end of the world, and offer, as if to Job in health, the vows of their oblations to the Redeemer of mankind in the power of His Godhead. Whence it is also well subjoined; *And they gave him each one sheep, and one earring of gold.* What is designated by a 'sheep' but innocence, what by an 'earring' but obedience? For by a sheep is expressed an innocent mind, but by an earring, hearing adorned with the grace of humility.

28. But because a fit opportunity has offered itself for setting forth the virtue of obedience, let us examine into it with somewhat more attention and care, and point out how great is its merit. For obedience is the sole virtue which implants other virtues in the mind, and keeps them safe when planted. Whence also the first man received a precept to keep, to which if he had willed obediently to submit himself, he would attain without labour to eternal blessedness. Hence Samuel says; *For obedience is better than victims, and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams, because to rebel is as the sin of witchcraft, and to refuse to obey as the sin of idolatry.* [1 Sam. 15, 22. 23.] For obedience is justly preferred to victims, because by victims the flesh of another, but by obedience our own will, is offered up; a person therefore appeases God the more quickly, the more he represses before His eyes the pride of his own will, and immolates himself with the sword of the commandment. And on the other hand, disobedience is said to be the sin of witchcraft, in order that it might be pointed out how great a virtue is

obedience. It is shewn therefore the better from its opposite what is thought in its praise. For if to rebel is as the sin of witchcraft, and to refuse to obey as the guilt of idolatry, it is the sole virtue which possesses the merit of faith, without which a person is convicted of being an unbeliever, though he seem to be a believer [‘fidelia’]. Hence it is said by Solomon in speaking of obedience; *An obedient man speaketh of victories.* [Prov. 21, 28] For an obedient man in truth speaketh of victories, because, when we humbly submit ourselves to the voice of another, we overcome ourselves in our heart. Hence the Truth says in the Gospel; *Him that cometh to Me I will not cast out, for I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.* [John 6, 37. 38.] For what? if He were doing His own will, would He have rejected those who come to Him? But who can be ignorant that the will of the Son differs not from the will of the Father? But since the first man went forth from the joy of Paradise, because he wished to do his own will; the second Man coming for the redemption of men, when He shews that He does the will of the Father, and not His own will, taught us to remain firm within. When therefore He does not His own will, but that of the Father, He casts not out those that come unto Him, because, while by His own example He brings us under the rule of obedience, He closes against us the way of escape. Hence again He says; *I can of Mine own Self do nothing; but as I hear I judge.* [John 5, 30] For obedience is enjoined on us to be observed even to death. But if He judges as He hears, He obeys also at that time when He comes as Judge. Lest then obedience to the end of our life should appear wearisome to us, our Redeemer points out that He practises it, even when He comes as a Judge. What wonder then if man who is a sinner subjects himself to obedience in the short period of the present life, when the Mediator between God and men does not abandon it, even when He recompenses the obedient.

29. But it should be known, that a sin ought never to be committed, through obedience, but that sometimes a good deed which is being performed ought, through obedience, to be given up. For the tree in Paradise was not evil, which God commanded man not to touch. But in order that man, who was rightly created, might increase the better by the merit of obedience, it was right that He should prohibit him even what was good; in order that his conduct might be more truly virtue, the more humbly he shewed that he was subject to his Maker, by forbearing what was good. But it should be observed that it is there said, *Eat ye of every tree of paradise, but touch ye not of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.* [Gen. 2, 16. 17.] For it is necessary that he who forbids those under him one good thing, should concede many, lest the mind of the person who obeys should perish utterly, if it is famished from having been entirely shut out from all good things. But the Lord granted all other trees of Paradise for food, when He prohibited them from one, in order that He might restrain His creature, whose advancement He desired, and not its destruction, the more easily from one, the greater liberty He gave for the rest.

30. But because sometimes worldly advantages, and sometimes worldly losses, are enjoined on us, it should he especially understood that sometimes if obedience has something of its own, it is none at all, but sometimes if it has not something of its own, it is a very paltry obedience. For when success in this world is enjoined, when a higher rank is commanded to be taken, he who obeys these commands makes void for himself the virtue of his obedience, if he is eager for these things with longing of his own. For he guides not himself by the rule of obedience, who in attaining to the good things of this life gives way to his own natural desire of ambition. Again, when contempt for the world is enjoined, when the endurance of reproaches and insults is commanded us, unless the mind desires these things of itself, it diminishes the merit of its obedience,

because it descends reluctantly and against its will to those things which are despised in this life. For obedience incurs loss, when its own consent does not in a measure accompany a mind in submitting to the reproaches of this world. Obedience then ought both in adversity to have something of its own, and again in prosperity to have nothing at all of its own; in order that in adversity it may be more glorious, the more it is united even in desire to the Divine ordinance, and may be more sincere in prosperity, the more entirely it is separated in desire from that present glory, which it obtains from God.

31. But we shew more clearly this value of virtue if we mention the doings of two men of the heavenly country. For Moses, when he was feeding sheep in the desert, was called by the Lord speaking to him in the fire by means of an Angel, to take the lead in the deliverance of all the multitude of the Israelites. But because he was humble in his own mind, he trembled at once at the glory of such authority which had been offered to him, and immediately had recourse to his weakness as a defence, saying, *I beseech Thee, O Lord, I am not eloquent: from yesterday and the day before, since Thou hast begun to speak unto Thy servant, I am of a more hesitating and slower tongue.* [Exod. 4, 10] And, having put himself aside, he asks for another, saying; *Send whom Thou wilt send.* [ib. 13] Behold, he is speaking with the Maker of his tongue, and that he may not undertake the power of such great authority, he alleges that he has no tongue. Paul had also been admonished by God that he ought to go up to Jerusalem, as he himself says to the Galatians; *Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem, taking with me Barnabas and Titus; but I went up by revelation.* [Gal. 2, 1] And when he had found on his journey the Prophet Agabus, he heard from him what adversity awaited him in Jerusalem. For it is written that this Agabus placed Paul's girdle on his own feet, and said; *So shall they bind at Jerusalem the man whose girdle this is.* [Acts 21, 11] Paul

immediately answered; *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of Jesus;* [ib. 13]] *neither do I count my life more precious than myself.* [Acts 20, 24] Going up then to Jerusalem by the command of revelation, he knows his sufferings, and yet he willingly seeks them, he hears of things to fear, but yet he more ardently pants after them. Moses therefore has nothing of his own to lead him on to prosperity, because he strives in his prayers not to be set over the people of Israel. But Paul is even by his own wish led on to suffering, because he gains a knowledge of the evils that threaten him, but yet in his devotion of spirit he is eager for sharper sufferings. The one wished, though God commanded him, to decline the glory of present power; the other when God had provided severity and hardships, yet studied to prepare himself for severer sufferings. We are taught then by the stubborn virtue of both these leaders going before, that if we truly endeavour to lay hold on the reward of obedience, we must contend for the prosperity of this world only by command, but that we must fight against its trials with devotion.

32. But it must be observed, that in this place a sheep is offered with an earring, and an earring with a sheep; doubtless because the ornament of obedience is always connected with innocent minds, as the Lord witnesses, Who says; *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me*. [John 10, 29] No one therefore offered blessed Job an earring without a sheep, no one a sheep without an earring; because, in truth, he who is not innocent obeys not his Redeemer, and he cannot be innocent who despises obedience. But since this very obedience must be maintained not with servile fear, but with the affection of love, not with dread of punishment, but with love of justice, all who come to the feast are said to have offered a ‘golden’ earring, in order, namely, that in that obedience which is displayed, charity should shine forth so as to surpass all virtues, as gold the other metals.

33. But because there can be no innocence, no true obedience, in the manifold divisions of heretics, let those who come to the knowledge of the faith offer a lamb, but only one; and an earring, but only one. That is, let them come so minded as to abide innocent and obedient in the unity of Holy Church. For that which is ‘one’ cannot be divided by numbers, because also this very ‘one’ of which we are speaking, is not a number. Let them offer therefore a sheep, but only one; let them offer an earring, but only one. That is, coming to Holy Church with innocence and obedience, let them offer such a mind as the schisms of sects cannot divide.

34. Let us open the eyes of faith, and contemplate that last banquet of Holy Church at the reception of the people of Israel. To which banquet that mighty Elias who is coming is engaged as the inviter of the guests. Then do neighbours, then do friends, come with gifts to Him, Whom they despised but a little before when exposed to the scourge. For as the day of judgment draws near, either by the words of His forerunner, or by certain signs which burst forth, does the might of the approaching Lord shine out in a measure before them. And while they hasten to prevent His wrath, they forward the time of their own conversion. But when converted they come with gifts, because by offering their virtuous deeds, they then reverence Him, Whom but a little before they derided in His Passion. Doubtless by this their oblation fulfilling that which we behold already made good in great measure, and which we believe is still to be made good in its fulness; *The daughters of Tyre shall adore Him with gifts.* [Ps. 45, 12] For then do the daughters of *Tyre* more fully adore Him with gifts, when the minds of the Israelites, which are now overcome by the desires of this world, bring to Him, Whom they proudly denied, when known at last, the offerings of their confession. And although at these very times, at which Antichrist draws near, the conduct of the faithful seems to be to a certain extent less virtuous, although in the contest with that ruined man, mighty fear constrains the

hearts even of the strong; yet not only do all the faithful, strengthened by the preaching of Elias, remain in the firmness of Holy Church, but, as we said before, many also of the unbelievers are converted to the knowledge of the faith. So that the remnants of the nation of Israel, which had before been utterly rejected, crowd together to the bosom of the Church their Mother with the most pious devotion. Whence it is now well subjoined;

Ver. 12. *But the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.*

35. We believe that these things have taken place historically, we hope that they are to take place mystically. For the latter end of Job is blessed more than his beginning, because as far as concerns the admission of the people of Israel, when the end of the present world is pressing on, the Lord consoles the pain of Holy Church by a manifold ingathering of souls. For then she will be the more abundantly enriched, the more clearly it becomes known that the temporal condition of the present life is hurrying to its close. For the Psalmist had beheld the preachers of Holy Church enriched with the blessing of the latter times, when he said; *They shall still be multiplied in a fruitful old age, and shall be well patient to announce.* [Ps. 92, 14] They are in truth multiplied in a fruitful old age, because, when their life is prolonged, their strength is ever carried on to a better condition, and the gains of their merits are increased by means of the increase of their age. But they are well patient to announce, because, when preaching heavenly truths, they endure adversities with greater firmness, the more abundantly they bring back benefits for their souls by their very endurance. It follows;

Ver. 13, 14. *And he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses; and he had seven sons, and three daughters.*

36. That he had had seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, before the trial of

his scourging, the preface of this same history points out to us. Those things which were lost through his scourging, were now restored twofold. But as many children were restored as he had lost. For he had seven sons and three daughters. But he is now described as having received seven sons and three daughters, in order that those who had been destroyed may be shewn to be alive. For when it is said; *The Lord added all that had been to Job twofold,* and yet He restored him as many children as he had lost, He also added to him a double number of children, to whom He afterwards restored ten in the flesh, but reserved the ten that had been lost, in the hidden abode [‘vita’] of souls. But if any one wishes, as an intellectual being, to put aside the chaff of the history, and to feed on the grain of mysteries, it is necessary for him to learn what is our opinion. For it is possible for us to understand that by these animals is designated the universal body of the faithful. For hence is that which is said by the Psalmist to the Father concerning the Son; *Thou hast put all things under His feet, sheep and all kine, and, moreover, the herds of the plain.* [Ps. 6, 7] Hence is it that the same Prophet, beholding the simple ones inhabiting Holy Church, says; *Thine animals shall dwell therein.* [Ps. 68, 10]

37. What then do we understand by ‘sheep,’ but the innocent, what by ‘camels,’ but those who surpass the evil doings of others by the involved mass of their exuberant vices; what by ‘yoked oxen,’ but the Israelites subject to the Law; what by ‘asses,’ but the simple minds of the Gentiles? For that the innocent are designated by the name of ‘sheep’ the Psalmist witnesses, who says, *But we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.* [Ps. 95, 7] For those who neglect to preserve their innocence, are not fed with that refreshment of the spiritual pasture.

38. But by the name of ‘camel’ is expressed in Holy Scripture sometimes the Lord, sometimes the pride of the Gentiles, tortuous, as it were, with a swelling excrescence from above. For since a camel bends itself of its own

accord to take up its burdens, it designates not improperly the grace of our Redeemer, Who, in deigning to hear the burden of our infirmity, descended of His own accord from the height of His power. Whence He says also in the Gospel; *I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it up again, and no man taketh it from Me.* [John 10, 38] Whence He also says again; *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 19, 24] For what does He mean by the name 'rich,' but any haughty person, what by the expression 'camel,' but His own condescension? For a camel passed through the eye of a needle, when the same our Redeemer entered through the narrow straits of His passion to the suffering of death. And this passion was like a needle, because it wounded His body with pain. But a camel goes more easily through the eye of a needle, than a rich man enters the kingdom of heaven, because, unless He took on Him first the burdens of our infirmity, and shewed us the opening ['foramen'] of humility by His passion, our haughty stubbornness would never bend itself down to His humility. Again, by the name 'camel' is designated the Gentile world, tortuous and full of sins; as it is said by Moses, that when the day had already declined, Rebecca sitting on a camel beheld Isaac who had gone forth in the field, and that she immediately descended from the camel, and being ashamed at the sight of him, covered herself with a veil. [Gen. 24, 64. 65.] For whom did Isaac designate, in having gone forth in the field when the day had already declined, but Him, Who, coming in this last age of the world, as if in the close of the day, went forth as it were into the field? Because though He is invisible, yet He shewed Himself to be visible in this world. And Rebecca when sitting on a camel beheld him, because the Church, coming forth from the Gentiles, when it was still resting on its sins, and cleaving not to spiritual, but animal emotions, listened to Him. But she immediately descended from the camel, because it abandoned the sins, with

which it had before been proudly elated, and was careful to cover itself with a veil, because, on beholding the Lord, it blushed at the infirmity of its own conduct; and she, who was before carried by the camel unconstrained, is afterwards on descending modestly covered. Whence it is said by the voice of the Apostle to this same Church, when converted from her former pride, as if to Rebecca descending from the camel, and throwing over her a veil; *For what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* [Rom. 6, 21]

39. But in ‘oxen’ is expressed sometimes the madness of the lustful, sometimes the laborious strength of preachers, sometimes the humility of the Israelites. For that by the name of ox is designated by comparison the madness of the lustful, Solomon points out. For when he had first mentioned the wantonness of the seducing woman, he added; *Immediately he followeth her, as an ox led for a victim.* [Prov. 7, 22] Again, that the labour of preachers is expressed by the name of ox, the words of the Law witness, which says; *Thou shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox when treading out the corn.* [Deut. 25, 4] As if it plainly said; Thou shalt not keep the preachers of the word from obtaining their stipends. [1 Cor. 9, 9; 1 Tim. 5, 18] Again, that the people of Israel is typified by the name of ox, the Prophet asserts, who says, when announcing the coming of the Redeemer, *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib.* [Is. 1, 3] Signifying in truth by the ‘ox’ the people of Israel, brought into subjection to the yoke of the Law, but indicating by the ‘ass’ the people of the Gentiles, given up to pleasures, and more overwhelmingly brutish.

40. Under the name also of he asses and she asses is designated sometimes the wantonness of the lustful, sometimes the gentleness of the simple, but sometimes, as we have before said, the foolishness of the Gentiles. For that the wantonness of the lustful is expressed, by way of comparison, by the term he asses, is plainly declared, when it is said by the

Prophet; *Whose flesh is as the flesh of asses.* [Ez. 23, 20] Again, because the life of the simple is typified by the name of she asses, when our Redeemer was going to Jerusalem, He is said to have sat on a she ass. For Jerusalem means the vision of peace. [Matt. 21, 5] What then does it signify, that our Lord sits on a she ass, and guides it to Jerusalem, except that when He possesses simple minds by ruling over them, He leads them by His own sacred indwelling [‘sessione’] to the vision of peace? Again, that by the name of he asses the foolishness of the Gentiles is designated, the Prophet witnesses, saying; *Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters, sending in thither the foot of the ox and the ass.* [Is. 32, 20] For to sow upon all waters is to preach to all people the fruitful words of life. But to send in the foot of the ox and the ass, is to bind the ways of the Israelitish and the Gentile people by the bands of heavenly precepts.

41. While preserving then the truth of the letter, we rightly believe that under the name of blessed Job, the people of Holy Church are designated by all these animals; in order that those things that are written, by the dispensation of the Holy Spirit Which wonderfully orders all things, may both relate to us what has happened, and announce what is to come. Let us recognise then in the ‘sheep’ the faithful and innocent people from Judaea, which had been before fed with the pastures of the Law. Let us recognise in the ‘camels’ the simple-minded from the Gentiles coming to the faith, who before, when under sacrilegious rites, through a kind of deformity of limbs, from the foulness, that is, of their vices, appeared very hideous. And because, as we have before said, the Holy Scriptures take good care to repeat their assertions, the Israelites, who were crushed, as it were, by the yoke of the Law, can again he understood by the ‘oxen.’ But, as has been said, by asses, can be understood the Gentile people, who, when they used to bow down to worship stones, foolishly, as it were, bent down their back, and, with no reluctant mind, served any idols whatever with brutish sense.

Holy Church therefore which, when oppressed at her first beginnings with innumerable temptations, lost either the people of Israel, or many of the Gentiles, (those, namely, whom she was unable to gain,) receives double at the end; because there springs up in her, out of each people, a multiplied number of believers. By yoked oxen preachers can also be understood. Whence, when the Lord sent them forth to preach, He is described as having sent them two and two; [Luke 10, 1] in order that either because there are two precepts of charity, or that society cannot exist between a less number than two, the holy preachers might learn from the very mode of their sending forth, how much they should love the agreement of fellowship. By she asses, as we have before said, the minds of the simple can be designated. But Holy Church receives oxen and she asses in double number; because holy preachers, who from being oppressed with fear in the time of her temptation had hitherto remained silent, and the minds of the simple, which from being overpowered by terrors were afraid to confess her truth, now exert their voices with greater powers in confession of the truth, the more weakly they were before afraid.

42. We have briefly stated these points as typical of Holy Church. But how they serve to set forth the Head of this same Holy Church, we remind you that we have stated at greater length in the beginning of this work. Whoever therefore is anxious to be more fully satisfied on these points, should deign to read the second book of this work. But if we are now asked to discuss the number of the animals, why a thousand yoke of oxen, or a thousand she asses, and six thousand camels, and fourteen thousand sheep, are mentioned; we can state briefly, that in secular knowledge the number thousand is considered perfect, because it is the solid square of the number ten. For ten times ten are a hundred, which though a square, is a plane figure. But in order that it may rise in height and become solid, the hundred is again multiplied by ten, and becomes a thousand. But the number six is

perfect, because it is the first number which is made up of its several parts, that is, its sixth, its third, and its half, which are one, and two, and three, and these added together become six. Nor is any other number found before six, which, when it is divided into its several parts, has its whole amount made up. But because we transcend all this knowledge, by advancing through the loftiness of Holy Scripture, we there find the reason why the numbers six, seven, ten, and a thousand, are perfect. For the number six is perfect in Holy Scripture, because in the beginning of the world God completed on the sixth day those works which He began on the first. The number seven is perfect therein, because every good work is performed with seven virtues through the Spirit, in order that both faith and works may be perfected at the same time. The number ten is perfect therein, because the Law is included in ten precepts, and no fault is forbidden further than by the ten words, and as the Truth relates, the labourers in the vineyard are rewarded with a denarius. [Mat. 20, 2] For in a denary three are joined to seven. But man, who consists of soul and body, consists of seven qualities. For he flourishes in three spiritually and in four bodily. For in the love of God he is excited in three qualities spiritually, when it is said to him by the Law; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.* [Matt. 22, 37] But he consists of four qualities bodily; because, namely, he is composed of hot and cold, of moist and dry matter. Man therefore who consists of seven qualities is said to be rewarded with a denarius, because in that attainment of the heavenly country our seven are joined to the eternal Three, in order that man may enjoy the contemplation of the Trinity, and, by the reward of his work, live as though made perfect by a denarius. Or certainly, because there are seven virtues in which we toil in this life, and when the contemplation of the Trinity is granted them as a reward, the life of those that toil is rewarded with a denarius. But every one who is perfect receives a denarius even in this life, when he unites to these

same seven virtues, faith, hope, and charity. The number thousand is also considered as perfect in Holy Scripture, because universality is designated by its appellation. Whence it is written; *The word which He commanded to a thousand generations.* [Ps. 105, 8] For since it cannot be believed that the world can be extended to a hundred generations, what else is set forth by a thousand generations but the whole number of generations? Blessed Job therefore received fourteen thousand sheep. For since in Holy Church the perfection of virtues extends to both sexes, the number seven is doubled therein. *And six thousand camels;* because they receive therein the plenitude of their work, who were before cut off from her by the filthiness of their sins. He received also a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses, because she exalts Israelites and Gentiles, learned and simple, after the falls of temptations, to the height of perfection. He received also seven sons and three daughters, because to the minds of those whom she had begotten with seven virtues, she adds faith, hope, charity, to complete their perfection, in order that she may the more truly rejoice in her offspring, the more she considers that there is no virtue wanting to her faithful ones. But because we have run over these points briefly, let us now turn to examine also the names themselves of his daughters. It follows,

Ver. 14. *And he called the name of one Dies, and the name of the second Casia, and the name of the third Cornustibii.*

43. Because these names are derived from virtues, the translator appropriately took care not to insert them as they are found in the Arabic language, but to shew their meaning more plainly when translated into the Latin tongue. For who can be ignorant that Dies and Casia are Latin words? But in Cornustibii, (though it is not *corn us* but *cornu,* and the pipe of singers is called not *tibium* but *tibia,)* I suppose he preferred, without keeping the gender of the word in the Latin tongue, to state the thing as it is, and to preserve the peculiarity of that language from which he was

translating. Or because he compounded one word out of the two, *(cornu,* and *tibia,)* he was at liberty to call both words, which are translated in Latin by one part of speech, whatever gender he pleased. What is the reason then that the first daughter of Job is said to have been called Dies, the second Casia, but the third Cornustibii, except that the whole human race, which is chosen by the kindness of its Creator, and by the mercy of the same Redeemer, is designated by these names? For man as he was made shone as bright as the day (dies), because his Maker overspread him with the splendour of innate innocence. But when he fell of his own accord into the darkness of sin, because he deserted the light of truth, he concealed himself as it were in the night of error; because he is elsewhere said to have followed a shadow. [Ps. 39, 6] But because the bounteousness of His goodness failed not our Maker, even in spite of the darkness of our iniquity, He afterwards received him by a mightier redemption from his error, whom He at first mightily created for righteousness. And because he wanted, after his fall, the strength of his original creation, He supported him against the inmost assaults of His opposing corruption with the manifold virtues of His gifts. And these virtues of those who are advancing are doubtless fragrant, in the discernment of other men, as if with sweet odours. For hence is that which is said by Paul, *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ.* [2 Cor. 2, 15] Hence it is that Holy Church, having scented a kind of fragrant sweetness in her Elect, speaks in the Song of Songs, saying, *While the king is at his repose, my spikenard gave forth its odour.* [Cant. 1, 12] As if he plainly said, As long as the king is concealed with himself from my sight in the rest of the heavenly retreat, the life of the Elect is regaled ['exercetur'] with wonderful odours of virtues, in order that as it still beholds not Him Whom it seeks for, it may burn the more ardently with desire. For the spikenard gives forth an odour, as the king is taking his repose, because when the Lord is resting in His blessedness, the virtue of Saints in the Church

supplies us with the delight of great sweetness. Because then the human race shone bright, on its creation, with the light of innocence, and afterwards, when redeemed, scattered the odour of sweetness by the exercise of good works, the first daughter is rightly named *Dies,* and the second is not unfitly named *Casia.* But she is well called Casia who is spread abroad with so strong an odour of a sublime life. For man, in his very beginning, in which he was created righteous, needed not such great virtues as he now requires. Because if he wished to remain as he had been created, he would have been able without difficulty to overcome his enemy placed without. But after that the adversary, through man's consent, has forced his way into his inmost parts, he is now cast out with greater labour as conqueror, who would, when still an assailant, be repulsed without difficulty.

44. For many qualities now need to be displayed, which were not necessary in Paradise. For now we require the virtue of patience, laborious instruction in learning, chastening of the body, assiduity in prayer, confession of faults, a deluge of tears; none of which man wanted in truth on his creation, because by his very creation he enjoyed the blessing of salvation. For a bitter cup is held out to a sick man, that he may be restored to a state of health by the removal of disease. But a man in health is never ordered what to take in order to regain his strength, but what to avoid, lest he should be ill. We therefore display now greater zeal, when we do not preserve the health we possess, but endeavour to regain that which we have lost. And because all these efforts for our restoration, are supported by great opinions in Holy Church, the name of the second daughter justly smells as cassia; in order that, as the first daughter existed as 'the day' ['dies'] through the dignity of her creation, the second may be 'cassia' through the fragrance of strength by the grace of redemption. Whence also it is said by the prophet to the same Redeemer on His coming; *Myrrh and amber and*

cassia come from Thy garments, from the ivory steps, out of which the daughters of kings have delighted Thee in Thine honour. [Ps. 45, 8] For what is designated by the name of myrrh, amber, and cassia, except the sweetness of virtues? What is expressed by the ivory steps, except the ascent of proficients, which shines with great strength? Our Redeemer, therefore, when He comes, uses myrrh, amber, and cassia in His garment, because He scatters forth from His Elect, with whom He mercifully arrays Himself, the fragrance of the myrrh of virtue. And in them this odour is led on by ivory steps, because, in them an opinion of their virtues arises not from the show of pretence, but from the ascent of true and solid deeds. But it is well subjoined; *Out of which the daughters of kings delighted Thee in Thine honour.* For holy souls, which had been brought forth by the ancient fathers to the knowledge of the truth, delight their Redeemer in His honour, because they claim nothing to their own credit from all that they do well. But because the human race in its third condition, even when new fashioned for the resurrection of the flesh, is engaged in that concert of eternal praise, the third daughter is called *Cornustibii.* For what is expressed by 'Cornustibii' but the song of those that rejoice? For there is that truly fulfilled which is now said by the Prophet? *Sing unto the Lord a new song.* [Ps. 149, 1] It is there truly fulfilled, where the song of praise to God will be sung no longer by faith, but in a contemplation of His Person. There does our Creator receive from us the true songs of His praises, Who both made the human race 'Dies' by creating it, 'Casia' by redeeming it, and 'Cornustibii' by taking it to Himself. For we who were 'light' when created, and are now 'casia' by having been redeemed, shall at last be 'cornustibii' when engaged in the exultation of eternal praise. But before the Bride comes to the marriage chamber, she casts off from herself all filthiness of life, and preparing herself for the love of the Bridegroom, adorns and arrays herself with the beautifyings of virtues. For she studies to approve herself to

the judgment of the inward Judge, and from being exalted in her inmost desires, to transcend the filthy habits of human conversation. Whence it is also well subjoined concerning the same daughters of blessed Job;

Ver. 15. *But in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job.*

45. For the souls of the Elect surpass, by the comeliness of their beauty, all the human race which lives after the fashion of men on the earth: and the more they slight themselves by outward affliction, the more truly do they array themselves within. Hence it is, that it is said by the Psalmist to Holy Church, which is adorned with the beauty of the Elect; the *King hath greatly desired thy beauty.* [Ps. 45, 11] Of whom it is added a little after; *All the glory of this daughter of kings is from within.* [ib. 13] For if she sought glory without, she would have no beauty within, for the king greatly to desire. And although many shine therein with the beauty of virtues, and surpass the merits of others by the very perfection of their conduct, yet some, because they are not able to attain to higher things, being conscious of their own weakness, are embraced in the bosom of her gentleness. For these, as far as they possess strength, avoid sins, although they do not fulfil higher excellencies as far as they desire. Yet God graciously receives them, and admits them to Himself in proportion to the recompense they deserve. Whence it also follows;

And their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

46. Because then of the merit of the perfect they are said to be beautiful; but as being a type of the imperfect they also receive, as if they were weak, an inheritance among their brethren. For the practice of life in former times admitted not females to obtain an inheritance among males, because the severity of the Law, selecting the strong, and despising the weak, studied to sanction what was strict rather than what was merciful. But on the coming of our gracious Redeemer, let no one who is conscious of his infirmity

despair of obtaining the inheritance of the heavenly patrimony. For our Father has granted to women also a right of succession among males, because amid the strong and perfect He admits the weak and humble to the lot of the heavenly inheritance. Whence the Truth Itself says in the Gospel; *In My Father's house are many mansions.* [John 14, 2] For there are in truth many mansions with the Father, because in that equal life of blessedness each one obtains a different place according to his different desert. But he feels not the losses of this disparity, because that which he has received is quite sufficient for him. Sisters therefore come to an inheritance together with their brethren, because the weak are admitted thither together with the strong; in such wise that if any one through imperfection shall not be the highest, he may not through humility be shut out from his lot of the inheritance. And these mansions Paul well teaches us are apportioned to each one according to his merits, when he says; *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differeth from star in glory.* [1 Cor. 15, 41] It follows;

Ver. 16. and last. *But Job lived after these scourges a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even to the fourth generation, and he died an old man, and full of days.*

47. In Holy Scripture a person is not easily recorded as 'full of days,' unless he is one whose conduct is praised in the same Scripture. For he is in truth void of days, who, even if he has lived ever so long, has wasted the time of his life in vanity. But he, on the other hand, is said to be 'full of days,' whose days pass not away and come to nought, but by the daily reward of good works, are treasured up with the just Judge, even after they have been passed.

48. But because there are some who wish to interpret these things also as typical of Holy Church, (whose wishes we must the rather obey, the more we must also rejoice at their spiritual understanding,) if we multiply

fourteen by ten, we come to the number one hundred and forty. And the life of Holy Church is rightly reckoned as made up of ten and four, because by keeping both Testaments, and living both according to the ten commandments of the Law, and the four books of the Gospel, it is carried on to the height of perfection. Whence also, though the Apostle Paul wrote fifteen Epistles [He refers to the Epistle to the Laodicaeans, Col. 4, 16 which however is thought to be that to the Ephesians, including Laodicaea, as all Achaia is associated with Corinth. Some Fathers have quoted the Ep. to the Ephesians as 'to the laodicaeans.' There is a spurious Epistle in Hutter's N. Test. 12. Linguarum, and one held by the Marcionites is rejected by St. Epiphanius. *Ab. from Ben.*], yet Holy Church does not retain more than fourteen, in order that the illustrious teacher might shew by the very number of his Epistles, that he had searched out the secrets of the Law and of the Gospel. But blessed Job is well said to 'live' after his scourgings, because Holy Church too is first smitten with the scourge of discipline, and afterwards strengthened by perfection of life. And she beholds also her sons, and her sons' sons even to the fourth generation, because in this life, which rolls on through four seasons in the year, she beholds children daily born to her, by the mouths of preachers even to the end of the world. Nor is it inconsistent with the truth to say that times are designated by generations. For what is each succession but a kind of offshoot of a race? And when the butler of the king of Egypt had seen a dream which was throwing out three shoots, Joseph, who was endowed with the solution of dreams, declares that the three shoots designate three days. [Gen. 40, 10. 12.] If therefore the space of three days is expressed by three shoots, why should not also the four seasons of the year be typified by four generations? Holy Church, therefore, beholds her sons, when she beholds the first progeny of the faithful. She sees her sons' sons, when she beholds that sons are begotten to the faith by these same faithful ones. And she dies also old and full of days,

because in the light, which follows as a reward for her daily doings, having laid aside the weight of corruption, she is changed into the incorruption of the heavenly country. She dies, namely, full of days, since her days pass not away as they glide on, but are made firm by the recompense of her enduring deeds. She dies full of days, who in this transitory state works that which passes not away. Whence it is also said to the Apostles; *Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.* [John 6, 27] Holy Church therefore loses not her days, even when she leaves the present life. Because she finds their lights more abundantly multiplied in her Elect, the more cautiously and anxiously she now guards herself in them from all temptation. The Church loses not her days, because she neglects not to examine herself watchfully day by day in this life, and is not weighed down with any sloth in all things which she is able rightly to perform. For hence is that which is said of her by Solomon; *She considers the ways of her house, and eateth not her bread in idleness.* [Prov. 13, 27] For she considers the ways of her house, because she accurately examines all the thoughts of her conscience. She eateth not her bread in idleness, because that which she learned out of Holy Scripture by her understanding, she places before the eyes of the Judge by exhibiting it in her works. But she is said to 'die,' because when the contemplation of eternity has absorbed her, it makes her entirely dead to this vicissitude of her changeableness, so that there lives no longer within her any thing to impede the keenness of inward vision. For she then more truly beholds inward things, the more entirely she is dead to all outward things. Let us both believe therefore that this death, this plenitude of days, has taken place in blessed Job, who is in truth one member of the Church; and let us hope that it is to take place in the whole Church together; in order that the truth of the history may be so maintained, that the prophecy of what is to take place may not be made void. For if the good deeds which we learn from the life of Saints are wanting in truth, they

are nothing; if they contain no mysteries, they are of very little value. Let the life then of good men, which is described by the Holy Spirit, both shine upon us in its spiritual meaning, and yet let not its interpretation depart from belief in the history, in order that the mind may remain more firmly fixed in its understanding, the more hope binds it to the future, and faith to past, when standing, as it were, midway between them.

49. This work then being now completed, I see that I must go back to myself. For our mind, even when it endeavours to say what is right, is much distracted from itself. For when we think on how our words are spoken, it takes from the perfection of the mind, because it draws it out of itself. I must therefore return from the outward utterance of words to the council chamber [‘curiam’] of the heart, to summon together the thoughts of my mind in a kind of council of consultation, to examine myself, in order that I may there see, whether I have either incautiously said wrong things, or right things in a wrong way. For a right thing is then rightly spoken, when he who says it, seeks by what he says to please Him alone from Whom he has received it. And though I do not find that I have said any things that are wrong, yet I do not maintain that I have not said any at all. But if I have said any good things, by a gift from above, I profess that it is my own fault in truth that I have spoken them but imperfectly. For on returning to myself within, and putting aside the leaves of words, and the branches of sentences, when I look closely at the very root of my intention, I find that I specially desired to please God thereby. But yet the desire of human praise, in some unknown secret way, blends itself with this intention with which I strive to please God. And when I discern this slowly and at last, I find that I do a thing in one way, which I knew I began in another. For the desire of human praise, secretly joining itself, and meeting with it, as it were, on the way, frequently comes up with our intention, when it is rightly commenced before the eyes of God. As food is taken indeed as a matter of necessity, but

when gluttony stealthily creeps in, as it is being eaten, the pleasure of eating is blended with it. Whence it frequently happens, that we finish for the sake of pleasure the bodily refreshment we begin for the sake of health. It must be confessed therefore that a less correct intention, which seeks to please men by means of the gifts of God, sometimes insidiously accompanies our right intention, which seeks to please God alone. But if we are strictly examined on these points by God, what place of safety remains for us therein, when both our evils are purely evil, and the good things we believe we possess, cannot possibly he purely good? But I believe it to be worth my while, to disclose without hesitation to the ears of my brethren all which I secretly blame in myself. For since in my exposition I have not concealed what I thought, in my confession I hide not what I suffer. By my exposition I have laid open my gifts, by my confession I discover my wounds. And because in this numerous race of men, there are not wanting little ones, who ought to be instructed by my words, nor yet great ones, who are able to pity my infirmity, when made known to them; in both these ways I confer assistance on some brethren, as far as I can, and hope for it from others. The one I have told in my exposition what to do; to the others I make known by my confession what to spare. From the one I withdraw not the healing remedies of my words; from the others I conceal not the laceration of my wounds. I pray therefore that every one who reads these books, may confer on me before the strict Judge the solace of his prayers, and wash away with his tears every filthiness which he discover, in me. But on comparing the virtues of prayer, and of exposition, my reader surpasses me in his recompense, if when he receives words by my means, he gives me tears in return.

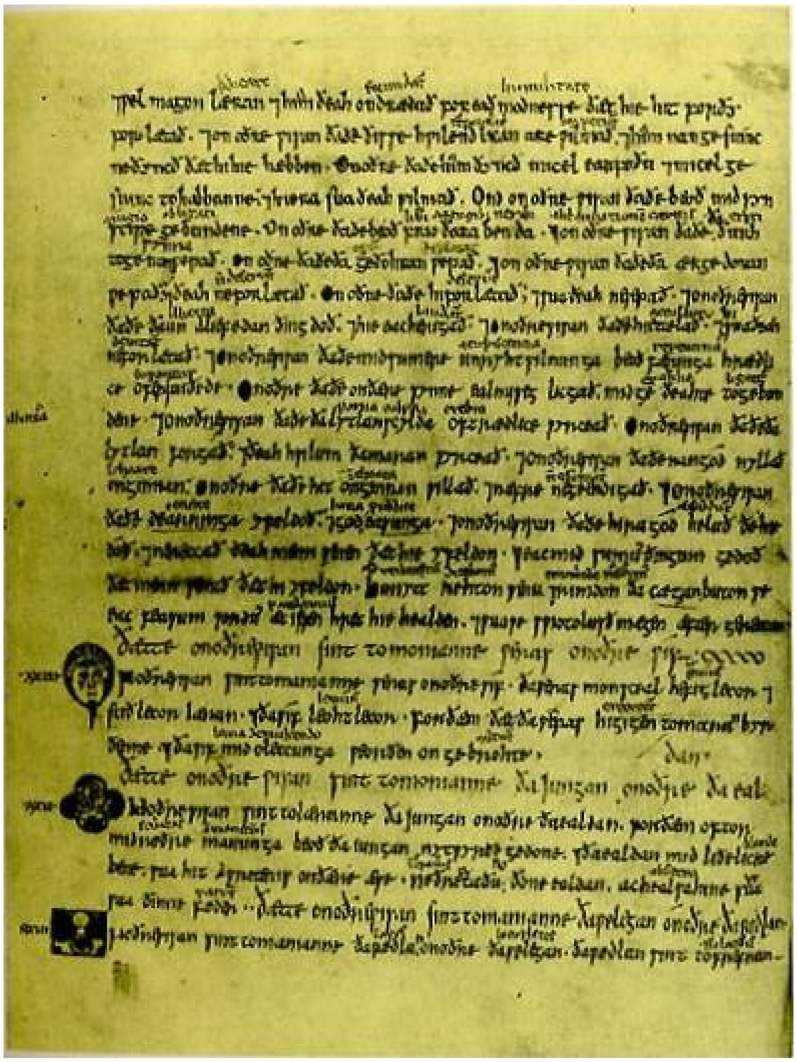
Book of Pastoral Rule

Translated by James Barmby, 1879

The *Liber Regulae Pastoralis* is a treatise on the responsibilities of the clergy, written by Gregory in c. 590, shortly after his papal inauguration. It became one of the most influential works on the topic ever written. The title was assigned by Gregory when sending a copy to his friend Leander of Seville. The text was addressed to John, the Bishop of Ravenna, as a response to a query from him.

The personal, intellectual and moral standards Gregory enjoins does not closely reflect sixth century realities: for example, a letter from the Bishop of Cartagena (Book II, letter 54 in Gregory's collected correspondence) praises the book, but expresses a reserve that it might prove beyond ordinary capacities. The influence of the treatise, however, was vast. After reading it, the Byzantine Maurice directed that it should be translated and distributed to every bishop within the empire.

The book was so highly regarded that it was taken to England by Augustine of Canterbury, who had been sent to the Kingdom of Kent by Gregory in 597, as noted by Alfred the Great in the preface to his Old English translation. The *Liber Regulae Pastoralis* was also recommended to Charlemagne's bishops at a series of councils held in 813, and a letter of Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims 845–882, notes that a copy of the text, together with the *Book of Canons*, was handed to the bishops before the altar at their consecration.



A page from a contemporary copy of Alfred the Great's translation of 'Pastoral Care' into Anglo-Saxon. This copy was sent to the Bishop of Worcester.

CONTENTS

Prefatory Note.

The Text followed in these Translations is the Benedictine one, as given by Migne in *Patrologia, Vol. LXXVII., Sancti Gregorii Magni, Vol. III.* The same Text of the *Regula Pastoralis* has been published with an English Translation by the Rev. H. R. Bramley (James Parker and Co., 1874). The Translation now given is an original one, though the translator desires to express his obligations to his predecessor in the same task. The selection of Epistles translated has been made with the view of exhibiting Gregory's various activities, his various styles of correspondence, his views and character, as well as of illustrating the history of his time. Those which relate to certain important subjects — such as the Lombard invasion, the English Mission, the dispute about the title of 'Œcumenical Bishop,' correspondence with the Emperors and with the Potentates of Gaul — have been given in their entirety. Of such as relate to subjects of less moment specimens only have been selected, but sufficient, it is hoped, for presenting a picture of the writer under his various aspects, and in his various spheres of work. It is hoped also that the appended notes may serve to shew the connexion of the several Epistles with each other, and with the circumstances they refer to, as well as to explain obscure words or passages. For a better understanding of the correspondence relating to the Church in Gaul, a pedigree of the contemporary Merovingian Kings is appended.

Prolegomena.

FOR an understanding of Gregory's position, and of the purport of a great part of those of his epistles which are translated in this Series, a brief survey of the state of things, politically and ecclesiastically, at the time of his accession may in the first place be of service. There was now no separate

Emperor of the West; what remained of the once great Western Empire being governed in the name of the Eastern Emperor, who had his court at Constantinople, by the Exarch of Italy, resident at Ravenna. The Kingdom of the Goths in Italy had ceased to be, the country having been recovered from them under Justinian about half a century before Gregory's accession, as well as the province of Africa from the Vandals.

But the Emperor's hold on Italy was limited and precarious, a large portion of it being already occupied by the Lombards, whose first invasion, under Alboin, had been in 568: and accordingly Gregory, writing in the thirteenth Indiction (a.d. 594–5), speaks of their having been in Italy for twenty-seven years, and in the sixth Indiction (a.d. 602–3) of their having been there for thirty-five years [*Epp., Lib.* V., *E*, and *Lib.* XIII., *E*]. Subsequently the Lombard King Autharis had advanced on Alboin's conquests, and is said to have proceeded to Rhegium, at the very toe of Italy, and there, riding up to a column on the shore through the tidal waves, to have touched it with the point of his spear and said, "So far shall extend the boundary of the Lombards" (Paul. Warnefr., *de gestis* Longob., *III. 33]. Autharis died in the first year of* Gregory's popedom *[Epp., Lib.* I., *E*], and was succeeded by Agilulph, previously duke of Turin, whom Theodelinda, the widow of the deceased king, had selected as her consort. Under him, his royal seat being at Ticinum *(Pavia),* the Lombard dominion included the greater part of Northern Italy, reaching northward to the Alpine passes, the two great dukedoms of Spoletum and Beneventum in Southern Italy, with partial hold on Tuscia and elsewhere. The only parts that now distinctly acknowledged the sway of the Exarch were the Exarchate of Ravenna, on the eastern side of Italy, with Istria and Venetia further north, the duchies of Rome and Naples on the western side, portions of territory at the heel and toe of Italy, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. But beyond the limits of their actual occupation the Lombards kept the country in a

continual state of disturbance and alarm; a great part of it appears to have been debatable ground, and no one could say definitely to whom it belonged.

No previous invaders seem to have been viewed by contemporaries with more horror, or painted in blacker colours, than the Lombards. Their Arian Christianity does not appear to have rendered them less odious than heathens would have been, or to have softened their alleged savagery. Gregory repeatedly in his letters speaks in the strongest possible terms of the misery of Italy "among the swords of the Lombards:" and it was doubtless the state of general distress thence arising, together with disorganization of the country from other causes, and the prevalence of calamity on whatever side he looked, that caused him continually to express his conviction that the signs of the times betokened the speedy approach of the Second Advent. It is in connexion with such a state of things that he stands out prominently as a political administrator of no common order. His position was one of peculiar difficulty. Though virtually, as bishop, the ruler of Rome, he was not a temporal potentate with power to act independently. He was but a subject of the Emperor, as he continually acknowledged, under the dominion of the Exarch of Ravenna, and possessed theoretically of spiritual jurisdiction only. And in his efforts to do good he was continually thwarted. He complains repeatedly in his letters of the insufficient aid afforded him by the distant Emperor, the counteraction of his own designs by the Exarch, and the corruption and iniquitous conduct of the imperial officers in Italy, which in more than one place he describes as even more trying than the oppressions of the Lombards. Still, in virtue of his high and influential position as bishop of old Rome, his commanding character, his indefatigable zeal, and his diplomatic talents, he did exert great political influence; and whatever success was attained in the defence of Italy against further aggression, or in

effecting truces with the enemy, to him alone such success appears to have been due. Many of the letters translated in this volume shew his activity in this regard. A short summary of what may be gathered from them will be given below. All Europe, to the north of Italy, was now severed from the Western Empire. Britain had long been relinquished: the old provinces of Gaul were ruled and contended for by the descendants of Clovis of the Merovingian dynasty: Spain, with Narbonensian Gaul, was an independent Visigothic kingdom. The relations of these kingdoms to the Empire were at this time amicable; and it was in ecclesiastical, and not temporal, matters that Gregory had dealings with them, as will appear below.

His talents and activity in secular affairs were shewn also in his management of the possessions in various quarters with which the See of Rome had been endowed, known as "St. Peter's patrimony." In Sicily especially, and also in Campania, Calabria, Dalmatia and elsewhere, and to a small extent in Gaul, the Roman Church held lands so called, over all of which Gregory exercised personal superintendence by letters to his various agents, shewing a remarkable knowledge of the state of things in the several localities, and giving minute directions. While, on the one hand, he took care that the Church should not be defrauded of her just dues, on the other hand we find him repeatedly and strongly forbidding any unjust claims, or any oppression of the natives who cultivated the Church lands. The patrimony was commonly managed, under him, by agents on the spot, called *rectores patrimonii*, and often by deacons, or subdeacons, sent from Rome, to control the ordinary *rectores*, or act in the same capacity. We find bishops also in some cases acting as *rectores.* There was also a class of officials called *defensores ecclesiæ*, or Guardians of the Church, who were required to be authorized by letters from Rome under the Pope's hand (see V. 29; IX, 62; XI. 38). These letters of appointment, of which we have specimens in V. 29 and XI. 38, specified the protection of the poor as their

primary duty. But their office had a much wider scope. We find them commissioned, not only to carry out various works of charity, but also to maintain the rights and property of churches, to rectify abuses in monasteries and hospitals (see e.g. I. 52; XIV. 2), to see to the canonical election of bishops (e.g. X. 77), and to the supply of episcopal ministrations during the suspension or incapacity of the holders of Sees (XIV. 2), to assist bishops in the exercise of discipline (X. I), and even to rebuke and coerce bishops themselves when negligent of duty (III. 36; X. 10; XIII. 26, 27; XIV. 4). In some cases they were also themselves *rectores patrimonii* (IX. 18). Further, they constituted a *schola*, as did also the notaries and subdeacons; and in the first Indiction (a.d. 598) Gregory appointed that seven of their number should thenceforth be dignified with the name of *regionarii* (as was already the case with the notaries and subdeacons), which gave them rank, and entitled them to sit in assemblies of the clergy (VIII. 14). Though entrusted with such large powers in matters ecclesiastical, they do not seem to have been of necessity in sacred orders, and might marry and have families (cf. III. 21; XII. 25). Some were subdeacons, as Anthemius, subdeacon and defensor of Campania (VII. 23). They might be apt, it seems, to take too much upon them: for we find Romanus, the defensor of Sicily, sharply rebuked for trenching on the prerogatives of a bishop (XI. 37). Though entitled, by special commission from the Roman See, to call even bishops to account, they were not to usurp their junctions. In some cases we find sworn *notarii* (otherwise called *chartularii*) attached to the patrimonies in addition to the *rectores*. Thus Adrian receives instructions as being *notarius Siciliæ*; and, on his being made rector, Pantaleo is appointed *notarius* (XIII. 18 and 34).

Notable among the subdeacons invested with authority for the number and particularity of the letters addressed to him is Peter, whom Gregory sent at once in the first year of his pontificate to Sicily, not only to look after the

patrimony there and after the supply of corn sent annually thence to Rome, but also, for a time at least, to exercise delegated authority, in matters ecclesiastical, over the bishops of the island (see *Lib*. 1., *Ep*. I). From the letters to this Peter we learn a good deal about the way in which the lands of the patrimony, in Sicily at least, were cultivated, and how the revenues were derived from them. (See especially *Lib*. I., *E*.) They were cultivated by native peasants, called by Gregory *rustici*, or *coloni*, who enjoyed the fruit of their labour, subject only to customary dues to the lords of the land; in this case to the Roman See. The principal dues we find referred to were, in the first place, a kind of land-tax, called *burdatio*, and further, the tithe of all the produce, which might be paid in kind, but seems to have been often commuted for a money payment. Among the prevalent abuses which Gregory peremptorily required to be corrected were excessive valuation of the tithe, irrespective of the current price of corn, when a money equivalent was paid, and in other cases the use of measures of too large capacity, and exactions in various ways of more than was fairly due. He orders schedules to be made and authorised, copies of which were to be given to the *rustici* in all the farms of the church, shewing what their legal payments were, so as to guard against their being wronged in future. There were other customary payments of smaller amounts, such as fees on the marriage of peasants, which, under limitations, he allows to be continued. It appears also from *Lib*. XII., *E*, that these *rustici*, or *coloni*, were *ascripti glebæ*, so as not to be allowed to migrate from the estate (*massa*) to which they were attached, or to contract marriages beyond its limits. The several estates constituting the patrimony were called *massæ*, each of which might comprise several *fundi;* and it was customary to let these *massæ* to farmers (*conductores*), who were left to deal with the *rustici*, or *coloni*, being themselves responsible for a certain amount, whether in money or produce, to the officials of the Church. Gregory directed, among other things, that these *conductores*,

should not be arbitrarily disturbed in their holdings, and that, on their death, members of their family should succeed them, guardians being appointed in case of their children being under age. Sicily was of great importance to Rome, as being a corn-growing country from which especially the Romans were supplied. Among Gregory's temporal responsibilities was that of seeing to a regular and adequate supply, a failure in which might be followed by famine in Rome: and we find him attentive to this duty, giving particular directions as to the procuring, storing, and shipping of the corn. (See e.g. *Lib*. l., *E*, 44, 72.) In fact, provision generally for the welfare of the Roman citizens, and the general charge of the city, seems to have devolved upon the Pope. And it was doubtless his responsibilities in this regard, together with his more general political ones, in addition to his "care of all the churches," that caused him so continually to bemoan in his letters the billows of worldly business, incident to his office, which overwhelmed him, and hindered his advancement in the spiritual life. Remarkable, indeed, must have been his mental activity and his varied abilities, in that he was able, as appears from his epistles, to make himself accurately acquainted with, and personally attend to, so many matters, finding time also for theological composition and letters of spiritual counsel, and retaining his religious aspirations in the midst of all. And all this is the more striking when one considers the distressing state of health, especially from gout, of which he continually complains, and the fact also that, with his strong monastic predilections, matters of worldly business would be likely to be peculiarly distasteful to him. We get a further view of his multifarious engagements from what his biographer, John the Deacon, tells us of his having himself seen to the fourfold distribution — to the bishop, the clergy, the fabrics and services of the churches, and the poor — of the revenues of the See; his having himself caused to be sought out, and kept a list of, the recipients of charity; and himself taught the choristers in the

Orphanotrophium which he had himself founded in Rome. It appears to have been his principle and practice to rely on others for nothing which he could possibly do himself.

With regard to the state of things in the ecclesiastical sphere during Gregory's popedom, it may be observed first, that there was now a comparative cessation for a time of controversial warfare. The battle no longer raged over Arian, Nestorian, Monophysite, or Pelagian heresies; the Monothelitic controversy had not yet begun. Catholic orthodoxy, as defined by the first four Councils, was accepted generally, and enforced by the imperial power, with Gregory's full approval of coercive measures (see e.g. *Lib*. IX., *E*; *Lib*. XI., *E*); while outside the limits of the Empire it was professed and upheld by the Frankish rulers of Gaul, and at length at the commencement of Gregory's reign accepted in Spain by the Visigothic Reccared. The Lombards, indeed, with their king Agilulph, were still Arians; but his queen Theodelinda, with whom Gregory corresponded, was herself a devout Catholic. Hence he was not called on to come forward prominently in the field of controversy, for which indeed he does not appear to have been peculiarly fitted. For, though able to state clearly, and give the received reasons for, accepted dogmas, he nowhere evinces any great originality of conception, or depth of insight of his own. He is content to rest on authority; that especially of the four Councils, which he regards as the unassailable bulwarks of the true faith (see I. 25; III. 10; IV. 37), or of ancient fathers of the Church. Nor does he seem to have been well versed in the past history of controversy. An instance of his imperfect knowledge in this regard is found in the letters which he wrote after receiving from Cyriacus, the newly-appointed bishop of Constantinople, his confession of faith, in which Eudoxius, who had been prominent in the course of the Arian controversy, was condemned. Gregory had never heard of this noted heretic, though he had come across the name of a sect called Eudoxiani,

and, not finding his name in the Latin books he was able to consult at Rome, he takes objection to his condemnation by Cyriacus (*Lib*. VII., *E*); and it was not till he had consulted Eulogius of Alexandria, who was more learned than himself, that he was satisfied; and this simply on being informed that ancient fathers of repute had condemned this Eudoxius. "We know him (he writes) to be manifestly slain, against whom our heroes have cast so many darts" (VII. 34; VIII. 30). Again, in writing to the same Eulogius against the sect of *Agnoitæ*, who taught a certain limitation of our Lord's human knowledge, he appears to draw all his arguments from what he found in Augustine and other Latin Fathers, and he rejoices to hear that Eulogius had found the Greek Fathers (whom he himself, being wholly ignorant of Greek, was unable to consult) consentient (*Lib*. X., *Ep*, 39).

But one subject of controversy there was, which especially troubled him; viz., that of "the three Chapters" (*tria capitula*), consequent upon the condemnation of the documents so-called, and of their deceased authors, at the instance of the Emperor Justinian, by the fifth General Council (a.d. 553). This condemnation had been in fact forced upon the Church by the Emperor in the said Council under his presidency at Constantinople, in spite of the protest of the great majority of the Western bishops, and of the then bishop of Rome, Vigilius. The grounds of objection to the condemnation were, that it was held to contravene the Council of Chalcedon, at which two of the writers whom it was proposed to condemn — Theodoret and Ibas — had been expressly acquitted of heresy; that to anathematize the dead, whatever their opinions might have been, was wrong; and further, that the condemnation was intended to conciliate the Monophysites, to whom the writers in question had been peculiarly obnoxious, and was in fact a concession to their heresy. Nor can it be doubted that a design to conciliate the Monophysite party, still strong and resolute in spite of its condemnation at Chalcedon, had been a main motive with Justinian in forcing a decree

against the Three Chapters on the Church. Vigilius, however, had afterwards yielded to pressure, and assented, however inconsistently, to the condemnation of the Chapters; as did his successors in the See of Rome, including Gregory. Consequently several Churches of the West had renounced communion with Rome; and the schism thus arising — as in Liguria, which was under the metropolitan of Milan, and still more decidedly in Istria and Venetia under the metropolis of Aquileia — continued throughout the reign of Gregory. He in vain endeavoured, either by remonstrance or by trying to enlist the emperor's aid, to bring back the Istrian bishops to conformity; and it must have been distressing to him, that even the Lombard queen, Theodelinda, who was so orthodox a Catholic, and whom he esteemed so highly, and corresponded with so cordially, herself could not be induced to accept the fifth Council, so far as the condemnation of the Three Chapters was concerned. In his last extant letter to her, written in the year of his death, he regrets that severe illness prevented him from replying to certain arguments on the subject by an abbot, Secundus, which she had sent for his consideration, but transmits to her a copy of the Acts of the fifth council, and again repeats his constant protest that his acceptance of that Council by no means implied any disparagement of the previous councils, or of the Tome of pope Leo (*Lib.* XIV., *E*). Further, the schism of the Donatists still lingered in the African provinces, though no longer powerful, and though a series of Imperial edicts had been issued for their suppression. We find Gregory, in many letters, urging measures against them, and more rigid enforcement of the penal laws.

With regard to the spiritual authority over the Church at large, claimed in the time of Gregory, and by him asserted, and the extent to which such claims were then acknowledged, the following remarks may be made.

Beyond the episcopal jurisdiction of the bishops of Rome over their own proper diocese, which comprised only the city of Rome, and their metropolitan jurisdiction over the seven suffragan bishops of the Roman territory — viz., those of Ostia, Portus, Silva Candida, Sabina, Præneste, Tusculum, and Albanum, — they had long exercised a more extended patriarchal jurisdiction, which (according to Rufinus towards the end of the fourth century) seems originally to have extended over the suburban provinces which were under the civil jurisdiction of the *vicarius urbis*, including the islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica. But, being the only patriarchs of the West, they had long exercised authority, more or less defined, over a much wider area, including Northern Italy, with its metropolis at Milan, Illyricum East and West, and Northern Africa. It is not necessary to attempt any review here of the growth, as years had gone on, of such extended jurisdiction, or of the degree and kind of authority over Churches that had been consequently claimed. Nor need we consider now the well-known instances of resistance to such authority, as notably in Africa by St. Cyprian in the third century, and at a later date in the same province when Zosimus was pope, in the case of Apiarius. For our present purpose it may be enough to say that the bishop of Rome was now generally acknowledged to be not only the sole Patriarch in the West, but also the highest in rank of all the bishops of Christendom. Still, even in some provinces where his authority was not openly disputed, there appears to have been, at any rate, jealousy of its exercise. For proofs of this in Africa, see II. 47, n. 1; IV. 34, n. 1 ; IX. 58, n. 1. For a notable instance in Western Illyricum, in the case of Maximus, bishop of Salona, see III. 47, and note there. At Ravenna also, the seat of the Exarch, there seems to have been jealousy of the claims of Rome, seeing that John, bishop of that See, in a letter to Gregory, though expressing himself as personally devoted to the

Roman See, says that he had provoked no little ill-will of many enemies against himself for his defence of its authority (III. 57).

In Gaul, under the Merovingian princes, there are no signs of any dispute of the pope's spiritual jurisdiction, which was constantly asserted, over the Churches there: but the ancient Celtic Churches of the British islands still retained their independence. This last fact is apparent, not only from what Bede relates of the attitude of the British and Scottish Christians towards Augustine and the Roman mission, but also from the tone of the letter of the Irish Columbanus to Gregory, which will be found among the epistles (see *Lib*. IX., *E*). With the Church in Spain, after its renunciation of Arianism under King Reccared at the beginning of Gregory's episcopate, he seems to have had little communication. He corresponded indeed with his friend Leander, of Seville, about the King's conversion, and wrote a letter to the latter (IX. 122), who had sent an offering to Rome. Further, he sent into Spain the abbot Cyriacus, who had been employed to bring about the assembling of a Council in Gaul, commending him in a somewhat adulatory epistle to one Claudius, who appears to have been a person of influence in the court of Reccared (IX. 120). But for what special purpose he was sent does not appear. There is, moreover, a long document, comprised under XIII. 45 in the Benedictine edition of the epistles, relating to two bishops who were said to have been uncanonically deposed, for the adjudication of whose case one John, a *defensor ecclesiæ*, is said to have been sent, and to have pronounced sentence. But this epistle is not found in all codices; nor does it appear from it, even if it were considered genuine, whether John's decision was accepted in Spain. On the whole, there is no sufficient evidence, but rather the contrary, of papal jurisdiction being recognized at that time in Spain as it certainly was in Gaul. It remains only to note the historical fact, that the whole Eastern branch of the Church Catholic never

at any time submitted itself to the Roman See, notwithstanding occasional appeals to it by bishops or others when suffering under grievances.

With regard to Gregory's own view of the prerogatives of the Roman See beyond the limits of its proper metropolitan or patriarchal jurisdiction, he undoubtedly claimed for it a primacy not of rank only, but also of authority in the Church Universal; and this of divine right, as representing the See of the Prince of the apostles. Such claim had come, in his day, to be the tradition of the Roman Church, which he accepted as a matter of course, and handed on. In assertion of this claim he says in more than one place, "Petro totius ecclesiæ cura et principatus commissa est;" and again, "quis nesciat sanctam Ecclesiam in apostolorum principis soliditate firmatam.… Itaque, cum multi sint apostoli, pro ipso tamen principatu sola apostolorum principis sedes in auctoritate convaluit" (*Lib*. VII., *E*); and he certainly regarded the like authority as residing still in what was called St. Peter's See.

But we nowhere find him asserting it in such a way as to merge the general episcopal commission in the Papacy, or to interfere with the canonical exercise of their independent jurisdiction by other patriarchs of ancient Apostolic Sees. He sent according to custom, after his accession, his confession of faith to the four Eastern patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople, as to brethren: he never, even where his jurisdiction was acknowledged, interfered with the free election of bishops by their several Churches, except where he saw some canonical impediment, reserving only to himself the right of confirming the election (see e.g. *Lib*. II., *E*; *Lib*. V., *E*, &c.): and, lastly, his memorable emphatic protest against the assumption of the title of Universal Bishop by the patriarchs of Constantinople, with his total renunciation of any right of his own to assume such a title, has often been quoted as a standing protest against such papal supremacy as has subsequently been claimed and

exercised. He seems to have regarded the See of St. Peter as everywhere supreme only in the sense of its being its prerogative to conserve inviolate the catholic faith and observance of the canons, wherever heresy or uncanonical proceedings called for protest and correction. He writes thus to John, bishop of Syracuse, "Si qua culpa in episcopis invenitur, nescio quis ei [*Sedi* apostolicæ*] subjectus non sit: cum vero culpa non* exigit, omnes secundum rationem humilitatis æquales sunt" (*Lib*. IX., *E*). Again, to the *defensor* Romanus, "Si qua unicuique episcopo jurisdictio non servatur, quid aliud agitur, nisi ut per nos, per quos ecclesiasticus custodiri debuit ordo, confundatur?" (*Lib*. XI., *E*). Again to Eulogius of Alexandria, protesting against being addressed as Universal Pope, and against the expression, *sicut* jussistis*, "Quod verbum jussionis peto a meo auditu removere,* quia scio qui sum, qui estis. Loco quim mihi fratres estis, moribus patres. Non ergo jussi, sed quæ utilia visa sunt indicare curavi.… Nec honorem esse deputo in quo fratres meos honorem suum perdere cognosco. Si enim universalem me Papam vestra sanctitas dicit, negat se hoc esse, quod me fatetur universum. Sed absit hoc." (*Lib*. VIII., *E*). Further, there is the notable fact, that he distinctly accords to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch equal shares with himself in the primacy of St. Peter's See; — to the former on the ground of his See having been founded by St. Mark, who had been sent by St. Peter; to the latter because (according to the Clementine tradition, which he takes for granted) St. Peter had been for seven years bishop of Antioch before he went to Rome. To Eulogius of Alexandria he writes, "Cum ergo unius atque una sit sedes, cui ex auctoritate divina tres nunc episcopi præsident, quicquid ergo de vobis boni audio, hoc mihi imputo. Si quid de me boni creditis, hoc vestris meritis imputate, quia in illo unum sumus qui ait, *Ut omnes unum sint, sicut et tu Pater in me, et ego in te,* et ipsi in nobis unum sint*" (*Lib. *VII.,* E. Cf. V. 39; X. 35; XIII. 41). He wrote thus in his anxiety to induce those two

patriarchs to support him in his resistance to the assumptions of Constantinople; but his view of the principality of St. Peter's See not being vested exclusively in the See of Rome remains no less distinctly on record. The view to which he gives expression of the unity of the three Sees may perhaps have arisen thus. The tradition of the peculiarly Petrine origin of the Roman See, and hence its claim as of divine right to supremacy, having come by this time to be accepted in the West, the undoubted ancient jurisdiction, independently of Rome, of the great patriarchal sees of the East in their own regions, had to be accounted for in accordance with this theory: and hence they too were regarded as deriving their authority from St. Peter. Accordingly we do not find Gregory in any of his letters to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch addressing them in a tone of command. It is true that in one letter to Eulogius of Alexandria he remonstrates with him urgently for allowing (as was alleged) simony in his diocese; but it is brotherly remonstrance only (*Lib*. XIII., *E*).

[There is indeed a passage in one of Gregory's Epistles (II. 52) which has been taken to imply a claim to jurisdiction over them. (See note on passage in Migne's *Patrologia*.) Natalis, bishop of Salona, had disregarded the admonitions of two successive bishops of Rome; and Gregory writes to him, "Quod si quilibet ex quatuor patriarchis fecisset, sine gravissimo scandalo tanta contumacia transire nullo modo potuisset." But the intended meaning may be, not that such contumacy towards Rome would have been scandalous even in one of the great Eastern patriarchs, but that it could not have been passed over by them if shewn towards themselves in their own patriarchates. The words, it is true, suggest the former meaning, but the latter seems more likely to have been intended.]

On the other hand, towards the patriarch of Constantinople, when he considered him guilty of uncanonical procedure, he assumed a distinctly authoritative attitude. On his own authority he declared null and void (as

his predecessor Pelagius II. had done) the synod at which the title of œcumenical bishop had been conferred on the Constantinopolitan patriarch (*Lib*. V., *Ep*, 21); he entertained the appeal to himself of the two presbyters John and Athanasius, reversed their condemnation by the patriarch of Constantinople, and ordered their restitution (*Lib*. VI., *Ep*, 15, 16, 17, &c.); and in a letter to John of Syracuse he says, "Nam de Constantinopolitana ecclesia quod dicunt, quis eam dubitet sedi apostolicæ esse subjectam?" (*Lib*. IX., *E*.) For the See of Constantinople, though now patriarchal, was not even an ancient *sedes apostolica*: its bishop had indeed been assigned honorary rank (τὰ πρεσβεῖα τῆς τιμῆς) next after the bishop of Rome by the general Council of Constantinople (a.d. 381), but this only on the political ground of Constantinople being new Rome: patriarchal jurisdiction had indeed been confirmed to it over the Metropolitans of the Pontic, Arian, and Thracian dioceses by the 28th Canon of the Council of Chalcedon (a.d. 451); but this Canon had been repudiated at the time by Pope Leo of Rome. Hence the popes were ever peculiarly jealous of any new assumption, or uncanonical proceedings, on the part of the Constantinopolitan See, the ascendancy of which signified to them imperial domination rather than primitive ecclesiastical order or prerogative: and hence it is not to be wondered at that on the assumption of a title that seemed to imply universal supremacy Gregory was at once in arms, and asserted strongly all the authority that he believed to be inherent in his own Apostolic See. Such assertion, however, had no immediate effect in the absence of power to enforce it: it was disregarded at Constantinople: the Emperor Mauricius, who alone could have given practical effect to it, was appealed to by Gregory in vain; and, though Phocas, who succeeded him, is said to have issued a decree that "the Apostolic See of St. Peter, that is the Roman Church, should be the head of all Churches" (*Anastasius Bibliothec*.), yet it

is an historical fact that neither Constantinople nor the Churches of the East generally, ever submitted to the claims of the Roman See.

There is no record of the year of Pope Gregory's birth: It was probably about a.d. 540, some ten years after Benedict of Nursia had founded the Benedictine order. He was well born, his father Gordianus being a wealthy Roman of senatorial rank, bearing the title of "Regionarius," which denoted some office of dignity. He received the education usual with young Romans of his rank in life, and is said to have been an apt scholar. The historian Gregory of Tours, who was his contemporary, states that in grammar, rhetoric, and logic he was considered second to none in Rome; and he also studied law. Such education, however, fell somewhat short of what we should now call a liberal one, leaving him, as it did, entirely unacquainted. with any language but his own, and so a stranger to all Greek literature; with no apparent taste, that he anywhere displays in his writings, for art, poetry, or philosophy; and with scanty historical knowledge. He was, with regard to intellectual equipment, an educated Roman gentleman of his day, and no more; regarding the Roman nation as paramount in the world, and not aspiring beyond the studies thought sufficient for Roman citizens of rank, at a time when study of Greek literature and scientific culture had died out at Rome. In later life also, when he had time to devote himself to study and contemplation, he confined himself, with a purely devotional purpose, to Holy Scripture, in which (though of course only in the Latin version) he was thoroughly versed, or to the orthodox Latin Fathers, St. Augustine being his favourite. His condemnation of the study of classical heathen literature by Christians, appears strikingly in his letter to Desiderius (*Lib*. XI., *E*). Still his early education, though thus limited, fitted him well for dealing with practical matters, for grasping the bearings of subjects that came before him, and for expressing himself clearly and often forcibly thereon; though his style is not free from the artificiality that

was probably encouraged by the rhetorical training of his day. He was intended for, and at first pursued, secular occupations suitable to his rank in life; and at an unusually early age (certainly before 573, when he would be little more than 30 years of age) he was appointed by the Emperor Justin II. to the dignified office of *Prætor* Urbanus. *In this early period he does not appear to have been* distinguished by any peculiar saintliness of practice or demeanour. He dressed, at any rate, conformably to his rank: for Gregory of Tours speaks of the striking contrast of the monastic garb which he afterwards assumed with the silk attire, the sparkling gems, and the purple-striped trabea, with which he had formerly paced the streets of Rome. But, on the other hand, there is not the least reason to suppose that he had ever been loose or irreligious.

He had been religiously brought up. His father Gordianus is said to have been himself a religious man: his mother Silvia (who lived in ascetic seclusion after her husband's death), and the sisters of Gordianus, Tarsilla and Æmiliana (who lived in their own house as dedicated virgins), have obtained a place in the calendar of saints: and his biographer, John the Deacon, speaks of his early training having been that of a saint among saints. He never, in his own writings, alludes to any crisis in his early life at which he had become convinced of sin, saying rather (as in one of his letters) that, while living in the world, he had tried to live to God also, but had found it hard. But on the death of his father (the date of which is not known) his religious aspirations took a decided form; he kept but a small part of the patrimony that came to him, employing the rest in charitable uses, and especially in founding monasteries, of which he endowed six in Sicily, and one, dedicated to St. Andrew, on the site of his own house near the Church of St. John and St. Paul on the Cælian, "ad clivum Scauri" which he himself entered as a monk, and of which he was eventually elected abbot. The religious views of his age, in which he fully shared,

would of necessity suggest to him the monastic life as the highest form of saintliness; and he may have been especially moved by the recent example of St. Benedict of Nursia, whom he greatly admired, and of whom he has left us in his Dialogues many interesting records. In the ardour of his devotion, his life in the monastery appears to have been ascetic to an extreme degree. He is said by his biographer to have been fed on raw vegetables (*crudo legumine*), supplied to him by his mother, who had become a recluse in a neighbouring cell; and his fasts made him continually ill, and endangered his life. He tells us himself in his Dialogues of one Holy Week towards the end of which he fainted from exhaustion, and was hardly kept alive: but before losing consciousness, being shocked at the idea of breaking his fast before Easter Day, he had requested the prayers of a very holy monk called Eleutherius; and the result was that, returning to consciousness, he remembered nothing of his previous pangs, felt no longer any craving for food, and could have continued his fast a day longer than was required. (*Dialog., Lib*. iii. c. 33.) Such was the idea then entertained, and by him shared, of the way of attaining to the highest holiness. However he survived all, though the very weak health of which in his subsequent life he continually complains may have been due in part to such extreme self-discipline. Nor did he, it is said, relax his habits of study and prayer in consequence of the debility induced by his asceticism. It seems not to have precluded even energetic action of a practical kind. For it was at this period of his life that, according to John the Deacon his biographer, the well-known incident occurred of his seeing the English youths in the Roman slave-market, and obtaining the leave of pope Benedict I. to undertake a missionary enterprise for the conversion of the Angli, on an expedition for which purpose he had already set forth when the pope, moved by the remonstrances of the Roman people, recalled him to Rome.

Having thus become a devout monk, he remained one in heart throughout his life. His habits of life were, as far as they could be, still monastic while he sat upon the papal chair; and he never lost, and often gave expression to, his ardent longing for a return to monastic seclusion, as alone allowing closeness to God, as well as peace and happiness. See, for instance, what he says on this subject soon after his accession to the Emperor's sister Theoctista (*Epp., Lib*. I., *E*), or, after longer experience, to his old friend Leander of Seville (*Lib*. IX., *E*).

But he was not allowed to enjoy for long the seclusion he so much desired; being summoned from his monastery by the pope to be ordained one of the seven deacons of Rome, and afterwards sent to Constantinople to be the pope's *apocrisiarius* (or *responsalis*) at the imperial court. There is some doubt as to which pope it was that thus ordained and commissioned him. From a combination of what is said by his biographers, Paul the Deacon and John the Deacon respectively, it seems most probable that it was Pope Benedict I. who summoned him from his monastery and ordained him, perhaps with the view of sending him to Constantinople, and that it was Pelagius II. (who succeeded Benedict a.d. 578) under whom he was actually sent. The office of apocrisiarius was usually filled by a deacon; and hence it is not unlikely that his employment in that office had been in view from the first, when he was called from his monastery and ordained. The popes at this time were in special need of an able representative at Constantinople for procuring, if possible, some effective aid against the Lombards, the Exarch at Ravenna having been appealed to in vain. Gregory remained at Constantinople for several years, probably from a.d. 578 to a.d. 585, first under the Emperor Tiberius, and then under Mauricius, who succeeded to the Empire a.d. 582. There is no extant record of instructions sent to him from Rome till a.d. 584, when Pope Pelagius wrote to him, representing the miserable state of Italy under the Lombards, the

imminent danger of Rome, and the inaction of the Exarch, and directing him to press the Emperor for succour. He also desired him to send back to Rome the monk Maximianus, who, together with other monks of his monastery, had accompanied Gregory to Constantinople. This, his official residence in the imperial city, could not fail to be of advantage to him in the way of preparation for his subsequent position, as giving him a practical knowledge of the state of parties there, the ways of the court, and the conduct of political affairs. He also made friends of position and influence there, with whom he afterwards corresponded; among whom may be named Theoctista, the Emperor's sister, who had charge of the imperial children, Narses a patrician, Theodorus, physician to the Emperor, Gregoria, lady of the bedchamber to the Empress, and two patrician ladies, Clementina and Rusticiana. All these were religious persons, over whom he had gained influence, which he did not allow to die. He also formed at this time the intimate acquaintance of Leander, Bishop of Seville, who happened to be sojourning in Constantinople, and to whom he wrote afterwards very affectionate letters. It was at his instigation that he began, while at Constantinople, the *Magna Moralia*, or Exposition of the Book of Job, which he also dedicated to him in its completed form (*Moral. Libri., Epist. Missoria*, c. 1; *Epp.,* Lib. *V.*

E). For he found time from secular business for devotion and study with the monks who had followed him from Rome, including his particular friend Maximianus, as has been already mentioned.

"By their example (he writes in his Introduction to the *Magna Moralia*, above referred to) I was bound, as it were by the cable of an anchor, when tossing in the incessant buffeting of secular affairs, to the placid shore of prayer. For to their society, as to the bosom of a most safe harbour, I fled for escape from the rollings and the billows of earthly action; and, though that ministry had torn me from the monastery, and cut me off by the sword

of its occupation from my former life of quiet, yet among them, through the converse of studious reading, the aspiration of daily compunction gave me life." He was engaged also at one time in a long dispute with Eutychius, the Constantinopolitan patriarch, who had written a treatise on the nature of the body after the resurrection, maintaining that it would be impalpable, and more subtle than air. Gregory maintained its palpability, alleging in proof that of the risen body of Christ. The Emperor Tiberius at length took cognizance of the dispute, and decided it in favour of Gregory, ordering the book of Eutychius to be burnt. The disputants are said to have been so exhausted by the long controversy that both had to take to their beds at its close (*Joan. Diac., Lib*. I., c. 28, 29).

Gregory was at length (probably a.d. 585) allowed by Pelagius to return to Rome and reenter his beloved monastery; and it was now probably that he was elected to be its abbot. But Pelagius appears still to have made use of him, a letter from that pope to Elias bishop of Aquileia on the subject of "The Three Chapters" being attributed by Paul the Deacon to the pen of Gregory (*De gestis Longobard*., *Lib*. III.).

That period of peace, lasting some five years, Gregory constantly refers to, and doubtless with complete sincerity, as the happiest part of his life. It was interrupted by the death of Pelagius II., who fell a victim to an epidemic disease then raging on the 8th of February, a.d. 590, when we are informed that the whole clergy and people of Rome concurred in electing Gregory to the popedom, as the only man for the place at that time of peculiar trial. In addition to the general distress and alarm caused by the advancing Lombards, the Tiber had overflowed its banks, destroying property and stores of corn, famine was feared, and fatal disease prevailed. Men's hearts were failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that were coming on the earth. Gregory himself often speaks of the signs of the time as betokening the coming end of all things; and in one of his letters

he compares Rome to an old and shattered ship, letting in the waves on all sides, tossed by a daily storm, its planks rotten and sounding of wreck. If anyone could pilot the ship through the storm, there seems to have been a general feeling that the man was Gregory. He was most unwilling to undertake the task. When an embassy was sent to Constantinople for obtaining the Emperor's confirmation of the election, he sent at the same time a letter imploring him to withhold it. But the letter was intercepted by the prefect of the city, and another sent in its place, entreating confirmation. Meanwhile Gregory employed himself in preaching to the people, and calling them to repentance, in view of so many symptoms of the wrath of God. He instituted at this time the "Septiform Litany," to be chanted through the streets of the city by seven companies — of clergy, of laymen, of monks, of nuns, of married women, of widows, and of children and paupers — who, setting out from different churches, were to meet for common supplication. It was at the close of one such procession that the vision (not mentioned by any contemporaries, or by Bede) was afterwards said to have been seen, to which the name of the Castle of St. Angelo is attributed; the story being that, on approaching the basilica of St. Peter on the Vatican, Gregory saw above the monument of Hadrian an angel sheathing his sword in token that the plague was stayed. At length, the Emperor's confirmation of his election having arrived at Rome, he is said to have fled in disguise from the city, and hid himself in a forest cave, to have been pursued and discovered by means of a pillar of light that disclosed his hiding-place, to have been brought back to the city in triumph, conducted to the church of St. Peter, and there at once ordained, on the 3rd of September, a.d. 590 (*Paul. Diac*., c. 13; *Joan. Diac*., I. 44).

The four Eastern patriarchs at this time, to whom, according to custom, he sent letters immediately after his accession continuing his confession of faith, were John (known as Jejunator, or the Faster) of Constantinople,

Eulogius of Alexandria, Gregory of Antioch, and John of Jerusalem; to whom is added in the address at the head of the circular letter, “Anastasius, ex-patriarch of Antioch,” who was indeed the true patriarch, having been deposed by the mere secular authority of the Emperor, Justin II. (*Evagr. H.* E*., V. 5). Consequently Gregory, though not venturing* to ignore the patriarch in possession, addressed the deposed one also in his circular, and wrote him also separate letters, in which he recognized him as the rightful patriarch, and undertook to intercede with the Emperor Maurice in his behalf (I. 8, 25, 26). On the restoration of Anastasius to his See (a.d. 593) by the Emperor on the death of the interloper, Gregory wrote him a warm congratulatory letter (V. 39).

Of the other patriarchs John of Constantinople was succeeded during Gregory’s pontificate (a.d. 596) by Cyriacus, and John of Jerusalem by Amos, and he (a.d. 600 or 601) by Isacius (see XI. 46). But the patriarchs of Jerusalem, though their position was recognized, were not at that time of any great influence or importance.

A brief summary may now suitably be given of some leading events of Gregory’s pontificate in the order suggested by the successive Books of his Epistles, which correspond to the years of his reign. His biographer John the Deacon says of him that, having been pope for a little more than thirteen and a half years, he left in the archives (*in scrinio*) as many books of Epistles as he had reigned years, the last, or 14th, book being left incomplete because of his not having completed the 14th year of his reign (*Joan. Diac. Vit. S. Greg*., IV. 71). Accordingly the Benedictine Editors of his works have arranged his extant epistles, according to what, to the best of their judgment, they conceived to have been the original order, in 14 books, answering to the successive years of his pontificate. Previous editions had given them in 12 books only, and many of them evidently placed wrongly in order of time. (See *Patrologiæ Tomus LXXV*. *Sancti* Gregorii magni;

Præfatio in Epistolas.*)* *Hence, supposing* the Benedictine arrangement to be on the whole correct, we have in the successive books as now arranged reference to the historical events of the successive years to which the books are assigned. The dates given to the books are according to the Roman method of Indictions, one Indiction being a period of 15 years, and the successive years of each of such periods being called the 1st, 2nd, 3rd year of the Indiction, or the 1st, 2nd, 3rd Indiction, and so on to the 15th. Each Indiction year began with September; and Gregory, having been ordained on the 3rd of September, a.d. 590, which was the commencement of the 9th year of the then Indiction, the date of the first book of the epistles, corresponding to the first year of his reign, is given as Indiction IX.

Book I. Indiction IX. (a.d. 590–1.)

This first book introduces us at once to a view of the new pope's immediate vigilance and activity in affairs secular and sacred that demanded his attention. (1.) We find him providing without delay for the efficient and just management of the patrimony of St. Peter, which has been spoken of above; and this especially in Sicily, whither (as has been also said above) he sent Peter the subdeacon as his agent with large powers. To him also he gave charge to keep him fully informed of all that was going on, and further committed to him ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the bishops of the island, directing him among other things to convene synods annually, and requiring the bishops to submit to his control (*Ep*. I). This, however, seems to have been only a temporary arrangement, since in the following year he appointed Maximian, bishop of Syracuse, who had been a monk with himself and his peculiar friend in the Monastery of St. Andrew, to act as his vicar in the island. Such vicarial jurisdiction, however, was only conferred on Maximian personally, as was specified at the time (*Lib*. II., *E*), and was not continued to his successor, though he also received the *pallium*. [It may be here observed that this decoration, in the time of Gregory, though usually

conferred on Metropolitans, did not of necessity imply metropolitan jurisdiction. Cf. *Epp.,* Lib. *IX.,* Note to E.*] At a later date we find* Romanus the *Defensor*, who had been made *Rector patrimonii* in Sicily, charged apparently with an oversight of the churches similar to what had been entrusted to Peter (*Lib*. IX., *E*; *Lib*. XI, *E*). (2.) We find him also, through his commissioned subdeacons, at once careful to correct the irregularities of monks in Campania, Sicily, Corsica, and other smaller islands; such as their migrating from monastery to monastery, wandering about exempt from rule, and even taking to themselves wives, or having women resident in the same buildings with themselves (*Ep*, 42, 50, 51, 52). (3.) Frequent directions are given for charitable donations to such as needed them (e.g. *Ep*, 24, 39); and his *apocrisiarius* at Constantinople is charged to move the Emperors in behalf of the natives of Sardinia, who were said to be oppressed illegally by the duke of the island (*E*). (4.) For the due election of bishops to vacant Sees, and the visitation of Sees during vacancy, in the case of Churches under his acknowledged jurisdiction, he gives careful orders, as e.g. in the case of Ariminum (*Ep*, 58), of Menavia in Umbria (*E*), and Saona in Corsica (*E*). The canonical rule, which he was careful to observe, was to leave the people of the place (clergy, nobles, and commonalty) free to elect their own bishop; but still reserving to himself power to reject any unfit person. Thus, in one case, he rejects one Ocleatinus as a candidate for the See of Ariminum (*Ep*, 58), and in another, in consequence of delay on the part of the electors, he departs from his usual practice by himself appointing a bishop of Saona (*E*). Over remiss or criminal bishops, as soon as he hears of their defaults — whereof, as of other things, he seems to have been speedily informed by his agents — he loses no time in bringing his authority to bear. It was in this, his first year, that he began a long continued correspondence with and with respect to Januarius, Bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia, who appears to have been a

frivolous old man of very doubtful character (see *E*, and *reff*.). Also with and with respect to Natalis, the convivial bishop of Salona in Western Illyricum, with reference both to his own habits and to his quarrel with the archdeacon Honoratus (see *E*, and note with *reff*.). (5.) There will be found also in this first book letters of sympathy and friendship, such as he never ceased to write, some of which are to pious ladies of rank, including one to Theoctista, the Emperor's sister (*E*), which is further interesting as containing a specimen of his usual way of interpreting Holy Scripture allegorically. Peculiarly charming as illustrative of his warm and abiding friendship is his long continued correspondence, begun in this year, with or with regard to Venantius, who had relinquished monastic for married life (see *E*, and *note* with *reff*.). (6.) To be noted also in this Book, are his ineffectual attempts, though apparently supported by the Emperor, to bring the Istrian bishops to submission in the matter of the" Three Chapters" (see *E*, and *notes*), and his invoking of the secular arm for suppression of what remained of the Donatist schism in Africa (see *E*, and *notes*). (7.) Lastly, we find, in *E* to Leander of Seville, the first intimation of the important event of the conversion to Catholicity of Reccared, the Visigothic King of Spain.

Most, if not all, of the subjects above noted, or the like, recur frequently in subsequent years. It may suffice to have drawn attention to them here, noting only in connexion with the following books any new subjects that appear of special interest.

Book II. Indiction X. (a.d. 591–2.)

(1.) We meet in this book with the first allusion to the operations of the Lombards in Italy (*E*); and hence this may be a suitable place for giving a brief sketch of Gregory's dealings with regard to them in the light thrown on the subject by his epistles. The Lombard King, Agilulf (as has been said above, p. vii.), had his headquarters at Ticinum (*Pavia*), the extensive

dukedoms of Beneventum and Spoletum in Southern Italy being in the possession of his dukes. Early in the year before us (the 10th Indiction), it appears that Ariulf, duke of Spoletum, was believed to be marching either towards Ravenna or Rome. (See *E*, which is dated in the *Collection* of Paul the Deacon and in *Cod. Colbert*. "die V. Kalend. Octob. Indict. 10," i.e. 27 Sept., a.d. 591.) Later in the same Indiction Gregory becomes aware of his approach, and addresses letters (*Ep*, 30) to officers in command of the imperial forces with the purpose of urging them to meet the impending danger. Subsequently in the same year it appears from a letter to the Bishop of Ravenna (*E*) that Ariulf was already besieging Rome. Gregory in this letter gives a sad account of the savagery of the besieger outside the walls, his own illness and depression, and the difficulties he had to contend with. He complains, in this as in other letters, of the conduct of Romanus Patricius, the Exarch at Ravenna, who would neither send aid nor sanction terms of peace. Further, troops had, he says, been withdrawn from Rome before the siege, so as to leave it insufficiently defended; and the soldiers of a legion that remained there, not receiving their pay, had refused to man the walls. In these straits Gregory appears at length to have come to terms with Ariulf on his own responsibility; for doing which he was afterwards blamed and reproached as having been duped by Ariulf. (See *Lib*. V., *E*.) The peace, however, was not of long duration. The Exarch (probably soon afterwards, though the date is not clear) marched himself to Rome, and on his return seized certain cities — Satrium, Polimartium, Horta, Tudertua, Ameria, Perusia, Luceoli, and others — which had been ceded to the Lombards under treaty — perhaps that which Gregory himself had made. (Paul. Diac. *De gestis Longobard*, IV. 8. Cf. *Epp*., *Lib*. V., *E*.) Agilulf, the Lombard King, incensed by this breach of faith, now came with an army from Ticinum, recaptured Perusia, and again besieged Rome. In a letter addressed some time afterwards to the Emperor (*Lib*. V., *E*), Gregory gives

a lamentable account of the misery that had ensued. Since the departure of Ariulf, he says, "troops had still further been withdrawn from the city for the fruitless defence of Perusia, the supply of corn had failed, while from the walls they saw Romans led away with ropes round their necks like dogs to be sold in France." He, with the præfect of the city, also called Gregory, and the military commander Castorius, had done all they could under extreme difficulty to guard the walls, for which he complains they afterwards got no thanks, but rather blame for neglect of duty in letting the corn run short. He himself, when the besiegers arrived, had been delivering his well-known course of homilies on Ezekiel, which he had been obliged to break off abruptly. The last ends thus:— "Let no one blame me if henceforth I cease my speaking, since, as you all see, our tribulations have increased; we are surrounded on all sides by swords; on all sides we are afraid for imminent danger of death. Some return to us with their hands cut off; others are reported to us as taken captive or slain. I am now forced to withhold my tongue from exposition, for my soul is weary of life." How long this siege lasted, or on what terms of agreement Agilulf at length departed, we are not told. Whatever arrangement was made, it was evidently due to Gregory alone. Paul the Deacon says only (*De gest.* Longob*., IV. 8), "that King Agilulf, matters being arranged,* returned to Ticinum;" and adds, "and not long afterwards, at the suggestion especially of his wife Queen Theodelinda, as the blessed Gregory often admonished her in his letters, he concluded a most firm peace with the same most holy Pope Gregory, and with the Romans." But it is plain from epistles written subsequently that it was not till some years later that anything like a settled truce was concluded: for it was not till the second indiction, i.e. a.d. 598–9 (if the letters are rightly arranged, as they appear to be, by the Benedictine editors), that we find letters of thanks from Gregory to King Agilulf for peace at length concluded, and to Theodelinda for her good offices (*Lib.*

IX., *Ep*, 43). In the meantime, as appears from various letters, Gregory continued to urge the Emperor or the Exarch to arrange terms of peace, for which he asserts, though he was not believed, that Agilulf was prepared. He declares also that he could have himself made a separate peace with him so as to secure himself and Rome; but that he had been unwilling to do so, having the welfare of the whole republic at heart. He implies that the Exarch and his adherents were but serving their own ends in opposing terms of peace, their own exactions and oppressions during the continuance of hostilities being even more intolerable than the ravages of the Lombards (see *Lib*. V., *Ep*, 42). In an urgent letter to the Empress Constantina he complains also of the cruel oppression of the natives of Sicily and Corsica under colour of raising funds for the war, and begs her to plead with the Emperor, for his own soul's sake as well as for real advantage to the republic, against the use of such iniquitous means (*Lib*. V., *E*). These letters (if rightly placed) were written in the 13th Indiction (a.d. 394–5), and in the next we find a letter to one Secundus at Ravenna, in which negotiations with Agilulf with a view to peace are spoken of as still going on, which this Secundus is urged to further (*Lib*. VI., E). But it was not, as has been already said, till the 2nd Indiction (a.d. 598–9) that any definite terms appear to have been agreed to (see *Lib*. IX., *Ep*, 6, 42, 43, 98): and then, it seems, only for a limited time (see *Lib* X., *E*;— "indicantes cum Langobardorum rege *usque ad mensem Martiam futuræ quartæ indictionis* de pace, propitiante Domino, convenisse"); and even so, Gregory does not appear to have felt secure: for in a letter written at this time to Januarius, bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia, alluding to the peace that had been made, he warns him to guard the island well in view still of possible danger from the Lombards (*Lib*. IX., *E*. Cf. also *Lib*. X., *E*). After the expiration of this truce (which, as has been seen, was from some time in the 2nd Indiction (588–9) to March in the 4th Indiction (a.d. 601), probably for two years),

hostilities having again broken out, a second truce was concluded in September, a.d. 603, as appears from Paul the Deacon (*De gest. Longob*., IV. 29), until April, a.d. 605: and that Gregory had been instrumental in procuring it through the influence of Queen Theodelinda on her husband, may be concluded from what he says in the last letter he addressed to her, not long before his death (*Lib*. XIV., *E*).

We thus see how indefatigably active Gregory was in the political sphere of things. Lasting peace or security for Italy at that trying time it was beyond the power of man to bring about: but whatever was done towards mitigation of distress, and temporary cessation of hostilities, or approaches to better understanding with the Lombard King, appears plainly to have been due to Gregory. Nor should we leave out of sight his provision for the redemption of captives taken in war, whether out of ecclesiastical funds or others entrusted to him for the purpose, or by the sale, which he cordially sanctioned, of the sacred vessels of churches (IV. 17, 31; VII. 13, 26, 28, 38; IX. 17, &c.).

(2.) Attention may be directed to epistles 22, 23 in this book in connexion with the spiritual jurisdiction exercised by Rome over East as well as West Illyricum.

(3.) We may observe also the important import of epistle 41, with regard to the exemption of monasteries from episcopal control by Gregory. The constitutions, *De* privelegiis monasteriorum*, therein contained were afterwards* promulged by a council under him (called *Conciliæ Romanum III.,* sive Lateranense*) in April, a.d. 601,* being signed by 20 bishops, 14 presbyters, and 3 or 4 deacons.

Book III. Indiction XI. (a.d. 592–3).

The following notable incidents are referred to in this Book :

(1.) Two instances of the authority exercised (as above said) over the Illyrian Churches being, for a time at least, resisted or disregarded, and of

the support of the Emperor being sought, and more or less obtained, in such resistance or disregard. The first instance was in the case of Adrian, bishop of Thebæ Phthioticæ in Eastern Illyricum, as to which see note to *E*. The second and more serious one (which has been already alluded to) was in the case of Maximus, elected and consecrated bishop of Salona in Western Illyricum, in defiance of Gregory's prohibition and excommunication. In this case the resistance was pertinacious and long continued, and it was not till after seven years that the matter was compromised and communion restored. A summary of the proceedings, with reference to all the epistles bearing on the case, will be found in a note to *E*.

(2.) As illustrative of the relations between Rome and Constantinople, the case of John of Chalcedon and Athanasius of Isauria, whose appeal to the Roman See was entertained by Gregory. See note to *Lib*. III., *E*.

(3.) The beginning of remonstrances, continued through two years, with the metropolitan bishops of Ravenna with regard to their assumption of dignity above that of other metropolitans, expressed especially by their use of the pallium on other occasions than during Mass. From the letters on this subject we may detect, as has been said above, some jealousy at the seat of the Exarch of the authoritative claims of the Roman See. See *Lib*. III., *E*, with note and *reff*.

(4.) The conduct of Gregory, at once outspoken and submissive to imperial edicts, with respect to the recent prohibition by the Emperor of soldiers becoming monks. See *E*, note and *reff*. The incident illustrates well Gregory's habitual deference to the authority of the state, except in matters purely spiritual.

(5.) His requirement of Jews not being allowed to obtain or keep possession of Christian slaves. There are other letters on this subject, viz. IV. 9, 21; VI. 32; VII. 24; IX. 36, 110. Even slaves already in the lawful possession of Jews, on declaring their desire to become Christians, were to

be thenceforth free without any compensation to their owners; only that pagans bought by Jews simply with a view to sale might, on their declaring such desire, be sold by such Jews within three months after their purchase of them; but only to Christian masters. It may be here observed that, though such provisions seem hard upon Jewish owners, and though Jews were legally prohibited from proselytising or building new synagogues, yet we find Gregory in other respects very tender towards them, repeatedly forbidding their being at all molested in the synagogues they had, or being in any way persecuted into accepting baptism (I. 10, 35, 47; VIII. 25; IX. 6, 55; XIII. 12). Those on the estates of the Church might indeed be drawn towards Christianity by the prospect of reduced rents (II. 32, V. 8), but all compulsory conversion of them is denounced as wrong and unavailing (e.g. I. 47). On the other hand, with some apparent inconsistency, pagan peasants on the estates might be compelled to conform by intolerable exactions being laid upon them in case of their refusal (IV. 26), and idolaters or diviners were to be reclaimed, if freemen, by imprisonment, or, if slaves, by stripes and torments (IX. 65).

Book IV. Indiction XII. (a.d. 593–4).

In this book we may note:

(1) The continued refusal of many at least of the bishops in Liguria, as well as in Istria and Venetia, to assent to the condemnation of the "Three Chapters" by the fifth Council, and with them of Theodelinda, the Catholic Lombard queen. See *E* and notes, with *Ep*, 4, 38, 39.

(2.) The case of Paul, a bishop in Numidia, as indicating the continuance of disinclination to submit fully to the Roman See in the African provinces. See *E*, with note. Cf. also *E*, and IX. 58, 59.

(3.) The directions given by Gregory, and, as thereby shewn, the custom of the Church, with regard to the anointing of the baptized (*E*, and *E*, with

note); and also his belief in the miraculous efficacy of the relics of saints, shewn in many other Epistles, but especially in E of this book.

Book V. Indiction XIII. (a.d. 594–5).

(1.) This year is memorable for the commencement of Gregory’s earnest protest, continued through his subsequent life, against the title of Œcumenical, or Universal, Bishop (or Patriarch) assumed by the Patriarch of Constantinople. The title itself was not a new one. It appears to have been occasionally given during the fifth century as a title of honour to patriarchs generally, the first known instance being when Olympius Episc. Evazensis gave it to Dioscorus at Concil. Ephes. ii. (*Giesler’s Eccles. Hist*. 2nd Period, 1st Division, Ch. iii., § 93, note 20; with *ref*. to Mansi, vi. 855). Justinian also had styled the patriarch of Constantinople “Œcumenical Patriarch” (Cod. i. 1, 7; Novell. iii., v., vi., vii., xvi., xiii.). The first known protest against it from Rome was on its assumption, a.d. 587, by John Jejunator at a synod at Constantinople, when Gregory’s predecessor, Pelagius II., had disallowed the acts of the synod in consequence, and had withdrawn his apocrisiarius from communion with the patriarch (*Epp*. V. 18, 43; IX. 68). Gregory himself also had, as appears from the epistles above referred to, remonstrated through his representatives at Constantinople with the patriarch on the subject, and had received a letter from the emperor desiring him to let the matter rest (V. 19). But he was now provoked to resolute action by having received a communication from the patriarch in reference to the case of John the Presbyter, wherein the title of “Œcumenical Patriarch” was repeatedly assumed (*ib*.). The peculiar warmth of feeling and strength of language that mark his lengthened correspondence on the subject, are accounted for not only by the old jealousy felt at Rome (which has been noticed above) of any claim of Constantinople, in mere virtue of being the imperial city, to the prerogatives of an ancient Apostolic See, but also by the title being viewed as not being

one of honour only, but as meaning really assumption of spiritual authority over the Church at large. Such assumption could only rest on the fact of Constantinople having come to be the imperial city: it had neither a shew of divine right, nor Apostolic tradition, nor canonical authority to go on. Rome, though for himself also Gregory earnestly disclaimed the title of Universal Bishop, was at any rate an. ancient apostolic See, and viewed at that time generally as representing the authority of the Prince of the Apostles, to whom Christ himself had given the keys. But no such ancient prestige or apostolical commission could possibly be claimed for Constantinople: its ascendency over the whole Church would simply mean imperialism, and imperial domination over the whole Church would in fact have been likely to be its practical result: and thus, in his determined protest, Gregory might well feel himself to be contending for heavenly as against earthly jurisdiction, for Christ as against the world, for God as against Cæsar.

The following is a summary of the correspondence that ensued in this and following years: —

In this year Gregory despatched five letters to Sabinianus, his apocrisiarius at Constantinople: — 1.

A long one to be delivered to John Jejunator, the Patriarch (*E*), dated Kal. Jan. Indict. 13 (i.e. Jan., a.d. 595), containing earnest remonstrances against pride in general, and against this display of it in particular, and expressing the hope that stronger measures may not be needed. 2. A private one to Sabinianus (*E*), in a bitter tone against the patriarch, attributing the mildness of the letter now addressed to the latter to the Emperor’s orders, but promising another by and by, such as would not be relished. 3. A long one to the Emperor Maurice (*E*), earnestly desiring him to disallow the title, and, if necessary, coerce the patriarch to compliance. While acknowledging the Emperor’s pious desire to promote peace among

the Bishops, he contends that the only means to this end was to quell the assumption of the patriarch, the inconsistency of which with his ascetic habits, and his affectation of humility, are pointed out ironically. 4. Another to the Empress Constantina (*E*), whose good disposition towards the Roman See he had heard of from Sabinianus. His object is to enlist her influence with the Emperor and his sons in the matter; and it is observable how, in addressing her, he speaks in a way he does not venture on to the Emperor, of the peril to her own soul if St. Peter should be dishonoured, to whom the power of binding and loosing had been given. 5. A long one to be transmitted through Sabinianus to the patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch (*E*), with the purpose of inducing them to join him in his protest. He represents the offensive title as an infringement on the rights and dignity of all patriarchs, not claiming in this letter any peculiar authority for the Roman patriarchate above the rest. He bids them not be afraid of the Emperor in the event, which he hopes will not ensue, of his continuing to support the Constantinopolitan patriarch, but to be ready to face all consequences.

In the following year (*Lib*. VI., *Indict*. XIV., i.e. a.d. 595–6) we find an epistle, dated August (i.e. August, a.d. 596), to Eulogius, the patriarch of Alexandria only (*E*), expressing surprise that the latter, in a letter received from him had not even alluded to the subject of the former epistle which had been addressed to the two patriarchs. It seems as if Eulogius had either been afraid to provoke the emperor’s displeasure, or had attached less importance to the title than did Gregory himself, and so had maintained a discreet silence. In this epistle Gregory expresses the view, which has been alluded to above, of the sees of Rome and Alexandria being both in a sense St. Peter’s, in virtue of the latter having been founded by St. Mark, whom St. Peter had sent. He had previously, in a letter to Anastasius of Antioch (V. 39), intimated a similar view of the See of Antioch being also in a

certain sense St. Peter's; and in a subsequent letter to Eulogius (VII. 40) he sets forth more distinctly and at length his noteworthy position of all the three patriarchal Sees of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria, having together the prerogatives of St. Peter's See.

In the following year (*Indict*. XV., a.d. 596–7) John Jejunator died, and was succeeded by Cyriacus, to whom Gregory wrote on receiving his synodical letter, addressing him in a friendly tone (*E*), but urging in the course of his letter the rejection of the offensive title. He wrote again (*E*) especially on the subject, still courteously, but pressing the matter strongly. To the emperor we find two letters; the first (*E*) approving of the appointment of Cyriacus, but without any allusion to the burning question; the second (*E*), after receiving one from the emperor, in which the desire had been expressed that the emissaries of the new patriarch should be honourably received at Rome. To this request Gregory replies that he has so received them, and admitted them to communion with him, hoping for the best; but that his own representatives at Constantinople would by no means be allowed to communicate with Cyriacus, unless the title were renounced. The emperor had said that the matter was a frivolous one. "Yes (says Gregory) the title is indeed frivolous, but its meaning and its consequences are serious;" and he repeals his continual assertion that whosoever assumes it is the precursor of Antichrist. In this year also he continued his efforts to induce the patriarchs Anastasius and Eulogius to join him in his protest. Anastasius, it seems, had not, like Eulogius, ignored the subject in his reply to the letter that had been addressed to both, but had said that in his opinion the matter was of little moment and not worth making a disturbance about; at the same time addressing Gregory in flattering terms. Gregory, in his reply (*E*), which is somewhat ironical, insists again. To Eulogius also he writes again (*E*), deprecating the too deferential manner in which he had been addressed by this patriarch, and

setting forth his view of the oneness of the three sees. The offensive title itself is not in this letter specifically referred to. There is also a second letter to the two patriarchs jointly, explaining what had been done so far since the accession of Cyriacus, and reiterating his protest against allowance of the title. In the succeeding year (*Lib*. VIII., *Indict*. I., a.d. 597–8) there is again a letter (*E*) to Eulogius, who appears to have written a third time to Gregory, at length alluding to the title so far as to say that he did not now use proud titles in addressing certain persons, but still apparently not prepared to take any action. As if to make up for such inaction, he had seemingly been profuse in his compliments to Gregory, using the expression, "as thou hast commanded," and calling him "Universal Pope." Such language Gregory, in reply, earnestly protests against, disclaiming for himself, as much as for any other bishop, the name of Universal. In the following year (*Lib*. IX., *Indict*. II., a.d. 598–9) we find two letters; one of which is an encyclical one (*E*), to Eusebius of Thessalonica and other Eastern bishops, in view of a synod about to be held at Constantinople, warning them against being cajoled there into assenting to the title, and threatening them with excommunication in case of their complying. From the second letter assigned to this year, which is again to Eulogius (*E*), it would seem that the synod at Constantinople had been held, and that Eulogius himself had been there, though what had been done does not appear. The letter is in reply to one which had been received with reference to a different subject from Eulogius; and Gregory complains that the latter had still said nothing about the most important subject of all, namely the title. He supposes Eulogius to be waiting till he himself shall take decided action; and he accounts for his own apparent delay by saying that he had been unwilling to be himself the immediate author of schism. It seems as if he had felt at a loss what to do. His remonstrances with Cyriacus and the emperor had been entirely unavailing; he had failed to

move the two great Eastern patriarchs, or the bishops of the East generally, to take up the question; and he shrank from so serious a step as breaking off communion with the whole Eastern Church. And so matters appear to have rested. We find no further epistle on the subject till four years later (*Lib*. XIII, *Indict*. VI., a.d. 602–3), when in a short letter (*E*) to Cyriacus, with whom he appears to be still in communion, he urges him once more to give up the title. There are in the same year two letters, and one in the previous one (XII. 50), as well as two (X., 35, 39) in the third indiction, to Eulogius, in which the subject is not alluded to.

(2) We observe in this year the sending of the pallium to Virgilius, bishop of Arles in Gaul, and with it his delegation (*Ep*, 54, 55) as the Pope's Vicar in the Kingdom of Childebert. As has been said above (see p. xii.), the spiritual authority of Rome over the Gallican Churches was not disputed; and Gregory exercised it vigilantly by means of letters to bishops, and to royal personages, labouring among other things to move them to put down simony, clerical immorality, and other prevalent abuses, and to assemble synods under authority from Rome for the correction of crying evils. But, though we find no resistance to his spiritual authority, neither do we find any evidence of his appeals to the consciences of the potentates of Gaul having had much practical effect in the directions indicated. Doubtless in a difficult field of action he did what he could; nor need we doubt that the authoritative voice from Rome was at any rate some check on violence and disorder, though the results may not be very apparent in history.

The main divisions of Gaul at this time were Austrasia on the Eastern side, including part of what is now Germany, Burgundy to the West and South, and the smaller Neustria on the North-west. The limits as well as the possession of these territories were continually changing during the contests between the descendants of Clovis, some or other of whom ruled the whole

of Gaul; all now professing Catholic Christianity. In the Indiction now before us (*Indict*. XIII., a.d. 594–5), as is pointed out in a note to *E*, Childebert II., then aged about 25, ruled by far the greatest part of Gaul; and hence the jurisdiction intended to be conferred on Virgilius, when the pallium was sent him, may be taken as equally extensive. We find no instance of spiritual authority so claimed being disputed in Gaul.

Book VI. Indiction XIV. (a.d. 595–6).

(1) This year is memorable for the mission of Augustine to England, the progress of which, as indicated by the epistles, may be summarized as follows. The missionaries having left Rome, probably in the early spring of the year 596, and proceeded as far as the South coast of France, and having there turned faint-hearted, Augustine himself returned to Rome for leave to relinquish the enterprize. Gregory sent him back to his companions with the letter, addressed to them, numbered *E* in this sixth book. It is dated X. Kal. Aug. Indict. 14, *i.e.* 23 July, a.d. 596. For a view of the circumstances see note to vi. 51. He was now charged (as he does not appear to have been when first sent forth) with various letters of commendation, intended to speed him on his journey: viz. to the bishops of Marseilles, of *Turni* (al. *Turon: — Tours*?), of Arles, Vienne and Autun, to Arigius, designated as Patrician of Gaul, to Theodebert and Theoderic, the two boy-kings of Austrasia and of Burgundy, and to their powerful grandmother Brunehild, who at this time ruled Austrasia as the guardian of Theodebert. The course of the missionaries, after leaving Marseilles, would naturally be up the valley of the Rhone, and so northward as far as Autun, most at least of the letters above named being such as might be delivered on the way. Thence to their place of embarcation for the Isle of Thanet we find no intimation of their route, except that, in passing through Neustria, they were well received and aided by Clotaire II. (nephew of Charibert, the deceased father of Bertha), who at that time ruled the country, having his capital at Soissons.

This appears, though there is no extant letter of commendation on this occasion to Clotaire, from a subsequent letter to him (XI. 61).

The landing of the missionaries on the Isle of Thanet was, according to Bede, in the following year, a.d. 597 (*H. E*., I. 25, V. 24). It must have been early in the year, so as to allow time for the events, to be next noticed, which took place before its close. The next allusion to the mission found in the Epistles is Gregory's exulting announcement to Eulogius, bishop of Alexandria, of its remarkable success, and of the baptism of more than ten thousand Angli as early as the Christmas of the same year, 597 (VIII. 30). The date is definitely given in the letter to Eulogius;— "in the solemnity of the Lord's Nativity which was kept *in this first* indiction*" — The first indiction being from September,* 597, to September, 598. In the meantime, as appears from the same letter, Augustine had already been consecrated bishop. The letter says vaguely "a Germanis Episcopis": but, according to John the Deacon (*Vit. S. Greg*. II. 36), and Bede (*H.* E*., I. 27), it was to Virgilius, bishop of Arles, that Augustine* had gone, as directed by Gregory, for consecration.

The next batch of Epistles throwing light on the progress of the mission (after two others, IX. 11 and 108, wherein Queen Brunehild and Syagrius Bishop of Autun are thanked for their attention to the missionaries on their progress) is in Book XI, and thus assigned to Indiction 4, i.e. A. D. 600–1, some three years after the aforesaid letter to Eulogius. It comprises fourteen Epistles, some of which bear their own dates, and others are shewn by their contents to have been written at the same time. It is true that the dates of the dated epistles vary in different mss. with regard to the time of year; but all the mss. agree in giving the same Indiction, viz. the fourth. The occasion of writing was when Augustine, according to Bede and John the Deacon, had sent the presbyter Laurentius and the monk Peter to Rome, to seek instructions on certain points, and to ask for more missionaries:

whereupon, we are told, Gregory sent back the messengers accompanied by Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus, Rufinianus, and others, with replies to Augustine's questions, instructions for the constitution of the Church in Britain, the pallium for himself, and books, utensils and relics for the Churches (*Joann. Diac. in Vit. S. Greg*., II. 36, 37; *Bede, H. E*., I. 27, 29). We might have supposed from the narratives of John the Deacon and Bede that Augustine had sent Lawrence and Peter to Rome on his return to Britain after his own consecration by the bishop of Arles, and that the new band of missionaries had been sent out without delay. But the dates of the epistles shew, as has been seen above, that several years had intervened, at any rate, between Augustine's return and the sending out of the new missionaries. And indeed Bede himself intimates this in his recapitulation of events (*H. E*., V. 24), though not in his narrative. For, having given a.d. 597 as the date of Augustine's first arrival in Britain, he gives a.d. 601 as that of the sending of the pallium with "more ministers, among whom was Paulinus."

The letters which these new missionaries carried with them were to the bishops Virgilius of Arles (*E*), Desiderius of Vienne (*E*), Aetherius of Lyons (*E*), Arigius of Vapincum (*E*), with a circular to various bishops of Gaul (*E*); also to Queen Brunehild (*E*), to kings Theodebert, Theoderic, and Clotaire (*Ep*, 60, 61): to Augustine himself (*E*), together with a long reply (*E*) to his questions, to Ethelbert king of Kent (*E*), and probably at the same time to Bertha his queen (*E*).

One more letter relating to the mission in Book XI. remains to be noticed; viz., *E*, to Mellitus, which was sent after the rest, being intended to overtake the new band of missionaries on their journey through Gaul. Its main purpose seems to have been to modify what had been said in the letter to Ethelbert as to the destruction of heathen temples. See Note to *E*. This is the last extant epistle referring to the English mission.

(2) To be noted also in this book is the first of the ten epistles addressed to the notorious queen Brunehild in Gaul (VI. 5). On her alleged character, and Gregory's mode of addressing her, see note to the epistle.

Book VII. Indiction XV. (a.d. 596–7), and Book VIII. Indiction I. (a.d. 597–8).

Though no historical events of importance come for the first time before our notice in these books, attention may be drawn (1) to Gregory's policy of protecting monasteries from episcopal domination (VII. 12, 43; VIII. 15); (2) his sanction of the sale of church plate for charitable purposes (VII. 13, 38); (3) Specimens of his letters of spiritual counsel, especially to pious ladies of rank (VII. 25, 26, 30; VIII. 22).

Book IX. Indiction II. (a.d. 598–9)

Noticeable in this book are, (1) Gregory's renewed efforts, on Romanus Patricius being succeeded by Callinicus in the exarchate, to reclaim the Istrian bishops to communion with Rome (*E*, 10, 93, &c.); (2) his interesting letter with reference to the ancient liturgical usages of the Roman Church (*E*); (3) the correspondence between him and the Visigothic king Reccared in Spain, assigned to this year (*Ep*, 121, 122); (4) his continued efforts to bring about the assembling of synods and correction of prevalent abuses in the Church of Gaul (*E*, &c.); (5) the remarkable letter to him of the Irish saint Columbanus, illustrating the differences with regard to the computation of Easter between the Roman and Celtic Churches, and the attitude of the latter towards the Roman See (*E*).

Book XI. Indiction IV. (a.d. 600–1).

Noticeable in this book are —

(1) The letter to Serenus, bishop of Marseilles, with regard to the use and abuse of pictures in Churches (*E*).

(2) Two long letters to ladies of rank at Constantinople (*Ep*, 45), the first of which is interesting, as in other ways, so for the account contained in it

of supposed miracles at the monastery of St. Andrew in Rome, shewing, as many other epistles do, Gregory's firm belief in miraculous interventions; while the second is remarkable, not only for its spiritual counsels, but also for its expression of Gregory's views on the unlawfulness of married persons entering monasteries without mutual consent; on the efficacy of baptism; and on various points of doctrine.

(3) The letter to the bishops of Iberia, setting forth the various ways of reconciling various kinds of heretics to the Church, and containing a specimen of Gregory's controversial skill in his refutation of Nestorianism (*E*).

(4) Evidence of Gregory's unremitted efforts to correct the immorality prevalent among the clergy in Gaul, shewn in his letter to queen Brunehild on the subject (*E*).

(5) The letters relating to the English mission, notice of which has been forestalled under Book VI.

Book XIII. Indiction V. (a.d. 602–3).

In this Book we may note —

(1) Continued correspondence about the Church in Gaul, with references to a church, monastery, and hospital, founded by queen Brunehild at Autun, and to the synod for correction of abuses, long desired by Gregory, for the holding of which she had now requested a fit person to be sent from Rome (*Ep*, 7, 8, 9, 10).

(2) The important event of the accession of Phocas to the empire (November, a.d. 602), with the letters of Gregory on the occasion to him and to his wife Leontia (*Ep*, 38, 39).

The tone of high compliment — nay, of adulation — which marks these letters has been justly regarded as a blot, much to be regretted, on the lustre of Gregory's character. There is indeed no reason to conclude that he knew so far of the peculiar blackness of the usurper's character, as depicted by

contemporary historians, and evinced by his disastrous and sanguinary reign. And, seeing that it appears from Epistle 38 that he had had no apocrisiarius resident at Constantinople towards the end of the reign of Mauricius, it may be that he had not been fully informed of the cruelties that accompanied the accession of Phocas to the imperial throne; — how, for instance, five sons of the former emperor had been murdered in succession before their father's eyes, and then the emperor himself, their bodies being thrown into the Tiber, and their heads exposed in Constantinople till putrefaction began. But, however this might be, Gregory's high-flown compliments addressed to the new potentates, and his excessive exultation on their accession, cannot but strike one as unseemly as well as premature. Nor is it pleasant to observe his exultant way of speaking of the fall of the late emperor, whose sad fate called for so much sympathy, and to whom he had himself once written in such terms as these: — "Since a sincere rectitude of faith shines in you, most Christian of princes, like a light sent from heaven, and since it is known to all that your Serenity embraces with all your heart the pure profession which wins the favour of God" (VI. 16). Again, "Amidst the cares of warfare, and innumerable anxieties which you sustain in your unwearied zeal for the government of the Christian republic, it is a great cause of joy to me, along with the whole world, that your Piety ever keeps guard over the faith whereby the empire of our lords is resplendent" (VI. 65). Again, about him, only some two years before his death, in a letter to the patriarch of Jerusalem, "Thanks should be given without cease to Almighty God, and prayer ever made for the life of our most pious and Christian lord the Emperor, and for his most tranquil spouse, and his most gentle offspring, in whose times the mouths of heretics are silent, &c." (XI. 46). Doubtless Maurice's inefficiency with regard to the Lombards had been exceedingly provoking, and perhaps still more so to Gregory himself, his support of the

Patriarch of Constantinople in his assumption of the offensive title. And perhaps the gout from which Gregory appears to have been suffering intensely at the time may partly account for his having given vent as he did to feelings of irritation long suppressed. Then, with regard to his adulation of the new potentates, some excuse may be found in prevalent usage, or his own habitual deference to the powers that be, or his policy (apparent also in his letters to Brunehild) of enlisting their support by flattering addresses to the cause of religion and the Church. But still a painful impression remains; though, on the other hand, it may be observed with truth that few great historical characters of whom so much is known are stained by so few disfiguring blots as that of Gregory. It may be presumed that a prominent motive of his paying court to the rising suns was his hope of getting their support against the patriarch. He does not indeed refer distinctly to the title; but in his letter to Leontia (whom, rather than the emperor, with characteristic address, he warns about her spiritual prospects being dependent on the favour of St. Peter) we can hardly mistake the covert allusion. If so, his policy was not fruitless. For, though there is no sufficient foundation for the statement of Baronius, that Phocas formally conferred on pope Boniface III. the title of "Universal Bishop" which had been assumed by the patriarch, there seems to be no good reason for doubting that the new emperor took the pope's part against Cyriacus, who had offended him by his protection of Constantina and her daughters, and that, when Boniface, who had been Gregory's apocrisiarius at Constantinople, himself became pope, an imperial edict of some kind was issued in favour of the claims of Rome. The words of Anastasius, the biographer of the popes towards the end of the ninth century, with reference to it are these: "He (i.e. Boniface) obtained from the emperor Phocas that the Apostolic See of St. Peter, that is, the Roman Church, should be the head of all Churches, because the Church of Constantinople wrote itself the

first of all Churches.” The authority, however, of Anastasius, who lived in a time of hierarchical forgeries, cannot be relied on without reserve.

Book XIV. Indiction VII. (a.d. 603–4.)

In the course of this indiction (on the 12th of March, a.d. 604) Gregory died. The seventeen Epistles assigned to this last half-year of his life (one of which is dated December) shew no abatement of his care for all the Churches, or his activity in correspondence, notwithstanding his excessive affliction from gout, leaving him sometimes hardly able to speak, which he alludes to in his letter to Theodelinda, the Lombard queen (*E*). This letter was probably written shortly before his death, since he speaks in it of the queen’s messengers having left him between life and death, though he still contemplates the possibility of recovery. It is a peculiarly interesting one, not only for this reason, but also as being his last to her. He congratulates her in it on the recent baptism of her infant son Adulouvald in the catholic faith, sends for him a cross containing, as he alleges, wood from the true one, and also jewelled rings for his sister; he bids her thank her husband for peace concluded, and influence him, as she had ever done, to continue it; and he promises her an answer, in case of his recovery, to certain arguments against the condemnation of the Three Chapters by the fifth council, which she had sent for his consideration. It thus appears that to the end of his life he had failed to convince the Lombard queen on this subject, notwithstanding his influence over her, and the cordial relations ever subsisting between them.

The view opened to us through this long series of letters into the mind and character of the great Gregory is of peculiar interest. The man himself stands out before us therein self-disclosed; his very faults and frailties, which a panegyrist would have veiled, giving life and reality to the picture. We may observe in the first place how conspicuous throughout is his unhesitating faith. No cloud of doubt seems to have cast its shadow on his

certainty of the truth of Holy Writ and Christianity, and of the divine authority of the Catholic Church, speaking through Fathers and Councils as its exponents. Nor were either his temperament or his training such as to expose him to philosophic questionings. No less clear is the sincerity of his life as inspired and guided by his religious faith. Whatever inferior human motives may appear sometimes, there can be no doubt that his paramount aim was to devote himself to God's service. As was to be expected from the religious ideas of his age, his theory of the Christian life was ascetic in the extreme. Continual compunction, fear of judgment, fastings, tears, almsgiving, and heavenly contemplation, formed his ideal of holiness. Even lawful marriage he seems to tolerate, as a Zoar of escape from temptation, rather than to approve: and for a man to enjoy life as most people aim at doing — to sit, as it were, under his vine and under his fig-tree — appeared to him at any rate fraught with danger. Hence the more of both sexes that were able, and could be induced, to leave the active duties of life for monastic seclusion, the better he regarded it for them and for the world in whose behalf they might thus have leisure to pray. Still, on the other hand, such ascetic views were not found incompatible in his case with tender regard for others in their earthly joys and sorrows, and interest in their family life, as expressed in many kind and sympathetic letters to friends; and he was ever ready to meet their temporal as well as spiritual needs. His charitable donations in all directions were bounded only by his means; all oppression of the poor had in him a resolute opponent; nor can we but be struck by his keen sense of justice and regard for it in all his dealings. His gentle breeding, aided by Christian culture, induced a tone of courtesy, with delicate consideration for the feelings of others, in his letters generally; and he usually softens even rebuke with gentleness. Partly, it may be, to this habit may be traced the tone of flattery, which has been remarked on elsewhere, in his letters to potentates, or to others whom it was

his purpose to conciliate; which was such indeed in some cases as to lay him open to a charge of insincerity. On the other hand, however, it is to be remembered that, when strongly moved, he could write with very outspoken boldness, not without a vein of cutting irony, even to the Emperor. Witness his two letters (V. 40; VII. 33) to Mauricius on the two subjects that appear above all others to have distressed and irritated him. In such letters — and especially in some to various correspondents about the title of "Universal Bishop" — there are symptoms, no doubt, of much personal irritation, intensified perhaps by gout, under provoking circumstances. But, if his politic flattery in some cases, and his irritability in others, are to some minds disappointing in a saint, they are interesting to a student of human nature: and it is greatly to his credit that they nowhere indicate any merely selfish aims, but rather zeal — however alloyed by policy or by bitterness — for what he honestly believed to be the cause of God.

As a divine he merits his title of a Doctor of the Church. He was, indeed, neither original nor deeply learned; as a mystical interpreter of Scripture he was fanciful, and often, from our point of view, absurd; owing to his visionary turn and his uncritical credulity he may have fostered, and perhaps originated, some fond fables and superstitions, such as infected the general belief of Christians in the middle ages: but he grasped and set forth clearly the orthodox doctrines of the Church; in treating difficult theological questions he displays from time to time no small power of thought and argument; as a preacher of essential Christian morality he was ever sound and true; nor has anyone more insisted on spiritual communion of the individual soul with God, or more strongly maintained the principle of justice, mercy and truth being of the essence of religion.

His diplomatic and practical talents, and his unwearied industry, have been already spoken of, and need no further notice in this brief final survey,

the intention of which is to view him rather in his character as a saint and a divine.

Preface.

The title, *Liber* Regulæ Pastoralis*, is the one adopted by the Benedictine* Edition from several ancient mss., being Gregory's own designation of his work when he sent it to his friend, Leander of Seville;— "Ut librum Regulæ Pastoralis, quem in episcopatus mei exordio scripsi…sanctitati tuæ transmitterem" (*Epp*. *Lib*. v., *E*). The previously more usual one, *Liber Pastoralis* Curæ*, may have been taken from the opening words of the book* itself, "Pastoralis curæ me pondera fugere, etc." The book was issued (as appears from the passage above quoted in the Epistle to Leander) at the commencement of Gregory's episcopacy, and (as appears from its opening words) addressed to John, bishop of Ravenna, in reply to a letter received from him. But, though put into form for a special purpose on this occasion, it must have been the issue of long previous thought, as is further evident from the fact that in his *Magna Moralia*, or Commentary on the Book of Job, begun and in a great measure written during his residence in Constantinople, he had already sketched the plan of such a treatise, and expressed the hope of some day putting it into form. For we there find the prologue to the third book of the Regula already written, together with most of the headings contained in the first chapter of that book, followed by the words, "And indeed we ought to have denoted particularly what should be the order of admonition with respect to each of these points; but fear of prolixity deters us. Yet, with God's help, we hope to complete this task in another work, should some little time of this laborious life still remain to us" (*Moral*. *Lib*. xxx. c. 12 and 13).

The book appears to have been estimated as it deserved during the writer's life. It was sent by him, as we have seen, to Leander of Seville,

apparently at the request of the latter, for the benefit of the Church in Spain; and there will be found among the Epistles one addressed to Gregory from Licinianus, a learned bishop of Carthagena in that country, in which it is highly praised, though a fear is expressed lest the standard required in it of fitness for the episcopal office might prove too high for ordinary attainment (*Epp. Lib*. II., *E*). The Emperor Maurice, having requested and obtained a copy of it from Anatolius, Gregory's deacon at Constantinople, had it translated into Greek by Anastasius the patriarch of Antioch, who himself highly approved of it (*Epp. Lib*. XII., *E*). It appears to have been taken to England by the Monk Augustine. This is asserted by Alfred the Great, who, nearly three hundred years afterwards, with the assistance of his divines, made a translation, or rather paraphrase, of it in the West Saxon tongue, intending, as he says, to send a copy to every bishop in his Kingdom.

Previously to this, there is evidence of the high repute in which the book was held in Gaul. In a series of councils held by command of Charlemagne, a.d. 813, — viz. at Mayence,

Rheims, Tours, and Châlon-sur-Seine — the study of it was specially enjoined on all bishops, together with the New Testament Scriptures and the Canons of the Fathers. Similarly at a Council held at Aix-la-Chapelle, a.d. 836. Further, it appears from a letter of Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims (a.d. 845–882), that a copy of it together with the Book of Canons was given into the hands of bishops before the altar at their consecration, and that they were admonished to frame their lives accordingly.

The work is well worthy of its old repute, being the best of its kind, and profitable for all ages. Two similar works had preceded it. First, that of Gregory Nazianzen (c. a.d. 362), known as his second oration, and called τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀπολογητικός , which was written, like that of the later Gregory, to excuse the writer's reluctance to accept the episcopate, and to set forth the responsibilities of the office. It is obvious, from comparing the two

treatises, that the earlier had suggested the later one; and indeed Pope Gregory acknowledges his indebtedness in his prologue to the second book of the *Regula*. The second somewhat similar treatise had been that of Chrysostom, 'De Sacerdotio,' in six books, c. a.d. 382. It also sets forth the awful responsibilities of the episcopal office; but there are no signs of pope Gregory having drawn from it.

It is to be observed that the subject of all these treatises is the office of episcopacy; not the pastoral or priestly office in its wider sense, as now commonly understood: and it is noteworthy how prominent in Gregory's view of it are the duties of preaching and spiritual guidance of souls. It is regarded, indeed, in the first place as an office of government — *locus regiminis, culmen regiminis*, denote it frequently — and hence the exercise of discipline comes prominently in; and the chief pastor is viewed also as an intercessor between his flock and God — See e.g. I. 10; — but it is especially as a teacher, and a physician of souls, that he is spoken of throughout the treatise; as one whose peculiar duty it is to be conversant with all forms of spiritual disease, and so be able to suit his treatment to all cases, to "preach the word, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine," and both by precept and example guide souls in the way of salvation. Gregory had not studied in vain the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul. Remarkable indeed is his own discriminating insight, displayed throughout, into human characters and motives, and his perception of the temptations to which circumstances or temperament render various people — pastors as well as members of their flocks — peculiarly liable. No less striking, in this as in other works of his, is his intimate acquaintance with the whole of Holy Scripture. He knew it indeed through the Latin version only; his critical knowledge is frequently at fault; and far-fetched mystical interpretations, such as he delighted in, abound. But as a true expounder of its general moral and religious teaching he well deserves his name as one of the great

Doctors of the Church. And, further, notwithstanding all his reverence for Councils and Fathers, as paramount authorities in matters of faith, it is to Scripture that he ever appeals as the final authority for conduct and belief.

Part I

Prologue

Gregory to his most reverend and most holy brother and fellow-bishop, John.

With kind and humble intent thou reprovest me, dearest brother, for having wished by hiding myself to fly from the burdens of pastoral care; as to which, lest to some they should appear light, I express with my pen in the book before you all my own estimate of their heaviness, in order both that he who is free from them may not unwarily seek them, and that he who has so sought them may tremble for having got them. This book is divided into four separate heads of argument, that it may approach the reader's mind by allegations arranged in order — by certain steps, as it were. For, as the necessity of things requires, we must especially consider after what manner every one should come to supreme rule; and, duly arriving at it, after what manner he should live; and, living well, after what manner he should teach; and, teaching aright, with how great consideration every day he should become aware of his own infirmity; lest either humility fly from the approach, or life be at variance with the arrival, or teaching be wanting to the life, or presumption unduly exalt the teaching. Wherefore, let fear temper the desire; but afterwards, authority being assumed by one who sought it not, let his life commend it. But then it is necessary that the good which is displayed in the life of the pastor should also be propagated by his speech. And at last it remains that, whatever works are brought to perfection, consideration of our own infirmity should depress us with regard to them, lest the swelling of elation extinguish even them before the eyes of hidden judgment. But inasmuch as there are many, like me in unskilfulness, who, while they know not how to measure themselves, are covetous of teaching what they have not learned; who estimate lightly the burden of authority in proportion as they are ignorant of the pressure of its greatness;

let them be reproved from the very beginning of this book; so that, while, unlearned and precipitate, they desire to hold the citadel of teaching, they may be repelled at the very door of our discourse from the ventures of their precipitancy.

Chapter I.

That the unskilful venture not to approach an office of authority.

No one presumes to teach an art till he has first, with intent meditation, learnt it. What rashness is it, then, for the unskilful to assume pastoral authority, since the government of souls is the art of arts! For who can be ignorant that the sores of the thoughts of men are more occult than the sores of the bowels? And yet how often do men who have no knowledge whatever of spiritual precepts fearlessly profess themselves physicians of the heart, though those who are ignorant of the effect of drugs blush to appear as physicians of the flesh! But because, through the ordering of God, all the highest in rank of this present age are inclined to reverence religion, there are some who, through the outward show of rule within the holy Church, affect the glory of distinction. They desire to appear as teachers, they covet superiority to others, and, as the Truth attests, they seek the first salutations in the market-place, the first rooms at feasts, the first seats in assemblies (Matth. xxiii. 6, 7), being all the less able to administer worthily the office they have undertaken of pastoral care, as they have reached the magisterial position of humility out of elation only. For, indeed, in a magisterial position language itself is confounded when one thing is learnt and another taught. Against such the Lord complains by the prophet, saying, *They have reigned, and not by Me; they have been set up as* princes, and I knew it not *(Hos. viii. 4). For those reign of* themselves, and not by the Will of the Supreme Ruler, who, supported by no virtues, and in no way divinely called, but inflamed by their own desire, seize rather than attain supreme rule. But them the Judge within both advances, and yet knows not; for whom by permission he tolerates them surely by the judgment of reprobation he ignores. Whence to some who come to Him even after

miracles He says, *Depart* from Me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not who ye are (Luke xiii. 27). The unskilfulness of shepherds is rebuked by the voice of the Truth, when it is said through the prophet, *The shepherds themselves have not* known understanding *(Isai. lvi. 11); whom again the Lord denounces, saying,* And they that handle the law knew Me not *(Jer.* ii. 8). And therefore the Truth complains of not being known of them, and protests that He knows not the principality of those who know not Him; because in truth these who know not the things of the Lord are unknown of the Lord; as Paul attests, who says, *But if any man knoweth not, he shall not be* known *(1 Cor. xiv.* 38). Yet this unskilfulness of the shepherds doubtless suits often the deserts of those who are subject to them, because, though it is their own fault that they have not the light of knowledge, yet it is in the dealing of strict judgment that through their ignorance those also who follow them should stumble. Hence it is that, in the Gospel, the Truth in person says, *If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the* ditch *(Matth. xv.* 14). Hence the Psalmist (not expressing his own desire, but in his ministry as a prophet) denounces such, when he says, *Let their eyes be blinded* that they see not, and ever bow thou down their back (Ps. lxviii. 24). For, indeed, those persons are eyes who, placed in the very face of the highest dignity, have undertaken the office of spying out the road; while those who are attached to them and follow them are denominated backs. And so, when the eyes are blinded, the back is bent, because, when those who go before lose the light of knowledge, those who follow are bowed down to carry the burden of their sins.

Chapter II.

That none should enter on a place of government who practise not in life what they have learnt by study.

There are some also who investigate spiritual precepts with cunning care, but what they penetrate with their understanding they trample on in their lives: all at once they teach the things which not by practice but by study they have learnt; and what in words they preach by their manners they impugn. Whence it comes to pass that when the shepherd walks through steep places, the flock follows to the precipice. Hence it is that the Lord through the prophet complains of the contemptible knowledge of shepherds, saying, *When ye yourselves had* drunk most pure water, ye fouled the residue with your feet; and My sheep fed on that which had been trodden by your feet, and drank that which your feet had fouled *(Ezek. xxxiv. 18, 19). For indeed the shepherds* drink most pure water, when with a right understanding they imbibe the streams of truth. But to foul the same water with their feet is to corrupt the studies of holy meditation by evil living. And verily the sheep drink the water fouled by their feet, when any of those subject to them follow not the words which they hear, but only imitate the bad examples which they see. Thirsting for the things said, but perverted by the works observed, they take in mud with their draughts, as from polluted fountains. Hence also it is written through the prophet, *A snare for the downfall of my people are evil* priests *(Hos. v. 1;* ix. 8). Hence again the Lord through the prophet says of the priests, *They are made to be for a stumbling-block of iniquity to* the house of Israel. *For certainly no one does more harm in* the Church than one who has the name and rank of sanctity, while he acts perversely. For him, when he transgresses, no one presumes to take to task; and the offence spreads forcibly for example, when out of

reverence to his rank the sinner is honoured. But all who are unworthy would fly from the burden of so great guilt, if with the attentive ear of the heart they weighed the sentence of the Truth, *Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him* that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea *(Matth.* xviii. 6). By the millstone is expressed the round and labour of worldly life, and by the depth of the sea is denoted final damnation. Whosoever, then, having come to bear the outward show of sanctity, either by word or example destroys others, it had indeed been better for him that earthly deeds in open guise should press him down to death than that sacred offices should point him out to others as imitable in his wrong-doing; because, surely, if he fell alone, the pains of hell would torment him in more tolerable degree.

Chapter III.

Of the weight of government; and that all manner of adversity is to be despised, and prosperity feared.

So much, then, have we briefly said, to shew how great is the weight of government, lest whosoever is unequal to sacred offices of government should dare to profane them, and through lust of pre-eminence undertake a leadership of perdition. For hence it is that James affectionately deters us, saying, Be not made many masters, my brethren (James iii. 1). Hence the Mediator between God and man Himself — He who, transcending the knowledge and understanding even of supernal spirits, reigns in heaven from eternity — on earth fled from receiving a kingdom. For it is written, *When Jesus therefore* perceived that they would come and take Him by force, to make Him a king, He departed again into the mountain Himself alone (Joh. vi. 15). For who could so blamelessly have had principality over men as He who would in fact have reigned over those whom He had Himself created? But, because He had come in the flesh to this end, that He might not only redeem us by His passion but also teach us by His conversation, offering Himself as an example to His followers, He would not be made a king; but He went of His own accord to the gibbet of the cross. He fled from the offered glory of pre-eminence, but desired the pain of an ignominious death; that so His members might learn to fly from the favours of the world, to be afraid of no terrors, to love adversity for the truth's sake, and to shrink in fear from prosperity; because this often defiles the heart through vain glory, while that purges it through sorrow; in this the mind exalts itself, but in that, even though it had once exalted itself, it brings itself low; in this man forgets himself, but in that, even perforce and against his will, he is recalled to memory of what he is; in this even good

things done aforetime often come to nothing, but in that faults even of long standing are wiped away. For commonly in the school of adversity the heart is subdued under discipline, while, on sudden attainment of supreme rule, it is forthwith changed and becomes elated through familiarity with glory. Thus Saul, who had before fled in consideration of his unworthiness, no sooner had assumed the government of the kingdom than he was puffed up (1 Kings x. 22; xv. 17, 30); for, desirous of being honoured before the people while unwilling to be publicly blamed, he cut off from himself even him who had anointed him to the kingdom. Thus David, who in the judgment of Him who chose him was well pleasing to Him in almost all his deeds, as soon as the weight of pressure was removed, broke out into a swelling sore (2 Kings xi. 3, *seq*.), and, having been as a laxly running one in his appetite for the woman, became as a cruelly hard one in the slaughter of the man; and he who had before known pitifully how to spare the bad learnt afterwards, without impediment of hesitation, to pant even for the death of the good (Ibid. 15). For, indeed, previously he had been unwilling to smite his captured persecutor; and afterwards, with loss to his wearied army, he destroyed even his devoted soldier. And in truth his crime would have snatched him farther away from the number of the elect, had not scourges called him back to pardon.

Chapter IV.

That for the most part the occupation of government dissipates the solidity of the mind.

Often the care of government, when undertaken, distracts the heart in divers directions; and one is found unequal to dealing with particular things, while with confused mind divided among many. Whence a certain wise man providently dissuades, saying, *My son, meddle not with many matters* (Ecclus. xi. 10); because, that is, the mind is by no means collected on the plan of any single work while parted among divers. And, when it is drawn abroad by unwonted care, it is emptied of the solidity of inward fear: it becomes anxious in the ordering of things that are without, and, ignorant of itself alone, knows how to think of many things, while itself it knows not. For, when it implicates itself more than is needful in things that are without, it is as though it were so occupied during a journey as to forget where it was going; so that, being estranged from the business of self-examination, it does not even consider the losses it is suffering, or know how great they are. For neither did

Hezekiah believe himself to be sinning (2 Kings xx. 13), when he shewed to the strangers who came to him his storehouses of spices; but he fell under the anger of the judge, to the condemnation of his future offspring, from what he supposed himself to be doing lawfully (Isai. xxxix. 4). Often, when means are abundant, and many things can be done for subordinates to admire, the mind exalts itself in thought, and fully provokes to itself the anger of the judge, though not breaking out in overt acts of iniquity. For he who judges is within; that which is judged is within. When, then, in heart we transgress, what we are doing within ourselves is hidden from men. but yet in the eyes of the judge we sin. For neither did

the King of Babylon then first stand guilty of elation (Dan. iv. 16, *seq*.) when he came to utter words of elation, inasmuch as even before, when he had given no utterance to his elation, he heard the sentence of reprobation from the prophet's mouth. For he had already wiped off the fault of the pride he had been guilty of, when he proclaimed to all the nations under him the omnipotent God whom he found himself to have offended.

But after this, elevated by the success of his dominion, and rejoicing in having done great things, he first preferred himself to all in thought, and afterwards, still vain-glorious, said, *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the* kingdom, and in the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? *(Dan. iv.* 30.) Which utterance of his, as we see, fell openly under the vengeance of the wrath which his hidden elation kindled. For the strict judge first sees invisibly what he afterwards reproves by publicly smiting it. Hence him He turned even into an irrational animal, separated him from human society, changed his mind and joined him to the beasts of the field, that in obviously strict and just judgment he who had esteemed himself great beyond men should lose even his being as a man. Now in adducing these things we are not finding fault with dominion, but guarding the infirmity of the heart from coveting it, lest any that are imperfect should venture to snatch at supreme rule, or those who stumble on plain ground set foot on a precipice.

Chapter V.

Of those who are able to profit others by virtuous example in supreme rule, but fly from it in pursuit of their own ease.

For there are some who are eminently endowed with virtues, and for the training of others are exalted by great gifts, who are pure in zeal for chastity, strong in the might of abstinence, filled with the feasts of doctrine, humble in the long-suffering of patience, erect in the fortitude of authority, tender in the grace of loving-kindness, strict in the severity of justice. Truly such as these, if when called they refuse to undertake offices of supreme rule, for the most part deprive themselves of the very gifts which they received not for themselves alone, but for others also; and, while they meditate their own and not another's gain, they forfeit the very benefits which they desire to keep to themselves. For hence it was that the Truth said to His disciples, *A city that is set on an* hill cannot be hid: neither do they light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house *(Matth. v. 15). Hence He says to Peter, Simon, Son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?* (Joh. xv. 16, 17); and he, when he had at once answered that he loved, was told, *If thou lovest Me, feed My* sheep. *If, then, the care of feeding is the proof of loving,* whosoever abounds in virtues, and yet refuses to feed the flock of God, is convicted of not loving the chief Shepherd. Hence Paul says, *If Christ died for all, then all* died. And if He died for all, it remaineth that they which live should now no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again *(2 Cor. v. 15). Hence Moses says (Deut. xxv. 5) that a surviving brother shall* take to him the wife of a brother who has died without children, and beget children to the name of his brother; and that, if he haply refuse to take her, the woman shall spit in his face, and her kinsman shall

loose the shoe from off one of his feet, and call his habitation the house of him that hath his shoe loosed. Now the deceased brother is He who, after the glory of the resurrection, said, *Go tell My* brethren *(Matth.* xxviii. 10). For He died as it were without children, in that He had not yet filled up the number of His elect. Then, it is ordered that the surviving brother shall have the wife assigned to him, because it is surely fit that the care of holy Church be imposed on him who is best able to rule it well. But, should he be unwilling, the woman spits in his face, because whosoever cares not to benefit others out of the gifts which he has received, the holy Church exprobrates even what he has of good, and, as it were, casts spittle on his face; and from one foot the shoe is taken away, inasmuch as it is written, *Your feet shod in* preparation of the Gospel of Peace *(Ephes. vi. 15). If, then, we have the care of* our neighbour as well as of ourselves upon us, we have each foot protected by a shoe. But he who, meditating his own advantage, neglects that of his neighbours, loses with disgrace one foot's shoe. And so there are some, as we have said, enriched with great gifts, who, while they are ardent for the studies of contemplation only, shrink from serving to their neighbour's benefit by preaching; they love a secret place of quiet, they long for a retreat for speculation. With respect to which conduct, they are, if strictly judged, undoubtedly guilty in proportion to the greatness of the gifts whereby they might have been publicly useful. For with what disposition of mind does one who might be conspicuous in profiting his neighbours prefer his own privacy to the advantage of others, when the Only-begotten of the supreme Father Himself came forth from the bosom of the Father into the midst of us all, that He might profit many?

Chapter VI.

That those who fly from the burden of rule through humility are then truly humble when they resist not the divine decrees.

There are some also who fly by reason only of their humility, lest they should be preferred to others to whom they esteem themselves unequal. And theirs, indeed, if it be surrounded by other virtues, is then true humility before the eyes of God, when it is not pertinacious in rejecting what it is enjoined to undertake with profit. For neither is he truly humble, who understands how the good pleasure of the Supernal Will ought to bear sway, and yet contemns its sway. But, submitting himself to the divine disposals, and averse from the vice of obstinacy, if he be already prevented with gifts whereby he may profit others also, he ought, when enjoined to undertake supreme rule, in his heart to flee from it, but against his will to obey.

Chapter VII.

That sometimes some laudably desire the office of preaching, while others, as laudably, are drawn to it by compulsion.

Although sometimes some laudably desire the office of preaching, yet others are as laudably drawn to it by compulsion; as we plainly perceive, if we consider the conduct of two prophets, one of whom offered himself of his own accord to be sent to preach, yet the other in fear refused to go. For Isaiah, when the Lord asked whom He should send, offered himself of his own accord, saying, *Here I am; send me* (Isai. vi. 8). But Jeremiah is sent, yet humbly pleads that he should not be sent, saying, *Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot* speak: for I am a child *(Jer. i. 6). Lo, from these two men* different voices proceeded outwardly, but they flowed from the same fountain of love. For there are two precepts of charity; the love of God and of our neighbour. Wherefore Isaiah, eager to profit his neighbours through an active life, desires the office of preaching; but Jeremiah, longing to cleave sedulously to the love of his Creator through a contemplative life, remonstrates against being sent to preach. Thus what the one laudably desired the other laudably shrunk from; the latter, lest by speaking he should lose the gains of silent contemplation; the former, lest by keeping silence he should suffer loss for lack of diligent work. But this in both cases is to be nicely observed, that he who refused did not persist in his refusal, and he who wished to be sent saw himself previously cleansed by a coal of the altar; lest any one who has not been purged should dare to approach sacred ministries, or any whom supernal grace has chosen should proudly gainsay it under a show of humility. Wherefore, since it is very difficult for any one to be sure that he has been cleansed, it is safer to decline the office of preaching, though (as we have said) it should not be

declined pertinaciously when the Supernal Will that it should be undertaken is recognized. Both requirements Moses marvellously fulfilled, who was unwilling to be set over so great a multitude, and yet obeyed. For peradventure he were proud, were he to undertake without trepidation the leadership of that innumerable people; and, again, proud he would plainly be were he to refuse to obey his Lord's command. Thus in both ways humble, in both ways submissive, he was unwilling, as measuring himself, to be set over the people; and yet, as presuming on the might of Him who commanded him, he consented. Hence, then, hence let all rash ones infer how great guilt is theirs, if they fear not to be preferred to others by their own seeking, when holy men, even when God commanded, feared to undertake the leadership of peoples. Moses trembles though God persuades him; and yet every weak one pants to assume the burden of dignity; and one who can hardly bear his own load without falling, gladly puts his shoulders under the pressure of others not his own: his own deeds are too heavy for him to carry, and he augments his burden.

Chapter VIII.

Of those who covet pre-eminence, and seize on the language of the Apostle to serve the purpose of their own cupidity.

But for the most part those who covet pre-eminence seize on the language of the Apostle to serve the purpose of their own cupidity, where he says, *If a man desire the office of a bishop, he* desireth a good work *(1 Tim. iii. 1).*

But, while praising the desire, he forthwith turns what he has praised to fear when at once he adds, *but a bishop must be blameless* (1 Tim. iii. 2). And, when he subsequently enumerates the necessary virtues, he makes manifest what this blamelessness consists in. And so, with regard to their desire, he approves them, but by his precept he alarms them; as if saying plainly, I praise what ye seek; but first learn what it is ye seek; lest, while ye neglect to measure yourselves, your blamefulness appear all the fouler for its haste to be seen by all in the highest place of honour. For the great master in the art of ruling impels by approval and checks by alarms; so that, by describing the height of blamelessness, he may restrain his hearers from pride, and, by praising the office which is sought, dispose them to the life required. Nevertheless it is to be noted that this was said at a time when whosoever was set over people was usually the first to be led to the torments of martyrdom. At that time, therefore, it was laudable to seek the office of a bishop, since through it there was no doubt that a man would come in the end to heavier pains. Hence even the office of a bishop itself is defined as a good work, when it is said, *If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work* (1 Tim. iii. 1). Wherefore he that seeks, not this ministry of a good work, but the glory of distinction, is himself a witness against himself that he does not desire the office of a bishop; inasmuch as that man not only does not love at all the sacred office, but

even knows not what it is, who, panting after supreme rule, is fed by the subjection of others in the hidden meditation of his thought, rejoices in his own praises, lifts up his heart to honour, exults in abundant affluence. Thus worldly gain is sought under colour of that honour by which worldly gains should have been destroyed; and, when the mind thinks to seize on the highest post of humility for its own elation, it inwardly changes what it outwardly desires.

Chapter IX.

That the mind of those who wish for pre-eminence for the most part flatters itself with a feigned promise of good works.

But for the most part those who covet pastoral authority mentally propose to themselves some good works besides, and, though desiring it with a motive of pride, still muse how they will effect great things: and so it comes to pass that the motive suppressed in the depths of the heart is one thing, another what the surface of thought presents to the muser's mind. For the mind itself lies to itself about itself, and feigns with respect to good work to love what it does not love, and with respect to the world's glory not to love what it does love. Eager for domination, it becomes timid with regard to it while in pursuit, audacious after attainment. For, while advancing towards it, it is in trepidation lest it should not attain it; but all at once, on having attained, thinks what it has attained to be its just due. And, when it has once begun to enjoy the office of its acquired dominion in a worldly way, it willingly forgets what it has cogitated in a religious way. Hence it is necessary that, when such cogitation is extended beyond wont, the mind's eye should be recalled to works already accomplished, and that every one should consider what he has done as a subordinate; and so may he at once discover whether as a prelate he will be able to do the good things he has proposed to do. For one can by no means learn humility in a high place who has not ceased to be proud while occupying a low one: one knows not how to fly from praise when it abounds, who has learnt to pant for it when it was wanting: one can by no means overcome avarice, when advanced to the sustentation of many, whom his own means could not suffice for himself alone. Wherefore from his past life let every one discover what he is, lest in his craving for eminence the phantom of his

cogitation illude him. Nevertheless it is generally the case that the very practice of good deeds which was maintained in tranquillity is lost in the occupation of government; since even an unskilful person guides a ship along a straight course in a calm sea; but in one disturbed by the waves of tempest even the skilled sailor is confounded. For what is eminent dominion but a tempest of the mind, in which the ship of the heart is ever shaken by hurricanes of thought, is incessantly driven hither and thither, so as to be shattered by sudden excesses of word and deed, as if by opposing rocks? In the midst of all these dangers, then, what course is to be followed, what is to be held to, except that one who abounds in virtues should accede to government under compulsion, and that one who is void of virtues should not, even under compulsion, approach it? As to the former, let him beware lest, if he refuses altogether, he be as one who binds up in a napkin the money which he has received, and be judged for hiding it (Matth. xxv. 18). For, indeed, to bind up in a napkin is to hide gifts received under the listlessness of sluggish torpor. But, on the other hand, let the latter, when he craves government, take care lest, by his example of evil deeds, he become an obstacle to such as are journeying to the entrance of the kingdom, after the manner of the Pharisees, who, according to the Master's voice (Matth. xxiii. 13), neither go in themselves nor suffer others to go in. And he should also consider how, when an elected prelate undertakes the cause of the people, he goes, as it were, as a physician to one that is sick. If, then, ailments still live in his body, what presumption is his, to make haste to heal the smitten, while in his own face carrying a sore!

Chapter X.

What manner of man ought to come to rule.

That man, therefore, ought by all means to be drawn with cords to be an example of good living who already lives spiritually, dying to all passions of the flesh; who disregards worldly prosperity; who is afraid of no adversity; who desires only inward wealth; whose intention the body, in good accord with it, thwarts not at all by its frailness, nor the spirit greatly by its disdain: one who is not led to covet the things of others, but gives freely of his own; who through the bowels of compassion is quickly moved to pardon, yet is never bent down from the fortress of rectitude by pardoning more than is meet; who perpetrates no unlawful deeds, yet deplores those perpetrated by others as though they were his own; who out of affection of heart sympathizes with another's infirmity, and so rejoices in the good of his neighbour as though it were his own advantage; who so insinuates himself as an example to others in all he does that among them he has nothing, at any rate of his own past deeds, to blush for; who studies so to live that he may be able to water even dry hearts with the streams of doctrine; who has already learnt by the use and trial of prayer that he can obtain what he has requested from the Lord, having had already said to him, as it were, through the voice of experience, *While thou art yet* speaking, I will say, Here am I *(Isai. lviii. 9). For if perchance any one* should come to us asking us to intercede for him with some great man, who was incensed against him, but to us unknown, we should at once reply, We cannot go to intercede for you, since we have no familiar acquaintance with that man. If, then, a man blushes to become an intercessor with another man on whom he has no claim, with what idea can any one grasp the post of intercession with God for the people, who does not know himself to be in favour with Him

through the merit of his own life? And how can he ask of Him pardon for others while ignorant whether towards himself He is appeased? And in this matter there is yet another thing to be more anxiously feared; namely, lest one who is supposed to be competent to appease wrath should himself provoke it on account of guilt of his own. For we all know well that, when one who is in disfavour is sent to intercede with an incensed person, the mind of the latter is provoked to greater severity. Wherefore let one who is still tied and bound with earthly desires beware lest by more grievously incensing the strict judge, while he delights himself in his place of honour, he become the cause of ruin to his subordinates.

Chapter XI.

What manner of man ought not to come to rule.

Wherefore let every one measure himself wisely, lest he venture to assume a place of rule, while in himself vice still reigns unto condemnation; lest one whom his own guilt depraves desire to become an intercessor for the faults of others. For on this account it is said to Moses by the supernal voice, *Speak unto Aaron;* Whosoever he be of thy seed throughout their generations that hath a blemish, he shall not offer loaves of bread to the Lord his God (Lev. xxi. 17). And it is also immediately subjoined; *If he be blind, if he be lame, if he* have either a small or a large and crooked nose, if he be brokenfooted or brokenhanded, if he be hunchbacked, if he be bleareyed (lippus), if he have a white speck (albuginem) in his eye, if chronic scabies, if impetigo in his body, or if he be ruptured (ponderosus) (Ibid. 18). For that man is indeed blind who is unacquainted with the light of supernal contemplation, who, whelmed in the darkness of the present life, while he beholds not at all by loving it the light to come, knows not whither he is advancing the steps of his conduct. Hence by Hannah prophesying it is said, *He will keep the feet of his saints,* and the wicked shall be silent in darkness *(1 Kings ii. 9). But that man is lame* who does indeed see in what direction he ought to go, but, through infirmity of purpose, is unable to keep perfectly the way of life which he sees, because, while unstable habit rises not to a settled state of virtue, the steps of conduct do not follow with effect the aim of desire. Hence it is that Paul says, *Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble* knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed (Heb. xii. 12, 13). But one with a small nose is he who is not adapted for keeping the measure of discernment. For with the nose we

discern sweet odours and stenches: and so by the nose is properly expressed discernment, through which we choose virtues and eschew sins. Whence also it is said in praise of the bride, *Thy nose is as the tower which is in* Lebanon *(Cant. vii. 4); because, to wit, Holy Church, by* discernment, espies assaults issuing from this or that quarter, and detects from an eminence the coming wars of vices. But there are some who, not liking to be thought dull, busy themselves often more than needs in various investigations, and by reason of too great subtilty are deceived. Wherefore this also is added, *Or have a* large and crooked nose. *For a large and crooked nose is* excessive subtilty of discernment, which, having become unduly excrescent, itself confuses the correctness of its own operation. But one with broken foot or hand is he who cannot walk in the way of God at all, and is utterly without part or lot in good deeds, to such degree that he does not, like the lame man, maintain them however weakly, but remains altogether apart from them. But the hunchbacked is he whom the weight of earthly care bows down, so that he never looks up to the things that are above, but is intent only on what is trodden on among the lowest. And he, should he ever hear anything of the good things of the heavenly country, is so pressed down by the weight of perverse custom, that he lifts not the face of his heart to it, being unable to erect the posture of his thought, which the habit of earthly care keeps downward bent. Of this kind of men the Psalmist says, *I am bent down* and am brought low continually *(Ps. xxxviii. 8). The fault of such as these* the Truth in person reprobates, saying, *But the seed which fell* among thorns are they which, when they have heard the word, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of life, and bear no fruit *(Luke viii.* 14). But the blear-eyed is he whose native wit flashes out for cognition of the truth, and yet carnal works obscure it. For in the blear-eyed the pupils are sound; but the eyelids, weakened by defluxion of humours, become gross; and even the brightness of the pupils

is impaired, because they are worn continually by the flux upon them. The blear-eyed, then, is one whose sense nature has made keen, but whom a depraved habit of life confuses. To him it is well said through the angel, *Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see* (Apoc. iii. 18). For we may be said to anoint our eyes with eyesalve that we may see, when we aid the eye of our understanding for perceiving the clearness of the true light with the medicament of good conduct. But that man has a white speck in his eye who is not permitted to see the light of truth, in that he is blinded by the arrogant assumption of wisdom or of righteousness. For the pupil of the eye, when black, sees; but, when it bears a white speck, sees nothing; by which we may understand that the perceiving sense of human thought, if a man understands himself to be a fool and a sinner, becomes cognizant of the clearness of inmost light; but, if it attributes to itself the whiteness of righteousness or wisdom, it excludes itself from the light of knowledge from above, and by so much the more fails entirely to penetrate the clearness of the true light, as it exalts itself within itself through arrogance; as of some it is said, *Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools* (Rom. i. 22). But that man has chronic *scabies* whom the wantonness of the flesh without cease overmasters. For in *scabies* the violent heat of the bowels is drawn to the skin; whereby lechery is rightly designated, since, if the heart's temptation shoots forth into action, it may be truly said that violent internal heat breaks out into *scabies* of the skin: and it now wounds the body outwardly, because, while sensuality is not repressed in thought, it gains the mastery also in action. For Paul had a care to cleanse away this itch of the skin, when he said, *Let no temptation take you but such as is* human *(1 Cor. x.* 13); as if to say plainly, It is human to suffer temptation in the heart; but it is devilish, in the struggle of temptation, to be also overcome in action. He also has impetigo in his body whosoever is ravaged

in the mind by avarice; which, if not restrained in small things, does indeed dilate itself without measure.

For, as *impetigo* invades the body without pain, and, spreading with no annoyance to him whom it invades, disfigures the comeliness of the members, so avarice, too, exulcerates, while it pleases, the mind of one who is captive to it. As it offers to the thought one thing after another to be gained, it kindles the fire of enmities, and gives no pain with the wounds it causes, because it promises to the fevered mind abundance out of sin. But the comeliness of the members is destroyed, because the beauty of other virtues is also hereby marred: and it exulcerates as it were the whole body, in that it corrupts the mind with vices of all kinds; as Paul attests, saying, *The love of money is the root of all evils* (1 Tim. vi. 10). But the ruptured one is he who does not carry turpitude into action, but yet is immoderately weighed down by it in mind through continual cogitation; one who is indeed by no means carried away to the extent of nefarious conduct; but his mind still delights itself without prick of repugnance in the pleasure of lechery. For the disease of rupture is when *humor viscerum ad virilia labitur, quæ profecto cum molestia* dedecoris intumescunt *He, then, may be said to* be ruptured who, letting all his thoughts flow down to lasciviousness, bears in his heart a weight of turpitude; and, though not actually doing deeds of shame, nevertheless in mind is not withdrawn from them. Nor has he power to rise to the practice of good living before the eyes of men, because, hidden within him, the shameful weight presses him down. Whosoever, therefore, is subjected to any one of these diseases is forbidden to offer loaves of bread to the Lord, lest in sooth he should be of no avail for expiating the sins of others, being one who is still ravaged by his own.

And now, having briefly shewn after what manner one who is worthy should come to pastoral authority, and after what manner one who is

unworthy should be greatly afraid, let us now demonstrate after what manner one who has attained to it worthily should live in it.

Part II. Of the Life of the Pastor.

Chapter I.

How one who has in due order arrived at a place of rule ought to demean himself in it.

The conduct of a prelate ought so far to transcend the conduct of the people as the life of a shepherd is wont to exalt him above the flock. For one whose estimation is such that the people are called his flock is bound anxiously to consider what great necessity is laid upon him to maintain rectitude. It is necessary, then, that in thought he should be pure, in action chief; discreet in keeping silence, profitable in speech; a near neighbour to every one in sympathy, exalted above all in contemplation; a familiar friend of good livers through humility, unbending against the vices of evil-doers through zeal for righteousness; not relaxing in his care for what is inward from being occupied in outward things, nor neglecting to provide for outward things in his solicitude for what is inward. But the things which we have thus briefly touched on let us now unfold and discuss more at length.

Chapter II.

That the ruler should be pure in thought.

The ruler should always be pure in thought, inasmuch as no impurity ought to pollute him who has undertaken the office of wiping away the stains of pollution in the hearts of others also; for the hand that would cleanse from dirt must needs be clean, lest, being itself sordid with clinging mire, it soil whatever it touches all the more. For on this account it is said through the prophet, *Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord* (Isai. lii. 11). For they bear the vessels of the Lord who undertake, on the surety of their own conversation, to conduct the souls of their neighbours to the eternal sanctuary. Let them therefore perceive within themselves how purified they ought to be who carry in the bosom of their own personal responsibility living vessels to the temple of eternity. Hence by the divine voice it is enjoined (Exod. xxviii. 15), that on the breast of Aaron the breastplate of judgment should be closely pressed by binding fillets; seeing that lax cogitations should by no means possess the priestly heart, but reason alone constrain it; nor should he cogitate anything indiscreet or unprofitable, who, constituted as he is for example to others, ought to shew in the gravity of his life what store of reason he carries in his breast. And on this breastplate it is further carefully prescribed that the names of the twelve patriarchs should be engraved. For to carry always the fathers registered on the breast is to think without intermission on the lives of the ancients. For the priest then walks blamelessly when he pores continually on the examples of the fathers that went before him, when he considers without cease the footsteps of the Saints, and keeps down unlawful thoughts, lest he advance the foot of his conduct beyond the limit of order. And it is also well called the breastplate of judgment, because the ruler ought ever with subtle scrutiny to discern

between good and evil, and studiously consider what things are suitable for what, and when and how; nor should he seek anything for himself, but esteem his neighbours' good as his own advantage. Hence in the same place it is written, *But thou shalt put in the breastplate* of Aaron doctrine and truth, which shall be upon Aaron's breast, when he goeth in before the Lord, and he shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his breast in the sight of the Lord continually *(Ibid.* 30). For the priest's bearing the judgment of the children of Israel on his breast before the face of the Lord means his examining the causes of his subjects with regard only to the mind of the judge within, so that no admixture of humanity cleave to him in what he dispenses as standing in God's stead, lest private vexation should exasperate the keenness of his censure. And while he shews himself zealous against the vices of others, let him get rid of his own lest either latent grudge vitiate the calmness of his judgment, or headlong anger disturb it. But when the terror of Him who presides over all things is considered (that is to say of the judge within), not without great fear may subjects be governed. And such fear indeed purges, while it humiliates, the mind of the ruler, guarding it against being either lifted up by presumption of spirit, or defiled by delight of the flesh, or obscured by importunity of dusty thought through lust for earthly things. These things, however, cannot but knock at the ruler's mind: but it is necessary to make haste to overcome them by resistance, lest the vice which tempts by suggestion should subdue by the softness of delight, and, this being tardily expelled from the mind, should slay with the sword of consent.

Chapter III.

That the ruler should be always chief in action.

The ruler should always be chief in action, that by his living he may point out the way of life to those that are put under him, and that the flock, which follows the voice and manners of the shepherd, may learn how to walk better through example than through words. For he who is required by the necessity of his position to speak the highest things is compelled by the same necessity to exhibit the highest things. For that voice more readily penetrates the hearer's heart, which the speaker's life commends, since what he commands by speaking he helps the doing of by shewing. Hence it is said through the prophet, *Get thee up into the high* mountain, thou that bringest good tidings to Sion (Isai. xl. 9): which means that he who is engaged in heavenly preaching should already have forsaken the low level of earthly works, and appear as standing on the summit of things, and by so much the more easily should draw those who are under him to better things as by the merit of his life he cries aloud from heights above. Hence under the divine law the priest receives the shoulder for sacrifice, and this the right one and separate (Exod. xxix. 22); to signify that his action should be not only profitable, but even singular; and that he should not merely do what is right among bad men, but transcend even the well-doers among those that are under him in the virtue of his conduct, as he surpasses them in the dignity of his order. The breast also together with the shoulder is assigned to him for eating, that he may learn to immolate to the Giver of all that of himself which he is enjoined to take of the Sacrifice; that he may not only in his breast entertain right thoughts, but with the shoulder of work invite those who behold him to things on high; that he may covet no prosperity of the present life, and fear no adversity; that, having regard to

the fear within him, he may despise the charm of the world, but considering the charm of inward sweetness, may despise its terrors. Wherefore by command of the supernal voice (Exod. xxix. 5) the priest is braced on each shoulder with the robe of the ephod, that he may be always guarded against prosperity and adversity by the ornament of virtues; so that walking, as S. Paul says (2 Cor. vi. 7), *in the armour of* righteousness on the right hand and on the left*, while he strives* only after *those things which are before*, he may decline on neither side to low delight. Him let neither prosperity elate nor adversity perturb; let neither smooth things coax him to the surrender of his will, nor rough things press him down to despair; so that, while he humbles the bent of his mind to no passions, he may shew with how great beauty of the ephod he is covered on each shoulder. Which ephod is also rightly ordered to be made of gold, blue, purple, twice dyed scarlet, and flue twined linen (Exod. xxviii. 8), that it may be shewn by how great diversity of virtues the priest ought to be distinguished. Thus in the priest's robe before all things gold glitters, to shew that he should shine forth principally in the understanding of wisdom. And with it blue, which is resplendent with aerial colour, is conjoined, to shew that through all that he penetrates with his understanding he should rise above earthly favours to the love of celestial things; lest, while caught unawares by his own praises, he be emptied of his very understanding of the truth. With gold and blue, purple also is mingled: which means, that the priest's heart, while hoping for the high things which he preaches, should repress in itself even the suggestions of vice, and as it were in virtue of a royal power, rebut them, in that he has regard ever to the nobility of inward regeneration, and by his manners guards his right to the robe of the heavenly kingdom. For it is of this nobility of the spirit that it is said through Peter, *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal* priesthood *(1 Pet.* ii. 9). With respect also to this power, whereby we subdue vices, we are fortified by the voice of John, who says, *As many*

as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God (John i. 12). This dignity of fortitude the Psalmist has in view when he says, *But with me greatly honoured* have been Thy friends, O God; greatly strengthened has been their principality *(Ps. cxxxviii. 17). For truly the mind of* saints is exalted to princely eminence while outwardly they are seen to suffer abasement. But with gold, blue, and purple, twice died scarlet is conjoined, to show that all excellences of virtue should be adorned with charity in the eyes of the judge within; and that whatever glitters before men may be lighted up in sight of the hidden arbiter with the flame of inward love. And, further, this charity, since it consists in love at once of God and of our neighbour, has, as it were, the lustre of a double dye. He then who so pants after the beauty of his Maker as to neglect the care of his neighbours, or so attends to the care of his neighbours as to grow languid in divine love, whichever of these two things it may be that he neglects, knows not what it is to have twice dyed scarlet in the adornment of his ephod. But, while the mind is intent on the precepts of charity, it undoubtedly remains that the flesh be macerated through abstinence. Hence with twice dyed scarlet fine twined linen is conjoined. For fine linen (*byssus*) springs from the earth with glittering show: and what is designated by fine linen but bodily chastity shining white in the comeliness of purity? And it is also twisted for being interwoven into the beauty of the ephod, since the habit of chastity then attains to the perfect whiteness of purity when the flesh is worn by abstinence. And, since the merit of affliction of the flesh profits among the other virtues, fine twined linen shews white, as it were, in the diverse beauty of the ephod.

Chapter IV.

That the ruler should be discreet in keeping silence, profitable in speech.

The ruler should be discreet in keeping silence, profitable in speech; lest he either utter what ought to be suppressed or suppress what he ought to utter. For, as incautious speaking leads into error, so indiscreet silence leaves in error those who might have been instructed. For often improvident rulers, fearing to lose human favour, shrink timidly from speaking freely the things that are right; and, according to the voice of the Truth (Joh. x. 12), serve unto the custody of the flock by no means with the zeal of shepherds, but in the way of hirelings; since they fly when the wolf cometh if they hide themselves under silence. For hence it is that the Lord through the prophet upbraids them, saying, *Dumb* dogs, that cannot bark *(Isai. lvi. 10). Hence again He complains,* saying, *Ye have not gone up against the enemy, neither opposed a* wall for the house of Israel, to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord *(Ezek. xiii. 5). Now to go up against the* enemy is to go with free voice against the powers of this world for defence of the flock; and to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord is out of love of justice to resist bad men when they contend against us. For, for a shepherd to have feared to say what is right, what else is it but to have turned his back in keeping silence? But surely, if he puts himself in front for the flock, he opposes a wall against the enemy for the house of Israel. Hence again to the sinful people it is said, *Thy* prophets have seen false and foolish things for thee: neither did they discover thine iniquity, to provoke thee to repentance (Lam. ii. 14). For in sacred language teachers are sometimes called prophets, in that, by pointing out how fleeting are present things, they make manifest the things that are to come. And such the divine discourse convinces of seeing

false things, because, while fearing to reprove faults, they vainly flatter evil doers by promising security: neither do they at all discover the iniquity of sinners, since they refrain their voice from chiding. For the language of reproof is the key of discovery, because by chiding it discloses the fault of which even he who has committed it is often himself unaware. Hence Paul says, *That he may be able by sound doctrine even to convince the* gainsayers *(Tit. i.* 9). Hence through Malachi it is said, *The priest's lips keep knowledge, and they* shall seek the law at his mouth *(Malac. ii. 7). Hence through Isaiah the* Lord admonishes, saying, *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy* voice like a trumpet *(Isai. lviii. 1). For it is true that whosoever* enters on the priesthood undertakes the office of a herald, so as to walk, himself crying aloud, before the coming of the judge who follows terribly. Wherefore, if the priest knows not how to preach, what voice of a loud cry shall the mute herald utter? For hence it is that the Holy Spirit sat upon the first pastors under the appearance of tongues (Acts ii. 3); because whomsoever He has filled, He himself at once makes eloquent. Hence it is enjoined on Moses that when the priest goes into the tabernacle he shall be encompassed with bells (Exod. xxviii. 33); that is, that he shall have about him the sounds of preaching, lest he provoke by his silence the judgment of Him Who beholds him from above. For it is written, *That his sound may be heard when he goeth in unto* the holy place before the Lord and when he cometh out, that he die not *(Exod. xxviii. 35). For the priest, when he* goeth in or cometh out, dies if a sound is not heard from him, because he provokes the wrath of the hidden judge, if he goes without the sound of preaching. Aptly also are the bells described as inserted in his vestments. For what else ought we to take the vestments of the priest to be but righteous works; as the prophet attests when he says, *Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness* (Ps. cxxxi. 9)? The bells, therefore, are inherent in his vestments to signify that the very works of the priest should also

proclaim the way of life together with the sound of his tongue. But, when the ruler prepares himself for speaking, let him bear in mind with what studious caution he ought to speak, lest, if he be hurried inordinately into speaking, the hearts of hearers be smitten with the wound of error and, while he perchance desires to seem wise he unwisely sever the bond of unity. For on this account the Truth says, *Have salt in yourselves, and have peace* one with another *(Mark ix. 49). Now by salt is denoted the* word of wisdom. Let him, therefore, who strives to speak wisely fear greatly, lest by his eloquence the unity of his hearers be disturbed. Hence Paul says, *Not to be more wise than behoveth* to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety *(Rom. xii. 3). Hence in the priest's* vestment, according to Divine precept, to bells are added pomegranates (Exod. xxviii. 34). For what is signified by pomegranates but the unity of the faith? For, as within a pomegranate many seeds are protected by one outer rind, so the unity of the faith comprehends the innumerable peoples of holy Church, whom a diversity of merits retains within her. Lest then a ruler should be unadvisedly hurried into speaking, the Truth in person proclaims to His disciples this which we have already cited, *Have salt in* yourselves, and have peace one with another *(Mark ix. 49). It is as though He should* say in a figure through the dress of the priest: Join ye pomegranates to bells, that in all ye say ye may with cautious watchfulness keep the unity of the faith. Rulers ought also to guard with anxious thought not only against saying in any way what is wrong, but against uttering even what is right overmuch and inordinately; since the good effect of things spoken is often lost, when enfeebled to the hearts of hearers by the incautious importunity of loquacity; and this same loquacity, which knows not how to serve for the profit of the hearers, also defiles the speaker. Hence it is well said through Moses, *The man that hath a flux of seed shall be* unclean *(Levit. xv.* 2). For the quality of the speech that is heard is the seed of the thought which follows, since, while speech is

conceived through the ear, thought is engendered in the mind. Whence also by the wise of this world the excellent preacher was called a sower of words (*seminiverbius*) (Acts xvii. 18). Wherefore, he that suffers from a flux of seed is pronounced unclean, because, being addicted to much speaking, he defiles himself by that which, had it been orderly issued, might have produced the offspring of right thought in the hearts of hearers; and, while he incautiously spends himself in loquacity, he sheds his seed not so as to serve for generation, but unto uncleanness. Hence Paul also, in admonishing his disciple to be instant in preaching, when he says, *I charge thee* before God and Christ Jesus, Who shall judge the quick and the dead by His appearing and His kingdom, preach the word, be instant opportunely, importunely*(2 Tim. iv. 1), being about to say importunely*, premises *opportunely*, because in truth importunity mars itself to the mind of the hearer by its own very cheapness, if it knows not how to observe opportunity.

Chapter V.

That the ruler should be a near neighbour to every one in compassion, and exalted above all in contemplation.

The ruler should be a near neighbour to every one in sympathy, and exalted above all in contemplation, so that through the bowels of loving-kindness he may transfer the infirmities of others to himself, and by loftiness of speculation transcend even himself in his aspiration after the invisible; lest either in seeking high things he despise the weak things of his neighbours, or in suiting himself to the weak things of his neighbours he relinquish his aspiration after high things. For hence it is that Paul is caught up into Paradise (2 Cor. xii. 3) and explores the secrets of the third heaven, and, yet, though borne aloft in that contemplation of things invisible, recalls the vision of his mind to the bed of the carnal, and directs how they should have intercourse with each other in their hidden privacy, saying, *But on account of fornication let* every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife her due, and likewise the wife unto the husband *(1 Cor. vii. 2). And a little after (Ibid. v.* 5), *Defraud ye not* one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to prayer, and come together again, that Satan tempt you not. *Lo, he is already initiated into heavenly secrets, and* yet through the bowels of condescension he searches into the bed of the carnal; and the same eye of the heart which in his elevation he lifts to the invisible, he bends in his compassion upon the secrets of those who are subject to infirmity. In contemplation he transcends heaven, and yet in his anxious care deserts not the couch of the carnal; because, being joined at once to the highest and to the lowest by the bond of charity, though in himself mightily caught up in the power of the spirit into the heights above, yet among

others, in his loving-kindness, he is content to become weak. Hence, therefore, he says, *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and* I burn not? *(2 Cor. xi. 29). Hence again he says, Unto the Jews I became as a Jew* (1 Cor. ix. 20). Now he exhibited this behaviour not by losing hold of his faith, but by extending his loving-kindness; so as, by transferring in a figure the person of unbelievers to himself, to learn from himself how they ought to have compassion shewn them; to the end that he might bestow on them what he would have rightly wished to have had bestowed upon himself, had he been as they. Hence again he says, *Whether we be beside* ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for you *(2 Cor. v. 13). For he had known how both* to transcend himself in contemplation, and to accommodate himself to his hearers in condescension. Hence Jacob, the Lord looking down from above, and oil being poured down on the stone, saw angels ascending and descending (Gen. xxviii. 12); to signify, that true preachers not only aspire in contemplation to the holy head of the Church, that is to the Lord, above, but also descend in commiseration downward to His members. Hence Moses goes frequently in and out of the tabernacle, and he who is wrapped into contemplation within is busied outside with the affairs of those who are subject to infirmity. Within he considers the secret things of God; without he carries the burdens of the carnal. And also concerning doubtful matters he always recurs to the tabernacle, to consult the Lord before the ark of the covenant; affording without doubt an example to rulers; that, when in the outside world they are uncertain how to order things, they should return to their own soul as though to the tabernacle, and, as before the ark of the covenant, consult the Lord, if so, they may search within themselves the pages of sacred utterance concerning that whereof they doubt. Hence the Truth itself, manifested to us through susception of our humanity, continues in prayer on the mountain, but works miracles in the cities (Luke vi. 12), thus laying down the way to be followed by good

rulers; that, though already in contemplation aspiring to the highest things, they should mingle in sympathy with the necessities of the infirm; since charity then rises wonderfully to high things when it is compassionately drawn to the low things of neighbours; and the more kindly it descends to the weak things of this world, the more vigorously it recurs to the things on high. But those who are over others should shew themselves to be such that their subjects may not blush to disclose even their secrets to them; that the little ones, vexed with the waves of temptation, may have recourse to their pastor's heart as to a mother's breast, and wash away the defilement they foresee to themselves from the filth of the sin that buffets them in the solace of his exhortation and in the tears of prayer. Hence also it is that before the doors of the temple the brazen sea for washing the hands of those who enter, that is the laver, is supported by twelve oxen (1 Kings vii. 23, *seq*.), whose faces indeed stand out to view, but whose hinder parts are hidden. For what is signified by the twelve oxen but the whole order of pastors, of whom the law says, as explained by Paul, *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the* corn *(1 Cor. ix. 9; ex Deut. xxv. 4)? Their open works indeed we see;* but what remains to them behind in the hidden retribution of the strict judge we know not. Yet, when they prepare the patience of their condescension for cleansing the sins of their neighbours in confession, they support, as it were, the laver before the doors of the temple; that whosoever is striving to enter the gate of eternity may shew his temptations to his pastor's heart, and, as it were, wash the hands of his thought and of his deed in the laver of the oxen. And for the most part it comes to pass that, while the ruler's mind becomes aware, through condescension, of the trials of others, it is itself also attacked by the temptations whereof it hears; since the same water of the laver in which a multitude of people is cleansed is undoubtedly itself defiled. For, in receiving the pollutions of those who wash, it loses, as it were, the calmness

of its own purity. But of this the pastor ought by no means to be afraid, since, under God, who nicely balances all things, he is the more easily rescued from his own temptations as he is more compassionately distressed by those of others.

Chapter VI.

That the ruler should be, through humility, a companion of good livers, but, through the zeal of righteousness, rigid against the vices of evildoers.

The ruler should be, through humility, a companion of good livers, and, through the zeal of righteousness, rigid against the vices of evil-doers; so that in nothing he prefer himself to the good, and yet, when the fault of the bad requires it, he be at once conscious of the power of his priority; to the end that, while among his subordinates who live well he waives his rank and accounts them as his equals, he may not fear to execute the laws of rectitude towards the perverse. For, as I remember to have said in my book on morals (*Lib.* xxi., *Moral, ca*, *nunc. n.* 22), it is clear that nature produced all men equal; but, through variation in the order of their merits, guilt puts some below others. But the very diversity which has accrued from vice is ordered by divine judgment, so that, since all men cannot stand on an equal footing, one should be ruled by another. Hence all who are over others ought to consider in themselves not the authority of their rank, but the equality of their condition and rejoice not to be over men, but to do them good. For indeed our ancient fathers are said to have been not kings of men, but shepherds of flocks. And, when the Lord said to Noe and his children, *Increase* and multiply, and replenish the earth *(Gen. ix. 1), He at once added,* And let the fear of you and the dread of you be upon all the beasts of the earth. *Thus it appears that, whereas it is ordered that the* fear and the dread should be upon the beasts of the earth, it is forbidden that it should be upon men. For man is by nature preferred to the brute beasts, but not to other men; and therefore it is said to him that he should be feared by the beasts, but not by men; since to wish to be feared by one's equal is to be

proud against nature. And yet it is necessary that rulers should be feared by their subjects, when they find that God is not feared by them; so that those who have no dread of divine judgments may at any rate, through human dread, be afraid to sin. For superiors by no means shew themselves proud in seeking to inspire this fear, in which they seek not their own glory, but the righteousness of their subordinates. For in exacting fear of themselves from such as live perversely, they lord it, as it were, not over men, but over beasts, inasmuch as, so far as their subordinates are bestial, they ought also to lie subdued to dread.

But commonly a ruler, from the very fact of his being pre-eminent over others, is puffed up with elation of thought; and, while all things serve his need, while his commands are quickly executed after his desire, while all his subjects extol with praises what he has done well, but have no authority to speak against what he has done amiss, and while they commonly praise even what they ought to have reproved, his mind, seduced by what is offered in abundance from below, is lifted up above itself; and, while outwardly surrounded by unbounded favour, he loses his inward sense of truth; and, forgetful of himself, he scatters himself on the voices of other men, and believes himself to be such as outwardly he hears himself called rather than such as he ought inwardly to have judged himself to be. He looks down on those who are under him, nor does he acknowledge them as in the order of nature his equals; and those whom he has surpassed in the accident of power he believes himself to have transcended also in the merits of his life; he esteems himself wiser than all whom he sees himself to excel in power. For indeed he establishes himself in his own mind on a certain lofty eminence, and, though bound together in the same condition of nature with others, he disdains to regard others from the same level; and so he comes to be even like him of whom it is written, *He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all* the children of pride *(Job xli. 25). Nay,*

aspiring to a singular eminence, and despising the social life of the angels, he says, *I will place my seat in the north, and I will be like unto the* Most High *(Isai.* xiv. 13). Wherefore through a marvellous judgment he finds a pit of downfall within himself, while outwardly he exalts himself on the summit of power. For he is indeed made like unto the apostate angel, when, being a man, he disdains to be like unto men. Thus Saul, after merit of humility, became swollen with pride, when in the height of power: for his humility he was preferred, for his pride rejected; as the Lord attests, Who says, *When thou wast little in thine* own sight, did I not make thee the head of the tribes of Israel (1 Sam. xv. 17)? He had before seen himself little in his own eyes, but, when propped up by temporal power, he no longer saw himself little. For, preferring himself in comparison with others because he had more power than all, he esteemed himself great above all. Yet in a wonderful way, when he was little with himself, he was great with God; but, when he appeared great with himself, he was little with God. Thus commonly, while the mind is inflated from an affluence of subordinates, it becomes corrupted to a flux of pride, the very summit of power being pander to desire. And in truth he orders this power well who knows how both to maintain it and to combat it. He orders it well who knows how through it to tower above delinquencies, and knows how with it to match himself with others in equality. For the human mind commonly is exalted even when supported by no authority: how much more does it lift itself on high when authority lends itself to its support! Nevertheless he dispenses this authority aright, who knows how, with anxious care, both to take of it what is helpful, and also to reject what tempts, and with it to perceive himself to be on a par with others, and yet to put himself above those that sin in his avenging zeal.

But we shall more fully understand this distinction, if we look at the examples given by the first pastor. For Peter, who had received from God

the principality of Holy Church, from Cornelius, acting well and prostrating himself humbly before him, refused to accept immoderate veneration, saying, *Stand up; do it not; I myself* also am a man *(Acts* x. 26). But, when he discovers the guilt of Ananias and Sapphira, he soon shews with how great power he had been made eminent above all others. For by his word he smote their life, which he detected by the penetration of his spirit; and he recollected himself as chief within the Church against sins, though he did not acknowledge this, when honour was eagerly paid him, before his brethren who acted well. In one case holiness of conduct merited the communion of equality; in the other avenging zeal brought out to view the just claims of authority. Paul, too, knew not himself as preferred above his brethren who acted well, when he said, *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers* of your joy *(2 Cor.* i. 23). And he straightway added, *For by faith ye stand:* as if to explain his declaration by saying, For this cause we have not dominion over your faith, because by faith ye stand; for we are your equals in that wherein we know you to stand. He knew not himself as preferred above his brethren, when he said, *We became babes in the midst of* you *(1 Thess. ii.* 7); and again, *But* ourselves your servants through Christ *(2 Cor. iv. 5). But, when he found a fault* that required to be corrected, straightway he recollected himself as a master, saying, *What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a* rod *(1 Cor. iv.* 21)?

Supreme rule, then, is ordered well, when he who presides lords it over vices, rather than over his brethren. But, when superiors correct their delinquent subordinates, it remains for them anxiously to take heed how far, while in right of their authority they smite faults with due discipline, they still, through custody of humility, acknowledge themselves to be on a par with the very brethren who are corrected; although for the most part it is becoming that in our silent thought we even prefer the brethren whom we correct to ourselves. For their vices are through us smitten with the vigour

of discipline; but in those which we ourselves commit we are lacerated by not even a word of upbraiding. Wherefore we are by so much the more bounden before the Lord as among men we sin unpunished: but our discipline renders our subordinates by so much the freer from divine judgment, as it leaves not their faults without retribution here. Therefore, in the heart humility should be maintained, and in action discipline. And all the time there is need of sagacious insight, lest, through excessive custody of the virtue of humility, the just claims of government be relaxed, and lest, while any superior lowers himself more than is fit, he be unable to restrain the lives of his subordinates under the bond of discipline. Let rulers, then, maintain outwardly what they undertake for the benefit of others: let them retain inwardly what makes them fearful in their estimate of themselves. But still let even their subjects perceive, by certain signs coming out becomingly, that in themselves they are humble; so as both to see something to be afraid of in their authority, and to acknowledge something to imitate with respect to humility. Therefore let those who preside study without intermission that in proportion as their power is seen to be great externally it be kept down within themselves internally; that it vanquish not their thought; that the heart be not carried away to delight in it; lest the mind become unable to control that which in lust of domination it submits itself to. For, lest the heart of a ruler should be betrayed into elation by delight in personal power, it is rightly said by a certain wise man *They have* made thee a leader: lift not up thyself, but be among them as one of them *(Ecclus. xxxii.* 1). Hence also Peter says, *Not as being lords over God's heritage, but being made ensamples to the* flock *(1 Pet. v.* 3). Hence the Truth in person, provoking us to higher virtuous desert, says, *Ye* know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are greater exercise authority upon them. It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be greater among you, let him be your minister; and

whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the San of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister *(Matth.* xx. 25). Hence also He indicates what punishments are in store for the servant who has been elated by his assumption of government, saying, *But and if that* evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites *(Matth. xxiv. 48,* seq.*). For he is* rightly numbered among the hypocrites, who under pretence of discipline turns the ministry of government to the purpose of domination. And yet sometimes there is more grievous delinquency, if among perverse persons equality is kept up more than discipline. For Eli, because, overcome by false affection, he would not punish his delinquent sons, smote himself along with his sons before the strict judge with a cruel doom (1 Sam. iv. 17, 18). For on this account it is said to him by the divine voice, *Thou hast honoured thy sons more* than Me *(Ibid. ii. 29). Hence, too, He upbraids* the shepherds through the prophet, saying, *That which was broken ye* have not bound up, and that which was cast away ye have not brought back *(Ezek. xxxiv.* 4). For one who had been cast away is brought back, when any one who has fallen into sin is recalled to a state of righteousness by the vigour of pastoral solicitude. For ligature binds a fracture when discipline subdues a sin, lest the wound should bleed mortally for want of being compressed by the severity of constraint. But often a fracture is made worse, when it is bound together unwarily, so that the cut is more severely felt from being immoderately constrained by ligaments. Hence it is needful that when a wound of sin in subordinates is repressed by correction, even constraint should moderate itself with great carefulness, to the end that it may so exercise the rights of discipline against delinquents as to retain the bowels

of loving-kindness. For care should be taken that a ruler shew himself to his subjects as a mother in loving-kindness, and as a father in discipline. And all the time it should be seen to with anxious circumspection, that neither discipline be rigid nor loving-kindness lax. For, as we have before now said in our book on Morals (*Lib.* xx., *Moral* n. 14, c. 8, *et e*, *lib.* 1), there is much wanting both to discipline and to compassion, if one be had without the other. But there ought to be in rulers towards their subjects both compassion justly considerate, and discipline affectionately severe. For hence it is that, as the Truth teaches (Luke x. 34), the man is brought by the care of the Samaritan half dead into the inn, and both wine and oil are applied to his wounds; the wine to make them smart, the oil to soothe them. For whosoever superintends the healing of wounds must needs administer in wine the smart of pain, and in oil the softness of loving-kindness, to the end that through wine what is festering may be purged, and through oil what is curable may be soothed. Gentleness, then, is to be mingled with severity; a sort of compound is to be made of both; so that subjects be neither exulcerated by too much asperity, nor relaxed by too great kindness. Which thing, according to the words of Paul (Heb. ix. 4), is well signified by that ark of the tabernacle, in which, together with the tables, there as a rod and manna; because, if with knowledge of sacred Scripture in the good ruler's breast there is the rod of constraint, there should be also the manna of sweetness. Hence David says, *Thy rod and thy* staff, they have comforted me *(Ps. xxiii. 4). For with a rod we are smitten,* with a staff we are supported. If, then, there is the constraint of the rod for striking, there should be also the comfort of the staff for supporting. Wherefore let there be love, but not enervating; let there be vigour, but not exasperating; let there be zeal, but not immoderately burning; let there be pity; but not sparing more than is expedient; that, while justice and mercy blend themselves together in supreme rule, he who is at the head may both soothe

the hearts of his subjects in making them afraid, and yet in soothing them constrain them to reverential awe.

Chapter VII.

That the ruler relax not his care for the things that are within in his occupation among the things that are without, nor neglect to provide for the things that are without in his solicitude for the things that are within.

The ruler should not relax his care for the things that are within in his occupation among the things that are without, nor neglect to provide for the things that are without in his solicitude for the things that are within; lest either, given up to the things that are without, he fall away from his inmost concerns, or, occupied only with the things that are within bestow not on his neighbours outside himself what he owes them. For it is often the case that some, as if forgetting that they have been put over their brethren for their souls' sake, devote themselves with the whole effort of their heart to secular concerns; these, when they are at hand, they exult in transacting, and, even when there is a lack of them, pant after them night and day with seethings of turbid thought; and when, haply for lack of opportunity, they have quiet from them, by their very quiet they are wearied all the more. For they count it pleasure to be tired by action: they esteem it labour not to labour in earthly businesses. And so it comes to pass that, while they delight in being hustled by worldly tumults, they are ignorant of the things that are within, which they ought to have taught to others. And from this cause undoubtedly, the life also of their subjects is benumbed; because, while desirous of advancing spiritually, it meets a stumbling-block on the way in the example of him who is set over it. For when the head languishes, the members fail to thrive; and it is in vain for an army to follow swiftly in pursuit of enemies if the very leader of the march goes wrong. No exhortation sustains the minds of the subjects, and no reproof chastises their

faults, because, while the office of an earthly judge is executed by the guardian of souls, the attention of the shepherd is diverted from custody of the flock; and the subjects are unable to apprehend the light of truth, because, while earthly pursuits occupy the pastor's mind, dust, driven by the wind of temptation, blinds the Church's eyes. To guard against this, the Redeemer of the human race, when He would restrain us from gluttony, saying, *Take heed to yourselves that your hearts be not overcharged with* surfeiting and drunkenness *(Luke xxi. 34), forthwith added,* Or with cares of this life: *and in the same place also, with design* to add fearfulness to the warning, He straightway said, *Lest* perchance that day come upon you unawares *(Ibid.): and He even declares the manner of that coming, saying, For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of* the whole earth *(Ibid. 35). Hence He says again,* No man can serve two masters *(Luke xvi. 13). Hence Paul withdraws the* minds of the religious from consort with the world by summoning, nay rather enlisting them, when he says, *No man that warreth for* God entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him to whom he has approved himself (2 Tim. ii. 4). Hence to the rulers of the Church he both commends the studies of leisure and points out the remedies of counsel, saying, *If then ye should have secular* judgments, set them to judge who are contemptible in the church (1 Cor. vi. 4); that is, that those very persons whom no spiritual gifts adorn should devote themselves to earthly charges. It is as if he had said more plainly, Since they are incapable of penetrating the inmost things, let them at any rate employ themselves externally in necessary things. Hence Moses, who speaks with God (Exod. xviii. 17, 18), is judged by the reproof of Jethro, who was of alien race, because with ill-advised labour he devotes himself to the people's earthly affairs: and counsel too is presently given him, that he should appoint others in his stead for settling earthly strifes,

and he himself should be more free to learn spiritual secrets for the instruction of the people.

By the subjects, then, inferior matters are to be transacted, by the rulers the highest thought of; so that no annoyance of dust may darken the eye which is placed aloft for looking forward to the onward steps. For all who preside are the head of their subjects; and, that the feet may be able to take a straight course, the head ought undoubtedly to look forward to it from above, lest the feet linger on their onward journey, the body being bent from its uprightness and the head bowed down to the earth. But with what conscience can the overseer of souls avail himself among other men of his pastoral dignity, while engaged himself in the earthly cares which it was his duty to reprehend in others? And this indeed is what the Lord, in the wrath of just retribution, menaced through the prophet, saying, *And there shall be like people,* like priest *(Hos.* iv. 9). For the priest is as the people, when one who bears a spiritual office acts as do others who are still under judgment with regard to their carnal pursuits. And this indeed the prophet Jeremiah, in the great sorrow of his charity, deplores under the image of the destruction of the temple, saying, *How is* the gold become dim! The most excellent colour is changed; the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of all the streets *(Lam. iv.* 1). For what is expressed by gold, which surpasses all other metals, but the excellency of holiness? What by the most excellent colour but the reverence that is about religion, to all men lovely? What are signified by the stones of the sanctuary but persons in sacred orders? What is figured under the name of streets but the latitude of this present life? For, because in Greek speech the word for latitude is πλάτος, streets (*plateæ*) have been so called from their breadth, or latitude. But the Truth in person says, *Broad and spacious is the way that leadeth to* destruction *(Matth.* vii. 13). Gold, therefore, becomes dim when a life of holiness is polluted by earthly doings; the most excellent colour is changed,

when the previous reputation of persons who were believed to be living religiously is diminished. For, when any one after a habit of holiness mixes himself up with earthly doings, it is as though his colour were changed, and the reverence that surrounded him grew pale and disregarded before the eyes of men. The stones of the sanctuary also are poured out into the streets, when those who, for the ornament of the Church, should have been free to penetrate internal mysteries as it were in the secret places of the tabernacle seek out the broadways of secular causes outside. For indeed to this end they were made stones of the sanctuary, that they might appear in the vestment of the high-priest within the holy of holies. But when ministers of religion exact not the Redeemer's honour from those that are under them by the merit of their life, they are not stones of the sanctuary in the ornament of the pontiff. And truly these stones of the sanctuary lie scattered through the streets, when persons in sacred orders, given up to the latitude of their own pleasures, cleave to earthly businesses. And it is to be observed that they are said to be scattered, not in the streets, but in the top of the streets; because, even when they are engaged in earthly matters, they desire to appear topmost; so as to occupy the broad ways in their enjoyment of delight, and yet to be at the top of the streets in the dignity of holiness.

Further, there is nothing to hinder us from taking the stones of the sanctuary to be those of which the sanctuary was itself constructed; which lie scattered in the top of the streets when men in sacred orders, in whose office the glory of holiness had previously seemed to stand, devote themselves out of preference to earthly doings. Secular employments, therefore, though they may sometimes be endured out of compassion, should never be sought after out of affection for the things themselves; lest, while they weigh down the mind of him who loves them, they sink it, overcome by its own burden, from heavenly places to the lowest. But, on the other hand, there are some who undertake the care of the flock, but

desire to be so at leisure for their own spiritual concerns as to be in no wise occupied with external things. Such persons, in neglecting all care for what pertains to the body, by no means meet the needs of those who are put under them. And certainly their preaching is for the most part despised; because, while they find fault with the deeds of sinners, but nevertheless afford them not the necessaries of the present life, they are not at all willingly listened to. For the word of doctrine penetrates not the mind of one that is in need, if the hand of compassion commends it not to his heart. But the seed of the word readily germinates, when the loving-kindness of the preacher waters it in the hearer's breast. Whence, for a ruler to be able to infuse what may profit inwardly, it is necessary for him, with blameless consideration, to provide also for outward things. Let pastors, then, so glow with ardour in regard to the inward affections of those they have the charge of as not to relinquish provision also for their outward life. For, as we have said, the heart of the flock is, even as it were of right, set against preaching, if the care of external succour be neglected by the pastor. Whence also the first pastor anxiously admonishes, saying, *The elders which are* among you I beseech, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed, feed the flock of God which is among you *(1 Pet. v.* 1): in which place he shewed whether it was the feeding of the heart or of the body that he was commending, when he forthwith added, *Providing for it,* not by constraint, but willingly, according to God, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. In these words, indeed, pastors are kindly forewarned, lest, while they satisfy the want of those who are under them, they slay themselves with the sword of ambition; lest, while through them their neighbours are refreshed with succours of the flesh, they themselves remain fasting from the bread of righteousness. This solicitude of pastors Paul stirs up when he says, *If any provide not for his own, and* especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse

than an infidel *(1 Tim. v. 8). In the midst of all this, then,* they should fear, and watchfully take heed, lest, while occupied with outward care, they be whelmed away from inward intentness. For usually, as we have already said, the hearts of rulers, while unwarily devoting themselves to temporal solicitude, cool in inmost love; and, being carried hither and thither abroad, fear not to forget that they have undertaken the government of souls. It is necessary, then, that the solicitude expended on those who are put under us should be kept within a certain measure. Hence it is well said to Ezekiel, *The priests shall not shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to* grow long, but polling let them poll their heads (Ezek. xliv. 20). For they are rightly called priests who are set over the faithful for affording them sacred guidance. But the hairs outside the head are thoughts in the mind; which, as they spring up insensibly above the brain, denote the cares of the present life, which, owing to negligent perception, since they sometimes come forth unseasonably, advance, as it were, without our feeling them. Since, then, all who are over others ought indeed to have external anxieties, and yet should not be vehemently bent upon them, the priests are rightly forbidden either to shave their heads or to let their hair grow long; that so they may neither cut off from themselves entirely thoughts of the flesh for the life of those who are under them, nor again allow them to grow too much. Thus in this passage it is well said, *Polling let them* poll their heads; *to wit, that the cares of temporal anxiety should* both extend themselves as far as need requires, and yet be cut short soon, lest they grow to an immoderate extent. When, therefore, through provident care for bodies applied externally life is protected [or, through provident care applied externally the life of bodies is protected], and again, through moderate intentness of heart, is not impeded, the hairs on the priest's head are both preserved to cover the skin, and cut short so as not to veil the eyes.

Chapter VIII.

That the ruler should not set his heart on pleasing men, and yet should give heed to what ought to please them.

Meanwhile it is also necessary for the ruler to keep wary watch, lest the lust of pleasing men assail him; lest, when he studiously penetrates the things that are within, and providently supplies the things that are without, he seek to be beloved of those that are under him more than truth; lest, while, supported by his good deeds, he seems not to belong to the world, self-love estrange him from his Maker. For he is the Redeemer's enemy who through the good works which he does covets being loved by the Church instead of Him; since a servant whom the bridegroom has sent with gifts to the bride is guilty of treacherous thought if he desires to please the eyes of the bride. And in truth this self-love, when it has got possession of a ruler's mind, sometimes carries it away inordinately to softness, but sometimes to roughness. For from love of himself the ruler's mind is inclined to softness, because, when he observes those that are under him sinning, he does not presume to reprove them, lest their affection for himself should grow dull; nay sometimes he smooths down with flatteries the offence of his subordinates which he ought to have rebuked. Hence it is well said through the prophet, *Woe unto them that sew cushions under* every elbow, and make pillows under the head of every stature to catch souls *(Ezek. xiii.* 18); inasmuch as to put cushions under every elbow is to cherish with bland flatteries souls that are falling from their uprightness and reclining themselves in this world's enjoyment. For it is as though the elbow of a recumbent person rested on a cushion and his head on pillows, when the hardness of reproof is withdrawn from one who sins, and when the softness of favour is offered to him, that he may lie softly in error, while no

roughness of contradiction troubles him. But so rulers who love themselves undoubtedly shew themselves to those by whom they fear they may be injured in their pursuit of temporal glory. Such indeed as they see to have no power against them they ever keep down with roughness of rigid censure, never admonish them gently, but, forgetful of pastoral kindness, terrify them with the rights of domination. Such the divine voice rightly upbraids through the prophet, saying, *But with austerity and power did ye rule them* (Ezek. xxiv. 4). For, loving themselves more than their Maker, they lift up themselves haughtily towards those that are under them, considering not what they ought to do, but what they can do; they have no fear of future judgment; they glory insolently in temporal power; it pleases them to be free to do even unlawful things, and that no one among their subordinates should contradict them. He, then, who sets his mind on doing wrong things, and yet wishes all other men to hold their peace about them, is himself a witness to himself that he desires to be loved himself more than the truth, which he is unwilling should be defended against him. There is indeed no one who so lives as not to some extent to fail in duty. He, then, desires the truth to be loved more fully than himself, who wishes to be spared by no one against the truth. For hence Peter willingly accepted Paul's rebuke (Galat. ii. 11); hence David humbly listened to the reproof of his subject (2 Sam. xii. 7); because good rulers, being themselves unconscious of loving with partial affection, believe the word of free sincerity from subjects to be the homage of humility. But meanwhile it is necessary that the care of government be tempered with so great skill of management that the mind of subjects, when it has become able to feel rightly on some subjects, should so advance to liberty of speech that liberty still break not out into pride; lest, while liberty of the tongue is perchance conceded to them overmuch, the humility of their life be lost. It is to be borne in mind also, that it is right for good rulers to desire to please men;

but this in order to draw their neighbours by the sweetness of their own character to affection for the truth; not that they should long to be themselves loved, but should make affection for themselves as a sort of road by which to lead the hearts of their hearers to the love of the Creator. For it is indeed difficult for a preacher who is not loved, however well he may preach, to be willingly listened to. He, then, who is over others ought to study to be loved to the end that he may be listened to, and still not seek love for its own sake, lest he be found in the hidden usurpation of his thought to rebel against Him whom in his office he appears to serve. Which thing Paul insinuates well, when, manifesting the secret of his affection for us, he says, *Even as I please all men in all things* (1 Cor. x. 33). And yet he says again, *If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of* Christ *(Gal. i.* 10). Thus Paul pleases, and pleases not; because in that he desires to please he seeks that not he himself should please men, but truth through him.

Chapter IX.

That the ruler ought to be careful to understand how commonly vices pass themselves off as virtues.

The ruler also ought to understand how commonly vices pass themselves off as virtues. For often niggardliness palliates itself under the name of frugality, and on the other hand prodigality hides itself under the appellation of liberality. Often inordinate laxity is believed to be loving-kindness, and unbridled wrath is accounted the virtue of spiritual zeal. Often precipitate action is taken for the efficacy of promptness, and tardiness for the deliberation of seriousness. Whence it is necessary for the ruler of souls to distinguish with vigilant care between virtues and vices, lest either niggardliness get possession of his heart while he exults in seeming frugal in expenditure; or, while anything is prodigally wasted, he glory in being as it were compassionately liberal; or in remitting what he ought to have smitten he draw on those that are under him to eternal punishment; or in mercilessly smiting an offence he himself offend more grievously; or by immaturely anticipating mar what might have been done properly and gravely; or by putting off the merit of a good action change it to something worse.

Chapter X.

What the ruler's discrimination should be between correction and connivance, between fervour and gentleness.

It should be known too that the vices of subjects ought sometimes to be prudently connived at, but indicated in that they are connived at; that things, even though openly known, ought sometimes to be seasonably tolerated, but sometimes, though hidden, be closely investigated; that they ought sometimes to be gently reproved, but sometimes vehemently censured. For, indeed, some things, as we have said, ought to be prudently connived at, but indicated in that they are connived at, so that, when the delinquent is aware that he is discovered and borne with, he may blush to augment those faults which he considers in himself are tolerated in silence, and may punish himself in his own judgment as being one whom the patience of his ruler in his own mind mercifully excuses. By such connivance the Lord well reproves Judah, when He says through the prophet, *Thou hast lied, and hast not remembered Me, nor laid it* to thy heart, because I have held My peace and been as one that saw not *(Isai. lvii.* 11). Thus He both connived at faults and made them known, since He both held His peace against the sinner, and nevertheless declared this very thing, that He had held His peace. But some things, even though openly known, ought to be seasonably tolerated; that is, when circumstances afford no suitable opportunity for openly correcting them. For sores by being unseasonably cut are the worse enflamed and, if medicaments suit not the time, it is undoubtedly evident that they lose their medicinal function. But, while a fitting time for the correction of subordinates is being sought, the patience of the prelate is exercised under the very weight of their offences. Whence it is well said by the Psalmist, *Sinners have built upon my back* (Ps. cxxviii. 3). For on the

back we support burdens; and therefore he complains that sinners had built upon his back, as if to say plainly, Those whom I am unable to correct I carry as a burden laid upon me.

Some hidden things, however, ought to be closely investigated, that, by the breaking out of certain symptoms, the ruler may discover all that lies closely hidden in the minds of his subordinates, and, by reproof intervening at the nick of time, from very small things become aware of greater ones. Whence it is rightly said to Ezekiel, *Son of man, dig in the wall* (Ezek. viii. 8); where the said prophet presently adds, *And when I had digged in the wall, there* appeared one door. And he said unto me, Go in, and see the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every similitude of creeping things, and abomination of beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, were pourtrayed upon the wall (Ibid. 9, 10). Now by Ezekiel are personified men in authority; by the wall is signified the hardness of their subordinates. And what is digging in a wall but opening the hardness of the heart by sharp inquisitions? Which wall when he had dug into, there appeared a door, because when hardness of heart is pierced either by careful questionings or by seasonable reproofs, there is shewn as it were a kind of door, through which may appear the interior of the thoughts in him who is reproved. Whence also it follows well in that place, *Go in and see the wicked abominations* that they do here *(Ibid.). He goes in, as it were,* to see the abominations, who, by examination of certain symptoms outwardly appearing, so penetrates the hearts of his subordinates as to become cognizant of all their illicit thoughts. Whence also he added, *And I went in and saw; and behold every similitude of* creeping things, and abomination of beasts *(Ibid.). By creeping things* thoughts altogether earthly are signified; but by beasts such as are indeed a little lifted above the earth, but still crave the rewards of earthly recompense. For creeping things cleave to the earth with the whole body; but beasts are in a large part of the

body lifted above the earth, yet are ever inclined to the earth by gulosity. Therefore there are creeping things within the wall, when thoughts are revolved in the mind which never rise above earthly cravings. There are also beasts within the wall, when, though some just and some honourable thoughts are entertained, they are still subservient to appetite for temporal gains and honour, and, though in themselves indeed lifted, as one may say, above the earth, still through desire to curry favour, as through the throat's craving, demean themselves to what is lowest. Whence also it is well added, *And all the* idols of the house of Israel were pourtrayed upon the wall (Ezek. viii. 10), inasmuch as it is written, *And covetousness, which is idolatry* (Colos. iii. 5). Rightly therefore after beasts idols are spoken of, because some, though lifting themselves as it were above the earth by honourable action, still lower themselves to the earth by dishonourable ambition. And it is well said, *Were pourtrayed;* since, when the shows of external things are drawn into one's inner self, whatever is meditated on under imagined images is, as it were, pourtrayed on the heart. It is to be observed, therefore, that first a hole in the wall, and afterwards a door, is perceived, and that then at length the hidden abomination is made apparent; because, in fact, of every single sin signs are first seen outwardly, and afterwards a door is pointed out for opening the iniquity to view; and then at length every evil that lies hidden within is disclosed.

Some things, however, ought to be gently reproved: for, when fault is committed, not of malice, but only from ignorance or infirmity, it is certainly necessary that the very censure of it be tempered with great moderation. For it is true that all of us, so long as we subsist in this mortal flesh, are subject to the infirmities of our corruption. Every one, therefore, ought to gather from himself how it behoves him to pity another's weakness, lest, if he be too fervently hurried to words of reprehension against a neighbour's infirmity, he should seem to be forgetful of his own.

Whence Paul admonishes well, when he says, *If a* man be overtaken in any fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted *(Galat. vi.* 1); as if to say plainly, When what thou seest of the infirmity of another displeases thee, consider what thou art; that so the spirit may moderate itself in the zeal of reprehension, while for itself also it fears what it reprehends.

Some things, however, ought to be vehemently reproved, that, when a fault is not recognized by him who has committed it, he may be made sensible of its gravity from the mouth of the reprover; and that, when any one smooths over to himself the evil that he has perpetrated, he may be led by the asperity of his censurer to entertain grave fears of its effects against himself. For indeed it is the duty of a ruler to shew by the voice of preaching the glory of the supernal country, to disclose what great temptations of the old enemy are lurking in this life's journey, and to correct with great asperity of zeal such evils among those who are under his sway as ought not to be gently borne with; lest, in being too little incensed against faults, of all faults he be himself held guilty. Whence it is well said to Ezekiel, *Take unto thee a tile, and thou shalt lay it before thee,* and pourtray upon it the city Jerusalem *(Ezek. iv. 1). And immediately it is* subjoined, *And thou shalt lay siege against it, and build forts, and* cast a mount, and set camps against it, and set battering rams against it round about. And to him, for his own defence it is forthwith subjoined, And do thou take unto thee an iron frying-pan, and thou shalt set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city. For of what does the prophet Ezekiel bear the semblance but of teachers, in that it is said to him, *Take unto thee a tile, and thou* shalt lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city Jerusalem?

For indeed holy teachers take unto themselves a tile, when they lay hold of the earthly heart of hearers in order to teach them: which tile in truth they lay before themselves, because they keep watch over it with the entire

bent of their mind: on which tile also they are commanded to pourtray the city Jerusalem, because they are at the utmost pains to represent to earthy hearts by preaching a vision of supernal peace. But, because the glory of the heavenly country is perceived in vain, unless it be known also what great temptations of the crafty enemy assail us here, it is fitly subjoined, *And thou shalt lay siege against it, and build* forts. *For indeed holy preachers lay siege about the tile on* which the city Jerusalem is delineated, when to a mind that is earthy but already seeking after the supernal country they shew how great an opposition of vices in the time of this life is arrayed against it. For, when it is shewn how each several sin besets us in our onward course, it is as though a siege were laid round the city Jerusalem by the voice of the preacher. But, because preachers ought not only to make known how vices assail us, but also how well-guarded virtues strengthen us, it is rightly subjoined, *And* thou shalt build forts. *For indeed the holy preacher builds* forts, when he shews what virtues resist what vices. And because, as virtue increases, the wars of temptation are for the most part augmented, it is rightly further added, *And thou shalt cast a mount,* and set camps against it, and set battering rams round about. For, when any preacher sets forth the mass of increasing temptation, he casts a mount. And he sets camps against Jerusalem when to the right intention of his hearers he foretells the unsurveyed, and as it were incomprehensible, ambuscades of the cunning enemy. And he sets battering-rams round about, when he makes known the darts of temptation encompassing us on every side in this life, and piercing through our wall of virtues.

But although the ruler may nicely insinuate all these things, he procures not for himself lasting absolution, unless he glow with a spirit of jealousy against the delinquencies of all and each. Whence in that place it is further rightly subjoined, *And do thou take to thee an iron frying-pan, and thou*

shalt set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city. *For by the* frying-pan is denoted a frying of the mind, and by iron the hardness of reproof.

But what more fiercely fries and excruciates the teacher's mind than zeal for God? Hence Paul was being burnt with the frying of this frying-pan when he said, *Who is made weak, and I am not made weak? Who is* offended, and I burn not? *(2 Cor. xi. 29). And, because whosoever is* inflamed with zeal for God is protected by a guard continually, lest he should deserve to be condemned for negligence, it is rightly said, Thou shalt set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city. For an iron frying-pan is set for a wall of iron between the prophet and the city, because, when rulers already exhibit strong zeal, they keep the same zeal as a strong defence afterwards between themselves and their hearers, lest they should be destitute then of the power to punish from having been previously remiss in reproving.

But meanwhile it is to be borne in mind that, while the mind of the teacher exasperates itself for rebuke, it is very difficult for him to avoid breaking out into saying something that he ought not to say. And for the most part it happens that, when the faults of subordinates are reprehended with severe invective, the tongue of the master is betrayed into excess of language. And, when rebuke is immoderately hot, the hearts of the delinquents are depressed to despair. Wherefore it is necessary for the exasperated ruler, when he considers that he has wounded more than he should have done the feelings of his subordinates, to have recourse in his own mind to penitence, so as by lamentations to obtain pardon in the sight of the Truth; and even for this cause, that it is through the ardour of his zeal for it that he sins. This is what the Lord in a figure enjoins through Moses, saying, *If a man go in simplicity of heart* with his friend into the wood to hew wood, and the wood of the axe fly from his hand, and the iron slip from the helve and smite his friend and slay him, he shall flee unto one of the

aforesaid cities and live; lest haply the next of kin to him whose blood has been shed, while his heart is hot, pursue him, and overtake him, and smite him mortally (Deut. xix. 4, 5). For indeed we go with a friend into the wood as often as we betake ourselves to look into the delinquencies of subordinates. And we hew wood in simplicity of heart, when with pious intention we cut off the vices of delinquents. But the axe flies from the hand, when rebuke is drawn on to asperity more than need requires. And the iron leaps from the helve, when out of reproof issues speech too hard. And he smites and slays his friend, because overstrained contumely cuts him off from the spirit of love. For the mind of one who is reproved suddenly breaks out into hatred, if immoderate reproof charges it beyond its due. But he who smites wood incautiously and destroys his neighbour must needs fly to three cities, that in one of them he may live protected; since if, betaking himself to the laments of penitence, he is hidden under hope and charity in sacramental unity, he is not held guilty of the perpetrated homicide. And him the next of kin to the slain man does not kill, even when he finds him; because, when the strict judge comes, who has joined himself to us by sharing in our nature, without doubt He requires not the penalty of his fault from him whom faith, hope and charity hide under the shelter of his pardon.

Chapter XI.

How intent the ruler ought to be on meditations in the Sacred Law.

But all this is duly executed by a ruler, if, inspired by the spirit of heavenly fear and love, he meditate daily on the precepts of Sacred Writ, that the words of Divine admonition may restore in him the power of solicitude and of provident circumspection with regard to the celestial life, which familiar intercourse with men continually destroys; and that one who is drawn to oldness of life by secular society may by the aspiration of compunction be ever renewed to love of the spiritual country. For the heart runs greatly to waste in the midst of human talk; and, since it is undoubtedly evident that, when driven by the tumults of external occupations, it loses its balance and falls, one ought incessantly to take care that through keen pursuit of instruction it may rise again. For hence it is that Paul admonishes his disciple who had been put over the flock, saying, *Till I come, give attendance to reading* (1 Tim. iv. 13). Hence David says, *How* have I loved Thy Law, O Lord! It is my meditation all the day *(Ps. cix. 97). Hence the Lord commanded Moses concerning the carrying of the ark,* saying. *Thou shalt make four rings of gold, which thou shalt put in* the four corners of the ark, and thou shalt make staves of shittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, and shalt put them through the rings which are by the sides of the ark, that it may be borne with them, and they shall always be in the rings, nor shall they ever be drawn out from them *(Exod. xxv. 12,* seq.*). What but the* holy Church is figured by the ark? To which four rings of gold in the four corners are ordered to be adjoined, because, in that it is thus extended towards the four quarters of the globe, it is declared undoubtedly to be equipped for journeying with the four books of the holy Gospel. And staves of shittim-wood are made, and are put through the same rings for carrying,

because strong and persevering teachers, as incorruptible pieces of timber, are to be sought for, who by cleaving ever to instruction out of the sacred volumes may declare the unity of the holy Church, and, as it were, carry the ark by being let into its rings. For indeed to carry the ark by means of staves is through preaching to bring the holy Church before the rude minds of unbelievers by means of good teachers. And these are also ordered to be overlaid with gold, that, while they are resonant to others in discourse, they may also themselves glitter in the splendour of their lives. Of whom it is further fitly added, *They shall* always be in the rings, nor shall they ever be drawn out from them; because it is surely necessary that those who attend upon the office of preaching should not recede from the study of sacred lore. For to this end it is that the staves are ordered to be always in the rings, that, when occasion requires the ark to be carried, no tardiness in carrying may arise from the staves having to be put in; because, that is to say, when a pastor is enquired of by his subordinates on any spiritual matter, it is exceedingly ignominious, should he then go about to learn, when he ought to solve the question. But let the staves remain ever in the rings, that teachers, ever meditating in their own hearts the words of Sacred Writ, may lift without delay the ark of the covenant; as will be the case if they teach at once whatever is required. Hence the first Pastor of the Church well admonishes all other pastors saying, *Be ready always to give an answer to every* man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you (1 Pet. iii. 15): as though he should say plainly, That no delay may hinder the carrying of the ark, let the staves never be withdrawn from the rings.

Part III. How the Ruler, While Living Well, Ought to Teach and Admonish Those that are Put Under Him.

Prologue.

Since, then, we have shewn what manner of man the pastor ought to be, let us now set forth after what manner he should teach. For, as long before us Gregory Nazianzen of reverend memory has taught, one and the same exhortation does not suit all, inasmuch as neither are all bound together by similarity of character. For the things that profit some often hurt others; seeing that also for the most part herbs which nourish some animals are fatal to others; and the gentle hissing that quiets horses incites whelps; and the medicine which abates one disease aggravates another; and the bread which invigorates the life of the strong kills little children. Therefore according to the quality of the hearers ought the discourse of teachers to be fashioned, so as to suit all and each for their several needs, and yet never deviate from the art of common edification. For what are the intent minds of hearers but, so to speak, a kind of tight tensions of strings in a harp, which the skilful player, that he may produce a tune not at variance with itself, strikes variously? And for this reason the strings render back a consonant modulation, that they are struck indeed with one quill, but not with one kind of stroke. Whence every teacher also, that he may edify all in the one virtue of charity, ought to touch the hearts of his hearers out of one doctrine, but not with one and the same exhortation.

Chapter I.

What diversity there ought to be in the art of preaching.

Differently to be admonished are these that follow: —

Men and women.

The poor and the rich.

The joyful and the sad.

Prelates and subordinates.

Servants and masters.

The wise of this world and the dull.

The impudent and the bashful.

The forward and the fainthearted.

The impatient and the patient.

The kindly disposed and the envious.

The simple and the insincere.

The whole and the sick.

Those who fear scourges, and therefore live innocently; and those who have grown so hard in iniquity as not to be corrected even by scourges.

The too silent, and those who spend time in much speaking.

The slothful and the hasty.

The meek and the passionate.

The humble and the haughty.

The obstinate and the fickle.

The gluttonous and the abstinent.

Those who mercifully give of their own, and those who would fain seize what belongs to others.

Those who neither seize the things of others nor are bountiful with their own; and those who both give away the things they have, and yet cease not

to seize the things of others.

Those that are at variance, and those that are at peace.

Lovers of strifes and peacemakers.

Those that understand not aright the words of sacred law; and those who understand them indeed aright, but speak them without humility.

Those who, though able to preach worthily, are afraid through excessive humility; and those whom imperfection or age debars from preaching, and yet rashness impels to it.

Those who prosper in what they desire in temporal matters; and those who covet indeed the things that are of the world, and yet are wearied with the toils of adversity.

Those who are bound by wedlock, and those who are free from the ties of wedlock.

Those who have had experience of carnal intercourse, and those who are ignorant of it.

Those who deplore sins of deed, and those who deplore sins of thought.

Those who bewail misdeeds, yet forsake them not; and those who forsake them, yet bewail them not.

Those who even praise the unlawful things they do; and those who censure what is wrong, yet avoid it not.

Those who are overcome by sudden passion, and those who are bound in guilt of set purpose.

Those who, though their unlawful deeds are trivial, yet do them frequently; and those who keep themselves from small sins, but are occasionally whelmed in graver ones.

Those who do not even begin what is good, and those who fail entirely to complete the good begun.

Those who do evil secretly and good publicly; and those who conceal the good they do, and yet in some things done publicly allow evil to be thought

of them.

But of what profit is it for us to run through all these things collected together in a list, unless we also set forth, with all possible brevity, the modes of admonition for each?

(*Admonition* 1.) Differently, then, to be admonished are men and women; because on the former heavier injunctions, on the latter lighter are to be laid, that those may be exercised by great things, but these winningly converted by light ones.

(*Admonition* 2.) Differently to be admonished are young men and old; because for the most part severity of admonition directs the former to improvement, while kind remonstrance disposes the latter to better deeds. For it is written, *Rebuke* not an elder, but entreat him as a father *(1 Tim. v. 1).>*

Chapter II

How the poor and the rich should be admonished.

(*Admonition* 3.) Differently to be admonished are the poor and the rich: for to the former we ought to offer the solace of comfort against tribulation, but in the latter to induce fear as against elation. For to the poor one it is said by the Lord through the prophet, *Fear not,* for thou shalt not be confounded *(Isai. liv. 4). And not long after,* soothing her, He says, *O thou poor little one, tossed with* tempest *(Ibid. 11). And again He comforts her,* saying, *I have chosen thee in the furnace of poverty* (Ibid. xlviii. 10). But, on the other hand, Paul says to his disciple concerning the rich, *Charge the rich of* this world, that they be not high-minded nor trust in the uncertainty of their riches *(1* Tim. vi. 17); where it is to be particularly noted that the teacher of humility in making mention of the rich, says not *Entreat*, but *Charge;* because, though pity is to be bestowed on infirmity, yet to elation no honour is due. To such, therefore, the right thing that is said is the more rightly commanded, according as they are puffed up with loftiness of thought in transitory things. Of them the Lord says in the Gospel, *Woe unto you that* are rich, which have your consolation *(Luke vi. 24). For, since they know not what* eternal joys are, they are consoled out of the abundance of the present life. Therefore consolation is to be offered to those who are tried in the furnace of poverty; and fear is to be induced in those whom the consolation of temporal glory lifts up; that both those may learn that they possess riches which they see not, and these become aware that they can by no means keep the riches that they see. Yet for the most part the character of persons changes the order in which they stand; so that the rich man may be humble and the poor man proud. Hence the tongue of the preacher ought soon to be adapted to the life of the hearer, so as to smite elation in a poor

man all the more sharply as not even the poverty that has come upon him brings it down, and to cheer all the more gently the humility of the rich as even the abundance which elevates them does not elate them.

Sometimes, however, even a proud rich man is to be propitiated by blandishment in exhortation, since hard sores also are usually softened by soothing fomentations, and the rage of the insane is often restored to health by the bland words of the physician, and, when they are pleasantly humoured, the disease of their insanity is mitigated. For neither is this to be lightly regarded, that, when an adverse spirit entered into Saul, David took his harp and assuaged his madness (1 Sam. xviii. 10). For what is intimated by Saul but the elation of men in power, and what by David but the humble life of the holy? When, then, Saul is seized by the unclean spirit, his madness is appeased by David's singing; since, when the senses of men in power are turned to frenzy by elation, it is meet that they should be recalled to a healthy state by the calmness of our speech, as by the sweetness of a harp. But sometimes, when the powerful of this world are taken to task, they are first to be searched by certain similitudes, as on a matter not concerning them; and, when they have pronounced a right sentence as against another man, then in fitting ways they are to be smitten with regard to their own guilt; so that the mind puffed up with temporal power may in no wise lift itself up against the reprover, having by its own judgment trodden on the neck of pride, and may not try to defend itself, being bound by the sentence of its own mouth. For hence it was that Nathan the prophet, having come to take the king to task, asked his judgment as if concerning the cause of a poor man against a rich one (2 Sam. xii. 4, 5, *seq.*), that the king might first pronounce sentence, and afterwards hear of his own guilt, to the end that he might by no means contradict the righteous doom that he had uttered against himself. Thus the holy man, considering both the sinner and the king, studied in a wonderful order first to bind the daring culprit by

confession, and afterwards to cut him to the heart by rebuke. He concealed for a while whom he aimed at, but smote him suddenly when he had him. For the blow would perchance have fallen with less force had he purposed to smite the sin openly from the beginning of his discourse; but by first introducing the similitude he sharpened the rebuke which he concealed. He had come as a physician to a sick man; he saw that the sore must be cut; but he doubted of the sick man's patience. Therefore he hid the medicinal steel under his robe, which he suddenly drew out and plunged into the sore, that the patient might feel the cutting blade before he saw it, lest, seeing it first, he should refuse to feel it.

Chapter III.

How the joyful and the sad are to be admonished.

*Admonition*4. Differently to be admonished are the joyful and the sad. That is, before the joyful are to be set the sad things that follow upon punishment; but before the sad the promised glad things of the kingdom. Let the joyful learn by the asperity of threatenings what to be afraid of: let the sad bear what joys of reward they may look forward to. For to the former it is said, *Woe unto you that laugh now! For ye* shall weep *(Luke* vi. 25); but the latter hear from the teaching of the same Master, *I will see you again, and* your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you (Joh. xvi. 22). But some are not made joyful or sad by circumstances, but are so by temperament. And to such it should be intimated that certain defects are connected with certain temperaments; that the joyful have lechery close at hand, and the sad wrath. Hence it is necessary for every one to consider not only what he suffers from his peculiar temperament, but also what worse thing presses on him in connection with it; lest, while he fights not at all against that which he has, he succumb also to that from which he supposes himself free.

Chapter IV.

How subjects and prelates are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 5.) Differently to be admonished are subjects and prelates: the former that subjection crush them not, the latter that superior place elate them not: the former that they fail not to fulfil what is commanded them, the latter that they command not more to be fulfilled than is just: the former that they submit humbly, the latter that they preside temperately. For this, which may be understood also figuratively, is said to the former, *Children, obey your parents in the* Lord: *but to the latter it is* enjoined, *And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath* (Coloss. iii. 20, 21). Let the former learn how to order their inward thoughts before the eyes of the hidden judge; the latter how also to those that are committed to them to afford outwardly examples of good living. For prelates ought to know that, if they ever perpetrate what is wrong, they are worthy of as many deaths as they transmit examples of perdition to their subjects. Wherefore it is necessary that they guard themselves so much the more cautiously from sin as by the bad things they do they die not alone, but are guilty of the souls of others, which by their bad example they have destroyed. Wherefore the former are to be admonished, lest they should be strictly published, if merely on their own account they should be unable to stand acquitted; the latter, lest they should be judged for the errors of their subjects, even though on their own account they find themselves secure. Those are to be admonished that they live with all the more anxiety about themselves as they are not entangled by care for others; but these that they accomplish their charge of others in such wise as not to desist from charge of themselves, and so to be ardent in anxiety about themselves as not to grow sluggish in the custody of those committed to them. To the one, who is at

leisure for his own concerns, it is said, *Go to the ant, thou sluggard, and consider her ways, and learn* wisdom *(Prov. vi.* 6): but the other is terribly admonished, when it is said, *My son, if thou be surety* for thy friend, thou hast stricken thy hand with a stranger, and art snared with the words of thy mouth, and art taken with thine own speeches *(Ibid. 1). For to be surety for a friend is* to take charge of the soul of another on the surety of one's own behaviour. Whence also the hand is stricken with a stranger, because the mind is bound with the care of a responsibility which before was not. But he is snared with the words of his mouth, and taken with his own speeches, because, while he is compelled to speak good things to those who are committed to him, he must needs himself in the first place observe the things that he speaks. He is therefore snared with the words of his mouth, being constrained by the requirement of reason not to let his life be relaxed to what agrees not with his teaching. Hence before the strict judge he is compelled to accomplish as much in deed as it is plain he has enjoined on others with his voice. Thus in the passage above cited this exhortation is also presently added, *Do* therefore what I say, my son, and deliver thyself, seeing thou hast fallen into the hands of thy neighbour: run up and down, hasten, arouse thy friend; give not sleep to thine eyes, nor let thine eyelids slumber *(Prov. vi.* 3). For whosoever is put over others for an example of life is admonished not only to keep watch himself, but also to arouse his friend. For it is not enough for him to keep watch in living well, if he do not also sever him when he is set over from the torpor of sin. For it is well said, *Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor let thine eyelids* slumber *(Ibid. 4). For indeed to give sleep to the* eyes is to cease from earnestness, so as to neglect altogether the care of our subordinates. But the eyelids slumber when our thoughts, weighed down by sloth, connive at what they know ought to be reproved in subordinates. For to be fast asleep is neither to know nor to correct the deeds of those committed to us. But to know what

things are to be blamed, and still through laziness of mind not to amend them by meet rebukes, is not to sleep, but to slumber. Yet the eye through slumbering passes into the deepest sleep; since for the most part, when one who is over others cuts not off the evil that he knows, he comes sooner or later, as his negligence deserves, not even to know what is done wrong by his subjects.

Wherefore those who are over others are to be admonished, that through earnestness of circumspection they have eyes watchful within and round about, and strive to become living creatures of heaven (Ezek. i. 18). For the living creatures of heaven are described as full of eyes round about and within (Revel. iv. 6). And so it is meet that those who are over others should have eyes within and round about, so as both in themselves to study to please the inward judge, and also, affording outwardly examples of life, to detect the things that should be corrected in others.

Subjects are to be admonished that they judge not rashly the lives of their superiors, if perchance they see them act blamably in anything, lest whence they rightly find fault with evil they thence be sunk by the impulse of elation to lower depths. They are to be admonished that, when they consider the faults of their superiors, they grow not too bold against them, but, if any of their deeds are exceedingly bad, so judge of them within themselves that, constrained by the fear of God, they still refuse not to bear the yoke of reverence under them. Which thing we shall shew the better if we bring forward what David did (1 Sam. xxiv. 4 *seq.*). For when Saul the persecutor had entered into a cave to ease himself, David, who had so long suffered under his persecution, was within it with his men. And, when his men incited him to smite Saul, he cut them short with the reply, that he ought not to put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed. And yet he rose unperceived, and cut off the border of his robe. For what is signified by Saul but bad rulers, and what by David but good subjects? Saul's easing

himself, then, means rulers extending the wickedness conceived in their hearts to works of woful stench, and their shewing the noisome thoughts within them by carrying them out into deeds. Yet him David was afraid to strike, because the pious minds of subjects, withholding themselves from the whole plague of backbiting, smite the life of their superiors with no sword of the tongue, even when they blame them for imperfection. And when through infirmity they can scarce refrain from speaking, however humbly, of some extreme and obvious evils in their superiors, they cut as it were silently the border of their robe; because, to wit, when, even though harmlessly and secretly, they derogate from the dignity of superiors, they disfigure as it were the garment of the king who is set over them; yet still they return to themselves, and blame themselves most vehemently for even the slightest defamation in speech. Hence it is also well written in that place, *Afterward David's* heart smote him, because he had cut off the border of Saul's robe *(Ibid. 6). For indeed the deeds of* superiors are not to be smitten with the sword of the mouth, even when they are rightly judged to be worthy of blame. But if ever, even in the least, the tongue slips into censure of them, the heart must needs be depressed by the affliction of penitence, to the end that it may return to itself, and, when it has offended against the power set over it, may dread the judgment against itself of Him by whom it was set over it. For, when we offend against those who are set over us, we go against the ordinance of Him who set them over us. Whence also Moses, when he had become aware that the people complained against himself and Aaron, said, *For what are we? Not against* us are your murmurings, but against the Lord *(Exod. xvi. 8).*

Chapter V.

How servants and masters are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 6). Differently to be admonished are servants and masters. Servants, to wit, that they ever keep in view the humility of their condition; but masters, that they lose not recollection of their nature, in which they are constituted on an equality with servants. Servants are to be admonished that they despise not their masters, lest they offend God, if by behaving themselves proudly they gainsay His ordinance: masters, too, are to be admonished, that they are proud against God with respect to His gift, if they acknowledge not those whom they hold in subjection by reason of their condition to be their equals by reason of their community of nature. The former are to be admonished to know themselves to be servants of masters; the latter are to be admonished to acknowledge themselves to be fellow-servants of servants. For to those it is said, *Servants, obey your masters according to the flesh* (Coloss. iii. 22); and again, *Let* as many servants as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honour *(1 Tim.* vi. 1); but to these it is said, *And ye, masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing* threatening, knowing that both their and your Master is in heaven (Ephes. vi. 9).

Chapter VI.

How the wise and the dull are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 7). Differently to be admonished are the wise of this world and the dull. For the wise are to be admonished that they leave off knowing what they know: the dull also are to be admonished that they seek to know what they know not. In the former this thing first, that they think themselves wise, is to be thrown down; in the latter whatsoever is already known of heavenly wisdom is to be built up; since, being in no wise proud, they have, as it were, prepared their hearts for supporting a building. With those we should labour that they become more wisely foolish, leave foolish wisdom, and learn the wise foolishness of God: to these we should preach that from what is accounted foolishness they should pass, as from a nearer neighbourhood, to true wisdom. For to the former it is said, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him* become a fool, that he may be wise *(1 Cor. iii. 18): but to the latter it is* said, *Not many wise men after the flesh* (1 Cor. i. 26); and again, *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to* confound the wise *(Ibid. 27). The former are for the most part* converted by arguments of reasoning; the latter sometimes better by examples. Those it doubtless profits to lie vanquished in their own allegations; but for these it is sometimes enough to get knowledge of the praiseworthy deeds of others. Whence also the excellent teacher, who was debtor to the wise and foolish (Rom. i. 14), when he was admonishing some of the Hebrews that were wise, but some also that were somewhat slow, speaking to them of the fulfilment of the Old Testament, overcame the wisdom of the former by argument, saying, *That which decayeth and* waxeth old is ready to vanish away *(Heb. viii. 13). But, when he perceived* that some were to be drawn by examples only, he added in the same epistle,

Saints had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword *(Ibid. xi.* 36, 37): and again, *Remember those who were set over you, who spoke to you the* Word of God, whose faith follow, looking to the end of their conversation *(Ibid. xiii.* 7); that so victorious reason might subdue the one sort, but the gentle force of example persuade the other to mount to greater things.

Chapter VII.

How the impudent and bashful are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 8). Differently to be admonished are the impudent and the bashful. For those nothing but hard rebuke restrains from the vice of impudence; while these for the most part a modest exhortation disposes to amendment. Those do not know that they are in fault, unless they be rebuked even by many; to these it usually suffices for their conversion that the teacher at least gently reminds them of their evil deeds. For those one best corrects who reprehends them by direct invective; but to these greater profit ensues, if what is rebuked in them be touched, as it were, by a side stroke. Thus the Lord, openly upbraiding the impudent people of the Jews, saying, *There is come unto thee a whore's forehead; thou* wouldest not blush *(Jerem. iii. 3). But again He revives them* when ashamed, saying, *Thou shalt forget the confusion of thy youth,* and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood; for thy Maker will reign over thee *(Isai. liv. 4). Paul also openly upbraids* the Galatians impudently sinning, when he says, *O foolish Galatians,* who hath bewitched you *(Galat. iii. 1)? And again,* Are ye so foolish, that, having begun in the Spirit, ye are now made perfect in the flesh *(Ibid. 3)? But the faults of those* who are ashamed he reprehends as though sympathizing with them, saying, *I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at* the last ye have flourished again to care for me, as indeed ye did care, for ye lacked opportunity

(Philipp. iv. 10); so that hard upbraiding might discover the faults of the former, and a softer address veil the negligence of the latter.

Chapter VIII.

How the forward and the faint-hearted are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 9.) Differently to be admonished are the forward and the faint-hearted. For the former, presuming on themselves too much, disdain all others when reproved by them; but the latter, while too conscious of their own infirmity, for the most part fall into despondency. Those count all they do to be singularly eminent; these think what they do to be exceedingly despised, and so are broken down to despondency. Therefore the works of the forward are to be finely sifted by the reprover, that wherein they please themselves they may be shewn to displease God.

For we then best correct the forward, when what they believe themselves to have done well we shew to have been ill done; that whence glory is believed to have been gained, thence wholesome confusion may ensue. But sometimes, when they are not at all aware of being guilty of the vice of forwardness, they more speedily come to correction if they are confounded by the infamy of some other person's more manifest guilt, sought out from a side quarter; that from that which they cannot defend, they may be made conscious of wrongly holding to what they do defend. Whence, when Paul saw the Corinthians to be forwardly puffed up one against another, so that one said he was of Paul, another of Apollos, another of Cephas, and another of Christ (1 Cor. i. 12; iii. 4), he brought forward the crime of incest, which had not only been perpetrated among them, but also remained uncorrected, saying, *It is reported commonly that* there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you (1 Cor. v. 1, 2). As if to say plainly, Why say ye in your forwardness that ye are of this

one or of the other, while shewing in the dissoluteness of your negligence, that ye are of none of them?

But on the other hand we more fitly bring back the faint-hearted to the way of well-doing, if we search collaterally for some good points about them, so that, while some things in them we attack with our reproof, others we may embrace with our praise; to the end that the hearing of praise may nourish their tenderness, which the rebuking of their fault chastises. And for the most part we make more way with them for their profit, if we also make mention of their good deeds; and, in case of some wrong things having been done by them, if we find not fault with them as though they were already perpetrated, but, as it were, prohibit them as what ought not to be perpetrated; that so both the favour shewn may increase the things which we approve, and our modest exhortation avail more with the faint-hearted against the things which we blame. Whence the same Paul, when he came to know that the Thessalonians, who stood fast in the preaching which they had received, were troubled with a certain faint-heartedness as though the end of the world were nigh at hand, first praises that wherein he sees them to be strong, and afterwards, with cautious admonition, strengthens what was weak. For he says, *We are bound to thank* God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; so that we ourselves too glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith *(2 Thess. i. 3, 4). But, having premised these* flattering encomiums of their life, a little while after he subjoined, *Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him,* that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as sent by us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand *(Ibid. ii.* 1). For the true teacher so proceeded that they should first hear, in being praised, what they might thankfully acknowledge, and afterwards, in being

exhorted, what they should follow; to the end that the precedent praise should settle their mind, lest the subjoined admonition should shake it; and, though he knew that they had been disquieted by suspicion of the end being near, he did not yet reprove them as having been so, but, as if ignorant of the past, forbade them to be disquieted in future; so that, while they believed themselves to be unknown to their preacher with respect even to the levity of their disquietude, they might be as much afraid of being open to blame as they were of being known by him to be so.

Chapter IX.

How the impatient and the patient are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 10.) Differently to be admonished are the impatient and the patient. For the impatient are to be told that, while they neglect to bridle their spirit, they are hurried through many steep places of iniquity which they seek not after, inasmuch as fury drives the mind whither desire draws it not, and, when perturbed, it does, not knowing, what it afterwards grieves for when it knows. The impatient are also to be told that, when carried headlong by the impulse of emotion, they act in some ways as though beside themselves, and are hardly aware afterwards of the evil they have done; and, while they offer no resistance to their perturbation, they bring into confusion even things that may have been well done when the mind was calm, and overthrow under sudden impulse whatever they have haply long built up with provident toil. For the very virtue of charity, which is the mother and guardian of all virtues, is lost through the vice of impatience. For it is written, *Charity is patient* (1 Cor. xiii. 4). Wherefore where patience is not, charity is not. Through this vice of impatience, too, instruction, the nurse of virtues, is dissipated. For it is written, *The instruction of a man is known by his patience* (Prov. xix. 11). Every man, then, is shewn to be by so much less instructed as he is convicted of being less patient. For neither can he truly impart what is good through instruction, if in his life he knows not how to bear what is evil in others with equanimity.

Further, through this vice of impatience for the most part the sin of arrogance pierces the mind; since, when any one is impatient of being looked down upon in this world, he endeavours to shew off any hidden good that he may have, and so through impatience is drawn on to arrogance;

and, while he cannot bear contempt, he glories ostentatiously in self-display. Whence it is written, *Better* is the patient than the arrogant *(Eccles. vii. 9); because, in truth, one that is* patient chooses to suffer any evils whatever rather than that his hidden good should come to be known through the vice of ostentation. But the arrogant, on the contrary, chooses that even pretended good should be vaunted of him, lest he should possibly suffer even the least evil. Since, then, when patience is relinquished, all other good things also that have been done are overthrown, it is rightly enjoined on Ezekiel that in the altar of God a trench be made; to wit, that in it the whole burnt-offerings laid on the altar might be preserved (Ezek. xliii. 13). For, if there were not a trench in the altar, the passing breeze would scatter every sacrifice that it might find there. But what do we take the altar of God to be but the soul of the righteous man, which lays upon itself before His eyes as many sacrifices as it has done good deeds? And what is the trench of the altar but the patience of good men, which, while it humbles the mind to endure adversities, shews it to be placed low down after the manner of a ditch? Wherefore let a trench be made in the altar, lest the breeze should scatter the sacrifice laid upon it: that is, let the mind of the elect keep patience, lest, stirred with the wind of impatience, it lose even that which it has wrought well. Well, too, this same trench is directed to be of one cubit, because, if patience fails not, the measure of unity is preserved. Whence also Paul says, *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so ye shall* fulfil the law Christ *(Galat. vi. 2). For the law of Christ is* the charity of unity, which they alone fulfil who are guilty of no excess even when they are burdened. Let the impatient hear what is written, *Better is the patient than the mighty, and he that* ruleth his spirit than he that taketh cities *(Prov. xvi. 32). For victory over cities is* a less thing, because that which is subdued is without; but a far greater thing is that which is conquered by patience, since the mind itself is by itself overcome, and subjects itself to

itself, when patience compels it to bridle itself within. Let the impatient hear what the Truth says to His elect; *In your patience ye shall* possess your souls *(Luke xxi. 19). For we are so wonderfully* made that reason possesses the soul, and the soul the body. But the soul is ousted from its right of possession of the body, if it is not first possessed by reason. Therefore the Lord pointed out patience as the guardian of our state, in that He taught us to possess ourselves in it. Thus we learn how great is the sin of impatience, through which we lose the very possession of what we are. Let the impatient hear what is said again through Solomon; *A fool uttereth all his mind, but a wise man* putteth it off, and reserves it until afterwards (Prov. xxix. 11). For one is so driven by the impulse of impatience as to utter forth the whole mind, which the perturbation within throws out the more quickly for this reason, that no discipline of wisdom fences it round. But the wise man puts it off, and reserves it till afterwards. For, when injured, he desires not to avenge himself at the present time, because in his tolerance he even wishes that men should be spared; but yet he is not ignorant that all things are righteously avenged at the last judgment.

On the other hand the patient are to be admonished that they grieve not inwardly for what they bear outwardly, lest they spoil with the infection of malice within a sacrifice of so great value which without they offer whole; and lest the sin of their grieving, not perceived by men, but yet seen as sin under the divine scrutiny, be made so much the worse as it claims to itself the fair shew of virtue before men.

The patient therefore should be told to study to love those whom they must needs bear with; lest, if love follow not patience, the virtue exhibited be turned to a worse fault of hatred. Whence Paul, when he said, *Charity is patient*, forthwith added, *Is kind* (1 Cor. xiii. 4); shewing certainly that those whom in patience she bears with in kindness also she ceases not to love. Whence the same excellent teacher, when he was persuading his disciples to

patience, saying, *Let all bitterness, and wrath,* and indignation, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you *(Ephes. iv.* 31), having as it were now set all outward things in good order, turns himself to those that are within, when he subjoins, *With all malice* (Ibid.); because, truly, in vain are indignation, clamour, and evil speaking put away from the things that are without, if in the things that are within malice, the mother of vices, bears sway; and to no purpose is wickedness cut off from the branches outside if it is kept at the root within to spring up in more manifold ways. Whence also the Truth in person says, *Love your* enemies, do good to them which hate you, and pray for them which persecute you and say evil of you falsely *(Luke vi. 27). It is virtue therefore* before men to bear with adversaries; but it is virtue before God to love them; because the only sacrifice which God accepts is that which, before His eyes, on the altar of good work, the flame of charity kindles. Hence it is that to some who were patient, and yet did not love, He says, *And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye, and* seest not the beam in thine own eye? *(Matth. vii. 3; Luke vi. 41). For indeed the* perturbation of impatience is a mote; but malice in the heart is a beam in the eye. For that the breeze of temptation drives to and fro; but this confirmed iniquity carries almost immoveably. Rightly, however, it is there subjoined, *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the* beam out of thine own eye, and then shall thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye *(Ibid.);* as if it were said to the wicked mind, inwardly grieving while shewing itself by patience outwardly as holy, First shake off from thee the weight of malice, and then blame others for the levity of impatience; lest, while thou takest no pains to conquer pretence, it be worse for thee to bear with the faultiness of others.

For it usually comes to pass with the patient that at the time, indeed, when they suffer hardships, or hear insults, they are smitten with no vexation, and so exhibit patience as to fail not to keep also innocence of

heart; but, when after a while they recall to memory these very same things that they have endured, they inflame themselves with the fire of vexation, they seek reasons for vengeance, and, in retracting, turn into malice the meekness which they had in bearing. Such are the sooner succoured by the preacher, if the cause of this change be disclosed. For the cunning adversary wages war against two; that is, by inflaming one to be the first to offer insults, and provoking the other to return insults under a sense of injury. But for the most part, while he is already conqueror of him who has been persuaded to inflict the injury, he is conquered by him who bears the infliction with an equal mind. Wherefore, being victorious over the one whom he has subjugated by incensing him, he lifts himself with all his might against the other, and is grieved at his firmly resisting and conquering; and so, because he has been unable to move him in the very flinging of insults, he rests meanwhile from open contest, and provoking his thought by secret suggestion, seeks a fit time for deceiving him. For, having lost in public warfare, he burns to lay hidden snares. In a time of quiet he returns to the mind of the conqueror, brings back to his memory either temporal harms or darts of insults, and by exceedingly exaggerating all that has been inflicted on him represents it as intolerable: and with so great vexation does he perturb the mind that for the most part the patient one, led captive after victory, blushes for having borne such things calmly, and is sorry that he did not return insults, and seeks to pay back something worse, should opportunity be afforded. To whom, then, are these like but to those who by bravery are victorious in the field, but by negligence are afterwards taken within the gates of the city? To whom are they like but to those whom a violent attack of sickness removes not from life, but who die from a relapse of fever coming gently on? Therefore the patient are to be admonished, that they guard their heart after victory; that they be on the lookout for the enemy, overcome in open warfare, laying snares against the

walls of their mind; that they be the more afraid of a sickness creeping on again; lest the cunning enemy, should he afterwards deceive them, rejoice with the greater exultation in that he treads on the necks of conquerors which had long been inflexible against him.

Chapter X.

How the kindly-disposed and the envious are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 11.) Differently to be admonished are the kindly-disposed and the envious. For the kindly-disposed are to be admonished so to rejoice in what is good in others as to desire to have the like as their own; so to praise with affection the deeds of their neighbours as also to multiply them by imitation, lest in this stadium of the present life they assist at the contest of others as eager backers, but inert spectators, and remain without a prize after the contest, in that they toiled not in the contest, and should then regard with sorrow the palms of those in the midst of whose toils they stood idle. For indeed we sin greatly if we love not the good deeds of others: but we win no reward if we imitate not so far as we can the things which we love. Wherefore the kindly-disposed should be told that if they make no haste to imitate the good which they applaud, the holiness of virtue pleases them in like manner as the vanity of scenic exhibitions of skill pleases foolish spectators: for these extol with applauses the performances of charioteers and players, and yet do not long to be such as they see those whom they praise to be. They admire them for having done pleasing things, and yet they shun pleasing in like manner. The kindly-disposed are to be told that when they behold the deeds of their neighbours they should return to their own heart, and presume not on actions which are not their own, nor praise what is good while they refuse to do it. More heavily, indeed, must those be smitten by final vengeance who have been pleased by that which they would not imitate.

The envious are to be admonished how great is their blindness who fail by other men's advancement, and pine away at other men's rejoicing; how great is their unhappiness who are made worse by the bettering of their

neighbour, and in beholding the increase of another's prosperity are uneasily vexed within themselves, and die of the plague of their own heart. What can be more unhappy than these, who, when touched by the sight of happiness, are made more wicked by the pain of seeing it? But, moreover, the good things of others which they cannot have they might, if they loved them, make their own. For indeed all are constituted together in faith as are many members in one body; which are indeed diverse as to their office, but in mutually agreeing with each other are made one. Whence it comes to pass that the foot sees by the eye, and the eyes walk by the feet; that the hearing of the ears serves the mouth, and the tongue of the mouth concurs with the ears for their benefit; that the belly supports the hands, and the hands work for the belly. In the very arrangement of the body, therefore, we learn what we should observe in our conduct. It is, then, too shameful not to act up to what we are. Those things, in fact, are ours which we love in others, even though we cannot follow them; and what things are loved in us become theirs that love them. Hence, then, let the envious consider of how great power is charity, which makes ours without labour works of labour not our own. The envious are therefore to be told that, when they fail to keep themselves from spite, they are being sunk into the old wickedness of the wily foe. For of him it is written, *But by envy of the devil death* entered into the world *(Wisd. ii. 24). For, because he had* himself lost heaven, he envied it to created man, and, being himself ruined, by ruining others he heaped up his own damnation. The envious are to be admonished, that they may learn to how great slips of ruin growing under them they are liable; since, while they cast not forth spite out of their heart, they are slipping down to open wickedness of deeds. For, unless Cain had envied the accepted sacrifice of his brother, he would never have come to taking away his life. Whence it is written, *And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering, but unto* Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain

was very wroth, and his countenance fell *(Gen. iv. 4). Thus spite on account of* the sacrifice was the seed-plot of fratricide. For him whose being better than himself vexed him he cut off from being at all. The envious are to be told that, while they consume themselves with this inward plague, they destroy whatever good they seem to have within them. Whence it is written, *Soundness of heart is the life of* the flesh, but envy the rottenness of the bones (Prov. xiv. 30). For what is signified by the flesh but certain weak and tender actions, and what by the bones but brave ones? And for the most part it comes to pass that some, with innocence of heart, in some of their actions seem weak; but others, though performing some stout deeds before human eyes, still pine away inwardly with the pestilence of envy towards what is good in others. Wherefore it is well said, *Soundness of heart is the* life of the flesh; *because, if innocence of mind is kept, even such* things as are weak outwardly are in time strengthened. And rightly it is there added, *Envy is the rottenness of the bones;* because through the vice of spite what seems strong to human eyes perishes in the eyes of

God. For the rotting of the bones through envy means that certain even strong things utterly perish.

Chapter XI.

How the simple and the crafty are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 12.) Differently to be admonished are the simple and the insincere. The simple are to be praised for studying never to say what is false, but to be admonished to know how sometimes to be silent about what is true. For, as falsehood has always harmed him that speaks it, so sometimes the hearing of truth has done harm to some. Wherefore the Lord before His disciples, tempering His speech with silence, says, *I have many things to say unto you, but* ye cannot bear them now *(Joh. xvi. 12). The simple are therefore* to be admonished that, as they always avoid deceit advantageously, so they should always utter truth advantageously. They are to be admonished to add prudence to the goodness of simplicity, to the end that they may so possess the security of simplicity as not to lose the circumspection of prudence. For hence it is said by the teacher of the Gentiles, *I would have you wise in that which is good, but* simple concerning evil *(Rom. xvi. 19). Hence the Truth in person* admonishes His elect, saying, *Be ye wise as serpents, but simple as* doves *(Matth. x.* 16); because, to wit, in the hearts of the elect the wisdom of the serpent ought to sharpen the simplicity of the dove and the simplicity of the dove temper the wisdom of the serpent, to the end that neither through prudence they be seduced into cunning, nor from simplicity grow torpid in the exercise of the understanding.

But, on the other hand, the insincere are to be admonished to learn how heavy is the labour of duplicity, which with guilt they endure. For, while they are afraid of being found out, they are ever seeking dishonest defences, they are agitated by fearful suspicions. But there is nothing safer for defence than sincerity, nothing easier to say than truth. For, when obliged

to defend its deceit, the heart is wearied with hard labour. For hence it is written, *The labour of their own lips shall cover* them *(Ps. cxxxix.* 10). For what now fills them then covers them, since it then presses down with sharp retribution him whose soul it now elevates with a mild disquietude. Hence it is said through Jeremiah, *They have* taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity *(Jerem.* ix. 5): as if it were said plainly, They who might have been friends of truth without labour, labour to sin; and, while they refuse to live in simplicity, by labours require that they should die. For commonly, when taken in a fault, while they shrink from being known to be such as they are, they hide themselves under a veil of deceit, and endeavour to excuse their sin, which is already plainly perceived; so that often one who has a care to reprove their faults, led astray by the mists of the falsehood that surrounds them, finds himself to have almost lost what he just now held as certain concerning them. Hence it is rightly said through the prophet, under the similitude of Judah, to the soul that sins and excuses itself, *There the urchin had her nest* (Isai. xxxiv. 15). For by the name of urchin is denoted the duplicity of a mind that is insincere, and cunningly defends itself; because, to wit, when an urchin is caught, its head is perceived, and its feet appear, and its whole body is exposed to view; but no sooner has it been caught than it gathers itself into a ball, draws in its feet, hides its head, and all is lost together within the hands of him that holds it which before was all visible together. So assuredly, so insincere minds are, when they are seized hold of in their transgressions. For the head of the urchin is perceived, because it appears from what beginning the sinner has advanced to his crime; the feet of the urchin are seen, because it is discovered by what steps the iniquity has been perpetrated; and yet by suddenly adducing excuses the insincere mind gathers in its feet, in that it hides all traces of its iniquity; it draws in the head, because by strange defences it makes out that it has not even begun

any evil; and it remains as it were a ball in the hand of one that holds it, because one that takes it to task, suddenly losing all that he had just now come to the knowledge of, holds the sinner rolled up within his own consciousness, and, though he had seen the whole of him when he was caught, yet, illuded by the tergiversation of dishonest defence, he is in like measure ignorant of the whole of him. Thus the urchin has her nest in the reprobate, because the duplicity of a crafty mind, gathering itself up within itself, hides itself in the darkness of its self-defence.

Let the insincere hear what is written, *He that* walketh in simplicity walketh surely *(Prov. x. 9). For indeed simplicity of* conduct is an assurance of great security. Let them hear what is said by the mouth of the wise man, *The holy spirit of discipline* will flee deceit *(Wisd. i. 5). Let them hear what is* again affirmed by the witness of Scripture, *His communing is with* the simple *(Prov.* iii. 32). For God's communing is His revealing of secrets to human minds by the illumination of His presence. He is therefore said to commune with the simple, because He illuminates with the ray of His visitation concerning supernal mysteries the minds of those whom no shade of duplicity obscures. But it is a special evil of the double-minded, that, while they deceive others by their crooked and double conduct, they glory as though they were surpassingly prudent beyond others; and, since they consider not the strictness of retribution, they exult, miserable men that they are, in their own losses. But let them hear how the prophet Zephaniah holds out over them the power of divine rebuke, saying, *Behold the day of the* Lord cometh, great and horrible, the day of wrath, that day; a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of cloud and whirlwind, a day of trumpet and clangour, upon all fenced cities, and upon all lofty corners *(Zephan. i. 15, 16). For what is expressed by* fenced cities but minds suspected, and surrounded ever with a fallacious defence; minds which, as often as their fault is attacked, suffer not the darts of truth to reach them? And what is

signified by lofty corners (a wall being always double in corners) but insincere hearts; which, while they shun the simplicity of truth, are in a manner doubled back upon themselves in the crookedness of duplicity, and, what is worse, from their very fault of insincerity lift themselves in their thoughts with the pride of prudence? Therefore the day of the Lord comes full of vengeance and rebuke upon fenced cities and upon lofty corners, because the wrath of the last judgment both destroys human hearts that have been closed by defences against the truth, and unfolds such as have been folded up in duplicities. For then the fenced cities fall, because souls which God has not penetrated will be damned. Then the lofty corners tumble, because hearts which erect themselves in the prudence of insincerity are prostrated by the sentence of righteousness.

Chapter XII.

How the whole and the sick are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 13.) Differently to be admonished are the whole and the sick. For the whole are to be admonished that they employ the health of the body to the health of the soul: lest, if they turn the grace of granted soundness to the use of iniquity, they be made worse by the gift, and afterwards merit the severer punishments, in that they fear not now to use amiss the more bountiful gifts of God. The whole are to be admonished that they despise not the opportunity of winning health for ever. For it is written, *Behold now is the* acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. vi. 2). They are to be admonished lest, if they will not please God when they may, they may be not able when, too late, they would. For hence it is that Wisdom afterward deserts those whom, too long refusing, she before called, saying, *I have called,* and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I will also laugh at your destruction, and will mock when what you feared cometh *(Prov. i. 24,* seq.*). And again, Then shall they call upon me, and I will not hearken; they shall* rise early, and shall not find me *(Ibid.* 28). And so, when health of body, received for the purpose of doing good, is despised, it is felt, after it is lost, how precious was the gift: and at the last it is fruitlessly sought, having been enjoyed unprofitably when granted at the fit time. Whence it is well said through Solomon, *Give not thine honour unto aliens and thy years unto the cruel, lest* haply strangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours be in the house of a stranger, and thou moan at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed *(Ibid. v. 9,* seq.*). For who are* aliens from us but malignant spirits, who are separated from the lot of the heavenly country?

And what is our honour but that, though made in bodies of clay, we are yet created after the image and likeness of our Maker? Or who else is cruel but that apostate angel, who has both smitten himself with the pain of death through pride, and has not spared, though lost, to bring death upon the human race? He therefore gives his honour unto aliens who, being made after the image and likeness of God, devotes the seasons of his life to the pleasures of malignant spirits. He also surrenders his years to the cruel one who spends the space of life accorded him after the will of the ill-domineering adversary. And in the same place it is well added, *Lest haply strangers be filled* with thy wealth, and labours be in the house of a stranger. For whosoever, through the healthy estate of body received by him, or the wisdom of mind granted to him, labours not in the practice of virtues but in the perpetration of vices, he by no means fills his own house, but the habitations of strangers, with his wealth: that is, he multiplies the deeds of unclean spirits, and indeed so acts, in his luxuriousness or his pride, as even to increase the number of the lost by the addition of himself. Further, it is well added, *And thou moan at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are* consumed. *For, for the most part, the health of the flesh* which has been received is spent through vices: but, when it is suddenly withdrawn, when the flesh is worn with afflictions, when the soul is already urged to go forth, then lost health, long enjoyed for ill, is sought again as though for living well. And then men moan for that they would not serve God, when altogether unable to repair the losses of their negligence by serving Him. Whence it is said in another place, *When He slew them, then they sought Him* (Ps. lxxvii. 34).

But, on the other hand, the sick are to be admonished that they feel themselves to be sons of God in that the scourge of discipline chastises them. For, unless He purposed to give them an inheritance after correction, He would not have a care to educate them by afflictions. For hence the

Lord says to John by the angel, *Whom I love I rebuke and chasten* (Rev. iii. 19; Prov. iii. 11). Hence again it is written, *My son despise not thou the discipline of the* Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth (Heb. xii. 5, 6). Hence the Psalmist says, *Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and out* of all these hath the Lord delivered them (Ps. xxxiii. 20). Hence also the blessed Job, crying out in his sorrow, says, *If l be righteous,* I will not lift up my head, being saturated with affliction and misery *(Job x.* 15). The sick are to be told that, if they believe the heavenly country to be their own, they must needs endure labours in this as in a strange land. For hence it was that the stones were hammered outside, that they might be laid without sound of hammer in the building of the temple of the Lord; because, that is, we are now hammered with scourges without, that we may be afterwards set in our places within, without stroke of discipline, in the temple of God; to the end that strokes may now cut away whatever is superfluous in us, and then the concord of charity alone bind us together in the building. The sick are to be admonished to consider what severe scourges of discipline chastise our sons after the flesh for attaining earthly inheritances. What pain, then, of divine correction is hard upon us, by which both a never-to-be-lost inheritance is attained, and punishments which shall endure for ever are avoided? For hence Paul says, *We have had fathers of our* flesh as our educators, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much more be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? And they indeed for a few days educated us after their own will; but He for our profit in the receiving of His sanctification (Heb. xii. 9, 10).

The sick are to be admonished to consider how great health of the heart is in bodily affliction, which recalls the mind to knowledge of itself, and renews the memory of infirmity which health for the most part casts away, so that the spirit, which is carried out of itself into elation, may be reminded

by the smitten flesh from which it suffers to what condition it is subject. Which thing is rightly signified to Balaam (had he but been willing to follow obediently the voice of God) in the very retardation of his journey (Num. xxii. 23, *seq.*). For Balaam is on his way to attain his purpose; but the animal which is under him thwarts his desire. The ass, stopped by the prohibition, sees an angel which the human mind sees not; because for the most part the flesh, slow through afflictions, indicates to the mind from the scourge which it endures the God whom the mind itself which has the flesh under it did not see, in such sort as to impede the eagerness of the spirit which desires to advance in this world as though proceeding on a journey, until it makes known to it the invisible one who stands in its way. Whence also it is well said through Peter, *He had the dumb beast of burden for a rebuke of his* madness, which speaking with a man's voice forbade the foolishness of the prophet *(2 Pet. ii. 16). For indeed a man is* rebuked as mad by a dumb beast of burden, when an elated mind is reminded by the afflicted flesh of the good of humility which it ought to retain. But Balaam did not obtain the benefit of this rebuke for this reason, that, going to curse, he changed his voice, but not his mind. The sick are to be admonished to consider how great a boon is bodily affliction, which both washes away committed sins and restrains those which might have been committed, which inflicts on the troubled mind wounds of penitence derived from outward stripes. Whence it is written, *The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil,* and stripes in the secret parts of the belly *(Prov. xx. 30). For the blueness of a* wound cleanseth away evil, because the pain of scourges cleanses iniquities, whether meditated or perpetrated. But by the appellation of belly the mind is wont to be understood. For that the mind is called the belly is taught by that sentence in which it is written, *The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, which searcheth all the secret parts of the* belly *(Ibid. 27). As if to say, The illumination* of Divine inspiration, when it

comes into a man's mind, shews it to itself by illuminating it, whereas before the coming of the Holy Spirit it both could entertain bad thoughts and knew not how to estimate them. Then, the blueness of a wound cleanses away evil, and stripes in the secret parts of the belly, because when we are smitten outwardly, we are recalled, silent and afflicted, to memory of our sins, and bring back before our eyes all our past evil deeds, and through what we suffer outwardly we grieve inwardly the more for what we have done. Whence it comes to pass that in the midst of open wounds of the body the secret stripe in the belly cleanses us more fully, because a hidden wound of sorrow heals the iniquities of evil-doing.

The sick are to be admonished, to the end that they may keep the virtue of patience, to consider incessantly how great evils our Redeemer endured from those whom He had created; that He bore so many vile insults of reproach; that, while daily snatching the souls of captives from the hand of the old enemy, He took blows on the face from insulting men; that, while washing us with the water of salvation, He hid not His face from the spittings of the faithless; that, while delivering us by His advocacy from eternal punishments, He bore scourges in silence; that, while giving to us everlasting honours among the choirs of angels, He endured buffets; that, while saving us from the prickings of our sins, He refused not to submit His head to thorns; that, while inebriating us with eternal sweetness, He accepted in His thirst the bitterness of gall; that He Who for us adored the Father though equal to Him in Godhead, when adored in mockery held His peace: that, while preparing life for the dead, He Who was Himself the life came even unto death. Why, then, is it thought hard that man should endure scourges from God for evil-doing, if God underwent so great evils for well-doing? Or who with sound understanding can be ungrateful for being himself smitten, when even He Who lived here without sin went not hence without a scourge?

Chapter XIII.

How those who fear scourges and those who contemn them are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 14.) Differently to be admonished are those who fear scourges, and on that account live innocently, and those who have grown so hard in wickedness as not to be corrected even by scourges. For those who fear scourges are to be told by no means to desire temporal goods as being of great account, seeing that bad men also have them, and by no means to shun present evils as intolerable, seeing they are not ignorant how for the most part good men also are touched by them. They are to be admonished that, if they desire to be truly free from evils, they should dread eternal punishments; nor yet continue in this fear of punishments, but grow up by the nursing of charity to the grace of love. For it is written, *Perfect charity casteth out fear* (1 Joh. iv. 18). And again it is written, *Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but the* spirit of adoption of sons, wherein we cry, Abba, Father (Rom. viii. 15). Whence the same teacher says again, *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* (2 Cor. iii. 17). If, then, the fear of punishment still restrains from evil-doing, truly no liberty of spirit possesses the soul of him that so fears. For, were he not afraid of the punishment, he would doubtless commit the sin. The mind, therefore, that is bound by the bondage of fear knows not the grace of liberty. For good should be loved for itself, not pursued because of the compulsion of penalties. For he that does what is good for this reason, that he is afraid of the evil of torments, wishes that what he fears were not, that so he might commit what is unlawful boldly. Whence it appears clearer than the light that innocence is thus lost before God, in whose eyes evil desire is sin.

But, on the other hand, those whom not even scourges restrain from iniquities are to be smitten with sharper rebuke in proportion as they have grown hard with greater insensibility. For generally they are to be disdained without disdain, and despaired of without despair, so, to wit, that the despair exhibited may strike them with dread, and admonition following may bring them back to hope. Sternly, therefore, against them should the Divine judgments be set forth, that they may be recalled by consideration of eternal retribution to knowledge of themselves. For let them hear that in them is fulfilled that which is written, *If thou shouldest* bray a fool in a mortar, as if with a pestle pounding barley, his foolishness will not be taken away from him *(Prov. xxvii. 22). Against these the prophet* complains to the Lord, saying, *Thou hast* bruised them, and they have refused to receive discipline (Jer. v. 3). Hence it is that the Lord says, *I have slain and destroyed this* people, and yet they have not returned from their ways (Isai. ix. 13). Hence He says again, *The people hath not returned to Him that smiteth* them *(Jer. xv.* 6). Hence the prophet complains by the voice of the scourgers, saying, *We have* taken care for Babylon, and she is not healed *(Jer. li. 9). For Babylon is taken care* for, yet still not restored to health, when the mind, confused in evil-doing, hears the words of rebuke, feels the scourges of rebuke, and yet scorns to return to the straight paths of salvation. Hence the Lord reproaches the children of Israel, captive, but yet not converted from their iniquity, saying, *The house of Israel is to Me become dross: all they are brass,* and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace (Ezek. xxii. 18); as if to say plainly, I would have purified them by the fire of tribulation, and I sought that they should become silver or gold; but they have been turned before me in the furnace into brass, tin, iron, and lead, because even in tribulation they have broken forth, not to virtue but to vices. For indeed brass, when it is struck, returns a sound more than all other metals. He, therefore, who, when subjected to strokes, breaks

out into a sound of murmuring is turned into brass in the midst of the furnace. But tin, when it is dressed with art, has a false show of silver. He, then, who is not free from the vice of pretence in the midst of tribulation becomes tin in the furnace. Moreover, he who plots against the life of his neighbour uses iron. Wherefore iron in the furnace is he who in tribulation loses not the malice that would do hurt. Lead, also, is the heaviest of metals. He, then, is found as lead in the furnace who, even when placed in the midst of tribulation, is not raised above earthly desires. Hence, again, it is written, *She hath wearied herself with much labour, and her* exceeding rust went not out from her, not even by fire (Ezek. xxiv. 12). For He brings upon us the fire of tribulation, that He may purge us from the rust of vices; but we lose not our rust even by fire, when even amid scourges we lack not vice. Hence the Prophet says again, *The* founder hath melted in vain; their wickednesses are not consumed (Jer. vi. 29).

It is, however, to be known that sometimes when they remain uncorrected amid the hardness of scourges, they are to be soothed by sweet admonition. For those who are not corrected by torments are sometimes restrained from unrighteous deeds by gentle blandishments. For commonly the sick too, whom a strong potion of medicine has not availed to cure, have been restored to their former health by tepid water; and some sores which cannot be cured by incision are healed by fomentations of oil; and hard adamant admits not at all of incision by steel, but is softened by the mild blood of goats.

Chapter XIV.

How the silent and the talkative are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 15.) Differently to be admonished are the over-silent, and those who spend time in much speaking. For it ought to be insinuated to the over-silent that while they shun some vices unadvisedly, they are, without its being perceived, implicated in worse. For often from bridling the tongue overmuch they suffer from more grievous loquacity in the heart; so that thoughts seethe the more in the mind from being straitened by the violent guard of indiscreet silence. And for the most part they overflow all the more widely as they count themselves the more secure because of not being seen by fault-finders without. Whence sometimes a man's mind is exalted into pride, and he despises as weak those whom he hears speaking. And, when he shuts the mouth of his body, he is not aware to what extent through his pride he lays himself open to vices. For his tongue he represses, his mind he exalts; and, little considering his own wickedness, accuses all in his own mind by so much the more freely as he does it also the more secretly. The over-silent are therefore to be admonished that they study anxiously to know, not only what manner of men they ought to exhibit themselves outwardly, but also what manner of men they ought to shew themselves inwardly; that they fear more a hidden judgment in respect of their thoughts than the reproof of their neighbours in respect of their speeches. For it is written, *My son, attend* unto my wisdom, and bow thine ear to my prudence, that thou mayest guard thy thoughts *(Prov. v. 1). For, indeed, nothing is* more fugitive than the heart, which deserts us as often as it slips away through bad thoughts. For hence the Psalmist says, *My* heart hath failed me *(Ps. xxxix. 13)*. Hence, when he returns to himself, he says, *Thy servant hath found* his heart to pray to Thee *(2 Sam. vii. 27). When,*

therefore, thought is kept under guard, the heart which was wont to fly away is found. Moreover, the over-silent for the most part, when they suffer some injustices, come to have a keener sense of pain from not speaking of what they endure. For, were the tongue to tell calmly the annoyances that have been caused, the pain would flow away from the consciousness. For closed sores torment the more; since, when the corruption that is hot within is cast out, the pain is opened out for healing. They, therefore, who are silent more than is expedient, ought to know this, lest, amid the annoyances which they endure while they hold their tongue, they aggravate the violence of their pain. For they are to be admonished that, if they love their neighbours as themselves, they should by no means keep from them the grounds on which they justly blame them. For from the medicine of the voice there is a concurrent effect for the health of both parties, while on the side of him who inflicts the injury his bad conduct is checked, and on the side of him who sustains it the violent heat of pain is allayed by opening out the sore. For those who take notice of what is evil in their neighbours, and yet refrain their tongue in silence, withdraw, as it were, the aid of medicine from observed sores, and become the causers of death, in that they would not cure the venom which they could have cured. The tongue, therefore, should be discreetly curbed, not tied up fast. For it is written, *A wise man will* hold his tongue until the time *(Eccles. xx. 7); in order, assuredly, that, when* he considers it opportune, he may relinquish the censorship of silence, and apply himself to the service of utility by speaking such things as are fit. And again it is written, *A time to keep silence, and* a time to speak *(Eccles. iii. 7). For, indeed, the times for* changes should be discreetly weighed, lest either, when the tongue ought to be restrained, it run loose to no profit in words, or, when it might speak with profit, it slothfully restrain itself. Considering which thing well, the Psalmist says, *Set a watch, O* Lord, on my mouth, and a door round about my lips *(Ps. cxl. 3). For he* seeks not

that a wall should be set on his lips, but a door: that is, what is opened and shut. Whence we, too, ought to learn warily, to the end that the voice discreetly and at the fitting time may open the mouth, and at the fitting time silence close it.

But, on the other hand, those who spend time in much speaking are to be admonished that they vigilantly note from what a state of rectitude they fall away when they flow abroad in a multitude of words. For the human mind, after the manner of water, when closed in, is collected unto higher levels, in that it seeks again the height from which it descended; and, when let loose, it falls away in that it disperses itself unprofitably through the lowest places. For by as many superfluous words as it is dissipated from the censorship of its silence, by so many streams, as it were, is it drawn away out of itself. Whence also it is unable to return inwardly to knowledge of itself, because, being scattered by much speaking, it excludes itself from the secret place of inmost consideration. But it uncovers its whole self to the wounds of the enemy who lies in want, because it surrounds itself with no defence of watchfulness. Hence it is written, *As a city that lieth* open and without environment of walls, so is a man that cannot keep in his spirit in speaking *(Prov. xxv. 28). For, because it has not the wall* of silence, the city of the mind lies open to the darts of the foe; and, when by words it casts itself out of itself, it shews itself exposed to the adversary. And he overcomes it with so much the less labour as with the more labour the mind itself, which is conquered, fights against itself by much speaking.

Moreover, since the indolent mind for the most part lapses by degrees into downfall, while we neglect to guard against idle words we go on to hurtful ones; so that at first it pleases us to talk of other men's affairs; afterwards the tongue gnaws with detraction the lives of those of whom we talk; but at last breaks out even into open slanders. Hence are sown pricking thorns, quarrels arise, the torches of enmities are kindled, the peace

of hearts is extinguished. Whence it is well said through Solomon, *He that* letteth out water is a well-spring of strifes *(Prov. xvii. 14). For to let out water is to* let loose the tongue to a flux of speech. Wherefore, on the other hand, in a good sense it is said again, *The words of a man's* mouth are as deep water *(Ibid. xviii. 4). He therefore who letteth* out water is the wellspring of strifes, because he who curbs not his tongue dissipates concord. Hence on the other hand it is written, *He that imposes silence on a fool allays enmities* (Ibid. xxvi. 10). Moreover, that any one who gives himself to much speaking cannot keep the straight way of righteousness is testified by the Prophet, who says, *A man full of* words shall not be guided aright upon the earth (Ps. cxxxix. 12). Hence also Solomon says again, *In the multitude of words there shall* not want sin *(Prov.* x. 19). Hence Isaiah says, *The culture of righteousness is silence* (Isai. xxxii. 17), indicating, to wit, that the righteousness of the mind is desolated when there is no stint of immoderate speaking. Hence James says, *If any man* thinketh himself to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain (James i. 26). Hence again he says, *Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak* (Ibid. 19). Hence again, defining the power of the tongue, he adds, *An unruly evil, full of deadly* poison *(Ibid. iii. 8). Hence the Truth in person* admonishes us, saying, *Every idle word that men shall speak, they* shall give account thereof in the day of judgment (Matth. xii. 36). For indeed every word is idle that lacks either a reason of just necessity or an intention of pious usefulness. If then an account is required of idle discourse, let us weigh well what punishment awaits much speaking, in which there is also the sin of hurtful words.

Chapter XV.

How the slothful and the hasty are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 16.) Differently to be admonished are the slothful and the hasty. For the former are to be persuaded not to lose, by putting it off, the good they have to do; but the latter are to be admonished lest, while they forestall the time of good deeds by inconsiderate haste, they change their meritorious character. To the slothful therefore it is to be intimated, that often, when we will not do at the right time what we can, before long, when we will, we cannot. For the very indolence of the mind, when it is not kindled with befitting fervour, gets cut off by a torpor that stealthily grows upon it from all desire of good things. Whence it is plainly said through Solomon, *Slothfulness casteth into a deep* sleep *(Prov. xix.* 15). For the slothful one is as it were awake in that he feels aright, though he grows torpid by doing nothing: but slothfulness is said to cast into a deep sleep, because by degrees even the wakefulness of right feeling is lost, when zeal for well-doing is discontinued. And in the same place it is rightly added, *And a dissolute soul shall* suffer hunger *(Ibid.). For, because it braces* not itself towards higher things, it lets itself run loose uncared for in lower desires; and, while not braced with the vigour of lofty aims, suffers the pangs of the hunger of low concupiscence, and, in that it neglects to bind itself up by discipline, it scatters itself the more abroad hungry in its craving after pleasures. Hence it is written again by the same Solomon, *The idle man is wholly in desires* (Prov. xxi. 26). Hence in the preaching of the Truth Himself (Matth. xii. 44, 45) the house is said indeed to be clean when one spirit has gone out; but, when empty, it is taken possession of by his returning with many more. For the most part the slothful, while he neglects to do things that are necessary, sets before him some that are difficult, but is

inconsiderately afraid of others; and so, as though finding something that he may reasonably fear, he satisfies himself that he has good reason for remaining torpid. To him it is rightly said through Solomon, *The* sluggard would not plough by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in summer, and it shall not be given unto him *(Prov. xx. 4). For indeed the sluggard* ploughs not by reason of the cold, when he finds an excuse for not doing the good things which he ought to do. The sluggard ploughs not by reason of the cold, when he is afraid of small evils that are against him, and leaves undone things of the greatest importance. Further it is well said, *He shall beg in summer, and it shall not be* given unto him. *For whoso toils not now in good works will* beg in summer and receive nothing, because, when the burning sun of judgment shall appear, he will then sue in vain for entrance into the kingdom. To him it is well said again through the same Solomon, *He that observeth the wind doth not sow: and he that regardeth* the clouds never reapeth *(Eccles. xi. 4). For what is expressed by the* wind but the temptation of malignant spirits? And what are denoted by the clouds which are moved of the wind but the oppositions of bad men? The clouds, that is to say, are driven by the winds, because bad men are excited by the blasts of unclean spirits. He, then, that observeth the wind soweth not, and he that regardeth the clouds reapeth not, because whosoever fears the temptation of malignant spirits, whosoever the persecution of bad men, and does not sow the seed of good work now, neither doth he then reap handfuls of holy recompense.

But on the other hand the hasty, while they forestall the time of good deeds, pervert their merit, and often fall into what is evil, while failing altogether to discern what is good. Such persons look not at all to see what things they are doing when they do them, but for the most part, when they are done, become aware that they ought not to have done them. To such, under the guise of a learner, it is well said in Solomon, *My son, do* nothing

without counsel, and after it is done thou shalt not repent (Ecclus. xxxii. 24). And again, *Let thine* eyelids go before thy steps *(Prov. iv. 25). For indeed our eyelids go before* our steps, when right counsels prevent our doings. For he who neglects to look forward by consideration to what he is about to do advances his steps with his eyes closed; proceeds on and accomplishes his journey, but goes not in advance of himself by looking forward; and therefore the sooner falls, because he gives no heed through the eyelid of counsel to where he should set the foot of action.

Chapter XVI.

How the meek and the passionate are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 17.) Differently to be admonished are the meek and the passionate. For sometimes the meek, when they are in authority, suffer from the torpor of sloth, which is a kindred disposition, and as it were placed hard by. And for the most part from the laxity of too great gentleness they soften the force of strictness beyond need. But on the other hand the passionate, in that they are swept on into frenzy of mind by the impulse of anger, break up the calm of quietness, and so throw into confusion the life of those that are put under them. For, when rage drives them headlong, they know not what they do in their anger, they know not what in their anger they suffer from themselves. But sometimes, what is more serious, they think the goad of their anger to be the zeal of righteousness. And, when vice is believed to be virtue, guilt is piled up without fear. Often, then, the meek grow torpid in the laziness of inactivity; often the passionate are deceived by the zeal of uprightness. Thus to the virtue of the former a vice is unawares adjoined, but to the latter their vice appears as though it were fervent virtue. Those, therefore, are to be admonished to fly what is close beside themselves, these to take heed to what is in themselves; those to discern what they have not, these what they have. Let the meek embrace solicitude; let the passionate ban perturbation. The meek are to be admonished that they study to have also the zeal of righteousness: the passionate are to be admonished that to the zeal which they think they have they add meekness. For on this account the Holy Spirit has been manifested to us in a dove and in fire; because, to wit, all whom He fills He causes to shew themselves as meek with the simplicity of the dove, and burning with the fire of zeal.

He then is in no wise full of the Holy Spirit, who either in the calm of meekness forsakes the fervour of zeal, or again in the ardour of zeal loses the virtue of meekness. Which thing we shall perhaps better shew, if we bring forward the authority of Paul, who to two who were his disciples, and endowed with a like charity, supplies nevertheless different aids for preaching. For in admonishing Timothy he says, *Reprove, entreat, rebuke, with all* long-suffering and doctrine *(2 Tim. iv. 2). Titus also he admonishes,* saying, *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all* authority *(Tit. ii.* 15). What is the reason that he dispenses his teaching with so great art as, in exhibiting it, to recommend authority to the one, and long-suffering to the other, except that he saw Titus to be of a meeker spirit, and Timothy of one a little more fervid? The former he inflames with the earnestness of zeal; the latter he moderates by the gentleness of long-suffering. To the one he adds what is wanting, from the other he subtracts what is overabundant. The one he endeavours to push on with a spur, the other to keep back with a bridle. For the great husbandman who has the Church in charge waters some shoots that they may grow, but prunes others when he sees that they grow too much; lest either by not growing they should bear no fruit, or by growing over much they should lose the fruits they may put forth. But far different is the anger that creeps in under the guise of zeal from that which confounds the perturbed heart without pretext of righteousness. For the former is extended inordinately in that wherein it ought to be, but the latter is ever kindled in that wherein it ought not to be. It should indeed be known that in this the passionate differ from the impatient, that the latter bear not with things brought upon them by others, but the former themselves bring on things to be borne with. For the passionate often follow after those who shun them, stir up occasion of strife, rejoice in the toil of contention; and yet such we better correct, if in the midst of the commotion of their anger we do shun them. For, while they are perturbed,

they do not know what we say to them; but, when brought back to themselves, they receive words of exhortation the more freely in proportion as they blush at having been the more calmly borne with. But to a mind that is drunk with fury every right thing that is said appears wrong. Whence to Nabal when he was drunk Abigail laudably kept silence about his fault, but, when he had digested his wine, as laudably told him of it (1 Sam. xxv. 37). For he could for this reason perceive the evil he had done, that he did not hear of it when drunk.

But when the passionate so attack others that they cannot be altogether shunned, they should be smitten, not with open rebuke, but sparingly with a certain respectful cautiousness. And this we shall shew better if we bring forward what was done by Abner. For, when Asahel attacked him with the violence of inconsiderate haste, it is written, *Abner spake unto Asahel, saying.* Turn thee aside from following me, lest I be driven to smite thee to the ground. Howbeit he scorned to listen, and refused to turn aside. Whereupon Abner smote him with the hinder end of the spear in the groin, and thrust him through, and he died (2 Sam. ii. 22, 23). For of whom did Asahel present a type but of those whom fury violently seizes and carries headlong? And such, in this same attack of fury, are to be shunned cautiously in proportion as they are madly hurried on. Whence also Abner, who in our speech is called the lantern of the father, fled; because when the tongue of teachers, which indicates the supernal light of God, sees the mind of any one borne along over the steeps of rage, and refrains from casting back darts of words against the angry person, it is as though it were unwilling to smite one that is pursuing. But, when the passionate will not pacify themselves by any consideration, and, like Asahel, cease not to pursue and to be mad, it is necessary that those who endeavour to repress these furious ones should by no means lift themselves up in fury, but exhibit all possible calmness; and yet adroitly bring something to bear whereby

they may by a side thrust prick the heart of the furious one. Whence also Abner, when he made a stand against his pursuer, pierced him, not with a direct stroke, but with the hinder end of his spear. For to strike with the point is to oppose with an onset of open rebuke: but to smite the pursuer with the hinder end of the spear is calmly to touch the furious one with certain hits, and, as it were, by sparing him overcome him. Asahel moreover straightway fell, because agitated minds, when they feel themselves to be spared, and yet are touched inwardly by the answers given in calmness, fall at once from the elevation to which they had raised themselves. Those, then, who rebound from the onset of their heat under the stroke of gentleness die, as it were, without steel.

Chapter XVII.

How the humble and the haughty are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 18.) Differently to be admonished are the humble and the haughty. To the former it is to be insinuated how true is that excellence which they hold in hoping for it; to the latter it is to be intimated how that temporal glory is as nothing which even when embracing it they hold not. Let the humble hear how eternal are the things that they long for, how transitory the things which they despise; let the haughty hear how transitory are the things they court, how eternal the things they lose. Let the humble hear from the authoritative voice of the Truth, *Every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted* (Luke xviii. 14). Let the haughty hear, *Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled* (Ibid.). Let the humble hear, *Humility goeth before glory;* let the haughty hear, *The spirit* is exalted before a fall *(Prov. xv. 33; xvi. 18). Let the humble hear, Unto whom shall I have respect, but to him that is humble and quiet,* and that trembleth at my words *(Isai. lxvi. 2)? Let the haughty hear, Why is earth and ashes proud* (Ecclus. x. 9)? Let the humble hear, *God hath respect unto the things that are* humble. *Let the haughty hear,* And lofty things He knoweth afar off *(Psal. cxxxvii. 6).* Let the humble hear, *That the Son of Man came not to be ministered* unto, but to minister *(Matth. xx. 28); let the haughty hear, that The beginning of all sin is pride* (Ecclus. x. 13). Let the humble hear, that *Our Redeemer humbled himself, being made obedient even unto* death *(Philip. ii.* 8); let the haughty hear what is written concerning their head, *He is king over all the* sons of pride *(Job* xli. 25). The pride, therefore, of the devil became the occasion of our perdition, and the humility of God has been found the argument for our redemption. For our enemy, having been created among all things, desired to appear exalted above all things; but our

Redeemer, remaining great above all things, deigned to become little among all things.

Let the humble, then, be told that, when they abase themselves, they ascend to the likeness of God; let the haughty be told that, when they exalt themselves, they fall into imitation of the apostate angel. What, then, is more debased than haughtiness, which, while it stretches itself above itself, is lengthened out beyond the stature of true loftiness? And what is more sublime than humility, which, while it depresses itself to the lowest, conjoins itself to its Maker who remains above the highest? There is, however, another thing in these cases that ought to be carefully considered; that some are often deceived by a false show of humility, while some are beguiled by ignorance of their own haughtiness. For commonly some who think themselves humble have an admixture of fear, such as is not due to men; while an assertion of free speech commonly goes with the haughty. And when any vices require to be rebuked, the former hold their peace out of fear, and yet esteem themselves as being silent out of humility; the latter speak in the impatience of haughtiness, and yet believe themselves to be speaking in the freedom of uprightness. Those the fault of timidity under a show of humility keeps back from rebuking what is wrong; these the unbridled impetuosity of pride, under the image of freedom, impels to rebuke things they ought not, or to rebuke them more than they ought. Whence both the haughty are to be admonished not to be free more than is becoming, and the humble are to be admonished not to be more submissive than is right; lest either the former turn the defence of righteousness into a display of pride, or the latter, while they study more than needs to submit themselves to men, be driven even to pay respect to their vices.

It is, however, to be considered that for the most part we more profitably reprove the haughty, if with our reproofs of them we mingle some balms of praise. For some other good things that are in them should be introduced

into our reproofs, or at all events some that might have been, though they are not; and then at last the bad things that displease us should be cut away, when previous allowance of the good things that please us has made their minds favourably disposed to listen. For unbroken horses, too, we first touch with a gentle hand, that we may afterwards subdue them to us even with whips. And the sweetness of honey is added to the bitter cup of medicine, lest the bitterness which is to be of profit for health be felt harsh in the act of tasting; but, while the taste is deceived by sweetness, the deadly humour is expelled by bitterness. In the case, then, of the haughty the first beginnings of our rebuke should be tempered with an admixture of praise, that, while they admit the commendations which they love, they may accept also the reproofs which they hate.

Moreover, we shall in most cases better persuade the haughty to their profit, if we speak of their improvement as likely to profit us rather than them; if we request their amendment to be bestowed upon us more than on themselves. For haughtiness is easily bent to good, if its bending be believed to be of profit to others also. Whence Moses, who journeyed through the desert under the direction of God and the leading of the cloudy pillar, when he would draw Hobab his kinsman from converse with the Gentile world, and subdue him to the dominion of Almighty God, said, *We are journeying unto the place* of which the Lord said, I will give it to you; Come with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And when the other had replied to him, I will not go with thee, but will return to my own land in which I was born; he straightway added, Leave us not, I pray thee; for thou knowest in what places we should encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be our guide *(Num. x. 29,* seq.*). And yet Moses* was not straitened in his own mind by ignorance of the way, seeing that acquaintance with Deity had opened out within him the knowledge of prophecy; and the pillar went before him

outwardly, while inwardly familiar speech in his sedulous converse with God instructed him concerning all things. But, in truth, as a man of foresight, talking to a haughty hearer, he sought succour that he might give it; he requested a guide on the way, that he might be able to be his guide unto life. Thus he so acted that the proud hearer should become all the more attentive to the voice that persuaded him to better things from being supposed to be necessary, and, in that he believed himself to be his exhorter's guide, he should bow himself to the words of exhortation.

Chapter XVIII.

How the obstinate and the fickle are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 19.) Differently to be admonished are the obstinate and the fickle. The former are to be told that they think more of themselves than they are, and therefore do not acquiesce in the counsels of others: but the latter are to be given to understand that they undervalue and disregard themselves too much, and so are turned aside from their own judgment in successive moments of time. Those are to be told that, unless they esteemed themselves better than the rest of men, they would by no means set less value on the counsels of all than on their own deliberation: these are to be told that, if they at all gave heed to what they are, the breeze of mutability would by no means turn them about through so many sides of variableness. To the former it is said through Paul, *Be not wise in your own conceits* (Rom. xii. 16): but the latter on the other hand should hear this; *Let us not be carried about with every* wind of doctrine *(Ephes. iv. 14). Concerning the former it* is said through Solomon, *They shall eat of the fruits of their own* way, and be filled with their own devices *(Prov. i. 31); but concerning the latter it is* written by him again, *The heart of the foolish will be unlike* (Ibid. xv. 7). For the heart of the wise is always like itself, because, while it rests in good persuasions, it directs itself constantly in good performance. But the heart of the foolish is unlike, because, while it shews itself various through mutability, it never remains what it was. And since some vices, as out of themselves they generate others, so themselves spring from others, it ought by all means to be understood that we then better wipe these away by our reproofs, when we dry them up from the very fountain of their bitterness. For obstinacy is engendered of pride, and fickleness of levity.

The obstinate are therefore to be admonished, that they acknowledge the haughtiness of their thoughts, and study to vanquish themselves; lest, while they scorn to be overcome by the right advice of others outside themselves, they be held captive within themselves to pride. They are to be admonished to observe wisely how the Son of Man, Whose will is always one with the Father's, that He may afford us an example of subduing our own will, says, *I* seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me *(Joh. v.* 30). And, still more to commend the grace of this virtue, He declared beforehand that He would retain the same in the last judgment, saying, *I can of myself do nothing,* but as I hear I judge *(Ibid.). With what conscience,* then, can a man disdain to acquiesce in the will of another, seeing that the Son of God and of Man, when He comes to shew forth the glory of his power, testifies that of his own self he does not judge?

But, on the other hand, the fickle are to be admonished to strengthen their mind with gravity. For they then dry up the germs of mutability in themselves when they first cut off from their heart the root of levity; since also a strong fabric is built up when a solid place is first provided whereon to lay the foundation. Unless, then, levity of mind be previously guarded against, inconstancy of the thoughts is by no means conquered. From this Paul declared himself to be free, when he said, *Did I use* levity? or the things that I purpose do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea and nay (2 Cor. i. 17)? As if to say plainly, For this reason I am moved by no breeze of mutability, that I yield not to the vice of levity.

Chapter XIX.

How those who use food intemperately and those who use it sparingly are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 20.) Differently to be admonished are the gluttonous and the abstinent. For superfluity of speech, levity of conduct, and lechery accompany the former; but the latter often the sin of impatience, and often that of pride. For were it not the case that immoderate loquacity carries away the gluttonous, that rich man who is said to have fared sumptuously every day would not burn more sorely than elsewhere in his tongue, saying, *Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip* the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame *(Luke* xvi. 24). By these words it is surely shewn that in his daily feasting he had frequently sinned by his tongue, seeing that, while burning all over, he demanded to be cooled especially in his tongue. Again, that levity of conduct follows closely upon gluttony sacred authority testifies, when it says, *The people sat down to eat and drink, and* rose up to play *(Exod. xxxii. 6). For the most part also* edacity leads us even to lechery, because, when the belly is distended by repletion, the stings of lust are excited. Whence also to the cunning foe, who opened the sense of the first man by lust for the apple, but bound it in a noose of sin, it is said by the divine voice, *On breast and belly shalt thou creep* (Gen. iii. 14); as if it were plainly said to him, In thought and in maw thou shalt have dominion over human hearts. That lechery follows upon gluttony the prophet testifies, denouncing hidden things while he speaks of open ones, when he says, *The chief of the cooks broke down the walls of Jerusalem* (Jer. xxxix. 9; 2 Kings xxv. 10). For the chief of the cooks is the belly, to which the cooks pay observance with great care, that it may itself be delectably filled

with viands. But the walls of Jerusalem are the virtues of the soul, elevated to a longing for supernal peace. The chief of the cooks, therefore, throws down the walls of Jerusalem, because, when the belly is distended with gluttony, the virtues of the soul are destroyed through lechery.

On the other hand, were it not that impatience commonly shakes the abstinent out of the bosom of tranquillity, Peter would by no means, when saying, *Supply in your faith virtue, and in* your virtue knowledge, and in your knowledge abstinence (2 Pet. i. 5), have straightway vigilantly added, *And in your abstinence patience.* For he foresaw that the patience which he admonished them to have would be wanting to the abstinent. Again, were it not that the sin of pride sometimes pierces through the cogitations of the abstinent, Paul would by no means have said, *Let not him that eateth not judge him* that eateth *(Rom.* xiv. 3). And again, speaking to others, while glancing at the maxims of such as gloried in the virtue of abstinence, he added, *Which things have* indeed a show of wisdom in superstition and humility, and for not sparing of the body, not in any honour for the satisfying of the flesh *(Coloss. ii.* 25). Here it is to be noted that the excellent preacher, in his argument, joins a show of humility to superstition, because, when the flesh is worn more than needs by abstinence, humility is displayed outwardly, but on account of this very humility there is grievous pride within. And unless the mind were sometimes puffed up by the virtue of abstinence, the arrogant Pharisee would by no means have studiously numbered this among his great merits, saying, *I fast twice in the week* (Luke xviii. 12).

Thus the gluttonous are to be admonished, that in giving themselves to the enjoyment of dainties they pierce not themselves through with the sword of lechery; and that they perceive how great loquacity, how great levity of mind, lie in wait for them through eating; lest, while they softly serve the belly, they become cruelly bound in the nooses of vice.

For by so much the further do we go back from our second parent as by immoderate indulgence, when the hand is stretched out for food, we renew the fall of our first parent. But, on the other hand, the abstinent are to be admonished ever anxiously to look out, lest, while they fly the vice of gluttony, still worse vices be engendered as it were of virtue lest, while they macerate the flesh, their spirit break out into impatience; and so there be no virtue in the vanquishing of the flesh, the spirit being overcome by anger. Sometimes, moreover, while the mind of the abstinent keeps anger down, it is corrupted, as it were, by a foreign joy coming in, and loses all the good of abstinence in that it fails to guard itself from spiritual vices. Hence it is rightly said through the prophet, *In the days of your fasts are found your* wills *(Isai. lviii.* 3, lxx.). And shortly after, *Ye fast for debates and strifes, and ye smite with* the fists *(Ibid.). For the will pertains to* delight, the fist to anger. In vain, then, is the body worn by abstinence, if the mind, abandoned to disorderly emotions, is dissipated by vices. And again, they are to be admonished that, while they keep up their abstinence without abatement, they suppose not this to be of eminent virtue before the hidden judge; lest, if it be perchance supposed to be of great merit, the heart be lifted up to haughtiness. For hence it is said through the prophet, *Is it* such a fast that I have chosen? But break thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the wanderers into thine house (Ibid. 5).

In this matter it is to be considered how small the virtue of abstinence is accounted, seeing that it is not commended but for other virtues. Hence Joel says, *Sanctify a* fast. *For indeed to sanctify a fast is to shew abstinence of* the flesh to be worthy of God by other good things being added to it. The abstinent are to be admonished that they then offer to God an abstinence that pleases Him, when they bestow on the indigent the nourishment which they withhold from themselves. For we should wisely attend to what is blamed by the Lord through the prophet, saying, *When ye fasted and*

mourned in the fifth and seventh month far these seventy years, did ye at all fast a fast unto Me? And when ye did eat and drink, did ye not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves *(Zach. vii. 5* seq.*)? For a man* fasts not to God but to himself, if what he withholds from his belly for a time he gives not to the needy, but keeps to be offered afterwards to his belly.

Wherefore, lest either gluttonous appetite throw the one sort off their guard, or the afflicted flesh trip up the other by elation, let the former hear this from the mouth of the Truth, *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be* overcharged in surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this world (Luke xxi. 34). And in the same place there is added a profitable fear; *And so that day come* upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth *(Ibid.* 35). Let the latter hear, *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but* that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man (Matth. xv. 11). Let the former hear, *Meat for the belly, and the belly far meats; but* God shall destroy both it and them (1 Cor. vi. 13). And again, *Not in rioting and drunkenness* (Rom. xiii. 13). And again, *Meat* commendeth us not to God (1 Cor. viii. 8). Let the latter hear, *To the pure all things are pure: but unto them* that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure (Tit. i. 15). Let the former hear, *Whose God is their belly, and whose glory* is in their own confusion *(Philip. iii. 19). Let the latter hear, Some shall depart from the faith;* and a little after, *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which* God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (1 Tim. iv. 1, 3). Let those hear, *It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor* anything whereby thy brother stumbleth *(Rom. xiv. 21). Let these hear,* Use a little wine far thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities *(1 Tim.* v. 23). Thus both the former may learn not to desire inordinately the food of the flesh, and the latter not dare to condemn the creature of God, which they lust not after.

Chapter XX.

How to be admonished are those who give away what is their own, and those who seize what belongs to others.

(*Admonition* 21.) Differently to be admonished are those who already give compassionately of their own, and those who still would fain seize even what belongs to others. For those who already give compassionately of their own are to be admonished not to lift themselves up in swelling thought above those to whom they impart earthly things; not to esteem themselves better than others because they see others to be supported by them. For the Lord of an earthly household, in distributing the ranks and ministries of his servants, appoints some to rule, but some to be ruled by others. Those he orders to supply to the rest what is necessary, these to take what they receive from others. And yet it is for the most part those that rule who offend, while those that are ruled remain in favour with the good man of the house. Those who are dispensers incur wrath; those who subsist by the dispensation of others continue without offence. Those, then, who already give compassionately of the things which they possess are to be admonished to acknowledge themselves to be placed by the heavenly Lord as dispensers of temporal supplies, and to impart the same all the more humbly from their understanding that the things which they dispense are not their own. And, when they consider that they are appointed for the service of those to whom they impart what they have received, by no means let vain glory elate their minds, but let fear depress them. Whence also it is needful for them to take anxious thought lest they distribute what has been committed to them unworthily; lest they bestow something on those on whom they ought to have spent nothing, or nothing on those on whom they ought to have spent something, or much on those on whom they ought to

have spent little, or little on those on whom they ought to have spent much; lest by precipitancy they scatter unprofitably what they give; lest by tardiness they mischievously torment petitioners; lest the thought of receiving a favour in return creep in; lest craving for transitory praise extinguish the light of giving; lest accompanying moroseness beset an offered gift; lest in case of a gift that has been well offered the mind be exhilarated more than is fit; lest, when they have fulfilled all aright, they give something to themselves, and so at once lose all after they have accomplished all. For, that they may not attribute to themselves the virtue of their liberality, let them hear what is written, *If any man administer, let him do it as of the* ability which God administereth (1 Pet. iv. 11). That they may not rejoice immoderately in benefits bestowed, let them hear what is written, *When ye shall have done all those things which are* commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do *(Luke xvii. 10). That moroseness may not* spoil liberality, let them hear what is written, *God loveth a cheerful giver* (2 Cor. ix. 7). That they may not seek transitory praise for a gift bestowed, let them hear what is written, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth* (Matth. vi. 3). That is, let not the glory of the present life mix itself with the largesses of piety, nor let desire of favour know anything of the work of rectitude. That they may not require a return for benefits bestowed, let them hear what is written, *When thou makest a dinner* or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. but, when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they have not whereof to recompense thee *(Luke xiv. 12* seq.*). That they may* not supply too late what should be supplied at once, let them hear what is written, *Say not unto thy friend, go and come again, and* to-morrow I will give, when thou mightest give immediately (Prov. iii. 28). Lest, under

pretence of liberality, they should scatter what they possess unprofitably, let them hear what is written, *Let thine alms sweat in* thine hand. *Lest, when much is necessary, little be given,* let them hear what is written, *He that soweth sparingly shall reap* also sparingly *(2* Cor. ix. 6). Lest, when they ought to give little, they give too much, and afterwards, badly enduring want themselves, break out into impatience, let them hear what is written, *Not that other men be eased, and ye* burdened, but by an equality, that your abundance may supply their want, and that their abundance may be a supply to your want (Ibid. viii. 13, 14). For, when the soul of the giver knows not how to endure want, then, in withdrawing much from himself, he seeks out against himself occasion of impatience. For the mind should first be prepared for patience, and then either much or all be bestowed in bounty, lest, the inroad of want being borne with but little equanimity, both the reward of previous bounty be lost, and subsequent murmuring bring worse ruin on the soul. Lest they should give nothing at all to those on whom they ought to bestow something, let them hear what is written, *Give to every man that* asketh of thee *(Luke vi. 30). Lest they should give* something, however little to those on whom they ought to bestow nothing at all, let them hear what is written, *Give to the good man, and* receive not a sinner: do well to him that is lowly, and give not to the ungodly *(Ecclus. xii.* 4). And again, *Set out thy bread and wine on the burial of the just, but eat and* drink not thereof with sinners *(Tobit iv. 17).*

For he gives his bread and wine to sinners who gives assistance to the wicked for that they are wicked. For which cause also some of the rich of this world nourish players with profuse bounties, while the poor of Christ are tormented with hunger. He, however, who gives his bread to one that is indigent, though he be a sinner, not because he is a sinner, but because he is a man, does not in truth nourish a sinner, but a poor righteous man, because what he loves in him is not his sin, but his nature.

Those who already distribute compassionately what they possess are to be admonished also that they study to keep careful guard, lest, when they redeem by alms the sins they have committed, they commit others which will still require redemption; lest they suppose the righteousness of God to be saleable, thinking that if they take care to give money for their sins, they can sin with impunity. For, *The soul is more than meat, and the body than raiment* (Matth. vi. 25; Luke xii. 23). He, therefore, who bestows meat or raiment on the poor, and yet is polluted by iniquity of soul or body, has offered the lesser thing to righteousness, and the greater thing to sin; for he has given his possessions to God, and himself to the devil.

But, on the other hand, those who still would fain seize what belongs to others are to be admonished to give anxious heed to what the Lord says when He comes to judgment. For He says, *I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no* meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not *(Matth. xxv. 42, 43). And these he previously* addresses saying, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into eternal fire,* which is prepared for the devil and his angels *(Ibid.* 41). Lo, they are in no wise told that they have committed robberies or any other acts of violence, and yet they are given over to the eternal fires of Gehenna. Hence, then, it is to be gathered with how great damnation those will be visited who seize what is not their own, if those who have indiscreetly kept their own are smitten with so great punishment. Let them consider in what guilt the seizing of goods must bind them, if not parting with them subjects to such a penalty. Let them consider what injustice inflicted must deserve, if kindness not bestowed is worthy of so great a chastisement.

When they are intent on seizing what is not their own, let them hear what is written, *Woe to him that increaseth that* which is not his! How long doth he heap up against himself thick clay *(Hab. ii.* 6)? For, indeed, for a

covetous man to heap up against him thick clay is to pile up earthly gains into a load of sin. When they desire to enlarge greatly the spaces of their habitation, let them hear what is written, *Woe unto you that join house to house and lay field to field, even* till there be no place left. What, will ye dwell alone in the midst of the earth *(Isai. v. 8)? As if to say plainly, How* far do ye stretch yourselves, ye that cannot bear to have comrades in a common world? Those that are joined to you ye keep down, and ever find some against whom ye may have power to stretch yourselves. When they are intent on increasing money, let them hear what is written, *The covetous man is not filled with money; and he that* loveth riches shall not reap fruit thereof *(Eccles. v. 9). For indeed he would reap* fruit of them, were he minded, not loving them, to disperse them well. But whoso in his affection for them retains them, shall surely leave them behind him here without fruit. When they burn to be filled at once with all manner of wealth, let them hear what is written, *He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent* (Prov. xxviii. 20): for certainly he who goes about to increase wealth is negligent in avoiding sin; and, being caught after the manner of birds, while looking greedily at the bait of earthly things, he is not aware in what a noose of sin he is being strangled. When they desire any gains of the present world, and are ignorant of the losses they will suffer in the world to come, let them hear what is written, *An inheritance to* which haste is made in the beginning in the last end shall lack blessing *(Prov. xx.* 21). For indeed we derive our beginning from this life, that we may come in the end to the lot of blessing. They, therefore, that make haste to an inheritance in the beginning cut off from themselves the lot of blessing in the end; since, while they crave to be increased in goods here through the iniquity of avarice, they become disinherited there of their eternal patrimony. When they either solicit very much, or succeed in obtaining all that they have solicited, let them hear what is written. *What is a man profited, if he should*

gain the whole world, but lose his own soul *(Matth. xvi. 26)? As if the Truth said plainly,* What is a man profited, though he gather together all that is outside himself, if this very thing only which is himself he damns? But for the most part the covetousness of spoilers is the sooner corrected, if it be shewn by the words of such as admonish them how fleeting is the present life; if mention be made of those who have long endeavoured to grow rich in this world, and yet have been unable to remain long among their acquired riches; from whom hasty death has taken away suddenly and all at once whatever, neither all at once nor suddenly, they have gathered together; who have not only left here what they had seized, but have carried with them to the judgment arraignments for seizure. Let them, therefore, be told of examples of such as these, whom they would, doubtless, even themselves, in words condemn; so that, when after their words they come back to their own heart, they may blush at any rate to imitate those whom they judge.

Chapter XXI.

How those are to be admonished who desire not the things of others, but keep their own; and those who give of their own, yet seize on those of others.

(*Admonition* 22.) Differently to be admonished are those who neither desire what belongs to others nor bestow what is their own, and those who give of what they have, and yet desist not from seizing on what belongs to others. Those who neither desire what belongs to others nor bestow what is their own are to be admonished to consider carefully that the earth out of which they are taken is common to all men, and therefore brings forth nourishment for all in common. Vainly, then, do those suppose themselves innocent, who claim to their own private use the common gift of God; those who, in not imparting what they have received, walk in the midst of the slaughter of their neighbours; since they almost daily slay so many persons as there are dying poor whose subsidies they keep close in their own possession. For, when we administer necessaries of any kind to the indigent, we do not bestow our own, but render them what is theirs; we rather pay a debt of justice than accomplish works of mercy. Whence also the Truth himself, when speaking of the caution required in shewing mercy, says, Take heed that ye do not your justice before men (Matth. vi. 1). The Psalmist also, in agreement with this sentence, says, He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor, his justice endureth for ever (Ps. cxii. 9).

For, having first mentioned bounty bestowed upon the poor, he would not call this mercy, but rather justice: for it is surely just that whosoever receive what is given by a common Lord should use it in common. Hence also Solomon says, Whoso is just will give and will not spare (Prov. xxi. 26). They are to be admonished also anxiously to take note how of the fig-

tree that had no fruit the rigorous husbandman complains that it even cumbers the ground.

For a fig-tree without fruit cumbers the ground, when the soul of the niggardly keeps unprofitably what might have benefited many. A fig-tree without fruit cumbers the ground, when the fool keeps barren under the shade of sloth a place which another might have cultivated under the sun of good works.

But these are wont sometimes to say, We use what has been granted us; we do not seek what belongs to others; and, if we do nothing worthy of the reward of mercy, we still commit no wrong. So they think, because in truth they close the ear of their heart to the words which are from heaven. For the rich man in the Gospel who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day, is not said to have seized what belonged to others, but to have used what was his own unfruitfully; and avenging hell received him after this life, not because he did anything unlawful but because by immoderate indulgence he gave up his whole self to what was lawful.

The niggardly are to be admonished to take notice that they do God, in the first place, this wrong; that to Him Who gives them all they render in return no sacrifice of mercy. For hence the Psalmist says. *He will not* give his propitiation to God, nor the price of the redemption of his soul *(Psal. xlviii. 9).* For to give the price of redemption is to return good deeds for preventing grace. Hence John cries aloud saying, *Now the axe* is laid unto the root of the tree. Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire (Luke iii. 9). Let those, therefore, who esteem themselves guiltless because they do not seize on what belongs to others look forward to the stroke of the axe that is nigh at hand, and lay aside the torpor of improvident security, lest, while they neglect to bear the

fruit of good deeds, they be cut off from the present life utterly, as it were from the greenness of the root.

But, on the other hand, those who both give what they have and desist not from seizing on what belongs to others are to be admonished not to desire to appear exceeding munificent, and so be made worse from the outward show of good. For these, giving what is their own without discretion, not only, as we have said above, fall into the murmuring of impatience, but, when want urges them, are swept along even to avarice. What, then, is more wretched than the mind of those in whom avarice is born of bountifulness, and a crop of sins is sown as it were from virtue? First, then, they are to be admonished to learn how to keep what is theirs reasonably, and then in the end not to go about getting what is another's. For, if the root of the fault is not burnt out in the profusion itself, the thorn of avarice, exuberant through the branches, is never dried up. So then, cause for seizing is withdrawn, if the right of possession be first adjusted well. But then, further, let those who are admonished be told how to give mercifully what they have, when they have learnt not to confound the good of mercy by throwing into it the wickedness of robbery. For they violently exact what they mercifully bestow. For it is one thing to shew mercy on account of our sins; another thing to sin on account of shewing mercy; which can no longer indeed be called mercy, since it cannot grow into sweet fruit, being embittered by the poison of its pestiferous root. For hence it is that the Lord through the prophet rejects even sacrifices themselves, saying, *I the Lord* love judgment, and I hate robbery in a whole burnt offering (Isai. lxi. 8). Hence again He has said, *The sacrifices of the ungodly are abominable,* which are offered of wickedness *(Prov. xxi. 28). Such persons also often* withdraw from the indigent what they give to God.

But the Lord shews with what strong censure he disowns them, saying through a certain wise man, *Whoso offereth a sacrifice of the substance of*

the poor doeth as one that killeth the son before the father's eyes (Ecclus. xxxiv. 20). For what can be more intolerable than the death of a son before his father's eyes? Wherefore it is shewn with what great wrath this kind of sacrifice is beheld, in that it is compared to the grief of a bereaved father. And yet for the most part people weigh well how much they give; but how much they seize they neglect to consider. They count, as it were, their wage, but refuse to consider their defaults. Let them hear therefore what is written, *He that* hath gathered wages hath put them into a bag with holes (Hagg. i. 6). For indeed money put into a bag with holes is seen when it is put in, but when it is lost it is not seen. Those, then, who have an eye to how much they bestow, but consider not how much they seize, put their wages into a bag with holes, because in truth they look to them when they gather them together in hope of being secure, but lose them without looking.

Chapter XXII.

How those that are at variance and those that are at peace are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 23.) Differently to be admonished are those that are at variance and those that are at peace. For those that are at variance are to be admonished to know most certainly that, in whatever virtues they may abound, they can by no means become spiritual if they neglect becoming united to their neighbours by concord. For it is written, *But the fruit of the* Spirit is love, joy, peace *(Gal. v. 22). He then that has no care* to keep peace refuses to bear the fruit of the Spirit. Hence Paul says, *Whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not* carnal *(1 Cor. iii.* 3)? Hence again he says also, *Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which* no man shall see the Lord (Heb. xii. 14). Hence again he admonishes, saying, *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit* in the bond of peace: there is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling *(Eph. iv. 3, 4). The one hope of our* calling, therefore, is never reached, if we run not to it with a mind at one with our neighbours. But it is often the case that some, by being proud of some gifts that they especially partake of, lose the greater gift of concord; as it may be if one who subdues the flesh more than others by bridling of his appetite should scorn to be in concord with those whom he surpasses in abstinence. But whoso separates abstinence from concord, let him consider the admonition of the Psalmist, *Praise him with timbrel and chorus* (Ps. cl. 4). For in the timbrel a dry and beaten skin resounds, but in the chorus voices are associated in concord. Whosoever then afflicts his body, but forsakes concord, praises God indeed with timbrel, but praises Him not with chorus. Often, however, when superior knowledge lifts up some, it disjoins them from the society of other

men; and it is as though the more wise they are, the less wise are they as to the virtue of concord. Let these therefore hear what the Truth in person says, *Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with* another *(Mark ix. 50).* For indeed salt without peace is not a gift of virtue, but an argument for condemnation. For the better any man is in wisdom, the worse is his delinquency, and he will deserve punishment inexcusably for this very reason, that, if he had been so minded, he might in his prudence have avoided sin. To such it is rightly said through James, *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not,* and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable *(James iii. 14, 15, 17). Pure, that is to say,* because its ideas are chaste; and also peaceable, because it in no wise through elation disjoins itself from the society of neighbours. Those who are at variance are to be admonished to take note that they offer to God no sacrifice of good work so long as they are not in charity with their neighbours. For it is written, *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest* that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then thou shalt come and offer thy gift *(Matth. v. 23, 24). Now by this precept we are led* to consider how intolerable the guilt of men is shewn to be when their sacrifice is rejected. For, whereas all evils are washed away when followed by what is good, let us consider how great must be the evils of discord, seeing that, unless they are utterly extinguished, they allow no good to follow. Those who are at variance are to be admonished that, if they incline not their ears to heavenly commands, they should open the eyes of the mind to consider the ways of creatures of the lowest order; how that often birds of one and the same kind desert not one another in their social flight, and that brute beasts feed in herds together. Thus, if we observe wisely, irrational nature shews by

agreeing together how great evil rational nature commits by disagreement; when the latter has lost by the exercise of reason what the former by natural instinct keeps. But, on the other hand, those that are at peace are to be admonished to take heed lest, while they love more than they need do the peace which they enjoy, they have no longing to reach that which is perpetual. For commonly tranquil circumstances more sorely try the bent of minds, so that, in proportion as the things which occupy them are not troublesome, the things which invite them come to appear less lovely, and the more present things delight, eternal things are the less sought after. Whence also the Truth speaking in person, when He would distinguish earthly from supernal peace, and provoke His disciples from that which now is to that which is to come, said, *Peace I leave with you, My* peace I give unto you *(Joh. xiv. 27). That is, I leave a* transitory, I give a lasting peace. If then the heart is fixed on that which is left, that which is to be given is never reached. Present peace, therefore, is to be held as something to be both loved and thought little of, lest, if it is loved immoderately, the mind of him that loves be taken in a fault. Whence also those who are at peace should be admonished lest, while too desirous of human peace, they fail entirely to reprove men's evil ways, and, in consenting to the froward, disjoin themselves from the peace of their Maker; lest, while they dread human quarrels without, they be smitten by breach of their inward covenant. For what is transitory peace but a certain footprint of peace eternal? What, then, can be more mad than to love footprints impressed on dust, but not to love him by whom they have been impressed? Hence David, when he would bind himself entirely to the covenants of inward peace, testifies that he held no agreement with the wicked, saying, *Did not I hate them, O* God, that hate thee, and waste away on account of thine enemies? I hated them with perfect hatred, they became enemies to me *(Ps. cxxxviii. 21, 22).* For to hate God's enemies with perfect hatred is both to

love what they were made, and to chide what they do, to be severe on the manners of the wicked, and to profit their life. It is therefore to be well weighed, when there is rest from chiding, how culpably peace is kept with the worst of men, if so great a prophet offered this as a sacrifice to God, that he excited the enmities of the wicked against himself for the Lord. Hence it is that the tribe of Levi, when they took their swords and passed through the midst of the camp because they would not spare the sinners who were to be smitten, are said to have consecrated their hands to God (Exod. xxxii. 27, *seq*.). Hence Phinehas, spurning the favour of his fellow-countrymen when they sinned, smote those who came together with the Midianites, and in his wrath appeased the wrath of God (Num. xxv. 9). Hence in person the Truth says, *Think not that I am come to send peace on* earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword (Matth. x. 34). For, when we are unwarily joined in friendship with the wicked, we are bound in their sins. Whence Jehoshaphat, who is extolled by so many praises of his previous life, is rebuked for his friendship with King Ahab as though nigh unto destruction, when it is said to him through the prophet, *Thou givest help to the ungodly, and art joined in* friendship with them that hate the Lord; and therefore thou didst deserve indeed the wrath of the Lord: nevertheless there are good works found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the graves out of the land of Judah *(2 Chron.* xix. 2, 3). For our life is already at variance with Him who is supremely righteous by the very fact of agreement in the friendships of the froward. Those who are at peace are to be admonished not to be afraid of disturbing their temporal peace, if they break forth into words of rebuke. And again they are to be admonished to keep inwardly with undiminished love the same peace which in their external relations they disturb by their reproving voice. Both which things David declares that he had prudently observed, saying, *With them that hate* peace I was peaceable; when I spake unto them, they fought against me without a cause *(Ps. cxix.*

7). Lo, when he spoke, he was fought against; and yet, when fought against, he was peaceable, because he neither ceased to reprove those that were mad against him, nor forgot to love those who were reproved. Hence also Paul says, *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you,* have peace with all men *(Rom. xii. 18).*

For, being about to exhort his disciples to have peace with all, he said first, *If it be possible,* and added, *As much as lieth in you.* For indeed it was difficult for them, if they rebuked evil deeds, to be able to have peace with all. But, when temporal peace is disturbed in the hearts of bad men through our rebuke, it is necessary that it should be kept inviolate in our own heart. Rightly, therefore, says he, *As much as lieth in you.* It is indeed as though he said, Since peace stands in the consent of two parties, if it is driven out by those who are reproved, let it nevertheless be retained undiminished in the mind of you who reprove. Whence the same apostle again admonishes his disciples, saying, *If any man obey not our word, note* that man by this epistle; and have no company with him, that he may be confounded *(2* Thess. iii. 14). And straightway he added, *Yet count him not as an enemy, but reprove* him as a brother *(Ibid. 15). As if to say, Break ye outward* peace with him, but guard in your heart's core internal peace concerning him; that your discord with him may so smite the mind of the sinner that peace depart not from your hearts even though denied to him.

Chapter XXIII.

How sowers of strifes and peacemakers are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 24.) Differently to be admonished are sowers of strifes and peacemakers. For sowers of strifes are to be admonished to perceive whose followers they are. For of the apostate angel it is written, when tares had been sown among the good crop, *An enemy hath done this* (Matth. xiii. 28). Of a member of him also it is said through Solomon, *An apostate person, an* unprofitable man, walketh with a perverse mouth, he winketh with his eyes, he beateth with his foot, he speaketh with his finger, with froward heart he deviseth mischief continually, he soweth strifes (Prov. vi. 12–14). Lo, him whom he would speak of as a sower of strifes he first named an apostate; since, unless after the manner of the proud angel he first fell away inwardly by the alienation of his mind from the face of his Maker, he would not afterwards come to sow strifes outwardly. He is rightly described too as winking with his eyes, speaking with his finger, beating with his foot. For it is inward watch that keeps the members outwardly in orderly control. He, then, who has lost stability of mind falls off outwardly into inconstancy of movement, and by his exterior mobility shews that he is stayed on no root within. Let sowers of strifes hear what is written, *Blessed* are the peacemakers, far they shall be called the children of God *(Matth. v. 9). And on the other hand let* them gather that, if they who make peace are called the children of God, without doubt those who confound it are the children of Satan. Moreover, all who are separated by discord from the greenness of loving-kindness are dried up: and, though they bring forth in their actions fruits of well-doing, yet there are in truth no fruits, because they spring not from the unity of charity. Hence, therefore, let sowers of strifes consider how manifoldly they sin; in that, while they perpetrate one iniquity, they

eradicate at the same time all virtues from human hearts. For in one evil they work innumerable evils, since, in sowing discord, they extinguish charity, which is in truth the mother of all virtues. But, since nothing is more precious with God than the virtue of loving-kindness, nothing is more acceptable to the devil than the extinction of charity. Whosoever, then, by sowing of strifes destroy the loving-kindness of neighbours, serve God's enemy as his familiar friend; because by taking away from them this, by the loss of which he fell, they have cut off from them the road whereby to rise.

But, on the other hand, the peacemakers are to be admonished that they detract not from the efficacy of so great an undertaking through not knowing between whom they ought to establish peace. For, as there is much harm if unity be wanting to the good, so there is exceeding harm if it be not wanting to the bad. If, then, the iniquity of the perverse is united in peace, assuredly there is an accession of strength to their evil doings, since the more they agree among themselves in wickedness, by so much the more stoutly do they dash themselves against the good to afflict them. For hence it is that against the preachers of that vessel of damnation, to wit, Antichrist, is it said by the divine voice to the blessed Job, *The members of his flesh stick close to each other* (Job xli. 14). Hence, under the figure of scales, it is said of his satellites, *One is joined to another, and* not even a breathing-hole cometh between them *(xli.* 7). For, indeed, his followers, from being divided by no opposition of discord among themselves, are by so much the more strongly banded together in the slaughter of the good. He then who associates the iniquitous together in peace supplies strength to iniquity, since they worse press down the good, whom they persecute unanimously. Whence the excellent preacher, being overtaken by violent persecution from Pharisees and Sadducees, endeavoured to divide among themselves those whom he saw to be violently united against himself, when he cried out, saying, *Men,* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees; of the hope and

resurrection of the dead I am called in question (Acts xxiii. 6). And, whereas the Sadducees denied the hope and resurrection of the dead, which the Pharisees in accordance with the precepts of Holy Writ believed, a dissension was caused in the unanimity of the persecutors; and Paul escaped unhurt from the divided crowd, which before, when united, had savagely assailed him. Those, therefore, who are occupied with the desire of making peace, are to be admonished that they ought first to infuse a love of internal peace into the minds of the froward, to the end that external peace may afterwards avail to do them good; so that, while their heart is hanging on cognition of the former, they be by no means hurried into wickedness from perception of the latter; and, while they see before them that which is supernal, they in no way turn that which is earthly to serve to their own detriment. But, if any perverse persons are such that they could not harm the good, even though they lusted to do so, between them, indeed, earthly peace ought to be established, even before they have risen to the knowledge of supernal peace; even so that they, whom the wickedness of their impiety exasperates against the loving-kindness of God, may at any rate be softened out of love of their neighbour, and, as it were from a neighbouring position, may pass to a better one, and so rise to what is as yet far from them, the peace of their Maker.

Chapter XXIV.

How the rude in sacred learning, and those who are learned but not humble, are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 25.) Differently to be admonished are those who do not understand aright the words of the sacred Law, and those who understand them indeed aright, but speak them not humbly. For those who understand not aright the words of sacred Law are to be admonished to consider that they turn for themselves a most wholesome drought of wine into a cup of poison, and with a medicinal knife inflict on themselves a mortal wound, when they destroy in themselves what was sound by that whereby they ought, to their health, to have cut away what was diseased. They are to be admonished to consider that Holy Scripture is set as a kind of lantern for us in the night of the present life, the words whereof when they understand not aright, from light they get darkness. But in truth a perverse bent of mind would not hurry them to understand it wrong, did not pride first puff them up. For, while they think themselves wise beyond all others, they scorn to follow others to things better understood: and, in order to extort for themselves from the unskilful multitude a name for knowledge, they strive mightily both to upset the right views of others and to confirm their own perverse views. Hence it is well said by the prophet, *They* have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border *(Amos* i. 13). For Gilead is by interpretation a heap of witness (Gen. xxxi. 47, 48). And, since the whole congregation of the Church together serves by its confession for a witness to the truth, not unfitly by Gilead is expressed the Church, which witnesses by the mouth of all the faithful whatever is true concerning God. Moreover, souls are called with child, when of divine love they conceive an understanding of the Word, so that, if they come to their

full time, they may bring forth their conceived intelligence in the shewing forth of work. Further, to enlarge their border is to extend abroad the fame of their reputation. They have therefore ripped up the women with child of Gilead that they might enlarge their border, because heretics assuredly slay by their perverse preaching the souls of the faithful who had already conceived something of the understanding of the truth, and extend for themselves a name for knowledge. The hearts of little ones, already big with conception of the word, they cleave with the sword of error, and, as it were, make for themselves a reputation as teachers. When, therefore, we endeavour to instruct these not to think perversely, it is necessary that we first admonish them to shun vain glory. For, if the root of elation is cut off, the branches of wrong assertion are consequently dried up. They are also to be admonished to take heed, lest, by gendering errors and discords, they turn into a sacrifice to Satan the very same law of God which has been given for hindering sacrifices to Satan. Whence the Lord complains through the prophet, saying, *I gave them corn, wine, and oil, and I* multiplied to them silver and gold, which they sacrificed to Baal (Hos. ii. 8). For indeed we receive corn from the Lord, when, in the more obscure sayings, the husk of the letter being drawn off, we perceive in the marrow of the

Spirit the inward meaning of the Law. The Lord proffers us His wine, when He inebriates us with the lofty preaching of His Scripture. His oil also He gives us, when, by plainer precepts, He orders our life gently and smoothly. He multiplies silver, when He supplies to us eloquent utterances, full of the light of truth. With gold also He enriches us, when He irradiates our heart with an understanding of the supreme splendour. All which things heretics offer to Baal, because they pervert them in the hearts of their hearers by a corrupt understanding of them all. And of the corn of God, of His wine and oil, and likewise of His silver and gold, they offer a sacrifice

to Satan, because they turn aside the words of peace to promote the error of discord. Wherefore they are to be admonished to consider that, when of their perverse mind they make discord out of the precepts of peace, they themselves, in the just judgment of God, die from the words of life.

But, on the other hand, those who understand indeed aright the words of the Law, but speak them not humbly, are to be admonished that, in divine discourses, before they put them forth to others, they should examine themselves; lest, in following up the deeds of others, they leave themselves behind; and lest, while thinking rightly of all the rest of Holy Scripture, this only thing they attend not to, what is said in it against the proud. For he is indeed a poor and unskilful physician, who would fain heal another's disease while ignorant of that from which he himself is suffering. Those, then, who speak not the words of God humbly should certainly be admonished, that, when they apply medicines to the sick, they see to the poison of their own infection, lest in healing others they die themselves. They ought to be admonished to take heed, lest their manner of saying things be at variance with the excellence of what is said, and lest they preach one thing in their speaking and another in their outward bearing. Let them hear, therefore, what is written, *If any man speak let him* speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. iv. 11). If then the words they utter are not of the things that are their own, why are they puffed up on account of them as though they were their own? Let them hear what is written, *As of God, in* the sight of God, speak we in Christ (2 Cor. ii. 17). For he speaks of God in the sight of God, who both understands that he has received the word of preaching from God, and also seeks through it to please God, not men. Let them hear what is written, *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination* to the Lord *(Prov. xvi. 5). For, surely, when in the* Word of God he seeks his own glory, he invades the right of the giver; and he fears not at all to postpone to his own praise Him from whom he has received the

very thing that is praised. Let them hear what is said to the preacher through Solomon, *Drink water out of thine own cistern, and running waters of* thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and divide thy waters in the streets. Have them to thyself alone, and let not strangers be partakers with thee *(Prov. v. 15–17). For indeed the preacher* drinks out of his own cistern, when, returning to his own heart, he first listens himself to what he has to say. He drinks the running waters of his own well, if he is watered by his own word. And in the same place it is well added, *Let thy fountains be* dispersed abroad, and divide thy waters in the streets. *For* indeed it is right that he should himself drink first, and then flow upon others in preaching. For to disperse fountains abroad is to pour outwardly on others the power of preaching. Moreover, to divide waters in the streets is to dispense divine utterances among a great multitude of hearers according to the quality of each. And, because for the most part the desire of vain glory creeps in when the Word of God has free course unto the knowledge of many, after it has been said, *Divide thy waters in the* streets, *it is rightly added,* Have them to thyself alone, and let not strangers be partakers with thee. *He here calls* malignant spirits strangers, concerning whom it is said through the prophet in the words of one that is tempted, *Strangers are risen up* against me, and strong ones have sought after my soul (Ps. liii. 5). He says therefore, *Both divide thy waters in the streets, and yet* have them to thyself alone; *as if he had said more plainly, It is* necessary for thee so to serve outwardly in preaching as not to join thyself through elation to unclean spirits, lest in the ministry of the divine word thou admit thine enemies to be partakers with thee. Thus we divide our waters in the streets, and yet alone possess them, when we both pour out preaching outwardly far and wide, and yet in no wise court human praises through it.

Chapter XXV.

How those are to be admonished who decline the office of preaching out of too great humility, and those who seize on it with precipitate haste.

(*Admonition* 26.) Differently to be admonished are those who, though able to preach worthily, are afraid by reason of excessive humility, and those whom imperfection or age forbids to preach, and yet precipitancy impells. For those who, though able to preach with profit, still shrink back through excessive humility are to be admonished to gather from consideration of a lesser matter how faulty they are in a greater one. For, if they were to hide from their indigent neighbours money which they possessed themselves they would undoubtedly shew themselves to be promoters of their calamity. Let them perceive, then, in what guilt those are implicated who, in withholding the word of preaching from their sinning brethren, hide away the remedies of life from dying souls. Whence also a certain wise man says well, *Wisdom that is hid, and treasure* that is unseen, what profit is in them both *(Ecclus. xx. 32)? Were a famine wasting the* people, and they themselves kept hidden corn, undoubtedly they would be the authors of death. Let them consider therefore with what punishment they must be visited who, when souls are perishing from famine of the word, supply not the bread of grace which they have themselves received. Whence also it is well said through Solomon, *He that hideth corn shall be cursed among the people* (Prov. xi. 26). For to hide corn is to retain with one's self the words of sacred preaching. And every one that does so is cursed among the people, because through his fault of silence only he is condemned in the punishment of the many whom he might have corrected. If persons by no means ignorant of the medicinal art were to see a sore that required lancing, and yet refused to lance it, certainly by their mere

inactivity they would be guilty of a brother's death. Let them see, then, in how great guilt they are involved who, knowing the sores of souls, neglect to cure them by the lancing of words. Whence also it is well said through the prophet, *Cursed is he who* keepeth back his sword from blood *(Jer. xlviii. 10). For to keep back the sword* from blood is to hold back the word of preaching from the slaying of the carnal life. Of which sword it is said again, *And my sword* shall devour flesh *(Deut. xxxii. 42).*

Let these, therefore, when they keep to themselves the word of preaching, hear with terror the divine sentences against them, to the end that fear may expel fear from their hearts. Let them hear how he that would not lay out his talent lost it, with a sentence of condemnation added (Matth. xxv. 24, &c.). Let them hear how Paul believed himself to be pure from the blood of his neighbours in this, that he spared not their vices which required to be smitten, saying, *I take you to record this day,* that I am pure from the blood of all men: for l have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God (Acts xx. 26, 27). Let them hear how John is admonished by the angelic voice, when it is said, *Let him that heareth say, Come* (Rev. xxii. 17); in order doubtless that he into whose heart the internal voice has found its way may by crying aloud draw others whither he himself is carried; lest, even though called, he should find the doors shut, if he approaches Him that calls him empty. Let them hear how Esaias, because he had held his peace in the ministry of the word when illuminated by supernal light, blamed himself with a loud cry of penitence, saying *Woe unto me that I have* held my peace *(Isai. vi. 5). Let them hear how through* Solomon the knowledge of preaching is promised to be multiplied to him who is not held back by the vice of torpor in that whereto he has already attained. For he says, *The soul which blesseth shall* be made fat; and he that inebriates shall be inebriated also himself *(Prov. xi.* 25). For he that blesses outwardly by preaching receives the fatness of inward enlargement; and, while he ceases

not to inebriate the minds of his hearers with the wine of eloquence, he becomes increasingly inebriated with the drought of a multiplied gift. Let them hear how David offered this in the way of gift to God, that he did not hide the grace of preaching which he had received, saying, *Lo I will not refrain my lips, O Lord, thou* knowest: I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart: I have declared thy truth and thy salvation *(Ps. xxxix.* 10, 11). Let them hear what is said by the bridegroom in his colloquy with the bride; *Thou that* dwellest in the gardens, thy friends hearken: make me to hear thy voice *(Cant. viii. 13). For the Church dwelleth in* the gardens, in that she keeps in a state of inward greenness the cultivated nurseries of virtues. And that her friends hearken to her voice is, that all the elect desire the word of her preaching; which voice also the bridegroom desires to hear, because he pants for her preaching through the souls of his elect. Let them hear how Moses, when he saw that God was angry with His people, and commanded swords to be taken for executing vengeance, declared those to be on God's side who should smite the crimes of the offenders without delay, saying, *If* any man is the Lord's, let him join himself to me; put every man his sword upon his thigh; go in and out from gate to gate through the midst of the camp, and slay every man his *brother and* friend and neighbour *(Exod. xxxii. 27). For to put sword upon* thigh is to set earnestness in preaching before the pleasures of the flesh; so that, when any one is earnest to speak holy words, he must needs have a care to subdue illicit suggestions. But to go from gate to gate is to run to and fro with rebuke from vice to vice, even to every one by which death enters in unto the soul. And to pass through the midst of the camp is to live with such impartiality within the Church that one who reproves the sins of offenders turns aside to shew favour to none. Whence also it is rightly added, *slay* every man his brother and friend and neighbour. *He in truth* slays brother and friend and neighbour who, when he finds what is worthy of punishment, spares not

even those whom he loves on the score of relationship from the sword of his rebuke. If, then, he is said to be God's who is stirred up by the zeal of divine love to smite vices, he surely denies himself to be God's who refuses to rebuke the life of the carnal to the utmost of his power.

But, on the other hand, those whom imperfection or age debars from the office of preaching, and yet precipitancy impells to it, are to be admonished lest, while rashly arrogating to themselves the burden of so great an office, they cut off from themselves the way of subsequent improvement; and, while seizing out of season what they are not equal to, they lose even what they might at some time in due season have fulfilled; and be shewn to have justly forfeited their knowledge because of their attempt to display it improperly. They are to be admonished to consider that young birds, if they try to fly before their wings are fully formed, are plunged low down from the place whence they fain would have risen on high. They are to be admonished to consider that, if on new buildings not yet compacted a weight of timbers be laid, there is built not a habitation, but a ruin. They are to be admonished to consider that, if women bring forth their conceived offspring before it is fully formed, they by no means fill houses, but tombs. For hence it is that the Truth Himself, Who could all at once have strengthened whom He would, in order to give an example to His followers that they should not presume to preach while imperfect, after He had fully instructed His disciples concerning the power of preaching, forthwith added, *But tarry ye in* the city until ye be endued with power from on high (Luke xxiv. 49). For indeed we tarry together in the city, if we restrain ourselves within the enclosures of our souls from wandering abroad in speech; so that, when we are perfectly endued with divine power, we may then go out as it were from ourselves abroad, instructing others also. Hence through a certain wise man it is said, *Young man, speak scarcely in* thy cause; and if thou hast been twice asked, let thy answer have a beginning

(Ecclus. xxxii. 10). Hence it is that the same our Redeemer, though in heaven the Creator, and even a teacher of angels in the manifestation of His power, would not become a master of men upon earth before His thirtieth year, in order, to wit, that He might infuse into the precipitate the force of a most wholesome fear, in that even He Himself, Who could not slip, did not preach the grace of a perfect life until He was of perfect age. For it is written, *When he was twelve years old, the child Jesus tarried* behind in Jerusalem *(Luke ii. 42, 43). And a little afterwards it* is further said of Him, when He was sought by His parents, *They* found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions *(Ibid. v.* 46). It is therefore to be weighed with vigilant consideration that, when Jesus at twelve years of age is spoken of as sitting in the midst of the doctors, He is found, not teaching, but asking questions. By which example it is plainly shewn that none who is weak should venture to teach, if that child was willing to be taught by asking questions, who by the power of His divinity supplied the word of knowledge to His teachers themselves. But, when it is said by Paul to his disciple, *These things command and teach: let no man despise* thy adolescence *(1* Tim. iv. 11, 12), we must understand that in the language of Holy Writ youth is sometimes called adolescence. Which thing is the sooner evident, if we adduce the words of Solomon, who says, Rejoice O young man in thy adolescence (Eccles. xi. 9). For unless he meant the same by both words, he would not call him a young man whom he was admonishing in his adolescence.

Chapter XXVI.

How those are to be admonished with whom everything succeeds according to their wish, and those with whom nothing does.

(*Admonition* 27.) Differently to be admonished are those who prosper in what they desire in temporal matters, and those who covet indeed the things that are of this world, but yet are wearied with the labour of adversity. For those who prosper in what they desire in temporal matters are to be admonished, when all things answer to their wishes, lest, through fixing their heart on what is given, they neglect to seek the giver; lest they love their pilgrimage instead of their country; lest they turn the supplies for their journey into hindrances to their arrival at its end; lest, delighted with the light of the moon by night, they shrink from beholding the clearness of the sun. They are, therefore, to be admonished to regard whatever things they attain in this world as consolations in calamity, but not as the rewards of retribution; but, on the other hand, to lift their mind against the favours of the world, lest they succumb in the midst of them with entire delight of the heart. For whosoever in the judgment of his heart keeps not down the prosperity he enjoys by love of a better life, turns the favours of this transitory life into an occasion of everlasting death. For hence it is that under the figure of the Idumæans, who allowed themselves to be vanquished by their own prosperity, those who rejoice in the successes of this world are rebuked, when it is said, *They* have given my land to themselves for an inheritance with joy, and with their whole heart and mind *(Ezek. xxxvi. 5). In which words it is to be* observed, that they are smitten with severe rebuke, not merely because they rejoice, but because they rejoice with their whole heart and mind. Hence Solomon says, *The turning away of the simple shall* slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy

them (Prov. i. 32). Hence Paul admonishes, saying, *They that buy, as though they possessed not; and* they that use this world, as though they used it not (1 Cor. vii. 30). So may the things that are supplied to us be of service to us outwardly to such extent only as not to turn our minds away from desire of supernal delight; and thus the things that afford us succour in our state of exile may not abate the mourning of our soul's pilgrimage; and we, who see ourselves to be wretched in our severance from the things that are eternal, may not rejoice as though we were happy in the things that are transitory. For hence it is that the Church says by the voice of the elect, *His left hand is under my head, and his right* hand shall embrace me *(Cant. ii. 6). The left hand of* God, to wit prosperity in the present life, she has put under her head, in that she presses it down in the intentness of her highest love. But the right hand of God embraces her, because in her entire devotion she is encompassed with His eternal blessedness. Hence again, it is said through Solomon, *Length of days is in her right* hand, but in her left hand riches and glory *(Prov. iii. 16). In speaking, then, of* riches and glory being placed in her left hand, he shewed after what manner they are to be esteemed. Hence the Psalmist says, *Save* me with thy right hand *(Ps. cvii. 7).* For he says not, *with thy hand*, but *with thy right hand;* in order, that is, to indicate, in saying *right hand*, that it was eternal salvation that he sought. Hence again it is written, *Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in* pieces the enemies *(Exod. xv. 6). For the enemies of* God, though they prosper in His left hand, are dashed to pieces with His right; since for the most part the present life elevates the bad, but the coming of eternal blessedness condemns them.

Those who prosper in this world are to be admonished to consider wisely how that prosperity in the present life is sometimes given to provoke people to a better life, but sometimes to condemn them more fully for ever. For hence it is that to the people of Israel the land of Canaan is promised, that

they may be provoked at some time or other to hope for eternal things. For that rude nation would not have believed the promises of God afar off, had they not received also something nigh at hand from Him that promised. In order, therefore, that they may be the more surely strengthened unto faith in eternal things, they are drawn on, not only by hope to realities, but also by realities to hope. Which thing the Psalmist clearly testifies, saying, *He* gave them the lands of the heathen, and they took the labours of the peoples in possession, that they might keep his statutes and seek after his law *(Ps. civ. 44)*. But, when the human mind follows not God in His bountiful gifts with an answer of good deeds, it is the more justly condemned from being accounted to have been kindly nurtured. For hence it is said again by the Psalmist, *Thou castedst them down when* they were lifted up *(Ps. lxxii. 18).* For in truth when the reprobate render not righteous deeds in return for divine gifts, when they here abandon themselves entirely and sink themselves in their abundant prosperity, then in that whereby they profit outwardly they fall from what is inmost. Hence it is that to the rich man tormented in hell it is said, *Thou in thy lifetime* receivedst thy good things *(Luke xvi. 25). For on this account, though an* evil man, he here received good things, that there he might receive evil things more fully, because here even by good things he had not been converted.

But, on the other hand, those who covet indeed the things that are of the world, but yet are wearied by the labour of adversity, are to be admonished to consider anxiously with how great favour the Creator and Disposer of all things watches over those whom He gives not up to their own desires. For a sick man whom the physician despairs of he allows to take whatever he longs for: but one of whom it is thought that he can be cured is prohibited from many things that he desires; and we withdraw money from boys, for whom at the same time, as our heirs, we reserve our whole patrimony. Let, then, those whom temporal adversity humiliates take joy from hope of an

eternal inheritance, since Divine Providence would not curb them in order to educate them under the rule of discipline, unless it designed them to be saved for ever. Those, therefore, who in respect of the temporal things which they covet, are wearied with the labour of adversity are to be admonished to consider carefully how for the most part even the righteous, when temporal power exalts them, are caught by sin as in a snare. For, as in the former part of this volume we have already said, David, beloved of God, was more upright when in servitude than when he came to the kingdom (1 Sam. xxiv. 18). For, when he was a servant, in his love of righteousness he feared to smite his adversary when taken; but, when he was a king, through the persuasion of lasciviousness, he put to death by a deceitful plan even a devoted soldier (2 Sam. xi. 17). Who then can without harm seek wealth, or power, or glory, if they proved harmful even to him who had them unsought? Who in the midst of these things shall be saved without the labour of a great contest, if he who had been prepared for them by the choice of God was disturbed among them by the intervention of sin? They are to be admonished to consider that Solomon, who after so great wisdom is described as having fallen even into idolatry, is not said to have had any adversity in this world before his fall; but the wisdom that had been granted him entirely left his heart, because not even the least discipline of tribulation had guarded it.

Chapter XXVII.

How the married and the single are to be admonished.

(*Admonition* 28.) Differently to be admonished are those who are bound in wedlock and those who are free from the ties of wedlock. For those who are bound in wedlock are to be admonished that, while they take thought for each other's good, they study, both of them, so to please their consorts as not to displease their Maker; that they so conduct the things that are of this world as still not to omit desiring the things that are of God; that they so rejoice in present good as still, with earnest solicitude, to fear eternal evil; that they so sorrow for temporal evils as still to fix their hope with entire comfort on everlasting good; to the end that, while they know what they are engaged in to be transitory, but what they desire to be permanent, neither the evils of the world may break their heart while it is strengthened by the hope of heavenly good, nor the good things of the present life deceive them, while they are saddened by the apprehended evils of the judgment to come. Wherefore the mind of married Christians is both weak and stedfast, in that it cannot fully despise all temporal things, and yet can join itself in desire to eternal things. Although it lies low meanwhile in the delights of the flesh, let it grow strong in the refreshment of supernal hope: and, if it has the things that are of the world for the service of its journey, let it hope for the things that are of God for the fruit of its journey's end: nor let it devote itself entirely to what it is engaged in now, lest it fall utterly from what it ought stedfastly to hope for. Which thing Paul well expresses briefly, saying, *They that have wives as* though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not *(1 Cor. vii. 29, 30)*. *For he has a wife as* though he had none who so enjoys carnal consolation through her as still never to be turned by love of her to

evil deeds from the rectitude of a better aim. He has a wife as though he had none who, seeing all things to be transitory, endures of necessity the care of the flesh, but looks forward with longing to the eternal joys of the spirit. Moreover, to weep as though we wept not is so to lament outward adversities as still to know how to rejoice in the consolation of eternal hope. And again, to rejoice as though we rejoiced not is so to take heart from things below as still never to cease from fear concerning the things above. In the same place also a little afterwards he aptly adds, *For the fashion of this world passeth* away *(v. 31);* as if he had said plainly, Love not the world abidingly, since the world which ye love cannot itself abide. In vain ye fix your affections on it as though it were continuing, while that which ye love itself is fleeting. Husbands and wives are to be admonished, that those things wherein they sometimes displease one another they bear with mutual patience, and by mutual exhortations remedy. *For it is written, Bear ye one* another's burdens, and so ye shall fulfil the law of Christ (Galat. vi. 2). For the law of Christ is Charity; since it has from Him bountifully bestowed on us its good things, and has patiently borne our evil things. We, therefore, then fulfil by imitation the law of Christ, when we both kindly bestow our good things, and piously endure the evil things of our friends. They are also to be admonished to give heed, each of them, not so much to what they have to bear from the other as to what the other has to bear from them. For, if one considers what is borne from one's self, one bears more lightly what one endures from another.

Husbands and wives are to be admonished to remember that they are joined together for the sake of producing offspring; and, when, giving themselves to immoderate intercourse, they transfer the occasion of procreation to the service of pleasure, to consider that, though they go not outside wedlock yet in wedlock itself they exceed the just dues of wedlock. Whence it is needful that by frequent supplications they do away their

having fouled with the admixture of pleasure the fair form of conjugal union. For hence it is that the Apostle, skilled in heavenly medicine, did not so much lay down a course of life for the whole as point out remedies to the weak when he said, *It is good for a man not to touch a woman:* but on account of fornication let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband *(1 Cor. vii. 1, 2). For in that he premised* the fear of fornication, he surely did not give a precept to such as were standing, but pointed out the bed to such as were falling, lest haply they should tumble to the ground. Whence to such as were still weak he added, *Let the husband render unto the wife her due;* and likewise also the wife unto the husband *(v.* 3). And, while in the most honourable estate of matrimony allowing to them something of pleasure, he added, *But this I say by way of indulgence, not by way* of command *(v. 6). Now where indulgence is* spoken of, a fault is implied; but one that is the more readily remitted in that it consists, not in doing what is unlawful, but in not keeping what is lawful under control. Which thing Lot expresses well in his own person, when he flies from burning Sodom, and yet, finding Zoar, does not still ascend the mountain heights. For to fly from burning Sodom is to avoid the unlawful fires of the flesh. But the height of the mountains is the purity of the continent. Or, at any rate, they are as it were upon the mountain, who, though cleaving to carnal intercourse, still, beyond the due association for the production of offspring, are not loosely lost in pleasure of the flesh. For to stand on the mountain is to seek nothing in the flesh except the fruit of procreation. To stand on the mountain is not to cleave to the flesh in a fleshly way. But, since there are many who relinquish indeed the sins of the flesh, and yet, when placed in the state of wedlock, do not observe solely the claims of due intercourse, Lot went indeed out of Sodom, but yet did not at once reach the mountain heights; because a damnable life is already relinquished, but still the loftiness of conjugal continence is not

thoroughly attained. But there is midway the city of Zoar, to save the weak fugitive; because, to wit, when the married have intercourse with each other even incontinently, they still avoid lapse into sin, and are still saved through mercy. For they find as it were a little city, wherein to be protected from the fire; since this married life is not indeed marvellous for virtue, but yet is secure from punishment. Whence the same Lot says to the angel, *This* city is near to flee unto, and it is small, and I shall be saved therein. Is it not a little one, and my soul shall live in it (Gen. xix. 20)? So then it is said to be near, and yet is spoken of as a refuge of safety, since married life is neither far separated from the world, nor yet alien from the joy of safety. But the married, in this course of conduct, then preserve their lives as it were in a small city, when they intercede for each other by continual supplications. Whence it is also rightly said by the Angel to the same Lot, *See I have* accepted thy prayers concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow the city for the which thou hast spoken (v. 21). For in truth, when supplication is poured out to God, such married life is by no means condemned. Concerning which supplication Paul also admonishes, saying, *Defraud ye not one the* other except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to prayer *(1 Cor.* vii. 5).

But, on the other hand, those who are not bound by wedlock are to be admonished that they observe heavenly precepts all the more closely in that no yoke of carnal union bows them down to worldly cares; that, as they are free from the lawful burden of wedlock, the unlawful weight of earthly anxiety by no means press them down; that the last day find them all the more prepared, as it finds them less encumbered; lest from being free and able, and yet neglecting, to do better things, they therefore be found deserving of worse punishment. Let them hear how the

Apostle, when he would train certain persons for the grace of celibacy, did not contemn wedlock, but guarded against the worldly cares that are

born of wedlock, saying, *This I* say for your profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without hindrance *(1 Cor. vii. 3, 5). For from wedlock proceed* earthly anxieties; and therefore the teacher of the Gentiles persuaded his bearers to better things, lest they should be bound by earthly anxiety. The man, then, whom, being single, the hindrance of secular cares impedes, though he has not subjected himself to wedlock, has still not escaped the burdens of wedlock. The single are to be admonished not to think that they can have intercourse with disengaged women without incurring the judgment of condemnation. For, when Paul inserted the vice of fornication among so many execrable crimes, he indicated the guilt of it, saying, *Neither fornicators,* nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God *(1* Cor. vi. 9, 10). And again, *But fornicators and adulterers God will judge* (Heb. xiii. 4). They are therefore to be admonished that, if they suffer from the storms of temptation with risk to their safety, they should seek the port of wedlock. For it is written, *It is better to marry than to burn* (1 Cor. vii. 9). They come, in fact, to marriage without blame, if only they have not vowed better things. For whosoever has proposed to himself the attainment of a greater good has made unlawful the less good which before was lawful. For it is written, *No man, having put his hand to the* plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God *(Luke ix. 62). He therefore who has been intent* on a more resolute purpose is convicted of looking back, if, leaving the larger good, he reverts to the least.

Chapter XXVIII.

How those are to be admonished who have had experience of the sins of the flesh, and those who have not.

(*Admonition* 29.) Differently to be admonished are those who are conscious of sins of the flesh, and those who know them not. For those who have had experience of the sins of the flesh are to be admonished that, at any rate after shipwreck, they should fear the sea, and feel horror at their risk of perdition at least when it has become known to them; lest, having been mercifully preserved after evil deeds committed, by wickedly repeating the same they die. Whence to the soul that sins and never ceases from sin it is said, *There is come unto thee a whore's forehead; thou* refuseth to be ashamed *(Jer. iii. 3). They are therefore to be* admonished to take heed, to the end that, if they have refused to keep whole the good things of nature which they have received, they at least mend them after they have been rent asunder. And they are surely bound to consider, how many in so great a number of the faithful both keep themselves undefiled and also convert others from the error of their way. What, then, will they be able to say, if, while others are standing in integrity, they themselves, even after loss, come not to a better mind? What will they be able to say, if, when many bring others also with themselves to the kingdom, they bring not back even themselves to the Lord who is waiting for them? They are to be admonished to consider past transgressions, and to shun such as are impending. Whence, under the figure of Judæa, the Lord through the prophet recalls past sins to the memory of souls corrupted in this world, to the end that they may be ashamed to be polluted in sins to come, saying, *They committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms* in their youth: then were their breasts pressed, and the teats of their virginity were

bruised *(Ezek. xxiii. 3). For indeed breasts are pressed* in Egypt, when the will of the human soul is prostituted to the base desire of this world. Teats of virginity are bruised in Egypt, when the natural senses, still whole in themselves, are vitiated by the corruption of assailing concupiscence.

Those who have had experience of the sins of the flesh are to be admonished to observe vigilantly with how great benevolence God opens the bosom of His pity to us, if after transgressions we return to Him, when He says through the prophet, *If a man put away his wife, and she go from him and become* another man's, shall he return to her again? Shall not that woman be polluted and contaminated? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord *(Jer. iii. 1). So, concerning the wife who has* played the harlot and is deserted, the argument of justice is put forward: and yet to us returning after fall not justice, but pity is displayed. Whence we are surely meant to gather how great is our wickedness, if we return not, even after transgression, seeing that, when transgressing, we are spared with so great pity: or what pardon for the wicked there will be from Him who, after our sin, ceases not to call us. And indeed this mercifulness, in calling after transgression, is well expressed through the Prophet, when to man turned away from God it is said, *Thine eyes shall see thy* teacher, and thine ears shall hear the word of one behind thy back admonishing thee *(Isai. xxx. 20, 21). For indeed the* Lord admonished the human race to their face, when to man, created in Paradise, and standing in free will, He declared what He ought to do or not to do. But man turned his back on the face of God, when in his pride he despised His commands. Yet still God deserted him not in his pride, in that He gave the Law for the purpose of recalling man, and sent exhorting angels, and Himself appeared in the flesh of our mortality. Therefore, standing behind our back, He admonished us, in that, even though despised, He called us to the recovery of grace. What, therefore could be said

generally of all alike must needs be felt specially with regard to each. For every man hears the words of God's admonition set as it were before him, when, before he commits sin, he knows the precepts of His will. For still to stand before His face is not yet to despise Him by sinning. But, when a man forsakes the good of innocence, and of choice desires iniquity, he then turns his back on the face of God. But lo, even behind his back God follows and admonishes him, in that even after sin He persuades him to return to Himself. He recalls him that is turned away, He regards not past transgressions, He opens the bosom of pity to the returning one. We hearken, then, to the voice of one behind our back admonishing us, if at least after sins we return to the Lord inviting us. We ought therefore to feel ashamed for the pity of Him Who calls us, if we will not fear His justice: since there is the more grievous wickedness in despising Him in that, though despised, He disdains not to call us still.

But, on the other hand, those that are unacquainted with the sins of the flesh are to be admonished to fear headlong ruin the more anxiously, as they stand upon a higher eminence. They are to be admonished to be aware that the more prominent be the place they stand on, so much the more frequent are the arrows of the lier-in-wait by which they are assailed. For he is wont to rouse himself the more ardently, the more stoutly he sees himself to be vanquished: and so much the more he scorns and feels it intolerable to be vanquished, as he perceives the unbroken camp of weak flesh to be set in array against him. They are to be admonished to look up incessantly to the rewards, and then undoubtedly they will gladly tread under foot the labours of temptation which they endure. For, if attention be fixed on the attained felicity apart from the passage to it, the toil of the passage becomes light. Let them hear what is said through the Prophet; *Thus saith the* Lord unto the eunuchs, Whoso shall have kept my sabbaths, and chosen the things that I would, and kept my covenant, I will give unto them in mine house and

within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters *(Isai. lvi. 4, 5)*. *For they indeed are* eunuchs, who, suppressing the motions of the flesh, cut off within themselves affection for wrong-doing. Moreover, in what place they are held with the Father is shewn, forasmuch as in the Father's house, that is in His eternal mansion, they are preferred even before sons. Let them hear what is said through John; *These are they which have not been defiled with women; for* they are virgins, and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth (Rev. xiv. 4); and how they sing a song which no one can utter but those hundred and forty four thousand. For indeed to sing a song to the Lamb singularly is to rejoice with Him for ever beyond all the faithful, even for incorruption of the flesh. Yet the rest of the elect can hear this song, although they cannot utter it, because, through charity, they are joyful in the exaltation of those others, though they rise not to their rewards. Let those who are unacquainted with the sins of the flesh hear what the Truth in person says concerning this purity; *Not all receive this word* (Matth. xix. 11). Which thing He denoted as the highest, in that He spoke of it as not belonging to all: and, in foretelling that it would be difficult to receive it, He signifies to his hearers with what caution it should be kept when received.

Those who are unacquainted with the sins of the flesh are therefore to be admonished both to know that virginity surpasses wedlock, and yet not to exalt themselves above the wedded: to the end that, while they put virginity first, and themselves last, they may both keep to that which they esteem as best, and also keep guard over themselves in not vainly exalting themselves.

They are to be admonished to consider that commonly the life of the continent is put to shame by the action of secular persons, when the latter take on themselves works beyond their condition, and the former do not stir up their hearts to the mark of their own order. Whence it is well said through the Prophet, *Be thou ashamed, O Sidon, saith the sea* (Isai. xxiii.

4). For Sidon is as it were brought to shame by the voice of the sea, when the life of him who is fortified, and as it were stedfast, is reproved by comparison with the life at those who are secular and fluctuating in this world. For often there are some who, returning to the Lord after sins of the flesh, shew themselves the more ardent in good works as they see themselves the more liable to condemnation for bad ones: and often certain of those who persevere in purity of the flesh seeing that they have less in the past to deplore, think that the innocency of their life is fully sufficient for them, and inflame themselves with no incitements of ardour to fervour of spirit. And for the most part a life burning with love after sin becomes more pleasing to God than innocence growing torpid in security. Whence also it is said by the voice of the Judge, *Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much* (Luke vii. 47); and, *Joy shall* be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance *(xv.* 7). Which thing we the sooner gather from experience itself, if we weigh the judgments of our own mind. For we love the land which produces abundant fruit after thorns have been ploughed out of it more than that which has had no thorns, but which, when cultivated, yields a barren harvest. Those who know not the sins of the flesh are to be admonished not to prefer themselves to others for the loftiness of their superior order, while they know not how great things are done by their inferiors better than by themselves. For in the inquisition of the righteous judge the quality of actions changes the merits of orders. For who, considering the very outward appearance of things, can be ignorant that in the nature of gems the carbuncle is preferred to the jacinth? But still a jacinth of cerulean colour is preferred to a pale carbuncle; because to the former its show of beauty supplies what the order of nature denied it, and the latter, which natural order had preferred, is debased by the quality of its colour. Thus, then, in the human race both some in the better order are the

worse, and some in the worse order are the better; since these by good living transcend the lot of their lower state, and those lessen the merit of their higher place by not coming up to it in their behaviour.

Chapter XXIX.

How they are to be admonished who lament sins of deed, and those who lament only sins of thought.

(*Admonition* 30.) Differently to be admonished are those who deplore sins of deed, and those who deplore sins of thought. For those who deplore sins of deed are to be admonished that perfected lamentations should wash out consummated evils, lest they be bound by a greater debt of perpetrated deed than they pay in tears of satisfaction for it. For it is written, *He hath given us drink in tears by measure* (Ps. lxxix. 6): which means that each person's soul should in its penitence drink the tears of compunction to such extent as it remembers itself to have been dried up from God through sins. They are to be admonished to bring back their past offences incessantly before their eyes, and so to live that these may not have to be viewed by the strict judge.

Hence David, when he prayed, saying, *Turn away* thine eyes from my sins *(Ps. l. 11), had* said also a little before, *My fault is ever before me* (v. 5); as if to say, I beseech thee not to regard my sin, since I myself cease not to regard it. Whence also the Lord says through the prophet, *And* I will not be mindful of thy sins, but be thou mindful of them (Isai. xliii. 25, 26). They are to be admonished to consider singly all their past offences, and, in bewailing the defilements of their former wandering one by one, to cleanse at the same time even their whole selves with tears. Whence it is well said through Jeremiah, when the several transgressions of Judæa were being considered, *Mine eye hath* shed divisions of waters *(Lam. iii. 48). For indeed we shed divided* waters from our eyes, when to our several sins we give separate tears. For the mind does not sorrow at one and the same time alike for all things; but, while it is more sharply touched by memory now of

this fault and now of that, being moved concerning all in each, it is purged at once from all.

They are to be admonished to build upon the mercy which they crave, lest they perish through the force of immoderate affliction. For the Lord would not set sins to be deplored before the eyes of offenders, were it His will to smite them with strict severity Himself. For it is evident that it has been His will to hide from His own judgment those whom in anticipation He has made judges of themselves. For hence it is written, *Let us come beforehand before the face of the Lord in confession* (Ps. xciv. 2). Hence through Paul it is said, *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged* (1 Cor. xi. 31). And again, they are to be admonished so to be confident in hope as not to grow torpid in careless security. For commonly the crafty foe, when he sees the soul which he trips up by sin to be afflicted for its fall, seduces it by the blandishments of baneful security. Which thing is figuratively expressed in the history of Dinah. For it is written, *Dinah went out to see the women of that land; and when* Sichem, the son of Hemor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he loved her, and seized her, and lay with her, and defiled her by force; and his soul clave unto her, and he soothed her with kind blandishments when she was sad *(Gen.* xxxiv. 1–3). For indeed Dinah goes out to see the women of a foreign land, when any soul, neglecting its own concerns, and giving heed to the actions of others, wanders forth out of its own proper condition and order. And Sichem, prince of the country, overpowers it inasmuch as the devil corrupts it, when found occupied in external cares. *And his soul clave unto her*, because he regards it as united to himself through iniquity. And because, when the soul comes to a sense of its sin, it stands condemned, and would fain deplore its transgression, but the corrupter recalls before its eyes empty hopes and grounds of security to the end that he may withdraw from it the benefit of sorrow, therefore it is rightly added in the text, *And soothed her with*

blandishments when she was sad. *For he tells now of the heavier offences of* others, now of what has been perpetrated being nothing, now of God being merciful; or again he promises time hereafter for repentance; so that the soul, seduced by these deceptions, may be suspended from its purpose of penitence, to the end that it may receive no good hereafter, being saddened by no evil now, and that it may then be more fully overwhelmed with punishment, in that now it even rejoices in its transgressions.

But, on the other hand, those who bewail sins of thought are to be admonished to consider anxiously within the recesses of their soul whether they have sinned in delight only, or also in consent. For commonly the heart is tempted, and in the sinfulness of the flesh experiences delight, and yet in its judgment resists this same sinfulness; so that in the secrets of thought it is both saddened by what pleases it and pleased by what saddens it. But sometimes the soul is so whelmed in a gulph of temptation as not to resist at all, but follows of set purpose that whereby it is assailed through delight; and, if outward opportunity be at hand, it soon consummates in effect its inward wishes. And certainly, if this is regarded according to the just animadversion of a strict judge, the sin is one, not of thought, but of deed; since, though the tardiness of circumstances has deferred the sin outwardly, the will has accomplished it inwardly by the act of consent.

Moreover, we have learnt in the case of our first parent that we perpetrate the iniquity of every sin in three ways; that is to say, in suggestion, delight, and consent. Thus the first is perpetrated through the enemy, the second through the flesh, the third through the spirit. For the lier-in-wait suggests wrong things; the flesh submits itself to delight; and at last the spirit, vanquished by delight, consents. Whence also that serpent suggested wrong things; then Eve, as though she had been the flesh, submitted herself to delight; but Adam, as the spirit, overcome by the suggestion and the delight, assented. Thus by suggestion we have

knowledge of sin, by delight we are vanquished, by consent we are also bound. Those, therefore, who bewail iniquities of thought are to be admonished to consider anxiously in what measure they have fallen into sin, to the end that they may be lifted up by a measure of lamentation corresponding to the degree of the downfall of which they are inwardly conscious; lest, if meditated evils torment them too little, they lead them on even to the perpetration of deeds. But in all this they should be alarmed in such wise that they still be by no means broken down. For often merciful God absolves sins of the heart the more speedily in that He allows them not to issue in deeds; and meditated iniquity is the more speedily loosed from not being too tightly bound by effected deed. Whence it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *I said I will declare against myself my* iniquities to the Lord, and thou forgavest the impiety of my heart *(Ps. xxxi. 5). For in that he added* impiety of heart, he indicated that it was iniquities of thought that he would declare: and in saying, *I said I will declare*, and straightway subjoining, *And thou forgavest*, he shewed how easy in such a case pardon was. For, while but promising that he would ask, he obtained what he promised to ask for; so that, since his sin had not advanced to deed, neither should his penitence go so far as to be torment; and that meditated affliction should cleanse the soul which in truth no more than meditated iniquity had defiled.

Chapter XXX.

How those are to be admonished who abstain not from the sins which they bewail, and those who, abstaining from them, bewail them not.

(*Admonition* 31.) Differently to be admonished are those who lament their transgressions, and yet forsake them not, and those who forsake them, and yet lament them not. For those who lament their transgressions and yet forsake them not are to be admonished to learn to consider anxiously that they cleanse themselves in vain by their weeping, if they wickedly defile themselves in their living, seeing that the end for which they wash themselves in tears is that, when clean, they may return to filth. For hence it is written, *The dog is returned to his own* vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire *(2 Pet. ii.* 22). For the dog, when he vomits, certainly casts forth the food which weighed upon his stomach; but, when he returns to his vomit, he is again loaded with what he had been relieved from. And they who mourn their transgressions certainly cast forth by confession the wickedness with which they have been evilly satiated, and which oppressed the inmost parts of their soul; and yet, in recurring to it after confession, they take it in again. But the sow, by wallowing in the mire when washed, is made more filthy. And one who mourns past transgressions, yet forsakes them not, subjects himself to the penalty of more grievous sin, since he both despises the very pardon which he might have won by his weeping, and as it were rolls himself in miry water; because in withholding purity of life from his weeping he makes even his very tears filthy before the eyes of God. Hence again it is written, *Repeat not a word* in thy prayer *(Ecclus. vii.* 14). For to repeat a word in prayer is, after bewailing, to commit what again requires bewailing. Hence it is said through Isaiah, *Wash you,* be ye clean *(Isai.* i. 16). For he neglects being

clean after washing, whosoever after tears keeps not innocency of life. And they therefore are washed, but are in no wise clean, who cease not to bewail the things they have committed, but commit again things to be bewailed. Hence through a certain wise man it is said, *He that is baptized from the touch of a dead body* and toucheth it again, what availeth his washing (Ecclus. xxxiv. 30)? For indeed he is baptized from the touch of a dead body who is cleansed from sin by weeping: but he touches a dead body after his baptism, who after tears repeats his sin.

Those who bewail transgressions, yet forsake them not, are to be admonished to acknowledge themselves to be before the eyes of the strict judge like those who, when they come before the face of certain men, fawn upon them with great submission, but, when they depart, atrociously bring upon them all the enmity and hurt they can. For what is weeping for sin but exhibiting the humility of one's devotion to God? And what is doing wickedly after weeping but putting in practice arrogant enmity against Him to whom entreaty has been made? This James attests, who says, *Whosoever will be a friend of this world becomes the enemy* of God *(James iv. 4). Those who lament their* transgressions, yet forsake them not, are to be admonished to consider anxiously that, for the most part, bad men are unprofitably drawn by compunction to righteousness, even as, for the most part, good men are without harm tempted to sin. Here indeed is found a wonderful measure of inward disposition in accordance with the requirements of desert, in that the bad, while doing something good, but still without perfecting it, are proudly confident in the midst of the very evil which even to the full they perpetrate; while the good, when tempted of evil to which they in no wise consent, plant the steps of their heart towards righteousness through humility all the more surely from their tottering through infirmity. Thus Balaam, looking on the tents of the righteous, said, *May my soul die the death of the righteous, and* may my last end be like

theirs *(Num. xxiii. 10). But, when the time of* compunction had passed, he gave counsel against the life of those whom he had requested for himself to be like even in dying: and, when he found an occasion for the gratification of his avarice, he straightway forgot all that he had wished for himself of innocence. Hence it is that Paul, the teacher and preacher of the Gentiles, says, *I see another law in my members, warring against the* law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members *(Rom. vii. 23). He is of a truth tempted for* this very purpose, that he may be the more stedfastly confirmed in good from the knowledge of his own infirmity. Why is it, then, that the one is touched with compunction, and yet draws not near unto righteousness, while the other is tempted, and yet sin defiles him not, but for this evident reason, that neither do good things not perfected help the bad, nor bad things not consummated condemn the good?

But, on the other hand, those who forsake their transgressions, and yet mourn them not, are to be admonished not to suppose the sins to be already remitted which, though they multiply them not by action, they still cleanse away by no bewailings. For neither has a writer, when he has ceased from writing, obliterated what he had written by reason of his having added no more: neither has one who offers insults made satisfaction by merely holding his peace, it being certainly necessary for him to impugn his former words of pride by words of subsequent humility: nor is a debtor absolved by not increasing his debt, unless he also pays what he has incurred. Thus also, when we offend against God, we by no means make satisfaction by ceasing from iniquity, unless we also follow up the pleasures which we have loved by lamentations set against them. For, if no sin of deed had polluted us in this life, our very innocence would by no means suffice for our security as long as we live here, since many unlawful things would still

assail our heart. With what conscience, then, can he feel safe, who, having perpetrated iniquities, is himself witness to himself that he is not innocent?

For it is not as if God were fed by our torments: but He heals the diseases of our transgressions by medicines opposed to them that we, who have departed from Him delighted by pleasures, may return to Him embittered by tears; and that, having fallen by running loose in unlawful things, we may rise by restraining ourselves even in lawful ones; and that the heart which mad joy had flooded may be burnt clean by wholesome sadness: and that what the elation of pride had wounded may be cured by the dejection of a humble life. *For hence it is* written, I said unto the wicked, Deal not wickedly; and to the transgressors, lift not up the horn *(Ps. lxxiv.* 5). For transgressors lift up the horn, if they in no wise humble themselves to penitence after knowledge of their iniquity. Hence again it is said, *A bruised* and humbled heart God doth not despise (Ps. l. 19). For whosoever mourns his sins yet forsakes them not bruises indeed his heart, but scorns to humble it. But he who forsakes his sins yet mourns them not does indeed already humble his heart, but refuses to bruise it. Hence Paul says, *And such indeed were ye; but ye* are washed, but ye are sanctified *(1 Cor. vi. 11); because, in truth, amended life* sanctifies those whom the ablution of the affliction of tears cleanses through penitence. Hence Peter, when he saw some affrighted by consideration of their evil deeds, admonished them, saying, *Repent,* and be baptized every one of you *(Acts ii. 38). For, being about to speak of* baptism, he spoke first of the lamentations of penitence; that they should first bathe themselves in the water of their own affliction, and afterwards wash themselves in the sacrament of baptism. With what conscience, then, can those who neglect to weep for their past misdeeds live secure of pardon, when the chief pastor of the Church himself believed that penitence must be added even to this Sacrament which chiefly extinguishes sins?

Chapter XXXI.

How those are to be admonished who praise the unlawful things of which they are conscious, and those who while condemning them, in no wise guard against them.

(*Admonition* 32.) Differently to be admonished are they who even praise the unlawful things which they do, and those who censure what is wrong, and yet avoid it not. For they who even praise the unlawful things which they do are to be admonished to consider how for the most part they offend more by the mouth than by deeds. For by deeds they perpetrate wrong things in their own persons only; but with the mouth they bring out wickedness in the persons of as many as there are souls of hearers, to whom they teach wicked things by praising them. They are therefore to be admonished that, if they evade the eradication of evil, they at least be afraid to sow it. They are to be admonished to let their own individual perdition suffice them. And again they are to be admonished that, if they fear not to be bad, they at least blush to be seen to be what they are. For usually a sin, when it is concealed, is shunned; because, when a soul blushes to be seen to be what nevertheless it does not fear to be, it comes in time to blush to be what it shuns being seen to be. But, when any bad man shamelessly courts notice, then the more freely he perpetrates every wickedness, the more does he come even to think it lawful; and in what he imagines to be lawful he is without doubt sunk ever more and more. Hence it is written, *They have declared their sin as* Sodom, neither have they hidden it *(Isai. iii. 9)*. *For, had Sodom hidden her* sin, she would still have sinned, but, in fear. But she had utterly lost the curb of fear, in that she did not even seek darkness for her sin. Whence also again it is written, *The cry of Sodom* and Gomorrah is

multiplied *(Gen. xviii. 20). For sin with a voice is guilt in* act; but sin with even a cry is guilt at liberty.

But, on the other hand, those who censure wrong things and yet avoid them not are to be admonished to weigh circumspectly what they can say in their own excuse before the strict judgment of God, seeing they are not excused from the guilt of their crimes, even themselves being judges. What, then, are these men but their own summoners? They give their voices against misdeeds, and deliver themselves up as guilty in their doings. They are to be admonished to perceive how it even now comes of the hidden retribution of judgment that their mind is enlightened to see the evil which it perpetrates, but strives not to overcome it; so that the better it sees the worse it may perish; because it both perceives the light of understanding, and also relinquishes not the darkness of wrong-doing. For, when they neglect the knowledge that has been given to help them, they turn it into a testimony against themselves; and from the light of understanding, which they had in truth received that they might be able to do away their sins, they augment their punishments. And, indeed, this their wickedness, doing the evil which it condemns, has already a taste here of the judgment to come; so that, while kept liable to eternal punishment, it shall not meanwhile be absolved here in its own test of itself; and that it may experience there the more grievous torments, in that here it forsakes not the evil which even itself condemns. For hence the Truth says, *That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did* according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes (Luke xii. 47). Hence the Psalmist says, *Let them go down quick into hell* (Ps. liv. 16). For the quick know and feel what is being done about them; but the dead can feel nothing. For they would go down dead into hell if they committed what is evil without knowledge. But when they know what is evil, and yet do it, they go down quick, miserable, and feeling, into the hell of iniquity.

Chapter XXXII.

How those are to be admonished who sin from sudden impulse and those who sin deliberately.

(*Admonition* 33.). Differently to be admonished are those who are overcome by sudden passion and those who are bound in guilt of set purpose. For those whom sudden passion overcomes are to be admonished to regard themselves as daily set in the warfare of the present life, and to protect the heart, which cannot foresee wounds, with the shield of anxious fear; to dread the hidden darts of the ambushed foe, and, in so dark a contest, to guard with continual attention the inward camp of the soul. For, if the heart is left destitute of the solicitude of circumspection, it is laid open to wounds; since the crafty enemy strikes the breast the more freely as he catches it bare of the breastplate of forethought. Those who are overcome by sudden passion are to be admonished to cease caring too much for earthly things; since, while they entangle their attention immoderately in transitory things, they are not aware of the darts of sins which pierce them. Whence, also, the utterance of one that is stricken and yet sleeps is expressed by Solomon, who says, *They have beaten me, and I was not pained; they have dragged me, and* I felt it not. When shall I awake and again find wine (Prov. xxiii. 35)? For the soul that sleeps from the care of its solicitude is beaten and feels not pain, because, as it foresees not impending evils, so neither is it aware of those which it has perpetrated. It is dragged, and in no wise feels it, because it is led by the allurements of vices, and yet is not roused to keep guard over itself. But again it wishes to awake, that it may again find wine, because, although weighed down by the sleep of its torpor from keeping guard over itself, it still strives to be awake to the cares of the world, that it may be ever drunk with pleasures; and,

while sleeping to that wherein it ought to have been wisely awake, it desires to be awake to something else, to which it might have laudably slept. Hence it is written previously, *And thou shalt be as one that sleepeth in the midst of* the sea, and as a steersman that is lulled to rest, having let go the rudder *(Prov.* xxiii. 35). For he sleeps in the midst of the sea who, placed among the temptations of this world, neglects to look out for the motions of vices that rush in upon him like impending heaps of waves. And the steersman, as it were, lets go the rudder when the mind loses the earnestness of solicitude for guiding the ship of the body. For, indeed, to let go the rudder in the sea is to leave off intentness of forethought among the storms of this life. For, if the steersman holds fast the rudder with anxious care, he now directs the ship among the billows right against them, now cleaves the assaults of the winds aslant. So, when the mind vigilantly guides the soul, it now surmounts some things and treads them down, now warily turns aside from others, so that it may both by hard exertion overcome present dangers, and by foresight gather strength against future struggle. Hence, again, of the strong warriors of the heavenly country it is said, *Every man* hath his sword upon his thigh because of fears in the night (Cant. iii. 8). For the sword is put upon the thigh when the evil suggestion of the flesh is subdued by the sharp edge of holy preaching. But by the night is expressed the blindness of our infirmity; since any opposition that is impending in the night is not seen. Every man's sword, therefore, is put upon his thigh because of fears in the night; that is, because holy men, while they fear things which they do not see, stand always prepared for the strain of a struggle. Hence, again, it is said to the bride, *Thy nose is as the tower that is in Lebanon* (Cant. vii. 4). For the thing which we perceive not with our eyes we usually anticipate by the smell. By the nose, also, we discern between odours and stenches. What, then, is signified by the nose of the Church but the foreseeing discernment of Saints? It is also said to be like to

the tower that is in Lebanon, because their discerning foresight is so set on a height as to see the struggles of temptations even before they come, and to stand fortified against them when they do come. For things that are foreseen when future are of less force when they are present; because, when every one has become more prepared against the blow, the enemy, who supposed himself to be unexpected, is weakened by the very fact of having been anticipated.

But, on the other hand, those who of set purpose are bound in guilt, are to be admonished to perpend with wary consideration how that, when they do what is evil of their own judgment, they kindle stricter judgment against themselves; and that by so much the harder sentence will smite them as the chains of deliberation have bound them more tightly in guilt. Perhaps they might sooner wash away their transgressions by penitence, had they fallen into them through precipitancy alone. For the sin is less speedily loosened which of set purpose is firmly bound. For unless the soul altogether despised eternal things, it would not perish in guilt advisedly. In this, then, those who perish of set purpose differ from those who fall through precipitancy; that the former, when they fall by sin from the state of righteousness, for the most part fall also into the snare of desperation. Hence it is that the Lord through the Prophet reproves not so much the wrong doings of precipitance as purposes of sin, saying, *Lest perchance my indignation come out as fire, and be inflamed, and* there be none to quench it because of the wickedness of your purposes *(Jer. iv.* 4). Hence, again, in wrath He says, *I will visit upon you according to the fruit of* your purposes *(Ibid. xxiii. 2). Since, then, sins which* are perpetrated of set purpose differ from other sins, the Lord censures purposes of wickedness rather than wicked deeds. For in deeds the sin is often of infirmity or of negligence, but in purposes it is always of malicious intent. Contrariwise, it is well said through the Prophet in describing a blessed man, *And he sitteth not in the*

chair of pestilence (Ps. i. 1). For a chair is wont to be the seat of a judge or a president. And to sit in the chair of pestilence is to commit what is wrong judicially; to sit in the chair of pestilence is to discern with the reason what is evil, and yet deliberately to perpetrate it. He sits, as it were, in the chair of perverse counsel who is lifted up with so great elation of iniquity as to endeavour even by counsel to accomplish evil. And, as those who are supported by the dignity of the chair are set over the crowds that stand by, so sins that are purposely sought out transcend the transgressions of those who fall through precipitancy. Those, then, who even by counsel bind themselves in guilt are to be admonished hence to gather with what vengeance they must at some time be smitten, being now made, not companions, but princes, of evil-doers.

Chapter XXXIII.

How those are to be admonished who commit very small but frequent faults, and those who, while avoiding such as are very small, are sometimes plunged in such as are grievous.

(*Admonition* 34.) Differently to be admonished are those who, though the unlawful things they do are very small, yet do them frequently, and those who keep themselves from small sins, but are sometimes plunged in such as are grievous. Those who frequently transgress, though in very small things, are to be admonished by no means to consider the quality of the sins they commit, but the quantity. For, if they scorn being afraid when they weigh their deeds, they ought to be alarmed when they number them; seeing that deep gulphs of rivers are filled by small but innumerable drops of rain; and bilge-water, increasing secretly, has the same effect as a storm raging openly; and the sores that break out on the members in scab are minute; but, when a multitude of them gets possession in countless numbers, it destroys the life of the body as much as one grievous wound inflicted on the breast. Hence for certain it is written, *He that contemneth small things falleth by little and* little *(Ecclus. xix.* 1). For he that neglects to bewail and avoid the smallest sins falls from the state of righteousness, not indeed suddenly, but bit by bit entirely. Those who transgress frequently in very little things are to be admonished to consider anxiously how that sometimes there is worse sin in a small fault than in a greater one. For a greater fault, in that it is the sooner acknowledged to be one, is by so much the more speedily amended; but a smaller one, being reckoned as though it were none at all, is retained in use with worse effect as it is so with less concern. Whence for the most part it comes to pass that the mind, accustomed to light evils, has no horror even of heavy ones, and, being fed

up by sins, comes at last to a sort of sanction of iniquity, and by so much the more scorns to be afraid in greater matters as it has learnt to sin in little ones without fear.

But, on the other hand, those who keep themselves from small sins, but are sometimes plunged in grievous ones, are to be admonished anxiously to apprehend the state they are in; how that, while their heart is lifted up for very small things guarded against, they are so swallowed up in the very gulph of their own elation as to perpetrate others that are more grievous, and, while they outwardly master little ills, but are puffed up inwardly with vain glory, they prostrate their soul, overcome within itself by the sickness of pride, amid greater ills even outwardly. Those, then, who keep themselves from little faults, but are sometimes plunged in such as are grievous, are to be admonished to take care lest they fall inwardly where they suppose themselves to be standing outwardly, and lest, according to the retribution of the strict judge, elation on account of lesser righteousness become a way to the pitfall of more grievous sin. For such as, vainly elated, attribute their keeping of the least good to their own strength, being justly left to themselves are overwhelmed in greater sins; and by falling they learn that their standing was not of themselves, so that immeasurable ills may humble the heart that is exalted by the smallest good. They are to be admonished to consider that, while in their more grievous faults they bind themselves in deep guilt, they nevertheless for the most part sin worse in the little faults which they guard against; because, while in the former they do what is wicked, in the latter they hide from men that they are wicked. Whence it comes to pass that, when they perpetrate greater evils before God, it is a case of open iniquity; and when they are careful to observe small good things before men, it is a case of pretended holiness. For hence it is that it is said of the Pharisees, *Straining out a gnat, but* swallowing a camel *(Matth. xxiii. 24). As if it were said* plainly. The least evils ye

discern; the greater ye devour. Hence it is that they are again reproved by the mouth of the Truth, when they are told, *Ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and omit the weightier* matters of the Law, judgment and mercy and truth (Ibid. 23). For neither is it to be carelessly heard that, when He said that the least things were tithed, He chose indeed to mention the lowest of herbs, but yet such as are sweet-smelling; in order, surely, to shew that, when pretenders observe small things, they seek to extend for themselves the odour of a holy reputation; and, though they omit to fulfil the greatest things, they still observe such of the smallest as smell sweetly far and wide in human judgment.

Chapter XXXIV.

How those are to be admonished who do not even begin good things, and those who do not finish them when begun.

(*Admonition* 35.) Differently to be admonished are they who do not even begin good things, and those who in no wise complete such as they have begun. For as to those who do not even begin good things, for them the first need is, not to build up what they may wholesomely love, but to demolish that wherein they are wrongly occupied. For they will not follow the untried things they hear of, unless they first come to feel how pernicious are the things that they have tried; since neither does one desire to be lifted up who knows not the very fact that he has fallen; nor does one who feels not the pain of a wound seek any healing remedy. First, then, it is to be shewn to them how vain are the things that they love, and then at length to be carefully made known to them how profitable are the things that they let slip. Let them first see that what they love is to be shunned, and afterwards perceive without difficulty that what they shun is to be loved. For they sooner accept the things which they have not tried, if they recognize as true whatever discourse they may hear concerning the things that they have tried. So then they learn to seek true good with fulness of desire, when they have learnt with certainty of judgment how vainly they have held to what was false. Let them be told, therefore, both that present good things will soon pass away from enjoyment, and also that the account to be given of them will nevertheless endure, without passing away, for vengeance; since both what pleases them is withdrawn from them now against their will, and what pains them is reserved them, also against their will, for punishment. Thus may they be wholesomely filled with alarm by the same things in which they harmfully take delight; so that when the stricken soul, in sight of

the deep ruin of its fall, perceives that it has reached a precipice, it may retrace its steps backward, and, fearing what it had loved, may learn to esteem highly what it once despised.

For hence it is that it is said to Jeremiah when sent to preach, *See, I have this day set thee over the nations and* over the kingdoms, to pluck out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to scatter, and to build, and to plant *(Jer. i. 10). Because, unless he first* destroyed wrong things, he could not profitably build right things; unless he plucked out of the hearts of his hearers the thorns of vain love, he would certainly plant to no purpose the words of holy preaching. Hence it is that Peter first overthrows, that he may afterwards build up, when he in no wise admonished the Jews as to what they were now to do, but reproved them for what they had done, saying, *Jesus of Nazareth, a man* approved of God among you by powers and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know; Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have by the hands of wicked men crucified and slain; whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of hell *(Acts ii.* 22–24); in order, to wit, that having been thrown down by a recognition of their cruelty, they might hear the building up of holy preaching by so much the more profitably as they anxiously sought it. Whence also they forthwith replied, *What then shall we do, men and* brethren? *And it is presently said to them,* Repent and be baptized, every one of you *(Ibid. 37, 38). Which words of building up* they would surely have despised, had they not first wholesomely become aware of the ruin of their throwing down. Hence it is that Saul, when the light from heaven shone upon him, did not hear immediately what he was to do aright, but what he had done wrong. For, when, fallen to the earth, he enquired, saying, *Who art Thou, Lord?* it was straightway replied, *I am Jesus of* Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. *And when he forthwith* replied, *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to* do? *it is added*

at once, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee there what thou must do *(Acts ix. 4,* &c.; xxii. 8, &c.). Lo, the Lord, speaking from heaven, reproved the deeds of His persecutor, and yet did not at once shew him what he had to do. Lo, the whole fabric of his elation had already been thrown down and then, humble after his downfall, he sought to be built up: and when pride was thrown down, the words of building up were still kept back; to wit, that the cruel persecutor might long lie overthrown, and rise afterwards the more firmly built in good as he had fallen utterly upset from his former error. Those, then, who have not as yet begun to do any good are first to be overthrown by the hand of correction from the stiffness of their iniquity, that they may afterwards be lifted up to the state of well-doing. For this cause also we cut down the lofty timber of the forest, that we may raise it up in the roof of a building: but yet it is not placed in the fabric suddenly; in order, that is, that its vicious greenness may first be dried out: for the more the moisture thereof is exuded in the lowest, by so much the more solidly is it elevated to the topmost places.

But, on the other hand, those who in no wise complete the good things they have begun are to be admonished to consider with cautious circumspection how that, when they accomplish not their purposes, they tear up with them even the things that had been begun. For, if that which is seen to be a thing to be done advances not through assiduous application, even that which had been well done falls back. For the human soul in this world is, as it were, in the condition of a ship ascending against the stream of a river: it is never suffered to stay in one place, since it will float back to the nethermost parts unless it strive for the uppermost. If then the strong hand of the worker carry not on to perfection the good things begun, the very slackness in working fights against what has been wrought. For hence it is that it is said through Solomon, *He that is feeble and slack in work is brother to* him that wasteth his works *(Prov. xviii. 9). For in truth he who*

does not strenuously execute the good things he has begun imitates in the slackness of his negligence the hand of the destroyer. Hence it is said by the Angel to the Church of Sardis, *Be watchful, and* strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I find not thy works complete before my God (Rev. iii. 2). Thus, because the works had not been found complete before his God, he foretold that those which remained, even such as had been done, were about to die. For, if that which is dead in us be not kindled into life, that which is retained as though still alive is extinguished too. They are to be admonished that it might have been more tolerable for them not to have laid hold of the right way than, having laid hold of it, to turn their backs upon it. For unless they looked back, they would not grow weak with any torpor with regard to their undertaken purpose. Let them hear, then, what is written, *It had been better for them not to have* known the way of righteousness than, after they have known it, to be turned backward *(2* Pet. ii. 21). Let them hear what is written; *I would thou wert cold or hot: but,* because than art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to spue thee out of my mouth *(Rev. iii. 15, 16). For he is hot who both takes up* and completes good purposes; but he is cold who does not even begin any to be completed. And as transition is made through lukewarmness from cold to heat, so through lukewarmness there is a return from heat to cold. Whosoever, then, has lost the cold of unbelief so as to live, but in no wise passes beyond lukewarmness so as to go on to burn, he doubtless, despairing of heat, while he lingers in pernicious lukewarmness, is in the way to become cold. But, as before lukewarmness there is hope in cold, so after cold there is despair in lukewarmness. For he who is yet in his sins loses not his trust in conversion: but he who after conversion has become lukewarm has withdrawn the hope that there might have been of the sinner. It is required, then, that every one be either hot or cold, lest, being lukewarm, he be spued out: that is, that either, being not yet converted, he

still afford hope of his conversion, or, being already converted, he be fervent in virtues; lest he be spued out as lukewarm, in that he goes back in torpor from purposed heat to pernicious cold.

Chapter XXXV.

How those are to be admonished who do bad things secretly and good things openly, and those who do contrariwise.

(*Admonition* 36.) Differently to be admonished are those who do bad things in secret and good things publicly, and those who hide the good things they do, and yet in some things done publicly allow ill to be thought of them. For those who do bad things in secret and good things publicly are to be admonished to consider with what swiftness human judgments flee away, but with what immobility divine judgments endure. They are to be admonished to fix the eyes of their mind on the end of things; since, while the attestation of human praise passes away, the heavenly sentence, which penetrates even hidden things, grows strong unto lasting retribution. When, therefore, they set their hidden wrong things before the divine judgment, and their right things before human eyes, both without a witness is the good which they do publicly, and not without an eternal witness is their latent transgression. So by concealing their faults from men, and displaying their virtues, they both discover while they hide what they deserve to be punished for, and hide while they discover what they might have been rewarded for. Such persons the Truth calls whited sepulchres, beautiful outward, but full of dead men's bones (Matth. xxiii. 17); because they cover up the evil of vices within, but by the exhibition of certain works flatter human eyes with the mere outward colour of righteousness. They are therefore to be admonished not to despise the right things they do, but to believe them to be of better desert. For those greatly misjudge their own good things who think human favour sufficient for their reward. For when transitory praise is sought in return for right doing, a thing worthy of eternal reward is sold for a mean price. As to which price being received, indeed,

the Truth says, *Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward* (Matth. vi. 2, 5, 6). They are to be admonished to consider that, when they prove themselves bad in hidden things, but yet offer themselves as examples publicly in good works, they shew that what they shun is to be followed; they cry aloud that what they hate is to be loved: in fine, they live to others, and die to themselves.

But, on the other hand, those who do good things in secret, and yet in some things done publicly allow evil to be thought of them, are to be admonished that, while what is good in them quickens themselves in the virtue of well-doing, they themselves slay not others through the example of a bad repute; that they love not their neighbours less than themselves, nor, while themselves imbibing a wholesome drought of wine, pour out a pestiferous cup of poison to minds intent on observing them. These assuredly in one way little help the life of their neighbour, and in the other greatly burden it, while they both study to do what is right unseen, and also, in some things in which they set an example, sow from themselves the seeds of evil. For whosoever is already competent to tread under foot the lust of praise commits a fraud on edification, if he conceals the good things he does; and he steals away, as it were, the roots of germination after having cast the seed, who shews not forth the work that is to be imitated. For hence in the Gospel the Truth says, *That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is* in heaven *(Matth.* v. 16). But then there comes also this sentence, which has the appearance of enjoining something very different, namely, *Take heed that ye do not your* righteousness before men, to be seen of them *(Matth. vi. 1).*

What means then its being enjoined both that our work is so to be done as not to be seen, and yet that it should be seen, but that the things we do are to be hidden, lest we ourselves should be praised, and yet to be shewn, that we may increase the praise of our heavenly Father? For, when the Lord

forbade us to do our righteousness before men, He straightway added, *To be seen of them.* And again, when He enjoined that our good works were to be seen of men, He forthwith subjoined, *That they may glorify your Father which is in heaven* (Matth. v. 16). In what manner, then, they are to be seen, and in what manner they are not to be seen, He shewed in the end of His injunctions, to the effect that the mind of the worker should not seek for his work to be seen on his own account, and yet that on account of the glory of the heavenly Father he should not conceal it. Whence it commonly comes to pass that a good work is both in secret when it is done publicly, and again in public when it is done secretly. For he that in a public good work seeks not his own, but the heavenly Father's glory, hides what he has done, in that he has had Him only for a witness whom he has desired to please. And he who in his secret good work covets being observed and praised has done this before men, even though no one has seen what he has done; because he has adduced so many witnesses to his good work as he has sought human praises in his heart. But when bad repute, so far as it prevails without sin committed, is not obliterated from the minds of lookers on, the cup of guilt is offered, in the way of example, to all who think evil. Whence also it generally comes to pass, that those who carelessly allow evil to be thought of them do not indeed commit wickedness in their own persons, but still, through those who may have taken example from them, offend in a more manifold way. Hence it is that Paul says to those who ate certain unclean things without pollution, but in this their eating put a stumbling-block of temptation in the way of the imperfect, *Take heed, lest by any means this* liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak (1 Cor. viii. 9); and again, *And* by thy conscience shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died. But when ye so sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ *(Ibid. ii.* 12). Hence it is that Moses, when he said, *Thou shalt not curse the deaf*, at once added, *Nor put*

a stumblingblock before the blind (Lev. xix. 14). For to curse the deaf is to disparage one who is absent and does not hear; but to put a stumbling-block before the blind is to act indeed with discernment, but yet to give cause of offence to him who has not the light of discernment.

Chapter XXXVI.

Concerning the exhortation to be addressed many at once, that It may so aid the virtues of each among them that vices contrary to such virtues may not grow up through it.

These are the things that a Bishop of souls should observe in the diversity of his preaching, that he may solicitously oppose suitable medicines to the diseases of his several hearers. But, whereas it is a matter of great anxiety, in exhorting individuals, to be of service to them according to their individual needs, since it is a very difficult thing to instruct each person in what concerns himself, dealing out due consideration to each case, it is yet far more difficult to admonish innumerable hearers labouring under various passions at one and the same time with one common exhortation. For in this case the speech is to be tempered with such art that, the vices of the hearers being diverse, it may be found suitable to them severally, and yet be not diverse from itself; that it pass indeed with one stroke through the midst of passions, but, after the manner of a two-edged sword, cut the swellings of carnal thoughts on either side; so that humility be so preached to the proud that yet fear be not increased in the timid; that confidence be so infused into the timid that yet the unbridled licence of the proud grow not; that solicitude in well doing be so preached to the listless and torpid that yet licence of immoderate action be not increased in the unquiet; that bounds be so set on the unquiet that yet careless torpor be not produced in the listless; that wrath be so extinguished in the impatient that yet negligence grow not in the easy and soft-hearted; that the soft-hearted be so inflamed to zeal that yet fire be not added to the wrathful; that liberality in giving be so infused into the niggardly that yet the reins of profusion be in no wise loosened to the prodigal; that frugality be so preached to the prodigal that yet care to

keep perishable things be not increased in the niggardly; that marriage be so praised to the incontinent that yet those who are already continent be not called back to voluptuousness; that virginity of body be so praised to the continent that yet fecundity of the flesh come not to be despised by the married. Good things are so to be preached that ill things be not assisted sideways. The highest good is so to be praised that the lowest be not despaired of. The lowest is so to be cherished that there be no cessation of striving for the highest from the lowest being thought sufficient.

Chapter XXXVII.

Of the exhortation to be applied to one person, who labours under contrary passions.

It is indeed a serious labour for the preacher to keep an eye in his public preaching to the hidden affections and motives of individuals, and, after the manner of the palæstra, to turn himself with skill to either side: yet he is worn with much severer labour, when he is compelled to preach to one person who is subject to contrary vices. For it is commonly the case that some one is of too joyous a constitution, and yet sadness suddenly arising immoderately depresses him. The preacher, therefore, must give heed that the temporary sadness be so removed that the constitutional joyousness be not increased; and that the constitutional joyousness be so curbed that the temporary sadness be not aggravated. This man is burdened by a habit of immoderate precipitancy, and yet sometimes the power of a suddenly-born fear impedes his doing what ought to be done in haste. That man is burdened by a habit of immoderate fear, and yet sometimes is impelled in what he desires by the rashness of immoderate precipitancy. In the one, therefore, let the fear that suddenly arises be so repressed that his long-nourished precipitancy do not further grow. In the other let the precipitancy that suddenly arises be so repressed that yet the fear stamped on him by constitution do not gather strength. And, indeed, what is there strange in the physicians of souls being on their guard in these things, when those who heal not hearts but bodies govern themselves with so great skill of discernment? For it is often the case that extreme faintness weighs down a weak body, which faintness ought to be met by strong remedies; but yet the weak body cannot bear a strong remedy. He, therefore, who treats the case gives heed so to draw off the supervening malady that the pre-existing

weakness of the body be in no wise increased, lest perchance the faintness should pass away with the life. He compounds, then, his remedy with such discernment as at one and the same time to meet both the faintness and the weakness. If, then, medicine for the body administered without division can be of service in a divided way, why should not medicine for the soul, applied in one and the same preaching, be of power to meet moral diseases in diverse directions: which medicine is the more subtle in its operation in that invisible things are dealt with?

Chapter XXXVIII.

That sometimes lighter vices are to be left alone, that more grievous ones may be removed.

But since, when the sickness of two vices attacks a man, one presses upon him more lightly, and the other perchance more heavily, it is undoubtedly right to haste to the succour of that through which there is the more rapid tendency to death. And, if the one cannot be restrained from causing the death which is imminent unless the other which is contrary to it increase, the preacher must be content by skilful management in his exhortation to suffer one to increase, to the end that he may keep the other back from causing the death which is imminent. When he does this, he does not aggravate the disease, but preserves the life of his sufferer to whom he administers the medicine, that he may find a fitting time for searching out means of recovery. For there is often one who, while he puts no restraint on his gluttony in food, is presently pressed hard by the stings of lechery, which is on the point of overcoming him, and who, when, terrified by the fear of this struggle, he strives to restrain himself through abstinence, is harassed by the temptation of vain-glory: in which case certainly one vice is by no means extinguished unless the other be fostered. Which plague then should be the more ardently attacked but that which presses on the man the more dangerously? For it is to be tolerated that through the virtue of abstinence arrogance should meanwhile grow against one that is alive, lest through gluttony lechery should cut him off from life entirely. Hence it is that Paul, when he considered that his weak hearer would either continue to do evil or rejoice in the reward of human praise for well-doing, said, *Wilt thou not be afraid of the* power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same *(Rom. xiii.* 3). For it is not that good things should be

done in order that no human power may be feared, or that the glory of transitory praise may be thereby won; but, considering that the weak soul could not rise to so great strength as to shun at the same time both wickedness and praise, the excellent preacher in his admonition offered something and took away something. For by conceding mild ailments he drew off keener ones; that, since the mind could not rise all at once to the relinquishing of all its vices, it might, while left in familiarity with some one of them, be taken off without difficulty from another.

Chapter XXXIX.

That deep things ought not to be preached at all to weak souls.

But the preacher should know how to avoid drawing the mind of his hearer beyond its strength, lest, so to speak, the string of the soul, when stretched more than it can bear, should be broken. For all deep things should be covered up before a multitude of hearers, and scarcely opened to a few. For hence the Truth in person says, *Who, thinkest thou, is the faithful and wise* steward, whom his Lord has appointed over his household, to give them their measure of wheat in due season? (Luke xii. 42). Now by a measure of wheat is expressed a portion of the Word, lest, when anything is given to a narrow heart beyond its capacity, it be spilt. Hence Paul says, *I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as* unto carnal. As it were to babes in Christ, I have given you milk to drink, and not meat *(1* Cor. iii. 1, 2). Hence Moses, when he comes on from the sanctuary of God, veils his shining face before the people; because in truth He shews not to multitudes the secrets of inmost brightness (Exod. xxxiv. 33, 35). Hence it is enjoined on him by the Divine voice that if any one should dig a cistern, and not cover it, and an ox or ass should fall into it, he should pay the price (Exod. xxi. 33, 34), because when one who has arrived at the deep streams of knowledge covers them not up before the brutish hearts of his hearers, he is adjudged as liable to penalty, if through his words a soul, whether clean or unclean, be caught on a stumbling-stone. Hence it is said to the blessed Job, *Who hath given understanding unto the cock?* (Job xxxviii. 36). For a holy preacher, crying aloud in time of darkness, is as the cock crowing in the night, when he says, *It is even now the hour for us to arise* from sleep *(Rom.* xiii. 11). And again, *Awake ye righteous, and sin not* (1 Cor. xv. 34). But the cock is wont to utter loud chants in the deeper hours of the night; but, when the time of

morning is already at hand, he frames small and slender tones; because, in fact, he who preaches aright cries aloud plainly to hearts that are still in the dark, and shews them nothing of hidden mysteries, that they may then hear the more subtle teachings concerning heavenly things, when they draw nigh to the light of truth.

Chapter XL.

Of the work and the voice of preaching.

But in the midst of these things we are brought back by the earnest desire of charity to what we have already said above; that every preacher should give forth a sound more by his deeds than by his words, and rather by good living imprint footsteps for men to follow than by speaking shew them the way to walk in. For that cock, too, whom the Lord in his manner of speech takes to represent a good preacher, when he is now preparing to crow, first shakes his wings, and by smiting himself makes himself more awake; since it is surely necessary that those who give utterance to words of holy preaching should first be well awake in earnestness of good living, lest they rouse others with their voice while themselves torpid in performance; that they should first shake themselves up by lofty deeds, and then make others solicitous for good living; that they should first smite themselves with the wings of their thoughts; that whatsoever in themselves is unprofitably torpid they should discover by anxious investigation, and correct by strict animadversion, and then at length set in order the life of others by speaking; that they should take heed to punish their own faults by bewailings, and then denounce what calls for punishment in others; and that, before they give voice to words of exhortation, they should proclaim in their deeds all that they are about to speak.

Part IV. How the Preacher, When He Has Accomplished All Aright, Should Return to Himself, Lest Either His Life or His Preaching Lift Him Up.

But since often, when preaching is abundantly poured forth in fitting ways, the mind of the speaker is elevated in itself by a hidden delight in self-display, great care is needed that he may gnaw himself with the laceration of fear, lest he who recalls the diseases of others to health by remedies should himself swell through neglect of his own health; lest in helping others he desert himself, lest in lifting up others he fall. For to some the greatness of their virtue has often been the occasion of their perdition; causing them, while inordinately secure in confidence of strength, to die unexpectedly through negligence. For virtue strives with vices; the mind flatters itself with a certain delight in it; and it comes to pass that the soul of a well-doer casts aside the fear of its circumspection, and rests secure in self-confidence; and to it, now torpid, the cunning seducer enumerates all things that it has done well, and exalts it in swelling thoughts as though superexcellent beyond all beside. Whence it is brought about, that before the eyes of the just judge the memory of virtue is a pitfall of the soul; because, in calling to mind what it has done well, while it lifts itself up in its own eyes, it falls before the author of humility. For hence it is said to the soul that is proud, *For* that thou art more beautiful, go down, and sleep with the uncircumcised *(Ezek. xxxii. 19): as if it were plainly said,* Because thou liftest thyself up for the comeliness of thy virtues, thou art driven by thy very beauty to fall. Hence under the figure of Jerusalem the soul that is proud in virtue is reproved, when it is said, *Thou wert perfect in* my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord, and having confidence in thy beauty thou hast committed fornication in thy renown *(Ibid. xvi.* 14, 15). For the mind is lifted up by confidence in its beauty, when, glad for the merits of its virtues, it glories within itself in security.

But through this same confidence it is led to fornication; because, when the soul is deceived by its own thoughts, malignant spirits, which take possession of it, defile it through the seduction of innumerable vices. But it is to be noted that it is said, *Thou hast* committed fornication in thy renown: *for when the soul leaves* off regard for the supernal ruler, it forthwith seeks its own praise, and begins to arrogate to itself all the good which it has received for shewing forth the praise of the giver; it desires to spread abroad the glory of its own reputation, and busies itself to become known as one to be admired of all. In its renown, therefore, it commits fornication, in that, forsaking the wedlock of a lawful bed, it prostitutes itself to the defiling spirit in its lust of praise. Hence David says, *He delivered their virtue into captivity, and* their beauty into the enemy's hands *(Ps. lxvii.* 61). For virtue is delivered into captivity and beauty into the enemy's hands, when the old enemy gets dominion over the deceived soul because of elation in well doing. And yet this elation in virtue tempts somewhat, though it does not fully overcome, the mind even of the elect.

But it, when lifted up, is forsaken, and, being forsaken, it is recalled to fear. For hence David says again, *I said in mine abundance, I shall not be moved for ever* (Ps. xxix. 7). But he added a little later what he underwent for having been puffed up with confidence in his virtue, *Thou didst turn thy face from me, and* I was troubled *(Ibid. v. 8). As if he would say* plainly, I believed myself strong in the midst of virtues, but, being forsaken, I become aware how great was my infirmity. Hence he says again, *I have sworn and am stedfastly purposed to keep the* judgments of thy righteousness *(Ps. cxix.* 106). But, because it was beyond his powers to continue the keeping which he sware, straightway, being troubled, he found his weakness. Whence also he all at once betook himself to the aid of prayer, saying, *I am humbled all* together; quicken me, O Lord, according to Thy word *(Ibid. v. 107). But sometimes Divine* government, before advancing a soul by gifts, recalls to it

the memory of its infirmity, lest it be puffed up for the virtues it has received. Whence the Prophet Ezekiel, before being led to the contemplation of heavenly things, is first called a son of man; as though the Lord plainly admonished him, saying, Lest thou shouldest lift up thy heart in elation for these things which thou seest, perpend cautiously what thou art; that, when thou penetratest the highest things, thou mayest remember that thou art a man, to the end that, when rapt beyond thyself, thou mayest be recalled in anxiety to thyself by the curb of thine infirmity. Whence it is needful that, when abundance of virtues flatters us, the eye of the soul should return to its own weaknesses, and salubriously depress itself; that it should look, not at the right things that it has done, but those that it has left undone; so that, while the heart is bruised by recollection of infirmity, it may be the more strongly confirmed in virtue before the author of humility. For it is generally for this purpose that Almighty God, though perfecting in great part the minds of rulers, still in some small part leaves them imperfect; in order that, when they shine with wonderful virtues, they may pine with disgust at their own imperfection, and by no means lift themselves up for great things, while still labouring in their struggle against the least; but that, since they are not strong enough to overcome in what is last and lowest, they may not dare to glory in their chief performances.

See now, good man, how, compelled by the necessity laid upon me by thy reproof, being intent on shewing what a Pastor ought to be, I have been as an ill-favoured painter pourtraying a handsome man; and how I direct others to the shore of perfection, while myself still tossed among the waves of transgressions. But in the shipwreck of this present life sustain me, I beseech thee, by the plank of thy prayer, that, since my own weight sinks me down, the hand of thy merit may raise me up.

Register of Epistles

Translated by James Barmby, 1879

CONTENTS

BOOK VII

BOOK I.

THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, INDICTION IX., BEING THE FIRST YEAR OF HIS ORDINATION.

EPISTLE I: TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF SICILY.

Gregory, servant of the servants of God , to all the bishops constituted throughout Sicily.

We have plainly perceived it to be very necessary that, even as our predecessors thought fit to do, we should commit all things to one and the same person; and that, where we cannot be present ourselves, our authority should be represented through him to whom we send our instructions. Wherefore, with the help of God, we have appointed Peter, subdeacon of our See, our delegate in the province of Sicily. Nor can we doubt as to the conduct of him to whom, with the help of God, we are known to have committed the charge of the whole patrimony of our church.

This also we have plainly perceived to be a thing that ought to be done; that once in the year your whole fraternity should assemble, at Syracuse or Catana, receiving, as we have charged him, the honour due to you; to the end that, together with the aforesaid Peter, subdeacon of our See, you may settle with due discretion whatever things pertain to the advantage of the churches of the province, or to the relief of the necessities of the poor and oppressed, or to the admonition of all, and the correction of those whose transgressions may peradventure be proved. From which council far be animosities, which are the nutriment of crimes, and may inward grudges die away, and that discord of souls which is beyond measure execrable. Let concord well-pleasing to God, and charity, approve you as His priests. Conduct all things, therefore, with such deliberation and calmness that yours may most worthily be called an Episcopal Council.

EPISTLE II: TO JUSTINUS, PRAETOR OF SICILY.

Gregory to Justinus, Praetor of Sicily.

What my tongue speaks my conscience approves; since even before you had become engaged in the employments of any office of dignity, I have greatly loved and greatly respected you. For the very modesty of your deportment made certain incipient claims on affection even from one who had been loth. And, when I heard that you had come to administer the praetorship of Sicily, I greatly rejoiced. But, since I have discovered that a certain ill-feeling is creeping in between you and the ecclesiastics, I have been exceedingly distressed. But now that you are occupied with the charge of civil administration, and I with the care of this ecclesiastical government, we can properly love one another in particular so far as we do no harm to the general community. Wherefore I beseech you by Almighty God, before Whose tremendous judgment we must give account of our deeds, that your Glory have always the fear of Him before your eyes, and never allow anything to come in whereby even slight dissension may arise between us. Let no gains draw you aside to injustice; let not either the threats or the favours of any one cause you to deviate from the path of rectitude. See how short life is: think, ye that exercise judicial authority, before what judge ye must at some time go. It is therefore to be diligently considered that we shall leave all gains behind us here, and that of harmful gains we shall carry with us to the judgment the pleas only that are against us for them. Those advantages, then, are to be sought by us which death may in no wise take away, but which the end of the present life may shew to be such as will endure for ever.

As to what you write concerning the corn, the, magnificent Citonatus asserts very differently that no more has been transmitted than what was supplied for replenishing the public granary in satisfaction of what was due for the past indiction. Give attention to this matter, since, if what is

transmitted be at all defective, it will be the death not of any one single person only, but of the whole people together.

Now for the management of the patrimony of Sicily I have sent, as I think under the guidance of God, such a man as you will be in entire accord with, if you are a lover of what is right, as I have found you to be. Moreover, as to your desire that I should remember you kindly, I confess the truth when I say that, unless any injustice should creep in from the snares of the ancient foe I have learnt thy Glory's modesty to be such that I shah not blush to be thy friend.

EPISTLE III: TO PAUL, SCHOLASTICUS,

Gregory to Paul, &c.

However strangers smile upon me on account of the dignity of my priestly office, this I take not much account of; but I do grieve not a little at your smiling upon me on this account, seeing that you know what I long for, and yet suppose me to have received advancement. For to me it would have been the highest advancement, if what I wished could bare been fulfilled; if I could have accomplished my desire, which you have been long acquainted with, in the enjoyment of longed-for rest. Yet, since I am now detained in the city of Rome, tied by the chains of this dignity, I have something wherein I may even rejoice in addressing your Glory, seeing that, when the most eminent lord the ex-consul Leo comes, I suspect that you will not remain in Sicily; and when thou thyself also, tied by thine own dignity, shalt come to be detained in Rome, thou wilt come to know what sorrow and what bitterness I suffer. But when the magnificent lord Maurentius, the Chartularius, comes to you, I pray thee concur with him in regard to the present straits of the Roman city, since outside we are stabbed without cease by hostile swords. But we are still more heavily pressed by danger within through a sedition of the soldiers. Further, we commend to your Glory in all respects Peter our sub-deacon, whom we have sent to rule the patrimony of the Church.

EPISTLE IV: TO JOHN, BISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Constantinople.

If the virtue of charity consists in the love of one's neighbour, and we are commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves, how is it that your Blessedness does not love me even as yourself? For I know with what ardour, with what anxiety, you wished to fly from the burden of the episcopate; and yet you made no opposition to this same burden of the episcopate being imposed on me. It is evident, then, that you do not love me as yourself, seeing that you have wished me to take on myself that load which you were unwilling should be imposed on you. But since I, unworthy and weak, have taken charge of an old and grievously shattered ship (for on all sides the waves enter, and the planks, battered by a daily and violent storm, sound of shipwreck), I beseech thee by Almighty God to stretch out the hand of thy prayer to me in this my danger, since thou canst pray the more strenuously as thou standest further removed from the confusion of the tribulations which we suffer in this land.

My synodical epistle I will transmit with all possible speed, having despatched Bacauda, our brother and fellow-bishop, immediately after my ordination, as the bearer of this letter, while pressed by many and serious engagements.

EPISTLE V: TO THEOCTISTA, SISTER OF THE EMPEROR.

Gregory to Theoctista, &c

With how great devotion my mind prostrates itself before your Venerableness I cannot fully express in words; nor yet do I labour to give utterance to it, since, even though I were silent, you read in your heart your own sense of my devotion. I wonder, however, that you withdrew your countenance, till of late bestowed on me, from this my recent engagement in the pastoral office; wherein, under colour of episcopacy, I have been brought back to the world; in which I am involved in such great earthly cares as I do not at all remember having been subjected to even in a lay state of life. For I have lost the deep joys of my quiet, and seem to have risen outwardly while inwardly falling down. Whence I grieve to find myself banished far from the face of my Maker. For I used to strive daily to win my way outside the world, outside the flesh; to drive all phantasms of the body from the eyes of my soul, and to see incorporeally supernal joys; and not only with my voice but in the core of my heart I used to say, My heart hath said unto Thee, I have sought Thy face, Thy face, Lord, will I seek (Ps. xxvi. 8). Moreover desiring nothing, fearing nothing, in this world, I seemed to myself to stand on a certain summit of things, so that I almost believed to be fulfilled in me what I had learnt of the Lord's promise through the prophet, I will lift thee up upon the high places of the earth (Isai. lviii. 14). For he is lifted up upon the high places of the earth who treads under foot through looking down upon them in his mind even the very things of the present world which seem lofty and glorious. But, having been suddenly dashed from this summit of things by the whirlwind of this trial, I have fallen into fears and tremors, since, even though I have no fears for myself, I am greatly afraid for those who have been committed to me. On every side I am tossed by the waves of business, and sunk by storms, so

that I may truly say, I am come into the depth of the sea, and the storm hath overwhelmed me (Ps. lxviii. 3). After business I long to return to my heart; but, driven therefrom by vain tumults of thoughts, I am unable to return. From this cause, then, that which is within me is made to be far from me, so that I cannot obey the prophetic voice which says, Return to your heart, transgressors (Isai. xlvi. 8). But, pressed by foolish thoughts, I am impelled only to exclaim, My heart hath failed me (Ps. xxxix. 13). I have loved the beauty of the contemplative life as a Rachel, barren, but keen of sight and fair (Gen. xxix.), who, though in her quietude she is less fertile, yet sees the light more keenly. But, by what judgment I know not, Leah has been coupled with me in the night, to wit, the active life; fruitful, but tender-eyed; seeing less, but bringing forth more. I have longed to sit at the feet of the Lord with Mary, to take in the words of His mouth; and lo, I am compelled to serve with Martha in external affairs, to be careful and troubled about many things (Luke x. 39, seq.). A legion of demons having been, as I believed, east out of me, I wished to forget those whom I bad known, and to rest at the feet of the Saviour; and lo it is said to me, so as to compel me against my will, Return to thine house, and declare how great things the Lord hath done for thee (Mark v. 19). But who in the midst of so many earthly cares may be able to preach the wondrous works of God, it being already difficult for me even to call them to mind? For, pressed as I am in this office of dignity by a crowd of secular occupations, I see myself to be of those of whom it is written, While they were being raised up thou didst cast them down (Ps. lxxii. 18). For he said not, Thou didst east them down after they had been raised up, but while they were being raised up; because all bad men fall inwardly, while through the support of temporal dignity they seem outwardly to rise. Wherefore their very raising up is their fall, because, while they rely on false glory, they are emptied of true glory. Hence, again, he says, Consuming away as smoke shall they consume away

(Ps. xxxvi. 20). For smoke in rising consumes away, and in extending itself vanishes. And so indeed it comes to pass when present felicity accompanies the life of a sinner, since whereby he is shewn to be exalted, thereby it is brought about that he should cease to be. Hence, again, it is written, My God, make them like a wheel (Ps. lxxxii. 14). For a wheel is lifted up in its hinder parts, and in its fore parts falls. But to us the things that are behind are the goods of the present world, which we leave behind us; but the things that are before are those which are eternal and permanent, to which we are called, as Paul bears witness, saying, Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before (Phil. iii. 13). The sinner, therefore, when he is advanced in the present life, is made to be as a wheel, since, while falling in the things which are before, he is lifted up in the things which are behind. For, when he enjoys in this life the glory which he must leave behind, he falls from that which comes after this life. There are indeed many who know how so to control their outward advancement as by no means to fall inwardly thereby. Whence it is written, God casteth not away the mighty, seeing that He also Himself is might (Job xxxvi. 5). And it is said through Solomon, A man of understanding shall possess governments (Prov. i. 5). But to me these things are difficult, since they are also exceedingly burdensome; and what the mind has not received willingly it does not control fitly. Lo, our most serene Lord the Emperor has ordered an ape to be made a lion. And, indeed, in virtue of his order it can be called a lion, but a lion it cannot be made. Wherefore his Piety must needs himself take the blame of all my faults and short-comings, having committed a ministry of power to a weak agent

EPISTLE VI: TO NARSES, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Narses, &c

In describing loftily the sweetness of contemplation, you have renewed the groans of my fallen state, since I hear what I have lost inwardly while mounting outwardly, though undeserving, to the topmost height of rule. Know then that I am stricken with so great sorrow that I can scarcely speak; for the dark shades of grief block up the eyes of my soul. Whatever is beheld is sad, whatever is thought delightful appears to my heart lamentable For I reflect to what a dejected height of external advancement I have mounted in falling from the lofty height of my rest. And, being sent for my faults into the exile of employment from the face of my Lord, I say with the prophet, in the words, as it were of destroyed Jerusalem, He who should comfort me hath departed far from me (Lam. i. 16). But when, in seeking a similitude to express my condition and title, you frame periods and declamations in your letter, certainly, dearest brother, you call an ape a lion. Herein we see that you do as we often do, when we call mangy whelps pards or tigers. For I, my good man, have, as it were, lost my children, since through earthly cares I have lost works of righteousness. Therefore call me not Noemi. that is fair; but call me Mara, for I am full of bitterness (Ruth i. 20). But as to your saying that I ought not to have written, “That you should plough with bubali in the Lord’s field,” seeing that when in the sheet shewn to the blessed Peter both bubali and all wild beasts were presented to view; thou knowest thyself that it is subjoined, Slay and eat (Acts x. Thou, then, who hadst not yet slain these beasts, why didst thou already wish to eat them through obedience? Or knowest thou not that the beast about which thou wrotest refused to be slain by the sword of thy mouth? Thou must needs, then, satisfy the hunger of thy desire with those whom thou hast been able to prick and slay (Lit., to slay through compunction).

Further, as to the case of our brethren, I think that, if God gives aid, it will be as thou hast written. It was not, however, by any means right for me to write about it at present to our most serene lords, since at the very outset one should not begin with complaints. But I have written to my well-beloved son, the deacon Honoratus, that he should mention the matter to them in a suitable manner at a seasonable time, and speedily inform me of their reply. I beg greetings to be given in my behalf to the lord Alexander, the lord Theodorus, my son Marinus, the lady Esicia, the lady Eudochia, and the lady Dominica.

EPISTLE VII: TO ANASTASIUS, PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH.

Gregory to Anastasius, &c.

I have found what your Blessedness has written to be as rest to the weary, as health to the sick, as a fountain to the thirsty, as shade to the oppressed with heat. For those words of yours did not seem even to be expressed by the tongue of the flesh, inasmuch as you so disclosed the spiritual love which you bear me as if your soul itself were speaking. But very hard was that which followed, in that your love enjoined me to bear earthly burdens, and that, having first loved me spiritually, you afterwards, loving me as I think in temporal wise, pressed me down to the ground with the burden you laid upon me; so that, losing utterly all uprightness of soul, and forfeiting the keen vision of contemplation, I may say, not in the spirit of prophecy, but from experience, I am bowed down and brought low altogether (Ps. cxviii. 107). For indeed such great burdens of business press me down that my mind can in no wise lift itself up to heavenly things. I am tossed by the billows of a multitude of affairs, and, after the ease of my former quiet, am afflicted by the storms of a tumultuous life, so that I may truly say, I am come into the depth of the sea, and the storm hath overwhelmed me (Ps. lxviii. 3). Stretch out, therefore, the hand of your prayer to me in my danger, you that stand on the shore of virtue. But as to your calling me the mouth and the lantern of the Lord, and alleging that I profit many, this also adds to the load of my iniquities, that, when my iniquity ought to have been chastised, I receive praises instead of chastisement. But with what a bustle of earthly business I am distracted in this place, I cannot express in words; yet you can gather it from the shortness of this letter, in which I say so little to him who I love above all others. Further, I apprize you that I have requested our most serene lords with all possible urgency to allow you to come to the threshold of Peter, the

prince of the apostles, with your dignity restored to you, and to live here with me so long as it may please God; to the end that, as long as I am accounted worthy of seeing you, we may relieve the weariness of our pilgrimage by speaking to each other of the heavenly country.

EPISTLE IX: TO PETER THE SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, &c.

Gregory, a servant of God, presbyter and abbot of the monastery of Saint Theodore in the province of Sicily constituted in the territory of Panormus, has given us to understand that men of the farm of Fulloniacus, which belongs to the holy Roman Church, are endeavouring to encroach on the boundaries of the farm of Gerdinia, bordering on the said farm of the holy Roman Church, which they [i.e. monks of St. Theodore] have possessed without dispute for innumerable years. And for this cause we desire you to go to the city of Panormus, and investigate the question in such sort (with the view of the right of possession remaining with those who have had it heretofore) that, if you shall find that the aforesaid monastery of Saint Theodore has possessed the boundaries concerning which the dispute has arisen without disturbance for forty years, you shall not allow it to suffer any damage, even though it were to the advantage of the holy Roman Church, but provide in all ways for its undisturbed security. But, if the agents of the holy Roman Church should shew that the monastery has not been in possession without dispute of its right for forty years, but that any question has been raised within that time concerning the said boundaries, let it be set at rest peaceably and legally by arbitrators chosen for the purpose. For not only do we wish that questions of wrong-doing that have never yet been mooted should be raised, but also that such as have been raised by others than ourselves should be speedily set at rest. Let thy Experience, therefore, cause all to be so effectively adjusted, that no question relating to this matter may be hereafter referred to us again. Further, we desire that the testament of Bacauda, late Xenodochus, continue valid as when first made. The month of November: ninth Indiction.

EPISTLE X: TO BACAUDA AND AGNELLUS, BISHOPS.

Gregory to Bacauda, &c

The Hebrews dwelling in Terracina have petitioned us for licence to hold, under our authority, the site of their synagogue which they have held hitherto. But, inasmuch as we have been informed that the same site is so near to the church that even the sound of their psalmody reaches it, we have written to our brother and fellow-bishop Peter that, if it is the case that the voices from the said place are heard in the church, the Jews must cease to worship there. Therefore let your Fraternity, with our above-named brother and fellow- bishop, diligently inspect this place, and if you find that there has been any annoyance to the church, provide another place within the fortress, where the aforesaid Hebrews may assemble, so that they may be able to celebrate their ceremonies without impediment. But let your Fraternity provide such a place, in case of their being deprived of this one, that there be no cause of complaint in future. But we forbid the aforesaid Hebrews to be oppressed or vexed unreasonably; but, as they are permitted, in accordance with justice, to live under the protection of the Roman laws, let them keep their observances as they have learnt them, no one hindering them: yet let it not be allowed them to have Christian slaves.

EPISTLE XI: TO CLEMENTINA, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Clementina, &c.

Having received your Glory's letter speaking of the passing away of the late Eutherius of magnificent memory, we give you to understand that our mind no less than yours is disturbed by such a sorrow, in that we see how men of approved repute are by degrees removed from this world, whose ruin is already evidenced in the actual effects of the causes thereof. But it becomes us to withdraw ourselves from it by the wise precaution of conversion, lest it involve us too in its own ruin. And indeed our sorrow for the loss of friends ought to be the more tolerable as our condition of mortality requires from us that we should lose them. Nevertheless, for the loss of aid to our carnal life He Who granted permission for its removal is powerful to console, and to come Himself as a comforter into the vacant place.

That we are unable to accede to your request that the deacon Anatholius should be sent to you is due to the circumstances of the case, and not to any rigorous austerity. For we have appointed him our steward, having committed our episcopal residence to his management.

EPISTLE XII: TO JOHN, BISHOP OF URBS VETUS

(Orvieto).

Gregory to John, &c.

Agapitus, abbot of the monastery of St. George, informs us that he endures many grievances from your Holiness; and not only in things that might be of service to the monastery in time of need, but that you even prohibit the celebration of masses in the said monastery, and also interdict burial of the dead there. Now, if this is so, we exhort you to desist from such inhumanity, and allow the dead to be buried, and masses to be celebrated there without any further opposition, lest the aforesaid venerable Agapitus should be compelled to complain anew concerning the matters referred to.

EPISTLE XVI: TO SEVERUS, BISHOP OF AQUILEIA.

Gregory to Severus, &c.

As, when one who walks through devious ways takes anew the right path, the Lord embraces him with all eagerness, so afterwards, when one deserts the way of truth, He is more saddened with grief for him than He rejoiced over him with joy when he turned from error; since it is a less degree of sin not to know the truth than not to abide in it when known: and what is committed in error is one thing, but what is perpetrated knowingly is another. And we, from having formerly rejoiced in thy being incorporated in the unity of the Church, are now the more abundantly distressed for thy dissociation from the catholic society. Accordingly we desire thee, at the instance of the bearer of these presents, according to the command of the most Christian and most serene Emperor, to come with thy adherents to the threshold of the blessed Apostle Peter, that, a synod being assembled by the will of God, judgment may be passed concerning the doubt that is entertained among you.

EPISTLE XVII: TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF ITALY.

Gregory to all, &c.

Inasmuch as the abominable Autharit during this Easter solemnity which has been lately completed, forbade children of Lombards being baptized in the catholic faith, for which sin the Divine Majesty cut him off, so that he should not see the solemnity of another Easter, it becomes your Fraternity to warn all the Lombards in your districts, seeing that grievous mortality is everywhere imminent, that they should reconcile these their children who have been baptized in Arian heresy to the catholic faith, and so appease the wrath of the Almighty Lord which hangs over them. Warn, then, those whom you can; with all the power of persuasion you possess seize on them, and bring them to a right faith; preach to them eternal life without end; that, when you shall come into the sight of the strict judge, you may be able, in consequence of your solicitude, to shew in your own persons a shepherd’s gains.

EPISTLE XVIII: TO PETER THE SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, &c.

We have been informed that Marcellus of the Barutanian Church, who has had penance assigned him in the monastery of Saint Adrian in the same city of Panormus, not only is in want of food, but also suffers inconvenience from scarcity of clothing. Therefore we hold it necessary to enjoin your Activity by this present order to appoint for him as much as you may see to be needful in the way of food clothing and bedding for his own maintenance, and provision for his servant; so that his want and nakedness may be provided for with such timely care that what you assign to this same man may be reckoned afterwards to your own account. So act, therefore, that you may both fulfil our command, and also by ordering this very thing well you may be able yourself to partake of the profit of the same. Further, there is this other matter that we enjoin you to look to without regard to the old custom that has now grown up; namely, that if any cities in the province of Sicily, for their sins, are known to be without pastoral government through the lapses of their priests, you should see whether there be any worthy of the office of priesthood among the clergy of the churches themselves, or out of the monasteries, and, after first enquiring into the gravity of their behaviour, send them to us, that the flock of each place may not be found destitute for any length of time through the lapse of its pastor. But if you should discover any vacant place in which no one of the same church is found fitted for such a dignity, send us word after the like careful enquiry, that some one may be provided whom God may have judged worthy of such ordination. For it is not right that from the deviation of one the Lord’s flock should be in danger of wandering abroad among precipices without a shepherd. For thus both the administration of places will go on, and there will remain no suspicion of the lapsed being restored to their former rank; and so may they repent the better.

EPISTLE XIX: TO NATALIS, BISHOP OF SALONA.

Gregory to Natalis, &c.

The acts of your synod which you have transmitted to us, in which the Archdeacon Honoratus is condemned, we perceive to be full of the seed of strifes, seeing that the same person is at one and the same time advanced to the dignity of the priesthood against his will, and removed from the office of the diaconate as though unworthy of it. And, as it is just that no one who is unwilling should be advanced by compulsion, so I think we must be of opinion that no one who is innocent should be deposed from the ministry of his order unjustly. Nevertheless, since discord hateful to God excuses thy part in the transaction, we admonish thee to restore his place and administration to the Archdeacon Honoratus, and agree to supply him with attendance sufficient for his divine ministry. If cause of offence is still fomented between you, let the aforesaid Archdeacon submit himself to our audience and enquiry, when admonished to do so, and let thy love send to us a person instructed in the case, that in the presence of both, the Lord assisting us, we may be able to decide what justice approves without respect of persons.

EPISTLE XX: TO HONORATUS, DEACON OF SALONA.

Gregory to Honoratus, &c.

Having read the contradictory letters which thou and thy bishop have addressed to us against each other, we grieve that there is so little charity between you. Nevertheless we enjoin thee to continue in the administration of thy office, and, if the cause of offence between you can, under the power of grace, be settled on the spot, we believe it will be greatly to the advantage of your souls. But in case the discord between you has so set you in arms against each other that you have no will to allay the swelling of your offence, do thou without delay come to be heard before us, and let thy bishop send to us on his own behalf such person as he may choose, furnished with instructions; that, after minutely considering the whole case, we may settle what may appear fit between the parties. But we would have thee know that we shall make strict enquiry of thee on all points, as to whether the ornaments, either those of thine own church, or such as have been collected from various churches, are being now kept with all care and fidelity. For, if any of them shall be found to have been lost through negligence or through any person's dishonesty, thou wilt be involved in the guilt of this, being, in virtue of thy office of Archdeacon, peculiarly responsible for the custody of the said church.

EPISTLE XXI: TO NATALIS, BISHOP OF SALONA.

Gregory to Natalis, &c.

We have received at the bands of the deacon Stephen, whom you sent to us, the letters of thy Reverence, wherein you congratulate us on our promotion. And truly what has been offered in the kindness and earnestness of charity demands full credence, reason having prompted your pontifical order to rejoice with us. We therefore, being cheered by your greeting, declare in conscience that I undertook the burden of dignity with a sick heart. But, seeing that I could not resist the divine decrees, I have recovered a more cheerful frame of mind. Wherefore we write to entreat your Reverence that both we and the Christian flock committed to our care may enjoy the succour of your prayers, to the end that in the security of that protection we may have power to overcome the hurricanes of these times.

The month of February, ninth indiction

EPISTLE XXV: TO JOHN, BISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE, AND THE OTHER PATRIARCHS.

Gregory, to John of Constantinople, Eulogius of Alexandria, Gregory of Antioch, John of Jerusalem, and Anastasias, Ex-Patriarch of Antioch. A paribus.

When I consider how, unworthy as I am, and resisting with my whole soul, I have been compelled to bear the burden of pastoral care, a darkness of sorrow comes over me, and my sad heart sees nothing else but the shadows which allow nothing to be seen. For to what end is a bishop chosen of the Lord but to be an intercessor for the offences of the people? With what confidence, then, can I come as an intercessor for the sins of others to Him before Whom I am not secure about my own? If perchance any one should ask me to become his intercessor with a great man who was incensed against him, and to myself unknown, I should at once reply, I cannot go to intercede for you, having no knowledge of that man from familiar acquaintance with him. If then, as man with man, I should properly blush to become an intercessor with one on whom I had no claim, how great is the audacity of my obtaining the place of intercessor for the people with God, whose friendship I am not assured of through the merit of my life! And in this matter I find a still more serious cause of alarm, since we all know well that, when one who is in disfavour is sent to intercede with an incensed person, the mind of the latter is provoked to still greater severity. And I am greatly afraid lest the community of believers, whose offences the Lord has so far indulgently borne with, should perish through the addition of my guilt to theirs. But, when in one way or another I suppress this fear, and with mind consoled give myself to the care of my pontifical office, I am deterred by consideration of the immensity of this very task.

"For indeed I consider with myself what watchful care is needed that a ruler may be pure in thought, chief in action, discreet in keeping silence,

profitable in speech, a near neighbour to every one in sympathy, exalted above all in contemplation, a companion of good livers through humility, unbending against the vices of evil-doers through zeal for righteousness." All which things when I try to search out with subtle investigation, the very wideness of the consideration cramps me in the particulars. For, as I have already said, there is need of the greatest care that "the ruler be pure in thought, &c." [A long passage, thus beginning, and ending with "beyond the limit of order," is found also in Regula Pastoralis, Pt. II. ch. 2, which see.]

Again, when I betake myself to consider the works required of the pastor, I weigh within myself what intent care is to be taken that he be "chief in action, to the end that by his living, he may point out the way of life to them that are put under him, &c." [See Reg. Past., Pt. II. ch. 3, to the end.]

Again, when I betake myself to consider the duty of the pastor as to speech and silence, I weigh within myself with trembling care how very necessary it is that he should be discreet in keeping silence and profitable in speech, "lest he either utter what ought to be suppressed or suppress what ought to be uttered, &c." [See Reg. Past., III., 4, down to "keep the unity of the faith."]

Again, when I betake myself to consider what manner of man the ruler ought to be in sympathy, and what in contemplation, I weigh within myself that he "should be a near neighbour to every one in sympathy, and exalted above all in contemplation, to the end that through the bowels of loving-kindness, &c." [See Reg. Past, Pt. II. ch. 5, to the end.]

Again, when I betake myself to consider what manner of man the ruler ought to be in humility, and what in strictness, I weigh within myself how necessary it is that he "should be, through humility, a companion to good livers, and, through the zeal of righteousness rigid against the vices of evil-

doers &c." [See Regula Pastoralis, Pt. II. ch. 6, down to "towards the perverse;" there being only a slight variation, not affecting the sense, in the wording of the concluding clause.] For hence it is that "Peter who had received from God, &c." [See Reg. Past., Pt. II. ch. 6, down to "dominates over vices rather than over his brethren."] He orders well the authority he has received who has learnt both to maintain it and to keep it in check. He orders it well who knows how both through it to tower above sins, and with it to set himself on an equality with other men.

Moreover, the virtue of humility ought to be so maintained that the rights of government be not relaxed; lest, when any prelate has lowered himself more than is becoming, he be unable to restrain the life of his subordinates under the bond of discipline; and the severity of discipline is to be so maintained that gentleness be not wholly lost through the over- kindling of zeal. For often vices shew themselves off as virtues, so that niggardliness would fain appear as frugality, extravagance as liberality, cruelty as righteous zeal, laxity as loving- kindness. Wherefore both discipline and mercy are far from what they should be, if one be maintained without the other. But there ought to be kept up with great skill of discernment both mercy justly considerate, and discipline smiting kindly. "For hence it is that, as the Truth teaches (Luke x. 34), the man is brought by the care of the Samaritan, &c." [See Reg. Past., Pt. II. ch. 6, down to "manna of sweetness."]

Thus, having undertaken the burden of pastoral care, when I consider all these things and many others of like kind, I seem to be what I cannot be, especially as in this place whosoever is called a Pastor is onerously occupied by external cares; so that it often becomes uncertain whether he exercises the function of a pastor or of an earthly noble. And indeed whosoever is set over his brethren to rule them cannot be entirely free from external cares; and yet there is need of exceeding care lest he be pressed

down by them too much. “Whence it is rightly said to Ezekiel, The priests shall not shave their heads, &c.”[See Reg. Past., Pt. II., ch. 7, to the end.]

But in this place I see that no such discreet management is possible, since cases of such importance hang over me daily as to overwhelm the mind, while they kill the bodily life. Wherefore, most holy brother, I beseech thee by the Judge who is to come, by the assembly of many thousand angels, by the Church of the firstborn who are written in heaven, help me, who am growing weary under this burden of pastoral care, with the intercession of thy prayer, test its weight oppress me beyond my strength. But, being mindful of what is written, Pray for one another, that ye may be healed (James v. 16), I give also what I ask for. But I shall receive what I give. For, while we are joined to you through the aid of prayer, we hold as it were each other by the hand while walking through slippery places, and it comes to pass, through a great provision of charity, that the foot of each is the more firmly planted in that one leans upon the other.

Besides, since with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, I confess that I receive and revere, as the four books of the Gospel so also the four Councils: to wit, the Nicene, in which the perverse doctrine of Arius is overthrown; the Constantinopolitan also, in which the error of Eunomius and Macedonius is refuted; further, the first Ephesine, in which the impiety of Nestorius is condemned; and the Chalcedonian, in which the pravity of Eutyches and Dioscorus is reprobated. These with full devotion I embrace, and adhere to with most entire approval; since on them, as on a four-square stone, rises the structure of the holy faith; and whosoever, of whatever life and behaviour he may be, holds not fast to their solidity, even though he is seen to be a stone, yet he lies outside the building. The fifth council also I equally venerate, in which the epistle which is called that of Ibas, full of error, is reprobated; Theodorus, who divides the Mediator between God and

men into two subsistences, is convicted of having fallen into the perfidy of impiety; and the writings of Theodoritus, in which the faith of the blessed Cyril is impugned, are refuted as having been published with the daring of madness. But all persons whom the aforesaid venerable Councils repudiate I repudiate; those whom they venerate I embrace; since, they having been constituted by universal consent, he overthrows not them but himself, whosoever presumes either to loose those whom they bind, or to bind those whom they loose. Whosoever, therefore, thinks otherwise, let him be anathema. But whosoever holds the faith of the aforesaid synods, peace be to him from God the Father, through Jesus Christ His Son, Who lives and reigns consubstantially God with Him in the Unity of the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

EPISTLE XXVI: TO ANASTASIUS, PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH.

[The beginning of this epistle is the same as that of Epistle VII. to the same Anastasius as far as the words “stand on the shore of virtue”; after which it is continued as follows.]

But, as to your calling me the mouth and lantern of the Lord, and alleging that I profit many by speaking, and am able to give light to many, I confess that you have brought me into a state of the greatest doubt in my estimate of myself. For I consider what I am, and detect in myself no sign of all this good. But I consider also what you are, and I do not think that you can lie. When, then, I would believe what you say, my infirmity contradicts me. When I would dispute what is said in my praise, your sanctity contradicts me. But I pray you, holy man, let us come to some agreement in this our contest, that, though it is not as you say, it may be so because you say it. Moreover, I have addressed my synodical epistle to you, as to the other patriarchs, your brethren; inasmuch as with me you are always what it has been granted you to be by the gift of Almighty God, without regard to what you are accounted not to be by the will of men. I have given some instructions to Boniface the guardian (defensori), who is the bearer of these presents, for him to communicate to your holiness in private. Moreover, I have sent you keys of the blessed apostle Peter, who loves you, which are wont to shine forth with many miracles when placed on the bodies of sick persons.

EPISTLE XXVII: TO ANASTASIUS, ARCHBISHOP OF CORINTH.

Gregory to Anastasius, &c.

In proportion as the judgments of God are unsearchable ought they to be an object of fear to human apprehension; so that mortal reason, being unable to comprehend them, may of necessity bow under them the neck of a humble heart, to the end that it may follow with the mind's obedient steps where the will of the Ruler may lead. I, then, considering that my infirmity cannot reach to the height of the apostolic See, had rather have declined this burden, lest, having pastoral rule, I should succumb in action through inadequate administration. But, since it is not for us to go against the will of the Lord who disposes all, I obediently followed the way in which it pleased the merciful hand of the Ruler to deal with me. For it was necessary that your Fraternity should be informed, even though the present opportunity had not occurred, how the Lord had vouchsafed that I, however unworthy, should preside over the apostolic See. Since, then, reason required this to be done, and an opportunity having occurred through our sending to you the bearer of these presents, that is, Boniface the guardian (defensorem), we are careful not only to offer to your Fraternity by letter the good wishes of charity, but also to inform you of our ordination, as we believe you would wish us to do. Wherefore let your Charity, by a letter in reply, cause us to rejoice for the unity of the Church and the acceptable news of your own welfare; to the end that our bodily absence from each other, which distance of place causes us to endure, may become as presence through interchange of letters. We exhort you, also, since we have despatched the above-mentioned bearer of these presents on certain necessary business to the feet of the most clement prince, and since the mutability of the time is wont to generate many hindrances on the way, that your priestly affection would bestow upon him whatever may be necessary either in provision for his

journey by land or in procuring for him the means of navigation, that through God's mercy, he may be able the more quickly to accomplish his intended journey.

EPISTLE XXVIII: TO SEBASTIAN, BISHOP OF RHISINUM [in Dalmatia].

Gregory to Sebastian, &c.

Although I deserved to receive no letters from your Blessedness, yet I also do not forget my own forgetfulness; I blame my negligence, I stir up my sluggishness with goads of love, that one who will not pay what he owes of his own accord, may learn even under blows to render it. Furthermore, I inform you that I have prepared a full representation, with urgent prayers to our most pious lords, to the effect that they ought to have sent the most blessed lord patriarch Anastasius, with the use of the pallium granted him, to the threshold of the blessed Peter, prince of the apostles, to celebrate with me the solemnities of Mass; to the end that, though he were not allowed to return to his See, he might at least live with me, retaining his dignity. But of the reason that has arisen for keeping back what I had thus written the bearer of these presents will inform you. Nevertheless, ascertain the mind of the said lord Anastasius, and inform me in your letters of whatever he may wish to be done in this business.

EPISTLE XXIX: TO ARISTOBULUS, EX-PREFECT AND ANTIGRAPHUS.

Gregory to Aristobulus, &c.

For fully expressing my affection I confess that my tongue suffices not: but your own affection will better tell you all that I feel towards you. I have heard that you are suffering from certain oppositions. But I am not greatly grieved for this, since it is often the case that a ship which might have reached the depths of the ocean had the breeze been favourable is driven back by an opposing wind at the very beginning of its voyage, but by being driven back is recalled into port. Furthermore, if you should by any chance receive for interpretation a lengthy letter of mine, translate it, I pray you, not word for word, but so as to give the sense; since usually, when close rendering of the words is attended to, the force of the ideas is lost.

EPISTLE XXXIII: TO ROMANUS, PATRICIAN, AND EXARCH OF ITALY.

Gregory to Romanus, &c.

Even though there were no immediate cause for writing to your Excellency, yet we ought to shew solicitude for your health and safety so as to learn through frequent intercommumcation what we desire to hear about you. Besides, it has come to our knowledge that Blandus, bishop of the city of Hortanum, has been detained now for a long time by your Excellency in the city of Ravenna. And the result is that the Church decays, being without a ruler, and the people as being without a shepherd; and infants there, for their sins, die without baptism. And again, since we do not believe that your Excellency has detained him except on the ground of some probable transgression, it is proper that a synod should be held to bring to light any crime that is charged against him. And, if such fault is found in him as to lead to his degradation from the priesthood, it is necessary that we should look out for another to be ordained, lest the Church of God should remain untended, and destitute in what the Christian religion does not allow it to be without. But, if your Excellency should perceive that the case is otherwise with him than it is said to be, allow him, I pray you, to return to his church, that he may fulfil his duty to the souls committed to his charge.

The month of March; the ninth Indiction.

EPISTLE XXXIV: TO VENANTIUS, EX-MONK, PATRICIAN OF SYRACUSE.

Gregory to Venantius, &c.

Many foolish men have supposed that, if I were advanced to the rank of the episcopate, I should decline to address thee, or to keep up communication with thee by letter. But this is not so; since I am compelled by the very necessity of my position not to hold my peace. For it is written, Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet (Isai. lviii. I). And again it is written, I have given thee for a watchman unto the house of Israel, thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and declare it to them from me (Ezek. iii. 17). And what follows to the watchman or to the hearer from such declaration being kept back or uttered is forthwith intimated; If, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die, thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may turn from his wicked way and live, the wicked man himself shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou declare it to the wicked, and he turn not from his iniquity and from his wicked way, he himself indeed shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul. Hence also Paul says to the Ephesians, My hands are pure this day from the blood of all of you. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God (Acts xx. 26, 27). He would not, then, have been pure from the blood of all, had he refused to declare unto them the counsel of God. For when the pastor refuses to rebuke those that sin, there is no doubt that in holding his peace he slays them. Compelled, therefore, by this consideration, I will speak whether you will or no; for with all my powers I desire either thee to be saved or myself to be rescued from thy death. For thou rememberest in what state of life thou wast, and knowest to what thou hast fallen without regard to the animadversion of supernal strictness. Consider, then, thy fault while there is time; dread, while thou canst, the severity of the future judge; lest thou then find it bitter,

having shed no tears to avoid it now. Consider what is written; Pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day (Matth. xxiv. 20). For the numbness of cold impedes walking in the winter, and, according to the ordinance of the law, it is not lawful to walk on the Sabbath day. He, then, attempts to fly in the winter or on the Sabbath day, who then wishes to fly from the wrath of the strict Judge when it is no longer allowed him to walk. Wherefore, while there is time, while it is allowed, fly thou from the animadversion which is of so great dreadfulness: consider what is written; Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is neither work, nor device, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou hastenest (Eccles. ix. 10). By the witness of the Gospel thou knowest that divine severity accuses us for idle talk, and demands a strict account of an unprofitable word (Matth. xii. 36). Consider, then, what it will do for perverse doing, if in its judgment it reprobates some for talking. Ananias had vowed money to God (Acts v. 2 seq.), which, afterwards, overcome by diabolical persuasion, he withheld. But by what death he was mulcted thou knowest. If then he was deserving of the penalty of death who withdrew the money which he had given to God, consider of how great penalty thou wilt be deserving in the divine judgment, who hast withdrawn, not money, but thyself, from Almighty God, to whom thou hadst devoted thyself in the monastic state of life. Wherefore, if thou wilt hear the words of my rebuke so as to follow them, thou wilt come to know in the end how kind and sweet they are. Lo, I confess it, I speak mourning and constrained by sorrow for what thou hast done. I scarce can utter words; and yet thy mind, conscious of guilt, is hardly able to bear what it hears, blushes, is confounded, remonstrates. If, then, it cannot bear the words of dust, what will it do at the judgment of the Creator? And yet I acknowledge the exceeding mercy of heavenly grace, in that it beholds thee flying from life, and nevertheless still reserves thee for life; that it sees thee acting proudly, and still bears with

thee; that through its unworthy servants it administers to thee words of rebuke and admonition. So great a thing is this that thou oughtest anxiously to ponder on what Paul says; We exhort you, brethren that ye receive not the grace of God in vain: for he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee. Behold now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. vi. 1 seq.).

But I know that, when my letter is received, forthwith friends come about thee, thy literary clients are called in, and advice about the purpose of life is sought from the promoters of death; who, loving not thee, but what belongs to thee, tell thee nothing but what may please thee at the time. For such, as thou thyself rememberest, were those thy former counsellors, who drew thee on to the perpetration of so great a sin. To quote to thee something from a secular author, "All things should be considered with friends, but the friends themselves should be considered first." But, if in thy case thou seekest an adviser, take me, I pray thee, as thy adviser. For no one can be more to be relied on for advice than one who loves not what is thine, but thee. May Almighty God make known to thy heart with what love and with what charity my heart embraces thee, though so far only as not to offend against divine grace. For I so attack thy fault as to love thy person; I so love thy person as not to embrace the viciousness of thy fault. If, therefore, thou believest that I love thee, approach the threshold of the apostles, and use me as an adviser. But if perchance I am supposed to be too keen in the cause of God, and am suspected for the ardour of my zeal, I will call the whole Church together into counsel on this question, and whatever all are of opinion should be done for good, this I will in no wise contradict, but gladly fulfil and subscribe to what is decided in common. May Divine grace keep thee while accomplishing what I have warned thee to do.

EPISTLE XXXV: TO PETER, BISHOP OF TERRACINA.

Gregory to Peter, &c.

Joseph, a Jew, the bearer of these presents, has informed us that, the Jews dwelling in the camp of Terracina having been accustomed to assemble in a certain place for celebrating their festivities, thy Fraternity had expelled them thence, and that they had migrated, and this with thy knowledge and consent, to another place for in like manner observing their festivities; and now they complain that they have been expelled anew from this same place. But, if it is so, we desire thy Fraternity to abstain from giving cause of complaint of this kind, and that they be allowed, as has been the custom, to assemble in the place which, as we have already said, they had obtained with thy knowledge for their place of meeting. For those who dissent from the Christian religion must needs be gathered together to unity of faith by gentleness, kindness, admonition, persuasion, lest those whom the sweetness of preaching and the anticipated terror of future judgment might have invited to believe should be repelled by threats and terrors. It is right, then, that they should come together kindly to hear the word of God from you rather than that they should become afraid of overstrained austerity.

EPISTLE XXXVI: TO PETER THE SUBDEACON.

Gregory, bishop, servant of the servants of God, to Peter the Subdeacon.

The code of instructions which I gave thee on thy going to Sicily must be diligently perused, so that the greatest care may be taken concerning bishops, lest they mix themselves up in secular causes, except so far as the necessity of defending the poor compels them. But what is inserted in the same code concerning monks or clerics ought, I think, in no respect to be varied from. But let thy Experience observe these things with such great attention as may fulfil my desire in this regard. Further, it has come to my ears that from the times of Antoninus, the defensor, till now, during these last ten years, many persons have endured certain acts of violence from the Roman Church, so that some publicly complain of their boundaries having been violently invaded, their slaves abstracted, and their moveables carried off by force, and not by any judicial process. In all such cases I desire thy Experience to keep intent watch, and whatsoever during these last ten years may be found to have been taken away by violence, or retained unjustly in the name of the Church, to restore it by authority of this my order to him to whom it is found to belong; lest he who has suffered violence should be obliged to come to me, and undertake the labour of so long a journey, in which case it could not be ascertained here before me whether or not he spoke the truth. Having regard, then, to the majesty of the Judge who is to come, restore all things that have been sinfully taken away, knowing that thou bringest great gain to me, if thou gatherest [heavenly] reward rather than riches. But we have ascertained that what the greater part complain of is the loss of their slaves, saying that, if any man's bondman, peradventure running away from his master, has declared himself to belong to the Church, the rectors of the Church have at once kept him as a bondman belonging to the Church, without any trial of the case, but supporting with a high hand the word of the bondman. This displeases me as much as it is

abhorrent from the judgment of truth. Wherefore I desire thy Experience to correct without delay whatever may be found to have been so done: and it is also fit that any such slaves as are now kept in ecclesiastical possession, as they were taken away without trial, should be restored before trial; so that, if holy Church has any legitimate claim to them, their possessors may then be dispossessed by regular process of law. Correct all these things irretractably, since thou wilt be truly a soldier of the blessed apostle Peter if in his causes thou keep guard over the truth, even without his receiving anything. But, if thou seest anything that may justly be claimed as belonging to the Church, beware lest thou ever try to assert such claim by force; especially as I have established a decree under pain of anathema, that tituli may not ever be put by our Church on any urban or rural farm; but whatever may in reason be claimed for the poor ought also to be defended by reason; lest, a good thing being done in a manner that is not good, we be convicted of injustice before Almighty God even in what we justly seek. Moreover, I pray thee, let noble laymen, and the glorious [Praetor] love thee for thy humility, not dread thee for thy pride. And yet, if by any chance thou knowest them to be doing any injustice to the indigent, turn thy humility at once into exaltation, so as to be always submissive to them when they do well, and opposed to them when they do ill. But so behave that neither thy humility be remiss nor thy authority stiff, to the end that uprightness season humility, and humility render thy very uprightness gentle. Further, since it has been customary for bishops to assemble here for the anniversary of the pontiff, forbid their coming for the day of my ordination, since foolish and vain superfluity delights me not. But if they must needs assemble, let them come for the anniversary of Peter, the prince of the apostles, to render thanks to him by whose bounty they are pastors. Farewell. Given this XVII day of the Kalends of April, in the ninth year of the Emperor Mauricius.

EPISTLE XXXIX: TO ANTHEMIUS, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Anthemius, &c.

We charged thee on thy departure, and remember to have afterwards enjoined on thee by letter, to take care of the poor, and, if thou shouldest find any in those parts to be in want, to inform me by letter: and thou hast been at pains to do this with regard to very few. Now, I desire that, as soon as thou hast received this present order, thou offer to Pateria, my father's sister, forty solidi for shoe-money for her boys, and four hundred modii of wheat; to the lady Palatina, the widow of Urbicus, twenty solidi and three hundred modii of wheat; to the lady Viviana, widow of Felix, twenty solidi and three hundred modii of wheat. And let all these eighty solidi be charged together in thy accounts. But bring hither with speed the sum of thy receipts, and be here, with the Lord's help, by Easter Day.

EPISTLE XLI: TO PETER, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, &c.

The venerable Paulinus bishop of the city of Taurum (Taurianum in Brutia), has told us that his monks have been scattered by reason of barbaric invasions, and that they are now wandering through the whole of Sicily, and that, being without a ruler, they neither have a care of their souls, nor pay attention to the discipline of their profession. On this account we enjoin thee to search out with all care and diligence, and collect together, these same monks, and to place them with the said bishop, their ruler, in the monastery of Saint Theodorus situate in the city of Messana, that both such as are there now, whom we find to be in need of a ruler, and those of his congregation whom you may have found and brought back, may be able, under his leadership, to serve the Almighty Lord together. Know also that we have signified this matter to the venerable Felix, bishop of the same city, lest anything ordained in the diocese committed to him should be disturbed without his knowledge.

EPISTLE XLII: TO ANTHEMIUS, SUBDEACON

Gregory to Anthemius, &c.

John, our brother and fellow-bishop, in a schedule sent to us by his cleric Justus, has among many other things intimated to us as follows: that some monks of the diocese of Surrentum transmigrate from monastery to monastery as they please, and depart from the rule of their own abbot out of desire for a worldly life; nay even (what is known to be unlawful) that they aim severally at having property of their own. Wherefore we command thy Experience by this present order, that no monk be henceforth allowed to migrate from monastery to monastery, and that thou permit not any one of them to have anything of his own. But, if any one whatever should so presume, let him be sent back with adequate constraint to the monastery in which he lived at first, to be under the rule of his own abbot from which he had escaped; lest, if we allow so great an iniquity to take its course uncorrected, the souls of those that are lost be required from the souls of their superiors. Further, if any of the clergy should chance to become monks, let it not be lawful for them to return anew to the same church in which they had formerly served, or to any other; unless one should be a monk of such a life that the bishop under whom he had formerly served should think him worthy of the priesthood, so that he may be chosen by him, and by him ordained to such place as he may think fit. And since we have learnt that some among the monks have plunged into such great wickedness as publicly to take to themselves wives, do thou seek them out with all vigilance, and, when found, send them back with due constraint to the monasteries of which they had been monks. But neglect not to deal also with the clergy who profess monasticism, as we have said above. For so thou wilt be pleasing in the eyes of God, and be found partaker of a full reward.

EPISTLE XLIII: TO LEANDER BISHOP OF HISPALIS

(Seville)

Gregory to Leander, &c.

I should have wished to reply to your letters with full application of mind, were I not so worn by the labour of my pastoral charge as to be more inclined to weep than to say anything. And this your Reverence will take care to understand and allow for in the very text of my letters, when I speak negligently to one whom I exceedingly love. For, indeed, I am in this place tossed by such billows of this world that I am in no wise able to steer into port the old and gotten ship of which, in the hidden dispensation of God, I have assumed the guidance. Now in front the billows rush in, now at the side heaps of foamy sea swell up, now from behind the storm follows on. And, disquieted in the midst of all this, I am compelled sometimes to steer in the very face of the opposing waters; sometimes, turning the ship aside, to avoid the threats of the billows slantwise. I groan, because I feel that through my negligence the bilgewater of vices increases, and, as the storm meets the vessel violently, the rotten planks already sound of shipwreck.

With tears I remember how I have lost the placid shore of my rest, and with sighs I behold the land which still, with the winds of affairs blowing against me, I cannot reach. If, then, thou lovest me, dearest brother, stretch out to me in the midst of these billows the hand of thy prayer; that from helping me in my labours thou mayest, in very return for the benefit, be the stronger in thine own.

I cannot, however, at all fully express in words my joy on having learnt that our common son, the most glorious King Rechared, has been converted with most entire devotion to the Catholic faith. In describing his character to me in thy letters thou bast made me love him, though I know him not. But, since you know the wiles of the ancient foe, how against conquerors he prepares all the fiercer war, let your Holiness keep watch the more warily

over him, that he may accomplish what he has well begun, nor lift himself up for good works accomplished; that he may keep the faith which he has come to know by the merits also of his life, and shew by his works that he is a citizen of the eternal kingdom, to the end that after a course of many years he may pass from kingdom to kingdom.

But with respect to trine immersion in baptism, no truer answer can be given than what you have yourself felt to be right; namely that, where there is one faith, a diversity of usage does no harm to holy Church. Now we, in immersing thrice, signify the sacraments of the three days' sepulture; so that, when the infant is a third time lifted out of the water, the resurrection after a space of three days may be expressed. Or, if any one should perhaps think that this is done out of veneration for the supreme Trinity, neither so is there any objection to immersing the person to be baptized in the water once, since, there being one substance in three subsistences, it cannot be in any way reprehensible to immerse the infant in baptism either thrice or once, seeing that by three immersions the Trinity of persons, and in one the singleness of the Divinity may be denoted. But, inasmuch as up to this time it has been the custom of heretics to immerse infants in baptism thrice, I am of opinion that this ought not to be done among you; lest, while they number the immersions, they should divide the Divinity, and while they continue to do as they have been used to do, they should boast of having got the better of our custom Moreover, I send to your to me most sweet Fraternity the volumes of which I have appended a notice below. What I had spoken in exposition of the blessed Job, which you express in your letter your wish to have sent to you, being weak both in sense and language as I had delivered it in homilies, I have tried as I could to change into the form of a treatise, which is in course of being written out by scribes. And, were I not crippled by the haste of the bearer of these presents, I should have wished to transmit to you the whole without diminution; especially as

I have written this same work for your Reverence, that I may be seen to have sweated in my labours for him whom I love above all others. Besides, if you find time allowed you from ecclesiastical engagements, you already know how it is with me: even though absent in the body, I behold thee always present with me; for I carry the image of thy countenance stamped within the bowels of my heart. Given in the month of May.

EPISTLE XLIV: TO PETER, SUBDEACON OF SICILY.

Gregory to Peter, &c.

With regard to our having so long delayed sending off thy messenger, we have been so occupied with the engagements of the Paschal festival that we have been unable to let him go sooner. But, with regard to the questions on which thou hast desired instruction, thou wilt learn below how, after fully considering them all, we have determined them.

We have ascertained that the peasants of the Church are exceedingly aggrieved in respect of the prices of corn, in that the sum appointed them to pay is not kept in due proportion in times of plenty. And it is our will that in all times, whether the crops of corn be more or less abundant, the measure of proportion be according to the market price. It is our will also that corn which is lost by shipwreck be fully accounted for; but on condition that there be no neglect on thy part in transmitting it; lest, the proper time for transmitting it being allowed to pass by, loss should ensue from your fault. Moreover, we have seen it to be exceedingly wrong and unjust that anything should be received from the peasants of the Church in the way of sextariatics, or that they should be compelled to give a larger modius than is used in the granaries of the Church. Wherefore we enjoin by this present warning that corn may never be received from the peasants of the Church in modii of more than eighteen sextarii; unless perchance there be anything that the sailors are accustomed to receive over and above, the consumption of which on board ship they themselves attest.

We have also ascertained that on some estates of the Church a most unjust exaction is practised, in that three and a half [modii] in seventy are demanded by the farmers; — a thing shameful to be spoken of. And yet even this is not enough; but something besides is said to be exacted according to a custom of many years. This practice we altogether detest, and desire it to be utterly extirpated from the patrimony. But, whether in

this or in other minute imposts, let thy Experience consider what is paid too much per pound, and what is in any way unfairly received from the peasants; and reduce all to a fixed payment, and, so far as the powers of the peasants go, let them make a payment in gross amounting to seventy- two: and let neither grains beyond the pound, nor an excessive pound, nor any further imposts beyond the pound, be exacted; but, through thy valuation, according as there is ability to pay, let the payment be made up to a certain sum, that so there may be in no wise any shameful exaction. But, lest after my death these very imposts, which we have disallowed as extras but allowed in augmentation of the regular payments, should again in any way be put on additionally, and so the sum of the payment should be found to be increased and the peasants be compelled to pay additional charges over and above what is due, we desire thee to draw up charters of security, to be signed by thee, declaring that each person is to pay such an amount, to the exclusion of grains (siliquoe), imposts, or granary dues. Moreover, whatever out of these several items used to accrue to the rector [sc. patrimonii], we will that by virtue of this present order it shall accrue to thee out of the total sum paid.

Before all things we desire thee carefully to attend to this; that no unjust weights be used in exacting payments. If thou shouldest find any, break them and cause true ones to be made. For my son the servant of God, Diaconus, has already found such as displeased him; but he had not liberty to change them. We will, then that, saving excepted cibaria of small value, nothing else beyond the just weights be exacted from the husbandmen of the Church.

Further, we have ascertained that the first charge of burdatio exceedingly cripples our peasants, in that before they can sell the produce of their labour they are compelled to pay taxes; and, not having of their own to pay with, they borrow from public pawnbrokers, and pay a heavy consideration for

the accommodation; whence it results that they are crippled by heavy expenses. Wherefore we enjoin by this present admonition that thy Experience advance to them from the public fund all that they might have borrowed from strangers, and that it be repaid by the peasants of the Church by degrees as they may have wherewith to pay, lest, while for a time in narrow circumstances, they should sell at too cheap a rate what might afterwards have sufficed for the payment of the due, and even so not have enough.

It has come to our knowledge also that immoderate fees are received on the marriages of peasants: concerning which we order that no marriage fees shall exceed the sum of one solidus. If any are poor, they should give even less; but if any are rich, let them by no means exceed the aforesaid sum of a solidus. And we desire no part of these marriage fees to be credited to our account, but that they should go to the benefit of the farmer (conductorem).

We have also ascertained that when some farmers die their relatives are not allowed to succeed them, but that their goods are withdrawn to the uses of the Church: with regard to which thing we decree that the relatives of the deceased who live on the property of the Church shall succeed them as their heirs, and that nothing shall be withdrawn from the substance of the deceased. But, if any one should leave young children, let discreet persons be chosen to take charge of their parents' goods, till they come to such an age as to be able to manage their own property.

We have ascertained also that, if any one of a family has committed a fault, he is required to make amends, not in his own person, but in his substance: concerning which practice we order that, whosoever has committed a fault, he shall be punished in his own person as he deserves. Moreover, let no present (commodum) be received from him, unless perchance it be some trifle which may go to the profit of the officer who may have been sent to him. We have ascertained also that, as often as a

farmer has taken away anything unjustly from his husbandman, it is indeed required from the farmer, but not restored to him from whom it was taken: concerning which thing we order that whatever may have been taken away by violence from any one of a family be restored to him from whom it was taken away, and not accrue to our profit, lest we ourselves should seem to be abettors of violence. Furthermore, we will that, if thy Experience should at any time despatch those who are under thy command in causes that arise beyond the limits of the patrimony, they may indeed receive small gratuities from those to whom they are sent; yet so that they themselves may have the advantage of them: for we would not have the treasury of the Church defiled by base gains. We also command thy Experience to see to this: that farmers never be appointed on the estates of the Church for a consideration (commodum); lest, a consideration being looked for, the farmers should be frequently changed; of which changing what else is the result but that the Church farms are never cultivated? But lest also the leases [i.e. by the Church to the farmers] be adjusted according to the sum of the payments due. We desire thee to receive no more from the estates of the Church on account of the store-houses and stores beyond what is customary; but let thine own stores which we have ordered to be procured be procured from strangers.

It has come to our ears that three pounds of gold have been unjustly taken away from Peter the farmer of Subpatriana; concerning which matter examine closely Fantinus the guardian (defensorem); and, if they have manifestly been unjustly and improperly taken, restore them without any delay. We have also ascertained that the peasants have paid a second time the bu dation which Theodosius had exacted from them but had failed to pay over, so that they have been taxed twice. This was done because his substance was not sufficient for meeting his debt to the Church. But, since we are informed through our son, the servant of God Diaconus, that this

deficiency can be made good out of his effects, we will that fifty-seven solidi be repaid to the peasants without any abatement, lest they should be found to have been taxed twice over. Moreover, if it is the case that forty solidi of his effects remain over and above what will indemnify the peasants (which sum thou art said also to have in thy hands), we will that they be given to his daughter, to enable her to recover her effects which she had pawned. We desire also her father's goblet (batiolam) to be restored to her.

The glorious magister militum Campanianus had left twelve solidi a year out of the Varronian estate to his notary John; and this we order thee to pay every year without any hesitation to the granddaughter of Euplus the farmer, although she may have received all the chattels of the said Euplus, except perhaps his cash; and we desire thee also to give her out of his cash five-and-twenty solidi. A silver saucers is said to have been pawned for one solidus, and a cup for six solidi. After interrogating Dominicus the secretary, or others who may know, redeem the pledge, and restore the aforesaid little vessels.

We thank thy Solicitude for that, after I had enjoined thee, in the business of my brother, to send him back Ills money, thou hast so consigned the matter to oblivion as if something had been said to thee by the last of thy slaves But now let even thy Negligence — I cannot say thy Experience — study to get this done; and whatever of his thou mayest find to be in the hands of Antoninus send back to him with all speed.

In the matter of Salpingus the Jew a letter has been found which we have caused to be forwarded to thee, in order that, after reading it and becoming fully acquainted with his case and that of a certain widow who is said to be implicated in the same business, thou mayest make answer as may appear to thee just concerning the fifty-one solidi which are known to be returnable, so that the creditors may in no way be defrauded unjustly of the debts due to them.

A moiety of his legacy has been given to Antoninus; a moiety will be redeemed: which moiety we desire to be made up to him out of the common substance; and not to him only, but also to the guardians (defensoribus) and strangers (pergrims) to whom he [the testator has left anything under the title of a legacy. To the family (familice) also we desire the legacy to be paid; which, however, is our concern. Having, then, made up the account for our part, that is for three-quarters, make the payment.

We desire thee to give something out of the money of the Church of Canusium to the clergy of the same Church, to the end that they who now suffer from want may have some sustenance; and that, if it should please God that a bishop should be ordained, he may have a maintenance.

As to lapsed priests, or any others of the clergy, we desire thee in dealing with their property to keep free from any contamination. But seek out the poorest regular monasteries which know how to live according to God, and consign the lapsed to penance in these monasteries; and let the property of the lapsed go to the benefit of the place in which they are consigned to penance, to the end that those who have the care of their correction may have aid themselves from their means. But, if they have relations, let their property be given to their legitimate relations; yet so that an allowance for those to whom they have been consigned for penance be sufficiently provided. But, if any of an ecclesiastical community, whether priests, levites, or monks, or clerics, or any others, shall have lapsed, we will that they be consigned to penance, but that the Church shall retain its claim to their property. Yet let them receive for their own use enough to maintain them during their penance, lest, if left destitute, they should be burdensome to the places whereto they have been consigned. If any have relations on the ecclesiastical domain, let their property be delivered to them, that it may be preserved in their hands subject to the Church's claim.

Three years ago the subdeacons of all the churches in Sicily, in accordance with the custom of the Roman Church, were forbidden all conjugal intercourse with their wives. But it appears to me hard and improper that one who has not been accustomed to such continency, and has not previously promised chastity, should be compelled to separate himself from his wife, and thereby (which God forbid) fall into what is worse. Hence it seems good to me that from the present day all bishops should be told not to presume to make any one a subdeacon who does not promise to live chastely; that so what was not of set purpose desired in the past may not be forcibly required, but that cautious provision may be made for the future. But those who since the prohibition of three years ago have lived continently with their wives are to be praised and rewarded, and exhorted to continue in their good way. But, as for those who since the prohibition have been unwilling to abstain from intercourse with their wives, we desire them not to be advanced to a sacred order; since no one ought to approach the ministry of the altar but one who has been of approved chastity before undertaking the ministry.

For Liberatus the tradesman, who has commended himself to the Church, dwelling on the Cincian estate, we desire thee to make an annual provision; which provision do thou estimate thyself as to what it ought to be, that it may be reported to me and charged in thy accounts. With regard to the present indiction I have already got information from our son the servant of God Diaconus.

One John, a monk, has died and left Fantinus the guardian (defensorem) his heir to the extent of one half. Hand over to the latter what has been left him, but charge him not to presume to do the like again. But appoint what he should receive for his work, so that it be not fruitless to him; and let him remember that one who lives on the pay of the Church should not pant after private gains. But, if anything should accrue to the Church, without sin and

without the lust of concupiscence, through those who transact the business of the Church, it is right that these should not be without fruit of their labour. Still let it be reserved for our judgment how they should be remunerated.

As to the money of Rusticianus, look thoroughly into the case, and carry out what appears to thee to be just. Admonish the magnificent Alexander to conclude the cause between himself and holy Church; which if he peradventure shall neglect to do, do thou, in the fear of God and with honour preserved, bring this same cause to an issue as thou art able We desire thee also to expend something in this business; and, if it can be done, let him be spared the cost of what has to be given to others, provided he terminates the cause which he has with us.

Restore without any delay the donation of the handmaiden of God who has lapsed and been sent into a monastery, to the end that (as I have said above) the same place that bears the toil of attending to her may have provision for her from what she has. But recover also whatever of hers is in the hands of others, and hand it over to the aforesaid monastery

Send to us the payments of Xenodochius of Via Nova to the amount thou hast told us of, since thou hast them by thee. But give something, according to thy discretion, to the agent whom thou hast deputed in the same patrimony.

Concerning the handmaiden of God who was with Theodosius, by name Extranea, it seems to me that thou shouldest give her an allowance, if thou thinkest it advantageous, or at any rate return to her the donation which she made. The house of the monastery which Antoninus had taken from the monastery, giving thirty solidi for it, restore thou without the least delay, the money being repaid. After thoroughly investigating the truth restore the onyx phials, which I send back to thee by the bearer of these presents.

If Saturninus is at liberty and not employed with thee, send him to us. Felix, a farmer under the lady Campana, whom she had left free and ordered to be exempt from examination, said that seventy-two solidi had been taken from him by Maximus the sub-deacon, for paying which he asserted that he sold or pledged all the property that he had in Sicily. But the lawyers said that he could not be exempt from examination concerning acts of fraud. However, when he was returning to us from Campania, he perished in a storm. We desire thee to seek out his wife and children, to redeem whatever he had pledged, repay the price of what he had sold, and moreover provide them with some maintenance; seeing that Maximus had sent the man into Sicily and there taken from him what he alleged. Ascertain, therefore, what has been taken from him, and restore it without any delay to his wife and children. React all these things over carefully, and put aside all that familiar negligence of thine. My writings which I have sent to the peasants cause thou to be read over throughout all the estates, that they may know in what points to defend themselves, under our authority, against acts of wrong; and let either the originals or copies be given them. See that thou observe everything without abatement: for, with regard to what I have written to thee for the observance of justice, I am absolved; and, if thou art negligent, thou art guilty. Consider the terrible Judge who is coming: and let thy conscience now anticipate His advent with fear and trembling, lest it should then fear [not?] without cause, when heaven and earth shall tremble before Him. Thou hast heard what I wish to be done: see that thou do it.

EPISTLE XLVI: TO PETER THE SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, &c.

The divine precepts admonish us to love our neighbours as ourselves; and, seeing that we are enjoined to love them with this charity, how much more ought we to succour them by supplies to their carnal needs, that we may relieve their distress, if not in all respects, yet at least with some support. Inasmuch, then, as we have found that the son of the most worthy Godiscalchus is in distress, not only from loss of sight, but also from want of food, we hold it necessary to provide for him as far as possible. Wherefore we enjoin thy Experience by this present order to supply to him for sustaining life twenty-four modii of wheat every year, and also twelve modii of beans and twenty decimates of wine; which may afterwards be debited in thy accounts. So act, therefore, that the bearer of these presents may have to complain of no delay in receiving the gifts of the Lord, and that thou mayest be found partaker in the well administered benefit.

EPISTLE XLVII: TO VIRGILIUS, BISHOP OF ARELATE (Arles) AND THEODORUS, BISHOP OF MASSILIA (Marseilles).

Gregory to Virgilius, Bishop of Arelate, and Theodorus, Bishop of Massilia, in Gaul.

Though the opportunity of a suitable time and suitable persons has failed me so far for writing to your Fraternity and duly returning your salutation the result has been that I can now at one and the same time acquit myself of what is due to love and fraternal relationship, and also touch on the complaint of certain persons which has reached us, with respect to the way in which the souls of the erring should be saved. Very many, though indeed of the Jewish religion, resident in this province, and from time to time travelling lot various matters of business to the regions of Massilia, have apprized us, that many of the Jews settled in those parts have been brought to the font of baptism more by force than by preaching. Now, I consider the intention in such cases to be worthy of praise, and allow that it proceeds from the love of our Lord. But I fear lest this same intention, unless adequate enforcement from Holy Scripture accompany it, should either have no profitable result, or even (which God forbid) the loss of the souls which we wish to save should further ensue. For, when any one is brought to the font of baptism, not by the sweetness of preaching, but by compulsion, he returns to his former superstition, and dies the worse from having been born again. Let, therefore, your Fraternity stir up such men by frequent preaching, to the end that through the sweetness of their teacher they may desire the more to change their old life. For so our purpose is rightly accomplished, and the mind of the convert returns not again to his former vomit. Wherefore discourse must be addressed to them, such as may burn up the thorns of error in them, and illuminate what is dark in them by preaching, so that your Fraternity may through your frequent admonition

receive a reward for them, and lead them, so far as God may grant it, to the regeneration of a new life.

EPISTLE XLVIII: TO THEODORUS, DUKE OF SARDINIA.

Gregory to Theodorus, &c.

The justice which you bear in your mind you ought to shew in the light of your deeds. Now Juliana, abbess of the monastery of Saint Vitus which Vitula of venerable memory had once built, has intimated to us that possession of the aforesaid monastery is claimed by Donatus, your official; who, seeing himself to be fortified by your patronage, scorns to have resort to a judicial examination of the case. But now let your Glory enjoin this same official, with the aforesaid hand-maiden of God, to submit the matter to arbitration to the end that whatever may be decided as to the question in dispute by the judgment of the arbitrators may be carried into effect; so that, whatever he may find he has to lose or keep, what he does may not be done as a deed of virtue, but set down to the justice of the law.

Further, Pompeiana, a religious lady, who is known to have established a monastery in her own house, has complained that the mother of her deceased son-in-law wishes to annul his will, to the end that her son's last disposition of his property may be made of none effect. On this account we hold it necessary with paternal charity to exhort your Glory to lend yourself willingly, with due regard to justice, to pious causes, and kindly order that whatever these persons have a rightful claim to be secured to them. Now, we beseech the Lord to direct the way of your life propitiously, and grant you a prosperous administration of your dignified office.

EPISTLE XLIX: TO HONORATUS, DEACON.

Gregory to Honoratus, &c.

Since we have undertaken, however undeserving, a place of government, it is our duty to succour our brethren in need, so far as our power extends. Januarius, then, our brother and fellow-bishop of the metropolitan city of Caralis (Cagliari), has been here in the city of Rome, and informed us that the glorious magister militum, Theodorus, who is known to have received the dukedom of the island of Sardinia, is doing many things there contrary to the commands of our most pious lords, whereby with fitting clemency and gentleness they removed many hardships of proprietors, or of citizens of their empire. Wherefore we desire you at a suitable time to represent the case to our most pious lords in accordance with what the provincials of the aforesaid island justly and reasonably demand; seeing that on a previous occasion also their sacred imperial letters were sent to the glorious Magister militum Edancius, who was in the seventh indiction duke of Sardinia, in which they ordered all these present grievances to be redressed, to the end that their commands, proceeding from the bountifulness of their piety, might be observed unshaken by dukes who might come in course of time to be in power, and that the benefit thereof might not be squandered away by administrators; that so a quiet life might be led under the clement empire of our lords, and for the ordinance which with tranquil mind they grant to their subjects they might receive multiplied compensation at the coming of the eternal judge.

EPISTLE L: TO ANTHEMIUS THE SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Anthemius, &c.

Even as, through the ordering of God as it hath pleased Him, we have received the place of government, so ought we to be solicitous for the souls committed to us. Now we find that in the Eumorphian island, in which, as is well known, there is an oratory of the blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, a large number of men with their wives from various patrimonies have fled to it for refuge, through stress of barbarian ferocity This we consider inexpedient: for, there being other places of refuge near at hand, why should women have their abode there with monks? Wherefore we enjoin thy Experience by this present order from this time forward to allow no woman, whether she be under ecclesiastical jurisdiction or any other, to take up her abode or tarry there; but let them provide for themselves a place of refuge (there being, as has been said above, so many in the neighbourhood) wherever they may choose; so that all intercourse with women may henceforth be put an end to; lest, if we should desist from taking all the care we can, and guarding against the snares of the enemy, we henceforth (which God forbid) should be culpable in case of anything wrong taking place. Delay not, therefore, to give to the abbot Felix, the bearer of these presents, one thousand five hundred pounds of lead, which he is known to be in want of in the same island, which may be charged afterwards in thy accounts, when the whole quantity shall be known. So proceed, then, that thou mayest provide thyself with some, if any can be profitably used for the buildings of the same island. Moreover, since congregations of monks in the islands are exposed to hardship, we forbid boys under eighteen years of age to be received into these monasteries. Or, if there are any now there, let thy Experience remove them, and send them to the city of Rome. We desire thee in all respects to observe this in Palmaria also and the other islands.

EPISTLE LII: TO SYMMACHUS THE DEFENSOR.

Gregory to Symmachus, &c.

My son Boniface the deacon has told me that thy Experience had written to say that a monastery built by Labina, a religious lady, is now ready for monks to be settled in it. And indeed I praised thy solicitude; but we wish that some other place than that which has been assigned for the purpose should be provided; but with the condition, in view of the insecurity of the time, that one above the sea be looked out for, which is either fortified by its position, or at all events can be fortified without much labour. So may we send monks thither, to the end that the island itself, hitherto without a monastery, may be improved by having this way of life upon it.

For carrying out and providing for this business we have given directions to Horosius, the bearer of this present order, with whom thy Experience must go round the shores of Corsica, and if any more suitable place in the possession of any private person should be found, we are prepared to give a suitable price, that we may be able to make some secure arrangement. We have enjoined the aforesaid Horosius to proceed to the island Gorgonia; and let thy Experience accompany him, and do you so avenge the evils that we have ascertained to have found entrance there that through the punishment you shall inflict the aforesaid island may remain corrected for the future also. Let the same abbot Horosius set in order the monasteries of this island, and so hasten to return to us. Let, then, thy Experience so act that in both these matters, that is, both in providing for monasteries in Corsica, and in correcting the monks of Gorgonia, thou mayest make haste to obey, not our will, but that of Almighty God.

Moreover we desire that the priests who abide in Corsica shall be forbidden to have any intercourse with women, except it may be a mother, or a sister, or a wife, towards whom chastity should be observed. But to the three persons about whom thy Experience has written to my son the

aforesaid deacon Boniface, give whatsoever thou deemest sufficient for them, since they are in grievous need; and this we will allow thee afterwards in thy accounts. Given in the month of July.

EPISTLE LVI: TO PETER, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, &c.

Being exceedingly desirous of observing the festivals of saints, we have thought it needful to address this our letter of direction to thy Experience, informing thee that we have arranged for the dedication with all solemnity, with the help of the Lord, in the month of August, of the Oratory of the Blessed Mary lately built in the cell of brethren where the abbot Marinianus is known to preside, to the end that what we have begun may through the Lord's operation be completed. But, inasmuch as the poverty of that cell requires that we should assist in that day of festival, we therefore desire thee to give for celebrating the dedication, to be distributed to the poor, ten solidi in gold, thirty amphorae of wine, two hundred lambs, two area of oil, twelve wethers, and a hundred hens, which may be afterwards charged in thy accounts. Provide therefore for this being done at once without any delay, that our desires, God granting it, may take speedy effect.

EPISTLE LVII: TO SEVERUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Severus, &c.

We learn from thy Fraternity's epistle that, with regard to the choice of a bishop, some are agreed in favour of Ocleatinus, with whom, since we disallow him, they need not further concern themselves. But give notice to the inhabitants of that city that, if they should find any one in their own Church fit for that work, they all transfer their choice to him. Otherwise the bearer of these presents will point out a person, of whom I have told him, in favour of whom the notification of the election should be made. Do you, moreover, be prudent and careful with regard to your visitation of the same Church, that its property may be preserved inviolate, and its interests attended to after the accustomed manner under your management.

EPISTLE LVIII: TO ARSICINUS DUKE, THE CLERGY, NOBILITY, AND COMMON PEOPLE (ordini et plebi) OF THE CITY OF ARIMINUM.

Gregory to Arsicinus, &c.

How ready is the devotion of your love in expectation of a pontiff the text of the report which you have addressed to us shews. But, since the ordainer ought in such cases to be exceedingly careful, we are watching over this case with due deliberation. And so we warn your Charity by this present writing that no one need trouble himself to apply to us in favour of Ocleatinus: but, if any one is found in your own city to undertake this work with profit, so that he cannot be objected to by us, let your choice concur in his favour. But, if no one should be found fit for it, we have mentioned to the bearers of these presents one to whom you may no less accord your consent. But do you with one accord pray faithfully, that, whosoever may be ordained, he may be able both to be profitable to you and to display priestly service worthy of our God.

EPISTLE LXI: TO GENNADIUS, PATRICIAN AND EXARCH OF AFRICA.

Gregory to Gennadius, &c.

That you have unceasingly the fear of God before your eyes, and pursue justice, the subdued necks of enemies testify; but, that the grace of Christ may keep your Glory in the same prosperity, restrain, as you have been wont, with speedy prohibition whatever things you discover to be committed wrongfully, so that, fortified with the arms of justice, you may overcome hostile attacks with the power of faith, which is the top of all virtue. Now Marinianus, our brother and fellow-bishop of the city of Turris has tearfully represented to us that the poor of his city are being vexed everywhere, and afflicted by expenses in the! way of gifts or payments; and further that the religious of his church endure serious molestation from the men of Theodorus the magister militum, and suffer bodily injuries; and that this thing is breaking out to such a pitch that (shocking to say) they are thrust into prison, and that he himself also is seriously hindered by the aforesaid glorious person in causes pertaining to his Church. How opposed such things are, if indeed they are true, to the discipline of the republic you yourselves know. And, since it befits your Excellency to amend all these things, greeting your Eminence I demand of you that you suffer them to be done no more; but straightly order him to abstain from harming the Church, and that none be aggrieved by burdens laid upon them, or payments, beyond what reason allows, and that, if there should be any suits, they be determined not by the terror of power, but by order of law. I pray you, then, so correct all these things, the Lord inspiring you, by the menace of your injunction that the glorious Theodorus and his men may abstain from such things, if not out of regard to rectitude, yet at any rate out of fear inspired by your command; that so, to the advancement of your credit and reward, justice with liberty may flourish in the parts committed to your charge.

EPISTLE LXII: TO JANUARIUS, ARCHBISHOP OF CARALIS (CAGLIARI) IN SARDINIA.

Gregory to Januarius, &c.

If our Lord Himself by the testimony of Holy Scripture declares Himself to be the husband of widows and father of orphans, we also, the members of His body, ought with the soul's supreme affection to set ourselves to imitate the head, and saving justice, to stand by orphans and widows if need be. And, having been given to understand that Catella, a religious woman who has a son serving here in the holy Roman Church over which under God we preside, is being troubled by the exactions and molestations of certain persons, we think it needful to exhort your Fraternity by this letter not to refuse (saving justice) to afford your protection to this same woman, knowing that by things of this kind you both make the Lord your debtor and bind us to you the more in the bonds of charity. For we wish the causes of the aforesaid woman, whether now or in future, to be terminated by your judgment, that she may be relieved from the annoyance of legal proceedings, and yet be by no means excused from submitting to a just judgment. Now I pray the Lord to direct your life in a prosperous course towards Himself, and Himself to bring you in His mercy to the kingdom of glory which is to come.

EPISTLE LXIII: TO JANUARIUS, BISHOP OF CARALIS (Cagliari) IN SARDINIA.

Gregory to Januarius, &c.

Though your Fraternity in the zeal of righteousness gives fitting attention to the protection of divers persons, yet we believe that you will be the more prone to succour those whom a letter from us may commend to you. Know then that Pompeiana, a religious woman, has represented to us through one of her people that she endures many grievances continually and unreasonably from certain men, and on this account has petitioned us to commend her in our letters to you. Wherefore, greeting your Fraternity with the affection of charity that is due to you, we have felt that we must needs commend the aforesaid woman to you, that, with due regard to justice, thy Fraternity may not allow her to be aggrieved in any way contrary to equity, or to be subjected to any expense unadvisedly. But if it should happen that she has any suits, let the matter of dispute be debated before chosen arbitrators, and whatsoever shall be decided, let it be so carried into effect quietly through your assistance that both reward may accrue to you for such a work, and she who has been commended by our letters may rejoice in having found justice.

EPISTLE LXVI: TO FELIX, BISHOP OF MESSANA (Messene).

Gregory to Felix, &c.

Customs which are found to bring a burden upon churches it becomes us in our consideration to discontinue, lest any should be forced to contribute to quarters from which they ought rather to look for contributions. Accordingly, it is thy duty to preserve intact the custom of the clergy and others, and to transmit to them every year what has been accustomed: but for the future we forbid thee to transmit anything to us. And, since we take no delight in presents (xeniis), we have received with thanks the Palmatianoe which thy Fraternity has sent us, but have caused them to be sold for an adequate price, which we have transmitted separately to thy Fraternity, for fear lest thou shouldest have felt the expense. Further, since we have learnt that thy Charity is desirous of coming to us, we admonish thee by the present letter not to take the trouble of coming: but pray for us, that the more we are separated by length of way, the more we may be joined one to another in mind, with the help of Christ, by charity; to the end that, siding each other by mutual supplication, we may resign our office unimpaired to the Judge that is to come.

EPISTLE LXVII: TO PETER, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, &c.

If with kind disposition we meet the needs of our neighbours by shewing compassion, we shall undoubtedly find the Lord mercifully inclined to our petitions. Now we have learnt that Pastor, who labours under exceeding weakness of sight, having a wife and two slaves, who also bad formerly been with the glorious lady Jonatha, is suffering from great need. Wherefore, we admonish thy Experience, by the writing of this present order, not to delay giving him for his sustenance three hundred modii of wheat, and also as many modii of beans, which may afterwards be charged in thy accounts. So act, then, as both thyself to obtain the benefit of reward for thy good service, and to carry our orders into effect. In the month of August.

EPISTLE LXXII: TO PETER, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, &c.

Thou hast learnt from a former letter that we have desired our brethren and fellow- bishops dwelling in the island of Sicily to assemble here for the anniversary of the blessed Peter the apostle. But, seeing that their suit with the magnificent Justin the ex-praetor has meanwhile hindered them, and that there is not now sufficient time for coming and returning, we do not wish them to be troubled before winter. But Gregory of Agrigentum, Leo of Catana, and Victor of Panormus, we by all means desire to come to us before winter. Further, get together from strangers corn of this year's growth to the value of fifty pounds of gold, and lay it up in Sicily in places where it will not rot, that we may send thither in the month of February as many ships as we can to convey this corn to us. But, in case of our delaying to send ships, do thou thyself provide some, and, with the help of the Lord, transmit this same corn to us in February, with the exception, however, of the corn which we expect to have sent to us now, according to custom, in the months of September or October. Let thy Experience, then, so proceed that, without annoyance to any husbandman (colonus) of the Church, the corn may be collected, since there has been here such a scanty crop that, unless by God's help corn be collected from Sicily, there is a serious prospect of famine. But keep guard in all ways over the ships that have always been assigned to the use of Holy Church, as the letters also addressed to thee by the glorious ex-consul Leo concur in directing thee to do. Moreover, many come hither desiring sundry lands or islands belonging to our Church to be leased to them; and some, indeed, we refuse, but to others we have already granted their request. But let thy Experience see to the advantage of Holy Church, remembering that thou hast before the most sacred body of the blessed apostle Peter received power over his patrimony. And, though letters should reach you from hence, allow nothing to be done

in any way to the disadvantage of the patrimony, since we neither remember to have given, nor are disposed to give away, any thing without good reason.

EPISTLE LXXIV: TO GENNADIUS, PATRICIAN AND EXARCH OF AFRICA.

Gregory to Gennadius, &c.

As the Lord hath made your Excellency to shine with the light of victories in the military wars of this life, so ought you to pose the enemies of the Church with all activity of mind and body, to the end that from both kinds of triumph your reputation may shine forth more and more, when in forensic wars, too, you firmly resist the adversaries of the Catholic Church in behalf of the Christian people, and bravely fight ecclesiastical battles as warriors of the Lord. For it is known that men heretical in religion, if they have liberty allowed them to do harm (which God forbid), rise strenuously against the catholic faith, to the end that they may transfuse, if they can, the poison of their heresy to the corrupting of the members of the Christian body. For we have learnt that they are lifting up their necks against the Catholic Church, the Lord being opposed to them, and desire to pervert the faith of the Christian profession. But let your Eminence suppress their attempts, and subdue their proud necks to the yoke of rectitude. Moreover, order the council of catholic bishops to be admonished not to appoint their primate on the ground of his standing, without regard to the merits of his life, since before God it is not the more distinguished rank, but the action of a better life, that is approved. But let the primate himself live, not, as is customary, here and there in the country, but in one city according to their selection, to the end that he may be better able to bring to bear the influence of the dignity that has fallen to him in resisting the Donatists. Moreover, if any from the Council of Numidia should desire to come to the Apostolic See, permit them to do so; and stop any who may be disposed to bring charges against their character. Great increase of glory will accrue to your Excellency with the Creator, if through you the union of the divided churches could be restored. For when He beholds the girls granted by Him

given back to His glory, He bestows gifts so much the more abundantly as He sees the dignity of His religion to be thereby enlarged. Furthermore, bestowing on you, as is due, the affection of our paternal charity, we beseech the Lord to make your arm strong for subduing your enemies, and to sharpen your soul with zeal for the faith like the edge of a quivering sword.

EPISTLE LXXV: TO GENNADIUS, PATRICIAN, AND EXARCH THROUGHOUT AFRICA.

Gregory to Gennadius, Patrician, &c.

Had not such great success of the military exploits of your Excellency arisen from the merit of your faith and from the grace of the Christian religion, it would not have been so greatly to be wondered at, since we know that the like has been granted to military leaders of old time. But when, God granting it, you forestall future victories, not by carnal provision, but rather by prayers, it becomes a matter of astonishment how your glory comes down upon you, not from counsels of this world, but from God, who bestows it from above. For where is not the renown of your deserts in people's mouths? And report goes that it is not from a desire of, shedding blood that you constantly court these wars, but for the sake of extending the republic in which we see that God is worshipped, to the end that the name of Christ may be spread abroad through subject nations by preaching of the faith. For, as your outward deeds of valour make you eminent in this life, so also the inward adornment of your character, proceeding from a clean heart, glorifies you in making you partaker of celestial joys to come. For we have learnt that your Excellency has done very many things of advantage for feeding the sheep of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, so as to have restored to him no small portions of his patrimony, which had been denuded of their proper cultivators, by supplying them with Datitian settlers. Whatever, then, with Christian disposition you confer on him, you receive retribution for through hope in the judgment to come. Wherefore we have thought fit to commend to your Eminence Hilarus, who is also the hearer of these presents, that you may bestow on him (though ever with regard to justice) your accustomed affection in matters wherein he may intimate his need of your help. Now, addressing to you the greeting of our paternal charity, we beseech our God

and Saviour mercifully to protect your Eminence for the consolation of the holy republic, and to fortify you with the strength of His arm for spreading His name more and more through the neighbouring nations.

EPISTLE LXXVII: TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF NUMIDIA.

Gregory to all the Bishops of Numidia.

If ever, most dear brethren in Christ, a troublesome mixture of tares intrudes itself among green corn, it is necessary for the hand of the husbandman to root it up entirely, lest the future fruit of the fertile corn should be obstructed. Wherefore let us too, who, however unworthy, have undertaken the cultivation of the field of the Lord, hasten to render the corn pure from all offence of tares, that the field of the Lord may fructify with more abundant increase. Now you requested through Hilarus our chartulary from our predecessor of blessed memory that you might retain all the customs of past time, which, from the beginnings of the ordinances of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, long antiquity has so far retained. And we, indeed, according to the tenour of your representation, allow your custom (so long as it clearly makes no claim to the prejudice of the catholic faith)to remain undisturbed, whether as to constituting primates or as to other points; save that with respect to those who attain to the episcopate from among the Donatists, we by all means forbid them to be advanced to the dignity of primacy, even though their standing should denote them for that position. But let it suffice them to take care of the people committed to them, without aiming at the topmost place of the primacy in preference to those prelates whom the Catholic faith hath both taught and engendered in the bosom of the Church. Do you, therefore, most dear brethren, anticipate our admonitions in the zeal of the charity of the Lord, knowing that the strict Judge will bring into examination all we do, and will approve every one of us with regard not to the prerogative of a higher rank, but to the merits of our works. I beseech you, therefore, love ye one another mutually, having peace among yourselves in Christ, and with one purpose of heart oppose ye heretics and enemies of the Church. Be ye solicitous for the souls of your neighbours: persuade all ye can to faith by the preaching of charity,

holding before them also the terror of the future judgment; inasmuch as ye are appointed to be shepherds, and the Lord of the docks expects from the shepherds to whom He has committed them the fruit of a multiplied flock. And if He should foresee an augmentation of His own flock through your bestowal of more diligent care upon it, He will assuredly adorn you with manifold gifts of the heavenly kingdom. Furthermore, addressing to you the greeting of fraternal love, I pray the Lord that He would make you, whom He has chosen to be shepherds of souls, worthy in His sight, and Himself so order our deeds here that He may accept them as they deserve in the future life.

EPISTLE LXXVIII: TO LEO, BISHOP IN CORSICA.

Gregory to Leo, &c.

Our pastoral charge constrains us to come with anxious consideration to the succour of a church that is destitute of the control of a priest. And, inasmuch as we have learnt that the church of Saona for many years, since the death of its pontiff, has been thus entirely destitute, we have thought it needful to enjoin on thy Fraternity the work of visiting it, to the end that through thy ordering its welfare may be promoted. In this church also and in its parishes we grant thee licence to ordain deacons and presbyters; concerning whom, however, let it be thy care to make diligent enquiry, that they be not personally in any respect such as are rejected by the sacred canons. But whomsoever thy Fraternity has perceived to be worthy of so great a ministry, having ascertained that their manners and actions fit them for ordination, them, by permission of our authority, thou mayest freely promote to the aforesaid office. We desire thee, therefore, to make use of all the property of the above named church as though thou wert its proper pontiff, until we write to thee again. Be, then, so diligent and careful in all these matters that through thy ordering all things may, with the help of God, be salubriously arranged to the Church’s profit.

EPISTLE LXXIX: TO MARTINUS, BISHOP IN CORSICA.

Gregory to Martinus, &c.

To those who ask for what is just it behoves us to lend a kindly ear, to the end both that the petitioners may find the remedies they hope for, and that the anxious care of a shepherd be not wanting to the Church. And inasmuch as the church of Tanates, in which thy Fraternity was formerly adorned with sacerdotal dignity, has for its sins been so taken possession of and ruined by hostile savagery that no further hope remains of thy returning thither, we appoint thee, by authority of these presen's, undisputed cardinal priest in the Church of Saona, which has now been long deprived of the aid of a pontiff. Do thou therefore so arrange and order all things according to the injunctions of the canons with vigilant care in the love of God, that both thy Fraternity may rejoice in having attained thy desires, and the Church of God may be filled with answering joy for having received thee as Cardinal pontiff.

EPISTLE LXXX: TO THE CLERGY AND NOBLES OF CORSICA.

Gregory to the Clergy, &c. ... A paribus.

Although for a long time it has caused you no sorrow that the Church of God should be without a pontiff, yet as for us, we are both compelled by the charge of the office we bear and bound especially by the charity of our love for you, to take thought for its government, knowing that in its supervision lies at the same time advantage to your souls. For, if the care of a shepherd be wanting to a flock, it easily falls into the snares of the lier in wait. Accordingly, inasmuch as the church of Saona has long been deprived of the aid of a priest, we have held it necessary to constitute Martinus, our brother and fellow-bishop, cardinal priest of the same, but to enjoin on Leo our brother and fellow-bishop the work of its visitation. To the latter we have also granted licence to ordain presbyters and deacons in it and in its parishes, and have permitted him to make use of its property so long as be shall be there, as though he were its proper pontiff. And so we admonish you by these present writings that your Charity receive the aforesaid visitor with all devotion, and shew him obedience in whatever is reasonable, as becomes sons of the Church, to the end that, supported by your devotion, he may be able to accomplish all that is found to conduce to the advantage of the above-named church.

BOOK II

EPISTLE III: TO VELOX, MAGISTER MILITIUM.

Gregory to Velox, &c..

We informed your Glory some time ago that soldiers had been prepared to come to your parts; but, inasmuch as your letter had signified to us that the enemy were collected and were marching hitherward, we for this reason have detained them here. But now it appears to be advantageous that a certain number of soldiers should be sent to you, whom let thy Glory be careful to admonish and exhort to be prepared for toil. And, when you find an opportunity, confer with our glorious sons Maurilius and Vitalianus, and do whatever, with the help of God, they may appoint you to do for the advantage of the republic. And, should you ascertain that the unspeakable Ariulph is making an incursion hitherward or to the parts about Ravenna, do you labour in his rear, as becomes brave men, to the end that your renown may by God's help advance still more in the republic from the quality of your labour. This, however, before all, we admonish you to do: to release without any delay or excuse the family of Maloin and Adobin, Vigild and Grussing, who are known to be with the glorious Magister militum Maurilius, to the end that the men of the aforesaid Maurilius, when they come to your parts, may without any impediment march along with them.

[In Colbert. and Paul. diac., Die. V. Kal. Oct. Indict. 10.]

EPISTLE VI: TO THE NEAPOLITANS.

Gregory to the clergy, nobles, gentry, and commonalty dwelling at Naples.

Although the sincere devotion of spiritual sons in behalf of their mother Church needs no exhortation, nevertheless, it ought to be stirred up by letter, lest it should suppose itself slighted. On this account I approach your love with an admonition of paternal charity, that with many tears and with one accord we may render thanks to our Redeemer, who has not suffered you to walk along pathless ways under so perverse a teacher, but has made publicly known the crimes of your unworthy pastor. For Demetrius, to wit, who even before had not deserved to be called a bishop, has been found to be involved in transactions to such an extent and of such a kind that, if he had received judgment without mercy according to the character of his deeds, he would undoubtedly have been condemned to a most hard death by both divine and human laws. But since, being reserved for penance, he has been deprived of the dignity of the priesthood, we cannot suffer the Church of God to remain long without a teacher, since it is laid down by canonical rules that, on the death or removal of a pastor, the church should not be long deprived of the priesthood. Wherefore, I have thought it necessary to admonish your Charity by this present writing that neither delay nor the discord which has been wont to generate scandals ensue to hinder your election of a pontiff. But seek you out with all care such a person as all by common consent may rejoice in, and as is in no respect rejected by the sacred canons; to the end that the office which the most wicked of men had polluted by his evil administration may be worthily filled and administered by him, whoever he may be, who, by the grace of Christ, and with His approval, shall be ordained.

EPISTLE VII: TO MAXIMIANUS, BISHOP OF SYRACUSE.

Gregory to Maximianus, &c.

We execute more efficiently our heavenly commission, if we share our burdens with our brethren. For this cause we appoint thee, our most reverend brother and fellow-bishop, to have administration over all the churches of Sicily in the name of the Apostolical See, so that whosoever there is reckoned as being in a condition of religion may by our authority be subject to thy Fraternity, to the end that it may not hereafter be necessary for them to make such long sea-voyages in resorting to us for slight causes. But if by any chance there are matters of difficulty which can by no means be settled by the judgment of thy Fraternity, in these only let our judgment be solicited, that so we may occupy ourselves more efficaciously in greater causes, being relieved from the least. And be it understood that we give this delegation of authority, not to thy place, but to thy person, because we have learnt from thy past life what we may presume of thee in thy future conduct.

The month of December, the tenth Indiction.

EPISTLE IX: TO THE NEAPOLITANS.

Gregory to the gentry and commonalty (ordini et plebi) residing at Naples.

The communication you have addressed to us has made manifest what your opinion is of our brother and fellow-bishop Paulus: and we congratulate you in that your experience of him for a few days has been such that you desire to have him as your cardinal bishop. But, since in matters of supreme importance there ought to be no hasty decision, so we, Christ helping us, will arrange after mature deliberation what is to be done hereafter, his character meanwhile, in course of time, having become better known to you.

Wherefore, most beloved sons, obey ye the aforesaid man, if you truly love him, and with devoted minds meet his wishes in peaceful concurrence, to the end that the affection of your mutual charity may so bind you to each other, that the enemy who flies about you raging may find no way through any of you for creeping in to break up your unanimity. Further, when we shall have perceived the aforesaid bishop offering to God the fruit of souls which we long for, God Himself also approving, we will do afterwards whatever divine inspiration may suggest to our heart, with regard to his person and to your desire.

EPISTLE X: TO PAULUS, BISHOP OF NAPLES.

Gregory to Paulus, &c.

If we administer safely the priestly office which we have received, without doubt both Divine assistance and the affection of our spiritual sons will not be wanting to us. Wherefore let thy Fraternity take care to shew thyself in all things such that the testimony which the clergy, the nobility, and all the people together, of the city of Naples bears to thee may be strengthened by the increase of thy goodness. Thou oughtest, then, so to bind thyself to continual employment in exhorting the aforesaid people that the Divine husbandman may store in his garners the fruit of thy word, which thou shalt have gathered from them by thy labours. But till such time as we shall be able, God revealing to us His will, to deliberate concerning the things which our aforesaid sons request us should be done, we grant leave for clerics to be ordained from the ranks of the laity, and also for manumissions to be solemnly celebrated before thee in the same church. Moreover we desire thee to observe without hesitation the customs of the clerical order and of the presbyters of the above-named church: and do thou also keep such diligent watch in the instruction of the same, that, abstaining from all that is unsuitable or unlawful, they may stand fast, under thy exhortations, ministering with due obedience, in the service of our God. The month of January, the tenth Indiction.

EPISTLE XIL: TO CASTORIUS, BISHOP OF ARIMINUM.

Gregory to Castorius, &c.

The illustrious lady Timothea has intimated to US by a petitionary notification, as is set forth below, that she has founded an oratory within the city of Ariminum in a place belonging to her, which she desires to have consecrated in honour of the holy cross. And, accordingly, dearest brother, if the said construction is in the jurisdiction of thy city, and if it is known that no body has been buried there, then, after reception in the first place of a legitimate endowment. that is, of two-thirds of her whole property (excepting slaves), of her movables and fixtures and live stock, the usufruct being reserved to her for her life, and such endowment having been secured by municipal deeds, thou wilt solemnly consecrate the aforesaid oratory without any public mass, on the condition that no baptistery shall be constructed in the same place in future times, and that thou appoint not a cardinal presbyter. And if perchance she should prefer having masses said there, let her know that she must ask thy Love for a presbyter, to the end nothing else may be presumed by any other priest whatever. Further, thou wilt reverently deposit the holy things she has provided.

EPISTLE XV: TO PAUL, BISHOP.

Gregory to Paul, &c.

I appointed thy Fraternity to preside for the present over the church of Naples, to the end that thou mightest convert all thou canst to God by persuasive preaching. And, while thou oughtest to be giving thy whole mind to this work, thou art in haste to return before bringing forth this fruit to the Lord, and requestest me to settle the affairs of this same church speedily, my mind being meanwhile by no means unoccupied in this matter. But, being desirous of fortifying securely the well-being of this Church, I hold it needful to consider the matter with long continued deliberation, so as to be able to arrange its affairs by the ordination of a worthy whom Christ may reveal to us. Wherefore let thy Fraternity meanwhile study to watch for the good of souls, so that the Opinion I have of thee may be strengthened by the effect of thy working. All thou hast written concerning the deacon Peter has now been made known to us by the ex-consul Theodorus. And so, now that I know that he is constant to thee, and, according to thy testimony, studies the advantage of the Church, he ought to be afraid of no one's opposition or enmity, but persevere in benefiting the Church and serving God all the more watchfully as he feels that others have a grudge against him; that so they may have no power at all to injure him. Moreover, thy Fraternity ought not hereafter to be suspected with regard to him; since no surreptitious proceedings will have effect on me.

EPISTLE XVIII: TO NATALIS, BISHOP OF SALONA.

Gregory to Natalis, &c

I have learnt, dearest brother, from many who have come from thy city that, neglecting thy pastoral charge, thou occupies, thyself wholly in feastings: which report I should not have believed had not my own experience of thy conduct confirmed it. For that thou in no wise art intent on reading, in no wise gives, attention to exhortation, but art even ignorant of the very use and purpose of ecclesiastical order, there is this in evidence, that thou knowest not how to observe reverence to those who are put over thee. For, when thou hadst been forbidden in writing by our predecessor of holy memory to retain in thy heart the soreness of thy long displeasure against Honoratus thy archdeacon, and when this had been positively interdicted thee by myself also, thou, disregarding the commands of God, and setting at naught our letters, didst attempt by a cunning device to degrade the aforesaid Honoratus thy archdeacon under colour of promoting him to a higher dignity. Thus it was contrived that, he being removed front the post of archdeacon, thou mightest call in another who would have fallen in with thy manner of life, the aforesaid man having, as I think, displeased thee for no other cause but that he prevented thee from giving sacred vessels and vestments to thy relations. Which case both I now, and my predecessor of holy memory formerly, have wished to subject to an accurate investigation; but thou, being conscious of what thou hadst done, hast put off sending hither a representative instructed for trial of the case. Wherefore let thy Fraternity, even after admonition so often repeated, repent of the error of thy wrongdoing, and restore the aforesaid Honoratus to his post immediately on the receipt of my letter. Which if thou shouldest defer doing, know that the use of the pallium, granted thee by this See, is taken from thee. But if, even when thou hast lost the pallium, thou still persistest in thy contumacy, know that thou art deprived of participation of the body

and blood of the Lord. And after this it will be needful for us to enquire more fully into the charges against thee, and to consider with the utmost care and investigation whether thou shouldest retain even thy episcopate. Him also who, against the rule of justice, has consented to be promoted to the place of another we depose from the dignity of the said archdeaconry. And, should he presume any longer to minister in this same office, let him know that he is deprived of participation in holy communion. Do thou, therefore, dearest brother, in no wise provoke us further, lest, having set us at naught when in an attitude of charity towards thee, thou shouldest find us very hard in our severity. Having, therefore, restored the archdeacon Honoratus to his place, send to us with speed a person instructed in the case, who may be able to shew to me by his allegations how the matter should be equitably proceeded with For we have commanded the said archdeacon to come to us, that, having heard the assertions of the parties, we may come to whatever decision may be just and well-pleasing to Almighty God. For we defend no one on the ground of personal love, but, God helping us, keep the rule of justice, putting aside respect to any man's person.

EPISTLE XIX: TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF DALMATIA.

Gregory to all the bishops constituted throughout Dalmatia.

Though desiring to visit your Fraternity frequently through the intercourse of letters, yet, when some special case demands our attention, we wish to take the opportunity of fulfilling two duties at once, so as both to refresh our brotherly souls in the way of visitation and to explain accurately matters that come up for notice, lest ignorance of them should leave the mind confused. Now when our brother Natalis, bishop of the city of Salona, wished to advance the archdeacon Honoratus to the order of the priesthood, who thereupon declined being advanced to a higher order, the latter demanded my predecessor of holy memory, in a petition that he sent, that he should not be so advanced against his will. For he alleged that the thing was attempted, not for the sake of promoting him, but in consequence of displeasure against him. Thereupon our predecessor of holy memory addressed letters to Natalis, our brother and fellow-bishop, interdicting him from promoting the archdeacon Honoratus against his will, or retaining in his heart the soreness of the displeasure which he had conceived against him. And when we too had laid the same interdiction on the said Natalis, he, not only disregarding the commands of God, but also setting at naught our letters, attempted, it is said, craftily to degrade the aforesaid archdeacon, in a way contrary to custom, under colour of promoting him to a higher dignity. Thus it was contrived that, having removed him from the archdeaconry, he might call in another person to minister in the place of the deposed archdeacon. Now we think that this Honoratus may have fallen under the displeasure of his bishop on account of having prevented him from giving sacred vessels to his relations: and both my predecessor of holy memory formerly and I now have wished to investigate the case accurately; but he, conscious of what he had done, has put off sending a representative with a view to its trial, test the truth with respect to his doings might appear.

We therefore, now that he has been already so often admonished by letter, and has so far been pertinaciously obstinate, have taken order for his being admonished once more in letters sent to him through the bearer of these presents, to the end that he may, immediately on the arrival of the bearer of these presents, receive the archdeacon Honoratus into his former place. And if, with heart still hardened, he should contumaciously defer restoring him to the said position, we order that for his contumacy so many times exhibited he be deprived of the use of the pallium granted to him by this See. But if, even after loss of the pallium, he should persevere in the same pertinacity, we order him to be debarred from participation in the body and blood of the Lord. For it is right that he should find those severe in justice whom he set at naught when they approached him in charity. Wherefore neither do we now deviate from the path of justice, which the aforesaid bishop has despised; but, when he whose guilt has by no means been made apparent to us has been restored to his place, we enjoin the bishop Natalis to send to us a person with instructions, who may be able by his allegations to prove to us the right intentions of the said bishop. For we have caused also the said archdeacon to come to us, that, having heard the assertions of both parties, we may decide whatever may be just, whatever may be well pleasing to Almighty God. For we defend no one on the ground of personal love, but, God helping us, keep the rule of justice without respect to any man’s person.

EPISTLE XX: TO ANTONINUS, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Antoninus, &c.

Honoratus, archdeacon of the Church of Salona, had demanded from my predecessor of holy memory, in a petition that he sent, that he should by no means be forced by his bishop to be advanced against his will, in a way contrary to custom, to a higher order.

[Here follows an account of the subsequent proceedings, almost word far word the same as that given in Epistle XIX.]

Wherefore we have thought it right to support thy Experience by the authority of this present order, that thou mayest resort to Salona, and at least try by exhortation to induce Natalis, our brother and fellow-bishop, who has been admonished by so many letters, to restore the above-mentioned Honoratus to his place immediately. But if, as has been his wont, he should contumaciously delay doing this, forbid him by authority of the Apostolic See the use of the pallium which has been granted him by this See. But if, even after loss of the pallium, thou shouldest find him persevering in the same pertinacity, thou shale deprive the said bishop of participation in holy communion. Moreover, him who, against the rule of justice, has consented to be promoted to another man's place we order to be deposed from the dignity of the same archdeaconry. And, if he should presume to minister further in the same place, we deprive him of participation in holy communion. For it is right that he should find those severe in justice whom he sets at naught when approaching him in charity. Wherefore, when the archdeacon Honoratus has been restored to his place, let the aforesaid bishop, at thy instigation, send to us a person with instructions, who may be able by his allegations to prove to us that the bishop's intention is or has been just.

[What follows corresponds exactly with the conclusion of Epistle XIX.]

As to our brother and fellow-bishop Malchus, thou wilt take care to make him find a surety, that he may come to us as soon as possible, to the end that, without any delay or loitering, be may render us an account of his proceedings, and so be able to return to his own with security.

EPISTLE XXII: TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF ILLYRICUM.

Gregory to all the bishops, &c.

It both affords us joy for your carefulness, and makes your Fraternity safe in your own ordination, if the order of ancient custom is maintained. Since, then, we have learnt from the letters which you have sent to us through the presbyter Maximianus and the deacon Andreas that the consent of all of you and the will of the most serene Prince have concurred in the person of our brother and fellow-bishop John, we feel great exultation that, under God's direction, such a one has been advanced to the office of priesthood as the judgment of all has approved as worthy. Wherefore, in accordance with your request, we confirm our aforesaid brother and fellow-bishop by the authority of our assent in the order of priesthood wherein he has been constituted, and declare our ratification of his consecration by sending him the pallium. And since, according to custom, we have committed to him vicariate jurisdiction in our stead, we must of necessity take the precaution of exhorting your Fraternity that you in no wise hesitate to obey him in matters pertaining to ecclesiastical order and the right course of discipline, or in other things not precluded by canonical decrees; that the soundness of your judgment in electing him may be declared by the obedience which you shew.

EPISTLE XXIII: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Prima Justiniana in Illyricum.

It is clearly a manifest evidence of goodness that the consent of all should concur in the election of one person. Since, then, the account which we have received from our brethren and fellow-bishops declared that you are summoned to the position of priesthood by the unanimous consent of the whole council and the will of the most serene Prince, we have rendered thanks with great exultation to Almighty God our Creator, who has made your life and actions so commendable in the past as to bring about (what is exceedingly to your credit) your approving yourself to the judgment of all. With them we also fully agree with regard to the person of your Fraternity. And we implore Almighty God that, as His Grace has chosen your Charity, so He would keep you in all respects under His protection, have sent you the pallium according to custom, and, renewing our commission, we appoint you to act as vicar of the Apostolic See, admonishing you that you so shew yourself gentle to your subjects that they may be provoked to love you rather than to fear you. And, if perchance any fault of theirs should require notice, you will be careful so to correct their transgressions as by no means to discard paternal affection from your mind Be watchful and assiduous in the care of the flock committed to you, and strict in the zeal of discipline, so that the wolf lying in wait may not prevail to disturb the Lord's sheepfold, or have opportunity for deceit, so as to hurt the sheep. Make haste with full purpose of heart to win souls to our God; and know that we have received the name of shepherd not for repose, but for labour. Let us, then, shew forth in our work what our native denotes. If we weigh with right consideration the prerogative of the priesthood, it will be to those who are diligent and do their duty well for honour, but to those who are negligent assuredly for a burden. For, as this name, in the sight of God, conducts those who labour and are assiduous for the salvation of souls to

eternal glory, so in the case of the idle and sluggish it tends to punishment. Through our tongue let the people committed to us learn that there is another life. Let the teaching of your Fraternity be to them an acceptable spur to urge them on, and your life an example for imitation. For your Fraternity's preaching should disclose to them what to love and what to fear, and your efficiency in this way should reap the fruit of eternal retribution. But let your deliberate care especially constrain you never to attempt to make any unlawful ordinations; but, whenever any are promoted to the clerical order, or, it may be, to some higher rank, let them be ordained, not for bribes orentreaties, but for merit. In no ordination let any consideration, in any way whatever, surreptitiously reach your Fraternity, lest you should be entangled (which God forbid) in the snares of simoniacal heresy. For what shall it profit a man, as the Truth says, if he shall gain the whole word, and lose his own soul (Mark viii. 36)? Hence it is necessary for us to look to God in all we do, to despise temporal and perishable things, and to direct the desire of our heart to the good things of eternity. Your Holiness's present I was altogether unwilling to accept, since it were very unseemly for us to seem to have received gifts from our plundered and afflicted brethren. But your messengers got the better of me by another argument, proffering it to one from whom your Fraternity's offerings may not be withheld. For this you ought before all things to study: how you may provide imperishable gifts to be offered to the coming judge of souls, to the end that He may have respect both to you for your profitable labour, and to us likewise for our exhortation.

EPISTLE XXVI: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, &c.

Inasmuch as we have enjoined on our brothel and fellow-bishop Paulus the work of the visitation of the Neapolitan church, therefore let not Fraternity shrink from assuming the visitation of the Nepesine Church, to the end that, according to the requirements of the Paschal festivity, whatever the solemnity of divine service demands may, through thy operation, be in all respects fulfilled. Until, then, we may be able to consider what should be done with regard to our aforesaid brother and fellow-bishop, let thy Fraternity strive to shew thyself so skilful and vigilant in all things that the absence of the bishop aforesaid may not at all be felt.

The month of April, the tenth Indiction.

EPISTLE XXVII: TO RUSTICIANA, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Rusticiana, &c.

On receiving the epistle of your Excellency I was relieved by the welcome news of your welfare, hoping that the Lord in His mercy may protect and direct your life and doings. But I wondered much why you have turned from your intention and vow to accomplish a good work in respect of your meditated journey to the holy places, seeing that, when anything good is by the gift of the Creator conceived in the heart, it is needful that it be carried out with quick devotion, lest, while the cunning plotter strives to ensnare the soul, he should afterwards suggest impediments, whereby the mind, weakened by occupations, may fail to carry its desires into effect. Whence it is necessary that your Excellency should anticipate all impediments that come in the way of pious designs, and gasp after the fruit of good work with all the efforts of your heart, that so you may succeed in living tranquilly in the present world and gaining possession of a heavenly kingdom in the future. But as to what you have written to us of Passivus having attempted to spread some calumnies against you, consider, on the other hand, that the most pious emperors have not only been unwilling to listen to them, but have also received the author of them roughly; and turn the whole hope of your soul to Him Who powerfully prevents men in this world from doing as much harm as they long to do, that so He may beat back the wicked intentions of men by the opposition of His arm, and Himself mercifully shatter their attempts, as He has been wont to do. I entreat that the glorious lord Appio and the lady Eusebia, the Lord Eudoxius and the lady Gregoria, be greeted in my name through you.

EPISTLE XXIX: TO MAURILIUS AND VITALIANUS.

Gregory to Maurilius and Vitalianus, magistris militum.

On receiving your Glory's letters we gave thanks to God that we were assured of your safety; and we greatly rejoiced at your careful provision; and what you wrote about was once prepared. But the magnificent Aldio wrote to us after the arrival of your men that Ariulph was already near at hand, and we feared that the soldiers sent to you might fall into his hands. Yet here also, so far as God may give aid, our son the glorious magister militum has prepared himself against him. But, if the enemy himself should advance hither, let your Glory also, as you have been accustomed to do, accomplish what you can in his rear. For we hope in the power of Almighty God, and that of the blessed Peter himself, the Prince of the apostles, on whose anniversary he desires to shed blood, that he may find him also without delay opposed to him.

EPISTLE XXX: TO MAURILIUS AND VITALIANUS.

Gregory to Maurilius and Vitalianus, magistris militum.

We have entreated your Glory through our son Vitalianus both by word and letter, charging you to communicate with him. But on the eleventh day of the month of January Ariulph sent us this letter which we forward to you. Wherefore, when you have read it, see if the people of Suana have stood fast in the fidelity they promised to the republic, and take adequate hostages from them, such as you can rely on; and moreover bind them anew by oaths, restoring to them what you took from them in the way of a pledge, and bringing them to a right mind by your discourses. But, should you quite distinctly ascertain that they have treated with Ariulph about their surrender to him, or at any rate have given him hostages, as the letter of Ariulph which we have forwarded to you leads us to suspect, then (after wholesome deliberation, lest your souls or mine be burdened with respect to our oaths), do ye whatever ye may judge to be of advantage to the republic. But let your Glory so act that neither anything be done for which we could be blamed by our adversaries, nor (which may the Lord avert) anything neglected which the advantage of the republic requires. Furthermore, my glorious sons, take anxious heed, since the enemy, so far as I have ascertained, has an army collected, and is said to be stationed at Narina; and if, God being angry with him, he should resolve to bend his course hitherward, do you plunder his positions so far as the Lord may aid you, or certainly let those whom you send carefully require night- watches, lest news of any sad event should reach us.

EPISTLE XXXII: TO PETER, SUBDEACON OF SICILY.
Gregory to Peter, &c.

By information received from Romanus the guardian (defensore) I have learnt that the monastery of handmaidens of God which is on the farm of Monotheus has suffered wrong from our church of Villa Nova with respect to a farm belonging to the latter, which is said to have been leased to the said monastery. If this is so, let thy Experience restore to them the farm, and also the payments from the same farm for the two indictions during which thou hast exacted them. Moreover, since many of the Jews dwell on the estates of the Church, I desire that, if any of them should be willing to become Christians, some little of their dues be remitted to them, to the end that others also, incited by this benefit, may be moved to a like desire.

Cows which are now barren from age, or bulls which appear to be quite useless, ought to be sold, so that at least some profit may accrue from their price. But as to the herds of mares which we keep very unprofitably, I wish them all to be dispersed, and four hundred only of the younger kept for breeding; which four hundred ought to be presented to the farmers- - so many to each, to the end that they may make some return to us from them in successive years: for it is very hard for us to spend sixty solidi on the herdsmen, and not get sixty pence from these same herds. Let then thy Experience so proceed that some may be divided among all the farmers, and others dispersed and converted into money. But so arrange with the herdsmen themselves throughout our possessions that they may be able to make some profit by cultivation of the ground. All the implements which, either at Syracuse or at Panormus, can be claimed by the Church must be sold before they perish entirely from age.

On the arrival of the servant of God, brother Cyriacus, at Rome I questioned him closely as to whether he had communicated with thee about the receiving of a bribe in the cause of a certain woman. And the same

brother says that he had learnt the state of the case from thy telling him, for that he had been commissioned by thee to ascertain who was the person commissioned to pay the bribe. This I believed, and immediately received him familiarly into favour, introduced him to the people and clergy, increased his stipend, placed him in a superior rank among the guardians, praising his fidelity before all, in that he had acquitted himself so faithfully in thy service; and I have consequently sent him back to thee. But, inasmuch as thou art in great haste, and I, though sick, am desirous of seeing thee, do thou leave some one whom thou hast fully proved to take thy place in the Syracusan district, and thyself make haste to come to me, that, if it should please Almighty God, we may consult together as to whether thou thyself oughtest to return thither or another person should be appointed in thy place. At the same time I have sent Benenatus the notary to occupy thy place in the patrimony in the district of Panormus till such time as Almighty God may ordain what pleases Him.

I have strongly rebuked Romanus for his levity, because in the Guest-house (xenodo- chium) which he kept, as I have now discovered, he has been taken up more with his own profits than with [heavenly] rewards. Him, therefore, if it should haply seem good to thee, leave in thy place. See how thou mayest best fortify him, by alarming and admonishing him, that he may act kindly and carefully towards the peasants (rusticos); and shew himself towards strangers and townspeople changed and active. In saying this, however, I am not selecting any person, but leave this to thy judgment. It is enough for me to have selected an occupier of thy place in the district of Panormus; and I wish thee to see thyself to providing one for the Syracusan district. When thou comest, bring with thee the moneys and ornaments (orna-menta) on the part, or of the substance of Antoninus. Bring also the payments of the ninth and tenth indictions which thou hast exacted, and with them all thy accounts. Take care, if it should please God, to cross

the sea for this city before the anniversary of Saint Cyprian, lest any danger should ensue (which God forbid) from the constellation which always threatens the sea at that season.

Furthermore, I would have thee know that I have no slight compunctions of mind for having been grievously set against the servant of God Pretiosus for no grievous fault of his, and driven him from me, sad and embittered. And I wrote to the lord bishops requesting him to send the man to me, if willing to do so; but he was altogether unwilling. Now him I ought not to distress, nor can I do so; since, occupied as he is in the causes of God, he ought to be supported by comfort, not depressed by bitterness. But the said Pretiosus, as I hear, is altogether distressed because he cannot return to me. I, however, as I have said, cannot distress the lord bishop, who is not willing to send him, and I am doubtful between the two. Do thou then, if in thy little diminutive body thou hast the greater wisdom, manage the matter so that I may have my will, and the lord bishop be not distressed. Yet, if thou see him to be at all distressed, say no more about it. I have, however, taken it amiss that he has excommunicated the lord Eusebius, a man of so great age and in such bad health. Wherefore it is needful for thee to speak privately to the said lord bishop, that he be not hasty in pronouncing sentences, since cases which are to be decided by sentences must needs be weighed beforehand with careful and very frequent consideration.

When the recruiting officers come, who, as I hear, are already raising recruits in Sicily, charge thy substitute to offer them some little present, so as to render them well- disposed towards him. But, before thou comest away, give also something, according to ancient custom, to the praetor's officials; but do it by the hands of him thou leavest in thy place, so as to conciliate their favour towards him. Also, lest we should seem to them to be at all uncivil, direct thy substitutes to carry out in all respects the orders we have given to thy Experience as to what is to be given to any individuals or

monasteries. But when thou comest, we will, with the help of God consider together how these things should be arranged. The three hundred solidi which I sent to be given through thee to the poor I do not think ought to be committed to their discretion. Let them carry out, then, those directions I have spoken of with reference to particular places and persons.

Now I remember having written before now to say that the legacies, which, according to the representation of Antoninus the guardian (defensoris), are due from us to monasteries or others, were to be paid as had been appointed. And I know not why thy Experience has delayed to accomplish this. Wherefore we desire thee to pay in full our portion of these legacies from the moneys of the church, that when thou comest to me, thou mayest not leave there the groans of the poor against thee. Bring also with thee at the same time the securities which have been found relating to the substance of the same Antoninus.

I have learnt on the information of Romanus that the wife of Redemptus, when dying, directed by word of mouth one silver shell to be sold, and the proceeds given to her freedmen, and also left a silver platter to a certain monastery; in respect of both of which bequests we desire her wishes to be fully carried out, lest from the least things we be betrayed into greater sins.

Further, I have learnt on the information of the Abbot Marinianus that the building in the Praetorian Monastery is not yet even half completed: which being the case, what can we praise for it but thy Experience's fervour? But even now let this admonition rouse thee; and, as far as thou canst, assert thyself in the construction of this same monastery. I said that nothing was to be given them for the cost; but I did not prohibit their building the monastery. But so proceed as to enjoin in all ways on him whom thou mayest depute in thy place at Panormus that he construct this same monastery at the charge of the ecclesiastical revenue, and that I may have no more private complaints from the abbot.

Moreover, I have learnt that thou knowest certain things on the farms, even in considerable numbers, to belong to others; but, owing to the entreaty of certain persons or to timidity, thou art afraid to restore them to their owners. But, if thou weft truly a Christian, thou wouldest be afraid of the judgment of God more than of the voices of men. Take notice that I unceasingly admonish thee on this matter; which if thou neglect to set right, thou wilt have also my voice for witness against thee. If thou shouldest find any of the laity fearing God who might receive the tonsure and become agents under the rector, I give my full consent. It will be necessary that letters also be sent to them.

Concerning the case of the son of Commissus the scholasticus, thou hast taken advice; and it appears that what he claims is not just in law. We are unwilling to burden the poor to their disadvantage; but, inasmuch as he has given himself trouble in this matter, we desire thee to give him fifty solidi, which must certainly be charged in thy accounts. As to the expense thou hast incurred on the business of the Church in the case of Prochisus, either reimburse thyself there out of his revenues, or, should his revenues be clearly insufficient for the repayment, thou must needs receive what is due to thee here from the deacon, But presume not to say anything about Gelasius the subdeacon, since his crime calls for the severest penance even to the end of his life.

Furthermore, thou has sent me one sorry nag and five good asses. That nag I cannot ride, he is such a sorry one; and those good asses I cannot ride, because they are asses. But we beg that, if you are disposed to content us, you will let us have something suitable. We desire thee to give to the abbot Eusebius a hundred solidi of gold, which must certainly be charged in thy accounts. We have learnt that Sisinnius, who was a judge at Samnium, is suffering from grievous want in Sicily, to whom we desire thee to supply twenty decimates of wine and four solidi yearly. Anastasius, a religious

person (religiosus), is said to be living near the city of Panormus in the oratory of Saint Agna, to whom we desire six solidi of gold to be given. We desire also six solidi, to be charged in thy accounts, to be given to the mother of Urbicus the Prior. As to tile case of the handmaiden of God, Honorata, what seems good to me is this: that thou shouldest bring with thee when thou comest all her substance which evidently existed before the time of the episcopate of John, bishop of Laurinum. But let the same handmaiden of God come with her son, that we may speak with her, and do whatever may please God. The volume of the Heptateuch out of the goods of Antoninus we desire to be given to the Praetorian monastery, and the rest of his books to be brought hither by thee.

EPISTLE XXXIII: TO JUSTINUS, PRAETOR. Gregory to Justinus, &c.

The spite of the ancient foe has this way of its own, that in the case of those whom, through God resisting him, he cannot delude into the perpetration of evil deeds, he maims their reputation for a time by false reports. Seeing, then, that a sinister rumour about our brother and fellow- bishop Leo had disseminated certain things inconsistent with his priestly profession, we caused strict and lengthened enquiry to be made as to whether they were true, and we have found no fault in him touching the things that had been said. But, that nothing might seem to be omitted, and that no possible doubt might remain in our heart, we caused him over and above to take a strict oath before the most sacred body of the blessed Peter. And, when he had done this, we rejoiced with great exultation that from a proof of this kind his innocence evidently shone forth. Wherefore let your Glory receive the aforesaid man with all charity, and shew him reverence such as is becoming towards a priest; nor let any doubtfulness remain in your heart touching the charges from which he has now been purged. But it lies upon you so to cleave in all respects to the above- named bishop, that you may be seen fittingly and becomingly in his person to honour God, whose minister he is.

EPISTLE XXXIV: TO MAXIMIANUS, BISHOP OF SYRACUSE. GREGORY TO MAXIMIANUS, &C.

I remember to have often admonished you to be by no means hasty in passing sentence. And lo, I have now learnt that your Fraternity in a fit of anger has excommunicated the most reverend abbot Eusebius. Now I am much astonished that neither his former conversation, nor his advanced age, nor his long-continued sickness, could turn your mind from wrath. For, whatever his transgression may have been, the very affliction of sickness ought to have sufficed as a scourge for him. For to one crushed by divine discipline it was superfluous to add human scourges. But perhaps thou hast been allowed to exceed in the case of such a person, in order that thou mightest become more cautious in the case of others of less account, and ponder long when thou art disposed to smite any one through a sentence. Yet still comfort this same man with a sweetness proportionate to the fury with which thou hast exasperated him, since it is very unjust that the very persons who have loved thee most should find thee without cause most bitter against themselves.

EPISTLE XXXVI: TO THE ABBOT EUSEBIUS.

Gregory to Eusebius, &c.

Let thy Charity believe me that I have been greatly saddened for thy sadness, as though I had myself suffered wrong in thee. But, when I afterwards learnt that, even after the most reverend Maximianus, our brother and fellow-bishop, had restored thee to his favour and communion, thy Love would not accept communion from him, I then knew that what had been done before was just. The humility of God's servants ought to appear in a time of affliction: but those who lift themselves up against their superiors shew that they scorn to be God's servants. And, indeed, what he once did ought not to have been done; but still it ought to have been taken by thee with all humility: and again, when he restored to thee his favour, he ought to have been met with thanks. And because it was not so done by thee, I feel that to us in every way there is cause for tears. For it is no great thing for us to be humble to those by whom we are honoured; for even any worldly man would do this: but we ought especially to be humble to those at whose hands we suffer. For the Psalmist says, See my humility before mine enemies (Psal. ix. 14). What life are we leading, if we will not be humble even to our fathers? Wherefore, most beloved son, I beseech thee that all bitterness pass away from thy heart, lest perchance the end should be near, and the ancient foe should, through the iniquity of discord, bar against us the way to the eternal kingdom. Further, we have caused a hundred solidi to be given to thy Love through Peter the subdeacon, which I beg thee to accept without offence.

EPISTLE XXXVII: TO JOHN, BISHOP OF SQUILLACIUM (Squillace, in Calabria).

Gregory to John, &c.

The care of our pastoral office warns us to appoint for bereaved churches bishops of their own, who may govern the Lord's flock with pastoral solicitude. Accordingly we have held it necessary to appoint thee, John, bishop of the civitas Lissitana (Lissus, hodie, Alessio?), which has been captured by the enemy, to be cardinal in the Church of Squillacium, that thou mayest carry on the cure of souls once undertaken by thee, having regard to future retribution. And although, being driven from thine own Church by the invading enemy, thou must govern another Church which is now without a shepherd, yet it must be on condition that, in case of the former city being set free from the enemy, and under the protection of God restored to its former state, thou return to the Church in which thou wast first ordained. If, however, the aforesaid city continues to suffer under the calamity of captivity, i thou must remain in this Church wherein thou art by us incardinated. Moreover, we enjoin thee never to make unlawful ordinations, or allow any bigamist, or one who has taken a wife who was not a virgin, or one ignorant of letters, or one maimed in any part of his body, or a penitent, or one liable to any condition of service, to attain to sacred orders. And, shouldest thou find any of this kind, thou must not dare to advance them. Africans generally, and unknown strangers, applying for ecclesiastical orders, on no account accept. seeing that some Africans are Manichaeans, and some have been rebaptized; while many strangers, though being in minor orders, are proved to have pretended to a higher dignity. We also admonish thy Fraternity to watch wisely over the souls committed to thee, and to be more intent on winning souls than on the profits of the present life. Be diligent in keeping and disposing. of the goods of the Church, that the coming Judge, when He comes to judge, may

approve thee as having in all respects worthily executed the office of shepherd which thou hast taken upon thee.

EPISTLE XLI: TO CASTORIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Castorius, Bishop of Ariminum (Rimini).

What lamentable supplications have been poured out to us by Luminosus, abbot of the monastery of St. Andrew and St. Thomas, in the city of Ariminum, appears from the text of the subjoined petition. With regard to this matter we exhort thy Fraternity that, on the death of the abbot of this same monastery, thy church shall under no pretext interfere in scheduling or taking charge of the property of the said monastery, acquired or to be acquired. And we desire thee to ordain as abbot of the same monastery none other but him whom the whole congregation may by common consent demand as being worthy in character and apt for monastic discipline. Moreover, we entirely forbid public masses to be celebrated there by the bishop, lest occasion be given for popular assemblies in the retreats of God's servants, and also lest too frequent an entrance of women be a cause of scandal (which God forbid), especially to the simpler souls. Further, we ordain that this paper by us written shall be carefully held to, and kept in force and unadulterated in all future time by thee and the bishops that shall be ordained after thee; that so, with the help of God, both thy church may be content with its own rights and no more, and also the said monastery, being subject henceforth to none but general or canonical jurisdiction, and free from all annoyances and vexations, may accomplish its divine work with the utmost devotion of heart.

[In place of the epistle as above given the following, with the appended paper on the privileges of monasteries, is found in some Codices.]

GREGORY TO CASTORIUS, BISHOP OF ARIMINUM.

What lamentable supplications Luminosus, abbot of the monastery of Saints Andrew and Thomas, in the city of Ariminum, has poured out to us, appears from the text of the subjoined petition. For from his account we learn that in very many monasteries the monks have suffered many

prejudices and annoyances from prelates. It is therefore the duty of thy Fraternity to make provision for their future quiet by a wholesome arrangement, to the end that those who have their conversation therein in God's service may, His grace assisting them, persevere with minds free from disturbance. But, lest from a custom which ought to be rather amended than continued, any one should presume to cause any kind of annoyance to monks, it is necessary that the things which we have caused to be enumerated below should be so carefully observed by the fraternity of bishops that no possible occasion of introducing disquiet may be found hereafter.

Of the privileges of Monasteries.

We therefore interdict in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and forbid by the authority of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, in whose stead we preside over this Roman Church, that any bishop or secular person hereafter presume in any way to devise occasions of interfering with regard to the revenues, property, or writings of monasteries, or of the cells or vills thereto appertaining, or have recourse to any tricks or exactions: but, if any case should by chance arise as to land disputed between their churches and any monasteries, and it cannot be arranged amicably, let it be terminated without intentional delay before selected abbots and other fathers who fear God, sworn upon the most holy Gospels. Also on the death of the abbot of any congregation, let no stranger be ordained, or any but one of the same congregation whom the society of the brethren shall of its own accord have elected unanimously, and who shall have been elected without fraud or venality. But, if they cannot find a suitable person among themselves, let them in like manner elect some one from some other monastery to be ordained. Nor, when an abbot has been constituted, let any person whatever on any pretext be put over him, unless perchance (which God forbid) crimes be apparent Which are shewn to be punishable by the sacred canons.

Likewise the rule is to be observed, that monks must not, without the consent of the abbot, be removed from monasteries for constituting other monasteries, or for sacred orders, or for any clerical office. We also disallow ecclesiastical schedules of the property of a monastery to be made by bishops. But if, circumstances requiring it, the abbot of a place should have questions with other abbots concerning property that has come into possession, let the matter be terminated also by their counsel or judgment. On the death also of an abbot let not the bishop on any pretext intermeddle in the scheduling or taking charge of the property of the monastery, acquired, or given, or to be acquired. We also entirely forbid public masses to be celebrated by him in a convent, lest in the retreats of the servants of God and their places of refuge any opportunity for a popular concourse be afforded, or an unwonted entrance of women should ensue, which would be by no means of advantage to their souls. Nor let him dare to place his episcopal chair there, or have any power whatever of command, or of holding any ordination, even the most ordinary, unless he should be requested to do so by the abbot of the place; that so the monks may always remain under the power of their abbots: and let no bishop detain a monk in any church without a testimonial and permission from his abbot, or promote one without such permission to any dignity. We ordain, then, that this paper by us written be kept to for all future time, in force and unadulterated, by all bishops; that both they may be content with the rights of their own churches and no more, and that the monasteries be subject to no ecclesiastical conditions, or compelled services, or obedience of any kind to secular authorities (saving only canonical jurisdiction), but, freed from all vexations and annoyances, may accomplish their divine work with the utmost devotion of heart.

EPISTLE XLII: TO LUMINOSUS, ABBOT.

Gregory to Luminosus, abbot of the monastery of Saint Thomas of Ariminum.

We were glad to receive thine own and thy congregation's petition, and accede to thy requests, in accordance with the statutes of the Fathers and with form of law. For to our brother and fellow-bishop Castorius a letter has been sent by our order, whereby we have taken away entirely from him and his successors all power to harm thy monastery; so that neither may he any longer come among you to be a burden to you, nor schedules be made of the property of the monastery, nor any public procession take place there; this only jurisdiction being still left to him, that he must ordain in the place of a deceased abbot another whom the common consent of the congregation may have chosen as worthy. But now, these things being thus accomplished, be you diligent in the work of God, and assiduously devote yourselves to prayer, lest you should seem not so much to have sought security of mind for prayer, as to have wished to escape strict episcopal control over you while living amiss.

EPISTLE XLVI: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Ravenna.

That I have not replied to the many letters of your Blessedness attribute not to sluggishness on my part, but to weakness, seeing that, on account of my sins, when Ariulph, coming to the Roman city, killed some and mutilated others, I was affected with such great sadness as to fall into a colic sickness. But I wondered much why it was that that well-known care of your Holiness for me was of no advantage to this city and to my needs. When, however, your letters reached me, I became aware that you are indeed taking pains to act, but yet have no one on whom you can bring your action to bear. I therefore attribute it to my sins that this man with whom we are now concerned both evades fighting against our enemies and also forbids our making peace; though indeed at present, even if he wished us to make it, we are utterly unable, since Ariulph, having the army of Authar and Nordulf, desires their subsidies to be given him ere he will deign to speak to us at all about peace.

But, as to the case of the bishops of Istria, I have learnt the truth of all you had told me in your letters from the commands which have come to me from the most pious princes, bid ding me abstain for the present from compelling them. I indeed feel with you, and rejoice greatly in your zeal and ardour, with regard to what you have written, and acknowledge myself to have become in many ways your debtor. Know nevertheless that I shall not cease to write with the greatest zeal and freedom on this same matter to the most serene lords. Moreover the animosity of the aforesaid most excellent Romanus Patricius ought not to move you, since, as we are above him in place and rank, we ought so much the more to tolerate with forbearance and dignity any light conduct on his part.

If, however, there is any opportunity of prevailing with him, let your Fraternity work upon him, so that we may make peace with Ariulph, if to

some small extent we may, since the soldiery have been removed from the city of Rome, as he himself knows. But the Theodosiacs, who have remained here, not having received their pay, are with difficulty induced to guard the walls; and how shall the city subsist, left destitute as it is by all, if it has not peace?

Furthermore, as to the gift redeemed from captivity, about whom you have written to us asking us to enquire into her origin, we would have your Holiness know that an unknown person cannot easily be traced. But as to what you say about one who has been ordained being ordained again, it is exceedingly ridiculous, and outside the consideration of one disposed as you are, unless perchance some precedent is adduced which ought to be taken into account in judging him who is alleged to have done any such thing. But far be it from your Fraternity to entertain such a view. For, as one who has been once baptized ought not to be baptized again, so one who has been once consecrated cannot be consecrated again to the same order. But in case of any one's attainment of the priesthood having been accompanied by slight misdemeanour, he ought to be adjudged to penance for the misdemeanour, and yet return his orders.

With regard to the city of Naples, in view of the urgent insistance of the most excellent Exarch, we give you to understand that Arigis, as we have ascertained, has associated himself with Ariulph, and is breaking his faith to the republic, and plotting much against this same city; to which unless a duke be speedily sent, it may already be reckoned among the lost.

As to what you say to the effect that alms should be sent to the city of the schismatic Severus which has been burnt, your Fraternity is of this opinion as being ignorant of the bribes that he sends to the Court in opposition to us. And, even though these were not sent, we should have to consider that compassion is to be shewn first to the faithful, and afterwards to the enemies of the Church. For indeed there is near at hand the city Fanum, in

which many have been taken captive, and to which I have already in the past year desired to send alms, but did not venture to do so through the midst of the enemy. It therefore seems to me that you should send the Abbot Claudius thither with a certain amount of money, in order to redeem the freemen whom he may find there detained in slavery for ransom, or any who are still in captivity. But, as to the sum of money to be thus sent, be assured that whatever you determine will please me. If, moreover, you are treating with the most excellent Romanus Patricius for allowing us to make peace with Ariulph, I am prepared to send another person to you, with whom questions of ransom may be better arranged.

Concerning our brother and fellow-bishop Natalis I was at one time greatly distressed, in that I had found him acting haughtily in certain matters; but, since he has himself amended his manners, he has overcome me and consoled my distress. In connexion with this matter admonish our brother and fellow-bishop Malchus that before he comes to us he render his accounts, and then depart elsewhere if it is necessary. And if we find his conduct good, it will perhaps be necessary for us to restore to him the patrimony which he had charge of.

EPISTLE XLVII: TO DOMINICUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Dominicus, Bishop of Carthage.

We have received with the utmost gratification the letters of your Fraternity, which have reached us somewhat late by the hands of Donatus and Quodvultdeus, our most reverend brethren and fellow-bishops, and also Victor the deacon with Agilegius the notary. And though we thought that we had suffered loss from the tardiness of their coming, yet we find gain from their more abundant charity; seeing that from this delay in point of time there appears no interruption, but rather increase of the love which, by the mercy of God, through your contemplation of the priestly office, your practice of reading, and your maturity of age, we know to be already firmly planted in you. For it would not flow so largely from you, had it not very many most abundant veins in your heart. Let us, therefore, most holy brother, hold fast with unshaken firmness this mother and guard of virtues. Let not the tongues of the deceitful diminish it in us, or any snares of the ancient enemy corrupt it. For this joins what is divided, and keeps together what is joined. This lifts up what is lowly without tumour; this brings down what is lifted up without dejection. Through this the unity of the universal Church, which is the knitting together of the Body of Christ, rejoices in its several parts through the mind's equalization of them, though having in it dissimilarity from the diversity of its members. Through this these members both exult in the joy of others, though in themselves afflicted, and also droop for the sorrows of others, though in themselves joyful. For seeing that, as the teacher of the Gentiles testifies, if one member suffers anything, the other members suffer with it, and if one member glories, all the members rejoice with it, I doubt not that you groan for our perturbation, as it is quite certain that we rejoice for your peace.

Now as to your Fraternity rejoicing with us on our ordination, it, displays to me the affection of most sincere charity. But I confess that a force of

sorrow strikes through my soul from contemplation of this order of ministry. For heavy is the weight of priesthood; seeing that it is necessary for a priest, first to live so as to be an example to others, and then to be on his guard not to lift up his heart because of the example which he shews. He should ever be thinking of the ministry of preaching, considering with most intense fear how that the Lord, when about to depart to receive for Himself a kingdom, and giving talents to His servants, says, Trade ye till I come (Luke xix. 13). Which trading surely we carry on only if by our living and our speaking we win the souls of our neighbours; if by preaching the joys of the heavenly kingdom we strengthen all that are weak in divine love; if by terribly sounding forth the punishments of hell we bend the froward and the timid; if we spare no one against the truth; if, given to heavenly friendships, we fear not human enmities. And indeed it was in thus shewing himself that the Psalmist knew that he had offered a kind of Sacrifice to God, when he said,, Did I not hale them, O God, that hated thee, and was I not grieved with thine enemies! Yea I hated them with a perfect hated, and they became enemies unto me (Ps. cxxxviii. 217). But in view of this burden I tremble for my infirmity, and look to the returning of the Master of the house, after receiving His kingdom, to take account of us. But with what heart shall I bear His coming, if from the trading I undertook I render Him no gain, or almost none? Do thou, therefore, most dear brother, help me with thy prayers; and what thou seest me to fear for myself, consider daily on thine own account with anxious dread. For through the bond of charity both what I say of myself is thy concern, and what I desire thee to do is mine.

Further, as to what your Fraternity writes about ecclesiastical privileges, keep to this without any hesitation, since, as we defend our own rights, so we observe those of several churches. Nor do I through partiality grant to any Church whatever more than it deserves, nor do I under the instigation of ambition derogate from any what belongs to it by right; but I desire to

honour my brethren in all ways, and study accordingly that each may be advanced in honour, so long as there can be no opposition to it of right on the part of one against the other. Further, I greatly rejoice with you in the manners of your messengers, in whom it has been shewn me how much you love me, in that you have sent to me elect brethren and sons.

Given the tenth of the Kalends of August, tenth indiction.

EPISTLE XLVIII: TO COLUMBUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Columbus, &c.

It is known, most dear brother In Christ, that the ancient enemy, who by cunning persuasion deposed the first man from the delights of Paradise to this life of care, and in him even then inflicted the penalty of mortality on the human race, does now with the same cunning, so as more easily to seize the flock, endeavour to infect the shepherds of the Lord's sheep with infused poisons, and already to claim them as his own by right. But we, who, though unworthy, have undertaken the government of the Apostolic See in the stead of Peter the prince of the apostles, are compelled by the very office of our pontificate to resist the general enemy by all the efforts in our power. Now the bearers of these presents, Constantius and Mustellus, have in a petition presented to us given us to understand, and the deacons of the Church of Pudentiana constituted in the province of Numidia assert, that Maximianus, prelate of the same Church, corrupted by a bribe from the Donatists, has by a new licence allowed a bishop to be made in the place where he lives; which thing, though previous usage allowed it, is prohibited from remaining and continuing by the catholic faith. On this account, then, we have deemed it necessary to exhort thy Fraternity by these present writings that, when Hilarus our chartularius comes to thee, this same case be subjected to a thorough and wise investigation in an united general council of bishops, having the terror of the coming judge before their eyes. And if this charge should be proved with sufficient evidences by the bearers of these presents against the aforesaid bishop, let him by all means be degraded from the dignity and office which he enjoys, that both he may return to the gains of penitence through acknowledgment of his fault, and others may not presume to attempt such things.

For it is right that one who has sold our Lord Jesus Christ to a heretic for money received, as is said to have been done, should be removed from

handling the mysteries of His most holy body and blood. Further, if, apart from this accusation, there is any contest afoot among them, as is contained in the petition of the deacons themselves, with respect to certain wrongs or private transactions, this let thy Fraternity with our aforesaid chartularius fully enquire into with evidence adduced, and decide it according to justice between all the parties.

But, further, we have learnt through the information given us by the bearers of these presents that the heresy of the Donatists is for our sins spreading daily, and that very many, leave being given them through venality, are being baptized a second time by the Donatists. How serious a matter this is, brother, it behoves us with the whole bent of our minds to consider. Lo, the wolf tears the Lord's flock, no longer stealthily in the night, but in the open light; and we see him advance in the slaughter of the sheep, and with no solicitude, with no darts of words, do we oppose him. What fruits, then, of a multiplied flock shall we shew to the Lord, if even that of which we have undertaken the feeding we see with easy mind mangled by the wild beast? Let us therefore study to inflame our hearts by imitation of earthly shepherds, who often keep watch through winter nights, pinched with showers and frost, lest even one sheep, and perchance not a profitable one, should perish. And, if the prowler should have bitten it with greedy mouth, how do they busy themselves, with what palpitations of heart do they pant, with what cries do they leap forward to rescue the captured sheep, stimulated by the pressing need, lest anything lost through their carelessness should be required of them by the lord of the flock! Let us then watch, lest anything should perish: and, if anything should by chance have been seized, let us bring it back to the Lord's flock by the cries of divine discourses, that He who is the Shepherd of shepherds may mercifully vouchsafe to approve us in His judgment as having kept watch over His sheepfold. This also it is needful for you to attend to wisely; that, if there

should be any proper petition on the part of the same bishop against the bearers of these presents, it should be thoroughly enquired into; and, if haply they themselves also should rightly deserve to be smitten for their own fault, we pronounce that they should by no means be spared on the ground of their having had the toil of resorting to us.

In the month of August, tenth indiction.

EPISTLE XLIX: TO JANUARIUS, ARCHBISHOP.

Gregory to Januarius, archbishop of Caralis (Cagliari).

If with integrity of heart we consider the priestly office which we administer, the concord of personal charity ought so to unite us with our sons that, as we are fathers in name, so we should be proved by our affection to be so in deed. While, then, we ought to be such as has been said above, we wonder why such a mass of complaints has arisen against thy Fraternity. We still indeed hesitate to believe it: but, that we may be able to ascertain the truth, we have sent to your parts John the notary of our See, supported by our injunction, who may compel all parties to abide the judgment of chosen arbitrators, and by his own execution carry their judgments into effect. Wherefore we exhort thy Fraternity by this present writing to consider well with thyself beforehand the merits of the cases; and, if you find that you have taken or hold anything unjustly, in consideration of your priesthood to restore it before trial.

Now, among numerous complaints, the most distinguished Isidore has complained of having been excommunicated and anathematised by thy Fraternity for invalid reasons. And, when we had wished to learn from one of thy clergy who was here for what cause this had been done, he gave us to understand that it had been done for no other cause than that the man had done thee an injury. This distresses us exceedingly; since, if it is so, thou shewest that thou dost not think of heavenly things, but givest signs of having thy conversation among things of earth, having brought to bear the malediction of anathema to avenge a private wrong; which is a thing forbidden by the sacred rules. Wherefore for the future be thoroughly circumspect and careful, and presume not to inflict any such penalty again for vindication of thine own wrongs. For, shouldest thou do anything of the kind, know that it will afterwards be avenged on thyself.

EPISTLE LI: TO ALL BISHOPS.

Gregory to all bishops in the matter of the Three Chapters.

I have received your letters with the utmost gratification: but I shall have far abundant joy, if it should be my lot to rejoice in your return from error. Now the forefront of your Epistle notifies that you suffer severe persecution. But persecution, if endured irrationally, is of no profit at all unto salvation. For it is impious in any one to expect a recompense of reward for sin. For you ought to know, as the blessed Cyprian says, that it is not the suffering that makes the martyr, but the cause for which he suffers. This being so, it is exceedingly incongruous for you to glory in the persecution whereof you speak, seeing that you are not thereby at all advanced towards eternal rewards. Let, then, purity of faith bring your Charity back to your mother church who bare you; let no bent of your mind dissociate you from the unity of concord; let no persuasion deter you from seeking again the right way. For in the synod which dealt with the three chapters it is distinctly evident that nothing pertaining to faith was subverted, or in the least degree changed; but, as you know, the proceedings had reference only to certain individuals; one of whom, whose writings evidently deviated from the rectitude of the Catholic Faith, was not unjustly condemned.

Moreover, as to what you write about Italy among other provinces having been especially scourged since that time, you ought not to twist this into a reproach, since it is written, Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (Hebr. xii. 6). If, then, it is as you say, Italy has been since that time the more loved by God, and in all ways approved, having been counted worthy of enduring the scourge of the Lord. But, since it is not as ye try to make out by way of insulting over her, attend ye to reason.

After the Pope Vigilius of illustrious memory, having been appointed in the royal city, promulgated a sentence of condemnation against Theodora, then empress, or against the Acephali, the city of Rome was then attacked and captured by enemies. Does it follow from this that the Acephali had a good case, or that they were unjustly condemned, because such things happened after their condemnation? Away with the thought! For it is not fit that either any one of you, or any others who have been instituted in the mysteries of the Catholic Faith, should say or in any way acknowledge this. This then being recognized, retire ye even now at length from the determination you have come to. Wherefore, that full satisfaction may be infused into your minds, and all doubt removed, with respect to the three chapters, I have judged it of advantage to send you the book which my predecessor of holy memory, Pope Pelagius, had written on this subject. Which book if you should be willing to read again and again, putting aside the spirit of wilful self-defence, I have confidence that you will follow it in all respects, and, notwithstanding all, return to union with us. But if henceforth, after perusal of this book, you should decide to persist in your present determination, you will doubtless shew that you gave yourselves up not to reason but to obstinacy. Wherefore once more, in a spirit of compassion, I admonish your Charity, that, inasmuch as under God the purity of our faith has remained inviolate in the matter of the Three Chapters, ye put away from you all swelling of mind, and return to your mother the Church, who expects and invites her sons; and this all the more speedily as you know that she expects you daily.

EPISTLE LII: TO NATALIS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Natalis, Bishop of Salons.

As though forgetting the tenour of former letters, I had determined to say nothing to your Blessedness but what should savour of sweetness: but, now that in your epistle you have recurred in the way of argumentation to preceding letters, I am once more compelled to say perhaps some things that I had rather not have said.

For in defence of feasts your Fraternity mentions the feast of Abraham, in which by the testimony of Holy Scripture he is said to have entertained three angels (Gen. xviii.). In view of this example, neither will we blame your Blessedness for feasting, if we come to know that you entertain angels. Again you say that Isaac gave a blessing to his son when satiated (Gen. xxvii. 27). Now as to both these things in the Old Testament — since they were so done in the way of history as still to have a meaning in the way of allegory — would that we could so read through the accounts of the things done as to perceive and take thought for the things to be done. For indeed the one, in saluting one only of the three angels, declared the Persons of the Trinity to be of one Substance; the other blessed his son when satiated, because one who is filled with divine banquets has his senses extended into the power of prophecy. But the words of Holy Writ are divine banquets. If, then, you read diligently — if, drawing example from what is outward, you penetrate what is inward — you will be satiated, as it were, from hunting in the field, and fill the stomach of the soul, so as to be able to announce things to come to your son placed before you, to wit to the people you have taken in charge. But one who prophesies anything of God is already in the dark as to this world; for it is assuredly right and fit that he whose senses are bright inwardly through intelligence should see less through concupiscence here below.

Take, therefore, these things to yourselves; and, if you know yourselves to be such as I have said, you need not at all doubt of our esteem. I also find your Blessedness rejoicing if you bear the name of “a gluttonous man” along with the world’s Creator. As to this I briefly comment thus; that, if you are called so falsely, you do truly bear this name along with the world’s Creator; but, if it is true of you, who can doubt that it was false of Him? A like name does not avail to acquit you, if the cause for it is unlike. For even the thief who was condemned to die endured the cross with Him; but a like crucifixion did not acquit him whom his own guilt bound. But now I beseech God with all the prayers I can offer that not the name only, but the cause for it, may join your most holy Fraternity to our Creator.

Further, your Holiness in your letters rightly praises feasts which are made with the intention of bestowing charity. But yet you should know that they then truly proceed from charity, when at them the lives of the absent are not backbitten, no one is censured in derision, and no idle tales about secular affairs, but the words of sacred reading, are heard; when the body is not pampered more than is needful, but only its weakness refreshed, that it may be kept in health for the practice of virtue. If, then, you thus conduct yourselves in your feasts, I own that you are masters of abstinence.

As to your alleging to me the testimony Of the apostle Paul, where he says, Let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth (Rom. xiv. 3), I think that this was altogether out of place, seeing both that I am not one that eateth not, and also that Paul did not here mean to say that the members of Christ, who are mutually bound to each other in His body, that is to say in his Church, with the bond of charity, should have no care whatever for each other. If, indeed, I had nothing to do with thee, nor thou with me, I should rightly be compelled to hold my peace, lest I should blame one whom I could not mend. This precept, then, was given only with reference to persons who go about to judge those who have not been committed to their

care. But now that we, by the ordering of God, are one, we should be much in fault were we to pass over in silence what calls for our correction. Lo, thy Fraternity has taken it amiss to have been blamed by me about feasts, while I, who surpass thee in my position, though not in my life, am ready to be found fault with by all, and by all to be amended. And him only do I esteem to be a friend to me, through whose tongue I wipe off the stains of my soul before the appearance of the strict judge.

But as to what you say, most sweet brother, about your being unable to read because of the pressure of tribulations upon you, I think this avails little for your excuse, since Paul says, Whatsoever things are written are written for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope (Rom. xv. 4). If, then, holy Scripture has been prepared for our comfort, we ought by so much the more to read it as we find ourselves the more wearied under the burden of tribulations. But if we are to rely only on that sentence which you quote in your letter, wherein the Lord says, When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak; far it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you (Matth. x. 19), I say that Holy Scriptures have been given us in vain, if, being filled with the Spirit, we have no need of external words. But, dearest brother, trusting in God without doubt, when we are straightened in a time of persecution, is one thing; what we ought to do when the Church is at peace is another. For it is our duty, through this same Spirit, to learn by reading now what we may be able to shew forth also in suffering, should cause arise.

Now, I rejoice exceedingly that you declare in your letter that you are giving attention to exhortation. For thus I know that you are wisely fulfilling the duties of your position, if you take pains to draw others also to your Maker. But your saying in the same sentence that you are not like me

saddens me at once, after I had begun to rejoice, since I think that it is in derision that you give me praises which in truth I do not recognize as due. However, I give thanks to Almighty God that through you heretics are being recalled to holy Church. But it is needful for you to have a care that those also who are contained in the bosom of holy Church live so that they be not her adversaries through their evil lives, For, if they give themselves not to heavenly desires, but to earthly lusts and pleasures, sons of strangers are being nourished in her bosom.

Now as to your declaring that you cannot possibly be ignorant of the degrees of ecclesiastical rank, I too fully know them with regard to you; and I am therefore much distressed that, if you knew the order of things, you have failed, to your greater blame, in knowing it with regard to me. For, after letters had been addressed to your Blessedness by my predecessor anti myself in the cause of the archdeacon Honoratus, then, the sentence of both of us being set at nought, the said Honoratus was deprived of the rank belonging to him. Which thing if any one of the four patriarchs had done, such great contumacy could by no means have been allowed to pass without the most grievous offence. Nevertheless, now that your Fraternity has returned to your proper position, I do not bear in mind the wrong done either to myself or to my predecessor.

But as to your saying that what has been handed down and guarded by my predecessors ought to be observed in our times also, far be it from me to infringe in any church the statutes of our ancestors with regard to my fellow priests, since I do myself an injury if I disturb the rights of my brethren. But when your accredited messengers arrive, I shall know the rights of the case between you and the aforesaid archdeacon Honoratus; and my own personal examination of it will shew you that, if you have the support of justice on your side, you will sustain no injury from me; as indeed you never have done. But in case justice supports the plea of the often-before-named

Honoratus, I will shew by my acquittal of him that in judgment I have no knowledge even of persons whom I knew.

Concerning the article of excommunication which, if I may say so, was of necessity added to our letters (though even the second and the third time with a condition interposed), your Blessedness complains unreasonably, since the apostle Paul says, Having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience (2 Cor. x. 6). But let these things pass: let us return to what concerns us now. For, if the lord Natalis acts as he should do, I cannot but be friends with him, knowing how much I am a debtor to his affection.

EPISTLE LIV: Here follows the Epistle of Saint Licinianus, bishop, concerning the Book of Rules, addressed to Saint Gregory, pope of the city of Rome.

To the most blessed lord pope Gregory, Licinianus, bishop.

The Book of Rules issued by Thy Holiness, and by the aid of divine grace conveyed to us, we have read with all the more pleasure for the spiritual rules which we find contained in it. Who can fail to read that with pleasure wherein by constant meditation he may find medicine for his soul; wherein, despising the fleeting things of this world which vary in their mutability, he may open the eyes of his soul to the settled estate of eternal life? This book of thine is a palace of all virtues. In it prudence fixes the boundary line between good and evil; justice gives each one his own, while it subjects the soul to God, and the body to the soul. In it fortitude also is found ever the same in adversity and in prosperity, being neither broken by opposition nor lifted up by success. In it temperance subdues the rage of lust, and discriminately imposes a limit upon pleasures. In it thou comprehendest all things that pertain to the partaking of eternal life: and not only for pastors layest down a rule of life, but also to those who have no office of government thou suppliest a rule of life. For pastors may learn in thy fourfold division what they should be in coming to this office; what life they should lead after coming to it; how and what they should teach, and what they should do to avoid being lifted up in so high a position as that of priesthood. This excellent teaching of thine is attested by the holy ancient fathers, doctors, and defenders of the Church; Hilary, Ambrose Augustin, Gregory Nazianzen: these all bear testimony to thee as did the prophets to the apostles. Saint Hilary says, in expounding the words of the Apostle who was the teacher of the Gentiles, “For so he signifies that the things belonging to discipline and morals serve to the good desert of the priesthood, if those things also which are necessary for the science of

teaching and guarding the faith shall not be wanting among the rest'; since it does not all at once constitute a good and useful priest only to act innocently, or only to preach knowingly, seeing that, though a man be innocent, he profits himself only unless he be learned, and that he that is learned is without the authority of a teacher unless he be innocents." Saint Ambrose gives attestation to this book of thine in the books which he wrote about Duties (de officiis). Saint Augustin gives attestation, saying, "In action dignity should not be loved in this life, neither power; since all things under the sun are vain. But the work itself which is done by means of this dignity or power, if it is rightly and profitably done, this is what avails for that weal of subjects which is according to God. Wherefore the Apostle says, 'He that desireth the office of a bishop desireth a good work.' He wished to explain what episcopus means; that it is a title denoting work, not dignity. For it is a Greek word derived hence; — that he who is put over others overlooks those whom he is put over, to wit, as taking care of them; for episcopacy is overlooking. Therefore, if we choose, we may say in Latin that to exercise the office of a bishop is to overlook; so that one who delights to be over others and not to profit them may understand that he is no bishop. For so it is that no one is prohibited from longing to become acquainted with truth, for which purpose leisure is to be commended; but as to a position of superiority, without which the people cannot be. governed, though it may be held and administered becomingly, it is unbecoming to covet it. Wherefore charity seeks holy leisure, so as to have time for perceiving and defending the truth. But if [the burden of government] be imposed, it is to be undertaken on account of the obligation of charity. But not even so should delight in the truth be altogether forsaken, lest the former sweetness should be withdrawn, and the present obligation be oppressive' (Lib. viii. de Trinit, num. 1).

Saint Gregory attests, whose style thou followest, and after whose example thou didst desire to hide thyself in order to avoid the weight of priesthood; which weight, of what sort it is, is clearly declared in the whole of thy book: and yet thou bearest what thou wast afraid of. For thy burden is borne upwards, not downwards; not so as to sink thee to the depths, but to lift thee to the stars; whilst by the grace of God, and the merit of obedience, and the efficiency of good work, that is made sweet which seemed to have heaviness through human weakness. For thou sayest the things that are in agreement with the apostles and with apostolic men. For, being fair, thou hast said things fair, and in them hast shewn thyself fair. I would not have thee liken thyself to an ill-favoured painter painting fair things, seeing that spiritual teaching issues from a spiritual soul, The human painter is by most men esteemed more highly than the inanimate picture. But put not this down to flattery or adulation, but to truth: for it neither becomes me to lie, nor thee to commend what is false. I then, though plainly sincere, have seen thee and all that is thine to be fair, and have seen myself as ill- favoured enough in comparison with thee. Wherefore I thee pray by the grace of God which abounds in thee that thou reject not my prayer, but willingly teach me what I confess myself ignorant of. For we are compelled of necessity to do what thou teachest.

For, when there is no skilled person found for the sacerdotal office, what is to be done but that an unskilled one such as I am, should be ordained? Thou orderest that no unskilled one should be ordained. But let thy prudence consider whether it may not suffice him for skill to know Jesus Christ and Him crucified: for, if this does not suffice, there will, according to this book, be no one who can be called skilled: and so no one will be a priest, if none, unless he be skilled, should be one. For with open front we resist bigamists, lest the sacrament should be thus corrupted. What if the husband of one wife should have touched a woman before his wife? What if

he should not have had a wife, and yet should not have been without touch of a woman? Comfort us with thy pen, that we may not be punished either for our own sin or that of others. For we are exceedingly afraid lest we should be forced to do what we ought not to do. Lo, obedience must be paid to thy precepts, that such a one may be made a priest as apostolical authority approves; and such a one as is sought is not found. Thus faith will cease which cometh of hearing; baptism will cease, if there should be no one to baptize; those most holy mysteries will cease which are effected through priests and ministers. In either case danger remains: either such a one must be ordained as ought not to be, or there must be no one to celebrate or administer sacred mysteries.

A few years ago Leander, Bishop of Hispalis, on his return from the royal city, saw us in passing, and told us that he had some homilies issued by your Blessedness on the Book of Job. And, as he passed by in haste, he did not shew them to us as we requested. But thou wrotest afterwards to him about trine immersion, and saidest in thy letter, as I am told, that thou wast dissatisfied with that work, and hadst determined on maturer consideration to change those homilies into the form of a treatise.

We have indeed six books of Saint Hilary, Bishop of Pictavia, which he turned into Latin from the Greek of Origen: but he has not expounded the whole of the book of holy Job in order. And I am not a little surprised that a man so very learned and so holy should translate the silly tales of Origen about the stars. I, most holy father, can in no wise be persuaded to believe that the heavenly luminaries are rational spirits, Holy Scripture not declaring them to have been made either along with angels or along with men. Let then your Blessedness deign to transmit to my littleness not only this work, but also the other books on morals which in this Book of Rules thou speakest of having composed. For we are thine, and are delighted to read what is thine. For to me it is a desirable and glorious thing, as thy

Gregory says, to learn even to extreme old age. May God the Holy Trinity vouchsafe to preserve your crown unharmed for instructing His Church, as we hope, most blessed father.

BOOK III

EPISTLE I: TO PETER, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, Subdeacon of Campania.

What a crime has been committed in the Lucullan fort against our brother and fellow-bishop Paul the account which has been sent to us has made manifest. And, inasmuch as the magnificent Scholasticus, judge of Campania, happens at the present time to be with us here, we have especially enjoined on him the duty of visiting the madness of so great perversity with strict correction. But, since the bearer of the aforesaid account has requested us to send some one to represent ourselves, we therefore send the subdeacon Epiphanius, who, together with the aforesaid judge, may be able to investigate and ascertain by whom the sedition was raised or investigated, and to visit it with suitable punishment. Let thy Experience then make haste to give aid in this case with all thy power, to the end both that the truth may be ascertained, and that vengeance may proceed against the guilty parties. Wherefore, since the slaves of the glorious Clementina are said to have had to do with this same crime, and to have used language calculated to stir up the sedition, do thou subject them strictly to immediate punishment, nor let your severity be relaxed in consideration of her person, since they ought to be smitten all the more as they have transgressed out of mere pride as being the servants of a noble lady. But you ought also to make thorough enquiry whether the said lady was privy to so atrocious a crime, and whether it was perpetrated with her knowledge, that from our visitation of it all may learn how dangerous it is not only to lay hands on a priest, but even to transgress in words against one. For, if anything should be done remissly or omitted in this case, know that thou especially wilt have to bear the blame and the risk; nor wilt thou find any plea for excuse with us. For in proportion as this business will commend thee to us if it be most strictly investigated and corrected, know that our indignation will become sharp against thee, if it be smoothed over.

Moreover, for the rest, if any slaves from the city should have taken refuge in the monastery of Saint Severinus, or in any other church of this same fort, as soon as this has come to thy knowledge, by no means allow them to remain there, but let them be brought to the church within the city; and, if they should have just cause of complaint against their masters, they must needs leave the church with suitable arrangements made for them. But, if they should have committed any venial fault, let them be restored without delay to their masters, the latter having taken oath to pardon them.

EPISTLE II: TO PAULUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Paulus, &c.

Although it has distressed us in no slight degree to hear of the injury that thou hast suffered, yet we have matter of consolation in learning that the affair is to thy credit, in that, so far as the account sent to us has disclosed the facts, thou hast suffered in the cause of uprightness and equity. Wherefore, that it may redound to the greater glory of thy Fraternity, this occurrence ought neither to shake thy constancy nor turn thee aside from the way of truth. For it is to the greater reward of priests if they continue in the path of truth even after injuries. But, lest the madness of such great impiety should remain unpunished, and pernicious insubordination break out to a worse degree, we have enjoined the magnificent Scholasticus, judge of Campania, who is at present here, that he should avenge what has been done with the repression it deserves. But, inasmuch as thy men have requested us to commission some One to represent ourselves, know that we have for this reason sent to Naples the subdeacon Epiphanius, who may be able, with the judge above named, to investigate and ascertain the truth, to the end that by his instancy he may cause worthy vengeance to be executed on those who may be shewn to have instigated or perpetrated so great a crime.

EPISTLE III: TO JOHN, ABBOT

Gregory to John, &c.

Thy Love has requested me that brother Boniface might be ordained Prior (proepositus) in thy monastery; as to which request I wonder much why it has not been done before. For since the time when I caused him to be given to thee thou oughtest already to have ordained him.

With regard to the tunic of Saint I have been altogether gratified by thy anxiety to tell me of it. But let thy Love endeavour to send me this tunic, or (better still) this same bishop who has it, with his clergy and with the tunic itself, to the end that we may enjoy the blessing thereof, and be able to derive benefit from this bishop and his clergy. I have been desirous of putting an end to the cause that is pending with Florianus, and have already advanced to him as much as eighty solidi, which I believe he proposes should be given him in compensation for the monastery's debt; and I am altogether desirous that this cause should be settled, inasmuch as Stephen the chartularius is said to be urgent that the aforesaid Florianus should transfer it to public cognizance, and it is distasteful to us to be engaged in a public lawsuit. Wherefore we must needs make some concession, so as to be able to bring this same cause to a composition. When this shall have been done, we will inform your Love of it.

But do thou give thy whole attention to the souls of the brethren. Let it be now enough that the reputation of the monastery has been stained through your negligence. Do not often go abroad. Appoint an agent for these causes, and do thou leave thyself time for reading and prayer.

Be attentive to hospitality; as far as thou art able, give to the poor; yet so as to keep what ought to be restored to Florianus.

Moreover, among the brethren of thy monastery whom I see I do not find addiction to reading. Wherefore you must needs consider how great a sin it

is, that God should have sent you alimony from the offerings of others, and you should neglect learning the commandments of God.

Further, with regard to the six twelfths, unless we see the original deed, or a copy of it, we can do nothing. But I have sent an order to the servant of God, Florentinus, that, if the truth should be made apparent to him, he restore to you the six twelfths; after the restoration of which we will either grant the remaining six twelfths on lease or commute the revenue.

EPISTLE V: TO PETER, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, Subdeacon of Campania.

As we have no wish to disturb the privileges of laymen in their judgments, so, when they judge wrongfully, we desire thee to resist them with moderate authority. For to restrain violent laymen is not to act against the laws, but to support law. Since then Deusdedit, the son-in-law of Felix of Orticellum, is said to have done violent wrong to the bearer of these presents, and still unlawfully to detain her property, in such sort that the dejection of her widowhood is found not to move his compassion, but to confirm his malice, we charge thy Experience that against the aforesaid man, as well as in other cases wherein the aforesaid woman asserts that she suffers prejudice, thou afford her the succour of thy protection, and not allow her to be oppressed by any one whatever, lest either thou be found to neglect what without prejudice to equity is commanded thee, or widows and other poor persons, finding no help where they are, be put to expense by the length of the journey hither.

EPISTLE VI: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, bishop of Prima Justiniana.

After the long afflictions which Adrian, bishop of the city of Thebae, has endured from his fellow-priests, as though they bad been his enemies, he has fled for refuge to the Roman city. And though his first representation had been against John, bishop of Larissa, to wit that in pecuniary causes he had given judgment without regard to the laws, yet after this he complained most grievously rather against the person of thy Fraternity, accusing thee of having deposed him unjustly from the degree of priesthood. But we, giving no credence to petitions that have not been enquired into, perused the acts of the proceedings, whether before our brother and fellow-bishop John, or before thy Fraternity. And indeed concerning the judgment of the above-named John, bishop of Larissa, which was suspended on appeal, both the most pious emperors, in their orders sent to the bishop of Corinth, have sufficiently decreed, and we have decreed also, Christ helping us, in our letters directed through the bearers of these presents to the aforesaid John of Larissa. But having ventilated the conflicting judgments, the examination of which the imperial commands had committed to thee, and inspected the series of proceedings held before the bishop John concerning the incriminated persons, we find that thou hast investigated almost nothing pertaining to the questions named and assigned to thee for decision, but by certain machinations hast produced witnesses against the deacon Demetrius, who were to allege with a view to the condemnation of this same bishop, that they had heard this Demetrius bearing testimony concerning the said bishop; — a thing not even lawful to be heard of. And when Demetrius in person denied having done so, it appears that, contrary to the custom of the priesthood and canonical discipline, thou gavest him into the hands of the praetor of the province as a deacon deposed from his dignity. And when, mangled by many stripes, he might perchance have said some things falsely

against his bishop under the pressure of torment, we find that to the very end of the business he confessed absolutely nothing of the things about which he was interrogated. Neither do we find anything else in the proceedings themselves, whether in the depositions of witnesses or in the declaration of Adrian, to his disadvantage. But it is only that thy Fraternity, I know not with what motive, in contempt of law, human and divine, has pronounced an abrupt sentence against him; which, even though it had not been suspended on appeal, being pronounced in contravention of the laws and canons, could not rightly in itself have stood. Further, after, as is abundantly evident, the appeal had been handed to thee, we wonder why thou hast not sent thy people to us to render an account of thy judgment according to the undertaking delivered to our deacon Honoratus by the representatives of thy church. This omission convicts thee either of contumacy or of trepidation of conscience. If, then, these things which have been brought before us have the rampart of truth, inasmuch as we consider that, taking advantage of your vicariate jurisdiction under us, you are presuming unjustly, we will, with the help of Christ, decree further concerning these things, according to the result of our deliberations.

But as regards the present, by the authority of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, we decree that, the decrees of thy judgment being first annulled and made of none effect, thou be deprived of holy communion for the space of thirty days, so as to implore pardon of our God for so great transgression with the utmost penitence and tears. But, if we should come to know that thou hast been remiss in carrying out this our sentence, know thou that not the injustice only, but also the contumacy, of thy Fraternity will have to be more severely punished. But, as to our aforesaid brother and fellow-bishop Adrian, condemned by thy sentence, which, as we have said, was consistent with neither canons nor laws, we order that he be restored, Christ being with him, to his place and rank; so that neither may he be

injured by the sentence of thy Fraternity pronounced in deviation from the path of justice, nor may thy Charity remain uncorrected; that so we may appease the indignation of the future judge.

EPISTLE VII: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, bishop of Larissa.

Our brother Adrian, bishop of the city of Thebae, has come to Rome, bitterly complaining of having been condemned, neither lawfully nor canonically, on certain charges by thy Fraternity, and also by John, bishop of Prima Justiniana. And, when for a long time we saw no representative of the opposite party arrive here who might have replied to his objections, we delivered for perusal, with a view to the necessary ascertainment of the truth, the proceedings which had taken place before you. From these we ascertained that John and Cosmas, deacons who had been deposed from their office, one for frailty of the body and the other for fraudulent dealing with ecclesiastical property, had sent a representation to our most pious emperors against him, with respect to pecuniary matters and also criminal charges.

They, in their commands sent to thee, desired thee (that is with strict observance of law and canons) to take cognizance of the matter so as to pass a sentence firm in law as to the pecuniary questions, but, as to the criminal charges, to report to their Clemency after a searching examination. Now if thy Fraternity had received in a right frame of mind these such right commands, you would never have accepted for a general accusation of their bishop men removed from their own office for their transgressions, and already hostilely disposed; especially as by their representation addressed to our most pious lords their untruthfulness is detected, in that they declared that they made it with the consent of all the clergy.

Yet after this, to touch briefly and summarily on some of the proceedings before thee, the first head of accusation was concerning the Theban deacon Stephen, whom the bishop Adrian had failed to deprive of the dignity of his order, though supposed to have been aware of his most shameful life As to this head, no witnesses were produced to show that bishop Adrian had any

know ledge of the matter, except that Stephen alone, a man of shameful life and on his own confession to be condemned, is alleged to have said so. The second charge made against him appears to have been concerning infants having been debarred by his order from receiving holy baptism, and so having died with the filth of sin unwashed away. But none of the witnesses brought forward against him declared their knowledge of anything of the kind having come under the notice of bishop Adrian, but said that they had learnt it from the mothers of the infants, whose husbands, it is said, had been removed from the church for their crimes. But even so they did not declare that the hour of death had overtaken those infants while unbaptized, as was contained in the invidious representation of the accusers, it being evident that they had been baptized in the city of Demetrias. So much then for the criminal charges.

But, as to the pecuniary matters, after what manner they were adjudged by thee is attested by the enquiry of the men deputed by the prince in pursuance of the most pious order of the most serene princes. For, when the oft- named Adrian had appealed against thy sentence, then, so far as we have ascertained from the depositions of four witnesses which were laid before John, bishop of Prima Justiniana, he was thrust into most close confinement, and forced by thy Fraternity to produce a document in which be confessed the charges brought against him. And it is true that in the document so produced by him he is found to have assented to thy sentence as to pecuniary matters. But the criminal charges he touched on in an indefinite and dubious sort of way, so that both thy purpose might be frustrated by the raising of certain clouds, and he might afterwards the better escape from his confession in the obscurity of a perplexed mode of speech. And when the appeal handed in by his people, and the rest of the proceedings under thy cognizance, had been reported to the most pious princes, and Honoratus, deacon of our See, with the glorious antigraphus

Sebastian having been deputed, as we have said, he was exempted by the most serene lords from all further orders. But, by what sought out contrivances I know not, another imperial order was again elicited, requiring John, bishop of Prima Justiniana, to enquire closely and pass judgment concerning all the aforesaid charges. In which trial all bishop Adrian's clergy, and Demetrius the deacon, the latter in the midst of torments, declared that all this calumny against bishop Adrian had been got up by the contrivance of thy Fraternity. Nor were any of the criminal charges that had been made in thy audience against the bishop Adrian proved. But there came up, contrary to canons and laws, another cruel and crafty enquiry directed against his deacon Demetrius and other persons, in the course of which nothing was discovered for which the oft-mentioned Adrian could have been lawfully condemned, but rather ground for his acquittal. But with respect to John, prelate of the city of Prima Justiniana, and his most iniquitous and abominable judgment, we shall take further measures. As to bishop Adrian, we find both that he has laboured under thy enmity in a way ill- befitting thy priestly character, and that he has been condemned in pecuniary matters for no just cause by the sentence of thy Fraternity.

Since then, having been deposed also by the above-said John bishop of Prima Justiniana in contravention of law and canons, he could not be left deprived of his rank and honour, we have decreed that he be reinstated in his church, and recalled to the order of his proper dignity. And, though thou oughtest to have been deprived of the communion of the Lord's body, for that, setting at naught the admonition of my predecessor of holy memory, whereby he exempted him and his church from the jurisdiction of thy authority, thou hast again presumed to retain some jurisdiction over them, yet we, decreeing more humanely, and still allowing thee the sacrament of communion, decree that thy Fraternity shall abstain from all exercise of the

jurisdiction formerly held by thee over him and his church; but that, according to the written instructions of our predecessor, if any case should possibly arise, whether touching the faith, or criminal, or pecuniary, against the aforesaid Adrian our fellow-priest, it be either taken cognizance of, if the question be a slight one, by those who are or may be our representatives in the royal city, or, if it be an arduous one, it be brought hither to the Apostolic See, to the end that it may be heard and decided before ourselves. But, if thou shouldest attempt at any time, on any pretext or by any surreptitious device, to contravene these our ordinances, know that we decree thee to be deprived of holy communion, and not to partake of it except at the close of thy life, unless upon leave granted by the Roman pontiff. For this we lay down as a rule, agreeably to the teaching of the holy fathers, that whosoever knows not how to obey the holy canons, neither is he worthy to minister or receive the communion at the holy altars. Moreover let thy Fraternity restore to him without any delay the sacred property, or any other, movable or immovable, which thou art said to retain so far; a specification whereof, that has been handed to us, we append to this letter. Concerning which if any question arises between you, we desire it to be considered by our representative in the royal city.

EPlSTLE VIII: TO NATALIS, ARCHBISHOP.

Gregory to Natalis, archbishop of Salona.

Whilst every kind of business demands anxious investigation of the truth, what pertains to deposition from sacerdotal rank should be considered with especial strictness, since here the matter in hand is not concerning persons constituted in a humble position, but, as it were, concerning reversal of divine benediction. This consideration has also moved us to exhort your Fraternity with respect to the person of Florentius, bishop of the city of Epidaurus. For indeed we have been told that he had been accused on certain criminal charges, and that, without any canonical proof being

sought, and without previous sentence of any sacerdotal council, he has been deposed from his office of dignity, not by law, but by authority. Inasmuch, then, as no man can be removed from the rank of episcopacy except for just causes by the concordant sentence of priests, we exhort your Fraternity to cause the aforesaid man to be recalled from the banishment into which he has been driven, and his case enquired into in a consultation of bishops. And, should he be convicted by canonical proof of the charges brought against him, without doubt he must be visited with canonical punishment. But, should the facts be found by the synodical inquisition to be otherwise than had been supposed, it is necessary both that his accusers should dread the rigour of justice, and that the incriminated person should have the approbation of his innocence preserved inviolate. But we have committed by our order the execution of the above-mentioned business to Antoninus, our subdeacon, to the end that decisions may be come to in accordance with the laws and canons, and, with the help of the Lord, be carried into effect.

EPISTLE IX: TO ANTONINUS, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Antoninus, &c.

It has come to our ears that Florentius, bishop of the city of Epidaurus, his property having first been seized, has been condemned, for certain crimes not proved, without a sacerdotal council. And, inasmuch as he ought not to suffer canonical punishment, no canonical sentence having been pronounced for his condemnation, we enjoin thy Experience to urge upon our brother and fellow-bishop Natalis that he should cause the aforesaid man to he recalled from the banishment into which he is said to have been driven. And a council of bishops having been assembled, if the charges brought against him should be canonically proved, we will that the sentence of our aforesaid brother and fellow-bishop Natalis shall take effect against him. But, should he be absolved by a general judgment, thou must not permit him to be subject to prejudice on the part of any one, and must carefully and rigorously insist on his aforesaid property being restored to him. It is therefore needful that the heavier thou feelest the burden of such negotiations to be, with the maturer and more vigilant execution thou take pains to fulfil them.

EPISTLE X: TO SAVINUS, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Savinus, &c.

Bad men have gone forth and disturbed your minds, understanding neither what they say nor whereof they affirm, pretending that in the times of Justinian of pious memory something was detracted from the faith of the holy synod of Chalcedon, which with all faith and all devotion we venerate. And in like manner all the four synods of the holy universal Church we receive as we do the four books of the holy Gospel. But concerning the per sons with respect to whom something had been done after the close of the synod, there was something ventilated in the times of Justinian of pious memory: yet so that neither was the faith in any respect violated, nor anything else done with regard to these same persons but what had been determined at the same holy synod of Chalcedon. Moreover, we anathematize any one who presumes to detract anything from the definition of the faith which was promulgated in the said synod, or, as though by amending it, to change its meaning: but, as it was there promulgate, so in all respects we guard it. Thee, therefore, most dear son, it becomes to return to the unity of Holy Church, that thou mayest end thy days in peace; lest the malignant spirit, who cannot prevail against thee through thy other works, may from this cause find a way at the day of thy departure of barring thy entrance into the heavenly Kingdom.

EPISTLE XII: TO MAXIMIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Maximianus, bishop of Syracuse

I wrote some time ago to your Fraternity desiring you to send to the Roman city those who had alleged anything against Gregory, bishop of the city of Agrigentum. And we exhort you by this present epistle that this should be immediately done. Wherefore hasten to send with speed the persons themselves, and the rest of the documents, that is the reports of proceedings and the petitions that have been given in. Nor do we allow any delay or excuse to be sought; to the end that, when they have been sent, as we have said, with speed to the Roman city, we may know how, with the help of God, we may most advantageously deal with him

EPISTLE XV: TO SCHOLASTICUS, JUDGE.

Gregory to Scholasticus, judge of Campania.

While we were greatly distressed in our care for the city of Naples, bereaved of the solace of a priest, the arrival of the bearers of these presents with the decree for the election of our subdeacon Florentius, had afforded us some relief under so great a burden of thought. But, when it appeared that our said subdeacon, flying from the very city. had deprecated his ordination with tears, know ye that our sadness increased, as if from some heavier dispensation. Wherefore, greeting you well, we exhort your Greatness to assemble the chief men or the people of the city, so as to take thought for the election of another, who may be worthy to be promoted to the priesthood with the consolation of Christ. Then, the decree having been solemnly passed, and transmitted to this city, let the ordination proceed, with the help of Christ, among yourselves. But, should you not find a suitable person on whom you can agree, at any rate choose ye three upright and wise men, to be sent to this city as representing the community, and to whose judgment the whole population may assent. Perhaps, when they come hither, they will find such a one as may be ordained as your bishop without reproach, to the end that your bereaved city may neither within itself want an inspector of its deeds, nor, when the care of a priest is supplied to it, afford entrance to hostile snares from without.

EPISTLE XXII: TO ANTONINUS, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Antoninus, Subdeacon, Rector of the patrimony in Dalmatia.

It is commonly reported in these parts that our brother and fellow-bishop, Natalis of the Church of Salona, is dead. If this is true, let thy Experience with all speed and all care hasten to admonish the clergy and people of that city that with one consent they elect a priest for ordination; and, when the nomination of the person who may be elected has been made, thou wilt take care to transmit it to us, that he may be ordained with our consent, as has been the case from ancient times. And this above all things thou must look to, that in this election neither any bribery in any way whatever come in, nor the patronage of any persons whatever prevail. For if one is elected through the patronage of certain persons, he is obliged out of deference to them to comply with their wishes after his ordination, and so it comes to pass that the possessions of that church are lessened, and ecclesiastical order. is not maintained. They must, therefore, under thy superintendence, elect such a person as will not be unsuitably subservient to the will of any one, but one who in the adornment of his life and conversation may be found worthy of such a high degree. But of the possessions or ornaments of the same church cause an inventory to be faithfully written out in thy presence. And, lest any of the possessions themselves should be lost. admonish Respectus the deacon and Stephanus the chief notary (primicerium notariarum) to take sole charge of these possessions, warning them that they will have to make good out of their own substance any diminution of them that may have arisen from their negligence.

Moreover, strictly charge Malchus, our brother and fellow-bishop, that he refrain entirely from intermeddling in this matter. For, should we learn that anything has been done or attempted by him against our will, let him know that he will incur no slight guilt and danger. But of this also take care

to warn him, that be mast be careful to set down and complete the accounts of our patrimony which he has had in charge; for doing which let him make baste, laying aside all excuses, to come to us from the Sicilian parts. Let him, then, in no wise presume to meddle with the affairs of the Church of Salona, lest he should be under further liability to it, and possibly found culpable. For he is said to have many things belonging to the aforesaid church; and report goes that he was well-nigh the prime mover in the sale of its possessions, and in other unlawful doings. And, should this be found in manifest truth to be as it is said to be, he may be certain that it will by no means remain unavenged.

Let any necessary expenses be defrayed by the steward who was in office at the time of the aforesaid bishop's death, that so he may explain his accounts to the future bishop as he knows them to be. All the things that we have enjoined on thee to be done it is certainly necessary that thou shouldest do with the advice of our son, the magnificent and most eloquent Marcellus, to the end that thou mayest be able to carry out carefully and effectively all that is contained in this paper of directions, and that no blame for negligence may belong to thee.

EPISTLE XXIX: TO THE PRESBYTERS AND CLERGY OF MEDIOLANUM (Milan).

Gregory to the presbyters, deacons, and clergy of the church of Mediolanum.

We have received your Love's epistle, which, though it bore no subscription, was accredited by the persons of the bearers, the presbyter Magnus and the cleric Hippolytus. Having read it, we find that you are all agreed in favour of our son Constantius, deacon of your church, who has been well known to me for long. And, when I represented the Apostolical See in the royal city, he stuck close to me for a long time; but i never found anything in him that could at all be found fault with. Nevertheless, since it has been for long my deliberate determination to interfere in no man's favour with a view to his undertaking the burden of pastoral care, I can but follow up your election with my prayers that Almighty God, who is ever prescient of our future doings, may supply you with a pastor such that in his tongue and manners you may be able to find pastures of divine exhortation; one in whose disposition humility may shine forth together with rectitude, and severity with loving-kindness; one who may be able to shew you the way of life not in his speaking only but also in his living; that so from his example your love may learn to sigh with longing for the eternal country. Wherefore, most dear sons, we, warned by our sense of the censorship of our office, urge you in this matter of getting yourselves a bishop that none of you look to your own gain without regard to the common advantage, lest, if any one is eager after his own individual interest, he should be deceived by a frivolous estimate: for the mind that is bound by cupidity does not examine with a free judgment a person's claims to preference. Considering, therefore, what things are profitable for all, pay ye ever in all things most complete obedience to him whom Divine grace may put over you. For, when once put over you, he must not be further judged by you; though now

he ought to be the more thoroughly judged as he may not be judged hereafter. But, when with God's leave a pastor has been consecrated for you, commit ye yourselves to him with all your heart, and in him serve the Lord the Almighty, who has put him over you.

But, inasmuch as supernal judgment is wont to provide pastors for peoples according to their deservings, do you seek spiritual things, love heavenly things, despise things temporal and fugitive; and hold it for most certain that you will have a pastor who shall please God, if you in your own doings please God. Lo, all the things of this world, which we used to hear from the sacred page were doomed to perish, we see already ruined. Cities are overthrown, camps uprooted, churches destroyed; and no tiller of the ground inhabits our land. Among ourselves who are left, very few in number, the sword of man incessantly rages along with calamities wherewith we are smitten from above. Thus we see before our eyes the evils which we long ago beard should come upon the world, and the very regions of the earth have become as pages of books to us. In the passing away, then, of all things, we ought to take thought how that all that we have loved was nothing. View, therefore, with anxious heart the approaching day of the eternal judge, and by repenting anticipate its terrors. Wash away with tears the status of all your transgressions. Allay by temporal lamentation the wrath that hangs over you eternally. For our loving Creator, when He shall come for judgment, will comfort us with all the greater favour as He sees now that we are punishing ourselves for our own transgressions.

We are now sending to you, by the favour of God, John our subdeacon, the bearer of these presents, to this end; — that, with the help of Almighty God, he may see to your bishop-elect being consecrated after the manner of his predecessor. For, as we demand our rights from others, so we conserve their several rights to all.

EPISTLE XXX: TO JOHN, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to John, &c

Inasmuch as it is manifest that the Apostolic See is, by the ordering of God, set over all Churches, there is, among our manifold cares, especial demand for our attention, when our decision is awaited with a view to the consecration of a bishop. Now on the death of Laurentius, bishop of the church of Mediolanum, the clergy reported to us that they had unanimously agreed in the election of our son Constantius, their deacon. But, their report not having been subscribed, it becomes necessary, that we may omit nothing in the way of caution, for thee to proceed to Genua (Genoa), supported by the authority of this order. And, inasmuch as there are many Milanese at present there under stress of barbarian ferocity, thou must call them together, and enquire into their wishes in common. And, if no diversity of opinion separates them from the unanimity of the election — that is to say, if thou ascertainest that the desire and consent of all continues in favour of our aforesaid son, Constantius, — then thou art to cause him to be consecrated by his own bishops, as ancient usage requires, with the assent of our authority, and the help of the Lord; to the end that through the observance of such custom both the Apostolic See may retain the power belonging to it, and at the same time may not diminish the rights which it has conceded to others.

EPISTLE XXXI: TO ROMANUS,

Gregory to Romanus, Patrician, and Exarch of Italy.

We believe that your Excellency is already aware of the death of Laurentius, bishop of the church of Mediolanum. And since, so far as we have learnt from the report of the clergy, all have agreed in the election of our son Constantius, deacon of the same church, it was necessary for us, for keeping up old usage, to send a soldier of our church, to cause him in whose favour he finds the will and consent of all to concur unanimously to l be consecrated by his own bishops, as ancient usage requires, though still with our assent. Wherefore, greeting you with fatherly affection as in duty bound, we request your Excellency to vouchsafe your support, justice approving, to the aforesaid Constantius, whether elected or not, whenever need may arise; to the end that this service may both exalt you here before your enemies, and commend you beforehand in the future life before God. For he is one of mine, and was once associated with me on very intimate terms. And you ought to hold as yours, and to love peculiarly, those whom you know to be ours.

EPISTLE XXXII: TO HONORATUS, ARCHDEACON.

Gregory to Honoratus, Archdeacon of Salona.

The mandates of ourselves and of our predecessor had reached thy Love not long ago, in which thou wert acquitted of the charges calumniously brought against thee; and we ordered thee to be reinstated without any dispute in the order of thy rank. But, inasmuch as again after no great lapse of time, thou camest to the city of Rome complaining of some improper proceedings among you concerning the alienation of sacred vessels, and as, while we had persons with us here who might have replied to thy objections, Natalis, thy bishop, departed this life, we have judged it necessary to confirm further by this present letter those same mandates, both our predecessor's and our own, which (as has been said) we sent not long ago for thy acquittal. Wherefore, acquitting thee fully of all the charges brought against thee, we will that thou continue without any dispute in the rank of thy order, so that the question raised by the aforesaid man may not on any pretext prejudice thee in the least degree. Moreover, as to the heads of thy complaint, we have straitly charged Antoninus, subdeacon and rector in your parts of the patrimony of holy Church over which, by God's providence, we preside, that, if he should find ecclesiastical persons implicated in them, he decide these cases with the utmost strictness and authority. But, in case of the business being with such persons as the vigour of ecclesiastical jurisdiction cannot reach, he is to deposit the proofs under each particular head among the public acts, and transmit them to us without any delay, that, being accurately informed, we may know how, with the help of Christ, to dispose of the matter.

EPISTLE XXXIII: TO DYNAMIUS, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Dynamius, Patrician of Gaul.

He who administers faithfully what is other's shews how well he dispenses what is his own. And this your Glory makes manifest to us in that, intent on your annual offering, you have rendered the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, the fruits of his revenues. In paying him what is his faithfully, you have made these gifts to him your own. For indeed it becomes the glorious people of this earth who think of eternal glory so to act that in virtue of their excelling in temporal power, they may procure for themselves a reward that is not temporal. Accordingly, addressing to you the greeting which we owe, we implore Almighty God both to replenish your life with present good, and to extend it to the lofty joys of eternity. For we have received through our son Hilarus (al Hilarius) of the aforesaid revenues of our Church four hundred Gallican solidi. We now send you as the benediction of the blessed apostle Peter a small cross, wherein are inserted benefits from his chains, which for a time bound his neck: but may they loose yours from sins for ever. Moreover in its four parts round about are contained benefits from the gridiron of the blessed Laurence, whereon he was burnt, that it, whereon his body was consumed by fire for the truth's sake, may inflame your soul to the love of the Lord.

EPISTLE XXXV: TO PETER, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Peter, subdeacon of Campania.

Our brother and fellow-bishop Paul has often requested us to allow him to return to his own church. And, having perceived this to be reasonable, we have thought it needful to accede to his petition. Consequently let thy Experience convene the clergy of the Neapolitan church, to the end that they may choose two or three of their number, and not omit to send them hither for the election of a bishop. But let them also intimate, in their communication to us, that those whom they send represent them all in this election, so that their church may have its own bishop validly ordained. For we cannot allow it to be any longer without a ruler of its own. Should they perchance try in any way to set aside thy admonition, bring to bear on them the vigour of ecclesiastical discipline. For he will be giving proof of his own perverseness, whosoever does not of his own accord assent to this proceeding. Moreover, cause to be given to the aforesaid Paul, our brother and fellow-bishop, one hundred solidi, and one little orphan boy, to be selected by himself, for his labour in behalf of the same church. Further, admonish those who are to come hither as representing all for the election of a bishop, to remember that they must bring with them all the episcopal vestments, and also as much money as they may foresee to be necessary for him who may be elected bishop to have to his own use. But lose no time in despatching those of the clergy who are selected as we have said, that, seeing that there are present here divers nobles of the city of Naples, we may treat with them concerning the election of a bishop, and take counsel together with the help of the Lord.

EPISTLE XXXVI: TO SABINUS, GUARDIAN (Defensorem).

Gregory to Sabinus, Guardian of Sardinia.

Certain serious matters having come to our ears which require canonical correction, we therefore charge thy Experience not to neglect to cause Januarius, our brother and fellow-bishop, together with John the notary, to appear before us with all speed, all excuses being laid aside, that in his presence what has been reported to us may be subjected to a thorough investigation. Further, if the religious women Pompeiana and Theodosia, according to their request, should wish to come hither, afford them your succour in all ways, that they may be able, through your assistance, to accomplish their desires: but especially be careful by all means to bring with you the most eloquent Isidore, as he has requested, that, the merits of his case which he is known to have against the Church of Caralis having been fully gone into, he may be able to have it legally terminated.

Furthermore, some personal misdemeanours having been reported to us of the presbyter Epiphanius, it is necessary for you to investigate everything diligently, and to make haste to bring at the same time with you the women with whom he is said to have sinned, or others whom you suppose to know anything about the matter; that so the truth may be clearly laid open to the rigour of ecclesiastical discipline.

Now you will take care to accomplish all these things so efficiently as to lay yourself open to no blame for negligence, knowing that it will be entirely at your peril if this our order should in any way be slackly executed.

EPISTLE XXXVIII: TO LIBERTINUS, PRAEFECT.

Gregory to Libertinus, Praefect of Sicily.

From the very beginning of your administration God has willed you to go forth to vindicate His cause, and of His mercy has reserved for you this reward, with praise attending it. For it is reported that one Nasas, a most wicked Jew, has with a temerity that calls for punishment erected an altar under the name of the blessed Elias, and by sacrilegious seduction has enticed many Christians to worship there; nay, has also, it is said, acquired Christian slaves, and devoted them to his own service and profit. Whilst, then, he ought to have been most severely punished for such great crimes, the glorious Justinus, soothed (as has been written to us) by the charm of avarice, put off avenging the injury done to God. But let your Glory institute a strict examination into all these things, and, if it should be found manifest that such things have been done, make haste to visit them most strictly and corporally on this wicked Jew, in such sort that you may thereby both conciliate the favour of God to yourself, and shew yourself by this example, to your own reward, a model to posterity. Moreover, set at liberty, without any equivocation, according to the injunctions of the laws, whatever Christian slaves it shall appear that he has acquired; lest (which God forbid) the Christian religion should be polluted by being subjected to Jews. Do you therefore with all speed correct these things most strictly, that not only may we give thanks to you for this discipline, but also bear testimony to your goodness in case of need.

EPISTLE XLV: TO ANDREW, BISHOP.

Gregory to Andrew, Bishop of Tarentum [Tarante, in Calabria].

A man may look without alarm to the tribunal of the eternal Judge, if only, conscious of his own guilt, he strives to pacify Him by befitting penitence. Now that thou hadst a concubine we find to be manifestly true, with regard to whom also an adverse suspicion has arisen in the minds of some. But, since in doubtful cases judgment ought not to be absolute, we have chosen to leave the matter to thine own conscience. If, then, after being constituted in sacred orders thou rememberest having been defiled by carnal intercourse, thou must resign the dignity of priesthood, nor presume by any means to approach its ministration, knowing that thou wilt administer it to the peril of thy soul, and without doubt have to render an account to our God, if, being conscious of this crime, thou shouldest desire to continue in the order wherein thou art, concealing the truth. Wherefore we again exhort thee that, if thou knowest thyself to have been deceived by the craft of the ancient foe, thou hasten to overcome him, while thou mayest, by adequate penitence, lest, as we hope may not be, thou be reckoned as partner with him in the day of judgment. If, however, thou art not conscious of this guilt, thou must needs continue in the order wherein thou art.

Furthermore, since, against due order, thou didst doom a woman on the Church-roll to be cruelly beaten with cudgels, although we do not think that she died eight months after wards, yet. because thou hast had no regard to thy order, we therefore sentence thee to abstain for two months from the administration of mass. Meanwhile, being suspended from thy office, it will become thee to weep for what thou hast done. For it is very right that, now that the examples of praiseworthy priests do not provoke thee to the tranquil rectitude befitting thy position, at any rate the medicine of correction should compel thee.

EPISTLE XLVI: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Calliopolis [Gallipoli, in Calabria].

From the reports sent to us by thy Fraternity it appears that Andrew, our brother and fellow-bishop, undoubtedly had a concubine. But, since it is uncertain whether he has touched her while constituted in sacred orders, it is necessary that thou shouldest warn him with earnest exhortation that, if he knows himself to have had intercourse with her while in sacred orders, he should retire from the office which he holds, and minister no longer. And if, though conscious of having done this thing, he should conceal his sin and presume to minister, let him know that peril hangs over his soul in the divine judgment.

As to the woman on the Church-roll, whom he caused to be chastised with cudgels, though we do not believe that she died eight months afterwards, yet, since he caused her to be thus punished inconsistently with his sacred calling, do thou suspend him for two months from the solemnization of mass, that at any rate this disgrace may teach him how to behave himself in future.

Moreover, the clergy of the aforesaid bishop, in a petition presented to us, which is subjoined below, allege that they endure much ill-treatment from him. Wherefore let thy Fraternity take care to ascertain all these things accurately, and so to correct and arrange them in a reasonable way that they may be under no necessity hereafter of resorting hither on account of this matter. In the month of July, indiction 11.

EPISTLE XLVII: TO THE CLERGY OF THE CHURCH OF SALONA.

Gregory to the clergy, &c.

Having read your letter, beloved, we learn that you have made choice of Honoratus your archdeacon; and know ye that it is altogether pleasing to us that you have chosen for the order of episcopacy a man tried of old and of grave manner of life. We too join with you in approbation of his personal character, inasmuch as it is already known to us; and it has been our own wish also that he should be ordained as your priest according to your desire. For which cause we exhort you to persist in his election without any ambiguity. Nor ought any circumstances to disincline you from his person, since, as this laudable choice is now approved, so it will impose both a burden on your souls and a stain of unfaithfulness on your reputation, if any one should seduce you (which God forbid) to turn aside your love from him. But as to those who are not at one with you in this desired election, we have caused them to be admonished by Antoninus our subdeacon, that they may be able to agree with you. To him also we have already given our injunctions as to what ought to be done with respect to the person of our brother and fellow-bishop Malchus. But, inasmuch as we have ourselves also written to him, we believe that he will without delay keep himself quiet from disquieting you. If by any chance he should in any way whatever neglect to obey, his contumacy will in every way be mulcted with the utmost rigour of canonical punishment.

EPISTLE XLVIII: TO COLUMBUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Columbus, &c.

Even before receiving thy Fraternity's letter, I knew thee from the report of thy deserved reputation to be a good servant of God. And now that I have received it, I understand more fully that what fame had already spread abroad was well founded; and I greatly rejoice in thy deserts, in that thou exhibitest manners and deeds that testify to a praiseworthy life. Since, then, I feel that these things are conferred on thee by the Supernal Majesty, I congratulate thee; and I bless God our Creditor, who denies not the gifts of His mercy to His humble servants. On this account I declare it to be true that thy Fraternity so kindles me with the flame of charity to love thee, and my spirit is so united to thee, that I both desire to see thee and am also with thee in heart, though absent. Thou perceivest in thine own thoughts that this is so. For in truth unity of minds in charity has power to unite more than bodily presence can. Furthermore, that with thy whole mind, thy whole heart, thy whole soul, thou cleavest and art devoted to the Apostolic See I am now assured, as, indeed before thy letter had borne testimony to the fact, I plainly knew. Wherefore, first addressing thee with the greeting of charity which is due, I exhort thee not to cease to be mindful of what thou hast promised to the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles.

Wherefore be thou urgent with the primate of thy synod, that boys be in no wise admitted to sacred orders, lest they fall by so much the more dangerously as they hasten more speedily to mount to higher places. Let there be no venality in ordination: let not the influence or entreaty of any persons obtain anything in contravention of these our prohibitions. For without doubt God is offended if any one is promoted to sacred orders, not for merit, but by favour (which God forbid) or venality.

If, then, thou art aware of these things being done, keep not silence, but oppose them urgently; since, if perchance thou shouldest neglect them, or

conceal them when known of, the chain of sin will bind not those alone who do such things, but no light guilt before God will touch thee also in the matter. If, then, anything of the kind is committed, it ought to be restrained by canonical punishment, lest so great a wickedness, with sin in others, acquire strength from connivance.

I have, therefore, the sooner given leave of departure to the bearer of these presents, Victorinus, thy Fraternity's deacon, whom I think to be thy imitator, and whom I have received with charity; and by him I have transmitted to thee for a blessing keys of the blessed Peter, in which something from his chains is included.

Lastly, with regard to the unity and peace of the council which, under God, you are taking measures to assemble, let thy Charity rejoice my mind by informing me of everything particularly.

EPISTLE XLIX: TO ADEODATUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Adeodatus, Primate bishop of the province of Numidia.

After what manner the charity of affection has bound your Fraternity to usward the tenour of your letters has evidently shewn; and they bare afforded us great matter of rejoicing, in that we have found them to be composed in a spirit of loving-kindness, and to glow with affection well-pleasing to God. As, then, we have briefly said, the epistle which you have addressed to us has so laid open your mind that its author might be supposed not to be absent from us at all. For, indeed, persons are not to be accounted absent whose feelings are not at variance with mutual charity. And though, as you say in your letter, neither your strength nor your age allow you to come to us, that we might be gratified by the bodily presence of your Fraternity, yet, seeing that we are one with you and you with us in feeling, we are entirely present one to the other, while we see each other in a mind made one through love. Furthermore, greeting your Fraternity with the suitable affection of charity, we exhort you that you study with all your heart so to acquit yourself wisely in the office of primacy which under God you hold, that it may both profit your soul to have attained to this rank, and that you may stand out as a good example for imitation to others in the future.

Be, then, especially careful with regard to ordination; and by no means admit any to aspire to sacred orders but such as are somewhat advanced in age and pure in deeds, lest perchance they cease for ever to be what they immaturely haste to be. For you must first examine the life and manners of those who are to be placed in any sacred order; and, that you may be able to admit such as are worthy to this office, let not the influence or the entreaty of any persons whatever inveigle you. But before all things it behoves you to be cautious that no venality may have place in ordination, lest (which God forbid) the greater danger hang over both the ordained and the

ordainers. If ever, then, there is need for such things to be taken in hand, call grave and experienced men into your counsels, and consider the matter in common deliberation with them. And before all others it is fit that you should in all cases call in Columbus our brother and fellow- bishop. For we believe that, if you shall have done what is to be done with his advice, no one will find anything in any way to find fault with in you; and know ye that it will be as acceptable to us as if it had been done with our advice; inasmuch as his life and manners have in all respects so approved themselves to us that it is clearly apparent to all that what is done with his consent will be darkened by no blot of faultiness. But the bearer of these presents, Victorians, deacon of our fellow-bishop above- named, has been such a herald of your merits as exceedingly to refresh our spirits With regard to your behaviour. And we pray the Almighty Lord to cause the good that has been reported of you to shine forth more fully in operation as well-pleasing to Him. When, therefore, the council which you are taking measures to assemble has, with the succor of God, been brought to a conclusion, rejoice us by telling of its unity and concord, and give us information on all points,

EPISTLE LI: TO MAXIMIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Maximinianus, Bishop of Syracuse.

My brethren who live with me familiarly urge me by all means to write something briefly about the miracles of the Fathers done in Italy, which we have heard of. With this view I am in great need of the assistance of your Charity, to mention to me shortly what comes back to your memory, and what you happen to have known. For I remember your telling me something, which I have now forgotten, about the lord Abbot Nonnosus, who was with the lord Anastasius of Pentomi. And therefore this, or anything else, I beg thee to communicate to me by letter without delay, if indeed thou art not intending to come to me thyself shortly.

EPISTLE LIII: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Constantinople.

Though consideration of the case moves me, yet charity also impels me to write, since I have written once and again to my most holy brother the lord John, but have received no letter from him. For some one else, a secular person, addressed me under his name; seeing that, if those were really his letters, I have not been vigilant, having believed of him something far different from what I have found. For I had written about the case of the most reverend presbyter John, and about the questions of the monks of Isauria, one of whom, being in priest's orders, has been beaten with clubs in your church; and thy most holy Fraternity (as appears from the signature of the letter) has written back to me professing ignorance of what I wrote about. At this reply I was exceedingly astonished, revolving within myself in silence, if he speaks the truth, what can be worse than that such things should be done against the servants of God, and even he who was close at hand should not know? For what. excuse can a shepherd have if the wolf devours the sheep and the shepherd knows it not? But, if your Holiness knew both what I referred to in my letter and what had been done, whether against John the presbyter or against Athanasius, monk of Isauria and presbyter, and wrote to me, I know not; what can I reply to this, since the Truth says through His Scripture, The mouth that lieth slayeth the saul (Wisd. i. 11)? I demand of thee, most holy brother; has that so great abstinence of thine come to this, that by denial thou wouldest hide from thy brother what thou knewest to have been done? Had it not been better that flesh should go into that mouth for food, than that falsehood should come out of it for deceiving a neighbour; especially when the Truth says, Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man (Matth. xv. 11)? But far be it from me to believe anything of the kind of your most holy heart. Those letters were headed

with your name, but I do not think they were yours. I had written to the most blessed lord John; but I believe that that familiar of yours has replied, — that youngster, who as yet has learnt nothing about God; who knows not the bowels of charity; who in his wicked doings is accused by all; who daily lays snares against the deaths of divers people by means of concealed wills; who neither fears God nor regards men. Believe me, most holy brother, you must first correct this man, that from the example of those who are near to you those who are not near may be better amended. Do not give ear to his tongue: he ought to be directed after the counsel of your holiness; not your holiness swayed by his words. For, if you listen to him, I know that you cannot have peace with your brethren. For I, as my conscience bears me witness, wish to quarrel with no man; and with all my power I avoid it. And, though I desire exceedingly to be at peace with all mankind, it is especially so with you, whom I exceedingly love, if only you are yourself the person whom I knew. For, if you do not observe the canous, and wish to tear to pieces the statutes of the Fathers, I know not who you are. So act, then, most holy and most dear brother, that we may mutually recognize each other, lest, if the ancient foe should move us two to take offence, he slay many through his most atrocious victory. As for me, to shew that I seek to do nothing in a haughty spirit, if that youngster of whom I have before spoken did not hold the topmost place of evil doing with thy Fraternity, I could meanwhile have passed over in silence what is ready to my hand from the canons, and have sent back to thee with confidence the persons who came to me at the first, knowing that your Holiness would receive them with charity. But even now I say; Either receive these same persons, restoring them to their orders, and leaving them in quiet; or, if perchance thou art unwilling to do this, observe in their case the statutes of the Fathers and the definitions of the canons, putting aside all altercation with me. But, if thou shouldest do neither, we indeed are unwilling to bring on a quarrel,

but still do not shun one if it comes from your side. Moreover your Fraternity knows well what the canons say about bishops who desire to inspire fear by blows. For we have been made shepherds, not persecutors. And the excellent preacher says, Argue, beseech, rebuke, with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Tim. iv. 2). But new and unheard of is this preaching, which exacts faith by blows. But I need not speak at length by letter about these things, since I have sent my most beloved son, the deacon Sabinianus, as my representative in ecclesiastical matters, to the threshold of our lords; and he will speak with you about everything more particularly. Unless you are disposed to wrangle with us, you will find him prepared for all that is just. Him I commend to your Blessedness, that he at least may find that lord John whom I knew in the royal city.

EPISTLE LVI: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Ravenna.

It is not long since certain things had been told us about thy Fraternity concerning which we remember having declared ourselves in full, when Castorius, notary of the holy church over which we preside, went into your parts. For it had come to our ears that some things were being done in your church contrary to custom and to the way of humility, which alone, as you well know, exalts the priestly office. Now, if your Wisdom had received our admonitions kindly or with episcopal seriousness, you ought not to have been incensed by them, but have corrected these same things with thanks to us. For it is contrary to ecclesiastical use, if even unjust correction (the which be far from us) is not most patiently borne.

But your Fraternity has been too much moved; and when, in the swelling of thy heart, as if to justify thyself, thou wrotest that thou didst not use the pallium except after the sons of the Church had been dismissed from the sacristy, and at the time of mass, and in solemn litanies, thou madest acknowledgment in words with most manifest truth of having usurped something contrary to the usage of the Church in general. For how can it be that at a time of ashes and sackcloth, through the streets among the noises of the people thou couldest do lawfully what thou hast disclaimed the doing of as being unlawful in the assembly of the poor and nobles, and in the sacristy of the Church? Yet this, dearest brother, is not, we think, unknown to thee; that it has hardly ever been heard of any metropolitan in any parts of the world that he has claimed to himself the use of the pallium except at the time of mass. And that you knew well this custom of the Church in general you have shewn most plainly by your epistles, in which you have sent to us appended the precept of our predecessor John of blessed memory, to the effect that all the customs conceded in the way of privilege to you and your church by our predecessors should be retained. You acknowledge,

then, that the custom of the Church in general is different, seeing that you claim the right of doing what you do on the score of privilege. Thus, as we think, we can have no remaining doubtfulness in this matter. For either the usage of all metropolitans should be observed also by thy Fraternity, or, if thou sayest that something has been specially conceded to thy church, it is for your side to shew the precept of former pontiffs of the Roman City wherein these things have been conceded to the Church of Ravenna. But, if this is not shewn, it remains, seeing that you establish your claim to do such things on the score neither of general custom nor of privilege, that you prove yourself to have usurped in what you have done. And what shall we say to the future judge, most beloved brother, if we defend the use of that heavy yoke and chain on our neck with a view, I do not say to ecclesiastical, but to a certain secular dignity; judging ourselves to be lowered if we are without so great a weight even for a short space of time? We desire to be adorned with the pallium, being, it may be, unadorned in character; whereas nothing shines more splendidly on a bishop's neck than humility.

It is therefore the duty of thy Fraternity, if thou art firmly determined to defend thy honours with any kind of arguments, either to follow the use of the generality without written authority, or to defend thyself under privileges shewn in writing. Or, if lastly thou doest neither, we will not have thee set an example of presumption of this sort to other metropolitans. But, lest thou shouldest perchance think that we, in thus writing to you, have neglected what belongs to fraternal charity, know ye that careful search has been made in our archives for the privileges of thy Church. And indeed some things have been found, sufficient to obviate entirely the aims of thy Fraternity, but nothing to support the contentions of your Church on the points in question. For even concerning the very custom of thy Church which thou allegest against us, which custom we wrote before should be proved on your side, we would have you know that we have already taken

thought sufficiently, having questioned our sons, Peter the deacon and Gaudiosus the primicerius, and also Michael the guardian (defensorem) of our see, or others who on various commissions have been sent by our predecessors to Ravenna; and they have most positively denied that thou hast done these things in their presence. It is therefore apparent that what was done in secret must have been an unlawful usurpation. Hence what has been latently introduced can have no firm ground to justify its continuance. What things, then, thou or thy predecessors have presumed to do superfluously do thou, having regard to charity, and with brotherly kindness, study to correct. To no degree attempt — I do not say of thine own accord, but after the fashion set by others, even thy predecessors, — to deviate from the rule of humility. For, to sum up shortly what I have said above, I admonish thee to this effect; that unless thou canst shew that this has been allowed thee by my predecessors in the way of privilege, thou presume not any more to use the pallium in the streets, lest thou come not to have even for mass what thou audaciously usurpest even in the streets. But as to thy sitting in the sacristy, and receiving the sons of the Church with the pallium on (which thing thy Fraternity has both done and disclaimed), we now for the present make no complaint; since, following the decision of synods, we refuse to punish minor faults, which are denied. Yet we know this to have been done once and again, and we prohibit its being done any more. But let thy Fraternity take careful heed, lest presumption which in its commencement is pardoned be more severely visited if it proceeds further.

Furthermore, you have complained that certain of the sacerdotal order in the city of Ravenna are involved in serious criminal charges. Their case we desire thee either to examine on the spot, or to send them hither (unless, indeed, difficulty of proof owing to the distance of the places stands in the way of this), that the case may be examined here But if, relying on the patronage of great people, which we do not believe, they should scorn to

submit to thy judgment or to come to us, and should refuse contumaciously to answer to the charges made against them, we desire that after thy second and third admonition, thou interdict them from the ministry of the sacred office, and report to us in writing of their contumacy, that we may deliberate how thou oughtest to make a thorough enquiry into their doings. and correct them according to canonical definitions. Let, therefore, thy Fraternity know tint we are most fully absolved from responsibility in this case, seeing that we have committed to you a thorough investigation of the matter; and that, if all their sins should pass unpunished, the whole weight of this enquiry redounds to the peril of thy soul. And know, beloved, that thou wilt have no excuse at the future judgment, if thou dost not correct the excesses of thy clergy with the utmost severity of canonical strictness, and if thou allowest any against whom such excesses shall have been proved to profane sacred orders any longer.

Further, what you have written in defence of the use of napkins by your clergy is strenuously opposed by our own clergy, who say that this has never been granted to any other Church whatever, and that neither have the clergy of Ravenna, either there or in the Roman city, presumed, to their knowledge, in any such way, nor, if it has been attempted in the way of furtive usurpation, does it form a precedent. But, even though there had been such presumption in any church whatever, they assert that it ought to be corrected, not being by grant of the Roman pontiff, but merely a surreptitious presumption. But we, to save the honour of thy Fraternity, though against the wish of our aforesaid clergy, still allow the use of napkins to your first deacons (whose former use of them has been testified to us by some), but only when in attendance upon thee. The use of them, at any other time, or by any other persons, we most strictly prohibit.

EPISTLE LVII.

From John, Bishop of Ravenna to Pope Gregory.

My most reverend fellow-servant Castorius, notary of your Apostolical See, has delivered to me my lord's epistle, compounded of honey and of venom; which has yet so infixed its stings as still to leave place for healing appliances. For my lord, while he reproves pride and speaks of divine judgment following it, in a certain way professes himself with reason to be mild and placid.

You have alleged, then, that I, ambitious of novelty, have usurped the use of the pallium beyond what had been indulged to my predecessors. This let not the conscience of my own lord, which is governed by the divine right hand, in any way allow itself to believe; nor let him open his most sacred ears to the uncertainty of common report. First, because I, though a sinner, still know how grave a thing it is to transgress the limits assigned to us by the Fathers, and that all elation leads to nothing but a fall. For, if our ancestors did not tolerate pride in kings, how much more is it not to be endured in priests! Then, I remember how I was nourished in the lap and in the bosom of your most holy Roman Church, and therein by the aid of God advanced. And how should I be so daring as to presume to oppose that most holy see, which transmits its laws to the universal Church, for maintaining whose authority, as God knows, I have seriously excited the ill-will of many enemies against myself? But let not my most blessed lord suppose that I have attempted anything contrary to ancient custom, as is attested by many and nearly all the citizens of this city, and as the above-written most reverend notary, even though he had taken no part in the proceedings, might have testified, inasmuch as it was not till the sons of the Church were descending from the sacristy, and the deacons were coming in for proceeding immediately [to the altar] that the first deacon has been

accustomed to invest the bishop of the Church of Ravenna with the pallium, which he has also been accustomed in like manner to use in solemn litanies.

Wherefore let no one endeavour to insinuate anything against me to my lord, since if any one wishes to do so, he cannot prove that any novelty has been introduced by me. For in what manner I have obeyed your commands and served your interests when cause required, may Almighty God make manifest to your most sincere heart: and I attribute it to my sins that after so many labours and difficulties which I endure within and without I should deserve to experience such a change. But again this among other things consoles me, that most holy fathers sometimes chastise their sons for the purpose only of advancing them the more, and that, after this devotion and satisfaction, you will not only conserve to the holy Church of Ravenna her ancient privileges, but even confer greater ones in your own times.

For with respect to the napkins, the use of which by my presbyters and deacons your Apostleship alleges to be a presumption, I confess in truth that it irks me to say anything on the subject, since the truth by itself, which alone prevails with my lord, is sufficient. For this being allowed to the smaller churches constituted around the city, the apostleship of my lord will also be able in all ways to find, if he deigns to enquire of the venerable clergy of his own first Apostolical See, that as often as priests or levites of the Church of Ravenna have come to Rome for the ordination of bishops or for business, they all have proceeded with napkins before the eyes of your most holy predecessors without any blame. Wherefore also at the time when I, sinner as I am, was ordained there by your predecessor, all my presbyters and deacons used them while proceeding in attendance on the lord pope. And since our God in His providence has placed all things in your hand and most pure conscience, I adjure you by the very Apostolical See, which you formerly adorned by your character, and now govern with due dignity, that you in no respect diminish on account of my deservings the privileges of

the Church of Ravenna, which is intimately yours; but, even according to the voice of prophecy, let it be laid upon me and upon my father's house, according to its deserving. I have, therefore, for your greater satisfaction, subjoined all the privileges which have been indulged by your predecessors to the holy Church of Ravenna, though none the less finding assurance in your venerable archives in reference to the times of the consecration of my predecessors. But now whatever, after ascertaining the truth, you may command to be done, is in God's power and yours; since I, desiring to obey the commands of my lord's Apostleship, have taken care, notwithstanding ancient custom, to abstain till I receive further orders.

EPISTLE LIX: TO SECUNDINUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Secundinus, Bishop of Tauromenium. [In Sicily.]

Some time ago we ordered that the baptistery should be removed from the monastery of Saint Andrew, which is above Mascalae, because of inconvenience to the monks, and that an altar should be erected in the place where the fonts now are. But the carrying out of this order has been put off so far. We therefore admonish thy Fraternity that thou interpose no further delay after receiving this our letter, but that the fonts themselves be filled up, and an altar at once erected there for celebration of the sacred mysteries; to the end that the aforesaid monks may be at liberty to celebrate more securely the work of God, and that our mind be not provoked against thy Fraternity for negligence.

EPISTLE LX: TO ITALICA, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Italica, &c.

We have received your letter, which is full of sweetness, and rejoice to hear that your Excellency is well. Such is the sincerity of our own mind with regard to it that paternal affection does not allow us to suspect any latent ill- feeling concealed under its calmness. But may Almighty God bring it to pass, that, as we think what is good of you, so your mind may respond with good towards us, and that you may exhibit in your deeds the sweetness which you express in words. For the most glorious health and beauty on the surface of the body profit nothing if there is a hidden sore within. And that discord is the more to be guarded against to which exterior peace affords a bodyguard. But as to what your Excellency in your aforesaid epistle takes pains to recall to our recollection, remember that you have been told in writing that we would not settle anything with you concerning the causes of the poor so as to cause offence, or with public clamour. We remember writing to you to this effect, and also know, God helping us how to restrain ourselves with ecclesiastical moderation from the wrangling of suits at law, and, according to that apostolical sentence, to endure joyfully the spoiling of our goods. But this we suppose you to know; that our silence and patience will not be to the prejudice of future pontiffs after me in the affairs of the poor. Wherefore we, in fulfilment of our aforesaid promise, have already determined to keep silence on these questions; nor do we desire to mix ourselves personally in these transactions, wherein we feel that too little kindness is being shewn. But, lest you should hence imagine, glorious daughter, that we still altogether renounce what pertains to concord, we have given directions to our son, Cyprianus the deacon, who is going to Sicily, that, if you arrange about these matters in a salutary way, and without sin to your soul, he should settle them with you by our authority, and that we should be no further

vexed by the business which may thus be brought to a conclusion amicably. Now may Almighty God, who well knows how to turn to possibility things altogether impossible, may He inspire you both to arrange your affairs with a view to peace, and, for the good of your soul, to consult the benefit of the poor of this Church in matters which concern them.

EPISTLE LXV: TO MAURICIUS AUGUSTUS.

Gregory to Mauricius, &c.

He is guilty before Almighty God who is not pure of offence towards our most serene lords in all he does and says. I, however, unworthy servant of your Piety, speak in this my representation neither as a bishop, nor as your servant in fight of the republic, but as of private right, since, most serene lord, you have been mine since the time when you were not yet lord of all.

On the arrival here of the most illustrious Longinus, the equerry (stratore), I received the law of my lords, to which, being at the time worn out by bodily sickness, I was unable to make any reply. In it the piety of my lords has ordained that it shall not be lawful for any one who is engaged in any public administration to enter on an ecclesiastical office. And this I greatly commended, knowing by most evident proof that one who is in haste to desert a secular condition and enter on an ecclesiastical office is not wishing to relinquish secular affairs, but to change them. But, at its being said in the same law that it should not be lawful for him to become a monk, I was altogether surprised, seeing that his accounts can be rendered through a monastery, and it can be arranged for his debts also to be recovered from the place into which he is received. For with whatever devout intention a person may have wished to become a monk, he should first restore what he has wrongly gotten, and take thought for his soul all the more truly as he is the more disencumbered. It is added in the same law that no one who has been marked on the hand may become a monk. This ordinance, I confess to my lords, has alarmed me greatly, since by it the way to heaven is dosed against many, and what has been lawful until now is made unlawful. For there are many who are able to live a religious life even in a secular condition: but there are very many who cannot in any wise be saved with God unless they give up all things. But what am I, in speaking thus to my lords, but dust and a worm? Yet still, feeling that this ordinance makes

against God, who is the Author of all, I cannot keep silence to my lords. For power over all men has been given from heaven to the piety of my lords to this end, that they who aspire to what is good may be helped, and that the way to heaven may be more widely open, so that an earthly kingdom may wait upon the heavenly kingdom. And lo, it is said in plain words that one who has once been marked to serve as an earthly soldier may not, unless he has either completed his service or been rejected for weakness of body, serve as the soldier of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To this, behold, Christ through me the last of His servants and of yours will answer, saying; From a notary I made thee a Count of the bodyguard; from Count of the bodyguard I made thee a Caesar; from a Caesar I made thee Emperor; and not only so, but also a father of emperors. I have committed my priests into thy hand; and dost thou withdraw thy soldiers from my service? Answer thy servant, most pious lord, I beseech thee; what wilt thou answer to thy Lord when He comes and thus speaks?

But peradventure it is believed that no one among them turns monk with a pure motive. I, your unworthy servant, know how many soldiers who have become monks in my own days have done miracles, have wrought signs and mighty deeds. But by this law it is forbidden that even one of such as these should become a monk.

Let my lord enquire, I beg, what former emperor ever enacted such a law, and consider more thoroughly whether it ought to have been enacted. And indeed it is a very serious consideration, that now at this time any are forbidden to leave the world; a time when the end of the world is drawing nigh. For lo! there will be no delay: the heavens on fire, the earth on fire, the elements blazing, with angels and archangels, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, the tremendous Judge will appear. Should He remit all sins, and say only that this law has been promulgate against Himself, what excuse, pray, will there be? Wherefore by the same

tremendous Judge I beseech you, that all those tears, all those prayers, all those fasts, all those alms of my lord, may not on any ground lose their lustre before the eyes of Almighty God: but let your Piety, either by interpretation or alteration, modify the force of this law, since the army of my lords against their enemies increases the more when the army of God has been increased for prayer.

I indeed, being subject to your command, have caused this law to be transmitted through various parts of the world; and, inasmuch as the law itself is by no means agreeable to Almighty God, lo, I have by this my representation declared this to my most serene lords. On both sides, then, I have discharged my duty, having both yielded obedience to the Emperor, and not kept silence as to what I feel in behalf of God.

EPISTLE LXVI: TO THEODORUS, PHYSICIAN.

Gregory to Theodorus, &c.

What benefits I enjoy from Almighty God and my most serene lord the Emperor my tongue cannot fully express. For these benefits what return is it in me to make, but to love their footsteps sincerely? But, on account of my sins, by whose suggestion or counsel I know not, in the past year he has promulgate such a law in his republic that whoso loves him sincerely must lament exceedingly. I could not reply to this law at the time, being sick. But I have just now offered some suggestions to my lord. For he enjoins that it shall be lawful for no one to become a monk who has been engaged in any public employment, for no one who is a paymaster, or who has been marked in the hand, or enrolled among the soldiers, unless perchance his military service has been completed. This law, as those say who are acquainted with old laws, Julian was the first to promulge, of whom we all know how opposed he was to God. Now if our most serene lord has done this thing because perhaps many soldiers were becoming monks, and the army was decreasing, was it by the valour of soldiers that Almighty God subjugated to him the empire of the Persians? Was it not only that his tears were heard, and that God, by an order which he knew not of, subdued to his empire the empire of the Persians?

Now it seems to me exceedingly hard that he should debar his soldiers from the service of Him who both gave him all and granted w him to rule not only over soldiers but even over priests. If his purpose is to save property from being lost, why might not those same monasteries into which soldiers have been received pay their debts, retaining the men only for monastic profession? Since these things grieve me much, I have represented the matter to my lord. But let your Glory take a favourable opportunity of offering him my representation privately. For I am unwilling that it should be given publicly by my representative (responsalis), seeing that you who

serve him familiarly can speak more freely and openly of what is for the good of his soul, since he is occupied with many things, and it is not easy to find his mind free from greater cares. Do thou, then, glorious son, speak for Christ. If thou art heard, it will be to the profit of the soul of thy aforesaid lord and of thine own. But if thou art not heard, thou hast profited thine own soul only.

EPISTLE LXVII: TO DOMITIAN, METROPOLITAN.

Gregory to Domitian, &c.

On receiving the letters of your most sweet Blessedness I greatly rejoiced, since they spoke much to me of sacred Scripture. And, finding in them the dainties that I love, I greedily devoured them. Therein also were many things intermingled about external and necessary affairs. And you have acted as though preparing a banquet for the mind so that the offered dainties might please the more from their diversity. And if indeed external affairs, like inferior and ordinary kinds of food, are less savoury, yet they have been treated by you so skilfully as to be taken gladly, since even contemptible kinds of food are usually made sweet by the sauce of one who cooks well. Now, while the truth of the History is kept to, what I had said some time ago about its divine meaning ought not to be rejected. For, although, since you will have it so, its meaning may not suit my case, yet, from its very context, what was said as being drawn from it may be held without hesitation. For her violator (i.e. Dinah's) is called the prince of the country (Genes. xxxiv. 2), by whom the devil is plainly denoted, seeing that our Redeemer says, Now shall the prince of this world be cast out (John xii. 31). And he also seeks her for his wife, because the evil spirit hastens to possess lawfully the soul which he has first corrupted by hidden seduction. Wherefore the sons of Jacob, being very wroth, take their swords against the whole house of Sichem and his country (Genes. xxxiv. 25), because by all who have zeal those also are to be attacked who become abettors of the evil spirit. And they first enjoin on them circumcision, and afterwards, while they are sore, slay them. For severe teachers, if they know not how to moderate their zeal, though cutting off the bias of corruption by preaching, nevertheless, when delinquents already mourn for the evil they had done, are frequently still savage in roughness of discipline, and harder than they should be. For those who had already cut off their foreskins ought not to

have died, since such as lament the sin of lechery, and turn the pleasure of the flesh into sorrow, ought not to experience from their teachers roughness of discipline, lest the Redeemer of the human race be Himself loved less, if in His behalf the soul is afflicted more than it should be. Hence also to these his sons Jacob says, Ye have troubled me, and made me odious to the Canaanites (Ibid. v. 30). For, when teachers still cruelly attack what the delinquents already mourn for, the weak mind's very love for its Redeemer grows cold, because it feels itself to be afflicted in that wherein of itself it does not spare itself.

So much therefore I would say in order to shew that the sense which I set forth is not improbable in connexion with the context. But what has been inferred from the same passage by your Holiness for my comfort I gladly accept, since in the understanding of sacred Scripture whatever is not opposed to a sound faith ought not to be rejected. For, even as from the same gold some make necklaces, some rings, and some bracelets, for ornament, so from the same knowledge of sacred Scripture different expositors, through innumerable ways of understanding it, compose as it were various ornaments, which nevertheless all serve for the adornment of the heavenly bride. Further, I rejoice exceedingly that your most sweet Blessedness, even though occupied with secular affairs, still brings back its genius vigilantly to the understanding of Holy Writ. For so indeed it is needful that, if the former cannot be altogether avoided, the latter should not be altogether put aside. But I beseech you by Almighty God, stretch out the hand of prayer to me who am labouring in so great billows of tribulation, that by your intercession I may be lifted up to the heights, who am pressed down to the depths by the weight of my sins. Moreover, though I grieve that the Emperor of the Persians has not been converted, yet I altogether rejoice for that you have preached to him the Christian faith; since, though he has not been counted worthy to come to the light, yet your Holiness will have

the reward of your preaching. For the Ethiopian, too, goes black into the bath, and comes out black; but still the keeper of the bath receives his pay.

Further, of Mauricius you say well, that from the shadow I may know the statue; that is, that in small things I may perpend greater things. In this matter, however, we trust him, since oaths and hostages bind his soul to us.

BOOK IV

EPISTLE I: TO CONSTANTIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Constantius, Bishop of Mediolanum (Milan).

On receiving the letters of your Fraternity I returned great thanks to Almighty God, that I was counted worthy to be refreshed by the celebration of your ordination. Truly that all, by the gift of God, with one accord concurred in your election, is a fact which thy Fraternity ought with the utmost consideration to estimate, since, after God, you are greatly indebted to those who with so submissive a disposition desired you to be preferred before themselves.

It becomes you, therefore, with priestly benignity to respond to their behaviour, and with kind sympathy to attend to their needs. If perchance there are any faults in any of them, rebuke these with well-considered reproofs, so that your very priestly indignation be mingled with a savour of sweetness, and that so you may be loved by your subjects even when you are greatly feared. Such conduct will also induce great reverence for your person in their judgment; since, as hasty and habitual rage is despised, so discriminate indignation against faults for the most part becomes the formidable in proportion as it has been slow.

Further, John our subdeacon, who has returned, has reported many good things of you as to which we beseech Almighty God Himself to fulfil what He has begun; to the end that He may shew thee to have advanced in good inwardly and outwardly both now among men and hereafter among the angels.

Moreover, we have sent thee, according to custom, a pallium to be used in the sacred solemnities of mass. But I beg you, when you receive it, to vindicate its dignity and its meaning by humility.

EPISTLE II: TO CONSTANTIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Constantius, Bishop of Mediolanum.

My most beloved son, the deacon Boniface, has conveyed to me certain private information through thy Fraternity's letter; namely that three bishops, having sought out rather than found an occasion, have separated themselves from the pious communion of your Fraternity, saying that you have assented to the condemnation of the Three Chapters, and have given a security. And, indeed, whether there has been any mention made of the Three Chapters in any word or writing whatever thy Fraternity remembers well; although thy Fraternity's predecessor, Laurentius, did send forth a most strict security to the Apostolic See, to which most noble men in legitimate number subscribed; among whom I also, at that time holding the praetorship of the city, likewise subscribed; since after such a schism had taken place about nothing, it was right that the Apostolic See should take heed, with the view of guarding in all respects the unity of the Universal Church in the minds of priests. But as to its being said that our daughter, Queen Theodelinda, after hearing this news, has withdrawn herself from thy communion, it is for all reasons evident that, though she has been seduced to some little extent by the words of bad men, yet, on the arrival of Hippolytus the notary, and John the abbot, she will seek in all ways the communion of your Fraternity. To her also I have addressed a letter, which I beg your Fraternity to transmit to her without delay. Further, with regard to the bishops who appear to have separated themselves, I have written another letter, which when you have caused to be shewn to them, I doubt not that they will repent of the superstition of their pride before thy Fraternity.

Furthermore, you have accurately and briefly informed me of what has been done, whether by King Ago or by the Kings of the Franks. I beg your Fraternity to make known to me in all ways what you have so far

ascertained. But, if you should see that Ago, King of the Lombards, is doing nothing with the Patrician, promise him on our part that I am prepared to give attention to his case, if he should be willing to arrange anything with the republic advantageously.

EPISTLE III: TO CONSTANTIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Constantius, Bishop of Mediolanum.

It has come to my knowledge that certain bishops of your diocese, seeking out rather than finding an occasion, have attempted to sever themselves from the unity of your Fraternity, saying that thou hadst given a security at the Roman city for thy condemnation of the three Chapters. And the fact is that they say this because they do not know how I am accustomed to trust thy Fraternity even without security. For if there had been need for anything of the kind, your mere word of mouth could have been trusted. I, however, do not recollect any mention between us of the three Chapters either in word or in writing. But as for them, if they soon return from their error, they should be spared, because, according to the saying of the Apostle Paul, They understand neither what they say nor where of they affirm (1 Tim. i. 7). For we, truth guiding us and our conscience bearing witness, declare that we keep the faith of the holy synod of Chalcedon in all respects inviolate, and venture not to add anything to, or to subtract anything from, its definition. But, if any one would fain take upon himself to think anything, either more or less, contrary to it, and to the faith of this same synod, we anathematize him without any hesitation, and decree him to be alien from the bosom of Mother Church. Any one, therefore, whom this my confession does not bring to a right mind, no longer loves the synod of Chalcedon, but hates the bosom of Mother Church. If then those who appear to have been thus dating have presumed thus to speak in zeal of soul, it remains for them, having received this satisfaction, to return to the unity of thy Fraternity, and not divide themselves from the body of Christ, which is the holy universal Church.

EPISTLE IV: TO QUEEN THEODELINDA.

Gregory to Theodelinda, Queen of the Lombards.

It has come to our knowledge by the report of certain persons that your Glory has been led on by some bishops even to such an offence against holy Church as to withdraw yourself from the communion of Catholic unanimity. Now the more we sincerely love you, the more seriously are we distressed about you, that you believe unskilled and foolish men, who not only do not know what they talk about, but can hardly understand what they have heard.

For they say that in the times of Justinian of pious memory, some things were ordained contrary to the council of Chalcedon; and, while they neither read themselves nor believe those who do, they remain in the same error which they themselves reigned to themselves concerning us. For we, our conscience bearing witness, declare that nothing was altered, nothing violated, with respect to the faith of this same holy council of Chalcedon; but that whatever was done in the times of the aforesaid Justinian was so done that the faith of the council of Chalcedon should in no respect be disturbed. Further, if any one presumes to speak or think anything contrary to the faith of the said synod, we detest his opinion, with interposition of anathema. Since then you know the integrity of our faith under the attestation of our conscience, it remains that you should never separate yourself from the communion of the Catholic Church, lest all those tears of yours, and all those good works should come to nothing, if they are found alien from the true faith. It therefore becomes your Glory to send a communication with all speed to my most reverend brother and fellow-bishop Constantius, of whose faith, as well as his life, I have long been well assured, and to signify by your letters addressed to him how kindly you have accepted his ordination, and that you are in no way separated from the communion of his Church; although I think that what I say on this subject is superfluous: for, though there has been some degree of doubtfulness in your

mind, I think that it has been removed from your heart on the arrival of my son John the abbot, and Hippolytus the notary.

EPISTLE V: TO BONIFACE, BISHOP.

Gregory to Boniface, Bishop of Regium (Reii).

It is a shame for priests to be admonished about matters of divine worship. For they are then to their disgrace required to do what they ought themselves to require to be done. Yet lest, as I do not suppose, thy Fraternity should neglect in any respect the things that pertain to the work of God, we have thought fit to exhort thee specially on this very head. We therefore admonish thee that the clergy of the city of Regium be to no extent released by the indulgence of thy Fraternity in duties demanded by their office. But in the things that pertain to God let them be most instantly and most earnestly compelled. We desire thee also to study the reputation of the aforesaid clergy, that nothing bad, nothing that at all contravenes ecclesiastical discipline, be heard of them; seeing that it is to its adornment, not to foulness of deeds, that their office appertains. Further, we decree that what we determined in the case of the Sicilians be observed by thy subdeacons; nor mayest thou suffer this our decision to be infringed by the contumacy or temerity of any one whatever; that so, as we believe will be the case, all that has been said above being most strictly kept in force by thee, thou mayest neither prove a transgressor of our admonition, nor be accused as guilty of remissness in the order of pastoral rule which has been committed to thee.

EPISTLE VI: TO CYPRIAN, DEACON.

Gregory to Cyprian, Deacon and Rector of Sicily.

It has been reported to us that a native of the province of Lucania, Petronilla by name, was converted through the exhortation of the bishop Agnellus, and that all her property, though she had it in her own power, she nevertheless bestowed on the monastery which she entered even by a special deed of gift: also that the aforesaid bishop died leaving half of his substance to one Agnellus, his son, who is said to be a notary of our Church, and half to the said monastery. But, when they had fled for refuge to Sicily because of the calamity impending on Italy, the above-named Agnellus is said to have corrupted her morals and defiled her, and, finding her with child, to have seduced her from the monastery, and to have taken away with her all her be longings, both those that had been her own and such as she might have had given her by his own father, and that, after perpetrating such and so great a crime, he claims these things as his own. We therefore exhort thy Love to cause the aforesaid man, and the above-named woman, to be summarily brought before thee, and to institute a most thorough enquiry into the case. And, if thou shouldest find it to be as reported to us, determine an affair defiled by so many iniquities with the utmost severity of expurgation; to the end that both strict retribution may overtake the above-named man, who has regarded neither his own nor her condition, and that, she having been first punished and consigned to a monastery under penance, all the property that had been taken away from the oft above-named place, with all its fruits and accessions, may be restored.

EPISTLE VII: TO GENNADIUS, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Gennadius, Patrician and Exarch of Africa.

We are well assured that the mind of your religious Excellency is inflamed with zeal of divine love against those things especially which are done in unseemly wise in the churches. We therefore the more gladly impose on you the correction of faults in ecclesiastical cases as we have confidence in the bent of your pious disposition. Be it known, then, to your Excellence that it has been reported to us by some who have come to us from the African parts that many things are being committed in the council of Numidia contrary to the way of the Fathers and the ordinances of the canons. And, being unable to bear any longer the frequent complaints that have reached us about such things, we committed them to be enquired into to our brother and fellow-bishop Columbus, of whose gravity his very reputation, which is spread abroad, now allows us not to doubt. Wherefore, greeting you with fatherly affection, we exhort your Excellence that in all things pertaining to ecclesiastical discipline you should lend him the support of your assistance, lest, if what is done amiss should not be enquired into anti visited, it should grow with greater license into future excesses through precedent of long continuance. Know moreover, most excellent son, that if you seek victories, and are dealing for the security of the province committed to you, nothing will avail you more for this end than being zealous in restraining as far as possible the lives of priests and the intestine wars of Churches.

EPISTLE VIII: TO JANUARIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Januarius, Bishop of Caralis (Cagliari).

We think indeed that thy position may in itself be enough to compel thee to be instant in the fulfilment of pious duties. But, lest remissness of any kind should intervene to abate thy zeal, we have thought it right to exhort thee especially with regard to them. Now it has come to our knowledge that your Stephen, when departing this life, by his last will and testament directed a monastery to be founded. But it is said that his desire is so far unaccomplished owing to the delay of the honourable lady Theodosia, his heiress. Wherefore we exhort thy Fraternity to pay the utmost attention to this matter, and admonish the above-named lady, to the end that within a year's space she may establish a monastery as has been directed, and construct everything without dispute according to the will of the departed. But if she should put off the completion of the design out of negligence or artfulness (as, for instance, if she is unable to found it in the place that had been appointed, and it is thought fit that it be placed elsewhere, and the matter is neglected through the intervening delay), then we desire that it be built by the diligence of thy Fraternity, and that, all things being set in order, the effects and revenues that have been left be appropriated by thee to this venerable place. For so thou wilt both escape condemnation for remissness before the awful Judge, and, in accordance with our most religious laws, wilt be accomplishing with episcopal zeal the pious wishes of the departed, which had been disregarded.

EPISTLE IX: TO JANUARIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Januarius, Bishop of Caralis (Cagliari).

Pastoral zeal ought indeed in itself to have sufficiently instigated thee, even without oar aid, to protect profitably and providently the flock of which thou hast taken charge, and to preserve it with diligent circumspection from the cunning devices of enemies. But, since we have found that thy Charity needs also the written word of our authority for the augmentation of thy firmness, it is necessary for us, by the exhortation of brotherly love, to strengthen thy faltering disposition towards the earnestness of religious activity.

Now it has come to our knowledge that thou art remiss in thy guardianship of the monasteries of the handmaidens of God situated in Sardinia; and, though it had been prudently arranged by thy predecessors that certain approved men of the clergy should have the charge of attending to their needs, this has now been so entirely neglected that women specially dedicated to God are compelled to go in person among public functionaries about tributes and other liabilities, and are under the necessity of running to and fro through villages and farms for making up their taxes, and of mixing themselves unsuitably in business which belongs to men. This evil let thy Fraternity remove by an easy correction; that is, by carefully deputing one man of approved life and manners, and o such age and position as to give rise to no evil suspicion of him, who may, with the fear of God, so assist the inmates of these monasteries that they may no longer be allowed to wander, against rule, for any cause whatever, private or public, beyond their venerable precincts; but that whatever has to be done in their behalf may be transacted reasonably by him whom you shall depute. But let the nuns themselves, rendering praises to God and confining themselves to their monasteries, no longer suggest any evil suspicion to the minds of the faithful. But if any one of them, either through former license, or through an

evil custom of impunity, has been seduced, or should in future be led, into the gulph of adulterous lapse, we will that, after enduring the severity of adequate punishment, she be consigned for penance to some other stricter monastery of virgins, that she may there give herself to prayers and fastings, and profit herself by penitence, and afford an example of the more rigorous kind of discipline, such as may inspire fear in others. Further, let any one who may be detected in any iniquity with women of this class be deprived of communion, if he be a layman; but, if he be a cleric, let him also be removed from his office, and thrust into a monastery for his ever to be deplored excesses.

We also desire thee to hold councils of bishops twice in the year, as is said to have been the custom of thy province, as well as being ordered by the authority of the sacred canons; that, if any among them be of moral character inconsistent with his profession, he may be convicted by the friendly rebuke of his brethren, and also that measures may be taken with paternal circumspection for the security of the flock committed to him, and for the well-being of souls. It has come to our knowledge also that male and female slaves of Jews, who have fled for refuge to the Church on account of their faith, are either restored to their unbelieving masters, or paid for according to their value in lieu of being restored. We exhort therefore that thou by no means allow so bad a custom to continue; but that whosoever being a slave to Jews, shall have fled for refuge to venerable places, thou suffer him not in any degree to sustain prejudice. But, whether he had been a Christian before, or been baptized now, let him be supported in his claim for freedom, without any loss to the poor, by the patronage of ecclesiastical compassion.

Let not bishops presume to sign baptized infants a second time on the forehead with chrism; but let the presbyters anoint those who are to be

baptized on the breast, that the bishops may afterwards anoint them on the forehead.

With regard also to founding monasteries, which divers persons have ordered to be built, if thou perceivest that any persons to whom the charge has been assigned put it off on unjust pretexts, we desire thee to insist sagaciously according to what the laws enjoin, lest (as God forbid should be the case) the pious retentions of the departed should be frustrated through thy neglect. Further, as to the monastery which Peter is said to have formerly ordered to be constructed in his house, we have seen fit that thy Fraternity should make accurate enquiry into the amount of the revenues there. And in case of there being a suitable provision, when all diminutions of the property and what is said to have been dispersed have been recovered, let the monastery with all diligence and without any delay be founded. But, if the means are insufficient or detrimental, we desire thee, after closely investigating everything as has been commanded, to send a report to us, that we may know how to deliberate with the Lord’s help with regard to its construction. Let, then, thy Fraternity give wise attention to all the points above referred to, so as neither to be found to have transgressed the tenour of our admonitions nor to stand liable to divine judgment for too little zeal in thy pastoral office.

EPISTLE X: TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF DALMATIA.

Gregory to all the bishops through Dalmatia.

It behoved your Fraternity, having the eyes of the flesh closed out of regard to Divine judgment, to have omitted nothing that appertains to God and to a right inclination of mind, nor to have preferred the countenance of any man whatever to the uprightness of justice. But now that your manners have been so perverted by secular concerns, that, forgetting the whole path of the sacerdotal dignity that is yours, and all sense of heavenly fear, you study to accomplish what may please yourselves and not God, we have held it necessary to send you these specially strict written orders, whereby, with the authority of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, we enjoin that you presume not to lay hands on any one whatever in the city of Salona, so far as regards ordination to episcopacy, without our consent and permission; nor to ordain any one in the same city otherwise than as we have said.

But if, either of your own accord, or under compulsion from any one whatever, you should presume or attempt to do anything contrary to this injunction, we shall decree you to be deprived of participation of the Lord's body and blood, that so your very handling of the business, or your very inclination to transgress our order, may cut you off from the sacred mysteries, and no one may be accounted a bishop whom you may ordain. For we wish no one to be rashly ordained whose life can be found fault with. And so, if the deacon Honoratus is shewn to be unworthy, we desire that a report may be sent us of the life and manners of him who may be elected, that whatever is to be done in this matter we may allow to be carried out salubriously with our consent.

For we trust in Almighty God that, as far as in us lies, we may never suffer to be done what may damage our soul; never what may damage your Church. But, if the voluntary consent of all should so fix on one person that by the favour of God he may be proved worthy, and there should be no one

to dissent from his being ordained, we wish him to be consecrated by you in this same church of Salona under the license granted in this present epistle; excepting notwithstanding the person of Maximus, about whom many evil reports have reached us: and, unless he desists from coveting the higher order, it remains, as I think, that after full enquiry, he should be deprived also of the very office which he now holds.

EPISTLE XI: TO MAXIMIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Maximianus, Bishop of Syracuse.

It had indeed been committed to thy Fraternity long ago by our authority to correct in our stead any excesses or unseemly proceedings that there might be in the Church and other venerable places of Sicily. But, seeing that a complaint has reached us of some things having been so far neglected, we have thought it fit that thy Fraternity should again be specially stirred up to correct them.

For we learn that in the case of revenues of Churches that have been newly acquired the canonical disposition of their fourth parts does not prevail, but that the bishops of the several places distribute a fourth part of the ancient revenues only, retaining for their own use those that have been recently acquired. Wherefore let thy Fraternity make haste actively to correct this evil custom that has crept in, so that, whether in the case of former revenues or of such as have accrued now or may accrue, the fourth parts may be dispensed according to the canonical distribution of them. For it is unseemly that one and the same substance of the Church should be rated, as it were, under two different laws, namely, that of usurpation and that of the canons.

Permit not presbyters, deacons, and other clerks of whatever order, who serve churches, to be abbots of monasteries; but let them either, giving up clerical duties, be advanced to the monastic order, or, if they should decide to remain in the position of abbot, let them by no means be allowed to have clerical employment. For it is very unsuitable that, if one cannot fulfil the duties of either of these positions with diligence proportional to its importance, any one should be judged fit for both, and that so the ecclesiastical order should impede the monastic life, and in torn the rule of monasticism impede ecclesiastical utility. Of this thing also we have taken thought to warn thy Charity; that, if any one of the bishops should depart

this life, or (which God forbid) should be removed for his transgressions, the hierarchs and all the chief of the clergy being assembled, and in thy presence making an inventory of the property of the Church, all that is found should be accurately described, and nothing should be taken away in kind, or in any other way whatever, from the property of the Church, as is said to have been done formerly, as though in return for the trouble of making the inventories. For we desire all that pertains to the protection of what belongs to the poor to be so executed that in their affairs no opportunity may be left for the venality of self- interested men.

Let visitors of churches, and their clerks who with them are at trouble in parishes that are not of their own city, receive according to thy appointment some subsidy for their labour. For it is just that they should get payment in the places where they are found to lend their services.

We most strongly forbid young women to be made abbesses. Let thy Fraternity, there fore, permit no bishop to veil any but a sexagenarian virgin, whose age and character may demand this being done; that so, this as well as the above-named points being set right with the Lord's help by the urgency of thy strict requirement, thou mayest hasten to bind up again with canonical ties the long loosened state of venerable things, and also that divine affairs may be arranged, not by the incongruous wills of men, but with adequate strictness. The month of October, Indiction.

EPISTLE XV: TO JANUARIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Januarius, Bishop of Caralis (Cagliari).

Theodosia, a religious lady, being desirous of carrying out the intention of her late husband Stephen by the building of a monastery, has begged us to transmit our letters to your Fraternity, whereby, through our commendation, she may the more tea lily be counted worthy of your aid. She asserts that her husband had given directions for the monastery to be constructed on the farm called Piscenas, which has come into the possession of the guest-house (Xenodachii) of the late bishop Thomas. Now, though the possessor of the property would allow her to found it on land that is not her own, yet seeing that the lord with reason objects, we have thought it right to agree to her petition; which is that she should, with the Lord's help, construct a monastery for handmaidens of God in a house belonging to herself, which she asserts that she has at Caralis. But, since she says that the aforesaid house is burdened by guests and visitors, we exhort thy Fraternity to take pains to assist her in all ways, and lend the aid of thy protection to her devotion, so that thy assistance and assiduity may make thee partaker of the reward of her departed husband's earnestness and her own. As to the relics which she requests may be placed there, we desire that they be deposited with due reverence by thy Fraternity.

EPISTLE XVIII: TO MAURUS, ABBOT.

Gregory to Maurus, &c.

The care of churches which is evidently inherent in the priestly office compels us to be so solicitous that no fault of neglect may appear with regard to them. Since, however, we have learnt that the church of Saint Pancratius, which had been committed to presbyters, has been frequently neglected, so that people coming there on the Lord's day to celebrate the solemnities of mass have returned murmuring on finding no presbyter, we therefore, after mature deliberation, have determined to remove those presbyters, and with the favour of God constitute for the same church a congregation of monks in a monastery, to the end that the abbot who shall preside there may give care and attention in all respects to the aforesaid church. And we have also thought fit to put thee, Maurus, over this monastery as abbot, ordaining that the lands of the aforesaid church, and whatever may have come into its possession, or accrued from its revenues, be applied to this thy monastery, and belong to it without any diminution; but on condition whatever needs to be effected or repaired in the church above written may be so effected and repaired by thee without fail.

But lest, after the removal of the presbyters to whom this church had previously been committed, it should seem to be without provision for divine service, we therefore enjoin thee by the tenour of this authority to supply it with a peregrine presbyter to celebrate the sacred solemnities of mass, who, nevertheless, must needs both live in thy monastery, and have from it provision for his maintenance.

But let this also above all be thy care, that there over the most sacred body of the blessed Pancratius the work of God be executed daily without fail. These things, then, which by the tenour of this precept we depute thee to do, we will that not only thou perform, but that they be also so observed and fulfilled for ever by those who shall succeed thee in thy office and

place, that there may be no possibility henceforth of neglect being found in the aforesaid church.

EPISTLE XX: TO MAXIMUS, PRETENDER (Proesumptorem).

Gregory to Maximus, Pretender in Salona.

Though the merits of any one's life were in other respects such as to offer no impediment to his ordination to priestly offices, yet the crime of canvassing in itself is condemned by the severest strictness of the canons. Now we have been informed that thou, having either obtained surreptitiously, or pretended, an order from the most pious princes, hast forced thy way to the order of priesthoods, which is of all men to be venerated, while being in thy life unworthy. And this without any hesitation we believed, inasmuch as thy life and age are not unknown to us, and further, because we are not ignorant of the mind of our most serene lord the Emperor, in that he is not accustomed to mix himself up in the causes of priests, lest he should in any way be burdened by our sins. An unheard-of wickedness is also spoken of; that, even after our interdiction, which was pronounced under pain of excommunication of thee and those who should ordain thee, it is said that thou wast brought forward by a military force, and that presbyters, deacons, and other clergy were beaten. Which proceeding we can in no wise call a consecration, since it was celebrated by excommunicated men. Since, therefore, without any precedent, thou hast violated such and so great a dignity, namely that of the priesthood, we enjoin that, until I shall have ascertained from the letters of our lords or of our responsalis, that thou wast ordained under a true and not a surreptitious order, thou and thy ordainers by no means presume to handle anything connected with the priestly office, and that you approach not the service of the holy altar till you have heard from us again. But, if you should presume to act in contravention of this order, be ye anathema from God and from the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, that your punishment may afford an

example to other catholic churches also, through their contemplation of the judgment upon you. The month of May, Indiction 12.

EPISTLE XXI: TO VENANTIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Venantius, Bishop of Luna (in Etruria).

It has reached us by the report of many that Christian slaves are detained in servitude by Jews living in the city of Luna; which thing has seemed to us by so much the more offensive as the sufferance of it by thy Fraternity annoys us. For it was thy duty, in respect of thy place, and in thy regard for the Christian religion, to leave no occasion for simple souls to serve Jewish superstition not through persuasion, but, in a manner, by right of authority. Wherefore we exhort thy Fraternity that, according to the course laid down by the most pious laws, no Jew be allowed to retain a Christian slave in his possession. But, if any are found in their power, let liberty be secured to them by protection under the sanction of law. But as to any that are on the property of Jews, though they be themselves free from legal obligation, yet, since they have long been attached to the cultivation of their lands as bound by the condition of their tenure, let them continue to cultivate the farms they have been accustomed to do, rendering their payments to the aforesaid persons, and performing all things that the laws require of husbandmen or natives, except that no farther burden be imposed on them. But, whether any one of these should wish to remain in his servitude, or any to migrate to another place, let the latter consider with himself that he will have lost his rights as a husbandman by his own rashness, though he has got rid of his servitude by force of law. In all these things, then, we desire thee to exert thyself so wisely that neither mayest thou be a guilty pastor of a dismembered flock, nor may thy too little zeal render thee reprehensible before us.

EPISTLE XXIII: TO HOSPITO, DUKE OF THE BARBARICINI.

Gregory to Hospito, &c.

Since no one of thy race is a Christian, I hereby know that thou art better than all thy race, in that thou in it art found to be a Christian. For, while all the Barbaricini live as senseless animals, know not the true God, but adore stocks and stones, in the very fact that thou worshippest the true God thou shewest how much thou excellest them all. But carry thou out the faith which thou hast received in good deeds and words, and offer what is in thy power to Christ in whom thou believest, so as to bring to Him as many as thou canst, and cause them to be baptized, and admonish them to set their affection on eternal life. And if perchance thou canst not do this thyself, being otherwise occupied, I beg thee, with my greeting, to succour in all ways our men whom we have sent to your parts, to wit my fellow-bishop Felix, and my son, the servant of God, Cyriacus, so that in aiding their labours thou mayest shew thy devotion to Almighty God, and that He whose servants thou succourest in their good work may be a helper to thee in all good deeds. We have sent you through them a blessing of St. Peter the apostle, which I beg you to receive, as you ought to do, kindly. The month of June, Indiction 12.

EPISTLE XXIV: TO ZABARDAS, DUKE OF SARDINIA.

Gregory to Zabardas, &c.

From the letters of my brother and fellow-bishop Felix, and of the servant of God, Cyriacus, we have learnt your Glory's good qualities. And we give great thanks to mighty God, that Sardinia has got such a duke; one who so knows how to do his duty to the republic in earthly matters as to know also how to exhibit to Almighty God dutiful regard for the heavenly country. For they have written to me that you are arranging terms of peace with the Barbaricini on such conditions as to bring these same Barbaricini to the service of Christ. On this account I rejoice exceedingly, and, should it please Almighty God, will speedily notify your gifts to our most serene princes. Do you, therefore, accomplish what you have begun, shew the devotion of your heart to Almighty God, and help to the utmost of your power those whom we have sent to your parts for the conversion of the Barbaricini 1); knowing that such works may avail much to aid you both before our earthly princes and in the eyes of the heavenly king.

EPISTLE XXV: TO THE NOBLES AND PROPRIETORS IN SARDINIA.

Gregory to the Nobles, &c.

I have learnt from the report of my brother and fellow-bishop Felix, and my son the servant of God, Cyriacus, that nearly all of you have peasants (rusticos) on your estates given to idolatry. And this has made me very sorry, since I know that the guilt of subjects weighs down the life of their superiors, and that, when sin in a subject is not corrected, sentence is flung back on those who are over them. Wherefore, magnificent sons, I exhort that with all care and all solicitude ye be zealous for your souls, and see what account you will render to Almighty God for your subjects. For indeed they have been committed to you for this end, that both they may serve for your advantage in earthly things, and you, through your care for them, may provide for their souls in the things that are eternal. If, then, they pay what they owe you, why pay you not them what you owe them? That is to say, your Greatness should assiduously admonish them, and restrain them from the error of idolatry, to the end that by their being drawn to the faith you may make Almighty God propitious to yourselves. For, lo, you observe how the end of this world is close at hand; you see that now a human, now a divine, sword rages against us: and yet you, the worshippers of the true God, behold stones adored by those who are committed to you, and are silent. What, I pray you, will you say in the tremendous judgment, when you have received God's enemies into your power, and yet disdain to subdue them to God and recall them to Him? Wherefore, addressing you with due greeting, I beg that your Greatness would be earnestly on the watch to give yourselves to zeal for God, and hasten to inform me in your letters which of you has brought how many to Christ. If, then, haply from any cause you are unable to do this, enjoin it on our aforesaid brother and fellow-bishop Felix, or my son Cyriacus, and afford them succour for the

work of God, that so in the retribution to come you may be in a state to partake of life by so much the more as you now afford succour to a good work.

EPISTLE XXVI, TO JANUARIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Januarius, Bishop of Caralis (Cagliari).

We have ascertained from the report of our fellow-bishop Felix and the abbot Cyriacus that in the island of Sardinia priests are oppressed by lay judges, and that thy ministers despise thy Fraternity; and that, so far as appears, while you aim only at simplicity, discipline is neglected. Wherefore I exhort thee that, putting aside all excuses, thou take pains to rule the Church of which thou hast received the charge, to keep up discipline among the clergy, and fear no one's words. But, as I hear, thou hast forbidden thy Archdeacon to live with women, and up to this time art set at naught with regard to this thy prohibition. Unless he obey thy command, our will is that he be deprived of his sacred order.

There is another tiling also which is much to be deplored; namely, that the negligence of your Fraternity has allowed the peasants (rusticos) belonging to lily Church to remain up to the present time in infidelity. And what is the use of my admonishing you to bring such as do not belong to you to God, if you neglect to recover your own from infidelity? Hence you must needs be in all ways vigilant for their conversion. For, should I succeed in finding a pagan peasant belonging to any bishop whatever in the island of Sardinia, I will visit it severely on that bishop.

But now, if any peasant should be found so perfidious and obstinate as to refuse to come to the Lord God, he must be weighted with so great a burden of payment as to be compelled by the very pain of the exaction to hasten to the right way.

It has also come to our knowledge that some in sacred orders who have lapsed, either after doing penance or before, are recalled to the office of their ministry; which is a thing that we have altogether forbidden; and the most sacred canons also declare against it. Whoso, then, after having received any sacred order, shall have lapsed into sin of the flesh, let him so

forfeit his sacred order as not to approach any more the ministry of the altar. But, lest those who have been ordained should ever perish, previous care should be taken as to what kind of people are ordained, so that it be first seen to whether they have been continent in life for many years, and whether they have had a care for reading and a love of almsgiving. It should be enquired also whether a man has perchance been twice married. It should also be seen to that he be not illiterate, or under liability to the state, so as to be compelled after assuming a sacred order to return to public employment. All these things therefore let your Fraternity diligently enquire into, that, every one having been ordained after diligent examination. none may be easily liable to be deposed after ordination. These things which We have written to your Fraternity do you make known to all the bishops under you, since I myself have been unwilling to write to them, lest I might seem to lessen your dignity.

It has also come to our ears that some have been offended by our having forbidden presbyters to touch with chrism those who are to be baptized. And we indeed acted according to the ancient use of our Church: but, if any are in fact hereby distressed, we allow that, where there is a lack of bishops, presbyters may touch with chrism, even on their foreheads, those who are to be baptized.

EPISTLE XXVII: TO JANUARIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Januarius, Bishop of Caralis (Cagliari).

Thy Fraternity ought indeed to have been so attentive to pious duties as to be in no need at all of our admonitions to induce thee to fulfil them: yet, as certain particulars that require correction have come to our knowledge, there is nothing incongruous in your having besides a letter addressed to you bearing our authority.

Wherefore we apprize you that we have been given to understand that it has been the custom for the Guest- houses (Xenodochia) constituted in the parts about Caralis to submit their accounts in detail from time to time to the bishop of the city; that is, so as to be governed under his guardianship and care.

Now, as thy Charity is said to have so far neglected this, we exhort, as has been said, that the inmates who are or have been established in these Guest-houses submit their accounts in detail from time to time. And let such persons be ordained to preside over them as may be found most worthy in life, manners and industry, and at any rate religiosi , whom judges may have no power of annoying, lest, if they should be such as could be summoned to the courts, occasion might be given for wasting the feeble resources which they have: concerning which resources we wish thee to take the greatest care, so that they be given away to no one without thy knowledge, lest the carelessness of thy Fraternity should go so far as to let them be plundered.

Moreover, thou knowest that the bearer of these presents, Epiphanius the presbyter, was criminally accused in the letters of certain Sardinians. We, then, having investigated his case as it was our will to do, and finding no proof of what was charged against him, have absolved him, so that he might be restored to his place. We therefore desire thee to search out the authors of the charge against him: and, unless he who sent those same letters be

prepared to support his charges by canonical and most strict proofs, let him on no account approach the mystery of holy communion.

Further, as to Paul the cleric, who is said to have been often detected in malpractices, and who had fled into Africa, having returned to a lay state of life in despite of his cloth, if it is so, we have seen to his being given up to penance after previous corporal punishment, to the end that, according to the apostolic sentence, by means of affliction of the flesh the spirit may be saved, and also that he may be able to wash away with continual tears the earthly filth of sin, which he is said to have contracted By wicked works.

Moreover, in accordance with the injunctions of the canons, let no religious person (religiosus) associate with those who have been suspended from ecclesiastical communion.

Further, for ordinations or marriages of clerics, or from virgins who are veiled, let no one presume to receive any fee, unless they should prefer to offer something of their own accord.

As to what should be done in the case of women who have left monasteries for a lay life, and have taken husbands, we have conversed at length with thy Fraternity's aforesaid presbyter, from whose report your Holiness may be more fully informed.

Further, let religious clerics (religiosi clerici) avoid resort to or the patronage of laymen; but let them be in all respects subject to thy jurisdiction according to the canons, lest through the remissness of thy Fraternity the discipline of the Church over which thou presidest should be dissolved.

Lastly, as to the men who have sinned with the aforesaid women who had left their monasteries, and are said to be now suspended from communion, if thy Fraternity should observe them to have repented worthily for such a wickedness, we will that thou restore them to holy communion.

EPISTLE XXIX: TO JANUARIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Januarius, Bishop of Caralis (Cagliari).

It has come to our knowledge that in the place within the province of Sardinia called Phausiana it is said to have been once the custom to ordain a bishop; but that, through stress of circumstances, the custom has for long fallen into disuse. But, as we are aware that now, owing to scarcity of priests, certain pagans remain there, living like wild beasts, and entirely ignorant of the worship of God, we exhort thy Fraternity to make haste to ordain a bishop there according to the ancient way; such a one, that is, as may be suitable for this work, and may take pains to bring wanderers into the Lord's flock with pastoral zeal; that so, while he devotes himself there to the saving of souls, neither may you be found to have required what was superfluous, nor may we repent of having re- established in vain what had been once discontinued.

EPISTLE XXX: TO CONSTANTINA AUGUSTA.

Gregory to Constantina, &c.

The Serenity of your Piety, conspicuous for religious zeal and love of holiness, has charged me with your commands to send to you the head of Saint Paul, or some other part of his body, for the church which is being built in honour of the same Saint Paul in the palace. And, being desirous of receiving commands from you, by exhibiting the most ready obedience to which I might the more provoke your favour towards me, I am all the more distressed that I neither can nor dare do what you enjoin. For the bodies of the apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul glitter with so great miracles and terrors in their churches that one cannot even go to pray there without great fear. In short, when my predecessor, of blessed memory, was desirous of changing the silver which was over the most sacred body of the blessed apostle Peter, though at a distance of almost fifteen feet from the same body, a sign of no small dreadfulness appeared to him. Nay, I too wished in like manner to amend something not far from the most sacred body of Saint Paul the apostle; and, it being necessary to dig to some depth near his sepulchre, the superintendent of that place found some bones, which were not indeed connected with the same sepulchre; but, inasmuch as he presumed to lift them and transfer them to another place, certain awful signs appeared, and be died suddenly.

Besides all this, when my predecessor, of holy memory, was desiring in like manner to make some improvements not far from the body of Saint Laurence the martyr, it not being known where the venerable body was laid, diggings were made in the course of search, and suddenly his sepulchre was unawares disclosed; and those who were present and working, monks and mansionarii, who saw the body of the same martyr, which they did not indeed presume to touch, all died within ten days, so that none might survive who had seen the holy body of that righteous man.

Moreover, let my most tranquil lady know that it is not the custom of the Romans, when they give relics of saints, to presume to touch any part of the body; but only a cloth (brandeum) is put into a box (pyxide), and placed near the most sacred bodies of the saints: and when it is taken up it is deposited with due reverence in the Church that is to be dedicated, and such powerful effects are thereby produced there as might have been if their bodies had been brought to that special place. Whence it came to pass in the[times of Pope Leo, of blessed memory, as has been handed down from our forefathers, that, certain Greeks being in doubt about such relics, the aforesaid pontiff took scissors and cut this same cloth (brandeum), and from the very incision blood flowed. For in the Roman and all the Western parts it is unendurable and sacrilegious for any one by any chance to desire to touch the bodies of saints: and, if one should presume to do this, it is certain that this temerity will by no means remain unpunished. For this reason we greatly wonder at the custom of the Greeks, who say that they take up the bones of saints; and we scarcely believe it. For certain Greek monks who came here more than two years ago dug up in the silence of night near the church of Saint Paul, bodies of dental men lying in the open field, and laid up their bones to be kept in their own possession till their departure. And, when they were taken and diligently examined as to why they did this, they confessed that they were going to carry those bones to Greece to pass for relics of saints. From this instance, as has been already said, the greater doubt has been engendered in us whether it be true that they really take up the bones of saints, as they are said to do.

But what shall I say of the bodies of the blessed apostles, when it is well known that, at the time when they suffered, believers came from the East to recover their bodies as being those of their own countrymen? And, having been taken as far as the second milestone from the city, they were deposited in the place which is called Catacumbas. But, when the whole multitude

came together and endeavoured to remove them thence, such violence of thunder and lightning terrified and dispersed them that they on no account presumed to attempt such a thing again. And then the Romans, who of the Lord's loving-kindness were counted worthy to do this, went out and took up their bodies, and laid them in the places where they are now deposited.

Who then, most serene lady, can there be so venturesome as, knowing these things, to presume, I do not say to touch their bodies, but even at all to look at them? Such orders therefore having been given the by you, which I could by no means have obeyed, it has not, so far as I find, been of your own motion; but certain men have wished to stir up your Piety against me, so as to withdraw from me (which God forbid) the favour of your good will, and have therefore sought out a point in which I might be found as if disobedient to you. But I trust in Almighty God that your most kind good will is in no way being stolen away from me, and that you will always have with you the power of the holy apostles, whom with all your heart and mind you love, not from their bodily presence, but from their protection.

Moreover, the napkin, which you have likewise ordered to be sent you, is with his body, and so cannot be touched, as his body cannot be approached. But since so religious a desire of my most serene lady ought not to be wholly unsatisfied, I will make haste to transmit to you some portion of the chains which Saint Peter the apostle himself bore on his neck and his hands, from which many miracles are displayed among the people; if at least I should succeed in removing it by filing. For, while many come frequently to seek a blessing from these same chains, in the hope of receiving a little part of the filings, a priest attends with a file, and in the case of some seekers a portion comes off so quickly from these chains that there is no delay: but in the case of other seekers the file is drawn for long over the chains, and yet nothing can be got from them. In the month of June, Indiction.

EPISTLE XXXI: TO THEODORUS, PHYSICIAN.

Gregory to Theodorus, Physician to the Emperor.

I myself give thanks to Almighty God, that distance does not separate the hearts of those who truly love each other mutually. For lo, most sweet and glorious son, we are far apart in body, and yet are present with each other in charity. This your works, this your letters testify, this I experienced in you when present, this I recognize in your Glory when absent May this make you both beloved of men and worthy for ever before Almighty God. For, charity being the mother of virtues, you bring forth the fruits of good works for this reason that you keep in your soul the very root of those fruits. Now what you have sent me God inspiring you, for the redemption of captives, I confess that I have received both with joy and with sorrow. With joy, that is, for you, whom I thus perceive to be preparing a mansion in the heavenly country; but with exceeding sorrow for myself, who, over and above my care of the property of the holy apostle Peter, must now also give an account of the property of my most sweet son, the lord Theodorus, and be held responsible for having spent it carefully or negligently. But may Almighty God, who has poured into your mind the bowels of His own mercy, who has granted to you to take anxious thought for what is said of our Saviour by the excellent preacher — That, though he was rich, yet far us he became poor (2 Cor. viii.) — may He, at the coming of the same Saviour, shew you to be rich in virtues, cause you to stand free from all fault. and giant to you heavenly for earthly joys; abiding joys for transitory.

As to what you say you desire to be done for you near the most sacred body of the holy apostle Peter, be assured that, though your tongue were silent, your charity bids the doing of it. Would indeed that we were worthy to pray for you: but that I am not worthy I have no doubt. Still, however, there are here many worthy folk, who are being redeemed from the enemy by your offering, and serve our Creator faithfully, with regard to whom you

have done what is written; Lay up alms in the bosom of the poor, and it shall pray for thee (Ecclus. xxix. 15).

But, since he loves the more who presumes the more, I have some complaint against the most sweet disposition of my most glorious son the lord Theodorus; namely that he has received from the holy Trinity the gift of genius, the gift of wealth, the gift of mercy and charity, and yet is unceasingly bound up in secular causes, is occupied in continual processions, and neglects to read daily the words of his Redeemer. For what is sacred Scripture but a kind of epistle of Almighty God to His creature? And surely, if your Glory were resident in any other place, and were to receive letters from an earthly emperor, you would not loiter, you would not rest, you would not give sleep to your eyes, till you had learnt what the earthly emperor had written.

The Emperor of Heaven, the Lord of men and angels, has sent thee his epistles for thy life's behoof; and yet, glorious son, thou neglectest to read these epistles ardently. Study then, I beseech thee, and daily meditate on the words of thy Creator. Learn the heart of God in the words of God, that thou mayest sigh more ardently for the things that are eternal, that your soul may be kindled with greater longings for heavenly joys. For a man will have the greater rest here in proportion as he has now no rest in the love of his Maker. But, that you may act thus, may Almighty God pour into you the Spirit the Comforter: may He fill your soul with His presence, and in filling it, compose it.

As to me, know ye that I suffer here many and innumerable bitternesses. But I give thanks to Almighty God that I suffer far less than I deserve.

I commend to your Glory my son, your patient, the lord Narses. I know indeed that you hold him as in all respects commended to you; but I beg you to do what you are doing, that, in asking for what I see is being done, I may by my asking have a share in your reward. Furthermore, I have

received the blessing of your Excellency with the charity wherewith it was sent to me. And I have presumed to send you, in acknowledgment of your love, a duck with two small ducklings, that, as often as your eye is led to look at it, the memory also of me may be recalled to you among the occupations and tumults of business.

EPISTLE XXXII: TO NARSES THE PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Narses, &c.

Your most sweet Charity has said much to me in your letters in praise of my good deeds, to all which I briefly reply, Call me not Noemi, that is beautiful; but call me Mara, that is bitter; far I am full of bitterness (Ruth (i. 20).

But as to the cause of the presbyters, which is pending with my brother and fellow-bishop, the most reverend Patriarch John, we have, as I think, for our adversary the very man whom you assert to be desirous of observing the canons. Further, I declare to thy Charity that I am prepared, with the help of Almighty God, to prosecute this same cause with all my power and influence. And, should I see that in it the canons of the Apostolic See are not observed, Almighty God will give unto me what I may do against the contemners of the same.

As to what your Charity has written to me, asking me to give thanks for you to my son the chief physician and ex-praefect Theodorus, I have done so, and have by no means ceased to commend you as much as I could. Further, I beg you to pardon me for replying to your letters with brevity; for I am pressed by such great tribulations that it is not allowed me either to read or to speak much by letter. This only I say to thee, For the voice of groaning I have forgotten to eat my bread (Ps. ci. 5). All that are with you I beg you to salute in my name. Give my salutations to the lady Dominica, whose letter I have not answered, because, though she is Latin, she wrote to me in Greek.

EPISTLE XXXIII: TO ANTHEMIUS, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Anthemius, &c.

Those whom our Redeemer vouchsafes to convert to himself from Judaical perdition we ought, with reasonable moderation, to assist; lest (as God forbid should be the case) they should suffer from lack of food. Accordingly we charge thee, under the authority of this order, not to neglect to give money every year to the children of Justa, who is of the Hebrews; that is to Julianus, Redemptus, and Fortuna, beginning from the coming thirteenth Indiction; and know that the payment is by all means to be charged in thy accounts.

EPISTLE XXXIV: TO PANTALEO, PRAEFECT

Gregory to Pantaleo, Praefect of Africa.

How the law urgently prosecutes the most abominable pravity of heretics is not unknown to your Excellency. It is therefore no light sin if these, whom both the integrity of our faith and the strictness of the laws condemn, should find licence to creep up again in your times. Now in those parts, so far as we have learnt, the audacity of the Donatists has so increased that not only do they with pestiferous assumption of authority cast out of their churches priests of the catholic faith, but fear not even to rebaptize those whom the water of regeneration had cleansed on a true confession. And we are much surprised, if indeed it is so, that, while you are placed in those parts, bad men should be allowed thus to exceed. Consider only in the first place what kind of judgment you will leave to be passed upon you by men, if these, who in the times of others were with just reason put down, find under your administration a way for their excesses. In the next place know that our God will require at your hand the souls of the lost, if you neglect to amend, so far as possibility requires it of you, so great an abomination. Let not your Excellency take amiss my thus speaking. For it is because we love you as our own children that we point out to you what we doubt not will be to your advantage. But send to us with all speed our brother and fellow-bishop Paul, lest opportunity should be given to any one under any excuse for hindering his coming; in order that, on ascertaining the truth more fully, we may be able, with God's help, to settle by a reasonable treatment of the case how the punishment of so great a crime ought to be proceeded with.

EPISTLE XXXV: TO VICTOR AND COLUMBUS, BISHOPS.

Gregory to Victor and Columbus, Bishops of Africa.

After what manner a disease, if neglected in its beginning, acquires strength we have proved from our own necessities, whosoever of us have had our lot in this life. If, then, it were met by the foresight of skilful physicians at its birth, we know that it would cease before doing very much harm from being attended to too late. On this consideration, then, reason ought to impel us, when diseases of souls are beginning, to make haste to resist them by all the means in our power, lest, while we neglect applying wholesome medicines, they steal away from us the lives of many whom we are striving to win for our God. Wherefore it behoves us so with watchful carefulness to guard the folds of sheep which we see ourselves to be put over as keepers that the prowling wolf may find everywhere shepherds to resist him, and may have no way of entrance thereinto.

For indeed we find that the stings of the Donatists have in your parts so disturbed the Lord's flock, as though it were guided by no shepherd's control. And there has been reported to us what we cannot speak of without heavy sorrow, seeing that very many have already been torn by their poisoned teeth. Lastly, in order with most wicked audacity to drive catholic priests from their churches, they are said, in their most atrocious wickedness, even to have slain many besides, on whom the water of regeneration had conferred salvation, by rebaptizing them. All this saddens our mind exceedingly, for that, while you are placed there, it has been allowed to damned presumption to perpetrate such wickedness.

In this matter we exhort your Fraternity by this present writing, that, after discussion held and a council assembled, you should eagerly and with all your power so oppose this still nascent disease that neither may it acquire strength from neglect nor scatter the woes of pestilence in the flock committed to your charge. For, if in any way whatever (as we do not believe

will be the case) you neglect to resist iniquity in its beginning, they will wound very many with the sword of their error. And it is in truth a most serious thing to allow to be ensnared in the noose of diabolical fraud those whom we are able to rescue beforehand from being entangled. Moreover it is better to prevent any one from being wounded than to search out how one that is wounded may be healed. Considering this, therefore, hasten ye by sedulous prayer and all the means in your power, to quell sacrilegious wickedness, so that subsequent news, through the aid of the grace of Christ, may cause us more joy for the punishment of those men than sadness for their excesses.

Furthermore, take all possible pains to send to us with all speed our brother and fellow-bishop Paul, to the end that, on learning more particularly from him the causes of so great a crime, we may be able by the succour of our Creator to apply the medicine of fitting rebuke to this most atrocious wickedness.

EPISTLE XXXVI: TO LEO, BISHOP.

Gregory to Leo, Bishop of Catana.

We have found from the report of many that a custom has of old obtained among you, for subdeacons to be allowed to have intercourse with their wives. That any one should any more presume to do this was prohibited by the servant of God, the deacon of our see, under the authority of our predecessor, in this way; that those who at that time had been coupled to wives should choose one of two things, that is, either to abstain from their wives, or on no account whatever presume to exercise their ministry. And, according to report, Speciosus, then a subdeacon, did for this reason suspend himself from the office of

administration, and up to the time of his death bore indeed the office of a notary, but ceased from the ministry which a subdeacon should have exercised. After his death we have learnt that his widow, Honorata, has been relegated to a monastery by thy Fraternity for having associated herself with a husband. And so if, as is said, her husband suspended himself from ministration, it ought not to be to the prejudice of the aforesaid woman that she has contracted a second marriage, especially if she had not been joined to the subdeacon with the intention of abstaining from the pleasures of the flesh.

If, then, you find the truth to be as we have been informed, it is right for you to release altogether the aforesaid woman from the monastery, that she may be at liberty to return without any fear to her husband.

But for the future let thy Fraternity be exceedingly careful, in the case of any who may be promoted to this office, to look to this with the utmost diligence, that, if they have wives, they shall enjoy no licence to have intercourse with them: but you must still strictly order them to observe all things after the pattern of the Apostolic See.

EPISTLE XXXVIII: TO QUEEN THEODELINDA.

Gregory to Theodelina, Queen of the Lombards.

It has come to our knowledge from the report of certain persons that your Glory has been led on by some bishops even to the offence against holy Church of suspending yourself from the communion of Catholic unanimity. Now the more we sincerely love you, the more seriously are we distressed about you, that you believe unskilled and foolish men, who not only do not know what they talk about, but can hardly understand what they have heard; who, while they neither read themselves, nor believe those who do, remain in the same error which they have themselves feigned to themselves concerning us For we venerate the four holy synods; the Nicene, in which Arius, the Constantinopolitan, in which Macedonius, the first Ephesine, in which Nestorius, and the Chalcedonians, in which Eutyches and Dioscorus, were condemned; declaring that whosoever thinks otherwise than these four synods did is alien from the true faith. We also condemn whomsoever they condemn, and absolve whomsoever they absolve, smiting, with interposition of anathema, any one who presumes to add to or take away from the faith of the same four synods, and especially that of Chalcedon, with respect to which doubt and occasion of superstition has arisen in the minds of certain unskilled men.

Seeing, then, that you know the integrity of our faith from my plain utterance and profession, it is right that you should have no further scruple of doubt with respect to the Church of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles: but persist ye in the true faith, and make your life firm on the rock of the Church; that is on the confession of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, lest all those tears of yours and all those good works should come to nothing, if they are found alien from the true faith. For as branches dry up without the virtue of the root, so works, to whatsoever degree they may seem good, are nothing, if they are disjoined from the solidity of the faith.

It therefore becomes your Glory to send a communication with all speed to our most reverend brother and fellow-bishop Constantius, of whose faith and life I have long been well assured, and to signify by your letters addressed to him how kindly you accept his ordination, and that you are in no wise separated from the communion of his Church, so that we may truly rejoice with a common exultation, as for a good and faithful daughter. Know also that you and your works will please God, if, before his assize comes, they be approved by the judgment of his priests.

EPISTLE XXXIX: TO CONSTANTIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Constantius, Bishop of Mediolanum (Milan).

Having read the letter of your Holiness, we find that you are in a state of serious distress, principally on account of the bishops and citizens of Briscia (Brescia) who bid you send them a letter in which you are asked to swear that you have not condemned the Three Chapters. Now, if your Fraternity's predecessor Laurentius did not do this, it ought not to be required of you. But, if he did it, he was not with the universal Church, and contradicted what he had sworn to in his security. But, inasmuch as we believe him to have kept his oath, and to have continued in the unity of the Catholic Church, there is no doubt that he did not swear to any of his bishops that he had not condemned the Three Chapters. Hence your Holiness may conclude that you ought not to be forced to do what was in no wise done by your predecessor. But, lest those who have thus written to you should be offended, send them a letter declaring under interposition of anathema that you neither take away anything from the faith of the synod of Chalcedon nor received those who do, and that you condemn whomsoever it condemned, and absolve whomsoever it absolved. And thus I believe that they may be very soon satisfied

Further, as to what you write about many of them being offended because you name our brother and fellow- bishop John of the Church of Ravenna during the solemnities of mass, you should enquire into the ancient custom; and, if it has been the custom, it ought not now to be found fault with by foolish men. But, if it has not been the custom, a tiring ought not to be done at which some may possibly take offence. Yet I have been at pains to make careful enquiry whether the same John our brother and fellow-bishop names you at the altar; and they say that this is not done. And, if he does not make mention of your name, I know not what necessity obliges you to make mention of his. If indeed it can be done without any one taking

offence, your doing anything of this kind is very laudable, since you shew the charity you have towards your brethren.

Further, as to what you write of your having been unwilling to transmit my letter to Queen Theodelinda on the ground that the fifth synod was named in it, if you believed that she might thereby be offended, you did right in not transmitting it. We are therefore doing now as you recommend, namely, that we should only express approval of the four synods. Yet, as to the synod which was afterwards held in Constantinople, called by many the fifth, I would have you know that it neither ordained nor held anything in opposition to the four most holy synods, seeing that nothing was done in it with respect to the faith, but only with respect to persons; and persons, too, about whom nothing is contained in the acts of the Council of Chalcedon but, after the canons had been promulged, discussion arose, and final action was ventilated concerning persons. Yet still we have done as you desired, making no mention of this synod. But we have also written to our daughter the queen what you wrote to us about the bishops. Ursicinus, who wrote something to you against our brother and fellow-bishop John, you ought by your letters addressed to him, with sweetness and reason, to restrain from his intention. Further, concerning Fortunatus, we desire your Fraternity to be careful, lest you be in any way surreptitiously influenced by bad men. For I hear that he ate at the table of the Church with your predecessor Laurentius for many years until now, that he sat among the nobles, and subscribed, and that with our brother's knowledge he served in the army. And now, after so many years, your Fraternity thinks that he should be driven from the position which he now occupies. This seems to me altogether incongruous. And so I have given you this order through him, but privately. Still, if there is anything reasonable that can be alleged against him, it ought to be submitted to our judgment. But, if it please Almighty God, we will send letters through your man to our son the lord Dynamius.

EPISTLE XLVI: TO RUSTICIANA, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Rusticiana, &c.

On receiving your Excellency's letters I was glad to hear that you had reached Mount Sinai. But believe me, I too should have liked to go with you, but by no means to return with you. And yet I find it very difficult to believe that you have been at the holy places and seen many Fathers. For I believe that, if you had seen them, you would by no means have been able to return so speedily to the city of Constantinople. But now that the love of such a city has in no wise departed from your heart, I suspect that your Excellency did not from the heart devote yourself to the holy things which you saw with the bodily eye. But may Almighty God illuminate your mind by the grace of His lovingkindness and give unto you to be wise, and to consider how fugitive are all temporal things, since, while we are thus speaking, both time runs on and the Judge approaches, and lo the moment is even now near when against our will we must give up the world which of our own accord we will not. I beg that the lord Apio and the lady Eusebia, and their daughters, be greeted in my behalf. As to that lady my nurse, whom you commend to me by letter, I have the greatest regard for her, and desire that she should be in no way incommoded. But we are pressed by such great straits that we cannot excuse even ourselves from exactions (angariis) and burdens at this present time.

EPISTLE XLVII: TO SABINIANUS, DEACON.

Gregory to Sabinianus, &c.

Thou knowest what has been done in the case of the prevaricator Maximus. For after the most serene lord the Emperor had Sent orders that he should not be ordained, then he broke out into a higher pitch of pride. For the men of the glorious patrician Romanus received bribes from him, and caused him to be ordained in such a manner that they would have killed Antoninus, the sub-deacon and rector of the patrimony, if he had not fled. But I despatched letters to him, after I had learnt that he had been ordained against reason and custom, telling him not to presume to celebrate the solemnities of mass unless I should first ascertain from our most serene lords what they had ordered with regard to him. And these my letters, having been publicly promulged or posted in the city, he caused to be publicly torn, and thus bounced forth more openly into contempt of the Apostolic See. How I was likely to endure this thou knowest, seeing that I was before prepared rather to die than that the Church of the blessed apostle Peter should degenerate in my days. Moreover thou art well acquainted with my ways, that I bear long; but if once I have determined not to bear, I go gladly in the face of all dangers. Whence it is necessary with the help of God to meet danger, lest he be driven to sin to excess. Look to what I say, and consider what great grief inspires it.

But it has come to my ears that he has sent [to Constantinople] a cleric, I know not whom, to say that the bishop Malchus was put to death in prison for money. Now as to this there is one thing that thou mayest shortly suggest to our most serene lords; — that, if I their servant had been willing to have anything to do with the death of Lombards, the nation of the Lombards at this day would have had neither king nor dukes nor counts, and would have been divided in the utmost confusion. But, since I fear God, I shrink from having anything to do with the death of any one. Now the

bishop Malchus was neither in prison nor in any distress; but on the day when he pleaded his cause and was sentenced he was taken without my knowledge by Boniface the notary to his house, where a dinner was prepared for him, and there he dined, and was treated with honour by the said Boniface, and in the night suddenly died, as I think you have already been informed. Moreover I had intended to send our Exhilaratus to you in connection with that business; but, as I considered that the case was now done with, I consequently abstained from doing so.

BOOK V

EPISTLE II: TO FELIX, BISHOP, AND CYRIACUS, ABBOT

Gregory to Felix, &c.

The tenor of the report submitted to you sufficiently explains the complaint of the religious lady Theodosia, in which we have found on reading it many heads of accusation, not befitting priestly gentleness, against our brother and fellow-bishop Januarius; so much so that, after the foundation by her of a monastery for servants of God, all that pertains to avarice, turbulence, and wrong is said to have been exhibited at the time of the very dedication of the oratory. Wherefore, if the case is as we find in her aforesaid representation, and if you are aware that anything at all unbecoming has been committed besides, we exhort you that, all wrongs having first been redressed, you press upon Musicus, the abbot of the monastery of Agilitanus, that he lose no time in giving the greatest attention to his monks whom he had began to settle there, to the end that, this venerable place being with the Lord's help set in order by you in a decent and regular manner, neither may we be disturbed by the frequent complaints of the aforesaid religious lady that her good desires are not fulfilled, nor may it be to the detriment of your soul that so pious a design should languish, as we do not believe it will, through any neglect of yours.

EPISTLE IV: TO CONSTANTIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Constantius, Bishop of Mediolanum (Milan).

If licence to be restored to their rank be granted to the lapsed, the force of ecclesiastical discipline is undoubtedly broken, while in the hope of restoration each person fears not to give way to his evil inclinations. Your Fraternity, for instance, has consulted us as to whether Amandinus, ex-presbyter and ex-abbot, who was deposed by your predecessor for fault requiring it, should be called back to his rank; which thing is not allowable; and we decree that it cannot on any account be done. Yet, if it should be the case that his manner of life deserves it, seeing that he has been deprived altogether of his sacred office, assign him a place in a monastery, as you may see fit, before other monks. Above all things, then, take care that no one's supplication persuade you in any way to restore the lapsed to their sacred orders, lest such punishment should be supposed not to be definitely ordained for them, but only a temporary expedient.

As to Vitalianus the ex-presbyter, about whom you write that he should be strictly guarded, we will cause him to be sent into Sicily, that, being deprived of all hope of departure thence, he may then at least constrain himself to penitential bewailing. Jobinus also, of Portus Veneris, once deacon and abbot, we have decreed to be deprived of his office, and written that another should be ordained in his place In like manner also we decree that the three subdeacons, whom your Fraternity has notified to us as having lapsed, shall ever cease from and stand deprived of their office, and that nothing beyond lay communion be allowed them. Further, we have adjudged the ex-presbyter Saturninus to give security that he will not ever presume to approach the ministry of his sacred order. And we desire him to remain, with deprivation of his sacred order, in the same island in which he was, permitting him to have and exercise care and solicitude with respect to monasteries; for we believe that, his lapse having made him more wary, he

will now the more carefully keep guard over those who are committed to him.

Further, concerning John, notary of your church, the charity wherewith we love you and have long loved you warns us to write, lest you should order anything with regard to him while you are still provoked by his fault. Guarding, then, against this, enquire fully by all means in your power into the possessions of your church; by which melons neither may you offend God, nor may lie be able to find a ground for accusing you before men. For we write, not as defending John or commending him personally without reason, but lest your soul should be in any way burdened with sin under the incitement of anger. Whence it is needful, as we have, before said, that you should by no means neglect to enquire, in the fear of God, with a full investigation into the possessions of your church.

Furthermore, the epistle of your most dear Fraternity has caused us to wonder much with respect to the person of Fortunatus. But either that letter was not dictated by you, or certainly, if it is yours, we by no means recognize in it our brother the lord Constantius. For you ought to have paid, and still ought to pay, attention to the fact that it is in behalf of your reputation that we write. For, when he asserts that he suffers wrong among you, and has been unable to procure the guardian's (defensoris) aid, what else does he intimate but ill-will on your part? Wherefore, that neither this affair may dim your reputation in some quarters nor damage possibly ensue in any way with good cause to your church, you ought to send hither a person instructed by you, that the nature of the case may be examined, and the matter terminated, without ill- will on your part. And for this reason especially, that if, after his complaint, sentence should be pronounced among yourselves in your favour, he will be believed to have been defeated, not reasonably, but by power alone. But we, out of the charity wherewith we are bored to you, desist not from admonishing you to do what will be for

your good repute, knowing that, though this exhortation saddens you for the time, it will afterwards cause you joy, when the animosity of contention has passed away. In the month of September, Indiction 13. (In Vatic. The month of December, Indict. 13.)

EPISTLE V: TO DOMINICUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Dominicus, Bishop of Carthage.

Prosper your delegate (responsalis), the bearer of these presents, has been with us, and after other expressions of your charity handed us your second letters with an allegation of the imperial commands, and a paper giving an account of the synod that has been held among you. Having read all, we rejoiced for your pastoral zeal, and that our most pious lords had given no ear to the calumnies of venal persons brought against you on the plea of religion; but especially that your Fraternity has so taken pains to preserve the African province as in no wise to neglect to restrain with priestly fervour the devious sects of heretics; concerning the quieting of whom we remember having laid down the law so fully, even before consulting the letters of your Charity, that we do not believe that anything needs to be said again in reply to you about them. Although, however, this is so, and though we desire all heretics to be repressed always with vigour and reason by catholic priests, yet, on looking thoroughly into what has been done among you, we are in fact apprehensive lest offence should thereby be caused (which thing may the Lord avert) to the primates of other councils. For at the conclusion of your acts you have promulged a sentence, in which, while ordering the searching out of those heretics, you have brought in that those who neglect the duty are to be punished by forfeiture of their possessions and dignities. It is therefore best, most dear brother, that, in dealing with matters outside ourselves that require correction, charity among ourselves should first be preserved, and that we should be subject in mind (as I judge to be peculiarly proper to your Gravity) even to persons below us in dignity. For you will then more advantageously meet the errors of heretics with your whole united powers when, as befits your priesthood, you study to keep ecclesiastical concord among yourselves.

EPISTLE VIII: TO CYPRIAN, DEACON.

Gregory to Cyprian, deacon and rector of the patrimony of Sicily.

Concerning the Manicheans who are on our possessions I have frequently admonished thy Love to press them with the utmost diligence, and recall them to the Catholic faith. If, then, the time requires it, make enquiries in person, or, if other business does not allow this, through others. Further, it has come to my ears that there are Hebrews on our possessions who will not by any means be converted to God. But it seems to me that thou shouldest send letters through all our possessions on which these Hebrews are known to be, promising them particularly from me that whosoever of them shall have been converted to our true Lord God Jesus Christ shall have the burdens of his holding lightened. And this I wish to have done in such sort that, if one has a payment to make of one solidus, a third should be remitted him; if of three or four, that one solidus should be remitted; if of any more, the remission should still be made in the same proportion, or at any rate according as thy Love sees fit, so that one who is converted may have some relief of Iris burden, and the Church may not be put to heavy expense. Nor shall we do this unprofitably, if by lightening the burdens of their payments we bring them to the grace of Christ, since, though they themselves came with little faith, yet those who may be born of them will now be baptized with more faith: thus we gain either them or their children. And whatever amount of payment we let them off for the sake of Christ is nothing serious. Furthermore, some time ago, when John the deacon came, thy Love wrote something to me, the whole of which I read at the time, but let many days intervene before replying; and then, after such delay, replied to all particulars as I recollected them. But now I think that one point escaped my memory, and suspect that I gave no reply about it. For thou hadst written that loans were being advanced to peasants (rusticis) through certain undertakers for their debt, lest in borrowing from others

they should be burdened either by exactions or by the prices of things. This particular was to me most acceptable; and, if indeed I have already written about it, observe what I wrote. But if, as I suspect, I gave in my reply no definite direction on the subject, thou must not hesitate to advance money for the advantage of the peasants, since the ecclesiastical property will not thus be wasted, and out of it the peasants will derive advantage. And, if there are other things which thou considerest to be advantageous, thou must carry them out without any hesitation.

EPISTLE XI: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Ravenna.

I find that your Fraternity is greatly distressed on account of being forbidden by the censure of reason to wear the pallium in litanies. But through the most excellent Patrician, and through the most eminent Prefect, and through other noble men of your city, you have urgently requested to have this allowed you. Now we, having made careful enquiry of Adeodatus, some time thy Fraternity's deacon, have ascertained that it was never the custom of thy predecessors to use the pallium during litanies, except at the solemnities of the blessed John the Baptist, the blessed Apostle Peter, and the blessed martyr Apollinaris. But we were by no means bound to believe him, since many of our delegates have often been at your Fraternity's city, who declare that they never saw anything of the kind. And in this matter credence is rather to be given to many than to one, who is attesting something in behalf of his own Church. But, since we do not wish your Fraternity to be distressed, or the petition of our sons to be of no avail with us, we concede the use of the pallium, until we shall gain some more accurate knowledge, on the days of the Nativity of the Blessed John the Baptist, of the blessed Apostle Peter, anti the blessed martyr Apollinaris, and on the day of the celebration of your ordination. But in the sacristy, according to former custom, after the sons of the Church have been received and dismissed, your Fraternity may put on the pallium, and so proceed to the solemnization of mass, arrogating to yourself nothing more in the daring of rash presumption; lest, while something is snatched at out of order in exterior habiliment, what might have been done in due order be neglected. Given in the month of October; Indiction 13.

EPISTLE XV: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Ravenna.

In the first place this makes me sad; that thy Fraternity writes to me with a double heart, exhibiting one sort of blandishment in letters, but another sort with the tongue in secular intercourse. In the next place, it grieves me that my brother John even to this day retains on his tongue those gibes which notaries while still boys are wont to indulge in. He speaks bitingly, and seems to delight in such pleasantry. He flatters his friends in their presence, and maligns them in their absence. Thirdly, it is to me grievous and altogether execrable, that he imputes shameful crimes to his servants, whatever the hour may be, calling them "effeminate;" and, what is still more grievous, this is done openly. Then there is this in addition that there is no discipline for keeping guard over the life of the clergy, but that he exhibits himself only as their lord. The last thing, but first in importance as evidence of elation, is about his use of the pallium outside the church, which is a thing he never presumed to do in the times of my predecessors, and what none of his predecessors ever presumed to do, as our delegates testify (except it might be when relics were deposited, though with regard to relics one person only could be found to say that it was so); yet this in my days, in contempt of me, with extreme audacity, he not only did, but even made a habit of doing.

From all these things I find that the dignity of the Episcopacy is with him all in outside show, not in his mind. And indeed I return thanks to Almighty God that at the time when this came to my knowledge, which had never; reached the ears of my predecessors, the Lombards were posted between me and the city of Ravenna. For perchance I had it in my mind to shew to men hour severe I can be.

Lest, however, thou shouldest suppose that I wish thy church to be depressed or lessened in dignity, remember where the deacon of Ravenna

used to stand in solemnization of mass at Rome, and enquire where he stands now; and thou wilt recognize the fact that I desire to honour the church of Ravenna. But that any one whatever should snatch at anything out of pride, this I cannot tolerate.

Nevertheless I have already written on this matter to our deacon at Constantinople, that he should enquire of all who have under them even thirty or forty bishops. And if there is anywhere this custom of their walking in litanies wearing the pallium, God forbid that through me the dignity of the church of Ravenna should seem to be in any way lessened.

Reflect, therefore, dearest brother, on all that I have said above: think of the day of thy call: consider what account thou wilt render of the burden of episcopacy. Amend those manners of a notary. See what becomes a bishop in tongue and in deed. Be entirely sincere to thy brethren. Do not speak one thing, and have another in thy heart. Do not desire to seem more than thou art, that so thou mayest be able to be more than thou seemest. Believe me, when I came to my present position, I had such consideration and charity towards thee that, if thou hadst wished to keep hold of this my charity, thou still wouldest not have ever found such a brother as myself, or one so sincerely loving thee, or so concurring with thee in all devotion: but when I came to know of thy words and thy manners, I confess I started back. I beseech thee, then, by Almighty God, amend all that I have spoken of, and especially the vice of duplicity. Allow me to love thee; and for the present and the future life it may be of advantage to thee to be loved of thy brethren. Reply, however, to all this, not by words, but by behaviour.

EPISTLE XVII: TO CYPRIAN, DEACON.

Gregory to Cyprian, &c.

I received your letters of most bitter import about the death of the lord Maximianus in the month of November. And he indeed has reached the rewards he longed for, but the unhappy people of the city of Syracuse is to be commiserated as not having been counted worthy to have such a pastor long. Accordingly let thy Love take anxious heed that such a one may be chosen for ordination in the same church as may not seem to obtain undeservedly the same place of rule after the lord Maximianus. And indeed I believe that the majority would choose the presbyter Trajan, who, as is said, is of a good disposition, but, as I suspect, not fit for ruling in that place. Yet, if a better cannot be found, and if there are no charges against him, he may be condescended to under stress of very great necessity. But, if my wishes are asked with regard to this election, I inform thee privately of what I do wish: for no one in this same church appears to me so worthy after the lord Maximianus as John the archdeacon of the church of Guiana. And, if his election can be brought about, I believe that he will be found an exceedingly fit person. But he too must first be enquired about by thee privately as to any charges against him that may stand in the way. If he should be found free from any, he may be rightly chosen. Should this be done, our brother and fellow-bishop Leo will also have to give him leave to go, that he may be found free to be ordained. These things, then, I have taken care to intimate to thy Love; and it will now be thy concern to look round thee on all sides carefully, and arrange what is pleasing to God.

EPISTLE XVIII: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Constantinople.

At the time when your Fraternity was advanced to Sacerdotal dignity, you remember what peace and concord of the churches you found. But, with what daring or with what swelling of pride I know not, you have attempted to seize upon a new name, whereby the hearts of all your brethren might have come to take offence. I wonder exceedingly at this, since I remember how thou wouldest fain have fled from the episcopal office rather than attain it. And yet, now that thou hast got it, thou desirest so to exercise it as if thou hadst run to it with ambitious intent. For, having confessed thyself unworthy to be called a bishop, thou hast at length been brought to such a pass as, despising thy brethren, to covet to be named the only bishop. And indeed with regard to this matter, weighty letters were addressed to your Holiness by my predecessor Pelagius of holy memory; in which he annulled the acts of the synod, which had been assembled among you in the case of our once brother and fellow-bishop Gregory, because of that execrable title of pride, and forbade the archdeacon whom he had sent according to custom to the threshold of our lord, to celebrate the solemnities of mass with you. But after his death, when I, unworthy, succeeded to the government of the Church, both through my other representatives and also through our common son the deacon Sabinianus, I have taken care to address your Fraternity, not indeed in writing, but by word of mouth, desiring you to restrain yourself from such presumption. And, in case of your refusing to amend, I forbade his celebrating the solemnities of mass with you; that so I might first appeal to your Holiness through a certain sense of shame, to the end that, if the execrable and profane assumption could not be corrected through shame, strict canonical measures might be then resorted to. And, since sores that are to be cut away should first be stroked with a gentle hand, I beg you, I beseech you, and with all the

sweetness in my power demand of you, that your Fraternity gainsay all who flatter you and offer you this name of error, nor foolishly consent to be called by the proud title. For truly I say it weeping, and out of inmost sorrow of heart attribute it to my sins, that this my brother, who has been constituted in the grade of episcopacy for the very end of bringing hack the souls of others to humility, has up to the present time been incapable of being brought back to humility; that he who teaches truth to others has not consented to teach himself, even when I implore him.

Consider, I pray thee, that in this rash presumption the peace of the whole Church is disturbed, and that it is in contradiction to the grace that is poured out on all in common; in which grace doubtless thou thyself wilt have power to grow so far as thou determinest with thyself to do so. And thou wilt become by so much the greater as thou restrainest thyself from the usurpation of a proud and foolish title: and thou wilt make advance in proportion as thou art not bent on arrogation by derogation of thy brethren. Wherefore, dearest brother, with all thy heart love humility, through which the concord of all the brethren and the unity of the holy universal Church may be preserved. Certainly the apostle Paul, when he heard some say, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, but I of Christ (1 Cor. i. 13), regarded with the utmost horror such dilaceration of the Lord's body, whereby they were joining themselves, as it were, to other heads, and exclaimed, saying, Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul (ib.)? If then he shunned the subjecting of the members of Christ partially to certain heads, as if beside Christ, though this were to the apostles themselves, what wilt thou say to Christ, who is the Head of the universal Church, in the scrutiny of the last judgment, having attempted to put all his members under thyself by the appellation of Universal? Who, I ask, is proposed for imitation in this wrongful title but he who, despising the legions of angels constituted socially with himself, attempted to start up to an eminence of singularity,

that he might seem to be under none and to be alone above all? Who even said, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the starts of heaven: I will sit upon the mount of the testament, in the sides of the North: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High (Isai. xiv. 13).

For what are all thy brethren, the bishops of the universal Church, but stars of heaven, whose life and discourse shine together amid the sins and errors of men, as if amid the shades of night? And when thou desirest to put thyself above them by this proud title, and to tread down their name in comparison with thine, what else dost thou say but I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven? Are not all the bishops together clouds, who both rain in the words of preaching, and glitter in the light of good works? And when your Fraternity despises them, and you would fain press them down under yourself, what else say you but what is said by the ancient foe, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds? All these things when I behold with tears, and tremble at the hidden judgments of God, my fears are increased, and my heart cannot contain its groans, for that this most holy man the lord John, of so great abstinence and humility, has, through the seduction of familiar tongues, broken out into such a pitch of pride as to attempt, in his coveting of that wrongful name, to be like him who, while proudly wishing to be like God, lost even the grace of the likeness granted him, and because he sought false glory, thereby forfeited true blessedness. Certainly Peter, the first of the apostles, himself a member of the holy and universal Church, Paul, Andrew, John, — what were they but heads of particular communities? And yet all were members under one Head. And (to bind all together in a short girth of speech) the saints before the law, the saints under the law, the saints under grace, all these making up the Lord's Body, were constituted as members of the Church, and not one of them has wished himself to be called universal. Now let your Holiness

acknowledge to what extent you swell within yourself in desiring to be called by that name by which no one presumed to be called who was truly holy.

Was it not the case, as your Fraternity! knows, that the prelates of this Apostolic See which by the providence of God I serve, had the honour offered them of being called universal by the venerable Council of Chalcedon. But yet not one of them has ever wished to be called by such a title, or seized upon this ill-advised name, lest if, in virtue of the rank of the pontificate, he took to himself the glory of singularity, he might seem to have denied it to all his brethren.

But I know that all arises from those who serve your Holiness on terms of deceitful familiarity; against whom I beseech your Fraternity to be prudently on your guard, and not to lay yourself open to be deceived by their words. For they are to be accounted the greater enemies the more they flatter you with praises. Forsake such; and, if they must needs deceive, let them at any rate deceive the hearts of worldly men, and not of priests. Let the dead bury their dead (Luke ix. 60). But say ye with the prophet, Let them be turned back and put to shame that say unto me, Aha, Aha (Ps. lxix. 4). And again, But let not the oil of the sinner lard my head (Ps. cxl. 5).

Whence also the wise man admonishes well, Be in peace with many: but have but one counsellor of a thousand (Ecclus. vi. 6). For Evil communications corrupt good manners (1 Cor. xv. 33). For the ancient foe, when unable to break into strong hearts, looks out for weak persons who are associated with them, and, as it were, scales lofty walls by ladders set against them. So he deceived Adam through the woman who was associated with him. So, when he slew the sons of the blessed Job, he left the weak woman, that, being unable of himself to penetrate his heart, he might at any rate be able to do so through the woman's words. Whatever weak and secular persons, then, are near you, let them be shattered in their own

persuasive words and flattery, since they procure to themselves the eternal enmity of God from their very frowardness in being seeming lovers.

Of a truth it was proclaimed of old through the Apostle John, Little children, it is the last hour (1 John ii. 18), according as the Truth foretold. And now pestilence and sword rage through the world, nations rise against nations, the globe of the earth is shaken, the gaping earth with its inhabitants is dissolved. For all that was foretold is come to pass. The king of pride is near, and (awful to be said l) there is an army of priests in course of preparation for him, inasmuch as they who bad been appointed to be leaders in humility enlist themselves under the neck of pride. But in this matter, even though our tongue protested not at all, the power of Him who in His own person peculiarly opposes the vice of pride is lifted up for vengeance against elation. For hence it is written, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble (Jam. iv. 6). Hence, again, it is said, Whoso exalteth his heart is unclean before God (Prov. xvi. 5). Hence, against the man that is proud it is written, Why is earth and ashes proud (Ecclus. x. 9)? Hence the Truth in person says, Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased (Luke xiv. 11). And, that he might bring us back to the way of life through humility, He deigned to exhibit in Himself what He teaches us, saying, Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart (Matth. xi. 29). For to this end the only begotten Son of God took upon Himself the form of our weakness; to this end the Invisible appeared not only as visible but even as despised; to this end He endured the mocks of contumely, the reproaches of derision, the torments of suffering; that God in His humility might teach man not to be proud. How great, then, is the virtue of humility for the sake of teaching which alone He who is great beyond compare became little even unto the suffering of death! For, since the pride of the devil was the origin of our perdition, the humility of God has been found the means of our redemption. That is to say, our enemy, having been created among all

things, desired to appear exalted above all things; but our Redeemer remaining great above all things, deigned to become little among all things.

What, then, can we bishops say for ourselves, who have received a place of honour from the humility of our Redeemer, and yet imitate the pride of the enemy himself? Lo, we know our Creator to have descended from the summit of His loftiness that He might give glory to the human race, and we, created of the lowest, glory in the lessening of our brethren. God humbled Himself even to our dust; and human dust sets his face as high as heaven, and with his tongue passes above the earth, and blushes not, neither is afraid to be lifted up: even man who is rottenness, and the son of man that is a worm.

Let us recall to mind, most dear brother, this which is said by the most wise Solomon. Before thunder shall go lightning, and before ruin shall the heart be exalted (Ecclus. xxxii. 10); where, on the other hand it is subjoined, Before glory it shall be humbled. Let us then be humbled in mind, if we are striving to attain to real loftiness. By no means let the eyes of our heart be darkened by the smoke of elation, which the more it rises the more rapidly vanishes away. Let us consider how we are admonished by the precepts of our Redeemer, who says, Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matth. v. 3). Hence, also, he says by the prophet, On whom shall my Spirit rest, but on him that is humble, and quiet, and that trembleth at my words (Isai. lxvi. 2)? Of a truth, when the Lord would bring back the hearts of His disciples, still beset with infirmity, to the way of humility, He said, Whosoever will be chief among you shall be least of all (Matth. xx.27). Whereby it is plainly seen how he is truly exalted on high who in his thoughts is humbled. Let us, therefore, fear to be numbered among those who seek the first seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the market, and to be called of men Rabbi. For, contrariwise, the Lord says to His disciples, But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your master; and all ye

are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth, far one is your Father (Matth. xxiii. 7, 8).

What then, dearest brother, wilt thou say in that terrible scrutiny of the coming judgment, if thou covetest to be called in the world not only father, but even general father? Let, then, the bad suggestion of evil men be guarded against; let all instigation to offence be fled from. It must needs be (indeed) that offences come; nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the offence cometh (Matth. xviii. 7). Lo, by reason of this execrable title of pride the Church is rent asunder, the hearts of all the brethren are provoked to offence. What! Has it escaped your memory how the Truth says, Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea (Ib. v. 6)? But it is written, Charity seeketh not her own (1 Cor. xiii. 4). Lo, your Fraternity arrogates to itself even what is not its own. Again it is written, In honour preferring one another (Row. xii. 10). And thou attemptest to take the honour away from all which thou desirest unlawfully to usurp to thyself singularly. Where, dearest brother, is that which is written, Have peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. xii. 14)? Where is that which is written, Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God (Matth. v. 9)?

It becomes you to consider, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. But still, though we neglect to consider, supernal judgment will be on the watch against the swelling of so great elation. And we indeed, against whom such and so great a fault is committed by this nefarious attempt, — we, I say, are observing what the Truth enjoins when it says, If thy brother shall sin against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two

more, that in the mouth of one or two witnesses every word may be established. But if he will not hear them, tell it unto the Church. But if he will not hear the Church, let hint be to thee as an heathen man and a publican (Matth. xviii. 15). I therefore have once and again through my representatives taken care to reprove in humble words this sin against the whole Church; and now I write myself. Whatever it was my duty to do in the way of humility I have not omitted. But, if I am despised in my reproof, it remains that I must have recourse to the Church.

Wherefore may Almighty God show your Fraternity how great love for you constrains me when I thus speak, and how much I grieve in this case, not against you, but for you. But the case is such that in it I must prefer the precepts of the Gospel, the ordinances of the Canons, and the welfare of the brethren to the person even of him whom I greatly love.

I have received the most sweet and pleasant letter of your Holiness with respect to the case of the presbyters John and Athanasius about which, the Lord helping me, I will reply to you in another letter; for, being surrounded by the swords of barbarians, I am now oppressed by such great tribulations that it is not allowed me, I will not say to treat of many things, but hardly even to breathe. Given in the Kalends of January; Indiction

EPISTLE XIX: TO SABINIANUS, DEACON

Gregory to Sabinianus, &c.

In the cause of our brother the most reverend John, bishop of Constantinople, I have been unwilling to write two letter. But one I have drawn up briefly, which may seem to combine both requisites; that is to say, both honesty and kindness.

Let therefore thy Love take care to give him this letter which I have now addressed to him in compliance with the wish of the Emperor. For in the sequel another will be sent him such as his pride will not rejoice in. For he has come even to this; that, taking occasion of the case of John the presbyter, he transmitted hither the acts, wherein almost in every line he called himself oikoumeniko`n (oecumenical) patriarch. But I hope in Almighty God that the Supernal Majesty will confound his hypocrisy. But I wonder how he could so deceive thy Love as that thou shouldest allow the Lord Emperor to be persuaded to write to me himself concerning this matter, admonishing me to have peace with him. For, if the Lord Emperor wishes to observe justice, he ought to have admonished him to refrain from the proud title, and then at once there would be peace between us. I suspect, however, that thou hast not all considered with what cunningness this has been done by our aforesaid brother John. For it is for this purpose that he has done it; that the Lord Emperor might be obeyed, and so he himself might seem to be confirmed in his vanity, or that I might not obey him, and so his mind might be irritated against me. But we will keep to the right way, fearing nothing in this cause except the Almighty Lord. Wherefore let thy Love be in nothing afraid. All things that you see to be lofty in this world against the truth in behalf of the truth despise; trust in the grace of Almighty God, and the help of the blessed Apostle Peter. Remember the voice of the Truth, which says, Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world (1 John iv. 4); and in this cause whatever has to be done, do it with the utmost

authority. For now that we can in no wise be protected from the swords of our enemies, now that for love of the republic we have lost silver, gold, slaves and clothing, it is too ignominious that through those men we should lose even the faith. For to assent to that atrocious title is nothing else than to lose the faith. Wherefore, as I have written to thee already in former letters, never do thou presume to proceed with him.

EPISTLE XX: TO MAURICIUS AUGUSTUS.

Gregory to Mauricius, &c.

Our most pious and God-appointed lord, among his other august cares and burdens, watches also in the uprightness of spiritual zeal over the preservation of peace among the priesthood, inasmuch as he piously and truly considers that no one can govern earthly things aright unless he knows how to deal with divine things, and that the peace of the republic hangs on the peace of the universal Church. For, most serene lord, what human power, and what strength of fleshly arm would presume to lift irreligious hands against the lofty height of your most Christian Empire, if the concordant hearts of priests were studious to implore their Redeemer for you with the tongue, and also, as they ought to do, by their deservings? Or what sword of a most savage race would advance with so great cruelty to the slaughter of the faithful, unless the life of us, who are called priests but are not, were weighed down by works most wicked. But while we neglect the things that concern us, and think of those that concern us not, we associate our sins with the barbaric forces and our fault, which weighs down the forces of the republic, sharpens the swords of the enemy. But what shall we say for ourselves, who press down the people of God which we are unworthily set over with the loads of our sins; who destroy by example what we preach with the tongue; who by our works teach unrighteous things, and with our voice only set forth the things that are righteous? Our bones are worn down by fasts, and in our mind we swell. Our body is covered with vile raiment, and ill elation of heart we surpass the purple. We lie in ashes, and look down upon loftiness. Teachers of humility, we are chiefs of pride; behind the faces of sheep we hide the teeth of wolves. But what is the end of these things except that we persuade men, but are manifest to God? Wherefore most providently for restraining warlike movements does the most pious Lord seek the peace of the Church,

and, for compacting it, deigns to bring back the hearts of its priests to concord. And this indeed is what I wish; and, as far as I am concerned, I render obedience to his most serene commands. But since it is not my cause, but God's, since the pious laws, since the venerable synods, since the very commands of our Lord Jesus Christ are disturbed by the invention of a certain proud and pompous phrase, let the most pious Lord cut the place of the sore, and bind the resisting patient in the chains of august authority. For in binding up these things tightly you relieve the republic; and while you cut off such things, you provide for the lengthening of your reign.

For to all who know the Gospel it is apparent that by the Lord's voice the care of the whole Church was committed to the holy Apostle and Prince of all the Apostles, Peter. For to him it is said, Peter, lovest thou Me? Feed My sheep (John xxi. 17). To him it is said, Behold Satan hath desired to sift you as wheat; and I have prayed for thee, Peter, that they faith fail not. And thou, when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren (Luke xxii. 31). To him it is said, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind an earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven (Matth. xvi. 18).

Lo, he received the keys of the heavenly kingdom, and power to bind and loose is given him, the care and principality of the whole Church is committed to him, and yet he is not called the universal apostle; while the most holy man, my fellow-priest John, attempts to be called universal bishop. I am compelled to cry out and say, O tempora, O mores!

Lo, all things in the regions of Europe are given up into the power of barbarians, cities are destroyed, camps overthrown, provinces depopulated, no cultivator inhabits the land, worshippers of idols rage and dominate daily for the slaughter of the faithful, and yet priests, who ought to lie weeping on

the ground and in ashes, seek for themselves names of vanity, and glory in new and profane titles.

Do I in this matter, most pious Lord, defend my own cause? Do I resent my own special wrong? Nay, the cause of Almighty God, the cause of the Universal Church.

Who is this that, against the evangelical ordinances, against the decrees of canons, presumes to usurp to himself a new name? Would indeed that one by himself he were, if he could be without any lessening of others, — he that covets to be universal.

And certainly we know that many priests of the Constantinopolitan Church have fallen into the whirlpool of heresy, and have become not only heretics, but even heresiarchs. For thence came Nestorius, who, thinking Jesus Christ, the Mediator of God and men, to be two persons, because he did not believe that God could be made man, broke out even into Jewish perfidy. Thence came Macedonius, who denied that God the Holy Spirit was consubstantial with the Father and the Son. If then any one in that Church takes to himself that name, whereby he makes himself the head of all the good, it follows that the Universal Church falls from its standing (which God forbid), when he who is called Universal falls. But far from Christian hearts be that name of blasphemy, in which the honour of all priests is taken away, while it is madly arrogated to himself by one.

Certainly, in honour of Peter, Prince of the apostles, it was offered by the venerable synod of Chalcedon to the Roman pontiff. But none of them has ever consented to use this name of singularity, lest, by something being given peculiarly to one, priests in general should be deprived of the honour due to them. How is it then that we do not seek the glory of this title even when offered, and another presumes to seize it for himself though not offered?

He, then, is rather to be bent by the mandate of our most pious Lords, who scorns to render obedience to canonical injunctions. He is to be coerced, who does wrong to the holy Universal Church, who swells in heart, who covets rejoicing in a name of singularity, who also puts himself above the dignity of your Empire through a title peculiar to himself.

Behold, we all suffer offence for this thing. Let then the author of the offence be brought back to a right way of life; and all quarrels of priests will cease. For I for my part am the servant of all priests, so long as they live as becomes priests. For whosoever, through the swelling of vain glory, lifts up his neck against Almighty Gold and against the statutes of the Fathers, I trust in Almighty God that he will not bend my neck to himself, not even with swords.

Moreover what has been done in this city on our hearing of this title, I have indicated in full to my deacon and responsalis Sabinianus. Let then the piety of my Lords think of me as their own, whom they have always cherished and countenanced beyond others, and who desire to render obedience to you and yet fear to be found guilty in the heavenly and tremendous judgment, and, according to the petition of the aforesaid deacon Sabinianus, let my most pious Lord either deign to judge this business, or to move the often before mentioned man to desist at length from this attempt. If then through the most just judgment of your Piety he should comply with your orders, even though they be mild ones, we shall return thanks to Almighty God, and rejoice for the peace granted through you to all the Church. But should he persist any longer in his present contention, we hold this sentence of the Truth to be already made good; Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled (Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14). And again it is written, Before a fall the heart is lifted up (Prov. xvi. 18). I however, rendering obedience to the commands of my Lords, have both Written sweetly to my aforesaid fellow-priest, and humbly admonished him to amend himself of

this coveting of empty glory. If therefore he be willing to hear me, he has a devoted brother. But, if he persists in pride, I already see what will follow: — that he will find Him as his adversary of whom it is written, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble (Jam. iv. 6).

EPISTLE XXI: TO CONSTANTINA AUGUSTA.

Gregory to Constantina, &c.

Almighty God, who holds in His right hand the heart of your Piety, both protects us through you and prepares for you rewards of eternal remuneration for temporal deeds. For I have learnt from the letters of the deacon Sabinianus my responsalis with what justice your Serenity is interested in the cause of the blessed Prince of the apostles Peter against certain persons who are proudly humble and feignedly kind. And I trust in the bounty of our Redeemer that for these your good offices with the most serene Lord and his most pious sons you will receive retribution also in the heavenly country. Nor is there any doubt that you will receive eternal benefits, being loosed from the chains of your sins, if in the cause of his Church you have made him your debtor to whom the power of binding and of loosing has been given. Wherefore I still beg you to allow no man's hypocrisy to prevail against the truth, since there are some who, according to the saying of the excellent preacher, by sweet words and fair speeches seduce the hearts of the innocent, — men who are vile in raiment, but puffed up in heart. And they affect to despise all things in this world, and yet seek to acquire for themselves all the things that are of this world. They confess themselves unworthy before all men, but cannot be content with private titles, since they covet that whereby they may seem to be more worthy than all. Let therefore your Piety, whom Almighty God has appointed with our most serene Lord to be over the whole world, through your favouring of justice render service to Him from whom you have received your right to so great a dominion, that you may rule over the world that is committed to you so much the more securely as you more truly serve the Author of all things in the execution of truth.

Furthermore, I inform you that I have received a letter from the most pious Lord desiring me to be pacific towards my brother and fellow-priest

John. And indeed so it became the religious Lord to give injunctions to priests. But, when this my brother with new presumption and pride calls himself universal bishop, having caused himself in the time of our predecessor of holy memory to be designated in synod by this so proud a title, though all the acts of that synod were abrogated, being disallowed by the Apostolic See, — the most serene Lord gives me a somewhat distressing intimation, in that he has not rebuked him who is acting proudly, but endeavours to bend me from my purpose, who in this cause of defending the truth of the Gospels and Canons, of humility and rectitude; whereas my aforesaid brother and fellow-priest is acting against evangelical principles and also against the blessed Apostle Peter, and against all the churches, and against the ordinances of the Canons. But the Lord, in whose hands are all things, is almighty; of Him it is written, There is no wisdom nor prudence nor counsel against the Lord (Prov. xxi. 30). And indeed my often before mentioned most holy brother endeavours to persuade my most serene Lord of many things: but well I know that all those prayers of his and all those tears will not allow my Lord to be in any thing cajoled by any one against reason or his own soul.

Still it is very distressing, and hard to be borne with patience, that my aforesaid brother and fellow-bishop, despising all others, should attempt to be called sole bishop. But in this pride of his what else is denoted than that the times of Antichrist are already near at hand? For in truth he is imitating him who, scorning social joy with the legions of angels, attempted to start up to a summit of singular eminence, saying, I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven, I will sit upon the mount of the testament, in the sides of the North, and will ascend above the heights of the clouds, and I will be like the most High (Isai. xiv. 13). Wherefore I beseech you by Almighty God not to allow the times of your Piety to be polluted by the elation of one man, nor in any way to give any assent to so perverse a title, and that in this

case your Piety may by no means despise me; since, though the sins of Gregory are so great that he ought to suffer such things, yet there are no sins of the Apostle Peter that he should deserve in your times to suffer thus. Wherefore again and again I beseech you by Almighty God that, as the princes your ancestors have sought the favour of the holy Apostle Peter, so you also take heed both to seek it for yourselves and to keep it, and that his honour among you be in no degree lessened on account of our sins who unworthily serve him, seeing that he is able both to be your helper now in all things and hereafter to remit your sins.

Moreover, it is now even seven years that we have been living in this city among the swords of the Lombards. How much is expended on them daily by this Church, that we may be able to live among them, is not to be t told. But I briefly indicate that, as in the regions of Ravenna the Piety of my Lords has for the first army of Italy a treasurer (sacellarium) to defray the daily expenses for recurring needs, so I also in this city am their treasurer for such purposes And yet this Church, which at one and the same time unceasingly expends so much on clergy, monasteries, the poor, the people, and in addition on the Lombards, lo it is still pressed down by the affliction of all the Churches, which groan much for this pride of one man, though they do not presume to say anything.

Further, a bishop of the city of Salona has been ordained without the knowledge of me and my responsalis, and a thing has been done which never happened under any former princes. When I heard of this, I at once sent word to that prevaricator, who had been irregularly ordained, that he must not presume by any means to celebrate the solemnities of mass, unless we should have first ascertained from our most serene Lords that they had ordered this to be done; and this I commanded him under pain of excommunication. And yet, scorning and despising me, supported by the audacity of certain secular persons, to whom he is said to give many bribes

so as to impoverish his Church, he presumes up to this time to celebrate mass, and has refused to come to me according to the order of my Lords. Now I, obeying the injunction of their Piety, have from my heart forgiven this same Maximus, who had been ordained without my knowledge, his presumption in passing over me and my responsalis in his ordination, even as though he had been ordained with my authority. But his other wrong doings — to wit his bodily transgressions, which I have heard of, and his having been elected through bribery, and his having presumed to celebrate mass while excommunicated — these things, for the sake of God, I cannot pass over without enquiry. But I hope, and implore the Lord, that no fault may be found in him with respect to these things that are reported, and that his case may be term hated without peril to my soul. Nevertheless, before this has been ascertained, my most serene Lord, in the order that has been despatched, has enjoined me to receive him with honour when he comes. And it is a very serious thing that a man of whom so many things of such a nature are reported should be honoured before such things have been enquired into and sifted, as they ought in the first place to be. And, if the causes of the bishops who are committed to me are settled before my most pious Lords under the patronage of others, what shall I do, unhappy hat I am, in this Church? But that my bishops despise me, and have recourse to secular Judges against me, I give thanks to Almighty God that I attribute it to my sins. This however I briefly intimate, because I am waiting for a little while; and, if he should long delay coming to me, I shall in no wise hesitate to exercise strict canonical discipline in his case. But I trust in Almighty God, that He will give long life to our most pious Lords, and order things for us under your hand, not according to our sins, but according to the gifts of His grace. These things, then, I suggest to my most tranquil lady, since I am not ignorant with how great zeal for rectitude the most pure conscience of her Serenity is moved.

EPISTLE XXIII: TO CASTORIUS, NOTARY.

Gregory to Castorius, &c.

Our hearing of the death of our brother and fellow-bishop John has greatly saddened us especially as that city at this time has lost the solace of pastoral care. Wherefore, since very many advantages to the Church itself demand that, under the guidance of Christ, a priest should be ordained without delay, we accordingly charge thy Experience to exhort the clergy and people with all urgency that they delay not to elect for themselves a priest to be consecrated. This however, and before all things, we desire thee to press upon them, that in the general cause they regard not their own private interests. Let there be no venality, then, in this election, lest, while they covet rewards, they lose their discrimination of choice and think that man worthy for this office who may have pleased them, not by his merits, but by his gifts. For let them especially and absolutely know this, that he is not only unworthy of the priesthood, but will also certainly become further culpable, whosoever may presume to make merchandise of the gift of God by thinking to purchase it for a price. Wherefore let not him that is liberal in bribes, but him that is worthy for his merits, be chosen. For the penalty will affect both the elected and the electors, if they attempt with sacrilegious mind to violate the purity of the priesthood. Moreover, whether one or two may have been elected, by all means warn five of the senior presbyters and five of the leading people to come to us together. But with respect to the clergy, if, besides those who determine to come, you are of opinion that the presence of any others is necessary, send them to us without delay, that there may be no plea of excuse, nor any delay ensue, in setting the Church in order.

EPISTLE XXV: TO SEVERUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Severus, Bishop of Ficulum.

The report that has been sent to us has informed us of the death of the bishop John. Wherefore we solemnly delegate to thy Fraternity the work of the visitation of the bereaved Church: which work it becomes thee so to execute that no one may presume to interfere with respect to the promotions of the clergy, the revenues, ornaments, ministrations, or whatever else belongs to the patrimony of the same Church. According to custom.

EPISTLE XXVI: TO THE PEOPLE OF RAVENNA.

Gregory to the clergy, gentry, and common people of Ravenna.

Having been informed of the death of your bishop, we have taken care to delegate to our brother and fellow- bishop Severus of Ficulum the visitation of the bereaved Church, to whom we have given in charge to allow nothing with respect to the promotions of the clergy, the revenues, ornaments, and ministrations, to be usurped by any one. It is for you to render obedience to his assiduous exhortations.According to custom.

EPISTLE XXIX: TO VINCOMALUS, GUARDIAN (Defensorem).

Gregory to Vincomalus, &c.

With a view to the advantage of the Church it is our will and pleasure, that, if thou art held bound by no condition of, or liability to, bodily service, and hast not been a cleric of any other city, and if there is no canonical objection to thee, thou take the office of guardian of the Church, that thou mayest execute incorruptly and with alacrity whatever may be enjoined thee by us for the benefit of the poor, using this privilege which after deliberation we have conferred upon thee, so as to do thy diligence faithfully in accomplishing all that may be enjoined on thee by us, as having to render an account of thy doings under the judgment of our God. This epistle we have dictated, to be committed to writing, to Paterius, notary of our Church; In the month of March, Indiction 13.

EPISTLE XXX: TO MAURICIUS AUGUSTUS.

Gregory to Mauricius, &c.

The Piety of my Lords, which has been wont mercifully to sustain your servants, has shone forth here in so kind a supply that the need of all the feeble has been relieved by the succour of your bounty. On this account we all with prayers and tears beseech Almighty God, who has moved the heart of your Clemency to do this thing, that He would preserve the empire of our Lords safe in His unfailing love, and by the aid of His own majesty extend their victories in all nations. The thirty pounds of gold which my fellow-servant Busa brought, Scribo has distributed faithfully to priests, persons in need, and others. And, since certain females devoted to a religious life (sanctimoniales foeminae) have come to this city from divers provinces, having fled hither after captivity, of whom some, so far as there was room for them, have been placed in monasteries, but others, who could not be taken in, lead a life of singular destitution, it has been thought good that what Could be spared from the relief of the blind maimed and feeble should be distributed to them, so that not only needy natives, but also strangers who arrive here, might receive of the compassion of our Lords. Hence it has been brought about that all alike with one accord pray for the life of our lords, that so Almighty God may give you a long and quiet life, and grant to the most happy offspring of your Piety to flourish long in the Roman republic. The pay also of the soldiers has been so distributed by my aforesaid fellow-servant Scribo , in the presence also of the glorious Castus, magister militum, that all received with thanks the gifts of our lords under due discipline, and abstained from all murmuring such as was formerly wont to prevail among them.

EPISTLE XXXVI: TO SEVERUS, Scholasticus.

Gregory to Severus, Scholasticus to the Exarch.

Those who assist judges and are bound to them by sincere attachment ought to-advise them and suggest to them what may both save their souls and not derogate from their reputation. This being so, since we know with what sincere loyalty you love the most excellent Exarch, we have been careful to inform your Greatness of the things that have been done, that, being aware of them, you may move him to assent to them reasonably.

Know then that Agilulph, King of the Lombards, is not unwilling to conclude a general peace, if only the lord Patricius will consent to an arbitration. For he complains that many acts of violence were committed in his regions during the time of peace. And since, if reasonable grounds for arbitration should be found, he desires to have satisfaction made to himself, he also himself promises to make satisfaction in all ways, if it should appear that any wrong was committed on his side during the peace. Since then it is no doubt reasonable to agree to what he asks, there ought to be an arbitration, that, if any wrongs have been done on either side, they may be adjusted; so that it may be possible, with the protection of Cool, to establish a general peace; for how necessary for us all this is you well know. Act therefore wisely as you have been wont to do, that the most excellent Exarch may consent to this without delay, lest peace should appear to be refused by him, as should not be. For, should he be unwilling to consent, he indeed [Agilulph] again promises to conclude a special peace with us; but we know that divers islands and other places would undoubtedly in that case be ruined. However, let him [the Exarch] consider these things, and hasten to make peace, to the end that at any rate during this cessation of hostilities we may have some degree of quiet, and the forces of the republic may with the help of God be the better repaired for resistance.

EPISTLE XXXIX: TO ANASTASIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Anastasius, Bishop of Antioch.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will (Luke ii. 14), because that great river which once had left the rocks of Antioch dry has returned at length to its proper channel, and waters the subject valleys that are near, so as also to bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, and some an hundred-fold. For now there is no doubt that many flowers of souls are growing up in its valleys, and that they will come even to ripe fruit through the streams of your tongue. Wherefore with voice of heart and mouth from our inmost soul we render due praise to Almighty God, and rejoice in your Blessedness, not with you only, but with all who are subject to you. I have received the letters of your Holiness, to me most sweet and pleasant, while we ourselves, if I may so speak, are sweating under the same toil with you. And indeed I know how heavy must be to thee the burden of external cares after those heights of rest, wherein with the hand of the heart thou wert touching heavenly secrets. But remember that thou rules an Apostolic See, and assuagest sorrow the more readily from being, made all things to all men. In the Books of Kings, as your accomplished Holiness knows, a certain man is described who used either hand for the right hand (1 Chron. xii. 2). And, with regard to this, I am not doubtful about tile lord Anastasius, of old my most sweet and most holy patron, that, while he draws earthly works to heavenly profit, he turns the left band to the right hand’s use; so that his heavenly intentness may accomplish its work, so to speak, with the right hand, and also, when he is led in his care of temporal things towards the interests of justice, the left hand may acquire the strength of the right.

And indeed these things cannot be without heavy labour and trouble. But let us remember the labours of those who went before us; and what we endure will not be hard. For We must through many tribulations enter into

the kingdom of God (Acts xiv. 22). And, We were pressed out of measure, yea and above strength, insomuch that we were weary even of life. But we ourselves, too had the answer of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves (2 Cor. i. 8, 9). And yet The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the supervening glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom. viii. 18). How then can we that are weak sheep pass without labour through the heat of this world wherein we know that even rams have suffered under heavy toil?

Further, what tribulations I suffer in this land from the swords of the Lombards, from the iniquities of judges, from the press of business, from the care of subjects, and also from bodily affliction, I am unable to express either by pen or tongue. Concerning which things even though I might say something briefly, I hesitate, lest to your most holy Charity, while afflicted by your own tribulations, I should add mine also. But may Almighty God both in the abundance of His loving-kindness fill the mind of your most holy Blessedness with all comfort, and grant at sortie time, on account of your intercession, to unworthy me to rest from these evils which I suffer. Amen. Grace. These words, as you see, taken from what you had written, I insert in my epistles, that your Blessedness may perceive with regard to Saint Ignatius that he is not only yours, but also ours. For, as we have his master, the Prince of the apostles in common, so also no one of us ought to have to himself alone the disciple of this same Prince. Moreover, we have received your blessing, which is of sweet smell and of a good savour, with the feelings that were due to it. And we give thanks to Almighty God that what you do, what you say, and what you give, is fragrant and savoury. For your life therefore let us say together, let us say all, Glory to God in the highest, and an earth peace to men of good will.

EPISTLE XL: TO MAURICIUS AUGUSTUS.

Gregory to Mauricius, &c.

The Piety of my Lords in their most serene commands, while set on refuting me on certain matters, in sparing me has by no means spared me. For by the use therein of the term simplicity they politely call me silly. It is true indeed that in Holy Scripture, when simplicity is spoken of in a good sense, it is often carefully associated with prudence and uprightness. Hence it is written of the blessed Job, The man was simple and upright (Job i. 1). And the blessed Apostle Paul admonishes saying Be ye simple in evil and prudent in good (Rom. xvi. 19). And the Truth in person) admonishes saying, Be ye prudent as serpents, and simple as doves (Matth. x. 16); thus shewing it to be very unprofitable if either prudence should be wanting to simplicity, or simplicity to prudence. In order, then, to make His servants instructed for all things He desired them to be both simple as doves, and prudent as serpents, that so both the cunning of the serpent might sharpen in them the simplicity of the dove, and the simplicity of the dove temper the cunning of the serpent.

I therefore, who am denounced in the most serene commands of my Lords as simple without tile addition of prudence, as having been deceived by the cunning of Ariulph, am plainly and undoubtedly called silly; which I also myself acknowledge to be the case. For, though your Piety were silent, the facts cry out. For, if I had not been silly, I should by no means have come to endure what 1 suffer in this place among the swords of the Lombards. Moreover, in what I stated about Ariulph, that he was prepared with all his heart to come to terms with the republic, seeing that I am not believed, I am reproved also as having lied. But, although I am not a priest, I know it to be a grave injury to a priest that, being a servant of the truth, he should be believed to be deceitful. And I have been for some time aware that Nordulph is believed before me, and Leo before me, and that now easy

credence is given to those who seem to be in your confidence more than to my assertions.

And indeed if the captivity of my land were not increasing day by day, I would gladly pass over in silence contempt and ridicule of myself. But this does afflict me exceedingly, that from my bearing the charge of falsehood it ensues also that Italy is daily led captive under the yoke of the Lombards. And, while my representations are in no wise believed, the strength of the enemy is increasing hugely. This however I suggest to my most pious Lord, that he would think anything that is bad of me, but, with regard to the advantage of the republic and the cause of the rescue of Italy, not easily lend his pious ears to any one, but believe facts rather than words. Moreover, let not our Lord, in virtue of his earthly power, too hastily disdain priests, but with excellent consideration, on account of Him whose servants they are, so rule over them as also to pay the reverence that is due to them. For in Holy Writ priests are sometimes called gods, and sometimes angels. For even through Moses it is said of him who is to be put upon his oath, Bring him unto the gods (Exod. xxii. 8); that is unto the priests. And again it is written, Than shall not revile the gods (Ib. 28), to wit, the priests. And the prophet says, The priest’s lips shall keep knowledge, and they skull seek the law at his mouth; for he is the angel of the Lord of hosts (Malach. ii. 7), Why, then, should it be strange if your Piety were to condescend to honour those to whom even God Himself in His word gives honour, calling them angels or gods?

Ecclesiastical history also testifies that, when accusations in writing against bishops had been offered to the Prince Constantine of pious: memory, he received indeed the bills of accusation, but, calling together the bishops who had been accused, he burnt before their eyes the bills which he had received, saying, Ye are gods, constituted by the true God. Go, and settle your causes among you, for it is not fit that we should judge gods. Yet

in this sentence, my pious Lord, he conferred more on himself by his humility than on them by the reverence paid to them. For before him there were pagan princes in the republic, who knew not the true God, but worshipped gods of wood and stone; and yet they paid the greatest honour to their priests. What wonder then if a Christian emperor should condescend to honour the priests of the true God, when pagan princes, as we have already said, knew how to bestow honour on priests who served gods of wood and stone? These things, then, I suggest to the piety of my Lords, not in my own behalf, but in behalf of all priests. For I am a man that is a sinner. And, since I offend against Almighty God incessantly every day, I surmise that it will be some amends for this at the tremendous judgment, that I am smitten incessantly every day by blows. And I believe that you appease the same Almighty God all the more as you more severely afflict me who serve Him badly. For I had already received many blows, and when the commands of my Lords came in addition, I found consolations that I was not hoping for. For, if I can, I will briefly enumerate these blows.

First, that the peace which without any cost to the republic I had made with the Lore bards who were in Tuscany was withdrawn from me. Then, the peace having been broken, the soldiers were removed from the Roman city. And some indeed were slain by the enemy, but others were placed at Narnii and Perusium (Perugia); and Rome was left, that Perusium might be held. After this a still heavier blow was the arrival of Agilulph, so that I saw with my own eyes Romans tied by the neck with ropes like dogs, to be taken to France for sale. And, because we who were within the city under the protection of God escaped his hands, a ground was thence sought for making us appear culpable; to wit, because corn ran short, which cannot by any means be kept in large quantities for long in this city; as I have shewn more fully in another representation. On my own account indeed I was in no wise disturbed, since I declare, my conscience bearing me witness, that I

was prepared to suffer any adversity whatever, so long as I came out of all these things with the safety of my soul. But for the glorious men, Gregory the praefect, and Castorius the military commander. (magistro militum), I have been distressed in no small degree, seeing that they n no way neglected to do all that could be done, and endured most severe toil in watching and guarding the city during the siege, and, after all this, were smitten by the heavy indignation of my Lords. As to them, I clearly understand that it is not their conduct, but my person, that goes against them. For, having with me alike laboured in trouble, they are alike troubled after labour.

Now as to the Piety of my Lords holding out over me the formidable and terrible judgment of Almighty God, I beseech you by the same Almighty God to do this no more. For as yet we know not how any of us will stand there. And Paul, the excellent preacher, says, Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts (1 Cor. iv. 5). Yet this I briefly say, that, unworthy sinner as I am, I rely more on the mercy of Jesus when He comes than on the justice of your Piety. And there are many things that men are ignorant of with regard to this judgment; for perhaps He will blame what you praise, and praise what you blame. Wherefore among all these uncertainties I return to tears only, praying that the same Almighty God may both direct our most pious Lord with His hand and in that terrible judgment find him free from all defaults. And may He make me so to please men, if need be, as not to offend against His eternal grace.

EPISTLE XLI: TO CONSTANTINA AUGUSTA.

Gregory to Constantina, &c.

Knowing how my most serene Lady thinks about the heavenly country and the life of her soul, I consider that I should be greatly in fault were I to keep silence on matters that ought to be represented to her for the fear of God.

Having ascertained that there are many of the natives in the island of Sardinia who still, after the evil custom of their race, practise sacrifices to idols, and that the priests of the same island are sluggish in preaching our Redeemer, I sent thither one of the bishops of Italy, who with the co-operation of the Lord has brought many of the natives to the faith. But he has reported to me a sacrilegious proceeding, namely, that those in the island who sacrifice to idols pay a bribe to the judge for license to do this. And, when some of them had been baptized and had ceased sacrificing to idols, the same payment had been exacted by this same judge of the island, even after their baptism, which they had been previously accustomed to make for leave to sacrifice to idols. And, when the aforesaid bishop found fault with him, he replied that he had promised so large a suffragium that he could not make it up except by aid from cases of this kind. But the island of Corsica is oppressed by such an excessive number of exactors and such a burden of exactions, that those who are in it are hardly able to make up what is exacted except by selling their children. Hence it ensues that the proprietors of this island, deserting the pious republic, are forced to take refuge with that most wicked nation of the Lombards. For what can they suffer from barbarians harder or more cruel than being so straitened and squeezed as to be compelled to sell their children? Moreover, in the island of Sicily one Stephen, chartularius of the maritime parts, is said to practise such illegalities and such oppressions, invading places that belong to various persons, and without any legal process putting up titles on

properties and houses, that, if I wished to tell every one of his doings that have come to my ears, I could not accomplish the task in a large volume.

Let my most serene Lady look to all these things wisely, and assuage the groans of the oppressed. For I suspect that these things have not come to your most pious ears. For if they could have reached them, they would by no means have continued until now. But they should be represented now at a suitable time to our most pious Lord, that he may remove such and so great a burden of sin from his own soul, from the empire, and from his sons. I know he will say that whatever is collected from the aforesaid islands is transmitted to us for the expenses of Italy. But in reply to this I suggest that, even though less expenditure were bestowed on Italy, he should still rid his empire of the tears of the oppressed. For perhaps, too, such great expenditure in this land profits less than it might do because the money for it is collected with some admixture of sin. Let therefore our most serene Lords give orders that nothing be collected with sin. And I know that, though less is given for the advantage of the republic, the republic is thereby much aided. And though perhaps it may be less aided by a less expenditure, yet it is better that we should not live temporally, than that you should find any hindrance in the way of eternal life. For consider what must be the feelings, what the state of heart of parents, when they part with their children lest they should be tormented. But how one ought to feel for the children of others is well known to those who have children of their own. Let it then suffice for me to have briefly represented these things, lest, if your Piety were not to know what is being done in these parts, I should suffer for the guilt of my silence before the strict judge.

EPISTLE XLII: TO SEBASTIAN, BISHOP.

Gregory to Sebastian, Bishop of Sirmium.

I have received the most sweet and pleasant letter of thy Fraternity, which, though you are never absent from my heart, has nevertheless made your Holiness as it were present with me bodily. But I beseech Almighty God to protect you with His right hand, and to grant you a tranquil life here, and, when it shall please Him, eternal rewards. But I beg you, if you love me with that love wherewith you always loved me when we were together, to pray for me more earnestly, that so Almighty God may loose me from the bands of my sins, and make me to stand free in His sight, released from the burden of this corruption. For, however inestimable be the sweetness of the heavenly country for drawing one towards it, yet there are many sorrows in this life to impel us daily to the love of heavenly things. And these only please me exceedingly from the very fact that they do not allow anything to please me in this world.

For we can by no means describe, most holy brother, what we suffer in this land at the hands of your friend, the lord Romanus. Yet I may briefly say that his malice towards us has surpassed the swords of the Lombards; so that the enemies who kill us seem kinder than the judges of the republic, who by their malice, rapines, and deceits wear us out with anxiety. And to bear at the same time the charge of bishops and clergy, and also of monasteries and people, and to watch anxiously against the plots of the enemy, and to be ever suspicious of the deceitfulness and malice of the dukes; what labours and what Sorrows all this involves, your Fraternity may the more truly estimate as you more purely love me who suffer these things

Furthermore, while addressing you with the greeting that I owe you, I inform you that it has come to my knowledge from the report Boniface the defensor, that our brother the most holy lord Anastasius the patriarch has wished to commit to you the government of the Church in one of his cities,

and that you have refused your assent. This your feeling and your wisdom I most gladly approve of, and strongly commend; and I account you happy, and myself unhappy in having consented at such a time as this to undertake the government of the Church. If, however, by any chance, in condescension to your brethren, and as being intent on works of mercy, you should ever decide to consent to such a proposal, I beg you by no means to prefer any one else's love to mine. For there are in the island of Sicily Churches without bishops, and, if by the guidance of God you are pleased to take the government of a Church, you will be able to do this better near the threshold of the blessed apostle Peter, with his aid. But if you are not so pleased, remain happily as you are, that this resolution may continue in you; and pray for us unhappy ones. Now may Almighty God keep you under His protection, in whatever place it be His will that you should be, and bring you to heavenly rewards.

EPISTLE XLIII: TO EULOGIUS AND ANASTASIUS, BISHOPS.

Gregory to Eulogius, Bishop of Alexandria, and Anastasius, Bishop of Antioch.

When the excellent preacher says, As long as I am the apostle of the Gentiles I will honour my ministry (Rom. xi. 13); saying again in another place, We became as babes among you (1 Thess. ii. 7), he undoubtedly shews an example to us who come after him, that we should retain humility in our minds, and yet keep in honour the dignity of our order, so that neither should our humility be timid nor our elevation proud. Now eight years ago, in the time of my predecessor of holy memory Pelagius, our brother and fellow-bishop John in the city of Constantinople, seeking occasion from another cause, held a synod in which he attempted to call himself Universal Bishop. Which as soon as my said predecessor knew, he despatched letters annulling by the authority of the holy apostle Peter the acts of the said synod; of which letters I have taken care to send copies to your Holiness. Moreover he forbade the deacon who attended us the most pious Lords for the business of the Church to celebrate the solemnities of mass with our aforesaid fellow-priest. I also, being of the same mind with him, have sent similar letters to our aforesaid fellow-priest, copies of which I have thought it right to send to your Blessedness, with this especial purpose, hat we may first assail with moderate force he mind of our before-named brother concerning this matter, wherein by a new act of pride, all the bowels of the Universal Church are disturbed. But, if he should altogether refuse to be bent from the stiffness of his elation, then, with the succour of Almighty God, we may consider more particularly what ought to be done.

For, as your venerable Holiness knows, this name of Universality was offered by the holy synod of Chalcedon to the pontiff of the Apostolic See which by the providence of God I serve. But no one of my predecessors has

ever consented to use this so profane a title; since, forsooth, if one Patriarch is called Universal, the name of Patriarch in the case of the rest is derogated. But far be this, far be it from the mind of a Christian, that any one should wish to seize for himself that whereby he might seem in the least degree to lessen the honour of his brethren. While, then, we are unwilling to receive this honour when offered to us, think how disgraceful it is for any one to have wished to usurp it to himself perforce.

Wherefore let not your Holiness in your epistles ever call any one Universal, lest you detract from the honour due to yourself in offering to another what is not due. Nor let any sinister suspicion make your mind uneasy with regard to our most serene lords, inasmuch as he fears Almighty God, and will in no way consent to do anything against the evangelical ordinances, against the most sacred canons. As for me, though separated from you by long spaces of land and sea, I am nevertheless entirely conjoined with you in heart. And I trust that it is so in all respects with your Blessedness towards me; since, when you love me in return, you are not far from me. Hence we give thanks the more to that grain of mustard seed (Matth. xiii. 31, 32), for that from what appeared a small and despicable seed it has been so spread abroad everywhere by branches rising and extending themselves from the same root that all the birds of heaven may make their nests in them. And thanks be to that leaven which, in three measures of meal, has leavened in unity the mass of the whole human race (Matth. xiii. 33); and to the little stone, which, cut out of the mountain without hands, has occupied the whole face of the earth (Dan. ii. 35), and which to this end everywhere distends itself, that from the human race reduced to unity the body of the whole Church might be perfected, and so this distinction between the several members might serve for the benefit of the compacted whole.

Hence also we are not far from you, since in Him who is everywhere we are one. Let us then give thanks to Him who, having abolished enmities, has caused that in His flesh there should be in the whole world one flock, and one sheepfold under Himself the one shepherd; and let us be ever mindful how the preacher of truth admonishes us, saying, Be careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (Ephes. iv. 3), and, Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God (Hebr. xii. 14). And he says also to other disciples, If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, having peace with all men (Rom. xii. 18) For he sees that the good cannot have peace with the bad; and therefore, as ye know, he premised, If it be possible.

But, because peace cannot be established except on two sides, when the bad fly from it, the good ought to keep it in their inmost hearts. Whence also it is admirably said, As much as lieth in you; meaning that it should remain in us even when it is repelled from the hearts of evil men. And such peace we truly keep, when we treat the faults of the proud at once with charity and with persistent justice, when we love them and hate their vices. For man is the work of God; but vice is the work of man. Let us then distinguish between what God and what man has made, and neither hate the man on account of his error nor love the error on account of the man.

Let us then with united mind attack the evil of pride in the man, that from his enemy, that is to say his error, the man himself may first be freed. Our Almighty Redeemer will supply strength to charity and justice; He will supply to us, though placed far from each other, the unity of His Spirit; even He by whose workmanship the Church, having been constructed as it were after the manner of the ark with the four sides of the world, and bound together with the compacture of incorruptible planks and the pitch of charity, is disturbed by no opposing winds, by the swelling of no billow coming from without.

But inasmuch as, with His grace steering us, we ought to seek that no wave coming upon us from without may throw us into confusion, so ought we to pray with all our hearts, dearest brethren, that the right hand of His providence may draw out the accumulation of internal bilgewater within us. For indeed our adversary the devil, who, in his rage against the humble, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. v. 8), no longer, as we perceive, walks about the folds but so resolutely fixes his teeth in certain necessary members of the Church that, unless with the favour of the Lord, the heedful crowd of shepherds unanimously run to the rescue, no one can doubt that he will soon tear all the sheepfold; which God forbid. Consider, dearest brethren, who it is that follows close at hand, of whose approach such perverse beginnings are breaking out even in priests. For it is because he is near of whom it is written, He is king over all the sons of pride (Job xli. 25) — not without sore grief I am compelled to say it — that our brother and fellow-bishop John, despising the Lord's commands, apostolical precepts, and rules of Fathers, attempts through elation to be his forerunner in name.

But may Almighty God make known to your Blessedness with what sore groaning I am tormented by this consideration; that he, the once to me most modest man, he who was beloved of all, he who seemed to be occupied in alms, deeds, prayers, and fastings, out of the ashes he sat in, out of the humility he preached, has grown so boastful as to attempt to claim all to himself, and through the elation of a pompous expression to aim at subjugating to himself all the members of Christ, which cohere to one Head only, that is to Christ. Nor is it surprising that the same tempter who knows pride to be the beginning of all sin, who used it formerly before all else in the case of the first man, should now also put it before some men at the end of virtues, so as to lay it as a snare for those who to some extent seemed to

be escaping his most cruel hands by the good aims of their life, at the very goal of good work, and as it were in the very conclusion of perfection.

Wherefore we ought to pray earnestly, and implore Almighty God with continual supplications, that He would avert this error from that man's soul, anti remove this mischief of pride and confusion from the unity and humility of the Church. And with the favour of the Lord we ought to concur, and make provision with all our powers, lest in the poison of one expression the living members in the body of Christ should die. For, if this expression is suffered to be allowably used, the honour of all patriarchs is denied: and while he that is called Universal perishes per chance in his error, no bishop will be found to have remained in a state of truth.

It is for you then, firmly and without prejudice, to keep the Churches as you have received them, and not to let this attempt at a diabolical usurpation have any countenance from you. Stand firm; stand secure; presume not ever to issue or to receive writings with the falsity of the name Universal in them. Bid all the bishops subject to your care abstain from the defilement of this elation, that the Universal Church may acknowledge you as Patriarchs not only in good works but also in the authority of truth. But, if perchance adversity is the consequence, we ought to persist unanimously, and show even by dying that in case of harm to the generality we do not love anything of our own especially. Let us say with Paul, To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain (Philip. i. 21). Let us hear what the first of all pastors says; If ye suffer anything for righteousness' sake, happy are ye (1 Pet. iii. 14). For believe me that the dignity which we have received for the preaching of the truth we shall more safely relinquish than retain in behalf of the same truth, should case of necessity require it. Finally, pray for me, as becomes your most dear Blessedness, that I may shew forth in works what I am thus bold to say to you.

EPISTLE XLVIII: TO ANDREW, SCHOLASTICUS.

Gregory to Andrew, &c.

We have been desirous of carrying out the wish of the most excellent the lord Patrician as to the person of Donatus, the archdeacon; but, seeing that it is very dangerous to the soul to lay hands on any one rashly, we took care to examine by a thorough investigation into his life and deeds. And, since many things have been discovered, as we have written to the said lord Patrician, which remove him far from the episcopate, we, fearing the judgment of God, have not thought fit to consent to his ordination. But neither have we presumed to ordain John, the presbyter, who is ignorant of the psalms, since this circumstance certainly shewed him to be too little in earnest about himself. These, then, being excluded, when we had urged the parties to choose some one from among their own people, and they declared that they had no one fit for this office, and when we together with them were the more distressed, they at length, with one common voice and consent, repeatedly solicited our venerable brother the presbyter Marinianus, who they learns had been associated with me for a long time in a monastery. He, shrinking from the office, was at last, by various means, with difficulty persuaded to give assent to their petition. And, since we were well acquainted with his life, and knew him to be solicitous in winning souls, we did not delay his ordination. Let, therefore, your Glory receive him as is becoming, and extend to his newness the aid of your succour. For to all, as you know, newness in any office whatever is very trying. But I have great confidence that Almighty God, who has vouchsafed to put him over His flock, will both stimulate him to give heed to what is inward, and comfort him with the loving-kindness of His grace for administering what is outward. But, inasmuch as, after his long enjoyment of quiet, his newness, as we have before said, will without doubt expose him to perturbation, I beg that, when he shall come to you flying from the whirlwinds of secular

storms, he may always find in your heart a haven of rest, and be cheered by the boon of your charity. But you will soon learn how much you will find yourselves able to agree; for he comes unwillingly to the episcopate.

EPISTLE XLIX: TO LEANDER, BISHOP.

Gregory to Leander, Bishop of Hispalis (Seville).

With what ardour I am athirst to see thee thou readest in the tables of thine own heart, since thou lovest me exceedingly. But since I cannot see thee, separated as thou art from me by long tracts of country, I have done what charity towards thee dictated, namely to transmit to thy Holiness, on the arrival here of our common son Probinus the presbyter, the book of Pastoral Rule, which I wrote at the commencement of my episcopate, and the books which thou knewest I had already composed on the exposition of the blessed Job. Some sheets indeed of the third and fourth parts of that work I have not sent to thy Charity, having already given those sheets only of the said parts to monasteries. These, then, which I send let thy Holiness earnestly peruse, and more earnestly deplore my sins, lest it be to my more serious blame that I am seen as it were to know what I omit to do. But with how great tumults of business I am oppressed in this Church the very brevity of my epistle will signify to thy Charity, seeing that I say so little to him whom more than all I love.

EPISTLE LII: TO JOHN, ARCHBISHOP.

Gregory to John, Archbishop of the Corinthians.

The equity and solicitude of Secundinus our brother and fellow-bishop, which had been well known to us of old, is shewn also by the tenor of your letters. In this matter he has greatly pleased us, and made us glad, in that in the cause of Anastasius, once bishop, which we charged him to enquire into, he has both exercised his vigilance diligently and judged the crimes that were discovered as justice required, and as was fight. But in all these things we return thanks to Almighty God for that, when certain accusers held back, He brought the truth to his knowledge, lest the originator of such great crimes should escape detection. But seeing that, in the sentence wherein it is evident that the above-named Anastasius has been justly condemned and deposed, our above-named brother and fellow- bishop has visited the offence of certain persons in such a manner as to reserve them for our judgment, we therefore have seen fit to signify by this present epistle what is to be held to and observed concerning them.

As to Paul the deacon then, the bearer of these presents, although his fault is exceedingly to his shame and discredit — namely, that deluded by promises, he held back from accusation of his late bishop who has been lately deposed, and that, in the eagerness of cupidity, he consented, against his own soul, to keep silence rather than declare the truth — yet, since it befits us to be more kind than strict, we pardon him this fault, and decide that he is to be received again into his rank and position. For we believe that the affliction which he has endured since the time of the sentence being pronounced may suffice for the punishment of this fault. But as to Euphemius and Thomas, who received sacred orders for relinquishing their accusation, it is our will that they be deprived of these sacred orders, and, having been deposed from them, so continue; and we decree that they shall never, under any pretext or excuse, be restored to sacred orders. For it is in

the highest degree improper, and contrary to the rule of ecclesiastical discipline, that they should enjoy the dignity which they have received, not for their merits, but as the reward of wickedness. Yet, inasmuch as it is fit for us to incline to mercy more than to strict justice, it is our will that the same Euphemius and Thomas be restored to the rank and position, but to that only, from which they had been promoted to sacred orders, and receive during all the days of their life the stipends of these positions, as they had been before accustomed. Further, as to Clematius the reader, I appoint, from a like motive of benignity, that he is to be restored to his rank and position. To all these also that is, to Paul the deacon, to Euphemius, Thomas, and Clematius, let your Fraternity take care to supply their emoluments, according to the rank and position in which each of them is, as each has been accustomed to receive them, from this present thirteenth indiction without any diminution. Inasmuch, therefore, as the above-named Paul the deacon asserts that he expended much for the advantage of your Church, and desires to be aided by the succour of your Fraternity for recovery of the same, we exhort that, if this is so, you should concur with him in all possible ways, and support him with your aid, for recovering what he has given, since no reason allows that he should unjustly suffer loss in what he has expended for the advantage of the generality. Furthermore, let your Fraternity restore without delay the three pounds of gold which, at the instance of our above- named brother and fellow-bishop Secundinus, it appears that the said Paul the deacon gave for the benefit of your Church, lest (which God forbid) you should seem to burden him, not reasonably, but out of mere caprice.

EPISTLE LIII: TO VIRGILIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Virgilius, Bishop of Arelate (Arles).

O how good is charity, which through an image in the mind exhibits what is absent as present to ourselves, through love unites what is divided, settles what is confused, associates things that are unequal, completes things that are imperfect! Rightly does the excellent preacher call it the bond of perfectness; since, though the other virtues indeed produce perfectness, yet still charity binds them together so that they can no longer be loosened from the heart of one who loves. Of this virtue, then, most dear brother, I find thee to be full, as both those who came from the Gallican parts and the words also of thy letter addressed to me testify to me of thee.

Now as to thy having asked therein, according to ancient custom, for the use of the pallium and the vicariate of the Apostolic See, far be it from me to suspect that thou hast sought eminence of transitory power, or the adornment of external worship, in our vicariate and in the pallium. But, since it is well known to all whence the holy faith proceeded in the regions of Gaul, when your Fraternity asks for a repetition of the old custom of the Apostolic See, what is it but that a good offspring reverts to the bosom of its mother? With willing mind therefore we grant what has been asked for, lest we should seem either to withdraw from you anything of the honour due to you, or to have despised the petition of our most excellent son king Childebert. But the present state of things requires the greater earnestness, that with increase of dignity solicitude also may advance, and watchfulness in the custody of others may grow, and the merits of your life may serve as an example to your subjects, and that your Fraternity may never seek your own through the dignity accorded you, but the gains of the heavenly country. For you know what the blessed apostle says, groaning, For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's (Philip. ii. 21).

For I have learnt from information given me by certain persons that in the parts of Gaul and Germany no one attains to holy orders except for a consideration given. If this is so, I say it with tears, I declare it with groans, that, when the priestly order has fallen inwardly, neither will it be able to stand outwardly for long. For we know from the Gospel what our Redeemer in person did; how He went into the temple, and overthrew the seats of them that sold doves (Matth. xxi. 12). For to sell doves is to receive a temporal consideration for the Holy Spirit, whom, being consubstantial with Himself, God Almighty gives to men through the imposition of hands. From which evil what follows is already intimated. For of those who presumed to sell doves in the temple of God the seats fell by God's judgment.

And in truth this transgression is propagated with increase among subordinates. For he who is promoted to any sacred order for a price, being already corrupted in the very root of his advancement, is the more ready to sell to others what he has bought. And where is that which is written, Freely ye have received, freely give (Matth. x. 8)?

And, seeing that the simoniacal heresy was the first to arise against the holy Church, why is it not considered, why is it not seen, that whoso ordains any one for money, causes him in advancing him, to become a heretic?

Another very detestable thing has also been reported to us; that some persons, being laymen, through desire of temporal glory, are tonsured on the death of bishops, and all at once are made priests. In such cases it is already known what manner of man he is who attains to priesthood, passing suddenly from a lay estate to sacred leadership. And one who has never served as a soldier fears not to become a leader of the religious. How is that man to preach who has perhaps never heard any one else preach? Or bow shall he correct the ills of others who has never yet bewailed his own? And,

where Paul the apostle prohibits a neophyte from coming to sacred orders, we are to understand that, as one was then called a neophyte who had been newly planted in the faith, so we now reckon among neophytes one who is still new in holy conversation.

Moreover, we know that walls after being built, are not made to carry a weight of timber till they are dried of the moisture of their newness, lest, if a weight be put on them before they are settled, it bear down the whole fabric together to the ground. And, when we cut trees for a building, we wait for the moisture of their greenness to be first dried out, lest, if the weight of the fabric is imposed on them while still fresh, they be bent from their very newness, and be the sooner broken and fall down from having been elevated prematurely. Why, then, is not this scrupulously seen to among men, which is so carefully considered even in the case of timber and stones?

On this account your Fraternity must needs take care to admonish our most excellent son king Childebert that he remove entirely the stain of this sin from his kingdom, to the end that Almighty God may give him the greater recompense with Himself as He sees him both love what He loves and shun what He hates.

And so we commit to your Fraternity, according to ancient custom, under God, our vicariate in the Churches which are under the dominion of our most excellent son Childebert, with the understanding that their proper dignity, according to primitive usage, be preserved to the several metropolitans. We have also sent a pallium for thy Fraternity to use within the Church for the solemnization of mass only. Further, if any one of the bishops should by any chance wish to travel to any considerable distance, let it not be lawful for him to remove to other places without the authority of thy Holiness. If any question of faith, or it may be relating to other matters, should have arisen among the bishops, which cannot easily be

settled, let it be ventilated and decided in an assembly of twelve bishops. But, if it cannot be decided after the truth has been investigated, let it be referred to our judgment.

Now may Almighty God keep you under His protection, and grant unto you to preserve by your behaviour the dignity that you have received. Given the 12th day of August, Indiction 13.

EPISTLE LIV: TO ALL THE BISHOPS OF THE KINGDOM OF CHILDEBERT.

Gregory to all the Bishops of Gaul who are under the kingdom of Childebert.

To this end has the provision of the divine dispensation appointed that there should be diverse degrees and distinct orders, that, while the inferiors shew reverence to the more powerful and the more powerful bestow love on the inferiors, one contexture of concord may ensue of diversity, and the administration of all several offices may be properly borne. Nor indeed could the whole otherwise subsist; unless, that is, a great order of differences of this kind kept it together. Further, that creation cannot be governed, or live, in a state of absolute equality we are taught by the example of the heavenly hosts, since, there being angels and also archangels, it is manifest that they are not equal; but in power and rank, as you know, one differs from another. If then among these who are without sin there is evidently this distinction, who of men can refuse to submit himself willingly to this order of things which he knows that even angels obey? For hence peace and charity embrace each other mutually, and the sincerity of concord remains firm in the reciprocal love which is well pleasing to God.

Since, then each single duty is then salubriously fulfilled when there is one president who may be referred to, we have therefore perceived it to be opportune, in the Churches that are under the dominion of our most excellent son king Childebert, to give our vicariate jurisdiction, according to ancient custom, to our brother Virgilius, bishop of the city of Arelate, to the end that the integrity of the catholic faith, that is of the four holy synods, may be preserved under the protection of God with attentive devotion, and that, if any contention should by chance arise among our brethren and fellow-priests, he may allay it by the rigour of his authority with discreet

moderation, as representing the Apostolic See. We have also charged him that, if such a dispute should arise in any cases as to require the presence of others, he should assemble our brethren and fellow-bishops in competent number, and discuss the matter salubriously with due regard to equity, and decide it with canonical integrity. But if a contention (which may the Divine power avert) should happen to arise on matters of faith, or any business come up about which there may perchance be serious doubt, and he should be in need of the judgment of the Apostolic See in place of his own greatness, we have directed him that, having diligently enquired into the truth, he should take care to bring the question under our cognizance by a report from himself, to the end that it may be terminated by a suitable sentence so as to remove all doubt.

And, since it is necessary that the bishops should assemble at suitable times for conference before him to whom we have granted our vicariate jurisdiction as often as he may think it, we exhort that none of you presume to be disobedient to his orders, or defer attending the general conclave, unless perchance bodily infirmity should prevent any one, or a just excuse in any case should allow his absence. Yet let such as are unavoidably prevented from attending the synod send a presbyter or a deacon in their stead, to the end that the things that, with the help of God, may be decided by our vicar, may come to the knowledge of him who is absent by a faithful report through the person whom he had sent, and be observed with unshaken steadfastness, and that there be no occasion of excuse for daring to violate them.

About this also we take the precaution of warning you, that none of you may attempt in any way to depart to places at any great distance without the authority of our aforesaid brother and fellow-bishop Virgilius, knowing that the orders of our predecessors, who granted vicariate jurisdiction to his predecessors, undoubtedly lay this down.

Furthermore, we exhort that each one of you give careful attention to his own office, so that he who desires to receive the reward promised for feeding the sheep may guard the flock committed to him with carefulness and prayer, lest the prowling wolf should invade and tear the sheep entrusted to him, and there should be in the retribution punishment instead of reward. We hope, therefore, most dear brethren, and we entreat Almighty God with all our prayers, that He would make you to be fervent more and more in the constancy of His love, and grant you especially to be retained in the peace of the Church, and in agreement together.

It has been reported to us that some are promoted to sacred orders through simoniacal heresy; and we have ordered our above-written brother and fellow-bishop Virgilius that this must be altogether prohibited; and, that your Fraternity may know and studiously observe this, our letter to him is to be read in your presence. Given the 12th day of August, Indiction 13.

EPISTLE LV: TO KING CHILDEBERT.

Gregory to Childebert, king of the Franks.

The letter of your Excellency has made us exceedingly glad, testifying as it does that you are careful, with pious affection, of the honour and reverence due to priests. For you thus shew to all that you are faithful worshippers of God, while you love His priests with the acceptable veneration that is due to them, and hasten with Christian devotion to do whatever may advance their position. Whence also we have received with pleasure what you have written, and grant what you desire with willing mind; and accordingly we have committed, with the favour of God, our vicariate jurisdiction to our brother Virgilius, bishop of the city of Arelate, according to ancient custom and your Excellency's desire; and have also granted him the use of the pallium, as has been the custom of old.

But, inasmuch as some things have been reported to us which greatly offend Almighty God, and confound the honour and reverence due to the priesthood, we beg that they may be in every way amended with the support of the censure of your power, lest, while headstrong and perverse doings run counter to your devotion, your kingdom, or your soul (which God forbid) be burdened by the guilt of others.

Further, it has come to our knowledge that on the death of bishops some persons from being laymen are tonsured, and mount to the episcopate by a sudden leap. And thus one who has not been a disciple is in his inconsiderate ambition made a master. And, since he has not learned what to teach, he bears the office of priesthood only in name; for he continues to be a layman in speech and action as before. How, then, is he to intercede for the sins of others, not having in the first place bewailed his own? For such a shepherd does not defend, but deceives, the flock; since, while he cannot for very shame try to persuade others to do what he does not do himself, what else is it but that the Lord's people remains a prey to robbers, and catches

destruction from the source whence it ought to have had a great support of wholesome protection? How bad and how perverse a proceeding this is let your Excellency's Highness consider even from your own administration of things. For it is certain that you do not put a leader over an army unless his work and his fidelity have first been apparent; unless the virtue and industry of his previous life have shewn him to be a fit person. But, if the command of an army is not committed to any but men of this kind, it is easily gathered from this comparison of what sort a leader of souls ought to be. But it is a reproach to us, and we are ashamed to say it, that priests snatch at leadership who have not seen the very beginning of religious warfare.

But this also, a thing most execrable, has been reported to us as well: that sacred orders are conferred through simoniacal heresy, that is for bribes received. And, seeing that it is exceedingly pestiferous, and contrary to the Universal Church, that one be promoted to any sacred order not for merit but for a price, we exhort your Excellency to order so detestable a wickedness to be banished from your kingdom For that man shows himself to be thoroughly unworthy of this office, who fears not to buy the gift of God with money, and presumes to try to get by payment what he deserves not to have through grace.

These things, then, most excellent son, I admonish you about for this reason, that I desire your soul to be saved. And I should have written about them before now, had not innumerable occupations stood in the way of my will. But now that a suitable time for answering your letter has offered itself, I have not omitted what it was my duty to do. Wherefore, greeting your Excellency with the affection of paternal charity, we beg that all things which we have enjoined on our above-named brother and fellow-bishop to be done and observed, may be carried out under the protection of your favour, and that you allow them not to be in any way upset by the elation or pride of any one. But, as they were observed by his predecessor under the

reign of your glorious father, so let them be observed now also, by your aid, with zealous devotion. It is right, then, that we should thus have a return made to us; and that, as we have not deferred fulfilling your will, so you too, for the sake of God and the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, should cause our ordinances to be observed in all respects; that so your Excellency's reputation, praiseworthy and well-pleasing to God, may extend itself all around. Given the 12th day of August, Indiction 13.

EPISTLE LVI: TO MARINIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Marinianus, Bishop of Ravenna.

Moved by the benevolence of the Apostolical See and the order of ancient custom, we have thought fit to grant the use of the pallium to thy Fraternity, who art known to have undertaken the office of government in the Church of Ravenna. And remember thou to use it in no other way but in the proper Church of thy city, when the sons (i.e. laity) have been already dismissed, as thou art proceeding from the audience chamber to celebrate the sacred solemnities of mass; but, when mass is finished, thou wilt take care to lay it by again in the audience chamber. But outside the Church, we do not allow thee to use it any more, except four times in the year, in the litanies which we named to thy predecessor John; giving thee at the same time this admonition; that, as through the Lord's bounty thou hast obtained from us the use of an adornment of this kind to the honour of the priestly office, so thou strive to adorn also the office undertaken by thee to the glory of Christ with probity of manners and of deeds. For thus wilt thou be conspicuous for two adornments answering to each other, if with such a vesture of the body as this the good qualities also of thy soul agree. For all privileges also which appear evidently to have been formerly granted to thy Church we confirm by our authority, and decree that they continue inviolate.

EPISTLE LVII: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of the Corinthians

Now that our God, from whom nothing is hidden, having cast out an atrocious plague of pollution from the government of His Church, has been pleased to advance you to the rule thereof, there is need of anxious precaution on your part that the Lord's flock, after the wounds and various evils inflicted by its former shepherd, may find consolation and wholesome medicine in your Fraternity. Thus, then, let the hand of your action wipe away the stain of the previous contagion, so as tO suffer no traces even to remain of that execrable wickedness.

Let, therefore, your solicitude towards your subjects be worthy of praise. Let discipline be exhibited with gentleness. Let rebuke be with discernment. Let kindness mitigate wrath; let zeal sharpen kindness: and let one be so seasoned with the other that neither immoderate punishment afflict more than it ought, nor again laxity impair the rectitude of discipline. Let the conduct of your Fraternity be a lesson to the people committed to you. Let them see in you what to love, and perceive what to make haste to imitate. Let them be taught how to live by your example. Let them not deviate from the straight course through your leading; let them find their way to God by following you; that so thou mayest receive as many rewards from the Saviour of the human race as thou shalt have won souls for Him. Labour therefore, most dear brother, and so direct the whole activity of thy heart and soul, that thou mayest hereafter be counted worthy to hear, Well done, thou goad and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord (Matth. xxv. 21).

As you requested in your letter which we received through our brother and fellow-bishop Andrew, we have sent you the pallium, which it is necessary that you should so use as your predecessors, by the allowance of our predecessors, are proved to have used it.

Furthermore, it has come to our ears that in those parts no one attains to any sacred order without the giving of a consideration. If this, is so, I say with tears, I declare with groans, that, when the priestly order has fallen inwardly, neither will it stand long outwardly. For we know from the Gospel what our Redeemer in person did; how He went into the temple, and overthrew the seats of them that sold, doves (Matth. xxi. 12). For to sell cloves is to receive a temporal consideration for the Holy Spirit, whom, being consubstantial with Himself, Almighty God gives to men through imposition of hands. And what follows from this evil, as I have said before, is intimated; for the seats of those who presumed to sell doves in the temple of God fell by the judgment of God. And in truth this transgression is propagated with increase among subordinates. For one who attains to a sacred dignity tainted in the very root of his promotion is himself the more prepared to sell to others what he has bought. And where then is that which is written, Freely ye have received; freely give (Matth. x. 8)? And, since the simoniacal heresy was the first to arise against holy Church, why is it not considered, why is it not seen, that whosoever ordains any one for a price in promoting him causes him to become a heretic? Seeing, then, that the holy universal Church utterly condemns this most atrocious wickedness, we exhort your Fraternity in all ways to repress, with all the urgency of your solicitude, this so detestable and so huge a sin in all places that are under you. For, if we shall perceive anything of the kind to be done henceforth, we will correct it, not with words, but with canonical punishment; and we shall begin to have a different opinion of you; which ought not so to be.

Further, your Fraternity knows that formerly the pallium was not given except for a consideration received. But, since this was incongruous, we held a council before the body of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, and forbade under a strict interdiction the receiving of anything, as well for this as for ordinations.

It is your duty then, that neither for a consideration, nor for favour or the solicitation of certain persons, you consent to any persons being advanced to sacred orders. For it is a grave sin, as we have said, and we cannot suffer it to continue without reproof.

I delayed receiving the above named Andrew, our brother and fellow-bishop, because by the report of our brother and fellow-bishop Secundinus we learnt that he had forged letters, as to himself from us, in the proceedings against John of Larissa. And, unless your goodness had induced us, we would on no account have received him. Given the 15th day of the month of August, Indiction 13.

EPISTLE LVIII: TO ALL THE BISHOPS THROUGHOUT HELLADIA.

Gregory to all bishops constituted in the province of Helladia.

I return thanks with you, dearest brethren, to Almighty God, who has caused the hidden sore which the ancient enemy had introduced to come to the knowledge of all, and has cut it away by a wholesome incision from the body of His Church. Herein we have cause both to rejoice and to mourn; to rejoice, that is, for the correction of a crime, but to mourn for the fall of a brother. But, since for the most part the fall of one is wont to be the safeguard of another, whosoever fears to fall, let him give heed to this, that he afford no way of approach to the enemy, nor think that deeds done lie hidden. For the Truth proclaims, There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed(Matth. x. 26). For this voice is already the herald of our doings, and He himself, being witness, brings in all ways to public view what is done in secret. And who may strive to hide his deeds before Him Who is both their witness and their judge? But, since sometimes, when one thing is attended to, another is not guarded against, it behoves every one to be watchful against all the snares of the enemy, lest, while he conquers in one point he be vanquished in another. For an earthly enemy too, when he desires to invade fortified places, thus employs the art of warfare. For indeed he lays ambushes latently; but shews himself as though entirely bent on the storming of one place, so that, while there is a running together for defence of that place where the danger is imminent, other places about which there is no suspicion may be taken. And the result is, that he who, when perceived, was repulsed by the valour of his opponent, obtains by stealth what he could not obtain by fighting. But, since in all these things there is need of the aid of divine protection, let every one of us cry to the Lord with the voice of the heart, saying, Lord, remove not Thy help far from me; Look Thou to my defence(Ps. xxi. 20). For it is manifest that,

unless He Himself should help, and defend those who cry to Him, our enemy cannot be vanquished.

Furthermore, know ye that, having received the letter of your Charity through Andrew our brother and fellow- bishop, we have transmitted the pallium to John our brother, the bishop of the Corinthians; whom it is by all means fitting that you should obey, especially as the order of ancient custom claims this, and his good qualities, to which you yourselves bear testimony, invite it. For from the account given me by certain persons I have learnt that in those parts no one attains to any sacred order without the giving of a consideration. If this is so, I say with tears, I declare with groans, that, when the priestly order has fallen inwardly, neither will it be able to stand long outwardly. For we know from the Gospel what our Redeemer did in person; how He went into the temple, and overthrew the seats of them that sold doves. For in truth to sell doves is to receive a temporal consideration for the Holy Spirit, whom, being consubstantial with Himself, Almighty God gives to men through imposition of hands. And, as I have said before, what follows from this evil is intimated; for the seats of them that presumed to sell doves in the temple of God fell by God's judgment And in truth this transgression is propagated with increase among subordinates. For he who is advanced to a sacred order already tainted in the very root of his promotion is himself more prepared to sell to others what he has bought. And where is that which is Written, Freely ye have received; freely give(Matth. x. 8)? And, since the simoniacal heresy was the first to arise against the holy Church, why is it not considered, why is it not seen, that whosoever ordains any one for a price in promoting him causes him to become a heretic? And so we exhort that none of you suffer this to be done any more; or dare to promote any to sacred orders for the favour or supplication of any person, except such a one as the character of his life and actions has shewn to be worthy. For, if we should perceive the contrary in

future, know ye that it will be repressed with strict and canonical punishment. Given on the 15th day of the month of August, Indiction 13.

BOOK VI

EPISTLE I: TO MARINIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Marinianus, Bishop of Ravenna. As unjust demands should not be conceded, so the petition of such as desire what is lawful ought not to be set aside. Now your Fraternity's presbyters, deacons and clergy have presented to us a petition complaining that the late John, your predecessor, made a will burdening his Church with various bequests. And they have petitioned that these, which are to the detriment of his Church, should under no excuse be paid, as being prohibited by law. And although, heredity and succession having been by him renounced, no reason binds thee to satisfy any such claims, nevertheless we hereby exhort thee over and above that with regard to such bequests as he has made, contrary to the ordinances of the laws, of property belonging to his Church, or acquired by him in his episcopate, your Fraternity neither lend your authority nor on any account consent to them. But, if he has wished or directed anything to be done with regard to his private property which he had before his episcopate, and which he had not previously bestowed upon his Church, it is necessary that this disposition should be held valid in all respects, and that no one of the ecclesiastics should attempt against reason on any pretext to set it aside.

But, inasmuch as during his life he often begged of us that we should confirm by our authority what he had conferred on the monastery which he had himself constructed near the church of Saint Apollinaris, and we promised to do this, we hold it needful to exhort your Fraternity to suffer nothing of what he has there conferred and constituted to be diminished, but to see to all being preserved and firmly established. Since, then, he is known to have made mention of this monastery, and of the property conferred on it, in the will which he made, you must know that we have not confirmed this part of it by reason of our following his last wishes, but because, as we have said, we promised it to him when he was alive. Let your Fraternity, therefore, make haste so carefully to accomplish all these

things that both what was by him constituted and by us confirmed in the above-named monastery may be maintained, and what he has by will directed to be given or done to the detriment of his Church may have no validity, seeing that the law forbids it.

EPISTLE II: TO THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF RAVENNA.

Gregory to the clergy and people of the Church of Ravenna.

We have been informed that certain men, instigated by the malignant spirit, have wished to corrupt your minds by false speech with regard to the reputation of our brother and fellow-bishop Marinianus; saying that this our brother venerates the holy synod of Chalcedon less than becomes him. On this head both he himself in person will satisfy you all of the integrity of his faith, and we fully testify that, having been nursed from his cradle in the bosom of the holy Universal Church, he has held the right preaching of the faith with the attestation of his life. For he venerates the holy Nicene synod in which Arius, the Constantinopolitan, in which Macedonius, the first Ephesine, in which Nestorius, and the holy Chalcedonian, in which Dioscorus and Eutyches were condemned. And if any one presumes ever to speak anything against the faith of these four synods and against the tome and definition of pope Leo of holy memory, let him be anathema. Accordingly, receiving the fullest satisfaction, love ye your pastor in entire charity with a pure heart, that the intercession of the same your pastor, poured out purely before God, may avail to your profit.

EPISTLE III: TO MAXIMUS OF SALONA.

Gregory to Maximus, pretender to the Church of Salona.

As often as anything is said to have been done contrary to ecclesiastical discipline, we dare not leave it unexamined, lest we should be guilty before God for connivance. Now it has come to our ears that thou wast ordained by means of simoniacal heresy. Nay and many other things have been said of thee here, whereof there was one especially on account of which we held it needful to prohibit thee urgently by letter from celebrating the solemnities of mass until we might ascertain the state of the case more certainly. Wherefore, lest the children of the Church should be too long without a shepherd, and lest, in case of these things which are said remaining unexamined, vice of this nature should extend itself to many, we exhort thee to make haste to come to us, laying aside all excuses, to the end that with due regard to justice we may be able to gain knowledge of these things, and terminate them according to the canonical institutes, Christ shewing us the way. But do thou so act that there be no more of these successive delays of thy coming, lest thy very absence point thee out as the more obnoxious to these charges against t hee, and lest we should be thus compelled to pass in council a harder sentence on thee, not only for thy alleged crimes from which thou evadest purging thyself, but also for the fault of disobedience, to wit as one that is contumacious.

EPISTLE V: TO QUEEN BRUNICHILD.

Gregory to Brunichild, Queen of the Franks.

The laudable and God-pleasing goodness of your Excellence is manifested both by your government of your kingdom and by your education of your son. To him you have not only with provident solicitude conserved intact the glory of temporal things, but have also seen to the rewards of eternal life, having planted his mind in the root of the true faith with maternal, as became you, and laudable care of his education. Whence not undeservedly it ensues that he should surpass all the kingdoms of the nations, in that he both worships purely and confesses truly the Creator of these nations. But that faith may shine forth in him the more laudably in his works, let the words of your exhortation kindle him, to the end that, as royal power shews him lofty among men, so goodness of conduct may make him great before God.

Now inasmuch as past experience in many instances gives us confidence in the Christianity of your Excellence, we beg of you, for the love of Peter, Prince of the apostles, whom we know that you love with your whole heart, that you would cherish with the aid of your patronage our most beloved son the presbyter Candidus, who is the bearer of these presents, together with the little patrimony for the government of which we have sent him, to the end that, strengthened by the favour of your support, he may be able both to manage profitably this little patrimony, which is evidently beneficial towards the expenses of the poor, and also to recover into the possession of this little patrimony anything that may have been taken away from it. For it is not without increase of your praise that after so long a time a man belonging to Church has been sent for the management of this patrimony. Let your Excellency, then, deign so willingly to give your attention to what we request of you that the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, to whom the power of binding and loosing has been given by the Lord Jesus Christ, may

both grant to your Excellence to rejoice here in your offspring, and after courses of many years cause you to be found, absolved from all ills before the face of the eternal Judge.

EPISTLE VI: TO KING CHILDEBERT.

Gregory to Childebert, King of the Franks.

As much as royal dignity is above that of other men, so much in truth does the high position of your kingdom excel that of the kingdoms of other nations. And yet to be a king is not extraordinary, there being others also; but to be a Catholic, which others are not counted worthy to be, this is enough. For as the splendour of a great lamp shines by the clearness of its light in the darkness of earth's night, so the clear light of your faith glitters and flashes amid the dark perfidy of other nations. Whatever the other kings glory in having you have. But they are in this regard exceedingly surpassed, because they have not the chief good thing which you have. In order, then, that they may be overcome in action as well as in faith, let your Excellence always shew yourself kind to your subjects. And, if there are any things such as to offend your mind, punish them not without enquiry. For then you will the more please the King of kings, that is the Almighty Lord, if, restraining your power, you feel that you may not do all that you can.

Now that you keep purity of faith both in mind and deed, the love that is in you of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, evidently shews, whose property has been so far well governed and preserved under the sway of your supremacy. But since Dynamius the Patrician, who on our recommendation looked after this property, is not able, as we have learnt, to govern it now, lest the little patrimony which is in your parts should be ruined from neglect, we have therefore sent the bearer of these presents, our most beloved son the presbyter Candidus to govern it, whom we commend in all respects to your Excellency, greeting you in the first place with paternal charity, with the request that, if by any chance any wrong has been done there, or if the property of the same little patrimony is detained by any one, the matter may be set right, and what has been alienated may be restored to its original ownership; that so your equity, as well as your faith,

may shine forth to all nations, which will be something very glorious and laudable.

Moreover we have sent to your Excellency Saint Peter’s keys, containing a portion of his chains, to protect you from all evils, when hung on your neck.

EPISTLE VII: TO CANDIDUS, PRESBYTER.

Gregory to Candidus, Presbyter, going to the patrimony of Gaul.

Now that thou art proceeding, with the help of our Lord God Jesus Christ, to the government of the patrimony that is in Gaul, we desire thy Love to procure with the money thou mayest receive clothing for the poor, or English boys of about seventeen or eighteen years of age, who may profit by being given to God in monasteries, that so the money of Gaul, which cannot be spent in our country, may he expended profitably in its own locality. Further, if you should succeed in getting anything from the moneys accruing to revenue which are called ablatae, from this too we desire thee to procure clothing for the poor, or, as we have before said, boys who may profit in the service of Almighty God. But, since such as can be found there are pagans, I desire that a presbyter be sent hither with them to provide against the case of any sickness occurring on the way, that he may baptize those whom he sees to be about to die. Wherefore let your Love so proceed as to lose no time in accomplishing these things diligently.

EPISTLE VIII: TO THE BISHOPS OF EPIRUS.

Gregory to Theodorus, Demetrius, Philip, Zeno, and Alcissonus, Bishops of Epirus.

The notification of your letters, most dear brethren, has made known to us that our brother Andrew has, by the favour of God, been solemnly ordained bishop of the city of Nicopolis. And, since you signify that his consecration has taken place with the assent of the clergy and provincials, we rejoice; and we pray that the good which you testify of him may remain in him, and by the co-operation of God's grace receive increase, since the goodness of prelates is the safety of their subordinates. It is your duty then to make haste studiously to imitate what you show by your praises to be pleasing to you in his person. For it is faulty before men and penal before God for any one to be unwilling to imitate the good that pleases him. Wherefore let your obedience supply credit to your testimony. Let no one gainsay him in what, with preservation of integrity, be may enjoin for the common profit of the Church. Let each one of you willingly exhibit his devotion that, while there is among you priestly concord pleasing to God and constant, no ill feeling may avail to loose you from the bond of mutual charity, or difference disturb you. For neither will there be access to your hearts for the crafty foe, since he knows that he can in no degree be admitted or received, where sincere charity finds place.

More over be ye attentive, most dear brethren, and bestow on the flock committed to you the vigilance which ye have taken upon yourselves, and which ye owe; meet the frauds of the enemy by attention and prayer. Surrender with uncontaminated faith to our God the people over which ye are, that your priestly office may avail you not for a penalty but for a crown before the sight of the eternal Judge.

Know ye then that we have sent a pallium to the above-written Andrew our brother and fellow-bishop, and have granted him all the privileges

which our predecessors conferred on his predecessors.

Furthermore, it has come to our ears that sacred orders in your parts are conferred for a consideration given. And, if this is so, I say it with tears, I declare it with groans, &c.[See Lib. V. E, to "become a heretic"]. On this account I admonish and conjure you to be altogether attentive to this, that no giving of a consideration, no favour, no supplication of any persons whatsoever, put in any claim in regard to sacred orders, but that one be promoted to this office whom gravity of manners and behaviour commends. For if, as we do not believe will be the case, we should perceive anything of the kind to be done, we will correct it, as is fit, with canonical severity. Now may Almighty God, who orders all things wonderfully by the power of His wisdom, and guards what He has ordered, grant unto you both to will and to do what He commands.

EPISTLE IX: TO DONUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Donus, Bishop of Messana (Messene).

Moved by the benevolence of the Apostolic See, and by the order of ancient custom, we have thought fit to grant to thee, who art known to have undertaken the office of government in the Church of Messana, the use of the pallium; to wit, at such times and in such manner as we dispute not that thy predecessor used it; at the same time warning thee that, as thou rejoicest in having received from us a decoration of this kind to the honour of thy priestly office, so also thou strive, by probity of manners and deeds, to adorn, to the glory of Christ, the office which thou hast undertaken under our authority. For so wilt thou be conspicuous for decorations mutually answering to each other, if with such an habiliment of the body as this all good qualities of thy soul also agree. For all the privileges which are known to have been granted of old to thy Church we confirm by our authority, and decree that they shall continue inviolate.

EPISTLE XII: TO MONTANA AND THOMAS.

Gregory to Montana, &c.

Since our Redeemer, the Maker of every creature, vouchsafed to assume human flesh for this end, that, the chain of slavery wherewith we were held being broken by the grace of His Divinity, He might restore us to pristine liberty, it is a salutary deed if men whom nature originally produced free, and whom the law of nations has subjected to the yoke of slavery, be restored by the benefit of manumission to the liberty in which they were born. And so, moved by loving-kindness and by consideration of this case, we make you, Montana and Thomas, servants of the holy Roman Church which with the help of God we serve, free from this day, and Roman citizens, and we release to you all your private property.

And, inasmuch as thou, Montana, declarest that thou hast applied thy mind to monastic profession, we therefore this day give and grant to thee two unciae, which the presbyter Gaudiosus by the disposition of his last will is known to have left to thee in the way of institution, provided that all go in all respects to the advantage of the monastery of Saint Laurence, over which the abbess Constantina presides, and in which by the mercy of God thou art about to make profession. But, if it should appear that thou hast in any way concealed any part of the property left by the above-written Gaudiosus, the whole of this must undoubtedly be transferred to the possession of our Church.

Moreover to thee, Thomas above-written, whom for enhancement of thy freedom we desire also to serve among the notaries, we in like manner this day give and grant by this writ of manumission the five unciae which the aforesaid presbyter Gaudiosus by his last will left to thee under the title of inheritance, together with the dowry which he had bestowed upon thy mother; to wit with this annexed law and condition, that, in case of thy dying without legitimate children, that is children born in lawful wedlock,

all that we have granted thee shall revert without any diminution to the possession of the holy Roman Church. But, if thou shouldest have children both in wedlock, as we have said, and recognized by the law, and shouldest leave them surviving thee, then we appoint thee to remain master of this same property without any condition, and give thee full power to make a will with respect to it. These things, then, which we have appointed and granted by this charter of manumission, know ye that we and our successors will observe without any demur. For the rule of justice and reason suggests that one who desires his own orders to be observed by his successors should undoubtedly keep to the will and ordinances Of his predecessor. This writ of manumission we have dictated to the notary Paterius to be put in writing, and for the fullest security have subscribed it with our own hand, together with three chief presbyters and three deacons, and have delivered it to you.

Done in the city of Rome.

EPISTLE XIV: TO THE COUNT NARSES.

Gregory to Nurses, &c.

Your Charity, being anxious to learn our opinion, has been at the pains of writing to us to ask what we think of the book against the presbyter Athanasius which was sent to us. Having thoroughly perused some parts of it, we find that he has fallen into the dogma of Manichaeus. But he who has noted some places as heretical by a mark set against them slips also himself into Pelagian heresy; for he has marked certain places as heretical which are catholicly expressed and entirely orthodox. For when this is written; that when Adam sinned his soul died, the writer shews afterwards how it is said to have died, namely that it lost the blessedness of its condition Whosoever denies this is not a Catholic. For God had said, In the hour ye eat thereof, in death ye shall die(Gen. ii. 17). When, therefore, Adam ate of the forbidden tree, we know that he did not die in the body, seeing that after this he begat children and lived many years. If, then, he did not die in the soul, the impious conclusion follows that He himself lied who foretold that in the day that he sinned he should die. But it is to be understood that death takes place in two ways; either from ceasing to live, or with respect to the mode of living. When, then, man's soul is said to have died in the eating of the forbidden thing, it is meant, not in the sense of ceasing to live, but with regard to the mode of living; — that he should live afterwards in pain who had been created to live happily in joy. He, then, who has marked this passage in the book sent to me by my brother the bishop John as heretical is a Pelagian; for his view is evidently that of Pelagius, which the apostle Paul plainly confutes in his epistles. The particular passages in his epistle I need not quote, as I write to one who knows. But Pelagius, who was condemned in the Ephesine synod, maintained this view with the intention of shewing that we were redeemed by Christ unreally. For, if we did not through Adam die in the soul, we were redeemed unreally, which it were impious to say.

Further, having examined the acts of the synod of Ephesus, we find nothing at all about Adelphius and Sava, and the others who are said to have been condemned there, and we think that, as the synod of Chalcedon was in one place falsified by the Constantinopolitan Church so something of the kind has been done with regard to the synod of Ephesus. Wherefore let your Charity make a thorough search for old copies of the acts of this synod, and thus see whether anything of the kind is found there, and send such copy as you may find to me, which I will return as soon as I have read it. For recent copies are not entirely to be trusted; and it is for this reason that I have been in doubt, and have not wished as yet to reply in this case to my aforesaid brother the bishop John. Further, the Roman copies are much more correct than the Greek ones, since, as we have not your cleverness, so neither have we any impostures.

Now concerning the presbyter John, know that his case has been decided in synod, whereby I have clearly ascertained that his adversaries have wished and long endeavoured to make him out a heretic, but have entirely failed.

Salute in my name your friends, who are ours: ours also, who are yours, salute you heartily through me. May Almighty God protect thee with His hand in the midst of so many thorns, that thou mayest, unhurt, gather those flowers which the Lord hath chosen.

EPISTLE XV: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Constantinople.

As the pravity of heretics is to be repressed by the zeal of a right faith, so the integrity of a true confession is to be embraced. For, if one who declares himself sound in the faith is scorned, the faith of all is brought into doubt, and fatal errors are generated from inconsiderate strictness. And hence not only are wandering sheep not recalled to their lord's folds, but even those that are within them are exposed to be cruelly torn by the teeth of wild beasts. Let us then fully consider this, most dear brother, and not suffer any one who truly professes the catholic faith to be distressed under pretext of heresy, nor (which God forbid) allow heresy to grow the more under shew of correcting it.

But we have wondered much why those who were deputed by you as judges in a matter of faith against John, presbyter of the church of Chalcedon, believed report, disregarding truth, and would not believe him when he distinct professed his faith; especially as his accusers, when asked what was the heresy of the Marcionists which they spoke of, and on the ground of which they endeavoured to make him out guilty, replied by a plain confession that they did not know. From which circumstance it evidently comes out that, without regard to God, not justly, but against their own souls, they were desirous only of injuring him personally of their own mere will. We therefore, after Council held (as the tenor of the proceedings before us shews), having thoroughly examined and considered all that was necessary. inasmuch as we have been unable to find the aforesaid presbyter in any respect guilty, and especially as the plea which he delivered to the judges delegated by you is in entire accordance with the integrity of a right faith, we I say on this account, disapproving the sentence of the said judges, through the revealing grace of Christ our God and Redeemer, pronounce him by our definite sentence catholic and free from all charge of heresy.

Seeing, then, that we have sent him back to your Holiness, it is for you to receive him with the kindness which you shew to all, and bestow on him your priestly charity, and defend him from all molestation, nor allow any one to busy himself in causing him trouble: but, as you defend others from oppression, so from him ought you not to withold your succour.

EPISTLE XVI: TO MAURICIUS, AUGUSTUS.

Gregory to Mauricius, &c.

Seeing that in you, most Christian of princes, uncorrupt soundness of faith shines as a beam sent down from heaven, and that it is known to all that your Serenity embraces fervently and loves with entire devotion of heart the pure profession in which by God's favour you are powerful, we have perceived it to be very necessary to make request for those whom one and the same faith enlightens, to the end that the Piety of our lords may protect them with its favour, and defend them from all molestation. When certain men scorn the confession of faith of such persons they are shewn to contradict the true faith. For, since the Apostle declares that confession of the mouth is made unto salvation, he who will not consent to believe a right profession accuses himself in rejecting others (Rom. x. 10).

Now all the proceedings against John, presbyter of the church of Chalcedon, having been read in council and considered in order, we have found that he has suffered the greater injustice in that, when he declared and shewed himself to be a Catholic, it was not his guilt, but an uncertain accusation of long standing, that crushed him; and this to such an extent that his accusers declared in their open reply that they did not know the heresy of the Marcionists which they referred to. And, whereas they ought therefore to have been rejected from the very beginning of the trial, they were allowed, vague as they were, to remain in court for his accusation. But, lest at any rate alleged report might injure him, he produced a written confession of his faith with the purpose of shewing evidently that he was a professor and follower of the right faith. But this the judges deputed by the most holy John, our brother and fellow-bishop, unjustly and unreasonably disregarded; and so, in doing all they could to put him down, shewed themselves more to blame than he. For no one doubts that it is unfaithfulness not to have faith in the faithful. Seeing then that, everything

having been thoroughly enquired into and considered, the decision of the holy Council with me, by the revealing grace of Divine power, has declared tile above-written John the presbyter to be a Catholic, and that no spot of heretical pravity has been found in him, I entreat that the pious protection of your Serenity may order him to be kept unharmed from all annoyance, nor allow a professor of the catholic faith to suffer any molestation. For not to believe one who professes truly is not to purge heresy, but to make it. If this should be allowed, occasion of infidelity will arise, and people will themselves incur the guilt which they would correct unwarily.

These things therefore let the most Serene Lord with pious precaution consider, and, as I have already requested, with profuse entreaties I again implore, that he allow not an innocent man to be afflicted anew as though he were guilty; to the end that Almighty God, who sees your Clemency love and defend the purity of catholic rectitude, may cause you both to rule over a pacified republic with your foes subdued, and to reign with His saints in life eternal.

EPISTLE XVII: TO THEOTISTUS.

Gregory to Theotistus, kinsman of the Emperor.

We know that the Christianity of your Excellency is always intent on good works and therefore we provide for you occasions for reaping reward, which you are certain to be glad of, so that we by so providing may have a share in your merits.

We therefore inform you that John the presbyter, the bearer of these presents, has come out free from those by whom he had been accused. For having, according to his request held a council, and subjected his faith to a subtle scrutiny, we found him guiltless of any wrong confession. And, inasmuch as he appeared to be, by the mercy of God, a professor and follower of the right faith, we absolved him by our definite sentence; especially as his accusers professed that they did not know what the heresy of the Marcionists, which they spoke of, was. On this account, saluting you with paternal affection, we request you to protect him with the grace of your favour. And, lest any one hereafter should be disposed to afflict him to no purpose, or in any way to cause him annoyance in this matter, let the advocacy of your Excellency so protest and defend him — and this the more instantly in consideration of your own reward — that no unjust affliction may any more consume him. and that the Creator and Redeemer of the human race, whom you worship with a sincere confession, may recompense your action in this behalf among your many good works. The month of October. Indiction 14.

EPISTLE XVIII: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Syracuse.

Moved by the benevolence of the Apostolic See and by the order of ancient custom, we have thought fit to grant to thy Fraternity, who art known to have received the office of government in the Church of Syracuse, the use of the pallium; that is, at such times and in such manner as thou knowest without doubt that it was used by thy predecessor; nevertheless admonishing thee that, as thou rejoicest in having received from us the use of this decoration for the honour of thy priestly office, so also by probity of manners and deeds thou strive to adorn the office thou hast received unto our glory in Christ. For thus wilt thou be conspicuous for decorations mutually answering to each other, if with this habit for the body the excellence also of thy mind agrees.

For all privileges which are known to have been granted formerly to thy Church we confirm by our authority, and decree that they shall remain inviolate.

EPISTLE XXII: TO PETER, BISHOP.

Gregory to Peter, Bishop of Aleria in Corsica.

Inasmuch as in the isle of Corsica, at the place Nigeunum, in the possession which is called Cellas Cupias belonging to the holy Roman Church, which by the providence of God we serve, we have ordered to be founded a basilica, with a baptistery, to the honour of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, and of Laurentius the martyr, we therefore hereby exhort thy Fraternity to proceed at once to the aforesaid place, and with observance of the venerable solemnities of dedication to consecrate solemnly the aforesaid church and baptistery. Deposit also reverently the holy relics (sanctuaria) which you have received.

EPISTLE XXIV: TO MARINIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Marinianus, Bishop of Ravenna.

We have received by the deacon Virgilius the letter of your Fraternity, in which you inform us that certain of the clergy and people have cried out that it is contrary to the laws and canons that the cause between your Church and the abbot Claudius should be examined and decided here. But, had they paid attention to ecclesiastical order and to the persons between whom the case is pending, they would by all means have abstained from needless complaint; especially as the cause could not be pleaded there, where the aforesaid abbot has complained of having endured injustice from your predecessor and of still suffering from it. For the objection might perhaps have been made if he had not appealed to a superior authority, and sought to have the rights of his case determined before it. Nay, but dost thou not thyself know that the case which arose on the part of the presbyter John against John of Constantinople, our brother and fellow-bishop, came before the Apostolic See, and was decided by our sentence?, If, then, a cause was brought under our cognizance from that city where the prince is, how much more should an affair between you have the truth about it ascertained and be terminated here? But as for you, let not the words of foolish men there move you, and believe not that through us any detriment to your Church is caused. For, if you will enquire of the servant of God Secundinus your deacon and of Castorius our notary, you will learn from them how your predecessor had already desired to arrange this case. But your Fraternity has done wisely in sending persons hither for this business, and in not listening to vain words. Now we trust in Almighty God that this cause may be terminated in a way well-pleasing to God, so that no room may be left for renewed complaint and that neither party may be aggrieved unjustly. The sword' which our most beloved son Peter, then deacon and guardian (defensor) in your parts, had left for us with your predecessor, please to

send to us by the servant of God Secundinus, and Castorius the notary, the bearers of these presents.

EPISTLE XXV: TO MAXIMUS OF SALONA.

Gregory to Maximus, intruder in the Church of Salona.

While, seeking this or that excuse, thou deferrest obedience to our letters, while thou puttest off coming to us for ascertainment of the truth after being so often admonished, thou lendest credibility all the more to what is alleged against thee; and, even though there had been nothing else to go against thee and do thee harm, thy delay alone would render thee culpable and accuse thee. Humble thyself at length, and submit thyself to obedience, and make haste to come to us without any excuses, that, the truth being investigated and ascertained, in the fear of God, whatever may be fair and canonical may be decided. For be assured that we will observe towards thee justice and the ordinances of the canons, and, by the revelation of God, who is the Author of truth, will terminate thy cause agreeably to justice. For, as to thy demand that we should send some one to your city, in whose presence there might be proof of the things alleged, this would be in some degree excusable, if reason ever imposed on the accused the necessity of proof. But, inasmuch as this burden lies not on thee but on thine accusers, do not thou hesitate to come to us, as we have before said, putting it off no longer; and either thine accuser will be present without delay to support with suitable proof what has been alleged as to simoniacal heresy or other things; or certainly, as far as regards a sound settlement of this business, a just dealing with it will, through the intervention of Peter, Prince of the apostles, ensue; that so no guiltiness may confound us before God for any connivance, now that these things have come to our knowledge. But, as to thy allegation that our most serene lords have ordered cognizance of the matter to be taken in your city, we indeed have received no other commands of theirs on the subject except that thou weft to come to us. But, even if by chance, occupied as they are by many thoughts and anxieties for the good of their republic which by the divine bounty has been granted to them, this has

been suggested to them, and a command has been surreptitiously elicited from them, yet, inasmuch as it is known to us and to all how our most pious lords love discipline, observe degrees, venerate the canons, and refrain from mixing themselves up in the causes of priests, we will still execute with instancy what is for the good both of their souls and of the republic, and what we are driven to by regard to the terrible and tremendous judgment.

Cease then from all excuses, and delay not to appear here, that, fortified by investigation of the truth, we may at length bring thy cause to a termination. But, whereas we have been informed that thou art greatly afraid and altogether in trepidation lest we should avenge on thee the known fact of thy having forced thy way irregularly into the order of priesthood without our consent, this was indeed an intolerable misdemeanour: but, in accordance with the commands of our most serene lord the Emperor, we forgive thee this, provided that thou in no wise persist any longer in the error of thy contumacy; and we are by no means moved against thee on this account. But other things that have been reported to us we cannot suffer to pass without enquiry.

Now inasmuch as we long ago sent thee a letter warning thee by no means to dare to celebrate the solemnities of mass till we should ascertain the will of the said our most serene lord, and as thou hast cunningly contrived that this letter should not come into thy hands, though thou nevertheless knewest in one way or another what its purport was, but hast refused to comply with it; — we therefore confirm what was before sent thee in writing, that thou must not dare to celebrate the solemnities of mass until all that has been alleged against thee has been thoroughly enquired into and sifted. And, if, with perverse daring, thou shouldest presume to celebrate, know that thou art not free from the former threat of interdiction from communion. For, even though there were no other transgressions, we deprive thee of the communion of the body and blood of the Lord for this

sin of pride alone. Wherefore, shewing the obedience that becomes thee, make haste, as we have said, with all diligence to come to us; but so as to have a space of thirty days for preparing for thy journey; and so, laying aside all excuses, defer not thy appearance here.

Moreover, if any occasion of hindering thy journey has arisen from the judges, or the military force, or the people, we acknowledge the skilfulness with which things are done. Do thou thyself, then, see what account of this obligation, thou canst render either to men here or to Almighty God in the future judgment, having by thy contempt provoked a strict sentence against thee.

Furthermore, it has come to my knowledge that my brother and fellow-bishop Paulinus, and Honoratus, archdeacon of the Church of Salona, for having refused to give assent to thy presumption are suffering grievous molestation at thy hands, so as to have been constrained to give sureties to the end that may not be at liberty to leave the city or their own houses. If this is so, do thou on receipt of this present writing, returning at last, though late, to a sound mind, desist from molesting either of them, that they may have free license either to come to me if they wish, or to go anywhere else for their advantage.

EPISTLE XXVI: TO THE SALONITANS.

Gregory to his most beloved sons, the clergy and nobles dwelling at Salona.

It has come to my ears, that certain men of perverse disposition, in order to poison your minds, beloved, have tried to insinuate to you that I am moved by some grudge against Maximus, and that I am desiring to carry out not so much what is canonical as what anger dictates. But far, far be it from the priestly mind to be moved in any cause by private feeling. It is on the contrary as taking thought for you, beloved, and as fearing the judgment of Almighty God on my own soul, that I desire the case of this same Maximus to be thoroughly investigated, as to whether he is burdened by no such crimes as are a bar to ordination, and makes no attempt to attain to the priestly office through simoniacal heresy; that is by giving bribes to some of his electors. He will then be a free intercessor for you before the Lord, if he shall come to the place of intercession bound by no sins of his own.

And yet his sin of pride is already manifestly shewn, in that, having been summoned to come to us, he resists under various excuses, shuns coming, is afraid to come. What then is he afraid of, if his conscience does not accuse him with respect to the things he is charged with? Lo, beloved, ye have now been long without a pastor, and may Almighty God make known to you how earnestly and from the bottom of my heart I sympathize with you in your destitution. For I hear what ravages are being made in the Lord’s flock. But, when there is no shepherd, who may watch against the wolves? Wherefore urge ye the aforesaid Maximus to come hither to us, to the end that we may confirm him if we are able to find him innocent; but, if the things that are said of him should turn out to be true, that you, beloved, may be no longer left destitute through the interposition of his person.

For as to me, be assured that I am not moved against him by any grudge or any animosity of private feeling; but whatever may be canonical and just with the help of God I will determine.

But I have been greatly astonished that among so many clergy and people of the Church of Salona hardly two in sacred orders have been found — to wit our brother and fellow-bishop Paulinus and my most beloved son Honoratus, archdeacon of the same Church — who refused to communicate with Maximus when he seized the priesthood, and who remembered that they were Christians.

For you ought, most dear sons, to have considered your own orders, and recognized as rejected him whom the Apostolical See rejected, that he might first be purged, if he could be, from the charges brought against him, and that then your Love might communicate with him without being partakers in his liability. We however are bound to your Charity in the bowels of loving-kindness; and, since we have learnt that some of you were pressed by force to accept him and communicate with him, we implore Almighty God to absolve you from all guilt of your own sins and from all implication in the liability of others, and to give you the grace of His protection in the present life, and grant to us to rejoice for you in the eternal country.

EPISTLE XXVII: TO THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE OF JADERA.

Gregory to the presbyters, deacons, and clergy, nobles and people, dwelling at Jadera, and who have communicated with the prevaricator Maximus.

It has come to my knowledge that some of you, deceived by ignorance or under compulsion, have communicated with those who, their fault as you know requiring it, have been deprived of communion by the Apostolic See, but that others, with wholesome discretion, have under the Lord's protection abstained; and as much as I rejoice in those that have been constant so much do I groan for those who have gone astray, since they have partaken of the mysteries of holy communion, which have been granted to us by Divine loving-kindness for absolution, rather to the detriment of their souls. And because (as I pray Almighty God to make known to you) I earnestly and from the bottom of my heart sympathize will your Charity, I adjure and entreat you with fatherly affection, that every one of you abstain from unlawful communion, and altogether shun those whom the Apostolic See does not receive into the fellowship of its communion, lest any one should stand guilty in the sight of the eternal Judge from that whereby he might have been saved.

Moreover I have discovered that certain men of perverse mind in your parts have tried to insinuate that I am moved against Maximus by some grudge, and that I desire to carry out not what is canonical, but what anger dictates. But far, far be this from the priestly mind, that it should be moved in any cause by private animosity. But as for me, it is as taking thought for the people dwelling in those parts and for my own soul, and as fearing the judgment of Almighty God, that I wish to have the cause of this Maximus enquired into, and, God shewing me the way, to decide canonically. Now, inasmuch as I have written to him frequently that he was not to celebrate the sacred solemnities of mass until I had been able to obtain knowledge of his

case, he would in any case be deprived of communion; and now his sin of pride is openly shewn from this, — that, having (as I have said) been often admonished to come to us, under various excuses he refuses, he shuns, he fears coming. What then is he afraid of, if his conscience does not accuse him with regard to the things that have been said? Since then you know these things, now that you can make no excuse on the plea of ignorance, I beseech, I exhort, I warn you, that you altogether refrain from fellowship with forbidden communion, and that not one of you presume, against his own soul, to communicate with any priest who communicates with the above written Maximus.

Since however I hear, as I have said before, hat some of you fell in ignorance, and that some were even driven by force to communicate, I implore the Almighty Lord, that He would keep with His perpetual protection, and answer with His wished for bounty, those who have given no assent to this iniquity; and as to those whom either party spirit, or ignorance, or any other cause soever, has drawn into a fault, that He would absolve hem from all guilt of their sins, and from all implication in the liability of others, and both give them all the grace of His protection in the present life, and grant to me to rejoice for them in the eternal country. Wherefore, that this intercession may avail for you with God our Saviour, do ye shew obedience to our exhortations for the weal of your souls, and receive the holy communion from those whom ye know to have abstained, and to abstain still, from communion with the aforesaid Maximus.

EPISTLE XXIX: TO MARINIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Marinianus, Bishop of Ravenna.

We wonder why the discernment of thy Fraternity should have been so changed in a short time that it does not consider what it asks for. On this account we grieve, since thou affordest manifest proof that the words of evil counsellors have availed with thee more than the study of divine lore has profited thee. And, when thou oughtest to be protecting monasteries, and with all thy power congregating the religious therein so as to make gain from the gathering together of souls, thou art on the contrary desiring to exercise thyself in oppressing them, as thy letters testify; and, what is worse, art trying to make us partakers in thy fault; to wit, in wishing, with our consent, to oppress the monastery which thy predecessor founded under the name of looking after its property and business affairs.

For thou oughtest to call to mind that, in thy presence, and in the presence also of sundry of thy presbyters, deacons, and clerics, we granted, as they requested, a precept contrary to the testament of thy predecessor. Yet, though the disposition he had made with regard to the monastery itself was still therein confirmed, thou now dissemblest this, and demandest of us that we should order the contrary. And indeed we know that this device is not thine own; but, when thou refusest not to listen to those who say incongruous things, thou injurest not only thine own reputation, but also souls. Since, then, I love thee much, I urgently admonish thee — consider this attentively — that thou care not more for money than for souls. The former should be regarded collaterally; but the latter should be regarded with the whole bent of the mind, and vehemently striven after. On this spend vigilantly thy labour and solicitude, since our Redeemer seeks from the priest’s office not gold, but souls.

Further, it has reached our ears that monasteries which are constituted under thy Fraternity are oppressed by importunities and various annoyances

from the clergy. That this may no longer be so, restrain it by strict prohibition, to the end that the monks who live therein may be able to exult freely in the praises of our God.

With regard to the clerics Romanus and Dominicus, who presumed with rash daring to depart from this city without our blessing, though they were to have been stricken with heavier punishment, nevertheless such relaxation ought to be made in a spirit of kindness that they be urged to come back to their duty. The month of April, Indict. 14.

EPISTLE XXX: TO SECUNDUS.

Gregory to Secundus, servant of God at Ravenna.

Now that Castorius has returned and made known to us all that has been done between you and King Agilulph, we have taken care to send him back to you with all speed, lest any one should find an excuse against us on the ground of delay. Having learnt then from him all that is to be done, give the matter your earnest attention, and press in all ways for this peace to be arranged, since, as report goes, there are some who are trying to hinder it. On this account make haste to act strenuously, that your labour may not remain without effect. For both these parts and various islands are already placed in great danger.

Stir up with such words as thou canst use our brother the bishop Marinianus: for I suspect that he has fallen asleep. For certain persons have come to me, among whom were some aged mendicants, who were questioned by me as to what they had received and from whom they had received it; and they told me particularly how much had been given them on their journey, and by whom it had been given. But, when I enquired of them what my aforesaid brother had given them, they replied that they had asked him, but had received nothing at all from him; so that they did not get even bread on the way, though it has always been the familiar usage of that Church to give to all. For they said, He answered saying, I have nothing that I can give you. And I am surprised, if he who has clothes, money, and storehouses, has nothing to give to the poor.

Tell him, then, that with his place he should change his disposition too. Let him not believe reading and prayer alone to be enough for him, so that he should think to sit apart, and nowise fructify with his hand; but let him have a liberal hand; let him succour those who suffer need; let him believe the wants of others to be his own; since, if he has not these things, be bears but a bishop’s empty name. I did indeed give him some admonitions about

his soul in my letter; but he has sent me no reply whatever; whence I suppose that he has not even deigned to read them. For this reason it is needless now for me to admonish him at all in my letter to him; and so I have written only what 1 was able to dictate as his adviser in wordly matters. For it is not incumbent on me to tire myself, by dictation for a man who does not read what is said to him. Let, then, thy I ove speak to him about all these things privately, and admonish him how he ought to demean himself, lest through present negligence he lose the advantage of his former life, which God forbid.

EPISTLE XXXII: TO FORTUNATUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Fortunatus, Bishop of Neapolis (Naples).

We have written before now to your Fraternity that, if any [slaves] by the inspiration of God, desire to come from Jewish superstition to the Christian faith, their masters have no liberty to sell them, but that from the time of their declaring their wish they have a full claim to freedom. But since, so far as we have learnt, they [i.e. Jewish masters], weighing with nice discrimination neither our wish nor the ordinances of the law, think that they are not bound by this condition in the case of pagan slaves, your Fraternity ought to attend to such cases, and, if any one of their slaves, whether he be a Jew or a pagan, should wish to become a Christian, after his wish has been openly declared, let not any one of the Jews, under cover of any device or argument whatever, have power to sell him; but let him who desires to be converted to the Christian faith be in all ways supported by you in his claim to freedom. Lest, however, those who have to lose slaves of this kind should consider that their interests are unreasonably prejudiced, it is fitting that with careful consideration you should observe this rule; — that if pagans when they have been brought out of foreign parts for the sake of traffic should chance to flee to the Church, and say that they wish to become Christians, or even outside tire Church should announce this wish, then, till the end of three months during which a buyer to sell them to may be sought for, they [the Jewish owners] may receive their price; that is to say, from a Christian buyer. But if after the aforesaid three months any one of such slaves should declare his wish and desire to become a Christian, let not either any one afterwards dare to buy him, or his master, under colour of any occasion whatever, dare to sell him; but let him unreservedly attain to the benefit of freedom; since he (i.e. the master) is in such case understood to have acquired him not for sale hut for his own service. Let, then, your Fraternity so vigilantly observe all these things that

neither the supplication of any nor respect of persons may avail to inveigle you.

EPISTLE XXXIV: TO CASTORIUS, NOTARY.

Gregory to Castorius, our notary at Ravenna.

When Florentinus, deacon of the Church of Ravenna, treated with us in behalf of our most reverend brother and fellow-bishop Marinianus concerning the use of the pallium, on our asking him what was the ancient custom, he replied that the bishop of the Church of Ravenna used the pallium in all litanies. But that this was not so we both learnt from others, and it appeared evidently from the letters of the former bishop John, which we shewed to him. But he said what he had been ordered to say. For, at the time when this same John was inhibited by thee from presuming to use the pallium out of order and unadvisedly, he wrote to us that the ancient custom had been this; that the bishop of that city should use the pallium in solemn litanies. We send thee, for thy information, copies of his letters. But when Adeodatus, deacon of the aforesaid Church, at the time when he was here, in like manner pressed us strongly concerning this use of the pallium, we, desiring to ascertain the truth, in like manner had him questioned as to what the custom was: and he, that he might persuade us to believe him, and succeed in obtaining from us what he sought, testified under oath that it had been the ancient custom for the bishop of his city to use the pallium in four or five solemn litanies. Let therefore thy Experience look to the matter diligently, and enquire with all carefulness how many solemn litanies there have been from ancient times. Take care also to make enquiry by calling them, not the solemn, but the greater litanies; that when, through what the aforesaid deacon Adeodatus testified to us and what the letter of the aforesaid bishop John acknowledges, it shall appear how many of these solemn litanies there were, we, knowing how often the pallium used to be worn in litanies, may most willingly grant the privilege. But do not make this enquiry of those who are put forward by the ecclesiastics, but of others whom you know to be impartial: and whatever after careful investigation

you discover communicate to us with accuracy, that having ascertained the truth, as we have said, we may relieve the mind of our brother and fellow-bishop, the most reverend Marinianus.

EPISTLE XXXV: TO ANTHEMIUS, SUBDEACON.

Gregory to Anthemius, our Neapolitan Sub-deacon.

How great is our grief, and how great the affliction of our heart, from what has taken place in the regions of Campania we cannot express; but thou mayest thyself gather it from the greatness of the calamity. With regard to this state of things, we send thy Experience by the magnificent Stephen, bearer of these presents, money for the succour of the captives who have been taken, admonishing thee that thou give thy whole attention to the business, and carry it out strenuously; and, in the case of freemen whom thou knowest to have no sufficient means for their own redemption, that thou make haste to redeem them. But, should there be any slaves, and thou findest that their masters are so poor that they cannot come forward to redeem them, hesitate not to recover them also. In like manner also thou wilt take care to redeem the slaves of the Church who have been lost by thy neglect. Further, whomsoever thou shalt have redeemed, thou wilt by all means be at pains to make out a list, containing their names, and a statement of where each is staying, and what he is doing, and where he came from; which list thou mayest bring, with thee when thou comest. Moreover, hasten to shew thyself so diligent in this business that those who are to be redeemed may incur no risk through thy negligence, or thou come afterwards to be highly culpable before us. But work especially for this also; that, if possible, thou mayest be able to recover those captives at a moderate price. But set down in writing, with all clearness and nicety, the whole sum expended, and transmit to us this thy written account with speed. The month of May, Indiction 14.

EPISTLE XXXVII: TO COLUMBUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Columbus, Bishop of Numidia

The letters of your Fraternity, full of priestly sweetness, we have received at the hands of Rogatianus the deacon, the bearer of these presents. And their kind expressions rejoiced us much, especially as we were informed through them of what we long to hear of, your welfare. But the devotion of your Holiness we have both known of old; and as you now write, so we hold it to be. For of what kind the sincerity of your Fraternity towards us is we need nothing to satisfy us, since we know it from the love of our own heart which encircles you. We have given to the above-named hearer, whom you commended to us by letter, writings addressed to the Rector of the patrimony of Sicily, bidding him urge the opposite party to do what is just, to the end that, idle excuses being put aside, the whole case in dispute may be speedily brought to an end.

We now inform your Holiness that a certain man has come to us, Peter by name, who asserted that he was a bishop, and requested from us a remedy of his complaint. And at first indeed he related things that might have been deserving of pity; but on enquiry we found things to be very different from what he told us, and his behaviour has exceedingly distressed us. But, inasmuch as, separated as we are by so great a distance, we could by no means learn thoroughly the gist of his ca e, we have been unable to determine it, being in doubt. But now, seeing that the aforesaid deacon, who is returning to you, has asked that this person should be allowed to go with him, and he himself has requested to be sent to you, both of them knowing that your Holiness has, as becomes you, zeal for the faith and a love of justice, the proposal has been acceptable to us, and we have granted what they asked. Since, then, you being on the spot can ascertain the merits of the case more thoroughly, we exhort you so to observe what is just and canonical towards the same Peter that both the requirements of rectitude

may be fulfilled by you in all respects, and his case may be seen to have been judged after the fear of God and the rules of the Church. But, if any one is said to have been privy to, or a partaker in, the things which the aforesaid Peter is accused of, accurate enquiry must be made, and, when the truth is known, judgment in like manner pronounced canonically.

Furthermore, a thing altogether hard to be borne, and hostile to the right faith, has come to our ears; namely that catholics (which is awful to be told and religious persons (which is worse) consent to their children and their slaves, or others whom they have in their power, being baptized in the heresy of the Donatists. And so, if this is true, let your Fraternity study with all your power to correct it, to the end that the purity of the faith may through your solicitude stand inviolate, and innocent souls who might be saved by catholic baptism perish not from the infection of heretics. Whosoever, then, of the persons above mentioned has suffered any one belonging to him to be baptized among the Donatists, study with all your power, and with all urgency, to recall such to the catholic faith. But, if any one of such persons should under any pretext endure the doing of this thing in the case of such as are his in future, let him be cut off entirely from the communion of the clergy.

EPISTLE XLIII: TO VENANTIUS, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Venantius, Patrician, and Ex-monk.

Your communication to us has found us much distressed from having become aware that offence has arisen between you and John our brother and fellow-bishop, in whose agreement with you we were desirous of rejoicing. For, whatever the cause may have been, rage ought not to have broken out to such a pitch that your armed men, as we have heard, should have burst into the episcopal palace, and committed divers evil deeds in a hostile manner, and that this affair should meanwhile separate you from his paternal charity. Could not the dispute, whatever it may have been, have been quietly arranged, so that neither party might suffer disadvantage, nor good feeling be disturbed? Now it is not unknown to us gravity, of what holiness, of what gentleness our above-named brother is. Whence we gather that, unless excessive force of vexation had compelled him, his Fraternity would by no means have resorted to the measure which you say that you are aggrieved. however, on hearing of it by letter from him, at once wrote to him, admonishing him to receive your offerings as before, and not only to allow masses to be celebrated in your house, but, if you wish it, even to officiate himself, and that he ought to have prosecuted his cause without breach of charity. And, inasmuch as we wish none to come or continue to be at variance, we have taken care to renew this same admonition. Hence it is necessary, dearest son, that you, as becomes sons, should shew him the reverence due to a priest, and not provoke his spirit to anger. For with whom will you have assured goodwill, it (which God forbid) you are at variance with your priest? Wherefore, putting away swelling of spirit, try ye so to transact the causes that ye have one with another that both charity may remain inviolate, and what is to your mutual advantage may be peaceably attained.

EPISTLE XLIV: TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Syracuse.

Although there may have been cause to provoke the spirit of your Fraternity not unreasonably to anger, so that you would neither receive the offerings of the lord Venantius nor allow the sacred solemnities of mass to be celebrated in his house, yet, inasmuch as our earthly interests should be prosecuted in such a manner that no quarrel may avail to sever us from the bond of charity, we therefore exhort your Holiness, as we have already written, that you should both receive the offerings of the aforesaid man with all sweetness and God-pleasing sincerity, and allow the mysteries of the mass to be performed in his house; and that, as we have written, you should, if perchance he should wish it, go there in person, and by celebrating mass with him renew your former friendly feeling. For it is your duty to bestow priestly affection on sons, though still m causes that may arise, by no means to pretermit, as reason approves, the jurisdiction of your Church. Wherefore, considering this, it is necessary that your Fraternity should try so to demean yourself with discreet moderation with respect to these matters as both to transact advantageously what the nature of the business requires, and not to recede from the grace of paternal charity.

EPISTLE XLVI: TO FELIX, BISHOP OF PISAURUM (Pesaro).

Gregory to Felix, Bishop, &c.

We wonder at your Fraternity, that, disregarding the tenor of the precept given you by our predecessor of holy memory, you, should consecrate the monastery constructed by John, the bearer of these presents, otherwise than as ancient use demands. For, while it is ordered among other things in the said precept that you should dedicate the place itself without a public mass, still, as we have heard. your chair has been placed there, and the sacred solemnities of mass are there publicly celebrated. If this is true, we hereby exhort you that, putting aside all excuse, you cause your chair to be altogether removed thence, and that henceforth you perform no public masses there. But, as both custom and the tenor of the precept direct, if they should wish mass to be celebrated for them there, let a presbyter be appointed by thee for the purpose.

Further, we desire that with the favour of God there shall always remain a congregation of servants of God in the same monastery, as the aforesaid John has requested, and as is now the case. As to the cup also which he informs me has been taken away by your Fraternity, if it be so, make haste to restore it. These things, then, let your Holiness so study to fulfil that the aforesaid bearer may have no need to resort to us again on the same account.

EPISTLE XLVIII: TO URBICUS, ABBOT.

Gregory to Urbicus, Abbot of Saint Hermes, which is situated in Panormus.

Whosoever, incited by divine inspiration, hastens to leave the employments of this world and to be converted to God should so be received with charity, and refreshed in all ways with kind consolations, that, by the help of God, he may delight in all ways to persevere in the state of life which he has chosen. Since, then, Agatho, the bearer of these presents, desires to be converted in thy Love's monastery, we exhort thee to receive him with all sweetness and love, and by assiduous exhortation kindle his longing for eternal life, and study to be diligently solicitous for his soul's salvation; to the end that, while by thy admonition he shall persist with devoted mind in the service of our God, it may both profit him to have left the world, and his conversion may be to the increase of thine own reward. Know, however, that he is to be so received only if his wife also should wish to be similarly converted. For, when the bodies of both have been made one by the tie of wedlock, it is unseemly that part should be converted and part remain in the world.

EPISTLE XLIX: TO PALLADIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Palladius, Bishop of Santones in Gaul (Saintes).

Leuparic your presbyter, the bearer of these presents, when he came to us informed us that your Fraternity has built a church in honour of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and also of the martyrs Laurentius and Pancratius, and placed there thirteen altars, of which we learn that four have remained not yet dedicated because of your desiring to deposit there relics of the above-named saints. And, seeing that we have reverently supplied you with relics of the Saints Peter and Paul, and also of the martyrs Laurentius and Pancratius, we exhort you to receive them with reverence, and deposit them with the help of the Lord, providing before all things that supplies for the maintenance of those who serve there be not wanting.

EPISTLE L: TO QUEEN BRUNICHILD.

Gregory to Brunichild, Queen of the Franks.

The tenor of your letters, which evinces a religious spirit and the earnestness of a pious mind, causes us not only to commend the purpose of your request, but also to grant willingly what you demand. For indeed it would ill become us to refuse what Christian devotion and the desire of an upright heart solicits, especially as we know that you demand, and embrace with your whole heart, what may both protect the faith of believers, and work no less the salvation of souls. Accordingly, greeting your Excellency with befitting honour, we inform you that to Leuparic, the bearer of these presents, through whom we received your communication, and whom you described as a presbyter, we have handed over, according to your Excellency's request, with the reverence due to them, certain relics of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul. But, that laudable and religious devotion may be more and more conspicuous among you, you must see that these benefits of the saints be deposited with reverence and due honour, and that those who serve in attendance on them be vexed with no burdens or molestations, lest perchance, under the pressure of outward necessity, they be rendered unprofitable and slow in the service of God, and (which God forbid) the benefits of the saints that have been bestowed sustain injury and neglect. Let, then, your Excellency see to their quiet, to the end that, while they are guarded by your bounty from all disquietude, they may render praises to our God with minds undisturbed, and that reward may also accrue to you in the life eternal.

EPISTLE LI: TO THE BRETHREN GOING TO ENGLAND (Angliam).

Gregory, servant of the servants of God, to the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since it had been better not to have begun what is good than to return back from it when begun, you must, most beloved sons fulfil the good work which with the help of the Lord you have begun. Let, then, neither the toil of the journey nor the tongues of evil-speaking men deter you; but with all instancy and all fervour go on with what under God's guidance you have commenced, knowing that great toil is followed by the glory of an eternal reward. Obey in all things humbly Augustine your provost (proeposito), who is returning to you, whom we also appoint your abbot, knowing that whatever may be fulfilled in you through his admonition will in all ways profit your souls. May Almighty God protect you with His grace, and grant to me to see the fruit of your labour in the eternal country; that so, even though I cannot labour with you, I may be found together with you in the joy of the reward; for in truth I desire to labour. God keep you safe, most beloved sons. Given the tenth day of the Kalends of August, the fourteenth year of the Emperor our lord Mauricius Tiberius, the most pious Augustus, the thirteenth year of the consulship of our said lord, Indiction 14.

EPISTLE LII: TO PELAGIUS AND SERENUS, BISHOPS.

Gregory to Pelagius of Turni and Serenus of Masilia (Marseilles) Bishops of Gaul. A paribus.

Although with priests who have the charity that is well pleasing to God religious men need no commendation, yet, since an apt time for writing has offered itself, we have thought well to send a letter to your Fraternity, mentioning that we have sent into your parts, with the help of the Lord, for the benefit of souls, the servant of God Augustine, of whose earnestness we are assured, with other servants of God. Him your Holiness must needs assist with priestly earnestness, and hasten to afford him your succour. We have also enjoined him, that so you may be the more ready to support him, to make you fully acquainted with the matter he has in hand, knowing that, when it is known to you, you will lend yourselves with entire devotion for God's sake to succour him as the case requires.

Moreover, we commend in all ways to your charity our common son the presbyter Candidus, whom we have sent for the government of the patrimony of our Church. Given on the tenth day of the Kalends of August, Indiction 14.

EPISTLE LIII: TO VIRGILIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Virgilius, Bishop of Arelate (Arles), Metropolitan.

Although we are confident that your Fraternity is intent on good works, and that you come forward of your own accord in causes well-pleasing to God, we nevertheless deem it advantageous to address you with fraternal charity, that, being provoked also by our letters, you may increase the solace which it becomes you voluntarily to bestow. And accordingly we inform your Holiness that we have sent Augustine. the servant of God, the bearer of these presents, with other servants of God, for the winning of souls in the parts whither he is going, as he will be able himself to inform you face to face. In these circumstances you must needs aid him with prayer and assistance, and, where need may require, afford him the support of your succour, and refresh him, as is fit, with fatherly and priestly consolation, to the end that, when he shall have obtained the succour of your Holiness, if he should succeed in winning any gain for God, as we hope he may, you too may be able to gain a reward along with him, having devoutly administered to his good works the abundance of your support. Moreover, as to Candidus the presbyter, our common son, and the little patrimony of our Church, let your Fraternity, as being of one mind with us, study to hold both as commended to you; that so, with the help of your Holiness, something may thence accrue for the sustenance of the poor. Inasmuch, then, as your predecessor held this patrimony for many years, and kept in his own hands the collected payments, let your Fraternity consider whose the moneys are, and to whom they should be paid, and restore them to us, handing them to the above-written presbyter Candidus, our son. For it is very execrable that what has been preserved by the kings of the nations should be said to be taken away by bishops.

EPISTLE LIV: TO DESIDERIUS AND SYAGRIUS, BISHOPS.

Gregory to Desiderius of Vienna (Vienne), and Syagrius of Augustodunum (Autun), Bishops of Gaul. A paribus.

Having regard to your sincere charity we are well assured that out of love for Peter, the Prince of the apostles, you will devotedly afford your succour to our men; especially. since the nature of the case requires you to give assistance even of your own accord, and the more when you see them labour. Wherefore we inform your Holiness that, the Lord so ordering it, we have despatched Augustine, the servant of God, the bearer of these presents, whose zeal and earnestness are well known to us, with other servants of God, in behalf of souls in those parts; from whose account of things when you have fully learnt what is enjoined on him, let your Fraternity bestow your succour on him in all ways which the case may require, that you may be able, as is becoming and fit, to be helpers of a good work. Let, then, your Fraternity study to shew yourself so devoted in this matter that your action may prove to us the truth of the good report that we have heard of you. We commend to you in all respects our most beloved common son, Candidus the presbyter, to whom we have committed the patrimony of our Church situated in those parts.

EPISTLE LV: TO PROTASIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Protasius, Bishop of Aquae in Gaul (Aix).

How great love of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, distinguishes you is evident, not only from the prerogative of your office, but also from the devotion you bestow on what is to the advantage of his Church. And Having learnt that this is the case from the relation of Augustine, servant of God, the bearer of these presents, we rejoice exceedingly for the affection and zeal for truth that is in you; and we give thanks that, though absent in the body, you still shew that you are with us in heart and mind, seeing that you exhibit brotherly charity towards us, as is fit. In order then that actual fact may confirm the good report of you, tell our brother and fellow-bishop Virgilius to hand over to us the payments which his predecessor received for many years and retained in his own hands: for it is the property of the poor. And if perchance, as we do not believe will be the case, he should desire in any way to excuse himself, do you, who know the real truth more exactly, inasmuch as you acted as steward (vicedominus) at that time, explain to him how the matter stands, and urge him not to retain in his hands the property of Saint Peter and of his poor. But, though perhaps our men may not need this, do not refuse your testimony in the case; that so, with regard to the truth as well as to the devotion of your good will, the blessed apostle Peter, for whose love you do this, may respond to you by his intercession both here and in the life to come. We heartily commend to your Holiness the presbyter Candidus, our common son, to whom we have committed the charge of this patrimony.

EPISTLE LVI: TO STEPHEN, ABBOT.

Gregory to Stephen, &c.

The account given us by Augustine, servant of God, the bearer of these presents, has made us joyful, in that he has told us that your Love is vigilant as you ought to be; and he further affirms that the presbyters and deacons and the whole congregation live in unanimity and concord. And, since the goodness of presidents is the salutary rule of their subjects, we implore Almighty God to enkindle thee always in good works by the grace of His loving-kindness, and to keep those who are committed to thee from all temptation of diabolical deceit, and grant to them to live with thee in charity and in the manner of life that pleases Him.

But, since the enemy of the human race never rests from plotting against our doings, so as to deceive in some part souls that are serving God, therefore, most beloved son, we exhort thee to exercise vigilantly thy anxious care, and so to keep those who are committed to thee by prayer and heedfulness that the prowling wolf may find no opportunity for tearing the flock: to the end that, when thou shall have rendered to our God unharmed those of whom thou hast undertaken the charge, He may both of His grace repay thee with rewards for thy labour and multiply in thee longings for eternal life.

We have received the spoons and plates which thou hast sent us, and we thank thy Charity, because thou hast shewn how thou lovest the poor in having sent for their use such things as they need.

EPISTLE LVII: TO ARIGIUS, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Arigius, Patrician of Gaul.

We have learnt from the servant of God, Augustine, the bearer of these presents, how great goodness, how great gentleness, with the charity that is well-pleasing to Christ, is in you resplendent; and we give thanks to Almighty God, who has granted you these gifts of His loving-kindness, through which you may have it in your power to be highly esteemed among men, and — what is truly profitable — glorious in His sight. We therefore pray Almighty God, that He would multiply in you these gifts which He has granted, and keep you with all yours under His protection, and so dispose the doings of your Glory in this world that they may be to your benefit both here, and — what is more to be wished — in the life to come. Saluting, then, your Glory with paternal sweetness, we beg of you that the bearer of these presents, and the servants of God who are with him, may obtain your succour in what is needful, to the end that, while they experience your favour, they may the better fulfil what has been enjoined on them to do.

Furthermore, we commend to you in all respects our son the presbyter Candidus, whom we have sent for the government of the patrimony of our Church which is in your parts; trusting that your Glory will receive a reward in return from our God, if with devout mind you lend your succour to the concerns of the poor.

EPISTLE LVIII: TO THEODORIC AND THEODEBERT.

Gregory to Theodoric and Theodebert, brethren, Kings of the Franks. A paribus.

Since Almighty God has adorned your kingdom with rectitude of faith, and has made it conspicuous among other nations by the purity of its Christian religion, we have conceived great expectations of you, that you will by all means desire that your subjects should be converted to that faith in virtue of which you are their kings and lords. This being so, it has come to our knowledge that the nation of the Angli is desirous, through the mercy of God, of being converted to the Christian faith, but that the priests in their neighbourhood neglect them, and are remiss in kindling their desires by their own exhortations. On this account therefore we have taken thought to send to them the servant of God Augustine, the bearer of these presents, whose zeal and earnestness are well known to us, with other servants of God. And we have also charged them to take with them some priests from the neighbouring parts, with whom they may be able to ascertain the disposition of the Angli, and, as far as God may grant it to them, to aid their wishes by their admonition. Now, that they may have it in their power to shew themselves efficient and capable in this business, we beseech your Excellency, greeting you with paternal charity, that these whom we have sent may be counted worthy to find the grace of your favour. And, since it is a matter of souls, let your power protect and aid them; that Almighty God, who knows that with devout mind and with all your heart you take an interest in His cause, may propitiously direct your causes, and after earthly dominion bring you to heavenly kingdoms.

Futhermore, we request your Excellency to hold as commended to you our most beloved son, Candidus, a presbyter, and the rector of the patrimony of our Church, to the end that the blessed Peter, Prince of the

apostles, may answer you by his intercession, while, looking to the reward, you afford your protection in the concerns of his poor.

EPISTLE LIX: TO BRUNICHILD, QUEEN OF THE FRANKS.

Gregory to Brunichild, &c.

The Christianity of your Excellence has been so truly known to us of old that we do not in the least doubt of your goodness, but rather hold it to be in all ways certain that you will devoutly and zealously concur with us in the cause of faith, and supply most abundantly the succour of your religions sincerity. Being for this reason well assured, and greeting you with paternal charity, we inform you that it has come to our knowledge how that the nation of the Angli, by God's permission, is desirous of becoming Christian, but that the priests who are in their neighbourhood have no pastoral solicitude with regard to them. And lest their souls should haply perish in eternal damnation, it has been our care to send to them the bearer of these presents, Augustine the servant of God, whose zeal and earnestness are well known to us, with other servants of God; that through them we might be able to learn their wishes, and, as far as is possible, you also striving with us, to take thought for their conversion. We have also charged them that for carrying out this design they should take with them presbyters from the neighbouring regions. Let, then, your Excellency, habitually prone to good works, on account as well of our request as of regard to the fear of God, deign to bold him as in all ways commended to you, and earnestly bestow on him the favour of your protection, and lend the aid of your patronage to his labour and, that he may have the fullest fruit thereof provide for his going secure under your protection to the above-written nation of the Angli, to the end that our God, who has adorned you in this world with good qualities well-pleasing to Him, may cause you to give thanks here and in eternal rest with His saints.

Furthermore, commending to your Christianity our beloved son Candidus, presbyter and rector of the patrimony of our Church which is

situated in your parts, we beg that he may in all things obtain the favour of your protection.

EPISTLE LX: TO EULOGIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Eulogius, Bishop of Alexandria. Charity, the mother and guardian of all that is good, which binds together in union the hearts of many, regards not as absent him whom it has present in the mind's eye. Since then, dearest brother, we are held together by the root of charity, neither will bodily absence nor distance of places have power to assert any claim over us, inasmuch as we who are One are surely not far from each other. Now we wish to have always this common charity with the rest of our brethren. Yet there is something that binds us in a certain peculiar way to the Church of Alexandria, and compels us, as it were by a special law, to be the more prone to love it. For, as it is known to all that the blessed evangelist Mark was sent by Saint Peter the apostle, his master, to Alexandria, so we are bound together in the unity of this master and his disciple, so that I seem to preside over the see of the disciple because of the master, and you over the see of the master because of the disciple.

Moreover to this unity of hearts we are bound also by the merits of your Holiness, since we know that you follow profitably the ordinances of your founder, and feel how you betake yourself with entire devotion to the bosom of your master, whence sprung the preaching of salvation in your parts. And so, when we received the letters of your Holiness, as much as our heart rejoiced in your brotherly visitation, so much is it oppressed with sadness for the untold burdens which you refer to, and we groan with you in brotherly sympathy for your grief. But, since a shaking of various kinds is extending itself everywhere, in the midst of a common need one should grieve less for one's own, but study rather, by patiently enduring, to overcome what we cannot altogether avoid.

But what we ourselves are suffering from the swords of the Lombards in the daily plundering and mangling and slaying of our citizens, we refuse to

tell, lest, while speaking of our own sorrows, we should increase yours from the sympathy which you bestow upon us.

Furthermore, a little time ago we sent to Sabinianus, who represents our Church in the royal city, a letter from ourselves, which he should have sent on to your Fraternity. If you have received it, we wonder why you have sent us no reply to it. And accordingly, since caution must be taken lest the pride of any one whatever introduce offence in the Churches, it is needful that you should carefully peruse it, and with all diligence and full bent of mind maintain what pertains to your dignity and to the peace of the Church.

Now may Almighty God, who by the grace of His loving-kindness has conferred on you the disposition and charity that becomes a priest, protect you in His service, and keep you within and without from all adversity, and mercifully grant that the souls of wanderers may be converted to Himself by your preaching.

We have received with the charity that was due to the bearer of these presents, our common son the deacon Isidore, who brought to us the benediction of Saint Mark the evangelist. And you indeed, being resplendent in the merit of a good life, have sent to us the sweetly smelling word, which is nigh unto Paradise. But we, to wit because we are sinners, send you wood from the West, which, being suitable for the building of ships, signifies the tumult of our mind, as being ever tossed in the sea-waves; and we wished indeed to send larger pieces, but the ship was not large enough to hold them. In the month of August, Indiction 14.

EPISTLE LXI: TO CASTORIUS, NOTARY. Gregory to Castorius, &c.

The magnificent lord Andreas presses me continually about restoring the use of the pallium in the Church of Ravenna according to ancient custom. And thou knowest that the bishop John wrote to me that it had been the custom for the bishops of the said Church to use the pallium in solemn litanies. Adeodatus, deacon of that church, when he besought me earnestly on the same subject, satisfied me by oath that the bishops of the said place were accustomed to use the pallium in litanies four times in the year. But the aforesaid lord Andreas says in his letters that the bishop of Ravenna was in the habit of using the pallium in litanies at all times except in Lent. And these litanies, which he does not blush to say were daily, he asserts to be solemn ones. Whence I have been altogether astonished. But let thy Experience regard no man's person, no man's words; keep the fear of God and rectitude only before thine eyes, and enquire of senior persons, and of the Archdebon of that same Church, who would not, I think, perjure himself for the honour of another, and of others of older standing who had been in sacred orders before the times of bishop John, or if there are any others of riper age not in holy orders; and let them come before the body of Saint Apollinaris, and touching his sepulchre swear what had been the custom before the times of bishop John; since, as thou knowest, he was a man who presumed greatly and endeavoured in his pride to arrogate many things to himself. And whatever may be sworn to by faithful and grave men, according to the subjoined form, we desire to be retained in the same Church. But see that thou act not negligently, and that no one corrupt thy faithfulness and devotion in this matter; for thy zeal I know. Act assiduously, yet so that the aforesaid Church be not lowered in a way contrary to justice, but that it retain the usage that existed before the times of bishop John. Moreover, for satisfying thyself, do not enquire of two or

three persons, but of as many as thou canst find of old standing and grave character, that so we may neither deny to that Church what has been of ancient custom, nor concede to it what has been coveted and attempted newly. But do all kindly and sweetly, so that both thy action may be strict and thy tongue gentle. The sword s which has been left at Ravenna, as we have already written, bring hither with thee; and carefully attend to what our son Boniface the deacon and the magnificent Maurentius the chartularius have written to thee about.

I swear by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the inseparable Trinity of Divine Power, and by this body of the blessed martyr Apollinaris, that out of favour to no person, and without any advantage to myself intervening, I give my testimony. But this I know, and am personally cognizant of, that, before the times of the late bishop John, the Bishop of Ravenna, in the presence of this or that apocrisiarius of the Apostolic See, on such and such days, had the custom of using the pallium, and I am not aware that he had herein usurped latently, or in the absence of the apocrisiarius.

EPISTLE LXIII: TO GENNADIUS, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Gennadius, Patrician of Africa.

We doubt not that your Excellency members how two years ago we wrote in behalf of Paul our brother and fellow-bishop, asking you to afford him the support of your Dignity in his desire to come to us on account of the trouble he was said to be undergoing from persecution on the part of the Donatists, to the end that, since it had been reported to us that he could get no aid against them there, we might, after ascertaining the truth, give him advice with fraternal sympathy, and treat with him as to what should be done in the way a wholesome arrangement against the madness of pestiferous presumption. And, so far as our aforesaid brother gave us to understand, he not only failed to get succour from any one, but was prevented by various hindrances from being able to come with safety to the Roman city. Yet, when we had caused your epistle to be read to him, he replied that he is not suffering from the ill-will of certain persons because he repressed the Donatists, but rather says that he is in disfavour with many for his defence of the Catholic faith; and he told me many things besides, which, since this is not a fit time for mentioning them, we have thought best to keep to ourselves.

Since, then, the question before us is not one of earthly affairs, but of the health of souls, and your assertion and his are different, we have been unable to say anything particularly in reply, not having investigated the truth, seeing that, when we received the letters of your Excellency, we were confined by bodily sickness. But when Almighty God, if it should please Him, shall have restored us to our former health, we will sift the truth as we can by diligent enquiry. And according to what we may be able to learn we will so settle the case through the mercy of God that not only the health of souls in the cure whereof you deign to take an interest, lost now by them that err, may be restored, but also that which the maintainers of the true

faith still possess may, through the protecting grace of our Redeemer, be preserved.

But with regard to the above-named bishop, whom you assert to be deprived of communion we greatly wonder how it is that a letter from your Excellency, and not from his primate, has announced this to us.

EPISTLE LXV: TO MAURICIUS, EMPEROR

Gregory to Mauricius Augustus.

Amidst the cares of warfare and innumerable anxieties which you sustain in your unwearied seal for the government of the Christian republic, it is a great cause of joy to me along with the whole world that your Piety ever watches over custody of the faith whereby the empire of Our lords is resplendent. Whence I fully trust that, as you guard the causes of God with the love of a religious mind, so God guards and aids yours with the grace of His Majesty. Now after what manner the serenity of your Piety, out of regard to righteousness and zeal for the purest religion, has been moved against the most flagitious pravity of the Donatists, the tenor of the commands which you have sent most clearly shews. But the most reverend bishops who have come from the African province assert that these have been so disregarded through ill-advised connivance that neither is the judgment of God held in fear there, nor are the imperial commands so far carried into effect; adding also this: that in the aforesaid province, through the bribes of the Donatists prevailing, the Catholic faith is publicly let to sale. But on the other hand the glorius Gennadius has likewise complained of one of those who made such complaints: and two others also have borne like testimony with him on the subject. But, inasmuch as in this case a secular judge was concerned, I have thought it right to send these bishops to the footsteps of your Piety, that they may represent in person to your most serene ears what they declare themselves to have endured for the catholic faith.

For these reasons I beseech the Christianity of my lords, for the weal of their souls and life of their most pious offspring, to give orders by a strict mandate for the punishment of such as you find to be such as have been described, and to arrest with the hand of rescue the ruin of those who are perishing? and to apply the medicine of correction to insane minds, and

cure them of the poisonous bite of error; that so, the darkness of pestiferous pravity having been driven away by the remedy of your pro vision, and the true faith having shed abroad in those parts the rays of its serenity, heavenly triumph may await you before the eyes of our Redeemer, because whomsoever you defend outwardly from the enemy, them you also set free inwardly from the poison of diabolical fraud; which is a still more glorious thing.

EPISTLE LXVI. TO ATHANASIUS, PRESBYTER.

Gregory to Athanasius, Presbyter of Isauria.

As we are afflicted and mourn for those whom the error of heretical pravity has cut off from the unity of the Church, so we rejoice with those whom their profession of the catholic faith retains within her bosom. And, as it is our duty to oppose the impiety of the former with pastoral solicitude, so it is fitting for us to bestow favour on the pious professions of the latter, and to declare their views to be sound. And accordingly, a suspicion of unsoundness in the faith having arisen against thee, Athanasius, presbyter of the monastery of Saint Mile, called Tamnacus, which is established in the province of Lycaonia, thou, in order that the integrity of the profession of faith might appear, didst elect to have recourse to the Apostolical See over which we preside, asserting also that, having been corporally chastised, thou hadst done some things unjustly and impetuously. And, although things done under compulsion by no means fall under the censure of the canons, and they are rightly accounted to be of no weight (since he himself invalidates them who compels what is unjust to be confessed and done), and though that confession is rather to be received and embraced which is shewn to proceed from the spontaneous will, as is known to be the case in that which thou madest before us; — yet still, to avoid the possibility of uncertainty, we took the precaution of writing about thee to our brother and fellow-bishop, the prelate of the city of Constantinople, that he might inform us by letter of what had been done. He, after being often admonished by us, wrote in reply to the effect that a volume had been found in thy possession, which contained many heretical statements, and that on this account he had been incensed against thee. He having lent this to us in his desire to satisfy us, we read the earlier portions of it attentively: and inasmuch as we found in it manifest poison of heretical pravity, we forbade its being read any more. But, since thou hast assured us that thou hadst read

it in simplicity, and, in order to cut off all ground for uncertain suspicion, hast handed to us a paper in thine own handwriting in which expounding thy faith, thou hast most plainly condemned all heresies in general, or whatever is opposed to the integrity of the Catholic faith or profession, and hast declared that thou hadst always received and didst still receive all that the four holy Ecumenical synods receive, and hadst condemned and didst still condemn what they condemn, and hast promised also to accept and hold to that synod which was held in the times of the emperor Justinian concerning the Three Chapters, and, being forbidden by us to read that same volume in which the poison of pestiferous error is interwoven, rejecting also and condemning all that in it is said or latently implied against the integrity of the Catholic faith, thou hast promised that thou wilt not read it again; — we, moved by these reasons (thy faith also having clearly appeared to us from the paper under thine own hand, God guarding thee, to be catholic), decree thee to be, according to thy profession, free from all stain of heretical perversity, and catholic; and we pronounce that thou hast proved thyself, by the grace of Christ Jesus our Saviour to be in all things a professor and follower of the unadulterated faith: and we give thee free licence, notwithstanding all, to return to thy monastery, resuming thy place and rank.

We wish to write also on this matter to our most beloved brother, the prelate of the city of Constantinople, who has been ordained in the place of the aforesaid holy John. But, since it is the custom that we should not write before his synodical epistle has reached us, we have therefore delayed. But, after it has reached us, we will inform him of these things when we find a convenient opportunity.

BOOK VII

EPISTLE II: TO COLUMBUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Columbus, Bishop of Numidia.

We received at the hands of the bearer, your deacon, the epistle of your Fraternity, in which you informed us of what had been done among you with regard to the person of the bishop Paul. This has been done so late that he could not now have appeared here in person. For his Excellency also, our son Gennadius the Patrician, sent his chancellor to us with reference to the same case. But when we had caused enquiry to be made whether he was willing to plead against him [i.e. against the bishop Paul] before us, he replied that he had been by no means sent with this intent but had only brought hither certain three persons from his Church who would allege many things against him. While, then, we neither found him prepared to commence an action, nor were moved by the quality of those persons to regard them as fit accusers of a bishop, we could not gainsay or offer hindrance to the often before- mentioned bishop Paul, who petitioned us in the hope of having leave given him to resort to the royal city; but we presently allowed him according to his petition, with two others whom he should take with him, to set forth. If, then, there have been any things that could be reasonably said against him, the proper course would have been for him to come here at once, and for your Fraternity to inform us of all particulars, as you have now done. For, as to your having signified to us that you suffer from the enmities of many on account of our frequently visiting you by our letters, there is no doubt, most reverend brother, that the good suffer from the grudges of the bad, and that those who are intent on divine works are harassed by the oppositions of the perverse. But, in proportion as these bad things are around you, ought you to be more instantly occupied with the care of the government committed to you, and to watch for the custody of the flock of Christ; and in proportion as the contrariety of unrighteous men presses upon you, ought the care of pastoral solicitude to

inflame you to be more active, and very certain of the promised reward, to the end that you may be able to offer to the chief Shepherd gain from the work given you to do.

EPISTLE IV: TO CYRIACUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Cyriacus, Bishop of Constantinople.

We have received with becoming charity our common sons, George the presbyter and Theodore your deacon; and we rejoice that you have passed from the care of ecclesiastical business to the government of souls, since, according to the voice of the Truth, faithful in a little will be faithful also in much (Luke xvi. 10). And to the servant who administers well it is said, Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler aver many things (Matth. xxv. 23); to whom also it is presently said further with respect to eternal retribution, Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Now you say in your letter that you had exceedingly wished for rest. But in this you shew that you have fitly assumed pastoral responsibility, since, as a place of rule should be denied to those who covet it, so it should be offered to those who fly from it. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron (Hebr. v. 4). And again the same excellent preacher says, If one died far all, then all died; and Christ died for all. It remaineth that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). And to the shepherd of holy Church it is said, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed My sheep (John xxi. 17). From which words it appears that, if one who is able refuses to feed the sheep of Almighty God, he shews that he does not love the chief Shepherd. For if the Only-begotten of the Father, for accomplishing the good of all, came forth from the secrecy of the Father into the midst of us, what shall we say, if we prefer our secrecy to the good of our neighbours? Thus rest is to be desired by us with all our heart; and yet for the advantage of many it should sometimes be laid aside. For, as we ought with full desire to fly from occupation, so, if there should be a want of some one to preach, we must needs put a willing shoulder under the burden of occupation. And this we are taught by the

conduct of two prophets, one of whom attempted to shun the office of preaching, while the other desired it. For to the Lord who sent him Jeremias replied saying, Ah, Lord God, I cannot speak; far I am a child (Jer. i. 6). And when Almighty God sought for some one to preach, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Isaias offered himself of his own accord, saying, Here am I, send me (Isai. vi. 8). Lo, different voices proceeded outwardly from the two, but they flowed from the same fountain of love.

For indeed there are two precepts of charity; to wit, the love of God and of one's neighbour. Wherefore Isaias, wishing to profit his neighbours by an active life, desires the office of preaching; but Jeremias, longing to cling assiduously to the love of his Maker by a contemplative life, protests against being sent to preach. What, then, one laudably desired the other laudably shrunk from: the latter lest by speaking he should lose the gains of silent contemplation; the former lest by keeping silence he should feel the loss of diligent work. But this is nicely to be observed in both, that he who refused did not resist finally, and he who wished to be sent saw himself previously purged by a coal from the altar; that so no one who has not been purged should dare to approach sacred ministries, nor any one whom heavenly grace chooses refuse proudly under a show of humility.

Moreover I find yon in your epistles seeking with great longing after serenity of mind, and panting for tranquillity of thought apart from perturbation. But I know not in what manner your Fraternity can attain to this. For one who has undertaken the pilotage of a ship must needs watch all the more as he further recedes from shore, so as sometimes to foresee from signs the coming storms; sometimes, when they come, either, if they are small, to ride over them in a straight course, or, if they swell violently, to avoid them as they rush on by steering sideways; and often to watch alone when all who are without charge of the ship are at rest. How, moreover,

having undertaken the burden of pastoral charge, can you have serenity of thought, seeing that it is written, Behold giants groan under the waters (Job xxvi. 5)? For, according to the words of John, The waters are peoples (Rev. xvii. 15). And the groaning of giants under the waters means that whoso in this world has increased in degree of power, as though in a sort of massive size of body, feels the load of greater tribulation by so much the more as he has taken on himself the care of ruling peoples. But, if the power of the Holy Spirit breathes upon the afflicted mind, forthwith what was done bodily for the people of Israel takes place with us spiritually. For it is written, But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea (Exod. xiv. 29). And through the prophet the Lord promises saying, When thou passest through the waters. I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not overflow thee (Isai. xliii. 2). For the rivers overflow those whom the active business of this world confounds with perturbation of mind. But he who is sustained in mind by the grace of the Holy Spirit passes through the waters, and yet is not overflowed by the rivers, because in the midst of crowds of peoples he so proceeds along his way as not to sink the head of his mind beneath the active business of the world.

I also, who, unworthy as I am, have come to a place of rule, had sometimes determined to seek some place of retirement: but, seeing the Divine counsels to be opposed to me, I submitted the neck of my heart to my Maker's yoke; especially reflecting on this, that no hidden places whatever can save the soul without the grace of God; and this we observe sometimes, when even saints go astray. For Lot was righteous in the depraved city itself, and sinned on the mountain (Gen. xix.). But why speak of these instances, when we know of greater ones? For what is pleasanter than Paradise? What safer than Heaven? And yet man out of Paradise, and the angel from heaven, by sinning fell. His power, then, should be sought, His grace implored, without whom we are nowhere without fault, with

whom we are nowhere without righteousness. We should, then, take care that perturbation of thought get not the better of our minds; for it can by no means be entirely got rid of. For whosoever is in a place of rule must needs have to think sometimes even of earthly things, and to have a care also of external things, that the flock committed to him may be able to subsist for accomplishing what it has to do. But it should be most carefully seen to, that this same care pass not due measure, and that, when lawfully admitted into the heart, it be not allowed to become excessive. Whence it is rightly said through Ezekiel, Let not the priests shave their heads, nor suffer their lacks to grow long; but palling let them poll their heads (Ezek. xliv. 20). For what are hairs in the head by signification but thoughts in the mind? For, rising above the brain insensibly, they denote cares of the present life, which from negligent perception, since they come on sometimes importunely, advance as it were without our feeling them. Since, then, all who are over others ought indeed to have outward anxieties, and yet not to devote themselves to them exceedingly, the priests are rightly forbidden either to shave the head or to let their locks grow long, so that they nay neither entirely cut off from themselves carnal thoughts for the life of their subjects, nor again allow them to grow too much. And it is also there well said, Polling let them pall their heads; meaning that the anxieties of a temporal charge should both proceed as far as is needful, and yet should be soon cut short, lest they grow to an immoderate length. While therefore both, through external provision administered, the life of bodies is protected, and again intentness of heart is not hindered through the same being immoderate, the hairs on the head of the priest are kept to cover the skin, and cut short so as not to veil the eyes.

Furthermore, we have received in full faith your letters addressed to us, and give thanks to Almighty God, who, by the mutual confession of the faithful, guards the coat that is without seam woven from the top

throughout, that is to say His Church, in the unity of grace, from all rent of error; and against the deluge (so to speak) of so many sins of the perishing world constructs an ark of many planks in which the elect of Almighty God may be preserved unto life. For, when we in our turn send the confession of our faith to you, and you shew your charity towards us, what are we doing in holy Church but smearing the ark with pitch; lest any wave of error enter, and kill all the spiritual as being men, and the carnal as being beasts.

But, when you have wisely professed a right faith, it remains doubtless that you should keep the more warily the peace of hearts, because of what the Truth says, Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another (Mark ix. 50). And Paul the apostle admonishes, saying, Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephes. iv. 3). And again he says, Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see God (Hebr. xii. 14). Which peace indeed you will then truly have with us, if you turn away from the pride of a profane name, according to what the same teacher of the Gentiles says, O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane novelties of words (1 Tim. vi. 20). For indeed it is too bad, if these who have been made preachers of humility should glory in the elation of a vain name, when the true preacher says, But God forbid that I should glory, save in the crass of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. vi. 14.). He then is truly glorious who glories not in temporal power, but, for the name of Christ, glories in His passion. Herein therefore we embrace you from the bottom of our heart, herein we recognize you as priests, if, rejecting the vanity of words, you occupy the place of holiness with holy humility. For behold, we have been scandalized by this impious appellation, and retain in our mind and express in words by no means slight complaints. But your Fraternity knows how the Truth says, If thou offerest thy gift before the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift, and go thy way to be first reconciled to thy

brother, and then thou shale come and after thy gift (Matth. v. 23, 24). Herein is to be considered, that, while every fault is done away by the offering of sacrifice, so great is the evil of offence engendered in another's heart that from one who has so sinned the Lord accepts not the sacrifice itself which is wont to do away sin. Take heed then with speed to wipe off cause of offence from your heart, that Almighty God may be able to regard as acceptable the sacrifice of your offering.

Furthermore, while you have truly and accurately professed the right faith, we find that among those whom you have held to be condemned by the most holy general synods you have condemned a certain Eudoxius; whose name we have not found mentioned in the Latin language either in synods or in the books of the bishops of blessed memory, Epiphanius, Augustin, or Philaster, whom we know to have been the chief disputants against heretics. Now if any one of the catholic Fathers really condemns him, we undoubtedly follow their opinion. If, however, in your synodical epistle you have wished to condemn by name those also who, apart from the holy synods, are condemned in the writings of the Fathers, your Fraternity has mentioned too few by many; but if those whom the general synods reject, then too many by this one. But in the midst of all these things it is to be remembered, that in order that we may be free to profess the true faith and to order whatever has to be done in peace and concord, we ought to pray incessantly for the life of our most serene lords and of their offspring, that Almighty God would subdue barbarous nations under their feet, and grant them long and happy lives, to the end that through a Christian empire the faith which is in Christ may reign.

EPISTLE V: TO CYRIACUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Cyriacus, Bishop of Constantinople.

When in time past I represented the Apostolic See in the royal city, I became acquainted with the good qualities of your Holiness. And I greatly rejoice that the care of souls has been committed to you. And though unworthy, I beseech Almighty God with all the prayers in my power that He would even increase His grace in you, and cause you to gather gain of souls for the eternal country. But, whereas you say that you are weak for this work that has been put upon you, we know that the first virtue is acknowledgment of infirmity; and from this we gather that you can fulfil well the ministry you have undertaken, that we see how, out of humility, you acknowledge your own infirmity For we are all infirm; but he is more infirm who has not strength to consider his infirmity. But you, most blessed brethren, are for this reason strong, that, distrusting your own strength, you trust in the power of Almighty God.

I cannot, however, express by the words of a letter how much my heart is bound to your Charity. But I pray that Almighty God may by the gift of His grace multiply the same charity that is between us, and may take away all occasion of offence, lest the holy Church, united by the profession of the true faith, and compacted by conjunction of the hearts of the faithful, should suffer any damage from priests disputing with each other, which God forbid. I at any rate, in all that I speak, in all that I say, against the proud conduct of certain persons, still, through the bounty of Almighty God, never relinquish custody of inward charity; but so execute outwardly what belongs to justice as by no means to disregard inwardly what belongs to love and kindness. And do you also ever return my love, and guard what belongs to peace and kindness; that, remaining of one mind, so as to allow no dissension to come in between us, we may be better able from the very unity of our hearts to obtain what we seek from the Lord.

Furthermore, I commend to your Holiness John, presbyter of Chalcedon, and Athanasius of Isauria, that no one may set you against them by underhand misrepresentations; for I have thoroughly examined their faith, and have found them sound in their confessions, which have also been given in writing.

Now may the Holy Trinity protect you with His hand, and render you always vigilant anti careful in the custody of souls, to the end that in the eternal retribution you may be counted worthy to be crowned, not only for your own work, but also for the amelioration of your subjects,

EPISTLE VI: TO MAURICIUS AUGUSTUS.

Gregory to Mauricius Augustus.

Almighty God, who has made your Piety to be the guardian of ecclesiastical peace, preserves you by the same faith which, through unity among priests, you preserve; and when you submit your heart humbly to the yoke of heavenly loving-kindness, it is brought to pass by heavenly grace that you tread your enemies under the foot of valour. For it cannot be of small advantage that, when John of holy memory had departed this life, your Piety long hesitated, and somewhat deferred the time, while seeking counsel in the fear of Almighty God, in order, to wit, that the cause of God might be ordered, as it should be, with great fear. Whence also I think that my brother and fellow-priest Cyriacus is proved to be exceedingly fit for pastoral rule, in that the long deliberation of your Piety has raised him to this degree. And we all know how diligent and how practised he has long been in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs. Whence also I doubt not that it has been brought about by Divine ordering that one who had administered the least things well should fitly undertake the greater, and should pass from the charge of affairs to the government of souls. Wherefore in all our prayers we beseech Almighty God to repay this good work to the Serenity of our lords and to their pious offspring both in the present world and also with a perpetual recompense, and to grant to my aforesaid brother and fellow-priest, who has been put over the Lord's flock, to shew himself fully solicitous in the care of souls; that he may be able irreprovably both to correct what is wrong in his subjects and to foster what is right unto further increase; to the end that the judgment of your Piety concerning him may be approved, not only before men, but also before the eyes of the Supernal Majesty.

The venerable men, George the presbyter and Theodore the deacon, in consideration of the command of my lords and the imminence of the winter

season, I have not allowed to be delayed in this city

EPISTLE VII: TO PETER, DOMITIAN, AND ELPIDIUS.

Gregory to Peter, Domitian, and Elpidius, Bishops.

I rejoice exceedingly that you welcomed with great joy the ordination of the most holy Cyriacus, my brother and fellow-priest. And since we have learnt from the preaching of Paul the apostle that If one member rejoice, all the members rejoice with it (1 Cor. xii. 26), you must needs consider with how great exultation I rejoice with you in this thing, wherein not one member, but many members of Christ have rejoiced. Nevertheless, so far as I have been able to consider your Fraternity's letters on a cursory perusal, great joy has carried you away into immoderate praise of this my brother. For you say that he has appeared in the Church like the sun, so that you all cried out, This is the day which the lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it (Ps. cxvii. 24). Yet surely this is a promise of the life to come, seeing that it is said, The righteous shall shine forth as the sun (Matth. xiii. 43; Wisd. iii. 7). For, in whatsoever virtue any one may excel, how can he shine forth as the sun while still in the present life, wherein The corruptible body presseth down the saul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things (Wisd. ix. 15); wherein We see another law in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity by the law of sin which is in our members (Rom. vii. 23); wherein Even in ourselves we have the answer of death, that we should not trust in ourselves (2 Cor. i. 9); wherein also the Prophet cries aloud, Fear and trembling are canto upon me, and darkness hath covered me (Ps. liv. 6)? For it is written also, A wise man abideth as the sun; a fool changeth as the moan (Ecclus. xxvii. 12); where the comparison of the sun is not applied to the splendour of his brightness, but to perseverance in well-doing. But the good beginning of his ordination could not as yet be praised by you with regard to perseverance. And as to your saying that you cried out, This is the day which the Lord hath made, you ought to have considered of whom this

is said. For what comes before is this; The stone which the builders refused, the same is made the head-stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes (Ps. cxvii. 22). And with regard to this same stone it is forthwith added, This is the day which the Lord hath made. For He who for strength of building is said to be a stone, for the grace of illumination is called the Day, being also made, because He became incarnate. In Him we are enjoined to rejoice and be glad, because He has overcome in us the darkness of our error by the light of His excellence. In praise of a creature, then, that expression ought not to have been used which is suitable to the Creator alone.

But why should I find fault with these things, knowing as I do how joy carries away the mind? For your charity engendered in you great gladness, which gladness of heart the tongue applauding followed. This being so, the praise which charity found to hand cannot now be called a fault. But to me concerning my most holy brother there should have been briefly said what I might accept with satisfaction, seeing that I knew him to be one who has long given to me especially this proof of his greatness; that, having been occupied in so many affairs of ecclesiastical administration, he has kept a tranquil heart in the midst of turbulent throngs, and always restrained himself with a gentle bearing. And this indeed is no small commendation of a great and unshaken mind, not to have been perturbed among the perturbations of business.

Furthermore, your Fraternity should be instant in continual prayers, that Almighty God may guard in our aforesaid brother and fellow-priest what has been well begun, and ever lead him on to what is better still. This should ever be the prayer of you, most holy ones, and of the people subject to him. For the deserts of rulers and peoples are so connected with each other that often the lives of subjects are made worse from tile fault of those who are over them, and often the lives of pastors fall off from the ill desert

of peoples. For that the evil doings of one who is over others does very great harm to those who are under him the Pharisees are evidence, of whom it is written, Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. For ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in (Matth. xxiii. 13). And that the fault of peoples does much harm to the life of pastors we perceive in what David did (2 Kings ii. 24). For he, praised by the testimony of God, he, conscious of heavenly mysteries, being inflated by the turnout of hidden elation, sinned in numbering the people; and yet the punishment fell upon the people for David's sin. Why was this? Because in truth according to the desert of subject peoples are the hearts of rulers disposed. Now the righteous Judge rebuked the fault of the sinner by visitation on those on account of whom he sinned. But, because he himself, waxing proud of his own will, was not free from fault, he himself also received punishment of his fault. For the fierce wrath, which smote the people bodily, prostrated also the ruler of the people with inmost sorrow of heart. Consider therefore these things mutually; and, even as he who is put over you and over the people should intercede for all, so should all of you pray for his conversation and manners, that before Almighty God both you may profit by imitation of him, and he may be aided by your deserts. Further, let us all with one accord pray continually with great weeping to the utmost of our powers for out most serene lords and their pious offspring, that protecting heavenly grace may guard their lives, and subdue the necks of the nations to the Christian empire.

EPISTLE XI: TO RUFINUS, BISHOP OF EPHESUS.

Gregory to Rufinus, &c.

The charity of your acts of friendship in the past has moved us to visit your Fraternity with the present letter. For we have been refreshed with great joy by learning from reports given us of your health that all is well with you. But, while this is so, we implore Almighty God, that as in the present life, which is as it were a shadow of the future one, He has granted you to rejoice in the transitory welfare of your body, so in that heavenly country wherein is true life He may cause us to give thanks and rejoice with a common exultation for the perfected salvation of your soul. Now the bearer of this, desiring to be commended to you by a letter from us, having been asked by us whether he had learnt letters as becomes a clerk, replied that he was ignorant of them. What further commendation, then, with regard to him I should give to your Fraternity I know not; except that you should be solicitous about his soul, and watch over him with pastoral zeal, so that, as he cannot read, your tongue may be a book to him, and that in the goodness of your preaching and work he may see what to follow. For the living voice usually draws the heart more closely than perfunctory reading. But, while, as his master, you supply him inwardly with this spiritual teaching, let not outward care for him also be wanting, that by its aid he come to long for spiritual things, and lest, if such aid is slighted, you should no longer have one to preach to.

EPISTLE XII: TO RESPECTA, ABBESS.

Gregory to Respecta, Abbess of Massilia (Marseilles) in Gaul.

The demand of a pious wish ought to be accomplished by a consequent result, that so the benefit demanded may be validly attained, and sincerity of devotion may laudably shine forth. Accordingly to the monastery consecrated to the honour of Saint Cassian wherein you are selected to preside — in accordance with the petition of our children Dynamius and Aureliana, who are shewn, in their religious devotion, to have united it to the house in their possession by connecting the buildings — we have seen fit to allow these privileges: — We appoint that on the death of the abbess of the aforesaid monastery, not a stranger, but one whom the congregation may choose for itself from among its own members, shall be ordained; whom (provided however that she be judged worthy of this ministry) the bishops of the same place shall ordain. Further, with regard to the property and management of the same monastery, we decree that neither bishop nor any ecclesiastic shall have any power; but appoint that these things shall in all respects pertain to the charge of thy Solicitude, or of her who may be abbess in the same place after thee. If on the day of the Saint's anniversary, or of the dedication, of the aforesaid monastery the bishop should resort thither for celebrating the sacred solemnities of mass, still his office must be so executed that his chair be not placed there, except on the aforesaid days while he is celebrating there the solemnities of mass. And when he departs, let his chair be at the same time removed from the same oratory. But on all other days let the offices of mass be performed by the presbyter whom the same bishop may appoint

Furthermore, with regard to the life and deeds of the handmaidens of God, or of the abbess who may be constituted in the above-written monastery, we enjoin on the bishop, in the fear of God, to devote careful attention to them; so that, if any of those who dwell there, her fault

demanding it, ought to be subjected to punishment, he may himself visit the offence according to the vigour of the sacred canons. These things, then, being by us ordained and granted, do thou, in the ordering of thy congregation, study to shew thyself so earnestly attentive in all respects that the malice of the malignant foe may find nothing there that can be contaminated. All these things, therefore, embraced in this paper of injunctions, we ordain to be observed, under Christ's protection, in all respects and by all persons for ever in thy monastery, to the end that the benefits of the privileges allowed may always continue firm and inviolate. The month of November, Indict. 15.

EPISTLE XIII: TO FORTUNATUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Fortunatus, Bishop of Fanum.

As it is reprehensible and deserving of punishment for any one to sell consecrated vessels except in cases sanctioned by law and the sacred canons, so it is not a matter for reproach or penalty if they should be disposed of with a compassionate purpose for the redemption of captives. Since, then, we find from the information given us by your Fraternity that you have borrowed money for the redemption of captives, and have not the means of repaying it, and on this account desire, with our authority, to dispose of some consecrated vessels, — in this case, seeing that the decrees of both the laws and the canons approve, we have thought fit to lend our approval, and grant you leave to dispose of the consecrated vessels. But, lest their sale should possibly lead to any ill-feeling against yourself, they ought to be disposed of, up to the amount of the debt, in the presence of John our defensor, and their price should be paid to the creditors, to the end that, the business being completed with observance of this kind, neither may the creditors feel loss from having lent the money, nor your Fraternity sustain ill-will now or at any future time.

EPISTLE XV: TO GEORGE, PRESBYTER.

Gregory to George, Presbyter, and to Theodore, deacon, of the Church of Constantinople.

Mindful of your goodness and charity, I greatly blame myself, that I gave you leave to return so soon: but, since I saw you pressing me importunately once and again for leave to go, I considered that it might be a serious matter for your Love to tarry with us longer. But, after I had learnt that you had lingered so long on your journey owing to the winter season, I confess that I was sorry that you had been sent away so soon. For, if your Love was trouble to accomplish your intended journey, it had been better that you had lingered with me than away from me.

Moreover, after your departure I learnt from information given me by my most beloved sons the deacons that your Love had said that our Almighty Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when He descended into hell, saved all who there acknowledged Him as God, and delivered them from the pains due to them. With regard to this subject I desire that your Charity should think very differently. For, when He descended into hell, He delivered through His grace those only who both believed that He should come and observed His precepts in their lives. For it is evident that after the incarnation of the Lord no one can be saved, even of those who hold His faith, who have not the life of faith; since it is written, They acknowledge that they know God, but in deeds they deny Him (Tit. i. 16). And John says, He that saith that he knows Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar (1 John ii. 4). James also, the brother of the Lord, writes saying, Faith without works is dead (Jam. ii. 20). If, then, believers now are not saved without good works, while the unbelieving and reprobate without good action were saved by our Lord descending into hell, then the lot of those who never saw the incarnation of the Lord was better than that of these who have been born after the mystery of His incarnation. But what fatuity it argues to say or

think this the Lord Himself testifies to His disciples, when He says, Many kings and prophets have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them (Matth. xiii. 17; Luke x. 24). But, that I may not detain your Love with argument of my own, learn what Philaster, in the book which he wrote about heresies, says about this heresy. His words are these; "They are heretics who say that the Lord descended into hell, and announced himself after death to all who were already there, so that in acknowledging Him there they might be saved; seeing that this is contrary to the prophet David where he says, But in hell who shall acknowledge thee (Ps. vi. 6)? And to the Apostle; As many as have shined without law shall perish without law (Rom. ii. 12)." And with his words the blessed Augustine also agrees in the book which he wrote about heresies.

Considering, therefore, all these things, hold ye nothing but what the true faith teaches through the Catholic Church: namely, that the Lord in descending into hell rescued from infernal durance those only whom while living in the flesh He preserved through His grace in faith and good conduct. For in that which He says in the Gospel, When I shall be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to myself (John xii. 32), He means all that are elect. For one could not be drawn to God after death who had separated himself from God by evil living. May Almighty God keep you under His protection, that, wherever ye are, ye may feel in soul and body the aid of His grace.

EPISTLE XVII: TO SABINIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Sabinianus, Bishop of Jadera.

If thou hadst been at pains to weigh with careful consideration the rule of ecclesiastical administration and the order of ancient custom, neither would any fault of unlawful presumption have crept in upon thee, nor would others have incurred danger by occasion of thy sin. Now there is no doubt that thou wast aware how that, certain things having come to our ears about Maximus which were no Slight bar to his advancement to the priesthood, we had not given our assent to it, and that it was our will that he should not attain to what he strove after till there had been adequate satisfaction concerning the things that were said. But, when thou oughtest by all means to have observed this, it came rather to pass that he, snatching at the episcopate with the greediness of a blind mind, inclined thee unwarily to favour him in spite of our prohibition. But, lest even then the things that had been reported to us should remain unexamined, he was summoned to come hither by letters from us. And, when he was so perversely inclined as to defer doing so, we took care to admonish him in repeated letters, under pain of interdiction from communion, to make haste to come to us for his purification, putting aside all excuses: but he chose rather to submit to excommunication than to evince obedience. Whence the result is (awful to be said), that the pravity of his perverse disposition involves others in his own perdition. Now however, inasmuch as we have learnt that thou dissentest from his wickedness, we exhort thee by the present writing (that so it may profit thy soul to have severed thyself, even though late, from him) that thou henceforth neither communicate with him nor make mention of his name in the sacred solemnities of mass; and also that thou defer not coming to us without delay, yea and bring others with thee too, such as thou canst, whether bishops or other religious persons, so that (the cause being thoroughly examined), both your absolution, should the case require it, may

fittingly and decently ensue, and that those who have fallen into the sin of the like temerity may be recalled to the way of salvation, with the help of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, by an arrangement well-pleasing to Christ. Moreover, let any bishop or religious person that may come to us know that he will sustain no prejudice or injustice, but that all will be arranged so as to please our Redeemer after full ascertainment of the truth; to the end that even from our way of ordering the matter, with the Lord's approval, it may appear to all that we are not moved by private grudge against any man, but by zeal for God and for the adjustment of ecclesiastical order.

EPISTLE XIX: TO MARINIANUS, ARCHBISHOP.

Gregory to Marinianus, Archbishop of Ravenna.

Your Fraternity has been long aware after what manner the Church of Ariminum has been hitherto deprived of pastoral government by reason of the known bodily affliction of the priest who was ordained by us. Now we, moved by the prayers of the inhabitants of that place, having frequently exhorted him to return with the help of the Lord to his Church, if he should feel himself relieved from this affliction of the head whereby he was kept away, he has been expected now for four years since the leave of absence given him. And, when at the instance of clergy and citizens who have come from thence anti urged us with entreaties, we urgently exhorted him to return with them, the Lord helping him, if able to do so, he begged of us by a supplication in writing, that, inasmuch as by reason of this affliction wherewith he is held he can in no wise rise to the government of the same Church, or to the office undertaken by him, we should ordain a bishop to this same Church. Hence, seeing that the charge laid upon us of caring for all the Churches constrains us to see that pastoral guardianship be no longer wanting to the flock of the faithful, and being compelled by their entreaties, and by his renunciation on the ground of his own inability, we have resolved that a bishop should be ordained to this same Church of Ariminum: and, having issued our precept according to custom, we have not failed to admonish the clergy and people of the same Church, to the end that they may concur with concordant provision to choose for themselves a prelate. We therefore exhort your Fraternity that him whom all with one consent shall choose (as they themselves also have requested leave to do) you cause to be summoned before you; and test him by cautious enquiry on all sides. And if, by favour of the Lord, none of the things that are punished with death in the text of the Heptateuch are found in him, and if, on the report of trustworthy persons, his life should approve itself to you, send him

to us with the certification of his election, adding your own letter of testification, to the end that a prelate of this same Church may, under the ordering of the Lord, be by us consecrated.

EPISTLE XX: TO THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE ARIMINUM.

Gregory to the Clergy, &c.

Our pastoral charge constrains us to succour with anxious consideration any Churches that are deprived of the government of a priest. Accordingly, inasmuch as your Church has long been deprived of pastoral rule from the malady, as you know, of its own priest, we, moved by your entreaties, have not failed to admonish the said bishop, that, if he should feel himself recovered from that malady, he should resume the ministry of the priesthood undertaken by him. And be, having been again and again warned by us, has now under the pressure of the same malady intimated by a supplication addressed to us in writing that by reason of this malady he can by no means rise to the government of the said Church or to the office undertaken by him. We therefore, compelled by the hopeless condition of this same person, have held it necessary to take thought for the setting in order of your Church. We exhort, then, that all of you, with one consent, without noise or disturbance, choose with the help of the Lord such a priest to preside over you as may not be disapproved by the venerable canons, and also be found worthy of so great a ministry. And let him, when required, come to us to be ordained, with the solemnity of a decree attested by the subscriptions of all and followed up by the written approval of the visitor, to the end that your Church, by the Lord's ordering, may have its own priest.

We desire also that him whom your unanimity may have chosen you take without delay to our brother and fellow- bishop Marinianus at Ravenna, that, having been thoroughly examined and tested by him, he may be supported by his testimony also when he comes to us.

EPISTLE XXIII: TO FORTUNATUS AND ANTHEMIUS(9a).

Gregory to Fortunatus, bishop, and Anthemius, guardian (defensori).

Catellus, the bearer of these presents, has informed us that his sister, who had been betrothed to one Stephen, has, through divine mercy moving her, been converted in a monastery at Naples, and that the same Stephen improperly detains a house and some other things belonging to her. And, inasmuch as legal decrees (Caus. 17, q. 2, c. 28) have appointed that a betrothed woman, should she wish to be converted, shall suffer no loss whatever, let thy Fraternity, together with Anthemius the subdeacon, endeavour by diligent enquiry to investigate the truth. And it; as we have been informed, you find that the Stephen above-named is keeping a house or anything else unjustly, let him be urgently warned by your exhortation to restore without any delay or altercation what he unduly detains, and not to defer under any kind of excuse the restitution of what is not his own. And if perchance you find him neglect your exhortation, notify this to us, giving also an accurate account of the facts of the case, to the end that, when the merits of the case are known, he may be forced by other means, in accordance with equity, to make the restitution which he scorns to make of his own accord out of regard to honesty. Commending the bearer of these presents to thy Fraternity, we exhort thee to allow him no longer to suffer from delay on this account.

EPISTLE XXV: TO GREGORIA.

Gregory to Gregoria, Lady of the Bed-chamber (cubicularioe) to Augusta.

I have received the longed for letters of your Sweetness, in which you have been at pains all through to accuse yourself of a multitude of sins: but I know that you fervently love the Almighty Lord, and I trust in His mercy that the sentence which was pronounced with regard to a certain holy woman proceeds from the month of the Truth with regard to you: Her sins, which are many, are forgiven her, for she loved much (Luke vii. 47). And how they were forgiven is shewn also by what follows afterwards; that she sat at the Lord's feet, and heard the word from His mouth (Luke x. 39). For, being rapt in the contemplative, she had transcended the active life, which Martha her sister still pursued (Ib. 40). She also sought earnestly her buried Lord, and, stooping over the sepulchre, found not His body. But, even when the disciples went away, she remained standing before the door of the sepulchre, and whom she sought as dead, Him she was counted worthy to see alive, and announced to the disciples that He had risen again. And this was by the wonderful dispensation of the loving-kindness of God, that life should be announced by a woman's mouth, because by a woman's mouth had been the first taste of death in Paradise. And at another time also, with another Mary, she saw the Lord after His resurrection, and held His feet. Bring before your eyes, I pray you, what hands held whose feet. That woman who had been a sinner in the city, those hands which had been polluted with iniquity, touched the feet of Him who sits at the right hand of the Father above all the angels. Let us estimate, if we can, what those bowels of heavenly loving-kindness are, that a woman who had been plunged through sin into the whirlpool's depth should be thus lifted high on the wing of love through grace. It is fulfilled, sweet daughter, it is fulfilled, what was promised to us by the prophetic voice concerning this time of the holy Church: And in that day the house of David shall be an open fountain

for ablution of the sinner and of her that is unclean (Zach. xiii. 1). For the house of David is an open fountain for ablution to us sinners, because we are washed from the filth of our iniquities by mercy now disclosed through the son of David our Saviour.

But as to what thy Sweetness has added in thy letters, namely that thou wilt continue to be urgent with me till I write that it has been revealed to me that thy sins are forgiven, thou hast demanded a difficult, nay even an unprofitable thing; difficult indeed, because I am unworthy of having a revelation made to me; but unprofitable, because thou oughtest not to become secure about thy sins, except when in the last day of thy life thou shall be able no longer to bewail them. But, until that day comes, thou oughtest, ever suspicious and ever fearful, to be afraid of faults, and wash them with daily tears. Assuredly the apostle Paul had already ascended into the third heaven, had also been caught up into Paradise, and heard secret words which it was not lawful for a man to speak (2 Cor. xii. 2, &c.), and yet, still fearful, he said, I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, while preaching to others, I myself should become a castaway (1 Cor. ix. 27). One who is caught up into heaven still fears; and shall one whose conversation is still on earth desire already not to fear? Consider, most sweet daughter, that security is wont to be the mother of carelessness. Thou oughtest not, then, in this life to have security, whereby thou mayest be rendered careless. For it is written, Happy is the man that is always afraid (Pray. xxviii. 14). And again it is written, Serve the Lord in fear, and rejoice unto him with trembling (Ps. ii. 11). In short, then, it must needs be that in the time of this life trembling possess your soul, to the end that it may hereafter rejoice without end through the joy of security. May Almighty God fill your soul with the grace of His Holy Spirit, and, after the tears which you daily shed in prayer, bring you to eternal joys.

EPISTLE XXVI: TO THEOCTISTA, PATRICIAN.

Gregory to Theoctista, &c.

That your Excellency, though placed in so great a tumult of affairs, is full of the fruitfulness of the sacred word, and incessantly pants after eternal joys, for this I give great thanks to Almighty God, in that in you I see fulfilled what is written of the elect fathers, But the children of Israel walked on dry land through the midst of the sea (Exod. xv. 19). But on the other hand, I am come into the depth of the sea, and the storm hath overwhelmed me (Ps. lxviii. 3). But you, as I see, walk with dry feet through the waves of secular affairs to the country of promise. Let us give thanks, then, to that Spirit who lifts up the hearts which He fills; who amid the tumults of men makes a solitude in the soul; and in whose presence there is no place, wherein a soul moved by compunction can be, which is not a secret one. For you inhale the odour of eternal sweetness, and so ardently love the bridegroom of your soul as to be able to say with the heavenly bride, Draw me after thee; we run in the odour of thine ointments (Cant. i. 3). But in the letters of your Excellency I find this deficiency; that you have been unwilling to tell me about your most serene mistress, how studiously she reads, or how she is moved by compunction in her reading. For your presence ought to be of great advantage to her, that amid the billows of affairs under which she continually suffers and by which, whether she will or no, she is drawn abroad, she may be recalled inwardly to the love of the heavenly country. And this also you ought to investigate, as often as tears are given her for her soul, whether her compunction arises still from fear, or whether now from love.

For there are two kinds of compunction, as you know: one that is afraid of eternal pains, the other that sighs for heavenly rewards; since the soul that is athirst for God is first moved to compunction by fear, and afterwards by love. For in the first place it is affected to tears because, while

recollecting its evil doings, it fears to suffer for them eternal punishments. But, when fear has died away in the anxiety of a long sorrow, a certain security has birth from a sense of pardon; and the mind is enflamed with love of heavenly joys. And one who previously wept for fear of punishment begins afterwards to weep most bitterly for being kept back from the kingdom. For the soul contemplates what are those choirs of angels, what is the very society of blessed spirits, what the vision of the inward brightness of God; and laments more for the lack of unending good than it wept before when it feared eternal evil; and thus it comes to pass that the compunction of fear, when perfected, draws the mind to the compunction of love. All this is well described in the sacred and true history, understood figuratively, which says, Axa the daughter of Caleph sighed sitting on an ass. And her father said to her, What wouldest than? Who answered, Give me a blessing, Thou hast given me a South and dry land; give me also a watered land. And her father gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs (Josh. xv. 18). For indeed Axa sits on an ass, when the soul presides over the irrational motions of the flesh. And sighing she seeks a watered land from her father, because the grace of tears is to be sought with great longing from our Creator. For there are some who have already freely received the gift of speaking in behalf of justice, of protecting the oppressed, of giving of their own to the needy, of having ardour of faith, but have not yet the grace of tears. These, that is to say, have a South and dry land, but still need springs of water; because, while they are occupied in good works, wherein they are great and fervent, they have still sore need (either from fear of punishment, or from love of the heavenly kingdom) to lament the sins which they cannot be without while they live. But since, as I have said, there are two kinds of compunction, her father gave her the upper springs and the nether springs. For the soul receives the upper springs, when she afflicts herself in tears for desire of the heavenly kingdom; but she receives the nether springs, when

she shudders with weeping at the punishments of hell. And indeed the nether springs are given first, and the upper springs afterwards. But, because the compunction of love is far above the other indignity, there was need for the upper springs to be mentioned first, and the nether springs afterwards. You then, who through the operation of the Almighty Lord know by experience both kinds of compunction, ought anxiously to try to discover day by day how much you are profiling your most serene mistress by your words.

Further, I beg you to take especial care to instruct in good morals the little lords whom you are bringing up, and to admonish the glorious eunuchs who are appointed to attend them that they should speak to them such things as may move their minds to mutual charity between themselves and to gentleness towards subjects; lest, if they should conceive now any grudge against each other, it should break out openly hereafter. For in truth the words of those who bring up children will be either milk, if they are good, or poison if they are evil. Let them therefore so speak now to the little ones that the latter may shew hereafter what good words they had sucked from the months of those who nursed them.

Furthermore, my beloved son, Sabinianus the deacon, has brought thirty pounds of gold, sent by your Excellency to be given for the redemption of captives and for distribution to the poor; with regard to which I rejoice, but tremble for myself, seeing that I shall have to render an account before the tremendous Judge, not only of the substance of Saint Peter, Prince of the apostles, but also of your possessions. But to you may Almighty God return heavenly things for earthly, and eternal for temporal. I have now to inform you that from the city of Crotona, which, lying on the Adriatic Sea in the land of Italy, was taken last year by the Lombards, many noble men and many noble women were led away captive, and children were parted from their parents, parents from their children, husbands from their wives, and

wives from their husbands; of whom some have already been redeemed. But, because of the heavy prices put upon them, many have remained so far in the hands of those most abominable Lombards. But I sent at once for their redemption a moiety of the money sent by you. Out of the other moiety I have arranged for the purchase of bed-clothes for the handmaidens of God whom you in Greek language call monastriae; seeing that they suffer from grievous bareness in their beds during the very severe cold of this winter; there being many of them in this city. For, according to the official list of them, they are found to be three thousand in number. They do indeed receive fourscore pounds a year from the possessions of Saint Peter, Prince of the apostles. But what is this for so great a multitude, especially in this city, where everything is so dear? Their life, moreover, is such, and strict to such a degree in tears and abstinence, that we believe that, but for them, not one of us could have subsisted for so many years in this place among the swords of the Lombards.

Furthermore, I send you, as a blessing from Saint Peter the apostle, a key from his most sacred body; with respect to which key the miracle has been wrought which I now relate. A certain Lombard, having found it on his entrance into a city in the parts beyond the Po, and, paying no regard to it as Saint Peter's key, but wishing to make something of it for himself in that he saw it to be of gold, took out a knife to cut it. But presently seized by a spirit, he plunged the knife wherewith he had thought to cut it into his own throat, and in the same hour fell down dead. And when Autharith, king of the Lombards, and many others belonging to him came to the place, and he who had stabbed himself was lying apart in one place dead, and this key on the ground in another, exceeding fear came upon all, so that no one ventured to lift this same key from the ground. Then a certain Lombard who was a Catholic, and known to be given to prayer and almsgiving, Minulf by name, was called, and himself lifted it from the ground. But Autharith, in

consideration of this miracle, made another golden key, and sent it along with this to my predecessor of holy memory, declaring what kind of miracle had through it occurred. I have taken thought, then, to send your Excellence this key, through which Almighty God cut off a proud and faithless man, that through it you who fear and love Him may be enabled to have both present and eternal welfare.

EPISTLE XXVII: TO ANASTASIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Anastasius, Bishop of Antioch.

I have received through the hands of our common son the deacon Sabinianus the longed for letter of your most sweet Holiness, in which the words have flowed not from your tongue but from your soul. And it is not surprising that one speaks well who lives perfectly. And, since you have learnt, through the Spirit teaching you in the school of the heart, the precepts of life — to despise all earthly things and to speed to the heavenly country, — in proportion as you have advanced in good you think what is good of others. But, when I heard many things said in the letters of your Blessedness in praise of me, I understood your intention; how that you wished to describe not what I am, but what I ought to be. But as to your saying that I ought to remember my manner of life, and on no account give place to the malignant spirit who seeks to sift souls, I indeed recollect myself to have been always of bad manner of life, and hasten to overcome and put an end to this my manner of life, if I can. If however, as you believe, I have had anything good in me, I trust in the help of Almighty God that I have not forgotten it. But your Holiness, as I see, by the words of sweetness at the beginning and the words that follow, has wished your letter to be like a bee, which carries both honey and a sting, satiating me with the honey and piercing me with the sting. But meanwhile I return to meditation on the words of Solomon, That better are the wounds of one that loves than the kisses of a flattering foe (Prov. xxvii. 6). Thus, as to your saying that we ought not to give occasion of offence for no cause at all, this is what your son, our most pious lord (for whose life we ought continually to pray) has already written repeatedly; and what he says out of power I know that you say out of love. Nor do I wonder that you have made use of imperial language in your letters, since there is a very close relationship between

love and power. For both presume in a princely way; both ever speak with authority.

And indeed on the receipt of the synodical epistle of our brother and fellow-bishop Cyriacus it was not worth my while to make a difficulty on account of the profane title at the risk of disturbing the unity of holy Church: but nevertheless I took care to admonish him with respect to this same superstitious and proud title, saying that he could not have peace with us unless he corrected the elation of the aforesaid expression, which the first apostate invented. You, however, ought not to say that this is a matter of no consequence, since, if we bear it with equanimity, we are corrupting the faith of the Universal Church; for you know how many not only heretics but heresiarchs have issued from the Constantinopolitan Church. And, not to speak of the injury done to your dignity, if one bishop is called Universal, the Universal Church comes to ruin, if the one who is universal falls. But far, far be this levity from my ears. Yet I trust in Almighty God that what He has promised He will soon fulfil; Whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled (Luke xiv. 11).

So much, in the midst of many occupations. I have briefly replied to what you have said in your letters: for what I ought not just now to express in writing remains imprinted on my mind. I beg your Blessedness always to recall me to your memory in your holy prayers, that so your intercessions may rescue me from temporal and eternal ills. Pray moreover zealousy and fervently for the most serene lord the Emperor; for his life is very necessary for the world. I refrain from saying more, for I doubt not that you know.

EPISTLE XXVIII: TO THEODORE, PHYSICIAN.

Gregory to Theodore, Physician at Constantinople.

My most beloved son the deacon Sabinianus, on his return to me, brought me no letter from your Glory; but he conveyed hither what had been sent for the poor and captives; whence I understood the reason. It was that you would not speak by letters to a man, having by a good deed made your address to Almighty God. For this same deed of yours has a voice of its own, which calls to the secret ears of God, as it is written, Hide thy alms in the bosom of the poor, and it shall entreat for thee (Eccles. xxix. 15). And indeed to me, I confess, it is sad to expend what is not my own, and to add to the accounts which I keep of the substance of the Church those also of the property of my most sweet son the lord Theodore. And yet I rejoice with your benignity that you carefully attend to and observe what the Truth says; Give alms, and behold, all things are clean unto you (Luke xi 41); and this which is written, Even as water quencheth fire, so alms quench sin (Ecclus. iii. 33). Paul the apostle also says, Let your abundance supply their want, that their abundance also may be a supply to your want (2 Cor. viii. 14). Tobias admonishes his son, saying, If thou hast much, give abundantly; but if thou hast little, of that little impart willingly (Tob. iv. 9). You therefore observe all these precepts: but we beg you to pray for us, lest we should dispense the fruits of your labours indiscreetly, and not as need requires; lest from that whereby you diminish sins we should heap up sins. Now may Almighty God keep you under His protection, and so grant you human favour in an earthly court as to bring you after a long life to the eternal joys of a heavenly court.

We send you as the benediction of Saint Peter, Prince of the apostles, whom you greatly love, a key from his most sacred body, in which is enclosed iron from his chains, that what bound his neck for martyrdom, may loose yours from all sins.

EPISTLE XXX: TO NARSES, THE RELIGIOUS (Narsae relegioso)

Gregory to Narses, &c.

When I was sending Romanus the guardian (defensorem) to the royal city, he sought long your letters, but they could not be found:

but afterwards they were found among many letters from other persons, your Sweetness, therein telling me of your afflictions and tribulations of spirit, and making known the oppositions to you of bad men. But, I pray you, in all this recall to your mind what I believe too that you never forget, That all who will live godly in Christ stiffer persecution. (2 Tim. iii. 12). And with regard to this I confidently say that you would live less godly if you suffered persecution less. For let us hear what else the same teacher of the Gentiles says to his disciples; Yourselves know, brethren, our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain; for we lead before suffered and been shamefully entreated (1 Thess. ii. 1). Lo, most sweet son, the holy preacher declared that his entrance would have been of no effect, if he had not been shamefully entreated; and thy Charity wishes to say good things, but refuses to endure evil things. Wherefore thou must needs gird thyself up more tightly in the midst of adverse circumstances, that adversity itself may the more increase thy desire for the love of God and thy earnestness in good works. So the seeds of harvests germinate the more fruitfully for being covered over with frost; so fire is kept down by a blast, that it may grow greater. I know indeed that from the perverse speeches of so many evil tongues thou endurest a violent storm, and bearest in thy soul billows of contradictions. But remember what the Lord says by the Psalmist, I heard thee in the secret place of storm; I proved thee at the waters of contradiction (Psal. lxxx. 8) (9a). For, if in the midst of them that contradict thou doest the things that are of God, then thou art proved a true worker.

Further, your most sweet Charity has written to me that I should write something in the way of admonition to the monasteries which, through your prayers and influence, have been instituted by our son the lord Paul. But, if they are vessels of God, I know that they have through the grace of compunction a fountain of wisdom within, and ought not to take in the little drops of my dryness. Further, your perfect wisdom recollects that in Paradise there was no rain, but a fountain ascended from the midst of Paradise to water the face of the ground. Those souls, then, that through the grace of compunction have a fountain in themselves have no need of rain from another's tongue.

Further, you inform me in your letter of the passing away of the lady Esychia ; and I rejoiced with great exultation that that good soul, which laboured in a foreign country, has arrived happily at its own. Further, greet in my behalf my glorious daughters, the lady Dominica and the lady Eudochia. But, inasmuch as I hear that it is now a long time since the aforesaid lady Dominica was made a prioress, let your Charity watch over her in this regard; that, as she is no longer compelled to serve in the toil of an earthy court, she may fly perfectly from all noises of this world, devote herself entirely to God, and leave no part of herself outside herself; but that she also gather together as many souls as she can to the service of her Creator, that their minds through her word may receive the grace of compunction, and that she herself may so much the more speedily be absolved from all her sins as, through her life and her tongue, the souls of others also shall have broken loose from the bands of sins. Moreover, since no one among men in this world is without sin (and what else is sinning but flying from God?), I say confidently that this my daughter also has some sins. Wherefore, that she may perfectly satisfy her mistress, that is eternal Wisdom, let her, who fled alone, return with many. For the guilt of turning away will be imputed to no one who in returning brings back gain.

Further, I beg you to greet in my behalf the lord Alexander and the lord Theodorus. But with respect to your saying in your letter that I ought to write to my most excellent daughter the lady Gurdia, and her most holy daughter the lady Theoctista , and their magnificent husbands, the lord Marinus and the lord Christidorus, and to give them some admonition about their souls, your most sweet Greatness well knows that there are none at present in the city of Constantinople who can translate well into Greek what has been dictated in Latin. For keeping to the words, but attending little to the sense, they both fail to make the words understood and also mangle the sense. On this account I have written shortly to my aforesaid daughter the lady Gurdia; but have not addressed the others. Further, I have sent you two camisiae and four oraria, which I beg may be humbly offered, with the blessing of St. Peter, to the aforesaid men. Besides, a certain person on his death has left me by will a little boy; taking thought for whose soul, I have sent him to your Sweetness, that he may live in this world in the service of one through whom he may be able to attain to the liberty of heaven. Further, I beg your most sweet Charity to visit frequently my most beloved son, the deacon Anatolius, whom I have sent to represent the Church in the royal city, that after the toils which he endures in secular causes he may find rest with you in the word of God, and wipe away the sweat of this his earthly toil as it were with a kind of white napkin. Commend him to all who are known to you, though I am sure that, if he is perfectly known, he needs no commendation. Yet do you shew with regard to him how much you love the holy apostle Peter, and me. Now may Almighty God guard your Charity, to me most sweet, from enemies within and without, and, when it shall please Him, bring you to heavenly kingdoms.

EPISTLE XXXI: TO CYRIACUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Cyriacus, Bishop of Constantinople.

We have received the letters of four Blessedness, which speak to us in words not of the tongue but of the soul. For they open to me your mind, which, however, was not closed to me, since of myself I retain experience of the same sweetness. Wherefore I return thanks continually to Almighty God, since, if charity the mother of virtues abides in your heart towards us, you will never lose the branches of good works, seeing that you retain the very root of goodness. You ought, then, to shew the beauty of this charity to me and to all your brethren by this good work in the first place, — your hastening to discard that word of pride whereby grave offence is engendered in the Churches, thus fulfilling in all ways what is written, Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephes. iv. 3): and again, Give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully (1 Tim. v. 14). For then will true charity be displayed, if there is no schism among us through an example of pride, For, as for me, I call Jesus to witness in my soul, that to no one among men from the highest to the lowest do I wish to give occasion of offence. I desire that all should be great and honourable, yet so that their honour detract not from the honour of Almighty God. For whoso covets to be honoured against God to me is not honourable. But, that you may learn what good will I have towards your Blessedness, I have sent my son the deacon Anatolius to the feet of our most pious lords, for satisfying their Piety and your Fraternity that I desire to injure no man m this matter, but to keep the humility that is pleasing to God, and the concord of holy Church. And because Antichrist, the enemy of God, is near at hand, I studiously desire the he may not find anything belonging. to himself, not only in the manners, but even m the titles of priests. Let then what has been introduced after a new fashion be removed in like manner as it was brought in, and peace in the Lord will remain with

us inviolate. For what pleasantness, what charity, will there be amongst us, if we cheer ourselves up with words, while we are galled by facts? Let then your Holiness so act that we may feel in our inmost hearts the good things you speak of, to the end that, the hearts of priests being in unanimity, when we supplicate for the life of our most pious lords, we may be counted worthy to be heard all the more as peace illuminates your prayers before the eyes of God, and no stain of discord darkens them.

EPISTLE XXXII: TO ANASTASIUS, PRESBYTERS.

Gregory to Anastasius, &c.

That a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things (Matth. xii. 35; Luke vi. 45), this thy Charity has shewn, both in thy habitual life and lately also in thy epistle; wherein I find two persons at issue with regard to virtues; that is to say, thyself contending for charity, and another for fear and humility. And, though occupied with many things, though ignorant of the Greek language, I have nevertheless sat as judge of your contention. But, in very truth, thou hast, in my judgment, thyself conquered thy opponent by the apostolical sentence, which I proffered to you during your contention, That there is no fear in charity,, but perfect charity casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in charity. I know then how much thy Fraternity is made perfect in charity. And, since thou lovest Almighty God much, thou oughtest to presume on thy neighhour much. For it is not places or ranks that make us neighbours to our Creator; but either our good deserts join us to Him, or our bad deserts separate us from Him. Since, then, it is still uncertain what any one is inwardly, how was it that thou wast afraid to write, ignorant as thou art as to which of us two is the superior? And indeed that thou livest well I know, but I am conscious myself of being burdened by many sins. And though thou art thyself a sinner, still thou art much better than I, since thou bearest thine own sins only, but I those also of the persons committed to me. In this, then, I look upon thee as lofty, in this I look upon thee as great, that in a great place and lofty before human eyes thou hast not felt thyself advanced at all. For therein, while honour is paid thee by men outwardly, thy mind is sunk into depths, because burdened by distracting cares. But to thee Almighty God has done as it is written; He hath laid down ascents in the heart, in the valley of tears (Ps. lxxxiii. 6). To me, however, thou mightest have appeared far loftier, far more sublime, hadst thou never

undertaken the leadership of the monastery which is called Neas, seeing that in that monastery, as I hear, there is indeed an appearance of monks kept up, but many secular things are done under the garb of sanctity. But even to this I shall think that heavenly grace has brought thee, if what in that place displeases Almighty God should be corrected under thy guidance.

But, since there have been wont to be quarrels between the father of this same monastery and the pastor of the Church of Jerusalem, I believe that Almighty God has willed that thy Love and my most holy brother and fellow- priest Amos should be at the same time at Jerusalem for this end, that the quarrels which I have spoken of should be put an end to. Shew, then, now how much you loved before. For I know that both of you are abstinent, both learned, both humble; whence the glory of our Saviour must needs be praised, according to the language of the Psalm, in timbrel and chorus (Ps. cl. 4). For in a timbrel the sound from the skin is dry, but in a chorus there is a concord of voices. What therefore is denoted by a timbrel but abstinence, and what by a chorus but unanimity? Since then by abstinence ye praise the Lord in timbrel, I beg that by unanimity ye praise Him in chorus. The Truth also in person says, Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another (Mark ix. 50). What is denoted by salt but wisdom, as Paul attests, who says, Let your speech be alway in grace, seasoned with salt (Col. iv. 6)? Since, then, we know that you have salt through the teaching of the heavenly word, it remains that through the grace of charity you keep with all your hearts peace between yourselves. All this I say, dearest brother, because I love you both exceedingly, and am much afraid lest the sacrifices of your prayers should be stained by any dissension between you.

The blessing which you sent, first by Exhilaratus the Secundicerius , and afterwards by Sabinianus the deacon, I received with thanksgiving, since from a holy place it became you to send holy things, and to shew by your

very gift whom you serve continually. May Almighty God protect you with His right hand, and preserve you scatheless from all evils.

EPISTLE XXXIII: TO MAURICIUS AUGUSTUS.

Gregory to Mauricius Augustus.

The provident piety of my lords, test perchance any scandal might be engendered in the unity of Holy Church by the dissension of priests, has once and again deigned to admonish me to receive kindly the representatives of my brother and fellow-priest Cyriacus, and to give them liberty to return soon. And although, most pious lord, all your injunctions are suitable and provident, yet I find that by such an admonition I am reproved as being m your judgment indiscreet. But, even though my mind has been wounded in no slight degree by a proud and profane title, could I possibly be guilty of so great indiscretion as not to know what I owed to the unity of the faith and to ecclesiastical concord, and to refuse to receive the representatives and the synodical letter of my brother on account of bitterness from whatever cause intervening? Far be this from me. Such wisdom had been unwisdom. For what is due from us for conserving unity of faith is one thing; what is due for restraining elation is another. Times therefore were to be distinguished, lest the newness of my aforesaid brother might in any point be disturbed. Whence also I received his representatives with great affection. Whatever charity I owed to them I displayed, and honoured them more than it had been the ancient custom to do, and caused them to celebrate the sacred solemnities of mass with me; since, even as my deacon ought not to serve, for exhibition of the sacred mysteries, him who has either committed the sin of elation or corrects it not himself when committed by others, so it was right that his ministers should attend, in the celebration of mass, on me, who, under the keeping of God, have not fallen into the error of pride.

I have however taken care to admonish earnestly the same my brother and fellow-bishop that, if he desires to have peace and concord with all, he must refrain from the appellation of a foolish title. As to this, the piety of

my lords has charged me in their orders, saying that offence ought not to be engendered among us for the appellation of a frivolous name. But I beseech your imperial Piety to consider that some frivolous things are very harmless, and others exceedingly harmful. Is it not the case that, when Antichrist comes and calls himself God, it will be very frivolous, and yet exceedingly pernicious? If we regard the quantity of the language used, there are but a few syllables; but if the weight of the wrong, there is universal disaster. Now I confidently say that whosoever calls himself, or desires to be called, Universal Priest, is in his elation the precursor of Antichrist, because he proudly puts himself above all others. Nor is it by dissimilar pride that he is led into error; for, as that perverse one wishes to appear as above all men, so whosoever this one is who covets being called sole priest, he extols himself above all other priests. But, since the Truth says, Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled (Luke xiv. 11; xviii. 14), I know that every kind of elation is the sooner burst as it is the more inflated. Let then your Piety charge those who have fallen into an example of pride not to generate any offence by the appellation of a frivolous name. For I, a sinner, who by the help of God retain humility, need not to be admonished to humility. Now may Almighty God long guard the life of our most serene lord for the peace of holy Church and the advantage of the Roman republic. For we are sure, that if you live who fear the. Lord of heaven, you will allow no proud doings to prevail against the truth.

EPISTLE XXXIV. TO EULOGIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Eulogius, Bishop of Alexandria, and Anastasius, Bishop of Antioch.

The charity wherewith I am greatly bound to you allows me by no means to keep silence, that your Holiness may know all that is going on among us, and, deceived by no false rumours, may keep more perfectly the way of your justice and rectitude, as you have perfectly begun to do. Now the representatives (responsales) of our brother and fellow-bishop Cyriacus came to me, bringing me his synodical epistle. And indeed between us and him there is, as your Blessedness knows, serious difference on account of the appellation of a profane name; but I thought that his representatives sent in the cause of the faith ought to be received, lest the sin of elation which has arisen in the Constantinopolitan Church almost against all priests, might cause 1 a shaking of the faith and a breach in ecclesiastical unity. I also caused the same representatives, inasmuch as they very humbly requested it, to celebrate with me the solemnities of mass, because, as I have taken care to intimate to the most serene lord the Emperor, it was right that the representatives of our brother and fellow priest Cyriacus should communicate with me, since by God's help I have not fallen into the error of elation. But my deacon ought not to celebrate the solemnities of mass with our aforesaid-brother Cyriacus, since, through a profane title, he has either committed or accedes to the sin of pride; lest if he (my deacon) proceeds with one who is in such a position of elation, we might seem (which God forbid) to confirm the vanity of that foolish name. But I have taken care to admonish our said brother to correct himself of such elation, since, if he does not correct it, he will in no way have peace with us.

Furthermore, our said brother in his synodical letters has by the grace of God expressed himself in all respects as a Catholic. But he has condemned a certain Eudoxius, whom we find neither condemned in synods, nor

repudiated by his predecessors in their synodical letters. It is true that the canons of the council of Constantinople condemn the Eudoxiaus; but they say nothing as to who their author Eudoxius was. But the Roman Church does not possess so far these same canons, or the acts of that council, nor has it accepted them, though it has accepted this same synod with regard to what was defined by it against Macedonius. It does certainly repudiate the other heresies therein spoken of, which had already been condemned by other Fathers: but so far it knows nothing about the Eudoxians. Some things are indeed told in Sozomen's history about a certain Eudoxius, who is said to have usurped the episcopate of the Church of Constantinople. But this history itself the Apostolic See refuses to accept, since it contains many false statements, and praises Theodore of Mopsuestia too much, and says that he was a great doctor of the Church even to the day of his death. It remains then that, if any one receives that history, he contradicts the synod held in the times of Justinian of pious memory concerning the three chapters. But one who cannot contradict this synod must needs reject that history. Moreover in the Latin language we have so far found nothing about this Eudoxius, either in Philaster or in the blessed Augustine, who wrote much about heresies, Let therefore your Charity inform me in your letters if any one of the approved Fathers among the Greeks has made mention of him.

Furthermore three years ago, with reference to the case of the monks of Isauria, who were accused as being heretics , my brother and fellow- bishop the lord John once sent me letters for my satisfaction, in which he attempted to shew that they had contradicted the definitions of the synod of Ephesus; and he forwarded to me certain chapters, purporting to be those of the same synod, which they were said to oppose. Now among other things it was in these chapters asserted concerning the soul of Adam, that by sin it did not die, in that the devil does not enter into the heart of man; and that whoso

said it was so was anathema. When this was read to me I was much grieved. For if the soul of Adam, who was the first to sin, did not die by sin, how was it said to him concerning the forbidden tree, In the day that ye eat thereof ye shall surely die (Gen. ii. 17)? And certainly Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree, and yet in their flesh they lived afterwards more than nine hundred years. It is therefore evident that in his flesh he did not die. If then he did not die in his soul, the impious conclusion follows that God pronounced a false sentence concerning him, when He said that in the day that he ate he should die. But far be this error, far be it from the true faith. For what we say is, that the first than died in soul in the day that he sinned, and that through him the whole human race is condemned in this penalty of death and corruption. But through the second man we trust that we can be freed, both now from the death of the soul, and hereafter from all corruption of the flesh in the eternal resurrection: — as moreover we said to the aforesaid representatives; 'We say that the soul of Adam died by sin, not from the substance of living, but from the quality of living. For, inasmuch as substance is one thing, and quality another, his soul did not so die as not to be, but so died as not to be blessed. Yet this same Adam returned afterwards to life through penitence.

But that the devil enters into the heart of man cannot be denied, if the Gospel is believed. For it is there written, And after sop Satan entered into hint (John xiii. 27).

And again it is therein also said, When the devil had now put himself into the heart of Judas, that Judas should betray Him (Ibid. 2). He that denies this falls into Pelagian heresy. Seeing then that, having examined the Ephesine synod, we found nothing of the kind to be contained therein, we caused to be brought to us also a very old Codex of the same synod from the Church of Ravenna, and we found it to agree with the report of the synod which we have so as to differ in no respect, and to contain nothing

else in its decree of anathema and rejection, except that they reject the twelve chapters of Cyril of blessed memory. But this whole argument we set forth much more fully and particularly to his representatives when they were with us, and most fully satisfied them. Wherefore lest either these or any like things should creep in yonder, so as to cause offence to holy Church, it is necessary for us to indicate these things to your Holiness. And, although we know our brother and fellow-bishop Cyriacus to be orthodox, yet on account of others we ought to be cautious, that the seeds of error may be trampled down before they spring up to public view.

I received the letters of your Holiness on the arrival here of our common son the deacon Sabinianus; but, as their bearer is already prepared for departure and cannot be detained, I will reply when the deacon, my responsalis, comes.

EPISTLE XXXV: TO DOMINICUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Dominicus, Bishop of Carthage.

Though we believe that thy Fraternity gives attention with pastoral vigilance to the care of monasteries, yet we think it necessary to inform you of what we have learnt about a monastery in the African province. Now the abbot Cumquodeus, the bearer of these presents, complaints that, if at any, time he wishes to restrain under regular discipline the monks over whom he presides, they at once leave the monastery, and are allowed to wander wherever they will. Seeing, then, that this is both altogether pernicious to themselves and also sets an example of perdition to others, we exhort your Fraternity that, if it is so, you should bring ecclesiastical censure to bear upon them, and withhold them by suitable punishment from such undoubted presumption; and that you should so bring them to obedience by salubrious provision, subduing their proud minds to the yoke of discipline, that correction may recall from guilt others whom their example might have provoked to similar transgression, and teach them to obey their superiors, as is fit. But, since he tells us that stray monks are defended by some bishops, let your Fraternity give careful attention to this, and restrain them by your menaces in all ways from such defence.

The month of July, Indiction 15.

EPISTLE XXXVIII. TO DONUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Donus, Bishop of Messana (Messene).

The ordinances both of the sacred canons and of the laws allow the utensils of the Church to be sold for the redemption of captives. And so, seeing that Faustinus, the bearer of these presents, is proved to have contracted a debt of three hundred and thirty solidi for the purpose of redeeming his daughters from the yoke of captivity, and that, thirty thereof having been repaid, it is certain that he has not sufficient means for the repayment of the remaining sum, we exhort thy Fraternity by this communication that thou by all means give him fifteen pounds, taking his receipt for the same, out of the silver in thy hands belonging to the Meriensian Church, of which he is known to be a soldier; so that, it being sold, and the debt paid, he may be freed from the bond of his obligation. But of this also your Fraternity should be careful, that in case of the aforesaid Church having so much current coin, he should receive from it the amount above-written; but otherwise you must needs supply him for the purpose in view with the sum we have stated from the consecrated vessels. For, as it is a very serious thing to sell idly ecclesiastical utensils, so on the other hand it is wrong, under pressing necessity of this kind, for an exceedingly desolated Church to prefer its property to its captives, or to loiter in redeeming them.

EPISTLE XXXIX. TO JOHN, BISHOP.

Gregory to John, Bishop of Syracuse.

Lest attention to secular affairs should disjoin the hearts of religious men (which God forbid) from mutual charity, very earnest endeavour should be made to bring any matter that has come into dispute to the easiest possible termination. Since, then, from the information of Caesarius, abbot of St. Peter's monastery, constituted in a place called Baias, we find that between him and John, abbot of St. Lucia's monastery, constituted in the city of Syracuse, there has arisen a serious question about certain boundaries, we, lest this contention should be prolonged between them, have taken thought for their dispute being terminated by the determination of a land-measurer. And accordingly we have written to the defensor Fantinus, bidding him direct John the land-measurer, who has gone from Rome to Panormus, to resort to your Fraternity.

We exhort, therefore, that you go with him to the places about which there is contention, and, both parties having been brought together, cause the places in dispute to have their boundaries defined in your presence, though still with a claim of prescription for forty years preserved to either party. But, whatever may be determined, let it be your Fraternity's anxious and studious care to have it so observed that no strife may henceforth be stirred up anew, nor any further complaint reach us.

We believe that it is not unknown to your Fraternity that the venerable abbot Caesarius was formerly our friend; and therefore, saving equity, we commend him to you in all respects, And, seeing that he is entirely inexperienced in secular causes, it is needful for him to be aided by your solicitude; yet so that, in this as in all cases, you observe, as is fit, reason and justice.

EPISTLE XL: TO EULOGIUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Eulogius, Bishop of Alexandria.

Your most sweet Holiness has spoken much in your letter to me about the chair of Saint Peter, Prince of the apostles, saying that he himself now sits on it in the persons of his successors. And indeed I acknowledge myself to be unworthy, not only in the dignity of such as preside, but even in the number of such as stand. But I gladly accepted all that has been said, in that he has spoken to me about Peter's chair who occupies Peter's chair. And, though special honour to myself in no wise delights me, yet I greatly rejoiced because you, most holy ones, have given to yourselves what you have bestowed upon me. For who can be ignorant that holy Church has been made firm in the solidity of the Prince of the apostles, who derived his name from the firmness of his mind, so as to be called Petrus from petra. And to him it is said by the voice of the Truth, To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matth. xvi. 19). And again it is said to him, And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren (xxii. 32). And once more, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Feed my sheep (Joh. xxi. 17). Wherefore though there are many apostles, yet with regard to the principality itself the See of the Prince of the apostles alone has grown strong in authority, which in three places is the See of one. For he himself exalted the See in which he deigned even to rest and end the present life. He himself adorned the See to which he sent his disciple as evangelist. He himself stablished the See in which, though he was to leave it, he sat for seven years. Since then it is the See of one, and one See, over which by Divine authority three bishops now preside, whatever good I hear of you, this I impute to myself. If you believe anything good of me, impute this to your merits, since we are one in Him Who says, That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee that they also may be one in us (Joh. xvii. 21). Moreover, in paying you the debt of salutation which is due

to you, I declare to you that I exult with great joy from knowing that you labour assiduously against the barkings of heretics; and I implore Almighty God that He would aid your Blessedness with His protection, so as through your tongue. to uproot every root of bitterness from the bosom of holy Church, lest it should germinate again to the hindrance of many, and through it many should be defiled. For having received your talent you think on the injunction, Trade till I come (Luke xix. 13). I therefore, though unable to trade at all nevertheless rejoice with you in the gains of your trade, inasmuch as I know this, that if operation does not make me partaker, yet charity does make me a partaker in your labour. For I reckon that the good of a neighbour is common to one that stands idle, if he knows how to rejoice in common in the doings of the other.

Furthermore, I have wished to send you some timber: but your Blessedness has not indicated whether you are in need of it: and we can send some of much larger size, but no ship is sent hither capable of containing it: and I think shame to send the smaller sort. Nevertheless let your Blessedness inform me by letter what I should do.

I have however sent you, as a small blessing from the Church of Saint Peter who loves you, six of the smaller sort of Aquitanian cloaks (pallia), and two napkins (oraria); for, my affection being great, I presume on the acceptableness of even little things. For affection itself has its own worth, and it is quite certain that there will be no offence in what out of love one has presumed to do.

Moreover I have received the blessing of the holy Evangelist Mark, according to the note appended to your letter. But, since I do not drink colatum and viritheum with pleasure, I venture to ask for cognidium, which last year, after a long interval, your Holiness caused to be known in this city. For we here get from the traders the name of cognidium, but not the thing itself. Now I beg that the prayers of your Holiness may support me

against all the bitternesses which I suffer in this life, and defend me from them by your intercessions with Almighty God.

EPISTLE XLII: TO MARINIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Marinianus, Bishop of Ravenna.

We find from the information given in your Fraternity's letter that the sons of the Church of Cornelium are continually supplicating you to consecrate a bishop for them in place of their former bishop who has lapsed, and that you are in doubt as to what should be done in the matter, and await our plain command. Inasmuch, then, as no sort of reason allows any one who has departed criminally to be recalled to the place from which he has lapsed, and as the ordinances of the sacred canons allow not a Church to be without a bishop beyond three months, lest (which God forbid) the ancient foe should lie in wait to tear the Lord's flock, your Fraternity ought to comply with their entreaty, and ordain a bishop in the place of the lapsed one. For, seeing that you ought to have admonished them to this thing by your exhortations before they asked you, you can have no excuse for refusing them when they demand it of you, since a Church of God ought not to remain long widowed of a bishop of its own.

EPISTLE XLIII: TO MARINIANUS, BISHOP.

Gregory to Marinianus, Bishop of Ravenna.

It has for some time reached us from the report of many that the monasteries constituted in the district of Ravenna are everywhere aggrieved by the domination of your clergy; so that — grievous to be said — under the pretext of government they take possession of them as if they were their own. Condoling in no small degree with these monasteries, we sent letters to your predecessor bidding him correct this evil. But, seeing that he was soon overtaken by the close of life, we remember having written in like manner to your Fraternity, lest this burden on the monasteries should continue. And because, as we have discovered, there has been loitering so far in the correction of this thing, we have thought fit to address you a second time by this letter. We exhort you, then, that, putting aside all delay and all excuses, you so study to relieve these monasteries from this kind of grievance that clerics, or such as are in sacred orders, may henceforth have no leave of access to them on any other ground except only for the purpose of praying, or if perchance they should be invited for solemnizing the sacred mysteries of mass. But, lest haply the monasteries should sustain a burden through the promotion of any monk or abbot, you must take care that, if any of the abbots or monks of any monastery should accede to any clerical office or sacred order, he shall have, as we have said, no power there any longer, lest under cover of this occasion the monasteries should be compelled to sustain the burdens which we prohibit. Let not your Holiness, then, after this second admonition, delay correcting all this with vigilant care, lest, if we should after this perceive you to be negligent (as we do not believe will be the case), we be compelled to provide otherwise for the quiet of the monasteries. For be it known to you that we will no longer suffer the congregations of the servants of God to be subjected to such requirements. Lest, however, any excuse should be put forward with regard to the monks,

let your Fraternity without fail send hither such person as you may see to be serviceable, and we will depute monks to go with him to you, to provide for whom you must place them in monasteries, if indeed there are among you places such as may afford them a maintenance.

BOOK VIII

EPISTLE I: TO PETER, BISHOP.

Gregory to Peter, Bishop of Corsica.

On receiving the letters of your Fraternity we returned great thanks to Almighty God, that you had been so good as to refresh us with the news of the gathering in of many souls. And accordingly let your Fraternity strive anxiously to bring to perfection, with the help of the Lord, the work which you have begun. And with regard to those who have once been faithful, but from negligence or under constraint have returned to the worship of idols, make haste to bring them back to the faith, imposing on them a penance of a few days, that they may bewail their guilt, and keep to that to which they return, God helping them, the more firmly as they shall have perfectly deplored that from which they now depart; and with regard to those who have not yet been baptized, let thy Fraternity make haste, by admonishing, by beseeching, by alarming them about the coming judgment, and also by giving reasons why they should not worship stocks and stones, to gather them in to Almighty God; that so, at His advent, when the strict day of judgment comes, thy Holiness may be found in the number of the Saints. For what more profitable work or more lofty canst thou be engaged in than taking thought for the quickening and gathering together of souls and bringing in immortal gain to thy Lord, Who has given to thee the post of preaching?

Further, we send thy Fraternity fifty solidi for procuring vestments for those who are to be baptized; and we have also caused to be given to the presbyter of the Church situated in Mount Negeugnus the possession which thy Fraternity has asked for, so that its value may be deducted from the money that he had been accustomed to receive.

Further, your Fraternity has asked to be allowed to make for yourself an episcopal residence in the church that is not far from the same mountain;

which proposal I most gladly accede to, since the nearer you are, the more will you be able to do good to the souls that are there.

In consideration of your Holiness's intercessions for him we have made the bearer of these presents an acolyte, and have sent him back to attend upon you, in order that, if he should be of still more service in winning souls, he may be in a position to be still further advanced.

EPISTLE II: TO ANASTASIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH.

Gregory to Anastasius, Patriarch of Antioch.

I have received the letters of your most sweet Blessedness, which flowed with tears for words. For I saw in them a cloud flying aloft as clouds do; but, though it carried with it a darkness of sorrow, I could not easily discover at its commencement whence it came or whither it was going, since by reason of the darkness I speak of I did not fully understand its origin. Yet it becomes you, most holy ones, ever to recall to mind what the preacher to the Gentiles says; In the last times perilous times shall be at hand, and there shall be men loving themselves, covetous, lifted up (1 Tim. iv. 1); and what follows, which it would be a trouble for me to speak, and which is not necessary for you to hear. Lo, in your holy old age, your Blessedness labours under many tribulations; but consider in whose seat you sit. Is it not in his to whom it was said by the voice of the truth, When thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee and carry thee whether thou wouldest not (Job. xxi. 18)? But in saying this I recollect that your Holiness even from your youth has toiled under many adversities. Say then with the good king, I will think again over all my years in the bitterness of my soul (Isai. xxxviii. 15). For there are many who, as you say in your letter, make to themselves pastime over our wounds: but we know who said, Ye shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful (Joh. xvi. 20): where also he forthwith adds, But your sorrow shall be turned into joy, But, since we already suffer what was foretold, it remains that we should also hope for what was promised. For as to these of whom you say that they themselves lay on the burdens which they ought to have lightened, I know that they are those who come in sheep's clothing, and inwardly are ravening wolves (Match. vii.). But They are so much the more to be endured as they persecute us not only with a malicious mind, but also in religious guise. And in that they desire to have to themselves above

others what it were not fit that they should have even with their brethren, we are in no wise disturbed at this, since we trust in Almighty God that those who desire what belongs to others will be the sooner deprived even of what is their own. For we know who said, That every one that exalteth himself shall be abased (Luke xiv. 11). And again it is written, Before a fall the heart is exalted (Prov. xvi. 18).

But in these days, as I find, new wars of heretics are arising, about whom I have before now written to your Blessedness, in such sort that they attempt to invalidate the prophets, the Gospels, and all the sayings of the Fathers. But, while the life of your Holiness endures, we trust in the favour of our Protector that their mouths which have been opened against the solidity of the truth may be the sooner stopped, inasmuch as, however sharp may be the swords that are employed, they recoil broken when they strike the rock. Moreover there is this by the great favour of Almighty God; that among those who are divided from the doctrine of Holy Church there is no unity, since every kingdom divided against itself shall not stand (Luke xi.). And holy Church is always more thoroughly equipped in her teaching when assaulted by the questionings of heretics; so that what was said by the Psalmist concerning God against heretics is fulfilled, They are divided from the wrath of his countenance, and his heart hath drawn nigh (Ps. liv. 22). For while they are divided in their wicked error, God brings His heart near to us, because, being taught by contradictions, we more thoroughly learn to understand Him.

Further, what ills we suffer from the swords of barbarians, and what from the perversity of judges, I shrink from relating to your Blessedness, lest I should increase your groaning, which I ought to diminish by consolation. But in all these things the precepts of our Master comfort me, who says, These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation (John xvi. 33). For I consider to

whom it was said, This is your hour, and the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53). If, then, the hour of light will be afterwards, since it is said to the elect, Ye are the light of the world (Matth. v. 14), and as it is written, The righteous shall have dominion over them in the morning (Ps. xlviii. 15), whatever we suffer in the hour of the power of darkness is not to be deplored.

Moreover your most sweet Holiness tells me that you would have wished, if it could have been so, to converse with me without paper and pen, and grieves that a distance almost as far as the East is from the West lies between us. But this which I feel I declare is true; that on paper your soul speaks to me without paper, since in the words of your Holiness charity alone sounds, and we are not divided by distance of place who, of the gift of Almighty God, are joined together in the bond of love. Why then seek you to have given you the wings of a dove covered with silver, when you already have them? For indeed these wings are love of God and of our neighbour. For by these holy Church flies aloft, and by these transcends all that is earthly; which if your Holiness had not, you would not have come to me by letter with so great charity.

Further, I beg you to pray earnestly in behalf of the weakness of my heart, to the end that Almighty God may through your intercession defend my soul from all evils, and the sooner snatch me away from the hurricanes of this time, which are so many, and bring me to the shores of eternal rest.

I have received all the very rich blessings, directed to me, which thou, as a man of God poor in spirit, hast sent me, saying of them, For what can a poor man give but what is poor? But had you not been poor through a spirit of humility, your blessings would not have been rich. May Almighty God guard you by His protection from all evils; and, since your life is very necessary for all good men, bring you after many years yet to come to the joys of the heavenly country.

EPISTLE III: TO DONUS, BISHOP OF MESSANA (in Sicily).

Gregory to Donus, &c.

The most eloquent than, our son Faustinus, has come to us and complained that his late father Peltrasius left some things which were not his own to your Church for his burial. And indeed he knows himself, and we have heard, what the secular law is in such a case; namely, that the heir is bound to pay if his father has bequeathed what was not his own. But, as we know that your Fraternity lives by the law of God and not of the world, it seems to me very unjust that an amber cup, and a boy who is said to be of a certain church situate on his property in the diocese of Consentia, should be detained by thy Fraternity. For, when the most reverend Palumbus, now bishop, but then archdeacon, had testified that things were as I have said, you certainly ought to have taken his word, and restored what was not your own. Further, you ought in my opinion to have considered the golden brooch, which would be his whole substance were there anything for the sustenance of those he had left behind him, and accepted it at that time for his burial. Nevertheless, you know our ordinance, how that we have entirely forbidden the old custom in our Church, nor give our assent to any one being allowed to acquire burial-places for a human body for a price. For, if the men of Sichem, who were as we suppose Gentiles, offered without charge to Abraham sepulture for the dead Sara to be buried in a place of her own, and were hardly prevailed upon by his great importunity to receive a price for her place of burial, ought we, who are called bishops, to make any charge for burying the bodies of the faithful? This, then, we commit to the judgment of your Fraternity.

The aforesaid most eloquent man complains also of this; that Sisinnius, the guardian (defensor) of thy Church, unreasonably detains slaves in his possession: concerning whom also he asserts that it had been decided by the judgment of bishop Maximianus of holy memory that the detainer of them

should give them up, but that he has so far wilfully put off their restitution. We therefore exhort thy Fraternity that, if the case has manifestly been adjudged, what was ordained be carried out. Otherwise, some one being deputed to act in the case, cause him to resort to the parts of our brother and fellow-bishop Secundinus for judgment, that, when it shall have been declared by his sentence to whom the slaves in question belong, neither the one party may appear to suffer prejudice nor the other bear a grudge.

EPISTLE V: TO VARIOUS METROPOLITANS AND BISHOPS.

Gregory to Eusebius of Thessalonica, Urbitius of Dyracchium, Constantius of Mediolanum (Milan), Andrew of Nicopolis, John of Corinth, John of Prima Justiniana, John Cretensi Scoritano, John of Larissa, Marinianus of Ravenna, Januarius of Canalis (Cagliari) in Sardinia, and all the bishops of Sicily.

I have taken care to transmit to your Fraternity the law which the most pious Emperor has issued, to the effect that such as are bound by engagements of military service or public liabilities, may not in any case, in order to escape risk of being called to account, assume the condition of ecclesiastics, or become monks: and this I especially press upon you, that such as are involved in secular engagements are not to be received hastily among the clergy of the Church, since, while they live in an ecclesiastical condition no otherwise than they had lived before, they are by no means trying to escape secular affairs, but to change them. But, if any such should even seek a monastery, they are by no means to be received unless they have first been absolved from their public liabilities. Further, if any from the military order are in haste to become monks, they are not to be received rashly, or until their life has been fully enquired into. And, according to the regular rule, they ought to undergo a probation of three years, and then, God granting it, assume the monastic habit. And if they have thus been proved and accepted, and are anxious, for the good of their souls, to do penance for the sins they have committed, then, with a view to their heavenly life and gain, monastic profession should not be denied them. With respect to this matter also, believe me, the most serene and most Christian Emperor is in every way pacified, and willingly allows the monastic profession of those whom he knows not to be implicated in public liabilities. The Month of December, first Indiction.

EPISTLE VI: TO AMOS, PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM.

Gregory to Amos, Bishop of Jerusalem.

Being confident that your Fraternity pays regard to the ordinances of the canons and the vigour of discipline, lest the falseness of one of' your clerics should succeed in imposing on you so as to escape the strictness of ecclesiastical order, we have thought it right to inform you of his fault, that through your solicitude he may be subjected to the discipline from which he has fled. We understand, then, that Peter, an acolyte, whom we bad caused to serve under our son the deacon Sabinianus, our ecclesiastical representative in the royal city, has fled, and resorted to your Church. If this is true, let your Fraternity be at pains to secure him, and send him back hither when an opportunity occurs. But if by chance, fearing this, he shall have departed from your Church, and be lurking in various places to escape detection, order him to be diligently sought for in all your parishes, and, when found, send him back to us, as we have before said. And we desire also to notify through you that he is deprived of communion: nor let him dare to receive the mysteries of the Lord's body and blood until he shall return to us, unless by chance he should be in imminent peril of death.

EPISTLE X: TO SABINIANUS, BISHOP OF JADERA.

Gregory to Sabinianus, &c.

As to one who perseveres in a fault punishment is rightly due, so pardon should be granted to those who return to a better mind. For, as in the former case anger against the culprit is deservedly provoked, so in the latter good-will displayed is wont to promote concord. And so, inasmuch as a recollection of the gravity of the priestly office has now withdrawn thy Fraternity from fellowship and communion with Maximus, into which thoughtlessness had before betrayed thee; and this to such an extent that thou couldest by no means allow thyself to be content with mere separation from him without also bewailing thy past transgression by betaking thyself to the retirement of a monastery, therefore doubt not that thou art received again into our favour and communion: for, as much as thy fault had before offended us, so much has thy penitence appeased us. We exhort thee, therefore, most beloved brother, that thou be instant in bestowing pastoral solicitude on the Lord's flock, and be diligently on the watch to make profit of the sheep committed to thy charge; that so the retribution of a copious reward may abound to thee in proportion as thou shalt offer multiplied fruits of thy labour at the coming of the eternal Judge. Strive then to rescue those who have fallen into sin; strive to shew the way of retracing their steps to those that go astray; strive to recall salubriously to the grace of communion those who have been deprived of communion. Let the coming back of your Charity lay on you the duty of rescuing others, and be an example of salvation; to the end that, while your anxious care shall direct the wandering steps of sheep to the folds of the chief shepherd, both they themselves may not be left exposed to the teeth of wolves, and (what is above all things to be desired.) that the compensation of condign retribution may await thee in the life eternal.

As to the cause about which you wrote to us, requesting us to guard against any clandestine proceedings against you in the royal city, let not this matter disturb your mind. For we have with all possible care given orders to our responsalis to shew himself solicitous and on his guard. And we trust in the power of our God that things are being so conducted that the opposition of no one shall avail against reason, so as in any way to trouble you or to bear hard upon you.

Furthermore, the inhabitants of the city of Epidaurus have most urgently requested us to restore to them Florentius, whom they allege to be their bishop, asserting that he was driven into exile invalidly by the mere will of the bishop Natalis. And so, if your Fraternity has any knowledge of his case, please to inform us accurately by letter. But, if so far you have no knowledge of it, make enquiry, and report to us, that we may be able, with the Lord's help, to deliberate with full knowledge before us as to what should be determined concerning him. In the month of February, first Indiction.

EPISTLE XIII: TO COLUMBUS.

Gregory to Columbus, Bishop of Numidia.

How we may presume on your Charity we gather from the disposition of our own mind with regard to you. Nor do we think that you love the Apostolic See otherwise than as it loves you. Whence it must needs be that we should more peculiarly commend those whom we know to be, as they should be, devoted in the Church of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, to you whose life the action as well as the dignity of a priest adorns, and of whose sincerity we already hold proof from past experience.

As to our brother, therefore, and fellow-bishop Paul, the bearer of these presents, with what billows and adversities he is tossed in your parts he tells us is not unknown to your Holiness. And seeing that he asserts that the complaints against him which you have told us have come to your ears are not true, but raised against him at the instigation of his adversaries, and that he trusts to be able by the help of the Lord to surmount them all, with the truth to support him and with you to take cognizance, we exhort you, most beloved brother, that, in whatever points considerations of justice are clearly on his side, you afford him becomingly the hand of succour, and aid him with priestly sympathy. Let, then, no circumstance, no influence of any persons, deflect you from studious regard to equity. But, leaning on the Lord's precepts, set at naught whatever is opposed to rectitude. In defending one party or the other insist constantly on justice. Shrink not from incurring ill-will, if such there be, in behalf of truth; that thou mayest find in the advent of our Redeemer b so much the greater fruit of reward as, not neglecting His commands, thou shalt have devoted thyself to the countenance and defence of justice.In the month of March, first Indiction.

EPISTLE XIV: TO BONIFACE, FIRST GUARDIAN (Defensorem).

Gregory to Boniface concerning the privileges of Guardians .

Those who labour faithfully in the interests of the Church should receive the benefit of suitable remuneration, so that both we may be seen to have made a worthy return for their services, and they may shew themselves the more useful for the favour of the solace granted them. Seeing, then, that those who hold the office of Guardians are known to labour in the causes of the Church and in the service of the pontiffs, we have thought fit that they should enjoy the following prerogatives, granted to them for recompense; — appointing that, as in the school (schola) of notaries and subdeacons, through the indulgence of pontiffs long ago, there have been constituted regionarii, so also among the Guardians seven who may have commended themselves by proved utility shall be distinguished by the dignity of regionarii. And we appoint that these, in the absence of the pontiff, shall have leave to sit anywhere in any assembly of clergy, and enjoy in all respects the privileges of their dignity. Furthermore, if any one, attaining to this position of priority, should by any chance live in another province for his own advantage, he must needs still occupy in all respects his place of priority, so that he may be the chief of all the guardians, as being one who, even before he obtained his position of priority, had not ceased by assiduous personal attention to devote himself to the interests of the Church and the service of the pontiff. These decrees, then, by us constituted, which have been ordained for the privileges and constitution of Guardians, we appoint to be kept in perpetual force and irrefragably; — whether such things as we have decreed in writing, or such as are seen to have been ordained in our presence: and we decree also that they shall not be upset or changed in whole or in part on any occasion whatever by any of the pontiffs. For it is a very harsh proceeding, and especially contrary to good conduct in priests,

that any one should endeavour, under any manner of excuse, to rescind what has been well ordained, and also by his example to teach others to dissolve his own constitutions after his own time The mouth of April, first Indiction.

EPISTLE XV: TO MARINIANUS, BISHOP OF RAVENNA.

Gregory to Marinianus, &c. How necessary it is to provide for the quiet of monasteries , and to take measures for their perpetual security, you are aware from the office you formerly filled in government of a monastery. And so, seeing that we have learnt how the monastery of the blessed John and Stephen in the city of Classis, over which our common son, the abbot Claudius, is known to preside, has suffered many prejudices and grievances from your predecessors, it is right that the provision of your Fraternity should make salutary arrangements for the quiet of its inmates in future; to the end that living there in the service of God, His grace also assisting them, they may persevere with free mind. But lest, owing to the custom which ought rather to be amended, any one at any time should presume to cause any annoyance there, it is necessary that the points which we have taken care to enumerate below be so guarded by the careful attention of your Fraternity that no occasion of causing them disquiet may possibly be found in future. Let no one, then, any more dare, by any kind of inquisition whatever, to diminish anything from the revenues or charters of the aforesaid monastery, or of any place that in any manner whatever pertains to it, or to attempt any kind of usurpations or stratagems. But if perchance any matter of dispute should arise between the Church of Ravenna and the aforesaid monastery, and it cannot be settled amicably, let it be concluded without voluntary delay before men who fear God chosen by the parties, oath being made upon the most holy Gospels. Further, on the death of an abbot, let not a stranger be ordained, but one whom the congregation may choose of its own free will for itself from the same congregation, and who shall have been chosen without any fraud or venality. But, if they should be unable to find a suitable person among themselves, let them in like manner wisely choose for themselves for ordination one from some other monastery. And, when an abbot comes, let no person whatever on any

occasion whatever be put over him in his own monastery, unless perchance in the case (which God forbid) of crimes which are shewn to be punishable by the sacred canons. This rule also must be no, less carefully observed; that against the will of the abbot of such monastery monks be not removed thence for furnishing other monasteries, or for sacred orders, or for any clerical office. But in cases of there being monks in abundance, sufficient for celebrating praises to God and for satisfying the requirements of monasteries, let the abbot offer with devotion of those who are to spare, such as he may be able to find worthy in the sight of God. But if, while having a sufficient number he should refuse to give any, then let the bishop of Ravenna take of such as are to spare for furnishing other monasteries. Nevertheless, let no one be taken out thence for an ecclesiastical office, except such as the abbot of the place, on having notice given him, may offer of his own accord, Whosoever also from the aforesaid monastery shall have attained to any ecclesiastical order, let him thenceforth have neither any power there nor leave to dwell there .

It is to be observed also that no schedule of the property and charters of this monastery must be made by ecclesiastics, if ever circumstances require one: but let the abbot of the place with other abbots make an inventory of the property.

Further, as often as the abbot may perchance wish to go or send to the Roman pontiff in the interest of his monastery, let him have entire liberty to do so.

Furthermore, though the visits of bishops should be looked for with desire by monasteries, yet, seeing that it has been reported to us that the aforesaid monastery in the times of your predecessor was burdened by occasion of entertainment, it is right that your Holiness should regulate this in a becoming manner, so that the prelate of the city may have access to the monastery as often as he pleases for the sake of visiting and exhorting. But

let the bishop so fulfil the office of charity there that the monastery incur not any burden. Now the aforesaid abbot not only does not fear your Fraternity's frequent access to the monastery, but even longingly desires it, knowing that it is quite impossible that the substance of the monastery should be burdened through you, Given in the month of April, first Indiction.

EPISTLE XVII. TO MAURENTIUS.

Gregory to Maurentius, magister militum .

My most beloved son, Cyprian the deacon, had pleased me much by his return to me, if his whole self had returned to me. But now that your Glory bus stayed in Sicily, I know most certainly that he has returned indeed in body, but in mind has remained in Sicily. Yet, in saying this, I rejoice with you for your quiet as much as I groan for my own occupations. And to this I earnestly exhort you, that, if the pleasant savour of inward sweetness has touched the palate of your heart, your mind be so rapt within itself that all which sounds without, all that delights without, may be distasteful. Moreover I commend you for avoiding concourses of men, seeing that a mind which desires to be renewed in God through the grace of compunction often relapses into its old state through evil conversation and words. I have sought for some to join you in a society for sacred reading, but have found no one, and I exceedingly lament the scarcity of what is good. And though I, a sinner, am very much occupied, yet, if you should wish to come to the threshold of the blessed apostle Peter, you will be able to have me as a close associate in the study of Holy Writ. May Almighty God keep you under His heavenly protection, and grant you to remain defended against the snares of the ancient foe.

EPISTLE XVIII: TO AGNELLUS, BISHOP OF TERRACINA. Gregory to Agnellus, &c.

It has come to our ears — a thing shocking to be told — that some in your parts worship trees, and perpetrate many other unlawful things contrary to the Christian faith. And we wonder why your Fraternity has delayed correcting this by strict punishment. On this account we exhort you by this present writing to cause these persons to be sought out by diligent enquiry, and such vengeance to be executed on them that both God may be pacified and their punishment may be an example of rebuke to others.

We have written also to Mourns the Viscount that he should afford aid to your Fraternity in this matter, that so you may be unable to find any excuse for nor apprehending them. Further, as we find that many excuse themselves from keeping watch over the walls, let your Fraternity be careful to suffer no man, either under the name of our or your Church, or under any other pretext, to be exempted from keeping watch: but let all generally be compelled, to the end that, while all keep watch, the custody of the city may, by the help of the Lord, be the better provided for.

EPISTLE XX: TO MARINIANUS, BISHOP OF RAVENNA.

Gregory to Marinianus, &c.

John, the bearer of these presents, complains that his wife, flying from the molestations of one George, has long been residing within venerable precincts , and has so far met with no assistance. Since she asserts that there is a dispute about her condition , and has asked that it should be commended to your Fraternity, we hereby exhort you that you afford your protection to this woman, and permit her not to be in any way aggrieved by any one unreasonably. But if the question about her station still continues, let it be your care that, without any oppression, and in a legal manner, it may be submitted for judgment; so that when, after ascertainment of the truth, what is agreeable to the order of law has been determined, neither party may complain of having suffered wrong. The month of May, first Indiction.

EPISTLE XXI: TO JOHN, BISHOP OF SYRACUSE.

Gregory to John, &c.

Felix, the bearer of these presents, has complained to us that, being born of Christian parents, he was given (i.e. as a slave) by a certain Christian to a Samaraean , which is an atrocious thing to be said. And, though neither order of law nor reverence for religion allow men of such like superstition in any way whatever to possess Christian slaves, yet he asserts that he remained for eighteen years in that man's service. But he says that, when your predecessor Maximianus of holy memory became aware of the fact, he was freed by him, moved, as was becoming, by priestly zeal, from the service of that Samaraean. But, inasmuch as the son of the said Samaraean is said after five years to have become a Christian, and certain persons are trying to reclaim the aforesaid Felix, according to his own account, to his service, let your Holiness enquire diligently into the facts that we have been informed of, and, if they should be found true, study to protect him, and allow him on no pretext whatever to be aggrieved by any one, seeing that, while the laws plainly forbid slaves of that superstitious sect who are before their masters in coming to the faith being reclaimed to their service, how much more ought not this man — born of Christian parents, and a Christian from his childhood — to be subjected m any wise to this contention; especially as neither could be the slave of that other man's father, who it is clear was rather liable to punishment by law for his wicked presumption? And so, as we have said, let the defence of your Holiness so protect him reasonably that no one may be at liberty, under any pretence whatever, in any degree to afflict him.

EPISTLE XXII: TO RUSTICIANA, PATRICIAN .

Gregory to Rusticiana, &c.

I remember having before now written to your Excellency, and repeatedly urged you to lose no time in revisiting the thresholds of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles. And what means your so great delight in the city of Constantinople, and your oblivion of the city of Rome, I know not. I have not so far been thought worthy of getting any information from you on this head. For how far it might be of advantage to your soul for reaping the rewards of eternal life, and how far it would suit also in all respects your glorious daughter, the lady Eusebia, this we fully give our attention to, and you may no less fully consider. But, if you enquire of my son Peter, your servant, whom I have found to be wise beyond his age and to be studying to attain ripeness, you will find how great is the love towards your Excellency of air who dwell here, and how great their desire to be thought worthy of seeing you again. And if, the Lord teaching us, we are admonished in Holy Writ that we should love even our enemies, we ought to consider how wrong it is to shew no love even to those who love us. But, if haply we are said to be loved. we know most certainly that no one can have affection for those whom he does not wish to see. If, however, you are afraid of the swords and wars of Italy, you should attentively observe how great is the protection of the blessed Peter, Prince of the apostles, in this city, wherein, without a large force of people, and without military aid, we are preserved under God for so many years among swords. This we say, because we love. But may Almighty God grant whatever He sees to be of advantage to your soul for ever, and to the renown of your house at the present time.

The ten pounds of gold which your Excellency has sent for the redemption of captives I have received at the hands of my aforesaid son. But I pray that the heavenly grace which granted to you that you should

give them for your soul's reward may also grant to me to dispense them without any contagion of sin; lest we should be stained by that whereby you wipe away sins. May Almighty God, who looks upon the weakness of your body and your pilgrimage, comfort you ever by His grace, and by the life and health of my most sweet son the lord Strategius ; that so He may nurture him both for you through many years and for Himself through eternity, and may both replenish you and all your house with present good and grant you to have grace from above. We further beg that the glorious lord Eudoxius may be greeted in our behalf.

EPISTLE XXIII: TO FANTINUS, GUARDIAN (Defensorem).

Gregory to Fantinus, &c.

From the information of the lady abbess of the monastery of Saint Stephen in the territory of Agrigentum we find that many of the Jews, divine grace inspiring them, wish to be converted to the Christian faith; but that it is necessary for some one to go thither by our command. Accordingly we enjoin thee, in virtue of the authority hereby given thee, that, putting aside every excuse, thou make haste to go to the aforesaid place, and with the favour of God aid their desire by thy exhortations. If, however, it seems long and dreary for them to look forward to the Paschal solemnity, and thou findest them anxious for baptism now, then lest long delay should possibly change their minds (which God forbid), speak thou with our brother the bishop of that place, that, penitence and abstinence having been prescribed them for forty days, he may baptize them under the protection of the mercy of Almighty God on a Lord's day, or on any very noted festival that may chance to occur; since the character of the present time too, on account of impending calamity, impels us not to defer the fulfilment of their desires by any procrastination. Further, whomsoever of them thou ascertainest to be poor and without sufficient means for buying vestments for themselves, we desire thee to supply with vestments for their baptism; and know that the price that thou mayest give for them is to be charged in thy accounts. But, if they should choose to wait for the holy season of Easter, speak again with the bishop, that they may for the present become catechumens, and that he may go to them frequently, and pay careful attention to them, and kindle their minds by the admonition of his exhortations, so that the more distant the expected festival is, the more may they prepare themselves and with fervent desire look forward to it.

Furthermore, let it be thy care to enquire with all zeal and diligence whether the above-named monastery over which the aforesaid lady presides

has sufficient means, or whether it suffers any need. And whatever thou mayest truly ascertain, as well as what is done with respect to those who desire to be baptized, make haste to inform us in full. The Month of June, first Indiction.

EPISTLE XXIV: TO SABINIANUS, BISHOP OF JADERA .

Gregory to Sabinianus, &c.

I am well delighted in thy sincerity, dearest brother, knowing how, with the discrimination of a careful judgment, it both obeys where obedience is due and resists where resistance is due with priestly zeal. For with what alacrity of devotion thou hast submitted to what we enjoined for the fault of thy past transgression is disclosed to us by the contents of the letters which thou hast sent to us by the bearer of these presents. For indeed my beloved brother could not take it otherwise than as it was enjoined by one who loves him. Hence I trust in the compassion of Almighty God that His grace so protects thee that, having been thus absolved also from other sins, thou mayest rejoice in having wholesomely obeyed. But as to what thy Charity has signified about being distressed by the jealousy of the excommunicated prevaricator Maximus, thou oughtest not to be disturbed; but it becomes thee by patiently enduring to bear up against the billows that swell vainly to some small degree, and by the virtue of perseverence to subdue the foaming of the waves. For patience knows how to smooth what is rough, and constancy to overcome fierceness. Let not, then, adversity deject your spirits, but inflame them. Let priestly vigour shew thee in all things the more bold. For this is a true evidence of truth, for one to exhibit himself as all the readier in hard circumstances, and all the braver in such as are adverse. Wherefore, that no blow may avail to upset the firmness of thy rectitude from its good determination, plant, as thou hast begun to do, the steps of thy soul on the solidity of that rock on which thou knowest that our Redeemer has rounded the Church throughout the world, that so the right footsteps of a sincere heart may not stumble on a devious way.

As to the things about which thou hast written, or which the bearer of these presents has explained in our presence, do not suppose that we are neglecting them: we are very carefully considering them.

Further, we have already, both before and now, given accurate information about everything to our most beloved son the deacon Anatolius ; exhorting him to lose no time, with the aid of our Creator, in acting strictly and zealously in whatever pertains to the advantage and quiet of your Charity and of your sons. And so let not sorrow affect your Fraternity, nor the enmity of any one whatever afflict you. For, with the assistance of Divine Grace, we trust that it will not be long before the presumption of the aforesaid excommunicated prevaricator will be more strictly repressed, and your quiet, as you desire, arrive. We have also by no means omitted to write about his perverseness to our most excellent son the Exarch , who is anxious to commend him to us.

As to the presbyter about whom thy Fraternity has consulted us through the representation of the bearer of these presents, know that after his lapse be cannot by any means remain in, or be restored to, his sacred order. Still be ought to be somewhat mildly dealt with, inasmuch as he is said to have readily confessed his fault.

Furthermore, this same bearer spoke at the same time of certain privileges of your Church granted by our predecessors.

About the writings thus referred to by your Charity we wish to be more accurately informed. Or, if any of them are lying in the registry of your Church, it is necessary that copies of them be transmitted hither; that we may be able with willing mind to renew whatever concerns reverence for your dignity or the genius of the aforesaid Church.

If our common son, the glorious lord Marcellus , should be minded to come hither, urgently persuade him to do so; for on all accounts I desire to see him. But, if he should choose to remain where he is, do you so exhibit yourselves to him in beseeming charity that you may be able to respond, as becomes you, to the affection which he has towards you. May Almighty

God keep and protect you with the gift of His grace, and enflame your heart to do the things that are well pleasing to Him.

EPISTLE XXIX: TO EULOGIUS, BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA.

Gregory to Eulogius, &c.

An address from a learned man is always profitable, because the hearer either learns what he had known himself to be ignorant of, or, what is more, comes to know what he did not know he had been ignorant of. A hearer of the latter kind I have now become, your most holy Blessedness having been minded to write to me, asking me to send you the acts of all the martyrs, which were collected in the times of Constantine, of pious memory, by Eusebius of Caesarea. But before receiving the letter of your Blessedness I did not know of these acts, whether they had been collected, or whether not. I therefore give thanks that, instructed by your most holy teaching, I have begun to know what I was ignorant of. For beside what is contained about the acts of the holy martyrs in the books of the same Eusebius, I am not aware of any collections in the archives of this our Church, or in the libraries of the city of Rome, unless it be some few things collected in one single volume. We bare indeed the names of almost all the martyrs, with their passions assigned to particular days, collected in one volume; and we celebrate the solemnities of mass on such days in commemoration of them. Yet it is not indicated in this volume who each was, and how he suffered; but only his name, the place, and day, of his passion are put down. Hence it results that many of divers countries and provinces are known to have been crowned with martyrdom, as I have said, through their several days. But these we believe you have. That, however, which you wish to have sent to you we have sought for, but have not found; but, though we have not found it, we will still search, and, if it can be found, will send it.

With regard to what you write about the timber being short in length, the cause was in the kind of ship by which it was sent; for, if a larger ship had come, we could have sent larger pieces of timber. But as to your saying that,

if we send larger pieces, you will pay for them, we thank you indeed for your liberality, but we are precluded from accepting a price, since the Gospel forbids it. For we do not buy the timber which we send; and how can we accept a price, when it is written, Freely ye have received, freely give (Matth. x. 8)? We have therefore sent now through the shipmaster timber of short length in accordance with the size of the ship, whereof a notice is subjoined. Next year, however, should it please Almighty God, we will prepare larger pieces.

We have received with the kindliness wherewith it was sent the blessing of Saint Mark the Evangelist, nay, it may be said more truly, of Saint Peter the Apostle ; and, greeting you well, we beg your Blessedness to deign to pray for us, that so we may be counted worthy to be soon delivered from present evils, and not to be excluded from future joys.

EPISTLE XXX: TO EULOGIUS, BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA.

Gregory to Eulogius, &c.

Our common son, the bearer of these presents, when he brought the letters of your Holiness found me sick, and has left me sick; whence it has ensued that the scanty water of my brief epistle has been hardly able to exude to the large fountain of your Blessedness. But it was a heavenly boon that, while in a state of bodily pain, I received the letter of your Holiness to lift me up with joy for the instruction of the heretics of the city of Alexandria, and the concord of the faithful, to such an extent that the very joy of my mind moderated the severity of my suffering. And indeed we rejoice with new exultation to hear of your good doings, though at the same time we by no means suppose that it is a new thing for you to act thus perfectly. For that the people of holy Church increases, that spiritual crops of corn for the heavenly garner are multiplied, we never doubted that this was from the grace of Almighty God which flowed largely to you, most blessed ones. We therefore render thanks to Almighty God, that we see fulfilled in you what is written, Where there is much increase, there the strength of the oxen is manifest (Prov. xiv. 4). For, if a strong ox had not drawn the plough of the tongue over the ground of the hearts of hearers, so great an increase of the faithful would by no means have sprung up.

But, since in the good things you do I know that you also rejoice with others, I make you a return for your favour, and announce things not unlike yours; for while the nation of the Angli, placed in a corner of the world, remained up to this time misbelieving in the worship of stocks and stones, I determined, through the aid of your prayers for me, to send to it, God granting it, a monk of my monastery for the purpose of preaching. And he, having with my leave been made bishop by the bishops of Germany, proceeded, with their aid also, to the end of the world to the aforesaid

nation; and already letters have reached us telling us of his safety and his work; to the effect that he and those that have been sent with him are resplendent with such great miracles in the said nation that they seem to imitate the powers of the apostles in the signs which they display. Moreover, at the solemnity of the Lord's Nativity which occurred in this first indiction, more than ten thousand Angli are reported to have been baptized by the same our brother and fellow-bishop. This have I told you, that you may know what you are effecting among the people of Alexandria by speaking, and what in the ends of the world by praying. For your prayers are in the place where you are not, while your holy operations are shewn in the place where you are.

In the next place, as to the person of Eudoxius the heretic , about whose error I have discovered nothing in the Latin language, I rejoice that I have been most abundantly satisfied by your Blessedness. For you have adduced the testimonies of the strong men, Basil, Gregory, and Epiphanius; and we acknowledge him to be manifestly slain, at whom our heroes have cast so many darts. But with regard to these errors which are proved to have arisen in the Church of Constantinople, you have replied on all heads most learnedly, and as it became you to utter the judgment of so great a see. Whence we give thanks to Almighty God, that the tables of the covenant are still in the ark of God. For what is the priestly heart but the ark of the covenant? And since spiritual doctrine retains its vigour therein, without doubt the tables of the law are lying in it.

Your Blessedness has also been careful to declare that you do not now make use of proud titles, which have sprung from a root of vanity, in writing to certain persons, and you address me saying, As you have commanded. This word, command, I beg you to remove from my hearing, since I know who I am, and who you are. For in position you are my brethren, in character my fathers. I did not, then, command, but was

desirous of indicating what seemed to be profitable. Yet I do not find that your Blessedness has been willing to remember perfectly this very thing that I brought to your recollection. For I said that neither to me nor to any one else ought you to write anything of the kind; and lo, in the preface of the epistle which you have addressed to myself who forbade it, you have thought fit to make use of a proud appellation, calling me Universal Pope. But I beg your most sweet Holiness to do this no more, since what is given to another beyond what reason demands is subtracted from yourself. For as for me, I do not seek to be prospered by words but by my conduct. Nor do I regard that as an honour whereby I know that my brethren lose their honour. For my honour is the honour of the universal Church: my honour is the solid vigour of my brethren. Then am I truly honoured when the honour due to all and each is not denied them. For if your Holiness calls me Universal Pope, you deny that you are yourself what you call me universally. But far be this from us. Away with words that inflate vanity and wound charity.

And, indeed, in the synod of Chalcedon and afterwards by subsequent Fathers, your Holiness knows that this was offered to my predecessors. And yet not one of them would ever use this title, that, while regarding the honour of all priests in this world, they might keep their own before Almighty God. Lastly, while addressing to you the greeting which is due, I beg you to deign to remember me in your holy prayers, to the end that the Lord for your intercessions may absolve me from the bands of my sins, since my own merits may not avail me.

EPISTLE XXXIII: TO DOMINICUS.

Gregory to Dominicus, Bishop of Carthage.

The letter of your Holiness, which we received at the hands of the bearer of these presents, so expressed priestly moderation as to soothe us, in a manner, with the bodily presence of its author. Nor indeed does infrequency of communication cause any harm where the affection of love remains uninterrupted in one's mind. Great, moreover, is the power of charity, beloved brother, which binds hearts one to another in mutual affection with the chain of its sincerity, and suffers them not to be loosened from the cohesion of grace, which conjoins things disjoined, keeps together things united, and causes persons who are unknown by sight to be known through love. Whosoever therefore fixes his heart on the hinge of charity, him no impulse of any adversity whatever tears from the habitation of the heavenly country, since, in whatever direction he may turn himself, he parts not from the threshold of the commandments. Hence also it is said by the excellent preacher in praise of this same charity, Which is the band of perfectness (Coloss. iii. 14). We see, then, what great praise is due to that which not only engenders perfectness in the soul, but also binds it.

Wherefore, since the language of thy letters shews thee to be inflamed with the fire of this virtue, I rejoice in the Lord with abundant exultation, and hope that it may shine forth in thee more and more, seeing that the flame of the shepherd is the light of the flock. For it becomes the Lord's priest to shine in manners and life, to the end that the people committed to him may be able, as it were in the mirror of his life, both to choose what to follow, and to see what to correct.

Knowing, furthermore, whence priestly ordination took its beginning in the African parts, you act laudably in recurring with wise recollection, in your love of the Apostolic See, to the origin of your office, and in continuing with commendable constancy in your affection towards it. For

indeed it is certain that whatever reverence and devotion in priestly wise you shew to it, this you add to your own honour; seeing that you hereby invite it to be bound with answering love to you.

It remains, most dear brother, that we beseech Almighty God with continual prayer that He would direct the steps of our hearts into the pathway of His truth, and bring us to the heavenly kingdoms, granting us by the grace of His protection to exhibit in our works the office which we bear in name. The Month of August, first Indiction.

EPISTLE XXXIV: TO JOHN BISHOP OF SCYLLACIUM.

Gregory to John, &c.

It is evidently a very serious thing, and contrary to what a priest should aim at, to wish to disturb privileges formerly granted to any monastery, and to endeavour to bring to naught what has been arranged for quiet. Now the monks of the Castilliensian monastery in your Fraternity's city have complained to us that you are taking steps to impose upon the said monastery certain things contrary to what had been allowed by your predecessors and sanctioned by long custom, and to disturb ancient arrangements by a certain injurious novelty. Wherefore we hereby exhort your Fraternity that, if this is so, you refrain from troubling this monastery under any excuse, and that you try not, through any opportunity of usurpation, to upset what has been long secured to it, but that you study, without any gainsaying, to preserve all its privileges inviolate, and know that no more is lawful to you with regard to the said monastery than was lawful to your predecessors.

Further, inasmuch as they have likewise complained that thy Fraternity has taken certain things from the monastery under the guise of their being, as it were, an offering, it is necessary that, if thou recollectest having received anything unbecomingly, thou restore it without delay, lest the sin of avarice seriously convict thee, whom priestly munificence ought to have shewn liberal towards monasteries. Therefore, while thou preservest all things which, as we have said, have been allowed and preserved by thy predecessors, let it be thy care to keep careful watch over the acts and lives of the monks residing there, and, if thou shouldest find any one living amiss, or (which God forbid) guilty of any sin of uncleanness, to correct such by strict and regular emendation. For, as we desire your Fraternity to abstain from incongruous usurpations, so we admonish you to be in all

ways solicitous in what pertains to rectitude of discipline and the guardianship of souls.

The monks of the aforesaid monastery have also informed us that the camp which is called Scillacium is built on ground belonging to their monastery, and that on this account those who live there pledged themselves in writing to pay a solatium every year; but that they afterwards thought scorn of it, and idly withheld their stipulated payment. Let then your Fraternity take care to learn the truth accurately; and, if you should find it so, urgently see to their not delaying to give what they promised, and what also reason requires; that so both they may possess quietly what they hold, and the rights of the monastery may incur no damage.

Furthermore, the monks of the aforesaid monastery have complained to us that their abbot has granted to thy Fraternity by title of gift land within the camp of Scillacium, to the extent of six hundred feet, under pretext of building a church: and accordingly it is our will that as much land as the walls of the church, when built, can surround shall be claimed as belonging to the church. But let whatever may be outside the walls of the said church revert without dispute to the possession of the monastery. For the ordinances neither of worldly laws nor of the sacred canons permit the property of a monastery to be segregated by any title from its ownership. On this account restore thou this gift of land which has been granted against reason.

EPISTLE XXXV: TO LEONTIUS, EX-CONSUL.

Gregory to Leontius, &c.

Since in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some indeed to honour but some to dishonour (2 Tim. ii. 20), who can be ignorant that in the bosom of the Universal Church some as vessels of dishonour are deputed to the lowest uses, but others, as vessels of honour, are fitted for clean uses. And yet it commonly comes to pass that the citizens of Babylon serve in task-work for Jerusalem, while the citizens of Jerusalem, that is of the heavenly country, are deputed to the task-work of Babylon. For when the elect of God, endowed with moral excellence, distinguished for moderation, seeking not their own gain, are deputed to earthly business, what else is it but that the citizens of holy Jerusalem serve in the work of Babylon? And when some, unbridled in immorality, hold places of holy dignity, and in the very things which they seem to do well seek praise to themselves, what else is it but that the citizens of Babylon execute the task-work of the heavenly Jerusalem? For so Judas, mixed with the apostles, long preached the Redeemer of the human race, and did signs with the rest; but, because he had been a citizen of Babylon, he executed his work as task-work for the heavenly Jerusalem. But on the other hand Joseph, being carried into Egypt, served an earthly court, bore the charge of administration in temporal things, exhibited whatever was justly due to a transitory kingdom; but, because he was still a citizen of holy Jerusalem, he administered the service of Babylon, as has been seen above, in the way of task-work only. A follower of him, good man, I believe thee to be, knowing thee, though involved in earthly action, to act with a gentle spirit, to keep in all respects the citadel of humility, and to give to every one what is just. For such good things are reported by many of your Glory that I would fain not hear of such things, but see them: yet still I am fed by the good renown of him whom I

am not allowed to see. But the woman who poured from the alabaster box, exhibiting a type of the Holy Church, that is of all the elect, filled the house with the ointment (Luke vii.). And we, as often as we hear anything of good people, draw in as it were through our nostrils a breath of sweetness. And when Paul the Apostle said, We are a good odour of Christ unto God (2 Cor. ii. 15), it is plainly given to be understood that he exhibited himself as a savour indeed to the present, but as an odour to the absent. We therefore, while we cannot be nourished by the savour of your presence, are so by the odour of your absence.

For this also we greatly rejoice, that the gifts which you sent us were not unlike your character. For indeed we received oil of the holy cross, and wood of aloes; one to bless by the touch, the other to give a sweet smell when kindled. For it was becoming that a good man should send us things that might appease the wrath of God against us.

Many other things also you have sent for our store-houses, since, as we subsist both in soul and in flesh, it was needful that we should be sustained in both. And yet in transmitting these things your most sweet soul declares that it blushes much for shame, and holds out the shield of charity before this same shame-facedness. But I altogether rejoice in these words, since from this attestation of the soul I know that he can never take away what is another's who blushes even in bestowing what is his own. Your gifts however, which you call small, are great: but I think that your Glory's very humility enhances them yet the more. And you beg me to receive them kindly. But meanwhile recall to your memory the two mites of a certain widow (Luke xxvii.). For, if she pleased God who offered a little with a good will, why should not he please men who with a humble mind has given much? Furthermore we send you, as a blessing from Saint Peter, Prince of the apostles, a key of his most sacred sepulchre, in which is

inserted a blessing from his chains, that what bound his neck for martyrdom may loose yours from all sins.

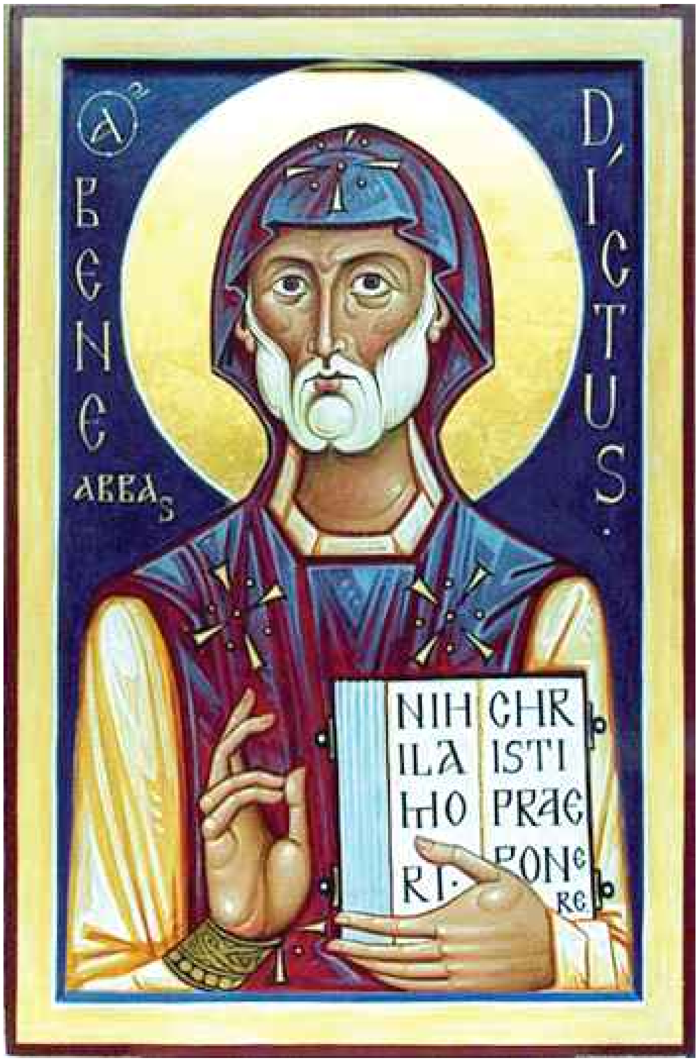
The Dialogues of Saint Gregory the Great, Pope of Rome

Translated by P. W., 1911

Transcribed by Roger Pearse, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/

CONTENTS

The Fourth Book



Saint Benedict depicted in an Eastern Orthodox icon

Introduction

The four books of *Dialogues* of Saint Gregory the Great, “concerning the life and miracles of the Italian Fathers and the eternity of souls,” were written in 593, three years after his elevation to the papacy, at the request of certain monks of his household.

“My brethren who dwell familiarly with me,” writes Gregory to Maximianus, Bishop of Syracuse, “would have me by all means write something in brief fashion concerning the miracles of the Fathers, which we have heard wrought in Italy. For this purpose I earnestly need the help of your charity, that you should briefly inform me of all those which come back to your memory, or which you have happened yourself to know. For I remember that you related certain things, which I have forgotten, concerning the lord abbot Nonnosus, who lived near the lord Anastasius de Pentumis. I beseech you, therefore, to put down this, and whatever others there are, in your letters, and forward them to me with speed, unless you yourself are coming to me shortly.”

There is no other book that gives us so vivid a picture of religious life in Italy during the sixth century: the century that witnessed the brief epoch of Gothic domination, the restoration of the imperial Byzantine power, and finally the invasion of the Lombards, that “barbarous and cruel nation,” writes Gregory, which, “drawn as a sword out of a sheath,” wrought such unutterable havoc and devastation in the peninsula that many, with Bishop Redemptus, held verily that “the end of all flesh was come.” It is the century that closed the period of classical civilisation, and ushered in that dreariest epoch in the history of mankind known as the Dark Ages.

Inevitably, men turned from the spectacle of a world “fraught with so many miseries and divers afflictions,” to prepare in the solitude of the cloister for the end which they deemed fast approaching, if it were not already come. They naturally sought eagerly to grasp such phenomena as

seemed to them miraculous, as visible signs that God had not utterly abandoned His creation, and to find proofs that the soul, at least, was immortal, and might look forward to a better life hereafter by forgiveness of injuries, and by offering herself up before death as a sacrifice to Him that had made her. It is this that gives pathos even to the apparent triviality of some of the miracles that Gregory records, and deeper significance to the note on which the work ends.

Three great figures illumine the general darkness of the sixth century in Italy : Boethius, the last philosopher of the classical world; Benedict, the organiser or western monasticism; and Gregory himself the chief agent in the building up of the mediaeval ideal of the papacy.

The Roman senator, Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, whom Gibbon calls "the last of the Romans whom Cato or Tully could have acknowledged for their countryman," was tortured to death by the orders of King Theodoric the Goth, in 524 or 525. Dante was to meet him among the glowing spirits of great teachers in the fourth sphere of Paradise : "In the vision of all good there rejoiceth the holy soul, who unmasks the world's deceit to whoso giveth good heed to it. The body whence it was hunted lieth below in Cieldauro, and it from martyrdom and from exile came unto this peace." Though a martyr for the liberty of Rome rather than for the faith of Christ, Boethius was (as we now know for certain) an advocate of Christianity, albeit from the philosophical rather than the religious standpoint; but his famous work, *De Consolatione Philosophiae,* composed in his prison at Pavia under the shadow of death, attempts to "assert eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to men" from the standpoint of human reason alone. It is somewhat curious that his name, which rings through the literature of the Middle Ages from Alfred to Dante, occurs nowhere in the *Dialogues,* although his fellow-victims under the tyranny of the last years of Theodoric's rule, John the Pope and Symmachus the

Senator, are mentioned more than once, and the monkish legend of their persecutor's terrible end is related in full.

Some four or five years after the death of Boethius, Benedict of Nursia founded the great monastery of Monte Cassino, about 529. Here in 543, fourteen years later, he died. Even in the west, Benedict was naturally not without precursors; such as Martin of Tours, Cassianus of Marseilles, Cesarius of Arles, Equitius, who, "by reason of his great holiness of life, was the father and governor of many abbeys in the province of Valeria," and some others; but it was more especially the work of the great Italian monk, whose face Dante so ardently desired to behold unveiled in Paradise, to elevate this western monastic life into a system, with fixed laws and an ideal, like the object of hope according to the scholastic definition, "arduous but not impossible of attainment." The famous rule, the *Regula Sancti Benedicti,* which he wrote and promulgated from Monte Cassino (based, in part, upon the eastern rule of St. Basil), for all its apparent simplicity, is one of the few great constructive works of the sixth century. Although, from the standpoint of the *Divina Commedia,* Dante makes the Saint declare that his *regola* remained on earth solely to waste the parchment on which it was written, *per danno delle carte,* it became the norm according to which generations of men and women throughout the western world devoted themselves to the highest spiritual life, and became "kindled by that heat which gives birth to flowers and holy fruits."

The second book of the *Dialogues, De vita et miraculis venerabilis Benedicti,* is the earliest and most authoritative account of St. Benedict that we possess. Indeed, it, together with his Rule, is our only source for the story of his life and the understanding of his character. As has been well said, it is "the biography of the greatest Monk, vritten by the greatest Pope (himself also a Monk.)"

Gregory was born probably a year or two before the death of St. Benedict. The son of the Roman senator, Gordianus, and a scion of the noble house of the Anicii, he inherited vast possessions in the Roman Campagna and in the territory of Tivoli, stretching almost to the gates of Praeneste (Palestrina), and a palace on the Caelian Hill. His childhood was passed amidst the disastrous events of the struggle between Justinian's generals and the Goths, when Rome was taken and retaken again and again by the Goths and the barbarian armies of the Empire. In his early manhood, after the death of Justinian and the recall of Narses to Constantinople, came the even more disastrous invasion and partial conquest of Italy by the Lombards. "Late and long," he writes, " I put off the grace of conversion, and, after I had been inspired with celestial desire, I thought it better to be clothed in the secular habit." In 573, when still a young man, he was prefect of Rome. A few years later, he became a monk, turned his palace into a monastery, made over his lands to the monks, and disposed of his property to religious and public uses. After serving as *apocrisiarius,* or papal legate, to the imperial court of Byzantium, for Pope Pelagius II., he was, on the latter's death during the terrible pestilence that devastated Rome at the beginning of 590, elected Pope, and, in spite of his resistance, was compelled to accept the choice of the Romans, which (in accordance with the usage of the times) was confirmed by the Emperor Mauritius.

This is not the place to tell again the story of Gregory's pontificate. Physically a complete invalid, suffering from almost incessant pain, he held the see for fourteen years (dying on March 12, 604), with an indefatigable vigour and an incessant activity, in times of wellnigh unqualified difficulty and gloom. Convinced in his own mind that the end of the world was at hand (he had announced it to the people in his first public homily as Pope in St. Peter's, and the conviction abode with him until his death), he nevertheless did not neglect even the care of temporal things, when these

were forced upon him by the duties of his state and the pressure of the times. His conception of the temporal power of the papacy, and the relations of Church and State, was poles asunder from that of the Popes of Dante's century, and essentially the same as that of the poet himself. Of the vast territorial possessions of the Church, the administration of which he thoroughly reformed, he regarded the Pope, "not as possessor, but as dispenser of the fruits for the poor of Christ, on behalf of the Church." Compelled to act as a secular ruler in defence of Rome against the Lombards, he regarded himself, in the temporal field, as the subject of the State. Like Dante, he conceives of the Church and State as mutually co-operating, but ruling over different spheres, and the Emperor is God's vicar and representative on earth in all things temporal: "What he does, if canonical, we follow; if it is not canonical, we bear it, as far as we can without sin." In the ecclesiastical sphere, on the other hand, he is uncompromising in asserting the supremacy of Rome over all other Christian churches. His work of converting the English, and preparing the conversion of the Lombards, need not be told here. Gregory was the creator of the spiritual ideal of the mediaeval papacy, even as Benedict had created that of western monasticism.

The *Dialogues* were translated into Greek by one of St. Gregory's successors, Pope Zaccharias I. (741-752): "that so the Grecians might be instructed in the rules of good living," as Platina's seventeenth-century translator puts it. With a similar desire for the edification of the English, an Anglo-Saxon version was made, about 890, by Bishop Werferth of Worcester, at the instigation of Alfred the Great. The *Dialogues* were among the most popular reading of the Middle Ages, and early translations exist in almost every European language. In the fourth book, we find the first rudiments of the mediaeval conception of the three states of souls in the other world. The story of the vision seen by a certain soldier is

practically the first in the west of those more or less fictitious visions of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, which (inspired so many imitations throughout the Middle Ages, from Venerable Bede's legends of Fursaeus and Drythelm to the visions of Tundal, Alberic of Monte Cassino, and the monk Edmund of Eynsham —— the long series which (speaking superficially) may be said to culminate in the *Divina Commedia.* Dante himself knew the *Dialogues* well. His account of St. Benedict in the sphere of Saturn, and his own vision of the nothingness of the world in his ascent to the Stellar Heaven, were directly suggested by St. Gregory's words. From Gregory, too, came his doctrine of the "Mansions of Beatitude," albeit its significance had for him acquired a deeper and intenser note by the passage through the mystical mind of Bonaventura. Echoes of the *Dialogues* may likewise be discerned in the *De Monarchia* and in the *Letter to Can Grande.* The influence of Gregory's earlier work, the *Moralia,* or *Exposition of the Book of Job*, is also very marked in many passages of the *Divina Commedia.*

The translation of the *Dialogues*, here offered to the reader, was published at Paris in 1608 —— seventeen years, that is, before the first English version of Boccaccio's *Decameron.* It was dedicated "to the high and excellent princess Anne: by God's singular providence, Queen of great Britain, France, and Ireland"; that is, to Anne of Denmark, the consort of King James I. The translator claims to be the first thus to present a book to her : "For whereas divers, of divers professions, have directed their works to our most dread Sovereign, and one also to our young Prince (your dear son, and the orient object of our country's joy), so none at all, for aught that I can learn, much less that professeth the religion of St. Gregory, hath hitherto presented any book to your Princely person." His "epistle dedicatory" is dated "the first of January, 1608," and signed " Your Majesty's most devoted servant, and daily orator, P.W." This "P. W." has not

been identified; the Jesuit father, Henry James Coleridge, who edited his translation, in a somewhat modernised form, in 1874, suggested that he was "an English Catholic, desirous to interest the Queen in favour of the ancient religion." The *Dialogues* are further introduced by a lengthy preface "to the courteous and virtuous Christian reader," and followed (with an independent title-page) by " A short Relation of divers Miracles wrought at the memories or shrines of certain martyrs, especially St. Stephen, the Protomartyr of Christ's Church," the contents of which are mainly taken from the *City of God of* St. Augustine and the Life of St. Bernard. The present re-issue of the translation, save for the spelling, follows verbally the edition of 1608. The Latin text cited is that given by Migne (P.L. lxxvii.).

The *Dialogues* of St. Gregory have exercised a certain influence upon Christian iconography. Spinello Aretino at San Miniato, Luca Signorelli and Giovanni Antonio Bazzi at Mont' Oliveto Maggiore, Fra Filippo Lippi, Neroccio of Siena, Benedetto Bonfigli, and many other Italian masters found subjects ready to their hand in its pages; while the pilgrim to Subiaco and the other sanctuaries of the Roman Campagna, hallowed by the footsteps of these "fathers of the olden time," will still find the words of the great pontiff of the sixth century the most vivid of guides.

EDMUND G. GARDNER

August 15, 1911

The First Book

Being upon a certain day too much over-charged with the troubles of worldly business, in which oftentimes men are enforced to do more than of duty they are bound, I retired myself into a solitary place, very fit for a sad and melancholy disposition; where each discontentment and dislike concerning such secular affairs might plainly show themselves, and all things that usually bring grief, mustered together, might freely be presented before mine eyes. In which place after that I had sat a long while, in much silence and great sorrow of soul, at length Peter, my dear son and deacon, came unto me; a man whom, from his younger years, I had always loved most entirely, and used him for my companion in the study of sacred scripture: who, seeing me drowned in such a dump of sorrow, spake unto me in this manner: “What is the matter? or what bad news have you heard? for certain I am, that some extraordinary sadness doth now afflict your mind.” To whom I returned this answer: “O Peter, the grief which continually 1 endure is unto me both old and new: old through common use, and new by daily increasing. For mine unhappy soul, wounded with worldly business, doth now call to mind in what state it was, when I lived in mine Abbey, and how then it was superior to all earthly matters, far above all transitory and corruptible pelf, how it did usually think upon nothing but heavenly things; and though it was enclosed in mortal body, yet did it by contemplation pass far beyond earthly bounds, and penetrate to the very height of heaven; and as for death, the memory whereof is almost to all men grievous, that it did love and desire, as the end of all misery, the reward of her labours, and the very entrance to an everlasting and blessed life. But now, by reason of my pastoral charge, my poor soul is enforced to endure the burden of secular men’s business, and after so excellent and sweet a kind of rest, denied it is with the dust of worldly conversation: and when it doth, at the request of others, attend to outward affairs, no question but it

returneth back, far less fit to think upon those that be inward, spiritual, and heavenly. Wherefore, at this present, do I meditate what I suffer, and consider what my soul hath lost: and the memory of my former loss doth make that more grievous which I do now endure. For do you not behold at this present, how I am tossed with the waves of this wicked world, and see the ship of my soul beaten with the storms of a terrible tempest? and therefore, when I remember my former state of life, I cannot but sigh to look back, and cast mine eyes upon the forsaken shore.

"And that which doth yet grieve me more is because I see myself so carried away amain with the boisterous blasts of this troublesome world, that I cannot now scarce behold the port from whence I did first hoist sail; for such be the downfalls of our soul, that first it loseth that goodness and virtue which before it possessed; yet so that it doth still remember what it hath lost; but afterwards, carried away more and more, and straying further from the path of virtue, it cometh at length to that pass, that it doth not so much as keep in mind what before it did daily practise: and so in conclusion, it falleth out as I said before, that sailing farther on, we go at length so far, that we do not so much as once behold the sweet harbour of quiet and peace from whence we first set forth. Sometime also my sorrow is increased, by remembering thrives of certain notable men, who with their whole soul did utterly forsake and abandon this wicked world: whose high perfection when I behold, I cannot also but see mine own infirmities and imperfection: very many of whom did, in a contemplative and retired kind of life, much please God: and lest by dealing with transitory business they might have decayed in virtue, God's goodness vouchsafed to free them from the troubles and affairs of this wretched world. But that which I have now said will be far more plain, and the better perceived, if the residue of my speech be dialogue wise distinguished, by setting down each of our names,

you asking what you shall think convenient, and I by answer, giving satisfaction to such questions as you shall demand at my hands."

PETER. I do not remember any in Italy, that have been very famous for virtue; and therefore ignorant I am who they be, that, comparing your life to theirs, you should be so much inflamed to imitate their steps; for although I make no doubt but that there have been many good men, yet do I verily think that none of them wrought any miracles, or at least they have been hitherto so buried in silence that, whether any such thing hath been done or no, not any one man can tell.

GREGORY. If I should, Peter, but report only those things which myself alone have understood by the relation of virtuous and credible persons, or else learned by myself, concerning the life and miracles of perfect and holy men, I should sooner in mine opinion lack day to talk in, than matter to speak of.

PETER. Desirous I am that you would vouchsafe to make me partaker of some of them: and not to think much, if, upon so good an occasion, you interrupt your other study of interpreting the scripture, because no less edification doth grow by the relation of miracles. For as by the exposition of that, we learn how virtue is to be found and kept: so by recounting the miracles of holy men, we know how that which is found out and possessed, is declared and made manifest to the world. And some there are that be sooner moved to the love of God by virtuous examples than by godly sermons: and oftentimes, by the lives of holy fathers, the heart doth reap a double commodity; for if, by comparing of his own life with theirs, he findeth himself inflamed with the love of heaven, although before he had haply a good opinion of himself, yet seeing now how far others do excel him, he becometh also more humble, and is brought to have a more lowly conceit of his own actions and virtue.

GREGORY. Such things as venerable and holy men have told me, I will now, without any further delay, make you partaker of, and that following the example of sacred scripture: for sure I am that St. Luke and St. Mark learned that gospel which they wrote, not by sight but by the relation of others: yet lest any in reading should have occasion to doubt whether such things as I write be true or no, I will set down by what means and of whom I have learned them: yet in some of them you have to know that I remember not all the particulars, but only the matter: in other some, both the matter and also the words. And besides, if I should have been so curious as to have kept in mind each man's particular words, many, uttered after the country manner, would have made the style of my discourse nothing handsome nor seemly. Tnac story which I mean first to begin with, I had by the report of passing reverent men and of great years.

Chapter One: of Honoratus, abbot of the Monastery of Funda.

In times past one Venantius, a noble man, had a living in the country of Samnium; the farmer whereof had a son called Honoratus, who from his very childhood by the virtue of abstinence did thirst after the joys of heaven: and as in other things he led an holy life, and refrained from all idle talk, so did he much, as I said before, subdue his body by means of abstinence. His parents, upon a certain day, had invited their neighbours to a banquet which consisted altogether of flesh, whereof because for the love of mortification he refused to eat, his father and mother began to laugh at him, willing him to fall to that which they had: "For can we," quoth they, "get you any fish here in these mountains?" (for in that place they used sometimes to hear of fish, but seldom to see any.) But whiles they were thus jesting, and mocking at their son, suddenly they lacked water: whereupon a servant with a wooden bucket (as the manner is there) went to the well to fetch some: into which, as he was a drawing, a fish entered in, which upon his return, together with the water, he poured forth before them all. And the fish was so great, that it served Honoratus very well for all that day. At this strange chance all were stroken in admiration, and his parents abstained now from further scoffing at his virtue, and began to have him in reverence for his abstinence, whom before for that very cause they did mock and scorn: and by this means, the fish, brought miraculously from the well, discharged God's servant from that shame, which he had endured through their uncivil jesting. Honoratus, proceeding forward in virtue, at length was made free by the foresaid Lord Venantius: and afterward, in that place which is called Funda, he built an Abbey, wherein he was the father almost of two hundred monks: and he lived in so great holiness that he gave good example to all the country round about. Upon a certain day, it fell so out, that a stone of an huge greatness, which was digged out of the mountain that hung over the top of his Abbey, tumbled down by the side of the hill,

threatening both the ruin of the house and the death of all the monks within: which danger the holy man seeing ready to come upon them, called often upon the name of Christ, and, putting forth his right hand, made against it the sign of the cross, and by that means did he stay it, and pin it fast to the side of that steep hill: which thing Lawrence, a religious man, affirmed to be most true. And because it found not there any place upon which it might rest, it hangeth at this time in such sort, that all which now look upon it do verily think that it would continually fall.

PETER. I suppose so notable a man as he was, and who afterward became master to so many scholars, had himself some excellent teacher of whom he was instructed.

GREGORY. I never heard that he was scholar to any: but the grace of the Holy Ghost is not tied to any law. The usual custom of virtuous men is, that none should take upon him to rule, who first hath not learned to obey: nor to command that obedience to his subjects, which before he hath not given to his own superiors. Yet some there be which are so inwardly taught by the doctrine of God's holy spirit, that although they have no man to instruct them outwardly, yet do they not want the direction of an inward teacher: which liberty of life notwithstanding is not to be taken for an example by such as be weak and infirm, lest, whiles each one doth in like manner presume to be full of the Holy Ghost, and contemn to learn of any, they become themselves erroneous masters. But that soul which is full of God's holy spirit, hath for proof thereof most evident signs, to wit, the other virtues, and especially humility, both which if they do perfectly meet in one soul, apparent it is that they be testimonies of the presence of heavenly grace. And so we read not that John Baptist had any master, nor yet that Christ, who by his corporal presence taught his Apostles, took him in amongst the number of his other disciples, but vouchsafed to instruct him inwardly, and left him, as it were, in the sight of the world to his own

liberty. So Moses, likewise, was taught in the wilderness, and learned by the Angel what God gave him in charge, which by means of any mortal man he knew not: but these things, as before hath been said, are of weaklings to be reverenced, and not by any means to be followed.

PETER. I like very well of your opinion: yet I beseech you to tell me, whether so notable a father as he was, left not some scholar behind him, that did imitate his master's steps.

Chapter Two: of Libertinus, Prior of the same Abbey.

GREGORY. The reverent man, Libertinus, who, in the time of Totila, king of the Goths, was Prior of the same Abbey of Funda, was brought up and taught by him: of whom, albeit the certain report of passing many hath made his sundry virtues known to the world, yet the foresaid religious man, Lawrence, who still liveth and that time had very familiar acquaintance with him, hath often told me many things, whereof some few, which now come to my mind, I will here set down. In the same province of Samnium, as Libertinus was in his journey about business of the Abbey, it so fell out that Darida, captain of the Goths, with his army, met him, by whose soldiers the man of God was thrown from his horse; which injury he taking very patiently, offered them also his whip, saying: "Take this, that you may make him the better to go"; and having said so, he betook himself to his prayers. The army marched on very fast, and quickly came to the river called Vulturnus, where they began to beat their horses both with their lances and also to spur them, till the blood came, and all this to make them take the water; but yet no beating nor spurring could enforce them forward: for they were as much afraid to enter the river as though it had been some deep downfall. At length, when they were all wearied with beating, one amongst the rest said, that the reason why they were thus punished was for taking away the horse from God's servant: whereupon returning straightways back, they found Libertinus prostrate at his prayers; and calling upon him to rise and take his horse, he bade them go on a God's name, saying that he needed him not; but for all that they alighted and set him perforce upon his own beast, and so in all haste departed, and returning back to the river they passed over so quickly as though in the channel there had been no water at all; and so it fell out that God's servant having restitution made him of his one horse, that all the soldiers came likewise to enjoy the use of their own.

At the same time one Buccellinus entered Campania with an army of French men, and because it was commonly said that the Abbey in which the holy man lived had great store of money, the French men, very greedy of so good a booty, came thither, and with raging minds went into his oratory (where he lay prostrate at his prayers) seeking and crying out for Libertinus; and a strange thing it was, for though they came in, and stumbled upon him, yet could they not see him, and so, deceived through their own blindness, away they departed as empty as they came.

At another time likewise upon business of the monastery, at the commandment of the Abbot who succeeded his master Honoratus, he took his journey to Ravenna. And for the great love which he bare to venerable Honoratus, always did he bear about him in his bosom one of his stockings. Being in his way it fell so out that a certain woman was carrying the corpse of her dead son; who no sooner saw the servant of God, but, for the love of her child, she laid hold upon his bridle, protesting with a solemn oath that he should not depart, before he had raised up her dead son. The holy man, not acquainted with so strange a miracle, was much afraid, to hear her make such a request, and willing to have got away, yet seeing no means how to effect his desire, greatly did he doubt what was best to be done. Here it is worth the noting to consider what a conflict he had in his soul: humility and the mother's piety striving together: fear to presume upon so unusual a miracle, and grief not to help the desolate, mother. At length, to the greater glory of God, piety and compassion overcame that virtuous soul, which therefore may truly be called invincible, because it did yield and was conquered; for a virtuous soul it had not been, if piety and compassion had not overcome it: wherefore, lighting from his horse, he fell upon his knees, lift up his hands to heaven, drew the stocking out of his bosom, laid it upon the breast of the dead corpse; and behold, whiles he was at his prayers, the soul of the child returned into the body, which he perceiving, took it by the

hand and delivered it alive to his sorrowful mother, and so went on the rest of his journey.

PETER. What is to be said in this case? For was it the merit of Honoratus, or the prayers of Libertinus, that wrought this miracle?

GREGORY. In the working of so notable a miracle, together with the faith of the woman, the virtue of both did concur; and therefore, in mine opinion, Libertinus had power to raise up that dead child, because he had learned to trust more upon the virtue of his master than his own: for when he laid his stocking upon the child's breast, no doubt but he thought that his soul did obtain that for which he did then pray. For we read the like of Heliseus, who carrying his master's cloak, and coming to the river of Jordan, stroke the waters once, and yet divided them not; but when straight after he said, *Where is now the God of Helias?* and then stroke the river with the same cloak, he made a way open for himself to pass through. Whereby you perceive, Peter, how much humility availeth for the working of miracles, for then the merit of the master had force to do that which he desired, when he called upon his name; and when with humility he did submit himself to his master, he wrought the same miracle which his master had done before him.

PETER. I am well pleased with your answer: but is there, I pray you, anything else of him yet remaining, which may serve for our edification? GREGORY. Surely there is, if there be yet any that list to imitate so notable an example: for I make no doubt, but that the patience of so worthy a man did far excel all his signs and miracles, as you shall now hear. Upon a certain day, the Abbot, who succeeded Honoratus, fell so pitifully out with venerable Libertinus, that he stroke, him with his fists: and because he could find never a staff, up he took a footstool, and with that did so strike his head and his face, that they both swelled and became black and blue. Being thus unreasonably beaten, without giving any words, he went quietly

to bed. The next day, he was to go forth about business of the Abbey, and therefore, when matins were ended, he came to his Abbot's bedside, and humbly demanded of him leave. The Abbot, knowing how greatly all did honour and love him, supposed that he would for the former injury have forsaken the Abbey: and therefore he asked him, whither he meant to go: to whom he answered: "Father," quoth he, "there is a certain matter concerning the Abbey to be handled, where I must needs be, for yesterday I promised to come, and therefore I am determined to travel thither." Then the Abbot, considering from the bottom of his heart his own austerity and hard dealing, and the humility and meekness of Libertinus, suddenly leapt out of his bed, gat hold of his feet, confessed that he had sinned and done wickedly, in presuming to offer unto so good and worthy a man so cruel and contumelious an injury. Libertinus, on the contrary, prostrate upon the earth, fell down at his feet, attributing all that he had suffered, not to any cruelty of his, but to his own sins and demerits. And by this means, the Abbot was brought to great meekness; and the humility of the scholar became a teacher to the master. Going afterward abroad about the foresaid business of the Abbey, many gentlemen of his acquaintance, that had him in great reverence, much marvelled, and diligently enquired by what means he came by such a swollen and black face: to whom he answered: "Yesterday," quoth he, "at evening, for punishment of my sins, I met with a footstool, and gat this blow which ye see." And thus the holy man, preserving both truth in his soul and the honour of his master, did neither bewray the fault of his father, nor yet incurred the sin of lying. PETER. Had not so venerable a man as this Libertinus was, of whom you have told so many miracles and strange things, in so great a convent, some that did imitate his holy life and virtues?

Chapter Three; of a certain monk, that was gardener to the same Abbey.

GREGORY. Felix, called also Corvus, one whom you know very well, and who not long since was Prior of the same Abbey, told me divers very strange things, some of which I will pass over with silence, because I hasten to other, but one there is which by no means I can omit. This it was.

In the same Abbey there lived a certain monk, very virtuous, who was the gardener. A thief likewise there was, that used to climb over the hedge, and so to steal away the worts. The holy man, seeing that he did set many which afterward he could not find, and perceiving that some were trodden down, and other stolen away, walked round about the garden to find the place where the thief came in, which when he had found, by chance also as he was there, he lighted upon a snake, which he willed to follow him, and bringing him to the place where the thief entered, gave him this charge: "In the name of Jesus," quoth he, "I command thee to keep this passage, and not to suffer any thief to come in." Whereupon the snake forthwith, obeying his commandment, laid itself across in the way, and the monk returned to his cell. Afterward in the heat of the day, when all the monks were at rest, the thief, according to his custom, came thither, and as he was climbing over the hedge and had put one leg on the other side, suddenly he saw the snake, which stopped the way, and for fear falling backward, he left his foot hanging there by the shoe upon a stake, and so he hung with his head downward, until the return of the gardener; who, coming at his usual hour, found the thief hanging there in the hedge, whom when he saw, he spake thus to the snake: "God be thanked, thou hast done what I bade thee, and therefore now go thy way": upon which licence, the snake by and by departed. Then, coming to the thief, he spake thus unto him: "What meaneth this, good brother? God hath delivered you, as you see, into mine hands: why have you been so bold as so often to rob away the labour of the

monks?" and speaking thus, he loosed his foot, without doing him any harm, willing him also to follow him; who brought him to the garden gate, and gave him those worts which he desired to have stolen, speaking also to him in sweet manner after this sort: "Go your way, and steal no more; but when you have need, come hither to me, and what sinfully you would take, that will I willingly bestow upon you for God's sake."

PETER. I have hitherto, as I now perceive, lived in an error: for never did I think that there had been any holy men in Italy, which had wrought miracles.

Chapter Four: of Equitius, abbot in the Province of Valeria.

GREGORY. By the relation of venerable Fortunatus, Abbot of the Monastery which is called Cicero's Bath, and also of other reverent men, I have come to the knowledge of that which now I mean to tell you. There was a passing holy man called 'Equitius, dwelling in the province of Valeria, who, for his virtuous life, was in great admiration with all men, with whom Fortunatus was familiarly acquainted. This Equitius, by reason of his great holiness of life, was the father and governor of many Abbeys in that province. In his younger years, many and sore carnal temptations he endured, which made him more fervent and diligent in prayers, and to persevere continually in that holy exercise, which he did, craving most instantly of God to afford him some remedy. Living in that manner, it fell so out, that in vision, upon a certain night, he saw an Angel come unto him, who made him an eunuch, and so delivered him from all those carnal motions in such sort that never after he felt any more, as though he had not been any man at all. Trusting now upon this great grace received by the special goodness of God, as before he was a governor of men, so afterward he took charge likewise of women, and yet, for all that, did he continually admonish his scholars not easily to credit themselves herein, nor to follow his example, nor yet to trust upon that gift, which they had not in themselves, lest it turned to their own ruin and destruction.

At such time as divers witches were here in this city of Rome apprehended, one Basilius, that was a principal man in that wicked art, put upon him the habit of a monk, and so fled away to Valeria; and coming to the reverent Bishop of the city of Amirtin, he desired his help, that he would, for the good of his soul, commend him to Abbot Equitius. The Bishop went with him to the Abbey, where he made suit to the servant of God, that he would vouchsafe to receive into his convent that monk which he brought, whom so soon as the holy man beheld, he said to the Bishop:

“This man, good brother,” quoth he, “whom you commend unto me, seemeth in mine eyes to be a devil, and not any monk”; whereunto the Bishop replied and said, that he sought excuses not to grant his petition. “Not so,” quoth the servant of God, “but I do denounce him to be such a one as I see him, and because you shall not think that I will be disobedient, what you command I will perform.” Whereupon he was received into the Abbey. Not many days after, God’s servant travelled far off to preach unto the people in the country; after whose departure it fell out that, in the monastery of virgins which was under his charge, one of them, which in respect of her corruptible carcase seemed beautiful, fell into an ague, to be afflicted with sore fits, and not so much to speak as pitifully to cry out in this manner: “I shall die forthwith, unless Basilius come unto me, and by his skill in physic restore me to my health.” But, in the absence of their father, none of the monks durst presume to enter into the monastery of virgins, much less was he permitted, that was yet but a novice, and whose life and conversation was not known to the rest of the brethren. A messenger, therefore, with all speed was dispatched to the servant of God, Equitius, to let him understand how such a Nun was fallen into a terrible burning ague, and how she did earnestly desire to be visited of Basilius: which news so soon as the holy man did hear, in an anger he smiled, and said: “Did I not say beforehand that this companion was a devil and not a monk? Go your ways, and turn him out of the Abbey; and as. for the virgin that is so sick of a fever, take no further care, for hereafter it shall not trouble her any more, nor she make any further inquisition after Basilius.” The monk that was the messenger returning back, understood that the Nun was at that very hour restored to her health, in which the servant of God, Equitius, far distant, affirmed that she should: no question but by special miracle, like to the example of our Saviour, who, being desired to visit the son of a lord, did by his only word restore him to his health, so that the

father at his return knew his son to be restored to life at that very hour in which he heard so much from the mouth of truth itself. The monks, putting their father's commandment in execution, turned Basilius out of the Abbey, who being so expulsed did often say, that he had by his incantations hanged Equitius his cell in the air, and yet that he could not hurt any of his monks. This wretch not long after, in this city of Rome, through the zeal of good people, for his wickedness was burnt, and so ended his life.

Upon a certain day, one of the Nuns of the same monastery, going into the garden, saw a lettice that liked her, and forgetting to bless it before with the sign of the cross, greedily did she eat it: whereupon she was suddenly possessed with the devil, fell down to the ground, and was pitifully tormented. Word in all haste was carried to Equitius, desiring him quickly to visit the afflicted woman, and to help her with his prayers: who so soon as he came into the garden, the devil that was entered began by her tongue, as it were, to excuse himself, saying: "What have I done? What have I done? I was sitting there upon the lettice, and she came and did eat me." But the man of God in great zeal commanded him to depart, and not to tarry any longer in the servant of almighty God, who straightways went out, not presuming any more to touch her.

A certain noble man likewise called Felix, of the province of Nursia, father to Castorius, who now dwelleth here with us in Rome, understanding that Equitius had not received holy orders, and yet that he did visit many places and preach unto divers, upon a day very boldly went and asked him, how he durst presume to preach, not having received holy orders, nor yet licence of the Bishop of Rome, under whom he did live; upon which demand, the holy man, being thus compelled, gave him to understand by what means he had obtained licence to preach: speaking thus unto him: "What you say unto me, myself have seriously thought upon; but, on a certain night, a young man in vision stode by me, and touched my tongue

with such an instrument as they use in letting of blood, saying: 'Behold, I have put my word into thy mouth, go thy way and preach.' And since that day, though I would, I can not but talk of God."

PETER. Desirous I am to know, what manner of life he led, who is said to have received such gifts at God's hand.

GREGORY. The work, Peter, proceedeth of the gift, and not the gift from the work, otherwise grace were not grace: for God's gifts do go before all works of ours, although the gifts by the works which follow do increase; but to the end that you may understand what life he led, which was known to the reverent man Albinus, Bishop of Reatino; and many there be yet alive, which might very well remember the same. But what do you seek for further works, when as his purity of life was answerable to his diligence in preaching? for such a zeal to save souls had inflamed his heart, that albeit he had the charge of many monasteries, yet did he diligently travel up and down, and visit churches, towns, villages, and particular men's houses, and all this to stir up the hearts of his auditors to the love of heavenly joys. The apparel which he ware was so base and contemptible, that such as knew him not would have thought scorn so much as to have saluted him, though himself had first offered that courtesy. And whithersoever he went, his manner was to ride, but that upon the most forlorn beast which could be found; his bridle was but an halter, his saddle no better than plain sheep's skins. His books of divinity were put into leather bags, and those he did carry himself, some hanging on the right side of his horse, and some upon the left: and to what place soever he came, he did so open the fountains of sacred scripture, that he watered their souls with the heavenly dew of his sermons. Whose grace in preaching was so great, that the fame thereof came even to Rome itself: and as the tongues of flatterers do with their glorious words kill the souls of such as give them the hearing, at the same time some of the Roman clergy did in flattering sort complain unto the

Bishop of this Apostolic see, saying: "What manner of rustical companion is this, that hath taken upon him authority to preach, and, being without learning, presumeth to usurp unto himself the office of our Apostolical Lord? wherefore, if it please you, let him be sent for before your presence, that he may taste of the severity of ecclesiastical discipline." And as it falleth out, that he which hath much business is overcome sometime by flattery, if that pleasing venom be not speedily dispatched from the soul, at the persuasion of his clergy the Pope gave his consent that he should be sent for to Rome, to understand what talent and gift he had received from God. And so one Julianus, who afterward was made Bishop of Sabinum, was sent, having yet commandment given him to bring him up with great honour, to the end that the servant of God might not thereby sustain any injury or detriment in his fame: who, to gratify the Pope's clergy, went in post to the Abbey, and finding there in his absence certain antiquaries writing, demanded of them for the Abbot; who told him that he was in the valley at the bottom of the Abbey, mowing of hay. Julianus had a man very proud and stubborn, and such a one that he could scarce rule him. This man he sent in all haste for the Abbot; who in an angry mood went his way, and coming quickly into the meadow where beholding all that were there cutting of grass, he demanded which of them was Equitius; and when they shewed him where he was, being yet far off, he fell into a great fear, and became therewith so faint, that he could scarce go upon his legs: trembling in that manner he came to the man of God, and humbly bowing down his head, he embraced his knees and kissed them, telling him that his master was desirous to speak with him. After God's servant had saluted him again, he willed him to take up some of the grass, and to carry it home for their horse, "and I will," quoth he, "straightways come, when I have dispatched this little work which remaineth."

In this meantime, Julianus much marvelled what the matter was, why his man tarried so long, and seeing him at length to come laden with grass upon his neck, in great rage he cried out to him, saying: “Sirrah, what meaneth this? I sent you to fetch me the Abbot, and not to bring meat for mine horse.” “Sir,” quoth his man, “he will come to you by and by”: and forthwith the man of God came in base apparel and a pair of shoes beaten full of nails, carrying his scythe upon his neck; and being yet far off, his man told him that he was the Abbot. So soon as Julianus beheld him attired in that base sort, he contemned him, and devised with himself how to speak unto him in the most cross and crooked manner he could. But when God’s servant drew nigh, such an intolerable fear came upon Julianus, that he fell a trembling, and his tongue so faltered, that he could scarce deliver the message for which he came: whereupon he fell down at his feet, and desired that he would vouchsafe to pray for him; and withal gave him to understand, that his Apostolical father the Pope was desirous to see him. Upon the receipt of which news the venerable man, Equitius, gave almighty God most hearty thanks, saying that heavenly grace had visited him by means of the highest Bishop; and straightways he called for some of his monks, commanding horse to be made ready in all haste: but Julianus, weary of his journey, told him that he could not travel so soon, but of necessity must rest himself that night. “I am very sorry for that,” quoth the holy man, “for if we go not to-day, to-morrow we shall not”: and thus, by reason of the other’s weariness, he was enforced that night to remain in the Abbey. The next morning, about the dawning of the day, came a post with a tired horse, bringing letters to Julianus, commanding him not to presume to molest or to draw the servant of God out of his monastery. And when he required the reason of this counter-command, the messenger told him that, the next night after his departure, the Pope was terribly frighted in a vision, for presuming to send for the man of God: whereupon Julianus, rising

suddenly out of his bed, and commending himself to the venerable man's prayers, spake thus unto him: "Our father desireth you not to trouble yourself any further, but to stay in your monastery": which when God's servant heard, very sorry he was, and said: "Did not I tell you, that if we did not set forward on our journey by and by, that afterward we should not?" Then upon charity he entertained his messenger a little while with him in his Cloister, and though by all means he refused, yet he enforced upon him a reward for the pains he had taken. See therefore, Peter, how God doth preserve and keep them, who in this life do contemn themselves, and how they are secretly honoured of the citizens in heaven, who are not ashamed outwardly to be little esteemed in this world; and on the contrary, in the sight of God they be of no account, who in the eyes of their own friends and neighbours do swell through desire of vain glory. And therefore our Saviour Christ, who was truth itself, said to certain: *You are they that justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is high to men is abominable in the sight of God.*

PETER. I marvel very much how so great a Bishop could be deceived in so worthy a man.

GREGORY. Why do you marvel, Peter? for the reason why we are deceived is, because we be men. What? have you forgotten how David, who usually had the spirit of prophecy, pronounced sentence against innocent Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, when he gave credit to the lying words of his servant Siba? which thing notwithstanding because it was done by David, we both believe to be just in the secret judgment of God, and yet by human reason how it was just we cannot perceive. What marvel then is it, if we, that be not prophets, be sometimes by lying tongues abused, and otherwise transported than charity and justice would: for it is much to be considered, that every Bishop hath his mind troubled with a world of business, and it cannot be, when the mind is distracted about many things,

but that it is the less able sufficiently to examine those that be particular, and so much the sooner is he deceived in some special case, by how much he is busied with the multitude of many.

PETER. It is most true that you say.

GREGORY. But I must not pass over with silence that which the reverent man Valentinus, some time mine Abbot, told me concerning Equitius. For he said, that his body being buried in the oratory of St. Lawrence the martyr, a certain country man set upon his grave a chest full of wheat, little considering or respecting how worthy and notable a man lay there buried. Whereupon suddenly a miraculous whirlwind came, and overthrew that chest and cast it far off, all other things remaining still in their former places; by which all did plainly perceive of what worth and merit that man was, whose body lay there buried.

To this must I also add another thing, which I heard of venerable Fortunatus, a man that doth much please me for his years, life, and simplicity. At such time as the Lombards came into the province of Valeria, the monks of the monastery of the reverent man Equitius fled from thence into the oratory, to the holy man's sepulchre, into which place the cruel men entering, they began by violence to pull the monks forth, either to torment them, or else with their swords to kill them. Amongst whom one sighed, and for very bitter grief cried out: "Alas, alas, holy Equitius, is it thy pleasure, and art thou content, that we should be thus miserably haled and violently drawn forth, and dost not thou vouchsafe to defend us?" Which words were no sooner spoken, but a wicked spirit possessed those savage soldiers in such sort that, falling down upon the ground, they were there so long tormented, until all the rest of the Lombards which were without understood of the matter, to the end that none should be so hardy as to presume to violate that holy place. And thus, as the holy man at that time

defended his own monks, so did he likewise afterward succour and preserve many more that fled unto the same place.

Chapter Five: of Constantius, Clerk of the Church of St. Stephen.

That which I intend now to tell you, I learned by the relation of one of my fellow Bishops, who lived in a monk's weed many years in the city of Ancona, and led there a good and religious life. Many also of mine own friends, who be now of good years and live in the same parts, affirm it to be most true. Near to the foresaid city of Ancona there is a church of the blessed martyr St. Stephen, in which one called Constantius, a man of venerable life, did serve there for clerk, who for his virtue and holiness was famous far and near, being one that utterly despised all worldly things, and with the whole power of his soul thirsted after the joys of heaven. Upon a certain day, it fell so out that there wanted oil in the church, by reason whereof the foresaid servant of God had not wherewith to light the lamps: whereupon he filled them all with water, and, as the manner is, put a piece of paper in the midst, and then set them on fire, and the water did so burn in the lamps as though it had been very oil; by which you may gather, Peter, of what merit this man was, who, enforced by necessity, did change the nature of the element.

PETER. Very strange it is that you say, but desirous I am to know what humility he had inwardly in his soul, who outwardly was so wonderful in the eyes of the world.

GREGORY. Among miracles very fitly do you enquire the inward state of the mind; for it is almost incredible how miracles, wrought in the sight of men, do with their temptation inwardly assault the soul. But after you have heard only one thing, which this venerable Constantius did, you will quickly perceive what an humble man he was.

PETER. Having now told me one of his miracles, it remaineth that you do edify me also with the humility of his soul.

GREGORY. Because the report of his holy life was very much spread abroad, many from divers countries travelled to Ancona, being very desirous to see him; and amongst others a certain country fellow was come far off, for that very purpose: at which time it so chanced that the holy man was standing upon a pair of wooden stairs, busying himself there in mending of lamps. A very little person he was of stature, with a thin face, and to the outward view contemptible. This fellow that came to see him enquired earnestly which was the man for whose sake he had travelled so long a journey. Those that knew him forthwith told him, pointing to Constantius. But as foolish souls do measure the merits of men by the quality of their bodies, so he, beholding him so little and contemptible, by no means could be persuaded that they told him truth; for in the country fellow's mind there fell out, as it were, a great contention betwixt that which he had heard, and that which he saw; and he verily persuaded himself that he could not be so little in his eyes, who was so great in his former conceit; and therefore, when very many did constantly affirm that he was the man, the simple soul despised him, and in scoffing manner said: "I verily believed that he had been a goodly great man, but this fellow hath not any thing at all in him that is like a man." Which words of his the servant of God, Constantius, hearing, forthwith left his lamps which he was in hand with, and in great haste came merrily down the stairs, embraced the country clown, and of exceeding love held him fast in his arms, kissed him, gave him great thanks for having that opinion, and spake thus unto him: "Thou only," quoth he, "hast thine eyes open, and dost truly behold what I am." By which fact we may easily gather what an humble man he was, that loved the country fellow the more for contemning him; for injurious words and contumelious usage try what a man is inwardly in his soul: for as proud men are glad of honour, so those that be humble for the most part rejoice in contempt and disgrace, and when they behold themselves to be of no

account in the opinion of others, glad they are, because they see that to be confirmed by the judgment of others which inwardly in their own souls they had of themselves.

PETER. This man, as I perceive, was outwardly great in miracles, but yet greater by his inward humility of soul.

Chapter Six: of Marcellinus, Bishop of Ancona.

GREGORY. Marcellinus, also a man of holy life, was Bishop of the same city of Ancona; who was so sore troubled with the gout, that being not able to go, his servants were enforced to carry him in their hands. Upon a day, by negligence, the city was set on fire, and though many laboured by throwing on of water to quench it, yet did it so increase and go forward that the whole city was in great danger; for it had laid hold of all the houses that were next it, and consumed already a great part of the town, none being able to help or withstand it. In so pitiful a necessity and great danger, the Bishop, carried by his servants, came thither, and commanded himself to be set down right against those furious flames, and in that very place whither the force of the fire did seem most to bend: which being done, the fire marvellous strangely turned back into itself, and as it were cried out, that it could not pass the Bishop; and by this means was it stopped from going forward, [and] went out of itself, not being able to touch any other buildings. By which, Peter, you see what an argument of great holiness it was, for a sick man to sit still, and by his prayers to quench those raging flames.

PETER. I do both see it and much wonder at so notable a miracle.

Chapter Seven: of Nonnosus, Prior of the Abbey in Mount Soracte.

GREGORY. Now I intend to let you understand somewhat of a place not far distant, which I heard of the reverent Bishop Maximianus, and of the old monk Laurio, one whom you know: both which are yet living; and as for Laurio, he was brought up under that holy man Anastasius, in the Abbey which is hard by the city of Nepi; and Anastasius, both by reason of the nearness of the place, equal love of virtue, and like profession of life, was daily in the company of holy Nonnosus, Prior of the Abbey which is in mount Soracte. This Nonnosus had for his Abbot a very sharp man, whose rough conditions notwithstanding he did always bear with wonderful patience, and did in such sweet sort govern the monks, that oftentimes by his humility he appeased the Abbot's anger. The Abbey, standing in the top of an hill, had never an even and plain place fit for a garden; one only little plot of ground there was, in the side of the mountain, but that was taken up of a great stone which did naturally grow there, so that by no means it could serve for a garden. Yet venerable Nonnosus, upon a day, began to think with himself that at least that piece of ground would serve very well to set worts, if by any means that huge stone could be taken away; but then he likewise thought that five hundred yoke of oxen would not be able to stir it; whereupon, despairing of all human help, he betook himself to God's goodness, and in that very place gave himself to prayer in the quiet time of the night, and behold, on the morning, when the monks came thither, they found that huge stone removed far off, and a very fit plot of ground left to make them a garden.

At another time, the same holy man being washing of lamps made of glass, one of them by chance fell out of his hands, and brake into many pieces; who, fearing the great fury of the Abbot, did forthwith gather up all the fragments, laid them before the altar, and there with great sighing fell to

his prayers; and afterward, lifting up his head, he found the lamp entire and whole. And thus, in these two miracles, did he imitate two notable fathers, to wit, Gregory and Donatus; the first of which removed a mountain, and the other made a broken chalice safe and sound.

PETER. We have, as I perceive now, miracles after the imitation of old saints.

GREGORY. How say you? are you content also in the conversation of Nonnosus, to hear how he did imitate the fact of the prophet Heliseus?

PETER. Content I am, and most earnestly desire it.

GREGORY. Upon a certain day, when the old oil was spent, and the time to gather olives was now at hand, the Abbot, because their own trees took not, thought it best to send the monks abroad to help strangers in the gathering of theirs, that for the recompense of their labour they might bring home some oil for the necessities of their own house. This determination the man of God, Nonnosus, in great humility did hinder, lest the monks, going abroad from their cloister to get oil, might lose somewhat in the devotion of their souls. And therefore, because he saw that their own trees had yet a few olives, he willed those to be gathered and put into the press, and that oil which came forth to be brought unto him, though it were never so little; which being done, he set the little vessel before the altar, and after their departure he offered his prayers to God, which being ended, he called for the monks, commanding them to take away the oil which they brought, and to pour a little thereof into all the vessels which they had, that each of them might have some of the benediction of that oil: which being done, he caused the vessels, empty as they were, to be close stopped, and the next day they found them all full.

PETER. We find daily the words of our Saviour to be verified, who saith: *My Father even to this time doth work, and I do work.*

Chapter Eight: of Anastasius, Abbot of the Monastery called Suppentonia.

GREGORY. At the same time the reverent man Anastasius, of whom I spake before, was notary to the church of Rome, whereof by God's providence I have now the charge; who desirous only to serve God, gave over his office, and made choice of a monastical life: and in that Abbey which is called Suppentonia, he lived many years virtuously, and governed that place with great care and diligence. Over the Abbey there hangeth an huge rock, and beneath it there is a steep downfall. Upon a certain night, when God had determined to reward the labours of venerable Anastasius, a voice was heard from the top of that rock, which very leisurely did cry out: "Come away, Anastasius"; who being so called, straight after, seven other monks were severally called by their names. And then the voice stayed for a little time, and then called again the eighth monk. Which strange voice the Convent hearing very plainly, made no doubt but that the death of them that were so called was not far off; wherefore not many days after, before the rest, Anastasius himself, and then the others in order, departed this mortal life, as they were before called from the top of the rock. And that monk who was called after some pausing did a little while survive the rest, and then he also ended his life: whereby it was plain that the staying of the voice did signify that he should live a little longer than the other. But a strange thing happened, for when holy Anastasius lay upon his death-bed, a certain monk there was in the Abbey, that would needs die with him, and therefore fell down at his feet, and there began with tears to beg of him in this manner: "For his love to whom you are now going, I beseech and adjure you, that I may not remain in this world seven days after your departure"; and indeed it so fell out, that before the seventh day was come, that he left this mortal life, and yet was not he that night named by that voice amongst the rest, so

that it appeareth plainly that it was only the intercession of Anastasius which obtained that his departure.

PETER. Seeing that monk was not called amongst the other, and yet by the intercession of that holy man was taken out of this life: what other thing can we gather hereof, but that such as be of great merit, and in favour with God, can sometime obtain those things which be not predestinate?

GREGORY. Such things as be not predestinate by God, cannot by any means be obtained at his hands; but those things which holy men do by their prayers effect, were from all eternity predestinate to be obtained by prayers. For very predestination itself to life everlasting, is so by almighty God disposed, that God's elect servants do through their labour come unto it, in that by their prayers they do merit to receive that which almighty God determined before all worlds to bestow upon them.

PETER. Desirous I am to have this point more plainly proved: to wit, that predestination may by prayers be holpen.

GREGORY. That which I inferred, Peter, may quickly be proved; for ignorant you are not that our Lord said to Abraham: *In Isaac shall seed be called to thee;* to whom also he said: *I have appointed thee to be a father of many nations;* and again he promised him, saying: *I will bless thee, and multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand of the sea.* Out of which place it is plain that almighty God had predestinate to multiply the seed of Abraham by Isaac, and yet the scripture saith: *Isaac did pray unto our Lord for his wife because she was barren, who did hear him, and Rebecca conceived*. If, then, the increase of Abraham's posterity was predestinate by Isaac, how came it to pass that his wife was barren? by which most certain it is, that predestination is fulfilled by prayers, when as we see that he by whom God had predestinate to increase Abraham's seed obtained by prayer to have children.

PETER. Seeing reason hath made that plain, which before I knew not, I have not herein any further doubt.

GREGORY. Shall I now tell you somewhat of such holy men as have been in Tuscania; that you may be informed what notable persons have flourished in those parts, and how greatly they were in the favour of almighty God?

PETER. Willing I am to give you the hearing; and therefore beseech you to proceed forward.

Chapter Nine: of Bonifacius, Bishop of Ferenti.

GREGORY. A man of holy life there was, called Bonifacius, Bishop of the city of Ferenti, one that with his virtuous conversation did well discharge his duty. Many miracles he did, which Gaudentius the Priest, who yet liveth, doth still report: and seeing he was brought up under him, no question but by reason of that his presence he is able to tell all things the more truly.

His Bishopric was passing poor (a thing which to good men is the preserver of humility), for he had nothing else for his revenues, but only one vineyard, which was also at one time so spoiled with a tempest of hail, that very few grapes did remain. Bonifacius coming in, and seeing what was happened, gave God great thanks, for that he had sent him further poverty to his former necessity. And when the time came that those few grapes which remained were ripe, he appointed one, according to the custom, to keep his vineyard, commanding him carefully to look well unto it. And upon a certain day, he willed Constantius, who both was a Priest and his nephew, to make ready, as before they were wont to do, all the barrels and wine-vessels they had: which thing when his nephew the Priest understood, he marvelled much to hear him command so mad a thing, as to make ready the vessels for wine, himself having no wine at all to put in: yet durst he not enquire the reason why he gave that charge, but did as he commanded, and made all the vessels and other things ready, as before they had always used to do. Then the man of God caused the poor remnant of grapes to be gathered and carried to the wine-press, and dispatching all others away, himself tarried there still with a little boy whom he commanded to tread those grapes, and when he perceived that a little wine began to run forth, the man of God took it, and put it into a little vessel, and poured somewhat thereof into all the other barrels and vessels which were made ready, as it were to bless them with that little quantity: when he had so done, he called straightways for the Priest, commanding him to send for the poor, upon

whose coming the wine in the press began to increase and run out so plentifully, that it did fill all the pots and other vessels which they brought. When they were all served, he bade the boy to leave treading, and come down; then, locking up the storehouse, into which he had put his own vessels, and setting his own seal upon the door, to the church he went, and three days after he called for Con-stantius, and having said a few prayers, he opened the door, where he found all the vessels into which he had before poured but a very little liquor working so plentifully, that, if he had not then come, they had all run over into the floor. Then he straightly commanded the Priest his kinsman, not to reveal this miracle to any, so long as he lived, fearing lest, by means thereof, the outward opinion of men might through vain glory inwardly have hurt his soul: following therein the example of our master Christ, who, to teach us to walk in the path of humility, commanded his disciples concerning himself, not to tell any what they had seen, until the Son of Man was risen again from death.

PETER. Because fit occasion is now offered, desirous I am to know what the reason was, that when our Saviour restored sight unto two blind men, and commanded them to tell nobody; yet they, after their departure, made him known throughout all that country. For had the only-begotten Son of God, who is co-eternal to his Father and the Holy Ghost, a desire herein to do that which he could not perform: to wit, that the miracle which he would have kept secret, could not yet be concealed?

GREGORY. All that which our blessed Saviour wrought in his mortal body, he did it for our example and instruction, to the end that, following his steps, according to our poor ability, we might without offence pass over this present life: and therefore, when he did that miracle, he both commanded them to conceal it, and yet it could not be kept in, and all this to teach his elect servants to follow his doctrine; to wit, that when they do any notable thing whereof glory may arise to themselves, that they should

have a desire not to be spoken of, and yet for the good of others, contrary to their own mind, they should be laid open and known: so that it proceed of their great humility to desire that their works may be buried with silence, and yet, for the profit of others, it should fall so out, that they can not be concealed. Wherefore our Lord would not have any thing done which he could not effect: but what his servants ought to desire, and what also, contrary to their minds, was convenient to be done, like a good master he taught us by his own example.

PETER. I am very well satisfied with this your answer.

GREGORY. For as much as we have now made mention of Bonifacius, let us prosecute a few more of his acts, not yet spoken of. At another time, upon the feast-day of St. Proculus the martyr, one Fortunatus, a noble man that dwelt in that town, did heartily entreat the Bishop that, after he had done the solemnity of mass, he would vouchsafe to come unto his house, to bless his meat and dine with him. The man of God was content to satisfy his request, so charitably was he invited: and therefore, when mass was done, he went thither: but before the table was yet blessed, suddenly (as some men by such means get their living) one came to the gate with an ape, who began to play upon an instrument, which the holy man hearing, was discontented, and said: "Alas, alas, this wretched man is dead, this wretched man is dead. Behold, I am come hither to dinner, and have not yet opened my lips to praise God, and he is here with his ape, playing upon his instrument." Then he desired them to give him some meat and drink: "Yet I would have you know," quoth he, "that he is a dead man." When the unhappy wretch had filled himself and was going out at the gate, a great stone fell from the house, and brake his head. Of which blow he fell down, and was taken up half dead, and being carried away the next day, as the man of God had before said, he departed this life; wherein, Peter, we have to consider how holy men are with fear to be reverenced: for they no question

be the temples of God, and when an holy man is enforced to anger, who is then moved but he that dwelleth in that temple? wherefore we have so much the more cause to fear how we provoke such kind of persons to wrath, seeing we know that he is present in their souls, who hath power and might sufficient to inflict what punishment himself best pleaseth.

At another time, the aforesaid Priest Constantius, his nephew, had sold his horse for twelve crowns, which money he laid up in his chest; and being abroad about other business, it so happened, that certain poor people pitifully begged of the holy Bishop, that he would vouchsafe to bestow something upon them for the relief of their necessity. The man of God, not having anything to give them, was much, grieved to send them away empty: whiles he was thus troubled, suddenly it came to his mind how his nephew had sold his horse, and that the money was in his chest; whereupon, in his absence, by virtuous violence, he brake open the lock, took away the twelve crowns, and bestowed them as best pleased himself upon the poor people. Constantius, returning home and finding his chest open, locked for his money, and finding it not, he began to exclaim, and with great noise and fury to cry out against his uncle, saying: “All other can live here in quiet, only I can not.” The Bishop, hearing him crying out in that manner, came unto him, as also the rest of his family; and when he began with sweet speech to mitigate his fury, in great anger he replied, saying: “All other can live with you, only I can not be suffered to be in quiet: give me my money, which you have taken out of my chest.” The Bishop, moved at his words, departed away, and went into the church of the blessed virgin Mary, where, lifting up his hands with his vestment upon them, he began standing to pray, that she would help him to so much money, that he might quiet the fury of the mad Priest: and casting suddenly his eyes upon the garment that lay between his arms stretched out, he found twelve crowns lying there, so fair and bright, as though they had then newly come from the mint; who

forthwith going out of the church, cast them to the raging Priest with these words: "Lo, there is your money which you have kept such a stir for; but know you that after my death you shall never be Bishop of this place, and that for your covetous mind." By which true censure of his we gather that the Priest provided that money for the getting of the Bishopric. But the words of the man of God did prevail: for the same Constantius ended his life without any further promotion than to the dignity of Priesthood. At another time, two Goths came unto him for hospitality, saying that they were travelling to Ravenna; unto whom he gave with his own hands a little wooden bottle full of wine, enough, haply, for their dinner; of which, notwithstanding, they drank until they came to Ravenna, and though they stayed some days in that city, yet they had no other wine than that which the holy man bestowed upon them: and so likewise they continued until they returned back again to the same venerable Bishop, drinking daily of the same, and yet never lacking wine to serve their necessity: as though, in that wooden bottle which he gave them, wine had grown, and not there increased.

Not long sithence, there came from the same country a certain old man that is a clerk, who reporteth divers notable things of him, which must not be passed over with silence. For he saith that going upon a day into his garden, he found it all full of caterpillars, and seeing all his worts spoiled, turning himself to them, he spake thus: "I adjure you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to depart from hence, and not to eat any more of these worts ": after which words, those worms did forthwith so vanish away, that there was not one to be found in all the whole garden. But what great marvel is it, to hear such things reported of him that was now a Bishop, being then, both by reason of his orders, and also holy conversation of life, grown into favour with almighty God, seeing those are more to be admired which this old clergyman said that he did, being yet but a little boy? For he

affirmeth, that at such time as Bonifacius dwelt with his mother, and went abroad, that sometime he came home without his shirt, and oftentimes without his coat: for no sooner did he see a naked man, but he gave away his clothes, and put them upon him, to the end that himself might be clothed with a reward in the sight of God. His mother rebuked him often for doing so, and told him that it was no reason that, being poor himself, he should give away his apparel to other. Upon another day, going into the barn, she found almost all her wheat, which she had provided for the whole year, given away by her son to the poor: and as she was, for very grief thereof, beating and tearing of herself, the child of God, Bonifacius, came, and with the best words he could began to comfort his afflicted mother; but when by no means she would be quieted, he entreated her to go out of the barn where the little wheat that remained was. When she was departed, the virtuous youth fell straightway to his prayers; and after a little while, going out, he brought his mother back again, where she found it as full of wheat as before it was: at the sight of which miracle, she, being touched in soul, exhorted him to give as he pleased, seeing he could so soon obtain at God's hands what he asked. His mother also kept hens before her door, which a fox, that had his berry not far off, used to carry away: and upon a certain day, as the youth Bonifacius was standing in the entry, the fox, after his old manner, came and took away one of the hens; whereupon in all haste he ran to the church, and prostrate there in prayer, with loud voice he spake thus: "Is it thy pleasure, O Lord, that I shall not eat of my mother's hens? for behold, the fox doth devour them up ": and rising from his prayers, he went out of the church, and straightways the fox came back again with the hen in his mouth, leaving it where he found it, and forthwith fell down dead in the presence of Bonifacius.

PETER. It seemeth strange unto me, that God vouchsafeth in such small things to hear the prayers of them that put their trust in him.

GREGORY. This falleth out, Peter, by the great providence of our Creator, to the end that by little things which we receive at his hands, we should hope for greater: for the holy and simple lad was heard in praying for small matters, that by them he should learn how much he ought to trust in God, when he prayed for things of greater importance. PETER. What you say pleaseth me very well.

Chapter Ten: of Fortunatus, Bishop of the City of Tuderti.

GREGORY. Another man also there was in the same parts, called Fortunatus, Bishop of Tuderti, who had a most singular grace in casting out of devils, in so much that sometime he did cast out of possessed bodies whole legions; and by the continual exercise of prayer, he overcame all their temptations. Julianus, who had an office here in our church, and not long since died in this city, was familiarly acquainted with him, by whose relation I learned that which I will now tell you: for by reason of his great and inward familiarity, often was he present at such miracles as he wrought, and did divers times talk of him to our instruction and his own comfort.

A certain noble matron there was, dwelling in the hither parts of Tuscania, that had a daughter-in-law, which, not long after the marriage of her son, was, together with her mother-in-law, invited to the dedication of the oratory of the blessed martyr, St. Sebastian: and the night before this solemnity, overcome with carnal pleasure, she could not abstain from her husband; and though in the morning her former delight troubled her conscience, yet shame drave her forth to the procession, being more ashamed of men than fearing the judgment of God, and therefore thither she went together with her mother-in-law. And behold, straight upon the bringing of the relics of St. Sebastian the martyr into the oratory, a wicked spirit possessed the foresaid matron's daughter-in-law, and pitifully tormented her before all the people. The Priest of the oratory, beholding her so terribly vexed and lifted up, took a white linen cloth and cast upon her; and forthwith the devil also entered into him, and because he presumed above his strength, enforced also he was by his own vexation, to know what himself was. Those that were present took up the young gentlewoman in their hands, and carried her home to her own house. And for as much as she was by the enemy continually and cruelly tormented, her kinsfolk that carnally loved her, and with their love did persecute her, cause her to be

carried for help to certain witches; so utterly to cast away her soul, whose body they went about by sorcery for a time to relieve. Coming into their hands, she was by them brought to a river, and there washed in the water, the sorcerers labouring a long time by their enchantments to cast out the devil, that had possessed her body: but by the wonderful judgment of almighty God, it fell out that whiles one by unlawful art was expelled, suddenly a whole legion did enter in. And from that time forward, she began to be tossed with so many varieties of motions, to shriek out in so many sundry tunes, as there were devils in her body. Then her parents, consulting together, and confessing their own wickedness, carried her to the venerable Bishop Fortunatus, and with him they left her: who, having taken her to his charge, fell to his prayers many days and nights, and he prayed so much the more earnestly, because he had against him, in one body, an whole army of devils: and many days passed not, before he made her so safe and sound, as though the devil had never had any power or interest in her body.

At another time, the same servant of almighty God cast forth a devil out of one that was possessed: which wicked spirit, when it was now night and saw few men stirring in the streets, taking upon him the shape of a stranger, began to go up and down the city, crying out: “O holy Bishop Fortunatus, behold what he hath done; he hath turned a stranger out of his lodging, and now I seek for a place to rest in, and in his whole city can find none.” A certain man, sitting in his house by the fire, with his wife and his little son, hearing one to cry out in that manner, went forth, and enquired what the Bishop had done, and withal invited him to his house, where he caused him to sit with them by the fire: and as they were among themselves discoursing of divers matters, the same wicked spirit on a sudden entered into his little child, cast him into the fire, and forthwith killed him: then the wretched father, by the loss of his son in this manner, knew full well whom he had entertained, and the Bishop turned out of his lodging.

PETER. What was the cause, that the old enemy presumed to kill his son in his own house: who, thinking him to be a stranger, vouchsafed him of lodging and entertainment?

GREGORY. Many things, Peter, seem to be good and yet are not, because they be not done with a good mind and intention; and therefore our Saviour saith in the gospel: *If thy eye be naughty all thy body shall be dark.* For when the intention is wicked, all the work that followeth is naught, although it seem to be never so good; and therefore this man who lost his child, though he seemed to give hospitality, yet I think that he took not any pleasure in that work of mercy, but rather in the detraction and infamy of the Bishop: for the punishment which followed did declare that his entertainment going before, was not void of sin. For some there be, which are careful to do good works, to the end they may obscure the virtue of another man's life; neither take they pleasure in the good thing which they do, but in the conceit of that hurt which thereby they imagine re-doundeth to others; and therefore I verily suppose that this man, which gave entertainment to the devil, was more desirous to seem to do a good work than to do

Matt. 6, 23.

it indeed; to the end that he might seem more charitable than the Bishop, in that he entertained him whom the man of God, Fortunatus, had thrust out of his house

PETER. It is verily so, as you say: for the end of the work declared that the intent of the doer was not good.

GREGORY. At another time, likewise, one that had lost his eyesight was brought unto him, who craved his intercession and obtained it: for so soon as the man of God had prayed for him, and made the sign of the cross upon his eyes, straightways he received his sight. Beside this, a certain soldier's horse became so mad, that he could scant be holden by many, and so cruel

he was, that he rent and tare the flesh of all such as he could reach with his teeth. At length, as well as they could, they tied him with ropes, and so brought him to the man of God; who putting forth his hand, made upon his head the sign of the cross, and forthwith all his madness departed, in such sort that he became more gentle than ever he was before. Then the soldier, seeing his horse so miraculously cured, determined to bestow him upon the Bishop: which because he refused, and yet the other instantly entreated that he would not reject his poor gift, the holy man took the middle way, and yielded so to the soldier's request, that yet he would not take any reward for the doing of that miracle; for he gave him first so much money as the horse was worth, and then received him; for perceiving that the soldier would have been grieved, if he had refused his courteous offer, upon charity he bought that whereof he had then no need.

Neither must I pass over with silence that which I heard almost twelve days since: for a certain poor old man was brought unto me (because I loved always to talk with such kind of men), of whom I enquired his country; and understanding that he was of the city of Tuderti, I asked him whether he knew the good old father, Bishop Fortunatus; to which he answered that he knew him, and that very well. "Then I beseech you," quoth I, "tell me whether you know of any miracles which he did, and because I am very desirous, let me understand what manner of man he was." "This man," quoth he, "was far different from all those which live in our days; for he obtained at God's hands whatsoever he requested. One of his miracles which cometh to my mind, I will now tell you.

"Certain Goths, upon a day, travelling not far from the city of Tuderti, as they were in their journey to Ravenna, carried away with them two little boys from a place which belonged to the said city. News hereof being brought to the holy Bishop Fortunatus, he sent straightways, desiring those Goths to come unto him: to whom he spake very courteously, being willing

by fair speech to pacify their fierce and cruel natures; and afterward told them that they should have what money they desired, so they would make restitution of the children: ‘and therefore, I beseech you,’ quoth he, ‘gratify my request in this one thing.’ Then he which seemed to be the chief of them two told him, that whatsoever else he commanded they were ready to perform, but as for the boys, by no means they would let them go. To whom the venerable man (threatening in sweet sort) spake unto him in this manner: ‘You grieve me, good son, to see that you will not be ruled by your father; but give me not any such cause of grief, for it is not good that you do.’ But for all this the Goth, continuing still hard-hearted, denied his request, and so went his way, yet coming again the next day, the holy man renewed his former suit concerning the children; but when he saw that by no means he could persuade him, in sorrowful manner he spake thus: ‘Well I know that it is not good for you to depart in this manner, and leave me thus afflicted.’ But the Goth, not esteeming his words, returned to his inn, set those children on horseback, and sent them before with his servants, and straightways himself took horse and followed after; and as he was riding in the same city by the church of St. Peter the Apostle, his horse stumbling, fell down, and brake his thigh in such sort that the bone was quite asunder: up was he taken, and carried back again to his inn; who in all haste sent after his servants, and caused the boys to be brought back again. Then he sent one to venerable Fortunatus with this message: ‘I beseech you, father, to send unto me your deacon’; who when he was come unto him lying in his bed, he made those boys, which before upon no entreaty he would restore, to be brought forth, and delivered them to him, saying: ‘Go and tell my Lord the Bishop: Behold you have cursed me, and I am punished, but I have now sent you those children which before you required, take them, and I beseech you to pray for me.’ The deacon received the children, and carried them to the Bishop; whereupon the holy man forthwith gave his deacon

some holy water, saying: 'Go quickly and cast it upon him where he lieth '; who went his way, and coming to the Goth, he sprinkled all his body with holy water: and O strange and admirable thing! the holy water no sooner touched his thigh but all the rupture was so healed, and himself so perfectly restored to his former health, that he forsook his bed that very hour, took his horse, and went on his journey, as though he had never been hurt at all: and thus it fell out, that he which refused for money and upon obedience to restore the children, was by punishment enforced to do it for nothing." When the old man had told me this strange story, ready he was to proceed unto other; but because I was at that time to make an exhortation to some that expected me, and the day was well spent, I could not at that time hear any more of the notable acts of venerable Fortunatus; and yet if I might, never would I do any thing else, than give ear to such excellent stories.

The next day, the same old man reported a thing far more wonderful: for he said that in the same city of Tuderti, there dwelt a good virtuous man called Marcellus, together with two of his sisters, who, falling sick, somewhat late upon Easter even departed this life: and because he was to be carried far off, he could not be buried that day. His sisters having now longer respite for his burial, with heavy hearts ran weeping unto the Bishop; where they began to cry out aloud in this manner: "We know that thou leadest an Apostolical life, that thou dost heal lepers, restore sight to the blind: come, therefore, we beseech you, and raise up our dead brother." The venerable man, hearing of their brother's death, began himself likewise to weep, desired them to depart, and not to make any such petition unto him: "for it is our Lord's pleasure," quoth he, "which no man can resist." When they were gone, the Bishop continued still sad and sorrowful for the good man's death; and the next day being the solemn feast of Easter, very early in the morning he went with two of his deacons to Marcellus' house, and coming to the place where his dead body lay, he fell to his prayers; and

when he had made an end, he rose up and sat down by the corpse, and with a low voice called the dead man by his name, saying: “Brother Marcellus “; whereat, as though he had been lightly asleep, and awaked with that voice, he rose up, opened his eyes, and looking upon the Bishop, said: “O what have you done? O what have you done?” To whom the Bishop answered, saying: “What have I done?” “Marry,” quoth he, “yesterday there came two unto me, and discharged my soul out of my body, and carried me away to a good place, and this day one was sent, who bade them carry me back again, because Bishop Fortunatus was gone to mine house.” And when he had spoken these words, straightways he recovered of his sickness, and lived long after. And yet for all this we must not think that he lost that place which he had, because there is no doubt, but that he might, by the prayers of his intercessor, live yet more virtuously after his death, who had a care before he died to please almighty God.

But why do I spend so many words in discoursing of his wonderful life, when as we have so many miracles, even at these days, wrought at his body? for, as he was wont to do when he lived upon earth, so doth he now continually at his dead bones dispossess devils, and heal such as be sick, so often as men pray for such graces with faith and devotion. But I mean now to return to the province of Valeria, of which I have heard most notable miracles from the mouth of venerable Fortunatus, of whom long before I have made mention, who, coming often to visit me, whiles he reporteth old stories, continually he bringeth me new delight.

Chapter Eleven: of Martirius, a Monk in the Province of Valeria.

A certain man lived in that province, called Martirius, who was a very devout servant of almighty God, and gave this testimony of his virtuous life. For, upon a certain day, the other monks, his brethren, made a hearth-cake, forgetting to make upon it the sign of the cross: for in that country they use to make a cross upon their loaves, dividing them so into four parts: when the servant of God came, they told him that it was not marked: who, seeing it covered with ashes and coals, asked why they did not sign it, and speaking so, he made the sign of the cross with his hand against the coals: which thing whiles he was in doing, the cake gave a great crack, as though the pan had been broken with the fire: after it was baked and taken out, they found it marked with the sign of the cross, which yet not any corporal touching, but the faith of Martirius had imprinted.

Chapter Twelve: of Severus, a Priest in the same Province.

In the same country there is a valley, which is called of the plain people Interocrina ; in which there lived a certain man of a rare life, called Severus, who was a parish priest of the church of our blessed Lady the mother of God and perpetual virgin. One that lay at the point of death sent for him in great haste, desiring him to come with all speed, and by his prayers to make intercession for him, that doing penance for his wickedness, and loosed from his sins, he might depart this life. So it chanced, that the Priest at that time was busy in pruning of his vines; and therefore he bade them that came for him to go on before: "and I will," quoth he, "come after by and by." For seeing he had but a little to do, he stayed a pretty while to make an end of that, and when it was dispatched, away he went to visit the sick man; but as he was going, the former messengers met with him, saying: "Father, why have you stayed so long? go not now any further, for the man is dead." At which news the good man fell a trembling, and cried out aloud that he had killed him; whereupon he fell a weeping, and in that manner came to the dead corpse, where before the bed he fell prostrate upon the earth, pouring out of tears. Lying there weeping very pitifully, beating his head against the ground, and crying out that he was guilty of his death, suddenly the dead man returned to life: which many that were present beholding cried out, and began to weep more plentifully for joy, demanding of him where he had been, and by what means he came back again; to whom he said: "Certain cruel men," quoth he, "did carry me away; out of whose mouth and nostrils fire came forth, which I could not endure; and as they were leading me through dark places, suddenly a beautiful young man with others met us, who said unto them that were drawing me forward: 'Carry him back again; for Severus the Priest lamenteth his death, and our Lord, for his tears, hath given him longer life.'" Then Severus rose up from the earth, and by his intercession did assist him in doing of penance. And when the sick man that

revived had done penance for his sins by the space of seven days, upon the eighth with a cheerful countenance he departed this life. Consider, Peter, I pray you, how dearly our Lord loved this Severus, that would not suffer him to be grieved for a little time.

PETER. They be marvellous strange things which you report, and which before this time I never heard of: but what is the reason that in these days there be not any such men now living?

GREGORY. I make no doubt, Peter, but that there be many such holy men now living; for though they work not the like miracles, yet for all that, may they be as virtuous and as holy. For true judgment of one's life is to be taken from his virtuous conversation, and not from the working of miracles, for many there be who, although they do not any such strange things, yet are they not in virtue inferior to them that do them.

PETER. How, I beseech you, can it be maintained for true, that there be some that work not any miracles, and yet be as virtuous as they which work them?

GREGORY. Sure I am that you know very well that the Apostle St. Paul is brother to St. Peter, chief of the Apostles in Apostolical principality.

PETER. I know that indeed, for no doubt can be made thereof: for though he were the least of the Apostles, yet did he labour more than all they.

GREGORY. Peter, as you well remember, walked with his feet upon the sea; Paul in the sea suffered ship-wreck. And in one and the same element, where Paul could not pass with a ship, Peter went upon his feet; by which apparent it is, that though their virtue in working of miracles was not alike, yet their merit is alike in the kingdom of heaven.

PETER. I confess that I am well pleased with that you say, for I know most assuredly that the life, and not the miracles, are to be considered; but yet, seeing such miracles as be wrought do give testimony of a good life, I

beseech you, if any more be yet remaining, that you would, with the examples and virtuous lives of holy men, feed mine hungry soul.

GREGORY. Desirous I am, to the honour of our blessed Saviour, to tell you some things now concerning the miracles of the man of God, venerable St. Benedict: but to do it as it ought, this day is not sufficient; wherefore we will here make a pause, and to handle this matter more plentifully, take another beginning.

The Second Book

Of the Life and Miracles of St. Benedict

There was a man of venerable life, blessed by grace, and blessed in name, for he was called “Benedictus” or Benedict: who, from his younger years, carried always the mind of an old man; for his age was inferior to his virtue: all vain pleasure he contemned, and though he were in the world, and might freely have enjoyed such commodities as it yieldeth, yet did he nothing esteem it, nor the vanities thereof. He was born in the province of Nursia, of honourable parentage, and brought up at Rome in the study of humanity. But for as much as he saw many by reason of such learning to fall to dissolute and lewd life, he drew back his foot, which he had as it were now set forth into the world, lest, entering too far in acquaintance therewith, he likewise might have fallen into that dangerous and godless gulf: wherefore, giving over his book, and forsaking his father’s house and wealth, with a resolute mind only to serve God, he sought for some place, where he might attain to the desire of his holy purpose: and in this sort he departed, instructed with learned ignorance, and furnished with unlearned wisdom. All the notable things and acts of his life I could not learn; but those few, which I mind now to report, I had by the relation of four of his disciples: to wit, of Constantinus, a most rare and reverent man, who was next Abbot after him; of Valentinianus, who many years had the charge of the Lateran Abbey; of Simplicius, who was the third General of his order; and lastly of Honoratus, who is now Abbot of that monastery in which he first began his holy life.

Chapter One: how he made a broken sieve whole and sound.

Benedict having now given over the school, with a resolute mind to lead his life in the wilderness: his nurse alone, which did tenderly love him, would not by any means give him over. Coming, therefore, to a place called Enside and remaining there in the church of St. Peter, in the company of other virtuous men, which for charity lived in that place, it fell so out that his nurse borrowed of the neighbours a sieve to make clean wheat, which being left negligently upon the table, by chance it was broken in two pieces: whereupon she fell pitifully a-weeping, because she had borrowed it. The devout and religious youth Benedict, seeing his nurse so lamenting, moved with compassion, took away with him both the pieces of the sieve, and with tears fell to his prayers; and after he had done, rising up he found it so whole, that the place could not be seen where before it was broken; and coming straight to his nurse, and comforting her with good words, he delivered her the sieve safe and sound: which miracle was known to all the inhabitants thereabout, and so much admired, that the townsmen, for a perpetual memory, did hang it up at the church door, to the end that not only men then living, but also their posterity might understand, how greatly God's grace did work with him upon his first renouncing of the world. The sieve continued there many years after, even to these very troubles of the Lombards, where it did hang over the church door.

But Benedict, desiring rather the miseries of the world than the praises of men: rather to be wearied with labour for God's sake, than to be exalted with transitory commendation: fled privily from his nurse, and went into a desert place called Sublacum, distant almost forty miles from Rome: in which there was a fountain springing forth cool and clear water; the abundance whereof doth first in a broad place make a lake, and afterward running forward, cometh to be a river. As he was travelling to this place, a certain monk called Romanus met him, and demanded whither he went, and

understanding his purpose, he both kept it close, furthered him what he might, vested him with the habit of holy conversation, and as he could, did minister and serve him.

The man of God, Benedict, coming to this foresaid place, lived there in a strait cave, where he continued three years unknown to all men, except to Romanus, who lived not far off, under the rule of Abbot Theodacus, and very virtuously did steal certain hours, and likewise sometime a loaf given for his own provision, which he did carry to Benedict. And because from Romanus' cell to that cave there was not any way, by reason of an high rock which did hang over it, Romanus, from the top thereof, upon a long rope, did let down the loaf, upon which also with a band he tied a little bell, that by the ringing thereof the man of God might know when he came with his bread, and so be ready to take it. But the old enemy of mankind, envying at the charity of the one and the refection of the other, seeing a loaf upon a certain day let down, threw a stone and brake the bell; but yet, for all that, Romanus gave not over to serve him by all the possible means he could.

At length when almighty God was determined to ease Romanus of his pains, and to have Benedict's life for an example known to the world, that such a candle, set upon a candlestick, might shine and give light to the Church of God, our Lord vouchsafed to appear unto a certain Priest dwelling a good way off, who had made ready his dinner for Easter day, and spake thus unto him: "Thou hast provided good cheer for thyself, and my servant in such a place is afflicted with hunger": who, hearing this forthwith rose up, and upon Easter day itself, with such meat as he had prepared, went to the place, where he sought for the man of God amongst the steep hills, the low valleys and hollow pits, and at length found him in his cave: where, after they had prayed together, and sitting down had given God thanks, and had much spiritual talk, then the Priest said unto him: "Rise up, brother, and let us dine, because today is the feast of Easter." To

whom the man of God answered, and said: “I know that it is Easter with me and a great feast, having found so much favour at God’s hands as this day to enjoy your company” (for by reason of his long absence from men, he knew not that it was the great solemnity of Easter). But the reverent Priest again did assure him, saying: “Verily, to-day is the feast of our Lord’s Resurrection, and therefore meet it is not that you should keep abstinence, and besides I am sent to that end, that we might eat together of such provision as God’s goodness hath sent us.” Whereupon they said grace, and fell to their meat, and after they had dined, and bestowed some time in talking, the Priest returned to his church.

About the same time likewise, certain shepherds found him in that same cave: and at the first, when they espied him through the bushes, and saw his apparel made of skins, they verily thought that it had been some beast: but after they were acquainted with the servant of God, many of them were by his means converted from their beastly life to grace, piety, and devotion. And thus his name in the country there about became famous, and many after this went to visit him, and for corporal meat which they brought him, they carried away spiritual food for their souls.

Chapter Two: how he overcame a great temptation of the flesh.

Upon a certain day being alone, the tempter was at hand: for a little black bird, commonly called a merle or an ousel, began to fly about his face, and that so near as the holy man, if he would, might have taken it with his hand: but after he had blessed himself with the sign of the cross, the bird flew away: and forthwith the holy man was assaulted with such a terrible temptation of the flesh, as he never felt the like in all his life.

A certain woman there was which some time he had seen, the memory of which the wicked spirit put into his mind, and by the representation of her did so mightily inflame with concupiscence the soul of God’s servant, which did so increase that, almost overcome with pleasure, he was of mind to have forsaken the wilderness. But, suddenly assisted with God’s grace, he came to himself; and seeing many thick briers and nettle bushes to grow hard by, off he cast his apparel, and threw himself into the midst of them, and there wallowed so long that, when he rose up, all his flesh was pitifully torn: and so by the wounds of his body, he cured the wounds of his soul, in that he turned pleasure into pain, and by the outward burning of extreme smart, quenched that fire which, being nourished before with the fuel of carnal cogitations, did inwardly burn in his soul: and by this means he overcame the sin, because he made a change of the fire.

From which time forward, as himself did afterward report unto his disciples, he found all temptation of pleasure so subdued, that he never felt any such thing. Many after this began to abandon the world, and to become his scholars. For being now freed from the vice of temptation, worthily and with great reason is he made a master of virtue: for which cause, in Exodus, commandment is given by Moses that the Levites from five-and-twenty years and upward should serve, but, after they came to fifty, that they should be ordained keepers of the holy vessels.

PETER. Somewhat I understand of this testimony alleged: but yet I beseech you to tell me the meaning thereof more fully.

GREGORY. It is plain, Peter, that in youth the temptation of the flesh is hot: but after fifty years the heat of the body waxeth cold, and the souls of faithful people become holy vessels. Wherefore necessary it is that God's elect servants, whiles they are yet in the heat of temptation, should live in obedience, serve, and be wearied with labour and pains. But when, by reason of age, the heat of temptation is past, they become keepers of holy vessels; because they then are made the doctors of men's souls.

PETER. I cannot deny, but that your words have given me full satisfaction: wherefore, seeing you have now expounded the meaning of the former text alleged, prosecute, I pray, as you have begun, the rest of the holy man's life.

Chapter Three: how Benedict, by the sign of the holy cross, broke a drinking-glass in pieces.

GREGORY. When this great temptation was thus overcome, the man of God, like unto a piece of ground well tilled and weeded, of the seed of virtue brought forth plentiful store of fruit: and by reason of the great report of his wonderful holy life, his name became very famous. Not far from the place where he remained there was a monastery, the Abbot whereof was dead: whereupon the whole Convent came unto the venerable man Benedict, entreating him very earnestly that he would vouchsafe to take upon him the charge and government of their Abbey: long time he denied them, saying that their manners were divers from his, and therefore that they should never agree together: yet at length, overcome with their entreaty, he gave his consent.

Having now taken upon him the charge of the Abbey, he took order that regular life should be observed, so that none of them could, as before they used, through unlawful acts decline from the path of holy conversation, either on the one side or on the other: which the monks perceiving, they fell into a great rage, accusing themselves that ever they desired him to be their Abbot, seeing their crooked conditions could not endure his virtuous kind of government: and therefore when they saw that under him they could not live in unlawful sort, and were loath to leave their former conversation, and found it hard to be enforced with old minds to meditate and think upon new things: and because the life of virtuous men is always grievous to those that be of wicked conditions, some of them began to devise, how they might rid him out of the way: and therefore, taking counsel together, they agreed to poison his wine: which being done, and the glass wherein that wine was, according to the custom, offered to the Abbot to bless, he, putting forth his hand, made the sign of the cross, and straightway the glass, that was holden far off, brake in pieces, as though the sign of the cross had been a stone

thrown against it: upon which accident the man of God by and by perceived that the glass had in it the drink of death, which could not endure the sign of life: and therefore rising up, with a mild countenance and quiet mind, he called the monks together, and spake thus unto them: “Almighty God have mercy upon you, and forgive you: why have you used me in this manner? Did not I tell you before hand, that our manner of living could never agree together? Go your ways, and seek ye out some other father suitable to your own conditions, for I intend not now to stay any longer amongst you.” When he had thus discharged himself, he returned back to the wilderness which so much he loved, and dwelt alone with himself, in the sight of his Creator, who beholdeth the hearts of all men.

PETER. I understand not very well what you mean, when you say that he dwelt with himself.

GREGORY. If the holy man had longer, contrary to his own mind, continued his government over those monks, who had all conspired against him, and were far unlike to him in life and conversation: perhaps he should have diminished his own devotion, and somewhat withdrawn the eyes of his soul from the light of contemplation; and being wearied daily with correcting of their faults, he should have had the less care of himself, and so haply it might have fallen out, that he should both have lost himself, and yet not found them: for so often as by infectious motion we are carried too far from ourselves, we remain the same men that we were before, and yet be not with ourselves as we were before: because we are wandering about other men’s affairs, little considering and looking into the state of our own soul. For shall we say that he was with himself, who went into a far country, and after he had, as we read in the Gospel, prodigally spent that portion which he received of his father, was glad to serve a citizen, to keep his hogs, and would willingly have filled his hungry belly with the husks which they did eat: who notwithstanding afterward, when he thought with himself

of those goods which he had lost, it is written of him that, returning into himself, he said: How many hired men in my father's house do abound with bread?

If then, before he were with himself, from whence did he return home unto himself? and therefore I said that this venerable man did dwell with himself, because carrying himself circumspectly and carefully in the sight of his Creator, always considering his own actions, always examining himself, never did he turn the eyes of his soul from himself, to behold aught else whatsoever.

PETER. Why, then, is it written of the Apostle, St. Peter, after he was by the Angel delivered out of prison, that, returning to himself, he said: *Now I know verily, that our Lord hath sent his Angel, and hath delivered me from the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews*.

GREGORY. We are two manner of ways, Peter, carried out of ourselves: for either we fall under ourselves by sinful cogitation, or else we are, by the grace of contemplation, lifted above ourselves: for he that kept hogs, through wandering of his mind and unclean thoughts, fell under himself: but he whom the Angel delivered out of prison, being also rapt by the Angel into an ecstasy, was in truth out of himself, but yet above himself. Both of them, therefore, did return unto themselves; the one when he recollected himself, and forsook his lewd kind of life; and the other from the top of contemplation, to have that usual judgment and understanding, which before he had: wherefore venerable Benedict in that solitary wilderness dwelt with himself, because he kept himself, and retired his cogitations within the closet of his own soul: for when the greatness of contemplation rapt him up aloft, out of all question he did then leave himself under himself.

PETER. Your discourse doth very well content me: yet I beseech you to answer me this question, whether he could in conscience give over those

monks, whose government he had now taken upon him?

GREGORY. In mine opinion, Peter, evil men may with good conscience be tolerated in that community, where there be some good that may be holpen, and reap commodity. But where there be none good at all, that receive spiritual profit, often times all labour is lost, that is bestowed in bringing of such to good order, especially if other occasions be offered of doing God presently better service elsewhere: for whose good, then, should the holy man have expected, seeing them all to persecute him with one consent? and (that which is not to be passed over with silence) those that be perfect carry always this mind, that when they perceive their labour to be fruitless in one place, to remove straight to another, where more good may be done.

And for this cause, that notable preacher of the word, who was desirous to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, *unto whom to live is Christ, and to die is gain* : and who not only desired himself to suffer persecution, but did also animate and encourage others to suffer the same; yet being himself in persecution at Damascus, got a rope and a basket to pass over the wall, and was privily let down. What then? shall we say that Paul was afraid of death, when as himself said, that he desired it for Christ's sake? not so: but when he perceived that in that place little good was to be done by great labour, he reserved himself to further labour, where more fruit and better success might be expected: and therefore the valiant soldier of Christ would not be kept within walls, but sought for a larger field where he might more freely labour for his master. And so, in like manner, you shall quickly perceive, if you mark well, that venerable Benedict forsook not so many in one place, that were unwilling to be taught, as he did in sundry other places raise up from the death of soul many more, that were willing to be instructed.

PETER. It is so as you say, and plain reason teacheth it, and the example of St. Paul alleged doth confirm it. But I beseech you to return unto your

former purpose, and to prosecute the life of the holy man.

GREGORY. When as God's servant daily increased in virtue, and became continually more famous for miracles, many were by him in the same place drawn to the service of almighty God, so that by Christ's assistance he built there twelve Abbeys; over which he appointed governors, and in each of them placed twelve monks, and a few he kept with himself, namely, such as he thought would more profit, and be better instructed by his own presence. At that time also many noble and religious men of Rome came unto him, and committed their children to be brought up under him, for the service of God. Then also Evitius delivered him Maurus, and Tertullius the Senator brought Placidus, being their sons of great hope and towardness: of which two, Maurus, growing to great virtue, began to be his master's coadjutor; but Placidus, as yet, was but a boy of tender years.

Chapter Four: how Benedict reformed a monk that would not stay at his prayers.

In one of the monasteries which he had built in those parts, a monk there was, which could not continue at prayers; for when the other monks knelt down to serve God, his manner was to go forth, and there with wandering mind to busy himself about some earthly and transitory things. And when he had been often by his Abbot admonished of this fault without any amendment, at length he was sent to the man of God, who did likewise very much rebuke him for his folly; yet notwithstanding, returning back again, he did scarce two days follow the holy man's admonition; for, upon the third day, he fell again to his old custom, and would not abide within at the time of prayer: word whereof being once more sent to the man of God, by the father of the Abbey whom he had there appointed, he returned him answer that he would come himself, and reform what was amiss, which he did accordingly: and it fell so out, that when the singing of psalms was ended, and the hour come in which the monks betook themselves to prayer, the holy man perceived that the monk, which used at that time to go forth, was by a little black boy drawn out by the skirt of his garment; upon which sight, he spake secretly to Pompeianus, father of the Abbey, and also to Maurus saying Do you not see who it is, that draweth this monk from his prayers?" and they answered him, that they did not. "Then let us pray," quoth he, "unto God, that you also may behold whom this monk doth follow": and after two days Maurus did see him, but Pompeianus could not.

Upon another day, when the man of God had ended his devotions, he went out of the oratory, where he found the foresaid monk standing idle, whom for the blindness of his heart he strake with a little wand, and from that day forward he was so freed from all allurement of the little black boy, that he remained quietly at his prayers, as other of the monks did: for the old enemy was so terrified, that he durst not any more suggest any such

cogitations: as though by that blow, not the monk, but himself had been strooken.

Chapter Five: of a fountain that sprung forth in the top of a mountain, by the prayers of the man of God.

Amongst the monasteries which he had built in those parts, three of them were situated upon the rocks of a mountain, so that very painful it was for the monks to go down and fetch water, especially because the side of the hill was so steep that there was great fear of danger: and therefore the monks of those Abbeys with one consent came unto the servant of God, Benedict, giving him to understand, how laborious it was for them daily to go down unto the lake for water: and therefore they added, that it was very necessary to have them removed to some other places. The man of God, comforting them with sweet words, caused them to return back again; and the next night, having with him only the little boy Placidus (of whom we spake before), he ascended up to the rock of that mountain, and continued there a long time in prayer; and when he had done, he took three stones, and laid them in the same place for a mark, and so, none of them being privy to that he had done, he returned back to his own Abbey. And the next day, when the foresaid monks came again about their former business, he said thus unto them: "Go your way to the rock, and in the place where you find three stones laid one upon another, dig a little hole, for almighty God is able to bring forth water in the top of that mountain, and so to ease you of that great labour which you take in fetching it so far." Away they went, and came to the rock of the mountain according to his direction, which they found as it were sweating drops of water, and after they had with a spade made an hollow place, it was straightways filled, and water flowed out so abundantly, that it doth plentifully, even to this day, spring out and run down from the top to the very bottom of that hill.

Chapter Six: how the iron head of a bill, from the bottom of the water, returned to the handle again.

At another time, a certain Goth, poor of spirit, that gave over the world, was received by the man of God; whom on a day he commanded to take a bill, and to cleanse a certain plot of ground from briers, for the making of a garden, which ground was by the side of a lake. The Goth as he was there labouring, by chance the head of the bill slipped off, and fell into the water, which was so deep, that there was no hope ever to get it again. The poor Goth, in great fear, ran unto Maurus and told him what he had lost, confessing his own fault and negligence: Maurus forthwith went to the servant of God, giving him to understand thereof, who came straightways to the lake: and took the handle out of the Goth's hand, and put it into the water, and the iron head by and by ascended from the bottom, and entered again into the handle of the bill, which he delivered to the Goth, saying: "Behold here is thy bill again, work on, and be sad no more."

Chapter Seven: how Maurus walked upon the water.

On a certain day, as venerable Benedict was, in his cell, the foresaid young Placidus, the holy man's monk, went out to take up water at the lake, and putting down his pail carelessly, fell in himself after it, whom the water forthwith carried away from the land so far as one may shoot an arrow. The man of God, being in his cell, by and by knew this, and called in haste for Maurus, saying: "Brother Maurus, run as fast as you can, for Placidus, that went to the lake to fetch water, is fallen in, and is carried a good way off."

A strange thing, and since the time of Peter the Apostle never heard of! Maurus, craving his father's blessing, and departing in all haste at his commandment, ran to that place upon the water, to which the young lad was carried by force thereof, thinking that he had all that while gone upon the land: and taking fast hold of him by the hair of his head, in all haste he returned back again: and so soon as he was at land, coming to himself he looked behind him, and then knew very well that he had before run upon the water: and that which before he durst not have presumed, being now done and past, he both marvelled, and was afraid at that which he had done.

Coming back to the father, and telling him what had happened, the venerable man did not attribute this to his own merits, but to the obedience of Maurus: but Maurus on the contrary, said that it was done only upon his commandment, and that he had nothing to do in that miracle, not knowing at that time what he did. But the friendly contention proceeding of mutual humility, the young youth himself that was saved from drowning did determine: for he said that he saw when he was drawn out of the water the Abbot's garment upon his head, affirming that it was he that had delivered him from that great danger.

PETER. Certainly they be wonderful things which you report, and such as may serve for the edification of many : for mine own part, the more that I hear of his miracles, the more do I still desire.

Chapter Eight: how a loaf was poisoned, and carried far off by a crow.

GREGORY. When as the foresaid monasteries were zealous in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and their fame dispersed far and near, and many gave over the secular life, and subdued the passions of their soul, under the light yoke of our Saviour: then (as the manner of wicked people is, to envy at that virtue which themselves desire not to follow) one Florentius, Priest of a church hardby, and grandfather to Florentius our sub-deacon, possessed with diabolical malice, began to envy the holy man's virtues, to back-bite his manner of living, and to withdraw as many as he could from going to visit him : and when he saw that he could not hinder his virtuous proceedings, but that, on the contrary, the fame of his holy life increased, and many daily, upon the very report of his sanctity, did betake themselves to a better state of life : burning more and more with the coals of envy, he became far worse; and though he desired not to imitate his commendable life, yet fain he would have had the reputation of his virtuous conversation.

In conclusion so much did malicious envy blind him, and so far did he wade in that sin, that he poisoned a loaf and sent it to the servant of almighty God, as it were for an holy present. The man of God received it with great thanks, yet not ignorant of that which was hidden within. At dinner time, a crow daily used to come unto him from the next wood, which took bread at his hands; coming that day after his manner, the man of God threw him the loaf which the Priest had sent him, giving him this charge: "In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, take up that loaf, and leave it in some such place where no man may find it." Then the crow, opening his mouth, and lifting up his wings, began to hop up and down about the loaf, and after his manner to cry out, as though he would have said that he was willing to obey, and yet could not do what he was commanded. The man of God again and again bade him, saying: "Take it up without fear, and throw it where no

man may find it." At length, with much ado, the crow took it up, and flew away, and after three hours, having dispatched the loaf, he returned back again, and received his usual allowance from the man of God.

But the venerable father, perceiving the Priest so wickedly bent against his life, was far more sorry for him than grieved for himself. And Florentius, seeing that he could not kill the body of the master, laboureth now what he can, to destroy the souls of his disciples; and for that purpose he sent into the yard of the Abbey before their eyes seven naked young women, which did there take hands together, play and dance a long time before them, to the end that, by this means, they might inflame their minds to sinful lust: which damnable sight the holy man beholding out of his cell, and fearing the danger which thereby might ensue to his younger monks, and considering that all this was done only for the persecuting of himself, he gave place to envy; and therefore, after he had for those abbeys and oratories which he had there built appointed governors, and left some under their charge, himself, in the company of a few monks, removed to another place.

And thus the man of God, upon humility, gave place to the other's malice; but yet almighty God of justice did severely punish [Florentius'] wickedness. For when the foresaid Priest, being in his chamber, understood of the departure of holy Benedict, and was very glad of that news, behold (the whole house besides continuing safe and sound) that chamber alone in which he was, fell down, and so killed him: which strange accident the holy man's disciple Maurus understanding, straightways sent him word, he being as yet scarce ten miles off, desiring him to return again, because the Priest that did persecute him was slain; which thing when Benedict heard, he was passing sorrowful, and lamented much: both because his enemy died in such sort, and also for that one of his monks rejoiced thereat; and therefore

he gave him penance, for that, sending such news, he presumed to rejoice at his enemy’s death.

PETER. The things you report be strange, and much to be wondered at: for in making the rock to yield forth water, I see Moses; and in the iron, which came from the bottom of the lake, I behold Eliseus; in the walking of Maurus upon the water, I perceive Peter; in the obedience of the crow, I contemplate Elias; and in lamenting the death of his enemy, I acknowledge David: and therefore, in mine opinion, this one man was full of the spirit of all good men.

GREGORY. The man of god, Benedict, had the spirit of the one true God, who, by the grace of our redemption, hath filled the hearts of his elect servants; of whom St. John saith: *He was the true light, which doth lighten every man coming into this world*, . Of whom, again, we find it written: *Of his fulness we have all received*, . For God’s holy servants might receive virtues of our Lord, but to bestow them upon others they could not; and therefore it was he that gave the signs of miracles to his servants, who promised to give the sign of Jonas to his enemies : so that he vouchsafed to die in the sight of the proud, and to rise again before the eyes of the humble: to the end, that they might behold what they contemned, and those see that which they ought to worship and love: by reason of which mystery it cometh to pass that, whereas the proud cast their eyes upon the contempt of his death, the humble contrariwise, against death, lay hold of the glory of his power and might.

PETER. To what places, I pray you, after this, did the holy man go: and whether did he afterward in them work any miracles, or no?

GREGORY. The holy man, changing his place, did not for all that change his enemy. For afterward he endured so much the more grievous battles, by how much he had now the master of all wickedness fighting openly against him. For the town, which is called Cassino, standeth upon

the side of an high mountain, which containeth, as it were in the lap thereof, the foresaid town, and afterward so riseth in height the space of three miles, that the top thereof seemeth to touch the very heavens: in this place there was an ancient chapel in which the foolish and simple country people, according to the custom of the old gentiles, worshipped the god Apollo. Round about it likewise upon all sides, there were woods for the service of the devils, in which even to that very time, the mad multitude of infidels did offer most wicked sacrifice. The man of God coming thither, beat in pieces the idol, overthrew the altar, set fire to the woods, and in the temple of Apollo, he built the oratory of St. Martin, and where the altar of the same Apollo was, he made an oratory of St. John: and by his continual preaching, he brought the people dwelling in those parts to embrace the faith of Christ.

The old enemy of mankind, not taking this in good part, did not privily or in a dream, but in open sight present himself to the eyes of that holy father, and with great outcries complained that he had offered him violence. The noise which he made, the monks did hear, but himself they could not see: but, as the venerable father told them, he appeared visibly unto him most fell and cruel, and as though, with his fiery mouth and flaming eyes, he would have torn him in pieces: what the devil said unto him, all the monks did hear; for first he would call him by his name, and because the man of God vouchsafed him not any answer, then would he fall a-reviling and railing at him: for when he cried out, calling him "Blessed Benedict," and yet found that he gave him no answer, straightways he would turn his tune, and say: "Cursed Benedict, and not blessed: what hast thou to do with me? and why dost thou thus persecute me?" Wherefore new battles of the old enemy against the servant of God are to be looked for, against whom willingly did he make war, but, against his will, did he give him occasion of many notable victories.

Chapter Nine: how venerable Benedict, by his prayer, removed a huge stone.

Upon a certain day, when the monks were building up the cells of the same Abbey, there lay a stone which they meant to employ about that business: and when two or three were not able to remove it, they called for more company, but all in vain, for it remained so immovable as though it had grown to the very earth: whereby they plainly perceived that the devil himself did sit upon it, seeing so may men’s hands could not so much as once move it: wherefore, finding that their own labours could do nothing, they sent for the man of God, to help them with his prayers against the devil, who hindered the removing of that stone. The holy man came, and after some praying, he gave it his blessing, and then they carried it away so quickly, as though it had been of no weight at all.

Chapter Ten: of the fantastical fire, which burnt the kitchen.

Then the man of God thought good that they should presently before his departure dig up the ground in the same place; which being done, and a deep hole made, the monks found there an idol of brass, which being for a little while by chance cast into the kitchen, they beheld fire suddenly to come from it, which to all their sight seemed to set the whole kitchen on fire; for the quenching whereof, the monks by casting on of water made such a noise, that the man of God, hearing it, came to see what the matter was: and himself beholding not any fire at all,which they said that they did, he bowed down his head forthwith to his prayers, and then he perceived that they were deluded with fantastical fire, and therefore bad them bless their eyes, that they might behold the kitchen safe and sound, and not those fantastical flames, which the devil had falsely devised.

Chapter Eleven: how venerable Benedict revived a boy, crushed to death with the ruin of a wall.

Again, as the monks were making of a certain wall somewhat higher, because that was requisite, the man of God in the meantime was in his cell at his prayers. To whom the old enemy appeared in an insulting manner, telling him, that he was now going to his monks, that were a-working: whereof the man of God, in all haste, gave them warning, wishing them to look unto themselves, because the devil was at that time coming amongst them. The message was scarce delivered, when as the wicked spirit overthrew the new wall which they were a building, and with the fall slew a little young child, a monk, who was the son of a certain courtier. At which pitiful chance all were passing sorry and exceedingly grieved, not so much for the loss of the wall, as for the death of their brother: and in all haste they sent this heavy news to the venerable man Benedict; who commanded them to bring unto him the young boy, mangled and maimed as he was, which they did, but yet they could not carry him any otherwise than in a sack: for the stones of the wall had not only broken his limbs, but also his very bones. Being in that manner brought unto the man of God, he bad them to lay him in his cell, and in that place upon which he used to pray; and then, putting them all forth, he shut the door, and fell more instantly to his prayers than he used at other times. And O strange miracle! for the very same hour he made him sound, and as lively as ever he was before; and sent him again to his former work, that he also might help the monks to make an end of that wall, of whose death the old serpent thought he should have insulted over Benedict, and greatly triumphed.

Chapter Twelve: how by revelation venerable Benedict knew that his monks had eaten out of the monastery.

Among other miracles which the man of God did, he began also to be famous for the spirit of prophecy: as to foretell what was to happen, and to relate unto them that were present, such things as were done in absence. The order of his Abbey was, that when the monks went abroad (to deliver any message) never to eat or drink anything out of their cloister: and this being diligently observed, according to the prescription of their rule, upon a certain day some of the monks went forth upon such business: and being enforced about the dispatch thereof to tarry somewhat long abroad, it fell so out that they stayed at the house of a religious woman, where they did eat and refresh themselves. And being late before they came back to the Abbey, they went as the manner was, and asked their father's blessing: of whom he demanded where they had eaten: and they said nowhere. "Why do you," quoth he, "tell an untruth? for did you not go into such a woman's house? and eat such and such kind of meat, and drink so many cups?" When they heard him recount so in particular, both where they had stayed, what kind of meat they had eaten, and how often they had drunk, and perceived well that he knew all whatsoever they had done, they fell down trembling at his feet, and confessed that they had done wickedly: who straightways pardoned them for that fault, persuading himself that they would not any more in his absence presume to do any such thing, seeing they now perceived that he was present with them in spirit.

Chapter Thirteen: of the brother of Valentinian the Monk, whom the man of God blamed for eating in his journey.

A brother also of Valentinian the monk, of whom I made mention before, was a layman, but devout and religious: who used every year, as well to desire the prayers of God's servant, as also to visit his natural brother, to travel from his own house to the Abbey: and his manner was, not to eat anything all that day before he came thither. Being therefore upon a time in his journey, he lighted into the company of another that carried meat about him to eat by the way: who, after the day was well spent, spake unto him in this manner: "Come, brother," quoth he, "let us refresh ourselves, that we faint not in our journey": to whom he answered: "God forbid: for eat I will not by any means, seeing I am now going to the venerable father Benedict, and my custom is to fast until I see him." The other, upon this answer, said no more for the space of an hour. But afterward, having travelled a little further again he was in hand with him to eat something: yet then likewise he utterly refused, because he meant to go through fasting as he was. His companion was content, and so went forward with him, without taking anything himself. But when they had now gone very far, and were well wearied with long travelling, at length they came unto a meadow, where there was a fountain, and all such other pleasant things as use to refresh men's bodies. Then his companion said to him again: "Behold here is water, a green meadow, and a very sweet place, in which we may refresh ourselves and rest a little, that we may be the better able to dispatch the rest of our journey." Which kind words bewitching his ears, and the pleasant place flattering his eyes, content he was to yield unto the motion, and so they fell to their meat together: and coming afterward in the evening to the Abbey, they brought him to the venerable father Benedict, of whom he desired his blessing. Then the holy man objected against him what he had done in the way, speaking to him in this manner: "How fell it out, brother," quoth he,

“that the devil talking to you, by means of your companion, could not at the first nor second time persuade you: but yet he did at the third, and made you do what best pleased him?” The good man, hearing these words, fell down at his feet, confessing the fault of his frailty; was grieved, and so much the more ashamed of his sin, because he perceived that though he were absent, that yet he did offend in the sight of that venerable father.

PETER. I see well that the holy man had in his soul the spirit of Heliseus, who was present with his servant Giezi, being then absent from him.

Chapter Fourteen: how the dissimulation of king Totila was discovered and found out by venerable Benedict.

GREGORY. You must, good Peter, for a little while be silent, that you may know matters yet far more important. For in the time of the Goths, when Totila, their king, understood that the holy man had the spirit of prophecy, as he was going towards his monastery, he remained in a place somewhat far off, and beforehand sent the father word of his coming: to whom answer was returned, that he might come at his pleasure. The king, as he was a man wickedly disposed, thought he would try whether the man of God were a prophet, as it was reported, or no. A certain man of his guard he had, called Riggo, upon whom he caused his own shoes to be put, and to be apparelled with his other princely robes, commanding him to go as it were himself to the man of God; and to give the better colour to this device, he sent three to attend upon him, who especially were always about the king: to wit, Vultericus, Rudericus, and Blindinus; charging them that in the presence of the servant of God, they should be next about him, and behave themselves in such sort as though he had been king Totila indeed: and that diligently they should do unto him all other services, to the end that both by such dutiful kind of behaviour, as also by his purple robes, he might verily be taken for the king himself. Riggo, furnished with that brave apparel, and accompanied with many courtiers, came unto the Abbey: at which time the man of God sat a little way off, and when Riggo was come so near that he might well understand what the man of God said, then, in the hearing of them all, he spake thus: “Put off, my good son, put off that apparel, for that which thou hast on, is none of thine.” Riggo, hearing this, fell straightways down to the ground, and was very much afraid, for presuming to go about to mock so worthy a man, and all his attendants and servitors fell down likewise to the earth, and after they were up again, they durst not approach

any nearer to his presence: but returned back to their king, telling him with fear, how quickly they were discovered.

Chapter Fifteen: how venerable Benedict prophesied to king Totila, and also to the Bishop of Camisina, such things as were afterwards to happen.

Then Totila himself in person went unto the man of God; and seeing him sitting afar off, he durst not come near, but fell down to the ground: whom the holy man (speaking to him twice or thrice) desired to rise up and at length came unto him, and with his own hands lifted him up from the earth, where he lay prostrate: and then, entering into talk, he reprehended him for his wicked deeds, and in few words told him all that which should befall him, saying: "Much wickedness do you daily commit, and many great sins have you done: now at length give over your sinful life. Into the city of Rome shall you enter, and over the sea shall you pass: nine years shall you reign, and in the tenth shall you leave this mortal life." The king, hearing these things, was wonderfully afraid, and desiring the holy man to commend him to God in his prayers, he departed: and from that time forward he was nothing so cruel as before he had been. Not long after he went to Rome, sailed over into Sicily, and, in the tenth year of his reign, he lost his kingdom together with his life.

The Bishop also of Camisina used to visit the servant of God, whom the holy man dearly loved for his virtuous life. The Bishop, therefore, talking with him of King Totila, of his taking of Rome, and the destruction of that city, said: "This city will be so spoiled and ruined by him, that it will never be more inhabited." To whom the man of God answered: "Rome," quoth he, "shall not be utterly destroyed by strangers: but shall be so shaken with tempests, lightnings, whirlwinds, and earthquakes, that it will fall to decay of itself." The mysteries of which prophecy we now behold as clear as the day: for we see before our eyes in this very city, by a strange whirlwind the world shaken, houses ruined, and churches overthrown, and buildings rotten with old age we behold daily to fall down. True it is that Honoratus, by

whose relation I had this, saith not that he received it from his own mouth, but that he had it of other monks, which did hear it themselves.

Chapter Sixteen: of a certain clergyman, whom venerable Benedict for a time delivered from a devil.

At the same time a certain clergyman, that served in the church of Aquinum, was possessed: whom the venerable man Constantius, Bishop of the same city, sent unto many places of holy martyrs for help: but God's holy martyrs would not deliver him, to the end that the world might know what great grace was in the servant of God, Benedict: wherefore at length he was brought unto him, who, praying for help to Jesus Christ our Lord, did forthwith cast the old enemy out of the possessed man's body, giving him this charge: "Go your way, and hereafter abstain from eating of flesh, and presume not to enter into holy orders, for whensoever you shall attempt any such thing, the devil again will have power over you." The man departed safe and sound, and because punishment fresh in memory useth to terrify the mind, he observed for a time what the man of God had given him in commandment. But after many years, when all his seniors were dead, and he saw his juniors preferred before him to holy orders, he neglected the words of the man of God, as though forgotten through length of time, and took upon him holy orders: whereupon straightways the devil that before had left him entered again, and never gave over to torment him, until he had separated his soul from his body.

PETER. This holy man, as I perceive, did know the secret counsel of God: for he saw that this clergyman was delivered to the power of the devil, to the end he should not presume to enter into holy orders.

GREGORY. Why should he not know the secrets of God, who kept the commandments of God: when as the scripture saith: *He that cleaveth unto our Lord, is one spirit with him?*

PETER. If he that cleaveth unto our Lord, be one spirit with our Lord, what is the meaning of that which the Apostle saith: *Who knoweth the sense of our Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?* , for it seemeth very

inconvenient to be ignorant of his sense, to whom being so united he is made one thing.

GREGORY. Holy men, in that they be one with our Lord are not ignorant of his sense: for the same Apostle saith : *For what man knoweth those things which belong to man, but the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things which belong to God, no man knoweth, but the spirit of God.* And to show also that he knew such things as belong to God, he addeth straight after: *But we have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit which is of God.* And for this cause, again he saith: *that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor it hath ascended into the heart of man, those things which God hath prepared for them that love him, but God hath revealed to us by his spirit.*

PETER. If, then, the mysteries of God were revealed to the same Apostle by the spirit of God, why did he then, entreating of this question, set down these words beforehand, saying: *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how incomprehensible be his judgments, and his ways investigable?*

And again, whiles I am thus speaking of this matter, another question cometh to my mind: for the prophet David said to our Lord: *With my lips have I uttered all the judgments of thy mouth*. Wherefore, seeing it is less to know, than to utter: what is the reason that St. Paul affirmeth the judgments of God to be incomprehensible; and yet David saith that he did not know only them, but also with his lips pronounce them?

GREGORY. To both these questions I have already briefly answered, when I said that holy men, in that they be one with our Lord, are not ignorant of the sense of our Lord. For all such, as do devoutly follow our Lord, be also by devotion one with our Lord; and yet for all this, in that they are laden with the burthen of their corruptible flesh, they be not with God: and so in that they be joined with him, they know the secret judgments of

God, and in that they be separated from God, they know them not: for seeing they do not as yet perfectly penetrate his secret mysteries, they give testimony that his judgments be incomprehensible.

But those that do with their soul adhere unto him, and cleaving unto the sayings of the holy scripture, or to secret revelations, acknowledge what they receive: such persons both know these things and do utter them: for those judgments which God doth conceal they know not, and those which he doth utter they know: and therefore the prophet David, when he had said: *I have with my lips uttered all the judgments*; he addeth immediately, *of thy mouth*: as though he should plainly say: Those judgments I may both know and utter, which I knew thou didst speak, for those things which thou dost not speak, without all question, thou dost conceal from our knowledge.

Wherefore the saying of David and St. Paul agree together: for the judgments of God are incomprehensible; and yet those which himself with his own mouth vouchsafeth to speak, are uttered with men's tongues: because men may come to the knowledge of them, and being revealed, they may be uttered, and by no means can be kept secret.

PETER. Now I see the answer to my question. But I pray you to proceed, if anything yet remaineth to be told of his virtue and miracles.

Chapter Seventeen: how the man of God, Benedict, did foretell the suppression of one of his own Abbeys.

GREGORY. A certain noble man called Theoprobus was by the good counsel of holy Benedict converted: who, for his virtue and merit of life, was very intrinsical and familiar with him. This man upon a day, coming into his cell, found him weeping very bitterly. And having expected a good while, and yet not seeing him to make an end (for the man of God used not in his prayers to weep, but rather to be sad), he demanded the cause of that his so great heaviness, to whom he answered straightway, saying: “All this Abbey which I have built, and all such things as I have made ready for my brethren, are by the judgment of almighty God delivered to the gentiles, to be spoiled and overthrown: and scarce could I obtain of God to have their lives spared, that should then live in it.” His words Theoprobus then heard, but we see them to be proved most true, who know that very Abbey to be now suppressed by the Lombards. For not long since, in the night time, when the monks were asleep, they entered in, and spoiled all things, but yet not one man could they retain there, and so almighty God fulfilled what he promised to his faithful servant: for though he gave them the house and all the goods, yet did he preserve their lives. In which thing I see that Benedict imitated St. Paul: whose ship though it lost all the goods, yet, for his comfort, he had the lives of all that were in his company bestowed upon him, so that no one man was cast away.

Chapter Eighteen: how blessed Benedict knew the hiding away of a flagon of wine.

Upon a certain time, Exhilaratus our monk, a lay-brother, whom you know, was sent by his master to the monastery of the man of God, to carry him two wooden bottles, commonly called flagons, full of wine: who in the way, as he was going, hid one of them in a bush for himself, and presented the other to venerable Benedict: who took it very thankfully, and, when the man was going away, he gave him this warning: "Take heed, my son," quoth he, "that thou drinkest not of that flagon which thou hast hidden in the bush: but first be careful to bow it down, and thou shalt find what is within it." The poor man, thus pitifully confounded by the man of God, went his way, and coming back to the place where the flagon was hidden, and desirous to try the truth of that was told him, as he was bowing it down, a snake straightways leaped forth. Then Exhilaratus perceiving what was gotten into the wine, began to be afraid of that wickedness which he had committed.

Chapter Nineteen: how the man of God knew that one of his Monks had received certain handkerchiefs.

Not far from his Abbey, there was a village, in which very many men had, by the sermons of Benedict, been converted from idolatry to the true faith of Christ. Certain Nuns also there were in the same town, to whom he did often send some of his monks to preach unto them, for the good of their souls. Upon a day, one that was sent, after he had made an end of his exhortation, by the entreaty of the Nuns took certain small napkins, and hid them for his own use in his bosom: whom, upon his return to the Abbey, the man of God very sharply rebuked, saying: "How cometh it to pass, brother, that sin is entered into your bosom ?" At which words the monk was much amazed for he had quite forgotten what he had put there; and therefore knew not any cause why he should deserve that reprehension: whereupon the holy man spake to him in plain terms, and said: "Was not I present when you took the handkerchiefs of the Nuns, and put them up in your bosom for your own private use?" The monk, hearing this, fell down at his feet, and was sorry that he had behaved himself so indiscreetly: forth he drew those napkins from his bosom, and threw them all away.

Chapter Twenty: how holy Benedict knew the proud thought of one of his Monks.

Upon a time, whiles the venerable Father was at supper, one of his monks, who was the son of a great man, held the candle: and as he was standing there, and the other at his meat, he began to entertain a proud cogitation in his mind, and to speak thus within himself: “ Who is he, that I thus wait upon at supper, and hold him the candle? and who am I, that I should do him any such service?” Upon which thought straightways the holy man turned himself, and with severe reprehension spake thus unto him: “Sign your heart, brother, for what is it that you say? Sign your heart”: and forthwith he called another of the monks, and bad him take the candle out of his hands, and commanded him to give over his waiting, and to repose himself: who being demanded of the monks, what it was that he thought, told them, how inwardly he swelled with pride, and what he spake against the man of God, secretly in his own heart. Then they all saw very well that nothing could be hidden from venerable Benedict, seeing the very sound of men’s inward thoughts came unto his ears.

Chapter Twenty-one: of two hundred bushels of meal, found before the man of God's cell.

At another time, there was a great dearth in the same country of Campania: so that all kind of people tasted of the misery: and all the wheat of Benedict's monastery was spent, and likewise all the bread, so that there remained no more than five loaves for dinner. The venerable man, beholding the monks sad, both rebuked them modestly for their pusillanimity, and again did comfort them with this promise: "Why," quoth he, "are you so grieved in your minds for lack of bread? Indeed, today some want there is, but tomorrow you shall have plenty": and so it fell out, for the next day two hundred bushels of meal was found in sacks before his cell door, which almighty God sent them: but by whom, or what means, that is unknown to this very day: which miracle when the monks saw, they gave God thanks, and by this learned in want, not to make any doubt of plenty.

PETER. Tell me, I pray you, whether this servant of God had always the spirit of prophecy, when himself pleased, or only at certain times?

GREGORY. The spirit of prophecy doth not always illuminate the minds of the prophets; because, as it is written of the Holy Ghost that *he breatheth where he will* , so we are also to know that he doth breathe likewise for what cause, and when he pleaseth. And hereof it cometh, that when king David demanded of Nathan whether he might build a temple for the honour of God, the prophet Nathan gave his consent; and yet afterward utterly forbad it. From hence likewise it proceedeth that, when Heliseus saw the woman weeping, and knew not the cause, he said to his servant that did trouble her: *Let her alone, for her soul is in grief, and God hath concealed it from me, and hath not told me.* Which thing almighty God of great piety so disposeth: for giving at some times the spirit of prophecy, and at other times withdrawing it, he doth both lift up the prophets minds on high, and yet doth preserve them in humility: that by the gift of the Spirit, they may

know what they are by God’s grace: and at other times, destitute of the same Spirit, may understand what they are of themselves.

PETER. There is very great reason for that you say. But, I pray you, let me hear more of the venerable man Benedict, if there be anything else that cometh to your remembrance.

Chapter Twenty-two: how, by vision, venerable Benedict disposed the building of the Abbey of Taracina.

GREGORY. At another time he was desired by a certain virtuous man, to build an Abbey for his monks upon his ground, not far from the city of Taracina. The holy man was content, and appointed an Abbot and Prior, with divers monks under them: and when they were departing, he promised that, upon such a day, he would come and shew them in what place the oratory should be made, and where the refectory should stand, and all the other necessary rooms: and so they, taking his blessing, went their way; and against the day appointed, which they greatly expected, they made all such things ready as were necessary to entertain him, and those that should come in his company. But the very night before, the man of God in sleep appeared to the Abbot and the Prior, and particularly described unto them where each place and office was to be builded. And when they were both risen, they conferred together what either of them had seen in their sleep: but yet not giving full credit to that vision, they expected the man of God himself in person, according to his promise. But when they saw that he came not, they returned back unto him very sorrowfully, saying: "We expected, father, that you should have come according to promise, and told us where each place should have been built, which yet you did not." To whom he answered: "Why say you so, good brethren? Did not I come as I promised you?" And when they asked at what time it was: "Why," quoth he, "did not I appear to either of you in your sleep, and appointed how and where every place was to be builded? Go your way, and according to that platform which you then saw, build up the abbey." At which word they much marvelled, and returning back, they caused it to be builded in such sort as they had been taught of him by revelation.

PETER. Gladly would I learn, by what means that could be done: to wit, that he should go so far to tell them that thing in their sleep, which they

should both hear and know by vision.

GREGORY. Why do you, Peter, seek out and doubt, in what manner this thing was done? For certain it is, that the soul is of a more noble nature than the body. And by authority of scripture we know that the prophet Habaccuc was carried from Judea with that dinner which he had, and was suddenly set in Chaldea ; by which meat the prophet Daniel was relieved: and presently after was brought back again to Judea. If, then, Habaccuc could in a moment with his body go so far, and carry provision for another man's dinner: what marvel is it, if the holy father Benedict obtained grace to go in spirit and to inform the souls of his brethren that were asleep, concerning such things as were necessary: and that as Abacuck about corporal meat went corporally, so Benedict should go spiritually about the dispatch of spiritual business?

PETER. I confess that your words have satisfied my doubtful mind. But I would know what manner of man he was in his ordinary talk and conversation.

Chapter Twenty-three: of certain Nuns absolved after their death.

GREGORY. His common talk, Peter, was usually full of virtue: for his heart conversed to above in heaven, that no words could in vain proceed from his mouth. And if at any time he spake aught, yet not as one that determined what was best to be done, but only in a threatening manner, his speech in that case was so effectual and forcible, as though he had not doubtfully or uncertainly, but assuredly pronounced and given sentence.

For not far from his Abbey, there lived two Nuns in a place by themselves, born of worshipful parentage: whom a religious good man did serve for the dispatch of their outward business. But as nobility of family doth in some breed ignobility of mind, and maketh them in conversation to show less humility, because they remember still what superiority they had above others: even so was it with these Nuns: for they had not yet learned to temper their tongues, and keep them under with the bridle of their habit: for often did they by their indiscreet speech provoke the foresaid religious man to anger; who having borne with them a long time, at length he complained to the man of God, and told him with what reproachful words they entreated him: whereupon he sent them by and by this message, saying: "Amend your tongues, otherwise I do excommunicate you"; which sentence of excommunication notwithstanding, he did not then presently pronounce against them, but only threatened if they amended not themselves. But they, for all this, changed their conditions nothing at all: both which not long after departed this life, and were buried in the church: and when solemn mass was celebrated in the same church, and the Deacon, according to custom, said with loud voice: "If any there be that do not communicate, let them depart": the nurse, which used to give unto our Lord an offering for them, beheld them at that time to rise out of their graves, and to depart the church. Having often times, at those words of the Deacon, seen them leave

the church, and that they could not tarry within, she remembered what message the man of God sent them whiles they were yet alive. For he told them that he did deprive them of the communion, unless they did amend their tongues and conditions. Then with great sorrow, the whole matter was signified to the man of God, who straightways with his own hands gave an oblation, saying: “Go your ways, and cause this to be offered unto our Lord for them, and they shall not remain any longer excommunicate”: which oblation being offered for them, and the Deacon, as he used, crying out, that such as did not communicate should depart, they were not seen any more to go out of the church: whereby it was certain that, seeing they did not depart with them which did not communicate, that they had received the communion of our Lord by the hands of his servant.

PETER. It is very strange that you report: for how could he, though a venerable and most holy man, yet living in mortal body, loose those souls which stood now before the invisible judgment of God?

GREGORY. Was he not yet, Peter, mortal, that heard from our Saviour: *Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in the heavens: and whatsoever thou shalt loose in earth, shall be loosed also in the heavens?* whose place of binding and loosing those have at this time, which by faith and virtuous life possess the place of holy government: and to bestow such power upon earthly men, the Creator of heaven and earth descended from heaven to earth: and that flesh might judge of spiritual things, God, who for man’s sake was made flesh, vouchsafed to bestow upon him: for from thence our weakness did rise up above itself, from whence the strength of God was weakened under itself.

PETER. For the virtue of his miracles, your words do yield a very good reason.

Chapter Twenty-four: of a boy that after his burial was cast out of his grave.

GREGORY. Upon a certain day, a young boy that was a monk, loving his parents more than reason would, went from the Abbey to their house, not craving the father's blessing beforehand: and the same day that he came home unto them, he departed this life. And being buried, his body, the next day after, was found cast out of the grave; which they caused again to be put in, and again, the day following, they found it as before. Then in great haste they went to the man of God, fell down at his feet, and with many tears beseeched him that he would vouchsafe him that was dead of his favour. To whom the man of God with his own hands delivered the holy communion of our Lord's body, saying: "Go, and lay with great reverence this our Lord's body upon his breast, and so bury him": which when they had done, the dead corpse after that remained quietly in the grave. By which you perceive, Peter, of what merit he was with our Lord Jesus Christ, seeing the earth would not give entertainment to his body, who departed this world out of Benedict's favour.

PETER. I perceive it very well, and do wonderfully admire it.

Chapter Twenty-five: how a Monk, forsaking the Abbey, met with a dragon in the way.

GREGORY. A certain monk there was so inconstant and fickle of mind, that he would needs give over the Abbey; for which fault of his, the man of God did daily rebuke him, and often times gave him good admonitions: but yet, for all this, by no means would he tarry amongst them, and therefore continual suit he made that he might be discharged. The venerable man upon a time, wearied with his importunity, in anger bad him depart; who was no sooner out of the Abbey gate, but he found a dragon in the way expecting him with open mouth, which being about to devour him, he began in great fear and trembling to cry out aloud, saying: "Help, help! for this dragon will eat me up." At which noise the monks running out, dragon they saw none, but finding him there shaking and trembling, they brought him back again to the Abbey, who forthwith promised that he would never more forsake the monastery, and so ever after he continued in his profession: for by the prayers of the holy man, he saw the dragon coming against him, whom before, when he saw not, he did willingly follow.

Chapter Twenty-six: how holy Benedict cured a boy of Leprosy.

But I must not here pass over with silence that which I had by relation of the honourable man, Anthony, who said that his father's boy was so pitifully punished with a leprosy, that all his hair fell off, his body swelled, and filthy corruption did openly come forth. Who being sent by his father to the man of God, he was by him quickly restored to his former health.

Chapter Twenty-seven: how Benedict found money miraculously to relieve a poor man.

Neither is that to be omitted, which one of his disciples called Peregrinus used to tell: for he said that, upon a certain day, an honest man, who was in debt, found no other means to help himself, but thought it his best way to acquaint the man of God with his necessity: whereupon he came to the Abbey, and finding the servant of almighty God, gave him to understand, how he was troubled by his creditor for twelve shillings which he did owe him. To whom the venerable man said that himself had not so much money, yet giving him comfortable words, he said: "Go your ways, and after two days come to me again, for I can not presently help you": in which two days, after his manner, he bestowed himself in prayer: and when upon the third day the poor man came back there were found suddenly upon the chest of the Abbey, which was full of corn, thirteen shillings: which the man of God caused to be given to him that required but twelve, both to discharge his debt, and also to defray his own charges.

But now will I return to speak of such things as I had from the mouth of his own scholars, mentioned before in the beginning of this book. A certain man there was who had an enemy that did notably spite and malign him, whose damnable hatred proceeded so far that he poisoned his drink, which, although it killed him not, yet did it change his skin in such sort that it was of many colours, as though he had been infected with a leprosy: but the man of God restored him to his former health: for so soon as he touched him, forthwith all that variety of colours departed from his body.

Chapter Twenty-eight: how a cruet of glass was thrown upon the stones, and not broken.

At such time as there was a great dearth in Campania, the man of God had given away all the wealth of the Abbey to poor people, so that in the cellar there was nothing left but a little oil in a glass. A certain sub-deacon called Agapitus came unto him, instantly craving that he would bestow a little oil upon him. Our Lord's servant, that was resolved to give away all upon earth that he might find all in heaven, commanded that oil to be given him: but the monk that kept the cellar heard what the father commanded, yet did he not perform it: who inquiring not long after whether he had given that which he willed, the monk told him that he had not, adding that if he had given it away, that there was not any left for the Convent. Then in an anger he commanded others to take that glass with the oil, and to throw it out at the window, to the end that nothing might remain in the Abbey contrary to obedience. The monks did so, and threw it out at a window, under which there was an huge downfall, full of rough and craggy stones upon which the glass did light, but yet continued for all that so sound as though it had never been thrown out at all, for neither the glass was broken nor any of the oil shed. Then the man of God did command it to be taken up again, and, whole as it was, to be given unto him that desired it, and in the presence of the other brethren he reprehended the disobedient monk, both for his infidelity, and also for his proud mind.

Chapter Twenty-nine: how an empty barrel was filled with oil.

After which reprehension, with the rest of his brethren he fell to praying, and in the place where they were, there stood an empty barrel with a cover upon it: and as the holy man continued in his prayers, the oil within did so increase, that the cover began to be lifted up, and at length fell down, and the oil, that was now higher than the mouth of the barrel, began to run over upon the pavement, which so soon as the servant of God, Benedict, beheld, forthwith he gave over his prayers, and the oil likewise ceased to overflow the barrel. Then he did more at large admonish that mistrusting and disobedient monk, that he would learn to have faith and humility, who upon so wholesome an admonition was ashamed, because the venerable father had by miracle shown the power of almighty God, as before he told him when he did first rebuke him: and so no cause there was why any should afterward doubt of his promise, seeing at one and the same time, for a small glass almost empty which he gave away, he bestowed upon them an whole barrel full of oil.

Chapter Thirty: how Benedict delivered a Monk from the devil.

Upon a certain time, as he was going to the oratory of St. John, which is in the top of the mountain, the old enemy of mankind upon a mule, like a physician, met him, carrying in his hand an horn and a mortar. And when he demanded whither he was going: "To your monks," quoth he, "to give them a drench" [i.e. a large dose of veterinary medicine].

The venerable father went forward to his prayers, and when he had done, he returned in all haste, but the wicked spirit found an old monk drawing of water, into whom he entered, and straightways cast him upon the ground, and grievously tormented him. The man of God coming from his prayers, and seeing him in such pitiful case gave him only a little blow with his hand, and at the same instant he cast out that cruel devil, so that he durst not any more presume to enter in.

PETER. I would gladly know, whether he obtained always by prayer, to work such notable miracles; or else sometimes did them only at his will and pleasure.

GREGORY. Such as be the devout servants of God, when necessity requireth, use to work miracles both manner of ways: so that sometime they effect wonderful things by their prayers, and sometime only by their power and authority: for St. John saith: *So many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God.* They, then, that by power be the sons of God, what marvel is it, if by power they be able to do wonderful things? And that both ways they work miracles, we learn of St. Peter: who by his prayers did raise up Tabitha; and by his sharp reprehension did sentence Ananias and Sapphira to death for their lying. For we read not, that in the death of them he prayed at all, but only rebuked them for that sin which they had committed. Certain therefore it is that sometimes they do these things by power, and sometimes by prayer: for Ananias and Sapphira by a severe rebuke, St. Peter deprived of life: and by prayer restored Tabitha to

life. And for proof of this, I will now tell you of two miracles, which the faithful servant of God, Benedict, did, in which it shall appear most plainly that he wrought the one by that power which God gave him, and obtained the other by virtue of his prayers.

Chapter Thirty-one: of a country fellow, that, with the only sight of the man of God, was loosed from his bands.

A certain Goth there was called Galla, an Arian heretic, who, in the time of King Totila, did with such monstrous cruelty persecute religious men of the Catholic church, that what priest or monk soever came in his presence, he never departed alive. This man on a certain day, set upon rapine and pillage, pitifully tormented a poor country man, to make him confess where his money and wealth was: who, overcome with extremity of pain, said that he had committed all his substance to the custody of Benedict, the servant of God: and this he did, to the end that his tormentor, giving credit to his words, might at least for a while surcease from his horrible cruelty. Galla hearing this tormented him no longer: but binding his arms fast with strong cords, drave him before his horse, to bring him unto this Benedict, who, as he said, had his wealth in keeping. The country fellow, thus pinioned and running before him, carried him to the holy man's Abbey, where he found him sitting before the gate, reading upon a book. Then turning back to Galla that came raging after, he said: "This is father Benedict, of whom I told you": who looking upon him, in a great fury, thinking to deal as terribly with him as he had with others, cried out aloud to him, saying: "Rise up, sirrah, rise up, and deliver me quickly such wealth as thou hast of this man's in keeping." The man of God, hearing such a noise, straightways lifted up his eyes from reading, and beheld both him and the country fellow; and turning his eyes to his bands, very strangely they fell from his arms, and that so quickly as no man with any haste could have undone them. Galla, seeing him so wonderfully and quickly loosed, fell straight a-trembling, and prostrating himself upon the earth bowed down his cruel and stiff neck to the holy man's feet, and with humility did commend himself to his prayers. But the venerable man for all this rose not up from his reading, but calling for some of his monks commanded them to have him in, and to give him

some meat. And when he was brought back again, he gave him a good lesson, admonishing him not to use any more such rigour and cruel dealing. His proud mind thus taken down, away he went, but durst not demand after that anything of the country fellow, whom the man of God, not with hands, but only with his eyes, had loosed from his bands. And this is that, Peter, which I told you, that those which in a more familiar sort serve God, do sometime, by certain power and authority bestowed upon them, work miracles. For he that sitting still did appease the fury of that cruel Goth, and unloose with his eyes those knots and cords which did pinion the innocent man's arms, did plainly shew by the quickness of the miracle, that he had received power to work all that which he did. And now will I likewise tell you of another miracle, which by prayer he obtained at God s hands.

Chapter Thirty-two: how by prayer venerable Benedict raised up a dead child.

Being upon a day gone out with his monks to work in the field, a country man carrying the corpse of his dead son came to the gate of the Abbey, lamenting the loss of his child: and inquiring for holy Benedict, they told him that he was abroad with his monks in the field. Down at the gate he laid the dead body, and with great sorrow of soul ran in haste to seek out the venerable father. At the same time, the man of God was returning homeward from work with his monks: whom so soon as he saw, he [the country man] began to cry out: "Give me my son, give me my son!"

The man of God, amazed at these words, stood still, and said: "What, have I taken away your son?" "No, no," quoth the sorrowful father, " but he is dead: come for Christ Jesus' sake and restore him to life."

The servant of God, hearing him speak in that manner, and seeing his monks upon compassion to solicit the poor man's suit, with great sorrow of mind he said: "Away, my good brethren, away: such miracles are not for us to work, but for the blessed Apostles: why will you lay such a burthen upon me, as my weakness cannot bear?" But the poor man, whom excessive grief enforced, would not give over his petition, but swore that he would never depart, except he did raise up his son.

"Where is he, then?" quoth God's servant.

He answered that his body lay at the gate of the Abbey: to which place when the man of God came with his monks, he kneeled down and lay upon the body of the little child, and rising, he held up his hands towards heaven, and said: "Behold not, O Lord, my sins, but the faith of this man, that desireth to have his son raised to life, and restore that soul to the body, which thou hast taken away."

He had scarce spoken these words, and behold the soul returned back again, and therewith the child's body began to tremble in such sort that all

which were present did behold it in strange manner to pant and shake. Then he took it by the hand and gave it to his father, but alive and in health. Certain it is, Peter, that this miracle was not in his own power, for which prostrate upon the ground he prayed so earnestly.

PETER. All is most true that before you said, for what you affirmed in words, you have now verified by examples and works. But tell me, I beseech you, whether holy men can do all such things as they please, and obtain at God's hands whatsoever they desire.

Chapter Thirty-three: of a miracle wrought by his sister Scholastica.

GREGORY. What man is there, Peter, in this world, that is in greater favour with God than St. Paul was: who yet three times desired our Lord to be delivered from the prick of the flesh, and obtained not his petition? Concerning which point also I must needs tell you, how there was one thing which the venerable father Benedict would have done, and yet he could not.

For his sister called Scholastica, dedicated from her infancy to our Lord, used once a year to come and visit her brother. To whom the man of God went not far from the gate, to a place that did belong to the Abbey, there to give her entertainment. And she coming thither on a time according to her custom, her venerable brother with his monks went to meet her, where they spent the whole day in the praises of God and spiritual talk: and when it was almost night they supped together, and as they were yet sitting at the table, talking of devout matters, and darkness came on, the holy Nun his sister entreated him to stay there all night, that they might spend it in discoursing of the joys of heaven. But by no persuasion would he agree unto that, saying that he might not by any means tarry all night out of his Abbey.

At that time, the sky was so clear that no cloud was to be seen. The Nun, receiving this denial of her brother, joining her hands together, laid them upon the table: and so, bowing down her head upon them, she made her prayers to almighty God: and lifting her head from the table, there fell suddenly such a tempest of lightning and thundering, and such abundance of rain, that neither venerable Benedict, nor his monks that were with him, could put their head out of door: for the holy Nun, resting her head upon her hands, poured forth such a flood of tears upon the table, that she drew the clear air to a watery sky, so that after the end of her devotions, that storm of rain followed: and her prayer and the rain did so meet together, that as she lifted up her head from the table, the thunder began, so that in

one and the very same instant, she lifted up her head and brought down the rain. The man of God, seeing that he could not by reason of such thunder and lightning and great abundance of rain return back to his Abbey, began to be heavy and to complain of his sister, saying: “God forgive you, what have you done?” to whom she answered: “I desired you to stay, and you would not hear me, I have desired our good Lord, and he hath vouchsafed to grant my petition: wherefore if you can now depart, in God’s name return to your monastery, and leave me here alone.”

But the good father, being not able to go forth, tarried there against his will, where willingly before he would not stay. And so by that means they watched all night, and with spiritual and heavenly talk did mutually comfort one another: and therefore by this we see, as I said before, that he would have had that thing, which yet he could not: for if we respect the venerable man’s mind, no question but he would have had the same fair weather to have continued as it was, when he set forth, but he found that a miracle did prevent his desire, which, by the power of almighty God, a woman’s prayers had wrought. And it is not a thing to be marvelled at, that a woman which of long time had not seen her brother, might do more at that time than he could, seeing, according to the saying of St. John, *God is charity* and therefore of right she did more which loved more.

PETER. I confess that I am wonderfully pleased with that which you tell me.

Chapter Thirty-four: how Benedict saw the soul of his sister ascend into heaven.

GREGORY. The next day the venerable woman returned to her Nunnery, and the man of God to his Abbey: who three days after, standing in his cell, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, beheld the soul of his sister (which was departed from her body), in the likeness of a dove to ascend into heaven: who rejoicing much to see her great glory, with hymns and lauds gave thanks to almighty God, and did impart the news of this her death to his monks, whom also he sent presently to bring her corpse to his Abbey, to have it buried in that grave which he had provided for himself: by means whereof it fell out that, as their souls were always one in God whiles they lived, so their bodies continued together after their death.

Chapter Thirty-five: how he saw the whole world represented before his eyes: and also the soul of Germanus, Bishop of Capua, ascending to heaven.

At another time, Servandus, the Deacon, and Abbot of that monastery, which in times past was founded by the noble man Liberius in the country of Campania, used ordinarily to come and visit the man of God: and the reason why he came so often was, because himself also was a man full of heavenly doctrine: and so they two had often together spiritual conference, to the end that, albeit they could not perfectly feed upon the celestial food of heaven, yet, by means of such sweet discourses, they might at least, with longing and fervent desire, taste of those joys and divine delights. When it was time to go to rest, the venerable Father Benedict reposed himself in the top of a tower, at the foot whereof Servandus the Deacon was lodged, so that one pair of stairs went to them both: before the tower there was a certain large room in which both their disciples did lie.

The man of God, Benedict, being diligent in watching, rose early up before the time of matins (his monks being yet at rest) and came to the window of his chamber, where he offered up his prayers to almighty God. Standing there, all on a sudden in the dead of the night, as he looked forth, he saw a light, which banished away the darkness of the night, and glittered with such brightness, that the light which did shine in the midst of darkness was far more clear than the light of the day. Upon this sight a marvellous strange thing followed, for, as himself did afterward report, the whole world, gathered as it were together under one beam of the sun, was presented before his eyes, and whiles the venerable father stood attentively beholding the brightness of that glittering light, he saw the soul of Germanus, Bishop of Capua, in a fiery globe to be carried up by Angels into heaven.

Then, desirous to have some witness of this so notable a miracle, he called with a very loud voice Servandus the Deacon twice or thrice by his name, who, troubled at such an unusual crying out of the man of God, went up in all haste, and looking forth saw not anything else, but a little remnant of the light, but wondering at so great a miracle, the man of God told him all in order what he had seen, and sending by and by to the town of Cassino, he commanded the religious man Theoprobus to dispatch one that night to the city of Capua, to learn what was become of Germanus their Bishop: which being done, the messenger found that reverent Prelate departed this life, and enquiring curiously the time, he understood that he died at that very instant, in which the man of God beheld him ascending up to heaven.

PETER. A strange thing and very much to be admired. But whereas you say that the whole world, as it were under one sunbeam, was presented before his eyes, as I must needs confess that in myself I never had experience of any such thing, so neither can I conceive by what means the whole world can be seen of any one man.

GREGORY. Assure yourself, Peter, of that which I speak: to wit, that all creatures be as it were nothing to that soul which beholdeth the Creator: for though it see but a glimpse of that light which is in the Creator, yet very small do all things seem that be created: for by means of that supernatural light, the capacity of the inward soul is enlarged, and is in God so extended, that it is far above the world: yea and the soul of him that seeth in this manner, is also above itself; for being rapt up in the light of God, it is inwardly in itself enlarged above itself, and when it is so exalted and looketh downward, then doth it comprehend how little all that is, which before in former baseness it could not comprehend. The man of God, therefore, who saw the fiery globe, and the Angels returning to heaven, out of all doubt could not see those things but in the light of God: what marvel, then, is it, if he saw the world gathered together before him, who, rapt up in

the light of his soul, was at that time out of the world? But albeit we say that the world was gathered together before his eyes, yet were not heaven and earth drawn into any lesser room than they be of themselves, but the soul of the beholder was more enlarged, which, rapt in God, might without difficulty see that which is under God, and therefore in that light which appeared to his outward eyes, the inward light which was in his soul ravished the mind of the beholder to supernal things, and shewed him how small all earthly things were.

PETER. I perceive now that it was to my more profit that I understood you not before: seeing, by reason of my slow capacity, you have delivered so notable an exposition. But now, because you have made me thrughly to understand these things, I beseech you to continue on your former narration.

Chapter Thirty-six: how holy Benedict wrote a rule for his monks.

GREGORY. Desirous I am, Peter, to tell you many things of this venerable father, but some of purpose I let pass, because I make haste to entreat also of the acts of other holy men: yet I would not have you to be ignorant, but that the man of God amongst so many miracles, for which he was so famous in the world, was also sufficiently learned in divinity: for he wrote a rule for his monks, both excellent for discretion and also eloquent for the style. Of whose life and conversation, if any be curious to know further, he may in the institution of that rule understand all his manner of life and discipline: for the holy man could not otherwise teach, than himself lived.

Chapter Thirty-seven: how venerable Benedict did prophesy to his monks, the time of his own death.

The same year in which he departed this life, he told the day of his holy death to his monks, some of which did live daily with him, and some dwelt far off, willing those that were present to keep it secret, and telling them that were absent by what token they should know that he was dead. Six days before he left this world, he gave order to have his sepulchre opened, and forthwith falling into an ague, he began with burning heat to wax faint, and when as the sickness daily increased, upon the sixth day he commanded his monks to carry him into the oratory, where he did arm himself with receiving the body and blood of our Saviour Christ; and having his weak body holden up betwixt the hands of his disciples, he stood with his own lifted up to heaven, and as he was in that manner praying, he gave up the ghost. Upon which day two monks, one being in his cell, and the other far distant, had concerning him one and the self-same vision: for they saw all the way from the holy man's cell, towards the east even up to heaven, hung and adorned with tapestry, and shining with an infinite number of lamps, at the top whereof a man, reverently attired, stood and demanded if they knew who passed that way, to whom they answered saying, that they knew not. Then he spake thus unto them: "This is the way," quoth he, "by which the beloved servant of God, Benedict, is ascended up to heaven." And by this means, as his monks that were present knew of the death of the holy man, so likewise they which were absent, by the token which he foretold them, had intelligence of the same thing. Buried he was in the oratory of St. John Baptist which himself built, when he overthrew the altar of Apollo; who also in that cave in which he first dwelled, even to this very time, worketh miracles, if the faith of them that pray requireth the same.

Chapter Thirty-eight: how a mad woman was cured in his cave.

For the thing which I mean now to rehearse fell out lately. A certain woman falling mad, lost the use of reason so far, that she walked up and down, day and night, in mountains and valleys, in woods and fields, and rested only in that place where extreme weariness enforced her to stay. Upon a day it so fell out, that albeit she wandered at random, yet she missed not the right way: for she came to the cave of the blessed man Benedict: and not knowing anything, in she went, and reposed herself there that night, and rising up in the morning, she departed as sound in sense and well in her wits, as though she had never been distracted in her whole life, and so continued always after, even to her dying day.

PETER. What is the reason that in the patronage of martyrs we often times find, that they do not afford so great benefit by their bodies, as they do by other of their relics: and do there work greater miracles, where themselves be not present?

GREGORY. Where the holy martyrs lie in their bodies, there is no doubt, Peter, but that they are able to work many miracles, yea and also do work infinite, to such as seek them with a pure mind. But for as much as simple people might have some doubt whether they be present, and do in those places hear their prayers where their bodies be not, necessary it is that they should in those places shew greater miracles, where weak souls may most doubt of their presence.

But he whose mind is fixed in God, hath so much the greater merit of his faith in that he both knoweth that they rest not there in body, and yet be there present to hear our prayers. And therefore our Saviour himself, to increase the faith of his disciples, said: *If I do not depart, the Comforter will not come unto you* : for, seeing certain it is that the comforting Spirit doth always proceed from the Father and the Son, why doth the Son say that he will depart that the Comforter may come, who never is absent from the

Son? But because the disciples, beholding our Lord in flesh, did always desire to see him with their corporal eyes, very well did he say unto them: "Unless I do go away, the Comforter will not come:" as though he had plainly told them: If I do not withdraw my body, I cannot let you understand what the love of the spirit is: and except you give over [cease] to love my carnal presence, never will you learn to affect me with true spiritual love.

PETER. That you say pleaseth me very well.

GREGORY. Let us now for a while give over our discourse, to the end that if we mean to prosecute the miracles of other Saints, we may through silence be the more able to perform it.

The Third Book

Being careful to entreat of such fathers as lived not long since, I passed over the worthy acts of those that were in former times: so that I had almost forgot the miracle of Paulinus, Bishop of Nola, who both for time was more ancient, and for virtue more notable, than many of those which I have spoken of: wherefore I will now speak of him, but as briefly as I can. For as the life and actions of good men are soonest known to such as be like them, so the famous name of venerable Paulinus became known to mine holy elders, and his admirable fact served for their instruction: who, for their gravity and old years, are as well to be credited, as if that which they reported they had seen with their own eyes.

Chapter One: of St. Paulinus, Bishop of the City of Nola.

When as in the time of the cruel Vandals, that part of Italy which is called Campania was overrun and sacked, and many were from thence carried captive into Africa: then the servant of God, Paulinus, bestowed all the wealth of his Bishopric upon prisoners and poor people. And not having now anything more left, a certain widow came unto him, lamenting how her son was taken prisoner by one that was son-in-law to the king of the Vandals, and by him carried away to be his slave: and therefore she besought him, that he would vouchsafe to help her with a ransom for the redeeming of her son. But the man of God, seeking what he had to give the poor woman, found nothing left but himself alone, and therefore he answered her in this manner: "Good woman, nothing have I to help thee withal but myself, and therefore take me, and a God's name say that I am your servant, and see whether he will receive me for his slave, and so set your son at liberty": which words she hearing from the mouth of so notable a man, took them rather for a mock, than to proceed indeed from true compassion. But as he was an eloquent man, and passing well learned in humanity, so did he quickly persuade the doubtful woman to give credit to his words, and not to be afraid to offer a Bishop for the ransom of her son; whereupon awaythey travelled both into Africa. And when the king's son-in-law came abroad, the widow put up her petition concerning her son, humbly beseeching him that he would vouchsafe to set him now at liberty, and bestow him upon his mother. But the barbarous man, swelling with pride and puffed up with the joy of transitory prosperity, refused not only to do it, but disdained also to give any ear to her petition. This way therefore taking no success, the desolate widow tried the next, and said unto him: "Behold, I give you here this man instead of him, only take compassion on me, and restore to me mine only son." At which words he, casting his eyes upon Paulinus, and seeing him to have an honest and good face, asked him

of what occupation he was: to whom the man of God answered: “Trade or occupation I can none, but some skill I have in keeping of a garden.” This pleased the Pagan very well, whereupon he admitted him for his servant, and restored the widow her son, with whom she departed out of Africa, and Paulinus took charge of the garden. The king’s son-in-law coming often into the garden, demanded certain questions of his new man, and perceiving him to be very wise and of good judgment, he began to give over the company of his old familiar friends, and conversed much with his gardener, taking great pleasure in his talk. Every day Paulinus brought him to his table divers sorts of green herbs, and after dinner returned to his garden. After he had used this a long time, upon a day, as his master and he were in secret talk together, Paulinus spake unto him in this manner: “Consider, my Lord, what is your best course, and how the kingdom of the Vandals shall be disposed of, for the king is to die shortly”: which news, because he was in special grace with the king, he gave him to understand, adding that his gardener, who was a passing wise man, had told him so much. The king, hearing this, was desirous to see the man he spake of: “Your Majesty,” quoth he, “shall see him, for his manner is to bring me in daily fresh herbs for my dinner, and I will give orders that he shall do it in your presence”: which direction being given, as the king sat at dinner, Paulinus came in, bringing with him divers sallettes and fresh herbs: whom so soon as the king beheld, he fell a trembling, and sending for Paulinus’ master (who by the marriage of his daughter was so near allied unto him), acquainted him with that secret which before he had concealed, saying: “It is very true that which you have heard, for the last night, in a dream, I saw certain judges in their seats sitting upon me, amongst whom this man also sat for one: and by their sentence that whip was taken from me, which for the punishment of others some time I had. But inquire, I pray you, what he is, for I do not think one of so great merit to be an ordinary man, as he outwardly seemeth.” Then the king’s

son-in-law took Paulinus in secret, and asked him what he was: to whom the man of God answered: “Your servant I am,” quoth he, “whom you took for the ransom of the widow’s son “; but when he would not be satisfied with that answer, but did instantly press him to tell, not what he was now, but what he had been in his own country, and did urge him very often to answer to this point: the man of God, adjured so strictly, not being able any longer to deny his request, told him that he was a Bishop; which his master and lord hearing became wonderfully afraid, and humbly offered him, saying: “Demand what you will, that you may be well rewarded of me, and so return home to your country.” To whom the man of God, Paulinus, said: “One thing there is wherein you may much pleasure me, and that is, to set at liberty all those that be of my city”: which suit he obtained, for straightways throughout Africa all were sought out, their ships laden with wheat, and to give venerable Paulinus satisfaction, they were all discharged, and in his company sent home: and not long after the king of the Vandals died, and so he lost that whip and severe government, which to his own destruction and the punishment of Christians by God’s providence he had before received. And thus it came to pass that Paulinus, the servant of almighty God, told truth, and he that voluntarily alone made himself a bondman, returned not back alone, but with many from captivity: imitating him who took upon him the form of a servant, that we should not be servants to sin: for Paulinus, following his example, became himself for a time a servant alone, that afterward he might be made free with many.

PETER. When I hear that which I cannot imitate, I desire rather to weep than to say anything.

GREGORY. Concerning this holy man’s death, it remaineth yet in the records of his own church, how that he was with a pain of his side brought to the last cast: and that, whiles all the rest of the house stood sound, the chamber only in which he lay sick was shaken with an earthquake, and so

his soul was loosed from his body: and by this means it fell out, that they were all stricken with a great fear that might have seen Paulinus departing this life. But because his virtue by that which I spoke of before is sufficiently handled, now, if you please, we will come to other miracles, which are both known to many, and which I have heard by the relation of such persons, that I can make no doubt but that they be most true.

Chapter Two: of St. John, the Pope.

In the time of the Goths, when the most blessed man John, Bishop of this church of Rome, travelled to the Emperor Justinian the elder, he came into the country of Corinth, where he lacked an horse to ride upon: which a certain noble man understanding, lent him that horse which, because he was gentle, his wife used for her own saddle, with order that when he came where he could provide himself of another, his wife's horse should be sent back again. And so the Bishop rode upon him, until he came to a certain place where he got another, and then he returned that which he had borrowed. But afterward, when his wife came to take his back, as before she used, by no means could she do it, because the horse, having carried so great a Bishop, would not suffer a woman to come any more upon his back, and therefore he began with monstrous snorting, neighing, and continual stirring, as it were in scorn, to shew that he could not bear any woman, upon whom the Pope himself had ridden: which thing her husband wisely considering, straightways sent him again to the holy man, beseeching him to accept of that horse, which by riding he had dedicated to his own service. Of the same man, another miracle is also reported by our ancestors: to wit, that in Constantinople, when he came to the gate called Aurea, where he was met with great numbers of people, in the presence of them all, he restored sight to a blind man that did instantly crave it: for laying his hand upon him, he banished away that darkness which possessed his eyes.

Chapter Three; of St. Agapitus, the Pope.

Not long after, about business concerning the Goths, the most blessed man Agapitus, Bishop of this holy church of Rome (in which by God's providence I do now serve), went to the Emperor Justinian. And, as he was travelling through Greece, a dumb and lame man was brought unto him for help. The holy man carefully demanded of his kinsfolk, that brought him thither and stood there weeping, whether they did believe that it was in his power to cure him: who answered, that they did firmly hope that he might help him in the virtue of God by the authority of St. Peter: upon which words forthwith the venerable man fell to his prayers, and beginning solemn mass, he offered sacrifice in the sight of almighty God: which being ended, he came from the altar, took the lame man by the hand, and straightways, in the presence and sight of all the people, he restored him to the use of his legs: and after he had put our Lord's body into his mouth, that tongue, which long time before had not spoken, was loosed. At which miracle all did wonder, and began to weep for joy: and forthwith both fear and reverence possessed their minds, beholding what Agapitus could do in the power of our Lord, by the help of St. Peter.

Chapter Four: of Datius, Bishop of Milan.

In the time of the same Emperor, Datius, Bishop of Milan, about matters of religion, travelled to Constantinople. And coming to Corinth, he sought for a large house to receive him and his company, and could scarce find any: at length he saw afar off a fair great house, which he commanded to be provided for him: and when the inhabitants of that place told him that it was for many years haunted by the devil, and therefore stood empty: "so much the sooner," quoth the venerable man, "ought we to lodge in it, if the wicked spirit hath taken possession thereof, and will not suffer men to dwell in it." Whereupon he gave order to have it made ready: which being done, he went without all fear to combat with the old enemy. In the dead of the night, when the man of God was asleep, the devil began, with an huge noise and great outcry, to imitate the roaring of lions, the bleating of sheep, the braying of asses, the hissing of serpents, the grunting of hogs, and the screeching of rats. Datius, suddenly awaked with the noise of so many beasts, rose up, and in great anger spake aloud to the old serpent, and said: "Thou art served well, thou wretched creature: thou art he that diddest say: *I will place my seat in the north, and I will be like to the highest:* and now through thy pride, see how thou art become like unto hogs and rats; and thou that wouldest needs unworthily be like unto God, behold how thou dost now, according to thy deserts, imitate brute beasts." At these words the wicked serpent was, as I may well term it, ashamed, that he was so disgraciously and basely put down, for well may I say that he was ashamed, who never after troubled that house with any such terrible and monstrous shapes as before he did: for ever after that time, Christian men did inhabit the same; for so soon as one man that was a true and faithful Christian took possession thereof, the lying and faithless spirit straightways did forsake it. But I will now surcease from speaking of things done in former times, and come to such miracles as have happened in our own days.

Chapter Five; of Sabinus, Bishop of Camisina.

Certain religious men, well known in the province of Apulia, do report that which many both far and near know to be most true, and that is of Sabinus, Bishop of Camisina: who, by reason of his great age, was become so blind that he saw nothing at all. And for as much as Totila, King of the Goths, hearing that he had the gift of prophecy, and would not believe it, but was desirous to prove whether it were so or no, it fell so out, that coming into those parts, the man of God did invite him to dinner. And when the meat was brought in, the King would not sit at the table, but sat beside at the right hand of venerable Sabinus: and when the Bishop's man brought him, as he used to do, a cup of wine, the King softly put forth his hand, took the cup, and gave it himself to the Bishop, to try whether he could tell who he was that gave him the wine. Then the man of God taking the cup, but not seeing him that did deliver it, said: "Blessed be that hand." At which words the King very merrily blushed, because, albeit he was taken, yet did he find that gift in the man of God which before he desired to know. The same reverent man, to give good example of life to others, lived until he was passing old: which nothing pleased his Archdeacon, that desired his Bishopric: and therefore upon ambition he sought how to dispatch him with poison, and for that purpose corrupted his cup-bearer, who, overcome with money, offered the Bishop at dinner that poison in his wine which he had received of the Archdeacon. The holy man, knowing what he brought, willed himself to drink that which he offered him. The wretch trembled at those words, and perceiving his villany to be detected, thought better to drink it, and so quickly dispatch himself, than with shame to suffer torments for the sin of so horrible a murder: but as he was putting the cup to his mouth, the man of God hindered him, saying: "Do not take it, but give it me, and I will drink it myself, but go thy way, and tell him that gave it thee, that I will drink the poison, but yet shall he never live to be Bishop": and so blessing the cup

with the sign of the cross, he drunk it without any harm at all; at which very time the Archdeacon, being in another place, departed this life; as though that poison had by the Bishop's mouth passed to his Archdeacon's bowels: for although he had no corporal poison to kill him, yet the venom of his own malice did destroy him in the sight of the everlasting Judge.

PETER. These be strange things, and much in our days to be wondered at: yet the life of the man is such, that he which knoweth his holy conversation hath no such cause to marvel at the miracle.

Chapter Six: of Cassius, Bishop of Narni.

GREGORY. Neither can I, Peter, pass over with silence that thing, which many of the city of Narni, which be here present, affirm to be most true. For in the time of the same Goths, the foresaid King Totila coming to Narni, Cassius, a man of venerable life, Bishop of the same city, went forth to meet him, whom the king utterly contemned, because his face was high-coloured, thinking that it proceeded not from any other cause than drinking. But almighty God, to show how worthy a man was despised, permitted a wicked spirit before his whole army, in the fields of Narni, where the king also himself was, to possess one of his guard, and cruelly to torment him. Straight ways was he brought to the venerable man Cassius, in the presence of the king: who praying to God for him, and making the sign of the cross, forthwith he cast out the devil, so that never after he durst presume any more to enter into his body. And by this means it fell out that the barbarous king, from that day forward, did with his heart much reverence the servant of God, whom before by his face he judged to be a man of no account: for seeing him now to be one of such power and virtue, he gave over those proud thoughts which before he had conceived.

Chapter Seven: of Andrew, Bishop of Funda.

But as I am thus busied in telling the acts of holy men, there cometh to my mind what God of his great mercy did for Andrew, Bishop of the city of Funda: which notable story I wish all so to read, that they which have dedicated themselves to continency, presume not in any wise to dwell amongst women: lest in time of temptation their soul perish the sooner, by having that at hand which is unlawfully desired. Neither is the story which I report either doubtful or uncertain: for so many witnesses to justify the truth thereof may be produced, as there be almost inhabitants in that city. When, therefore, this venerable man Andrew lived virtuously, and with diligent care, answerable to his priestly function, led a continent and chaste life: he kept in his house a certain Nun, which also had remained with him before he was preferred to that dignity; for assuring himself of his own continency, and nothing doubting of hers, content he was to let her remain still in his house: which thing the devil took as an occasion to assault him with temptation: and so he began to present before the eyes of his mind the form of that woman, that by such allurements he might have his heart wholly possessed with ungodly thoughts. In the meantime it so fell out, that a Jew was travelling from Campania to Rome, who drawing nigh to the city of Funda, was so overtaken with night, that he knew not where to lodge, and therefore, not finding any better commodity, he retired himself into a temple of the god Apollo, which was not far off, meaning there to repose himself: but much afraid he was, to lie in so wicked and sacrilegious a place: for which cause, though he believed not what we teach of the cross, yet he thought good to arm himself with that sign. About midnight, as he lay waking for very fear of that forlorn and desert temple, and looked suddenly about him, he espied a troop of wicked spirits walking before another of greater authority: who coming in took up his place, and sat down in the body of the temple: where he began diligently to inquire of those his

servants, how they had bestowed their time, and what villany they had done in the world. And when each one told what he had done against God's servants, out stepped a companion, and made solemn relation, with a notable temptation of carnality he had put into the mind of Bishop Andrew, concerning that Nun which he kept in his palace: whereunto whiles the master devil gave attentive ear, considering with himself what a notable gain it would be, to undo the soul of so holy a man; the former devil went on with his tale, and said that the very evening before he assaulted him so mightily, that he drew him so far forth, that he did merrily strike the said Nun upon the back. The wicked serpent and old enemy of mankind hearing this joyful news, exhorted his agent with very fair words, diligently to labour about the effecting of that thing which he had already so well begun, that for so notable a piece of service, as the contriving the spiritual ruin of that virtuous Prelate, he might have a singular reward above all his fellows. The Jew who all this while lay waking, and heard all that which they said, was wonderfully afraid: at length the master devil sent some of his followers to see who he was, and how he durst presume to lodge in their temple. When they were come, and had narrowly viewed him, they found that he was marked with the mystical sign of the cross: whereat they marvelled and said: "Alas, alas, here is an empty vessel, but yet it is signed": which news the rest of those hell-hounds hearing, suddenly vanished away. The Jew, who had seen all that which then passed among them, presently rose up, and in all haste sped himself to the Bishop, whom he found in the church: and taking him aside, he demanded with what temptation he was troubled: but shame so prevailed, that by no means he would confess the truth. Then the Jew replied and told him, that he had cast his eyes wickedly upon such a one of God's servants; but the Bishop would not acknowledge that there was any such thing. "Why do you deny it," quoth the Jew, "for is it not so true that yesternight you were brought so far

by sinful temptation, that you did strike her on the back?" When the Bishop, by these particulars, perceived that the matter was broken forth, he humbly confessed what before he obstinately denied. Then the Jew, moved with compassion to his soul, and tendering his credit, told him by what means he came to the knowledge thereof, and what he heard of him in that assembly of wicked spirits. The Bishop, hearing this, fell prostrate upon the earth, and betook himself to his prayers: and straight after he discharged out of his house, not only that Nun, but all other women that attended upon her. And not long after, he converted the temple of Apollo into an oratory of the blessed Apostle, St. Andrew: and never after was he troubled with that carnal temptation: and the Jew, by whose means he was so mercifully preserved, he brought to everlasting salvation: for he baptized him, and made him a member of holy Church, And thus, by God's providence, the Jew having care of the spiritual health of another, attained also himself the singular benefit of the same: and almighty God by the same means brought one to embrace piety and virtue, by which he preserved another in an holy and godly life.

PETER. This history which I have heard worketh in me fear, and yet withal giveth me cause of hope.

GREGORY. That is not amiss, Peter, for necessary it is that we should both trust upon the mercy of God, and yet, considering our own frailty, be afraid: for we have now heard how one of the cedars of Paradise was shaken, and yet not blown down, to the end that, knowing our own infirmity, we should both tremble at his shaking, and yet conceive hope, in that he was not overthrown, but kept his standing still.

Chapter Eight: of Constantius, Bishop of Aquinum.

Constantius, likewise a man of holy life, was Bishop of Aquinum, who not long since died, in the time of Pope John of blessed memory, my predecessor: many that knew him familiarly, say that he had the gift of prophecy. And amongst divers other things which he did, religious and honest men then present report that, lying upon his deathbed, the citizens that stood about him wept bitterly, and asked him with tears, who should be their father and Bishop after him. To whom by the spirit of prophecy he answered, saying: “After Constantius, you shall have a muleteer, and after a muleteer, a fuller of cloth: and these men,” quoth he, “be now in the city of Aquinum”: and having spoken these prophetical words, he gave up the ghost. After whose departure one Andrew, his Deacon, was made Bishop: who in times past had kept mules and post horses. And when he died, one Jovinus was preferred to that dignity, who in former times had been a fuller in the same city: in whose days all the citizens were so wasted, some by the sword of barbarous people, and some by a terrible plague, that after his death neither could any be found to be made Bishop, nor yet any people for whose sake he should be created. And so the saying of the man of God was fulfilled, in that his church, after the death of two that followed him, had no Bishop at all.

Chapter Nine: of Frigidianus, Bishop of Lucca.

But I must not forget to tell you what I heard of the reverent man Venantius, Bishop of Luna, some two days ago: who said that there was, nigh unto him, a man of rare virtue called Frigidianus, Bishop of Lucca, who wrought a strange miracle, which, as he saith, all the inhabitants of that place do speak of, and it was this. Hard by the walls of the city, there runneth a river called Anser, which divers times doth so swell and overflow the banks, that it drowneth many acres of ground, and spoileth much corn and fruit. The inhabitants, enforced by necessity, seeing that this did often happen, went about by all means possible to turn the stream another way: but when they had bestowed much labour, yet could they not cause it to leave the old channel. Whereupon the man of God, Frigidianus, made a little rake, and came to the river, where all alone he bestowed some time in prayer; and then he commanded the river to follow him, and going before, he drew his rake over such places as he thought good, and the whole river, forsaking the old channel, did follow him, and kept possession of that which the holy man by that sign of his rake had appointed: and so never afterward did it hurt any more either corn or other things planted for the maintenance of men.

Chapter Ten; of Sabinus, Bishop of Placentia.

The same Venantius told me likewise another miracle, done as he said in the city of Placentia, which one John, the servant of God, and a man of credit living now here amongst us, and who was born and brought up in that city, affirmeth also to be most true. For in that town of Placentia, they say that there was a Bishop of wonderful virtue, called Sabinus: who understanding by one of his Deacons, that the great river of Po was broken forth, and had overflowed the land which belonged to the church, and done much harm, he bad him go unto the river, and deliver it this message from him: "The Bishop commandeth you to retire, and keep yourself within your own bounds." His Deacon, hearing these words, scornfully contemned to be employed in any such business. Then the man of God, Sabinus, sent for a notary, and willed him to write these words: "Sabinus, the servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, sendeth admonition to Po. I command thee, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou come not out of thy channel, nor presume any more to hurt the lands of the church." This short letter he bad the notary write, and when he had so done, to go and cast it into the river. The notary did as he bad him, and the river obeyed the precept of the holy man, for straightways it withdrew itself from the church-lands, returned to his own channel, and never presumed any more to overflow those grounds. By which fact, Peter, the pride of disobedient men is confounded, seeing that the very senseless element, in the name of Jesus, obeyed the holy man's commandment.

Chapter Eleven: of Cerbonius, Bishop of Populonium.

Cerbonius, also a man of holy life, Bishop of Populonium, hath made great proof in our time of his rare virtue. For being much given to hospitality, upon a certain day he gave entertainment to divers soldiers, which, for fear of the Goths (that passed likewise by his house), he conveyed out of the way, and so saved their lives from those wicked men. Totila, their impious king, having intelligence thereof, in great rage and cruelty commanded him to be brought unto a place called Merulis (eight miles from Populonium), where he remained with his whole army, and in the sight of the people to be cast unto wild bears to be devoured. And because the wicked king would needs be present himself, to behold the Bishop torn in pieces, great store of people were likewise assembled, to see that pitiful pageant. The Bishop was brought forth, and a terrible bear provided, that might in cruel manner tear his body in pieces, so to satisfy the mind of that bloody king. Out of his den was the beast let loose, who in great fury and haste set upon the Bishop: but suddenly, forgetting all cruelty, with bowed neck and humbled head, he began to lick his feet: to give them all to understand that men carried towards the man of God the hearts of beasts, and the beasts as it were the heart of a man. At this sight the people, with great shouting and outcries, declared how highly they did admire the holy man: and the king himself was moved to have him in great reverence: and so by God's providence it fell out, that he which before refused to obey and follow God by saving the Bishop's life, was brought to do it by the miraculous meekness of a cruel bear. Many of them which were then present, and saw it, be yet living, who do all affirm this to be most true.

Another miracle concerning the same man I heard of Venantius, Bishop of Luna, and it was this. Cerbonius had in the church of Populonium a tomb provided for himself; but when the Lombards invaded Italy, and spoiled all that country, he retired himself into the island of Elba. Where falling sore

sick, before his death he commanded his chaplains to bury his body in the foresaid tomb at Populonium: and when they told him how hard a thing it was by reason of the Lombards, which were lords of the country, and did range up and down in all places: "Carry me thither," quoth he, "securely, and fear nothing, but bury me in all haste, and that being done, come away as fast as you can." For performing of this his will they provided a ship, and away they went with his body towards Populonium: in which journey there fell great store of rain, but that the world might know whose body was transported in that ship, in that twelve miles' space which is betwixt the island and Populonium, a great storm of rain fell upon both sides of the ship, but not one drop within. When they were come to the place, they buried his body, and, according to his commandment, returned to their ship with all speed: and they were no sooner aboard, than there entered into the church, where the Bishop was buried, a most cruel captain of the Lombards called Gunmar. By whose sudden coming to that place, it appeared plainly that the man of God had the spirit of prophecy, when he willed them in all haste to depart from the place of his burial.

Chapter Twelve: of Fulgentius, Bishop of Otricoli.

The very same miracle, which I told you concerning the division of the rain, happened likewise to the great veneration of another Bishop. For a certain old Priest, who yet liveth, was then present when it happened, and saith that Fulgentius, Bishop of Otricoli, was in disgrace with that cruel tyrant Totila: and therefore, as he was passing that way with his army, the Bishop did carefully beforehand by his chaplains send him certain presents, by that means, if it were possible, to mitigate his furious mind. But the tyrant contemned them, and in great rage commanded his soldiers hardly to bind the Bishop, and to keep him safe until he had heard his examination. The merciless Goths executed his cruel commandment: and setting him upon a piece of ground, they made a circle round about him, out of which they commanded him not to stir his foot. Whiles the man of God stood there in great extremity of heat, environed round about with those Goths, suddenly there fell such thunder and lightning, and such plenty of rain, that his keepers could not endure that terrible storm: and yet for all that, not one drop fell within the circle, where the man of God, Fulgentius, stood. Which strange news being told to that tyrannical king, his barbarous mind was brought to have him in great reverence, whose torment before he desired and so cruelly thirsted after his blood. Thus almighty God, to bring down the lofty minds of carnal men, doth work miracles by such as they most contemn: that truth, proceeding from the mouths of his humble servants, may subdue those, which of pride do extol and advance themselves against the doctrine of truth.

Chapter Thirteen: of Herculanus, Bishop of Perusium.

Not long since, the virtuous Bishop Floridus told me a notable miracle, which was this. "The great holy man," quoth he, "Herculanus, who brought me up, was Bishop of Perusium, exalted to that dignity from the state of a monk: in whose time the perfidious king Totila besieged it for seven years together, and the famine within was so great that many of the townsmen forsook the place: and before the seventh year was ended, the army of the Goths took the city. The commander of his camp dispatched messengers to Totila, to know his pleasure what he should do with the Bishop, and the rest of the citizens: to whom he returned answer, that he should, from the top of the Bishop's head to his very foot, cut off a thong of his skin, and that done, to strike off his head: and as for the rest of the people, to put them all to the sword. When he had received this order, he commanded the reverent Bishop Herculanus to be carried to the walls, and there to have his head strooken off, and when he was dead, that his skin should be cut from the very crown down to the very foot, as though indeed a thong had been taken from his body; after which barbarous fact they threw his dead corpse over the wall. Then some upon pity, joining the head to the body, did bury him, together with an infant that was there found dead. Forty days after, Totila making proclamation that the inhabitants, which were gone, should without all fear come back again: those, which upon extremity of hunger departed, returned home to their houses, and calling to mind the holy life of their Bishop, they sought for his body, that it might, as he deserved, be buried in the church of St. Peter. And when they came to the place where it lay, they digged, and found the body of the infant that was buried together with him, putrefied and full of worms: but the Bishop's body was so sound as though it had been newly put into the earth, and that which is more to be admired, and deserveth greater reverence, his head was so fast joined to his body as though it had never been cut off, neither did any sign of his beheading

appear at all. Then they viewed likewise his back, whether that were also whole and sound, and they found it so perfect and well, as though never any knife had touched the same."

PETER. Who would not wonder at such miracles of them that be dead: wrought, no question, for the spiritual good of the living?

Chapter Fourteen: of the servant of God, Isaac.

GREGORY. At such time as the Goths first invaded Italy, there was, near to the city of Spoleto, a virtuous and holy man called Isaac: who lived almost to the last days of the Goths, whom many did know, and especially the holy virgin Gregoria, which now dwelleth in this city, hard by the church of the blessed and perpetual Virgin Mary: which woman, in her younger years, desiring to live a nun's life, fled to the church from marriage, already agreed upon by her friends, and was by this man defended: and so, through God's providence, obtained to have that habit which so much she desired, and so,leaving her spouse upon earth, she merited a spouse in heaven. Many things also I had by the relation of the reverent man Eleutherius,who was familiarly acquainted with him; and his virtuous life doth give credit to his words. This holy man Isaac was not born in Italy; and therefore I will only speak of such miracles as he did living here in our country. At his first coming out of Syria to the city of Spoleto, he went to the church, and desired the keepers that he might have free leave to pray there, and not to be enforced to depart when night came. And so he began his devotions, and spent all that day in prayer, and likewise the night following. The second day and night he bestowed in the same manner, and remained there also the third day: which when one of the keepers of the church perceived, who was a man of a proud spirit, he took scandal by that, whereof he ought to have reaped great profit. For he began to say that he was an hypocrite and cozening companion, who in the sight of the world remained at his prayers three days and three nights together: and forthwith running upon the man of God, he strook him, to make him by that means with shame to depart the church as an hypocrite, and one that desired to be reputed an holy man. But to revenge this injury, a wicked spirit did presently possess his body, who cast him down at the feet of the man of God, and began by his mouth to cry out: "Isaac doth cast me forth, Isaac doth cast me forth." For what name the

strange man had, none at that time did know, but the wicked spirit told it, when he cried out that he had power to cast him out. Straightways the man of God laid himself upon his body, and the cursed devil that was entered in, departed in all haste. News of this was by and by blown over the whole city, and men and women, rich and poor, came running, every one striving to bring him home to their own house: some for the building of an Abbey, did humbly offer him lands, others money, and some such other helps as they could. But the servant of almighty God, refusing to accept any of their offers, departed out of the city, and not far off he found a desert place, where he built a little cottage for himself: to whom many repairing began by his example to be inflamed with the love of everlasting life, and so, under his discipline and government, gave themselves to the service of almighty God. And when his disciples would often humbly insinuate, that it were good for the necessity of the Abbey to take such livings as were offered, he, very careful to keep poverty, told them constantly, saying: "A monk that seeketh for livings upon earth is no monk": for so fearful he was to lose the secure state of his poverty, as covetous rich men are careful to preserve their corruptible wealth.

In that place, therefore, he became famous for the spirit of prophecy: and his life was renowned far and near, for the notable miracles which he wrought. For upon a day, towards evening, he caused his monks to lay a certain number of spades in the garden. The night following, when according to custom they rose up to their prayers, he commanded them, saying: "Go your ways, and make pottage for our workmen, that it may be ready very early in the morning." And when it was day, he bad them bring the pottage which they had provided; and going with his monks into the garden, he found there so many men working as he had commanded them to lay spades: for it fell so out, that certain thieves were entered in to spoil and rob it; but God changing their minds, they took the spades which they found

there, and so wrought from the time of their first entrance, until the man of God came unto them: and all such parts of the ground as before were not manured, they had digged up and made ready. When the man of God was come, he saluted them in this wise: "God save you, good brethren: you have laboured long, wherefore now rest yourselves ": then he caused such provision as he had brought to be set before them, and so after their labour and pains refreshed them. When they had eaten that was sufficient, he spake thus unto them: "Do not hereafter any more harm: but when you desire anything that is in the garden, come to the gate, quietly ask it, and take it a God's blessing, but steal no more": and so bestowing upon them good store of worts, he sent them away. And by this means it fell out that they which came into the garden to do harm, departed thence not doing any damage at all, and besides had the reward of their pains, and somewhat also of charity bestowed upon them.

At another time, there came unto him certain strange men a begging, so torn and tattered, that they had scant any rags to cover them, humbly beseeching him to help them with some clothes. The man of God, hearing their demand, gave them no answer: but secretly calling for one of his monks, bad him go into such a wood, and in such a place of the wood to seek for an hollow tree, and to bring unto him that apparel which he found there. The monk went his way, and brought closely to his master that which he had found. Then the man of God called for those poor naked men, and gave them that apparel, saying: "Put on these clothes to cover your naked bodies withal." They, seeing their own garments, were wonderfully confounded: for thinking by cunning to have gotten other men's apparel, with shame they received only their own.

Again, at another time, one there was that commended himself to his prayers, and sent him by his servant two baskets full of meat: one of the which, as he was in his journey, he took away, and hid in a bush till his

return back again; and the other he presented to the man of God, telling him how his master had sent him that, heartily commending himself to his prayers. The holy man took that which was sent very kindly, giving the messenger this good lesson: “I pray thee, my friend, to thank thy master, and take heed how thou dost lay hand upon the basket, for a snake is crept in, and therefore be careful, lest otherwise it doth sting thee.” At these words the messenger was pitifully confounded, and though glad he was that by this means he escaped death, yet somewhat grieved that he was put to that shame. Coming back to the basket, very diligent and careful he was in touching it; for as the man of God had told him, a snake in very deed was got in. This holy man, therefore, albeit he were incomparably adorned with the virtue of abstinence, contempt of worldly wealth, the spirit of prophecy, and perseverance in prayer: yet one thing there was in him which seemed reprehensible, to wit, that sometime he would so exceed in mirth, that if men had not known him to have been so full of virtue, none would ever have thought it.

PETER. What, I beseech you, shall we say to that? for did he willingly give himself sometime to such recreation: or else excelling in virtue, was he, contrary to his own mind, drawn sometime to present mirth?

GREGORY. God’s providence, Peter, in bestowing of his gifts, is wonderful: for often it falleth out, that upon whom he vouchsafeth the greater, he giveth not the less: to the end that always they may have somewhat to mis-like in themselves: so that desiring to arrive unto perfection and yet can not: and labouring about that which they have not obtained, and can not prevail: by this means they become not proud of those gifts which they have received, but do thereby learn that they have not those greater graces of themselves, who of themselves cannot overcome small faults. And this was the cause that, when God had brought his people into the land of promise, and destroyed all their mighty and potent enemies, yet

did he long time after reserve the Philistines and Caananites, that, as it is written, *He might in them try Israel.* For sometime as hath been said, upon whom he bestoweth great gifts, he leaveth some small things that be blameworthy, that always they may have somewhat to fight against, and not to be proud, though their great enemies be vanquished, seeing other adversaries in very small things do put them to great trouble: and therefore it falleth out strangely, that one and the self same man is excellent for virtue, and yet of infirmity sometime doth offend, so that he may behold himself on the one side strong and well furnished, and on another open and not defended: that by the good thing which he seeketh for, and is not able to procure, he may with humility preserve that virtue which already he hath in possession. But what wonder is it that we speak this concerning man, when as heaven itself lost some of his citizens, and other some continued sound in God's grace: that the elect Angels of God, seeing others through pride to fall from heaven, might stand so much the more steadfast, by how much with humility they preserved God's grace received? They, therefore, took profit by that loss which heaven then had, and were thereby made to persevere more constantly in God's service for all eternity. In like manner it fareth with each man's soul, which sometime for preserving of humility, by a little loss it attaineth to great spiritual perfection.

PETER. I am very well pleased with that you say.

Chapter Fifteen: of the servants of God Euthicius and Florentius.

GREGORY. Neither will I pass over that with silence, which I heard from the mouth of that reverent Priest, Sanctulus, one of the same country: and of whose report I am sure you make no doubt, for you know very well his life and fidelity.

At the same time, in the province of Nursia there dwelt two men, observing the life and habit of holy conversation: the one was called Euthicius and the other Florentius; of which Euthicius bestowed his time in spiritual zeal and fervour of virtue, and laboured much by his exhortations, to gain souls to God; but Florentius led his life in simplicity and devotion. Not far from the place where they remained, there was an Abbey, the governor whereof was dead, and therefore the monks made choice of Euthicius, to take the charge thereof: who, condescending to their petition, governed the Abbey many years. And not to have his former oratory utterly destitute, he left the reverent man Florentius to keep the same; who dwelt there all alone, and upon a day, being at his prayers, he besought almighty God to vouchsafe him of some comfort in that place; and having ended his devotions, he went forth, where he found a bear standing before the door, which by the bowing down of his head to the ground, and shewing in the gesture of his body no sign or cruelty, gave the man of God to understand that He was come thither to do him service, and himself likewise did forthwith perceive it. And because he had in the house four or five sheep which had no keeper, he commanded the bear to take charge of them, saying: "Go and lead these sheep to the field, and at twelve of the clock come back again ": which charge he took upon him, and did daily come home at that hour: and so he performed the office of a good shepherd, and those sheep, which before time he used to devour, now fasting himself, he took care to have them safely kept. And when God's servant determined to

fast until three of the clock, then he commanded the bear to return with his sheep at the same hour; but when he would not fast so long, to come at twelve. And whatsoever he commanded his bear, that he did, so that bidden to return at three of the clock, he would not come at twelve; and commanded to return at twelve, he would not tarry till three. And when this had continued a good while, he began to be famous far and near for his virtue and holy life. But the old enemy of mankind by that means which he seeth the good to come unto glory, by the same doth he draw the wicked through hatred to procure their own misery; for four of Euthicius' monks, swelling with envy that their master wrought not any miracles, and that he who was left alone by him was famous for so notable a one, upon very spite went and killed his bear. And therefore, when the poor beast came not at his appointed hour, Florentius began to suspect the matter: but expecting yet until the evening, very much grieved he was that the bear, whom in great simplicity he called his brother, came not home. The next day, he went to the field, to seek for his sheep and his shepherd, whom he found there slain; and making diligent inquisition, he learned quickly who they were that had committed that uncharitable fact. Then was he very sorry, bewailing yet more the malice of the monks than the death of his bear; whom the reverent man Euthicius sent for, and did comfort him what he might; but the holy man Florentius, wonderfully grieved in mind, did in his presence curse them, saying: "I trust in almighty God, that they shall in this life, and in the sight of the world, receive the reward of their malice, that have thus killed my bear which did them no harm"; whose words God's vengeance did straight follow, for the four monks that killed the poor beast were straight so stricken with a leprosy, that their limbs did rot away, and so they died miserably: whereat the man of God, Florentius, was greatly afraid, and much grieved, that he had so cursed the monks; and all his life after he wept, for that his prayer was heard, crying out that himself was cruel, and

that he had murdered those men. Which thing I suppose almighty God did, to the end that he should not, being a man of great simplicity, upon any grief whatsoever, afterward presume to curse any.

PETER. What? is it any great sin, if in our anger we curse others?

GREGORY. Why do you ask me whether it be a great sin, when as St. Paul saith: *Neither cursers shall possess the kingdom of God?* Think, then, how great the sin is, which doth exclude a man out of heaven.

PETER. What if a man, haply not of malice, but of negligence in keeping his tongue, doth curse his neighbour?

GREGORY. If before the severe judge idle speech is reprehended, how much more that which is hurtful. Consider, then, how damnable those words be, which proceed of malice, when that talk shall be punished which proceedeth only from idleness.

PETER. I grant it be most true.

GREGORY. The same man of God did another thing which I must not forget. For, the report of his virtue reaching far and near, a certain Deacon, that dwelt many miles off, travelled unto him, to commend himself to his prayers. And coming to his cell, he found it round about full of innumerable snakes; at which sight being wonderfully afraid, he cried out, desiring Florentius to pray: who came forth, the sky being then very clear, and lifted up his eyes and his hands to heaven, desiring God to take them away in such sort as he best knew. Upon whose prayers, suddenly it thundered, and that thunder killed all those snakes. Florentius, seeing them all dead, said unto God: “Behold, O Lord, thou hast destroyed them all, but who shall now carry them away?” And straight as he had thus spoken, so many birds came as there were snakes killed, which took them all up, and carried them far off, discharging his habitation from those venomous creatures.

PETER. Certainly he was a man of great virtue and merit, whose prayers God did so quickly hear.

GREGORY. Purity of heart and simplicity, Peter, is of great force with almighty God, who is in purity most singular, and of nature most simple. For those servants of his, which do retire themselves from worldly affairs, avoid idle words, labour not to lose their devotion, nor to defile their soul with talking, do especially obtain to be heard of him, to whom, after a certain manner, and as they may, they be like in purity and simplicity of heart. But we that live in the world, and speak oftentimes idle words, and that which is worse, sometime those that be hurtful: our words and prayers are so much the farther off from God, as they be near unto the world: for we are drawn too much down towards the earth, by continual talking of secular business: which thing the prophet Esaye did very well reprehend in himself, after he had beheld the King and Lord of armies, and was penitent, crying out: *Woe be to me for being silent, because I am a man that have defiled lips:* and he sheweth straight after the reason why his lips were defiled, when he saith: *I dwell in the midst of a people that hath defiled lips*. For sorry he was that his lips were defiled, yet concealeth not from whence he had them, when he saith, that he dwelt in the midst of a people that had defiled lips. For very hard it is that the tongues of secular men should not defile their souls, with whom they talk; for when we do sometime condescend to speak with them of certain things, by little and little we get such a custom, that we hear that spoken with pleasure which is not meet to be heard at all, so that afterward we are loath to give that over, to which at the first, to gratify others, we were brought against our wills. And by this means we fall from idle words to hurtful speeches, and from talk of small moment to words of great importance: and so it cometh to pass that our tongue is so much the less respected of God when we pray, by how much we are more defiled with foolish speech, because, as it is written: *He that turneth away his ear that he hear not the law, his prayer shall be execrable.* What marvel, then, is it, if, when we pray, God doth slowly hear us, when

as we hear God’s commandments, either slowly or not at all? And what marvel if Florentius, when he prayed, was quickly heard, who obeyed God in observing his commandments?

PETER. The reason alleged is so plain, that nothing with reason can be said against it.

GREGORY. But Euthicius, who was companion to Florentius in serving of God, was famous also for miracles after his death. For the inhabitants of that city do speak of many: but the principal is that which, even to these times of the Lombards, almighty God hath vouchsafed to work by his coat: for when they had any great drougth the citizens, gathering themselves together, did carry that, and together with their prayers offer it in the sight of our Lord. And when they went with that through the fields, praying to God, forthwith they had such plenty of rain as the dryness of the ground required: whereby it was apparent, what virtue and merits were in his soul, whose garment shewed outwardly did pacify the anger of almighty God.

Chapter Sixteen: of Marcius, the Monk of Mount Marsico.

Not long since, there was a reverent man in Campania, called Marcius, who lived a solitary life in the mountain of Marsico: and many years together did he continue in a narrow and straight cave: whom many of our acquaintance knew very well, and were present at such miracles as he did, and many things concerning him have I heard from the mouth of Pope Pelagius of blessed memory, my predecessor, and also of others, who be very religious men. His first miracle was that, so soon as he made choice of that cave for his habitation, there sprung water out of the hollow rock, which was neither more nor less than served for his necessity: by which almighty God did shew what great care he had of his servant, seeing miraculously, as in ancient time he had before done to the children of Israel, he caused the hard rock to yield forth water. But the old enemy of mankind, envying at his virtues, went about by his ancient slight to drive him from that place: for he entered into a serpent, his old friend, and so thought to have terrified him from thence. For the serpent alone would come into the cave where he lived also alone, and when he was at his prayers, it would cast itself before him, and when he took his rest, it would lie down by his side. The holy man was nothing at all dismayed at this: for sometime he would put his hand or leg to his mouth, saying: "If thou hast leave to sting me, I hinder thee not ": and when he had lived thus continually the space of three years, upon a day the old enemy, overcome with his heavenly courage, made a great hissing, and tumbling himself down by the side of the mountain, he consumed all the bushes and shrubs with fire: in which fact by the power of God he was enforced to shew of what force he was, that departed with loss of the victory. Consider, I pray you then, in the top of what mountain this man of God stood, that continued three years together with a serpent, without taking any harm at all.

PETER. I do consider it, and do tremble at the very hearing of the story.

GREGORY. This reverent man, when he first shut himself up, was determined never to behold women any more: not because he contemned them, but for that he feared lest their sight might be the occasion of sinful temptation: which resolution of his a certain woman understanding, up she went boldly to the mountain, and forgetting all modesty, impudently approached to his cave. He seeing her a good way off, and perceiving by the apparel that it was a woman, he fell straight to his prayers, with his face upon the earth, and there he lay prostrate, until the shameless creature, wearied with staying at his window, departed: and that very day after she was descended the mountain, she ended her lire; to give all the world to understand how highly she displeased almighty God, in offending his servant with that her bold enterprise.

At another time, many of devotion going to visit him, a young boy, taking little heed to his feet, and by reason the path was so straight upon the side of the mountain, fell down, and tumbled until he came to the bottom of the valley, which was very deep: for the mountain is so high, that huge trees growing beneath seem to them that be above nothing else but little shrubs. The people present were at this chance much dismayed, and very diligently did they seek, to see where they could find his dead body: for who would have thought any otherwise but that he was slain, or once imagined that his body could ever have come safe to the ground, so many rocks being in the way to tear it in pieces? yet for all this, he was found in the valley, not only alive, but also without any harm at all. Then they perceived very well, that the reason why he was not hurt was because Marcius' prayers did preserve him in his falling.

Over his cave there was a great rock, which seemed to hang but by a little piece unto the mountain, and therefore daily was it feared that it would fall, and so kill the servant of God. For preventing of which mischief, the honourable man Mascatus, nephew to Armentarius, came thither with a

great number of country people, desiring him to leave his cave so long until they had removed that rock, to the end he might afterward continue there without any danger: but the man of God could not by any means be persuaded to come forth, bidding them notwithstanding do what they thought convenient, only he retired himself to the farthest part of his cell: yet none made any doubt, but that if so huge a rock as that was did fall, but that it would both spoil his cave and kill himself. Wherefore they laboured what they might, to see if they could remove that mighty stone without any danger to the man of God, and forthwith, in the sight of them all, a strange thing happened: for that rock, severed by their labour from the rest of the mountain, not touching Marcius' cave, did skip clean over, and avoiding, as it were, to hurt God's servant, it fell far off: which thing no man can doubt but that it was done by the hands of Angels, at the commandment of almighty God.

At such time as this holy man came first to inhabit that mountain, and had not yet made any door for his cave, he fastened the one end of an iron chain to the stony wall, and the other he tied to his leg, to the end he might go no farther than the length of that chain did give him leave: which thing the reverent man Benedict hearing of, sent him this word by one of his monks: "If thou be God's servant, let the chain of Christ, and not any chain of iron, hold thee": upon this message Marcius forthwith loosed his chain, yet did he keep still the same compass, and go no farther than he did before. Living afterward in the same cave, he began to entertain certain disciples, which dwelt apart from his cell, who, having no other water but that which with a rope and a bucket they drew out of a well, great trouble they had, because their rope did often break: and therefore they came unto him, craving that chain which he had loosed from his leg, that they might tie the rope to that, and fasten the bucket upon it: and from that time forward, though the rope was daily wet with water, yet did it break no more; for

having touched the holy man's chain, it became strong like unto iron, so that the water did not wear it, nor do it any harm.

PETER. These worthy acts of his do please me, seeing they are strange, and that very much, because they were so lately done, and be yet fresh in memory.

Chapter Seventeen: how a Monk of Mount Argentario raised up a dead man.

GREGORY. Not long since in our time, a certain man called Quadragesimus was subdeacon in the church of Buxentin, who in times past kept a flock of sheep in the same country of Aurelia: by whose faithful report I understood a marvellous strange thing, which is this. At such time as he led a shepherd's life, there was an holy man that dwelt in the mountain of Argentario: whose religious conversation and inward virtue was answerable to the habit of a monk, which outwardly he did wear. Every year he travelled from his mountain to the church of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles: and in the way took this Quadra-gesimus' house for his lodging, as himself did tell me. Coming upon a day to his house, which was hard by the church, a poor woman's husband died not far off, whom when they had, as the manner is, washed, put on his garments, and made him ready to be buried, yet it was so late, that it could not be done that day: wherefore the desolate widow sat by the dead corpse, weeping all night long, and to satisfy her grief she did continually lament and cry out. The man of God, seeing her so pitifully to weep and never to give over, was much grieved, and said to Quadragesimus the subdeacon: "My soul taketh compassion of this woman's sorrow, arise, I beseech you, and let us pray": and thereupon they went to the church, which, as I said, was hard by, and fell to their devotions. And when they had prayed a good while, the servant of God desired Quadragesimus to conclude their prayer; which being done, he took a little dust from the side of the altar: and so came with Quadragesimus to the dead body; and there he began again to pray, and when he continued so a long time, he desired him not, as he did before, to conclude their prayers, but himself gave the blessing, and so rose up: and because he had the dust in his right hand, with his left he took away the cloth that covered the dead man's face; which the woman seeing, earnestly withstood him, and

marvelled much what he meant to do: when the cloth was gone, he rubbed the dead man's face a good while with the dust, which he had taken up; and at length, he that was dead received his soul again, began to open his mouth and his eyes, and to sit up, and as though he had awakened from a deep sleep, marvelled what they did about him; which when the woman, that had wearied herself with crying, beheld, she began then afresh to weep for joy, and cry out far louder than she did before: but the man of God modestly forbad her, saying: "Peace, good woman, and say nothing, and if any demand how this happened, say only, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath vouchsafed to work his pleasure." Thus he spake, and forthwith he departed from Quadragesimus, and never came to his house again. For, desirous to avoid all temporal honour, he so handled the matter, that they which saw him work that miracle, did never see him more so long as he lived.

PETER. What others think I know not: but mine opinion is, that it is a miracle above all miracles, to raise up dead men, and secretly to call back their souls, to give life unto their bodies again.

GREGORY. If we respect outward and visible things, of necessity we must so believe; but if we turn our eyes to invisible things, then certain it is that it is a greater miracle, by preaching of the word and virtue of prayer, to convert a sinner than to raise up a dead man: for in the one, that flesh is raised up which again shall die: but in the other, he is brought from death which shall live for ever. For I will name you two, and tell me in which of them, as you think, the greater miracle was wrought. The first is Lazarus, a true believer, whom our Lord raised up in flesh; the other is Saul, whom our Lord raised in soul. For of Lazarus' virtues after his resurrection we read nothing: but after the raising up of the other's soul, we are not able to conceive what wonderful things be in holy scripture spoken of his virtues: as that his most cruel thoughts and designments were turned into the bowels of piety and compassion; that he desired to die for his brethren, in whose

death before he took much pleasure; that knowing the holy scriptures perfectly, yet professed that he knew nothing else but Jesus Christ and him crucified; that he did willingly endure the beating of rods for Christ, whom before with sword he did persecute; that he was exalted to the dignity of an Apostle, and yet willingly became a little one in the midst of other disciples; that he was rapt to the secrets of the third heaven, and yet did turn his eye of compassion to dispose of the duty of married folks, saying: *Let the husband render debt to the wife, and likewise the wife to the husband;* that, he was busied in contemplating the quires of Angels, and yet contemned not to think and dispose of the facts of carnal men; that he rejoiced in his infirmities, and took pleasure in his reproaches; that for him to live is Christ, and gain to die; that although he lived in flesh, yet was he wholly out of the flesh. Behold how this blessed Apostle lived, who from hell returned in his soul to the life of virtue: wherefore less it is for one to be raised up in body, except perchance, by the reviving thereof, he be also brought to the life of his soul, and that the outward miracle do serve for the giving of life to the inward spirit.

PETER. I thought that far inferior, which I perceive now to be incomparably superior: but prosecute, I beseech you, your former discourse, that we spend no time without some spiritual profit to our souls.

Chapter Eighteen: of Benedict the Monk.

GREGORY. A certain monk lived with me in mine Abbey, passing cunning in holy scripture, who was elder than I, and of whom I learned many things which before I knew not. By his report I understood that there was in Campania, some forty miles from Rome, a man called Benedict, young in years, but old for gravity: one that observed the rule of holy conversation very strictly. When the Goths in the time of King Totila found him, they went about to burn him, together with his cell; and fire for that end was put to, which consumed all things round about, but no hold would the fire take upon his cell: which when the Goths saw, they became more mad, and with great cruelty drew him out of that place, and espying not far off an oven made hot to bake bread, into those flames they threw him, and so stopped the mouth. But the next day he was found so free from all harm, that not only his flesh, but his very apparel also, was not by the fire anything touched at all.

PETER. I hear now the old miracle of the three children, which were thrown into the fire, and yet were preserved from those furious flames.

GREGORY. That miracle, in mine opinion, was in some thing unlike to this: for then the three children were bound hand and foot, and so thrown into the fire, for whom the King looking the next day, found them walking in the furnace, their garments being nothing hurt by those flames: whereby we gather that the fire into which they were cast, and touched not their apparel, did yet consume their bands, so that at one and the same time, for the service of the just, the fire had force to bring them comfort, and yet had none to procure them torment.

Chapter Nineteen: of the church of blessed Zeno the Martyr: in which the water ascended higher than the door, and though it were open, yet entered not in.

Like unto this ancient miracle we had in our days another, but yet in a divers element: for not long since John the Tribune told me that, when the Earl Pronulphus was there, and himself also with Antharicus the king, how there happened at that time a strange miracle, and he affirmeth that himself doth know it to be true. For he said that, almost five years since, when the river of Tiber became so great that it ran over the walls of Rome, and overflowed many countries: at the same time in the city of Verona, the river Athesis did so swell, that it came to the very church of the holy martyr and Bishop Zeno; and though the church doors were open, yet did it not enter in. At last it grew so high, that it came to the church windows, not far from the very roof itself, and the water standing in that manner, did close up the entrance into the church, yet without running in: as though that thin and liquid element had been turned into a sound wall. And it fell so out, that many at that time were surprised in the church, who not finding any way how to escape out, and fearing lest they might perish for want of meat and drink, at length they came to the church door, and took of the water to quench their thirst, which, as I said, came up to the windows, and yet entered not in; and so for their necessity they took water, which yet, according to the nature of water, ran not in: and in that manner it stood there before the door, being water to them for their comfort, and yet not water to invade the place: and all this to declare the great merit of Christ's martyr. Which miracle I said truly, that it was not unlike to that ancient one of the fire: which burnt the three children's bands, and yet touched not their garments.

PETER. Marvellous strange are these acts of God's saints which you tell; and much to be admired of us weak men, that live in these days. But

because I understand now, by your relation, what a number of excellent and virtuous men have been in Italy, desirous I am to know whether they endured any assaults of the devil, and did thereby more profit in the service of God.

GREGORY. Without labour and fighting, none can obtain the crown of victory: whence, then, come so many conquerors but from this, that they fought valiantly, and resisted the assaults of the old enemy? For the wicked spirit doth continually watch our thoughts, words, and works: to find something whereof to accuse us before the eternal Judge. For proof whereof I will now let you understand, how ready he is always to entrap and deceive us.

Chapter Twenty: of a priest called Stephen, in the province of Valeria: whose stockings the devil would have drawn off.

Some that are yet living with me, affirm this to be true which 1 will now speak of. A man of holy life there was, called Stephen, who was a Priest in the province of Valeria, nigh of kindred to my deacon Bonifacius: who, coming home upon a time from travel, spake somewhat negligently to his servant, saying: "Come, sir devil, and pull off my hose": at which words, straightways his garters began to loose in great haste, so that he plainly perceived that the devil indeed, whom he named, was pulling off his stocking: whereat being much terrified, he cried out aloud, and said: "Away, wretched caitiff, away; I spake not to thee, but to my servant." Then the devil gave over, leaving his garters almost quite off. By which we may learn, that if the devil be so officious in things concerning our body, how ready and diligent he is to observe and note the cogitations of our soul.

PETER. A very painful thing it is and terrible, always to strive against the temptations of the devil, and, as it were, to stand continually armed ready to fight.

GREGORY. Not painful at all, if we attribute our preservation not to ourselves, but to God's grace; yet so notwithstanding, that we be careful what we may for our parts, and always vigilant under God's protection. And it falleth out sometime by God's goodness, that when the devil is expelled from our soul, that he is so little of us to be feared, that contrariwise he is rather terrified by the virtuous and devout life of good people.

Chapter Twenty-one: of a Nun that, by her only commandment, dispossessed a devil.

For the holy man, old father Eleutherius, of whom I spake before, told me that which I will now tell you: and he was himself a witness of the truth thereof: this it was. In the city of Spoleto, there was a certain worshipful man's daughter, for years marriageable, which had a great desire to lead another kind of life: whose purpose her father endeavoured to hinder: but she, not respecting her father's pleasure, took upon her the habit of holy conversation: for which cause her father did disinherit her, and left her nothing else but six little pieces of ground. By her example many noble young maids began under her to be converted, to dedicate their virginity to almighty God, and to serve him. Upon a time, the virtuous Abbot Eleutherius went to bestow upon her some good exhortation: and as he was sitting with her, discoursing of spiritual matters, a country man came from that piece of ground which her father had left her, bringing a certain present: and as he was standing before them, suddenly a wicked spirit possessed his body; so that straightways he fell down before them, and began pitifully to cry and roar out. At this the Nun rose up, and with angry countenance and loud voice, commanded him to go forth, saying: "Depart from him, thou vile wretch, depart." "If I depart," quoth the devil, speaking by the mouth of the possessed man, "into whom shall I go?" By chance there was at that time a little hog hard by: into which she gave him leave to enter, which he did, and so, killing it, went his way.

PETER. I would gladly be informed, whether she might bestow so much as that hog upon the devil.

GREGORY. The actions of our Saviour be a rule for us, according to which we may direct our life: and we read in the scripture, how the legion of devils that possessed a man said unto our Saviour: *If thou dost cast us forth, send us into the herd of swine:* who cast them out, and permitted them

to enter in as they desired, and to drown that herd in the sea. By which fact of our Saviour we learn also this lesson, that, except almighty God giveth leave, the devil cannot have any power against man, seeing he cannot so much as enter into hogs, without our Saviour's permission. Wherefore, necessary it is that we be obedient to him, unto whom all our enemies be subject, that we may so much the more be stronger than our enemies, by how much through humility we become one with the author of all things. And what marvel is it, if God's chosen servants, living yet upon earth, can do many strange things, when as their very bones, after they be dead, do oftentimes work miracles?

Chapter Twenty-two: of a Priest in the province of Valeria, who detained a thief at his grave.

For, in the province of Valeria, this strange thing happened: which I had from the mouth of Valentius, mine Abbot, who was a blessed man. In that country there was a Priest, who in the company of divers other clerks served God, and led a virtuous and holy life: who, when his time was come, departed this life, and was buried before the church. Not far off, there belonged to the church certain sheep-cotes: and the place where he lay buried was the way to go unto the sheep. Upon a night, as the Priests were singing within the church, a thief came to the said place, took up a wether, and so departed in all haste: but as he passed where the man of God was buried, there he stayed, and could go no farther. Then he took the wether from his shoulders, and would fain have let it go, but by no means could he open his hand: and therefore, poor wretch, there he stood fast bound, with his prey before him; willingly would he have let the wether go, and could not; willingly also have carried it away, and was not able. And so very strangely the thief, that was afraid to be espied of living men, was held there against his will by one that was dead; for his hands and feet were bound in such sort, that away he could not go. When morning was come, and the Priests had ended their service, out they came: where they found a stranger, with a wether in his hand. And at the first they were in doubt, whether he had taken away one of theirs, or else came to give them one of his own: but he that was guilty of the theft told them in what manner he was punished: whereat they all wondered, to see a thief, with his prey before him, to stand there bound by the merits of the man of God. And straightways they offered their prayers for his delivery, and scarce could they obtain that he, which came to steal away their goods, might at least find so much favour as to depart empty as he came: yet in conclusion, the thief that had long stood

there with his stolen wether, was suffered to go away free, leaving his carnage behind him.

PETER. By such facts almighty God doth declare, in what sweet manner he doth tender us, when he vouchsafeth to work such pleasant miracles.

Chapter Twenty-three: of the Abbot of Mount Preneste, and his Priest.

GREGORY. Above the city of Preneste there is a mountain, upon which standeth an Abbey of the blessed Apostle, St. Peter: of the monks of which place, whiles I lived in an Abbey myself, I heard this miracle: which, those religious men said, they knew to be very true. In that monastery they had an Abbot of holy life, who brought up a certain monk, that became very virtuous, whom he perceiving to increase in the fear of God, he caused him in the same monastery to be made Priest: who, after his taking of orders, understood by revelation that his death was not far off; and therefore desired leave of the Abbot to make ready his sepulchre, who told him that himself should die before him: "but yet for all that," quoth he, "go your way, and make your grave at your pleasure." Away he went, and did so. Not many days after, the old Abbot fell sick of an ague, and drawing near to his end, he bad the foresaid Priest that stood by him, to bury his body in that grave which he had made for himself: and when the other told him that he was shortly to follow after, and that the grave was not big enough for both, the Abbot answered him in this wise: "Do as I have said, for that one grave shall contain both our bodies." So he died, and according to his desire, was buried in that grave which the Priest had provided for himself. Straight after, the Priest fell sick, and lay not long before he departed this life; and when his body was by the monks brought to the grave, which he had provided for himself, they opened it, and saw that there was not any room, because the Abbot's corpse filled the whole place: then one of them, with a loud voice, said: "O father, where is your promise, that this grave should hold you both?" No sooner had he spoken those words, than the Abbot's body, which lay with the face upward, did, in all their sight, turn itself upon one side, and so left place enough for the burial of the Priest: and so after his death he performed what he promised alive, concerning the lying of

both their bodies in that one grave. But because we have now made mention of St. Peter's Abbey in the city of Preneste, where this miracle happened, are you content to hear something of the keepers of his church which is in this city where his most holy body remaineth?

PETER. Most willing I am, and beseech you that it may be so.

Chapter Twenty-four: of Theodorus, Keeper of St. Peter’sChurch, in the City of Rome.

GREGORY. There be yet some alive that knew Theodorus, keeper of that church: by whose report a notable thing that befell him came to my knowledge. For rising somewhat early one night to mend the lights that hung by the door, and was upon the ladder (as he used) to pour oil into the lamps, suddenly St. Peter the Apostle in a white stole, standing beneath upon the pavement, appeared unto him, and spake to him in this manner: “Theodorus, why hast thou risen so early?” and when he had said so, he vanished out of his sight: but such a fear came upon him, that all the strength of his body did forsake him, so that he was not able to rise up from his bed for many days after. By which apparition what meant the blessed Apostle else, but to give those which serve him to understand by that his presence, that whatsoever they do for his honour, himself for their reward doth always behold it?

PETER. I marvel not so much at his apparition: as that being before very well, he fell sick upon that sight.

GREGORY. What reason have you, Peter, to marvel at that? for have you forgotten how the prophet Daniel, when he beheld that great and terrible vision at which he trembled, speaketh thus of himself: *I became weak, and was sick for very many days;* for the flesh cannot conceive such things as pertain to the spirit, and therefore sometimes when a man’s mind is carried to see somewhat beyond itself, no remedy but this earthly and frail vessel of ours, not able to bear such a burthen, must fall into weakness and infirmity.

PETER. Your reason hath taken away that scruple which troubled my mind.

Chapter Twenty-five: of Abundius, Keeper of the same Church of St. Peter.

GREGORY. Not very many years since (as old men say) there was another keeper of the same church, called Abundius, a grave man, and of great humility: who served God so faithfully, that the blessed Apostle St. Peter did by miracle declare what opinion he had of his virtue. For a certain young maid, that frequented his church, was so pitifully sick of the palsy, that she crept upon her hands, and, for very weakness, drew her body upon the ground. Long time had she prayed to St. Peter for help of this her infirmity: who upon a night in a vision, stood by her and spake thus: “Go unto Abundius, and desire his help, and he shall restore thee to thine health.” The maid, as she made no doubt of the vision, so not knowing this Abundius, up and down she crept through the church, enquiring for the man, and suddenly met with him whom she sought for; and asking for him of himself, he told her that he was Abundius. Then quoth she: “Our pastor and patron, blessed St. Peter the Apostle, hath sent me, that you should help me of this my disease.” “If you be sent by him,” quoth Abundius, “then rise up”: and taking her by the hand, he forthwith lifted her up upon her feet: and from that very hour, all the sinews and parts of her body became so strong, that no sign of her former malady remained. But if I should recount all the miracles in particular, which are known to have been done in his church, questionless no time would be left for the relation of any other; wherefore I will speak no more of them, but come to such holy men as have been famous in divers other places of Italy.

Chapter Twenty-six: of a solitary Monk called Menas.

Not long since, in the province of Samnium, there was a reverent man called Menas, who some ten years since led a solitary life, and was known to many of our friends: and for the truth of such his notable acts as I shall report, I will not name any one author, because I have so many witnesses as there be men that know that province of Samnium. This holy man had no other wealth to live upon, but a few hives of bees, which a certain Lombard would needs have taken away: for which cause the holy man reprehended him, and by and by he fell down before him, and was tormented of a devil: upon which accident his name became famous, both to his neighbours and also to that barbarous nation: so that none durst after that but in humility come into his cell. Oftentimes also there came certain bears out of the wood which was hard by, to devour up his honey, whom he strook with a little stick which he carried in his hand; and the bears so feared his stripes, that they would roar out and run away, and they which little feared naked swords were now afraid to be beaten by him with a small wand. He desired not to possess aught in this world, nor to seek for any thing; and his manner was, by heavenly talk to inflame all such as of charity came to visit him, with the desire and love of eternal life. And if at any time he understood that others had committed any great sin, he would never spare them, but with true love to their souls reprehend them for their faults. His neighbours, and others also that dwelt farther off, used upon a custom, every one upon certain days in the week, to send him their presents and offerings, to the end he might have somewhat to bestow upon such as came to visit him. A certain man there was, called Carterius, who, overcome of filthy concupiscence, violently took away a Nun, and by unlawful matrimony made her his wife: which thing so soon as the man of God understood, he sent him by such as he could that message which his fact deserved. The man, guilty in his conscience of that wickedness which he had committed,

durst not himself go unto God's servant, fearing lest, as his manner was, he would sharply have rebuked him: and therefore he sent his offerings among others, that at least through ignorance he might receive what he sent him. But when all the offerings were brought before him, he sat still, viewing them all in particular, and laying the rest aside, he took those which Carterius sent, and cast them away, saying: "Go and tell him: Thou hast taken away God's offering, and dost thou send me thine? I will none of thy offering, because thou hast taken from God that which was his." By which fact all that were present fell into a great fear, perceiving that he could certainly tell what they did which were absent.

PETER. Many such men as he was might, in mine opinion, have been martyrs, if they had lived in times of persecution.

GREGORY. There be, Peter, two kinds of martyrdoms, the one secret, the other open: for if a man hath a burning zeal in his mind to suffer death for Christ, although he endureth not any external persecution, yet hath he in secret the merit of martyrdom. For that one may be a martyr without suffering death openly, our Lord doth teach us in the Gospel: who said unto the sons of Zebedeus, desiring as then, through infirmity of soul, the principal places to sit upon in his kingdom: *Can you drink the chalice which I shall drink?* and when they answered that they could, he said to them both: *My chalice verily shall you drink, but to sit at my right hand or left, is not mine to give you:* in which words what is signified else, by the name of *chalice,* but the cup of passion and death? And seeing we know that James was put to death for Christ, and that John died when the Church enjoyed peace: undoubtedly we do gather that one may be a martyr without open suffering: for as much as he is said to have drunk our Lord's chalice, who yet in persecution was not put to death. But concerning those notable and excellent men of whom I have made mention before, why may we not truly say, that if they had fallen into a time of persecution, they might have been

martyrs, when as by enduring the secret assaults of the devil, and by loving their enemies in this world, by resisting all carnal desires, and in that they did in their heart sacrifice themselves to almighty God, they were also martyrs in the time of peace? seeing that now in our days we see that mean men and of secular life, yea, and even those of whom one would have supposed that they did little think of heaven, have by occasion of persecution obtained the glorious crown of martyrdom.

Chapter Twenty-seven: of forty country husbandmen that were slain by the Lombards, because they would not eat flesh sacrificed to idols.

For about fifteen years since, as they report who might very well have been present, forty husbandmen of the country were taken prisoners by the Lombards, whom they would needs have enforced to eat of that which was sacrificed to idols: but when they utterly refused so to do, or so much as once to touch that wicked meat, then they threatened to kill them, unless they would eat it: but they, loving more eternal than transitory life, continued constant, and so they were all slain. What then were these men? what else but true martyrs, that made choice rather to die than, by eating of that which was unlawful, to offend their Creator?

Chapter Twenty-eight: of a great number of prisoners that were slain, because they would not adore a goat's head.

At the same time, the Lombards, having almost four hundred prisoners in their hands, did, after their manner, sacrifice a goat's head to the devil: running round about with it in a circle, and by singing a most blasphemous song did dedicate it to his service. And when they had themselves with bowed heads adored it, then would they also have enforced their prisoners to do the like. But a very great number of them choosing rather by death to pass unto immortal life, than by such abominable adoration to preserve their mortal bodies, refused utterly to do what they commanded them; and so would not by any means bow down their heads to a creature, having always done that service to their Creator: whereat their enemies, in whose hands they were, fell into such an extreme rage, that they slew all them with their swords, which would not join with them in that sacrilegious fact. What marvel then is it, that those notable men before mentioned might have come to martyrdom, had they lived in the days of persecution, who in the time of peace, by continual mortification, walked the straight way of martyrdom: when as we see that, in the storm of persecution, they merited to obtain the crown of martyrdom, who, the Church being quiet, seemed to walk the broad way of this world? Yet that which we say concerning the elect servants of God, is not to be holden for a general rule in all. For when open persecution afflicteth the Church, as most true it is that many may arrive to martyrdom, who, when no such tempest did blow, seemed contemptible, and of no account: so likewise sometimes they fall away for fear, who before persecution, and when all was quiet, seemed to stand very constant: but such holy men as before have been mentioned, I dare boldly say that they might have been martyrs, because we gather so much by their happy deaths: for they could not have fallen in open persecution, of whom it is

certain that, to the very end of their lives, they did continue in the profession of piety and virtue.

PETER. It is as you say: but I much wonder at the singular providence of God's mercy, which he sheweth to us unworthy wretches, in that he doth so moderate and temper the cruelty of the Lombards, that he suffereth not their wicked priests to persecute the faith of Christians: when as they see themselves, as it were, the conquerors and rulers of Christian people.

Chapter Twenty-nine: of an Arian Bishop that was miraculously struck blind.

GREGORY. Many, Peter, have attempted that, but miracles from heaven have stayed the course of their cruelty: and one will I now tell you, which I heard three days since of Bonifacius, a monk of my Abbey, who, until these four years last past, remained amongst the Lombards. An Arian Bishop of theirs coming to the city of Spoleto, and not having any place where to exercise his religion, demanded a church of the Bishop of that town: which when he constantly denied him, the Arian prelate told him, that the next day he would by force take possession of St. Paul's church, which was hard by his lodging. The keeper of the church, understanding this news, in all haste ran thither, shut the doors, and with locks and bolts made them as fast as he could: and when it was night he put out all the lamps, and hid himself within. The next morning, very early, the Arian Bishop came thither with many in his company: meaning by force to break open the doors. But suddenly by miracle the locks were cast far off, and the doors of themselves, making a great noise, flew open: and all the lamps, before put out, were lightened again by fire descending from heaven: and the Arian Bishop that came to enter the church by violence, was suddenly struck blind, so that other men were fain to lead him back again to his own lodging. Which strange accident when the Lombards there about understood, they durst not any more presume to violate Catholic places: and so it fell out wonderfully, by God's providence, that for as much as the lamps in St. Paul's church were by reason of him put out: that at one and the self same time, both he lost the light of his eyes, and the church received her former light again.

Chapter Thirty: how a church of the Arians in Rome was hallowed according to the Catholic manner.

Neither is that to be passed over in silence which God of his mercy vouchsafed, two years since, to shew in this city, to the great condemnation of the Arian heresy: for part of that which I intend now to speak of, many of the people know to be true: part the Priest and keepers of the church affirm that they saw and heard. A church of the Arians, in that part of the city which is called Subura, remained until two years since with the doors shut up; at which time, being desirous thatdt should be hallowed in the Catholic faith, we brought with us thither the relics of the blessed martyrs St. Stephen and St. Agatha: and so with great multitudes of people, singing of praises to almighty God, we entered the church: and when the solemnity of mass was in celebrating, and the people, by reason of the straight place, thrust one another, some of them that stood without the chancel heard an hog running up and down through their legs, and each one perceiving it told it to his next fellow: but the hog made towards the church door to go forth, striking all those into great admiration by whom he passed; but though they heard him, yet none there was that saw him: which strange thing God of piety vouchsafed to shew, to the end we should understand how that the unclean spirit, which before possessed that place, was now departed and gone. When mass was done we went away, but the night following such a noise was heard in the top of the church, as though somebody had there run up and down; and the next night after that a far greater, and withal, of a sudden, such a terrible crack there was, as though the whole church had been quite falling down: which forthwith vanished away, and never after was the church troubled any more by the old enemy: but by the great stir which he kept before his departure, he made it apparent that he went very unwillingly from that place, which so long time he had possessed.

Not many days after, in a passing fair and clear day, a cloud miraculously descended upon the altar of the same church: covering it as it had been with a canopy: and filled the church with such a kind of terror and sweetness, that though the doors were wide open, yet none durst presume to enter in. The Priest also and the keepers of the church, and those which were come thither to say mass, beheld the selfsame thing, yet could they not go in, although they felt the sweetness of that strange perfume.

Likewise upon another day, the lamps hanging without light, fire came from heaven and set them a burning: and a few days after, when mass was ended, and the keeper of the church had put out the lamps, and was departed, yet returning back again, he found them burning which before he had put forth; but thinking that he had done it negligently, he did it now more carefully the second time, and so departed the church and shut the door; but returning three hours after, he found them again burning as before: to the end that by the very light the world might manifestly know, how that place was from darkness translated to light.

PETER. Although we be in great miseries and tribulations, yet these strange miracles, which God vouchsafeth to work, do plainly declare that he hath not utterly forsaken and given us over.

GREGORY. Albeit I was determined to recount unto you only such strange things as were done in Italy, are you for all that content, to the further condemnation of the said Arian heresy, that I turn a little my speech to Spain, and so by Africa return back again to Italy?

PETER. Go whither you will, willingly will I travel with you, and joyfully return home again.

Chapter Thirty-one: of King Hermigildus, son to Leuigildus, King of the Visigoths; who was, for the Catholic faith, put to death by his father.

GREGORY. Not long since, as I have learned of many which came from Spain, king Hermigildus, son of Leuigildus, king of the Visigoths, was from Arian heresy lately converted to the Catholic faith by the most reverent man Leander, Bishop of Seville, with whom I was not long since familiarly acquainted; which young Prince, upon his conversion, his father, being an Arian, laboured both by large promises and terrible threats to draw again to his former error: but when most constantly his son answered, that he would never forsake the true faith which he had once embraced, his father in great anger took away his kingdom, and beside deprived him of all wealth and riches; and perceiving that, with all this, his mind was nothing moved, he committed him to straight prison, laying irons both upon his neck and hands. Upon this, the young king Hermigildus began now to contemn his earthly kingdom, and to seek with great desire after the kingdom of heaven: and lying in prison fast bound, he prayed to almighty God in hair-cloth to send him heavenly comfort: and so much the more did he despise the glory of this transitory world, by how much he knew himself in that case that he had now nothing that could be taken from him.

When the solemn feast of Easter was come, his wicked father sent unto him in the dead of the night an Arian Bishop, to give him the communion of a sacrilegious consecration, that he might thereby again recover his father's grace and favour: but the man of God, as he ought, sharply reprehended that Arian Bishop which came unto him, and giving him such entertainment as his deserts required, utterly rejected him; for albeit outwardly he lay there in bands, yet inwardly to himself he stood secure in the height of his own soul. The father, at the return of the Arian prelate, understanding these news, fell into such a rage that forthwith he sent his officers of execution to put to

death that most constant confessor, in the very prison where he lay: which unnatural and bloody commandment was performed accordingly: for so soon as they came into the prison, they clave his brains with an hatchet, and so bereaved him or mortal life, having only power to take that from him which the holy martyr made small account of. Afterward, for the publishing of his true glory to the world, there wanted not miracles from heaven: for in the night time singing was heard at his body: some also report that, in the night, burning lamps were seen in that place: by reason whereof his body, as of him that was a martyr, was worthily worshipped of all Christian people. But the wicked father and murtherer of his own son, albeit he was sorry that he had put him to death, yet was not his grief of that quality that it brought him to the state of salvation. For although he knew very well that the Catholic faith was the truth, yet, for fear of his people, he never deserved to be a professor thereof.

At length, falling sick, a little before his death, he commended his son Recharedus, who was to succeed him in the kingdom, and was yet an heretic, unto Bishop Leander, whom before he had greatly persecuted: that by his counsel and exhortation, he might likewise make him a member of the Catholic Church, as he had before made his brother Hermigildus; and when he had thus done, he departed this life. After whose death, Recharedus the king, not following the steps of his wicked father, but his brother the martyr, utterly renounced Arianism: and laboured so earnestly for the restoring of religion, that he brought the whole nation of the Visigoths to the true faith of Christ, and would not suffer any that was an heretic in his country to bear arms and serve in the wars. And it is not to be admired that he became thus to be a preacher of the true faith, seeing he was the brother of a martyr, whose merits did help him to bring so many into the lap of God's Church: wherein we have to consider that he could never have effected all this, if king Hermigildus had not died for the testimony of true

religion; for, as it is written: *Unless the grain of wheat falling into the earth doth die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die*$_y$ *it bringeth forth much fruit.* This we see to prove true in the members, which before was verified in the head: for one died amongst the Visigoths that many might live, and of one grain that was sown for the faith, a great crop of faithful people sprung up.

PETER. A wonderful thing, and much to be admired in these our days.

Chapter Thirty-two: of certain Bishops of Africa, who had their tongues cut out by the Vandals, that were Arian heretics, for the defence of the Catholic faith; and yet spake still as perfectly as they did before.

GREGORY. Likewise, in the time of Justinian the Emperor, when as the Vandals, that were Arian heretics, did grievously persecute the Catholic faith, certain Bishops, continuing constant, were openly examined: whom when the king of the Vandals saw that he could neither by any words or rewards draw to embrace his heretical religion, yet he thought that by torments he might do it: and therefore, when he commanded them not to speak in defence of truth, and they refused to obey his precept, lest by silence they might seem to give consent unto wicked heresy, in a great fury he commanded their tongues to be cut out by the roots. A miraculous thing, and yet known to many old men: they did as perfectly afterward speak in defence of true religion, as they did before, when they had their tongues safe and sound.

PETER. You tell me of a marvellous strange thing, and greatly to be admired.

GREGORY. It is written, Peter, of the only Son of the eternal Father: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God.* Of whose virtue and power it straightways followeth: *All things were made by him.* Why then should we marvel, if that eternal Word could speak without a tongue, which made the tongue?

PETER. What you say pleaseth me very well.

GREGORY. These Bishops, therefore, flying at that time from the persecution, came unto the city of Constantinople: and at such time as myself, about the affairs of the Church, was sent thither unto the Emperor, I found there a Bishop of good years, who told me that he saw them himself speak without tongues: for they opened their mouths, and said: “Behold and

see how we have no tongues, and yet do speak"; for, as he said, their tongues being cut off by the roots, there seemed as it were a deep hole in their throat: and yet, though their mouths were empty, they pronounced their words very plain and distinctly. One of which, falling afterward in that place into carnal sin, was forthwith deprived of that supernatural gift: and that by the just judgment of almighty God, seeing reason requireth that he which was careless to preserve the continency of his body which he had, should not any longer utter the words of truth without the tongue of his body which he had not. But because I have now spoken sufficient for the condemnation of Arianism, therefore I will return to entreat of such other miracles as have lately fallen out here in Italy.

Chapter Thirty-three: of the servant of God, Eleutherius.

Eleutherius, of whom I made mention before, father of the Abbey of the Evangelist St. Mark, which is in the suburbs of the city of Spoleto, lived long time together with me in this city in my monastery, and there ended his days. Of whom his monks do report that by his tears he raised up one that was dead: for he was a man of such simplicity and compunction, that no doubt but those tears, coming from his humble and simple soul, were of force to obtain many things of almighty God. One miracle of his I will now tell you, which himself, being demanded by me, did with great simplicity confess. As he was travelling upon a certain day, and not finding at night any other place to lodge in, he went to a Nunnery, wherein there was a little boy which the wicked spirit did usually every night torment. The Nuns, giving entertainment to the man of God, desired him that the said little boy might remain with him all night: wherewith he was well content. In the morning, the Nuns diligently enquired of the father, if the child had not been sore troubled and tormented that night: who, marvelling why they asked that question, answered that he perceived not any such thing. Then they told him how a wicked spirit did every night pitifully afflict the child, and earnestly desired him that he would take him home to his own Abbey, because their hearts could not endure to behold any such misery. The old man yielded to their request, and so carried away the boy home to his own monastery: where he remained long time safe and sound, the devil not presuming to touch him. Whereupon the old man, seeing him to continue so well, was immoderately glad thereof, and therefore, in the presence of the monks, he spake thus: “The devil did dally with those sisters: but now he hath to do with the servants of God, he dare not come near this boy.” He had scarce uttered these words, when as in that very instant the poor child was, in the presence of them all, possessed, and pitifully tormented: which the old man beholding, straightways lamented and fell a weeping, and

persevering so a long time, the monks came to comfort him; but he answered them, saying: “Believe me,” quoth he, “none of you shall this day eat any bread, unless this boy be dispossessed.” Then, with the rest of the brethren, he fell prostrate to his prayers, and there they continued so long, until the boy was delivered from his former torments, and besides so perfectly cured, that the wicked spirit never after presumed to molest him any more.

PETER. I verily suppose that he sinned a little in vain glory: and that God’s pleasure was, that the other monks should co-operate to the dispossessing of the devil.

GREGORY. It is even so as you say: for seeing he could not alone bear the burthen of that miracle, it was divided amongst the rest of his brethren. Of what force and efficacy this man’s prayers were, I have found by experience in myself: for being upon a time, when I lived in the Abbey, so sick that I often swooned: and was by means thereof, with often pangs, continually at death’s door, and in such case that, unless I did continually eat something, my vital spirit was going away: Easter day was at hand, and therefore when I saw that upon so sacred a vigil I could not refrain from often eating, in which not only old persons, but even children use to fast, I was more afflicted with grief, than grieved with mine infirmity: yet at length my sorrowful soul quickly found out a device, and that was, to carry the man of God secretly into the oratory, and there to entreat him that he would by his prayer obtain for me of God so much strength and ability as to fast that day: which fell out accordingly: for so soon as we came into the oratory, with humility and tears he fell to his prayers, and after a while (having made an end) he came forth, and upon the words of his blessed prayers, my stomach grew so strong, that I did not so much as think of any meat, nor feel any grief at all. Then I began to marvel at myself, and to think in what case I was before, and how I felt myself now: and when I

thought upon my former sickness, I found none of those pangs with which before I was troubled: and when my mind was busied about the affairs of the Abbey, my sickness was quite out of my memory; yea, and as I said, if I did think thereof, yet feeling myself so well and strong, I began to doubt whether I had eaten or no. When evening was come, I found myself so lusty that I could very well have fasted until the next day. And by this means, having experience of his prayers in myself, I made no doubt but those things also were true which in other places he did, though myself was not then present.

PETER. Seeing you told me that he was a man of great compunction, desirous I am to be better informed touching the efficacy of compunction and tears: and therefore I pray you, let me understand how many kinds of compunction there be.

Chapter Thirty-four: of the divers kinds of compunction.

GREGORY. Compunction is divided into many kinds: to wit, when every sin is of penitent men in particular bewailed: whereof the prophet Jeremy, in the person of penitent sinners, speaketh thus: *Mine eye hath brought forth divisions of waters*. But speaking more properly, there be especially two kinds of compunction: for the soul that thirsteth after God is first sorrowful in heart for fear, and afterward upon love. For first it is grieved and weepeth, because, calling to mind former sins committed, it feareth to endure for punishment of them everlasting torments: but when long anxiety and sorrow hath banished away that fear, then a certain security of the hope of pardon doth follow: and so the soul is inflamed with the love of heavenly delights, and whereas before it did weep for fear of eternal pain, afterward it poureth out tears, that it is kept from everlasting joys. For the soul doth then contemplate those glittering quires of Angels, that heavenly company of those blessed spirits, that great majesty of the eternal beholding the face of God; and doth lament so much more now, because it wanteth that everlasting felicity, than it wept before at the fear of eternal punishment. Which thing in scripture is mystically set down, in an holy and true history: for there we read how Axa, the daughter of Caleb, riding upon an ass, did sigh: and when her father demanded what the matter was, she answered him thus: *Give me your blessings a southern and dry land you have given me, join also a watery: and he gave her a watery ground above and beneath*. For Axa then rideth upon the ass, when our soul doth subdue and govern the sensual motions of the flesh: which sighing doth crave wet ground of her father, when it doth with contrition and sorrow of heart desire of our Creator the grace of tears and weeping. For some there be, upon whom God hath bestowed such a gift, that they will speak freely in defence of justice, help them that be oppressed, give alms to the poor, and be zealous in religion, but yet have they not obtained the grace of tears: these be they, that

have ground towards the south, and that which is dry: but yet do they want that which is moist and wet: because, albeit they be diligent and fervent in good works, yet requisite it is that they should also, either for fear of hell or the love of heaven, bewail the sins of their life past. But because, as I said, there be two kinds of compunction, therefore her father gave her that which was wet above and also wet beneath: for our soul doth then receive that which is wet above, when it is grieved, and doth weep for the desire of heaven; and it doth then possess that which is wet beneath, when it is afraid, and poureth forth tears for the fear of hell fire: and albeit that which is wet beneath is bestowed upon our soul, before that which is wet above, yet because the compunction of love is the more excellent, convenient it was that the ground which was wet above should be first named, and afterward that which was wet beneath.

PETER. Your discourse pleaseth me very well: but seeing you have now told me of that reverent man Eleutherius, and his great grace of compunction, desirous I am to know whether there be now any such men living in the world.

Chapter Thirty-five: of Amantius, a Priest in the Province of Tuscania.

GREGORY. Floridus, Bishop of Tivoli, a man (as yourself knoweth very well) of holy life, and worthy to be credited, told me that he had dwelling with him a certain Priest called Amantius, of marvellous simplicity: who, like unto the Apostles, had such a grace given him of God, that, laying his hand upon them that were sick, he restored them to their former health; and although the disease were very great and dangerous, yet upon his touching did it forthwith depart. Moreover he said that he had also this miraculous gift, that wheresoever he found any serpents or snakes, though never so cruel, yet did he with the sign of the cross dispatch and kill them: for by virtue of the cross, which the man of God made with his hand, their bowels did break, and they suddenly die: and if by chance the snake gat into any hole, then did he with the sign of the cross bless the mouth thereof, and it wrought the same effect; for any might straightways find it there dead. Myself having understanding of this great grace bestowed upon him, was desirous to see him: and when he was brought unto me, I caused him to be lodged in a chamber amongst the sick men: thereby to try what his gift was in curing of diseases. At that time, there was one amongst them beside himself, being fallen into a phrensy: who one night did so cry out like a mad man, that with his noise he disquieted all the rest that were sick, so that they could not sleep or take any rest: and so it fell out very strangely that, one being ill, all the rest fared the worse. But as I had before learned of the reverent Bishop Floridus, who was at that time there present with the said Priest, and afterward also plainly understood of him that attended that night upon the sick persons, the foresaid venerable Priest, rising out of his bed, went softly to the place where the mad man lay, and there prayed, laying his hands upon him; whereupon the man became somewhat better. Then he carried him away unto the higher part of the house, into the oratory: where

more plentifully he prayed unto God for his recovery: and straight after he brought him back again to his own bed safe and sound, so that he cried out no more, neither troubled any of the other sick persons. By which one fact of his, I had sufficient reason to give credit to all the rest that before had been told me.

PETER. A great edification it is, to see men working such notable miracles: and to behold, as it were upon earth, heavenly Jerusalem in her citizens.

Chapter Thirty-six: of Marimianus, Bishop of Syracusis.

GREGORY. Neither is that miracle to be passed over with silence, which almighty God vouchsafed to work by his servant Maximianus, now Bishop of Syracusis, but then the father and governor of mine Abbey. For at such time as I was, upon the commandment of my Bishop, sent to Constantinople to the Emperor, about affairs of the Church, the same reverent man, Maximianus upon charity, with other of his monks, came thither unto me: who in his return homeward to Rome, fell into a great tempest upon the Adriake sea: in which both himself and all those that were in his company, after a most strange and miraculous manner, tasted both of the indignation and favour of almighty God. For the sea did so rage with the fury of the winds, that they had spent their mast: the sails floated upon the waves: and the ship, beaten and torn with boisterous billows, did leak water so fast, that it was now come to the upper deck, in such sort that the ship seemed not so much to be in the waters, as the waters in the ship.

The mariners and passengers, troubled with the fear of death, not as a thing far off, but even present before their eyes, void of all hope of this life, prepared themselves for the next: and so, mutually giving the pax or kiss of peace one to another, they received the body and blood of our Saviour: commending themselves to almighty God, that he would vouchsafe mercifully to receive their souls, who had delivered their bodies to so fearful a death: but God, who had wonderfully terrified their minds, did more wonderfully preserve their lives. For the same ship although full of water, yet did it hold on her course for eight days together, and upon the ninth, it arrived at the port of Cothronum: and when all the rest were safely gone out, then last of all the reverent man Maximianus went also forth: and no sooner was he upon land, than the ship sunk in the haven: as though, by their departure, it had wanted that which did preserve it: and whereas before, being at sea, it was full of men, and carried also abundance of water,

and yet sailed onward: now when Maximianus with his monks were landed, it could not in the haven carry the waters alone: whereby God gave them to understand, that, when it was laden, himself with his divine hand did govern and preserve it: seeing when it was empty it could not for a small time continue above the water.

Chapter Thirty-seven: of Sanctulus, a Priest in the Province of Nursia.

About forty days since, you saw with me one called Sanctulus, a reverent Priest, who every year came unto me out of Nursia: but three days ago, a certain monk, coming from those parts, brought me very heavy news of his death. The holy life and virtue of which man was such, that although I can not but fetch sweet sighs when I remember it, yet now I may without all fear report and publish to the world such miracles as I have learned by the relation of very virtuous and holy Priests, that were his neighbours: and as amongst dear friends familiarity causeth one to presume much in charity, oftentimes myself did so courteously urge him, that he was enforced to tell me some small miracles which himself had done.

Certain Lombards being upon a time pressing of olives to make oil, Sanctulus, as he was both merry in countenance and heart, came unto them, and saluted them pleasantly: and shewing them his bottle which he brought, rather willed than desired them to fill it with oil. But they being infidels, and having laboured all day in vain, and not pressed out any oil at all, took his words in ill part, and gave him very bad speech: but the man of God, notwithstanding this, spake unto them yet with a more merry countenance, and said: “If you desire to do me a good turn, you will fill this bottle for Sanctulus, and so he will depart from you very well contented.” But they, seeing no oil to run forth, and hearing him yet for all that so earnest to have his bottle filled, fell into a great rage, and railed mightily upon him. Then the man of God, seeing that no oil came from the press, called for water, which he blessed before them all, and with his own hands cast it upon the press: and forthwith, by virtue of that benediction, such plenty of oil ran forth, that the Lombards, who before had long laboured in vain, did not only fill their own vessels, but also his bottle: giving him thanks for that, coming

to beg oil, by his blessing he bestowed that upon them which himself had demanded.

At another time, when a great dearth was in the country, the man of God being desirous to repair the church of St. Lawrence, burnt before by the Lombards, he hired for that end many cunning workmen and divers other labourers, who of necessity were daily to be maintained: but so great was the scarcity, that he wanted bread to relieve them; whereupon his workmen cried out for meat, because they were faint and could not labour. The man of God, hearing this, gave them comfortable words, promising to supply their want; yet inwardly very much was he grieved, being not able to perform what he had said. Going therefore up and down in great anxiety, he came to an oven, wherein the neighbours that dwelt by had the day before baked bread: and stooping down, he looked in, to see whether they had by chance left any bread behind them, where he found a loaf both greater and whiter than commonly they used: which he took away, but yet would he not by and by give it to his workmen, lest perhaps it belonged to some other body, and so might as it were, of compassion to other, have committed a sin himself: and therefore he did first shew it to all the women there about, enquiring whether it were any of theirs: but all denied it, saying that they had all received their just number of loaves. Then the man of God in great joy went with that one loaf to many workmen, wishing them to give thanks to almighty God, telling them how his goodness had provided them of necessary food; and forthwith he set that loaf before them, whereof, when they had satisfied themselves, he gathered up more pieces of bread which remained, than the whole loaf itself was before in quantity. The day following, again he set it before them, and again the pieces remaining were far more than the former fragments: and so, for the space of ten days together, all those artificers and workmen lived upon that one loaf, and were

very well satisfied: some thing remaining every day for the next, as though the fragments had by eating increased.

PETER. A strange thing, and not unlike to that notable miracle of our Saviour; and therefore worthy to be admired of all.

GREGORY. Our Saviour at this time, Peter, vouchsafed by his servant to feed many with one loaf, who in times past, by himself, fed five thousand with five loaves: and doth daily of a few grains of corn produce innumerable ears of wheat: who also out of the earth brought forth those very grains; and more than all this, created all things of nothing. But to the end you should not marvel any longer, what by God's assistance the venerable man Sanctulus wrought outwardly: I will now tell you what, by our Lord's grace, he was inwardly in his soul. Upon a certain day, the Lombards had taken a Deacon, whom they kept in prison, with a purpose to put him to death. When evening was come, the man of God, Sanctulus, entreated them to set him at liberty, and to grant him his life: but when he saw that he could not obtain that favour at their hands, but that they were fully resolved to have his life: then he beseeched them, that they would at least commit him to his keeping: wherewith they were content, but with this condition, that if he scaped away, that then himself should die for him. The man of God was very well content, and so he received the Deacon into his own charge and custody.

The midnight following, when he saw all the Lombards fast asleep, he called up the Deacon, willing him quickly to rise up and to run away as fast as he could: "and almighty God," quoth he, "deliver thee out of their hands." To whom the Deacon (knowing what he had promised) said: "Father, I can not run away, for if I do, out of all doubt they will put you to death." Yet for all this, Sanctulus enforced him to be gone with all speed, saying: "Up, and away: and God of his goodness defend and protect you: for I am in his hands, and they can do no more unto me than his divine

Majesty shall give them leave." Upon these words away went the Deacon; and he that had undertaken his safe keeping, as one that had been deceived, remained behind.

In the morning the Lombards demanded of Sanctulus for their prisoner: who told them that he was run away. "Then," quoth they, "you best know what is convenient for you to have." "Yea, marry, that do I," answered the servant of God, with great constancy. "Well," quoth they, "thou art a good man, and therefore we will not by divers torments take away thy life; but make choice of what death thou wilt." To whom the man of God answered in this manner: "Here I am, at God's disposition and pleasure, kill me in such sort, as he shall vouchsafe to give you leave." Then all the Lombards that were present agreed to have him beheaded: to the end an easy and quick death might soon dispatch him. When it was given out abroad that Sanctulus was to die, whom for his virtue and holiness they greatly honoured, all the Lombards that were in those parts repaired thither, being glad (such cruel minds they have) to behold him put to death: and when all the army was gathered together, they brought him forth to execution, and the strongest man amongst them was chosen out, to cut off his head at one blow.

The venerable man, beset with armed soldiers, betook himself to his usual weapons: for he desired them to give him a little leave to pray: which when he had obtained, he cast himself prostrate upon the earth, and fell to his devotions: in which after he had continued for a good space, the executioner spurned him up with his foot, bidding him rise, kneel down, and to prepare himself for death. The man of God rose up, bowed down his knee, and held forth his head, and beholding the drawn sword ready to dispatch him, these only words they said that he spake aloud: "O Saint John, hold that sword." Then the foresaid executioner, having the naked weapon in his hand, did with all his force lift up his arm to strike off his

head; but by no means could he bring it down again, for it became suddenly so stiff that it remained still above, the man being not able once to bend it downward. Then all the Lombards who came to feed their eyes with the lamentable sight of his death, began with admiration to praise God's name, and with fear to reverence the man of God: for they now saw apparently of what great holiness he was, that did so miraculously stay the arm of his executioner above in the air.

Then they desired him to rise up, which he did; but when they required him to restore his executioner's arm to his former state, he utterly refused, saying: "By no means will I once pray for him, unless beforehand he swear unto me, that he will never with that arm offer to kill any Christian more." The poor Lombard, who, as we may truly say, had stretched out his arm against God, enforced with this necessity, took an oath never more to put any Christian to death. Then the man of God commanded him to put down his arm, which forthwith he did; he commanded him also to put up his sword, which in like manner he performed. All the Lombards, by this perceiving him to be a man of rare virtue, began in all haste to present him with the gifts of such oxen and other cattle as before they had taken from others: but the man of God utterly refused all such kind of presents, desiring them rather, if they meant to bestow anything upon him worth the giving, that they would deliver unto him all such prisoners as they had in their keeping: that he might have some cause in his prayers to commend them to almighty God. To which request of his they condescended, and so all the poor captives were discharged: and thus, by God's sweet providence, one offering himself to die for another, many were delivered from death.

PETER. A strange thing it was: and although I have heard the same story by the relation of others, yet I cannot deny, but so often as I hear it repeated, it seemeth still unto me as though it were fresh news.

GREGORY. There is no cause why you should admire Sanctulus for this thing: but ponder with yourself, if you can, what manner of spirit that was, which possessed his simple soul, and did advance it to so high a perfection of virtue. For where was his mind, when he offered himself with such constancy to die for his neighbour; and to save the temporal life of his brother, contemned his own, and put his head under the executioner's sword? What force of true love did then harbour in that heart, when he nothing feared death to preserve the life of another? Ignorant I am not, that this venerable man Sanctulus could scant read well, and that he knew not the precepts of the law: yet because charity is the fulfilling of the law, by loving God and his neighbour, he kept the whole law: and that which outwardly lacked in knowledge, did inwardly by charity live in his soul. And he, perhaps, who never read that which St. John the Apostle said of our Saviour, to wit, that *as he yielded his life for us, so we likewise should yield our lives for our brethren:* yet that great and high precept of the Apostle he knew more by action than by speculation. Let us here, if you please, compare his learned ignorance with our unlearned knowledge: where our kind of learning is nothing worth, his is of great price and estimation: we, destitute of virtue, do speak thereof, and, as it were in the midst of plentiful trees smell of the fruit, but do not eat thereof. He knew full well how to gather and taste of the fruit itself, although he lacked the smell of words and vain speech.

PETER. What, I pray, do you think, is the cause that good men are still taken away; and such as for the benefit and edification of many, might live still in this world, either are not to be found at all, or at least very few can be heard of?

GREGORY. The malice and wickedness of them that remain behind in the world deserveth that those should quickly be taken away, who by their life might much help us: and for as much as the world draweth towards an)

end, God’s chosen servants are taken out of it, that they fall not into more wicked times: and therefore from hence it cometh that the prophet saith: *The just man doth perish, and there is none that doth ponder it in his heart: and men of mercy are gathered together, because there is none that hath understanding.* And from hence also it proceedeth that the scripture saith: *Open ye, that they may go forth which do tread it under foot.* Hence, likewise, it is that Solomon saith: *There is a time of casting stones abroad, and a time of gathering them together.* And therefore the nearer that the world draweth to an end, so much the more necessary it is that the living stones should be gathered together, for the heavenly building: that our celestial Jerusalem may arrive to the full measure of his whole perfection. And yet do I not think that all God’s elect servants are so taken out of the world, that none but the wicked remain behind: for sinners would never be converted to the sorrow of true penance, if they had not the examples of some good people to provoke them forward.

PETER. Without cause do I complain of the death of good men, when as daily I see them also that be wicked in great numbers to depart this life.

Chapter Thirty-eight: of the vision of Redemptus, Bishop of the City of Ferenti.

GREGORY. Wonder nothing at this, Peter, for you knew very well Redemptus, Bishop of the city of Ferenti, a man of venerable life, who died almost seven years since: with whom I had familiar acquaintance, by reason that he dwelt not far from the Abbey in which I lived. This man, when I asked him (for the matter was very well known far and near), told me that which by divine revelation he had learned concerning the end of the world, in the time of John the younger, who was my predecessor. For he said that upon a certain day, as he was, according to his manner, visiting of his diocese, he came to the church of the blessed martyr Euthicius: and when it was night he would needs be lodged nigh to the sepulchre of the martyr, where after his travel he reposed himself. About midnight, being, as he said himself, neither perfectly waking, nor yet sleeping, but rather heavy of sleep, he felt his waking soul oppressed with great sorrow: and being in that case, he saw the same blessed martyr Euthicius standing before him, who spake thus: “Art thou waking, Redemptus?” to whom he answered, that he was. Then the martyr said: “The end of all flesh is come: the end of all flesh is come”: which words after he had repeated thus three times, he vanished out of his sight.

Then the man of God rose up, and fell to his prayers with many tears: and straight after, those fearful sights in heaven followed; to wit, fiery lances, and armies appearing from the north. Straight after likewise the barbarous and cruel nation of the Lombards, drawn as a sword out of a sheath, left their own country, and invaded ours: by reason whereof the people, which before for the huge multitude were like to thick corn-fields, remain now withered and overthrown: for cities be wasted, towns and villages spoiled, churches burnt, monasteries of men and women destroyed, farms left desolate, and the country remaineth solitary and void of men to

till the ground, and destitute of all inhabitants: beasts possessing those places, where before great plenty of men did dwell. And how it goeth in other parts of the world I know not, but here in this place where we live, the world doth not foretell any end, but rather sheweth that which is present and already come. Wherefore so much the more zealously ought we to seek after eternal things, by how much we find all temporal so quickly to be fled and gone. Surely this world were to be contemned, although it did flatter us, and with pleasant prosperity contented our mind: but now, seeing it is fraught with so many miseries and divers afflictions, and that our sorrows and crosses do daily increase and be doubled, what doth it else but cry unto us that we should not love it?

Many more things yet remain of the worthy acts of God’s servants, but because I have resolved now upon another course, I will now pass them over with silence.

PETER. For as much as I perceive that many Christians do doubt of the immortality of the soul, after the dissolution of the body: I beseech you for the spiritual good or many, to set down some reasons for proof thereof: or the examples of some souls which have testified the same, if you remember any: to the end that those which be troubled with any such temptations, may learn that the soul doth not die together with the body.

GREGORY. This is a work of great labour, especially for one that is busied with other affairs, and hath other things to attend unto: yet if any profit by my means may redound to others, willingly do I prefer that before mine own will and pleasure: and therefore, God’s grace assisting me, in this fourth book following, I will clearly show that the soul doth live after the death of the body.

The Fourth Book

Chapter One; how carnal men give the less credit to those things which be eternal and spiritual; because they know not by experience, what they hear others to speak of.

After that the first Parent of mankind was for his sin banished from the joys of Paradise, he fell into the misery of this ignorance and banishment, which to this very day we do all endure: for his sin was the cause that he could not any longer see those joys of heaven, which before by contemplation he possessed: for during the time of his residence in Paradise, he usually heard God talking with him, and by purity of heart and heavenly vision, was present with the quires of the blessed Angels. But after his fall he lost that light of soul, which before abundantly he enjoyed. From whom we being by carnal propagation derived, that live now in this dark ignorance of banishment, do hear indeed of an heavenly country, and how it is inhabited by the Angels of God; and that the souls of just and perfect men do there keep them company. But yet such as be carnal, because they can not by experience know those invisible creatures, doubt whether there be any such, seeing with their corporal eyes they cannot behold them: from which doubt our first Parent was altogether free: for although he was exiled from the joys of Paradise, yet did he still keep in memory what he had lost, because he had before beheld the same: but these men can not by any means call to mind such things as they hear others speak of, because they never had of them any former experience as our first father Adam had. For it is in this case as if a woman big with child should be put in prison, and be there delivered of a son, which never went forth, but were there continually brought up: for if his mother should tell him of the sun, moon, stars, mountains: and speak of the fields, the flying of birds, and running of horses; her child, that had continually been brought up in the prison, and acquainted with nothing else but black darkness, might well hear what she said, but with a doubt whether it were true or no, because experience taught

him not any such thing. Even so, men that are born in this dark world, the place of their banishment, do hear that there be wonderful, strange, and invisible things: but because they are not acquainted with any else but terrestrial creatures, which only be visible, they doubt whether there be any such invisible things as are reported of, or no: for which cause the Creator himself of all things both visible and invisible, and the only begotten Son of the eternal Father, came into this world, for the redemption of mankind: and sent the holy Ghost unto our hearts, that quickened by him and his grace, we should believe those things which as yet by sense or experience we cannot possibly understand: and therefore so many of us as have received this spirit, the heavenly pledge of our inheritance, make no doubt of God's invisible and immortal creatures: and whosoever as yet is not settled in this belief, out of all question, he ought of reason to give credit to the words of them that be more learned and holy, and believe them that, through the grace of God's holy Spirit, have experience of those things that be invisible: for he were a very foolish child, that thought his mother lied, when she spake of light in other places, because himself, where he was, beheld nothing else but the darkness of the prison.

PETER. That you say doth wonderfully content me: yet he who believeth not that there be any invisible things, out of question in mine opinion is an infidel: and he that is an infidel, in that thing whereof he doubteth seeketh not for faith, but for reason.

Chapter Two: that an infidel liveth not without faith.

GREGORY. I speak boldly yet truly, that an infidel liveth not without faith: for if I demand of him, who is his father or mother, straightways he will tell me, such a man and such a woman: and if I press him further, whether he doth remember the time when he was first conceived, or the hour when he was born into this world, he will answer me, that he never knew or saw any such thing: and yet for all this doth he believe that which he never beheld, seeing he believeth, without all doubt, that such a man was his father, and such a woman his mother.

PETER. I must needs confess, that I never knew before this time that an infidel had any faith.

GREGORY. Infidels have faith, but not in God, for then they were not infidels: but worthily are they by the former reason to be blamed, and thereby also to be provoked to embrace true faith: for if concerning their visible body, they believe that which they never saw, why do they not also believe some things which with their corporal eyes they cannot behold?

Chapter Three: that God creates three kinds of spirits with life.

For that our soul doth live after the death of the body, reason doth teach us, assisted and holpen with faith: for almighty God created three kinds of spirits having life. One altogether spiritual without body: another with a body, but yet which dieth not with the body: the third that which is both joined with the body, and also together with the body doth die. The spirits that have no bodies be the Angels: they that have bodies but die not with them, be the souls of men: those that have bodies and die together with them, be the souls of cattle and brute beasts. Man, therefore, as he is created in the middle state, inferior to Angels and superior to beasts, so doth he participate of both: having immortality of soul with the Angels, and mortality of body with beasts, until the day of doom: for then the glory of the resurrection shall take away and consume the mortality of the body: for being then reunited to the soul, it shall be preserved for ever: as the soul joined to the body is preserved for God. Neither shall the bodies of the damned, lying in torments, ever perfectly perish: for though they always decay, yet for ever shall they continue: and as they sinned both with soul and body, so living always in body and soul, they shall always die without end.

PETER. All your discourse is consonant to that reason which Christian religion teacheth: but I beseech you, if there be so great difference betwixt the souls of men and beasts as you affirm, why doth Solomon speak in this manner? *I have said in mine heart of the sons of men, that God would prove them, and shew them to be like unto beasts: therefore there is one death of men and beasts, and their state is both alike:* and prosecuting afterward more exactly that opinion of his, thus he writeth: *As a man dieth, so do beasts die: all things breathe alike, and man hath nothing more than beasts.* After which words, he addeth also this general conclusion: *All things are*

subject to vanity, and all things go to one place: of the earth they were made, and into the earth they return again.

Chapter Four: of Solomon’s question, to wit: The death of men and beasts is all one.

GREGORY. Solomon’s book, in which these sayings are found, is called *Ecclesiastes:* as much to say properly as *The Preacher.* And in a sermon the manner is to have an opinion set down, by means whereof the tumultuous sedition of common people may be appeased: and whereas divers have divers opinions, yet are they all, by the Preacher’s arguments and reasons, brought to unity and agreement: and therefore this book is called *The Preacher:* because in it Solomon doth as it were take upon him the person and words of the unruly vulgar sort, and by way of inquisition speaketh those things, which haply ignorant men through temptation do verily think: and therefore so many questions as he doth by way of enquiry propound, so many divers persons doth he in a manner take upon himself: but the true Preacher doth, as it were with his hand, compound all their doubts and disagreements, and bring them all to concord and unity of opinion, when as in the end of his book he saith: *Let us all together hear an end of speaking: Fear God, keep his commandments, for this is every man*. For if in that book he had not by his discourse taken upon him the person of divers, why did he admonish all to make an end of speaking, together with him, and to hear?

He, therefore, that in the conclusion of the book saith: *Let us all together hear:* doth give evident testimony of himself, that he took many persons upon him, and that he spake not at all as of himself: and therefore some things there be in that book, which are moved by way of disputation, and other some which by reason give satisfaction: some things which he uttereth in the person of one that is tempted, and who as yet followeth the pleasures of the world: and some other things, in which he disputeth them according to the rule of reason, and to draw the mind from vain pleasure and delight: for as there he saith: *This, therefore, seemeth unto me good, that a man*

should eat and drink, and take joy of his labour: so afterward he addeth: *It is better to go unto the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting.* For if it be good to eat and drink, it seemeth better to go unto the house of feasting than to the house of mourning: and therefore by this it is evident, that he uttered that former saying in the person of frail men, and pronounced this latter according to the rule of reason: and therefore doth he straight-ways set down the grounds of his reason, and sheweth what commodity is gotten by going to the house of mourning, saying thus: *For in that we are put in mind of the end of all men, and the living man thinketh what he shall be.* Again there we find it written: *O young man, rejoice in thy youth:* and yet a little after is added: *for youth and pleasure be vain things.*

Seeing, therefore, he doth afterward reprove that for vain, which before he seemed to allow: plainly doth he declare that he spake those words as it were of carnal concupiscence, and the other of a right and true judgment. Therefore as he doth, in the first place, express the delight of carnal things, and pronounceth it to be good to cast away all care, and to eat and drink: so afterward, with reason and judgment doth he reprove that, when he saith that it is better to go unto the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting: and though he saith that a young man ought to rejoice in his youth, yet doth he utter that as proceeding from the resolution of a carnal mind; seeing afterward, by definitive sentence, he reproveth both youth and pleasure, as vain things. Even so and in like manner, doth our Preacher set down the opinion of man's suspicion, as it were in the person of those that be weak, and subject to temptation, when he saith: *The death of man and beasts is one, and their condition both alike: as man dieth, so they also die: all things do breathe alike, and a man hath not any more than beasts:* who, notwithstanding, afterward putteth down his own opinion, proceeding from judgment and reason, in these words: *What hath a wise man more than a fool, and what a poor man, but that he may go thither where life is?* He

therefore that said: *A man hath no more than beasts:* said also with mature deliberation, that a wise man hath not only more than a beast, but also more than a foolish man, to wit, that he goeth to that place where life is: in which words he doth also teach us, that man's life is not in this world, seeing he affirmeth it to be elsewhere: wherefore man hath this more than beasts, because they after death do not live: but he doth then begin truly to live, when by mortal death he maketh an end of this transitory life: and therefore long after he saith: *Whatsoever thy hand can do, instantly work: because with them in hell whither thou goest, there shall be neither work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom:* how then is the death of man and beasts all one, and how is their condition and state alike? or how hath not a man more than beasts, when as they after death live not, and the souls of men, after the death of their bodies, be for their wicked deeds carried to hell, and do not die when they depart this life? But in both these sayings, which seem contrary each to other, it is made manifest that the Preacher speaketh the truth: uttering the one of carnal temptation, and yet afterward, upon deliberation and according to truth, resolutely setteth down and defineth the contrary.

PETER. Glad I am, that ignorant I was of that question which I demanded: seeing I have, by means thereof, come to so exact an understanding of that which before I knew not. But I beseech you to take it patiently, if I also, like to this our Preacher, take upon me the person of weak and frail men: that I may the better, as it were by their demanding of questions, be profitable to them in their weakness and infirmities.

GERGORY. Why should I not bear with you, condescending to the infirmities of your neighbours? when as Paul saith: *To all men I became all things, that I might save all:* and surely you are the more to be reverenced, for condescending to their weakness upon charity, and therein do you imitate the steps of an excellent preacher.

Chapter Five: of a question concerning the soul, which goeth invisibly out of the body: to wit, whether there be any such thing, seeing it can not be seen.

PETER. It chanced so, that I was present when one departed this life. Who suddenly, as he was a speaking, gave up the ghost; and whom before I heard talking with me, in an instant I saw dead: but whether his soul went out of the body or no, that I did not see: and it seemeth very hard to believe that thing, which no man can behold.

GREGORY. What marvel is it, Peter, that you saw not the soul departing out of the body, seeing you behold it not when it remaineth in the body? What? do you believe me to have no soul, because, whiles you now talk with me, you can not see it? The nature of the soul is invisible, and therefore invisibly doth it depart out of the body, as it doth invisibly remain in the body.

PETER. That the soul hath life, so long as it remaineth in the body, easily do I perceive by the motion thereof: for if the body were destitute of the soul, the members could not possibly move at all: but that the soul liveth when it is out of the body, by what motions or actions I should gather, desirous I am to be informed by you: to the end that by such things as I do see, I may know that thing which I can not see.

GREGORY. Though not with any great subtlety of discourse, yet confidently do I affirm it to be most true, that as the power of the soul doth quicken and move the body, so the power of God doth fill all things which he hath created; and to some things doth he give life by breathing it into them; to other things he vouchsafeth life in another manner: and upon some other things he bestoweth only a being, without any life at all. Seeing, therefore, you doubt not but that God is the creator and preserver of all things, that he doth fill and embrace all things, that he doth excel all things, and also maintaineth them, that he is incircumscriptible and invisible: so

neither ought you to doubt, but that he is served with invisible creatures, seeing they that serve ought to be somewhat like unto him upon whom they attend, and so, consequently, that we ought not to doubt, but for as much as he is invisible in himself, that they also be of the same nature: and what creatures can these be else but his holy Angels, and the souls of just men? Wherefore, as you know, when you see the body move, that the soul remaineth in the body, and you gather this from the body which is lowest: so ought you to think of the life of the soul that departeth from the body, deducing a reason from God who is the highest: to wit, that the soul liveth invisibly, seeing it is to remain in the service of the invisible Creator.

PETER. All this is very well said: yet our mind can hardly be brought to believe that, which with our corporal eyes we can not behold.

GREGORY. Seeing St. Paul saith, that *faith is the substance of things to be hoped for*, *the argument of things not appearing:* truly are we said to believe that which can not be seen, and by no means to believe that which with our eyes we do behold: yet in few words to bring you home again to yourself, I say, that no visible things be seen but by the means of invisible: for although your bodily eye beholdeth all sensible creatures, yet could it not behold any such thing, did it not receive force from that which is invisible: for take away the soul, which none doth see, and in vain be the eyes opened to look upon anything. Take away the soul from the body, and the eyes, out of all question, may remain still open as before. If, then, our eyes did see of themselves, how cometh it to pass, that now the soul is gone, they see nothing at all? Learn then by this, that visible things themselves are, not seen, but by means of them that be invisible. Let us also imagine that we saw before us the building of houses, huge timber and stones to be lifted up, great pillars to hang upon engines: what, I pray you, effecteth all this? the visible body that with hands draweth and moveth those huge and massy things, or the invisible soul that giveth life to the body? for take

away that which is not seen in the body, and straightways all those things, which before did move, will remain without any motion at all. By which we may easily gather, that nothing can be disposed of in this visible world, but by another creature which is invisible: for as almighty God either by inspiration, or by replenishing those creatures which have reason, doth both quicken and move those things which be invisible, so, in like manner, those things which be invisible do give motion and sense to carnal bodies which are visible.

PETER. Willingly overcome with these reasons alleged, I confess that I am enforced almost to think that these visible things are nothing: whereas before, taking upon me the person of weak and unlearned men, I doubted whether there were any invisible creatures or no; wherefore your whole discourse doth very well please me: yet, as 1 am assured of the life of the soul by the motion of the body, so desirous I am to know by some sure and certain demonstrations, that the soul doth also live, after it is departed from the body.

Chapter Six: that as the life of the soul remaining in the body, is gathered by the motion of the members: so the life of the soul, after death in holy men, is to be found out by the virtue of miracles.

GREGORY. Herein most ready I am to satisfy your request; and for proof of this point, no difficulty do I find: for think you that the holy Apostles and martyrs of Christ would have contemned this present life, and offered their bodies to death, had they not known that their souls did most assuredly live for ever? You confess that you know the life of the soul remaining in the body by the motion thereof: behold, then, how these that lost their lives for Christ, and believed that souls lived after death, be renowned for their daily miracles. For sick persons come unto their dead bodies, and be cured: perjured persons repair thither, and be possessed with devils: possessed with devils visit them, and are delivered: lepers come, and be cleansed: dead folk are brought, and they be raised up again. Consider then in what sort their souls do live in those places where they live, whose dead bodies live also in this world by so many miracles. If then you gather the life of the soul remaining in the body by the motion of the members: why do you not likewise, by the dead bones which work miracles, infer that the soul doth live after the death of the body?

PETER. No solution, as I think, can overthrow the force of this reason alleged: by which we are constrained through visible things to believe those which we see not and be invisible.

Chapter Seven: of the Departure of men's souls.

GREGORY. A little before, you complained for that you could not see the soul of one when it departed out of his body: but that was your fault, who desired with corporal eyes to behold an invisible thing, for many of us, that by sincere faith and plentiful prayer, have had the eye of our soul purified, have often seen souls going out of their bodies: and therefore now I think it necessary to set down both how, and in what sort, men's souls departing out of their bodies have been seen: and also what wonderful things have been revealed unto them, at the time of their departure: that by this means examples may satisfy our wavering and doubtful minds, which reason can not so fully persuade. Wherefore to begin. I remember that, in the second book of this work, I told you how venerable Benedict (as by relation of his own monks I learned) being far distant from the city of Capua, beheld the soul of Germanus (Bishop of the same place) at midnight to be carried to heaven in a fiery globe: who, seeing the soul as it was ascending up, beheld also, in the largeness of his own soul, within the compass of one sunbeam, the whole world as it were gathered together.

Chapter Eight: of the Departure of the soul of Speciosus, a Monk.

By the relation also of the same monks, his disciples, I understood how two noble men that were brethren, and very well learned in humanity, the one called Speciosus, the other Gregory, entered into religion, there to live virtuously under the direction of his rule: whom the venerable father placed in a Monastery of his, hard by the city of Teracina. These men, whiles they remained in the world, were very rich, but for the redemption of their own souls, they had given all to the poor, and led their life in the same Monastery. One of these twain, to wit Speciosus, being sent upon business of the Monastery to the city of Capua: his natural brother Gregory in the meantime, sitting at table at dinner amongst the other monks, rapt in spirit, beheld his brother's soul, though so far distant, departing out of his body: which forthwith he told unto the other monks, and straight after in all haste took his journey to Capua, where he found his brother newly buried; and there understood how he died at that very hour, in which he saw his soul going out of his body.

Chapter Nine: of the soul of a certain anchoret.

A certain religious man, and one of great credit (at such time as I lived in the Monastery), told me that certain sailing from Sicily to Rome, as they were in the midst of the sea, beheld the soul of a certain servant of God carried to heaven, who had been an Anchoret in the land of Samnium. Landing afterward in the same place, and making enquiry of that thing, they understood that holy man to have departed this life upon that very day in which they saw his soul ascending to heaven.

Chapter Ten: of the departure of abbot Hope's soul.

Whiles I lived as yet in my Monastery, I understood, by the relation of a very reverent man, a certain thing which I will now tell you. A venerable father there was, called Hope, who had built an Abbey in a place called Cample, distant almost six miles from the old city of Nursia. This man almighty and merciful God, by temporal affliction, preserved from everlasting misery, and gave him great grace and quiet of mind: for how dearly he loved him, yea, at that very time when he sent him affliction, was afterward made apparent to the world, when he vouchsafed perfectly to restore him to his former health. This man therefore was, for the space of forty years, punished with such a continual blindness of his eyes, that he could not so much as behold any light at all. But because none in adversity can without the help of God's grace stand: and unless the same merciful father, who sendeth punishment, giveth also patience: straightways his chastising of our sins doth by impatience more increase them: and so it pitifully falleth out, that our sin is by that very thing made greater, by which an end of all sin might very well have been expected. God therefore seeing our infirmity, together with affliction, by his sweet providence keepeth and preserveth us; and is in his correction which he sendeth his chosen children in this world, so just with mercy, that they may become such to whom afterward he may justly shew mercy: and therefore, though he did lay his cross of blindness upon this venerable man, yet did he not leave him destitute of inward light: for as his body was wearied with pain, so, by the providence of God's holy Spirit, his soul was refreshed with heavenly comfort.

At length when he had continued forty years in this kind of blindness, our good Lord restored him to his former sight, giving him also to understand that he was shortly to leave this world: and therefore admonished him to preach the word of life unto all such Abbeys as were

about him; and that for as much as himself had received the light of his body, he would go and open unto them the spiritual light of the soul: who forthwith obeying God's commandment, visited the foresaid Abbeys, and preached unto them such precepts of good life as himself before had in conversation practised. Returning after fifteen days to his own Abbey, he called his monks together, and in their presence received the Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord, and straightways began, together with them, the mystical hymns of the Psalms: afterward, falling with attention to his prayers, whiles they continued on their singing, he gave up the ghost: at which very time all the monks saw a dove coming out of his mouth, which in their sight flying forth through the top of the oratory being then opened, ascended up into heaven. And surely it is to be thought, that his soul, by divine providence, did in that manner appear in the likeness of a dove, that almighty God might thereby shew with what a true and simple heart that holy man had always served him.

Chapter Eleven: of the Departure of a Priest's soul, called Ursinus.

Neither must I forget that which the reverent Abbot Stephen (who not long since died in this city, and whom you knew very well) told me to have happened in the same province of Nursia. For he said that a Priest dwelt in that country, who in the fear of God governed the church committed to his charge: and although, after he had taken orders, he did still love his old wife as his sister, yet did he avoid her as his enemy: and never would he permit her to come near him upon any occasion, abstaining wholly from all intercourse of familiarity. For this is a thing proper to holy men, oftentimes to deprive themselves of those things which be lawful, to the end they may remain the more free from such as be unlawful: and therefore this man, not to fall into any sin, utterly refused all necessary and requisite service at her hands.

When this reverent man had long lived in this world, the fortieth year after he was made priest, by a great and vehement ague [he] was brought to the last cast: his old wife, beholding him so far spent, and to lie as though he had been dead, put her head near unto him, to see whether he did breathe or no: which he perceiving, having yet a little life left, enforced himself to speak as well as he could, and in great fervour of spirit brake out into these words: "Get thee away, woman: a little fire is yet left, away with the straw." After she was gone, his strength somewhat increasing, he began with great joy to cry out: "Welcome, my Lords, welcome, my Lords: why have you vouchsafed to visit me, your unworthy servant? I come, I come: I thank you, I thank you": and when he did often repeat these and the like words, his friends that were present asked him to whom he spake, to whom with a kind of admiration he answered: "What? do you not here behold the holy Apostles? Do you not see the chief of them, St. Peter and St. Paul?" And so, turning himself again towards them, he said: "Behold I come, behold I

come": and in speaking those words, he gave up his happy ghost. And that he did indeed verily behold the holy Apostles, he testified by that his departure with them. And thus it doth often fall out, by the sweet providence of God, that good men at their death do behold his Saints going before them, and leading as it were the way, to the end they should not be afraid at the pangs thereof; and that whiles their souls do see the Saints in heaven, they may be discharged from the prison of this body, without all fear and grief.

Chapter Twelve: of the soul of Probus, Bishop of the City of Reati.

Concerning which thing I must also tell you that which the servant of God, Probus (who now in this city liveth in an Abbey), gave me to understand of an uncle of his, called also Probus, who was Bishop of the city of Reati. For he said that, being grievously sick and in great extremity of death, his father, whose name was Maximus, caused many physicians to be sent for, to see whether by their skill he could any ways be helped; who all upon the feeling of his pulse, gave sentence of speedy death. When dinner time was come, and the day somewhat far spent, the venerable Bishop, more careful of their health than of his own, desired them that they would go up with his old father into the higher part of his palace; and after their great pains, to refresh themselves with a poor dinner. Whereupon all went up, and none remained with him, but a little young boy, who, as Probus saith, is yet living. The little boy, standing by his bedside, suddenly saw certain men coming in to the man of God, apparelled in white stoles, whose faces were far more beautiful and bright than the whiteness of their garments: whereat being amazed and afraid, he began to cry out, and ask who they were: at which noise the Bishop also looking up, beheld them coming in and knew them, and thereupon comforted the little boy, bidding him not to cry, or be afraid, saying that they were the holy martyrs St. Juvenal and St. Eleutherius that came to visit him: but he, not acquainted with any such strange visions, ran out at the doors as fast as he could, carrying news hereof both to his father and the physicians; who, going down in all haste, found the Bishop departed: for those Saints, whose sight the child could not endure, had carried his soul away in their company.

Chapter Thirteen: of the death of a Nun called Galla.

Neither will I conceal that which I received by the relation of those that are grave and of good credit. In the time of the Goths, an honourable young maid called Galla, daughter to Symmachus the Consul, was bestowed in marriage: whose husband, before the year came about, departed this life: and though both plenty of wealth and her young years were great allurements to a second marriage, yet she made choice rather to be married spiritually to God, in which after mourning everlasting joy doth follow: than to become again subject to carnal matrimony, which always beginneth with joy, and in conclusion endeth with sorrow. But because she had a passing high colour, the physicians told her that, unless she did marry again, that she would through abundance of heat, contrary to nature, have a beard like unto men: which afterward fell so out indeed: but the holy woman little regarded outward deformity, which inwardly in her soul was enamoured with the beauty of the heavenly spouse; and feared not if that in her became foul, which she knew that her celestial spouse did nothing love. Wherefore straight upon the death of her husband, casting off her secular habit and attire, she rendered herself for the service of God to that Nunnery which is by the church of the blessed Apostle St. Peter; where she lived for the space of many years in prayer and simplicity of heart, and bestowed alms plentifully upon needy and poor people. At length, when almighty God determined to bestow upon her an everlasting reward, he sent her a cancer in one of her breasts. Two candles she had usually in the night time burning before her bed; for loving light, she did not only hate spiritual darkness, but also corporal. One night, lying sore afflicted with this her infirmity, she saw St. Peter standing before her bed, betwixt the two candlesticks, and being nothing afraid, but glad, love giving her courage, thus she spake unto him: “How is it, my Lord? what? are my sins forgiven me?” To whom (as he hath a most gracious countenance) he bowed down a little his head, and

said: “Thy sins are forgiven thee; come and follow me.” But because there was another Nun in the Monastery which Galla loved more than the rest, she straightways beseeched him that sister Benedicta might go with her: to whom he answered that she could not then come, but another should: “and as for her,” quoth he, “whom you now request, thirty days hence shall she follow you”: and when he had thus said, he vanished out of her sight. After whose departure, she straightways called for the mother of the Convent, and told her what she had seen and heard: and the third day following, both she and the other before mentioned departed this life: and she also, whose company Galla desired, the thirtieth day after did follow them. The memory of which thing continueth still fresh in that Monastery, so that the Nuns which now live there (receiving it by tradition from their predecessors) can tell every little point thereof, as though they had been present at that time when the miracle happened.

Chapter Fourteen: of the departure of a poor man, sick of the palsy, called Servulus.

Here also we have to know that oftentimes, at the death of God's servants, heavenly musick is heard, to the end that whiles they give willing ear to that melody, the soul may have no leisure to feel, when it departeth from the body. For I remember that, in my Homilies upon the Gospel, I told how in that porch which is in the way to St. Clement's Church, there lay a certain man called Servulus, whom I doubt not but you also do remember: who, as he was poor in wealth, so rich in merits. This man had long been afflicted with sickness: for from the first time that I knew him, to the very last hour of his life, never can I remember but that he was sick of the palsy, and that so pitifully, that he could not stand, nor sit up in his bed: neither was he ever able to put his hand unto his mouth, or to turn from one side to the other. His mother and brethren did serve and attend him, and what he got in alms, that by their hands he bestowed upon other poor people. Read he could not, yet did he buy the holy scriptures, which very carefully he caused such religious men as he entertained to read unto him: by means whereof, according to his capacity, though, as I said, he knew not a letter of the book, yet did he fully learn the holy scripture. Very careful he was in his sickness always to give God thanks, and day and night to praise his holy name.

When the time was come, in which God determined to reward this his great patience: the pain of his body strook inwardly to his heart, which he feeling, and knowing as his last hour was not far off, called for all such strangers as lodged in his house, desiring them to sing hymns with him, for his last farewell and departure out of this life: and as he was himself singing with them, all on a sudden he cried out aloud, and bad them be silent, saying: "Do ye not hear the great and wonderful musick which is in heaven?" and so whiles he lay giving of ear within himself to that divine harmony, his holy soul departed this mortal life: at which time, all that were

there present felt a most pleasant and fragrant smell, whereby they perceived how true it was that Servulus said. A monk of mine, who yet liveth, was then present, and with many tears useth to tell us, that the sweetness of that smell never went away, but that they felt it continually until the time of his burial.

Chapter Fifteen: of the departure of a Nun called Romula.

In the same Homilies, I remember likewise, how I told a certain thing, which Speciosus, my fellow-Priest, doth also verify to be most true. At such time as I entered into religion, there dwelt in this city, near to the church of our blessed Lady, a certain old woman, called Redempta, living in the habit of a Nun, a disciple of that Hirundina, which was famous for virtue, and led an eremitical life (as they say) in the mountains by the city of Praeneste. This foresaid Redempta had two scholars, which wore the same habit that she did: the one called Romula, and the name of the other, which yet liveth, I can not tell, though by sight I know her very well. These three together in, one little house lived a poor life, yet rich for piety and virtue: and of these twain Romula far excelled the other in merit of life: for she was a woman of marvellous patience, passing obedient, a great observer of silence, and one that with great zeal bestowed her time in continual prayer.

But because it often falleth out, that they whom the world think to be perfect, have yet in the eyes of almighty God some imperfection (as many times unskilful men do commend seals of arms as excellently well engraven, which yet the cunning workman doth better consider, and laboureth to make more perfect), this foresaid Romula fell into such a pitiful palsy, that she was fain to keep her bed: where she lay, deprived almost of all the use of her members: which great cross, notwithstanding, drew her not to any impatience, but rather the sickness of her body was the health of her soul, and the cause of her greater increase in virtue: for the less she could do in other things, the more she did in prayer and devotion. Upon a certain night she called for Redempta (who, as I said, brought them both up as her daughters), saying: “Come, mother, come, mother”: who straightways with her other disciple rose up, and (as myself and many more have heard it from their own mouths) when they were about midnight by her bedside, suddenly there came a light from heaven, which filled all that

cell: and such a brightness there appeared, that it put them both into a wonderful fear, and, as themselves did afterward report, all their body became cold, in such sort, that there they stood amazed: for they heard a noise, as it were of many that came in, and the cell door shaken and thrust open, as though there had been a great press of people: and as they said, they heard a great company come in, yet they saw nobody, and that by reason of great fear and much light: for both fear did make them to hold their eyes downward, and the brightness of such plenty of light did so dazzle them, that they could not behold anything. Straight after that light followed a wonderful pleasant smell, which did greatly comfort their fearful hearts. Romula, perceiving that they could not endure that abundance of light, with sweet words comforted Redempta, that stood trembling by her bedside, saying: "Be not afraid, mother; for I shall not die at this time": and when she had often repeated those words, by little and little the light vanished away, but yet the sweet smell remained still, and so continued both the next and the third day after. Upon the fourth night, again she called for that her mother, and when she was come, she desired to receive the Sacrament, and so she did; and behold, before Redempta or her other disciple departed from her bedside, suddenly they heard two quires singing before the door without: and as they said, they perceived by their voices that the one was of men, that began the psalms, and the other of women that answered: and whiles these heavenly funerals were in celebrating before the cell door, that holy soul departed this life, and was carried in that manner up into heaven: and the higher those two quires did ascend, the less did they hear that celestial musick, until at length they heard no more: and beside that sweet and odoriferous smell, which before they felt, vanished quite away.

Chapter Sixteen: of the departure of the holy virgin Tarsilla.

Sometime also for the comfort of the soul that departeth, there appeareth unto it the author himself of life, and rewarder of all virtue: for proof whereof I will here report that which I remember also to have spoken of in mine Homilies, concerning mine aunt Tarsilla: who, in the company of two others of her sisters, had for continuance in prayer, gravity of life, singularity in abstinence, arrived to the top of perfection. To this woman, Felix, my great-grandfather, sometime Bishop of this see of Rome, appeared in vision, and shewed her the habitation of everlasting light, speaking thus: "Come with me, and I will entertain you in this dwelling place of light." Shortly after, taken with an ague, she was brought to the last cast: and as when noble men and women lie a dying, many do visit them for the comfort of their friends: so divers both men and women, at the time of her departure, were come, which stood round about her bed: at what time she, suddenly casting her eyes upward, beheld our Saviour coming: whereupon, looking earnestly upon him, she cried out to them that were present: "Away, away: my Saviour Jesus is come": and so, fixing her eyes upon him, whom she beheld, her holy soul departed this life: and such a wonderful fragrant smell ensued, that the sweetness thereof gave evident testimony that the author of all sweetness was there present. Afterward, when her dead body, according to the manner, was made ready to be washed, they found that, with long custom of prayer, the skin of her arms and knees was, like a camel's, become hard: and so her dead body gave sufficient testimony, what her living spirit had continually practised.

Chapter Seventeen: of the departure of a young maid called Musa.

Neither must that be forgotten, which the servant of God before mentioned, called Probus, used to tell of a little sister which he had, called Musa: for he said that one night our blessed Lady appeared unto her in vision, shewing her sundry young maids of her own years, clothed all in white: whose company she much desiring, but yet not presuming to go amongst them, the Blessed Virgin asked her whether she had any mind to remain with them, and to live in her service: to whom she answered that willingly she would. Then our blessed Lady gave her in charge, not to behave herself lightly, nor to live any more like a girl, to abstain also from laughing and pastime, telling her that after thirty days she should, amongst those virgins which she then saw, be admitted to her service. After this vision, the young maid forsook all her former behaviour: and with great gravity reformed the levity of her childish years: which thing her parents perceiving, and demanding from whence that change proceeded, she told them what the blessed Mother of God had given her in commandment, and upon what day she was to go unto her service. Five and twenty days after, she fell sick of an ague; and upon the thirtieth day, when the hour of her departure was come, she' beheld our blessed Lady, accompanied with those virgins which before in vision she saw to come unto her, and being called to come away, she answered with her eyes modestly cast downward, and very distinctly spake in this manner: "Behold, blessed Lady, I come, behold, blessed Lady, I come": in speaking of which words she gave up the ghost, and her soul departed her virgin's body, to dwell for ever with the holy virgins in heaven.

PETER. Seeing mankind is subject to many and innumerable vices, I think that the greatest part of heaven is replenished with little children and infants.

Chapter Eighteen: how certain young children are hindered from heaven by their parents' wicked education: as is shown by the example of a blasphemous young boy.

GREGORY. Although we ought not to doubt, but believe that all infants which be baptized, and die in their infancy, go to heaven; yet no point of our belief it is, that all little ones which can speak do come unto that holy place: because some little children are kept from heaven by their parents, which bring them up wickedly and in lewd life. For a certain man in this city, well known to all, some three years since had a child, as I think five years old, which upon too much carnal affection he brought up very carelessly: in such sort that the little one (a lamentable case to speak of) so soon as anything went contrary to his mind, straightways used to blaspheme the name of God.

This child, in that great mortality which happened three years since, fell sick, and came to the point of death: and his father holding him at that time in his arms, the child (as they say, which were then present) beheld with trembling eyes certain wicked spirits coming towards him: at which sight he began to cry out in this manner: "Keep them away, father, keep them away": and crying so out, he turned away his face, and would have hid himself in his father's bosom: who demanding why he was so afraid, and what he saw: "O father," quoth he, "there be blackamoors come to carry me away ": after which words straightways he blasphemed God, and so gave up the ghost. For to the end God might make it known to the world for what sin he was delivered to such terrible executioners, he permitted him at his very death to iterate that sin, for which his father, whiles he lived, would not correct him: so that he which through God's patience had long lived a blasphemer, did at length, by his just judgment, blaspheming end his life, that the father might both know his own sin, and also how, by neglecting the soul of his little son, he nourished and brought up not a little sinner for hell

fire. But now to surcease from further speech of this sad and melancholy matter, let us prosecute, as we have begun, our former joyful narration.

Chapter Nineteen: of the departure of the man of God called Stephen.

By the relation of the same Probus, and other religious men, I came to the knowledge of such things as in my Homilies I told to mine auditors, concerning the venerable father Stephen. For he was a man, as Probus and many more affirm, who had no wealth in this world, nor cared for any, loving only poverty for God's sake: in adversity always did he keep patience: secular men's company did he avoid: and his desire was always to pray and serve God: of whom I will here report one excellent virtuous act, that by one, many other which he likewise did, each man may ponder with himself. This man, therefore, having upon a time carried his corn, which he reaped with his own hands, into the barn, being the only substance upon which he and his disciples were to live all the year: a certain wicked wretch, pricked forward by the devil, set it all on fire: which another perceiving, ran in all haste and told it to the servant of God: and after he had done his message, he added these words, saying: "Alas and woe, father Stephen, what an ill chance hath befallen you." To whom straight ways, with a pleasant countenance and quiet mind, he answered: "Nay, what an ill chance and misery is befallen him that hath done this: for to me what hath happened?" By which words of his it appeareth, to what great perfection he was arrived, that took so quietly the loss of all his worldly wealth, and was more sorry for the other's sin than grieved for his own loss; and more thought what his neighbour had inwardly lost in his soul, than what himself had outwardly lost in his substance. When this man lay a dying, many came to visit him, and to commend their souls to his, that was now leaving this world: and standing about his bed, some of them beheld Angels coming in, but yet were not able to tell it unto others then present: others there were that saw nothing, but yet such a great fear fell upon them all, that none could endure to remain in that place, when his soul departed the body: and

therefore all of them, terrified and wholly possessed with fear, fled away: by which they perceived of what power he was, that received his soul going out of this world: seeing at that time no mortal creature could endure to be there present.

Chapter Twenty: how sometime the merit of the soul is not so truly declared at the time of the departure as afterward.

But here we have to understand, that sometime the merit of the soul is not so truly known at the time of the departure, as it is afterward: and therefore divers holy martyrs have suffered many great torments at the hands of infidels: who afterwards, at their dead bones, were famous for signs and miracles, as before hath been noted.

Chapter Twenty-one: of the two Monks of Abbot Valentinus.

For the virtuous man Valentinus, who afterward, as you know, was in this city Abbot of my Monastery, having had before in the province of Valeria the government of another Abbey: into which, as he told me, the cruel Lombards entered in, and hung up two of his monks upon a tree, who in that manner ended their life. When evening was come, both their souls began in that place to sing so plainly and distinctly, that they also who had killed them, hearing that kind of musick, became wonderfully afraid. All the prisoners likewise that were there present heard it, and afterward witnessed the same: which strange melody God's providence would have known, to the end that mortal men living yet upon earth might thereby learn how that, if they serve him truly in this world, that they shall after death verily live with him in the world to come.

Chapter Twenty-two: of the departure of abbot Suranus.

At such time as I yet lived in the Monastery, I understood by the relation of certain religious men, that in the time of the Lombards, in this very province called Sura and not far off, there was an holy Abbot called Suranus, who bestowed upon certain prisoners, which had escaped their hands, all such things as he had in his Monastery: and when he had given away in alms all his own apparel, and whatsoever he could find either in the monks' cells or in the yards, and nothing was left: suddenly the Lombards came thither, took him prisoner, and demanded where his gold was: and when he told them that he had nothing, they carried him to an hill hard by, where there was a mighty great wood in which a certain prisoner that ran away from them had hid himself in an hollow tree. There one of the Lombards, drawing out his sword, slew the foresaid venerable Abbot, whose body as it fell to the ground, suddenly all the hill together with the wood did shake, as though the earth by that trembling had said, that it could not bear the weight of his holiness and virtue.

Chapter Twenty-three: of the departure of a Deacon belonging to the church of the Marsori.

Another Deacon also there was in the province of the Marsori, a man of holy life, whom the Lombards had taken, and one with his sword had cut off his head. But as his body fell to the ground, he that slew him was possessed by a devil, and so he fell down at the holy man's feet, shewing thereby that he was delivered to the enemy of God, because he had so cruelly slain the friend of God.

PETER. What is the reason, I beseech you, that almighty God suffereth them to be put to death: whom afterward he doth make known to the world, that they were holy men and his dear servants?

Chapter Twenty-four: of the death of the man of God, that was sent to Bethel.

GREGORY. Seeing we find it written, that what death soever the just man dieth, that his justice shall not be taken from him: what hurt cometh to God's elect servants (walking no question the way to everlasting life), if for a little while they have some pitiful end? and perhaps it proceedeth from some small sin of theirs, which by such kind of death God's pleasure is that it should be purged. And hereof it cometh that reprobates receive superiority and power over others, who at their death be so much the more punished, for that they used their cruel authority against God's servants: as the foresaid wicked and wretched man, whom God suffered not to triumph over that venerable Deacon, though he permitted him to kill his body: which thing to be true we learn also out of holy scriptures. For that man of God which was sent against Samaria, because contrary to God's commandment he did eat in his journey, was slain by a lion; and yet in the same place we read, that the lion stood by the man's ass, and did not touch his dead body. By which we perceive that his sin of disobedience was by that his death pardoned: because the same lion that feared not to kill him, presumed not yet to touch his dead carcass: for licence he had for the one, but no leave was granted for the other, because he that was culpable in his life, having his sin of disobedience now punished, was just by his death; and therefore the lion that before slew the body of a sinner, preserved afterward the corpse of a just man.

PETER. Your discourse pleaseth me very well: yet willing I am to know whether, before the resurrection, the souls of just men do enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Chapter Twenty-five: whether the souls of just men be received into heaven, before the general resurrection of our bodies.

GREGORY. This thing, speaking generally of all just men, can neither be affirmed nor denied: for the souls pf some just men, remaining as yet in certain mansions, be deferred from heaven; by which stay of theirs, what else do we learn, but that they lacked somewhat of perfect justice? And yet is it more clear than day that the souls of them that be perfect, do, straight after death, possess the joys of heaven: the truth whereof Christ himself assureth us, when he saith: *Wheresoever the body shall be, thither will the eagles be gathered together;* for where our Saviour is present in body, thither, without all question, do the souls of just men assemble themselves; and St. Paul saith: *I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ.* He, therefore, that doubteth not Christ to be in heaven, how can he doubt that St. Paul's soul is in the same place? which Apostle speaketh also of the dissolution of his body, and his dwelling in heaven in these words: *We know that if our terrestrial house of this habitation be dissolved, that we have a building of God; an house not made with hands, but everlasting in heaven.*

PETER. If just men's souls be already in heaven: what then shall they receive for a reward of their virtuous and just life at the day of judgment?

GREGORY. Whereas now their souls be only in heaven, at the day of judgment this further increase of joy shall they have, that their bodies also shall be partakers of eternal bliss, and they shall in their flesh receive joy: in which, for Christ's sake, they suffered grief and torments. In respect of this their double glory, the scripture saith: *In their land, they shall possess double things;* and it is written of the souls of the just, that, before the day of resurrection: *To every one of them white stoles were given; and it was said to them: that they should rest yet a little time, until the number of their fellow-servants and brethren were complete.* They, therefore, that now receive but one stole, in the day of judgment shall every one have two:

because now they rejoice only for the felicity of their souls, but then shall they enjoy the endless glory of body and soul together.

PETER. I grant it to be as you say: but what, I beseech you, is the reason that oftentimes those which lie a dying do prophesy and tell of many things to come?

Chapter Twenty-six: By what means it happens, that those which lie dying do prophesy of things to come: and of the death of a certain advocate: of that also which was revealed to the monks Gerontius and Mellitus: of the death of a boy called Armentatius, and of the diversity of tongues.

GREGORY. Sometime the soul itself by reason of the spiritual nature which it hath, doth foresee some thing which will so fall out; and sometime souls, before their departure, come to the knowledge of future things by revelation; sometime also, when they are straightways to leave the body, by heavenly inspiration they penetrate with their spiritual eyes the secrets of heaven. For that the soul, by reason of the spiritual nature which it hath, doth know things to come, certain it is, by that which happened to a certain advocate in this city, who died two days ago of a pain in his side. For a little before his death, he called for his boy, to give him his apparel, that he might rise up and walk: who, supposing him not to know what he said, refused to do what he willed him. Whereupon he rose up, put on his clothes, and said that he would go to the church of St. Sixtus, which is on the Appian way: and when not long after, his sickness increasing, he departed this life, determined it was, that his body should be buried in the church of St. Januarius the martyr, which standeth upon the way called Praenestine. But because they which had the care of his burial thought it too far off, suddenly they resolved upon a new course: and so, going forth with his corpse by the Appian way, not knowing what he had said, they buried him in that church which before he had mentioned: and seeing it is well known that he was a man given to the world, and one that sought after earthly gain, how could he know that which fell out, but that the force and spiritual nature of his soul did foresee what should become of his body?

That those also, which lie a dying, do oftentimes by divine revelation foretell what shall happen afterward, we may learn by such things as have

fallen out amongst us in divers Abbeys. For ten years since, there was a monk in my Monastery, called Gerontius, who, lying sore sick, saw by vision in the night time, certain white men beautifully apparelled to descend from above into the Monastery, and standing by his bed-side, one of them said: “The cause of our coming hither is to choose out certain of Gregory’s monks, to send them abroad unto the wars”: and forthwith he commanded another to write in a bill the names of Marcellus, Valentinian, Agnellus, and divers others, whose names I have now forgotten: that being done, he said further: “Put down also the name of him that now beholdeth us.” By which vision he being assured of that which would come to pass, the next morning he told the monks, who they were that should shortly die out of the Monastery, adding also that himself was to follow them. The next day the foresaid monks fell more dangerously sick, and so died all in that very order which they were named in the bill. Last of all, himself also departed this life, who had foretold the departure of the other monks before him.

Likewise in that mortality which, three years since, lamentably afflicted this town, there was in the Monastery of the city of Portus, a young monk called Mellitus, a man of wonderful simplicity and humility, whose last day being come, he fell desperately sick or the common disease: which when venerable Felix, Bishop of the same place, understood (by whose relation myself have learned this story), very careful he was to visit him, and with sweet words to comfort him against death: adding, notwithstanding, that by God’s grace he might live long in this world. To whom the sick man answered that his time was at hand, saying that there came unto him a young man with letters, willing him to open and read them: which when he had done, he said that he found both his own name, and all the rest of them which, the Easter before, had been baptized by that Bishop, written in letters of gold: and first of all he said that he found his own name, and afterward the rest of them that were christened at that time: by which he

made no doubt but that both himself and the rest should shortly depart this life, and so it fell out, for he died that very day: and after him followed all those which had before been baptized, so that, within the space of a few days, no one of them was left alive. Of whom no question can be made, but that the reason why the foresaid servant of God saw them written in gold, was because their names were written in heaven in the everlasting sight of God. And as these men, by divine revelation, knew and foretold such things as were to come: so sometimes souls, before their departure, not in a dream but waking, may have some taste of heavenly mysteries. For you were well acquainted with Ammonius, a monk of my Monastery, who whiles he lived in a secular weed and was married to the daughter of Valerianus, a lawyer in this city, continually and with all diligence he followed his business: by reason whereof he knew whatsoever was done in his father-in-law's house. This man told me, how, in that great mortality which happened in this city, in the time of that noble man Narses, there was a boy in the house of the foresaid Valerianus, called Armentarius, who was very simple and passing humble: when, therefore, that mortal disease entered that lawyer's house, the foresaid boy fell sick thereof, and was brought to the point of death: who suddenly falling into a trance, and afterward coming to himself again, caused his master to be sent for, to whom he told that he had been in heaven, and did know who they were that should die out of his house. "Such and such," quoth he, "shall die, but as for yourself, fear nothing, for at this time die you shall not. And that you may be assured that I have verily been in heaven, behold I have there received the gift to speak with all tongues: you know well enough that ignorant I am of the Greek tongue, and yet will I speak Greek, that you may see whether it be true that I say or no." Then his master spake Greek, and he so answered him in that tongue, that all which were present did much marvel. In the same house there was a Bulgar, servant to the foresaid Narsus, who in all haste, being brought to the

sick person, spake unto him in the Bulgarian tongue; and the boy that was born and brought up in Italy, answered him so in that barbarous language, as though he had been born and bred in that country. All that heard him thus talking wondered much, and by experience of two tongues which they knew very well that before he knew not, they made no doubt of the rest, though they could make no trial thereof. After this he lived two days, and upon the third, by what secret judgment of God none can tell, he tare and rent with his teeth his own hands and arms, and so departed this life. When he was dead, all those whom before he mentioned did quickly follow after; and besides them, none in that house died at that time.

PETER. A very terrible thing it is, that he which merited so great a grace, should be punished with so pitiful a death.

GREGORY. Who is able to enter into the secret judgments of God? Wherefore those things which in divine examination we cannot comprehend, we ought rather to fear than curiously to discuss.

Chapter Twenty-seven: of the death of Count Theophanius.

And to prosecute what we have already begun, concerning the prophetical knowledge of those that die, I will now tell you that which, when I was in the city of Centumcellis, I understood by the relation of many, touching Theophanius, Count of that place. For he was a man of great mercy and compassion, and one that did many good works, but especially he was given to good housekeeping and hospitality. True it is that, following the affairs of his earldom, he spent much time about earthly and worldly business, but that rather of necessity and duty than according to his own mind and desire, as his virtuous end afterward declared. For when the time of his death was come, there arose a great tempest, which was likely to hinder the funerals; whereat his wife, pitifully weeping, asked him in this manner: "What shall I do? or how shall we carry you to be buried, seeing the tempest is so terrible, that none can stir out of doors?" To whom he answered thus: "Weep not, good wife, for so soon as I am dead you shall have fair weather": and when he had so said, he gave up the ghost: and straightways the air became clear, and the tempest ceased. After this miracle one or two more followed. For whereas his hands and feet were with the gout before swollen and festered, and by reason of much corrupt matter, did savour and smell: yet when he was dead, and his body after the manner came to be washed, they found his hands and feet so sound and whole, as though they had never been troubled with any such sores at all. Four days after his burial, his wife was desirous to have the marble stone that lay upon him changed: which being done, such a fragrant and pleasant smell came from his body, as though, instead of worms, spices had sprung out of that corrupt carcass: of which strange thing when I did in my Homilies make public mention, and certain incredulous persons doubted thereof: upon a day, as I was sitting in the company of divers noble men, those very workmen, which had changed the tombstone, came unto me about business of their own: whom in the

presence of the clergy, nobility, and common people, I examined, touching that miracle: and they all affirmed it to be most true, saying that they were in a strange manner replenished with that sweet smell: and they added also certain other things concerning his sepulchre, that made the miracle greater, which, not to be over long, I mean to pass over with silence.

PETER. I perceive now that my former question is sufficiently satisfied: yet another remaineth which troubleth my mind, and that is, seeing you affirmed before that holy men's souls which depart this life be now in heaven, it followeth consequently that the souls of the wicked be also in hell: and yet ignorant I am whether it be so or no, for man's imagination cannot conceive how the souls of sinners can be tormented before the day of judgment.

Chapter Twenty-eight: that, as we believe the souls of just and perfect men to be in heaven; so we ought also to believe that the souls of the wicked, after their departure from the body, be in hell.

GREGORY. If, by the testimony of holy scripture, you believe that the souls of holy and perfect men be in heaven: by the same reason ought you also to believe that the souls of the wicked be in hell: for as just men do rejoice and be glad at the retribution qf eternal justice, so necessary it is that the wicked at the same justice should be grieved and tormented: for as heavenly felicity doth glad the elect, so we ought to believe that, from the day of their departure, fire doth afflict and burn the reprobate.

PETER. With what reason can we believe, that corporal fire can hold and torment an incorporal thing?

Chapter Twenty-nine: the reason why we ought to believe, that corporal fire can hold and torment the spirits that be without bodies.

GREGORY. If a spirit without a body can be holden and kept in the body of a living man: why, likewise, after death, may not an incorporal spirit be holden and kept in corporal fire?

PETER. The reason why an incorporal spirit in every living man is kept in the body, is, because it doth quicken and give life to the body.

GREGORY. If an incorporal spirit, Peter, may be kept in that to which it giveth life: why also, for punishment, may it not be kept there, where it continually dieth? And we say that a spirit is holden by fire, to the end that, in the torment thereof, it may both by seeing and feeling be punished: for the soul by seeing of the fire is afflicted, and burned it is, in that it seeth itself to be burned: and so it falleth out, that a corporal thing may burn that which hath no body, whiles that an invisible burning and sorrow is drawn from visible fire, and the incorporal soul by means of corporal fire may be tormented with a spiritual and incorporal flame: although out of the Gospel we also learn that the soul is not only tormented by seeing the fire, but also by the feeling thereof: for the rich glutton, as our Saviour saith, was buried in hell. And he giveth us to understand that his soul was kept in fire, in that he telleth us how he did beseech Abraham, speaking to him in this manner: *Send Lazarus, that he may dip the top of his finger into the water and may refresh my tongue: because I am tormented in this flame.* Seeing, then, truth itself assureth us that the sinful rich man was condemned into fire, what wise man can deny that the souls of the reprobate be detained in fire?

PETER. Both reason and testimony of scripture draweth my mind to believe what you say: but yet, when I think not of them, it returneth again to his former opinion: for I neither see, nor can perceive, how a corporal thing can hold and torment that which is incorporal and without body.

GREGORY. Tell me, I pray you, whether do you think that those Angels which fell from heaven have bodies or no?

PETER. What man that hath his wits will say that they have any bodies?

GREGORY. And whether do you think that the fire of hell is corporal or spiritual?

PETER. I make no doubt but that it is corporal, seeing most certain it is that bodies be burned therewith.

GREGORY. And as certain it is that, at the day of judgment, our Saviour shall say to the reprobate: *Go into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels.* If, then, the devil and his angels, though without bodies, shall be tormented with corporal fire, what marvel is it that the souls after their departure, and before they be united again to their bodies, may in like manner suffer corporal torments?

PETER. The reason you give is very plain, and therefore now there is not any further doubt touching this question, that doth trouble my mind.

Chapter Thirty: of the death of King Theodoricus, who was an Arian heretic.

GREGORY. Seeing with such difficulty you are brought to believe, I think it worth my labour to let you understand such things concerning this very point, as I have received from them that be of good credit. Julian, who died almost seven years since, and had a worshipful office in this church of Rome, in which now by God's providence I serve, used often to visit me (living as yet in my Monastery) and to talk with me of spiritual things for the good of both our souls. This man, upon a day, told me this story.

"In the time of king Theodoricus ," quoth he," my wife's father, being then in Sicily, was to return into Italy. The ship in which he came arrived at the island of Liparis: where he understood that there dwelt a certain solitary man of great virtue, whom he thought good, whiles the mariners were occupied about mending of their ship and tackling, to visit, to talk with him, and to commend himself to his prayers: and so he did in the company of others. When they were come to the man of God, amongst other talk which they had, he asked them this question: 'Do you,' quoth he, 'hear that king Theodoricus is dead?' to whom they quickly answered: 'God forbid: we left him alive at our departure from Rome; and before this present we never heard of any such thing.' Then the servant of God told them that certainly he was dead: 'for yesterday,' quoth he, 'at nine of the clock, he was without shoes and girdle, and his hands fast bound, brought betwixt John the Pope and Symmachus the Senator, and thrown into Vulcan's gulph, which is not far from this place.' When they heard this news, carefully they wrote down the time, and at their return into Italy, they understood that king Theodoricus died upon that very day, in which his unhappy passage out of this world and punishment was revealed to the servant of God." And for as much as he had, by miserable imprisonment, been the death of Pope John,

and also killed Symmachus, justly did he appear to be thrown of them into fire, whom before in this life he had unjustly condemned.

Chapter Thirty-one: of the death of Reparatus.

At the same time, when I first desired to lead a solitary life, a certain old man called Deusdedit, passing well beloved of the whole city, and one also that was my friend and familiar acquaintance, told me that, in the time of the Goths, a certain worshipful man, called Reparatus, came to die; who lying a long while with his countenance changed, and his body stiff, many thought in very deed that he had been dead: and when divers of his friends and family wept for his departure, all on a sudden he came to himself, to the great admiration of his mourning household. Being returned thus to life, he bad them in all haste to send a boy to the church of St. Lawrence in Damaso (so called of him that built it) and quickly to bring word what was become of Tiburtius the Priest. This Tiburtius, as the speech went, was much given to a dissolute and wanton life; and Florentius, who at that time was a Priest in the same church, remembereth full well his conversation and manner of life. When the messenger was gone, Reparatus, that was returned to life, told them that in the place where he was, he saw a great wood-pile made ready, and Tiburtius brought forth and laid upon it, and there to have been burnt with fire. "Then another fire," quoth he, "was prepared, which was so high that it reached from earth to heaven": but although they demanded for whom it was, yet did he not tell them: for when he had spoken these words straightways he died: and the boy, which was sent to see what was become of Tiburtius, returned with news, that he found him, a little before his coming, departed this life. By which we may learn that, seeing this Reparatus was carried to the places of torments to see them, returned afterward to life to tell what he had there beheld, and straight after left this world: that he saw not all these things for himself, but for us that yet live, and have time granted to amend our wicked lives. And the reason why Reparatus saw that great wood-pile burning, was not that we should think that the fire of hell is nourished with any wood: but because he was to make

relation of these things to them that remained still in this world, he saw that fire prepared for the wicked, to be made of the same matter of which our fire is, to the end that, by those things which we know and be acquainted with, we should learn to be afraid of those, which yet we have not seen nor have any experience.

Chapter Thirty-two: of the death of a Courtier : whose grave burned with fire.

Maximianus, Bishop or Syracusis, a man of holy life, who for a long time in this city had the government of my Monastery, often told me a terrible story, which fell out in the province of Valeria. A certain courtier, upon Easter even, was godfather to a young maid, who, after the fast was ended, returned home to his house: where drinking more wine than enough, he desired that his god-daughter might tarry with him: whom that night, which is horrible to speak of, he did utterly undo. In the morning, up he rose, and with guilty conscience thought good to go unto the bath, as though the water of that place could have washed away the filthiness of his sin, yet he went and washed himself. Then he began to doubt, whether it were best to go unto the church or no; fearing, on the one side, what men would say, if he went not upon that so great a festival day; and on the other, if he did go, he trembled to think of God's judgment. In conclusion, shame of the world overcame him, and therefore to the church he went: where yet he remained with great fear and horror, looking every instant that he should have been delivered to the devil, and tormented before all the people. At that solemn mass, though he did wonderfully shake for fear, yet he scaped free from all punishment: and so he departed very joyfully from church: and the next day after, came thither without any fear at all: and so merrily and securely he continued for six days together, thinking with himself that either God saw not that his abominable sin, or else that mercifully he had pardoned the same. Upon the seventh day, by sudden death he was taken out of this world. And being buried, for a long time after, in the sight of the whole town, a flame of fire came out of his grave, which burnt his bones so long, until it consumed the very grave itself, in such sort that the earth which was raised up with a little bank, appeared lower than the rest of the ground. By which fact almighty God declared what his soul suffered in the other world,

whose dead body flaming fire consumed in this. To us also he hath left a fearful example, that we may thereby learn what the living and sensible soul suffereth for sin committed, when as the sensible bones by such a punishment of fire were burnt to nothing.

PETER. Desirous I am to know whether in heaven the good know the good, and the wicked in hell know one another.

Chapter Thirty-three: that in heaven the good know the good: and in hell the wicked have knowledge of the wicked.

GREGORY. The truth of this question we find most clearly resolved in those words of our Saviour before alleged: in which, when it is said that: *There was a certain rich man, and he was clad with purple and silk, and he fared every day magnifically: and there was a certain beggar called Lazarus, that lay at his gate full of sores, desiring to be filled of the crumbs that fell from the rich mans table, and none did give him, but the dogs also came and licked his sores;* straightways it is there also said, that: *Lazarus died, and was carried of the Angels into Abrahams bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried in hell: who, lifting up his eyes, being in torments, saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and he cried saying: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger into water for to cool my tongue, because I am tormented in this flame.* To whom Abraham answered: *Son, remember that thou diddest receive good things in thy lifetime, and Lazarus likewise evil*. By which words, the rich man, having no hope of salvation for himself, beginneth to make suit for his friends, saying: *Father, I beseech thee, that thou wouldest send him unto my father s house, for I have five brethren, for to testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments.* In which words we see plainly, that the good do know the good, and the bad have knowledge of the bad. For if Abraham had not known Lazarus, never would he have spoken to the rich man being in torments, and made mention of his affliction and misery past, saying: *that he had received evil things in his life.* And if the bad did not know the bad, never would the rich man in torments have remembered his brethren that were absent: for shall we think that he knew not them that were present with him, who was so careful to pray for them that were absent?

By which we learn also the answer to another question, which you demanded not: and that is, that the good do know the bad, and the bad the good. For Abraham knew the rich man, to whom he said: *Thou hast received good things in thy life:* and Lazarus, God's elect servant, was also known to the rich reprobate, whom by name he desired that he might be sent unto him, saying: *Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger into water, and cool my tongue:* by which mutual knowledge on both sides, the reward likewise to both parts increaseth, for the good do more rejoice, when they behold them also in felicity whom before they loved: and the wicked seeing them, whom in this world not respecting God they did love, to be now punished in their company, tormented they are, not only with their own pains, but also with the pains of their friends. Beside all this, a more wonderful grace is bestowed upon the Saints in heaven: for they know not only them with whom they were acquainted in this world, but also those whom before they never saw, and converse with them in such familiar sort as though in times past they had seen and known one another: and therefore when they shall see the ancient fathers in that place of perpetual bliss, they shall then know them by sight, whom always they knew in their lives and conversation. For seeing they do in that place with unspeakable brightness (common to all) behold God, what is there that they know not, that know him who knoweth all things?

Chapter Thirty-four: of a certain religious man, that at his death saw the Prophets.

For a certain religious man of my Monastery, that lived a virtuous life, dying some four years since, saw at the very time of his departure (as other religious men do report, that were present) the Prophet Jonas, Ezechiel, and Daniel, and by their names called them his Lords, saying that they were come unto him: and as he was bowing his head downward to them for reverence, he gave up the ghost: whereby we perceive what perfect knowledge shall be in that immortal life, when as this man, being yet in corruptible flesh, knew the Prophets whom he never saw.

Chapter Thirty-five: how sometime souls ready to depart this world, that know not one another, know yet what torments for their sins, or like rewards for their good deeds, they shall receive. And of the death of John, Ursus, Eumorphius, and Stephen.

And sometime it happens that the soul, before it departeth, knoweth them with whom, by reason of equality of sins or rewards, it shall in the next world remain in one place. For old Eleutherius, a man of holy life, of whom in the former book I spake much, saith that he had a natural brother of his, called John, who lived together with him in his Monastery, who, fourteen days beforehand, told the monks when he was to die: and three days before he departed this life, he fell into an ague, and when his time was come, he received the mystery of our Lord's body and blood: and calling for the monks about him, he willed them to sing in his presence, prescribing them a certain anthem concerning himself, saying: *Open unto me the gates of justice*, *and being gone into them, I will confess unto our Lord: this is the gate of our Lord, just men shall enter in by it;* and whiles the monks about him were singing this anthem, suddenly with a loud and long voice he cried out, saying: "Come away, Ursus": straight after which words his soul departed this mortal life. The monks marvelled, because they knew not the meaning of that, which at his death he so cried for: and therefore after his departure, all the Monastery was in sorrow and affliction. Four days after, necessary business they had, to send some of their brethren to another Monastery far distant: to which place when they came,, they found all the monks in great heaviness, and demanding the reason, they told them that they did lament the desolation of their house: "for four days since," quoth they, "one of our monks died, whose life kept us all in this place": and when they inquired his name, they understood that it was Ursus: asking also at what hour he left this world, they found that it was at that very instant,

when he was called by John who died with them. Out of which we may learn that the merits of either were alike; and that in the next world they live familiarly together in one mansion, who at one time like fellows departed this life.

Here also will I tell you what I heard from the mouths of my neighbours, at such time as I was yet a layman, and dwelled in my father's house, which descended to me by inheritance. A certain widow there was not far from me, called Galla, which had a young man to her son, whose name was Eumorphius: not far from whom dwelt one Stephen called also Optio. This Eumorphius, lying sick at the point of death, called for his man, commanding him in all haste to go unto Stephen Optio, and to desire him without all delay to come unto him, because there was a ship ready, to carry them both into Sicily. But because his man refused to go, supposing that through extremity of sickness he knew not what he spake, his master very earnestly urged him forward, saying: "Go thy way, and tell him what I say, for I am not mad, as thou thinkest." Hereupon away he went towards Stephen, but as he was in the midst of his journey, he met one that asked him whither he was going, and when he told him, that he was by his master sent to Stephen Optio: "You lose your labour," quoth the other, "for I come now from thence: and he died this very hour." Back again upon this news he returned to his master, Eumorphius: but before he could get home, he found him dead. And so, by conferring their meeting together, and the length of the way, apparent it was that both of them, at one and the self same instant, departed this mortal life.

PETER. Very terrible it is that you say: but what, I pray you, is the reason, that he saw a ship at his departure? Or why did he say that he was to go into Sicily?

GREGORY. The soul needeth not anything to carry it: yet no wonder it is, if that appeared to the soul being yet in the body, which by means of the

body it had oftentimes before seen: to the end that we should thereby understand whither his soul might spiritually be carried. And in that he said he was to go into Sicily, what else can be meant thereby, but that there be in the islands of that country more than in any place else, certain gaping gulfs of torments, casting out fire continually? and as they say that know them, daily do they wax greater, and enlarge themselves: so that the world drawing to an end, and so, consequently, more coming thither to be burnt in those flaming dungeons, so much the more do those places of torments open and become wider. Which strange thing almighty God, for the terror and amendment of the living, would have extant in this world, that infidels which believe not the unspeakable pains of hell, may with their eyes see the places of torments, which they list not to credit when it is told them. And that both the elect and reprobate, whose life and conversation hath been alike, shall after death be carried to like places, the saying of our Saviour doth teach us, though we had no examples to prove the same; for of the elect himself saith in the Gospel: *In the house of my Father there be many mansions.* For if there were not inequality of rewards in the everlasting felicity of heaven, then were there not many mansions, but rather one: wherefore there be many mansions, in which divers orders and degrees of God's saints be distinguished, who in common do all rejoice of the society and fellowship of their merits, and yet all they that laboured receive one penny, though they remain in distinct mansions: because the felicity and joy which there they possess is one, and the reward, which by divers and unequal good works they receive is not one but divers: which to be true our Saviour assureth us, when, talking of his coming to judgment, he saith: *Then I will say to the reapers: Gather up the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn.* For the Angels, which be the reapers, do then bind up in bundles the cockle to burn, when like with like are put together in torment: as the proud to burn in hell with the proud, carnal with the carnal, covetous

with the covetous, deceitful with the deceitful, envious with the envious, and infidels with infidels: when therefore those that were like in sinful life, be condemned to like torments, then be they as it were cockle bound together in bundles to be burnt.

PETER. You have given a sufficient reason for satisfaction to my demand: yet I beseech you to inform me further, what the cause is, that some be called out of this world, as it were through error: who afterward return again to life, saying that they heard how they were not the men which were sent for out of this life.

Chapter Thirty-six: of those souls which seem as it were through error to be taken out of their bodies: and of the death and reviving of a monk calleo Peter: of the death, likewise, and raising up again of one Stephen: and of the strange vision of a certain soldier.

GREGORY. When this happeneth, Peter, it is not, if it be well considered, any error, but an admonition. For God of his great and bountiful mercy so disposeth, that some after their death do straightways return again to life, that having seen the torments of hell, which before when they heard they would not believe, they may now at least tremble at, after they have with their eyes beheld them. For a certain Sclavonion, who was a monk and lived with me here in this city in my Monastery, used to tell me that at such time as he dwelt in the wilderness, that he knew one Peter, a monk born in Spain, who lived with him in the vast desert called Evasa : which Peter (as he said) told him how, before he came to dwell in that place, by a certain sickness he died, and was straightways restored to life again, affirming that he had seen the torments and innumerable places of hell, and divers, who were mighty men in this world, hanging in those flames; and that as himself was carried to be thrown also into the same fire, suddenly an Angel in a beautiful attire appeared, who would not suffer him to be cast into those torments: but spake unto him in this manner: “Go thy way back again, and hereafter carefully look unto thyself, how thou leadest thy life”: after which words his body by little and little became warm, and himself, waking out of the sleep of everlasting death, reported all such things as happened about him: after which time he bound himself to such fasting and watching, that though he had said nothing, yet his very life and conversation did speak what torments he had seen and was afraid of: and so God’s merciful providence wrought in his temporal death that he died not everlastingly.

But because man’s heart is passing obdurate and hard, hereof it cometh that though others have the like vision, and see the same pains, yet do they not always reap the like profit. For the honourable man Stephen, whom you knew very well, told me of himself, that at such time as he was upon business resident in the city of Constantinople, that he fell sick and died; and when they sought for a surgeon to bowel him, and to embalm his body, and could not get any, he lay unburied all the night following: in which space his soul was carried to the dungeon of hell, where he saw many things, which before when he heard he little believed. But when he was brought before the judge that sat there, he would not admit him to his presence, saying: “I commanded not this man to be brought, but Stephen the smith “: upon which words he was straightway restored to life, and Stephen the smith, that dwelled hard by, at that very hour departed this life: whose death did show that the words which he heard were most true. But though the foresaid Stephen escaped death in this manner at that time, yet three years since, in that mortality which lamentably wasted this city (and in which, as you know, men with their corporal eyes did behold arrows that came from heaven, which did strike divers), the same man ended his days: at which time a certain soldier being also brought to the point of death, his soul was in such sort carried out of his body, that he lay void of all sense and feeling, but coming quickly again to himself, he told them that were present, what strange things he had seen. For he said (as many report that know it very well) that he saw a bridge, under which a black and smoky river did run, that had a filthy and intolerable smell: but upon the farther side thereof there were pleasant green meadows full of sweet flowers, in which also there were divers companies of men apparelled in white: and such a delicate savour there was, that the fragrant odour thereof did give wonderful content to all them that dwelt and walked in that place. Divers particular mansions also there were, all shining with brightness and light,

and especially one magnificent and sumptuous house which was a building, the brick whereof seemed to be of gold, but whose it was, that he knew not.

There were also upon the bank of the foresaid river certain houses, but some of them the stinking vapour which rose from the river did touch, and some other it touched not at all. Now those that desired to pass over the foresaid bridge, were subject to this manner of trial: if any that was wicked attempted to go over, down he fell into that dark and stinking river; but those that were just and not hindered by sin, securely and easily passed over to those pleasant and delicate places. There he said also that he saw Peter, who was steward of the Pope's family, and died some four years since, thrust into a most filthy place, where he was bound and kept down with a great weight of iron: and inquiring why he was so used, he received that answer, which all we that knew his life can affirm to be most true: for it was told him that he suffered that pain, because when himself was upon any occasion to punish other, that he did it more upon cruelty than to shew his obedience; of which his merciless disposition none that knew him can be ignorant. There also he said that he saw a Priest whom he knew: who coming to the foresaid bridge, passed over with as great security, as he lived in this world sincerely.

Likewise, upon the same bridge he said that he did see this Stephen, whom before we spake of, who being about to go over, his foot slipped, and half his body hanging beside the bridge, he was of certain terrible men, that rose out of the river, drawn by the legs downward: and by certain other white and beautiful persons, he was by the arms pulled upward: and whiles they strove thus, the wicked spirits to draw him downward, and the good to lift him upward, he that beheld all this strange sight returned to life, not knowing in conclusion what became of him. By which miraculous vision we learn thisvthing concerning the life of Stephen, to wit, that in him the sins of the flesh did strive with his works of alms. For in that he was by the

legs drawn downward, and by the arms plucked upward, apparent it is, that both he loved to give alms, and yet did not perfectly resist the sins of the flesh, which did pull him downward: but in that secret examination of the supreme judge, which of them had the victory, that neither we know, nor he that saw it. Yet most certain it is, that the same Stephen, after that he had seen the places of hell, as before was said, and returned again to his body, did never perfectly amend his former wicked life, seeing many years after he departed this world, leaving us in doubt whether he were saved or damned. Whereby we may learn, that when any have the torments of hell shewn them, that to some it is for their commodity, and to others for their testimony: that the former may see those miseries to avoid them, and these other to be so much the more punished, in that they would not take heed of those torments, which they both knew and with their eyes beheld.

PETER. What, I beseech you, was meant by the building of that house in those places of delight, with bricks of gold? For it seemeth very ridiculous, that in the next life we should have need of any such kind of metal.

What is meant by the building of the house in those pleasant places. And of one Deusdedit, whose house was seen to be built upon the Saturday.

GREGORY. What man of sense can think so? but by that which was shewn there, whosoever he was, for whom that house was built, we learn plainly what virtuous works he did in this world: for he that by plenty of alms doth merit the reward of eternal light, certain it is, that he doth build his house with gold. For the same soldier who had this vision said also, which I forgot before to tell you, that old men, and young, girls, and boys, did carry those bricks of gold for the building of that house: by which we learn that those to whom we shew compassion in this world, do labour for us in the next. There dwelt also hard by us a religious man, called Deusdedit, who was a shoemaker, concerning whom another saw by revelation that he had in the next world an house a building; but the workmen thereof laboured only upon the Saturday. Who afterward enquiring more diligently how he lived, found that whatsoever he got by his labour all the week, and was not spent upon necessary provision of meat and apparel, all that upon the Saturday he bestowed upon the poor in alms at St. Peter's church: and therefore see what reason there was, that his building went forward upon the Saturday.

PETER. You have given me very good satisfaction touching this one point: yet desirous I am further to know, what the reason was that some of those habitations were touched, by the stinking vapour, and some were not; and what is meant by the bridge and river which he saw.

GREGORY. By the representation of these things, Peter, are expressed the causes which they do signify. For the bridge, by which he beheld God's servants to pass unto those pleasant places, doth teach us that the path is very strait which leadeth to everlasting life: and the stinking river, which he saw running beneath, signifieth that the filthy corruption of vice in this world doth daily run to the downfall of carnal pleasure. And that some of

the habitations were touched with the stinking vapour, and some were not, what is meant else, but that there be divers which do many good works, yet in their soul they are touched with the delight of carnal sins? and therefore very great reason there is, that in the next world such should taste of a stinking vapour, whom filthy carnality did delight in this; and therefore blessed Job, perceiving the pleasure of the flesh to be stinking, pronounceth this sentence of the wanton and carnal man: *His sweetness be worms.* But those that do preserve their heart free from all pleasure of carnal thoughts, have not their houses touched with any such stinking vapour: and here we have also to note, that he saw one and the same thing both to be a vapour and also to have an ill savour, because carnal delight doth so obscure the soul which it hath infected, that it can not see the brightness of true light: for the more pleasure it hath in the inferior part, the more darkness it hath in the superior, which doth hinder it from the contemplation of heavenly mysteries.

PETER. Is there any text of holy scripture, to prove that carnal sins be punished with stinking and bad savours?

Of the punishment of the men of Sodom.

GREGORY. There is: for in *Genesis* we read that our Lord rained fire and brimstone upon the city of Sodom: that both fire might burn them, and the stench of brimstone smother and kill them: for seeing they burnt with the unlawful love of corruptible flesh, by God's just judgment they perished both by fire and an unsavoury smell; to the end they might know that they had, by the pleasure of their stinking life, incurred the sorrows of eternal death.

PETER. Concerning those things which before I doubted of, I find myself now so fully satisfied, that I have not any further question to move.

Chapter Thirty-seven: who the souls of some men, being yet in their bodies, do see some spiritual punishment: and of that which happened to the boy Theodorus.

GREGORY. We have also to know that sometime the souls, whiles they are in their bodies, do behold some spiritual punishment: which yet happeneth to some for their own good, and to others for the edification of them that hear thereof. For there was one Theodorus (which story I remember that in mine Homilies to the people I have also spoken of) who was a very unruly lad, and, more upon necessity than of his own good will, in the company of his brother entered into my Monastery: and so little pleasure he took in spiritual talk, that it was death to him to hear anything tending to the good of his own soul, for he was so far from doing any good work, that he could not endure to hear thereof: and he would openly protest, sometimes by swearing, sometimes in anger, and sometimes in scoffing sort, that he never meant to take upon him the habit of a religious life. This untoward boy, in the late mortality which consumed the greatest part of this city, was grievously strooken: whereof he lay sore sick: and being at last come to the point of death, all the monks repaired to his chamber, to pray for the happy departure of his soul, which seemed not to be far off: for the one half of his body was already dead, and only in his breast a little life remained, and therefore the nearer they saw him to his end, the more fervently did they commend him to God's mercy. Whiles they were thus busied, suddenly he cried out to them, and with great clamour went about to interrupt their devotions, saying: "Depart and away, for behold I am delivered over to a dragon to be devoured, and your presence doth let him, that he can not dispatch me. My head he hath already swallowed up in his mouth, and therefore go your ways, that my torments be not the longer, and that he may effect that which he is about to do: for if I be given him to devour, why do you keep me here in longer pain?" At these fearful words the monks said

unto him: “Why do you speak thus, good brother? Bless yourself with the sign of the holy cross”: to whom he answered: “Willingly I would, but I can not, I am so loaden with this dragon’s scales.” Upon these words the monks fell prostrate upon the earth, and in great zeal with tears they prayed to God for his delivery out of the enemy’s hands, who mercifully heard them, for upon a sudden the sick person began to cry out, and say: “God be thanked, behold the dragon that had me to devour, is fled away, and overcome with your prayers, here he could not tarry. Now, I beseech you, make intercession for my sins, for I am ready to turn unto God, and wholly to renounce all kind or secular life “: and thus he that was half dead, as before was said, reserved now to a longer life, turned to God with his whole heart: and so, after he had put on a new mind, and was a long time punished with affliction, then his soul departed from the miseries of this mortal life.

Chapter Thirty-eight: of the death of Chrisorius : and of a certain Monk of Iconia.

But Chrisorius on the contrary (as his kinsman Probus, of whom I made mention before, told me) was a substantial man in this world, but as full of sin as of wealth: for he was passing proud, given to the pleasures of the flesh, covetous, and wholly set upon scraping of riches together. But when God determined to make an end of so many sins, he sent him a great sickness; and when his last time drew near, in that very hour in which his soul was to leave the body, lying with his eyes open, he saw certain cruel men and black spirits stand before him, pressing upon him to carry him away to the pit of hell: at which fearful sight he began to tremble, to wax pale, to sweat, and with pitiful outcries to crave for truce: and often with faltering tongue to call for his son Maximus (whom, when I was a monk, I knew also to profess the same kind of life), saying: "Come away, Maximus, with all speed. Never in my life did I any harm to thee, receive me now in thy faith." His son, greatly moved at these outcries, came unto him in all haste: and his whole family lamenting and crying out, repaired also to his chamber: none of all which beheld those wicked spirits, which did so urge and vex him: but by his trouble of mind, by his paleness and trembling, they made no doubt of their presence: for he was so affrighted with their terrible looks, that he turned himself every way in his bed. Lying upon his left side, he could not endure their sight: and turning to the wall, there also he found them: at last, being very much beset, and despairing of all means to escape their hands, he cried out with a loud voice: "O truce till to-morrow, O truce till to-morrow": and crying out in this sort he gave up the ghost. This being the manner of his death, certain it is that he saw this fearful sight not for himself, but for us: that his vision might do us good, whom God's patience doth yet with fatherly long sufferance expect to amendment. For what profit

reaped he by seeing those foul spirits before his death, and by craving for that truce which he could not obtain?

There is also now dwelling amongst us a Priest of Isauria called Athanasius, who telleth a very fearful story which in his time happened, as he saith, at Iconium. For there was in that place, as he reporteth, a Monastery called Thongolaton , in which there lived a monk that was had in great account: for he was of good conversation, and in his life very orderly: but, as the end declared, he was far otherwise than he outwardly appeared: for though he did seem to fast with the rest of the monks, yet did he secretly take his meat: which vice of his none of the other monks ever understood. But at length it came forth by this means: for falling grievously sick, so that no hope of life remained, he caused all the monks of the Convent to be called together, who all willingly came, verily thinking that, at the departure of so notable a man, they should have heard some sweet and good exhortation: but it fell out far otherwise, for with great trouble of mind, and trembling of body, he was enforced to tell them that he died in a damnable state, saying: "When you thought that I fasted with you, then had I my meat in secret corners: and behold, now I am delivered to a dragon to be devoured, who with his tail hath enwrapped fast my hands and feet: and his head he hath thrust into my mouth, and so he lieth sucking and drawing out of my breath ": and speaking these words he departed this life, and had not any time given to deliver himself by penance from that dragon which he saw. By which we learn, that he had this vision only for the commodity of them that heard it, seeing himself could not escape from the enemy which he beheld, and into whose hands he was given to be devoured.

PETER. Desirous I am to be informed, whether we ought to believe that after death there is any fire of Purgatory.

Chapter Thirty-Nine: whether there be any fire of purgatory in the next world.

GREGORY. Our Lord saith in the Gospel: *Walk whiles you have the light:* and by his Prophet he saith: *In time accepted have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I holpen thee:* which the Apostle St. Paul expounding, saith: *Behold, now is the time acceptable; behold, now the day of salvation.* Solomon, likewise, saith: *Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, work it instantly: for neither work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom shall be in hell, whither thou dost hasten.* David also saith: *Because his mercy is for ever.* By which sayings it is plain, that in such state as a man departeth out of this life, in the same he is presented in judgment before God. But yet we must believe that before the day of judgment there is a Purgatory fire for certain small sins: because our Saviour saith, *that he which speaketh blasphemy against the holy Ghost, that it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.* Out of which sentence we learn, that some sins are forgiven in this world, and some other may be pardoned in the next: for that which is denied concerning one sin, is consequently understood to be granted touching some other. But yet this, as I said, we have not to believe but only concerning little and very small sins, as, for example, daily idle talk, immoderate laughter, negligence in the care of our family (which kind of offences scarce can they avoid, that know in what sort sin is to be shunned), ignorant errors in matters of no great weight: all which sins be punished after death, if men procured not pardon and remission for them in their lifetime: for when St. Paul saith, that *Christ is the foundation:* and by and by addeth: *And if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: the work of every one, of what kind it is, the fire shall try. If any man's work abide which he built thereupon, he shall receive reward; if any mans work burn, he shall suffer detriment, but himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.* For

although these words may be understood of the fire of tribulation, which men suffer in this world: yet if any will interpret them of the fire of Purgatory, which shall be in the next life: then must he carefully consider, that the Apostle said not that he may be saved by fire, that buildeth upon this foundation iron, brass, or lead, that is, the greater sort of sins, and therefore more hard, and consequently not remissible in that place: but wood, hay, stubble, that is, little and very light sins, which the fire doth easily consume. Yet we have here further to consider, that none can be there purged, no, not for the least sins that be, unless in his lifetime he deserved by virtuous works to find such favour in that place.

Chapter Forty: of the soul of Paschasius the Deacon.

For when I was yet in my younger years, and lived.a secular life, I heard from the mouth of mine elders, who knew it to be true: how that Paschasius, a Deacon of this Roman church (whose sound and eloquent books of the holy Ghost be extant amongst us), was a man of a wonderful holy life, a marvellous giver of alms, a lover of the poor, and one that contemned himself. This man, in that contention which, through the exceeding hot emulation of the clergy, fell out betwixt Symmachus and Lawrence, made choice of Lawrence to be Bishop of Rome: and though he was afterward by common consent overcome, yet did he continue in his former opinion till his dying day: loving and preferring him, whom the Church, by the judgment of Bishops, refused for her governor. This Deacon ending his life in the time of Symmachus, Bishop of the Apostolic see: a man possessed with a devil came and touched his dalmatic, as it lay upon the bier, and was forthwith delivered from that vexation. Long time after, Germanus, Bishop of Capua (before mentioned), by the counsel of physicians, for the recovery of his health went to the baths: into which after he was entered, he found there standing in those hot waters the foresaid Paschasius, ready to do him service. At which sight being much afraid, he demanded what so worthy a man as he was did in that place: to whom Paschasius returned this answer: "For no other cause," quoth he, "am I appointed to this place of punishment, but for that I took part with Lawrence against Symmachus: and therefore I beseech you to pray unto our Lord for me, and by this token shall you know that your prayers be heard, if, at your coming again, you find me not here." Upon this, the holy man Germanus betook himself to his devotions, and after a few days he went again to the same baths, but found not Paschasius there: for seeing his fault proceeded not of malice, but of ignorance, he might after death be purged from that sin. And yet we must withal think that the plentiful alms which he bestowed in this life, obtained favour at God's

hands, that he might then deserve pardon, when he could work nothing at all for himself.

PETER. What, I pray you, is the reason, that, in these latter days, so many things come to light, which in times past were not known: in such sort that by open revelations and manifest signs, the end of the world seemeth not to be far off?

Chapter Forty-one: why in latter times so many things be known, concerning men’s souls: which in former ages were not heard of.

GREGORY. So it is, for the nearer that this present world draweth towards an end, so much the more the world to come is at hand, and sheweth itself by more plain and evident tokens. For seeing, in this world, we know not one another’s cogitations, and, in the next, men’s hearts be known to all, what fitter name can we give to this world than to term it night, and what better to the next, than to call it day? But as, when the night is almost spent, and the day beginneth to break, darkness and light be in a certain manner joined together, until the light of the day following doth perfectly banish away the dark remnants of the former night: even so, the end of this world is, as it were, mingled together with the beginning of the next, and with the darkness of this, some light of such spiritual things as be in that doth appear: and so we see many things which belong to that world, yet for all this, perfect knowledge we have not any, but as it were in the twilight of our soul behold them before the rising of that sun of knowledge, which then abundantly will cast his beams over all.

PETER. I like very well of your speech, yet, in so worthy a man as Paschasius was, this doubt doth trouble me, how he was after his death carried to any place of punishment, seeing the touching of his garment upon the bier did dispossess a wicked spirit.

GREGORY. Herein appeareth the great and manifold providence of almighty God, by whose just judgment it fell out, that Paschasius for some time entertained inwardly sin in his soul, and yet in the sight of the world wrought miracles by his body after his death, who in his lifetime did, as they know, many good works: to the end that those which had seen his virtuous life, should not be deceived concerning the opinion of his great alms; and yet himself should not without punishment have remission of his

sin, which whiles he lived he thought to be no sin, and therefore did not by tears wash it away.

PETER. I understand very well what you say, but by this reason I am driven into such straights, that I must stand in fear both of those sins which I know, and also of those which I know not. But because a little before you discoursed of the places of torments: in what part of the world, I beseech you, are we to believe that hell is, whether above the earth or beneath the same?

Chapter Forty-two: in what place of the world we ought to believe that hell is.

GREGORY. Touching this point I dare not rashly define anything: for some have been of opinion that hell was in some place upon the earth; and others think that it is under the earth: but then this doubt ariseth, for if it be therefore called hell, or an infernal place, because it is below, then as the earth is distant from heaven, so likewise should hell be distant from the earth: for which cause, perhaps, the Prophet saith: *Thou hast delivered my soul from the lower hell;* so that the higher hell may seem to be upon the earth, and the lower under the earth: and with this opinion that sentence of John agreeth, who, when he had said, *that he saw a book sealed with seven seals: and that none was found worthy*, *neither in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth, to open the book, and loose the seals thereof:* he added forthwith: *and I wept much:* which book, notwithstanding, afterward he saith was opened by a lion of the tribe of Juda. By which book, what else can be meant but the holy scripture, which our Saviour alone did open: for being made man, by his death, resurrection, and ascension, he did reveal and make manifest all those mysteries which in that book were closed and shut up. And none in heaven, because not any Angel; none upon earth, because not man living in body; not any under the earth was found worthy: because neither the souls departed from their bodies could open unto us, beside our Lord himself, the secrets of that sacred book. Seeing, then, none under the earth is said to be found worthy to open that book, I see not what doth let, but that we should believe that hell is in the lower parts, under the earth.

PETER. I beseech you: Is there one fire in hell, or, according to the diversity of sinners, be there so many sorts of fire prepared in that place?

Chapter Forty-three: whether there is one fire in hell, or many.

GREGORY. The fire of hell is but one: yet doth it not in one manner torment all sinners. For every one there, according to the quantity of his sin, hath the measure of his pain. For as, in this world, many live under one and the same sun, and yet do not alike feel the heat thereof: for some be burnt more, and some less: so in that one fire, divers manners of burning be found, for that which in this world diversity of bodies doth, that in the next doth diversity of sins: so that although the fire be there all alike, yet doth it not in one manner and alike burn and torment them that be damned.

PETER. Shall those, I pray you, which be condemned to that place, burn always, and never have any end of their torments?

Chapter Forty-four: whether those that be in hell shall burn there for ever.

GREGORY. Certain it is, and without all doubt most true, that as the good shall have no end of their joys, so the wicked never any release of their torments: for our Saviour himself saith: *The wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, and the just into everlasting life*. Seeing, then, true it is, that which he hath promised to his friends: out of all question false it cannot be, that which he hath threatened to his enemies.

PETER. What if it be said that he did threaten eternal pain to wicked livers, that he might thereby restrain them from committing of sins?

GREGORY. If that which he did threaten be false, because his intent was by that means to keep men from wicked life: then likewise must we say that those things are false which he did promise: and that his mind was thereby to provoke us to virtue. But what man, though mad, dare presume so to say? For if he threatened that which he meant not to put into execution: whiles we are desirous to make him merciful, enforced we are likewise (which is horrible to speak) to affirm him to be deceitful.

PETER. Willing I am to know how that sin can justly be punished without end, which had an end when it was committed.

GREGORY. This which you say might have some reason, if the just judge did only consider the sins committed, and not the minds with which they were committed: for the reason why wicked men made an end of sinning was, because they also made an end of their life: for willingly they would, had it been in their power, have lived without end, that they might in like manner have sinned without end. For they do plainly declare that they desired always to live in sin, who never, so long as they were in this world, gave over their wicked life: and therefore it belongeth to the great justice of the supreme judge, that they should never want torments and punishment in

the next world, who in this would never give over their wicked and sinful life.

PETER. But no judge that loveth justice taketh pleasure in cruelty: and the end why the just master commandeth his wicked servant to be punished is, that he may give over his lewd life. If, then, the wicked that are tormented in hell fire never come to amend themselves, to what end shall they always burn in those flames?

GREGORY. Almighty God, because he is merciful and full of pity, taketh no pleasure in the torments of wretched men: but because he is also just, therefore doth he never give over to punish the wicked. All which being condemned to perpetual pains, punished they are for their own wickedness: and yet shall they always there burn in fire for some end, and that is, that all those which be just and God's servants may in God behold the joys which they possess, and in them see the torments which they have escaped: to the end that they may thereby always acknowledge themselves grateful to God for his grace, in that they perceive through his divine assistance, what sins they have overcome, which they behold in others to be punished everlastingly.

PETER. And how, I pray you, can they be holy and saints, if they pray not for their enemies, whom they see to lie in such torments? when it is said to them: *Pray for your enemies.*

GREGORY. They pray for their enemies at such time as their hearts may be turned to fruitful penance, and so be saved: for what purpose else do we pray for our enemies, but, as the Apostle saith, *that God may give them repentance to know the truth, and recover themselves from the devil, of whom they are held captive at his will?*

PETER. I like very well of your saying: for how shall they pray for them, who by no means can be converted from their wickedness, and brought to do the works of justice?

GREGORY. You see, then, that the reason is all one, why, in the next life, none shall pray for men condemned for ever to hell fire: that there is now of not praying for the devil and his angels, sentenced to everlasting torments: and this also is the very reason why holy men do not now pray for them that die in their infidelity and known wicked life: for seeing certain it is that they be condemned to endless pains, to what purpose should they pray for them, when they know that no petition will be admitted of God, their just judge? And therefore, if now holy men living upon earth take no compassion of those that be dead and damned for their sins, when as yet they know that themselves do some thing through the frailty of the flesh, which is also to be judged: how much more straightly and severely do they behold the torments of the damned, when they be themselves delivered from all vice of corruption, and be more nearly united to true justice itself: for the force of justice doth so possess their souls, in that they be so intrinsical with the most just judge, that they list not by any means to do that which they know is not conformable to his divine pleasure.

PETER. The reason you bring is so clear, that I cannot gainsay it: but now another question cometh to my mind, and that is, how the soul can truly be called immortal, seeing certain it is that it doth die in that perpetual fire.

Chapter Forty-five: how the soul is said to be immortal and never to die: if it be punished with the sentence of death.

GREGORY. Because there be two manner of lives, consequently also there be two manner of deaths. For one kind of life there is, by which we live in God, another which we received by our creation or generation: and therefore one thing it is to live blessedly, and another thing to live naturally. The soul, therefore, is both mortal and immortal: mortal, because it loseth the felicity of an happy life: and immortal, in that it always keepeth his natural life, which can never be lost, no, not when it is sentenced to perpetual death: for in that state, though it hath not a blessed life, yet it doth retain still the former being and natural life: by reason whereof it is enforced to suffer death without death, defect without defect, and end without end: seeing the death which it endureth is immortal, the defect which it suffereth never faileth, and the end which it hath is infinite, and without end.

PETER. What man is he, though never so holy, that, cometh to leave this mortal life, hath not just cause to fear the unspeakable sentence of damnation? for although he knoweth what he hath done, yet ignorant he is not, how straightly his works shall be examined and judged.

Chapter Forty-six: of a certain holy man that was afraid when he came to die.

GREGORY. It is even so, Peter, as you say. And yet sometime the only fear of death doth purge the souls of just men from their smaller sins, as you and I have often heard of a certain holy man that was very much afraid when he came to die: and yet, after he was dead, appeared to his disciples in a white stole, reporting to them in what excellent manner he was received, when he departed out of this world.

Chapter Forty-seven: how some by divine revelation are discharged from fear at their death. And of the manner how the monks Anthony, Merulus, and John departed this life.

Sometime also almighty God doth by divine revelation strengthen the minds of them that be fearful, to the end that they should not be afraid of death. For a certain monk there was, called Anthony, that lived together with me in my Monastery, who by daily tears laboured to come to the joys of heaven: and when as he did very carefully and with great zeal of soul meditate upon the sacred scriptures, he, sought not so much for cunning and knowledge, as for tears and contrition of heart, that by means thereof his soul might be stirred up and inflamed: and that by contemning all earthly things, he might with the wings of contemplation fly unto the kingdom of heaven. This man upon a night, by revelation, was admonished in this manner: "Make yourself ready, because our Lord hath given commandment for your departure": and when he answered, that he had not wherewith to defray the charges of that journey: straightaway he heard these comfortable words: "If you take care for your sins, they be forgiven you"; which thing though he had heard once, and yet for all that was in great fear, another night he had again the same vision: and so after five days he fell sick of an ague, and as the other monks were praying and weeping about him, he departed this life.

Another monk there was in the same Monastery, called Merulus, who was wonderfully given to tears and bestowing of alms: and no time almost passed him, except it were when he was at meat or asleep, in which he did not sing psalms. This man, by vision in the night, saw a crown made of white flowers to descend upon his head: and straight after falling sick, he died with great quiet and joy of mind. Fourteen years after, when Peter, who now hath the government of my Monastery, went about to make a grave for himself hard by Merulus' sepulchre, such a fragrant and pleasant smell, as

he saith, came out of it, as though it had been a storehouse of all manner of sweet flowers. By which it appeared plainly, that it was very true, which before he had seen by vision in the night.

Likewise in the same Monastery there was another, called John, who was a young man of great towardness, and one that led his life with great circumspection, humility, sweetness, and gravity. This man falling sore sick, saw in his great extremity by vision in the night an old man to come unto him, who touched him with a wand, saying: “Rise up, for you shall not die of this sickness: but make yourself ready, for you have not any long time to stay in this world”: and forthwith, though the physicians despaired of his health, yet he recovered, and became perfectly well. The vision which he saw he told to others, and for two years following, as I said, he served God in such sort, that his great devotion surpassed his young years. Three years since another monk died, who was buried in the churchyard of the same Monastery, and when we had ended all his funerals, and were departed, this John, as himself with pale face and great trembling told us, remained there still, where he heard that monk which was buried to call him out of the grave: and that it was so indeed, the end following did shew: for ten days after he fell sick of an ague and so departed this life.

PETER. Willingly would I learn whether we ought to observe such visions, as be revealed to us by night in our sleep.

Chapter Forty-eight: whether dreams are to be believed: and how many kinds of dreams there be.

GREGORY. Concerning this point, Peter, you must understand that there are six kind of dreams. For sometime they proceed of too much fulness or emptiness of the stomach: sometime by illusion: sometime both by thought and illusion: sometime by revelation: and sometime both by thought and revelation. The two first all by experience know to be true: and the four latter we find mentioned in holy scripture. For if dreams did not sometime proceed by illusion from our secret enemy, never would the wise man have said: *Dreams have made many to err, and hoping in them have they been deceived*: and again: *Ton shall not be soothsayers, nor observe dreams:* by which words we see how they are to be detested, that are compared with sooth-sayings. Again, if dreams did not sometime proceed both of thought together with illusion, the wise man would not have said: *Dreams follow many cares.* And if sometime also they did not come by mystical revelation, Joseph had never known by dream that he should have been exalted above his brethren: neither the Angel would ever in a dream have admonished the spouse of our Lady to fly away with the child into Egypt. Again, if sometime they did not also proceed both from thoughts and divine revelation, never would the prophet Daniel, disputing of Nabuchodonosor's dream, have begun from the root of his former thoughts, saying: *Thou, O king, diddest begin to think in thy bed, what should happen in times to come; and he that revealeth mysteries did shew thee what things should come:* and a little after: *Thou diddest see, and behold as it were a great statue: that great statue and high of stature did stand against thee, &c.* Wherefore, seeing Daniel doth with reverence insinuate that the dream should come to pass, and also declareth from what cogitation it did spring, plainly do we learn that dreams sometimes do come both of thought and revelation together. But seeing dreams do grow from such divers roots, with

so much the more difficulty ought we to believe them: because it doth not easily appear unto us, from what cause they do proceed. Holy men, indeed, by a certain inward spiritual taste, do discern betwixt illusions and true revelations, by the very voices or representations of the visions themselves: so that they know what they receive from the good spirit, and what they suffer by illusion from the wicked: and therefore, if our mind be not herein very attentive and vigilant, it falleth into many vanities, through the deceit of the wicked spirit: who sometime useth to foretell many true things, that, in the end, he may by some falsehood ensnare our soul.

Chapter Forty-nine: of one who in his dream had long life promised him, and yet died shortly after.

As not long since it is most certain, that it befell to one that lived amongst us, who, being much given to observe dreams, had one night in a dream long life promised him: and when as he had made provision of great store of money for the maintenance of his many days, he was so suddenly taken out of this life, that he left it all behind him, without ever having any use thereof, and carried not with him any good works to the next world.

PETER. I remember very well who it was: but let us, I pray you, prosecute such questions as we began to entreat of: Doth any profit, think you, redound to men’s souls, if their bodies be buried in the church?

Chapter Fifty: Whether the souls receive any benefit, if their bodies be buried in the church.

GREGORY. Such as die not in mortal sin receive this benefit by having their bodies buried in the church: for when their friends come thither, and behold their sepulchres, then do they remember them, and pray unto God for their souls: but those that depart this life in the state of deadly sin, receive not any absolution from their sins, but rather be more punished in hell, for having their bodies buried in the church: which thing shall be more plain, if I do briefly tell you what concerning this point hath chanced in our time.

Chapter Fifty-one: of a certain Nun that was buried in the church, which appeared with her body half burnt

Felix, Bishop of Portua, a man of holy life, who was born and brought up in the province of Sabina, saith that there lived in that place a certain Nun, which, though she were chaste of her body, yet had she an ungracious and foolish tongue: which departing this life, was buried in the church: the keeper whereof, the night following, saw her by revelation brought before the holy altar, where she was cut in two pieces, and the one half was burnt in the fire, and the other was not touched at all. Rising up in the morning, he told unto others what a strange vision he had seen, and shewed them the very place in which she was burnt, the marble whereof appeared with the very marks and signs of a fire upon it, as though that woman had been there burnt in very deed with corporal fire. By which we may plainly see, that such as have not their sins pardoned, can reap small benefit by having their bodies after death buried in holy places.

Chapter Fifty-two: of the burial of Valerianus.

John also, an honourable man, one of the governors of this city, and one that is of great gravity and credit, as all know, told me how one Valerianus, that was a gentleman of the city of Bressa, departed this life, whose body for money the Bishop was content should be buried in the church. This Valerianus, even to his very old age, led a light and wanton life: refusing utterly to give over sin and wickedness. That very night in which he was buried, the blessed martyr Faustinus, in whose church his body lay, appeared to the keeper thereof, saying: "Go, and bid the Bishop cast out that stinking carcass which he hath here buried, and if he will not do it, tell him that thirty days hence he shall die himself." This vision the poor man was afraid to report unto the Bishop, and though he were admonished the second time to do it, yet he refused: and so upon the thirtieth day, the Bishop going safe and sound to bed (never fearing any such thing), suddenly departed this life.

Chapter Fifty-three: of the body of Valentinus, that was after his burial cast out of the church.

There be also at this time here in the city our venerable brother Venantius, Bishop of Luna, and Liberius, a noble man and one of very great credit: both which do say that themselves know it, and that their servants were present in the city of Genua, when this strange thing happened. One Valentinus, who had an office in the church of Milan, died there, a man in his life time given to wantonness and all kind of lightness, whose body was buried in the church of the blessed martyr Sirus. The midnight following, a great noise was heard in that place, as though some body by force had been drawn out from thence: whereupon the keepers ran thither, to see what the matter was, and when they were come, they saw two very terrible devils, that had tied a rope about his legs, and were drawing him out of the church, himself in the mean time crying and roaring out: at which sight they were so frighted, that they returned home again to their beds: but when the morning was come, they opened the grave in which Valentinus was buried, but his body they could not find, and therefore they sought without the church to see where it was, and so found it thrown into another place, with the feet still bound as it was drawn out of the church. Out of which, Peter, you may learn that such as die in mortal sin, and cause their bodies to be buried in holy ground, are punished also for that their presumption: the holy places not helping them, but rather the sin of their temerity accusing them.

Chapter Fifty-four: of the body of a dyer buried in the church, which afterward could not be found.

For another thing also which happened in this city, the company of dyers dwelling here do testify to be most true, and it is concerning one that was the chief of their profession, who departed this life, and was by his wife buried in the church of St. Januarius the martyr, near to the gate of St. Lawrence: whose spirit the night following, in the hearing of the sexton, cried out of his grave, saying: "I burn, I burn": and when he continued a long time crying so, the sexton told it to the dyer's wife, who thereupon sent certain of his own profession to the church, to see in what case his body was in the grave, who so cried out in that pitiful manner: and when they had opened it, there they found his garments safe and sound, which be still kept in the same church, for a perpetual memory of that which happened: but his body by no means could they find, as though it had never been buried there: by which we may gather to what torments his soul was condemned, whose body was in that sort turned out of the church. What profit, then, do holy places bring to them that be buried there, when as those, that be wicked and unworthy, be by God's appointment thrown out from those sacred places?

PETER. What thing is there, then, that can profit and relieve the souls of them that be departed?

Chapter Fifty-five: what is available for the soul after death: and of a Priest of Centumcellis, who was desired bv a certain man’s spirit, to be helped after his death, by the holy sacrifice: and of the soul of a monk called Justus.

GREGORY. If the sins after death be pardonable, then the sacred oblation of the holy host useth to help men’s souls: for which cause the souls sometime, of them that be dead, do desire the same: for Bishop Felix, whom we spake of before, saith that a virtuous Priest, who died some two years since, and dwelt in the diocese of the city of Centumcellis, and was pastor of the church of St. John in the place called Tauriana, told him that himself did use (when he had need) to wash his body in a certain place, in which there were passing hot waters: and that going thither upon a time, he found a certain man whom he knew not, ready to do him service, as to pull off his shoes, take his clothes, and to attend upon him in all dutiful manner. And when he had divers times done thus, the Priest, minding upon a day to go to the baths, began to think with himself that he would not be ungrateful to him that did him such service, but carry him somewhat for a reward, and so he took with him two singing breads : and coming thither he found the man there ready, and used his help as he was wont to do: and when he had washed himself, put on his clothes, and was ready to depart, he offered him for an holy reward that which he had brought, desiring him to take that courteously, which for charity he did give him. Then with a sad countenance, and in sorrowful manner, he spake thus unto him: “Why do you give me these, father? This is holy bread, and I cannot eat of it, for I, whom you see here, was sometime lord of these baths, and am now after my death appointed for my sins to this place: but if you desire to pleasure me, offer this bread unto almighty God, and be an intercessor for my sins: and by this shall you know that your prayers be heard, if at your next coming you find me not here.” And as he was speaking these words, he vanished

out of his sight: so that he, which before seemed to be a man, shewed by that manner of departure that he was a spirit. The good Priest all the week following gave himself to tears for him, and daily offered up the holy sacrifice: and afterward returning to the bath, found him not there: whereby it appeareth what great profit the souls receive by the sacrifice of the holy oblation, seeing the spirits of them that be dead desire it of the living, and give certain tokens to let us understand how that by means thereof they have received absolution.

Here also I cannot but tell you that which happened three years since in mine own Monastery . A certain monk there was, called Justus, one very cunning in medicine, and whiles I remained in the Abbey, served me very diligently, attending upon me in my often infirmities and sickness. This man himself at length fell sore sick, so that in very deed he was brought to the last cast. A brother he had, called Copiosus, that had care of him, who yet liveth. Justus perceiving himself past all hope of life, told this brother of his where he had secretly laid up three crowns of gold; but yet they were not so closely conveyed, that they could be concealed from the monks: for they, carefully seeking, and tossing up all his medicines and boxes, found in one of them these three crowns hidden. Which thing so soon as I understood, very much grieved I was, and could not quietly digest so great a sin at his hands, that lived with us in community, because the rule of my Monastery was that all the monks thereof should so live in common, that none in particular might possess anything proper to himself. Being, therefore, much troubled and grieved at that which had happened, I began to think with myself what was best to be done, both for the soul of him that was now dying, and also for the edification and example of those that were yet living. At length I sent for Pretiosus, Prior of the Monastery, and gave him this charge: “See,” quoth I, “that none of our monks do so much as visit Justus in this his extremity, neither let any give him any comfort at all: and when

his last hour draweth nigh, and he doth desire the presence of his spiritual brethren, let his carnal brother tell him that they do all detest him, for the three crowns which he had hidden: that, at least before his death, sorrow may wound his heart, and purge it from the sin committed: and when he is dead, let not his body be buried amongst the rest of the monks, but make a grave for him in some one dunghill or other, and there cast it in, together with the three crowns which he left behind him, crying out all with joint voice: 'Thy money be with thee unto perdition'; and so put earth upon him." In either of which things my mind and desire was, both to help him that was leaving the world, and also to edify the monks yet remaining behind, that both grief of death might make him pardonable for his sin, and such a severe sentence against avarice might terrify and preserve them from the like offence: both which, by God's goodness, fell out accordingly. For when the foresaid monk came to die, and carefully desired to be commended to the devotions of his brethren, and yet none of them did either visit him, or so much as speak to him: his brother Copiosus told him for what cause they had all given him over: at which words he straightways sighed for his sin, and in that sorrow gave up the ghost. And after his death, he was buried in that manner, as I had given in commandment: by which fact all the monks were so terrified, that they began each one to seek out the least and basest things in their cells, and which by the rule they might lawfully keep: and very much they feared, lest some thing they had, for which they might be blamed.

Thirty days after his departure, I began to take compassion upon him, and with great grief to think of his punishment, and what means there was to help him: whereupon I called again for Pretiosus, Prior of my Monastery, and with an heavy heart spake thus unto him: "It is now a good while since that our brother which is departed remaineth in the torments of fire, and therefore we must shew him some charity, and labour what we may to

procure his delivery: wherefore go your way, and see that for thirty days following sacrifice be offered for him, so that no one day pass in which, for his absolution and discharge, the healthful sacrifice be not offered": who forthwith departed, and put my commandment in execution. In the mean time, my mind being busied about other affairs, so that I took no heed to the days how they passed: upon a certain night the same monk that was dead, appeared to his brother Copiosus: who, seeing him, enquired of his state in this manner: "What is the matter, brother? and how is it with you?" to whom he answered thus: "Hitherto have I been in bad case, but now I am well; for this day have I received the communion": with which news Copiosus straightways coming to the Monastery, told the monks: and they diligently counting the days, found it to be that in which the thirtieth sacrifice was offered for his soul: and so, though neither Copiosus knew what the monks had done for him, nor they what he had seen concerning the state of his brother, yet at one and the same time both he knew what they had done, and they what he had seen, and so the sacrifice and vision agreeing together, apparent it was that the dead monk was by the holy sacrifice delivered from his pains.

PETER. The things you report be passing strange, and yet full of joy and comfort.

Chapter Fifty-six: of the life and departure of Bishop Cassius.

GREGORY. And that we should not call in question, or doubt of that which the dead report, we have, for confirmation of the same thing, the facts of the living. For Cassius, Bishop of Narni, a man of holy life, who did usually every day offer sacrifice unto God (and whiles he was at the mysteries of those sacrifices, did also immolate himself in tears), received from our Lord this message by one of his Priests. “Do that thou doest: work that thou workest: let not thy foot cease, let not thy hand cease, upon the nativity of the Apostles thou shalt come unto me, and I will give thee thy reward.” And so, seven years after, upon that very day of the Apostles, after he had ended the solemnity of Mass and received the mysteries of the sacred communion, he departed this life.

Chapter Fifty-seven: of one that was taken by his enemies and put in prison, whose irons fell off at the time of the sacrifice: and of one Baraca, a mariner, that was by the holy sacrifice delivered from drowning.

That also which I have heard is known to many, to wit, how one was by his enemies taken and put in prison, with irons upon him: for whom his wife caused upon certain days sacrifice to be offered: who, long time after, returning home to his wife, told her upon what days his bolts used to fall off: by whose relation she found that it was upon those very days in which sacrifice had been offered for him. By another thing likewise, which happened seven years since, the very same truth is confirmed. For when Agathus, Bishop of Palermo (as many faithful and religious men both have and still do tell me), was, in the time of my predecessor of blessed memory, commanded to come to Rome, and in his journey fell into such a tempest at sea, that he despaired of ever coming to land: the mariner of the ship, called Baraca (who now is one of the clergy, and serves in the same church), governed another small vessel, tied to the poop of the former ship: the rope whereof breaking in pieces, away it went with man and all, and amongst the huge mountains of waters, quickly vanished out of sight. The ship in which the Bishop was, after many great dangers, at length arrived all weather-beaten at the island of Ostica: and when three days were past, and the Bishop could hear no news of the foresaid mariner that was so violently carried away with the storm, nor see him in any part of the sea, very sorry he was, and verily believed that he had been drowned: and so upon great charity bestowed one thing upon him being yet alive, which was not due unto him until he was dead: for he willed that the sacrifice of the healthful oblation should be offered unto almighty God for the absolution of his soul: which being done accordingly, and the ship new rigged, away he departed for Italy, where, arriving at Portua, he found the mariner alive, whom he

verily supposed to have been drowned: upon which good chance altogether unlooked for, very glad he was, and demanded of him, how it was possible that he could escape so many days, in so great a danger and so terrible a tempest: who told him, how in that storm he was tossed with that little ship which he governed, and how he did swim with it being full of water: and so often as it was turned upside down, how he gat upon the keel, and held fast there: adding also that, by striving and labouring thus continually day and night, at length, with watching and hunger, his strength began to fail him: and then he told how, by the singular providence and mercy of God, he was preserved from drowning: for as even to this very day he still affirmeth, so then did he verify the same to the Bishop, telling him in this manner. "As I was," quoth he, "striving and labouring in the sea, and my strength began to fail me, suddenly I became so heavy of mind, that methought I was neither waking nor yet asleep: and being in that case in the midst of the sea, I saw one come, who brought me bread to refresh my tired body: which so soon as I had eaten, I recovered my strength again; and not long after, a ship passing by took me in, and so was I delivered from that danger of death and set safe a land. The Bishop, hearing this, enquired upon what day this strange thing happened, and he found by his relation, that it was that very day in which the Priest in the island of Ostica did sacrifice for him unto God, the host of the holy oblation.

PETER. That which you report, myself also heard at my being in Sicily.

GREGORY. I, for my part, do verily believe, that the reason why, by God's providence, this thing falleth out thus apparently to them that be living, and think nothing thereof, is that all may know how, if their sins be not irremissible, that they may after death obtain pardon and absolution for them, by the oblation of the holy sacrifice. But yet we have here to note, that the holy sacrifice doth profit those kind of persons after their death, who in their life time obtained that such good works as were by their friends

done for them might be available to their souls, after they were out of this world.

Chapter Fifty-eight: of the virtue and mystery of the holy sacrifice.

And here also we have diligently to consider, that it is far more secure and safe that every man should do that for himself whiles he is yet alive, which he desireth that others should do for him after his death. For far more blessed it is, to depart free out of this world, than being in prison to seek for release: and therefore reason teacheth us, that we should with our whole soul contemn this present world, at least because we see that it is now gone and past: and to offer unto God the daily sacrifice of tears, and the daily sacrifice of his body and blood. For this sacrifice doth especially save our souls from everlasting damnation, which in mystery doth renew unto us the death of the Son of God: who although being risen from death, doth not now die any more, nor death shall not any further prevail against him: yet living in himself immortally, and without all corruption, he is again sacrificed for us in this mystery of the holy oblation: for there his body is received, there his flesh is distributed for the salvation of the people: there his blood is not now shed betwixt the hands of infidels, but poured into the mouths of the faithful. Wherefore let us hereby meditate what manner of sacrifice this is, ordained for us, which for our absolution doth always represent the passion of the only Son of God: for what right believing Christian can doubt, that in the very hour of the sacrifice, at the words of the Priest, the heavens be opened, and the quires of Angels are present in that mystery of Jesus Christ; that high things are accompanied with low, and earthly joined to heavenly, and that one thing is made of visible and invisible?

Chapter Fifty-nine: how we ought to procure sorrow of heart, at the time of the holy mysteries: and of the custody of our soul after contrition.

But necessary it is that, when we do these things, we should also, by contrition of heart, sacrifice ourselves unto almighty God: for when we celebrate the mystery of our Lord's passion, we ought to imitate what we then do: for then shall it truly be a sacrifice for us unto God, if we offer ourselves also to him in sacrifice. Careful also must we be, that after we have bestowed some time in prayer, that, as much as we can by God's grace, we keep our mind fixed in him, so that no vain thoughts make us to fall unto dissolution, nor any foolish mirth enter into our heart: lest the soul, by reason of such transitory thoughts, lose all that which it gained by former contrition. For so Anne deserved to obtain that which she craved at God's hand, because after her tears, she preserved herself in the former force of her soul: for of her thus it is written: *And her looks were not any more changed to divers things.* She therefore, that forgot not what she desired, was not deprived of that gift which she requested.

Chapter Sixty: that we ought to pardon other men their sins, that we may obtain remission of our own.

I We have also further to know, that he doth rightly and in good sort demand pardon for his own sin, who doth forgive that which hath been done against himself. For our gift is not received, if, before, we free not our soul from all discord and lack of charity: for our Saviour saith: *If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift.* Wherein we have to consider, that whereas all sin by a gift is loosed, how grievous the sin of discord is, for which no gift is received: and therefore we ought, in soul and desire, to go unto our neighbour though he be far off, and many miles distant from us, and there to humble ourselves before him, and to pacify him by humility and hearty good will, to the end that our Creator, beholding the desire of our mind, may forgive us our own sin, who receiveth a gift for sin. And our Saviour himself teacheth us, how that servant, which did owe ten thousand talents, by penance obtained of his Lord the forgiveness of that debt: but yet because he would not forgive his fellow-servant an hundred pence, which were due to him, that was again exacted at his hands, which before was pardoned. Out of which sayings we learn, that if we do not from our heart forgive that which is committed against us, how that is again required at our hands, whereof before we were glad that by penance we had obtained pardon and remission.

Wherefore, whiles time is given us, whiles our judge doth bear with us, whiles he that examineth our sins doth expect our conversion and amendment: let us mollify with tears the hardness of our heart, and with sincere charity, love our neighbours: and then dare I speak it boldly, that we shall not have any need of the holy sacrifice after our death: if, before death, we offer up ourselves for a sacrifice unto almighty God.

Here end the Dialogues of Saint Gregory.

Selected Sermons

Translated by D. G. Hubert, 1901

CONTENTS

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF SS. NEREUS AND ACHILLES ON THEIR FESTIVAL.

SUNDAYS AND FESTIVALS

WITH THE

FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

OR

HOMILIES OF THE HOLY FATHERS ON THE GOSPELS OF ALL THE SUNDAYS AND CHIEF FESTIVALS OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

BY THE

REV. D. G. HUBERT

1901

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LADY HERBERT OF LEA IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF HER GREAT CHARITY AND GENEROSITY THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED BY HER HUMBLE AND OBLIGED SERVANT IN CHRIST

D. G. HUBERT

INTRODUCTION

THE Christian's rule of life is contained in the Gospels. They are *the* Book on which he should meditate, and the teaching of which he should endeavour to put into practice all the days of his life. Yet, it is to be feared that, in reading this Book, he might not have the necessary light from above, and perhaps might attach to the sacred words a meaning that was not intended by the Divine Teacher, nor by His disciples. To prevent such possibility, many learned men, well versed in Holy Writ, have carefully explained the meaning of the Gospels, and have thus imparted to Christians a greater taste and love for the reading of the Word of God. Hence we have their commentaries, meditations, lives of Jesus Christ, and divers essays on the Holy Scriptures, the titles of which alone would form a large volume. Many of these works are thoroughly well written, and the reader can be but greatly edified and instructed by them. However, it is strange, that from the beginning it never occurred to anyone to go up to the very source. Among spiritual books the oldest are the best and the surest. It seems, therefore, that the works of the holy Fathers should have obtained the preference, for they are nearly as old as the Church, and in them the tradition is preserved in all its strength and purity.

Indeed, when we follow these wise teachers in their writings from century to century, we are astonished that Christian Faith, enlightening us now, should be always one and the same, and that the doctrine of faith, taught by the Church, and the doctrine of morals, preached in the world, have never undergone any change in the succession of centuries. We see that the true Church, our glory and the foundation of our hope, has always remained calm in the midst of storms, victorious in the fiercest struggles, unhurt amidst the most powerful attacks, and always preserved from the arrows of her enemies. We see that the Bride of Jesus has always been holy and infallible in her precepts and commands, always wise and enlightened

in her teaching, always prudent and reasonable in her discipline, and always pure in her religious practices. We recognise that the Church, built upon the Rock, has been, and will be to the end of the world, holy and immaculate, because she is protected by the infinitely powerful and eternal God, and guided by the Holy Ghost.

It is, therefore, a subject of astonishment that, what the holy Fathers have written and preached about the Gospels, has not more often been translated and published in modern times. Was it not quite natural to think of this pious duty, especially as they are often quoted in sermons and instructions, and consulted, when difficult passages of Holy Scripture have to be explained? Are not they our teachers, under whose guidance we cannot fall into error? There are no better sources from which to draw with greater safety. What eloquence and diversity in their works! Who would not admire the grace and strength of a St. John Chrysostom, the fecundity and sublimity of a St. Augustine, the clear penetration and depth of a St. Ambrose, the vast learning of a St. Jerome, or the penetrating knowledge of a St. Gregory? What dignity and authority in St. Leo, and what beauty in the writings of the Venerable Bede!

The works of the Fathers of the Church form a rich library. Yet this field, so fertile in an abundance of delicious fruits, remains sterile for the greater number of the Catholic people, who perhaps know not what to choose, or are ignorant of the language of these holy writers. It seems to me that a collection of Homilies from different Fathers, arranged according to the Sundays and principal festivals of the ecclesiastical year, would be a great spiritual help to all Christians. This is the reason why I undertook this collection, and I have carefully endeavoured that it should be useful to all.

Before every Homily is placed the respective part of the Gospels, thus showing the intimate relation existing between the one and the other. The literal, spiritual, allegorical, and figurative meaning of the Holy Scriptures

is explained in these discourses. Their style is clear and simple, yet elegant; the comparisons are most beautiful and instructive, for they are natural. Simplicity is their ornament, and this simplicity pervades the whole discourse. The present book is, therefore, a selection of different essays which, by their number and diversity, form a collection presenting the doctrine of faith and morals, and containing the principal truths of our Holy Catholic Religion.

This is the notion or idea which may be formed of these Homilies. I have endeavoured to render, in a natural and simple style, the sublime and forcible eloquence of the holy Fathers, without weakening their thoughts. For I am of opinion that a literal translation, often dry and tiring, could not give a clear idea of the beautiful expressions found in these Homilies, A dogmatical work is not to be translated like a history or an ordinary speech.

It is to be hoped that this book will be of great and general utility, specially as priests and others, whose duty it is to instruct the faithful, have not always the time to consult the Fathers, even should they possess their works. The duties of priests in parishes, the time they spend in the confessional, their visiting the sick and the poor, the administration of the Sacraments, will not allow them to do so. Besides, would it not require a long time to find out the special subject? For, in order to discover in the writings of the Fathers a few pages, or even one passage, directly explaining the Gospel, a whole essay or a whole book must sometimes be read, the greater part of which has no direct reference to that Gospel. Again, there are many priests, whose duty it is to preach and instruct, who do not possess the works of the Fathers, who have a few books only: their small means not allowing them to buy any more.

We also offer this book to all Christians who spend some time, specially on Sundays and Feast-days, in spiritual reading. The Homilies' are also offered to all those who, through sickness or the nursing of the sick, are

prevented from assisting at the instructions of their Pastor. The clergy and the laity will find in them a source of instruction and edification. As to the writer, he will be rewarded by the thought that he has placed in the hands of a great many a selection of solid instructions, a great portion of which has never been translated. Two words will explain why this book ought to be dear to all good Christians: it contains the essential parts of the Gospels, and the most important parts of the works of the Fathers.

D. G. HUBERT.

BATH,

October, 1901.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL: Luke xxi. 25-33. *At that time:* Jesus said to His disciples: There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves, men withering away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of the heavens shall be moved, and then they shall' see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand. And He spoke to them a similitude: See the fig-tree and all the trees, when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh; so you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER.

FIRST HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. As our adorable Saviour will expect at His coming to find us ready, He warns us of the terrors that will accompany the latter days in order to wean us from the love of this world; and He foretells the misery which will be the prelude to this inevitable time, so that, if we neglect in the quietness of this life to fear a God of compassion, the fearful spectacle of the approaching last judgment may impress us with a wholesome dread. A short time before He had said: *Nation shall rise against nation*, *and kingdom against kingdom*. *And there shall he great earthquakes in divers places*, *and pestilences and famines* (Luke xxi. 10, 11). Now He added: *And there shall he signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations.* Of all these events we have seen many already fulfilled, and with fear and trembling we look for the near fulfilment of the rest. As for the nations which are to rise up one against the other, and the persecutions which are to be endured on earth, what we learn from the history of our own times, and what we have seen with our own eyes, makes a far deeper impression than what we read even in Holy Scripture. With regard to the earthquakes converting numberless cities into lamentable heaps of ruins, the accounts of them are not unknown to you, and reports of the like events reach us still from various parts of the world. Epidemics also continue to cause us the greatest sorrow and anxiety; and though we have not seen the *signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars*, mentioned in Holy Scripture, we know, at least, that fiery weapons have appeared shining in the sky, and even blood, the foreboding of that blood which was to be shed in Italy by the invading barbarian hordes. As to the terrible *roaring of the sea and of the waves*, we have not yet heard it. However, we do not

doubt that this also will happen; for, the greater part of the prophecies of our Lord being fulfilled, this one will also see its fulfilment, the past being a guarantee for the future.

II. Moreover, we say this, beloved brethren, to encourage you to unceasing watchfulness over yourselves, so that no false confidence may take possession of your souls, leaving you to languish in ignorance; but that, on the contrary, a true and wholesome fear may drive you on to do good, and strengthen you in the carrying out of good works. Take special notice of the following, added by our Saviour: *Men shall wither away for fear and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall he moved.* What is meant by our heavenly Teacher when speaking of *the powers of heaven*, but the angels and archangels, the thrones, principalities and powers, that will appear on the day of vengeance of that severe Judge, Who will then demand from us with severity the homage and submission, which He now, as our Creator, although unseen, asks for in love as His due. *Then they shall see the Son of Man coming in a cloud*, *with great power and majesty.* Which means that the people will then see Him, whom in His meekness and humiliations they would neither listen to nor recognise, coming in power and majesty. In that day they will feel the more compelled to acknowledge His power, since in the present time they deny Him, and refuse to submit themselves to His yoke, to which He so patiently invites them.

III. As, however, these words of our Saviour are spoken to the lost, so are the following uttered for the comfort of the elect: *When these things begin to come to pass} look up and lift up your heads*, *became your redemption is at hand.* Truth Itself teaches the chosen ones in these words, and seems to say to them: When you see the calamities which portend the end of the world increasing; when fear of that awful judgment-day takes possession of even the bravest hearts at the sight of the shaken powers of

heaven, then lift up your heads, that is, rejoice with your whole heart, because the end of this world, so little loved by you, announces to you the wished-for, freedom to be enjoyed by you hereafter. The head is often used in Holy Scripture for the soul, and in this way, by warning us to lift up our heads, it reminds us to rouse up our souls to the thought of the heavenly home which is awaiting us. Those, therefore, who love God, are commanded to rejoice when they see the end of the world approaching, because, when this world, which they have not loved, is destroyed, they will find themselves in possession of Him, Who is the one true object of their love. We are assured that among these true believers, who have a real longing to see God, there is not one who will not be deeply moved by the fearful events accompanying the end of the world. For we know from Holy Scripture that *Whosoever will be a friend of this world*, *becometh an enemy of God*. (James iv. 4.) Therefore, to show no pleasure at the approach of the end of the world is as much as to declare that we love this world, and that, we are the enemies of God. This wicked clinging to the world must be far removed from the hearts of good Christians, and of those who by faith are convinced that there is another life, and by their good works deserve that life. Let those weep over the destruction of the world, whose hearts are given to it, and whose hopes are fixed upon it, and who, far from seeking this new life, refuse to believe that there will be another life. As for us who believe in this heavenly home and in its eternal bliss prepared for us, let us hasten to reach them. We should wish to attain this home as soon as possible, and endeavour to find the shortest way thither. For, are we not surrounded in this world by a great many misfortunes? Do we not experience many troubles and calamities? What, indeed, is this mortal life but a painful way? Consider, beloved brethren, what folly it would be in a man walking along a toilsome and difficult road until overcome with fatigue, and yet not wishing to see the end of it! Moreover, our Saviour

teaches us by His wise similitude that this world does not deserve our affection, but that, on the contrary, we should despise it. He says: *See the fig-tree and all the trees. When they now shoot forth their fruit*, *you know that summer is nigh*. *So you also*, *when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand*. Is it not as though He said: In the same way that you conclude by the trees bearing fruit that summer is near, so by the downfall of the world you will know that the kingdom of God is not far off? These words show us plainly enough that the fall and destruction of this world are its real fruits, since its rise and increase are closely connected with its fall, and since it brings forth those things only which are destined to perish. If, on the contrary, we consider the kingdom of God, we are aware that we may in all truth compare it with the summer, when all the clouds of our afflictions will be dispersed and be followed by happy days, lighted up by a never disappearing sun of bliss.

IV. And that we should never doubt these truths, our Lord confirms them with an oath, saying: *Amen*, *I say to you*, *this generation shall not, pass away, till all things he fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away*, b*ut My words shall not pass away.* Among all corporeal things and beings nothing is more durable than heaven and earth; in the same way nothing disappears more quickly than the word. Before the word is expressed it exists, and hardly is it said than it has disappeared; for the word cannot attain its perfection without at the same instant losing its existence. Now *heaven and earth shall pass away*, says the oracle of eternal truth, but *My words shall not pass away.* It is as if our Saviour said: Learn ye, that everything among you, that seems to be durable, has not been made to last for ever or to continue without any change; whereas what seems to pass away quickly, is firmly and for ever established. For even the words I speak, and which fly away, contain in themselves irrevocable utterances.

V. Now, beloved brethren, to return to what you have heard about this world being filled with continual daily increasing evils, consider what remains of the immense nation that has sustained the calamities of which I am speaking. Meanwhile, the troubles have not yet left us; we are still oppressed by lamentable and unforeseen calamities, and we are grieved and afflicted by new losses. Strip, therefore, your hearts from the love of this world which you enjoy so little; and for this purpose take to heart the precept of the Apostle: *Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world*. *If any man love the world*, *the charity of the Father is not in him* (1 John ii. 15). What we have experienced these last three days is not unknown to you; how suddenly raging storms have rooted out the largest and strongest trees, have pulled down houses and destroyed churches! Many of the inhabitants, who at the end of the day quietly and in good health projected new plans for the morrow, were taken away by a sudden death during the night, and buried under the ruins of their dwellings.

VI. I beseech you, beloved brethren, be careful! If the invisible Judge is letting loose the stormy winds in order to produce these terrible effects; if He only needs to move the clouds of heaven and thus to shake the whole earth, and to overthrow and ruin the strongest buildings; what can we expect from this Judge when in His wrath He comes to take revenge and to punish sinners? If a mere cloud raised by Him against us is sufficient to strike us down, how shall we be able to resist His almighty power? St. Paul, thinking of the infinite power of the Judge appearing on this awful day, exclaims: *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (Heb x. 31). The Royal Prophet expresses himself with the same force, when in his psalm he says: *The God of gods*, *the Lord hath spoken; and He hath called the earth*. *From the rising of the sun, to the going down thereof, God shall come manifestly: our God shall come, and shall not keep silence*. *A fire shall burn before Him; and a mighty tempest shall be round about Him. He*

shall call heaven from above, and the earth, to judge His people. Gather ye together His saints to Him; and the heavens shall declare His justice, for God is Judge. Hear, O My people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify to thee; I am God thy God. Understand these things you that forget God; lest He snatch you away, and there be none to deliver you (Ps xlix.). It is not without a special reason that this severe judgment will be accompanied by fire and storms; for it will weigh, as in scales, men who were devoured by the natural fire. Therefore, beloved brethren, keep this great day before your mind's eye, and whatever seems difficult and troublesome, will soon become light and easy, when you compare the one with the other. The prophet Sophonias says to us: *The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and exceeding swift; the voice of the day of the Lord is bitter; the mighty man shall there meet with tribulation. That day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds; a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high bulwarks* (Soph i. 14-16). And the Lord God has spoken of this day through His prophet: *Yet one little while, and I will move the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land* (Agg ii. 7). But, as we have already remarked, if the earth could not resist the force of the wind set in motion, how will man be able to resist the motions of the heavens? For what are all these terrible events causing us so much uneasiness and fear, but heralds announcing to us the wrath of God following them? From all this we conclude that between the evils oppressing us now, and those which will come in the latter days, there is as great a difference as between the power of the highest Judge and the power announcing Him. Therefore, beloved brethren, think of the last day with renewed attention; amend your lives; steadfastly resist all temptations leading you to sin, and wipe out with your tears the sins you have committed. Then the more you have endeavoured, through salutary

fear, to anticipate the severity of His judgments, the greater will be the confidence with which you will witness the coming of this Immortal King.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

Gospel: John 1. 19-29. *At that time;* The Jews sent from Jerusalem Priests and Levites to John to ask him: Who art thou ? And he confessed and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then ? Art thou Elias ? And he said: I am not. Art thou a Prophet ? And he answered: No. They said, therefore, unto him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us ? What sayest thou of thyself ? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, *Make straight the way of the Lord*, as said the Prophet Isaias. And they that were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize if thou be not Christ, nor Elias, nor the Prophet ? John answered them, saying: I baptize with water, but there hath stood One in the midst of you Whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, Who is preferred before me; the latchet of Whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER.

SEVENTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. The words of this Gospel, beloved brethren, teach us highly to esteem the humility of St. John. His heroic virtues were so well known, that he was believed by the multitude to be Jesus Christ Himself; yet, far from being led astray by the high estimation in which he was held, or holding a good opinion of himself, he preferred to know himself and to remain in his humble position. *He confessed and did not deny; and he confessed: I am not the Christ.* However, by saying that he was not the Christ, Whom they believed him to be, he did not deny that which he in reality was, and so in truth he became a member of Him Whose name he would not-assume. He renounced the name and the high dignity of Jesus Christ, and thus deserved to be a member of Christ; for the confession of his humble condition raised him up to a greatness published and confirmed by our Lord Himself. If now we meditate on some words of Jesus which we find in another part of Holy Scripture, we shall have to clear up a most important question. When the disciples of our Lord asked Him about the second coming of Elias, *He, answering, said to them: Elias indeed shall come. But I say to you, that Elias is already come*, *and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they had a mind. Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them of John the Baptist* (Matt xvii. 11-13). Now, ask John the Baptist if he be Elias, and he will answer: *I am not*. Who can explain this mystery, beloved brethren? Why does the Prophet of truth contradict Him who is the Eternal Truth? For there is a great contradiction between these two testimonies. And if John does not agree with the Truth, who shall be recognised as the Prophet of truth? Yet, when we examine the meaning of these words, which seem to be contradictory, we at once, recognise that,

although apparently announcing opposite things, they really are in perfect agreement. When the angel, appearing to Zacharias, said that John shall *go before the Lord in the spirit of Elias* (Luke i. 17), he wished to convey the meaning that John would come into this world with the spirit and power of the prophet Elias, in order to precede the *first* coming of the Redeemer, as Elias would precede His *second* coming. Elias will be the precursor of the great Divine Judge, as John was the precursor of the Divine Redeemer. John was Elias in spirit but not in person; therefore, he could deny to be the person of one whose spirit was in him, according to the testimony of the Lord. Besides, it was proper that Jesus, answering His disciples, should speak of the spirit of St. John; whereas the Baptist, answering a multitude of rough and sensual people, spoke of his body and person, and not of his spirit. In this manner his words do not depart from the way of truth, though at first sight they seem to contain a contradiction.

II. When he promptly added that he was not a prophet, he wished to declare that he had not only the power to announce the Redeemer of the world, but was also able to point Him out; and he declared his mission, saying: I *am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.* You know, beloved brethren, that the only-begotten Son is called *the Word of the Father*, as St. John the Evangelist tells us, saying: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God*, *and the Word was God* (John i 1). Now you certainly notice that, when you speak, the sound of the voice strikes the ear before the word is distinctly heard, In the same sense John declares himself to be the voice, because he precedes the Word, for his coming preceded that of the Redeemer; therefore he was the voice through which the Word of the Father was heard. He is also the voice of one crying in the wilderness and announcing to the hopelessly forsaken Judea, the approaching consolation of the Saviour. Lastly, he teaches the meaning of his cry by adding: *Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias* (Isa xl. 3). Now, the

way of the Lord is made straight and prepared in our hearts, when we hear the word of truth in humility and resignation. His way is also made straight, when through the purity of our life we prepare ourselves to accept the teaching of His truth. Thus Jesus Christ said: *If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him* (John xiv. 23).. Consequently, he that extols himself in pride and is governed by avarice; he that gives himself up to luxury and lust, closes his heart against truth, opens the door to passions, and shuts every entrance of his soul against the Lord, Who then cannot take up His abode with him.

III. These same men sent by the Jews to St. John, inquired of him why he baptized, since *he was not Christ, nor Elias*, *nor the Prophet?* But it was envy, not the desire of knowing the truth, that led them to speak. This is sufficiently clear from the words of the Evangelist, who says: *And they that were sent were of the Pharisees*, just as if he had said: They inquired into the doings of John with such eagerness as to show that they wished to find in them something blamable, and that they did not care for his teaching, which only aroused their envy and jealousy. However, since the spirit of meekness and holy zeal does not forsake the saints, even when the envious and wicked question them, we see that John the Baptist answered with words of life and salvation the questions inspired by envy and hatred, arid said: *I baptize with water; but there hath stood One in the midst of you Whom you know not*. The baptism of John was only a baptism with water, as he himself confessed, therefore it did not give the Holy Ghost. It had not the power of forgiving sin; only of purifying the bodies, but not the souls, of those who received it. He gave this unfruitful baptism only to fulfil his office of precursor, preceding by this baptism the one of the Redeemer, just as in his birth he had preceded the coming of Jesus into this world. Even in his preaching he had come before the Saviour. Thus by the representation of

this sacrament he signified the real Sacrament instituted by our Lord. While announcing the mystery of the Redeemer to the multitude, John taught them that this Redeemer, Whom they knew not, stood in the midst of them. For He Who was God had taken human nature, was like us in everything, and was visibly among men; yet the splendour of His Divinity was hidden from their eyes. And when he added: *The same is He that shall come after me, Who is preferred before me,* he wished to teach us, that if Jesus Christ, as to His birth, has come after him, according to His dignity He was infinitely preferred before him. And he gives the reason of this preference in the preceding words, *He was before me,* and declares that He Who was born after him far surpasses him, because time cannot enclose Him in its bounds. Though He was born of His Virgin Mother in time, yet He was begotten of His Father from all eternity. However, to show even more clearly the esteem and reverence which were due to the Redeemer, he confessed in deep humility that he was not worthy to loose the latchet of His shoe. Among the ancients there was a custom that, when a man would not accept the bride allotted to him by law, this bride was to take off his shoes. This clearly indicates that, when Jesus came to abide among men, He also showed Himself as the Bridegroom of the Holy Church, according to the words of John himself, saying: *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom* (John iii. 29). Now, in order to combat the opinion, according to which some thought that the person of Jesus was John the Baptist, he positively declares that he was not even worthy to loose the latchet of the Redeemer's shoe, acknowledging by this that, as he could neither assume the name nor the nature of the Bridegroom, so neither had he the power to uncover the feet of the Redeemer. There is yet another meaning in these words. Everyone knows that what serves to cover the feet is taken from the skin of dead animals. Now, our Saviour, taking a body like ours, appeared in this world with the covering of our mortal and corruptible nature. Who is able to

understand the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God? Who can comprehend how the highest Spirit, giving life to everything, received life in the womb of a mother? How was He, who had no beginning, but is eternal, and showed Himself in time, conceived? And as the obscurity of this mystery is signified by the latchet of the Saviour of the world, we understand why John the Baptist declared that he had not the power to loose it. Though he had recognised by his prophetic spirit the Incarnation of the Word, his human mind was not able to conceive this great mystery. When he tells us that he is not worthy to loose the latchet of the Saviour's shoe, he wishes to teach us that he acknowledges his ignorance, and that we are not to be astonished at seeing that He, Who was born after him, was preferred before him; because the mystery of our Saviour's nativity was far beyond his conception and understanding. Lastly, this confession of St. John tells us that, though he might have possessed the required knowledge imparted to him in the gift of prophecy, he still remained in ignorance concerning this incomprehensible mystery.

IV. Beloved brethren, our special attention is called to the way in which the saints endeavour to preserve the virtue of humility. As soon as they are aware of the extraordinary wisdom and knowledge imparted to them, they consider all the things which they do not know, so that the consideration of their weakness may keep them humble, since the knowledge of their perfection might engender pride in them; they are convinced that, knowledge being a virtue, humility is its best preservative. For, be the mind ever so enlightened by extraordinary attainments, it must be humbled deeply, that the blessings received and acquired by knowledge may not be blown away by the wind of pride. Therefore, beloved brethren, when you do good works, remember the evil you have done in past years; for if you keep your faults before your eyes, you will never feel vain delight nor take thoughtless pleasure in any merit you may possess. Consider yourselves

less than others, especially less than those not entrusted to your care. Should you notice faults in your neighbour, consider that he possesses virtues which you do not see. Everyone is intended to acquire a certain degree of eminence through his merits; yet in a certain sense he must not recognise this, lest he lose through pride the virtue he has attained. *Woe to you*, says the prophet Isaias, *that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own conceits* (Isa v. 21). St. Paul confirms these words when he says: *Be not wise in your own conceits* (Rom xii. 16). When Saul was puffed up with pride God said to him: *When thou wast a little one in thy own eyes, was thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel?* (1 Kings xv. 17). That is, when thou didst esteem thyself but little among others, I exalted thee above all of them; but now, as thou thinkest thyself great, thou hast become little in My eyes. On the contrary, we see David who, in spite of his power and glory, thought but little of himself, dancing before the ark and saying: *Before the Lord... I will both play and make myself meaner than I have done, and I will be little in my own eyes* (2 Kings vi. 22). But who is he that would preserve himself from pride? had he done such heroic deeds as this King, and counted in his life so many wonders as we read in the history of this King? He had, by the strength of his arms, struck down lions and bears and cut them to pieces; he was preferred to his brothers, though the last of them, and was chosen to wear the royal crown; he was anointed by the prophet, in order to take the place of a reprobate King, and to govern the kingdom of Israel. With one single stone he had overthrown a powerful giant, the terror of Saul's army. Yet, in spite of these brilliant deeds, and in the midst of his triumph and exaltation, this powerful King, as seen by his humble words and feelings, thought but little of himself. If the greatest saints, amidst their wonderful deeds, thought themselves worthy of contempt, how will those who do not practise the least virtue excuse their vanity and pride? For should we deserve praise for our good works, yet they

must be considered as nothing, unless humility give them their value. Virtue will lower, not exalt us, when humility is wanting. The Christian who heaps up virtues without the accompanying humility is like a man exposing dust to the wind; it will be carried away by the wind and thrown into his own eyes. Therefore, beloved brethren, cling to humility in all your actions, as to the root of all good works. Do not consider those whom you surpass in merits, but fix your eyes on those who excel you in virtues; then you will place before you as models those who are most perfect, and by your own humility you will attain the highest degree of perfection.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL: Luke iii. 1-6. Now, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judea, and Herod Tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip his brother Tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis, and Lysanias Tetrarch of Abilina, under the high priests Annas and Caiphas, the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary, in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins, as it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet: 'A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

TWENTIETH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. The Gospel, speaking of the Roman Emperor Tiberius and of the different Princes governing Judea and Galilee and other provinces, has no other motive but to tell us the year in which *the word of the Lord was made unto John,* the Precursor of the true Messiah. He was to announce to the world Him Who would save some among the Jews and a great number of Gentiles; therefore the time of his ministry is given by the name of the Emperor who reigned over the Gentiles and by the Princes governing in Judea. The enrolment which had taken place in the world, indicates that the Gentiles were to be united, whilst the faithless nation of the Jews would be dispersed. For the Romans recognised but one supreme chief, whilst Judea was divided into four provinces under as many Princes. Thus was verified among the Jews the word of the Redeemer: *Every kingdom divided against itself shall be brought to desolation* (Luke xi. 17). And the names of the high priests are given after those of the Kings, because John the Baptist announced the Messiah, who was both Priest and King. St. Luke, mentioning in his Gospel the ministry of the Precursor, speaks at the same time of the office of priests and rulers.

II. *John came into all the country about the Jordan preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins*. From the words of Holy Scripture it appears that St. John not only preached the baptism of penance, but also administered it to some of the Jews. His baptism could not forgive sins, for only the baptism instituted by Jesus can do that. However, he preached the baptism of penance; for, though he had not the power to give the baptism which sanctifies, at least he announced it to the world. This great prophet had preached, in the ministry of the Word, the Saviour Who,

being the uncreated Word of the Father, was made man for us; and now he represented by his sterile baptism the Sacrament of the real Baptism, which alone can sanctify, truth and reality being preceded by shadows and symbols.

III. And the Gospel adds: *As it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet: A voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His paths*. When John was asked by the priests and Levites: *Who art thou?* he answered: *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness* (John i. 23). He was called by the prophet *a voice,* as we have shown elsewhere, because by his voice he had preceded the Divine Word. We also know the words uttered by this voice, for the prophet himself tells them, saying; *Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight His paths.* We learn from all this that he, who preached the true faith and the necessity of good works, wished also to prepare the hearts of those who listened to him, that is, to prepare the way by which the Lord was coming. For he removed from men's hearts whatever could prevent the grace of God from entering into and illuminating them by the Divine light. The minister of the word makes the ways straight for the steps of the Redeemer, when he awakens pious thoughts in the mind of his hearers. Therefore, when it is said:

Every valley shall he filled, *and every mountain and hill shall he brought low*, we understand that the humble are meant by the valleys and the proud by the mountains. We know now why at the coming of the Saviour of the world the valleys were to be filled and the mountains to be brought low, for He Himself said: *Everyone that exalteth himself*, *shall he humbled; and he that humbleth himself*, *shall he exalted* (Luke xiv. 11). A valley, which is filled up, rises and increases; whilst a mountain or hill brought down will decrease. Thus we see that the Gentiles, who in all humility received the faith in Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, received the

fulness of grace; whilst the Jews, puffed up and filled with pride and vanity, lost the grace of God through their faithlessness. The valleys are filled, because the humble, receiving into their hearts the word of salvation, obtain at the same time grace to help them to practise virtue, according to the words of the psalmist; *Thou sendest forth springs in the vales* (Ps ciii. 10); and again: *The vales shall abound with corn* (Ps lxiv. 14). The water running down the mountains represents those proud men who have forsaken the doctrine of truth; but humble souls receive the truth preached to them, like the valleys receive the waters which render them fertile. Indeed, we recognise this fact when we consider those whose meekness and simplicity are despised by the world, but who are nourished and filled with the bread of Divine truth.

IV. When the multitude saw the extraordinary holiness of John the Baptist, they believed him to be the firm and high mountain announced in Holy Scripture: *It shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall he prepared in the top of mountains, and high above the hills; and the people shall flow to it* (Mich iv. 1). These words were applied to St. John the more confidently since, according to the Gospel, he was taken for Christ Himself: *The people were of opinion, and all were thinking in their hearts of John, that perhaps he might he the Christ* (Luke iii. 15). The multitude, thinking this in their hearts, insisted on an answer, and said to him: *Art thou not Christ?* But John the Baptist, through his own humility, was in his own eyes like a deep valley. He was, therefore, filled with the grace of the Holy Ghost, and, making known the opinion he had of himself, he answered: *He that shall come after me is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose.* Again he said: *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease* (John iii. 29,

30). We see, therefore, that John the Baptist, on account of his great virtues, was taken for Jesus Christ by those who saw and heard him. In order to bring them out of this error, he answered that he was not only *not* Christ, but that he was not even worthy to loose the latchet of His shoe, that is, to investigate and understand the great mystery of the Incarnation. They also imagined, when taking John for Jesus Christ, that the Church was His Bride. However, he formally declared that the true Bridegroom was He who possessed the bride, as if to say: I am not the bridegroom, only the friend of the Bridegroom, giving us to understand that his only joy consisted in hearing the Bridegroom's voice, and that he did not glory in his own voice. For the joy which St. John felt in his heart did not come from the fact that the multitude listened to him in sincere humility, but from the hope that the voice of truth had gained their hearts, and that by his teaching he would then unfold the truth more fully to them. He could, therefore, say that his joy was full; for he that rejoices only because his voice was listened to, cannot possess real and entire happiness.

V. St. John, speaking of our Redeemer, added: *He must increase*, *but I must decrease*. Now, let us consider in what our Lord could increase and in what His prophet could decrease. This difficulty is easily overcome when we remember that the people, seeing the wonderful mortification of John the Baptist, and his retirement in the desert far from all intercourse with men, thought he was Christ the Messiah. Whereas, seeing Jesus among publicans, conversing and eating with them, and not avoiding the company of sinners, they took Him for a prophet only, and not for the Christ. But what John said was literally fulfilled, when the time came that the Redeemer, Whom they had looked upon as a mere prophet, was recognised as the Christ, and that John the Baptist, taken for Christ, was then known only as His prophet. Then, indeed, was fulfilled what John said of Jesus: *He must increase, but I must decrease*. And our Lord increased in the esteem of

men as soon as they recognised Who He in reality was; whilst the honour given to John decreased, when it became known that he was only the prophet of the Messiah. Thus the holiness of John the Baptist was preserved, because he remained humble. The greater number of those who wish to attain to greatness, very often by their proud thoughts and sentiments, fall deeply, and verify in their lives these words: *Every valley shall befilled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low*. For God is with the humble, and gives them His richest blessings; whereas He forsakes the heart of the proud man.

VI. Again it is said: *And the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain*. These words will be fulfilled when the wicked, whose hearts are corrupted by injustice, endeavour to return to God by practising Christian justice. And the rough ways are made plain, when hard and passionate hearts are softened and become peaceful through the grace of God. When the word of truth is not received, but finds an insensible heart, it is withdrawn, on account of the obstacles placed in its way. Whereas, when through the unction of the grace of God, we are softened and willingly receive the instructions and exhortations of God's ministry, the truth they announce, instead of finding rough ways, finds them smooth and plain, and thus easily penetrates the heart.

VII. *And all flesh,* continues the Evangelist, *shall see the salvation of God;* that is, all men shall see Jesus Christ. But in this life all men cannot see the Redeemer. It seems, therefore, that the prophet spoke of the future, that he saw heaven open before him, and Jesus in His glory, surrounded by angels, apostles and saints, as He will come to judge the world. Then all men, both the just and the unjust, will see the Judge. The just, that they may receive the due reward of everlasting happiness; and the wicked, that they may be punished in everlasting torments for their sins and vices. Amen.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

GOSPEL: Luke ii. 1-14, And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus, the Governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them; and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people; for this day is born to you a SAVIOUR, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you: You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

EIGHTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. Since by the mercy of God we are to say three Masses to-day, there is not much time left for preaching on this Gospel; at the same time the festival of the Lord's Nativity obliges us to speak a few words. Let us first ask why, when our Lord was to be born, the world was enrolled? Was it not clearly to show that He Who was to come into this world and be made man would one day enroll His elect and inscribe their names in the book of eternity? For the prophet, speaking of the reprobate, says: *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; and with the just let them not be written* (Ps lxviii. 29). Then it is not without a special reason that the Lord is born in Bethlehem. For the name *Bethlehem* signifies *the House of Bread,* and this is the birthplace of Him Who said: I *am the living Bread, which came down from heaven* (John vi. 51). We see then that the name of Bethlehem was prophetically given to the place where Christ was born, because it was there that He was to appear in the flesh, by the eating of which the souls of the elect are fed unto life everlasting. He was born, not in His mother's house, but away from home. And this is a mystery, showing that by assuming our mortality He was born in a strange country. We say strange, considering the Divine nature of our Redeemer, and not His Divine power. For, referring to this power, Holy Scripture says that, when the Lord came into this world, He came unto His own. But, when thinking of His Divine nature, and knowing that He was begotten of the Father before all worlds, we may say that by taking our nature in time, He came into a strange country. Again, considering, as the prophet says, that *all flesh is grass* (Isa xl. 6), we easily understand how Jesus, taking this flesh, changed it into wheat, since He said of Himself: *Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die*, *itself remaineth alone*

(John xii. 24). This is the reason why the Divine Child is seen in a manger after His birth, that His flesh, like pure wheat, may draw to Him the faithful, as mysterious animals, to be fed and filled with eternal wisdom. And when it is said that the angel showed himself to the shepherds keeping the night-watches, and that a wonderful light surrounded them, we learn from this that those, who carefully attend to the flocks entrusted to them must be favoured with deeper knowledge, since their ministry is highly meritorious. For, whilst they carefully watch over their flocks, they are enlightened by God with graces more abundant than those given to others.

II. The angel announced that a King was born, and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.* Before the Incarnation of the Son of God there was disagreement between the angels and men. Original sin and the crimes daily committed in the world were the cause of this division. It was only just that the angels, being the friends and faithful servants of God, should look upon men as strangers and have no communication with them on account of their transgressing the commandments. But since man submitted to God and recognised Him as his lawful Master, the heavenly spirits consider mankind as their fellow-citizens. Though highly superior to us, they do not despise our weakness, since the King of heaven and earth came down and took upon Him this human weakness. These blessed spirits, forgetting their former aversion, wish to live in friendship with us. Instead of despising us as frail humanity, they look upon us as their fellow-creatures. We read in Holy Scripture that Lot and Josua prostrate on the ground worshipped the angels sent by God; but when St. John fell down to adore before the feet of the angel he was prevented from doing so, for the angel said: *See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant and of thy brethren* (Apoc xxii. 9). Why did the angels, before the coming of the Redeemer, see men prostrate before them and

prevent them not? And why were they unwilling, after the birth of our Saviour, to receive such honour? Was it not because they saw the human nature, which they had before despised, now exalted high above their own in the person of Jesus, true God and true man? Also because they dread to see the human nature humbled, since they adore that humanity in the person of the King of Majesty, their own King. Lastly, the angels consider man as their equal because they adore God made man, sitting at the right hand of the Father. Let us, therefore, beloved brethren, beware of every sin, by which we might be made unworthy of that heavenly city, which God has prepared for us as well as for His angels. Let us lead such good lives that they may correspond with our dignity. Avoid, therefore, impurity and lust, even every sinful thought. Let not wickedness soil the purity of your souls; let not the poison of envy and hatred penetrate your hearts. Keep your souls free from pride, covetousness and anger, and especially from the desire of tasting the sinful pleasures of this world. Remember that you have been called *the sons of the most High* (Ps lxxxi. 6). Defend in yourselves the glory of God by avoiding sin, for God was made man in order to honour us and make us partakers of His eternal glory. Amen.

THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD.

GOSPEL: Mat ii. 1-12. When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and are come to adore Him. And King Herod, hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And, assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet: And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the Princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come forth the Captain that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, privately calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them, and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him. Who, having heard the King, went their way; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them until it came and stood over where the Child was. And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy; and entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary, His mother, and falling down, they adored Him; and opening their treasures, offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER ON THE EPIPHANY.

TENTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. You have heard from the Gospel lesson, beloved brethren, how, when the King of heaven was born, the king of earth was troubled. The depths of earth are stirred, whilst the heights of heaven are opened. Now, let us consider the question why, when the Redeemer was born, an angel brought the news to the shepherds of Judea, but a star led the wise men of the East to adore Him. It seems as if the Jews, as reasonable creatures, received a revelation from a reasonable being, that is, an angel; whilst the Gentiles without, not listening to their reason, are attracted, not by a voice, but by a sign, that is, a star. Hence, St. Paul says: *A sign*, *not to believers*, *but to unbelievers; but prophecies*, *not to unbelievers*, *but to believers* (i Cor xiv. 22). So the prophesying — that is, of an angel — was given to those who believed, and the sign to them that believed not. We also remark that later on the Redeemer was preached among the Gentiles, not by Himself, but by the Apostles, even as when a little child He is shown to them, not by the voice of angels, but merely by the vision of a star. When He Himself began to speak, He was made known to us by teachers; but when He laid silent in the manger, by the silent testimony in heaven.

II. However, whether we consider the signs accompanying His birth, or His death, this special thing is wonderful, namely, the hardness of heart of the Jews, who would not believe in Him, in spite of both prophecies and miracles. All things in creation bore witness that its Creator was come. Let us reckon them up after the manner of men. The heavens knew that He was God, and sent a star to shine over where He lay. The sea knew it, and bore Him up when He walked upon it. The earth knew it, and quaked when He died. The sun knew it, and was darkened. The rocks and walls knew it, and

broke in pieces at the hour of His death. Hell knew it, and gave up the dead that were therein. And yet, up to this very hour, the hearts of the unbelieving Jews do not acknowledge that He, to Whom all nature did testify, is their God, and, being more hardened than rocks, refuse to be rent by repentance. But that which increases their guilt and punishment lies in the fact that they despise that God Whose birth had been announced to them by the prophets, hundreds of years before, and Whom they had seen after His birth in the stable. They even knew the place of His birth, for they spoke of it to the inquiring Herod, and told him that, according to the testimony of Holy Scripture, Bethlehem was to be renowned as the birthplace of the Messiah. They strengthen, therefore, our faith, whilst their own knowledge condemns them. The Jews are like Isaac, whose eyes were overtaken with the darkness of death, when he blessed, but could not see his son Jacob standing before him. Thus the unhappy nation was struck with blindness, and, knowing what the prophets had said about the Redeemer, would not recognise Him, though He stood in the midst of them.

III. When Herod heard of the birth of our King, he betook himself to his cunning wiles, and, lest he should be deprived of an earthly kingdom, he desired the wise men to search diligently for the Child, and when they had found Him, to bring him word again. He said, *that he also may come and adore Him;* but, in reality, if he had found Him, that he might put Him to death. Now, behold, of how little weight is the wickedness of man, when it is tried against the counsel of the Almighty. It is written: *There is no wisdom*, *there is no prudence*, *there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov xxi. 30). And the star which the wise men saw in the East still led them on; they found the new-born King, and offered Him gifts; then they were warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod. And so it came to pass, that when Herod sought Jesus, he could not find Him. Even so it is

with hypocrites who, whilst they make pretence to seek the Lord, to adore Him, find Him not.

IV. It is well to know that one of the errors of the Priscillianist heretics consists in believing that every man is born under the influence of a star. In order to confirm this notion, they bring forward the instance of the star of Bethlehem that appeared when the Lord was born, and which they call His star, that is, the star ruling His fate and destiny. But, consider the words of the Gospel concerning this star; they say: *It went before them until it came and stood over where the Child was.* Whence we see that it was not the Child who followed the star, but the star that followed the Child, as if to show that the Child ruled over the star, instead of the star ruling over Him. Let, therefore, the hearts of the faithful be free from the thought that anything rules over their destiny. In this world there is only One Who directs the destiny of man, that is, He Who made him. Neither was man made for the stars, but the stars for man; and if we say that they rule over his destiny, we set them above him, for whose service they were created. When Jacob came out of his mother's womb, and his hand took hold of his brother Esau's heel, the first could not have been perfectly born without the second immediately following. Yet such was not in after-life the position of these two brothers, whom their mother brought forth at one birth.

V. Should a ridiculous astrologer, according to his principles, pretend that the power of the stars depends on the very moment of the birth to which their whole operation is referred, we answer that the birth of man requires a certain space of time during which the stars continually change their position. These changes would consequently form as many destinies as there are limbs in those who are born during that space of time. There is another fixed rule accepted by the adepts of this pseudo-science, namely, that he who is born under the sign of Aquarius (waterman) will never have any other profession than that of a fisherman. Yet we know from history

that the Gatulians never carry on that business. But who will pretend that not one of them was ever born under that special sign of the Zodiac? By the same principle they will say that all those, born under the sign of the Balance, will be bankers or money-lenders. But we know that there are many nations among which these kinds of business are unknown. These so-called learned astrologers must, therefore, confess, either that these nations have not this sign of the Zodiac, or that none of their children are born under this sign. Many nations, as we know, have a law that their rulers must be of royal blood. But are not many poor children in these countries born at the very moment when the one, who is destined to be king, sees the light? Why, then, should there be a difference between those who are born under the same sign, so that some are clothed in purple whilst others are slaves? We wish, in speaking of the star that appeared to the wise men, to say these few words against the deceptions of astrology.

VI. The wise men brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold is a gift suitable for a king, frankincense is offered in sacrifice to God, and with myrrh are embalmed the bodies of the dead. By the gifts, therefore, they presented to Him, the wise men set forth three things concerning Him, to Whom they offered them. The gold signifies that He was King; the frankincense that He was God, and the myrrh that He was mortal. There are some heretics who believe Him to be God, but confess not His Kingly dominion over all things. These offer Him the frankincense, but refuse the gold. There are some others who admit that He is King, but deny that He is God. These present the gold, but withhold the frankincense. Again, there are other heretics who profess that Christ is both God and King, but deny that He took to Himself a mortal nature. These offer Him gold and frankincense, but not myrrh for the burial incident to His mortality. Let us, however, present gold to the new-born Lord, acknowledging His universal Kingship; let us offer Him frankincense, confessing that He Who had been

made manifest in time, was still God before time; let us give Him myrrh, believing that He, Who cannot suffer as God, became capable of death by assuming our human, mortal nature. There is also another meaning in this gold, frankincense and myrrh. Gold is the type of wisdom, for, as Solomon says, wisdom is a treasure to be desired, and that it is found in the mouth of the wise (Prov xxi. 20, Septuag.). Frankincense, which is burnt in honour of God, is a figure of prayer; witness the words of the Psalmist: *Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight* (Ps cxl. 2). By myrrh is represented the mortification of the body, as where Holy Church says of her children labouring in their strife after God even unto death: *My hands dropped with myrrh* (Cant v. 5). We offer, therefore, gold to this new King when in His sight we reflect the brilliancy of true wisdom. We offer Him frankincense when our pious prayers, like a sweet odour before God, banish all wicked thoughts and inflame good desires. We offer him myrrh, when by fasting and penance we mortify our passions; for through the effects produced by the myrrh, as we have already remarked, the bodies are preserved from corruption. Our flesh is corrupted when we give up ‘this mortal body to luxury, as the prophet says: *The beasts have rotted in their dung* (Joel i. 17). The image of these beasts indicates those carnal beings who give themselves up to their shameful desires, and hasten towards their own destruction. We bring, therefore, a present of myrrh to God, when by temperance and mortification we preserve our bodies from all impurity.

VII. The wise men teach us also a great lesson in that *they went back another way into their country*; and what they did, *having received an answer in sleep*, we ought to do. Our country is heaven, and when we have once known Jesus, we can never reach it by returning to the way, wherein we walked before knowing Him. We have gone far from our country by the way of pride, disobedience, worldliness, and forbidden indulgence; we must seek that heavenly fatherland by subjection, by contempt of the things

which are seen, and by curbing the fleshly appetites. Let us, then, depart into our own country by another way. They that have by enjoyment put themselves away from it, must seek it again by sorrow. It behoves us, therefore, beloved brethren, to be ever fearful and watchful, having continually before the eyes of our mind, on the one hand, the guilt of our doings, and, on the other, the judgment at the last day. It behoves us to think how that awful Judge, Whose judgment is hanging over us, but has not yet fallen, will surely come. The wrath to come is before sinners, but has not yet smitten them; the Judge yet tarries, that when ‘He comes there may perhaps be less to condemn. Let us afflict ourselves for our faults with weeping, and with the psalmist, *let us come before His presence with thanksgiving* (Ps xciv. 2). Let us take heed that we be not befooled by the appearance of earthly happiness, or seduced by the vanity of any worldly pleasure; for the Judge is at hand, Who says: *Woe to you that now laugh*, *for you shall mourn and weep* (Luke vi. 25). Hence, also, Solomon says: *Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow*, *and mourning taketh hold of the end of joy* (Prov xiv. 13). And again: *Laughter I counted error*, *and to mirth I said: Why art thou vainly deceived?* (Eccles ii. 2). And yet again: *The heart of the wise is where there is mourning*, *but the heart of fools where there is mirth* (vii. 5). Let us fear lest we do not fulfil” the commandments given to us. If we wish to celebrate this feast to His glory, let us offer Him the acceptable sacrifice of our sorrow, for the royal prophet says: *A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humbled heart*, *O God*, *Thou wilt not despise* (Ps. 1. 19). Our former faults were remitted by the Sacrament of Baptism, yet we have again offended God; and these sins which the water of baptism cannot cleanse, will be forgiven only when in real and deep sorrow we shed tears of contrition. We have gone away from our real fatherland; we have followed the false gods which allured us; let us,

therefore, return by another way, the way of suffering, the bitterness of which we shall endure with the grace of God.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

GOSPEL: Matt xx. 1-16. *At that time:* Jesus spoke to His disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like to a householder who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard said to his steward: Call the labourers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When, therefore, they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should have received more; and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it, they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering, said to one of them: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way. I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil because I am good? So shall the last be the first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. LAWRENCE ON SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

NINETEENTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. This Gospel containing many things which need explaining, I will try as far as possible to shorten my explanation, that it may not become tedious to you. *The kingdom of heaven,* so we are told by our Lord, *is like to a householdery who went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard*. Who, indeed, is more justly to be likened to a householder than our Creator, Who is the Head of the household of faith, ruling over those He has made, and being Master of His chosen ones in the world, as a master of those in his house? He it is that has the Church as His vineyard, a vineyard that ceases not to bring forth branches of the true Vine, from just Abel to the last of the elect that shall be born in the world. This householder, then, for the cultivation of his vineyard, goes out early in the morning, and at the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh, to hire labourers into his vineyard. Thus the Lord, from the beginning to the end of the world, never ceases to gather together preachers for the instruction of His faithful people. The early morning of the world was from Adam until Noah; the third hour from Noah until Abraham; the sixth from Abraham until Moses; the ninth from Moses until the coming of the Lord; the eleventh from the coming of the Lord to the end of the world. At this eleventh hour were sent forth as preachers the Apostles, who received full wages, though they came in late. For the cultivation of His vineyard — that is, the instruction of His people, — the Lord has never ceased to send labourers into it. First by the patriarchs, then by the prophets and teachers of the law, and lastly by the Apostles, He dressed and tended the lives of His people, as the owner of a vineyard dresses and tends it by means of workmen. Whoever, in whatever

degree, joined to a right faith the teaching of justice, was so far one of God's labourers in God's vineyard. By the labourers at early morning, at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour, may be understood God's ancient people, the Hebrews, who, striving to worship Him with a right faith, in company with His chosen ones from the beginning of the world, continually laboured in His vineyard. And now, at the eleventh hour, it was said to the Gentiles: *Why stand you here all the day idle?* The Lord speaks of their carelessness and indifference concerning their salvation, for they had not yet done anything to be assured of it; yet, if you ponder upon their answer to the householder sending them to his vineyard, you will have cause of being ashamed. Their answer to the householder's question, why they stood all the day idle, was: *Because no man hath hived us.* Indeed, they, unlike others, had neither patriarchs nor prophets to instruct them. No one had hired them, for no one had shown them the way leading to salvation. As to us, who neglect the practice of good works, and lead an idle life, what shall we answer for our justification? For we received the true faith, so to speak, in the womb of our mother; we heard the words of life when still in the cradle, and we drank the milk of Christian doctrine, given by our holy Church at the time when, for the life of our bodies, we were sucking the breasts of our natural mothers.

II. The different hours of the parable may also be compared to the different periods of man's life. Childhood, on account of the small sphere of knowledge, is the early hour, of morning; youth may be compared to the third hour, when the sun rises and the heat of years increases; the sixth hour represents manhood, the virility, when the sun has reached the zenith of his course; by the ninth hour, showing the sun slowly retreating from his height, we recognise the elderly age of man, when he loses the strength and power of younger years; whereas old age is figured by the eleventh hour. Now, consider how some are called, already in their childhood, to lead a

perfect and holy life; others in their youth; these in their manly age; some others in advanced years; and lastly others in their old age. Do you understand that all of us are labourers, who may at any time be sent into the vineyard of the Lord? Again, beloved brethren, consider your own lives, and ask yourselves whether you are worthy labourers of the Lord, whether you are mindful of the work you are doing, and lastly whether you labour indeed in the Lord’s vineyard. Be sure that those who work for their own interests only, have not entered the vineyard of the Lord; for those only are accounted as His labourers, who prefer the glory of God to their own profit and interest. Such worthy Christians endeavour to serve God with ardent love and sincere devotion; they strive to win souls to God, and exert themselves to take others along with them to the habitation of the Saints; whereas those who live for themselves and try to satisfy their vices and concupiscences, are condemned as idle labourers, making no effort to work in, or care for, the Lord’s vineyard.

III. What shall we say of those who put off their conversion to the end of their life? Are they not like those labourers standing in the market-place until the eleventh hour, to whom the householder said: *Why stand you here all the day idle?* Our Saviour wishes them to understand that, having spent their childhood and youth, in the service of the world and far from God, they are called upon to begin to turn to God, at least, now at the extreme limits of life, and with greater courage to walk on the road of justice, that leads to perfection and eternal life; for the work they are bid to do cannot last very long, since they came so late. Thus this good Householder invites them to come back to Him, and often rewards them before those who had been called from their childhood, since very often the last comers are called away the first. Remember the good Thief (Luke xxiii.). He came at the eleventh hour; but by the capital punishment he suffered, he obtained a reward certainly not deserved by his former sinful life. He recognised Jesus

to be the Redeemer of the world, confessed Him publicly, and almost at the same moment gave up the ghost. We see thereby that the Householder, giving the promised penny, began with the last; for the good Thief was received into Paradise before St. Peter. The same happened to many good and pious souls living before the Law and under the Law. They had to wait for their reward, whilst those called after the coming of the Messiah, at once went to Paradise. We may also say, in all truth, that the same reward — that is, a penny, — was given to them that had worked one hour only, as to the others who had been working the whole day and had *borne the burden of the day and the heats*. For the eternal happiness, that reward given to them that worked well, will be common to all of them, both to those who came at the beginning and to those who arrived with the Redeemer. This very equality was the cause of complaints: *These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us that have borne the burden of the day and the heats.* Indeed, the first comers can say that they have borne the burden of the day and the heats, since their life was longer than ours. They came at the beginning, when the life of man was very long, and they had to fight against their own self for many years. We also feel in us the fire of concupiscence, against which we contend, and which we try to extinguish; and this continual fighting may be compared to the *burden of the day and the heats.*

IV. Besides all this, I ask, what is the meaning of the murmurs of those who received the reward in heaven very late? Also in what sense can we say that they murmured, since heaven will not be given to those who murmur, and since those who have entered heaven neither murmur nor complain? I answer: If I consider that the patriarchs, though leading a good and holy life, could not enter Paradise before the coming of the Son of God, Who by His death reopened the gates of heaven, we find therein, that is, in the delay preventing them to receive the reward for which they worked so hard, the

real motive of their murmuring. After fighting for justice' sake, and thus deserving the crown of glory, their souls went to *limbo*, a place of rest and peace. To them, therefore, we may attribute the murmurs of the labourers after their day's work. However, after this presupposed murmuring, the souls of the just, leaving their prison, that is *Umbo*, wherein they had been detained for a long time, receive the promised penny, namely, the happiness of the eternal kingdom, of which they take possession. As to us who, though arriving at the end of the day, receive a penny, we do not murmur like those who arrived the first. Since the coming of the Redeemer into this world, we enter into the kingdom of heaven as soon as we leave this life, and we receive without any delay the crown of glory granted to the patriarchs after their very long waiting. (Note: It would be a mistake to infer from these words that St. Gregory did not believe in Purgatory. Their meaning is that a soul, leaving the body and having nothing to atone for, will be at once received into Paradise, unlike the just souls of the patriarchs which, before the coming of Christ, descended into limbo.) On this occasion the master of the house said to one of the labourers: *I will also give to this last even as to thee*. And, as the place in heaven assigned to a soul is an effect of His generous will, He adds: *Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will?* It would be man's greatest folly to criticise the manner in which God's goodness deigns to act. Indeed, we could murmur against God, were He to refuse that which He is bound to give, but not when He refuses to grant what He is not in justice obliged to give. He, therefore, that murmurs, deserves this rebuke: *Is thy eye evil because I am good?* Hence we conclude that nobody is to boast of his work or of the time spent in doing it, for the Eternal Truth tells us: *The last shall be first, and the first last*. Though we be aware of our good works, we know not how strictly they will be scrutinized by the great Judge; yea, each of us ought to feel exceedingly happy to receive even the last place in the kingdom of God.

V. The following words of this Gospel, *many are called, but few are chosen,* cannot but inspire us with terror; for many receive the light of faith, but to a few only is granted the happiness of heaven. On account of the festival there are now a great many gathered together here, and there is hardly room for all within the walls of this temple. Yet, who can tell how many of them will one day be found among the number of the elect? All voices are loud in confessing Jesus, but the lives of those who confess Him do not agree with their exterior acts of faith. The greater number of those here present think it sufficient to follow Jesus in words, whilst by their acts they are separated from Him. St. Paul points them out to us, saying: *They profess that they know God*, *but in their works they deny Him* (Tit i. 16). This is confirmed by St. James: *Faith without works is dead* (Jas ii. 26). And the Psalmist repeats the words of God: *I have declared and I have spoken; they are multiplied above number* (Ps xxxix. 6). By these words we understand that, when the Lord calls men through His prophets, the number of believers greatly increases. However, not all those who by the gift of faith obtain the knowledge of the truth will be numbered among the elect. It is certain that when a great number of wicked Christians are gathered together with true servants of God, because of the same faith that they profess, they nevertheless do not deserve to be numbered with the faithful on account of their unchristian lives. For it cannot be denied that, though the holy Church includes in the same fold the sheep and the goats, the Eternal Judge will one day separate the just from the wicked, *as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats* (Matt xxv. 32). Know ye, therefore, and recognise that none of those now given up to the pleasures of the world will be received among the elect; that the Judge will exclude them from the happy fate of the humble, since in this world they were lifted up on the wings of pride. They had received the gift of heavenly faith, but they clung to the earth, and heaven will not be opened to them.

VI. Meanwhile, though a great many people, whose lives are unchristian, may be found in the Church of God, I beseech you, beloved brethren, neither to imitate them nor to think them to be lost. We are aware of the unhappy condition of these people to-day, but we know not what they will be to-morrow. It often happens that those whom we see behind us on the road to holiness, soon precede us on account of their progress in spirituality; then it is with great difficulty that we follow those whom at some time we seemed to precede. When St. Stephen shed his blood for Christ, his murderers *laid their garments at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul* (Acts vii. 57), and who may be accused of having also stoned St. Stephen by assisting the murderers; yet, by his great labours undertaken for the Church, Saul has gone before the holy martyr, to whose death he contributed. Let us, therefore, consider these two things greatly deserving our attention. First, knowing that many are called but few are chosen, no one can help himself without the grace of God, and, though being called by faith, no one is sure of his eternal salvation. Secondly, when we see our neighbour in the clutches of sin and vice, let us not presumptuously think that he will be lost, for God's infinite mercy is unknown to us.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

GOSPEL: Luke viii. 4. 15. *At that time:* When a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities to meet Jesus, He spoke by a similitude. A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns; and the thorns growing up with it choked it. And other some fell upon good ground, and sprung up, and yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, He cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And His disciples asked Him what this parable might be. To whom He said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God. And they by the wayside, are they that hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their hearts, lest believing they should be saved. Now, they upon the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots, for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares and the riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground are they, who, in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER ON SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

FIFTEENTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. The extract from the Holy Gospel which you have just heard, beloved brethren, needs not so much that it should be explained as that its lesson should be impressed on your minds. The Truth Himself has explained it, and after that, it is not becoming man's frailty to discuss His exposition as if not reliable. But there is, in that very explanation of our Lord, somewhat which it behoves us well to weigh. For, if we asked you to believe that by the seed is signified the word, by the field, the world, by the birds, the devils, and by the thorns, riches, you would perhaps doubt the truth of our exposition. Therefore, the Lord Himself deigned to give this explanation, and that, not for this parable only, but that you may know in what manner to interpret others, the meaning of which He has not given. Beginning His explanation, the Lord says that He is speaking in parables; and thereby He assures us when our weakness would unveil to you the hidden meaning of His words. For who would believe me were I to say that riches are thorns? Thorns prick, but riches afford us delight. And yet riches are thorns, indeed, for the anxiety they bring is a ceaseless pricking in the minds of their owners, and, if they lead to sin, they are thorns which tear the soul to bleed. But we understand from another Evangelist (Matt xiii. 28), that in this place our Lord speaks not of the riches themselves, but of the deceitfulness of riches. Those riches are deceitful, which can be ours for a little while only; those riches are deceitful, which cannot relieve the poverty of our souls. If, then, you seek to be rich, beloved brethren, earnestly desire the true riches; if you would be truly honourable, strive after the kingdom of heaven; if you love to reach the summit of titles and dignities, hasten to have your names written in Court above, where angels are.

II. Take to heart the Lord’s words which your ears hear. The food of the soul is the word of God. When the stomach is sick it rejects again the food that is put into it; and so is the soul sick when a man hears and digests not in his memory the word of God. And if any man cannot retain his food, that man’s life is in a desperate case. Thus we ought to fear for our soul, lest it should be lost, when receiving the food of holy admonition, we do not keep in our memory the words of life which would preserve in us true Christian justice. Further, consider that, whatsoever you are doing now, will in time pass away, and that every day you come nearer the moment of the strict account to be given to God. Are you convinced of this truth? Then why do you love such goods as you must leave, and why are you careless about that end which you will soon reach, and by which your fate in eternity will be decided? Do remember the words of your Redeemer: *He that hath ears to hear let him hear.* Not all of those who were present and heard these words, understood them; for our Lord wished them to be heard with the ears of the heart and mind, and not with the ears of the body only, so that His doctrine may be understood and *accepted.* Be careful, therefore, that the Divine word you receive be not taken from your heart and memory; be careful that this word fall not by the wayside, that is, watch, lest through your carelessness and distraction the devil take the word out of your hearts. Be careful that this precious seed fall not into your souls as upon rocks, that is, that for want of perseverance on your part, it cannot take root, and will, therefore, wither away. Many are seen receiving the words of salvation with joy; some also are noticed beginning to practise virtues, but they fall away in time of temptation. By their inconstancy and the fickleness of their mind they are like the dry and rocky ground, where the seed springs up and withers away, because it has no moisture. Such Christians perhaps hear a sermon against avarice, and at once they feel for that vice the aversion it deserves, and they praise those who despise the goods of this world. But as

soon as an opportunity is at hand to gratify their own concupiscence and covetousness, the praises given to the contempt of riches disappear from their memory. When a sermon against impurity is preached, there are many who, at the terrible picture drawn of this shameful vice, not only resolve never to commit such heinous sins, but are also deeply ashamed of their past offences wherewith they are reproached by their own conscience. Yet, should a dangerous object be presented, they long for it with the same eagerness, as if they had not made the resolution to avoid such objects. They relapse into the same sins which they had previously committed and execrated. It sometimes happens that they shed tears over their debaucheries, and yet they return to them as soon as they cease to bewail them. Thus Balaam shed tears of contrition, seeing the camp of the Israelites, and wished to be in death like this people beloved by God. *Let my soul die the death of the just*, he said, *and my last end be like to them* (Num xxiii. 10). But these feelings of contrition were hardly expressed, when the desires of this impious man were again inflamed by avarice. At the sight of the presents offered to him, he gave the most abominable advice, so as to bring about the destruction of the very people to whom he had wished to be like. His sorrow and contrition were forgotten, for he had not entirely extinguished the flames of avarice burning in his soul.

III. Explaining His parable, our Redeemer says that the cares, the riches and the pleasures of this life choke the seed of the Divine word. Indeed, they choke it through the continual thoughts awakened in the mind, preventing this word of life from taking root. Then, since these useless thoughts shut the door of the heart to good desires, they also prevent the heart from receiving the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, Who preserves the life of the soul. Let us also note that, in the parable of the Lord, both the cares and the pleasures of this life are connected with the possession of riches, because the troubles about riches oppress the mind; then, by their

superabundance, they deliver us up to sinful pleasures. For it is certain that rich people have many cares and troubles on account of their love for the things of this world; and it is also certain that they indulge in sensual pleasures, though it seems that these two statements do not agree. Yet, we may say, that if at one time they feel uneasy about their riches, at another they are mollified by the allurements of lust, to which they are attracted by their wealth.

IV. The good seed, falling upon good ground, yields fruit a hundredfold, yet brings forth that fruit in patience. For our good works would be of no avail to us, did we not patiently and generously bear the trials inflicted on us by our neighbour. The more we advance in virtue, the heavier become the crosses wherewith our Father in heaven allows us to be burdened, in order to try those who serve Him. How is this? Because the more a soul endeavours to be separated from the love of the world, the more it finds this same world contemptible and loathsome. Indeed, we see that the greater number of virtuous people doing good works are nevertheless overwhelmed with troubles and trials. The stronger they fight against sensual temptations, the more bitter are their sufferings. Yet it is just in this manner that, according to the Redeemer's words, the just bring forth fruit in patience. They humbly submit to the scourges wherewith they are smitten by God in this world, and afterwards rise to enjoy the eternal rest prepared for them in heaven. We may compare them with grapes, which, being trodden under feet, yield a delicious wine. They are also like the fruit of the olive-tree, which yields in the press a frothy liquid, that becomes the precious oil. Lastly, the just are like to the wheat, which, being thrashed on the floor and separated from the chaff, is preserved in the barn. Those, therefore, who wish their sins and passions to be destroyed, ought to submit willingly, for their spiritual progress, to the stripes wherewith Divine Providence chastises them. Then they will appear before the judgment-seat of God so

much the purer, the more they were cleansed from the rust of sin by the fire of suffering.

V. My assertions will be proved by the example of Servulus, which I now place before you. He was begging at the door of the Church of St. Clement, and many among you have known this poor man as well as I did. Deprived of all earthly riches, yet rich in spiritual goods, he was for years afflicted with a terrible disease. From his youth to the very end of his life, he was on his sick-bed, without being able to rise or even to sit up. Palsy, which reduced him to this sad condition, had deprived him of the use of his limbs; he could neither raise his hand to his mouth, nor turn over on his bed. The mother and brother of this poor man waited on him, and gave to other poor people the remainder of the alms he received. Though he had never learnt how to read, he had a copy of the Holy Scripture bought, and pious people, whom he most hospitably received, read it out to him. Thus he acquired a thorough knowledge of the Holy Writ, according to his intellect, which, as I said, had not been cultivated. Amidst his sufferings, his principal object was to thank and praise God day and night with psalms and spiritual canticles. But when the hour came that heaven was to reward such heroic virtue, the acute pains of the palsy reached the heart, and, feeling himself at the point of death, he summoned his own people and others, and asked them to stand up and sing psalms until he died. Whilst he himself was singing with others, he suddenly stopped, and said in a strong and extraordinary voice: ‘Do you hear the songs of praise resounding in heaven?’ And while listening, to that melodious heavenly harmony, his innocent soul left his body. A delicious fragrance was noticed by the assistants, and recognised by them as a sign that his soul had been taken up to heaven. A monk belonging to a monastery, where I stayed for some time, witnessed these facts, the remembrance of which made him shed tears of joy. I was assured by him that, until the burial of the body, the same

delicious odour was perceived by all those present. Beloved brethren, do think of the precious death of one who, whilst on earth, bore all the troubles and trials of life with patience and resignation. By his invincible courage, he became like to the good ground, which, according to our Redeemer, brings forth fruit in patience, and, after suffering the plough of tribulations, yields fruit a hundred-fold. Now, I ask you and entreat you to consider what answer we shall give at the terrible judgment? In spite of the graces wherewith we were enriched by Divine Providence; in spite of the hands given to us for useful work, we languish in idleness and neglect good works. Does not the example of that poor and sick man condemn our carelessness? He had in this life neither the goods of this world nor the use of his limbs, yet he strictly observed the Lord's precepts. What shall we say for our justification, when the example of the Apostles, surrounded by the innumerable nations converted by their labours and preaching, will be placed before us by the Judge; when we shall see so many praiseworthy martyrs who, making the sacrifice of their lives, bought heaven with their blood shed for Jesus Christ? What shall we answer, when blessed Servulus stands before us, he who constantly laboured and did good works, though his arms, paralyzed by disease, were of no use to him? Do think of all this, beloved brethren, in order to encourage yourselves to do good works; place before your eyes the beautiful models of virtue proposed to your imitation, and one day you will share with them the eternal beatitude in heaven.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

GOSPEL: Luke xviii. 31-43. *At that time:* Jesus took unto Him the twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon; and after they have scourged Him, they will put Him to death, and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things. And this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass, that when He drew nigh to Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace; but he cried out much the more: Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus, standing, commanded him to be brought unto Him. And when he was come near, He asked Him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people when they saw it, gave praise to God..

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER ON QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

SECOND HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. Foreseeing that the minds of His Apostles would be troubled by the thought of His suffering, our Redeemer told them long before, both of the pains of that suffering and of the glory of His rising again; to this end that, when they should see Him die, as He had prophesied, they might not doubt that He was likewise to rise again. But, since His disciples were as yet carnal, and could not understand His words, telling of this mystery, He wrought a miracle before them. A blind man received his sight before their eyes, that, if they could not comprehend heavenly things by words, they might be convinced of heavenly things by deeds. But we must so take the miracles of our Lord and Saviour, as believing, both that they were actually wrought, and that they have some mystic meaning for our instruction. For in His works power speaks one thing, and mystery again another. Behold, for instance: we know not historically who this blind man was, but we know of what he was mystically a figure. Mankind is blind, driven out of Paradise in the persons of our first parents, knowing not the light of heaven, and suffering the darkness of condemnation. Nevertheless, by the coming of his Redeemer man is enlightened, so that he sees by hope already the gladness of interior light, and walks by good works in the path of life.

II. Note also, beloved brethren, that, as Jesus drew nigh to Jericho, a blind man received his sight. Now, this name *Jericho*, being interpreted, signifies *the city of the moon*, and in Holy Scripture the moon is used as a figure of our imperfect flesh, of whose gradual corruption her monthly waning is a type. Therefore, as our Creator draws nigh to Jericho, a blind man receives his sight. Whilst God takes unto Himself our weak human nature, man receives again the light which he had lost. By God's suffering

in the Manhood, man is raised up towards God. This blind man is also well described as sitting by the wayside begging; for the Truth says: *I am the way* (John xiv. 6). He that knows not Him Who is eternal light, is blind. But as soon as he believes in Jesus, the Redeemer, then he is sitting on the road leading to salvation. When man has faith, but is not continually asking to be enlightened by *Divine* light, he may, like the blind man, sit on the road, but he is not begging alms. But when by means of faith he begins to believe, when he recognises the blindness of his heart, and unceasingly asks to be delivered from it and to receive the light of truth, then he is like to the poor and unhappy blind man who, sitting by the wayside, was begging. Let him, therefore, who recognises his darkness, and the need of eternal light, cry out with all the desires of his heart and all the fervour of his soul: *Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!* This was the prayer of the blind man to the Redeemer, whilst those who *went before rebuked him*, and asked him *to hold his peace.*

III. And what do we understand by those who went before, but the crowd of bad desires and the restlessness of our passions disturbing our mind and troubling our heart, when we cry to our Saviour? We experience this only too often, that, when after a sinful life we wish to return to God; when we ask Him for strength to pray well, and to renounce the sins enslaving us, the image of our former sins is pictured in our memory, the light of our intellect is darkened, our courage is weakened, and we remain insensible to the voice of God's minister preaching the truth. Thus, those who went before our Lord rebuked the blind man of Jericho, that he should hold his peace; and we learn therefrom the important lesson that, before Jesus comes into our hearts, the awful image of our sensual pleasures rises in our memory, so as to prevent the effects of our prayers.

IV. However, the blind man, waiting to be cured, is our teacher. Though he was rebuked, he cried out much more: *Son of David*, *have mercy on me!*

Thus our prayer must be the more ardent and assiduous, the stronger the noise of wicked thoughts that rise in our mind and endeavour to prevent it. When the stormy crowd of temptations call back the remembrance of our sins, and assail us from all sides, trying to make us neglect, if possible, our prayers, then our powerful and repeated cry towards heaven will render all these phantoms useless and powerless. However, the things I say now, may be learned by you, through your own experience. For when we begin to tear our thoughts and desires away from the world, and to turn them to God; when we give up our mind to prayer, then the worldly thoughts and sinful pleasures of our former life return to attack and distract us. And this assault of our former thoughts is so strong that, in spite of good desires and even tears of repentance, it is only by the greatest care and watchfulness that we succeed in keeping our hearts in safety.

V. Meanwhile, we may be sure that, if we persevere in our prayers, Jesus will remain with us, as He stayed for some time with the blind man. *And Jesus*, *standing*, *commanded him to be brought unto Him.* And the words of the Gospel tell us, not without a special motive, that Jesus was first passing by, then was standing. We learn from this that, when powerless phantoms endeavour to disturb us in our prayers, Jesus seems to be passing by; but that when, in spite of their attacks, we persevere in these prayers, Jesus remains standing by us, and delivers us from blindness. For when God takes His abode in our heart, He dispels darkness by His Divine light.

VI. There is yet another lesson taught by our Lord in that miraculous cure of the blind man, that is, the manifestation both of the marks of His Divinity and of the signs of His humanity. For when the Man-God heard the blind man cry out to Him, He did not cure him until standing still, showing us that He was man, because He passed by, and that He was also God, because He remained standing. Was not our Redeemer, as man, to be born among us, to increase in years, to die, to rise from the dead, and to move

about from one place to another? But, being at the same time God, He gives us to understand that He is immovable, and that all changes noticed in Him, came from His humanity; whilst, as God, He is always the same, without any change, present everywhere, without shifting His dwellings. Again, our Redeemer heard the voice of the blind man whilst passing by, and granted him light whilst standing still, thus teaching us that His humanity called His attention and love to the blindness of which we suffered, and His Divine power enlightened us with the light of His grace.

VII. For our further instruction we hear Jesus, as soon as He saw the blind man, say to him: *What wilt thou that I do to thee?* Our Saviour, having the power to restore the sight to the blind man, was certainly not ignorant of that which he was going to ask. But He wished to teach us that it was His will we should ask Him, though He knows our desires and is willing to grant them. He, therefore, very often exhorts us to pray to Him, though He assures us that His Father in heaven knows all our needs before we ask. He wishes to encourage us to trust in Him, and to awaken in our hearts real love for prayer. We hear the blind man at once uttering his request, and asking to receive the light. He was asking neither for gold nor for riches of any kind, but for light, since, without this gift, all other goods could not satisfy him. Let us, then, beloved brethren, imitate this man in his prayer, for he received therewith the health both of soul and body. Let us beseech the Lord not for the riches of this world, nor for the perishable blessings of honour and fame, but for the *true lights* and not for the limited light, which for a moment only interrupts the long night, and is common to us with the unreasonable animals. Let us ask for the uncreated light to be seen in the company of the elect, that light having no beginning and being eternal in its duration. Faith will lead us to this light, according to the words of Jesus to the blind man: *Receive thy sight; thy faith hath made thee whole.* Should the sensual man object and say that this light, being invisible, cannot be

reached, that nobody can be sure of a thing which cannot be seen, he will soon be convinced of his error, when told that his interior feelings do not arise from his body, but from his thinking soul. Though nobody can see his s6ul, yet there cannot be any doubt about our having an invisible soul, ruling our visible body. For, when this invisible soul is separated from our visible body, the latter is immediately destroyed, being deprived of the essence of its existence. Therefore, since it is certain that we live by means of this invisible being, namely, the soul, not perceived by our senses, why should we doubt the Truth teaching us that there will be another life which we cannot see now?

VIII. When we perceive the good result of the blind man's prayer, we recognise from the words of the Gospel why this man at once saw the light and followed our Redeemer. He that recognises what is good and at the same time endeavours to do it, imitates the blind man who, seeing Jesus, followed Him. Whereas he who sees Jesus and does not follow Him, acknowledges what is good, but does not consider it his duty to do it. Beloved brethren, when we are aware of the blindness in which we are weeping in this vale of tears; when, by the help of faith telling us of the mystery of Redemption, we sit on the road leading to life; when daily we ask the Author of salvation to enlighten us; when, lastly, we enjoy that heavenly light, taking us out of the darkness in which we were wandering, then nothing remains to us but to follow by our good works the Saviour, Whom we see by the light of faith. Let us carefully examine the place He passes through, then follow His steps by imitating His example; for it is by imitation that we follow Him, as He Himself teaches, saying to one of His disciples: *Follow Me*, *and let the dead bury the dead* (Matt viii. 22). And to show that the words *follow Me* mean *imitate Me,* our Lord says in another place of the Gospels: *If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me* (John xii. 26). To be worthy of Him, we must follow His steps and examine the

way in which He walked. And first we see that He, the Creator of all heavenly and reasonable beings, deigned to descend into the womb of a virgin, there to assume the human nature, which He Himself had created out of nothing. We see that He did not choose to be born of rich parents, when taking our human nature, but chose poor parents, who were not even able to offer for Him in the temple a lamb, but only a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.

Thus our Redeemer did not seek happiness in this world; He endured insults, scorn, and blasphemies; He allowed Himself to be spit upon, to be buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to a cross. He would give us to understand that the pleasures we derived from corporeal things, robbed us of the eternal happiness, of which we can again take possession only by drinking the bitter chalice of suffering. Yet, since God suffered so much for man, what suffering will the sinful man be ready to endure? When after all this a Christian, believing in Jesus Christ, is still ruled and led by avarice or ambition; when he is still devoured by the fire of envy or carnal pleasures; when he is eagerly rushing after the happiness of this world, then we can truly say that, instead of following Jesus, he is despising Him, because he is walking on quite a different road, and not on the road taken by the Son of God during His mortal life of bitter suffering. Let us, therefore, recall to our mind our own wickedness; let us remember that the eternal Judge will punish our sins most severely; then, let us endeavour to destroy them by sorrowful repentance. Now, let us do severe penance, and thus escape in eternity the terrible wrath of an offended God. The tears shed in this life will take us to the joys of heaven, for our Lord said: *Blessed are they that mourn*, *for they shall be comforted* (Matt v. 5); whereas the pleasures of this world will, according to the same Saviour, bring us to the eternal dwelling of tears and sorrow. *Woe to you that now laugh, for you shall mourn and weep* (Luke vi. 25). If we wish to obtain the highest

felicity, let us now walk in the path of penance, and our penitential life will not only gain for us great merits with God, but will be to His greater glory; for, according to the words of the Gospel, others will be encouraged by our good example: *And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.*

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

GOSPEL: Matt iv. 1-11. *At that time:* Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards hungry. And the tempter coming, said to Him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written, ‘Not by bread alone doth man live, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’ Then the devil took Him into the holy city, and set Him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written: He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said to Him: ‘It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’ Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said to Him: All these will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and adore me. Then Jesus said to him: ‘Begone, Satan; for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.’ Then the devil left Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN LATERAN.

SIXTEENTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. It is often asked by some people what spirit it was by which Jesus was led into the wilderness, on account of the words a little further on: *Then the devil took Him into the holy city;* and again: *The devil took Him up into a very high mountain*. But in truth, and without any further searching, we may believe it was the Holy Ghost who led Him up into the wilderness. His own Spirit led Him where the evil spirit found Him to tempt Him. However, when it is said that He, God and Man, was taken up by the devil, either into a very high mountain or into the holy city, the mind shrinks from believing, and the ears of man tingle when hearing it. Yet we know that these things are not incredible, when we consider certain other things concerning Him. Indeed, the devil is the head of all the wicked, and every wicked man is a member of that body, of which the devil is the head. Was not Pilate a limb of Satan? Were not the Jews who persecuted, and the soldiers who crucified Christ, likewise limbs of Satan? Is it then strange that He should allow Himself to be led up into a mountain by the head, Who allowed Himself to be crucified by the members? Therefore it is not unworthy of our Redeemer, Who came to be slain, that He should be willing to be tempted. It was meet that He should thus overcome our temptations by His own, even as He came to overcome our death, by His own. We ought to know that temptation works under three forms. There is first the suggestion, then the delectation, or pleasure, and, lastly, the consent. When we are tempted, it often happens that we fall into delectation, and even into consent, because in the sinful flesh of which we are begotten, we carry in ourselves matter to favour the attack. But God, when He took flesh in the womb of the Virgin, and came into the world without sin, did so without having in Himself anything of this

lusting of the flesh against the spirit. It was possible, therefore, for Him to be tempted in the first stage, namely, suggestion; but there was nothing in His mind, in which delectation could fix its teeth. Thus all the temptation He endured from the devil was without, and none within Him.

II. If, now, we consider the order of the temptations attacking the Redeemer of the world, we see with what power our Saviour delivered us from the snares prepared for us by the enemy of our salvation. For, when the old Serpent rose against the first man, the father of the human race, he attacked him with three kinds of temptations, namely, intemperance, vain-glory and avarice. And being thus tempted, he was overcome by the devil, for he gave his consent. When Satan showed to man the forbidden fruit, and persuaded him to eat of it, he attacked him with the weapon of intemperance; then he tempted him with vain-glory, saying that he would be like to God; lastly, avarice was his weapon, since he assured him that he would possess the knowledge of good and evil. For avarice consists not only in the inordinate love of riches, but also in the desire of exaltation; and we are in reality avaricious, when in an ambitious manner we desire to obtain dignities to which we cannot lay claim. This is also the teaching of St. Paul, who, speaking of Jesus Christ, says: *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal to God; but emptied Himself taking the form of a servant* (Phil ii. 6, 7). The devil, therefore, attacked our first parent with the arrows of avarice, for he awakened in him the desire of exalting himself.

III. But this tempter, the old dragon, who by his artifice had overcome the first man, was in his turn overcome by another Man, with the very same weapons he had used in former times. For our Redeemer, the Man-God, was assailed by the devil in the same manner as our first parent; first, with the sensual appetite, since he said to Him: *If thou be the Son of God*, *command that these stones be made bread.* Then he tempted Him with vain-glory,

asking Him to cast Himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, and so to show that He was the Son of God, saving His life by a miracle. Lastly, he tempted Him with avarice, when he showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and promised to give them to Him, if falling down He would adore him. But our Saviour overcame this enemy by the same means that He had employed to tempt the father of the human race. And after this defeat he was enchained by our Lord, and forced by Him to go out of our heart by the same door by which he had entered to enslave us. Yet, beloved brethren, there is another lesson contained in this temptation of our Lord. He could cast His tempter into the eternal abyss by one single word, He being the Eternal Word. But He only answered with the commandments contained in Holy Scripture, so as to give us an example of His patience and moderation, instead of a brilliant sign of His almighty power. By this He teaches us that, when our sufferings are caused by the wicked, we should make good use of such persecutions, and be instructed by them, rather than take revenge. But are we not ashamed, when we consider, on one side God's patience, and on the other our own impatience, when suffering injustice? It often happens, when we are unjustly treated or despised, that anger fills our heart at once. We try to take revenge, as far as lies in our power, and even threaten with a revenge of which we are powerless. Our Lord overcame the temptations of the devil through His patience and meek words. He bore an enemy who deserved the arrows of His justice, and He is thus the more worthy of our admiration and praise, since He was victorious over that enemy by His moderation rather than by the stripes of His anger.

IV. Take notice of the fact that, as soon as the devil left Jesus, *Angels came and ministered unto Him,* Thereby we are given to understand that there are two natures in Jesus Christ. By the temptation of the devil we know that He was true Man, whilst the coming of the Angels and their ministering to Him, teach us that He is also true God. Let us, then,

recognise our own nature in our Saviour, for the devil would not have dared to tempt Him, had he not perceived in Him our humanity. At the same time we bring Him our adorations, for the Angels would not have considered it their duty to minister unto Him, were He not as God exalted over them and all creatures.

V. This Gospel, calling to our mind the forty days and forty nights of fasting spent by our Lord in the desert, entirely agrees with the fast we observe during this holy season. But why was this number of forty days' fasting sanctified? We read in the history of the Israelites that Moses prepared himself for the reception of the Law by fasting forty days; that Elias observed the same fast; that Jesus, before beginning His public life, abstained from food for forty days and forty nights; and lastly, that we also, as far as lies in us, observe this abstinence and fasting during the time of Lent. Though several motives may be set forth to explain this law of the Church, we can say in all truth that, by observing this commandment, we offer to God the tenth part of the year granted to us for satisfying our corporeal necessities. After living solely for ourselves during the course of the year, we now in Lent live for God, offering Him by our abstinence a part of that year. Now, after deducting from the six weeks of Lent the Sundays — on which we do not fast, — we find that there remain thirty-six days, so to speak, the tenth part of the year that we offer to God. The Lord God, beloved brethren, commands you in the Old Law to offer to Him the tithe (tenth part) of your possessions; it is, therefore, just that you should give Him the tithe of your days. For this reason it is everybody's duty to mortify his body, according to his strength, to crucify his desires and subdue his sinful passions, that he may be, as St. Paul says, *a living sacrifice* (Rom xii. 1). For we are a living sacrifice when, as long as we live, we mortify the desires of the flesh. Just as the lust of the flesh led us to commit sin, true penance must bring us back to God. Consider, again, that since by the

eating of the forbidden fruit we were shut out of heaven, so we must endeavour to re-enter these gates by that temperance and abstinence which will atone for all the offences against God committed by our intemperance.

VI. Yet, let us not think that our fasting will be sufficient to appease God, if it is not accompanied by the merits of almsgiving; for He said to us: *Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen? Loose the bonds of wickedness*, *undo the bundles that oppress*, *let them that are broken go free*, *and break asunder every burden*. *Deal thy bread to the hungry*, *and bring the needy and harbourless into thy house; when thou shalt see one naked*, *cover him*, *and despise not thy own flesh* (Isa lviii. 6, 7), This testimony teaches us that the fasting most pleasing to God is the one accompanied by alms offered by our hands, that is, by the love for our neighbour, perfected through works of mercy. Of whatsoever you deprive yourselves, give it to your poor neighbour, to relieve him; and these goods, of which you deprive yourselves by mortifying your appetite, will rejoice your neighbour who is in need. Hear the Lord's complaint: *When you fasted and mourned*, *did you keep a fast unto Me? And when you did eat and drink*, *did you not eat for yourselves*, *and drink for yourselves?* (Zach vii. 5, 6). Now, we eat for ourselves when the needy has no share in the food we are taking, which, being a gift of God, has been created for all men. And he keeps a fast for himself, who, depriving himself for a time of the food he used to take, preserves it to satisfy his desires later on, instead of giving it to the poor. The prophet Joel exhorts us *to sanctify a fast* (Joel i. 14), teaching us, if we wish to make our abstinence worthy of God the Almighty, to unite the mortification of our flesh with the practice of other virtues; to refrain from anger and banish hatred from our heart. In vain do we chastise our body, if the mind is not subdued by our victory over sinful passions. God Himself declares this through His prophet: *Behold, in the day of your fast your own will is found, and you exact of all your debtors. Behold, you fast for debates*

and strife, and strike with the fist wickedly (Isa lviii. 3, 4). No injustice is committed when you ask your debtors to pay what they owe you. Yet you easily understand that he, who practises penance, will even abstain from exacting that which is owed to him in justice. When he mortifies himself in this manner and feels real sorrow for his sins, then God will be ready to forgive the debts due to His justice, seeing that for His sake the sinner forgives to others what they owe him in justice.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT, OR PASSION

SUNDAY.

GOSPEL: John viii. 46-59. *At that time:* Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: Which of you shall convince Me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe Me? He that is of God heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God. The Jews therefore answered and said to Him: Do not we say well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered: I have not a devil; but I honour My Father, and you have dishonoured Me. But I seek not Mine own glory; there is One that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you: If any man keep My word, he shall not see death for ever. The Jews therefore said: Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and Thou sayest: If any man keep My word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead? Whom dost Thou make Thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing. It is My Father that glorifieth Me, of Whom you say that He is your God; and you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I shall say that I know Him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know Him, and do keep His word. Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see My day. He saw it and was glad. The Jews therefore said to Him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and Thou hast seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I AM. They took up stones, therefore, to cast at Him. But Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER ON PASSION SUNDAY.

EIGHTEENTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. Let us consider here, beloved brethren, the great goodness and meekness of the Son of God. He came into this world to take away sins, and He says to the Jews; *Which of you shall convince Me of sin?* He was able, through the power of His Divinity, to justify sinners, and was contented to show by argument that He was not Himself a sinner. But the words He added, *He that is of God, heareth the words of God,* must fill us with fear and fright; for *you hear them not*, *because you are not of God,* He at once added. If, then, whosoever is of God hears God's words, and whosoever is not of God cannot hear Him, let everyone ask himself, whether in the ear of his heart he hears God's words, and understands whose words they are. The Truth commands us to be longing for a home in heaven, to bridle the lusts of the flesh, to turn away from the glory of the world, not to seek any man's goods and to give away our own. Let, therefore, every one of you think within himself, if this voice of God be heard in the ear of his heart, and if he already know that he is of God. For there are some, who do not deign to hear the commandments of God, not even with their bodily ears. And there are some who do not mind hearing them with their bodily ears, but whose heart is far from them. And there are some, who hear the words of God with joy, and even are thereby moved to tears, but who turn again to iniquity as soon as the fit of weeping is past. Those who despise to do the words of God, do not hear them. Therefore, beloved brethren, carefully recall to your mind your own life; then with fear and trembling ponder on those awful words spoken by the mouth of the Eternal Truth: *Therefore you hear them not*, *because you are not of God*. And what the Lord here speaks about the reprobate, they themselves make the same thing concerning them manifest

by their evil deeds. These words follow immediately: *The Jews therefore answered and said to Him: Do not we say well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*

II. Now let us hear what the Lord answered to such an insult. *I have not a devil, but I honour My Father, and you have dishonoured Me.* The Lord said, *I have not a devil;* but He did not say, *I am not a Samaritan*, for in one sense He was a Samaritan, because the word *Samaritan* in the Hebrew language signifies ‘a watcher.’ And the Lord is that Watcher of Whom the Psalmist says:

Unless the Lord keep the city, he watcheth in vain that keepeth it (Ps cxxviii. 2). He also is the Watchman to Whom Isaias says: *Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?* (Isa xxi. 11.) Therefore the Lord said, *I have not a devil*, but not, *I am not a Samaritan*. Of the two things brought against Him He denied one, but by His silence admitted the other. Indeed, our Saviour came into this world to watch over the whole human race, therefore He said nothing when accused of being a Samaritan, but defended Himself against and denied the unjust and wicked imputation of having a devil. By the extraordinary meekness shown by our. Lord towards His enemies He puts to shame our pride and haughtiness; for, when we receive the slightest injustice, we often accuse our opponents of greater crimes than those imputed to us. We do to them whatever injury we are able to, and even threaten them with punishments that are not in our power. Now consider the example of patience given by our Lord: the blackest calumnies are invented against Him and He is not angry; when justifying Himself He never makes use of an offensive word. In truth He could have answered the Jews, who in such improper manner calumniated Him, that they were themselves possessed by the devil, since they could not blaspheme God without being animated by the evil spirit. Yet He, Who is Truth itself, did not on this occasion make use of the truth to defend Himself. His words

were spoken solely for giving testimony to the truth, and not for revenging Himself on His enemies. By this action of the Son of God we are taught that, when we are attacked by our brethren with false accusations, we are not to publish the faults they are themselves guilty of, so that passion should not give to our hands weapons wherewith to satisfy our anger, instead of punishing them in a lawful manner. And since it is well known that those, who most zealously exert themselves to work for the glory and intentions of God, are very often calumniated by the wicked and freethinkers, our Lord wished to give us in His own person an example of patience, saying to the Jews, by whom He was unjustly accused: *I honour My Father, but you have dishonoured Me.* And in order perfectly to instruct us concerning the dispositions of our mind when we suffer for justice' sake He added: *I seek not Mine own glory. There is One that seeketh and judgeth.* Now the Gospel tells us that *the Father hath given all judgment to the Son* (John v. 22); therefore, when the Son, overwhelmed with insults and accusations, and without vindicating His own honour, leaves the duty of revenge to His Father, He wishes us to understand that we are calmly to bear any detractions or calumnies coming from our brethren. For we see that He, Who received from His Father the power to judge, did not make use of it then, to administer justice. However, should, in spite of our moderation, the malice of the wicked against us increase from day to day, let us not withhold from them the teachings of the Divine doctrine. On the contrary, let us persevere in our instructing them according to our Lord's example, Who, in spite of the insulting reproaches of His enemies, saying that He had a devil, continued even with greater zeal His kind and patient teaching. For immediately after He added: *Amen, amen, I say to you: If any man keep My word, he shall not see death for ever.* As it is certain that the just become more perfect by the injuries done to them, so it is also true that the wicked grow worse through the kindness shown to them. We see, that after the kind

exhortations and admonitions addressed to them by Jesus, the Jews were still more angry, and had the wickedness to say to His face: *Now we know that Thou hast a devil.* They were spiritually blind, and could not perceive the deadly state in which they were through their sins. But since they considered temporal death as the greatest of all evils, they said to our Saviour: *Abraham is dead*, *and the prophets*, *and Thou sayest: If any man keep My word*, *he shall not taste death for ever*. By their words these Jews seem to have believed in the Scriptures, since they recognised Abraham and the prophets, and honoured their memory; yet the honour given to His servants by those who do not recognise God is neither real nor true.

III. Though our Lord saw that the Jews tried their utmost to oppose His doctrine, He never ceased to preach, the truth, and continued His teaching, for He said to them: *Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it and was glad.* That day of the Lord, which Abraham really saw, was that on which he received into his house three Angels under the appearance of travellers. For these three Angels, appearing under a human form, represented to the faith of Abraham the adorable mystery of the Blessed Trinity which he recognised. He addressed the Three present before him, as if speaking only to one, so as to show that in the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, whom he adored, there was the Unity of the Divine Nature. As to those who keep their souls bowed down to the earth, it is in vain they hear the doctrine of heaven; their eyes never look upwards to gaze at it. Thus we see that the Jews, with their carnal thoughts, had in view only the years of our Saviour's mortal life, and said to Him: *Thou art not yet fifty years old*, *and Thou hast seen Abraham?* Thereon our Lord, to raise them up to the comprehension of His Divinity, and to shut the eyes of their bodies, wherewith alone they looked at Him, answered: *Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made*, *I AM.* You will notice that our Lord did not say, I was before Abraham, but *before Abraham was made,* I AM, in

order to show by this expression that His Divine Nature, which is eternal, knows neither the past nor the future, but is ALWAYS PRESENT. For this reason God the Almighty, speaking to Moses, said: I AM WHO AM; then added: *Then shalt thou say to the children of Israel: He who is, hath sent Me to you* (Exod iii. 14). As man Jesus Christ was by His birth to come either before or after the time of Abraham. But, being the Eternal Truth, and not subject to any time, He could have neither beginning nor end. Yet, as the unbelieving Jews were not able to understand these eternal truths, announced to them by the Redeemer, *They took up stones to cast at Him*, and tried to kill Him Whom they were unable to understand.

IV. To avoid the fury of the Jews, who were on the point of stoning Him, *Jesus*, as the Gospel says, *hid Himself and went out of the temple.* What ought to be to you, beloved brethren, a motive of astonishment, is the fact that our Saviour is seen escaping the persecution of His enemies, whose hands He could have bound by His mere will, and whose lives He could have taken, had He made use of His almighty power. Yet, this infinitely good God, Who had come into this world to suffer and to die, would not show the severity of a judge. This was again proved at the time of His Passion, when He said to the soldiers, who had come with Judas to apprehend Him:

I am He (John xviii. 5), and *they went backwards and fell to the ground.* Yet, He allowed them to take hold of His Sacred Person, and He willingly submitted to all the tortures they inflicted on Him. Now, if we ask why our Lord hid Himself, since, without escaping from the presence of His enemies, He could have rendered all their efforts powerless, we shall see that this Redeemer of the world wished to teach us an important lesson both by His example and His words. His action tells us that even when we are able to scorn the attacks of our enemies, and the injuries they try to inflict on us, we are, after His example, to avoid by timely retirement, the wrath of

their excited passions. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans (ch xii.) repeats the same exhortation. Let us therefore carefully avoid the fury of our brethren whom we see angry with us; let us not rise against those by whom we are calumniated, nor render evil for evil; but let us be convinced by the example given by God Himself, that it is more honourable to overcome all insults and persecutions by flight and silence, than by taking revenge.

V. Yet the spirit of pride whispers into our ears: Silence brings shame, when we are attacked and do not resist. When those, witnessing the affronts put upon us, notice that we are silent, they will not be convinced of our patience, but will imagine that in the depth of our conscience we confess ourselves guilty of the sins imputed to us. Thus speaks pride. However, such thoughts arising in our mind, and trying to stifle the feelings of moderation inspired by patience, come from our human opinion, and our inclination to think more of the false honour of the world and people's opinions, than of the esteem and approval of God, Who from the heights of heaven witnesses our doings. This is not the way of following Jesus, for He says: '*I seek not Mine own glory; there is One that seeketh and judgeth.*

The words of the Evangelist, *Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple*, may have yet another meaning, namely, that our Saviour was forsaking the Jews, who despised the word of salvation announced to them, and of which they made no other use than to become more wicked, and even to wish to stone Him. He hid the truth before them, since by their pride and their contempt for it, they had become unworthy of His heavenly doctrine. For proud and vain souls, not knowing the value of humility, are abandoned by the Truth. Yet, are there not many Christians, perhaps among us, who, detesting the obduracy of the Jews who were deaf to the Lord's teaching, are just as guilty by refusing to put into practice this same doctrine of Jesus? Many hear what our Redeemer commands us to practise; they recognise the Divine power in His miracles, but they refuse to change their

lives and thus to be converted. Jesus calls us, and we do not return to Him; He bears with us in our sinful life, and we abuse His patience. Oh, my beloved brethren! let us not hesitate to renounce our sinful ways whilst there is yet time; let us take care lest God be tired of waiting for us, and, after despising His infinite mercy, we fall into the hands of His infinite justice.

EASTER SUNDAY.

GOSPEL: Mark xvi. 1-7. *At that time:* Mary Magdalen and Mary, the mother of James, and Salome brought sweet spices, that coming, they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe; and they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, Who was crucified; He is risen, He is not here; behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him, as He told you.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ON EASTER SUNDAY.

TWENTY-FIRST HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. You have heard, beloved brethren, the deed of the holy women who followed our Lord, how they brought sweet spices to His sepulchre, and, having loved Him while He was still alive, they still followed Him with careful tenderness now that He was dead. But, what these holy women did, points to something which is to be done in the holy Church. And it behoves us well to give ear to what they did, that we may afterwards consider with ourselves what we must do after their example. We also, believing in Him Who is dead, we come to His sepulchre bearing sweet spices, if we seek Him with the savour of pious living and the fragrant odour of good works. These women, when they brought spices, saw a vision of angels, and those souls who are moved by the pious desire to seek the Lord with the good odour of holy lives, will see the countrymen of our Fatherland that is above.

II. If we inquire about the mystery contained in the fact of the Angel who, appearing to the holy women, sat on the *fight side*, we shall find that by the left side is meant the life which now is, and life everlasting by the right side. For in the Book of the Canticles it is said of the Bridegroom: *His left hand is under my head*, *and His right hand shall embrace me* (Cant ii. 6). Since, therefore, our Redeemer had passed from the corruption of this life, the Angel, who told that His eternal life was come, sat becomingly on the right side. They saw him clothed with a white robe, for he announced the joy of this our great solemnity, and the shining whiteness of his raiment told of the brightness of this our holy festival. Of ours, did I say? or of his? But, if we speak the truth, we must acknowledge that it is both his and ours. The Resurrection of our Lord is a festival of gladness for us, since we now

know that we shall not die for ever; and for the angels also it is a festival of joy, for they now know that we are called to complete their number in heaven.

III. Therefore, on this glad festival, which is both his and ours, the Angel appeared in a white robe. For as the Lord, rising again from the dead, leads us to the eternal dwellings above, He repairs the breaches or gaps of the heavenly Fatherland. But what is the meaning of these words spoken by the Angel to the women who had come to the sepulchre: *Be not affrighted?* Is it not as though he had said openly: Let them fear who love not the coming of the heavenly citizens; let them be affrighted who are so burdened by fleshly lusts, that they despair ever to be joined to their company. But as to you, why do ye fear, since seeing us you only see your fellow-citizens? Thus also St. Matthew, describing the appearance of the Angel, says: *His countenance was as lightning*, *and his raiment as snow* (Matt, xxviii. 3). The lightning speaks of fear and terror, 'the snow of the brilliant whiteness of rejoicing. Since God the Almighty shows Himself terrible to sinners, but at the same time well pleased with good and pious souls, it was but right that the Angel, who had been sent by Him to give testimony to His Resurrection, should inspire some with fear and terror by the lightning, and others with confidence and hope by His garment. God Himself wished to convey to us this meaning, for He guided the Israelites through the desert by a pillar of fire in the night and a cloud during the day (Exod xiii.). For the life of the just may be compared to daylight, and that of the sinner to a dark night. Thus the pillar of fire is to inspire sinners with fear, whilst the just, wandering in the light of the day, see a cloud which fills them with hope and security. St. Paul, writing to converted sinners, says: *You were heretofore darkness*, *but now light in the Lord* (Eph v. 8). Lastly, all this will be accomplished by the Lord on the day of His wrath, when His loving

countenance will shine on the just, while the terror of His justice will crush the wicked.

IV. *You seek Jesus of Nazareth*, *Who was crucified?* said the Angel, to prevent any mistake about Him, since there were several others bearing the same name of Jesus. Yet, this holy Name belongs in reality only to the Redeemer of the world, Who was crucified. As the Angel said: *He is risen, He is not here.* He is no longer here in His humanity, though His Divinity is present everywhere. *But go,* the Angel continued, *tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee.* You will perhaps ask why the Angel, after speaking of the disciples, specially mentioned Peter. But when we consider that Peter, after the great misfortune of denying his Master, would probably not have dared to accompany the other disciples to seek and meet Jesus, you will easily understand why he was specially invited and his name mentioned — that is, that he should have no motive to doubt that his faithlessness was forgiven him. Acknowledge the infinite goodness of God! He had permitted that disciple, chosen by Him to be the visible head of His Church, to be so frightened by the words of a maidservant, as to deny his Redeemer, so that the remembrance of his own weakness and sin might teach him patience and forbearance with other people's misery, and with the failings of the great flock that was to be entrusted to him.

V. Not without a special reason did our Lord send word to His disciples that He expected them in Galilee, where they would find Him. The word 'Galilee' means 'change and this was entirely conformable with the state of our Saviour, for He had passed from suffering to the glory of the resurrection, from death to life, from a state of corruption to incorruptibility. He showed Himself in Galilee, glorious and risen from the dead, to manifest Himself to them by the place He had chosen, and to give us to understand that one day we shall have the joy and happiness of seeing Him in the glory of His resurrection, if now we pass from the state of sin to the heights of

Christian virtues. Notice also that our Redeemer had Himself announced to the disciples near the place of His sepulchre, yet appeared to them only after changing His dwelling-place, because, according to His example, the mortification of the flesh must precede in this life if we wish for the beatific contemplation in the next. These few words, beloved brethren, I wished to address to you on the Gospel of this great festival; yet, just on account of this great day, I will add a few more remarks.

VI. It is certain that there are two kinds of life: the one we now lead in this world, the other of which we have no knowledge. The life we now know is mortal, the other is immortal; by the one we are subject to corruption, by the other we obtain incorruptibility. Death will be the end of the first, and our resurrection will be the beginning of the second. Jesus Christ, Who came as the Mediator between God and man, lived the one and the other life; for He suffered the death of the first, and He rose from the dead to give us some knowledge of the second. Had He only promised that one day we shall rise again, without giving us in His own flesh an example of that resurrection, no one perhaps would have referred to His testimony. But by taking our human nature, and becoming like ourselves, He willingly gave up His body to death; then, by His infinite power, He rose again, and gave us in His own Person a pledge of the resurrection He had promised. Should anyone say that it was easy for God to rise from the dead, since He could not be overcome by death, he will consider that, to enlighten our ignorance and strengthen our faith in a future resurrection, our Lord wished us to be convinced not by the example of His resurrection only. For notice, though He was the only one who died at that moment, yet Holy Scripture tells us (Matt, xxvii.), that many bodies of the saints, that had slept, arose at that time, thus destroying any doubts still remaining in the minds of unbelievers. Therefore, should anybody, seeing that a Man-God rose from the dead, still doubt about his own resurrection, he being only a mere man,

he must remember that Providence willed people of the same nature as ours to rise with Jesus Christ. Being members of the Redeemer, we have no doubt but that what is seen in the Head will be fulfilled in the members; that what happened to those who, as the first members of the Saviour, rose from the dead, will also happen to us though the last.

VII. The Jews blasphemed the crucified Redeemer, and said: *If He be the King of Israeli let Him now come down from the cross*, *and we will believe in Him* (Matt, xxvii. 42). Had Jesus yielded to these insults and mockery, He would not have given us the beautiful example of His astonishing patience. However, He waited; He accepted and bore insults and blasphemies; He persevered in that wonderful patience, and put off the time for giving a sign of His almighty power, that would then have caused a momentary amazement only, in order to show a greater miracle, namely, the glory of His resurrection. It was a more glorious triumph to leave the sepulchre, full of renewed life, than to come down from the cross. By His resurrection He triumphed over death, whilst by descending from the cross He would only have saved His life. Meanwhile, the Jews were jubilant, for, in spite of their insults, our Lord was still hanging on the cross; and they presumed that, after His death, His name would be forgotten for ever. Yet, out of the bosom of the earth, His Name was spread abroad all over the world, and with such glory that this perfidious, nation, so eager to punish Him with an ignominious death, was quite confounded, when seeing that the torments inflicted on Him had become the cause of His triumph. It was thought of Samson by the Philistines that, being enclosed within the walls of the city of Gaza, and surrounded by guards, he would soon be overcome and bound with the chains they had prepared; but during the night He took the doors of the gate, and, laying them on His shoulders, carried them up to the top of the hill (Judg xvi. 2, 3). Thus the all-powerful Saviour, the strong God typified by Samson, burst the bonds of the sepulchre, surrounded by

the Jews with guards, whilst they fancied that the Author of life, Whom they had killed and enclosed in the grave, would be for ever buried therein. And this all-powerful God, more terrible after His death than Samson in his life, came out, after descending into Limbo, and, triumphing over His enemies, ascended into heaven. Let us abide by this glorious resurrection, which, announced by the Prophets, was so happily accomplished. Let us desire to die, that we may be partakers of that resurrection. And since we heard that the angels who announced the resurrection of our Lord, are inhabitants of the eternal dwelling for which we are longing, let us endeavour to reach them, and thus celebrate this festival with them. Though we are not just now able to enjoy a glorious resurrection with these heavenly spirits, we will, nevertheless, join them with the ardour of our desires. Let us forsake sin and practise virtue, and by this change be able to see the face of our Redeemer. Ask God the Father, Who for the sake of our salvation delivered His only-begotten Son to a cruel death, to strengthen our desires, so that we may for ever praise Him, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen.

EASTER MONDAY.

GOSPEL: Luke xxiv. 13-35- *At that time:* Two of the disciples went the same day to a town, which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus Himself also drawing near, went with them. But their eyes were held, that they should not know Him. And He said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to Him: Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? To whom He said: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people. And how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel; and now besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who before it was light, were at the sepulchre, and, not finding His body, came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it so as the women had said, but Him they found not. Then He said to them: Oh, foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the Prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? And 'beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them in all the Scriptures, the things that were concerning Him. And they drew nigh to the town, whither they were going, and He made as though He would go farther. But they constrained Him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent. And He went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst He was at table with them, He took ' bread, and blessed, and brake,

and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him: and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures? And, rising up the same hour, they went back to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them. And they told what things were done in the way, and how they knew Him in the breaking of bread.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER ON EASTER MONDAY.

TWENTY-THIRD HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. You have heard, beloved brethren, how two of the Lord's disciples went together to Emmaus, and were talking about Him. They did not believe in His resurrection, yet talked about it, when the Lord Himself appeared to them, but held their eyes so that they should not recognise Him. And this holding of their corporal eyes was a figure of the spiritual veil by which the eyes of their hearts were still covered. In their hearts they loved, yet they doubted; and the Lord drew nigh to them outwardly, though He did not show Himself to their soul. He revealed His immediate presence to them that talked of Him, and He hid from them who doubted the knowledge of His Person. By words He associated with them, and rebuked their heart-hardness: *He expounded to them in all the Scriptures*, *the things that were concerning Him;* nevertheless, seeing that He was still a stranger to faith in their hearts, *He made as though He would go farther.* These words, *He made as though*, would seem to mean, *He feigned;* but He, who is Truth itself, has nothing to do with feigning. He showed Himself to them in bodily manners, as He was to them spiritually; but they were put to the proof whether they could love Him, at least, as a wanderer, though they loved Him not yet as their God.

II. However, since it was impossible that they, with whom the Truth was walking, should be without love, they invited Him as a wanderer to accept their hospitality. Why do we say they invited Him, since it is written: *But they constrained Him?* Their example teaches us not only to bid, but even to compel wanderers, to accept our hospitality. These disciples, therefore, laid a table, and set before Him bread and meat; and they knew in the breaking of the bread *that* God, Whom they had not known in the expounding of the

Holy Scripture. They were not enlightened in hearing the Commandments of God, but they were enlightened in doing them, as it is written: *Not the hearers of the law are just before God*, *but the doers of the law are justified* (Rom ii. 13). Whosoever will understand that which he hears, let him make haste to practise in his works what he was able to hear. Behold, the Lord was not known while He spoke, but deigned to be known when breaking the bread.

III. I say this to you, beloved brethren', that you might willingly practise hospitality and all other works of charity. Remember St. Paul's words: *Let the charity of the brotherhood abide in you; and hospitality do not forget; for by this some, being not aware of it, have entertained angels* (Heb xiii i, 2). And St. Peter says: *Using hospitality one towards another without murmuring* (1 Pet iv. 9). Lastly, Truth Himself says to you: *I was a stranger*, *and you took Me in* (Matt xxv. 35). An authentic history, related in the writings of our forefathers, tells us of a father of a family who, with all the members of his household, zealously practised the virtue of hospitality. Every day he received poor strangers at his table, and waited on them. One day, among the poor strangers there was one who suddenly disappeared out of the room, at the moment when the humble and charitable man presented him, as was his custom, with water to wash his hands therewith. His surprise was great; but during the night he had a vision. Our Lord appeared, and said to him: 'On other days you received Me in My members, but yesterday you received Me in Person.' At the last judgment our Lord will say: *Amen*, *I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren*, *you did it to Me* (Matt xxv. 40). All this teaches us that, before the time of the last judgment, Jesus Christ is received by us in the person of poor strangers, and that those, who receive them, are considered by Jesus as receiving Him. Yet we neglect the blessings and merits acquired by true hospitality. Consider the excellence of this virtue, and receive Jesus at your

table, that one day He may receive you at His eternal banquet. Take into your house, in the persons of strangers, the Lord Jesus, that on the day of the judgment He treat you not as strangers whom He knows not, but take you as friends into His kingdom, there to enjoy His glory, Who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER, OR LOW SUNDAY

GOSPEL: John xx. 19-31. *At that time:* When it was late that same day, being the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord. He said, therefore, to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them, and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples, therefore, said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hands into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again the disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He said to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said to Him: My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed. Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing, you may have life in His Name.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN LATERAN ON THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

TWENTY-SIXTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. When we hear this Gospel, our human mind can hardly understand how it was that the Body of the risen Lord, being a real Body, could pass through closed doors into the room where the disciples were assembled. But this will not surprise us when we consider that the works of God would no longer be wonderful, were they understood by man's reason, and that our faith would be destitute of all merit, were the human intellect able to demonstrate how these works of God are done. However, these very works of our Redeemer, which we are unable to understand, must be taken in connection with some others of His works, so that we may be led to believe in wonderful things by means of others still more wonderful. For that Body of our Lord, which came into the assembly of the disciples, the doors being shut, was the same which at His birth was manifested to the eyes of men, by passing out of the Virgin's womb without breaking the seal of her virginity. What wonder, then, is it that Jesus Christ, after His Resurrection, enjoyed a glorious and immortal life, showed Himself to His disciples, the doors being shut, since as a weak and mortal child He came out of a Virgin's womb in an incomprehensible manner? But since the Body of our Lord, after His resurrection, though real and visible, could raise doubts in the minds of the beholders, *He showed them His hands and His side,* and allowed them to touch that same flesh which had just passed through closed doors. In this event two strange things which, according to our understanding, are contrary the one to the other, were manifested, namely, that His Body was incorruptible and yet palpable. For, whatsoever can be touched must needs be corruptible; and whatsoever is not subject to

corruption cannot be touched. But, in a way altogether wonderful and incomprehensible, our Redeemer appeared after His resurrection in a Body at the same time palpable and incorruptible. He appeared in an incorruptible Body, inviting us to seek the same glorification; and in a palpable Body to strengthen our faith. He showed Himself both incorruptible and palpable, to make manifest this fact, that His risen Body was the same in nature, though transfigured in glory.

II. *He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.* The Father, Who is God, sent Me Who am God; and! Who am also man, send you who are men. The Father sent the Son, Whom He appointed to be made man for the redemption of man. He willed to send the Son into the world to suffer, though He loved that Son Who was sent to suffer. And our Lord sent His chosen Apostles into the world, not to be happy in the world, but to suffer, as He Himself had been sent. For, as the Father loves the Son, and yet sent Him to suffer, so does the Lord love His Apostles, though sending them into the world to suffer therein. Therefore it is well said: '*As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you* meaning, while I send you into storms and persecutions, I love you all the same with a love like that wherewith My Father loves Me, Who yet sent me into the world to suffer. This sending of the Son may also be understood of His Eternal and Divine generation, for the Holy Ghost, equal to the Father and to the Son, and Who has not assumed our human nature, was to be sent according to the promise of our Redeemer: *When the Paraclete cometh, Whom I mil send you from the Father* (John xv. 26). For should the word *send* only mean to become man, then the Holy Ghost could not be said to have been *sent,* since He did not become man. We call Him, therefore, *sent*, in that sense that He proceeds from the Father and the Son, and, as His sending refers to His Divine procession, so may the sending of the Son be referred to His Divine generation.

III. When Jesus, standing in the midst of His disciples, had said: *Peace be to you*, He breathed on them and said: *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*. Let me remark that Holy Scripture speaks of two occasions only on which the Holy Ghost was given by our Redeemer: the first, when He was still on earth, and the second when He was already reigning in heaven. On the first occasion, as it is seen in this Gospel, He breathed on His disciples, and on the second the Holy Ghost came down from heaven upon them in the form of fiery tongues. Now, should we wish to know the reason why the Holy Ghost was imparted at two different times, and under different circumstances, we must consider that charity contains two commandments, namely, the love of God and the love of our neighbour. It seems, therefore, that the Holy Ghost was given on earth to move us to fulfil the duty of loving our neighbour; whereas He was sent from heaven to inflame our hearts with true love for God. But, since the two commandments spring forth from charity, which is one and the same, so was the one and the same Holy Ghost given by our Redeemer on two occasions — to wit, the first time when He was still on earth, and the second after His Ascension into heaven, giving us to understand that the love for our neighbour serves like steps leading us up to the love for God, according to the words of His beloved disciple: *If anyone say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, Whom he seeth not(i* John iv. 20). Yet let us not conclude that the Apostles had not received the Holy Ghost before, since they possessed Him by faith. But after the Resurrection the Holy Ghost was given to them in a special and visible manner; and we understand in this sense the words, *As yet the Holy Ghost was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified* (John vii. 39). Hence Moses said: *He set him that he might such honey out of the rock; and oil out of the hardest stone* (Deut xxxii. 13). For, perusing the Books of the Old Testament, we find that these words cannot be applied to the Israelites, since we do not see

anywhere that they ever sucked honey and oil out of stones. We conclude, therefore, according to the testimony of St. Paul, that this rock was Christ. Indeed, seeing the acts and wonders of Jesus, the disciples sucked honey out of this Stone, and oil out of this Rock; for, after His Resurrection, they received the anointing of the Holy Ghost. We may also compare our Saviour with a soft stone, that, through the sweetness of His miracles, in His earthly life, He offered honey to the disciples. But since, after His Resurrection He cannot suffer any more, and has become like a hard rock, He sent them the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

IV. This is the supernatural oil spoken of by the prophets: *The yoke shall putrefy at the presence of the oil* (Isa x. 27). We were under the yoke of the cruel slavery of Satan; but having received the anointing of the Holy Ghost, and the grace to be set at liberty, the tyrannical yoke, under which we were groaning, has disappeared. This truth is confirmed by St. Paul, saying *Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* (2 Cor iii. 17). However, take notice that these very disciples, who had already received the Holy Ghost, so as to lead a holy life with His assistance, and by their preaching to be useful to others, again received the Holy Ghost after the Resurrection, and in a most striking manner, for the benefit of the nations they were to instruct in the course of time. Hence our Lord, giving them the Holy Ghost, says: *Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.* Let us wonder at the high degree of honour to which the disciples were raised at a time when destined to suffer the deepest humiliations. They were promised that not only their own sins were forgiven, but that they had power to absolve others from their sins — that is, power to sit on God's judgment-seat, and, like God Himself, to forgive or retain sins committed against His Divine justice. It was meet that those who, for the love of God, were ready to accept every humiliation and contempt, should be honoured in this way, and that their fear of being

condemned by the severe Judge Whom they adored should be the motive prompting God to set them up as judges of souls, which were to be condemned or to be absolved.

V. Consider again, beloved brethren, this important truth, and carefully endeavour to be preserved from the eternal perdition. These Easter-days are celebrated with great pomp and magnificence; yet our duty is to make ourselves worthy of arriving at the eternal Festivals. You endeavour to be present at these feast-days, which pass and disappear; try, then, your utmost to be one day present, all together, at the never-ending celebration in heaven. What would it profit you to assist at our festivals now, were you never to be admitted to the festivities of the angels in heaven? Our present feast-days are only the shadow of those we are expecting, and, though year after year we are celebrating them, we are longing for those never-ending days in the kingdom of God. Renew in your hearts the desire of the eternal festivities by the celebration of the annual earthly festivals. Let the happiness granted to us in the present time penetrate us in such a way that we continue sighing for the eternal happiness prepared for us in heaven, and ardently desired by us on earth. Prepare yourselves for that eternal rest by amending your lives and practising virtue and holiness. Never forget that He Who in His Resurrection was meekness itself, will be terrible when coming to judge the world. On this awful day He will appear surrounded by Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Principalities and Powers. On that day heaven and earth and all the elements, being the ministers of His wrath, will be in a general conflagration. May this terrible Judge be ever present to the eyes of your mind, that, penetrated by a salutary fear of His severe judgment, that is to be held, you may confidently expect His coming. Let us fear now, that we may be without fear then, and this fear will help us to avoid sin and work out our salvation. For I tell you that the more we are

now afraid to rouse the anger of our Judge against us, the greater will be our confidence when we appear before Him at the end of the world.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL: John x. 11-16. *At that time:* Jesus said to the Pharisees: I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and flieth; and the wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep, and the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling, and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd: and I know Mine and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for My sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER ON THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

FOURTEENTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. This Gospel which you have heard, beloved brethren, is to you, both an instruction and a warning against danger. For our Lord, Who is infinitely good, not by an accidental gift of nature, but by the very essence of His being, says to us: *I am the Good Shepherd.* Then He tells us what is the character of His goodness, even of that goodness which we must endeavour to imitate. *The Good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep.* This truth was proved by our Redeemer's own example; for both the instruction and the command were literally fulfilled in His life. The Good Shepherd gave His life for the sheep, and made His own Body and Blood to be the sacramental Food of the sheep He had redeemed. In this Divine Model we perceive the way we are to go, and the manner of imitating Him. For we see in Him the duty freely and tenderly to spend our temporal goods for His sheep, and, if necessary, to give our life for them. Again, the soul being more precious than all outward things that we possess, how shall we be ready to give our life for our brethren, seeing that we refuse to them even our worldly substance? However, there are many, loving the things of this world better than the sheep entrusted to them, who deserve no longer to be called shepherds. Of them it is said by our Redeemer: *The hireling*, *and he that is not the shepherd*, *whose own the sheep are not*, *seeth the wolf coming*, *and leaveth the sheep*, *and flieth*.

II. He is called a hireling, and is deprived of all the rights of a good shepherd, because he does not in reality love the sheep entrusted to him — that is, their souls — but wishes thereby to gain earthly wealth. He that takes a shepherd's place, and seeks not the salvation of souls, is only a

hireling. He is seeking his happiness in he honours rendered to his dignity, and endeavours to procure to himself the commodities of life. And does not the reward of the hireling consist in the temporal profit he acquires by the care he takes of his flock, whilst he will be deprived of the eternal inheritance prepared by God for His faithful servants? But it is not very easy to recognise the true shepherd, and to distinguish him from the hireling, unless he be discovered by special circumstances or by dangers threatening the flock. For very often, when men are kept in safety by peace and tranquillity, the hireling seems, like a true and faithful shepherd, to watch over his sheep. But when a wolf comes near the flock, then will be noticed by what spirit the selfish shepherd is animated. Under the image of the ravenous wolf attacking the flock we usually understand a violent and unjust man, who attacks souls, and tries to bring them under his power. In such circumstances he, who has only the appearance of a zealous shepherd, will leave his sheep and fly away, because he is afraid of dangers, and has not the courage to resist the unjust attempts of the enemy. But the hypocritical shepherd does not always leave his place or go away from his flock; still, he may be said to fly, because he gives not his flock the necessary assistance and the spiritual help he owes to them. He flies, since he keeps silent at the time when he ought to raise his voice against injustice; he flies when, hiding under the cloak of dissimulation, he tries to escape the strokes of the enemy. The Prophet justly complains against such faithless shepherds, saying: *You have not gone up to face the enemy*, *nor have you set up a wall for the house of Israel, to stand in battle in the day of the Lord* (Ezech xiii. 5). To face the enemy means to resist with true freedom and strength of mind every kind of power misusing, its authority and doing injustice. We stand in battle, and set up a strong wall for the protection of the house of Israel, when with the weapons of justice we defend the innocence of the faithful attacked without cause. But under such critical

circumstances the hireling, perceiving the wolf coming near the flock, flies instead of resisting.

III. However, there is yet another wolf against whose fury, far more terrible than the former, we are to protect ourselves; for his cruelty ravishes not bodies, but souls. This is the infernal spirit, who kills souls and carries them off as his prey. Of the devil it is said: *The wolf catcheth and scattereth the sheep*, *and the hireling flieth.* This happens when the devil, by his temptations, tears souls to pieces, and when he, who ought to perform the duties of a good shepherd, thinks of earthly advantages only, and lets the souls go to their ruin, without even attempting to help them. The infernal wolf catches and scatters the sheep, attracting some to lust and impure sins, and others to avarice; tempting some to pride or violent anger; awakening in some sinful envy, and instructing others in the art of deceiving. Through these different temptations death is brought by the devil to Christian souls; yet the zeal of the hireling is not awakened, neither is he prompted by godliness to save his flock from ruin and destruction. For, since he seeks only the comforts and commodities of life, he is not moved by the spiritual sickness nor the eternal death of his flock. Hence our Lord adds these words: *The hireling flieth*, *because he is a hireling*, as if to say: It is not possible to one, who is a shepherd of My sheep, to remain firm amidst dangers surrounding them, if he does not give to the flock an unselfish love, but is seeking for the perishable goods of the world. For, desiring honours and trying to find happiness in the enjoyment of earthly things, he will be careful to avoid those dangers by which the things he loves so well would be lost. After unfolding before us the defects and faults of the hireling, our Lord shows us in His own Person the qualities of the one we are to imitate, and says: *I am the Good Shepherd*, *and I know Mine* — that is, I love them — *and Mine know Me,* namely, they are subject to Me, because they love

Me. He that has no love for the truth announced by our Saviour, cannot boast of knowing Him.

IV. You have seen, beloved brethren, the dangers to which the office of a pastor or shepherd is exposed; now recognise also, according to our Lord's words, those dangers to which you are exposed. Consider first whether you are of the sheep belonging to the Divine Shepherd, and hear His voice. Ask yourselves whether you know what truth is. For it is not enough to recognise the truth by faith — it must be sincerely loved; and it is not enough to believe the truth — it must be put into practice. St. John, who wrote this Gospel, says: *He who saith that he knoweth God*, *and keepeth not His commandments*, *is a liar, and the truth is not in him* (1 John ii. 4). And our Lord added these words: *As the Father knoweth Me*, *and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for My sheep* — that is, I wish them to recognise the love I have for My Father by the love that moves Me to give My life for their salvation. And since our Saviour came to redeem not only the Jews but also the Gentiles, he continued: *And other sheep I have that are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.* Our Lord, speaking of these *other sheep*, had in view our own salvation, for at ‘ that time we were among the number of the Gentiles. And this is fulfilled every day, as you can witness the fact; for you are aware of the mystery of reconciliation among the idolaters, by which the two nations, formerly separated, are united in the one and the same fold, and Jews and Gentiles form one spiritual nation. St. Paul speaks of this: *For Jesus Christ is our peace*, *Who hath made both one* (Eph ii. 14). Thus our Lord gives life everlasting to simple and artless souls, chosen among the one and the other nation, and brings them as His sheep into His own fold.

V. Of these sheep our Lord was speaking, when He said: *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life*

everlasting. By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and he shall go in and out, and shall find pasture (John x. 27-29). That is, he will go in by faith, and go out of this life to see Me face to face. Then he will see with his own eyes that which he believed when on earth, and finally he will find eternal nourishment in this happy dwelling. These are the pastures promised by our Lord and found by His sheep; for since with a simple and willing heart they followed Him, they will be nourished with heavenly love, that fruitful field and that inexhaustible source of blessings. Indeed, what is the food of these beloved sheep but the interior joy felt at the ever new spectacle prepared for them in heaven? God Himself, ever present to the elect, will be their food; and since there is no deficiency in Him, their souls will be continually satiated with this Bread of Heaven. In these delicious pastures of eternity, which alone can satisfy our desires, was found real happiness by those who have already been victorious over the pleasures of this world. The heavenly court resounds with the eternal songs of its blessed inhabitants. Among the citizens of this holy city are seen those who safely arrived there after a sad and long pilgrimage in this foreign country, in which we are still living. There are seen the Prophets who announced future events; the Apostles on their thrones judging the nations; the glorious army of the Martyrs, the more praiseworthy the greater their sufferings had been; Confessors rewarded for their constancy; faithful and fearless men never overcome by the wickedness of the world; holy women who, in spite of the weakness of their sex, conquered the world; children, whose virtues were beyond the number of their years; and old men, whose infirmities never prevented them from advancing on the road to perfection.

VI. Ah, let us eagerly seek for that spiritual food! The happiness, which so many heavenly citizens wish to share with us, will be obtained, and the festivities to which we are invited will be our portion. Were a great market or fair to be held in a city, or the feast of the consecration of a church to be

celebrated, we should all endeavour to be present. You would feel very sorry, were you not able to enjoy the festivities by which those present are filled with delight and happiness. And we are indifferent about the eternal blessings, and make no efforts to possess them; we are not even desirous of assisting at these eternal festivities, and, though deprived of them, we still rejoice. Let us encourage ourselves, beloved brethren; let our faith be awakened by these truths, so that our desires may be inflamed with love for the eternal goods; for to love them is the only way to reach them. Let us not be prevented by any adversity; for this place of happiness must be the aim of our efforts, notwithstanding all troubles and obstacles encountered in the way. We should be like a foolish traveller, were we to tarry on the road looking at the variety of flowers and the beauty of the fields, without caring to reach the end of our journey. All our desires ought to take us to the lands above, our real Fatherland. Let us not desire the goods of this world, which soon forsake us; but, wishing to be faithful sheep of our heavenly Shepherd, instead of loving the worthless enjoyments of this life, let us be longing after the eternal pastures by which we shall be made happy for ever. Amen.

ASCENSION DAY.

GOSPEL: Mark xvi. 14-20. *At that time:* Jesus appeared to the eleven as they were at table; and He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen Him after He was risen again. And He said to them: Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow them that believe: in My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover. And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up to heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God. But they, going, preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER ON THE FEAST OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD.

TWENTY-NINTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. The slowness of the disciples to believe that the Lord had indeed risen from the dead was not so much, if I may be allowed to say so, a sign of their weakness, as the motive of Divine Providence to strengthen us in our faith. Indeed, the consequence of their doubts was the demonstration of the Resurrection by many infallible proofs. And we read and acknowledge these proofs, and our faith is assured by the disciples' doubt. For my part, I do not put so much trust in Mary Magdalen, who believed at once, as in Thomas, who doubted so long; for by his doubting he came actually to touch the Lord's wounds, and thereby closed up any wound of doubt in our own hearts. However, to confirm to our minds the truth of the Resurrection of our Lord, we do well to take notice of one of the statements of St. Luke: *Eating together with them*, *He commanded them that they should not depart, from Jerusalem* (Acts i. 4); and a little afterwards: *While they looked on*, *He was raised up*, *and a cloud received Him out of their sight* (ver. 9). He ate, and ascended; so that the fact of His eating might show the reality of His body in which He went up. But St. Mark tells us that before the Lord ascended into heaven, He upbraided His disciples with their incredulity and hardness of heart. I know not what we should gather from this, unless that the Lord then reproached His disciples, from whom He was about to be parted in the body, to this end, that the words He spoke to them, as He left them, might be the deeper imprinted on their hearts.

II. And when He had rebuked the hardness of their heart, what command did He give them? Listen: *Go ye into the whole world*, *and preach the Gospel to every creature.* Was, then, the holy Gospel to be preached to

things insensate, or to brute animals, that the Lord said to His disciples: *Preach the Gospel to every creature?* No; but by the words *every creature* we must understand man, who possesses qualities pertaining to all creatures. He has being in common with stones, life in common with trees, feeling in common with beasts, and understanding in common with angels. If, then, man has something in common with every creature, man is to some extent every creature. And if the Gospel is preached to man only, it is preached to every creature, because man has dominion over all things created by God on earth, and because every thing created has in itself something like to man. However, we may also suppose that the intention of Jesus, commanding His Apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, was to give them to understand that His Gospel was to be preached to all the nations in the world. On a former occasion He had told them not to go to the Gentiles, but now He commanded them to preach to all men. When, therefore, the Jews despised the preaching of the Apostles announcing Jesus Christ, the preachers turned to the Gentiles and were listened to. For, instead of imitating the pernicious pride and obstinacy of the Jews, the Gentiles humbly submitted to the yoke of the Gospel. When the Apostles were sent by the Eternal Truth to preach to the world, a most precious seed was sown, which seems very small, but which, through faith, will soon bring forth a rich harvest. How could the number of the faithful have increased in the world in such marvellous manner, had not the hand of the Almighty spread abroad among the different nations the small number of Apostles chosen for the purpose of extending His kingdom on earth?

III. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned*. Relying on the truth of these words every one among us will perhaps say; I shall be saved, for I believe. This will undoubtedly be the case if our actions agree with the faith we profess. For we shall be saved by that faith by which our life is in conformity with the

principles it teaches. St. Paul confirms this when, speaking of bad Christians, he says: *They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny Him* (Titus i. 16). The same is said by St. John: *He who saith that he knoweth God and keepeth not His commandments*, *is a liar, and the truth is not in him* (i John ii. 4). If this be so, then our life must absolutely give testimony to the faith which we profess; and if our conduct be not against the rules prescribed by our holy religion, then we may trust to belong to the number of the faithful. Indeed, we do not forget the solemn promises made at our baptism — namely, to renounce Satan, all his works and all his pomps. Let each of us earnestly examine himself, and should he be able to testify to the fact that he has fulfilled all those duties taken upon himself in the Sacrament of Baptism, he may congratulate himself on the happiness of being a good Christian. But should he be forced to confess that he has been faithless to his promises, that he has been a member of that company which he had formerly renounced, and that his actions reproach him with having lost his innocence, then let him ask himself whether he feels deep contrition for his sins, and endeavours to wash them out with tears of repentance. Our Judge is a God of mercies, who will no longer recognise as faithless the servant who, after leaving Him, now feels contrite, and sincerely returns to Him; for our penance will make Him forget the sins that had rendered us guilty in His eyes.

IV. Then our Lord added these words: *And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My Name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take tip serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing*, *it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands upon the sick*, *and they shall recover.* Now, do not think because such miracles are not wrought by you, that you have not the true faith. These miracles were necessary at the beginning of the Church, that the faith should be accepted, and the number of the faithful increased by the signs of the Almighty power. For the

beginning of the Church may be compared to the planting of a young tree, which is to be tended and watered until it has taken deep root in the ground. Therefore St. Paul says: *Tongues are for a sign not to believers, but to unbelievers* (i Cor xiv. 22). But there is also an important lesson contained in these miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, provided we understand their meaning. For these miracles, which in former times were wrought by the Apostles in a corporal and visible manner, now take place in the Church of God in a spiritual and invisible manner. When we, priests and ministers of the Church, lay our hands upon the faithful, and see how by the power of exorcisms the evil spirit is prevented from entering souls, is it not as if we were casting out devils? When Christians, formerly addicted to bad conversations, so common in the world, now renounce such sins, are edifying in their words, conversing about the doctrine of salvation, and everywhere praising their Creator and Redeemer, are they, not like those Christians who spoke *with new tongues?* Again, those who, by their zealous admonitions, withdraw others from a shameful and vicious life *take up serpents*, and are not poisoned by them. If anyone, hearing corrupting language, is not affected by it or led to evil, does he not seem to *drink a deadly thing, and is not hurt?* Lastly, all those who, seeing their brethren, not yet strong in virtue — on the point of yielding to sin, run to their help, in order to prevent their spiritual shipwreck; all others who by their good example strengthen their neighbour in virtue — all of them *lay hands upon the sick*, *and they recover*. All these miracles are the more astonishing, since they are worked on souls, the resurrection of which to the spiritual life of grace is more wonderful than the rising of bodies. Well, beloved brethren, you can do these invisible wonders with the help of God, if only you are willing. As to the visible signs, proving the holiness of those who work them, they cannot of themselves sanctify, not even those by whom they are witnessed; whereas the spiritual gifts, spoken of just now, when imparted to

souls, though not proving the virtue of the receivers, nevertheless give them the life of grace. Both the good and the wicked may be favoured by exterior gifts; yet the spiritual gifts are possessed by the just only. Therefore it was said by the Eternal Truth, speaking of those who boast of having done miracles in His Name: *Many will say to me in that day: Lord*, *Lord, have not we prophesied in Thy Name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and done many miracles in Thy Name? And then will I profess unto them*, *I never knew you; depart from Me, you that work iniquity* (Matt vii. 22, 23). Beloved brethren, do not desire these exterior signs which are sometimes granted by God to His enemies and to the reprobate; but earnestly wish for those wonders of love and examples of true piety, I have spoken of to you. Their merits are the surer the more they are hidden — merits that will be the more generously rewarded by God, the less they are shining before the eyes of men.

V. *And the Lord Jesus*, *after He had spoken to them*, *was taken up to heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.* When we read in Holy Scripture (4 Kings ii.) that Elias also was taken up to heaven, we easily understand the difference. The prophet was taken up in the air, whereas our Saviour ascended by His own power into heaven. As the birds, flying up in the air and again coming down, are called the *birds of the heaven*, so Elias is said to have passed through the space of the air or atmosphere, that he might be taken to an unknown land, there to spend painless and happy days, until the end of the world, when he will again appear and pay the debt of nature. Death is a punishment that was not remitted to him; it was only postponed. But our Redeemer, suffering death without delay, conquered it and destroyed its dominion by His Resurrection, the glory of which was revealed in the triumph of His Ascension. Again, observe that the prophet Elias was taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot, showing that, as a human being, he had need of exterior help. Angels carried him into the atmosphere,

wherein the great weakness of his human nature could not have supported him. But our Saviour ascended into heaven by His own power, without the assistance of angels or the help of creatures; and He saw the earth under His feet, since by His Almighty power He was elevated above all things. He ascended without any effort to the eternal dwellings, for He had never left His glory; and if as man He ascended into heaven, as God He had always been present in heaven and on earth.

VI. As Joseph, sold by his brethren, was a symbol of Jesus sold by Judas, so were also Henoch, translated by God to paradise, and Elias taken up to heaven, two types of His Ascension. Our Lord wished this great mystery to be announced by these two witnesses, the one living before the Law, the other under the Law. However, there are different degrees of glory in these translations, according to the different conditions of the persons. Holy Scripture says of Henoch: *He was seen no mover because God took him* (Gen v. 24); of Elias, that he was taken up in a fiery chariot. But our Saviour penetrated heaven without the help of another. He was not taken up nor carried up, but went up into the dwelling of glory by His own power. In His Ascension, and also in the translation of Henoch and Elias, are shown the different degrees of the virtue of chastity, of which He is our exemplar, and which He wished to be perpetuated in His Church. When first we consider Henoch in the bonds of matrimony, then see Elias without wife and children, we notice the progress of this holy virtue manifested in these two men, as compared with Jesus in His Ascension. We know that Henoch, being begotten like other men, in his turn begot children; that Elias, coming later, though born like others, never begot; and that Jesus Christ, not only in His miraculous birth, but in His whole life, was Purity itself.

VII. St. Mark says of our Lord: *And sitteth on the fight hand of God.* Yet St. Stephen (Acts vii. 55) exclaimed: *Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.* This does not seem to

agree, namely, *sitting* on the right hand, and *standing* on the right hand. Yet, beloved brethren, you will not be astonished by this seemingly disagreeing testimony of Holy Scripture. You will take into consideration that it appertains to a judge to be sitting, whereas one fighting or helping is thought to be standing. Now, the Redeemer of the world, after ascending into heaven, is the Judge of all things, and will come at the end to judge the whole world; and in this capacity of highest judge He is represented by St. Mark as sitting on the right hand of God. But when Stephen, still in the throes of the battle, saw Him standing in the midst of His glory, we are to understand that Jesus in the highest heavens was fighting with this glorious martyr, giving him His help to overcome the fury of his persecutors.

VIII. *But they, going preached everywhere; the Lord working withal*, *and confirming the word with signs that followed*.

What are we to notice in this, and what are we to remember, but that obedience followed the commandment, and that great miracles followed their obedience? But now, since by the will of God we have lightly run over our reading from the Gospel, it remains that we should give you some considerations or reflections on this great festival.

IX. And first, let us ask why the angels, appearing at the birth of our Lord, were not in white garments; whereas, when the Lord ascended into heaven, it is written that they were clad in white. It is written: *While they looked on, He was raised up: and a cloud received Him out of their sight: And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven*, *behold two men stood by them in white garments* (Acts i. 9, 10). White garments are an outward sign of an inward joy. But how is it that these heavenly spirits, announcing the blessed birth of our Saviour, were not seen in white garments? Because at the Ascension the angels, beholding the Man-God going up in triumph to heaven, were manifesting their joy, since His humanity received the glory due to Him; whereas in His Nativity the

Divinity seemed to be humbled, taking the form of a servant, and the angels showed no special exterior joy. 'Their appearance in white garments at the Ascension was a sign of glory; at the Nativity a sign of the humiliation of the Son of God.

X. However, beloved brethren, what deserves our greatest consideration on this festival is the fact, that on this day Christ was *blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us* (Col, ii. 14), and that the sentence of corruption was reversed. For our human nature, of which it was said, *Thou art dust, and unto dust thou shalt return* (Gen iii. 19), was taken up to heaven on this day. Foreseeing this elevation of our flesh, the holy man Job compared our Lord with a bird. And seeing that the Jews would not recognise this mystery, he reproached them with their incredulity, and said: *The bird hath not known the path* (Job xxviii. 7). The name of a bird is well given to the Lord, Who in His human body soared up into heaven. And those who do not believe in His Ascension, do not know the path of the Bird. It is of this glorious occasion that the Psalmist says: *Thy magnificence, O Lord*, *is elevated above the heavens* (Ps viii. 2); again: *God is ascended with jubilee*, *and the Lord with the sound of trumpet* (Ps xlvi. 6). And again he says: *Thou hast ascended on high*, *Thou hast led captivity captive; Thou hast received gifts in men* (Ps lxvii. 19). Ascending to heaven, He led captivity captive, for by His Resurrection we were delivered from corruption; and He gave gifts to men when sending His Spirit: *To one*, *indeed*, *by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge; to another the grace of healing*; *to another the working of miracles; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of speeches* (1 Cor xii. 8-10). The prophet Habacuc spoke of the glory of Christ's Ascension in the words: *The Sun and the Moon stood still in their habitation* (Hab iii. 11). Who is here signified by the Sun if not the Saviour? or by the Moon, if not the Church? This Church was, until the Lord's

Ascension, exposed to violent storms, and lived in fear of her enemies. But when our Saviour had ascended into heaven, the Church was strengthened, took heart, and began to preach openly the faith which she had been holding secretly. Like the sun rising towards the south, the Lord rose, and gave strength and increase to His Church by the powerful command to preach His Gospel. And to confirm the truth, the Church, taking the words of Solomon, exclaims: *The voice of my beloved; behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains*, *shipping over the hills* (Cant ii. 8). For the Church contemplates the sufferings of our Saviour, Who, from the first moment of His coming into this world, *leaped* with giant's steps on painful roads. And would you know, beloved brethren, these steps taken by the Redeemer? Consider that from heaven He stepped into the womb of a Virgin, from the womb into the manger, from the manger on to the cross, from the cross into the sepulchre, and from the sepulchre up to heaven. Thus the truth manifested in the flesh took such steps for our sakes, that He might draw us to run after Him; and for this end *He hath rejoiced as a giant to run His way* (Ps xviii. 6), that we might passionately say: *Draw us; we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy sweetness* (Cant i. 3).

XI. Therefore, beloved brethren, we must follow in heart and mind Him Who on this day ascended into heaven. Let our hearts be separated from all earthly desires, so that we may henceforth taste no other happiness than the remembrance of Him Who is our Father in heaven. Let us remember, and often meditate, on this truth, that, though He ascended as a peaceful King, He will one day come as a terrible Judge, and require of us with justice an account of our keeping those commandments given to us by Him in mercy. Let no man neglect the time given to us for doing penance; let everyone work for the salvation of his soul whilst there is yet an opportunity. Our Redeemer will be all the sterner, when He comes in judgment, the more wondrously long-suffering He was before. Carefully consider my words,

and dispose your life according to this important lesson. And should your soul be tossed about by the storms of this life, let it be fastened by the anchor of hope to the eternal dwellings, our true fatherland, and let your, eyes steadfastly gaze on that heavenly light. After considering the Ascension of our Lord, let our faith meditate on this mystery, and, though we are still fastened to this earth by the bonds of our body, let us at least follow Jesus on the wings of our love, and ask Him, Who granted us these heavenly desires, not to forsake us, until they be perfectly fulfilled. Amen.

WHIT-SUNDAY, THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: John xiv. 23-31. *At that time:* Jesus said to His disciples: If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him; he that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words. And the word which you have heard is not Mine; but the Father's Who sent Me. These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world giveth do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come again to you. If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you; for the Prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF ST. PETER, APOSTLE, ON THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

THIRTIETH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. It will be best, beloved brethren, briefly to run through the words of the Gospel, read out to you, and afterwards dwell for a longer time upon the subject of this solemn festival. This is the day whereon *suddenly then came a sound from heaven*, and the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles, and changed their fleshly minds into minds filled with the love of God. And whilst without *there appeared parted tongues*, as *it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them,* within their hearts were inflamed. They received the visible presence of God in the form of fire, and their hearts were filled with the flames of His love. The Holy Ghost Himself is love; hence St. John says: *God is charity [love]* (1 John iv. 8). Whosoever, therefore, desires God with all his soul, has already obtained Him Whom he loves; for no one is able to love God, if he has not gained Him Whom he loves. Now behold, if one of you were asked whether he love God, he would with boldness and quietness of spirit answer: ‘I do love God.’ Yet at the very beginning of this day’s Gospel we heard the Divine Truth say: *If anyone love Me, he will keep My word.* The test of love, then, is whether it is shown by works. Hence the same John says in his Epistle: *If any man say*, *I love God, and keep not His commandments*, *he is a liar* (i John iv. 20, v. 3). We do indeed love God and keep His commandments, when we deny ourselves the gratification of our appetites. Whosoever goes after unlawful desires, does not love God, for he is acting against the will of God.

II. *And My Father will love him*, *and We will come to him*, *and will make Our abode with him*. O, beloved brethren, consider what a dignity it is to have God abiding as a guest in our heart! Surely, if some rich man, or some

powerful friend were to come into our house, we would hasten to have the whole house cleaned, lest perhaps the eye of the entering friend should be offended by something, So let him, who wishes to make his heart a dwelling of God, cleanse it from all filth of sinful works. For what says the Truth? *We will come to him*, *and will make Our abode with him.* There are some hearts into which God comes, but makes not His abode therein. With a certain contrition they feel His presence, but in the time of temptation they forget that which made them sorry; and so they turn again to commit sin, as though they had never repented. Whosoever truly loves God, and keeps all His commandments, will receive the Redeemer into his heart, and be the abode of God, because Divine love will enchain him so strongly that, in the time of temptation, he will not be separated from that love. The true love of God is made manifest by our firmness amidst temptations, and our courage in overcoming them; for it is certain that we are the further from the love of supernal things, the more pleasure we find in the sinful enjoyments of this life. Therefore our Saviour added: *He that loveth Me not*, *keepeth not My words.* Examine, then, yourselves, beloved brethren, whether you really love God; and do not believe what your mind answers if you have not the testimony of your good works. The heart, the tongue, and the whole life must give testimony; for real love cannot remain idle. Love works great things, and as soon as it ceases to work, it ceases to exist. *And the word which you have heard is not Mine, but the Father's Who sent Me.* You know, beloved brethren, that the only-begotten Son Who speaks is the Word of the Father, and that the word He announced is not the Son's, but the Father's word, because the Son is the Word of the Father. But how do these words of Jesus — *These things have I spoken unto you, abiding with you* — agree with His other words promising His disciples to be with them *all days*, *even to the consummation of the world?* This will be easily understood, when we remember that the Word made flesh will after a

certain time secede from the world corporally, yet remain with us by virtue of His all-powerful and invisible Divinity.

III. And our Lord added: *But the Paraclete*, *the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name*, *He will teach you all things*, *and bring all things to your mind*, *whatsoever I shall have said to you.* You know, beloved brethren, that the Greek word *Paraclete* means in our tongue *intercessor* or *advocate* because the Holy Ghost defends, so to speak, the poor sinner before the tribunal of the Father's justice. Therefore, when it is said that the Holy Ghost, though one and the same with the Father and the Son, is interceding for sinners, it means that by His inspirations He moves our hearts to pray to God, as St. Paul says: *We know not what we should pray for as we ought*, *but the Spirit Himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings* (Rom viii. 26). Should you ask how it is that the Holy Ghost, not being inferior to, but as infinitely great and powerful as the Father, nevertheless intercedes for us, you will understand this to mean that He fills our hearts and inflames our desires to send our petitions to heaven and lay our necessities before the throne of the Almighty. He is also called the *Comforter*, because He takes away the sorrowfulness caused by the remembrance of our sins, and inspires us with the hope of being pardoned by God. Our Lord also says that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things, because the words of the most eloquent preacher would be useless, did not the Holy Ghost speak to the hearts of the hearers. Therefore, do not attribute to the art and eloquence of the teacher whatsoever you understand about the Divine doctrine, but to the Spirit of Truth speaking in your soul; for does it not every day happen that the voice of the preacher reaches the ears of his hearers, yet the meaning of his words is not understood by all in the same manner? The voice is the same, but the understanding is not the same, because the divine Spirit, this invisible Teacher, opens the mind of some, and they comprehend the doctrine, whilst others remain unmoved by the

same sound of the words. St. John teaches this truth, when he says: *His unction teacheth you all things* (1 John ii. 27); and we understand that, were not the unction of the Holy Ghost poured forth into our hearts, the words of the preacher could not teach us. But why should we insist on this fact that human eloquence is not able to convince us of the truths of salvation, since God Himself would in vain speak for our instruction, did not the unction of the Spirit move our hearts at the same time? We are aware that God, knowing Cain's sinful intention to kill his brother, spoke to him, and said: *Thou hast sinned; now stop* (Gen iv., j*uxta* LXX,). Yet, though he heard the voice of God warning him not to stain his hands with the innocent blood of his brother, he remained deaf to that voice, because the unction of the Holy Spirit had not entered his heart, nor moved him to give ear to that voice. However, there is another difficulty. Our Saviour, speaking of the Holy Ghost, said to His disciples: *And He will bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you*. This seems to imply that the Son of God is superior to the Holy Ghost. But when we consider the words *bring all things to your mind*, we understand that the Holy Ghost does not lower Himself by such suggestions, as if drawing these things out of the innermost of the souls, but by His supernatural light makes known the truths which before were hidden to them. *Peace I leave with you*, *My peace I give you.* These words of our Lord mean that He leaves His peace with those who endeavour to walk on the road to salvation, and that He will give His peace for ever to those who enter the kingdom prepared for them.

IV. After briefly explaining the words of this day's Gospel, let us now give our attention to the mystery of this solemn festival. You heard, beloved brethren, that on this day the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles in parted tongues, as it were, of fire, and that they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. By this great wonder we understand that the holy Church, filled with the same spirit as

the Apostles, and preaching to the nations of the world, will be heard by all of them. Indeed, when God, to confound the arrogance of the people building the Tower of Babel, also confounded their tongue, He in the same way united all languages in those who humbly feared Him, so that humility found its power there, where pride and arrogance felt their weakness and received their punishment.

V. Now let us examine why the Holy Ghost, one and co-eternal with the Father and the Son, appeared under the element of fire; why He appeared in fire and tongues; why He at one time appeared as a dove, and at another as fire; why He showed Himself as a dove when coming down upon the Son of God, and as tongues of fire upon the Apostles (Acts ii. 2); so that the dove was not visible when the Holy Ghost came upon the Apostles, neither the fire when He appeared upon the Person of the Son of God. These questions will be answered, when we first say that the Holy Ghost, co-eternal with the Father and the Son, showed Himself as fire, because God Himself is a spiritual and invisible fire, according to the words of St. Paul: *For our God is a consuming fire* (Heb xii. 29). He is indeed a fire, for He consumes the rust of our sins; and this has been confirmed by the words of the Eternal Truth: *I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled* (Luke xii. 49). The earth of which He speaks are the worldly hearts of men, which, being filled with earthly thoughts, are, so to speak, trodden upon by the infernal spirits. But when, through the breathing of the Holy Ghost, the Almighty sends His Divine fire, the carnal hearts of men are at once inflamed by His love; the earth is enkindled by this heavenly fire, and the worldly and cold hearts forsake the sinful desires, by which they are bound to this world, and they endeavour to belong only to God, now the sole object of their love. The Holy Ghost comes in fire, because by Him our cold hearts are warmed and filled with desires of eternity. And, being co-eternal with the Son, the same Spirit appeared in the shape of tongues of

fire, and thus showed the intimate relationship between the tongue and the Word. For the Son is the Word of the Father, and since the Holy Ghost and the Son have the same Divine Nature, it was fit that this Spirit should appear in the form of a tongue, this being the organ of words. The Holy Ghost was seen in tongues, for he that receives this Spirit will confess the Word of God, the only-begotten Son; and he cannot deny the Word, since he already possesses the tongue of the Spirit. Again He appeared in the shape of tongues *of five,* because all those filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost are by Him inflamed with love and endowed with eloquence. The true teachers of the doctrine of Jesus Christ have, so to speak, *fiery tongues*, because they preach the love of God, and inflame the hearts of the hearers; for the most learned sermons are unprofitable, unless sparks of that holy fire are brought by them into the hearts of men. The heat of this fire was felt by the two disciples going to Emmaus, and, being taught by the Eternal Truth, they said: *Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way*, *and opened to us the Scriptures*? (Luke xxiv. 32). These are the effects produced in a soul listening to zealous preaching: the heart is inflamed, the ice of torpidness is melted, holy desires are aroused, and the longings for earthly things are removed. Real love, filling the soul, awakens in it sighs and tears; but by these pains, suffered under the yoke of Divine love, the real love is nourished and strengthened. Such a soul finds its delight in hearing the word of God and the Divine commandments, and these commandments are as many torches enlightening and guiding the soul on the road to salvation, whereupon it had been walking carelessly and inactively, but now zealously, because strengthened by the word of God. Thus Moses says: *In His right hand a fiery law* (Deut xxxiii. 2); for by the left hand are indicated the damned, one day to be placed at the left hand of the Judge; whereas the right hand shows the elect, who could not behold the fiery law in the right hand of the Almighty without being inflamed with

fiery love to fulfil that law. As soon as the words of the law are heard, these souls find no other rest but in the sweetness of this fire consuming them. But as the Holy Spirit showed Himself under the form of fires, and on another occasion appeared under the form of a dove, this twofold symbol meant the effects produced by Him in the hearts of those who receive Him — that is, simplicity and ardour of love. By Him we are made artless through purity, and ardent through Divine zeal. For simplicity without zeal cannot please God, just as zeal without an artless heart cannot be accepted by Him. We hear, therefore, the Truth say to His Apostles: *Be ye, therefore*, *wise as serpents*, *and simple as doves* (Matt, x. 16); meaning that wise zeal must animate simplicity, whilst simplicity is to temperate our zeal. This is corroborated by "the great Apostle admonishing us in these words: *Brethren*, *do not become children in sense*, *but in malice be children, and in sense be perfect* (1 Cor xiv. 20). And Holy Scripture, speaking of Job as a simple man, says: *And this man was simple*, *and upright, and fearing God.* By which We are taught that there can be no uprightness without simplicity, nor simplicity agreeable to God without uprightness. And since the Holy Ghost came to teach us both these virtues, He appeared as a dove and as fire, in order to teach us meekness and peacefulness under the form of a dove, and ardent love for justice under the form of fire — virtues imparted to those that receive Him.

VI. The motive why the same Holy Spirit came upon the Redeemer as a dove, and upon the Apostles in tongues of fire, is apparent when we consider that the wrath of the justice of the Son of God could not have been borne by us, had He appeared in fire to judge and punish, before attracting us through the sweetness of His blessings. The Son of God became man to redeem all men, and He showed Himself full of meekness that we might find His yoke light and amiable; also because He wished to convert and to be merciful to all in this life, since in His justice He must condemn some of

them on the day of His wrath. This is the reason why the Holy Ghost showed Himself first as a dove upon Him who had come to forgive the sins of men, and not to punish. But if on this day He appeared in consuming fire, it means that the Apostles, being mere men, and consequently sinners, were to be purified in the fire of Divine love, cleansed by their own penance from their faults, though God in His infinite mercy is always ready to forgive sins; for let us not imagine that the Apostles, entrusted with that heavenly ministry, were without sin. St. John writes: *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* ‘ (1 John i. 8). The Holy Ghost came in fire upon men, and as a dove upon our Lord; for Christ has borne our sins patiently and mercifully; whereas we are carefully to examine our sins and burn them in the fire of penance and ardent love of God.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: Luke xiv. 16-24. *At that time:* Jesus spoke this parable to the Pharisees: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many. And he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and must needs go out and see it; I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them: I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF SS. PHILIP AND JAMES, ON THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THIRTY-SIXTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. Between the pleasures of the body, beloved brethren, and the pleasures of the mind, there is that difference, that the pleasures of the body, when we miss them, raise up a great longing after them, and when we greedily taste them, our fulness soon produces dislike and aversion. Whereas the pleasures of the mind seem disagreeable as long as we lack them, but when we fill ourselves with them we feel hungry after them, and the more we feed on them, the more hungry we get after them. Bodily or corporal pleasures are full of sweetness when taken, but soon excite nausea; whereas in the spiritual feeding, which at first seems bitter, real pleasure is found at the end. What is sensual stirs up our appetite, yet we cannot take it for a time without feeling a strong aversion against it. But what is spiritual excites the appetite in the very act of eating. We see, therefore, that souls tasting spiritual dainties, feel greater hunger and thirst for Divine things through the sweetness they taste. If we taste them not, we cannot love them, for we know not how sweet they are. And who can love that thing whereof he knows nothing? We are, therefore, invited by the Psalmist, saying: O *taste, and see that the Lord is sweet* (Ps xxxiii. 9); that is, as it were, if you taste not, you shall not know His goodness, but let your heart once taste the food of life, then, indeed, having tasted and proved its sweetness, you will be able to love Him. These are the dainties which were lost to man, when he sinned in the earthly paradise; and he lost Paradise when he shut his own mouth against the sweet bread, whereof if any man eat he shall live for ever. And as we are born of the first man under the afflictions of this pilgrimage, and came into this world smitten with aversion, we know not what to desire.

And the disease of this aversion grows worse, the more our soul is estranged from this bread of sweetness. We are no longer hungering after interior dainties, since we have lost the use of eating them. And so in this aversion we starve, and the sickness of long fasting destroys our health. We would not eat of the interior sweetness made ready for us, and we love outward things, even our starvation; yet the infinite Goodness does not forsake those by whom It is forsaken.

II. This goodness of God recalls to our mind these holy dainties, so often despised, and by trying to shake off our sluggishness, invites us to overcome the aversion we feel against this spiritual food. Listen to the words of our Redeemer: *A certain man made a great sapper*, *and invited many.* This man is the same of whom the prophet said: *It is a Man*, *and who hath known Him?* (Jer xvii. 9). He prepared a great supper, for He wished to give us the fill of interior sweetness. Many were invited, but a few came; for it often happens that some of those who receive the light of faith, keep away from the eternal banquet through a bad life that is opposed to their calling. This man *sends out his servant at the hour of the supper to say to them that were invited*, *that they should come.* And what is the meaning of these words, *the hour of the supper?* The end of the world, as St. Paul explains, saying: *All these things happened to them in figure*, *and they are written for our correction*, *upon whom the ends of the world are come* (1 Cor x. 11). And since we know that the Lord calls us *now*, because the hour of the supper, to which we are invited, has come, we cannot find any excuse not to appear at it, especially because, on account of the offered and yet neglected grace, we must fear that the favourable hour will never return. Then, this banquet prepared by God, is called in the Gospel a supper, to give us to understand that, supper being the last meal of the day, the banquet spoken of means the eternal supper prepared by God at the end of the world. And who is the servant sent out to call *them that were invited*, if not

the preachers bidden by God to announce His truths? As one of these servants, God has sent us, though unworthy of this high office, being bowed down under the burden of our own sins. God has sent us to you on this day; and whilst I speak to you that you may be edified and instructed, I obey the commands of the Divine Householder. Exhorting you to despise the world, I am like the servant of the Gospel, and I invite you to the supper prepared for you by God. Do not consider my person, but only my office; for if you see in me a servant unworthy to invite you, your esteem ought, at all events, to be given to the pleasures of the spiritual banquet to which you are invited. You know, beloved brethren, that a master, being of a high rank, often has a servant who, seeming low, is despised. But when this servant brings a message to his master's friends, it is gladly accepted in consideration of the master, no attention being paid to the faults or shortcomings of the servant. Do likewise, beloved brethren, and be not disturbed by my unworthiness, but highly esteem the call of the Lord. Obey, and promptly, the invitation of the Divine Householder to His Banquet. Prepare your hearts, and expel from them the mortal indifference which keeps you away from His sanctifying Banquet. And should your minds be still carnal, desiring only corporeal food, consider that the Flesh of your God is offered to you for the nourishment of your souls. The sinless Lamb of God, killed for you, is prepared for you on God's altar.

III. How shall we be made worthy of this invitation?

And they began all at once to make excuse, says the Gospel.

God in His infinite love offers, without being asked for, an actual favour, which we could not expect, not even by our most ardent desires; yet this favour is despised. He promises food for our eternal happiness; yet everyone makes excuse not to accept it. Let us take an ordinary example to understand higher things. A mighty Prince invites a poor man to his banquet. You will easily imagine that this poor man will be overwhelmed

with joy, that he will express his gratitude with modest and humble words, and, taking off his tattered garments, will endeavour to appear one of the first in the banquet-hall, not to be before-handed by another. This poor man would certainly behave in this manner. And we are invited by God Himself to His Banquet, and we make excuse, and do not appear. Yet it seems to me, your answer in your heart will be that you do *not* excuse yourselves, and that you will be only too glad to partake of this supper prepared for you.

IV. Your testimony seems plausible enough, were it not for your own conscience telling you that you are inclined to love the world more than heaven, and corporeal and perishable things more than spiritual and invisible goods. Consider the motives alleged by the invited guests for not appearing at the supper. *The first said: I have bought a farm*, *and must needs go out and see it; I pray thee hold me excused*. This farm he speaks of, what does it mean but the earthly and perishable goods? He goes out to see it, for he is only busy with and fettered by exterior and temporal possessions. *And another said: I have bought live yoke of oxen, and I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused.* Cannot the five corporal senses of man be understood under the number of these yoke of oxen? And is it not with a special reason that animals are put before us under the yoke, or in couples, as both sexes are subject to the exterior sense? By these senses we are not elevated to the knowledge of *supernatural* things, but we remain with the *corporeal* ones. Through these man forsakes the knowledge of the things within him, and clings to those without. And this is the cause of our inquisitiveness concerning the life of our neighbour, whilst we overlook our own life. The human mind is, indeed, of this disposition, trying to know things which are of no concern, and overlooking those which ought to be the first and paramount care. Not without a special reason is it said about the five yoke of oxen: *I go to try them; I pray thee hold me excused.* Such excuse clearly shows the curiosity of the man. This vice mastered him

entirely, and led him to go and try *exterior* and not spiritual things. Now, consider how those who wished to be excused by the householder for not coming to his banquet — the one on account of the farm and the other on account of the five yoke of oxen — at first made use of very humble language, *I pray thee hold me excused.* Yet this humility is in their words only, while the contempt for the householder resides in their doings. And such is the conduct of many Christians towards the ministers of God, when punished by them for their misdeeds. Being admonished in such words as: 'Do be converted; return to God; avoid the world and its sins their answer to the zealous servant of God, inviting them to the Lord's banquet, will be: 'We are not worthy of the grace offered to us; we are sinners; we cannot obey you; but do not forget to pray the Lord for us.' Are they not like the invited guests, who asked the servant to excuse them? Saying that they are sinners, they seem to humble themselves, but adding that they cannot be converted, their pride is only too obvious. Their false humility is shown by their words, and by their acts, their real pride.

V. *And another said: I have married a wife*, *and therefore I cannot come.* The real reason of his refusal is found in the vice of voluptuousness. Indeed, though marriage is in itself good and lawful, being instituted by Divine Providence for the propagation of the human race, yet it is often desired, not for that legitimate purpose, but for the satisfaction of vicious desires; so that under the words of an action, just in itself, unlawful intentions are often hidden, The Divine Master of the house invites you to His heavenly Banquet; yet you refuse, since the love of earthly goods, inquisitiveness, and sinful lust keep you away. You act in the same manner as those who, on account of their excuses, were rejected by the householder of the Gospel. They alleged the same reasons you make use of, and showed the same aversion against the heavenly food offered to men.

VI. *And the servant, returning, told these things to his lord. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the blind, and the lame.* The Lord, therefore, shuts out of His Banquet those who are only and solely clinging to the goods of this earth, those addicted to useless curiosity, and those given up to sinful lust. The proud also are rejected, and the poor are chosen. How is this? Listen to St. Paul saying: *The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise; and the weak things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong* (i Cor i. 27). Now, notice that those brought to the banquet are called *poor* and *feeble*, to point out that they were not relying on their own strength, but recognised their weakness. For he that, in the midst of his poverty, has a high opinion of himself, is proud in spite of his needs. Again, the blind may be said to be those deprived of the interior light; the lame, those who do not go straight in the path of justice. Now, these exterior deformities seem to be the marks of interior defects; it follows, then, that they are sinners, like the first who refused to come to the Banquet. But because they are humble they are preferred and received, on account of their humble sentiments.

VII. The despised by the world are therefore chosen by God; for it often happens that the little esteem in which they are held makes them reflect on themselves, and urges them to follow the prodigal son of the Gospel, who, having wasted his substance living riotously, and being in want, returned to himself, and said: *How many hived servants in my father's house abound with bread*? (Luke xv. 17). As long as he was living in sinful abundance, he knew not himself, but went, so to speak, away from himself, not to see the sad condition in which he was plunged. He would not have returned to himself, had not the corporal hunger he suffered shown him the terrible spiritual distress of his soul. The poor and the feeble, the blind and the

lame, are called by God, and they come, because they are infirm and despicable in the eyes of the world. They are the more willing and prompt to listen to the voice of God, the less attention and comfort they receive from the world.

VIII. However, the sentence pronounced by our Lord against all those who refused to accept the invitation, is exceedingly terrible. I entreat you, therefore, you, beloved brethren, and you, my teachers, you who are sinners and you who are just — I entreat you to give your serious attention to His words, that He may be the less feared on the day of the judgment, the more He is feared by you now, when attentively listening to my words. He adds: I *say unto you*, *That none of those men that were invited*, *shall taste of My supper.* At sundry times and in divers manners you have been called by God: through His Angels, sent to guide us; through the Prophets and Fathers, gone before us; through the Apostles and pastors; and, lastly, through our ministry; do not despise His invitation. Should the voice of God be heard by you in miracles or punishments, in blessings or adversities, do not refuse to listen to it. For, were you unwilling to accept the invitation now, the time might come when the entrance to the banquet will be refused to you, just when you are most desirous to obtain that favour. Remember what Wisdom tells us through Solomon: *Then they shall call upon me*, *and I will not hear; they shall rise in the morning*, *and shall not find me* (Prov i. 28). And the foolish virgins, coming late, exclaim: *Lord, Lord*, *open to us. But the Bridegroom*, *answering*, *said*: *Amen I say to you, I know you not* (Matt xxv. 11, 12). And now need I tell you, beloved brethren, to forsake all things, to renounce the cares and concerns of this world, and to think only of eternity? Such a blessing is given to a few only; and I do not flatter myself that you will be induced, in consequence of my admonitions, to forsake all the things you possess. But if you cannot do so, at least keep your earthly goods in such a way as not to be possessed by them; keep them

in your possession, so that your heart may not be enslaved by them; make use of the goods of this world, and desire the eternal gifts. Temporal goods help us on the journey of this life, but eternal goods alone are deserving of our continual desires and efforts to possess them. Whatsoever happens in this world ought to be looked upon with indifference, whilst the eyes of our soul are to be continually directed towards the desired eternal' felicity. Let us entirely root out the vices of our heart, so that we may be ready not only to avoid every sinful act, but even to banish the least sinful thought. Then neither the lust of the flesh, nor over-curiosity or desire for honours will keep us away from the Banquet of the Lord. When applying ourselves to honest and necessary occupations, let not our mind be so intent on them, as to give them bur whole heart. You see, therefore, beloved brethren, that you are not asked to forsake all things, but that, though keeping what you possess, you may in spirit deprive yourselves of all things — that is to say, you will make use of earthly things, so as to found all your hopes and desires upon eternal goods. Follow this advice of St. Paul: *The time is short; it remaineth*, *that they that weep, be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice*, *as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world*, as *if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away* (i Cor vii. 29 and following).

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: Luke xv. 1-10. *At that time:* The publicans and sinners drew near unto Jesus to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And He spoke to them this parable, saying: What man of you that hath an hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing; and, coming home, call together his friends and neighbours, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost. I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or what woman, having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbours, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost. So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF SS. JOHN AND PAUL ON THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

THIRTY-FOURTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. You have heard, beloved brethren, from the Gospel just read out to you, that the publicans and sinners drew near our Lord, and were received by Him, not only to speak, but also to eat with Him; and the Pharisees and Scribes, seeing this, murmured. Learn from this that true justice is merciful, whereas false justice is full of contempt, though even the just sometimes feel moved with indignation against sinners. However, we distinguish between a feeling of indignation through pride, and another such feeling through love for the law. He that has a true zeal feels indignant against sin, but he despises not the sinner; he feels a holy impatience, but he loses not hope; he will fight against sinners so as yet loving them; and though he will exteriorly punish them with strong words, he will always preserve in his heart the sweetness of love. The just man prefers to himself in his heart those whom he is correcting, and thinks those he judges, better than himself. And, so doing, he preserves discipline in those who are subject to him, and in himself, real humility. Whereas those possessing a false justice, by which they are rendered prouder, have only contempt for others; they spare them not; they are unmerciful to their misery, and thus are the more sinful, because they perceive not that they themselves are sinners. Such were the Pharisees who judged our Lord because He received sinners. Their hearts were mortally dry, whilst they rebuked the very fountain of mercy.

II. Their sickness was so desperate that they recognised not even they were sick. But the heavenly Physician, that they might know of their sickness, applied to them soft ointments by means of a gracious parable, and lanced the abscess of their proud heart. He said: *What man of you that*

hath an hundred sheep, and if he shall lose one of them, *doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert*, *and go after that which was lost until he find it?* We cannot sufficiently admire the infinite wisdom and goodness of our Redeemer, who in this parable compels man to recognise himself, whilst his Creator's image is placed before him. Consider that one hundred is a perfect number representing angels and men, created by God and being His sheep. You will easily recognise that man is the lost sheep, since through sin he left the life-giving pastures allotted to him by God; and that this lost sheep might be found, the ninety-nine were left in the desert. For our Redeemer left the choirs of the angels in heaven, and came into this, world to His human creatures. Why is heaven compared to a desert? Because man, by his sins, deserted that place created for him. And the angels, prefigured by the other sheep, inhabited that desert, whilst the lost sheep on earth were sought after by the Divine Shepherd. This desert had its beginning, when the number of angels and men, created for the contemplation of the Almighty, was diminished by the transgression of man. The lost sheep on earth were gone after, that the full number of His sheep in heaven might be restored. Thus we see that another Evangelist (Matt, xviii. 12) uses the expression *mountains* instead of desert, clearly indicating that the angels, dwelling in the highest, are those sheep which remained in the heavenly pastures prepared by their Creator. *And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing.* Do we not recognise in this image our Saviour Himself, who, taking our human nature, burdened Himself with our sins? *And, coming home, call together his friends and neighbours*, *saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost.* After finding' the lost sheep He came home; for after redeeming the human nature, that lost sheep, Jesus Christ returned to His home, the eternal kingdom. There He found His friends and neighbours — that is, the choirs of the angels. They are His friends, for they have continually and faithfully

done His will. They are His neighbours, for, walking in His presence, they are enlightened by the rays of His glory. The Divine Shepherd does not say: Rejoice with My sheep, but *Rejoice with Me;* for His joy is to give us life, and His desire and joy will be complete when we enter His kingdom.

III. This is explained by our Lord Himself: *I say to you*, *that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance.* Why does our Lord say that heaven will rejoice upon sinners doing penance, more than upon the just who persevere in their justice? It is because, according to our daily experience, the just, not forsaking the ways of justice, are not over anxious to win heaven, since they do not feel themselves burdened with sins, and are free from all unlawful doings. They abstain the less from lawful things, the more convinced they are of their renouncing forbidden things; thus they do not endeavour to attain to higher things, being conscious of their never committing any grievous fault. Whereas sinners, remembering their former vicious life, and penetrated by deep and sincere contrition, return to God with an ardent love. They begin to practise the most heroic virtues, and fight hard for a glorious victory over themselves. They are no longer moved by the pleasures of the world, nor by honours or dignities, but they rejoice in bearing with injustice and iniquities. Their only longing is after heaven, their only desire, to obtain the eternal felicity; and thus they make amends for their former sins by the rich treasure of their merits. Do not wonder, therefore, that there is joy in heaven upon one sinner doing penance, more than upon the just persevering in justice. A soldier who at the first shock of the battle lost heart and ran away, but at once returned with great courage to strike and overwhelm the enemy, will receive from the commander more praise than another who, though not turning his back to the enemy, never showed any act of real courage. Thus also a field, formerly covered with thistles and thorns, but now yielding a rich harvest, will be preferred by the

farmer to a soil which, though never covered with thistles, has not been as fertile as the other.

IV. However, we must confess that among the just there are to be found many, who rejoice in heaven more than converted sinners do by their most sincere penance. For there are a great many who, leading a perfectly innocent life, nevertheless punish themselves with great severity, as if they had committed grievous sins. Such Christians renounce all the commodities of life; with heroic contempt they rise above the world; what is lawful seems to them sinful; justly acquired goods are rejected, whilst all visible things are despised in order to ascend to invisible riches. Tears and sighs are their comfort, and humiliations their happiness. And when others are weeping on account of their really sinful actions, they are sorry for the least sinful thought. We conclude, therefore, that such Christians, being really good and innocent, yet reap the merits of severe penance, because they continually practise the most sublime virtues. We may, therefore, recognise how much God rejoices upon the just suffering and humbling themselves for sins they never committed, since He rejoices upon a sinner deeply sorry for his past sins.

V. But, though our Lord said: *There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance*, the same Lord announces through His prophet: *If the just, trusting in his justice*, *commit iniquity*, *all his justices shall be forgotten* (Ezech xxxiii. 13). Consider the mystery of God's wisdom and goodness, threatening the just with His wrath, should they forsake the road of justice, and at the same time inspiring sinners with hope of forgiveness, provided they forsake and rise from their sins, and do penance. What a mystery! God inspiring the just with fear, lest their justice and good works make them presumptuous, and giving hope and courage to sinners, to prevent them from despairing on account of their sins! Learn, therefore, you good Christians, to fear the justice of God, Who may suffer you to fall, and

you, sinners, hope in the mercy of God helping you to rise from your sins. Though oppressed by the burden of their wickedness, the sinners are awaited by Him, Who created them in justice, to rise again. The arms of His mercy are stretched out to receive them as soon as they return to Him. Yet, only a sincere penance can reconcile us to God, and this penance, the qualities of which must be acknowledged, consists in the deep sorrow for sins committed, and the firm purpose of avoiding them in the future. However, he that is repentant for past sins, and is again committing new ones, knows nothing about real penance, or is acting as if he knew nothing. "What does it profit you to be sorry for sins against chastity, if at the same time you are given up to avarice? What advantage will be derived from tears shed about anger, if the fire of envy is not extinguished in your heart?

VI. Our penance will be perfect if, besides true contrition for past sins and sincere purpose not to commit them again, we also abstain from lawful things, in order to satisfy Divine Justice for unlawful actions. It is meet and just to renounce some pleasure, when the great commandments were transgressed. Let me illustrate this by an example taken from Holy Scripture. It was forbidden to covet the neighbour's wife (Exod xx. 17), but the King was not forbidden to impose very difficult tasks on his soldiers, neither to ask for water by the fetching of which they would be exposed to great dangers. But all of you know how King David, yielding to his passions, took away the wife of one of his subjects; how his sin was severely punished, and how he made amends for it by severe penance and bitter tears. A long time afterwards the same King, fighting against his enemies, and suffering terrible thirst, was longing for the living waters of the cisterns at Bethlehem. Some fearless soldiers at once went, in spite of extreme dangers, through the ranks of the enemy, and brought him the longed-for fresh water. But David, reflecting on the great danger to which these soldiers exposed themselves, only to satisfy his desire, was sorry, and

at once poured out the water upon the ground before the Lord, to bring Him a sacrifice, and thus to expiate by this generous self-denial the burning desire he had to get water. You see how this repentant and converted sinner deprived himself of the water so ardently desired, whilst he did not mind before that to take the wife of another man, to satisfy his lust. David, therefore, denied to himself the use of a thing allowed by the law, because he remembered the sin he had committed against the law by a forbidden act. Our penance must be of the same kind, if we wish to atone for our sinful actions. Consider also the infinite mercies of God, Who, though seeing us commit sin, bears with us in incomprehensible patience.

VII. It is true, when God had created man, He prohibited sin, yet since man's misfortune of committing sin, God's mercy has never tired in offering him forgiveness. He still calls us, though we give no ear to His voice; we forsake God, and He does not forsake us. This is expressed by Isaias the Prophet, saying: *Thy eyes shall see the teacher*, *and thy ears shall hear the word of one admonishing thee behind thy back* (Isa, xxx, 20, 21). Man was created in justice and instructed by his Creator, at Whose countenance he gazed as long as he remained in the state of innocence and accepted His commands. But when he had transgressed these commands, he turned, so to speak, his countenance from His Creator. Yet, this despised and forsaken good God did not cease running after him, following him, and continually beseeching him to return. And this is God's conduct towards us; for when He was despised by us, He nevertheless continued to call us. We offend Him, not listening to His exhortations, and considering His commandments too severe to be obeyed; nevertheless, He invites us to return to Him. His Divine commandments call us, whilst His invincible patience is awaiting us. Beloved brethren, consider a slave who, in his pride, will not listen to your words, who, instead of obeying, will turn his back on you; shall not his impudence be most severely punished? We easily

recognise ourselves in this comparison, since by our repeated sins we have turned against God, our Creator, Who, in spite of them, still continues to preserve our life. We have proudly resisted Him, yet, in spite of our contempt, He meekly calls us, and is not only satisfied with remitting us the punishment deserved by our sins, but offers us, as a reward for our return, an eternal happiness in heaven. The most hardened heart ought to be moved by such infinite mercy. Let us also learn, by God's infinite patience after our heinous sins, to be ashamed of our ingratitude, which in justice deserves the most severe punishment.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: Luke xix. 41-47. *At that time*: When Jesus drew near to Jerusalem, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee fiat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the temple. He began to cast out them that sold therein and them that bought, saying to them: It is written: My house is the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves. And He was teaching daily in the temple.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE BASILICA OF ST. JOHN, CALLED THE CONSTANTINE.

THIRTY-NINTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. No one, that has read the history of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman princes Vespasian and Titus, can be ignorant of the fact that the Lord spoke of this destruction, when He wept over the ruin of that city. These princes were pointed at when He said: *For the days shall come upon thee; and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round*, *and straiten thee on every side*, *and beat thee flat to the ground*, *and thy children who are in thee.* And the truth of what follows, *they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone*, is even now fulfilled by the change of site of the city, which has been rebuilt round about the place without the gates, where the Lord was crucified, whilst the ancient city, as I am told, has been destroyed down to the very foundations. And a little after the preceding words we find what the sin of Jerusalem was, which brought upon her the punishment of this destruction: *Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.* The Creator of all things was pleased to visit her through the mystery of the Incarnation, but she remembered not to fear or to love Him. Hence, also, the prophet Jeremias, rebuking man's hardness of heart, calls the birds of the air to testify against it, and says *The kite in the air hath known her time*, *the turtle*, *and the swallow*, *and the stork have observed the time of their coming; but My people have not known the judgment of the Lord* (Jer viii. 7). The Saviour wept over the ruin of the faithless city, while she herself knew not that it was coming. *If thou also hadst known,* He said, *even thou*; and we may understand Him to have meant, 'Thou wouldst have wept, instead of making merry, as thou now dost, not knowing what is hanging over thee.' And he added, *at least in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace.* While she was giving herself up to

carnal pleasures, and never looked forward to the coming sorrows, she had still for a day in her power the things which might have brought peace to her. *But now they are hidden from thy eyes,* says the Lord. For, had the misfortunes threatening her been known, she would not have founded her hope and happiness upon that prosperous state by which she was deceived. And for this reason were foretold to her by the Redeemer all the evils she had later on to bear from the Roman army., II. And as we see Jerusalem destroyed, and the temple, once the abode of thieves before our Lord had cast them out, now a mass of ruins, do we not perceive in these ruins an image of the spiritual destruction of our own moral conduct, destruction which we have every reason to be afraid of? *Seeing the city*, *He wept over it.* Indeed, our Lord once wept over Jerusalem and foretold her ruin; and He does the same every day, since He and His ministers and elect behold how some souls forsake the road to holiness and give themselves up to corrupt ways. He laments the blindness of these people, who ignore His lamentations and confirm the words of Solomon: *Who are glad when they have done evil and rejoice in the most wicked things* (Prov ii. 14). For should these wicked people recognise their impending damnation, they would shed tears with the good Christians, who bewail their destruction. In all truth we may apply to such souls running to their perdition these words of Jesus: *If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes.* These perverse souls, thinking only of the present time, and looking at this time, which quickly passes away, as their happiest days, seem to find true peace in earthly pleasures. Amidst the perishable things of this world by which they are dazzled — honours, puffing them up, carnal lust by which they are carried away with delight — such souls are in peace, and will not be disturbed by anything on the peaceful and bright day that destroys in their memory the fear of the terrible punishments awaiting them. But another, a

different day will throw such souls into the eternal damnation, when they will see themselves in great affliction, whilst the just will be overwhelmed with joy and comfort; for on that terrible day the sweetness tasted now will be changed into bitterness and wrath. Then the reprobate souls will turn their anger and fury against themselves; they will upbraid themselves for not being terrified by the terrible condemnation threatened by God, and for having shut their eyes so as not to foresee the punishments heaped up and reserved for their unhappy future. Therefore it is said: *But now they are hidden from thy eyes*. Giving themselves entirely up to earthly things and rushing after the pleasures of this life, these souls cannot see the misery following their footsteps. And should the consideration of the future inspire such souls with fear, amidst the worldly pleasures they dismiss such a terrible sight from their mind, and blindfoldly rush amid frivolous amusements towards the everlasting flames. The wise man was right when he said: *In the day of good things he not unmindful of evils; and in the day of evils he not unmindful of good things* (Ecclus xi. 27). And St. Paul says: *And they that rejoice be as if they rejoiced not* (1 Cor vii. 30). Though it be lawful to rejoice in this world, the fear of the coming judgment should not forsake us; then our soul, at the sight of the Lord's wrath, would be penetrated with terror, be moderate in the pleasures of life, and would courageously look forward to the beginning of the great day. *Blessed is the man,* says Solomon, *that is always fearful; but he that is hardened in mind shall fall into evil* (Prov xxviii. 14). Meanwhile the wrath of God will be the more terrible on that fearful day, the less we now fear to irritate Him by our sins.

III. Our Lord continues the history of the evils befalling Jerusalem, saying: *For the days shall come upon thee*, *and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee*, *and compass thee round*, *and straiten thee on every side*. Who are these enemies but the devils, our sworn foes, laying snares to our

soul which, by their allurements, is kept up in the love of the pleasures of this life, but will be besieged by them at the moment when it has to leave the body? Indeed, we may say that at the moment of our death the devil will make to himself a trench of our sins, and compass us round, and thus drag our soul down into hell. In that unhappy moment the sinful soul will ‘be straitened on every side by this cruel enemy, without any hope of escaping, since the time for doing penance or good works, neglected during life, will now be passed. Truly it maybe said of that poor soul, that it is attacked by the enemy on every side, for not only the wicked actions, but also the bad thoughts and desires, are brought up against it. *In that day all their thoughts shall perish* (Ps cxlv, 4). And these thoughts may be compared to stones, for our Lord said: *And they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone*, The perverse mind and the wicked thoughts form, so to speak, stones upon stones, and the more so, since that poor soul made such bad use of its former freedom.

IV. And what was the cause of that great evil? Listen to our Lord, saying: *Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation.* Almighty God visits the soul of the sinner in different ways: now He announces by His ministers the great and Divine truths; now He chastises that soul with the scourges of His justice; again He meets that soul in a wonderful manner with His richest blessings. Acting thus, and making use of different means, God endeavours to convince that soul of the eternal truths so long unknown to it. When the word of God is not powerful enough to convert that soul; when the severity of His punishments cannot humble it, nor conquer its hardness; when all these means have been useless, then the infinitely merciful God sometimes pours out His blessings with a generous hand, that the ingratitude of the sinful soul might perhaps put it to shame. But should this soul wilfully refuse to recognise the time of visitation, then God will give it over to its enemies, with whom it must suffer the pains of damnation. Let us,

therefore, make good use of the advice given by our Lord: *When thou goest with thy adversary to the prince, whilst thou art in the way endeavour to be delivered from him; lest perhaps he draw thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the exacter, and the exacter cast thee into prison* (Luke xii. 58). This adversary, spoken of here, is the word of God, by which our passions are continually opposed during life. If the sinner humbly submits to the commands of this adversary, and faithfully obeys them, he shall be delivered from his persecutions. Whereas if he does not endeavour to be delivered in this manner, he will be drawn to the judge, and by him delivered to the officer of justice. The word of God, now despised by the sinner, will witness against him before the judgment-seat of the Almighty. He will be delivered by his Judge to the officer of His wrath — that is, the devil — by whom the poor sinner will be tortured with so much greater fury, the easier he had yielded during life to all vicious temptations. When it is said that the sinful soul will be cast into prison by the officer of justice, this means that it will be kept in hell until the day of the last judgment, when the bodies of the damned united with their souls, will be cast into the everlasting flames, there to suffer with the infernal spirits.

V. Our Lord, after ending the description of the destruction of the unhappy city, which is applied to the perdition of a sinful soul, *entering into the temple*, *He began to cast out them that sold therein*, *and them that bought.* This temple is also an image of a Christian soul, for our conscience is the temple and house of God. Yet, when the human mind is filled with sinful thoughts against the neighbour, it becomes like a den of thieves and murderers; for such a soul is armed with murderous designs against simple and innocent Christians, and discharges its arrows for their destruction. Thus our soul, deprived of innocence and simplicity of justice, instead of being a house of prayer and meditation, becomes a den of thieves, as it is to others a cause of scandal and perdition. According to the Gospel, *He was*

teaching daily in the temple. This certainly means that He is still continuing to teach — that is, that He is *teaching daily in the temple*, enlightening the souls of the faithful, and showing them how to avoid sin. However, we ought to know that we shall be powerfully instructed in the truth, only when the future evils we ought to be afraid of are continually placed before our eyes, and that we endeavour to avoid them, never losing sight of these words of wisdom: *In all thy works remember the last end*, *and thou shalt never sin* (Ecclus vii. 40).. So let us, then, every day consider these words Jesus addressed to us: *If thou hadst known*, *and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes*. And since that severe Judge still patiently bears with us, and does not stretch out His arm to strike us; since the day of His wrath seems to be far off, let us think of the great calamities following that day, and let us endeavour to avoid them by being sorry for our sins. Let us despise the pleasures of the present life, and let us never be dazzled by its sinful amusements; then we shall not be dragged into the deep abyss now hidden by them from our eyes.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: Matt xxii. 1-14. *At that time;* Jesus spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees in parables, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage; and they would not come. Again he sent, other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and failings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and, having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and, sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. Then he said to his servants: The marriage, indeed, is ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants, going forth into the ways, gathered together all they found, both bad and good; and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how earnest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and his feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY MARTYR CLEMENT.

THIRTY-EIGHTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS,

I. I remember having often said that in the holy Gospel the Church of God, as she is now, is called the kingdom of heaven, for the kingdom of heaven is indeed the assembly of the just. The Lord said by the mouth of His prophet: *Heaven is My throne* (Isa lxvi i). Solomon says: *The soul of the just is the throne of wisdom* (Wisd vii. 27); and Paul says: *Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God* (1 Cor i. 24). From these passages we may clearly infer that, if wisdom be God, and wisdom's throne the soul of the just, and God's throne the heaven, then the soul of the just is heaven. Hence the Psalmist, speaking of holy preachers, says: *The heavens show forth the glory of God* (Ps xviii. 1). The kingdom of heaven, therefore, is the Church of the just — that is, of those whose hearts seek not for anything upon earth, but who so sigh for the things that are above, that God does already reign in them, as He reigns in heaven. Let it, then, be said: *The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king*, *who made a marriage for his son*. You understand, beloved brethren, Who is this Royal Father of a Royal Son. It is indeed He to Whom the Psalmist says: *Give to the King Thy judgment, O God, and to the King*'*s son Thy justice* (Ps lxxi. 2) — *Who made a marriage for His Son.* God the Father made a marriage for God the Son, when He wedded Him to the human nature in the womb of the Virgin, when He willed that He, Who is God before all ages, should become Man in the end of the ages.

II. The union of two persons forms the marriage union; but God forbid that we should imagine that the one Person of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, Who is both God and Man, is formed by the union of a human person with a Divine Person. We profess that He is of and in two natures; but we shrink from the blasphemy of saying that in Him there are two persons. It will be

clearer and safer to say that the marriage made by the Father for His Royal Son, was the joining Him, through the mystery of the Incarnation, to His mystic Bride, the Holy Church, and that the womb of the Virgin Mother was the bridal chamber in which this union took place. Hence it is that the Psalmist says: *He hath set His tabernacle in the sun*, *and He as a bridegroom coming out of His bride-chamber* (Ps xviii. 6). Indeed, the Divine Redeemer came out of the purest womb of the Virgin, to unite Himself with the Church chosen by Him as His Bride. He sent out His servants to call His friends that were invited to the marriage. He sent them out twice, to give us to understand that the preachers of the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God were first the prophets and after them the Apostles. The former announced this great mystery in prophecies only, whilst the latter preached to the nations announcing the same, yet being now fulfilled. The proof that the first invited refused to come to the marriage feast is contained in the words addressed to the second: *Behold*, *I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and failings are killed*, *and all things are ready. Come ye to the marriage.* No mention of this fact was made in the first invitation; but afterwards it was said that the beeves and fatlings were killed, that everything was ready. For when we refuse to hear the words of God, He shows us by examples that, what we think impossible, becomes easy, as soon as we understand that others were able to do the things to which He invites us.

III. The invited guests neglected the invitation, according to the words of the Gospel, *and went their ways*, *one to his farm, and another to his merchandise.* The one going to his farm is a type of those persons entirely bent on this world's business, whilst the other one represents those who give themselves up to temporal gains and profits. Now, since these two kinds of persons are intent on the cares and goods of this world only, they give no thought to the mystery of God made Man for the salvation of man;

neither do they think of conforming their lives to the life of Jesus. It is, therefore, on account of these worldly goods and worldly interests that they refuse to come to the marriage. But what is still worse, they not only refuse to come, but despise the grace of God inviting them; for it is said: They *laid hands on His servants*, *and, having treated them contumeliously*, *put them to death*.

IV. *But when the King had heard of it*, *He was angry*, *and*, *sending His armies*, *He destroyed those murderers*, *and burnt their city.* He strikes the persecutors, and destroys the murderers. He burns their city — that is, the bodies, in which dwell these sinful souls, will be cast with them, into the everlasting fire. The armies, sent to destroy the murderers, are the Angels of God sent with His thunderbolts to take revenge. For what are the hosts of Angels but the armies of our eternal King? Hence God is called the Lord of Sabaoth, and *Sabaoth* means hosts — *the Lord of hosts* (Isa i. 9). The armies of God are composed of the countless multitudes of Angels ordered by God to execute the sentences pronounced against His enemies, and to destroy them. Our fathers heard the Son of God threatening the world with these terrible punishments, and we, their children, have witnessed their fulfilment. Where are now the cruel persecutors of so many holy Martyrs? Where are the proud princes who lifted up their arrogant heads against God, and boasted of their worldly glory? By the death of the holy Martyrs the Christian faith has been spread abroad throughout the whole world; whereas the remembrance even of their persecutors has disappeared with their sudden death. Behold the terrible effects of God's wrath, which is spoken of in the parables of our Lord!

V. And the King, Who invites guests to the marriage of His Son, will easily fill the places of those who refuse to come. For should the word of God remain fruitless in many, it will yet find docile and ready hearts making good use of it. We read: *Then he said to his servants: The marriage*

indeed is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And our Lord continues in the parable: *And his servants, going forth into the ways, gathered together all they found, both bad and good, and the marriage was filled with guests.* In these different kinds of persons brought to the marriage is seen an image of the Church, including both good and bad Christians. Are you among the good? then during all your life bear generously the presence of the bad. Be not frightened at the enormous number of the wicked, nor saddened by the small number of the just; for *wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it l* (Matt vii. 13,14).

VI. *The King,* says the Gospel, *went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment.* What is the meaning of this wedding garment? It is charity.

He that came to the marriage without a wedding garment had indeed the true faith, but he had not charity. It was with the garment of love that the Son of God came to celebrate the marriage union with His Bride, the Church, and in this bond of love He continues to be united with His elect. Thus St. John says: *God so loved the world*, *as to give His only begotten Son* (John iii, 16). Our Saviour, having come to us in love, indicates clearly enough that the wedding garment, in which we are to appear at His marriage-feast, is true charity. Those among you, who believe and belong to the communion of the Church, but have not charity, are in the marriage-hall indeed, but are not covered with the wedding garment. When you are invited to a wedding, beloved brethren, do you not take off your everyday garments and put on your best? By this you intend to show the great interest you take in the happiness and joy of the bride and bridegroom. You dare not appear in garments by which you would be despised by the other guests.

Yet, it is God Who invites you to His marriage feast, and you appear without the garment of love. Heaven resounds with songs of praise of the angelic choirs, when the elect are received into their company; but you, assisting by faith at their festivities — you are not ashamed to appear without the wedding garment of love, by which alone you find favour with God and His Angels.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL: John iv, 46-53. *At that time:* There was a certain ruler, whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He, having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee^ went to Him, and prayed Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said unto him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to Him: Lord, come down before that my son die. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going down, his servants met him, and they brought word, saying that his son lived. He asked, therefore, of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father, therefore, knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: Thy son liveth; and himself believed and his whole house.

HOMILY BY POPE ST. GREGORY, PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF SS. NEREUS AND ACHILLES ON THEIR FESTIVAL.

TWENTY-EIGHTH HOMILY ON THE GOSPELS.

I. The Gospel lesson which you have just heard, my brethren, stands in need of no explanation. However, lest I should seem to pass it by in idle silence, I will say a few words thereon, but that rather by way of exhortation than of explanation. Indeed, there seems to me to be but one point calling for explanation, namely, this: When the ruler came to Jesus and besought Him to come down and heal his son, how is it that he heard Jesus say: *Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not?* The very fact that the ruler came and asked Jesus to heal his son is a proof that he believed. Had he not believed Him to be a Saviour, he would not have asked Him to save his son. Yet Jesus said: *Unless you see signs and wonders*, *you believe not.* He had not seen any signs, yet he believed. Now, think of his prayer, and you will clearly understand wherein his faith was weak. *He prayed Him that He would come down and heal his son.* He asked for the corporal presence of Him Who is spiritually present everywhere. He did not believe enough in Jesus, since he thought His bodily presence was required for the healing of his son. Had his faith been perfect, he would doubtless have known that God is everywhere. His faith was, therefore, imperfect for attributing the virtue of healing, not to Christ's Majesty, but to His bodily presence. Thus, even while he was asking for his son's health, his faith was not yet sound. He believed concerning Him, Whom he had come to ask, that He was mighty enough to save, yet he thought that at that very moment Jesus was absent from his son. But the Lord, being asked to go, showed that He is there, wherever He is called on; and He gave health by a single command, He Who by a single act of His will had created all things.

II. What we are to consider in this case is the answer given by Jesus, on another occasion, to the centurion asking Him to heal his servant grievously tormented by the palsy. According to the Evangelist, our Lord said: *I will come and heal him* (Matt viii. 7). How is it that our Lord, being asked by the ruler to come to his house and heal his son, refused to go, whereas He promised the centurion to go down and heal his servant, though He had not been asked to come down and see that servant? The reason is that the Lord wished to put down our pride, that sees and esteems in others their dignities and riches, more than their nature, the image of God. Indeed, when we consider man in the things without, like riches and honours, we do not see what he is in himself, neither do we know his real merit, when considering only his body, that seems contemptible on account of its infirmities.

Our Saviour judges differently. To give us to understand that whatsoever seems great in the eyes of the world, is often low and contemptible, and whatsoever is despicable in the estimation of the worldly-minded, is not so before God, He goes to the servant of the centurion, whilst refusing to visit the son of the ruler.

III. Indeed, should we be asked by a servant to go down to him, our pride would tell us not to do such a thing. To yield to his prayer would be to lower ourselves, to esteem our honour very little; certainly such a place as the dwelling of an humble menial does not deserve this condescension. Yet there we see God Himself coming down from heaven, and not despising to go to a poor servant, whilst we, being nothing but living dust, feel great difficulty in humbling ourselves. We are the more to be despised, since, wishing to guard our honour before the world, we fear not the eyes of that Divine Majesty searching the thoughts and hearts of men. Hence the Son of God said to the Pharisees: *You are they who justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is high before men, is an abomination before God* (Luke xvi. 15). Carefully consider those words,

beloved brethren. If it is true that the things which seem great to men, are abominable before God, then our conclusion will be that our thoughts are despised by God, as much as they are esteemed by men. Humility produces a different effect, since it makes us the greater before God, the less we are considered by men. Now let us look at our doings; let not even our most praiseworthy undertakings flatter our pride; neither let our vanity be tickled by honours and riches. For if we are puffed up by our possessions, whatsoever they may be, we shall be despised by God. Speaking of the humble, the Psalmist says: *The Lord is the keeper of little ones* (Ps cxiv. 6). The little ones are the humble. And, speaking of his own experience, he adds: *I was humbled*, *and He delivered me (ibid.),* IV. Now, consider these truths well, beloved brethren, and carefully ponder on them. When honouring your brethren, look not so much at their perishable riches, as at the fact that men are the image and likeness of God, their Creator. Honour them for the sake of God. Yet this will not be possible, as long as your proud thoughts are not banished from your hearts. He that esteems himself on account of passing things cannot honour another for his durable goods. Consider as nothing what you *have*, but think of what you *are,* for the world you love will one day perish. The Saints, before whose tomb we are now standing, despised the flowers brought forth by the world, and trampled upon them. A long life, good health, a prosperous state, a numerous posterity, tranquillity in continual peace, were flowers at which their hearts did not rejoice; they blossomed in the world, but in their own hearts they were withered. Like a tree drying up before our eyes, the world is getting weaker and darker, yet it is still blossoming in our hearts and minds. Everywhere there is death, everywhere mourning, everywhere desolation! We are struck from all sides; we are filled with bitterness; nevertheless, with lamentable blindness, we desire and love the bitter fruits of carnal concupiscence. The world flies away, and we run after it; it is shaken under

our feet, and we cling to it; and since we cannot prevent its fall, we still take hold of it, and are thrown into the same abyss. At the beginning we were attracted by the deceitful world; now, seeing it is so full of scourges and misery, we ought to be brought back to God by this very world. Reflect upon all this, and know that the things disappearing in time are to be considered as nothing. By the fall of all the things once existing in the world, we understand that they were but a shadow now vanished, for they are destroyed. The ruins of those splendid monuments, which once were thought of as defying all future times, clearly tell us that nothing is durable in this world. These are subjects worthy of your meditations; such thoughts will encourage you to have only contempt for worldly greatness, and to desire what is eternal. They will also help you to obtain that eternal glory revealed to you by faith through the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord, Who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth one God, world without end. Amen.

The Latin Texts



Caelian Hill, Rome — Gregory I's family resided in a villa on the Caelian Hill, fronting the same street as the former palaces of the Roman emperors on the Palatine Hill opposite. On his father's death, Gregory converted the villa into a monastery, which he dedicated to Saint Andrew.

List of Latin Texts

In this section of the eBook, readers can view the original Latin texts of Gregory's works. You may wish to Bookmark this page for future reference.

CONTENTS

Moralia

CONTENTS

Epistola

In qua operis sui tempus, occasionem, divisionem, institutum ac dicendi et interpretandi modum explicat.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

Opus subsequens quando inchoatum, qua occasione, quibus hortatoribus, quidve rogitantibus. 1 Reverendissimo et sanctissimo fratri Leandro coepiscopo, Gregorius servus servorum Dei. Dudum te, frater beatissime, in Constantinopolitana urbe cognoscens, cum me illic sedis apostolicae responsa constringerent, et te illuc injuncta pro causis fidei Visigothorum legatio perduxisset, omne in tuis auribus, quod mihi de me displicebat, exposui: quoniam diu longeque conversionis gratiam distuli, et postquam coelesti sum desiderio afflatus saeculari habitu contegi melius putavi (Joan. Diac., l. I, c. 27). Aperiebatur enim mihi jam de aeternitatis amore quid quaererem, sed inolita me consuetudo devinxerat, ne 2 exteriorem cultum mutarem. Cumque adhuc me cogeret animus praesenti mundo quasi specie tenus deservire, coeperunt multa contra me ex ejusdem mundi cura succrescere, ut in eo jam non specie, sed, quod est gravius, mente retinerer. Quae tandem cuncta sollicite fugiens, portum monasterii petii, et relictis quae mundi sunt, ut frustra tunc credidi, ex hujus vitae naufragio nudus evasi. Quia enim plerumque navem incaute religatam, etiam de sinu tutissimi littoris unda excutit, cum tempestas excrescit, repente me, sub praetextu ecclesiastici ordinis, in causarum saecularium pelago reperi; et quietem monasterii, quia habendo non fortiter tenui, quam stricte tenenda fuerit, perdendo cognovi. Nam cum mihi ad percipiendum sacri altaris ministerium, obedientiae virtus opponitur, hoc sub Ecclesiae colore susceptum est, quod 3 si inulte liceat, iterum fugiendo deflectatur. Postque hoc nolenti mihi atque renitenti, cum grave esset altaris ministerium, etiam

pondus est curae pastoralis injunctum. Quod tanto nunc durius tolero, quanto me ei imparem sentiens, in nulla fiduciae consolatione respiro. Quia enim mundi jam tempora, malis crebrescentibus, termino propinquante turbata sunt; ipsi nos, qui internis mysteriis deservire credimur, curis exterioribus implicamur: sicut eo quoque tempore, quo ad ministerium altaris accessi, hoc de me, ignorante me, actum est, ut sacri ordinis pondus acciperem, quatenus in terreno palatio licentius excubarem; ubi me scilicet multi ex monasterio fratres mei, germana vincti charitate, secuti sunt. Quod divina factum dispensatione conspicio, ut eorum semper exemplo ad orationis placidum littus, quasi anchorae fune restringerer, cum causarum saecularium incessabili impulsu fluctuarem. Ad illorum quippe consortium, velut ad tutissimi portus sinum, terreni actus volumina fluctusque fugiebam; et licet illud me ministerium ex monasterio abstractum, a pristinae quietis vita, mucrone suae occupationis exstinxerat; inter eos tamen per studiosae lectionis alloquium, quotidianae me aspiratio compunctionis animabat. Tunc eisdem fratribus, etiam cogente te, placuit, sicut ipse meministi, ut librum beati Job exponere importuna me petitione compellerent; et prout veritas vires infunderet, eis mysteria tantae profunditatis aperirem. Qui hoc quoque mihi in onere suae petitionis addiderunt, ut non solum verba historiae per allegoriarum sensus excuterem, sed allegoriarum sensus protinus in exercitium moralitatis inclinarem; adhuc aliquid gravius adjungentes, ut intellecta quaeque testimoniis cingerem; et prolata testimonia, si implicita fortasse viderentur, interpositione superadditae expositionis enodarem.

CAPUT II.

Qua animi demissione, qua in Deum fiducia. Idem opus qua ratione retractatum, absolutum ac divisum. Quos rimetur sensus. — Mox vero, ut in obscuro hoc opere, atque ante nos hactenus indiscusso, ad tanta me pertrahi

ac talia cognovi, solo auditus pondere victus, fateor, lassatusque succubui. Sed repente inter formidinem devotionemque deprehensus, cum in largitorem munerum oculos mentis attollerem, cunctatione postposita, illico certus attendi, quia impossibile esse non poterat, quod de fraternis mihi cordibus charitas imperabat. Fore quippe idoneum me ad ista desperavi: sed ipsa mei desperatione robustior, ad illum spem protinus erexi, per quem aperta est lingua mutorum, qui linguas infantium facit disertas (Sap. X, 21); qui immensos brutosque asinae ruditus, per sensatos humani colloquii distinxit modos. Quid igitur mirum, si intellectum stulto homini praebeat, qui veritatem suam, cum voluerit, etiam per ora jumentorum narrat (Num. XXII, 28)? Hujus ergo robore considerationis accinctus, ariditatem meam ad indagandum fontem tantae profunditatis excitavi. Et quamvis eorum, quibus exponere compellebar, longe me vita transcenderet, injuriosum tamen esse non credidi, si fluenta usibus hominum plumbi fistula ministraret. Unde mox eisdem coram positis fratribus, priora libri sub oculis dixi; et quia tempus paulo vacantius reperi, posteriora tractando 4 dictavi. Cumque mihi spatia largiora suppeterent, multa augens, pauca subtrahens, atque ita ut inventa sunt, nonnulla derelinquens, ea quae me loquente excepta sub oculis fuerant, per libros emendando composui, quia et cum postrema dictarem, quo stylo prima dixeram, sollicite attendi. Egi ergo, ut et ea quae locutus sum, studiosa emendatione transcurrens, quasi ad similitudinem dictatus erigerem; et ea quae dictaveram, non longe a colloquentis sermone discreparent; quatenus dum hoc tenditur, illud attrahitur, edita modo dissimili res non dissimilis formaretur; quamvis tertiam hujus operis partem ut colloquendo protuli, pene ita dereliqui, quia cum me fratres ad alia pertrahunt, hanc subtilius emendari noluerunt. Quibus nimirum multa jubentibus, dum parere modo per expositionis ministerium, modo per contemplationis ascensum, modo per moralitatis instrumentum volui, opus hoc per triginta et quinque volumina extensum, in

sex Codicibus explevi. Unde et in eo saepe quasi postponere ordinem expositionis invenior, et paulo diutius contemplationis latitudini ac moralitatis insudo. Sed tamen quisquis de Deo loquitur, curet necesse est ut quidquid audientium mores instruit, rimetur; et hunc rectum loquendi ordinem deputet, si cum opportunitas aedificationis exigit, ab eo se, quod loqui coeperat, utiliter derivet. Sacri enim tractator eloquii morem fluminis debet imitari. Fluvius quippe dum per alveum defluit, si valles concavas ex latere contingit, in eas protinus sui impetus cursum divertit; cumque illas sufficienter impleverit, repente sese in alveum refundit. Sic nimirum, sic divini verbi esse tractator debet, ut cum de qualibet re disserit, si fortasse juxta positam occasionem congruae aedificationis invenerit, quasi ad vicinam vallem linguae undas intorqueat; et cum subjunctae instructionis campum sufficienter infuderit, ad sermonis propositi alveum recurrat.

CAPUT III.

Quo ordine singulos sensus explicet. Allegorico interdum necessario inhaerendum. — Sciendum vero est, quod quaedam historica expositione transcurrimus, et per allegoriam quaedam typica investigatione perscrutamur; quaedam per sola allegoricae moralitatis instrumenta discutimus; nonnulla autem per cuncta simul sollicitius exquirentes, tripliciter indagamus. Nam primum quidem fundamenta historiae ponimus; deinde per significationem typicam in arcem fidei fabricam mentis erigimus; ad extremum quoque per moralitatis gratiam, quasi superducto aedificium colore vestimus. Vel certe quid veritatis dicta, nisi reficiendae mentis alimenta credenda sunt? Quae modis alternantibus multipliciter disserendo, ferculum ori offerimus; ut invitati lectoris quasi convivae nostri fastidium repellamus, qui dum sibi multa oblata considerat, quod elegantius decernit, assumat. Aliquando vero exponere aperta historiae verba negligimus, ne tardius ad obscura veniamus: aliquando autem intelligi juxta

litteram nequeunt; quia superficie tenus accepta, nequaquam instructionem legentibus, sed errorem gignunt. Ecce etenim dicitur: Sub quo curvantur qui portant orbem (Job. IX, 13). Et de tanto viro quis nesciat quod nequaquam vanas poetarum fabulas sequitur, ut 5 mundi molem subvehi giganteo sudore suspicetur? Qui rursum pressus percussionibus dicit: Elegit suspendium anima mea, et mortem ossa mea (Job. VII, 15). Et quis rectum sapiens credat virum tanti praeconii, quem videlicet constat ab interno judice praemia pro patientiae virtute recipere, decrevisse inter verbera suspendio vitam finire? Aliquando etiam, ne fortasse intelligi juxta litteram debeant, ipsa se verba litterae impugnant. Ait namque: Pereat dies in qua natus sum, et nox in qua dictum est: Conceptus est homo (Job. III, 2). Et paulo post subjicit: Occupet eam caligo, et involvatur amaritudine (Ibid., 5). Atque in ejusdem noctis maledictione subjungit: Sit nox illa solitaria (Ib., 7). Qui nimirum nativitatis dies, ipso impulsu temporis evolutus, stare non poterat. Quo igitur pacto hunc involvi caligine optabat? Elapsus quippe, jam non erat; et tamen si in rerum natura subsisteret, sentire amaritudinem nequaquam posset. Constat ergo quod nullo modo de die insensibili dicitur, qui sensu percuti amaritudinis optatur. Et si conceptionis nox reliquis noctibus conjuncta discesserat, quo pacto hanc fieri solitariam exoptat? Quae ut a lapsu temporis figi non potuit, ita etiam nec a reliquarum noctium conjunctione separari. Qui rursum dicit: Usquequo non parcis mihi, nec dimittis me, ut glutiam salivam meam (Job. VII, 19)? Et tamen paulo superius dixerat: Quae prius tangere nolebat anima mea, nunc prae angustia cibi mei sunt (Job. VI, 7). Quis autem nesciat salivam facilius posse glutiri quam cibum? Qui itaque se sumere cibum denuntiat, incredibile est valde quo ordine glutire posse salivam negat. Atque iterum dicit: Peccavi, quid faciam tibi, o custos hominum (Job. VII, 20)? vel certe: Consumere me vis peccatis adolescentiae meae (Job. XIII, 26)? Et tamen alia responsione subjungit: Neque enim reprehendit me cor meum in omni vita mea (Job.

XXVII, 6). Quo igitur pacto a corde suo minime in omni vita reprehenditur, qui peccasse se publica voce testatur? Neque enim simul unquam conveniunt culpa operis, et irreprehensibilitas cordis. Sed nimirum verba litterae, dum collata sibi convenire nequeunt, aliud in se aliquid quod quaeratur ostendunt, ac si quibusdam vocibus dicant: Dum nostra nos conspicitis superficie destrui, hoc in nobis quaerite, quod ordinatum sibique congruens apud nos valeat intus inveniri.

CAPUT IV.

Aliquando litterali sensui inhaerendum. — Aliquando autem qui verba accipere historiae juxta litteram negligit, oblatum sibi veritatis lumen abscondit; cumque laboriose invenire in eis aliud intrinsecus appetit, hoc quod foris sine difficultate assequi poterat, amittit. Sanctus namque vir dicit: Si negavi quod volebant pauperibus, et oculos viduae exspectare feci; si comedi buccellam meam solus, et non comedit pupillus ex ea; si despexi praetereuntem, eo quod non habuerit indumentum, et absque operimento pauperem; si non benedixerunt mihi latera ejus, et de velleribus ovium mearum calefactus est (Job. XXXI, 16 et seq.). Quae videlicet si ad allegoriae sensum violenter inflectimus, cuncta ejus misericordiae facta vacuamus. Divinus etenim sermo sicut mysteriis prudentes exercet, sic plerumque superficie simplices refovet. Habet in publico unde parvulos nutriat, servat in secreto unde mentes sublimium in admiratione suspendat. Quasi quidam quippe est 6 fluvius, ut ita dixerim, planus et altus, in quo et agnus ambulet, et elephas natet. Ut ergo uniuscujusque loci opportunitas postulat, ita se per studium expositionis ordo immutat; quatenus tanto verius sensum divinae locutionis inveniat, quanto ut res quaeque exegerit, per causarum species alternat.

CAPUT V.

Gregorius aegritudine laborans opus sequens perfecit. Artem loquendi neglexit. Quibus utatur Scripturae versionibus. — Quam videlicet expositionem recensendam tuae beatitudini, non quia velut dignam debui, sed quia te petente memini promisisse, transmisi. In qua quidquid tua sanctitas tepidum incultumque repererit, tanto mihi celerrime indulgeat, quanto hoc me aegrum dicere non ignorat. Nam dum molestia corpus atteritur, affecta mente etiam dicendi studia languescunt. Multa quippe annorum jam curricula devolvuntur, quod crebris viscerum doloribus crucior, horis momentisque omnibus fracta stomachi virtute lassesco, lentis quidem, sed tamen continuis febribus anhelo. Interque haec dum sollicitus penso quia, Scriptura teste, Omnis filius qui a Deo recipitur, flagellatur (Hebr. XII, 6), quo malis praesentibus durius deprimor, eo de aeterna certius praesumptione respiro. Et fortasse hoc divinae providentiae consilium fuit, ut percussum Job percussus exponerem, et flagellati mentem melius per flagella sentirem. Sed tamen recte considerantibus liquet, quia adversitate non modica laboris mei studiis in hoc molestia corporalis obsistit, quod carnis virtus cum locutionis ministerium exhibere vix sufficit, mens digne non potest intimare quod sentit. Quid namque est officium corporis, nisi organum cordis? Et quamlibet peritus sit cantandi artifex, explere artem non valet, nisi ad hanc sibi et ministeria exteriora concordent: quia nimirum canticum, quod docta manus imperat, quassata organa proprie non resultant; nec artem flatus exprimit, si scissa rimis fistula stridet. Quanto itaque gravius expositionis meae qualitas premitur, in qua dicendi gratiam sic fractura organi dissipat, ut hanc peritiae ars nulla componat? Quaeso autem ut hujus operis dicta percurrens, in his verborum folia non requiras, quia per sacra eloquia ab eorum tractatoribus infructuosae loquacitatis levitas studiose compescitur, dum in templo Dei nemus plantari prohibetur (Deut. XVI, 21). Et cuncti procul dubio scimus, quia quoties in foliis male laetae segetis culmi proficiunt, minori plenitudine spicarum grana turgescunt.

Unde et ipsam loquendi artem, quam magisteria disciplinae exterioris insinuant, servare despexi. Nam sicut hujus quoque epistolae tenor enuntiat, non metacismi collisionem fugio, non barbarismi confusionem devito, situs motusque et praepositionum casus servare contemno, quia indignum (Dist. 38, c. Indignum) vehementer existimo, ut verba coelestis oraculi restringam sub regulis Donati. Neque enim haec ab ulus interpretibus, in Scripturae sacrae auctoritate servata sunt. Ex qua nimirum quia nostra expositio oritur, dignum profecto est ut quasi edita soboles speciem suae matris imitetur. Novam vero translationem dissero; sed cum probationis causa exigit, nunc novam, nunc veterem per testimonia assumo; ut quia sedes apostolica, cui Deo auctore praesideo, utraque utitur, mei quoque labor studii ex utraque fulciatur. Praefatio In qua quae toto opere edisserenda sunt paucis perstringit.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

7 1. Quis scriptor libri Job. — Inter multos saepe quaeritur, quis libri beati Job scriptor habeatur. Et alii quidem Moysen, alii unum quemlibet ex prophetis scriptorem hujus operis fuisse suspicantur. Quia enim in libro Geneseos (Genes. XXXVI, 33.) Jobab de stirpe Esau descendisse, et Bale filio Beor in regnum successisse describitur, hunc beatum Job longe ante Moysi tempora exstitisse crediderunt, morem profecto sacri eloquii nescientes, quia in superioribus suis partibus solet breviter longe post secutura perstringere, cum studet ad alia subtilius enumeranda properare. Unde et illic Jobab, priusquam reges in Israel existerent, fuisse memoratur. Nequaquam ergo exstitisse ante legem cognoscitur, qui Israeliticorum judicum tempore fuisse signatur. Quod dum quidam minus caute considerant, Moysen gestorum illius quasi longe antepositi scriptorem putant; ut videlicet is qui potuit ad eruditionem nostram legis praecepta edere, ipse credatur etiam ex gentilis viri historia, virtutis ad nos exempla

mandasse. Nonnulli vero, ut dictum est, scriptorem hujus operis unum quemlibet ex prophetis arbitrantur: asserentes quod nullus tam mystica Dei verba cognoscere potuit, nisi cujus mentem prophetiae spiritus ad superna sublevavit. 2. Auctor Spiritus sanctus. — Sed quis haec scripserit, valde supervacue quaeritur, cum tamen auctor libri Spiritus sanctus fideliter credatur. Ipse igitur haec scripsit, qui scribenda dictavit. Ipse scripsit, qui et in illius opere inspirator exstitit, et per scribentis vocem imitanda ad nos ejus facta transmisit. Si magni cujusdam viri susceptis epistolis legeremus verba, sed quo calamo fuissent scripta quaereremus, ridiculum profecto esset epistolarum auctorem scire sensumque cognoscere, sed quali calamo earum verba impressa fuerint indagare. Cum ergo rem cognoscimus, ejusque rei Spiritum sanctum auctorem tenemus, quia scriptorem quaerimus, quid aliud agimus, nisi legentes litteras, de calamo percontamur? 3. Quo inspirante Job sua certamina descripsit. — Arbitrari tamen verius possumus, quod idem beatus Job, qui certamina spiritalis pugnae sustinuit, etiam consummatae suae victoriae gesta narravit. Nec movere debet quod in eodem libro dicitur, Dixit Job; vel, haec atque illa pertulit Job. Moris 8 enim Scripturae sacrae est ut ipsi qui scribunt, sic de se in illa quasi de aliis loquantur. Hinc est enim quod Moyses ait: Erat Moyses vir mitissimus super omnes homines, qui morabantur in terra (Num. XII, 3). Hinc Joannes dicit: Discipulus ille, quem diligebat Jesus (Joan. XIX, 26). Hinc Lucas ait: Quod ambularent duo ex discipulis in via, Cleophas et alius (Luc. XXIV, 13); quem profecto alium, dum tam studiose tacuit, ut quidam dicunt, seipsum fuisse monstravit. Scriptores igitur sacri eloquii, quia impulsu sancti Spiritus agitantur, sic de se in illo testimonium tanquam de aliis proferunt. Ergo sanctus Spiritus per Moysen locutus est de Moyse; sanctus Spiritus per Joannem locutus est de Joanne. Paulus quoque quia non ex se ipso loqueretur, insinuat dicens: An experimentum quaeritis ejus qui in me loquitur Christus (II Cor. XIII, 3)? Hinc est quod angelus qui Moysi

apparuisse describitur, modo angelus, modo Dominus memoratur: angelus videlicet, propter hoc, quod exterius loquendo serviebat; Dominus autem dicitur, quia interius praesidens loquendi efficaciam ministrabat. Cum ergo loquens ab interiori regitur, et per obsequium angelus, et per inspirationem Dominus nominatur. Hinc David ait: Attendite popule meus legem meam; inclinate aurem vestram in verba oris mei (Psal. LXXVII, 1). Non enim lex David, aut populus David, sed personam ejus, ex quo loquebatur, assumens, ipsius auctoritate loquitur, cujus inspiratione replebatur. Hoc quotidie fieri in Ecclesia cernimus, si vigilanter intuemur. Nam stans in medio populi lector clamat: Ego sum Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, et Deus Jacob (Exod. III, 6). Et quod ipse Deus sit, vere profecto non dicit; nec tamen per hoc quod dicit, veritatis regulam deserit; quia cui ministerium lectione exhibet, ejus dominium voce praetendit. Itaque scriptores sacri eloquii, quia repleti sancto Spiritu super se trahuntur, quasi extra semetipsos fiunt; et sic de se sententias, quasi de aliis proferunt. Unde et beatus Job sancto Spiritu afflatus, potuit sua gesta, quae erant videlicet supernae aspirationis dona, quasi non sua scribere: quia eo alterius erant quae loquebatur, quo homo loquebatur quae Dei sunt; et eo alter quae erant illius loquebatur, quo Spiritus sanctus loquebatur quae hominis sunt.

CAPUT II.

9 4. Praecepta homini data. — Sed jam debemus ista postponere, et ad consideranda sacrae historiae gesta properare. Omnis homo eo ipso quo homo est, suum intelligere debet auctorem; cujus voluntati tanto magis serviat, quanto se quia de se ipso nihil sit pensat; ecce autem conditi Deum considerare neglеximus. Adhibita sunt praecepta, praeceptis quoque obtemperare noluimus. Adjunguntur exempla, ipsa quoque imitari exempla declinamus, quae edidisse nobis positos sub lege conspicimus. Quia enim Deus aperte quibusdam sub lege positis locutus est, quasi alienos nos ab

eisdem praeceptis aspicimus, quibus haec specialiter locutus non est. Unde ad confutandam impudentiam nostram, gentilis homo ad exemplum deducitur; ut quia obedire homo legi sub lege positus despicit, ejus saltem comparatione evigilet, qui sine lege legaliter vixit. Erranti igitur homini data est lex; erranti vero etiam sub lege adducitur testimonium eorum qui extra legem sunt, ut quia conditionis nostrae ordinem servare noluimus, praeceptis admoneremur; et quia praeceptis obedire contempsimus, exemplis confunderemur; nec, ut dictum est, eorum exemplis, quos lex astringeret, sed quos lex a peccato nulla cohiberet. 5. Praecepta contemnenti addita exempla Job hominis gentilis. — Circumscripsit nos divina providentia, circumvenit excusationem nostram; undique conclusus est aditus tergiversationis humanae. Homo gentilis, homo sine lege, ad medium adducitur, ut eorum qui sub lege sunt pravitas confundatur. Quod bene per prophetam ac breviter dicendo ostenditur: Erubesce, Sidon, ait mare (Isai. XXIII, 4). In Sidone quippe figuratur stabilitas in lege positorum - in mari autem, vita gentilium. Erubesce ergo, Sidon, ait mare, quia ex vita gentilium redarguitur vita sub lege positorum, atque ex actione saecularium confunditur actio religiosorum: dum illi etiam promittendo non servant quae in praeceptis audiunt; et isti vivendo ea custodiunt, in quibus nequaquam mandatis legalibus astringuntur. Qua vero auctoritate liber iste sit praeditus, ipsa sacrarum paginarum soliditas attestatur, dum per Ezechielem prophetam dicitur (Ezech. XIV, 14), quod tres solummodo viri liberentur, Noe scilicet, Daniel et Job. Nec immerito inter Hebraeorum vitas, in auctoritatis reverentiam vita justi gentilis adducitur, quia Redemptor noster, sicut ad redemptionem Judaeorum et gentilium venit, ita se Judaeorum et gentilium prophetari vocibus voluit; ut per utrumque populum diceretur, qui pro utroque populo quandoque pateretur. 6. Ejus virtus, quo magis fragraret, flagellis attrita. — Vir itaque iste summis viribus fultus, sibi notus erat et Deo: qui si non flagellaretur, a nobis nullatenus agnosceretur. Virtus quippe

etiam per quietem se exercuit, sed virtutis opinio commota per flagella fragravit. Et qui quietus in se ipso quod erat continuit, commotus ad notitiam omnium odorem suae fortitudinis aspersit. Sicut enim unguenta latius redolere nesciunt nisi commota, et sicut aromata fragrantiam suam non nisi cum incenduntur expandunt; ita sancti viri omne quod virtutibus redolent in tribulationibus innotescunt. Unde et recte in Evangelio dicitur: Si habueritis fidem tanquam granum sinapis, dicetis huic monti: Transi hinc, et transibit (Matth. XVII, 19). Granum quippe 10 sinapis nisi conteratur, nequaquam vis virtutis ejus agnoscitur. Nam non contritum lene est: si vero conteratur, inardescit, et quod in se acerrimum latebat, ostendit. Sic unusquisque vir sanctus, cum non pulsatur, despicabilis ac lenis aspicitur: si qua vero illum tritura persecutionis opprimat, mox omne, quod calidum sapit, ostentat; atque in fervorem virtutis vertitur, quidquid in illo ante despicabile infirmumque videbatur; quodque in se per tranquillitatis tempora libens operuerat, exagitatus tribulationibus coactus innotescit. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: In die mandavit Dominus misericordiam suam, et in nocte declaravit (Ps. XLI, 9). Misericordia enim Domini in die mandatur, quia in tranquillo tempore cognoscendo percipitur; in nocte vero declaratur, quia donum, quod in tranquillitate sumitur, in tribulationibus manifestatur.

CAPUT III.

7. Virtutes Job recensentur. — Sed subtilius perscrutandum est cur tot flagella pertulit, qui tantam virtutum custodiam sine reprehensione servavit. Humilitatem quippe habuit, quia et ipse testatur: Si contempsi judicium subire cum servo meo, et ancilla mea, cum disceptarent adversum me (Job. XXXI, 13). Hospitalitatem exhibuit, sicut ipse perhibet, dicens: Foris non mansit peregrinus, ostium meum viatori patuit (Job. XXXI, 32). Disciplinae vigorem tenuit, sicut ipse indicat dicens: Principes cessabant loqui, et

digitum superponebant ori suo (Job. XXIX, 9). Mansuetudinem in vigore custodivit, sicut ipse fatetur, dicens: Cumque sederem quasi rex, circumstante exercitu, eram tamen moerentium consolator (Ibid., 25). Eleemosynarum largitatem amplexus est, sicut ipse insinuat dicens: Si comedi buccellam meam solus, et non comedit pupillus ex ea (Job. XXXI, 17). Cum igitur omnia virtutum mandata perficeret, unum ei deerat, ut etiam flagellatus agere gratias sciret. Notum erat quia servire Deo inter dona noverat: sed dignum fuerat ut districtio severitatis inquireret utrum devotus Deo et inter flagella permaneret. Poena quippe interrogat, si quietus quis veraciter amat. Quem hostis quidem ut deficeret petiit, sed ut proficeret accepit. Fieri Dominus benigne permisit quod diabolus inique postulavit. Nam cum idcirco illum expetisset hostis ut consumeret, tentando egit ut ejus merita augeret. Scriptum quippe est: In omnibus his non peccavit Job labiis suis (Job. I, 22). Et quidem quaedam verba responsionum illius imperitis lectoribus aspera resonant, quia sanctorum dicta pie intelligere, sicut dicuntur, ignorant; et quia animum dolentis et justi in semetipsis assumere nesciunt, ideo doloris verba bene interpretari non possunt. Mentem quippe patientis bene pensare novit condescensio passionis. 8. Ab imperitorum criminationibus Dei judicio absolvitur. — Credunt ergo beatum Job in suis sermonibus deliquisse, minus caute intuentes, quia si beati Job responsa redarguunt, falsam etiam de eo Domini sententiam fuisse testantur. Diabolo namque a Domino dicitur: Considerasti servum meum Job, quod non sit ei similis super terram: vir simplex et rectus ac timens Deum, et recedens a malo (Vers. 8)? Cui a diabolo mox respondetur: Nunquid gratis Job colit Deum? Nonne tu vallasti eum cunctamque familiam ejus? Sed mitte manum tuam, et tange eum, si non in faciem benedixerit tibi (Vers. 10). Hostis itaque in beato Job vires suas exercuit, sed tamen certamen contra 11 Deum assumpsit. Inter Deum itaque et diabolum beatus Job in medio materia certaminis fuit.. Quisquis ergo sanctum virum inter flagella positum, dictis

suis peccasse asserit, quid aliud, quam Deum, qui pro illo proposuerat, perdidisse reprehendit? Ipse quippe in se tentati causam suscipere voluit, qui eum et ante flagella praetulit, et praeferens tentari per flagella permisit. Si ergo excessisse Job dicitur, laudator illius succubuisse perhibetur, quamvis eum nullatenus deliquisse etiam dona testantur. Quis enim nesciat quod culpis non praemia, sed poenae debeantur? Qui ergo duplicia recipere quae amiserat meruit, ex remuneratione edocuit quia nequaquam vitium sed virtus fuit omne quod dixit. Assertioni quoque huic adhuc adjungitur, quod ipse pro amicis delinquentibus intercedit. In gravibus namque peccatis quis positus (Causa 3, q. 7, c. In gravibus), dum suis premitur, aliena non diluit. Mundus ergo ostenditur esse de se, qui emundationem potuit obtinere pro aliis. Si vero hoc quibusdam displicet, quod bona sua ipse narravit, sciendum est quia inter tot rerum damna, inter tot corporis vulnera, inter tot pignorum funera, amicis ad consolationem venientibus, et ad increpationem prorumpentibus, de vita sua desperare cogebatur; et quem tot detrimenta afflixerant, contumeliosa insuper increpantium verba feriebant. Hi namque, qui ad consolandum venerant, dum quasi ejus injustitiae exprobrabant, desperare eum de semetipso funditus compellebant. Quod ergo bona sua ad mentem revocat, non se per jactantiam elevat; sed quasi collapsum inter verba et vulnera ad spem animum reformat. Gravi enim desperationis telo mens percutitur, cum supernae irae tribulationibus premitur, et foris linguarum opprobriis urgetur. Beatus igitur Job tot dolorum jaculatione confossus, dum labefactari per opprobria timuit, ad statum se fiduciae ex anteacta vita confirmando revocavit. Nequaquam ergo in arrogantiae vitium cecidit, quia contra internum desperationis impulsum, per exteriora praeconiorum suorum verba pugnavit; ut dum bona quae fecerat diceret, nequaquam de bono quod quaesierat desperaret.

CAPUT IV.

9. Omnia Satanae machinamenta contra Job erecta. — Sed jam nunc ipsum ordinem tentationis ejus exsequamur. Inimicus saeviens, et sancti viri validissimum pectus debellare contendens, cunctas contra eum tentationum machinas erexit; abstulit substantiam, interfecit filios, percussit corpus, instigavit uxorem, amicos ad consolationem adduxit; sed in asperitatem increpationis excitavit: alium quoque amicum durius increpantem, in extrema et acriori invectione servavit, ut saltem crebrius feriendo cor attingeret, quod novo vulnere semper iteraret. Quia enim in saeculo potentem vidit, damnis substantiae eum moveri credidit, quem non concussum ex filiorum morte pulsavit. Videns autem quia ad augmentum divinae laudis etiam ex vulnere crevit orbitatis, petiit feriendam salutem corporis. Intuens etiam quia per dolorem corporis pervenire nequiverit ad passionem mentis, instigavit uxorem. Civitatem quippe, quam expugnare appetiit, nimis munitam vidit; et idcirco exterius tot plagas inferens, quasi foras exercitum admovit; animum vero uxoris in verbis malae persuasionis 12 accendens, quasi intus civium corda corrupit. Ex bellis enim exterioribus discimus quid de interioribus sentiamus. Inimicus namque saeviens, et urbem circumfusis exercitibus vallans, si ejus munimina invicta conspexerit, ad alia se pugnandi argumenta convertit, ut intus etiam quorumdam civium corda corrumpat; quatenus cum extrinsecus impugnatores admoverit, internos quoque habeat adjutores, atque increscente belli foras certamine, de quorum intus fide confiditur, eorum perfidia urbs destituta capiatur. 10. Foris bellum, virulenta intus consilia adhibuit. — Itaque exterius quasi ariete constituto, murum civitatis istius tot ictibus perculit, quot vicibus adversa nuntiavit. Intus autem quasi civium corda corrupit, dum fortia urbis hujus munimina persuasione destruere conjugis studuit. Foras itaque admovit impetum belli, intus venena consilii: ut tanto citius urbem caperet, quanto eam exterius interiusque turbaret. Quia autem nonnunquam plus conturbant verba quam vulnera, amicorum, ut

dictum est, se linguis armavit. Qui quidem quia seniores erant, de eorum verbis minus fortasse doleri poterat. Heliu junior subrogatur, ut sanctum pectus tanto acriori vulnere percuteret, quanto contra illud ictus brachii vilioris excitaret. Ecce ad feriendum invictissimum robur inimicus saeviens, quot tentationum jacula invenit; ecce quot obsidionum machinamenta circumposuit; ecce quot percussionum tela transmisit: sed in his omnibus mansit mens imperterrita, stetit civitas inconcussa.

CAPUT V.

11. Patientia Job in adversis. — Student hostes, cum contra faciem veniunt, alios ex occulto transmittere, qui eo licentius pugnantis latus feriant, quo is qui pugnat intentius venientes hostes contra faciem aspectat. Igitur Job, in hujus certaminis bello deprehensus, suscepit damna, quasi hostes contra faciem; sustinuit verba consolantium, quasi hostes ex latere: sed in his omnibus circumacto gravitatis suae clypeo, ubique munitus astitit, undique venientibus gladiis vigilanter obviavit: amissam substantiam tacite despicit, carnem in filiis mortuam aequanimiter dolet, carnem in se percussam patienter tolerat, carnem in conjuge male suadentem sapienter docet. Super haec amici in asperam correptionem prosiliunt; et pro sedando dolore venientes, vim doloris adjungunt. Omnia ergo machinamenta tentationum sancto viro vertuntur in augmenta virtutum. Per vulnera quippe probatur ejus patientia; per verba vero exercetur ejus sapientia. Ubique fortiter occurrit, quia et flagella robore, et verba ratione superavit. Amici vero ejus, qui ad consolationem quidem veniunt, sed usque ad verba increpationis excedunt, ignorantia magis credendi sunt, quam malitia deliquisse. Neque enim tantum virum amicos iniquos habuisse credendum est: sed dum discernere causam flagellorum nequeunt, in culpam dilabuntur. 12. Varia percussionum genera. — Percussionum quippe diversa sunt genera. Alia namque est percussio, qua peccator percutitur, ut sine retractatione puniatur;

alia, qua peccator percutitur, ut corrigatur; alia, qua nonnunquam quisque percutitur, non ut praeterita corrigat, sed ne ventura committat; alia qua 13 plerumque percutitur, per quam nec praeterita culpa corrigitur, nec futura prohibetur; sed ut, dum inopinata salus percussionem sequitur, salvantis virtus cognita ardentius ametur; cumque innoxius flagello atteritur, ei per patientiam meritorum summa cumuletur. Aliquando enim peccator percutitur, ut absque retractatione puniatur, sicut periturae Judaeae dicitur: Plaga inimici percussi te, castigatione crudeli (Jer. XXX, 14). Et rursum: Quid clamas ad me, super contritione tua? Insanabilis est dolor tuus (Ibid., 15). Aliquando peccator percutitur, ut corrigatur, sicut cuidam in Evangelio dicitur: Ecce sanus factus es, jam noli peccare, ne tibi deterius aliquid contingat (Joan. V, 14). Verba enim salvantis indicant, quia peccata praecedentia habiti vim doloris exigebant. Aliquando quisque non pro praeterita culpa diluenda, sed pro futura vitanda percutitur; quod aperte Paulus apostolus de semetipso testatur, dicens: Ne magnitudo revelationum extollat me, datus est mihi stimulus carnis meae, angelus Satanae, qui me colaphizet (II Cor. XII, 7). Qui enim non ait, quia extulit, sed ne extollat, aperte indicat quod percussione illa, ne eveniat, compescitur, non autem quae evenit culpa purgatur. Nonnunquam vero quisque nec pro praeterita, nec pro futura iniquitate percutitur; sed ut sola divinae virtutis potentia, ex amputata percussione monstretur. Unde cum Domino in Evangelio de caeco nato diceretur: Hic peccavit, aut parentes ejus, ut caecus nasceretur (Joan. IX, 2)? respondit Dominus dicens: Neque hic peccavit, neque parentes ejus; sed ut manifestentur opera Dei (Ibid. 3)? In qua manifestatione quid agitur, nisi ut ex flagello meritorum virtus augeatur; et cum nulla praeterita iniquitas tergitur, magna de patientia fortitudo generetur. Unde idem beatus Job praefertur prius voce judicis, et post manui committitur tentatoris: quem post flagellum Deus dum remunerans familiarius alloquitur, aperte quantum de verbere creverit indicatur. Amici ergo beati Job, dum percussionum

genera distinguere nesciunt, percussum pro culpa crediderunt: et dum Deum justum in percussione sua conantur asserere, beatum Job compulsi sunt de injustitia reprobare; nescientes videlicet quod idcirco flagellatus fuerat, ut pro flagello ejus divinae gloriae laus cresceret, non autem ut per flagella peccata quae nequaquam commiserat emendaret. Unde et ad veniam citius redeunt, quia ignorantia potius quam malitia peccaverunt. Quorum superbiam divina justitia eo vehementer humiliat, quo nequaquam illos ad suam gratiam, nisi per eum quem despexerant, reformat. Valde quippe elata mens retunditur, si ipsi super quem se extulit supponatur.

CAPUT VI.

13. Sancti omnes quasi stellae, noctem vitae praesentis illuminant. — Sed libet inter haec mira divinae dispensationis opera cernere quomodo ad illuminandam noctem vitae praesentis astra quaeque suis vicibus in coeli faciem veniant, quousque in finem noctis Redemptor humani generis, quasi verus lucifer, surgat. Nocturnum namque spatium, dum decedentium succedentiumque stellarum cursibus illustratur, magno coeli decore peragitur. Ut ergo noctis nostrae tenebras suo tempore editus, vicissimque permutatus stellarum radius tangeret, ad ostendendam innocentiam, venit Abel; ad docendam 14 actionis munditiam, venit Enoch; ad insinuandam longanimitatem spei et operis, venit Noe; ad manifestandam obedientiam, venit Abraham; ad demonstrandam conjugalis vitae castimoniam, venit Isaac; ad insinuandam laboris tolerantiam, venit Jacob; ad rependendam pro malo bonae retributionis gratiam, venit Joseph; ad ostendendam mansuetudinem, venit Moyses; ad informandam contra adversa fiduciam, venit Josue; ad ostendendam inter flagella patientiam, venit Job. Ecce quam fulgentes stellas in coelo cernimus, ut inoffenso pede operis iter nostrae noctis ambulemus. Nam cognitioni hominum divina dispensatio quot justos exhibuit, quasi tot astra super peccantium tenebras coelum misit, quousque

verus lucifer surgeret, qui aeternum nobis mane nuntians, stellis caeteris clarius ex divinitate radiaret. 14. Cuncti Christum praenuntiarunt, maxime Job. — Quem electi omnes dum bene vivendo praeeunt, et rebus et vocibus prophetando promiserunt. Nullus etenim justus fuit, qui non ejus per figuram nuntius exstiterit. Dignum quippe erat ut in semetipsis bonum omnes ostenderent, de quo et omnes boni essent, et quod prodesse omnibus scirent. Unde et sine cessatione promitti debuit quod et sine aestimatione dabatur percipi, et sine fine retineri; ut simul omnia saecula dicerent quid in redemptione communi saeculorum finis exhiberet. Unde et necesse fuit ut etiam beatus Job, qui tanta incarnationis ejus mysteria protulit, eum quem voce diceret ex conversatione signaret; et per ea quae pertulit, quae passurus esset ostenderet; tantoque verius passionis illius sacramenta praediceret, quanto haec non loquendo tantummodo, sed etiam patiendo prophetaret. Sed quia Redemptor noster unam se personam cum sancta Ecclesia, quam assumpsit, exhibuit; de ipso enim dicitur, Qui est caput omnium nostrum (Ephes. IV, 15); et de Ecclesia ejus scriptum est: Corpus Christi, quod est Ecclesia (Colos. I, 24); quisquis eum in semetipso significat, modo hunc ex capite, modo ex corpore designat, ut non solum vocem capitis, sed etiam corporis teneat. Unde et Isaias propheta ejusdem Domini verba exprimens, ait: Quasi sponso posuit mihi mitram, et quasi sponsam ornavit me ornamento (Isaiae LXI, 10). Quia igitur ipse in capite sponsus, ipse est in corpore sponsa, necesse est ut cum nonnunquam aliquid de capite dicitur, sensim ac subito etiam ad vocem corporis derivetur; et rursum cum de corpore aliquid dicitur, repente ad vocem capitis ascendatur. Beatus ergo Job venturi cum suo corpore typum Redemptoris insinuat; uxor vero ejus, quae eum ad maledicendum provocat, vitam carnalium designat; qui intra sanctam Ecclesiam incorrectis moribus positi, quo per fidem bonis juxta sunt, eo per vitam durius premunt; quia dum quasi fideles vitari non possunt, a fidelibus tanto deterius, quanto et interius tolerantur. 15. Amici

Job haereticos adumbrant. — Amici vero ejus, qui dum consulunt invehuntur, haereticorum figuram exprimunt, qui sub specie consulendi agunt negotium seducendi. Unde et ad beatum Job quasi pro Domino loquuntur, sed tamen a Domino non approbantur; quia videlicet omnes haeretici Deum, dum defendere 15 nituntur, offendunt. Unde eis aperte et ab eodem sancto viro dicitur: Disputare cum Deo cupio: prius vos ostendens fabricatores mendacii, et cultores perversorum dogmatum (Job XIII, 3 et 4). Constat ergo eos haereticorum typum errando gerere, quos sanctus vir redarguit cultui perversorum dogmatum deservire. Omnis vero haereticus in eo quod Deum defendere cernitur, veritati illius adversatur, Psalmista attestante, qui ait: Ut destruas inimicum et defensorem (Psalm. VIII, 3). Inimicus quippe et defensor est, qui Deum quo praedicat impugnat.

CAPUT VII.

16. Nominibus suis Job Christum, amici ejus haereticos significant. — Nam quia beatus Job venturi Redemptoris speciem teneat, etiam nomine demonstrat. Job quippe interpretatur dolens. Quo nimirum dolore, vel Mediatoris passio, vel sanctae Ecclesiae labor exprimitur, quae multiplici praesentis vitae fatigatione cruciatur. Amici quoque ejus ex vocabulo nominis meritum suae indicant actionis. Nam Eliphaz Latina lingua dicitur Domini contemptus. Et quid aliud haeretici faciunt, nisi quod, dum falsa de Deo sentiunt, eum superbiendo contemnunt? Baldad interpretatur vetustas sola. Bene autem omnes haeretici in his quae de Deo loquuntur, dum non intentione recta, sed appetitione temporalis gloriae videri praedicatores appetunt, vetustas sola nominantur. Ad loquendum quippe non zelo novi hominis, sed vitae veteris pravitate concitantur. Sophar quoque Latino sermone dicitur dissipatio speculae, vel speculationem dissipans. Mentes namque fidelium ad contemplanda superna se erigunt; sed dum haereticorum verba pervertere recta contemplantes appetunt, speculam

dissipare conantur. In tribus itaque amicorum Job nominibus, tres haereticarum mentium perditionis casus exprimuntur. Nisi enim Deum contemnerent, nequaquam de illo perversa sentirent; et nisi vetustatis cor traherent, in novae vitae intelligentia non errarent; et nisi speculationem bonorum destruerent, nequaquam eos superna judicia tam districto examine pro verborum suorum culpa reprobarent. Contemnendo igitur Deum, in vetustate se retinent: sed in vetustate retinendo, pravis suis sermonibus speculationi rectorum nocent.

CAPUT VIII.

17. In amicorum Job reconciliatione haereticorum conversio figuratur. — Quia vero nonnunquam haeretici divinae gratiae largitate perfusi ad unitatem sanctae Ecclesiae redeunt, bene hoc ipsa amicorum reconciliatione signatur. Pro quibus tamen beatus Job exorare praecipitur, quia haereticorum sacrificia accepta Deo esse nequeunt, nisi pro eis universalis Ecclesiae manibus offerantur; ut ejus meritis remedium salutis inveniant, quam verborum jaculis impugnando feriebant. Unde et septem pro eis sacrificia memorantur oblata; quia dum septiformis gratiae Spiritum confitentes accipiunt, quasi septem oblationibus expiantur. Hinc est quod in Joannis Apocalypsi per septem Ecclesiarum numerum universalis Ecclesia designatur (Apoc. I, 11). Hinc per Salomonem de Sapientia dicitur: Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum, excidit columnas septem (Prov. IX, 1). Ipso ergo sacrificiorum numero reconciliati haeretici, quid 16 prius fuerint exprimunt, qui perfectioni septiformis gratiae non nisi redeundo junguntur.
18. Illorum mactanda superbia, ut Ecclesiae hoc sacrificio restituantur. — Bene autem tauros pro se et arietes obtulisse describuntur. In tauro quippe cervix superbiae, in ariete autem ducatus gregum sequentium designatur. Quid est ergo pro eis tauros arietesque mactare, nisi eorum superbum ducatum interficere; ut de se humilia sentiant, et post se corda innocentium

non seducant? Cervice enim tumenti ab Ecclesiae unitate resilierant, et infirmos post se populos quasi sequentes greges trahebant. Veniant igitur ad beatum Job, id est, revertantur ad Ecclesiam, et septenario sacrificio tauros et arietes mactandos offerant; qui ut universali Ecclesiae conjungantur, humilitate interveniente interficiant quidquid prius tumidum de superbo ducatu sapiebant.

CAPUT IX.

19. Superbus, licet recte sentiens, increpandus. Qua ratione non indiget sacrificio. — Per Heliu autem, qui rectis quidem sensibus loquitur, sed ad stulta elationis verba derivatur, persona uniuscujusque arrogantis exprimitur. Multi namque intra sanctam Ecclesiam positi, recta quae sapiunt recte proferre contemnunt. Unde et divinae increpationis verbis arguitur, nec tamen pro illo sacrificium offertur; quia fidelis quidem est, sed tamen arrogans: per veritatem credulitatis intus est, sed per tumoris sui obstaculum acceptabilis non est. Hinc ergo increpatio redarguit, sed sacrificium non reducit; quia in ea quidem fide est in qua esse debuit, sed superna hunc justitia increpans pro superfluis repellit. Unde et bene Heliu Latino sermone dicitur, Deus meus iste, vel Deus Dominus. Arrogantes enim viri intra sanctam Ecclesiam, quamvis Deum elate vivendo refugiunt, eum tamen veraciter credendo confitentur. Quid est enim, Deus meus iste, nomine dicere, nisi eum, cui credidit, aperta professione monstrare? vel quid est, Deum Dominum dicere, nisi hunc et Deum per divinitatem credere, et Dominum ex incarnatione perhibere?

CAPUT X.

20. Job duplicia recipiens quid praesignet. Sanctorum ante resurrectionem una beatitudo; post duplex. — Bene autem post damna rerum, post funera pignorum, post cruciatus vulnerum, post certamina pugnasque verborum,

duplici remuneratione sublevatur; quia nimirum sancta Ecclesia, adhuc etiam in hac vita posita, pro laboribus quos sustinet, duplicia munera recipit; cum susceptis plene gentibus, in fine mundi Judaeorum etiam ad se corda convertit. Hinc enim scriptum est: Donec plenitudo gentium intraret, et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret (Rom. XI, 25). Duplicia et postmodum recipiet: quia finito labore praesentis temporis, non solum ad animarum gaudium, sed etiam ad beatitudinem corporum ascendit. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: In terra sua duplicia possidebunt (Isai. LXI, 7). Sancti quippe in terra viventium duplicia possident, quia nimirum beatitudine mentis simul et corporis gaudent. Unde Joannes in Apocalypsi, quia ante resurrectionem corporum clamantes sanctorum animas vidit, accepisse eas stolas singulas aspexit, dicens: Et datae sunt illis singulae stolae albae, et dictum est illis, ut requiescerent tempus 17 adhuc modicum, donec impleretur numerus conservorum et fratrum eorum (Apoc. VI, 11). Ante resurrectionem quippe stolas singulas accepisse dicti sunt, quia sola adhuc mentis beatitudine perfruuntur. Binas ergo accepturi sunt, quando cum animarum perfecto gaudio, etiam corporum incorruptione vestientur. 21. Afflictio hic certa; quantum duratura sit, incertum. — Recte autem afflictio quidem beati Job dicitur sed quantitas temporis in ejus afflictione reticetur; quia sanctae Ecclesiae in hac vita tribulatio cernitur, sed quanto hic tempore conterenda atque differenda sit, ignoratur. Unde et ore Veritatis dicitur: Non est vestrum nosse tempora, vel momenta, 18 quae Pater posuit in sua potestate (Act. I, 7). Per hoc ergo, quod beati Job passio dicitur, docemur quod experiendo novimus. Per hoc vero quod quantitas temporis in passione reticetur, docemur quid nescire debeamus. In longum praefationis verba protraximus, ut quasi totum breviter perstringendo loqueremur. Sed quia ad loquendi initium, diu loquendo, pervenimus, debemus prius historiae radicem figere, ut valeamus mentem postmodum de allegoriarum fructu satiare.

LIBER PRIMUS.

Capitis primi libri Job priores versus primum historico, deinde allegorico, postremo morali sensu explanat.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

VERS. 1. — Vir erat in terra Hus, nomine Job. HISTORICUS SENSUS. — 1. Job inter malos bonus dicitur, quod summa laus est. — Idcirco sanctus vir ubi habitaverit dicitur, ut ejus meritum virtutis exprimatur. Hus namque quis nesciat quod sit terra gentilium? Gentilitas autem eo obligata vitiis exstitit, quo cognitionem sui conditoris ignoravit. Dicatur itaque ubi habitaverit, ut hoc ejus laudibus proficiat, quod bonus inter malos fuit. Neque enim valde laudabile est bonum esse cum bonis, sed bonum esse cum malis. Sicut enim gravioris culpae est, inter bonos bonum non esse; ita immensi est praeconii, bonum etiam inter malos exstitisse. Hinc est quod isdem beatus Job sibimet attestatur, dicens: Frater fui draconum, et socius struthionum (Job. XXX, 29). Hinc Petrus magnis Loth laudibus extulit, quod bonum inter reprobos invenit, dicens: Et justum Loth oppressum a nefandorum injusta conversatione eripuit. Aspectu enim et auditu justus erat, habitans apud eos, qui de die in diem animam justi iniquis operibus cruciabant (II Pet. II, 7, 8). Qui nimirum cruciari non posset, nisi prava propinquorum opera et audiret, et cerneret. Et tamen aspectu et auditu justus dicitur, quia iniquorum vita, non delectando justi aures atque oculos, sed feriendo tangebat. Hinc Paulus discipulis dicit: In medio nationis pravae et perversae, inter quos lucetis sicut luminaria in mundo (Philip. II, 15). Hinc angelo Pergami ecclesiae dicitur: Scio ubi habitas, ubi sedes est Satanae; et tenes nomen meum, et non negasti fidem meam (Apoc. II, 13). Hinc sancta Ecclesia sponsi voce laudatur, cum ei in amoris Cantico dicitur: Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias (Cant. II, 2). Bene ergo beatus Job,

memorata terra gentili, inter iniquos vixisse describitur; ut, juxta sponsi praeconium, inter spinas lilium crevisse monstretur. Unde recte mox subditur:

CAPUT II.

IBID. — Simplex, et rectus. 2. Job simplicitas et rectitudo. Utraque necessaria. — Nonnulli namque ita sunt simplices, ut rectum quid sit ignorent. Sed eo verae simplicitatis innocentiam deserunt, quo ad virtutem rectitudinis non assurgunt; quia dum cauti esse per rectitudinem nesciunt, nequaquam innocentes persistere per simplicitatem possunt. Hinc est quod Paulus discipulos admonet dicens: Volo vos sapientes esse in bono, simplices autem in malo (Rom. XVI, 19). Hinc rursum dicit: Nolite pueri effici sensibus, sed malitia parvuli estote (I Cor. XIV, 20). Hinc per semetipsam Veritas discipulis praecipit, dicens: Estote prudentes sicut serpentes, et simplices sicut columbae (Matth, X. 16). Utraque enim necessario in admonitione conjunxit; ut et simplicitatem columbae astutia serpentis instrueret, et rursum serpentis astutiam columbae simplicitas temperaret. Hinc est quod sanctus Spiritus praesentiam suam hominibus, non in columba solummodo, sed etiam in igne patefecit (Matth. III, 11, 16). Per columbam quippe simplicitas, per ignem vero zelus indicatur. In columba igitur, et in igne ostenditur (Act. II, 3): quia quicunque illo pleni sunt, sic mansuetudini simplicitatis inserviunt, ut contra culpas delinquentium etiam zelo rectitudinis accendantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT III.

IBID. — Timens Deum, et recedens a malo. 3. Deum timere quid sit. Bona malis admista reprobantur. — Deum timere est nulla, quae facienda sunt bona praeterire. Unde per Salomonem dicitur: Qui Deum timet, nihil negligit (Eccle. VII, 19). Sed quia nonnulli sic bona quaedam faciunt, ut

tamen a quibusdam malis minime suspendantur, bene postquam timens Deum dicitur, recedens quoque a malo perhibetur. Scriptum quippe est: Declina a malo, et fac bonum (Psal. XXXVI, 27). Neque enim bona Deo accepta sunt, 19 quae ante ejus oculos malorum admistione maculantur. Hinc namque per Salomonem dicitur: Qui in uno offenderit, multa bona perdet (Eccle. IX, 18). Hinc Jacobus attestatur dicens: Quicunque totam legem servaverit, offendat autem in uno, factus est omnium reus (Jac. II, 10). Hinc Paulus ait: Modicum fermentum totam massam corrumpit (I Cor. V, 6). Beatus igitur Job, ut ostendatur quam mundus in bonis exstitit, solerter indicatur quam alienus a malis fuit. 4. Cur virtutes Job ab exordio describantur. — Mos vero esse narrantium solet, ut cum palaestrae certamen insinuant, prius luctantium membra describant quam latum validumque sit pectus, quam sanum, quam pleni tumeant lacerti, quam subterpositus venter nec mole gravet, nec extenuatione debilitet; ut cum prius aptos certamini artus ostenderint, tunc demum magnae fortitudinis ictus narrent. Quia ergo athleta noster contra diabolum fuerat certaturus, quasi ante arenae spectaculum, sacrae scriptor historiae in athleta hoc spiritales virtutes enumerans, mentis membra describit, dicens: Erat vir ille simplex, et rectus, ac timens Deum, et recedens a malo, ut, dum membrorum positio magna cognoscitur, ex hac ipsa jam forti positione subsequens etiam victoria praenoscatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 2. — Natique sunt ei septem filii et tres filiae. 5. Filiorum multitudo eum ad avaritiam non pellexit. — Saepe ad avaritiam cor parentis illicit fecunditas prolis. Eo enim ad ambitum congregandae haereditatis accenditur, quo multis haeredibus fecundatur. Ut ergo beati Job quam sancta mens fuerit, ostendatur, et justus dicitur, et multae prolis pater fuisse perhibetur. Qui in libri sui exordio devotus sacrificiis offerendis asseritur,

promptus autem largitatibus etiam post a semetipso memoratur. Pensemus ergo quanta fortitudine praeditus exstitit, quem ad haereditatis tenaciam nec tot haeredum affectus inclinavit. Sequitur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 3. — Et fuit possessio ejus septem millia ovium, et tria millia camelorum; quingenta quoque juga boum, et quingentae asinae, ac familia multa nimis. 6. Opes sine amore possedit. — Scimus, quia ad majorem dolorem mentem commovent damna majora. Ut igitur ostendatur, quantae virtutis exstitit, multum fuisse dicitur, quod patienter amisit. Nunquam quippe sine dolore amittitur, nisi quod sine amore possidetur. Itaque dum substantia magna describitur, et tamen paulo post patienter amissa perhibetur; quam sine dolore perdidit, constat quia sine amore possedit. Notandum quoque est, quod prius cordis divitiae, et post, opes corporis describuntur. Solet enim rerum abundantia tanto magis a divino timore mentem solvere, quanto magis hanc exigit diversa cogitare. Nam dum per multa spargitur, stare in intimis fixa prohibetur. Quod per semetipsam Veritas, cum parabolam seminantis exponeret, indicavit dicens: Qui seminatus est in spinis, hic est, qui verbum audit, et sollicitudo saeculi istius, et fallacia divitiarum, suffocat verbum, et sine fructu efficitur (Matth. XIII, 22; Luc. VIII, 7, 8; Marc. IV, 7). Ecce beatus Job et multa possidere dicitur, et paulo post divinis sacrificiis instanter deservire perhibetur. 7. Cuncta jam corde reliquerat. — Consideremus ergo cujus sanctitatis iste vir fuerit, qui ad tam sedula Dei obsequia, et sic occupatus vacavit. Necdum praecepti virtus emicuerat, quae omnia relinqui praeciperet; sed tamen beatus Job ejusdem jam praeceptionis vim corde servabat; quia nimirum substantiam suam mente 20 reliquerat, quam sine delectatione possidebat.

CAPUT VI.

IBID. — Eratque vir ille magnus inter omnes Orientales. 8. Quantis divitiis afflueret. — Orientales viros esse praedivites quis ignorat? Magnus ergo inter Orientales exstitit, ac si aperte diceretur: quia et divitibus ditior fuit.

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 4. — Et ibant filii ejus, et faciebant convivia per domos, unusquisque in die suo: et mittentes vocabant tres sorores suas, ut comederent et biberent cum eis. 9. Substantia dividenda inter filios, eorum corda non divisit. — Solet inter fratres major substantia, discordiae fieri gravioris causa. O inaestimabilem paternae institutionis laudem! Et pater dives dicitur, et filii concordes asseruntur. Et dum dividenda inter eos substantia aderat, corda tamen omnium indivisa charitas replebat.

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 5. — Cumque in orbem transissent dies convivii, mittebat ad eos Job, et sanctificabat illos, surgensque diluculo offerebat holocausta per singulos. 10. Nulla pene convivia sine culpa, propter voluptatem et loquacitatem. — Cum dicitur, mittebat et sanctificabat illos, aperte demonstratur quid districtionis erga illos praesens ageret, quibus absens sollicitudine non deesset. Sed hoc nobis est solerter intuendum quod, peractis diebus convivii, purgatio per singulos adhibetur holocausti. Vir quippe sanctus noverat quia celebrari convivia sine culpa vix possent. Noverat quia magna purgatione sacrificiorum diluendae sunt epulae conviviorum; et quidquid in semetipsis filii convivantes inquinaverant, pater sacrificium immolando tergebat. Nonnulla quippe sunt vitia quae a conviviis aut separari vix possunt, aut certe nequaquam possunt. Pene semper enim epulas comitatur voluptas. Nam dum corpus in refectionis delectatione resolvitur, cor ad inane gaudium relaxatur. Unde scriptum est: Sedit populus manducare et bibere, et surrexerunt ludere (Exod. XXXII, 6).

11. Pene semper epulas loquacitas sequitur; cumque venter reficitur, lingua diffrenatur. Unde recte dives apud inferos aquam appetere describitur, dicens: Pater Abraham, miserere mei, et mitte Lazarum, ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aquam, et refrigeret linguam meam, quia crucior in hac flamma (Luc. XVI, 24). Prius epulatus quotidie splendide dicitur; et post aquam petere in lingua memoratur. Quia enim, ut diximus, inter epulas valde diffluere loquacitas solet, ex poena indicat culpam, cum eum, quem epulatum quotidie splendide Veritas dixerat, in lingua plus ardere perhibebat. Hi qui chordarum harmoniam temperant, tanta hanc arte dispensant, ut plerumque, cum una tangitur, longe alia ac multis interjacentibus posita chorda quatiatur: cumque ista sonitum reddit, illa, quae in eodem cantu temperata est, aliis impercussis, tremit. Sic ergo in Scriptura sacra plerumque de virtutibus, sic de vitiis agitur; ut dum loquendo aliud insinuat, tacendo aliud innotescat. Nihil enim contra divitem de loquacitate memoratur; sed dum poena in lingua dicitur, quae in convivio inter alias gravior fuerit culpa monstratur. 12. Job octavo die sacrificium offerens, mysterium resurrectionis colit. — Cum vero septem fratres per dies singulos convivia facere describuntur, et peractis diebus convivii, Job septem sacrificia offerre perhibetur; aperte historia indicat quod beatus Job octavo die sacrificium offerens mysterium resurrectionis colat. Dies namque qui nunc Dominicus dicitur, a morte Redemptoris est tertius, sed in ordine conditionis octavus, qui et primus in conditione est. Sed quia revolutus septimum sequitur, octavus 21 recte numeratur. Quia ergo octavo die offerre septem sacrificia dicitur, plenus septiformis gratiae Spiritu pro spe resurrectionis Domino deservisse perhibetur. Unde et psalmus pro octava praescribitur, in quo gaudium de resurrectione nuntiatur. Sed quia beati Job filii tanta fuerant disciplina bonae institutionis accincti, ut neque per facta in conviviis, neque per verba delinquerent, aperte monstratur, cum subditur:

CAPUT IX.

IBID. — Dicebat enim: Ne forte peccaverint filii mei et benedixerint Deo in cordibus suis. 13. De alterius corde non est temere judicandum. In rectores fidelium qui eorum opera nesciunt. — Perfectos quippe esse in opere et sermone docuerat, pro quibus de sola pater cogitatione metuebat. Quia vero de alienis cordibus judicare temere non debeamus, in sancti hujus viri verbis agnoscimus, qui non ait: Quia benedixerunt in cordibus suis: sed, Ne forte benedixerint Deo in cordibus suis. Unde bene per Paulum dicitur: Nolite judicare ante tempus, quoadusque veniat Dominus, qui illuminabit abscondita tenebrarum, et manifestabit consilia cordium (I Cor. IV, 5).. Quisquis enim in cogitatione a rectitudine exorbitat, in tenebris peccat. Nos ergo tanto minus debemus aliena corda audacter reprehendere, quanto scimus, quia visu nostro non possumus alienae cogitationis tenebras illustrare. Sed hac solerter intuendum est, quanta pater severitate potuit filiorum opera corrigere, qui tanta sollicitudine studuit corda mundare. Quid ad haec rectores fidelium dicunt, qui discipulorum suorum et aperta opera nesciunt? Quid in sua excusatione cogitant, qui in commissis sibi nec vulnera actionum curant? Ut vero hujus sancti operis etiam perseverantia demonstretur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT X.

IBID. — Sic faciebat Job cunctis diebus. 14. Job perseverantia. — Scriptum quippe est: Qui perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit. (Matth. X, 22; XXIV, 13.) In sacrificio igitur sancta actio, in cunctis autem diebus sacrificii, constantia sanctae actionis ostenditur. Haec breviter historiam sequendo transcurrimus; nunc ordo expositionis exigit ut exordium repetentes, allegoriarum jam secreta pandamus.

CAPUT XI.

. VERS. 1. — Vir erat in terra Hus, nomine Job. 15. SENSUS ALLEGOR. — Christus Job nomine designatus. — Haec per historiam facta credimus, sed per allegoriam jam qualiter sint impleta, videamus. Job namque, ut diximus, interpretatur dolens: Hus vero consiliator. Quem ergo alium beatus Job suo nomine exprimit, nisi eum de quo propheta loquitur dicens: dolores nostros ipse portavit (Isai. LIII, 4)? Qui Hus terram inhabitat, quia in corda populi consiliatoris regnat. Paulus quippe ait Christum Dei virtutum, et Dei sapientiam. (I Cor. I, 24). Atque haec ipsa Sapientia per Salomonem dicit: Ego sapientia habito in consilio, et eruditis intersum cogitationibus (Proverb. VIII, 12). Hus ergo terram inhabitat Job, quia Sapientia, quae pro nobis passionis dolorem sustinuit, corda vitae consiliis dedita sibimet habitationem fecit.

CAPUT XII.

IBID. — Et erat vir ille simplex et rectus. 16. Simplicitatem et rectitudinem tenuit. — In rectitudine justitia, in simplicitate autem mansuetudo signatur. Plerumque nos cum rectitudinem justitiae exsequimur, mansuetudinem relinquimus; et cum mansuetudinem servare cupimus, justitiae rectitudinem declinamus. Incarnatus 22 vero Dominus simplicitatem cum rectitudine tenuit: quia nec in mansuetudine districtionem justitiae, nec rursum in districtione justitiae virtutem mansuetudinis amisit. Unde cum quidam, deducta adultera, hunc tentare voluissent, ut in culpam aut immansuetudinis aut injustitiae laberetur, ad utraque respondit dicens: Qui sine peccato est vestrum, primus in illam lapidem mittat (Joan., VIII, 7). Dat simplicitatem mansuetudinis qui sine peccato est vestrum; dat zelum justitiae, primus in illam lapidem mittat. Unde et ei propheta dicit: Intende, prospere procede, et regna propter veritatem et mansuetudinem et justitiam (Psal. XLIV, 5). Veritatem quippe exsequens, mansuetudinem cum justitia conservavit; ut

nec zelum rectitudinis in mansuetudinis pondere amitteret, nec rursum pondus mansuetudinis zelo rectitudinis perturbaret. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII.

IBID. — Timens Deum, et recedens a malo. 17. Deum quomodo timuit. — Scriptum est de illo: Et replevit eum spiritus timoris Domini (Isai. XI, 3). Incarnatus enim Dominus in semetipso omne quod nobis inspiravit, ostendit; ut quod praecepto diceret, exemplo suaderet. Juxta humanitatis ergo naturam Redemptor noster Deum timuit; quia ut superbum hominem redimeret mentem pro illo humilem sumpsit. Cujus bene per hoc, quod recedere a malo Job dicitur, et actio designatur. Ipse quippe recessit a malo, non quod faciendo contigit, sed quod inveniendo reprobavit: quia vetustam, quam natus invenit, humanae conversationis vitam deseruit; et novam, quam secum detulit sequacium moribus impressit.

CAPUT XIV.

Vers. 2. — Natique sunt ei septem filii, et tres filiae. 18. Septenarius numerus perfectus. — Quid in septenario numero nisi summa perfectionis accipitur? Ut enim humanae rationis causas de septenario numero taceamus, quae asserunt, quod idcirco perfectus sit, quia ex primo pari constat, et primo impari; ex primo qui dividi potest, et primo qui dividi non potest; certissime scimus quod septenarium numerum Scriptura sacra pro perfectione ponere consuevit (Genes. II, 3). Unde et septimo die Dominum requievisse ab operibus asserit. Hinc est etiam quod septimus dies in requiem hominibus, id est, in sabbatum datus est. Hinc est quod jubileus annus, in quo plenaria requies exprimitur, septem hebdomadibus consummatur, qui monade addita nostrae adunationis impletur. 19. Filii Job apostolos signant. — Nati sunt ergo ei septem filii. Ad praedicandum scilicet viriliter incedentes apostoli. Qui dum perfectionis praecepta

peragunt, quasi superioris sexus fortitudinem in conversatione tenuerunt. Hinc est enim, quod perfectione septiformis gratiae Spiritus implendi duodecim sunt electi. A septenario quippe numero in duodenarium surgitur. Nam septenarius suis in se partibus multiplicatus, ad duodenarium tenditur. Sive enim quatuor per tria, sive per quatuor tria ducantur, septem in duodecim vertuntur. Unde sancti apostoli, quia sanctam Trinitatem in quatuor partibus mundi praedicare mittebantur, duodecim sunt electi; ut etiam numero perfectionem ostenderent, quam vita et voce praedicarent. 20. Filiae fidelium plebes. Fidelium tres ordines. — Natae sunt et tres filiae. Quid in filiabus, nisi 23 infirmiores fidelium plebes accipimus, quae etsi ad perfectionem operis nequaquam forti virtute permanent, fidem tamen Trinitatis cognitam constanter tenent? In septem ergo filiis ordo praedicantium, in tribus vero filiabus multitudo significatur auditorum. Possunt etiam per tres filias tres ordines fidelium designari. Post filios quippe filiae nominantur, quia post apostolorum conspectam fortitudinem, tres distinctiones fidelium in Ecclesiae conversatione secutae sunt: pastorum videlicet, et continentium, atque conjugatorum. Unde et Ezechiel propheta tres liberatos viros audisse se asserit, Noe scilicet, et Danielem, et Job (Ezechiel XIV). Quid enim per Noe, qui arcam in undis rexit, nisi praepositorum ordo signatur; qui dum ad formam vitae populis praesunt, sanctam Ecclesiam in tentationum fluctibus regunt? Quid per Danielem, cujus mira abstinentia scribitur, nisi continentium vita figuratur; qui dum cuncta, quae mundi sunt, deserunt, despectae Babyloniae alta mente dominantur? Quid per Job, nisi bonorum conjugum vita signatur; qui de rebus mundi, quas possident, dum pia opera faciunt, quasi per terrae viam ad coelestem patriam tendunt? Quia igitur post sanctos apostolos tres istae fidelium distinctiones secutae sunt, recte post filios, tres filiae natae memorantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 3. — Et fuit possessio ejus septem millia ovium, et tria millia camelorum. 21. Ovibus innocentes, camelis vitiosi gentiles adumbrati et Samaritani. — Quia fideles auditores ex varia conversatione collecti sunt, quod prius universaliter, memoratis filiabus, dicitur, hoc distincte postmodum appellatione animalium subinfertur. Quid enim in septem millibus ovium, nisi perfectam quorumdam innocentiam exprimit, quae ad perfectionem gratiae, ex legis pascuis venit? Quid vero in tribus millibus camelorum, nisi ad plenitudinem fidei veniens, torta gentilium vitiositas designatur? In Scriptura autem sacra aliquando cameli nomine ipse Dominus, aliquando autem populus gentilis exprimitur. Cameli enim nomine Dominus designatur, sicut ab eodem Domino Judaeis adversantibus dicitur: Liquantes culicem, camelum glutientes (Matth. XXIII, 24). Culex enim susurrando vulnerat, camelus autem sponte se ad suscipienda onera inclinat. Liquaverunt ergo Judaei culicem, quia seditiosum dimitti latronem petierunt; camelum vero glutierunt, quia eum qui ad suscipienda nostrae mortalitatis onera sponte descenderat exstinguere clamando conati sunt. Rursus cameli nomine gentilitas designatur. Unde et Rebecca ad Isaac veniens (Genes. XXIV, 61), dorso cameli deducitur; quia ad Christum ex gentilitate Ecclesia properans, in tortis vitiosisque vitae veteris conversationibus invenitur. Quae, Isaac viso, descendit; quia Domino cognito, vitia sua gentilitas deseruit, et ab elatione celsitudinis ima humilitatis petiit. Quae et verecundata pallio velatur, quia coram illo ex anteacta vita confunditur. Unde et per Apostolum eisdem gentibus dicitur: Quem ergo fructum habuistis tunc in illis, in quibus nunc erubescitis? (Rom. VI, 21.) Quia igitur per oves, 24 Hebraeos a pascuis legis ad fidem venientes accipimus, nihil obstat ut per camelos, tortos moribus, atque onustos idolorum cultibus, gentilium populos sentiamus. Quia enim ex semetipsis sibi invenerunt deos quos colerent, quasi a semetipsis eis onus in dorso excreverat, quod portarent. 22. Potest etiam per camelos, quia

communia sunt animalia, Samaritanorum vita signari. Cameli namque ruminant, sed nequaquam ungulam findunt. Samaritani quoque quasi ruminant, quia ex parte legis verba recipiunt; et quasi ungulam non findunt, quia eam pro parte contemnunt. Qui et grave onus in dorso mentis tolerant, quia in omne, quod faciunt, sine spe aeternitatis elaborant. Fidem quippe resurrectionis nesciunt. Et quid esse gravius atque onustius potest, quam afflictionem saeculi praetereuntis perpeti, et nequaquam ad relevationem mentis gaudia remunerationis sperare? Sed quia in carne Dominus apparens, et Hebraeorum populos perfectionis gratia implevit, et Samaritanorum quosdam ad cognitionem fidei, mira opera ostendendo, perduxit; dicatur recte de umbra, quae veritatem exprimeret, quod et septem millia ovium, et camelorum tria millia possideret. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI.

IBID. — Quingenta juga boum, et quingentae asinae. 23. Boum nomine quid designetur. Quid nomine asinorum. — Jam superius dictum est, quod in quinquagenario numero, qui septem hebdomadibus ac monade addita impletur, requies designatur; denario autem numero summa perfectionis exprimitur. Quia vero fidelibus perfectio quietis promittitur, quasi quinquagenario decies ducto ad quingentesimum pervenitur. In Scriptura autem sacra boum nomine aliquando hebetudo fatuorum, aliquando bene operantium vita signatur. Quia enim bovis nomine stultorum vecordia figuratur, recte per Salomonem dicitur: Statimque eam sequitur quasi bos ductus ad victimam (Proverb. VII, 22). Rursum quia boum nomine vita uniuscujusque operantis exprimitur, legis praecepta testantur, quae per Moysen praecepit, dicens: Non alligabis os bovi trituranti (Deut. XXV, 4). Quod aperte rursum dicitur: Dignus est operarius mercede sua (Luc. X, 7). Asinorum quoque nomine aliquando stultorum pigritia, aliquando immoderata petulantium luxuria, aliquando gentilium simplicitas

designatur. Stultorum pigritia asinorum appellatione figuratur, sicut per Moysen dicitur: Non arabis in bove simul et asino (Deut. XXII, 10). Ac si diceret: Fatuos sapientibus in praedicatione non socies, ne per eum qui implere rem non valet, illi qui praevalet obsistas. Immoderata quoque petulantium luxuria asinorum appellatione exprimitur, ut propheta testatur, qui ait: Quorum carnes sunt ut carnes asinorum (Ezech. XXIII, 20). Asinorum rursus nomine, simplicitas gentilitatis ostenditur. Unde Jerusalem tendens Dominus, asellum sedisse perhibetur (Matth. XXI, 5). Quid est enim sedendo asinum Jerusalem venire, nisi gentilitatis simplicia corda possidendo, ea ad visionem pacis regendo et praesidendo perducere? Quod uno et facili testimonio ostenditur: quia et per boves Judaeae 25 operarii, et per asinum gentiles populi designantur, cum per prophetam dicitur: Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe Domini sui (Isai. I, 3). Quis enim bos, nisi Judaicus populus exstitit, cujus cervicem jugum legis attrivit? Et quis asinus, nisi gentilitas fuit, quam quilibet seductor reperit quasi brutum animal, et nulla ratione renitens, quo voluit errore substravit? Bos ergo possessorem, et asinus Domini praesepe cognovit, quia et Hebraicus populus Deum, quem colebat, sed ignorabat, reperit; et gentilitas legis pabulum, quod non habebat, accepit. Quod igitur superius nominatis ovibus et camelis dicitur, hoc inferius in bobus et asinis replicatur. 24. Praedicatores Judaeorum boves jugo legis pressi. — Habuit vero et ante Redemptoris adventum Judaea boves, quia ad praedicandum misit operarios, quibus voce Veritatis dicitur: Vae vobis, hypocritae, qui circuitis mare et aridam, ut faciatis unum proselytum; et cum fuerit factus, facitis eum filium gehennae duplo, quam vos (Matth. XXIII, 15). Quos grave jugum legis presserat, quia exteriora litterae mandata tolerabant. Quibus voce Veritatis dicitur: Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos. Tollite jugum meum super vos, et discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde (Matth. XI, 28, 29). Quod ergo in Evangelio bene

laborantibus requies promittitur, hoc est quod hic juga boum quingenta memorantur: quia qui Redemptoris dominio colla subjiciunt quo, nisi ad requiem, tendunt? Unde et asinae quingentae perhibentur; quia vocatae plebes gentilium, dum ad requiem pervenire desiderant, cuncta mandatorum onera libenter portant. Unde bene, quod hanc requiem populus gentilis appeteret, Jacob filios alloquens, prophetica hoc studuit voce signare, dicens: Isachar asinus fortis, accubans inter terminos, vidit requiem quod esset bona, et terram quod optima, et supposuit humerum ad portandum (Genes, 14, 15). Inter terminos namque accubare, est praestolato mundi fine requiescere, nihilque de his quae nunc in medio versantur quaerere, sed ultima desiderare. Fortisque asinus requiem ac terram optimam videt, cum simplex gentilitas idcirco se ad robur boni operis erigit, quia ad aeternae vitae patriam tendit. Quae ad portandum humerum supponit; quia conspecta superna requie, praeceptis etiam gravibus in operatione se subjicit, et quidquid intolerabile pusillanimitas asserit, hoc ei leve ac facile spes remunerationis ostendit. Quia ergo ad aeternam requiem pro electorum parte Judaea gentilitasque colligitur, recte quingenta juga boum, et quingentae asinae haberi perhibentur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII.

IBID. — Ac familia multa nimis. 25. Stulti mundi prius vocati quam sapientes. — Quid est, quod prius animalium multitudo describitur, et familia in extremo memoratur: nisi quod ad cognitionem fidei prius stulta mundi collecta sunt, ut post ejus etiam astuta vocarentur, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Non multi sapientes secundum carnem, non multi potentes, non multi nobiles, sed quae stulta sunt mundi, elegit Deus, ut confundat sapientes [I Cor. I, 27)? Ipsa namque sanctae Ecclesiae principia, litterarum perhibentur ignara, ut videlicet, cunctis in praedicatoribus suis Redemptor

ostenderet quod ad vitam credentes populos non sermo, sed causa suaderet. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII.

IBID. — Erat vir ille magnus inter omnes Orientales. 26. Christus humanitate caeteris similis, divinitate singularis. — Quod Redemptor noster Oriens dicitur, propheta 26 testante perhibetur, qui ait: Et ecce vir Oriens nomen ejus (Zach. VI, 12). Omnes ergo, qui in hoc Oriente fide consistunt, recte Orientales vocantur. Sed quia omnes homines tantummodo homines sunt, ipse autem Oriens Deus et homo, recte dicitur, Erat magnus inter omnes Orientales. Ac si aperte diceretur: Omnes, qui in fide Deo nascuntur, superat; quia non ut caeteros adoptio, sed natura illum divinitatis exaltat, qui etsi humanitate caeteris apparuit similis divinitate tamen mansit super omnia singularis.

CAPUT XIX.

Vers. 4. — Et ibant filii ejus, et faciebant convivia per domos. 27. In filiis Job convivia celebrantibus praedicatores intelligendi. — Filii facturi convivia per domos ibant, cum praedicatores apostoli in diversis mundi regionibus, virtutum epulas audientibus, quasi edentibus ministrabant. Unde et eisdem filiis de esurientibus plebibus dicitur: Date illis vos manducare (Matth. XIV, 17; XV, 32; Marc. VI, 37; Luc. IX, 13). Et rursum: Dimittere eos jejunos nolo, ne deficiant in via. Id est, in praedicatione vestra verbum consolationis accipiant, ne a veritatis pabulo jejuni remanentes, in hujus vitae labore succumbant. Hinc rursum eisdem filiis dicitur: Operamini non cibum qui perit, sed qui permanet in vitam aeternam (Joan. VI, 27). Quae convivia quomodo exhiberentur, adjungitur, cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT XX.

IBID. — Unusquisque in die suo. 28. Juxta mensuram intelligentiae pascendi auditores. — Si ignorantiae obscuritas sine dubitatione nox cordis est, intellectus non immerito dies vocatur. Unde et per Paulum dicitur: Alius judicat diem inter diem, alius judicat omnem diem (Rom. XIV, 5). Ac si aperte dicat: Alius quaedam nonnullis intermissis intelligit, alius vero omnia intellectu possibilia ita ut sunt videnda cognoscit. Unusquisque ergo filius in die suo convivium exhibet, quia sanctus quisque praedicator juxta mensuram illuminatae intelligentiae mentes audientium epulis veritatis pascit. In die suo Paulus fecerat convivium, cum dicebat: Beatiores erunt si sic permanserint secundum meum consilium (I Cor. VII, 40). De die suo unumquemque admonebat cogitare, cum diceret: Unusquisque in suo sensu abundet (Rom. XIV, 5). Sequitur:

CAPUT XXI.

IBID. — Et mittentes vocabant tres sorores suas, ut comederent et biberent cum eis. 29. Hi per filias Job significantur. Scriptura sacra modo cibus, modo potus. — Sorores filii ad convivium vocant: quia infirmis auditoribus sancti apostoli refectionis supernae gaudia praedicant, eorumque mentes, quia a veritatis pabulo jejunas aspiciunt, divini eloquii epulis pascunt. Bene autem dicitur: Ut comederent et biberent cum eis. Scriptura enim sacra aliquando nobis est cibus, aliquando potus. Cibus est in locis obscurioribus, quia quasi exponendo frangitur, et mandendo glutitur. Potus vero est in locis apertioribus, quia ita sorbetur sicut invenitur. Cibum vidit propheta Scripturam sacram, qui exponendo frangeretur, cum diceret: Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis (Thren. IV, 4): id est, infirmi quique Scripturae sacrae valentiores sententias petierunt exponendo comminui; sed qui exponere debeat non valet inveniri. Potum vidit Scripturam sacram propheta, cum diceret: Omnes sitientes venite ad aquas (Isai. LV, 1). Si potus aperta mandata non essent, per semetipsam Veritas

non clamaret: Si quis sitit, veniat ad me et bibat (Joan. VII, 37). Quasi cibum et potum vidit propheta Judaeae defuisse, cum diceret: Nobiles ejus interierunt fame, et multitudo ejus siti exaruit (Isai. V, 12). Paucorum quippe est fortia et occulta 27 cognoscere; multorum vero, historiae aperta sentire. Et idcirco Judaeae nobiles non siti, sed fame interiisse asserit; quia hi qui praeesse videbantur, dum totos se exteriori intelligentiae dederant, quod de intimis discutiendo manderent non habebant. Quia vero sublimioribus ab interno intellectu cadentibus, parvulorum intelligentia et in exterioribus exsiccatur, recte illic adjungitur: Multitudo ejus siti exaruit. Ac si aperte diceret: dum vulgus vitae suae studium deserit, jam nec fluenta historiae exquirit. Et occulta sacri eloquii mandata et aperta se intellexisse testantur, qui reprobanti se judici conquerentes dicunt: Manducavimus et bibimus coram te (Luc. XIII, 26). Quod aperte exponendo subjungunt: Et in plateis nostris docuisti (Ibid.). Quia ergo sacra eloquia in locis obscurioribus exponendo franguntur, in locis vero apertioribus ita, ut inventa fuerint, potantur, dicatur recte: Mittentes vocabant tres sorores suas, ut comederent et biberent cum eis. Ac si aperte diceretur: infirmos quosque blanda ad se persuasione deducebant, quatenus eorum mentes, et magna per contemplationem disserentes pascerent, et parva per historiam tradentes nutrirent. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 5. — Cumque in orbem transissent dies convivii, mittebat Job, et sanctificabat eos: consurgensque diluculo offerebat holocausta per singulos.
30. Christus praedicatorum suorum corda mundat. — In orbem dies convivii transeunt, cum praedicationum ministeria peraguntur. Peractisque conviviis, holocaustum Job pro filiis obtulit; quia pro apostolis de praedicatione redeuntibus, Patrem Redemptor exoravit. Bene autem mittendo sanctificare dicitur; quia dum sanctum Spiritum, qui a se procedit,

discipulorum cordibus tribuit, quidquid culpae inesse potuit, emundavit. Recteque ad offerenda holocausta diluculo consurgere perhibetur; quia per hoc quod pro nobis intercessionis suae petitionem obtulit, discussa erroris nocte, humanae mentis tenebras illustravit; ne quo peccati contagio, ex ipsa praedicationis gratia, mens in occulto polluatur; ne sibi quae agit tribuat; ne sibi tribuendo quae agebat, amittat. Unde recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIII.

IBID. — Dicebat enim, Ne forte peccaverint filii mei, et benedixerint Deo in cordibus suis. 31. Maculae a praedicatoribus contractae quomodo diluendae. — Deo quippe benedicere, id est maledicere, est de ejus munere sibi gloriam praebere. Unde recte sanctis apostolis post praedicationem Dominus pedes lavit (Joan XIII, 5); ut videlicet aperte monstraret quia plerumque et in bono opere peccati pulvis contrahitur, et inde inquinantur vestigia loquentium, unde audientium corda mundantur. Nam saepe nonnulli dum exhortationis verba faciunt, quamlibet tenuiter, sese intrinsecus, quia per eos purgationis gratia derivatur, extollunt; cumque verbo aliena opera diluunt, quasi ex bono itinere pulverem malae cogitationis sumunt. Quid ergo fuit post praedicationem pedes discipulorum lavare, nisi post praedicationis gloriam, cogitationum pulverem tergere, gressusque cordis ab interna elatione mundare? Nec obstat ab omnimoda Mediatoris scientia quod dicitur: Ne forte. Nam cuncta sciens, sed in locutione sua ignorantiam nostram suscipiens, 28 atque dum suscipit docens, nonnunquam quasi ex nostra dubitatione loquitur, sicut dicit: Filius hominis veniens, putas, inveniet fidem super terram? (Luc. XVIII, 3.) Expletis ergo conviviis, sacrificium Job pro filiis offerens dicebat: Ne forte peccaverint filii mei, et benedixerint Deo in cordibus suis; quia Redemptor noster postquam praedicatores suos a malis impugnantibus diluit, etiam inter bona quae egerant a tentationibus defendit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIV.

IBID. — Sic faciebat Job cunctis diebus. 32. Holocaustum a Christo pro nobis jugiter oblatum. Cunctis diebus Job sacrificium offerre non cessat; quia sine intermissione pro nobis holocaustum Redemptor immolat, qui sine cessatione Patri suam pro nobis incarnationem demonstrat. Ipsa quippe ejus incarnatio nostrae emundationis oblatio est; cumque se hominem ostendit, delicta hominis interveniens diluit. Et humanitatis suae mysterio perenne sacrificium immolat, quia et haec sunt aeterna quae mundat. 33.. VERS. 1. — Vir erat in terra Hus nomine Job. 34. SENSUS MORALIS. — Job electos significat. Quae eorum affectio circa terrena et aeterna. — Si Job dolens, et Hus consiliator dicitur, non immerito per utraque nomina electus quisque figuratur; quia nimirum consiliatorem animum inhabitat, qui dolens de praesentibus ad aeterna festinat. Nam sunt nonnulli qui vitam suam negligunt; et dum transitoria appetunt, dum aeterna vel non intelligunt, vel intellecta contemnunt, nec dolorem sentiunt, nec habere consilium sciunt. Cumque superna, quae amiserunt, non considerant, esse se, heu miseri! in bonis putant. Nequaquam enim ad veritatis lucem, cui conditi fuerant, mentis oculos erigunt; nequaquam ad contemplationem aeternae patriae desiderii aciem tendunt: sed semetipsos in his ad quae projecti sunt deserentes, vice patriae diligunt exsilium quod patiuntur, et in caecitate, quam tolerant, quasi in claritate luminis exsultant. At contra electorum mentes dum cuncta transitoria nulla esse conspiciunt, ad quae sint conditae exquirunt; cumque eorum satisfactioni nihil extra Deum sufficit, ipsa inquisitionis exercitatione fatigata illorum cogitatio, in conditoris sui spe et contemplatione requiescit, supernis interseri civibus appetit; et unusquisque eorum adhuc in mundo corpore positus, mente jam extra mundum surgit, aerumnam exsilii, quam tolerat, deplorat, et ad sublimem patriam incessantibus se amoris stimulis excitat. Cum ergo dolens videt, quam sit aeternum quod perdidit, invenit salubre consilium, temporale hoc despicere

quod percurrit; et quo magis crescit consilii scientia, ut peritura 29 deserat, eo augetur dolor, quod necdum ad mansura pertingat. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Qui apponit scientiam, apponit dolorem (Eccles. I, 18). Qui enim scit jam summa quae adhuc non habet, magis de infimis in quibus retinetur dolet. 35. In terra Hus, id est, in consilio habitant. — Recte ergo in terra Hus habitare Job dicitur, quia in scientiae consilio electi uniuscujusque dolens animus tenetur. Intuendum quoque est quam nullus dolor mentis sit in actione praecipitationis. Qui enim sine consiliis vivunt, qui se ipsos rerum eventibus praecipites deserunt, nullo interim cogitationum dolore fatigantur. Nam qui solerter in vitae consilio figit mentem, caute sese in omni actione circumspiciendo considerat; et ne ex re quae agitur repentinus finis adversusque subripiat, hunc prius molliter posito pede cogitationis palpat; pensat ne ab his quae agenda sunt formido praepediat; ne in his quae differenda sunt praecipitatio impellat; ne prava per concupiscentiam aperto bello superent; ne recta per inanem gloriam insidiando supplantent. Job ergo in terra Hus habitat, dum mens electi quo magis per consilium vivere nititur, eo angusti itineris dolore fatigatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

IBID. — Simplex et rectus, timens Deum, et recedens a malo. 36. Justi simplicitas et rectitudo. — Quisquis aeternam patriam appetit, simplex procul dubio et rectus vivit: simplex videlicet opere, rectus fide; simplex in bonis quae inferius peragit, rectus in summis quae in intimis sentit. Sunt namque nonnulli qui in bonis quae faciunt simplices non sunt, dum non in his retributionem interius, sed exterius favorem quaerunt. Unde bene per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Vae peccatori terram ingredienti duabus viis (Eccli. II, 14). Duabus quippe viis peccator terram ingreditur, quando et Dei est quod opere exhibet, et mundi quod per cogitationem quaerit. 37. A timore inchoat, in charitate consummatur. — Bene autem dicitur: Timens

Deum, et recedens a malo; quia sancta electorum Ecclesia simplicitatis suae et rectitudinis vias timore inchoat, sed charitate consummat. Cui tunc est funditus a malo recedere, cum ex amore Dei coeperit jam nolle peccare. Cum vero adhuc timore bona agit, a malo penitus non recessit; quia eo ipso peccat, quo peccare vellet, si inulte potuisset. Recte ergo cum timere Deum Job dicitur, recedere etiam a malo perhibetur; quia dum metum charitas sequitur, ea quae mente relinquitur, etiam per cogitationis propositum culpa calcatur. Et quia ex timore unumquodque vitium premitur, ex charitate autem virtutes oriuntur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 2. — Natique sunt ei septem filii et tres filiae. 38. Septem filii Job totidem dona Spiritus sancti significant; tres filiae, spem, fidem et charitatem. — Septem quippe nobis filii nascuntur, cum per conceptionem bonae cogitationis, sancti Spiritus septem in nobis virtutes oriuntur. Hanc namque internam prolem propheta dinumerat, cum Spiritus mentem fecundat, dicens: Requiescet super eum Spiritus Domini, spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis, et replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini (Isai. XI, 2). Cum ergo per adventum Spiritus sancti, sapientia, intellectus, consilium, fortitudo, scientia, pietas ac timor Domini unicuique nostrum 30 gignitur, quasi mansura posteritas in mente propagatur, quae supernae nostrae nobilitatis genus eo ad vitam longius servat, quo amori aeternitatis sociat. Sed habent in nobis septem filii tres procul dubio sorores suas, quia quidquid virile hi virtutum sensus faciunt, spei, fidei charitatique conjungunt. Neque enim ad denarii perfectionem septem filii perveniunt, nisi in fide, spe et charitate fuerit omne quod agunt. Quia vero hanc praeeuntium virtutum copiam multimoda bonorum operum cogitatio sequitur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 3. — Et fuit possessio ejus septem millia ovium et tria millia camelorum. 39. Oves possidet qui mentem innoxiam intus veritate pascit. — Servata quippe veritate historiae, imitari spiritaliter possumus, quod carnaliter audimus. Ovium enim septem millia possidemus, cum cogitationes innocuas, perfecta cordis munditia, intra nosmetipsos inquisito veritatis pabulo pascimus. 40. Camelos possidet, qui quod in se altum ac tortuosum, aut fidei subdit, aut prae charitate flectit. — Eruntque nobis in possessione etiam tria millia camelorum, si omne, quod in nobis altum ac tortuosum est, rationi fidei subditur, et sub cognitione Trinitatis, sponte in appetitu humilitatis inclinatur. Camelos quippe possidemus, si quod altum sapimus, humiliter deponamus. Camelos procul dubio possidemus, cum cogitationes nostras ad infirmitatis fraternae compassionem flectimus, ut vicissim onera nostra portantes, alienae infirmitati compati condescendendo noverimus. Possunt etiam per camelos, qui ungulam nequaquam findunt, sed tamen ruminant, terrenarum rerum bonae dispensationes intelligi: quae quia habent aliquid saeculi, et aliquid Dei, per commune eas necesse est animal designari. Neque enim terrena dispensatio, quamvis aeternae utilitati serviat, sine perturbatione mentis valet exhiberi. Quia igitur per hanc et ad praesens mens confunditur, et in perpetuum merces paratur, quasi commune animal, et aliquid de lege habet, et aliquid non habet. Ungulam namque non findit, quia non se penitus anima ab omni terreno opere disjungit; sed tamen ruminat, quia bene dispensando temporalia, per certitudinis fiduciam coelestia sperat. Terrenae igitur dispensationes, quasi camelorum more, capite legi concordant, pede discrepant; quia et coeli sunt illa quae juste viventes appetunt, et hujus mundi sunt ea in quibus opere versantur. Nos ergo cum easdem terrenas dispensationes cognitioni Trinitatis subdimus, quasi camelos fide possidemus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

Quingenta quoque juga boum, et quingentae asinae. 41. Boum juga concordes virtutes. Asinae lascivientes, motus aut cogitationes simplices. — Juga boum in usum nostrae possessionis sunt, cum concordes virtutes exarant duritiam mentis. Quingentas quoque asinas possidemus, cum lascivientes motus restringimus; et quidquid in nobis carnale exsurgere appetit, spiritali cordis dominatu refrenamus. Vel certe asinas possidere, est cogitationes intra nos simplices regere: quae dum in subtiliori intellectu currere non valent quo quasi pigrius ambulant, eo fraterna onera mansuetius portant. Sunt namque nonnulli qui dum alta non intelligunt, ad exteriora conversationis opera se humilius premunt. Bene ergo per asinas, pigrum quidem animal, sed tamen portandis oneribus deditum, 31 simplices cogitationes accipimus; quia dum nostram plerumque ignorantiam cognoscimus, levius onera aliena toleramus. Cumque nos quasi singularis sapientiae altitudo non elevat, ad perferendam alieni cordis inertiam, mens se nostra aequanimiter inclinat. Recte autem sive juga boum, sive asinae quingentae referuntur; quia vel in hoc, quod prudenter sapimus, vel in hoc, quod humiliter ignoramus, dum aeternae pacis requiem quaerimus, quasi intra jubilei numerum tenemur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXX.

IBID. — Ac familia multa nimis. 42. Multa familia est multitudo cogitationum cohibenda. — Multam nimis familiam possidemus, cum cogitationes innumeras sub mentis dominatione restringimus; ne ipsa sui multitudine animum superent, ne perverso ordine discretionis nostrae principatum calcent. Et bene cogitationum turba multae familiae appellatione signatur. Nam scimus quod absente domina, ancillarum linguae perstrepunt, silentium deserunt, deputati operis officia negligunt, totumque

sibimet ordinem vivendi confundunt. At si repente domina veniat, mox perstrepentes linguae reticent, officia uniuscujusque operis repetunt; sicque ad opus proprium, ac si non recesserint, revertuntur. Si igitur a domo mentis ad monumentum ratio discedat, quasi absente domina, cogitationum se clamor, velut garrula ancillarum turba multiplicat. Ut autem ratio ad mentem redierit, mox se confusio tumultuosa compescit; et quasi ancillae se ad injunctum opus tacite reprimunt, dum cogitationes protinus causis se propriis ad utilitatem subdunt. Possidemus ergo multam familiam, cum recto jure innumeris cogitationibus rationis discretione dominamur. Quod nimirum cum solerter agimus, jungi per eamdem discretionem angelis conamur. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

IBID. — Eratque vir ille magnus inter omnes Orientales. 43. Earum refrenatione magni efficimur. — Tunc namque magni inter omnes Orientales efficimur, cum eis spiritibus, qui orienti luci inhaerent, pressa carnalis corruptionis nebula, discretionis nostrae radiis, in quantum possibilitas suppetit, sociamur. Unde et per Paulum dicitur: Nostra conversatio in coelis est (Philipp. III, 20). Quisquis temporalia ac defectiva sequitur, occasum petit; quisquis vero superna desiderat, quia in Oriente habitet, demonstrat. Magnus ergo non inter Occidentales, sed inter Orientales efficitur, qui non inter malorum actiones ima et fugitiva quaerentium, sed inter choros proficere supernorum civium conatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 4. Et ibant filii ejus, et faciebant convivium per domos, unusquisque in die suo. 44. Virtutes singulae, in die suo convivium faciunt. — Filii per domos convivium faciunt, dum virtutes singulae juxta modum proprium

mentem pascunt. Et bene dicitur: Unusquisque in die suo. Dies enim uniuscujusque filii, est illuminatio uniuscujusque virtutis. Ut enim haec ipsa dona breviter septiformis gratiae replicem, alium diem habet sapientia, alium intellectus, alium consilium, alium fortitudo, alium scientia, alium pietas, alium timor. Neque enim hoc est sapere, quod intelligere; quia multi aeterna quidem sapiunt, sed haec intelligere nequaquam possunt. Sapientia ergo in 32 die suo convivium facit, quia mentem de aeternorum spe et certitudine reficit. Intellectus in die suo convivium parat; quia in eo quod audita penetrat, reficiendo cor, tenebras ejus illustrat. Consilium in die suo convivium exhibet; quia dum esse praecipitem prohibet, ratione animum replet. Fortitudo in die suo convivium facit; quia dum adversa non metuit, trepidanti menti cibos confidentiae apponit. Scientia in die suo convivium parat, quia in ventre mentis ignorantiae jejunium superat. Pietas in die suo convivium exhibet, quia cordis viscera misericordiae operibus replet. Timor in die suo convivium facit; quia dum premit mentem, ne de praesentibus superbiat, de futuris illam spei cibo confortat. 45. Si ab invicem separentur, deficiunt. — Sed illud in hoc filiorum convivio perscrutandum video, quod semetipsos invicem pascunt. Valde enim singula quaelibet virtus destituitur, si non una alii virtus virtuti suffragetur. Minor quippe est sapientia, si intellectu careat; et valde inutilis intellectus est, si ex sapientia non subsistat; quia cum altiora sine sapientiae pondere penetrat, sua illum levitas gravius ruiturum levat. Vile est consilium, cui robur fortitudinis deest; quia quod tractando invenit, carens viribus, usque ad perfectionem operis non perducit: et valde fortitudo destruitur, nisi per consilium fulciatur; quia quo plus se posse conspicit, eo virtus sine rationis moderamine deterius in praeceps ruit. Nulla est scientia, si utilitatem pietatis non habet; quia dum bona cognita exsequi negligit, sese ad judicium arctius stringit. Et valde inutilis est pietas, si scientiae discretione caret; quia dum nulla hanc scientia illuminat, quomodo misereatur ignorat. Timor

quoque ipse nisi has etiam virtutes habuerit, ad nullum opus procul dubio bonae actionis surgit; quia dum ad cuncta trepidat, ipsa sua formidine a bonis omnibus torpens vacat. Quia ergo alternato ministerio virtus a virtute reficitur, recte dicitur quod apud se filii vicissim convivantur. Cumque una aliam sublevando sublevat, quasi per dies suos numerosa soboles pascenda convivium parat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

IBID. — Et mittentes vocabant tres sorores suas, ut comederent et biberent cum eis. 46. Ad convivium virtutum invitandae, spes, fides, charitas. — Cum virtutes nostrae in omne quod agunt, spem, fidem, et charitatem ciunt, quasi operatores filii, tres ad convivium sorores vocant, ut fides, spes et charitas in opus bonum gaudeant quod unaquaeque virtus administrat. Quae quasi ex cibo vires accipiunt, dum-bonis operibus fidentiores fiunt; et dum post cibum contemplationis rore infundi appetunt, quasi ex poculo ebriantur. 47. Ipsis bonis quae agimus, ad deterius propinquamus. — Sed quid est, quod in hac vita sine quavis tenuissimi contagii inquinatione peragatur? Nonnunquam namque ipsis bonis quae agimus ad deterius propinquamus; quia dum laetitiam menti pariunt, quamdam etiam securitatem gignunt; dumque mens secura redditur, in torporem laxatur. Nonnunquam vero aliquantula elatione nos polluunt; et tanto dejectiores apud Deum faciunt, quanto apud nosmetipsos tumidiores reddunt. Unde bene subjungitur.

CAPUT XXXIV.

VERS. 5. Cumque in orbem transissent dies convivii, mittebat Job, et sanctificabat eos. 33 47. In bonis operibus purganda intentio. — Peracto quippe orbe dierum convivii, mittere ad filios, eosque sanctificare, est post virtutum sensum, intentionem cordis dirigere, et omne quod agitur, districta

retractationis discussione mundare; ne bona aestimentur quae mala sunt; ne saltem veraciter bona putentur sufficientia, cum perfecta non sunt. Sic enim mens plerumque decipitur, ut aut qualitate mali, aut boni quantitate fallatur. Sed hos virtutum sensus melius preces quam discussiones inveniunt; nam ea quae perscrutari in nobismetipsis plenius nitimur, saepe verius orando quam investigando penetramus. Cum enim mens per quamdam compunctionis machinam ad alta sustollitur, omne, quod ei de se ipsa occurrerit, sub se ipsa dijudicando certius contemplatur. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

IBID. — Consurgensque diluculo offerebat holocausta per singulos. 48. Holocaustum precis pro singulis virtutibus purgandis offerendum. — Diluculo namque consurgimus, cum compunctionis luce perfusi humanitatis nostrae noctem deserimus, et ad veri luminis radios, oculos mentis aperimus. Atque holocaustum per singulos filios offerimus, cum pro unaquaque virtute Domino hostiam nostrae precis immolamus: ne sapientia elevet; ne intellectus, dum subtiliter currit, aberret; ne consilium, dum se multiplicat, confundat; ne fortitudo, dum fiduciam praebet, praecipitet; ne scientia, dum novit et non diligit, inflet; ne pietas, dum se extra rectitudinem inclinat, intorqueat; ne timor, dum plus justo trepidat, in desperationis foveam mergat. Cum ergo pro unaquaque virtute, ut pura esse debeat, preces Domino fundimus, quid aliud, quam juxta filiorum numerum holocaustum per singulos exhibemus? Holocaustum namque totum incensum dicitur. Holocaustum igitur dare, est totam mentem igne compunctionis incendere, ut in ara amoris cor ardeat, et quasi delicta propriae sobolis, inquinamenta cogitationis exurat. 49.. IBID. — Dicebat enim: Ne forte peccaverint filii mei, et benedixerint Deo in cordibus suis. 50. Variae hostis insidiae; ut bona opera vitiet, in operis initio, in progressu, in fine. — Filii in cordibus maledicunt, cum recta nostra opera a non rectis

cogitationibus prodeunt; cum bona in aperto exerunt, sed in occulto noxia moliuntur. Deo quippe maledicunt, cum mentes nostrae se de se aestimant habere quod sunt. Deo maledicunt, cum se et ab illo accepisse vires intelligunt, sed tamen de ejus muneribus propriam laudem quaerunt. Sciendum vero est, quod bona nostra tribus modis antiquus hostis insequitur, ut videlicet hoc, quod rectum coram hominibus agitur, in interni judicis conspectu vitietur. Aliquando namque in bono opere intentionem polluit, ut omne, quod in actione sequitur, eo purum mundumque non exeat, quo hoc ab origine perturbat. Aliquando vero intentionem boni operis vitiare non praevalet, sed in ipsa actione se quasi in itinere opponit; ut cum per propositum mentis securior quisque egreditur, subjuncto latenter vitio, quasi ex insidiis perimatur. Aliquando vero nec intentionem vitiat, nec in itinere supplantat, sed opus bonum in fine actionis illaqueat; quantoque vel a domo cordis, vel ab itinere operis longius recessisse se simulat, tanto ad decipiendum bonae actionis terminum astutius exspectat; et quo incautum quemque quasi recedendo reddiderit, eo illum repentino nonnunquam vulnere durius insanabiliusque transfigit. 51. Intentionem quippe in bono opere polluit, quia cum facilia ad decipiendum corda hominum conspicit, eorum desideriis auram transitorii favoris apponit; ut in his, quae recta faciunt, ad appetenda ima, fortitudine intentionis inclinentur. Unde recte sub Judaeae specie, de unaquaque anima laqueo miserae intentionis capta, per prophetam dicitur: Facti sunt hostes ejus in capite. Ac si aperte (Threnn. I, 5) diceretur: Cum bonum opus non bona intentione sumitur, huic adversantes spiritus ab ipso cogitationis exordio principantur; tantoque eam plenius possident, quanto et per initium dominantes tenent. 52. Cum vero intentionem vitiare non praevalent, in via positos laqueos tegunt, ut in eo quod bene agitur cor exaltans se ex latere ad vitium derivetur; quatenus quod inchoans aliter proposuerat, in actione longe aliter quam coeperat percurrat. Saepe enim bono operi dum laus humana obviat, mentem

operantis immutat: quae quamvis quaesita non fuerat, tamen oblata delectat. Cujus 35 delectatione cum mens bene operantis resolvitur, ab omni intentionis intimae vigore dissipatur. Saepe se bene inchoatae nostrae justitiae, ex latere ira subjungit; et dum zelo rectitudinis immoderatius mentem turbat, cunctam quietis intimae salutem sauciat. Saepe gravitatem cordis, quasi ex latere subjuncta tristitia sequitur; atque omne opus quod mens bona intentione inchoat, haec velamine moeroris obumbrat. Quae et nonnunquam tanto tardius repellitur, quanto et pressae menti quasi serior famulatur. Saepe se bono operi laetitia immoderata subjungit; cumque plus mentem quam decet, hilarescere exigit, ab actione bona omne pondus gravitatis repellit. Quia enim bene etiam inchoantibus subesse in itinere laqueos Psalmista conspexerat, recte prophetico plenus spiritu dicebat: In via hac, qua ambulabam, absconderunt laqueum mihi (Psal. CXLI, 4). Quod bene ac subtiliter Jeremias insinuat, qui dum gesta foris referre studuit, quae intus apud nosmetipsos gererentur indicavit, dicens: Venerunt octoginta viri de Sichem, et de Silo, et de Samaria, rasi barba, et scissis vestibus, squalentes; munera et thus habebant in manu, ut offerrent in domo Domini. Egressus autem Ismael filius Nathaniae in occursum eorum de Maspha, incedens et plorans ibat. Cumque occurrisset eis, dixit ad eos: Venite ad Godoliam filium Aicham. Qui cum venissent ad medium civitatis, interfecit eos (Jerem. XLI, 5). Barbam quippe radunt, qui sibi de propriis viribus fiduciam subtrahunt. Vestes scindunt, qui sibimetipsis in exterioris decoris laceratione non parcunt. Oblaturi in domo Domini thus et munera veniunt; qui exhibere se in Dei sacrificio orationem cum operibus pollicentur. Sed tamen si se in ipsa sanctae devotionis via caute circumspicere nesciunt, Ismael Nathaniae filius in eorum occursum venit; quia nimirum quilibet malignus spiritus, prioris sui, Satanae videlicet exemplo, in superbiae errore generatus, se ad laqueum deceptionis opponit. De quo et bene dicitur: Incedens et plorans ibat; quia ut devotas mentes interimere feriendo

praevaleat, semetipsum quasi sub velamine virtutis occultat; et dum concordare se vere lugentibus simulat, ad cordis intima securius admissus, hoc, quod intus de virtute latet, occidit. Qui plerumque se spondet ad altiora provehere. Unde et dixisse perhibetur, Venite ad Godoliam filium Aicham; atque dum majora promittit, etiam minima subtrahit. Unde et recte dictum est: Qui cum venissent ad medium civitatis, interfecit eos. Viros ergo ad offerenda Deo munera venientes, in medio civitatis interficit; quia divinis deditae operibus mentes, nisi magna se circumspectione custodiant, hoste subripiente, dum devotionis portant hostiam, in ipso itinere perdunt vitam. De cujus hostis manu non evaditur, nisi citius ad poenitentiam recurratur. Unde illic apte subjungitur: Decem autem viri reperti sunt inter eos qui dixerunt ad Ismael: Noli occidere nos, quia habemus thesauros in agro frumenti et hordei, et olei, et mellis; et non occidit eos (Jer. XLI, 8). Thesaurus quippe in agro est spes in poenitentia, quae quia non cernitur, quasi in terra cordis suffossa continetur. Qui ergo thesauros in agro habuere, servati sunt; quia qui post incautelae suae vitium, ad lamentum 36 poenitentiae redeunt, nec capti moriuntur. 53. Cum vero antiquus hostis neque in exordio intentionis ferit, neque in itinere actionis intercipit, duriores in fine laqueos tendit. Quem tanto nequius obsidet, quanto solum sibi remansisse ad decipiendum videt. Hos namque fini suo appositos laqueos Propheta conspexerat, cum dicebat: Ipsi calcaneum meum observabunt (Psal. LV, 7). Quia enim in calcaneo finis est corporis, quid per hunc nisi terminus signatur actionis? Sive ergo maligni spiritus, sive pravi quique homines, illorum superbiae sequaces, calcaneum observant, cum actionis bonae finem vitiare desiderant. Unde et eidem serpenti dicitur: Ipsa tuum observabit caput, et tu calcaneum ejus (Genes. III, 15, sec. LXX). Caput quippe serpentis observare, est initia suggestionis ejus aspicere, et manu sollicitae considerationis a cordis aditu funditus exstirpare. Qui tamen cum ab initio deprehenditur, percutere calcaneum molitur, quia etsi

suggestione prima intentionem non percutit, decipere in fine tendit. Si autem semel cor in intentione corrumpitur, sequentis actionis medietas, et terminus ab hoste callido secure possidetur; quoniam totam sibi arborum fructus ferre conspicit, quam veneni dente in radice vitiavit. Quia ergo summa cura vigilandum est, ne vel bonis operibus serviens mens, reproba intentione polluatur, recte dicitur: Ne forte peccaverint filii mei, et benedixerint Deo in cordibus suis. Ac si aperte diceretur: Nullum est bonum, quod foris agitur, si non pro eo intus ante Dei oculos innocentiae victima in ara cordis immolatur.. Tota itaque virtute perspiciendus est fluvius operis, si purus emanat ex fonte cogitationis. Omni cura servandus est a malitiae pulvere oculus cordis; ne hoc, quod in actione rectum hominibus ostentat, apud semetipsum per vitium pravae intentionis intorqueat. 54. Ideo curandum, ne bona opera nostra pauca sint, aut indiscussa. — Curandum itaque est ne bona nostra pauca sint; curandum ne indiscussa; ne aut pauca agentes, inveniamur steriles; aut indiscussa relinquentes, vecordes. Neque enim unaquaeque vere virtus est, si mista aliis virtutibus non est. Unde recte ad Moysen dicitur: Sume tibi aromata, stacten et onycha, galbanum boni odoris, et thus lucidissimum; aequalis ponderis erunt omnia, faciesque thymiama compositum opere unguentarii, mistum diligenter et purum (Exod. XXX, 34). Thymiama quippe ex aromatibus compositum facimus, cum in altari boni operis, virtutum multiplicitate redolemus. Quod mistum et purum fit; quia quanto virtus virtuti jungitur, tanto incensum boni operis sincerius exhibetur. Unde et bene subjungitur: Cumque in tenuissimum pulverem universa contuderis, pones ex eo coram testimonii tabernaculo (Ibid., 36). In tenuissimum pulverem aromata universa conterimus, cum bona nostra quasi in pilo cordis, occulta discussione tundimus; et si veraciter bona sint, subtiliter retractamus. Aromata ergo in pulverem redigere, est virtutes recogitando terere, et usque ad subtilitatem occulti examinis revocare. Et notandum,

quod de eodem pulvere dicitur: Pones ex eo coram testimonii tabernaculo; quia tunc nimirum bona nostra veraciter in conspectu judicis placent, cum haec mens subtilius recogitando conterit, et quasi de aromatibus pulverem reddit; ne 37 grossum durumque sit bonum quod agitur; ne si hoc arcta retractationis manus non comminuat, odorem de se subtilius non aspergat. Hinc est enim quod sponsae virtus, sponsi voce laudatur, cum dicitur: Quae est ista, quae ascendit per desertum, sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhae et thuris, et universi pulveris pigmentarii (Cant. III, 6)? Sancta quippe Ecclesia sicut fumi virgula ex aromatibus ascendit; quia ex vitae suae virtutibus in interni quotidie incensi rectitudinem proficit, nec sparsa per cogitationes defluit, sed sese intra arcana cordis in rigoris virga constringit. Quae ea quae agit, dum recogitare semper ac retractare non desinit, myrrham quidem et thus habet in opere, sed pulverem in cogitatione. Hinc est, quod de oblatoribus hostiae ad Moysen iterum dicitur: Detracta pelle hostiae, artus in frusta concidant (Levit. I, 6). Pellem namque hostiae subtrahimus, cum a mentis nostrae oculis superficiem virtutis amovemus. Cujus artus in frusta concidimus, cum distinguentes subtiliter ejus intima, membratimque cogitamus. Curandum ergo est, ne cum mala vincimus, bonis lascivientibus supplantemur; ne fortasse fluxa prodeant, ne incircumspecta capiantur, ne per errorem, viam deserant, ne per lassitudinem fracta, anteacti laboris meritum perdant. In cunctis enim vigilanter debet se mens circumspicere, atque in ipsa circumspectionis 38 suae providentia perseverare. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

IBID. — Sic faciebat Job cunctis diebus. 55. Perseverantia necessaria. — Incassum quippe bonum agitur (De poenit., dist. 3, can. 17, incassum), si ante terminum vitae deseratur; quia et frustra velociter currit, qui prius quam ad metas veniat deficit. Hinc est enim quod de reprobis dicitur: Vae

his qui perdiderunt sustinentiam (Eccli. II, 16). Hinc electis suis Veritas dicit: Vos estis qui permansistis mecum in tentationibus meis (Luc. XXII, 28). Hinc Joseph, qui inter fratres usque ad finem justus perseverasse describitur, solus talarem tunicam habuisse perhibitur (Genes. XXXVII, 24, sec. LXX). Nam quid est talaris tunica, nisi actio consummata? Quasi enim protensa tunica talum corporis operit, cum bona actio ante Dei oculos usque ad vitae nos terminum tegit. Hinc est quod per Moysen caudam hostiae in altari offerre praecipitur (Exod. XXIX, 22; Levit. III, 9); ut videlicet omne bonum quod incipimus, etiam perseveranti fine compleamus. Bene igitur coepta cunctis diebus agenda sunt; ut cum malum pugnando repellitur, ipsa boni victoria constantiae manu teneatur. 56. Haec itaque sub intellectu triplici diximus, ut fastidienti animae varia alimenta proponentes, aliquid, quod eligendo sumat, offeramus. Hoc tamen magnopere petimus, ut qui ad spiritalem intelligentiam mentem sublevat, a veneratione historiae non recedat.

LIBER SECUNDUS.

Capitis primi a versu sexto ad finem usque, secundum triplicem sensum prosequitur enarrationem.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. S. scriptura Speculum est. — Scriptura sacra mentis oculis quasi quoddam speculum opponitur (Vid. August. in Psal. CIII, ser. 1, n. 4), ut interna nostra facies in ipsa videatur. Ibi etenim foeda, ibi pulchra nostra cognoscimus. Ibi sentimus, quantum proficimus, ibi a provectu quam longe distamus. Narrat autem gesta sanctorum, et ad imitationem corda provocat infirmorum. Dumque illorum victricia facta commemorat, contra vitiorum praelia, debilia nostra confirmat; fitque verbis illius, ut eo mens minus inter certamina trepidet, quo ante se positos tot virorum fortium triumphos videt. Nonnunquam vero non solum nobis eorum virtutes asserit, sed etiam casus innotescit; ut et in victoria fortium quod imitando arripere, et rursum videamus in lapsibus quod debeamus timere. Ecce enim Job describitur tentatione auctus, sed David tentatione prostratus; ut et majorum virtus spem nostram foveat, et majorum casus ad cautelam nos humilitatis accingat; quatenus dum illa gaudentes sublevant, ista metuentes premant; et audientis animus illinc spei fiducia, hinc humilitate timoris eruditus, nec temeritate superbiat, quia formidine premitur, nec pressus timore desperet, quia ad spei fiduciam virtutis exemplo roboratur.

CAPUT II.

VERS. 6. — Quadam die cum venissent filii Dei, ut assisterent coram Domino, adfuit inter eos etiam Satan. 2. HISTORICUS SENSUS. Quam accurate S. Scriptura facta describat. — Intueri libet quomodo sacra eloquia in exordiis narrationum qualitates exprimant, terminosque causarum.

Aliquando namque a positione loci, aliquando a positione corporis, aliquando a qualitate aeris, aliquando a qualitate temporis signant, quid de ventura actione subjiciant. A positione quippe locorum divina Scriptura exprimit subsequentium merita finesque causarum, sicut de Israel dicit quia verba Dei in monte audire non potuit, sed praecepta in campestribus accepit: subsequentem nimirum infirmitatem populi indicans, qui ascendere ad summa non valuit, sed semetipsum in infimis neglecte vivendo laxavit. A positione corporis futura denuntiat, sicut in apostolorum Actibus Stephanus Jesum, qui a dextris virtutis Dei sedet, stantem se vidisse manifestat (Act. VII, 55, 56). Stare quippe adjuvantis est. Et recte stare cernitur, qui in bello certaminis opitulatur. A qualitate aeris res subsequens demonstratur, sicut evangelista, cum praedicante Domino, nullos tunc ex Judaea credituros diceret, praemisit dicens: Hiems autem erat (Joan. X, 22). Scriptum namque est: Quoniam abundabit iniquitas, refrigescet charitas multorum (Matth. XXIV, 12). Idcirco ergo hiemis curavit tempus exprimere, ut inesse auditorum cordibus malitiae frigus indicaret. Hinc est quod de negaturo Petro praemittitur: Quia frigus erat, et stans ad prunas calefaciebat se (Joan. XVIII, 18). Jam namque intus a charitatis calore torpuerat, et ad amorem praesentis vitae, quasi ad persecutorum prunas infirmitate aestuante recalebat. A qualitate quoque temporis finis exprimitur actionis, sicut non rediturus ad veniam, ad traditionis perfidiam nocte Judas 39 exiisse perhibetur, cum egrediente illo, ab evangelista dicitur: Erat autem nox (Joan. XIII, 30). Hinc enim et iniquo diviti dicitur: Hac nocte repetent animam tuam abs te (Luc. XII, 20). Anima quippe, quae ad tenebras ducitur, non in die repeti, sed in nocte memoratur. Hinc est quod Salomon, qui sapientiam non perseveraturus accepit, in somnis hanc et nocte accepisse describitur (III Reg. III, 11). Hinc est quod angeli ad Abraham meridie veniunt; punituri autem Sodomam, ad eam vespere venisse memorantur

(Gen. XVIII, 1, 2; XIX, 1). Quia igitur beati Job tentatio ad victoriam deducitur, a die coepta perhibetur, cum dicitur:

CAPUT III.

IBID. — Quadam die, cum venissent filii Dei, ut assisterent coram Domino, adfuit inter eos etiam Satan. 3. Quomodo Angeli Deo adsunt, etiam in ministerium missi. Quantae subtilitatis sint angeli. — Qui autem Dei filii, nisi electi angeli vocantur? De quibus cum constet, quod obtutibus majestatis inserviant, valde quaerendum est unde veniant, ut coram Domino assistant. De his quippe voce Veritatis dicitur: Angeli eorum in coelis semper vident faciem Patris mei, qui in coelis est (Matth. XVIII, 10). De his propheta ait: Millia millium ministrabant ei, et decies millies centena millia assistebant ei (Daniel. VII, 10). Si igitur semper vident, et semper assistunt, vigilanti cura quaerendum est unde veniunt, qui nunquam recedunt. Sed cum de illis per Paulum dicitur: Nonne omnes sunt administratorii spiritus in ministerium missi, propter eos qui haereditatem capiunt salutis (Heb. I, 14)? Per hoc, quod missos cognoscimus, unde veniant invenimus. Sed ecce quaestioni quaestionem jungimus, et quasi dum ansam solvere nitimur, nodum ligamus. Quomodo enim aut semper assistere, aut videre semper faciem Patris possunt, si ad ministerium exterius pro nostra salute mittuntur? Quod tamen citius solvimus, si quantae subtilitatis sit angelica natura pensamus. Neque enim sic a divina visione foras exeunt, ut internae contemplationis gaudiis priventur; quia si conditoris aspectum exeuntes amitterent, nec jacentes erigere, nec ignorantibus vera nuntiare potuissent; fontemque lucis, quem egredientes ipsi perderent, caecis nullatenus propinarent. In hoc itaque est nunc natura angelica a naturae nostrae conditione distincta, quod nos et loco circumscribimur, et caecitatis ignorantia coarctamur: angelorum vero spiritus loco quidem circumscripti sunt, sed tamen eorum scientiae longe super nos incomparabiliter dilatantur.

Interius quippe exteriusque sciendo distenti sunt, quia ipsum fontem scientiae contemplantur. Quid enim de his quae scienda sunt nesciunt, qui scientem omnia sciunt? Eorum itaque scientia comparatione nostrae valde dilatata est, sed tamen comparatione divinae scientiae angusta: sicut et ipsi illorum spiritus comparatione quidem nostrorum corporum, spiritus sunt, sed comparatione summi et incircumscripti spiritus, corpus. Et mittuntur igitur, et assistunt: quia et per hoc, quod circumscripti sunt, exeunt; et per hoc, quod intus quoque praesentes sunt nunquam recedunt. Et faciem ergo Patris semper vident, et tamen ad nos veniunt; quia et ad nos spiritali praesentia foras exeunt, et tamen ibi se, unde recesserant, per internam contemplationem servant. Dicatur ergo: Venerunt filii Dei, ut 40 assisterent coram Domino, quia illuc spiritus conversione redeunt, unde nulla mentis aversione discedunt.

CAPUT IV.

IBID. — Affuit inter eos etiam Satan. 4. Satan inter angelos, quia naturam non amisit. — Valde quaerendum est quomodo inter electos angelos Satan adesse potuerit, qui ab eorum sorte, exigente superbia, dudum damnatus exivit. Sed recte inter eos adfuisse describitur, quia etsi beatitudinem perdidit, naturam tamen eis similem non amisit; et si meritis praegravatur, conditione naturae subtilis attollitur. Inter Dei ergo filios coram Domino adfuisse dicitur; quia eo intuitu, quo omnipotens Deus cuncta spiritalia conspicit, etiam Satan in ordine naturae subtilioris videt, attestante Scriptura, quae dicit: Oculi Domini contemplantur malos et bonos (Prov. XV, 3). Sed hoc, quod adfuisse Satan coram Domino dicitur, in gravi nobis quaestione versatur. Scriptum quippe est: Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt (Matth. V, 8). Satan vero, qui mundo corde esse non potest, quomodo ad videndum Dominum adfuisse potest. 5. Deo adest, quia ab eo videtur. — Sed intuendum est quia adfuisse coram Domino, non autem

Dominum vidisse perhibetur. Venit quippe, ut videretur, non ut videret. Ipse in conspectu Domini, non autem in conspectu ejus Dominus fuit: sicut caecus cum in sole consistit, ipse quidem radiis solis perfunditur, sed tamen lumen non videt quo illustratur. Ita ergo etiam inter angelos in conspectu Domini Satan adfuit; quia vis divina, quae intuendo penetrat omnia, non se videntem immundum spiritum vidit. Quia enim et ipsa, quae Deum fugiunt, latere non possunt, dum cuncta nuda sunt superno conspectui, Satan adfuit absens praesenti. Sequitur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 7. — Cui dixit Dominus, Unde venis? 6. Nescire Dei est reprobare. — Quid est, quod venientibus angelis electis nequaquam dicitur, Unde venitis? Satan vero unde veniat percontatur? non enim requirimus, nisi utique quae nescimus. Nescire autem Dei, reprobare est. Unde quibusdam in fine dicturus est: Nescio vos unde sitis, discedite a me, omnes operarii iniquitatis (Luc. XIII, 27). Sicut et nescire mentiri vir verax dicitur qui labi per mendacium dedignatur; non quo si mentiri velit, nesciat, sed quo falsa loqui veritatis amore contemnat. Quid est ergo ad Satan dicere, Unde venis, nisi vias illius quasi incognitas reprobare? Veritatis igitur lumen tenebras, quas reprobat, ignorat; et Satanae itinera, quia judicans damnat, dignum est ut quasi nesciens requirat. Hinc est quod Adae peccanti conditoris voce dicitur, Adam ubi es? (Genes. III, 9.) Neque enim divina potentia nesciebat, post culpam servus ad quae latibula fugerat; sed quia vidit in culpa lapsum, jam sub peccato velut ab oculis veritatis absconditum, quia tenebras erroris ejus non approbat, quasi ubi sit peccator ignorat; eumque et vocat, et requirit, dicens, Adam ubi es? Per hoc quod vocat, signum dat quia ad poenitentiam revocat. Per hoc quod requirit, aperte insinuat, quia peccatores jure damnandos ignorat. Satan ergo Dominus non vocat, sed tamen requirit, dicens: Unde venis? quia nimirum Deus apostatam spiritum ad

poenitentiam nequaquam revocat; sed vias superbiae ejus nesciens, damnat. 41 Igitur dum Satan de itinere suo discutitur, electi angeli requirendi unde veniant non sunt: quia eorum viae tanto Deo notae sunt, quanto et ipso auctore peraguntur; dumque soli ejus voluntati inserviunt, eo esse incognitae nequeunt, quo per approbationis oculum ex ipso semper ante ipsum fiunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT VI.

IBID. — Respondens Satan, ait: Circuivi terram, et perambulavi eam. 7. Satanae circuitus, ejus anxietatis argumentum. — Solet per gyrum circuitus, laboris anxietas designari. Satan ergo laborans terram circuivit, quia quietus in coeli culmine stare contempsit. Cumque se non volasse, sed perambulasse insinuat, quanto peccati pondere in imis prematur, demonstrat. Perambulans ergo terram circuivit; quia ab illo spiritalis potentiae volatu corruens, malitiae suae pressus gravedine, foras ad gyrum laboris venit. Hinc est enim quod et de ejus membris per Psalmistam dicitur: In circuitu impii ambulant (Psal. XI, 9); quia dum interiora non appetunt, in exteriorum labore fatigantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 8. — Nunquid considerasti servum meum Job, quod non sit ei similis in terra, homo simplex et rectus, ac timens Deum, et recedens a malo? 8. Variae Dei spirituumque locutiones. — Hoc quod divina voce beatus Job simplex et rectus, ac timens Deum, et recedens a malo dicitur, quia subtiliter membratimque supra exposuimus, replicare quae diximus devitamus; ne dum discussa repetimus, tardius ad indiscussa veniamus. Hoc ergo nobis est solerter intuendum, quid sit, quod vel ad Satan loqui Dominus dicitur, vel quod Satan Domino respondere perhibetur. Discutienda quippe est quaenam sit ista locutio. Neque enim vel a Domino,

qui summus atque incircumscriptus est spiritus, vel a Satan, qui nulla est carnea natura vestitus, humano modo aereus flatus folle ventris attrahitur, ut per organum gutturis, vocis expressione reddatur. Sed dum naturae invisibili natura incomprehensibilis loquitur, dignum est ut mens nostra qualitatem corporeae locutionis excedens, ad sublimes atque incognitos modos locutionis intimae suspendatur. Nos namque ut ea quae sentimus intrinsecus extrinsecus exprimamus, haec per organum gutturis, per sonum vocis ejicimus. Alienis quippe oculis intra secretum mentis, quasi post parietem corporis stamus; sed cum manifestare nosmetipsos cupimus, quasi per linguae januam egredimur, ut quales sumus intrinsecus ostendamus. Spiritalis autem natura non ita est, quae ex mente et corpore composita dupliciter non est. Sed rursus sciendum est quia ipsa etiam natura incorporea cum loqui dicitur, ejus locutio nequaquam una atque eadem qualitate formatur. Aliter enim loquitur Deus ad angelos, aliter angeli ad Deum; aliter Deus ad sanctorum animas, aliter sanctorum animae ad Deum; aliter Deus ad diabolum, aliter diabolus ad Deum. 9. Aliter Deus loquitur ad angelos. — Nam quia spiritali naturae ex corporea oppositione nihil obstat, loquitur Deus ad angelos sanctos eo ipso, quo eorum cordibus occulta sua invisibilia ostentat: ut quidquid agere debeant, in ipsa contemplatione veritatis legant, et velut quaedam praecepta vocis sint ipsa gaudia contemplationis. Quasi enim audientibus dicitur, quod videntibus 42 inspiratur. Unde cum eorum cordibus, Deus contra humanam superbiam, animadversionem ultionis infunderet, dixit: Venite descendamus, et confundamus ibi linguam eorum (Genes. II, 7). Dicitur eis qui adhaerent, Venite; quia nimirum hoc ipsum nunquam a divina contemplatione decrescere, in divina contemplatione semper accrescere est; et nunquam corde recedere, quasi quodam stabili motu est semper venire. Quibus et dicit: Descendamus et confundamus linguam eorum. Ascendunt angeli, in eo quod creatorem conspiciunt. Descendunt angeli, in eo quod creaturam

sese in illicitis erigentem examine districtionis premunt. Dicere ergo Dei est: Descendamus et confundamus linguam eorum, in seipso eis hoc, quod recte agatur ostendere, et per vim internae visionis, eorum mentibus exhibenda judicia occultis motibus inspirare. 10. Aliter angeli ad Deum. — Aliter loquuntur angeli ad Deum, sicut et per Joannis Apocalypsim dicunt: Dignus est Agnus, qui occisus est, accipere virtutem, et divinitatem, et sapientiam (Apoc. V, 12). Vox namque angelorum est in laude conditoris, ipsa admiratio intimae contemplationis. Virtutis divinae miracula obstupuisse, dixisse est, quia excitatus cum reverentia motus cordis, magnus est ad aures incircumscripti spiritus clamor vocis. Quae vox se quasi per distincta verba explicat, dum sese per innumeros modos admirationis format. Deus ergo angelis loquitur, cum eis voluntas ejus intima videnda manifestatur. Angeli autem loquuntur Domino, cum per hoc, quod super semetipsos respiciunt, in motum admirationis surgunt. Aliter Deus ad sanctorum animas, et illae ad Deum. — Aliter Deus ad sanctorum animas, aliter sanctorum animae loquuntur ad Deum. Unde et in Joannis Apocalypsi rursum dicitur: Vidi subter altare animas interfectorum propter verbum Dei, et propter testimonium quod habebant; et clamabant voce magna dicentes: Usquequo, Domine, sanctus et verus, non judicas et vindicas sanguinem nostrum de his qui habitant in terra? Ubi illico adjungitur, Datae sunt illis singulae stolae albae, et dictum est illis, ut requiescerent tempus adhuc modicum, donec impleatur numerus conservorum et fratrum eorum. Quid est enim animas vindictae petitionem dicere, nisi diem extremi judicii, et resurrectionem exstinctorum corporum desiderare? Magnus quippe earum clamor, magnum est desiderium. Tanto enim quisque minus clamat, quanto minus desiderat; et tanto majorem vocem in aures incircumscripti spiritus exprimit, quanto se in ejus desiderium plenius fundit. Animarum igitur verba ipsa sunt desideria. Nam si desiderium sermo non esset, Propheta non diceret: Desiderium cordis eorum audivit auris tua (Psal. IX, 17). Sed cum

aliter moveri soleat mens quae petit, aliterque quae petitur, et sanctorum animae ita in interni secreti sinu Deo inhaereant, ut inhaerendo requiescant; quomodo dicuntur petere, quas ab interna voluntate constat nullatenus discrepare? quomodo dicuntur petere, quas et voluntatem Dei certum est, et ea quae futura sunt, non ignorare? Sed in ipso positae, ab ipso aliquid petere dicuntur, non quo quidquam desiderent, quod ab 43 ejus voluntate, quem cernunt, discordat: sed quo mente ardentius inhaerent, eo etiam de ipso accipiunt, ut ab ipso petant, quod eum facere velle noverunt. De ipso ergo bibunt, quod ab ipso sitiunt; et modo nobis adhuc incomprehensibili, in hoc, quod petendo esuriunt, praesciendo satiantur. Discordarent ergo a voluntate conditoris, si quae eum vident velle, non peterent; eique minus inhaererent, si volentem dare, desiderio pigriori pulsarent. Quibus responsum divinitus dicitur: Requiescite tempus adhuc modicum, donec compleatur numerus conservorum et fratrum vestrorum. Desiderantibus animabus, Requiescite tempus adhuc modicum, dicere, est inter ardorem desiderii ex ipsa praescientia solatium consolationis aspirare; ut et animarum vox sit hoc, quod amantes desiderant; et respondentis Dei sermo sit hoc, quod eas retributionis certitudine inter desideria confirmat. Respondere ergo ejus est, ut collectionem fratrum exspectare debeant, eorum mentibus libenter exspectandi moras infundere; ut cum carnis resurrectionem appetunt, etiam ex colligendorum fratrum augmento gratulentur. 12. Aliter Deus ad diabolum, et ille ad Deum. Aliter Deus loquitur ad diabolum, aliter diabolus ad Deum. Loqui enim Dei est ad diabolum, vias ejus ac negotia animadversione occultae districtionis increpare, sicut hic dicitur: Unde venis? Diaboli autem ei respondere, est omnipotenti majestati ejus nihil posse celare. Unde hic ait, Circuivi terram, et perambulavi eam. Quasi enim dicere ejus est quid egerit, scire quod actus suos illius oculis occultare non possit. Sciendum vero est, quia sicut hoc loco discimus, quatuor modis loquitur Deus ad diabolum; tribus modis diabolus ad Deum. Quatuor modis

loquitur Deus ad diabolum; quia et injustas vias ejus arguit, et electorum suorum contra illum justitiam proponit, et tentandam eorum innocentiam ei concedendo permittit, et aliquando eum, ne tentare audeat, prohibet. Injustas enim vias ejus redarguit, sicut jam dictum est: Unde venis? Electorum suorum contra illum justitiam proponit, sicut ait: Considerasti servum meum Job, quod non sit ei similis super terram? Tentandam eorum innocentiam concedendo permittit, sicut dicit: Ecce universa quae habet in manu tua sunt. Rursumque eum a tentatione prohibet, cum dicit: Tantum in eum ne extendas manum tuam. Tribus autem modis loquitur diabolus ad Deum, cum vel vias suas insinuat, vel electorum innocentiam fictis criminibus accusat, vel tentandam eamdem innocentiam postulat. Vias quippe suas insinuat, qui ait: Circuivi terram, et perambulavi eam. Electorum innocentiam accusat, qui dicit: (Vers. 9, 10) Nunquid frustra Job timet Deum? Nonne tu vallasti eum, ac domum ejus, universamque substantiam per circuitum? Tentandam eamdem innocentiam postulat, cum dicit: Extende manum tuam, et tange cuncta quae possidet, nisi in faciem benedixerit tibi. Sed dicere Dei est, Unde venis? sicut et supra insinuavimus, vi suae justitiae itinera malitiae ejus inerepare. Dicere Dei est, Considerasti servum meum Job, quod non sit ei similis super terram? tales electos suos justificando facere, qualibus nimirum apostata angelus possit invidere. Dicere Dei est, Ecce universa quae habet in manu tua sunt,
44 ad probationem fidelium, contra eos occulta vi incursum illum suae malitiae relaxare. Dicere Dei est, Tantum in eum ne extendas manum tuam, ab immoderatae tentationis impetu eum etiam permittendo restringere. Dicere autem diaboli est, Circuivi terram, et perambulavi eam, sagacitatem suae malitiae invisibilibus ejus oculis occultare non posse. Dicere diaboli est, Nunquid frustra Job timet Deum? contra bonos intra cogitationum suarum latibula conqueri; eorumque provectibus invidere, atque invidendo reprobationis rimas exquirere. Dicere diaboli est, Extende paululum manum

tuam, et tange cuncta quae possidet (Vers. 11), ad afflictionem bonorum, malitiae aestibus anhelare. Quo enim eorum tentationem invidens appetit, eo illorum quasi probationem deprecans petit. Quia igitur internarum locutionum modos succincte diximus, ad intermissum paululum expositionis ordinem revertamur

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 8. — Considerasti servum meum Job, quod non sit similis ei super terram, vir simplex et rectus, ac timens Deum, et recedens a malo? 13. Dei diabolique pugna, cujus materia Job fuit. — Praecedenti jam sermone tractatum est, quia diabolus non contra Job, sed contra Deum certamen proposuit; materia vero certaminis beatus Job in medio fuit. Et si in sermonibus suis dicimus Job inter flagella deliquisse, quod sentire nefas est, Deum dicimus in sua propositione perdidisse. Nam ecce et in hoc loco intuendum est, quia non prius diabolus beatum Job a Domino petiit, sed eum Dominus in diaboli despectum laudavit. Et nisi in sua justitia permansurum nosset, non utique pro illo proponeret. Nec periturum in tentatione concederet, de quo ante tentationem, ex Dei laudibus, in tentatoris mente invidiae fuerant faces excitatae. 14. Quam astute quaerat diabolus unde nos accuset. — Sed antiquus adversarius cum quae accuset mala, non invenit, ipsa ad malum inflectere bona quaerit. Cumque de operibus vincitur, ad accusandum verba nostra perscrutatur. Cum nec in verbis accusationem reperit, intentionem cordis fuscare contendit; tanquam bona facta bono animo non fiant, et idcirco perpendi a judice bona non debeant. Quia enim fructus arboris esse et in aestu virides conspicit, quasi vermem ponere ad radicem quaerit. Nam dicit:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 9, 10. — Nunquid frustra Job timet Deum? Nonne tu vallasti eum ac domum ejus, universamque substantiam per circuitum? Operibus manuum ejus benedixisti, et possessio illius crevit in terra. 15. Ex prosperis et ex adversis tentat. — Ac si aperte dicat: Qui tot bona in terra recepit, quid mirum est, si pro eis se innocenter gerit? Innocens vere esset, si bonus inter adversa persisteret. Cur autem magnus dicitur, quem merces sui uniuscujusque operis tanta rerum multiplicitate comitatur? Astutus quippe adversarius, cum sanctum virum inter prospera bene egisse considerat, reprobare apud judicem per adversa festinat. Unde recte in Apocalypsi voce angelica dicitur: Projectus est accusator fratrum nostrorum, qui accusabat illos ante conspectum Dei nostri die ac nocte (Apoc. XII, 10). Scriptura autem sacra saepe diem pro prosperis, noctem autem pro adversis ponere consuevit. In die ergo et nocte accusare non desinit, quia modo nos in prosperis, modo in adversis accusabiles ostendere contendit. In die accusat, cum prosperis male nos uti insinuat. In nocte accusat, cum in adversis 45 nos non habere patientiam demonstrat. Beatum ergo Job quia necdum flagella attigerant, quasi adhuc unde in nocte accusare posset, omnino non habebat. Quia vero in prosperis magna sanctitate viguerat, pro eisdem prosperis bona illum egisse simulabat: versuta assertione mentiens quod non ad usum Domini substantiam possideret, sed ad usum substantiae Dominum coleret. Sunt enim nonnulli qui ut fruantur Deo, dispensatorie utuntur hoc saeculo. Et sunt nonnulli qui ut fruantur hoc saeculo, transitorie uti volunt Deo. Cum igitur bona divini muneris narrat, putat quod facta fortis operarii leviget; ut cujus vitam reprehendere de operibus non valet, ejus mentem quasi ex cogitationibus addicat; mentiens quod non amori Domini, sed temporalis prosperitatis appetitioni servierit omne, quod innocue exterius vixit. Vires ergo beati Job nesciens, sed tamen unumquemque adversis probari verius sciens, tentandum hunc expetit; ut qui per diem prosperitatis inoffenso gressu incesserat, saltem in nocte

adversitatis impingeret, et ante laudatoris sui oculos offensione impatientiae prostratus jaceret. Unde subjungit: CAPUT. X. VERS. 11. — Sed extende paululum manum tuam, et tange cuncta quae possidet, nisi in faciem benedixerit tibi. 16. Diabolus nihil nisi Deo permittente potest. — Cum sanctum virum Satan tentare appetit, et tamen Domino, ut manum suam extendere debeat, dicit; valde notandum est quia feriendi vires nec ipse sibi tribuit, qui contra auctorem omnium singulariter superbit. Scit namque diabolus, quia quodlibet agere ex semetipso non sufficit, quia nec per semetipsum in eo quod est spiritus existit. Hinc est quod in Evangelio expellenda de homine legio dicebat: Si ejicis nos, mitte nos in gregem porcorum (Matth. VIII, 31). Qui enim per semetipsum ire in porcos non poterat, quid mirum si sine auctoris manu, sancti viri domum contingere non valebat?. VERS. 12. — Ecce universa, quae habet, in manu tua sunt: tantum in eum ne extendas manum tuam. 19. Deus tentatori alia permittit, alia negat. — Consideranda est in verbis Domini dispensatio sanctae pietatis, quomodo hostem nostrum permittit, et retinet; relaxat, et refrenat. Alia ad tentandum dat, sed ab aliis religat. Universa quae habet, in manu tua sunt, tantum in eum ne extendus manum tuam. Substantiam prodit, sed tamen corpus ejus protegit, quod quidem postmodum tentatori traditurus est; sed tamen non simul ad omnia relaxat hostem, ne undique feriens frangat civem. Mala enim cum multa electis eveniunt, mira conditoris gratia ex tempore dispensantur; ut quae coacervata perimerent, possint divisa tolerari. Hinc Paulus ait: Fidelis Deus, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet cum tentatione etiam exitum, ut possitis sustinere (I Cor. X, 13). Hinc David ait: Proba me, Domine, et tenta me (Psal. XXV, 2). Ac si aperte dicat: Prius vires inspice, et tunc ut ferre valeo, tentari permitte. Hoc tamen quod dicitur: Ecce universa, quae habet, in manu tua sunt, tantum in eum ne extendas manum tuam, intelligi et aliter potest, quia fortem quidem pugnatorem suum Dominus noverat, sed tamen dividere ei

certamina contra hostem volebat; ut quamvis robusto bellatori victoria in cunctis suppeteret, prius tamen de uno certamine hostis ad Dominum victus rediret: tuncque ei aliud iterum vincendo concederet, quatenus fidelis famulus eo mirabilius victor existeret, quo victus hostis se contra illum iterum ad nova bella repararet. Sequitur:

CAPUT XII.

IBID. — Egressusque est Satan a facie Domini. 20. Deus est intra et extra omnia, supra et infra omnia. — Quid est quod Satan a facie Domini egressus dicitur? Quo enim exitur ab eo qui ubique est? Hinc namque ait: Coelum et terram ego impleo (Jer. XXIII, 24). Hinc est, quod Sapientia illius dicit: Gyrum coeli circuivi sola (Eccli. XXIV, 8). Hinc de ejus Spiritu scriptum est: Spiritus Domini implevit orbem terrarum (Sap. I, 7). Hinc est quod Dominus iterum dicit: Coelum mihi sedes est, terra autem scabellum pedum meorum (Isai. LXVI, 1). Rursumque de eo scriptum est: Coelum metitur palmo et omnem terram pugillo concludit (Isa. XL, 12). Sedi quippe, cui praesidet, interior et exterior manet. Coelum palmo metiens, et terram pugillo concludens ostenditur, quod ipse sit circumquaque cunctis rebus, quas creavit, exterior. Id namque quod interius concluditur, a concludente exterius continetur. Per sedem ergo, cui praesidet, 47 intelligitur esse interius supraque; per pugillum, quo continet, esse exterius subterque signatur. Quia enim ipse manet intra omnia, ipse extra omnia, ipse supra omnia, ipse infra omnia; et superior est per potentiam, et inferior per sustentationem; exterior per magnitudinem, et interior per subtilitatem: sursum regens, deorsum continens; extra circumdans, interius penetrans; nec alia ex parte superior, alia inferior, aut alia ex parte exterior, atque ex alia manet interior: sed unus idemque totus ubique praesidendo sustinens, sustinendo praesidens, circumdando penetrans, penetrando circumdans; unde superius praesidens, inde inferius sustinens; et unde exterius ambiens,

inde interius replens: sine inquietudine superius regens, sine labore inferius sustinens; interius sine extenuatione penetrans, exterius sine extensione circumdans. Est itaque inferior et superior sine loco; est amplior sine latitudine, est subtilior sine extenuatione. 21. A facie Domini exit Satan, cum ad desiderii sui effectum venit. — Quo igitur exitur ab eo, qui dum per molem corporis nusquam est, per incircumscriptam substantiam nusquam deest? Sed quandiu Satan pressus majestatis potentia, appetitum suae malitiae exercere non valuit, quasi ante faciem Domini stetit. A facie autem Domini exiit; quia relaxatus divinitus ab internae retentionis angustia, ad sui desiderii effectum venit. A facie Domini exiit, quia diu vinculis disciplinae religata quandoque voluntas noxia ad opus processit. Cum enim, sicut dictum est, id quod voluit implere non valuit, quasi ante faciem Domini stetit; quia illum ab effectu malitiae superna dispensatio coactavit. Sed a facie ejus exiit, quia potestatem tentationis accipiens, ad malitiae suae vota pervenit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 13, 14, 15. — Cum autem quadam die filii et filiae ejus comederent, et biberent vinum in domo fratris sui primogeniti, nuntius venit ad Job, qui diceret: Boves arabant, et asinae pascebantur juxta eos, et irruerunt Sabaei, tuleruntque omnia, et pueros percusserunt gladio, et evasi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 22. Diabolus tentandi tempora eligit. — Notandum quae tempora tentationibus congruant. Tunc quippe diabolus tentandi tempus elegit, quando beati Job filios in convivio invenit. Neque enim solummodo intuetur hostis quid faciat, sed etiam quando faciat. Nam quamvis potestatem acceperit, aptum tamen ad subversionem tempus exquisivit; ut videl cet nobis Deo dispensante proderetur, quia praenuntia tribulationis est laetitia satietatis. Intuendum vero est, quam callide ipsa damna, quae illata sunt, nuntiantur. Non enim dicitur, boves a Sabaeis ablati sunt: sed qui

ablati sunt, boves arabant; ut videlicet memorato fructu operis, causa crescat doloris. Unde et apud Graecos non solum asinae, sed fetae asinae raptae referuntur; ut dum minima animalia audientis animum minus ex sui qualitate percuterent, amplius ex fecunditate vulnerarent. Et quia eo magis adversa animum feriunt, quo cum multa sunt, etiam subita nuntiantur, aucta est mensura gemituum, etiam per articula nuntiorum. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 16. — 48 Cumque adhuc ille loqueretur, venitalius, et dixit: Ignis Dei cecidit de coelo, et tactas oves puorosque consumpsit, et effugi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 23. Casibus repentinis constantiam Job evertere conatur. — Ne rebus perditis minorem audienti dolorem moveat, ejus animum ad excedendum etiam ipsis nuntiorum verbis instigat. Intuendum quippe est, quam callide dicitur: Ignis Dei, ac si diceretur: Illius animadversionem sustines, quem tot hostiis placare voluisti; illius iram toleras, cui quotidie serviens insudabas. Dum enim Deum, cui servierat, adversa intulisse indicat, laesum commemorat, in quo excedat; quatenus anteacta obsequia ad mentem reduceret, et frustra se servisse aestimans, in auctoris injuriam superbiret. Pia etenim mens, cum se adversa ab hominibus perpeti conspicit, in divinae gratiae consolatione requiescit; cumque tentationum procellas increscere extrinsecus viderit, secessum spei Dominicae appetens, intra conscientiae portum fugit. Ut vero versutus hostis uno eodemque tempore sancti viri robustissimum pectus et humanis adversitatibus, et divina desperatione concuteret, et prius Sabaeos irruisse intulit, et mox ignem Dei de coelo cecidisse nuntiavit; ut quasi omnem aditum consolationis excluderet, dum et ipsum adversantem ostenderet, qui consolari animum inter adversa potuisset: quatenus dum se tentatus undique destitui atque undique premi considerat, in contumeliam tanto audacius, quanto et desperatius erumpat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 17. — Sed et illo adhuc loquente, venit alius et dixit: Chaldaei fecerunt tres turmas, et invaserunt camelos, et tulerunt eos, necnon et pueros percusserunt gladio, et effugi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 24. Vulnera ingeminat. — Ecce iterum, ne quid minus de humana adversitate doluisset, Chaldaeorum turmas irruisse denuntiat; et ne illum minus desuper veniens adversitas feriat, iteratam iram in aere demonstrat. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 18, 19. — Loquebatur ille, et ecce alius intravit, et dixit: Filiis tuis et filiabus vescentibus et bibentibus vinum in domo fratris sui primogeniti, repente ventus vehemens irruit a regione deserti, et concussit quatuor angulos domus, quae corruens oppressit liberos tuos, et mortui sunt, et effugi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 25. Ad odium Dei provocare conatur. — Qui uno vulnere non prosternitur, idcirco bis, terque percutitur, ut usque ad intima quandoque feriatur. Nuntiata itaque fuerat adversitas de Sabaeis, nuntiata divina animadversio per ignem de coelo, nuntiatur ab hominibus iterum camelorum raptus, caedesque puerorum, et divinae indignationis ira repetitur, dum ventus irruens concussisse domus angulos, atque exstinxisse liberos indicatur. Quia enim notum est, quod absque superno nutu moveri elementa non possint, latenter infertur quod ipse contra illum elementa moverit, qui moveri permisit; quamvis Satan semel accepta a Domino potestate ad usum suae nequitiae etiam elementa concutere praevalet. Nec movere debet, si spiritus de summis projectus turbare in ventos aerem potuit; cum nimirum constet quia et damnatis 49 in metallum, ad usum aqua et ignis servit. Quaesitum est igitur ut nuntiarentur mala, quaesitum ut multa, quaesitum ut subita. Sed cum prius adversa nuntiavit, tranquillo adhuc pectori quasi sanis membris vulnus inflixit; cum vero percussum cor

feriendo repetiit, ut ad impatientiae verba compelleret, super vulnera vulnus irrogavit. 26. Plagae Job subitae et multiplices. — Intuendum vero est quam callide curavit hostis antiquus, non tam jactura rerum sancti viri patientiam rumpere, quam ipso ordine nuntiorum. Qui studens prius parva, et post nuntiare majora, in extremo filiorum mortem intulit, ne vilia pater rei familiaris damna duceret, si illa jam orbatus audiret; et minus percuteret rerum amissio, praecognita morte filiorum, quia videlicet nulla esset haereditas, si illos prius subtraheret qui servabantur haeredes. Sed a minimis incipiens, in ultimum graviora nuntiavit; ut dum gradatim deteriora cognosceret, in ejus corde doloris locum omne vulnus inveniret. Notandum quam callide tot malorum pondera, et divisa, et subita nuntiantur, ut et repente, et particulatim crescens, in audientis corde sese dolor ipse non caperet; et tanto ardentius in blasphemiam accenderet, quanto subitis ac multiplicibus nuntiis in se angustius aestuaret.. VERS. 20. — Tunc surrexit Job, et scidit vestimenta sua, et tonso capite corruens in terram adoravit. 28. Flagella Dei aut non sentire, aut nimis, vitium est. — Nonnulli magnae constantiae philosophiam putant, si disciplinae asperitate correpti, ictus verberum doloresque non sentiant. Nonnulli vero tam nimis percussionum flagella sentiunt, ut immoderato dolore commoti, etiam in excessum linguae dilabantur. Sed quisquis veram tenere philosophiam 50 nititur, necesse est ut inter utraque gradiatur. Non est enim pondus verae virtutis, insensibilitas cordis: quia et valde insana per stuporem membra sunt, quae et incisa dolore nequaquam possunt. Rursus virtutis custodiam deserit, qui dolorem verberum ultra quam necesse est sentit; quia dum nimia afflictione cor tangitur, usque ad impatientiae contumelias excitatur, et qui per flagella corrigere malefacta debuerat, agit ut nequitia per flagellum crescat. Contra insensibilitatem quippe percussorum per prophetam dicitur: Percussisti eos, nec doluerunt; attrivisti eos, et renuerunt accipere disciplinam (Jerem. V, 3). Contra pusillanimitatem percussorum per Psalmistam dicitur: In miseriis

non subsistent (Psal. CXXXIX 11). In miseriis namque subsisterent, si aequanimiter adversa tolerarent. At postquam mente inter flagella corruunt, quasi inter illatas miserias subsistendi constantiam perdunt.. VERS. 21. — Nudus egressus sum de utero matris meae, nudus revertar illuc. 30. Temporalia parvi facienda, quod ea aliquando non habuerimus, nec habituri simus. — O quam altae sedi interni consilii praesidet iste, qui scissis vestibus in terra prostratus jacet! Quia enim judicante Domino, cuncta amiserat, pro servanda 51 patientia illud tempus ad memoriam reduxit, quo necdum ista quae perdidit habebat; ut dum intuetur quod aliquando illa non habuit, dolorem temperet quod amisit. Magna enim consolatio est in rerum amissione, illa tempora ad mentem reducere, quibus nos contigit res quas perdidimus non habuisse. Quia vero omnes nos terra genuit, hanc non immerito matrem vocamus. Unde scriptum est: Grave jugum super filios Adam a die exitus de ventre matris eorum, usque in diem sepulturae in matrem omnium (Eccli. XL, 1). Beatus igitur Job, ut patienter lugeat quod hic amisit, vigilanter attendit qualis huc venerit. Ad augmentum autem servandae patientiae, adhuc solertius inspicit hinc qualis recedit, et dicit: Nudus egressus sum de utero matris meae, nudus revertar illuc. Ac si dicat: Nudum me huc intrantem terra protulit, nudum me hinc exeuntem terra recipiet. Qui ergo accepta, sed relinquenda perdidi, quid proprium amisi? Quia vero consolatio non solum ex consideratione conditionis adhibenda est, sed etiam ex justitia conditoris, recte subjungit: IBID. — Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit, sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est. 31. Deus bonis nos spolians, non nostra aufert, sed sua. — Sanctus vir, tentante adversario, cuncta perdiderat; sed tamen sciens, quia contra se Satan tentandi vires, nisi permittente Domino, non habebat, non ait: Dominus dedit, diabolus abstulit; sed: Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; fortasse enim fuerat dolendum, si quod conditor dederat hostis abstulisset: at postquam non abstulit nisi ipse qui dedit, sua recepit, non nostra abstulit. Si

enim ab illo accipimus, quibus in hac vita utimur, cur doleat quod ipso judicante exigimur, quo largiente feneramur? Nec aliquando injustus est creditor, qui dum praefixo reddendi tempore non constrigitur; quando vult, exigit quod feneratur. Ubi et bene subjungitur: Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est. Cum enim in hac vita ea quae nolumus, patimur, necesse est ut ad eum qui injustum velle nil potest, studia nostrae voluntatis inclinemus. Magna quippe est consolatio in eo quod displicet, quod illo ordinante erga nos agitur, cui nonnisi justum placet. Si igitur justa placere Domino scimus, pati autem nulla, nisi quae Domino placuerint, possumus; justa sunt cuncta quae patimur, et valde injustum est, si de justa passione murmuramus. 32. Diabolus nos aggrediens, humilitate ac patientia nostra confoditur. — Sed quia orator fortis quomodo assertionem partis suae contra adversarium allegavit, audivimus; nunc quomodo in orationis suae termino judicem benedicendo laudet audiamus. Sequitur: Sit nomen Domini benedictum. Ecce omne quod rectum sensit, Domini benedictione conclusit; ut hinc adversarius inspiciat, et ad poenam suam victus erubescat, quia ipse Domino contumax etiam in beatitudine conditus exstitit, cui homo hymnum gloriae etiam percussus dicit. Intuendum vero est, quia hostis noster tot nos jaculis percutit, quot tentationibus affligit. Quotidie namque in acie stamus, quotidie tentationum ejus tela excipimus. Sed et nos contra illum jacula mittimus, si confossi tribulationibus, humilia respondemus. Beatus igitur Job percussus damno rerum, percussus morte filiorum, quia vim doloris vertit in laudem conditoris, 52 dicens: Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum; superbum hostem humilitate perculit, crudelem patientia stravit. Nec credamus, quod bellator noster accepit vulnera, et non inflixit. Quot enim voces patientiae in Dei laudem percussus reddidit, quasi tot in adversarii pectore jacula intorsit, et acriora valde quam sustinuit infixit. Afflictus enim

terrena perdidit, sed afflictionem humiliter sustinens coelestia multiplicavit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 22. — In omnibus his non peccavit Job: neque stultum aliquid contra Deum locutus est. 33. Job a murmuratione oris et cordis abstinuit. — Quia tentationum tribulationibus deprehensi, etiam tacito cogitationum motu possumus non loquendo peccare, beato Job et oris testimonium perhibetur, et cordis. Prius enim dicitur: Non peccavit; et tunc demum subditur: Neque stultum aliquid contra Deum locutus est. Qui enim stultum locutus non est, culpam a lingua compescuit; sed cum praemittitur, Non peccavit, constat quod murmurationis vitium etiam a cogitatione restrinxit. Nec peccavit ergo, nec stulte locutus est, quia nec per conscientiam tacitus tumuit, nec linguam in contumaciam relaxavit. Stulte enim contra Deum loquitur, qui inter divinae animadversionis flagella positus, justificare semetipsum conatur. Si enim innocentem se asserere superbe audeat, quid aliud quam justitiam ferientis accusat? Hucusque nos verba historiae transcurrisse sufficiat: jam nunc ad indaganda allegoriae mysteria expositionis se sermo convertat. Sed in hoc quod scriptum est:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 6. — Quadam die cum venissent filii Dei coram Domino; adfuit inter eos etiam Satan: 34. Deus tempora sine tempore disponit. — Discutiendum prius est, cur quadam die factum aliquid coram Domino dicitur, cum apud illum nequaquam cursus temporis, mutatione diei noctisque varietur. Neque enim in ea luce, quae sine accessu ea quae eligit illustrat, et sine recessu ea quae respuit deserit, defectus mutabilitatis venit; quia in semetipsa manendo immutabilis, mutabilia cuncta disponit; sicque in se transeuntia condidit, ut apud se transire nequaquam possint; nec

tempus intus in conspectu ejus defluit, quod apud nos foras decurrit. Unde fit ut in aeternitate ejus fixa maneant ea quae non fixa exterius saeculorum volumina emanant. Cur ergo apud eum dicitur, Quadam die, cui nimirum dies una est aeternitas sua? quam videlicet nec fine claudi, nec initio vidit aperiri Psalmista, cum dicit: Melior est dies una in atriis tuis super millia (Psal. LXXXIII, 11). 35. Assuetos temporalibus sensim ad aeterna deducit. — Sed cum Scriptura sacra temporaliter editis loquitur, dignum est ut verbis temporalibus utatur, quatenus condescendendo levet; et dum de aeternitate aliquid temporaliter narrat, assuetos temporalibus sensim ad aeterna trajiciat; seque bene nostris mentibus aeternitas incognita, dum verbis cognitis blanditur, infundat. Quid autem mirum, si in sacro eloquio incommutabilitatem suam Deus praepropere humanae menti non aperit; quando et resurrectionis suae solemnitate celebrata, quibusdam provectionum accessibus innotuit, incorruptionem corporis, quod resumpsit? Luca quippe attestante (Luc. XXIV, 4) didicimus quod quibusdam se in monumento quaerentibus prius angelos misit; et rursum 53 discipulis de se in via loquentibus ipse quidem, sed non cognoscendus apparuit (Ibid., 15), qui post exhortationis moras, cognoscendum se in panis fractione monstravit; ad extremum vero repente ingrediens, non solum se cognoscibilem, sed etiam palpabilem praebuit. Quia enim infirma adhuc gestabant corda discipuli, in cognitione tanti mysterii ista fuerant dispensatione nutriendi, ut paulisper aliquid quaerentes invenirent; invenientes crescerent, et crescentes cognita robustius tenerent. Quia igitur non repente, sed causarum verborumque incrementis, quasi quibusdam ad aeternitatem passibus ducimur, intus apud eum quadam die aliquid factum dicitur, qui ipsa quoque tempora sine tempore contuetur. 36. In luce tenebras videt. — An quia etiam Satan adfuit, dum quadam die hoc factum dicitur, indicare sacra Scriptura studuit quia in luce Deus tenebras vidit? Nos quippe uno eodemque contuitu lucem et tenebras intueri non possumus:

quia cum in tenebras oculus figitur, lux fugatur; et cum ad lucis se coruscationem verterit, tenebrarum umbra discedit. Illa autem vis, quae cuncta mutabilia immutabiliter videt, quasi in die ei Satan adfuit, quia apostatae angeli tenebras sine obscuritate comprehendit. Nos, ut dictum est, uno eodemque intuitu contemplari non possumus, et quae approbando eligimus, et quae reprobando damnamus: quia cum ad hanc animus vertitur, ab illa cogitatione separatur; cum vero ad illam reducitur, ab hac cui inhaesit removetur. 37. Diversa ordinans non est diversus. — Deus vero, quia sine mutabilitate simul cuncta respicit, sine distentione comprehendit, videlicet et bona quae juvat, et mala quae judicat, et quae adjuta remunerat, et quae judicans damnat, in his quae diverso disponit ordine, diversus non est. In die ergo ei Satan adfuisse describitur, quia lumen aeternitatis ejus nulla mutabilitatis fuscatione tangitur; et in hoc, quod ei tenebrae praesentes fiunt, adfuisse inter filios Dei dicitur: quia ea vi justitiae immundus spiritus penetratur, qua videlicet mundorum spirituum corda complentur; eoque radio luminis iste transfigitur, quo illi ut luceant perfunduntur. 38. Deo serviunt angeli boni ad adjutorium, mali ad probationem. — Inter filios Dei adfuit, quia etsi illi Deo ad electorum adjutorium, iste ad probationem servit. Inter filios Dei adfuit, quia etsi ab illis in hac vita laborantibus auxilium pietatis impenditur, iste occultae ejus justitiae nesciendo serviens, ministerium exsequi reprobationis conatur. Unde bene in libris Regum per prophetam dicitur: Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium suum, et exercitum coeli a dextris et sinistris ejus, et dictum est: In quo decipiam Achab, ut ascendat et cadat in Ramoth Galaath? Et dixit alius ita, et alius aliter. Et egressus est unus, et dixit: Ego decipiam Achab. Et dictum est: In quo decipies? Qui respondit, dicens: Egrediar, et ero Spiritus mendax in ore omnium prophetarum ejus (III Reg. XXII, 19 seq.). Quid enim solium Domini, nisi angelicas potestates accipimus, quarum mentibus altius praesidens, inferius cuncta disponit? Et quid exercitus coeli, nisi

ministrantium angelorum multitudo describitur? Quid est ergo, quod exercitus coeli a dextris et sinistris ejus stare perhibetur? Deus enim, 54 qui ita est intra omnia, ut etiam sit extra omnia, nec dextra, nec sinistra concluditur. Sed dextra Dei, angelorum pars electa; sinistra autem Dei, pars angelorum reproba designatur. Non enim ministrant Deo solummodo boni, qui adjuvent; sed etiam mali, qui probent; non solum qui a culpa redeuntes sublevent, sed etiam qui redire nolentes gravent. Nec quod coeli exercitus dicitur, angelorum pars reproba in eo intelligi posse prohibetur. Quas enim suspendi in aere novimus, aves coeli nominamus. Et de eisdem spiritibus Paulus dicit: Contra spiritalia nequitiae in coelestibus (Ephes. VI, 12). Quorum caput enuntians, ait: Secundum principem potestatis aeris ejus (Ephes. II, 2). A dextra ergo Dei et sinistra angelorum exercitus stat: quia et voluntas electorum spirituum divinae pietati concordat; et reproborum sensus suae malitiae serviens, judicio districtionis ejus obtemperat. Unde et mox fallax spiritus in medium prosiliisse describitur, per quem Achab rex, exigentibus suis meritis, decipiatur. Neque enim fas est credere bonum spiritum fallaciae deservire voluisse, ut diceret: Egrediar, et ero spiritus mendax in ore omnium prophetarum ejus. Sed quia Achab rex peccatis praecedentibus dignus erat, ut tali debuisset deceptione damnari: quatenus qui saepe volens ceciderat in culpam, quandoque nolens caperetur ad poenam, occulta justitia licentia malignis spiritibus datur, ut quos volentes in peccati laqueo strangulant, in peccati poenam etiam nolentes trahant. Quod ergo illic a dextris atque sinistris Dei, exercitus coeli astitisse describitur, hoc hic inter filios Dei Satan adfuisse perhibetur. Ecce a dextris Dei steterunt angeli, quia nominantur filii Dei; ecce a sinistris stant angeli, quia adfuit inter eos etiam Satan.. VERS. 11. — Sed extende paululum manum tuam, et tange cuncta quae possidet, nisi in faciem benedixerit tibi. 45. Ejus divinitatem tentationibus exploravit. — Quem enim tranquillitatis tempore, Dei gratia custoditum credidit, peccare posse per passionem

putavit. Ac si aperte dicat: Interrogatus afflictionibus homo, et peccator agnoscitur, qui in miraculis Deus putatur, Dixit ergo Dominus ad Satan:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 12. — Ecce universa quae habet, in manu tua sunt: tantum in eum ne extendas manum tuam. 46. Satanae manus, non potestas, sed tentatio debet intelligi. — Cum sacram historiam sub figurali intellectu discutimus, Satanae manus non potestas, sed tentatio debet intelligi. Universa itaque quae habet, in manum tentantis dantur, et in eum tentationis manus extendi prohibetur, quod tamen fieri substantia amissa conceditur: quia nimirum prius Judaea, quae possessio ejus fuerat, in infidelitate sublata est, et post ejus caro patibulo crucis affixa. Qui igitur prius Judaeam adversantem pertulit, et postmodum usque ad crucem venit, quasi prius habita amisit, et post in semetipso adversantis nequitiam pertulit.

CAPUT XXVIII.

IBID. — Egressusque est Satan a facie Domini. 47. Diabolus voti compos factus a facie Domini exit. — Sicut et superius dictum est, Satan a facie Domini exiit, quia ad desiderii sui vota pervenit. Quasi enim ante ipsum erat, dum propter ipsum quae male sitiebat implere non poterat.

CAPUT XXIX.

VERS. 13. — Cum autem quadam die filii ejus et filiae comederent et biberent vinum in domo fratris sui primogeniti. 18. Filius Domini major Judaicus populus. — Beati Job filios ac filias, vel apostolorum ordinem, vel cunctorum fidelium multitudinem diximus designasse. Incarnatus autem Dominus prius ex Judaea ad fidem paucos elegit, et post sibi 57 multitudinem populi gentilis aggregavit. Quis autem major Domini filius,

nisi Judaicus accipi populus debet, qui ei dudum datae legis fuerat doctrina generatus: minor autem gentilis populus, qui et in mundi extremitate collectus est? Quia igitur cum Satan utilitati hominum nesciens deserviret, et corruptis persecutorum cordibus licentiam Dominicae passionis expeteret, sancti apostoli necdum aggregandam Deo gentilitatem noverant, et soli Judaeae fidei arcana praedicabant; cum Satan exiisse a Domino dicitur, filii et filiae in domo fratris primogeniti convivari referuntur. Dictum quippe eis fuerat: In viam gentium ne abieritis (Matth. X, 5). Post mortem namque resurrectionemque Domini in gentium praedicationem conversi sunt. Unde et in suis Actibus dicunt: Vobis oportebat loqui primum verbum Dei; sed quia repulistis illud, et indignos vos judicastis aeternae vitae, ecce convertimur ad gentes (Act. XIII, 46). Hi itaque filii sponsi, de quibus et ejusdem voce sponsi dicitur: Non jejunabunt filii sponsi, quandiu cum illis est sponsus (Matth. IX, 15), in domo fratris primogeniti convivantur, quia videlicet adhuc apostoli sacrae Scripturae deliciis in solius Judaici populi collectione vescebantur.

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 14, 15. — Nuntius venit ad Job, qui diceret: Boves arabant, et asinae pascebantur juxta eos, et irruerunt Sabaei, tuleruntque omnia, et pueros percusserunt gladio, et evasi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 49. Simplices perfectioribus adhaerentes, eorum intellectu pascuntur. — Quid aliud per figuram boves, quam bene operantes; quid aliud asinas, quam quosdam simpliciter viventes accipimus? Quae bene juxta boves pasci referuntur; quia mentes simplicium etiam cum alta capere non possunt, eo magis vicinae sunt, quo et fraterna bona, sua per charitatem credunt; cumque invidere alienis sensibus nesciunt, quasi in pastu se minime dividunt. Simul ergo se asinae cum bobus reficiunt, quia prudentibus conjuncti tardiores, eorum intelligentia pascuntur. Sabaei autem captivantes interpretantur. Et

qui alii captivantium nomine, nisi immundi spiritus designantur, qui cunctos quos sibi subjiciunt in infidelitatem captivos ducunt? Qui et pueros gladio feriunt, quia eos tentationis suae graviter jaculis vulnerant, quos necdum juvenilis constantia liberos vel robustos servat. Qui bene quidem bona incipiunt, sed in ipsa adhuc inchoationis suae teneritudine captivantibus immundis spiritibus substernuntur. Quos gladio hostis percutit, quia aeternitatis desperatione transfigit. [REC. XIX.] 50. Prophetia, caeteris pereuntibus, in aeternum manet. — Quid est autem hoc quod nuntius venit, qui diceret: Evasi ego solus? Quis est iste nuntius, qui, aliis pereuntibus, solus evadit, nisi propheticus sermo, qui, dum fiunt omnia mala quae praedixit, quasi sanus ad Dominum solus redit? Dum enim vera dixisse de perditorum casu cognoscitur, quasi inter mortuos vixisse monstratur. Hinc est, quod ad Rebeccam in Isaac conjugio deducendam puer mittitur (Genes. XXIV, 9), quia videlicet ad desponsandam Ecclesiam Domino, interposita prophetia famulatur. Sabaeis ergo irruentibus, solus puer qui nuntiaret evasit, quia malignis spiritibus infirmorum mentes in captivitatem ducentibus, sententia prophetiae convaluit; 58 quae eamdem captivitatem praenuntians dicit: Propterea captivus ductus est populus meus, quia non habuit scientiam (Isai. V, 13). Prophetia ergo quasi salvatur, dum captivitas, quam praedixit, ostenditur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 16. — Cumque adhuc ille loqueretur, venit alter, et dixit: Ignis Dei cecidit de coelo, et tactas oves, puerosque consumpsit, et effugi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 51. Ignis oves et pueros Job consumens, invidiam sacerdotum contra Christum significat. Malos ignis nunc cruciat per livorem, postea per vindictam. — Omnes qui praedicationis officium in synagoga tenuerunt, coelum recte vocati sunt, quia nimirum sapere superna credebantur. Unde et Moyses, cum sacerdotes ac populum ad verba suae

admonitionis excitaret, dixit: Attende, coelum, et loquar; et audiat terra verba ex ore meo (Deut. XXXII, 1, sec. LXX); per coelum videlicet signans praepositorum ordinem, per terram vero subditam plebem. Hoc igitur loco coelum, sacerdotes, vel Pharisaeos, vel legis doctores non inconvenienter accipimus, qui ante oculos hominum dum coelestibus officiis inservirent, quasi desuper lucere videbantur. Sed quia ipsi summopere in redemptoris nostri adversitate commoti sunt, quasi ignis de coelo cecidit, dum ad decipiendum imperitum populum, ab his etiam qui vera docere putabantur, flamma invidiae exarsit. Teste quippe Evangelio novimus quod doctrinae veritatis invidentes, opportunitatem Dominicae traditionis exquirebant; sed metuentes populum, quae moliebantur innotescere non audebant. Hinc etiam in eo scriptum est, quod dissuadendis populis dicunt: Nunquid aliquis ex principibus credidit in eum, aut ex Pharisaeis? Sed turba haec quae non novit legem, maledicti sunt (Joan. VII, 48). Quid autem in ovibus atque in pueris, nisi innocentes quosque, sed tamen adhuc infirmos, accipimus? qui dum adversitatem Pharisaeorum ac principum tolerare timuerunt, infidelitatis concrematione consumpti sunt. Dicatur ergo: Ignis Dei cecidit de coelo, et tactas oves, puerosque consumpsit, id est, a praepositorum cordibus flamma invidiae corruit, et quidquid boni in plebibus oriebatur, incendit; quia dum mali praepositi suum contra veritatem honorem exigunt, ab omni rectitudine corda sequentium subvertunt. Ubi et bene adjungitur: Et effugi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi; quia dum impletur praedicta causa malitiae, fallaciae interitum evadit sermo prophetiae, qui ait: Et nunc ignis adversarios consumit (Isai. XXVI, 11). Ac si aperte dicat: Malos non solum ignis per vindictam post cruciat, sed nunc etiam per livorem cremat, quia qui post puniendi sunt retributionis supplicio, nunc semetipsos afficiunt invidiae tormento. Puer ergo solus fugiens remeat, et igne periisse oves puerosque denuntiat, dum prophetia Judaicum populum deserens, vera se dixisse manifestat, quae ait: Zelus apprehendit populum ineruditum. Ac si

aperte dicat: Dum verba prophetarum plebs discutere noluit, sed credulitatem suam verbis invidentium dedit, zeli igne periit, quia in alienae invidiae se flamma concremavit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 17. — Sed et illo adhuc loquente, venit alius, et dixit: Chaldaei fecerunt tres turmas, et invaserunt camelos, et tulerunt eos, necnon et pueros percusserunt gladio, et effugi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 59 52. Chaldaei tres turmas facientes Pharisaei, Herodiani et Sadducaei. Cameli, Samaritani, aut Judaei merae legis litterae adhaerentes. — Quia Chaldaeos interpretari feroces novimus, qui alii Chaldaeorum nomine designantur, nisi persecutionis auctores usque ad apertos clamores malitiae prorumpentes, cum dicunt: Crucifige, crucifige (Luc. XXIII, 21; Marc. III, 6)? Qui de semetipsis tres turmas faciunt, cum se ad proponendas quaestiones Domino Pharisaei, Herodiam et Sadducaei diviserunt. Qui ore quidem Sapientiae victi sunt: sed quia stultos quosdam post se eos traxisse credendum est, factis turmis camelos tulerunt. Unusquisque namque eorum ordo in prava quae sapuit, insipientium corda corrupit; et dum persuadendo ad interitum pertraxit, quasi tortuosas mentes infirmantium ad captivitatem duxit. Praedicante quippe in Samaria Domino, multi ex Samaritanis fuerunt in possessionem ejusdem Redemptoris nostri asciti. Sed nunquid ii qui pro septem viris unius mulieris mortuis, de resurrectionis desperatione Dominum tentant (Matth. XXII, 25), nequaquam conati sunt credentes Samaritanos a fide reducere, quos constat spem resurrectionis ignorare? Qui dum ex lege nonnulla recipiunt, nonnulla contemnunt, quasi camelorum more, velut mundum animal ruminant, sed ut immundum ungulam nequaquam findunt. Quamvis et eos cameli ruminantes, sed tamen ungulam non findentes, indicant qui in Judaea juxta litteram, historiam audierant, sed virtutem ejus discernere spiritaliter nesciebant. Quos tribus turmis Chaldaei

rapiunt; dum Pharisaei, Herodiani et Sadducaei ab omni sensus rectitudine iniqua persuasione pervertunt. Simulque pueros gladio feriunt, quia etsi qui in populo uti jam ratione poterant, eis ipsi non virtute rationis, sed potestatis auctoritate contraibant; dumque se quasi praepositos imitari a subditis volunt, etsi intelligere aliquid sequentes possunt, ex auctoritate tamen suscepti regiminis eos ad perniciem pertrahunt. A quibus bene solus puer qui nuntiet fugit: quia Pharisaeis, Herodianis, atque Sadducaeis iniqua patrantibus, eos nimirum deserens propheticus sermo convalescit, qui ait: Et tenentes legem nescierunt me (Jer. II, 8). Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

VERS. 18, 19. — Loquebatur ille, et ecce alius intravit, et dixit: Filiis tuis et filiabus vescentibus et bibentibus vinum in domo fratris sui primogeniti, repente ventus vehemens irruit a regione deserti, et concussit quatuor angulos domus. Quae corruens oppressit liberos tuos, et mortui sunt. 53. Judaicus populus in primogenito Job figuratus. — Paulo ante jam diximus quod filios et filias, praedicantes apostolos et plebes subditas sentiamus: qui in domo fratris primogeniti convivari referuntur, quia in habitatione adhuc Judaici populi sacrae praedicationis deliciis vescebantur. Repente autem vehemens ventus irruit a regione deserti. Regio deserti est cor infidelium, quod dum Creator deserit, nullus inhabitator colit. Ventus autem vehemens quid aliud, quam tentatio fortis accipitur? Ventus ergo vehemens a regione deserti irruit; quia in passione Redemptoris nostri contra fideles ejus, fortis tentatio a cordibus Judaeorum venit. Potest etiam deserti regio, derelicta immundorum spirituum multitudo non inconvenienter intelligi. A qua ventus venit, et domum concutit, quia ab 60 eis tentatio prodiit, et persecutorum corda commovit. 54. Ejus domus eversa, est synagoga, quatuor angulis, hoc est quatuor ordinibus concussis diruta. Unde et oppressi liberi. — Sed haec domus, in qua convivabantur filii, in quatuor

angulis stabat. Tres enim regentium ordines in synagoga cognovimus, sacerdotum scilicet, scribarum atque seniorum populi. Quibus si et Pharisaeos jungimus, quatuor in hac domo angulos invenimus. A regione igitur deserti ventus venit, et quatuor domus angulos concutit, quia ab immundis spiritibus tentatio irruit, et mentes quatuor ordinum, in malitiam persecutionis excitavit. Quae domus corruens, oppressit liberos, quia dum Judaea in crudelitatem Dominicae persecutionis cecidit, apostolorum fidem desperationis formidine obruit. Teneri enim tantummodo magistrum viderunt, et jam negantes per diversa fugiebant. Et quamvis interna manus eorum spiritum in praescientia ad vitam tenuit, a vita tamen fidei eos interim carnalis timor exstinxit. Qui ergo auctorem suum, Judae saeviente, reliquerunt, quasi concussis angulis domo eversa necati sunt. Quid autem illo tempore de grege fidelium factum credimus, quo fugisse ipsos etiam arietes scimus? Sed inter haec unus qui nuntiet evadit, quia convaluisse se sermo propheticus, qui haec denuntiaverat, ostendit, dicens de persecutore populo: Dilectus meus in domo mea fecit scelera multa (Jerem. XI, 15); dicens de bonis praedicatoribus, sed tamen in passione fugientibus: Proximi mei a longe steterunt (Psal. XXXVII, 12); dicens de cunctis valde formidantibus: Percutiam pastorem, et dispergentur oves gregis (Zach. XIII, 7; Matth. XXVI, 31). Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIV Vet.

[XXIX, Rec. XXII]. VERS. 20. — Tunc surrexit Job, et scidit vestimenta sua. 55. Job surgens et vestem scindens Christum adumbrat. — Ruente domo exstinctis filiis, Job surrexit, quia Judaea in infidelitate perdita, praedicatoribus in pavoris morte cadentibus, Redemptor humani generis semetipsum a carnis suae morte suscitavit: quanto judicio persecutores suos deseruit, demonstravit. Surgere quippe ejus est qua districtione peccatores derelinquat ostendere, quasi enim jacere ejus est patienter mala tolerare.

Surgit ergo, cum contra reprobos judicium justitiae exerit. Unde et recte vestimenta scidisse perhibetur. Quid enim vestimentum Domini nisi Synagoga exstitit, quae prophetis praedicantibus expectationi incarnationis illius adhaesit? Sicut enim his nunc vestitur, a quibus diligitur, Paulo attestante qui ait: Ut exhiberet sibi gloriosam Ecclesiam, non habentem maculam aut rugam (Ephes. V, 27). Quae enim maculam aut rugam non habere dicitur, profecto vestis rationalis et per actionem munda, et per spem tensa monstratur. Ita cum incarnandum eum Judaea credidit, adhaerendo nihilominus vestis fuit. 56. Synagoga ejus vestis scissa, aliis credentibus, aliis non credentibus. — Sed quia exspectatus venit, veniens nova docuit, docens mira exercuit, mira faciens prava toleravit; vestem quam indutus fuerat scidit, dum in Judaea alios ab infidelitate sustulit, alios in infidelitate dereliquit. Quid est igitur vestis scissa, nisi Judaea in contrariis sententiis divisa? Si enim vestis ejus scissa non esset, evangelista non diceret quod praedicante Domino contentio oriebatur in populo, Ut alii dicerent, Bonus est; alii autem, Non, sed seducit turbas (Joan. VII, 12). Quasi scissa vestis illius fuit quae divisa 61 per sententias unitatem concordiae perdidit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

IBID. — Et tonso capite corruens in terram, adoravit. 57. Quasi tonso capite in terram ruit, dum Judaico sacerdotio rejecto, ad gentes descendit. — Quid per decisos capillos, nisi sacramentorum subtilitas; quid per caput, nisi summa sacerdotii designatur? Unde et ad Ezechielem prophetam dicitur: Tu, fili hominis, sume tibi gladium acutum, radentem pilos, et assumes eum, et duces per caput tuum et barbam (Ezech. V, 1), ut videlicet prophetae facto judicium Redemptoris exprimatur, qui in carne apparens caput rasit, quia a Judaico sacerdotio praeceptorum suorum sacramenta abstulit; barbam rasit, quia regnum Israeliticum deserens, decorem virtutis ejus amputavit.

Quid vero hoc loco per terram, nisi homo peccator exprimitur? Primo quippe peccanti homini dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Terrae ergo nomine peccatrix gentilitas designatur. Nam cum justam Judaea se crederet, constat quam reproba de gentilitate sentiret, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Nos natura Judaei, et non ex gentibus peccatores (Gal. II, 15). Mediator igitur noster quasi detonso capite in terram corruit, quia Judaeam deserens, dum sacramenta sua ab ejus sacerdotio abstulit, ad notitiam gentium venit. Capillos enim a capite rasit, quia sacramenta legis ab illo primo suo sacerdotio sustulit; et in terram corruit, quia salvandis se peccatoribus dedit; dumque eos qui sibi justi videbantur deseruit, hos qui se injustos et noverant, et fatebantur, assumpsit. Hinc et ipse in Evangelio dicit: Ego in judicium veni in hunc mundum, ut qui non vident videant, et qui vident caeci fiant (Joan. IX, 39). Hinc et columna nubis, quae in eremo populum praeibat (Exod. XIII. 21), splendore ignis non in die, sed in nocte radiabat, quia videlicet redemptor noster, suae conversationis exemplo, ducatum sequentibus praestans, de justitia sua confidentibus nulla luce claruit; peccatorum vero suorum tenebras agnoscentibus, igne sui amoris infulsit. Nec quod corruere Job dicitur, indignum mens hoc significatione Redemptoris arbitretur. Scriptum namque est: Verbum misit Dominus in Jacob, et cecidit in Israel (Isai. IX, 8). Jacob quippe supplantator, Israël vero videns Deum dicitur. Et quid per Jacob, nisi Judaicus populus; quid per Israël nisi gentilis populus designatur? Quia quem Jacob per carnis mortem supplantare studuit, hunc nimirum per oculos fidei gentilitas Deum vidit. Ad Jacob ergo missum verbum, in Israël cecidit, quia eum quem ad se venientem Judaicus respuit, hunc repente confitens populus gentilis invenit. De sancto quippe Spiritu scriptum est: Cecidit spiritus Domini super eos (Act. X, 44). 58. Cadere qui dicatur verbum Dei aut Spiritus sanctus. — Idcirco autem vel verbum Dei, vel Spiritus sanctus in sacra Scriptura cadere dicitur, ut inopinatus ejus adventus exprimatur. Quod enim ruit vel cadit, ad

ima repente venit. Mediatori ergo in terram quasi corruisse est, nullis signis praecurrentibus inopinate ad gentes venisse. Bene autem dicitur quod corruens adoravit, quia dum ipse humilitatem carnis suscepit, in se credentibus vota humilitatis infudit. Fecit enim, quia fieri docuit; sicut et de ejus Spiritu dicitur: Ipse Spiritus postulat 62 pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus (Rom. VIII, 26). Neque enim petit, qui aequalis est, sed postulare dicitur; quia nimirum quos repleverit, postulantes facit: quamvis hoc et in semetipso Redemptor noster ostendit, qui Patrem etiam, dum passioni propinquaret, exoravit. Quid enim mirum, si in forma servi exorando so Patri subdidit, in qua etiam manus peccantium usque ad mortis extrema toleravit? Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 21. — Nudus egressus sum de utero matris meae, nudus revertar illuc. 59. Christus ad Judaeos e quibus exivit, in fine mundi est reversurus. — Redemptoris mater juxta carnem Synagoga exstitit, ex qua ad nos per corpus visibilis processit. Sed hunc intra se tegmine litterae adopertum tenuit, dum ad spiritalem ejus intelligentiam mentis oculos aperire neglexit. Hunc quia in carne humani corporis latentem videre Deum noluit, quasi in divinitate nudum considerare contempsit. Sed nudus de utero matris exiit: quia a Synagogae carne prodiens conspicuus ad gentes venit. Quod bene Joseph relicto pallio fugiente signatum est (Genes. XXXIX, 12). Dum enim mulier adultera male illo uti voluisset, relicto pallio fugit foras, quia dum Synagoga Dominum purum hominem credens, quasi adulterino complexu constringere voluit, ipse tegmen litterae ejus oculis reliquit, et ad cognoscendam divinitatis suae potentiam conspicuum se gentibus praebuit. Unde et Paulus dixit: Usque hodie, dum legitur Moyses, velamen est super cor eorum (II Cor. III, 15), quia videlicet adultera mulier apud semetipsam pallium retinuit, et quem male tenebat, nudum amisit. Qui ergo a Synagoga

veniens, fidei gentium conspicuus apparuit, ex utero matris nudus exivit. Sed nunquid hanc omnimodo deserit? Et ubi est quod per prophetam dicitur: Si fuerit numerus filiorum Israël quasi arena maris, reliquiae salvae fient (Isai. X, 22, Rom. IX, 27)? Ubi quod scriptum est: Donec plenitudo gentium introiret, et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret (Rom. XI, 25)? Erit ergo quando conspicuus etiam Synagogae appareat. Erit in fine mundi procul dubio, quando gentis suae reliquiis semetipsum, sicut est Deus, innotescat. Unde et bene hic dicitur: Nudus revertar illuc. Nudus quippe ad uterum matris revertitur, cum in mundi hujus termino is, qui in saeculo factus homo despicitur, Synagogae suae oculis, Deus ante saecula declaratur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

IBID. — Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit: sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est: sit nomen Domini benedictum. 60. Deus Christo Judaeam dedit et abstulit. — Redemptor noster per hoc quod Deus est, cum Patre dat omnia; per hoc vero quod homo est, a Patre accipit inter omnia. Dicat igitur de Judaea, cum venturum incarnationis ejus mysterium crederet: Dominus dedit. Dicat de Judaea, cum exspectatam incarnationis ejus praesentiam contempsisset: Dominus abstulit. Data quippe est, cum per quosdam futura credidit; sed exigente merito suae caecitatis ablata est, cum credita per quosdam venerari contempsit. 61. Christus exemplo docuit Deo in flagellis benedicere. — In se autem credentes edoceat, ut in flagellis positi benedicere Domino sciant, cum subditur: Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum. Unde et teste Evangelio (Matth. XXVI, 26), cum 63 propinquare passioni dicitur, accepto pane gratias egisse perhibetur. Gratias itaque agit, qui flagella alienae iniquitatis suscipit. Et qui nihil dignum percussione exhibuit, humiliter in percussione benedicit; ut hinc videlicet ostendat quid unusquisque in flagello culpae propriae facere debeat, si ipse aequanimiter flagella culpae portat alienae ut hinc ostendat

quid in correptione faciat subditus, si in flagello positus Patri gratias agit aequalis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS. 22. — In omnibus his non peccavit Job neque stultum aliquid contra Deum locutus est. 62. Dolus apud homines prudentia, apud Deum stultitia est. — Quod nec peccasse, nec stultum aliquid contra Deum locutus asseritur; hoc de illo Petrus, sicut jam praediximus, aperte testatur, dicens: Qui peccatum non fecit, nec dolus inventus est in ore ejus (I Pet. II, 22). Dolus quippe in ore, quanto apud homines prudentius callet, tanto apud Deum stultius desipit, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Sapientia hujus mundi stultitia est apud Deum (I Cor. III, 19). Quia ergo dolus in ore ejus non fuit, stultum proculdubio nihil dixit. Hunc contra Deum sacerdotes et principes locutum stulte crediderunt, cum interrogatus passionis tempore, Dei se Filium testaretur. Unde et conquirentes dicunt: Quid adhuc egemus testibus? ecce ipsi audivimus blasphemiam (Matth. XXVI, 65). Sed contra Deum stulte nihil dixit: quia vera loquens, hoc de se infidelibus etiam moriendo intulit, quod paulo post redemptis omnibus resurgendo monstravit. 63. SENSUS MORALIS. — Satan Deo cum sanctis angelis assistit, cogitationes malas bonis interserendo. — Haec in significationem nostri capitis breviter tractata transcurrimus: nunc in aedificationem ejus corporis, ea moraliter tractanda replicemus, ut quod actum foris narratur in opere, sciamus quomodo intus agatur in mente. Nam cum filii Dei assistunt coram Deo, inter eos quoque assistit et Satan, quia plerumque bonis nostris cogitationibus, quae in corde nostro, adventu sancti Spiritus operante, seminantur, antiquus ille callide se interserit et subjungit inimicus, ut bene cogitata perturbet, maleque perturbata dilaniet. Sed nequaquam nos in tentatione deserit, qui creavit. Nam hostem nostrum, qui se contra nos in

insidiis contegit, illustratione sui luminis nobis deprehensibilem reddit; propter quod ei mox dicit:

CAPUT XXXIX.

VERS. 7. — Unde venis? 64. Cui dicendum unde venis? — Callidum namque hostem requirere, est ejus nobis insidias declarare, ut quo eum subintrare cor cernimus, forti contra illum circumspectione vigilemus.

CAPUT XL.

IBID. — Qui respondens ait: Circuivi terram, et perambulavi eam. 65. Qui insidias ejus Deus nobis detegat. — Satanae terram circuire, est carnalia corda perscrutari, et unde occasionem accusationis invenire possit, exquirere. Terram circuit, quia humana corda circumvenit, ut bona tollat, ut mala mentibus inserat, ut inserta cumulet, ut cumulata perficiat, ut perfectos in iniquitatibus ad poenam socios acquirat. Et notandum quod non transvolasse, sed perambulasse se asserit, quia nimirum nequaquam quem tentat velociter deserit; sed ubi molle cor invenit, ibi pedem miserae persuasionis figit, ut immorando actionis pravae vestigia imprimat, et ex suae iniquitatis similitudine, quos valet, reprobos reddat. Sed contra hunc beatus Job laudatur, et dicitur:

CAPUT LXI.

VERS. 8. — Nunquid considerasti servum meum Job, quod 64 non sit ei similis super terram, vir simplex, et rectus, ac timens Deum, et recedens a malo? 66. Laudare Dei est bona dare, ac data custodire. — Quem divina inspiratio contra hostem roborat, hunc quasi in Satanae auribus Deus laudat. Laudare quippe ejus est, et prius bona concedere, et post concessa custodire.

Sed antiquus hostis eo contra bonos gravius saevit, quo vallari eos divinae protectionis munere conspicit. Unde et subjungens dicit:

CAPUT XLII.

VERS. 9. — Nunquid frustra Job timet Deum? Nonne tu vallasti eum, ac domum ejus, universamque substantiam per circuitum? Operibus manuum ejus benedixisti, et possessio illius crevit in terra. 67. Suis viribus homo non stat. — Ac si aperte dicat: Cur laudas quem protegendo roboras? Despecto enim me, dignus tuis laudibus homo esset, si suis contra me viribus staret. Unde mox et malitiose de homine expetit, quod tamen protector hominis benigne concedit. Nam subditur:

CAPUT XLIII.

VERS. 11. Sed extende paululum manum tuam, et tange cuncta quae possidet, nisi in faciem benedixerit tibi. 68. Electi in tentatione proficiunt. — Plerumque enim, dum virtutum fructus fecunde reddimus, dum continua prosperitate pollemus, aliquantulum mens erigitur, ut a semetipsa sibi existere bona quae habet, arbitretur. Quae nimirum bona antiquus hostis malitiose attrectare appetit; sed haec tentari Deus nonnisi benigne permittit, ut dum mens tentatione pulsante, in bonis de quibus gaudebat concutitur, imbecillitatis suae debilitate cognita, in spe divini adjutorii robustius solidetur. Fitque mira dispensatione pietatis, ut unde malignus hostis cor tentat, ut interimat, inde misericors conditor hoc erudiat, ut vivat. Unde et bene subjungitur:

CAPUT XLIV.

VERS. 12. — Ecce universa quae habet, in manu tua sunt, tantum in eum ne extendas manum tuam. 69. Deo perseverantiam tribuente. — Ac si aperte

dicat: Electi uniuscujusque bona sic tibi tentanda exterius tribuo, ut tamen ipse noveris, quia perseverantem mihi illum in mentis radice conservo. Ubi et bene subditur:

CAPUT XLV.

IBID. — Egressusque est Satan a facie Domini: 70. Quo moderante, diabolus bonorum corda usque ad interitum non vulnerat. — Quia per hoc, quod usque ad defectum cordis praevalere nequaquam permittitur, exclusus ab intimis, exterius vagatur. Qui etiam si virtutes mentis plerumque turbat, eo ipso foris est, quo resistente Deo, usque ad interitum bonorum corda non vulnerat. Tantum quippe contra illa saevire permittitur, in quantum necesse est ut tentationibus erudita solidentur; ne ea quae agunt bona, suis viribus tribuant, ne in securitatis torpore se deserant, et a formidinis accinctione dissolvant: sed ad provectus sui custodiam tanto solertius invigilent, quanto se contra adversarium stare semper in acie tentationum vident.

CAPUT XLVI.

VERS. 13, 14, 15. — Cum autem quadam die filii et filiae ejus comederent et biberent vinum in domo fratris sui primogeniti, nuntius venit ad Job, qui diceret: Boves arabant, et asinae pascebantur juxta eos, et irruerunt Sabaei, tuleruntque omnia, et pueros percusserunt gladio; et evasi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 71. Fides virtutum omnium prima. — In electorum corde prior bonorum sequentium sapientia nascitur, atque haec per donum Spiritus quasi primogenita proles profertur. Quae profecto sapientia, nostra fides est, propheta attestante, qui ait: Nisi credideritis non intelligetis (Isai. VII, 9. sec. LXX). Tunc enim vere ad intelligendum sapimus, cum cunctis 65 quae conditor dicit, credulitatis nostrae fidem praebemus. In domo ergo fratris primogeniti convivantur filii, cum virtutes reliquae epulantur in fide. Quae si non prima in corde nostro gignitur, reliqua quaeque esse bona non

possunt, etiamsi bona videantur. In domo fratris primogeniti filii convivantur, dum virtutes nostrae in habitaculo fidei, sacri eloquii cibo satiantur. Scriptum quippe est: Sine fide impossibile est placere Deo (Hebr. XI, 6). Tunc ergo virtutes nostrae veras vitae epulas sumunt, cum nutriri fidei sacramentis incipiunt. In domo fratris primogeniti convivantur filii, quia nisi virtutes reliquae sapientiae epulis repletae, ea quae appetunt prudenter agant, virtutes esse nequaquam possunt. 72. Virtutibus nostris quam varie insidietur diabolus. — Sed ecce dum bona quae agimus, sapientiae epulis fideique pascuntur, hostis noster arantes boves et pascentes asinas subtrahit, et pueros gladio occidit. Quid arantes boves, nisi graviores nostras cogitationes accipimus? quae dum cor studiosa exercitatione conficiunt, uberes provectuum fructus reddunt. Quid pascentes intelligimus asinas, nisi simplices motus cordis? quos dum studiose a duplicitatis errore compescimus, quasi in campo liberae puritatis nutrimus. Sed plerumque hostis callidus, cum graves cogitationes in corde conspicit, eas sub introducta voluptatis delectatione corrumpit; et dum motus cordis simplices videt, subtilia inventionum acumina ostendit; ut dum laus de subtilitate quaeritur, puritatis simplicitas amittatur; et si usque ad opus pravum pertrahere non valet, tentando tamen bonorum cogitationibus subripiens nocet; ut dum turbare bona mentis agnoscitur, ea quasi funditus abstulisse videatur. Possunt etiam per arantes boves, cogitationes charitatis accipi; quibus prodesse aliis conamur, cum fraterni cordis duritiam praedicando scindere cupimus. Potest etiam per asinas, quae nimirum sese onerantibus, nulla ferocitatis insania resistunt, patientiae mansuetudo signari. Et saepe hostis antiquus cum velle prodesse nos loquendo aliis conspicit, in quodam torpore otii mentem mergit; ut aliis prodesse non libeat, etiam cum a propriis vacat. Arantes ergo boves subtrahit, cum cogitationes mentis fraternae utilitatis fructibus deditas, per submissum negligentiae torporem frangit. Et quamvis electorum corda intra arcana suae cogitationis

invigilant, et quid a tentatore sustineat, superantes pensant, eo tamen ipso malignus inimicus aliquid rapuisse se gaudet, quo cogitationibus bonorum vel ad momentum praevalet.. VERS. 17. — Sed et illo adhuc loquente, venit alius, et dixit: Chaldaei fecerunt tres turmas, et invaserunt camelos, et tulerunt eos, necnon et pueros percusserunt gladio; et effugi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 75. Quantis periculis terrenarum rerum dispensatio sit obnoxia. — Per camelos, qui mundum aliquid habent, dum ruminant, et immundum, dum nequaquam ungulam findunt, supra jam diximus bonas rerum temporalium dispensationes intelligi, in quibus quo est cura distensior, eo nobis multiplicius insidiatur inimicus. Omnis enim, qui dispensandis terrenis rebus praesidet, occulti hostis jaculis latius patet. Nonnulla enim providens agere nititur, et saepe dum cautus futura subtiliter praevidet, incautus damna praesentia nequaquam videt; saepe dum praesentibus invigilat, ad instantia praevidenda dormitat; saepe dum aliqua torpens agit, quae vigilanter agenda sunt negligit; saepe dum plus justo vigilantem se in actione exhibet, ipsa actionis suae inquietudine rebus subditis pejus nocet. Aliquando autem linguae modum ponere nititur, sed onere dispensationis exigente, silere prohibetur. Aliquando dum nimia se censura restringit, tacet etiam 67 quae loqui debuit. Aliquando ad inferenda necessaria dum se latius relaxat, dicit etiam quae loqui non debuit. Plerumque autem tantis cogitationum voluminibus implicatur, ut ipsa ferre vix valeat, quae intra se providus versat; et cum nil opere faciat, sub magno cordis sui pondere vehementer insudat. Quia enim dura sunt quae apud semetipsum intus patitur, quietus foris otiosusque lassatur. Plerumque enim quasi ventura animus conspicit, totamque contra haec intentionem proponit; magnusque ardor contentionis se inserit, sopor fugit, nox in diem vertitur; et cum quieta foris membra lectulus teneat, intus magnis clamoribus in cordis foro litigatur. Et fit plerumque ut nulla eveniant quae praevidentur: totaque illa cogitatio, quae diu se plena intentione paraverat, repente vacua quiescat.

Tanto autem longius mens a necessariis cessat, quanto inania latius cogitat. Quia igitur dispensationis curas maligni spiritus modo torpenti vel praecipitata actione feriunt, modo pigra vel immoderata locutione confundunt, pene autem semper nimiis cogitationum molibus premunt, tribus turmis Chaldaei camelos rapiunt. Quasi enim tres turmas contra camelos facere, est terrenarum dispensationum studia modo illicito opere, modo superflua locutione, modo inordinata cogitatione vastare; ut dum se ad administranda exterius mens efficaciter extendere nititur, a sui consideratione separetur; et eo damna quae de semetipsa patitur nesciat, quo erga aliena fortiori studio quam decet elaborat. Recta autem mens cum curas dispensationis suscipit, quid sibi, quid proximis debeat attendit; et nec per alienae sollicitudinis immoderationem sua studia negligit, nec per suae utilitatis vigilantiam aliena postponit. Sed tamen plerumque dum ad utraque mens solerter invigilat, dum magnis erga se, et ea quae sibi commissa sunt, circumspectionibus vacat, repentino turbata cujuslibet causae emergentis articulo, ita in praeceps rapitur, ut ab ea subito cunctae circumspectiones ejus obruantur. Unde et custodes camelorum pueros Chaldaei gladio feriunt. Sed tamen unus redit; quia inter haec discretionis ratio mentis nostrae oculis occurrit, et sollicita sibimet anima quid subito impulsu tentationis intrinsecus amittat, intelligit. Sequitur.

CAPUT XLIX.

VERS. 18, 19. — Loquebatur ille, et ecce alius intravit, et dixit: Filiis tuis et filiabus vescentibus et bibentibus vinum in domo fratris sui primogeniti, repentè ventus vehemens irruit a regione deserti, et concussit quatuor angulos domus, quae corruens oppressit liberos tuos, et mortui sunt: et effugi ego solus, ut nuntiarem tibi. 76. Virtutibus quatuor innititur spiritale aedificium. Unde concutiatur. — Sicut supra jam diximus, regio deserti est immundorum spirituum multitudo derelicta: quae dum conditoris sui

beatitudinem deseruit, quasi manum cultoris amisit a qua ventus vehemens venit, et domum subruit; quia ab immundis spiritibus fortis tentatio subripit, et a tranquillitatis suae statu conscientiam evertit. In quatuor vero angulis domus ista consistit, quia nimirum solidum mentis nostrae aedificium, prudentia, temperantia, fortitudo, justitia sustinet. In quatuor angulis domus ista subsistit, quia in his quatuor virtutibus tota boni 68 operis structura consurgit. Unde et quatuor paradisi flumina terram irrigant, quia dum his quatuor virtutibus cor infunditur, ab omni desideriorum carnalium aestu temperatur. Sed nonnunquam dum menti ignavia subripit, prudentia frigescit; nam cum fessa torpet, ventura non providet. Nonnunquam dum nonnulla menti delectatio subripit, temperantia nostra marcescit; in quantum enim ad delectationem praesentium ducimur, in tantum minus ab illicitis temperamus. Nonnunquam se timor cordi insinuat, et vires nostrae fortitudinis turbat; et eo minores contra adversa existimus, quo quaedam perdere immoderatius dilecta formidamus. Nonnunquam vero amor suus se menti ingerit, eamque latenti motu a rectitudine justitiae divertit; et quo se totam auctori reddere negligit, eo in se justitiae juri contradicit. Ventus ergo vehemens quatuor angulos domus concutit; dum fortis tentatio occultis motibus quatuor virtutes quatit; et quasi quassatis angulis domus eruitur, dum pulsatis virtutibus conscientia turbatur. 77. Inde virtutes caeterae quasi cordis soboles se invicem pascunt. — Intra hos autem quatuor domus angulos filii convivantur, quia intra arcana mentis, quae principaliter his quatuor virtutibus ad summae rectitudinis culmen erigitur, virtutes caeterae quasi quaedam cordis soboles se invicem pascunt. Donum quippe Spiritus, quod in subjecta mente ante alia prudentiam, temperantiam, fortitudinem, justitiam format, eamdem mentem ut contra singula quaeque tentamenta erudiat, in septem mox virtutibus temperat, ut contra stultitiam, sapientiam; contra hebetudinem, intellectum; contra praecipitationem, consilium; contra timorem, fortitudinem; contra ignorantiam, scientiam; contra duritiam,

pietatem; contra superbiam det timorem. 78. His qui virtutibus praediti sunt, gratia aliquando utiliter se subtrahit. — Sed nonnunquam, dum mens nostra tanti muneris plenitudine atque ubertate fulcitur, si continua in his securitate perfruitur, a quo sibi haec sint obliviscitur; seque a se habere putat, quod nunquam sibi abesse considerat. Unde fit ut aliquando se haec eadem gratia utiliter subtrahat, et praesumenti menti, quantum in se infirmatur, ostendat. Tunc enim vere cognoscimus bona nostra unde sunt, quando haec quasi amittendo, sentimus quia a nobis servari non possunt. Ad hoc itaque intimandae humilitatis magisterium, fit plerumque ut irruente tentationis articulo, tanta stultitia sapientiam nostram feriat, ut turbata mens, qualiter malis imminentibus obviet, vel contra tentationem quomodo se praeparet, ignoret. Sed hac ipsa stultitia cor prudenter eruditur, quia unde ad momentum desipit, eo post verius, quo et humilius, sapit; et sapientia unde quasi amittitur, inde certius possidetur. Aliquando dum sublimia intelligendo in elatione se animus erigit, in rebus imis et vilibus gravi hebetudine pigrescit, ut repente sibi etiam ima clausa videat, qui pernix summa penetrabat. Sed haec ipsa hebetudo intellectum nobis, dum subtrahit, servat, quia dum ad momentum cor humiliat, verius ad sublimia intelligenda confirmat. Aliquando dum cuncta nos agere consilii gravitate gaudemus, pulsante causae emergentis articulo, praecipitatione subita rapimur; et qui nos semper disposite vixisse credidimus, repente 69 intima confusione vastamur. Sed tamen ejusdem confusionis eruditione discimus, ne nostris viribus consilia nostra tribuamus; et tanto maturius ad gravitatem restringimur, quanto ad hanc quasi amissam redimus. Aliquando dum mens fortiter adversa contemnit, subortis adversitatis eventibus, hanc metus vehemens percutit. Sed per hunc concussa discit cui tribuat quod in quibusdam fortiter stetit; et tanto post validius fortitudinem retinet, quanto hanc repente irruente formidine sibi jam quasi elapsam videt. Aliquando dum magna nos scire gaudemus, repentinae ignorantiae caecitate

torpescimus. Sed quo ignorantia mentis oculus ad momentum clauditur, eo post ad scientiam verius aperitur, ut nimirum flagello suae caecitatis eruditus, et scire ipsum a quo habeat sciat. Aliquando dum religiose cuncta disponimus, dum pietatis viscera plene nos habere gratulamur, quadam mentis duritia irruente percutimur. Sed quasi obdurati cognoscimus, cui pietatis habitae bona tribuamus; et pietas verius velut exstincta recipitur, dum quasi amissa amplius amatur. Aliquando dum subjectum se divinae formidini animus gaudet, repente superbia tentante rigescit. Sed tamen valde mox timens quia non timet, ad humilitatem se iterum festinus inflectit; et tanto hanc solidius recipit, quanto ejus virtutis pondus quasi amittendo pensavit. 79. Tentationibus acquiruntur humilitas et vigilantia. — Eversa igitur domo, moriuntur filii quia turbata in tentatione conscientia, ad utilitatem propriae cognitionis raptim et in momento temporis obruuntur genitae in corde virtutes. Qui profecto filii intus per spiritum vivunt, dum exterius carne moriuntur, quia videlicet virtutes nostrae tentationis tempore etsi in momento turbatae ab status sui incolumitate deficiunt, per intentionis tamen perseverantiam integrae in mentis radice subsistunt. Cum quibus etiam tres sorores occumbunt, quia in corde nonnunquam per flagella turbatur charitas, per formidinem concutitur spes, per quaestiones pulsatur fides. Saepe enim quasi a conditoris amore torpescimus, dum ultra quam nobis congruere credimus, flagello fatigamur. Saepe dum plus quam necesse est mens formidat, fiduciam sibimet spei debilitat. Saepe dum immensis quaestionibus animus tenditur, perturbata fides quasi defectura fatigatur. Sed tamen vivunt filiae, quae domo concussa moriuntur, quia etsi intra conscientiam, spem, fidem, charitatemque pene occumbere perturbatio ipsa renuntiat, has tamen ante Dei oculos vivas perseverantia rectae intentionis servat. Unde et puer qui haec nuntiet solus evadit, quia mentis discretio etiam inter tentamenta incolumis permanet. Agitque puer ut Job filios fiendo recipiat, dum, discretione nuntiante, dolens animus vires quas

quasi amittere coeperat poenitendo conservat. Mira autem hoc nobiscum dispensatione agitur, ut mens nostra culpae nonnunquam pulsatione feriatur. Nam esse se magnarum virium homo crederet, si nullum unquam earumdem virium defectum intra mentis arcana sentiret. Sed dum tentatione irruente quatitur, et quasi ultra quam sufficit fatigatur, ei contra hostis sui insidias munimen humilitatis ostenditur, et unde se pertimescit enerviter cadere, inde accipit fortiter stare. Tentatus autem, non solum vires a quo accipiat discit, sed quanta eas vigilantia servet intelligit. 70 Saepe enim quem tentationis certamen superare non valuit, sua deterius securitas stravit. Nam dum lassum se quisque in otio remittit, dissolutam mentem corruptori prostituit; at si eum ex dispensatione supernae pietatis tentatio non repente vehementer irruens, sed temperato accessu erudiens pulsat, nimirum ad insidias providendas evigilat, ut contra hostem se in certamine cautus accingat. Unde et bene subjungitur:

CAPUT L.

VERS. 20. — Tunc surrexit Job. 80. Discretio tentationibus proficit. — Sedere enim, quiescentis est; assurgere, decertantis. Auditis ergo adversis surgere, est expertis tentationibus mentem ad certamina robustius parare. Quibus nimirum tentationibus etiam discretio proficit, quia ut virtutes a vitiis subtilius distinguat, agnoscit. Unde et bene subjungitur:

CAPUT LI.

IBID. — Scidit vestimenta sua. 81. Tentationibus pulsati ad luctum poenitentiae humilitatemque confugiant ut sanentur. — Vestimenta scindimus, cum discernendo nostra opera retractamus. Si enim apud Deum nos opera nostra quasi vestimenta non tegerent, nequaquam voce angelica diceretur: Beatus qui vigilat, et custodit vestimenta sua, ne nudus ambulet, et videant turpitudinem ejus (Apoc. XVI, 15). Turpitudo enim nostra tunc

cernitur, cum vita reprehensibilis ante justorum oculos in judicio, nequaquam subsequentis boni operis tegmine velatur. Sed quia cum culpa tentamur, ad lamenta accendimur; atque ipsis lamentis excitati, ad perspiciendam lucem justitiae subtilius oculos mentis aperimus, quasi in dolore vestimenta scindimus, quia ex fletu, discretione crescente, cuncta quae agimus, districtius irata manu judicamus. Tunc omnis nostra elatio corruit, tunc cuncta ab animo cogitationum superfluitas cadit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT LII.

IBID. — Et tonso capite corruens in terram adoravit. 82. Elatio et cogitationum vanitas, quomodo resecentur. — Nam quid moraliter per capillos, nisi defluentes animi cogitationes accipimus? Unde et alias Ecclesiae dicitur: Sicut vitta coccinea labia tua, sponsa, et eloquium tuum dulce (Cant. IV, 3). Vitta quippe crines capitis astringit. Labia ergo sponsae sicut vitta sunt, quia exhortatione sanctae Ecclesiae, cunctae in auditorum mentibus diffusae cogitationes ligantur; ne remissae defluant, ne sese per illicita spargant, ne sparsae cordis oculos deprimant; sed quasi ad unam se intentionem colligant, dum vitta eas sanctae praedicationis ligat. Quam recte et coccineam asserit; quia sanctorum praedicatio solo charitatis ardore flammescit. Quid vero per caput, nisi ea, quae principale uniuscujusque actionis est, mens ipsa signatur? Unde et alias dicitur: Et oleum de capite tuo non deficiat (Eccles. IX, 8). Oleum quippe in capite, est charitas in mente; et a capite deficit oleum, cum charitas a mente discedit. Caput ergo detondere est cogitationes superfluas a mente resecare. Et detonso capite in terram corruit, qui repressis praesumptionis suae cogitationibus, quam in semetipso infirmus sit humiliter agnoscit. Et notandum quod in terram corruens adoravit. Ille enim veram Deo adorationem exhibet qui semetipsum, quia pulvis sit, humiliter videt, qui nihil sibi virtutis tribuit, qui

bona quae agit esse de misericordia conditoris agnoscit. Unde et competenter dicit:

CAPUT LIII.

VERS. 21. — Nudus egressus sum de utero matris meae: nudus revertar illuc. 85. Qui se a virtutibus nudum putat, ipsa melius humilitate vestitur. — Ac si tentatus animus et in infirmitatis suae inopia deprehensus dicat: Nudum me in fide prima gratia genuit, nudum eadem gratia in assumptione salvabit. Est namque magnum animi turbati solatium, ut pulsatus vitiis, cum se quasi nudari virtutibus conspicit, ad solam misericordiae spem recurrat; et eo se nudari non sinat, quo se a virtutibus humiliter nudum putat: qui etsi fortasse aliqua virtute in tentatione detegitur, infirmitatem tamen propriam agnoscens, ipsa melius humilitate vestitur; et valde robustius quam steterat jacet, cum sibi sine divino adjutorio cessat tribuere quod habet. Unde et manum mox largitoris et judicis humiliter agnoscit, dicens:

CAPUT LIV.

IBID. — Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit. 86. Tentatione eruditi crescimus. — Ecce tentationibus eruditus crevit, qui et in virtute habita largitatem dantis, et in perturbatione fortitudinis, potestatem tollentis agnoscit. Quae tamen fortitudo non tollitur, sed perturbata fatigatur; quatenus concussa mens, dum se hanc jamjamque quasi amittere trepidat, semper facta humilis nunquam perdat.

CAPUT LV.

IBID. — Sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est, sit nomen 72 Domini benedictum. 87. Tentato quid agendum. — In hoc, quod interna perturbatione concutimur, dignum est ut ad conditoris judicium recurramus;

ut inde cor nostrum adjutori suo majores laudes exhibeat, unde pulsatum verius imbecillitatem suae infirmitatis pensat. Bene autem dicitur:

CAPUT LVI.

In omnibus his non peccavit Iob nec stultum aliquid contra Deum locutus est.

2 Quia solerti cura custodire dolens animus debet, ne cum se intus tentatio stimulat, in verbis foras illicitae locutionis erumpat, ne de probatione murmuret, et ignis qui hunc velut aurum concremat, per excessum sermonis illiciti in paleae favillam vertat.

3 Nihil vero obstat si hoc quod de virtutibus diximus, de his quae in ostensione virtutis dantur donis sancti Spiritus sentiamus. Alii namque prophetiae, alii genera linguarum, alii virtutes curationum dantur. Sed quia haec ipsa dona non semper in mente eodem modo sunt, liquido ostenditur quod ne se mens in praesumptione elevet, aliquando utiliter subtrahuntur. Nam si prophetiae spiritus prophetis semper adesset, nimirum Elisaeus propheta non diceret; Dimitte eam, anima enim eius in amaritudine est, et Dominus celavit a me verbum. Si prophetiae spiritus prophetis semper adesset, inquisitus Amos propheta non diceret: Non sum propheta, ubi et subdidit: Neque filius prophetae; sed armentarius ego sum, vellicans sycomoros. Quomodo autem propheta non fuit, qui de futuris tot vera praedixit? Aut quomodo propheta fuit, si de se in praesenti vera denegavit? Sed quia eadem hora qua requisitus est prophetiae sibi spiritum deesse sensit, de semetipso testimonium veraciter intulit, dicens: Non sum propheta. Qui tamen secutus adiunxit: Et nunc audi verbum Domini. Haec dicit Dominus: Uxor tua in civitate fornicabitur, et filii tui et filiae tuae in gladio cadent, et humus tua funiculo metietur; et tu in terra polluta morieris. Quibus prophetae verbis aperte ostenditur quia dum de se illa loqueretur, impletus est; et mox habere prophetandi spiritum meruit, quia se prophetam

non esse humiliter agnovit. Et si prophetiae spiritus prophetis semper adesset, David regi de templi se constructione consulenti, nequaquam Nathan propheta concederet quod post paululum negaret.

4 Unde bene et in Evangelio scriptum est: Super quem videris Spiritum descendentem et manentem super eum, hic est qui baptizat. In cunctis namque fidelibus Spiritus venit, sed in solo Mediatore singulariter permanet, quia eius humanitatem nunquam deseruit, ex cuius divinitate procedit. In illo igitur manet, qui solus et omnia et semper potest. Nam fideles, qui hunc accipiunt, cum signorum dona habere semper, ut volunt, non possunt, hunc se accepisse quasi in transitus ostensione testantur. Sed cum rursum de eodem Spiritu Veritatis ore discipulis dicitur, Apud vos manebit, et in vobis erit, quid est quod divina voce Mediatoris signum haec eadem sancti Spiritus mansio declaratur, cum dicitur: Super quem videris Spiritum descendentem, et manentem super eum? Si igitur iuxta magistri vocem et in discipulis manet, quomodo iam singulare signum erit quod in Mediatore permanet? Quod tamen citius cognoscimus, si dona eiusdem Spiritus discernamus.

5 Alia namque sunt dona illius, sine quibus ad vitam nequaquam pertingitur, alia quibus vitae sanctitas pro aliorum utilitate declaratur. Mansuetudo namque, humilitas, patientia, fides, spes, charitas, dona eius sunt, sed ea sine quibus ad vitam homines pervenire nequaquam possunt. Prophetiae autem, virtus curationum, genera linguarum, interpretatio sermonum, dona eius sunt, sed quae virtutis eius praesentiam pro correctione intuentium ostendunt. In his igitur donis sine quibus ad vitam perveniri non potest, sanctus Spiritus sive in praedicatoribus suis, sive in electis omnibus semper manet; in illis autem quibus per ostensionem illius non nostra vita servatur, sed aliorum quaeritur, nequaquam semper in praedicatoribus permanet, quia semper quidem eorum cordi ad bene vivendum praesidet, nec tamen per eos virtutum signa semper ostendit: sed

aliquando se eis a signorum ostensionibus subtrahit, ut eo humilius virtutes eius habeantur, quo habitae teneri non possunt.

6 Mediator autem Dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus, in cunctis eum et semper et continue habet praesentem, quia et ex illo isdem Spiritus per substantiam profertur. Recte ergo et cum in sanctis praedicatoribus maneat, in Mediatore singulariter manere perhibetur, quia in istis per gratiam manet ad aliquid, in illo autem per substantiam manet ad cuncta. Sicut enim corpus nostrum sensum tantummodo tactus agnoscit, caput autem corporis usum simul omnium quinque sensuum possidet, ut videat, audiat, gustet, odoretur, et tangat; ita membra superni capitis in quibusdam virtutibus emicant, ipsum vero caput in cunctis virtutibus flagrat. Dissimiliter ergo Spiritus in illo manet, a quo per naturam nunquam recedit. Dona vero eius quibus ad vitam tenditur, sine periculo amitti non possunt; dona autem quibus vitae sanctitas demonstratur, plerumque, ut dictum est, sine dipendio subtrahuntur. Illa ergo pro nostra eruditione tenenda sunt, haec pro alienis provectibus exquirenda. In illis nos terreat formido, ne pereant; in istis vero ad tempus aliquando sublatis consoletur humilitas, quia ad elationem mentem fortasse sublevant. Cum igitur concessa nobis virtutum signa subtrahuntur, dicamus recte: Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Domino placuit, ita factum est; sit nomen Domini benedictum. Tunc enim vere ostendimus quia accepta recte tenuimus, cum profecto aequanimiter ad momentum sublata toleramus.

LIBER TERTIUS

1. Beatus Iob ad mortem petitus in tentatione, ad vitam crevit ex verbere; et antiquus hostis unde se bona eius aestimavit exstinguere, inde doluit multiplicasse. Sed quia in primo certamine se succubuisse considerat, ad alia se tentationum bella restaurat, et de sancto viro mala adhuc impudenter sperat; quia bona malus credere non potest, vel experta. Ea autem quae in prima eius percussione praemissa sunt, iterum subnectuntur, cum dicitur:

2 Factum est cum quadam die venissent filii Dei et assisterent coram Domino, venissetque Satan inter eos, et staret in conspectu eius, ut diceret Dominus ad Satan: Unde venis? Qui respondens, ait: Circuivi terram, et perambulavi eam. Et dixit Dominus ad Satan: Nunquid considerasti servum meum Iob, quod non sit ei similis super terram, homo simplex et rectus, timens Deum, et recedens a malo.

3 Haec quia latius supra disseruimus, melius silendo praeterimus: ne, dum saepius discussa repetimus, tardius ad indiscussa veniamus. Quamvis hoc, quod voce Domini ad Satan dicitur: Unde venis? nequaquam aestimo quod ei, ut prius, dicatur. Cum enim ab eo certamine in quo relaxatus fuerat victus redit; et unde venit requiritur, qui unde veniat scitur; quid aliud quam infirmitas superbiae eius increpatur? ac si ei aperte divina vox dicat: Ecce ab uno et in infirma carne posito homine vinceris, qui te contra me auctorem omnium erigere conaris. Unde mox Dominus cum beati Iob bona, sicut prius diceret, haec cum victoriae triumphis enumerans adiungit:

1 Et adhuc retinens innocentiam suam.

2 Ac si aperte dicat: Tu quidem exercuisti malitiam, sed ille innocentiam non amisit; et unde te aestimasti provectum eius imminuere, inde compulsus es eius provectui deservire, quia mentis innocentiam, quam gloriose tenuit in tranquillitate, gloriosius servavit in verbere. Sequitur:

1 Tu autem commovisti me adversus eum, ut affligerem illum frustra.

2 Cum sit Deus iustus et verax, valde quaerendum est quomodo beatum Iob frustra afflixisse se indicat. Quia enim iustus est, frustra affligere non potuit; sed rursum quia verax est, aliter non potuit dixisse quam fecit. Ut ergo iusto et veraci utraque conveniant, quatenus et vera dicat, et iniusta non faciat; cognoscamus beatum Iob et iuxta aliquid frustra, et rursum iuxta aliquid non frustra percussum. Quia enim iustus et verax haec de semetipso asserit, ostendamus et verum exstitisse quod dixit, et rectum fuisse quod fecit. Necesse quippe erat, ut sanctus vir Deo soli sibique cognitus, quanta virtute polleret, ad imitandum cunctis innotesceret. Aperte namque aliis virtutis exempla non daret, si ipse sine tentatione remaneret. Actum ergo est ut et vires eius cunctis imitandas ipsa vis percussionis ostenderet, et flagella proderent quod in tranquillitate latuisset. Sed eisdem flagellis crevit virtus patientiae, atque ex dolore verberis aucta est gloria remunerationis. Ut ergo in dicto Domini veritas, rectitudo autem teneatur in facto, beatus Iob et non frustra percutitur, quia augetur meritum; et tamen frustra percutitur, quia nullum punitur admissum. Frustra enim percussus est, cui culpa nulla reciditur; et non frustra percussus est, cui virtutis meritum cumulatur.

3 Sed quid est quod dicitur: Commovisti me adversus eum? Nunquid Satanae verbis Veritas accenditur, ut in subditorum suorum cruciatibus instigetur? Quis haec de Deo senserit, quae recto etiam homine indigna perpendit? Sed quia nos ferire nisi commoti nescimus, ipsa divina percussio commotio vocatur; et ad nostra verba divina voce descenditur, ut eius factum ab homine utcunque capiatur. Illa enim vis quae absque necessitate omnia creavit, et sine despectu omnibus praesidet, et sine labore cuncta sustentat, et sine occupatione regit, etiam sine commotione corrigit, sicque humanas mentes ad ea quae voluerit flagellis format, ut in diversitatis umbram a suae incommutabilitatis luce non transeat. Sequitur:

1 Respondens Satan, ait: Pellem pro pelle, et cuncta quae habet homo dabit pro anima sua; alioquin mitte manum tuam, et tange os eius et carnem,

et tunc videbis quod in faciem benedicat tibi.

2 Antiquus hostis ex rebus exterioribus colligit, quod beato viro ad mentis crimen infligit. Pellem enim pro pelle dari asserit, quia saepe dum venire ictum contra faciem cernimus, manum palpebris opponimus, ut ab ictu oculos defendamus; et corpus vulneri obiicimus, ne in corpore teneriori vulneremur. Satan ergo haec consuete fieri sciens, dicit: Pellem pro pelle, et cuncta quae habet homo, dabit pro anima sua. Ac si aperte dicat: Idcirco Iob tot extra se flagella aequanimiter patitur, quia pavet, ne ipse feriatur. Cura ergo carnis est, quod damno affectuum carnalium motus non est, quia dum sibimetipsi metuit, minus suorum percussiones sentit. Unde et mox eius carnem feriendam postulat, dicens: Mitte manum tuam, et tange os eius et carnem, et tunc videbis quod in faciem benedicat tibi. Superius dixerat: Tange cuncta quae possidet, et tunc videbis quod in faciem benedicat tibi . Nunc quasi prioris propositionis oblitus, fractus de aliis alia postulat. Quod tamen recte divina dispensatione permittitur, quatenus altercator impudens vel saepe victus obmutescat. Sequitur:

1 Dixit ergo Dominus ad Satan: Ecce in manu tua est, verumtamen animam illius serva.

2 Ecce iterum permissionem verberis comitatur custodia protectionis, et electum suum divina dispensatio custodiendo deserit, deserendo custodit, alia illius prodit, alia protegit. Si enim totum Iob desereret in manu tanti adversarii, homo quid esset? In ipsa ergo iustitia permissionis miscetur quaedam libra pietatis, quatenus in uno eodemque certamine et servus humilis ex oppressione proficiat, et hostis superbiens ex permissione succumbat. Manui itaque adversarii sanctus vir traditur, sed tamen in intimis adiutoris sui manu retinetur. De illis quippe ovibus fuit, de quibus in Evangelio ipsa Veritas dicit: Non rapiet eas quisquam de manu mea; et tamen expetenti hosti dicitur: Ecce in manu tua est. Isdem ergo in manu Dei, isdem in manu est diaboli. Nam dicens: In manu tua est; cum protinus

adiungit: Verumtamen animam illius serva; patenter pius adiutor innotuit, quia tenuit quem concessit, et dando non dedit, quem adversarii sui iaculis eiiciens abscondit.

3 Quid est autem hoc, quod ad Satan dicitur: Animam illius serva? Quo enim pacto ille custodit, qui custodita semper irrumpere appetit? Sed servare Satan dicitur, irrumpere non audere, sicut e contrario Patrem in oratione postulamus, dicentes: Ne nos inducas in tentationem. Neque enim in tentationem Dominus inducit, qui semper a tentatione subditos misericorditer protegit: sed tamen in tentationem quasi eius inducere est, a tentationis nos illecebra non munire. Et tunc nos in tentationis laqueum non inducit, cum tentari nos ultra quam possumus non permittit. Sicut ergo Deus inducere nos in tentationem dicitur, si nos ab adversario induci patiatur; ita adversarius servare animam dicitur cum hanc tentando superare prohibetur.

4 Egressus igitur Satan a facie Domini.

5 Quomodo Satan a facie Domini exeat, ea iam quae superius sunt dicta, manifestant. Sequitur:

1 Percussit Iob ulcere pessimo, a planta pedis usque ad verticem eius.

2 Duobus semper modis flagella pensanda sunt, ut scilicet perpendantur, aut qualia sint, aut quanta. Nam saepe multa ex qualitate, saepe gravia ex quantitate levigantur: si videlicet cum multa sunt, non sint gravia; cum vero gravia, non sint multa. Ut igitur ostendatur quomodo per asperitatem flagelli adversarius contra sanctum virum non solum per nequitiam qualitatis, sed etiam per pondus quantitatis exarsit, ad demonstrandam qualitatem dicitur: Percussit eum ulcere pessimo; ad insinuandam vero quantitatem subiungitur: A planta pedis usque ad verticem, ut nimirum nihil in mente vacet a gloria, in cuius corpore nil vacat a poena. Sequitur:

1 Qui testa saniem radebat, sedens in sterquilinio.

2 Unde testa, nisi ex luto conficitur? Quid vero est sanies corporis, nisi lutum? Saniem ergo radere testa perhibetur, ac si aperte diceretur: Luto

tergebat lutum. Pensabat quippe vir sanctus unde sumptum fuerat quod gestabat, et fragmento vasis fictilis confractum vas fictile radebat. Quo facto patenter ostenditur corpus suum quomodo sibi sanum subdidit, quod et percussum sic despiciens curavit; quam ille mollitiem sanae suae carni concessit, qui non vestem, non digitos, sed testam etiam vulneribus admovit. Testa ergo radebat saniem, ut semetipsum et in fragmento considerans, etiam de extersione vulneris sumeret curam mentis.

3 Quia vero saepe per ea quae circa corpus sunt, animus inflatur, et per hoc quod erga nos agitur fragilitas nostri corporis ab oculis cordis amovetur (sicut nonnulli saeculares cum temporalibus dignitatibus fulciuntur, dum locis altioribus praesident, dum multorum obsequia sibi suppetere ad votum vident, fragilitatem suam intueri negligunt, et vas quod gestant fictile, quam sit velociter conterendum, obliviscentes omni modo non attendunt), beatus Iob ut considerationem fragilitatis suae etiam ex circumstantibus traheret, et ante oculos suos vim suae despectionis augeret, non quolibet in terra, quae pene ubique munda reperitur, sed in sterquilinio sedisse describitur. In sterquilinio ponebat corpus, ut ex terra sumpta quae esset carnis substantia, bene proficiens perpenderet animus. In sterquilinio ponebat corpus ut etiam ex loci fetore caperet, quod festine corpus ad fetorem rediret.

4 Sed ecce cum beatus Iob tot rerum damna sustinet, tot funeribus pignerum percussus dolet, tot vulnera tolerat; dum decurrentem saniem testa radit, dum per putredinem defluens in sterquilinio residet; intueri libet quid est, quod omnipotens Deus quos sibi tam charos in aeternum conspicit, tam vehementer quasi despiciens affligit. Ecce autem dum beati Iob vulnera cruciatusque considero, repente mentis oculos ad Ioannem reduco, et non sine gravissima admiratione perpendo, quod ille prophetiae spiritu intra matris uterum impletus, atque, ut ita dixerim, priusquam nasceretur, renatus: ille amicus sponsi, ille, quo inter natos mulierum maior nemo surrexit; ille sic propheta, ut plus etiam quam propheta, ab iniquis in carcerem mittitur, et

pro puellae saltatu, capite truncatur, et vir tantae severitatis pro risu turpium moritur. Nunquidnam credimus aliquid fuisse, quod in eius vita illa sic despecta mors tergeret? Sed quando ille vel in cibo peccavit, qui locustas solummodo et mel silvestre comedit? Quid Deo vel de qualitate sui tegminis deliquit, qui camelorum pilis corpus operuit? Quid de conversatione sua offendere potuit, qui de eremo non recessit? Quid illum loquacitatis reatus polluit, qui disiunctus longe ab hominibus fuit? Quando illum vel silentii culpa attigit, qui ad se venientes tam vehementer increpavit, dicens: Genimina viperarum, quis demonstravit vobis fugere a ventura ira? Quid est ergo, quod Iob Dei testimonio praefertur, et tamen plagis usque ad sterquilinium sternitur? Quid est, quod Ioannes Dei voce laudatur, et tamen pro temulenti verbis in saltationis praemium moritur? Quid est, quod omnipotens Deus sic vehementer in hoc saeculo despicit, quos sic sublimiter ante saecula elegit: nisi hoc, quod pietati fidelium patet, quoniam idcirco sic eos premit in infimis, quia videt quomodo remuneret in summis; et foras usque ad despecta deiicit, quia intus usque ad incomprehensibilia perducit. Hinc ergo unusquisque colligat quid illic sint passuri quos reprobat, si hic sic cruciat quos amat; aut quomodo ferientur qui in iudicio arguendi sunt, si sic eorum vita premitur, qui ipso iudice teste laudantur. Sequitur:

1 Dixit autem illi uxor sua: Adhuc permanes in simplicitate tua? Benedic Deo, et morere.

2 Antiquus hostis humanum genus duobus modis tentare consuevit; ut videlicet corda stantium aut tribulationibus frangat, aut persuasionibus molliat. In utrisque ergo contra beatum Iob se vehementer exercuit. Nam prius patrifamilias intulit damna rerum, orbavit patrem morte filiorum, percussit incolumem putredine vulnerum. Sed quia putrescentem foras, sanum adhuc interius stare conspexit; et quem exterius nudum reddidit, hunc interius ditiorem fieri per exhibitam laudem conditoris invidit; callide

cogitans pensat quod contra se athleta Dei unde premitur, inde sublevatur, victusque ad subtilia tentandi argumenta convertitur. Nam antiquae artis insidias repetit; et quia scit quomodo Adam decipi soleat, ad Evam recurrit. Beatum enim Iob inter tot rerum damna, inter tot percussionum vulnera, quasi in quadam virtutum arce stare invictum vidit. In alto quippe mentem fixerat; et idcirco hanc hostiles insidiae irrumpere non valebant. Quaeritur ergo ab adversario in hanc arcem munitissimam quibus gradibus ascendatur. Vicina est autem viro mulier atque subiuncta. Cor igitur mulieris tenuit, et quasi scalam, qua ad cor viri ascendere potuisset invenit. Occupavit animum coniugis, scalam mariti. Sed nihil hac arte praevaluit, quia sanctus vir subiectam sibi mulierem, et non praepositam attendit; et recta loquens docuit, quam serpens, ut perversa loqueretur, instigavit. Dignum quippe erat ut fluxam mentem virilis censura restringeret, cum profecto et de ipso primo lapsu humani generis nosset quod docere mulier recta nesciret. Unde bene et per Paulum dicitur: Docere autem mulieri non permitto; quia nimirum aliquando cum docuit, a sapientiae aeternitate separavit. Antiquus itaque hostis ab Adam in sterquilinio perdidit, qui Adam in paradiso superavit; atque adiutricem suam mulierem dum ad verba malae persuasionis accendit, ad doctrinam sanctae eruditionis misit; et quae excitata fuerat ut perderet, erudita est ne periret. Sic sic a nostris viris fortibus hostis percutitur, ut sua ei etiam tela rapiantur. Unde enim se exaggerare aestimat dolorem vulneris, inde eis contra semetipsum suggerit arma virtutis.

3 Ex verbis autem male persuadentis coniugis vigilanter debemus aspicere quod antiquus adversarius non solum per semetipsum, sed per eos etiam qui nobis adhaerent, statum satagit nostrae mentis inclinare. Cum enim cor nostrum sua persuasione non subruit, ad hoc nimirum per linguas adhaerentium repit. Hinc enim scriptum est: A filiis tuis cave, et a domesticis tuis attende. Hinc per prophetam dicitur: Unusquisque se a proximo suo custodiat, et in omni fratre suo non habeat fiduciam. Hinc

rursum scriptum est: Inimici hominis domestici eius. Callidus namque adversarius, cum a bonorum cordibus repelli se conspicit, eos qui ab illis valde diliguntur exquirit; et per eorum verba blandiens loquitur, qui plus caeteris amantur; ut dum vis amoris cor perforat, facile persuasionis eius gladius ad intimae rectitudinis munimina irrumpat. Post damna igitur rerum, post funera pignorum, post vulnera scissurasque membrorum, antiquus hostis linguam movit uxoris.

4 Et notandum quo tempore viri mentem studuit virulento sermone corrumpere. Verba enim post vulnera intulit, ut nimirum cum vis doloris ingravesceret, facile persuasionis suggestio perversa praevaleret. Sed si ipsum subtiliter tentationis eius ordinem perpendimus, qua calliditate saeviat invenimus. Movit namque prius damna substantiae, quae et extra naturam profecto essent, et extra corpus. Subtraxit filios, quod iam quidem extra naturam non esset, sed tamen adhuc aliquatenus extra proprium corpus. Ad extremum percussit et corpus. Sed quia vulneribus carnis ad mentis vulnus pervenire non valuit, etiam coniunctae mulieris linguam quaesivit. Quia enim aperto certamine superari se doluit, de ore coniugis iaculum quasi de insidiis intorsit, quae profecto diceret: Adhuc permanes in simplicitate tua? Benedic Deo, et morere. Ecce tentando omnia abstulit, ecce tentando mulierem reliquit, et sancto viro callide cuncta diripuit; sed valde callidius adiutricem suam mulierem reservavit, quae dicat: Adhuc permanes in simplicitate tua? Verba sua Eva repetit. Nam quid est dicere: Simplicitatem desere, nisi: Obedientiam, vetitum comedendo, contemne? Et quid est dicere: Benedic Deo, et morere, nisi: Transcendendo praeceptum, ultra quam es conditus, vive? Sed Adam noster fortis in sterquilinio iacuit, qui in paradiso quondam debilis stetit. Nam illico ad male suadentis verba respondit, dicens:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 10. — Quasi una de stultis mulieribus locuta es. Si bona accipimus de manu Domini, mala quare non sustineamus? 15. Job externis rebus vacuus, intus Deo plenus. Mala quatenus vocentur flagella. — Ecce ubique hostis frangitur, ubique superatur, per cuncta tentationum argumenta succubuit, quia et illud suum familiare solatium etiam de muliere amisit. Inter haec igitur sanctum virum intueri libet, foras rebus vacuum, intrinsecus Deo plenum. Paulus cum in seipso divitias sapientiae internae conspiceret, seque ipsum exterius esse corruptibile corpus videret, ait: Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus (II Cor. IV, 7). Ecce in beato Job vas fictile scissuras ulcerum exterius sensit; sed hic thesaurus interius integer mansit. Foras enim per vulnera crepuit, sed indeficienter interius nascens thesaurus sapientiae per verba sanctae eruditionis emanavit, dicens: Si bona accepimus de manu Domini, mala quare non sustineamus? bona scilicet, dona Dei vel temporalia vel aeterna; mala autem, flagella praesentia appellans, de quibus per prophetam Dominus dicit: Ego Dominus, et non est alter, formans lucem, et creans tenebras; faciens pacem, et creans mala (Isai. XLV, 7). Neque enim mala, quae nulla sua natura subsistunt, a Domino creantur; sed creare se mala Dominus indicat, cum res bene conditas nobis male agentibus in flagellum format, ut ea ipsa et per dolorem, quo feriunt, delinquentibus mala sint; et per naturam, qua existunt, bona. Unde et venenum mors quidem est homini, sed tamen vita serpenti. Amore enim praesentium ab auctoris nostri dilectione recessimus; et perversa mens dum dilectioni creaturae se subdidit, a creatoris societate disjunxit. Ex his ergo ab auctore ferienda erat, quae errans auctori praeposuerat, ut unde homo culpam non timuit superbus admittere, inde poenam corrigendus inveniret; et tanto citius resipisceret ad illa quae perdidit, quanto doloris plena esse conspiceret quae quaesivit. Unde et bene dicitur: Formans lucem, et creans tenebras, quia cum per flagella exterius doloris tenebrae creantur, intus per eruditionem lux mentis accenditur. Faciens pacem, et creans mala, quia tunc

nobis pax cum Deo redditur, cum haec quae bene sunt condita, sed non bene concupita, in ea quae nobis mala sunt, flagella vertuntur. Per culpam quippe Deo discordes exstitimus; dignum ergo est ut ad pacem illius per flagella redeamus; ut cum unaquaeque res bene condita nobis in dolorem vertitur, correcti 80 mens ad auctoris pacem humiliter reformetur. Haec itaque flagella beatus Job mala nominat; quia salutis et tranquillitatis bonum, qua perturbatione feriant, pensat. 16. Flagelli poena memoria doni, laetitia metu flagelli temperanda. Sensus pravis, non sexus in vitio. — Sed illud valde in ejus verbis intuendum est, contra persuasionem conjugis quanta considerationis arte se colligat, dicens: Si bona accepimus de manu Domini, mala quare non sustineamus? Magna quippe consolatio tribulationis est, si cum adversa patimur, auctoris nostri ad memoriam dona revocemus. Nec frangit quod ex dolore obviat, si menti citius hoc, quod ex munere sublevat, occurrat. Hinc namque scriptum est: In die bonorum ne immemor sis malorum, et in die malorum ne immemor sis bonorum (Eccli. XI, 27). Quisquis enim dona percipit, sed donorum tempore nequaquam etiam flagella pertimescit, in elatione per laetitiam corruit. Quisquis autem flagellis atteritur, sed flagellorum tempore nequaquam se ex donis, quae eum contigit accepisse, consolatur, ab statu mentis omnimoda desperatione destruitur. Sic ergo utraque jungenda sunt, ut unum semper ex altero fulciatur; quatenus et flagelli poenam memoria temperet doni, et doni laetitiam mordeat suspicio ac formido flagelli. Sanctus igitur vir, ut oppressam mentem inter vulnera mulceat, in flagellorum doloribus blandimenta donorum pensat, dicens: Si bona accepimus de manu Domini, mala quare non sustineamus? Ubi et bene praemittit, Locuta es quasi una ex insipientibus mulieribus. Quia enim sensus pravae mulieris, non autem sexus in vitio est, nequaquam ait: Locuta es quasi una ex mulieribus, sed, ex ineptis mulieribus, ut videlicet ostendatur quia quod pravum sapit, accedentis stultitiae, non autem conditae sit naturae. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

IBID. — In omnibus his non peccavit Job labiis suis. 17. Job non peccavit labiis, quia nec injusta dixit, nec justa reticuit. — Duobus modis labiis delinquimus, cum aut injusta dicimus, aut justa reticemus. Nam si aliquando et tacere culpa non esset, propheta non diceret: Vae mihi, quia tacui (Isai. VI, 5). Beatus igitur Job in cunctis quae egit, labiis suis minime peccavit, quia nec contra ferientem superba dixit, nec contra suadentem recta reticuit. Nec loquens ergo, nec tacens deliquit, qui et flagellanti patri gratias reddidit, et male suadenti conjugi doctrinae sapientiam ministravit. Quia enim scivit quid deberet Deo, quid proximo, scilicet patientiam conditori, sapientiam conjugi, idcirco et hanc redarguendo docuit, et illum gratias agendo laudavit. Quis autem nostrum, si unum quodlibet vulnus tantae hujus percussionis acciperet, non mox ab intimis prostratus jaceret? Ecce stratus foris vulneribus carnis, erectus intrinsecus munimine permanet mentis; et sub semetipso omne jaculum transvolare conspicit, quod in se exterius districta manu saeviens hostis figit, vigilanter deprehendit jacula, modo vulneribus contra se a facie, modo verbis quasi ex latere intorta. Et bellator noster circumvallantium certaminum fervore deprehensus, ubique patientiae suae clypeum opponit; undique venientibus spiculis obviat, et per cuncta virtutum latera circumspectam contra irruentia vulnera mentem rotat.. VERS. 11. — Igitur audientes tres amici Job omne malum quod accidisset ei, venerunt singuli de loco suo: Eliphaz Themanites, Baldad Suhites, et Sophar Naamathites. Condixerant enim sibi, ut pariter venientes visitarent eum, et consolarentur. 19. Amicorum Job recta intentio indiscretione fuscatur. — Qui ex condicto ad afflicti consolationem veniunt, et inter se et erga percussum quantae chariratis fuerint, demonstrantur. Quamvis et per hoc, quod Scriptura eos tanti viri amicos fuisse testatur, quia boni studii et rectae fuerint intentionis ostenditur; sed tamen haec ipsa

illorum intentio, eis ad verba prorumpentibus, ante districti judicis oculos, suborta indiscretione, fuscatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 12. — Cumque elevassent procul oculos suos, non cognoverunt eum; et exclamantes ploraverunt, scissisque vestibus sparserunt pulverem super caput suum in coelum. 20. Consolaturus afflictum debet moerere. At modum dolori ponat. — Quia percussi speciem plaga mutaverat, amici plorantes exclamant, vestes scindunt, capita pulvere aspergunt; ut cum mutatum eum, ad quem venerant, cernerent, ipsam etiam consolatorum speciem spontaneus dolor immutaret. Ordo quippe consolationis est, ut cum volumus afflictum quempiam a moerore suspendere, studeamus prius moerendo ejus luctui concordare. Dolentem namque non potest consolari, qui non concordat ejus dolori, quia eo ipso, quo a moerentis afflictione discrepat, minus ab illo recipitur, a quo mentis qualitate separatur. Emolliri itaque prius debet animus, ut afflicto congruat, congruens inhaereat, inhaerens trahat. Neque enim ferrum ferro conjungitur, si non utrumque exustione ignis liquetur; et durum molli non adhaeret nisi prius duritia ejus temperata mollescat, ut quasi hoc ipsum fiat, quod curatur ut teneat. Sic nec jacentes erigimus, nisi a rigore nostri status inclinemur, quia dum rectitudo stantis a jacentis situ discrepat, eum, cui condescendere negligit, nequaquam levat. Amici igitur beati Job ut afflictum a dolore suspenderent, curaverunt necessario simul dolere; et cum vulneratum illius corpus viderent, studuerunt ipsi vestes scindere; et cum immutatum conspicerent, studuerunt pulvere capita foedare; quatenus afflictus vir tanto facilius eorum verba reciperet, quanto in eis suum aliquid de afflictione cognovisset. 21. Sed inter haec sciendum est quia is qui afflictum consolari desiderat, mensuram necesse est dolori quem suscipit ponat, ne non solum dolentem non mulceat, sed intemperate dolens, afflicti animum ad pondus

desperationis premat. Sic enim dolor noster moerentium dolori jungendus est, ut per temperamentum sublevet, non autem per augmentum gravet. Unde fortasse colligendum est 82 quod amici beati Job plusquam necesse fuerat, in consolatione doluerunt, qui dum percussionem cernunt, sed percussi mentem nesciunt, ita in immensum luctum versi sunt, ac si percussus vir tantae fortitudinis, in plaga corporis, etiam a corde cecidisset. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 13. — Sederuntque cum eo in terra septem diebus et septem noctibus, et nemo loquebatur ei verbum; videbant enim dolorem ejus esse vehementem. 22. Continuis ne, an intermissis septem diebus ac noctibus, amici cum Job sederint incertum. — Utrum continuis septem diebus et septem noctibus cum afflicto Job sederint, an certe diebus septem et noctibus totidem instantia ei crebrae visitationis adhaeserint, ignoramus. Saepe enim rem quamlibet tot diebus agere dicimur, quamvis non eisdem diebus ad eam continue vacemus. Saepe vero Scriptura sacra sic totum pro parte, sicut pro toto partem ponere consuevit. Pro toto enim partem loquitur, sicut Jacob familiam describens dicit: Intravit Jacob in Aegyptum cum animabus septuaginta (Gen. XLVI, 27). Quae nimirum cum animas memorat, constat quia intrantium et corpora comprehendit. Rursum totum pro parte insinuat, sicut ad monumentum Maria queritur, dicens: Tulerunt Dominum de monumento, et nescimus ubi posuerunt eum (Joan. XX, 2). Solum quippe corpus Domini quaesitura venerat, et quasi totum simul Dominum tultum deplorat. An ergo et hoc in loco totum pro parte dicatur incertum est. 23. Nec sermo sit praeceps, nec post debitum silentium indiscretus. — Sed tamen hoc, quod diu tacuerunt, et quandoque loquendo reprobati sunt, neglecte praetereundum non est. Sunt namque nonnulli qui et loqui praecipitanter incipiunt, et effrenate coepta effrenatius exsequuntur. Et

sunt nonnulli qui tarde quidem loqui inchoant, sed semel inchoantes, habere modum locutionis ignorant. Amici igitur beati Job dolorem videntes, diu tacuerunt; sed tarde inchoantes, indiscrete locuti sunt, quia parcere dolenti noluerunt. Tenuerunt linguam, ne praepropere inciperet; sed incipientem semel nequaquam moderati sunt, ne se ex consolatione usque ad contumelias effrenaret. Et bona quidem intentione ad consolandum venerant; sed hoc, quod pia mens mundum Deo obtulit, locutio praecipitata vitiavit. Scriptum quippe est: Si recte offeras, non recte autem dividas, peccasti (Genes. IV, 7, sec. LXX). Recte namque offertur, cum recta intentione quid agitur. Sed recte non dividitur, si non hoc, quod die agitur, etiam subtiliter discernatur. Oblata enim recte dividere est quaelibet bona nostra studia sollicite discernendo pensare. Quod nimirum qui agere dissimulat, etiam recte offerens peccat. 25. ALLEGORICUS SENSUS. — Christi et Ecclesiae quanta sit conjunctio. — Haec juxta historiam breviter tractata percurrimus, nunc ad allegoriarum mysterium verba vertamus. Sed quia in exordio hujus operis dum de unitate capitis et corporis tractaremus, sollicita intentione praemisimus quanta in eis sit compago charitatis, quia nimirum et Dominus multa adhuc per corpus, quod nos sumus, patitur, et jam corpus ejus, id est Ecclesia, de suo capite, videlicet Domino, in coelo gloriatur; ita nunc passiones exprimi ejusdem capitis debent, ut ostendatur quam multa etiam in corpore suo sustinet. Si enim caput nostrum tormenta nostra non tangerent, nequaquam pro afflictis membris persecutori suo etiam de coelo clamaret: Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris? (Act. IX, 5.) Si cruciatus nostri ejus poenae non essent, conversus afflictusque Paulus minime diceret: Suppleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi, in carne mea (Col. I, 24). Et tamen resurrectione jam sui capitis exaltatus dicit: Qui nos conresuscitavit, et consedere fecit in coelestibus (Ephes. II, 6). Nempe hunc in terra persecutionum tormenta constrinxerant; sed poenarum suarum ponderibus pressus, ecce jam per gloriam capitis in coelo residebat. Quia

ergo in omnibus unitum caput et corpus novimus, sic a percussione capitis incipimus, ut subsequenter tamen ad corporis flagella veniamus. Sed hoc, quod quadam die Satan coram Domino astitisse dicitur, quod unde veniat 84 percontatur, quod beatus Job magnis conditoris praeconiis praefertur, quia jam saepe discussimus, replicare devitamus. Si enim diu mens rebus discussis involvitur, pervenire ad indiscussa praepeditur. Ibi ergo allegoriae nunc initium ponimus, ubi post verba saepe repetita, adjunctum novi aliquid scimus. Itaque ait:

CAPUT XIV.

Commovisti me adversus eum, ut affligerem illum frustra. 26. Christus pro se frustra, pro nobis non frustra afflictus. — Si beatus Job Redemptoris nostri in passione positi speciem tenet, quomodo ad Satan a Domino dicitur: Commovisti me adversus eum? Mediator quidem Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus, ut culpas nostrae transgressionis exstingueret, venit mortalitatis nostrae flagella tolerare; sed quia unius cum Patre ejusdemque naturae est, quomodo per Satan motum se adversus eum Pater asserit, cum constet quod Patris Filiique concordiam nulla potestatis inaequalitas, nulla voluntatis diversitas interrumpat? Sed tamen isdem, qui Patri aequalis est per divinitatem, venit propter nos ad flagella per carnem. Quae nimirum flagella non susciperet, nisi formam damnati hominis redimendo sumpsisset. Et nisi primus homo delinqueret, secundus ad passionis probra minime veniret. Cum ergo primus homo per Satan a Domino motus est, tunc est Dominus in homine secundo commotus. Satan itaque ad hujus afflictionem, Dominum tunc commovit, quando in paradiso primum hominem a justitiae culmine inobedientiae culpa prostravit. Nisi enim Adam primum per voluntarium vitium in animae mortem traxisset, Adam secundus sine vitio in carnis mortem voluntariam non veniret. Bene ergo ei etiam de Redemptore nostro dicitur: Commovisti me adversus eum, ut

affligerem illum frustra. Ac si apertius dicatur: Dum iste non sua, sed illius causa moritur, tunc me in hujus afflictionem commovisti, cum illum a me callida persuasione traxisti. De quo et bene additur, frustra. Frustra quippe afflictus est, qui et culpae ultione pressus est, et culpae contagio inquinatus non est. Frustra afflictus est, qui incarnatus, propria admissa non habuit, et tamen poenam carnalium sine culpa suscepit. Hinc est enim quod per Prophetam loquitur, dicens: Quae non rapui, tunc exsolvebam (Psal. LXVIII, 5). Alius namque ad paradisum conditus, divinae potentiae similitudinem superbe rapere voluit, sed tamen culpam hujus superbiae sine culpa Mediator exsolvit. Hinc est quod Patri quidam sapiens dicit: Cum sis justus, juste omnia disponis, eum quoque qui non debet puniri condemnas (Sap. XII, 15). 27. Qui Deus Christum innocentem poenis affecit. — Sed pensandum est quomodo justus sit, et omnia juste disponat, si eum, qui non debet puniri condemnat. Mediator etenim noster puniri pro semetipso non debuit, quia nullum culpae contagium perpetravit. Sed si ipse indebitam non susciperet, nunquam nos a debita morte liberaret. Pater ergo cum justus sit, justum puniens, omnia juste disponit; quia per hoc cuncta justificat, quod eum qui sine peccato est, pro peccatoribus damnat; ut eo electa omnia ad culmen justitiae surgerent; quo is qui est super omnia damna injustitiae nostrae sustineret. Quod ergo illic damnatus cum non debeat dicitur, hoc hic afflictus frustra memoratur. Qui tamen juxta semetipsum frustra afflictus est, juxta vero nostra acta non frustra. 85 Rubigo quippe vitii purgari non potuit, nisi igne tormenti. Venit itaque sine vitio, qui se subjiceret sponte tormento; ut debita nostrae iniquitati supplicia eo reos suos juste amitterent, quo hunc a semetipsis liberum injuste tenuissent. Frustra ergo et non frustra afflictus est, qui in se quidem admissa non habuit, sed cruore proprio reatus nostri maculam tersit.

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 4, 5. — Respondens Satan ait: Pellem pro pelle, et cuncta quae habet homo, dabit pro anima sua. Alioquin mitte manum tuam, et tange os ejus et carnem, et tunc videbis quod in faciem benedicat tibi. 28. Satan unde sciat Christum, unde de eo dubitet. In charitate ac patientia Christi aestimanda unde fallatur. Satanae loquela tum per se, tum per suos. — Malignus spiritus cum Redemptorem nostrum miraculis coruscare conspicit, clamat: Scimus qui sis, Sanctus Dei (Luc. IV, 34). Qui haec dicens, cognoscendo Dei Filium pertimescit; sed tamen vim supernae pietatis ignorans, nonnunquam dum passibilem considerat, hominem purum putat. Multos autem sub sanctitatis specie in pastorali positos loco didicerat, qui a visceribus charitatis alieni valde, pro minimo aliena damna pensabant. Hunc ergo quasi ex aliis colligens, quia subtractis multis, superari non vidit, usque ad ejus carnem, per tactum passionis sic exarsit, ut diceret: Pellem pro pelle, et cuncta quae habet homo, dabit pro anima sua. Alioquin mitte manum tuam, et tange os ejus et carnem, et tunc videbis quod in faciem benedicat tibi. Ac si aperte dicat: Moveri ex his, quae extra se sunt, negligit; sed tunc veraciter qui sit agnoscitur, si in se ipso quod doleat, experiatur. Haec per se Satan cum fieri appetit, non verbis, sed desideriis dixit. Haec per membra sua et verbis et desideriis intulit. Ipse quippe loquitur, cum juxta prophetae vocem ejus, sequaces dicunt: Mittamus lignum in panem ejus, et eradamus eum de terra viventium (Jerem. XI, 19). Lignum quippe in panem mittere, est configendo ejus corpori stipitem crucis adhibere; et vitam illius de terra viventium eradere se posse existimant, quem dum mortalem conspiciunt, finiri morte suspicantur.

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 6. — Dixit autem Dominus ad Satan: Ecce in manu tua est, verumtamen animam illius serva. 29. Satanae membra, omnes male viventes. Satanae manus, potestas ejus. Illi se tradens Dominus, eum sibi

servire cogit. — Conditorem omnium Satanae manui traditum quis vel disipiens credat? sed tamen edoctus veritate, quis nesciat quod ejusdem Satanae membra sunt omnes, qui ei perverse vivendo junguntur? Membrum quippe ejus Pilatus exstitit, qui, usque ad mortis extrema, venientem in redemptionem nostram Dominum non cognovit. Corpus ejus sacerdotum principes exstiterunt, qui Redemptorem mundi a mundo repellere, usque ad crucem persequendo, conati sunt. Cum ergo se pro nostra redemptione Dominus membrorum Satanae manibus tradidit, quid aliud quam ejusdem Satanae manum in se saevire permisit; ut unde ipse exterius occumberet, inde nos exterius interiusque liberaret? Si igitur Satanae manus, ejus potestas accipitur, ejus manum juxta carnem pertulit, cujus potestatem corporis usque ad sputa, colaphos, flagella, crucem lanceamque toleravit. Unde et Pilato, ejus videlicet corpori, ad passionem veniens dicit: Non haberes in me potestatem, nisi tibi data esset desuper (Joan. XIX, 11). Sed tamen hanc potestatem, quam contra se ei extrinsecus dederat, suis servire lucris intrinsecus 86 compellebat. Pilatus enim vel Satan, qui ejusdem Pilati caput exstiterat, sub potestate illius, super quem potestatem acceperat, tenebatur; quia et superior ipse disposuerat hoc quod inferius accedens a persecutore tolerabat; ut cum ex mala mente infidelium surgeret, utilitati tamen electorum omnium ipsa quoque crudelitas deserviret. Pie igitur disponebat intus quod semetipsum pati nequiter permittebat foris. Hinc est enim quod de illo in coena dicitur: Sciens Jesus, quia omnia dedit ei Pater in manus, et quia a Deo exivit, et ad Deum vadit, surgit a coena, et ponit vestimenta sua (Joan. XIII, 3). Ecce in manus persequentium iturus, sciebat quod in manu sua ipsos etiam persecutores acceperat. Qui enim omnia accepisse se noverat, constat quia et ipsos a quibus tenebatur tenebat; ut ipse in se ad usum pietatis intorqueret quidquid eorum contra se malitia permissa saeviret. Dicatur ergo ei: Ecce in manu tua est; quia ad feriendam carnem saeviens licentiam accepit, sed potestati illius nesciens deservivit..

VERS. 7. — Egressus igitur Satan a facie Domini, percussit Job ulcere pessimo, a planta pedis usque ad verticem. 32. Christus ab exordio mundi in suis percussus. — Nullus in hanc vitam electorum venit, qui non hujus hostis adversa sustinuit. Membra autem nostri Redemptoris exstiterunt, etiam qui ab ipso mundi exordio, dum pie vivunt, crudelia passi 87 sunt. An non hujus membrum Abel se esse perhibuit, qui ejus mortem, de quo scriptum est, Sicut agnus coram tondente se obmutescet, et non aperiet os suum (Isai. LIII, 7), non solum placens in sacrificio, sed etiam moriens tacendo signavit? Ab ipso itaque mundi exordio Redemptoris nostri corpus expugnare conatus est. A planta ergo pedis usque ad verticem vulnus intulit, quia a puris hominibus inchoans, usque ad ipsum caput Ecclesiae saeviendo pervenit. Bene autem dicitur:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 8. — Testa saniem radebat. 33. Testa, hoc est, carne sua e terra sumpta, saniem peccati rasit. — Quid enim aliud in manu Domini testa est, nisi caro ex nostrae substantiae luto sumpta? Etenim testa igne solidatur. Caro autem Domini eo ex passione sua robustior exstitit, quo per infirmitatem moriens, a morte sine infirmitate surrexit. Unde recte etiam per Prophetam dicitur: Exaruit velut testa virtus mea (Psal. XXI, 16). Sicut testa enim ejus virtus exaruit, qui susceptae carnis infirmitatem passionis suae igne roboravit. Quid vero per saniem, nisi peccatum, debet intelligi? Per carnem quippe et sanguinem solent carnis peccata designari. Unde per Psalmistam dicitur: Libera me de sanguinibus (Psal. L, 16). Sanies itaque putredo est sanguinis. Quid ergo accipimus saniem, nisi peccata carnis ex longa vetustate pejora? Vulnus itaque in saniem vertitur, cum neglecta culpa usu deterius gravatur. Mediator itaque Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus (I Tim. II, 5) corpus suum manibus persequentium tradens, saniem testa rasit, quia peccatum carne delevit. Venit enim, sicut scriptum est, in

similitudinem carnis peccati, ut de peccato damnaret peccatum (Rom. VIII, 3). Dumque hosti objicit innocentiam carnis suae, extersit contagia carnis nostrae; et ex qua nos captivos inimicus tenuit, per illam nos liberos expiavit; quia quam nos instrumentum fecimus culpae, haec nobis per Mediatorem versa est in arma justitiae. Testa ergo sanies raditur, cum carne culpa superatur. Bene autem subditur:

CAPUT XIX.

IBID. — Sedens in sterquilinio. 34. In sterquilinio sedit, quia infirma mundi elegit. — Non in foro, in quo lex perstrepit; non in aedificio, quod se culmine in alta sustollit; sed in sterquilinio residet, quia videlicet Redemptor humani generis ad carnem veniens, attestante Paulo, Infirma mundi elegit, ut confunderet fortia (I Cor. I, 27). An non quasi ruentibus aedificiis in sterquilinio residet, qui relictis Judaeis superbientibus, in ea quam dudum abjecerat gentilitate requiescit? Extra habitaculum reperitur in vulnere, qui in eo quod Judaeam adversantem pertulit, passionis dolorem a gente propria despectus sensit; Joanne attestante, qui ait: In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt (Joan. I, 11). Sed quomodo sedens in sterquilinio conquiescat, haec eadem de semetipsa Veritas dicat: Ait enim: Gaudium erit in coelo super uno peccatore poenitentiam agente, quam super nonaginta novem justis, qui non indigent poenitentia (Luc. XV, 10). Ecce dolens in sterquilinio sedet, qui post perpetratas culpas libenter corda poenitentium possidet. An non quasi quoddam sterquilinium sunt corda poenitentium, qui dum mala sua flendo considerant, quasi ante se stercora, sese abjiciendo coacervant? Percussus ergo Job montem non petiit, sed in sterquilinio resedit, quia ad passionem Redemptor veniens, alta superborum corda deseruit, et in afflictorum humilitate requievit. 88 Quod tamen de se et prius quam incarnaretur, indicavit, cum per Prophetam dixit: Ad quem respiciam, nisi ad humilem et quietum et trementem sermones meos? (Isai. LVI, 2, sec.

LXX.) 35. Christus in suis, et ab infidelibus, et a fidelibus carnalibus multa patitur. — Quis vero consideret, is qui tot pia hominibus intulit, quot ab hominibus perversa toleravit? Quis consideret, quanta nunc usque tolerat, etiam cum de coelo super corda fidelium regnat? Ipse quippe quotidie patitur omne quod a reprobis ejus electi lacerantur. Et quamvis caput hujus corporis, quod videlicet nos sumus, jam sese super omnia liberum exerit, reproborum tamen vulnera adhuc per suum, quod deorsum retinet, corpus sentit. Sed quid ista de infidelibus dicimus, cum in ipsa quoque Ecclesia multos carnalium, pravis moribus contra Redemptoris vitam pugnare videamus? Sunt namque nonnulli qui hunc, quia gladiis non possunt, perversis actibus insequuntur; quia dum sibi in Ecclesia vident deesse quod ambiunt, hostes bonorum fiunt; et non solum pravae semetipsos actioni inserunt, sed etiam justorum rectitudinem inflectere ad perversa moliuntur. Aeterna quippe intueri negligunt, et appetitui temporalium mentis pusillanimitate succumbunt; tantoque ab aeternis altius corruunt, quanto bona temporalia esse quasi sola suspicantur. His justorum simplicitas displicet, et cum occasionem perturbationis inveniunt, suam eos arripere duplicitatem suadent. Unde hoc quoque congruit apte quod subditur:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 9. — Dixit autem illi uxor sua: Adhuc permanens in simplicitate tua? Benedic Deo et morere. 36. Uxor Job male suadens, figura est carnalium in Ecclesiae sinu positorum. — Cujus enim speciem male suadens mulier tenuit, nisi quorumlibet carnalium in Ecclesiae sinu positorum, qui quo verbis professae fidei intus sunt, eo bonos incorrectis suis moribus pejus premunt. Nam minus fortasse nocuissent, si non eos sancta Ecclesia introrsus admittens usque ad fidei cubile reciperet, quos dum per professam fidem recipit, sibi procul dubio pene inevitabiles facit. Hinc est, quod premente turba, una Redemptorem nostrum mulier tetigit;

unde et isdem Redemptor noster protinus dicit: Quis me tetigit? Cui cum discipuli responderent: Turbae te comprimunt et affligunt, et dicis: Quis me tetigit? illico adjunxit: Tetigit me aliquis, nam et ego novi virtutem de me exisse (Luc. VIII, 44, 45, 46). Sed electi quique cum prava intus a carnalibus tolerant, quantae se formam rectitudinis ostendant, discamus ex verbis vulnerati et incolumis, sedentis et erecti, qui ait:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 10. — Locuta es quasi una ex stultis mulieribus. Si bona accepimus de manu Domini, mala quare non sustineamus? 39. Sancti ferientibus opponunt scutum patientiae, male suadentibus jacula intorquent doctrinae. — Sancti viri tribulationum bello deprehensi, cum uno eodemque tempore alios ferientes, alios suadentes ferunt, illis opponunt scutum patientiae, istis intorquent jacula doctrinae; atque ad utrumque pugnandi modum mira virtutis arte se erigunt; quatenus et perversa intus sapienter doceant, et foras fortiter adversa contemnant; hos docentes corrigant, illos tolerantes premant. Insurgentes namque hostes patiendo despiciunt, infirmantes vero cives compatiendo ad salutem reducunt: illis resistunt, ne et alios subtrahant; istis metuunt, ne vitam rectitudinis funditus perdant.. IBID. ET VERS. 11. — In omnibus his non peccavit Job labiis suis; neque stultum aliquid contra Deum locutus est. Igitur audientes tres amici Job omne malum, quod accidisset ei, venerunt singuli de loco suo: Eliphaz Themanites, et Baldad Suhites, et Sophar Naamathites. 42. In amicis Job adumbrati haeretici. — In praefatione hujus operis diximus, quia amici beati Job, etsi bona ad eum intentione conveniunt, haereticorum tamen idcirco speciem tenent, quia ad culpam indiscrete loquendo dilabuntur. 91 Unde et illis ab eodem beato Job dicitur: Disputare cum Deo cupio, prius vos ostendens fabricatores mendacii, et cultores perversorum dogmatum. [Rec. XIII]. Sancta itaque Ecclesia omni hoc tempore peregrinationis suae in

afflictione constituta, cum vulnera sustinet, cum membrorum suorum lapsus dolet, insuper alios sub Christi nomine tolerat hostes Christi. Ad augmentum namque doloris ejus, etiam haeretici in contentione conveniunt, eamque quasi quibusdam jaculis, irrationabilibus verbis transfigunt. 43. Locus unde venerunt superbia. — Bene autem dicitur: Venerunt de loco suo. Haereticorum quippe locus ipsa superbia est; quia nisi prius in corde intumescerent, ad pravae assertionis certamina non venirent. Ita namque malorum locus superbia, sicut est e contra humilitas locus bonorum. De quo per Salomonem dicitur: Si spiritus potestatem habentis ascenderit super te, locum tuum ne dimiseris (Ephes. X, 4). Ac si aperte dicat: Si tentatoris spiritum contra te in aliquo praevalere consideras, humilitatem poenitentiae non relinquas. Qui quia locum nostrum humilitatem poenitentiae dixerit, verbis sequentibus ostendit, dicens: Quia curatio cessare faciet peccata maxima (Ibid.). Quid est enim aliud humilitas lamenti, nisi medicina peccati? Haeretici igitur de loco suo veniunt, quia contra sanctam Ecclesiam ex superbia moventur. 44. Amicorum Job nomina actionem signant haereticorum. — Quorum perversa quoque actio ex ipsa suorum nominum interpretatione colligitur. Dicuntur enim, Eliphaz, Baldad, Sophar; et, sicut superius diximus, Eliphaz interpretatus dicitur, Dei contemptus. Nisi enim Deum contemnerent, nequaquam de eo perversa sentirent. Baldad autem interpretatur, vetustas sola. Dum enim vere vinci refugiunt, et perverso studio esse victores quaerunt, novae vitae conversationem negligunt; et ex sola vetustate est quod intendunt, Sophar vero speculam dissipans. Hi etenim, qui in sancta Ecclesia siti sunt, Redemptoris sui mysteria fide vera humiliter contemplantur; sed dum haeretici cum falsis allegationibus veniunt, speculam dissipant, quia eorum mentes, quos ad se attrahunt, ab intentione rectae contemplationis inclinant.. IBID. — Scissisque vestibus, sparserunt pulverem super caput suum in coelum. 48. Multas in partes scinduntur. — Sicut vestimenta Ecclesiae cunctos fideles accipimus; unde et

per prophetam dicitur: Omnibus his velut ornamento vestieris; ita haereticorum vestes sunt omnes, qui eis concorditer inhaerentes, illorum erroribus involvuntur. Habent vero haeretici hoc proprium, quod in eo gradu in quo de Ecclesia exeunt, diu stare non possunt; sed ad deteriora quotidie ruunt, et sentiendo pejora, in multis se partibus scindunt, atque a semetipsis plerumque longius confusionis suae altercatione dividuntur. Quia ergo hos quos suae perfidiae adjungunt, 93 adhuc in multa divisione dilaniant, dicatur recte quod amici qui veniunt vestes rumpant. Ruptis autem vestibus corpus ostenditur, quia saepe scissis sequacibus, malitia eorum cogitationis aperitur; ut discordia dolos patefaciat, quos gravis prius concordiae culpa claudebat. 49. Terrena de verbis coelestibus sapiunt. — Pulverem vero in coelum super capita spargunt. Quid per pulverem, nisi terrena intelligentia? quid per caput, nisi hoc, quod principale nostrum est, mens videlicet, designatur? Quid per coelum, nisi praeceptum supernae locutionis exprimitur? Pulverem ergo super caput in coelum spargere, est saeculari intellectu mentem corrumpere, et de verbis coelestibus terrena sentire. Divina autem verba plus discutiunt plerumque, quam capiunt. Super capita igitur pulvorem spargunt, quia in praeceptis Dei per terrenam intelligentiam ultra suarum mentium vires enituntur.

CAPUT XXVI.

Vers. 13. — Sederuntque cum eo in terra septem diebus et septem noctibus. 50. Per fictam humilitatem persuadere tentant superba. — In die quae videmus agnoscimus; in nocte autem, aut caecitate nil cernimus, aut dubietate caligamus. Per diem itaque intelligentia, per noctem vero ignorantia designatur. Septenario autem numero summa universitatis exprimitur. Unde et non amplius, quam diebus septem, omne hoc tempus transitorium consummatur. Quid est ergo, quod amici beati Job consedere ei septem diebus et septem noctibus referuntur, nisi quod haeretici, vel in his

in quibus verum lumen intelligunt, vel in his in quibus ignorantiae tenebras patiuntur, quasi infirmanti sanctae Ecclesiae se condescendere simulant, eique sub blandimentorum specie, dolos deceptionis parant? Et quamvis vel in his quae intelligunt, vel in his quae intelligere non possunt, elationis typo turgidi, magnos se apud semetipsos existimant, nonnunquam tamen sanctae Ecclesiae specie tenus inclinant; et dum verba molliunt, virus infundunt. In terra ergo consedere, est aliquid de imagine humilitatis ostendere; ut dum humilia exhibent, persuadeant superba quae docent.. VERS. 8. — Quia testa saniem radebat. 58. Quia testa saniem radere est se judicando fragilitatemque suam contemplando peccatum purgare. — Quid enim per testam, nisi vigor districtionis; quid per saniem, nisi fluxus illicitae cogitationis accipitur? Percussi ergo testa saniem radimus, cum post pollutiones cogitationis illicitae, nosmetipsos aspere dijudicando mundamus. Potest etiam testa fragilitas mortalitatis intelligi. Testa ergo saniem mundare, est mortalitatis cursum fragilitatemque pensare, et putredinem miserae delectationis abstergere. Nam dum quisque considerat, quam citius caro ad pulverem redeat, festine superat hoc, quod se de carne intus turpiter impugnat. Cum ergo ex tentatione prava mentem cogitatio influit, quasi ex vulnere sanies decurrit. Sed citius sanies tergitur, si in consideratione nostra fragilitas quasi in manu testa teneatur. 59. Cogitationes pravae non sunt spernendae. — Neque enim parvi pendenda sunt quae, quamvis usque ad effectum non pertrahunt, tamen illicite in mente versantur. Hinc est quod quasi a vulneribus Redemptor noster saniem radere venerat, cum dicebat: Audistis quia dictum est antiquis: Non moechaberis. Ego autem dico vobis quod si quis viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam moechatus est eam in corde suo (Matth. V, 27). Sanies itaque tergitur, cum culpa non solum ab opere, sed etiam a cogitatione resecatur. Hinc est, quod Jerobaal cum a paleis frumenta excuteret, angelum vidit, ad cujus imperium protinus haedum coxit, quem

super petram posuit, et jus carnium desuper effudit; quae angelus virga tetigit, eaque ignis exiens de petra consumpsit (Jud. VI, 11, 12, 19). Quid est enim frumentum virga caedere, nisi rectitudine judicii, a vitiorum paleis virtutum grana separare? Sed haec agentibus angelus apparet, quia tanto magis Dominus interiora denuntiat, quanto se studiosius homines ab exterioribus purgant. Qui occidi haedum praecipit, id est, omnem appetitum nostrae carnis immolari, carnesque super petram poni, et jus carnium desuper fundi. Quem alium signat petra, nisi eum, de quo per Paulum dicitur: Petra autem erat Christus (I Cor. X, 4). Carnes ergo super petram ponimus, cum corpus nostrum in Christi imitatione cruciamus. Jus etiam carnium desuper fundit, qui in conversatione Christi ipsas a se etiam carnales cogitationes exinanit. Quasi enim jus ex carne liquida in petram funditur, quando mens et a cogitationum carnalium fluxu vacuatur. Quae tamen mox angelus 97 virga tangit, quia intentionem nostram nequaquam potestas divini adjutorii deserit. De petra autem ignis exit, et jus carnesque consumit, quia afflatus a Redemptore spiritus, tanta cor nostrum flamma compunctionis concremat, ut omne quod in eo est illicitum et operis et cogitationis exurat. Quod ergo illic est jus in petram fundere, hoc est hic saniem testa mundare. Perfecta enim mens solerter invigilat, ut non solum perversa agere renuat, sed omne etiam quod in se per cogitationes turpiter liquatur tergat. Sed saepe de ipsa victoria bellum oritur, ut cum immunda cogitatio vincitur, victoris animus elatione pulsetur. Sic ergo mentem necesse est per munditiam erigi, ut tamen sollicite debeat in humilitate substerni. Unde et cum de sancto viro diceretur, Testa saniem radebat, protinus apte subjungitur,

CAPUT XXXI.

IBID. — Sedens in sterquilinio. 60. Tentationis victor humilitatem servet. Elatio parva agentium, et magna de se sentientium. Elatio iniquorum, ubi

alii peccant in quibus ipsi non peccent. — In sterquilinio quippe sedere, est vilia de se quempiam et abjecta sentire. In sterquilinio nobis sedere, est ad ea quae illicite gessimus mentis oculos poenitendo reducere; ut cum ante nos peccatorum stercora cernimus, omne quod in animo de elatione surgit inclinemus. In sterquilinio sedet, qui infirmitatem suam sollicitus respicit, et sese de bonis, quae per gratiam perceperit, non extollit. An non apud se in sterquilinio Abraham sederat, qui dicebat: Loquar ad Dominum meum, cum sim pulvis et cinis (Genes. XVIII, 27)? Aperte enim cernimus, in quo se apud se loco posuerat, qui pulverem se ac cinerem, etiam dum cum Deo loqueretur, aestimabat. Si igitur ita se despicit, qui usque ad honorem divinae collocutionis ascendit, sollicita intentione pensandum est qua poena illi feriendi sunt qui et ad summa non proficiunt, et tamen de minimis extolluntur. Nam sunt nonnulli, qui cum parva agunt, de semetipsis magna sentiunt: in altum mentem sublevant, et praeire se caeteros virtutum meritis putant. Hi nimirum apud se introrsus humilitatis sterquilinium deserunt, et elationis fastigia ascendunt; illum videlicet imitantes, qui primus se apud se extulit, sed elevando prostravit; illum imitantes, qui accepta conditionis dignitate contentus non fuit, dicens: In coelum conscendam, super astra coeli exaltabo solium meum (Isai. XIV, 13). Unde et ei male conjuncta Babylonia, id est, confusa multitudo peccantium, dicit: Sedeo regina, et vidua non sum (Isai. XLVII, 8, sec. LXX.) Quisquis ergo introrsus intumescit, in altum se apud semetipsum posuit. Sed eo se gravius in infimis deprimit, quo de se infima veraciter sentire contemnit. Sunt vero nonnulli qui nihil quidem virtutis agere student, sed tamen cum alios peccare conspiciunt, justos se in eorum comparatione suspicantur. Neque enim corda omnium una vel similis culpa transfigit. Hunc namque superbia illaqueat, illum forsitan ira supplantat, hunc autem avaritia cruciat, illum vero luxuria inflammat. Et plerumque contingit ut is quem superbia deprimit, alium respiciat qualiter ira succendat; et quia se ira non citius

instigat, meliorem iracundo jam reputat, atque apud semetipsum quasi de justitia extollitur, quia pensare negligit vitium quo gravius tenetur. Plerumque contingit ut is quem avaritia sauciat, alium in luxuriae voragine mersum cernat; et quia se a pollutione carnali alienum respicit, 98 quibus ipse sordibus spiritalis vitii intrinsecus polluitur, non attendit; dumque in alio pensat malum quod ipse non habet, in se negligit considerare quod habet: sicque fit, ut dum ad aliena dijudicanda mens ducitur, proprii judicii lumine privetur; et eo durius contra aliena superbiat, quo sua negligentius ignorat.. VERS. 10. — Locuta es quasi una ex stultis mulieribus. Si bona accepimus de manu Domini, mala quare non sustineamus? 64. Contra aspera aut blanda quomodo resistendum. — Dignum quippe est ut sancta mens spiritali correptione comprimat, quidquid apud se carnale insolenter immurmurat; ne caro aut loquens aspera, ad impatientiam illam pertrahat, aut loquens blanda, ad libidinis fluxa dissolvat. Censura igitur virilis, illicitae cogitationis suggestionem redarguens, dissolutam turpitudinis mollitiem reprimat, dicens: Locuta es quasi una ex stultis mulieribus. Et rursum consideratio munerum 99 cogitationis asperae impatientiam refrenet, dicens: Si bona accepimus de manu Domini, mala quare non sustineamus? Quisquis autem subigere vitia appetit, et ad aeterna internae retributionis culmina, verae intentionis gressibus tendit, quo magis vallari se vitiorum bello undique conspicit, eo se virtutum armis robustius accingit; et tanto minus jacula metuit, quanto contra haec venientia fortiter pectus munit. 65. Vitia se sub virtutum specie tegunt. — Sed plerumque dum contra hoc tentationum bellum fulciri magnis virtutibus nitimur, quaedam se nobis vitia sub specie virtutum tegunt, et quasi blanda ad nos facie veniunt; sed cujus adversitatis sint, discussa sentiuntur. Unde et amici beati Job quasi pro consolatione conveniunt, sed in contumelias erumpunt; quia insidiantia vitia virtutum faciem sumunt, sed hostili invectione nos feriunt. Nam saepe immoderata ira, justitia; et saepe dissoluta remissio, misericordia vult

videri. Saepe incautus timor humilitas; saepe effrenata superbia appetit libertas apparere. Ad consolandum ergo amici veniunt, sed ad increpationis verba dilabuntur; quia nimirum vitia virtutum specie palliata, blanda quidem superficie inchoant, sed aspera nos contrarietate perturbant. Bene autem dicitur:

CAPUT XXXIV.

VERS. 11. — Condixerant enim sibi, ut pariter venientes visitarent eum. 66. Foedus adversum nos ineunt. — Vitia quippe sibi sub virtutum praetextu condicunt, quia sunt quaedam quae adversum nos inter se quadam convenientia conjunguntur, sicut superbia et ira, remissio et timor. Vicina namque est ira superbiae, remissio timori. Condicendo ergo veniunt, quae contra nos sibi ex quadam pravitatis cognatione sociantur. Sed si aerumnam nostrae captivitatis agnoscimus, si ex amore aeternae patriae in intimis dolemus, vitia, quae male laetis surrepunt, bene tristibus praevalere non possunt. Unde et bene subditur:

CAPUT XXXV.

VERS. 12. — Cumque elevassent procul oculos suos, non agnoverunt eum. 67. Afflictio fugat vitia. — Afflictos enim nos vitia minime cognoscunt, quia triste cor mox ut pulsaverint, reprobata resiliunt; et quae nos laetos quasi noverant, quia penetrabant, moerentes cognoscere nequeunt, quia ipso nostro rigore franguntur. Sed antiquus hostis, quo in eis fortiter deprehendi se conspicit, eo illa sub virtutum imagine altius abscondit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXXVI.

IBID. — Et exclamantes ploraverunt, scissisque vestibus sparserunt pulverem super caput suum in coelum, et sederunt cum eo in terra septem

diebus et septem noctibus. 68. Nisi sub virtutum specie illudant. — Signatur enim pietas per ploratum, discretio per scissionem vestium, affectus operum per 100 pulverem capitum, humilitas per sessionem. Aliquando enim pium quid hostis insidians simulat, ut ad crudelitatis terminum deducat; sicut est, cum plecti per disciplinam culpam prohibet, quatenus quae hic non reprimitur, gehennae igne feriatur. Aliquando discretionis imaginem oculis objicit, et ad indiscretionis laqueos perducit; sicut est cum impulsu ejus pro infirmitate nobis plus alimentorum quasi discrete concedimus, sed indiscrete contra nos bella carnis excitamus. Aliquando affectum simulat bonorum operum, sed per hunc inquietudinem irrogat laborum; sicut est cum quis quiescere non valet, et quasi de otio judicari timet. Aliquando imaginem humilitatis ostentat, ut affectum utilitatis subtrahat; sicut est cum quosdam, plusquam sunt infirmos atque inutiles sibimetipsis asserit, ut dum se nimis indignos considerant, res in quibus prodesse proximis poterant, ministrare pertimescant. 69. Compunctio contra vitia munit. — Sed haec vitia quae sub virtutum specie antiquus hostis occultat, valde subtiliter manus compunctionis examinat. Qui enim veraciter intus dolet, quae agenda foras, quae non agenda sint, fortiter praevidet. Si enim nos virtus compunctionis in intimis afficit, omnis strepitus pravae suggestionis obmutescit. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 13. — Et nemo loquebatur ei verbum: videbant enim dolorem esse vehementem. 70. Qui vitia ad virtutis usum possunt famulari. — Si enim cor veraciter dolet, linguam contra nos vitia non habent. Nam cum plene vita rectitudinis quaeritur, supervacua suggestio pravitatis obturatur. Saepe autem si forti nos studio contra vitiorum incentiva stringimus, ipsa etiam vitia ad usum virtutis immutamus. Nonnullos namque ira possidet: sed hanc, dum rationi subjiciunt, in sancti zeli ministerium vertunt. Nonnullos

superbia erigit; sed dum divinae formidini animum inclinant, hanc ad defensionem justitiae in vocem liberae auctoritatis immutant. Nonnullos fortitudo carnis illecebrat; sed dum exercendis piis operibus corpus subdunt, unde iniquitatis stimulum passi sunt, inde pietatis lucra mercantur. Unde et bene isdem beatus Job post multa certamina hostiam pro amicis immolat. Quos enim per contentionem diu hostes pertulit, quandoque per sacrificium cives reddit; quia dum vitiosas quasque cogitationes subigendo in virtutes vertimus, tentationum adversa studia per intentionis hostiam, quasi ad amica corda permutamus. Haec nos in tribus voluminibus tripliciter disseruisse sufficiat. In ipso namque operis hujus exordio velut in molem nasciturae arboris, linguae radicem fiximus, ut expositionis ramos postmodum, prout singula expetunt loca, producamus.

LIBER QUARTUS.

In quo Gregorius paucis praefatus Scripturae litteram secum aliquando pugnare, et imprecationes Job sicut Jeremiae ac David, secundum id quod sonant, sine absurditate intelligi non posse, verba Job ab initio capitis tertii, ad versum vigesimum historice, mystice ac moraliter exponit.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

PRAEFATIO. 101 Scripturae littera aliquando sibi contradicit. Scripturae sensus ab humilibus assiduitate legendi penetratur. — Qui textum considerat, et sensum sacrae locutionis ignorat, non tam se eruditione instruit, quam ambiguitate confundit, quia nonnunquam sibi litterae verba contradicunt; sed dum a semetipsis per cotrarietatem dissident, lectorem ad intelligentiam veritatis mittunt. Quid enim est quod Salomon ait: Melius est comedere et bibere (Eccle. II, 24); et non longe post subjicit: Melius est ire ad domum luctus, quam ad domum convivii (Eccle. VII, 3)? Cur luctum convivio praetulit, qui prius esum potumque laudavit? Si enim per electionem bonum est comedere et bibere, procul dubio esse melius debet ad domum gaudii, quam ad domum lamenti properare. Hinc est quod iterum dicit: Laetare, juvenis, in adolescentia tua (Eccle. XI, 9). Et paulo post subjicit: Adolescentia enim et voluptas vana sunt (Ibid., 10). Quid est hoc quod vel prius reprehendenda praecipit, vel post praecepta reprehendit, nisi quod ipsis litterae verbis innuit, ut qui difficultatem exterius patitur, veritatis intelligentiam consideret, quam sequatur? quae nimirum veritatis intelligentia cum per cordis humilitatem quaeritur, legendi assiduitate penetratur. Sicut enim ignotorum hominum facies cernimus, et corda nescimus, sed si familiari eis locutione conjungimur, usu colloquii eorum etiam cogitationes indagamus; ita cum in sacro eloquio sola historia aspicitur, nihil aliud quam facies videtur; sed si huic assiduo usu

conjungimur, ejus nimirum mentem quasi ex collocutionis familiaritate penetramus. Dum enim alia ex aliis colligimus, facile in ejus verbis agnoscimus, aliud esse quod intimant, aliud quod sonant. Tanto autem quisque notitiae illius extraneus redditur, quanto in sola ejus superficie ligatur.

CAPUT II.

Imprecationes Job intelligi ad litteram sine absurditate nequeunt. — Ecce enim quod beatus Job diei suo maledixisse describitur dicens: Pereat dies in qua natus sum, et nox in qua dictum est: Conceptus est homo, si superficie tenus attenditur, quid his verbis reprehensibilius invenitur? Quis autem nesciat, diem in quo natus est nequaquam tunc stare potuisse? Modus quippe est temporis, ut statum non habeat mansionis. Quia enim per ventura tendit ad esse, semper ex praeteritis festinat non esse. Cur ergo vir tantus malediceret rei, quam nequaquam subsistere non ignoraret? Sed fortasse aliquis dicat, quod ex eo pondus virtutis ejus aspicitur, quia tribulatione commotus, illi rei maledictum 102 irrogat quae constat quod minime subsistat. Sed hoc citius perspecta ratio destruit, quia si subsistebat res cui malediceret, perniciosum maledictum intulit: si autem non subsistebat, otiosum. Quisquis vero ejus spiritu plenus est, qui ait: Omne verbum otiosum, quod locuti fuerint homines, rationem reddent de eo in die judicii (Matth. XII, 36), ita otiosa admittere, sicut etiam perniciosa formidat. Cui adhuc sententiae adjungitur: Dies ille vertatur in tenebras, non requirat eum Deus desuper, et non sit in recordatione, et non illustret lumine: obscurent eum tenebrae et umbra mortis, occupet eum caligo, et involvatur amaritudine. Noctem illam tenebrosus turbo possideat, sit nox illa solitaria, nec laude digna; exspectet lucem, et non videat, nec ortum surgentis aurorae. Dies qui elapsus cursu temporis scitur, cur verti in tenebras dicitur? Et cum constaret quia non subsisteret, cur optatur ut eum umbra mortis

obscuret; vel quae caligo occupat, quae implicatio amaritudinis involvit; aut quis noctem tenebrosus turbo possidet, quam nullus status tenet? Aut quomodo optatur fieri solitaria, quae transeundo jam fuerat nulla? Aut lucem quomodo exspectat, quae et sensu caret, et in proprio statu non permanet? Quibus adhuc verbis subjicit:

CAPUT III.

Quare non in vulva mortuus sum, egressus ex utero non statim perii? Quare exceptus genibus? Cur lactatus uberibus? Nunc enim dormiens silerem, et somno meo requiescerem. Argumenti propositi confirmatio. Qui liberarentur homines ab originali peccato, ante institutum baptismum. — Nunquid si egressus ex utero statim periisset, retributionis meritum ex hac ipsa perditione conciperet? Nunquid aeterna requie abortivi perfruuntur? Quisquis enim regenerationis unda non solvitur, reatu primi vinculi ligatus tenetur. Quod vero (De cons., dist. 4, c, 5, Quod autem) apud nos valet aqua baptismatis, hoc egit apud veteres vel pro parvulis sola fides, vel pro majoribus virtus sacrificii, vel pro his qui ex Abrahae stirpe prodierant, mysterium circumcisionis. Nam quia unusquisque cum primi parentis culpa concipitur, Propheta testatur, dicens: Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum (Psal. L, 7). Et quia is quem salutis unda non diluit, originalis culpae supplicia non amittit, aperte per semetipsam Veritas perhibet, dicens: Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu sancto, non habebit vitam aeternam (Joan. III, 5). Quid est ergo quod in vulva se mortuum fuisse desiderat, et potuisse se quiescere ejusdem mortis beneficiis sperat, dum constet quod nequaquam eum requies vitae susciperet, si a reatu illum originalis culpae 103 nequaquam divinae cognitionis sacramenta liberassent? Qui adhuc cum quibus quiescere potuisset, adjungit dicens: Cum regibus et consulibus terrae, qui aedificant sibi solitudines. Quis ignoret quod reges terrae ac consules eo a solitudine longe sunt, quo innumeris obsequentium cuncis

constipantur? Vel quam difficile hi ad requiem tendunt, qui tam duris rationum multiplicium nexibus astringuntur? Scriptura attestante, quae ait: Judicium durissimum in his qui praesunt fiet (Sap. VI, 6). Unde in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Cui multum datum est, multum quaeretur ab eo (Luc. XII, 48). Qui adhuc quos in eadem requie socios habuisset, insinuat dicens: Aut cum principibus, qui possident aurum, et replent domos suas argento. Rarum valde est ut qui aurum possident, ad requiem tendant, dum per semetipsam Veritas dicat: Difficile, qui pecunias habent, intrabunt in regnum coelorum (Matth. XIX, 24). Nam qui hic multiplicandis divitiis inhiant, quae alterius vitae gaudia sperant? Quod tamen, ut Redemptor noster valde rarum, et ex solo divino miraculo evenire posse monstraret: Apud homines, inquit, hoc impossibile est, apud Deum autem possibilia omnia sunt. Quia igitur verba haec in superficie a ratione discordant, ipsa jam littera indicat, quod in eis sanctus vir juxta litteram nihil dicat.

CAPUT IV.

Nec David nec Jeremiae imprecationes ad litteram accipiendae. — Sed si prius in sacro eloquio alia maledicta discutimus, hoc quod beati Job ore prolatum est, subtilius indagamus. Quid est enim, quod David, qui retribuentibus sibi mala non reddidit, cum Saul et Jonathas bello occumberent, Gelboe montibus maledicit, dicens: Montes Gelboe, nec ros nec pluvia veniat super vos, neque sint agri primitiarum, quia ibi abjectus est clypeus Saul, quasi non esset unctus oleo (II Reg. I, 21)? Quid est quod Jeremias, cum praedicationem suam cerneret audientium difficultate praepediri, maledicit dicens: Maledictus vir qui annuntiavit patri meo, dicens: Natus est tibi puer masculus (Jerem. XX, 15)? Quid ergo montes Gelboe, Saul moriente deliquerunt, quatenus in eis nec ros nec pluvia caderet, et ab omni eos viriditatis germine sententiae sermo siccaret? Sed quia Gelboe interpretatur decursus, per Saul autem unctum et mortuum,

mors nostri Mediatoris exprimitur; non immerito per Gelboe montes superba Judaeorum corda signantur, quae dum in hujus mundi desideriis defluunt, in Christi, id est uncti, se morte miscuerunt. Et quia in eis unctus rex corporaliter moritur, ipsi ab omni gratiae rore siccantur. De quibus et bene dicitur: Ut agri primitiarum esse non possint. Superbae quippe Hebraeorum mentes primitivos fructus non ferunt, quia in Redemptoris adventu ex parte maxima in perfidia remanentes, primordia fidei sequi noluerunt. Sancta namque Ecclesia in primitiis suis multitudine gentium fecundata, vix in mundi fine Judaeos, quos invenerit, suscipiet; et extrema colligens, eos quasi reliquias frugum ponet. De quibus nimirum reliquiis Isaias dicit: Si fuerit numerus filiorum Israel sicut arena maris, reliquiae salvae fient (Isaiae X, 22, sec. LXX; Rom. IX, 27). Possunt tamen idcirco Gelboe montes ore prophetae maledici, ut dum fructus exarescente terra non oritur, possessores terrae sterilitatis damno feriantur, quatenus ipsi maledictionis sententiam 104 acciperent, qui apud se mortem regis suscipere iniquitate sua exigente meruissent. Sed quid est quod a Propheta maledictionis sententiam vir ille suscepit, qui nativitatem illius patri nuntiavit? Hoc nimirum tanto intrinsecus majori mysterio plenum est, quanto extrinsecus humana ratione vacuum. Nam si quid exterius rationabile fortasse sonuisset, nequaquam nos ad studium interioris intellectus accenderet. Eo ergo nobis plenius aliquid intus innuit, quo foris rationabile nihil ostendit. Si enim ex matris suae utero hoc in mundo propheta affligendus prodiit, nativitatis ejus nuntius quid deliquit? Sed quid persona prophetae fluctuantis, nisi per poenae meritum veniens humani generis mutabilitas designatur? Et quid per patrem illius, nisi iste de quo nascimur mundus exprimitur? Et quis est ille vir qui nativitatem nostram patri annuntiat, nisi antiquus hostis, qui cum nos in cogitationibus fluctuare considerat, malorum mentes, qui ex auctoritate hujus mundi praeeminent, ad persuasionem nostrae deceptionis instigat; cumque nos agere infirma

conspexerit, ea quasi fortia favoribus extollit, et quasi natos masculos loquitur, cum corruptores veritatis per mendacium nos exstitisse gratulatur? Patri ergo masculum natum denuntiat, quando huic mundo eum, quem persuaserit, factum innocentiae corruptorem demonstrat. Nam cum cuilibet peccanti ac superbienti dicitur, Fecisti sicut vir, quid aliud quam natus masculus in mundo perhibetur? Jure itaque vir, qui masculum natum nuntiat, maledicitur, quia ipso ejus nuntio reprobum gaudium nostri corruptoris indicatur. His ergo Scripturae sacrae maledictionibus discimus quid apud beatum Job in voce maledictionis inquiramus, ne quem Deus post vulnera et verba remunerat, lector verba ejus redarguere non intelligens praesumat. Quia igitur utcunque haec quae in praefatione fuerant exquirenda distinximus, verba jam historiae disserentes exsequamur.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

CAP. III. VERS. 1-3. — Post haec aperuit Job os suum, et maledixit diei suo, dicens: Pereat dies in qua natus sum. 1. HISTORICUS ET MYSTICUS SENSUS. — Job ex impatientia maledictum non protulit. — Non est neglecte disserendum quod dicitur, Aperuit os suum. Scriptura enim sacra ex his quae tenuiter praemittit, reverenter exspectanda indicat quae subjungit. Sicut enim clausa vascula quid intus habeant ignoramus, aperto vero ore vasculorum quid intrinsecus contineatur agnoscimus; ita sanctorum corda, quae clauso ore occulta sunt, aperto ore deteguntur; et cum cogitationes detegunt, os aperire referuntur, ut intenta mente, quasi apertis vasculis, quid intus contineant festinemus cognoscere, ac nosmetipsos eorum intimo odore recreare. Unde et sublimia praecepta Domino in monte dicturo praemittitur: Aperiens os suum dixit (Matth. V, 2); quamvis illic et hoc accipi debeat, quia tunc os suum in praeceptis aperuit, in quibus dudum aperuerat ora prophetarum. Valde autem solerter intuendum est quod dicitur, Post haec, ut nimirum rei virtus quae agitur veraciter ex tempore sentiatur.

Prius enim vastitas rerum, exstinctio pignorum, 105 dolor vulnerum, persuasio conjugis, adventus amicorum describitur, qui scidisse vestes, exclamantesque flevisse, pulvere capita conspersisse, et diu considentes in terra tacuisse memorantur, ac deinde subjungitur: Post haec aperuit Job os suum, et maledixit diei suo; ut ipso videlicet narrationis ordine perpendatur quia nequaquam maledictum per impatientiam protulit, qui ad maledictionis vocem amicis adhuc tacentibus erupit. Si enim ira motus malediceret, audito damno substantiae, cognita morte filiorum, eum procul dubio ad maledictionem dolor excitaret. Sed quid tunc dixit audivimus. Ait namque: Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit (Job. I, 21). Rursum, si ira motus malediceret saltem percussus in corpore, vel male suasus a conjuge, maledictum inferre potuisset. Sed quid tunc respondit agnovimus. Ait namque: Locuta es quasi una ex stultis mulieribus. Si bona accepimus de manu Domini, mala quare non sustineamus? (Job. II, 10.) Post haec vero describitur, quia amici veniunt, flent, consident, tacent; moxque subjungitur hoc, quod diei suo maledixisse perhibetur. Nimis itaque incongruum est ut suspicemur eum, nullo instigante, nullo pulsante, ex impatientia ad vocem maledictionis erumpere, quem nimirum novimus inter damna rerum mortemque filiorum, inter vulnera corporis, inter verba male suadentis uxoris, magna creatori praeconia humili mente reddidisse. Patefecit ergo qua mente haec quietus dixerit, qui tot Dei laudes etiam percussus emanavit. Neque enim postmodum non percussus superbire potuit, quem et in percussione dolor humilem ostendit. Sed cum certo novimus quod maledictum sacra Scriptura prohibet, cur recte aliquando fieri dicimus quod vitari eodem sacro eloquio non ignoramus? Cum vero sancti viri maledictionis sententiam proferunt (24, q. 3, can. 12, Cum sancti), non ad hanc ex voto ultionis, sed ex justitiae examine erumpunt. Intus enim subtile Dei judicium aspiciunt, et mala foras exsurgentia, quia maledicto debeant ferire, cognoscunt; et eo in maledicto non peccant, quo ab interno judicio

non discordant. Hinc est quod Petrus in offerentem sibi pecuniam Simonem, sententiam maledictionis intorsit, dicens: Pecunia tua tecum sit in perditionem (Act. VIII, 20). Qui enim non ait, est; sed sit, non indicativo, sed optativo modo se haec dixisse 106 signavit. Hinc Elias duobus quinquagenariis ad se venientibus dixit: Si homo Dei sum, descendat ignis de coelo, et consumat vos (IV Reg. I, 10). Quorum utrorumque sententia quanta veritatis ratione convaluit, terminus causae monstravit. Nam et Simon aeterna perditione interiit, et duos quinquagenarios desuper veniens flamma consumpsit. Virtus ergo subsequens testificatur, qua mente maledictionis sententia promitur. Cum enim et maledicentis innocentia permanet, et tamen eum qui maledicitur, usque ad interitum maledictio absorbet, ex utriusque partis fine colligitur, quia ab uno et intimo judice in reum sententia sumpta jaculatur. 3. Maledictio Job ex rectitudine judicis. — Igitur si subtiliter beati Job verba pensamus, non est ejus maledictio ex malitia delinquentis, sed ex rectitudine judicis; non est ira commoti, sed doctrina tranquilli. Qui enim tam recta maledicens intulit, non perturbationis vitio succubuit, sed doctrinae magisterium impendit. Vidit quippe amicos cum clamore flere, vidit vestes scindere, vidit pulvere capita conspersisse, vidit consideratione suae percussionis obmutescere; et vir sanctus inspexit, quia hi qui prospera temporalia requirebant, ex comparatione mentis propriae eum temporali fractum adversitate crediderant. Perspexit quod transitoria afflictione percussum desperate non flerent, nisi ipsi desperatam mentem ab spe incolumitatis internae subtraherent; et dum erumpit foras in vocem doloris, vulneratis intus ostendit virtutem medicaminis, dicens: Pereat dies in qua natus sum. Dum igitur dies ut pereat optatur, et paulo post involvendus amaritudine dicitur; quem credamus, quod vir sanctus diei nomine exprimere voluit, nisi apostatam spiritum, qui in vivendi essentia etiam moriendo subsistit? quem perditio vitae non subtrahit, quia in aeterno dolore positum, servando mors

immortalis exstinguit: qui jam a beatitudinis gloria dejectus, adhuc optatur ut pereat, ut videlicet retrusus dignis suppliciis, etiam tentandi licentiam amittat.. IBID. — Non requirat eum Deus desuper, et non illustret lumine. 8. Cur humana natura reparata, non angelica. — Omnipotens Deus sicut ex nihilo bona facere potuit, ita, cum voluit, per incarnationis suae mysterium etiam perdita bona reparavit. Duas vero ad intelligendum se creaturas fecerat, angelicam videlicet, et humanam: utramque vero superbia perculit, atque ab statu ingenitae rectitudinis fregit. Sed una tegmen carnis habuit, alia vero nihil infirmum de carne gestavit. Angelus namque solummodo spiritus, homo vero et spiritus est et caro. Misertus ergo creator ut redimeret, illam ad se debuit reducere, quam in perpetratione culpae ex infirmitate aliquid constat habuisse; et eo altius debuit apostatam angelum repellere, quo cum a persistendi fortitudine corruit, nihil infirmum ex carne gestavit. Unde recte Psalmista, cum misertum Redemptorem hominibus diceret, ipsam quoque causam misericordiae expressit, dicens: Et memoratus est, quia caro sunt (Psal. LXXVII, 39). Ac si diceret: Quo eorum infirma vidit, eo districte culpas punire noluit. Est adhuc aliud, quo et perditus homo reparari debuit, et superbiens spiritus reparari non possit, quia nimirum angelus sua malitia cecidit, hominem vero aliena prostravit. Quia ergo humanum genus ad lucem poenitentiae Redemptoris adventu reducitur, apostata vero angelus ad restaurationis lucem nulla spe veniae, nulla conversionis emendatione revocatur; dicatur recte: Non requirat eum Deus desuper, et non illustret lumine. Ac si aperte diceretur: Quia ipse tenebras intulit, toleret sine fine quod fecit; nec unquam lumen pristini status recipiat, quia hoc etiam non suasus amisit. Sequitur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 5. — Obscurent eum tenebrae et umbra mortis. 9. Diabolum erroris caecitas sic obruit, ut ad poenitentiae lucem non sit resurrecturus. — Per

umbram mortis, oblivio debet intelligi; quia sicut mors interimit vitam, ita oblivio exstinguit memoriam. Quia ergo apostata angelus aeternae oblivioni traditur, umbra mortis obscuratur. Dicatur igitur: Obscurent eum tenebrae et umbra mortis; id est, sic eum erroris sui caecitas obruat, ut nequaquam ulterius ad lucem poenitentiae per divini respectus memoriam resurgat. Sequitur:

CAPUT V.

IBID. — Occupet eum caligo, et involvatur amaritudine. 10. Quid nunc patiatur, et quid passurus sit post judicium. — Antiquus hostis nequitiae suae vinculis astrictus, aliud est quod nunc patitur, aliud quod in fine patietur. Quia enim a lucis intimae ordine cecidit, nunc semetipsum intrinsecus erroris caligine confundit. Sed post hoc amaritudine involvitur, quia ex merito spontaneae caliginis aeterno gehennae tormento cruciatur. Dicatur ergo: Is qui serenitatem lucis intimae perdidit, quid est quod ante extremum supplicium tolerat? Occupet eum caligo. Subjungatur etiam, quae illum poena subsequens etiam sine termino devastat: Involvatur amaritudine. Omne quippe quod involutum est finem suum quasi nusquam indicat; quia sicut non ostendit quo incipit, ita non detegit quo desistit. Involvi ergo amaritudine antiquus hostis dicitur, quia superbiae ejus supplicia non solum omnimoda, sed etiam infinita praeparantur. Quae videlicet ejus poena tunc initium accipit, cum districtus ad extremum judicium judex venit. Unde et bene subditur: 109

CAPUT VI.

VERS. 6. — Noctem illam tenebrosus turbo possideat. 11. Quanta tempestate ad aeterna supplicia raptus. — Scriptum quippe est: Deus manifestus veniet, Deus noster, et non silebit. Ignis in conspectu ejus ardebit, et in circuitu ejus tempestas valida (Psal. XLIX, 3). Tenebrosus

ergo turbo hanc noctem possidet, quia apostatam spiritum a conspectu districti judicis ad aeterna supplicia, pavenda illa tempestas rapit. Turbine ergo nox ista possidetur, quia superba ejus caecitas districta animadversione percutitur. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII.

IBID. — Non computetur in diebus anni, nec numeretur in mensibus. 12. Quid diei mensis et anni nomine, in verbis Job intelligendum. — Annum praedicationem supernae gratiae non inconvenienter accipimus; quia sicut in anno congestis diebus tempus perficitur, ita in superna gratia virtutum multiplex vita completur. Potest per annum etiam multitudo intelligi redemptorum; quia sicut ex dierum multitudine annus ducitur, ita ex collectione bonorum omnium, illa electorum innumerabilis universitas expletur. Hunc namque annum perfectae multitudinis Isaias praedicat, dicens: Spiritus Domini super me, eo quod unxerit me Dominus: ad annuntiandum mansuetis misit me, ut mederer contritis corde, et praedicarem captivis indulgentiam, et clausis apertionem, ut praedicarem annum placabilem Domini (Isai. LXI, 1). Annus enim placabilis Domini praedicatur, cum futura plebs fidelium veritatis lumine illustranda praedicitur. Quid vero per dies, nisi singulae quaeque electorum mentes; quid per menses, nisi multiplicatae eorum Ecclesiae, quae unam catholicam faciunt, designatur? Illa ergo nox non computetur in diebus anni, nec numeretur in mensibus; quia antiquus hostis superbiae suae tenebris pressus, adventum quidem Redemptoris conspicit, sed nequaquam ad veniam cum electis redit. Hinc enim scriptum est: Nusquam enim angelos apprehendit, sed semen Abrahae apprehendit (Hebr. II, 16). Idcirco namque Redemptor noster non angelus, sed homo factus est, quia hoc procul dubio fieri debuit, quod redemit; ut et perditum angelum non apprehendendo desereret, et hominem in semetipso apprehendendo repararet. Possunt etiam

dies hi qui in interna luce permanent, angelici spiritus; menses autem, eorum ordines et dignitates intelligi. Singuli enim quique spiritus, quia lucent, dies sunt. Sed quia certis quibusdam dignitatibus distinguuntur, ut alii throni, alii dominationes, alii principatus, alii potestates sint; pro hac ipsa distributione agminum, menses vocantur. Sed quia antiquus hostis nequaquam ad meritum lucis, nequaquam ad ordinem supernorum agminum reducitur: nec in diebus anni, nec in mensibus numeratur. Sic quippe illum perpetratae superbiae caecitas gravat, ut ultra ad illa claritatis intimae agmina superna non redeat. Nequaquam jam stantibus lucis dignitatibus admiscetur, quia tenebrarum suarum merito semper ad ima deprimitur. Qui quia ab illa patriae coelestis frequentia exsors in perpetuum permanet, recte adhuc subjungitur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 7. — Sit nox illa solitaria, nec laude digna. 13. Diabolus redempto homine et idolis reprobatis fit solitarius et sine laude. — Nox illa solitaria efficitur, quia distinctione perpetua a frequentia patriae supernae separatur. Quod tamen intelligi et aliter potest, ut videlicet hominem, quem sibi socium ad perditionem fecerat, 110 amittat; et solus cum suo corpore hostis pereat, dum multos quos destruxerat, Redemptoris gratia reformat. Solitaria ergo nox efficitur, cum sublatis eis qui electi sunt, solus hostis antiquus aeternis ignibus gehennae mancipatur. Bene autem dicitur: Nec laude digna. Cum enim humanum genus, erroris tenebris pressum, deos lapides crederet, per hoc quod idolis serviebat, quid aliud quam seductoris sui facta laudabat? Unde bene per Paulum dicitur: Scimus, quia nihil est idolum; sed quae immolant gentes, daemoniis immolant (I Cor. VIII, 4). Qui ergo idolorum venerationi substrati sunt, quid aliud quam noctis tenebras laudaverunt? Sed ecce jam cernimus, quia nox illa non esse laude digna cognoscitur, cum jam a redempto humano genere idolorum veneratio reprobatur; et solitaria nox

relinquitur, quia cum damnato apostata spiritu ad tormenta non itur. Sequitur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 8. — Maledicant ei qui maledicunt diei, qui parati sunt suscitare Leviathan. 14. A Christo ejus malitia jam destruitur; in fine mundi potentia exstinguetur. — In translatione veteri ita non dicitur; sed, Maledicat eam, qui maledixit diem, qui capturus est grandem cetum. Quibus verbis aperte ostenditur quod a sancto viro in fine mundi ventura Antichristi perditio praevidetur. Malignus namque spiritus, qui per meritum nox est, diem se in mundi fine simulat, cum se quasi Deum hominibus ostentat, cum claritatem sibi Divinitatis fallaciter tribuit, et se supra omne quod Deus vel dicitur, vel colitur, extollit. Noctem igitur maledicit, qui maledicit diem; quia ille nunc ejus malitiam destruit, qui illustratione adventus sui tunc etiam potentiam ejus fortitudinis exstinguet. Unde et bene subjungitur: Qui capturus est grandem cetum. Hujus enim ceti fortitudo in aquis capitur, quia antiqui hostis versutia baptismi sacramento superatur. 15. Electi angeli ejus doli tenebras nobis indicant. — Sed quod translatione veteri de auctore omnium dicitur, hoc translatione hac, quae ad nos ex Hebraeo est Arabicoque sermone derivata, de electis ejus angelis memoratur (Consule quae diximus l. XXXV, cap. olim 13, ad vers. 14 c. ult. l. Job.) De his namque dicitur: Maledicant ei qui maledicunt diei. Diem se quippe iste superbiens spiritus ostentare etiam angelicis potestatibus voluit, cum se super caeteros quasi in potentia divinitatis extollens; tot post se ad interitum legiones traxit. Sed hi nimirum, qui in auctore suo humili corde perstiterunt, cum errori ejus noctem inesse conspicerent, diem claritatis illius de semetipsis humilia sentiendo calcaverunt: qui nunc nobis doli ejus tenebras indicant, et quam sit illius despicienda ficta claritas, demonstrant. Dicatur ergo de tenebrosa nocte, quae humanae infirmitatis oculos claudit: Maledicant ei, qui

maledicunt diei, id est, illi electi spiritus erroris ejus tenebras damnando denuntient, qui magnitudinem claritatis illius jam ab exordio fictam vident. Bene autem subditur: Qui parati sunt suscitare Leviathan. Leviathan quippe intepretatus dicitur additamentum eorum. Quorum scilicet, nisi hominum? Recta autem additamentum eorum dicitur, quia postquam primam culpam mala suggestione intulit, hanc quotidie augere gravioribus persuasionibus non desistit. Vel certe per exprobrationem Leviathan vocatus est, id est, additamentum hominum dictus. Eos namque in paradiso immortales reperit; sed divinitatem immortalibus 111 promittendo, quasi eis aliquid ultra quam erant se addere spopondit. Sed dum blande non habita se daturum perhibuit, callide et habita subtraxit. Unde et eumdem Leviathan ita propheta describit dicens: Super Leviathan serpentem vectem, super Leviathan serpentem tortuosum (Isai. XXVII, 1). Leviathan quippe iste in eo, quod se addere homini spopondit, tortuosis ad eum sinibus irrepsit; quia dum falso impossibilia promisit, vere et possibilia sustulit. Quaerendum vero nobis est cur qui serpentem dixerat, tortuosumque illico subjungens, interposuit vectem, nisi forte quod in serpentis tortitudine fluxa mollities, in vecte autem est duritia rigiditatis. Ut ergo hunc et durum signaret, et mollem; et vectem nominat, et serpentem. Durus quippe est per malitiam, mollis per blandimenta. Vectis ergo dicitur, quia usque ad necem percutit; serpens autem, quia se per insidias molliter infundit. 16. Diabolum electi angelorum in puteo abyssi clausum premunt. — Sed hunc Leviathan electi angelorum spiritus nunc in puteo abyssi clausum premunt. Unde scriptum est: Vidi angelum descendentem de coelo, habentem clavem abyssi, et catenam magnam in manu sua: et apprehendit draconem serpentem antiquum, qui est diabolus et Satanas, et ligavit eum per annos mille, et misit eum in abyssum (Apocal. XX, 1, 2 et seq.). Quem tamen in mundi fine ad apertiora certamina revocant, et totum contra nos in suis viribus ralaxant. Unde et illic rursum scriptum est: Cum completi fuerint mille anni, solvetur Satanas

(Ibid., 7). Ille enim apostata angelus, quia ita conditus fuerat, ut angelorum caeteris legionibus emineret, ita superbiendo succubuit, ut hunc stantium angelorum ditioni substratus sit; quatenus vel nunc ad utilitatem nostram eis ministrantibus religatus lateat, vel tunc ad probationem nostram eis relaxantibus, totis se contra nos suis viribus solutus exerceat. Quia igitur hi electi spiritus superbum apostatam comprimunt, qui humiles hunc sequi noluerunt, ipsisque administrantibus disponitur, ut ad intentionem aperti certaminis destruendus funditus quandoque revocetur, dicatur recte: Qui parati sunt suscitare Leviathan. Quia tamen hostis callidus ad aperta bella necdum suscitatus est, quomodo quorumdam mentes nox ista nunc latenter obscuret, insinuet. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 9. — Obtenebrentur stellae caligine ejus. 17. Stellae aliquando sancti, aliquando hypocritae in Scripturis dicuntur. Hypocritarum lux obscuratur aperto errore. — In Scriptura sacra stellarum stellarum nomine aliquando sanctorum justitia, quae in hujus vitae tenebris lucet, aliquando vero hypocritarum fictio demonstratur, qui bona quae faciunt, ad percipiendas laudes hominibus ostendunt. Si enim recte viventes, stellae non essent, nequaquam Paulus discipulis diceret: In medio nationis pravae et perversae, inter quos lucetis sicut luminaria in mundo (Philip. II, 15). Rursum, si inter eos qui recta agere videntur, quidam de actione sua retributionem favoris humani non quaererent, nequaquam stellas Joannes ruere a coelestibus videret, dicens: Misit draco caudam, et traxit tertiam partem stellarum (Apoc. XII, 4). Draconis enim cauda stellarum pars trahitur, quia extrema persuasione Antichristi quidam qui videntur lucere rapientur. 112 Stellas namque in terram trahere, est eos qui videntur studio vitae coelestis inhaerere, ex amore terreno iniquitate aperti erroris involvere. Sunt namque nonnulli qui ante humanos oculos velut magnis

operibus lucent; sed quia haec ipsa opera a mundo corde non prodeunt, capti in occultis cogitationibus, noctis hujus tenebris obscurantur; qui saepe ea quae mundo corde non faciunt, etiam opera amittunt. Quia ergo nox praevalere permittitur, quando et inter bona opera cordis intentio minime mundatur, dicatur recte: Obscurentur stellae caligine ejus; id est, contra eos qui ante humanos oculos quasi bonis operibus splendent, malitia antiqui hostis obscura praevaleat; et hoc, quod ante humana judicia sumpserant, lumen laudis deponant. Caligine quippe noctis obscurantur, cum eorum vita aperto errore confunditur; ut nimirum tales etiam foris in actione appareant, quales apud semetipsos intus divino parere judicio non formidant. Sequitur:

CAPUT XI.

IBID. Exspectet lucem, et non videat, nec ortum surgentis aurorae. 18. Christus cum bonis una est persona, et diabolus una cum reprobis. Qui prava agunt, aut recta non recto corde, mercedem aeternam frustra sperant. — In Evangelio Veritas dicit: Ego sum lux mundi (Joan. VIII, 12). Sicut autem isdem Redemptor noster una persona est cum congregatione bonorum; ipse namque caput est corporis, et nos hujus capitis corpus; ita antiquus hostis una persona est cum cuncta collectione reproborum, quia ipse eis ad iniquitatem quasi caput praeeminet, illi autem dum ad persuasa deserviunt, velut subjunctum capiti corpus inhaerent. Quod ergo de hac nocte, id est antiquo hoste dicitur, dignum est ut ad corpus ejus, id est ad iniquos quosque, derivetur. Quia igitur Redemptor humani generis lux est, quid est quod de hac nocte dicitur: Exspectet lucem, et non videat: nisi quod sunt nonnulli qui fidem, quam operibus destruunt, tenere se sermonibus ostendunt? De quibus per Paulum dicitur: Qui confitentur se nosse Deum, factis autem negant (Tit. I, 16). Hi nimirum aut prava sunt quae faciunt, aut recta opera non recto corde sectantur. Non enim de suis operibus retributiones perpetuas, sed transitorios favores quaerunt; et tamen quia

quasi sanctos laudari se audiunt, esse se veraciter sanctos arbitrantur; et quanto se ex multorum aestimatione irreprehensibiles putant, tanto diem districti judicii securius exspectant. De quibus bene per prophetam dicitur: Vae desiderantibus diem Domini (Amos V, 18). Quibus beatus Job debitam sententiam profert, praedicentis studio; non optantis voto dicens: Exspectet lucem, et non videat. Nox quippe illa, videlicet tenebrosus hostis, in membris suis lucem exspectat, et non videt, quia vel hi qui fidem sine operibus retinent, cum pro eadem fide in extremo judicio salvari se posse confidunt, spes eorum frustrabitur, quia hanc vivendo demoliti sunt, quam confitendo tenuerunt, vel hi qui pro humana laude in bona actione se exhibent, incassum a veniente judice retributionem bonorum operum sperant; quia dum haec in ostentationem faciunt laudis, jam praemium ab humano ore receperunt, Veritate attestante, quae ait: Amen dico vobis, receperunt mercedem 113 suam (Matth. VI, 2, 5). Ubi et bene subditur: Nec ortum surgentis aurorae. Beatus Job considerans, postquam a mentis statu succubuit genus humanum, quanta in rebus prosperis fiducia sublevetur, vel quanta ex adversis perturbatione frangatur, ad illum, quem habere in paradiso potuit, incommutabilitatis statum mente recurrit, et mortalitatis lapsum per prospera et adversa variantem, quam despicabilem cerneret, maledicendo declaravit dicens:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 3. Pereat dies in qua natus sum, et nox in qua dictum est, Conceptus est homo. 24. Dies est prosperitas, nox tribulatio. Dies peccati delectatio, nox caecitas mentis. — Quasi dies quaedam est, cum mundi hujus prosperitas arridet. Sed dies iste in noctem desinit, quia saepe temporalis prosperitas ad tribulationis tenebras perducit. Hunc prosperitatis diem propheta despexerat, cum dicebat: Diem hominis non concupivi, tu scis (Jerem. XVII, 16). Hanc tribulationis noctem postremo incarnationis suae

tempore passurum se Dominus nuntiabat, cum per Psalmistam quasi ex praeterito diceret: Usque ad noctem increpuerunt me renes mei (Psal. XV, 7). Potest autem per diem, peccati delectatio, per noctem vero caecitas mentis intelligi, per quam se homo patitur in culpae perpetratione prosterni. Optat igitur perire diem, ut omne quod blandiri culpa cernitur, vigore justitiae interveniente destruatur. Optat etiam perire noctem, ut quod caecata mens etiam per consensum perpetrat, animadversione poenitentiae exstinguat. 115 25. Scriptura tribus modis hominem appellat. Homo per voluntarias mentis tenebras a delectatione peccati rapitur. — Sed quaerendum nobis est cur in die homo natus dicitur, in nocte conceptus? Scriptura sacra tribus modis hominem appellat, scilicet aliquando per naturam, aliquando per culpam, aliquando per infirmitatem. Homo quippe per naturam dicitur, sicut scriptum est: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram (Genes. I, 26). Homo per culpam, sicut scriptum est: Ego dixi, Dii estis, et filii Excelsi omnes; vos autem sicut homines moriemini (Psal. LXXXI, 6). Ac si aperte dicat: Sicut delinquentes obibitis. Unde et Paulus ait: Cum sit inter vos zelus et contentio, nonne carnales estis, et secundum hominem ambulatis (I Cor. III, 3)? Ac si dicat: Qui discordes mentes ducitis, nonne adhuc ex reprehensibili humanitate peccatis? Homo per infirmitatem dicitur, sicut scriptum est: Maledictus homo, qui spem suam ponit in homine (Jerem. XVII, 5). Ac si aperte diceret, in infirmitate. Homo ergo in die nascitur, sed in nocte concipitur, quia nequaquam a delectatione peccati rapitur, nisi prius per voluntarias mentis tenebras infirmetur. Ante enim caecus in mente fit, et postmodum se reprobae delectationi substernit. Dicatur ergo: Pereat dies in qua natus sum, et nox in qua dictum est, Conceptus est homo: id est, pereat delectatio, quae in culpam hominem rapuit, pereat incauta mentis infirmitas, quae usque ad tenebras pravi consensus excaecavit. Homo enim dum blandimenta delectationis caute non perspicit, etiam in noctem nequissimae

perpetrationis ruit. Solerter ergo vigilandum est, ut cum blandiri culpa inchoat, ad quantum interitum mens trahatur, agnoscat. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 4. — Dies illa vertatur in tenebras. 26. Delectationis initium poenitentiae lamentis castigandum. — Dies quippe in tenebras vertitur, cum culpa in ipso delectationis exordio, ad quem perditionis finem rapiat, videtur. In tenebras diem vertimus, cum nosmetipsos districte punientes, ipsa delectationis pravae blandimenta per districta poenitentiae lamenta cruciamus, cum flendo insequimur quidquid in corde taciti ex delectatione peccamus. Quia enim fidelis quisque cogitationes in judicio exquiri subtiliter non ignorat, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Inter se invicem cogitationum accusantium, aut etiam defendentium (Rom. II, 15); semetipsum introrsus discutiens, ante judicium vehementer examinat, ut districtus judex eo jam tranquillius veniat, quo reatum suum, quem discutere appetit, jam pro culpa punitum cernit. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XV.

IBID. — Non requirat eum Deus desuper. 27. Ut a Deo in judicio non puniatur. — Requirit Deus quae judicando discutit; non requirit quae ignoscendo in suo jam judicio impunita derelinquit. Hic itaque dies, id est, haec peccati delectatio, a Domino non requiretur, si animadversione spontanea punitur, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Si nosmetipsos dijudicaremus, non utique a Domino judicaremur (I Cor. XI, 31). Deo ergo diem nostrum requirere, est contra mentem nostram subtiliter in judicio omne quod de culpa gratulatur indagare; in qua scilicet requisitione illum tunc severius percutit, quem sibi nunc mollius pepercisse deprehendit. Bene autem sequitur: Et non illustret lumine. In judicio namque Dominus apparens, 116

omne quod tunc redarguit, lumine illustrat. Quasi enim sub quadam obscuritate tegitur, quidquid tunc in memoriam judicis non revocatur. Scriptum quippe est: Omnia autem quae arguuntur, a lumine manifestantur (Ephes. V, 13). Quasi quaedam tenebrae peccata poenitentium abscondunt, de quibus per Prophetam dicitur: Beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata (Psal. XXXI, 1). Quia ergo omne quod tegitur, velut in tenebris occultatur; in die extremi judicii non illustratur lumine, quod non discutitur ultione. Actus namque nostros, quos tunc juste punire noluerit, ipsa sibi aliquo modo sciens divina misericordia abscondit. In lumine vero ostenditur, quidquid tunc in conspectu omnium demonstratur. Hic ergo dies vertatur in tenebras, ut videlicet omne quod delinquimus, nos per poenitentiam feriamus. Hunc diem Dominus non requirat, et lumine non illustret; ut scilicet nobis culpam nostram ferientibus, ipse hanc extremi judicii animadversione non increpet. 28. Poenitens solus locum invenit, quo se Deo judici abscondat. — Ipse autem judex venturus est, qui cuncta penetret, cuncta perstringat. Qui quia ubique est, locus quo fugiatur, non est. Sed quia correctionis nostrae fletibus placatur, solus ab illo locum fugae invenit, qui post perpetratam culpam nunc se ei in poenitentia abscondit. Unde et apte adhuc de hoc delectationis die subjungitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 5. — Obscurent eum tenebrae et umbra mortis. 29. Occulta Dei judicia, quaedam tenebrae sunt. — Diem profecto tenebrae obscurant, quando delectationem mentis inflicta poenitentiae lamenta transverberant. Possunt etiam per tenebras occulta judicia designari. In luce namque quod videmus agnoscimus; in tenebris vero aut omnino nihil cernimus, aut incerto visu caligamus. Occulta ergo judicia quasi quaedam ante oculos nostros tenebrae sunt, quia perscrutari nequaquam possunt. Unde et de Deo scriptum est: Posuit tenebras latibulum suum (Psal. XVII, 12). Et quia

absolvi non meremur, agnoscimus: sed praeveniente nos divina gratia, per ejus judicia occulta liberamur. Diem igitur tenebrae obscurant, cum flendum nostrae delectationis gaudium, ab illo justae animadversionis radio inscrutabilia ejus judicia misericorditer occultant. Ubi et apte subjungitur: Et umbra mortis. Sed quia nullum peccatum Dominus inultum relaxat, aut enim nos hoc flendo insequimur, aut ipse judicando, restat ut ad emendationem suam semper mens solerter invigilet. In quo ergo sibi quisque misericorditer subveniri considerat, hoc necesse est ut confitens tergat. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVII.

IBID. — Occupet eum caligo. 32. Mentis poenitentis salubris caligo. — Quia enim in caligine oculus confunditur, ipsa per poenitentiam mentis nostrae confusio, caligo nominatur. Nam sicut caligo nebulosa congerie obscurat diem, ita confusio perturbatis cogitationibus obnubilat mentem. De qua per quemdam dicitur: Est confusio adducens gloriam (Eccli. IV, 25). Cum enim ad mentem male gesta poenitendo reducimus, gravi mox moerore confundimur, perstrepit in animo turba cogitationum, moeror conterit, anxietas devastat, in aerumnam mens vertitur, et quasi quodam nubilo caliginis obscuratur. Haec namque caligo confusionis eorum mentem salubriter oppresserat; quibus Paulus dicebat: Quem enim fructum habuistis tunc in illis, in quibus nunc erubescitis (Rom. VI, 21)? Hunc ergo peccati diem caligo occupet, id est, blandimentum nequitiae afflictio poenitentiae digno moerore perturbet. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVIII.

IBID. — Involvatur amaritudine. 33. Salubris moeror de prava delectatione. — Dies enim amaritudine involvitur, cum ad cognitionem mente redeunte, peccati blandimenta 118 cruciatus poenitentiae sequuntur. Diem

amaritudine involvimus, cum pravae delectationis gaudium, quae supplicia sequantur aspicimus, et asperis hoc fletibus circumdamus. Quia enim hoc quod involvitur, ex latere omnis partis operitur, involvi dies amaritudine optatur, quatenus quae mala incorrectis imminent, ex omni parte quisque conspiciat, et voluptatis suae lasciviam tristitiae lamentis tergat. 34. Quanto major esse debeat de consensu ad culpam. — Sed si diem, quam peccati delectationem diximus, tot impeti precibus audivimus, ut videlicet circumdantes fletus expient quidquid delectatus per negligentiam animus delinquit, quanta animadversione poenitentiae hujus diei nox ferienda est, videlicet ipse jam consensus ad culpam? Sicut enim minoris culpae est, cum carnaliter mens in delectatione rapitur, sed tamen delectationi suae per spiritum reluctatur; ita gravioris et plenae est nequitiae, ad peccati illecebram non solum delectatione pertrahi, sed etiam consensu famulari. Tanto igitur arctiori manu poenitentiae, mens a pollutione tergenda est, quanto se per consensum conspicit sordidius inquinatam. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 6. — Noctem illam tenebrosus turbo possideat. 35. Vis compunctionis. — Quasi enim quidam turbo tempestatis est concitatus spiritus moeroris. Nam dum peccatum quisque quod fecit, intelligit; dum pravitatis suae nequitiam subtiliter pensat, moerore mentem obnubilat et quasi concusso serenae laetitiae aere, omnem in se tranquillitatem cordis poenitentiae turbine devastat. Nisi enim recognoscentem se animum iste turbo contereret, nequaquam Propheta dixisset: In spiritu vehementi conteres naves Tharsis (Psal. XLVII, 8). Tharsis quippe exploratio gaudii dicitur. Sed cum vehemens poenitentiae spiritus mentem occupat, omnem in ea explorationem reprehensibilis gaudii perturbat, ut nihil ei jam nisi flere libeat, nihil nisi quod se terrere possit attendat. Ponit namque ante oculos

illinc districtionem justitiae, hinc meritum culpae: conspicit quo supplicio digna sit, si parcentis pietas desit, quae per lamenta praesentia ab aeterna eruere poena consuevit. Spiritus ergo vehemens Tharsis naves conterit, cum vis compunctionis valida mentes nostras huic mundo, quasi mari deditas, salubri terrore confundit. Dicat igitur: Noctem illam tenebrosus turbo possideat; id est, perpetrationem culpae, non blandimenta securae quietis foveant, sed pie desaeviens amaritudo poenitentiae irrumpat. 36. Quid sit possidere noctem, et a nocte possideri. — Sciendum vero est, quia cum peccata impunita relinquimus, a nocte possidemur; cum vero haec animadversione poenitentiae plectimus, nimirum nos noctem, quam fecimus, possidemus. Sed tunc peccatum cordis sub juris nostri possessionem reducitur, si cum incipit, reprimatur. Unde et divina voce Cain prava cogitanti dicitur: In foribus peccatum tuum aderit, sed sub te erit appetitus ejus, et tu dominaberis illius (Genes. IV, 7). In foribus quippe peccatum adest, cum in cogitationibus pulsat. Cujus appetitus subter est, eique homo dominatur, si cordis nequitia inspecta, citius prematur, et priusquam ad duritiam crescat, reluctanti mente subigatur. Ut ergo delictum suum citius animus sentiat, 119 et culpae tyrannidem sub jure suo poenitendo restringat, dicatur recte: Noctem illam tenebrosus turbo possideat. Ac si aperte diceretur: Ne captiva mens culpae serviat, culpam a poenitentia liberam non relinquat. Et quia quod flendo insequimur, nequaquam nobis a venturo judice hoc objici certe speramus, bene subditur:

CAPUT XX.

IBID. — Non computetur in diebus anni, nec numeretur in mensibus. 37. Rogandus Deus ne mala quae gessimus, in judicio nobis objiciantur. — Illuminationis nostrae annus tunc perficitur, quando apparente aeterno judice sanctae Ecclesiae, peregrinationis suae vita completur. Tunc laboris sui remunerationem recipit, cum expleto hoc belli tempore, ad patriam redit.

Unde bene per Prophetam dicitur: Benedices coronae anni benignitatis tuae (Psal. LXIV, 12). Quasi enim corona anni benedicitur, cum finito laboris tempore, virtutum remuneratio confertur. Dies vero hujus anni sunt singulae quaeque virtutes; menses autem multiplicia facta virtutum. Sed ecce cum per fiduciam mens erigitur, ut speret quod veniente judice de virtutibus remuneretur, occurrunt ejus memoriae etiam mala quae gessit; et valde formidat, ne districtus judex qui venit ut virtutes remuneret, etiam ea quae illicite gesta sunt examinans, subtiliter penset; ne cum annum complet, etiam noctem numeret. Dicat itaque de hac nocte: Non computetur in diebus anni, nec numeretur in mensibus. Ac si districtum judicem exoret, dicens: Cum completo sanctae Ecclesiae tempore, extremo te examini manifestas, sic dona quae contulisti remunera, ut mala quae commisimus non requiras. Si enim nox illa in diebus anni computatur, omne quod egimus, ex pravitatis nostrae aestimatione confunditur. Et dies virtutum jam non lucent, si hos in conspectu tuo annum eratanostrae noctis tenebrosa confusio obscuret.. VERS. 7. — Sit nox illa solitaria, nec laude digna. 39. Nulla excusando exaggeremus. — Sunt nonnulli, qui non solum nequaquam deflent quod faciunt, sed etiam laudare et defendere non desistunt. Et nimirum dum defenditur culpa, geminatur. Contra quod recte per quemdam dicitur: Peccasti, ne adjicias iterum (Eccli. XXI, 1). Peccatum quippe peccato adjicit, qui male gesta etiam defendit; et noctem solitariam non relinquit, qui culpae suae tenebris etiam patrocinia defensionis adjungit. Hinc est, quod primus homo de erroris sui nocte requisitus, eamdem noctem esse solitariam noluit; quia dum requisitione ad poenitentiam vocaretur, ei adminicula excusationis adjunxit, dicens: Mulier, quam dedisti mihi sociam, dedit mihi de ligno, et comedi (Genes. III, 12); scilicet excessus sui vitium in auctorem latenter intorquens, ac si diceret: Tu occasionem delinquendi praebuisti, qui mulierem dedisti. Hinc est, quod hujus erroris ramus in humano genere ex illa nunc usque radice 120 protrahitur, ut quod male

agitur, adhuc etiam defendatur. Dicat ergo: Sit nox illa solitaria, nec laude digna. Ac si aperte exoret, dicens: Culpa, quam fecimus, sola remaneat, ne dum laudatur et defenditur, in conspectu nos nostri judicis multiplicius astringat. Peccare quidem non debuimus; sed utinam alia non jungentes, vel ea quae fecimus sola deseramus. 40. Culpam suam veraciter insequitur, qui prosperitatem saeculi calcat. — Sed inter haec sciendum est, quia ille culpam suam veraciter insequitur, qui jam ad amorem praesentis saeculi nullo appetitu prosperitatis instigatur; qui hujus mundi blandimenta quam sint fraudulenta considerat, favoresque ejus quasi quasdam persecutiones pensat. Unde et bene subditur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 8. — Maledicant ei, qui maledicunt diei. 41. Transactas culpas punit qui seductoris insidias in ipsa suggestione deprehendit. — Ac si aperte dicat: Illi hujus noctis tenebras vere poenitendo feriant, qui jam lucem prosperitatis saeculi despicientes calcant. Si enim diem laetitiam delectationis accipimus, recte de hac nocte dicitur: Maledicant ei qui maledicunt diei; quia nimirum illi veraciter mala transacta per animadversionem poenitentiae corrigunt, qui jam ad bona fallentia nulla delectatione rapiuntur. Nam quos adhuc noxia alia delectant, falsum est quod cernitur, quia perpetrata alia deplorant. Si autem, ut supra dictum est, suggestionem callidam antiqui hostis accipimus, illi maledicere noctem intelligendi sunt, qui diei maledicunt; quia scilicet illi transactas culpas vere puniunt, qui maligni seductoris insidias in ipsa blanda suggestione deprehendunt. Bene autem subditur:

CAPUT XXIII.

IBID. — Qui parati sunt suscitare Leviathan. 42. Diabolum contra se suscitant, qui ejus tyrannidem despiciunt. — Omnes enim, qui ea quae

mundi sunt mente calcant, et ea quae Dei sunt plena intentione desiderant, Leviathan contra se suscitant, quia ejus malitiam instigatione suae conversationis inflammant. Nam qui ejus voluntati subjecti sunt, quasi quieto ab illo jure possidentur, et superbus eorum rex quasi quadam securitate perfruitur, dum eorum cordibus inconcussa potestate dominatur. Sed cum uniuscujusque spiritus ad conditoris sui desiderium recalescit, cum torporem negligentiae deserit, et frigus insensibilitatis pristinae igne sancti amoris accendit; cum libertatis ingenitae meminit, et teneri ab hoste servus erubescit, quia isdem hostis se considerat despici, quia vias Dei videt apprehendi, dolet contra se captum reniti, et mox zelo accenditur, mox ad certamen movetur, mox ad tentationes innumeras contra rebellantem mentem se excitat, atque in omni arte lacerationis instigat, ut tentationum jacula intorquendo confodiat cor, quod dudum quieto jure possidebat. Quasi dormiebat quippe, dum sopitus in pravo corde quiesceret: sed excitatur in provocatione certaminis, cum jus amiserit perversae dominationis. Huic ergo nocti maledicant, qui parati sunt suscitare Leviathan: id est, hi se contra peccatum fortiter judicio districtionis erigant, qui in suis tentationibus excitare antiquum adversarium non formidant. Scriptum namque est: Fili, accedens ad servitutem Dei, sta in justitia 121 et timore, et praepara animam tuam ad tentationem (Eccli. II, 1). Quisquis enim accingi in divino servitio properat, quid aliud, quam se contra antiqui adversarii certamen parat, ut liber in certamine ictus suscipiat, qui quietus sub tyrannide in captivitate serviebat? Sed in eo ipso, quod mens contra hostem accingitur, quod alia vitia subigit, aliis reluctatur, aliquando de culpa aliquid, quod tamen non valde noceat, remanere permittitur. 43. Ob humilitatem Deus sinit ut qui multa et gravia vitia subegit, unum minimum non expugnet. — Et saepe mens, quae adversa multa et fortia superat, unum in se, et fortasse minimum, quamvis magna intentione invigilet, non expugnat. Quod divina nimirum dispensatione agitur, ne ex omni parte

virtutibus splendens, in elatione sublevetur; ut dum in se parvum quid reprehensibile videt, et tamen hoc subigere non valet, nequaquam sibi, sed auctori victoriam tribuat in his quae subigere fortiter valet. Unde et bene subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 9. — Obtenebrentur stellae caligine ejus. 44. Sic qui stellae sunt, aliqua caligine obscurantur. — Stellae quippe hujus noctis caligine tenebrantur, quando et hi qui magnis jam virtutibus splendent, adhuc de obscuritate culpae aliquid renitentes sustinent, ut etiam magna vitae claritate luceant, et tamen adhuc noctis reliquias nolentes trahant. Quod ad hoc, sicut dictum est, agitur, ut mens proficiens ad virtutem justitiae suae, melius infirmitate roboretur; et inde verius in bonis luceat, unde eam etiam nolentem parva reprehensibilia humiliter obscurant. Unde et bene cum Israelitico populo, percepta repromissionis terra, partiretur, Ephraim tribui Chananaeus gentilis populus non occisus, sed factus tributarius dicitur, sicut scriptum est: Habitavit Chananaeus in medio Ephraim tributarius (Jos. XVI, 10). Quid enim Chananaeus, gentilis videlicet populus, nisi vitium significat? Et saepe magnis virtutibus terram repromissionis ingredimur, quia spe intima de aeternitate roboramur. Sed dum inter acta sublimia, vitia quaedam parva retinemus, quasi Chananaeum vivere in terra nostra concedimus. Qui tamen tributarius efficitur, quia hoc ipsum vitium, quod subigere non possumus, ad usum nostrae utilitatis humiliter retorquemus; ut eo de se mens et in summis vilia sentiat, quo suis viribus etiam parva quae appetit, non expugnat. Unde bene rursum scriptum est: Hae sunt gentes quas Dominus dereliquit, ut erudiret in eis Israelem (Jud. III, 1). Ad hoc namque quaedam minima vitia nostra retinentur, ut sese nostra intentio sollicitam in certamine semper exerceat; et eo de victoria non superbiat, quo vivere in se hostes conspicit, a quibus adhuc vinci formidat. Israel ergo

reservatis gentibus eruditur, quando in quibusdam minimis vitiis elatio virtutis nostrae comprimitur, et in parvis sibi resistentibus discit, quod ex se majora non subigit. 45. Nemo in hac vita, quantalibet sanctitate fulgeat, Deum sicut est videre valet. — Hoc tamen quod dicitur: Obtenebrentur stellae caligine ejus; intelligi et aliter potest. Nox quippe illa, videlicet consensus ad culpam, quae ad nos primi parentis est excessu propagata, mentis nostrae oculum tanta obscuritate perculit, ut in hujus vitae exsilio, caecitatis suae tenebris pressus, quantalibet vi aeternitatis lumen intenderit, penetrare non possit. Post poenam namque damnati 122 peccatores nascimur, atque ad hanc vitam cum mortis nostrae merito venimus; et cum ad supernae lucis radium aciem mentis erigimus, ipsa infirmitatis nostrae obscuritate caligamus. Et quidem multi in hac infirmitate carnis tanta virtute roborati sunt, ut resplendere mundo quasi stellae potuissent. Multi in tenebris vitae praesentis, dum superiora de se exempla exhibent, astrorum more nobis desuper lucent; sed quantalibet coruscatione operis fulgeant, quantolibet se igne compunctionis accendant; nimirum constat quia dum corruptibili adhuc carne gravati sunt, aeternum lumen, sicut est, videre nequaquam possunt. Dicat ergo: Obtenebrentur stellae caligine ejus; id est, etiam illi in contemplatione sua, antiquae noctis adhuc tenebras sentiant, de quibus nimirum constat quod humano generi in hujus vitae caligine virtutum suarum jam radios expandant, quia etsi mente jam ad summa exsiliunt, adhuc tamen in infimis primae culpae pondere gravantur. Unde fit ut et foras exempla lucis velut astra praebeant, sed tamen intus usque ad fixae visionis certitudinem pressi noctis caligine non ascendant. Saepe autem ita mens accenditur, ut quamvis in carne sit posita, in Deum tamen omni subjugata carnali cogitatione rapiatur; nec tamen Deum sicut est conspicit, quia hanc nimirum, sicut dictum est, in carne corruptibili pondus primae damnationis premit. Saepe ita ut est, absorberi desiderat, ut aeternam vitam, si possit fieri, sine interventu corporeae mortis attingat.

Unde Paulus, cum ardenter internam lucem quaereret, sed tamen utcunque exterioris mortis damna formidaret, ait: Quandiu sumus in hoc habitaculo, ingemiscimus gravati, eo quod nolumus exspoliari, sed supervestiri, ut absorbeatur quod mortale est a vita (II Cor. V, 4). Sancti igitur viri videre verum mane appetunt, et, si concedatur, etiam cum corpore illud attingere lucis intimae secretum volunt. Sed quantolibet ardore intentionis exsiliant, adhuc antiqua nox gravat, et corruptibilis hujus carnis oculos, quos hostis callidus ad concupiscentiam aperuit, judex justus a contuitu interni sui fulgoris premit. Unde et bene subditur:

CAPUT XXV.

IBID. — Exspectet lucem, et non videat, nec ortum surgentis aurorae. 46. Ortus aurorae est internae veritatis claritas. — Quantalibet namque intentione adhuc peregrina mens satagat videre lucem sicut est, non valet, quia hanc ei damnationis suae caecitas abscondit. (Ortus vero aurorae est internae veritatis claritas, quae semper nobis debet esse nova. Quam nox procul dubio non videt, quia per culpam caeca nostra infirmitas ad illud lumen, quod supernos jam cives irradiat, in carne adhuc corruptibili posita non ascendit. Intus namque haec aurora surgit, ubi angelorum spiritibus divinitatis claritas nova semper ostenditur; et quasi semper gaudium lucis oritur, quod nunquam finitur.) Ortus vero aurorae est illa nova nativitas resurrectionis, qua sancta Ecclesia etiam carne suscitata oritur ad contemplandum lumen aeternitatis. Si enim ipsa carnis nostrae resurrectio quasi quaedam nativitas non esset, de ea Veritas non dixisset: In regeneratione, cum sederit Filius hominis in sede majestatis suae (Matth. XIX, 28; Luc. XXII, 69). Esse ergo hanc ortum vidit, quam regenerationem 123 vocavit. Sed quantalibet virtute electi nunc fulgeant, penetrare nequeunt, quae erit illa novae nativitatis gloria, qua tunc cum carne ad contemplandum aeternitatis lumen ascendunt. Unde et Paulus ait: Quod

oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se (I Cor. II, 9). Dicat ergo: Exspectet lucem, et non videat, nec ortum surgentis aurorae; quia spontaneo vitio tenebrata nostra infirmitas, nisi prius per mortem poenae suae debitum solvat, claritatem lucis internae non penetrat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 10. — Quia non conclusit ostia ventris qui portavit me, nec abstulit mala ab oculis meis. 47. Concupiscentiae ostia consensus noster aperuit, unde innumera mala. — Sicut et superius dictum est, non conclusit, dicit aperuit; et non abstulit, irrogavit. Haec itaque nox, videlicet culpa, ostia ventris aperuit, quia concepto ad peccatum homini desideria concupiscentiae reseravit. Ostia quippe ventris sunt desideria concupiscentiae, de quibus per prophetam dicitur: Intra in cubicula tua, claude ostia tua (Isai. XXVI, 20). Cubicula quippe ingredimur, cum secreta nostrae mentis intramus. Ostia autem claudimus, cum desideria illicita coercemus. Haec itaque concupiscentiae carnalis ostia, dum consensus noster aperuit, ad innumera nos mala corruptionis pertraxit. Unde jam nunc sub mortalitatis pondere gemimus, quamvis ad hoc arbitrio nostro venerimus; quia et judicii sic justitia exigit, ut quod sponte fecimus, inviti toleremus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 11, 12. — Quare non in vulva mortuus sum; egressus ex utero non statim perii? cur exceptus genibus? cur lactatus uberibus? 48. Quid intelligendum in verbis Job cum se optat abortivum. — Absit nos credere quod beatus Job, tanta spiritus scientia praeditus, tanta interni judicis attestatione laudatus, abortivum se optet interiisse. Sed quia, sicut etiam per remunerationem cognoscitur, intus habet testem suae fortitudinis, intus

pensanda sunt ejus pondera locutionis. Unde et primus homo post culpam audacior exstitit, dicens: Mulier, quam dedisti mihi sociam, ipsa dedit mihi de ligno, et comedi (Genes. III, 12). Qui quidem per timorem semetipsum absconsurus fugerat; sed tamen requisitus innotuit quantum etiam timens tumebat. Cum enim ex peccato praesens poena metuitur, et amissa Dei facies non amatur; timor ex tumore est, non ex humilitate. Superbit quippe, qui peccatum, si liceat non puniri, non deserit. 51. Deplorat ac deprecatur quatuor modos quibus homines peccant in opere. — Sed his, sicut dictum est, quatuor modis culpa, ut in corde agitur, etiam in opere perpetratur. Ait enim: Quare non in vulva mortuus sum? Vulva quippe peccantis, est hominis culpa latens, quae occulte peccatorem concipit, et reatum suum adhuc in tenebris abscondit. Egressus ex utero non statim perii? A vulva de utero exitur, cum peccator quae in occulto commiserit, haec etiam in aperto committere non erubescit. Quasi enim ab occultationis suae vulva processerant, de quibus Propheta dicebat: Et peccatum suum quasi Sodoma praedicaverunt, nec absconderunt (Isai. III, 9). Quare exceptus genibus? Quia nimirum peccator, cum jam de iniquitate sua non confunditur, in iniquitate eadem etiam adminiculis pessimae consuetudinis roboratur. Quasi genibus peccator fovetur ut crescat, dum culpa consuetudinibus firmatur ut vigeat. Cur lactatus uberibus? Quia dum prodire culpa in usum coeperit, nimirum se vel falsa spe divinae misericordiae, vel aperta miseria desperationis pascit; ut eo nequaquam ad correptionem redeat, quo vel factorem suum pium sibi inordinate simulat, vel hoc quod fecit, inordinate formidat. Beatus igitur vir humani generis lapsus aspiciat, et quibus praecipitiis mersum sit in foveam iniquitatis intendat, dicens: Quare non in vulva mortuus sum? id est, in ipsa occulta perpetratione peccati, cur a carnis vita mortificare me nolui? Egressus ex utero non statim perii? id est, postquam ad apertam 125 iniquitatem exii, cur me tunc saltem perditum non cognovi? Perisset quippe in suo judicio, si se perditum cognovisset. Quare

exceptus genibus? id est, etiam post apertam culpam, cur me adhuc in illa etiam consuetudo suscepit, ut valentiorem ad nequitias redderet, et pravis me usibus sustinens foveret? Cur lactatus uberibus? id est, postquam in culpae consuetudinem veni, cur me ad atrociorem nequitiam vel falsae spei fiducia, vel lacte miserae desperationis enutrivi? Cum enim culpa in usum venerit, ei jam animus etiam si appetat, debilius resistit; quia quot vicibus pravae frequentationis astringitur, quasi tot vinculis ad mentem ligatur. Unde fit ut enervis animus, cum solvi non valet, ad quaedam se solatia falsae consolationis inclinet; quatenus venturum judicem tantae sibi misericordiae spondeat, ut eos etiam quos arguendos invenerit penitus non occidat. Cui rei hoc deterius accidit, quod ei multorum similium lingua consentit, cum multi etiam male gesta laudibus exaggerant: unde fit ut incessanter crescat culpa, favoribus nutrita. Curari autem vulnus negligitur, quod dignum praemio laudis videtur. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Fili mi, si te lactaverint peccatores, ne acquiescas eis (Prov. I, 10). Peccatores etenim lactant, cum vel perpetranda mala blandimentis inferunt, vel perpetrata favoribus extollunt. An non lactantur, de quo per Psalmistam dicitur: Quoniam laudatur peccator in desideriis animae suae: et qui iniqua gerit benedicitur (Psal. IX, 24)? 52. Peccati quartus gradus difficilius corrigitur. — Sciendum quoque est, quod tres illi modi peccantium juxta descensus sui ordinem facilius corriguntur, quartus vero iste difficilius emendatur. Unde et Redemptor noster puellam in domo, juvenem extra portam, in sepulcro autem Lazarum suscitat. Adhuc quippe in domo mortuus jacet, qui latet in peccato. Jam quasi extra portam educitur, cujus iniquitas usque ad inverecundiam publicae perpetrationis aperitur. Sepulturae vero aggere premitur, qui in perpetratione nequitiae etiam usu consuetudinis pressus gravatur. Sed hos ad vitam miseratus revocat, quia plerumque divina gratia, non solum in occultis, sed etiam in apertis iniquitatibus mortuos, et mole pravae consuetudinis pressos, respectus sui

lumine illustrat. Quartum vero mortuum Redemptor noster nuntiante discipulo agnoscit, nec tamen suscitat, quia valde difficile est ut is quem post usum malae consuetudinis etiam adulantium linguae excipiunt, a mentis suae morte revocetur. De quo et bene dicitur: Sine mortuos sepelire mortuos suos (Luc. IX, 60). Mortui enim mortuos sepeliunt, cum peccatores peccatorem favoribus premunt. Quid enim aliud est peccare, quam occumbere; et sepelire, quam abscondere? Sed qui peccantem laudibus prosequuntur, exstinctum sub verborum suorum aggere abscondunt. Erat autem et Lazarus mortuus, sed tamen non a mortuis sepultus. Fideles quippe mulieres illum obruerant, quae et ejus mortem vivificatori nuntiabant. Unde et protinus ad lucem rediit, quia cum in peccato animus moritur, citius ad vitam reducitur, si super hunc sollicitae cogitationes vivunt. Aliquando autem, sicut et superius 126 dictum est, falsa spes mentem non intercipit, sed hanc deterior desperatio configit, quae dum omnem spem veniae funditus interimit, erroris lacte animam uberius nutrit.. VERS. 14. — Cum regibus et consulibus terrae. 55. Angelici gaudii socius fuisset. Qui angeli sint reges et consules. — Ex rebus insensibilibus discimus quid de sensibilibus atque intelligibilibus sentiamus. Terra namque aere fecundatur, aer autem ex coeli qualitate disponitur. Sic jumentis homines, hominibus angeli, archangeli vero angelis praesunt. Nam quod jumentis homines praesint, et usu cernimus, et verbis Psalmistae docemur, qui ait: Omnia subjecisti sub pedibus ejus, oves et boves universas, insuper et pecora campi (Psal. VIII, 8). Quia vero angeli hominibus praesint, per prophetam testatur angelus, dicens: Princeps regni Persarum restitit mihi (Dan. X, 13). Quod vero angeli a superiorum angelorum potestatibus dispensentur, Zacharias perhibet propheta, qui ait: Ecce angelus, qui loquebatur in me, egrediebatur; et angelus alius egrediebatur in occursum ejus, et dixit ad eum: Curre, loquere ad puerum istum, dicens: Absque muro habitabitur Jerusalem (Zach. II, 3). Si enim in ipsis officiis sanctorum spirituum

nequaquam potestates summae minimas disponerent, nullo modo hoc, quod homini diceret, angelus ab angelo cognovisset. Quia igitur cunctorum conditor omnia per semetipsum tenet, et tamen ad distinguendum pulchrae universitatis ordinem, alia aliis dispensantibus regit, non immerito reges, angelorum spiritus accipimus, qui quo auctori omnium familiarius serviunt, eo subjecta potius regunt. Cum regibus ergo dormiret, quia nimirum jam cum angelis homo quiesceret, si persuasoris linguam sequi noluisset. Qui bene etiam consules vocantur, quia spiritali reipublicae consulunt, dum nos sibi ad regnum socios jungunt. Bene consules vocantur, quia dum ipsis nuntiantibus voluntatem conditoris agnoscimus, in eis procul dubio consultum ab hac angustia nostrae tribulationis invenimus.. Reges quippe sunt sancti praedicatores res Ecclesiae, qui et commissos sibi recte disponere, et sua bene regere corpora sciunt; qui dum desideriorum in se motus temperant, super subjectis cogitationibus lege virtutis regnant. Qui bene etiam terrae consules vocantur. Reges enim sunt, quia sibimetipsis praesident; terrae autem consules, quia exstinctis peccatoribus vitae consultum praebent. Reges sunt, quia semetipsos regere sciunt; terrae sunt consules, quia terrenas mentes per exhortationis suae consilium ad coelestia pertrahunt. An terrae consul non erat, qui dicebat: De virginibus autem praeceptum Domini non habeo, consilium autem do (I Cor. VII, 25)? Et iterum: Beatior erit, si sic permanserit, secundum meum consilium (Ibid., 40). Bene autem subditur:

CAPUT XXX IBID.

— Qui aedificant sibi solitudines. 57. Turbam tumultuantem in se gestant. Luxuriae deditus, iracundus, avarus, superbus, curis saecularibus deserviens. — Omnes enim, qui vel illicita appetunt, vel in hoc mundo videri aliquid volunt, densis cogitationum tumultibus in corde comprimuntur; dumque desideriorum turbas intra se excitant, prostratam

mentem pede miserae frequentationis calcant. Alius namque juri se luxuriae subdidit, atque ante mentis oculos schemata turpium perpetrationum fingit: et cum effectus non tribuitur operis, hoc crebrius agitur intentione cogitationis. Voluptatis perfectio quaeritur, et concussus enerviter animus, hinc inde et sollicitus et caecatus, occasionem nequissimae expletionis rimatur. Mens itaque haec quasi quemdam populum patitur, quae insolenti cogitationum tumultu vastatur. Alius irae se dominio stravit; et quid in corde, nisi jurgia, etiam quae desunt peragit? Hic saepe praesentes non videt, absentibus contradicit, intra semetipsum contumelias profert et recipit, receptis autem durius respondet; et cum qui obviet nullus adsit, magnis clamoribus rixas in corde componit. Turbam itaque hic intus sustinet, quem pondus vehemens inflammatae cogitationis premit. Alius juri se avaritiae tradidit, et fastidiens propria, aliena concupiscit: Hic plerumque concupita adipisci non valens, diem quidem in otium, noctem vero in cogitationem versat: torpet ab utili opere, quia fatigatur illicita cogitatione; consilia multiplicat, et sinum mentis cogitationum inventionibus latius expandit; pervenire ad concupita satagit, atque ad obtinenda haec quosdam secretissimos causarum meatus quaerit. Qui mox ut in causa aliquid subtile invenisse se aestimat, jam se obtinuisse quod concupierat, 129 exsultat: jam quid etiam adeptae rei adjungat, excogitat, atque ut in meliori statu debeat excoli, pertractat. Quam quia jam quasi possidet, et quasi ad meliorem speciem adducit, mox insidias invidentium considerat, et quid contra se jurgii moveatur, pensat: exquirit quid respondeat, et cum rem nullam teneat, jam in defensione rei quam appetit, vacuus litigator elaborat. Quamvis ergo nihil de concupita re ceperit, habet tamen in corde jam fructum concupiscentiae, laborem rixae. Gravi itaque populo premitur, qui instigantis avaritiae tumultu vastatur. Alius se tyrannidi superbiae subjecit; et cor miserum, dum contra homines erigit, vitio substernit. Honorum sublimium infulas appetit, exaltari successibus exquirit, totumque quod esse

desiderat, sibi apud semetipsum in cogitationibus depingit: jam quasi tribunali praesidet, jam sibi parere obsequia subjectorum videt, jam caeteris eminet, jam aliis mala irrogat, aliis quia irrogaverint recompensat. Jam apud semetipsum stipatus cuneis ad publicum procedit, jam quibus obsequiis fulciatur conspicit; qui tamen haec cogitans solus repit; jam alia conculcat, alia sublevat; jam de conculcatis satisfacit odiis, jam de sublevatis recipit favores. Qui igitur tot phantasmata cordi imprimit, quid iste aliud quam somnium vigilans videt? Quia ergo tot rerum causas quas fingit tolerat, nimirum intrinsecus natas ex desideriis turbas portat. Alius jam illicita refugit, sed tamen bonis mundi carere pertimescit: concessa tenere appetit, videri inter homines minor erubescit, et curat summopere ne inops in domo sit, ne despectus in publico. Exquirit quid sibi sufficiat, quid necessitas subjectorum petat; atque ut sufficienter jura patronatus subditis expleat, patronos quaerit quibus ipse famuletur; sed his dum familiariter jungitur, eorum procul dubio causis implicatur, quibus saepe consentit in illicitis, et mala quae propter semetipsum non appetit, committit propter alia quae non derelinquit. Nam saepe dum honorem suum in hoc mundo imminui trepidat, ea apud majores personas approbat, quae jam per proprium judicium damnat. Is dum sollicite cogitat, quid patronis debeat, quid subjectis; quid sibi augeat, quid affectibus prosit, quasi tanta frequentia turbarum premitur, quanta curarum importunitate laceratur. 60. Sed iste consul an sibi etiam solitudinem aedificet, narret. Ait enim: Ecce elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine (Psal. LIV, 8). Fugiens elongat, quia a turba desideriorum temporalium in alta Dei contemplatione se sublevat. Manet vero in solitudine, quia perseverat in remota mentis intentione. De qua bene solitudine Domino Jeremias ait: A facie manus tuae solus sedebam, quoniam comminatione replesti me (Jerem. XV, 17). Facies quippe manus Dei, est illa percussio justi judicii, qua superbientem hominem a paradiso repulit, et in hac caecitate praesentis exsilii exclusit. Comminatio vero ejus,

est terror adhuc supplicii sequentis. Post faciem igitur manus adhuc nos minae terrificant, quia per experimentum judicii jam nos et poena praesentis exsilii perculit, et si peccare non desistimus, aeternis adhuc suppliciis addicit. Consideret ergo vir sanctus, projectus huc, unde homo ceciderit, atque hunc post ista peccantem, quo adhuc justitia judicantis rapit; et cunctas a se desideriorum temporalium turbas ejiciat, seque in magna mentis 131 solitudine abscondat, dicens: A facie manus tuae solus sedebam, quoniam comminatione replesti me. Ac si aperte dicat: Dum considero quid jam per judicii experimentum patior, a tumultu desideriorum temporalium trepidus mentis secessum peto, quia et adhuc acrius illa quae minaris, aeterna supplicia formido. Bene ergo de regibus atque consulibus dicitur: Qui aedificant sibi solitudines. Quia ii qui et se bene regere, et consulere aliis sciunt, quoniam praesentari interim illi intimae quieti non possunt, hanc apud semetipsos per studium tranquillae mentis imitantur Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 15. — Cum principibus, qui possident aurum, et replent domos suas argento. 61. Principes sunt rectores Ecclesiae, aurum sapientia, argentum verbum Dei. — Quos alios principes, nisi sanctae Ecclesiae rectores vocat, quos indesinenter in loco praedicatorum praecedentium divina dispensatio subrogat? De quibus eidem Ecclesiae Psalmista ait: Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii: constitues eos principes super omnem terram (Psal. XLIV, 17). Quid vero aurum, nisi sapientiam appellat? de qua per Salomonem dicitur: Thesaurus desiderabilis requiescit in ore sapientis (Prov. XXI, 20). Aurum nempe sapientiam vidit, quam thesaurum vocavit. Quae et recte auri appellatione signatur; quia sicut auro temporalia, ita sapientia bona aeterna mercantur. Si aurum sapientia non esset, nequaquam Laodiceae Ecclesiae ab angelo diceretur: Suadeo tibi emere a me aurum ignitum (Apoc. III, 18). Aurum quippe emimus, cum accepturi sapientiam, prius obedientiam

praebemus. Ad quem videlicet nos contractum bene quidam sapiens excitat, dicens: Concupisti sapientiam? Serva mandata, et Dominus praebebit illam tibi (Eccli. I, 33). Quid autem per domos, nisi conscientiae designantur? Unde sanato cuidam dicitur: Vade in domum tuam (Matth. IX, 6). Ac si aperte audiat: Post exterius miraculum ad conscientiam revertere, et qualem te intrinsecus Deo debeas exhibere, perpende. Quid etiam per argentum, nisi eloquia divina figurantur? de quibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Eloquia Domini, eloquia casta, argentum igne examinatum (Psal. XI, 7). Eloquium Domini argentum igne examinatum dicitur, quia sermo Dei si in corde figitur, tribulationibus probatur.. VERS. 16. — Aut sicut abortivum absconditum non subsisterem: vel qui concepti non viderunt lucem. 63. Sancti ante redemptionis tempus orti, sunt velut abortivi. Plures fuerunt quam quos memorat Moyses — Abortivum, quia ante plenum tempus oritur, exstinctum protinus occultatur. Quos ergo sanctus vir alios abortivos vocat, cum quibus se quiescere potuisse considerat, nisi electos quosque, qui ab ipso mundi primordio ante redemptionis tempus exorti sunt, et tamen huic mundo semetipsos mortificare curaverunt? Qui conscriptae legis tabulas non habentes, quasi ab utero mortui sunt, quia auctorem suum naturali lege timuerunt; et cum venturum Mediatorem crederent, studuerunt summopere, mortificandis voluptatibus, etiam quae scripto non acceperant praecepta servare. Tempus itaque illud, quod juxta mundi initium mortuos huic saeculo patres nostros protulit, quasi abortivi uterus fuit. Ibi namque Abel, qui occidenti se fratri restitisse non legitur (Genes. IV, 8, 24). Ibi Enoch, qui talem se exhibuit, ut ambulaturus cum Domino transferretur (Genes. V, 22, 24). Ibi Noe, qui per hoc, quod divino examini placuit, in mundo mundo superstes fuit (Genes. VII, 23). Ibi Abraham, qui dum peregrinus est in saeculo, factus est amicus Deo (Genes. XII, 1). Ibi Isaac, qui caligantibus carnis oculis, per aetatem quidem praesentia non vidit, sed per virtutem prophetici spiritus in futuris etiam saeculis magna videndi luce

radiavit (Genes. XXVII, 1). Ibi Jacob, qui iram fratris humiliter fugit, clementer edomuit; qui prole quidem fecundus exstitit, sed tamen spiritus ubertate fecundior, eamdem prolem sub prophetiae suae vinculis astrinxit (Genes. XXXIII, 4). Bene autem abortivum hoc absconditum dicitur, quia a mundi primordiis, dum quosdam paucos Moyse scribente cognoscimus, pars nobis maxima humani generis occultatur. Neque enim tot justos solummodo usque ad acceptam legem exstitisse credendum est, quot Moyses brevissima descriptione perstrinxit. Quia ergo a mundi primordio edita multitudo bonorum, ex magna parte notitiae nostrae subtrahitur, abortivum hoc absconditum vocatur. Quod et non substitisse dicitur, quia, enumeratis paucis, eorum frequentia nullo apud nos memoriae scripto retinetur.. VERS. 17. — Ibi impii cessaverunt a tumultu, et ibi requieverunt fessi robore. 66. Impii Incarnationis beneficio a gravi labore erepti. — Paulo ante jam diximus quia corda peccantium per hoc quod strepitus desideriorum possidet, gravis cogitationum instigantium tumultus premit. Sed in hac luce, quam concepti minime viderunt, a tumultu suo impii cessare perhibentur, quia nimirum Mediatoris adventum, quem patres in lege positi diu praestolati sunt, ad vitae suae requiem populi gentiles invenerunt, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Quod quaerebat Israel, hoc non est consecutus, electio autem consecuta est (Rom. XI, 7). In hac itaque luce impii a tumultu cessant, dum perversorum mentes, veritate cognita, laboriosa mundi desideria fugiunt, et tranquillitati intimi amoris acquiescunt. An non ad cessationem vocat Lux ipsa, quae ait: Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego vos reficiam: tollite jugum meum super vos, et discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde, et invenietis requiem animabus vestris; jugum enim meum suave est, et onus meum leve est (Matth. XI, 28, 29, 30)? Quid enim grave mentis nostrae cervicibus imponit, qui vitari omne desiderium quod perturbat praecipit? Quid grave subjectis jubet, qui declinari laboriosa mundi hujus itinera admonet?

Attestante autem Paulo apostolo, Christus pro impiis mortuus est (Rom. V, 6). Sed idcirco dignata est pro impiis ipsa Lux occumbere, ne impii in tenebrarum suarum tumultu remanerent. Contempletur ergo vir sanctus quod Lux per incarnationis suae mysterium ex gravi labore impios eripit, dum ab eorum cordibus desideria pravitatis tergit; contempletur quod conversi quique quietem, quam percipere in aeternitate desiderant, hic jam per tranquillitatem mentis degustant, et dicat: Ibi impii cessaverunt a tumultu, et ibi requieverunt fessi robore. 134 67. Quo plus in amore Dei roboramur, eo magis deficimus a propria virtute. Lux aeterna locus noster. — Omnes enim qui in hoc mundo fortes sunt, robore quasi fortes sunt, non robore defessi. Qui vero in auctoris sui amore roborantur, quo magis in concupita Dei fortitudine convalescunt, eo a propria virtute deficiunt; et quo robustius aeterna appetunt, eo a temporalibus salubri defectione lassantur. Hinc Psalmista amoris sui robore fessus dicebat: Defecit in salutari tuo anima mea (Psal. CXVIII, 81). In salutare enim Dei proficiendo defecerat, quia aeternitatis lucem desiderans, a carnis jam fiducia fractus anhelabat. Hinc rursum dicit: Concupivit, et defecit anima mea in atria Domini (Psal. LXXXIII, 3). Qui nimirum cum diceret, Concupivit, recte subdidit, Et defecit: quia valde minor est divinitatis concupiscentia, quam non mox etiam proprius sequitur defectus. Qui enim ad appetenda aeternitatis atria accenditur, dignum profecto est ut ab hoc temporalitatis amore lassetur, ut tanto frigescat ab studio saeculi, quanto surgit ardentior in amorem Dei. Quem scilicet si perfecte arripit, mundum etiam plene derelinquit; et eo funditus temporalibus moritur, quo ad supernam vitam altius afflatu aeternitatis animatur. An non robore suo fessam se invenerat, quae dicebat: Anima mea liquefacta est, ut locutus est (Cant. V, 6)? Quia nimirum mens dum occultae locutionis aspiratione tangitur, a statu suae fortitudinis infirmata, ipso quo absorbetur desiderio liquatur; et inde se apud semetipsam fessam invenit, unde ultra se esse conspicit fortitudinem, quam

conscendit. Hinc propheta, cum visionem Dei se conspexisse diceret, adjungit, Elangui et aegrotavi per dies plurimos (Dan. VIII, 27), quia cum ad virtutem Dei mens stringitur, a fortitudine propria caro lassatur. Hinc Jacob, qui angelum tenuit, uno mox pede claudicavit (Genes. XXXII, 25), quia qui vero amore sublimia respicit, jam in hunc mundum duplicibus incedere desideriis nescit. Uno enim pede innititur, qui solo Dei amore roboratur; et necesse est ut alius marceat, quia, mentis virtute crescente, oportet procul dubio ut carnis fortitudo torpescat. Beatus igitur Job alta fidelium corda respiciat, atque perpendat quem sinum intimae quietis inveniunt, dum a viribus propriis in Deum proficiendo lassantur, et dicat: Ibi requieverunt fessi robore. Ac si aperte insinuet, dicens: Illic requies lucis remunerat, quos hic interius recreans provectus fatigat. Nec movere debet quod lucem nominans, nequaquam subdidit: In hac, sed Ibi. Quam enim continere electos conspicit, quasi locum nostrum hanc esse deprehendit. Unde Psalmista cum incommutabilitatem aeternitatis aspiceret, dicens: Tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient (Psal. CI, 28), hunc electorum locum esse denuntiat, subdens: Filii servorum tuorum inhabitabunt ibi (Ibid., 29). Deus enim, qui sine situ omnia continet, nobis ad se venientibus locus non localis manet. Quem locum dum pertingimus, etiam ipsa in hac vita mentis nostrae tranquillitas, quanta fuerit perturbatio videmus; quia etsi jam justi in pravorum comparatione quieti sunt, in aestimatione tamen quietis intimae omni modo quieti non sunt. Unde et bene subditur:

CAPUT XXXIV.

VERS. 18. — Et quondam vincti pariter sine molestia. 68. Vincula dura quibus hic ligantur etiam justi. — Justos enim quamvis nullus desideriorum carnalium tumultus possideat, duris tamen vinculis eos in hac vita positos suae molestia corruptionis 135 ligat. Scriptum quippe est: Corpus quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa

cogitantem (Sap. IX, 15). Eo itaque ipso quo adhuc mortales sunt, corruptionis suae pondere gravantur, et astricti molestia vincti sunt, quia in illa adhuc libertate vitae incorruptibilis non exsurgunt. Aliud namque de mente, aliud de corpore tolerant, et contra semetipsos quotidie in interno certamine desudant. An non duro molestiae vinculo ligantur, quorum nimirum mens sine labore in ignorantia solvitur, et non nisi cum studio laboris eruditur? Coacta erigitur, libens jacet, ab infimis vix levatur, et tamen elevata protinus labitur. Semetipsam laboriose vincendo, superna conspicit; sed reverberata, lumen, quod se irradiaverat, refugit. An non duro molestiae vinculo ligantur, quos cum accensus spiritus ad sinum pacis intimae pleno desiderio pertrahat, fervente certamine caro perturbat? Quae etsi jam ante faciem velut ex adverso acie erecta non obviat, adhuc tamen a mentis dorso quasi captiva submurmurat: et quamvis timendo, sed tamen turpi strepitu in corde speciem pulchrae quietis foedat. Electi igitur etsi valenter omnia superant, cum securitatem pacis internae desiderant, gravis eis est molestia, adhuc habere quod vincant. Qui his exceptis, ea etiam vincula sustinent, quae gravis exterius necessitas astringit. Esurire quippe, sitire, lassescere, vincula corruptionis sunt: quae scilicet solvi nequeunt, nisi cum in illam immortalitatis gloriam nostra mortalitas permutatur. Replemus etenim refectionibus corpus, ne extenuatum deficiat; extenuamus abstinentia, ne nos repletum premat. Vegetamus hoc motibus, ne situ immobilitatis intereat; sed citius hoc collocando sistimus, ne ipsa sua vegetatione succumbat. Adjumentis hoc vestium tegimus, ne frigus interimat, et quaesita adjumenta projicimus, ne calor exurat. Tot igitur diversitatibus occurrentes quid agimus, nisi corruptibilitati servimus, ut saltem multiplicitas impensi obsequii corpus sustineat, quod anxietas infirmae mutabilitatis gravat? Unde bene per Paulum dicitur: Vanitati enim creatura subjecta est non volens, sed propter eum qui subjecit in spe: quia et ipsa creatura liberabitur a servitute corruptionis, in libertatem gloriae

filiorum Dei (Rom. VIII, 20). Vanitati quippe creatura non volens subditur, quia homo, qui ingenitae constantiae statum volens deseruit, pressus justae mortalitatis pondere, nolens mutabilitatis suae corruptioni servit. Sed creatura haec tunc a servitute corruptionis eripitur, cum ad filiorum Dei gloriam incorrupta resurgendo sublevatur. Hic itaque electi molestia vincti sunt, quia adhuc corruptioni suae poena deprimuntur. Sed cum corruptibili carne exuimur, quasi ab his, quibus nunc astringimur, molestiae vinculis relaxamur. Praesentari namque jam Deo cupimus, sed adhuc mortalis corporis obligatione praepedimur. Jure ergo vincti dicimur, quia adhuc incessum 136 nostri desiderii ad Deum liberum non habemus. Unde bene Paulus aeterna desiderans, sed tamen adhuc corruptionis suae sarcinam portans, vinctus clamat: Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo (Phil. I, 23). Dissolvi enim non quaereret, nisi se procul dubio vinctum videret. Haec autem vincula, quia certissime rumpenda in resurrectione conspexerat, jam quasi rupta gaudebat Propheta, cum diceret: Dirupisti vincula mea, tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis (Psal. CXV, 7). Epilogus. — Contempletur itaque vir sanctus, quod conversos peccatores lux interna recipiat, et dicat: Ibi impii cessaverunt a tumultu. Contempletur, quod sancti viri desiderii exercitatione fatigati, altius in illo intimo sinu requiescant, et dicat: Et ibi requieverunt fessi robore. Contempletur, quod cunctis simul corruptionis suae vinculis absoluti, ad illa libertatis gaudia incorrupta perveniant, et dicat: Et quondam vincti pariter sine molestia. Bene autem dicitur, Quondam vincti; quia dum illa semper praesens laetitia cernitur, omne quod erit et defluit, quasi praeteritum jam videtur. Dum enim rerum finis attenditur, omne quod praeterit, quasi jam fuisse pensatur. Sed omnes hi quos illuc quies interna suscipiet, hic interim quid egerint, narret. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

IBID. — Non exaudierunt vocem exactoris. 69. Diabolus exactor. Non exauditur, cum tentanti resistitur. — Quis alius debet nomine exactoris intelligi, nisi importunus ille persuasor, qui humano generi semel nummum deceptionis contulit, et ab hoc quotidie expetere mortis debitum non desistit? Qui in paradiso homini peccati pecuniam commodavit; sed iniquitate crescente, hanc quotidie cum usuris exigit. De hoc exactore in Evangelio Veritas dicit, Et judex tradet te exactori (Luc. XII, 58). Hujus igitur exactoris vox est tentatio miserae suggestionis. Audimus autem vocem exactoris, cum ejus tentatione pulsamur; sed non exaudimus, si pulsanti resistimus. Audit enim, qui tentationem sentit; exaudit vero qui tentationi consentit. Dicatur itaque de justis: Non exaudierent vocem exactoris, quoniam suggestionem ejus etsi audiunt, quia tentantur; non exaudiunt, quia consentire contemnunt. Sed quia quod valde mens amat, etiam in sermone saepius replicat, beatus Job, quia internae pacis frequentiam diligens conspicit, descriptioni ejus iterum servit, dicens:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 19. — Parvus et magnus ibi sunt, et servus liber a domino suo. 70. Ut hic merita, ita in coelo erunt praemia diversa. — Quia in hac vita nobis est discretio operum, erit in illa procul dubio discretio dignitatum, ut quod hic alius alium merito superat, illic alius alium retributione transcendat. Unde in Evangelio Veritas dicit: In domo Patris mei mansiones multae sunt (Joan. XIV, 2). Sed in eisdem multis mansionibus erit aliquo modo ipsa retributionum diversitas concors; quia tanta vis in illa pace nos sociat, ut quod in se quisque non acceperit, hoc se accepisse in alio exsultet. Unde et non aeque laborantes in vinea (Matth. XX, 10), aeque 137 cuncti denarium sortiuntur. Et quidem apud Patrem mansiones multae sunt, et tamen eumdem denarium dispares laboratores accipiunt; quia una cunctis erit beatitudo laetitiae, quamvis non una sit omnibus sublimitas vitae. Parvum et

magnum in hac luce conspexerat, qui ex voce capitis dicebat: Imperfectum meum viderunt oculi tui, et in libro tuo omnes scribentur (Psal. CXXXVIII, 16). Parvum et magnum conspexerat, cum dicebat: Benedixit omnes timentes se Dominus, pusillos cum majoribus (Psal. CXIII, 13). 71. Quis peccati servus, quis ab eo liber, et quod hic nemo ab eo liber. — Bene autem subditur: Et servus liber a domino suo. Scriptum quippe est, Omnis qui peccat, servus est peccati (Joan. VIII, 34); quia nimirum quisquis se pravo desiderio subjicit, iniquitatis dominio dudum libera mentis colla supponit. Sed huic domino contradicimus, cum iniquitati quae nos ceperat, reluctamur; cum consuetudini violenter resistimus, et desideria perversa calcantes contra hanc jus nobis libertatis ingenitae vindicamus; cum culpam poenitendo percutimus, et maculas sordium fletibus lavamus. Plerumque autem jam mens quidem quod perverse egisse se meminit, deplorat; jam prave acta non solum deserit, sed amarissimis etiam lamentis punit; sed tamen dum eorum quae egit reminiscitur, gravi de judicio pavore terretur. Jam se perfecte convertit; sed adhuc se perfecte in securitatem non erigit, quia dum quanta sit districtio extremi examinis pensat, inter spem ac formidinem sollicita trepidat, quia justus judex veniens, quid de perpetratis reputet, quid relaxet, ignorat. Nam quam prava commiserit, meminit; sed an commissa digne defleverit, nescit; ac ne culpae immanitas modum poenitentiae transeat, metuit. Et plerumque culpam jam veritas relaxat, sed mens afflicta adhuc de venia, dum valde sibi est sollicita, trepidat. Servus ergo hic jam fugit dominum, sed liber non est, quia peccatum suum homo jam corrigendo et poenitendo deserit, sed tamen adhuc districtum judicem de ejus retributione pertimescit. Ibi ergo servus a domino liber erit, ubi jam de peccati venia dubietas non erit, ubi jam securam mentem culpae suae memoria non addicit, ubi non sub reatu animus trepidat, sed de ejus in dulgentia liber exsultat. 138 72. An nulla in coelo peccati memoria: qui haec beatitudini non officiat. — Sed si nulla ibi homo peccati sui memoria

tangitur, ereptum se unde gratulatur? Aut quomodo largitori gratias refert de venia quam accepit, si interveniente oblivione transactae nequitiae, esse se poenae debitorem nescit? Neque enim neglecte praetereundum est quod Psalmista ait: Misericordias tuas, Domine, in aeternum cantabo (Psal. LXXXVIII, 1). Quomodo enim Dei misericordias in aeternum cantat, si se fuisse miserum ignorat? Et si miseriae transactae non meminit, unde largitati misericordiae laudes reddit? Sed rursum quaerendum est, quomodo electorum mens perfecta esse in beatitudine poterit, si hanc inter gaudia memoria sui reatus tangit? Aut quomodo perfectae lucis clarescit gloria, quam reducta ad animum obumbrat culpa? Sed sciendum est quia sicut saepe nunc tristium laeti reminiscimur, ita tunc transactae nequitiae sine laesione nostrae beatitudinis recordamur. Plerumque enim incolumitatis tempore ad memoriam dolores praeteritos sine dolore reducimus; et quo aegros recolimus, eo nos incolumes plus amamus. Erit ergo et in illa beatitudine culpae memoria, non quae mentem polluat, sed quae nos arctius laetitiae astringat; ut dum doloris sui animus sine dolore reminiscitur, et debitorem se medico verius intelligat, et eo magis acceptam salutem diligat, quo de molestia meminit, quid evasit. In illa itaque laetitia sic tunc sine taedio mala nostra conspicimus, sicut nunc in luce positi, sine ulla cordis caligine animo tenebras videmus; quia etsi obscurum est quod mente cernimus, de judicio est hoc luminis, non de passione caecitatis. Et in aeternum ergo laudem misericordiae largitori nostro referimus, et nequaquam miseriae conscientia gravamur; quia dum mala nostra sine aliquo mentis malo respicimus, et nunquam erit quod corda laudantium de transactis iniquitatibus polluat, et semper erit quod haec ad laudem liberatoris accendat. Quia ergo internae lucis requies sic in se magnos sublevat, ut tamen nec parvulos derelinquat, dicatur recte: Parvus et magnus ibi sunt. Quia autem sic ibi conversi peccatoris animus culpae suae memoria

tangitur, ut tamen nulla ejusdem memoriae confusione deprimatur, congrue subjungitur: Et servus liber a domino suo.

LIBER QUINTUS.

Reliquam capitis tertii partem a XX versu, totum caput quartum, et quinti duos priores versus enarrat.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. Sancti hic prospera magis formidare, quam adversa. — Cum valde occulta sint divina judicia, cur in hac vita nonnunquam bonis male sit, malis bene, tunc occultiora sunt, cum et bonis hic bene est, et malis male. Nam cum bonis male est, malis bene, hoc fortasse deprehenditur, quia et boni, si qua deliquerunt, hic recipiunt, ut ab aeterna plenius damnatione liberentur; et mali bona, quae pro hac vita faciunt, hic inveniunt, ut ad sola in posterum tormenta pertrahantur. Unde et ardenti in inferno diviti dicitur: Memento, fili, quia recepisti bona in vita tua, et Lazarus similiter mala (Luc. XVI, 25). At cum bonis hic bene est, et malis male, incertum valde fit utrum boni idcirco bona accipiant, ut provocati ad aliquid melius crescant; an justo latentique judicio hic suorum operum remunerationem percipiant, ut a praemiis vitae sequentis inanescant; et utrum malos idcirco adversa feriant, ut ab aeternis suppliciis corrigentia defendant; an hic eorum poena incipiat, ut quandoque complenda eos ad ultima gehennae 139 tormenta perducat. Quia ergo inter divina judicia gravi incertitudinis suae caligine humana mens premitur, sancti viri cum sibi suppetere prospera hujus mundi conspiciunt, pavida suspicione turbantur. Timent enim ne hic laborum suorum fructus recipiant; timent ne quod divina justitia latens in eis vulnus aspiciat, et exterioribus eos muneribus cumulans, ab intimis repellat. Cum vero taciti cogitant quod nec bona agunt, nisi ut soli Domino placeant, nec in ipsa affluentia suae prosperitatis exsultant, minus quidem de prosperis occulta contra se judicia metuunt, sed tamen eadem prospera, quia se ab intima intentione praepediunt, aegre ferunt; et moleste praesentis vitae

blandimenta tolerant, quia per haec se utcunque tardari in interno desiderio non ignorant. Plus enim in hoc mundo honor quam despectio occupat, et magis prosperitatis sublimitas quam necessitatis adversitas gravat. Per hanc namque nonnunquam cum homo exterius premitur, ad concupiscenda quae intus sunt, liberius relaxatur. Per illam vero animus, dum multis parere cogitur, a desiderii sui cursu retinetur. Unde fit ut sancti viri magis in hoc mundo prospera quam adversa formident. Sciunt namque quia mens dum blanda occupatione premitur, aliquando libens ad exteriora derivatur. Sciunt quia saepe sic hanc clandestina cogitatio decipit, ut quomodo permutetur ignoret. Pensant autem quae sint aeterna bona quae cupiunt, et cognoscunt quam nihil sit omne quod blandum temporaliter arridet; cunctaque hujus mundi prospera mens eorum eo aegre tolerat, quo supernae felicitatis est amore sauciata, tantoque magis in praesentis dulcedinis aspernatione erigitur, quanto hanc conspicit, quia furtive sibi in aeternae gloriae despectu blanditur. Unde beatus Job cum supernam requiem contemplatus diceret: Parvus et magnus ibi sunt, et servus liber a domino suo, illico adjungit:

CAPUT II.

VERS. 20. — Quare data est misero lux? 2. Aeterna contemplantes terrenam prosperitatem refugiunt. — In Scriptura sacra nonnunquam lucis appellatione prosperitas, noctis autem nomine hujus mundi adversitas designatur. Unde et bene per Psalmistam dicitur: Sicut tenebrae ejus, ita et lumen ejus (Psal. CXXXVIII, 12). Quia enim sancti viri ita prosperitatem saeculi despicientes calcant, sicut et adversitatem ejus calcantes tolerant, per magnam mentis celsitudinem mundi sibi et adversa et prospera substernentes dicunt: Sicut tenebrae ejus, ita et lumen ejus. Ac si apertius dicant: Sicut intentionis nostrae fortitudinem ejus tristia non premunt, ita hanc nec blanda corrumpunt. Sed quia haec, ut diximus, bonorum mentem etiam cum non sublevant, perturbant, sancti viri, qui se in hujus exsilii

aerumna miseros cognoscunt, clarescere in ejus prosperitate refugiunt. Unde bene nunc dicitur: Quare data est misero lux? Lux enim miseris datur, quando ii qui sublimia contemplantes, esse se in hac peregrinatione miseros agnoscunt, claritatem transitoriae prosperitatis accipiunt. Et cum valde defleant quia tarde ad patriam redeunt, tolerare insuper honoris onera compelluntur. Amor eos aeternorum conterit, et gloria de temporalibus arridet. Qui dum cogitant 140 quae sint quae in infimis tenent, et quae sint quae de sublimibus non vident; quae sint quae in terra fulciunt, quae autem de coelestibus perdiderunt, prosperitatis suae moerore mordentur; quia etsi vident nequaquam se ab ea funditus opprimi, pensant tamen sollicite cogitationem suam in amore Domini et in ejus dispensatione partiri. Unde bene cum dicit: Quare data est misero lux? protinus adjungit:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 20. — Et vita his qui in amaritudine animae sunt. 3. Hic in amaritudine sunt electi et reprobi; quo discrimine. — In amaritudine quippe animae sunt omnes electi, quia vel punire flendo non desinunt quae deliquerunt, vel gravi se moerore afficiunt, quia longe huc a facie conditoris projecti, adhuc in aeternae patriae gaudiis non sunt. De quorum corde per Salomonem bene dicitur: Cor, quod novit amaritudinem animae suae, in gaudio illius non miscebitur extraneus (Prov. XIV, 10). In amaritudine namque sunt et corda reproborum, quia ipsis etiam pravis suis desideriis affliguntur; sed eamdem amaritudinem nesciunt, quia pensare quod tolerant, sponte sua excaecati non possunt. At contra cor bonorum amaritudinem suam novit, quia aerumnam exsilii, in qua projectum laceratur, intelligit; et quam sint tranquilla quae perdidit, quam confusa in quibus cecidit, sentit. Sed hoc amaricatum cor ad gaudium suum quandoque reducitur, atque in ejus gaudio extraneus non miscetur; quia is qui nunc ab hoc moerore cordis foras se per desideria ejicit, seclusus tunc ab illa intima ejus solemnitate

remanebit. 4. Quis mortuus mundo, et cui mundus mortuus. — Hi itaque qui in amaritudine animae sunt, mori mundo funditus concupiscunt; ut sicut in saeculo ipsi nihil appetunt, ita jam a saeculo nulla obligatione teneantur. Et plerumque contingit ut jam homo mundum mente non teneat, sed tamen mundus hominem occupationibus astringat: et ipse quidem mundo jam mortuus est, sed ipsi mundus adhuc mortuus non est. Quasi enim adhuc vivus mundus eum conspicit, dum alio intentum in suis actibus rapere contendit. Unde bene Paulus, cum et ipse saeculum perfecte despiceret, et talem se factum videret, quem jam hoc saeculum concupiscere omnino non posset, ruptis hujus vitae vinculis liber dicit: Mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo (Gal. VI, 14). Mundus quippe ei crucifixus fuerat, quia hunc cordi suo jam mortuum non amabat. Sed et se ipsum mundo crucifixerat, quia talem se ei exhibere studuit, ut ab eo quasi mortuus concupisci non posset. Si enim uno in loco sint mortuus et vivens; etsi mortuus vivum non videt, vivus tamen mortuum videt; si vero utrique sint mortui, alter alterum nequaquam videt. Ita qui jam mundum non amat, sed tamen ab illo vel non volens amatur, etsi ipse velut mortuus mundum non videt, hunc tamen mundus adhuc non mortuus videt. Si vero nec ipse in amore mundum retinet, nec rursum a mundi amore retinetur, vicissim sibi utrique exstincti sunt; quia dum alter alterum non appetit, quasi mortuum mortuus non attendit. Quia igitur Paulus nec mundi gloriam quaerebat, nec a mundi gloria ipse quaerebatur, et se mundo, et mundum sibi crucifixum esse gloriatur. Quod quia multi appetunt, sed tamen usque ad culmen exstinctionis 141 omni modo non assurgunt, recte gementes dicunt: Quare data est misero lux, et vita his qui in amaritudine animae sunt? Vita quippe amaricatis datur, cum hujus mundi gloria tristibus gementibusque tribuitur. In qua nimirum vita poena se validissimi timoris afficiunt, quia etsi ipsi mundum non tenent, adhuc tamen tales esse se metuunt, qui a mundo teneantur; quia nisi ei quantulumcunque viverent, hos ad usum suum procul

dubio non amaret. Mare enim viva corpora in semetipso retinet; nam mortua extra se protinus expellit. Sequitur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 21. — Qui exspectant mortem, et non venit. 5. Mori saeculo appetentes, saepe humanis ministeriis servire coguntur. Non sine suo et aliorum lucro. — Desiderant quippe mortificare se funditus, atque ab omni vita gloriae temporalis exstinguere; sed occultis saepe Dei judiciis vel praeesse in regimine, vel occupari injunctis honoribus compelluntur, atque inter haec mortificationem plenissimam indesinenter exspectant. Sed exspectata mors non venit, quia eorum usus temporali gloriae etiam nolens vivit, quam tamen pro divino timore tolerant. Et intus quidem servant desiderium pietatis, foris autem explent ministerium ordinis; quatenus nec a perfectione per intentionem recedant, nec dispositioni conditoris per superbiam contradicant. Mira enim divinitatis pietate agitur, cum is qui perfecto corde ad contemplationem tendit, humanis ministeriis occupatur; ut et multis infirmioribus ejus mens perfecta proficiat, et quo se ipse imperfectum respicit, inde ad humilitatis culmen perfectior assurgat. Nonnunquam etenim sancti viri unde desideriorum suorum detrimenta tolerant, inde majora lucra, conversis aliis, reportant; quia dum eis vacare ut appetunt non licet, rapere secum alios, quibus admiscentur, libet. Fit ergo mira dispensatione pietatis ut unde se destructiores aestimant, inde locupletiores ad coelestis patriae constructionem surgant. 6. Desideria pia saepe Deus explere differt, ut crescant. — Nonnunquam vero idcirco ad concepta desideria minime perveniunt, ut ipsa interveniente tarditate, ad eadem desideria laxato mentis sinu dilatentur; et quae extenuari fortasse impleta poterant, magna dispositione agitur, ut repulsa crescant. Sic quippe mortificari appetunt, ut jam perfecte, si liceat, conditoris sui faciem contemplentur. Sed eorum desiderium differtur, ut proficiat; et tarditatis

suae sinu nutritur, ut crescat. Unde bene sponsa in sponsi sui desiderio anhelans clamat: In lectulo meo per noctes quaesivi quem diligit anima mea; quaesivi illum, et non inveni (Cant. III, 1). Abscondit se sponsus cum quaeritur, ut non inventus ardentius quaeratur; et differtur quaerens sponsa, ne inveniat, ut tarditate sua capacior reddita, multiplicius quandoque inveniat quod quaerebat. Unde beatus Job cum diceret: Exspectant mortem, et non venit, ut hoc ipsum quaerentium desiderium subtilius expleret, illico adjungit: CAPUT. IBID. — Quasi effodientes thesaurum. 7. Crescunt, ubi finis propinquior. — Omnes namque qui fodiendo thesaurum quaerunt, cum fodere altius coeperint, ad laborem instantius inardescunt; quia quo se thesauro abscondito jam jamque appropinquare aestimant, eo in effossione enixius laborant. Qui igitur plene 142 mortificationem suam appetunt, quasi effodientes thesaurum quaerunt; quia quanto fiunt viciniores ad finem, tanto se exhibent ardentiores in opere. Laborando ergo non deficiunt, sed magis ad usum laboris crescunt; quia quo jam praemia propinquiora considerant, eo in opere delectabilius exsudant. Unde bene Paulus quibusdam absconditum aeternae patriae thesaurum quaerentibus dicit: Non deserentes collectionem nostram, sicut est consuetudinis quibusdam, sed consolantes, et tanto magis, quanto videritis appropinquantem diem (Hebr. X, 25). Laborantem quippe consolari, est pariter in labore persistere, quia sublevatio laboris est visio collaborantis: sicut cum in itinere comes jungitur, via quidem non abstrahitur, sed tamen de societate comitis labor itineris leviatur. Dum itaque Paulus consolantes se in laboribus quaereret, adjunxit dicens: Tanto magis, quanto videritis appropinquantem diem. Ac si diceret: Eo labor crescat, quo ipsa jam praemia laboris appropinquant, velut si aperte dicat: Thesaurum quaeritis? sed eo fodere ardentius debetis, quo jam juxta quaesitum aurum fodiendo pervenistis. 8. Mortui mundo se intra se a terrenis abscondunt. — Quamvis hoc quod dicitur: Exspectant mortem, et non venit, quasi effodientes thesaurum, intelligi et aliter potest. Quia

enim perfecte mori mundo non possumus, nisi intra mentis nostrae invisibilia a visibilibus abscondamur, recte ii qui mortificationem suam appetunt, thesaurum effodientibus comparantur. Mundo enim per invisibilem sapientiam morimur, de qua per Salomonem dicitur: Si quaesieris illam quasi pecuniam, et sicut thesauros effoderis eam (Prov. II, 4, 5). Sapientia quippe in rerum superficie non jacet; quia in invisibilibus latet. Et tunc mortificationem nostram sapientiam contingentes apprehendimus, si relictis visibilibus in invisibilibus abscondamur; si sic hanc, cor effodientes, quaerimus, ut omne quod terrenum mens cogitat, a semetipsa, manu sanctae discretionis ejiciat, et thesaurum virtutis, qui se latebat, agnoscat. Facile enim in se thesaurum invenit, si eam quae se male presserat molem a se terrenae cogitationis repellit. Quia autem quaesitam mortem sicut thesaurum dicit, recte subjungit:

CAPUT VI.

VERS. 22. — Gaudentque vehementer, cum invenerint sepulcrum. 9. Divina contemplatio sepulcrum est in quo mens mundo mortua quiescit. — Sicut enim sepulcrum locus est quo absconditur corpus, ita divina contemplatio quoddam sepulcrum mentis est, quo absconditur anima. Quasi enim huic adhuc mundo vivimus, cum mente in eum foras vagamur; sed mortui in sepulcro abscondimur, cum mortificati exterius, in secreto internae contemplationis celamur. Sancti igitur viri ab importunitate desideriorum temporalium, a tumultu inutilium curarum, a clamore perstrepentium perturbationum, semetipsos sacri verbi gladio mortificare non desinunt, atque intus ante Dei faciem in sinu mentis abscondunt. Unde bene per Psalmistam dicitur: Abscondes eos in abscondito vultus tui, a conturbatione hominum (Psal. XXX, 21). Quod quamvis perfecte postmodum fiat, etiam nunc ex magna parte agitur, cum a temporalium desideriorum tumultibus delectatione in interiora rapiuntur; 143 ut mens

eorum dum in amorem Dei tota tenditur, nulla inutili perturbatione laceretur. Hinc est quod Paulus per contemplationem mortuos et quasi in sepulcro absconditos discipulos viderat, quibus dicebat: Mortui enim estis, et vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo (Col. III, 3, 4). Qui ergo mortem quaerit, gaudet dum sepulcrum invenit, quia qui mortificare se appetit, valde ad inventam requiem contemplationis hilarescit; ut exstinctus mundo lateat, et a cunctis exteriorum rerum perturbationibus intra sinum se intimi amoris abscondat. 10. Mortui olim cum divitiis sepulti. — Si vero ad hoc quod thesaurus effodi dicitur, etiam sepulcri inventio subinfertur, hoc necesse est ut intentio nostra conspiciat, quod antiqui mortuos cum divitiis obruebant. Qui igitur thesaurum quaerit, gaudet cum sepulcrum invenerit, quia sapientiam perquirentes, cum sacrae Scripturae paginas volvimus, cum exempla praecedentium perscrutamur, quasi ex sepulcro gaudium sumimus, quia mentis divitias apud mortuos invenimus: qui quia huic mundo perfecte exstincti sunt, in occulto cum divitiis requiescunt. Sepulcro ergo dives efficitur, qui per exempla justorum in contemplationis virtute sublevatur. Sed cum requirens dicat: Quare data est misero lux? cur hoc ipsum requirere praesumat, insinuat dicens:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 23. — Viro, cujus abscondita est via, et circumdedit eum Deus tenebris. 11. Ignorat recte agens utrum perseveraturus sit. — Via enim sua viro abscondita est, quia etsi jam in qua sit vitae qualitate considerat, adhuc tamen ad quem finem tendat, ignorat. Etsi jam superna appetit, etsi plenis haec desideriis quaerit, adhuc tamen si in eisdem desideriis permaneat, nescit. Peccata quippe deserentes, ad justitiam tendimus; et unde venimus, novimus; sed quo perveniamus, ignoramus. Quid hesterna die fuimus, scimus; sed quid contingat crastina nos esse, nescimus. Via ergo sua viro abscondita est, quia sic pedem ponit operis, ut tamen praevidere nequeat

exitum consummationis ejus.. VERS. 24. — Antequam comedam, suspiro. 14. Lacrymas saepe excipit gaudium contemplationis. — Comedere namque est animae, supernae lucis contemplationibus pasci. Suspirat ergo antequam comedat, quia prius gemitibus tribulationis afficitur, et postmodum contemplationis refectione satiatur. Nisi enim suspiret, non comedit; quia qui se in hoc exsilio per desideriorum coelestium lamenta non humiliat, aeternae patriae gaudia non degustat. A veritatis enim pabulo jejuni sunt, qui in hac peregrinationis inopia laetantur. Suspirat autem qui comedit, quia quos amor veritatis afficit, etiam refectio contemplationis pascit. Suspirans Propheta comedebat, cum diceret: Fuerunt mihi lacrymae meae panes (Psal. XIV, 4). Luctu enim suo anima pascitur, cum ad superna gaudia flendo sublevatur, et intus quidem doloris sui gemitus tolerat; sed eo refectionis pabulum percipit, quo vis amoris per lacrymas emanat. Unde et eamdem lacrymarum vim beatus Job adhuc sequitur, subdens:

CAPUT IX.

IBID. — Et quasiinundantes aquae, sic rugitus meus. 15. Quae sanctis lugendi et trepidandi causae. — Aquae cum inundant, cum impetu veniunt; et crescentibus multipliciter voluminibus, intumescunt. Electi vero dum mentis suae oculis divina judicia opponunt, dum de occulta super se sententia trepidant, dum se ad Deum pervenire posse confidunt, sed tamen ne non perveniant metuunt, dum praeteritorum suorum recolunt, 145 quae deflent, dum quae sibi adhuc futura sunt, quia nesciunt, pertimescunt; quasi quaedam in eis aquarum more volumina colliguntur, quae in moeroris rugitus quasi in subjecta littora defluunt. Vir igitur sanctus vidit, quanta sint in lamentis poenitentiae volumina cogitationum; atque ipsas moeroris undas inundantes aquas vocavit, dicens: Et quasi inundantes aquae, sic rugitus meus. [Vet. V.] Nonnunquam vero justi, sicut et paulo superius diximus, in ipsis bonis operibus positi trepidant, ac ne in eisdem occulto aliquo errore

displiceant, continuis lamentis vacant. Quos cum divina subito flagella corripiunt, auctoris sui se gratiam offendisse suspicantur, quia vel infirmitatibus praepediti, vel amaritudinibus pressi, ad impendenda proximis pia opera non assurgunt. Et cor in lamentum vertitur, quia corpus a devotionis suae ministerio retardatur. Cumque se mercedem non augere considerant, etiam transacta opera displicuisse formidant. Unde bene beatus Job cum rugitum suum quasi inundantes aquas diceret, illico adjunxit:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 25. — Quia timor quem timebam evenit mihi, et quod verebar, accidit. 16. Judicia Dei quam metuenda. — Justi igitur deflent et pavent, et magnis se lamentis cruciant, quia deseri formidant; et quamvis de correptione sua gaudeant, eorum tamen trepidam mentem correptio ipsa perturbat; ne malum quod tolerant, non pia percussio disciplinae sit, sed animadversio justa vindictae. Quod bene Psalmista considerans ait: Quis novit potestatem irae tuae (Psal. LXXXIX, 11)? Potestas quippe divinae irae nostra non potest mente comprehendi, quia ejus dispensatio obscuris super nos dispositionibus, saepe unde aestimatur deserere, inde nos recipit; et unde nos recipere creditur, inde derelinquit; ut plerumque hoc fiat gratia, quod ira dicitur, et hoc aliquando ira sit, quod gratia putatur. Nonnullos enim flagella corrigunt, nonnullos ad impatientiae vesaniam perducunt; et alios prospera quia demulcent, ab insania mitigant; alios quia elevant, funditus ab omni spe conversionis eradicant. Cunctos autem vitia ad ima pertrahunt: sed tamen quidam eo ab his facilius redeunt, quo se in eis corruisse altius erubescunt. Et semper virtutes ad superna sublevant; sed nonnunquam quidam dum tumorem de virtute concipiunt, per ipsum tramitem ascensionis cadunt. Quia ergo potestas divinae irae minime cognoscitur, in cunctis necesse est ut sine cessatione timeatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 26. — Nonne dissimulavi? nonne silui? nonne quievi? et venit super me indignatio. 17. Quae cogitando, loquendo, agendo peccare soleant in potestate constituti. — Quamvis quolibet in loco positi, cogitando, loquendo, agendo peccemus, tunc tamen per tria haec animus effrenatius rapitur, cum mundi hujus prosperitate sublevatur. Nam cum praeire se potestate caeteros conspicit, alta de se elate cogitans sentit. Et cum auctoritati vocis a nullo resistitur, lingua licentius per abrupta diffrenatur. Cumque facere quod libet, licet, juste sibi omne aestimat licere, quod libet. Sed sancti viri cum mundi hujus potestate fulciuntur, tanto sub majore mentis disciplina se redigunt, quanto sibi per impatientiam potestatis suaderi illicita quasi licentius sciunt. Cor namque a consideranda sua gloria reprimunt, linguam ab immoderata 146 locutione restringunt, opus ab inquietudinis vagatione custodiunt. Saepe enim qui in potestate sunt, ea quae recte faciunt, quia elate cogitant, amittunt; dumque se ad cuncta utiles aestimant, etiam impensae utilitatis sibi meritum damnant. Ut enim cujuslibet facta digniora sint, necesse est ut ei apud se semper indigna videantur, ne eadem bona actio agentis cor sublevet, et sublevando plus auctorem de elatione dejiciat, quam ipsos quibus forte impenditur juvet. Hinc est enim quod rex Babyloniae, dum elata mente apud se tacitus volveret, dicens: Nonne haec est Babylon, quam ego aedificavi (Dan. IV, 27)? in irrationale animal protinus versus est. Quod enim factus fuerat perdidit, quia humiliter noluit dissimulare quod fecit. Et quia elatione cogitationis se super homines extulit, ipsum, quem communem cum hominibus habuit, sensum hominis amisit. Saepe vero qui in potestate sunt, ad subjectorum passim contumelias erumpunt; et hoc quod invigilantes regimini serviunt, per linguae procacitatem perdunt, minori scilicet formidine judicis verba pensantes, quia qui sine causa fratri, fatue dixerit, gehennae se ignibus addicit (Math. V, 22). Saepe ii qui in potestate sunt,

dum sese a licitis retinere nesciunt, ad illicita opera et inquieta dilabuntur. Solus enim in illicitis non cadit, qui se aliquando et a licitis caute restringit. Qua videlicet constrictione religatum bene se Paulus insinuat, dicens: Omnia mihi licent, sed non omnia expediunt (I Cor. VI, 12). Atque ut ex ipsa religatione ostenderet in quanta se mentis libertate dilataret, illico adjunxit: Omnia mihi licent, sed ego sub nullius redigar potestate (Ibid., 12). Cum enim mens concepta desideria sequitur, servire rebus convincitur, quarum amore superatur. Sed Paulus, cui cuncta licent, sub nullius potestate se redigit, quia semetipsum etiam a licitis restringendo, ea quae delectata premerent, despecta transcendit. 18. Quomodo Job haec vitavit. — Beatus igitur Job, ut nos erudiat, qualis in potestate fuit innotescat, dicens: Nonne dissimulavi? Potestas namque cum habetur, et cogitanda est ad utilitatem, et dissimulanda propter tumorem; quatenus is qui ea utitur, et ut prodesse debeat, posse se sciat; et ut extolli non debeat, posse se nesciat. Qualis vero in ore fuerit, adjungat dicens: Nonne silui? Qualis erga illicita opera, adhuc subjiciat: Nonne quievi? Potest autem silere et quiescere, adhuc subtilius perscrutari. Silere namque est mentem a terrenorum desideriorum voce restringere. Vis enim magni clamoris est tumultus cordis. 19. Qui praesunt, occupationes temporales, ut Deo vacent, intermittere debent. — Quiescunt quoque qui bene in potestate sunt, cum terrenarum actionum strepitus pro divino amore intermittendo postponunt; ne dum ima indesinenter occupant, cor funditus a summis cadat. Sciunt enim quia nequaquam mens ad superna attollitur, si curarum tumultibus continue in infimis occupatur. Quid enim de Deo occupata obtineat, quae de illo apprehendere aliquid etiam vacans laborat. Bene autem per Psalmistam dicitur: Vacate et videte, quoniam ego sum Deus (Psal. XLV, 11); quia qui vacare Deo negligit, suo sibi judicio lumen ejus visionis abscondit. Hinc etiam per Moysen dicitur ut pisces qui pennulas non habent non edantur (Lev. XI, 12, 13). Pisces namque qui habent pennulas, saltus dare super aquas solent. 147 Soli ergo in electorum

corpore quasi cibus transeunt, qui in eo quod imis deserviunt, aliquando ad superna conscendere mentis saltibus sciunt, ne semper in profundis curarum lateant, et nulla eos amoris summi quasi liberi aeris aura contingat. Qui ergo rebus temporalibus occupantur, tunc bene exteriora disponunt, cum sollicite ad interiora refugiunt; cum nequaquam foras perturbationum strepitus diligunt, sed apud semetipsos intus in tranquillitatis sinu requiescunt. Dissimulanda ergo sunt quae exterius favent, reprimenda quae interius perstrepunt, declinanda quae quasi necessaria involvunt; et tamen in his omnibus adhuc districti examinis flagella metuenda, quia et ipsa nostra perfectio culpa non caret, nisi hanc severus judex in subtili lance examinis misericorditer penset. Quid est namque mens justi, nisi arca testamenti? Quae gestata a bobus calcitrantibus inclinatur; quia nonnunquam etiam qui bene praeest, dum subjectorum populorum confusione concutitur, ad dispensationis condescensionem ex sola dilectione permovetur. Sed in hoc, quod dispensatorie agitur, inclinatio ipsa fortitudinis, casus putatur imperitis. Unde et nonnulli subditi contra hanc, manum reprehensionis mittunt, sed a vita protinus ipsa sua temeritate deficiunt. Levites ergo quasi adjuvans, manum tetendit, sed delinquens vitam perdidit, quia dum infirmi quique fortium facta corripiunt, ipsi a viventium sorte reprobantur. Aliquando etiam sancti viri quaedam minimis condescendentes dicunt, quaedam vero summa contemplantes proferunt; dumque vim vel condescensionis vel altitudinis nesciunt, audacter haec stulti reprehendunt. Et quid est justum de sua condescensione velle corrigere, nisi inclinatam arcam superba reprehensionis manu relevare? Quid est justum de incognita locutione reprehendere, nisi motum ejus fortitudinis, erroris lapsum putare? Sed perdit vitam, qui arcam Dei tumide sublevat, quia nequaquam quis sanctorum corrigere recta praesumeret, nisi de se prius meliora sensisset. Unde et Levites isdem recte Oza dicitur, quod videlicet robustus Domini interpretatur; quia praesumptores quique nisi audaci mente robustos se in

Domino crederent, nequaquam meliorum facta vel dicta velut infirma judicarent. Amici igitur Job, dum contra eum quasi in Dei defensionem prosiliunt, divini praecepti regulam superbientes excedunt. 25. Si aliquid in his displicet, non est reticendum, sed magna humilitate promendum. — Cum vero quaedam facta meliorum deterioribus displicent, nequaquam hoc quod mentem movet, reticendum est, sed cum magna humilitate proferendum; quatenus intentio pie sentientis eo vere servet formam rectitudinis, quo per iter graditur humilitatis. Et libere ergo dicenda sunt quae sentimus, et valde humiliter promenda quae dicimus, ne et quae recte intendimus, haec elate proferendo non recta faciamus. Paulus auditoribus suis multa humiliter dixerat; sed de ipsa exhortatione humili placare eos adhuc humilius satagebat, dicens: Rogo autem vos, fratres, ut sufferatis verbum solatii; etenim perpaucis scripsi vobis (Hebr. XIII, 22). Ephesiis quoque Mileti valedicens, afflictis ac gementibus, humilitatem suam ad memoriam revocat, dicens: Vigilate, memoria retinentes quoniam per triennium nocte ac die non cessavi cum lacrymis monens unumquemque vestrum (Act. XX, 31). Eisdem rursum per Epistolam dicit: Obsecro vos, fratres, ego vinctus in Domino, ut digne ambuletis vocatione, qua vocati estis (Ephes. IV, 1). Hinc ergo colligat, si quando aliquid recte sentit, quanta 150 humilitate debeat magistro loqui discipulus; si ipse magister gentium in his quae cum auctoritate praedicat, tam submisse discipulos rogat. Hinc unusquisque colligat, eis a quibus bene vivendi exempla percepit, hoc quod bene intelligit, quam humiliter dicat; si Paulus illis humili se voce subdidit, quos ad vitam ipse suscitavit. 26. Humiliter loqui nesciens consolationis regulam ignorat. — Eliphaz autem, qui primus amicorum loquitur, quamvis ad consolandum pietate veniat, humilitatem tamen locutionis deserens, regulam consolationis ignorat. Qui dum loquendi custodiam negligit, usque ad afflicti contumelias excedit, dicens: Tigris periit eo quod non haberet praedam. Rugitus leonis, et vox leaenae, et dentes catulorum leonum

dissipati sunt (Job. IV, 11). Beatum videlicet Job nomine tigridis, quasi vitio varietatis notans, per leonis rugitum ejusdem viri terrorem, per leaenae vocem loquacitatem conjugis, per dissipatos vero dentes catulorum leonum destructam filiorum edacitatem signans. Unde et bene amicorum sensum, qui in tumida correptione se extulit, sententia divina reprehendit, dicens: Non estis locuti coram me rectum, sicut servus meus Job (Job. XXXII, 7).. CAP. IV. VERS. 1, 2. — Respondens autem Eliphaz Themanites, dixit: Si coeperimus loqui tibi, forsitan moleste accipies. 29. Haereticorum verba blanda primum, post aspera. — Jam superius dicta sunt quae his vocabulorum interpretationibus exprimantur. Quia ergo festine ad indiscussa tendimus, prolata replicare devitamus. Hoc itaque est solerter intuendum, quod ii qui haereticorum speciem tenent, loqui molliter inchoant, dicentes: Si coeperimus loqui tibi, forsitan moleste accipies. Exasperare quippe haeretici auditores suos in exordio locutionis suae metuunt, ne vigilanter audiantur, eorumque valde tristitiam declinant, ut negligentiam capiant. Et pene semper blanda sunt quae proponunt; sed aspera quae prosequendo subinferunt. Unde et nunc amici Job a reverentia mansuetae locutionis incipiunt, sed usque ad jacula asperrimae invectionis erumpunt; quia et radices spinarum molles sunt, sed tamen ex ipsa sua mollitie proferunt unde pungunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 2. — Sed conceptum sermonem tenere quis possit? 30. Verba prava alii concipiunt et proferunt, alii concepta reprimunt, alii nec concipiunt. — Tria sunt hominum genera, quae gradatim ductis a se qualitatibus dissident. Sunt namque alii qui et ad loquendum prava concipiunt, a locutione sua nulla silentii gravitate refrenantur. Et sunt alii qui cum prava concipiunt, magno se silentii vigore restringunt. Et sunt nonnulli qui, virtutum usu roborati, usque ad eam celsitudinem provehuntur, ut ad loquendum, ne in

corde quidem perversa concipiant, quae silendo 152 compescant. Eliphaz itaque ex quo sit ordine, ostenditur, qui conceptum sermonem tenere se non posse testatur. Qua in re et illud innotuit, quod se loquendo offensurum novit. Neque enim retinere verba quae non potest vellet, nisi per haec se vulnera inferre praenosceret. Boni enim viri freno consilii retinent praecipitationem verbi, et caute considerant ne relaxantes linguae lasciviam auditorum conscientiam incauta locutione transfigant. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Qui dimittit aquam, caput est jurgiorum (Prov. XVII, 14). Aqua quippe dimittitur, cum linguae fluxus effrenatur. Sed dimissor aquae jurgiorum caput efficitur, quia per linguae incontinentiam, discordiae origo propinatur. Pravi igitur sicut in sensu leves sunt, ita in locutione praecipites, et reticere pertractando negligunt quae loquantur. Sed quod levis conscientia concipit, levior protinus lingua prodit. Unde nunc Eliphaz ex suo experimento colligit, quod desperate de omnibus sentit, dicens: Sed conceptum sermonem tenere quis possit? Sequitur:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 3, 4. — Ecce docuisti plurimos, et manus lassas roborasti; vacillantes confirmaverunt sermones tui, et genua trementia confortasti. 31. Quantus Job fuerit, cujus laudes nec silere valet qui crimen ingerere conatur. — Si ipse historiae textus aspicitur, magna est lectoris utilitas, quod ab amicis jurgantibus in beato Job pro laceratione vitiorum, virtutum praeconia proferuntur. Nunquam quippe est tam robustum vitae testimonium, quam cum ille laudanda loquitur, qui ingerere crimen conatur. Pensemus autem cujus celsitudinis iste vir fuerit, qui indoctos docens, lassos roborans, vacillantesque confirmans, inter curas domus, inter multiplicium rerum custodiam, inter affectus pignorum, inter studia tot laborum, erudiendis se caeteris impendit. Et illa quidem occupatus exercuit, sed tamen liber magisterio doctrinae militavit. Temporalia regendo

disposuit; aeterna praedicando nuntiavit; vitae rectitudinem et agendo videntibus ostendit, et loquendo audientibus ingessit. Sed sive haeretici, seu perversi quilibet, cum bona justorum referunt, haec in argumentum criminis inflectunt. Inde namque Eliphaz contra beatum Job occasionem objurgationis colligit, unde laudanda narravit. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 5. — Nunc autem venit super te plaga, et defecisti; tetigitte, et conturbatus es. 32. Perversi bonorum vitam duobus modis impetunt. — Perversi quique duobus modis bonorum vitam impetunt, quia aut prava eos dicere asserunt, aut recta non servare quae dicunt. Unde et beatus Job inferius ab amicis suis de locutione reprehenditur; nunc autem recta dixisse, sed haec non servasse laceratur. Ab iniquis ergo modo bonorum locutio, modo actio reprobatur, quatenus aut reprehensa lingua taceat, aut ejusdem linguae suae adjudicata testimonio, in crimine vita succumbat. Et notandum quod prius laudes linguae inferunt, et postmodum de vitae infirmitate conqueruntur. Iniqui etenim, ne publice pravi videantur, loquuntur aliquando bona de justis, quae esse jam cognita et aliis noverunt. Sed sicut praediximus, haec ipsa protinus ad cumulum 153 reatus pertrahunt, et credendum sibi in contrariis, ex eo quod et prospera loquebantur, ostendunt; tantoque mala quasi verius insinuant, quanto et bona quasi devote laudabant. Ad usum ergo intorquent criminis voces favoris, dum justorum vitam inde post gravius vulnerant, unde hanc paulo ante specie tenus defendebant. Saepe autem eorum bona quae prius habita despiciunt, haec postmodum quasi perdita mirantur. Unde et Eliphaz sancti viri virtutes, quia amissas asserit, enumerando subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 6. — Ubi est timor tuus, fortitudo tua, et patientia tua, et perfectio viarum tuarum? 33. Virtutum quatuor gradus. — Quae nimirum cuncta ei sententiae subrogat, quam praemisit, dicens: Nunc autem venit super te plaga, et defecisti; tetigit te, et conturbatus es. Omnia ergo simul interisse asserit, in eo quod beatum Job turbatum flagello reprehendit. Sed intuendum valde est, quia quamvis inconvenienter increpat, congruenter tamen ordines virtutum narrat. Quatuor quippe gradibus vitam beati Job virtutes enumerando distinxit, dum et timori fortitudinem, et fortitudini patientiam, et patientiae perfectionem junxit. In via etenim Dei a timore incipitur, ut ad fortitudinem veniatur. Nam sicut in via saeculi audacia fortitudinem, ita in via Dei audacia debilitatem parit; et sicut in via saeculi timor debilitatem, ita in via Dei timor fortitudinem gignit, Salomone attestante, qui ait: In timore Domini fiducia fortitudinis (Prov. XIV, 26). Timori quippe Domini inesse fiducia fortitudinis dicitur, quia nimirum mens nostra tanto valentius terrores rerum temporalium despicit, quanto se auctori eorumdem temporalium veracius per formidinem subdit. Quae in timore Domini constituta, non invenit extra quod metuat, quia dum recto metu conditori omnium jungitur, potestate quadam supra omnia sublevatur. Fortitudo autem nonnisi in adversitate ostenditur, unde et mox post fortitudinem patientia subrogatur. Tanto enim se unusquisque ad fortitudinem profecisse verius demonstrat, quanto aliena mala robustius tolerat. Nam minus in se convaluit, quem aliena iniquitas sternit. Qui in eo quod ferre contrarietatem non valet, pusillanimitatis suae gladio confossus jacet. Quia vero perfectio de patientia nascitur, statim post patientiam, viarum perfectio subinfertur. Ille enim vere perfectus est, qui erga imperfectionem proximi impatiens non est. Nam qui alienam imperfectionem ferre non valens deserit, ipse sibi testis est quod perfecte necdum proficit. Hinc in Evangelio Veritas dicit: In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras (Luc. XXI, 19). Quid est enim animas possidere,

nisi perfecte in omnibus vivere, cunctis mentis motibus ex virtutis arce dominari? Qui igitur patientiam tenet, animam possidet; quia inde contra adversa omnia fortis efficitur, unde sibi et semetipsum vincendo dominatur. Et quo se laudabiliter frangit, infractum se fortiter exerit; quia cum in suis se voluptatibus superat, sese ad contraria invictum parat. Sed quia Eliphaz invehendo corripuit, nunc aliqua velut exhortando subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 7. — Recordare, obsecro, quis unquam innocens perit? aut quando recti deleti sunt? 154 34. Saepe innocentes hic perire et deleri, rectos. — Sive haeretici, quorum amicos beati Job tenere speciem diximus, sive perversi quilibet, quam inordinate redarguunt, tam reprehensibiliter exhortantur. Ait namque: Quis unquam innocens periit, aut quando recti deleti sunt? Saepe quippe hic et innocentes pereunt, et recti funditus delentur; sed tamen ad aeternam gloriam pereundo servantur. Si enim nullus innocens periret, Propheta non diceret: Justus periit, et nemo est qui recogitet (Isai. LVII, 1). Si rectos Deus providendo non raperet, nequaquam de justo Sapientia dixisset: Raptus est, ne malitia mutaret intellectum ejus (Sap. IV, 11). Si justos animadversio nulla percuteret, Petrus minime praenuntiaret, dicens: Tempus est ut incipiat judicium de domo Dei (I Pet. IV, 17). Illi ergo veraciter recti sunt, qui amore supernae patriae ad cuncta praesentis vitae adversa praeparantur. Nam qui pro aeternis bonis mala hic perpeti metuunt, videlicet recti non sunt. Sed Eliphaz vel deleri rectos, vel innocentes hic perire non aestimat, quia saepe hi qui non spe coelestis gloriae, sed pro terrena Deo retributione deserviunt, ipsi sibimet fingunt quod quaerunt; et docere praesumentes, cum terrenam securitatem praedicant, cunctis suis laboribus ostendunt quid amant. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 8, 9. — Quin potius vidi eos qui operantur iniquitatem, et seminant dolores, et metunt eos, flante Deo perisse, et spiritu irae ejus esse consumptos. 35. Dolores seminant ac metunt. Cur malos Deus aliquando toleret, aliquando statim feriat. — Dolores seminare, est fraudulenta dicere; dolores autem metere, est dicendo praevalere. Vel certe dolores seminant, qui perversa agunt; dolores metunt, cum de eadem perversitate puniuntur. Fructus quippe doloris est retributio damnationis. Sed cum protinus subinfertur quia qui dolores seminant et metunt, flante Deo pereunt, et irae ejus spiritu consumuntur, hoc loco doloris messio, non jam poena, sed adhuc perfectio iniquitatis ostenditur, quia ex divinae irae spiritu, ejusdem messionis poena subrogatur. Seminant ergo hic dolores et metunt, quia iniqua sunt quae faciunt, et in ipsa iniquitate prosperantur; sicut de iniquo per Psalmistam dicitur: Polluuntur viae ejus in omni tempore; auferuntur judicia tua a facie ejus, omnium inimicorum suorum dominabitur (Psal. X, 5, sec. Heb.). De quo paulo post subditur: Sub lingua ejus labor et dolor (Ibid., 7). Dolores itaque seminat, cum perversa agit; dolores metit, cum ex eisdem perversitatibus temporaliter excrescit. Quomodo ergo flante Deo pereunt, qui plerumque diu hic subsistere, et justis felicius, permittuntur? Hinc namque de illis iterum per Psalmistam dicitur: In laboribus hominum non sunt, et cum hominibus non flagellabuntur (Psal. LXXII, 5). Hinc Jeremias ait: Quare via impiorum prosperatur (Jerem. XII, 1). Quia enim, sicut scriptum est, Dominus patiens redditor est (Eccli. V, 4), saepe diu tolerat quos in perpetuum damnat; nonnunquam vero concite percutit, qui pusillanimitati innocentium consolando concurrit. Aliquando ergo omnipotens Deus diu praevalere iniquos patitur, ut justorum mundius vita purgetur. Aliquando vero injustos celeriter trucidat, eorumque interitu innocentium corda confirmat. Si enim nunc omnes male agentes percuteret, extremum jam judicium quibus exhiberet? Si autem nullum omnino percuteret, quis Deum res humanas curare credidisset? Nonnunquam ergo

155 iniquos ferit, ut ostendat quia inulta mala non deserit. Nonnunquam vero iniquos diu tolerat, ut considerantibus insinuet, ad quod eos judicium reservet. 36. Iniquos deleri quo sensu falsum, quo verum. — Haec itaque sententia deletionis iniquorum, si non cum fine praesentis saeculi de cunctis generaliter dicitur, ex magna parte procul dubio veritatis virtute evacuatur. Sed tunc vera erit, cum jam iniquitatis dilatio non erit. Quae hoc fortasse modo intelligi rectius potest, quoniam nec innocens perit, nec rectus deletur; quia etsi carne hic atteritur, in conspectu aeterni judicis vera salute reparatur. Et qui seminant dolores et metunt, flante Deo pereunt; quia quanto hic altius perverse agendo proficiunt, tanto durius subsequenti damnatione feriuntur. Sed cum eidem sententiae praemittitur, Recordare, videlicet patet quia transacta res ad mentem reducitur, non autem futura nuntiatur. Tunc ergo Eliphaz verius diceret, si haec de iniquis generaliter fieri extrema animadversione credidisset. 37. Flare Deus apte dicitur, cum vindictam retribuit. Tunc qui in se tranquillus, pereuntibus videtur turbulentus. — Sed hoc quod flare Deus dicitur, urget ut subtilius discernatur. Nos quippe cum flamus, aerem ab exterioribus introrsus trahimus, et introrsus tractum hunc exterius reddimus. Flare ergo Deus in vindictae retributione dicitur, quia ab exterioribus causis introrsus judicii consilium concipit, et ab interno consilio extrorsus sententiam emittit. Quasi flante Deo, ab exterioribus aliquid introrsus trahitur, quando foras mala nostra conspicit, et intus judicium disponit. Et rursum, quasi flante Deo, ab interioribus spiritus extrorsus emittitur, quando ab interno conceptu consilii, exterius judicium damnationis infertur. Bene itaque dicitur quod qui dolores seminant, flante Deo pereunt; quia unde foris perversa faciunt, inde ab intimis recte feriuntur. Vel certe cum flare Deus dicitur, quia et statim irae ejus spiritus subinfertur, appellatione flatus illius potest ipsa ejus animadversio designari. Nos quippe cum irascimur, flatu furoris inflammamur. Ut ergo vindictam cogitans Dominus demonstretur, flare

irascendo dicitur; non quo ipse in natura sua mutabilitatis vicissitudinem recipiat, sed quo post longam patientiam, quando vindictam peccatoris exsequitur, is qui in semetipso tranquillus est, pereuntibus turbulentus videtur. Mens quippe reproba, quia adversum suis actibus judicem conspicit, quasi commotus ei ostenditur, quia in conspectu illius suo reatu ipsa turbatur. Sed postquam quasi clementer admonuit, aperte increpationis verba subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 10. — Rugitus leonis, et vox leaenae, et dentes catulorum leonum contriti sunt. 38. Dura in Job Eliphaz verba. — Quid enim rugitum leonis appellat, nisi, ut paulo ante praemisimus, severitatem viri? quid vocem leaenae, nisi loquacitatem conjugis? quid dentes catulorum leonum, nisi edacitatem prolis? Quia enim filii convivantes exstincti sunt, dentium expressione signantur. Quae cuncta dum contrita Eliphaz rigidus exsultat, quasi jure damnata denuntiat. Cujus adhuc duritiam increpationis ingeminat, cum subjungit:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 11. — Tigris periit, eo quod non haberet praedam, et 156 catuli leonum dissipati sunt. 39. Tigris varia ac rapax hypocritas apte significat. — Quem enim nomine tigridis, nisi beatum Job nota varietatis signat, vel aspersum maculis simulationis? Omnis namque simulator in eo quod videri rectus appetit, mundum se per omnia non ostendit; quia dum virtutes quasdam per hypocrisin assumit, et occulte semetipsum vitiis subjicit, quaedam latentia vitia repente in faciem erumpunt, et superductae simulationis, quasi visionis corium, ex admistione sua varium ostendunt; ut plerumque sit mirum cur homo, qui tantis virtutibus pollere cernitur, etiam tam reprobis actibus inquinetur. Sed nimirum omnis hypocrita tigris est,

quia dum mundus color de simulatione ducitur, vitiorum nigredine interrumpente variatur. Saepe enim dum de castitatis munditia extollitur, sorde avaritiae foedatur. Saepe dum virtute largitatis speciosus ostenditur, luxuriae maculis inquinatur. Saepe dum castitatis atque largitatis decore vestitur, velut ex zelo justitiae, crudelitatis atrocitate fuscatur. Saepe largitate, castitate, pietate ex pulchra visione induitur, sed interfusa obscuritate superbiae notatur. Sicque fit ut intermistis vitiis dum mundam in se speciem hypocrita non ostendit, quasi unum colorem tigris habere nequaquam possit. Quae videlicet tigris rapit praedam, quia humani sibi favoris usurpat gloriam. Qui enim rapta laude extollitur, quasi praeda satiatur. Bene autem hypocritarum laus praeda dicitur. Praeda quippe est, cum aliena violenter auferuntur. Omnis autem hypocrita, quia vitam justitiae simulans, justorum sibi laudem arripit, alienum profecto est quod tollit. Eliphaz itaque, quia beatum Job incolumitatis suae tempore laudanda egisse cognovit, percussione subsequente, haec illum tenuisse per hypocrisin credidit, dicens: Tigris periit, eo quod non haberet praedam. Ac si aperte dicat: Varietas tuae simulationis exstincta est, quia et adulatio laudis ablata est; et jam tua hypocrisis praedam non habet, quia percussa divinitus, humanis favoribus caret. 40. Myrmicoleon eos adumbrat qui timidi in fortiores, audaces in parvos sunt. — Translatione autem Septuaginta interpretum nequaquam tigris dicitur, sed, Myrmicoleon periit, eo quod non haberet praedam. Myrmicoleon quippe parvum valde est animal, formicis adversum, quod se sub pulvere abscondit, et formicas frumenta gestantes interficit, interfectasque consumit. Myrmicoleon autem Latine dicitur, vel formicarum leo, vel certe expressius formica pariter et leo. Recte autem formica et leo nominatur, quia sive volatilibus, seu quibuslibet aliis minutis animalibus formica est, ipsis autem formicis leo. Has enim quasi leo devorat, sed ab illis quasi formica devoratur. Cum igitur Eliphaz dicit: Myrmicoleon periit, quid in beato Job sub myrmicoleontis

nomine, nisi pavorem et audaciam reprehendit? Ac si ei aperte dicat: Non injuste percussus es, quia contra erectos timidus, contra subditos audax fuisti. Ac si aperte dicat: Contra astutos te formido pressit, contra simplices temeritas inflavit. Sed praedam jam myrmicoleon non habet, quia timida tua elatio dum verberibus premitur, ab aliena laesione 157 prohibetur. Sed quia amicos beati Job haereticorum tenere speciem diximus, urget necessario, ut haec eadem Eliphaz verba quomodo etiam typice sentienda sint intimemus.

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 10. — Rugitus leonis, et vox leaenae, et dentes catulorum leonum contriti sunt. SENSUS ALLEGORICUS. — 41. Eadem re in Scripturis figurantur diversa. — Quia natura uniuscujusque rei ex diversitate componitur, in sacro eloquio per rem quamlibet licite diversa figurantur. Habet quippe leo virtutem, habet et saevitiam. Virtute ergo Dominum, saevitia diabolum signat. Hinc enim de Domino dicitur: Vicit leo de tribu Juda, radix David (Apoc. V, 5). Hinc de diabolo scriptum est: Adversarius vester diabolus, sicut leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret (I Pet. V, 8). Leaenae autem nomine aliquando sancta Ecclesia, aliquando Babylonia designatur. Pro eo enim quod contra adversa audax est, leaena Ecclesia dicitur; sicut ejusdem beati Job vocibus approbatur, qui derelictam ab Ecclesia Judaeam indicans, ait: Non calcaverunt eam filii institorum, nec pertransivit per eam leaena (Job. XXVIII, 8). Aliquando vero leaenae nomine hujus mundi civitas, id est Babylonia, exprimitur, quae contra vitam innocentium immanitate crudelitatis efferatur, quae antiquo hosti, quasi saevissimo leoni sociata, perversae persuasionis ejus semina concipit, et reprobos ex se filios ad similitudinem illius, quasi crudeles catulos gignit. Catuli autem leonum sunt quilibet reprobi, ad iniquam vitam, malignorum spirituum errore generati: qui et simul omnes universam mundi civitatem, quam praediximus, Babyloniam faciunt, et tamen iidem singuli Babyloniae

filii, quasi non leaena, sed leaenae catuli vocantur. Sicut enim Sion tota simul Ecclesia dicitur, filii autem Sion sanctorum quique singuli memorantur, ita et filii Babyloniae singuli quique reproborum, et eadem Babylonia simul omnes reprobi vocantur.. VERS. 12. — Porro ad me dictum est verbum absconditum. 45. Haeretici novum et occultam doctrinam affectant, cur. — Verbum absconditum haeretici audire se simulant, ut auditorum mentibus quamdam praedicationis suae reverentiam obducant. Unde et latenter praedicant, quatenus eorum praedicatio tanto sancta, quanto et occulta videatur. Communem autem scientiam habere refugiunt, ne caeteris aequales aestimentur; et quaedam nova semper exquirunt, quae dum alii nesciunt, apud imperitorum 159 mentes ipsi de scientiae singularitate gloriantur. Quam, ut diximus, occultam insinuant, quia scilicet ut miram ostendere valeant, hanc se latenter percepisse confirmant. Unde apud Salomonem haereticorum speciem mulier tenens, dicit: Aquae furtivae dulciores sunt, et panis absconditus suavior (Prov. IX, 17). Unde hic quoque subditur: Et quasi furtive suscepit auris mea venas susurrii ejus. Furtive susurrii venas percipiunt, quia socialis scientiae gratiam deserentes, ad hanc nequaquam per ostium ingrediuntur, Domino attestante, qui ait: Qui non intrat per ostium in ovile ovium, sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur est et latro (Joan. X, 1, 2). Venas itaque divini susurrii furtive suscipit, qui ad percipiendam virtutis ejus notitiam, deserto publicae praedicationis ostio, pravae intelligentiae rimas quaerit. Quia vero fur et latro, qui intrat aliunde, et tenebras diligit, et claritatem luminis perhorrescit, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 13. — In horrore visionis nocturnae, quando solet sopor occupare homines. 46. Ut alta esse ostendant quae docent, ea se vix capere declarant. Modo de sapientiae singularitate extolluntur. — Saepe haeretici dum altiora

dicere conantur, ipsi sibi testes sunt quia quae proferunt, vera non sunt. In nocturna quippe visione dubie cernitur. Rimas ergo susurrii in pavore nocturnae visionis se percepisse asserunt, quia ut quae docent alta aliis ostendant, vix ea se capere posse denuntiant. Sed hinc colligendum est quomodo audientibus certa esse poterunt, quae ipsi dubie viderunt. Miro ergo ordine cum alta loquentes profluunt, in patefactione stultitiae, ipsis suae altitudinis vocibus ligantur. Quantum vero de singularitate sapientiae elevantur, ostenditur cum protinus subdit: Quando solet sopor occupare homines. Ac si aperte ab haereticis diceretur: Cum homines inferius dormiunt, nos ad percipienda superna vigilamus, quia ea nobis nota sunt, ad quae videlicet cognoscenda caeterorum hominum corda torpentia non assurgunt. Ac si apertius dicant: In quibus intelligentia nostra se erigit, reliquorum hominum sensus dormit. Nonnunquam vero cum hoc despici ab auditore conspiciunt, semetipsos simulant timere quod dicunt. Unde subditur:

CAPUT XXV.

VERS. 14. — Pavor tenuit me et tremor, et omnia ossa mea perterrita sunt. 47. Modo pavidos se simulant. — Quia enim de doctrinae suae altitudine miri videri appetunt, quasi pertimescunt quae fingunt; et cum minoris laboris sit audire quam dicere, ad ea proferenda audaces sunt, quae scilicet astruunt quia ipsi vix audire potuerunt. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 15, 16. — Et cum spiritus me praesente transiret, inhorruerunt pili carnis meae; stetit quidam, cujus non agnoscebam vultum. 48. Modo fingunt in se incomprehensibilia novisse. — Ut incomprehensibilia se cognovisse indicent, non stetisse, sed transisse coram se spiritum narrant; et

vultum se vidisse incognitum simulant, ut esse se ei cognitos qui ab humana mente cognosci non valet ostendant. Ubi adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 16. — Imago coram oculis meis, et vocem quasi aurae lenis audivi.
49. Deum intueri spiritaliter nequeunt, neque tamen semper errant. Quaedam vera et sublimia loquuntur. — Saepe haeretici Deum sibi imaginaliter fingunt quem intueri spiritaliter nequeunt; ejusque 160 vocem quasi aurae lenis audire se perhibent, quia ad secreta illius cognoscenda, quasi esse se caeteris familiariores gaudent. Non enim ea docent quae Deus publice loquitur, sed quae eorum auri quasi latenter aspirantur. Haec igitur diximus, ut quid sub haereticorum specie in Eliphaz sermonibus sentiendum sit intimenius. Sed qui amici beati Job tanti viri amici non essent, nisi manifeste aliquid ex veritate didicissent, quia quamvis in sententiis correptionis errant, in veritatis tamen cognitione non in toto titubant: haec eadem paulo superius verba replicemus, ut subtilius discernamus quomodo ea quae de perceptione veritatis dicuntur, a recte sentientibus proferri veraciter possint. Nonnunquam vero haeretici vera quaedam et sublimia loquuntur, non quod haec divinitus ipsi percipiunt, sed quod ex sanctae Ecclesiae contentione didicerunt; neque haec ad profectum conscientiae, sed ad scientiae ostentationem trahunt. Unde fit plerumque ut alta sciendo dicant, sed vivendo quae dicunt nesciant. Sive igitur ex haereticorum specie, videlicet non vitam scientiae, sed verba tenentium, seu certe ex persona amicorum beati Job, qui de cognitione veritatis potuerunt procul dubio percipiendo experiri, quod studuerunt docendo eloqui, haec eadem quae transcurrimus, subtilius dicta disseramus; ut dum sollicite Eliphaz sermo discutitur, quantae scientiae fuerit, demonstretur; quamvis in eadem scientia humilitatem non tenuit, qui commune bonum sibi specialiter arrogavit. Ait namque:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 12. — Porro ad me dictum est verbum absconditum. ALLEGORICUS SENSUS. — 50. Verbum absconditum, Dei Filius, vel Spiritus sancti locutio. Haec a paucis percipitur. Sentiri potest, non exprimi. — Verbum quippe absconditum, invisibilis Filius vocatur, de quo Joannes ait: In principio erat Verbum. Quod ipse quoque absconditum insinuat, dum subjungit: Et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Sed hoc verbum absconditum electorum mentibus dicitur, cum potestas unigeniti Filii credentibus manifestatur. Potest etiam per verbum absconditum, allocutio intimae aspirationis intelligi; de qua Joannes dicit: Unctio ejus docet vos de omnibus (I Joan. II, 27). Quae nimirum aspiratio humanam mentem contingendo sublevat, et temporales cogitationes deprimens, aeternis hanc desideriis inflammat, ut nihil ei jam, nisi quae superna sunt, libeat, et cuncta quae inferius de humana perstrepunt corruptione contemnat. Absconditum ergo verbum audire, est locutionem sancti Spiritus corde concipere. Quae profecto sciri non potest, nisi a quo haberi potest. Unde et Veritatis voce de hac abscondita locutione dicitur: Ego rogabo Patrem, et alium Paraclitum dabit vobis, ut maneat vobiscum in aeternum, Spiritum veritatis, quem mundus non potest accipere (Joan. XIV, 16). Sicut enim isdem Paraclitus post Mediatoris ascensum, alius humani generis consolator, in semetipso invisibilis est; ita omnem, quem repleverit, ad desideranda invisibilia accendit. Et quoniam mundana corda sola visibilia diligunt, hunc mundus non accipit, quia ad diligenda invisibilia non assurgit. Saeculares etenim mentes quanto se foras per desideria dilatant, tanto ad receptionem illius sinum cordis angustant. Et quoniam valde in 161 humano genere pauci sunt, qui a desideriorum temporalium sorde purgati, ad perceptionem sancti Spiritus ipsa hac purgatione dilatentur, verbum hoc absconditum dicitur, quia illud a quibusdam procul dubio in corde percipitur, quod a maxima hominum parte nescitur. Vel certe haec ipsa

afflatio sancti Spiritus absconditum verbum est, quia sentiri potest, sed strepitu locutionis exprimi non potest. Cum igitur divina aspiratio sine strepitu mentem sublevat, verbum absconditum auditur, quia sermo Spiritus in aure cordis silenter sonat. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. — Et quasi furtive suscepit auris mea venas susurrii ejus. 51. Mentem quaerit a visibilibus abstractam. Quam variis modis eam alloquatur. — Venas susurrii superni auris cordis furtive suscipit, quia subtilitatem locutionis intimae afflata mens et raptim et occulte cognoscit. Nisi enim se ab exterioribus desideriis abscondat, interna non penetrat. Et occultatur ut audiat, et audit ut occultetur; quia et subtracta a visibilibus, invisibilia conspicit, et repleta invisibilibus, visibilia perfecte contemnit. Notandum vero quod non ait: Quasi furtive suscepit auris mea susurrium ejus; sed venas susurrii ejus. Susurrium quippe occulti verbi, est haec ipsa locutio aspirationis internae. Venae autem susurrii dicuntur causarum origines, quibus haec ipsa aspiratio ad mentem ducitur. Quasi enim venas susurrii sui aperit, cum nobis Deus latenter insinuat, quibus modis ad nostrae intelligentiae aurem venit. Aliquando enim nos amore, aliquando terrore compungit; aliquando praesentia quam nulla sint ostendit, et ad aeterna diligenda desiderium erigit; aliquando prius aeterna indicat, ut post temporalia vilescant. Aliquando nostra nobis mala aperit, et ad hoc nos usque, ut alienis etiam malis doleamus, extendit. Aliquando mala aliena nostris obtutibus objicit, et compunctos mirabiliter a nostra pravitate nos corrigit. Venas itaque divini susurrii furtive audire, est occultos divinae aspirationis modos tenuiter et latenter agnoscere. 52. Susurrat nobis Deus, quia non se plene manifestum facit. Per creata opera velut per quasdam rimas se admirandum praebet. — Quamvis adhuc vel susurrium, vel venas susurrii intelligere aliter valemus. Qui enim susurrat, occulte loquitur, et

vocem non exprimit, sed imitatur. Nos igitur quousque carnis corruptione premimur, nullo modo claritatem divinae potentiae, sicut in se incommutabilis manet, videmus: quia acies infirmitatis nostrae non sustinet hoc quod de ejus aeternitatis radio super nos intolerabiliter fulget. Cum ergo se nobis omnipotens Deus per rimas contemplationis indicat, nequaquam nobis loquitur, sed susurrat, quia etsi se plene non intimat, quiddam tamen de se humanae menti manifestat. Tunc autem nequaquam jam susurrat, sed loquitur, cum ejus nobis species certa revelatur. Hinc est enim quod in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Palam de Patre annuntiabo vobis (Joan. XVI, 26). Hinc Joannes ait: Videbimus eum sicuti est (I Joan. III, 2). Hinc Paulus dicit: Tunc cognoscam, sicut et cognitus sum (I Cor. XIII, 12). Nunc autem divinum susurrium tot ad nos venas habet, quot creatis operibus ipsa divinitas praesidet. Dum enim quae sunt cuncta creata cernimus, in creatoris admiratione sublevamur. Nam sicut aqua leniter fluens, rimata per venas quaeritur, ut augeatur, tantoque se vastius fundit, quanto venas apertiores invenerit; ita nos dum studiose divinitatis 162 notitiam ex creaturae ejus consideratione colligimus, quasi susurrii illius ad nos venas aperimus; quia per hoc quod factum cernimus, virtutem factoris admiramur; et per ea quae sunt in publico, illud ad nos emanat, quod latet in occulto. Quasi enim per quemdam ad nos sonitum erumpit, dum consideranda nobis sua opera ostendit, in quo semetipsum utcunque indicat, dum quam sit incomprehensibilis manifestat. Quia igitur considerare eum digne non possumus, non ejus vocem, sed vix susurrium audimus. Plene enim quia perpendere neque ipsa quae sunt creata sufficimus, recte dicitur: Quasi furtive suscepit auris mea venas susurrii ejus. Projecti quippe a paradisi gaudiis, et caecitatis poena multati, vix susurrii venas apprehendimus, quia ipse quoque mira ejus opera raptim tenuiterque pensamus. Sciendum vero est, quia quanto virtutem illius mens sublevata considerat, tanto ejus rectitudinem repressa formidat. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 13. — In horrore visionis nocturnae. 53. Mens eo amplius de suis factis trepidat, quo altius in Deum elevatur. Hinc Deum magis metuit et diligit. — Horror nocturnae visionis, est pavor occultae contemplationis. Humana etenim mens quo altius elevata, quae sint aeterna considerat, eo de factis temporalibus gravius tremefacta formidat; quia tanto se ream verius cernit, quanto se ab illo lumine discrepasse quod super se intermicat conspicit; sicque fit ut illuminata plus metuat, quia magis aspicit a veritatis regula per quanta discordat; eamque gravi formidine suus ipse profectus quatit, quae prius quasi securius nihil videbat. Quamvis quantalibet virtute profecerit, non jam manifestum aliquid de aeternitate comprehendit, sed adhuc sub cujusdam caligine imaginationis conspicit. Unde et haec eadem, nocturna visio dicitur. In nocte quippe, sicut et superius diximus, dubie; in die autem constanter videmus. Quia igitur ad contemplandum interni solis radium, nubes sese nostrae corruptionis interserit, nec ad infirmos nostrae mentis oculos illud, sicut est, incommutabile lumen erumpit; adhuc Deum quasi in nocturna visione cernimus, cum procul dubio sub incerta contemplatione caligamus. Sed quamvis extremum de illo aliquid mens conceperit, in consideratione tamen ejus magnitudinis inhorrescit, et magis metuit, quia ipsis contemplationis ejus vestigiis se imparem sentit, atque ad se relapsa, eum arctius diligit, cujus miram dulcedinem ferre non valens, vix hanc sub incerta visione gustavit. Sed quia ad hujus sublevationis culmen minime pertingitur, nisi prius desideriorum carnalium importune perstrepens turba reprimatur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

IBID. — Quando solet sopor occupare homines. 54. Ad contemplationem non pervenitur nisi sopitis carnalibus desideriis. Somnus tribus modis

accipitur. — Quisquis ea quae mundi sunt agere appetit, quasi vigilat; quisquis vero internam quietem quaerens, hujus mundi strepitum fugit, velut obdormiscit. Sed prius sciendum est quia in Scriptura sacra figurate positus tribus modis somnus accipitur. Aliquando enim somno mors carnis, aliquando torpor negligentiae, aliquando vero exprimitur, calcatis terrenis desideriis, quies vitae. Somni namque vel dormitionis nomine carnis mors intimatur, sicut Paulus ait: Nolo vos ignorare fratres de dormientibus. Et paulo post: Ita et Deus eos qui dormierunt per Jesum, adducet cum eo (I Thess. IV, 12). Somno 163 rursum torpor negligentiae designatur, sicut ab eodem Paulo dicitur: Hora est jam nos de somno surgere (Rom. XIII, 11). Et rursum: Evigilate, justi, et nolite peccare (I Cor. XV, 34). Somno quoque calcatis carnis desideriis quies vitae figuratur, sicut sponsae voce in canticorum Cantico dicitur: Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat (Cant. V, 2); quia videlicet sancta mens quo se ab strepitu temporalis concupiscentiae comprimit, eo verius interna cognoscit; et tanto alacrius ad intima vigilat, quanto se ab exteriori inquietudine occultat. Quod bene per Jacob in itinere dormientem figuratur (Genes. XXVIII, 11), qui ad caput lapidem posuit, et obdormivit: a terra scalam coelo inhaerentem, innixum scalae Dominum, ascendentes quoque et descendentes angelos vidit. In itinere quippe dormire, est in hoc praesentis vitae transitu a rerum temporalium amore quiescere. In itinere dormire, est in dierum labentium cursu ab appetitu visibilium mentis oculos claudere: quos primis hominibus seductor aperuit, qui dixit: Scit enim Deus quod in quocunque die comederitis ex eo, aperientur oculi vestri (Genes. III, 5, 6). Unde et paulo post subditur: Tulit de fructu illius, et comedit; deditque viro suo, qui comedit, et aperti sunt oculi amborum. Culpa quippe oculos concupiscentiae aperuit, quos innocentia clausos tenebat. Angelos vero ascendentes et descendentes cernere, est cives supernae patriae contemplari, vel quanto amore auctori suo super semetipsos inhaereant, vel quanta compassione charitatis nostris

infirmitatibus condescendant. 55. Ad contemplationem non sufficit a mundi actionibus quiescere, nisi et virtutes exerceantur. — Et notandum valde est quod ille dormiens angelos conspicit, qui in lapide caput ponit; quia nimirum ipse ab exterioribus operibus cessans, interna penetrat, qui intentamente, quae principale est Sunt namque nonnulli qui mundi quidem actiones fugiunt, sed nullis virtutibus exercentur. Hi nimirum torpore, non studio dormiunt; et idcirco interna non conspiciunt, quia caput non in lapide sed in terra posuerunt. Quibus plerumque contingit ut quanto securius ab externis actionibus cessant, tanto latius in se immundae cogitationis strepitum per otium congerant. Unde sub Judaeae specie per Prophetam torpens otio anima defletur, cum dicitur: Viderunt eam hostes, et deriserunt Sabbata ejus (Thren. I, 7). Praecepto etenim legis ab exteriori opere in sabbato cessatur. Hostes ergo sabbata videntes irrident, cum maligni spiritus ipsa vacationis otia ad cogitationes illicitas pertrahunt; ut unaquaeque anima quo remota ab externis actionibus servire Deo creditur, eo magis eorum tyrannidi illicita cogitando famuletur. Sancti autem viri, qui a mundi operibus non torpore, sed virtute sopiuntur, laboriosius dormiunt, quam vigilare potuerunt, quia in eo quod actiones hujus saeculi deserentes superant, robusto conflictu quotidie contra semetipsos pugnant, ne mens per negligentiam torpeat, ne subacta otio ad desideria immunda frigescat, ne in ipsis bonis desideriis plus justo inferveat, ne sub 164 discretionis specie sibimet parcendo, a perfectione languescat. Agit haec, et ab hujus mundi inquieta concupiscentia se penitus subtrahit, ac terrenarum actionum strepitum deserit, et per quietis studium virtutibus intenta, vigilans dormit. Neque enim ad contemplanda interna perducitur, nisi ab his quae exterius implicant studiose subtrahatur. Hinc est enim quod per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Nemo potest duobus dominis servire (Matth. VI, 24). Hinc Paulus ait: Nemo militans Deo, implicat se negotiis saecularibus, ut ei placeat, cui se probavit (II Tim. II, 4). Hinc per Prophetam Dominus admonens dicit:

Vacate, et videte, quoniam ego sum Deus (Psal. XLV, 11). Quia igitur nequaquam notitia interna conspicitur, nisi ab externa implicatione cessetur, recte nunc verbi absconditi et divini susurrii tempus exprimitur, cum dicitur: in horrore visionis nocturnae, quando solet sopor occupare homines, quia nimirum mens nostra nullo modo ad vim intimae contemplationis rapitur, nisi studiose prius a terrenorum desideriorum tumultu sopiatur. Sed humanus animus quadam suae contemplationis machina sublevatus, quo super se altiora conspicit, eo in semetipso terribilius contremiscit. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 14. — Pavor tenuit me, et tremor, et omnia ossa mea perterrita sunt.
56. Quo altius Dei rectitudinem contemplamur, eo de nostra magis formidamus. — Quid per ossa, nisi fortia acta signantur? De quibus et per Prophetam dicitur: Dominus custodit omnia ossa eorum (Psal. XXXIII, 21). Et saepe ea quae agunt homines, esse alicujus momenti aestimant, quia districtionis intimae quam sit subtile judicium ignorant. Sed cum per contemplationem rapti superna conspiciunt, ab ipsa aliquo modo praesumptionis suae securitate liquefiunt; et tanto magis in divino conspectu trepidant, quanto nec bona sua digna ejus examine, quem conspiciunt, pensant. Hinc est etenim quod is qui fortia operando profecerat, per spiritum sublevatus clamabat: Omnia ossa mea dicent: Domine, quis similis tibi (Psalm. XXXIV, 10)? Ac si diceret: Carnes meae verba non habent, quia infirma mea apud te funditus silent; ossa autem mea tuae magnitudinis laudem dicunt, quia ipsa quoque, quae esse in me fortia credidi, tua consideratione contremiscunt. Hinc est quod Manue, viso angelo pertimescens, dicit: Morte moriemur, quia vidimus Dominum (Jud. XIII, 22). Quem uxor protinus consolatur, dicens: Si Dominus nos vellet occidere, de manibus nostris holocaustum et libamenta non suscepisset

(Ibid., 23). Quid est autem quod ad visionem angeli vir fit timidus, et mulier audax, nisi quod nobis quoties coelestia demonstrantur, spiritus quidem pavore se concutit, sed tamen spes praesumit? Inde namque spes ad majora audenda sese erigit, unde turbatur spiritus, quia ea quae superna sunt, prior videt. Quia igitur cum altiora secretorum coelestium sublevata mens conspicit, cuncta humanarum virium soliditas contremiscit, recte nunc dicitur: Pavor tenuit me, et tremor, et omnia ossa mea perterrita sunt. Ac si aperte diceretur: Subtilitatis intimae arcana percipiens, unde me apud me fortem credidi, ante conspectum judicis inde titubavi. Districtionem quippe divinae justitiae contemplantes, etiam de ipsis operibus jure pertimescimus, quae nos fortia egisse putabamus. Ducta namque ad internam regulam nostra rectitudo, si 165 districtum judicium invenit, multis tortitudinum suarum sinibus in intimam rectitudinem impingit. Unde bene Paulus cum et virtutum ossa habere se cerneret, et tamen sub districto examine haec eadem ejus ossa trepidarent, ait: Mihi pro minimo est, ut a vobis judicer, aut ab humano die. Sed neque me ipsum judico; nihil enim mihi conscius sum (I Cor. IV, 3). Sed quia auditis venis divini susurrii, haec eadem ejus ossa contremuerunt, illico adjunxit: Sed non in hoc justificatus sum: qui autem judicat me, Dominus est. Ac si diceret: recta egisse me recolo, et tamen de meritis non praesumo, quia ad ejus examen vita nostra ducitur, sub quo nostrae fortitudinis et ossa turbantur. 57. Contemplationis gratia non est diuturna. — Sed cum mens in contemplatione suspenditur, cum carnis angustias superans, per speculationis vim de libertate aliquid intimae securitatis rimatur, stare diu super semetipsam non potest; quia etsi hanc spiritus ad summa evehit, caro tamen ipso adhuc corruptionis suae pondere deorsum premit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

VERS. 15. — Et cum spiritus me praesente transiret, inhorruerunt pili carnis meae. 58. Invisibilia quidem cognoscimus, sed raptim. — Nobis praesentibus spiritus transit, quando invisibilia cognoscimus, et tamen haec non solide, sed raptim videmus. Neque enim in suavitate contemplationis intimae diu mens figitur, quia ad semetipsam ipsa immensitate luminis reverberata revocatur. Cumque internam dulcedinem degustat, amore aestuat, ire super semetipsam nititur, sed ad infirmitatis suae tenebras fracta relabitur; et magna virtute proficiens, videt quia videre non possit hoc quod ardenter diligit, nec tamen ardenter diligeret, nisi aliquatenus videret. Non ergo stat, sed transit spiritus, quia supernam lucem nostra nobis contemplatio et inhiantibus aperit, et mox infirmantibus abscondit. Et quia in hac vita quantalibet virtute quis profecerit, adhuc tamen corruptionis suae stimulum sentit: Corpus quippe, quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem (Sap. IX, 15), recte subditur: Inhorruerunt pili carnis meae.. VERS. 16. — Stetit quidam, cujus non agnoscebam vultum. 61. Homo per peccatum totus carnalis factus, non cogitat sine imaginibus corporum. Qui sine his animam suam, ac deinde Deum percipiat. — Quidam namque non dicimus, nisi de eo utique, quem exprimere aut nolumus, aut non valemus. Sed qua mente hoc loco dicitur quidam, videlicet exponitur, cum protinus subinfertur: Cujus non agnoscebam vultum. Humana quippe anima, primorum hominum vitio a paradisi gaudiis expulsa, lucem invisibilium perdidit, et totam se in amorem visibilium fudit; tantoque ab interna speculatione caecata est, quanto foras deformiter sparsa; unde fit ut nulla noverit nisi ea quae corporeis oculis, ut ita dixerim, palpando cognoscit. Homo enim, qui si praeceptum servare voluisset, etiam carne spiritalis futurus erat, peccando factus est etiam mente carnalis ut sola cogitet, quae ad animum per imagines corporum trahit. Corpus quippe est coeli, terrae, aquarum, animalium, cunctarumque rerum visibilium, quas indesinenter intuetur, in quibus dum totam se

delectata mens projicit, ab internae intelligentiae subtilitate grossescit; et quia jam erigere ad summa se non valet, in his infirma libenter jacet. Cum vero miris conatibus ab his exsurgere nititur, magnum valde est, si ad cognitionem suam, repressa corporali specie, anima perducatur; ut semetipsam sine corporea imagine cogitet, et cogitando se, viam sibi usque ad considerandam aeternitatis substantiam paret.. IBID. — Et vocem quasi aurae lenis audivi. 65. Spiritus Sancti vox et aura lenis et spiritus vehemens. — Quid enim per vocem aurae lenis, nisi cognitio sancti Spiritus designatur, qui de Patre procedens, et de eo quod est Filii accipiens, nostrae tenuiter notitiae infirmitatis infunditur? Qui tamen super apostolos veniens, per exteriorem sonum tanquam per vehementem spiritum demonstratur, cum dicitur: Factusque est repente de coelo sonus tanquam advenientis spiritus vehementis (Act. II, 2). Sanctus enim Spiritus cum se notitiae humanae infirmitatis insinuat, et sonitu vehementis spiritus, et voce aurae lenis exprimitur; quia videlicet veniens, et vehemens est et lenis: lenis, quia notitiam suam, quatenus cognosci utcunque valeat, nostris sensibus temperat; vehemens, quia quantumlibet hanc temperet, adventu tamen suo infirmitatis nostrae caecitatem illuminando perturbat. Illustratione enim sua nos leniter tangit, sed inopiam nostram immaniter concutit. 66. Aura lenis quia se quantumlibet sanctis hic modicum aperit. In contemplatione quidquid mens perfecte valet conspicere, non est Deus. — Vox ergo Dei quasi aurae lenis auditur, quia in hac adhuc vita positis contemplatoribus suis, nequaquam se Divinitas sicut est insinuat, sed lippientibus mentis nostrae oculis claritatem suam tenuiter demonstrat. Quod bene ipsa legis acceptione signatur, cum dicitur, quia Moyses ascendit, et Dominus in monte descendit (Exod. XXIV, 1). Mons quippe est ipsa nostra contemplatio, in quam nos ascendimus, ut ad ea quae ultra infirmitatem nostram sunt videnda sublevemur. Sed in hanc Dominus descendit, quia nobis multum proficientibus parum de se aliquid nostris sensibus aperit; si

tamen dici in illo vel parum, vel aliquid potest, qui unus semper et idem permanens, intelligi partiliter non potest, et tamen a suis fidelibus participari dicitur, cum in ejus substantia pars nullatenus admittatur. Sed quia hunc exprimere perfecto sermone non possumus, humanitatis nostrae modulo, quasi infantiae imbecillitate praepediti, eum aliquatenus balbutiendo resonamus. Quia vero et in magna contemplatione sublevati, subtile quid de aeternitatis cognitione pertingimus, sacrae historiae verbis ostenditur, cum de cognitione Dei propheta nobilis Elias edocetur. Cui cum transiturum ante eum se Dominus promitteret, dicens: Ecce Dominus transit, spiritus grandis et fortis, subvertens montes et conterens petras ante Dominum; illico adjunxit: Non in spiritu Dominus; et post spiritum commotio, non in commotione Dominus; et post commotionem ignis, non in igne Dominus; et post ignem sibilus aurae tenuis (III Reg. XIX, 11, 12). Spiritus quippe ante Dominum evertit montes, et petras 169 conterit; quia pavor, qui ex adventu ejus irruit, et altitudinem cordis nostri dejicit, et duritiam liquefacit. Sed spiritui commotionis et igni non inesse Dominus dicitur, esse vero in sibilo aurae tenuis non negatur; quia nimirum mens cum in contemplationis sublimitate suspenditur, quidquid perfecte conspicere praevalet, Deus non est: cum vero subtile aliquid conspicit, hoc est quod de incomprehensibili substantia aeternitatis audit. Quasi enim sibilum tenuis aurae percipimus, cum saporem incircumscriptae veritatis contemplatione subita subtiliter degustamus. Tunc ergo verum est quod de Deo cognoscimus, cum plene nos aliquid de illo cognoscere non posse sentimus. Unde bene illic subditur: Quod cum audisset Elias, operuit vultum suum pallio, et ingressus stetit in ostio speluncae (Ibid.). Post aurae tenuis sibilum, vultum suum propheta pallio operit, quia in ipsa subtilissima contemplatione veritatis, quanta ignorantia homo tegatur, agnoscit. Vultui namque pallium superducere est, ne altiora mens quaerere audeat, hanc ex consideratione propriae infirmitatis velare; ut nequaquam intelligentiae oculos ultra se praecipitanter

aperiat, sed ad hoc quod apprehendere non valet, reverenter claudat. Qui haec agens, in speluncae ostio stetisse describitur. Quid namque spelunca nostra est, nisi haec corruptionis habitatio, in qua adhuc ex vetustate retinemur? Sed cum aliquid percipere de cognitione Divinitatis incipimus, quasi jam in speluncae nostrae ostio stamus. Quia enim progredi perfecte non possumus, ad cognitionem tamen veritatis inhiantes, jam aliquid de libertatis aura captamus. In ingressu ergo speluncae stare, est represso nostrae corruptionis obstaculo, ad cognitionem veritatis incipere exire. Unde et nube in tabernaculum descendente Israelitae e longinquo cernentes, in papilionum suorum ostiis stetisse memorantur (Exod., XXXIII, 9) quia ii, qui adventum Divinitatis utcunque conspiciunt, quasi jam ex habitaculo carnis procedunt. Quia igitur humana mens quantalibet se virtute tetenderit, vix de intimis extrema cognoscit, recte nunc dicitur: Et vocem quasi aurae lenis audivi. Sed quoniam cum de se saltem parum nobis divina cognitio exbibet, infirmitatis nostrae ignorantiam perfecte docet, qui vocem aurae lenis audivit, dicat quae ex ipsa hac auditione didicerit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 17. — Nunquid homo Dei comparatione justificabitur, aut factore suo purior erit vir? 67. Justitia humana divinae comparata, injustitia est. Qui compescendae de Dei flagellis querelae. — Humana justitia divinae justitiae comparata, injustitia est: quia et lucerna in tenebris fulgere cernitur, sed in solis radio posita tenebratur. Quid ergo Eliphaz raptus in contemplatione cognovit, nisi quod justificari homo Dei comparatione non possit? Recta namque credimus quae exterius operamur, sed cum minime interna cognoscimus, quasi in solis radio positi caligamus. Cum vero illa utcunque percipimus, ista non utcunque judicamus, quia tanto quisque subtilius de tenebris judicat, quanto ei verius claritas lucis constat. Qui enim lucem videt, scit quid de tenebris aestimet. Nam qui candorem lucis ignorat, et

obscura pro lucidis approbat. Bene autem subditur: 170 Aut factore suo purior erit vir? Quisquis de percussione murmurat, quid aliud quam justitiam ferientis accusat? Puriorem se ergo vir factore suo existimat, si contra flagellum querelam parat; eumque sibi procul dubio postponit, cujus judicium de sua afflictione redarguit. Ut ergo homo reprehendere non audeat judicem culpae, hunc humiliter cogitet auctorem naturae, quia qui mire ex nihilo hominem fecit, factum impie non affligit. Quod tunc Eliphaz didicit, cum vocem quasi aurae lenis audivit. In consideratione namque divinae magnitudinis discitur quam humiliter in sua animadversione timeatur. Et qui superna degustat, inferiora aequanimiter tolerat, quia plene intus conspicit, quanti aestimet quod foris agit. Male enim se rectum putat, qui regulam summae rectitudinis ignorat; et saepe lignum rectum creditur, si ad regulam non ducatur; sed cum regulae jungitur, per quantam tortitudinem tumescit invenitur, quia nimirum rectitudo abcidens increpat, quod oculus deceptus approbabat. Eliphaz itaque quia superna conspexit, districtum judicium de inferioribus exerit; et quamvis beatum Job non recte redarguit, in comparatione tamen creatoris omnium, creaturae modum recte describit dicens: [

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS. 18, 19. Ecce qui serviunt ei, non sunt stabiles, et in angelis suis reperit pravitatem: quanto magis hi, qui habitant domos luteas, qui terrenum habent fundamentum, consumentur velut tinea? 68. Natura angelica cur mutabilis, et unde fiat immutabilis. Angelorum lapsus homines admonet de sua infirmitate diffidere. Tinea, concupiscentia. — Natura angelica etsi contemplationi auctoris inhaerendo, in statu suo immutabiliter permanet; eo ipso tamen quo creatura est, in semetipsa vicissitudinem mutabilitatis habet. Mutari autem, ex alio ad aliud ire est, et in semetipso stabilem non esse. Unaquaeque enim res quasi tot passibus ad aliud tendit, quot mutabilitatis

suae motibus subjacet. Sola autem natura incomprehensibilis a statu suo nescit moveri, quae ab eo quod semper idem est, nescit immutari. Nam si angelorum substantia a mutabilitatis motu fuisset aliena, bene ab auctore condita, nequaquam in reprobis spiritibus a beatitudinis suae arce cecidisset. Mire autem omnipotens Deus naturam summorum spirituum bonam, sed mutabilem condidit, ut et qui permanere nollent, ruerent, et qui in conditione persisterent, tanto in ea jam dignius, quanto et ex arbitrio starent; et eo majoris apud Deum meriti fierent; quo mutabilitatis suae motum voluntatis statione fixissent. Quia ergo ipsa quoque natura angelica est in semetipsa mutabilis, quam videlicet mutabilitatem vicit per hoc, quod ei qui semper idem est vinculis amoris illigatur, recte nunc dicitur: Ecce qui serviunt ei, non sunt stabiles. Atque ejusdem protinus documentum mutabilitatis adjungitur, cum de apostatis spiritibus subinfertur: Et in angelis suis reperit pravitatem. Ex quorum casu bene infirmitatis humanae considerationem colligit, cum illico subnectit: Quanto magis hi, qui habitant domos luteas, qui terrenum habent fundamentum, consumentur velut tinea? Luteas quippe domos habitamus, quia in corporibus terrenis subsistimus. Quae bene Paulus considerans 171 ait: Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus (II Cor. IV, 7). Et rursum: Scimus quia si terrestris domus nostra hujus habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem ex Deo habemus, domum non manufactam (II Cor. V, 1). Terrenum quoque fundamentum est substantia carnis. Quod in se sollicite Psalmista conspexerat, cum dicebat: Non est occultatum os meum a te, quod fecisti in occulto, et substantia mea in inferioribus terrae (Psal. CXXXVIII, 15). Tinea autem de veste nascitur, et eamdem vestem, de qua oritur, oriendo corrumpit. Quasi quaedam vero vestis animae caro est; sed haec nimirum vestis habet tineam suam, quia ab ipsa carnalis tentatio oritur, ex qua laceratur. Quasi enim quadam sua tinea vestis nostra consumitur, cum caro corruptibilis tentationem gignit, et per hanc ad interitum pervenit. Velut tinea homo consumitur, cum de se oritur

unde conteratur. Ac si aperte dicat: Si illi spiritus esse ex se incommutabiles nequeunt, qui nulla carnis infirmitate deprimuntur; qua temeritate se homines in bono permanere constanter existimant, quos in eo quod intellectus ad summa evehit, carnalis infirmitas aggravans praepedit, ut per corruptionis vitium in semetipsis habeant unde ab intima novitate veterascant? 72. Qui prosperis vel adversis bene utantur. — Sed quia nequaquam sic humani generis multitudo deseritur, ut cuncta ad interitum tendere permittatur, sunt nonnulli qui praesentis vitae oblectamentum despiciunt, etiam cum adsunt, transitoria esse considerant, atque haec ex amore aeternitatis calcant. Cumque in hoc primo gradu judicii gressum ponunt, vegetiores ad altiora perveniunt, ut cuncta temporalia non solum quia citius sunt amittenda, despiciant, sed his inhaerere non appetant, etiam si aeterna esse potuissent; et a pulchre conditis amorem subtrahunt, quia in ipsum auctorem pulchritudinis cordis passibus tendunt. Et sunt nonnulli qui bona vitae praesentis diligunt, sed tamen haec nullatenus assequuntur: qui rebus temporalibus totis desideriis inhiant, mundi gloriam quaerunt, sed adipisci nequaquam possunt. Hos, ut ita dixerim, cor ad mundum 173 pertrahit, mundus ad cor repellit. Nam saepe contingit ut ipsis suis adversitatibus fracti ad mentem redeant, et in semetipsis reversi considerent, quam sint inania quae quaerebant, seseque pro tam stulto desiderio protinus ad lamentum vertant; et tanto valentius aeterna desiderent, quanto se stultius laborasse pro temporalibus dolent. Unde bene descriptis reprobis subditur:

CAPUT XLI.

Vers. 21. — Qui autem reliqui fuerint, auferentur ex iis. 73. Quos mundus despicit, Deus eligit. — Quos alios reliquos, nisi hujus mundi despectos accipimus? Quos dum praesens saeculum ad nullius gloriae usum eligit, quasi minimos indignosque derelinquit. Sed mundi reliquos auferre Dominus dicitur, quia despectos hujus saeculi eligere dignatur, Paulo

attestante qui ait: Non multi sapientes secundum carnem, non multi potentes, non multi nobiles; sed quae stulta sunt mundi elegit Deus, ut confundat sapientes; et infirma mundi elegit Deus, ut confundat fortia (I Cor. I, 26, 27). Quod bene in libris Regum Aegyptio puero in via lassescente signatur, quem Amalecita aegrotum in itinere deserit, David vero invenit, cibo reficit, ducem sui itineris facit; Amalecitam persequitur, epulantem reperit, et funditus exstinguit (I Reg. XXX, 13). Quid est enim quod Aegyptius Amalecitae puer in itinere lassatur, nisi quod amator praesentis saeculi peccati sui nigredine opertus, saepe ab eodem saeculo infirmus despectusque relinquitur, ut cum eo currere nequaquam valeat, sed fractus adversitate torpescat? Sed hunc David invenit, quia Redemptor noster veraciter manu fortis nonnunquam quos despectos a mundi gloria reperit, in suum amorem convertit. Cibo pascit, quia verbi scientia reficit. Ducem itineris eligit, quia suum etiam praedicatorem facit. Et qui Amalecitam sequi non valuit, dux David efficitur, quia is, quem indignum mundus deseruit, non solum conversus in suas mentes Dominum recipit, sed praedicando hunc etiam usque ad aliena corda perducit. Quo videlicet duce David Amalecitam convivantem invenit et exstinguit, quia ipsis Christus praedicantibus mundi laetitiam destruit, quos mundus comites habere despexit. Quia igitur plerumque quos mundus relinquit, Dominus eligit, recte nunc dicitur: Qui reliqui fuerint, auferentur ex eis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLII.

IBID. — Morientur, et non in sapientia. 74. Scripturae mos, ut ubi quid interponit peregrinum, mox ad tractatum argumentum redeat. — Quid est quod superius reproborum interitum protulit, dicens: Quia nullus intelligit, in aeternum peribunt; et de electis Dei illico adjunxit: Qui reliqui fuerint, auferentur ex eis; et hoc protinus, quod eisdem electis non conveniat, subdit dicens: Morientur, et non in sapientia? Si enim a reprobis divinitus

auferuntur, quo pacto mori non in sapientia dicuntur? Sed nimirum sacrae Scripturae consuetudo est, ut cum aliquid narrat, interposita alterius causae sententia, ad superiora protinus redeat. Nam postquam dixit: Et quia nullus est qui intelligat, in aeternum peribunt, electorum mox sortem subintulit, dicens: Qui autem reliqui fuerint, auferentur ex eis. Et rursum sententiae suae oculum in eum, quem praedixerat, interitum reproborum mittens, subito adjunxit: Morientur, 174 et non in sapientia. Ac si diceret: Hi quos dixi quia non intelligentes in aeternum peribunt, procul dubio non in sapientia morientur. Sed hunc esse nonnunquam morem sacri eloquii melius ostendemus, si ex eo aliquam hujus rei similitudinem proferamus. Paulus namque apostolus cum dilectum discipulum de instituendis Ecclesiae officiis admoneret, ne quos forte ad sacros ordines inordinate proveheret, dixit: Manus cito nemini imposueris, neque communicaveris peccatis alienis, te ipsum castum custodi (I Tim. V, 22). Qui ad infirmitatem ejus corporis protinus verba convertens ait: Noli adhuc aquam bibere, sed modico vino utere propter stomachum tuum, et frequentes tuas infirmitates (Ibid., 23). Statimque subjungit, dicens: Quorumdam hominum peccata manifesta sunt praecedentia ad judicium, quorumdam autem et subsequuntur (Ibid., 24). Quid ergo ad illud pertinet, quod ab infirmo bibi aquam prohibuit, hoc quod de peccatis absconditis quorumdam hominum manifestisque subjunxit, nisi quod interposita de ejus infirmitate sententia, ad hoc in extremo rediit, quod superius dixit: Manus cito nemini imposueris, neque communicaveris peccatis alienis? Ut enim haec eadem peccata quanta sollicitudine perquirenda essent ostenderet, interposita contra infirmitatis molestiam discretionis admonitione, protinus intulit quod in aliis patescerent, in aliis laterent, dicens: Quorumdam hominum peccata manifesta sunt praecedentia ad judicium, quorumdam autem et subsequuntur. Sicut ergo per hanc sententiam Paulus non eisdem verbis congruit, quibus eam loquens de Timothei infirmitate subjunxit; sed ad illud

rediit, quod superius intermittendo narravit; ita hoc loco Eliphaz cum de electis diceret: Qui reliqui fuerint, auferentur ex eis, illico adjungens: Morientur, et non in sapientia, ad illud protinus recurrit, quod superius de reprobis protulit, dicens: Et quia nullus intelligit, in aeternum peribunt. 75. Moriuntur reprobi et electi, hi in sapientia, illi in insipientia. — Idcirco autem reprobi electos despiciunt, quod ad vitam invisibilem per visibilem mortem tendunt. De quibus bene nunc dicitur: Morientur, et non in sapientia. Ac si aperte diceretur: Mortem quidem et sapientiam pariter fugiunt; sed sapientiam penitus deserunt, mortis autem laqueos non evadunt. Et quia quandoque morituri vivere moriendo potuerant, dum mortem quae procul dubio ventura est metuunt, et vitam simul et sapientiam perdunt. At contra justi in sapientia moriuntur, quia mortem quam devitare funditus nequeunt, cum pro veritate imminet, differre contemnunt; eamque dum aequanimiter ferunt, poenam propaginis vertunt in instrumentum virtutis, ut inde debeat vita recipi, unde per primae culpae meritum cogitur finiri. Sed quia haec Eliphaz contra iniquos veraciter protulit, beatum Job reprehensibilem aestimans, de fastu se sapientiae inflavit. Unde et post praedicamenta tantae rectitudinis, irrisionis verba subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XLIII.

CAP. V. VERS. 1. — Voca ergo si est qui tibi respondeat. 76. Vocare Deum quid sit, quid Dei respondere. — Omnipotens enim Deus saepe ejus precem 175 in perturbatione deserit, qui praecepta illius in tranquillitate contemnit. Unde scriptum est: Qui avertit aurem suam ne audiat legem, oratio ejus erit exsecrabilis (Prov. XXVIII, 9). Vocare autem nostrum, est humili Deum prece deposcere; respondere vero Dei, est effectum precibus praebere. Ait ergo: Voca, si est qui tibi respondeat. Ac si aperte dicat: Quantumlibet afflictus clames, Deum respondentem non habes, quia vox in tribulatione

non invenit, quem mens in tranquillitate contempsit. Ubi adhuc deridendo subjungit:

CAPUT XLIV.

IBID. — Et ad aliquem sanctorum convertere. 77. Ac si despiciens dicat: Sanctos quoque invenire in afflictione adjutores non vales, quos habere socios in hilaritate noluisti. Qui post irrisionem protinus sententiam subdit, dicens:

CAPUT XLV.

VERS. 2. — Virum stultum interficit iracundia, et parvulum occidit invidia. 78. Vera dicit Eliphaz, sed non vere in Job. Irae quanta culpa, quot mala. — Quae nimirum sententia vera esset, si illata contra tanti viri patientiam non fuisset. Sed nos pensemus quod dicitur, quamvis ab auditoris sui virtute relidatur, ut ostendamus quam rectum est quod promitur, si non in beatum Job injuste promeretur, cum scriptum sit, Tu autem, Domine, cum tranquillitate judicas (Sap. XII, 18); sciendum nobis magnopere est quia quotiens turbulentos motus animi sub mansuetudinis virtute restringimus, redire ad similitudinem conditoris conamur. Nam cum tranquillitatem mentis ira diverberat, dilaniatam quodam modo scissamque perturbat, ut sibimetipsi non congruat, ac vim intimae similitudinis amittat. Quanta ergo sit iracundiae culpa pensemus, per quam dum mansuetudo amittitur, supernae imaginis similitudo vitiatur. Per iram sapientia perditur, ut quid quove ordine agendum sit omnino nesciatur, sicut scriptum est: Ira in sinu stulti requiescit (Eccl. VII, 10); quia nimirum intelligentiae lucem subtrahit, cum mentem permovendo confundit. Per iram vita amittitur, etsi sapientia teneri videatur, sicut scriptum est: Ira perdit etiam prudentes (Prov. XV, 1, sec. LXX); quia scilicet confusus animus nequaquam explet, etiam si quid intelligere prudenter valet. Per iram justitia relinquitur, sicut scriptum est:

Ira viri justitiam Dei non operatur (Jac. I, 20); quia dum perturbata mens judicium suae rationis exasperat, omne quod furor suggerit, rectum putat. Per iram gratiae vitae socialis amittitur, sicut scriptum est: Noli esse assiduus cum homine iracundo, ne discas semitas ejus, et sumas scandalum animae tuae (Prov. XXII, 24, 25). Et idem: Quis poterit habitare cum homine, cujus spiritus facilis est ad irascendum? (Prov. XVIII, 14.) Quia qui se ex humana ratione non temperat, necesse est, ut bestialiter solus vivat. Per iram concordia rumpitur, sicut scriptum est: Vir animosus parit rixas. Et vir iracundus effodit peccata (Prov. XV, 18). Iracundus quippe peccata effodit, quia etiam malos, quos incaute ad discordiam provocat, pejores facit. Per iram lux veritatis amittitur, sicut scriptum est: Sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram (Ephes. IV, 26); quia cum menti iracundia confusionis tenebras incutit, huic Deus radium suae cognitionis abscondit. Per iram sancti Spiritus splendor excluditur; quo contra, juxta vetustam translationem scriptum est: Super quem 176 requiescet spiritus meus, nisi super humilem et quietum et trementem sermones meos (Isa. LXVI, 2)? Cum enim humilem diceret, quietum protinus adjunxit. Si ergo ira quietem mentis subtrahit, suam sancto Spiritui habitationem claudit, cujus recessione animus vacuus, ad apertam mox insaniam ducitur, et usque ad superficiem ab intimo cogitationum fundamento dissipatur. 79. Imago irati optimis coloribus expressa. — Nam irae suae stimulis accensum cor palpitat, corpus tremit, lingua se praepedit, facies ignescit, exasperantur oculi, et nequaquam recognoscuntur noti. Ore quidem clamorem format, sed sensus quid loquatur ignorat. In quo itaque iste ab arreptitiis longe est, qui actionis suae conscius non est? Unde fit plerumque ut usque ad manus ira prosiliat, et quo ratio longius recedit, audacior exsurgat; seque ipsum retinere animus non valet, quia, factus est potestatis alienae; et eo furor membra foras in ictibus exercet, quo intus ipsam membrorum dominam mentem captivam tenet. Aliquando autem manus non exerit, sed in maledictionis jaculum

linguam vertit. Fratris namque interitum precibus exposcit, et hoc Deum perpetrare expetit, quod ipse perversus homo facere vel metuit, vel erubescit. Fitque ut voto et voce homicidium peragat, etiam cum a laesione proximi manibus cessat. Aliquando ira perturbato animo, quasi ex judicio silentium indicit; et quo se foras per linguam non exprimit, intus deterius ignescit, ut iratus quisque collocutionem suam proximo subtrahat, et nihil dicendo, quam sit aversus dicat. Et nonnunquam haec silentii severitas per disciplinae dispensationem geritur, si tamen sollicite in intimis discretionis forma teneatur. Nonnunquam vero dum accensus animus a consueta locutione restringitur, per accessum temporis penitus a proximi dilectione separatur, et acriores stimuli ad mentem veniunt, causae quoque quae gravius exasperant oriuntur; atque in irati oculo festuca in trabem vertitur, dum ira in odium permutatur. Plerumque ira per silentium clausa intra mentem vehementius aestuat et clamosas tacita voces format; verba sibi, quibus exasperetur objicit, et quasi in causae examine posita durius exaperata respondet; quod Salomon breviter insinuat, dicens: Praestolatio impiorum furor (Prov. XI, 23). Sicque fit ut perturbatus animus majorem strepitum sui silentii sentiat, eumque gravius clausae irae flamma consumat. Unde bene ante nos quidam sapiens dixit: Cogitationes iracundi vipereae sunt generationes, mentem comedunt matrem suam. 80. Gradus quatuor quibus ad iram sumus affecti. — Sciendum vero est quo nonnullos ira citius accendit, facilius deserit. Nonnullos vero tarde quidem commovet, sed diutius tenet. Alii namque accensis calamis similes, dum vocibus perstrepunt, quasi quosdam accensionis suae sonitus reddunt; citius quidem flammam faciunt, sed protinus in favillam frigescunt. Alii autem lignis gravioribus durioribusque non dispares, accensionem tarde suscipiunt, sed tamen accensi semel difficilius exstinguuntur, et quia se tardius in asperitatem concitant, furoris, sui diutius ignem 177 servant. Alii autem, quod est nequius, et citius iracundiae flammas accipiunt, et tardius

deponunt. Nonnulli vero has et tarde suscipiunt, et citius amittunt. In quibus nimirum quatuor modis liquido lector agnoscit, quia et ad tranquillitatis bonum ultimus plusquam primus appropinquat, et in malo secundum tertius superat. Sed quid prodest quod iracundia quomodo mentem teneat, dicimus, si non etiam qualiter compesci debeat exprimamus? 81. Irae compescendae duo modi. — Duobus etenim modis fracta possidere animum ira desuescit. Primus quippe est, ut mens sollicita antequam agere quodlibet incipiat, omnes sibi, quas pati potest, contumelias proponat, quatenus Redemptoris sui probra cogitans, ad adversa se praeparet. Quae nimirum venientia tanto fortior excipit, quanto se cautius ex praescientia armavit. Qui enim improvidus ab adversitate deprehenditur, quasi ab hoste dormiens invenitur; eumque citius inimicus necat, quia non repugnantem perforat. Nam qui mala imminentia per sollicitudinem praenotat, hostiles incursus quasi in insidiis vigilans exspectat; et inde ad victoriam valenter aecingitur, unde nesciens deprehendi putabatur. Solerter ergo animus ante actionis suae primordia, cuncta debet adversa meditari; ut semper haec cogitans, semper contra haec thorace patientiae munitus, et quidquid accesserit providus superet, et quidquid non accesserit lucrum putet. Secundus autem servandae mansuetudinis modus est, ut cum alienos excessus aspicimus, nostra, quibus in aliis excessimus, delicta cogitemus. Considerata quippe infirmitas propria, mala nobis excusat aliena. Patienter namque illatam injuriam tolerat, qui pie meminit quod fortasse adhuc habeat, in quo debeat ipse tolerari. Et quasi aqua ignis exstinguitur, cum surgente furore animi, sua cuique ad mentem culpa revocatur, quia erubescit peccata non parcere, qui vel Deo, vel proximo saepe se recolit parcenda peccasse. 82. Ira alia ex impatientia, alia ex zelo. Prima oculum excaecat, altera ita turbat, ut ad clarius videndum disponat. — Sed inter haec solerter sciendum est quod alia est ira, quam impatientia excitat, alia quam zelus format. Illa ex vitio, haec ex virtute generatur. Si enim nulla ira ex virtute surgeret, divinae

animadversionis impetum Phinees per gladium non placasset. Hanc iram quia Heli non habuit, motum contra se implacabiliter supernae ultionis excitavit. Nam quo contra subditorum vitia tepuit, eo contra illum districtio aeterni rectoris exarsit. De hac per Psalmistam dicitur: Irascimini, et nolite peccare (Psal. IV, 5). Quod nimirum non recte intelligunt, qui irasci nos nobis tantummodo, non etiam proximis delinquentibus volunt. Si enim sic proximos ut nos amare praecipimur, restat ut sic eorum erratibus sicut nostris vitiis irascamur. De hac per Salomonem dicitur: Melior est ira risu, quia per tristitiam vultus corrigitur animus delinquentis (Eccle. VII, 4). De hac iterum Psalmista ait: Turbatus est prae ira oculus meus (Psal. VI, 8). Ira quippe per vitium oculum mentis excaecat, ira autem per zelum turbat; quia quo saltem recti aemulatione concutitur, ea quae nisi tranquillo corde percipi non potest, contemplatio dissipatur. Ipse namque zelus rectitudinis, quia inquietudine mentem agitat, ejus mox aciem obscurat, 178 ut altiora in commotione non videat, quae pene prius tranquilla cernebat. Sed inde subtilius ad alta reducitur, unde ad tempus, ne videat, reverberatur. Nam ipsa recti aemulatio aeterna post paululum in tranquillitate largius aperit, quae haec interim per commotionem claudit; et unde mens turbatur ne videat, inde proficit ut ad videndum verius clarescat: sicut infirmanti oculo cum collyrium immittitur, lux penitus negatur; sed inde eam post paululum veraciter recipit, unde hanc ad tempus salubriter amittit. Nunquam vero commotioni contemplatio jungitur, nec praevalet mens perturbata conspicere, ad quod vix tranquilla valet inhiare, quia nec solis radius cernitur, cum commotae nubes coeli faciem obducunt, nec turbatus fons respicientis imaginem reddit, quam tranquillus proprie ostendit, quia quo ejus unda palpitat, eo in se speciem similitudinis obscurat. 83. Cavendum ne ira menti ex zelo commotae dominetur. — Sed cum per zelum animus movetur, curandum summopere est ne haec eadem, quae instrumento virtutis assumitur, menti ira dominetur, nec quasi domina praeeat, sed velut

ancilla ad obsequium parata, a rationis tergo nunquam recedat. Tunc enim robustius contra vitia erigitur, cum subdita rationi famulatur. Nam quantumlibet ira ex zelo rectitudinis surgat, si immoderata mentem vicerit, rationi protinus servire contemnit; et tanto se impudentius dilatat, quanto impatientiae vitium virtutem putat. Unde necesse est ut hoc ante omnia, qui zelo rectitudinis movetur, attendat, ne ira extra mentis dominium transeat, sed in ultione peccati tempus modumque considerans, surgentem animi perturbationem subtilius retractando restringat, animositatem reprimat, et motus fervidos sub aequitate disponat; ut eo fiat justior ultor alienus, quo prius exstitit victor suus, quatenus sic culpas delinquentium corrigat, ut ante ipse qui corrigit, per patientiam crescat, et fervorem suum transcendendo dijudicet, ne intemperanter excitatus ipso zelo rectitudinis, longe a rectitudine aberret. Quia vero, sicut diximus, etiam laudanda boni aemulatio mentis oculum turbat, recte nunc dicitur: Virum stultum interficit iracundia. Ac si aperte diceretur: Ira per zelum sapientes turbat, ira vero per vitium stultos trucidat, quia illa sub ratione restringitur, haec vero irrationabiliter devictae menti dominatur. Bene autem subditur.

CAPUT XLVI.

IBID. — Et parvulum occidit invidia. 84. Invidus eo cui invidet, se minorem testatur. — Invidere enim non possumus, nisi eis quos nobis in aliquo meliores putamus. Parvulus ergo est qui livore occiditur, quia ipse sibi testimonium perhibet, quod ei minor sit cujus invidia torquetur. Hinc est quod hostis callidus primo homini invidendo subripuit, quia amissa beatitudine, minorem se immortalitati illius agnovit. Hinc est quod Cain ad perpetrandum fratricidium corruit (Genes. IV, 5-7); quia despecto suo sacrificio, praelatum sibi infremuit, cujus Deus hostiam accepit: et quem meliorem se esse exhorruit, ne utcunque esset, amputavit. Hinc Esau ad persecutionem fratris exarsit (Genes. XXV, 34; XXVII, 41), quia

primogenitorum benedictione perdita, quam tamen esu lenticulae ipse vendiderat, minorem se ei, 179 quem nascendo praeibat, ingemuit. Hinc Joseph fratres sui Ismaelitis transeuntibus vendiderunt (Genes. XXXVII, 27, 28), quia cognito revelationis mysterio, ne se melior fieret, ejus provectibus obviare conati sunt. Hinc Saul David subditum, lanceam intorquendo, persequitur (I Reg. XVIII, 11), quia quem magnis quotidie augeri virtutum successibus sensit, ultra se excrescere expavit. Parvulus itaque est qui invidia occiditur, quia nisi ipse inferior existeret, de bono alterius non doleret. 85. In invidia serpens antiquus totum virus suum concutit ac vomit. Invidi descriptio. — Sed inter haec sciendum est quia quamvis per omne vitium quod perpetratur, humano cordi antiqui hostis virus infunditur, in hac tamen nequitia, tota sua viscera serpens concutit, et imprimendae malitiae pestem vomit. De quo nimirum scriptum est: Invidia diaboli mors intravit in orbem terrarum (Sap. II, 24). Nam cum devictum cor livoris putredo corruperit, ipsa quoque exteriora indicant, quam graviter animum vesania instigat. Color quippe pallore afficitur, oculi deprimuntur, mens accenditur, et membra frigescunt, fit in cogitatione rabies, in dentibus stridor; cumque in latebris cordis crescens absconditur odium, dolore caeco terebrat conscientiam vulnus inclusum. Nil laetum de propriis libet, quia tabescentem mentem sua poena sauciat, quam felicitas torquet aliena; quantoque extranei operis in altum fabrica ducitur, tanto fundamentum mentis lividae profundius suffoditur; ut quo alii ad meliora properant, eo ipse deterius ruat; qua ruina videlicet etiam illud destruitur, quod in aliis actibus perfecto opere surrexisse putabatur. Nam invidia cum mentem tabefecerit, cuncta quae invenerit bene gesta consumit. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Vita carnium, sanitas cordis; putredo ossium invidia (Prov. XIV, 30). Quid enim per carnes, nisi infirma quaedam ac tenera; et quid per ossa, nisi fortia acta signantur? Et plerumque contingit ut quidam cum vera cordis innocentia in nonnullis suis actibus infirmi videantur;

quidam vero jam quaedam ante humanos oculos robusta exerceant, sed tamen erga aliorum bona, 180 intus invidiae pestilentia tabescant. Bene ergo dicitur: Vita carnium, sanitas, cordis, quia si mentis innocentia custoditur, etiam si qua foris infirma sunt, quandoque roborantur. Et recte subditur: Putredo ossium invidia, quia per livoris vitium, ante Dei oculos pereunt etiam fortia acta virtutum. Ossa quippe per invidiam putrescere, est quaedam etiam robusta deperire. 86. Invidiae imminutio et mors, inchoatus aut perfectus amor aeternitatis. — Sed cur haec de invidia dicimus, si non etiam qualiter eruatur intimemus? Difficile namque est ut hoc alteri non invideat, quod adipisci alter exoptat; quia quidquid temporale percipitur, tanto fit minus singulis, quanto dividitur in multis; et idcirco desiderantis mentem livor excruciat, quia hoc quod appetit, aut funditus alter accipiens adimit, aut a quantitate restringit. Qui ergo livoris peste plene carere desiderat, illam haereditatem diligat, quam cohaeredum numerus non angustat; quae et omnibus una est, et singulis tota; quae tanto largior ostenditur, quanto ad hanc percipientium multitudo dilatatur. Imminutio ergo livoris est affectus surgens internae dulcedinis et plena mors est ejus, perfectus amor aeternitatis. Nam cum mens ab ejus rei appetitu retrahitur, quae accipientium numero partitur, tanto magis proximum diligit; quanto minus ex provectu illius sua damna pertimescit. Quae si perfecte in amore coelestis patriae rapitur, plene etiam in proximi dilectione sine omni invidia solidatur; quia cum nulla terrena desiderat, nihil est quod ejus erga proximum charitati contradicat. Quae nimirum charitas quid est aliud quam oculus mentis; qui si terreni amoris pulvere tangitur, ab internae lucis mox intuitu laesus reverberatur? Quia autem parvulus est qui terrena diligit, magnus qui aeterna concupiscit, potest etiam sic non inconvenienter intelligi: Parvulum occidit invidia, quoniam hujus pestis languore non moritur, nisi qui adhuc in desideriis infirmatur.

LIBER SEXTUS.

Totum caput quintum, a versu tertio orsus, spiritali intellectu, pauca quidem allegorico, pleraque autem morali exponit.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

181 Job Christum et Ecclesiam, ejus amicis haereticos praesignari. — Servata historiae veritate beati Job dicta, amicorumque illius mystica proposui interpretatione discutere; quia cunctis vera scientibus liquet quod redemptorem mundi totis suis allegationibus curat sancta scriptura promittere, eumque per electos omnes, ut per ejus scilicet membra, studuit signare. Unde et idem beatus Job latino eloquio dolens dicitur, ut per ejus et nomen et vulnera, Redemptoris nostri passio designetur, de quo propheta ait: Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit (Isai. LIII, 4). Cui tentator, ablatis omnibus, et servos et filios occidit; quia non solum Judaicum populum ex timore servientem, sed ipsos quoque apostolos in suo amore regeneratos, passionis ejus tempore telo perfidiae perculit. Vulnere beati Job corpus atteritur, quia Redemptor noster configi clavis in crucis patibulo non dedignatur. A planta autem pedis usque ad verticem vulnera suscepit, quia sanctam Ecclesiam, quae corpus ejus est, non solum per extrema et ultima, sed usque ad summa membra persecutione saeviens tentator affligit. Unde etiam Paulus dixit: Compleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi in carne mea (Coloss. I, 24). Cui suadere uxor ad maledicendum nititur, quia carnales quique intra sanctam Ecclesiam adjutores callidi tentatoris existunt. Quae enim eum ad maledicendum provocat, vitam carnalium designat; quia, ut jam supra diximus (l. III, c. 20. n. 36, 37), intra sanctam Ecclesiam incorrectis moribus positi, quo per fidem bonis juxta sunt, eo per vitam durius premunt. Quia enim quasi fideles vitari nequeunt, a fidelibus tanto deterius, quanto et interius

tolerantur. Amici vero illius, qui quasi ad consolandum veniunt, sed ad verba asperae invectionis excedunt, haereticorum speciem tenent, qui cum contra bonos Deum defendere nituntur, offendunt. 2. Spiritales sensus quos edit Gregorius, prodeunt ex historiae radice. Amicorum Job dicta nequaquam per omnia reprobanda. — Haec itaque superius latius dicta, nunc breviter studui ex mystica designatione succingere, ut lector meus ex ipsa hac replicatione meminerit me in hoc opere spiritali intellectui deservire. Et tamen cum utilitatis usus postulat, subtiliter quoque 182 studeo historiae verba discutere. Cum vero necesse est, simul utrumque complector, ut spiritales fructus allegoria germinet, quos tamen ex radice historiae veritas producit. Amicos vero beati Job, quos haereticorum tenere speciem diximus, in dictis suis nequaquam per omnia reprobamus, quia dum per supernam sententiam contra eos dicitur: Non estis locuti coram me rectum, et protinus subditur, sicut servus meus Job (Job XLII, 7), profecto liquet quia non omnino despicitur quod ex melioris comparatione reprobatur. In reprehensionem quippe ejus incaute dilabuntur; sed tamen quia tanti viri amici sunt, ex familiaritate illius mystica multa didicerunt. Unde sicut et superius diximus (Lib. V, n. 27), eorum verbis etiam Paulus utitur, et haec in assertionis suae adjutorium assumens, prolata ex veritate testatur. Quae tamen veritas recte reprehendit, quia quamlibet fortis sententia contra sanctum virum proferri non debuit. Possunt ergo mystice Eliphaz verba pensari, quibus ad beatum Job loquitur, dicens:

CAPUT II.

VERS. 3. — Ego vidi stultum firma radice, et maledixi pulchritudini ejus statim. ALLEGORICUS SENSUS. 3. Judaei sunt stulti, etiam haereticorum maledictioni ob Christi repulsam obnoxii. — Stultus quippe Judaeorum populus exstitit, quia ipsam in carne praesentiam aeternae Sapientiae sprevit. Qui quasi firma radice convaluit, quia electorum vitam temporaliter

exstinguendo superavit. Sed hunc Eliphaz maledicendo despicit, quia nimirum omnes haeretici, quorum tenere speciem amicos beati Job diximus, cum de nomine Christi gloriantur, Judaeorum perfidiam ex auctoritate reprehendunt. De quo stulto protinus subditur:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 4. — Longe fiant filii ejus a salute, et conterentur in porta, et non erit qui eripiat. 4. Horum filii omnes perfidi. In Christo, qui est porta, conteruntur. — Filii hujus stulti sunt omnes qui perfidiae illius praedicatione generantur. Qui scilicet a salute longe sunt, quia etsi temporalem vitam sine afflictione percipiunt, aeterna gravius ultione feriuntur, sicut de eisdem filiis illius Dominus dicit: Vae vobis, Scribae et Pharisaei hypocritae, qui circuitis mare et aridam, ut faciatis unum proselytum, et cum fuerit factus, facitis eum filium gehennae 183 duplo quam vos (Matth. XXIII, 15). Sequitur: Et conterentur in porta, et non erit qui eripiat. Quis alius portae nomine, nisi mediator Dei et hominum debet intelligi, qui ait: Ego sum ostium, per me si quis introierit, salvabitur (Joann. X, 9)? Filii igitur hujus stulti extra portam proficiunt, et in porta conteruntur, quia pravae Judaeorum soboles ante Mediatoris adventum in legis observatione floruerunt; sed in ipsa Redemptoris nostri praesentia a Divinitatis obsequio, perfidiae suae meritis repulsi ceciderunt. Quos nimirum non est qui eripiat, quia scilicet dum ipsum Redemptorem exstinguere persequendo conati sunt, oblata sibi ereptionis remedia absciderunt; de quo bene subditur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 5. — Cujus messem famelicus comedet, et ipsum rapiet armatus. 5. Gentiles messem eorum, id est, sacra eloquia, comedunt, ac divitias rapiunt. — Hujus enim stulti messis fuerat sacri seges eloquii. Quaedam namque

spicarum grana, sunt verba prophetarum, quae stultus habuit, sed non comedit, quia Judaicus populus legem quidem verbo tenus tenuit, sed per fatuitatis fastidium ab ejus intellectu jejunavit. Hujus vero stulti messem famelicus comedit, quia nimirum gentilis populus verba legis intelligendo edit, ad quae plebs Judaica sine intellectu laboravit. Hos famelicos fidei Dominus praevidit, cum per evangelistam dixit: Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur (Matth. V, 6). De his famelicis Anna prophetante dicitur: Repleti prius, pro panibus se locaverunt, et famelici saturati sunt (I Reg. II, 5). Sed quia messem perdidit, recte subjungitur qualiter ipse etiam stultus perit, cum dicitur: Et ipsum rapiet armatus. Antiquus hostis Judaicum populum armatus rapuit, quia in eo vitam fidei fraudulentae suggestionis jaculis exstinxit, ut unde se inhaerere Deo crederet, inde ejus ordinationi repugnaret. Quod profecto discipulos Veritas praemonet, dicens: Venit hora ut omnis qui interficit vos arbitretur obsequium se praestare Deo (Joann. XVI, 2). Sequitur:

CAPUT V.

IBID. — Et bibent sitientes divitias ejus. 6. Eloquia Dei et messis et divitiae. Quomodo et comedi, et bibi dicuntur. — Hujus stulti divitias sitientes bibunt, quia fluentis sacrae locutionis, quae Judaicus populus in superbiae ostentatione possederat, conversae gentilium mentes irrigantur. Unde et eisdem per prophetam dicitur: Omnes sitientes venite ad aquas; et qui non habetis argentum, properate (Isai. LV, 1). Quia enim argenti vocabulo eloquia divina signantur, Psalmista testatur, dicens: Eloquia Domini, eloquia casta, argentum igne examinatum (Psal. XI, 7). Qui ergo argentum non habent, ad aquas vocantur, quia nimirum gentilitas, quae Scripturae sacrae praecepta non acceperat, sacri eloquii inundatione satiatur, quam tanto nunc avidius potat, quanto hanc diu sicca sitiebat. Eadem ergo divina eloquia et messes et divitiae vocantur: messes quia jejunam mentem

reficiunt; divitiae, quia magna nos morum venustate componunt. Eadem et comedi dicuntur et bibi, quia nimirum dum quaedam in eis obscura sunt, quae non nisi interpretata intelligimus, haec quasi mandendo glutimus; dum quaedam vero ad intelligendum facilia ita sumimus ut invenimus, ea quasi non mansa bibimus, quia non fracta sorbemus. Haec sub intellectu mystico brevi locutione transcurrimus, ne quid forsitan praeterisse videremur. Sed quia beati 184 Job amici esse non possent, nisi in quibusdam quoque magna morum honestate fulgerent, restat ut in eorum verbis virtutem sensuum moraliter inquiramus, quatenus dum locutionis eorum pondus discutitur, cujus doctrinae fuerint, ostendatur.

CAPUT VI.

VERS. 3. — Ego vidi stultum firma radice, et maledixi pulchritudini ejus statim. SENSUS MORALIS. 7. Terrena sectantes in prosperis videntur firma radice. — Quasi firma radice stultus in terra figitur, quia totis desideriis in terreno amore solidatur. Unde et primus Cain civitatem in terra construxisse describitur (Genes. IV, 17), ut aperte monstraretur quia ipse in terra fundamentum posuit, qui a soliditate coelestis patriae alienus fuit. Quasi firma radice stultus attollitur, quando hic temporali prosperitate fulcitur; ut omne quod appetit assequatur, adversa nulla sustineat, contra infirmos sine repugnatione praevaleat, bene agentibus ex auctoritate contradicat, ad majora commoda ex pejori semper actione perveniat, ut unde viam vitae deserit, inde ad tempus felicior vivat. Sed cum malos florere infirmi conspiciunt, trepidant; et apud semetipsos peccantium prosperitate turbati, intus in gressibus mentis nutant. Quorum profecto speciem sumpsit Psalmista cum diceret: Mei autem pene moti sunt pedes, pene effusi sunt gressus mei; quia zelavi in peccatoribus, pacem peccatorum videns (Psal. LXXII, 2). 8. Prudentes eorum gloriam despiciunt. Nec damnare differunt. — Cum vero eorum gloriam fortes aspiciunt, protinus

quae post gloriam poena sequatur, attendunt; et alta intus cogitatione despiciunt hoc, quod superbi foras fastu vacuae inflationis intumescunt. Bene ergo dicitur: Ego vidi stultum firma radice, et maledixi pulchritudini ejus statim. Pulchritudini quippe stulti maledicere, est ejus gloriam ex considerata damnatione judicare, quia eo atrocius in tormentis obruitur, quo altius in peccatis elevatur; quia transit quod extollitur, permanet quod punitur; quia qui honoratur in via, in perventione damnabitur; et quasi per amoena prata ad carcerem pervenit, qui per praesentis vitae prospera ad interitum tendit. Notandum vero, quod cum stulti pulchritudini maledixisse se diceret, protinus addidit, statim. Mos namque humanae et infirmae mentis est, ut cum earum rerum quas respicit qualitate varietur. Saepe enim ejus judicium cum ipsa praesentis rei specie ducitur, et juxta hoc quod aspicit, intentio illius sensusque formatur. Nam plerumque nonnulli, dum quorumdam gloriam cernunt, ejusdem gloriae aspectibus delectantur, ac magnum aliquid existimant, seque ut talia mereantur exoptant. Cum vero gloriosos quosque, aut dejectos subito, aut fortasse etiam morientes aspiciunt, quia humana gloria omni modo nihil sit, cum gemitu fatentur, ita ut protinus dicant: Ecce quam nihil est homo. Qui hoc nimirum rectius dicerent, si cum in gloria hominem cernerent, tunc ejus interitum cogitantes, transeuntem potentiam nihil esse sensissent. Tunc quippe est humana elatio pensanda quam nihil sit, cum sese super caeteros successibus extollit. Tunc considerandum est quo cursu felicitas transvolet, cum ante humanos oculos quasi permanens pollet. Nam gloriam morituri nihil esse, in ipsa jam morte pensare infirmi 185 quilibet possunt. Tunc enim ei etiam illi derogant, qui hanc et usque ad mortem sequentes amant. Bene itaque dicitur: Ego vidi stultum firma radice, et maledixi pulchritudini ejus statim. Ac si aperte diceret: Contra stulti pulchritudinem, moram in maledictione non habui, quia cum hanc cernerem, simul etiam poenam sequentem vidi. Non enim statim maledicerem, si qua me gloriae illius delectatio tenuisset; sed sine

tarditate maledixi, quia supplicia mansura conspiciens, ejus potentiam sine dubitatione reprobavi. Sed quia iniqui quique quo plus in hoc mundo proficiunt, plures secum ad interitum trahunt, recte subditur: Longe fiant filii ejus a salute. Filii quippe stulti sunt, qui in ambitione hujus saeculi ex ejus imitatione nascuntur; qui profecto a salute tanto longius fiunt, quanto in perpetratione nequitiae nulla infirmitate feriuntur. De quibus bene additur:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 4. — Et conterentur in porta, et non erit qui eripiat. 9. Judicii dies porta regni. Tunc non valet eripi, qui renuit hic corripi. — Nam sicut urbis aditus porta dicitur; ita est dies judicii porta regni, quia per eum ab electis omnibus ad coelestis patriae gloriam intratur. Unde et hunc diem cum ad retributionem sanctae Ecclesiae Salomon appropinquare conspiceret, dixit: Nobilis in portis vir ejus, quando sederit cum senatoribus terrae (Prov. XXXI, 23). Vir quippe est Ecclesiae humani generis Redemptor, qui in portis se nobilem ostendit, qui despectus prius in contumeliis exstitit, sed in ingressu regni sublimis apparebit. Qui cum terrae senatoribus residet, quia judicii sententiam cum sanctis ejusdem Ecclesiae praedicatoribus decernet, sicut ipse in Evangelio dicit: Vos qui secuti estis me, in regeneratione cum sederit Filius hominis in sede majestatis suae, sedebitis et vos super sedes duodecim, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel (Matth. XIX, 28). Quod Isaias quoque longe ante praenuntians ait: Dominus ad judicium veniet cum senioribus populi sui (Isai. III, 14). De his portis Salomon iterum dicit: Date ei de fructu manuum suarum, et laudent eam in portis opera ejus (Prov. XXXI, 31). Tunc quippe sancta Ecclesia de fructu manuum suarum accipit, cum eam ad percipienda coelestia laboris sui retributio attollit. Tunc eam sua opera in portis laudant, quando ejus membris in ipso regni aditu dicitur: Esurivi, et dedistis mihi manducare; sitivi, et dedistis mihi bibere; hospes eram, et collegistis me; nudus, et cooperuistis me (Matth. XXV, 35), et

caetera. Filii igitur hujus stulti ante portam elati sunt, sed in porta conterentur, quia amatores hujus saeculi in praesenti vita superbiunt, sed in ipso regni aditu aeterna animadversione feriuntur. Bene autem subditur: Et non erit qui eripiat. Illos quippe veritas ab aeterna adversitate eripit, quos in temporalibus prosperis per disciplinam premit. Qui ergo nunc renuit premi, tunc non valet eripi, quia iniqui eum, quem per disciplinam habere negligunt patrem, afflictionis suae tempore per adjutorium non inveniunt ereptorem. Sequitur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 5. — Cujus messem famelicus comedet. 10. Malus recta et intelligens et dicens, messem habet quam alii comedant. — Habet etiam stultus messem, quando iniquus quisque donum recte intelligentiae accipit: Scripturae sacrae sententiis docetur, bona loquitur, sed tamen nullo modo hoc quod dicit operatur: 186 verba Dei profert, nec tamen diligit; laudando exaggerat, vivendo calcat. Quia ergo stultus iste recta et intelligit et dicit, sed tamen haec operando non amat, messem habendo jejunat. Quam nimirum famelicus comedit, quia is qui ad Deum sanctis desideriis anhelat, discit quod audit, agit quod didicerit; et dum doctoris pravi recta praedicatione reficitur, quid aliud quam stulti fruge satiatur? An non famelicos suos Veritas, ut stulti messem comederent, admonebat, cum per desideria sancta flagrantibus, de Pharisaeis praeciperet, dicens: Quae dicunt facite, juxta opera vero eorum nolite facere (Matth. XXIII, 3). Ac si aperte diceret: Verbi messem loquendo excolunt, sed hanc male vivendo minime contingunt. Vestram ergo famem messis ista reficiat, quia vobis hanc per fatuitatis suae fastidium servant. Bene autem subditur:

CAPUT IX.

IBID. — Et ipsum rapiet armatus. 11. Diabolus saepe scientiam permittit, ut corrumpat vitam. — Antiquus namque hostis quasi inermis vincitur, cum mala aperte suggerens humanae menti, bona omnia simul destruere conatur. Sed armatus venit, quando bona alia intacta deserens, latenter alia corrumpit. Nam saepe quosdam in intellectu non tentat, eisque in sacri eloquii meditatione non obviat; sed tamen eorum vitam in operatione supplantat, qui dum de scientiae virtute laudantur, nequaquam suorum operum damna respiciunt; cumque in favoris delectationem animus ducitur, vitae suae vulneribus non medetur. Hunc ergo armatus hostis rapuit, quem fraude tectus in alia deserens, ex alia parte superavit. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

IBID. — Et bibent sitientes divitias ejus. 12. Saepe hebes hoc in divinae legis eruditione studendo intelligit, quod per negligentiam ingeniosus nescit. — Saepe stultus habet interni liquoris fontem, sed non bibit, quia ingenium quidem intelligentiae accipit, sed tamen veritatis sententias cognoscere legendo contemnit; scit quia intelligere studendo praevaleat, sed ab omni doctrinae studio fastidiosus cessat. Divitiae quoque mentis, sunt verba sacrae locutionis; sed has divitias stultus oculis aspicit, et in ornamenti sui usum minime assumit, quia verba legis audiens, magna quidem esse considerat, sed ad comprehendenda haec nullo studio amoris elaborat. At contra alius sitim habet, ingenium non habet; amor ad meditandum pertrahit, sensus hebetudo contradicit; et saepe hoc in divinae legis eruditione quandoque studendo intelligit, quod per negligentiam ingeniosus nescit. Hujus ergo stulti divitias sitientes bibunt, dum praecepta Dei, quae ingeniosi fastidientes nesciunt, hebetes amantes assequuntur. In his nimirum tenebras hebetudinis illustrat oculus amoris; nam hoc tardioribus sitis aperit, quod velocioribus fastidium claudit. Qui et idcirco ad intelligentiae alta perveniunt, quia agere quae intellexerunt, vel minima nulla contemnunt; et

dum sensum manibus adjuvant, sese ultra altitudinem ingeniosorum levant. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Stellio manibus nititur, et moratur in aedibus regis (Prov. XXX, 28). Plerumque enim aves, quas ad volatum penna sublevat, in vepribus resident; et stellio, qui ad volatum pennas non habet, nitens manibus, regni aedificium tenet, quia nimirum saepe ingeniosi quique dum per negligentiam torpent, in pravis 187 actibus remanent, et simplices, quos ingenii penna non adjuvat, ad obtinenda aeterni regni moenia virtus operationis levat. Stellio ergo dum manibus nititur, in regis aedibus moratur, quia illo simplex per intentionem recti operis pervenit, quo ingeniosus minime ascendit. Sed his auditis, quaestio nostro cordi suboritur, cur vel negligenti intelligentiae donum tribuitur, vel studiosus quisque sensus sui tarditate praepeditur? Ad quam citius respondetur, dum protinus subditur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 6. — Nihil in terra sine causa. 13. Cur ingenium studio tardum, negligenti acre tribuatur. — Idcirco enim saepe et desidiosus ingenium accipit, ut de negligentia justius puniatur, quia quod sine labore assequi potuit, scire contemnit. Et idcirco nonnunquam studiosus tarditate intelligentiae premitur, ut eo majora praemia retributionis inveniat; quo magis in studio inventionis elaborat. Nihil ergo est in terra sine causa, quando et studioso tarditas ad praemium proficit, et desidioso velocitas ad supplicium crescit. Ad intelligenda autem quae recta sunt, aliquando laboris studio, aliquando vero dolore percussionis erudimur. Unde cum dictum sit, Nihil in terra sine causa; apte protinus additur:

CAPUT XII.

IBID. — Et de humo non egredietur dolor. 14. Per occulta merita mentium, aperta prodeunt flagella poenarum. — Dolor namque quasi de humo

egreditur, cum homo ad Dei imaginem conditus de rebus insensibilibus flagellatur. Sed quia per occulta mentium merita, aperta prodeunt flagella poenarum, et de humo dolor non egreditur, quoniam sensus nostri malitia exigit ut a rebus insensibilibus feriatur. Ecce enim cernimus quod ad correptionem nostram exspectatus imber arente terra suspenditur, et caliginosus aer inardescente sole siccatur; mare procellis tumescentibus saevit, et alios ad transmeandum susceptos intercipit, aliis desideratum iter erecta in cumulum unda contradicit; terra non solum germina fecunditatis imminuit, sed etiam semina accepta consumit. In quibus nimirum cunctis patenter aspicitur hoc, quod quidam sapiens de Domino testatur, dicens: Et pugnabit cum eo orbis terrarum contra insensatos (Sap. V, 21). Orbis quippe terrarum cum Domino contra insensatos pugnat, quando in poena delinquentium et elementorum adversitas militat. Sed tamen de humo dolor non egreditur, quia res quaelibet insensibilis ad afflictionem nostram stimulo nostrae actionis excitatur. De humo dolor non egreditur, quia nequaquam poena de ea nascitur creatura, quae percutit, sed de ea procul dubio, quae peccando vim percussionis extorsit. Sed curandum magnopere est ut cum in rebus exterioribus pondere doloris afficimur, spe ad superna tendamus; quatenus eo mens ad alta perveniat, quo nos exterior poena castigat. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 7. — Homo ad laborem nascitur, et avis ad volatum. 15. Quantum caro flagellis afficitur, mens ad altiora sublevatur. — Ad laborem quippe nascitur homo quia nimirum is qui accepta est praeditus ratione, considerat quod valde sibi sit impossibile, ut haec peregrinationis suae tempora sine gemitu evadat. Unde bene Paulus cum tribulationes suas discipulis enumeraret, adjunxit: Ipsi enim scitis quod in hoc positi sumus (I Thess. III, 3). Sed in eo quod caro flagellis afficitur, 188 mens ad appetenda altiora

sublevatur; Paulo rursus attestante, qui ait: Et licet is qui foris est noster homo corrumpitur, tamen is qui intus est, renovatur de die in diem (II Cor. IV, 16). Homo ergo ad laborem nascitur, et avis ad volatum, quia inde mens ad summa evolat, unde caro in infimis durius laborat. 16. Carnalium gravis labor, spiritalium nullus. — Potest quoque appellatione hominis carnalium vita signari. Unde et Paulus ait: Cum enim sit inter vos zelus et contentio, nonne carnales estis? (I Cor. III, 3.) Quibus paulo post subjecit, dicens: Nonne homines estis? (Ibid., 4.) In hac itaque vita homo ad laborem nascitur, quia carnalis quisque cum transeuntia appetit, desideriorum suorum se pondere affligit. Gravis quippe labor est, hanc ipsam praesentis vitae gloriam quaerere, quaesitam quandoque percipere, et perceptam cum circumspectione custodire. Gravis labor est, hoc cum magna fatigatione apprehendere, quod is qui apprehendet, noverit diu stare non posse. Sancti autem viri quia transeuntia non amant, non solum nulla temporalium desideriorum pondera tolerant; sed et si qua adversa consurgunt, in ipsis suis pressuris et languoribus non laborant. Quid enim flagellis durius? et tamen de flagellatis apostolis scriptum est: Ibant gaudentes a conspectu concilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati (Act. V, 41). Quid ergo eorum mentibus labor est, quibus et poena verberum labor non est? Homo ergo ad laborem nascitur, quia ille hujus mundi veraciter mala sentit, qui ejus bona inhianter appetit. Nam cujus mens ad alta suspenditur, sub ipsa est quidquid exterius contra ipsam movetur. Bene itaque subditur, Et avis ad volatum. Quia tanto animus a laboris afflictione se subtrahit, quanto per spem ad summa sustollit. An non quasi avis, Paulus ad volatum natus fuerat, qui tot adversa sustinens dicebat: Nostra conversatio in coelis est (Philip. XXXI, 20)? Et rursum: Scimus quoniam si terrestris domus nostra hujus habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem habemus ex Deo, domum non manufactam, aeternam in coelis (II Cor. V, 1). Velut avis ergo ima transcenderat, quem adhuc corpore in terra

demorantem, jam in sublimibus spei penna sublevabat. Sed quia nullus suis viribus valet sese in alta sustollere, ut cum visibilibus affligitur, in invisibilia sublevetur, recte mox subditur:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 8 — Quamobrem ego deprecabor Dominum, et ad Deum ponam eloquium meum. 17. Hoc Dei donum est. — Ac si aperte diceret: illum rogo, per quem haec tribui scio. Si enim hoc per se habere se crederet, deprecari Deum non indigeret. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 9. — Qui facit magna et inscrutabilia et mirabilia absque numero. 18. Mira Dei opera humanis oculis usu viluerunt. — Quis omnipotentis Dei mirabilia perscrutari sufficiat, quod cuncta ex nihilo creavit, quod ipsa mundi fabrica mira potentiae virtute disposita est, et super aera coelum suspenditur, et super abyssum terra libratur; quod ex rebus invisibilibus omnis haec universitas ac visibilibus existit, quod hominem fecit, ut ita dixerim, in brevi colligens mundum alterum, sed rationalem; quod hunc ex anima et carne constituens, investigabili virtutis dispositione permiscuit spiritum et lutum? Ex his 189 itaque aliud novimus, aliud et sumus; sed tamen mirari negligimus, quia ea quae incomprehensibili indagatione mira sunt, humanis oculis usu viluerunt. Unde fit ut si mortuus homo suscitetur, in admirationem omnes exsiliant, et quotidie homo qui non erat nascitur, et nemo miratur, cum procul dubio omnibus constet quia plus sit creari quod non erat, quam reparari quod erat. Quia arida Aaron virga floruit, cuncti mirati sunt; quotidie ex arente terra arbor producitur, virtusque pulveris in lignum vertitur, et nemo miratur. Quia quinque sunt panibus quinque millia homines satiati, crevisse escas in dentibus cuncti mirati sunt; quotidie sparsa grana seminum, plenitudine multiplicantur spicarum, et nemo

miratur. Aquam semel in vinum permutatam videntes cuncti mirati sunt; quotidie humor terrae in radicem vitis attractus, per botrum in vinum vertitur, et nemo miratur. Mira sunt itaque omnia quae mirari homines negligunt, quia ad considerandum, ut praediximus, usu torpescunt. Bene autem cum diceret: Qui facit magna, adjunxit statim: Et inscrutabilia. Minus enim fuerat magna facere, si tamen ea quae facta sunt, perscrutari potuissent. Recte autem subditur: Et mirabilia absque numero, quia minoris esset magnitudinis, si quae inscrutabilia condidit, pauca fuisset. 19. Miracula Dei per studium consideranda, non discutienda per intellectum. Fides ubi titubat, qui firmanda. Unde resurrectio fiat credibilis. — Sed inter haec sciendum est quia divina miracula et semper debent considerari per studium, et nunquam discuti per intellectum. Saepe namque humanus sensus dum quarumdam rerum rationem quaerens non invenit, in dubitationis se voraginem mergit. Unde fit ut nonnulli homines mortuorum corpora in pulverem redacta considerent; dumque resurrectionis vim ex ratione colligere non possunt, haec ad statum pristinum redire posse desperent. Mira igitur, ex fide credenda sunt, perscrutanda per rationem non sunt; quia si haec nostris oculis ratio expanderet, mira non essent. Sed cum in his fortasse animus titubat, necesse est ut ea quae per usum novit, nec tamen per rationem colligit, ad memoriam reducat; quatenus rei similis argumento fidem roboret, quam labefactari sua sagacitate deprehendit. Considerato quippe humanae carnis pulvere, quorumdam mens concussa desperat, quando pulvis ad carnem redeat, et redivivum corpus per membrorum lineamenta componat; quando illa terrae ariditas per viventia membra viridescat, ac se per eorum species formasque distinguat. Hoc nimirum comprehendi per rationem non potest, sed tamen credi facile per exemplum potest. Quis enim ab uno grano seminis, immensam surgere arborem crederet, nisi certum hoc per experimentum teneret? In tanta namque unius grani parvitate et pene nulla sui dissimilitudine, ubi latet ligni

duritia, et ligno tenerior vel durior medulla, asperitas corticis, viriditas radicis, sapor fructuum, suavitas odorum, colorum diversitas, mollities foliorum? Et tamen quia hoc per experimentum novimus, ex uno grano seminis prodire omnia non dubitamus. Quid ergo est difficile, ut 190 pulvis in membra redeat, dum conditoris potentiam quotidie cernimus, qui et ex grano ligna mirabiliter, et adhuc mirabilius fructus ex lignis creat? Dicat ergo: Qui facit magna et inscrutabilia, et mirabilia absque numero, quia divinorum operum magnitudo nec ex qualitate valet discuti, nec ex quantitate numerari. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 10, 11. — Qui dat pluviam super faciem terrae, et irrigat aquis universa. Qui ponit humiles in sublimi, et maerentes erigit sospitate. SENSUS MYSTICUS. — 20. Aquis gratiae Deus universa irrigat. Universitatis nomine homo signatur. — Quia amicos beati Job eruditos ejus societate credimus, necesse est ut haec Eliphaz verba mystice disseramus. Omnipotens enim Deus terrae pluviam tribuit, cum arentia corda gentilium, supernae gratia praedicationis infundit. Et aquis universa irrigat, quia sterelitatem perditi hominis repletione Spiritus ad fructificationem format, sicut per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Qui biberit ex aqua, quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in aeternum (Joan. IV, 13). Universitatis autem nomine homo signatur, quia in ipso vera species, et magna communio universitatis ostenditur. Omne namque quod est, aut est, et non vivit; aut est, et vivit, sed nequaquam sentit; aut est, et vivit, et sentit, sed non intelligit, nec discernit; aut est, aut vivit, et sentit, et intelligit, discernit. Sunt namque lapides, nec tamen vivunt. Sunt arbusta, vivunt quidem, nec tamen sentiunt. Herbarum namque atque arborum vita viriditas vocatur, sicut per Paulum de seminibus dicitur: Insipiens, tu quod seminas, non vivificatur, nisi prius moriatur (I Cor. XV, 36). Sunt bruta animalia, vivunt et sentiunt, nec tamen intelligunt.

Sunt angeli, et vivunt, et sentiunt, et intelligendo discernunt. Homo itaque, quia habet commune esse cum lapidibus, vivere cum arboribus, sentire cum animalibus, discernere cum angelis, recte nomine universitatis exprimitur, in quo juxta aliquid ipsa universitas tenetur. Unde et discipulis Veritas dicit: Euntes in mundum universum, praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae (Marc. XVI, 15). Omnem videlicet creaturam solum intelligi hominem voluit, cui commune aliquid cum omnibus creavit. 21. Universa Deus irrigat, cum ex omni hominum genere ad suam cognitionem vocat. — Quamvis hoc loco universa intelligi et aliter possunt. Sancti enim Spiritus gratia cum sibi divites subjicit, pauperes non repellit, cum fortes humiliat, venire ad se debiles non recusat; cum nobiles colligit, simul et ignobiles apprehendit; cum sapientes suscipit, imperitorum stultitiam non contemnit. Universa ergo Deus aquis irrigat, qui dono sancti Spiritus ex omni genere hominum ad suam cognitionem vocat. 22. Universa Deus irrigat, quia vim sui sermonis in singulis juxta morum diversitatem format. — Possunt autem universorum nomine ipsae morum dissimilitudines designari. Alius namque elatione erigitur, alius pondere timoris inclinatur, alius libidine aestuat, alius avaritia anhelat, alius remissione se dejicit, alius ira fervescit. Sed per doctrinam sacri eloquii, dum superbo humilitas tribuitur, timido confidentia praebetur, luxuriosus per castitatis studium ab immunditia tergitur, avarus per continentiam ab ambitionis aestu temperatur, remissus zeli rectitudine erigitur, 191 iracundus a praecipitationis suae excitatione refrenatur, universa Deus aquis irrigat; quia vim sui sermonis in singulis juxta morum diversitatem format, ut hoc in ejus eloquio quisque inveniat, per quod virtutis necessariae germen ferat. Unde per quemdam sapientem de mannae dulcedine dicitur: Paratum panem de coelo praestitisti illis sine labore, omne delectamentum in se habentem, atque omnis saporis suavitatem (Sap. XXVI, 20). Manna quippe omne delectamentum atque omnis saporis in se suavitatem habuit, quod videlicet in ore spiritalium, juxta voluntatem

edentium, saporem dedit, quia divinus sermo et omnibus congruens, et a semetipso non discrepans, qualitati audientium condescendit; quem dum electus quisque utiliter juxta modum suum intelligit, quasi acceptum manna in voluntarium saporem vertit. Et quia laborem boni operis gloria sequitur retributionis, post aquarum rigationem recte subjungitur: Qui ponit humiles in sublimi, et moerentes erigit sospitate. 23. Servos Dei nunc despectos et afflictos gloria et gaudium excipient. — In sublimi humiles ponuntur, quia hi qui nunc pro Dei amore despecti sunt, tunc cum Deo judices veniunt, sicut hoc quod paulo ante jam diximus, eisdem humilibus Veritas pollicetur, dicens: Vos qui secuti estis me, in regeneratione cum sederit Filius hominis in sede majestatis suae, sedebitis et vos super duodecim sedes, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel (Matth. XIX, 28). Tunc moerentes Dominus sospitate erigit, quia hi qui, ejus desideriis accensi, prospera fugiunt, adversa patiuntur, cruciatus persequentium tolerant, seque ipsi per lamenta castigant, tanto sublimiorem tunc sospitatem recipiunt, quanto nunc cunctis mundi gaudiis devote moriuntur. Hinc est enim quod per Salomonem dicitur: Cor quod novit amaritudinem animae suae, in gaudio ejus non miscebitur extraneus (Prov. XIV, 10). Humana etenim mens amaritudinem animae suae scit, cum, aeternae patriae desideriis accensa, peregrinationis suae poenam flendo cognoscit; sed in ejus gaudio extraneus non miscebitur, quia qui nunc a moerore compunctionis alienus est, tunc particeps ad laetitiam consolationis non est. Hinc est quod in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Amen amen dico vobis, quid plorabitis et flebitis vos, mundus autem gaudebit; vos autem contristabimini, sed tristitia vestra vertetur in gaudium (Joan. XVI, 20). Et rursum: Vos igitur nunc quidem tristitiam habetis, iterum autem videbo vos, et gaudebit cor vestrum, et gaudium vestrum nemo auferet a vobis (Ibid., 22). Sospitate ergo Dominus moerentes erigere dicitur, quia pro se afflictos temporaliter vera salute consolatur. Quod tamen de electis Dei etiam in hac vita nil obstat intelligi. 24. Humiles jam ex hac

vita in sublimi sunt positi. — In sublimi quippe humiles ponuntur, quia cum se ex humilitate substernunt, altae mentis judicio cuncta temporalia transeunt; cumque se indignos in omnibus aestimant, rectae cogitationis examine hujus mundi gloriam transcendentes calcant. Videamus humilem Paulum. Ecce discipulis dicit: Non enim nosmetipsos praedicamus, sed Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, nos antem servos vestros per Christum (II Cor. IV, 5). Videamus hunc humilem in sublimi jam positum. Ait: An nescitis quia angelos judicabimus (I Cor. VI, 3)? Et rursum: Conresuscitavit et consedere nos fecit in coelestibus (Ephes. II, 6). Fortasse hunc exterius tunc catena religabat, mente tamen positus in sublimibus fuerat, qui jam per spei suae certitudinem in coelestibus sedebat. Sancti itaque viri foris despecti sunt, et velut indigni omnia tolerant; 192 sed dignos se supernis sedibus confidentes, aeternitatis gloriam cum certitudine exspectant; cumque laborant foris adversitate persecutionis, ad munitam recurrunt intrinsecus arcem mentis; et inde cuncta sub se ire despiciunt, inter quae et transi e corporaliter etiam semetipsos cernunt; minas non metuunt, quia et tormenta patiendo contemnunt. Hinc enim per Salomonem dicitur: Justus quasi leo confidens absque terrore erit (Prov. XXVIII, 1). Hinc ab eo iterum scriptum est: Non contristabit justum, quidquid ei acciderit (Prov. XII, 21). Quia enim recti quique in alto intentionis suae vertice siti sunt, dum mortem moriendo non sentiunt, miro modo eos reproborum jacula et feriunt, et non contingunt. In sublimi ergo humiles sunt positi, quia unde se in omnibus despiciunt, inde contra omnia securiores fiunt. Mens ad ea quae supra ipsam sunt inhiare cessans, sub semetipsam indesinenter ruit. — Quo contra recte sub Babylonis specie per prophetam menti reprobae dicitur: Descende, sede in pulvere, virgo filia Babylonis, sede in terra; non est solium filiae Chaldaeorum (Isai. XLVII, 1). Hoc enim loco humana mens virgo non incorrupta, ut arbitror, dicitur, sed infecunda. Et quia Babylon confusio interpretatur, recte infecunda mens Babylonis filia vocatur, quae in eo quod

nequaquam bona opera germinat, dum nullo ordine rectae vitae componitur, quasi confusione matre generatur. Sin autem virgo non infecunda dicitur, sed incorrupta, postquam statum salutis perdidit, ad confusionis suae cumulum appellatur quod fuit. Cui apte per increpationem dicitur divina voce: Descende. In alto quippe humanus animus stat, quando supernis retributionibus inhiat; sed ab hoc statu descendit, cum turpiter victus sese defluentibus mundi desideriis subjicit. Cui bene mox additur: Sede in pulvere. Descendens enim in pulvere residet, quia coelestia deserens, terrenis cogitationibus aspersus in infirmis vilescit. Ubi adhuc ingeminando subjungitur: Sede in terra. Ac si aperte exprobrans dicat: Quia coelesti conversatione noluisti te erigere, sub temetipso prostratus in terrenis actibus humiliare. Unde et necessario protinus additur: Non est solium filiae Chaldaeorum. Chaldaei namque feroces interpretantur. Valde autem feroces sunt, qui voluntates proprias sequentes, nec suis parcere mortibus sciunt. Ferocia sunt terrena desideria, quae non solum contra praecepta conditoris, sed saepe etiam contra percussionum verbera, duram atque insensibilem mentem reddunt. Sed filia ferocium solium non habet, quia mens, quae ad amorem mundi ex pravis desideriis nascitur, atque eisdem desideriis obduratur, in eo quod se terrenis concupiscentiis subjicit, sedem judicii amittit; nullique apud se solio praesidet, quia examine discretionis caret, et quasi a judicii sui sessione repellitur, quia per exteriores concupiscentias vagatur. Liquet enim, quod mens, quae intus consilii sedem perdiderit, foras se per desideria innumerabiliter spargit. Et quia agere intellecta dissimulat, caecatur recte, ut etiam nesciat quod agat; et saepe justo judicio in sua ipsa voluntate relinquitur, et sub ea quae anxie appetit laboriosa mundi ministeria relaxatur. Unde apte illic subditur: Quia ultra non vocaberis mollis et tenera; tolle molam, et mole farinam (Ibid., 2). Constat nimirum quod tenerae suae filiae parentes parcunt, nec duris atque servilibus hanc operibus affligunt. Omnipotens ergo Deus quasi teneram filiam vocat, 193

quando dilectam uniuscujusque animam a laboriosis hujus mundi servitiis revocat; ne dum exterioribus actibus afficitur, ab internis desideriis obduretur. Sed Chaldaeorum filia mollis et tenera non vocatur; quia mens pravis desideriis dedita, in eo quod anxie appetit hujus saeculi labore relinquitur, ut foras mundo velut ancilla serviat, quae intus Deum ut filia nequaquam amat. Unde et molam tollere, ac farinam molere jubetur. Mola in gyrum ducitur, et farina profertur. Unaquaeque autem mundi hujus actio mola est, quae dum multas curas congerit, humanas mentes quasi per gyrum vertit; atque ex se velut farinas projicit, quia seducto corde, semper minutissimas cogitationes gignit. Nonnunquam vero qui quietus alicujus esse meriti creditur, positus in qualibet actione denudatur, unde illic protinus subinfertur: Denuda turpitudinem tuam, discooperi humerum, revela crura, transi flumina (Ibid., 2). In administratione quippe operis turpitudo denudatur, dum vilis mens abjectaque in actionis ostentatione cognoscitur, quae quieta prius magna putabatur. Humerum mens discooperit, quando opus suum quod ignorabatur ostendit. Crura revelat, quia quibus desideriorum passibus lucris mundi inhiet manifestat. Flumina etiam transit, quia actiones hujus saeculi, quae quotidie ad terminum defluunt, indesinenter appetit; dumque alias relinquit, alias assequitur, quasi semper de flumine ad flumen tendit. Haec paucis per excessum diximus, ut mens a solio sanctae intentionis excussa quo jaceat monstraremus, quia si ad ea quae super ipsam sunt inhiare cessaverit, sub semetipsam etiam indesinenter ruit. In alto autem figitur, si amorem temporalium deserens, ad spem incommutabilis aeternitatis ligatur. 26. Laetitia servorum Dei vera; laetitia iniquorum ex insania, non ex sospitate. — Bene ergo dicitur: Qui ponit humiles in sublimi. Atque apte subjungitur: Et moerentes erigit sospitate. Saepe in hoc mundo etiam laeti quilibet erecti sunt, dum de ipsa gloria suae prosperitatis intumescunt. Sed moerentes Dominus sospitate erigit, quia afflictos suos ad gloriam verae laetitiae soliditate sustollit.

Sospitate quippe, non insania erecti sunt, qui in bonis actibus positi, spe in Deum firma gratulantur. Nonnulli enim, sicut diximus, et iniquitates perpetrant, et gaudere non cessant; de quibus per Salomonem dicitur: Qui laetantur cum malefecerint, et exsultant in rebus pessimis (Prov. II, 14). Et rursum: Sunt impii, qui ita securi sunt, ac si justorum facta habeant (Eccle. VIII, 14). Hi nimirum non sospitate eriguntur, sed insania, qui superbiunt cum affligi debuerant; et inde miseri in exsultatione defluunt, unde a bonis flentur. Phreneticorum videlicet sensibus similes, insaniam qua praevalent, virtutem putant; qui ex morbo esse nesciunt hoc, quod amplius sanis possunt; et quasi crevisse se viribus aestimant, dum ad vitae terminum per augmenta languoris appropinquant. Qui quia rationis sensum non habent, flentur, et rident; et tanto in magna exsultatione se dilatant, quanto et insensibiles malum quod patiuntur ignorant. Sospitate ergo Dominus moerentes erigit, quia electorum mens non de praesentis vitae insania, sed de certitudine aeternae salutis hilarescit. Unde apte mox de hac ipsa pravorum destructione subjungitur:

CAPUT XVII.

194 VERS. 12. — Qui dissipat cogitationes malignorum ne possint implere manus eorum quod coeperant. 27. Malorum saepe cassae sunt cogitationes, nec minus rea conscientia. — Reproborum mentes perversis cogitationibus semper invigilant, sed plerumque eis superna dispensatio obviat; et quamvis pravitatem consilii nec fracti adversitatibus corrigant, ne tamen contra bonos praevaleant, eorum vires refrenat. Quos contra miro judicio agitur, ut effectu quidem pravi operis careant, et tamen justae sententiae judicis reos conscientiae addicat. Quod ergo mala cogitant, quid ipsi faciant ostendunt; quod vero mala implere nequeunt, hi contra quos cogitaverant, defenduntur. Unde et adhuc bene subditur:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 13. — Qui comprehendit sapientes in astutia eorum, et consilia pravorum dissipat. 28. Dei consiliis renitentes, ipsis famulantur inviti. Ostenditur exemplis fratrum Joseph, Saulis, Jonae, Judaeorum. — Saepe enim nonnulli humana sapientia inflati, dum desideriis suis divina judicia contraire conspiciunt, astutis eis reluctari machinationibus conantur; et quo ad votum suum vim supernae dispensationis intorqueant, callidis cogitationibus insistunt, subtiliora consilia exquirunt; sed inde voluntatem Dei peragunt, unde hanc immutare contendunt; atque omnipotentis Dei consilio, dum resistere nituntur, obsequuntur, quia saepe et hoc ejus dispositioni apte militat, quod ei per humanum studium frivole resultat. Sapientes ergo Dominus in ipsa eorum astutia comprehendit, quando ejus consiliis humana facta etiam tunc congrue serviunt, cum resistunt. Quod melius ostendimus, si pauca gestarum rerum ad medium exempla proferamus. 29. Joseph somnium viderat, quod suo manipulo fratrum ejus se manipuli prosternebant (Genes. XXXVII, 7); somnium viderat, quod sol et luna se cum reliquis stellis adorabant. Quae quia pure fratribus retulit, eorum corda protinus futurae dominationis invidia pavorque percussit. Cumque ad se hunc venire conspicerent, malitia saeviente dixerunt: Ecce somniator ille venit, venite occidamus eum, et videamus quid illi proderunt somnia sua (Ibid., 20). Cumque se ejus dominio subjici metuunt, somniatorem in puteum deponunt, eumque Ismaelitis transeuntibus vendunt: qui in Aegyptum ductus, servituti subditus, luxuriae accusatione damnatus, castitatis merito adjutus, prophetiae judicio erectus, omni Aegypto praelatus est; per supernam vero sapientiam providus frumenta congessit, et futuro periculo necessitatis obviavit. Cumque in orbem fames irruit, de alimentorum praeparatione sollicitus Jacob filios suos in Aegyptum misit: qui frumentorum dispensationi praepositum Joseph nescientes inveniunt, atque ut mererentur alimenta percipere, eorum

dispensatorem compulsi sunt pronis in terram cervicibus adorare. Pensemus ergo gestae rei ordinem, pensemus quomodo sapientes in ipsa sua astutia vis divina comprehendat. Ideo ab eis venditus fuerat Joseph, ne adoraretur; sed ideo est adoratus, quia venditus. Astute namque aliquid agere ausi sunt, ut Dei consilium mutaretur; sed divino judicio, quod declinare conati sunt, renitendo servierunt. Inde quippe coacti sunt Dei voluntatem peragere, unde hanc moliti sunt astute commutare. Sic divinum consilium dum devitatur, impletur; sic humana sapientia dum reluctatur, comprehenditur. Timuerunt fratres, 195 ne Joseph super eos excresceret; sed hoc quod divinitus dispositum fuerat, cavendo factum est ut eveniret. Humana ergo sapientia in se ipsa comprehensa est, quae voluntati Dei, unde per intentionem restitit, inde ejus impletioni militavit. 30. Sic Saul dum David subjectum quotidiano succrescere virtutum successu conspiceret, suam ei in conjugium filiam spopondit, atque in ejus dotem centum dari ab eo Philistinorum praeputia petiit, ut cum provocatus miles ultra se excrescere quaereret, inimicorum gladiis traditus vitam finiret, sicut scriptum est: Non habet rex necesse sponsalia, nisi tantum centum praeputia Philistinorum, ut fiat ultio de inimicis regis (I Reg. XVIII, 25). Porro Saul cogitabat tradere David in manus Philistinorum; sed David dispositionis intimae favore roboratus, centum se dare perhibuit, et ducenta praeputia reportavit. Cujus nimirum operis Saul argumento superatus, superna providentia in sapientiae suae est consilio comprehensus; quia unde succrescentis militis vitam se exstinguere credidit, virtutis ejus gloriam inde cumulavit. 31. Sed quia nonnunquam astute aliquid sapere etiam electi moliuntur, libet ad medium alium sapientem deducere, et quomodo in internis consiliis astutia mortalium comprehendatur, demonstrare. Prudenter quippe Jonas sapere voluit, cum ad praedicandam Ninivitarum poenitentiam missus, quia electis gentibus Judaeam deseri timuit, praedicationis officium implere recusavit (Jonae I, 2, 3, seq.). Navim petiit, fugere Tharsis elegit; sed protinus tempestas exoritur,

sors mittitur, ut videlicet cognoscatur cujus culpa mare turbetur. Jonas in culpa deprehenditur, in profundum mergitur, ceto sorbente devoratur, atque illuc gestante bellua pervenit, quo ire sponte contemnit. Ecce fugitivum Dei tempestas invenit, sors ligat, mare suscipit, bellua includit, et quia auctori suo obedire renititur, ad locum quo missus fuerat, suo reus carcere portatur. Jubente Deo ministrare homo prophetiam noluit, aspirante Deo bellua prophetam vomit. Comprehendit erge Dominus sapientes in astutia eorum, quando et hoc in usum suae voluntatis redigit, per quod sibi voluntas humana contradicit. 32. Perscrutemur adhuc Hebraeorum sapientiam, ut videamus quid providendo prohibuit, quid prohibendo provocavit. Certe cum ad Redemptoris nostri miracula credentium turba conflueret, cum sacerdotes populi, invidiae facibus accensi, mundum post eum ire proclamarent dicentes: Videtis quia nihil proficimus, ecce mundus totus post eum abiit (Joan. XII, 19); ut ab illo vim tantae concursionis absciderent, finire ejus potentiam morte conati sunt, dicentes: Expedit ut unus homo moriatur, et non tota gens pereat (Joan. XI, 50). Sed Redemptoris mors ad conjunctionem sui corporis, id est Ecclesiae, valuit, non ad separationem. Unde et per legem turturi vel columbae, in figura nostri sacrificii, secari guttur praecipitur, et non penitus abscidi, ut et post mortem corpori caput inhaereat (Levit. I, 15); quia videlicet mediator Dei et hominum (I Tim. II, 5), id est, caput omnium nostrum, 196 et verae mundationis hostia, unde pro nobis mortem pertulit, inde nobis verius inhaesit. Post sectionem ergo caput turturis suo corpori inhaeret, quia Christum ab Ecclesia nec mors interveniens dividit. Persecutores igitur peregerunt hoc quod perniciose moliti sunt, intulerunt mortem, ut ab eo absciderent fidelium devotionem; sed inde fides crevit, unde hanc se exstinguere infidelium crudelitas credidit. Cumque se aestimant ejus miracula persequendo abscidere, haec nimirum compulsi sunt nesciendo dilatare. Comprehendit ergo Dominus sapientes in astutia eorum, quando et

hoc ad pietatis suae obsequium redigit, quod contra illum humana crudelitas exarsit. 33. Deus alia concedit propitius, alia permittit iratus. — Justus namque et misericors mortalium acta disponens, alia concedit propitius, alia permittit iratus; atque ea quae permittit, sic tolerat, ut haec in sui consilii usum vertat. Unde miro modo fit ut et quod sine voluntate Dei agitur, voluntati Dei contrarium non sit, quia dum in bonum usum mala facta vertuntur, ejus consilio militant etiam quae ejus consilio repugnant. Hinc enim per Psalmistam dicitur: Magna opera Domini, exquisita in omnes voluntates ejus (Psal. CX, 2). Sic quippe ejus opera magna sunt, ut per omne quod ab hominibus agitur, ejus voluntas exquiratur. Nam saepe inde perficitur, unde repelli putabatur. Hinc rursum dicitur: Omnia quaecunque voluit Dominus fecit in coelo et in terra (Psal. CXXXIV, 6). Hinc Salomon ait: Non est sapientia, non est prudentia, non est consilium contra Dominum (Prov. XXI, 30). Restat ergo ut in cunctis quae agimus vim supernae voluntatis inquiramus, cui videlicet cognitae debet nostra actio devote famulari, et quasi ducem sui itineris persequi, ne ei etiam nolens serviat, si hanc superbiens declinat. Vitari enim vis superni consilii nequaquam potest; sed magna sibi virtute hanc temperat, qui se sub ejus nutibus refrenat; ejusque sibi pondera levigat, qui hanc subjecto cordis humero volens portat. Sed quia persecutorum superius memoriam fecimus, qualiter etiam ea quae subjuncta sunt, eorum caecitati congruant, ostendamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 14. — Per diem incurrent tenebras, et quasi in nocte, sic palpabunt in meridie. 34. Christi persecutores in die tenebras passi sunt. Et quasi caeci palparunt in meridie. — Per diem tenebras incurrerunt, quia in ipsa veritatis praesentia perfidiae errore caecati sunt. Clare quippe per diem cernitur, per noctem vero nostra acies obscuratur. Persecutores igitur Redemptoris nostri dum divinae virtutis miracula cernerent, et tamen de ejus divinitate

dubitarent, in die tenebras passi sunt, quia visum in luce perdiderunt. Hinc est quod eos ipsa Lux admonet dicens: Ambulate dum lucem habetis, ne vos tenebrae comprehendant (Joan. XII, 35). Hinc est quod de Judaea dicitur: Occidit ei sol, cum adhuc esset dies (Jerem. XV, 9). Hinc est quod vocem poenitentium in se propheta iterum sumpsit, dicens: Impegimus meridie quasi in tenebris, in caliginosis quasi mortui (Isai. LIX, 10). Hinc iterum dicit: Custos quid de nocte? custos quid de nocte? Dixit custos: Venit mane et nox (Isai. XXI, 11). De nocte etenim custos venit, quia humani generis protector et manifestus in 197 carne apparuit, et tamen hunc pressa perfidiae suae tenebris Judaea minime agnovit. Ubi bene ex voce custodis additur, Venit mane et nox, quia per ejus praesentiam et nova lux mundo inclaruit, et tamen in corde infidelium vetusta caecitas remansit. Bene autem dicitur: Quasi in nocte, sic palpabunt in meridie. Hoc quippe palpando exquirimus, quod oculis non videmus. Judaei autem aperta ejus miracula viderant, et adhuc cum quasi palpantes quaerebant, cum dicerent: Quo usque animam nostram tollis? Si tu es Christus, dic nobis palam (Joan. X, 24). Ecce miraculorum lux ante oculos aderat, et tamen in cordis sui tenebras offendentes, adhuc requirendo palpabant. Quorum nimirum caecitas ad crudelitatem, crudelitas etiam usque ad aperta opera persecutionis exarsit. Sed Redemptor humani generis persecutorum suorum manibus diu teneri non potuit. Unde et protinus subditur:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 15. — Porro salvum faciet egenum de gladio oris eorum, et de manu violenti pauperem. 35. Christus Judaeorum linguas et gentilium gladium resurgendo superavit. — Ipse quippe iste pauper est, de quo per Paulum dicitur: Propter nos egenus factus est, cum dives esset. Et quia Judaei Dominum accusando tradiderunt, quem traditum gentiles occiderunt (II Cor. VIII, 9), potest per oris gladium accusantium Hebraeorum lingua signari, de

quibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Filii hominum, dentes eorum arma et sagittae, et lingua eorum muchaera acuta (Psal. LVI, 5); quia Evangelio etiam teste clamaverunt: Crucifige, crucifige (Luc. XXIII, 21). Per violenti vero manum, ipsa crucifigens gentilitas exprimi potest, quae in Redemptoris morte Hebraeorum voces opere implevit. Deus itaque hunc pauperem et de violenti manu, et de oris gladio salvum fecit; quia videlicet Redemptor noster et vires gentilium, et linguas Judaeorum moriendo ex humanitate pertulit, sed ex divinitatis suae potentia resurgendo superavit. Qua videlicet resurrectione quid aliud agitur, nisi ut ad spem vitae subsequentis infirmitas nostra roboretur? Unde et bene mox subditur:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 16. — Et erit egeno spes. 36. Suorum spem solidavit. — Erepto quippe paupere, egenus ad spem reducitur, quia humilis fidelium populus, Redemptore moriente, pavore concutitur, sed resurgente solidatur. Ipsos namque primos hujus populi pauperes, electos videlicet praedicatores, visa ejus mors perculit, sed resurrectio ostensa reparavit. Salvato ergo paupere, spem egenus recipit, quia resurgente in carne Domino, fidelis quisque ad aeternae vitae fiduciam convalescit. Sed ecce jam in manifesta ostensione Veritas venit, jam carnis mortem pertulit, eamque resurgendo destruxit, jam resurrectionem gloria ascensionis honoravit; et tamen Hebraeorum lingua adhuc cum contumeliis lacessere non desinit, quos nimirum aequanimiter tolerat, ut alios tolerando convertat, atque alios minime conversos quandoque districtius feriat. Tunc enim lingua infidelium ab effrenatione suae loquacitatis obmutescet, cum venire eum justum judicem viderit, quem nunc injuste judicavit. Unde et bene subditur:

CAPUT XXII.

IBID. — Iniquitas autem contrahet os suum. 37. Judaei a contumeliis in Christum cessabunt. — Os enim suum nunc adhuc iniquitas dilatat, quia humani generis Redemptorem lingua infidelium contumeliis lacessere nequaquam cessat. Sed tunc os contrahet, cum hoc quod non vult per 198 studium, per supplicium claudet. Quod tamen bene accipi etiam de conversis persecutoribus potest. Salvato enim paupere, dum egenus ad spem redit, contracto ore iniquitas obmutescit, quia resurrectionis ejus clarescente miraculo, dum copiosa multitudo infidelium credit, a Redemptoris sui injuriis contumeliisque cessavit. Os enim suum, quod Deum deridendo aperuit, jam formidando contraxit. SENSUS MORALIS. — 38. Invidorum tenebrae et anxia malitia. — Libet haec moraliter, postposita Judaeorum significatione, transcurrere, atque a pravis generaliter quomodo agantur indagare. Iniquorum quippe hominum mentes cum quaedam a proximis bene gesta conspiciunt, in extenso livoris sui equuleo torquentur, et gravem malitiae suae poenam sustinent, cum bona in aliis tabescentes vident. Recte itaque dicitur: Per diem incurrent tenebras, quia mens eorum cum de aliena melioratione affligitur, de radio lucis obscuratur; quia saepe in proximis dum bona aperta considerant, si qua mala lateant investigant, et sollicitis inquisitionibus laborant, si quid forte quod accusare possint inveniant. Sana quidem membra conspiciunt: sed clausis cordis oculis vulnus palpantes quaerunt. Unde et bene subditur: Et quasi in nocte, sic palpabunt in meridie. Dies boni operis in proximo exterius lucet; sed quasi in nocte palpant, quia livoris sui intus tenebras tolerant. Pervenire ad aliqua, quae reprehendant, satagunt, detractionis aditum quaerunt; sed quia hunc invenire non valent, caeci exterius circumeunt. Quod bene exprimitur, cum Lot, protegentibus angelis, in domo ejus ostium Sodomitae non invenerunt, sicut scriptum est: Vim faciebant Lot vehementissime, et jam proximum erat ut frangerent fores, et miserunt manum viri, et introduxerunt ad se Lot, clauseruntque ostium, et eos qui erant foris, percusserunt caecitate a minimo usque ad

maximum, ita ut ostium invenire non possent (Gen. XIX, 9, 10 seq.). Quid est quod malis adversantibus, intra domum Lot reducitur et munitur, nisi quod justus quisque dum pravorum insidias sustinet, ad mentem revertitur, et imperterritus manet? Sodomitae autem viri in domo Lot invenire ostium nequeunt, quia corruptores mentium contra vitam justi nullum accusationis aditum deprehendunt. Percussi enim caecitate quasi domum circumeunt, qui invidentes facta dictaque perscrutantur. Sed quia eis de vita justi fortis undique ac laudabilis actio obviat, errantes nihil aliud quam parietem palpant. Bene ergo dicitur: Quasi in nocte, sic palpabunt in meridie, quia dum bonum quod vident accusare nequeunt, caecati malitia, malum quod non vident ad accusationem quaerunt. 39. Ad culpam nos trahit delectatio aut terror; neutrum valet in humilem. — Ubi et recte subjungitur: Porro salvum faciet de gladio oris eorum, et de manu violenti pauperem. Pauper quippe est, quisquis apud semetipsum elatus non est. Unde et per Evangelium Veritas dicit: Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum coelorum (Matth. V, 3). Duobus autem modis ad culpam unusquisque pertrahitur. Aut enim delectatione ducitur, aut terrore superatur. Gladius namque oris est iniquitas persuasionis, manus autem violenti est adversitas potestatis. Sed quia veraciter humilis, qui hoc loco pauper vocatur, quo nulla hujus mundi prospera appetit, 199 eo audenter etiam adversa contemnit, recte dicitur: Salvum faciet de gladio oris eorum et de manu violenti pauperem. Ac si aperte diceretur: Sic in se Deus mentes humilium solidat, ut eas ad perpetrandam nequitiam nec blandimenta suasionum pertrahant, nec dolores suppliciorum frangant. Spes quippe in aeternitatem animum erigit, et idcirco nulla mala exterius quae tolerat sentit. Unde et subditur: Et erit egeno spes. Ad cujus spei videlicet fructum eum pauper pervenerit, omnis elatus obmutescit. Unde et adhuc subditur: Iniquitas autem contrahet os suum. Nunc enim malus bonis derogat, et recta quae agere negligit. haec in aliis obtrectando lacerare non cessat. Sed tunc

iniquitas os suum contrahit, cum justis quanta suppetat gloria retributionis agnoscit. Tunc enim ei loqui contra bonos non vacat, quia malorum suorum digna retributione linguam tormenta ligant. Unde bene, Anna prophetante, dicitur: Pedes sanctorum suorum servabit, et impii in tenebris conticescent (I Reg. II, 9). Sed ut electus quisque aeterna supplicia evadat, et ad perennem gloriam pauper ascendat, debet hic assiduis flagellis atteri, quatenus in judicio valeat purgatus inveniri. Ipso namque infirmitatis nostrae pondere deorsum quotidie ducimur, nisi mira manu artificis per subvenientia flagella relevemur. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXIII.

VERS. 17. — Beatus homo qui corripitur a Domino. 40. Assiduis flagellis hic atteri electus debet. — Prima virtus est, ne perpetrari debeant, vitare peccata; secunda autem, saltem perpetrata corrigere. Sed plerumque culpas non solum imminentes minime vitamus, verum etiam nec commissas agnoscimus. Et peccatorum mens tanto altius tenebrescit, quanto nec damnum suae caecitatis intelligit. Unde fit plerumque divini muneris largitate, ut culpam poena subsequatur, et flagella oculos delinquentis aperiant, quos inter vitia securitas caecabat. Torpens quippe animus percussione tangitur, ut excitetur; quatenus qui statum suae rectitudinis securus perdidit, afflictus consideret quo jacet. Hinc itaque ipsa asperitas correptionis origo fit luminis. Unde et per Paulum dicitur: Omne quod arguitur, a lumine manifestatur (Ephes. V, 13), argumentum enim salutis est vis doloris. Hinc est enim quod Salomon ait: Curatio cessare faciet peccata maxima (Eccle. X, 4). Hinc iterum dicit: Quem enim diligit Dominus, castigat; flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit (Hebr. XII, 6). Hinc voce angelica Dominus ad Joannem loquitur, dicens: Ego quos amo, redarguo et castigo (Apoc. III, 19). Hinc Paulus ait: Omnis autem disciplina in praesenti quidem non videtur esse gaudii, sed moeroris; postea autem

fructum pacatissimum exercitatis per eam reddit justitiae (Hebr. XII, 11). Quamvis ergo convenire simul nequeant dolor et beatitudo, recte tamen nunc dicitur, Beatus homo qui corripitur a Domino; quia per hoc, quod peccator dolore correptionis premitur, quandoque ad beatitudinem, quae sine interventu est doloris, eruditur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIV.

IBID. — Increpationem ergo Domini ne reprobes. 41. Correptio Dei alia punit, alia probat. — Quisquis pro culpa percutitur, sed in querela suae percussionis elevatur, increpationem Domini reprobat, quia hanc injuste se perpeti accusat. Qui autem non pro purgatione criminis, sed pro 200 fortitudinis probatione feriuntur, cum causas suae percussionis inquirunt, nequaquam increpationem Domini reprobare dicendi sunt, quia in semetipsis satagunt invenire quod nesciunt. Unde et beatus Job ad libertatis verba inter percussionis verbera erumpens, tanto de se rectius judicia ferientis interrogat, quanto in semetipso verius causas passionis ignorat. Eliphaz itaque, quia hunc percussum non probationis examine, sed purgationis aestimavit, dum libere inter flagella loqueretur, reprobasse Dei increpationem credidit. Quem apte etiam haereticorum tenere speciem diximus, qui omne quod a sancta Ecclesia recte agitur, apud judicium suum semper ad vitium tortitudinis inflectunt. Quia vero bona intentione ad loquendum ducitur, sed non curat discernere cui loquatur, adhuc supernae dispensationis moderamina praedicando subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XXV.

VERS. 18. — Quia ipse vulnerat, et medetur; percutit, et manus ejus sanabunt. 42. Duobus modis Deus ad salutem vulnerat. Menti ad Deum redeunti, ad tentationem vertitur, quidquia prius in saeculo blandum. — Duobus modis omnipotens Deus vulnerat, quos reducere ad salutem curat.

Aliquando enim carnem percutit, et mentis duritiam suo pavore tabefacit. Vulnerando ergo ad salutem revocat, cum electos suos affligit exterius, ut interius vivant. Unde per Moysen quoque loquitur, dicens: Ego occidam, et vivere faciam: percutiam, et ego sanabo (Deut. XXXII, 39). Occidit enim ut vivificet, percutit ut sanet; quia idcirco foras verbera admovet, ut intus vulnera delictorum curet. Aliquando autem etiam si flagella exterius cessare videantur, intus vulnera infligit, quia mentis nostrae duritiam suo desiderio percutit. Sed percutiendo sanat, quia terroris sui jaculo transfixos ad sensum nos rectitudinis revocat. Corda enim nostra male sana sunt, cum nullo Dei amore sauciantur, cum peregrinationis suae aerumnam non sentiunt, cum erga infirmitatem proximi nec quamlibet minimo affectu languescunt. Sed vulnerantur ut sanentur, quia amoris sui spiculis mentes Deus insensibiles percutit, moxque eas sensibiles per ardorem charitatis reddit. Unde et sponsa in Canticis canticorum dicit: Vulnerata charitate ego sum (Cant. II, 5, sec. LXX). Male enim sana anima, atque in hujus exsilii stratum caeca securitate prostrata, nec videbat Dominum, nec videre requirebat; percussa autem charitatis ejus spiculis, vulneratur in intimis affectu pietatis, ardet desiderio contemplationis, et miro modo vivificatur ex vulnere, quae prius mortua jacebat in salute; aestuat, anhelat, et jam videre desiderat quem fugiebat. Percussione ergo ad salutem reducitur, quae ad securitatem quietis intimae, amoris sui perturbatione revocatur. Sed cum sauciata mens anhelare in Deum coeperit, cum cuncta mundi hujus blandimenta despiciens, ad supernam patriam per desiderium tendit, ad tentationem ei protinus vertitur, quidquid amicum prius in saeculo blandumque putabatur. Nam qui peccantem amare consueverant, recte viventem crudeliter impugnant. Et erectus in Deum animus, carnis suae bella tolerat, in qua prius vitiis serviens, delectabiliter jacebat; voluptates priscae ad memoriam redeunt, et contradicentem mentem gravi certamine affligunt. Sed quia dum

201 transitorio labore atterimur, a perpetuo dolore liberamur, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 19. — In sex tribulationibus liberabit te, et in septima non tanget te malum. 43. Transitorio labore eruimur a perpetuo dolore. — Quid enim senario numero, quem septimus sequitur, nisi praesentis vitae operatio decursusque signatur? Sexto quippe die omnia perficiens, hominem condidit, et septimo Deus die requievit. Qui scilicet septimus vesperam non habet, quia subsequentem requiem nullus jam terminus claudit. Perfectis ergo omnibus requies sequitur; quia post bona vitae praesentis opera, retributio aeternae quietis invenitur. In sex itaque nos tribulationibus Dominus liberat, ne nos in septima malum tangat, quia per paternae pietatis eruditionem praesentis vitae labore nos atterit, sed in adventu judicis a verbere abscondit; ut tanto tunc ad salutem certiores exhibeat, quanto nunc nos flagella durius secant. Qui apte mox et mala vitae praesentis, et adjutoria supernae protectionis enumerans subdit:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 20. — In fame eruet te de morte, et in bello de manu gladii. 44. Deus dum verbi sui pabulo mentes reficit, contra tentationes fortes reddit. — Sicut fames carnis est subtractum subsidium corporis, ita fames mentis est silentium divinae locutionis. Unde recte per prophetam dicitur: Emittam famem in terram, non famem panis, neque sitim aquae, sed famem audiendi verbum Dei (Amos VIII, 11). Et quia humanam mentem cum divina allocutio deserit, contra eam tentatio carnis invalescit, apte subjungitur: Et in bello de manu gladii. Bellum quippe patimur, cum carnis nostrae tentationibus impugnamur; de quo nimirum bello per Psalmistam dicitur: Obumbra caput meum in die belli (Psal. CXXXIX, 3). Quia igitur reprobi

dum fame verbi Dei deficiunt, etiam belli gladio transfiguntur; electos suos Dominus et in fame a morte eripit, et in bello a gladio abscondit, quia eorum mentes dum verbi sui pabulo reficit, contra tentationes corporis fortes reddit. Sed sunt nonnulli qui etsi ex divino eloquio ab interna se fame reficiunt, si jam contra tentationes corporis continentiae virtute fulciuntur, adhuc tamen percuti humanis detractionibus metuunt, et saepe dum linguarum jacula formidant, peccati se laqueo strangulant. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 21. — A flagello linguae absconderis. 45. Contra flagellum linguae, contra poenas corporales armare se oportet. — Flagellum linguae est exprobratio illatae contumeliae. Flagello linguae bonos feriunt, qui eorum opera irridendo persequuntur. Saepe enim lingua a bono opere, dum vituperat, revocat; et quasi flagellum se exerit, quia dorsum timidae mentis caedit. Hoc flagellum linguae, electae menti insidiari Propheta conspexerat, cum supernum adjutorium pollicens dicebat: Ipse liberabit de laqueo venantium, et a verbo aspero (Psal. XC, 3). Venantes enim nihil aliud quam carnem quaerunt. Sed a venantium laqueo, atque ab aspero verbo eripimur, quando et insidias carnalium, et irrisionum probra despiciendo superamus. Aspera quippe eorum verba sunt, quae bonis nostris itineribus adversantur. Sed asperitatem verbi evadere, est irrisiones detrahentium dissimulando calcare. Sancta ergo 202 anima a flagello linguae absconditur, quia dum in hoc mundo honorem laudis non quaerit, nec contumelias detractionis sentit. Sed sunt nonnulli qui jam derogantium verba despiciunt, jam irrisiones pro nihilo attendunt, adhuc tamen poenas corporis cruciatusque pertimescunt. Antiquus namque adversarius ut a recta intentione nos retrahat, multiformiter impugnat; et tentationem nostram modo verbi fame, modo carnis certamine, modo flagello sermonis, modo calamitate persecutionis

aggreditur. Sed quia perfectus quisque cum in seipso vitia vicerit, statim mentem etiam contra vulnera passionis accingit, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. — Et non timebis calamitatem, cum venerit. 46. Contra multiformem adversarium pugnantes multiplicius nos parare debemus. — Sancti enim viri quia contra multiformem adversarium se pugnare considerant, semetipsos in certamine multipliciter parant. Habent enim contra famem divini verbi pabulum, contra belli gladium, continentiae scutum; contra flagellum linguae, protectionem patientiae; contra exterioris calamitatis damnum, interni amoris adjutorium. Unde miro modo agitur, ut quo eos hostis callidus numerosius tentat, eo circumspecti Dei milites virtutibus ditiores fiant. Et quia electi quique dum praesentis vitae certamina fortiter tolerant, in terrore sibi venturi judicii securitatem parant, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 22. — In vastitate et fame ridebis. 47. Reprobi interius exteriusque torquebuntur. — Tunc quippe reprobi vastitatem famemque passuri sunt, cum damnati in extremo judicio ab aeterni panis visione separantur. Scriptum namque est: Tollatur impius, ne videat gloriam Dei (Isai. XXVI, 10, sec. LXX). Et per semetipsum Dominus dicit: Ego sum panis vivus, qui de coelo descendi (Joan. VI, 51). Simul ergo eos vastitas famesque cruciat, qui non solum foras tormenta sentiunt, sed intus etiam inediae peste moriuntur. Vastat gehenna, quia concremat, fames interficit, quia suam illis faciem Redemptor abscondit. Bene namque retributionem interius exteriusque recipiunt, quia et cogitando miseri et operando deliquerunt. Unde bene per Psalmistam dicitur: Pones eos ut clibanum ignis in tempore vultus tui; Dominus in ira sua conturbabit eos, et devorabit eos ignis (Psal. XX, 10). Quod enim ab igne devoratur, ab exteriori parte accenditur,

clibanus vero interius inflammatur. In tempore ergo vultus Domini injusti omnes et ut clibanus ponuntur, et ab igne devorantur; quia, apparente judice, cum a visione illius eorum multitudo repellitur, et intus per desiderium ardet conscientia, et foris carnem cruciat gehenna. 48. Justi tunc ridebunt, nec ulla in damnatos misericordia movebuntur. — Potest etiam flagellum linguae, sententia ultimae animadversionis intelligi, qua districtus judex reprobis dicit: Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus (Matth. XXV, 41). Justus ergo a flagello linguae atque a calamitate veniente absconditur, quia in tanta districtione sententiae blanda tunc judicis voce refovetur cum dicitur: Esurivi, et dedistis mihi manducare; sitivi, et dedistis mihi bibere; hospes eram, et collegistis me; nudus, et cooperuistis me; infirmus, et visitastis me; in carcere eram, et venistis ad me (Ibid., 35, 36). Quibus praemittitur: Venite, benedicti 203 Patris mei, possidete paratum vobis regnum a constitutione mundi (Ibid., 34). In vastitate ergo et fame justus ridebit; quia cum iniquos omnes extrema ultio percutit, ipse de gloria dignae retributionis hilarescit. Nec damnatis jam tunc ex humanitate compatitur; quia divinae justitiae per speciem inhaerens, inconcusso districtionis intimae vigore solidatur. Erectas namque in claritate supernae rectitudinis electorum mentes nulla misericordia afficit, quia has a miseriis altitudo beatitudinis alienas reddit. Unde bene etiam per Psalmistam dicitur: Videbunt justi et timebunt, et super eum ridebunt, et dicent: Ecce homo qui non posuit Deum adjutorem suum (Psal. LI, 8). Iniquos enim justi nunc vident et metuunt, tunc visuri sunt et ridebunt. Quia enim modo ad eorum labi imitationem possunt, hic habent formidinem; quia vero damnatis tunc prodesse nequeunt, illic non habent compassionem. Aeterno itaque supplicio deditis non esse miserendum, in ipsa qua beati sunt justitia judicantis legunt, qui, quod suspicari fas non est, qualitatem sibi perceptae felicitatis imminuunt, si in regno positi volunt quod implere nequaquam possunt. Sed quisquis ad vitae

praecepta se dirigit, priusquam praemia aeterna percipiat, hic jam initia secuturae in perpetuum securitatis degustat; ut antiquum hostem non metuat, ut interveniente mortis articulo violentos ejus impetus nullatenus perhorrescat. Justis namque initium retributionis est ipsa plerumque in obitu securitas mentis. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 22. — Et bestiam terrae non formidabis. 49. Saepe in obitu percipiunt securitatem mentis. — Callidus quippe adversarius bestia terrae dicitur, quia ad rapiendas mortis tempore peccatorum animas violentia crudelitatis efferatur. Quos enim viventes blandiens decipit, morientes saeviens rapit. Quo contra de electorum Ecclesia per prophetam Dominus pollicetur, dicens: Mala bestia non transibit per eam (Isai. XXXV, 9). Illi igitur terrae bestiam morientes timent, qui conditoris sui potentiam viventes non timent. Sancti etenim viri quia divinae se formidini medullitus subdunt, omne de adventu adversarii pondus timoris abjiciunt. Hinc est enim quod Psalmista Dominum exorat, dicens: Ne quando rapiat ut leo animam meam (Psal. VII, 3). Hinc rursus ait: Exaudi, Deus, orationem meam cum tribulor, a timore inimici eripe animam meam (Psal. LXIII, 1, 2). Viventes quippe perfecte timent judicem, ne morientes metuant accusatorem. Bene ergo dicitur: Et bestiam terrae non formidabis. Ac si aperte diceretur: Quia a blandiente hoste modo non vinceris, hunc saevientem postmodum non timebis. Sed cum bene vivitur, valde cavendum est ne mens, despectis caeteris, de gloria singularitatis elevetur. Unde apte ad memoriam bonum sociale reducitur, cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 23. — Sed cum lapidibus regionum pactum tuum. 50. Pie viventibus cavenda singularitas. — Quasi distinctae in mundo regiones sunt Ecclesiae

gentium, quae in una fide positae, morum linguarumque diversitate dividuntur. Quid ergo regionum lapides, nisi Ecclesiarum electos accipimus? quibus primi instructoris voce dicitur: Vosautem tanquam lapides vivi superaedificamini (I Petr. II, 5). De quibus sanctae Ecclesiae per prophetam Dominus pollicetur dicens: Ecce ego sternam per ordinem lapides tuos (Isai. LIV, 11). Qui igitur recte vivit, pacto se lapidibus 204 regionum jungit, quia in eo quod mundi desideria superat, vitam suam procul dubio ad sanctorum praecedentium imitationem ligat. Sed cum a mundi actione disjungitur, malignorum spirituum impugnationes crescunt: quae tamen quo magis in moerore quemquam atterunt, eo conditori humilius subdunt. Unde et subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

IBID. — Et bestiae terrae pacificae erunt tibi. 51. Acriores hostis insidiae, ad gratiae adjutorium postulandum nos compellunt. — Notandum prius est quod non ait pacatae, sed pacificae, videlicet, non quia pacem habent, sed quia pacem faciunt. Hostes quippe callidi dum insidiantur, affligunt; sed afflicta mens tanto magis ad aeternam patriam reditum diligit, quanto in hoc aerumnoso exsilio laboriosius vivit; et verius se gratiae sui adjutoris humiliat, cum contra se insidias hostium acriores pensat. Terrae ergo bestiae pacificae electis fiunt, quia maligni spiritus, cum bonorum corda adversantes deprimunt, haec nolentes ad amorem Domini impellunt. Inde ergo cum Deo pax robustior oritur, unde nobis ab adversariis durior pugna generatur. 52. Motus carnis tentando rugiunt, sed usque ad morsum non perveniunt. Imo nobis pacem cum Deo procurant. — Possunt etiam per terrae bestias motus carnis intelligi, qui dum mentem nostram irrationabilia suadendo lacessunt, contra nos bestialiter insurgunt. Sed cum cor sub divina lege deprimitur, etiam carnis incentiva detumescunt; ut etsi tentando submurmurant, nequaquam tamen usque ad effectum operum, quasi ad

aperti morsus rabiem exsurgant. Quis enim in hac adhuc corruptibili carne subsistens, has terrae bestias plene edomat, cum ille ad tertium coelum raptus egregius praedicator dicat: Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis (Rom. VII, 23)? Sed alius est has bestias in campo operis saevientes aspicere, aliud intra cordis caveam frementes tenere. Redactae namque intra claustra continentiae, etsi adhuc tentando rugiunt, usque ad morsum tamen, ut diximus, actionis illicitae non excedunt. Pacificae itaque sunt terrae bestiae, quia motus carnis etsi per desideria palpitant, aperta nos tamen contradictione operis non impugnant. Quamvis per hoc ipsum quod pacificae dicuntur, etiam id quod de malignis spiritibus diximus, non inconvenienter accipitur. Motus etenim carnis pacem nobis cum Deo faciunt, cum tentando contradicunt. Nam justi mens in eo quod ad superna dirigitur, ex corruptibili corpore gravi bello fatigatur. Quae si quando a desideriis coelestibus, hujus mundi quamlibet minima delectatione tardatur, ipso bello suae tentationis impellitur, ut illud toto corde diligat, quod contradictio nulla perturbat. Unde fit, ut quietem intimam ad memoriam revocet, et carnis suae illecebras fugiens, ad illam pleno amore suspiret. Considerare enim ex tentatione unusquisque compellitur, unde quo cecidit, qui postquam pacem Dei deseruit, rixam sibi contra se exsurgere ex semetipso sentit, et tunc verius videt de secura Dei dilectione quid perdidit, qui ad se dilapsus, suam in se contumeliam invenit. Pacem ergo nobis terrae bestiae faciunt, quia motus carnis, dum nos tentando lacessunt, ad amorem quietis intimae impellunt. Bene autem subditur:

CAPUT XXXIV VERS.

24. — Et scies quod pacem habeat tabernaculum tuum. 205 53. In Scripturis pax plena et pax inchoata. — In Scriptura sacra aliter pax plena dicitur,

atque aliter inchoata. Inchoatam quippe pacem Veritas discipulis dederat, cum dicebat: Pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis (Joan. XIV, 27), et plenam Simeon desideraverat, cum exoraret dicens: Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace (Luc. II, 29). Pax enim nostra ex desiderio conditoris inchoatur, ex manifesta autem visione perficitur. Plena quippe tunc erit, cum mens nostra nec ignorantia caecatur, nec carnis suae impugnatione concutitur. Sed quia ejus exordia tangimus, cum vel mentem Deo, vel carnem menti subjugamus, tabernaculum justi habere pacem dicitur, quia videlicet ejus corpus, quod mente inhabitat, a perversis desideriorum motibus sub justitiae dispositione refrenatur. Sed quid prodest per continentiam carnem restringere, si mens se per compassionem nesciat in proximi amore dilatare? Nulla namque est castitas carnis quam non commendat suavitas mentis. Unde post pacem tabernaculi apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

IBID. — Et visitans speciem tuam, non peccabis. 54. Se quisque in altero cogitet et amet. Paulus omnibus omnia factus condescendendo, non cadendo. — Species quippe hominis est alter homo. Recte enim species nostra dicitur proximus noster, quia in illo cernimus quid ipsi sumus. Corporali enim visitatione ad proximum gressuum accessu imus; spiritali vero, non gressu, sed affectu ducimur. Speciem ergo suam visitat, quisquis ad eum, quem sibi similem per naturam conspicit, passibus amoris tendit; ut in altero sua considerans, ex se ipso colligat, qualiter infirmanti alteri condescendat. Speciem suam visitat, qui ut in se alterum reficiat, se in altero pensat. Hinc namque per Moysen Veritas cum gesta describeret, gerenda signabat, dicens: Protulit terra herbam virentem et afferentem semen juxta genus suum, lignumque faciens fructum, et habens unumquodque sementem secundum speciem suam (Genes. I, 12). Lignum

quippe secundum speciem suam semen producit, cum mens nostra ex se considerationem in alterum colligit, et recti operis germen parit. Hinc quidam sapiens dicit: Quod tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris (Tob. IV, 16). Hinc in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Quae vultis ut faciant vobis homines, et vos eadem facite illis (Matth. VII, 12). Ac si aperte diceret: Speciem vestram in altero visitate, atque ex vobismetipsis cognoscite, quid vos oporteat aliis exhibere. Hinc Paulus ait: Factus sum Judaeis tanquam Judaeus, ut Judaeos lucrarer; et his qui sub lege sunt, quasi sub lege essem, cum ipse non essem sub lege, ut eos qui sub lege erant lucrifacerem; et his qui sine lege sunt quasi sine lege essem, cum sine lege Dei non essem, sed in lege essem Christi. (I Cor. IX, 20 et 21). Et paulo post: Omnibus omnia factus sum, ut omnes facerem salvos (Ibid., 23). Neque enim egregius praedicator, ut quasi Judaeus fieret, ad perfidiam erupit; neque ut quasi sub lege esset, ad carnale sacrificium rediit; neque ut omnibus omnia fieret, simplicitatem mentis in erroris varietatem commutavit; sed condescendendo appropinquavit infidelibus, non cadendo; ut videlicet singulos in se suscipiens, et se in singulos transfigurans, compatiendo colligeret, si ita 206 ipse, ut illi, esset quid impendi sibi ab aliis recte voluisset; et tanto verius unicuique erranti concurreret, quanto salutis ejus modum ex propria consideratione didicisset. Bene ergo dicitur: Et visitans speciem tuam non peccabis, quia tunc peccatum plene vincitur, cum ex sua similitudine unusquisque perpendit, quomodo in proximi dilectione dilatetur. Cum vero a vitiis caro restringitur, cum mens virtutibus exercetur, restat ut loquendo quisque doceat vitam quam moribus servat. Ille namque uberes fructus praedicationis colligit, qui semina bonae operationis praemittit. Unde post pacem tabernaculi, et speciei nostrae visitationem, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 25. — Et scies quoniam multiplex erit semen tuum, et progenies tua sicut herba terrae. 55. Semen justi multiplex. — Post pacem quippe tabernaculi, post speciei nostrae visitationem, semen justi multiplex surgit, quia nimirum post membrorum macerationem, ac morum magnitudinem, tanto ei fecundius praedicationis verbum tribuitur, quanto hoc in ejus pectore perfecti operis exaratione praevenitur. Ille namque bene loquendi facundiam accipit, qui sinum cordis per recte vivendi studia extendit. Nec loquentem conscientia praepedit, cum vita linguam antecedit. Hinc est quod Aegypti, servitio publico, Joseph dispensante, subjecti (Genes. XLVII, 20 seq.); cum juri regis semetipsos tradentes humiliant, frumenta etiam ad semen reportant. Frugem quippe ad esum etiam liberi accipimus, cum et sacro eloquio pascimur, et tamen ad quaedam, quae in hoc mundo appetimus in nostris voluptatibus vagamur. Sed servi facti, et ad semen frumenta percipimus, quia dum plene Deo subdimur, etiam verbo praedicationis replemur. Et quoniam magna proles fidelium sequitur, cum sancta praedicatio praerogatur, post multiplicitatem seminis recte subjungitur: Et progenies tua sicut herba terrae. Justi progenies herbae terrae comparatur, quia qui de ejus imitatione nascitur, dum arentem vitae praesentis gloriam deserit, spe in aeterna viridescit. Vel certe justi progenies sicut herba oritur, quia dum vivendo monstrat quod praedicando asserit, multitudo sequentium innumerabilis exsurgit. Sed quisquis jam terrena desideria despicit, quisquis se per activae vitae opera extendit, nequaquam ei sufficit magna exterius agere, nisi etiam per contemplationem valeat interna penetrare. Unde et apte protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 26. — Ingredieris in abundantia sepulcrum, sicut infertur acervus tritici in tempore suo. 56. Qui carnem domuit, contemplationi vacare debet. Et qui praedicationi operam dat. — Quid enim sepulcri nomine, nisi

contemplativa vita signatur, quae nos quasi ab hoc mundo mortuos sepelit, dum a terrenis desideriis susceptos in intimis abscondit? Ab exteriori quippe vita mortui etiam sepulti per contemplationem fuerant, quibus Paulus dicebat: Mortui enim estis, et vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo (Colos. III, 3). Activa quoque vita sepulcrum est, quia a pravis nos operibus mortuos tegit; sed contemplativa perfectius sepelit, quia cunctis mundi actionibus funditus dividit. Quisquis ergo jam in se contumelias 207 carnis edomuit, superest ut mentem per studia sanctae operationis exerceat; et quisquis jam mentem per sancta opera dilatat, superest ut hanc usque ad secreta intimae contemplationis studia extendat. Neque enim perfectus praedicator est, qui vel propter contemplationis studium operanda negligit, vel propter operationis instantiam contemplanda postponit. Hinc est enim quod Abraham conjugem mortuam in sepulcro duplici sepelit (Genes. XXIII, 19); quia nimirum perfectus quisque praedicator exstinctam a praesentis vitae desideriis animam suam, sub bonae operationis tegmine et contemplationis abscondit, ut a carnali concupiscentia sub activa contemplativaque vita quasi insensibilis lateat, quae prius mundi desideria sentiens, mortaliter vivebat. Hinc est quod humani generis Redemptor per diem miracula in urbibus exhibet, et ad orationis studium in monte pernoctat, ut perfectis videlicet praedicatoribus innuat quatenus nec activam vitam amore speculationis funditus deserant, nec contemplationis gaudia penitus operationis nimietate contemnant; sed quieti contemplantes sorbeant, quod occupati erga proximos loquentes refundant. Speculando quippe in Dei amorem surgitur, sed praedicando ad proximi utilitatem reditur. Unde apud Moysen, dum in sacrificio vacca mactatur (Num. XIX, 3), offerri cum hyssopo lignoque cedrino bis tinctus coccus praecipitur. Vaccam quippe mactamus, cum carnem a lascivia suae voluptatis exstinguimus. Quam cum hyssopo lignoque cedrino ac cocco offerimus; quia cum maceratione carnis, sacrificium fidei, spei et charitatis adolemus.

Hyssopus quippe interna nostra mundare consuevit. Et per Petrum dicitur: Fide mundans corda eorum (Act. XV, 9). Lignum cedrinum nulla putredine deficit, quia spem coelestium terminus non consumit. Unde et per Petrum dicitur: Regeneravit nos in spem vivam per resurrectionem Jesu Christi ex mortuis, in haereditatem incorruptibilem, et incontaminatam, et immarcescibilem (I Pet. I, 3). Coccus rubeo colore flammescit, quia quem implet charitas incendit. Unde et in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Ignem veni mittere in terram (Luc. XII, 49). Sed bis tinctus coccus offerri praecipitur, ut videlicet ante interni judicis oculos charitas nostra Dei et proximi dilectione coloretur; quatenus conversa mens nec sic pro amore Dei quietem diligat, ut curam proximi utilitatemque postponat; nec sic pro amore proximi occupata inserviat, ut quietem funditus deserens, ignem in se superni amoris exstinguat. Quisquis ergo semetipsum Deo jam sacrificium obtulit, si perfecta desiderat, curet necesse est, ut non solum ad operationis se latitudinem, verum etiam ad culmina contemplationis extendat. 57. Vita activa aliis, aliis contemplativa magis congruit. Alterutra cuique pro ingenio colenda. — Sed inter haec magnopere sciendum est, quia valde inter se diversae sunt conspersiones animorum. Nonnulli namque hominum ita otiosae mentis sunt, ut si eos labor occupationis excipiat, in ipsa operis inchoatione succumbant; et nonnulli ita inquieti sunt, ut si vacationem laboris habuerint, gravius laborent, quia tanto deteriores cordis tumultus tolerant, quanto eis licentius ad cogitationes vacat. Unde necesse est ut nec quieta mens ad exercitationem se immoderati operis 208 dilatet, nec inquieta ad studium contemplationis angustet. Saepe enim qui contemplari Deum quieti poterant, occupationibus pressi ceciderunt; et saepe qui occupati bene humanis usibus viverent, gladio suae quietis exstincti sunt. Hinc namque est quod nonnulli inquieti spiritus, dum plus exquirunt contemplando quam capiunt, usque ad perversa dogmata erumpunt; et dum veritatis discipuli esse humiliter negligunt, magistri errorum fiunt. Hinc per

semetipsam Veritas dicit: Si oculus tuus dexter scandalizat te, erue eum, et projice abs te. Bonum est tibi cum uno oculo in vitam intrare, quam duos oculos habentem mitti in gehennam ignis (Matth. V, 29). Duae quippe vitae, activa videlicet et contemplativa, cum conservantur in mente, quasi duo oculi habentur in facie. Dexter namque oculus vita contemplativa est, sinister activa. Sed sunt nonnulli, ut diximus, qui discrete intueri summa et spiritalia nequaquam possunt, et tamen alta contemplationis assumunt, atque idcirco in perfidiae foveam, intellectus pravi errore dilabuntur. Hos itaque contemplativa vita ultra vires assumpta, cogit a veritate cadere, quos in statu suae rectitudinis humiliter poterat sola activa custodire. Quibus recte hoc quod praefati sumus, Veritas dicit: Si oculus tuus dexter scandalizat te, erue eum, et projice abs te. Bonum tibi est cum uno oculo in vitam intrare, quam duos oculos habentem mitti in gehennam ignis. Ac si aperte diceret: Cum ad contemplativam vitam idonea discretione non sufficis, solam securius activam tene. Cumque in hoc, quod pro magno eligis, deficis, eo contentus esto, quod pro minimo attendis; ut si per contemplativam vitam a veritatis cognitione compelleris cadere, regnum coelorum per solam activam valeas saltem luscus intrare. Hinc rursum dicit: Qui scandalizaverit unum de pusillis istis qui in me credunt, expedit eti ut suspendatur mola asinaria in collo ejus, et demergatur in profundum maris (Matth. XVIII, 6). Quid per mare, nisi praesens saeculum; quid per molam asinariam, nisi actio terrena signatur? Quae dum colla mentis per stulta desideria stringit, hanc in laboris circuitum mittit. Sunt itaque nonnulli qui dum terrenas actiones deserunt, et ad contemplationis studia, humilitate postposita, ultra intelligentiae vires surgunt, non solum se in errorem dejiciunt, sed infirmos quosque a gremio unitatis dividunt. Qui ergo unum de minimis scandalizat, melius illi fuerat, alligata collo mola asinaria, in mare projici, quia nimirum perversae menti expeditius esse potuisset, ut occupata mundo terrena negotia ageret, quam per contemplationis studia ad

multorum perniciem vacaret. Rursum, nisi quibusdam mentibus contemplativa vita potius quam activa congrueret, nequaquam per Psalmistam Dominus diceret: Vacate et videte, quoniam ego sum Deus (Psal. XLV, 11). 58. Quid valeant timor et amor ad contemplationem. — Sed inter haec sciendum est quia saepe et pigras mentes amor ad opus excitat, et inquietas in contemplatione timor refrenat. Anchora enim cordis est pondus timoris; et plerumque fluctu cogitationum quatitur, sed per disciplinae suae vincula retinetur; neque hoc tempestas suae inquietudinis ad naufragium pertrahit, quia in divini amoris littore perfecta charitas astringit. Unde necesse est 209 ut quisquis ad contemplationis studia properat, semetipsum prius subtiliter interroget, quantum amat. Machina quippe mentis est vis amoris, quae hanc dum a mundo extrahit, in alta sustollit. Prius ergo discutiat, si summa inquirens diligit, si diligens timet, si novit incognita aut amando comprehendere, aut non comprehensa timendo venerari. In contemplatione etenim mentem si amor non excitat, teporis sui torpor obscurat; si timor non aggravat, sensus hanc per inania ad nebulam erroris levat; et cum clausa ei secretorum janua tardius aperitur, ab ea longius ipsa sua praesumptione repellitur; quia irrumpere appetit hoc, quod non inveniens quaerit; cumque superba mens errorem pro veritate percipit, quo quasi intus gressum porrigit, foras tendit. Hinc est enim quod legem daturus Dominus, in igne fumoque descendit (Exod. XIX, 18); quia et humiles per claritatem suae ostensionis illuminat, et superborum oculos per caliginem erroris obscurat. Prius igitur mens ab appetitu gloriae temporalis, atque ab omni carnalis concupiscentiae delectatione tergenda est, et tunc ad aciem contemplationis erigenda. Unde et cum lex accipitur, populus a monte prohibetur, ut videlicet qui infirmis adhuc mentibus terrena desiderant, considerare sublimia non praesumant. Unde et recte dicitur: Si bestia tetigerit montem, lapidabitur (Ibid., 12, 13). Bestia enim montem tangit, cum mens irrationabilibus desideriis subdita ad contemplationis alta

se erigit. Sed lapidibus percutitur, quia summa non sustinens, ipsis superni ponderis ictibus necatur. 59. Quae ad eam assequendam perfectio necessaria. — Qui igitur culmen apprehendere perfectionis nituntur, cum contemplationis arcem tenere desiderant, prius se in campo operis per exercitium probent, ut sollicite sciant si nulla jam mala proximis irrogant, si irrogata a proximis aequanimiter portant, si objectis bonis temporalibus nequaquam mens laetitia solvitur, si subtractis non nimio moerore sauciatur; ac deinde perpendant si cum ad semetipsos introrsus redeunt, in eo quod spiritalia rimantur, nequaquam secum rerum corporalium umbras trahunt, vel fortasse tractas manu discretionis abigunt; si incircumscriptum lumen videre cupientes, cunctas circumscriptionis suae imagines deprimunt; et in eo quod super se contingere appetunt, vincunt quod sunt. Unde recte nunc dicitur: Ingredieris in abundantia sepulcrum. Vir quippe perfectus sepulcrum in abundantia ingreditur, quia prius activae vitae opera congregat, et postmodum carnis sensum per contemplationem mortuum, huic mundo funditus occultat. Unde et apte subditur: Sicut infertur acervus tritici in tempore suo (Ibid.). 60. Actio contemplationem debet antecedere. — Actionis namque tempus primum est, contemplationis extremum. Unde necesse est ut perfectus quisque prius virtutibus mentem exerceat, atque hanc postmodum in horreum quietis condat (Luc. VIII, 35). Hinc est enim quod is quem legio daemonum Domino jubente dereliquit, ad Salvatoris sui pedes residet, verba doctrinae percipit, et de regione sua simul discedere cum salutis auctore concupiscit; sed tamen ei ipsa quae salutem contulit Veritas dicit: Revertere primum in domum 210 tuam, et narra quanta tibi fecerit Dominus. Cum enim quamlibet parum de divina cognitione percipimus, redire ad humana jam nolumus, et proximorum necessitatibus onerari recusamus; quietem contemplationis quaerimus, nihilque aliud, nisi hoc quod sine labore reficit, amamus. Sed sanatos nos Veritas ad domum mittit, narrare quae nobiscum acta sunt praecipit, ut videlicet prius mens

exsudet in opere, et postmodum refici debeat per contemplationem. 61. Contemplationis et actionis figurae Rachel et Lia, Maria et Martha. Vitae activae magna merita, contemplativae potiora. — Hinc est quod Jacob pro Rachel servit, et Liam accipit, eique dicitur Non est consuetudinis in terra nostra ut minores ante tradamus ad nuptias quam majores (Genes. XXIX, 27). Rachel namque, visum principium; Lia autem laboriosa dicitur. Et quid per Rachelem, nisi contemplativa; quid per Liam, nisi activa vita designatur? In contemplatione quippe principium, quod Deus est, quaeritur; in operatione autem sub gravi necessitatum fasce laboratur. Unde et Rachel pulchra, sed sterilis; Lia autem lippa est, sed fecunda, quia nimirum mens cum contemplandi otia appetit, plus videt, sed minus Deo filios generat; cum vero ad laborem se praedicationis dirigit, minus videt, sed amplius parit. Post Liae ergo complexus ad Rachelem Jacob pervenit, quia perfectus quisque ante activae vitae ad fecunditatem jungitur, et post contemplativae ad requiem copulatur. Quia enim contemplativa vita minor quidem tempore, sed merito major est quam activa, sacri Evangelii verbis ostenditur, in quo duae mulieres diversa egisse referuntur. Maria quippe Redemptoris nostri verba audiens, ad pedes illius residebat; Martha autem corporalibus ministeriis insistebat. Cumque contra Mariae otium Martha quereretur, audivit: Martha, Martha, sollicita es, et turbaris erga plurima. Porro unum est necessarium. Maria optimam partem elegit, quae non auferetur ab ea (Luc. X, 41, 42). Quid enim per Mariam, quae verba Domini residens audiebat, nisi contemplativa vita exprimitur? Quid per Martham exterioribus obsequiis occupatam, nisi activa vita signatur? Sed Marthae cura non reprehenditur, Mariae vero etiam laudatur, quia magna sunt activae vitae merita, sed contemplativae potiora. Unde nec auferri unquam Mariae pars dicitur, quia activae vitae opera cum corpore transeunt, contemplativae autem gaudia melius ex fine convalescunt. Quod bene ac breviter Ezechiel propheta exprimit, cum volantia animalia contemplatus ait: Et similitudo

manus hominis subtus pennas eorum erat (Ezech. X, 21). Quid enim per pennas animalium, nisi contemplationes possumus sentire sanctorum, quibus ad summa transvolant, et terrena deserentes, sese in coelestibus librant? Quid per manus, nisi operationes accipimus? Quia cum in proximi amore se dilatant, bona quae praevalent etiam corporaliter administrant. Sed manus eorum sub pennis sunt, quia actionis suae opera virtute contemplationis vincunt. 62. Sepulcri nomine requies aeterna potest intelligi. — Potest etiam per sepulcrum non solum in hac vita nostra contemplatio, sed requies aeternae et intimae retributionis intelligi; in qua tanto verius quiescitur, quanto in nobis corruptionis vita perfectius necatur. In abundantia ergo sepulcrum 211 ingreditur, qui post congesta vitae praesentis opera, mutabilitati suae plene mortuus, in secreto veri luminis occultatur. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur: Abscondes eos in abdito vultus tui, a conturbatione hominum (Psal. XXX, 21). Quod bene etiam comparatio adjuncta commendat, cum subditur: Sicut infertur acervus tritici in tempore suo. Frumentum quippe in segete sole tangitur, quia in hac vita, humana anima respectu superni luminis illustratur; pluvias accipit, quia veritatis eloquio pinguescit; ventis concutitur, quia tentationibus exercetur; et secum crescentes paleas portat, quia nequiorem contra se quotidie vitam peccantium tolerat; atque ad aream deductum triturationis pondere premitur, ut a palearum connexione solvatur; quia mens nostra coelesti disciplinae supposita, dum correctionis flagella percipit, a societate carnalium mundior recedit; et relictis paleis ad horreum ducitur, quia foris remanentibus reprobis, electa anima ad supernae mansionis aeterna gaudia sublevatur. Bene ergo dicitur: Ingredieris in abundantia sepulcrum, sicut infertur acervus tritici in tempore suo; quia dum post afflictionem justi praemia patriae coelestis inveniunt, quasi post pressuras ad horreum grana deferuntur; et in alieno quidem tempore percussiones sentiunt, sed in suo a percussione requiescunt. Electis quippe tempus alienum est vita praesens,

unde et quibusdam adhuc infidelibus Veritas dicit: Tempus meum nondum venit, tempus autem vestrum semper est paratum (Joan. VII, 6). Et rursum: Haec est hora vestra, et potestas tenebrarum (Luc. XXII, 53). Sepulcrum ergo in tempore suo sicut frumenti acervus ingreditur, quia ille aeternam requiem 212 percipit, qui prius hic, ut ab exurendis paleis liber sit, disciplinae pressuras sentit. Eliphaz vero, quia et in locutionis suae serie tabernaculum, lapides, bestias, semen, herbas, sepulcrumque nominavit, quod non haec juxta litteram dixerit, ipse innuit, qui post cuncta illico subjungit.

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS. 27. — Ecce hoc, ut investigavimus, ita est. 63. Verba Eliphaz spiritaliter intelligenda sunt. — Liquet profecto quod in his verbis nihil ab eo juxta superficiem dicitur, quia nimirum ante faciem non jacet quod investigatur. Qui ergo haec investigasse se indicat, quia in verbis exterioribus interiora quaesierit demonstrat. Sed post cuncta ad stultitiam jactantiae pervenit, quia protinus subdit:

CAPUT XXXIX.

IBID. — Quod auditum, mente pertracta. 64. Gravis ejus imperitia est velle docere meliorem. — Quantalibet doctrina mens polleat, gravis ejus imperitia est velle docere meliorem. Unde et ea quae ab amicis recte prolata sunt, ab interno arbitro non recta judicantur. In eo namque vim suae rectitudinis amittunt, quod auditori non congruunt; quia et medicamina vires perdunt, cum sanis membris apponuntur. In omni ergo quod dicitur, necesse est ut causa, tempus et persona pensetur; si verba sententiae veritas roborat, si hanc tempus congruum postulat, si et veritatem sententiae, et congruentiam temporis personae qualitas non impugnat. Ille enim laudabiliter spicula emittit, qui prius hostem quem feriat conspicit. Male

namque arcus validi cornua subigit, qui sagittam fortiter dirigens civem ferit.

LIBER SEPTIMUS.

Totum caput sextum, tribus postremis versibus exceptis, partim allegorice, partim moraliter explicat.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

211 1. Job flagellis et conviciis probatus. Si qua loquitur quae impatientiam sonant, haec non humano pensanda judicio, sed divino. — Quorumdam mentes plus flagella, quam convicia cruciant; quorumdam vero plus convicia quam flagella castigant. Nam saepe contra nos quibuslibet poenis durius tormenta verborum saeviunt; cumque nos ad defensionem erigunt, in impatientiam sternunt. Unde beato Job ne deesse tentatio ulla potuisset, non solum hunc flagella desuper feriunt sed graviora plagis amicorum colloquia affligunt; ut sancti viri anima hinc inde pulsata, ad motum iracundiae et elationis erumperet, et quidquid mundum vixerat, per contumaciam superbae locutionis inquinaret. Sed tactus plagis gratias retulit; lacessitus verbis recta respondit; et percussus innotescit, quam pro minimo salutem carnis habuerit. Loquens quoque indicat, quam sapiens tacebat. Sed quaedam ejus verbis admista sunt, quae apud humana judicia patientiae limitem transire videantur: quae nos vere intelligimus, si superni sententiam judicis in eorum examinatione pensamus. Ipse quippe beatum Job et prius contra adversarium praetulit, dicens: Vidisti servum meum Job, quod non ei similis est super terram; vir simplex et rectus, ac timens Deum, et recedens a malo (Job. I, 8)? Ipse post probationem amicos ejus redarguit, dicens: 212 Non estis locuti coram me rectum, sicut servus meus Job (Job. XLII, 7). Restat ergo ut cum mens in beati Job sermonibus fluctuat, eorum pondus ex ejusdem historiae initio ac fine perpendat. Ab aeterno enim judice nec casurus laudari potuit, nec lapsus praeferri. Si igitur in ambiguitatis tempestate deprehensi, prima hujus historiae et postrema conspicimus, navis

cordis considerationis suae funibus, quasi a prora et puppi, restringitur, ne in erroris saxa perducatur. Nullis ergo ignorantiae nostrae procellis obruimur, si tranquillum supernae sententiae littus tenemus. Ecce enim dicit quod quaestione non modica lectoris animum moveat. Sed quis hoc non rectum dicere audeat, quod in Dei auribus rectum sonat?

CAPUT II.

CAP. VI. VERS. 2, 3. — Utinam appenderentur peccata mea, quibus iram merui, et calamitas quam patior, in statera: quasi arena maris haec gravior appareret. SENSUS TYPICUS. 2. Christus libra est in qua et quod meremur, et quod pro nobis passus est, pensantur. Poenae nostrae gravitatem nobis notam fecit. — Quis alius staterae nomine, nisi Dei et hominum mediator exprimitur? qui ad pensandum vitae nostrae meritum venit, ac secum justitiam simul et misericordiam detulit; sed misericordiae lance praeponderans, culpas nostras parcendo levigavit. In manu etenim Patris, quasi statera miri libraminis factus, hinc in se calamitatem nostram,
213 et illinc peccata suspendit. Sed gravis ponderis calamitatem moriendo innotuit, et apud misericordiam leve esse peccatum relaxando monstravit. Qui hoc primum gratiae contulit, quia poenam nostram nobis cognoscibilem fecit. Homo namque ad contemplandum auctorem conditus, sed exigentibus meritis ab internis gaudiis dejectus, in aerumnam corruptionis ruens, caecitatem exsilii sustinens, culpae suae supplicia et tolerabat, et nesciebat; ita ut exsilium patriam crederet, et sic sub corruptionis pondere quasi in salutis libertate gauderet. Sed is, quem intus homo reliquerat, assumpta carne, foris apparuit Deus; cumque se exterius praebuit, expulsum foras hominem ad interiora revocavit, ut jam damna sua videat, jam poenam suae caecitatis ingemiscat. Calamitas ergo hominis in statera gravis apparuit, quia malum quod pertulit nonnisi in praesentia Redemptoris agnovit; lucem quippe nesciens, damnationis suae tenebras voluptuose tolerabat. Sed

postquam vidit quod diligeret, intellexit etiam quod doleret; et grave sensit quod pertulit, quia dulce innotuit quod amisit. Vir igitur sanctus colloquentis amici sententiis a claustris silentii excussus, et prophetici spiritus affluentia repletus, dicat sua, dicat humani generis voce: Utinam appenderentur peccata mea, quibus iram merui, et calamitas quam patior, in statera, quasi arena maris haec gravior appareret. Ac si aperte diceret: Damnationis nostrae malum leve creditur, quia necdum cognita Redemptoris aequitate pensatur. Sed utinam veniat, et aerumnam tanti exsilii misericordiae suae lance suspendat, et quid post exsilium requiramus edoceat. Si enim innotescit quid amisimus, grave esse insinuat quod toleramus. Bene autem haec eadem peregrinationis nostrae calamitas maris arenae comparatur. Arena etenim maris, undarum aestu exterius pellitur, quia et delinquens homo, quoniam tentationum fluctus mobiliter pertulit, extra se ab intimis exivit. Magni autem arena maris est ponderis; sed calamitas hominis arena maris gravior dicitur, quia dura fuisse poena ostenditur, dum per misericordem judicem culpa levigatur. Et quia quisquis gratiam Redemptoris agnoscit, quisquis reditum ad patriam diligit, eruditus sub pondere peregrinationis gemit, post staterae desiderium recte subjungitur:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 2. — Unde et verba mea dolore sunt plena. 3. Gemere hic non cessat qui se exsulem novit. — Qui peregrinationem pro patria diligit, dolere etiam inter dolores nescit. Justi autem verba dolore plena sunt, quia quo usque praesentia tolerat, ad aliud loquendo suspirat; omne quod peccans pertulit, conspicit; atque ut ad statum beatitudinis redeat, sollicite judicia quibus affligitur pensat. Unde subditur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 4. — Quia sagittae Domini in me sunt. 4. Sagittis praedicatio vel poena signatur. — Sagittarum quippe nomine aliquando praedicationis verba, aliquando animadversionis sententiae designantur. Praedicationis namque eloquia sagittis exprimuntur, quia in eo quod vitia feriunt, 214 male viventium corda transfigunt. De his sagittis venienti Redemptori dicitur: Sagittae tuae acutae, potentissime; populi sub te cadent in corde (Psal. XLIV, 6). De quo Isaias dicit: Mittam ex eis qui salvati fuerint ad gentes in mare, in Africam, et in Lydiam, tenentes sagittam, in Italiam, in Graeciam (Isai. LXVI, 19). Rursum sagittis, animadversionis percussio designatur, sicut Joas regi per Elisaeum dicitur: Jace sagittam. Quo jaciente ait: Percuties Syriam, donec consumas eam (IV Reg. XIII, 17). Vir igitur sanctus quia peregrinationis suae aerumnam respicit, quia sub percussionibus Dominicae animadversionis ingemiscit, dicat: Unde et verba mea dolore sunt plena, quia sagittae Domini in me sunt [Rec. III.] Ac si aperte diceret: Ego in exsilii damnatione non gaudeo, sed sub judicio positus doleo, quia vim percussionis agnosco. Plerique autem sunt quos tormenta cruciant, sed non emendant. Quo contra apte subjungitur:

CAPUT V.

IBID. — Quarum indignatio ebibit spiritum meum. 5. Justi poenis quas sustinent emendantur. — Quid enim est spiritus hominis, nisi spiritus elationis? Sagittae autem Domini spiritum hominis ebibunt, cum supernae animadversionis sententiae afflictam mentem ab elatione compescunt. Sagittae Domini spiritum hominis ebibunt, quia intentum exterioribus introrsus trahunt. Epotatus namque David spiritus fuerat, cum dicebat: In deficiendo in me spiritum meum, et tu cognovisti semitas meas (Psal. CXLI, 4). Et rursum: Negavi consolari animam meam, memor fui Dei, et delectatus sum, exercitatus sum, et defecit paulisper spiritus meus (Psal. LXXVI, 4). Sagittarum ergo indignatio justi spiritum ebibit, quia supernae

sententiae electos, quos in peccatis inveniunt, dum vulnerant, immutant; ut duritiam suam transfixa mens deserat, atque ex salutifero vulnere sanguis confessionis currat. Pensant namque unde, quo lapsi sunt, pensant a quanta beatitudine ad quae corruptionis suae tormenta ceciderunt; et non solum gemunt in his quae sustinent, sed insuper metuunt hoc quod districtus judex delinquentibus de gehennae ignibus minatur. Unde recte subjungitur:

CAPUT VI.

IBID. — Et terrores Domini militant contra me. 6. Deum praesentes poenas dolent, pavent futuras. — Justorum mens non solum perpendit quod tolerat, sed etiam pavet quod restat; videt qualia in hac vita patitur; metuit ne post hanc graviora patiatur. Luget quia in hujus caecitatis exsilio a paradisi gaudiis cecidit; timet ne et cum exsilium relinquetur, mors aeterna subsequatur. Jam ergo sententiam tolerat in poena; sed minas adhuc venturi judicis formidat ex culpa. Hinc Psalmista ait: In me pertransierunt irae tuae, et terrores tui conturbaverunt me (Psal. LXXXVII, 17). Interni quippe judicis postquam irae pertranseunt, etiam terrores conturbant, quia jam aliud damnatione patimur, et adhuc aliud de aeterna ultione formidamus. Vir igitur sanctus, perpendens mala quae tolerat, dicat: Sagittae Domini in me sunt, quarum indignatio ebibit spiritum meum. Sed, graviora in perpetuum metuens, adjungat: Et terrores militani contra me. Ac si aperte diceret: Percussus quidem de praesentibus doleo; 215 sed hoc in dolore fit gravius, quia et in poena positus, adhuc supplicia aeterna pertimesco. Sed quia jam staterae interventum desiderat, jam mala in quibus humanum genus cecidit pensat, quamvis in gentili natione positus, munere tamen prophetici spiritus plenus; quo ardore Redemptoris adventum vel gentilitas, vel Judaea sitiat, verbis sequentibus demonstrat, dicens:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 5. — Nunquid rugiet onager cum habuerit herbam? aut mugiet bos cum ante praesepe plenum steterit? 7. Gentilitatis et Judaeae in Redemptoris adventum desideria. — Quid namque per onagrum, id est, agrestem asinum, nisi gentilis populus designatur? quem sicut natura extra stabula disciplinae edidit, ita vagus in voluptatum suarum campo permansit. Quid per bovem nisi plebs Judaica figuratur, quae, jugo dominationis supernae supposita, ad spem proselytos colligens, per corda quae valuit vomerem legis traxit. Sed beati Job vita attestante cognoscimus, ut exspectasse Redemptoris adventum multos etiam ex gentibus credamus. Et nascente Domino, Simeone in spiritu in templum veniente, didicimus quanto desiderio ex plebe Israelitica sancti viri incarnationis ejus mysterium videre cupierunt. Unde et per eumdem Redemptorem discipulis dicitur: Multi, dico vobis, justi et prophetae desideraverunt videre quae videtis, et non viderunt (Luc. X, 24). Herba ergo onagri, et fenum bovis est haec ipsa Mediatoris incarnatio, per quam simul gentilitas et Judaea satiatur. Quia enim per prophetam dicitur: Omnis caro fenum (Isa. XL, 6), universitatis conditor, ex nostra substantia carnem sumens, fenum fieri voluit, ne nostra in perpetuum caro fenum remaneret. Tunc ergo herbam onager invenit, cum gentilis populus gratiam divinae incarnationis accepit. Tunc bos vacuum praesepe non habuit, cum plebi Judaicae ejus carnem exspectanti lex exhibuit, quem diu exspectanti prophetavit. Unde et natus Dominus in praesepe ponitur, ut videlicet signaretur quia sancta animalia, quae jejuna diu apud legem inventa sunt, incarnationis ejus feno satiantur. Praesepe enim natus implevit, qui cibum semetipsum mentibus mortalium praebuit, dicens: Qui comedit carnem meam, et bibit sanguinem meum, in me manet, et ego in eo (Joan. VI, 57). Sed quia diu et electorum gentilium vota dilata sunt, et ex Hebraico populo sancti quique longo tempore redemptionem suam exspectando gemuerunt, beatus Job, bene prophetiae mysteria enarrans, ex utraque natione causas afflictionis insinuat, dicens: Nunquid rugiet onager cum

habuerit herbam? aut mugiet bos cum ante praesepe plenum steterit? Ac si aperte dicat: Idcirco gentilitas gemit, quia eam necdum Redemptoris sui gratia reficit; atque ideo Judaea mugitus dilatat, quia, legem tenens, sed legis auctorem non videns, stans ante praesepe jejunat. Quae nimirum lex, quia ante Mediatoris adventum nequaquam spiritaliter, sed carnaliter tenebatur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 6. — Aut poterit comedi insulsum, quod non est sale conditum? 8. Lex carnaliter intellecta insulsa, a Christo sale condita. — In lege sal litterae est virtus intelligentiae occultae. Quisquis ergo, obsequiis carnalibus intentus, hanc intelligere spiritaliter noluit, quid aliud quam insulsum cibum comedit? Sed hoc in 216 cibo sal cognita Veritas misit, cum latere in lege saporem occultae intelligentiae docuit dicens: Si crederetis Moysi, crederetis forsitan et mihi, de me enim ille scripsit (Joan. V, 46). Et rursum: Habete sal in vobis, et pacem habete inter vos (Marc. V, 49). Sed quia ante Mediatoris adventum Judaea legem carnaliter tenuit, praeceptis ejus dura jubentibus gentilitas subdi recusavit. Insulsum ergo cibum comedere noluit, quia prius quam Spiritus condimentum perciperet servare vim litterae expavit. Quis namque gentilium hoc quod illic praecipitur ferret, filiorum carnem pro obsequio religionis incidere, verborum culpas morte resecare? Unde et bene adhuc subditur:

CAPUT IX.

IBID. — Aut gustare aliquis potest quod gustatum affert mortem? 9. Lex carnaliter degustata, prius erat mortifera. — Lex namque carnaliter degustata mortem detulit, quia commissa delinquentium dura animadversione distrinxit; mortem detulit, quia et per praeceptum culpam innotuit, et hanc per gratiam non delevit, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Nihil ad

perfectum perduxit lex (Heb. VII, 19). Et rursum: Lex quidem sancta, et mandatum sanctum et justum et bonum. Et paulo post: Peccatum, ut appareat peccatum, per bonum mihi operatum est mortem (Rom. VII, 12, 13). Ad Christum vero conversa gentilitas, quia hunc sonare per verba legis intelligit, angustata desideriis suis, eum quem vehementer diligit inter praecepta carnalia spiritaliter requirit. Unde et ex voce mox Ecclesiae per prophetiae spiritum subditur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 7. — Quae prius tangere nolebat anima mea, nunc, prae angustia, cibi mei sunt. 10. Verba Job spiritali intellectu esse gravida. Gentes legis cibum quaesiturae, et Judaei gentium societatem non dedignaturae praedicuntur. — Valde namque in errorem labitur qui beati Job verba ad solam prolata historiam suspicatur. Vir enim sanctus, et tot conditoris sui praeconiis fultus, quid magnum, vel potius quid verum diceret, si insulsum cibum comedi non posse dixisset? Aut quis ejus esui mortifera alimenta obtulerat, ut subjungat: Aut potest aliquis gustare quod gustatum affert mortem? Quae si de amicorum colloquiis dicta sentimus, ab intellectu hoc sententia subjuncta compescimur, qua ait: Quae prius tangere nolebat anima mea, nunc, prae angustia, cibi mei sunt. Absit enim ne vir sanctus, in status sui incolumitate constitutus, amicorum suorum aliquando dicta despexerit, qui, sicut ipso attestante post didicimus, et servis humilis fuit. Verba ergo ejus a mysteriis non vacant, quae, sicut ex fine historiae discimus, et internus arbiter laudat. Quae nequaquam etiam cum tanta veneratione usque ad mundi extrema decurrerent, si intellectu mystico gravida non fuissent. 11. Beatus igitur Job, quia membrum sanctae est Ecclesiae, ejus etiam loquatur ex voce, dicens: Quae prius tangere nolebat anima mea, nunc prae angustia, cibi mei sunt, quia nimirum amoris sui aestibus anxia cibum Scripturae veteris conversa gentilitas esurit, quem dudum superba despexit.

Quae tamen et Judaeae vocibus congruunt, si paulo consideratius disserantur. Ipsa quippe ex eruditione legis, ex unius Dei cognitione sal habuit, et cunctas gentes tanquam animalia bruta despexit. Sed quia societatem gentilium ad semetipsam recipere praeceptis legis erudita contempserat, 217 quid aliud quam insulsum cibum sumere fastidiebat? Divina quippe sententia, proposita morte, vetuerat ne plebs Israelitica foedus cum alienigenis jungeret, et vitam sanctae religionis inquinaret (Exod. XXIII, 32). Unde et subditur: Aut gustare aliquis potest quod gustatum affert mortem? Sed quia ad Redemptoris fidem haec eadem Judaea ex electorum parte conversa est, lucem quam cognoverat praedicare per sanctos apostolos suae prolis infidelibus satagebat. Ejus autem praedicationis obsequium Hebraeorum superbia repulit. Unde mox ad collectionem gentium exhortationis suae verba declinavit, sicut et per eosdem apostolos dicitur: Vobis oportebat primum loqui verbum Dei; sed quoniam repulistis illud, et indignos vos judicastis aeternae vitae, ecce convertimur ad gentes (Act. XIII, 46). Unde hoc quoque loco apte subjungitur: Quae prius tangere nolebat anima mea, nunc prae angustia, cibi mei sunt. Judaea quippe, vitam gentilium dedignata, eam dudum quasi tangere noluit, cujus societatem recipere sprevit; sed ad Redemptoris gratiam veniens, ab Israelitis infidelibus repulsa, dum per sanctos apostolos ad collectionem se gentium dilatat, quasi hoc in cibum esuriens accipit, quod indignum prius fastidiosa despexit. Praedicationis enim suae angustias pertulit, quae apud Hebraeos despici quod loquebatur vidit. Sed prae angustia cibos quos dudum contempserat comedit, quae, repulsa Judaeorum duritia, gentiles suscipere populos quos despexerat concupiscit. Quia igitur haec figuraliter diximus, restat nunc ut moraliter inquiramus. SENSUS MORALIS. — 12. Vir sanctus, Redemptoris adventum sub staterae appellatione desiderans, dum se per eloquium aperit, nos ad vivendi studium erudit; dum sua narrat, quaedam nostra indicat; dum de se quae

recognoscamus insinuat, nos ad spem trepidos infirmosque confirmat. Jam quippe per fidem Mediatoris vivimus, et tamen adhuc pro expurgatione vitiorum dura animadversionis intimae flagella sustinemus. Unde et post staterae desiderium subdit:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 4. — Quia sagittae Domini in me sunt, quarum indignatio ebibit spiritum meum. 13. Boni flagellis ac judicii terrore configuntur. Praestat tamen agi amore. — Sed ecce, ut superius dictum est, et divinae correptionis percussione configimur, et tamen adhuc illud gravius est quod de terrore venturi judicis ex aeterna animadversione formidamus. Unde protinus subinfertur: Et terrores Domini militant contra me. Debet tamen a metu et dolore animus excuti, et ad sola aeternae patriae desideria extendi. Tunc enim nobilitatem nostrae regenerationis ostendimus, si eum ut patrem diligimus, quem nunc servili mente ut dominum formidamus. Unde et per Paulum dicitur: Non accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore, sed accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus, Abba pater (Rom. VIII, 15). Pondus itaque formidinis mens electi postponat, in virtute se amoris exerceat, renovationis suae dignitatem desideret, ad conditoris sui speciem anhelet; quem quo usque conspicere non valet, aeternitatem ejus necesse est, id est, intimum cibum suum esuriens, exspectet. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 5. — Nunquid rugiet onager cum habuerit herbam? aut mugiet bos cum ante praesepe plenum steterit? 14. Onager fidelem plebem, bos ordinem ecclesiasticum designat. Utrisque hic gemendi causa de dilata Dei visione. — Qui alii onagri appellatione signati sunt, nisi hi qui, in campo fidei constituti, nullius officii loris 218 ligantur? Vel quos bovis significatio

exprimit, nisi hos quos intra sanctam Ecclesiam ad praedicationis officium suscepti ordinis jugum premit? Herba vero onagri et pabulum bovis est interna refectio populi fidelis. Alii namque more bovis intra Ecclesiam suscepti officii loris tenentur; alii more onagri sacri ordinis stabula nesciunt, et in campo propriae voluntatis degunt. Sed cum quis ex vita saeculari internae visionis desiderio aestuat, cum refectionis intimae pabulum concupiscit, cum jejunum se in peregrinationis hujus caecitate considerans, quibus valet fletibus reficit, quasi herbam non inveniens onager rugit. Alius quoque necessitatem suscepti ordinis tolerat, in labore praedicationis exsudat, et per aeternam jam contemplationem refici appetit; sed quia Redemptoris sui speciem necdum conspicit, quasi bos ad praesepe vacuum ligatus gemit. Quia enim, longe ab interna sapientia positi, aeternae haereditatis viriditatem non cernimus, velut bruta animalia, a desiderata herba jejunamus. De qua nimirum herba Redemptoris voce dicitur: Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur, et ingredietur, et egredietur, et pascua inveniet (Joan. X, 9). Sed plerumque, quod esse amantibus gravius solet, sanctis bonorum studiis malorum vita contradicit; et cum mens ad coeleste desiderium rapitur, bene coepta intentio, interrumpentibus stultorum verbis ac moribus, reverberatur; ita ut quae jam per contemplationis adnisum ad summa evolaverat, ad expugnandam pravorum stultitiam sese in infimis contra certamina accingat. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 6. — Aut poterit comedi insulsum quod non est sale conditum? Aut potest aliquis gustare quod gustatum affert mortem? 15. Electis quam gravia sint verba moresque carnalium. — Verba quippe moresque carnalium quasi cibum se nostris mentibus ingerunt, ut in delectationis ventre rapiantur. Sed electus quisque insulsum non comedit, quia pravorum dicta factaque dijudicans, ab ore cordis repellit. Paulus ad esum mentium inferri insulsa

prohibuit, cum discipulis dixit: Sermo vester semper in gratia sale sit conditus (Coloss. IV, 6). Et Psalmistae quoque verba reproborum in cordis ore insulsa sapuerant, cum dicebat: Narraverunt mihi iniqui fabulationes, sed non ita ut lex tua, Domine (Psal. CXVIII, 84). Saepe autem verba carnalium dum se importune nostris auribus ingerunt, in corde bellum tentationis gignunt; et quamvis haec et ratio respuat, et lingua reprehendat, cum labore tamen intus vincitur quod foris cum auctoritate judicatur. Unde necesse est ut nec ad aures veniat quod mens a cogitationis aditu vigilans repellat. Sancti igitur viri, cum aeternitatis desideriis anhelant, in tantam altitudinem vitae se sublevant, ut audire jam quae mundi sunt grave sibi ac deprimens pondus credant. Valde namque insolens atque intolerabile aestimant quidquid illud non sonat quod intus amant. 26. Non omnium est ad cruciatus corporis pro Deo subeundos accingi. — Sed saepe mens jam per desiderium ad sublimia rapitur, jam funditus a stulta terrenorum hominum locutione separatur, nec tamen adhuc pro amore veritatis ad perferendos praesentis vitae cruciatus accingitur; jam superna appetit, jam in infimis stulta contemnit, sed necdum se ad perferendae adversitatis tolerantiam dirigit. Unde et subditur: Aut potest aliquis gustare quod gustatum affert mortem?

CAPUT XIV.

17. Proximorum infirma tolerando, ad cruciatus subeundos roboramur. — Durum quippe est appetere quod cruciat, 219 sequi quod vitam fugat. Sed plerumque mens justi ad tantum se virtutis culmen extendit, ut et apud se in internae rationis arce praesideat, et quorumdam foris stultitiam tolerando convertat. Quos enim ad fortia trahere nitimur, eorum necesse est ut infirma toleremus, quia nec jacentem erigit, nisi qui status sui rectitudinem per compassionem flectit. Cum vero alienae infirmitati compatimur, valentius a nostra roboramur; ut amore futurorum mens ad praesentia adversa se

praeparet, et cruciatus corporis quos timebat exspectet. Auctis namque desideriis coelestibus angustatur; cumque aeternae patriae quanta sit dulcedo considerat, pro ea praesentis vitae amaritudines ardenter amat. Unde post insulsi cibi fastidium, post impossibilem mortis gustum, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 7. — Quae prius tangere nolebat anima mea, nunc, prae angustia, cibi mei sunt. 18. Prae amore coelestis patriae exsilii poenas amamus. — Mens enim justi proficiens, quae prius, dum sola propria curaret, ferre aliena fastidiebat, quae minus alienis compatiens, convalescere contra adversa non poterat, cum ad toleranda proximi infirma se attrahit, ad adversa superanda convalescit; ita ut pro amore veritatis praesentis vitae cruciatus tanto post fortius appetat, quanto prius infirma fugiebat. Inclinatione namque sua erigitur, attractione tenditur, compassione roboratur; cumque in amorem proximi se dilatat, quasi ex meditatione colligit quanta fortitudine in auctorem surgat. Charitas namque, quae nos ad vim compassionis humiliat, altius in culmine contemplationis levat; et multiplicata jam majoribus desideriis aestuat, jam pervenire ad vitam spiritus, etiam per cruciatus corporis, anhelat. Quod ergo prius tangere nolebat, hoc post prae angustia comedit, qui desideria sua vix capiens, et ipsas quas dudum timuerat, jam prae amore coelestis patriae poenas amat. Si enim mens in Deum forti intentione dirigitur, quidquid sibi in hac vita amarum fit, dulce aestimat, omne quod affligit requiem putat; transire et per mortem appetit, ut obtinere vitam plenius possit; funditus in infimis exstingui desiderat, quo verius summa conscendat. Sed haec de cujuslibet justi animo, haec de beati Job mente mentior, nisi ipse subjungat:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 8-10. — Quis det ut veniat petitio mea, et quod exspecto tribuat mihi Dominus; et qui coepit, ipse me conterat; solvat manum suam, et succidat me, et haec mihi sit consolatio, ut affligens me dolore, non parcat? 19. Exemplum Job suum percussorem benedicentis. Conterit nos Deus, conterit et diabolus, diversis exitibus. — Sed fortasse haec per contumaciam expetit, fortasse in eo quod se perfecte exstingui desiderat, injustitiam ferientis accusat. Absit hoc. Nam qua mente id expetat, verbis sequentibus demonstrat, dicens: Nec contradicam sermonibus sancti. Nequaquam ergo de injustitia percutientis murmurat, qui percussorem suum et inter verbera sanctum vocat. Sciendum vero est quia aliquando nos adversarius, aliquando autem conterit Deus. Ex contritione autem adversarii a virtute deficimus; per contritionem vero Domini fracti, a vitiis in virtute roboramur. Hanc contritionem Propheta prospexerat, cum dicebat: Reges eos in virga ferrea, et tanquam vas figuli conteres eos (Psal. II, 9). In virga nos ferrea Dominus regit et conterit, quia 220 dispensationis suae forti rectitudine cum nos interius reficit, exterius affligit. Nam quo virtutem carnis humiliat, intentionem spiritus exaltat. Unde et haec eadem contritio figuli vasi comparatur, sicut et per Paulum dicitur: Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus (II Cor. IV, 7). Qui simul contritionem et regimen exprimens, ait: Licet is qui foris est noster homo corrumpitur, tamen is qui intus est renovatur de die in diem (Ibid., 16). Sanctus igitur vir, qui appropinquare Deo etiam per flagella desiderat, per spiritum humilitatis dicat:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 9. — Qui coepit, ipse me conterat. 20. Efferentem se de virtutibus Deus misericorditer corripit. — Plerumque enim vitiorum contritionem in nobis agere Dominus inchoat; sed cum mens ex ipso exordio provectus extollitur, cumque se jam quasi de virtutibus erigit, saevienti contra se adversario aditum pandit, qui cordis intima penetrans, omne quod in ea de

studio bonae inchoationis invenerit, confringit; tantoque se vehementius in ejus confractione exhibet, quanto et gravius, quia vel ad modicum fuerat provectus, dolet. Unde et teste Evangelio, voce Veritatis, ad neglectam domum conscientiae spiritus immundus qui solus exiit cum spiritibus septem redit (Matth. XII, 45). Ne ergo post divinae correptionis exordia antiquus hostis subripiat, atque ad virtutum confractionem trahat, sanctus vir congrue exorat, dicens: Qui coepit, ipse me conterat. Ac si aperte didicat: Hoc, quod in me exorsus est perficere feriendo non desinat, ne desertum me adversario ad contritionem tradat. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XVIII.

IBID. — Solvat manum suam, et succidat me. 21. Quam timendum ne ad ferienda nostra vitia ligatam manum teneat. — Saepe namque fiducia longae prosperitatis inflati, in quodam statu elationis erigimur. Cumque nos extolli conditor conspicit, sed amorem suum erga nos per verbera non exercet, quasi ad ferienda nostra vitia manum ligatam tenet. An non affectus sui manum ligaverat cum peccanti populo dicebat: Jam non irascar tibi (Isai. LIV, 9); et: Zelus meus recessit a te (Ezech. XVI, 42)? Solvat ergo manum dicitur, exerceat affectum. Recte autem subjungitur: Et succidat me. Cum enim securos nos ac de virtutum affluentia elatos, repentinus vel flagelli dolor, vel infirmitatis tentatio percutit, protinus a status sui vertice mentis nostrae elatio succisa cadit, ut de semetipsa nihil audeat, sed, infirmitatis suae ictu prostrata, manum levantis quaerat. Hinc est quod sancti viri cum de occulta erga se dispositione suspecti sunt, plus prospera ipsa pertimescunt, tentari appetunt, flagellari concupiscunt, quatenus incautam mentem metus et dolor erudiat, ne in hac peregrinationis via, hoste ex insidiis erumpente, sua eamdem deterius securitas sternat. Hinc Psalmista ait: Proba me, Domine, et tenta me (Psal. XXV, 2). Hinc iterum dicit: Ego ad flagella paratus sum (Psal. XXXVII, 18). Quia enim sancti mentis suae

correptionis vulnus sine putredine non esse considerant, libenter se sub manu medici ad sectiones parant, ut, aperto vulnere, virus peccati exeat, quod sana cute intus occidebat. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 10. — Et haec mihi sit consolatio, ut affligens me dolore, non parcat. 22. Sancti timent prospera, cupiunt flagella. — Electi qui cum perpetrasse se illicita noverunt, sed perscrutantes inveniunt quia nulla pro illicitis adversa perpessi sunt, vi immensae formidinis 221 tabescunt, pavore aestuant, sinistris agitati suspicionibus laborant, ne in aeternum se gratia deseruerit, quos in praesenti vita mali sui retributio nulla custodit; timent ne ultio quae suspenditur gravior in fine servetur; feriri paterna correptione desiderant, et dolorem vulneris medicamina salutis putant. Recte ergo nunc dicitur: Haec mihi sit consolatio, ut affligens me dolore non parcat. Ac si aperte diceretur: Qui ideo hic quibusdam parcit, ut eos in perpetuum feriat; ideo hic me feriat, ut non parcendo, in perpetuum parcat. Ex afflictione enim me consolor, quia corruptionis humanae putredinem sciens, ad spem salutis ex vulnere certus reddor. Quod quia non tumenti sed humili mente edidit, subjungendo, ut praediximus, patefacit, dicens:

CAPUT XX.

IBID. — Nec contradicam sermonibus sancti. 23. Deus saepe tacitus loquitur operibus. — Plerumque ad nos verba Dei non sunt dictorum sonitus, sed effectus operationum. In eo enim nobis loquitur quod erga nos tacitus operatur. Beatus igitur Job sermonibus Dei contradiceret, si de ejus percussionibus murmuraret. Sed quid de percussore suo sentiat, indicat, qui (sicut jam diximus) quem ferientem tolerat, sanctum vocat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 11. — Quae est enim fortitudo mea, ut sustineam; aut quis finis meus, ut patienter agam? 24. Quae justorum fortitudo, quae reproborum. — Sciendum quod alia justorum, atque alia est fortitudo reproborum. Justorum quippe fortitudo est carnem vincere, propriis voluntatibus contraire, delectationem vitae praesentis exstinguere, hujus mundi aspera pro aeternis praemiis amare, prosperitatis blandimenta contemnere, adversitatis metum in corde superare. Reproborum vero fortitudo est transitoria sine cessatione diligere, contra flagella conditoris insensibiliter perdurare, ab amore rerum temporalium nec ex adversitate quiescere, ad inanem gloriam etiam cum vitae detrimento pervenire, malitiae augmenta exquirere, bonorum vitam non solum verbis ac moribus, sed etiam gladiis impugnare, in semetipsis spem ponere, iniquitatem quotidie sine ullo desiderii defectu perpetrare. Hinc est quod per Psalmistam dicitur ad electos: Viriliter agite, et confortetur cor vestrum, omnes qui speratis in Domino (Psal. XXX, 25). Hinc per prophetam reprobis dicitur: Vae qui potentes estis ad potandum vinum, et viri fortes ad miscendam ebrietatem (Isai. V, 22). Hinc per Salomonem dicitur quod sancti quique sine ulla debilitate desiderii internam requiem contemplantur: En lectulum Salomonis, sexaginta fortes ambiunt, ex fortissimis Israel (Cant. III, 7). Hinc Psalmista contra reprobos in passione positi voce Redemptoris insinuans, ait: Ecce occupaverunt animam meam, irruerunt in me fortes (Psal. LVIII, 4). Quam bene utramque fortitudinem Isaias complexus est, dicens: Qui confidunt in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem (Isai. XL, 31). Quia enim nequaquam sument, sed mutabunt dixit, profecto patenter innotuit aliam esse quae ponitur, et aliam quae inchoatur. 25. In quibus fortis est reprobus, segnis est justus. — An non etiam reprobi fortes sunt, qui ad praesentis vitae concupiscentiam tot laboribus currunt, periculis se audenter objiciunt, pro lucris contumelias libenter ferunt, ab appetitus sui libidine 222 nulla victi contrarietate resiliunt, percussionibus durescunt, et mala mundi tolerant pro mundo,

ejusque, ut ita dixerim, gaudia quaerentes perdunt, nec tamen haec perdendo fatigantur? Unde bene ex humani generis voce per Jeremiam dicitur: Inebriavit me absinthio (Thren. III, 15). Ebrius quippe quod patitur nescit. Absinthio ergo est ebrius, qui, prae amore praesentis saeculi a sensu rationis alienus, dum quidquid pro mundo sustinet, leve deputat, laboris amaritudinem quam tolerat ignorat, quia nimirum delectabiliter ad cuncta ducitur, in quibus poenaliter fatigatur. At contra vir justus ad mundi pericula pro mundo toleranda esse debilis studet, finem suum conspicit, vita praesens quam sit transitoria attendit, et pro ea exterius labores perpeti renuit, cujus intrinsecus delectationem vicit. Beatus igitur Job, praesentis vitae adversitatibus pressus, dicat ex sua, dicat ex omnium voce justorum: Quae est enim fortitudo mea, ut sustineam? aut quis finis meus, ut patienter agam? Ac si aperte insinuet, dicens: Mala mundi pro mundo tolerare nequeo, quia jam in ejus desiderio fortis non sum. Dum enim praesentis vitae finem conspicio, cur pondus ejus patior, cujus appetitum calco? Et quia injusti quique, ut diximus, tanto fortius labores illius perferunt, quanto avidius ejus delectatione pascuntur, recte mox eamdem reproborum fortitudinem subdit, dicens:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 12. — Nec fortitudo lapidum fortitudo mea, nec caro mea aenea est.

26. Ad percussionem Dei alii sunt lapides sine sono, alii aes sonans sine sensu. Job non per insaniam, sed per salutis statum fortis. — Quid hoc loco aere ac lapidibus, nisi insensibilium hominum corda signantur, qui saepe et supernos ictus accipiunt, et tamen nulla disciplinae percussione mollescunt? Quo contra electis per prophetam, pollicente Domino, dicitur: Tollam a vobis cor lapideum, et dabo vobis cor carneum (Ezech. XI, 19). Paulus quoque ait: Si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum, charitatem autem non habeam, factus sum velut aes sonans, aut cymbalum tinniens (I Cor. XIII,

1). Scimus autem quoniam percussi lapides clarum sonum reddere nequeunt; aes vero cum percutitur, canorus valde sonitus ex ejus percussione formatur. Quod quia, ut lapides, vita caret, sensum in sonitu non habet. Et sunt nonnulli qui, lapidibus similes, ita ad pietatis praecepta duruerunt, ut cum eos percussio supernae animadversionis examinat, nequaquam sonitum humilis confessionis reddant. Quidam vero a metallo aeris in nullo discrepantes, cum flagella supernae percussionis accipiunt, piae confessionis sonitum emittunt; sed quia humilitatis voces ex corde non proferunt, ad statum salutis reducti, nesciunt quod promiserunt. Illi ergo, more lapidum percussi, nec voces habent; isti autem in nullo aeris imitationem fugiunt, qui, in percussione positi, bona quae non sentiunt loquuntur. Illi venerationi ferientis et verba denegant; isti, pollicentes quod non impleant, sine vita clamant. Vir igitur sanctus, reproborum duritiam inter verbera fugiens, dicat: Nec fortitudo lapidum fortitudo mea, nec caro mea aenea est. Ac si aperte fateatur, dicens: Reproborum similitudinem sub disciplinae verbere fugio, quia nec more 223 lapidum ita obdurui, ut sub percussionis stimulo a ministerio confessionis obmutescam; nec rursus quasi aes vocem confessionis resono, et sensum vocis ignoro. Sed quia ad percussionem reprobi debiliter fortes sunt, electi autem valenter infirmi, beatus Job dum fortem se per insaniam non esse asserit, fortem se per statum salutis innotescit.. VERS. 14. — Qui tollit ab amico suo misericordiam, timorem Domini derelinquit. 28. Amor Dei et amor proximi quid sibi invicem praestent. — Quis hoc loco amici nomine nisi quilibet proximus designatur, qui eo nobis fideliter jungitur, quo, percepto nunc a nobis bono opere, ad obtinendam post aeternam patriam veraciter auxiliatur? Quia autem duo sunt praecepta charitatis, Dei videlicet amor et proximi, per amorem Dei amor proximi gignitur, et per amorem proximi amor Dei nutritur. Nam qui amare Deum negligit, profecto diligere proximum nescit; et tunc plenius in Dei dilectione proficimus, si in ejusdem

dilectionis gremio prius proximi charitate lactamur. Quia enim amor Dei amorem proximi generat, dicturus per legem Dominus, Diliges proximum tuum (Deut. VI, 5; X, 12), praemisit, dicens: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum (Matth. XXII, 37, 39): ut scilicet in terra pectoris nostri prius amoris sui radicem figeret, quatenus per ramos postmodum dilectio fraterna germinaret. Et rursum quia amor Dei ex proximi amore coalescit, testatur Joannes, dicens: Qui non diligit fratrem suum quem videt, Deum quem non videt, quomodo potest diligere (I Joan. IV, 20)? Quae tamen divina dilectio per timorem nascitur, sed in affectum crescendo permutatur. 29. Proximi dilectio in ejus aerumnis probatur. Amicum in adversis despicientis quanta iniquitas. — Saepe vero omnipotens Deus ut quantum quisque a charitate ejus ac proximi longe sit, vel in ea quantum profecerit innotescat, miro ordine cuncta dispensans, alios flagellis deprimit, alios successibus fulcit. Et cum quosdam temporaliter deserit, in quorumdam cordibus quod malum latet ostendit. Nam plerumque ipsi nos miseros insequuntur, qui felices sine comparatione coluerunt. Cum enim quis positus in prosperitate diligitur, incertum valde est utrum prosperitas an persona diligatur. Amissio autem felicitatis interrogat vim dilectionis. Unde bene quidam sapiens dicit: Non agnoscitur in bonis amicus, et non 224 absconditur in malis inimicus (Eccli. XII, 8). Nec prosperitas quippe amicum indicat, nec adversitas inimicum celat, quia et ille saepe prosperitatis nostrae reverentia tegitur, et iste ex confidentia adversitatis aperitur. Vir igitur justus in flagellis positus dicat: Qui tollit ab amico suo misericordiam, timorem Domini derelinquit, quia nimirum qui ex adversitate proximum despicit, aperte convincitur quod hunc in prosperis non amavit. Et cum omnipotens Deus ideo quosdam percutiat, ut et percussos erudiat, et non percussis occasionem boni operis praebeat, quisquis percussum despicit, occasionem a se virtutis repellit; et tanto se nequius contra auctorem erigit, quanto hunc nec pium in salute propria, nec justum in alieno vulnere agnoscit. Intuendum vero est quod

beatus Job sic sua loquitur, ut totius quoque electi populi per eum vita signetur. Quia enim ejusdem populi membrum est, cum quae ipse patitur narrat, ea etiam quae sustinet ille denuntiat, dicens:

CAPUT XXV.

VERS. 15. — Fratres mei praeterierunt me sicut torrens, qui raptim transit in convallibus. 30. Reprobi cur a justis dicantur et fratres, et praetereuntes. Torrenti recte comparantur. Vita brevi et fugitiva transeunt ad aeterna tormenta. — Reproborum mens quia sola praesentia diligit plerumque nunc tanto aliena existit a verbere, quanto post extranea remanet ab haereditate; et superba justos despicit, quos paterna misericorditer severitas affligit. Saepe vero reprobi eamdem fidem qua vivimus retinent, eadem fidei sacramenta percipiunt, ejusdem religionis unitate continentur; sed tamen compassionis viscera nesciunt, charitatis vim, qua in Deum flagramus et proximum, non agnoscunt. Recte ergo et fratres et praetereuntes vocantur, quia ex uno matris nobiscum gremio per fidem prodeunt, sed in uno charitatis studio erga Deum et proximum non figuntur. Unde apte etiam torrenti qui raptim transit in convallibus comparantur. Torrens namque ex montanis ad ima defluit, et collectus hiemalibus pluviis, aestivis solibus arescit. Qui enim terrena diligentes spem supernae patriae deserunt, quasi ex montibus valles petunt; quos tamen hiems praesentis vitae multiplicat, sed aestas venturi judicii exsiccat, quia cum sol supernae districtionis incanduerit, reproborum laetitiam in ariditatem vertit. Bene ergo dicitur: Raptim transit in convallibus. Torrentem quippe ad convalles raptim transire est pravorum mentes ad ima desideria sine ullo obstaculo ac difficultate descendere. Omnis enim ascensus in labore est, descensus in voluptate, quia per adnisum gressus ad superiora tenditur, per remissionem vero ad inferiora declinatur. Ad montis enim verticem saxum subvehere magni laboris est, idemque a summis ad ima dimittere labor non est. Sine mora

videlicet proruit, qui magnis conatibus ad summa pervenit. Longo studio seges seritur, sole atque imbre diutino nutritur, sed tamen una et subita scintilla consumitur. Paulisper aedificia ad alta proficiunt, sed repentinis casibus terram petunt. Robusta arbor in aera per tarda incrementa se erigit; sed quidquid diu ad alta protulit, semel et simul cadit. Quia igitur ascensus in labore est, descensus in voluptate, recte nunc dicitur: Fratres mei praeterierunt me sicut torrens, qui raptim transit in convallibus. Quod tamen sentiri et aliter potest. 225 31. Si enim convalles ima poenarum loca intelligimus, injusti quique sicut torrens raptim ad convalles transeunt, quia in hac vita, quam totis desideriis appetunt, diu stare nequaquam possunt. Nam quot dies aetatis accipiunt, quasi tot quotidie gressibus ad finem tendunt. Augeri sibi optant tempora, sed quia concessa subsistere nequeunt, quot augmenta vivendi percipiunt, de vivendi spatio totidem perdunt. Momenta ergo temporum quo sequuntur fugiunt, quo accipiunt amittunt. Raptim itaque ad convalles transeunt, qui in longum quidem voluptatum desideria pertrahunt, sed ad inferni claustra repente deducuntur. Quia enim hoc etiam tempus, quod qualibet longaevitate extensum est, si fine clauditur, longum non est; ex fine miseri colligunt breve fuisse quod amittendo tenuerunt. Unde bene et per Salomonem dicitur: Si multis annis vixerit homo, et in his omnibus laetatus fuerit, meminisse debet tenebrosi temporis, et dierum multorum, qui cum venerint, vanitatis arguentur praeterita (Eccle. XI, 8). Stulta etenim mens cum malum repente invenerit, quod nequaquam praeterit, aeternitatem ejus tolerando intelligit, quia quod praeterire potuit vanum fuit. Sciendum vero est quod plerique agere recta desiderant, sed sunt nonnulla quae infirmis eorum mentibus ex praesenti vita contradicant; cumque adversa in infimis perpeti metuunt, in superni judicii rectitudinem offendunt. Unde recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 16. — Qui timent pruinam, irruit super eos nix. 32. Qui temporalium damnorum metu justitiam deserunt, incident in aeterna mala. — Pruina quippe inferius gelascit, nix autem de superioribus ruit. Et saepe nonnulli dum temporalia adversa pertimescunt districtioni se aeternae animadversionis objiciunt. De quibus bene per Psalmistam dicitur: Illic trepidaverunt timore, ubi non erat timor (Psal. XIII, 5). Iste namque veritatem jam libere defendere appetit, sed tamen in ipso suo appetitu trepidus indignationem potestatis humanae pertimescit; cumque in terra hominem contra veritatem pavet, ejusdem veritatis iram coelitus sustinet. Ille, peccatorum suorum conscius, ea quae possidet indigentibus jam largiri desiderat, sed tamen ne datis rebus egeat ipse formidat. Cumque carnis subsidia reservando trepidus praeparat, ab alimentis misericordiae animam necat; et cum pati in terra inopiam metuit, aeternam sibi abundantiam supernae refectionis abscindit. Recte ergo dicitur: Qui timent pruinam, irruit super eos nix, quia qui conculcanda ab infimis metuunt, a summis metuenda patiuntur; et cum transire nolunt quod calcare poterant, judicium de supernis excipiunt, quod tolerare nequaquam possunt. Sed haec agentes, mundi gloriam temporaliter obtinent. Quid autem tempore vocationis suae facturi sunt cum cuncta simul pavidi deserunt quae hic cum gravi timore servaverunt? Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 17. — Tempore quo fuerint dissipati peribunt. 33. Quantus eorum pavor, judicio appropinquante. — Quos enim praesentis vitae sollicitudo ordinat, amissio dissipat; et tunc etiam exterius pereunt, qui intus dudum aeterna negligendo perierunt. 226 De quibus recte additur: Et ut incaluerint, solventur de loco suo. Iniquus enim quisque cum incaluerit, de loco suo solvitur, quia judicio intimae districtionis appropinquans, cum jam per cognitionem poenae fervere coeperit, ab ea, cui dudum inhaeserat, carnis

suae delectatione separatur. Hinc est enim quod per prophetam contra reprobos dicitur: Et tantummodo sola vexatio intellectum dabit auditui (Isai. XXVIII, 19), quia videlicet aeterna non intelligunt, nisi cum pro temporalibus jam sine emendatione puniuntur. Tunc mens aestuat, et infructuosae poenitentiae se ignibus inflammat, duci ad supplicium timet, praesentem vitam ex desiderio retinet; sed de loco suo solvitur, quia oblectamenta carnis deserens, ejus duritia per supplicium liquatur. Sed quia iniqui omnes quid abstractionis suae tempore patientur audivimus, adhuc aliqua quibus in libertatis suae spatio implicantur audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 18. — Involutae sunt semitae gressuum eorum. 34. Nihil prodest recta proponere, nisi propositi simus tenaces. — Omne quod involvitur in semetipsum replicatur. Et sunt nonnulli qui seducentibus vitiis obviare quasi tota intentione deliberant, sed irruente tentationis articulo, in deliberationis proposito non perdurant. Alius namque, pravo ausu superbiae inflatus, cum magna esse praemia humilitatis considerat, adversum semetipsum se erigit, et quasi tumorem turgidi fastus deponit, exhibere se quibuslibet contumeliis humilem promittit; sed cum repente hunc unius injuria verbi pulsaverit, ad consuetam protinus elationem redit, sicque ad tumorem ducitur, ut nequaquam quia humilitatis bonum concupierat recordetur. Alius avaritia aestuans, augendis facultatibus anhelat. Is cum praeterire omnia velociter conspicit, vagantem per concupiscentias mentem figit, decernit jam nihil appetere, et adepta tantummodo sub magni moderaminis freno possidere; sed cum repente fuerint oculis oblata quae placeant, in ambitione protinus mens anhelat, semetipsam non capit, adipiscendi haec occasionem quaerit, et oblita continentiae quam secum pepigerat, cogitationum se stimulis per desideria acquisitionis inquietat. Alius luxuriae tabe polluitur, et longa jam consuetudine captus tenetur; quanta autem castitatis sit munditia conspicit,

et a carne vinci turpe deprehendit. Restringere ergo voluptatum fluxa deliberat, et resultare consuetudini quasi totis se viribus parat. Sed vel objecta oculis specie, vel ad memoriam reducta, cum subita tentatione concutitur, protinus a pristina praeparatione dissipatur; et qui contra hanc clypeum deliberationis erexerat, delectationis iaculo confossus jacet; sicque eum luxuria enervem superat, ac si nulla contra eam intentionis arma praeparasset. Alius irae flammis accenditur, et usque ad inferendas proximis contumelias effrenatur. Cum vero nulla furoris animum occasio pulsat, quanta sit mansuetudinis virtus, quanta patientiae altitudo considerat, seque etiam contra contumelias patientem parat; sed cum parva quamlibet commotionis occasio nascitur, 227 repente ad voces et contumelias medullitus inflammatur; ita ut non solum ad memoriam patientia promissa non redeat, sed et semetipsam mens et ea quae loquitur convicia non agnoscat. Cumque furori plene satisfecerit, quasi post exercitium in tranquillitatem redit; et tunc se ad silentii claustra recolligit, cum linguae non patientia, sed procacitatis suae satisfactio frenum posuit. Vix igitur sero post convicia illata se cohibet, quia et a cursu saepe spumantes equos non praesidentis dextera, sed campi terminus coercet. Bene ergo de reprobis dicitur: Involutae sunt semitae gressuum eorum, quia recta quidem deliberando appetunt, sed ad consueta semper mala replicantur; et quasi extra se tensi, ad semetipsos per circuitum redeunt, qui bona quidem cupiunt, sed a malis nunquam recedunt. Esse quippe humiles, sed tamen sine despectu; esse contenti propriis, sed sine necessitate; esse casti, sed sine maceratione corporis; esse patientes, sed sine contumeliis volunt; cumque adipisci virtutes quaerunt, sed labores virtutum fugiunt, quid aliud quam et belli certamina in campo nesciunt, et triumphare in urbibus de bello concupiscunt. Quomodo autem culpa prodeat, vel quibuslibet ex occasionibus erumpat, reproborum tamen semitae semper involutae sunt, ut pravis concupiscentiis dediti, aut bona nulla appetant, aut appetentes

infirmo desiderio, ad haec nequaquam mentis liberos gressus tendant. Recta enim aut non incipiunt, aut, in ipso fracti itinere, ad haec minime pertingunt. Unde fit plerumque ut ad morem suum lassati redeant, seseque ab intentione animi in carnis voluptatibus sternant, sola quae transeunt cogitent, nulla quae 230 secum permaneant curent. Unde apte subditur:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. — Ambulabunt in vacuum, et peribunt. 38. Transitoriis bonis inhiantium vacuus labor. — In vacuum quippe ambulant qui nil secum de fructu sui laboris portant. Alius namque adipiscendis honoribus exsudat, alius multiplicandis facultatibus aestuat, alius promerendis laudibus anhelat; sed quia cuncta haec hic quisque moriens deserit, labores in vacuum perdidit, qui secum ante judicem nihil tulit. Quo contra bene per legem dicitur: Non apparebis in conspectu Domini vacuus (Exod. XXIII, 15). Qui enim promerendae vitae mercedem bene agendo non providit, in conspectu Domini vacuus apparet. Hinc de justis per Psalmistam dicitur: Venientes autem venient in exsultatione, portantes manipulos suos (Psal. CXXV, 6). Ad examen quippe judicii portantes manipulos veniunt qui in semetipsis recta opera quibus vitam mereantur ostendunt. Hinc de unoquoque electo Psalmista iterum dicit: Qui non accepit in vanum animam suam (Psal. XXIII, 4). In vanum namque animam suam accipit, qui, sola praesentia cogitans, quae se sequantur in perpetuum non attendit. In vanum animam suam accipit qui, ejus vitam negligens, ei curam carnis anteponit. Sed animam suam justi in vanum non accipiunt, quia intentione continua ad ejus utilitatem referunt quidquid corporaliter operantur, quatenus et transeunte opere, operis causa non transeat, quae vitae praemia post vitam parat. Sed haec curare reprobi negligunt, quia profecto, ambulantes in vacuum, vitam sequentes fugiunt, invenientes perdunt. Melius vero a pravorum imitatione

compescimur, si eorum damna ex fine pensamus. Unde bene etiam cum exhortatione subjungitur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 19. Considerate semitas Themam, itinera Saba, et exspectate paulisper. 39. Aliqui honestatis nomine in saeculi retibus illaqueantur. In his sunt qui curam rei familiaris gerunt, aut qui propinquos inordinate diligunt. — Theman quippe Auster, Saba autem rete interpretatur. Quid hic per Austrum, qui afflata teporibus membra dissolvit, nisi fluxa vivendi remissio, quid per rete nisi actionis obligatio demonstratur? Qui enim dissoluta mente ea quae aeterna sunt appetunt, ne gressu libero ad Deum prodeant, ipsi se suis inordinatis conatibus ligant; cumque se fluxis conversationis suae actibus implicant, quasi remansuros in retis maculis pedes ponunt. Ut enim paulo superius quosdam ad devictas jam culpas retrahi per aperta quaedam et non devicta vitia diximus, ita nonnulli ad ea quae reliquerant redeunt per quaedam quae vel honestatis nomine, vel laudis honore, pallientur. Nam sunt plerique qui jam aliena non appetunt, atque ab hujus mundi jurgiis inchoato quietis amore dividuntur, erudiri sacris eloquiis sitiunt, vacare supernis contemplationibus concupiscunt; nec tamen perfecta animi libertate curam rerum familiarium deserunt, cui saepe dum licite serviunt, etiam illicitis hujus mundi jurgiis implicantur; cumque terrenas res studiose tueri desiderant, cordis requiem deserunt, quam quaerebant; et cum substantia fugiens continua provisione protegitur, conceptus in animo divinae 231 scientiae sermo dissipatur, quia, juxta Veritatis sententiam (Matth. XXIII, Marc. IV, Luc. VIII), obortum semen spinae opprimunt, cum verbum Dei a memoria importunae terrenarum rerum sollicitudines expellunt. Dissolutis itaque gressibus in rete ambulant, qui dum mundum perfecte non deserunt, semetipsos gradiendo obligant, ne gradiantur. 40. Et sunt plerique qui non solum aliena non appetunt, verum

etiam cuncta quae possederant in mundo derelinquunt, semetipsos despiciunt, nullam praesentis vitae gloriam requirunt, ab hujus mundi se actionibus separant, et pene quidquid prosperitatis arriserit calcant. Sed tamen adhuc vinculo carnalis cognationis obligati, dum amori propinquitatis indiscrete deserviunt, ad ea saepe per effectum cognationum redeunt, quae jam et cum proprio despectu subegerunt. Cumque plus quam necesse est carnis propinquos diligunt, retracti exterius, a cordis parente dividuntur. Nam saepe quosdam videmus, quantum ad proprium studium spectat, jam praesentis vitae desideria non habere, mundum et opere et professione reliquisse; sed tamen pro inordinatis affectibus propinquorum praetoria irrumpere, terrenarum rerum jurgiis vacare, libertatem intimae quietis relinquere, et mundi studia in se jam dudum destructa reparare. Quo itaque isti nisi in rete ambulant, quos a praesenti saeculo inchoata jam vitae perfectio solverat, sed inordinatus amor terrenae cognationis ligat? 41. Propinquos Dei causa aebemus despicere, odisse, nescire. — Qui enim districto studio, et non dissolutis gressibus aeternae sponsionis praemium sequuntur, sicut semetipsos pro divino amore despiciunt, sic cuncta, quibus se sentiunt praepediri, postponunt; et cum pro Deo necesse est ut quibus valent cunctis inserviant, pro Deo privata obsequia etiam propinquis negant. Hinc est enim quod quidam cum diceret: Permitte mihi prius ire et sepelire patrem meum (Matth. VIII, 21), Veritatis ore protinus audivit: Sine ut mortui sepeliant mortuos suos, tu autem vade, annuntia regnum Dei (Ibid., 22). Qua in re notandum est quia electus discipulus dum a parentis sepultura compescitur, hoc devotum quemque exhibere patri mortuo ex affectu carnali propter Dominum non licet, quod propter Dominum et exteris debet. Hinc rursum Veritas dicit: Si quis venit ad me, et non odit patrem suum, et matrem, et uxorem, et filios, et fratres, et sorores, adhuc autem et animam suam, non potest meus esse discipulus (Luc. XIV, 26). Quo in loco videlicet, dum propinquorum odio animae quoque nostrae odium

subinfertur, patenter ostenditur quia sic propinquos, sicut nosmetipsos odio habere praecipimur, ut hos ad aeterna rapientes, eorumque carnalem gratiam cum praepedit postponentes, discamus temperata eos discretionis arte et convenienter diligere, et salubriter odio habere, quatenus sic sciat per amorem odium surgere, ut valeamus eos verius per odium amare. Hinc rursum per Moysen dicitur: Qui dixerit patri suo et matri suae, Nescio vos, et fratribus suis, Ignoro illos, et nescierunt filios suos, hi custodierunt eloquium tuum et pactum tuum, et servaverunt judicia tua (Deut. XXXIII, 9). Ille enim scire Deum familiarius appetit, qui prae amore pietatis nescire desiderat quos carnaliter scivit. 232 Gravi etenim damno scientia divina minuitur, si cum carnis notitia partitur. Extra cognatos ergo quisque ac proximos debet fieri, si vult parenti omnium verius jungi, quatenus eosdem quos propter Deum utiliter negligit tanto solidius diligat, quanto in eis affectum solubilem copulae carnalis ignorat. 42. Propinquis plus caeteris prodesse debemus, modo hinc noster ad Deum progressus nil retardetur. Qui debemus erga eos benigne affici, nec tamen ab itinere quod ad Deum ducit declinare. — Debemus quidem et temporaliter his quibus vicinius jungimur plus caeteris prodesse, quia et flamma admotis rebus incendium porrigit, sed hoc ipsum prius ubi nascitur incendit. Debemus copulam terrenae cognationis agnoscere; sed tamen hanc, cum cursum mentis praepedit, ignorare, quatenus fidelis animus in divino studio accensus, nec ea quae sibi sunt in infimis conjuncta despiciat, et, haec apud semetipsum recte ordinans, summorum amore transcendat. Solerti ergo cura providendum est ne carnis gratia subrepat, atque a recto itinere cordis gressum deflectat, ne vim superni amoris impediat, et surgentem mentem superimposito pondere deorsum premat. Sic etenim quisque propinquorum debet necessitatibus compati, ut tamen per compassionem non sinat vim suae intentionis impediri, ut affectus quidem mentis viscera repleat, sed tamen a spiritali proposito non avertat. Neque enim sancti viri ad impendenda necessaria

propinquos carnis non diligunt, sed amore spiritalium ipsam in se dilectionem vincunt, quatenus sic eam discretionis moderamine temperent, ut per hanc in parvo saltem ac minimo a recto itinere non declinent. Quos bene nobis per significationem vaccae innuunt, quae, sub arca Domini ad montana tendentes, affectu simul et rigido sensu gradiuntur, sicut scriptum est: Tollentes duas vaccas quae lactabant vitulos, junxerunt ad plaustrum, vitulosque earum clauserunt domi, et posuerunt arcam Dei super plaustrum (I Reg. VI, 10). Et paulo post: Ibant in directum vaccae per viam quae ducit Bethsames, et itinere uno gradiebantur, pergentes et mugientes, et non declinantes neque ad dexteram, neque ad sinistram (Ibid., 12). Ecce enim, reclusis domi vitulis, vaccae quae sub arca Domini ad plaustrum religantur, gemunt et pergunt, dant ab intimis mugitus, et tamen ab itinere non demutant gressus. Amorem quidem per compassionem sentiunt, sed colla posterius non deflectunt. Sic sic necesse est ut incedere debeant qui, sacrae legis jugo suppositi, jam per internam scientiam Domini arcam portant, quatenus per hoc quod propinquorum necessitatibus condolent a coepto rectitudinis itinere non declinent. Bethsames quippe domus solis dicitur. Arca ergo Domini superposita Bethsames pergere est cum superna scientia ad aeternae lucis habitaculum propinquare. Sed tunc vere Bethsames tendimus, cum viam rectitudinis gradientes, ad vicina erroris latera nec pro affectu pignorum declinamus. Quorum nimirum gratia mentem nostram tenere debet, sed reflectere non debet, ne haec eadem mens aut si affectu non tangitur, dura sit; aut plus tacta, si inflectitur, remissa. — SENSUS MORALIS. 52. Pauperis, oppressi, ac stulti propter Deum qualis sit animus. — Beatus Job rerum damna pertulerat, malignorum spirituum percussionibus traditus dolores vulnerum sentiebat; sed, sapientem Dei stultitiam diligens, stultam mundi sapientiam mentis despectu calcaverat. Igitur contra mundi divites 236 pauper, contra potentes oppressus, contra sapientes stultus dicitur. Tria respondit, quia nec pauper eorum substantiam,

nec oppressus adjutorium contra robustos, nec stultus doctrinam sapientiae carnalis quaerit. Sanctus etenim vir, quia mente super semetipsum rapitur, et pauper inopia non angustatur, et oppressus nihil patitur, et voluntarie stultus carnalem sapientiam non miratur. Hinc est enim quod oppressus alius pauper dicit: Aporiamur, sed non destituimur; persecutionem patimur, sed non derelinquimur; dejicimur, sed non perimus (II Cor. IV, 8). Hinc est quod sapientiam sanctae stultitiae insinuans, ait: Quae stulta sunt mundi, elegit Deus, ut confundat sapientes (I Cor. I, 27). Et: Si quis videtur inter vos sapiens in hoc saeculo, stultus fiat, ut sit sapiens (I Cor, III, 18). Hinc et gloriam oppressionis, et divitias desideratae paupertatis aperiens, dicit: Quasi morientes, et ecce vivimus; ut castigati, et non mortificati; quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes; sicut egentes, multos autem locupletantes; tanquam nihil habentes, et omnia possidentes (II Cor. I, 19). 53. Sanctorum exterius oppressorum sublimitas. Et in arguendis potestatibus libertas. — Libet inter haec oculos mentis attollere, et electos Dei exterius oppressos quantae intrinsecus arci praesideant videre. Cuncta quippe quae foris eminent, occultis eorum obtutibus per despectum jacent. Nam, super se interius rapti, in alto animum figunt; et quaeque in hac vita patiuntur, quasi longe infra labentia atque a se aliena conspiciunt; atque, ut ita dixerim, dum mente extra carnem fieri decertant, pene ipsa quae tolerant ignorant. In horum profecto oculis quidquid temporaliter eminet altum non est. Nam, velut in magni vertice montis siti, praesentis vitae plana despiciunt, seque ipsos per spiritalem celsitudinem transcendentes, subjecta sibimet intus vident, quaeque per carnalem gloriam foris tument. Unde et nullis contra veritatem potestatibus parcunt; sed quos attolli per elationem conspiciunt, per spiritus auctoritatem premunt. Hinc est enim quod, a deserto Moyses veniens, Aegypti regem ex auctoritate aggreditur, dicens: Haec dicit Dominus Deus Hebraeorum: Usquequo non vis subjici mihi? Dimitte populum meum, ut sacrificet mihi (Exod. X, 3). Cui dum plagis pressus

Pharao diceret: Ite, sacrificate Deo vestro in terra ista (Exod. VIII, 25), aucta protinus auctoritate respondit: Non potest ita fieri; abominationes Aegyptiorum immolabimus Domino Deo nostro (Ibid., 26)? Hinc est quod peccantem regem Nathan aggreditur, cui prius similitudinem perpetratae praevar cationis objiciens, eumque reum per proprii judicii vocem tenens, protinus adjunxit, dicens: Tu es ille vir, qui fecisti hanc rem (II Reg. XII, 7). Hinc est quod vir Dei, ad destruendam idololatriam Samariam missus, Jeroboam rege super altare thura jaciente, non regem veritus, non formidine mortis pressus, contra altare intrepidus auctoritatem liberae vocis exercuit, dicens: Altare, altare, haec dicit Dominus Deus: Ecce filius nascetur domui David, Josias nomine, et immolabit super te sacerdotes excelsorum (III Reg. XIII). Hinc est quod Achab superbus, idolorum servitio subactus, cum increpare Eliam praesumeret, dicens: Tune es ille vir, qui conturbas Israel (III Reg. XVIII, 17)? Elias protinus superbi regis stultitiam, objurgationis liberae auctoritate percussit, dicens: Non ego turbavi Israel, sed tu et domus patris tui, qui dereliquistis 237 mandata Domini, et secuti estis Baalim. Hinc est quod Elisaeus, veram magistri celsitudinem sequens, Joram filium Achab ad se cum Josaphat rege venientem ex reatu perfidiae confudit, dicens: Quid mihi et tibi est? Vade ad prophetas patris tui et matris tuae (IV Reg. IV, 13). Et: Vivit Dominus exercituum, in cujus conspectu sto, quod si non vultum Josaphat regis Judae erubescerem, nec attendissem quidem te, nec respexissem (Ibid., 14). Hinc est quod isdem vir Naaman ad se cum equis et curribus venientem ante ostium domus fixit, et talentorum copia ac vestium fulto non occurrit; non januam domus aperuit, sed ut lavari septies in Jordane debuisset per nuntium jussit (IV Reg. V, 9, 10). Unde et isdem Naaman iratus recedebat dicens: Putabam quod egrederetur ad me (Ibid., 11). Hinc est quod Petrus, cum eum sacerdotes ac principes etiam per flagella saevientes in nomine Jesu loqui prohiberent, cum magna protinus auctoritate respondit, dicens: Si justum est in conspectu Dei vos potius

audire quam Deum, judicate. Non enim possumus quae vidimus et audivimus non loqui (Act. IV, 19). Hinc est quod Paulus cum residentem contra veritatem sacerdotum principem cerneret, eumque minister illius alapa percussisset, non maledictum perturbatus intulit, sed repletus Spiritu libera voce prophetavit, dicens: Percutiet te Deus, paries dealbate. Et tu sedens judicans me secundum legem, et contra legem jubes me percuti (Ibid., 5)? Hinc est quod Stephanus contra vim persequentium auctoritatem vocis exerere nec moriturus expavit, dicens: Dura cervice et incircumcisi cordibus et auribus, vos Spiritui sancto resistitis, sicut patres vestri et vos (Act. VII, 51).. VERS. 25. — Quare detraxistis sermonibus veritatis, cum e vobis nullus sit qui possit arguere? 56. Mundus esse debet qui alios vult corrigere. — Mundus ipse esse a vitiis debet qui curat aliena corrigere, ut terrena non cogitet, ut desideriis 239 infimis non succumbat; quatenus tanto perspicacius aliis fugienda videat, quanto haec ipse per scientiam et vitam verius declinat, quia nequaquam pure maculam in membro considerat oculus quem pulvis gravat, et superjectas sordes tergere non valent manus quae lutum tenent. Quod, juxta antiquae translationis seriem, bene ad David erga exteriora bella laborantem per significationem divina vox innuit, cum dicit: Non tu aedificabis mihi templum, quia vir sanguinum es (II Reg. VII; XVI, 8; I Par. XXII, 8). Dei autem templum aedificat, qui corrigendis atque instituendis proximorum mentibus vacat. Templum quippe Dei nos sumus, qui ad veram vitam ex ejus inhabitatione construimur, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Templum Dei sanctum est, quod estis vos (I Cor. III, 17). Sed vir sanguinum templum Deo aedificare prohibetur, quia qui adhuc actis carnalibus incumbat necesse est ut instruere spiritaliter proximorum mentes erubescat. Bene ergo dicitur: Quare detraxistis sermonibus veritatis, cum e vobis nullus sit qui possit arguere? Ac si aperte diceretur: Qua temeritate audita reprehenditis, qui, percussionis meae causas ignorantes, adhuc reprehensibilia profertis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 26. — Ad increpandum tantum eloquia concinnatis, et in ventum verba profertis. 57. Locutionum duo genera hominibus noxia. — Duo sunt genera locutionum importuna valde et noxia generi humano, unum quod curat etiam perversa laudare, aliud quod studet semper etiam recta corripere. Illud deorsum cum fluvio ducitur, hoc vero contra fluenta veritatis obserare et alveum conatur. Illud metus premit, hoc elatio erigit. Illud gratiam ex favoribus captat, hoc ira ut ex certamine ostendatur exagitat. Illud in promptu subjacet, hoc semper e diverso tumet. Ex hujus ergo qualitate beatus Job amicos suos fuisse redarguit, cum dicit: Ad increpandum tantum eloquia concinnatis. Sed unde usque ad injustae increpationis audaciam pervenitur, protinus innotuit, cum subjunxit: Et in ventum verba profertis. In ventum enim verba proferre est otiosa dicere. Nam saepe dum ab otiosis verbis nequaquam lingua compescitur, ad temeritatem quoque stultae increpationis effrenatur. Quibusdam enim ruinae suae gradibus desidiosa mens in foveam lapsus impellitur. Nam dum otiosa verba cavere negligimus, ad noxia pervenimus, ut prius loqui aliena libeat, et postmodum detractionibus eorum vitam, de quibus loquitur, lingua mordeat, quandoque autem usque ad apertas contumelias erumpat. Hinc irarum seminantur stimuli, oriuntur rixae, accenduntur faces odiorum, pax tota exstinguitur cordium. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Qui dimittit aquam caput est jurgiorum (Prov. XVII, 14). Aquam quippe dimittere est linguam in fluxum eloquii relaxare. Quo contra et in bonam partem asserit, dicens: Aqua profunda, verba ex ore viri (Prov. XVIII, 4). Qui ergo dimittit aquam, caput est jurgiorum, quia qui linguam non refrenat, concordiam dissipat. Unde e diverso scriptum est: Qui imponit stulto silentium, iras mitigat (Prov. XXVI, 10). Plerumque autem nimis taciti cum nonnulla injusta patiuntur, eo in acriorem dolorem prodeunt, quo ea quae sustinent non loquuntur. Nam si illatas molestias lingua tranquille diceret, a

conscientia dolor emanaret. Vulnera enim clausa plus cruciant, quia cum putredo, quae intrinsecus fervet, ejicitur, ad salutem dolor aperitur. Plerumque nimis taciti dum quorumdam mala respiciunt, et tamen in silentio 241 linguam premunt, quasi conspectis vulneribus usum medicaminis subtrahunt. Eo enim mortis auctores fiunt, quo virus quod poterant ejicere loquendo noluerunt. Unde et immoderatum silentium si in culpa non esset, propheta non diceret: Vae mihi quia tacui (Isai. VI, 5). 61. Lingua per disciplinam retineatur, et ex necessitate laxetur. — Quid ergo inter haec, nisi studiose lingua sub magni moderaminis libratione frenanda est, non insolubiliter obliganda, ne aut laxata in vitium defluat, aut restricta etiam ab utilitate torpescat? Hinc namque per quemdam dicitur: Sapiens tacebit usque ad tempus (Eccli. XX, 7), ut nimirum cum opportunum considerat, postposita censura silentii, loquendo quae congruunt, in usum se utilitatis impendat. Hinc Salomon ait: Tempus tacendi, et tempus loquendi (Eccle. III, 7). Discrete quippe vicissitudinum pensanda sunt tempora, ne aut cum restringi 242 lingua debet, per verba se inutiliter solvat; aut cum loqui utiliter potest, semetipsam pigre restringat. Quod bene Psalmista considerans brevi postulatione complexus est dicens: Pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo, et ostium circumstantiae labiis meis (Psal. CXLIX, 3). Ostium namque aperitur et clauditur. Qui ergo ori suo nequaquam poni obstaculum, sed ostium petiit, aperte docuit quod et per disciplinam retineri lingua debeat, et ex necessitate laxari, quatenus os discretum et congruo tempore vox aperiat, et rursum congruo taciturnitas claudat. Quod quia vel amici beati Job, vel omnes haeretici, quorum hi speciem tenent, servare nesciunt, in ventum verba proferre perhibentur, quia nimirum dicta quae discretionis pondus non solidat aura levitatis portat.

LIBER OCTAVUS.

Postremam capitis sexti partem, a 27 versu, et cum septimo totum octavum, enarrat. In hac porro enarratione a versu 11 capitis octavi ad finem usque, de hypocrisis vitio copiose edisserit.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

241 1. Job humilitas et amor in persecutores. Quo Ecclesiae charitas erga haereticos adumbratur. — Praecedenti jam libello tractavimus, quod beatus Job vim nobis humilitatis suae innotescit, dicens: CAP. VI, VERS. 27. — Super pupillum irruitis, et subvertere nitimini amicum vestrum. Quantae namque infirmitatis se perpendat insinuat, quem pupillum vocat; quia vero ab amore recedere etiam laesa charitas nescit, et subverti velle se queritur, et tamen amicum se esse testatur. Cujus verba, ut saepe jam diximus, sic eidem specialiter congruunt, ut tamen per haec ex prophetico spiritu etiam sententia fidelis populi, ex voce Ecclesiae universalis, exprimatur, qui haereticorum contrarietatem tolerans, et infirmum se per humilitatem conspicit, et tamen a servandae dilectionis magnitudine non recedit. Sanctae quippe Ecclesiae populus, quia mortui patris est filius, pupillus non incongrue dicitur; cujus resurgentis vitam jam quidem per fidem sequitur, sed necdum per speciem contemplatur. Super pupillum vero haeretici irruunt, cum humilitatem fidelis populi importunis falsisque allegationibus affligunt. Et tamen amicus est quem nituntur evertere, quia fidelis Dei populus ipsos quoque quos persequentes tolerat amando non desinit ad veritatem vocare. Sed inter haec sciendum est quia sancti viri nec sustinere falsa per infirmitatem metuunt, nec laesi unquam a veritate conticescunt. Unde subditur:

CAPUT II.

VERS. 28. — Verumtamen quod coepistis explete; praebete aurem et videte an mentiar. 2. Charitati verae contra adversarios adesse debent patientia et benignitas. — Quia enim adversa perpeti non timet, dicat: Verumtamen quod coepistis, explete. Quia vero ipsis suis persecutoribus veritatis praedicamenta non subtrahit, adjungat: Praebete aurem, et videte an mentiar. Ac si aperte diceret: Nec ante illatas molestias trepido, nec ingratis auditoribus correptionis adjutoria abscondo, quia et malis pressus exerceor, et ipsis meis persecutoribus 242 benigne impensus cresco. Mens quippe sanctorum in hoc tentationum praelio et munita patientiae clypeo, et gladiis amoris accincta, ad perferenda mala sumit fortitudinem, et ad rependenda bona exerit benignitatem, quatenus et odiorum tela potenter excipiat, et amoris jacula valenter reddat. Nequaquam quippe ad bella armatus pergit qui aut clypeum sumens, gladiis non utitur, aut utens gladiis clypeo non munitur. Unde et miles Dei, adversitatis bello deprehensus, et scutum patientiae debet anteferre, ne pereat; et ad praedicandum promptus amoris inferre jacula, ut vincat. Cujus armaturae summam Paulus breviter insinuat, dicens: Charitas patiens est, benigna est (I Cor. XIII, 4). Cum vero unum ex utroque defuerit, charitas non est, si, videlicet, malos aut absque benignitate tolerans, non amat, aut rursum, sese sine patientia exhibens, negligit tolerare quos amat. Ut ergo a nobis charitas vera teneatur, necesse est quatenus et benignitati patientia, et rursum patientiae benignitas suffragetur, ut magnum quoddam in corde nostro aedificium construens, et benignitatis arcem patientia solidet, et patientiae fundata aedificia benignitas exornet. Beatus igitur Job promptus ad patientiam dicat: Verumtamen quod coepistis, explete; benignitate praeditus adjungat: Praebete aurem, et videte an mentiar. 3. Ecclesia errantes studet rationibus revocare. — Quia vero sancta Ecclesia ex magisterio humilitatis instituta, recta quae errantibus dicit, non quasi ex auctoritate praecipit, sed ex ratione persuadet, bene nunc dicitur: Videte, an mentiar. Ac si aperte dicat: Ea quae assero nequaquam mihi ex

auctoritate credite, sed an vera sint ex ratione pensate. Quae et si quando dicit quod ratione comprehendi non valet, ne de occultis humana ratio quaeri debeat, rationabiliter suadet. Sed saepe haeretici, dum occasionem ratiocinationis accipiunt, ad jurgia contentionis effrenantur. Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 29. — 243 Respondete, quaeso, absque contentione. 4. Haeretici rixas, non rationes exquirunt. — Neque enim haeretici inquisitionibus suis veritatem conantur assequi, sed victores videri. Cumque foris ostendi sapientes appetunt, intus per stultitiam elationis suae vinculis ligantur. Unde fit ut contentionum certamina exquirant, et de Deo, qui pax nostra est, loqui pacfice nesciant, atque ex pacis negotio rixae inventores fiant. Quibus bene per Paulum dicitur: Si quis autem videtur esse contentiosus, nos talem consuetudinem non habemus, neque Ecclesia Dei (I Cor. XI, 16). Recte autem subditur:

CAPUT IV.

IBID. — Et loquentes id quod justum est, judicate. 5. Nil inconsulte loquendum. — Is namque qui loquitur, dum de verbis suis auditoris sententiam exspectat, quasi ejus judicio supponitur a quo auditur. Qui igitur in dictis suis reprobari metuit, ipse prius debet examinare quod dicit, quatenus inter cor et linguam aequus quidam discretusque arbiter sedeat, subtiliter pensans, si recta verba cor offerat, quae, utiliter suscipiens, ad auditorum judicium lingua perducat. Beatus igitur Job sua contra amicos agens, sed contra haereticos nostra denuntians, praecipitationem loquentium reprehendat, atque ad eorum mentem verba colligat, dicens: Loquentes id quod justum est, judicate. Ac si aperte diceret: Si in eo quod ad nos egressum locutionis exitis, reprehendi non vultis, intus justitiae libram

tenete, ut tanto foris quod dicitur ex veritatis pondere placeat, quanto hoc interius trutina discretionis pensat. Et quia hi erga aliena dicta rectum judicium exerunt, qui judicare prius propria sciunt, postquam dixit, Loquentes id quod justum est, judicate, apte mox subdit:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 30. — Et non invenietis in lingua mea iniquitatem, nec in faucibus meis stultitia personabit. 6. Dictorum suorum censor rectius judicat de alienis. Prius falsa refellenda, quam vera doceantur. — Ac si aperte diceret: Si subtilius vestra perpenditis, verius aliena pensatis, et cum rectum coeperit esse quod dicitis, justum cognoscetis quod auditis. Nequaquam quippe mea vobis lingua stultitiam resonat, si a vestra conscientia non procedat. Sic sancta Ecclesia studet prius assertiones hostium falsas ostendere, et tunc praedicamenta veritatis aperire, quia cum recta se tenere aestimant, recta quae audiunt contumaciter impugnant. Ante ergo necesse est ut errorem suum haeretici sentiant, ne auditae veritati contradicant, quia et camporum sentes si arator vomeris scissione non eruit, terra accepta semina in segetem non producit; et cum putredinem medicus vulneris apertione non ejicit, nequaquam in loco putredinis sana caro coalescit. Prius ergo perversa destruens, dicat: Loquentes id quod justum est judicate; post autem recta insinuans, adjungat: Et non invenietis in lingua mea iniquitatem, nec in faucibus meis stultitia personabit. [Vet. III.] Solent autem haeretici alia aperte dicere, alia in occultis tenere. Per linguam quippe aperta locutio, per fauces vero occulta tractatio designatur. 7. Ecclesia non alia aperte profert, alia celat, haereticorum more. — Sanctae ergo Ecclesiae nec in lingua iniquitas, nec stultitia in faucibus resonat, quia ea quae per publicam locutionem praedicat, etiam per intimam fidem servat; nec in aperto aliud docet, atque in occultis aliud retinet, sed et quod sentit 244 loquendo ejicit, et quod loquitur vivendo custodit; ac de sapientiae supernae convivio

quidquid per linguam praedicationis emanat, hoc per fauces tacitae exspectationis degustat. Sed beatus Job unum scilicet membrum universalis Ecclesiae, sua insinuans, atque electorum omnium corda manifestans, omne quod sentit aperiat, ut mentis ejus rectitudinem attestatio locutionis innotescat. Sequitur:

CAPUT VI.

CAP. VII, VERS. 1. — Militia est vita hominis super terram. 8. Vita nostra, et militia et tentatio eodem sensu. Ipsa sibi tentatio est. — Hoc in loco translatione veteri nequaquam militia vita hominis, sed tentatio vocatur. Sed si utriusque verbi sensus aspicitur, diversum quidem est quod exterius resonat, sed unum eumdemque concorditer intellectum format. Quid enim nisi pugna contra malignos spiritus, nomine tentationis exprimitur? Et quid appellatione militiae, nisi contra hostes exercitium designatur? Tentatio itaque ipsa militia est, quia dum contra malignorum spirituum insidias vigilat, in bellorum procinctu procul dubio exsudat. Notandum vero, quod haec eadem vita hominis non tentationem habere dicitur, sed ipsa tentatio esse perhibetur. Sponte quippe a statu conditionis lapsa, et corruptionis suae putredini subdita, dum sibi ex semetipsa molestias gignit, hoc est jam facta quod tolerat. Quia enim statum mentis inclinata deseruit, quid in se nisi motum varietatis invenit? Unde nunc etsi ad summa appetenda se erigit, mutabilitatis lubricae impulsu protinus ad semetipsam cadit. Vult in contemplatione stare, sed non valet. Cogitationis gressum figere nititur, sed infirmitatis suae lapsibus enervatur. Quae nimirum mutabilitatis suae onera quia volens expetiit, nolens portat. Quietus homo possidere carnem potuit, si bene ab auctore conditus, possideri voluisset. Cumque se erigere contra conditorem studuit, in semetipso protinus carnis contumeliam invenit. Sed quia cum culpa simul ab origine etiam poena propagatur, inserto infirmitatis vitio nascimur, et quasi nobiscum hostem deducimus, quem cum labore

superamus. Ipsa ergo hominis vita tentatio est, cui ex semetipsa nascitur unde perimatur. Quae etsi semper ex virtute succidit, quod ex infirmitate generat, semper tamen ex infirmitate generat, quod ex virtute succidat. 9. Quot modis tentemur; qui tentationi uni succedat altera. — Sic itaque humana vita tentatio est, ut etsi jam ab iniquitatis perpetratione compescitur, in ipsis tamen bonis operibus, modo malorum memoria, modo seductionis caligine, modo intentionis suae interruptione fuscetur. Alius namque a luxuria carnem jam refrenat, sed tamen adhuc luxuriae phantasmata tolerat, quia quae volens fecit, horum invitus meminit, et poenam sustinet, quod voluptatem putavit. Quia vero ad devictam culpam retrahi metuit, ventrem mirae abstinentiae vigore restringit, vultusque ex abstinentia pallescit; cumque in facie pallor aspicitur, reverenda ab hominibus vita laudatur; moxque inanis gloria ad abstinentis animum cum verbis favoris venit, quam concussa mens dum subjicere non valet, eum per quem venerat tergere a facie pallorem quaerit; sicque fit ut, infirmitatis nexibus ligata, aut pallorem abstinentiae fugiens, iterum per alimenta subdi luxuriae 245 metuat, aut, impulsum luxuriae per abstinentiam superans, pallorem suum inani gloriae militare pertimescat. Alius, lapsum superbiae superans, toto jam desiderio statum humilitatis apprehendit; cumque superbientes quosdam usque ad oppressionem innocentium erumpere conspicit, zeli excitatione succensus, postponere aliquatenus cogitur quod decrevit, vim rectitudinis exerit, pravisque non mansuetudine, sed auctoritate contradicit. Unde plerumque fit ut aut humilitatis studio zelum rectitudinis deserat, aut rursum zelo rectitudinis turbet humilitatis studium quod tenebat. Cumque servari simul et zeli auctoritas, et propositionis humilitas vix possit, sibimetipsi homo ex perturbatione incognitus redditur, ita ut vehementer ambigat, ne apud seductum animum aut superbia se auctoritatem zeli insinuet, aut torpor pavidus humilitatem fingat. Alius, quanta sit fallaciae culpa considerans, munire se arce veritatis decernit, ut ex ore jam falsus sermo non prodeat,

seseque funditus a mendacii transgressione disjungat. Sed fit plerumque ut cum verum dicitur, vita proximi gravetur; cumque ingerere alteri laesionem metuit, ad hoc quod dudum presserat fallaciae vitium, quasi ex studio pietatis redit; sicque fit ut etsi malitia mentem non teneat, in ea tamen veritatis radium umbra mendacii obscuret. Unde et saepe quia percontatus quisque conticescere non valet, aut, falsum dicens, suam mentem trucidat, aut, vera loquens, proximi vitam gravat. Alius, amore conditoris sui excitatus, a terrenis cogitationibus mentem curat assidua oratione suspendere, atque hanc in secreta quietis intimae securitate collocare; sed in ipso suae orationis ascensu, dum clevari ab infimis nititur, infimorum phantasmate reverberatur; atque ad intuendam lucem mentis oculus tenditur, sed ex corporeo usu, surgentibus rerum terrenarum imaginibus, obscuratur. Unde fit plerumque ut intendentis animus, ipsa sua infirmitate fatigatus, aut, orationem deserens, desidia torpeat, aut, si diu in oratione permanserit, ante oculos ejus obortarum imaginum caligo densescat. Sciendum quoque est quod mercenarius sollicite curat inspicere ne unquam dies vacuus labatur ab opere, et exspectatus finis temporis ne inanis veniat ad remunerationem. In laboris namque studio conspicit quid percipere in tempore remunerationis possit. Nam cum opus crescit, praemii fiducia proficit; cum vero opus torpuerit, spes a remuneratione 247 lassescit. Unde et electus quisque vitam suam quasi mercenarii dies pensans, tanto fidentius spe tendit ad praemium, quanto nunc robustius perdurat ad laboris incrementum; qui sit decursus praesentis temporis pensat, dies cum operibus numerat, ne a labore vacua transeant vitae momenta formidat; adversis gaudet, passione reficitur, moerore refovetur, quia subsequentis vitae praemiis tanto se remunerari largius conspicit, quanto pro amore illius quotidianis se mortibus verius impendit. Hinc namque est quod cives supernae patriae conditori ejus Psalmistae vocibus dicunt: Propter te morte afficimur tota die (Psal. XLIII, 22). Hinc Paulus ait: Quotidie morior propter vestram gloriam, fratres (I

Cor. XVI, 31). Hinc iterum dicit: Ob quam causam haec patior, sed non confundor; scio enim cui credidi, et certus sum quia potens est depositum meum servare in illum diem (II Tim. I, 12). Sancti igitur viri quot labores nunc veritati commendantes exhibent, tot jam remunerationis suae pignora intra spei cubiculum clausa tenent. Sed gravis nunc sentitur aestus in opere, ut quandoque refrigerium percipiatur ex quiete. Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 2, 3. — Sicut servus desiderat umbram, et sicut mercenarius praestolatur finem operis sui, sic et ego habui menses vacuos, et noctes laboriosas enumeravi mihi. 13. Requiem aeternam desiderat. Servus est, non liber, quoad corruptioni subjacet. — Umbram quippe servo desiderare est post tentationis aestum, sudoremque operis, aeterni refrigerii requiem quaerere. Hanc namque umbram servus ille desideraverat qui dicebat: Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum; quando veniam, et parebo ante faciem Dei (Psal. XLI, 3)? Et rursum: Heu me! quod incolatus meus prolongatus est (Psal. CXIX, 5). Qui quasi a labore acri aestum fugiens, atque ad obtinendam requiem refrigerii tegmen quaerens, iterum dicit: Ingrediar in locum tabernaculi admirabilis, usque ad domum Dei (Psal. XLI, 5). Hanc umbram comprehendere Paulus anhelabat, desiderium habens dissolvi, et cum Christo esse (Philip. I, 23). Ad hanc umbram ex desiderii jam perfectione pervenerant qui dicebant: Nos qui portavimus pondus diei et aestus (Matth. XX, 12). Bene autem qui desiderare umbram dicitur, servus vocatur, quia electus quisque quousque infirmitatis conditione constringitur, sub dominantis corruptionis jugo, quasi sub aestus anxietate retinetur. Qui nimirum cum corruptione exutus fuerit, tunc sibimetipsi liber et tranquillus innotescit. Unde et recte etiam per Paulum dicitur: Ipsa creatura liberabitur a servitute corruptionis, in libertatem gloriae filiorum Dei (Rom. VIII, 21). Electos enim nunc poena corruptionis aggravat, sed tunc incorruptionis

gloria exaltat; et quantum ad praesentis necessitatis pondera nunc in Dei filiis de libertate nihil ostenditur, tantum vero ad subsequentis libertatis gloriam, tunc in Dei famulis de servitute nihil apparebit. Creatura ergo, servitute corruptionis exuta, et dignitate libertatis accepta, in filiorum Dei gloriam vertitur, quia, unita Deo per spiritum, quasi hoc ipsum quod creatura est transisse ac subegisse declaratur. Sed qui adhuc umbram desiderat servus est, quia quousque aestum tentationum tolerat, jugum miserae conditionis portat. Ubi apte subditur: Et sicut mercenarius praestolatur finem operis sui. 248 Potest etiam non inconvenienter intelligi quod sanctus quisque menses vacuos sicut mercenarius ducit, quia laborem jam sustinet, sed praemium necdum tenet; hoc tolerat, illud exspectat. Noctes vero laboriosas enumerat, quia adversitates sibi praesentis temporis sese in virtutibus exercendo coacervat. Nam si proficere in mente non appetit, minus fortasse aspera quae mundi sunt sentit. 16. Ecclesia in membris infirmis menses vacuos, in fortibus noctes laboriosas habet. Labor pro saeculo inanis ex fine dignoscitur. — Quae tamen sententia si ad vocem sanctae 249 Ecclesiae ducitur, intellectus ejus paulo subtilius indagatur. Ipsa quippe vacuos menses habet, quae in infirmis suis membris terrenas actiones absque vitae praemio defluentes sustinet. Ipsa noctes laboriosas enumerat, quae in membris fortibus multiplices tribulationes portat. In hac etenim vita quaedam laboriosa sunt, quaedam vacua, quaedam vero vacua simul et laboriosa. Amore quippe conditoris praesentis vitae tribulationibus exerceri laboriosum quidem est, sed vacuum non est. Amore autem saeculi voluptatibus solvi vacuum quidem est, sed non laboriosum. Amore vero ejusdem saeculi adversa aliqua perpeti et vacuum simul est et laboriosum, quia et ex adversitate mens afficitur, et remunerationis praemio non repletur. In his itaque sancta Ecclesia qui in ea jam positi adhuc voluptatibus defluunt, et proinde fructu boni operis non ditantur, menses vacuos ducit, quia vitae tempora sine retributionis munere expendit. In his vero qui,

aeternis desideriis dediti mundi hujus adversa patiuntur, laboriosas noctes enumerat, quia tribulationum tenebras quasi in caligine vitae praesentis portat. In his autem qui et transeuntem mundum diligunt, et tamen ejus contrarietate fatigantur, simul menses vacuos et noctes laboriosas tolerat, quia eorum vitam et retributio subsequens nulla remunerat, et praesens tribulatio angustat. Recte autem nequaquam dies, sed in eis menses vacuos habere se perhibet. Mensium quippe nomine dierum collectio et summa signatur. Per diem ergo unaquaeque actio exprimitur, per menses autem actionum finis innuitur. Et saepe cum in hoc mundo aliquid agimus, intenta spei alacritate suspensi, hoc ipsum quod agimus vacuum non putamus; sed postquam ad actionum terminum pervenimus, non obtinentes quae appetimus, laborasse nos in vacuum dolemus. Non solum igitur dies, sed et menses vacuos ducimus, cum nos in terrenis actionibus sine fructu laborasse, non ex actionum principio, sed fine pensamus. Cum enim labores nostros adversitas sequitur, quasi vitae nostrae vacui menses arguuntur, quia ex completione actionum agnoscitur quam frustra in actionibus sudabatur. 17. De inani hoc labore Ecclesia ingemiscit. — Sed quia in sacro eloquio nonnunquam nox pro ignorantia ponitur, Paulo attestante, qui venturam vitam scientibus discipulis dicit: Omnes vos filii lucis estis, et filii diei; non sumus noctis neque tenebrarum (I Thess. V, 5); quibus praemisit: Vos autem, fratres, non estis in tenebris, ut vos dies illa tanquam fur comprehendat (Ibid., 4); potest hoc in loco ex eorum persona vox sanctae Ecclesiae accipi, qui post ignorantiae suae caliginem ad amorem rectitudinis redeunt, et, veritatis radiis illustrati, fletibus diluunt quod erraverunt. Illuminatus etenim quisque respicit quam turpe fuerit quod praesentis vitae amore laboravit.. In eis ergo sancta Ecclesia, in quibus ad vitam revertitur laborem suum aestuanti servo et desideranti finem mercenario comparat, dicens: Sicut servus desiderat umbram et sicut mercenarius praestolatur finem operis sui: sic et ego habui menses vacuos, et noctes laboriosas

enumeravi mihi. In comparatione etenim duo sunt quae praemisit; in expressione etiam fatigationis duo protinus subdidit. Ad aestuantem quippe menses vacuos reddidit, quia quo magis aeternum 250 refrigerium quaeritur, eo magis conspicitur quam vacue pro vita ista laboratur. Ad praestolantem vero laboriosas noctes subintulit, quia quo magis ex termino operis praemium quod assequamur inspicimus, eo magis ingemiscimus diu nos nescisse quod quaerimus. Unde et ipsa poenitentis cura vigilanter exprimitur, ut laboriosas noctes enumerasse diceretur, quia quanto verius ad Deum revertimur, tanto subtilius labores, quos per ignorantiam in hoc mundo pertulimus, dolendo pensamus. Nam quo unicuique plus dulce fit quod de aeternis desiderat, eo ei magis grave ostenditur quod pro praesentium amore tolerabat. Si vero ad solam historiam sequentia verba pensantur, per haec procul dubio animus dolentis exprimitur qualiter per diversos motus desiderii, moestitia impellente, variatur. Nam subditur.

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 4. — Si dormiero, dicam: Quando surgam? et rursum exspectabo vesperam. 18. Dolens praesentia despicit, exspectat futura. — In nocte quippe dies quaeritur, in die vespera desideratur, quia nimirum dolor non permittit placere quae adsunt; cumque mentem per experimentum praesentium afficit, semper hanc quasi consolante desiderio ad alia per exspectationem tendit. Sed quia et afflicta mens per appetitum ducitur, et tamen dolor ejus etiam seductus desideriis non finitur, recte subjungitur, — IBID.: — Replebor doloribus usque ad tenebras. Causa autem ejusdem doloris exprimitur, cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 5. — Induta est caro mea putredine, et sordibus pulveris, cutis mea aruit, et contracta est. 19. Hominis lapsi instabilitas. — Sed haec subtilius

congruentiusque disserimus, si ad praemissae expositionis ordinem redeamus. Somno namque torpor otii, surrectione autem exercitatio actionis exprimitur. Vesperae quoque nomine, quia somno congruit, rursus otii desiderium figuratur. Sancta vero Ecclesia quousque vitam corruptionis ducit, flere mutabilitatis suae damna non desinit. Ad hoc namque homo conditus fuerat, ut, stante mente, in arcem se contemplationis erigeret, et nulla hunc corruptio a conditoris sui amore declinaret. Sed in eo quod ab ingenita standi soliditate voluntatis pedem ad culpam movit, a dilectione conditoris in semetipsum protinus cecidit. Amorem vero Dei, veram scilicet stationis arcem deserens, nec in se consistere potuit, quia, lubricae mutabilitatis impulsu, infra se per corruptionem proruens, etiam a semetipso dissensit. Qui nunc, quia conditionis suae soliditate non figitur, alternantis semper desiderii motu variatur, ut et quietus actionem desideret, et occupatus ad otium anhelet. Quia enim fixa mens stare cum potuit noluit, stare jam non valet etiam cum volet. Conditoris quippe sui contemplationem deserens, salutis suae fortitudinem perdidit, et quolibet posita, semper aegra alium locum quaerit. Varietatem ergo humanae mentis exprimens, dicat: Si dormiero, dicam: Quando surgam? et rursum exspectabo vesperam. Ac si aperte diceret: Nihil perceptum menti sufficit, quia ipsum qui vere sufficere potuit amisit. In somno namque surrectionem desidero, in surrectione vesperam exspecto, quia et quietus exercitium actionis appeto, et exercitatus otium quietis quaero. 251 Ut enim paulo superius diximus, soliditatem ingenitam voluntarie homo deseruit, et sese in corruptionis voraginem mersit; unde nunc vel per immunda opera labitur, vel per cogitationes illicitas foedatur. Ut enim ita dixerim, culpae suae poenaliter subdita, ipsa jam natura nostra facta est extra naturam; et remissa usque ad perversa opera ducitur, restricta autem perversorum operum importuna cogitatione fuscatur. Per expletionem ergo actionis illicitae carnem putredo afficit, per levitatem vero cogitationis improbae quasi ante

oculos pulvis surgit. Consentiendo vitiis putredine atterimur, vitiorum vero imagines in corde tolerando sordibus pulveris foedamur. Ait ergo: Induta est caro mea putredine et sordibus pulveris. Ac si aperte diceret: Carnalem vitam, quam patior, aut tabes lubricae operationis polluit, aut ex vitiorum memoria caligo miserae cogitationis premit. 23. Ecclesiae caro in lubricis membris putrescit, in quaerentibus terram sordescit. — Quod tamen si ex voce Ecclesiae universalis accipimus, aliquando hanc procul dubio carnis putredine, aliquando autem gravari sordibus pulveris invenimus. Multi quippe in ea sunt qui, dum amori carnis inserviunt, fetore luxuriae computrescunt. Et sunt nonnulli qui a voluptate quidem carnis abstinent, sed tamen tota mente in terrenis actibus jacent. Dicat ergo sancta Ecclesia unius membri sui vocibus, dicat quid de utroque genere hominum tolerat: Induta est caro mea putredine et sordibus pulveris. Ac si aperte insinuet, dicens: Sunt plerique qui mihi per fidem membra sunt, sed tamen sana vel munda per actionem non sunt, quia aut, victi desideriis turpibus, ad corruptionis putredinem defluunt, aut, terrenis actibus dediti, pulvere consperguntur. In illis enim quos lubricos tolero carnem videlicet putrescentem gemo, in istis autem quos terram quaerentes patior quid aliud quam foedatam pulvere porto? 24. Ecclesiae cutis qui solis exterioribus curis inserviunt: unde arescat. — Unde et apte simul de utrisque subjungitur: Cutis mea aruit, et contracta est. In sanctae quippe Ecclesiae corpore hi qui solis exterioribus curis inserviunt, congrue cutis vocantur. Quae nimirum cutis arescendo attrahitur, quia mentes carnalium, dum praesentia diligunt, et quasi juxta posita concupiscunt, ad futura tendi per longanimitatem nolunt. Qui dum internae spei pinguedinem negligunt, ut attrahantur arefiunt, quia si eorum corda desperatio non siccaret, nequaquam 253 aestus haec pusillanimitatis attraheret. Hanc namque attractionem Psalmista formidaverat cum, siccitatem mentis metuens, dicebat: Sicut adipe et pinguedine repleatur anima mea (Psal. LXII, 6). Adeps quippe pinguedinis animam replet, cum

hanc contra praesentium desideriorum aestum supernae spei infusio refovet. Cutis ergo arescens attrahitur cum cor rebus exterioribus deditum, atque ex desperatione siccatum, in auctoris sui amorem non tenditur, sed in semetipso, ut ita dixerim, rugosa cogitatione replicatur. 25. Amore praesentium non tenetur, qui vitae hujus brevitatem recogitat. — Pensandum vero est quod carnales mentes idcirco praesentia diligunt, quia vita carnis quam fugitiva sit minime perpendunt. Nam si velocitatem transitus ejus aspicerent, hanc etiam prosperantem minime amarent. Sancta autem Ecclesia in electis suis quotidie quantus sit rebus exterioribus cursus conspicit, et idcirco in intimis pedem sollicitae intentionis figit. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 6. — Dies mei velocius transierunt quam a texente tela succiditur. 26. Tempus carnis telae apte comparatur. — Congrua valde similitudine tempus carnis telae comparatur, quia sicut tela filis, sic vita mortalis diebus singulis proficit; sed quo ad augmentum proficit, eo ad incisionem tendit, quia, sicut et superius diximus (Lib. VII, n. 30), cum tempora percepta praetereunt, ventura breviantur, et de universo vitae spatio eo fiunt pauciora quae veniunt, quo multa sunt quae transierunt. Tela quippe infra supraque ligata, duobus lignis innectitur, ut texatur; sed quo inferius texta involvitur, eo superius texenda deplicatur; et unde se ad augmentum multiplicat, inde fit minus quod restat. Sic nimirum vitae nostrae tempora et transacta quasi inferius involvimus, et ventura a superiori deplicamus, quia quo plus fiunt praeterita, minus esse incipiunt futura. Sed quia nec tela ad expressionem nostri temporis sufficit, nam ejus quoque festinationem vitae nostrae velocitas transit, recte nunc dicitur: Dies mei velocius transierunt, quam a texente tela succiditur. Tela quippe tarditatem provectus habet, vita autem praesens moram defectus non habet. In illa namque cum laborantis manus

figitur, adventus terminus elongatur; in ista vero, quia tempus semper desinens indesinenter consumimus, ad finem nostri itineris etiam quiescendo pervenimus, et per cursum nostri transitus etiam dormientes imus. Electi igitur, quia praesentis vitae momenta decurrere sub festinatione conspiciunt, nequaquam in hoc tantae mobilitatis itinere cordis intentionem figunt. Unde et apte protinus subditur: IBID. — Et consumpti sunt absque ulla spe. 27. Electi mortem cogitant etiam sani, reprobi nequidem cum imminet. — Reproborum mens erga dies vitae praesentis tanto amore constringitur, ut sic semper hic appetant vivere, quatenus, si valeant, vivendi cursum desiderent nunquam finire. Cogitare quippe ventura despiciunt, spem totam in rebus transeuntibus ponunt, habere nulla nisi quae praetereunt concupiscunt. Cumque nimis transeuntia cogitant, et mansura nullatenus sperant, sic caecitate 254 insensibili cordis oculus clauditur, ut aeternae luci nullatenus intendatur. Unde fit ut saepe jam corpus molestia quatiat, et vicina mors virtutem vitalis spiritus incidat, nec tamen curare quae mundi sunt desinant. Jamque eos ultor ad judicium pertrahit; et tamen ipsi, ordinatione sollicita rebus transeuntibus occupati, nihil aliud cogitant nisi in hoc mundo adhuc qualiter vivant. Relinquendo omnia quasi possidendo disponunt, quia spes vivendi non frangitur, etiam cum vita terminatur. Jam ad judicium trahuntur per sententiam, et tamen adhuc habendis rebus inhaerent per curam. Dura etenim mente abesse mors longe creditur, etiam cum sentitur. Sicque a carne anima solvitur, ut erga praesentia immoderato amore se retinens, dum ad aeternum supplicium ducitur, hoc ipsum quoque nesciat quo ducitur; et deserens quae amare cum termino noluit, repente sine termino invenit quae nunquam praevidit. At contra rectorum mens ad aeternitatis intentionem tenditur, etiam cum praesens eam feliciter vita comitatur. Magna carnis salute utitur, nec tamen ejus fiducia animus retardatur. Nullum adhuc mortis articulum erumpit, et quasi praesentem hanc quotidie conspicit. Quia enim vita indesinenter

labitur, spes ei vivendi funditus amputatur. Bene ergo de diebus praetereuntibus dicitur: Consumpti sunt absque ulla spe. Ac si aperte diceretur: Mentis fiduciam in praesenti vita non posui, quia omne quod praeterit calcando desperavi. Unde et mox apte subditur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 7. — Memento quia ventus est vita mea. 28. Vita praesens, aeterna non attendentibus cara, attendentibus vilis. Vitae brevis consideratio, grata Deo est oblatio. — Hi etenim vitam carnis quasi permanentem diligunt, qui quanta sit vitae sequentis aeternitas non attendunt; cumque soliditatem perennitatis non considerant, exsilium patriam, tenebras lumen, cursum stationem putant, quia qui majora nesciunt, judicare de minimis nequaquam possunt. Ordo quippe judicii exigit ut quod examinare nitimur transcendamus. Si enim praeesse rebus omnibus animus non valet, nequaquam de his corta a quibus vincitur videt. Idcirco itaque mens reproba praesentis vitae curcum aestimare non sufficit, quia admirationi illius ex amore succumbit. Sancti autem viri, quo ad aeterna cor elevant, quam breve sit quod fine clauditur pensant; et eo eorum sensibus vilescit quod praeterit, quo intellectu radiante interlucet quod acceptum nunquam recedit; cumque infinitatem perennitatis aspiciunt, nequaquam jam pro magno desiderant quidquid finis angustat. Sed sublevata mens extra temporum terminos ducitur, etiam cum carne in tempore tenetur; et tanto altius finienda despicit, quanto verius infinita cognoscit. Sed haec ipsa humanae brevitatis consideratio auctori nostro magnae virtutis oblatio est. Unde recte nunc cum deprecatione immolatio ejusdem virtutis offertur, cum dicitur: Memento quia ventus est vita mea. Ac si aperte diceretur: Transeuntem velociter benignus respice, quia et tanto a te videri misericordius debeo, quanto ipse a consideratione brevitatis meae oculos non averto. Sed quia dum tempus 255

vitae praesentis absciditur, ad operationem promerendae veniae ulterius non reditur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIV.

IBID. — Nec revertetur oculus meus ut videat bona. 29. Post mortem non est locus promerendae veniae. — Ad videnda bona exstincti oculus non redit, quia ad exhibenda recta opera exuta carne anima non recurrit. Hinc est quod dives quem inferni flamma cruciabat, quia semetipsum reparare operando non posset agnoverat; nam nequaquam sibi, sed relictis fratribus prodesse satagebat, dicens: Rogo te, pater Abraham, ut mittas eum in domum patris mei, habeo enim quinque fratres, ut testetur illis, ne et ipsi veniant in locum hunc tormentorum (Luc. XVI, 27). Solet namque moestum animum spes vel falsa refovere. Sed ut poenam suam reprobi gravius sentiant, et spem de venia amittunt. Unde, flammis ultricibus traditus, non sibi, ut diximus, sed opitulari fratribus concupivit, quia nunquam se ignium carere tormentis, adjuncto desperationis supplicio, agnovit. Hinc Salomon ait: Quodcunque potest manus tua facere, instanter operare, quia nec opus, nec ratio, nec scientia, nec sapientia erunt apud inferos, quo tu properas (Eccle. IX, 10). Nequaquam ergo ad videnda bona oculus revertetur, quia retributionem suam mens inveniens, ad operationis usum nullatenus revocatur. Quia igitur fugit omne quod cernitur, et mansura sunt quae sequuntur, bene beatus Job uno versu utraque complexus est, dicens: Memento quia ventus est vita mea, nec revertetur oculus meus ut videat bona. Cursum quippe praesentium contemplatus ait: Memento quia ventus est vita mea. Aeternitatem vero sequentium considerans adjunxit: Nec revertetur oculus meus ut videat bona. Ubi apte quoque universi humani generis a redemptionis munere destituti vocem protinus sumit, dicens:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 8. — Nec aspiciet me visus hominis. 30. Tunc Christi gratia non liberat, quem nunc non reformat. — Visus quippe hominis est misericordia Redemptoris, quae insensibilitatis nostrae duritiam, cum respicit, emollit. Unde, teste quoque Evangelio, dicitur: Respexit Dominus Petrum, et recordatus est Petrus verbi quod dixerat Jesus; egressus foras, flevit amare (Luc. XXII, 61). Exutam vero carne animam nequaquam jam visus hominis aspicit, quia post mortem non liberat, quem ante mortem gratia ad veniam non reformat. Hinc etenim Paulus dicit: Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce nunc dies salutis (II Cor. VI, 2). Hinc Psalmista ait: Quoniam in saeculum misericordia ejus (Psal. CXVII, 1). Quia nimirum quem nequaquam modo misericordia eripit, sola post praesens saeculum justitia addicit. Hinc Salomon ait: Quia lignum in quocunque loco ceciderit, sive ad Austrum, sive ad Aquilonem, ibi erit (Eccle. XI, 3), quia cum humani casus tempore, sive sanctus, sive malignus spiritus egredientem animam claustra carnis acceperit, in aeternum secum sine ulla permutatione retinebit, ut nec exaltata ad supplicium proruat, nec mersa aeternis suppliciis, ultra ad remedium ereptionis ascendat. Vir igitur sanctus, humani generis damna considerans, quod a praesenti saeculo sine Redemptoris cognitione subtrahitur, atque in aeternis ignibus irreparabiliter sepelitur, et ejus vocem in se suscipiens, dicat: Nec aspiciet me visus hominis, quia 256 nimirum Redemptoris gratia, quem nunc non intuetur ut corrigat, tunc non respicit ut ab interitu abscondat. In judicium quippe Dominus veniens, peccatorem videt ut feriat, sed non videt ut ad largiendam salutis gratiam recognoscat; culpas examinat, et vitam pereuntium ignorat. Unde sanctus vir, cum se post praesentem vitam, respectu hominis videri non posse fateretur, apte mox subdidit:

CAPUT XVI.

IBID. — Oculi tui in me, et non subsistam. 31. Christus in judicio reprobos ad feriendum videbit, quos hic ad misericordiam impendendam non vidit. — Ac si aperte diceret: Districtus ad judicium veniens, et ad salvandum non vides, et ad feriendum vides, quia quem in praesenti vita dispensationis tuae miseratione non respicis, respiciendo, postmodum per justitiam exstinguis. Nunc enim peccator quisque Deum non metuit et vivit, blasphemat et proficit, quia scilicet misericors creator, quem exspectando vult corrigere, aspiciendo non vult punire, sicut scriptum est: Dissimulans peccata hominum propter poenitentiam (Sap. XI, 24). Sed tunc peccator cum respicitur non subsistit, quia cum districtus judex merita subtiliter inquirit, reus ad tormenta non sufficit. 32. Justi se perituros sciunt, si remota pietate a Deo judicentur. — Quamvis hoc etiam justorum voci congruit, quorum mens semper sollicita venturo examini intendit. Omne enim quod agunt metuunt, dum caute considerant qui ante quantum judicem stabunt. Intuentur potentiam illius magnitudinis, et pensant quanto reatu constricti sunt propriae infirmitatis. Enumerant mala proprii operis, et contra haec exaggerant bona conditoris. Considerant prava quam districte judicet, bona opera quam subtiliter penset, et perituros se absque ambiguitate praesciunt, si remota pietate judicentur, quia hoc ipsum quoque quod juste videmur vivere culpa est, si vitam nostram cum judicat, hanc apud se divina misericordia non excusat. Hinc enim in hoc eodem libro scriptum est: Astra non sunt munda in conspectu ejus (Job. XXV, 5), quia apud eum districte judicati, ipsi quoque maculas inquinationis habent, qui per munditiam sanctitatis lucent. Bene ergo dicitur: Oculi tui in me, et non subsistam. Ac si aperte justi voce diceretur: Si subtili examinatione discutior, perferendo judicio non assurgo, quia ad poenam vita non sufficit, si hanc immanitas justae retributionis premit. Bene autem ejusdem humani generis et culpa breviter, et poena subrogatur, cum protinus dicitur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 9. — Sicut consumitur nubes, et pertransit, sic qui descendit ad inferos non ascendet. 33. Damnatis non est reditus ad veniam, aut ad ea quae amabant. — Nubes quippe ad altiora suspenditur; sed densata vento impellitur ut currat, calore autem solis dissipatur ut evanescat. Sic sic nimirum corda sunt hominum, quae per acceptae rationis ingenium ad alta emicant, impulsa autem maligni spiritus flatu, pravis desideriorum suorum motibus huc illucque pertrahuntur; sed, districto respectu superni judicis, quasi solis calore liquefiunt, et, semel locis poenalibus tradita, ad operationis usum ultra non redeunt. Vir igitur sanctus elationem, cursum defectumque humani generis exprimens dicat: Sicut consumitur nubes, et pertransit, sic qui descendit ad inferos non ascendet. Ac si aperte loqueretur, dicens: In altum currendo 257 deficit, qui superbiendo ad interitum tendit; quem si semel culpa ad poenam pertrahit, misericordia ulterius ad veniam non reducit. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 10. — Nec revertetur ultra in domum suam. 34. Domus mentis est id quod amando habitat. Desperantium corda nubibus similia. Extra se funduntur. — Sicut domus est corporis habitaculum corporale, ita unicuique menti hoc domus fit quod ex desiderio inhabitare consuevit. Ad domum igitur suam ultra non revertitur, quia semel quisque, aeternis suppliciis traditus, ad hoc jam ubi amore inhaeserat nullatenus revocatur. Potest etiam inferni nomine peccatoris desperatio designari, de qua per Psalmistam dicitur: In inferno autem quis confitebitur tibi (Psalm. VI, 6)? Unde rursum scriptum est: Impius cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit (Prov. XVIII, 3). Quisquis autem impietati succumbit, vitam profecto justitiae moriendo derelinquit. Qui vero etiam post peccatum mole desperationis obruitur, quid aliud quam post mortem in inferni suppliciis sepelitur? Bene ergo dicitur: Sicut consumitur nubes, et pertransit, sic qui

descendit ad inferos non ascendet, quia plerumque cum perpetratione nequitiae etiam desperatio sociatur, et via jam reversionis absciditur. Recte autem corda desperantium nubibus comparantur, quia et caligine erroris obscura sunt, et peccatorum multiplicitate condensa; sed consumpta pertranseunt, quia claritate extremi judicii irradiata dissipantur. Solet etiam domus inhabitatio cordis intelligi. Unde sanato cuidam dicitur: Vade in domum tuam (Marc. V, 19), quia nimirum dignum est ut peccator post veniam ad mentem suam redeat, ne iterum quo juste feriatur admittat. Sed qui ad infernum descenderit, ad domum suam ulterius non ascendet, quia eum quem desperatio obruit, a cordis sui habitaculo foras mittit, et redire introrsus non valet, quia, fusus exterius, ad deteriora quotidie compulsus cadit. Ad contemplandum quippe Creatorem homo conditus fuerat, ut ejus semper speciem quaereret, atque in solemnitate illius amoris habitaret. Sed extra se per inobedientiam missus, mentis suae locum perdidit, quia, tenebrosis itineribus sparsus, ab inhabitatione veri luminis elongavit. Unde apte adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XIX.

IBID. — Neque cognoscet eum amplius locus ejus. 35. Locus hominis Deus, per inobedientiam desertus. Non cogniturus est in judicio, qui eum hic spreverint. — Locus quippe hominis, sed non localis, ipse scilicet conditor exstitit, qui hunc ut in semetipso consisteret creavit. Quem nimirum locum tunc homo deseruit, cum, seductoris verba audiens, a conditoris amore discessit. Sed cum omnipotens Deus redimendo se homini etiam corporaliter ostendit, ipse, ut ita dixerim, fugitivi sui vestigia subsequens, ad retinendum quem amiserat hominem locus venit. Si enim appellari locus nequaquam conditor posset, Deum laudans Psalmista non diceret: Filii servorum tuorum habitabunt ibi (Psal. CI, 29). Ibi enim non dicimus, nisi cum locum specialiter designamus. Sed sunt plerique qui

etiam post perceptum Redemptoris auxilium ad desperationis tenebras devolvuntur; et tanto nequius pereunt, quanto et oblata remedia misericordiae contemnunt. Recte ergo de damnato homine dicitur: Neque cognoscet eum amplius 258 locus ejus, quia a conditore suo tanto tunc districtius in judicio non cognoscitur, quanto nunc ad reparationis gratiam nec per dona revocatur. Unde et notandum summopere est quod non ait: Neque cognoscet amplius locum suum, sed ait: Neque cognoscet eum amplius locus ejus. Dum enim cognitio non homini, sed loco tribuitur, patenter ipse conditor loci nomine designatur, qui, districtus ad examen ultimum veniens, in iniquitate durantibus dicet: Nescio vos unde sitis (Luc. XIII, 25). Sed electi quique quo districte reprobos repelli considerant, eo semetipsos quotidie a perpetratae nequitiae sordibus sollicitius purgant. Cumque perituros alios frigescere a vitae amore conspiciunt, studiose se ad poenitentiae lamenta succendunt. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 11. — Quapropter et ego non parcam ori meo. 36. Iram judicis in confessione praeveniunt electi. — Ori etenim suo parcit, qui confiteri malum quod fecit erubescit. In laborem quippe os mittere est hoc ad confessionem perpetratae iniquitatis occupare. Sed justus ori suo non parcit, quia iram judicis districti praeveniens, verbis contra se propriae confessionis saevit. Hinc Psalmista ait: Praeveniamus faciem ejus in confessione (Psal. XCIV, 2). Hinc per Salomonem dicitur: Qui abscondit scelera sua, non dirigetur; qui autem confessus fuerit et dereliquerit ea, misericordiam consequetur (Prov. XXVIII, 13). Hinc rursum scriptum est: Justus in principio accusator est sui (Prov. XVIII, 17). Sed nequaquam ad confessionem os panditur, nisi cum consideratione districti judicii per pavorem spiritus angustatur. Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT XXI.

IBID. — Loquar in tribulatione spiritus mei. 37. Peccatorum confessionem comitari debet poenitentiae luctus. — Tribulatio quippe spiritus linguam commovet, ut reatum pravi operis vox confessionis impugnet. Sciendum quoque est quia saepe et reprobi peccata confitentur, sed deflere contemnunt. Electi autem culpas suas, quas vocibus confessionis aperiunt, districtae animadversionis fletibus insequuntur. Unde bene beatus Job postquam se ori suo non parcere spopondit, tribulationem mox spiritus subdidit. Ac si aperte fateretur, dicens: Sic reatum lingua loquitur, ut nequaquam expers a moeroris stimulo per alia spiritus vagetur: sed culpas loquens, vulnus aperio; culpas vero ad correctionem cogitans, salutem vulneris ex medicamine moeroris quaero. Qui enim mala quidem quae perpetravit insinuat, sed flere quae insinuaverit recusat, quasi subducta veste vulnus detegit, sed torpenti mente medicamentum vulneri non apponit. Confessionis igitur vocem solus necesse est ut moeror excutiat, ne vulnus proditum, sed neglectum, quo licentius jam per humanam notitiam tangitur, deterius putrescat. Quo contra Psalmista plagam cordis non solum detexerat, sed detectae etiam medicamentum moeroris adhibebat, dicens: Iniquitatem meam ego pronuntio, et cogitabo pro peccato meo (Psal. XXXVII, 19). Pronuntiando enim occultum vulnus detegit, cogitando autem quid aliud quam medicamentum vulneri apponit? Sed afflictae menti, et sua sollicite damna cogitanti, rixa pro semetipsa oritur contra semetipsam. Nam cum se ad lamenta poenitentiae instigat, occulta se increpatione dilaniat. 259 Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT XXII.

IBID. — Confabulabor cum amaritudine animae meae. 38. Compuncta mens multa in se detegit deflenda. Recolit quot Dei donis quam fuerit

ingrata. — Pavore namque divini judicii afflicti, dum quaedam male gesta plangimus, ipsa vi nostrae amaritudinis ad discutiendos nos vigilantius excitati, alia in nobis etiam quae amplius defleamus, invenimus. Nam saepe quod torpentes latuit, flentibus subtilius innotescit; et afflicta mens certius invenit malum quod fecerat et nesciebat, eique rixa sua verius aperit, quantum a veritatis pace deviavit, quia reatum suum, cujus secura non meminit, hunc in se commota deprehendit. Succrescens quippe amaritudo poenitentiae, verecundanti cordi importune ingerit illicita quae commisit, districtum contra haec judicem ostendit, suppliciorum minas incutit, pavore animum ferit, pudore confundit, motus illicitos increpat, quietem noxiae securitatis turbat; quae ei conditor bona contulit, quae ipse bonis illius mala respondit enumerat, quod mire ab eo conditus, quod gratuito nutritus, quod rationis substantia in conditione ditatus est, quod conditoris gratia vocatus, quod sequi ipse et vocatus noluit, quod vocantis misericordia nec surdum hunc renitentemque despexit, quod illuminatus donis, quod sua sponte pravis actibus etiam post dona caecatus est, quod a caecitatis suae erroribus paternae sollicitudinis flagellis expiatus, quod a flagellorum doloribus ad salutis gaudia misericordiae medicamento reductus est; quod quibusdam culpis, etsi non gravibus subditus, peccare tamen et inter flagella non desinit; quod peccatorem suum superna gratia nec contempta dereliquit. Cum igitur afflictam mentem modo per replicationem donorum Dei, modo per improperia actionis suae tanta severitate increpat, habet in corde justorum amaritudo animae linguam suam, quae tanto eis subtilius loquitur, quanto et interius auditur. Unde et nequaquam dicitur: Fabulabor in amaritudine animae meae, sed, Confabulabor cum amaritudine animae meae, quia vis doloris, quae peccata singula reputans, torpentem animum ad lamenta excitat, quasi ad eum verba confabulationis format, in quibus semetipsum correctus inveniat, et ad sui jam custodiam sollicitior exsurgat. Dicat itaque vir justus ex voce sua, et sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenens, dicat

ex nostra: Confabulabor cum amaritudine animae meae. Ac si apertius insinuet, dicens: Intus contra me cum cordis mei dolore colloquor, et foris me a verbere judicis abscondo. Sed mens poenitentiae doloribus pressa in semetipsa constringitur, atque a cunctis delectationibus carnis forti cogitatione separatur, ad summa proficere appetit, et tamen adhuc de corruptione corporis contradictionem sentit. Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT XXIII.

VERS. 12. — Nunquid mare sum ego, aut cetus, quia circumdedisti me carcere? 39. Carcere constringuntur homo, diabolus, carnales; cum quod volunt implere non valent. — Carcere homo circumdatur, quia plerumque et virtutum provectibus ad alta exsurgere nititur, et tamen carnis suae corruptione praepeditur. Qua bene exui Psalmista deprecatur, dicens: Educ de carcere animam meam, ad confitendum nomini tuo (Psal. CXLI, 8). Quid vero appellatione maris, nisi corda carnalium tumidis cogitationibus fluctuosa; 260 quid autem ceti nomine, nisi antiquus hostis exprimitur? Qui dum mentes saecularium possidendo penetrat, quasi in eorum lubrica cogitatione natat. Sed cetus carcere stringitur, quia malignus spiritus, in inferioribus dejectus, ne ad coelestia evolare praevaleat, poenae suae pondere coarctatur, Petro attestante, qui ait: Deus angelis peccantibus non pepercit, sed rudentibus inferni detractos in tartarum tradidit in judicium cruciandos reservari (II Petr. II, 4). Cetus carcere astringitur, quia tentare bonos quantum desiderat prohibetur. Carcere quoque mare circumdatur, quia carnalium mentium tumida insanaque desideria ad peragenda mala quae appetunt impossibilitatis suae angustia gravantur. Saepe enim dominari melioribus concupiscunt; sed tamen eis, divino judicio cuncta mirabiliter disponente, substrati sunt. Nocere bonis elati desiderant, et tamen subjecti ab eis solatia sperant. Pro explendis voluptatibus carnis longaevitatem vitae praesentis cupiunt, sed tamen ab ea sub celeritate

rapiuntur. De quibus bene per Psalmistam dicitur: Statuit aquas quasi in utre (Psal. LXXVII, 13). Aquae quippe in utre sunt cum lubrica eorum desideria, quia operis effectum non inveniunt, sub carnali corde deprimuntur. Cetus ergo ac mare circumdatione premitur carceris, quia vel malignus spiritus, vel sequaces illius, in quorum se mentibus colligit, atque in eis undas tumentium cogitationum volvit, ut implere mala quae appetunt nequeant, superna eos districtio angustat.. VERS. 13, 14. — Si dixero, consolabitur me lectulus meus, et relevabor loquens mecum in stratu meo; terrebis me per somnia, et per visiones horrore concuties. 41. Justus ab exterioribus ad cor redit, nec ibi requiem invenit. Judiciorum Dei terrore turbatur. — In sacro namque eloquio lectulus, cubile, vel stratum, secretum solet cordis intelligi. Hinc est enim quod sub uniuscujusque animae specie sponsa, occultis stimulis sancti amoris excitata, in Canticis canticorum dicit: In lectulo meo per noctes quaesivi quem diligit anima mea (Cant. III, 1). In lectulo quippe et per noctem dilectus quaeritur, quia nimirum invisibilis conditoris species, repressa omni corporeae visionis imagine, in cubili cordis invenitur. Unde et eisdem suis dilectoribus Veritas dicit: Regnum Dei intra vos est (Luc. XVII, 21). Et rursum: Si ego non abiero, Paraclitus non veniet (Joan. XVI, 7). Ac si aperte diceret: Si ab intentionis vestrae oculis corpus non subtraho, ad intellectum vos invisibilem per consolatorem Spiritum non perduco. Hinc de justis per Psalmistam dicitur: Exsultabunt sancti in gloria, laetabuntur in cubilibus suis (Psal. CXLIX, 5), quia scilicet cum mala ab exterioribus fugiunt, securi intra mentium secreta gloriantur. Sed tunc laetitia cordium erit perfecta cum carnis exterius pugna non fuerit. Nam quousque caro illicit, quia quasi domus nostrae paries quatitur, etiam cubile turbatur. Unde et recte per eumdem Psalmistam dicitur: Universum stratum ejus versasti in infirmitate ejus (Psal. XL, 4), quia dum nos tentatio carnis concutit, tremefacta nostra infirmitas etiam mentis cubile confundit. Quid vero hoc loco somnia vel visiones accipimus, nisi imaginationes

ultimi districtique examinis? quod jam utcunque per timorem cernimus, sed tamen ut est veraciter non videmus. Sancti itaque viri, ut diximus, ad cordis semper secreta redeunt, cum ab hoc mundo vel ultra votum prospera, vel ultra vires adversa patiuntur; atque, externis laboribus fessi, quasi stratum vel lectulum, cubilia mentis petunt. Sed dum quibusdam imaginationibus cogitationum quam sint subtilia divina judicia conspiciunt, quasi in ipsa strati sui requie somnii visione turbantur. Contemplantur enim quam districtus judex veniat, qui, dum vi immensae magnitudinis cordium secreta illuminat, omnes ante oculos culpas reducat. Pensant quanta illa sit verecundia, in conspectu tunc totius humani generis, angelorum omnium, archangelorumque confundi. Perpendunt qui post confusionem cruciatus maneat, cum et reatus animum immortaliter morientem et indeficienter deficientem carnem gehenna consumat. Cum itaque tam pavida imaginatione mens quatitur, quid aliud quam in stratu triste somnium videtur? Dicat ergo: Si dixero Consolabitur me lectulus meus, et relevabor loquens mecum in stratu meo, terrebis me per somnia, et per visiones horrore concuties. Ac si aperte fateatur, dicens: Si, exteriora fugiens, introrsus redeo, et utcunque requiescere in cordis cubili concupisco, ibi me, dum districtionis tuae contemplationi objicis, vehementer per ipsas meae providentiae imaginationes terres. Bene autem dicitur: Et relevabor, loquens mecum in stratu meo, 262 quia nimir um cum ad mentis nostrae silentium fessi revertimur, quasi in stratu colloquentes, occulta intra nos cogitationum verba versamus. Sed haec ipsa nostra collocutio in pavorem vertitur, quia ex illa vehementius intellectus nobis, qui terrorem judicis intentet in mente aperitur.. VERS. 15. — Quamobrem elegit suspendium anima mea, et mortem ossa mea. 44. Remedium est contra mentis anxietatem, ad alta eam ferre. — Quid per animam nisi mentis intentio, quid per ossa nisi carnis fortitudo designatur? Omne autem quod suspenditur procul dubio ab imis elevatur. Anima ergo suspendium eligit, ut ossa moriantur, quia dum mentis

intentio ad alta se sublevat, omnem in se fortitudinem vitae exterioris necat. Sancti etenim viri certissime sciunt quia habere in hac vita requiem nequaquam possunt; et idcirco suspendium eligunt, quia nimirum, desideria terrena deserentes, ad alta animum tollunt. Suspensi autem mortem suis ossibus inferunt, quia amore supernae patriae, in virtutum studiis accincti, hoc quod fortes prius in mundo fuerant, vinculo humilitatis insequuntur. Intueri libet quomodo animam Paulus suspenderat, qui dicebat: Vivo autem jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus (Gal II, 20). Et rursum: Desiderium habens dissolvi, et cum Christo esse (Philip. I, 23). Et: Mihi vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum (Ibid., 21). Qui, gesta terrenae fortitudinis ad memoriam revocans, quasi quaedam in se ossa numerabat, dicens: Hebraeus ex Hebraeis, secundum legem Pharisaeus, secundum aemulationem persequens Ecclesiam Dei (Philip. III, 5, 6). Sed suspendio animae, quia haec in se ossa interficit, protinus asserit, qui subjungit: Sed quae mihi fuerunt lucra, haec arbitratus sum propter Christum detrimenta (Ibid., 7). Quae adhuc ossa in semetipso insinuat vehementius exstincta, cum subdit: Propter quem omnia detrimentum feci, et arbitror ut stercora (Ibid., 8). Mortuis vero ossibus quam exanimis pendeat ostendit, qui illico subjungit, dicens: Ut Christum lucrifaciam, et inveniar in illo non habens meam justitiam, quae ex lege est, sed eam quae ex fide est Jesu Christi (Ibid. 9). Sed quia collatis ejus testimoniis Paulum ad alta suspensum, mundo mortuum, testati sumus, nunc beatum Job si, plenus eodem spiritu, exterioris vitae concupiscentiam fugiat ostendamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 16. — Desperavi, nequaquam ultra jam vivam. 45. Justi alii terrena possident, alii abdicant. — Sunt nonnulli justorum qui sic coelestia appetunt, ut tamen a terrenorum spe minime frangantur. Largita divinitus patrimonia ad necessitatis subsidium possident, honores sibi temporaliter

impensos tenent, aliena non ambiunt, suis licite utuntur. Qui tamen ab eisdem rebus quas habent alieni sunt, quia ad haec ipsa quae possident ex desiderio non tenentur. Et sunt nonnulli justorum qui, ad comprehendendum culmen perfectionis accincti, dum altiora interius appetunt, exterius cuncta derelinquunt; qui rebus se habitis nudant, 264 gloria honoris exspoliant; qui internorum desiderio per assiduitatem se amici moeroris afficiunt, habere de exterioribus consolationem nolunt; qui internis gaudiis dum mente appropiant, vitam in se funditus corporeae delectationis necant. Talibus namque per Paulum dicitur: Mortui enim estis, et vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo (Col. III, 3). Horum vocem Psalmista expresserat, cum dicebat: Concupiscit et deficit anima mea in atria Domini (Psal. LXXXIII, 3). Concupiscunt enim, sed non deficiunt, qui jam quidem coelestia appetunt, sed adhuc tamen a terrenorum delectationibus minime lassantur. Concupiscit vero et in Dei atria deficit, qui, cum aeterna desiderat, in amore temporalium non perdurat. Hinc Psalmista iterum dicit: Defecit in salutari tuo anima mea (Psal. CXVIII, 81). Hinc per semetipsam Veritas admonet, dicens: Si quis vult post me venire abneget semetipsum (Luc. IX, 23). Et rursum: Nisi quis renuntiaverit omnibus quae possidet, non potest meus esse discipulus (Luc. XIV, 33). Horum igitur numero sanctus vir, divisa a terrenis desideriis mente, se inserit, qui ait: Desperavi, nequaquam ultra jam vivam. Justi quippe desperare est praesentis vitae bona aeternitatis electione deserere, mansura quaerere, et in rebus temporalibus fiduciam non habere. Qui haec agens nequaquam se ultra vivere asserit, quia videlicet vivificatrice morte quotidie a vita se passionis occidit. Absit enim ne vir sanctus de divinae misericordiae largitate desperet, ne gressum cordis a profectu intimi itineris subtrahat, ne, amorem conditoris deserens, quasi a duce destitutus in via remaneat, et confossus gladio latrocinantis desperationis ruat. Sed ne ejus dicta ad nostri intellectus arbitrium videamur

violenter inflectere, debemus ex posterioribus praemissa pensare. Quo enim sensu haec dixerit, ipse protinus indicat, qui subjungit:

CAPUT XXVII.

IBID. — Parce mihi, Domine, nihil enim sunt dies mei. 46. Job bona peritura pia desperatione deseruit, in aeternum mansura expetiit. — Neque enim duo sibi haec verba conveniunt, desperavi et parce. Nam qui desperat nequaquam jam sibi parci postulat, et qui adhuc sibi parci desiderat profecto minime desperat. Aliunde ergo est quod desperat, aliunde vero quod parci sibi sanctus vir postulat, quia nimirum dum bona vitae transeuntis per desperationem deserit, ad obtinenda quae permanent in spe robustior exsurgit. Desperando itaque melius ad spem veniae ducitur, qui eo certius ventura appetit, quo praesentia verius ex desperatione derelinquit. Et notandum quod, vim nobis sui cordis insinuans, unam quidem de se sententiam protulit, sed hanc tertio insinuando replicavit. Quod enim superius dixerat: Elegit suspendium anima mea, hoc replicans addidit, Desperavi; atque aeterna concupiscendo, et temporalia postponendo, hoc postremo intulit, Parce mihi; et quod superius dixit, Mortem ossa mea, hoc nimirum subdidit, Nequaquam ultra jam vivam; hoc ultimum protulit, Nihil enim sunt dies mei. [Vet. XX.] Bene autem dies suos nihil esse considerat, quia, ut paulo superius saepe jam diximus, sancti viri quo verius summa cognoscunt, eo sublimius terrena despiciunt; et idcirco praesentis vitae dies nihil esse conspiciunt, quia illuminatae mentis oculos in consideratione 265 aeternitatis figunt. De qua dum ad se redeunt, quid se esse nisi pulverem agnoscunt, et infirmitatis suae conscii, districte judicari metuunt? Cumque vim tanti vigoris aspiciunt, trepidant examinari quod sunt. Unde et adhuc apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 17. — Quid est homo quia magnificas eum? aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum? 47. Sancti suam vilitatem, ac Dei munera et judicia semper considerant. — Hominem Deus magnificat, quia largitate rationis ditat, infusione gratiae visitat, honore collatae virtutis exaltat. Cumque per semetipsum nihil sit, esse tamen eum cognitionis suae participem, benignitatis munere concedit. Sed erga eumdem magnificatum hominem cor suum Dominus apponit, quia post dona judicium exerit, merita subtiliter pensat, vitae pondera vehementer examinat, et tanto ab eo post districtius poenas exigit, quanto hunc impenso munere largius praevenit. Vir igitur sanctus immensitatem supernae majestatis aspiciat, atque ad infirmitatem propriam considerationis oculum reducat. Videat quia caro capere non valet hoc quod de semetipsa Veritas per spiritum docet. Videat quia etiam sublevatus hominis spiritus judicium tolerare non sufficit quod Deus sub examine districtae retributionis intendit, et dicat: Quid est homo, quia magnificas eum? aut quid apponis erga eum cor tuum? Ac si aperte exclamet, dicens: Magnificatur homo spiritali munere, sed tamen caro est; et vias ejus post munera districte consideras, sed tamen si remota pietate judicetur, pondus quod de tua subtilitate imminet, ferre nec sublevatus ad justitiam spiritus valet, quia etsi hunc ultra se tua dona dilatant, ad inquisitionem tamen tui districti examinis sua infirmitas angustat. Unde et adhuc apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

VERS. 18. — Visitas eum diluculo, et subito probas illum. 48. Quos donis ditavit Deus, tentationibus probat. Ut quid ex Deo, quid ex se sint, discant. Ideo tunc lubricis cogitationibus turbantur. — Quis nostrum nesciat quia diluculum dicitur cum jam nocturna tempora in claritatem lucis mutantur? Nos itaque noctis tenebris premimur cum perpetratione iniquitatis obscuramur. Sed nox in lucem vertitur cum erroris nostri obscuritas veritatis

cognitione irradiatui Nox in lucem vertitur cum corda nostra justitiae fulgor illuminat, quae caecitas culpae deprimebat. Hoc diluculum discipulorum mentibus oriri Paulus aspexerat cum dicebat: Nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit (Rom. XIII, 12). Diluculo ergo nos Dominus visitat, quia erroris nostri tenebras luce suae cognitionis illustrat, contemplationis munere sublevat, in arcem virtutis exaltat. Sed notandum quod Deus postquam diluculo visitat, subito hominem probat, quia et accedendo corda nostra ad virtutes provehit, et recedendo concuti tentatione permittit. Si enim post virtutum munera nulla tentatione concutitur, has se habere animus ex semetipso gloriatur. Ut ergo et firmitatis dona habeat, et infirmitatem suam humiliter agnoscat, per accessum gratiae ad alta sustollitur, et per recessum quid ex semetipso sit probatur. Quod bene nobis ex historia sacrae lectionis innuitur (III Reg. III, 16), qua Salomon et divinitus accepisse sapientiam, et tamen post acceptam eamdem sapientiam meretricum statim pulsatus quaestione memoratur. Mox enim ut tantae revelationis gratiam accepit, certamen turpium mulierum pertulit, quia nimirum saepe cum mentem nostram concessis 266 virtutibus respectus intimae largitatis illuminat, hanc protinus etiam lubricae cogitationes turbant, ut quae sublevata immmenso munere exsultat, etiam tentatione pulsata quid sit inveniat. Sic Elias et visitatus diluculo, sermone coelos aperuit; et tamen probatus subito, infirmus per deserta fugiens, unam mulierem expavit (III Reg. XIX, 3). Sic Paulus ad tertium coelum ducitur, paradisi penetrans secreta considerat (II Cor. XII, 2); et tamen, ad semetipsum rediens, contra carnis bellum laborat, legem aliam in membris sustinet, cujus in se rebellione fatigari spiritus legem dolet (Rom. VII, 21). Diluculo ergo Deus visitat, sed subito post visitationem probat, quia et collato munere sublevat, et abstracto ad paululum, ipsum sibi hominem demonstrat. Quod eo usque procul dubio patimur, quo, detersa funditus labe peccati, ad promissae incorruptionis substantiam reformemur. Unde adhuc apte subditur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 19. — Usquequo non parcis mihi, nec dimittis me, ut glutiam salivam meam? 49. Contemplationis sapor, non satietas hic datur. — Saliva in os ex capite labitur, ab ore vero ad ventrem ducitur cum glutitur. Quid itaque est caput nostrum nisi divinitas? per quam existendi principium sumimus, ut creatura simus, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Caput viri Christus, caput autem Christi Deus (I Cor. XI, 3). Quid autem venter noster est, nisi mens? quae dum cibum suum, supernum videlicet intellectum suscipit, refecta procul dubio omnium membra actionum regit. Nisi enim sacra eloquia aliquando mentem nomine ventris exprimerent, Salomon utique non dixisset: Lucerna Domini spiraculum hominis, quae investigat omnia secreta ventris (Prov. XX, 27), quia nimirum dum nos gratia superni respectus illuminat, cuncta etiam mentis nostrae nobis absconsa manifestat. Quid ergo salivae nomine nisi sapor intimae contemplationis accipitur? quae ad os a capite defluit, quia de claritate conditoris adhuc in hac vita nos positos vix gustu revelationis tangit. Unde et Redemptor veniens salivam luto miscuit, et caeci nati oculos reparavit (Joan. IX, 6), quia superna gratia carnalem cogitationem nostram per admistionem suae contemplationis irradiat, et ab originali caecitate hominem ad intellectum reformat. Nam quia a paradisi gaudiis expulsum in hoc jam exsilio natura edidit, quasi a nativitate homo sine oculis processit. Sed sicut sanctus vir insinuat, haec saliva ad os quidem labitur, ut vero ad ventrem usque perveniat non glutitur, quia divinitatis contemplatio sensum, tangit, sed plene mentem non reficit, quoniam perfecte animus conspicere non valet quod adhuc, quia caligo corruptionis praepedit, raptim videt. 50. Mens mole corporis pressa, supernae luci diu inhaerere non valet. — Ecce enim electorum mens jam terrena desideria subjicit, jam cuncta quae considerat praeterire transcendit, jam ab exteriorum delectatione suspenditur, et quae sint bona invisibilia rimatur, atque haec agens plerumque in dulcedinem supernae

contemplationis rapitur, jamque de intimis aliquid quasi per caliginem conspicit, et ardenti desiderio interesse spiritalibus angelorum ministeriis conatur; gustu incircumscripti luminis pascitur, et ultra se evecta ad semetipsam relabi dedignatur; sed quia adhuc corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam (Sap. IX, 15), inhaerere diu luci 267 non valet, quam raptim videt. Ipsa quippe carnis infirmitas transcendentem se animam retrahit, atque ad cogitanda ima ac necessaria suspirantem reducit. Saliva ergo ex capite defluens os tangit, sed ad ventrem minime pervenit, quia liquore supernae contemplationis jam quidem intellectus noster infunditur, sed nequaquam mens plene satiatur. In ore etenim gustus est, in ventre satietas. Salivam itaque glutire non possumus, quia supernae claritatis bono satiari non permittimur, quod adhuc ex tenuitate gustamus. Sed quia hoc ipsum, quod utcunque jam superne cognoscimus, ex pietate parcentis est, quod vero hoc percipere perfecte non possumus adhuc ex poena vetustae damnationis, recte nunc dicitur: Usquequo non parcis mihi, nec dimittis me, ut glutiam salivam meam? Ac si aperte diceretur: Tunc homini plene parcis, cum hunc ad perfectionem tuae contemplationis admiseris, ut claritatem tuam raptus interius videat, et eum carnis suae corruptio exterius non repellat. Tunc permittis ut salivam glutiam, cum me sapore tuae claritatis usque ad abundantiam satietatis infuderis, ut nequaquam jam per indigentiam gustu oris esuriam, sed in te solidus irrigato mentis ventre subsistam. Sed qui promereri vult bonum quod expetit, debet malum confiteri quod fecit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS 20. — Peccavi; quid faciam tibi, o custos hominum? 51. Homo per se lapsus, per se non valet surgere. — Ecce fatetur malum quod egit, sed bonum quod Deo in recompensationem debeat offerre non invenit, quia ad abluendam culpam quaelibet humanae actionis virtus infirma est, nisi hanc

misericordia parcentis foveat, et non justitia recte judicantis premat. Unde recte per Psalmistam dicitur: Melior est misericordia tua super vitam (Psal. LXII, 40), quia quamlibet videatur innocens, apud districtum tamen judicem nostra nos vita non liberat, si ei reatus sui debitum misericordiae benignitas non relaxat. Vel certe cum dicitur: Quid faciam tibi? patenter ostenditur quia haec ipsa bona quae agere praecipimur, non praeceptori, sed nobis prosunt. Unde rursum per Psalmistam dicitur: Quoniam bonorum meorum non indiges (Psal. XV, 2). Humilitas autem nostrae destitutionis exprimitur cum Deus hominum custos vocatur, quia si ejus nos custodia minime protegit, ante occulti hostis insidias, nostrae sollicitudinis oculus vigilans dormit, Psalmista rursus attestante, qui ait: Nisi Dominus custodierit civitatem, in vanum vigilant qui custodiunt eam (Psal. CXXVI, 1, 2). Per nos namque cecidimus, sed nostris resurgere viribus non valemus. Culpa nos voluntatis propriae semel stravit, sed poena culpae deterius quotidie deprimit. Ad amissam rectitudinem surgere studiorum conatibus nitimur, sed meritorum pondere gravamur. Unde et apte subditur.

CAPUT XXXII.

IBID. — Quare posuisti me contrarium tibi, et factus sum mihimetipsi gravis? 52. Peccando contrarius factus est Deo. — Tunc sibi contrarium Deus hominem posuit, cum homo Deum peccando dereliquit. Serpentis quippe persuasionibus captus hostis ejus exstitit, cujus praecepta contempsit. Justus vero conditor hunc sibi contrarium posuit, quia inimicum ex elatione deputavit. Sed haec ipsa contrarietas culpae 268 facta est homini pondus poenae, ut corruptioni suae male liber serviat, qui bene servus de incorruptionis libertate gaudebat. Salubrem quippe humilitatis arcem deserens, ad infirmitatis jugum superbiendo pervenit, et cervicem cordis erigendo supposuit, quia qui subesse divinis jussionibus noluit, sub suis se necessitatibus stravit. Quod melius ostendimus, si ea quae dejectus sustinet,

et prius carnis, et post pondera mentis exprimamus. 53. Quot modis homo sibi gravis sit, propter corpus. Et propter mentem. Mens nostra ampla et angusta. — Ut enim taceamus hoc, quod dolores tolerat, quod febribus anhelat, sua quadam aegritudine constringitur ipsa haec nostri corporis quae salus vocatur. Nam otio tabescit, opere deficit; inedia deficiens, cibo reficitur ut subsistat; refectione lassescens, abstinentia relevatur ut vigeat; aqua perfunditur, ne arescat; linteis tergitur, ne ipsa nimis perfusione liquefiat; labore vegetatur, ne quiete torpeat; quiete refovetur, ne laboris exercitatione succumbat; fatigata vigiliis, somno reparatur; oppressa somno, vigiliis excutitur, ne sua pejus quiete lassetur; vestibus tegitur, ne frigoris adversitate penetretur; quaesito calore deficiens, aurarum flatu refovetur. Cumque inde molestias invenit, unde vitare molestias quaesivit, male sauciata, ut ita dixerim, de ipso suo medicamine languescit. Remotis ergo febribus, cessantibusque doloribus, ipsa nostra salus aegritudo est, cui curandi necessitas nunquam deest. Quot enim solatia ad vivendi usum quaerimus, quasi tot nostrae aegritudini medicamentis obviamus. Sed ipsum quoque medicamen in vulnus vertitur, quia exquisito remedio paulo diutius inhaerentes, ex eo gravius deficimus, quod provide ad refectionem paramus. Sic nimirum debuit praesumptio corripi, sic superbia sterni. Quia enim elatum semel sumpsimus spiritum, ecce defluens quotidie portamus lutum. 54. Ipsa quoque mens nostra a secreti interioris securo gaudio exclusa, modo spe decipitur, modo pavore vexatur, modo dolore dejicitur, modo falsa hilaritate relevatur; transitoria pertinaciter diligit, eorumque amissione incessanter atteritur, quia et incessanter cursu rapiente permutatur. Rebus autem mutabilibus subdita, et a semetipsa variatur. Nam quaerens quod non habet, anxia percipit; cumque hoc habere coeperit, taedet hanc percepisse quod quaesivit. Amat saepe quod despexerat, despicit quod amabat. Cum labore quae aeterna sunt discit, sed horum repente obliviscitur, si laborare desierit. Diu quaerit, ut parum quid de summis inveniat, sed ad consueta

citius relabens, nec parum in his quae invenit perseverat. Erudiri appetens, vix suam ignorantiam superat, sed erudita, gravius contra scientiae gloriam pugnat. Vix carnis suae sibi tyrannidem subjicit, sed tamen adhuc intus culpae imagines tolerat, cujus jam foris opera vincendo restrinxit. In auctoris sui inquisitione se erigit, sed reverberatam hanc, corporearum rerum amica caligo confundit. Semetipsam qualiter incorporea corpus regat intueri vult, et non valet. Requirit mire quod sibi respondere non sufficit, et sub eo ignara deficit, quod prudenter requirit. 269 Amplam se simul et angustam considerans, qualem se veraciter aestimet, ignorat, quia si ampla non esset, nequaquam tam investiganda requireret, et rursum si angusta non esset, hoc ipsum saltem quod ipsa requirit inveniret. 55. Homo dum relicto Deo, se sibi sufficere credidit, nihil in se nisi tumultum perturbationis invenit. Hoc pressus Job misericordiam Dei postulat. — Bene ergo dicitur: Posuisti me contrarium tibi, et factus sum mihimetipsi gravis, quia dum repulsus homo, et a carne molestias, et a mente quaestiones tolerat, grave nimirum pondus semetipsum portat. Undique languoribus premitur, undique infirmitatibus urgetur, ut qui, relicto Deo, se sibi ad requiem sufficere credidit, nihil in se nisi tumultum perturbationis inveniret, inventumque se fugere quaereret, sed, auctore contempto, quo se fugeret non haberet. Cujus infirmitatis pondera bene quidam sapiens contemplatus, ait: Grave jugum super filios Adam, a die exitus de ventre matris eorum usque ad diem sepulturae in matrem omnium (Eccli. XL, 1). Beatus autem Job ista considerans, et quare ita ordinata sint ingemiscens, non justitiam redarguit, sed misericordiam inquirit, ut percunctando ipse humiliter pulset quod parcendo divina pietas immutet. Ac si aperte dicat: Cur quasi contrarium tibi hominem despicis, qui certus scio quia perire vel ipsum quem despicere crederis non vis? Unde bene adhuc et humilitatem confessionis exprimit, et vocem liberae inquisitionis adjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XXXIII.

VERS. 21. — Cur non tollis peccatum meum, et quare non aufers iniquitatem meam? 56. Mediatorem desiderat et resurrectionem. — Quibus profecto verbis quid aliud quam desiderium praestolati Mediatoris innuitur? de quo Joannes ait: Ecce Agnus Dei, qui tollit peccatum mundi (Joan. I, 29). Vel certe ab humano genere tunc peccatum plene tollitur, cum per incorruptionis gloriam nostra corruptio permutatur. Esse namque a culpa liberi nequaquam possumus, quousque in corpore mortis tenemur. Redemptoris ergo gratiam, vel resurrectionis soliditatem desiderat, qui iniquitatem suam auferri funditus sperat. Unde mox et poenam quam ex origine meruit, et judicium quod ex propria actione pertimescit adjungens subdit:

CAPUT XXXIV.

IBID. — Ecce nunc in pulvere dormiam; et si mane me quaesieris, non subsistam. 57. Dum praesenti poena premitur, de futuris gravius urgetur. Humilitas tegmen a gladio judicis. — Peccanti primo homini dictum est: Pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris (Genes. III, 19). Mane autem dicitur illa tunc manifestatio mentium, quae in adventu judicis apertis cogitationibus quasi post noctis tenebras demonstratur. De quo nimirum mane per Psalmistam dicitur: Mane astabo tibi et videbo (Psal. V, 5). Quaerere autem Dei est hominem subtili interrogatione discutere, et districte discutiendo judicare. Beatus igitur Job humanae dejectionis damna considerans, videat quia et praesenti jam poena premitur, et adhuc de futuris gravius urgetur: Et dicat: Ecce nunc in pulvere dormiam; et si mane me quaesieris, non subsistam. Ac si apertius deploret, dicens: in praesenti quidem mortem jam carnis patior, et tamen adhuc de venturo judicio graviorem mortem, districtionis tuae sententiam, pertimesco: interitum pro culpa sustineo, sed adhuc ad judicium veniens culpas restitui et post interitum formido. 270 Exteriorem ergo mortem considerans, dicat, Ecce nunc in pulvere dormiam;

interiorem metuens adjungat: Et si mane me quaesieris, non subsistam. Quantalibet enim justitia polleant, nequaquam sibi ad innocentiam vel electi sufficiunt, si in judicio districte requirantur. Sed hoc nunc ad solatium suae ereptionis inveniunt, quod nequaquam se posse sufficere humiliter sciunt. Sub humilitatis ergo tegmine a gladio se tantae animadversionis abscondunt, et quo terrorem venturi judicis praestolantes continuo timore trepidant, eo indesinenter agitur, ut paratiores fiant. Sequitur.

CAPUT XXXV.

CAP. VIII, VERS. 1, 2. — Respondens autem Baldad Suhites dixit. Usquequo loqueris talia, et spiritus multiplex sermonis oris tui? 58. Justorum verba injustis gravia. Loquendi quadruplex vis. Unica crimini subjacet. Injustis semper gravia sunt verba justorum; et quae ad aedificationem prolata audiunt, haec quasi superimpositum pondus ferunt. Quod de se aperte Baldad Suhites indicat, dicens: Usquequo loqueris talia? Qui enim usquequo dicit, quia aedificationis verba jam portare non possit ostendit. Sed cum corrigi iniqui despiciunt, bene prolata criminantur. Unde et protinus adjungit: Et spiritus multiplex sermonis oris tui. Cum multiplicitas in sermone reprehenditur, esse procul dubio intelligentiae gravitas in sensu denegatur. Vis quippe summa loquentium, quadrifaria qualitate distinguitur. Nam sunt nonnulli quos sentiendi simul ac dicendi amplitudo dilatat, et sunt nonnulli quos sentiendi simul et dicendi inopia angustat. Sunt nonnulli qui efficaciam dicendi habent, sed acumen sentiendi non habent; et sunt nonnulli qui acumine sentiendi subnixi sunt, sed ex inopia locutionis obmutescunt. Hoc namque in hominibus cernimus, quod in rebus saepe insensibilibus videmus. Nam plerumque et abundans aqua ab intimis ducitur et largis in superficiem meatibus derivatur. Plerumque angusta in intimis latet, et progrediendi rimas difficulter inveniens, foras angustior exsudat. Plerumque minima in absconditis oritur; cumque

patenter qua exeat invenit, ex largo foramine tenuis procedit, magnique se meatus dilatant, sed non est quod fundant. Plerumque vero ampla in absconditis surgit, sed angustis pressa meatibus tenuissime profluit. Sic itaque in aliis os patens emanat, quod largus ingenii fons ministrat. In aliis intellectum nec sensus porrigit, nec lingua fundit. In aliis os quidem ad loquendum patet, sed ad reddendum parata a sensu lingua nihil accipit. In aliis vero largus sentiendi fons a corde exuberat, sed hunc quasi meatus tenuis impar lingua coangustat. In quibus nimirum quatuor dicendi qualitatibus, sola crimini tertia subjacet, quae hoc sibi per locutionem arripit, ad quod per ingenium non assurgit. Nam prima laudanda est, quae utroque valenter pollet. Secunda miseranda, quae utroque humiliter caret. Quarta adjuvanda, quae explere quod sentit non valet. Tertia vero despicienda atque reprimenda, quae, dum sermone se erigit, sensu jacet, quae membris inflatione tumentibus similis, ad aures audientium vasta, sed vacua, procedit. Quod nunc Baldad ad beati Job crimen intorquet, dicens: Spiritus multiplex sermonis oris tui. 271 Qui enim multiplicitatem sermonis ori tribuit, profecto cordis inopiam reprehendit. Ac si aperte dicat: Abundantia spiritus in sermone oris attolleris, sed sensus indigentia coangustaris. Pravi autem, cum recta reprehendunt, ne ipsi quae justa sunt nescire videantur, nota omnibus bona, quae audiendo didicerunt, quasi incognita proferunt. Unde et Baldad protinus adjungit:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 3. — Nunquid Deus supplantat judicium et Omnipotens subvertit quod justum est? 59. Pravi doctrinae laudem aucupantur. Justitiam Dei laudant ubi eis bene est, ubi male damnant. Haec beatus Job nec loquens negaverat, nec reticens ignorabat. Sed procaces quique, ut diximus, etiam nota jactanter proferunt, ut loquendo docti videantur: contemnunt moderate conticescere, ne credantur ex imperitia tacuisse. Sciendum vero est quia

tunc divinae justitiae rectitudinem laudant, cum se ad gaudium incolumitas sublevat, et alios flagella castigant; cum se conspiciunt rerum prosperitate perfrui, alios adversitate fatigari. Nam dum perverse agunt, sed tamen se rectos arbitrantur, hoc quod sibi prospera suppetunt, deberi suis meritis credunt; eoque colligunt quod Deus injuste non judicat, quo quasi justos se adversitas nulla contristat. Sed si eorum vitam quamlibet breviter vis supernae correptionis attigerit, pulsati protinus consilium divini examinis increpant, quod paulo ante incolumes admirando praeferebant, justumque esse judicium, quod suis moribus adversatur, negant, de divina aequitate disputant, ad resultationis verba prosiliunt, et correpti quia deliquerint, gravius delinquunt. Unde bene etiam per Psalmistam contra peccatoris confessionem dicitur: Confitebitur tibi, cum bene feceris ei (Psal. XLVIII, 19). Despecta quippe vox confessionis est, quam format jucunditas prosperitatis. Sola autem confessio habet magni meritum ponderis, quam a veritate rectitudinis nequaquam separat vis doloris, quam usque ad judicium vocis exacuit adversitas testis cordis. Non ergo mirum quod Baldad divinam justitiam laudat, qui nihil adversi ab eadem justitia tolerat. 60. Haereticorum in Ecclesiam adversis pressam insania. — Sed quia amicos beati Job haereticorum tenere speciem diximus, libet ut paucis quomodo Baldad verba haereticorum subreptionibus congruant demonstremus. Hi quippe dum sanctam Ecclesiam temporali corripi animadversione conspiciunt in semetipsis, audacius in jactantiam perversae praedicationis intumescunt; et superni examinis rectitudinem praetendentes, prosperari se ex meritis asserunt, illam vero affligi dignis retributionibus attestantur, et verbis blandientibus subreptionis aditum protinus inter dolores quaerunt, atque aliorum vitam, exprobratis aliorum mortibus, feriunt, ac si illi jam juste defuncti sint qui de Deo credere digna noluerunt. Unde Baldad Suhites, postquam divinam justitiam protulit, illico adjungit:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 4, 5, 6. — Etiamsi filii tui peccaverunt ei, et dimisit eos in manu iniquitatis suae, tu tamen si diluculo surrexeris ad Deum, et Omnipotentem fueris deprecatus, si mundus et rectus incesseris, statim evigilabit ad te, et pacatum reddet habitaculum justitiae. 61. Populorum ab Ecclesia discissionem tanquam erroris argumentum exprobrarant. — Ac si afflictis catholicis errorum praedicatores dicant: Vitae vestrae providete, et quam perversa 272 teneatis, ex eorum qui inter vos defuncti sunt damnatione cognoscite, quia conditori omnium nisi perfidia vestra displiceret, nequaquam a vobis tam numerosos populos interitu saeviente subtraheret. Ait enim: Etiam si filii tui peccaverunt ei, et dimisit eos in manu iniquitatis suae. Quasi aperte dicens: In iniquitatis suae manu dimissi sunt, qui vitam nostrae rectitudinis imitari noluerint. Tu tamen si diluculo surrexeris ad Deum, et Omnipotentem fueris deprecatus. [Vet. XXVI.] Quia enim se haeretici tenere lucem veritatis aestimant, sanctam Ecclesiam quasi in erroris nocte positam, ad diluculum veritatis vocant, quatenus et per cognitionem Dei, quasi per diluculum surgat, et per precem poenitentiae praeterita diluat. Si mundus et rectus incesseris. Mundus videlicet in cogitatione, rectus in opere. Statim evigilabit ad te. Ac si aperte dicat: Quia is qui nunc tribulationibus tuis virtutem suae protectionis non exerit, quasi ab adjutorio errantis dormit. Et pacatum reddet habitaculum justitiae tuae. Id est, praesentis vitae contrarietates amovet, et tranquillitatis protinus securitatem praebet. Quia enim perversi quique temporale gaudium singulare aestimant divinae remunerationis bonum, quae ipsi anxie ambiunt, haec aliis pro magno pollicentur. Unde plerumque fit, ut aut ami sa recuperari spondeant, aut ad majora adhuc praesentis vitae praemia auditorum suorum animos extendant. Quod patenter Baldad exprimit, cum protinus adjungit:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS 7. — In tantum, ut si priora tua fuerint parva, et novissima tua multiplicentur nimis. 62. Quid suis sequacibus promittant — Si vero habitaculum justitiae, consilium mentis vocat, afflictis catholicis errorum magistri pacatum habitaculum justitiae promittunt, quia si eos ad sua pertrahunt, profecto a contentione conticescunt. Namque hi qui trahi ad perversa potuerunt, tanto jam tranquillius temporali pace quieti sunt, quanto longius ab aeterna separantur. Opes quoque intelligentiae se sequentibus crescere spondent. Unde et subditur: In tantum, ut si priora tua fuerunt parva, et novissima tua multiplicentur nimis. Sed quia eorum verbis non facile creditur, quoniam saepe vita contemptibilis demonstratur, antiquorum patrum sententias proferunt, earumque rectitudinem in argumentum sui erroris inflectunt. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXXIX VERS.

8. Interroga enim generationem pristinam, et diligenter investiga patrum memoriam. 63. Antiquorum patrum auctoritate abutuntur. — Generationem pristinam, ac patrum memoriam nequaquam videri, sed investigari admonent: quia hoc in ea nolunt conspici, quod liquido cunctis patet. Nonnunquam vero, more bonorum, quaedam moraliter docent, et qualiter ex praeteritis praesentia colligantur insinuant, atque ex his quae jam a nostris oculis pertranseundo subtracta sunt quam nulla sint quae videntur demonstrant. Unde et adhuc subditur: VERS. 9. — Hesterni quippe sumus, et ignoramus quoniam sicut umbrae dies nostri sunt super terram. 64. Quae jam transacta sunt nos docent quam celeriter caetera sint transitura. — Generatio itaque pristina interroganda proponitur, ut transire tempus vitae praesentis sicut umbra monstretur; quia videlicet si ea quae erant, et jam transacta sunt, ad memoriam reducimus, patenter agnoscimus quam celeriter hoc quoque fugiat quod tenemus. Saepe vero haeretici eosdem 273

nobiscum patres, quos veneramur laudant, sed intellectu depravato, ipsis nos eorum laudibus impugnant. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XLI.

VERS. 10. — Ipsi docebunt te; loquentur, tibi, et de corde suo proferent eloquia. 65. Pravi bona interdum proferunt, sed non bene. Suo tum se mucrone feriunt. — Notandum quod superius dixerat: Spiritus multiplex sermonis oris tui; nunc vero, reductis ad memoriam patribus, dicit: De corde suo proferent eloquia. Ac si vitam sanctae Ecclesiae haeretici detestantes, dicant: Multiplicitatem spiritus in ore habes, in corde non habes. Sed illi contra te audiendi sunt, qui verba ex corde proferentes, recta vivendo docuerunt. Saepe autem pravi, dum suae vitium fortitudinis ignorant, audenter aliorum rectitudinem lacerant; cumque contra bonos sibi auctoritatem increpationis arripiunt, aut ea bona proferunt, quae non videndo, sed audiendo didicerunt; aut ea aliis mala mentientes ingerunt, quae ipsi committunt. Sed cum ea bona proferunt quae servare contemnunt, sciendum est quia plerumque veritas sic per ora adversariorum sonat, ut eorum linguam movens vitam feriat, quatenus culmen rectitudinis loquentes et ignorantes, ipsi et verbis judices, et factis accusatores fiant. Unde Baldad mira quidem contra hypocritas subdit, sed mucrone verbi se impetit, quia simulator justitiae, nisi ex aliquantulo ipse esset, docere justum nequaquam tanta temeritate praesumeret. Et quidem fortia sunt valde quae dicit; sed haec stultis, non autem sapienti, pravis, non recto, dicere debuit, quia et vecordem se asserit qui, hortis sitientibus, in flumen aquam fundit. Sed interim postponentes cui dicitur, pensemus subtiliter quid dicatur, ut nos prolata instruant, quamvis meritum sui auctoris impugnent. Sequitur: VERS. 11. — Nunquid virescere potest seirpus absque humore, aut crescere carectum sine aqua? Cui Baldad scirpum, vel carectum comparet, ipse protinus aperit cum subjungit:

CAPUT XLII.

VERS. 12, 13. — Cum adhuc sit in flore, nec carpatur manu, ante omnes herbas arescit; sic viae omnium qui obliviscuntur Deum, et spes hypocritae peribit. 66. Hypocrita bonorum operum speciem, non fructum habet. Dona Dei ad incrementum damnationis habet. — Scirpi ergo vel carecti nomine hypocritae vitam signat, quae speciem quidem viriditatis habet, sed ad humanos usus fructum utilitatis non habet; quae, sterilitate operis arida permanens, solo sanctitatis colore viridescit. Sed neque sine humore scirpus, neque sine aqua carectum proficit, quia hypocritarum vita ad bona opera infusionem quidem superni muneris percipit, sed, in cunctis quae agit exteriores laudes appetens, a fructu perceptae infusionis inanescit. Saepe namque mira signorum opera faciunt, ab obsessis corporibus spiritus pellunt, et per prophetiae donum ventura quaeque sciendo praeveniunt, sed tamen a largitore tot munerum cogitationis intentione divisi sunt, quia per ejus dona non ejus gloriam, sed proprios favores quaerunt; cumque per accepta bona in sua laude se elevant, ipsis muneribus contra largitorem pugnant. Inde quippe contra dantem superbiunt, unde ei amplius humiles esse debuerunt. Sed eo eos postmodum districtior sententia percutit, quo nunc superna bonitas et ingratos largius infundit. Fitque eis amplitudo muneris 274 incrementum damnationis, quia irrigati fructum non ferunt, sed sub viriditatis colore vacui in altum crescunt. Quos bene per Evangelium Veritas exprimit, dicens: Multi dicent mihi in illa die: Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in nomine tuo daemonia ejecimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus? Et tunc confitebor illis, quia nunquam novi vos, discedite a me qui operamini iniquitatem (Matth. VII, 2). Scirpus igitur vel carectum sine aqua non vivit, quia nimirum hypocritae non nisi ex superno munere viriditatem bonae operationis accipiunt; sed quia hanc in usum propriae laudis arripiunt, in aqua quidem virides, sed tamen inanes crescunt. 67. Hypocrita correptionis est impatiens. — Bene

autem subditur: Cum adhuc sit in flore, nec carpatur manu, ante omnes herbas arescit. Scirpus in flore est hypocrita in laude. Acutis vero angulis surgens carectum manu non carpitur, quia, exasperatis per arrogantiam sensibus, de pravitate sua hypocrita corripi dedignatur. In flore suo manum carpentis incidit, quia in laude hypocrita positus, ne hunc quisquam corripere audeat, asperitate sua protinus vitam corripientis secat. Sanctus namque non esse appetit, sed vocari; et cum fortasse corripitur, quasi in opinionis gloria detruncatur. Deprehensum se in pravitate irascitur, loqui sibi redarguentem prohibet, quia velut in occulto vulnere tactus dolet. Qualis imperitis innotuit, talis vult ab omnibus aestimari; et, paratior mori quam corripi, redargutione deterior redditur, quia quasi dirae percussionis aestimat jaculum puritatis verbum. Unde exasperatus protinus in contumelias surgit, et quae mala exaggeret contra vitam correptoris inquirit. Demonstrare longe incomparabiliter reum reprehensorem suum desiderat, ut innocentem se non suis actibus, sed alienis criminibus ostendat; ita ut saepe homo redargutionis aliquid se dixisse poeniteat, et quasi a carpentis manu, sic a corripientis animo quidam, ut ita dixerim, sanguis moeroris currat. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Noli arguere derisorem, ne oderit te (Prov. IX, 8). Neque enim justo timendum est ne derisor cum corripitur contumelias inferat, sed ne tractus ad odium pejor fiat. 68. Hypocrita in bonis operibus non perseverat. — Inter haec sciendum est quod justorum bona, quia ex corde incipiunt, usque ad praesentis vitae terminum crescunt; hypocritarum vero opera, quia nequaquam sunt in occulto radicata, saepe ante deficiunt quam praesens vita finiatur. Nam plerumque studio sacrae eruditionis insistunt; et quia hanc non praeparandis meritis, sed promerendis favoribus inquirunt, statim ut judicium humanae laudis arripiunt, et per hoc gratiam transitorii profectus assequuntur, tota mente saecularibus curis inserviunt, atque a sacra funditus eruditione vacuantur; et agendo post indicant quantum temporalia diligant, qui sola prius aeterna praedicabant.

Plerumque autem assumptae speciem maturitatis ostendunt; quiete silentii, longanimitate patientiae, continentiae virtute decorantur; sed cum per haec quaesiti culmen honoris attigerint, cumque sibi jam reverentia a cunctis impenditur, protinus se in lasciviam voluptatis fundunt, et bona se non 275 ex corde tenuisse ipsi sibi testes sunt qui haec cito dimiserunt. Nonnunquam vero aliqui quae possident tribuunt, atque indigentibus cuncta largiuntur; sed tamen ante vitae terminum, avaritiae prurigine accensi, aliena appetunt, qui sua largiri videbantur, et pertinaci post crudelitate ambiunt quod ficta prius pietate reliquerunt. Unde et recte nunc dicitur: Cum adhuc sit in flore, ne carpatur manu, ante omnes herbas arescit. Juxta carnem quippe et justi herba sunt, propheta attestante, qui ait: Omnis caro fenum (Isai. XL, 6). Sed ante omnes herbas arescere scirpus dicitur, quia, justis in bono suo permanentibus, a viriditate assumptae rectitudinis hypocritarum vita siccatur. Arescunt herbae etiam reliquae, quia justorum opera cum carnis vita deficiunt. Sed herbarum ariditatem scirpus praevenit, quia priusquam de carne hypocrita transeat, ea quae in se ostenderat virtutum facta derelinquit. De quibus bene etiam per Psalmistam dicitur: Fiant sicut fenum aedificiorum, quod prius quam evellatur arescit (Psal. CXXVIII, 6). Fenum quippe aedificii in alto nascitur, sed nequaquam pingui radice solidatur, quia et hypocrita summa quidem agere cernitur, sed non in eis ex cordis puritate roboratur. Quod nimirum fenum et non evulsum citius arescit, quia videlicet hypocrita et in praesenti adhuc vita subsistit, et jam sanctitatis opera quasi viriditatis speciem amittit. Quia enim sine intentione rectae cogitationis bona studuit agere, haec amittens, indicat se sine radice floruisse. 69. Hypocrita spe sua diu frui non valet. — Sed Baldad, sicut praediximus, cui scirpum vel carectum comparet, illico aperit, cum subjungit: Sic viae omnium qui obliviscuntur Deum, et spes hypocritae peribit. Quid enim cunctis suis operibus hypocrita sperat, nisi honoris reverentiam, gloriam laudis, a melioribus metui, sanctus ab omnibus vocari? Sed permanere spes

hypocritae non valet, quia, aeternitatem non quaerens, fugit quod tenet. Nequaquam quippe mentis ejus intentio in illa gloria figitur quae sine fine possidetur, sed cum transitoriis favoribus inhiat, perdit percipiendo quod laborat, Veritate attestante, quae ait: Amen dico vobis quia receperunt mercedem suam (Matth. VI, 2, 5). Sed haec spes recipiendae mercedis teneri diu non potest, quia pro ostensis operibus honor tribuitur, sed vita ad terminum urgetur; laudes resonant, sed ad finem cum laudibus tempora festinant; et quia nequaquam animus in aeternitatis amore radicatur, cum ipsis profecto rebus quas diligit labitur. Nemo namque valet mobilia diligere et ipse immobilis stare. Qui enim transeuntia amplectitur, eo ipso ad cursum ducitur, quo decurrentibus implicatur. Dicat ergo: Et spes hypocritae peribit, quia humana laus quam magnis laboribus appetit impulsa temporum momentis decurrit. Bene autem subditur:

CAPUT XLIII.

VERS. 14. — Non ei placebit vecordia sua. 70. Rem magni pretii vili vendit hypocrita. Fecundae et neglectae viti similis est. — Magna quippe vecordia est laboriosa agere, et aurae laudis inhiare; forti opere praeceptis coelestibus inservire, sed terrenae retributionis praemium quaerere. Ut enim ita dixerim, qui pro virtute quam agit humanos favores desiderat rem magni meriti vili pretio venalem portat; unde coeli regnum mereri potuit, inde nummum transitorii sermonis quaerit. Vili ergo pretio opus vendit, 276 quia magna impendit, sed minima recipit. Quibus itaque hypocritae similes, nisi fecundis et neglectis vitibus existunt, quae per ubertatem fructum proferunt, sed nequaquam per studium a terra sublevantur? Quod pingues palmites germinant, errantes bestiae conculcant; et quo hoc uberius aspiciunt, projectum in infimis avidius consumunt, quia nimirum hypocritarum opera, dum clara monstrantur, quasi pinguia prodeunt, sed dum humanas laudes appetunt quasi in terra deseruntur. Quae hujus mundi bestiae, maligni

scilicet spiritus comedunt, quia haec ad usum perditionis inflectunt; tantoque ardentius rapiunt, quanto et magna clarius innotescunt. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Culmus stans, non est in eis germen, et non facient farinam; quod etsi fecerint, alieni comedent eam (Osee. VIII, 7). Culmus quippe germen non habet cum vita meritis virtutum caret. Farinam culmus non facit cum is qui in praesenti saeculo proficit nil subtilitatis intelligit, nullum boni operis fructum reddit. 71. Fructibus suis malignos spiritus satiat hypocrita. Pascitur et ipse modo, secus post mortem. — Sed saepe et cum fecerit, hanc alieni comedunt, quia et cum bona opera hypocritae ostendunt, de his malignorum spirituum vota satiantur. Qui enim per haec Deo placere non appetunt, nequaquam agri dominum, sed alienos pascunt. Fecundo itaque hypocrita et neglecto palmiti similis, servare fructum non valet, quia botrus boni operis in terra jacet. Sed tamen hac ipsa sua vecordia pascitur, quia pro bono opere a cunctis honoratur; caeteris praeeminet, subjectas hominum mentes tenet, majoribus locis attollitur, favoribus nutritur. Haec vero ei sua vecordia placet interim, sed non placebit, quia cum retributionis tempus advenerit, in poena displicet quod vecors fuit. Tunc se stulte egisse intelliget, cum pro delectatione laudis sententiam divinae increpationis acceperit. Tunc se vecordem fuisse considerat, cum se pro temporali quam percepit gloria perpetua tormenta castigant. Tunc veram scientiam supplicia aperiunt, quia per haec profecto colligitur nihil fuisse omnia quae transire potuerunt. Unde et recte subditur:

CAPUT XLIV.

IBID. — Et sicut tela aranearum fiducia ejus. 72. Hypocritae fiducia vana, bona coram Deo nulla, praedicatio infructuosa, abstinentia inanis. — Bene hypocritarum fiducia aranearum telis similis dicitur, quia omne quod ad obtinendam gloriam exsudant ventus vitae mortalis dissipat. Nam quoniam aeterna non quaerunt, bona temporalia cum tempore amittunt. Pensandum

quoque est quod fila araneae per ordinem ducunt, quia sua hypocritae quasi sub discretione opera disponunt. Aranearum tela studiose texitur, sed subito flatu dissipatur, quia quidquid hypocrita cum labore peragit aura humani favoris tollit; et dum in appetitu laudis opus deficit, quasi in ventum labor evanescit. Saepe namque et usque ad praesentis vitae terminum hypocritarum facta perdurant, sed quia per haec auctoris laudem non quaerunt, bona ante Dei oculos nunquam fuerunt. Plerumque enim, ut praediximus, sacrae legis eruditione fulciuntur, doctrinae verba proferunt, omne quod sentiunt testimoniis accingunt, nec tamen per haec vitam audientium, sed proprios favores quaerunt, quia nec proferre alia noverunt, nisi quae auditorum corda ad rependendas laudes excutiant, non autem ad lacrymas accendant. 277 Mens quippe concupiscentiis exterioribus occupata igne divini amoris non calet; et idcirco ad supernum desiderium inflammare auditores suos nequeunt verba quae frigido corde proferuntur. Neque enim res quae in se ipsa non arserit aliud accendit. Unde fit plerumque ut hypocritarum dicta et audientes non erudiant, et eosdem ipsos qui se proferunt elatos laudibus deteriores reddant. Attestante etenim Paulo, Scientia inflat, charitas aedificat (I Cor. VIII, 1). Cum ergo charitas aedificando non erigit, scientia inflando pervertit. Plerumque se hypocritae mira abstinentia affligunt, omne robur corporis atterunt, et quasi carnis vitam funditus in carne viventes exstinguunt, sicque per abstinentiam morti appropiant, ut pene quotidie morientes vivant. Sed ad haec humanos oculos quaerunt, admirationis gloriam expetunt, Veritate attestante, quae ait: Exterminant facies suas, ut appareant hominibus jejunantes (Matth. VI, 16). Nam ora pallescunt, corpus debilitate quatitur, pectus interrumpentibus suspiriis urgetur. Sed inter haec, ab ore proximorum sermo admirationis quaeritur, nihilque tanto labore aliud, nisi aestimatio humana cogitatur. Quos nimirum bene Simon ille significat, qui dominicae passionis tempore in angariam crucem portabat, de quo scriptum est: Invenerunt hominem

Cyrenaeum, venientem obviam sibi, nomine Simonem; hunc angariaverunt, ut tolleret crucem Jesu (Matth. XXVII, 32; Marc. XV, 21). Quod enim per angariam agimus, non hoc ex studio amoris operamur. Crucem ergo Jesu in angaria portare est afflictionem abstinentiae pro alia quam necesse est intentione tolerare. An non Jesu crucem in angaria portat, qui quasi ad praeceptum Domini, carnem domat, sed tamen spiritalem patriam non amat? Unde et Simon isdem crucem portat, sed nequaquam moritur, quia omnis hypocrita corpus quidem per abstinentiam afficit, sed tamen per amorem gloriae mundo vivit.. VERS. 15. — Innititur super domum suam, et non stabit; fulciet eam, et non surget. 74. Hypocritae domus super quam innititur, favor humanus. Stare non valet. — Sicut domus exterioris conversationis est aedificium quod inhabitat corpus, ita domus nostrae cogitationis est res quaelibet quam per dilectionem inhabitat animus. Omne quippe quod diligimus, quasi in hoc quiescentes habitamus. Unde Paulus, quia in supernis cor fixerat, in terra quidem 278 positus, sed tamen a terra extraneus, dicebat: Nostra conversatio in coelis est (Philip. III, 20). Mens itaque hypocritae nihil aliud in omne quod agit nisi opinionis suae gloriam cogitat, nec curat quo post per meritum ducitur, sed quid interim dicatur. Domus ergo ejus est delectatio favoris, quam quasi quietus inhabitat, quia per cuncta sua opera ad hanc se intra animum reclinat. Sed stare domus haec non valet, quia laus cum vita praeterit, et humanus favor in judicio non subsistit. Unde et fatuae virgines, quae oleum in vasis non sumpserant, quia in alienis scilicet vocibus gloriam et non in suis conscientiis habebant, turbatae per sponsi praesentiam, dicunt: Date nobis de oleo vestro, quia lampades nostrae exstinguuntur (Matth. XXI, 8). Oleum quippe a proximis petere est gloriam boni operis a testimonio alieni oris implorare. Mens etenim vacua, cum cunctis suis laboribus nihil se intus tenuisse invenerit, testimonium foras quaerit. Ac si aperte fatuae virgines dicant: Cum nos repelli sine retributione conspicitis, dicite in nostro opere quid vidistis. Sed

quia vita hypocritae, scirpi appellatione signata, qualiter in judicio reprobetur audivimus, prius quam districtus judex appareat, qualis ab hominibus habeatur audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVI.

VERS. 16. — 279 Humectus videtur antequam veniat sol. 76. Nunc sanctus creditur hypocrita, sed Christo veniente iniquus apparebit. — Saepe in sacro eloquio Dominus solis appellatione figuratur, sicut per prophetam dicitur: Vobis autem qui timetis nomen Domini, orietur sol justitiae (Mal. IV, 2). Et sicut repulsi in judicio impii dicere Sapientiae libro describuntur: Erravimus a via veritatis, et lumen justitiae non luxit nobis, et sol non est ortus nobis (Sap. V, 6). Ante solem igitur scirpus humidus cernitur, quia prius quam divina districtio in judicio candeat, omnis hypocrita infusum se sanctitatis gratia ostentat; quasi virens aspicitur, quia justus aestimatur, honoris locum obtinet, de gloria sanctitatis pollet, a cunctis ei veneratio defertur, opinio laudis extenditur. Scirpus itaque iste in nocte humidus est; sole autem veniente siccatur, quia nimirum hypocrita in tenebris vitae praesentis sanctus ab omnibus creditur, sed cum districtus judex venerit, quam sit iniquus apparebit. Dicat ergo: Humectus videtur antequam veniat sol, quia virentem se nunc humanis oculis exhibet, sed in calore tunc divini judicii arescet. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVII.

IBID. — Et in ortu suo germen ejus egreditur. 77. Statim ut recte agit, vult laudari hypocrita. Assumpto sanctitatis habitu, interdum pejor fit. — Herba quaelibet nascendo prius a terra producitur, aura et aestibus tangitur, sole ac pluviis nutritur, et tunc demum ad proferendum sui seminis germen aperitur. Scirpus vero cum flore suo nascitur, moxque a terra surgit, sui secum seminis germen producit. Bene ergo per herbas reliquas sancti quilibet, per

scirpum vero hypocrita designatur, quia justi viri, prius quam in opere sanctae conversationis oriantur, hujus vitae hiemem tolerant, eosque gravium persecutionum aestus fatigant; sed cum recta faciunt, nequaquam hic suae rectitudinis remunerationem quaerunt; cum vero a praesentis mundi laboribus exeunt, ad aeternam patriam venientes, exspectata retributione perfruuntur. At contra hypocrita, quia mox in bono opere nascitur, praesentis mundi recipere gloriam conatur. Quasi scirpi more cum germine oritur, qui pro eo quod bene vivere incipit, quaerit statim ut a cunctis honoretur. Germen itaque in ortu est remuneratio in inchoatione. Saepe namque nonnulli apertae pravitatis vias deserunt, sanctitatis habitum sumunt; moxque ut prima limina bene vivendi contigerint, obliti qui fuerint, affligi jam per poenitentiam de consummatis nequitiis nolunt; laudari autem de inchoata justitia appetunt, praeesse caeteris etiam melioribus concupiscunt. Quos plerumque dum juxta votum praesens prosperitas sequitur, multo quam prius fuerant de sanctitatis habitu pejores fiunt. Nam rebus multiplicibus occupati, atque ipsa occupatione confusi, non solum perpetrata minime deplorant, sed adhuc quae deplorentur exaggerant. Scirpus itaque iste qui inter lapides commoratur, super acervum petrarum radices densat, quia omnis hypocrita cogitationes suas in exquirenda hominum admiratione multiplicat. Per omne enim quod hypocritae faciunt, quia occultis cogitationibus laudes hominum requirunt, quasi radices scirpi in acervum petrarum mittunt. Operaturi quippe laudes suas cogitant, laudati autem has secum taciti in cogitationibus versant. 282 Gaudent se praecipuos in humana aestimatione claruisse. Cumque inflati favoribus apud semetipsos intumescunt, saepe mirantur taciti etiam ipsi quod sunt. Videri quotidie semetipsis altiores cupiunt, ac miris inventionibus in opere excrescunt, quia sicut virtutes omne vitium enervant, sic arrogantia roborat. Cogit namque mentem juvenescere, et contra vires valere, quia et quod negat vigor valetudinis, imperat amor laudis. Unde et factis suis, ut diximus,

arbitros inquirunt. Si vero eorum operi testes deesse contingat, narrant ipsi quae gesserint. Cumque efferri favoribus coeperint, saepe eisdem suis operibus quae egisse se referunt mentiendo aliquid adjungunt. Cum vero et vera dicunt, haec dicendo aliena faciunt, quia quaesitis remunerati favoribus, ab eorum intima retributione vacuantur. 82. Hypocrita bona sua dum ostentat, malignis spiritibus prodit. Hostes ad rapinam provocat, dum suas eis divitias detegit. — In eo enim quod bona sua patefaciunt, ostendunt malignis spiritibus, quasi insidiantibus hostibus, quae praedentur. Quorum profecto vitam illa cunctis notissima Ezechiae culpa figuravit, qui postquam una prece, et sub unius noctis spatio, centum octoginta quinque millia hostium angelo feriente prostravit, postquam occasui proximum ad altiora coeli spatia solem reduxit, postquam vitam propinquante jam termino coarctatam in tempora longiora protelavit, susceptis Babylonici regis nuntiis, bona omnia quae possidebat ostendit; sed prophetae voce protinus audivit: Ecce dies venient, et auferentur omnia quae in domo tua sunt, in Babylonem; non relinquetur quidquam, dicit Dominus (IV Reg. XX, 17). Sic sic nimirum hypocritae, postquam magnis virtutibus excrescunt, quia cavere malignorum spirituum insidias negligunt, et celari in eisdem virtutibus nolunt, bona sua ostendendo, hostium faciunt, et prodentes subito amittunt quidquid diutius studentes operantur. Hinc per Psalmistam dicitur: Tradidit in captivitatem virtutes eorum, et pulchritudines eorum in manus inimici (Psal. LXXVII, 61). Virtus quippe et pulchritudo arrogantium inimici manibus traditur, quia omne bonum quod per concupiscentiam laudis ostenditur occulti adversarii juri mancipatur. Hostes namque ad rapinam provocat, qui suas eorum notitiae divitias denudat. Quousque enim ab aeternae patriae securitate disjungimur, per latronum insidiantium iter ambulamus. Qui ergo in itinere depraedari formidat, abscondat necesse est bona quae portat. O miseri, qui affectantes laudes hominum, in semetipsis dissipant fructus laborum; cumque se ostendere alienis oculis appetunt,

damnant quod agunt! Quos nimirum maligni spiritus cum ad jactantiam provocant, eorum, sicut diximus, opera captivantes denudant. Unde sub cujusdam gentis specie antiquorum hostium malitiam signans per prophetam Veritas dicit. Posuit vineam meam in desertum, decorticavit ficum meam, nudans exspoliavit eam, albi facti sunt rami ejus (Joel. I, 7). Insidiantibus quippe spiritibus, Dei vinea in desertum ponitur, cum plena fructibus anima humanae laudis cupiditate dissipatur. Ficum Dei gens ista decorticat, quia seductam mentem in favoris appetitum rapiens, quo hanc ad ostentationem pertrahit, tegmen ei humilitatis tollit; eamque nudans exspoliat, quia 283 quousque in bonis suis absconditur, quasi proprii tegminis cortice vestitur. Cum vero mens hoc quod egerit videri ab aliis concupiscit, quasi spoliata ficus eum qui se texerat corticem amisit. Ubi apte subditur: Albi facti sunt rami ejus, quia ostensa humanis oculis ejus opera candescunt, de sanctitate nomen sumitur, cum recta actio divulgatur. Sed quoniam, subducto cortice, rami fici hujus arefiunt, solerter intuendum est quia facta arrogantium humanis oculis ostensa unde placere appetunt inde siccantur. Mens itaque quae per jactantiam proditur, decorticata recte ficus vocatur, quia et candida est per hoc quod cernitur, et siccitati proxima per hoc quod tegmine corticis nudatur. Intus ergo sunt servanda quae agimus, si ab interno arbitro vicem recipere nostri operis exspectamus. Hinc est enim quod per Evangelium Veritas dicit: Nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua; ut sit eleemosyna tua in abscondito, et Pater tuus, qui videt in abscondito, reddet tibi (Matth. VI, 3). Hinc est quod de electorum Ecclesia per Psalmistam dicitur: Omnis gloria ejus filiae regum ab intus (Psal. XLIV, 14). Hinc Paulus ait: Gloria nostra haec est, testimonium conscientiae nostrae (II Cor. I, 12). Filia quippe regum Ecclesia quae in bono est opere spiritalium principum praedicatione generata. Gloriam intus habet, quia hoc quod agit, in ostentationis jactantiam non habet. Gloriam suam Paulus testimonium conscientiae memorat, quia, favores oris alieni non appetens,

vitae suae gaudia extra semetipsum ponere ignorat. Quia vero non solum ex sua perversitate hypocrita, sed adjuncta etiam sequacium perditione reprobatur, postquam non cognosci a judice dicitur, recte protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT L.

VERS. 18, 19. — Haec est enim laetitia viae ejus ut rursum de terra alii germinentur. 86. Multiplex hypocritae supplicium. — Ac si aperte diceretur: Veniente judice, nequaquam cognoscitur, sed multipliciter supplicia recipit, quia eo latius in sua iniquitate laetatus est, quo et in aliis mala propagavit. Cui enim hic non sufficit iniquitas propria, torqueatur illic necesse est et merito reatus alieni. Nunc itaque simulatores gaudeant, et humana judicia se obtinuisse glorientur; despiciatur justorum simplicitas, atque a calliditate duplicium fatuitas vocetur; citius despectus simplicium transit, citius duplicium gloria percurrit. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT LI.

VERS. 20. — Deus non projiciet simplicem, nec porriget manum malignis: 285 87. Propter bona non bona intentione facta, et propter dolos. — Quia nimirum districtus in judicio apparens, et despectum simplicium glorificando eriget, et malignorum gloriam reprobando confringet. Maligni enim vocantur hypocritae, qui bona non bene faciunt, et recta quaeque sub studio laudis operantur. Manum vero cui porrigimus, hunc videlicet ab imis elevamus. Malignis ergo Deus manum non porrigit, quia quaerentes terrenam gloriam in imo derelinquit, et quamlibet recta videantur esse quae agunt, hos ad gaudia superna non provehit. Vel certe ideo maligni appellantur hypocritae, quia benignitatem erga proximos ostendunt, et dolos suae iniquitatis operiunt. Per omne namque quod vel faciunt, vel loquuntur, simplicitatem exterius exhibent, sed subtilitate interius duplicitatis callent;

puritatem superficie simulant, sed semper malitiam sub specie puritatis occultant. Quos contra bene per Moysen dicitur: Non indues vestem ex lana linoque contextam (Deut. XXII, 11, 12). Per lanam quippe simplicitas, per linum vero subtilitas designatur. Et nimirum vestis, quae ex lana linoque conficitur, linum interius celat, lanam in superficie demonstrat. Vestem ergo ex lana linoque contextam induit, qui in locutione vel actione qua utitur intus subtilitatem malitiae operit, et simplicitatem foras innocentiae ostendit. Quia enim sub puritatis imagine deprehendi calliditas non valet, quasi sub lanae grossitudine linum latet. Bene autem post reprobationem duplicium justorum remuneratio demonstratur, cum protinus subditur:

CAPUT LII.

VERS. 20, 21. — Donec impleatur risu os tuum, et labia tua jubilo. 88. Sanctorum risus post luctum. Jubilum. — Os quippe justorum tunc risu replebitur, cum eorum corda, finitis peregrinationis fletibus, aeternae laetitiae exsultatione satiabuntur. De hoc risu discipulis Veritas dicit: Mundus gaudebit, vos autem contristabimini; sed tristitia vestra vertetur in gaudium (Joan. XVI, 20). Et rursum: Videbo vos, et gaudebit cor vestrum, et gaudium vestrum nemo auferet a vobis (Ibid., 22). De hoc risu sanctae Ecclesiae Salomon ait: Ridebit in die novissimo (Prov. XXXI, 25). De hoc iterum dicitur: Timenti Dominum, bene erit in extremis (Eccli. I, 13). Non autem tunc risus erit corporis, sed risus cordis. Risus enim nunc corporis de lascivia dissolutionis, nam risus cordis tunc de laetitia nascetur securitatis. Cum ergo electi omnes implentur gaudio manifestae contemplationis, quasi ad hilaritatem risus exsiliunt in ore mentis. Jubilum vero dicimus, cum tantam laetitiam corde concipimus, quantam sermonis efficacia non explemus; et tamen mentis exsultatio hoc quod sermone non explicat voce sonat. Bene autem os risu impleri dicitur, labia jubilo, quia in illa aeterna patria, cum justorum mens in exsultationem rapitur, lingua in cantum laudis

elevatur. Qui quoniam tantum vident, quantum dicere non valent, in risu jubilant, quia non explendo resonant quod amant.. VERS. 22. — Qui oderunt te induenter confusione. 90. Reprobi unde erubescent in die judicii. — Justorum hostes in extremo examine confusio induit, quia cum transacta mala redundare sibi ante oculos mentis aspexerint, suus eos undique deprimens reatus vestit. Ad poenam quippe tunc factorum suorum memoriam tolerant, qui nunc quasi a sensu rationis extranei gaudentes peccant. Ibi vident quantum debuerint fugere quod amaverunt, ibi conspiciunt quam lugubre fuerit quod nunc in culpa gratulantur. Tunc animum reatus obnubilat, et recordationis suae jaculis ipsa se conscientia impugnat. Quis igitur digne penset iniquorum confusio quanta tunc erit, quando et foris aeternus judex cernitur, et intus ante oculos culpa versatur? Qui ad haec idcirco perveniunt, quia sola hic transeuntia dilexerunt. Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT LIV.

IBID. — Et tabernaculum impiorum non subsistet. 91. Quae circa terrena bona reproborum affectio. Quae justorum. — Tabernaculum quippe construitur ut ab aestu corpus et frigore defendatur. Quid itaque hoc loco tabernaculi nomine nisi aedificatio terrenae felicitatis exprimitur, per quam super se reprobi casura multiplicant, ut se a praesentis vitae necessitatibus quasi ab aestu et imbribus defendant? Honoribus namque excrescere ambiunt, ne despecti videantur. Terrena aggregando exaggerant, ne inopiae frigore tabescant. Contemnunt curare quod sequitur, et tota intentione satagunt ne quid in praesentibus desit. Student nomen dilatare, ne lateant; et si cuncta ad desiderium suppetant, munitos se in omnibus et felices putant. Ubi ergo 287 mentis habitationem construunt, ibi procul dubio tabernacula fixerunt. Adversa impatienter perferunt, remisse in prosperis laetantur. Sola quae adsunt cogitant, nec ad affectum coelestis patriae ulla recordatione

respirant. Gaudent sibi suppetere bona quae cupiunt; atque ubi carne requiescunt, ibi et mentem exstinguendo sepeliunt, quia, saecularis curae telo trucidati, terrenarum rerum aggerem, quem foras exquirendo multiplicant, hunc semper interius per cogitationem portant. 92. At contra justi nec oblata bona hic pro magno suscipiunt, nec illata mala valde pertimescunt. Sed et cum bonis praesentibus utuntur, ventura mala metuunt; et cum de malis praesentibus gemunt, bonorum sequentium amore consolantur. Sicque temporali refoventur subsidio, sicut viator in stabulo utitur lecto: pausat, et recedere festinat; quiescit corpore, sed ad aliud tendit mente. Nonnunquam vero et adversa perpeti appetunt, in transitoriis prosperari refugiunt, ne delectatione itineris a patriae perventione tardentur, ne gressum cordis in via peregrinationis figant, et quandoque ad conspectum coelestis patriae sine remuneratione perveniant. Gaudent despici, nec dolent se necessitatibus affligi. Qui ergo contra praesentia se adversa non muniunt, quasi contra aestus et pluvias habere tabernaculum nolunt. Unde et Petrus jure reprehenditur, quia necdum mentis perfectione roboratus, veritatis claritate cognita, in terra figere tabernaculum conatur (Matth. XVII, 4; Marc. IX, 2). Justi itaque hic se construere negligunt, ubi peregrinos se et hospites noverunt. Quia enim in propriis gaudere desiderant, esse in alieno felices recusant. Injusti autem quanto longius ab aeternae patriae haereditate divisi sunt, tanto in terra altius fundamenta cogitationis figunt. 288 Hinc est quod ab ipso humanae conditionis exordio, in electa prole Enoch septimus nascitur. Hinc est quod Cain primum filium Enoch vocat, atque ex ejus nomine civitatem quam condidit appellat (Genes. IV, 17). Enoch quippe dedicatio dicitur. Iniqui ergo se in primordiis dedicant, quia in hac vita, quae ante est, cordis radicem plantant, ut hic ad votum floreant, et a sequenti patria funditus arescant. Justis vero Enoch septimus oritur, quia eorum vitae festa dedicatio in fine servatur. Hinc est quod, attestante Paulo, Abraham in casulis habitat (Hebr. XI, 9), quia

habentem fundamenta civitatem, quam supernus artifex construxit, exspectat. Hinc est quod Jacob greges ovium sequens humiliter, graditur (Genes. XXXIII, 14), atque huic Esau obviam veniens tumultu multiplicis comitatus elevatur, quia nimirum et electi hic elationem non habent, et in bonis carnis reprobi laeti tument. Hinc ad Israel Dominus dicit: Si elegeris unum de populo terrae, et constitueris principem super te, non faciet sibi equos et equites (Deut. XVII, 16). Et tamen primus rex ab eodem populo electus, repente ut culmen potestatis attigit, tria millia sibimet equites elegit, in elationem protinus prodiit, ad aedificationem percepti culminis erupit (I Reg. XIII, 2), quia foras restringere sub aequalitate non poterat quod intus animus super caeteros tumebat. Quasi munitum sibi dives ille tabernaculum construxerat, qui dicebat: Anima, habes multa bona reposita in annos multos: requiesce, comede et bibe, et epulare (Luc. XII, 19). Sed quia ejus tabernaculum in veritatis fundamento non subsistit, illico audivit: Stulte, hac nocte repetunt animam tuam abs te; quae praeparasti, cujus erunt (Ibid., 20)? Bene ergo dicitur: Tabernaculum impiorum non subsistet, quia vitae fugientis amatores, dum studiose se in praesentibus construunt, repente ad aeterna rapiuntur.

LIBER NONUS.

CAPUT NONUM CUM TOTO DECIMO EXPLANAT.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

287 1. Perversi recta ut prava adversantium dicta rejiciunt, secus boni. — Perversae mentes si semel ad studium contrarietatis eruperint, sive pravum, seu rectum quid a contradicentibus audiant, adversis hoc responsionibus impugnant, quia cum persona per contrarietatem displicet, nec recta quae protulerit placent. At contra bonorum corda, quibus in odium non venit persona, sed culpa, sic perversa dijudicant, ut recta quae dicuntur assumant. Discernendis quippe contradicentium sensibus aequissimi arbitri resident, et sic male prolata respuunt, ut tamen approbent quae ex veritate cognoscunt. Solet namque inter spinarum multitudinem, etiam de frugis semine spica succrescere. Cauta ergo manu operantis agendum est, ut dum spina tollitur, spica nutriatur, quatenus qui studet eradicare quod pungit, noverit servare quod reficit. Unde et beatus Job, quia Baldad Suhites recte per inquisitionem dixerat: Nunquid Deus supplantat judicium, aut Omnipotens 288 subvertit quod justum est (Job. VIII, 3)? quia vera in hypocritas robustaque protulerat, bene haec et contra pravos generaliter prolata conspiciens, studium propriae defensionis calcat, atque audita protinus approbat, dicens:

CAPUT II.

CAP. IX, VERS. 2. — Vere scio quod ita sit, et quod non justificatur homo compositus Deo. 2. Deo supponi debemus, non componi. — Homo quippe Deo suppositus justitiam percipit, compositus amittit, quia quisquis se auctori bonorum comparat, bono se quod acceperat privat. Qui enim accepta

bona sibi arrogat, suis contra Deum donis pugnat. Unde ergo despectus erigitur, dignum est ut erectus inde destruatur. Sanctus autem vir, quia omne virtutis nostrae meritum esse vitium conspicit, si ab interno arbitro districte judicetur, recte subjungit:

CAPUT III.

Si voluerit contendere cum eo, non poterit respondere ei unum pro mille. 289 3. Dona Dei amittit qui de eis extollitur. — In Scriptura sacra millenarius numerus pro universitate solet intelligi. Hinc etenim Psalmista ait: Verbi quod mandavit in mille generationes (Psal. CIV, 8); cum profecto constet, quod ab ipso mundi exordio usque ad Redemptoris adventum, per evangelistam non amplius quam septuaginta et septem propagines numerentur (Luc. III, 38). Quid ergo in millenario numero, nisi ad proferendam novam sobolem perfecta universitas praescitae generationis exprimitur? Hinc et per Joannem dicitur: Et regnabunt cum eo mille annis (Apoc. XX, 6), quia videlicet regnum sanctae Ecclesiae universitatis perfectione solidatur. Quia vero monas multiplicata in denarium ducitur, denarius per semetipsum ductus in centenarium dilatatur, qui rursus per denarium ductus in millenarium tenditur, cum ab uno incipimus, ut ad millenarium veniamus, quid hoc loco unius appellatione, nisi bene vivendi initium, quid millenarii numeri amplitudine nisi ejusdem bonae vitae perfectio designatur? Cum Deo autem contendere est non ei tribuere, sed sibi gloriam suae virtutis arrogare. Sed sanctus vir conspiciat quia et qui summa jam dona percepit, si de acceptis extollitur, cuncta quae acceperat amittit, et dicat: Si voluerit contendere cum eo, non poterit respondere ei unum pro mille. Qui enim cum auctore contendit, unum pro mille respondere non sufficit, quia qui de perfectione se erigit, habere se bene vivendi nec initium ostendit. Unum namque pro mille respondere non possumus, quia cum de bonae vitae perfectione extollimur, hanc nos nec

inchoasse monstramus. Sed tunc de nostra infirmitate verius concutimur, si quam sit immensa potentia judicis, considerando pensamus. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 4. — Sapiens corde est, et fortis robore. 4. Deus ut sapiens falli, ut fortis vitari non potest. — Quid mirum si conditorem sapientium, sapientem dicimus, quem ipsam esse sapientiam scimus? Et quid mirum quod fortem esse memorat, quem hanc ipsam esse fortitudinem nullus ignorat? Sed sanctus vir duobus verbis in laudem auctoris prolatis, aliquid nobis intimat, unde nos ad cognitionem nostram trepidos reducat. Sapiens quippe Deus dicitur, quia occulta nostra subtiliter agnoscit; et esse fortis adjungitur, quia valenter cognita percutit. Nec falli ergo a nobis, quia sapiens; nec vitari, quia fortis est, valet. Nunc ut sapiens omnia invisibilis aspicit, tunc ut fortis sine ullo obstaculo quos reprobat punit. Qui hoc quoque hic forti sapientia ordinat, ut humana mens cum contra auctorem se elevat, ipsa se sua elatione confundat. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT V.

IBID. — Quis restitit ei, et pacem habuit? 5. Qui Deo resistit, pace cadit. Resistere Deo quid sit. — Qui enim cuncta mirabiliter creat, ipse, ut creata sibimet conveniant ordinat. In quo ergo conditori resistitur, pacis conventio dissipatur, quia ordinata esse nequeunt, quae superni moderaminis dispositionem perdunt. Quae enim subjecta Deo in tranquillitate persisterent, ipsa se sibimet dimissa confundunt, quia in se pacem 290 non inveniunt, cui venienti desuper in auctore contradicunt. Sic summus ille angelicus spiritus, qui subjectus Deo in culmine stare potuisset, semetipsum repulsus patitur, quia per naturae suae inquietudinem foras vagatur. Sic primus humani generis parens, quia auctoris praecepto restitit, carnis

protinus contumeliam sensit; et quia subesse conditori per obedientiam noluit, sub semetipso prostratus, et pacem corporis protinus amisit. Bene ergo dicitur: Quis restitit ei, et pacem habuit? quia perversa mens unde se contra auctorem erigit, inde se in semetipsa confundit. Resistere autem Deo dicimur, cum repugnare ejus dispositionibus conamur. Neque enim nostra infirmitas incommutabili ejus sententiae obviat, sed tamen quod explere non valet tentat. Nam saepe humana infirmitas occulte vim dispositionis agnoscit, et tamen hanc si mutare valeat appetit. Contraire satagit, sed ipso se gladio contradictionis frangit. Ordini interno renititur, sed suis victa conatibus ligatur. Habere ergo pacem resistens non potest, quia dum superbiam confusio sequitur, quod stulte per culpam geritur, hoc in agentis poenam mirabiliter ordinatur. Sed vir sanctus, virtute prophetici spiritus plenus, cum confusionem generaliter humanae superbiae conspicit, ad speciale malum protinus plebis Israeliticae oculos mentis tendit, et quae poena elatos omnes maneat, ex unius gentis interitu ostendit. Nam repente subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT VI.

VERS. 5. — Qui transtulit montes, et nescierunt hi, quos subvertit in furore suo. 6. Praedicitur verbi Dei praedicatio a Judaeis ad gentes transferenda. — In Scriptura sacra saepe montium nomine praedicantium altitudo signatur de quibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Suscipiant montes pacem populo tuo (Psal. LXXI, 3). Electi quippe praedicatores aeternae patriae non immerito montes vocantur, quia per vitae suae celsitudinem ima terrarum deserunt, et coelo propinqui fiunt. Sed montes Veritas transtulit, cum praedicatores sanctos a Judaeae obduratione subtraxit. Unde recte etiam per Psalmistam dicitur: Transferentur montes in cor maris (Psal. XLV, 3). In cor enim maris montes translati sunt cum praedicantes apostoli a Judaeae perfidia repulsi, ad intellectum gentilium venerunt. Unde ipsi quoque in suis Actibus dicunt:

Vobis oportebat primum loqui verbum Dei; sed quia repellitis illud, et indignos vos judicastis aeternae vitae, ecce convertimur ad gentes (Act. XIII, 46). Sed hanc eamdem translationem montium hi ipsi nescierunt, qui in Domini furore subversi sunt, quia cum de suis finibus Hebraei apostolos pellerent, lucrum se fecisse arbitrati sunt, quod praedicationis lumen amiserunt. Exigentibus quippe meritis, justa animadversione percussi, tanto intelligentiae errore caecati sunt, ut quod lucem perderent, hoc esse gaudium putarent. Sed repulsis apostolis, per Romanum protinus principem Titum Judaea destruitur, atque in cunctis gentibus sparsa dissipatur. Unde et translatis montibus recte subjungitur:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 6. — Qui commovet terram de loco suo, et columnae ejus concutientur. 291 7. Judaeorum dispersio praedicitur. — De loco quippe suo terra commota est cum plebs Israelitica, de Judaeae finibus evulsa, nimirum colla gentibus subdidit, quia subdi auctori recusavit. Quae scilicet terra columnas habuit, quia in sacerdotes et principes, legis doctores atque Pharisaeos, ruitura ejus pertinaciae structura surrexit. In ipsis namque litterae aedificium tenuit, et tranquillitatis suae tempore, sacrificiorum carnalium quasi superimpositae fabricae onera portavit. Sed translatis montibus, columnae concussae sunt, quia subductis a Judaea apostolis, nec ipsi vivere in illa permissi sunt, qui ab illa vitae praedicatores expulerunt. Dignum quippe erat ut terrenam patriam subacti perderent, cujus amore nequaquam veriti sunt coelestis patriae milites impugnare. Sed expulsis sanctis doctoribus, Judaea funditus torpuit, et justo judicantis examine in erroris sui tenebris mentis oculos clausit. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 7. — Qui praecipit soli, et non oritur; et stellas claudit quasi sub signaculo. 8. Praedicatoribus expulsis Judaeae lux defuit. — Aliquando namque in sacro eloquio solis nomine, praedicatorum claritas designatur; sicut per Joannem dicitur: Factus est sol ut saccus cilicinus (Apoc. VI, 12). In extremo quippe tempore sol quasi cilicinus saccus ostenditur, quia fulgens vita praedicantium, ante reproborum oculos aspera et despecta monstratur. Qui stellarum quoque claritate figurantur, quia dum recta peccatoribus praedicant, tenebras nostrae noctis illustrant. Unde et subtractis praedicatoribus, per prophetam dicitur: Prohibitae sunt stellae pluviarum (Jerem. III, 3). Quia vero sol per diem fulget, stellae obscuritatem noctis irradiant; et plerumque in sacro eloquio diei appellatione aeterna patria, noctis autem nomine praesens vita signatur: praedicatores sancti ut sol nostris oculis fiunt cum contemplationem nobis verae lucis aperiunt, et velut stellae in tenebris lucent cum per activam vitam profuturi nostris necessitatibus terrena disponunt. Quasi in die ut sol coruscant cum ad contemplandam internae claritatis patriam mentis nostrae aciem sublevant; et quasi stellae in nocte resplendent, quia et cum terrena agunt offensurum jamjamque nostri operis pedem exemplo suae rectitudinis dirigunt. Sed quia expulsis praedicatoribus non fuit qui plebi Judaicae in perfidiae suae nocte remanenti vel claritatem contemplationis ostenderet, vel activae vitae lumen aperiret (veritas quippe, quae hanc repulsa deseruit, subtracto praedicationis lumine, merito suae pravitatis excaecavit), recte dicitur: Qui praecipit soli, et non oritur; et stellas claudit quasi sub signaculo. Oriri quippe ei solem noluit, a qua praedicantium animum divertit. Et quasi sub signaculo stellas clausit, qui dum praedicatores suos per silentium intra semetipsos retinuit, caecis iniquorum sensibus coeleste lumen abscondit. VERS. 8. — Qui extendit coelos solus. 10. Evangelium a Judaeis repelli permisit Deus, ut in omnes gentes diffunderetur. — Quid namque coelorum nomine nisi haec eadem coelestis praedicantium vita

designatur? De quibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei (Psal. XVIII, 1). Ipsi igitur coeli, ipsi sol esse memorantur; coeli scilicet, quia intercedendo protegunt; sol autem, quia praedicando vim luminis ostendunt. Commota igitur terra, coeli extensi sunt, quia cum Judaea ad vim persecutionis infremuit, apostolorum vitam Dominus in cunctarum gentium cognitionem dilatavit; et dum illa per judicium in mundum captiva dispergitur, isti ubique per gratiam in honorem tenduntur. Angusti quippe coeli fuerant, cum una plebs tot egregios praedicatores tenebat. Quis enim gentilium Petrum nosset, si in solius Israelitici populi praedicatione remaneret? Quis Pauli virtutes agnosceret, nisi hunc Judaea ad nostram notitiam persequendo transmisisset? Ecce jam qui flagris et contumeliis ab Israelitica plebe repulsi sunt per mundi fines honorantur. Solus ergo Dominus coelos tetendit, qui secreti mira dispensatione consilii praedicatores suos unde permisit in una gente opprimi, fecit in mundi cardines inde dilatari. Sed neque ipsa haec praesenti dedita mundo gentilitas, cum culpas ejus apostolorum lingua corripuit, verba vitae libenter accepit. Nam protinus in elationem contradictionis intumuit, atque ad crudelitatem se persecutionis excitavit. Sed quae praedicationis verbis contraire nititur, signorum citius admiratione temperatur. Unde apte quoque in auctoris laudem subjungitur:

CAPUT X.

IBID. — Et graditur super fluctus maris. 293 11. Gentilium persecutiones miraculorum virtute frangendae. — Quid enim maris nomine nisi in bonorum nece saeviens mundi hujus amaritudo signatur? De quo et per Psalmistam dicitur: Congregans quasi in utre aquas maris (Psal. XXXII, 7). Aquas etenim maris quasi in utre Dom nus congregat cum, miro moderamine cuncta disponens, in suis clausas cordibus carnalium minas frenat. Super fluctus ergo maris Dominus graditur, quia cum se procellae

persecutionis erigunt, miraculorum ejus obstupefactione franguntur. Qui enim tumores humanae vesaniae mitigat, quasi erectas in cumulo undas calcat. Nam cum morem suum gentilitas destrui novae conversationis praedicatione conspiceret, cum mundi hujus divites elationi suae contraire viderent facta pauperum, cum sapientes saeculi adversari sibi imperitorum verba pensarent, in persecutionis protinus tempestatem tumuerunt. Sed qui, verborum adversitate commoti, ad persecutionis procellas insiliunt, signorum, ut diximus, admiratione temperantur. Tot ergo in his fluctibus Dominus gressus posuit, quot superbis persecutoribus miracula ostendit. Unde bene rursum per Psalmistam dicitur: Mirabiles elationes maris, mirabilis in excelsis Dominus (Psal. XCII, 4), quia contra electorum vitam ad persecutionis undas mundus se mirabiliter extulit, sed has supernorum conditor sublevata virtute praedicantium mirabilius stravit; ministros etenim suos plus ostendit posse per miracula, quam potestates terrenae tumuerant per iram. Quod bene etiam per Jeremiam Dominus exteriora narrans, interiora denuntians, dicit: Posui arenam terminum mari, praeceptum sempiternum quod non praeteribit; et commovebuntur, et non poterunt, et intumescent fluctus ejus, et non transibunt illum (Jerem. V, 22). Arenam quippe Dominus mari terminum posuit, quia ad frangendam mundi gloriam abjectos et pauperes elegit. Cujus nimirum maris fluctus intumescunt, cum potestates saeculi ad commotionem persecutionis exsiliunt. Sed transire arenam nequeunt, quia despectorum miraculis et humilitate franguntur. Sed dum mare saevit, dum per insaniae suae fluctus erigitur, quia tamen virtutis intimae ostensione calcatur, sancta Ecclesia proficit, atque ad statum sui ordinis per temporum incrementa consurgit. Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 9. — Qui facit Arcturum, et Orionas, et Hyadas, et interiora Austri.

12. Verbis sapientum mundi cur utatur Scriptura. — Nequaquam sermo

veritatis vanas Hesiodi, Arati, et Callimachi fabulas sequitur, ut Arcturum nominans, extremam stellarum septem caudam Ursae suspicetur, et quasi Orion gladium teneat amator insanus. Haec quippe astrorum nomina a cultoribus sapientiae carnalis inventa sunt; sed Scriptura sacra idcirco eisdem vocabulis utitur, ut res quas insinuare appetit notitia usitatae appellationis exprimantur. Nam si astra quae vellet per ignota nobis nomina diceret, homo, pro quo haec eadem Scriptura facta est, nesciret procul dubio quid audiret. Sic igitur in sacro eloquio sapientes Dei sermonem trahunt a sapientibus saeculi, sicut in eo pro utilitate hominis vocem in se humanae passionis ipse conditor hominum sumit Deus, ut videlicet dicat: Poenitet me 294 fecisse hominem super terram (Genes. VI, 6, 7); cum profecto constet quia is qui cuncta prius quam veniant conspicit, nequaquam postquam aliquid fecerit poenitendo resipiscat. Quid ergo mirum si spiritales viri utuntur verbis carnalium, quando ipse ineffabilis et creator omnium Spiritus, ut ad intellectum suum carnem pertrahat, in se ipso carnis sermonem format? In Scriptura igitur sacra dum nota astrorum nomina audimus, de quibus astris sermo moveator agnoscimus. Cum vero quae narrentur astra perpendimus, restat ut ex eorum motibus ad spiritualis intelligentiae arcana surgamus. Neque enim juxta litteram mirum aliquid dicitur, quod Deus Arcturum, Orionas, et Hyadas fecit, de quo nimirum constat quia omnino in mundo nihil sit quod ipse non fecerit. Sed sanctus vir haec fecisse Dominum dicit: per quae signari proprie ea quae spiritaliter geruntur intelligit. 13. Arcturus significat Ecclesiam. — Quid namque Arcturi nomine, qui, in coeli axe constitutus, septem stellarum radiis fulget, nisi Ecclesia universalis exprimitur, quae in Joannis Apocalypsi per septem Ecclesias septemque candelabra figuratur (Apoc. I, 12, 20)? Quae dum dona in se septiformis gratiae Spiritus continet, claritate summae virtutis irradians, quasi ab axe veritatis lucet. Pensandum quoque est quod Arcturus semper versatur, et nunquam mergitur, quia et sancta Ecclesia persecutiones

iniquorum sine cessatione tolerat, sed tamen usque ad mundi terminum sine defectu perdurat. Saepe namque eam reprobi, quia usque ad internecionem persecuti sunt, quasi hanc se funditus exstinxisse crediderunt; sed eo multiplicius ad statum sui provectus rediit, quo inter manus persequentium moriendo laboravit. Arcturus ergo dum versatur erigitur, quia tunc sancta Ecclesia valentius in veritate reficitur, cum ardentius pro veritate fatigatur. 14. Oriones martyres. — Unde apte quoque post Arcturum protinus Orionas subdit. Oriones quippe in ipso pondere temporis hiemalis oriuntur, suoque ortu tempestates excitant, et maria terrasque perturbant. Quid igitur post Arcturum per Orionas nisi martyres designantur? Quid, dum sancta Ecclesia ad statum praedicationis erigitur, pondus persequentium molestiasque passuri, ad coeli faciem quasi in hieme venerunt. His etenim natis, mare terraque turbata est, quia dum gentilitas mores suos destrui, apparente illorum fortitudine, doluit, in eorum necem non solum iracundos ac turbidos, sed etiam placidos erexit. Ex Orionibus itaque hiems inhorruit, quia, clarescente sanctorum constantia, frigida mens infidelium ad tempestatem se persecutionis excitavit. Orionas ergo coelum edidit, cum sancta Ecclesia martyres misit. Qui dum loqui recta rudibus ausi sunt, omne pondus ex frigoris adversitate pertulerunt. 15. Hyades doctores. — Bene autem protinus Hyadas subdit, quae juvenescente verno ad coeli faciem prodeunt, et cum jam sol caloris sui vires exerit ostenduntur. Illius quippe signi initiis inhaerent quod sapientes saeculi Taurum vocant, ex quo augeri sol incipit, 295 atque ad extendenda diei spatia ferventior exsurgit. Qui itaque post Orionas Hyadum nomine nisi doctores sanctae Ecclesiae designantur? Qui, subductis martyribus, eo jam tempore ad mundi notitiam venerunt quo fides clarius elucet, et, repressa infidelitatis hieme, altius per corda fidelium sol veritatis calet. Qui, remota tempestate persecutionis, expletis noctibus longae infidelitatis, tunc sanctae Ecclesiae exorti sunt, cum ei jam per credulitatis vernum lucidior annus aperitur. Nec immerito

doctores sancti Hyadum nuncupatione signantur. Graeco quippe eloquio ὑετὸς pluvia vocatur, et Hyades nomen a pluviis acceperunt, quia ortae procul dubio imbres ferunt. Bene ergo Hyadum appellatione expressi sunt qui, ad statum universalis Ecclesiae quasi in coeli faciem deducti, super arentem terram humani pectoris sanctae praedicationis imbres fuderunt. Si enim praedicationis sermo pluvia non esset, Moyses minime dixisset: Exspectetur sicut pluvia eloquium meum (Deut. XXXII, 2); nequaquam per Isaiam Veritas diceret: Mandabo nubibus, ne pluant super eam imbrem (Isai. V, 6); atque hoc, quod paulo ante protulimus: Quamobrem prohibitae sunt stellae pluviarum (Jerem. III, 3). Dum ergo Hyades cum pluviis veniunt, ad coeli spatia altiora sol ducitur, quia, apparente doctorum scientia, dum mens nostra imbre praedicationis infunditur, fidei calor augetur. Et perfusa terra ad fructum proficit, cum lumen aetheris ignescit, quia uberius frugem boni operis reddimus, dum per sacrae eruditionis flammam in corde clarius ardemus. Dumque per eos diebus singulis magis magisque scientia coelestis ostenditur, quasi interni nobis luminis vernum tempus aperitur, ut novus sol nostris mentibus rutilet, et eorum verbis nobis cognitus, se ipso quotidie clarior micet. Urgente etenim mundi fine, superna scientia proficit, et largius cum tempore excrescit. Hinc namque per Danielem dicitur: Pertransibunt plurimi, et multiplex erit scientia (Dan. XII, 4). Hinc Joanni in priori parte revelationis angelus dicit: Signa quae locuta sunt septem tonitrua (Apoc. X, 4). Cui tamen in ejusdem revelationis termino praecipit, dicens: Ne signaveris verba prophetiae libri hujus (Ibid., XXII, 10). Pars quippe revelationis anterior signari praecipitur, terminus prohibetur, quia quidquid in sanctae Ecclesiae initiis latuit, finis quotidie ostendit. Nonnulli vero a Graeca littera quae y dicitur Hyadas nuncupatas arbitrantur. Quod si ita est, significationi quam diximus contrarium non est. Doctores enim his stellis non inconvenienter expressi sunt quae a litteris nomen trahunt. Sed quamvis Hyades ab ejusdem litterae visione non discrepent, certum tamen

est quia ὑετὸς imber dicitur, et ortae pluvias apportant. 16. In Ecclesia fulserunt apostoli, tum martyres, post doctores. — Vir igitur sanctus redemptionis nostrae ordinem contemplatus admiretur, atque admirans exclamet, dicens: Qui extendit coelos solus, et graditur super fluctus maris; qui facit Arcturum, et Orionas, et Hyadas. Extensis etenim coelis, Dominus formavit Arcturum, quia, in honorem deductis apostolis, in coelesti conversatione fundavit Ecclesiam. Formato quoque Arcturo, fecit 296 Orionas, quia, roborata fide universalis Ecclesiae, contra procellas mundi edidit martyres. Editis quoque Orionibus, protulit Hyadas, quia, convalescentibus contra adversa martyribus, ad infundendam ariditatem humanorum cordium doctrinam contulit magistrorum. Isti itaque sunt astrorum spiritalium ordines, qui, dum summis virtutibus eminent, semper ex supernis lucent. 17. Quae sanctis hinc migrantibus gloria praeparata. — Sed post ista quid restat, nisi ut sancta Ecclesia, laboris sui fructum recipiens, ad videnda supernae patriae intima perveniat? Unde apte, quia dixit, Qui facit Arcturum, et Orionas, et Hyadas, protinus addidit: Et interiora Austri. [Vet. IX.] Quid namque in hoc loco Austri nomine nisi fervor sancti Spiritus designatur? quo dum repletus quisque fuerit, ad amorem patriae spiritalis ignescit. Unde et sponsi voce in Canticorum canticis dicitur: Surge, Aquilo, et veni, Auster, perfla hortum meum, et fluent aromata illius (Cant. IV, 16). Austro quippe veniente, Aquilo surgens recedit, cum adventu sancti Spiritus expulsus antiquus hostis, qui in torpore mentem constrinxerat, deserit. Atque hortum sponsi Auster perflat, ut aromata defluant, quia nimirum dum sanctam Ecclesiam donorum suorum virtutibus Spiritus veritatis impleverit, ab ea longe lateque odores boni operis spargit. Interiora ergo Austri sunt occulti illi angelorum ordines, et secretissimi patriae coelestis sinus, quos implet calor Spiritus sancti. Illuc quippe sanctorum animae et nunc corporibus exutae et post corporibus restitutae perveniunt, et quasi astra in abditis occultantur. Ibi per diem, quasi

in meridiano tempore, ardentius solis ignis accenditur, quia conditoris claritas, mortalitatis nostrae jam pressa caligine, manifestius videtur; et velut sphaerae radius ad spatia altiora se elevat, quia de semetipsa nos veritas subtilius illustrat. Ibi lumen intimae contemplationis sine interveniente cernitur umbra mutabilitatis; ibi calor summi luminis sine ulla obscuritate corporis; ibi invisibiles angelorum chori quasi astra in abditis emicant, quae eo nunc ab hominibus videri nequeunt, quo flamma veri luminis altius perfunduntur. Valde itaque mirum est quod, missis apostolis, Dominus coelos tetendit; quod, temperatis persecutionum tumoribus, maris fluctus gradiens repressit; quod solidata Ecclesia, Arcturum statuit; quod, roboratis contra adversa martyribus, Orionas misit; quod, repletis in tranquillitate doctoribus, Hyadas praebuit; sed post haec valde est admirabile quod sinum nobis coelestis patriae quasi interiora Austri praeparavit. 18. Sanctorum pulchritudo alia morum, alia praemiorum. — Pulchrum est hoc omne quod quasi in coeli facie de divina dispensatione cernitur, sed longe illud et incomparabiliter pulchrius ad quod invisibiliter pervenitur. Unde bene iterum sponsus in sponsae suae laudibus dicit: Quam pulchra es, amica mea, quam pulchra! oculi tui columbarum, absque eo quod intrinsecus latet (Cant. IV, 1). Pulchram narrat, et pulchram replicat, quia alia ei est pulchritudo morum in qua nunc cernitur, atque alia pulchritudo praemiorum in qua tunc per conditoris sui speciem sublevabitur. Cujus videlicet membra omnes electi, quia ad cuncta simpliciter incedunt, ejus oculi 297 columbarum vocantur, qui magna luce irradiant, quia et signorum miraculis coruscant. Sed quantum est omne hoc miraculum quod videri potest? Illud de internis miraculum est mirabilius quod videri nunc non potest. De quo illic apte subditur: Absque eo quod intrinsecus latet. Magna quippe gloria aperti operis, sed longe incomparabilis occultae remunerationis. Quod ergo per beatum Job astrorum nomine, hoc Salomonis vocibus oculorum appellatione signatur; et quod per Salomonem dicitur:

Absque eo quod intrinsecus latet, hoc nobis beatus Job intimat, cum Austri interiora commendat. Sed ecce vir sanctus exteriora mirans, interiora considerans, aperta narrans, occulta penetrans, omne quod interius exteriusque agitur dicere conatur; sed opera summae magnitudinis quando explicet lingua carnis? Unde et apte mox haec eadem opera melius deficiendo comprehendit dicens:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 10. — Qui facit magna, et inscrutabilia, et mirabilia, quorum non est numerus. 19. Dei opera facundius obstupescendo quam loquendo laudamus. — Divinae fortitudinis facta tunc verius explemus, cum haec nos explere non posse cognoscimus; tunc facundius loquimur, cum ab his obstupescendo reticemus. Ad narranda quippe Dei opera habet defectus noster, quam sufficienter exerat linguam suam, ut quae comprehendere idonee non valet, haec idonee mutus laudet. Unde bene per Psalmistam dicitur: Laudate eum in potentatibus ejus, laudate eum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis ejus (Psal. CL, 2). Ille quippe Dominum secundum multitudinem magnitudinis ejus laudat, qui se succumbere in ejus laudis expletione considerat. Dicat ergo: Qui facit magna, et inscrutabilia, et mirabilia, quorum non est numerus, videlicet magna virtute, inscrutabilia ratione, innumerabilia multiplicitate. Divina ergo opera, quae explere dicendo non potuit, facundius deficiendo definivit. Sed in consideratione rerum cur longe extra nos ducimur, qui hoc ipsum quoque quod erga nos agitur ignoramus? Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIII VERS.

11. — Si venerit ad me, non videbo eum; et si abierit, non intelligam. 20. Homo ita caecus, ut gratiae donum saepe iram putet, ac vice versa. — Seclusum quippe ab internis gaudiis genus humanum, exigente culpa,

mentis oculos perdidit, et quo meritorum suorum passibus graditur nescit. Saepe enim donum gratiae est, quod iram deputat, et saepe divinae districtionis ira est, quod gratiam putat. Nam plerumque gratiam aestimat dona virtutum, et tamen eisdem donis elatus corruit. Plerumque velut iram metuit adversa tentationum; et tamen, eisdem tentationibus pressus, ad virtutum custodiam cautior exsurgit. Quis enim Deo se propinquare non aestimet cum supernis excrescere se muneribus agnoscit, cum vel prophetiae donum; vel doctrinae magisterium percipit, vel ad exercendam curationis gratiam convalescit? Et tamen saepe mens, dum de virtutis suae securitate resolvitur, insidiante adversario, inopinatae culpae telo perforatur; et inde a Deo in aeternum longe fit, unde ei ad tempus sine cautelae custodia propinquavit. Et quis se derelictum jam gratia divina non deputet cum post experimentum munditiae lacessiri se carnis tentationibus videt, inhonesta ad animum congeri, et ante cogitationis oculos nonnulla improba et immunda 298 versari? Et tamen cum fatigant ista, nec superant, nequaquam per pollutionem trucidant, sed per humilitatem servant, ut infirmum se animus in tentatione deprehendens, totum se ad Divinitatis adjutorium conferat, et sui fiduciam funditus amittat; sicque fit ut inde altius Deo inhaereat, unde se a Deo profundius cecidisse suspirabat. Accessus igitur recessusque Dei a mente nostra minime cognoscitur, quousque rerum alternantium finis ignoratur, quia et de tentatione incertum est utrum probet an trucidet, et de donis nequaquam deprehenditur utrum hic desertos remunerent, an in via nutriant, ut ad patriam perducant. Homo ergo ab internis gaudiis semel expulsus clausas contra se januas secreti spiritalis aspiciat, atque ad semetipsum foras projectus in carne gemat, et, caecitatis suae damna considerans, dicat: Si venerit ad me, non videbo eum; et si abierit, non intelligam. Ac si aperte deploret, dicens: Postquam semel sponte oculos perdidi, quoniam quaesitae noctis caecitatem patior, nec ortum jam, nec occasum solis agnosco. Et tamen homo qui infirmitatis

poena premitur, et caecitatis suae caligine gravatur, ad supernae lucis judicium properat, ut suorum actuum rationem reddat. Unde et mox subditur:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 12. — Si repente interroget, quis respondebit ei? 21. Deo judicanti aut percutienti respondere homo non sufficit. — Repente Deus interrogat cum nos ad districtionem sui examinis inopinatos vocat. Sed interrogationi illius respondere homo non sufficit, quia si remota tunc pietate discutitur, in illo examine etiam justorum vita succumbit. Vel certe interrogat cum duris nos percussionibus pulsat, ut cum mens nostra magna de se in tranquillitate aestimat, semetipsam veraciter qualis sit in perturbatione deprehendat. Et plerumque quoniam percutitur gemit, sed respondere non sufficit, quia et ipsa ei percussionis suae adversitas displicet; sed tamen semetipsum homo considerans, tacet, et divina judicia discutere metuit, quia esse se pulverem agnoscit. Unde et per Paulum dicitur: O homo, tu quis es qui respondeas Deo (Rom. IX, 20)? Respondere Deo non posse convincitur qui homo nominatur, quia per hoc quod de humo sumptus est, judicia superna discutere dignus non est. Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XV.

IBID. — Vel quis ei dicere potest, cur ita facis? 22. Dei facta non discutienda, sed veneranda. — Auctoris facta semper indiscussa veneranda sunt, quia injusta esse nequaquam possunt. Rationem quippe de occulto ejus consilio quaerere nihil est aliud quam contra ejus consilium superbire. Cum ergo factorum causa non deprehenditur, restat ut sub factis illius cum humilitate taceatur, quia nequaquam sufficit sensus carnis, ut secreta penetret majestatis. Qui ergo in factis Dei rationem non videt, infirmitatem suam considerans, cur non videat rationem videt. Unde et per Paulum

quoque subsequenter adjungitur: Nunquid dicet figmentum ei qui se finxit: Quare me fecisti sic (Ibid.)? Quo enim se cernit figmentum divini operis, eo semetipsum redarguit, ne contra manum resultet operantis, quia qui benigne quod non erat fecit, quod est, injuste non deserit. Ad semetipsam ergo in percussione mens redeat, et quod apprehendere non valet, non requirat, ne si divinae irae causa discutitur, amplius discussa 299 provocetur; et quam placare humilitas poterat, inexstinguibiliter superbia accendat. Unde apte quoque de hac eadem ira protinus subditur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 13. — Deus, cujus resistere irae nemo potest, et sub quo curvantur qui portant orbem. 23. Qua ratione irae Dei nemo resistat. Quaestionis solutio. — Mirum valde est quod irae Dei nullum posse resistere dicitur, cum multos indignationi supernae animadversionis obviasse eloquia divina testentur. An non irae Dei Moyses restitit, qui, pro cadente populo erectus, ipsum supernae percussionis impetum mortis suae oblatione restrinxit, dicens: Dimitte illis hanc noxam; alioqui dele me de libro tuo, quem scripsisti (Exod. XXXII, 31)? An non irae Dei Aaron restitit, cum inter viventes ac mortuos thuribulum sumpsit, atque animadversionis ignem incensi fumo temperavit (Num. XVI, 47, 48)? An non Phinees irae Dei restitit, qui, luxuriantes cum alienigenis in ipso coitu trucidans, zelum suum divinae indignationi obtulit, et furorem gladio placavit (Num. XXV, 11)? An non irae Dei David restitit, qui, angelo ferienti se offerens, placationis gratiam et ante tempus propositum exegit (II Reg. XXIV, 25)? An non Elias irae Dei restitit, qui longo jam tempore terra arente, subductas de coelo pluvias verbo revocavit (III Reg. XVIII, 44)? Quomodo ergo divinae irae nullum posse resistere dicitur, cum multos saepe restitisse exemplis existentibus demonstratur? Sed si subtiliter et haec beati Job eloquia, et illorum facta pensamus, et verum cognoscimus quia divinae irae non

resistitur, et verum quia multi saepe restiterunt. Omnes enim sancti qui irae Dei obviant ab ipso accipiunt ut contra impetum percussionis ejus opponantur, atque, ut ita dixerim, cum ipso se erigunt contra ipsum, eosque divina vis sibi opponit secum, quia in eo quod adversum saevientis iram foris obtinent, intus eos gratia irascentis fovet; et famulantes interius levat, quos quasi adversantes exterius tolerat. Portat ergo contradictionem deprecantium quam aspirat; et velut nolenti imponitur, quod ab ipso ut fiat imperatur. Moysi etenim dicit: Dimitte me, ut irascatur furor meus contra eos, et deleam eos; faciamque te in gentem magnam (Exod. XXXII, 10). Quid est servo dicere, Dimitte me, nisi deprecandi ausum praebere? Ac si aperte diceretur: Pensa, quantum apud me valeas, et cognosce quia obtinere poteris quidquid pro populo exoras. Quod quia hac mente agitur, statim venia subjuncta testatur. Cum vero superna indignatio sese, ut ita dixerim, medullitus movet, hanc oppositio humana non retinet (23, q. 4, c. Vasis, § unde Grogorius); nec se utiliter cujuslibet deprecatio objicit, cum semel Deus aliquid ab intimis irascendo disponit. Hinc est enim quod Moyses, qui reatum totius plebis apud Deum suis precibus tersit, dumque se obicem obtulit, divinae iracundiae vim placavit, ad petram Horeb veniens, et pro aquae exhibitione diffidens, repromissionis terram ingredi, Domino irascente, non potuit (Num. XX, 12). Et saepe hac de re affligitur, saepe desiderio se excitante turbatur, et dispositae ultionis iracundiam repellere a semetipso non valuit, qui hanc, volente Domino, et a populo amovit. Hinc David, qui a prostrata plebe postmodum angeli gladium prece compescuit (II Reg. XXIV, 10), prius plorans et ejulans, nudis pedibus filium fugit; et quousque 300 perpetrati facinoris ultionem ad plenum reciperet, iram Dei pro semetipso temperare nequaquam valuit. Hinc Elias, ut sicut homo parum aliquid quasi de divina animadversione sentiret, qui verbo coelos aperuit (III Reg. XVII, 1), ante indignationem mulieris territus per desertum fugit; et pro semetipso infirmatur in formidine, qui furorem Dei placat aliis

per interventionem (Ibid., XIX, 3). Irae igitur Dei et resisti valet, quando ipse qui irascitur opitulatur; et resisti omnino non valet, quando se et ad ulciscendum excitat, et ipse precem quae ei funditur non aspirat. Hinc ad Jeremiam dicitur: Tu ergo noli orare pro populo hoc, et ne assumas pro eis laudem et orationem, quia non exaudiam in tempore clamoris eorum ad me (Jerem. VII, 16). Et rursum: Si steterint Moyses et Samuel coram, me, non est anima mea ad populum istum (Jerem. XV, 1). 24. Orationis pro inimicis virtus. — Qua in re quaeri utiliter potest cur, relictis tot antiquioribus patribus, ad effundendam precem Moyses et Samuel tantummodo praestantius elegantiusque nominantur? Quod tamen facile agnoscimus, si ejus quae diligere et inimicos praecipitur charitatis merita pensamus. Conditoris namque auribus illa maxime oratio commendatur, quae pro inimicis quoque intercedere nititur. Unde et per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos (Matth. V, 44). Et rursum: Cum stabitis ad orandum, dimittite si quid habetis adversus alterum (Marc. XI, 25). Cum vero patrum priorum facta sacro eloquio describente revolvimus, Moysen et Samuelem exorasse pro adversantibus invenimus. Unus quippe eorum saevientis populi persecutionem fugit, et tamen pro vita sui persecutoris intervenit; alter, ex principatu populi dejectus, ipsis suis adversariis dicit: Absit a me hoc peccatum in Domino, quo minus cessem orare pro vobis (I Reg. XII, 23). Quid est ergo in difficultate deprecandi Moysen et Samuelem deducere, nisi apertius indicare quia ejus irae neque illi si astarent obsisterent, qui idcirco pro amicis intervenire citius possent, quia apud hunc intercedere et pro inimicis solerent? Hinc ad eamdem Judaeam dicitur: Plaga inimici percussi te, castigatione crudeli (Jerem. XXX, 14). Et rursum: Quid clamas ad me super contritione tua? Insanabilis est dolor tuus (Ibid., 15). Vir igitur sanctus aspiciat quia nullius interventu divina ira restringitur cum implacabiliter excitatur, et dicat: Deus, cujus resistere irae nemo potest. Quod bene et ad specialem intellectum ducimus,

si ejusdem plebis Israeliticae damna pensamus, quam Redemptor per dispensationis suae mysterium ostensus superbientem deseruit, atque ad cognitionis suae gratiam gentes vocavit. Unde et apte mox subditur: Sub quo curvantur qui portant orbem.. VERS. 15. — Qui si habuero quidpiam justum, non respondebo, sed meum judicem deprecabor. 28. Justitia nostra eget veniae deprecatione. — Ut enim saepe diximus, omnis humana justitia injustitia esse convincitur, si districte judicetur. Prece ergo post justitiam indiget, ut quae succumbere discussa poterat, ex sola judicis pietate convalescat. Quae cum plene a perfectioribus habetur, haberi de illa quidpiam dicitur, quia mens humana et comprehensa vix peragit, et valde extrema sunt quae comprehendit. Dicat ergo: Qui si habuero quidpiam justum, non respondebo, sed meum judicem deprecabor. Velut si apertius fateatur, dicens: Et si ad opus virtutis excrevero, ad vitam non meritis, sed ex venia convalesco. Preci itaque innitendum est, cum recta agimus, ut omne quod juste vivimus, ex humilitate condiamus. 302 Sed plerumque ipsa nostra deprecatio tam multis tentationibus quatitur, ut pene a conspectu judicis repulsa videatur. Et saepe hanc creator misericors percipit; sed quia illibatam se ut vult exerere non valet, super se judicium reprobationis pavet. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 16. — Et cum invocantem me exaudierit, non credo quod exaudierit vocem meam. 29. Animi inter orandum alternantes motus. — Plerumque etenim mens divini amoris igne accenditur, atque ad intuenda coelestia et arcana sublevatur; ad summa jam rapitur, et, perfecto desiderio compuncta, ab infimis alienatur; sed repentina tentatione percussa, quae intentione forti erecta in Deum fuerat, obortis cogitationibus transfixa curvatur; ita ut seipsam discernere nequeat, atque inter vitia virtutesque deprehensa, ex qua parte sit valentior non agnoscat. Nam saepe ad hoc usque perducitur, ut

miretur quomodo tam summa comprehendit, quam cogitatio illicita polluit; et rursum quomodo illicitas cogitationes recipit, quam super se valide fervor spiritus Quos alternantes cogitationum motus in animo bene Psalmista intuens, ait: Ascendunt usque ad coelos, et descendunt usque ad abyssos (Psal. CVI, 26). Usque ad coelos quippe ascendimus cum summa penetramus; sed ad abyssos usque descendimus, cum repente a contemplationis culmine per turpia tentamenta dejicimur. Motus itaque animi dum inter vota et vitia alternant, nimirum sibi certitudinem exauditionis obnubilant. Recte ergo dicitur: Et cum invocantem me exaudierit, non credo quod exaudierit vocem meam, quia mens ex ipsa sua mutabilitate fit trepida; et per hoc quod nolens patitur, repulsam se abjectamque suspicatur. 30. Judicii extremi severitas. Maxime in eos quos diu Dei patientia toleravit. — Libet intueri vir sanctus quanta se subtilitate dijudicat, ne quid in illo divina judicia reprehendant. Infirmitatem namque suam intuens, ait: Quantus ergo sum ego qui respondeam ei, et loquar verbis meis cum eo? [Rec. XII.] De justitiae suae meritis non confidens, sed ad solam se spem postulationis conferens subdit: Qui etiam si habuero quidpiam justum, non respondebo, sed meum judicem deprecabor. Sed de ipsa quoque postulatione pavidus adjungit: Et cum invocantem me exaudierit, non credo quod exaudierit vocem meam. Cur tanta circumspectione trepidat, cur tanta sollicitudine formidat, nisi quia terrorem judicis in extrema districtione considerat, et, vim discussionis illius non ferens, omne quod gerit esse sibi insufficiens pensat? Unde et protinus subdit:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 17. — In turbine enim conteret me. 31. Peccator quisque in turbine atteritur, qui erectus in tranquillitate videbatur, quia quem diu superna longanimitas tolerat, extrema judicii severitas necat; quae recte turbo

dicitur, quia in elementorum commotione revelatur, Psalmista attestante, qui ait: Deus manifestus veniet, Deus noster, et non silebit. Ignis in conspectu ejus ardebit, et in circuitu ejus tempestas valida (Psal. XLIX, 3.) Unde et propheta quoque alius dicit: Dominus in tempestate et turbine viae ejus. (Nah. I, 3). In quo nimirum turbine 303 idcirco justus nequaquam conteritur, quia semper hic sollicite metuit ne conteratur. Perpendit namque, adhuc in praesentis vitae itinere constitutus, humanis actibus exactor operum quam districtus appareat, qui quosdam tunc reatu culpae originalis astrictos etiam sine operibus damnat. Unde recte vir sanctus ex humani generis voce protinus adjungit:

CAPUT XXI.

IBID. — Et multiplicabit vulnera mea etiam sine causa. 32. Damnantur parvuli ex sola culpa originali. — Nonnulli etenim prius a praesenti luce subtrahuntur quam ad proferenda bona malave merita activae vitae perveniant. Quos quia a culpa originis sacramenta salutis non liberant, et hic ex proprio nihil egerunt, et illuc ad tormenta perveniunt. Quibus unum vulnus est corruptibiliter nasci, aliud carnaliter emori. Sed quia post mortem quoque aeterna mors sequitur, occulto eis justoque judicio etiam sine causa vulnera multiplicantur. Perpetua quippe tormenta percipiunt et qui nihil ex propria voluntate peccaverunt. Hinc namque scriptum est: Non est mundus in conspectu ejus nec unius diei infans super terram (Job. XV, 14). Hinc per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu sancto, non potest introire in regnum Dei (Joan. III, 5). Hinc Paulus ait: Eramus natura filii irae, sicut et caeteri (Ephes. II, 3). Qui itaque, nullum proprium adjungens, ex solo originis reatu perimitur, quid iste in illo extremo examine, quantum ad humani sensus aestimationem, nisi sine causa vulneratur? Sed tamen sub divina districtione justum est ut propago mortalis, velut infructuosa arbor, et in ramis servet amaritudinem quam

traxit ex radice. Ait ergo: In turbine enim conteret me, et multiplicabit vulnera mea etiam sine causa. Ac si, aperte humani generis damna considerans, dicat: Districtus judex qua eos animadversione trucidat quos culpa propriae actionis damnat, si et illos in aeternum percutit quos reatus arbitrii non addicit? 33. Job Dei judicium timet. Percussus est ut meritum augeretur, non ut vitium tergeretur. — Quae nimirum dicta nec a beato Job specialiter discrepare cognoscimus, si haec quam vere prolata sunt indagamus. Semetipsum namque subtiliter pensans, atque in omni actione dijudicans, supernae districtionis vim quanta sollicitudine pertimescat insinuat, subdens: In turbine enim conteret me. Ac si aperte dicat: Idcirco hunc semper et in tranquillitate timeo, quia per flagella qualis in turbine veniat non ignoro. Quae flagella scilicet et metuens praevidit, et praevidens pertulit. Unde subjungit: Et multiplicabit vulnera mea etiam sine causa. Ut enim saepe jam diximus, nequaquam beatus Job percussus est ut in eo percussio vitium tergeret, sed ut meritum augeret. Vulneratum se itaque sine causa asserens, hoc de se foris loquitur, quod de illo Veritas in occulto testatur, dicens: Commovisti me adversus eum, ut affligerem eum frustra (Job. II, 3). Vir ergo sanctus superbe non dicit quod veraciter dicit, nec per haec verba a rectitudine discrepat, per quae a judice non discordat. Qui eorumdem protinus vulnerum continuationem exprimit, cum subjungit:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 18. — Non concedit quiescere spiritum meum, et implet me amaritudinibus. 34. Job intus et foris affligitur. — Saepe justis exercitium virtutis est sola exterius 304 adversa tolerare. Sed ut eorum vires certamen plenae probationis erudiat, hos nonnunquam et foris tormenta lacerant, et intus tentamenta castigant. Unde vir sanctus impletum se amaritudinibus asserit, quia cum flagella exterius tolerat, illud est gravius quod de

tentatione adversarii in intimis portat. Sed inter haec mitigat vim doloris considerata aequitas et potentia ferientis. Unde subjungit:

CAPUT XXIII.

VERS. 19. — Si fortitudo quaeritur, robustissimus est; si aequitas judicii, nemo pro me audet testimonium dicere. 35. Aequitas judicii Dei. — Ille quippe vitae causas examinat, qui has per alienum testimonium non explorat, quia qui districtus quandoque ostenditur illator poenae, ipse diu tacitus exstitit testis culpae. Hinc etenim per prophetam dicitur: Ego sum judex et testis (Jerem. XXIX, 23). Hinc rursum ait: Tacui, semper silui, patiens fui, sicut parturiens loquar (Isai. XLII, 14). Parturiens namque cum dolore ejicit quod diu in abditis cum pondere portavit. Post longum ergo silentium, sicut parturiens, Dominus loquitur, quia quod apud se nunc tacitus tolerat, in ultione quandoque judicii quasi cum dolore manifestat. Sed requirendum nobis est, iste vir justus, si pro eo testimonium dicere quisquam praesumeret, nunquid hunc a reatu liberaret? Et si huic alius testimonium non impendit, nunquid ad proferendum pro se testimonium saltem ipse convalescit? Sequitur. VERS. 20. — Si justificare me voluero, os meum condemnabit me; si innocentem ostendero, pravum me comprobabit. 36. Nemo se innocentem certo scit. — Ac si aperte dicat: Quid de aliis loquar, qui ipse de me testimonium ferre non valeo? Sed quia innocentiae tuae testificari non sufficis, nunquid hoc ipsum, quia innocentiam habeas, scis? Subdit:

CAPUT XXV.

VERS. 21. — Etiam si simplex fuero, hoc ipsum ignoravit anima mea. 37. Utilitas et incommodum ignorantiae nostrae. [Vet. XVIII]. Saepe vitium peragit quod virtus inchoavit. — Plerumque si scimus bona quae agimus, ad elationem ducimur; si nescimus, minime servamus. Quis enim aut de

virtutis suae conscientia non quantulumcunque superbiat? Aut quis rursum bonum in se custodiat quod ignorat; sed contra utraque quid superest, nisi ut recta quae agimus sciendo nesciamus, ut haec et recta aestimemus, et minima, quatenus et ad custodiam sensificet animum scientia rectitudinis, et in tumorem non elevet aestimatio minorationis? Sed sunt nonnulla quae sciri a nobis facile nequeunt, etiam cum geruntur. Nam saepe recto studio contra delinquentium culpas accendimur; et cum ultra aequitatis metas per iram rapimur, hoc zelum justae districtionis aestimamus. Saepe officium praedicationis assumimus, ut per hoc fraternae utilitati serviamus; sed nisi placeamus cui loquimur, nequaquam libenter accipitur quod praedicamus. Cumque placere mens utiliter studet, ad amorem laudis propriae turpiter defluit; et quae a captivitate vitiorum alias curabat eruere, ipsa suis favoribus incipit capta servire. Quasi latrunculus quippe est appetitus laudis humanae, qui recto itinere gradientibus ex latere jungitur, ut ex occultis educto gladio gradientium vita trucidetur. Cumque propositae utilitatis intentio ad studia privata 305 deducitur, horrendo modo unum idemque opus culpa peragit, quod virtus inchoavit. Saepe et ab ipsis exordiis aliud cogitatio expetit, aliud actio ostendit.. VERS. 22. — Unum est quod locutus sum, et innocentem et impium ipse consumit. 40. Humana puritas divinae comparata evanescit. Impius Dei ultionem non effugit. Mors omnes invadit. — Innocens a Creatore consumitur, quia quantalibet ejus simplicitas fuerit, divinae magnitudinis simplicitate devoratur. Quamvis enim simplicitatem studiose servemus, ex consideratione tamen intimae puritatis ostenditur quod haec ipsa quam agimus simplicitas non sit. Impius quoque a conditore consumitur, quia, Deo cuncta mirabiliter ordinante, ipsis suis versutiis ejus impietas ligatur. Nam inde se suppliciis et nesciens implicat, unde se aliquid facere scienter exsultat. Quia igitur omnipotens Deus et bonorum innocentiam simplicitate superat, et malorum astutiam penetrans damnat, recte nunc dicitur: Unum est quod locutus sum, et innocentem et impium

ipse consumit. Ac si aperte diceretur: Hoc apud me verbum cogitationis protuli, quia nec innocens, si districte discutior, innocens apparebo; nec impius, si apud me latere voluero, a superni examinis acumine abscondor, quoniam districtus judex, cuncta comprehendens, occulta malitiae mirabiliter penetrat, et suis hanc inventionibus bene ordinans damnat. Vel certe et innocentem et impium ipse consumere dicitur, quia quamvis in mentis vita divisi sint, primae tamen culpae merito aeque ad carnis interitum pertrahuntur. Unde et per Salomonem dicitur: Moritur doctus similiter ut indoctus (Eccle. II, 16). Et rursum: Cuncta subjacent vanitati, et omnia pergunt ad unum locum; de terra facta sunt, et in terram pariter revertuntur (Eccle. III, 19). Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 23. — Si flagellat, occidat semel et non de poenis innocentum rideat. 41. Job mediatorem desiderat qui sua nos morte liberet. — Quis haec non per superbiam prolata crederet, nisi sententiam judicis audiret, qui ait: Non estis locuti coram me rectum, sicut servus meus Job (Job. XLII, 7)? Restat ergo ut nullus auctoris verba reprehendere audeat, quae constat quia judex laudat. Sed tanto in intimis suis cautius subtiliusque rimanda sunt, quanto durius foras sonant. Vir etenim sanctus humani generis damna considerans, unde quo venerint pensans; quod homo, pollicente adversario, boni malique scientiam appetens scire, perdidit etiam semetipsum, ita ut veraciter dicat: Etiam si simplex fuero, hoc ipsum ignorabit anima mea; quod post expulsionis poenam flagella quoque corruptionis sustinet, et adhuc ad carnis, vel certe ad mentis interitum etiam post tormentum tendit, ut recte dicat: Et innocentem et impium ipse consumit; Mediatoris contra haec gratiam requirit, dicens: Si flagellat, occidat semel. Nos enim quia et a Deo mente recessimus, et carne ad pulverem redimus, poena duplae mortis astringimur. Sed venit ad nos qui pro nobis sola carne moreretur, qui

simplam suam duplae nostrae conjungeret, et nos ab utraque morte liberaret. De qua per Paulum dicitur: 307 Quod autem mortuus est peccato, mortuus est semel (Rom. VI, 10). Damna ergo vir sanctus nostrae corruptionis aspiciat, et unam, quae duas nostras destruat, mortem Mediatoris quaerat, atque hanc desiderans dicat: Si flagellat, occidat semel. 42. Desiderium suum non differri appetit. — Sed ecce quasi humilitati renititur, quod protinus subinfertur: Et non de poenis innocentum rideat. Quod tamen valde humillimum sine difficultate cognoscimus, si humili hoc mente pensamus. Cunctis etenim liquet quod omne desiderium poena est cum differtur, Salomone quoque attestante, qui ait: Spes quae differtur affligit animam (Prov. XIII, 12). Ridere autem Dei est humanae nolle afflictioni misereri. Unde per Salomonem rursum Dominus reprobis in culpa durantibus dicit: Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo (Prov. I, 26); id est, afflictioni vestrae nulla pietate compatiar. Ante Redemptoris igitur adventum poenam suam electi omnes habuerunt, quia, aestuante desiderio, incarnationis ejus mysterium videre cupierunt, ipso attestante, qui ait: Multi, dico vobis, justi et prophetae voluerunt videre quae videtis, et non viderunt (Luc. X, 24). Poenae itaque innocentum sunt desideria justorum. Quousque ergo electorum suorum vota Dominus non compatiens distulit, quid aliud quam poenas innocentum risit? Itaque vir sanctus, venturi Redemptoris dona considerans, et votorum suorum dilationem graviter tolerans, dicat: Si flagellat, occidat semel, et non de poenis innocentum rideat. Ac si aperte exoret, dicens: Quia vita nostra quotidie flagello vindictae pro culpa atteritur, ille jam veniat qui pro nobis semel sine culpa moriatur, ut de innocentum poenis Deus ultra non rideat, si ipse carne passibilis apparet in cujus se desideriis mens nostra castigat. Potest ergo nomine impii infidelis ac persecutor populus designari, cui et hoc congruit omnino quod subditur:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. — Quod si non ille est, quis ergo est? 45. Ac si aperte diceretur: Quis unquam impius esse putandus est, si ille populus, qui ipsam pietatem persecutus est, impius non est? Sed considerata vir sanctus Judaicae plebis perfidia, ad semetipsum mentis oculos revocat; dolet quod videre nequeat quem amat; moerore afficitur, quia ex praesenti mundo ante subtrahitur quam salus mundi reveletur. Unde et subdit:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 25. — Dies mei velociores fuerunt cursore; fugerunt, et non viderunt bonum. 46. Antiqui justi dolent se ad Christi tempora non pervenisse. — Cursoris quippe officium est secutura nuntiare. Omnes igitur electi, qui ante adventum Redemptoris orti sunt, quia hunc aut vivendo tantummodo, aut etiam loquendo nuntiarunt, quasi in mundo quidam cursores fuerunt. Sed quia ante praestolatum redemptionis tempus se subtrahi praevident, transire se cursore velocius dolent; diesque suos esse breves ingemiscunt, quia usque ad videndam Redemptoris lucem minime tenduntur. Unde apte dicitur: Fugerunt, et non viderunt bonum. Omnia quae creata sunt bona sunt, Moyse attestante, qui ait: Vidit Deus cuncta quae fecerat, et ecce bona valde (Genes. I, 31). Sed hoc solum bonum principaliter bonum est, per quod haec omnia bona sunt, quae bona non principaliter existunt. De quo bono Veritas per Evangelium dicit: Nemo bonus nisi solus Deus (Luc. XVIII, 19). Quia igitur antiquorum patrum prius dies finiti sunt quam mundo Deus in carne monstraretur, recte de eisdem diebus dicitur: Fugerunt, et non viderunt bonum. Ac si aperte diceretur: Ante exspectatum tempus elapsi sunt, quia ad Redemptoris praesentiam pervenire nequiverunt. Unde adhuc subditur: 309

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 26. — Pertransierunt quasi naves poma portantes. 47. Quem exspectando odorati sunt, ejus nos visu et fructu satiamur. Opertum nobis detulerunt Spiritus fructum. — Hi qui poma deferentes maria transmeant, ipsi quidem fructuum odore perfruuntur, sed eorumdem fructuum aliis cibos ferunt. Quid igitur antiqui patres nisi naves poma portantes exstiterunt? Qui divinae incarnationis mysterium prophetantes, ipsi quidem spei odore potiti sunt, sed nobis fructum de ejusdem spei perfectione detulerunt. Quod enim illi exspectando odorati sunt, hoc nos cernendo et percipiendo satiamur. Unde et Redemptor isdem discipulis dicit: Alii laboraverunt, et vos in labores eorum introistis (Joan. IV, 38). Quorum videlicet dies comparantur navibus, quia decurrunt; et recte poma portantibus, quia electos omnes quos ante Redemptoris praesentiam gestaverunt, per prophetiae valuerunt spiritum exspectatione refovere, non autem manifesta exhibitione reficere. Vel certe quia naves cum poma portant, haec paleis admiscent, ut ad terras illaesa perducant, recte patrum praecedentium dies describuntur navibus poma portantibus similes, quia antiquorum dicta in eo quod mysteria spiritalis vitae denuntiant, per interfusam haec historiae stipulam servant, et opertum nobis fructum Spiritus deferunt cum carnalia loquuntur. Saepe namque dum quaedam narrant propria, ad Divinitatis elevantur arcana. Qui crebro etiam cum altitudinem Divinitatis aspiciunt, ad incarnationis ejus mysterium repente funduntur. Unde adhuc apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXII.

IBID. — Sicut aquila volans ad escam. 48. Velut aquilae a summis ad ima descendunt, Christi carne pascendi. — Moris quippe est aquilae ut irreverberata acie radios solis aspiciat; sed cum refectionis indigentia urgetur, eamdem oculorum aciem, quam radiis solis infixerat, ad respectum cadaveris inclinat; et quamvis ad alta evolet, pro sumendis tamen carnibus terram petit. Sic videlicet, sic antiqui patres fuerunt, qui in quantum

humanitatis infirmitas admittebat, Creatoris lucem erecta mente contemplati sunt; sed incarnandum hunc in mundi fine praescientes, quasi a solis radiis ad terram oculos deflexerunt. Et quasi de summis ad ima veniunt, dum hunc Deum supra omnia et hominem intra omnia agnoscunt. Quem pro humano genere dum passurum moriturumque conspiciunt, qua scilicet morte semetipsos refici atque reformari ad vitam noverunt, quasi more aquilae post contemplatos solis radios in cadavere escam quaerunt. Libet spectare aquilam solis radios intuentem, quae ait: Deus fortis, pater futuri saeculi, princeps pacis (Isai. IX, 6). Sed ab alto volatu celsitudinis ad terras veniat, escam cadaveris inferius inquirat. Paulo post etenim subdit, dicens: Disciplina pacis nostrae super eum, et livore ejus sanati sumus (Isai. LIII, 5). Et rursum: Et homo est, et quis cognoscet eum (Jer. XVII, 10, sec. LXX)? Sublevata ergo in divinitatem mens justi, cum dispensationis gratiam ex ejus carne considerat, quasi a summis repente, ut aquila ad escam volat. Sed ecce ille Israeliticus populus immenso dudum prophetiae spiritu infusus ejusdem prophetiae dona perdidit, atque in ea fide quam praevidendo nuntiaverat non permansit; 310 et a se Redemptoris praesentiam negando repulit, quam cunctis se sequentibus praenuntiando declaravit. Unde et apte protinus per compassionem ad eorum quoque duritiam sermo convertitur, atque ab eis quomodo prophetiae gratia subtrahitur, indicatur. Nam subditur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

VERS. 27. — Cum dixero: Nequaquam ita loquar, commuto faciem meam, et dolore torqueor. 49. Judaeorum perfidia et reprobatio. — Plebs quippe Judaica loqui ut prius noluit, quae eum quem praedixerat negavit. Sed commutata facie dolore torquetur, quia dum interni sui hominis aspectum, quo agnosci a conditore potuerat, foeditate perfidiae polluit, a praesentibus malis incipiens, sub aeterna se ultione damnavit. Quasi enim commutata

facie, ab auctore non cognoscitur, quae perdita bonae conscientiae fide reprobatur. Sed nimirum restat ut suppliciorum dolor torqueat, quam suus non cognoscens conditor ignorat. Quia igitur haec sub Redemptoris nostri significatione transcurrimus, nunc moraliter discutiendo replicemus. SENSUS MORALIS. — 50. CAP. IX, VERS. 25. — Dies mei velociores fuerunt cursore; fugerunt, et non viderunt bonum. — Quibus bonis homo peccando spoliatus, quibus malis obnoxius. — Sicut saepe jam diximus, sic primus homo conditus fuit, ut per augmenta temporum tendi posset ejus vita tantummodo, non evolvi. Sed quia sponte ad culpam decidit, quo attigit vetitum, pertulit decursum, quem nunc homo praesentis vitae desiderio oppressus indesinenter et tolerat et optat. Ne enim finiatur, vivere appetit, sed per augmenta vitae quotidie ad finem tendit. Nec deprehendit valde temporum incrementa quam nulla sint, nisi cum repente transacta fiunt quae venientia longa videbantur. Vir igitur sanctus statum suae conditionis aspiciat, et ex humani generis voce damna decursus ingemiscat, dicens: Dies mei velociores fuerunt cursore; fugerunt, et non viderunt bonum. Ac si aperte dicat: Ad hoc homo conditus fuit, ut bonum, quod Deus est, videre potuisset; sed qui stare ad lucem noluit, fugiendo oculos amisit, quia quo per culpam coepit ad ima decurrere, eo caecitatem pertulit, ne intimum lumen videret. De quibus adhuc diebus apte subjungitur: Pertransierunt quasi naves poma portantes. Naves cum poma portant, fructus terrae videlicet per fluctus ferunt. Terra vero hominis paradisus exstitit, quae hunc inconcussum tenere potuit, si per innocentiam stare voluisset. Sed quia ad mutabilitatis undas per culpam cecidit, ad praesentis vitae maria post terram venit. Poma etiam terrae hujus fuerunt mandati sermo, concessa possibilitas operis, naturae indita intelligentia conditoris. Sed haec poma quae edere in terra renuimus, per maria portamus, quia concessa bona tot munerum inconcussi custodire in paradiso noluimus, et servare nunc in tentationibus conamur. Tendentes ad terminum, aura vitae praesentis impellimur,

mutabilitatis nostrae fluctu fatigamur. Sed quia per crucis mysterium ad ingenita naturae bona restringimur, quasi per lignum poma portamus. Quod tamen intelligi et aliter potest. Naves etenim cum poma portant, suavitatem odoris habent, sed gravitatem ponderis 311 non habent. Et humanum genus paradisi gaudiis expulsum vim contemplationis perdidit, robur conditae fortitudinis amisit; cumque ad superna repetenda se erigit, fragrat quidem odore memoriae, sed digne non exerit pondus vitae. Pomorum ergo odoribus repletur, et tamen huc illucque leviter mentis nostrae navis impellitur, quia et paradisi celsitudinem cum odoris recordatione meminimus, et importunos tentationum fluctus ex carne toleramus. Unde et apte subjungitur: Sicut aquila volans ad escam. [Vet. XXV.] Aquila etenim alto valde volatu suspenditur, et adnisu praepeti ad aethera libratur; sed per appetitum ventris terras expetit, seseque a sublimibus repente deorsum fundit. Sic sic humanum genus in parente primo ad ima de sublimibus corruit, quod nimirum conditionis suae dignitas in rationis celsitudine quasi in aeris libertate suspenderat; sed quia, contra praeceptum, cibum vetitum contigit, per ventris concupiscentiam ad terras venit; et quasi post volatum carnibus pascitur, quia illa libera contemplationis inspiracula perdidit, et deorsum corporeis voluptatibus laetatur. Sicut ergo aquila volans ad escam, dies nostri velociter transeunt, quia quo ima petimus, eo subsistere in vita prohibemur. 51. Quaestiones durae circa hominis lapsum qui refrenandae. Menti etsi justa, tamen dura caecitas. — Sed cum haec ante mentis oculos continua cogitatione revolvimus, duris taciti quaestionibus urgemur, cur omnipotens Deus condidit quem periturum esse praescivit? cur is qui summe potens et summe bonus est nequaquam voluit hominem talem facere qui perire non posset? Cum vero haec tacita mens interrogat, pavet ne ipso interrogationis ausu in superbiam erumpat, seque humiliter comprimit, et cogitationes restringit. Sed eo gravius affligitur, quo inter mala quae sustinet etiam de conditionis suae abscondito intellectu cruciatur. Unde hic quoque

apte subjungitur: Cum dixero, Nequaquam ita loquar, commuto faciem meam, et dolore torqueor. Nequaquam quippe ita nos debere loqui dicimus cum, nostrae infirmitatis modum ex inquisitione transeuntes, nosmetipsos pavore reprehendimus, et supernae reverentiae consideratione refrenamus. In qua refrenatione scilicet mentis nostrae facies commutatur, quia quae prius non capiens audenter summa requirebat, infirmitatem suam postmodum agnoscens, venerari inchoat quod ignorat. Sed in ipsa commutatione dolor est, quia valde affligitur, quoniam primae culpae merito ad intelligenda ea quae de ipsa sunt caecatur. Quae patitur, justa esse considerat; pavet, ne in dolore per licentiam locutionis excedat; ori silentium indicit, sed excitatus dolor eo ipso quo restringitur augetur. Dicat ergo: Cum dixero, Nequaquam ita loquar, commuto faciem meam, et dolore torqueor, quia tunc gravius plerumque affligimur, cum quasi per consolationis studium afflictionis nostrae nobis conamur mala levigare. Sed quisquis, jam subtiliter parentis primi damnatione propagata, humani generis damna considerat, superest ut his adjungere propria metuat. Unde vir sanctus postquam communia intulit, repente specialia subjungit, dicens:
312

CAPUT XXXIV.

VERS. 28. — Verebar omnia opera mea, sciens quod non parceres delinquenti. 52. Operibus etiam bonis timendum Job docet. — Quae beatus Job opera exercuit, sacrae hujus historiae textus ostendit. Holocaustis quippe multiplicibus auctorem placare studuit, quia juxta filiorum numerum, ut scriptum est, consurgens diluculo, offerebat holocausta per singulos; eosque non solum ab immundis actibus, sed a prava quoque cogitatione mundabat. De quo, Scriptura teste, perhibetur: Dicebat enim: Ne forte peccaverint filii mei, et benedixerint Deo in cordibus suis (Job. I, 5). Affectum ergo compassionis exercuit, quia ipse de se amicorum

quaestionibus exactus dicit: Flebam quondam super eum qui afflictus erat (Job. XXX, 25). Ministerium pietatis impendit, qui ait: Oculus fui caeco, et pes claudo (Job. XXIX, 15). Castitatis munditiam in corde custodivit, qui obtestando se aperit, dicens: Si deceptum est cor meum super mulierem (Job. XXXI, 9). Humilitatis culmen medullitus tenuit, qui dicit: Si contempsi judicium subire cum servo meo et ancilla mea, cum disceptarent adversum me (Ibid., 13). Beneficia largitatis impendit, qui ait: Si comedi buccellam meam solus, et non comedit pupillus ex ea (Ibid., 17). Et rursum: Si non benedixerunt mihi latera ejus, et de velleribus ovium mearum calefactus est (Ibid., 20). Gratiam hospitalitatis exhibuit, qui dicit: Foris non mansit peregrinus, ostium meum viatori patuit (Ibid., 32). Et inter haec ad virtutum cumulum per excellentiorem viam charitatis, et inimicos dilexit, qui ait: Si gavisus sum ad ruinam ejus qui me oderat (Ibid., 29). Et rursum: Non enim dedi ad peccandum guttur meum, ut expeterem maledicens animam ejus (Ibid., 30). Quid ergo vir sanctus sua opera verebatur, qui illa semper exhibuit, ex quibus placari Deus erga iniquitates solet? Quid ergo est quod, mira opera faciens, haec ipsa etiam veretur pavens, cum dicit: Verebar omnia opera mea, nisi quod in sancti viri actibus verbisque colligimus, ut si placere Deo veraciter cupimus, postquam perversa subigimus, ipsa in nobis etiam bene gesta timeamus?. Saepe enim bona nostra latrocinanti fraude depereunt, quia rectis se nostris actibus concupiscentiae terrenae subjungunt. Saepe desidia interveniente deficiunt, quia a fervore quo coepta sunt frigescente amore tabefiunt. Quia ergo culpae subreptio vel in ipso virtutis actu vix vincitur, quid ad securitatem superest, nisi ut studiose semper et in virtute timeatur? 54. Delictum nullum est inultum. — Sed post haec valde scrupulosum cordi se objicit quod subjungit: Sciens quod non parceres delinquenti. Si enim delinquenti non parcitur, quis ab aeterna morte eripitur, cum a delicto mundus nemo reperitur? An poenitenti parcit et delinquenti non parcit? Quia cum delicta

plangimus, nequaquam jam delinquentes sumus. Sed quid quod Petrus cum negat respicitur, et Redemptoris negati respectu ad lacrymas vocatur? Quid quod Paulus cum Redemptoris nomen in terra conaretur exstinguere, ejus verba de coelo meruit audire? Sed tamen culpa in utroque punita est, quia et de Petro, teste Evangelio, scriptum est: Recordatus Petrus verbi Jesu, egressus foras, flevit amare (Luc. XXII, 61). Et de Paulo haec eadem, quae hunc vocavit, Veritas dicit: Ego ostendam ei quanta eum oporteat pro nomine meo pati (Act. IX, 16). Delinquenti ergo Dominus nequaquam parcit, quia delictum sine ultione non deserit. Aut enim ipse hoc homo in se poenitens punit, aut hoc Deus cum homine vindicans percutit. Nequaquam igitur peccato parcitur, quia nullatenus sine vindicta laxatur Sic David (De poenit. dist. 1, cap. Si peccatum) audire post confessionem meruit: Dominus transtulit peccatum tuum (II Reg. XII, 13). Et tamen multis post cruciatibus afflictus ac fugiens, reatum culpae quam perpetraverat exsolvit. Sic nos salutis unda a culpa primi parentis absolvimur; sed tamen, reatum ejusdem culpae diluentes, absoluti quoque adhuc carnaliter obimus. Bene ergo dicitur: Sciens quod non parceres delinquenti, quia delicta nostra sive per nos, sive per semetipsum resecat, etiam cum relaxat. Ab electis enim suis iniquitatum maculas studet temporali afflictione tergere, quas in eis in perpetuum non vult videre. Sed saepe mens dum plus justo trepidat, dum pavore quatitur, dum sinistris suspicionibus urgetur, taedet hanc vivere, quae se ad vitam vel per labores ambigit pervenire. Unde et subsequenter adjungitur: VERS. 29. — Si autem et sic impius sum, quare frustra laboravi?

CAPUT XXXV.

314 55. Sancti ita incerti sunt ut confidant, ita confidunt ut non torpeant. — Si enim remota pietate discutimur, opus nostrum poena dignum est, quod remunerari praemiis praestolamur. Vir igitur sanctus, sub occulta judicia

trepidans, dicit: Si autem et sic impius sum, quare frustra laboravi? non quo hunc laborasse poenitet, sed quo incertus esse de praemiis et inter labores dolet. Sciendum vero est quod viri sancti ita incerti sunt ut confidant, atque ita confidunt ut tamen ex securitate non torpeant. Quia ergo plerumque mens et impensa rectis actibus trepidat, restat ut postquam bonum opus agitur lacrymae deprecationis exquirantur, quatenus ad aeterna praemia meritum recti operis subvehat humilitas postulationis. Sed tamen sciendum est quia mundos nos ad perfectum reddere, vel vita, vel lacrymae non valent quousque nos mortalitas nostrae corruptionis tenet. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 30, 31. — Si lotus fuero quasi aquis nivis, et fulserint velut mundissimae manus meae; tamen sordibus intinges me, et abominabuntur me vestimenta mea. 56. Lacrymae mundant, si profluant cum humilitate. Si non propter terrena, sed superna bona. — Aquae enim nivis sunt lamenta humilitatis. Quae profecto humilitas, quia ante districti judicis oculos caeteris virtutibus praeeminet, quasi per magni meriti colorem candet. Sunt namque nonnulli qui lamenta habent, sed humilitatem non habent, quia afflicti plangunt, sed tamen in ipsis fletibus vel contra proximorum vitam superbiunt, vel contra ordinationem conditoris eriguntur. Hi nimirum aquas habent, sed nivis aquas non habent, et mundi esse nequeunt, quia humilitatis fletibus minime lavantur. Aquis autem nivis a culpa se laverat qui confidenter dicebat: Cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non spernit (Psal. L, 19). Qui enim lamentis affliguntur, sed murmurando rebelles sunt, mentem quidem conterunt, sed humiliari contemnunt. Quamvis aquae nivis intelligi et aliter possunt. Aqua enim fontis et fluminis ex terra oritur, aqua vero nivis ex aere proruit. Et sunt plerique qui per orationum lamenta se cruciant, sed tamen totis lamentorum laboribus ad sola terrena desideria exsudant;

compunguntur in precibus, sed felicitatis transitoriae gaudia exquirunt. Hos itaque nivis aqua non abluit, quia eorum fletus ab imis venit. Quasi enim ex terrae aqua perfusi sunt, qui pro terrenis bonis in precibus compunguntur. Qui vero idcirco plorant, quoniam praemia superna desiderant, aqua nivis hos diluit, quia coelestis compunctio infundit. Nam cum perennem patriam per lamenta appetunt, ejusque accensi desideriis plangunt, a summis accipiunt unde mundentur. Per manus autem quid aliud quam opera designantur? Unde quibusdam per prophetam dicitur: Manus vestrae sanguine plenae sunt (Isa. I, 15); id est, opera crudelitate. 57. Perfectam munditiam hic non assequimur. — Notandum vero quod vir sanctus non ait: Fulserunt mundissimae manus meae; sed, velut mundissimae manus meae, quia quousque poena corruptionis astringimur, quamlibet rectis operibus, veram munditiam nequaquam apprehendimus, sed imitamur. Unde et apte subjungitur: Tamen sordibus 315 intinges me. Deus nos sordibus intingere dicitur, intinctos sordibus demonstrare, quia quanto ad illum verius per bona opera surgimus, tanto subtilius vitae nostrae sordes agnoscimus, quibus ab ejus munditia discordamus. Ait ergo: Si lotus fuero quasi aquis nivis, et fulserint velut mundissimae manus meae, tamen sordibus intinges me. Ac si apertius dicat: Quamvis lamentis supernae compunctionis infundar, quamvis per studia rectae operationis exercear, in tua tamen munditia video quia mundus non sum. Intentam quippe Deo animam ipsa adhuc corruptibilis caro diverberat, ejusque amoris pulchritudinem obscenis et illicitis cogitationum motibus foedat. Cui hoc quoque fit gravius, quod saepe neque hoc intelligit unde delinquit. Flagella suscipit, sed districto judici quid 316 in se majus, quidve minus displiceat, non agnoscit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 32. — Neque enim viro, qui similis mei est, respondebo, nec qui mecum in judicio ex aequo possit audiri. 59. Justo quam grave sit ignorare unde delinquit. — Dum cum quolibet in judicio ex aequo contendimus, et quid contra nos dicatur agnoscimus, et in his quae dicimus audimur, et quo objecta patenter apprehendimus, eo audenter ad proposita respondemus. Quia ergo invisibilis judex quae facimus videt, quasi audit quae dicimus; sed quia id quod ei displicet nequaquam plene cognoscimus, quasi quid ipse dicit ignoramus. Vir igitur sanctus vestimentorum suorum abominationem considerans, eo amplius timet, quo audiri ex aequo in judicio non valet, quia quousque corruptionis suae pondere premitur, hoc in poena sua gravius tolerat, quod et sensum sui reprehensoris ignorat. Ac si aperte dicat: In hoc ex aequo non audior, quia et patent cuncta quae facio, et tamen ipse nescio per quanta reprehendor. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS. 33. — Non est qui utrumque valeat arguere, et ponere manum suam in ambobus. 60. Arguere Deum quid sit. — Durum sonat ut quaeratur qui Deum arguat; sed durum non erit, si recurrat ad memoriam quod ipse per alium prophetam dicit. Per Isaiam quippe admonet, dicens: Quiescite agere perverse, discite benefacere, quaerite judicium, subvenite oppresso, judicate pupillo, defendite viduam; et venite, et arguite me, dicit Dominus (Isai. I, 16). Ei namque quem arguimus rationis auctoritate contraimus. Et quid est quod Dominus, agere sancta nos admonens, adjungit: Venite, et arguite me, nisi quod aperte insinuat quantam bonis actibus fiduciam praestat? Ac si patenter dicat: Recta agite, et animadversionis meae motibus non jam per deprecationis gemitum, sed per fiduciam auctoritatis obviate. Hinc etenim Joannes dicit: Si cor nostrum non reprehenderit nos, fiduciam habemus ad Deum (I Joan. III, 21). Hinc est quod Moyses, quia placet serviens, auditur tacens, cum silenti dicitur: Quid clamas ad me (Exod. XIV, 15)? Hinc est

quod irascentem retinet, cum audit: Dimitte me, ut irascatur furor meus contra populum istum (Exod. XXXII, 10). Hinc est quod arguentem Dominus non habuisse se queritur, cum per prophetam dicitur: Quaesivi virum qui interponeret sepem, et staret oppositus contra me, ne dissiparem eam, et non inveni (Ezech. XXII, 30). Hinc est quod graviter Isaias deplorat, dicens: Omnes nos cecidimus quasi folium, et iniquitates nostrae quasi ventus abstulerunt nos; non est qui invocet nomen tuum, qui consurgat et teneat te (Isai. LXIV, 6, 7). 61. Christus solus potuit nos a morte liberare. Patiendo hominis culpam corripuit, et placavit Dei iram. — Sed possunt recti quilibet per acceptae innocentiae meritum aliquando praesentis motibus animadversionis obviare, non autem valent virtute propria ab humano genere supplicia secuturae mortis expellere. Vir igitur sanctus humanum genus consideret quo defluxit; aeternae mortis damna conspiciat; cui nimirum constat quia nequaquam justitia humana contradicat, videat quam perverse homo deliquerit; videat quam districte conditor contra hominem irascatur, et mediatorem Dei et hominis, Deum et hominem, requirat. Quem quia longe post venturum considerat, deplorans 317 dicat: Non est qui utrumque valeat arguere, et ponere manum suam in ambobus. Redemptor quippe humani generis, mediator Dei et hominis per carnem factus, quia justus in hominibus solus apparuit, et tamen ad poenam culpae etiam sine culpa pervenit, et hominem arguit ne delinqueret, et Deo obstitit ne feriret, exempla innocentiae praebuit, poenam malitiae suscepit. Patiendo ergo utrumque arguit, qui et culpam hominis, justitiam aspirando, corripuit, et iram judicis moriendo temperavit; atque in utrisque manum posuit, quia et exempla hominibus quae imitarentur praebuit, et Deo in se opera, quibus erga homines placaretur, ostendit. Nullus quippe ante hunc exstitit, qui sic pro alienis reatibus intercederet, ut proprios non haberet. Aeternae igitur morti tanto quis in aliis obviare non poterat, quanto hunc reatus de propriis astringebat. Venit itaque novus homo ad homines,

contradictor ad culpam, amicus ad poenam; mira monstravit, crudelia pertulit. Manum ergo suam in ambobus posuit, quia unde reum recta docuit, inde iratum judicem placavit. Qui hoc quoque ipsis suis miraculis mirabilius praebuit, quia corda delinquentium mansuetudine potius quam terrore correxit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXXIX.

VERS. 34. — Auferat a me virgam suam, et pavor ejus non me terreat. 62. Mansuetudine potius quam terrore nos correxit. — Per legem quippe virgam Deus tenuerat, cum dicebat: Si quis haec vel illa fecerit, morte moriatur. Sed incarnatus virgam abstulit, quia vias vitae per mansuetudinem ostendit. Unde ei per Psalmistam dicitur: Intende, prospere procede, et regna, propter veritatem et mansuetudinem et justitiam (Psal. XLIV, 5). Timeri quippe quasi Deus noluit, sed quasi pater ut amaretur inspiravit. Quod liquido Paulus dicit: Non enim accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore, sed accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus, Abba pater (Rom. VIII, 15). Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XL.

VERS. 35. — Loquar, et non timebo eum. 63. Timor a peccato nos suscitare non valuit. — Vir enim sanctus, quia humani generis Redemptorem venire mitem conspicit, non metum ad Dominum, sed affectum ad patrem sumit; et timorem despicit, quia per adoptionis gratiam ad amorem surgit. Hinc Joannes ait: Timor non est in charitate, sed perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem (I Joan. IV, 18). Hinc Zacharias dicit: Ut sine timore de manu inimicorum nostrorum liberati serviamus illi (Luc. I, 74). A peccati igitur morte timor nos suscitare non valuit, sed ad statum vitae aspirata mansuetudinis gratia erexit. Quod bene Elisaeo Sunamitis filium suscitante signatur (IV Reg. IV, 30, 34), qui cum baculo puerum mittens, exstincto

filio vitam minime reddidit; per semetipsum vero veniens, seque super mortuum sternens, atque ad ejus membra se colligens, huc illucque deambulans, et in ore mortui septies aspirans, hunc ad redivivam lucem protinus per ministerium compassionis animavit. Auctor quippe humani generis Deus, quasi mortuum puerum doluit, cum exstinctos nos iniquitatis aculeo miseratus aspexit. Et quia per Moysen terrorem legis protulit, quasi 318 per puerum virgam misit. Sed puer cum baculo mortuum suscitare non valuit, quia, Paulo attestante: Nihil ad perfectum adduxit lex (Hebr. VII, 19). Ipse autem per semetipsum veniens, et super cadaver se humiliter sternens, ad exaequanda sibi mortui membra se collegit: Quia cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo; sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus, et habitu inventus ut homo (Philip. II, 6). Huc illucque deambulat, quia et Judaeam juxta, et longe positas gentes vocat. Super mortuum septies inspirat, quia per apertionem divini muneris gratiae septiformis spiritum in peccati morte jacentibus tribuit. Moxque vivens erigitur, quia is, quem terroris virga suscitare non potuit, per amoris spiritum puer ad vitam rediit. Dicat itaque ex sua, dicat ex voce humani generis: Auferat a me virgam suam, et pavor ejus non me terreat; loquar, et non timebo eum. Ubi et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLI.

IBID. — Neque enim possum metuens respondere 64. Timor digna Deo pro ejus donis obsequia non reddit. — Respondere quippe cuilibet dicimur cum factis illius digna opera repensamus. Deo ergo respondere est donis ejus praecedentibus nostra obsequia reddere. Unde et psalmi quidam, in quibus sancta operatio imitanda proponitur, ad respondendum scripti praenotantur. Rectum itaque Deus hominem condidit, eumque ad perversa defluentem cum longanimitate toleravit. Quotidie culpam aspicit, et tamen vivendi

spatia non citius abscidit; dona largitur benignitate sua, et erga malos utitur patientia sua. Respondere homo tot beneficiis debet; sed tamen respondere metuens non valet, quia humani generis conditorem qui adhuc serviliter formidat, procul dubio non amat. Nam tunc solum Deo vera obsequia reddimus, cum eum propter amoris fiduciam non timemus; cum nos ad bona opera affectus, non metus dirigit; cum malum nostrae menti jam non placet, etiam si licet. Nam qui a perversitatis opere ex timore restringitur, perversa libenter ageret, si liceret. Nequaquam ergo veraciter rectus est, qui adhuc a pravitatis desiderio liber non est. Bene itaque dicitur: Neque enim possum metuens respondere, quia vera obsequia Deo non reddimus, si ex timore mandatis illius, et non potius ex amore servimus. Sed cum menti nostrae ejus dulcedinis amor accenditur, omne desiderium praesentis vitae levigatur, in taedium dilectio vertitur, atque hanc cum moerore mens tolerat, cui victa prius reprobo amore serviebat. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XLII.

CAP. X, VERS. 1. — Taedet animam meam vitae meae. 65. Amor Dei vitae hujus taedium parit, et ad erratorum confessionem adducit. — Sed cum praesens vita vilescere, cum conditoris amor dulcescere coeperit, sese contra se animus accendit, ut accusare se de culpis debeat, in quibus se ante supernorum nescius defendebat. Unde adhuc recte adjungit:

CAPUT XLIII.

IBID. — Dimittam adversum me eloquium meum. 66. Quasi pro se eloquio suo utitur, qui prava quae gessit defendere excusationibus conatur. Sed adversum se eloquium dimittit, qui accusare in se hoc incipit quod erravit. Saepe vero et cum delinquimus 319 ea quoque quae agimus dijudicamus. Accusat mens ipsa quod perpetrat; sed quia hoc ex desiderio minime deserit, erubescit confiteri quod fecit. Cum vero toto jam judicio carnis

delectationem premit, audaci voce in accusationis suae confessionem se erigit. Unde recte nunc dicitur: Dimittam adversum me eloquium meum, quia fortis mens relaxare contra se verba detestationis inchoat, quae apud semetipsam prius infirme verecundata retinebat. Sed sunt nonnulli qui apertis vocibus culpas fatentur, sed tamen in confessione gemere nesciunt, et lugenda gaudentes dicunt. Unde adhuc apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLIV.

IBID. — Loquar in amaritudine animae meae. 67. Confessio fiat in amaritudine animae. — Qui culpas suas detestans loquitur, restat necesse est ut has in amaritudine animae loquatur, ut haec ipsa amaritudo puniat quidquid lingua per mentis judicium accusat. Sciendum vero est quia ex poena poenitentiae, quam sibi mens irrogat, aliquatenus securitatem percipit, atque ad interrogationem superni judicis fidentior exsurgit, ut semetipsam subtilius inveniat, et erga se quaeque quomodo disponantur agnoscat. Unde et protinus additur:

CAPUT XLV.

VERS. 2. — Dicam Deo: Noli me condemnare; indica mihi cur me ita judices. 68. Judicat nos hic et punit Deus duobus modis. — Quia peccatorem se in amaritudine animae asserit, quid Deo aliud quam ne condemnetur dicit? quia amaritudo praesentis poenitentiae exstinguit supplicia sequentis irae. Duobus autem modis in hac vita hominem Deus judicat, quia aut per mala praesentia irrogare jam tormenta sequentia incipit, aut tormenta sequentia flagellis praesentibus exstinguit. Nisi enim delictis exigentibus justus judex et nunc et postmodum quosdam percuteret, Judas minime dixisset, Secundo eos qui non crediderunt perdidit (Judae 5); et de iniquis Psalmista non diceret: Induantur sicut diploide confusione sua (Psal. CVIII, 29). Diploidem quippe duplum vestimentum dicimus. Confusione

ergo sicut diploide induti sunt qui juxta reatus sui meritum et temporali et perpetua animadversione feriuntur. Solos quippe poena a supplicio liberat quos immutat. Nam quos praesentia mala non corrigunt, ad sequentia perducunt. Si autem nequaquam quosdam poena praesens a supplicio aeterno defenderet, Paulus minime dixisset: Cum judicamur, a Domino corripimur, ut non cum hoc mundo damnemur (I Cor. XI, 32). Hinc voce angelica ad Joannem dicitur: Ego quos amo redarguo et castigo (Apoc. III, 19). Hinc etiam scriptum est: Quem diligit Dominus castigat, flagellat omnem filium quem recipit (Hebr. XII, 6):. VERS. 3. — Nunquid bonum tibi videtur, si calumnieris et opprimas pauperem, opus manuum tuarum, et consilium impiorum adjuves? 70. Justi propter quid flagelletur ignorantis anxietas. — Hoc nimirum sic per interrogationem dicitur, ut negetur. Ac si aperte diceretur. Tu qui summe bonus es, novi quia bonum non aestimas, ut pauperem per calumniam premas. Et scio ergo quia non est injustum quod patior, et eo magis doleo quo causas justitiae ignoro. Notandum vero quod non ait Ut opprimas innocentem, sed pauperem. Qui enim districtioni judicis nequaquam innocentiam, sed paupertatem suam objicit, non jam de vita audaciam arripit, sed quam se infirmum conspiciat ostendit. Ubi et congrue subjungit: Opus manuum tuarum. Ac si aperte dicat: Impie opprimere non potes, quem te fecisse gratuito recordaris. 71. Deus non sinit nos supra vires tentari. — Bene autem subditur: Et consilium impiorum adjuves? Quos namque hoc loco impios, nisi malignos spiritus vocat? Qui cum redire ipsi ad vitam nequeant, crudeliter socios ad mortem quaerunt. Quorum nimirum consilium fuit ut beatum Job divina correptio tangeret, et qui in tranquillitate justus exstiterat, saltem per flagella peccaret. Sed impiorum consilium Dominus non adjuvit, quia eorum tentationibus carnem justi prodidit, animam negavit. Hoc indesinenter contra bonos consilium maligni spiritus ineunt, ut hi quos servire Deo innocue in tranquillitate conspiciunt vexati adversitatibus ad voraginem culpae rapiantur. Sed eorum

consilii acumen destruitur, quia pius conditor cum viribus flagella moderatur, ne virtutem poena transeat, et per astutiam fortium humana infirmitas excidat. Unde et bene per Paulum dicitur: Fidelis autem Deus, qui non patietur vos tentari supra quam potestis, sed faciet cum tentatione etiam proventum, ut possitis sustinere (I Cor. X, 13). Nisi enim misericors Deus cum viribus tentamenta modificet, nullus profecto est qui malignorum spirituum insidias non corruens portet, quia si mensuram judex tentationibus non praebet, eo ipso protinus stantem dejicit, quo ultra vires onera imponit. Sic autem beatus Job negando 321 requisivit ista quae protulit, sicut et requirendo negat ea quae illico subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XLVII.

VERS. 4-7. — Nunquid oculi carnei tibi sunt, aut sicut videt homo et tu videbis? Nunquid sicut dies hominis dies tui, aut anni tui sicut humana sunt tempora, ut quaeras iniquitatem meam, et peccatum meum scruteris? et scias quia nihil impium fecerim. 72. Discrimen visus humani et divini, dierum nostrorum et aeternitatis. — Oculi carnei facta temporum non nisi in tempore agnoscunt, quia et ipsi ad videndum cum tempore prodeunt, cum tempore clauduntur; et humanus visus quodlibet opus sequitur, non praecurrit, quia vix existentia aspicit, et ventura nullo modo agnoscit. Dies quoque et anni hominis a diebus et annis discrepant aeternitatis, quia vitam nostram, quae tempore incipitur, tempore finitur; dum intra sinus sui latitudinem format, aeternitas devorat. Cujus nimirum immensitas, quia ultra citraque super nos tenditur, sine inchoatione et termino ejus aeternum esse dilatatur; eique nec transacta praetereunt, nec adhuc ventura, quasi quae non appareant, desunt, quia is qui semper esse habet, cuncta sibi praesentia conspicit; cumque aspiciendo post et ante non tenditur, nulla intuitus mutatione variatur. Dicat ergo: Nunquid oculi carnei tibi sunt; aut sicut videt homo, et tu videbis? Nunquid sicut dies hominis dies tui, et anni

tui sicut humana sunt tempora, ut quaeras iniquitatem meam, et peccatum meum scruteris? et scias quia nihil impium fecerim. Ac si humiliter requirens, diceret: Cur me in tempore per flagella examinas, quem apud te perfecte et ante tempora scisti? Cur culpas meas verberibus interrogas, quem per aeternitatis tuae potentiam nec prius quam conderes ignoras? Cujus nimirum potentiae mox pondus exprimit, cum subjungit:

CAPUT XLVIII.

IBID. — Cum sit nemo qui de manu. tua possit eruere. 73. Humilis deprecatio flagellati. — Ac si aperte dicat: Quid tibi restat, nisi parcere, cujus virtuti nullus valet obviare? Quo enim nemo est qui animadversionem tuam ex merito suae virtutis retineat, eo a se facilius tua pietas exigat ut parcat. Quia autem nos in delicto concepti, in iniquitatibus editi, aut noxie prava perpetramus, aut incaute etiam recta agendo delinquimus, districtus judex unde nobis fiat placabilis, non habemus. Sed cum nostrum opus ejus obtutibus dignum exhibere non possumus, restat ut ad placationem illius suum ei opus offeramus. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XLIX.

VERS. 8. — Manus tuae plasmaverunt me, et fecerunt me totum in circuitu, et sic repente praecipitas me? 74. Manichaei dogma destruitur. — Ac si ei humiliter dicat: Quia sub justo examine dignum non est tua placatione quod feci, pensa misericorditer, ne pereat quod fecisti. Quibus etiam verbis perversum Manichaei dogma destruitur, qui duo esse principia mentiens, a Deo spiritum, a Satana vero carnem conditam asserere conatur. Sanctus etenim vir prophetici gratia spiritus plenus, longe post ventura considerat, et errorum genimina praevidens calcat, dicens: Manus tuae plasmaverunt me, et fecerunt me totum in circuitu. Qui enim et plasmatum se, et factum totum in circuitu a Deo asserit, tenebrarum genti 322 nec in spiritu suo aliquid nec

in carne derelinquit. Nam plasmatum se propter internam imaginem retulit; factum vero totum in circuitu, in eo quod ex carnis constat indumento, memoravit.. VERS. 9. — Memento, quaeso, quod sicut lutum feceris me. 76. Quare angelus irremissibiliter peccavit, non homo. — Angelorum spiritus idcirco irremissibiliter peccaverunt, quia tanto robustius stare poterant, quanto eos carnis admistio non tenebat. Homo vero idcirco post culpam veniam meruit, quia per carnale corpus aliquid quo semetipso minor esset accepit. Unde et apud respectum judicis argumentum pietatis est haec eadem infirmitas carnis; sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Ipse autem est misericors, et propitius fiet peccatis eorum, et non disperdet eos. Et multiplicavit ut averteret iram suam ab eis, et non accendit omnem iram suam, et rememoratus est quia caro sunt (Psal. LXXVII, 38). Ut lutum ergo homo factus est, quia de limo est ad conditionem sumptus. Lutum quippe fit, cum se aqua terrae conspergit. Sicut lutum itaque homo est conditus, quia quasi aqua infundit pulverem, cum anima rigat carnem. Quod sanctus vir bene pietati judicis objicit, cum postulans dicit: Memento, quaeso, quod sicut lutum feceris me. Ac si aperte dicat: Infirmitatem carnis considera, et reatum iniquitatis laxa. Ubi aperte quoque mors ejusdem carnis adjungitur, cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT LI.

IBID. — 323 Et in pulverem reduces me. 77. Hominem excusat carnis infirmitas. — Ac si patenter postulet, dicens: Memento, quaeso, quod per carnem a terra venio, et per ejus interitum ad terram tendo. Materiam itaque originis, et poenam finis aspice, et culpae citius transeuntis parce. Sed quia qualitatem protulit hominis conditi, nunc subjungit ordinem propagati, dicens:

CAPUT LII.

VERS. 10, 11. — Nonne sicut lac mulsisti me, et sicut caseum me coagulasti? Pelle et carnibus vestisti me, ossibus et nervis compegisti me. 78. Hominis ortus descriptio. — Plasmatus quippe homo sicut lutum factus est, propagatus autem et sicut lac mulgetur semine, et sicut caseus coagulatur in carne. Carnibus et pelle induitur, ossibus nervisque solidatur. Per lutum ergo primae conditionis qualitas, per lac vero sequentis ordo conceptionis exprimitur, quia per coagulationis incrementa ducitur, ut paulisper in ossa roboretur. Sed angusta Dei laus est descriptio creati corporis, nisi etiam subsequenter exprimatur mira aspiratio vivificationis. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT LIII.

VERS. 12. — Vitam et misericordiam tribuisti mihi. 79. Vitae inspiratio et conservatio. — Sed incassum nobis bona conditor tribuit, si non omne quod tribuit ipse custodit. Sequitur, — IBID: — Et visitatio tua custodivit spiritum meum. Haec autem quae de exteriori homine diximus, etiam interiori quemadmodum possit congruere libet ut breviter replicando monstremus. 80. Homo lutum, fit pulvis subtracta gratia. Bella carnis patitur, sed gratia roboratur. — Memento, quaeso, quod sicut lutum feceris me. Sicut lutum quippe homo noster interior existit, quia sancti Spiritus gratia terrenae menti infunditur, ut ad intellectum sui conditoris erigatur. Humana namque cogitatio, quae peccati sui sterilitate aruit, per vim sancti Spiritus, quasi irrigata terra viridescit. Sed saepe dum perceptis superni doni virtutibus sine interruptione utimur, ad privatam fiduciam usu continuae prosperitatis elevamur. Unde fit plerumque ut isdem qui sublevaverat parumper Spiritus deserat, quatenus ipsum sibi hominem ostendat. Quod sanctus vir protinus exprimit, cum subjungit: Et in pulverem reduces me. Quia enim per subtractionem Spiritus mens aliquantulum in tentatione deseritur, quasi ab humore pristino terra siccatur, ut infirmitatem suam

derelictus sentiat, et sine infusione supernae gratiae quantum homo aruit cognoscat. Qui apte quoque reduci ad pulverem dicitur, quia dimissus sibi cujuslibet tentationis aura raptatur. Sed dum relicti concutimur, ea quae afflati cognovimus subtilius jam dona cogitamus. Unde subjungit: Nonne sicut lac mulsisti me, et sicut caseum me coagulasti? Mens etenim nostra cum per sancti Spiritus gratiam ab usu vetustae conversationis abstrahitur, sicut lac mulgetur, quia in quadam novae inchoationis teneritudine et subtilitate formatur; et sicut caseus coagulatur, quia in constipatione pinguescentis cogitationis astringitur, ut nequaquam jam per desideria diffluat, sed in uno amore se colligens, ad solidam reformationem surgat. Plerumque vero contra haec eadem rudimenta spiritalia ex usu veteri caro submurmurat, et mens bella tolerat ex homine quem foris portat. Unde subjungit: Pelle et carnibus vestisti me. Pelle quippe 324 et carnibus interior homo vestitur, quia in eo quod ad superna erigitur, carnalium motuum obsidione vallatur. Sed tendentem ad justitiam nequaquam in tentatione conditor deserit, qui per infusionem gratiae etiam peccantem praevenit; sed sublevatam mentem et ad bella exterius laxat, et interius roborat. Unde adhuc apte subjungitur; Ossibus et nervis compegisti me. Carnibus et pelle vestimur, sed ossibus nervisque compingimur, quia etsi tentatione foras irruente concutimur, intus tamen nos conditoris manus roborat, ne frangamur. Carnis itaque nos motibus humiliat ad dona, sed per ossa virtutum roborat contra tentamenta. Ait ergo: Carne et pelle vestisti me, ossibus et nervis compegisti me. Ac si aperte dicat: Foras me ad probationem deseris, sed tamen intus ne peream virtutibus astringendo custodis. Qui idcirco nobis bene vivendi rectitudinem tribuit, quia benigne praeterita quae deliquimus parcit. Unde et adhuc apte subjungitur: Vitam et misericordiam tribuisti mihi. 81. Vitam ex misericordia Dei praeveniente et subsequente accipit et servat. — Vita quippe tribuitur cum malignis mentibus benignitas aspiratur. Sed vita sine misericordia accipi nequaquam

valet, quia ad obtinenda Dominus justitiae bona non adjuvat, si prius misericorditer anteactas nequitias non relaxat. Vel certe vitam nobis et misericordiam tribuit, quia ea qua nos misericordia ad bene vivendum praevenit, etiam subsequente custodit. Nisi enim misericordiam subroget, servari non valet vita quam praebet. Ipso quippe quotidie humanae vitae usu veterascimus, et exterioris hominis impulsu cogitatione lubrica ab interioribus eximus. Et nisi nos superna visitatio vel ad amorem compungendo vivificet, vel ad timorem flagellando restauret, repentino lapsu mens funditus tota destruitur, quae longo virtutis studio innovata videbatur. Unde subjungit: Et visitatio tua custodivit spiritum meum. Humanum quippe spiritum visitatio superna custodit, cum hunc virtutibus ditatum, vel flagello percutere, vel compungere amore non desinit. Nam si dona praestat, sed hunc continue restaurando non sublevat, citius bonum perditur, quod non a largiente custoditur. Sed ecce vir sanctus dum se humiliter agnoscit, conferenda generaliter divinae misericordiae secreta deprehendit; cumque infirmitatem suam veraciter fatetur, repente ad cognoscendam vocationem gentium sublimiter rapitur. Nam protinus subdit:

CAPUT LIV.

VERS. 13. — Licet haec celes in corde tuo, tamen scio quia universorum memineris. 82. Vocatio gentium in consilio Dei abscondita. — Ac si aperte dicat: Cur de me trepido, qui et universas gentes quia colligas scio? Quod tamen in corde celas, quia hoc adhuc aperto sermone non indicas. Sed qui et universorum reminisceris, me procul dubio de venia certum facis. Sciendum vero est quia in quibusdam factis et certi de venia reddimur, et post perpetratas culpas ad absolutionis nostrae fiduciam correctione et poenitentia subsequente roboramur; perpetratae tamen nostrae nequitiae adhuc memoria tangimur, et cogitatione illicita aversi nolentesque pulsamur. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT LV.

VERS. 14. — Si peccavi, et ad horam pepercisti mihi, cur ab 325 iniquitate mea mundum me esse non pateris? 83. Peccata deleta qui memoriam inficiant, et bellum reparent. Quid tum agendum. — Ad horam Dominus peccatum parcit, cum reatum culpae concessis protinus fletibus diluit. Sed ab iniquitate nostra mundos nos esse non patitur, quia volentes quidem culpam fecimus, sed nonnunquam nolentes ejus memoriam cum delectatione toleramus. Saepe namque hoc quod a conspectu jam judicis fletu interveniente deletum est ad animum redit, et devicta culpa ad delectationem rursus inserpere nititur, atque in antiquo certamine rediviva pulsatione reparatur; ita ut quod prius egit in corpore, hoc importuna cogitatione postmodum verset in mente. Quod caute ille conspicere athleta spiritalis noverat, qui dicebat: Computruerunt et deterioraverunt cicatrices meae, a facie insipientiae meae (Psal. XXXVII, 6). Quid namque cicatrices, nisi sanationes sunt vulnerum? Laxatas ergo nequitias ad delectationem memoriae redire conspexerat, qui cicatrices deflebat. Cicatrices quippe computrescere est sanata jam peccatorum vulnera rursus in tentationem serpere, atque ex eorum suggestionibus, post superductam cutem poenitentiae, fetorem culpae iterum doloremque sentire. Qua videlicet in re et nihil foras opere agitur, et sola intus cogitatione peccatur; districtoque se reatu mens obligat, nisi hoc sollicitis lamentis tergat. 84. Unde bene per Moysen dicitur: Si fuerit inter vos homo qui nocturno pollutus sit somnio, egredietur extra castra; et non revertetur prius quam ad vesperam lavetur aqua, et post solis occasum regredietur in castra (Deut. XXIII, 10). Nocturnum quippe est somnium tentatio occulta, per quam tenebrosa cogitatione turpe aliquid corde concipitur, quod tamen corporis opere non expletur. Sed somnio nocturno pollutus egredi extra castra praecipitur, quia videlicet dignum est ut qui immunda cogitatione polluitur, indignum se cunctorum fidelium societatibus arbitretur, culpae suae meritum ante oculos

ponat, et ex bonorum se aestimatione despiciat. Polluto ergo extra castra exire est turpi impugnatione laboranti, sese ex continentium comparatione despicere. Qui ad vesperam lavatur aqua, cum defectum suum conspiciens ad poenitentiae lamenta convertitur, ut fletibus diluat omne quod animum occulta inquinatio accusat. Sed post occasum solis ad castra redeat, quia, defervescente tentationis ardore, necesse est ut iterum fiduciam erga societatem bonorum sumat. Post aquae quippe lavationem, occumbente sole ad castra revertitur, qui post lamenta poenitentiae, frigescente flamma cogitationis illicitae, ad fidelium merita praesumenda reparatur; ut jam se a caeteris longe esse non aestimet, qui mundum se per obitum intimi ardoris gaudet. Sed inter haec sciendum est quod idcirco nonnunquam impulsu illicitae cogitationis affligimur, quia in quibusdam terrenae conversationis actibus, quamvis licitis, libenter occupamur. Cumque vel in minimis terrena actio per desiderium tangitur, crescente contra nos antiqui hostis fortitudine, mens nostra non minima importunitate tentationis inquinatur. Unde 326 et sacerdos legis, membra hostiae per frusta concisa, caput atque ea quae erga jecur sunt, jubetur ignibus cremare, pedes vero atque intestina hostiae prius aqua diluere (Levit. I, 7, 12). Nos quippe ipsos sacrificium Deo offerimus cum vitam nostram cultui divino dedicamus. Qui membra hostiae per frusta concisa super ignem ponimus, cum vitae nostrae opera in virtutibus distinguentes immolamus. Caput atque ea quae juxta jecur continentur incendimus, cum in sensu nostro, quo omne corpus regitur, atque in occultis desideriis flamma divini amoris ardemus. Et tamen praecipitur ut pedes atque intestina hostiae laventur. Pedibus enim terra tangitur, intestinis vero stercora gestantur, quia plerumque jam ex desiderio in aeternitatem succendimur, jam toto devotionis sensu ad appetitum nostrae mortificationis inhiamus; sed quia adhuc terrenum prae infirmitate aliquid agimus, nonnulla etiam quae jam subegimus illicita in corde toleramus. Cumque cogitationes nostras immunda tentatio inquinat, quid aliud quam intestina

hostiae stercus portant? Sed ut comburi debeant, laventur, quia nimirum necesse est, ut immundas cogitationes timoris fletus diluat, quas in acceptione sacrificii supernus amor incendat. Et quidquid mens vel de inexperto certamine, vel de conversationis pristinae memoria patitur, lavetur, ut tanto suavius in conspectu sui spectatoris ardeat, quanto cum ei assistere coeperit nil terrenum secum, nil lubricum in ara suae orationis imponit. Vir igitur sanctus humanae mentis damna conspiciat, quod plerumque se cogitatione illicita inquinat; et postquam reatum operis judex relaxat, et, sua plorans, nostra quae ploremus aperiat, dicens: Si peccavi, et ad horam pepercisti mihi, cur ab iniquitate mea mundum me esse non pateris? Ac si aperte dicat: Si culpam venia abstulit, cur hanc et a memoria non detergit?. VERS. 16. — Et propter superbiam quasi, leaenam capies me. 86. Leaena qua arte capiatur. Eodem modo et lapsi et reparati sumus. — Leaena cum escam catulis exquirit, inhianter in foveam captionis ruit. Sicut enim ex quibusdam regionibus fertur, fit in ejus itinere fovea, in qua pecus deponitur, ut illuc se ejus appetitu projicere leaena provocetur: quae angusta simul et alta praeparatur, ut in eam ruere ambiendo valeat, sed hanc saliendo nullo modo evadat. Alia quoque fovea, quae priori cohaereat, effoditur, quae tamen ei, in qua pecus est, extremae partis apertione conjungitur. In qua nimirum cavea ponitur, ut leaena corruens, quia desuper terroribus urgetur, cum quasi in secretiori parte foveae occultare, se appetit, caveam volens intret; cujus jam saevitia nequaquam pertimescitur, quia clausa in cavea levatur. Quae enim sua sponte in foveam corruit, ad superiores partes circumsepta vectibus redit. Sic sic nimirum humana mens capta est, quae in libertate arbitrii condita, dum nutrire desideria carnis appetivit, quasi leaena catulis escam quaesivit, atque in deceptionis suae foveam cecidit, quae, suadente hoste, ad cibum prohibitum manum tetendit. Sed in fovea protinus caveam invenit, quia sponte ad mortem veniens corruptionis suae mox carcerem pertulit; atque ad auras liberas, gratia interveniente, reducitur. Sed

cum multa agere conatur, et non valet, ejusdem corruptionis suae obstaculis quasi caveae vectibus ligatur. Jam quidem eam in quam ceciderat damnationis foveam evasit, quia secuturae mortis supplicium, manu redemptionis adjuta, ad veniam redeundo superavit. Sed tamen coarctata caveam tolerat, quia supernae quoque disciplinae nexibus cingitur, ne per carnis desideria vagetur. Quae ergo sponte sua in foveam cecidit, ad auras liberas clausa redit, quia et per libertatem arbitrii in culpam corruit, et tamen hanc a suis motibus, conditoris gratia coactam nolentemque constringit. Post foveam itaque caveam patitur, quae, erepta ex aeterno supplicio, a pravae libertatis motibus, et sub coelestis artificis dispensatione religatur. Recte igitur dicit: Et propter superbiam, quasi leaenam capies me, quia et liber homo per cibum sibi mortem intulit, et reductus ad veniam sub disciplina melius clausus vivit. Quasi leaena ergo propter superbiam captus est, quia inde nunc eum disciplina suae corruptionis deprimit, unde transgressionem praecepti non timens, audacter in foveam saltum dedit.. IBID. — Reversusque mirabiliter me crucias. 88. Mentis a Deo desertae obduratio, visitatae compunctio. — Cum ab auctore relinquimur, nec ipsa ullatenus destitutionis nostrae damna sentimus. Quo enim longe nos conditor deserit, eo mens nostra insensibilius obdurescit, nulla quae Dei sunt diligit, nequaquam superna concupiscit; et quia amoris intimi calorem non habet, frigida deorsum jacet, ac miserando modo fit quotidie tanto securior, quanto pejor; cumque unde sit lapsa non meminit, et supplicia secutura non metuit, quantum lugenda sit nescit. At si afflatu sancti Spiritus tangitur, ad considerationem protinus suae perditionis evigilat, in coelestium inquisitione se excutit, amoris summi aestibus inardescit, quae se circumprimunt damna considerat, et plorat proficiens quae prius laeta peribat. Bene ergo conditori dicitur: Reversusque mirabiliter me crucias, quia omnipotens Deus unde mentem nostram visitans ad amorem suum erigit, inde hanc per lacrymas gravius affligit. Ac si aperte dicat:

Relinquendo me nequaquam afficis, quia insensibilem reddis; sed cum reverteris crucias, quia dum te insinuas mihi me quam sim lugendus demonstras. Unde et nequaquam se poenaliter, sed mirabiliter asserit cruciari, quia dum per fletum mens ad summa rapitur, compunctionis suae poenam gaudens miratur; et libet affici, quia afflictione sua se conspicit ad alta sublevari. Saepe autem cum nos a sancti desiderii exercitatione torpescere superna pietas cernit, exempla se sequentium nostris obtutibus objicit, ut mens per otium remissa, quo in aliis vigilantium provectus considerat, eo in se pigritudinem torporis erubescat. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT LIX.

VERS. 17. — Instauras testes tuos contra me, et multiplicas iram tuam, et poenae militant in me. 89. Exemplis bonorum Deus ad se nos revocat. — Testes enim Dei sunt, qui per exercitium sancti operis testantur quae electos secutura sint 329 praemia veritatis. Unde hos quoque quos pro veritate passos agnoscimus Graeco eloquio martyres, id est testes, vocamus. Et per Joannem voce angelica Dominus dicet: In diebus Antipas testis meus fidelis, qui occisus est apud vos (Apoc. II, 13). Sed testes suos contra nos Dominus instaurat, cum electorum vitam pravitati nostrae contrariam ad arguendos nos instruendosque multiplicat. Contra nos ergo testes illius instaurantur, quia cuncta quae agunt studiis nostrae pravitatis adversa sunt. Unde et sermo veritatis adversarius vocatur, cum Mediatoris voce per Evangelium dicitur: Esto consentiens adversario tuo cito, dum es cum illo in via (Matth. V, 25). Atque de hoc eodem Redemptore reprobi persequentes dicunt: Contrarius est operibus nostris (Sap. II, 12); et paulo post: Et dissimilis est aliis vita illius (Ibid., 15). Testes itaque suos contra nos Dominus instaurat, quia bona quae facere ipsi negligimus, haec ad correptionem nostram fieri ab aliis demonstrat; ut qui praeceptis non

accendimur, saltem exemplis excitemur, atque in appetitu rectitudinis nil sibi mens nostra difficile aestimet quod perfecte peragi ab aliis videt. Et fit plerumque ut cum alienae vitae bona conspicimus, nostrae sollicitius damna timeamus; et eo patescat quantae post pondere animadversionis impatimur, quo nunc a bonorum moribus longe discrepamus. 90. Eorum labor indicat quae reprobos poena maneat. Bona in aliis visa quos animi motus excitare debeant. — Unde et testium instauratione memorata, protinus apte subjungitur: Et multiplicas iram tuam. Eo nobis multiplicari ira Dei dicitur, quo esse multiplex indicatur, quia ex ipsa nunc bonorum vita et labore cognoscimus, si emendari, dum tempus est, nolumus, quanta post animadversione feriamur. Electos quippe Dei cernimus et pia agere, et crudelia multa tolerare. Hinc ergo colligitur districtus judex quanta illic feriat districtione quos reprobat, si hic sic cruciat quos amat; Petro attestante qui ait. Tempus est ut judicium incipiat de domo Dei; si autem primum a nobis, quis finis eorum qui non credunt Dei Evangelio (I Pet. IV, 17)? Omnipotens igitur Deus cum contra nos testes instaurat, iram multiplicat, quia quo bonorum vitam nostris oculis objicit, eo pravitatis perpetratae duritiam qua districtione in judicio percutiat ostendit. Nam cum solis se sequentibus dona exaggerat, torpentes jam quia reliquerit demonstrat. Cum bona ergo in aliis cernimus, valde necesse est ut et exsultationem nostrae formidini, et formidinem nostrae exsultationi misceamus, quatenus et de alienis provectibus charitas gaudeat, et de suis infirmitatibus conscientia contremiscat. Sed cum fraterno proveatu reficimur, cum districtionem super nos interni judicis ex ipso nostro torpore pensamus, quid restat nisi ut ad discutiendum se animus redeat, et quidquid in se reprobum, quidquid pravum deprehendit, affligat? Unde et apte subjungitur: Et poenae militant in me. Consideratis quippe Dei testibus, poenae in nobis militant, quia dum miranda illorum facta conspicimus, vitam nostram, quae ex eorum nobis comparatione displicet, studiosa afflictione cruciamus; ut quidquid in nobis

polluerunt opera, diluant lamenta; et si quid adhuc culpa delectationis inquinat, poena moeroris tergat. Beatus igitur Job, 330 quia vitam patrum praecedentium conspicit, quid in se gemere debeat subtilius agnoscit. Sed magni doloris magisterio, dum sua plangit, ad lamenta nos instruit: ut quo virtutes in aliis cernimus, eo apud districtum judicem nostra sollicite delicta timeamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT LX.

VERS. 18. — Quare de vulva eduxisti me? Qui utinam consumptus essem, ne oculus me videret. 91. Quod nimirum prima oratione jam protulit, dicens: Quare non in vulva mortuus sum? Qui hoc quoque quod hic adjicit, subdens, — VERS. 19. — Fuissem quasi non essem, de utero translatus ad tumulum, illic verbis aliis non aliter adjungit, dicens: Sicut abortivum absconditum non subsisterem, vel qui concepti non viderunt lucem (Job. III, 16). Quia vero haec superius late digessimus (Lib. IV, n. 48 et seq.), pro vitando lectoris fastidio, exposita replicare declinamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT LXI.

VERS. 20. — Nunquid non paucitas dierum meorum finietur brevi? 92. Vitae terminus, potissimum attendendus. — Cautum se ac sollicitum vivere ostendit, qui brevitatem praesentis vitae considerans, non ejus usum, sed terminum conspicit, ut ex fine colligat nihil esse quod transiens delectat. Hinc namque per Salomonem dicitur: Si annis multis vixerit homo, et in his omnibus laetatus fuerit, meminisse debet tenebrosi temporis et dierum multorum; qui cum venerint, vanitatis arguentur praeterita (Eccle. XI, 8). Hinc rursum scriptum est: In omnibus operibus tuis memorare novissima tua, et in aeternum non peccabis (Eccli. VII, 40). Igitur cum culpa animum tentat, mens necesse est ut brevitatem suae delectationis aspiciat, ne ad vivacem mortem iniquitas rapiat, cum constet quod ad terminum citius

mortalis vita percurrat. Sed saepe oculus contemplationis nostrae confunditur dum dolor noster flagellis crebrescentibus aggravatur. Libet praesentis vitae exsilium gemere, sed prae ipsa afflictione mens non valet damna suae caecitatis aestimare. Unde protinus subdit:

CAPUT LXII.

. IBID. — Dimitte ergo me, ut plangam paululum dolorem meum. 93. Lacrymas et doloris sensum tollit nimius moeror. Flere mala nostra nos non sinit vis consuetudinis. — Sicut enim moderata afflictio lacrymas exprimit, ita immoderata subducit, quia moeror ipse quasi sine moerore fit, qui, afflicti mentem devorans, sensum doloris tollit. Vir igitur sanctus feriri plus quam sufficit pertimescit, dicens: Dimitte ergo me, ut plangam paululum dolorem meum. Ac si aperte dicat: Flagella tuae percussionis tempera, ut, moderatis doloribus, aestimare mala quae patior flendo convalescam. Quod tamen intelligi et aliter potest. Saepe namque peccator iniquitatis suae vinculis ita constringitur, ut pondus quidem peccatorum toleret, sed tamen quia tolerat ignoret. Saepe etiamsi cognoscat quanto reatu premitur, erumpere conatur, et non potest, ut hunc in se mente libera, conversione integra, persequatur. Flere ergo dolorem suum non valet, quia et iniquitatis suae reatum considerat, et tamen prae terrenae occupationis pondere hanc ei gemere nequaquam vacat. Flere dolorem suum non valet, qui pravae quidem consuetudini contraire nititur, sed tamen adhuc succrescentibus desideriis carnis gravatur. Hujus doloris praesentia Prophetae mentem 331 cruciaverat, cum dicebat: Dolor meus ante me est semper, quoniam iniquitatem meam ego pronuntio, et cogitabo pro peccato meo (Psal. XXXVII, 18, 19). Sed solutis iniquitatis vinculis dimissum se noverat qui exsultabat dicens: Dirupisti vincula mea, tibi sacrificabo hostiam laudis (Psal. CXV, 16). 94. Nisi Deus ad id nos adjuvet. — Tunc igitur ad plangendum dolorem nos Dominus dimittit, cum et mala nobis quae

fecimus demonstrat, atque ad haec eadem flenda quae cognoscimus adjuvat. Culpas oculis objicit, et pia manu gratiae vincula cordis solvit, ut ad vacationem poenitentiae mens nostra se erigat, et, carnis soluta compedibus, in auctorem suum libera gressum amoris tendat. Plerumque etenim vitam nostram ipsi reprehendimus, sed tamen libenter agimus hoc quod in nobis recte reprobamus. Ad justitiam nos spiritus erigit, ad consuetudinem caro restringit. Amori suo mens renititur, sed protinus delectata captivatur. Bene itaque dicitur: Dimitte ergo me, ut plangam paululum dolorem meum, quia nisi a reatu culpae, quo nos ligavimus, misericorditer dimittamur, perfecte flere non possumus hoc quod in nobis ipsis contra nosmetipsos dolemus. Sed tunc veraciter reatus nostri dolor plangitur, cum tenebrosa illa inferni retributio intento timore praevidetur. Unde apte subjungitur:

CAPUT LXIII.

VERS. 21. — Antequam vadam, et non revertar, ad terram tenebrosam et opertam mortis caligine. 95. Inferni poenae nec transitoriae nec phantasticae. Infernus cur terra, cur lacus. — Quid enim terrae tenebrosae nomine, nisi tetra tartari claustra signantur? Quae aeternae mortis caligo operit, quia damnatos quosque in perpetuum a vitae luce disjungit. Nec immerito infernus terra dicitur, quia quicunque ab eo capti fuerint, stabiliter tenentur. Scriptum quippe est: Generatio praeterit, et generatio advenit, terra vero in aeternum stat (Eccle. I, 4). Recte igitur inferni claustra tenebrosa terra nominantur, quia quos puniendos accipiunt, nequaquam poena transitoria, vel phantastica imaginatione cruciant, sed ultione solida perpetuae damnationis servant. Quae aliquando tamen laci appellatione signantur, propheta attestante, qui ait: Portaverunt ignominiam suam cum his qui descendunt in lacum (Ezech. XXXII, 24, 25). Infernus ergo et terra nominatur, quia susceptos stabiliter tenet; et lacus dicitur, quia hos quos semel ceperit semper fluctuantes et trepidos tormentis circumfluentibus

absorbet. Sanctus autem vir sive sua, seu humani generis voce dimitti se postulat, antequam vadat, non quia ad terram tenebrosam qui culpam deflet iturus est, sed quia ad hanc procul dubio qui plangere negligit vadit; sicut debitori suo creditor dicit: Solve debitum prius quam pro debito constringaris; qui tamen non constringitur, si quod debet solvere non moratur. Ubi et recte subditur: Non revertar, quia nequaquam ultra misericordia parcentis liberat quos semel in locis poenalibus justitia judicantis damnat. Quae adhuc subtilius loca describuntur, cum dicitur:

CAPUT LXIV.

VERS. 22. — Terram miseriae et tenebrarum. 96. Quos tenet, foris cruciantur, intus caecantur. — Miseria ad dolorem pertinet, tenebrae ad caecitatem. Ea ergo quae a conspectu districti judicis expulsus tenet, miseriae et tenebrarum terra perhibetur, quia foris dolor cruciat quos divisos a vero lumine intus caecitas obscurat. Quamvis miseriae et tenebrarum terra intelligi et aliter potest. 332 Nam haec quoque terra in qua nascimur est quidem miseriae, sed tenebrarum non est, quia multa hic corruptionis nostrae mala patimur, sed tamen adhuc in ea per conversionis gratiam ad lucem redimus, Veritate suadente, quae ait: Ambulate dum lucem habetis, ne vos tenebrae comprehendant (Joan. XII, 35). Illa vero simul miseriae et tenebrarum terra est, quia quisquis ad toleranda ejus mala descenderit, nequaquam ulterius ad lucem redit. In cujus adhuc descriptione subjungitur:

CAPUT LXV.

IBID. — Ubi umbra mortis, et nullus ordo. 97. Ultionem habet, non lucem. Quam justae hae poenae. — Sicut mors exterior ab anima dividit carnem, ita mors interior a Deo separat animam. Umbra ergo mortis est obscuritas divisionis, quia damnatus quisque cum aeterno igne succenditur, ab interno lumine tenebratur. Natura vero ignis est, ut ex se ipso et lucem exhibeat, et

concremationem; sed transactorum illa ultrix flamma vitiorum concremationem habet, et lumen non habet. Hinc est enim quod reprobis Veritas dicit: Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus (Matth. XXV, 41). Quorum rursus omnium corpus in unius persona significans, dicit: Ligate ei manus et pedes, et mittite eum in tenebras exteriores (Matth. XXII, 13). Si itaque ignis qui reprobos cruciat lumen habere potuisset, is qui repellitur nequaquam mitti in tenebras diceretur. Hinc etiam Psalmista ait: Super eos cecidit ignis et non viderunt solem (Psal. LVII, 9). Ignis enim super impios cadit, sed sol igne cadente non cernitur, quia quo illos gehennae flamma devorat, a visione veri luminis caecat; ut et foris eos dolor combustionis cruciet, et intus poena caecitatis obscuret; quatenus qui auctori suo et corpore et corde deliquerunt, simul et corpore et corde puniantur; et utrobique poenas sentiant, qui dum hic viverent pravis suis delectationibus ex utroque serviebant. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Descenderunt in infernum cum armis suis (Ezech. XXXII, 27). Arma quippe peccantium sunt membra corporis, quibus perversa desideria quae concipiunt exsequuntur. Unde recte per Paulum dicitur: Neque exhibeatis membra vestra arma iniquitatis peccato (Rom. VI, 13). Cum armis ergo ad infernum descendere est cum ipsis quoque membris quibus desideria voluptatis expleverunt aeterni judicii tormenta tolerare, ut tunc eos undique dolor absorbeat, qui nunc, suis delectationibus subditi, undique contra justitiam juste judicantis pugnant.? Quia autem pravi audire bona patienter nequeunt, et cum vitae emendationem negligunt, ad verba se responsionis accingunt, aperte Sophar insinuat, qui subjungit:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 3. — Tibi soli tacebunt homines, et cum caeteros irriseris, a nullo confutaberis? 3. Ad correptionem quam diverse affecti pravi et recti. — Imperita mens, ut diximus, veritatis sententias graviter tolerat, et silentium

poenam putat atque omne quod rectum dicitur dedecus suae irrisionis arbitratur, quia cum vera vox pravorum se auribus admovet, memoriam culpa mordet, et in redargutione vitiorum quo intus cognitione mens tangitur, foras ad studium contradictionis excitatur. Ferre vocem non valet, quia tacta in vulnere sui reatus dolet, et per hoc quod generaliter contra perversos dicitur, se impeti specialiter suspicatur. Quod enim intus egisse se meminit, audire foris erubescit. Unde mox se ad defensionem praeparat, ut reatus sui verecundiam per verba pravae refutationis tegat. Sicut enim recti de quibusdam quae ab eis non recte gesta sunt correptionis vocem, ministerium charitatis aestimant, sic perversi contumeliam derisionis putant. Illi se protinus ad obedientiam sternunt, isti ad insaniam suae defensionis eriguntur. Illi correptionis adjutorium vitae suae patrocinium deputant, per quod dum praesentis vitae culpa corripitur, venturi judicis ira temperatur; isti cum se impeti redargutione conspiciunt, gladium percussionis credunt, quia dum per correptionis vocem culpa detegitur, praesentis gloriae opinio foedatur. Hinc quippe in laude justi per Salomonem dicit Veritas: Doce justum, et festinabit accipere (Prov. IX, 10). Hinc pravorum contumaciam despicit, dicens: Qui erudit derisorem, ipse sibi facit injuriam (Ibid., 7). Nam fit plerumque ut cum correpta in se mala defendere nequeunt, ex verecundia pejores fiant; ac sic in sua defensione superbiant, ut quaedam vitia contra vitam corripientis exquirant; et eo se criminosos non aestimant, si crimina et aliis imponant. Quae cum vera invenire nequeunt, fingunt, ut ipsi quoque habeant quod non impari justitia increpare videantur. Unde et Sophar, quia quasi irrideri se per increpationem doluit, protinus mentiendo subjungit:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 4. — Dixisti enim, Purus est sermo meus, et mundus sum in conspectu tuo. 4. Pravi vera in se mala flere renuunt, et aliis falsa

impingunt. — Qui beati Job dictorum meminit, quam falso hoc voci illius impingatur agnoscit. Quomodo enim mundum se dicere potuit, qui ait: Si justificare me voluero, os meum condemnabit me (Job. IX, 20)? Sed habet hoc pravorum malitia, ut cum vera in se 339 flere mala renuit, fingat aliena. Nam quasi solatio facinoris utitur, si falsis vocibus et vita corripientis inquinetur. Sciendum vero est quod plerumque perversi verbotenus bona optant, ut mala esse quae in praesentibus habentur ostendant; et quasi faventes prospera expetunt, ut benigni videantur. Unde et Sophar protinus subjicit, dicens:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 5. — Atque utinam Deus loqueretur tecum, et aperiret labia sua tibi!
5. Homini quando Deus loquatur, quando ipse sibi. — Ipse quippe sibi homo loquitur, cum per hoc quod sentit nequaquam Divinitatis spiritu a carnalis prudentiae intellectu separatur; cum caro sensum exerit, et mentem, quasi ad intelligentiam provocans, foras mittit. Unde et adhuc Petro terrena sapienti Veritas dicit: Non enim sapis quae Dei sunt, sed quae hominum (Marc. VIII, 33). Cui tamen recta confitenti dicitur: Caro et sanguis non revelavit tibi, sed Pater meus qui in coelis est (Matth. XVI, 17). Quid autem Dei labia nisi judicia ejus accipimus? Clausis namque labiis vox premitur, et sensus tacentis ignoratur; apertis autem sermo dum promitur, animus loquentis invenitur. Labia itaque sua Deus aperit cum voluntatem suam hominibus per aperta judicia ostendit. Quasi enim reserato ore loquitur, cum remota obscuritate dispositionis intimae renuit occultare quod vult. Nam velut clausis labiis sensum nobis suum non indicat, cum per occulta judicia cur quid faciat celat. Sophar itaque beatum Job ut de carnali intellectu redarguat, seque ipsum quantae sit benignitatis ostendat, ei bona optat, quae et cum habentur ignorat, dicens: Atque utinam Deus loqueretur tecum et aperiret labia sua tibi! Ac si patenter dicat: Imperitiae tuae potius quam

poenae compatior, quia, sola carnis prudentia praeditum, a veritatis te spiritu vacuum agnosco. Si enim Dei judicia occulta cognosceres, tam procaces contra illum sententias non sonares. Et quia omnipotens Deus cum ad consideranda nos sua judicia sublevat, ignorantiae nostrae protinus caecitatem fugat, quae apertis ejus labiis, ad nos eruditio prodeat, protinus adjungendo manifestat, dicens:

CAPUT VI.

VERS. 6. — Ut ostenderet tibi secreta sapientiae, et quod multiplex sit lex ejus. 6. Sapientiae opera quae publica. Quae secreta. — Publica sapientiae supernae sunt opera, cum omnipotens Deus regit quos creat, perficit bona quae inchoat, et aspirando adjuvat quos visitationis suae lumine illustrat. Cunctis etenim liquet quia quos gratis condidit benigne disponit. Et cum spiritalia dona largitur, ipse perficit quod ipse ex munere suae benignitatis inchoavit. Secreta vero sapientiae supernae sunt opera cum Deus quos creavit deserit; cum bona quae praeveniendo coeperat; nequaquam prosequendo consummat; cum claritate nos suae illustrationis illuminat, et tamen, permissis carnis tentationibus, tenebris caecitatis pulsat; cum dona quae contulit minime custodit; cum et mentis nostrae ad se desideria excitat, et tamen occulto judicio difficultate nos nostrae imbecillitatis angustat. Sed Dei dilectio per tria distinguitur, quia ex toto corde, et ex tota anima, et ex tota fortitudine diligi conditor jubetur. Qua in re notandum est quod divinus sermo cum Deum diligi praecipit, non solum narrat ex quo, sed etiam informat ex quanto, cum subjungit ex toto, ut videlicet qui perfecte Deo placere desiderat sibi de se nihil relinquat. Proximi autem dilectio ad duo praecepta derivatur, cum et per quemdam justum dicitur: Quod ab alio tibi odis fieri, vide ne tu alteri facias (Tob. IV, 16). Et per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Quae vultis ut faciant vobis homines, et vos facite illis (Matth. VII, 12). Quibus duobus scilicet utriusque Testamenti mandatis, per unum

malitia compescitur, per aliud benignitas praerogatur, ut malum quod pati non vult quisque non faciens; cesset a nocendi opere; et rursum bonum quod sibi fieri appetit, 341 impendens, erga utilitatem se proximi exerceat ex benignitate. Sed haec nimirum duo dum sollicita intentione cogitantur, cor ad innumera virtutum ministeria tenditur, ne vel ad inferenda quae non debet desideriis inquieta mens ferveat, vel erga exhibenda quae debet otio resoluta torpescat. Nam cum cavet alteri facere quod nequaquam vult ab altero ipsa tolerare, sollicita se intentione circumspicit, ne superbia elevet, et usque ad despectum proximi animum dejiciens exaltet; ne ambitio cogitationem laniet, cumque hanc ad appetenda aliena dilatat, angustet; ne cor luxuria polluat, et subjectum desideriis per illicita corrumpat; ne ira exasperet, et usque ad proferendam contumeliam inflammet; ne invidia mordeat, et alienis felicitatibus aemula, sua se face consumat; ne immoderate linguam loquacitas pertrahat, eamque usque ad lasciviam obtrectationis extendat; ne odium malitia excitet, et os usque ad jaculum maledictionis irritet. Rursum cum cogitat ut ea alteri faciat quae ipsa sibi fieri ab altero exspectat, pensat nimirum ut malis bona, et bonis meliora respondeat; ut erga procaces mansuetudinem longanimitatis exhibeat; ut malitiae peste languentibus gratiam benignitatis impendat; ut discordes pace uniat, et concordes ad concupiscentiam verae pacis accingat; ut indigentibus necessaria tribuat; ut errantibus viam rectitudinis ostendat; ut afflictos verbo et compassione mulceat; ut accensos in hujus mundi desideriis increpatione restinguat; ut minas potentum ratiocinatione mitiget; ut oppressorum angustias quanta praevalet ope levet; ut foris resistentibus opponat patientiam; ut intus superbientibus exhibeat cum patientia disciplinam; ut erga errata subditorum sic mansuetudo zelum temperet, quatenus a justitiae studio non enervet; sic ad ultionem zelus ferveat, ne tamen pietatis limitem fervendo transcendat; ut ingratos beneficiis ad amorem provocet; ut gratos quosque ministeriis in amore servet; ut proximorum mala cum corrigere non

valet, taceat, utque cum corrigi loquendo possunt, silentium consensum esse pertimescat; ut sic ea quae tacet toleret, ne tamen in anima virus doloris occultet; ut sic malevolis munus benignitatis exhibeat, ne tamen per gratiam a jure rectitudinis excedat; ut cuncta proximis quae praevalet impendat, sed haec impendendo non tumeat; ut sic in bonis quae exhibet tumoris praecipitium paveat, ne tamen a boni exercitio torpescat; ut sic quae possidet tribuat, quatenus quanta sit largitas remunerantis attendat; ne cum terrena largitur, suam plus quam necesse est inopiam cogitet, et in oblatione muneris hilaritatis lumen tristitia obscuret. 9. Charitas multiformis exemplis sanctorum ostenditur. — Bene ergo lex Dei multiplex dicitur, quia nimirum cum una eademque sit charitas, si mentem plene coeperit, hanc ad innumera opera multiformiter accendit. Cujus diversitatem breviter exprimimus, si in electis singulis bona illius perstringendo numeremus. Haec namque per Abel et electa Deo munera, obtulit, et fratris gladium non reluctando toleravit (Genes. IV, 4, 8). Haec Enoch et inter homines vivere spiritaliter docuit, et ad sublimem vitam ab hominibus etiam corporaliter abstraxit (Genes. V, 24). 342 Haec Noe, despectis omnibus solum Deo placabilem ostendit, atque in arcae fabricam studio longi laboris exercuit, et mundo superstitem pio opere exercendo servavit (Genes. VII, 6). Haec per Sem et Japhet humiliter verenda patris erubuit, et superjecto dorsis pallio, quae non videbat abscondit (Genes. IX, 23). Haec Abrahae dextram quia ad mortem filii obediendo extulit, hunc prolis innumerae, gentium patrem fecit (Genes. XXII, 10). Haec Isaac mentem, quia semper ad munditiam tenuit, caligantibus aetate oculis, ad videnda longe post ventura dilatavit (Genes. XXVII, 1). Haec Jacob compulit et amissum bonum filium medullitus gemere, et pravorum filiorum praesentiam sub aequanimitate tolerare (Genes. XXXVII, 34). Haec Joseph docuit a fratribus venundatum, et libertate animi infracta servitium perpeti, et eisdem post fratribus mente non elata principari (Genes. XLII, 33). Haec Moysen, delinquente populo, et

usque ad petitionem mortis in precibus stravit, et usque ad interfectionem populi per zeli studium erexit, ut et pro pereunte plebe sese morti objiceret, et contra peccantem protinus vice Domini irascentis saeviret (Exod. XXXII, 33). Haec Phinees brachium in ultionem peccantium erexit, ut arrepto gladio, coeuntes transfigeret, et iram Domini iratus placaret (Num. XXV, 8, 9). Haec Jesum exploratorem docuit, ut et prius contra falsiloquos cives veritatem verbo defenderet, et hanc postmodum gladio contra hostes allegaret (Josue I, 2, seq.; Num. XIV, 6, 7, seq.). Haec Samuel et in principatu humilem praebuit, et integrum in dejectione servavit, qui cum persequentem se plebem diligeret, ipse sibi testimonio exstitit, quia culmen ex quo dejectus est non amavit (I Reg. III, 4, seq.). Haec David ante iniquum regem et humilitate commovit ad fugam, et pietate replevit ad veniam; qui persecutorem suum et timendo fugit ut dominum, et tamen cum potestatem feriendi reperit, non agnovit inimicum (I Reg. XXIV, 6, 18). Haec Nathan et contra peccantem regem in auctoritatem liberae increpationis sustulit, et cum regis culpa deesset, in petitione humiliter stravit (II Reg. XII, 1, seq.). Haec per Isaiam nuditatem carnis in praedicatione non erubuit, et subducto carnali velamine, superna mysteria penetravit (Isai. XX, 2). Haec Eliam, quia fervoris zelo vivere spiritaliter docuit, ad vitam quoque et corporaliter abstraxit (IV Reg. II, 11). Haec Elisaeum, quia magistrum diligere simpliciter instituit, magistri spiritu dupliciter implevit (Ibid., 10). Per hanc Jeremias ne in Aegyptum populus descenderet restitit; sed tamen et inobedientes diligens, quo descendi prohibuit, et ipse descendit (Jerem. XLII, 18). Haec Ezechielem, quia prius a terrenis desideriis sustulit, post per cincinnum capitis in aere libravit (Ezech. VIII, 3). Haec in Daniele, quia a regiis dapibus gulam compescuit, ei et esurientium ora leonum clausit (Dan. XIV, 40), Haec tribus pueris, quia in tranquillitate positis incendia vitiorum subdidit, tribulationis tempore et flammas in fornace temperavit (Dan. III, 50). Haec in Petro et minis

terrentium principum fortiter restitit, et in circumcisione submovenda minorum verba humiliter audivit. Haec in Paulo et manus persequentium humiliter pertulit, et tamen in circumcisionis negotio longe se imparis prioris sensum audenter increpavit (Act. XV). Multiplex ergo ista lex Dei est, quae singulis rerum articulis non permutata congruit, et causis se variantibus non variata conjungit. 10. Charitatis officia ex Paulo. — Cujus nimirum legis multiplicitatem bene 343 Paulus enumerat, dicens: Charitas patiens est, benigna est; non aemulatur, non inflatur, non agit perperam, non est ambitiosa, non quaerit quae sua sunt, non irritatur, non cogitat malum, non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati (I Cor. XIII, 4). Patiens quippe est charitas, quia illata mala aequanimiter tolerat. Benigna vero est, quia pro malis bona largiter ministrat. Non aemulatur, quia per hoc quod in praesenti mundo nil appetit, invidere terrenis successibus nescit. Non inflatur, quia cum praemium internae retributionis anxia desiderat, de bonis se exterioribus non exaltat. Non agit perperam, quia quo se in solum Dei ac proximi amorem dilatat, quidquid a rectitudine discrepat ignorat. Non est ambitiosa, quia quo ardenter intus ad sua satagit, foras nullatenus aliena concupiscit. Non quaerit quae sua sunt, quia cuncta quae hic transitorie possidet velut aliena negligit, cum nihil sibi esse proprium nisi quod secum permaneat agnoscit. Non irritatur, quia et injuriis lacessita ad nullos se ultionis suae motus excitat, dum pro magnis laboribus majora post praemia exspectat. Non cogitat malum, quia in amore munditiae mentem solidans, dum omne odium radicitus eruit, versare in animo quod inquinat nescit. Non gaudet super iniquitate, quia quo sola dilectione erga omnes inhiat, nec de perditione adversantium exsultat. Congaudet autem veritati, quia ut se caeteros diligens, per hoc quod rectum in aliis conspicit, quasi de augmento proprii provectus hilarescit. Multiplex ergo ista lex Dei est, quae contra uniuscujusque culpae jaculum, quod perimendam mentem impetit, instructionis suae munimine occurrit, ut quia antiquus hostis varia

circumfusione nos obsidet, ipsa hunc de nobis multipliciter expugnet. Quam nimirum legem si sollicita consideratione pensamus, auctori nostro quantum quotidie delinquamus agnoscimus. Si autem culpas perpendimus, profecto aequanimiter flagella toleramus; nec ex dolore ad impatientiam proruit, cum suo se judicio conscientia addicit. Unde Sophar, quid diceret sciens, sed cui diceret nesciens, postquam praemisit dicens, Ut ostenderet tibi secreta sapientiae, et quod multiplex sit lex ejus, protinus adjungit:

CAPUT VII IBID.

— Et intelligeres quod multo minora exigaris a Deo quam meretur iniquitas tua. 11. Culparum nostrarum cognitio temperat dolorem flagellorum. — Dolor quippe, ut diximus, flagelli temperatur cum culpa cognoscitur, quia et tanto quisque patientius ferramentum medici tolerat, quanto putridum conspicit esse quod secat. Qui igitur multiplicitatem legis intelligit, cuncta quae patitur quam sint minora perpendit, quia per hoc quod culpae pondus agnoscitur, afflictionis poena levigatur. 12. Venialiter peccant, qui zeli fervore modum correptionis excedunt. — Sed inter haec sciendum est quia sine magna iniquitate non fuerit quod Sophar virum justum usque ad objectionem iniquitatis increpavit. Unde et eorum audaciam Veritas juste redarguit, sed benigne ad gratiam reducit; quia apud misericordem judicem nequaquam sine venia culpa relinquitur, cum per fervorem zeli ex ejus amore peccatur. Saepe namque magnis hoc doctoribus mirandisque contingit, ut quo alta charitate fervent, 344 modum correptionis exaggerent, et lingua aliquid quod non debet dicat, quia mentem dilectio quantum debet inflammat. Sed verbum prolatae contumeliae tanto citius parcitur, quanto et ex qua radice prodeat pensatur. Unde bene per Moysen Dominus praecepit dicens: Si quis abierit cum amico suo simpliciter in silvam ad ligna caedenda, et lignum securis fugerit manu, ferrumque lapsum de manubrio amicum ejus percusserit, et occiderit,

hic ad unam supradictarum urbium fugiet, et vivet, ne forte proximus ejus, cujus effusus est sanguis, doloris stimulo persequatur, et apprehendat eum, et percutiat animam ejus (Deut. XIX, 5). Ad silvam quippe cum amico imus quoties cum quolibet proximo ad intuenda delicta nostra convertimur, et simpliciter ligna succidimus cum delinquentium vitia pia intentione resecamus. Sed securis manu fugit cum sese increpatio plus quam necesse est in asperitatem pertrahit. Ferrumque de manubrio prosilit cum de correptione sermo durior excedit; et amicum percutiens occidit, quia auditorem suum prolata contumelia ab spiritu dilectionis interficit. Correpti namque mens repente ad odium proruit, si hanc immoderata increpatio plus quam debuit addicit. Sed is qui incaute ligna percutit, et proximum exstinguit, ad tres necesse est urbes fugiat, ut in una earum defensus vivat, quia si, ad poenitentiae lamenta conversus, in unitate sacramenti sub spe, fide et charitate absconditur, reus perpetrati homicidii non tenetur; eumque exstincti proximus et cum invenerit non occidit, quia cum districtus judex venerit, qui sese nobis per naturae nostrae consortium junxit, ab eo procul dubio vindictam de culpae reatu non expetit quem sub ejus venia spes, fides et charitas abscondit. Citius ergo culpa dimittitur quae nequaquam malitiae studio perpetratur. Unde et Sophar iniquum vocat quem superna sententia laudaverat; nec tamen a venia reprobatus excluditur, quia ad verba contumeliae divini amoris zelo promovetur. Qui pro eo quod beati Job merita non agnoscit, ex imperita adhuc irrisione subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 7. — Forsitan vestigia Dei comprehendes, et usque ad perfectum, Omnipotentem reperies. 13. Dei vestigia sunt ejus dona quibus ad superna provocamur. Deus hic non videtur manifeste. Contemplationis vis. Dei essentiam angelica vel humana mens non plene contuetur. — Quid Dei vestigia nisi benignitatem illius visitationis vocat? Quibus nimirum progredi

ad superna provocamur cum ejus Spiritus afflatu tangimur, et, extra carnis angustias sublevati, per amorem agnoscimus auctoris nostri contemplandam speciem, quam sequamur. Nam cum mentem nostram spiritalis patriae amor inflammat, quasi sequentibus iter insinuat, et substrato cordi velut quoddam vestigium Dei gradientis imprimitur, ut ab eo rectis cogitationum gressibus via vitae teneatur. Quem enim necdum cernimus, restat necesse est ut per vestigia sui amoris indagemus, quatenus usque ad contemplationis speciem quandoque mens inveniat quem nunc, quasi a tergo subsequens, per sancta desideria explorat. Haec Psalmista auctoris nostri vestigia bene sequi noverat cum dicebat: Adhaesit anima mea post te (Psal. LXII, 9). Quem reperire quoque usque ad visionem suae celsitudinis satagebat, dicens: Sitivit anima mea 345 ad Deum vivum; quando veniam, et parebo ante faciem Dei (Psal. XLI, 3) Tunc quippe cogitatione manifesta omnipotens Deus reperitur, cum, mortalitatis nostrae funditus corruptione calcata, ab assumptis nobis in divinitatis suae claritate conspicitur. Nunc autem a carnali cogitatione animum infusi Spiritus gratia sublevat, et in contemptum rerum transeuntium exaltat; totumque mens quod appetebat in infimis despicit, atque ad superna desideria ignescit, et contemplationis suae vi extra carnem tollitur, quae corruptionis suae pondere adhuc in carne retinetur. Incircumscripti luminis jubar intueri conatur, et non valet; quod infirmitate pressus animus et nequaquam penetrat, et tamen repulsus amat. Jam namque de se conditor per quod ametur ostendit, sed visionis suae speciem amantibus subtrahit. Sola ergo ejus vestigia conspicientes gradimur, qui hunc per donorum suorum signa sequimur, quem necdum videmus. Quae nimirum vestigia comprehendi nequeunt, quia unde, ubi, quibusve modis veniant ejus Spiritus dona, nesciuntur, Veritate attestante, quae ait: Spiritus ubi vult spirat, et vocem ejus audis, et nescis unde veniat, et quo vadat (Joann. III, 8). In retributionis autem culmine reperiri Omnipotens per contemplationis speciem potest, sed tamen ad perfectum

non potest, quia etsi hunc in claritate sua quandoque conspicimus, non tamen ejus essentiam plene contuemur. Angelica etenim, vel humana mens cum ad incircumscriptum lumen inhiat, eo ipso se, quo est creatura, coangustat; et super se quidem per provectum tenditur, sed tamen ejus fulgorem comprehendere nec dilatata sufficit, qui et transcendendo et portando omnia et implendo concludit. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 8, 9. — Excelsior coelo est, et quid facies? profundior inferno, et unde cognosces? Longior terra mensura ejus, et latior mari. 14. Qui Deus omnia transcendat. — Quod Deus coelo excelsior, inferno profundior, terra longior, marique latior esse describitur, tanto spiritaliter debet intelligi, quanto de eo quidquam nefas est juxta corporea lineamenta sentire. Sed coelo est excelsior, quia incircumscriptione sui spiritus cuncta transcendit; inferno profundior, quia transcendendo subvehit; terra longior, quia creaturae modum perennitate suae aeternitatis excedit; mari latior, quia rerum temporalium fluctus sic regens possidet, ut hos sub omnimoda potentiae suae praesentia coangustando circumdet. Quamvis possunt et coeli appellatione angeli, et inferni vocabulo daemonia designari; per terram vero justi homines, per mare autem peccatores intelligi. Excelsior itaque coelo est, quia ipsi quoque electi spiritus visionem tantae celsitudinis perfecte non penetrant. Profundior inferno est, quia malignorum spirituum astutias longe subtilius quam ipsi putaverant judicans damnat. Terra longior, quia longanimitatem nostram patientia divinae longanimitatis exsuperat, quae nos et peccantes tolerat, et conversos ad praemia remunerationis exspectat. Mari latior, quia ubique facta peccantium 346 retributionis suae praesentia occupat, ut et cum non praesens per speciem cernitur, praesens per judicium sentiatur. 15. Qui homo coelum, infernus, terra, mare. Dei latitudo, longitudo, sublimitas et profundum. — Cuncta tamen ad solum

referri hominem possunt, ut ipse sit coelum cum jam per desiderium summis inhaereat; ipse infernus, cum, tentationum suarum caligine perturbatus, in infimis jacet; ipse terra, quia in bono opere fixae spei ubertate fructificat; ipse mare, quia in quibusdam trepidus quatitur, et aura suae mutabilitatis agitatur. Sed coelo est excelsior Deus, quia potentiae ejus magnitudine vincimur, etiam cum super nosmetipsos elevamur; inferno profundior, quia nimirum plus judicat quam ipse se humanus animus in tentationibus investigat; terra longior, quia fructus vitae, quos in fine retribuit, nequaquam nunc vel spes nostra comprehendit; mari latior, quia humana mens fluctuans multa de his quae ventura sunt conjicit, sed cum jam cernere quae aestimaverat coeperit, angustam se fuisse in sua aestimatione cognoscit. Excelsior igitur coelo fit cum ipsa in eum nostra contemplatio deficit. Unde et cor Psalmista in altum posuerat, sed necdum se eum contigisse sentiebat, dicens: Mirabilis facta est scientia tua ex me, confortata est, nec potero ad eam (Psal. CXXXVIII, 6). Inferno profundiorem noverat, qui semetipsum discutiens, sed ejus subtiliora judicia pertimescens, dicebat: Nihil mihi conscius sum, sed non in hoc justificatus sum; qui autem judicat me, Dominus est (I Cor. IV, 4). Longiorem terra viderat, cum minora ei esse humanae mentis vota pensabat, dicens: Qui potens est omnia facere superabundanter quam petimus aut intelligimus (Ephes. III, 20). Latiorem mari conspexerat, qui timendo pensabat quia nequaquam mens humana immensitatem districtionis ejus agnosceret, quantumlibet inquirendo fluctuaret, dicens: Quis novit potestatem irae tuae, aut prae timore iram tuam dinumerare (Psal. LXXXIX, 11)? Cujus bene potentiam egregius nobis doctor insinuat, cum breviter narrat: Ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis, quae sit latitudo, longitudo, sublimitas et profundum (Ephes. III, 18). Habet quippe Deus latitudinem, quia dilectionem suam usque ad collectionem persequentium tendit. Habet longitudinem, quia ad vitae patriam nos longanimiter tolerando perducit.

Habet sublimitatem, quia ipsorum quoque intelligentiam qui recepti in supernam fuerint congregationem transcendit. Habet profundum, quia damnatis inferius districtionis suae judicium incomprehensibiliter exerit. Quae scilicet quatuor nobis in hac vita positis singulis exercet, quia et latitudinem amando, et longitudinem tolerando, et celsitudinem, non solum nostram intelligentiam, sed etiam vota superando, et profunditatem suam exhibet, occultos et illicitos cogitationum motus districte judicando. Sed ejus celsitudo et profunditas quam sit investigabilis nullus agnoscit, nisi qui vel contemplatione ad summa provehi, vel, occultis motibus resistens, tentationum coeperit importunitate turbari. Unde et beato Job dicitur: Excelsior coelo est, et quid facies? profundior inferno, et unde cognosces? Ac si ei aperto despectu diceretur: Profunditatem ejus 347 atque excellentiam quando tu cognoscere sufficis, qui vel virtute ad summa evehi, vel temetipsum reprehendere in tentationibus nescis. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

. VERS. 10. — Si subverterit omnia, vel in unum coarctaverit, quis contradicet ei? vel quis dicere ei potest, Cur ita facis? 16. Quomodo Deus in nobis coelum, infernum, terram, mare subvertat. — Subvertit Dominus coelum cum terribili et occulta dispensatione humanae contemplationis celsitudinem destruit. Subvertit infernum cum cujuslibet mentem in suis tentationibus pavidam cadere etiam ad deteriora permittit. Subvertit terram cum fructificationem boni operis adversis irruentibus intercidit. Subvertit mare cum fluctuationem nostrae titubationis emergente subito pavore confundit. Dubietate quippe sua cor anxium hoc ipsum quia titubat valde formidat, et quasi mare subvertitur cum ipsa in Deum nostra trepidatio, considerato ejus judicii terrore, turbatur. Quia igitur quomodo coelum vel infernus, terra vel mare, subvertitur breviter diximus, nunc aliquantulum laboriosius restat ut haec qualiter in unum coarctari valeant, demonstremus.

17. Coelum et infernus simul, in una mente contemplatio et carnis tentatio. — Saepe namque contingit ut ad summa jam mentem spiritus elevet, sed tamen hanc importunis caro tentationibus impugnet. Cumque ad contemplanda coelestia animus ducitur, objectis actionis illicitae imaginibus reverberatur. Nam carnis repente hunc stimulus sauciat quem extra carnem contemplatio sancta rapiebat. Coelum ergo simul infernusque coarctatur cum unam eamdemque mentem et sublevatio contemplationis illuminat, et importunitas tentationis obscurat; ut et videat intendendo quod appetat, et succumbendo in cogitatione toleret quod erubescat. De coelo quippe lux oritur, infernus autem tenebris possidetur. In unum ergo coelum infernusque redigitur cum mens, quae jam lucem patriae supernae considerat, etiam de carnis bello tenebras occultae tentationis portat. Certe jam Paulus tertii coeli culmen ascenderat, jam paradisi secreta cognoverat, et tamen adhuc carnis bella tolerans gemebat, dicens: Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis (Rom. VII, 23). Quid ergo in hujus tanti praedicatoris pectore nisi coelum Deus infernumque coarctaverat, qui et visionis intimae jam lumen acceperat, et tamen adhuc tenebras de carne tolerabat? Super se viderat quod laetus appeteret, in se cernebat quod metuens doleret. Jam coelestis patriae lux irradiaverat, sed adhuc tentationis obscuritas animum confundebat. Cum coelo ergo infernum pertulit, quia et illuminatum securitas erexit, et tentatum gemitus stravit. 18. Terra et mare simul, fidei certitudo cum aliquantula dubietate. — Et saepe contingit ut fides in mente jam vigeat, sed tamen ex parte aliquantula in dubietate contabescat; quatenus et certa se a visibilibus elevet, et ex quibusdam sese incerta perturbet. Nam plerumque ad aeterna appetenda se erigit, et subortis cogitationum stimulis agitata, sibimet ipsa contradicit. In unum ergo terra mareque coarctatur cum unam eamdemque mentem, et certitudo solidae fidei roborat, et tamen ex aliquantula 348 mutabilitate perfidiae aura

dubietatis versat. An non in suo pectore coarctari terram mareque cognoverat, qui et per fidem sperans, et per infidelitatem fluctuans, dicebat: Credo, Domine, adjuva incredulitatem meam (Marc. IX, 23)? Quid itaque est, quod et se credere asserit, et adjuvari in se incredulitatem quaerit, nisi quod coarctari in suis cogitationibus terram cum mari deprehenderat, qui et exorare certus jam per fidem coeperat, et adhuc incertus undas perfidiae ex incredulitate tolerabat? 19. Cur mentem ad recta surgentem Deus impugnari sinat. — Quod tamen occulta fieri dispensatione permittitur, ut cum mens jam surgere ad rectitudinem coeperit, pravitatis suae reliquiis impugnetur; quatenus haec ipsa impugnatio, aut resistentem exerceat, aut delectationibus seductam frangat. Recte itaque nunc dicitur: Si subverterit omnia, vel in unum coarctaverit, quis contradicet ei? vel quis dicere ei potest: Cur ita facis? quia nimirum divinum judicium nec adversitate valet imminui, nec inquisitione cognosci, cum vel virtutes quas tribuerat subtrahit, vel has omnino non adimens, vitiorum concuti impugnatione permittit. Saepe namque in elationem cor tollitur cum laetis successibus in virtute roboratur, sed dum latentes motus audaciae in cogitatione conditor conspicit, se sibi hominem ostendendo derelinquit, ut ejus mens derelicta quid sit inveniat, quae male in se secura gaudebat. Unde cum subverti omnia, vel in unum coarctari, dicerentur, protinus additur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 11. — Ipse enim novit hominum vanitatem, et videns iniquitatem, nonne considerat? 20. Vanitatis ab iniquitate discrimen. — Ac si praemissa patefaciendo subjungeret, dicens: Quia tolerando succrescere vitia conspicit, judicando dona confundit. Rectus vero in descriptione ordo servatur, cum prius nosci vanitas, et post considerari iniquitas perhibetur. Omnis quippe iniquitas, vanitas, non tamen omnis vanitas esse iniquitas solet. Vana namque agimus quoties transitoria cogitamus. Unde et

evanescere dicitur quod repente ab intuentium oculis aufertur. Hinc Psalmista ait: Universa vanitas omnis homo vivens (Psal. XXXVIII, 6); quoniam per hoc quod vivendo ad interitum tendit, recte quidem vanitas dicitur, sed nequaquam recte etiam iniquitas appellatur, quia etsi de poena est culpae quod deficit, non tamen hoc ipsum culpa est, quod a vita percurrit. Vana sunt itaque, quae transeunt. Unde et per Salomonem dicitur: Omnia vanitas (Eccle. I, 2). 21. Vanitas ducit ad iniquitatem. Vanitas mentem obnubilat, iniquitas caecat. — Apte autem post vanitatem protinus iniquitas subinfertur, quia dum per quaedam transitoria ducimur, in quibusdam noxie ligamur; cumque mens incommutabilitatis statum non tenet, a semetipsa defluens, ad vitia prorumpit. Vanitate ergo ad iniquitatem labitur, quae assueta rebus mutabilibus, dum ex aliis ad alia semper impellitur, suborientibus culpis inquinatur. Potest tamen et vanitas culpa intelligi, et iniquia is nomine reatus gravior demonstrari. Si enim aliquando vanitas culpa non esset, Psalmista non diceret: Quanquam in imagine Dei ambulet homo, tamen vane conturbatur; thesaurizat, et ignorat cui congreget ea (Psal. XXXVIII, 8); quia quamvis Trinitatis imaginem in natura servemus, vanis tamen delectationis motibus 349 perturbati, in conversatione nostra delinquimus; ut modis nos semper alternantibus cupido concutiat, metus frangat, laetitia mulceat, dolor affligat. Ex vanitate ergo, ut et superius dictum est, ad iniquitatem ducimur cum prius per levia delicta defluimus, ut, usu cuncta levigante, nequaquam post committere etiam graviora timeamus. Nam dum moderari lingua otiosa verba negligit, more inolitae remissionis capta, audax ad noxia prorumpit; dum gulae incumbitur, ad levitatis protinus insaniam proditur; cumque mens subigere delectationem carnis renuit, plerumque et ad perfidiae voraginem ruit. Unde bene Paulus plebis Israeliticae damna conspiciens, ut imminentia ab auditoribus mala compesceret, curavit ex ordine transacta narrare, dicens: Neque idololatrae efficiamini, sicut quidam eorum, quemadmodum

scriptum est (I Cor. X, 7): Sedit populus manducare et bibere, et surrexerunt ludere (Exod. XXXII, 6). Esus quippe potusque ad lusum impulit, lusus ad idololatriam traxit, quia si vanitatis culpa nequaquam caute compescitur, ab iniquitate protinus mens incauta devoratur, Salomone attestante, qui ait: Qui modica spernit, paulatim decidit (Eccle. XIX, 1). Si enim curare parva negligimus, insensibiliter seducti, audenter etiam majora perpetramus. Et notandum quod non videri, sed considerari iniquitas dicitur. Studiosius quippe conspicimus quae consideramus. Deus itaque hominum vanitatem novit, iniquitatem considerat, quia nec minora delicta inulta deserit, et ad majora ferienda sese intentius accingit. Quia igitur a levioribus malis incipitur, et ad graviora pervenitur; vanitas mentem obnubilat, iniquitas caecat. Quae nimirum mens, amisso mox lumine, tanto se altius per tumorem erigit, quanto et iniquitatis capta laqueis a veritate longius recedit. Unde et apte quoque quo vanitas cum iniquitate pertrahat, exprimit, cum repente subjungit:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 12. — Vir vanus in superbiam erigitur. 22. Vanitas audacem ex culpa reddit, et in naturae motibus effrenum. — Vanitatis quippe finis est, ut cum peccato mentem sauciat, hanc ex culpa audacem reddat; quatenus, sui reatus oblita, quae amisisse se innocentiam non dolet, justo excaecata judicio, simul et humilitatem perdat. Et fit plerumque ut, pravis desideriis serviens, a jugo se divini timoris excutiat, et, quasi in malorum perpetrationem jam libera, omne quod voluptas suggerit implere contendat. Unde cum vir vanus se erigere in superbiam dicitur, illico subinfertur:

CAPUT XIII.

IBID. — Et quasi pullum onagri se liberum natum putat. 23. Per pullum quippe onagri omne agrestium genus exprimitur, quod, naturae dimissum

motibus, loris dominantium non tenetur. Agri namque animalia in libertate habent et ire quo appetunt, et quiescere cum lassantur. Et quamvis insensatis animalibus homo longe sit melior; hoc tamen plerumque homini non licet quod brutis animalibus licet. Quae enim ad aliud minime servantur, eorum motus procul dubio nequaquam sub disciplina restringitur. Homo autem qui ad sequentem vitam ducitur, necesse profecto est ut in cunctis suis motibus
350 sub disciplinae dispositione religetur, et quasi domesticum animal loris vinctum serviat, atque aeternis dispositionibus restrictum vivat. Qui ergo implere cuncta quae desiderat per effrenatam libertatem quaerit, quid aliud quam pullo onagri esse similis concupiscit, ut disciplinae hunc lora non teneant, sed audenter vagus per silvam desideriorum currat? 24. Lora quibus nos Deus coercet ac regit. — Saepe autem divina miseratio, quos prodire in effrenationem illicitae libertatis conspicit, objectione properae adversitatis frangit, quatenus elisi discant quam reproba erectione tumuerant; ut jam flagelli experimentis edomiti, quasi jumenta domestica praeceptorum loris mentis colla subjiciant, et vitae praesentis itinera ad nutum praesidentis pergant. Quibus bene loris ligatum se noverat, qui dicebat: Ut jumentum factus sum apud te, et ego semper tecum (Psal. LXXII, 23). Unde et saevus ille persecutor ab agro perfidae voluptatis ad domum fidei deductus, rectoris sui calcaribus punctus, audiebat: Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare (Act. IX, 5). Restat ergo ut si esse jam similes pullo onagri nolumus, in cunctis quae appetimus nutum prius intimae dispensationis exquiramus, ut mens nostra in omne quod nititur, superni regiminis loro teneatur; et inde magis vota sua ad vitam impleat, unde vitae suae studia et contra propriam voluntatem calcat. Multa Sophar fortia protulit, sed quod meliori se haec loquitur nescit. Unde adhuc increpando subjungit:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 13. — Tu autem firmasti cor tuum, et expandisti ad eum manus tuas. 25. Sophar arguit Job animi obdurati et superbi. Illum imitantur mali et haeretici adversus bonos et catholicos. — Firmati cor non hoc loco per virtutem dicitur, sed per insensibilitatem. Omnis namque a intus qui districtionis intimae considerationi se subjicit, ex ejus protinus timore mollescit; eumque sagitta divinae formidinis penetrat, quia infirma viscera per humilitatem gestat. Quisquis autem pertinacia insensibilitatis obdurescit, quasi cor firmat, ne hoc jacula timoris superni confodiant. Unde quibusdam per prophetam Dominus misericorditer dicit: Tollam vobis cor lapideum, et dabo vobis cor carneum (Ezech. XXXVI, 26). Cor quippe lapideum tollit cum a nobis superbiae duritiam subtrahit, et cor carneum tribuit cum eamdem protinus nostram duritiam ad sensibilitatem vertit. Per manus vero, ut jam crebro docuimus, opera designantur. Cum culpa igitur manus ad Deum expandere est contra largitoris gratiam de virtute operum superbire. Qui enim in conspectu aeterni judicis loquens sibi bona quae facit tribuit, ad Deum manus superbiens tendit. Sic profecto contra electos reprobi, sic contra catholicos haeretici semper effrenantur, ut cum objurgare facta nequeunt, bonos reprehendere de factorum elatione moliantur, quatenus eos quos redarguere ex infirmitate actionis non valent, ex crimine tumoris accusent. Unde et ea bona quae exterius fiunt, nequaquam bona esse jam censent, quae quasi per studium turgidae cogitationis exhibentur. Qui saepe humilia tumentes increpant, et quod dictis suis semetipsos feriunt ignorant. 351 Sed quia justum virum Sophar hactenus reprehendendo corripuit, nunc velut docendo subjungit:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 14, 15. — Si iniquitatem quae est in manu tua abstuleris a te, et non manserit in tabernaculo tuo injustitia, tunc levare poteris faciem tuam absque macula, et eris stabilis, et non timebis. 26. Ut mens sit munda, prius

operis, tum cordis iniquitas resecanda. — Omne peccatum aut sola cogitatione committitur, aut cogitatione simul et opere perpetratur. Iniquitas ergo in manu est culpa in opere, injustitia vero in tabernaculo iniquitas in mente. Mens quippe nostra tabernaculum non incongrue vocatur, in qua apud nosmetipsos abscondimur, cum foris in opere non videmur. Sophar itaque, quia justi viri amicus est, novit quod dicat; sed quia justum increpat, haereticorum tenens speciem, proferre recte etiam quae novit ignorat. Sed nos calcantes hoc, quod ab eo tumide dicitur, pensemus ejus verba quam vera sint, si recte dicerentur. Prius enim a manu iniquitatem subtrahi, et post a tabernaculo admonet injustitiam abscidi, quia quisquis jam prava a se opera exterius resecat, necesse profecto est ut, ad semetipsum rediens, solerter sese in mentis intentione discernat; ne culpa, quam jam in actione non habet, adhuc in cogitatione perduret. Unde bene etiam per Salomonem dicitur: Praepara foris opus tuum, et diligenter exerce agrum tuum, ut postea aedifices domum tuam (Prov. XXIV, 27). Quid namque est praeparato opere agrum diligenter exterius exercere, nisi evulsis iniquitatis sentibus, actionem nostram ad frugem retributionis excolere? Et quid est post agri exercitium ad aedificium domus redire, nisi quod plerumque ex bonis operibus discimus quantam vitae munditiam in cogitatione construamus? Pene cuncta namque bona opera ex cogitatione prodeunt, sed sunt nonnulla cogitationis acumina, quae ex operatione nascuntur; nam sicut ab animo opus sumitur, ita rursus ab opere animus eruditur. Mens quippe divini amoris exordia capiens imperat bona quae fiant; sed postquam fieri imperata coeperint, ipsis suis exercitata actionibus discit, cum imperare bona inchoaverat, quantum minus videbat. Foris ergo ager excolitur, ut domus postmodum construatur, quia plerumque ab exteriori opere sumimus, quantam subtilitatem rectitudinis in corde teneamus. Quem bene Sophar servare ordinem studuit, cum prius auferri iniquitatem a manibus, et post a tabernaculo injustitiam dixit, quia nequaquam plene animus in cogitatione

erigitur, quando adhuc ab eo extrinsecus in opere erratur. 27. Haec munditia fiduciam praestat in oratione; secus, si desit. — Quae si perfecte duo haec tergimus, ad Deum statim sine macula faciem levamus. Interna quippe facies hominis mens est, in qua nimirum recognoscimur, ut ab auctore nostro dirigamur. Quam scilicet faciem levare est in Deo animum per studia orationis attollere. Sed elevatam faciem macula inquinat, si intendentem mentem reatus sui conscientia accusat, quia a spei fiducia protinus frangitur, si intenta precibus necdum devictae culpae memoria mordetur. Diffidit namque accipere se posse quod appetit, quae profecto reminiscitur nolle se adhuc facere quod divinitus audivit. 352 Hinc per Joannem dicitur: Si cor nostrum non reprehenderit nos, fiduciam habemus apud Deum, et quidquid petierimus ab eo accipiemus (I Joan. III, 21). Hinc Salomon ait: Qui avertit aurem suam, ne audiat legem, oratio ejus erit exsecrabilis (Prov. XXVIII, 9). Cor quippe nos in petitione reprehendit cum resistere se praeceptis ejus quem postulat meminit, et oratio fit exsecrabilis cum a censura avertitur legis, quia dignum profecto est ut ab ejus beneficiis sit quisque extraneus cujus nimirum jussionibus non vult esse subjectus. 28. Cum non adest, quid agendum. — Qua in re hoc est salubre remedium, ut cum se mens ex memoria culpae reprehendit, hoc prius in oratione defleat, quod erravit; quatenus erroris macula cum fletibus tergitur, in petitione sua cordis facies ab auctore munda videatur. Sed curandum nimis est ne ad hoc rursus proruat quod se mundasse fletibus exsultat, ne dum deplorata iterum culpa committitur, in conspectu justi judicis ipsa etiam lamenta levigentur. Solerter quippe debemus meminisse quod dicitur: Ne iteres verbum in oratione tua (Eccli. VII, 15). Quo videlicet dicto vir sapiens nequaquam nos prohibet saepe veniam petere, sed culpas iterare. Ac si aperte dicat: Cum male gesta defleveris, nequaquam rursus facias, quod in precibus iterum plangas. 29. Ante orationem immundae ac terrenae cogitationes ablegandae. — Ut ergo ad precem facies sine macula levetur, ante orationis semper

tempora debet sollicite conspici quidquid potest in oratione reprobari; talemque se mens et cum ab oratione cessat exhibere festinet, qualis apparere judici in ipso orationis tempore exoptat. Saepe namque immunda quaedam vel illicita in animo versamus, quoties a precibus vacamus. Sed cum se mens ad studia orationis erexerit, earum rerum imagines reverberata patitur, quibus libenter prius otiosa premebatur; et quasi jam faciem anima ad Deum levare non sufficit, quia in se nimirum inquinata mente maculas pollutae cogitationis erubescit. Saepe curis mundi libenter occupamur. Cumque post haec studio orationis intendimus, nequaquam se mens ad coelestia erigit, quia pondus hanc terrenae sollicitudinis in profundum mersit; et in prece facies munda non ostenditur, quia cogitationis infimae luto maculatur. 30. Aliena in nos delicta relaxanda. Quis a timore liber. — Nonnunquam vero cor a cunctis excutimus, et illicitis motibus, etiam cum a prece vacat, obviamus; sed tamen quia nos culpas rarius committimus, aliena pigrius delicta relaxamus; et quo peccare noster animus sollicitius metuit, eo districtius hoc quod in se ab alio delinquitur abhorrescit. Unde fit ut eo inveniatur quisque tardus ad veniam, quo proficiendo factus est cautus ad culpam; et quo ipse excedere in alterum metuit, hoc quod in se exceditur punire durius exquirit. Sed quid hac doloris macula reperiri deterius potest, quae in conspectu judicis charitatem non inquinat, sed necat? Vitam quippe animae quaelibet culpa polluit, servatus vero contra proximum dolor occidit. Menti namque ut gladius figitur, et mucrone illius ipsa viscerum occulta perforantur. Qui scilicet a transfixo corde, si prius non educitur, nihil in precibus divinae opis obtinetur, quia et vulneratis membris imponi salutis medicamina 353 nequeunt, nisi ferrum a vulnere ante subtrahatur. Hinc est enim quod per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Nisi remiseritis hominibus peccata eorum, nec Pater vester qui in coelis est remittet vobis peccata vestra (Matth. VI, 15). Hinc admonet, dicens: Cum stabitis ad orandum, dimittite si quid habetis adversus alterum (Marc. XI, 25). Hinc rursum ait:

Date, et dabitur vobis; dimittite, et dimittetur vobis (Luc. VI, 38). Hinc constitutioni postulationis conditionem posuit pietatis, dicens: Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris (Matth. VI, 12); ut profecto bonum quod a Deo compuncti petimus, hoc primum cum proximo conversi faciamus. Tunc igitur vere sine macula faciem levamus, cum nec nos prohibita mala committimus, nec ea quae in nos commissa sunt ex proprio zelo retinemus. Gravi namque mens nostra orationis suae tempore confusione deprimitur, si hanc aut sua adhuc operatio inquinat, aut alienae malitiae servatus dolor accusat. Quae duo quisque dum terserit, ad ea quae subnexa sunt protinus liber exsurgit. Et eris stabilis, et non timebis; quia nimirum tanto minus judicem trepidat, quanto in bonis actibus solidius stat. Timorem quippe superat, qui stabilitatem servat, quia dum sollicitus studet peragere quod mansuete conditor imperat, securus etiam cogitat quod terribiliter intentat. 31. In activa vita facilius perseveratur quam in contemplativa. Quis in contemplatione persistere censeatur. — Sciendum praeterea est quod nonnulla bona sunt ad quae indefessi persistimus, et rursum nonnulla sunt a quibus continue deficientes labimur, atque ad haec magnis conatibus per intervalla temporum reformamur. In activa etenim vita sine defectu mens figitur, a contemplativa autem infirmitatis suae pondere victa lassatur. Illa quippe tanto firmius durat, quanto ad vicina se erga utilitatem proximi dilatat; haec tanto celerius labitur, quanto et carnis claustra transgrediens, super semetipsam ire conatur. Illa per plana se dirigit, et idcirco pedem operis robustius figit; haec autem quo super se alta appetit, ad se citius fessa descendit. Quod bene ac breviter Ezechiel insinuat, cum eorum quae viderat motus animalium narrat, dicens: Non revertebantur cum incederent. Et paulo post subjicit, adjungens: Et animalia ibant, et revertebantur (Ezech. I, 9, 14). Sancta quippe animalia aliquando vadunt, et minime redeunt; aliquando vadunt, et protinus revertuntur, quia electorum mentes cum per collatam sibi activae vitae gratiam erroris vias

deserunt, redire ad mala mundi nesciunt quae reliquerunt; cum vero per contemplationis aciem ab hac se eadem activa vita suspendunt, eunt et redeunt, quia per hoc quod diu persistere minime in contemplatione sufficiunt, sese iterum ad operationem fundunt; ut in his quae sibi juxta sunt se exercendo refoveant, et super se rursum surgere contemplando convalescant. Sed dum haec eadem contemplatio more debito per temporum intervalla repetitur, indeficienter procul dubio et in ejus soliditate persistitur, quia etsi infirmitatis suae pondere superata mens deficit, hanc tamen iterum continuis conatibus reparata comprehendit. Nec stabilitatem suam in ea perdidisse dicenda est, a qua etsi semper deficit, hanc et cum perdiderit semper inquirit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 16. — 354 Miseriae quoque oblivisceris, et quasi aquarum quae praeterierint, non recordaberis. 32. Mala vitae hujus gravia non sunt aeterna bona cogitanti. — Mala vitae praesentis tanto durius animus sentit, quanto pensare bonum quod sequitur, negligit; et quo non vult praemia considerare quae restant, gravia aestimat esse quae tolerat. Unde et contra flagelli ictum cogitatio caeca conqueritur, et quasi infinita calamitas creditur, quae diebus cursu labentibus quotidie finitur. At si semel quisque ad aeterna se erigat, atque in his quae incommutabiliter permanent oculum cordis figat, prope nihil esse hic conspicit quidquid ad finem currit. Praesentis vitae adversa tolerat, sed quasi nihil esse omne quod labitur pensat. Quo enim se internis gaudiis robustius inserit, eo minus exterius dolores sentit. Unde Sophar nequaquam veritus ausu temerario docere meliorem, exhortatur ad justitiam, et demonstrat quam nulla justi oculis videatur poena. Ac si aperte dicat: Si degustas gaudium quod intus permanet, leve fit protinus omne quod foris dolet. Bene autem praesentis vitae miserias aquis praetereuntibus comparat, quia calamitas transiens, electi mentem nequaquam vi concussionis obruit,

sed tamen tactu moeroris infundit. Nam madet quidem per cruorem vulneris, etsi a suae certitudine non frangitur salutis. Saepe autem non solum flagella atterunt, sed in uniuscujusque justi animo malignorum quoque spirituum tentamenta grassantur, ut exterius ex percussione doleat, et intus aliquatenus ex tentatione frigescat. Sed nequaquam gratia deserit, quae quo nos durius ex dispensatione percutit, eo amplius ex pietate custodit. Nam cum tenebrescere per tentationem coeperit, sese iterum lux interna succendit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 17. — Et quasi meridianus fulgor consurget tibi ad vesperum. 33. Virtus renovatur in tentatione. — Fulgor quippe meridianus in vespere est virtutis renovatio in tentatione, ut repentino charitatis fervore mens vigeat, quae jamjamque lumen sibi gratiae occubuisse formidabat. Quod adhuc Sophar subtilius aperit, cum subjungit:

CAPUT XVIII.

IBID. — Et cum te consumptum putaveris, orieris ut lucifer. 34. Tristitia ex tentatione, Dei misericordiam pro nobis exorat. Justus, lucifer. — Saepe namque tot tentamenta nos obsident, ut ipsa nos eorum numerositas pene ad lapsum desperationis inclinet. Unde plerumque cum mens in taedium vertitur, vix ipsa virtutis suae damna considerat; et tota dolens, sed quasi jam et a sensu doloris aliena, frangitur, et enumerare non valet quanto cogitationum tumultu vastatur. Ruituram se per momenta conspicit, eique ne arma repugnationis arripiat gravius moeror ipse contradicit. Circumductos quolibet oculos obscuritas obsidet, et cum visum tenebrae semper impediant, moesta mens nihil aliud quam tenebras videt. Sed apud misericordem judicem saepe haec ipsa, quae adnisum quoque orationis aggravat, pro nobis subtilius tristitia exorat. Nam tunc moeroris nostri

caliginem conditor conspicit, et subtracti luminis radios refundit, ita ut erecta protinus per dona mens vigeat, quam paulo ante decertantia vitia superbiae calce deprimebant. Mox torporis pondus discutit, atque ad contemplationis lumen post turbationis suae tenebras erumpit. Mox in gaudium profectus 355 attollitur, quae inter tentamenta pejus cadere ex desperatione cogebatur. Sine cogitationis certamine praesentia despicit, sine dubitationis obstaculo de ventura retributione confidit. Justus ergo cum se consumptum putaverit, ut lucifer oritur, quia mox ut tenebrescere tentationum caligine coeperit, ad lucem gratiae reformatur, et in se ipso monstrat diem justitiae, qui casurus paulo ante timuit noctem culpae. Recte autem lucifero justi vita comparatur. Solem quippe praecurrens lucifer, diem nuntiat. Et quid nobis sanctorum innocentia nisi sequentis judicis claritatem clamat? In eorum namque admiratione conspicimus quid de majestate veri luminis aestimemus. Necdum Redemptoris nostri potentiam videmus, sed tamen virtutem illius in electorum suorum moribus admiramur. Quia igitur bonorum vita in consideratione sua oculis nostris vim veritatis objicit, clarus ad nos lucifer ante solem venit. 35. Justus dura hic patitur, sed bene ei erit in extremis. Jam ab hinc foris cadens, intus innovatur. — Sciendum vero est quod haec quae ex tentationum spiritalium adversitate discussimus, juxta exteriora quoque mala nil obstat intelligi. Sancti etenim viri quia summa medullitus diligunt, in infimis dura patiuntur; sed in fine gaudii lumen inveniunt, quod habere in hoc spatio percurrentis vitae contemnunt. Unde nunc per Sophar dicitur: Et quasi meridianus fulgor consurget tibi ad vesperum. Peccatoris enim lumen in die est obscuritas in vespere, quia in praesenti vita felicitate attollitur, sed adversitatis tenebris in fine devoratur. Justo autem meridianus fulgor ad vesperum surgit, quia quanta sibi claritas maneat cum jam occumbere coeperit agnoscit. Hinc namque scriptum est: Timenti Deum bene erit in extremis (Eccli. I, 13). Hinc per Psalmistam dicitur: Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum, haec est haereditas Domini (Psal.

CXXVI, 2). Qui in hujus quoque vitae adhuc certamine positus, cum se consumptum putaverit, ut lucifer oritur, quia foris cadens, intus innovatur; et quo magis exterius adversa tolerat, eo uberius virtutum lumine interius coruscat, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Sed licet is qui foris est noster homo corrumpitur, tamen is qui intus est renovatur de die in diem. Id enim quod in praesenti est momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostrae supra modum in sublimitate aeternum gloriae pondus operatur in nobis (II Cor. IV, 16). Et notandum quod nequaquam cum consumptus fueris, sed cum te consumptum putaveris dicit, quia et quod videmus in dubietate est, et quod speramus in certitudine. Unde et isdem Paulus non se consumptum noverat, sed putabat, qui et in adversa tribulationum corruens ut lucifer resplendebat, dicens: Quasi morientes, et ecce vivimus; quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes; sicut egentes, multos autem locupletantes (II Cor. VI, 9). Sciendum quoque est quod bonorum mens quo duriora pro veritate tolerat, eo aeternitatis praemia certius sperat. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 18. — Et habebis fiduciam, proposita tibi spe. 36. Eo certius in Deum sperat, quo duriora pro illo patitur. — Tanto namque spes in Deum solidior surgit, quanto pro illo quisque graviora pertulerit, quia nequaquam retributionis gaudium de aeternitate colligitur, quod non hic prius pia tribulatione seminatur. 356 Hinc enim per Psalmistam dicitur: Euntes, ibant et flebant, mittentes semina sua; venientes autem venient in exsultatione, portantes manipulos suos (Psal. CXXV, 6). Hinc Paulus ait: Si commorimur, et convivemus; si sustinemus, et conregnabimus (II Tim. II, 11). Hinc discipulos admonet, dicens: Per multas tribulationes oportet nos introire in regnum Dei (Act. XIV, 21). Hinc sanctorum gloriam Joanni angelus indicans, ait: Hi sunt qui venerunt de tribulatione magna, et laverunt stolas suas, et candidas eas fecerunt in sanguine Agni (Apoc. VII, 14). Quia igitur

nunc per tribulationem seritur, ut post gaudii fructus metatur, tanto major fiducia mentem roborat, quanto hanc fortior pro veritate afflictio angustat. Unde apte protinus adjungitur:

CAPUT XX.

IBID. — Et defossus securus dormies. 37. Malis praesens securitas laborem, bonis praesens labor securitatem parit. — Sicut enim malis praesens securitas laborem, ita bonis praesens labor perpetuam securitatem parit. Unde et defossum se securum dormire jam noverat, qui dicebat: Ego enim jam delibor, et tempus meae resolutionis instat; bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi; de reliquo reposita mihi est corona justitiae, quam reddet mihi Dominus in die illa justus judex (II Tim. IV, 6). Quia enim contra mala transeuntia sine defectu certaverat, de mansuris nimirum gaudiis sine dubietate praesumebat. 38. A terrenis curis liberi quies et opus. — Quamvis defossus intelligi et aliter potest. Saepe namque, rebus transitoriis occupati, pensare negligimus per quanta peccamus; sed si, reducto considerationis oculo, a sinu cordis terrenae cogitationis agger excutitur, quidquid in mente latebat invenitur. Unde sancti viri animorum latebras perscrutari non desinunt, sese subtiliter indagantes, terrenarum rerum curas abjiciunt, et, effossis plene cogitationibus, cum nullo se reatu criminis morderi deprehendunt, velut in strato cordis apud se securi requiescunt. Latere quoque ab hujus mundi actibus appetunt, semper sua considerant, et cum loro regiminis minime constringuntur, judicare quae aliena sunt recusant. Effossi ergo securi dormiunt, quia dum sua intima vigilanter penetrant, a laboriosis se hujus mundi oneribus sub quietis otio occultant. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 19. — Requiesces, et non erit qui te exterreat. 39. Aeternis inhians nihil timet a mundo. — Quisquis praesentem gloriam quaerit, profecto despectum metuit. Qui semper ad lucra inhiat, semper videlicet damna formidat. Cujus enim perceptione reficitur, ejus rei procul dubio et amissione sauciatur; et quo obligatus mutabilibus ac perituris inhaeret, eo longe in infimis ab arce securitatis jacet. At contra quisquis in solo aeternitatis desiderio figitur, nec prosperitate attollitur, nec adversitate quassatur; dum nil habet in mundo quod appetat, nihil est quod de mundo pertimescat. Hinc etenim Salomon ait: Non contristabit justum quidquid ei acciderit (Prov. XII, 21). Hinc iterum dicit: Justus quasi leo confidens absque terrore erit (Prov. XXVIII, 1). Bene itaque nunc dicitur: Requiesces, et non erit qui te exterreat (Job. XI, 19), quia tanto quisque a se plenius pavorem qui ex mundo est abjicit, quanto in semetipso verius mundi concupiscentiam vincit. An non 357 absque terrore Paulus in corde requieverat, qui dicebat: Certus sum enim quia neque mors, neque vita, neque angeli, neque principatus, neque instantia, neque futura, neque fortitudo, neque altitudo, neque profundum, neque creatura alia poterit nos separare a charitate Dei, quae est in Christo Jesu Domino nostro (Rom. VIII, 38)? Cujus videlicet fortitudo charitatis, vera sanctae Ecclesiae voce laudatur, cum per canticorum Canticum dicitur (Cant. VIII, 6): Valida est ut mors dilectio (De poenit., dist. 2, ca). Virtuti etenim mortis dilectio comparatur, quia nimirum mentem, quam semel ceperit, a delectatione mundi funditus occidit; et tanto hanc valentius in auctoritatem erigit, quanto et insensibilem contra terrores reddit. Sed inter haec sciendum est quod pravi cum recta praedicant, valde difficile est ut ad hoc quod taciti ambiunt non erumpant. Unde et Sophar protinus adjungit:

CAPUT XXII.

IBID. — Et deprecabuntur faciem tuam plurimi. 40. Recti non ambiunt intercessores pro aliis videri. — Neque enim justi viri idcirco se per innocentiae itinera arcta custodiunt, ut ab aliis exorentur. Sed sive haeretici, seu perversi quilibet, per hoc quod inter homines quasi innocenter vivunt, videri intercessores pro hominibus volunt; et cum sancta loquentes insinuant, quod ipsi appetunt, hoc aliis pro magno pollicentur; dumque coelestia praedicant, in suis repente sponsionibus ostendunt quod amant. Sed ne diu terrena pollicendo patescant quod sunt, ad verba rectitudinis citius recurrunt. Unde mox subditur.

CAPUT XXIII.

VERS. 20. — Oculi autem impiorum deficient, et effugium peribit ab eis. 41. Impiis a miseria hic aliquod effugium; post mortem nullum. — Quod oculorum nomine vis intentionis exprimitur, per Evangelium Veritas attestatur, dicens: Si oculus tuus simplex fuerit, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit (Matth. VI, 22); quia videlicet si operationem nostram intentio munda praevenerit, quamlibet aliter hominibus videatur, interni tamen judicis oculis mundum subsequentis actionis corpus ostenditur. Oculi ergo impiorum sunt intentiones in eis carnalium desideriorum. Qui idcirco deficiunt, quia aeterna negligunt, et sola semper transitoria praestolantur. Adipisci quippe terrenam gloriam cogitant, multiplicari rebus temporalibus exoptant, ad mortem quotidie cursu rerum labentium tendunt; sed cogitare mortalia mortaliter nesciunt. Carnis vita per momenta deficit, et tamen carnale desiderium crescit. Res habita instanti fine corripitur, et habendi anxietas non finitur. Sed cum mors impios subtrahit, eorum profecto desideria cum vita terminantur. Quorum scilicet oculi tunc superna ultione deficiunt, quia suo hic judicio a terrena deficere delectatione noluerunt. Hos illorum oculos a jucunditate pristina claudi Psalmista conspexerat, cum dicebat: In illa die peribunt omnes cogitationes eorum (Psal. CXLV, 4); quia

et aeterna mala nunquam cogitata reperiunt, et subito amittunt bona temporalia quae diu tractata tenuerunt. A quibus et omne effugium perit, quia eorum malitia ab animadversione districti judicis quo se valeat occultare non invenit. Nam nunc iniqui cum tristitia aliqua, vel adversa patiuntur, effugii latebras inveniunt, quia ad voluptatem protinus desideriorum carnalium recurrunt. Ne enim 358 paupertas cruciet, divitiis animum demulcent. Ne despectus proximorum deprimat, sese dignitatibus exaltant. Si fastidio corpus atteritur, antepositis epularum diversitatibus nutritur. Si quo animus moestitiae impulsu dejicitur, mox per interposita jocorum blandimenta relevatur. Tot ergo hic habent effugia, quot sibi praeparant delectamenta. Sed quandoque eis effugium perit, quia eorum mens, amissis omnibus, se solummodo et judicem conspicit. Tunc voluptas subtrahitur, sed voluptatis culpa servatur, et repente miseri pereundo discunt quia peritura tenuerunt. Qui tamen quousque corporaliter vivunt quaerere nocitura non desinunt. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXIV.

IBID. — Et spes illorum abominatio animae. 42. Quod iniquo voluptas, hoc poena est justo. Unde reficitur caro, inde deficit spiritus. — Quid hic peccator totis cogitationibus sperat, nisi ut potestate caeteros transeat, cunctos rerum multiplicitate transcendat, adversantes dominando subjiciat, obsequentibus mirandus innotescat, irae ad votum satisfaciat, benignum se, cum laudatur, ostendat; quidquid gula appetit, offerat; ad hoc quod voluptas imperat, operis expletione concurrat? Bene ergo spes illorum abominatio animae dicitur, quia et ea quae carnales ambiunt spiritales quique judicio rectitudinis aversantur. Nam quod peccatores voluptatem aestimant, hoc justi procul dubio poenam putant. Abominatio igitur est animae, spes pravorum, quia nimirum spiritus deficit, ubi caro requiescit. Ut enim caro mollibus, sic anima duris nutritur: illam blanda refovent, hanc aspera

exercent; illa delectationibus pascitur, haec amaritudinibus vegetatur. Et sicut carnem dura sauciant, sic spiritum mollia necant; sicut illam laboriosa interimunt, ita hunc delectabilia exstinguunt. Spes itaque carnalium, abominatio animae dicitur, quia inde in perpetuum spiritus interit, unde ad tempus caro suaviter vivit. 43. Recte dicta saepe corrumpit loquentis indiscretio. — Sed haec Sophar recte diceret, nisi beatus Job cuncta largius etiam vivendo praedicasset. At postquam sanctiorem monere de vita nititur, doctioremque se erudire sapientiae magisterio conatur, ipse dictorum suorum pondus levigat, qui, indiscretione interposita, omne quod loquitur destruit, quia liquorem scientiae pleno vasculo superfundit. Sic namque ab indiscretis opes scientiae, sicut a stultis saepe opes corporalis substantiae possidentur. Nonnulli enim, qui rerum terrenarum multiplicitate subnixi sunt, aliquando multa et habentibus tribuunt, ut ipsi haec cunctis largius habere videantur. Ita perversi, cum vera sapiunt, recta quaedam etiam rectioribus loquuntur; non ut alios audientes doceant, sed ut ipsi quanta doctrina polleant, innotescant. Praeire se quippe sapientia cunctos existimant, et idcirco nihil se cuilibet dicere ultra mensuras suae magnitudinis putant. Sic pravi quilibet, sic omnes haeretici superba voce meliores docere non metuunt, quia omnes se inferiores arbitrantur. Sed sancta Ecclesia elatos quosque ab aestimationis suae culmine revocat, et discretionis manu ad aequalitatis compagem reformat. Unde beatus Job, qui ejusdem sanctae Ecclesiae membrum est, videns quod amicorum mens per verba prolatae eruditionis intumuit, illico respondit, dicens:

CAPUT XXV.

CAP. XII, VERS. 2. — 359 Ergo vos estis soli homines, et vobiscum morietur sapientia. 44. Superbe sapientis fatuitas. — Quisquis se praeire omnes ratione existimat, quid iste aliud quam solum se esse hominem exsultat? Et saepe contingit ut cum per tumorem mens in altum ducitur, in

despectum omnium et sui admirationem sublevetur. In cogitatione etenim proprii favores oriuntur, sibique de singularitate sapientiae blanditur ipsa fatuitas. Pensat ea quae audierit, ac verba quae profert; et miratur sua, ridet aliena. Qui ergo solum se sapere aestimat, quid aliud quam hanc eamdem secum mori sapientiam putat? Nam quam adesse aliis abnuit, soli sibi hanc tribuens, profecto intra tempora suae brevitatis claudit. Pensandum vero est vir sanctus quanta discretione utitur, ut amicorum superbientium arrogantia comprimatur, cum protinus adjungit:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 3. — Et mihi est cor, sicut et vobis, nec inferior vestri sum. 45. Hujus arrogantia modeste comprimenda. — Quis etenim nesciat quantum beati Job vita atque scientia amicorum ejus scientiam excedat? Sed ut eorum superbiam corrigat, esse se inferiorem negat; et ne suae humilitatis limitem transeat, esse se superiorem tacet: nec preferendo se, sed conferendo, indicat quod de se hi qui sibi longe sunt impares discant, ut dum sponte inflectitur sapientia quae eminet, nequaquam se contra vires erigat scientia quae jacet. Quos bene mox ad aequalitatis sensum revocat, quia tumere valde quasi de singularitate magnitudinis pensat, cum subsequenter adjungit:

CAPUT XXVII.

IBID. — Quis enim haec quae nostis ignorat? 46. Ostendendo ea quae scire se gloriatur, a nemine ignorari. — Ac si aperte dicat: Cum cunctis sint nota quae dicitis, de dictorum scientia singulariter cur tumetis? Quia igitur elationem arrogantium ad aequalitatis communionem revocans, perfecta correptione redarguit, ad doctrinae nunc sententias erumpit, ut amici ejus humiliati, prius discerent veritatis pondera, quam reverenter audirent. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 4. — Qui deridetur ab amico suo sicut ego, invocabit Deum, et exaudiet eum. 74. Recte agenti quid noceat laus, quid prosit irrisio hominum. Irrisio prodest ubi non est culpae meritum. — Saepe infirma mens, cum de bonis actibus aura humani favoris excipitur, ad gaudia exteriora derivatur, ut postponat quod intus appetit, et in hoc libenter resoluta jaceat, quod foris audit; ita ut beatam non tam fieri quam dici se gaudeat. Cumque laudis suae vocibus inhiat, quod esse coeperat relinquit. Inde ergo a Deo disjungitur, unde in Deo laudanda videbatur. Nonnunquam vero recto operi animus constanter innititur, et tamen humanis irrisionibus urgetur: miranda agit, et opprobria recipit; et qui exire foras per laudes potuit, repulsus contumeliis, ad semetipsum redit; et eo se intus robustius in Deo solidat, quo foris non invenit quo requiescat. Tota etenim spes in auctore figitur, et inter irrisionum convicia solus interior testis imploratur; atque afflicti animus fit Deo tanto proximus, quanto 360 et a gratia humani favoris alienus: in precem protinus funditur, et pressus exterius, ad penetranda quae intus sunt mundius liquatur. Bene itaque nunc dicitur: Qui deridetur ab amico suo sicut ego, invocabit Deum, et exaudiet eum, quia bonorum menti dum pravi exprobrant, ostendunt quem suorum actuum testem quaerant. Quae dum compuncta sese in precibus accingit, inde intra se supernae exauditioni jungitur, unde extra se ab humana laude separatur. Notandum vero quam provide interponitur Sicut ego, quia sunt nonnulli quos et humanae irrisiones deprimunt, et tamen divinis auribus exaudibiles non sunt. Nam cum derisio contra culpam nascitur, profecto nullum virtutis meritum in derisione generatur. Baal etenim sacerdotes clamosis hunc vocibus implorantes, derisi ab Elia fuerant, cum dicebat: Clamate voce majori, Deus enim est, et forsitan loquitur, aut in diversorio est (III Reg. XVIII, 27). Sed haec eis irrisio ad virtutis usum non fuit, quia per culpae meritum venit. Provide ergo nunc dicitur: Qui deridetur ab amico suo, sicut

ego, invocabit Deum, et exaudiet eum, quia illum facit humana derisio Deo proximum, quem ab humanis pravitatibus vitae innocentia servat alienum. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. — Deridetur enim justi simplicitas. 48. Quid sapientia hujus mundi. Quid sapientia justorum. Cur a mundo rideatur. — Hujus mundi sapientia est, cor machinationibus tegere, sensum verbis velare, quae falsa sunt vera ostendere, quae vera sunt fallacia demonstrare. Haec nimirum prudentia usu a juvenibus scitur, haec a pueris pretio discitur, hanc qui sciunt caeteros despiciendo superbiunt; hanc qui nesciunt, subjecti et timidi in aliis mirantur, quia ab eis haec eadem duplicitas iniquitatis, nomine palliata, diligitur, dum mentis perversitas urbanitas vocatur. Haec sibi obsequentibus praecipit honorum culmina quaerere, adepta temporalis gloriae vanitate gaudere, irrogata ab aliis mala multiplicius reddere, cum vires suppetunt nullis resistentibus cedere, cum virtutis possibilitas deest, quidquid explere per malitiam non valet, hoc in pacifica bonitate simulare. At contra sapientia justorum est nil per ostensionem fingere, sensum verbis aperire, vera ut sunt diligere, falsa devitare, bona gratis exhibere, mala libentius tolerare quam facere; nullam injuriae ultionem quaerere, pro veritate contumeliam lucrum putare. Sed haec justorum simplicitas deridetur, quia ab hujus mundi sapientibus puritatis virtus, fatuitas creditur. Omne enim quod innocenter agitur, ab eis procul dubio stultum putatur; et quidquid in opere veritas approbat, carnali sapientiae fatuum sonat. Quid namque stultius videtur mundo quam mentem verbis ostendere, nil callida machinatione simulare, nullas injuriis contumelias reddere, pro maledicentibus orare, paupertatem quaerere, possessa relinquere, rapienti non resistere, percutienti alteram maxillam praebere? Unde bene hujus mundi dilectoribus ille egregius Dei sapiens dicit: Abominationes

Aegyptiorum immolabimus Domino Deo nostro (Exod. VIII, 26). 361 Oves quippe Aegyptii edere dedignantur; sed quod abominantur Aegyptii, hoc Israelitae Deo offerunt, quia simplicitatem conscientiae, quam injusti quique velut infimam abjectamque despiciunt, hanc justi in virtutis sacrificium vertunt; et excolentes recti puritatem ac mansuetudinem Deo immolant, quam abominantes reprobi fatuitatem putant. Quae nimirum justi simplicitas breviter, sed sufficienter exprimitur, cum protinus subinfertur.

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 5. — Lampas contempta apud cogitationes divitum. 49. Divitiarum possessionem non esse in crimine, sed cupiditatem. — Quid hoc loco signatur nomine divitum, nisi elatio superborum, qui venturi judicis respectum non habent, dum superbis apud se cogitationibus tument? Nam sunt nonnulli quos census per tumorem non elevat, sed per misericordiae opera exaltat. Et sunt nonnulli qui, dum se terrenis opibus abundare conspiciunt, veras Dei divitias non requirunt, atque aeternam patriam non amant, quia hoc sibi sufficere, quod rebus temporalibus fulciuntur, putant. Non est ergo census in crimine, sed affectus. Cuncta enim quae Deus condidit bona sunt; sed qui bonis male utitur profecto agit ut, quasi per edacitatis ingluviem, eo per quem vivere debuit pane moriatur. Pauper ad requiem Lazarus venerat, superbum vero divitem tormenta cruciabant (Luc. XVI, 26). Sed tamen dives Abraham fuerat, qui in sinu Lazarum tenebat; qui tamen auctori suo colloquens, dicit: Loquar ad Dominum meum, cum sim pulvis et cinis (Genes. XVIII, 27). Quid itaque iste divitias suas aestimare noverat, qui semetipsum pulverem cineremque pensabat? Aut quando hunc res possessae extollerent, qui de se quoque, earum videlicet possessore, tam abjecta sentiret? 50. Divites censeri qui egent, et fastu tument. His despectui sunt mundi contemptores. — Atque iterum sunt nonnulli quibus et res terrenae non suppetunt, et tamen apud se per fastum

tumoris eriguntur. Hos et census ad ostensionem potentiae minime subvehit, et tamen morum protervia inter reprobos divites addicit. Quoscunque ergo sequentis vitae amor non humiliat, hoc in loco sacer sermo divites appellat, quia in judicii quoque ultione non discrepant utrum rebus an solis moribus intumescant. Qui cum vitam simplicium in hoc mundo humilem abjectamque conspiciunt; elatis protinus despectibus irrident. Nequaquam quippe eis hoc exterius adesse considerant, ad quod ipsi totis conatibus anhelant. Quasi stultos ergo despiciunt qui scilicet ea non habent quae ipsi utique vel habendo, vel solummodo amando, moriuntur; et quasi mortuos deputant, quos nequaquam secum vivere carnaliter pensant. Qui enim ab hujus mundi appetitu moritur, a terrenis mentibus profecto omni modo exstinctus aestimatur. Quod bene nostri miraculum Redemptoris signat, cum ab immundo spiritu hominem liberat, de quo nimirum scriptum est: Clamans, et multum discerpens eum, exiit ab eo; et factus est sicut mortuus, ita ut multi dicerent quia mortuus est. Jesus autem tenens manum ejus, elevavit eum, et surrexit (Marc. IX, 25). Velut mortuus quippe ostenditur qui a maligni spiritus potestate liberatur, 362 quia quisquis jam terrena desideria subigit, vitam in se carnalis conversationis exstinguit; et mundo mortuus apparet, quia possessore pravo, qui per immunda desideria se agitabat, caret. Quem multi mortuum dicunt, quia qui spiritaliter vivere nesciunt eum qui carnalia bona non sequitur exstinctum funditus arbitrantur.
51. Justi, carnalium oculis sine luce, coram Deo ardent et lucent. — Sed quia ipsi quoque derisores simplicium Christianitatis nomine censentur, reverentia religionis pressi, exhibere malum publicae irrisionis erubescunt. Unde fit ut apud se tumidi tacentesque derideant, quos abjectos valde atque infimos per simplicitatem putant. Bene ergo dicitur: Lampas contempta apud cogitationes divitum, quia superbi quique, dum pensare bona sequentia, ut superius diximus, nesciunt, pene nihil aestimant, quem non vident habere quod amant. Saepe namque contingit ut electus quisque, qui

ad aeternam felicitatem ducitur, continua hic adversitate deprimatur, non hunc rerum abundantia fulciat, non dignitatum gloria honorabilem ostendat, nulla ei obsequentum frequentia suppetat, nulla hunc humanis oculis vestium pompa componat; a cunctis vero despicabilis cernitur, et hujus mundi gratia indignus aestimatur. Sed tamen ante occulti judicis oculos virtutibus emicat, vitae meritis coruscat, honorari metuit, despici non refugit; corpus continentia afficit, sola in animo dilectione pinguescit, mentem semper ad patientiam praeparat, et erectus pro justitia, de perceptis contumeliis exsultat, afflictis ex corde compatitur, de bonorum prosperitatibus quasi de propriis laetatur, sacri verbi pabula in mente sollicitus ruminat, et inquisitus quodlibet eloqui dupliciter ignorat. Bene itaque justi simplicitas et lampas esse dicitur, et contempta. Lampas, quia interius lucet; contempta, quia exterius non lucet. Intus ardet flamma charitatis, foris nulla gloria resplendet decoris. Lucet ergo et despicitur qui flagrans virtutibus abjectus aestimatur. Mentes quippe carnalium pensare bona non valent, nisi quae carnaliter vident. Hinc est quod David sanctum pater ipse despexerat, quem prophetae Samuelis oculis praesentare recusabat. Qui ad unctionis gratiam dum septem filios deduxisset, a propheta requisitus an numerum sobolis explesset, cum magna desperatione respondit: Est puer parvulus qui pascit oves (I Reg. XVI, 10, 11). Quo deducto et electo, protinus audivit: Homo videt in facie, Deus autem perscrutatur cor (Ibid., 7). Lampas ergo David per innocentiam fuerat; sed tamen valde contempta, quia exteriora cernentibus non lucebat. Sciendum vero est quod justus quisque aut temporalem gloriam non habet, aut hanc sub semetipso frangit, si habet, ut honori suo liber emineat, ne ei victus delectatione succumbat. Hinc enim est quod ille praedicator egregius ante humanos oculos apostolatus sui gloriam humiliaverat, qui dicebat: Non usi sumus hac potestate, cum possimus oneri esse ut Christi apostoli, sed facti sumus parvuli in medio vestrum (I Thess. II, 7). Ejus vero auditoribus

nimirum tumor divitum adhuc in corde remanserat, cum dicebant: Epistolae graves sunt et fortes, 363 praesentia autem corporis infirma, et sermo contemptibilis (II Cor. X, 10). Quem enim talia dicere posse cognoverant, secum communiter vivere non posse judicabant. Cumque eum et humilem vivendo cernerent, et altum sermone pensarent, sua eos elatio compulit ut quem per scripta timuerant per praesentiae verba despicerent. Quid igitur Paulus, nisi contempta lampas apud cogitationes divitum fuit, qui unde magisterium humilitatis exhibuit, inde a rudibus discipulis superbiae contumelias recepit? Horrendo etenim modo languor superbientium unde detumescere debuit excrevit, dum mens elata carnalium hoc quasi dedignabile repulit, quod magister imitabile ostendit. An contempta lampas non erat, qui, tot virtutibus emicans, tanta a persecutoribus adversa tolerabat (Ephes. VI, 20)? Legatione in catena fungitur, ejusque vincula in omni praetorio manifestantur, virgis caeditur, multisque ex genere, ex gentibus, periculis urgetur (Philip. I, 13), lapidibus Lystris tunditur, pedibus extra urbem trahitur, quia exstinctus aestimatur (II Cor. XI, 26). Sed usquequo lampas ista contemnitur? Usquequo despicabilis habetur? Nunquidnam fulgorem suum nullatenus exerit, et nunquam quanta claritate candeat ostendit? Ostendit plane. Nam cum lampas contempta apud cogitationes divitum diceretur, protinus additur:

CAPUT XXXI.

IBID. — Parata ad tempus statutum. 52. Justi hic spreti fulgebunt in die judicii. — Statutum quippe contemptae lampadis tempus est extremi judicii praedestinatus dies, quo justus quisque, qui nunc despicitur, quanta potestate fulgeat demonstratur. Tunc enim cum Deo judices veniunt, qui nunc pro Deo injuste judicantur. Tunc eorum lux tanto latius emicat, quanto eos nunc manus persequentium durius angustat. Tunc reproborum oculis patescet quod coelesti potestate subnixi sunt qui terrena omnia sponte

reliquerunt. Unde electis suis Veritas dicit: Vos qui secuti estis me, in regeneratione, cum sederit Filius hominis in sede majestatis suae, sedebitis et vos super duodecim sedes, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel (Matth. XIX, 28). Neque enim plus quam duodecim judices illa interni consessus curia non habebit; sed nimirum duodenario numero quantitas universitatis exprimitur, quia quisquis, stimulo divini amoris excitatus, hic possessa reliquerit, illic procul dubio culmen judiciariae potestatis obtinebit, ut simul tunc judex cum judice veniat, qui nunc consideratione judicii sese spontanea paupertate castigat. Hinc est enim quod de sanctae Ecclesiae sponso per Salomonem dicitur: Nobilis in portis vir ejus, quando sederit cum senatoribus terrae (Prov. XXXI, 23). Hinc Isaias ait: Dominus ad judicium veniet cum senioribus populi sui (Isai. III, 14). Hinc eosdem seniores Veritas non jam famulos, sed amicos denuntiat, dicens: Non jam dicam vos servos, sed amicos meos (Joan. XV, 15). Quos nimirum Psalmista intuens, ait: Mihi autem nimis honorificati sunt amici tui, Deus (Psal. CXXXVIII, 17). Quorum dum celsitudinem cordis aspiceret, mundi gloriam qua calce calcarent protinus addidit: Nimis confortatus est principatus eorum. Ac ne paucos esse crederemus, quos proficere usque ad summam tantae perfectionis agnoscimus, illico adjunxit: 364 Dinumerabo eos, et super arenam multiplicabuntur. Quot itaque nunc pro amore veritatis sese libenter humiliant, tot tunc in judicio lampades coruscant. Dicatur igitur recte: Lampas contempta apud cogitationes divitum, parata ad tempus statutum, quia uniuscujusque justi anima velut abjecta contemnitur cum degens inferius gloriam non habet, sed admirabilis cernitur dum desuper fulget. 53. Christus lampas hic contempta. — Libet inter haec ad Redemptoris vias mentis oculos attollere, sensimque a membris ad caput venire. Ipse enim nobis lampas veraciter exstitit, qui, pro redemptione nostra in cruce moriens, tenebrosis nostris mentibus lucem per lignum fudit. Hac nos lampade Joannes illuminari conspexerat, cum dicebat: Erat lux

vera quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum (Joan. I, 9). Quam tamen apud cogitationes divitum contemptam vidit, cum paulo post subdidit: In propria venit et sui eum non receperunt (Ibid., 11). Hujus lampadis flammas Herodes explorare voluit, cum ejus miracula videre concupivit, sicut scriptum est: Erat enim ex multo tempore cupiens videre eum, eo quod audisset multa de illo, et sperabat signum aliquod videre ab eo fieri (Luc. XXIII, 8). Sed lampas haec ante ejus oculos nullo radio lucis emicuit, quia ei qui se non pie sed curiose quaesierat nil de se mirabile ostendit. Inquisitus quippe Redemptor tacuit, exspectatus miracula exhibere contempsit, seseque apud se in occultis retinens, eos quos exteriora quaerere comperit, ingratos foris reliquit: magis eligens aperte a superbientibus despici, quam a non credentibus vacua voce laudari. Unde et protinus lampas ista contempta est, sicut illic subditur: Sprevit autem illum Herodes cum exercitu suo, et illusit indutum veste alba (Ibid. 11). 54. In die novissimo coruscabit. — Sed contempta lampas, quae in terra irrisiones tolerat, de coelo judicium coruscat. Unde hic apte subjungitur: Parata ad tempus statutum. De quo videlicet tempore per Psalmistam dicit: Cum accepero tempus, ego justitias judicabo (Psal. LXXIV, 3). Hinc in Evangelio per semetipsam Veritas denuntiat, dicens: Tempus meum nondum advenit (Joan. VII, 6). Hinc Petrus ait: Quem oportet coelum suscipere, usque ad tempora restitutionis (Act. III, 21). Lampas ergo quae nunc contemnitur ad statutum tempus ventura praeparatur, quia ipse peccata in die ultimo judicat, qui nunc peccantium derisiones portat. Et tanto tunc durius districtionem exerit, quanto nunc vocandis peccatoribus suam lenius patientiam sternit. Qui enim diu convertendos exspectat, non conversos sine retractatione cruciat. Quod per prophetam scilicet breviter insinuat, dicens: Tacui, semper silui, patiens fui, sicut parturiens loquar (Isai. XLII, 14). Ut enim jam praediximus, parturiens cum dolore ejicit hoc quod in intimis tempore longo gestavit. Qui ergo semper siluit sicut parturiens loquitur, quia venturus

judex, qui sine ultione diu facta hominum pertulit, quandoque cum fervore examinis, quasi cum dolore mentis, quantae animadversionis sententiam intus servaverit ostendit. Nemo igitur hanc lampadem, cum latet, despiciat, ne contemptores, suos, cum de coelo fulserit, 365 exurat. Cui enim nunc non ardet ad veniam, tunc procul dubio ardebit ad poenam. Quia ergo per supernam gratiam vocationis tempus accipimus, dum adhuc licentia superest, ejus iram, qui ubique est, mores in melius commutando, fugiamus. Solum quippe animadversio illa non invenit quem correctio abscondit.

55. Haec nos, largiente Domino, in duobus jam corporibus 366 transcurrisse sufficiat. Quia enim sacri libri sequentia mysteriorum virtutibus extensa complecti breviter exponendo non possumus, ea necesse est ut aliis voluminibus reservemus, quatenus lector tanto ferventior ad legendi studium redeat, quanto ex lectionis quoque intercisione respirat.

LIBER DECIMUS.

CAPUT I.

Quoties in arenae spectaculum fortis athleta descenderit, ii qui impares viribus existunt vicissim se eius expugnationi subiiciunt: et uno victo, contra hunc protinus alter erigitur; atque hoc subacto, alius subrogatur; ut luctantis vires quandoque molliores inveniant quas ipsa sua crebrescens victoria fatigat; quatenus cum novus quisque congreditur, is qui vinci virium qualitate non valet, personarum saltem mutatione superetur. Sic sic in hoc hominum angelorumque spectaculo beatus Iob fortis athleta prodiit, quantumque contra mutationes adversantium valeat continuatione indefessi roboris ostendit. Cui primus se Eliphaz, secundus autem Baldad obiicit, atque ad extremum se Sophar in eius expugnatione supponit: qui ad inferendos ictus totis se conatibus erigunt, sed tamen ad feriendam altitudinem robusti pectoris non pertingunt. Ipsa quippe eorum verba patenter insinuant quod ictus in auras iactant, quia cum sanctum virum non recte redarguunt, expressa in vacuum verba percussionis perdunt. Quod liquido ostenditur, cum Sophar Naamathitis responsio a contumeliis inchoatur, qui ait:

CAPUT II.

CAP. XI, Nunquid qui multa loquitur non et ipse audiet? aut vir verbosus iustificabitur?

Mos esse procacium solet ut recte dictis semper e diverso respondeant, ne si ad prolata consentiant, inferiores esse videantur. Quibus iustorum verba quamlibet pauca sonuerint multa sunt, quia quo eorum vitia resecant, auditum gravant. Unde et ad crimen trahitur hoc quod recta praedicatione contra crimina profertur. Ipsum quippe qui ex veritate fortes sententias

dixerat Sophar redarguens, verbosum vocat, quia cum ab ore iustorum sapientia culpas increpat, stultorum auribus superfluitas loquacitatis sonat. Pravi namque nil rectum, nisi quod ipsi senserint, putant; et iustorum verba eo otiosa aestimant, quo suis haec sensibus inveniunt diversa. Nec fallacem quidem Sophar sententiam protulit, quod vir verbosus iustificari nequaquam possit, quia dum quisque per verba diffluit, perdita gravitate silentii, mentis custodiam amittit. Hinc quippe scriptum est: Cultus iustitiae, silentium. Hinc Salomon ait: Sicut urbs patens et absque murorum ambitu, ita vir qui non potest in loquendo cohibere spiritum suum. Hinc rursum dicit: In multiloquio peccatum non deerit. Hinc Psalmista testatur, dicens: Vir verbosus non dirigetur super terram. Sed virtus verae sententiae perditur, quae sub discretionis custodia non profertur. Certum itaque est quod verbosus iustificari vir nequeat. Sed bonum bene non dicitur, quia non intenditur cui dicatur. Vera quippe contra malos sententia, si bonorum rectitudinem impetit, suam perdit, et eo retusa resilit, quo illud est forte quod ferit.? Quia autem pravi audire bona patienter nequeunt, et cum vitae emendationem negligunt, ad verba se responsionis accingunt, aperte Sophar insinuat, qui subiungit:

CAPUT III.

Tibi soli tacebunt homines, et cum caeteros irriseris, a nullo confutaberis?

Imperita mens, ut diximus, veritatis sententias graviter tolerat, et silentium poenam putat atque omne quod rectum dicitur dedecus suae irrisionis arbitratur, quia cum vera vox pravorum se auribus admovet, memoriam culpa mordet, et in redargutione vitiorum quo intus cognitione mens tangitur, foras ad studium contradictionis excitatur. Ferre vocem non valet, quia tacta in vulnere sui reatus dolet, et per hoc quod generaliter contra perversos dicitur, se impeti specialiter suspicatur. Quod enim intus egisse se meminit, audire foris erubescit. Unde mox se ad defensionem

praeparat, ut reatus sui verecundiam per verba pravae refutationis tegat. Sicut enim recti de quibusdam quae ab eis non recte gesta sunt correptionis vocem, ministerium charitatis aestimant, sic perversi contumeliam derisionis putant. Illi se protinus ad obedientiam sternunt, isti ad insaniam suae defensionis eriguntur. Illi correptionis adiutorium vitae suae patrocinium deputant, per quod dum praesentis vitae culpa corripitur, venturi iudicis ira temperatur; isti cum se impeti redargutione conspiciunt, gladium percussionis credunt, quia dum per correptionis vocem culpa detegitur, praesentis gloriae opinio foedatur. Hinc quippe in laude iusti per Salomonem dicit Veritas: Doce iustum, et festinabit accipere. Hinc pravorum contumaciam despicit, dicens: Qui erudit derisorem, ipse sibi facit iniuriam. Nam fit plerumque ut cum correpta in se mala defendere nequeunt, ex verecundia peiores fiant; ac sic in sua defensione superbiant, ut quaedam vitia contra vitam corripientis exquirant; et eo se criminosos non aestimant, si crimina et aliis imponant. Quae cum vera invenire nequeunt, fingunt, ut ipsi quoque habeant quod non impari iustitia increpare videantur. Unde et Sophar, quia quasi irrideri se per increpationem doluit, protinus mentiendo subiungit:

CAPUT IV.

Dixisti enim, Purus est sermo meus, et mundus sum in conspectu tuo.

Qui beati Iob dictorum meminit, quam falso hoc voci illius impingatur agnoscit. Quomodo enim mundum se dicere potuit, qui ait: Si iustificare me voluero, os meum condemnabit me? Sed habet hoc pravorum malitia, ut cum vera in se flere mala renuit, fingat aliena. Nam quasi solatio facinoris utitur, si falsis vocibus et vita corripientis inquinetur. Sciendum vero est quod plerumque perversi verbotenus bona optant, ut mala esse quae in praesentibus habentur ostendant; et quasi faventes prospera expetunt, ut benigni videantur. Unde et Sophar protinus subiicit, dicens:

CAPUT V.

Atque utinam Deus loqueretur tecum, et aperiret labia sua tibi!

Ipse quippe sibi homo loquitur, cum per hoc quod sentit nequaquam Divinitatis spiritu a carnalis prudentiae intellectu separatur; cum caro sensum exerit, et mentem, quasi ad intelligentiam provocans, foras mittit. Unde et adhuc Petro terrena sapienti Veritas dicit: Non enim sapis quae Dei sunt, sed quae hominum. Cui tamen recta confitenti dicitur: Caro et sanguis non revelavit tibi, sed Pater meus qui in coelis est. Quid autem Dei labia nisi iudicia eius accipimus? Clausis namque labiis vox premitur, et sensus tacentis ignoratur; apertis autem sermo dum promitur, animus loquentis invenitur. Labia itaque sua Deus aperit cum voluntatem suam hominibus per aperta iudicia ostendit. Quasi enim reserato ore loquitur, cum remota obscuritate dispositionis intimae renuit occultare quod vult. Nam velut clausis labiis sensum nobis suum non indicat, cum per occulta iudicia cur quid faciat celat. Sophar itaque beatum Iob ut de carnali intellectu redarguat, seque ipsum quantae sit benignitatis ostendat, ei bona optat, quae et cum habentur ignorat, dicens: Atque utinam Deus loqueretur tecum et aperiret labia sua tibi! Ac si patenter dicat: Imperitiae tuae potius quam poenae compatior, quia, sola carnis prudentia praeditum, a veritatis te spiritu vacuum agnosco. Si enim Dei iudicia occulta cognosceres, tam procaces contra illum sententias non sonares. Et quia omnipotens Deus cum ad consideranda nos sua iudicia sublevat, ignorantiae nostrae protinus caecitatem fugat, quae apertis eius labiis, ad nos eruditio prodeat, protinus adiungendo manifestat, dicens:

CAPUT VI.

Ut ostenderet tibi secreta sapientiae, et quod multiplex sit lex eius.

Publica sapientiae supernae sunt opera, cum omnipotens Deus regit quos creat, perficit bona quae inchoat, et aspirando adiuvat quos visitationis suae lumine illustrat. Cunctis etenim liquet quia quos gratis condidit benigne disponit. Et cum spiritalia dona largitur, ipse perficit quod ipse ex munere suae benignitatis inchoavit. Secreta vero sapientiae supernae sunt opera cum Deus quos creavit deserit; cum bona quae praeveniendo coeperat; nequaquam prosequendo consummat; cum claritate nos suae illustrationis illuminat, et tamen, permissis carnis tentationibus, tenebris caecitatis pulsat; cum dona quae contulit minime custodit; cum et mentis nostrae ad se desideria excitat, et tamen occulto iudicio difficultate nos nostrae imbecillitatis angustat.

Quae nimirum secreta eius sapientiae pauci valent inquirere, sed nullus invenire, quia quod super nos de nobis ad immortali sapientia non iniuste disponitur, iustum profecto est ut a nobis adhuc mortalibus ignoretur. Sed haec ipsa sapientiae illius secreta conspicere utcunque iam incomprehensibilitatis eius est potentiam videre, quia etsi in ipsa consiliorum eius inquisitione deficimus, deficiendo tamen verius discimus quem timeamus. Ad haec se Paulus sapientiae illius secreta tetenderat, cum dicebat: O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei, quam incomprehensibilia sunt iudicia eius, et investigabiles viae eius. Quis enim cognovit sensus Domini? vel quis consiliarius eius fuit? Qui superius etiam ex ipsa inquisitione lassescens, sed tamen ad cognitionem infirmitatis propriae lassescendo proficiens, praemittit dicens: O homo, tu quis es qui respondeas Deo? Nunquid dicit figmentum ei qui se finxit: Quare me fecisti sic? Qui igitur ad occulta Dei pertingere non valens ad infirmitatis suae cognitionem rediit, atque ad eruditionem se propriam deficiendo revocavit, ut ita dicam, secreta sapientiae non inveniens invenit, quia cum ad superna consilia requirenda lassesceret, didicit ut humilius timeret; et quem sua infirmitas a cognitione intima repulit, hunc ei verius humilitas iunxit.

Sophar itaque et per scientiae studium peritus, et per audaciam tumidae locutionis ignarus, quia ipse gravitatem non habet, meliori optat quod habet, dicens: Atque utinam Deus loqueretur tecum, et aperiret labia sua tibi, ut ostenderet tibi secreta sapientiae! Qui eam quoque, qua se super amicum pollere aestimat, optando sapientiam ostentat, cum protinus subdit: Et quod multiplex sit lex eius. Quid hoc loco Dei lex accipi nisi charitas debet, per quam semper in mente legitur praecepta vitae qualiter in actione teneantur? De hac etenim lege Veritatis voce dicitur: Hoc est praeceptum meum ut diligatis invicem. De hac Paulus ait: Plenitudo legis, dilectio. De hac iterum dicit: Invicem onera vestra portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi. Lex etenim Christi quid congruentius intelligi quam charitas potest, quam tunc vere perficimus cum fraterna onera ex amore toleramus.

Sed haec eadem lex multiplex dicitur, quia studiosa sollicitudine charitas ad cuncta virtutum facta dilatatur. Quae a duobus quidem praeceptis incipit, sed se ad innumera extendit. Huius namque legis initium dilectio Dei est ac dilectio proximi. Sed Dei dilectio per tria distinguitur, quia ex toto corde, et ex tota anima, et ex tota fortitudine diligi conditor iubetur. Qua in re notandum est quod divinus sermo cum Deum diligi praecipit, non solum narrat ex quo, sed etiam informat ex quanto, cum subiungit ex toto, ut videlicet qui perfecte Deo placere desiderat sibi de se nihil relinquat. Proximi autem dilectio ad duo praecepta derivatur, cum et per quemdam iustum dicitur: Quod ab alio tibi odis fieri, vide ne tu alteri facias. Et per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Quae vultis ut faciant vobis homines, et vos facite illis. Quibus duobus scilicet utriusque Testamenti mandatis, per unum malitia compescitur, per aliud benignitas praerogatur, ut malum quod pati non vult quisque non faciens; cesset a nocendi opere; et rursum bonum quod sibi fieri appetit, impendens, erga utilitatem se proximi exerceat ex benignitate. Sed haec nimirum duo dum sollicita intentione cogitantur, cor ad innumera virtutum ministeria tenditur, ne vel ad inferenda quae non

debet desideriis inquieta mens ferveat, vel erga exhibenda quae debet otio resoluta torpescat. Nam cum cavet alteri facere quod nequaquam vult ab altero ipsa tolerare, sollicita se intentione circumspicit, ne superbia elevet, et usque ad despectum proximi animum deiiciens exaltet; ne ambitio cogitationem laniet, cumque hanc ad appetenda aliena dilatat, angustet; ne cor luxuria polluat, et subiectum desideriis per illicita corrumpat; ne ira exasperet, et usque ad proferendam contumeliam inflammet; ne invidia mordeat, et alienis felicitatibus aemula, sua se face consumat; ne immoderate linguam loquacitas pertrahat, eamque usque ad lasciviam obtrectationis extendat; ne odium malitia excitet, et os usque ad iaculum maledictionis irritet. Rursum cum cogitat ut ea alteri faciat quae ipsa sibi fieri ab altero exspectat, pensat nimirum ut malis bona, et bonis meliora respondeat; ut erga procaces mansuetudinem longanimitatis exhibeat; ut malitiae peste languentibus gratiam benignitatis impendat; ut discordes pace uniat, et concordes ad concupiscentiam verae pacis accingat; ut indigentibus necessaria tribuat; ut errantibus viam rectitudinis ostendat; ut afflictos verbo et compassione mulceat; ut accensos in huius mundi desideriis increpatione restinguat; ut minas potentum ratiocinatione mitiget; ut oppressorum angustias quanta praevalet ope levet; ut foris resistentibus opponat patientiam; ut intus superbientibus exhibeat cum patientia disciplinam; ut erga errata subditorum sic mansuetudo zelum temperet, quatenus a iustitiae studio non enervet; sic ad ultionem zelus ferveat, ne tamen pietatis limitem fervendo transcendat; ut ingratos beneficiis ad amorem provocet; ut gratos quosque ministeriis in amore servet; ut proximorum mala cum corrigere non valet, taceat, utque cum corrigi loquendo possunt, silentium consensum esse pertimescat; ut sic ea quae tacet toleret, ne tamen in anima virus doloris occultet; ut sic malevolis munus benignitatis exhibeat, ne tamen per gratiam a iure rectitudinis excedat; ut cuncta proximis quae praevalet impendat, sed haec impendendo non tumeat; ut sic in bonis quae exhibet tumoris

praecipitium paveat, ne tamen a boni exercitio torpescat; ut sic quae possidet tribuat, quatenus quanta sit largitas remunerantis attendat; ne cum terrena largitur, suam plus quam necesse est inopiam cogitet, et in oblatione muneris hilaritatis lumen tristitia obscuret.

Bene ergo lex Dei multiplex dicitur, quia nimirum cum una eademque sit charitas, si mentem plene coeperit, hanc ad innumera opera multiformiter accendit. Cuius diversitatem breviter exprimimus, si in electis singulis bona illius perstringendo numeremus. Haec namque per Abel et electa Deo munera, obtulit, et fratris gladium non reluctando toleravit. Haec Enoch et inter homines vivere spiritaliter docuit, et ad sublimem vitam ab hominibus etiam corporaliter abstraxit. Haec Noe, despectis omnibus solum Deo placabilem ostendit, atque in arcae fabricam studio longi laboris exercuit, et mundo superstitem pio opere exercendo servavit. Haec per Sem et Iaphet humiliter verenda patris erubuit, et superiecto dorsis pallio, quae non videbat abscondit. Haec Abrahae dextram quia ad mortem filii obediendo extulit, hunc prolis innumerae, gentium patrem fecit. Haec Isaac mentem, quia semper ad munditiam tenuit, caligantibus aetate oculis, ad videnda longe post ventura dilatavit. Haec Iacob compulit et amissum bonum filium medullitus gemere, et pravorum filiorum praesentiam sub aequanimitate tolerare. Haec Ioseph docuit a fratribus venundatum, et libertate animi infracta servitium perpeti, et eisdem post fratribus mente non elata principari. Haec Moysen, delinquente populo, et usque ad petitionem mortis in precibus stravit, et usque ad interfectionem populi per zeli studium erexit, ut et pro pereunte plebe sese morti obiiceret, et contra peccantem protinus vice Domini irascentis saeviret. Haec Phinees brachium in ultionem peccantium erexit, ut arrepto gladio, coeuntes transfigeret, et iram Domini iratus placaret. Haec Iesum exploratorem docuit, ut et prius contra falsiloquos cives veritatem verbo defenderet, et hanc postmodum gladio contra hostes allegaret . Haec Samuel et in principatu humilem praebuit, et

integrum in deiectione servavit, qui cum persequentem se plebem diligeret, ipse sibi testimonio exstitit, quia culmen ex quo deiectus est non amavit. Haec David ante iniquum regem et humilitate commovit ad fugam, et pietate replevit ad veniam; qui persecutorem suum et timendo fugit ut dominum, et tamen cum potestatem feriendi reperit, non agnovit inimicum. Haec Nathan et contra peccantem regem in auctoritatem liberae increpationis sustulit, et cum regis culpa deesset, in petitione humiliter stravit. Haec per Isaiam nuditatem carnis in praedicatione non erubuit, et subducto carnali velamine, superna mysteria penetravit. Haec Eliam, quia fervoris zelo vivere spiritaliter docuit, ad vitam quoque et corporaliter abstraxit. Haec Elisaeum, quia magistrum diligere simpliciter instituit, magistri spiritu dupliciter implevit. Per hanc Ieremias ne in Aegyptum populus descenderet restitit; sed tamen et inobedientes diligens, quo descendi prohibuit, et ipse descendit. Haec Ezechielem, quia prius a terrenis desideriis sustulit, post per cincinnum capitis in aere libravit. Haec in Daniele, quia a regiis dapibus gulam compescuit, ei et esurientium ora leonum clausit, Haec tribus pueris, quia in tranquillitate positis incendia vitiorum subdidit, tribulationis tempore et flammas in fornace temperavit. Haec in Petro et minis terrentium principum fortiter restitit, et in circumcisione submovenda minorum verba humiliter audivit. Haec in Paulo et manus persequentium humiliter pertulit, et tamen in circumcisionis negotio longe se imparis prioris sensum audenter increpavit. Multiplex ergo ista lex Dei est, quae singulis rerum articulis non permutata congruit, et causis se variantibus non variata coniungit.

Cuius nimirum legis multiplicitatem bene Paulus enumerat, dicens: Charitas patiens est, benigna est; non aemulatur, non inflatur, non agit perperam, non est ambitiosa, non quaerit quae sua sunt, non irritatur, non cogitat malum, non gaudet super iniquitate, congaudet autem veritati. Patiens quippe est charitas, quia illata mala aequanimiter tolerat. Benigna

vero est, quia pro malis bona largiter ministrat. Non aemulatur, quia per hoc quod in praesenti mundo nil appetit, invidere terrenis successibus nescit. Non inflatur, quia cum praemium internae retributionis anxia desiderat, de bonis se exterioribus non exaltat. Non agit perperam, quia quo se in solum Dei ac proximi amorem dilatat, quidquid a rectitudine discrepat ignorat. Non est ambitiosa, quia quo ardenter intus ad sua satagit, foras nullatenus aliena concupiscit. Non quaerit quae sua sunt, quia cuncta quae hic transitorie possidet velut aliena negligit, cum nihil sibi esse proprium nisi quod secum permaneat agnoscit. Non irritatur, quia et iniuriis lacessita ad nullos se ultionis suae motus excitat, dum pro magnis laboribus maiora post praemia exspectat. Non cogitat malum, quia in amore munditiae mentem solidans, dum omne odium radicitus eruit, versare in animo quod inquinat nescit. Non gaudet super iniquitate, quia quo sola dilectione erga omnes inhiat, nec de perditione adversantium exsultat. Congaudet autem veritati, quia ut se caeteros diligens, per hoc quod rectum in aliis conspicit, quasi de augmento proprii provectus hilarescit. Multiplex ergo ista lex Dei est, quae contra uniuscuiusque culpae iaculum, quod perimendam mentem impetit, instructionis suae munimine occurrit, ut quia antiquus hostis varia circumfusione nos obsidet, ipsa hunc de nobis multipliciter expugnet. Quam nimirum legem si sollicita consideratione pensamus, auctori nostro quantum quotidie delinquamus agnoscimus. Si autem culpas perpendimus, profecto aequanimiter flagella toleramus; nec ex dolore ad impatientiam proruit, cum suo se iudicio conscientia addicit. Unde Sophar, quid diceret sciens, sed cui diceret nesciens, postquam praemisit dicens, Ut ostenderet tibi secreta sapientiae, et quod multiplex sit lex eius, protinus adiungit:

CAPUT VII

Et intelligeres quod multo minora exigaris a Deo quam meretur iniquitas tua.

Dolor quippe, ut diximus, flagelli temperatur cum culpa cognoscitur, quia et tanto quisque patientius ferramentum medici tolerat, quanto putridum conspicit esse quod secat. Qui igitur multiplicitatem legis intelligit, cuncta quae patitur quam sint minora perpendit, quia per hoc quod culpae pondus agnoscitur, afflictionis poena levigatur.

Sed inter haec sciendum est quia sine magna iniquitate non fuerit quod Sophar virum iustum usque ad obiectionem iniquitatis increpavit. Unde et eorum audaciam Veritas iuste redarguit, sed benigne ad gratiam reducit; quia apud misericordem iudicem nequaquam sine venia culpa relinquitur, cum per fervorem zeli ex eius amore peccatur. Saepe namque magnis hoc doctoribus mirandisque contingit, ut quo alta charitate fervent, modum correptionis exaggerent, et lingua aliquid quod non debet dicat, quia mentem dilectio quantum debet inflammat. Sed verbum prolatae contumeliae tanto citius parcitur, quanto et ex qua radice prodeat pensatur. Unde bene per Moysen Dominus praecepit dicens: Si quis abierit cum amico suo simpliciter in silvam ad ligna caedenda, et lignum securis fugerit manu, ferrumque lapsum de manubrio amicum eius percusserit, et occiderit, hic ad unam supradictarum urbium fugiet, et vivet, ne forte proximus eius, cuius effusus est sanguis, doloris stimulo persequatur, et apprehendat eum, et percutiat animam eius. Ad silvam quippe cum amico imus quoties cum quolibet proximo ad intuenda delicta nostra convertimur, et simpliciter ligna succidimus cum delinquentium vitia pia intentione resecamus. Sed securis manu fugit cum sese increpatio plus quam necesse est in asperitatem pertrahit. Ferrumque de manubrio prosilit cum de correptione sermo durior excedit; et amicum percutiens occidit, quia auditorem suum prolata contumelia ab spiritu dilectionis interficit. Correpti namque mens repente ad odium proruit, si hanc immoderata increpatio plus quam debuit addicit. Sed is qui incaute ligna percutit, et proximum exstinguit, ad tres necesse est urbes fugiat, ut in una earum defensus vivat, quia si, ad poenitentiae

lamenta conversus, in unitate sacramenti sub spe, fide et charitate absconditur, reus perpetrati homicidii non tenetur; eumque exstincti proximus et cum invenerit non occidit, quia cum districtus iudex venerit, qui sese nobis per naturae nostrae consortium iunxit, ab eo procul dubio vindictam de culpae reatu non expetit quem sub eius venia spes, fides et charitas abscondit. Citius ergo culpa dimittitur quae nequaquam malitiae studio perpetratur. Unde et Sophar iniquum vocat quem superna sententia laudaverat; nec tamen a venia reprobatus excluditur, quia ad verba contumeliae divini amoris zelo promovetur. Qui pro eo quod beati Iob merita non agnoscit, ex imperita adhuc irrisione subiungit, dicens:

CAPUT VIII.

Forsitan vestigia Dei comprehendes, et usque ad perfectum, Omnipotentem reperies.

Quid Dei vestigia nisi benignitatem illius visitationis vocat? Quibus nimirum progredi ad superna provocamur cum eius Spiritus afflatu tangimur, et, extra carnis angustias sublevati, per amorem agnoscimus auctoris nostri contemplandam speciem, quam sequamur. Nam cum mentem nostram spiritalis patriae amor inflammat, quasi sequentibus iter insinuat, et substrato cordi velut quoddam vestigium Dei gradientis imprimitur, ut ab eo rectis cogitationum gressibus via vitae teneatur. Quem enim necdum cernimus, restat necesse est ut per vestigia sui amoris indagemus, quatenus usque ad contemplationis speciem quandoque mens inveniat quem nunc, quasi a tergo subsequens, per sancta desideria explorat. Haec Psalmista auctoris nostri vestigia bene sequi noverat cum dicebat: Adhaesit anima mea post te. Quem reperire quoque usque ad visionem suae celsitudinis satagebat, dicens: Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum; quando veniam, et parebo ante faciem Dei Tunc quippe cogitatione manifesta omnipotens Deus reperitur, cum, mortalitatis nostrae funditus corruptione calcata, ab

assumptis nobis in divinitatis suae claritate conspicitur. Nunc autem a carnali cogitatione animum infusi Spiritus gratia sublevat, et in contemptum rerum transeuntium exaltat; totumque mens quod appetebat in infimis despicit, atque ad superna desideria ignescit, et contemplationis suae vi extra carnem tollitur, quae corruptionis suae pondere adhuc in carne retinetur. Incircumscripti luminis iubar intueri conatur, et non valet; quod infirmitate pressus animus et nequaquam penetrat, et tamen repulsus amat. Iam namque de se conditor per quod ametur ostendit, sed visionis suae speciem amantibus subtrahit. Sola ergo eius vestigia conspicientes gradimur, qui hunc per donorum suorum signa sequimur, quem necdum videmus. Quae nimirum vestigia comprehendi nequeunt, quia unde, ubi, quibusve modis veniant eius Spiritus dona, nesciuntur, Veritate attestante, quae ait: Spiritus ubi vult spirat, et vocem eius audis, et nescis unde veniat, et quo vadat. In retributionis autem culmine reperiri Omnipotens per contemplationis speciem potest, sed tamen ad perfectum non potest, quia etsi hunc in claritate sua quandoque conspicimus, non tamen eius essentiam plene contuemur. Angelica etenim, vel humana mens cum ad incircumscriptum lumen inhiat, eo ipso se, quo est creatura, coangustat; et super se quidem per provectum tenditur, sed tamen eius fulgorem comprehendere nec dilatata sufficit, qui et transcendendo et portando omnia et implendo concludit. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT IX.

Excelsior coelo est, et quid facies? profundior inferno, et unde cognosces? Longior terra mensura eius, et latior mari.

Quod Deus coelo excelsior, inferno profundior, terra longior, marique latior esse describitur, tanto spiritaliter debet intelligi, quanto de eo quidquam nefas est iuxta corporea lineamenta sentire. Sed coelo est excelsior, quia incircumscriptione sui spiritus cuncta transcendit; inferno

profundior, quia transcendendo subvehit; terra longior, quia creaturae modum perennitate suae aeternitatis excedit; mari latior, quia rerum temporalium fluctus sic regens possidet, ut hos sub omnimoda potentiae suae praesentia coangustando circumdet. Quamvis possunt et coeli appellatione angeli, et inferni vocabulo daemonia designari; per terram vero iusti homines, per mare autem peccatores intelligi. Excelsior itaque coelo est, quia ipsi quoque electi spiritus visionem tantae celsitudinis perfecte non penetrant. Profundior inferno est, quia malignorum spirituum astutias longe subtilius quam ipsi putaverant iudicans damnat. Terra longior, quia longanimitatem nostram patientia divinae longanimitatis exsuperat, quae nos et peccantes tolerat, et conversos ad praemia remunerationis exspectat. Mari latior, quia ubique facta peccantium retributionis suae praesentia occupat, ut et cum non praesens per speciem cernitur, praesens per iudicium sentiatur.

Cuncta tamen ad solum referri hominem possunt, ut ipse sit coelum cum iam per desiderium summis inhaereat; ipse infernus, cum, tentationum suarum caligine perturbatus, in infimis iacet; ipse terra, quia in bono opere fixae spei ubertate fructificat; ipse mare, quia in quibusdam trepidus quatitur, et aura suae mutabilitatis agitatur. Sed coelo est excelsior Deus, quia potentiae eius magnitudine vincimur, etiam cum super nosmetipsos elevamur; inferno profundior, quia nimirum plus iudicat quam ipse se humanus animus in tentationibus investigat; terra longior, quia fructus vitae, quos in fine retribuit, nequaquam nunc vel spes nostra comprehendit; mari latior, quia humana mens fluctuans multa de his quae ventura sunt coniicit, sed cum iam cernere quae aestimaverat coeperit, angustam se fuisse in sua aestimatione cognoscit. Excelsior igitur coelo fit cum ipsa in eum nostra contemplatio deficit. Unde et cor Psalmista in altum posuerat, sed necdum se eum contigisse sentiebat, dicens: Mirabilis facta est scientia tua ex me, confortata est, nec potero ad eam. Inferno profundiorem noverat, qui

semetipsum discutiens, sed eius subtiliora iudicia pertimescens, dicebat: Nihil mihi conscius sum, sed non in hoc iustificatus sum; qui autem iudicat me, Dominus est. Longiorem terra viderat, cum minora ei esse humanae mentis vota pensabat, dicens: Qui potens est omnia facere superabundanter quam petimus aut intelligimus. Latiorem mari conspexerat, qui timendo pensabat quia nequaquam mens humana immensitatem districtionis eius agnosceret, quantumlibet inquirendo fluctuaret, dicens: Quis novit potestatem irae tuae, aut prae timore iram tuam dinumerare? Cuius bene potentiam egregius nobis doctor insinuat, cum breviter narrat: Ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis, quae sit latitudo, longitudo, sublimitas et profundum. Habet quippe Deus latitudinem, quia dilectionem suam usque ad collectionem persequentium tendit. Habet longitudinem, quia ad vitae patriam nos longanimiter tolerando perducit. Habet sublimitatem, quia ipsorum quoque intelligentiam qui recepti in supernam fuerint congregationem transcendit. Habet profundum, quia damnatis inferius districtionis suae iudicium incomprehensibiliter exerit. Quae scilicet quatuor nobis in hac vita positis singulis exercet, quia et latitudinem amando, et longitudinem tolerando, et celsitudinem, non solum nostram intelligentiam, sed etiam vota superando, et profunditatem suam exhibet, occultos et illicitos cogitationum motus districte iudicando. Sed eius celsitudo et profunditas quam sit investigabilis nullus agnoscit, nisi qui vel contemplatione ad summa provehi, vel, occultis motibus resistens, tentationum coeperit importunitate turbari. Unde et beato Iob dicitur: Excelsior coelo est, et quid facies? profundior inferno, et unde cognosces? Ac si ei aperto despectu diceretur: Profunditatem eius atque excellentiam quando tu cognoscere sufficis, qui vel virtute ad summa evehi, vel temetipsum reprehendere in tentationibus nescis. Sequitur:

Si subverterit omnia, vel in unum coarctaverit, quis contradicet ei? vel quis dicere ei potest, Cur ita facis?

Subvertit Dominus coelum cum terribili et occulta dispensatione humanae contemplationis celsitudinem destruit. Subvertit infernum cum cuiuslibet mentem in suis tentationibus pavidam cadere etiam ad deteriora permittit. Subvertit terram cum fructificationem boni operis adversis irruentibus intercidit. Subvertit mare cum fluctuationem nostrae titubationis emergente subito pavore confundit. Dubietate quippe sua cor anxium hoc ipsum quia titubat valde formidat, et quasi mare subvertitur cum ipsa in Deum nostra trepidatio, considerato eius iudicii terrore, turbatur. Quia igitur quomodo coelum vel infernus, terra vel mare, subvertitur breviter diximus, nunc aliquantulum laboriosius restat ut haec qualiter in unum coarctari valeant, demonstremus.

Saepe namque contingit ut ad summa iam mentem spiritus elevet, sed tamen hanc importunis caro tentationibus impugnet. Cumque ad contemplanda coelestia animus ducitur, obiectis actionis illicitae imaginibus reverberatur. Nam carnis repente hunc stimulus sauciat quem extra carnem contemplatio sancta rapiebat. Coelum ergo simul infernusque coarctatur cum unam eamdemque mentem et sublevatio contemplationis illuminat, et importunitas tentationis obscurat; ut et videat intendendo quod appetat, et succumbendo in cogitatione toleret quod erubescat. De coelo quippe lux oritur, infernus autem tenebris possidetur. In unum ergo coelum infernusque redigitur cum mens, quae iam lucem patriae supernae considerat, etiam de carnis bello tenebras occultae tentationis portat. Certe iam Paulus tertii coeli culmen ascenderat, iam paradisi secreta cognoverat, et tamen adhuc carnis bella tolerans gemebat, dicens: Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis. Quid ergo in huius tanti praedicatoris pectore nisi coelum Deus infernumque coarctaverat, qui et visionis intimae iam lumen acceperat, et tamen adhuc tenebras de carne tolerabat? Super se viderat quod laetus appeteret, in se cernebat quod metuens doleret. Iam coelestis

patriae lux irradiaverat, sed adhuc tentationis obscuritas animum confundebat. Cum coelo ergo infernum pertulit, quia et illuminatum securitas erexit, et tentatum gemitus stravit.

Et saepe contingit ut fides in mente iam vigeat, sed tamen ex parte aliquantula in dubietate contabescat; quatenus et certa se a visibilibus elevet, et ex quibusdam sese incerta perturbet. Nam plerumque ad aeterna appetenda se erigit, et subortis cogitationum stimulis agitata, sibimet ipsa contradicit. In unum ergo terra mareque coarctatur cum unam eamdemque mentem, et certitudo solidae fidei roborat, et tamen ex aliquantula mutabilitate perfidiae aura dubietatis versat. An non in suo pectore coarctari terram mareque cognoverat, qui et per fidem sperans, et per infidelitatem fluctuans, dicebat: Credo, Domine, adiuva incredulitatem meam? Quid itaque est, quod et se credere asserit, et adiuvari in se incredulitatem quaerit, nisi quod coarctari in suis cogitationibus terram cum mari deprehenderat, qui et exorare certus iam per fidem coeperat, et adhuc incertus undas perfidiae ex incredulitate tolerabat?

Quod tamen occulta fieri dispensatione permittitur, ut cum mens iam surgere ad rectitudinem coeperit, pravitatis suae reliquiis impugnetur; quatenus haec ipsa impugnatio, aut resistentem exerceat, aut delectationibus seductam frangat. Recte itaque nunc dicitur: Si subverterit omnia, vel in unum coarctaverit, quis contradicet ei? vel quis dicere ei potest: Cur ita facis? quia nimirum divinum iudicium nec adversitate valet imminui, nec inquisitione cognosci, cum vel virtutes quas tribuerat subtrahit, vel has omnino non adimens, vitiorum concuti impugnatione permittit. Saepe namque in elationem cor tollitur cum laetis successibus in virtute roboratur, sed dum latentes motus audaciae in cogitatione conditor conspicit, se sibi hominem ostendendo derelinquit, ut eius mens derelicta quid sit inveniat, quae male in se secura gaudebat. Unde cum subverti omnia, vel in unum coarctari, dicerentur, protinus additur:

CAPUT XI.

Ipse enim novit hominum vanitatem, et videns iniquitatem, nonne considerat?

Ac si praemissa patefaciendo subiungeret, dicens: Quia tolerando succrescere vitia conspicit, iudicando dona confundit. Rectus vero in descriptione ordo servatur, cum prius nosci vanitas, et post considerari iniquitas perhibetur. Omnis quippe iniquitas, vanitas, non tamen omnis vanitas esse iniquitas solet. Vana namque agimus quoties transitoria cogitamus. Unde et evanescere dicitur quod repente ab intuentium oculis aufertur. Hinc Psalmista ait: Universa vanitas omnis homo vivens; quoniam per hoc quod vivendo ad interitum tendit, recte quidem vanitas dicitur, sed nequaquam recte etiam iniquitas appellatur, quia etsi de poena est culpae quod deficit, non tamen hoc ipsum culpa est, quod a vita percurrit. Vana sunt itaque, quae transeunt. Unde et per Salomonem dicitur: Omnia vanitas.

Apte autem post vanitatem protinus iniquitas subinfertur, quia dum per quaedam transitoria ducimur, in quibusdam noxie ligamur; cumque mens incommutabilitatis statum non tenet, a semetipsa defluens, ad vitia prorumpit. Vanitate ergo ad iniquitatem labitur, quae assueta rebus mutabilibus, dum ex aliis ad alia semper impellitur, suborientibus culpis inquinatur. Potest tamen et vanitas culpa intelligi, et iniquia is nomine reatus gravior demonstrari. Si enim aliquando vanitas culpa non esset, Psalmista non diceret: Quanquam in imagine Dei ambulet homo, tamen vane conturbatur; thesaurizat, et ignorat cui congreget ea; quia quamvis Trinitatis imaginem in natura servemus, vanis tamen delectationis motibus perturbati, in conversatione nostra delinquimus; ut modis nos semper alternantibus cupido concutiat, metus frangat, laetitia mulceat, dolor affligat. Ex vanitate ergo, ut et superius dictum est, ad iniquitatem ducimur cum prius per levia delicta defluimus, ut, usu cuncta levigante, nequaquam post committere etiam graviora timeamus. Nam dum moderari lingua otiosa

verba negligit, more inolitae remissionis capta, audax ad noxia prorumpit; dum gulae incumbitur, ad levitatis protinus insaniam proditur; cumque mens subigere delectationem carnis renuit, plerumque et ad perfidiae voraginem ruit. Unde bene Paulus plebis Israeliticae damna conspiciens, ut imminentia ab auditoribus mala compesceret, curavit ex ordine transacta narrare, dicens: Neque idololatrae efficiamini, sicut quidam eorum, quemadmodum scriptum est : Sedit populus manducare et bibere, et surrexerunt ludere. Esus quippe potusque ad lusum impulit, lusus ad idololatriam traxit, quia si vanitatis culpa nequaquam caute compescitur, ab iniquitate protinus mens incauta devoratur, Salomone attestante, qui ait: Qui modica spernit, paulatim decidit. Si enim curare parva negligimus, insensibiliter seducti, audenter etiam maiora perpetramus. Et notandum quod non videri, sed considerari iniquitas dicitur. Studiosius quippe conspicimus quae consideramus. Deus itaque hominum vanitatem novit, iniquitatem considerat, quia nec minora delicta inulta deserit, et ad maiora ferienda sese intentius accingit. Quia igitur a levioribus malis incipitur, et ad graviora pervenitur; vanitas mentem obnubilat, iniquitas caecat. Quae nimirum mens, amisso mox lumine, tanto se altius per tumorem erigit, quanto et iniquitatis capta laqueis a veritate longius recedit. Unde et apte quoque quo vanitas cum iniquitate pertrahat, exprimit, cum repente subiungit:

CAPUT XII.

Vir vanus in superbiam erigitur.

Vanitatis quippe finis est, ut cum peccato mentem sauciat, hanc ex culpa audacem reddat; quatenus, sui reatus oblita, quae amisisse se innocentiam non dolet, iusto excaecata iudicio, simul et humilitatem perdat. Et fit plerumque ut, pravis desideriis serviens, a iugo se divini timoris excutiat, et, quasi in malorum perpetrationem iam libera, omne quod voluptas suggerit

implere contendat. Unde cum vir vanus se erigere in superbiam dicitur, illico subinfertur:

CAPUT XIII.

Et quasi pullum onagri se liberum natum putat.

Per pullum quippe onagri omne agrestium genus exprimitur, quod, naturae dimissum motibus, loris dominantium non tenetur. Agri namque animalia in libertate habent et ire quo appetunt, et quiescere cum lassantur. Et quamvis insensatis animalibus homo longe sit melior; hoc tamen plerumque homini non licet quod brutis animalibus licet. Quae enim ad aliud minime servantur, eorum motus procul dubio nequaquam sub disciplina restringitur. Homo autem qui ad sequentem vitam ducitur, necesse profecto est ut in cunctis suis motibus sub disciplinae dispositione religetur, et quasi domesticum animal loris vinctum serviat, atque aeternis dispositionibus restrictum vivat. Qui ergo implere cuncta quae desiderat per effrenatam libertatem quaerit, quid aliud quam pullo onagri esse similis concupiscit, ut disciplinae hunc lora non teneant, sed audenter vagus per silvam desideriorum currat?

Saepe autem divina miseratio, quos prodire in effrenationem illicitae libertatis conspicit, obiectione properae adversitatis frangit, quatenus elisi discant quam reproba erectione tumuerant; ut iam flagelli experimentis edomiti, quasi iumenta domestica praeceptorum loris mentis colla subiiciant, et vitae praesentis itinera ad nutum praesidentis pergant. Quibus bene loris ligatum se noverat, qui dicebat: Ut iumentum factus sum apud te, et ego semper tecum. Unde et saevus ille persecutor ab agro perfidae voluptatis ad domum fidei deductus, rectoris sui calcaribus punctus, audiebat: Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare. Restat ergo ut si esse iam similes pullo onagri nolumus, in cunctis quae appetimus nutum prius intimae dispensationis exquiramus, ut mens nostra in omne quod nititur,

superni regiminis loro teneatur; et inde magis vota sua ad vitam impleat, unde vitae suae studia et contra propriam voluntatem calcat. Multa Sophar fortia protulit, sed quod meliori se haec loquitur nescit. Unde adhuc increpando subiungit:

CAPUT XIV.

Tu autem firmasti cor tuum, et expandisti ad eum manus tuas.

Firmati cor non hoc loco per virtutem dicitur, sed per insensibilitatem. Omnis namque a intus qui districtionis intimae considerationi se subiicit, ex eius protinus timore mollescit; eumque sagitta divinae formidinis penetrat, quia infirma viscera per humilitatem gestat. Quisquis autem pertinacia insensibilitatis obdurescit, quasi cor firmat, ne hoc iacula timoris superni confodiant. Unde quibusdam per prophetam Dominus misericorditer dicit: Tollam vobis cor lapideum, et dabo vobis cor carneum. Cor quippe lapideum tollit cum a nobis superbiae duritiam subtrahit, et cor carneum tribuit cum eamdem protinus nostram duritiam ad sensibilitatem vertit. Per manus vero, ut iam crebro docuimus, opera designantur. Cum culpa igitur manus ad Deum expandere est contra largitoris gratiam de virtute operum superbire. Qui enim in conspectu aeterni iudicis loquens sibi bona quae facit tribuit, ad Deum manus superbiens tendit. Sic profecto contra electos reprobi, sic contra catholicos haeretici semper effrenantur, ut cum obiurgare facta nequeunt, bonos reprehendere de factorum elatione moliantur, quatenus eos quos redarguere ex infirmitate actionis non valent, ex crimine tumoris accusent. Unde et ea bona quae exterius fiunt, nequaquam bona esse iam censent, quae quasi per studium turgidae cogitationis exhibentur. Qui saepe humilia tumentes increpant, et quod dictis suis semetipsos feriunt ignorant. Sed quia iustum virum Sophar hactenus reprehendendo corripuit, nunc velut docendo subiungit:

CAPUT XV.

Si iniquitatem quae est in manu tua abstuleris a te, et non manserit in tabernaculo tuo iniustitia, tunc levare poteris faciem tuam absque macula, et eris stabilis, et non timebis.

Omne peccatum aut sola cogitatione committitur, aut cogitatione simul et opere perpetratur. Iniquitas ergo in manu est culpa in opere, iniustitia vero in tabernaculo iniquitas in mente. Mens quippe nostra tabernaculum non incongrue vocatur, in qua apud nosmetipsos abscondimur, cum foris in opere non videmur. Sophar itaque, quia iusti viri amicus est, novit quod dicat; sed quia iustum increpat, haereticorum tenens speciem, proferre recte etiam quae novit ignorat. Sed nos calcantes hoc, quod ab eo tumide dicitur, pensemus eius verba quam vera sint, si recte dicerentur. Prius enim a manu iniquitatem subtrahi, et post a tabernaculo admonet iniustitiam abscidi, quia quisquis iam prava a se opera exterius resecat, necesse profecto est ut, ad semetipsum rediens, solerter sese in mentis intentione discernat; ne culpa, quam iam in actione non habet, adhuc in cogitatione perduret. Unde bene etiam per Salomonem dicitur: Praepara foris opus tuum, et diligenter exerce agrum tuum, ut postea aedifices domum tuam. Quid namque est praeparato opere agrum diligenter exterius exercere, nisi evulsis iniquitatis sentibus, actionem nostram ad frugem retributionis excolere? Et quid est post agri exercitium ad aedificium domus redire, nisi quod plerumque ex bonis operibus discimus quantam vitae munditiam in cogitatione construamus? Pene cuncta namque bona opera ex cogitatione prodeunt, sed sunt nonnulla cogitationis acumina, quae ex operatione nascuntur; nam sicut ab animo opus sumitur, ita rursus ab opere animus eruditur. Mens quippe divini amoris exordia capiens imperat bona quae fiant; sed postquam fieri imperata coeperint, ipsis suis exercitata actionibus discit, cum imperare bona inchoaverat, quantum minus videbat. Foris ergo ager excolitur, ut domus postmodum construatur, quia plerumque ab exteriori opere sumimus,

quantam subtilitatem rectitudinis in corde teneamus. Quem bene Sophar servare ordinem studuit, cum prius auferri iniquitatem a manibus, et post a tabernaculo iniustitiam dixit, quia nequaquam plene animus in cogitatione erigitur, quando adhuc ab eo extrinsecus in opere erratur.

Quae si perfecte duo haec tergimus, ad Deum statim sine macula faciem levamus. Interna quippe facies hominis mens est, in qua nimirum recognoscimur, ut ab auctore nostro dirigamur. Quam scilicet faciem levare est in Deo animum per studia orationis attollere. Sed elevatam faciem macula inquinat, si intendentem mentem reatus sui conscientia accusat, quia a spei fiducia protinus frangitur, si intenta precibus necdum devictae culpae memoria mordetur. Diffidit namque accipere se posse quod appetit, quae profecto reminiscitur nolle se adhuc facere quod divinitus audivit. Hinc per Ioannem dicitur: Si cor nostrum non reprehenderit nos, fiduciam habemus apud Deum, et quidquid petierimus ab eo accipiemus. Hinc Salomon ait: Qui avertit aurem suam, ne audiat legem, oratio eius erit exsecrabilis. Cor quippe nos in petitione reprehendit cum resistere se praeceptis eius quem postulat meminit, et oratio fit exsecrabilis cum a censura avertitur legis, quia dignum profecto est ut ab eius beneficiis sit quisque extraneus cuius nimirum iussionibus non vult esse subiectus.

Qua in re hoc est salubre remedium, ut cum se mens ex memoria culpae reprehendit, hoc prius in oratione defleat, quod erravit; quatenus erroris macula cum fletibus tergitur, in petitione sua cordis facies ab auctore munda videatur. Sed curandum nimis est ne ad hoc rursus proruat quod se mundasse fletibus exsultat, ne dum deplorata iterum culpa committitur, in conspectu iusti iudicis ipsa etiam lamenta levigentur. Solerter quippe debemus meminisse quod dicitur: Ne iteres verbum in oratione tua. Quo videlicet dicto vir sapiens nequaquam nos prohibet saepe veniam petere, sed culpas iterare. Ac si aperte dicat: Cum male gesta defleveris, nequaquam rursus facias, quod in precibus iterum plangas.

Ut ergo ad precem facies sine macula levetur, ante orationis semper tempora debet sollicite conspici quidquid potest in oratione reprobari; talemque se mens et cum ab oratione cessat exhibere festinet, qualis apparere iudici in ipso orationis tempore exoptat. Saepe namque immunda quaedam vel illicita in animo versamus, quoties a precibus vacamus. Sed cum se mens ad studia orationis erexerit, earum rerum imagines reverberata patitur, quibus libenter prius otiosa premebatur; et quasi iam faciem anima ad Deum levare non sufficit, quia in se nimirum inquinata mente maculas pollutae cogitationis erubescit. Saepe curis mundi libenter occupamur. Cumque post haec studio orationis intendimus, nequaquam se mens ad coelestia erigit, quia pondus hanc terrenae sollicitudinis in profundum mersit; et in prece facies munda non ostenditur, quia cogitationis infimae luto maculatur.

Nonnunquam vero cor a cunctis excutimus, et illicitis motibus, etiam cum a prece vacat, obviamus; sed tamen quia nos culpas rarius committimus, aliena pigrius delicta relaxamus; et quo peccare noster animus sollicitius metuit, eo districtius hoc quod in se ab alio delinquitur abhorrescit. Unde fit ut eo inveniatur quisque tardus ad veniam, quo proficiendo factus est cautus ad culpam; et quo ipse excedere in alterum metuit, hoc quod in se exceditur punire durius exquirit. Sed quid hac doloris macula reperiri deterius potest, quae in conspectu iudicis charitatem non inquinat, sed necat? Vitam quippe animae quaelibet culpa polluit, servatus vero contra proximum dolor occidit. Menti namque ut gladius figitur, et mucrone illius ipsa viscerum occulta perforantur. Qui scilicet a transfixo corde, si prius non educitur, nihil in precibus divinae opis obtinetur, quia et vulneratis membris imponi salutis medicamina nequeunt, nisi ferrum a vulnere ante subtrahatur. Hinc est enim quod per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Nisi remiseritis hominibus peccata eorum, nec Pater vester qui in coelis est remittet vobis peccata vestra. Hinc admonet, dicens: Cum stabitis ad

orandum, dimittite si quid habetis adversus alterum. Hinc rursum ait: Date, et dabitur vobis; dimittite, et dimittetur vobis. Hinc constitutioni postulationis conditionem posuit pietatis, dicens: Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris; ut profecto bonum quod a Deo compuncti petimus, hoc primum cum proximo conversi faciamus. Tunc igitur vere sine macula faciem levamus, cum nec nos prohibita mala committimus, nec ea quae in nos commissa sunt ex proprio zelo retinemus. Gravi namque mens nostra orationis suae tempore confusione deprimitur, si hanc aut sua adhuc operatio inquinat, aut alienae malitiae servatus dolor accusat. Quae duo quisque dum terserit, ad ea quae subnexa sunt protinus liber exsurgit. Et eris stabilis, et non timebis; quia nimirum tanto minus iudicem trepidat, quanto in bonis actibus solidius stat. Timorem quippe superat, qui stabilitatem servat, quia dum sollicitus studet peragere quod mansuete conditor imperat, securus etiam cogitat quod terribiliter intentat.

Sciendum praeterea est quod nonnulla bona sunt ad quae indefessi persistimus, et rursum nonnulla sunt a quibus continue deficientes labimur, atque ad haec magnis conatibus per intervalla temporum reformamur. In activa etenim vita sine defectu mens figitur, a contemplativa autem infirmitatis suae pondere victa lassatur. Illa quippe tanto firmius durat, quanto ad vicina se erga utilitatem proximi dilatat; haec tanto celerius labitur, quanto et carnis claustra transgrediens, super semetipsam ire conatur. Illa per plana se dirigit, et idcirco pedem operis robustius figit; haec autem quo super se alta appetit, ad se citius fessa descendit. Quod bene ac breviter Ezechiel insinuat, cum eorum quae viderat motus animalium narrat, dicens: Non revertebantur cum incederent. Et paulo post subiicit, adiungens: Et animalia ibant, et revertebantur. Sancta quippe animalia aliquando vadunt, et minime redeunt; aliquando vadunt, et protinus revertuntur, quia electorum mentes cum per collatam sibi activae vitae gratiam erroris vias deserunt, redire ad mala mundi nesciunt quae

reliquerunt; cum vero per contemplationis aciem ab hac se eadem activa vita suspendunt, eunt et redeunt, quia per hoc quod diu persistere minime in contemplatione sufficiunt, sese iterum ad operationem fundunt; ut in his quae sibi iuxta sunt se exercendo refoveant, et super se rursum surgere contemplando convalescant. Sed dum haec eadem contemplatio more debito per temporum intervalla repetitur, indeficienter procul dubio et in eius soliditate persistitur, quia etsi infirmitatis suae pondere superata mens deficit, hanc tamen iterum continuis conatibus reparata comprehendit. Nec stabilitatem suam in ea perdidisse dicenda est, a qua etsi semper deficit, hanc et cum perdiderit semper inquirit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI.

Miseriae quoque oblivisceris, et quasi aquarum quae praeterierint, non recordaberis.

Mala vitae praesentis tanto durius animus sentit, quanto pensare bonum quod sequitur, negligit; et quo non vult praemia considerare quae restant, gravia aestimat esse quae tolerat. Unde et contra flagelli ictum cogitatio caeca conqueritur, et quasi infinita calamitas creditur, quae diebus cursu labentibus quotidie finitur. At si semel quisque ad aeterna se erigat, atque in his quae incommutabiliter permanent oculum cordis figat, prope nihil esse hic conspicit quidquid ad finem currit. Praesentis vitae adversa tolerat, sed quasi nihil esse omne quod labitur pensat. Quo enim se internis gaudiis robustius inserit, eo minus exterius dolores sentit. Unde Sophar nequaquam veritus ausu temerario docere meliorem, exhortatur ad iustitiam, et demonstrat quam nulla iusti oculis videatur poena. Ac si aperte dicat: Si degustas gaudium quod intus permanet, leve fit protinus omne quod foris dolet. Bene autem praesentis vitae miserias aquis praetereuntibus comparat, quia calamitas transiens, electi mentem nequaquam vi concussionis obruit, sed tamen tactu moeroris infundit. Nam madet quidem per cruorem

vulneris, etsi a suae certitudine non frangitur salutis. Saepe autem non solum flagella atterunt, sed in uniuscuiusque iusti animo malignorum quoque spirituum tentamenta grassantur, ut exterius ex percussione doleat, et intus aliquatenus ex tentatione frigescat. Sed nequaquam gratia deserit, quae quo nos durius ex dispensatione percutit, eo amplius ex pietate custodit. Nam cum tenebrescere per tentationem coeperit, sese iterum lux interna succendit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XVII.

Et quasi meridianus fulgor consurget tibi ad vesperum.

Fulgor quippe meridianus in vespere est virtutis renovatio in tentatione, ut repentino charitatis fervore mens vigeat, quae iamiamque lumen sibi gratiae occubuisse formidabat. Quod adhuc Sophar subtilius aperit, cum subiungit:

CAPUT XVIII.

Et cum te consumptum putaveris, orieris ut lucifer.

Saepe namque tot tentamenta nos obsident, ut ipsa nos eorum numerositas pene ad lapsum desperationis inclinet. Unde plerumque cum mens in taedium vertitur, vix ipsa virtutis suae damna considerat; et tota dolens, sed quasi iam et a sensu doloris aliena, frangitur, et enumerare non valet quanto cogitationum tumultu vastatur. Ruituram se per momenta conspicit, eique ne arma repugnationis arripiat gravius moeror ipse contradicit. Circumductos quolibet oculos obscuritas obsidet, et cum visum tenebrae semper impediant, moesta mens nihil aliud quam tenebras videt. Sed apud misericordem iudicem saepe haec ipsa, quae adnisum quoque orationis aggravat, pro nobis subtilius tristitia exorat. Nam tunc moeroris nostri caliginem conditor conspicit, et subtracti luminis radios refundit, ita ut erecta protinus per dona mens vigeat, quam paulo ante decertantia vitia

superbiae calce deprimebant. Mox torporis pondus discutit, atque ad contemplationis lumen post turbationis suae tenebras erumpit. Mox in gaudium profectus attollitur, quae inter tentamenta peius cadere ex desperatione cogebatur. Sine cogitationis certamine praesentia despicit, sine dubitationis obstaculo de ventura retributione confidit. Iustus ergo cum se consumptum putaverit, ut lucifer oritur, quia mox ut tenebrescere tentationum caligine coeperit, ad lucem gratiae reformatur, et in se ipso monstrat diem iustitiae, qui casurus paulo ante timuit noctem culpae. Recte autem lucifero iusti vita comparatur. Solem quippe praecurrens lucifer, diem nuntiat. Et quid nobis sanctorum innocentia nisi sequentis iudicis claritatem clamat? In eorum namque admiratione conspicimus quid de maiestate veri luminis aestimemus. Necdum Redemptoris nostri potentiam videmus, sed tamen virtutem illius in electorum suorum moribus admiramur. Quia igitur bonorum vita in consideratione sua oculis nostris vim veritatis obiicit, clarus ad nos lucifer ante solem venit.

Sciendum vero est quod haec quae ex tentationum spiritalium adversitate discussimus, iuxta exteriora quoque mala nil obstat intelligi. Sancti etenim viri quia summa medullitus diligunt, in infimis dura patiuntur; sed in fine gaudii lumen inveniunt, quod habere in hoc spatio percurrentis vitae contemnunt. Unde nunc per Sophar dicitur: Et quasi meridianus fulgor consurget tibi ad vesperum. Peccatoris enim lumen in die est obscuritas in vespere, quia in praesenti vita felicitate attollitur, sed adversitatis tenebris in fine devoratur. Iusto autem meridianus fulgor ad vesperum surgit, quia quanta sibi claritas maneat cum iam occumbere coeperit agnoscit. Hinc namque scriptum est: Timenti Deum bene erit in extremis. Hinc per Psalmistam dicitur: Cum dederit dilectis suis somnum, haec est haereditas Domini. Qui in huius quoque vitae adhuc certamine positus, cum se consumptum putaverit, ut lucifer oritur, quia foris cadens, intus innovatur; et quo magis exterius adversa tolerat, eo uberius virtutum lumine interius

coruscat, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Sed licet is qui foris est noster homo corrumpitur, tamen is qui intus est renovatur de die in diem. Id enim quod in praesenti est momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostrae supra modum in sublimitate aeternum gloriae pondus operatur in nobis. Et notandum quod nequaquam cum consumptus fueris, sed cum te consumptum putaveris dicit, quia et quod videmus in dubietate est, et quod speramus in certitudine. Unde et isdem Paulus non se consumptum noverat, sed putabat, qui et in adversa tribulationum corruens ut lucifer resplendebat, dicens: Quasi morientes, et ecce vivimus; quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes; sicut egentes, multos autem locupletantes. Sciendum quoque est quod bonorum mens quo duriora pro veritate tolerat, eo aeternitatis praemia certius sperat. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XIX.

Et habebis fiduciam, proposita tibi spe.

Tanto namque spes in Deum solidior surgit, quanto pro illo quisque graviora pertulerit, quia nequaquam retributionis gaudium de aeternitate colligitur, quod non hic prius pia tribulatione seminatur. Hinc enim per Psalmistam dicitur: Euntes, ibant et flebant, mittentes semina sua; venientes autem venient in exsultatione, portantes manipulos suos. Hinc Paulus ait: Si commorimur, et convivemus; si sustinemus, et conregnabimus. Hinc discipulos admonet, dicens: Per multas tribulationes oportet nos introire in regnum Dei. Hinc sanctorum gloriam Ioanni angelus indicans, ait: Hi sunt qui venerunt de tribulatione magna, et laverunt stolas suas, et candidas eas fecerunt in sanguine Agni. Quia igitur nunc per tribulationem seritur, ut post gaudii fructus metatur, tanto maior fiducia mentem roborat, quanto hanc fortior pro veritate afflictio angustat. Unde apte protinus adiungitur:

CAPUT XX.

Et defossus securus dormies.

Sicut enim malis praesens securitas laborem, ita bonis praesens labor perpetuam securitatem parit. Unde et defossum se securum dormire iam noverat, qui dicebat: Ego enim iam delibor, et tempus meae resolutionis instat; bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi; de reliquo reposita mihi est corona iustitiae, quam reddet mihi Dominus in die illa iustus iudex. Quia enim contra mala transeuntia sine defectu certaverat, de mansuris nimirum gaudiis sine dubietate praesumebat.

Quamvis defossus intelligi et aliter potest. Saepe namque, rebus transitoriis occupati, pensare negligimus per quanta peccamus; sed si, reducto considerationis oculo, a sinu cordis terrenae cogitationis agger excutitur, quidquid in mente latebat invenitur. Unde sancti viri animorum latebras perscrutari non desinunt, sese subtiliter indagantes, terrenarum rerum curas abiiciunt, et, effossis plene cogitationibus, cum nullo se reatu criminis morderi deprehendunt, velut in strato cordis apud se securi requiescunt. Latere quoque ab huius mundi actibus appetunt, semper sua considerant, et cum loro regiminis minime constringuntur, iudicare quae aliena sunt recusant. Effossi ergo securi dormiunt, quia dum sua intima vigilanter penetrant, a laboriosis se huius mundi oneribus sub quietis otio occultant. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXI.

Requiesces, et non erit qui te exterreat.

Quisquis praesentem gloriam quaerit, profecto despectum metuit. Qui semper ad lucra inhiat, semper videlicet damna formidat. Cuius enim perceptione reficitur, eius rei procul dubio et amissione sauciatur; et quo obligatus mutabilibus ac perituris inhaeret, eo longe in infimis ab arce securitatis iacet. At contra quisquis in solo aeternitatis desiderio figitur, nec prosperitate attollitur, nec adversitate quassatur; dum nil habet in mundo

quod appetat, nihil est quod de mundo pertimescat. Hinc etenim Salomon ait: Non contristabit iustum quidquid ei acciderit. Hinc iterum dicit: Iustus quasi leo confidens absque terrore erit. Bene itaque nunc dicitur: Requiesces, et non erit qui te exterreat, quia tanto quisque a se plenius pavorem qui ex mundo est abiicit, quanto in semetipso verius mundi concupiscentiam vincit. An non absque terrore Paulus in corde requieverat, qui dicebat: Certus sum enim quia neque mors, neque vita, neque angeli, neque principatus, neque instantia, neque futura, neque fortitudo, neque altitudo, neque profundum, neque creatura alia poterit nos separare a charitate Dei, quae est in Christo Iesu Domino nostro? Cuius videlicet fortitudo charitatis, vera sanctae Ecclesiae voce laudatur, cum per canticorum Canticum dicitur : Valida est ut mors dilectio. Virtuti etenim mortis dilectio comparatur, quia nimirum mentem, quam semel ceperit, a delectatione mundi funditus occidit; et tanto hanc valentius in auctoritatem erigit, quanto et insensibilem contra terrores reddit. Sed inter haec sciendum est quod pravi cum recta praedicant, valde difficile est ut ad hoc quod taciti ambiunt non erumpant. Unde et Sophar protinus adiungit:

CAPUT XXII.

Et deprecabuntur faciem tuam plurimi.

Neque enim iusti viri idcirco se per innocentiae itinera arcta custodiunt, ut ab aliis exorentur. Sed sive haeretici, seu perversi quilibet, per hoc quod inter homines quasi innocenter vivunt, videri intercessores pro hominibus volunt; et cum sancta loquentes insinuant, quod ipsi appetunt, hoc aliis pro magno pollicentur; dumque coelestia praedicant, in suis repente sponsionibus ostendunt quod amant. Sed ne diu terrena pollicendo patescant quod sunt, ad verba rectitudinis citius recurrunt. Unde mox subditur.

CAPUT XXIII.

Oculi autem impiorum deficient, et effugium peribit ab eis.

Quod oculorum nomine vis intentionis exprimitur, per Evangelium Veritas attestatur, dicens: Si oculus tuus simplex fuerit, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit; quia videlicet si operationem nostram intentio munda praevenerit, quamlibet aliter hominibus videatur, interni tamen iudicis oculis mundum subsequentis actionis corpus ostenditur. Oculi ergo impiorum sunt intentiones in eis carnalium desideriorum. Qui idcirco deficiunt, quia aeterna negligunt, et sola semper transitoria praestolantur. Adipisci quippe terrenam gloriam cogitant, multiplicari rebus temporalibus exoptant, ad mortem quotidie cursu rerum labentium tendunt; sed cogitare mortalia mortaliter nesciunt. Carnis vita per momenta deficit, et tamen carnale desiderium crescit. Res habita instanti fine corripitur, et habendi anxietas non finitur. Sed cum mors impios subtrahit, eorum profecto desideria cum vita terminantur. Quorum scilicet oculi tunc superna ultione deficiunt, quia suo hic iudicio a terrena deficere delectatione noluerunt. Hos illorum oculos a iucunditate pristina claudi Psalmista conspexerat, cum dicebat: In illa die peribunt omnes cogitationes eorum; quia et aeterna mala nunquam cogitata reperiunt, et subito amittunt bona temporalia quae diu tractata tenuerunt. A quibus et omne effugium perit, quia eorum malitia ab animadversione districti iudicis quo se valeat occultare non invenit. Nam nunc iniqui cum tristitia aliqua, vel adversa patiuntur, effugii latebras inveniunt, quia ad voluptatem protinus desideriorum carnalium recurrunt. Ne enim paupertas cruciet, divitiis animum demulcent. Ne despectus proximorum deprimat, sese dignitatibus exaltant. Si fastidio corpus atteritur, antepositis epularum diversitatibus nutritur. Si quo animus moestitiae impulsu deiicitur, mox per interposita iocorum blandimenta relevatur. Tot ergo hic habent effugia, quot sibi praeparant delectamenta. Sed quandoque eis effugium perit, quia eorum mens, amissis omnibus, se solummodo et iudicem conspicit. Tunc voluptas subtrahitur, sed voluptatis culpa servatur,

et repente miseri pereundo discunt quia peritura tenuerunt. Qui tamen quousque corporaliter vivunt quaerere nocitura non desinunt. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXIV.

Et spes illorum abominatio animae.

Quid hic peccator totis cogitationibus sperat, nisi ut potestate caeteros transeat, cunctos rerum multiplicitate transcendat, adversantes dominando subiiciat, obsequentibus mirandus innotescat, irae ad votum satisfaciat, benignum se, cum laudatur, ostendat; quidquid gula appetit, offerat; ad hoc quod voluptas imperat, operis expletione concurrat? Bene ergo spes illorum abominatio animae dicitur, quia et ea quae carnales ambiunt spiritales quique iudicio rectitudinis aversantur. Nam quod peccatores voluptatem aestimant, hoc iusti procul dubio poenam putant. Abominatio igitur est animae, spes pravorum, quia nimirum spiritus deficit, ubi caro requiescit. Ut enim caro mollibus, sic anima duris nutritur: illam blanda refovent, hanc aspera exercent; illa delectationibus pascitur, haec amaritudinibus vegetatur. Et sicut carnem dura sauciant, sic spiritum mollia necant; sicut illam laboriosa interimunt, ita hunc delectabilia exstinguunt. Spes itaque carnalium, abominatio animae dicitur, quia inde in perpetuum spiritus interit, unde ad tempus caro suaviter vivit.

Sed haec Sophar recte diceret, nisi beatus Iob cuncta largius etiam vivendo praedicasset. At postquam sanctiorem monere de vita nititur, doctioremque se erudire sapientiae magisterio conatur, ipse dictorum suorum pondus levigat, qui, indiscretione interposita, omne quod loquitur destruit, quia liquorem scientiae pleno vasculo superfundit. Sic namque ab indiscretis opes scientiae, sicut a stultis saepe opes corporalis substantiae possidentur. Nonnulli enim, qui rerum terrenarum multiplicitate subnixi sunt, aliquando multa et habentibus tribuunt, ut ipsi haec cunctis largius

habere videantur. Ita perversi, cum vera sapiunt, recta quaedam etiam rectioribus loquuntur; non ut alios audientes doceant, sed ut ipsi quanta doctrina polleant, innotescant. Praeire se quippe sapientia cunctos existimant, et idcirco nihil se cuilibet dicere ultra mensuras suae magnitudinis putant. Sic pravi quilibet, sic omnes haeretici superba voce meliores docere non metuunt, quia omnes se inferiores arbitrantur. Sed sancta Ecclesia elatos quosque ab aestimationis suae culmine revocat, et discretionis manu ad aequalitatis compagem reformat. Unde beatus Iob, qui eiusdem sanctae Ecclesiae membrum est, videns quod amicorum mens per verba prolatae eruditionis intumuit, illico respondit, dicens:

CAPUT XXV.

CAP. XII, Ergo vos estis soli homines, et vobiscum morietur sapientia.

Quisquis se praeire omnes ratione existimat, quid iste aliud quam solum se esse hominem exsultat? Et saepe contingit ut cum per tumorem mens in altum ducitur, in despectum omnium et sui admirationem sublevetur. In cogitatione etenim proprii favores oriuntur, sibique de singularitate sapientiae blanditur ipsa fatuitas. Pensat ea quae audierit, ac verba quae profert; et miratur sua, ridet aliena. Qui ergo solum se sapere aestimat, quid aliud quam hanc eamdem secum mori sapientiam putat? Nam quam adesse aliis abnuit, soli sibi hanc tribuens, profecto intra tempora suae brevitatis claudit. Pensandum vero est vir sanctus quanta discretione utitur, ut amicorum superbientium arrogantia comprimatur, cum protinus adiungit:

CAPUT XXVI.

Et mihi est cor, sicut et vobis, nec inferior vestri sum.

Quis etenim nesciat quantum beati Iob vita atque scientia amicorum eius scientiam excedat? Sed ut eorum superbiam corrigat, esse se inferiorem negat; et ne suae humilitatis limitem transeat, esse se superiorem tacet: nec

preferendo se, sed conferendo, indicat quod de se hi qui sibi longe sunt impares discant, ut dum sponte inflectitur sapientia quae eminet, nequaquam se contra vires erigat scientia quae iacet. Quos bene mox ad aequalitatis sensum revocat, quia tumere valde quasi de singularitate magnitudinis pensat, cum subsequenter adiungit:

CAPUT XXVII.

Quis enim haec quae nostis ignorat?

Ac si aperte dicat: Cum cunctis sint nota quae dicitis, de dictorum scientia singulariter cur tumetis? Quia igitur elationem arrogantium ad aequalitatis communionem revocans, perfecta correptione redarguit, ad doctrinae nunc sententias erumpit, ut amici eius humiliati, prius discerent veritatis pondera, quam reverenter audirent. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

Qui deridetur ab amico suo sicut ego, invocabit Deum, et exaudiet eum.

Saepe infirma mens, cum de bonis actibus aura humani favoris excipitur, ad gaudia exteriora derivatur, ut postponat quod intus appetit, et in hoc libenter resoluta iaceat, quod foris audit; ita ut beatam non tam fieri quam dici se gaudeat. Cumque laudis suae vocibus inhiat, quod esse coeperat relinquit. Inde ergo a Deo disiungitur, unde in Deo laudanda videbatur. Nonnunquam vero recto operi animus constanter innititur, et tamen humanis irrisionibus urgetur: miranda agit, et opprobria recipit; et qui exire foras per laudes potuit, repulsus contumeliis, ad semetipsum redit; et eo se intus robustius in Deo solidat, quo foris non invenit quo requiescat. Tota etenim spes in auctore figitur, et inter irrisionum convicia solus interior testis imploratur; atque afflicti animus fit Deo tanto proximus, quanto et a gratia humani favoris alienus: in precem protinus funditur, et pressus exterius, ad penetranda quae intus sunt mundius liquatur. Bene itaque nunc dicitur: Qui

deridetur ab amico suo sicut ego, invocabit Deum, et exaudiet eum, quia bonorum menti dum pravi exprobrant, ostendunt quem suorum actuum testem quaerant. Quae dum compuncta sese in precibus accingit, inde intra se supernae exauditioni iungitur, unde extra se ab humana laude separatur. Notandum vero quam provide interponitur Sicut ego, quia sunt nonnulli quos et humanae irrisiones deprimunt, et tamen divinis auribus exaudibiles non sunt. Nam cum derisio contra culpam nascitur, profecto nullum virtutis meritum in derisione generatur. Baal etenim sacerdotes clamosis hunc vocibus implorantes, derisi ab Elia fuerant, cum dicebat: Clamate voce maiori, Deus enim est, et forsitan loquitur, aut in diversorio est. Sed haec eis irrisio ad virtutis usum non fuit, quia per culpae meritum venit. Provide ergo nunc dicitur: Qui deridetur ab amico suo, sicut ego, invocabit Deum, et exaudiet eum, quia illum facit humana derisio Deo proximum, quem ab humanis pravitatibus vitae innocentia servat alienum. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

Deridetur enim iusti simplicitas.

Huius mundi sapientia est, cor machinationibus tegere, sensum verbis velare, quae falsa sunt vera ostendere, quae vera sunt prudentia usu a iuvenibus scitur, haec a pueris pretio discitur, hanc qui sciunt caeteros despiciendo superbiunt; hanc qui nesciunt, subiecti et timidi in aliis mirantur, quia ab eis haec eadem duplicitas iniquitatis, nomine palliata, diligitur, dum mentis perversitas urbanitas vocatur. Haec sibi obsequentibus praecipit honorum culmina quaerere, adepta temporalis gloriae vanitate gaudere, irrogata ab aliis mala multiplicius reddere, cum vires suppetunt nullis resistentibus cedere, cum virtutis possibilitas deest, quidquid explere per malitiam non valet, hoc in pacifica bonitate simulare. At contra sapientia iustorum est nil per ostensionem fingere, sensum verbis aperire, vera ut sunt diligere, falsa devitare, bona gratis exhibere, mala libentius

tolerare quam facere; nullam iniuriae ultionem quaerere, pro veritate contumeliam lucrum putare. Sed haec iustorum simplicitas deridetur, quia ab huius mundi sapientibus puritatis virtus, fatuitas creditur. Omne enim quod innocenter agitur, ab eis procul dubio stultum putatur; et quidquid in opere veritas approbat, carnali sapientiae fatuum sonat. Quid namque stultius videtur mundo quam mentem verbis ostendere, nil callida machinatione simulare, nullas iniuriis contumelias reddere, pro maledicentibus orare, paupertatem quaerere, possessa relinquere, rapienti non resistere, percutienti alteram maxillam praebere? Unde bene huius mundi dilectoribus ille egregius Dei sapiens dicit: Abominationes Aegyptiorum immolabimus Domino Deo nostro. Oves quippe Aegyptii edere dedignantur; sed quod abominantur Aegyptii, hoc Israelitae Deo offerunt, quia simplicitatem conscientiae, quam iniusti quique velut infimam abiectamque despiciunt, hanc iusti in virtutis sacrificium vertunt; et excolentes recti puritatem ac mansuetudinem Deo immolant, quam abominantes reprobi fatuitatem putant. Quae nimirum iusti simplicitas breviter, sed sufficienter exprimitur, cum protinus subinfertur.

CAPUT XXX.

Lampas contempta apud cogitationes divitum.

Quid hoc loco signatur nomine divitum, nisi elatio superborum, qui venturi iudicis respectum non habent, dum superbis apud se cogitationibus tument? Nam sunt nonnulli quos census per tumorem non elevat, sed per misericordiae opera exaltat. Et sunt nonnulli qui, dum se terrenis opibus abundare conspiciunt, veras Dei divitias non requirunt, atque aeternam patriam non amant, quia hoc sibi sufficere, quod rebus temporalibus fulciuntur, putant. Non est ergo census in crimine, sed affectus. Cuncta enim quae Deus condidit bona sunt; sed qui bonis male utitur profecto agit ut, quasi per edacitatis ingluviem, eo per quem vivere debuit pane moriatur.

Pauper ad requiem Lazarus venerat, superbum vero divitem tormenta cruciabant. Sed tamen dives Abraham fuerat, qui in sinu Lazarum tenebat; qui tamen auctori suo colloquens, dicit: Loquar ad Dominum meum, cum sim pulvis et cinis. Quid itaque iste divitias suas aestimare noverat, qui semetipsum pulverem cineremque pensabat? Aut quando hunc res possessae extollerent, qui de se quoque, earum videlicet possessore, tam abiecta sentiret?

Atque iterum sunt nonnulli quibus et res terrenae non suppetunt, et tamen apud se per fastum tumoris eriguntur. Hos et census ad ostensionem potentiae minime subvehit, et tamen morum protervia inter reprobos divites addicit. Quoscunque ergo sequentis vitae amor non humiliat, hoc in loco sacer sermo divites appellat, quia in iudicii quoque ultione non discrepant utrum rebus an solis moribus intumescant. Qui cum vitam simplicium in hoc mundo humilem abiectamque conspiciunt; elatis protinus despectibus irrident. Nequaquam quippe eis hoc exterius adesse considerant, ad quod ipsi totis conatibus anhelant. Quasi stultos ergo despiciunt qui scilicet ea non habent quae ipsi utique vel habendo, vel solummodo amando, moriuntur; et quasi mortuos deputant, quos nequaquam secum vivere carnaliter pensant. Qui enim ab huius mundi appetitu moritur, a terrenis mentibus profecto omni modo exstinctus aestimatur. Quod bene nostri miraculum Redemptoris signat, cum ab immundo spiritu hominem liberat, de quo nimirum scriptum est: Clamans, et multum discerpens eum, exiit ab eo; et factus est sicut mortuus, ita ut multi dicerent quia mortuus est. Iesus autem tenens manum eius, elevavit eum, et surrexit. Velut mortuus quippe ostenditur qui a maligni spiritus potestate liberatur, quia quisquis iam terrena desideria subigit, vitam in se carnalis conversationis exstinguit; et mundo mortuus apparet, quia possessore pravo, qui per immunda desideria se agitabat, caret. Quem multi mortuum dicunt, quia qui spiritaliter vivere nesciunt eum qui carnalia bona non sequitur exstinctum funditus arbitrantur.

Sed quia ipsi quoque derisores simplicium Christianitatis nomine censentur, reverentia religionis pressi, exhibere malum publicae irrisionis erubescunt. Unde fit ut apud se tumidi tacentesque derideant, quos abiectos valde atque infimos per simplicitatem putant. Bene ergo dicitur: Lampas contempta apud cogitationes divitum, quia superbi quique, dum pensare bona sequentia, ut superius diximus, nesciunt, pene nihil aestimant, quem non vident habere quod amant. Saepe namque contingit ut electus quisque, qui ad aeternam felicitatem ducitur, continua hic adversitate deprimatur, non hunc rerum abundantia fulciat, non dignitatum gloria honorabilem ostendat, nulla ei obsequentum frequentia suppetat, nulla hunc humanis oculis vestium pompa componat; a cunctis vero despicabilis cernitur, et huius mundi gratia indignus aestimatur. Sed tamen ante occulti iudicis oculos virtutibus emicat, vitae meritis coruscat, honorari metuit, despici non refugit; corpus continentia afficit, sola in animo dilectione pinguescit, mentem semper ad patientiam praeparat, et erectus pro iustitia, de perceptis contumeliis exsultat, afflictis ex corde compatitur, de bonorum prosperitatibus quasi de propriis laetatur, sacri verbi pabula in mente sollicitus ruminat, et inquisitus quodlibet eloqui dupliciter ignorat. Bene itaque iusti simplicitas et lampas esse dicitur, et contempta. Lampas, quia interius lucet; contempta, quia exterius non lucet. Intus ardet flamma charitatis, foris nulla gloria resplendet decoris. Lucet ergo et despicitur qui flagrans virtutibus abiectus aestimatur. Mentes quippe carnalium pensare bona non valent, nisi quae carnaliter vident. Hinc est quod David sanctum pater ipse despexerat, quem prophetae Samuelis oculis praesentare recusabat. Qui ad unctionis gratiam dum septem filios deduxisset, a propheta requisitus an numerum sobolis explesset, cum magna desperatione respondit: Est puer parvulus qui pascit oves. Quo deducto et electo, protinus audivit: Homo videt in facie, Deus autem perscrutatur cor. Lampas ergo David per innocentiam fuerat; sed tamen valde contempta, quia exteriora

cernentibus non lucebat. Sciendum vero est quod iustus quisque aut temporalem gloriam non habet, aut hanc sub semetipso frangit, si habet, ut honori suo liber emineat, ne ei victus delectatione succumbat. Hinc enim est quod ille praedicator egregius ante humanos oculos apostolatus sui gloriam humiliaverat, qui dicebat: Non usi sumus hac potestate, cum possimus oneri esse ut Christi apostoli, sed facti sumus parvuli in medio vestrum. Eius vero auditoribus nimirum tumor divitum adhuc in corde remanserat, cum dicebant: Epistolae graves sunt et fortes, praesentia autem corporis infirma, et sermo contemptibilis. Quem enim talia dicere posse cognoverant, secum communiter vivere non posse iudicabant. Cumque eum et humilem vivendo cernerent, et altum sermone pensarent, sua eos elatio compulit ut quem per scripta timuerant per praesentiae verba despicerent. Quid igitur Paulus, nisi contempta lampas apud cogitationes divitum fuit, qui unde magisterium humilitatis exhibuit, inde a rudibus discipulis superbiae contumelias recepit? Horrendo etenim modo languor superbientium unde detumescere debuit excrevit, dum mens elata carnalium hoc quasi dedignabile repulit, quod magister imitabile ostendit. An contempta lampas non erat, qui, tot virtutibus emicans, tanta a persecutoribus adversa tolerabat? Legatione in catena fungitur, eiusque vincula in omni praetorio manifestantur, virgis caeditur, multisque ex genere, ex gentibus, periculis urgetur, lapidibus Lystris tunditur, pedibus extra urbem trahitur, quia exstinctus aestimatur. Sed usquequo lampas ista contemnitur? Usquequo despicabilis habetur? Nunquidnam fulgorem suum nullatenus exerit, et nunquam quanta claritate candeat ostendit? Ostendit plane. Nam cum lampas contempta apud cogitationes divitum diceretur, protinus additur:

CAPUT XXXI.

Parata ad tempus statutum.

Statutum quippe contemptae lampadis tempus est extremi iudicii praedestinatus dies, quo iustus quisque, qui nunc despicitur, quanta potestate fulgeat demonstratur. Tunc enim cum Deo iudices veniunt, qui nunc pro Deo iniuste iudicantur. Tunc eorum lux tanto latius emicat, quanto eos nunc manus persequentium durius angustat. Tunc reproborum oculis patescet quod coelesti potestate subnixi sunt qui terrena omnia sponte reliquerunt. Unde electis suis Veritas dicit: Vos qui secuti estis me, in regeneratione, cum sederit Filius hominis in sede maiestatis suae, sedebitis et vos super duodecim sedes, iudicantes duodecim tribus Israel. Neque enim plus quam duodecim iudices illa interni consessus curia non habebit; sed nimirum duodenario numero quantitas universitatis exprimitur, quia quisquis, stimulo divini amoris excitatus, hic possessa reliquerit, illic procul dubio culmen iudiciariae potestatis obtinebit, ut simul tunc iudex cum iudice veniat, qui nunc consideratione iudicii sese spontanea paupertate castigat. Hinc est enim quod de sanctae Ecclesiae sponso per Salomonem dicitur: Nobilis in portis vir eius, quando sederit cum senatoribus terrae. Hinc Isaias ait: Dominus ad iudicium veniet cum senioribus populi sui. Hinc eosdem seniores Veritas non iam famulos, sed amicos denuntiat, dicens: Non iam dicam vos servos, sed amicos meos. Quos nimirum Psalmista intuens, ait: Mihi autem nimis honorificati sunt amici tui, Deus. Quorum dum celsitudinem cordis aspiceret, mundi gloriam qua calce calcarent protinus addidit: Nimis confortatus est principatus eorum. Ac ne paucos esse crederemus, quos proficere usque ad summam tantae perfectionis agnoscimus, illico adiunxit: Dinumerabo eos, et super arenam multiplicabuntur. Quot itaque nunc pro amore veritatis sese libenter humiliant, tot tunc in iudicio lampades coruscant. Dicatur igitur recte: Lampas contempta apud cogitationes divitum, parata ad tempus statutum, quia uniuscuiusque iusti anima velut abiecta contemnitur cum degens inferius gloriam non habet, sed admirabilis cernitur dum desuper fulget.

Libet inter haec ad Redemptoris vias mentis oculos attollere, sensimque a membris ad caput venire. Ipse enim nobis lampas veraciter exstitit, qui, pro redemptione nostra in cruce moriens, tenebrosis nostris mentibus lucem per lignum fudit. Hac nos lampade Ioannes illuminari conspexerat, cum dicebat: Erat lux vera quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum. Quam tamen apud cogitationes divitum contemptam vidit, cum paulo post subdidit: In propria venit et sui eum non receperunt. Huius lampadis flammas Herodes explorare voluit, cum eius miracula videre concupivit, sicut scriptum est: Erat enim ex multo tempore cupiens videre eum, eo quod audisset multa de illo, et sperabat signum aliquod videre ab eo fieri. Sed lampas haec ante eius oculos nullo radio lucis emicuit, quia ei qui se non pie sed curiose quaesierat nil de se mirabile ostendit. Inquisitus quippe Redemptor tacuit, exspectatus miracula exhibere contempsit, seseque apud se in occultis retinens, eos quos exteriora quaerere comperit, ingratos foris reliquit: magis eligens aperte a superbientibus despici, quam a non credentibus vacua voce laudari. Unde et protinus lampas ista contempta est, sicut illic subditur: Sprevit autem illum Herodes cum exercitu suo, et illusit indutum veste alba.

Sed contempta lampas, quae in terra irrisiones tolerat, de coelo iudicium coruscat. Unde hic apte subiungitur: Parata ad tempus statutum. De quo videlicet tempore per Psalmistam dicit: Cum accepero tempus, ego iustitias iudicabo. Hinc in Evangelio per semetipsam Veritas denuntiat, dicens: Tempus meum nondum advenit. Hinc Petrus ait: Quem oportet coelum suscipere, usque ad tempora restitutionis. Lampas ergo quae nunc contemnitur ad statutum tempus ventura praeparatur, quia ipse peccata in die ultimo iudicat, qui nunc peccantium derisiones portat. Et tanto tunc durius districtionem exerit, quanto nunc vocandis peccatoribus suam lenius patientiam sternit. Qui enim diu convertendos exspectat, non conversos sine retractatione cruciat. Quod per prophetam scilicet breviter insinuat, dicens:

Tacui, semper silui, patiens fui, sicut parturiens loquar. Ut enim iam praediximus, parturiens cum dolore eiicit hoc quod in intimis tempore longo gestavit. Qui ergo semper siluit sicut parturiens loquitur, quia venturus iudex, qui sine ultione diu facta hominum pertulit, quandoque cum fervore examinis, quasi cum dolore mentis, quantae animadversionis sententiam intus servaverit ostendit. Nemo igitur hanc lampadem, cum latet, despiciat, ne contemptores, suos, cum de coelo fulserit, exurat. Cui enim nunc non ardet ad veniam, tunc procul dubio ardebit ad poenam. Quia ergo per supernam gratiam vocationis tempus accipimus, dum adhuc licentia superest, eius iram, qui ubique est, mores in melius commutando, fugiamus. Solum quippe animadversio illa non invenit quem correctio abscondit.

Haec nos, largiente Domino, in duobus iam corporibus transcurrisse sufficiat. Quia enim sacri libri sequentia mysteriorum virtutibus extensa complecti breviter exponendo non possumus, ea necesse est ut aliis voluminibus reservemus, quatenus lector tanto ferventior ad legendi studium redeat, quanto ex lectionis quoque intercisione respirat.

LIBER UNDECIMUS.

In quo caput duodecimum, a versu sexto, decimum tertium, et decimi quarti quatuor priores versus, mutato tantisper stylo, exponuntur.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. Quae sint tota hac tertia parte exponenda et quo stylo. — Quamvis in prolixo opere esse culpabilis styli mutabilitas non debeat, ne quis tamen me ex locutionis meae immutatione reprehendat, in epistola libris praemissa causam reddidi cur tertiam hujus operis partem ad aliarum usque similitudinem minime emendando perduxi. Quibus scilicet exclusis, hoc quoque additur, quod ab eo versu, quo dicitur: Abundant tabernacula praedonum, ejusdem partis expositio incipit, et usque ad hoc, quod scriptum est: Dulcedo eorum vermis; disserendo pertingit. Quae nimirum tam multa sunt, ut in uno corpore comprehendi non possent, nisi sub magna brevitate dicerentur. Qui ergo ab aliis actibus vacat, legat caetera multipliciter dicta. Cui vero ad studiose legendum non vacat, hujus partis ei brevitas placeat, in qua non tam quae sentimus dicimus quam ea quae sunt dicenda signamus. Igitur quoniam in ea multa, sicut me loquente excepta sunt, ita dereliqui, immutationem styli lector meus aequanimiter accipe, quia et saepe eosdem cibos edentibus, diversitas placet coctionis. Sed quoties partes singulas ad legendum sumis, reducere semper ad memoriam eam, quam proposui causae originem, stude, quia et per beatum Job, qui dolens dicitur, passiones Domini ejusque corporis, id est sanctae Ecclesiae designantur, et amici ejus haereticorum tenent speciem, qui, ut saepe jam diximus (Maxime praefat., c. 6, n. 15), Deum dum defendere nituntur, offendunt. Qui dum ficte consulunt, sanctorum mentem fortiter affligunt; nec tamen per cuncta quae loquuntur a veritatis cognitione desipiunt, sed plerumque et stultis prudentia, et fictis vera permiscent, ut dum ex veritate aliquid praerogant,

facile ad falsitatem trahant. Unde amici quoque beati Job modo despicabilia, modo autem mira sunt quae loquuntur; quae tamen sanctus vir aliquando reprobando convincit, aliquando vero approbando suscipit, atque ad usum rectitudinis pertrahit etiam quae ab eis recta, sed non recte proferuntur. Itaque inopiam suam despicientes despicit, atque in sterquilinio corpore positus, in quanto virtutum culmine apud se sedeat ostendit, cum nil esse praesentis vitae divitias memorat, quos abundare et reprobis narrat, dicens:

CAPUT II.

CAP. 12, VERS. 6. — Abundant tabernacula praedonum, et audacter provocant Deum, cum ipse dederit omnia in manibus eorum. 2. Quantus in Job divitiarum contemptus eluceat. — Facile est hominem tunc divitias despicere, cum habet; difficile vero est eas, cum non habet, viles aestimare. Unde patenter ostenditur quantus contemptus terrenarum rerum in beati Job cogitatione fuerit, qui tunc dicit nulla esse quae abundant reprobis, 367 quando omnia amisit. Ait ergo: Abundant tabernacula praedonum, et audacter provocant Deum, quia plerumque mali eo magis contra Deum superbiunt, quo ab ejus largitate et contra meritum ditantur; et qui provocari bonis ad meliora debuerant, donis pejores fiunt. 3. Quae injuste faciunt mali, Deus fieri juste permittit — Sed intelligendum nobis est quomodo praedones appellentur, dum protinus additur: Cum ipse dederit omnia in manibus eorum. Si enim praedones sunt, violenter abstulerunt, et dubium non est quia violentorum non sit adjutor Deus. Quomodo igitur ipse dat quod hi qui praedones sunt nequiter tollunt? Sed sciendum est quia aliud est quod omnipotens Deus misericorditer tribuit, aliud quod omnipotens Deus misericorditer tribuit, aliud quod iratus haberi sinit. Nam quod praedones perverse faciunt, hoc dispensator aequissimus fieri non nisi juste permittit; ut et is qui rapere sinitur caecatus mente culpam augeat, et is qui rapinam

patitur jam in ejusdem rapinae damno pro alia quam ante perpetravit culpa feriatur. Ecce enim quidam in montis fauce constitutus insidiatur itinerantibus; sed is qui iter agit iniqua fortasse quaedam aliquando perpetravit, eique omnipotens Deus malum suum in praesenti vita retribuens, atque hunc insidiatoris manibus tradens, vel spoliari rebus, vel etiam interimi permittit. Quod ergo praedo injuste appetiit, hoc aequissimus judex juste fieri permisit; ut et ille reciperet quod injuste fecerat, et iste gravius quandoque feriatur, per cujus nequissimam voluntatem culpam omnipotens Deus in alterum juste vindicavit. Ille purgatur qui opprimitur; in isto reatus augetur, qui opprimit, ut vel de profundo nequitiae quandoque ad poenitentiam redeat, vel non revertens tanto gravius aeterna damnatione feriatur, quanto diu est in sua iniquitate toleratus. Cum illo ergo misericorditer agitur ut peccatum finiat, cum isto districte ut multiplicet, nisi ad poenitentiam recurrat. In illo mala purgantur dum vim sustinet, in isto cumulantur dum facit. Omnipotens itaque Deus quod fieri prohibet justum est ut fieri sinat, ut unde nunc exspectat, et non conversos diu tolerat, quandoque inde plus feriat. Bene ergo dicitur: Abundant tabernacula praedonum, et audacter provocant Deum, cum ipse dederit omnia in manibus eorum, quia quod iniqui tollunt, eis hoc ipse dat, qui illis ad rapinam posset obsistere, si misereri voluisset. 4. Praedones sunt qui de donis a Deo sibi collatis superbiunt. — Quod tamen intelligi de rebus quoque spiritalibus potest. Nam plerumque nonnulli doctrinae dona percipiunt, sed ex eisdem donis intumescunt, et magni prae caeteris videri volunt. Atque omnipotentem Deum provocare est de ejus donis inter proximos superbire. Qui etiam praedones non immerito vocantur, quia dum loquuntur quae non faciunt, in usum locutionis suae verba justorum tollunt. Sed quia haec ipsa verba superna eis gratia tribuit, quorum tamen vitam in pravis moribus relinquit, per semetipsos quidem praedones sunt, sed tamen bona quae habent divinitus acceperunt. Sequitur: VERS. 7 et 8. — Nimirum

interroga jumenta, et docebunt te; volatilia coeli et indicabunt tibi. Loquere terrae, et respondebit tibi, et narrabunt pisces maris.

CAPUT III.

368 5. Quid per jumenta et coeli volatilia, quid per terram et pisces maris significetur. — Quid per jumenta, nisi sensu pigriores, quid per coeli volatilia nisi summa atque sublimia sapientes intelligere debemus? De jumentis quippe, id est sensu pigrioribus, scriptum est: Animalia tua habitabunt in ea (Psal. LXVII, 11). Et quia sublimia sapientes, in verbis nostri Redemptoris evolant, scriptum est: Ita ut volucres coeli veniant, et habitent in ramis ejus (Matth. XIII, 32). Quid vero per terram, nisi terrena sapientes? Unde et primo homini coelestia deserenti dictum est, Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Quid per pisces maris nisi curiosos hujus saeculi debemus accipere? De quibus Psalmista ait: Pisces maris, qui perambulant semitas maris (Psal. VIII, 9). Qui in magnis rerum inquisitionibus quasi in abditis fluctibus latent. Quid autem cuncta haec inquisita doceant, adjungit, dicens:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 9. — Quis ignorat quod omnia haec manus Domini fecerit? 6. Deum omnium creatorem cuncta praedicant. — Ac si aperte dicat: Sive sensu tardiores, seu sublimia sapientes, sive terrenis actibus deditos, seu hujus mundi occupatos inquisitionibus requiras, cuncta haec creatorem omnium Deum fatentur, et de potestate ejus concorditer sentiunt, quamvis sub ea non concorditer vivant. Quod enim justus quisque etiam vivendo loquitur, hoc injustus plerumque de Deo vel sola voce compellitur fateri; fitque ut mali, auctori omnium, cui operibus resistunt, attestatione famulentur, quia quem impugnare moribus ausi sunt, creatorem omnium negare non possunt. Quod tamen intelligi etiam juxta solam speciem litterae utiliter potest, quia omnis

respecta creatura quasi dat vocem attestationis propriae, ipsam quam habet speciem suam. Jumenta, vel volatilia, terram, vel pisces requirimus, dum consideramus quae nobis concorditer respondent, quod cuncta Dominus fecerit; quia dum nostris oculis suas species ingerunt, se a semetipsis non esse testantur. Eo ipso enim quod creata sunt, per ostensam speciem creatori suo quasi vocem confessionis reddunt, qui quia omnia condidit, qualiter etiam debeant administrari disposuit. Unde subditur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 10. — In cujus manu anima omnis viventis, et spiritus universae carnis hominis. 7. Qui praestitit esse quod non erat, providit qualiter sit quod jam existit. Spiritus hominis duobus modis intelligitur. — Per manum quippe potestas exprimitur. Anima igitur omnis viventis, et spiritus universae carnis hominis, in ejus potestate est a quo est; ut ipse provideat qualiter sit, qui praestitit esse quod non fuit. Potest vero per animam omnis viventis jumentorum vita signari. Omnipotens autem Deus jumentorum animam usque ad corporeos sensus vivificat, hominum vero spiritum usque ad spiritalem intellectum tendit. In ejus ergo manu est anima omnis viventis, et spiritus universae carnis hominis, dum et in illo hoc praestat animae ut vivificet carnem, et in isto ad hoc vivificat animam, ut ad intelligendam perveniat aeternitatem. Sciendum vero est quia in sacro eloquio spiritus hominis duobus modis poni consuevit. Aliquando namque spiritus pro anima, aliquando pro effectu spiritali ponitur. Pro anima namque spiritus dicitur, sicut de nostro ipso capite scriptum est: Inclinato capite tradidit spiritum (Joan. XIX, 30). Si enim aliud spiritum quam animam evangelista diceret, exeunte utique spiritu, 369 anima remansisset. Pro effectu quoque spiritali spiritus dicitur, sicut scriptum est: Qui facit angelos suos spiritus, et ministros suos ignem urentem (Psal. CIII, 4). Angeli quippe, id est nuntii, in sacro eloquio nonnunquam praedicatores vocantur, sicut per prophetam

dicitur: Labia sacerdotis custodiunt scientiam, et legem requirunt ex ore ejus, quia angelus Domini exercituum est (Mal. II, 7). Omnipotens ergo Deus angelos suos spiritus facit, quia praedicatores suos spiritales efficit. Hoc autem loco si anima omnis viventis ipsa corporis vita signatur, spiritu universae carnis hominis effectus intelligentiae spiritalis exprimitur. Sequitur:

CAPUT VI.

VERS. 11. — Nonne auris verba dijudicat, et fauces comedentis saporem? 8. Unius ejusdemque sapientiae quam diversa dona diversique inhabitationis modi. — Pene nullum latet quod quinque sensus corporis nostri, videlicet visus, auditus, gustus, odoratus et tactus, in omne quod sentiunt atque discernunt, virtutem discretionis et sensus a cerebro trahunt. Et cum unus sit judex sensus cerebri qui intrinsecus praesidet, per meatus tamen proprios sensus quinque discernit, Deo mira operante, ut neque oculus audiat, neque auris videat, neque os olfaciat, neque nares gustent, neque manus odorentur. Et cum per unum sensum cerebri omnia disponantur, quilibet tamen horum sensus aliud facere non potest, praeter id quod ex dispositione conditoris accepit. Ex istis ergo corporalibus et exterioribus, interiora et spiritalia colligenda sunt, ut per id quod in nobis publicum est transire debeamus ad secretum quod in nobis est et nosmetipsos latet. Intuendum quippe est quia cum una sit sapientia, alium minus, alium magis inhabitat; alii hoc, alii illud praestat, et, quasi cerebri more, nobismetipsis velut quibusdam sensibus utitur, ut quamvis ipsa sibimet nunquam sit dissimilis, per nos tamen diversa et dissimilia semper operetur, quatenus iste sapientiae, ille scientiae donum percipiat; iste genera linguarum, ille gratiam curationum habeat. 9. Verba sapientiae reprobi solum audiunt, electi etiam gustant. — Sed in his verbis beatus Job, quibus ait: Auris verba dijudicat, et fauces comedentis, saporem, etiam de electis ac

reprobis aliquid videtur innuere, quia verba sapientiae, quae reprobi audiunt, electi non solum audiunt, sed etiam gustant, ut eis in corde sapiat quod reproborum non mentibus, sed solummodo auribus sonat. Aliud namque est nominatum cibum audire solummodo, aliud vero etiam gustare. Electi itaque cibum sapientiae sic audiunt, ut degustent, quia hoc quod audiunt eis per amorem medullitus sapit. Reproborum vero scientia usque ad cognitionem sonitus tenditur, ut quidem virtutes audiant, sed tamen corde frigido qualiter sapiant ignorent. Quibus videlicet verbis beatus Job amicorum suorum imperitiam, et eorum qui de doctrina sapientiae inflantur arrogantiam reprobat, quia aliud est de Deo aliquid scire, aliud vero hoc quod cognoscitur fauce intelligentiae gustare. Recte ergo dicitur: Nonne auris verba dijudicat, et fauces comedentis, saporem? Ac si aperte arrogantibus diceretur: Doctrinae verba, quae vobis usque ad aurem veniunt, mihi etiam per saporem intimum intelligentiae fauces tangunt. Quia vero infirma aetas, etiam cum recte sapit, ad praedicandum non debet incaute prosilire, recte subditur:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 12. — 370 In antiquis est sapientia, et in multo tempore prudentia. 10. Sapientia per vivendi usum et experientiam confirmatur. — Illa enim dicta in sapientiae radice solidata sunt, quae per vivendi usum etiam actuum experimento convalescunt. Sed quia multis et longior vita tribuitur, et sapientiae gratia non confertur, recte adhuc in cujus judicio ipsa dona pendeant demonstratur, dum subditur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 13. — Apud ipsum est sapientia et fortitudo; ipse habet consilium et intelligentiam. 11. Christus Dei sapientia et fortitudo. — Haec non incongrue de Unigenito summi Patris accipimus, ut ipsum esse Dei

sapientiam et fortitudinem sentiamus. Nam Paulus quoque nostro intellectui attestatur, dicens: Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam (I Cor. I, 24); qui apud ipsum semper est, quia in principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Joan. I, 1). Habet autem Deus consilium et intelligentiam: consilium videlicet, quia disponit sua; intelligentiam, quia cognoscit nostra. Potest quoque consilii nomine ipsa occulti judicii mora signari, ut quod aliquando tardius delinquentes percutit, non quia iniquorum culpa non conspicitur, sed ut damnationis eorum sententia, quae pro agenda poenitentia differtur, quasi tarda ex consilio prodire videatur. Quod ergo foris quandoque aperta sententia indicat, hoc apud omnipotentem Dominum ante saecula in consilio latebat. Sequitur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 14. — Si destruxerit, nemo est qui aedificet; si incluserit hominem, nullus est qui aperiat. 12. Deus humanam mentem destruit ab ea recedendo. Qui male agit conscientiam sibi carcerem facit. — Omnipotens Deus humanum cor destruit cum relinquit, aedificat dum replet. Neque enim humanam mentem debellando destruit, sed recedendo, quia ad perditionem suam sufficit sibi dimissa. Unde plerumque fit ut cum audientis cor exigentibus culpis omnipotentis Dei gratia non repletur, incassum exterius a praedicatore moneatur, quia mutum est os omne quod loquitur, si ille interius in corde non clamet, qui aspirat verba quae audiuntur. Hinc Propheta ait: Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum, in vanum laborant qui aedificant eam (Psal. CXXVI, 1). Hinc Salomon dicit: Considera opera Dei quod nemo possit corrigere quem ille despexerit (Eccle. VII, 14). Nec mirum si a corde reprobo praedicator minime auditur, dum nonnunquam ipse quoque Dominus in his quae loquitur resistentium moribus impugnatur. Hinc est enim quod Cain et divina voce admoneri potuit, et mutari non potuit, quia exigente culpa malitiae, jam intus Deus cor reliquerat, cui foris

ad testimonium verba faciebat. Bene autem subditur: Si incluserit hominem, nullus est qui aperiat. Quia omnis homo per id quod male agit, quid sibi aliud quam conscientiae suae carcerem facit, ut hunc animi reatus premat, etiamsi nemo exterius accuset? Qui cum, judicante Deo, in malitiae suae caecitate relinquitur, quasi intra semetipsum clauditur, ne evadendi locum inveniat, quem invenire minime meretur. Nam saepe nonnulli a pravis actibus exire cupiunt; sed quia eorumdem actuum pondere premuntur, in malae consuetudinis carcere inclusi, a semetipsis exire non possunt. Et quidam culpas proprias punire cupientes, hoc quod recte se agere aestimant, in graviores culpas vertunt; fitque modo miserabili ut quod exitum putant, hoc inclusionem inveniant. Sic videlicet reprobus Judas (Matth. XXVII, 5), cum mortem sibi contra peccatum intulit. 371 ad aeternae mortis supplicia pervenit, et pejus de peccato poenituit quam peccavit. 13. Vocanti Deo nemo resistit, relinquenti obviat nemo. — Dicatur ergo: Si incluserit hominem, nullus est qui aperiat, quia sicut nemo obsistit largitati vocantis, ita nullus obviat justitiae relinquentis. Includere itaque Dei est clausis non aperire. Unde et ad Moysen dicitur de Pharaone: Ego obdurabo cor ejus (Exod. IV, 21; VII, 3). Obdurare quippe per justitiam dicitur Deus, quando cor reprobum per gratiam non emollit. Recludit itaque hominem quem in suorum operum tenebris relinquit. Quasi enim aperire hanc inclusionem Isaac primogenito filio voluit, cum hunc fratri praeponere benedicendo conatus est (Genes. XXVII, 5). Sed filium quem pater voluit Dominus reprobavit, et quem Dominus voluit pater etiam nolendo benedixit (Ibid., XXV, 34), ut qui jam primogenita fratri pro esca vendiderat primogenitorum benedictionem non acciperet, quam ex cupidine gulae reliquisset: qui terrena ambiens, fugitiva sequens, haereditare cupiens benedictionem, reprobatus est. Non enim invenit poenitentiae locum, quanquam cum lacrymis inquisisset eam, quia videlicet fructum non habent lamenta, quae student cum gemitu desiderare peritura. Aperire itaque Isaac nec filio potuit,

quem Deus omnipotens justo judicio in suae carcere malitiae inclusit. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 15. — Si continuerit aquas, omnia siccabuntur; si emiserit eas, subvertent terram. 14. Subtracta praedicatione aut gratia, cor arescit. — Si aqua scientia praedicationis accipitur, sicut scriptum est: Aqua profunda, verba ex ore viri et torrens redundans fons sapientiae (Prov. XVIII, 4), cum aqua continetur, cuncta siccantur; quia si scientia praedicatorum subtrahitur, eorum qui viridescere in spe aeterna poterant, corda protinus arefiunt; ut in desperata siccitate remaneant, dum, fugitiva diligentes, nesciunt sperare mansura. Sin vero aquae nomine sancti Spiritus gratia designatur, sicut Veritatis voce in Evangelio dicitur: Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae (Joan. VII, 38, 39); ubi statim evangelista subjunxit: Hoc autem dixit de Spiritu, quem accepturi erant credentes in eum; congruus in his sermonibus intellectus patet, quibus ait: Si continuerit aquas, omnia siccabuntur, quia si sancti Spiritus gratia ab audientis mente subtrahitur, arescit protinus intellectus, qui jam per spem viridescere in audiente videbatur. Quod autem non aquam, sed aquas memorat, pluralitatis appellatione, ad septiformem donorum spiritalium gratiam recurrit, quia quasi tot aquis unusquisque infunditur, quot donis repletur. De quibus apte subjungitur: Si emiserit eas, subvertent terram. 15. Afflante gratia, cor terrena sapiens subvertitur et mutatur. — Quid enim terra, nisi peccator accipitur, cui per sententiam dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19)? Manet itaque terra immobilis, cum praeceptis dominicis peccator obedire contemnit; cum cervicem superbiae erigit, atque a veritatis lumine oculos mentis claudit. Sed quia scriptum est: Pedes ejus steterunt, et mota est terra (Habac. III, 6, sec. LXX), quia cum veritas in corde figitur, mentis immobilitas agitatur, si sancti Spiritus gratia superno

munere juxta vocem praedicantis infunditur, statim terra subvertitur, quia peccatricis mentis duritia ab immobilitatis suae obstinatione 372 permutatur, ut tantum se postmodum praeceptis dominicis flendo subjiciat, quantum superbiendo prius contra Dominum cervicem cordis erigebat. Videas namque quod terra cordis humani, aqua divini muneris infusa, post libenter injurias toleret, quas prius vehementer irrogabat; post etiam sua tribuat, quae prius et aliena rapiebat; post carnem abstinendo cruciet, quae prius satietate carnis per mortifera turpitudinum oblectamenta defluebat; post etiam persecutores diligat, quae prius diligere etiam se amantes nolebat. Cum igitur mens humana, divino munere infusa, contra hoc quod consueverat agere coeperit, terra subversa est, quia deorsum missa est, quae prius eminebat, et sursum elevata est facies, quae prius in profunda premebatur. 16. Quod in Paulo converso mire elucet. — Libet in hujus rei exemplo unum e multis ad medium Paulum vocare; qui cum, acceptis contra Christum epistolis, Damascum pergeret, sancti Spiritus gratia in itinere infusus, ab illa sua protinus crudelitate mutatus est; et postmodum plagas pro Christo accepit, quas veniebat inferre Christianis; et qui prius carnaliter vivens, in mortem conabatur sanctos Domini tradere, gaudet postmodum pro vita sanctorum suae carnis sacrificium immolare (I Tim. I, 13). Illae crudelitatis ejus frigidae cogitationes versae sunt in ardorem pietatis; et qui prius fuit blasphemus et persecutor, humilis post factus est piusque praedicator (Act. IX, 1). Qui lucrum maximum putavit, se in discipulis Christum occidere, jam vitam suam Christum aestimat, et mori lucrum (Philip. I, 21). Emissa ergo aqua terra subversa est, quia Pauli mens, mox ut sancti Spiritus gratiam accepit, statum suae immobilitatis atque crudelitatis immutavit. Quod contra per prophetam Dominus contra Ephraim queritur, dicens: Ephraim factus est subcinericius panis, qui non reversatur (Osee VII, 8). Panis namque subcinericius super se cinerem portans, partem mundiorem deorsum premit, partemque superiorem tanto

sordidiorem habet, quanto in ea cinerem tolerat. Mens itaque quae terrena cogitat quid super se aliud quam cineris molem portat? Sed si reversari voluerit, mundam faciem quam deorsum presserat superius reducit, cum cinerem quem portabat excusserit. Si igitur terrenarum cogitationum cinerem a mente excutimus, quasi panem subcinericium reversamus, ut illa nostra intentio jam postponi debeat, quam prius cogitationis infimae cinis premebat; et munda facies ad superiora veniat, ut recta nostra intentio mole jam terreni desiderii non prematur. Quod nequaquam agere possumus, nisi sancti Spiritus gratia perfundamur, quia videlicet omnipotens Deus si aquas emiserit, subvertent terram. Sequitur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 16. — Apud ipsum est fortitudo et sapientia. 17. In judicio reprobi prius condemnabuntur, quam electi gloria donentur. — Paulo superius dictum fuerat: Apud ipsum est sapientia et fortitudo; nunc autem dicitur: Apud ipsum est fortitudo et sapientia. Quia enim omnipotens Deus, cum pietatis suae mysterio homo factus est, prius mansuetudinis doctrinam protulit, et postmodum in judicio quantae sit fortitudinis ostendit, recte superius sapientia ante fortitudinem memoratur, cum de Patris Unigenito 373 dicitur: Apud ipsum est sapientia et fortitudo. Quia vero ad judicandum veniens in terrore suae virtutis apparebit, et repulsis reprobis, electis suis in regno perpetuo, qualiter sit sapientia Patris indicabit, recte in subsequenti sententia apud ipsum esse prius fortitudo, et post sapientia dicitur. In verbis itaque prioribus, quibus ait: Apud ipsum est sapientia et fortitudo, aperte indicat, quia hoc quod mansuetus edocuit qualiter credendum fuerit, in judicii virtute terribilis ostendet. In verbis vero subsequentibus, quibus ait: Apud ipsum est fortitudo et sapientia, luce clarius demonstrat, quod prius in judicio per virtutem reprobos destruit, et postmodum electorum mentibus aeterni regni perfecto lumine infulget. Sed quia ante extremi diem judicii

judicare quotidie occultis dispositionibus facta mortalium non desistit, ad hoc quod nunc agitur reditur, cum subditur:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 16, 17. — Ipse novit et decipientem, et eum qui decipitur. Adducit consiliarios in stultum finem et judices in stuporem. 18. Deus iniquorum dolos et scit in examine, et nescit in amore. — Cum omnis qui proximum suum decipere conatur iniquus sit, et iniquis Veritas dicat: Non novi vos, discedite a me omnes qui operamini iniquitatem (Matth. VII, 23), qualiter hoc in loco dicitur, quia Dominus decipientem novit? Sed quia scire Dei aliquando cognoscere dicitur, aliquando approbare, et scit iniquum, quia cognoscendo judicat (neque enim iniquum quempiam judicasset si nequaquam cognosceret), et tamen iniquum nescit, quia ejus facta non approbat. Et novit ergo quia deprehendit; et non novit, quia hunc in suae sapientiae specie non recognoscit: sicut de veraci quolibet viro dicitur quia falsitatem nesciat, non quia cum vel ab aliis falsum dicitur, hoc reprehendere ignorat, sed eamdem ipsam fallaciam et scit in examine, et nescit in amore, ut videlicet ipse hanc non agat, quam actam ab aliis damnat. Et fit plerumque ut nonnulli insidiis vacantes alienae vitae perversitatis suae laqueos tendant; et cum quis nesciens eisdem laqueis capi conspicitur, utrum haec divinitus videantur fortasse dubitatur; miranturque homines si haec Deus videat, cur fieri permittat; sed ipse novit decipientem et eum qui decipitur. Novit enim decipientem, quia plerumque anteriora ejus conspicit, et hunc justo judicio cadere etiam in alia peccata permittit. Novit decipientem, quia in manu suorum operum dimissum hunc ut ad pejora proruat deserit, sicut scriptum est: Qui nocet, noceat adhuc; et qui in sordibus est, sordescat adhuc (Apoc. XXII, 11). Novit quoque et eum qui decipitur, quia saepe committunt homines mala quae sciunt, et idcirco permittuntur decipi, ut cadant in mala etiam quae nesciunt. Quod tamen

deceptis aliquando ad purgationem, aliquando vero ad ultionis initium fieri solet. 19. Stultus finis eorum qui bonum non bona intentione faciunt. — Adducit autem consiliarios in stultum finem, cum etiam bonum quodlibet non bona intentione faciunt, sed ad temporalis muneris retributionem tendunt. Si enim ipse summi Patris Unigenitus, quia per hoc quod factus est homo aeterna nuntiavit, magni consilii angelus est vocatus, recte consiliarios praedicatores accipimus, qui suis auditoribus consilium vitae praebent. Sed cum praedicator quisque ideo aeterna praedicat, ut temporalia lucra consequatur, profecto in stultum finem 374 deducitur, quia illo per laborem tendit, unde per mentis rectitudinem fugere debuit. 20. Eorum qui aliis praesunt nec invigilant, stupor. — Bene autem subditur: Et judices in stuporem. Omnes enim qui examinandis aliorum moribus praesunt recte judices vocantur. Sed cum is qui praeest, subjectorum vitam nequaquam sollicite discutit, nec quem qualiter corrigat agnoscit, in stuporem judex deductus est, quia qui judicare male acta debuit, nequaquam ea quae judicanda sunt deprehendit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 18. — Balteum regum dissolvit, et praecingit fune renes eorum. 21. Deus mentis elationem peccatis carnalibus punit. — Qui membrorum suorum motus bene regere sciunt, non immerito reges vocantur. Sed cum de ipsa continentia elatione mens tangitur, plerumque omnipotens Deus ejus superbiam deserens, hanc in immunditiam operis cadere permittit. Regum itaque balteum dissolvit, quando in his qui bene regere sua membra videbantur, propter elationis culpam, castitatis in eis cingulum destruit. Quid vero in fune accipitur, nisi peccatum? Sicut per Salomonem dicitur: Iniquitates suae capiunt impium, et funibus peccatorum suorum constringitur (Prov. V, 22). Et quia in renibus carnis delectatio principatur, districtus conscientiarum judex, qui regum balteum dissolvit, fune

praecingit renes eorum, quatenus dissoluto castitatis cingulo, scilicet eorum membris delectatio peccati dominetur, ut quos in occulto superbia inquinat, quam sint detestabiles etiam in publico ostendat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 19. — Ducit sacerdotes inglorios, et optimates supplantat. 22. Qui aut curam sibi subditorum negligunt, aut aliud quam aeterna praemia requirunt, inglorii. — Magna sacerdotis gloria est rectitudo subditorum. Unde bene egregius praedicator discipulis dicit: Quae enim est nostra spes, aut gaudium, aut corona gloriae? nonne vos ante Dominum (I Thess. II, 19)? Sed cum sacerdotes vitam discipulorum negligunt, et nullum de eorum provectibus ante Dominum fructum ferunt, quid aliud quam inglorii dicuntur? quia ante districtum judicem nimirum gloriam tunc non inveniunt, quam modo in subditorum suorum moribus praedicationis studio non exquirunt. Bene autem dicitur: Et optimates supplantat, quia cum mentem regentium justo judicio deserit, haec internum retributionis praemium non requirit; et in eo supplantatur quo fallitur, ut pro aeterna gloria de principatu temporali gratuletur. Supplantantur igitur optimates, quia dum vera coelestis patriae praemia negligunt, in suis hic voluptatibus cadunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 20. — Commutans labium veracium, et doctrinam senum auferens. 23. Deus veritatis verbum facientibus tribuit, non facientibus tollit. — Cum sacerdos non agit bona quae loquitur, ei etiam sermo subtrahitur, ne loqui audeat quod non operatur, sicut per Prophetam dicitur: Peccatori autem dixit Deus: Quare tu enarras justitias meas, et assumis testamentum meum per os tuum (Psal. XLIX, 16)? Unde etiam deprecatur, dicens: Et ne auferas de ore meo verbum veritatis usquequaque (Psal. CXVIII, 43). Perpendit namque quod omnipotens Deus veritatis verbum facientibus tribuit, et non

facientibus tollit. Qui ergo hoc de ore suo non auferri petiit, quid aliud quam gratiam bonae operationis quaesivit? Ac si aperte diceret: A bono opere errare me non sinas, ne dum amitto ordinem bene vivendi, rectitudinem perdam loquendi. Et plerumque doctor qui docere audet 375 quod negligit agere, cum desierit bona loqui quae operari contempsit, docere subjectos incipit prava quae agit, ut justo omnipotentis Dei judicio, in bono jam nec linguam habeat, qui habere bonam vitam recusat, quatenus cum mens ejus terrenarum rerum amore incenditur, de terrenis rebus semper loquatur. Unde in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Ex abundantia cordis os loquitur: Bonus homo de bono thesauro profert bona, et malus homo de malo thesauro profert mala (Matth. XII, 34; Luc. VI, 45). Hinc etiam Joannes ait: Ipsi de mundo sunt, ideo de mundo loquuntur. Bene ergo dicitur: Commutans labium veracium, et doctrinam senum auferens (I Joan. IV, 5), quia hi qui prius coelestia praedicando veraces erant, dum temporalia diligentes, ad terrena corruunt, labium veracium commutatur, et senum doctrina tollitur, quia diligentes temporalia priorum suorum praecepta minime sequuntur, ut locum regiminis quasi ad fructum voluptatis teneant, non ad usum laboris. 24. Judaei Christum quem venturum dixerant, negarunt praesentem. — Quod tamen apertius de Judaeis valet intelligi, qui ante incarnationem Domini veraces fuerunt, quia hunc venturum esse crediderunt, atque nuntiaverunt; sed postquam in carne apparuit, hunc esse negaverunt. Labium itaque veracium mutatum est, quia quem venturum dixerant negaverunt praesentem. Et doctrina senum ablata est, quia nequaquam ea credendo secuti sunt quae patres suos praedixisse meminerunt. Unde etiam Elia veniente promittitur quod reducat corda filiorum ad patres eorum (Malac. IV, 6), ut doctrina senum quae nunc a Judaeorum corde ablata est tunc miserante Domino redeat, quando hoc intelligere de Domino coeperint filii quod praedicaverunt patres. Sin vero senes eosdem quoque Judaeos accipimus, qui, suadente perfidia, Veritatis verbo contraire conati sunt,

doctrina senum ablata est postquam hanc Ecclesia ex gentibus videlicet juvencula accepit, quae per Psalmistam dicit: Super seniores intellexi (Psal. CXVIII, 100). Quam quia operando tenuit, qualiter super seniores intellexerit ostendit, dum protinus subdit, dicens: Quia mandata tua exquisivi. Quia enim studuit operando implere quod didicit, accepit intelligere quod doceret. Unde adhuc apte subditur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 21. — Effundit despectionem super principes, et eos qui oppressi fuerant relevans. 25. Judaei propter infidelitatem despecti. Gentiles ob fidem a casu erecti. — Cum enim Judaeorum populus in legis mandato permaneret, et cuncta gentilitas nulla Dei praecepta cognosceret, et illi per fidem principari videbantur, et isti in profundo pressi jacuerunt per infidelitatem. Sed cum incarnationis Dominicae mysterium Judaea negavit, gentilitas credidit, et principes in despectionem ceciderunt, et hi qui oppressi in culpa perfidiae fuerant in verae fidei libertatem levati sunt. Hunc vero Israelitarum casum longe ante Jeremias intuens ait: Factus est Dominus velut inimicus, praecipitavit Israel, praecipitavit omnia moenia ejus, dissipavit munitiones ejus (Thren. II, 5). Moenia autem in urbibus pro ornamento sunt, munitiones vero in defensionem. Et alia sunt dona quae nos muniunt, alia quae ornant. Prophetica quippe doctrina, genera linguarum, curationum virtus, quasi quaedam moenia mentis sunt. Quae etsi quisque non habeat, stare munitus per fidem et justitiam 376 potest, quamvis ornatus virtutum altitudine minime esse videatur. Spes vero, fides, et charitas, non nostra moenia, sed munitiones sunt; quae si habere negligimus, hostilibus insidiis patemus. De Judaea ergo, quia prophetiam atque doctrinam, vel miraculorum signa abstulit, moenia praecipitavit. Quia vero spem, fidem atque charitatem propter ejus duritiam auferri permisit, munitiones ejus dissipare studuit. Rectus vero ordo servatus est, ut prius moenia, et post

munitiones dissipatae dicerentur, quia cum peccatrix anima relinquitur, prius ab ea virtutum dona, quae ad manifestationem spiritus data sunt, et postmodum spei, fidei atque charitatis fundamenta destruuntur. Quae cuncta Dominus a perfidis ablata, gentilitati tribuit, atque ex his quae infidelibus abstulit mentes fidelium ornavit. Unde scriptum est: Et speciei domus dividere spolia (Psal. LXVII, 13). Cum enim virtutum spolia a Judaeis abstulit, domui cordis gentilium, quam per fidem inhabitare dignatus est, speciem donorum dedit. Quod videlicet gestum est, cum verba Dei, et Judaeorum populus ad solam litteram quae occidit acciperet, et conversa gentilitas per spiritum qui vivificat penetraret. Unde mox subditur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 22. — Qui revelat profunda de tenebris, et producit in lucem umbram mortis. 26. Christus occulta revelavit, et in lucem umbram mortis mutavit. — Cum enim quaeque mystica de occultis prophetarum verbis a credentibus agnoscuntur, quid aliud quam profunda de tenebris revelantur? Unde ipsa quoque Veritas discipulis in parabolis loquens, ait: Quod dico vobis in tenebris, dicite in lumine (Matth. X, 27). Cum enim mysticos allegoriarum nodos per explanationem solvimus, in lumine dicimus quod in tenebris audivimus. Umbra autem mortis erat legis duritia, quae unumquemque peccantem morte corporis puniri sanciebat. Sed postquam Redemptor noster asperitatem legalis sanctionis per mansuetudinem temperavit, nec jam pro culpa mortem carnis inferri constituit, sed mors spiritus quantum timenda esset indicavit, in lucem procul dubio umbram mortis produxit. Ista enim mors in qua caro separatur ab anima umbra illius mortis est in qua anima separatur a Deo. In lucem ergo umbra mortis producitur, cum, intellecta morte spiritus, mors carnis minime timetur. Quod tamen et aliter intelligi potest. Principes etenim non immerito vocantur qui magno consilii judicio suis cogitationibus semper principantur, omnesque

stultos motus potestate sapientiae comprimunt. Sed saepe contingit ut in occulto animus de ipsa sua sapientia in elationis fastum sublevetur, et sub eis vitiis corruat, de quibus se victorem fuisse gaudebat. Recte ergo dicitur: Effundit despectionem super principes. Sed quia nonnunquam hi qui in vitiis jacere videntur ad poenitentiae lamenta currunt, seque contra culpas quibus subjacebant erigunt, apte subjungitur: Et eos qui oppressi fuerant, relevans. Nonnulli enim superno illustrati munere, aspiciunt in quanta peccatorum suorum turpitudine jacent, factorum maculas lacrymis lavant, et sub se postmodum carnis suae motus deprimunt, a quibus ante premebantur. 377 27. Magna Dei dispensatione omnia hic habentur incerta. — Quod nimirum magna omnipotentis Dei dispensatione agitur, ut videlicet in hac vita omnia habeantur incerta, et nullus ex habita castitate superbiat, quia effundit despectionem super principes. Nullus ex vitiorum suorum depressione desperet, quia eos qui oppressi fuerant relevat. Et quoniam cum haec aguntur ex occultis Dei consiliis super unumquemque sententia aperta producitur, recte subjungitur: Et revelat profunda de tenebris. 28. Deus in occultis suis judiciis omnia videt nec videtur. — Profunda enim de tenebris Dominus revelat quando apertam sententiam ex occultis suis consiliis indicat, ut de unoquoque quae sentiat ostendat. Quia enim videt nunc Creator omnia, et ipse in consiliis non videtur, recte de illo per Psalmistam dicitur: Posuit tenebras latibulum suum (Psal. XVII, 12). Sed quasi de istis tenebris ad lumen exit, quando quid de uniuscujusque actibus sentiat ostendit. Et quia cum is qui peccatorum suorum pondere premebatur ad rectitudinis statum ducitur, prius ipsam mortem conspicit, in qua et deficere consueverat, et hanc considerare nesciebat, recte additur: Et producit in lucem umbram mortis. Umbra enim mortis est prava operatio, quae de imitatione antiqui hostis, quasi de corporis lineamentis exprimitur. De quo etiam sub cujusdam significatione dicitur: Et nomen illi mors (Apoc. VI, 8). Et plerumque ejus maligna cogitatio mentes hominum latet, atque per hoc

quod nescitur amplius praevalet. Umbra ergo mortis in lucem producitur dum sanctorum mentibus maligna operatio antiqui hostis, ut destrui possit, aperitur. Sequitur: VERS. 23. — Qui multiplicat gentes, et perdit eas, et subversas in integrum restituit. 29. Occultis Dei judiciis alii cadunt, alii resurgunt. — Intelligi fortasse valet quoniam gentes Dominus multiplicat et perdit, quia nascuntur quotidie morituri; et subversas in integrum restituit, quia resurgent qui fuerint mortui. Quod tamen melius accipimus si hoc qualiter in earum mente agitur sentiamus. Multiplicat enim gentes et perdit, quia eas et per fecunditatem sobolis extendit, et tamen in propria infidelitate derelinquit. Sed subversas in integrum restituit, quia quas in infidelitatis casu reliquerat quandoque ad fidei statum reducit. Quibus videlicet in mentis integritate restitutis, antiquus ille populus, qui fidelis Deo esse videbatur, reprobatus, corde repulsus est, ut sua perfidia deceptus contra ipsum post insurgeret quem ante praedicavit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 24, 25. — Qui immutat cor principum populi terrae, et decipit eos, ut frustra incedant per invium. Palpabunt quasi in tenebris, et non in luce, et errare eos faciet quasi ebrios. 30. Judaeorum obcaecatio erga Christum humana quidem patientem, sed divina ostendentem. — Cor enim principum terrae immutatum est cum in Judaea summi sacerdotes et seniores populi illi conabantur suo consilio obsistere quem prius venturum esse praedicabant. Cumque ejus nomen persequendo molirentur exstinguere, decepti sua malitia, incedere per invium frustra conabantur, quia crudelitati eorum patere via non poterat contra auctorem omnium, miracula cernebant, virtute terrebantur; sed, credere renuentes, adhuc signa quaerebant, cum dicerent: Quod ergo 378 tu facis signum, ut videamus et credamus tibi? quid operaris (Joan. VI, 30)? Bene itaque dicitur: Palpabunt quasi in tenebris, et non in luce. Qui enim inter tot aperta miracula trepidat, quasi in tenebris palpat,

quia quod tangit non videt. Omnis vero qui errat, nunc huc, nunc illuc ducitur. Et quia aliquando ostendebantur credere, cum dicerent: Nisi esset hic a Deo, non poterat facere quidquam (Joan. IX, 33); aliquando vero hunc a Deo esse negabant, cum despicientes dicerent: Nonne hic est fabri filius? nonne mater ejus dicitur Maria, et fratres ejus Jacobus, et Joseph, et Simon, et Judas, et sorores ejus nonne omnes apud nos sunt (Matth. XIII, 55)? recte subjungitur: Et errare eos faciet quasi ebrios. Videbant quippe eum et suscitare mortuos, et tamen esse mortalem. Quis non crederet Deum, quem conspiciebant suscitare mortuum? Sed rursum cum hunc mortalem conspicerent, despiciebant credere hunc esse immortalem Deum. Per hoc ergo quod omnipotens Deus talem se eorum oculis exhibuit, qui posset et divina ostendere, et humana pati, errare eos quasi ebrios fecit, ut eorum superbia, quae incarnationis ejus mysterium despicere maluit quam sequi, et contra humanitatem ejus se extolleret, et intus lucentem Deitatis ejus potentiam miraretur. Quae cuncta quia beati Job oculis praesentia per prophetiae spiritum facta sunt, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XX.

CAP. XIII. VERS. 1. — Ecce omnia. 31. Job prophetiae spiritu pollebat. — In illo enim quae secutura erant videbat assistentia, cui nec futura veniunt, nec praeterita discedunt, sed cuncta simul ante ejus oculos assistunt. Et quia ea ipsa quae ventura erant, alia esse vidit in operibus, alia in dictis, recte subjungitur, — IBID.: — Et vidit oculus meus, et audivit auris mea. Sed utilitatem dicta non habent, si intellectu carent. Unde apte subditur, — IBID.: — Et intellexi singula. Cum enim aliquid ostenditur, vel auditur, si intellectus non tribuitur, prophetia minime est. Vidit namque Pharao per somnium quae erant Aegypto ventura (Genes. XLI, 2, seq.); sed quia nequivit intelligere quod vidit, propheta non fuit. Aspexit Balthasar rex articulos manus scribentis in pariete (Dan. V, 5); sed propheta non fuit, quia

intellectum rei quam viderat non accepit. Ut igitur beatus Job prophetiae spiritum se habere testetur, non solum vidisse se et audisse sed etiam intellexisse omnia asserit. De quo intellectu quia non extollitur, subjuncta ejus verba testantur cum ait:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 2. — Secundum scientiam vestram et ego novi, nec inferior vestri sum. 32. Hoc accepto dono non intumuit. — Quibus videlicet dictis innotuit quantae humilitatis fuit qui se eis inferiorem negat, quorum longe vitam sancte vivendo transcenderat. Nam et secundum eorum scientiam se nosse confirmat, qui, sciendo coelestia, eorum terrenas cogitationes per prophetiae quoque spiritum transibat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 3. — Sed tamen ad Omnipotentem loquar, et disputare cum Deo cupio. 33. Qui Deo in prece nunc familiaris est, cum ipso postmodum judicabit. — Cum Omnipotente loquimur dum ejus misericordiam deprecamur; cum eo vero disputamus dum, nos illius justitiae conjungentes, facta nostra subtili indagatione discutimus. Vel certe 379 cum Deo disputare est eum qui hic ejus praeceptis paruit cum illo postmodum ad judicandos populos judicem venire, sicut cuncta relinquentibus praedicatoribus dicitur: Vos qui secuti estis me, in regeneratione cum sederit Filius hominis in sede majestatis suae, sedebitis et vos super duodecim thronos, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel (Matth. XIX, 28). Unde et per Isaiam Dominus dicit: Eripite injuriam accipientem, judicate pupillo, et justificate viduam, et venite, disputemus (Isai. I, 17). Rectum quippe est ut cum Deo de pupillis in judicio disputent qui ad verba Dei praesens saeculum perfecte derelinquunt. Loqui ergo ad orationem, disputare ad judicium pertinet. Vir igitur sanctus, modo ad Omnipotentem loquitur, ut cum Omnipotente postmodum disputet,

quia ille cum Deo postmodum judex venit, qui hic ei modo in prece familiaris exstiterit. Sed sancta Ecclesia, cujus saepe jam beatum Job speciem tenere praediximus (Maxime in praefat., c. 6 et seq.), non solum tunc de iniquis judicat, cum ultimi judicii dies advenerit, sed nunc etiam de cunctis prave agentibus, vel stulte sentientibus judicare non cessat. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXIII.

VERS. 4. — Prius vos ostendens fabricatores mendacii, et cultores perversorum dogmatum. 34. Haeretici fabricatores mendacii. — Quibus videlicet verbis aperte ostenditur quod amici ejus quasi ex haereticorum specie sancti viri judiciis adversantur. Liquet enim quia catholicorum figuram non teneant qui cultores perversorum dogmatum vocantur. Qua in re hoc quoque oportet intendi quod mendacii fabricatores dicuntur. Sicut enim aedificium lapidibus, ita mendacium sermonibus fabricatur. Ubi enim non dolosa locutio, sed sensus veritatis est, quasi munita moles non ex fabrica, sed ex natura consurgit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 5. — Atque utinam taceretis, ut putaremini esse sapientes. 35. Occultandae stultitiae utile silentium. — Sicut clausa janua in domo quae intus membra lateant ignoratur, sic plerumque stultus, si tacuerit, utrum sapiens sit, an stultus, absconditur, si tamen nulla alia opera prodeant quae sensum etiam tacentis loquantur. Sanctus igitur vir amicos suos aspiciens velle apparere quod non erant, eos ad tacendum admonuit, ne possent apparere quod erant. Unde et per Salomonem dicitur: Stultus, si tacuerit, sapiens putabitur (Prov. XVII, 28). Sed quia stultus, cum loquitur, per hoc quod sua infert sapientium verba pensare non sufficit, recte adhuc, postquam silentium indixit, adjungit:

CAPUT XXV.

VERS. 6. — Audite ergo correptiones meas, et judicium labiorum meorum attendite. 36. Stultis correptio necessaria. — Bene autem prius correptionem, et postmodum judicium intulit, quia nisi per correptionem prius tumor stulti deprimatur, nequaquam per intelligentiam judicium justi cognoscitur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 7. — Nunquid Deus indiget vestro mendacio, ut pro illo loquamini dolos? 37. Veritas fulciri non quaerit auxilio falsitatis. — Deus mendacio non eget, quia veritas fulciri non quaerit auxilio falsitatis. Haeretici autem, quia ea quae prave de Deo intelligunt ex veritate tueri non possunt, quasi ad probandum radium luminis umbram falsitatis requirunt. Et pro eo 380 dolos loquuntur, dum infirmas mentes in intellectu illius stulta seductione decipiunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 8. — Nunquid faciem ejus accipitis, et pro Deo judicare nitimini? 38. Stulti tanto severius de alienis judicant, quanto sua profundius ignorant. — Stulti cum prudentium facta conspiciunt, haec eis omnia reprehensibilia esse videntur; qui, suae imperitiae atque infirmitatis obliti, tanto intentius de alienis judicant, quanto sua profundius ignorant. At contra justi cum pravorum facta redarguunt, semper suae infirmitatis conscii, eos etsi exterius saeviendo, tamen interius compatiendo reprehendunt, quia illius solius est peccata hominum sine compassione discutere, qui ex naturae suae omnipotentia ignorat peccare. Quia igitur amici beati Job ita ejus facta reprehenderant ac si in se ipsi reprehensibile nihil haberent, recte nunc dicitur: Nunquid faciem ejus accipitis, et pro Deo judicare nitimini? Faciem

quippe ejus accipere est auctoritatem illius in judicio sumere; et quasi pro Deo judicare nititur, qui, cum infirma quaeque in altero reprehendit, apud se introrsus per compassionem non infirmatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 9. — Aut placebit ei quem celare nihil potest; aut decipietur, ut homo, vestris fraudulentiis? 39. Haeretici Deum, dum defendere fingunt, offendunt. — Fraudem Deo haeretici exhibent, quia ea astruunt quae nequaquam ipsi pro quo loquuntur placent; eumque dum quasi defendere nituntur offendunt, dum in adversitate ejus corruunt cui videntur ex praedicatione famulari. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur: Ut destruas inimicum et defensorem (Psal. VIII, 3). Omnis quippe haereticus omnipotenti Deo inimicus et defensor est, quia unde hunc quasi defendere nititur, inde veritati illius adversatur. Quia autem latere Deum nihil potest, hoc in eis judicat quod intus sentiunt, non quod famulari foris videntur. Quia igitur eorum fraudulentiis Deus ut homo non fallitur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

VERS. 10, 11. — Ipse vos arguet, quoniam in abscondito faciem ejus accipitis. Statim ut se commoverit, turbabit vos, et terror ejus irruet super vos. 40. Qua poena digni qui veritatem agnitam impugnant. — Hoc, quod in abscondito accipi asserit faciem Dei, duobus modis valet intelligi. Sunt namque nonnulli qui et veritatem in corde sentiunt, et tamen quae falsa sunt de Deo foris loquuntur. Ne enim vinci videantur, et cognoscunt veritatem interius, et tamen hanc exterius impugnant. Unde et nunc bene dicitur: Ipse vos arguet, quoniam in abscondito faciem ejus accipitis. Ac si aperte diceretur: Tanto magis de falsitate apud eum estis reprehensibiles, quanto et apud vosmetipsos quod verum est videtis. Et sunt nonnulli qui quando ad mentem redeunt, Dei justitiam et rectitudinem contemplantur, et orando ac

flendo contremiscunt; sed postquam contemplationis hora transierit, sic audaces ad iniquitates redeunt ac si, post dorsum ejus positi, a justitiae ejus lumine minime videantur. Hi itaque apud se in abscondito quasi corporaliter videntem accipiunt faciem Dei, quia ei et cum praesentes fiunt blandiuntur fletibus, et cum quasi a conspectu illius recedunt moribus detrahunt. Qui tanto amplius de malis suis 381 feriendi sunt, quanto et in occulto cogitationis recta Dei judicia cognoscunt. Unde et subditur: Statim ut se commoverit, turbabit vos; et terror ejus irruet super vos. 41. Justi Deum metuunt antequam iratum experiantur. — Cum sit naturae incommutabilis omnipotens Deus, in ira judicii perturbabilis non est. Sed humano verbo motus Dei dicitur ipsa rectitudinis ejus districtio, qua humana pravitas feritur. Justi autem viri ante Deum metuunt quam ejus contra eos ira moveatur; et ne commotum sentiant, tranquillum timent. At contra perversi, tunc jam feriri pertimescunt, cum feriuntur; eosque tunc terror ejus a somno sui torporis exsuscitat, cum vindicta perturbat. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Et tantum sola vexatio intellectum dabit auditui (Isai. XXVIII, 19). Cum enim de praeceptis Dei contemptis atque despectis verberari per vindictam coeperint, tunc intelligunt quod audierunt. Et Psalmista ait: Cum occideret eos, tunc inquirebant eum (Psal. LXXVII, 34). Bene itaque dicitur: Statim ut se commoverit, turbabit vos; et terror ejus irruet super vos, quia reproborum cordibus non timor requiem, sed poena timorem parit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 12. — Memoria vestra comparabitur cineri. 42. Superborum memoria cineri a vento rapto comparatur, et luto. — Omnes qui cogitatione terrena huic saeculo conformantur per omne quod agunt huic mundo relinquere sui memoriam conantur. Alii bellorum titulis, alii altis aedificiorum moenibus, alii disertis doctrinarum saecularium libris instanter

elaborant, sibique memoriae nomen aedificant. Sed cum ipsa ad finem celerius vita percurrat, quid in ea fixum stabit, quando et ipsa celeriter mobilis pertransit? Aura etenim cinerem rapit, sicut scriptum est: Non sic impii, non sic, sed tanquam pulvis, quem projicit ventus a facie terrae (Psal. I, 4). Recte ergo stultorum memoria cineri comparatur, quia illic ponitur, ubi ab aura rapiatur. Quantumlibet etenim quisque pro perficienda gloria sui nominis elaboret, memoriam suam quasi cinerem posuit, quia hanc citius ventus mortalitatis rapit. Quo contra de justo scriptum est: In memoria aeterna erit justus (Psal. CXI, 4). Eo ipso enim, quo facta sua solius Dei oculis imprimit, nomen suae memoriae in aeternitate figit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

IBID. — Et redigentur in lutum cervices vestrae. 43. Sicut per oculum visus, sic per cervicem solet superbia designari. Cervix itaque in lutum redigitur, cum superbus quisque humiliatur in morte, et elata caro tabescit in putredine. Intueamur enim qualia in sepulcris jaceant divitum cadavera, quae illa in exstincta carne sit imago mortis, quae tabes corruptionis. Et certe ipsi erant qui extollebantur honoribus, habitis rebus tumebant, despiciebant caeteros, et quasi solos se esse gaudebant; et dum non perpenderent quo tendebant, nesciebant quid erant. Sed in lutum cervix redacta est, quia despecti jacent in putredine, qui tumebant in vanitate. In lutum cervix redigitur, quia quantum carnis potentia valeat, tabes corruptionis probat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 13. — Tacete paulisper, ut loquar quodcunque mihi mens suggesserit. 44. Qui carnaliter loquuntur, ad silentium sunt revocandi. — Sensu carnis locutos indicat, quos idcirco ad silentium restringit, ut ea quae illi mens suggesserit dicat. Ac si aperte dicat: Non ego carnaliter, sed

spiritaliter loquor, quia per sensum spiritus 382 audio quae per ministerium corporis profero. Unde mox ad alta conscendit, seque in mysteriis elevat, et increpationem quam protulerat ad mystica verba permutat, dicens:

CAPUT XXXIII.

VERS. 14. — Quare lacero carnes meas dentibus meis, et animam meam porto in manibus meis? 45. Justi leviora delicta magnis cruciatibus in se puniunt. — In Scriptura sacra dentes aliquando sancti praedicatores, aliquando vero interni accipi sensus solent. De sanctis enim praedicatoribus, sponsae dictum est: Dentes tui sicut greges tonsarum, quae ascenderunt de lavacro (Cant. IV, 2). Unde et uni eorum ostensis in figura gentibus dicitur: Macta et manduca (Act. X, 13); id est, vetustatem earum contere, et in corpus Ecclesiae, videlicet in tua membra, converte. Rursum quia dentes interiores sensus accipi solent Jeremias propheta testatur, dicens: Fregit ad numerum dentes meos (Thren. III, 10). Per dentes etenim cibus frangitur, ut glutiatur. Unde non immerito in dentibus internos sensus accipimus, qui singula quae cogitant quasi mandunt et comminuunt, atque ad ventrem memoriae transmittunt. Quos propheta ad numerum fractos dicit, quia juxta mensuram uniuscujusque peccati intelligentiae caecitas generatur in sensibus, et secundum quod quisque egit exterius, in eo obstupescit quod de internis atque invisibilibus intelligere potuit. Unde recte etiam scriptum est: Omnis homo qui comederit uvam acerbam, obstupescent dentes ejus (Ezech. XVIII, 2; Jerem. XXX, 30). Quid namque uva acerba nisi peccatum est? Uva quippe acerba est fructus ante tempus. Quisquis enim praesentis vitae delectationibus satiari desiderat quasi fructus ante tempus comedere festinat. Qui igitur uvam acerbam comedit, dentes ejus obstupescunt, quia qui praesentis mundi delectatione pascitur, interni ejus sensus ligantur, ut jam spiritalia mandere, id est intelligere nequeant, quia unde in exterioribus delectati sunt, inde in intimis obstupescunt. Et dum peccato anima pascitur,

panem justitiae edere non valet, quoniam ligati dentes, ex peccati consuetudine, justum quod intus sapit edere nequaquam possunt. Hoc igitur loco, quia dentes, ut diximus, internos sensus accipimus, considerare magnopere quid agere justi soleant debemus. Qui plerumque, si qua in se quamlibet leviter carnalia esse deprehendunt, haec, in internis sensibus retractantes, vehementer in semetipsis insequuntur, afflictione se conterunt, magnisque cruciatibus vel minima in se prava dijudicant, atque haec per poenitentiam damnant. Quod idcirco agunt, ut in conspectu aeterni judicis et ipsi inveniri, in quantum est possibile, irreprehensibiles debeant, et hi qui eos sic se judicare conspiciunt emendare semetipsos a culpis culpis gravioribus inardescant. Quod videlicet beatus Job coram amicis suis temporalem gloriam tenentibus, et transeuntia bona laudantibus, fecerat; sed tamen eorum sensum ad cognoscendam utilitatem flagelli sui perducere non valebat, ut scilicet pensare possent quod non solum prospera omnipotens Deus tribueret, sed nonnunquam etiam adversa propitius irrogaret. Unde bene nunc dicit: Quare lacero carnes meas dentibus meis? Ac si aperte dicat: Cur internis sensibus carnalia, si qua fuerint in me facta, discutio, si meis spectatoribus prodesse non possum? Ubi et apte subditur: Et animam meam porto in manibus meis. 383 46. Non solum profectum suum, sed aedificationem proximi in omnibus quaerunt. — Animam in manibus portare est intentionem cordis in operatione ostendere. Habent namque hoc justi proprium ut in omne quod dicunt atque omne quod agunt, non solum provectum suum, sed etiam proximorum aedificationem quaerant. Et aliquando in quibusdam semetipsos dijudicant, ut pigros auditores ad considerandos semetipsos revocent. Aliquando bona opera ostendunt, ut spectatores eorum erubescant non imitari quod vident. Nam scriptum est: Videant vestra bona opera, et glorificent Patrem vestrum, qui est in coelis (Matth. V, 16). Qui igitur intentionem suam per opera insinuat, animam suam in manibus portat. Sed cum justus quisque nec se dijudicando, nec

bona opera ostendendo, utilitati proximorum proficit, per hoc quod egerit, ad verba doloris redit. Unde recte nunc dicitur: Quare lacero carnes meas dentibus meis, et animam meam porto in manibus meis? Id est, cur me vel districte coram hominibus dijudico, vel quid appetam in opere ostendo, si utilitati proximorum nec mala dijudicando, nec bona ostendendo proficio? Sed tamen justi etiam, cum haec dicunt, nunquam a praebendo proximis bono exemplo deficiunt. Unde adhuc coram amicis suis beatus Job virtutem patientiae exhibens et ostendens ait:

CAPUT XXXIV VERS.

15. — Etiamsi occiderit me, in ipso sperabo. 47. Justus Deum etiam in adversis laudat. — Nunquam est patientiae virtus in prosperis. Ille autem vere est patiens, qui et adversis atteritur, et tamen a spei suae rectitudine non curvatur. De reprobi namque sensu scriptum est: Et confitebitur tibi cum benefeceris ei (Psal. XLVIII, 19). In hoc itaque mens justa ab injusta discernitur, quod omnipotentis Dei laudem et inter adversa confitetur, quod non cum rebus frangitur, non cum casu gloriae exterioris cadit, sed in hoc magis qualis cum rebus fuerit demonstrat, quae et sine rebus robustior stat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

VERS. 15, 16. — Verumtamen vias meas in conspectu ejus arguam, et ipse erit salvator meus. 48. Culpis suis nescit parcere, ut Deus parcat. — Cum Paulus apostolus dicat: Si nosmetipsos dijudicaremus, non utique judicaremur (I Cor. XI, 31), eo tunc Dominus salvator invenitur, quo nunc pro timore Dei peccatum nostrum a nobismetipsis redarguitur. Unde electi quique culpis suis nunquam sciunt parcere, ut possint culparum judicem placatum invenire. Et vere eum postmodum invenire salvatorem credunt, quem districte modo judicem metuunt. Nam qui sibi nunc in culpa parcit, ei

postmodum in poena non parcitur. Dicat ergo: Verumtamen vias meas in conspectu ejus arguam. Quae vero utilitas de hac argutione sequatur adjungat: Et ipse erit salvator meus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVI.

IBID. — Non enim veniet in conspectu ejus omnis hypocrita. 49. Hypocrita Dei conspectum fugit, dum humanis oculis placere cupit. — Cum constet quod judex veniens agnos ad dexteram, haedos vero ad sinistram ponat (Matth. XXV, 33), qua nunc ratione dicitur in conspectu ejus hypocritam non esse venturum, qui scilicet si inter haedos erit, ad sinistram judicis apparebit? Sed sciendum est quod duobus modis in conspectu Domini venimus. Uno quidem, quo hic, peccata nostra subtiliter perpendentes, in ejus non conspectu punimus, et flendo dijudicamus. Nam quoties conditoris nostri 384 potentiam ad sensum reducimus, toties in conspectu illius stamus. Unde recte quoque per virum Dei Eliam dicitur: Vivit Dominus Deus Israel, in cujus conspectu sto (III Reg. XVII, 1). Alio quoque modo in conspectu Domini venimus, cum in extremo judicio ante tribunal ejus assistimus. Hypocrita igitur per examen ultimum ante conspectum judicis venit; sed quia modo culpas suas considerare ac deflere dissimulat, in conspectu Domini venire recusat. Sicut enim justi viri, cum districtionem venturi judicis contemplantur, peccata sua ad memoriam reducunt, deflent quae commiserunt, et districte se judicant, ne judicentur; ita hypocritae quo exterius hominibus placent, eo se interius aspicere negligunt; totosque se in verbis proximorum fundunt, et sanctos se esse aestimant, quia sic se haberi ab hominibus pensant. Cumque mentem per verba suae laudis sparserint, nunquam hanc ad cognitionem reducunt culpae, nunquam considerant ubi internum judicem offendant, nihil de ejus districtione metuunt, quia sic se placuisse ei sicut hominibus credunt. Qui si terrorem ejus ad mentem reducerent, hoc ipsum quod in mala intentione positi placent hominibus

plus timerent. Bene itaque dicitur: Non enim veniet in conspectu ejus omnis hypocrita, quia districtionem Dei ante oculos non ponit, dum placere humanis oculis concupiscit. Qui si, mentem suam discutiens, semetipsum in conspectu Dei poneret, profecto jam hypocrita non esset. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 17. — Audite sermonem meum, et aenigmata percipite auribus vestris. 50. Job figurata locutio. — Per hoc quod aenigmata nominat, figuratas se habere locutiones demonstrat. Unde apte quoque voce fidelis populi subditur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS. 18. — Si fuero judicatus, scio quia justus inveniar. 51. Job etiam se laudantis humilitas. Sibi iniquitatem, Deo vero purgationem suam tribuit. — Quod ab ejusdem etiam beati Job persona non discrepat, quando hoc ipse foris de se ipso loquitur, quod de illo Veritas hosti ejus interius dixerat: Vidisti servum meum Job, quod non sit ei similis super terram (Job. I, 8). Et quidem idem vir valde inferius est quod de se memorat quam quod de illo Dominus dixit. Aliud est enim justum esse, aliud est ei similem non esse. Humiliter igitur de semetipso sensit, qui dum justus sine comparatione exstitit, non se prae caeteris, sed justum tantummodo inveniri posse memoravit. Hoc tamen in ejus verbis videtur habere quaestionis, quod qui superius dixit: Vias meas in conspectu ejus arguam (Vers. 15); et inferius dicit: Consumere me vis peccatis adolescentiae meae; et peccata sua subtiliter agnoscens, adhuc longe inferius adjungit: Signasti quasi in sacculo delicta mea; nunc ait: Si fuero judicatus, scio quia justus inveniar. Neque enim simul convenire queunt peccatum et justitia. Sed sanctus vir sibi iniquitatem tribuens, et omnipotenti Domino purgationem suam, et peccatorem se cognoscit ex se, et justum se factum non ignorat ex munere.

Qui in recto quoque opere positus ex abundanti gratia meruit flagella sustinere. Jamque se in judicio justum inveniri gaudet, qui se ante judicium percussum vidit. Unde et cum longe post dicat: Signasti quasi in sacculo delicta mea, statim subdit: IBID. — 385 Sed curasti iniquitatem meam. Qui ergo justum inveniri se in judicio memorat, nequaquam se juste flagellatum negat; quamvis flagello ejus Dominus non peccata studuit tergere, sed merita augere. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIX.

VERS. 19. — Quis est qui judicetur mecum? veniat. 52. Nullus peccati cogitationis expers esse potest. — Sancti viri ita se in operibus suis, Deo auctore, custodiunt, ut omnino unde accusentur exterius non inveniatur; interius vero in cogitationibus suis tanta se cautela circumspiciunt, ut, si fieri valeat, semper irreprehensibiles interni judicis oculis assistant. Sed quantum agere possunt, ne exterius labantur in opere, tantum interius agere nequaquam possunt, ut nunquam labantur in cogitatione. Humana enim conscientia eo ipso quo ab intimis recedit, semper in lubrico est. Unde fit ut etiam sancti viri frequenter labantur in corde. Beatus ergo Job, tam ex voce sua quam ex voce electorum loquens, dicat: Quis est qui judicetur mecum? veniat. Quia enim in exterioribus actibus unde reprehendatur non habet, libere accusatorem quaerit. Quia vero etiam justorum corda semetipsa nonnunquam de stulta cogitatione reprehendunt. propter hoc fortasse subditur:

CAPUT XL.

IBID. — Quare tacens consumor? 53. Cujus in occulto agenda est poenitentia. — Tacens enim consumitur qui, de stulta se cogitatione reprehendens, apud semetipsum dente conscientiae mordetur. Ac si aperte dicat: Sicut vixi ut accusatorem exterius nullum timerem, utinam sic

vixissem ut intra memetipsum accusatricem conscientiam non haberem! Tacens enim consumitur, qui intus in se invenit unde uratur. Sequitur: VERS. 20. — Duo tantum ne facias mihi, et tunc a facie tua non abscondar. 54. A Dei animadversione nemo tutus. — Hoc loco quid Dei faciem nisi animadversionem debemus accipere, in qua dum peccata respicit punit? A qua videlicet nullus etiam justus absconditur, si duo quae postulat non amoveantur; de quibus subdit:

CAPUT XLI.

VERS. 24. — Manum tuam longe fac a me, et formido tua non me terreat. 55. Sancti ante Christum illam legem cupiebant, in qua non timore servirent, sed amore. — In quibus videlicet duobus, quid aliud per prophetiae vocem quam tempus gratiae et redemptionis inquirit? Lex namque sub percussione ultionis populum tenuit, ut quisquis sub illa peccaret protinus morte puniretur. Nec plebs Israelitica ex amore Domino, sed ex timore, serviebat. Nunquam vero impleri justitia per timorem potest, quia, juxta Joannis vocem: Perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem (I Joan. IV, 18). Et Paulus quoque adoptionis filios consolatur, dicens: Non accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore, sed accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus, Abba, pater (Rom. VIII, 15). Ex voce igitur generis humani, legalis percussionis duritiam transire concupiscens, atque a formidine pervenire ad dilectionem appetens, quae duo a se omnipotens Deus longe faciat exorat, dicens: Manum tuam longe fac a me, et formido tua non me terreat; id est, percussionis duritiam remove a me, formidinis pondus tolle, sed irradiante gratia dilectionis, spiritum securitatis infunde, quia si 386 longe a percussione et formidine non fuero, scio quia a districtione tui examinis non abscondar, quoniam in conspectu tuo justus esse non valet qui tibi non per dilectionem, sed per timorem servit. Unde et ipsam conditoris sui praesentiam quasi familiariter ac corporaliter quaerit,

ut per hanc et audiat quod ignorat, et in his audiatur quae novit. Nam protinus adjungit: VERS. 22. — Voca me, et respondebo tibi; aut certe loquar, et tu responde mihi. 56. Christus peccata quae latebant manifestavit. — Qui dum humanis oculis per assumptam carnem apparuit, sua hominibus peccata aperuit, quae et perpetrabant, et nesciebant. Unde subditur.

CAPUT XLII.

. VERS. 23. — Quantas habeo iniquitates et peccata, scelera mea et delicta ostende mihi. 57. Vocat Deus cum nos amando eligit. Ei parendo respondemus. Quid distet inter peccatum et iniquitatem, inter scelera et delicta. Quamvis vocare ac respondere intelligi et aliter possit. Vocare enim Dei est nos amando et eligendo respicere. Respondere autem nostrum est amori illius bonis operibus parere. Ubi apte additur: Aut certe loquar, et tu responde mihi. Loquimur namque cum ejus faciem per desiderium postulamus. Respondet vero Deus loquentibus cum nobis se amantibus apparet. Sed quia quisquis aeternitatis desiderio anhelat, semetipsum subtiliter reprehendens, facta sua discutit, et ne quid in illo sit in quo auctoris sui faciem offendat quaerit, recte subjungit: Quantas habeo iniquitates et peccata, scelera mea et delicta ostende mihi. Iste in hac vita justorum labor est ut semetipsos inveniant, et invenientes flendo atque corrigendo ad meliora perducant. Et quamvis inter iniquitatem atque peccatum nihil distare perhibeat Joannes apostolus, qui ait: Iniquitas peccatum est (I Joan. III, 4), ipso tamen usu loquendi plus iniquitas quam peccatum sonat, et omnis se homo libere peccatorem fatetur, iniquum vero dicere nonnunquam erubescit. Inter scelera vero et delicta hoc distat, quod scelus etiam pondus peccati transit, delictum vero pondus peccati non transit, quia et cum offerri sacrificium per legem jubetur, nimirum praecipitur sicut pro peccato, ita etiam pro delicto. Et nunquam scelus nisi in opere est, delictum vero plerumque in sola cogitatione. Unde et per

Psalmistam dicitur: Delicta quis intelligit (Psal. XVIII, 13)? Quia videlicet peccata operis tanto citius cognoscuntur, quanto exterius videntur; peccata vero cogitationis eo ad intelligendum difficilia sunt, quo invisibiliter perpetrantur. Quisquis igitur aeternitatis desiderio anxius apparere venturo judici desiderat mundus, tanto se subtilius nunc examinat, quanto nimirum cogitat, ut tunc terrori illius liber assistat, et ostendi sibi exorat ubi displicet, ut hoc in se per poenitentiam puniat, seque hic dijudicans injudicabilis fiat.
58. In eam caecitatem venimus per peccatum, ut nosmetipsos ignoremus. — Sed inter haec intueri necesse est quanta peregrinationis nostrae poena nos perculit, qui in eam caecitatem venimus, ut nos ipsos ignoremus. Perpetramus mala, nec tamen haec celerius deprehendimus vel perpetrata. Exclusa quippe mens a luce veritatis nil in se nisi tenebras invenit, et plerumque in peccati foveam pedem porrigit, et nescit. 387 Quod nimirum de sola exsilii sui caecitate patitur, quia, ab illuminatione Domini repulsa, et semetipsam videre perdidit, quae auctoris sui faciem non amavit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XLIII.

VERS. 24. — Cur faciem tuam abscondis, et arbitraris me inimicum tuum?
59. Ex poenali timore ad amorem est redeundum. — Humanum genus contemplationem lucis intimae habuit in paradiso; sed sibimetipsi placens, quo a se recessit, lumen conditoris perdidit, ejusque faciem; ad ligna paradisi fugit, quia post culpam videre metuebat quem amare consueverat. Sed ecce post culpam venit in poenam, ex poena autem ad amorem redit, quia quis fuerit culpae fructus invenit; atque illam faciem quam timuit in culpa excitatus requirit ex poena, ut jam caliginem caecitatis suae fugiat, atque hoc ipsum, quod auctorem suum non videt graviter perhorrescat. Quo videlicet desiderio compunctus sanctus vir clamat: Cur faciem tuam abscondis, et arbitraris me inimicum tuum? quia si ut amicum aspiceres,

tuae me visionis lumine non privares. Qui mobilitatem quoque cordis humani subsequens adjungit:

CAPUT XLIV.

VERS. 25. — Contra folium, quod vento rapitur, ostendis potentiam tuam, et stipulam siccam persequeris? 60. Homo quasi folium et stipula, tentationis vento movetur. — Quid est enim homo, nisi folium, qui videlicet in paradiso ab arbore cecidit? Quid est nisi folium, qui tentationis vento rapitur, et desideriorum flatibus levatur? Mens quippe humana quot tentationes patitur, quasi tot flatibus movetur. Hanc enim plerumque ira perturbat; cum recedit ira, succedit inepta laetitia. Luxuriae stimulis urgetur, aestu avaritiae longe lateque ad ambienda quae terrena sunt tenditur. Aliquando hanc superbia elevat; aliquando vero inordinatus timor in infimis deponit. Quia ergo tot tentationum flatibus elevatur et ducitur, recte folio homo comparatur. Unde bene quoque per Isaiam dicitur: Cecidimus quasi folium universi, et iniquitates nostrae quasi ventus abstulerunt nos (Isai. LXIV, 6). Quasi ventus quippe nos iniquitas abstulit, quia nullo fixos virtutis pondere in vanam elationem levavit. Bene autem post folium etiam stipula appellatur homo. Qui enim arbor fuit in conditione, folium a semetipso factus est in tentatione, sed post stipula apparuit in dejectione. Quia enim de alto cecidit, folium; quia vero per carnem terrae proximus fuit, etiam cum stare videbatur, stipula esse memoratur. Sed quia viriditatem intimi amoris perdidit, jam stipula sicca est. Consideret itaque vir sanctus, et homo quantae vilitatis sit, et Deus quantae districtionis, et dicat: Contra folium, quod vento rapitur, ostendis potentiam tuam, et stipulam siccam persequeris? Ac si aperte deploret, dicens: Cur tanta rectitudine impetis eum quem sic infirmum esse in tentatione cognoscis? Sequitur:

CAPUT XLV.

. VERS. 26. — Scribis enim contra me amaritudines. 61. Scripta de morte hominis peccatoris sententia mutari non potest. — Quia omne quod loquimur transit, quod vero scribimus manet, Deus non loqui, sed scribere amaritudines dicitur, cum diu super nos ejus flagella perdurant. Semel quippe peccanti homini dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Et saepe apparentes angeli hominibus praecepta dederunt. Moyses legislator per districtionem peccata coercuit. 388 Ipse Unigenitus summi Patris ad nos redimendos venit, moriendo mortem absorbuit; vitam perpetuam denuntiavit nobis, quam ostendit in se. Sed tamen illa quae in paradiso data est de morte carnis nostrae sententia ab ipso initio generis humani usque ad finem saeculi non mutatur. Quis est enim homo qui vivit, et non videbit mortem (Psal. LXXXVIII, 49)? Quod bene rursum Psalmista intuens ait: Tu terribilis es, et quis resistet tibi? ex tunc ira tua (Psal. LXXV, 8). Qui videlicet peccanti in paradiso homini iratus semel de mortalitate carnis nostrae sententiam fixit, quae nunc et usque ad ultimum mutari nullo modo valebit. Dicat ergo: Scribis contra me amaritudines. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XLVI.

. IBID. — Et consumere me vis peccatis adolescentiae meae. 62. Sicut corporis, ita mentis aetates sunt variae. — Ecce vir justus, quia in juventute sua se peccasse non invenit, adolescentiae facta pertimescit. Sed sciendum est quia sicut in corpore, ita sunt etiam incrementa aetatis in mente. Prima quippe hominis aetas infantia est, cum etsi innocenter vivit, nescit tamen fari innocentiam quam habet. Ac deinde pueritia sequitur, in qua jam valet dicere quod vult; cui succedit adolescentia, quae videlicet prima est aetas in operatione; quam juventus sequitur, scilicet apta fortitudini; ac postmodum senectus, etiam per tempus jam congrua maturitati. Quia igitur primam aetatem aptam bonis actibus adolescentiam diximus, et justi viri, cum in

magna mentis maturitate proficiunt, nonnunquam ad memoriam actionum suarum initium reducunt, seque tantum de suis primordiis reprehendunt, quantum ex gravitate mentis altius profecerunt, quia eo indiscretos se fuisse inveniunt, quo discretionis arcem postmodum plenius consequuntur, recte nunc per sancti viri vocem adolescentiae peccata formidantur. Quod si ad ipsam litteram est tenendum, hinc considerandum est quantum sint gravia peccata juvenum et senum, si et illud sic justi metuunt quod in infirma aetate deliquerunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVII.

VERS. 27. — Posuisti in nervo pedem meum, et observasti omnes semitas meas, et vestigia pedum meorum considerasti. 63. Divini judicii in puniendis etiam pravis cogitationibus, severitas. — In nervo Deus pedem hominis posuit, quia pravitatem illius forti districtionis suae sententia ligavit. Cujus omnes semitas observat, quia subtiliter singula ejus quaeque dijudicat. Semita etenim angustior solet esse quam via. Quia autem vias actiones, non immerito semitas ipsas actionum cogitationes accipimus. Deus itaque omnes semitas observat, quia in singulis quibusque nostris actibus etiam cogitationes pensat. Et vestigia pedum considerat, quia intentiones nostrorum operum quam recte ponantur examinat, ne et hoc quod bonum agitur non recto desiderio agatur. Possunt quoque per pedum vestigia quaedam male acta signari. Nam pes in corpore est vestigium in via. Et plerumque dum quaedam prava agimus, intuentibus hoc fratribus, exemplum malum praebemus; et, quasi inflexo extra viam pede, sequentibus vestigia distorta relinquimus, dum per nostra opera ad scandalum aliena corda provocamus. Valde autem laboriosum est custodire ne mala homo facere audeat, ne in bonis actibus per intentionem titubet, 389 et inter recta opera sinistra eum cogitatio illudat. Quae tamen cuncta omnipotens Deus subtiliter examinat, atque in judicio singula repensat. Sed

quando homo, qui carnis suae infirmitate constringitur, contra cuncta valeat subtiliter assurgere, atque inconcussa cogitatione rectitudinem tenere? Unde apte subditur:

CAPUT XLVIII.

VERS. 28. — Qui quasi putredo consumendus sum, et quasi vestimentum quod comeditur a tinea. 64. Homo putredine sibi innata consumitur. — Sicut enim vestimentum a tinea de se exorta comeditur, ita homo in semetipso habet putredinem, de qua consumatur; atque hoc est quod est unde consumatur ut non sit. Quod intelligi et aliter potest, si ex voce tentati hominis dicitur: Qui quasi putredo consumendus sum, et quasi vestimentum quod comeditur a tinea. Homo enim quasi putredo consumitur, dum carnis suae corruptione conteritur. Cui quia immunda tentatio non aliunde, sed a semetipso nascitur, more tineae carnem tentatio, quasi vestem de qua exit, consumit. In semetipso quippe habet homo unde tentetur. Quasi ergo tinea vestem consumit, quae ex veste eadem processit. Sciendum quoque quod tinea sine sonitu perforat vestimentum; et plerumque cogitatio ita transfigit mentem, ut mens ipsa non sentiat, nisi postquam fuerit ejus aculeo transfixa. Bene ergo dicitur, quod homo tanquam vestimentum a tinea consumitur, quia nonnunquam tentationum nostrarum vulnera non cognoscimus, nisi postquam ab eis confossi in mente fuerimus. Quam videlicet infirmitatem nostram bene adhuc sanctus vir considerans, adjungit:

CAPUT XLIX.

CAP. XIV, VERS. 1. — Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletur multis miseriis. 65. Homo natus ex infirmitate, quia de muliere ortus. — In sacro eloquio mulier aut pro sexu ponitur, aut pro infirmitate. Pro sexu quippe sicut scriptum est: Misit Deus filium suum, factum ex muliere, factum sub lege (Gal. IV, 4). Pro infirmitate vero, sicut per

quemdam sapientem dicitur: Melior est iniquitas viri, quam benefaciens mulier (Eccli. XLII, 14). Vir etenim fortis quilibet et discretus vocatur, mulier vero mens infirma vel indiscreta accipitur. Et saepe contingit ut etiam discretus quisque subito labatur in culpam, atque indiscretus alius et infirmus bonam exhibeat operationem. Sed is qui indiscretus atque infirmus est nonnunquam de eo quod bene egerit amplius elevatur, atque gravius in culpam cadit; discretus vero quisque etiam ex eo quod male se egisse intelligit, ad districtionis regulam arctius se reducit; et inde altius ad justitiam proficit, unde ad tempus a justitia cecidisse videbatur. Qua in re recte dicitur: Melior est iniquitas viri, quam benefaciens mulier, quia nonnunquam etiam culpa fortium occasio virtutis fit, et virtus infirmorum occasio peccati. Hoc igitur loco mulieris nomine quid nisi infirmitas designatur, cum dicitur: Homo natus de muliere? Ac si apertius dicatur: Quid in se habebit fortitudinis, qui natus est ex infirmitate? 66. Angustatur ad vitam, dilatatur ad miseriam. — Brevi vivens tempore, repletur multis miseriis. Ecce viri sancti vocibus poena hominis breviter est expressa, quia et angustatur ad vitam, et 390 dilatatur ad miseriam. Si enim subtiliter consideretur omne quod hic agitur, poena et miseria est. Ipsi etenim corruptioni carnis servire ad necessaria atque concessa miseria est, ut contra frigus vestimenta, contra famem alimenta, contra aestum frigora requirantur. Quod multa cautela custoditur salus corporis; quod etiam custodita amittitur, amissa cum gravi labore reparatur, et tamen reparata in dubio semper est; quid hoc aliud quam mortalis vitae miseria est? Quod amamus amicos, suspecti ne offendi valeant; formidamus inimicos, atque securi de eis non sumus utique quos formidamus; quod plerumque inimicis sic confidenter quasi amicis loquimur, et nonnunquam pura verba proximorum, et multum nos fortasse diligentium, quasi verba suscipimus inimicorum, et qui falli nunquam vel fallere volumus, ex cautela nostra gravius erramus; quid itaque hoc nisi humanae vitae miseria est? Quod,

amissa coelesti patria, repulsus homo delectatur exsilio, gravatur curis, et tamen cogitare dissimulat quam grave sit quia multa cogitantur; quod privatus est interno lumine, et tamen in hac vita diu vult perpeti caecitatem suam; quid hoc aliud quam de poena nostra nata miseria est? Sed quamvis diu hic stare desideret, ipso tamen cursu mortalis vitae impellitur ut egrediatur. Unde vir sanctus recte subjungit:

CAPUT L.

VERS. 2. — Qui quasi flos egreditur et conteritur, et fugit velut umbra, et nunquam in eodem statu permanet. 67. Mundus tot floribus brevi siccandis repletur, quot nominibus. — Quasi flos etenim egreditur, quia nitet in carne; sed conteritur, quia redigitur in putredinem. Quid enim sunt nati homines in mundo, nisi quidam flores in campo? Tendamus oculos cordis in hanc latitudinem mundi praesentis, et ecce quasi tot floribus quot hominibus plenus est. Vita itaque in carne, flos in feno est. Unde bene per Psalmistam dicitur: Homo, sicut fenum dies ejus; et sicut flos agri, ita florebit (Psal. CII, 15). Isaias quoque ait: Omnis caro fenum, et omnis gloria ejus sicut flos agri (Isa. XL, 6). Homo etenim more floris procedit ex occulto, et subito apparet in publico, qui statim ex publico per mortem retrahitur ad occultum. Carnis nos viriditas ostendit, sed ariditas pulveris ab aspectibus retrahit. Quasi flos apparuimus, qui non eramus; quasi flos arescimus, qui temporaliter apparebamus. 68. Homo singulis vitae momentis ad mortem pergit. Inde deficit unde proficit. — Et quia per momenta homo quotidie compellitur ad mortem, recte adjungitur: Et fugit velut umbra, et nunquam in eodem statu permanet. Sed cum sol quoque indesinenter cursum suum peragat, et nunquam se in stabilitate figat; cur cursus vitae hominis umbrae potius quam soli comparatur, nisi quia, amisso amore conditoris, calorem cordis perdidit, et in solo iniquitatis suae frigore remansit? Quia juxta Veritatis vocem: Abundabit iniquitas, et refrigescet charitas multorum

(Matth. XXIV, 12). Qui igitur in amore Dei cordis calorem non habet, nec tamen vitam quam diligit tenet, scilicet velut umbra fugit. Unde recte quoque de illo scriptum est: Quia secutus est umbram (Eccli. XXXIV). Bene autem dicitur: 391 Et nunquam in eodem statu permanet, quia dum infantia ad pueritiam, pueritia ad adolescentiam, adolescentia ad juventutem, juventus ad senectutem, senectus transit ad mortem, in cursu vitae praesentis ipsis suis augmentis ad detrimenta impellitur; et inde semper deficit, unde se proficere in spatium vitae credit. Fixum etenim statum hic habere non possumus, ubi transituri venimus: atque hoc ipsum nostrum vivere, quotidie a vita transire est. Quem videlicet lapsum primus homo ante culpam habere non potuit, quia tempora, eo stante, transibant. Sed postquam deliquit, in quodam se quasi lubrico temporalitatis posuit; et quia cibum comedit vetitum, status sui protinus invenit defectum. Quam tamen mutabilitatem non solum exterius, sed interius quoque homo patitur, dum ad meliora opera exsurgere conatur. Mens etenim mutabilitatis suae pondere ad aliud semper impellitur quam est, et nisi in statu suo arcta custodiae disciplina teneatur, semper in deteriora dilabitur. Quae enim semper stantem deseruit, statum quem habere potuit amisit. Unde nunc cum ad meliora nititur, quasi contra ictum fluminis conatur. Cum vero ab intentione ascendendi resolvitur, sine labore ad ima reducitur. Quia enim in ascensu labor est, in descensu otium, intraturos per angustam portam Dominus admonet, dicens: Contendite intrare per angustam portam (Luc. XIII, 24). Dicturus quippe angustae portae introitum, praemisit, contendite, quia nisi mentis contentio ferveat, unda mundi non vincitur, per quam anima semper ad ima revocatur. Quia igitur homo velut flos nascitur et conteritur, quia sicut umbra fugit, atque in statu suo nunquam permanet, quid in hac consideratione subjungat audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT LI.

VERS. 3. — Et dignum ducis super hujuscemodi aperire oculos tuos, et adducere eum tecum in judicium? 69. Duo extrema nomo et creator, pulvis et Deus. — Consideravit quippe superius et omnipotentis Dei potentiam, et infirmitatem suam; deduxit ante oculos se et Deum, pensavit quis cum quo ad judicium veniat. Vidit hinc hominem, inde conditorem, id est pulverem, et Deum; et recte ait: Et dignum ducis super hujuscemodi aperire oculos tuos? Omnipotenti Deo oculos aperire 392 est judicia exercere, quem feriat videre. Nam quasi clausis oculis non vult aspicere quem non vult ferire. Unde mox de ipso quoque judicio adjungitur: Et adducere eum tecum in judicium? Sed quia contemplatus est ad judicium venientem Deum, rursum considerat infirmitatem suam. Videt quia mundus per semetipsum esse non possit, qui ut esse possit, de immunditia processit, atque subjungit:

CAPUT LII.

VERS. 4. — Quis potest facere mundum de immundo conceptum semine? Nonne tu, qui solus es? 70. Homo propter vitiatam originem immunda patitur etiam nolens. — Is qui per se solus est mundus mundare praevalet immunda. Homo enim in corruptibili carne vivens habet tentationum immunditias impressas in semetipso, quia nimirum eas traxit ab origine. Ipsa quippe propter delectationem carnis ejus conceptio immunditia est. Unde et Psalmista ait: Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in delictis peperit me mater mea (Psal. L, 7). Hinc est ergo quod plerumque tentatur et nolens. Hinc est quod immunda quaedam in mente patitur, quamvis ex judicio reluctetur, quia conceptus de immunditia, dum ad munditiam tendit, hoc conatur vincere quod est. Quisquis autem occultae tentationis motus atque immunditiam cogitationis evicerit, nequaquam sibi suam munditiam tribuat, quia de immundo conceptum semine nullus facere mundum potest, nisi is qui mundus per semetipsum solus est. Qui ergo jam ad locum munditiae mente pervenit, conceptionis suae viam respiciat, per

quam venit, atque inde colligat quia ex sua virtute non habet munditiam vivendi, cui de immunditia factum est initium subsistendi. Potest vero hoc in loco intelligi, quia beatus Job incarnationem Redemptoris intuitus, solum vidit in mundo hominem de immundo semine non esse conceptum, qui sic in mundum venit ex Virgine, ut nihil haberet de immunda conceptione. Neque enim ex viro et femina, sed ex sancto Spiritu et Maria virgine processit. Solus ergo in carne sua vere mundus exstitit, qui delectatione carnis tangi non potuit, quia nec per carnalem huc delectationem venit.

LIBER DUODECIMUS.

In quo, exposito capite XIV libri Job, a versu quinto, caput XV ex integro plerumque moraliter explicatur. Mos justorum est tanto sollicitius praesentem vitam quam sit fugitiva cogitare, quanto studiosius noverint coelestis patriae bona aeterna perpendere. Ex his enim quae manentia intus aspiciunt, foris fugam rerum labentium subtilius attendunt. Unde beatus Job, cum de lapsu humani temporis sententiam protulisset, dicens: Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore. Et rursum: Et fugit velut umbra, et nunquam in eodem statu permanet, adhuc de brevitate vitae ejus adjungit:

CAPUT PRIMUM.

CAP. XIV, VERS. 5. — Breves dies hominis sunt, numerus mensium ejus apud te est. 1. Quod tanta velocitate transcurrit velut non est. — Hoc etenim apud nos velut non esse considerat, quod tanta velocitate transcurrit. Quia vero apud omnipotentem Deum etiam labentia stant, apud eum esse numerum nostrorum mensium perhibet. Vel certe in diebus brevitas temporis, in mensibus vero quasi multiplicata dierum spatia designantur. Nobis ergo breves dies sunt. Sed quia vita nostra post tenditur, apud Deum numerus nostrorum mensium esse memoratur. Unde et per Salomonem dicitur: Longitudo dierum in dextera ejus. Sequitur:

CAPUT II.

IBID. — Constituisti terminos ejus, qui praeteriri non poterunt. 393 2. Nulla fiunt hominibus sine Dei consilio, etsi occulto. Nulla quae in hoc mundo hominibus fiunt absque omnipotentis Dei occulto consilio veniunt. Nam cuncta Deus secutura praesciens, ante saecula decrevit qualiter per saecula disponantur. Statutum quippe jam homini est, vel quantum hunc mundi prosperitas sequatur, vel quantum adversitas feriat, ne electos ejus aut

immoderata prosperitas elevet, aut nimia adversitas gravet. Statutum quoque est quantum in ipsa vita mortali temporaliter vivat. Nam etsi annos quindecim Ezechiae regi ad vitam addidit omnipotens Deus (IV Reg. XX, 1), cum eum mori permisit, tunc eum praescivit esse moriturum. Qua in re quaestio oritur, quomodo ei per prophetam dicatur: Dispone domui tuae, quia morieris tu, et non vives; cui cum mortis sententia dicta est, protinus ad ejus lacrymas est vita addita. Sed per prophetam Dominus dixit quo tempore mori ipse merebatur; per largitatem vero misericordiae illo eum tempore ad mortem distulit, quod ante saecula ipse praescivit. Nec propheta igitur fallax, quia tempus mortis innotuit, quo vir ille mori merebatur; nec dominica statuta convulsa sunt, quia ut ex largitate Dei anni vitae crescerent, hoc quoque ante saecula praefixum fuit; atque spatium vitae quod inopinate foris est additum, sine augmento praescientiae fuit intus statutum. Bene ergo dicitur: Constituisti terminos ejus, qui praeteriri non poterunt. 3. Deus profectibus spiritualibus modum ponit. — Quod tamen intelligi etiam juxta spiritum valet, quia nonnunquam in virtutibus proficere conamur, et quaedam dona percipimus, a quibusdam vero repulsi in imis jacemus. Nemo enim est qui tantum virtutis apprehendat quantum desiderat, quia omnipotens Deus, interiora discernens, ipsis spiritalibus provectibus modum ponit, ut ex hoc homo quod apprehendere conatur, et non valet, in illis se non elevet quae valet. Unde ille quoque egregius praedicator, qui raptus ad tertium coelum fuerat, paradisi arcana penetraverat, esse post revelationem tranquillus atque intentatus non valebat (II Cor. XII, 3). Sed quia omnipotens Deus terminos constituit homini, qui praeteriri non poterunt, et elevavit hunc ad cognoscenda sublimia, et reduxit iterum ad infirma toleranda, ut modi sui mensuram aspiciens, dum securitatem comprehendere conaretur, et non posset, ne per elationem extra se iret, per humilitatem cogeretur intra suos semper terminos redire. Sequitur:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 6. — Recede paululum ab eo, ut quiescat, donec optata veniat, sicut mercenarii dies ejus. 4. Sancti vitae praesentis taedio ad aeternam requiem semper anhelant. — Hoc loco recede dicitur vim flagelli amove. Quis enim valet Deo recedente quiescere, cum solus ipse sit requies, et a quo quisque quanto longe fuerit, fit tanto et inquietus? Itaque sic recede ab eo, dicitur, ut intelligas feriendo. Apte enim subjungitur: Donec optata veniat, sicut mercenarii dies ejus. Mercenarius quanto longe est a fine operis, tanto et retributione mercedis. Ita vir quisque sanctus in hac vita positus, dum longe se esse ab exitu vitae praesentis conspicit, longe se esse ab aeternis gaudiis gemit. Quid est ergo dicere: Recede paululum ab eo, ut quiescat, nisi: jam flagella vitae praesentis subtrahe, et bona aeternae quietis ostende? Unde etiam de ipsa quiete additur: Donec 394 optata veniat, sicut mercenarii dies ejus. Tunc namque homini optata sicut mercenarii dies venit, quando aeternam requiem pro recompensatione sui laboris acceperit. Quantum vero ad praesentis vitae speciem spectat, adhuc beatus Job humanum genus multis miseriis repletum quam sit despectum insinuat, quantumque ipsa insensibilia ipsum praeire videantur narrat, cum dicit:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 7-10. — Lignum habet spem; si praecisum fuerit, rursum virescit, et rami ejus pullulant. Si senuerit radix ejus in terra, et in pulvere emortuus fuerit truncus illius, ad odorem aquae germinabit, et faciet comam quasi cum primum plantatum est. Homo vero cum mortuus fuerit, et nudatus atque consumptus, ubi, quaeso, est? 5. Ligni nomine multa significantur: Crux, vir justus, incarnata Dei Sapientia. Ex percussione justi ad amorem coelestis patriae accenduntur. — Sed quia hoc juxta litteram patet, debemus sensum ad interiora reducere, et qualiter haec juxta spiritum intelligi debeant perscrutari. In Scriptura etenim sacra ligni nomine aliquando crux, aliquando vir justus, aut etiam injustus, aliquando vero incarnata Dei

sapientia figuratur. Crux etenim ligno signatur, cum dicitur: Mittamus lignum in panem ejus (Jerem. XI, 19). Lignum quippe in panem mittere est Dominico corpori crucem adhibere. Rursum ligni nomine vir justus aut etiam injustus exprimitur, sicut per prophetam Dominus dicit: Ego Dominus humiliavi lignum sublime, et exaltavi lignum humile (Ezech. XVII, 24). Quia juxta ejusdem Veritatis vocem: Omnis qui se exaltat humiliabitur, et qui se humiliat exaltabitur (Luc. XIV, 11). Salomon quoque ait: Si ceciderit lignum ad Austrum, aut ad Aquilonem, in quocunque loco ceciderit, ibi erit (Eccle. XI, 3). In die etenim mortis suae justus ad Austrum cadit, peccator ad Aquilonem, quia et justus per fervorem spiritus ad gaudia ducitur, et peccator cum apostata angelo, qui dixit: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis (Isai. XIV, 13), in frigido suo corde reprobatur. Rursum per lignum incarnata Dei Sapientia figuratur, sicut de ea scriptum est: Lignum vitae est his qui apprehenderint eam (Prov. III, 18); et sicut ipsa ait: Si in viridi ligno haec faciunt, in arido quid fiet (Luc. XXIII, 31)? Hoc itaque loco cum lignum praefertur homini, quid homo nisi carnalis quisque accipitur? Et quid ligni nomine nisi justi uniuscujusque vita designatur: Lignum etenim habet spem; si praecisum fuerit, rursum virescit, quia cum in morte passionis pro veritate justus afficitur, in aeternae vitae viriditate recuperatur. Et qui hic virebat per fidem, illic virescit per speciem. Et rami ejus pullulant, quia plerumque ex passione justi fideles quique ad amorem coelestis patriae multiplicantur, et viriditatem vitae spiritalis accipiunt, dum hic pro Deo fortiter egisse gratulantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 8, 9. — Si senuerit in terra radix ejus, et in pulvere emortuus fuerit truncus illius, ad odorem aquae germinabit, et faciet comam quasi cum primum plantatum est. 6. Sua morte uberes in nobis fructus gignunt justi. — Quid radix justi nisi sancta praedicatio, quia ab ipsa oritur, et in ipsa

subsistit? et quid terrae vel pulveris nomine nisi peccator accipitur? cui voce conditoris dicitur: Terra es, et in terram ibis, vel certe, sicut habet nostra translatio: Pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris (Genes. III, 19). Justi igitur radix in terra senescit, et in pulvere truncus emoritur, 395 quia apud corda pravorum ejus praedicatio despecta cunctisque viribus effeta creditur. Et in pulvere truncus emoritur, quia inter manus persequentium corpus illius exanimatur. Juxta Sapientiae etenim vocem: Visi sunt oculis insipientium mori, et aestimata est afflictio exitus illorum (Sap. III, 2). Sed iste cujus radix in terra senuit, et in pulvere truncus emortuus est, ad odorem aquae germinat, quia per afflatum sancti Spiritus in electorum cordibus exemplo sui operis germen virtutis facit. Aquae etenim appellatione nonnunquam sancti Spiritus irrigatio designari solet, sicut scriptum est: Si quis sitit, veniat ad me, et bibat. Qui autem biberit ex aqua, quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in aeternum (Joan. VII, 37; IV, 13). Sequitur: Et faciet comam quasi cum primum plantatum est. Succiso trunco comam facere, est exstincto corporaliter justo, ipso suae passionis exemplo multorum corda suscitare, et ex fide recta viriditatem veritatis ostendere. Bene autem dicitur: Quasi cum primum plantatum est. Omne quod hic a justis agitur secunda plantatio est, quia prima videlicet plantatio non in opere justorum, sed in praescientia conditoris est. Et quia cuncta quae agunt electi, sicut prius interius conspiciuntur atque disponuntur, ita postmodum exterius perficiuntur, bene dicitur: Faciet comam quasi cum primum plantatum est; id est, viriditatem suam ostendit in effectu operis, quam prius habuit in praescientia conditoris.. VERS. 10. — Homo vero cum mortuus fuerit, et nudatus atque consumptus, ubi, quaeso, est? 9. Homo peccator moritur in culpa, nudatur a justitia, consumitur in poena. — Nullus homo sine peccato est, nisi ille qui in hunc mundum non venit ex peccato. Et quia omnes in culpa ligamur, ipsa amissione justitiae morimur; concessa prius in paradiso veste innocentiae nudamur, interitu etiam carnis subsequente consumimur. Homo itaque

peccator moritur in culpa, nudatur a justitia, consumitur in poena. Hanc nuditatem peccatoris filii tegere dignatus est pater, qui eo redeunte dixit: Cito proferte stolam primam (Luc. XV, 22). Prima quippe stola est vestis innocentiae, quam homo bene conditus accepit, sed male a serpente persuasus perdidit. Contra hanc rursum nuditatem dicitur: Beatus qui vigilat, et custodit vestimenta sua, ne nudus ambulet (Apoc. XVI, 15). Vestimenta quippe custodimus cum praecepta innocentiae servamus in mente, ut cum nos judici culpa nudat, ad amissam redeuntes innocentiam poenitentia operiat. Bene autem dicitur: Ubi, quaeso, est? quia peccator homo illic stare noluit, ubi conditus fuit; hic vero, ubi cecidit, diu esse prohibetur. Patriam volens perdidit, a peregrinatione vero sua quam diligit invitus expellitur. Ubi ergo est, qui in ejus amore non est ubi verum esse est? Sequitur:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 11, 12. — Quomodo si recedant aquae de mari, et fluvius vacuefactus arescat, sic homo, cum dormierit, non resurget. 10. Mens humana aestuanti mari similis. — Mare mens hominis, et quasi fluctus maris sunt cogitationes mentis, quae aliquando per iram tumescunt, per gratiam tranquillae fiunt, per odium cum amaritudine defluunt. Sed cum homo moritur, aquae maris recedunt, quia, juxta Psamistae vocem: In illa die peribunt omnes cogitationes eorum (Psal. CXLV, 4). Et rursum de moriente scriptum est: Amor quoque et odium simul peribunt (Eccle. IX, 6). Arescit ergo fluvius vacuefactus, quia, subducta anima, vacuum remanet corpus. Quasi enim alveus fluminis vacuus est corpus exanime. Qua in re vigilanter intuendum est quia vita praesens, videlicet quousque anima moratur in corpore, mari comparatur et fluvio. Aqua enim maris amara est, fluminis dulcis. Et quia hic viventes modo quibusdam amaritudinibus afficimur, modo autem dulcedine tranquilli ac mites invenimur, praesentis

vitae decursus comparatione exprimitur maris et fluminis. 11. (Vet. VI, Rec. V.] Job resurrectionem non absolute negat, sed tantum futuram ante mundi finem. — Sed in his durum valde videtur esse quod subditur: Sic homo, cum dormierit, non resurget. Cur itaque laboramus, si in resurrectionis retributionem non tendimus? Quomodo autem dicitur: Non resurget, cum scriptum sit: Omnes quidem resurgemus, sed non omnes immutabimur (I Cor. XV, 51). Et rursum: Si in 397 hac vita tantum in Christo sperantes sumus, miserabiliores sumus omnibus hominibus (I Cor. XV, 19). Et per semetipsam Veritas dicat: Omnes qui in monumentis sunt audient vocem ejus, et procedent qui bona fecerunt in resurrectionem vitae (Joan. V, 28). Sed subjuncta sententia indicat quae discretio in praemissa lateat. Nam subditur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 12. — Donec atteratur coelum, non evigilabit, nec consurget de somno suo. 12. Liquet enim quia non resurget, scilicet donec atteratur coelum, quia nisi mundi hujus finis advenerit, humanum genus a somno mortis ad vitam non evigilabit. Non ergo quia omnino non resurgat, sed quia ante contritionem coeli, humanum genus minime resurgat, insinuat. Notandum quoque est cur postquam superius hominem mortuum dixit, inferius non mortuum, sed dormientem nominat, eumque de somno suo minime consurgere, donec coelum atteratur narrat, nisi quod patenter datur intelligi quia in comparatione ligni revirentis hominem mortuum peccatorem nominat, a vita scilicet justitiae exstinctum. Ubi autem de morte carnis loquitur, non hanc mortem, sed somnum maluit vocare, spem procul dubio resurrectionis insinuans, quia sicut citius homo a somno evigilat, ita concite ad conditoris nutum a morte corporis resurgat. Vehementer enim ab infirmis mentibus nomen mortis pertimescitur, somni autem vocabulum non timetur. Unde et Paulus discipulos admonens, dicit: Nolumus autem

ignorare vos, fratres, de dormientibus, ut non contristemini sicut et caeteri qui spem non habent. Si enim credimus quod Jesus mortuus est et resurrexit, ita et Deus eos qui dormierunt per Jesum adducet cum eo (I Thess. IV, 12). Quid est quod praedicator egregius mortem Domini mortem vocat, mortem vero servorum Domini, non mortem, sed somnum nominat, nisi quia, infirma corda audientium respiciens, medicamentum praedicationis suae mira arte componit, et illum quem jam resurrexisse noverant, eis mortuum insinuare non dubitat; eos vero qui necdum resurrexerant, ut spem resurrectionis insinuet, non mortuos, sed dormientes vocat? Non enim verebatur dicere mortuum quem auditores jam resurrexisse cognoverant, et verebatur dicere mortuos quos resurgere vix credebant. Beatus igitur Job, quia carne mortuos ad vitam rursus evigilare non dubitat, eos dormientes potius quam mortuos appellat. Sequitur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 13. — Quis mihi tribuat ut in inferno protegas me? 13. Duplex infernus, alius inferior malis cruciandis, alius superior justis usque ad adventum Christi recipiendis destinatus. — Quia ante adventum mediatoris Dei et hominis omnis homo, quamvis mundae probataeque vitae fuerit, ad inferni claustra descenderit, dubium non est, quoniam homo, qui per se cecidit, per se ad paradisi requiem redire non potuit, nisi veniret ille qui suae incarnationis mysterio ejusdem nobis paradisi iter aperiret. Unde et post culpam primi hominis ad paradisi aditum romphaea flammea posita esse memoratur (Genes. III, 24), quae et versati lis dicitur, pro eo quod quandoque veniret tempus ut etiam removeri potuisset Nec tamen ita justorum animas ad infernum dicimus descendisse, ut in locis poenalibus tenerentur. Sed esse superiora inferni loca, esse alia inferiora credenda sunt, ut et in superioribus justi requiescerent, et in inferioribus 398 injusti cruciarentur. Unde et Psalmista propter praevenientem se Dei gratiam dicit:

Eripuisti animam meam ex inferno inferiori (Psal. LXXXV, 13). Beatus igitur Job ante Mediatoris adventum ad infernum se descendere sciens, conditoris sui illic protectionem postulat, ut a locis poenalibus alienus existat, ubi, dum ad requiem ducitur, a suppliciis abscondatur. Unde subjungit:

CAPUT X.

IBID. — Et abscondas me donec pertransent furor tuus. 14. Dei furor perturbationis expers, in fine mundi consummatur. — Furor etiam omnipotentis Dei in hoc quotidie vim suae districtionis peragit, quod viventes indigne dignis suppliciis demergit. Qui furor nunc equidem transit, sed in fine pertransit, quia modo agitur, sed in mundi termino consummatur. Qui tamen iste furor, quantum ad electorum animas, in Redemptoris nostri adventu pertransiit, quia eas ab inferni claustris ad paradisi gaudia mediator Dei et hominum, dum ipse illuc pie descenderet, reduxit. Inter haec vero sciendum est quod furoris nomen Divinitati non congruit, quia naturam Dei simplicem perturbatio nulla confundit. Unde ei dicitur: Tu autem dominator virtutis cum tranquillitate judicas, et cum magna reverentia disponis nos (Sap. XII, 18). Sed quia justorum animae per Mediatoris adventum erant quandoque ab inferni locis, quamvis non poenalibus, liberandae, hoc quoque justus vir praevidet, et petendo subjungit:

CAPUT XI.

IBID. — Et constituas mihi tempus, in quo recorderis mei? 15. Christus ab inferno eduxit tantum quos sibi inhaesisse praescivit. — At ubi venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deus Filium suum, factum ex muliere, factum sub lege, ut eos qui sub lege erant redimeret (Gal. IV, 4). Hanc itaque redemptionem vir Domini praesciens, in qua erant multi etiam ex gentilitate liberandi, sicut ipse ait: Licet haec celes in cordo tuo, tamen scio quia

universorum memineris (Job. X, 13), apud omnipotentem Deum tempus sibi constitui suae recordationis petit. Hinc est enim quod in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Et ego si exaltatus fuero a terra, omnia traham ad me ipsum (Joan. XII, 32), omnia videlicet electa. Non enim ab inferno rediens Dominus electos simul et reprobos traxit, sed illa exinde omnia sustulit quae sibi inhaesisse praescivit. Unde etiam per Osee prophetam dicit: Ero mors tua, o mors, ero morsus tuus, inferne (Osee XIII, 14). Quod enim occidimus, agimus ut penitus non sit. Ex eo enim quod mordemus, partem abstrahimus, partemque relinquimus. Quia ergo in electis suis funditus Dominus occidit mortem, mors mortis exstitit. Quia vero ex inferno partem abstulit, partemque reliquit, non occidit funditus, sed momordit infernum. Dicit ergo: Ero mors tua, a mors; id est, in electis meis te funditus perimo. Ero morsus tuus, inferne, quia, sublatis eis, te ex parte transfigo. Sciens igitur beatus Job hunc adventum ad inferos Redemptoris nostri, petat quod futurum praevidit, et dicat: Et constituas mihi tempus in quo recorderis mei. Sequitur:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 14. — Putasne mortuus homo rursum vivet? 16. Nonnunquam a fortibus infirmitatis verba suscipienda. — Solent justi viri in eo quod ipsi certum ac solidum sentiunt quasi ex dubietate aliquid proferre, ut infirmorum in se verba transferant. Sed rursum per fortem sententiam infirmanti dubietate omnimodo contradicunt, quatenus per hoc quod dubie proferre cernuntur infirmis aliquatenus condescendant, et per hoc quod certam sententiam proferunt, 399 infirmorum mentes dubias ad soliditatem trahant. Quod nimirum dum faciunt exemplum nostri capitis sequuntur. Passioni quippe Dominus propinquans infirmantium in se vocem sumpsit, dicens: Pater mi, si possibile est, transeat a me calix iste (Matth. XXVI, 39), eorumque timorem, ut abstraheret, suscepit; et rursus per obedientiam vim

fortitudinis ostendens ait: Verumtamen non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu (Ibid., 39) ut cum hoc imminet quod fieri nolumus, sic per infirmitatem petamus ut non fiat, quatenus per fortitudinem parati simus ut voluntas conditoris nostri etiam contra voluntatem nostram fiat. Hoc igitur exemplo nonnunquam a fortibus infirmitatis verba suscipienda sunt, ut per eorum post praedicamenta fortia infirmorum corda gratius roborentur. Unde beatus Job, cum quasi dubitantis verba protulit, dicens: Putasne mortuus homo rursum vivet? illico sententiam suae certitudinis adjunxit, qua ait:

CAPUT XIII.

IBID. — Cunctis diebus, quibus nunc milito, exspecto donec veniat immutatio mea. 17. Job, hujus vitae cursu despecto, immutabilitatis statum requirit. — Qui itaque immutationem suam tanto desiderio exspectat, quam sit de resurrectione certus insinuat; et cursum vitae praesentis quantum despiciat innotescit, qui hunc militiam appellat. Per militiam quippe semper ad finem tenditur, et quotidie conclusionis terminus exspectatur. Cursum itaque vitae hujus despicit, et statum soliditatis requirit, qui per hoc quod mutabiliter militat, ad immutationem suam pervenire festinat. Justo quippe in hac vita ipsa sarcina suae corruptionis onerosa est. Quod vigiliae defatigant, somnus quaeritur, ut vigiliarum labor atque anxietas temperetur. Sed nonnunquam etiam somnus occidit. Fames corpus atterit, atque, ut ejus necessitas repellatur, cibi requiruntur; sed saepe et cibi gravant, qui ad repellendum debilitatis gravamen quaesiti fuerant. Gravis itaque est sarcina corruptionis, quae nisi ita gravis esset, Paulus nequaquam diceret: Vanitati creatura subjecta est, non volens, sed propter eum qui subjecit eam in spe, quia et ipsa creatura liberabitur a servitute corruptionis, in libertatem gloriae filiorum Dei. Scimus enim quod omnis creatura ingemiscit, et parturit usque adhuc (Rom. VIII, 20). Sanctus ergo vir incorruptionis statum desiderans,

dicat: Cunctis diebus, quibus nunc milito, exspecto donec veniat immutatio mea. In qua immutatione quid agatur adjungit:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 15. — Vocabis me, et ego respondebo tibi. 18. Vocanti Deo respondebimus, cum ad ejus jussum incorruptibiles resurgemus. — Respondere cuilibet dicimur cum ejus factis congrua ad vicem opera reddimus. In illa igitur commutatione vocat Dominus, et respondet homo, quia ante incorrupti claritatem, incorruptus homo ostenditur post corruptionem. Nunc etenim quousque subditi corruptioni sumus, auctori nostro minime respondemus, quia dum corruptio ab incorruptione longe est, similitudo apta nostrae responsioni non est. De illa vero immutatione scriptum est: Cum apparuerit, similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est (Joan. III, 2). Tunc ergo vocanti Deo veraciter respondebimus, quando ad summae incorruptionis jussum incorruptibiles surgemus. Et quia hoc percipere creatura ex semetipsa non valet, sed solius 400 omnipotentis Dei dono agitur ut ad tantam incorruptionis gloriam permutetur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XV.

IBID. — Operi manuum tuarum porriges dexteram. 19. Quod ex seipso homo consequi non valet. — Ac si patenter dicat: Idcirco creatura tua corruptibilis persistere ad incorruptionem potest, quia tuae potestatis manu erigitur, et tui respectus gratia, ut persistat, tenetur. Humana namque creatura, eo ipso quod creatura est, in semetipsa habet sub se defluere, sed a conditore suo homo accepit, ut et super se contemplatione rapiatur, et in seipso incorruptione teneatur. Creatura ergo ne sub se defluat, sed in incorruptione persistat, ad incommutabilitatis statum auctoris sui dextera levatur. Potest quoque dexterae nomine Filius designari: Quia omnia per

ipsum facta sunt (Joan. I, 3). Operi igitur manuum suarum porrexit omnipotens Deus dexteram suam, quia ut abjectum atque in infimis jacens ad summa erigeret genus humanum, incarnatum ad hoc unigenitum misit. Ex cujus nobis incarnatione datum est ut qui ex voluntate propria in corruptionem cecidimus, vocanti nos Deo quandoque ad incorruptionis gloriam respondere valeamus. Qua in re largitatem divinae misericordiae pensare quis valeat, quod ad tantam perducit gloriam hominem post culpam? Pensat Deus mala quae facimus, et tamen per benignitatis suae gratiam ea misericorditer relaxat. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 16. — Tu quidem gressus meos dinumerasti, sed parcis peccatis meis. 20. Culpae nostrae, ne Deus eas puniat, poenitentia castigandae. — Gressus Deus dinumerat, cum singula quaeque nostra opera propter retributionem signat. Quid enim in gressibus, nisi unaquaeque nostra actio designatur? Omnipotens itaque Deus et gressus dinumerat, et peccatis parcit, quia et subtiliter acta nostra considerat, et tamen haec poenitentibus misericorditer relaxat. Qui et duritiam in peccantibus conspicit, sed tamen hanc, praeveniente gratia, ad poenitentiam emollit. Culpas ergo dinumerat, cum nos ipsos ad singula quae fecimus, deflenda convertit. Quas misericorditer relaxat, quia eas dum nos ipsi punimus, ipse nequaquam in extremo examine judicat, Paulo attestante, qui ait: Si nosmetipsos dijudicaremus, non utique judicaremur (I Cor. XI, 31). Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 17. — Signasti quasi in sacculo delicta mea, sed curasti iniquitatem meam. 21. Peccata, nisi poenitentia diluantur, de sacculo secreti, exibunt ad publicum judicii. — Signantur quasi in sacculo delicta nostra, quia hoc

quod nos exterius agimus, nisi poenitentia interveniente diluamus, in secreto judiciorum Dei sub quadam occultatione servatur, ut quandoque etiam de sacculo secreti exeat ad publicum judicii. Unde etiam per Moysen dicitur: Nonne haec congregata sunt apud me, et signata in thesauris meis? In die ultionis reddam illis (Deut. XXXII, 34, 35). Cum vero pro malis quae fecimus disciplinae flagello atterimur, et haec per poenitentiam deflemus, iniquitatem nostram signat et curat, quia nec inulta hic deserit, nec in judicio punienda reservat. Signat igitur delicta, quia ea hic subtiliter attendit ut feriat; curat vero, quia haec per flagellum funditus relaxat. Unde iniquitatem quoque illius persecutoris sui, quem in terra 401 prostraverat, signando curavit, cum de illo ad Ananiam dixit: Vas electionis mihi est iste, ut portet nomen meum coram gentibus, et regibus, et filiis Israel. Ego enim ostendam illi, quanta eum oporteat pro nomine meo pati (Act. IX, 15). Cui enim adhuc pro transactis excessibus venturas passiones minatur, profecto hoc quod deliquerat in corde signatum tenebat. Sed procul dubio delicta ejus signando curaverat, quem Vas electionis vocabat. Vel certe peccata nostra signantur in sacculo cum mala quae fecimus sollicito semper corde pensamus. Quid namque est cor hominis, nisi sacculus Dei? Ubi dum studiose conspicimus per quanta delinquimus, peccata nostra quasi in Dei sacculo signata portamus. An non peccatum suum David signatum tenebat in sacculo, qui dicebat: Iniquitatem meam ego agnosco, et delictum meum coram me est semper (Psal. L, 5)? Et quia culpas, quas non intuendo et poenitendo cognoscimus, pius nobis conditor relaxat, recte post signata in sacculo delicta subjungitur: Sed curasti iniquitatem meam. Ac si aperte dicat: Quae modo signas ut poenitendo videam, agis procul dubio ne in retributione videantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 18, 19. — Mons cadens defluit, et saxum transfertur de loco suo. Lapides excavant aquae, et alluvione paulatim terra consumitur, et homines ergo similiter perdes. 22. Alii subitis, alii lentis ac blandis tentationibus evertuntur. — Hoc crebro agitur ut, cadentibus rupibus, saxum ad loca alia transferatur; ut aquae lapides excavent, et paulatim terra alluvionibus consumatur. Sed magna nobis intentione discutiendum est quod infertur: Et homines ergo similiter perdes. Quid est enim hoc, quod cadenti monti et saxo translato, quod excavato lapidi et per alluvionem terrae consumptae perditio humana comparatur, nisi hoc, quod patenter datur intelligi, quia duo sunt genera tentationum? Unum, quod in mente etiam justi hominis per repentinum eventum agitur, quatenus sic subito tentetur, ut hunc inopinato proventu concutiat et prosternat, casumque suum nonnisi postquam ceciderit videat. Aliud vero, quod paulatim venit in mentem, et resistentem animum lenibus suggestionibus inficit, et omnes in eo vires justitiae non nimietate sua, sed assiduitate consumit. Quia ergo alia est tentatio quae justos plerumque subita invasione prosternit, dicatur: Mons cadens defluit, et saxum transfertur de loco suo; id est, mens sancta, cujus locus justitia fuerat, impulsu subito transfertur ad culpam. Rursum quia alia est tentatio, quae se cordi hominis leniter infundit, omnemque duritiam fortitudinis corrumpit atque consumit, dicatur: Lapides excavant aquae, quia videlicet duritiam mentis absorbent assidua et mollia blandimenta libidinis, et lentum atque subtile vitium corrumpit durum et forte propositum mentis. Unde subditur: Et alluvione paulatim terra consumitur. [Vet. XII.] Sicut enim influente aqua paulatim terra consumitur, sic leniter subrepente vitio mens etiam fortis absorbetur. Unde bene subjungitur Et homines ergo similiter perdes. Id est, quia cum tentationem justo judicio ejus menti qui stare in alto cernitur repente dominari permittis, cadere ac defluere montem facis; et cum voluntas ad vitium commutatur, quasi ad locum alium transfertur saxum; 402 cum vero tentationem lentam atque subtilem, sed tamen

assiduam, eorum qui fortes esse creduntur praevalere mentibus sinis, quasi lapides excavant aquae, et alluvione paulatim terra consumitur, quia nimirum suggestione leni subacta mentis duritia mollitur. 23. David mons altus repentino casu cecidit. Salomon subrepente paulisper peccati lenocinio. — Videamus David ille quantum mons altus fuerit, qui tanta Dei mysteria prophetico spiritu valuit contemplari; sed aspiciamus quam subito casu defluxit, qui dum, in solario deambulans, alienam conjugem concupivit et abstulit, ejusque virum cum damno sui exercitus interemit (II Reg. XI, 4, seq.), repentino casu mons cecidit, cum mens illa mysteriis coelestibus assueta, inopinata tentatione devicta est, tamque immanissimae turpitudini subacta. Saxum itaque de loco suo translatum est, cum prophetae animus, a prophetiae mysteriis exclusus, ad cogitandas turpitudines venit. Videamus etiam qualiter lapides excavant aquae, et alluvione paulatim terra consumitur. Salomon quippe (32, q. 4, c. Salomon) immoderato usu atque assiduitate mulierum ad hoc usque perductus est, ut templum idolis fabricaret (III Reg. XI, 7); et qui prius Deo templum construxerat, assiduitate libidinis, etiam perfidiae substratus, idolis construere templa non timuit. Sicque factum est ut ab assidua carnis petulantia usque ad mentis perfidiam perveniret. Quid itaque aliud quam aquae excavarunt lapidem, et alluvione paulatim terra consumpta est, quia subripiente paulisper infusione peccati, terra cordis illius ad consumptionem defluxit? Consideret ergo beatus Job utrasque tentationes, vel subitam et immensam, vel lentam atque longiorem; consideret casus hominum, et ex his quae exterius accidunt rapiat interius contemplationem, dicens: Mons cadens defluit, et saxum transfertur de loco suo. Lapides excavant aquae, et alluvione paulatim terra consumitur; et homines ergo similiter perdes; id est, sicut haec insensibilia modo subito corruunt, modo paulisper infusa aquarum mollitie consumuntur, ita etiam eum quem rationabilem condidisti, vel subita

tentatione dejicis, vel longa ac lenta consumi permittis. Atque mox eamdem rationabilem creaturam verbis sequentibus explicat, dicens:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 20. — Roborasti eum paululum, ut in perpetuum transiret. 24. Vitae brevi succedit aeternitas. — Paululum roboratus est homo, quia hic vivendi vires ad modicum accepit ut in perpetuum transeat ubi ejus vitam terminus non concludat. Sed in hac brevitate ubi roboratus est colligit unde in perpetuitate inveniat, vel ut semper gaudeat, vel ut suscepta supplicia non evadat. Qui pro eo quod paululum roboratus est ut in perpetuum transeat, apte mox subditur:

CAPUT XX.

IBID. — Immutabis faciem ejus, et emittes eum. 25. Hominis in morte quanta mutatio. — Facies hominis immutatur cum ejus species morte atteritur. Emittitur vero, quia ab his quae volens tenuit transire ad aeterna cogitur nolens; dumque ad illa perducitur, haec quae diu cogitata tenuit qualiter sese habitura sint relicta nescit. Unde et additur.

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 21. Sive nobiles fuerint filii ejus, sive ignobiles, non intelligit. 26. Animae sanctorum Deum videntes, nihil eorum quae extra se sunt ignorant; secus aliae. — Sicut enim hi qui adhuc viventes sunt 403 mortuorum animae quo loco habeantur ignorant, ita mortui vita in carne viventium post eos qualiter disponatur nesciunt, quia et vita spiritus longe est a vita carnis; et sicut corporea atque incorporea diversa sunt genere, ita etiam distincta cognitione. Quod tamen de animabus sanctis sentiendum non est, quia quae intus omnipotentis Dei claritatem vident nullo modo credendum est quia

foris sit aliquid quod ignorent. Sed carnales quique, quia amorem praecipuum filiis impendunt, hoc eos beatus Job nescire postmodum asserit quod hic vehementer amaverunt, ut sive nobiles, sive ignobiles sint filii nesciant, quorum eos semper cura fatigabat. Quod tamen si intelligi spiritaliter debet, non incongrue filiorum nomine opera designantur; sicut de muliere Paulus dicit: Quia salva erit per filiorum generationem (I Tim. II, 15). Neque enim mulier quae, continentiae studens, nequaquam filios generat salva non erit, sed per generationem filiorum salvari dicitur, quia per effectum bonorum operum perpetuae saluti sociatur. Nobiles ergo sunt filii recta opera, ignobiles autem facta perversa. Et saepe homo agere quaelibet bona intentione nititur; sed tamen pro multis, quae subrepunt, ejus acta apud omnipotentem Deum qualiter habeantur, incertum est. Sive itaque nobiles fuerint filii ejus, sive ignobiles, non intelligit, quia, subtili examine discussa, utrum approbentur ejus opera an reprobentur ignorat. Et hic ergo homo in dolore laboris est positus, et illuc ducitur in timore suspicionis. Unde adhuc de ipso praesentis vitae labore subjungitur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 22. — Attamen caro ejus, dum vivit, dolebit, et anima ejus super semetipso lugebit. 27. Qui carnis voluptatibus delectantur, majores ex carne tribulationes experiuntur. — De conjugibus Paulus dicit: Tribulationem tamen carnis habebunt hujusmodi (I Cor. VII, 28). Sed tribulationem carnis hic pati possunt, etiam jam qui spiritaliter vivunt. Cur ergo inesse conjugibus carnis tribulatio quasi specialiter dicitur, quae etiam a vita spiritalium longe non est, nisi quod hi frequenter majores tribulationes ex carne suscipiunt qui carnis voluptatibus delectantur? Bene autem dicitur: Et anima ejus super semetipso lugebit, quia quisquis gaudere in se appetit, eo ipso jam in luctu est quo a vera laetitia recessit. Vera quippe laetitia mentis

creator est Dignum itaque est ut in se semper homo moerores inveniat, qui, derelicto creatore, in se gaudium quaerebat. Sequitur.

CAPUT XXIII.

CAP. XV, VERS. 1, 2. — Respondens autem Eliphaz Themanites, dixit: Nunquid sapiens respondebit quasi in ventum loquens, et implebit ardore stomachum suum? 28. Mali bonorum verba non rationis sententias, sed furoris stimulos censent. — Crebro jam diximus beatum Job typum sanctae universalis Ecclesiae, amicos vero illius haereticorum speciem tenere, qui, quasi ex defensione Domini, occasionem stultae locutionis inveniunt, et contumeliosa contra bonos verba jaculantur. Quibus cuncta quae a fidelibus sentiuntur quasi in ventum prolata displicent. Unde nunc dicitur: Nunquid sapiens respondebit quasi in ventum loquens? Nec bonorum verba dicta rationis, sed stimulos furoris existimant. Unde et subditur. Et implebit ardore stomachum suum. Quia ea etiam quae se sciunt contumeliose dicere, student semper, ut dictum est, ex Domini defensione palliare. Unde 404 Eliphaz subdit:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 3. — Arguis verbis eum qui non est aequalis tibi, et loqueris quod tibi non expedit. 29. Dum vera quae exprobrent non inveniunt, falsa fingunt haeretici. — Nullum vero existimant timorem Domini habere, nisi eum quem potuerint ad suae confessionis stultitiam trahere. Unde adjungit: — VERS. 4 — Quantum in te est, evacuasti timorem, et tulisti preces coram Deo. Tulisti dicitur abstulisti, ac si aperte dicat: De tua justitia praesumens, Creatoris tui gratiam despicis deprecari. Cum enim vera mala haeretici contra bonos non inveniunt, fingunt quae redarguant, ut justi esse videantur, et fit plerumque ut ad aperta contumeliarum verba perveniant. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXV.

VERS. 5. — Docuit enim iniquitas tua os tuum, et imitaris linguam blasphemantium. 30. Dei honori specie caventes, bonitati detrahunt. — Iniquitas os docet quando ex mala vita concipitur quod pejus dicatur. Quia autem beatus Job tanto in ore liber fuerat quanto justus in opere, ab amicis suis haereticorum typum tenentibus, et de iniqua vita, et de audaci ore reprehenditur, ut dicatur: Docuit enim iniquitas tua os tuum. Ac si aperte ei diceretur: Quod perverse loqueris, ex perversiore didicisti vita. Saepe vero haeretici dum quasi venerantur Deum, ejus mysteriis contradicunt, et humilitatem putant si veritatem denegant. Sunt namque nonnulli qui Deo se injuriam irrogare existimant si eum veram carnem assumpsisse fateantur, aut si hunc veraciter pro nobis carne mori potuisse crediderint. Cumque Deo quasi plus honoris conantur tribuere, coguntur laudes veras bonitatis illius negare. Quid enim est in charitatis suae laude potentius quam ut illa sibi pro nobis digna ad susceptionem faceret, quae ei videntur indigna? Sancta autem Ecclesia veram carnem, veram mortem illius confitetur; sed haec dicens, ab haereticis irrogare Deo contumeliam creditur. Unde nunc dicitur: Et imitaris linguam blasphemantium. Cui si quid in hoc mundo adversitatis evenerit, hoc ei contingere ex ipsa hac injuria suae confessionis dicunt. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 6. — Condemnabit te os tuum et non ego, et labia tua respondebunt tibi. 31. Rectae fidei confessionem adversitatis flagellis puniri delirant. — Quia enim ex errore confessionis existimant mala adversitatis erumpere, labia sua ei asserunt respondere, ut culpa eloquii sit causa flagelli. Aliquando vero eam comprimere quasi ratiocinantes volunt. Unde Eliphaz beatum Job reprehendere quasi ex ratione conatur, dicens:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 7, 8. — Nunquid primus homo tu natus es, et ante colles formatus? Nunquid consilium Dei audisti, et inferior te erit ejus sapientia? 32. Dum divinam gloriam defendere videntur, suae prospiciunt. — Ac si verbis apertioribus dicat: Qui de aeterno loqueris pensa quia temporalis es, qui de ejus sapientia disputas, pensa quia ejus consilium ignoras. Sed quia ad hoc haeretici verba dominicae defensionis assumunt, ut docti esse videantur, et dum divinam gloriam defendere videntur, suam scientiam hominibus innotescant, ipsa hoc Eliphaz subjuncta verba testantur, qui loqui quidem de sapientia Dei coepit, sed statim ad suam elationem cecidit, dicens: VERS. 9. — Quid nosti quod ignoremus? quid intelligis quod nesciamus? 405 Quae videlicet dicta patenter ostendunt ex qua mentis elatione prodeat quidquid quasi ad Dominicam defensionem sonat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 10. — Et senes et antiqui sunt in nobis multo vetustiores quam patres tui. 33. De antiquorum patrum magisterio et consensu falso sibi blandiuntur. — Quia omnes haeretici a sancta universali Ecclesia sunt egressi, testatur Joannes, qui ait: Ex nobis prodierunt, sed non erant ex nobis (I Joan. II, 19). Sed ut ea quae asserunt commendare stultis mentibus hominum quasi de antiquitate possint, antiquos patres se habere testantur, atque ipsos doctores Ecclesiae suae professionis magistros dicunt. Cumque praesentes praedicatores despiciunt de antiquorum Patrum magisterio falsa praesumptione gloriantur, ut ea quae ipsi dicunt, etiam antiquos patres tenuisse fateantur, quatenus hoc quod rectitudine astruere non valent quasi ex illorum auctoritate confirment. Quia vero scriptum est: Quem diligit Dominus castigat, flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit (Hebr. XII, 6). Saepe sancta Ecclesia multis in hac vita adversitatibus laborat, et

reproborum vita tanto sine flagello dimittitur, quanto ad nulla praemia servatur. Sed afflictiones sanctae Ecclesiae videntes haeretici, eam despiciunt, et tot illam flagellis atteri ex pravae professionis merito suspicantur. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXIX.

VERS. 11. — Nunquid grande est ut consoletur te Deus? sed verba tua prava hoc prohibent. 34. Afflictam Ecclesiam despiciunt. — Ac si ei patenter dicat: Si professionem fidei corrigeres, jamdudum consolationem a flagellis habere potuisses. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 12. — Quid te elevat cor tuum, et, quasi magna cogitans, attonitos habes oculos? 35. Sanctorum contemplationem irrident nunquam experti. — Saepe justorum mens ita ad altiora contemplanda suspenditur, ut exterius eorum facies obstupuisse videatur. Sed quia hanc contemplationis vim in occulto agere haeretici ignorant, hoc a justis et recta sapientibus fieri magis per hypocrisim quam per veritatem putant, quia hoc quod ipsi habere nequeunt inesse veraciter aliis non suspicantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 13. — Quid tumet contra Deum spiritus tuus, ut proferas de ore tuo hujuscemodi sermones? 36. Justorum et iniquorum verba saepe similia, sed cor dissimile. Haeretici falsis quaedam vera permiscent, non rejicienda. — Plerumque justi aliquibus necessitatibus afflicti sua opera coguntur fateri, quod beatus Job fecerat, quem post justitiam flagella deprimebant; sed cum eorum dicta injusti audiunt, haec per elationem potius quam per veritatem existimant prolata. Ex suis enim cordibus verba justorum pensant, et dici

humiliter posse verba bona non existimant. Sicut enim gravis culpa est sibi hoc hominem arrogare quod non est, sic plerumque culpa nulla est, si humiliter bonum dicat quod est. Unde saepe contingit ut justi et injusti habeant verba similia, sed tamen semper cor longe dissimile, et ex quibus dictis Dominus ab injustis offenditur, in eisdem quoque a justis placatur. Nam Pharisaeus ingressus templum, dicebat: Jejuno bis in Sabbato, decimas do omnium quae possideo (Luc. XVIII, 12); sed justificatus magis publicanus, quam ille exiit. Ezechias quoque rex cum, molestia corporis afflictus, ad extremitatem pervenisset vitae, in oratione compunctus dixit: Obsecro, Domine, memento, quaeso, quomodo ambulaverim coram te in veritate et in corde perfecto (Isai. XXXVIII, 3). Nec tamen Dominus 406 hanc confessionem perfectionis ejus despexit, aut renuit, quem mox in suis precibus exaudivit. Ecce Pharisaeus se justificavit in opere, et Ezechias justum se esse asseruit etiam in cogitatione, atque unde ille offendit, inde iste Dominum placavit. Cur itaque hoc, nisi quia omnipotens Deus singulorum verba a cogitationibus pensat, et in ejus auribus superba non sunt quae humili corde proferuntur? Unde beatus Job, cum sua opera protulit, contra Deum nullo modo tumuit, quia ea quae veraciter fecerat humiliter dixit. Sed solent haeretici errorum suorum dictis vera aliqua permiscere, et amici beati Job quamvis in reprehensione ejus omnimodo fallantur, possunt tamen et quaedam vera dicere, quae ex illius assiduitate didicerunt. Quorum dicta si omnia refutanda essent, Eliphaz sententiam Paulus apostolus minime protulisset, dicens: Apprehendit sapientes in astutia eorum (I Cor. III, 19). Quia igitur et ea quae recta dicunt contra beatum Job recte non dicunt, nos in eorum dictis et calcemus vitium indiscretionis, et discutiamus vires rectitudinis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 14. — Quid est homo, ut immaculatus sit? 37. Homo ex humo et ex muliere ortus, qui possit esse sine macula? — Eo enim ipso quo dicitur homo, terrenus exprimitur et infirmus: homo enim ab humo appellatus est. Et quomodo esse valet sine macula, qui sponte sua ad infirmitatem concidit factus de terra? Ubi et additur, — IBID. — Et ut justus appareat natus de muliere. Primam quippe viro injustitiam mulier propinavit in paradiso. Quomodo ergo justus apparebit, qui de illa natus est quae injustitiae propinatrix exstitit? Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

VERS. 15. — Ecce inter sanctos ejus nemo immutabilis, et coeli non sunt mundi in conspectu ejus. 38. Solus Deus mutabilitatis expers. — Hoc coelorum nomine repetiit quod sanctorum prius appellatione signavit. Nam de eisdem sanctis scriptum est: Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei (Psal. XVIII, 1). Qui per naturam omnes in semetipsis propriam mutabilitatem habent; sed dum immutabili veritati studiose semper inhaerere desiderant, inhaerendo agunt, ut immutabiles fiant. Cumque ad hanc toto affectu se tenent, quandoque accipiunt ut super semetipsos ducti vincant hoc quod in semetipsis mutabiles exstiterunt. Quid enim mutabilitas nisi mors quaedam est? Quae dum rem quamlibet in aliam immutat, quasi occidit quod fuerat, ut incipiat esse quod non erat. Et de auctore omnium scriptum est: Qui solus habet immutabilitatem (I Tim. VI, 16), quia videlicet in semetipso solus immutabilis est. De quo per Jacobum dicitur: Apud quem non est transmutatio, nec vicissitudinis obumbratio (Jac. I, 17). Ipsa enim mutabilitas umbra est, quae quasi obscuraret lucem, si hanc per aliquas vicissitudines permutaret. Sed quia in Deo mutabilitas non venit, nulla ejus lumen umbra vicissitudinis intercidit. Bene autem dicitur: Coeli non sunt mundi in conspectu ejus, quia per semetipsos ante districtum Dei judicium nec ipsi esse mundi ad perfectum possunt qui munditiae praedicatores fiunt,

Joanne attestante, qui ait: Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus (I Joan. I, 3). Si igitur inter sanctos illius nemo immutabilis est, et coeli in conspectu ejus non sunt mundi, quis apud se de justitiae opere praesumat? Unde et subditur: 407

CAPUT XXXIV.

VERS. 16. — Quanto magis abominabilis et inutilis homo, qui bibit quasi aquas iniquitatem? 39. Mala opera nostra nequissima esse, sed bona imperfecta et inutilia. — Qui immaculatum prius hominem et justum per se posse esse negaverat, hunc abominabilem et inutilem appellat: abominabilem scilicet propter immunditiam maculae, inutilem vero propter injustitiam imperfectae vitae. Qui tamen abominabilis et inutilis intelligi et aliter potest. Aliquando enim homo perversus quaedam recte agere videtur, sed per ea quae iniqua sunt etiam ea quae ejus recta sunt destruuntur. Et quia multum Deo displicent mala, neque illa placent quae videntur bona. Qui ergo in malis suis Deo abominabilis est, in bonis est inutilis, quia dum se per prava opera Deo exsecrabilem exhibet, nec illud de eo quod rectum videtur placet. Bene autem dicitur: Qui bibit quasi aquas iniquitatem. Hoc namque quod comeditur cum mora glutitur, quia manditur ut glutiatur. Quod autem bibitur, tanto ad glutiendum moram non habet, quanto nullam et ad mandendum necessitatem habet. Culpa ergo, quia a stulto homine sine ulla retractatione perpetratur, quasi aqua iniquitas bibitur. Quia enim illicita sine timore facit, quasi potum injustitiae sine obstaculo glutit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

VERS. 17. — Ostendam tibi, audi me, quod vidi narrabo tibi. 40. Superbi quo altius per intelligentiam assurgunt, per elationem gravius cadunt. — Habent hoc omnes arrogantes proprium, ut cum rectum quid vel parvum senserint, in usum hoc elationis inflectant; atque unde per intellectum

sibimetipsis altiores fiant, inde per tumorem in foveam elationis cadant, seque doctis doctiores existiment, reverentiam sibi a melioribus exigant, et docere sanctiores quasi ex auctoritate contendant. Unde nunc dicitur: Ostendam tibi, audi me. Et quia cum minore auctoritate docet is qui audita quam is qui ea quae viderit loquitur, ut fortiorem sibimet auctoritatem Eliphaz arroget, dicit: Quod vidi narrabo tibi. Quia vero nonnunquam haeretici de damnatis suis patribus confunduntur, et tamen eorum sententias quasi cum auctoritate ad medium proferunt, ex quorum stultitia jure reprobantur, recte ipsa haereticorum audacia subinfertur, cum dicitur:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 18. — Sapientes confitentur, et non abscondunt patres suos. 41. Quos erroris magistros habuerunt haeretici, quam insulse jactitent sapientes. — In quorum et laudem prosiliunt, et eos velut solos Ecclesiae praefuisse gloriantur. Unde adhuc subditur: — VERS. 19: — Quibus solis data est terra, et non transivit alienus per eos. Solis suis patribus datam terram existimant, quia solos errorum suorum magistros rexisse veraciter Ecclesiam putant. Quis vero alienus nisi apostata angelus vocatur? Unde et per Psalmistam de cunctis simul malignis spiritibus dicitur: Quoniam alieni insurrexerunt in me, et fortes quaesierunt animam meam (Psal. LIII, 5). Haeretici igitur, quia doctorum suorum corda apostatae angelo existimant non fuisse subjecta, transisse per eos alienum denegant. Cui videlicet alieno per unumquemque transire est iniquas in corde ejus cogitationes immittere. Unde et per prophetae vocem de malignis spiritibus contra stantem animam dicitur: Et dixerunt animae tuae: Incurvare 408 ut transeamus (Isai. LI, 23). Sed Eliphaz Themanites quia quaedam narraturus audiri vult, quamvis multa quae dicenda sunt sciat, sed quia beato Job dicenda non erant nesciat, audiamus sententias quas contra beatum Job protulit. Nec enim debemus cui, sed solum pensare quid dixit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 20. — Cunctis diebus suis impius superbit. 42. Electi in humilitate, reprobi in superbia vitam finiunt. — Solent etiam electi in quibusdam suis cogitationibus atque actibus superbire. Sed quia electi sunt, cunctis diebus suis superbire non possunt, quia priusquam vitam finiant, ad humilitatis metum ab elatione corda commutant. Impius vero diebus suis omnibus superbit, quia sic vitam terminat, ut ab elatione minime recedat. Circumspicit quod temporaliter floret, et pensare negligit quo in aeternum ducitur. In vita carnis fiduciam ponit, eaque diu permanere existimat quae ad praesens tenet. Solidatur in elatione animus, in despectum adducitur omnis propinquus; quam repentina mors subrepat nunquam considerat; quam sit ejus incerta felicitas nunquam pensat. Qui si incertitudinem fugacis vitae conspiceret, incerta pro certo nequaquam teneret. Unde et bene subditur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

IBID. — Et numerus annorum incertus est tyrannidis ejus. 43. Mors timeri debet, quod praevideri nequeat. — Superbire enim minime debuisset, etiam si annorum suorum numerum certum habere potuisset, ut sciens quantum viveret, praesciret quando se ab elatione removeret. At postquam praesens vita semper incerta est, tanto semper mors subrepens timeri debet, quanto nunquam praevideri valet. Bene autem superbiam impii tyrannidem vocat. Proprie enim tyrannus dicitur qui in communi republica non jure principatur. Sed sciendum est quia omnis superbus juxta modum proprium tyrannidem exercet. Nam quod nonnunquam alius in republica, hoc est, per acceptam dignitatis potentiam, alius in provincia, alius in civitate, alius in domo propria, alius per latentem nequitiam hoc exercet apud se in cogitatione sua. Nec intuetur Dominus quantum quisque mali valeat facere,

sed quantum velit. Et cum deest potestas foris, apud se tyrannus est, cui iniquitas dominatur intus, quia etsi exterius non affligit proximos, intrinsecus tamen habere potestatem appetit, ut affligat. Et quia omnipotens Deus corda pensat, jam in ejus oculis impius egit quod cogitavit. Ad hoc autem conditor noster latere nos voluit finem nostrum, ut dum incerti sumus quando moriamur, semper ad mortem parati inveniamur. Unde recte postquam dictum est: Cunctis diebus suis impius superbit, adjungit: Et numerus annorum incertus est tyrannidis ejus. Ac si aperte diceretur: Cur quasi de certo extollitur, cujus vita sub poena incertitudinis tenetur? Sed omnipotens Deus prave agentibus non solum ventura supplicia reservat, sed eorum corda hic etiam ubi delinquunt poenis implicat, ut eo ipso quo peccant semetipsos feriant, ut semper trepidi semperque suspecti mala ab aliis pati metuant, quae se aliis fecisse meminerunt. Unde adhuc de hoc impio subditur:

CAPUT XXXIX.

VERS. 21. — Sonitus terroris semper in auribus illius; et cum pax sit, ille insidias suspicatur. 44. Simplicitas cordis arx munitissima. — Nil autem simplici corde felicius, quia quo 409 innocentiam erga alios exhibet, nihil est quod pati ab aliis formidet. Habet enim quasi arcem quamdam fortitudinis simplicitatem suam. Nec suspectus est pati quod se fecisse non meminit. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: In timore Domini fiducia fortitudinis (Prov. XIV, 26). Qui et rursum ait: Secura mens, quasi juge convivium (Prov. XV, 15). Quasi enim continuatio refectionis est ipsa tranquillitas securitatis. At contra mens prava semper est in laboribus, quia aut molitur mala quae inferat, aut metuit ne haec sibi ab aliis inferantur. Et quidquid contra proximos excogitat, hoc contra se excogitari a proximis formidat. Fit undique suspecta, undique trepida. Omnis qui ad memoriam venit exquirere contraria creditur. Cui ergo tranquillitas securitatis deest,

huic procul dubio terroris sonitus semper in auribus est. Et saepe contingit ut illi quilibet proximus suus simpliciter loquatur, nil adversum cogitet. Sed cum pax sit, ille insidias suspicatur, quia qui semper dolose agit, simpliciter erga se agi non aestimat. Et quia scriptum est: Impius cum in profundum venerit peccatorum, contemnit (Prov. XVIII, 3), involutus iniquitatis suae tenebris jam de luce desperat. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XL.

VERS. 22. — Non credit quod reverti possit de tenebris ad lucem, circumspectans undique gladium. 45. Impius desperata salute, ad nequitiam semper excrescit. — Quia dum feriri se undique insidiis credit, salute desperata, semper ad nequitiam excrescit. Aliquando vero iste perversus etiam superna judicia attendit, et super se haec venire metuit. Sed cum stipendium vitae praesentis quaerit, haec eadem judicia quae metuere coeperat avaritiae devictus insania contemnit. Et quidem mori se posse in peccato existimat, sed tamen a peccato non cessat. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XLI.

VERS. 23. — Cum se moverit ad quaerendum panem, novit quod paratus sit in manu ejus tenebrarum dies. 46. Etsi feriri metuat, semper auget quo feriatur. — Panis etenim, stipendium vitae praesentis; tenebrarum vero dies tempus ultionis accipitur. In actu itaque suo aliquando iste perversus iram superni judicis perpendit praesentem; sed a malo non avertitur, ut etiam ipsa quoque ab ejus interitu valeat averti. Accusante se autem conscientia feriri metuit, sed tamen semper auget quo feriatur. Contemnit reditum suum, desperat veniam, superbit in culpa; sed tamen testem suae nequitiae intus habet timorem. Et quamvis prava videatur foris audacter agere, de his tamen apud semetipsum cogitur trepidare. Unde scriptum est: Cum enim sit timida nequitia, dat testimonium condemnationi (Sap. XVII, 10), quia cum illicita

quisquis perpetrat, pavet quod facit; et apertus damnationis testis est ipse timor iniquitatis, quia et timetur quod agitur, et tamen malum non vincitur quod timetur. De quo et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XLII.

VERS. 24. — Terrebit eum tribulatio, et angustia vallabit eum, sicut regem qui praeparatur ad praelium. 47. Quot angustiis vallatur, qui securitatis sociam, viam veritatis relinquit. Plana est veritatis via; asperum iter mendacii. — In omne quod iniquus agit tribulatione et angustia vallatur, quia cor ejus anxietate et suspicione confunditur. Alius occulte appetit vi aliena diripere, qui laborat in cogitationibus, ne 410 deprehendi valeat. Alius, relicta veritate, mentiri deliberat, ut audientium animum fallat. Sed quantus labor est sollicite custodire ne ipsa ejus fallacia deprehendi queat? Ponit quippe ante oculos quid sibi a veritatem scientibus responderi possit, et cum magno cogitatu pertractat quomodo per argumenta falsitatis documenta veritatis exsuperet. Hinc inde se circumtegit, et contra hoc, ubi deprehendi potuerit, veritati similem responsionem quaerit, qui si vellet verum dicere, utique sine labore potuisset. Plana quippe veritatis via, et grave est iter mendacii. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Docuerunt enim linguam suam loqui mendacium, ut inique agerent laboraverunt (Jerem. IX, 5). Bene ergo dicitur: Terrebit eum tribulatio, et angustia vallabit eum, quia apud semetipsum in labore timoris deficit, qui securitatis sociam viam veritatis relinquit. Qui bene regi praeparato ad praelium comparatur, quia in eo ipso malo quod agit, et terretur, et festinat, et ex conscientia trepidat, et ex desiderio anhelat, metuit et superbit, pavescit suspicionibus, et mentem per audaciam erigit. Sciendum quoque est quia rex qui praeparatur ad praelium sic de hoste suspectus est, ut eidem quoque quem ducit exercitui metuat, ne labefactetur, ne per destitutionem militum jaculis pateat inimicorum. Iniquus ergo angustia vallatur, sicut rex qui praeparatur ad

praelium, quia videlicet falsa agens, falsa loquens, formidat ne suos amittat milites, id est, argumenta falsitatis, et veritatis jaculis pateat, si ei fortasse defuerit quod ex fallacia opponat. Sed quamvis animus trepidet, quamvis conscientia accuset, cupiditate tamen sua iniquus vincitur, et suppresso pavore audaciam de iniquitatibus sumit. Et saepe etiam ultione menti proposita, se contra Deum erigit, quaelibet ab eo adversa perpeti deliberat, dummodo hic, dum valet, omne quod placet agat. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XLIII.

VERS. 25, 26. — Tetendit enim adversus Deum manum suam, et contra Omnipotentem roboratus est. Cucurrit adversus eum erecto collo, et pingui cervice armatus est. 48. Pravorum voluntati quandoque Deus per misericordiam obsistit, quam iratus aliquando sinit impleri. — Haec de ipso iniquorum capite, scilicet Antichristo, apertius sentiuntur qui contra Deum manum erigens, roborari dicitur, quia parvo tempore permittitur exaltari, ut quo ad modicum gloriari sinitur, eo in perpetuum atrocius puniatur. Sed quia ejus membra sunt omnes iniqui, hoc quod in fine mundi ille tunc singulariter acturus est unus, videamus modo qualiter a malis agatur singulis. Sunt namque nonnulli qui et si qua aliquando agere contra omnipotentis Dei judicium nituntur, ipsa impossibilitate explendae suae voluntatis fracti, ad semetipsos respiciunt, atque ad eum quem contemnere voluerant convertuntur; et qui discedere longe potuerant, si quod vellent implere valuissent, per hoc aliquando salvantur, quia quod nequiter voluerunt, implere nequiverunt. Unde ad se reducti, cujus sint conditionis aspiciunt, et plangunt se contraria veritati voluisse. Et sunt nonnulli 411 qui hoc quod perverse contra Deum appetunt justo Dei judicio implere nequius permittuntur. Et cum eos malitia accendit, potentia roborat, tanto jam semetipsos in errore cognoscere nequeunt, quanto in rebus affluentibus extra se semper per potentiam trahuntur. De quorum nunc intentione dicitur:

Tetendit enim adversus Deum manum suam, et contra Omnipotentem roboratus est. Contra Deum quippe manum tendere est in operatione prava, despectis Dei judiciis, perseverare. Et quia tunc magis irascitur Deus, quando permittit impleri quod saltem concipi in cogitatione non debuit, contra Omnipotentem iniquus iste roboratur, quia prosperari in mala sua actione permittitur, quatenus et perversa faciat, et tamen feliciter vivat. De quo adhuc subditur: Cucurrit adversus eum erecto collo. 49. Opulentorum superborum quanta in pravis operibus audacia. — Erecto collo contra Deum currere est ea quae Creatori displicent cum audacia perpetrare. De quo recte dicitur: Cucurrit, id est, in malo opere obstaculum de adversitate non habuit. De quo adhuc, additur: Et pingui cervice armatus est. Pinguis cervix est opulenta superbia, affluentibus videlicet rebus quasi multis carnibus fulta. Potens igitur iniquus pingui cervice contra Deum armatur, qui, rebus temporalibus tumens contra praecepta veritatis, quasi de magnitudine carnis erigitur. Quid enim paupertas nisi quaedam macies, et quid rerum abundantia nisi pinguedo est vitae praesentis? Pingui ergo cervice se contra Deum erigit qui temporalem abundantiam in superbiam assumit. Habent enim hoc potentes et iniqui proprium, ut, fallacibus divitiis occupati, veras Dei opes negligant; et quanto minus quod verum est inquirunt, tanto amplius falsis divitiis extollantur. Cura etenim multiplex terrenarum rerum, quia occupat, excaecat. Unde adhuc apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLIV.

VERS. 27. — Operuit faciem ejus crassitudo. 50. Terrenarum rerum abundantia oculos claudente. — Visus quippe in facie est, in qua et prima corporis honorabilior pars est. Non ergo immerito mentis intentio per faciem designatur, quam quolibet vertimus, illuc videmus. Faciem ergo crassitudo operit, quia desiderata terrenarum rerum abundantia oculos mentis premit, et hoc quod in eis esse honorabile debuit, ante Dei oculos

foedat, quia curis multiplicibus aggravat. Quibus tamen nec solum sufficit ut ipsi superbiant, nisi et hi qui eis conjuncti sunt de eorum pinguedine etiam ipsi glorientur. Nam sunt nonnulli qui patronis majoribus adjuti superbiunt, et de eorum potentia contra inopes extolluntur. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XLV.

IBID. — Et de lateribus ejus arvina dependet. 51. Qui iniquo potenti adhaerent, de ejus potentia tument. — Quia arvina pinguedo carnis est, et latera dicere divitum solemus hos quos eis conjunctos cernimus, arvina de ejus lateribus dependet, quia quisquis potenti et iniquo adhaeret, ipse quoque de ejus potentia, velut ex pinguedine rerum, tumet, ut, patroni perversi iniquitatem sequens, Deum non timeat, quos valet, et quantum valet, 412 pauperes affligat, de gloria temporali cor elevet. Cum ergo talis est qui iniquo potenti adhaeret, de ejus profecto latere arvina dependet. De quibus adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XLVI.

VERS. 28. — Habitabit in civitatibus desolatis, et in domibus desertis, quae in tumulos sunt redactae. 52. Ille vicissim dum sibi conjunctorum laudibus extollitur, ad prava opera vehementius rapitur. — Quia enim a conversatione conviventium civitas appellatur, civitates desolatae sunt ipsi obsequentium cunei perversorum, quorum clamoribus perversus iste laudatur cum ad prava opera per nequitiam rapiatur. Unde scriptum est: Laudatur peccator in desiderio animae suae, et qui iniqua agit benedicitur (Psal. X, 3, sec. Hebr.). Domus vero desertae sunt cogitationes pravae, quas iniquus iste inhabitat, quia per omne quod agit iniquorum hominum placere cogitationibus appetit. Quae civitates desolatae, et domus desertae recte nominantur, quia nisi omnipotens Deus, talium conversationes

cogitationesque, praecedentibus eorum culpis, relinqueret, ad graviora perpetranda minime pervenirent. Bene autem dicitur: Quae in tumulos sunt redactae. Ruentia namque domorum atque civitatum aedificia tumulos faciunt, quoniam dum pravi quique confusis actionibus sibimetipsis ad perversa opera junguntur, ostendunt procul dubio quia de aedificio vitae ceciderunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVII.

VERS. 29. — Non habitabitur, nec perseverabit substantia ejus, nec mittet in terram radicem suam. 53. Virtutibus non ditatur nisi cujus mentem Deus inhabitat. Sine radice stat superbus, leni flatu statim prostrandus. — Quod hic Non habitabitur dictum est in quibusdam Codicibus reperi Non ditabitur; sed sensus non discrepat, quamvis a se sermo discordet. Ille enim virtutibus ditatur, cujus mentem inhabitat omnipotens Deus. Sed quia superbi cogitatio ab auctoris sui gratia non inhabitatur, profecto per hoc virtutibus non ditatur. Propter hoc ergo quod interius est vacuus, dicatur: Non inhabitabitur; propter hoc vero quod transitorium foris tumet, recte subjungit: Nec perseverabit substantia ejus. Ac si aperte dicatur: Hoc quod habere videtur exterius transit, et illud quod transire non poterat interius non habet. Unde et apte subjungitur: Nec mittet in terra radicem suam. Quod si de hac terra dictum accipimus, liquet procul dubio quia arbor quae in terra radicem non habet, vel tenuissimis commota flatibus cadit. Et superbus quisque dum contra omnipotentem Dominum roboratur, dum currit erecto collo, et pingui cervice contra auctorem erigitur, stare quasi arbor videtur. Sed status ejus sine radice est, quia velut ad lenem flatum, sic ad motum occultae sententiae vita ejus eruitur. Sin vero hoc loco terram aeternae vitae retributionem accipimus, de qua Propheta ait: Portio mea in terra viventium (Psal. CXLI, 6), iniquus iste in terra radicem suam non mittit, quia nunquam ad aeternae vitae desiderium cordis sui cogitationes plantat. Quod enim

radix arbori, hoc unicuique hominum cogitatio sua est, quia in hoc quod exterius videtur, per illud tenetur quod exterius non videtur. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Mittet radicem deorsum, et faciet fructum sursum (Isai. XXXVII, 31). Cum enim cogitationem nostram ad compatiendum indigenti proximo tendimus, 413 quasi radicem deorsum mittimus, ut retributionis fructum superius faciamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVIII.

VERS. 30. — Non recedet de tenebris. 54. Quia lucem justitiae non quaerit, de tenebris non recedit. — Si superbus iste a culpa ad justitiam redire voluisset, de tenebris recederet. Sed quia lucem justitiae non quaerit, de tenebris non recedit. Cujus etiam exemplo hi qui ei adhaerent in terrenis profectibus anhelant, avaritiae facibus accenduntur, desideriorum carnalium ignibus uruntur. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XLIX.

IBID — Ramos ejus arefaciet flamma. 55. Desideriorum carnalium facibus cum sibi conjunctis uritur. — Si enim sibi quosdam aeternam patriam quaerentes adjungeret, ramos in se virides haberet. Sed quia ipsi quoque qui ei conjuncti sunt terrenis desideriis aestuant, et dum desideriorum flamma clientium ejus animos accendit, scilicet ramos ejus arefacit, ut fructum boni operis non ferant, quia ad appetenda infima per nequitiam anhelant. Bene autem subditur:

CAPUT L.

IBID. — Et auferetur spiritu oris sui. 56. Propter laxata linguae frena gravissime torquendus. — Superbus etenim quisque quo in hac vita plus valet, eo sibi linguae frena audacius relaxat, ut loquatur perversa quaelibet,

nullum de verbis suis metuat, istos contumeliis feriat, illos maledictionibus jaculetur. Nonnunquam vero in blasphemiam contra conditorem rapitur, sicut de talibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Posuerunt in coelum os suum, et lingua eorum transivit super terram (Psal. LXXII, 9): Unde et dives in igne positus, stillari sibi aquam ex digito Lazari in linguam postulat (Luc. XVI, 24). Qua ex re intelligitur quia ubi amplius peccaverat, ibi atrocius ardebat. Recte ergo nunc dicitur: Et auferetur Spiritu oris sui, quia eo percussionis sententiam accepit, quo oris sui spiritum sub divina formidine non restrinxit. Sequitur:

CAPUT LI.

VERS. 31. — Non credat frustra deceptus, quod alio pretio redimendus sit.

57. Tunc solum eleemosynae nobis prosunt cum peccata plangimus et abdicamus. — Quoties post culpam eleemosynas facimus, quasi pro pravis actibus pretium damus. Unde et per Prophetam de eo qui haec non agit dicitur: Non dabit Deo propitiationem suam, nec pretium redemptionis animae suae (Psal. XLVIII, 8, 9). Nonnunquam vero divites elati inferiores opprimunt, aliena rapiunt, et tamen quasi quaedam aliis largiuntur; et cum multos deprimant, aliquando quibusdam opem defensionis ferunt, et pro iniquitatibus quas nunquam deserunt dare pretium videntur. Sed tunc eleemosynae pretium nos a culpis liberat, cum perpetrata plangimus, et abdicamus. Nam qui et semper peccare vult, et quasi semper eleemosynam largiri, frustra pretium tribuit, quia non redimit animam, quam a vitiis non compescit. Unde nunc dicitur: Non credat frustra errore deceptus, quod aliquo pretio redimendus sit. Quia eleemosyna superbi divitis eum redimere non valet, quam perpetrata simul rapina pauperis ante Dei oculos ascendere non permittit. Quod fortasse intelligi aliter potest, quia saepe superbi divites cum eleemosynam tribuunt, non hanc pro aeternae vitae desiderio, sed pro extendenda vita temporali largiuntur, mortem se posse differre donationibus

credunt, sed non credat frustra errore deceptus quod aliquo pretio redimendus sit, quia obtinere ex impenso munere non valet ut finem debitum evadat, 414 cujus etiam nequitia intercidit vitam. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT LII.

VERS. 32. — Antequam dies ejus impleantur peribit, et manus ejus arescent. 58. Praefixi dies singulis, nec augeri possunt nec minui. Qui longiores sperat, antequam impleantur, perit. — Praefixi dies singulis ab interna Dei praescientia nec augeri possunt, nec minui, nisi contingat ut ita praesciantur, ut aut cum optimis operibus longiores sint, aut cum pessimis breviores, sicut Ezechias augmentum dierum meruit impensione lacrymarum; et sicut de perversis scriptum est: Indisciplinatis obviat mors. Sed saepe iniquus, quamvis in occulta Dei praescientia longa vitae ejus tempora non sint praedestinata, ipse tamen quia carnaliter vivere appetit, longo animo dies proponit. Et quia ad illud tempus pervenire non valet quod exspectat, quasi antequam dies illius impleantur perit. Quod tamen intelligere et aliter possumus. Plerumque enim quosdam cernimus et perverse agere, et usque ad senectutem ultimam pervenire. Quomodo ergo dicitur: Antequam dies ejus impleantur peribit, cum in quibusdam saepe videamus quia aetate longa jam membra deficiunt, et tamen pravitatem suam eorum desideria exsequi non desistunt? 59. Post conversionem exteriora repetens ab omni boni operis statu eradicatur. — Sunt namque nonnulli qui post vitam perditam ad semetipsos redeunt, et, accusante se conscientia, perversa itinera relinquunt, commutant opera, antiquae suae pravitati contradicunt, terrenas actiones fugiunt, desideria superna sectantur; sed priusquam in eisdem sanctis desideriis solidentur, per torporem mentis ad ea quae dijudicare coeperant redeunt, atque ad mala quae fugere disposuerant recurrunt. Quia enim saepe contingit ut pro utilitate multorum etiam sancti viri exterioribus actibus serviant, et populorum gubernationibus

occupentur, hoc infirmi aspicientes, et per vetustam adhuc superbiam quaerentes imitari, exterioribus se actionibus inserunt; sed quanto ad eas non eruditi spiritalibus veniunt, tanto eas carnaliter exsequuntur. Nisi enim prius cor longo studio et diutina conversatione in desideriis coelestibus convalescat, cum ad exteriora agenda refunditur, ab omni statu boni operis eradicatur. Unde recte quoque de hoc iniquo dicitur: Antequam dies ejus impleantur peribit. Quia et si quid boni fortasse coeperit agere, priusquam in eo per longitudinem temporis convalescat, ad exteriora relabitur, et perverse deserit quae recte inchoasse videbatur. Unde et apte subditur: Et manus ejus arescent. Quia dum exterioribus actibus intempestive involvitur, ab omni nimirum bona operatione siccatur. Unde adhuc bene subditur:

CAPUT LIII.

VERS. 33, 34. — Laedetur quasi vinea in primo flore botrus ejus, et quasi oliva projiciens florem suum. Congregatio enim hypocritae sterilis. 60. Hypocritae bona opera cur arefiant. Quam periculose qui in virtute infirmi sunt, praesint. — Notandum quod sic de hoc iniquo generaliter loquitur, ut tamen divinus sermo ad specialem ejus nequitiam derivetur. Qui enim dicens: Laedetur quasi vinea in primo flore botrus ejus, et quasi oliva projiciens florem suum, protinus subdit: Congregatio enim hypocritae sterilis, patenter indicat quia in hoc iniquo reprobationis sententiam contra ejus hypocrisim ferat. Sed 415 nunc pensandum nobis est qualiter hypocrita sicut vinea in primo flore, vel sicut oliva florem projiciens laedatur. Si florentem vineam per inaequalitatem aeris immoderatum frigus attigerit, protinus ab omni humore viriditatis arefacit. Et sunt nonnulli qui post perversa itinera sanctas vias sectari appetunt, sed priusquam in eis, ut diximus, desideria bona roborentur, quaedam illos praesentis saeculi prosperitas accipit, quae eos rebus exterioribus implicat, et eorum mentem dum a calore intimi amoris retrahit, quasi ex frigore exstinguit, et quidquid

in eis de virtutum flore apparere videbatur, interficit. In terrenis quippe actibus valde frigescit animus, si necdum fuerit per intima dona solidatus. Unde necesse est ut loca majora vel exteriora opera, quae humanis sunt necessitatibus profutura, illi exercenda suscipiant, qui haec dijudicare, atque sub semetipsis premere ex virtute intima noverunt. Nam cum infirmus quisque vel ad locum regiminis, vel ad exteriora agenda retrahitur, quo quasi extra se ducitur, eradicatur, quia et arbor quae radices in altum prius non mittit, citius ventorum impetu sternitur, si se ad altum vertice extollit; eoque citius ad ima corruit, quo altius in aere sine radicibus excrevit. Nonnunquam vero florentem vineam non frigus, sed aestus arefacit. Cumque immoderato calore tangitur, discusso flore botrus tabescit. Et plerumque contingit ut hi qui ad bona opera recta intentione non veniunt, cum placere se hominibus vident, ad exercenda haec eadem opera vehementius accendantur, humanis placitura oculis agere anxie studeant, et quasi in sancto studio fervescant. Quis itaque istos nisi in flore aestus contigit, quos humanae laudis appetitio a fructu alienos fecit? Unde et bene subditur: Et quasi oliva projiciens florem suum. Oliva quippe cum in flore est, si immoderata nebula tangitur, a plenitudine fructuum vacuatur. Et quoties inchoantes quique bona opera laudari ab aspicientibus coeperint, atque in suis laudibus delectari, fit caligo intelligentiae in cogitatione, ut jam discernere nequeant qua intentione quid faciant, et fructum perdant operis, velut ex nebula favoris. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Mane surgamus ad vineas, videamus si floruit vinea, si flores fructus parturiunt (Cant. II, 12). Florent quippe vineae cum mentes fidelium bona opera proponunt. Sed fructus non pariunt, si ab eo quod proposuerint aliquibus victi erroribus infirmantur.. VERS. 34. — Et ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum, qui munera libenter accipiunt. 62. Parum est munus a manu non recipere nisi munus ab ore respuamus. — Sicut enim corpus in tabernaculo, sic mens habitat in cogitatione. Sed ignis tabernacula devorat cum aestus

avaritiae cogitationes devastat. Et fit plerumque ut hypocrita aurum vel quaeque bona corporalia ab hominibus accipere contemnat, sed quia haec non accipit, majores ab eis recipere laudes quaerat; et fortasse munus se accepisse non aestimat, quia bona corporalia recipere recusat. Unde sciendum est quia aliquando munus a manu, aliquando vero ab ore porrigitur. Nam qui nummum tribuit, munus ex manu dedit; qui autem verbum laudis impendit, munus ab ore protulit. Hypocrita itaque etsi exteriora dona, quae terrenae forsitan necessitati congruunt, accipere recusat, plus est quod sibi retribui appetit, cum, ultra meritum laudari desiderans, munus ab ore quaerit. Et quia in ipso laudis appetitu nimio cor ardore succenditur, dicatur recte: Et ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum qui munera libenter accipiunt.. CAP. XVI, VERS. 2. — Audivi frequenter talia. 2. Job typus Ecclesiae a fictis amicis oppressae, consolatores simulantibus. A consolatoriis verbis ad increpatoria amici Job eruperant. — Electi quippe frequenter aliena mala quasi sua audiunt, et ab his eis crimen impingitur a quibus crimina impacta perpetrantur. Hac autem responsione beatus Job illud Ecclesiae tempus significat quo, oppressa ab adversariis, temporali eorum potentia quasi dejecta creditur. Unde sequitur: — IBID. — Consolatores onerosi omnes vos estis. Sive enim haeretici, seu pravi quilibet, cum laborare bonos in adversitate conspiciunt, in eo quod illos consolari appetunt, mala eis persuadere conantur. Unde non immerito bonorum mentibus onerosa fit eorum consolatio, quia inter verba dulcedinis virus propinare cupiunt erroris; et dum dictis lenibus dolores quasi levigant, peccati onus imponere festinant. Sed electi viri etiam cum temporali gloria privantur, interni vigorem judicii non amittunt. Nam sciunt et foris adversa perpeti, et tamen interius infracti recta sine pavore defendere, 418 Unde subjungitur:

CAPUT LIII.

Laedetur quasi vinea in primo flore botrus eius, et quasi oliva proiiciens florem suum. Congregatio enim hypocritae sterilis.

Notandum quod sic de hoc iniquo generaliter loquitur, ut tamen divinus sermo ad specialem eius nequitiam derivetur. Qui enim dicens: Laedetur quasi vinea in primo flore botrus eius, et quasi oliva proiiciens florem suum, protinus subdit: Congregatio enim hypocritae sterilis, patenter indicat quia in hoc iniquo reprobationis sententiam contra eius hypocrisim ferat. Sed nunc pensandum nobis est qualiter hypocrita sicut vinea in primo flore, vel sicut oliva florem proiiciens laedatur. Si florentem vineam per inaequalitatem aeris immoderatum frigus attigerit, protinus ab omni humore viriditatis arefacit. Et sunt nonnulli qui post perversa itinera sanctas vias sectari appetunt, sed priusquam in eis, ut diximus, desideria bona roborentur, quaedam illos praesentis saeculi prosperitas accipit, quae eos rebus exterioribus implicat, et eorum mentem dum a calore intimi amoris retrahit, quasi ex frigore exstinguit, et quidquid in eis de virtutum flore apparere videbatur, interficit. In terrenis quippe actibus valde frigescit animus, si necdum fuerit per intima dona solidatus. Unde necesse est ut loca maiora vel exteriora opera, quae humanis sunt necessitatibus profutura, illi exercenda suscipiant, qui haec diiudicare, atque sub semetipsis premere ex virtute intima noverunt. Nam cum infirmus quisque vel ad locum regiminis, vel ad exteriora agenda retrahitur, quo quasi extra se ducitur, eradicatur, quia et arbor quae radices in altum prius non mittit, citius ventorum impetu sternitur, si se ad altum vertice extollit; eoque citius ad ima corruit, quo altius in aere sine radicibus excrevit. Nonnunquam vero florentem vineam non frigus, sed aestus arefacit. Cumque immoderato calore tangitur, discusso flore botrus tabescit. Et plerumque contingit ut hi qui ad bona opera recta intentione non veniunt, cum placere se hominibus vident, ad exercenda haec eadem opera vehementius accendantur, humanis placitura oculis agere anxie studeant, et quasi in sancto studio fervescant. Quis itaque

istos nisi in flore aestus contigit, quos humanae laudis appetitio a fructu alienos fecit? Unde et bene subditur: Et quasi oliva proiiciens florem suum. Oliva quippe cum in flore est, si immoderata nebula tangitur, a plenitudine fructuum vacuatur. Et quoties inchoantes quique bona opera laudari ab aspicientibus coeperint, atque in suis laudibus delectari, fit caligo intelligentiae in cogitatione, ut iam discernere nequeant qua intentione quid faciant, et fructum perdant operis, velut ex nebula favoris. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Mane surgamus ad vineas, videamus si floruit vinea, si flores fructus parturiunt. Florent quippe vineae cum mentes fidelium bona opera proponunt. Sed fructus non pariunt, si ab eo quod proposuerint aliquibus victi erroribus infirmantur.

Non ergo intuendum est si vineae floreant, sed si flores ad partum fructuum convalescant, quia mirum non est si quis bona inchoet, sed valde mirabile est si intentione recta in bono opere perduret. Unde fit plerumque ut si in bono opere recta intentio non tenetur, etiam ipsum hoc opus quod bonum creditur amittatur. Nam quosdam saepe vidimus terrena quae possederant reliquisse, et nil iam transitorium quaerere, nullis pro hac vita iurgiis immisceri. Cum itaque hoc in se fidelis anima ostendit, quasi oliva florem protulit. Sed cum quidam ex talibus rursus coeperint mundi gloriam quam contempserant quaerere, et terrenis rebus quas sprevisse videbantur insatiabiliter inhiare, vacare iurgiis, proximorum laesiones exquirere, nimirum proiecit oliva florem quem proposuit, quia rudimenta boni studii ad perfecta opera non perduxit. Sed sciendum est quia haec semper eis eveniunt qui Deum puro ac simplici studio non sequuntur. Unde recte subditur: Congregatio enim hypocritae sterilis. Coepta enim bona non amitteret, si hypocrita non fuisset. Congregant vero et hypocritae bona opera, sed eorum sterilis est ipsa congregatio, quia per hoc quod agunt fructum recipere in aeterna retributione non appetunt. Fecundi ac virides in suis operibus humanis oculis videntur, sed in conspectu occulti iudicis

infecundi et aridi apparent. Saepe vero, aestu avaritiae accensi, eo maiora de se opera humanis oculis ostendunt, quo ampliora sibi ab hominibus offerri munera appetunt. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT LIV.

Et ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum, qui munera libenter accipiunt.

Sicut enim corpus in tabernaculo, sic mens habitat in cogitatione. Sed ignis tabernacula devorat cum aestus avaritiae cogitationes devastat. Et fit plerumque ut hypocrita aurum vel quaeque bona corporalia ab hominibus accipere contemnat, sed quia haec non accipit, maiores ab eis recipere laudes quaerat; et fortasse munus se accepisse non aestimat, quia bona corporalia recipere recusat. Unde sciendum est quia aliquando munus a manu, aliquando vero ab ore porrigitur. Nam qui nummum tribuit, munus ex manu dedit; qui autem verbum laudis impendit, munus ab ore protulit. Hypocrita itaque etsi exteriora dona, quae terrenae forsitan necessitati congruunt, accipere recusat, plus est quod sibi retribui appetit, cum, ultra meritum laudari desiderans, munus ab ore quaerit. Et quia in ipso laudis appetitu nimio cor ardore succenditur, dicatur recte: Et ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum qui munera libenter accipiunt.

Sin vero eorum tabernacula corpora debemus accipere, in quibus illorum animae habitant, ignis eorum tabernacula devorat, quia qui hic in mente ardent igne avaritiae, illic etiam in carne concremantur ignibus gehennae, et quia mens hypocritae nunquam vacat a malitiae cogitatione; nam sive terrena quaeque, seu laudem appetat, haec aliis invidet quae sibi tribui anhelat; et tanto caeteros ostendere perversos molitur, quanto videri sanctior omnibus appetit, ut ex eo quod alii despicabiles fiunt, ipse reverentior semper appareat. Unde fit ut de opinione proximi ante humana iudicia, linguae suae laqueos praetendat, ut eorum quibus placere appetit solus aestimationem capiat. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT LV.

Concepit dolorem, et peperit iniquitatem, et uterus eius praeparat dolos.

Dolorem quippe concipit cum perversa cogitat. Iniquitatem parit cum explere coeperit quod cogitavit. Invidendo dolorem concipit, derogando iniquitatem parit. Gravis quippe est iniquitas quando is qui perversus est ostendere alios perversos molitur, ut inde ipse quasi sanctus appareat, quod alios sanctos non esse docuerit. Sciendum vero quod in sacro eloquio ventris vel uteri nomine mens solet intelligi. Hinc est enim quod per Salomonem dicitur: Lucerna Domini spiraculum hominis, quae investigat omnia secreta ventris. Lux enim gratiae, quae desuper venit, spiraculum homini praestat ad vitam. Quae videlicet lux omnia secreta ventris investigare dicitur, quia occulta mentis penetrat, ut ea quae de seipsa latebant animam, ante eius oculos flendo reducat. Hinc Ieremias ait: Ventrem meum, ventrem meum doleo. Qui ut ventrem suum quid dixisset ostenderet, adiunxit: Sensus cordis mei turbati sunt. Uteri itaque nomine recte mens accipitur, quia sicut proles in utero concipitur, sic cogitatio in mente generatur; et sicut in ventre cibi, ita continentur in mente cogitationes. Uterus itaque hypocritae praeparat dolos, quia tanto semper maiorem malitiam contra proximos in mente concipit, quanto solus prae omnibus videri innocentior quaerit. Haec idcirco Eliphaz protulit, quia beatum Iob tanto percussum verbere propter hypocrisim putavit. Sed eius verba etsi multis congruunt, ab ipso solo aliena sunt pro quo solo dicebantur, quia sanctus vir nihil in suis actibus duplicitatis habuit, quem testis veritas de cordis simplicitate laudavit.

LIBER DECIMUS TERTIUS.

CAPUT I

Esse hoc perversorum proprium solet, quod sua mala per convicium bonis ingerant, priusquam de eis ipsi veraciter accusentur; et dum metuunt increpari de his quae faciunt, adversantes suis pravitatibus iustos haec facere testantur. Sancti autem viri patienter audiunt etiam quae se nunquam fecisse meminerunt, quamvis ea mala quae sibi ingeri conspiciunt ab ipsis suis criminatoribus noverint perpetrata; et cum eos praedicando corrigere non possunt, patiendo tolerant, quatenus si fructum conversionis eorum non valent, ex ipsis tamen praemium longanimitatis acquirant. Unde et sancta Ecclesia David prophetae vocibus dicit: Supra dorsum meum fabricaverunt peccatores, quia videlicet dum haereticos vel quoslibet reprobos, quos corrigere non valet, tolerat, facta peccantium supra dorsum portat. Beatus itaque Iob videns Eliphaz amicum suum multa contra se de hypocrisi conquerentem, qui ex consolationis verbis ad amaritudinem increpationis eruperat, et simulatus consolator apparebat, per patientiam suam typum servat Ecclesiae, quae novit talia audiendo tolerare, et, cum eius sermo admittitur, ratiocinando destruere, et dicit:

CAPUT II.

CAP. XVI, Audivi frequenter talia.

Electi quippe frequenter aliena mala quasi sua audiunt, et ab his eis crimen impingitur Consolatores onerosi omnes vos estis. Sive enim haeretici, seu pravi quilibet, cum laborare bonos in adversitate conspiciunt, in eo quod illos consolari appetunt, mala eis persuadere conantur. Unde non immerito bonorum mentibus onerosa fit eorum consolatio, quia inter verba dulcedinis virus propinare cupiunt erroris; et dum dictis lenibus dolores

quasi levigant, peccati onus imponere festinant. Sed electi viri etiam cum temporali gloria privantur, interni vigorem iudicii non amittunt. Nam sciunt et foris adversa perpeti, et tamen interius infracti recta sine pavore defendere, Unde subiungitur:

CAPUT III VERS.

3. — Nunquid habebunt finem verba ventosa? 3. Verba sana, propter elationem eorum a quibus proferuntur aliquando ventosa. Lugens non increpandus. — Ventosa enim verba sunt quae inflationi temporali potius quam rectitudini serviunt. Saepe autem mali etiam bona dicunt; sed quia bene non dicunt, ventosa verba proferunt. Nam dicta eorum et si quando sana sunt per sententiam, inflata tamen sunt per elationem. In hoc vero quod dictum est: Consolatores onerosi omnes vos estis, quid aliud beati Job magisterio docemur, nisi ut quisque perpendere sollicite sciat ne luctus tempore verba increpationis inferat? Si enim sunt quaedam quae increpari jure debeant, in afflictione postponenda sunt, ne consolator increpando dolorem augeat, quem lenire proposuerat. Sequitur:

CAPUT IV.

IBID. — Aut aliquid tibi molestum est, si loquaris? 4. Justi convicia non reddunt. — Mali viri cum aliis sibi similibus conviciosa verba proferunt, eo citius obmutescunt, quo de se talia mox audiunt qualia suis auditoribus dicunt. Cum autem bonos viros per conviciosa verba jaculantur, nil eis molestiae ex convicio nascitur, quia contra tacentes loquuntur, nec compelluntur audire quod sunt, quia justi convicia non reddunt, etiam dum coguntur audire quod non sunt. Bene ergo dicitur: Aut aliquid tibi molestum est, si loquaris? Ac si ei aperte diceretur: Eo plus loqueris quo a me

molestum aliquid de tua actione non audis. Unde et subditur, — VERS. 4. — Poteram et ego similia vestri loqui. [Rec III.] Narrat justus quid facere potuit; sed ne justitiam deserat, quod facere potuit declinat. Sequitur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 4-6. — Atque utinam esset anima vestra pro anima mea! consolarer et ego vos sermonibus, et moverem caput meum super vos. Roborarem vos ore meo, et moverem labia mea, quasi parcens vobis. 5. Malis divina flagella quandoque debent optari. — Aliquando necesse est ut pravis mentibus quae humana praedicatione corrigi nequeunt divina flagella optari benigne debeant. Quod cum magno fit amoris studio, videlicet non errantis poena, sed correptio quaeritur, et oratio potius quam maledictio esse monstratur. In his autem verbis hoc beatus Job monstratur intendere, ut amici, qui dolori illius per charitatem compati nesciebant, ab experimento 419 discerent alienae afflictioni qualiter misereri debuissent; atque, edomiti doloribus, a sua passione traherent consolationem aliis qualiter inferrent; et tunc salubrius intrinsecus viverent, cum aliquid extrinsecus de infirmitate sentirent. Notandum, quod non ait: Utinam esset anima mea pro anima vestra! sed Utinam esset anima vestra pro anima mea! quia profecto sibi malediceret, si se illis fieri similem optaret. Illis vero meliora voluit quos sibi fieri similes quaesivit. Consolamur vero pravos in flagellis constitutos cum de exteriore percussione interiorem in eis convalescere salutem indicamus. Caput etiam movemus cum mentem, quae principale nostrum est, ad compassionem inflectimus. Eosque inter flagella roboramus cum doloris eorum vim verbis mitibus lenimus. Sunt namque nonnulli qui dum interna nesciunt de malis exterioribus desperabiliter affliguntur, de quibus per Psalmistam dicitur: In miseriis non subsistent (Psal. CXXXIX, 11). Ille etenim bene novit in exterioribus miseriis subsistere, qui scit semper de spe interna gaudere. 6. Aliquando malis quasi parcens non parcit, et quasi non

parcens parcit Ecclesia. — Quod vero non ait Parcens, sed Quasi parcens vobis, nequaquam hoc negligenter praetereundum puto, quia sancta Ecclesia disciplinae vigorem cum permistione mansuetudinis servans, aliquando malis et quasi parcens non parcit, aliquando vero et quasi non parcens parcit. Quod melius ostendimus, si ipsa quae plerumque accidunt proferamus. Ponamus itaque ante oculos mentis duos pravos in sancta Ecclesia esse constitutos, quorum sit unus potens et protervus, alter mitis et subditus. Si qua miti et subdito culpa subripuerit, hanc protinus increpando praedicator insequitur et corripit, eumque corripiendo, a culpa liberat, atque ad viam rectitudinis reformat. Quid itaque huic nisi non parcens pepercit, quia dum correptionis verbum non distulit, citius hunc a culpa liberavit? Libere enim arguens non pepercit, sed in eo quod correxit pepercit. At contra potens et protervus, cum aliquid perpetrasse cognoscitur, tempus quaeritur ut de malo quod fecit increpetur. Nisi enim praedicator sustineat quando ferre congrue correptionem possit, auget in eo malum quod insequitur. Saepe enim contingit ut talis sit qui nulla increpationis verba suspiciat. Quid itaque in hujus culpa praedicatori agendum est, nisi ut in sermone admonitionis, quem pro communi salute omnium auditorum facit, tales culpas ad medium deducat quales eum perpetrasse considerat qui et praesto est, et de se solo adhuc argui non potest, ne deterior fiat? Et cum generaliter contra culpam invectio intenditur, correptionis verbum libenter ad mentem ducitur, quia potens pravus ignorat quod sibi hoc specialiter dicatur. Quid itaque isti praedicator suus nisi parcens minime pepercit, cui et specialiter correptionis verba non intulit, et tamen vulnus illius sub communi admonitione percussit? Unde fit plerumque ut eo vehementius perpetratam culpam lugeat, quo reatum suum et cum se percussum sentiat nesciri putat.. VERS. 8. — Nunc autem oppressit me dolor meus, et in nihilum redacti sunt omnes artus mei. 9. Dolor Ecclesiae dum ad malorum exempla infirmos pertrahi conspicit. — Dolore suo sancta Ecclesia premitur

quando in malitia sua crescere perversos intuetur. Et quia dum pravi crescunt etiam infirmi qui in ea sunt ad sequenda studia pravitatis irritantur, recte additur: Et in nihilum redacti sunt omnes artus mei. Sicut enim per ossa fortes, sic per artus infirmi quique designari solent. Membra ergo Ecclesiae ad nihilum rediguntur quando ex imitatione pravorum in hoc mundo crescentium infirmi quique deterius infirmantur. Videntes etenim felicitatem malorum, saepe ab ipso fidei statu dilabuntur, bona temporalia appetunt, et veluti in nihilum rediguntur, quia dum manentem Dei essentiam deserunt, diligentes transitoria, quasi ad non esse tendunt. Bene autem dicitur: Nunc autem oppressit me dolor meus, quia videlicet tempus doloris Ecclesiae modo est, et tempus gaudii postmodum sequetur. Saepe vero contingit ut sancta Ecclesia non solum infideles atque extra positos adversarios toleret, sed eorum quoque insidias atque adversitatem vix ferat, quos intus habet. Unde beati viri voce apte mox subditur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 9. — Rugae meae testimonium dicunt contra me. 10. Rugae Ecclesiae sunt mali Christiani. — Quid per rugas nisi duplicitas designatur? Rugae itaque sunt sanctae Ecclesiae omnes qui in ea dupliciter vivunt, qui fidem vocibus clamant, operibus denegant. Hi nimirum pacis tempore, quia hujus mundi potestatibus eamdem fidem honori esse conspiciunt, fideles se esse mentiuntur. Sed cum 421 sanctam Ecclesiam subita adversitatis procella turbaverit, illico ostendunt quid in perfida mente moliuntur. Has autem rugas in electis suis sancta Ecclesia non habet, quia videlicet nesciunt aliud de se foris ostendere, et intus aliud habere. Unde recte egregius praedicator dicit: Ut exhiberet ipse sibi gloriosam Ecclesiam, non habentem maculam aut rugam (Ephes. V, 27). Maculam quippe et rugam non habet, quae et turpitudine operis et duplicitate sermonis caret. Sed quia nunc intra sinum fidei multos etiam reprobos tenet, cum tempus persecutionis

exarserit, ipsos hostes patitur quos praedicationis verbis alere ante videbatur. Dicat itaque quia: Rugae meae testimonium dicunt contra me, id est ipsi me insequendo increpant, qui nunc, in meo corpore positi, duplicitatis suae in se malitiam non mendant. Unde bene adhuc subditur: IBID. — Et suscitatur falsiloquus adversus faciem meam, contradicens mihi. 11. Per malos saevit diabolus. — Etiam pacis suae tempore sancta Ecclesia falsiloquium patitur, dum sunt in ea multi qui de aeternitatis promissione diffidunt, et tamen se fideles esse mentiuntur. Qui dum praedicationi ejus aperte contradicere non praesumunt, falsiloquium non contra faciem, sed quasi post dorsum patitur. Sed cum malitiae tempus eruperit, is qui nunc metuens derogat, ad contradicendum ante faciem venit, quia verbis verae fidei apertis vocibus obsistit. Sciendum vero est quia cum haec a carnalibus patimur, non tam ipsi sunt qui in nostra morte saeviunt quam malignus spiritus qui eorum mentibus principatur, sicut per Paulum dicitur: Non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes et potestates, adversus mundi rectores tenebrarum harum (Ephes. VI, 12). Unde cum hic quoque de falsiloquio loqueretur, apte mox ad describendum ejus falsiloquii principem verba convertit dicens:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 10. — Collegit furorem suum in me, et, comminans mihi, infremuit contra me dentibus suis; hostis meus terribilibus oculis me intuitus est. 12. Per malos saevit diabolus, modo occulta, modo aperta persecutione. — Quid aliud omnes iniqui quam membra sunt diaboli? Ipse itaque per eos agit quidquid in eorum cordibus ut agere debeant immittit.. Habet autem etiam nunc diabolus contra sanctam Ecclesiam furorem, sed sparsus ejus furor est, quia occultas tentationes per singulos movet. Cum vero contra eam in aperta persecutione proruperit, furorem sum in eam colligit, quia in afflictione illius tota se intentione constringit. Membra autem ejus hoc pacis tempore

idcirco contra electos collectum furorem non habent, quia malilitiam suam minus se sentiunt posse implere quam volunt. Cum vero sibi suppetere licentiam pravitatis aspexerint, tanto hanc audacius feriunt, quanto et contra illam ex unanimitate glomerantur. Recte itaque nunc dicitur: Collegit furorem suum in me. Cujus adhuc furor ut latius exponatur dicitur: Et comminans mihi, infremuit contra me dentibus suis. De quo et subditur: Hostis meus terribilibus oculis me intuitus est. Ille quippe antiquus hostis Ecclesiae contra hanc dentibus fremit, 422 eamque terribilibus oculis intuetur, quia per alios crudelia exercet, et per alios quae exerceat providet. 13. Diaboli dentes, persecutores; oculi, qui eos consiliis suis regunt. — Dentes namque hujus hostis sunt bonorum persecutores atque carnifices, qui ejus membra laniant, dum electos illius suis persecutionibus affligunt. Oculi vero hujus hostis sunt hi qui contra eam provident mala quae faciant, suisque consiliis persecutorum ejus crudelitates inflammant. Antiquus ergo ejus adversarius fremit contra eam dentibus suis, dum per crudeles reprobos in ea insequitur vitam bonorum. Intuetur hanc terribilibus oculis, qui pravorum consiliis non cessat mala exquirere, in quibus hanc semper deterius affligat. Nam sicut incarnata Veritas in praedicatione sua pauperes idiotas et simplices elegit, sic e contrario damnatus ille homo, quem in fine mundi apostata angelus assumet, ad praedicandam falsitatem suam, astutos ac duplices atque hujus mundi scientiam habentes electurus est.. Unde et per Isaiam dicitur: Vae terrae cymbalo alarum, quae est trans flumina Aethiopiae, quae mittit in mari legatos, et in vasis papyri super aquas (Isai. XVIII, 1). Terra quippe cui vae dicitur ille principaliter homo damnatus est, qui alarum cymbalum vocatur, quia hi qui per superbiam in altitudinem cogitationis evolant, eumdem perversum hominem praedicando sonant. Quae scilicet terra recte trans flumina Aethiopiae esse perhibetur. Aethiopia etenim nigrum populum mittit, et omnem hominem mundus iste, quia peccatorem profert, quasi nigrum Aethiopia populum parit. Sed terra cui

vae dicitur trans flumina Aethiopiae esse perhibetur, quia damnatus ille homo tanta immensitate iniquus est, ut omnium peccantium peccata transcendat. Qui mittit in mari legatos, quia praedicatores suos in saeculum spargit. De quibus recte subditur qualiter mittantur, dum dicitur: In vasis papyri super aquas. Ex papyro quippe charta est. Quid itaque per papyrum nisi saecularis scientia designatur? Vasa ergo papyri sunt corda doctorum saecularium. In vasis igitur papyri super aquas legatos mittere est praedicationem suam in sapientum carnalium sensibus ponere, et defluentes ad culpam populos vocare. Qui ergo illic per vasa papyri, ipsi hic, quia carnaliter vident, per oculos designantur. De quibus et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 11. — Aperuerunt super me ora sua, exprobrantes. 14. Os diaboli qui errores praedicant. — Ora sua reprobi exprobrantes aperiunt cum et erroris sui mala praedicare non metuunt, et praedicamenta rectae fidei irrident. De quibus sciendum est quia illos praecipue in sancta Ecclesia persequuntur quos multis conspiciunt esse profuturos, qui vitam carnalium verbo correptionis conterunt, eosque in Ecclesiae corpore spiritaliter vertunt. Unde et subditur.

CAPUT XII.

. IBID. — Percusserunt maxillam meam, satiati sunt poenis meis. 15. Maxilla Ecclesiae sancti praedicatores. — Maxilla quippe Ecclesiae sancti praedicatores sunt, sicut sub Judaeae specie per Jeremiam dicitur: Plorans ploravit in nocte, et lacrymae ejus in maxillis ejus (Thren. I, 2), quia in adversitatibus Ecclesiae illi amplius plangunt qui vitam carnalium confringere 423 praedicando noverunt. Per ipsos quippe sancta Ecclesia iniquos a vitiis conterit, et quasi glutiens in sua membra convertit. Unde ipsi quoque primo praedicatori velut maxillae Ecclesiae dicitur: Occide et

manduca (Act. X, 13). (Vet. VIII). Hinc est etiam quod Samson maxillam asini tenuit, et hostes peremit (Judic. XV, 16), quia Redemptor noster simplicitatem atque patientiam praedicantium suae manu virtutis tenens, a vitiis suis carnales interfecit. Et maxilla in terram projecta postmodum aquas fudit, quia data morti praedicatorum corpora magna populis monstravere miracula. Maxillam ergo Ecclesiae perversi feriunt, cum bonos praedicatores insequuntur. Et quia tunc reprobi grande se aliquid fecisse aestimant cum vitam praedicatorum necant, post percussionem maxillae apte subjungitur: — IBID. — Satiati sunt poenis meis. Illa quippe eos poena satiat quae mentem Ecclesiae praecipue castigat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 12. Conclusit me Deus apud iniquum, et manibus impiorum me tradidit. 16. Electi persecutionibus antiqui hostis temporaliter permissi. — Electorum populus apud iniquum concluditur cum ejus caro antiqui hostis persecutionibus temporaliter datur. Qui non spiritui, sed manibus impiorum traditur, quia quo hunc in mente capere nequeunt, eo contra carnem illius crudelius inardescunt. Sed sanctae Ecclesiae populus cum adversa perpeti graviter coeperit, et infirmos suos conspexerit ad deteriora delabi, pacis suae tempora ad mentem revocat, quando fideles suos praedicationis suae opulentia pascebat. Unde apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 13. — Ego ille quondam opulentus reponte contritus sum. 17. — Firmis mentibus nulla adversa repente adveniunt. — In eo quod se repente contritum asseruit infirmorum mentem improvidam designavit. Qui dum mala quae ventura sunt praevidere nesciunt; tanto eis graviora fiunt quanto et ab eis inopinata tolerantur. Firmis autem mentibus repente adversa non veniunt, quia priusquam veniant praevidentur. Quod tamen nunc quoque

sancta Ecclesia in quibusdam retro labentibus patitur, qui post doctrinae opulentiam subitis aliquando vitiis conteruntur, ut sic in quibusdam malis corruant, ac si verbi pabulum nunquam habuissent. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV.

IBID. — Tenuit cervicem meam, confregit me, posuit me sibi quasi in signum. 18. Infirmi, urgente persecutione, veritatem praedicare trepidant. — Sicut in malis cervix superbiam, sic in bonis libertatis erectionem signat. Unde nonnunquam ipsa quoque superbia pro erectionis auctoritate ponitur, sicut per prophetam Dominus sanctae Ecclesiae pollicens dicit: Ponam te in superbiam saeculorum (Isai. LX, 15). Et quia persecutionis tempore infirmi quidam vera quae sentiunt praedicare libere non praesumunt, recte de hoc hoste dicitur: Tenuit cervicem meam, confregit me. [Vet. IX.] Fortasse autem hi cervicis appellatione signati sunt qui pacis ejus tempore plusquam decet eriguntur, et sub occasione defendendae rectitudinis vitio deserviunt elationis. Qui persecutionis tempore idcirco adversa plus sentiunt, quia de prosperis extolluntur. De quibus bene dicitur: Tenuit cervicem meam, confregit me. Id est, elationem quam in infirmis habuit, districtione suae percussionis inclinavit. Et posuit me sibi quasi in signum. Constat nimirum quia idcirco signum ponitur, ut sagittarum emissione feriatur. Fidelis itaque populus in signum hosti suo est positus, quia 424 eum semper suis ictibus impetit, eumque suis persecutionibus affligit. Qui enim in hac vita assidua mala tolerat, velut in signum positus, ictus excipit ferientis. Unde et praedicator egregius cum persecutionum mala toleraret, atque sub persecutione adversariorum gemeret, teneram discipulorum mentem de suis afflictionibus consolans, ait: Ipsi enim scitis quod in hoc positi sumus (I Thess. III, 3). Ac si eis aperte dicat: Quid in hoc tempore vulnera nostra miramini, qui si aeterna gaudia quaerimus, huc ad hoc venimus, ut feriamur? Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 14. — Circumdedit me lanceis suis, convulneravit lumbos meos, non pepercit, et effudit in terram viscera mea. 19. Hostis tentationum jaculis ab omni parte nos impetit. — Haec juxta litteram beato Job congruere posse videbantur, per hoc quod dicitur: Circumdedit me lanceis suis, convulneravit lumbos meos, non pepercit, nisi subderetur quod de eo minime scriptum legitur: Effudit in terram viscera mea. Ex qua re necesse est ut dum hoc juxta litteram invenire non possumus, ea quae in verbis ejus secundum historiam sonant juxta spiritum inquiramus. Sancta Ecclesia lanceis ab hoste suo circumdatur quando in membris suis ab impugnatore callido tentationum jaculis impetitur. Bene autem circumdari lanceis dicimur, quia antiquus hostis tentationis suae vulnere ab omni parte nos impetit. Saepe enim dum gula restringitur, ut libido subigatur, inanis gloriae aculeus mentem pulsat. Si autem corpus abstinentiae afflictione non atteritur, contra mentem libidinis flamma se excitat. Saepe dum servare parcimoniam nitimur, ad tenaciam labimur. Et saepe dum possessa effuse tribuimus, ad avaritiam ducimur, quia rursum colligere quaerimus quod tribuamus. Dum ergo antiqui hostis jacula ubique nos impetunt, recte non dicitur: Circumdedit me lanceis suis. Et quia omne peccatum hostis quidem callidus suadet, sed nos ejus suasionibus consentiendo perpetramus, apte subjungitur: Convulneravit lumbos meos. In lumbis quippe luxuria est. Unde et is qui cupiebat voluptatem libidinis a corde exstinguere, praedicavit dicens: Succincti lumbos mentis vestrae (I Pet. I, 13). Cum ergo antiquus hostis fidelem populum ad luxuriam pertrahit, hunc procul dubio in lumbis ferit. Ubi notandum quoque est quod non ait: Vulneravit, sed Convulneravit lumbos meos. Sicut enim loqui aliquando unius est, colloqui vero duorum, vel fortasse multorum, sic antiquus hostis, quia nos ad culpam sine nostra voluntate non rapit, nequaquam lumbos nostros vulnerare, sed convulnerare dicitur, quia hoc quod nobis ille male suggerit, nos sequentes ex voluntate

propria implemus, et quasi cum ipso nos pariter vulneramus, quia ad perpetrandum malum ex libero simul arbitrio ducimur. Sequitur: Non pepercit. Ac si dicat Non destitit. VERS. 17. — Facies mea intumuit a fletu. 23. Filios suos poenitentes fletibus suis adjuvat. Praelati de alienis tanquam de propriis lapsibus se affligant. Facies quippe sanctae Ecclesiae sunt hi qui, in locis regiminum positi, apparent primi, ut ex eorum specie sit honor fidelis populi, etiam si quid in corpore latet deforme. Qui nimirum praelati plebibus plangunt culpas infirmantium, seque sic de alienis lapsibus ac si de propriis affligunt. Et saepe dum quosdam vident ad veniam post culpas redire, quosdam vero in iniquitate persistere, occulta omnipotentis Dei judicia mirantur, sed penetrare nequeunt. Obstupescunt enim quae non intelligunt. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XXI.

IBID. — Et palpebrae meae caligaverunt. 24. Subditorum vias vice oculorum dirigant. — Palpebrae enim recte appellati sunt qui ad praevidenda pedum itinera vigilant. Sed cum occulta Dei judicia nec praepositi vigilantes intelligunt, palpebrae sanctae Ecclesiae caligant. Sed ut saepe jam me dixisse memini, beatus Job sanctae Ecclesiae 426 typum tenens, modo voce corporis, modo autem voce capitis utitur; et dum de membris ejus loquitur, repente ad verba capitis levatur. Unde hic quoque subjungitur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 18. — Haec passus sum absque iniquitate manus meae, cum haberem mundas ad Deum preces. 25. Solus prae omnibus mundas ad Deum preces Christus habuit. — Absque iniquitate enim manus suae pertulit, qui peccatum non fecit, nec inventus est dolus in ore ejus (I Pet. II, 22, seq.), et tamen dolorem crucis pro nostra redemptione toleravit. Qui

solus prae omnibus mundas ad Deum preces habuit, quia et in ipso dolore passionis pro persecutoribus oravit, dicens: Pater, dimitte illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt (Luc. XXIII, 34). Quid enim dici, quid cogitari in prece mundius potest quam cum et illis misericordia intercessionis tribuitur a quibus toleratur dolor? Unde factum est ut Redemptoris nostri sanguinem, quem persecutores saevientes fuderant, postmodum credentes biberent, eumque esse Dei Filium praedicarent. De quo videlicet sanguine apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIII.

VERS. 19. — Terra, ne operias sanguinem meum, neque inveniat in te latendi locum clamor meus. 26. Sanguis ejus Abelis sanguine melius loquitur; hic enim ultionem, ille veniam exorat. — Peccanti homini dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Quae scilicet terra Redemptoris nostri sanguinem non abscondit, quia unusquisque peccator redemptionis suae pretium sumens, confitetur ac laudat, et quibus valet proximis innotescit. Terra etiam sanguinem ejus non operuit, quia sancta Ecclesia redemptionis suae mysterium in cunctis jam mundi partibus praedicavit. Notandum quod subditur: Neque inveniat in te latendi locum clamor meus (Genes. III, 19). Ipse enim sanguis redemptionis qui sumitur clamor nostri Redemptoris est. Unde etiam Paulus dicit: Et sanguinis aspersionem melius loquentem quam Abel (Heb. XII, 24). De sanguine Abel dictum fuerat: Vox sanguinis fratris tui clamat ad me de terra (Genes. IV, 10). Sed sanguis Jesu melius loquitur quam Abel, quia sanguis Abel mortem fratricidae fratris petiit, sanguis autem Domini vitam persecutoribus impetravit. Ut ergo in nobis sacramentum dominicae passionis non sit otiosum, debemus imitari quod sumimus, et praedicare caeteris quod veneramur. Locum enim latendi clamor ejus in nobis invenit, si hoc quod mens credidit lingua tacet. Sed ne in nobis clamor ejus lateat, restat ut

unusquisque juxta modulum suum vivificationis suae mysterium proximis innotescat. Libet mentis oculos ad dominicae passionis horam reducere, cum Judaei persequentes saevirent, discipuli timentes fugerent. Qui enim carne mori videbatur nequaquam Deus esse credebatur. Unde hic apte subditur:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 20. — Ecce enim in coelo testis meus, et conscius meus in excelsis. 27. Hominibus Christum nescientibus, conscium et testem habuit Patrem in coelo. — Cum enim Filius labefactaretur in terra, erat ei testis in coelo. Testis quippe Filii Pater est, de quo ipse in Evangelio dicit: Et qui misit me Pater, ipse testimonium perhibuit de me (Joan. V, 37). Qui recte etiam conscius dicitur, quia una voluntate, uno consilio Pater cum Filio semper operatur. Cujus etiam testis est, quia nemo novit Filium nisi Pater (Matth. XI, 27). Tunc ergo in coelo testem et conscium in excelsis habuit, quando hi qui eum morientem in carne cernebant divinitatis ejus 427 potentiam considerare nesciebant. Et cum ignorarent homines, in morte tamen Mediator Dei et hominum noverat quod cum ipso operabatur Pater. Quod fortasse etiam ad vocem ejus corporis referri valet. Sancta namque Ecclesia idcirco adversa vitae praesentis tolerat, ut hanc superna gratia ad praemia aeterna perducat. Carnis suae mortem despicit, quia resurrectionis intendit gloriae. Et transitoria sunt quae patitur, perpetua quae praestolatur. De quibus nimirum bonis perpetuis dubietatem non habet, quia fidele jam testimonium Redemptoris sui gloriam tenet. Carnis quippe ejus resurrectionem mente conspicit, atque ad spem fortiter convalescit quia, quod in suo videt jam factum capite, sperat in ejus quoque corpore, quod videlicet ipsa est absque dubietate secuturum. Quam scilicet Ecclesiam Psalmista conspiciens in perpetua perfectione mansuram, sub appellatione lunae describit, dicens: Luna perfecta in aeternum (Psal. LXXXVIII, 38).

Quam quia ad resurrectionis spem dominica resurrectio roborat, recte subjunxit: Et testis in coelo fidelis, quia ut de sua resurrectione non trepidet, jam eum in coelo, qui resurrexit a mortuis, testem habet. Fidelis itaque populus cum adversa patitur, cum duris tribulationibus fatigatur, ad spem sequentis gloriae mentem erigat, et, de Redemptoris sui resurrectione confidens, dicat: Ecce enim in coelo testis meus, et conscius meus in excelsis. Qui recte conscius dicitur, quia naturam nostram non solum creando novit, sed etiam assumendo. Scire enim ejus est nostra suscepisse. Unde etiam per Psalmistam dicitur: Ipse enim scit figmentum nostrum (Psal. CII, 13). Quid enim mirum si figmentum nostrum dicatur specialiter scire, dum constet nihil esse quod nesciat? Sed figmentum nostrum scire ejus est hoc in seipso ex pietate suscepisse. 28. Idem testis nobis quaerendus. Quae tamen vox cum beato Job congruere nobis etiam singulis potest. Omnis enim qui ex eo quod agit humanas laudes appetit, testem in terra quaerit. Qui autem de actibus suis omnipotenti Deo placere festinat, testem se in coelo habere considerat. Et saepe contingit ut ipsa quoque in nobis bona opera ab incautis hominibus reprehendantur. Sed qui testem in coelo habet, reprehensiones hominum metuere non debet. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXV.

VERS. 21. — Verbosi amici mei, ad Deum stillat oculus meus. 29. Non ab hominibus quaerendum testimonium. — Quid enim per oculum nisi cordis intentio designatur? sicut scriptum est: Si fuerit oculus tuus simplex, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit (Matth. VI, 22). Quia cum bona intentione quid agitur, ejus intentionis actio apud Deum minime fuscatur. Cum ergo verbosi amici sunt, id est cum et ipsi derogant qui in fide sociantur, ad Deum necesse est ut oculus stillet, quatenus nostra intentio tota in amoris intimi compunctione defluat, et tanto subtilius se ad interiora erigat, quanto et per

exteriora opprobria repulsa intus redire cogitur, ne foras evanescat. Sequitur.

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 22. — Atque utinam sic judicaretur vir cum Deo, quomodo judicatur filius hominis cum collega suo! 30. Quoa peccatum in nobis flagellis suis puniat Deus incertum. — Peccatores quidem nos esse semper agnoscimus; sed tamen saepe in flagello positi, pro quo magis peccato flagellemur ignoramus; et nos ipsos 428 subtili inquisitione discutimus, ut, si quo modo possimus, causam percussionis nostrae investigare valeamus. Quae dum plerumque nos latet, fit nobis oneri caecitas nostra, et de eo quod patimur plus dolemus. Quisquis vero cum collega suo ad judicium accedit, et quod sentit dicit, et quidquid contradicitur agnoscit, et quo voluerit pulsat, et novit unde pulsatur. Qui autem divina animadversione percutitur, dum novit quidem quia vapulat, sed cur vapulet ignorat, quasi dicit ipse quod sentit, sed quid contra se dicatur nescit, quia ipse quidem ingemiscit in verbere, sed Deus aperte non declarat pro qua eum feriat ultione. Itaque nunc dicitur: Atque utinam sic judicaretur vir cum Deo, quomodo judicatur filius hominis cum collega suo! Ac si aperte diceretur: Sicut in omni quod dico audior, sic omne quod de me dicitur audirem. Quod tamen in hac vita fieri nullatenus potest, quia magna est interpositio oculis cordis nostri ad contemplandam subtilitatem Dei, ipsa videlicet infirmitas nostra. Sed tunc ad purum intuebimur eum a quo nunc subtiliter intuemur, cum, hac infirmitate deposita, ad contemplationis internae gratiam venerimus, de qua Paulus dicit: Tunc cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum (I Cor. XIII, 12). Unde beatus Job videns eamdem cognitionem plenissime hic perfici nullatenus posse, de caecitate quidem vitae praesentis gemit, sed tamen se de ejus brevitate consolatur, dicens:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 23. — Ecce enim breves anni transeunt, et semitam per quam non revertar ambulo. 31. Vitae miserias ejus brevitas mitigat et sotatur. — Omne quod transit breve est, etiam si tardius terminari videatur. In mortis autem semita, per quam non revertimur, ambulamus, non quod ad vitam carnis minime resurgendo reducimur, sed quod ad labores hujus vitae mortalis, vel ad conquirenda laboribus praemia, iterum non venimus.

CAPUT XXVIII.

CAP. XVII, VERS. 1. — Spiritus meus attenuabitur. 32. Boni brevem vitam, longam vero mali sibi pollicentur. — Attenuatur spiritus timore judicii, quia electorum mentes quo amplius extremo judicio propinquare se sentiunt, eo ad discutiendas semetipsas terribilius contremiscunt, et si quas in se carnales unquam cogitationes inveniunt, poenitentiae ardore consumunt, nec cogitationes suas dilatari carnali voluptate permittunt, quia eo semetipsos dijudicantes subtilius feriunt, quo districtum judicem praestolantur vicinum. Unde fit ut propinquum sibi semper exitum suspicentur. Nam reproborum mentes idcirco multa nequiter agunt, quia hic se vivere diutius arbitrantur. Justorum ergo attenuatur spiritus, sed crassescit iniquorum. Quo enim per elationem tument, eo attenuationem spiritus non habent. Justi vero dum brevitatem suae vitae considerant, elationis et immunditiae culpas declinant. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. — Dies mei breviabuntur, et solum mihi superest sepulcrum. 33. Hinc elationis et immunditiae culpas declinant illi, isti multiplicant. Perfecta vita est mortis imitatio. — Qui enim considerat qualis erit in morte, semper fit timidus in operatione; atque unde in oculis suis jam quasi non vivit, inde

veraciter in oculis sui conditoris vivit. Nil quod transeat appetit, cunctis praesentis vitae desideriis contradicit; et pene mortuum se considerat, quia moriturum 429 minime ignorat. Perfecta enim vita est mortis imitatio, quam dum justi sollicite peragunt, culparum laqueos evadunt. Unde scriptum est: In omnibus operibus tuis memorare novissima tua, et in aeternum non peccabis (Eccli. VII, 40). Unde et beatus Job, quia dies suos considerat breviari, et solum sibi superesse sepulcrum pensat, apte subjungit:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 2. — Non peccavi, et in amaritudinibus moratur oculus meus. 34. Non pro corrigenda culpa, sed pro augenda gratia Job percussus. — Ac si aperte dicat: Culpam non feci, et flagella suscepi. Sed hac in re animum movet, quia in multis se hujus historiae locis peccasse confitetur, qua ratione peccasse se nunc abneget? Sed ad haec ratio celeriter occurrit, quia nec tantum peccavit ut flagella mereretur, nec tamen esse sine peccato potuit. Nam quia non pro corrigenda culpa, sed pro gratia augenda percussus est, judex ipse testatur, qui laudat et ferit. Et rursum quia sine peccato non fuerit, nec ipse negat qui a judice laudatur, atque ideo laudatur, quia non negat. Sed credo quod melius haec verba discutimus, si dicta ex voce capitis sentiamus. Redemptor etenim noster ad redemptionem nostram veniens, et non peccavit, et amaritudinem pertulit, quia poenam culpae nostrae sine culpa suscepit, de cujus voce subditur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 3. — Libera me, et pone me juxta te, et cujusvis manus pugnet contra me. 35. Christus in amaritudine fuit per passionem, liberatus est per resurrectionem. — Ipse etenim non peccavit in cogitatione, vel opere, ipse in amaritudine moratus est per passionem, ipse liberatus est per resurrectionem, ipse juxta Patrem positus est per ascensionem, quia

profectus in coelum sedet a dextris Dei. Et quia post ascensionis ejus gloriam Judaea in discipulorum ejus persecutione commota est, recte nunc dicitur: Et cujusvis manus pugnet contra me. Tunc quippe in membris illius furor persequentium saeviit, tunc contra fidelium vitam flamma crudelitatis exarsit. Sed quo irent iniqui, aut quid agerent, dum is quem persequebantur in terra jam sedebat in coelo? De quibus adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 4. — Cor eorum longe fecisti a disciplina. 36. Pravorum cor longe esse a disciplina Deus tantum permittendo facit. — Si enim disciplinae custodiam nossent, et nequaquam Redemptoris nostri praecepta contemnerent, ipsa eos carnis suae mortalitas ad amorem vitae immortalis excitasset. Hoc ipsum namque in hac vita corruptioni nos esse subjectos, jam de flagello disciplinae est. Aestu enim et frigore, fame sitique turbari, morbis affici, quandoque etiam exstingui, quid sunt haec aliud quam flagella peccati? Sed sunt nonnulli qui et flagella tolerant, et tamen mentem ad flagellantis metum minime reformant. Unde recte nunc dicitur: Cor eorum longe fecisti a disciplina. Quia etsi corpus sub disciplina est, cor sub disciplina non est, dum et flagellatur quisque, et tamen ad humilitatem mentis non reducitur. Neque ita hoc dicitur ac si omnipotens et misericors Deus longe cor hominis a disciplina faciat, sed quod sponte delapsum ibi remanere ubi cecidit judicando permittat, sicut ei in oratione quoque dicimus. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem (Matth. VI, 13); id est, induci minime permittas. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

IBID. — Propterea non exaltabuntur. 430 37. Disciplinae expertes ab infimis ad coelestia nunquam sublevantur. — Cor enim si sub disciplina esset, superiora appeteret, adipiscendis bonis transeuntibus non inhiaret.

Quorum igitur cor sub disciplina non est, recte de illis dicitur: Propterea non exaltabuntur, quia dum in infimis voluptatibus dimissi terrena bona semper desiderant, cor ad superna gaudia nunquam levant. Exaltarentur quippe si mentem ad spem patriae coelestis erigerent. Sed qui per disciplinam custodire vitam minime student, semper per desideria in imis jacent, et, quod est gravius, jacendo se erigunt, quia de rebus transitoriis extolluntur. Extolli autem possunt, sed exaltari nequeunt, quia inde profundius in imo sunt, unde apud se altiores fiunt. Cor itaque, quod sine disciplina est, exaltari non valet, quia humana mens sicut male elevata in infimis premitur, sic bene pressa in sublimibus levatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIV.

VERS. 5. — Praedam pollicetur sociis, et oculi filiorum ejus deficient. 38. Unum corpus sunt diabolus et iniqui. Ejus socii, angeli apostatae; filii, perversi homines. — Postquam de multitudine iniquorum, id est de antiqui hostis corpore, beatus Job sententiam protulit, mox ad ipsum eorum principem, id est caput omnium perditorum, sententiam vertit, atque a plurali numero ad singularem redit. Ita quippe unum corpus sunt diabolus et omnes iniqui, ut plerumque nomine capitis censeatur corpus, et nomine corporis appelletur caput. Nam capitis nomine censetur corpus cum de perverso homine dicitur: Ex vobis unus diabolus est (Joan. VI, 71). Et rursum nomine corporis appellatur caput cum de ipso apostata angelo dicitur: Inimicus homo hoc fecit (Matth. XIII, 28). Iste igitur princeps omnium perversorum alios socios habet atque alios filios. Qui namque sunt ejus socii, nisi illi apostatae angeli qui cum eo de coelestis patriae sede ceciderunt? Vel quos alios filios habet, nisi perversos homines, qui de ejus prava persuasione in malitiae operatione generantur? Unde etiam Veritatis voce infidelibus dicitur: Vos ex patre diabolo estis (Joann. VIII, 44). 39. Quam praedam sociis polliceatur diabolus. — Perversus itaque iste auctor

erroris praedam sociis pollicetur, quia malignis spiritibus pravorum promittit animas in eorum fine rapiendas. Et oculi filiorum ejus deficient, quia dum intentiones hominum ad sola terrena speranda excitat, hoc illos amare facit quod diu tenere non possunt. Neque enim valet amoris pravi intentio permanere, quando et hoc quod amat ipsumque qui amat constat sub celeritate deficere. Possunt quoque et per socios fortasse intelligi crudelissimi quique et omni malitia jam repleti; per filios vero hi qui adhuc deceptoriis promissionibus illusi, augendae pravitati nutriuntur, ut illos jam velut ex merito malitiae diabolus quasi socios habeat qui jam non habent in perditione quo crescant, istos autem quasi filios quos promissionibus lactat ut ad pejora proficiant. Sed oculi filiorum ejus deficient, quia pravorum intentiones cadunt cum omne quod hic appetunt deserunt, et illic quod doleant sine fine patiuntur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

VERS. 6. — Posuit me quasi in proverbium vulgi: et exemplum sum coram eis. 40. De electorum flagellis stulta vulgi opinio. — Haec beatus Job dicat ex se, dicat ex vocibus omnium electorum. Omnis quippe qui flagello percutitur quasi in proverbium ponitur vulgi, quia 431 stultus quisque dum cuiquam maledicere appetit, ex illius similitudine maledictionem sumit, quem percussum temporaliter videt, eamque poenam suo optat adversario quam evenisse conspicit justo. Sicque fit ut non recte sapientibus in exemplum deducatur rectus, dum et poena justi esse damnatio creditur, et quae illi maneat gloria nulla spe fidei praevidetur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 7. — Caligavit ad indignationem oculus meus, et membra mea quasi in nihilum redacta sunt. 41. Ad flagella sanctis obstupescentibus et caligantibus, infirmi aliquando corruunt. — Ad indignationem oculus

caligat quando ipsi quoque qui in dominico corpore, id est in Ecclesia, lumen veritatis habent, dum se diutius a pravis despici ac dedignari conspiciunt, de occulti judicii admiratione turbantur, et secretum Dei penetrare nequeunt, cur praevalere perversi contra bonorum innocentiam permittuntur. Quis etenim non obstupescat cum Herodias apud temulentum regem saltatu filiae obtinet ut caput amici Sponsi, prophetae et plusquam prophetae, ante ora convivantium in disco deferatur (Marc. VI, 27)? Sed cum justi ad indignationem caligant, infirmi plerumque usque ad infidelitatem corruunt. Unde subditur: Et membra mea quasi in nihilum sunt redacta. Membrorum quippe nomine teneritudo exprimitur infirmorum, qui dum perversos prospiciunt florere justosque cruciari, ad hoc nonnunquam perveniunt, ut se bona vel inchoasse poeniteant; atque ita ad agenda mala citius recedunt, ac si eorum vitae nocuerit bonum quod inchoaverunt. Hoc autem quod ait: Caligavit ad indignationem oculus meus, verbis planioribus aperit, adjungens:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 8. Stupebunt justi super hoc, et innocens contra hypocritam suscitabitur. 42. Imperfectorum est gloriae perversorum invidere. — Hoc loco innocens necdum perfectus justus accipitur, qui bona adhuc inchoans, etsi nocere aliis non novit, perfecta tamen ipse agere nequaquam valet. Et quia corda parvulorum, dum perversos florere in praesenti vita conspiciunt, invidiae facibus succenduntur; tanto enim quisque plus invidet aliis bona praesentia, quanto ea ipse minus contempserit. Nam quod haberi ab omnibus non valet simul totum, huic desit quod alter habuerit. Succenditur vero contra hypocritam innocens, dum gloriae simulatoris invidet etiam qui nulli nocere solet. Sin vero hoc in loco innocens quilibet in bono perfectus accipitur, contra hypocritam innocens suscitatur quando hunc et florere conspicit, et tamen cum suo eum flore contemnit; et praedicando quae recta

sunt, tanto eum despiciendum caeteris esse denuntiat, quanto eum conspicit illa anxie quaerere quae cum eo diu non valeant permanere. In quo adhuc sensu subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS. 9. — Et tenebit justus viam suam, et mundis manibus addet fortitudinem. 43. Deus qui malis temporalia bona concedit, justis aeterna non denegabit. — Considerato quippe hypocrita, justus viam suam tenet, quia dum illum ex perversa voluntate obtinere ea quae mundi sunt intuetur, ipse ad amorem coelestium robustius stringitur, sciens quia bonis desideriis praemia aeterna non deerunt, dum et pravis et duplicibus cordibus bona temporalia non negantur. Qua ex re mundis quoque manibus addit fortitudinem, quia conspiciens perversos obtinere terrenam gloriam, bona sua opera provehit 432 ad perfectionem; et tanto altius temporalia despicit, quanto haec abundare etiam malis cernit. Quam enim sint despicienda considerat quae Deus omnipotens etiam perversis praestat. Si enim principaliter magna essent, nequaquam haec conditor adversariis suis tribueret. Unde et indignum sibi esse perpendit ut illa bona appetat quae abundare conspicit et malis, sed ad percipienda coelestia mentem suam dirigit, quae sibi cum reprobis communia esse non possunt. Igitur postquam exteriores profectus malorum, bonorum vero interiores intulit, exhortationis verba protulit, dicens:

CAPUT XXXIX.

VERS. 10. — Igitur omnes vos convertimini, et venite. 44. Ad Deum converti fide, et venire opere debemus. — Quae videlicet exhortationis verba proprie ad electos format, quos ad aeternitatem vocat. Qui duobus modis invitantur, scilicet ut convertantur, et veniant: convertantur nimirum fide, veniant opere. Vel certe convertantur deserendo mala, et veniant bona

faciendo, sicut scriptum est: Declina a malo, et fac bonum (Psal. XXXVI, 27). Mirandum vero quod subditur:

CAPUT XL.

IBID. — Et non inveniam in vobis ullum sapientem. 45. Apud semetipsos sapientes, ad veram sapientiam pervenire nequeunt. — Quid est enim quod eos ad sapientiam vocat, et tamen optat ne illos sapientes inveniat, nisi quod ad veram sapientiam venire non possunt qui falsae suae sapientiae fiducia decipiuntur? de quibus scriptum est: Vae qui sapientes estis in oculis vestris, et coram vobismetipsis prudentes (Isai. V, 21). Et quibus rursum dicitur: Nolite esse prudentes apud vosmetipsos (Rom. XII, 16). Unde idem praedicator egregius hos quos carnaliter sapientes invenerat, ut sapientiam veram perciperent, prius fieri stultos quaerebat, dicens: Si quis videtur inter vos sapiens esse in hoc saeculo, stultus fiat, ut sit sapiens (I, Cor. III, 18). Et per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Confiteor tibi, Pater Domine coeli et terrae, quia abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis (Matth. XI, 25). Quia ergo hi qui apud semetipsos sapientes sunt ad veram sapientiam pervenire non possunt, recte beatus Job, conversionem auditorum desiderans, exoptat ne in eis ullum sapientem inveniat. Ac si eis aperte dicat: Stulti esse apud vosmetipsos discite, ut in Deo vere sapientes esse valeatis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLI.

VERS. 11. — Dies mei transierunt, cogitationes meae dissipatae sunt, torquentes cor meum. 46. Dies Ecclesiae prosperitas, noctes adversitas. Sancti ad terrena dispensanda coacti torqueri se sentiunt. — Sancta electorum Ecclesia per diurna et nocturna tempora conspicit vitae suae spatia transire, quia noctem in adversitatibus, diem vero in prosperitatibus habere consuevit. Quasi enim lux ei oritur ex tranquillitate pacis, et nox ex

dolore persecutionis. Sed cum post quietis otia ad excrescentis contra se persecutionis laborem redit, dies suos transisse testatur. In quibus tamen diebus solet tanto gravioribus curis premi, quanto a se de ipsa tranquillitate pacis subtiliores a judice rationes cogitat exquiri. In tranquillitate enim pacis modo animarum lucra cogitat, modo terrenarum rerum dispensationes curat. Quae videlicet terrenorum actuum dispensationes tanto bonis mentibus graviores sunt, quanto earum intuitu ab intuendis coelestibus vel ad modicum avelluntur. Unde bene beatus Job sive sua, sive voce universalis Ecclesiae, postquam dies suos transisse testatur, illico subjunxit: Cogitationes meae dissipatae sunt, 433 torquentes cor meum. Quia dum bonis mentibus temporalis felicitas transit, etiam cura eis terrenae dispensationis subtrahitur, quae eas in cogitationibus torquere videbatur. Dum enim erectae semper esse ad percipienda coelestia appetunt, eo ipso quo aliquando ex dispensatione terrena ad ima cogitanda descendunt, torqueri se sentiunt. Unde fit ut ipsa quoque adversitas persecutionis vertatur in magnam exsultationem laetitiae, propter adeptam quietem cordis. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XLII.

VERS. 12. — Noctem verterunt in diem. 47. Sancti malunt perpeti mala, quam bonorum cura fatigari. — Dissipatae etenim cogitationes noctem in diem vertunt, quia nonnunquam justis amplius placet ex adversitate mala perpeti quam ex prosperitate terrenae dispensationis cura fatigari. Sed quia noverunt cautius, et adversa transire, et prospera rursus illucescere, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLIII.

IBID. — Et rursum post tenebras spero lucem. 48. Sancti post mortem statim coelestibus praemiis donantur. — Lux enim post tenebras speratur,

quia vel post noctem vitae praesentis aeternum lumen percipitur, vel ita hic adversitas atque prosperitas alternant, ut sibi succedere vicissim non desinant. Unde fit ut et in luce nox in suspicione sit, et in nocte lux in praesumptione, sicut scriptum est: In die bonorum ne immemor sis malarum, et in die malorum ne immemor sis bonorum (Eccl. XI, 27). Sed ecce quia auctoris nostri gratia redempti sumus, hoc jam coelestis muneris habemus, ut cum a carnis nostrae inhabitatione subtrahimur, mox ad coelestia praemia deducamur, quia dum conditor ac Redemptor noster, claustra inferni penetrans, electorum exinde animas eduxit, nos illo ire non patitur, unde jam alios descendendo liberavit. Hi vero, qui ante ejus adventum in hunc mundum venerunt, quantamlibet justitiae virtutem haberent, ex corporibus educti in sinu coelestis patriae statim recipi nullo modo poterant, quia necdum ille venerat qui inferni claustra sua descensione solveret, et justorum animas in perpetua jam sede collocaret. Unde beatus Job et afflictionem sentiens, et adhuc differri retributionem justorum sciens, apte subjungit:

CAPUT XLIV.

VERS. 13. — Si sustinuero, infernus domus mea est, et in tenebris stravi lectulum meum. 49. Ante Christum justorum animae in inferno tormentorum expertes tenebantur. — Priores etenim sancti et sustinere adversa poterant, et tamen, e corporibus educti, adhuc ab inferni locis liberari non poterant, quia necdum venerat qui illuc sine culpa descenderet, ut eos qui ibi tenebantur ex culpa liberaret. Tunc vero homo suum lectulum in tenebris stravit, quando lucem justitiae persuasori callido consentiendo deseruit. Et quia in ipsis quoque inferni locis justorum animae sine tormento tenebantur, ut et pro originali culpa adhuc illuc descenderent, et tamen ex propriis actibus supplicium non haberent, quasi in tenebris lectulum stravisse est in inferno sibi requiem praeparasse. Grave etenim taedium

electis fuit post solutionem carnis adhuc speciem non videre Creatoris. Quod taedium non immerito beatus Job tenebras vocat. Sed quia hoc ex poena infirmitatis venit, recte eamdem mox infirmitatem subdit dicens:

CAPUT XLV.

434 VERS. 14. — Putredini dixi: Pater meus es; mater mea, et soror mea, vermibus. 50. Ex origine vitiata concupiscentiae curarumque vermes trahimus. — Quid est hoc quod dixit putredini: Pater meus es, nisi quod omnis homo ab origine jam vitiata descendit? Unde et additur: Mater mea, et soror mea, vermibus, quia videlicet et ab ipsa putredine et cum ipsa in hunc mundum venimus. Quantum enim ad materiam corruptibilis carnis, mater nostra ac soror vermes sunt, quia et de putredine processimus, et cum putredine venimus, quam portamus. Quod si intelligi spiritaliter potest, et mater natura, et consuetudo non immerito soror vocatur, quia ab illa cum ista sumus. Quae videlicet mater et soror vermes sunt, quia ex natura corruptibili et consuetudine perversa cogimur, ut quasi quibusdam vermibus, sic inquietis cogitationibus in mente fatigemur. Carnis enim natura vitiata et consuetudo perversa, quia innumeras curas in corde infirmitatis nostrae generant, bene mater et soror vermes vocantur. Mordent enim animum curae, dum inquietant. Non enim cessant justi viri vel sollicite cogitare et pertractare quid agant, vel provide inspicere quo post praesentem vitam ducendi sint. Quia ergo tunc electi ante adventum Domini et in labore vitae praesentis se esse cernebant, et tamen post praesentem vitam necdum coelestia bona percipere, multis cogitationibus urebantur. Exspectabant enim gratiam Redemptoris sui, nec tamen ad eam poterant in carne vivendo pervenire. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XLVI.

VERS 15. — Ubi est ergo nunc praestolatio mea? 51. Justorum tot in malis, sola spes Christus. — Quae esse potuit praestolatio justorum, nisi justos justificans Deus, qui ad poenas humani generis sponte descenderet, et captivos mortis justitiae suae virtute liberaret? Hujus enim praesentiam minime cessabant intenta cogitatione praestolari: esse venturam noverant, sed venire citius quaerebant. Unde non ait: Ubi est ergo praestolatio mea? sed ait: Ubi est ergo nunc praestolatio mea? [Vet. XXII.] Dum enim addit nunc, ostendit quia quod quandoque venturum erat venire citius desiderabat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVII.

IBID. — Et patientiam meam quis considerat? 52. Ardentibus desideriis ab illis expetitus. — Expressit desiderium quo festinat in carne positus redimi et ab inferis ad superna revocari. Et quidem paucorum hominum ista fuit perpendere, ut scirent de praesentis vitae laboribus vel de subsequenti post mortem dilatione cogitare. Quod utrumque justi ante adventum Redemptoris nostri se perpeti dolebant. Unde et recte dicitur: Et patientiam meam quis considerat? Equidem non deest qui patientiam consideret; sed cum citius non exaudit, quasi minus considerare Deus dicitur. Ipsa enim humani generis quae venit in mundi fine redemptio ab his qui a mundi initio praecesserunt tarda credebatur, quia longo temporis spatio a coelestium remuneratione disjuncti sunt, Veritate attestante, quae ait: Multi prophetae et reges voluerunt vos videre quae vos videtis, et non viderunt (Luc. X, 24). Itaque quod nunc dicitur: Patientiam meam quis considerat? ardentis desiderii vota panduntur. Neque enim, ut praediximus, justorum patientiam 435 non considerat Deus, sed quasi non considerare dicitur ad votum desiderii minus citius apparere, et per prolixiora tempora dispensationis suae gratiam differre. Dicat ergo: Patientiam meam quis considerat? quia quod disponenti breve est, longum est amanti. Unde adhuc dilationis suae

damna considerans, hoc quod jam praedixerat repetit, et, descensurus ad ima, vocem doloris ingeminat, dicens:

CAPUT XLVIII.

VERS. 16. — In profundissimum infernum descendent omnia mea. 53. Qui profundissimus infernus, dicantur eorum receptacula. — Cum constet, quod apud inferos justi non in locis poenalibus, sed in superiori quietis sinu, tenerentur, magna nobis oboritur quaestio, quidnam sit quod beatus Job asserit, dicens: In profundissimum infernum descendent omnia mea. Qui et si ante adventum mediatoris Dei et hominum in infernum descensurus erat, liquet tamen quia in profundissimum infernum descensurus non erat. An ipsa superiora loca inferi profundissimum infernum vocat? Quia videlicet, quantum ad sublimitatem coeli, jam hujus aeris spatium non immerito dici infernus potest. Unde cum apostatae angeli a coelestibus sedibus in hoc caliginoso aere sint demersi, Petrus apostolus dicit: Angelis peccantibus non pepercit, sed rudentibus inferni detractos, in tartarum tradidit in judicio cruciandos reservari (II Petr. II, 4). Si itaque, quantum ad celsitudinem coeli, aer iste caliginosus infernus est, quantum ad ejusdem aeris altitudinem, terra quae inferius jacet, et infernus intelligi et profundus potest; quantum vero ad ejusdem terrae altitudinem, et illa loca inferi quae superiora sunt aliis receptaculis inferni, hoc loco non incongrue inferni profundissimi appellatione signantur, quia quod aer ad coelum, terra ad aerem, hoc ille est superior infernorum sinus ad terram. 436 54. Job solam animam totum hominem esse sentit. — Sed mirum valde est quod adjungit: Descendent omnia mea. Cum enim sola anima descensura esset ad inferni loca, quid est quod sanctus vir illuc perhibet omnia sua descendere, nisi quod ibi se esse totum vidit, ubi pondus suae remunerationis intelligit? Quia hoc quod ex se insensibile in terra deserit, quousque ad incorruptionem resurrectionis redeat, se esse non sentit. Omnia itaque sua in infernum

profundissimum descensura perhibet, quo solam suam animam descensuram videt, quia ibi totus est, ubi sentire possit quod receperit. Vel certe in infernum omnia ejus descendunt, quia laborum omnium retributio adhuc in sola inferni quiete recipi praestolabatur. Et quasi illuc descendit omne quod egit, quia ibi quietem retributionis suae ex omnibus invenit. Unde etiam ipsa quies praestolata subjungitur, cum illico subinfertur:

CAPUT XLIX.

IBID. — Putasne saltem ibi erit requies mihi? 55. Job de sua salute trepidante, nemo securus sit. — In quibus nimirum verbis et innotescit quod desiderat, et tamen esse se adhuc de suscipienda requie dubium designat, ne cujus sancta opera tot flagella secuta sunt, occulto judicio superni judicis, post flagella temporalia etiam mansura tormenta sequerentur. Qua in re cum magno nobis timore pensandum est quis nostrum jam de requie aeterna securus sit, si de ea adhuc et ille trepidat cujus virtutis praeconia et ipse judex qui percutit clamat: Si enim justus vix salvabitur, impius et peccator ubi parebunt (I Pet. IV, 18)? Beatus etenim Job ad requiem se post flagella perventurum noverat; sed ut nostra timore corda concuteret, ipse visus est de aeternae quietis retributione dubitare cum dicit Putasne? ut nos videlicet perpendamus quanta debemus formidine venturum judicium semper expavescere, quando et ille qui a judice laudatus est adhuc de retributione judicii in suis vocibus securus non est.

LIBER DECIMUS QUARTUS

In quo sanctus Gregorius XVIII et XIX capitum libri Job sensum historicum, allegoricum et moralem aperit.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. Superius dictorum anacephalaeosis. — Superiori hujus operis parte (Maxime praefat., c. 2) tractavimus quod omnipotens Deus, ut mentes corrigeret sub lege positorum, beati Job vitam ad testimonium adduxit, qui legem non novit, et tamen tenuit, qui praecepta vitae quae scripto non acceperat custodivit. Hujus prius actio Deo attestante laudatur, et probari postmodum diabolo insidiante permittitur, ut per tentamenta tribulationis ostenderet quantum prius in tranquillitate profecisset. Hujus vitam inimicus generis humani more suo improbus, et laudari Deo attestante cognovit, et tamen ad tentandum expetiit. Quem cum tot damnis rerum, tot orbitatibus percussum sternere nequivisset, uxorem ei in stimulum malae suasionis excitavit, ut saltem per familiaria verba corrumperet quem per tot sternere nuntiorum tormenta minime valeret. Sed cum adjutorio feminae, quod contra Adam prius in paradiso obtinuit, contra hunc secundum in sterquilinio positum roborari non potuit, ad alia se tentandi argumenta convertit, ut amicos ejus quasi consolantes adduceret, et tamen eorum mentes in asperitatem increpationis excitaret; quatenus eum, cujus patientiam flagella non vicerant, inter flagella saltem aspera verba superarent. Sed inimicus callide insidians fraudem quam contra sanctum virum paraverat pertulit, quia sancto viro quot occasiones perditionis intulit, tot causas victoriae ministravit. Contra tormenta quippe patientiam, contra verba sapientiam tenuit, quia et dolores verberum aequanimiter sustinuit, et stultitiam male suadentium sapienter frenavit. Sed quia in ipsis passionibus doctisque 437 locutionibus sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenet, amicis ejus, ut

saepe jam diximus, quaedam recta, et quaedam stulta loquentibus, non immerito haeretici figurantur, qui pro eo quod sancto viro amici sunt, multa de reprobis recta dicunt; sed pro eo quod speciem haereticorum tenent, plerumque in oris sui excessu dilabuntur, et verborum suorum jaculis sancti viri pectus feriunt, sed contra mentem inexpugnabilem ipsa sua percussione fatigantur. Nos igitur subtili debemus discretione distinguere, et quid sit in eorum verbis quod vere de reprobis sentiunt, et quid quod contra beatum Job fatuum sonant.

CAPUT II.

CAP. XVIII, VERS. 1, 2. — Respondens autem Balda: Suhites, dixit: Usque ad quem finem verba jactabis? Intellige prius, et sic loquamur. 2. Haeretici Ecclesiam superbiae et ignorantiae insimulant. — Omnes haeretici sanctam Ecclesiam in quibusdam cognitis superbire putant, quaedam vero nec intelligere suspicantur. Unde Baldad Suhites beatum Job quasi in superbiam astruit erupisse, quem fatetur verba jactare. Sed signat ipse quanta elatione tumuerat, qui beatum Job loqui quae non intelligeret putabat. Et quia omnes haeretici in aestimatione sua a sancta Ecclesia despici conqueruntur, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 3. — Quare reputati sumus ut jumenta, et sorduimus coram te? 3. Haereticorum in Ecclesiam suspiciones et contumeliae. — Humanae mentis est proprium hoc sibi fieri suspicari quod facit. Arbitrantur enim se despici, qui bonorum mores despicere consueverunt. Et quia in his quae comprehendi valent ratione contra haereticos ostendit Ecclesia rationabile non esse quod astruunt, aestimari se ab ejus judicio velut jumenta suspicantur. Ex qua despectus sui suspicione protinus ad dedignationem

prosiliunt, atque ad ejusdem Ecclesiae contumelias excitantur. Unde subditur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 4. — Quid perdis animam tuam in furore tuo? 4. Ecclesiae zelum, furorem et insaniam vocant haeretici. — Haeretici vel zelum rectitudinis, vel spiritalem gratiam sanctae praedicationis, non virtutis pondus, sed insaniam furoris aestimant. Quo furore videlicet perire fidelium animas arbitrantur quia inde interire Ecclesiae vitam credunt, unde eam contra se infervere conspiciunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT V.

IBID. — Nunquid propter te derelinquetur terra? 5. Deus extra veram Ecclesiam vere non colitur. — Se enim ubique Deum colere, se totum mundum existimant occupasse. Quid est ergo dicere: Nunquid propter te derelinquetur terra, nisi hoc quod saepe fidelibus dicunt, quia si hoc est verum quod vos dicitis, omnis a Deo terra derelicta est, quam jam prae multitudine nos tenemus; sancta autem universalis Ecclesia praedicat Deum veraciter nisi intra se coli non posse, asserens quod omnes qui extra ipsam sunt minime salvabuntur. At contra haeretici, qui etiam extra ipsam salvari se posse confidunt, in quolibet loco sibi divinum adjutorium adesse profitentur. Unde dicunt: Nunquid propter te derelinquetur terra? id est, ut quisquis extra te fuerit minime salvetur? Unde etiam subditur:

CAPUT VI.

IBID. — Et transferentur rupes de loco suo. 6. 438 Haeretici doctores suos rupes vocant. — Haeretici rupes vocant eos quos sublimibus in humano genere excedere sensibus aestimant, quos profecto doctores se habere

gloriantur. Cum vero sancta Ecclesia perversos quosque praedicatores intra sinum rectae fidei colligere studet, quid aliud quam de locis propriis rupes movet, ut intra eam recta sentientes humiliter jaceant, qui in perversis suis sensibus prius rigidi stabant? Sed hoc fieri haeretici omnino contradicunt, et propter ejus vocem rupes de loco proprio transferri renituntur, quia videlicet nolunt ut ad eam venientes vera humiliter sentiant hi qui apud eos elati sensibus falsa sapiebant. Quia habent et impii lucem suam, prosperitatem scilicet vitae praesentis. Sed lux impii exstinguetur; quia fugitivae vitae prosperitas cum ipsa citius vita terminatur. Unde apte subditur: Nec splendebit flamma ignis ejus? 9. Mali quod appetunt, plerumque ad cumulum perditionis obtinent. — Omnis namque impius habet flammam ignis proprii, quem in corde suo ex fervore desideriorum temporalium accendit, dum modo istis, modo illis cupiditatibus aestuat, et cogitationes suas per multiplicia blandimenta saeculi amplius inflammat. Ignis autem si flammam non habet, nequaquam fuso lumine splendet. Flamma itaque ignis ejus est decor, vel potestas exterior, quae de interno ejus ardore procedit, quia quod anxie in hoc mundo 439 adipisci desiderat, plerumque ad cumulum perditionis suae obtinet, et sive in potestate culminis, sive in divitiis multiplicationis, quasi per exteriorem gloriam lucet. Sed non splendebit flamma ignis ejus; cum in die exitus, omnis exterior decor subtrahitur, et solo suo intrinsecus ardore concrematur. Flamma ergo ab igne subtrahitur cum gloria exterior ab interno ejus ardore separatur. Habent etiam et justi flammam ignis sui, sed nimirum quae resplendeat, quia videlicet eorum desideria in bonis operibus lucent. Iniquorum vero flamma minime splendet, quia per hoc quod mala appetunt; ad tenebras pertrahuntur. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 6. — Lux obtenebrescet in tabernaculo illius. 10. Iniquorum gaudium cito deficit. Supra ipsos est gaudium; justorum infra. — Si plerumque tristitiam tenebras accipimus, non immerito lucem accipere gaudium debemus. Lux ergo in tabernaculo illius tenebrescit, quia in ejus conscientia, quam male inhabitat, gaudium quod de temporalibus rebus fuerat deficit. Unde et apte subjungitur: IBID. — Et lucerna quae super eum est exstinguetur. Ut enim de usu multorum loquar, lucerna lumen in testa est, lumen vero in testa est gaudium in carne. Lucerna ergo quae super eum est exstinguitur, quia cum malorum suorum retributio impium sequitur, in ejus mente gaudium carnale dissipatur. Bene autem de lucerna hac non dicitur quae apud eum est, sed quae super eum est, quia iniquorum mentem terrena gaudia possident, sicque eam in voluptatibus absorbent, ut super ipsam sint, non apud ipsam. Justi autem etiam cum prosperitatem vitae praesentis habent, eam sub semetipsis premere noverunt, ut hoc quod apud se in bonis hilarescunt, gravitatis consilio transeant, et virtutis regimine excedant. Lucerna ergo impii quae super eum est exstinguitur, quia citius ejus gaudium deficit, quod eum totum in hac vita possedit. Et qui nunc male se in voluptatibus dilatat, eum post in suppliciis poena coangustat. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 7. — Arctabuntur gressus virtutis ejus. 11. Qui nunc in deliciis vagantur, in suppliciis arctabuntur. — Nunc enim quasi toties virtutis suae gressus exerit, quoties potestatis suae violentias exercet. Sed gressus virtutis ejus arctabuntur, quia vires malitiae illius, quas nunc in voluptate sua exhibet, postmodum poena constringit. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

IBID. — Et praecipitabit eum consilium suum. 12. Suo unusquisque impius consilio in praeceps ruit. — Habet nunc consilium suum omnis iniquus praesentia appetere, aeterna deserere, injusta agere, justa deridere; sed cum judex justorum injustorumque venerit, suo unusquisque impius consilio praecipitatur, quia per hoc quod hic appetere pravis cogitationibus elegit, in aeterni supplicii tenebras mergitur. Quem enim hic gloria temporalis extollit, illic sine termino poena premit. Qui hic in voluptate laetatus est, illic perpetua ultione cruciatur. Et fit plerumque ut ipsa hujus mundi prosperitas, quae ab impiis inhianter appetitur, eorum gressus ita obliget, ut etiam cum ad bona opera voluerint redire, vix possint, quia recta agere non valent cum mundi hujus amatoribus 440 displicere timent. Unde agitur ut per gloriam quam impius ex peccato assequitur ejus adhuc peccata amplius multiplicentur, quod bene Baldad exprimit cum subjungit:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 8. — Immisit enim in rete pedem suum, et in maculis ejus ambulat. 13. Peccator cum a peccati laqueis expediri nititur, cognoscit quam duris nexibus teneatur, maxime in fine vitae. — Qui pedes in rete mittit, non cum voluerit ejicit, sic qui in peccata se dejicit non mox ut voluerit surgit; et qui in maculis retis ambulat, gressus suos ambulando implicat, et cum expedire ad ambulandum nititur, ne ambulet obligatur. Saepe namque contingit ut quis, hujus mundi delectatione persuasus, in eo ad honoris gloriam pertingat, ut ad desideriorum suorum effectum perveniat, et pervenisse se ad hoc quod expetiit laetetur. Sed quia bona mundi non habita in amore sunt, et plerumque habita vilescunt, percipiendo discit quam sit vile quod expetiit. Unde revocatus ad mentem exquirit qualiter sine culpa fugiat, quod se cum culpa conspicit adeptum; sed ipsa eum dignitas quae implicavit tenet, et sine culpis aliis fugere non valet hoc ubi non sine culpa pervenit. Immisit ergo in rete pedes suos, et in maculis ejus ambulat, quia cum expediri nititur, tunc

veraciter conspicit quam duris nexibus tenetur. Neque enim vere obligationem nostram cognoscimus, nisi cum evadere nitentes, quasi levare pedes conamur. Unde et hanc eamdem obligationem aperit subjungens: VERS. 9. — Tenebitur planta illius laqueo. Quia videlicet stringetur finis in peccato. Et quia hostis generis humani, cum uniuscujusque vitam in culpa obligat, ad ejus mortem anxius anhelat, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XII.

IBID. — Et exardescet contra eum sitis. 14. Cum se obligatum experitur, concupiscentia acrius aestuat peccator. — Antiquus quippe noster inimicus, cum in peccato vitam illaqueat, sitit, ut mortem peccatoris bibat. Quod tamen et aliter intelligi potest. Nam perversa mens, cum in peccatum se venisse conspicit, quadam cogitationis superficie evadere peccati laqueos quaerit; sed vel terrores, vel opprobria hominum timens, eligit in aeternum mori, quam ad tempus aliquid adversitatis perpeti. Unde totum se vitiis deserit, quibus jam se semel obligatum sentit. Cujus ergo usque ad finem vita in culpa constringitur, ejus planta laqueo tenetur. Sed quia se quo malis obligatum pensat, eo de suo reditu desperat, ipsa jam desperatione acrius ad hujus mundi concupiscentias aestuat, fit desideriorum fervor in mente, et peccatis praecedentibus irretitus animus ad majora etiam delicta succenditur. Unde et subditur: Et exardescet contra eum sitis. In ejus quippe animo contra eum sitis exardescit, quia quo agere perversa consuevit, eo ad ebibenda mala vehementer accenditur. Impio quippe sitire est hujus mundi bona concupiscere. Unde et Redemptor noster ante Pharisaei domum hydropicum curat, et cum contra avaritiam disputaret, scriptum est: Audiebant autem omnia haec Pharisaei, qui erant avari, et deridebant illum (Luc. XIV, 12; XVI, 4). Quid est ergo quod ante Pharisaei domum hydropicus curatur, nisi quod per alterius aegritudinem corporis, in altero exprimitur aegritudo cordis? Hydropicus quippe 441 quo amplius biberit,

amplius sitit, et omnis avarus ex potu sitim multiplicat, quia cum ea quae appetit adeptus fuerit, ad appetenda alia amplius anhelat. Qui enim adipiscendo plus appetit, hujus sitis ex potu crescit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 10. — Abscondita est in terra pedica ejus, et decipula illius super semitam. 15. Diaboli quanta in decipiendo astutia. Qualitates morum certis vitiis affines. — In terra pedica absconditur cum culpa sub terrenis commodis occultatur. Inimicus quippe insidians ostendit humanae menti in terreno lucro quid appetat, et occultat peccati laqueum, ut ejus animam stringat, quatenus videat quidem quod concupiscere valeat, et tamen nequaquam videat in quo culpae laqueo pedem ponat. Decipula vero a decipiendo vocata est. Et tunc ab antiquo hoste super semitam decipula ponitur, quando in actione hujus mundi, quam mens appetit, peccati laqueus paratur; quae videlicet non facile deciperet, si videri potuisset. Sic quippe decipula ponitur, ut dum esca ostenditur, nequaquam ipsa a transeunte videatur. Quasi esca quippe in laqueo est lucrum cum culpa, et hujus mundi prosperitas cum iniquitate. Dum itaque a concupiscente lucrum appetitur, quasi pedem mentis apprehendit decipula, quae non videtur. Saepe ergo proponuntur animo cum culpa honores, divitiae, salus, et vita temporalis; quae mens infirma dum quasi escam videt, et decipulam non videt, per escam quam videns appetit, in culpa constringitur quae non videtur. Existunt etenim qualitates morum, quae certis vitiis sunt vicinae. Nam mores asperi, aut crudelitati, aut superbiae solent esse conjuncti; mores autem blandi, et quam decet paulo amplius laetiores, nonnunquam luxuriae et dissolutioni. Intuetur ergo inimicus generis humani uniuscujusque mores cui vitio sint propinqui, et illa opponit ante faciem ad quae cognoscit facilius inclinari mentem, ut blandis ac laetis moribus saepe luxuriam, nonnunquam vanam gloriam; asperis vero mentibus iram, superbiam, vel

crudelitatem proponat. Ibi ergo decipulam ponit, ubi esse semitam mentis conspicit, quia illic periculum deceptionis inserit, ubi viam esse invenerit propinquae cogitationis. Et quia perversus homo omne quod facit etiam pati metuit, atque hoc sibi ab omnibus fieri aestimat quod ipse omnibus quibus valet parat, recte sequitur:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 11. — Undique terrebunt eum formidines. 16. Peccator pravis desideriis ad malam actionem tractus timore irretitur. — Tales enim contra se omnes esse suspicatur, qualis ipse esse contra omnes nititur. Quae nimirum formidines quid in ejus actione faciant, subinfertur cum dicitur: IBID. — Et involvent pedes ejus. Pedes quippe si involuti fuerint, gressus liberos habere non possunt, et nullum carpere iter valent, quia sua eos involumenta retinent. Prava itaque desideria ad pessimam actionem trahunt, sed pessima actio restringit in formidine. Quae videlicet formido involvit pedes, ne in rectam exire valeant actionem. Et saepe contingit ut idcirco quisque bonus esse metuat, ne hoc a pravis ipse patiatur quod se bonis fecisse reminiscitur; dumque hoc pati quod fecit metuit, undique territus, undique suspectus, quasi pedes involutos habet, qui timore irretitur, nil libere agere praevalet, quia in bono opere quasi inde gressum perdidit, unde ad mala 442 quae concupierat excessit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 12. — Attenuetur fame robur ejus, et inedia invadat costas illius. 17. Iniquus fame tabescit, quia nulla cibi interni refectione pascitur. — Scripturae sacrae more, optare videtur quod futurum praevidet, scilicet non maledicentis animo, sed praedicentis. Omnis itaque homo, quia ex anima et carne consistit, quasi ex robore et infirmitate compositus est. Ex ea enim parte qua spiritus rationalis est conditus, non incongrue dicitur robustus; ex

ea vero qua carnalis, infirmus est. Robur ergo est hominis anima rationalis, quae impugnantibus vitiis resistere per rationem valet. Unde et superius per beatum Job dictum est: Roborasti eum paululum, ut in perpetuum pertransiret (Job. XIV, 20). Ex rationali quippe anima habet homo ut in perpetuum vivat. Hujus ergo iniqui robur fame attenuatur, quia ejus anima nulla interni cibi refectione pascitur. De qua scilicet fame Deus per prophetam loquitur: Emittam famem in terram, non famem panis neque sitim aquae, sed audiendi verbum Domini (Amos VIII, 11). 18. Hinc sensus mentis deficiunt. — Bene autem subditur: Et inedia invadat costas illius. Costae enim viscera constringunt, ut latentia intrinsecus earum soliditate muniantur. Costae ergo uniuscujusque sunt sensus animi, qui latentes cogitationes muniunt. Inedia igitur invadit costas, quando, omni spiritali refectione subtracta, sensus mentis deficiunt, et cogitationes suas regere vel tueri non possunt. Inedia invadit iniqui costas, quia fames interna sensus mentis extenuat, ut cogitationes suas nullatenus regant. Nam dum sensus mentis obtusi fuerint, cogitationes ad exteriora prodeunt, et, quasi costis infirmantibus, ea quae in occulto sana latere potuerant foras viscera funduntur. Unde fit ut, cogitationibus exterius sparsis, exterioris gloriae speciem deceptus appetat animus, nihilque diligat, nisi quod pulchrum foris viderit. Contra quem adhuc apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 13. — Devoret pulchritudinem cutis ejus, et consumat brachia illius primogenita mors. 19. Primogenita mors est superbia quam cavere vix possunt divites. — Pulchritudo cutis est gloria temporalis, quae dum foris concupiscitur, quasi species in cute retinetur. Brachiorum vero nomine non incongrue opera designantur, quia corporale opus brachiis agitur. Quid autem mors nisi peccatum est, quod ab interiore vita animam occidit? unde scriptum est: Beatus et sanctus qui habet partem in resurrectione prima

(Apoc. XX, 6), quia ille post in carne feliciter resurget, qui, in hac vita positus, a mentis suae morte resurrexerit. Si igitur peccatum mors, non incongrue primogenita mors superbia valet intelligi, quia scriptum est: Initium omnis peccati superbia (Eccli. X, 15). Pulchritudinem igitur cutis ejus et brachia illius primogenita mors devorat, quia iniqui gloriam vel operationem superbia supplantat. Potuit enim etiam in hac vita sine culpa gloriosus existere, si superbus minime fuisset; potuit auctoris sui judicio quibusdam suis operibus commendari, nisi haec ipsa opera ante ejus oculos elatio supplantaret. Saepe enim quosdam divites videmus, qui opes et gloriam habere sine culpa potuissent, si haec habere cum humilitate voluissent. Sed extolluntur rebus, inflantur honoribus, dedignantur caeteros, omnemque vitae suae fiduciam in ipsa abundantia rerum ponunt. Unde et quidam dives dicebat: 443 Anima, habes multa bona reposita in annos plurimos; requiesce, comede, bibe, epulare (Luc. XII, 19). Quas eorum cogitationes dum supernus judex aspicit, de hac ipsa eos sua fiducia evellit. Unde hic quoque apte subditur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 14. — Evellatur de tabernaculo suo fiducia ejus, et calcet super eum quasi rex interitus. 20. Quos diabolus blandis persuasionibus decipit, violentis nexibus ad supplicium rapit. — Hoc loco interitus nomine ipse hostis generis humani, qui interitum intulit, designatur; qui per suum quemdam satellitem exprimitur, de quo ad Joannem dicitur: Nomen illi mors (Apoc. VI, 8). Iste itaque interitus in die exitus quasi rex super impium calcat, quia quem prius blandis persuasionibus decepit, ad extremum violentis nexibus ad supplicium rapit, tantoque eum durius deprimit, quanto in pravis actibus vehementius astringit. Qui hic quoque reprobi mentem dum possidet calcat, quia quoties eam delectationibus pressit, quasi toties super eam pedes suae tyrannicae dominationis posuit..

VERS. 15. — Habitent in tabernaculo illius socii ejus, quia non est. 22. Satan non esse dicitur, quia bene esse amisit. — Id est, in mente ejus apostatae angeli per cogitationes nequissimas conversentur, ejus videlicet socii, qui idcirco jam non est, quia a summa essentia recessit, et per hoc, quotidie excrescente defectu, quasi ad non esse tendit, quo semel ab eo qui vere est cecidit; qui recte quoque non esse dicitur, quia bene esse perdidit, quamvis naturae essentiam non amisit. Adhuc tamen easdem iniqui cogitationes subtilius exprimens subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XIX.

IBID. — Aspergatur in tabernaculo ejus sulphur. 23. Peccata carnis sulphuri fetenti et ardenti recte comparantur. — Sulphur quid aliud quam fomentum ignis est? Quod tamen sic ignem nutrit, ut fetorem gravissimum exhalet. Quid itaque in sulphure, nisi peccatum carnis accipimus? Quod dum perversis cogitationibus quasi quibusdam fetoribus mentem replet, aeterna ei incendia praeparat; et dum fetoris sui nebulam in mente reproba dilatat, contra eam flammis subsequentibus quasi nutrimenta subministrat. Nam quia per sulphur fetor carnis accipitur, ipsa sacri eloquii historia testatur, quae contra Sodomam ignem ac sulphur pluisse Dominum narrat (Genes. XIX, 24). Qui cum carnis ejus scelera punire decrevisset, in ipsa qualitate ultionis notavit maculam criminis. Sulphur quippe fetorem habet, ignis ardorem. Quia itaque ad perversa desideria ex carnis fetore arserant, dignum fuit ut simul igne et sulphure perirent, quatenus ex justa poena discerent ex injusto desiderio quid fecissent. Hoc ergo in tabernaculo iniqui sulphur aspergitur, quoties perversa carnis delectatio in ejus mente dominatur. Quem quia indesinenter pravae cogitationes possident, eumque ferre boni operis fructum vetant, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 16. — Deorsum radices ejus siccentur, sursum autem atteratur messis ejus. 24. Iniquorum ariditas et streilitas. — Quid namque radicum nomine, quae in occulto sitae sunt, et germen in apertum ferunt, nisi cogitationes accipimus, quae dum non videntur in corde, visibilia opera producunt? Unde et messis nomine eadem aperta operatio signatur quae videlicet ex latenti radice producitur. Et quia omnis iniquus prius in cogitationibus tentationum arescit, et postea a bonis actibus deficit, recte per Baldad dicitur: Deorsum radices ejus siccentur, sursum autem atteratur messis ejus. Quia dum pravus quisque cogitationes suas in infimis rebus ponit et sempiternae viriditatis gaudia appetere negligit, quid aliud quam radices suas deorsum siccari permittit? Cujus sursum messis atteritur, quia omnis ejus operatio a superno judicio quasi nihilum deputatur, etiam si ante humanos oculos bona videatur. In imo itaque radices sunt, et superius messis, quia hic prius bonas cogitationes mittimus, ut quandoque bonorum operum fructum percipere in aeterna retributione mereamur. Sed iniquus quisque, cum 445 bonas cogitationes deserit, et ad ea quae sunt exterius semetipsum fundit, deorsum siccantur radices ejus. Sursum vero messis ejus atteritur, quia qui hic sterilis persistit, post hanc vitam ad nulla praemia vocatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 17. — Memoria illius pereat de terra, et non celebretur nomen ejus in plateis. 25. Antichristi et iniquorum omnium quam brevis gloria. — Intuendum est nobis quia sic Baldad Suhites de unoquoque iniquo loquitur ut latenter ad caput omnium iniquorum ejus verba vertantur. Caput quippe iniquorum diabolus est. Ipse quippe, in ultimis temporibus, illud vas perditionis ingressus, Antichristus vocabitur, qui nomen suum longe lateque diffundere conabitur, quod nunc unusquisque imitatur cum de memoria terreni nominis gloriam laudis suae extendere nititur, atque opinione

transitoria laetatur. Sic ergo haec verba intelligantur de unoquoque iniquo, ut referri quoque debeant ad ipsum specialiter caput iniquorum. Dicat itaque: Memoria illius pereat de terra, et non celebretur nomen ejus in plateis. Plateae quippe appellatione graeca a latitudine sunt vocatae. Memoriam vero suam in terra statuere Antichristus conatur, cum in terrena gloria appetit, si esset possibile, in perpetuum permanere. Nomen suum in plateis celebrari gaudet, cum longe lateque operationem suae iniquitatis extendit. Sed quia diu haec ejus iniquitas non sinitur extolli, dicatur: Memoria illius pereat de terra, et non celebretur nomen ejus in plateis; id est, et citius laudem terrenae potestatis amittat, et omne gaudium sui nominis perdat, quod longe lateque in brevi temporis prosperitate diffuderat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 18. — Expellet eum de luce in tenebras. 26. Iniquorum gloriam supplicium aeternum excipit. — De luce ad tenebras ducitur cum de honore vitae praesentis ad supplicia aeterna damnatur. Unde et apertius subditur: IBID. — Et de orbe transferet eum. De orbe quippe transfertur cum, superno apparente judice, de hoc mundo tollitur, in quo perverse gloriatur. Qui pro eo quod cum omnibus sequacibus suis, fine mundi interveniente, damnatur, recte subjungitur: VERS. 19. — Non erit semen ejus, neque progenies in populo suo, nec ullae reliquiae in regionibus ejus. Scriptum quippe est, quia Dominus Jesus interficiet eum spiritu oris sui, et destruet illustratione adventus sui (II Thess. II, 8). Dum ergo ejus iniquitas cum mundi statu terminatur, progenies ejus in populo suo non relinquetur, quia et ipse et ejus populus cum ea ad supplicium pariter urgetur, et omnes iniqui, qui de ejus perversa persuasione in pravis actionibus nati sunt, illustratione adventus Domini aeterno interitu cum eodem suo capite ferientur. Ac nulla ejus progenies in mundo remanet, quia districtus judex iniquitates illius cum

ipso mundi fine concludit. Quod vero haec aperte de Antichristo intelligi debeant, demonstratur cum subditur:

CAPUT XXIII.

VERS. 20. — In diebus ejus stupebunt novissimi, et primos invadet horror. 27. Antichristi saeva persecutio. Tunc sanctis aderit et constantia ex virtute, et pavor ex carne. — Tanta enim tunc contra justos iniquitate effrenabitur, ut etiam electorum corda non parvo pavore 446 feriantur. Unde scriptum est: Ita ut in errorem inducantur, si fieri potest, etiam electi (Matth. XXIV, 24). Quod videlicet dicitur, non quia electi casuri sunt, sed magnis terroribus trepidaturi. Tunc vero contra eum certamen justitiae, et novissimi electi habere narrantur et primi, quia scilicet et hi qui in fine mundi electi reperientur in morte carnis prosternendi sunt, et illi etiam qui a prioribus mundi partibus processerunt, Enoch scilicet et Elias, ad medium revocabuntur, et crudelitatis ejus saevitiam in sua adhuc mortali carne passuri sunt. Hujus vires in tanta potestate laxatas novissimi obstupescunt, et primi metuunt, quia licet juxta hoc quod spiritu superbiae sublevatur, omnem temporalem ejus potestatem despiciunt, juxta hoc tamen quod ipsi adhuc in carne mortali sunt, in qua cruciari temporaliter possunt, ipsa quae fortiter tolerant supplicia perhorrescunt; ita ut in eis uno eodemque tempore et constantia ex virtute sit, et pavor ex carne, quia etsi electi sunt, ut tormentis vinci nequeant, per hoc tamen quod homines sunt, et ipsa metuunt tormenta quae vincunt. Dicatur ergo: In diebus ejus stupebunt novissimi, et primos invadet horror, quia videlicet tanta tunc signa monstraturus, et crudelia ac dura facturus est, ut ad stuporem perducat quos in fine mundi invenerit, et priores patres qui in ejus expugnationem servati sunt carnalis mortis dolore transfigat. Igitur quia de iniquis omnibus, vel de ipso iniquorum capite multa narravit, generali mox definitione subjungit:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 21. — Haec sunt ergo tabernacula iniqui, et iste locus ejus qui ignorat Deum. 28. Antichristi locus tenebrae sunt, in quas cum iniquis omnibus detrudetur. — Superius enim dixerat: Expellet eum de luce ad tenebras, et de orbe transferet eum. Cujus cum mala subjungeret, adjunxit: Haec sunt tabernacula iniqui, et iste locus ejus qui ignorat Deum, videlicet indicans quia is qui nunc Deum ignorando extollitur, tunc ad propria tabernacula pervenit, quando eum sua iniquitas in supplicia demergit; et locum suum quandoque invenit tenebras, qui dum hic de falsa gauderet luce justitiae, locum tenebat alienum. Perversi enim in omne quod per simulationem faciunt nomen gloriae justorum quasi locum occupare alienum nituntur. Sed ad locum suum tunc perveniunt, cum iniquitatis suae merito perpetuo igne cruciantur. Hic namque per omne quod agunt percipiendae laudis desiderio serviunt, et per imaginem bonorum operum sinum mentis ad avaritiam extendunt. Eat igitur nunc iniquus, et, multis apparatibus tumidus, sua hic habitacula construat, nomen gloriae extendat, rura multiplicet, seque abundantibus opibus delectet; cum vero ad supplicia aeterna pervenerit, profecto cognoscet quia haec sunt tabernacula iniqui, et iste locus ejus qui ignorat Deum. Recte vero haec Baldad dixerat, sed cui diceret ignorabat. Vehementer autem justi cor affligitur, quando contra illum sententiae ex injusta aestimatione proferuntur. Unde beatus Job protinus respondit, dicens:

CAPUT XXV.

CAP. XIX, VERS. 2. — Usquequo affligitis animam meam, et atteritis me sermonibus? 447 29. Quid a malis patiantur justi. — Sancti viri eloquia, ut saepe jam diximus, aliquando ex persona propria, aliquando vero ex voce capitis, aliquando autem ex typo sunt universalis Ecclesiae sentienda. Valde

vero affligitur anima justorum quando illi contra bonos districtas sententias intorquent, qui bene vivere ignorant; et ex voce sibi justitiam vindicant, quam moribus impugnant. Unde amicis beati Job, ut saepe jam diximus, haereticorum typum tenentibus, recte ab eodem respondetur: Usquequo affligitis animam meam, et atteritis me sermonibus? Atteruntur enim boni sermonibus iniquorum, quando contra eos illi in verbis tument, qui aut in perversa fide, aut in pravis moribus jacent. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 3. — En, decies confunditis me. 30. Sive sileant justi, sive loquantur, malos semper experiuntur adversarios. — Numeratis vicibus locutionum amicorum Job, adhuc nisi quinquies locutos eos cognoscimus. Sed propter hoc quod ab eis quinquies increpationes audierat, quorum increpationibus quinquies ipse respondit, decies se perhibet esse confusum, quia et in eo graviter laboravit quod frustra increpatus est, et in eo confusionem pertulit quod verba doctrinae non audientibus dixit. Itaque et cum audiens taceret, et cum loquens non audiretur, ipse laborem pertulit, qui et tacendo patienter, et eis loquendo inutiliter, cordis dolorem sensit. Unde et superius dicit: Quid agam? Si locutus fuero, non quiescet dolor meus; et si tacuero, non recedet a me (Job. XVI, 7). Sin vero ad typum sanctae Ecclesiae haec verba referimus, liquet quod magnum ejus est gaudium servare Decalogi praecepta. Sed hanc perversi decies confundunt, quia per omne quod peccant pravis suis moribus Decalogi praecepta relinquunt, et toties bonis confusionem faciunt, quoties in suis actibus divinis vocibus obsistunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVII.

IBID. — Et non erubescitis opprimentes me. 31. Hostes Ecclesiae nec timore Dei, nec hominum pudore refrenantur. — Sunt nonnulli quos ad

perpetrandam nequitiam oborta subito malitia invitat, sed tamen humana verecundia revocat. Et plerumque per hoc quod exterius erubescunt, ad interiora sua redeunt, et contra se internum judicium sumunt, quia si propter hominem mala facere metuunt, quanto magis propter Deum, qui cuncta inspicit, nec appetere mala debuerunt? In quibus fit ut mala majora corrigant per bona minima, scilicet per exteriorem verecundiam interiorem culpam. Et sunt quidam qui postquam Deum in mente contempserint, multo magis humana judicia spernunt, atque omne malum quod appetunt, audacter peragere non erubescunt. Quos ad perpetrandum malum occulta iniquitas invitat, et nulla aperta verecundia retardat; sicut et de quodam iniquo judice dicitur: Deum non timebat, et hominem non verebatur (Luc. XVIII, 2). Hinc est etiam quod de quibusdam impudenti fronte peccantibus dictum est: Et peccatum suum quasi Sodoma praedicaverunt (Isai. III, 9). Plerumque ergo tales sunt adversarii sanctae Ecclesiae, qui a perpetrandis malis nec timore Domini, nec hominum pudore refrenantur. Quibus bene per beatum Job dicitur: Et non erubescitis opprimentes me, quia etsi pravum fuit mala voluisse, pejus est male appetita non erubescere. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 4. — Nempe et si ignoravi, mecum erit ignorantia mea. 448 32. Ecclesiae humilitati haeretici arrogantiam opponunt. — Habent hoc haeretici proprium, ut de inani scientiae suae arrogantia inflentur, et recte credentium simplicitatem saepe derideant, et nullius esse meriti vitam humilium ducant. At contra sancta Ecclesia in omne quod veraciter sapit sensum suum humiliter deprimit, ne scientia infletur, ne in requisitione occultorum tumeat, et perscrutari aliqua quae ultra vires sunt illius praesumat. Utilius etenim studet nescire quae perscrutari non valet quam audacter definire quae nescit. Scriptum quippe est: Sicut qui mel multum comedit, non est ei bonum; sic qui scrutator est majestatis opprimetur a

gloria (Prov. XXV, 27). Dulcedo etenim mellis, si plus quam necesse est sumitur, unde delectatur os, inde vita comedentis necatur. Dulcis quoque est requisitio majestatis; sed qui plus hanc scrutari appetit quam humanitatis cognitio permittit, ipsa hunc ejus gloria opprimit, quia velut immoderate mel sumptum, perscrutantis sensum, dum non capitur, rumpit. Nobiscum vero esse dicitur, quod pro nobis est; et rursum non nobiscum esse dicitur quod contra nos est (Luc. XI, 13). Quia ergo scientia sua haeretici cor inflat, fideles autem cognitio ignorantiae suae humiliat, dicat beatus Job voce sua, dicat etiam confessione universalis Ecclesiae: Nempe et si ignoravi, mecum erit ignorantia mea. Ac si aperte haereticis dicatur: Omnis vestra scientia vobiscum non est, quia contra vos est, dum stulta elatione vos erigit. Mea vero ignorantia mecum est, quia pro me est; quoniam dum perscrutari de Deo aliquid superbe non audeo, in veritate me humiliter servo. Et quia haec ipsa haeretici quae scire quaerunt ad usum solius elationis arripiunt, ut contra fideles et humiles docti videantur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

VERS. 5. — At vos contra me erigimini. 33. Ordo postulat ut primum contra nos, et postmodum contra malos erigamur. Hanc correctionis rationem ignorant mali. — Sed haec fortasse melius verba perpendimus, si ipsis specialiter amicis beati Job quemadmodum congruant demonstremus. Ipsi etenim percussum justum videntes, ad sua intima redire debuerunt, et nequaquam beatum Job verbis increpationis premere, sed se deflere, quia si sic percussus fuerat qui ita serviebat, qua ultione feriri merebantur qui non ita servierant? Quibus bene dicitur: At vos contra me erigimini. Ac si eis apertius dicatur: Qui erigi contra vosmetipsos ex mea percussione debuistis. Ordo quippe erectionis in bono iste est, ut primum contra nos et postmodum contra malos erigamur. Nam qui contra bonos erigitur per superbiam inflatur. Contra nosmetipsos enim erigimur quando, mala propria

recognoscentes, districta nosmetipsos poenitentiae ultione ferimus, quando nequaquam nobis in peccatis parcimus, et nullis erga nos cogitationum blandimentis inclinamur. Qui si districte prius nostra in nobis mala insequimur, justum quoque est ut etiam contra aliena mala utiliter erigamur; et ea quae in nobis punimus, etiam in aliis redarguendo superemus. 34. Sed hanc erectionem mali nesciunt, quia se relinquunt, et bonos impetunt. Sibi se intra conscientiam suam mollitie blandae adulationis inclinant, et contra bonorum vitam districtione asperitatis eriguntur. Unde amicis beati Job in ejus flagello tumentibus recte nunc dicitur: At vos contra me 449 erigimini; id est, vosmetipsos redarguendos relinquitis, et me districtis sententiis increpatis. Qui enim semetipsum prius non judicat, quid in alio rectum judicet ignorat. Et si novit fortasse per auditum quod rectum judicare debeat, recte tamen judicare aliena merita non valet, cui conscientia innocentiae propriae nullam judicii regulam praebet. Hinc est enim quod insidiantibus quibusquam, et puniendam adulteram deducentibus dicitur (Joan. VIII, 7). Qui sine peccato est vestrum, primus in illam lapidem mittat (3, q. 7, ca). Ad aliena quippe punienda peccata ibant, et sua reliquerant. Revocantur itaque intus ad conscientiam, ut prius propria corrigant, et tunc aliena reprehendant. Hinc est quod cum tribus Benjamin in carnis scelere fuisset obruta, collectus omnis Israel ulcisci iniquitatem voluit, sed tamen semel et iterum in belli certamine ipse prostratus est. Consulto autem Domino si ad ulciscendum ire debuissent, jussum est. Qui juxta divinae vocis imperium perrexit, et semel et secundo cecidit, et tunc demum peccatricem tribum valde feriens pene funditus exstinxit. Quid est quod in ultionem sceleris inflammatur, et tamen prius ipse prosternitur, nisi quod prius ipsi purgandi sunt per quos aliorum culpae feriuntur, ut ipsi jam mundi per ultionem veniant, qui aliorum vitia corrigere festinant? Unde necesse est ut cum contra nos ultio divini examinis cessat, nostra se conscientia ipsa reprehendat, atque ad lamenta poenitentiae ipsa se contra semetipsam

erigat, nec contra bonos elata et sibi humilis, sed contra se rigida sit, bonis vero omnibus submissa. Superbis ergo corripientibus recte nunc dicitur: At vos contra me erigimini, et arguitis me opprobriis meis. Omnes elati grave esse opprobrium deputant mala temporalia; et tanto unumquemque esse a Deo despectum credunt, quanto hunc afflictum percussionis flagello conspiciunt. Nil etenim in moribus, nil in actibus quaerunt; sed quoslibet in hac vita percussos viderint, esse jam divino judicio damnatos arbitrantur. Unde bene nunc beati Job voce dicitur:

CAPUT XXX.

IBID. — Et arguitis me opprobriis meis. 35. Falsa reproborum de justorum flagellis judicia. — Quia hi qui eum justum ante flagella noverant, injustum esse ex ipsa jam sua percussione judicabant. Unde et saepe haeretici, quia affligi quosdam intra sanctam Ecclesiam vident, scriptum quippe de Deo est: Flagellat omnem filium quem recipit (Hebr. XII, 6), tribulationes fidelium non nisi ex peccato esse suspicantur, seque ideo justos credunt, quia, in pravitatis suae sensu dimissi, sine flagello duruerunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 6. — Saltem nunc intelligite quia Deus non aequo judicio afflixerit me. 36. Quaedam Scripturae sacrae verba prava censentur, quia ad interiorem sui intelligentiam non exiguntur. — O quam durum sonat vox justi verberibus afflicti; quam tamen non elatio, sed dolor expressit! Sed justus non est qui justitiam in dolore deserit. Beatus autem Job, quia mite cor habuit, nec in dura voce peccavit. Nam si hunc peccasse in hac voce dicimus, implesse diabolum astruimus quod proposuit, dicens: Tange os ejus et carnem, si non in faciem benedixerit tibi (Job. II, 5). Gravis itaque quaestio oritur. Si etenim non peccavit in eo quod dicit: Saltem nunc intelligite, quia Deus non aequo judicio afflixerit me, Deum (quod dici

nefas est) injuste aliquid egisse consentimus. Si vero 450 peccavit, diabolus de illo quod promisit exhibuit. Astruendum est igitur quia et Deus recte circa beatum Job egerit, et tamen beatus Job ex eo quod dicit se non justo Dei judicio afflictum mentitus non sit, et antiquus hostis in eo quod de beati viri promiserat culpa mentitus sit. Nonnunquam namque ideo prava creduntur verba bonorum, quia interiori sua intelligentia minime pensantur. Beatus enim Job vitam suam attenderat, et ea quae patiebatur flagella pensabat, et videbat aequum non esse ut ad talem vitam talia flagella reciperet. Et cum dicit non aequo se judicio afflictum, hoc libera voce locutus est, quod in secreto suo Dominus de illo adversario ejus dixerat: Commovisti me adversus eum, ut affligerem eum frustra (Ibid., 3). Quod enim dicit Deus, quia frustra beatum Job afflixerit, hoc rursum beatus Job asserit, quia non aequo judicio a Domino sit afflictus. In quo itaque peccavit qui a sententia auctoris sui in nullo discrepavit.. IBID. — Et flagellis suis me cinxerit. 39. Infirma Ecclesiae membra ex assiduis flagellis turbantur. — Aliud quippe est flagellis percuti, aliud cingi. Flagellis namque percutimur cum consolationem et in doloribus ex rebus aliis habemus. Nam cum tanta nos afflictio depremit, ut ex nullius rei consolatione respirare animus possit, non jam flagellis solummodo ferimur, sed etiam cingimur, quia tribulationum verbere ex omni parte circumdamur. Cinctus enim flagellis Paulus fuerat, cum dicebat: Foris pugnae, intus timores (II Cor. VII, 5). Cinctus flagellis fuerat, cum dicebat: Periculis ex genere, periculis ex gentibus, periculis in civitate, periculis in solitudine (II Cor. XI, 26), et caetera, quae ita enumerat, ut nusquam se habuisse requiem ostendat. Sancta vero Ecclesia cum tribulationum suarum flagellis cingitur, in ea infirmi quique in pusillanimitatis casu rediguntur, ita ut se eo jam despectos existiment, quo exaudiri se tardius vident. Recte adhuc etiam ex eorum typo sancti viri voce subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

VERS. 7. — Ecce clamabo vim patiens, et nemo exaudiet; vociferabor, et non est qui judicet. 40. Dolentium querelas dissimulat Deus, ut utilitatem augeat. — Omnipotens Deus quid nobis profuturum esse valeat sciens, dissimulat exaudire dolentium vocem, ut augeat utilitatem, ut purgetur vita per poenam, et quietis tranquillitas, quae hic inveniri non valet, alibi quaeratur. Sed hanc dispensationis gratiam nonnulli etiam fidelium ignorant. Ex quorum etiam persona nunc dicitur: Ecce clamabo vim patiens, et nemo exaudiet; vociferabor, et non est qui judicet. Non est enim qui judicet dicitur quando judicare dissumulat ipse qui est, quia causam nostram contra adversarium, praeter eum, qui judicet non est. Nec tamen hoc sine judicio est, quod judicium differtur, quia cum haec beatus Job diceret, et sancti viri merita, et adversarii poena crescebat. Hoc ipsum ergo judicium differre judicis est. Sed aliud est quod juste intrinsecus disponit Deus, aliud quod foris flagellis attritus expetit animus. Unde adhuc de ipsa verberum depressione subjungit:

CAPUT XXXIV.

VERS. 8. — Semitam meam circumsepsit, et transire non possum, et in calle meo tenebras posuit. 41. Ex ignorantia et infirmitate peccantibus adest Deus illuminatio et salus nostra. — Circumseptam verberibus semitam suam vidit cum, transire ad securitatem cupiens, evadere flagella non potuit. Et quia se percuti aspexit, nec tamen percussione dignam vitam in semetipso reperit, quasi in calle cordis ignorantiae suae tenebras invenit, qui cur ita flagellaretur penetrare non potuit. Quod ad infirma quoque membra sanctae Ecclesiae non incongrue refertur, quando per hoc quod prave se egisse meminerunt, a 452 bono quoque opere retardantur; et ex infirmitate propria timidi, bona contra haec fortia aggredi non praesumunt. Timent enim magna bona incipere, qui se in suis actibus infirmos esse meminerunt. Et cum plerumque etiam bonum quod eligant nesciunt, quasi in calle suo

positas tenebras perhorrescunt. Nam saepe ita de suo opere fit animus incertus, ut ignoret omnino quid virtus, quid culpa sit. In calle ergo suo tenebras invenit, qui in his quae agere appetit quid eligere debeat nescit. Quia igitur saepe infirmitate, nonnunquam vero ignorantia peccatur, ex infirmantibus membris dicitur: Semitam meam circumsepsit, et transire non possum. Ex eis vero quid ad ipsum opus bonum quod eligant caligant subditur: Et in calle meo tenebras posuit. Ex poena etenim culpae est videre bonum quod agere debeat, et tamen implere non posse, et rursum ex graviori poena culpae est quod agere debeat nec videre. Unde et contra haec utraque Psalmistae voce dicitur: Dominus illuminatio mea, et salus mea, quem timebo (Psal. XXVI, 1)? Contra ignorantiae enim tenebras illuminatio, contra infirmitatem vero salus est Dominus, quando et ostendit quid debeat ad agendum appeti, et vires praebet ut quod ostenderit possit impleri. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXV VERS.

9. — Spoliavit me gloria mea, et abstulit coronam de capite meo. 42. Infirma Ecclesiae membra aliquando justitia spoliantur ad tempus. — Quod cuncta haec beati viri in afflictione positi personae conveniant, dubium non est. Sed quia historiae verba patent, juxta litteram expositione non indigent. Oportet ergo ut per sensus debeant mysticos investigari. Ait namque: Spoliavit me gloria mea. Gloria quippe uniuscujusque justitia est. Sicut vero vestimentum tegit a frigore, ita justitia munit a morte. Unde non immerito justitia vestimento comparatur, cum per Prophetam dicitur: Sacerdotes tui induantur justitia (Psal. CXXXI, 9). Quia vero afflictionis suae tempore hoc justitiae vestimentum, quod apud Deum protegit, sancta Ecclesia in membris suis infirmantibus amittit, dicatur recte: Spoliavit me gloria mea; id est, justitia ab infirmis ablata est, quae ab eis auferri non posset si medullitus inhaesisset; sed idcirco tolli potuit, quia more vestimenti exterius

adhaesit. Qua in re quaerendum est quomodo sanctae Ecclesiae membra dici valeant qui potuerunt justitiam perdere, quam tenere videbantur. Sed sciendum est quod plerumque a membris ejus infirmantibus justitia ad tempus amittitur; sed cum per cognitionem culpae postmodum ad poenitentiam redeunt, sese ad eamdem justitiam quam perdiderant fortius quam credebatur astringunt. Ubi adhuc subditur: Et abstulit coronam de capite meo. Sicut caput corporis prima pars est, ita principale interioris hominis mens est. Corona vero victoriae praemium est, quod desuper potitur, ut qui certaverit remuneretur. Quia ergo multi adversitatibus pressi minime in certamine perdurant, in eis sancta Ecclesia quasi coronam de capite amittit. Corona quippe in capite est superna remuneratio in mente. Et sunt plerique qui, dum adversitatibus affliguntur, superna praemia cogitare negligunt, et ad perfectionem victoriae pervenire non possunt. In his itaque corona de capite aufertur, quia 453 supernum et spiritale praemium de mentis cogitatione tollitur, ut exteriora jam tranquilla appetant, et aeterna praemia, quia cogitare consueverant, non requirant. 43. Corona de capite Ecclesiae aufertur, cum praelati bona spiritualia negligunt. — Vel certe caput fidelium non immerito sacerdotes accipiuntur, quia pars membrorum Domini prima sunt. Unde et per prophetam caput et cauda exterminari dicitur, ubi videlicet et capitis nomine sacerdotes, et caudae appellatione prophetae reprobi designantur. Corona ergo de capite aufertur cum supernae remunerationis praemia etiam ipsi deserunt qui in hoc Ecclesiae corpore praeesse videbantur. Et plerumque ducibus cadentibus, latius succumbit exercitus qui sequebatur. Unde mox post damna majorum de multimoda labefactione Ecclesiae subsecutus adjunxit:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 10. — Destruxit me undique, et pereo, et quasi avulsae arbori abstulit spem meam. 44. Praepositis corruentibus infirmi cadunt. — Quasi

undique enim Ecclesia destruitur, atque in infirmis membris deperit, quando ipsa quae videbantur fortia corruunt, quando corona de capite abstrahitur, id est quando aeterna praemia etiam a praepositis negliguntur. Bene autem de infirmis cadentibus subditur: Et quasi avulsae arbori abstulit spem meam. Arbor quippe vento impellitur ut cadat. Et quem minae terrent, ut ad injustitiam corruat, quid aliud quam arbor flatum venti pertulit, et statum suae rectitudinis amisit? Quasi enim ex vento spem perdidit, qui, pravorum minis ac persuasionibus devictus, aeterna quae sperabat praemia reliquit. Et quia plerumque contingit ut poenas quis metuens justitiam deserat, fit, judicante Deo, ut etiam justitiam deserens poenas quas timuit non evadat, et qui mentis interitum minime timuit, etiam carnis mala toleret, quae timebat. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 11. — Iratus est contra me furor ejus, et sic me habuit quasi hostem suum. 45. Quosdam ferit Deus tanquam filios, alios tanquam hostes. — Praedicatore quippe egregio attestante dicimus quia fidelis est Deus, et non patietur nos tentari supra id quod possumus ferre, sed faciet cum tentatione proventum, ut possimus sustinere (I Cor. X, 13). Per prophetam quoque Dominus dicit: Plaga inimici percussi te, castigatione crudeli (Jerem. XXX, 14). Qui ergo ita percutitur, ut vires illius a percussione superentur, non hunc Dominus jam quasi filium per disciplinam, sed quasi hostem per iram ferit. Cum ergo virtutem nostrae patientiae flagella transeunt, valde metuendum est ne, peccatis nostris exigentibus, non jam quasi filii a patre, sed quasi hostes a Domino feriamur. Et quia fit plerumque ut etiam maligni spiritus afflictorum cordibus multa suadeant, atque inter flagella quae exterius feriunt cogitationes noxias in mentibus fundant, post furorem Domini recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS. 12. — Simul venerunt latrones ejus, et fecerunt sibi viam per me. 46. Afflictos maligni spiritus irrumpentes obsident. In eis voluntas injuste est, et potestas justa. — Latrones namque ejus maligni sunt spiritus, qui exquirendis hominum mortibus occupantur. Quia viam sibi in afflictorum cordibus faciunt, quando inter adversa quae exterius tolerantur cogitationes quoque pravas immittere non desistunt. De quibus adhuc dicitur: Et obsederunt in gyro tabernaculum meum. In gyro enim tabernaculum obsident quando 454 ex omni latere suis tentationibus mentem cingunt. Quam modo lugere de temporalibus, modo desperare de aeternis, modo in impatientiam ruere, atque in Deum blasphemiae verba jaculari, pessima suggestione persuadent. Quae tamen verba, ut jam praediximus, beato Job etiam juxta historiam congruunt, qui dum mala quae pertulit ante oculos congessit, non quasi corrigendum filium, sed quasi hostem percussum se esse judicavit. Per quem sibi etiam latrones ejus viam fecerunt, quia maligni contra eum spiritus licentiam percussionis acceperunt. Cujus in gyro tabernaculum obsederunt, quia, sublatis rebus et filiis, etiam corpus ejus omne vulneribus attriverunt. Sed mirum valde est, cum latrones diceret, cur addidit ejus? ut videlicet eosdem latrones Dei esse monstraret. Qua in re si voluntas ac potestas malignorum spirituum discernatur, cur latrones Dei dicantur aperitur. Maligni quippe spiritus ad nocendum nos incessabiliter anhelant; sed cum pravam voluntatem ex semetipsis habeant, potestatem tamen nocendi non habent, nisi eos voluntas summa permittat. Et cum ipsi quidem injuste nos laedere appetunt, quemlibet tamen laedere, non nisi juste a Domino permittuntur. Quia ergo in eis voluntas injusta est, et potestas justa, et latrones dicuntur, et Dei, ut ex ipsis sit quod inferre mala injuste desiderant, et ex Deo, quod desiderata juste consummant. Sed quia, ut saepe jam diximus, sanctus vir positus in dolore poenarum, modo suis, modo Ecclesiae, modo Redemptoris nostri vocibus utitur, et plerumque sic sua

narrat, ut tamen per typum ea quae sunt sanctae Ecclesiae ac Redemptoris nostri proferat, postposita paulisper cura historiae, in his quae subjungit qualiter Redemptoris nostri vocibus congruat demonstremus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIX.

VERS. 13, 14. — Fratres meos longe fecit a me, et noti mei quasi alieni recesserunt a me. Dereliquerunt me propinqui mei, et qui me noverant obliti sunt mei. ALLEGORICUS SENSUS. — 47. Judaei Christi fratres, noti et propinqui, quem incarnandum praedixerant, incarnatum negarunt. — Hoc melius ostendimus, si Joannis ad medium testimonium proferamus, qui ait: In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt (Joan. I, 11). Ab eo quippe fratres longe facti sunt, et noti recesserunt, quem tenentes legem prophetare Hebraei noverunt, et praesentem minime recognoscebant. Unde recte dicitur: Dereliquerunt me propinqui mei, et qui me noverant obliti sunt mei. Judaei etenim propinqui per carnem, noti per legis instructionem, quasi obliti sunt quem prophetaverant, dum eum et incarnandum verbis legis canerent, et incarnatum verbis perfidiae negarent. Sequitur:

CAPUT XL.

VERS. 15. — Inquilini domus meae et ancillae sicut alienum habuerunt me. 48. A sacerdotibus et levitis pro alieno habitus fuit Christus. — Inquilini domus Dei fuerunt sacerdotes, quorum origo in Dei servitio deputata jam per officium in conditione tenebatur. Ancillae autem non immerito intelliguntur Levitarum animae, ad secreta tabernaculi, quasi ad interiora cubiculi, familiarius servientes. Dicat ergo de sacerdotibus sedula cura servientibus, dicat de Levitis ad interiora domus Dei obsequentibus: Inquilini domus meae et ancillae sicut alienum habuerunt me, quia incarnatum Dominum, quem dudum per legis verba praedixerant,

cognoscere ac venerari noluerunt. 455 Qui adhuc apertius quod ab eorum perversa voluntate non sit cognitus manifestat cum subdit:

CAPUT XLI.

IBID. — Et quasi peregrinus fui in oculis eorum. 49. Christus in propria domo peregrinus. — Redemptor etenim noster, dum a synagoga cognitus non est, in domo sua quasi peregrinus exstitit. Quod aperte propheta testatur, dicens: Quare sicut colonus futurus es in terra, et quasi viator declinans ad manendum (Jerem. XIV, 8)? Quia enim ut Dominus auditus non est, non possessor agri, sed colonus est creditus. Qui quasi viator ad manendum tantummodo declinavit, quia paucos ex Judaea abstulit, et ad vocationem gentium pergens, iter coeptum peregit. Peregrinus ergo in eorum oculis fuit, quia dum sola quae videre poterant cogitabant, non valuerunt intelligere in Domino quod videre non poterant. Dum enim despiciunt carnem visibilem, non pervenerunt ad invisibilem majestatem. Dicatur igitur recte: Et quasi peregrinus fui in oculis eorum. De quo adhuc populo apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLII.

VERS. 16. — Servum meum vocavi, et non respondit. 50. Christus a suo servo, nimirum a Judaico populo contemptus. — Quid enim Judaicus populus nisi servus fuit, qui non amore filii obsequebatur Domino, sed timore servili? Quo contra nobis per Paulum dicitur: Non accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore, sed spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus, Abba, pater (Rom. VIII, 15). Hunc igitur servum vocavit Dominus, quia, collatis muneribus, quasi emissis eum vocibus ad se ducere studuit. Sed non respondit, quia digna opera donis ejus reddere contempsit. Vocat enim nos Deus cum muneribus praevenit, respondemus vero vocationi ejus cum digne juxta percepta munera deservimus. Quia ergo tot

muneribus Judaicum populum praevenit, dicat: Servum meum vocavi. Sed quia etiam post tot munera eum contempsit, subjungat: Et non respondit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLIII (Vet.

XXII, Rec. XX). IBID. — Ore proprio deprecabar illum. 51. Christus jussis reluctantem deprecatus est, nec exauditus. — Ac si apertius diceret: Ego ille qui ante incarnationem meam tot ei praecepta facienda per prophetarum ora mandaveram, incarnatus ad eum veniens, ore eum proprio deprecabar. Unde et Matthaeus, cum praecepta ab eo dari in monte describeret, ait: Aperiens os suum, dixit (Matth. V, 2). Ac si patenter dicat: Tunc os suum aperuit, qui prius aperuerat ora prophetarum. Hinc est etiam quod de illo a sponsa praesentiam ejus desiderante dicitur: Osculetur me osculis oris sui (Cant. I, 1). Sancta quippe Ecclesia quot praecepta ex ejus praedicatione cognovit, quasi tot oris ejus oscula accepit. Bene autem dicitur: Deprecabar, quia in carne monstratus, dum mandata vitae humiliter dixit, quasi superbientem servum, ut veniret, rogavit. Ubi et apte subditur:

CAPUT XLIV (Rec.

XXI). VERS. 17. — Halitum meum exhorruit uxor mea. 52. Christum exhorruit sponsa synagoga. — Quid uxor Domini nisi Synagoga accipitur, in legis foedere carnali ei intelligentia subjecta? Halitus vero ex carne est. Sed infidelis populus carnem Domini carnaliter intellexit, quia purum hunc hominem credidit. Halitum ergo ejus uxor exhorruit, quia Synagoga eum quem videbat hominem Deum credere expavit. Cumque ab ejus ore verba corporaliter audiret, in eo intelligere divinitatis arcana 456 recusavit, et Creatorem esse non credidit quem creatum vidit. Carnis ergo halitum carnalis uxor exhorruit, quia, carnalibus sensibus dedita, incarnationis ejus mysterium non agnovit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLV (Rec.

XXII). IBID. — Et orabam filios uteri mei. 53. Qui Deus membra corporea habere dicatur. — In Deo, qui corporis forma non circumscribitur, membra corporis, id est manus, oculus, uterus ita nominantur, ut ex membrorum vocabulis effectus ejus potentiae designentur. Oculos quippe habere dicitur, quia cuncta videt; manus habere describitur, quia cuncta operatur; in utero autem proles concipitur, quae in hac vita profertur. Quid ergo uterum Dei nisi ejus consilium debemus accipere, in quo ante saecula per praedestinationem concepti sumus, ut creati per saecula producamur? Deus ergo qui manet ante saecula uteri sui filios oravit, quia eos quos potenter per divinitatem condidit, incarnatus veniens humiliter rogavit. Sed quia in ipsa carne qua apparuit ab eorum aestimatione despectus est, subjungitur:

CAPUT XLVI.

VERS. 18. — Stulti quoque despiciebant me. 54. Sapientibus a veritate cadentibus, etiam stulti defecerunt. — Sapientibus a veritatis fide cadentibus, recte de stultis quoque additur, quia dum Dominum Pharisaei ac legisperiti despicerent, eorum incredulitatem etiam populi turba secuta est, quae in eo quod hominem vidit, Redemptoris mundi praedicamenta despexit. Nam saepe stultorum nomine hi qui sunt in plebe pauperes designantur. Unde et per Jeremiam dicitur: Dixi, forsitan pauperes sunt et stulti, ignorantes viam Domini, et judicium Dei sui (Jerem. V, 4). Relictis autem mundi sapientibus atque divitibus, Redemptor noster quaerere pauperes et stultos venerat. Unde nunc quasi in augmentum doloris dicitur: Stulti quoque despiciebant me. Ac si aperte diceretur: Ipsi etiam me despexerunt, pro quibus sanandis stultitiam praedicationis assumpsi. Scriptum quippe est: Quia in Dei sapientia non cognovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere

credentes (I Cor. I, 21). Verbum quippe Dei sapientia est, sed stultitia hujus sapientiae dicta est caro Verbi; ut quia carnales quique per carnis suae prudentiam pertingere non valebant ad sapientiam Dei, per stultitiam praedicationis, id est per carnem Verbi sanarentur. Ait ergo: Stulti quoque despiciebant me. Ac si aperte diceretur: et ab ipsis despectus sum pro quibus stultus aestimari veritus non sum. Et quia Judaeorum plebs cum miracula nostri Redemptoris cerneret, hunc ex signis honorabat, dicens: Hic est Christus (Marc. XIII, 21); cum vero humanitatis ejus infirma conspiceret, eum creatorem credere dedignabatur, dicens: Non, sed seducit turbas (Joan. VII, 12); recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLVII (Vet.

XXIII). IBID. — Et cum ab eis recessissem, detrahebant mihi. 55. Christo a miraculis quiescenti detraxerunt. — Quasi accedebat quippe ad corda populorum Dominus cum eis miracula demonstraret, et quasi recedebat cum nulla signa ostenderet. Sed recedenti Domino detrahebant cum a miraculis quiescenti praebere fidem nolebant. Sed quid mirum eum perpeti ista a plebibus, cum ipsi quoque qui legis doctores esse videbantur, qui eum 457 verbis propheticis incarnandum esse perhibebant, et incarnatum viderunt, et ab eo tamen perfidiae interruptione divisi sunt? De quibus subditur:

CAPUT XLVIII.

VERS. 19. — Abominati sunt me quondam consiliarii mei et quem maxime diligebam aversatus est me. 56. Abominati sunt eum legis doctores et Pharisaei. — Cunctis liquet quia Deus consiliariis non eget, qui ipsis quoque consiliariis hominum sapientiae consilium praebet. De quo etiam scriptum est: Quis cognovit sensum Domini, aut quis ejus consiliarius fuit (Rom. XI, 34, ex Isai. XL, 13). Sed quemadmodum cum panis vel vestimentum egenti tribuitur, hoc se Dominus accepisse testatur (Matth.

XXV, 40), ita cum nescienti cuilibet rectum consilium datur, hoc ipse accipit, cujus ille membrum est qui eruditur. Omnes etenim fideles membra nostri Redemptoris sumus; et sicut ipse in nobis per misericordiam largitatis pascitur, ita ipse in nobis per doctrinae consilium juvatur. Scribae itaque et legis doctores, qui erudire populos ad vitam consueverant, quid aliud quam venturi Redemptoris consiliarii fuerunt? Qui tamen dum incarnatum Dominum conspicerent, consiliis suis multos ab ejus fide diviserunt, quamvis prius ad credendum incarnationis ejus mysterium per prophetarum verba multos docuisse viderentur. Et quia ille apud Deum magis in amore est, qui ad ejus amorem plurimos trahit, adhuc de eodem legis doctorum atque Pharisaeorum ordine subditur: Et quem maxime diligebam aversatus est me. Ipse enim ordo, suadente perfidia, a fide veritatis aversus est, qui prius in labore praedicationis serviens, maxime diligebatur; quem non solum ad non credendum, sed usque ad persequendum quoque Dominum populorum turba secuta est, et usque ad passionem illius saevitiae facibus accensa. In qua videlicet passione discipulorum corda turbata sunt. Unde et nunc subditur:

CAPUT XLIX.

VERS. 20. — Pelli meae, consumptis carnibus, adhaesit os meum. 57. Christo patienti, fugientibus apostolis, sanctae mulieres tanquam pellis adhaeserunt. — In osse fortitudo, in carnibus vero infirmitas corporis designatur. Quia igitur Christus et Ecclesia una persona est, quid per os nisi ipse Dominus designatur? Quid per carnem nisi discipuli, qui passionis ejus tempore infirma sapuerunt? Per pellem vero, quae exterior carne manet in corpore, quid nisi illae sanctae feminae figurantur, quae ad praeparanda subsidia corporis exterioribus Domino ministeriis serviebant? Nam cum ejus discipuli quamvis necdum firmi veritatis fidem populis praedicarent, ossi suo inhaerebant carnes. Et cum sanctae mulieres ea quae necessaria

erant exteriora praepararent, quasi pellis exterius manebant in corpore. Sed cum ad crucis horam ventum est, ejus discipulos gravis ex persecutione Judaeorum timor invasit: fugerunt singuli, mulieres adhaeserunt. Quasi ergo consumpta carne, os Domini pelli suae adhaesit, quia fortitudo ejus, passionis tempore, fugientibus discipulis, juxta se mulieres invenit. Stetit equidem aliquandiu Petrus, sed tamen post territus negavit (Matth. XXVI, 70). Stetit etiam Joannes, cui ipso crucis tempore dictum est: Ecce mater tua (Joan. XIX, 27.) Sed perseverare minime potuit, quia de ipso quoque scriptum est, quod adolescens quidam sequebatur illum 458 amictus sindone super nudo, et tenuerunt eum; at ille rejecta sindone, nudus profugit ab eis (Marc. XIV, 51). Qui etsi post, ut verba Redemptoris sui audiret, ad horam crucis rediit, prius tamen territus fugit. Mulieres autem non solum non timuisse, neque fugisse, sed etiam usque ad sepulcrum stetisse memorantur. Dicat ergo: Pelli mea, consumptis carnibus, adhaesit os meum. Hoc est, hi qui meae fortitudini propinquius inhaerere debuerant, passionis meae tempore timore consumpti sunt, et eas, quas ad exteriora ministeria posui, in passione mea sine formidine inhaerere mihi fideliter inveni. Ubi et aperte subintelligitur, quod haec verba per mysterium dicantur, dum sequitur:

CAPUT L.

IBID. — Et derelicta sunt tantummodo labia circa dentes meos. 58. Christi dentes apostoli, eo patiente virtutem omnem amiserant. — Quid enim circa dentes aliud quam labia habemus, etiam si nulla flagella patiamur? Sed quid per labia nisi locutio, quid per dentes, nisi sancti apostoli designantur? Qui in hoc Ecclesiae corpore idcirco sunt positi, ut vitam carnalium correptione mordeant, eamque a suae pertinaciae duritia confringant. Unde et eidem primo apostolorum quasi denti in ejus corpore posito dicitur: Macta, et manduca (Act. X, 13). Sed quia passionis ejus tempore isti dentes prae

timore mortis amiserunt morsum correptionis, amiserunt fiduciam roboris, amiserunt efficaciam omnimodae operationis, ita ut duo ex illis ambulantes, post ejus mortem ac resurrectionem, in via loquerentur et dicerent: Nos sperabamus quia ipse esset redempturus Israel (Luc. XXIV, 21), recte nunc dicitur: Et derelicta sunt tantummodo labia circa dentes meos. Confabulabantur adhuc de illo, sed jam in illum minime credebant. Tantummodo ergo labia circa dentes ejus remanserant, quia virtutem bonae operationis amiserant, et sola de illo confabulationis verba retinebant. Perdiderant morsum correptionis, et habebant motum locutionis. Labia itaque tantummodo circa dentes relicta sunt, quia adhuc quidem confabulari noverant, sed praedicare jam eum, aut mordere infidelium vitia formidabant. Peractis itaque his quae in voce capitis dixit, ad propria beatus Job verba revertitur, dicens:

CAPUT LI.

VERS. 21. — Miseremini mei, miseremini mei, saltem vos amici mei, quia manus Domini tetigit me. 59. Piorum mens in adversis, ad preces, non ad iram movetur. — Hoc habere solet proprium mens piorum, quod cum injusta ab adversariis patitur, non tam ad iram quam ad preces moveatur, ut si moderari eorum pravitas placide valeat, plus deprecari eligant quam irasci. Unde recte nunc dicitur: Miseremini mei, miseremini mei, saltem vos amici mei, quia manus Domini tetigit me. Ecce eos a quibus semper contumeliis se affligi considerat amicos vocat, quia bonis mentibus etiam ipsa fiunt prospera, quae videntur adversa. Nam perversi quique bonorum dulcedine aut convertuntur, ut redeat, et eo ipso amici sunt quo boni fiunt; aut in malitia perseverant, et in hoc quoque etiam nolentes amici sunt, quia si qua bonorum delicta sunt, ea suis persecutionibus etiam nescientes purgant. Notandum quoque, quod eis 459 quae secreto apud Deum gesta sunt, beati viri in publico verba concordant. A Satan quippe percussus

fuerat, nec tamen percussionem suam Satanae tribuit, sed tactum se manu Domini appellat, sicut ipse quoque Satan dixerat: Mitte manum tuam et tange os ejus et carnem, si non in faciem benedixerit tibi (Job. II, 5). Sciebat quippe vir sanctus quia et per hoc ipsum quod perversa voluntate contra se Satan egerat, potestatem non a semetipso, sed a Domino habebat. Sequitur:

CAPUT LII.

VERS. 22. — Quare persequimini me sicut Deus, et carnibus meis saturamini? 60. Deus non saeviendo nos persequitur. — Non abhorret a locutione pietatis quod a Deo se perhibet persequi. Est namque persecutor bonus, sicut de semetipso ore prophetico Dominus dicit: Detrahentem occulte adversus proximum suum, hunc persequebar. Cum vero sanctus quisque flagellari permittitur, scit quod persecutionem contra commissa vitia ex interna dispensatione patiatur. Crudeles autem persecutorum mentes cum potestatem feriendi appetunt, contra bonorum vitam non studio purgationis, sed livoris facibus accenduntur. Et quidem hoc faciunt quod Deus omnipotens fieri permittit. Sed dum una causa cum Deo etiam per eos agitur, non tamen voluntas una in eadem causa servatur, quia cum omnipotens Deus amando purgationem exhibet, injustorum pravitas saeviendo malitiam exercet. Quod ergo dicitur, quare persequimini me sicut Deus? ad exteriorem hoc percussionem retulit, non ad intimam intentionem, quia etsi hoc agunt exterius quod Deus agi disposuit, non tamen hoc quod Deus in sua actione appetunt, ut boni ex afflictione purgentur. Quod intelligi et aliter potest. Tanto enim omnipotens Deus justius aliena vitia percutit, quanto in semetipso nihil habet vitiorum. Homines vero cum per disciplinam alios feriunt, sic alienam infirmitatem debent percutere, ut etiam ad suam noverint oculos revocare, ut ex semetipsis considerent quantum aliis feriendo parcant, cum se quoque ipsos dignos percussionibus non ignorant. Itaque nunc dicitur: Quare persequimini me sicut Deus? Ac si

aperte diceretur: Ita me ex infirmitatibus meis affligitis, ac si ipsi more Dei de infirmitate nihil habeatis. Unde considerandum est quod si qui fortasse sint qui asperitate correptionis indigeant, tunc eis dura correptio a nobis admovenda est, cum Dei manus cessat a verbere. Cum vero superna flagella insunt, non a nobis jam correptio, sed consolatio debetur, ne dum in dolore increpationem jungimus, percussionem percussioni sociemus. 61. Detractores belluarum more, homines devorant. — Bene autem subditur: Et carnibus meis saturamini? Quorum mens proximorum poenas esurit, saturari procul dubio alienis carnibus quaerit. Sciendum quoque est quia hi etiam qui alienae vitae detractione pascuntur, alienis procul dubio carnibus satiantur. Unde per Salomonem dicitur: Noli esse in conviviis potatorum, neque comedas cum eis qui carnes ad vescendum conferunt (Prov. XXIII, 20). Carnes quippe ad vescendum conferre est in collocutione derogationis vicissim proximorum vitia dicere. De quorum illic poena mox subditur: Quia vacantes potibus et dantes symbolum consumentur, 460 et vestietur pannis dormitatio (Ibid.). Potibus vacant, qui de opprobrio alienae vitae se debriant. Symbolum vero dare est, sicut unusquisque solet pro parte sua cibos ad vescendum, ita in confabulatione detractionis verba conferre. Sed vacantes potibus et dantes symbolum consumentur, quia sicut scriptum est (Fortasse, Proverb. XV, 5): Omnis detractor eradicabitur. Vestietur autem pannis dormitatio, quia despectum et inopem a cunctis bonis operibus mors sua invenit, quem hic ad alienae vitae exquirenda crimina detractionis suae languor occupavit. Sed tot dura quae beatus. Job sustinet, dignum non est ut per silentium transeant, eaque a notitia hominum ignorantiae obscuritas tegat. Tanti quippe aedificari ad servandam patientiam valent, quanti, implente se superna gratia, ejus patientiae facta cognoverint. Unde et idem beatus Job in exemplum vult pertrahi flagella quae sentit, qui statim subjungit dicens:

CAPUT LIII.

VERS. 23, 24. — Quis mihi tribuat ut scribantur sermones mei? Quis mihi det ut exarentur in libro stylo ferreo, et plumbi lamina, vel certe sculpantur in silice? 62. Per plumbi laminam Judaeorum, per silicem gentilium corda designantur. — Cuncta quae beatus Job pertulit, quia forti patrum sententia edoctus gravis ille Judaeorum populus agnovit, stylo ferreo et plumbi lamina scripta sunt. Quia vero haec etiam dura gentilium corda cognoverunt, quid ea nisi in silice sculpta videmus? Et notandum quia in plumbo quod scribitur ipsa metalli mollitie citius deletur; in silice vero tardius quidem valent litterae imprimi, sed difficilius deleri. Non ergo immerito per plumbi laminam Judaea exprimitur, quae praecepta Dei et sine labore percepit, et cum celeritate perdidit. Recte per silicem gentilitas figuratur, quae verba sacri eloquii vix custodienda suscipere potuit; sed tamen fortiter suscepta servavit. Per stylum vero ferreum quid aliud quam fortis Dei sententia designatur? Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Peccatum Judae scriptum est stylo ferreo in unque adamantino (Jerem. XVII, 1). In ungue finis est corporis. Ita vero lapis durus est adamas, ut ferro non valeat secari. Per stylum vero ferreum fortis sententia, per unguem vero adamantinum finis signatur aeternus. Peccatum itaque Judae stylo ferreo in ungue adamantino scriptum dicitur, quia culpa Judaeorum per fortem Dei sententiam in finem servatur infinitum. 63. Plumbum avaritiam significat. — Recte quoque per plumbi laminam eos accipimus quos avaritiae pondus gravat, quibus per increpantem Prophetam dicitur: Filii hominum, usquequo graves corde (Psal. IV, 3)? Per plumbum namque, cujus natura gravis est ponderis, peccatum avaritiae specialiter designatur, quod mentem quam infecerit ita gravem reddit, ut ad appetenda sublimia attolli nequaquam possit. Hinc enim in Zacharia scriptum est: Leva oculos tuos, et vide. Quid est hoc quod egreditur? Et dixi: Quidnam est? Et ait: Haec est amphora egrediens, et dixit: Haec est oculus eorum in universa terra. (Vet. XXVII.) Et ecce talentum plumbi portabatur, et ecce mulier una sedens in medio

amphorae, et dixit: Haec est impietas. Et projecit eam in medio amphorae, et misit massam plumbeam in os ejus (Zach. V, 5, seq.). Qui de hac visione amphorae, et mulieris, et plumbi, ut latius quid cognovisset ostenderet, 461 adhuc secutus adjunxit: Et levavi oculos meos, et vidi; et ecce duae mulieres egredientes, et spiritus in alis earum, et habebant alas quasi alas milvi, et levaverunt amphoram inter terram et coelum. Et dixi ad angelum qui loquebatur in me: Quo istae deferunt amphoram? Et dixit ad me: Ut aedificetur ei domus in terra Sennaar (Ibid., 9, seq.). Quod prophetae testimonium inutiliter pro documento plumbi protulimus, si non etiam repetentes exponamus. Ait enim: Leva oculos, et vide. Quid est hoc quod egreditur? Et dixi: Quidnam est? Et ait: Haec est amphora egrediens (Ibid.). Volens Deus prophetae ostendere humanum genus, ex qua ab eo maxime culpa dilabatur, per imaginem amphorae quasi patens os avaritiae designavit. Avaritia quippe velut amphora est, quae os cordis in ambitu apertum tenet. Et dixit: Haec est oculus eorum in universa terra (Ibid.). Multos obtusi sensus homines cernimus, et tamen eos in malis actibus astutos videmus; propheta quoque attestante, qui ait: Sapientes sunt ut faciant mala, bene autem facere nesciunt (Jerem. IV, 22). Hi itaque sensu torpent, sed in his quae appetunt avaritiae stimulis excitantur; et qui ad bona videnda caeci sunt, excitantibus praemiis, ad peragenda mala vigilantes fiunt. Unde recte de hac eadem avaritia dicitur: Haec est oculus eorum in universa terra. Et ecce talentum plumbi portabatur (Ibid.). Quid est talentum plumbi, nisi ex eadem avaritia pondus peccati? Et ecce mulier una sedens in medio amphorae. Quam mulierem, ne fortassis quae esset dubitare possemus, illico angelus innotuit. Nam illic mox sequitur: Et dixit: Haec est impietas. Et projecit eam in medio amphorae. Impietas in medio amphorae projicitur, quia nimirum in avaritia semper impietas tenetur. Et misit massam plumbi in os ejus. Massa plumbi in os mulieris mittitur, quia scilicet impietas avaritiae peccati sui pondere gravatur. Si enim ad ea quae

deorsum sunt non ambiret, erga Deum ac proximum impia nequaquam existeret. Quo etenim pacto credendum est quia ex eo aliquid per figuram insinuat, si eum nobis apertis vocibus non demonstrat? Sed jam quid de eo sentit aperiat, omnesque nobis ambages cogitationum tollat. Sequitur:

CAPUT LIV.

VERS. 25. — Scio enim quod Redemptor meus vivit. 67. Job Christum Redemptorem aperte praenuntiavit. — Qui enim non ait conditor, sed Redemptor, aperte eum denuntiat qui, postquam omnia creavit, ut nos de captivitate redimeret, inter nos incarnatus apparuit, suaque passione nos a perpetua morte liberavit. Et notandum quanta fide se in virtute ejus divinitatis astringat, de quo per Paulum dicitur: Quia etsi crucifixus est ex infirmitate, sed 463 vivit ex virtute Dei (II Cor. XIII, 4). Ait namque: Scio enim quod Redemptor meus vivit. Ac si apertis vocibus dicat: Infidelis quisque illum flagellatum, derisum, palmis caesum, corona spinea coronatum, sputis illitum, crucifixum, mortuum noverit; ego illum post mortem vivere certa fide credo, libera voce profiteor, quia Redemptor meus vivit, qui inter impiorum manus occubuit. Sed quid, beate Job, per resurrectionem illius etiam de tuae carnis resurrectione confidis, aperta, quaeso, voce profitere. Sequitur:

CAPUT LV.

IBID. — Et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum. 68. Christus mortuus est ut mori non timeremus; resurrexit ut nos resurgere posse confidamus. — Quia videlicet resurrectionem quam in se ostendit in nobis etiam quandoque facturus est. Resurrectionem quippe quam in se ostendit nobis promisit, quia sui capitis gloriam sequuntur membra. Redemptor ergo noster suscepit mortem, ne mori timeremus. Ostendit resurrectionem, ut nos resurgere posse confidamus. Unde et eamdem mortem non plusquam triduanam esse

voluit, ne si in illo resurrectio differretur, in nobis omnimodo desperaretur. Quod bene de illo per Prophetam dicitur: De torrente in via bibet, propterea exaltabit caput (Psal. CIX, 7). Quasi enim de quodam flumine nostrae passionis non in mansione bibere, sed in via dignatus est, quia mortem transitorie, id est ad triduum contigit, atque in ea morte quam contigit, nequaquam sicut nos usque ad finem saeculi remansit. Dum ergo die tertio resurrexit, quid in ejus corpore, id est Ecclesia, sequatur ostendit. Exemplo quippe monstravit quod promisit in praemio, ut sicut ipsum resurrexisse fideles agnoscerent, ita in seipsis in fine mundi resurrectionis praemia sperarent. Ecce nos per mortem carnis usque ad finem mundi remanemus in pulvere, ille autem die tertia ab ariditate mortis viruit; ut divinitatis suae nobis potentiam ipsa innovatione suae carnis ostenderet. Quod bene per Moysen virgis duodecim in tabernaculo positis demonstratur (Num. XVII, 2). Nam cum Aaron sacerdotium, qui de tribu Levi fuerat, despiceretur, nec digna tribus quae offerret holocausta crederetur, duodecim virgae, juxta duodecim tribus, in tabernaculo poni praeceptae sunt; et ecce virga Levi viruit, et quid virtutis in munere Aaron haberet, ostendit (Ibid., 8). Quo videlicet signo quid innuitur, nisi quod omnes qui usque ad finem mundi jacemus in morte, quasi virgae reliquae in ariditate remanemus? Sed cunctis virgis in ariditate remanentibus, virga Levi ad florem redit, quia corpus Domini, veri scilicet sacerdotis nostri in mortis ariditate positum, in florem resurrectionis erupit. Quo flore recte Aaron sacerdos esse cognoscitur, quia hac resurrectionis gloria Redemptor noster, qui de tribu Juda ac Levi ortus est, intercessor pro nobis esse monstratur. Ecce ergo jam virga Aaron post ariditatem floret; sed virgae duodecim tribuum in ariditate remanent, quia jam quidem corpus Domini post mortem vivit, sed nostra adhuc corpora usque ad finem mundi a resurrectionis gloria differuntur. Unde caute hanc eamdem dilationem intulit, dicens: Et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum. 464 69. Fiduciam nostram roborat multorum mortuorum resurrectio.

— Habemus ergo spem resurrectionis nostrae, considerata gloria capitis nostri. Sed ne quis vel cogitatione tacita forsitan dicat quod idcirco ille resurrexit a morte, quia unus idemque Deus et homo mortem, quam ex humanitate pertulit, ex divinitate superavit, nos vero, qui puri homines sumus, a mortis surgere damnatione non possumus, recte in resurrectionis ejus tempore etiam multorum sanctorum corpora resurrexerunt, ut et in se nobis exemplum ostenderet, et de aliorum qui nobis per puram humanitatem similes fuerunt nos resurrectione roboraret, quatenus cum se homo desperaret percipere quod in se ostenderat Deus homo, hoc in se fieri posse praesumeret, quod in ipsis factum cognosceret quos puros fuisse homines non dubitaret. 70. Fides resurrectionis astruitur. — Sunt vero nonnulli qui, considerantes quod spiritus a carne solvitur, quod caro in putredinem vertitur, quod putredo in pulverem redigitur, quod pulvis ita in elementa solvitur, ut nequaquam ab humanis oculis videatur, resurrectionem fieri posse desperant; et dum arida ossa inspiciunt, haec vestiri carnibus rursumque ad vitam viridescere posse diffidunt. Qui si resurrectionis fidem ex obedientia non tenent, certe hanc tenere ex ratione debuerant. Quid enim quotidie nisi resurrectionem nostram in elementis suis mundus imitatur? Per quotidiana quippe momenta lux ipsa temporalis quasi moritur, dum, supervenientibus noctis tenebris, ea quae aspiciebatur subtrahitur, et quasi quotidie resurgit, dum lux ablata oculis, suppressa iterum nocte reparatur. Per momenta quoque temporum cernimus arbusta viriditatem foliorum amittere, a fructuum prolatione cessare; et ecce subito quasi ex arescenti ligno velut quadam resurrectione veniente videmus folia erumpere, fructus grandescere, et totam arborem redivivo decore vestiri. Indesinenter cernimus parva arborum semina terrae humoribus commendari, ex quibus non longe post aspicimus magna arbusta surgere, folia pomaque proferre. Consideremus ergo parvum cujuslibet arboris semen, quod in terram jacitur, ut arbor ex illo producatur, et comprehendamus, si possumus, ubi in illa

tanta brevitate seminis tam immensa arbor latuit, quae ex illo processit, ubi lignum ubi cortex, ubi viriditas foliorum, ubi ubertas fructuum. Nunquidnam in semine tale aliquid cernebatur cum in terram jaceretur? Et tamen occulto rerum omnium opifice cuncta mirabiliter ordinante, et in mollitie seminis latuit asperitas corticis, et in teneritudine illius absconsa est fortitudo roboris, et in siccitate ejus ubertas fructificationis. Quid ergo mirum, si tenuissimum pulverem, nostris oculis in elementis redactum, cum vult, in hominem roformat, qui ex tenuissimis seminibus immensa arbusta redintegrat? Quia ergo rationales sumus conditi, spem resurrectionis nostrae ex ipsa debemus rerum specie et contemplatione colligere, Sed quia in nobis sensus torpuit rationis, accessit in exemplum gratia Redemptoris. Venit namque conditor noster, suscepit mortem, ostendit resurrectionem, ut qui resurrectionis spem ex ratione tenere 465 noluimus, hanc ex ejus adjutorio et exemplo teneremus. Dicat igitur beatus Job: Scio quod Redemptor meus vivit, et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum. Et quisquis resurrectionis in se virtutem fieri posse desperat, verba in gentilitate positi viri fidelis erubescat, et penset quanto poenae sit pondere feriendus, si adhuc non credit suam, qui jam resurrectionem Domini cognovit factam, si et ille suam credidit, qui adhuc Domini Jesu sperabat esse faciendam.. VERS. 26. — Et rursum circumdabor pelle mea. 72. Error Eutychii, corpus impalpabile aereque subtilius futurum asserentis refellitur. — Dum aperte pellis dicitur, omnis dubitatio verae resurrectionis aufertur, quia non, sicut Eutychius Constantinopolitanae urbis episcopus scripsit, corpus nostrum in illa resurrectionis gloria erit impalpabile, ventis aereque subtilius. In illa enim resurrectionis gloria erit corpus nostrum subtile quidem per effectum spiritalis potentiae, sed palpabile per veritatem naturae. Unde etiam redemptor noster dubitantibus de sua resurrectione discipulis, ostendit manus et latus, palpanda ossa carnemque praebuit, dicens: Palpate et videte, quia spiritus carnem et ossa non habet, sicut me videtis habere (Luc. XXIV,

39). Qui cum eidem Eutychio in Constantinopolitana urbe positus, hoc evangelicae veritatis testimonium protulissem, ait: Idcirco Dominus hoc fecit, ut dubitationem resurrectionis suae de discipulorum cordibus amoveret. Cui inquam: Mira est res valde quam astruis, ut inde nobis dubietas surgat, unde discipulorum corda a dubietate sanata sunt. Quid enim deterius dici potest quam ut hoc nobis de ejus vera carne dubium fiat, per quod discipuli ejus ad fidem ab omni sunt dubietate reparati? Si enim non hoc habuisse astruitur quod ostendit, unde fides discipulis ejus confirmata est, inde nostra destruitur. Qui adjungebat etiam, dicens: Corpus palpabile habuit quod ostendit; sed post confirmata corda palpantium, omne illud in Domino quod palpari potuit in subtilitatem est aliquam redactum. Ad haec ipsa respondi, dicens: Scriptum est: Christus resurgens a mortuis, jam non moritur, mors illi ultra non dominabitur (Rom. VI, 9). Si quid ergo in ejus corpore post resurrectionem potuit immutari, contra veridicam Pauli sententiam, post resurrectionem Dominus rediit in mortem. 466 Quod quis dicere vel stultus praesumat, nisi qui veram carnis ejus resurrectionem denegat? Tunc mihi objecit, dicens: Cum scriptum sit: Caro et sanguis regnum Dei possidere non possunt (I Cor. XV, 50), qua ratione credendum est resurgere veraciter carnem? Cui inquam: in sacro eloquio aliter caro dicitur juxta naturam, atque aliter juxta culpam, vel corruptionem. Caro quippe juxta naturam, sicut scriptum est: Hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis, et caro de carne mea (Genes. II, 23); et Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis (Joan. I, 14). Caro vero juxta culpam, sicut scriptum est: Non permanebit in hominibus istis spiritus meus, eo quod sunt caro (Genes. VI, 3). Et sicut Psalmista ait: Memoratus est quia caro sunt: spiritus vadens, et non rediens (Psal. LXXVII, 39). Unde et discipulis Paulus dicebat: Vos autem in carne non estis, sed in spiritu (Rom. VIII, 9). Neque enim in carne non erant, quibus epistolas transmittebat, sed quia passiones carnalium desideriorum vicerant, jam liberi per virtutem spiritus in carne non erant.

Quod ergo Paulus apostolus dicit: Quia caro et sanguis regnum Dei possidere non possunt, carnem vult secundum culpam intelligi, non carnem secundum naturam. Unde et mox, quia carnem secundum culpam diceret ostendit subdens: Neque corruptio incorruptelam possidebit. In illa ergo coelestis regni gloria caro secundum naturam erit, sed secundum passionum desideria non erit, quia devicto mortis aculeo, in aeterna incorruptione regnabit. Ecce enim jam de spe resurrectionis dubitare non possumus, dum ait: Et in novissimo die de terra resurrecturus sum. Dubietatem quoque de reparatione vera corporis abstulit, qui ait: Et rursum circumdabor pelle mea. Qui adhuc ad auferendas ambages nostrae cogitationis subdit: VERS. 26. — Et in carne mea videbo Deum. 76. Reducendam carnem in integrum statum credidit Job. — Ecce resurrectionem, ecce pellem, ecce carnem apertis fatetur vocibus. Quid ergo remanet unde possit mens nostra dubitare? Si itaque iste vir sanctus ante effectum resurrectionis dominicae reducendam carnem in integrum statum credidit, quis erit reatus nostrae dubitationis, si vera carnis resurrectio nec post exemplum creditur Redemptoris? Si enim post resurrectionem corpus palpabile non erit, profecto alius surgit quam moritur, quod dictu nefas est credere, quia ego morior, et alius resurgat. Unde quaeso te, beate Job, subjunge quae sentis, et hujus nobis questionis scrupulum tolle. Sequitur:

CAPUT LVII.

VERS. 27. — Quem visurus sum ego ipse, et oculi mei conspecturi sunt, et non alius. 77. Caro nostra post resurrectionem eadem futura est per naturam, et diversa per gloriam. — Si enim, sicut quidam errorum sequaces arbitrantur, post resurrectionem corpus palpabile non erit, sed invisibilis corporis subtilitas caro vocabitur, quamvis substantia carnis non sit, profecto alius est qui moritur, et alius qui resurgit. Sed beatus Job hanc eis sententiam veridica voce destruit, qui ait: Quem visurus sum ego ipse, et

oculi mei conspecturi sunt, et non alius. Nos autem beati Job fidem sequentes, et Redemptoris nostri post resurrectionem corpus palpabile veraciter credentes, fatemur carnem nostram post resurrectionem futuram et eamdem, et diversam: eamdem per naturam, diversam per gloriam; eamdem per veritatem, diversam per potentiam. Erit itaque subtilis, quia et incorruptibilis. Erit palpabilis, quia non amittet essentiam veracis naturae. Sed sanctus vir eamdem resurrectionis fiduciam qua spe teneat, quanta certitudine praestoletur, 468 adjungit. Sequitur:

CAPUT LVIII.

IBID. — Reposita est haec spes mea in sinu meo. 78. Job de resurrectione sua certissimus. — Nil nos habere certius credimus quam hoc quod in sinu tenemus. In sinu ergo suo spem repositam tenuit, quia veram certitudinem de spe resurrectionis praesumpsit. Sed quia venturum diem resurrectionis innotuit, jam nunc seu voce sua, seu typo sanctae et universalis Ecclesiae pravorum facta redarguit, et judicium quod in resurrectionis die sequitur praedicit. Nam protinus subdit:

CAPUT LIX.

VERS. 28, 29. — Quare ergo nunc dicitis: Persequamur eum, et radicem verbi inveniamus contra eum? Fugite ergo a facie gladii, quoniam ultor iniquitatum gladius est, et scitote esse judicium. 79. Ex judicio quod resurrectionem excepturum est, urget iniquos ad poenitentiam. — Priori quippe sententia iniquorum facta reprehendit, sequenti autem ex divino judicio poenas innotuit. Ait enim: Quare ergo nunc dicitis: Persequamur eum, et radicem verbi inveniamus contra eum? Perversi quilibet quia malo studio bene prolata audiunt, et in lingua justi accusationis aditum invenire appetunt, quid aliud quam contra eum verbi radicem quaerunt, ex qua videlicet loquendi originem sumant, et ramos pravae loquacitatis in

accusatione dilatent? Sed vir sanctus cum a pravis talia sustinet, non contra eos, sed magis pro ipsis dolet, et male cogitata redarguit, ac mala eis quae fugiant ostendit, dicens: Fugite ergo a facie gladii, quia ultor iniquitatum gladius est, et scitote esse judicium. Omnis qui perversa agit, eo ipso quo hoc timere despicit, esse Dei judicium nescit. Si enim hoc timendum sciret, quae in illo sunt punienda non ageret. Nam sunt plerique qui extremum esse judicium verbo tenus sciunt, sed perverse agendo testantur quia nesciunt. Quia enim hoc non formidat ut debet, necdum cognovit cum quanto turbine terroris adveniat. Si enim pensare pondus tremendi examinis nosset, irae diem utique timendo praecaveret. Faciem quoque gladii fugere est animadversionis districtae sententiam prius quam appareat placare. Vitari namque terror judicis non nisi ante judicium potest. Modo non cernitur, sed precibus placatur. Cum vero in illo tremendo examine sederit, et videri potest, et placari jam non potest, quia facta pravorum, quae diu sustinuit tacitus, simul omnia reddet iratus. Unde necesse est nunc timere judicem, cum necdum judicium exercet, cum diu sustinet, cum mala adhuc tolerat quae videt, ne cum semel manum in retributione ultionis excusserit, tanto in judicio districtius feriat, quanto ante judicium diutius exspectavit.

LIBER DECIMUS QUINTUS.

In quo XX et XXI capitum libri Job explicatio brevis absolvitur. 469 Quia amici beati Job nequaquam perversi esse potuerunt, Sophar Naamathitis verba testantur, qui de ore ejus terrorem venturi judicii audiens, protinus adjungit:

CAPUT PRIMUM.

CAP. XX, VERS. 2. — Idcirco cogitationes meae varie succedunt sibi, et mens in diversa rapitur. 1. Quanto terrore ex assidua ejus consideratione affici debeamus. — Ac si apertis vocibus dicat: Quia extremi judicii terrorem considero, idcirco cogitationum tumultibus in timore confundor. Tanto se quippe animus amplius, in cogitatione dilatat, quanto illud esse terribile, quod imminet, pensat. Et in diversa mens rapitur, quando modo mala quae egit, modo bona quae agere neglexit, modo reprehensibilia in quibus est, modo recta quae sibi adhuc deesse conspicit, sollicito pavore perpendit. Sed amici beati Job cum assiduitate vitae illius edocti bene vivere noverint, pensare tamen subtiliter Dei judicia nescientes, mala hic justorum quempiam posse recipere non credebant. Unde et eumdem sanctum virum iniquum esse suspicati sunt, quem flagellatum viderunt, atque ex hac suspicione agebatur ut in ejus quoque increpationem dilaberentur; ad quam tamen increpationem quasi sub quadam reverentia descendunt. Unde Sophar subjicit dicens:

CAPUT II.

VERS. 3. — Doctrinam qua me arguis audiam, et spiritus intelligentiae meae respondebit mihi. 2. Multi monita audiunt, ut judicent, non ut sequantur. — Ac si aperte dicat: Tua quidem verba audio, sed an recte prolata sint, spiritu meae intelligentiae discerno. Nam qui docentis verba

despiciunt, doctrinam ejus non ad adjutorium, sed ad occasionem certaminis sumunt, ut audita potius judicent quam sequantur. His itaque sub quodam moderamine praemissis, in apertam jam beati viri exprobrationem prosilit, cum subjungit:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 4, 5. — Hoc scio a principio, ex quo positus est homo super terram, quod laus impiorum brevis sit, et gaudium hypocritae ad instar puncti. 3. Breve est quidquid finitur. — Liquet nunc quia, suae intelligentiae spiritu inflatus, eas quas contra impios sententias profert in beati Job redargutionibus inflectit. Quem enim prius justa agere et postmodum poenas tolerare conspexit, omne in illo hypocrisim aestimat fuisse quod vidit, quia videlicet a justo Deo justum famulum affligi posse non credidit. Sed nos easdem ejusdem sententias, quas non recte rectas protulit, sollicita intentione pensantes exsequamur; et contemnentes quod falsum contra beatum Job loquitur, intueamur quam vera dicat si haec contra impios loqueretur. Ait itaque: Hoc scio a principio, ex quo positus est homo super terram, quod laus impiorum brevis sit. [Vet. II.] Dicturus brevitatem vitae praesentis, cordis oculum ad exordium reduxit originis, ut ex anteactis colligat quam nulla sint quae videntur aliqua esse dum sunt. Si enim ab ipso humani generis exortu usque ad hoc tempus in quo sumus mentis oculos ducimus, omne quod finiri potuit 470 quam breve fuerit videmus. Ponamus enim quemlibet hominem a primo die mundi conditi usque ad hodiernum diem vitam ducere, hodie tamen eamdem vitam quam sic longam ducere videbatur finire, ecce finis adest, praeterita jam nulla sunt, quia cuncta transierunt. Futurum in hoc mundo nihil est, quia nullum ad vitam vel brevissimum restat momentum. Ubi est ergo longum tempus quod inter initium finemque deprehensum ita consumitur, ac si nec breve unquam fuisset? 4. Multi non esse, sed dici boni curant. Hypocritae gaudium transit,

poena manet. Impii itaque, quia praesentem vitam diligunt, in ea procul dubio elati percipere laudem quaerunt. Linguae favoribus extolluntur, nec esse boni, sed dici appetunt. Quam videlicet laudem longam esse existimant dum assequuntur, sed brevem intelligunt fuisse dum amittunt. In fine quippe eis ostenditur quam nihil fuerit quod amaverunt. Unde recte contra eosdem impios dicitur: Hoc scio a principio, ex quo positus est homo super terram, quod laus impiorum brevis sit. Ubi apte subjungitur: Et gaudium hypocritae ad instar puncti. Saepe hypocrita dum sanctum se simulat, et iniquum exhibere minime formidat, ab omnibus honoratur, eique sanctitatis gloria defertur ab iis qui exteriora cernunt, sed interiora perspicere nequeunt. Unde fit ut gaudeat in prima sessione, hilarescat in primo recubitu, infletur in prima salutatione, elevetur in reverenti voce obsequentium, et superba cogitatione tumeat in famulatu subditorum, sicut voce quoque Veritatis de talibus dicitur: Omnia vero opera sua faciunt, ut videantur ab hominibus. Dilatant enim phylacteria sua, et magnificant fimbrias suas. Amant autem primos recubitus in coenis, et primas cathedras in synagogis, et salutationes in foro, et vocari ab hominibus, Rabbi (Matth. XXIII, 5). Sed hoc eorum gaudium aeternitati comparatum quid erit, quando, irruente mortis articulo, ita consumitur ac si omnino non fuerit? Cujus nimirum gaudii laetitia pertransiit, et poena permanet, et cum res amittitur, causa durat. Bene autem dicitur: Gaudium hypocritae ad instar puncti. In puncto enim stylus mox ut ponitur levatur, nec mora ulla agitur ut per exprimendam lineam trahatur. Gaudium ergo hypocritae ad similitudinem puncti est, quia apparet ad momentum, sed disparet in perpetuum; et sicut stylus in puncto dum ponitur levatur, sic hypocrita praesentis vitae gaudia dum tangit amittit. De quo et subditur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 6, 7. — Si ascenderit usque ad coelum superbia ejus, et caput ejus nubes tetigerit, quasi sterquilinium in fine perdetur. 5. Gaudia vitae praesentis, quae iniqui tanti faciunt, justi arbitrantur stercora. — Superbia hypocritae usque ad coelum ascendere dicitur, quando ejus elatio coelestem agere vitam videtur. Cujus etiam caput quasi nubes tangit 471 quando principalis pars, videlicet intellectus illius, sanctorum praecedentium coaequari meritis creditur. Sed quasi sterquilinium in fine perditur, quia in morte sua cum ad tormenta ducitur, stercoribus vitiorum plenus, a malignis spiritibus conculcatur. Gaudia etenim vitae praesentis, quae injusti aestimant magna bona, justi stercora deputant. Unde scriptum est: De stercore bonum lapidatus est piger (Eccli. XXII, 2). Is ergo qui Deum sequi noluerit, ab amore aeternae vitae pigrescit. Et quoties rerum temporalium damno percutitur ex his nimirum affligitur, quae justi viri velut stercora contemnunt. Qui ergo ex terrenarum rerum percussione atteritur, quid aliud quam de boum stercore lapidatur? Et recte hypocrita sterquilinio similis dicitur, quia dum temporalem gloriam habere appetit, modo per cogitationem apud semetipsum tumet, modo eamdem gloriam aliis invidet, eamque alios veraciter habentes irridet. Quot ergo vitiis plenus est, quasi tot stercoribus in conspectu aeterni judicis illius pectus fetet. Dicatur igitur: Si ascenderit usque ad coelum superbia ejus, et caput ejus nubes tetigerit, quasi sterquilinium in fine perdetur. Qui etsi coelestem vitam se agere simulat, etsi intellectum suum esse similem veris praedicatoribus ostentat, quasi sterquilinium tamen in fine perditur, quia mens illius pro vitiorum suorum fetore damnatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 7. — Et qui eum viderant dicent: Ubi est? 6. Hypocritarum vita in fine detegitur. — Plerumque hypocritarum vita etiam ab omnibus reproba in fine cognoscitur, ut signis jam apertioribus qui fuerint ostendatur. Qui ergo

nunc elatum viderunt, de exstincto dicent: Ubi est? Quia neque hic ubi elatus fuerat apparet, neque in aeternitatis requie, de qua esse putabatur. De cujus brevitate vitae adhuc apte subjungitur:

CAPUT VI.

VERS. 8. — Velut somnium avolans non invenietur, transiet sicut visio nocturna. 7. Vita hypocritae phantasmati similis. — Quid est vita hypocritae, nisi quaedam visio phantasmatis, quae hoc ostendit in imagine, quod non habet ex veritate? Unde recte quoque somnio comparatur, quia ab eo omnis laus et gloria quasi dum tenetur amittitur. Saepe namque in nocturna visione nonnulli pauperes factos se divites admirantur, deferri sibi honores aspiciunt, divitiarum moles, obsequentium multitudinem, pulchritudinem vestium, abundantiam ciborum sibimet adesse considerant; gaudent se evasisse penuriam, quam cum gemitu tolerabant; sed repente, cum evigilant, inveniunt quam falsum fuerit quod gaudebant, eosque evigilasse poenitet, quia vigilantes inopia vera tenet. Sic hypocritarum mentes, dum aliud est quod agunt, atque aliud quod hominibus ostendunt, laudes de ipsa sanctitatis ostentatione recipiunt, in aestimatione hominum multis melioribus praeferuntur, et cum intus apud se tacita cogitatione superbiant, foris se humiles demonstrant. Cumque ab hominibus immoderate laudantur, tales esse se quoque apud Deum existimant, quales se gaudent hominibus innotuisse. Unde fit ut etiam aeternae vitae percepturos se praemia praesumant, et qui hic de humanis favoribus exsultant, illic se habituros requiem omnino non dubitent. Sed 472 inter haec occulta vocationis hora subrepit, et cum carnis oculos claudunt, mentis aperiunt, moxque ut supplicia aeterna receperint, ibi vident quia virtutum aestimatione divites in somnis fuerunt. Bene ergo de hoc hypocrita dicitur: Transiet velut visio nocturna. Quia hoc quod se ad momentum divitem humanis aestimationibus videt, de ostensione est phantasmatis, non de

soliditate virtutis. Nam cum mens ejus in morte carnis evigilat, cognoscit procul dubio quia favores circa se hominum dormiens videbat. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 9. — Oculus qui eum viderat, non videbit, neque ultra intuebitur eum locus suus. 8. Linguae adulantium ei nihil prosunt in judicic. — Quis est locus hypocritae, nisi cor adulantium? Ibi quippe requiescit, ubi favores invenerit. Oculus ergo qui eum viderat, non videbit, quia, subtractus morte, stultis amatoribus suis absconditur, qui eum consueverant admirando conspicere. Nec ultra eum locus suus intuebitur, quia linguae adulantium hunc ad judicium favoribus non sequuntur. Sed tamen quousque vivit, ea quae ipse agit etiam sequaces suos docere non desinit, et per erroris sui pravitatem alios quoque ad eam quam exhibet generat simulationem. De quibus hic apte subditur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 10. — Filii ejus atterentur egestate. 9. Exterius multiplicati hypocritae, interius inanes fiunt. — Scriptum est: In malevolam animam non introibit sapientia (Sap. I, 4). Et per Psalmistam dicitur: Divites eguerunt, et esurierunt (Psal. XXXIII, 11). Si enim de exteriori fame egestas eorum et esuries diceretur, profecto divites non essent, qui pane corporis indigerent. Sed quia dum exterius multiplicantur, interius inanes fiunt, et divites pariter et egentes esse memorantur, quia videlicet pane sapientiae satiari minime merentur. Filii itaque hujus hypocritae atteruntur egestate, quia hi qui in hypocrisi ex ejus imitatione nascuntur, dum veritatis soliditatem non tenent, in cordis egestate deficiunt.

CAPUT IX.

IBID. — Et manus illius reddent ei dolorem suum. 10. Aeternum hypocritis supplicium quasi quoddam debitum solvetur. — Quid per manus nisi opera designantur? Manus itaque illius ei dolorem reddent, quia damnationem justam ex iniqua recipiet operatione. Bene autem non dabunt, sed reddent, dicitur, quia perversae ejus actiones aeternum ei supplicium quasi quoddam debitum solvent. Sed priusquam ad aeterna supplicia perveniat, qualem se hic exhibeat plenius adjungat. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 11. — Ossa ejus implebuntur vitiis adolescentiae ejus, et cum eo in pulvere dormient. 11. Hypocritas vitia nunquam deserunt. — Origo pravae inchoationis causas culpae etiam praesumendo multiplicat. Dum enim mala agere quisque coeperit, usu jam deterius in hoc quod inchoaverat excrescit. Quid itaque adolescentia hujus hypocritae nisi inchoatio pravitatis est? In adolescentia quippe jam libido fervescere inchoat. Et tunc adolescentiam hypocrita habet, cum appetere et amplecti libidinem gloriae coeperit. Quam in eo dum adulantium blanda fomenta multiplicant, robustiorem reddunt, et quasi in ossa convertunt. Hoc enim quod male coepit, pejus quotidie per consuetudinem roborat. Dicatur itaque: Ossa ejus implebuntur vitiis adolescentiae ejus, quia durae in eo pravitatum consuetudines a vitio sumptae sunt pessimae inchoationis. Unde 473 scriptum est in Proverbiis: Adolescens juxta viam suam, etiam cum senuerit, non recedet ab ea (Prov. XXII, 6). Quae nimirum ossa cum eo in pulvere dormient, quia eousque in illo iniquae consuetudines perdurant, quo hunc ad mortis pulverem pertrahant. Cum eo enim in pulvere ossa vel vitia dormire est usque ad pulverem eum non deserere, id est usque ad mortem ab iniquitate minime cessare. Tenent igitur illum pravae consuetudines, quae semel coeperunt, atque quotidie duriores existunt. Et cum illo in pulvere dormiunt, quia non nisi cum ejus vita finiuntur. Sed haec intelligi et aliter possunt.. VERS. 13.

— Parcet illi, et non derelinquet illud, et celabit 474 in gutture suo. 14. Hypocritae est perpetrata nunquam confiteri. — Malo enim quod diligit, parcit, quia non hoc in semetipsum poenitendo persequitur. Unde et additur: Non derelinquet illud. Si enim vellet relinquere, nequaquam parceret, quia persequeretur. Sed hoc celat in gutture, quia sic servat in cogitatione, ut nunquam proferat in voce. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 14. — Panis ejus in utero illius vertetur in fel aspidum intrinsecus. 15. Hypocritae qua delectatur gloria, convertitur in fel aspidum. — Quod panis in utero, hoc est satietas temporalis delectationis in mente. Satietur ergo nunc hypocrita illata laude, delectetur honoribus; panis ejus in utero illius vertetur in fel aspidum intrinsecus, quia satietas transitoriae delectationis in retributionis fine ad amaritudinem vertetur; et fel aspidum, id est malignorum, spirituum, persuasio fuisse cognoscitur, quod hic laus gloriae esse credebatur. Tunc enim iniqui vident quod antiqui serpentis veneno infecti sunt, dum, flammis ultricibus traditi, cum eodem suo persuasore cruciantur. Panis itaque iste aliud in ore sapit, sed aliud in utero, quia transitoriae delectationis laetitia dulcis est, cum hic quasi mandendo agitur; sed amarescit in utero, quia peracta laetitia deglutitur ad poenam. VERS. 15. — Divitias quas devoravit evomet, et de ventre illius extrahet eas Deus. 17. Contempto bono opere, saepe etiam scientiam perdit hypocrita. — Vult hypocrita scire divina eloquia, nec tamen facere. Vult docte loqui, nec vivere. Pro eo ergo quod non agit quae novit, etiam hoc quod novit amittit, ut quia scientiae suae puram operationem non sociat, contempta puritate boni operis et scientiam perdat. Divitias igitur sacrae legis, quas legendo devoravit, obliviscendo evomit, easque de ventre illius Deus extrahit, quia quod observare noluit, justo judicio de ejus memoria evellit, ne praecepta Dei saltem in lingua teneat, quae non servavit in vita.

Unde per Prophetam dicitur: Peccatori autem dixit Deus: Quare tu enarras justitias meas, et assumis testamentum meum per os tuum (Psal. XLIX, 16)? Quae etiam verba doctrinae, si quando contingit, ut hypocrita usque ad finem videatur in ore retinere, 475 inde magis damnabitur, unde bono Dei munere etiam malus minime privatur. Scriptum quippe est: Memoria retinentibus mandata ejus, ut faciant ea (Psal. CII, 18). Qui ergo mandata illius memoria retinet, sed nequaquam facit, hic in doctrinae verbis sententias, quibus damnetur, tenet. Quae latitudinem decem cubitorum, longitudinem vero viginti habere perhibetur, quia latitudo operationis nostrae simpla est, et longanimitas spei in duplum tenditur, quoniam pro bono nostro opere et hic nobis mentis requies, et illic gaudia aeterna praeparantur, Veritate attestante, quae ait: Si quis reliquerit domum, aut agros, et caetera, centuplum in hoc saeculo recipiet, et in futuro vitam aeternam possidebit (Matth. XIX, 29; Luc. XVIII, 30). Centenarius quippe numerus decemplicato denario fit perfectus. Hic itaque centuplum recipit, qui etsi nihil habuerit, ipsa tamen perfectione mentis jam in hoc saeculo habere nihil quaerit. Quia ergo per hanc duplum nobis pro simplo redditur, recte hoc volumen per viginti cubitos in longum tenditur, quod per decem dilatatur. Sed quia haec ipsa sacra eloquia ad aeternam damnationem sunt eis qui illa vel scire nolunt, vel certe sciendo contemnunt, recte de hoc volumine dicitur: Haec est maledictio, quae egredietur super faciem universae terrae (Zach. V, 3). Et cur maledictio dicatur, adjungit: Quia omnis fur sicut ibi scriptum est, judicabitur. Hypocrita igitur, quia secundum verba legis quae novit vivere contemnit, et de doctrina favores quaerit, fur judicabitur, quia per hoc quod justa loquitur, laudem sibi vitae justorum rapit. De quo adhuc bene subditur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 16. — Caput aspidum suget, et occidet eum lingua viperae. 19. Diabolus in tentatione prius leniter subrepit, postea violenter trahit. — Aspis parvus est serpens, vipera vero prolixioris est corporis; et aspides ova gignunt, atque ex ovis eorum filii procreantur, viperae autem cum conceperint, filii earum in ventre saeviunt, qui ruptis lateribus matrum ex earum ventribus procedunt. Unde et vipera, eo quod vi pariat, nominatur. Vipera itaque sic nascitur ut violenter exeat, et cum matris suae exstinctione producatur. Quid ergo per aspides parvos nisi latentes suggestiones immundorum spirituum figurantur, qui cordibus hominum parva prius persuasione subripiunt? Quid vero per linguam viperae, nisi violenta diaboli tentatio designatur? Prius enim leniter subripit, postmodum vero etiam violenter trahit. Caput itaque aspidum sugit, quia initium suggestionis occultae parvum prius in corde nascitur, sed occidit eum lingua viperae, quia postmodum capta mens veneno violentae tentationis necatur. Primum subtilibus consiliis ad cor hominis immundi spiritus loquuntur, qui dum leniter persuadent, quasi venenum aspidum 476 fundunt. Unde scriptum est: Ova aspidum ruperunt et telas araneae texuerunt. Qui comederit de ovis eorum morietur, et quod confotum est erumpet in regulum (Isai. LIX, 5). Ova quippe aspidum pravis hominibus rumpere est malignorum spirituum consilia, quae in eorum cordibus latent, perversis operibus aperire. Telas quoque araneae texere est pro hujus mundi concupiscentia temporalia quaelibet operari. Quae dum nulla stabilitate solidata sunt, ea procul dubio ventus vitae mortalis rapit. Bene autem additur: Qui comederit de ovis eorum morietur (Ibid.), quia qui immundorum spirituum consilia recipit, vitam in se animae occidit. Et quod confotum est erumpet in regulum, quia consilium maligni spiritus quod corde tegitur ad plenam iniquitatem nutritur. Regulus namque serpentum rex dicitur. Quis vero reproborum caput est, nisi Antichristus? Quod ergo confotum fuerit, erumpet in regulum, quia is qui in se enutrienda aspidis consilia recipit, membrum

iniqui capitis factus in corpus Antichristi accrescit. De hoc itaque hypocrita dicitur: Caput aspidum suget, et occidet eum lingua viperae, quia cum iniquam suggestionem antiqui hostis libenter suscipit, violentis se postmodum ejus tentationibus devictus tradit. Unde et in paradiso quoque, stanti homini verba blandae persuasionis intulit (Genes. III, 5 seq.); sed quem semel rapuit ad consensum, jam nunc etiam renitentem trahit, et corruptionis suae delectationibus devictum pene violenter interficit. Sed fortasse haec ipsa intelligere etiam per contrariam interpretationem valemus. Nam quia veneno suo aspis concite, vipera autem tardius occidit, per aspidem violenta et subita, per viperam vero lenis et diuturna tentatio designatur. Unde et illi mors in suctione capitis, viperae autem in lingua esse perhibetur, quia repentina tentatio saepe inopinatam mentem mox ut surgit interficit; longa vero tentatio, quia prava diutius persuadendo suggerit, velut ex lingua vipera occidit. Et quia omnis hypocrita, immundorum suggestione spirituum, quasi serpentum veneno, penetratus, quae sint superna sancti spiritus dona nequaquam considerat, dum intentionem cordis in exterioribus favoribus divulgat, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 17. — Non videat rivulos fluminis torrentis mellis et butyri. 20. Hypocrita fidei, spei, et charitatis exors. — In Evangelio Dominus dicit: Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae (Joan. VII, 38). Ubi Evangelista subjungit, dicens: Hoc autem dixit de spiritu quem accepturi erant credentes in eum. Rivuli ergo sunt fluminis dona Spiritus sancti. Rivulus est fluminis charitas, rivulus fluminis fides, rivulus fluminis spes. Sed quoniam omnis hypocrita nec Deum, nec proximum diligit, cum transitoriam mundi gloriam quaerit, rivulos fluminis non videt, quia irrigatione non infunditur charitatis. Hypocrita, dum praesentia lucra quaerit, munera futura despicit, et fidem non habens,

rivulum fluminis mente non videt, quia est fides rerum argumentum non apparentium (Hebr. XI, 1). Et dum retinet hypocrita quae videntur, spem negligit eorum quae non videntur. Rivulum ergo fluminis per desiderium non videt, quia solis visibilibus intendit. Et scriptum est: Quod enim videt quis, quid sperat (Rom. VIII, 24)? Rivulos ergo fluminis vidisset, si a 477 praesentis mundi gloria oculos clauderet, eosque ad coelestis patriae amorem aperiret. Et notandum quod non rivos, sed rivulos dicit. Accipi enim rivuli fluminis possunt ea dona spiritualia, quae in amantis mentem ita de coelestibus subtiliter currunt, ut per os carnis expleri non possint. Saepe namque amantis animus tanto contemplationis munere repletur, ut videre valeat, quod loqui non valet. Fluvius autem torrens est ipsa inundatio Spiritus sancti, quae in contemplantis animum exuberanti infusione colligitur, cum mens plus quam intelligere sufficit, repletur. Et sciendum quia cum nos Spiritus sancti gratia infundit, melle nos pariter et butyro replet. Mel enim desuper cadit, butyrum vero ex animalium lacte colligitur. Mel itaque ex aere, butyrum vero ex carne est. Summi autem Patris Unigenitus, cum sit Deus super omnia, homo est factus inter omnia. Qui cum nos dulcedine divinitatis suae et mysterio incarnationis replevit, melle nos pariter et butyro satiavit. Quia ergo spiritus Christi mentem quam repleverit, et divinitatis ejus dulcedine, et incarnationis fide laetificat, isti rivuli torrentis fluminis mellis simul et butyri esse memorantur, quia et de cognitione Dei alta mentem suavitate reficiunt, et de incarnationis gratia charismatis hanc mysterio perungunt. Sed iste hypocrita quia, in exterioribus favoribus fusus, haec interna dona non percipit, ad quae post supplicia tendat adjungit, cum subditur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 18. — Luet quae fecit omnia, nec tamen consumetur. 21. Damnati semper moriuntur nunquam morte consumendi. — Persolvit enim in

tormento ea quae hic illicite servavit desideria; et, flammis ultricibus traditus, semper moritur, quia semper in morte servatur. Non enim in morte consumitur, quia si consumeretur vita morientis, cum vita etiam poena finiretur. Sed ut sine fine crucietur, vivere sine fine in poena compellitur, ut cujus vita hic mortua fuit in culpa, illic ejus mors vivat in poena. Dicat ergo: Luet quae fecit omnia, nec tamen consumetur, quia cruciatur, et non exstinguitur; moritur, et vivit; deficit, et subsistit; finitur semper, et sine fine est. Haec solo auditu valde sunt terribilia, quanto magis passione! Sed quia multitudo iniquitatis ejus exigit ut carere suppliciis nunquam possit, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVIII.

IBID. — Juxta multitudinem adinventionum suarum, sic et sustinebit. 22. Novis inventis cruciantur ad poenam, qui multa invenerunt ad culpam. — Quia enim multa invenit ad culpam, novis inventionibus cruciatur in poena. Nam quod hic suspicari non potuit, hoc illic ultioni traditus sentit. Sicut enim exercitati in bonis operibus electi nonnunquam plus student agere quam eis dignatus est Dominus jubere (carnis enim virginitas nequaquam jussa est, sed tantummodo laudata; nam si illa juberetur, nimirum conjugium jam culpa crederetur, et tamen multi virtute virginitatis pollent, ut videlicet plus impendant obsequio quam acceperunt praecepto), sic plerumque perversi quique in pravis actibus exercentur, ut plus inveniant in perversa operatione quod faciant, quam ex usu reproborum iniquitatis accipere exempla 478 potuerunt. Unde et amplioris retributionis tormento feriuntur, quia et ipsi ex semetipsis amplius actiones pravas, de quibus feriri debeant, invenerunt. Bene itaque dicitur: Juxta multitudinem adinventicnum suarum, sic et sustinebit. Non enim inveniret iniquitatem novam, nisi et quaereret; et non quaereret, nisi ex studio perpetrare festinaret. Pensatur ergo in tormento ejus nimietas malae cogitationis, et dolorem recipit dignae

retributionis. Et quamvis damnatorum omnium sit dolor infinitus, graviora tamen tormenta recipiunt, qui multa in iniquitatibus ex suis quoque desideriis invenerunt. Sed quia Sophar hujus hypocritae intulit poenam, protinus adjungit culpam, nec unam quamlibet narrat, sed eam de qua omnes oriuntur. Scriptum quippe est: Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas (I Tim. VI, 10). Cui ergo cupiditas dominari dicitur, subjectus procul dubio malis omnibus demonstratur. Nam subjungit:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 19, 20. — Quoniam confringens nudavit pauperis domum, rapuit, et non aedificavit eam, nec est satiatus venter ejus. 23. Aeterna poena multatur qui sua non erogavit; quanto magis qui rapuit aliena. Avaritia obtentis bonis desideratis crescit, non exstinguitur. — Domum pauperis confringit et nudat, qui eum quem per potentiam conterit spoliare quoque per avaritiam non erubescit. Rapit eam, et non aedificat. Ac si aperte diceretur: Qui hanc aedificare debuit insuper rapit. Venturus namque in judicio Dominus dicturus est reprobis: Esurivi, et non dedistis mihi manducare; sitivi, et non dedistis mihi potum; hospes eram, et non collegistis me; nudus, et non operuistis me, et caetera (Matth. XXV, 42). Ex qua culpa subjungitur: Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus (Ibid.). Si igitur tanta poena multatur, qui non dedisse sua convincitur, qua poena feriendus est, qui redarguitur aliena abstulisse? Rapuit ergo, et non aedificavit eam, quia non solum de suo nil tribuit, sed etiam quod erat alienum tulit. Bene autem subditur: Nec est satiatus venter ejus. Venter quippe iniqui avaritia est, quia in ipsa colligitur quidquid perverso desiderio glutitur. Liquet vero quia avaritia desideratis rebus non exstinguitur, sed augetur. Nam more ignis cum ligna quae consumat acceperit, accrescit; et unde videtur ad momentum flamma comprimi, inde paulo post cernitur dilatari. Et saepe omnipotens Deus cum avarae menti

vehementer irascitur, prius ei permittit ad votum cuncta suppetere, et post hanc per ultionem subtrahit, ut pro eis debeat supplicia aeterna tolerare. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 20. — Et cum habuerit quae concupierat, possidere non poterit. 24. Majoris irae signum est, cum hoc tribuitur quod male desideratur. — Majoris quippe iracundiae est cum hoc tribuitur quod male desideratur, atque inde repentina ultio sequitur, quia hoc quoque obtinuit quod Deo irascente concupivit. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur, cum escam carnis male populus desiderasse perhibetur: Adhuc esca eorum erat in ore ipsorum, et ira Dei ascendit super eos, et occidit plurimos eorum (Psal. LXXVII, 31). Solent namque tardius apparere divina judicia, cum praepediuntur, ne impleri 479 debeant mala vota. Nam quanto citius malum votum impleri permittitur, plerumque tanto celerius punitur. Unde ergo hypocrita festine multiplicatur ut potens sit, inde agitur cum celeritate ne sit, quia et arbusta quae tardius crescunt annosa perdurant; et quae in temporis brevitate proficiunt celerius arescunt, et quasi cum festinant esse tendunt ad non esse. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 21. — Nec remansit de cibo ejus. 25. Cibus ejus est omne hoc quod perverso desiderio concupivit. Sed percusso hypocrita, de cibo suo nil remanet, quia cum ipse ad aeterna supplicia ducitur, a cunctis bonis quae hic possederat alienatur. Unde et adhuc subditur: IBID. — Propterea nihil permanebit de bonis ejus. Si enim de bonis suis ei aliquid permaneret, secum quae habuerat tolleret. Sed quia omnia ambiens timere judicem noluit, ex hac vita subtractus, ad judicem nudus vadit. Cui tamen iniquo ad retributionem minus est quod in subsequenti poena cruciatur, si in hac

saltem vita liber esse permittitur. Sed nulla est libertas in culpa, quia scriptum est: Ubi spiritus Domini, ibi libertas (II Cor. III, 17). Et plerumque perversae menti ipsa sua culpa fit poena. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 22. — Cum satiatus fuerit, arctabitur. 26. Divitum ex satietate angustia. — Prius quippe anhelat per avaritiam concupita congregare; et cum quasi in quodam ventre avaritiae multa congesserit, satiatus arctatur, quia dum anxiatur qualiter acquisita custodiat, ipsa eum sua satietas augustat. Divitis enim cujusdam uberes fructus ager attulerat, sed quia ubi eos tantos reponeret non habebat, dixit: Quid faciam, quia non habeo quo congregem fructus meos? Et dixit: Hoc faciam, destruam horrea mea, et majora aedificabo (Luc. XII, 17). Qui ergo ex abundantia coangustatus dicebat: Quid faciam? quasi multo cibo pressus aestuabat. Pensemus quot votis appetiit ut uberes fructus ager illius afferret. Ecce autem vota completa sunt, quia fructus uberes ager attulerat. Sed quia ad recondendum loca non sufficiunt, multiplicatus dives quid faciat ignorat. O angustia ex satietate nata! De ubertate agri angustatur animus avari. Dicens namque: Quid faciam? profecto indicat quia, votorum suorum affectibus pressus, sub quodam rerum fasce laborabat. Bene ergo dicitur: Cum satiatus fuerit, arctabitur. Quia mens avari, quae prius ex abundantia requiem quaesierat, post ad custodiam gravius laborabat. Unde hic quoque adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXIII.

IBID. — Aestuabit, et omnis dolor irruet in eum. 27. In acquirendis et custodiendis divitiis anxietas aeternis suppliciis praeludit. — Prius namque dolorem habuit in ipsa suae concupiscentiae fatigatione, qualiter concupita raperet, quomodo alia blandimentis, alia terroribus auferret; at postquam acquisitis rebus pervenit ad desiderium, alius hunc dolor fatigat, ut cum

sollicito timore custodiat quod cum gravi labore meminit acquisitum. Hinc inde insidiatores metuit, atque se hoc perpeti quod ipse fecit aliis pertimescit. Formidat potentiorem alterum, ne hunc sustineat violentum; pauperem vero cum conspicit, suspicatur furem. Ipsa quoque quae congesta sunt curat magnopere, ne ex naturae propriae defectu 480 per negligentiam consumantur. In his itaque omnibus quia timor ipse poena est, tanta infelix patitur, quanta pati timet. Post hoc quoque ad gehennam ducitur, et aeternis cruciatibus mancipatur. Omnis ergo dolor super eum irruit, quem et hic prius poena concupiscentiae, postmodum vero cura custodiae, et illic quandoque poena ultionis cremat.. VERS. 24. — Fugiet arma ferrea, et irruet in arcum aereum. 30. Temporalem inopiam cavens, perpetuae, simulque aeternis suppliciis addicitur avaritia. — Sciendum quod avaritia aliquando per elationem subrepit, aliquando vero per timorem. Sunt namque nonnulli qui dum potentiores videri appetunt, ad alienarum rerum ambitum succenduntur. Et sunt nonnulli qui dum sibi subsidiorum necessaria deesse timent, mentem ad avaritiam relaxant, et aliena ambiunt, cum sua sibi sufficere non posse suspicantur. Omnis vero necessitas non incongrue ferrum vocatur, quia vitam inopis moeroris vulnere cruciat, sicut de ejus quoque necessitatibus scriptum est qui a fratribus venditus afflictam vitam ducebat: Ferrum pertransivit animam ejus (Psal. CIV, 18). Quid ergo sunt arma ferrea, nisi necessitates vitae praesentis, quae dure premunt, et vitam inopis insequuntur? Ferrum quippe aerugo consumit, aes autem consumere difficilius solet. Ferro ergo necessitas praesens, quae transitoria est, aere autem sententia aeterna figuratur. Et quia judicium supernum ab iniqui mente non attenditur, juste arcui comparatur, quoniam velut ex insidiis percutit, dum illud is qui percutitur non attendit. Fugiet ergo arma ferrea, et irruet in arcum aereum, quia dum, praesentes necessitates metuens, multa per avaritiam rapit, extremi judicii districtis se percussionibus anteponit. Et cum fugit arma ferrea, ab arcus aerei sagittis invenitur, quia, mala

temporalia stulte praecavens, sententia aeterna 481 percutitur. Qui enim hic inopiae duritiam cum culpa fugit, illic perpetuitatem justae ultionis invenit. Sed priusquam ad judicium rapiatur, adhuc quae iniquus iste hic operetur insinuat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 25. — Eductus, et egrediens de vagina sua, et fulgurans in amaritudine sua. 31. Ad peccatum a diabolo tracti, propria voluntate egredimur. — Iniquus iste insidiatur depraedationibus proximorum; sed dum prava in cogitationibus machinatur, quasi adhuc gladius in vagina est; dum vero malum quod cogitavit inique perficit, de vagina sua egreditur, quia de occultatione cogitationis suae per iniquitatem malae operationis aperitur. Ostenditur in opere qualis latuit in cogitatione. Et notandum quod ait: Eductus, et egrediens de vagina sua; eductus scilicet per seductorem, egrediens vero per propriam voluntatem. Nam is qui ducitur ducentem procul dubio sequitur; qui autem egreditur, secundum suam pergere voluntatem videtur. Qui ergo ad mala quaeque opera et ab antiquo hoste trahitur, et tamen suo libero arbitrio in eorum desideriis obligatur, de vagina sua eductus et egrediens dicitur, quoniam hoc quod ex prava cogitatione exit ad pessimam operationem, et illius est spiritus qui suggessit, et ejus nequitiae qui ex propria voluntate consensit. 32. Iniqui quo magis splendent, eo acrius punientur. Cujus adhuc potentiae terror ostenditur cum protinus subinfertur: Et fulgurans in amaritudine sua. — Fulgur quippe cum repente desuper venit, cum terrore ante oculos clarescit, claritatem ostendit, et anteposita percutit. Sic sic videlicet iniquus cum gloriam vitae praesentis assumpserit, unde in hoc mundo per potentiam clarus ostenditur, inde agitur ut in ultimo feriatur. Quasi enim fulgurare iniqui est in hujus vitae honore clarescere. Sed quia splendor gloriae illius aeternis gehennae suppliciis mancipatur, recte nunc dicitur: Fulgurans in amaritudine sua. Qui enim

modo quasi ex terrore et claritate feriens gaudet, inde post supplicia in perpetuum sustinet. Et quidem de quodam divite scriptum est (Luc. XVI, 19) quia epulabatur quotidie splendide. Sed aliud est splendere, atque aliud fulgurare. Nonnunquam quippe splendor sine percussione est, fulguris vero nomine splendor exprimitur cum percussione. Qui itaque in potestate positus aliis nocet, non incongrue fulgurans dicitur, quia unde ipse contra bonos quasi ex luce gloriae extollitur, inde bonorum vita cruciatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVII.

IBID. — Vadent, et venient super eum horribiles. 33. Quot vitiis sibi succedentibus premitur peccator, tot malignis spiritibus euntibus ac redeuntibus devastatur. — Qui hoc loco horribiles, nisi maligni spiritus appellantur, bonis videlicet mentibus pavendi atque fugiendi? Et quia iidem maligni spiritus certis quibusque vitiis singuli obsequi sunt credendi, cum perversus iste alia quidem vitia ad momentum deserere videtur, sed alia agere incipit, super hunc profecto horribiles vadunt et veniunt, quia perversi mentem, etsi alia mala deserunt, alia occupant. Saepe namque videas iniquum in terrena potestate constitutum, gravi furore commoveri, quidquid ira suggesserit exsequi; et cum furor abscesserit, mox 482 ejus mentem luxuria devastat; cum luxuria ad tempus intermittitur, elatio protinus quasi de continentia in ejus cogitatione subrogatur, atque ut a caeteris timeatur, appetit videri terribilis. Sed cum res exigit ut loqui quid dupliciter debeat, quasi postposito terrore superbiae, remissa locutione blanditur; et cum superbus videri desierit, duplex effici non pertimescit. In cujus ergo mentem vitia vitiis succedunt, recte de eo dicitur: Vadent, et venient super eum horribiles, quia quot vitiis decedentibus et succedentibus premitur, tot malignis spiritibus ejus animus quasi euntibus ac redeuntibus devastatur. Sed haec quae agit extrinsecus per partes prodeunt; nam menti ejus simul omnia mala colligantur. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 26. — Omnes tenebrae absconditae sunt in occultis ejus. 34. Omnia vitia in hypocritae mente sunt colligata. — Quamvis enim hypocrita actiones bonas in superficie ostendat, quaedam tamen in eo malorum operum tenebrae apparent; sed tamen minus prodit in opere quam in ejus latet cogitatione. Nam qui cuncta simul in effectu non explet, cuncta quae noceant in mente tacitus tenet. Omnes ergo tenebrae in occultis ejus absconditae dicuntur, quia etsi in se mala omnia non ostendit, omnia tamen inferre proximis appetit. Sed mens ista sic reproba qua ultione sit ferienda subjungat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. — Devorabit eum ignis, qui non succenditur. 35. Ignis gehennae mire fovetur, et animam et corpus cruciat. — Miro valde modo paucis verbis expressus est ignis gehennae. Ignis namque corporeus, ut esse ignis valeat, corporeis indiget fomentis. Qui cum necesse est ut servetur, per congesta ligna procul dubio nutritur; nec valet nisi succensus esse, et nisi refotus subsistere. At contra gehennae ignis, cum sit corporeus, et in se missos reprobos corporaliter exurat, nec studio humano succenditur, nec lignis nutritur, sed creatus semel durat inexstinguibilis, et succensione non indiget, et ardore non caret. Bene ergo de hoc iniquo dicitur: Devorabit eum ignis, qui non succenditur, quia Omnipotentis justitia, futurorum praescia, ab ipsa mundi origine gehennae ignem creavit, qui in poena reproborum esse semel inciperet, sed ardorem suum etiam sine lignis nunquam finiret. Sciendum vero est quod omnes reprobi, quia ex anima simul et carne peccaverunt, illic in anima pariter et carne cruciantur. Unde per Psalmistam dicitur: Pones eos ut clibanum ignis, in tempore vultus tui; Dominus in ira sua conturbabit eos, et devorabit eos ignis (Psal. XX, 10). Clibanus namque intrinsecus ardet, is

vero qui ab igne devoratur, ab exteriori incipit parte concremari. Ut ergo sacra eloquia ardere et exterius et interius reprobos demonstrarent, eos et ab igne devorari, et sicut clibanum poni testantur, ut per ignem crucientur in corpore, et per dolorem ardeant in mente. Unde hic quoque cum de hoc impio diceretur: Devorabit eum ignis, qui non succenditur, protinus de ejus spiritu additur:

CAPUT XXX.

IBID. Affligetur relictus in tabernaculo suo. 36. Mali qui de corpore nunc nolentes educuntur, in corpore tenebuntur inviti. — Iniqui enim tabernaculum caro est, quia ipsam laetus inhabitat, et si sit possibile, optat ut eam nunquam relinquat. Justi vero, quia gaudium suum in spe coelestium 483 ponunt, eorumque conversatio in coelis est (Philip. III, 26), cum adhuc in carne sint quasi in carne jam non sunt, quia nulla carnis delectatione pascuntur. Unde et quibusdam dicitur: Vos autem non estis in carne, sed in spiritu (Rom. VIII, 9). Neque enim in carne non erant qui per magistri epistolas exhortationis eloquia suscipiebant; sed quasi jam non in carne esse est de amore carnalium nihil habere. At contra iniquus iste, quia omne gaudium suum in carnali vita posuit, in tabernaculo carnis habitavit. Quam videlicet carnem cum in resurrectione receperit, cum ea gehennae igni traditus ardebit. Tunc ab ea educi appetit, tunc ejus tormenta evadere, si valeat, quaerit; tunc incipit velle vitare quod amavit. Sed quia eamdem carnem Deo praeposuit, judicante Deo agitur, ut ex ea amplius in igne crucietur. Hic itaque eam relinquere non vult, et tamen ab ea abstrahitur; illic eam relinquere appetit, et tamen in ea propter supplicia servatur. Ad augmentum itaque tormenti et hic de corpore nolens educitur, et illic in corpore tenetur invitus. Quia ergo ejus spiritus carnem quam sibi male amando praeposuit evadere in tormento volet et non valet, recte nunc

dicitur: Affligetur relictus in tabernaculo suo. De cujus accusatione mox dicitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 27. — Revelabunt coeli iniquitatem ejus, et terra consurget adversus eum. 37. Iniqui in judicio accusatores experientur justos et injustos. — Quid per coelos nisi justos, et quid per terram nisi peccatores accipimus? Unde et in Dominica oratione petimus: Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra (Matth. VI, 10), ut videlicet voluntas nostri conditoris sicut in omnibus justis perficitur, ita et in omnibus quoque peccatoribus impleatur. De justis quoque scriptum est: Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei (Psal. XVIII, 1). Et peccanti homini sententia infertur, qua dicitur: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Hujus itaque impii ad illud terribile judicium deducti revelant coeli iniquitatem, et terra consurgit adversus eum, ut qui hic nec bonis unquam nec malis pepercit, in illo eum tremendo examine et justorum vita et peccatorum pariter accuset. Et gravius quidem est si quis justis potius quam peccatoribus noceat. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Sanguis ejus in medio ejus est, super limpidissimam petram effudit illum; non effudit illum super terram, ut possit operiri pulvere (Ezech. XXIV, 7). Per terram videlicet et pulverem peccatores, per petram vero limpidissimam justum signans, qui gravibus peccatorum contagiis non exasperatur. Sanguis ergo super limpidissimam petram effunditur, quando malitia cruentae mentis in afflictione justae animae grassatur. Cum ergo sit gravius justos quam injustos injuste affligere, multo tamen est gravius et justis pariter et injustis nocere. Quia ergo hic iniquus et justis pariter nocuit et injustis, in accusatione condemnationis revelabunt coeli iniquitatem ejus, et terra consurget adversus eum, quia et illis obstitit qui coelestia, et eos pressit qui ima sapuerunt. Possunt vero per terram non peccatores et reprobi, sed hi qui, terrenis actibus occupati, eleemosynarum et lacrymarum ope ad

aeternam vitam perveniunt designari, de quibus per Psalmistam dicitur, cum venire Dominus ad judicium nuntiaretur: Advocavit coelos sursum 484 et terram, ut discerneret populum suum (Psal. XLIX, 4). Coelos quippe sursum advocat cum hi qui, sua omnia relinquentes, conversationem coelestis vitae tenuerunt ad consedendum in judicio vocantur, atque cum eo judices veniunt. Terra etiam sursum vocatur cum hi qui terrenis actibus obligati fuerant, in eis tamen plus coelestia quam terrena lucra quaesierunt, quibus dicitur: Hospes eram et collegitis me; nudus, et operuistis me (Matth. XXV, 43). Hypocritae itaque hujus coeli iniquitatem revelant, atque adversus eum terra consurgit, dum et hi qui cum Deo judices veniunt, et hi qui per judicium liberantur pravitatis illius testes existunt. Nihil ergo de his quae egit in tempore damnationis ejus absconditur, et si quidem acta illius modo hominibus per duplicitatem multa celantur, sed in damnationis die quidquid in eo intrinsecus latebat ostenditur. Unde apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 28. — Apertum erit germen domus illius, detrahetur in die furoris Dei. 38. In judicio mala intus latentia revelabuntur. — Tunc germen domus illius aperitur, cum omne malum quod in conscientia illius nascebatur ostenditur. Modo quippe germen domus hypocritae manet occultum, quia etsi bona in imagine apparet ejus operatio, sed latet intentio. Aliud est namque quod agit, aliud quod intendit. Sed cum, adveniente judice, uniuscujusque conscientia ad testimonium fuerit deducta, unde scriptum est: Cogitationibus accusantibus, aut etiam defendentibus (Rom. II, 15), in hoc hypocritae germen domus aperitur, quia in ejus mente cogitatio perversa detegitur. Et in die furoris Dei detrahitur, quia, ostensa ira judicis, flammis ultricibus traditus, ab ejus conspectu separatur. Qui enim summa cogitare dum viveret noluit, peccatorum suorum pondere depressus, a facie judicis in ima suppliciorum cadet. Nunc autem et peccantem considerat judex et

tolerat, atque ad conversionem singulos, quia dies patientiae, et necdum est dies furoris, exspectat. Sed in hoc die patientiae quasi immobilis manet hypocrita, dum et multa mala perpetrat, et hunc flagella nulla castigant. Sed in furoris die detrahetur, quia, vindictae tempore raptus ad supplicia, ab aeterni judicis vultu separatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

Haec est pars hominis impii a Deo, et haereditas verborum ejus a Domino. 39. In judicio vel minima mala punientur. — Si enim bene agere in hac positus vita voluisset, partem apud Dominum coelestis regni consortium haberet. Sed quia pravis subdi desideriis elegit, partem suam a Domino in tormentis invenit, quia ejusdem Domini participare gratiam non quaesivit. Bene autem dicitur: Et haereditas verborum ejus a Domino. Qui enim pro magnis malis in supplicium mergitur, fortasse credebatur quod pro verbis quae male dixerat minime judicaretur. Sed cum districta Dei omnipotentis justitia supplicium a reprobis pro perversis actibus exigit, eis mala usque ad verborum retributionem reddit, ut qui de magnis malis debitores sunt, suppliciis traditi, etiam novissimum quadrantem solvant. Illis enim minima parcuntur qui majora in se districte male defleverunt. Nam quos magna premunt, etiam mala minima in gehenna pariter affligunt. 485 Sancti autem viri non partem a Domino accipere, sed partem suam ipsum Dominum habere desiderant. Unde Propheta deprecatur, dicens: Portio mea Dominus (Psal. LXXII, 26) Iniquus vero quia portionem suam habere ipsum Dominum non quaesivit, partem suam extra Dominum ignem invenit, ut ab ejus facie exclusus, quia gaudere in ipso non appetiit, sub ipso crucietur. Haec Sophar ita intulit, ut per ea quae contra hypocritam dixerat beati Job vitam feriret, existimans quod is qui a Domino percussus esset cuncta bona quae egerat mente simplici non egisset. Quem enim percussum vidit, Deo displicuisse credidit. Sed amici beati Job etiam in hac re haereticorum

speciem tenent, qui in sancta Ecclesia dum quosdam bene agentes aspiciunt sub flagellis gemere, eos existimant bona merita in bonis actibus non habere, et malos credunt quos affligi verbere divino conspiciunt, videlicet nescientes quia multae tribulationes justorum (Psal. XXXIII, 20); et flagellat omnem filium quem recipit (Hebr. XII, 6). Sed beatus Job more sanctae et universalis Ecclesiae, quae a perversis verborum jacula aequanimiter tolerat, et cum superborum dicta audit, humilitatis suae tramitem non relinquit, cum magna cordis humilitate subjunxit, dicens:

CAPUT XXXIV.

CAP. XXI, VERS. 2. — Audite quaeso sermones meos, et agite poenitentiam. 40. Sancti dum recte docent, irrideri non metuunt. — Qui enim cum diceret Audite, addidit Quaeso, cum quanta humilitate loquatur insinuat, dum contra se superbientes rogat, ut eorum sensum ad salutis doctrinam reducat. Sancti autem viri dum intra universalem Ecclesiam non solum docere recta, sed etiam perversa tolerare parati sunt, irrideri non metuunt. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXXV.

VERS. 3. — Sustinete me, ut et ego loquar, et post mea, si videbitur, verba ridete. 41. Sancti in verbis suis quaerunt auditoribus suis, et sibi prodesse. Superbis auditoribus grave onus est doctrina humilitatis. — Boni etenim, cum loquuntur, duo sunt quae in suis locutionibus attendunt, ut videlicet aut sibi et auditoribus suis, aut sibimet solis prosint, si auditoribus prodesse non possunt. Cum enim bene audiuntur bona quae dicunt, sibi simul et auditoribus prosunt. Cum vero ab auditoribus deridentur, sibi procul dubio profuerunt, quos a culpa silentii liberos fecerunt. Beatus itaque Job ut sibi et suis auditoribus prosit, dicat: Audite quaeso sermones meos, et agite poenitentiam. Ut autem ipse quod debet exsolvat, etiam si auditoribus

prodesse non valeat, adjungit: Sustinete me, ut et ego loquar, et post, mea, si videbitur, verba ridete. Et notandum quia dum subjungeret Agite poenitentiam, praemisit Audite; cum vero subderet: Post mea, si videbitur, verba ridete, praemisit Sustinete me. Audire quippe volentis est, sustinere nolentis. Amici ergo ejus si doceri appetunt, audiant; si autem irridere parati sunt, sustineant quae dicuntur, quia videlicet superbis mentibus pondus grave est oneris doctrina humilitatis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 4. — Nunquid contra hominem disputatio mea est, ut merito non debeam contristari? 42. Job ex flagellis humilior, Deo displicuisse tantum timuit. — Omnis qui Deo placens hominibus displicet, causas tristitiae nullas habet. Qui autem aut hominibus placens Deo displicet, aut simul Deo et hominibus 486 displicere se credit, si hunc tristitia non afficit, a virtute sapientiae alienus existit. Beatus autem Job displicuisse Deo inter flagella se credidit, et idcirco animum ad tristitiam revocavit, quia despiciendus non erat cui se displicuisse formidabat. Si autem de vitae suae meritis contra hominem disputaret, nequaquam contristari debuisset; sed quia per flagella praesentia anceps factus de anteacta vita fuerat, in flagello tristitiam jure requirebat. Unde etiam subdit:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 5. — Attendite me, et obstupescite. 43. Ex Job percussionibus discendum quid formidare debeamus. — Id est, considerate quae egi, et admiramini in hac percussione quae patior. Qui adhuc recte subinfert, dicens: IBID. — Et superponite digitum ori vestro. Ac si aperte dicat: Scientes bona quae egi, et considerantes mala quae patior, vosmetipsos etiam a verborum culpa compescite, atque in meis percussionibus vestra damna formidate. Vel certe quia digitis quaeque discernimus, non incongrue

per digitum discretio designatur. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur: Benedictus dominus Deus meus, qui docet manus meas ad praelium, et digitos meos ad bellum (Psal. CXLIII, 1). Per manus videlicet operationem, per digitos vero discretionem designans. Digitus ergo ori superponitur cum per discretionem lingua refrenatur, ne per hoc quod loquitur in stultitiae culpam delabatur. Ait ergo: Superponite digitum ori vestro, id est, locutioni vestrae discretionis virtutem adjungite, ut per haec quae recta contra hypocritam dicitis quibus sint dicenda videatis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS. 6. — Et ego quando recordatus fuero, pertimesco, et concutit carnem meam tremor. 44. Quaedam ironice et per irrisionem a sanctis dicuntur. — Quia beatus Job actuum suorum oblitus non fuerit, extrema locutio ejus ostendit. Qua ex re hoc quod ab eo nunc amicis dicitur: Et ego quando recordatus fuero, pertimesco, et concutit carnem meam tremor, constat nimirum quod per irrisionem dicatur. Ac si aperte diceretur: Si me aliquid hypocritae habuisse meminero, in poenitentiae mox fletu contremisco. Carmen vero suam, si recordatus fuerit, tremore perhibet concuti, id est infirmitatem operis ultionis pavore fatigari. Sed quia multa Sophar de subita damnatione impii, in quibus beati Job potentiam momordit, asseruit, sanctus vir contra ejus dicta subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XXXIX.

VERS. 7. — Quare ergo impii vivunt, sublevati sunt, confortatique divitiis? 45. Expenditur hujus vitae felicitas, in dignitatibus et divitiis, in liberis et propinquis; in pacata domo; in armentorum fecunditate; in familiae multitudine et exsultatione. — Nisi enim eos patientia divina toleraret, nequaquam diu vitam in peccatis ducerent. Sublevantur namque divitiis cum esse potentes incipiunt, confortantur vero cum diu in hac vita

subsistere permittuntur. Quos enim substantia elevat, in suae fastu potentiae dierum longitudo confortat. Vel certe sublevati et confortati referuntur, quia sublevantur honoribus, confortantur rebus. Sed sunt plerique qui et honoribus sublevati, et divitiis confortati, ea quae in hac concupiscunt vita accipiunt, successione autem sobolis privantur. Istis nimirum ipsa sua potentia poena est, cum et magnam se habere haereditatem considerant, et haeredes non habent quibus relinquant. Quid itaque prodest 487 si adsint omnia, et desint filii qui successores fiant? Sequitur:

CAPUT XL.

VERS. 8. — Semen eorum permanet coram eis. 46. In augmentum magnae felicitatis, cum magno patrimonio dantur et haeredes; ac ne qua necessitas saltem temporalis ab oculis subtrahat eos in quibus animus exsultat, de hoc eorum semine dicitur: Permanet coram eis. Quid autem si filii dati sunt, sed ipsi sterilitate feriuntur? Sic in eis genus exstinguitur, sicut parentum sterilitate exstingui timebatur. Sequitur: IBID. — Propinquorum turba et nepotum in conspectu eorum. Ecce adest vita, adsunt honores et divitiae, adsunt filii, adsunt nepotes. Quid si qua mentem intestina cogitatio exurat, et securitatis gaudia domestica rixa transverberet? Quae est mundi hujus felicitas, si laeta non est? Sequitur:

CAPUT XLI.

VERS. 9. — Domus eorum securae sunt et pacatae, et non est virga Dei super illos. 47. Securae et pacatae sunt, quia peccantes vivunt, lugenda agunt, et gaudia non relinquunt. Virga eos supernae disciplinae non percutit, et tanto amplius in culpa proficiunt, quanto minus ex culpa feriuntur. Sed quia intus quae prosperantur audivimus, in agris quoque quae prosperitas arrideat videamus. Sequitur: VERS. 10. — Bos eorum concepit, et non abortivit; vacca peperit, et non est privata fetu suo. Vulgaris locutionis usus

est ut bovem masculum et vaccam feminam vocet, sed litteraturae (Id est, grammaticae), locutio bovem communis generis appellat. Unde nunc dicitur: Bos eorum concepit, et non abortivit; vacca peperit, et non est privata fetu suo. Dominis gregum prima felicitas est, si grex sterilitatem non habens concipit; secunda, si conceptus ad partum venit; tertia autem, si hoc quod partum est per nutrimenta ad provectum ducatur. Ut ergo tota simul adesse impiis demonstraret, eorum greges beatus Job asserit concepisse, et non abortisse; peperisse, et fetu proprio non esse privatos. Minor autem est felicitas, si cum greges crescunt, custodes quoque gregum non proficiunt. Unde et ad fecunditatem gregum mox fecunditas familiae subrogatur. Nam dicitur:

CAPUT XLII.

VERS. 11. — Egrediuntur quasi greges parvuli eorum, et infantes eorum exsultant lusibus. 48. Ut sicut majora ad habendum concessa sunt, ita multi germinent ad custodiendum. Sed quia dixit Exsultant lusibus, ipsum quoque infantium lusum in domo iniquorum ne vilem valde esse crederemus, subjungens, ait: VERS. 12. — Tenent tympanum et citharam, gaudent ad sonitum organi. Ac si patenter dicat: Cum domini honoribus et rebus tument, subjecti in ludicris actibus gaudent. Sed, o beate vir, quid tam multa nobis de iniquorum voluptatibus narras? Jam diu est quod in eorum descriptione loqueris, post multa breviter distingue quae sentis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLIII.

VERS. 13. — Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt. 49. Quidquid finem habet, momentaneum. Prosperitas innocentiae, adversitas iniquitatis non est argumentum. — Ecce, beate vir, eorum gaudia diu narraveras; quomodo nunc asseris quod in puncto ad inferna descendant, nisi quod omnis longitudo temporis 488 vitae praesentis

punctus esse cognoscitur, cum fine terminatur? Cum enim ad extremum quisque perducitur, de praeterito jam nil tenet, quia tempora cuncta delapsa sunt; in futuro nil habet, quia unius horae momenta non restant. Vita ergo quae sic angustari potuit punctus fuit. Ut enim praediximus, in puncto stylum ponimus, et levamus. Quasi ergo in puncto vitam tetigit, qui hanc accepit et amisit. Potest in puncto hoc quoque intelligi, quod saepe hi qui diu in iniquitate tolerati sunt subita morte rapiuntur, ut nec flere ante mortem liceat quae peccaverunt. Sed quia nonnunquam etiam vita justorum subito fine terminatur, melius illud accipimus, si hoc de eorum temporali vita sentiamus, quia quidquid transire potuit subitum fuit. Amicis autem beati Job, qui idcirco hunc injustum esse crediderunt, quia flagellatum viderunt, recte ejusdem sancti viri voce de iniquorum flore et perditione ostensum est quia praesentis vitae prosperitas innocentiae testis non est, quia multi ad perennem vitam per flagella redeunt, et plerique ad infinita supplicia perducendi sine flagello moriuntur. De quibus adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XLIV.

VERS. 14. — Qui dixerunt Deo: Recede a nobis. 50. Qui Dei mandatis non obsequuntur, eum a se abigunt. — Haec verbis dicere vel stulti minime praesumunt; sed tamen perversi omnes Deo Recede, non verbis, sed moribus dicunt. Qui enim illa agunt quae Deus omnipotens prohibet, quid aliud faciunt quam suum animum contra Omnipotentem claudunt? Sicut enim ejus praecepta cogitare eum ad se introducere est, ita ejus mandatis obsistere eum a cordis inhabitatione repellere est. Dicunt ergo: Recede a nobis, qui ei ad se aditum praebere recusant, eumque pravis actibus impugnant, etiam si verbis laudare videantur. Dicunt etiam:

CAPUT XLV.

IBID. — Scientiam viarum tuarum nolumus. 51. Aliud est nescire vias Dei, aliud scire nolle. — Eo ipso quo ejus scientiam apprehendere contemnunt. Sunt namque nonnulli qui ex eo quod Veritas dicit: Servus qui non cognovit voluntatem domini sui, et facit digna plagis, vapulabit paucis; et servus sciens voluntatem domini sui, et non faciens juxta eam, vapulabit multis (Luc. XII, 47, 48); nolunt scire quod faciant, et quasi minus se vapulaturos existimant, si nesciant quod operari debuerunt. Sed aliud est nescisse, aliud scire noluisse. Nescit namque qui apprehendere vult, et non valet. Qui autem ut nesciat aurem a voce veritatis avertit, iste non nesciens, sed contemptor addicitur. Via autem Dei pax, via Dei humilitas, via Dei patientia est. Sed quia haec omnia iniqui despiciunt, dicunt: Scientiam viarum tuarum nolumus. Dum enim in praesenti vita superbiunt, dum honoribus inflantur, dum etiam si non habent appetunt, vias Dei in sua cogitatione contemnunt. Quia enim via Dei in hac vita humilitas fuit, ipse hic Deus et Dominus redemptor noster ad probra, ad contumelias, ad passionem venit, et adversa hujus mundi aequanimiter pertulit, prospera fortiter vitavit, ut et prospera doceret aeternae vitae appeti, et adversa praesentis vitae non formidari. Sed quia iniqui gloriam vitae praesentis appetunt, ignominiam fugiunt, dicere memorantur: Scientiam viarum tuarum nolumus. Scire quippe nolunt quod facere contemnunt. 489 Quorum adhuc verba subduntur, cum dicitur:

CAPUT XLVI.

VERS. 15. — Quis est Omnipotens, ut serviamus ei? 52. Carnales, aut Deum non esse suspicantur, aut ei servire contemnunt. — Mens enim hominis male exterius fusa, sic in rebus corporeis sparsa est, ut neque ad semetipsam intus redeat, neque eum qui est invisibilis cogitare sufficiat. Unde carnales viri jussa spiritalia contemnentes, Deum quia corporaliter non vident, quandoque ad hoc perveniunt, ut etiam non esse suspicentur.

Unde scriptum est: Dixit insipiens in corde suo: Non est Deus (Psal. XIII, 1). Unde nunc quoque dicitur: Quis est Omnipotens, ut serviamus ei? Plerumque enim plus appetunt homines servire hominibus, quos corporaliter vident, quam servire Deo, quem non vident. Per omne enim quod faciunt, ad finem oculorum tendunt; et quia in Deum oculos corporis tendere non possunt, ei obsequia praebere vel despiciunt, vel si coeperint, fatigantur. Esse enim, sicut dictum est, non credunt, quem corporaliter non intuentur. Qui si auctorem omnium Deum humiliter quaererent, id quod non videtur, ei rei quae videtur, esse melius, in semetipsis invenirent. Ipsi quippe ex anima invisibili et corpore visibili subsistunt; sed si hoc ab eis quod non videtur, abstrahitur, illico corruit quod videtur. Et patent quidem carnis oculi; sed videre quidquam vel sentire non possunt. Sensus enim visionis periit, quia habitator recessit; et domus carnis remanet vacua, quia abscessit ille invisibilis spiritus, qui per ejus respicere fenestras solebat. Quia ergo rebus visibilibus invisibilia praestantiora sunt, carnales quique ex semetipsis pensare debuerunt, atque per hanc, ut ita dixerim, scalam considerationis tendere in Deum: quia eo est, quo invisibilis permanet, et eo summus permanet quo comprehendi nequaquam potest. Sunt vero nonnulli qui Deum et esse et incomprehensibilem esse non ambigunt; qui tamen ab eo non ipsum, sed dona exteriora quaerunt. Quae cum ei servientibus deesse conspiciunt, ipsi servire contemnunt. De quorum adhuc verbis adjungitur:

CAPUT XLVII.

IBID. — Et quid nobis prodest, si oraverimus illum? 53. Ordo rerum in oratione postulandarum. — Cum Deus in oratione non quaeritur, citius in oratione animus lassatur: quia cum illa quisque postulat, quae fortasse juxta occultum judicium Deus tribuere recusat, ipse quoque venit in fastidium, qui non vult dare quod amatur. Sed se magis Dominus quam ea quae condidit, vult amari, aeterna potius quam terrena postulari, sicut scriptum

est: Quaerite primum regnum Dei et justitiam ejus, et haec omnia adjicientur vobis (Matth. VI, 33). Qui enim non ait, dabuntur, sed adjicientur: profecto indicat aliud esse quod principaliter datur, aliud quod superadditur. Quia enim nobis in intentione aeternitas, in usu vero temporalitas esse debet, et illud datur, et hoc nimirum ex abundanti superadditur. Et tamen saepe homines, cum bona temporalia postulant, aeterna vero praemia non requirunt, petunt quod adjicitur, et illud non desiderant ubi adjiciatur. Nec lucrum suae esse petitionis deputant, si hic sint temporaliter pauperes, et illic beatitudine divites in aeternum vivant; sed solis, ut dictum est, visibilibus intenti, labore postulationis renuunt invisibilia mercari. 490 Qui si superna quaererent, jam cum fructu laborem exhiberent: quia cum mens in precibus ad auctoris sui speciem anhelat, divinis desideriis inflammata, supernis conjungitur, ab inferioribus separatur, amore fervoris sui se aperit ut capiat, et capiens inflammat; et superiora amare jam sursum ire est; dumque magno desiderio ad coelestia inhiat, miro modo hoc ipsum quod accipere quaerit degustat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVIII.

VERS. 16. — Verumtamen quia non sunt in manu eorum bona sua, consilium eorum longe sit a me. 54. Justi bona sua possident, non ab eis possidentur; secus iniqui. — Bona in manu habet, qui despiciendo temporalia sub dominio mentis premit. Nam quisquis ea nimie diligit, se magis illis quam sibi ipsa supponit. Multi etenim justorum in hoc mundo divites fuerunt, rebus et honoribus fulti habere multa videbantur, quorum mentem quia eorum quae aderant delectatio nimia non possidebat, bona illorum in manu erant: quia potestati animi subjecta tenebantur. At contra iniqui ita se totis desideriis in exteriorum rerum appetitionibus fundunt, ut non magis ipsi habita teneant, sed ab his quae habent, captiva mente teneantur. Quia igitur non sunt in manu eorum bona sua, recte subjungitur:

Consilium eorum longe sit a me. Quid namque est iniquorum consilium nisi terrenam gloriam quaerere, aeternam negligere, salutem temporalem cum damno interiori appetere, et dolores transitorios ad aeternos gemitus commutare? Vir igitur sanctus has iniquorum cogitationes intuens aspernetur, et dicat: Consilium eorum longe sit a me. Quia nimirum esse bonum incomparabiliter videt, ad breve tempus eligit hic sub flagello gemere quam aeternae ultionis supplicia tolerare. Sed neque in hac vita hi qui in ea prosperari appetunt, continue prosperantur. Nam plerumque eorum gaudia, suborti gemitus interrumpunt. Unde subditur:

CAPUT XLIX.

VERS. 17. — Quoties lucerna eorum exstinguetur, et superveniet eis inundatio, et dolores dividet furoris sui. 55. Quot et qualibus poenis afficiuntur mali. — Saepe impius lucernam suam, filiorum vitam aestimat; sed cum filius qui nimie amatur, subtrahitur, lucerna impii, quae videbatur, exstincta est. Saepe impius praesentis honoris gloriam lucernam putat; sed dum, sublata dignitate, dejicitur, lucerna exstincta est, quae ei juxta desiderium lucebat. Saepe impius opes terrenae substantiae adesse sibi, quasi magnam luminis lucernam putat; sed cum, irruente damno, divitias, quas plus se amabat, perdiderit, quid iste aliud quam lucernam, in cujus lumine gaudebat, amisit? Qui ergo gaudere de aeternis non appetit, neque hic ubi solidari vult, potest continue laetari. Nam quoties lucerna impiorum exstinguitur, et supervenit eis mundatio, et dolores dividit furoris sui. Inundatio impiis supervenit, cum dolorum fluctus ex aliqua adversitate patiuntur. Omnipotens enim Deus cum se despici et in terrena videt concupiscentia laetari, hoc quoque doloribus percutit quod sibi videt in cogitatione impii praeferri. Bene autem dicitur: Et dolores dividet furoris sui. Qui enim aeternos dolores impio per retributionem servat, et aliquando ejus mentem etiam 491 temporali dolore transverberat: quia hic quoque et

illic percutit, furoris sui super impium dolores dividit. Neque enim poena praesens, quae injusti animam a pravis desideriis non immutat, ab aeternis suppliciis liberat. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur: Pluet super peccatores laqueos, ignis, sulphur et spiritus procellarum pars calicis eorum (Psal. X, 7). Dicendo enim laqueos, ignis, sulphur et spiritus procellarum, multos nimirum dolores intulit. Sed quia ab eis doloribus peccator, qui non corrigitur, ad aeterna supplicia vocatur, eosdem dolores non jam totum calicem, sed partem calicis dixit: quia videlicet eorum passio hic quidem per dolores incipitur, sed in ultione perpetua consummatur. De quorum adhuc fine subjungitur:

CAPUT L.

VERS. 18. — Erunt sicut paleae ante faciem venti, et sicut favilla quam turbo dispergit. 56. Tanquam paleae ab irae divinae flatu ad ignem asportantur. — Iniquus cum in potestate conspicitur, cum valde in oppressionibus et violentiis effrenatur, ab infirmorum cogitationibus gravis nimium, et quasi in hoc mundo radicatus aestimatur. Sed cum districti judicis sententia venerit, omnes iniqui quasi paleae ante ventum erunt: quia, ut ita dicam, irae flatu subito levantur atque asportantur ad ignem, quos hic in suis quondam praejudiciis quasi duri ponderis superjacentem molem indigentium lacrymae movere non poterant. Et ad rapientis judicii manus leves sunt, qui per injustitiam proximis graves fuerunt. Et sicut favilla, quam turbo dispergit. Ante omnipotentis Dei oculos iniqui vita favilla est: quia, etsi apparet ad momentum viridis, ab ejus tamen judicio jam consumpta cernitur; quia consumptioni est aeternae deputata. Hanc favillam turbo dispergit: quia Deus manifestus veniet; Deus noster, et non silebit. Ignis in conspectu ejus ardebit, et in circuitu ejus tempestas valida (Psal. XLIX, 3). Hujus enim tempestatis turbine ab aeterni conspectu judicis iniqui rapiuntur; et qui hic mentem desiderio perverso solidaverant, ibi

paleae et favilla videbuntur: quia eos ad aeterna supplicia turbo rapiens asportat. Sequitur:

CAPUT LI.

VERS. 19. — Deus servabit filiis illius dolorem patris: et cum reddiderit, tunc sciet. 57. Qui Deus peccata parentum puniat in filiis. — Scriptum novimus: Qui reddis peccata patrum in filios ac nepotes, in tertiam et quartam generationem (Exod. XXXIV, 7). Et rursum scriptum est: Quid est (De Poenit., dist. 4, c. 13) quod inter vos parabolam vertitis in proverbium istud in terra Israel, dicentes: Patres comederunt uvam acerbam, et dentes filiorum obstupuerunt? Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus, si erit vobis ultra parabola haec in proverbium in Israel. Ecce omnes animae, meae sunt; ut anima patris, ita et anima filii, mea est. Anima quae peccaverit, ipsa morietur (Ezech. XVIII, 2; Jerem. XXXI, 29). In utraque igitur hac sententia dum dissimilis sensus invenitur, auditoris animus ut discretionis viam subtiliter requirat instruitur. Peccatum quippe originale a parentibus trahimus; et nisi per gratiam baptismatis solvamur, etiam parentum peccata portamus: quia unum adhuc videlicet cum illis sumus. Reddit ergo peccata parentum in filios, dum pro culpa parentis, ex originali peccato anima polluitur prolis. Et rursum non reddit parentum peccata 492 in filios: quia cum ab originali culpa per baptismum liberamur, jam non parentum culpas, sed quas ipsi committimus, habemus. Quod tamen intelligi etiam aliter potest: quia quisquis pravi parentis iniquitatem imitatur, etiam ex ejus delicto constringitur. Quisquis autem parentis iniquitatem non imitatur, nequaquam delicto illius gravatur. Unde fit, ut iniquus filius iniqui patris non solum sua quae addidit, sed etiam patris peccata persolvat; cum vitiis patris, quibus iratum Dominum non ignorat, etiam suam adhuc malitiam adjungere non formidat. Et justum est, ut qui sub districto judice vias parentis iniqui non timet imitari, cogatur in vita praesenti etiam culpas

parentis iniqui persolvere. Unde et illic dictum est: Anima patris mea est, et anima filii mea est. Anima quae peccaverit, ipsa morietur: quia in carne nonnunquam filii etiam ex patris peccato perimuntur. Deleto autem originali peccato, ex parentum nequitia in anima non tenentur. Quid enim est quod parvuli filii plerumque a daemonibus arripiuntur, nisi quod caro filii ex patris poena multatur? In semetipso enim percutitur pater iniquus, et percussionis vim sentire contemnit. Plerumque percutitur in filiis, ut acrius uratur; et dolor patris carni filiorum redditur, quatenus per filiorum poenas mens patris iniqua puniatur. Cum vero non parvuli, sed jam provectiores filii ex parentum culpa feriuntur, quid aliud aperte datur intelligi, nisi quod illorum etiam poenas luunt, quorum facta secuti sunt? Unde et recte dicitur: Usque ad tertiam et quartam progeniem. Quia enim usque ad tertiam et quartam progeniem, eam quam imitantur filii parentum vitam possunt videre, usque ad eos ultio extenditur, qui viderunt quod male sequerentur. Sed ecce cum haec audimus, cordi nostro quaestio oritur, cur omnipotens et misericors Deus in tantam caecitatem cadere rationem mentis humanae permiserit? Ne vero quisquam ultra quam debet occulta Dei judicia discutere praesumat, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT LIV.

VERS. 22. — Nunquid Deum quispiam docebit scientiam, qui excelsos judicat? 61. Occulta Dei judicia curiosius non scrutanda. — Cum in his quae de nobis aguntur ambigimus, debemus alia quae nobis sunt certa conspicere, et eam quae de nostra nobis incertitudine surrexerat cogitationis querelam placare. Ecce enim quod electos ad vitam flagella revocant, et a malis actibus reprobos nec flagella compescunt, omnipotentis Dei judicia super nos valde occulta sunt, et injusta non sunt. Sed si tendamus oculum mentis ad superiora, in illis aspicimus quia de nobis quid juste conqueri non habemus. Omnipotens enim Deus angelorum merita discernens, 494 alios in

aeterna luce sine lapsu permanere constituit, alios sponte lapsos a statu suae celsitudinis in aeternae damnationis ultione prostravit. Nobiscum igitur injuste nil agit, qui et subtiliorem nobis naturam juste judicavit. Dicat ergo: Nunquid Deum quispiam docebit scientiam, qui excelsos judicat? Qui enim super nos mira facit, constat procul dubio quia de nobis scienter omnia disponit. His itaque praemissis, adjungitur ubi humanus animus in requisitione fatigatur. Nam subditur:

CAPUT LV.

VERS. 23-25. — Iste moritur robustus et sanus, dives et felix, viscera ejus plena sunt adipe, et medullis ossa illius irrigantur; alius vero moritur in amaritudine animae suae absque ullis opibus. 62. Electorum et reproborum vita dispar, at mors carnis eadem. Iniqui laetitia transit ad poenam, innocentis poena ad laetitiam. — Ista cum ita sint, quis omnipotentis Dei secreta discutiat cur haec ita esse permittat? Sed electis et reprobis vita quidem dispar est, carnis autem in morte corruptio dispar non est. Unde subjungitur: VERS. 26. — Et tamen simul in pulvere dormient, et vermes operient eos. Quid ergo mirum, si prosperitate vel adversitate praesentis saeculi dissimiliter ad momentum currunt, qui per corruptionem carnis ad terram similiter redeunt? Illa est ergo solummodo vita cogitanda, in qua cum resurrectione carnis ad finem dissimilem pertingitur retributionis. Quae est enim iniquis salus aut robur, qui adeps et divitiae, dum totum hic cum celeritate relinquitur, et illic retributio, quae nunquam relinqui possit, invenitur? Sicut autem hujus iniqui laetitia transit ad poenam, ita afflicti innocentis poena transit ad laetitiam. Nec divitiae ergo debent mentem extollere, nec inopia perturbare. Unde beatus Job inter damna rerum nulla admittit ad animum damna cogitationum, sed ad eos qui se in percussione despiciunt redarguendo subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT LVI.

VERS. 27, 28. — Certe novi cogitationes vestras, et sententias contra me iniquas. Dicitis enim: Ubi est domus principis, et ubi tabernacula impiorum? 63. Job infractus, quia amissis caeteris Deum non amiserat. — Impium enim crediderant quem, ablatis rebus, temporaliter destructum videbant. Sed sanctus vir tanto eos alta consideratione dijudicat, quanto inter damna quae pertulerat infracta rectitudine stabat. Quid enim ei foris rerum damna nocuerant, qui illum non amiserat quem interius amabat? Allegoricus sensus. — 64. Ex copia superbia nascitur. — Hoc vero quod dicitur: Simul in pulvere dormient, et vermes operient eos, si quis forsitan accipere per allegoriam velit, explere breviter possumus, si de iniquo hoc divite ea quae sunt jam dicta replicemus. Dicitur namque: Viscera ejus plena sunt adipe. Sicut enim ex abundanti cibo adeps, ita ex abundantia rerum superbia nascitur, quae impinguat mentem divitis, dum elevatur animus superbientis. Superbia quippe cordis quasi quaedam pinguedo est crassitudinis. Unde quia plerique ex abundantia peccata perpetrant, per Prophetam dicitur: Prodiit quasi ex adipe iniquitas eorum (Psal. LXXII, 7). Sequitur: Et medullis ossa illius irrigantur. Amatores hujus saeculi quasi ossa habent, quando in hoc mundo fortitudinem dignitatum possident. 495 Sed si in exteriori dignitate desint terrenae et domesticae divitiae, quantum ad judicium suum ossa quidem habent, sed medullas in ossibus non habent. Quia ergo sic iste amator hujus saeculi exteriori potestate fulcitur, ut etiam interiori terrenae domus abundantia saginetur, dicitur: Et medullis ossa illius irrigantur. Vel certe ossa sunt hujus divitis pravae et durae consuetudines, medullae vero in ossibus sunt ipsa desideria male vivendi, quae neque ex pravitatis satisfactione satiantur. Quae medullae quasi ossa irrigant, cum prava desideria perversas consuetudines suas in voluptatum delectatione conservant.. VERS. 29, 30. — Interrogate quemlibet de viatoribus, et haec eadem illum intelligere cognoscetis. Quia in diem

perditionis servatur malus, et ad diem furoris ducitur. 68. Consulendi sunt, qui vitam sibi viam esse, non patriam cogitant. — Saepe etenim diu divina patientia tolerat quos jam ad supplicia praescita condemnat, permittit florere quos adhuc cernit deteriora perpetrare. Quia enim videt ad quam damnationis foveam tendant, hoc eis pro nihilo esse existimat, quod hic perversi relinquenda multiplicant. Sed quisquis praesentis vitae gloriam diligit, magnam esse felicitatem deputat hic secundum votum florere, quamvis cogatur postmodum supplicia aeterna tolerare. Solus ergo ille conspicit nil esse quod iniquus floret, qui jam gressum cordis ab amore praesentis saeculi amovit. Unde recte cum de subsequenti damnatione impii diceretur, praemittitur: Interrogate quemlibet de viatoribus, et haec eadem illum intelligere cognoscetis. Viator quippe dicitur qui praesentem vitam viam sibi esse et non patriam attendit, qui in dilectione praetereuntis saeculi cor figere despicit, qui non remanere in transeuntibus, sed ad aeterna pervenire concupiscit. Qui enim in hac vita viator esse non appetit, hujus vitae prospera minime contemnit, et ea quae ipse desiderat, cum abundare aliis viderit, miratur. Unde David propheta quoniam a dilectione praesentis saeculi jam corde transierat, iniqui gloriam describens, dicebat: Vidi impium superexaltatum et elevatum sicut cedros Libani (Psal. XXXVI, 35). Sed quia cor huic mundo non subdidit, hunc jure despexit, dicens: Transivi, et ecce non erat (Ibid., 36). Esset quippe aliquid in ejus aestimatione impius, si ipse ab hoc saeculo per intentionem minime transisset. Sed is cui non transeunti magnum aliquid esset, transeunti animo quam nihil esset apparuit, quia dum aeterna retributio cogitatur, praesens gloria quam sit nulla cognoscitur. Hinc Moyses, cum supernae contemplationis gloriam quaereret, dixit, Transiens videbo visionem (Exod. III, 3). Nisi enim gressum cordis a saeculi amore removisset, nequaquam intelligere superna potuisset. Hinc Jeremias luctum cordis sui considerari deposcens, ait: O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte, si est dolor sicut dolor

meus (Thren. I, 12). Qui enim praesentem vitam non quasi viam transeunt, sed quasi patriam attendunt, luctum cordis electorum considerare nesciunt. Illos ergo ut dolorem suum considerent propheta exquirit, quos in hoc mundo contigit 497 animum non fixisse. Hinc per Salomonem dicitur: Aperi os tuum muto, et causis omnium filiorum qui pertranseunt (Prov. XXXI, 8). Muti enim dicuntur qui praedicatorum verbis contradicendo minime resistunt. Qui etiam pertranseuntes sunt, quia intentionem mentis in amore vitae praesentis figere dedignantur. Igitur quia malus ad diem perditionis servatur, et ad diem furoris ducitur, hoc non nisi qui est viator intelligit, quoniam qui cor in praesentibus fixit, quae iniquum sequuntur supplicia non deprehendit. De quo adhuc subditur:

CAPUT LVIII VERS.

31. — Quis arguet coram eo viam ejus? et quae fecit, quis reddet illi? 69. Antichristum tantis signis, ostensione sanctitatis tanta elatum, solus Christus debellaturus est. — Saepe malus indignationem conditoris sui, quam in aeternum passurus est, et in hac quoque vita positus experitur, dum prosperitatem quam amat amittit, et adversitatem quam formidat invenit. Et quamvis increpari de suis pravitatibus a justorum lingua etiam in prosperis valeat, scimus tamen quod cum facta sua perversum quemque dejiciunt, justorum increpatio convalescat. Qua autem ratione nunc dicitur: Quis arguet coram eo viam ejus? dum etiam, justis tacentibus, hoc quoque notum sit, quia toties hic iniqui via arguitur, quoties ejus prosperitas interveniente adversitate turbatur. Sed beatus Job dum de omnium malorum corpore loqueretur, subito ad omnium iniquorum caput verba convertit. Vidit enim quod in fine mundi Satan hominem ingrediens, quem sacra Scriptura Antichristum appellat, tanta elatione extollitur, tanta virtute principatur, tantis signis et prodigiis in sanctitatis ostensione elevatur, ut argui ab homine ejus facta non valeant quia cum potestate terroris adjungit etiam

signa ostensae sanctitatis, et ait: Quis arguet coram eo viam ejus? Quis videlicet hominem illum increpare audeat, cujus visum ferre pertimescit? Sed tamen ejus viam non solum Elias et Enoch, qui in ejus exprobrationem ad medium deducuntur, sed etiam omnes electi arguunt, dum contemnunt, dum virtute mentis ejus malitiae resistunt. Sed quia hoc ex divina gratia, et non suis viribus faciunt, recte nunc dicitur: Quis arguet coram eo viam ejus? Quis etenim, nisi Deus, cujus adjutorio electi, ut resistere valeant, fulciuntur? Aliquando enim in Scriptura sacra cum interrogando Quis ponitur, Omnipotens designatur. Unde scriptum est: Quis suscitabit eum (Genes. XLIX, 9)? De quo per Paulum dicitur: Quem Deus suscitavit a mortuis (Gal. I, 1). In eo ergo quod sancti viri ejus iniquitati contradicunt, non ipsi sunt qui viam ejus arguunt, sed ille est ex cujus gratia confortantur. Et quia praesentia ejus, qua in homine venturus est, multo atrocior in persecutione erit quam nunc, cum minime cernitur, quia specialiter adhuc illo vase suo proprio non gestatur, bene dictum est: Coram eo. Multi enim nunc vias Antichristi dijudicantes corripiunt, sed hoc quasi in ejus absentia faciunt, dum illum arguunt quem adhuc specialiter non intuentur. Cum vero
498 in illo damnato homine venerit, quisquis ejus praesentiae resistit, coram eo viam ejus arguit, cujus vires et conspicit et contemnit. Vel certe viam ejus arguere est prosperitatem cursus ejus aeterno supplicio interveniente turbare. Quod quia solus Dominus propria virtute facturus est, de quo scriptum est. Quem Dominus Jesus interficiet spiritu oris sui, et destruet illustratione adventus sui (II Thess. II, 8.), recte dicitur: Quis arguet coram eo viam ejus? Unde et sequitur: Et quae fecit, quis reddet illi? Quis nimirum, nisi Dominus? Qui solus illi perdito homini quae fecit reddet, dum potestatem ejus tam validam per adventum suum aeterna damnatione contriverit. Sed elatus iste princeps malorum, in hac vita quandiu est positus, quid agat, audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT LIX.

VERS. 32. — Ipse ad sepulcra ducetur, et in congerie mortuorum vigilabit. 70. In multitudine peccantium tanquam in congerie mortuorum, et in sepulcris Satan vigilat. — Quia sepulcra mortuos tegunt, quid aliud per sepulcra quam reprobi designantur, in quibus exstinctae a vita beatitudinis animae velut in sepulcris latent? Iniquus ergo iste ad sepulcra ducetur, quia in pravorum cordibus recipietur, quoniam soli eum illi suscipiunt, in quibus mortuae a Deo animae reperiuntur. De quo recte etiam, dum ejus supplicia describuntur, per prophetam dicitur: In circuitu illius sepulcra ejus, omnes interfecti, et qui ceciderunt gladio (Ezech. XXXII, 22). Illi quippe in inferno juxta illum sunt, in quibus idem malignus spiritus mortuus jacet. Qui iniquitatis ejus gladio percussi ceciderunt. Unde scriptum est: Qui liberasti David servum tuum de gladio maligno (Psal. CLIII, 10). Recte autem dicitur: Et in congerie mortuorum vigilabit, quia nunc in congregatione peccantium astutiae suae insidias exerit. Pro eo autem quod in mundo raritas bonorum est, et multitudo malorum, recte mortuorum congeries nominatur, ut ipsa iniquorum multitudo signetur. Lata enim via est quae ducit ad perditionem, et multi sunt qui ingrediuntur per eam (Matth. VII, 13). Satanae itaque in congerie mortuorum vigilare est in reproborum cordibus malitiae suae astutias exercere. De quo adhuc subditur:

CAPUT LX.

VERS. 33. — Dulcis fuit glareis Cocyti. 71. Ut amarus est electis, ita reprobis vitia suggerendo dulcis est. — Graeca lingua cocytus luctus dicitur, qui tamen luctus feminarum vel quorumlibet infirmantium solet intelligi. Sapientes vero hujus saeculi, a luce veritatis exclusi, quasi umbras quasdam veritatis inquisitione tenere conati sunt. Unde Cocytum fluvium currere apud inferos putaverunt, videlicet designantes quod hi qui digna doloribus opera faciunt, in infernum ad luctum decurrunt. Sed nos despiciamus umbram carnalis sapientiae, qui jam de veritate lucem tenemus et

cognoscamus voce beati viri Cocyton luctum infirmantium dici. Scriptum quippe est: Viriliter agite, et confortetur cor vestrum (Psal. XXX, 25). Qui enim in Deo confortari renuunt, ad luctum per animi infirmitatem tendunt. Glareas vero lapillos fluminum appellare, consuevimus, quos aqua defluens trahit. 499 Quid ergo per glareas Cocyti nisi reprobi designantur, qui, suis voluptatibus dediti, quasi semper a flumine ad ima detrahuntur? Qui enim contra voluptates hujus saeculi stare fortiter nolunt, glareae Cocyti fiunt qui suis quotidie lapsibus ad luctum tendunt, ut in aeternum post lugeant, qui modo se in suis voluptatibus delectabiliter relaxant. Et quia antiquus hostis suum vas illum reprobum hominem ingressus, dum dona perversis tribuit, dum eos in hoc mundo honoribus extollit, dum eorum oculis prodigia ostendit, fluxae mentes hunc in suis prodigiis admirantur et sequuntur, bene de eo dicitur: Dulcis fuit glareis Cocyti. Cum enim hunc electi despiciunt, cum mentis calce contemnunt, illi eum sequentes diligunt, qui velut ab aqua voluptatis ad perpetuum luctum trahuntur, qui per terrenam concupiscentiam more glareae quotidianis lapsibus ad ima dilabuntur. Aliis namque gustum suae dulcedinis per superbiam, aliis per avaritiam, aliis per invidiam, aliis per fallaciam, aliis per luxuriam porrigit; et ad quanta vitiorum genera pertrahit, quasi tot suae dulcedinis potus propinat. Nam cum aliquid superbum in mente persuadet, fit dulce quod dicit, quia videri praelatus caeteris homo perversus appetit. Dum menti avaritiam infundere molitur, fit dulce quod occulte loquitur, quia per abundantiam necessitas vitatur. Dum aliquid de invidia suggerit, fit dulce quod dicit, quia perversa mens dum alium deterescere viderit, exsultat se eo minorem minime videri. Cum aliquid de fallacia persuadet, fit dulce quod suggerit, quia eo ipso quo fallit caeteros, prudens videtur sibi. Cum luxuriam deceptae menti loquitur, fit dulce quod suadet, quia in voluptate animum resolvit. Quot ergo vitia carnalium cordibus inserit, quasi tot potus suae dulcedinis eis porrigit. Quam tamen, ut praedixi, ejus dulcedinem non percipiunt, nisi qui,

praesentibus voluptatibus dediti, ad perpetuum luctum trahuntur. Bene ergo dicitur: Dulcis fuit glareis Cocyti, quia amarus electis, et suavis est reprobis. Illos enim solummodo suis delectationibus pascit, quos quotidianis lapsibus ad gemitum impellit. Sequitur: CAPUT. LXI. IBID. — Et post se omnem hominem trahit, et ante se innumerabiles. 72. Per Antichristum, urgente mundi fine, carnales omnes ad se trahet, nunc tantum plurimos. — Hoc loco homo humana sapiens dicitur. Sed cum plus sint omnes quam innumerabiles quaerendum est nobis cur ante se innumerabiles et post se omnes trahere dicatur, nisi quod antiquus hostis reprobum tunc hominem ingressus 500 cunctos quos carnales invenerit sub suae jugum ditionis rapit? Qui et nunc priusquam appareat innumerabiles quidem, non tamen omnes, carnales trahit, quia quotidie a carnali opere ad vitam multi revocantur, atque ad statum justitiae alii per brevem, alii vero per longam poenitentiam redeunt. Et nunc innumerabiles rapit, cum falsitatis suae stupenda hominibus signa non exhibet. Cum vero coram carnalium oculis miranda eis prodigia fecerit, post se tunc non innumerabiles, sed omnes trahit, quia qui bonis praesentibus delectantur potestati illius se absque retractatione subjiciunt. Sed, sicut praefati sumus, quia plus est omnem hominem quam innumerabiles trahere, cur prius dicitur quia omnem hominem trahit, et post in augmento innumerabiles subjiciuntur? Ratio namque expetit ut prius quod minus est et post in augmento quod plus est diceretur. Sed sciendum quia hoc loco plus fuit innumerabiles dixisse quam omnes. Post se enim omnem hominem trahit, quia in tribus annis et dimidio omnes quos in studiis vitae carnalis invenerit jugo suae dominationis astringit. Ante se vero innumerabiles traxit, quia per quinque millia et adhuc amplius annorum curricula, quamvis carnales omnes trahere minime potuit, multo tamen plures sunt in tam longo tempore hi quos ante se innumerabiles rapit, quam omnes quos in tam brevi tempore rapiendos invenerit. Bene ergo dicitur: Post se omnem hominem trahit, et ante se innumerabiles, quia et

tunc minus tollit cum omnes tulerit, et nunc amplius diripit cum corda innumerabilium invadit. Haec beatus Job, quia contra iniquorum principem mire disseruit, qui in hac vita extolli permittitur, sed in adventu Domini destruetur, de se patenter ostendit quia flagella dominica non ex offensione susceperit, quoniam si iniquus quisque in hac vita permittitur prosperari, necesse est ut electus Dei debeat sub flagelli freno retineri. Ex qua re amicos arguit, dicens:

CAPUT LXII.

VERS. 54. — Quomodo igitur consolamini me frustra, cum responsio vestra repugnare ostensa sit veritati? 73. Sanctis quam odiosum mendacium. — Amici beati Job eum consolari non poterant, in quo suis sermonibus veritati contraibant. Cumque hunc hypocritam vel impium dicerent, per hoc quod ipsi mentientes perpetrabant culpam, augebant procul dubio poenam justi vulneribus afflicti. Nam sanctorum mentes, quia veritatem diligunt, etiam culpa fallaciae torquet alienae. Quanto enim grave mendacii esse crimen aspiciunt, tanto hoc non solum in se, sed etiam in aliis oderunt.

LIBER DECIMUS SEXTUS.

Decursis brevi explicatione libri Job capitibus XXII, XXIII et XXIV, usque ad medium versum 20 tertiam partem claudit.

501 Qui contra veritatis verba in allegatione deficiunt, saepe etiam nota replicant, ne tacendo victi videantur. Unde Eliphaz, beati Job sermonibus pressus, ea dicit quae nullus ignorat. Ait enim:

CAPUT PRIMUM.

CAP. XXII, VERS. 2. — Nunquid Deo comparari potest homo, etiam cum perfectae fuerit scientiae? 1. Scientia nostra divinae comparata, ignorantia est. — In comparatione enim Dei, scientia nostra ignorantia est. Ex Dei namque participatione sapimus, non comparatione. Quid ergo mirum cum illud quasi per doctrinam dicitur, quod sciri potuit etiamsi taceretur? Qui adhuc Dei potentiam quasi defendendo subjungit:

CAPUT II.

VERS. 3. — Quid prodest Deo, si justus fueris? aut quid ei confers, si immaculata fuerit vita tua? 2. Justitia nostra Deus non indiget. — In omni quippe quod bene agimus, nosmetipsos, non autem Deum juvamus. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur: Dixi Domino: Deus meus es tu, quoniam bonorum meorum non indiges (Psal. XV, 2). Ipse enim vere nobis Dominus, quia et utique Deus est, qui bono non indiget servientis, sed bonitatem confert quam recipit, ut oblata bonitas non ipsi, sed prius accipientibus et post reddentibus prosit. Nam etsi in judicium Dominus veniens dicit: Quandiu fecistis uni de his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis (Matth. XXV, 40), mira hoc pietate loquitur ex suorum compassione membrorum. Et ipse nos

per hoc quod caput nostrum est adjuvat, qui per nostra bona opera in suis membris adjuvatur. Adhuc adjungit Eliphaz, quod nullus ignorat, dicens:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 4. — Nunquid timens arguet te, et veniet tecum ad judicium? 3. Otiose de Deo dicitur quod a nemine ignoratur. — Quis hoc vel desipiens sentiat, quod Dominus ex timore nos arguat, et ex metu judicium contra nos suum proponat? Sed qui verba sua metiri nesciunt, procul dubio ad otiosa dicta dilabuntur. In quibus si se minime reprehendunt, statim ad noxia et contumeliosa verba prosiliunt. Unde Eliphaz, qui otiosa intulit, ad contumeliosa protinus verba prorupit, dicens:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 5. — Et non propter malitiam tuam plurimam, et infinitas iniquitates tuas? 4. A verbis otiosis ad contumeliosa venitur. — Ecce a torpenti corde ad verba venit otiosa, ab otiosis autem verbis per crimen fallaciae ad contumelias exarsit. Isti quippe sunt casus culpae crescentis, ut lingua cum non restringitur nequaquam ubi ceciderit jaceat, sed semper ad deteriora descendat. Ea vero quae subjuncta sunt, quia valde juxta historiam patent, exponenda ad litteram non sunt. 5. Sed quia amicos beati Job haereticorum speciem tenere diximus (Sup., in praef., et alibi saepissime), ipsum vero significationem sanctae Ecclesiae gerere, jam nunc Eliphaz verba quo modo haereticorum falsitati congruant, demonstremus. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT V.

502 Abstulisti enim pignus fratrum tuorum sine causa, et nudos spoliasti vestibus. Aquam lasso non dedisti, et esurienti subtraxisti panem. In fortitudine brachii tui possidebas terram, et potentissimus obtinebas eam.

TYPICUS SENSUS. 6. Haeretici suos errare et Spiritum sanctum amittere, dum ad Ecclesiam redeunt, mentiuntur. — In Scriptura sacra pignoris appellatione aliquando dona Spiritus sancti, aliquando vero signatur confessio peccati. Pignus namque accipitur donum Spiritus sancti, sicut per Paulum dicitur: Qui dedit nobis pignus Spiritus (II Cor. I). Ad hoc enim pignus accipimus, ut de promissione quae nobis fit certitudinem teneamus. Donum ergo sancti Spiritus pignus dicitur, quia per hoc nostra anima ad interioris spei certitudinem roboratur. Rursum pignoris nomine peccati confessio solet intelligi, sicut in Lege scriptum est: Cum debet tibi quidpiam frater tuus, et abstuleris pignus ab eo, ante solis occasum pignus restitue (Exod. XXII, 26). Frater etenim noster debitor nobis efficitur cum quilibet proximus in nos aliquid deliquisse monstratur. Peccata quippe debita vocamus. Unde peccanti servo dicitur: Omne debitum dimisi tibi (Matth. XVIII, 32). Et in Dominica oratione quotidie precamur: Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris (Matth. VI, 12). A debitore autem nostro pignus accipimus, quando ab eo qui in nos peccasse cognoscitur peccati ejus jam confessionem tenemus, per quam relaxare peccatum quod in nos perpetratum est postulamur. Qui enim peccatum quod commisit fatetur, et veniam petit, jam quasi pro debito pignus dedit. Quod nimirum pignus ante solis occasum reddere jubemur, quia priusquam in nobis per dolorem cordis sol justitiae occidat, debemus ei confessionem veniae reddere a quo confessionem accipimus culpae, ut qui se deliquisse in nos meminit a nobis mox relaxatum sentiat quod deliquit. Quia ergo sancta Ecclesia cum quoslibet ab haereticis ad veritatem fidei revertentes recipit, prius ut confiteri erroris sui culpam debeant persuadet, quasi sub haereticorum specie per Eliphaz dicitur: Abstulisti enim pignus fratrum tuorum sine causa. Id est, ab his qui a nobis ad te veniunt inutiliter confessionem erroris exegisti. Si vero, ut praediximus, pignus sancti Spiritus dona sentiamus, haeretici sanctam Ecclesiam fratrum suorum

pignus dicunt abstulisse, quia eos qui ad illam veniunt dona spiritalia suspicantur amittere. Unde et sequitur: Et nudos spoliasti vestibus. Sed cum nudus exspoliari nequeat, quaerendum nobis est quomodo prius nudi, et post spoliati memorantur? 503 Sed sciendum est quia omnis qui cordis puritate perfruitur, eo ipso quo duplicitatis tegumentum non habet, nudus est. Et sunt nonnulli apud haereticos qui cordis quidem puritatem habent, sed tamen doctrinae eorum dogmata perversa suscipiunt. Hi nimirum et ex sua puritate nudi sunt, et quasi ex eorum praedicatione vestiuntur. Et quia tales quique facile ad sanctam Ecclesiam redeunt, eo quod duplicitatis malitia non utuntur, eos haeretici nudos fatentur, quos ab ea dicunt vestibus exspoliatos, quia simplices quosque pigros atque hebetes putant, quos prava sua dogmata perdidisse considerant. 8. Ecclesiam inscitiae arguunt, cum incognita loquuntur. — Sequitur: Aquam lasso non dedisti, et esurienti subtraxisti panem. Haeretici quo veritatis soliditatem non tenent, eo nonnunquam student ut loquaciores appareant, et contra catholicorum fidem quasi de doctrinae scientia gloriantur; cunctos quos aspiciunt pravis ad se trahere sermonibus quaerunt, et unde sibi alios ad interitum sociant, inde se agere aliquid vivaciter putant. Eos vero lassos dicimus qui sub hujus saeculi onere laborioso fatigantur. Unde et per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis, et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos (Matth. XI, 28). Haeretici igitur, quia sua dogmata praedicare non cessant, sanctam Ecclesiam quasi de imperitia irrident, dicentes: Aquam lasso non dedisti, et esurienti panem subtraxisti. Se enim aquam lasso dare existimant cum quibusdam sub terreno fasce laborantibus sui poculum erroris praebent. Et panem se esurientibus non subtraxisse suspicantur, quia etiam de invisibilibus atque incomprehensibilibus requisiti, cum superba audacia respondent. Et tunc se doctos prae omnibus credunt cum loqui de incognitis infelicius praesumunt. Sancta vero Ecclesia dum quempiam videt esurire quod ei non prosit accipere, aut si jam sunt sibi cognita, modeste supprimit,

aut si adhuc videntur incognita, humiliter fatetur, eosque ad ordinatae humilitatis sensum revocat cum per suum illis praedicatorem dicit: Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem (Rom. XII, 3). Et rursum: Noli altum sapere, sed time (Rom. XI, 20). Atque iterum: Altiora te ne quaesieris, et fortiora te ne scrutatus fueris (Eccli. III, 22). Et rursum: Mel invenisti, comede quod sufficit tibi, ne forte satiatus evomas illud (Prov. XXV, 15). Mel quippe invenire est sancti intellectus dulcedinem degustare. Quod tunc sufficienter comeditur, quando nostra intelligentia juxta mensuram sensus sub moderamine tenetur. Nam satiatus mel emovit, qui plus appetens penetrare quam capit, et illud perdit unde potuit nutriri. Quia ergo sancta Ecclesia ab infirmis mentibus prohibet alta perscrutari, beato Job dicitur: Esurienti subtraxisti panem.. VERS. 12-14. — An cogitas quod Deus excelsior coelo sit, et super stellarum vertices sublimetur? Et dicis: Quid enim novit Deus? et quasi per caliginem judicat. Nubes latibulum ejus, nec nostra considerat, 505 et circa cardines coeli perambulat. 12. Immensitatis et providentiae divinae eximia descriptio. Deus sic intendit omnibus, ut adsit singulis. — Sunt plerique ita hebetes ut formidare nesciant nisi quod corporaliter vident. Unde fit ut Deum non metuant, quem videre non possunt. Haeretici autem, quia se esse sapientes arbitrantur, verba contra catholicos irrisionis proferunt, atque ab eis illum non timeri suspicantur, quem videre corporaliter nequeunt ut quasi per torporem sensus auctorem suum existiment, quia coelo excelsior est, et super stellarum vertices sublimatur, ex longinquo videre non posse; et quia inter nos et coelestem sedem partes aereae intersunt, quasi in nube latens per caliginem judicet, et superioribus intentus, minus ima perpendat; et dum coeli cardines ambiendo constringit, interiora non videat. Sed quis de Deo ista vel desipiens suspicetur, qui nimirum cum sit semper Omnipotens, sic intendit omnibus, ut adsit singulis; sic adest singulis, ut simul omnibus nunquam desit? Nam etsi quosdam peccantes deserit, eisdem tamen ipsis

adest per judicium, quibus deesse cernitur per adjumentum. Sic itaque exteriora circumdat, ut interiora impleat; sic interiora implet ut exteriora circumdet; sic summa regit, ut ima non deserat; sic imis praesens est, ut a superioribus non recedat; sic latet in sua specie, ut tamen cognoscatur in operatione; sic cognoscitur in suo opere, ut tamen comprehendi non valeat a cognoscentis aestimatione; sic adest, ut videri nequeat; sic videri non valet, ut tamen ejus praesentiam ipsa sua judicia testentur; sic se nobis intelligendum praebet, ut tamen ipsum nobis radium sui intellectus obnubilet; et rursum sic caligine nos ignorantiae reprimit, ut tamen menti nostrae radiis suae claritatis intermicet: quatenus et sublevata quidpiam videat, et reverberata contremiscat; et quia eum, sicuti est, videre non potest, aliquatenus vivendo cognoscat. Sed haec haeretici sanctam Ecclesiam scire non aestimant, quia stulto judicio solos se esse sapientes putant. Ex quorum adhuc typo subjungitur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 15. — Nunquid semitam saeculorum custodire cupis, quam calcaverunt viri iniqui? 13. Christi semita humilitas mundi superbia. — Sicut semita Redemptoris nostri humilitas, ita semita saeculorum superbia est. Saeculorum itaque semitam viri iniqui calcant, quia per hujus vitae desideria in elatione perambulant. De quibus adhuc iniquis subditur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 16. — Qui sublati sunt ante tempus suum et fluvius subvertit fundamentum eorum. 14. Iniqui semper ante tempus quod sibi praefixerunt nunquam ante constitutum a Deo moriuntur. — Cum tempus vitae a divina nobis praescientia sit procul dubio praefixum, quaerendum valde est qua ratione nunc dicitur quod iniqui ex praesenti saeculo ante tempus proprium subtrahantur. Omnipotens enim Deus etsi plerumque mutat sententiam,

consilium nunquam. Eo ergo tempore ex hac vita quisque subtrahitur, quo ex divina potentia ante tempora praescitur. Sed sciendum quia creans et ordinans nos omnipotens Deus, juxta singulorum merita, disponit et terminos, ut vel malus ille breviter vivat, ne multis bene agentibus 506 noceat; vel bonus iste diutius in hac vita subsistat, ut multis boni operis adjutor existat; vel rursum malus longius differatur in vita ut prava adhuc opera augeat, ex quorum tentatione purgati justi verius vivant; vel bonus citius subtrahatur, ne si hic diu vixerit, ejus innocentiam malitia corrumpat. Sciendum tamen quia benignitas Dei est peccatoribus spatium poenitentiae largiri. Sed quia accepta tempora non ad fructum poenitentiae, sed ad usum iniquitatis vertunt, quod a divina misericordia mereri poterant amittunt. Quamvis omnipotens Deus illud tempus uniuscujusque ad mortem praesciat quo ejus vita terminatur, nec alio in tempore quisquam mori potuit, nisi ipso quo moritur. Nam si Ezechiae anni additi ad vitam quindecim memorantur (IV Reg. 20, 6), tempus quidem vitae crevit ab illo termino quo mori ipse merebatur. Nam divina dispositio ejus tempus tunc praescivit, quo hunc postmodum ex praesenti vita subtraxit. Cum ergo ita sit, quid est quod dicitur: Quia iniqui sublati sunt ante tempus suum, nisi quod omnes qui praesentem vitam diligunt longiora sibi ejusdem vitae spatia promittunt? Sed cum eos mors superveniens a praesenti vita subtrahit, eorum vitae spatia, quae sibi longiora quasi in cogitatione tendere consueverant, intercidit. De quibus recte dicitur:. VERS. 18. — Cum ille implesset domos eorum bonis. 17. Deus etiam malos beneficiis cumulat. Quo consilio. — Malorum domos Dominus bonis implet, quia etiam ingratis sua dona non denegat, ut aut benignitatem conditoris erubescant, et ad bonitatem redeant; aut redire omnimodo contemnentes, inde illic gravius puniantur, unde hic et bonis Dei largioribus mala reddiderunt, ut duriora eos tunc supplicia puniant, quorum hic malitiam nec dona vicerunt. Sequitur: IBID. — Quorum sententia procul sit a me. Aliud sententia, aliud consilium. — Hoc

etiam per beatum Job dictum est. Ait namque: Quorum consilium longe sit a me (Job. XXI, 16), quamvis aliud sententia, atque aliud consilium possit intelligi. Sententia quippe in ore est, consilium in cogitatione. Dum ergo Eliphaz longe se a malorum sententia, beatus vero Job a consilio optavit, constat nimirum quia iste malorum verbis, ille vero etiam cogitationi desiderat esse dissimilis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII VERS.

19. — Videbunt justi, et laetabuntur, et innocens subsannabit eos. 18. Justi de iniquorum peccatis nunc tabescunt, de eorum interitu quandoque laetaturi. — Justi cum hic injustos errare conspiciunt, de errore pereuntium laetari non possunt. Si enim gaudent erroribus, justi non sunt. Rursum si per insultationem laetantur eo quod tales non sunt quales alios esse conspiciunt, omnino superbi sunt. Unde et pharisaeus justificationem perdidit, quia publicani meritis gaudendo se praetulit, dicens: Gratias ago tibi, quia non sum sicut caeteri homines, raptores, injusti, adulteri, velut etiam hic publicanus (Luc. XVIII, 11). Rursum si dicimus quod perfecto gaudio exsultare justi possunt de morte pravorum, quale est in hoc mundo gaudium de ultione peccantium, in quo adhuc incerta est vita justorum? Discernamus igitur tempora tremoris et exsultationis. Vident etenim nunc injustos justi, et de eorum nequitia tabescunt. Cumque eos feriri conspiciunt, de sua quoque vita suspecti fiunt. Quando ergo videbunt justi iniquorum interitum, et laetabuntur, nisi cum districto judici perfecta jam securitate exsultationis inhaeserint, cum in illo extremo examine illorum damnationem conspicient, et de se jam quod metuant non habebunt? Nunc itaque reprobos aspiciunt et gemunt, tunc aspicient et subsannabunt, quia eos exsultando despicient, quos modo nec sine gemitu iniqua perpetrantes, nec sine metu vident pro iniquitate morientes. Unde per hoc quod subditur, quia de damnatione eorum ultima dicatur ostenditur; nam protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT XIV.

508 VERS. 20. Nonne succisa est erectio eorum et reliqua eorum devoravit ignis? 19. Mali nunc florent, aliquando succidendi, et tam in carne quam in anima puniendi. — Hic namque iniqui erecti sunt, quia in pravis actionibus extolluntur, quia et perverse agunt, et tamen pro perversis actibus minime feriuntur. Peccant et florent peccata augent et terrena bona multiplicant. Sed eorum erectio tunc succiditur, cum vel a praesenti vita ad interitum, vel a conspectu aeterni judicis ad aeternum gehennae incendium pertrahuntur. Qui etsi hic mortuam suam carnem relinquunt, ipsam quoque in resurrectione recipiunt, ut cum carne ardeant, in qua peccaverunt. Sicut enim eorum culpa in mente fuit et corpore, ita eorum poena in anima erit pariter et carne. Quia ergo nec hoc eis erit a tormento liberum, quod hic mortuum relinquunt, recte nunc dicitur: Reliquias eorum devoravit ignis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 21, 22. — Acquiesce igitur ei, et habeto pacem, et per haec habebis fructus optimos. Suscipe ex ore illius legem, et pone sermones ejus in corde suo. 20. Haereticorum superbia et praesumptio. — Culpa superbiae est docere meliorem, quam saepe haeretici perpetrant, qui de his quae prave sentiunt quasi docere catholicos praesumunt. Tunc enim eos putant Deo acquiescere, si illos contigerit eorum perversitatibus consentire. Et acquiescentibus pacem promittunt, quia contra eos qui sibi consentiunt jam jurgari desistunt. Fructus autem optimos sibi consentientibus pollicentur, quia eos solos bona opera agere existimant, quos ad sua dogmata se trahere exsultant. Quibus et hoc congruit, quod adjungit: Suscipe ex ore illius legem. Quia ea quae ipsi sentiunt ex ore Dei procedere suspicantur: Et pone sermones ejus in corde tuo. Ac si aperte astruat, dicens: Quos nunc usque in

ore, et non in corde tenuisti. Quia enim eorum perversa dogmata respuit, non eum verba Dei in sensu, sed in ostensione habuisse criminantur. Unde quasi sub quadam specie dulcedinis infundunt virus pestiferae persuasionis, ut verba Dei Ecclesiam in corde suo ponere admoneant. Quae si unquam a corde illius recessissent, ab illis talia nullatenus audiret. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 23. — Si reversus fueris ad Omnipotentem, aedificaberis, et longe facies iniquitatem a tabernaculo tuo. 21. Quid ad Deum post peccata revertitur, in cogitatione et opere munducatur. — Fidelem populum haeretici a Deo discessisse existimant, quia eum suis praedicationibus resistentem vident. Quem cum malis praesentibus afflictum conspiciunt, quasi per admonitionem ad conditoris gratiam trahere conantur, dicentes: Si reversus fueris ad Omnipotentem, aedificaberis. Ac si aperte dicant: Quia nostris dogmatibus resistendo a Domino recessisti, idcirco a justitiae aedificatione destructus es. Tabernaculum vero aliquando accipimus habitaculum corporis, aliquando vero habitaculum cordis. Nam sicut anima habitamus in corpore, ita per cogitationes habitamus in mente. Iniquitas ergo in tabernaculo mentis, est perversa intentio in studio cogitationis, iniquitas autem in tabernaculo corporis per expletionem operis actio carnalis. Eliphaz itaque quia amicus beati viri exstitit, quaedam vera sentiens, et tamen in his, in quibus a rectitudine deviat, haereticorum speciem tenens, beatum Job ex virtutibus flagellatum nesciens 509 errasse credidit, quem percussum vidit, eique, si reversus ad Omnipotentem fuerit, pollicetur dicens: Longe facies iniquitatem a tabernaculo tuo, ac si patenter dicat: Quisquis ad Deum post errata revertitur, in cogitatione simul et in opere mundatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 24. — Dabit pro terra silicem, et pro silice torrentes aureos. 22. Infirmi, sanante Deo, fortes evadunt, et aliis doctrina praelucent. — Quid per terram nisi infirmitas actionis, quid per duritiam silicis, nisi fortitudo signatur? quid per torrentes aureos, nisi doctrinam intimae claritatis accipimus? Omnipotens autem Deus ad se conversis pro terra dat silicem, quia pro infirma actione fortitudinem tribuit robusti operis. Dat etiam pro silice torrentes aureos, quia pro robusto opere doctrinam multiplicat clarae praedicationis, ut peccator quisque conversus, et ex infirmo fortis existere valeat, et in sua fortitudine usque ad proferenda verba intimae claritatis exsurgat, quatenus in eo et infirmitas actionis, in qua velut solvitur, bene vivendi fortitudine solidetur; et rursus cum sensus ex vita trahitur, ex ipsa fortitudine torrentes aurei defluant, quia in ore bene viventium doctrinae claritas inundat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 25. Eritque Omnipotens contra hostes tuos, et argentum coacervabitur tibi. 23. Deus, fugatis hostibus, divini eloquii argento nos ditat. — Quos magis alios hostes patimur quam malignos spiritus, qui in nostris nos cogitationibus obsident, ut civitatem valeant nostrae mentis irrumpere, eamque sub sui jugo dominii captam tenere? Argenti autem nomine sacra eloquia designati testatur Psalmista, qui ait: Eloquia Domini eloquia casta, argentum igne examinatum terrae (Psal. XI, 7). Et saepe cum eloquiis sacris intendimus, malignorum spirituum insidias gravius toleramus, quia menti nostrae terrenarum cogitationum pulverem aspergunt, ut intentionis nostrae oculos a luce intimae visionis obscurent. Quod nimirum Psalmista pertulerat, cum dicebat: Declinate a me, maligni, et scrutabor mandata Dei mei (Psal. CXVIII, 115). Videlicet patenter insinuans quia mandata Dei perscrutari non poterat cum malignorum spirituum insidias in mente tolerabat. Quod etiam in Isaac opere sub

Allophylorum pravitate cognoscimus designari, qui puteos quos Isaac foderat terrae congerie replebant (Genes. XXVI, 15). Hos enim nos nimirum puteos fodimus cum in Scripturae sacrae abditis sensibus alta penetramus. Quos tamen occulte replent Allophyli quando nobis ad alta tendentibus immundi spiritus terrenas cogitationes ingerunt, et quasi inventam divinae scientiae aquam tollunt. Sed quia nemo hos hostes sua virtute superat, per Eliphaz dicitur: Eritque Omnipotens contra hostes tuos, et argentum coacervabitur tibi. Ac si aperte diceretur: Dum malignos spiritus Dominus a te sua virtute repulerit, divini intus eloquii talentum lucidum excrescit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 26. — Tunc super Omnipotentem deliciis afflues. 24. Deliciis affluunt qui multiplices in sacris Scripturis sensus discernere sciunt. — Super Omnipotentem deliciis affluere est in amore illius Scripturae sacrae epulis satiari. In cujus nimirum verbis tot delicias invenimus, quot ad profectum nostrum intelligentiae diversitates accipimus, ut modo nuda nos pascat historia, modo sub textu litterae velata medullitus nos reficiat moralis allegoria, modo ad altiora suspendat contemplatio, in praesentis vitae tenebris jam de lumine aeternitatis 510 intermicans. Et sciendum quod quisquis deliciis affluit in quadam sui remissione solvitur, atque a laboris studio quasi ex lassitudine relaxatur, quia nimirum anima cum internis deliciis abundare coeperit, terrenis jam operibus incubare minime consentit; sed amore conditoris capta, et sua captivitate jam libera, ad contemplandam ejus speciem deficiendo suspirat, et quasi lassescendo convalescit, quia dum sordida onera portare jam non valet, ad illum per quietem properat, quem intus amat. Hinc etiam in admiratione sponsae scriptum est: Quae est ista quae ascendit de deserto deliciis affluens (Cant. VIII, 5)? Quia nimirum sancta Ecclesia nisi verborum Dei deliciis afflueret, de deserto vitae

praesentis ascendere ad superiora non posset. Deliciis ergo affluit, et ascendit, quia dum mysticis intelligentiis pascitur, ad superna quotidie contemplanda sublevatur. Hinc etiam Psalmista ait: Et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis (Psal. CXXXVIII, 11), quia dum per intellectum mysticum studiosa mens reficitur, jam in ea vitae praesentis obscuritas fulgore diei subsequentis illuminatur, ut etiam in hujus corruptionis caligine in intellectum illius vis futuri luminis erumpat, et verborum deliciis pasta praegustando discat quid de pabulo veritatis esuriat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XX.

IBID. — Et elevabis ad Deum faciem tuam. 25. Ad Deum faciem levare, est cor poenitentia mundatum ad divina investiganda attollere. — Ad Deum faciem levare, est cor ad sublimia investiganda attollere. Nam sicut per corporis faciem homini, ita per interiorem imaginem Deo noti atque conspicabiles sumus. Cum vero reatu culpae deprimimur, ad Deum levare cordis nostri faciem veremur. Dum enim nulla bonorum operum confidentia fulcitur, intueri summa mens trepidat, quia ipsa se conscientia accusat. Cum vero jam poenitentiae lamentis culpa diluitur, et sic perpetrata planguntur, ut plangenda minime perpetrentur, magna menti fiducia nascitur, et ad conspicienda supernae retributionis gaudia cordis nostri facies levatur. Sed haec Eliphaz recte diceret si infirmum moneret. Cum vero justum virum propter flagella despicit, quid aliud quam verba scientiae nesciens fundit? Quae nimirum dicta si ad haereticorum typum ducimus, ipsi falsis promissionibus ad Deum nos faciem levare pollicentur. Ac si fideli populo patenter dicant: Quandiu praedicationem nostram non sequeris, cor in infirmis premis. Quia vero Eliphaz beatum Job ad Deum reverti admonuit, a quo videlicet idem vir beatus nunquam recessit, adhuc pollicendo subjungit:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 27. — Rogabis eum, et exaudiet te. 26. Frustra Deum rogant qui ejus praecepta contemnunt. — Rogant quippe Dominum, sed exaudiri minime merentur, qui jubentis Domini praecepta contemnunt. Unde scriptum est: Qui declinat aurem suam ne audiat legem, oratio ejus erit exsecrabilis (Prov. XXVIII, 9). Quandiu ergo Eliphaz beatum Job non exaudiri credidit, hinc nimirum in suo opere errasse judicavit. Unde et adhuc subdit: IBID. — Et vota tua reddes. Qui vota vovit, sed haec prae infirmitate solvere non valet, ei ex peccati poena agitur ut volenti bonum posse subtrahatur. Cum vero in conspectu intimi judicis ea quae obsistit culpa detergitur, fit protinus ut votum possibilitas sequatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXII.

511 VERS. 28. — Decernes rem, et veniet tibi. 27. Falsa hominum de adversis et prosperis judicia. — Hoc esse proprium infirmantium judicium solet, ut tanto quempiam existiment justum, quanto hunc adipisci conspiciunt omne quod appetit. cum videlicet noverimus nonnunquam bona terrena justis subtrahi, quae largo munere tribuuntur injustis, quia et desperatis aegris medici quidquid poposcerint dari praecipiunt, et eis quos reduci posse ad salutem praevident quae appetunt dari contradicunt. Sed si dicta haec Eliphaz de donis spiritalibus intulit, sciendum quod res decernitur et venit cum virtus quae ex desiderio appetitur, largiente Deo, etiam effectu prosperatur. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXIII.

IBID. — Et in viis tuis splendebit lumen. 28. Mirus virtutis splendor. — In viis quippe justorum lumen splendere est per mira opera virtutum signa suae claritatis aspergere, ut quocunque per intentionem pergunt, ab intuentium cordibus peccati noctem excutiant, et exemplo sui operis in eis

justitiae lumen fundant. Sed quantalibet sit justitia operis, apud internum judicem nulla est, si nanc elevat tumor mentis. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 29. — Qui enim humiliatus fuerit, erit in gloria; et qui inclinaverit oculos suos, ipse salvabitur. 29. Humilitatis commendatio. — Quae nimirum sententia a Veritatis ore non discrepat dicentis: Omnis qui se exaltat, humiliabitur, et qui se humiliat, exaltabitur (Luc. XIV, 11). Unde et per Salomonem dicitur: Antequam conteratur, exaltatur cor hominis; et antequam glorietur, humiliatur (Prov. XVIII, 12). Recte autem dicitur: Qui inclinaverit oculos suos, ipse salvabitur, quia, quantum per membrorum ministerium deprehendi potest, prima superbiae ostensio esse in oculis solet. Hinc enim scriptum est: Et oculos superborum humiliabis (Psal. XVII, 28). Hinc de ipso superbientium capite dicitur: Omne sublime videt (Job XLI, 25). Hinc de illa quae ei per infidelitatem adhaesit scriptum est: Generatio cujus excelsi sunt oculi, et palpebrae ejus in altum subrectae (Prov. XXX, 13). Oculos ergo inclinare est nullum respiciendo despicere, sed se minorem atque imparem cunctis quos aspicit aestimare. Salvabitur itaque qui oculos inclinat, quia qui falsum superbiae verticem deserit, veritatis altitudinem ascendit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXV.

VERS. 30. — Salvabitur innocens, salvabitur autem munditia manuum suarum. 30. Gratiae praevenientis necessitas, quam comitari et subsequi debet liberum arbitrium. — Quae scilicet sententia si de coelestis regni retributione promitur, veritate fulcitur, quia cum de Deo scriptum sit: Qui reddit unicuique secundum opera ejus (Rom. II, 6), illum in extremo examine justitia aeterni judicis salvat, quem hic ejus pietas ab immundis operibus liberat. Sin vero ad hoc salvari quisque hic munditia manuum

suarum creditur, ut suis viribus innocens fiat, procul dubio erratur, 512 quia si superna gratia nocentem non praevenit, nunquam profecto inveniet quem remuneret innocentem. Unde veridica Moysis voce dicitur: Nullusque apud te per se innocens est (Exod. XXXIV, 7). Superna ergo pietas prius agit in nobis aliquid sine nobis, ut, subsequente quoque nostro libero arbitrio, bonum quod jam appetimus agat nobiscum, quod tamen per impensam gratiam in extremo judicio ita remunerat in nobis, ac si solis processisset ex nobis. Quia enim divina nos bonitas, ut innocentes faciat, praevenit, Paulus ait: Gratia autem Dei sum id quod sum (I Cor. XV, 10). Et quia eamdem gratiam nostrum liberum arbitrium sequitur, adjungit: Et gratia ejus in me vacua non fuit, sed abundantius illis omnibus laboravi. Qui dum se de se nihil esse conspiceret, ait: Non autem ego. Et tamen quia se esse aliquid cum gratia invenit, adjunxit: Sed gratia Dei mecum. Non enim diceret mecum si cum praeveniente gratia subsequens liberum arbitrium non haberet. Ut ergo se sine gratia nihil esse ostenderet, ait: Non ego. Ut vero se cum gratia operatum esse per liberum arbitrium demonstraret, adjunxit: Sed gratia Dei mecum. Munditia itaque manuum suarum innocens salvabitur, quia qui hic praevenitur dono ut innocens fiat, cum ad judicium ducitur, ex merito remuneratur. Quae cuncta Eliphaz, sicut praedictum est, etsi recte protulit, cui tamen proferret ignoravit, quia docere meliorem non debuit, sed audire. Quae tamen omnia per typum haereticorum promissionibus congruunt, qui cum fideles quosque in praesenti vita afflictos inveniunt, eos ex culpa perfidiae percussos arbitrantur, eisque si sua dogmata sequantur, salutem innocentiae per bonorum operum munditiam promittunt. Sed mens fidelium tanto eos altius despicit, quanto illos innocentiam non videt habere quam pollicentur. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Frustra jactatur rete ante oculos pennatorum (Prov. I, 17). Pennati quippe sunt bonorum spiritus, qui dum ad altiora per spem veritatis evolant, apposita pravorum hominum deceptionis retiacula declinant. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

CAPUT XXIII, VERS.

1, 2. — Respondens autem Job dixit: Nunc quoque in amaritudine est sermo meus, et manus plagae meae aggravata est super gemitum meum. 31. Inordinata consolatio dolorem auget. — More suo beatus Job planioribus verbis inchoat, sed dicta sua alta mysterii prosecutione consummat. Mederi quippe dolor afflicti ex amicorum consolatione debuerat; sed quia consolatio ad blandimenta fallaciae erupit, afflicti dolor inhorruit. Quia, enim Eliphaz spondere converso meliora non timuit, quasi ex noxio medicamine vulnus crevit. Unde recte dicitur: Nunc quoque in amaritudine est sermo meus, et manus plagae meae aggravata est super gemitum meum, quia videlicet 513 inordinatae consolationis intentio percussionem quam minuere debuit multiplicavit. In quibus nimirum verbis per typum sanctae Ecclesiae etiam fidelium dolor exprimitur, qui eo amplius gemunt, quo malos blandiri conspiciunt, qui juxta Pauli vocem: Per dulces sermones et benedictiones seducunt corda innocentium (Rom. XVI, 18). 32.. VERS. 3. — Quis mihi tribuat ut cognoscam et inveniam illum, et veniam usque ad solium ejus? 33. Ardor electorum Dei conspectu frui cupientium. — Electus quisque nisi Deum cognovisset, utique non amaret. Sed aliud est cognoscere per fidem, atque aliud per speciem; aliud invenire per credulitatem, aliud per contemplationem. Ex qua re agitur ut electi omnes eum quem fide cognoverunt videre quoque per speciem anhelent. Cujus amore flagrantes aestuant, quia ejus dulcedinis suavitatem jam in ipsa suae fidei certitudine degustant. Quod bene ille in Gerasenorum regione sanatus a daemonibus designat, qui vult abire cum Jesu; sed ei a magistro salutis dicitur: Redi in domum tuam, et narra quanta tibi fecerit Deus (Luc. VIII, 39). Amanti enim adhuc dilatio imponitur, ut ex dilati amoris desiderio meritum retributionis augeatur. Fit ergo nobis omnipotens Deus dulcis in miraculis, et tamen in

sua celsitudine manet occultus, ut et quiddam monstrando de se occulta nos inspiratione in suo amore succendat, et tamen abscondendo Majestatis suae gloriam amoris sui vim per aestum desiderii augeat. Nisi enim sanctus vir videre hunc in sua Majestate quaereret, non utique subinferret: Et veniam usque ad solium ejus [Vet. XIV]. Quid namque est solium Dei, nisi illi angelici spiritus 514 qui, Scriptura teste, throni vocati sunt? Qui ergo usque ad solium Dei venire vult, quid aliud quam interesse angelicis spiritibus concupiscit, ut nulla jam defectiva temporum momenta sustineat, sed ad permanentem gloriam in contemplatione aeternitatis exsurgat? 34. Electi occulta Dei judicia venerantur. — Quae tamen verba etiam in hac vita positis justis conveniunt. Nam cum contra votum suum atque desiderium quodlibet agi conspiciunt, ad occulta Dei judicia recurrunt, ut in eis videant quia inordinate intus non disponitur quod inordinatum foris currere videtur. Cum enim praesidentem angelicis spiritibus Creatorem omnium fidei oculis contemplantur, ad ejus nimirum solium veniunt. Et quia considerant quoniam is qui mire angelos regit injuste homines non disponit, profecto inveniunt causales rationes quam justae sint, dum ipsae causae extrinsecus videantur injustae; dumque id humiliter faciunt, semetipsos saepe in sua voluntate reprehendunt, sua in se nonnunquam vota dijudicant, dum meliora esse ea quae disponit conditor pensant. Unde bene adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 4. — Ponam coram eo judicium, et os meum replebo increpationibus. 35. Ex occultorum Dei judiciorum consideratione ad poenitentiam accenduntur electi. — Coram Deo judicium ponere est intra secretum mentis per fidei contemplationem ad tremendum examen majestatis illius oculos nostrae considerationis aperire, quid peccator homo mereatur attendere, et occultus nunc et tacitus judex quam terribilis post appareat considerare. Ex qua re agitur ut ad cognitionem sui anima subtilius

revocetur, et quo occultum judicem suum magis terribilem videt, eo de suis actibus formidolosius angustetur. Anxie trepidat, culpas suas lamentis insequitur, poenitendo increpat, qualem fuisse se meminit. Unde nunc quoque postquam dictum est: Ponam coram eo judicium, recte subjungitur: Os meum replebo increpationibus. Qui enim sibi in conspectu Dei judicium ponit, os suum increpationibus replet, quia dum subtile examen tremendi contra se judicis contemplatur, amarae se poenitentiae invectione persequitur. Saepe autem dum culpas nostras pensare negligimus, quae earum reprehensio in judicio sequatur ignoramus; dum vero eas poenitendo persequimur, quid nobis de eis judex in suo examine dicere possit invenimus. Unde adhuc apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

VERS. 5. — Ut sciam verba quae mihi respondeat, et intelligam quid loquatur mihi. 36. Occulta Dei judicia, dum metuunt, evadunt electi. — Tunc enim culpas plangimus cum pensare coeperimus. Sed tunc subtilius pensamus, cum sollicitius plangimus, atque ex lamentis in corde nostro plenius nascitur quid peccantibus divina districtio minatur, quae erunt illa reproborum improperia, qui terror, quae implacabilis Majestatis aversio. Tanta enim tunc Dominus reprobis iratus dicet; quanta eos pati ex aequitate permiserit. Quae nimirum verba animadversionis illius justi, dum modo sollicite metuunt, evadunt. Sed quis in illo examine inveniri justus valeat, si secundum suae fortitudinis Majestatem vitam hominum 515 discutiat Deus? Apte ergo subjungitur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 6. — Nolo multa fortitudine contendat mecum; nec magnitudinis suae mole me premat. 37. Dei fortitudinem formidantes, infirmitatem in assumpta humanitate desiderant. — Mens etenim quamlibet justi, si ab

omnipotente Domino districte judicatur, mole magnitudinis premitur. In quibus nimirum verbis hoc quoque intelligendum est, quod sanctus vir, dum Dei fortitudinem devitat, quid ejus aliud quam infirmitatem desiderat? Et scriptum est: Quod infirmum est Dei, fortius est hominibus (I Cor. I, 25). Unde et protinus adjungit: VERS. 7. — Proponat aequitatem contra me, et perveniet ad victoriam judicium meum. Quis enim alius nisi Mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus (I Tim. II, 5), aequitatis nomine designatur? de quo scriptum est: Qui factus est sapientia nobis a Deo et justitia (I Cor. I, 30). Quae scilicet justitia dum in hunc mundum contra vias peccatorum venit, antiquum hostem vincimus, a quo captivi tenebamur. Dicat ergo: Nolo multa fortitudine contendat mecum, nec magnitudinis suae mole me premat; proponat aequitatem contra me, et perveniet ad victoriam judicium meum. Id est, ad redarguendas vias meas incarnatum Filium mittat, et tunc insidiantem adversarium per absolutionis meae judicium victor excludam. Si enim in divinitatis fortitudine sic unigenitus Dei Filius invisibilis maneret, ut nil de nostra infirmitate susciperet, infirmus homo ad eum invenire accessum gratiae quando potuisset? Consideratum quippe pondus ejus magnitudinis opprimeret potius quam juvaret. Sed fortis super omnia apparuit infirmus inter omnia, ut dum nobis ex assumpta infirmitate congrueret, ad permanentem nos suam fortitudinem elevaret. In altitudine enim sua divinitas a nobis utpote parvulis apprehendi non potuerat, sed stravit se hominibus per humanitatem, et quasi in jacentem ascendimus; surrexit, et levati sumus. Unde hoc quoque mox subditur, per quod divinitas invisibilis atque incomprehensibilis demonstretur. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 8, 9. — Si ad Orientem iero, non apparet; si ad Occidentem, non intelligam eum; si ad sinistram, quid agam? non apprehendam eum; si me vertam ad dexteram, non videbo illum. 38. Deus invisibilis et

incomprehensibilis, non in parte sed ubique quaerendus. — Creator quippe omnium in parte non est, quia ubique est. Et tunc minus invenitur, quando is qui totus ubique est in parte quaeritur. Incircumscriptus namque spiritus omnia intra semetipsum habet, quae tamen et implendo circumdat, et circumdando implet, et sustinendo transcendit, et transcendendo sustinet. Bene autem postquam dictum est: Si ad Orientem iero, non apparet; si ad Occidentem, non intelligam eum; si ad sinistram quid agam? non apprehendam eum; si me vertam ad dexteram, non videbo illum; illico adjunxit: Ipse vero scit viam meam. Ac si aperte dicat: Videre non valeo videntem me, et eum qui me subtiliter intuetur intueri non possum; ut videlicet ostendat quia tanto cautius formidandus est, quanto conspicabilis non est. Qui enim ita nos aspicit, ut a nobis aspici nequeat, eo magis timendus est, quo cuncta videns minime videtur. Cum enim contra nos latere quempiam in insidiis credimus, eo illum amplius metuimus, quo minime videmus. 516 Cumque ejus insidias nequaquam deprehendimus ubi sunt, et ibi eas metuimus ubi non sunt. Creator autem noster, qui ubique totus est, et cernens cuncta non cernitur, tanto magis metuendus est, quanto invisibilis permanens, de nostris actibus quando et quid decernat ignoratur. Quae tamen verba intelligi et aliter possunt. Ad Orientem quippe imus, cum mentem in consideratione majestatis ejus attollimus. Sed non apparet, quia qualis in natura sua est a cogitatione mortali videri non praevalet. Si ad Occidentem non intelligam eum. [Vet. XVI.] Ad Occidentem imus cum sublevatum in Deo cordis oculum, sed ipsa immensitate luminis reverberatum, ad nosmetipsos reducimus, et lassati discimus valde super nos esse quod quaerebamus, nostramque mortalitatem considerantes, indignos nos adhuc esse deprehendimus qui immortalem videre valeamus. Si ad sinistram, quid agam non apprehendam eum. Ad sinistram ire est peccatorum delectationibus consentire. Et nimirum constat quia Deum apprehendere non valet qui adhuc in delectatione peccati per sinistram jacet.

Si me vertam ad dexteram, non videbo illum. In dexteram procul dubio vertitur qui de virtutibus elevatur. Sed Deum videre non valet qui privata laetitia de bonis actibus gaudet, quia in eo cordis oculum tumor elationis premit. Unde bene alias dicitur: Non declines ad dexteram, aut ad sinistram (Deut. XVII, 11). In quibus cunctis plerumque se anima discutit, nec tamen plene deprehendere semetipsam valet. Unde hic apte subditur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 10. — Ipse vero scit viam meam. 39. Deus justorum vias explorat eosque probat. — Ac si patenter dicat: Ego me et districte discutio, et perfecte me scire non possum; et tamen ille quem videre non valeo, videt subtiliter cuncta quae ago. Sequitur: Et probabit me quasi aurum quod per ignem transit. Aurum in fornace ad naturae suae claritatem proficit, dum sordes amittit. Quasi aurum ergo quod per ignem transit probantur animae justorum, quibus exustione tribulationis et subtrahuntur vitia et merita augentur. Nec elationis fuit quod sanctus vir in tribulatione se positum auro comparavit, quia qui Dei voce justus ante flagella dictus est, non idcirco tentari permissus est ut in eo vitia purgarentur, sed ut merita crescerent, aurum vero igne purgatur. Minus ergo de se aestimavit ipse quam erat, dum, tribulationi traditus, purgari se credidit, qui purgandum in se aliquid non habebat. 40. Justi quantumvis humiles, sua bona opera non ignorant. — Sciendum vero est quia quamvis de se humilia sentiat animus justorum, ea tamen quae agunt quam sint recta conspiciunt, sed de eorum rectitudine non praesumunt: Unde adhuc subditur: Vestigia ejus secutus est pes meus: viam ejus custodivi, et non declinavi ex ea. A mandatis labiorum ejus non recessi, et in sinu meo abscondi verba oris ejus. Sed in his omnibus an se esse aliquid existimet videamus. Sequitur: Ipse enim solus est [Rec. XVI]. Qua sententia subjuncta ostendit quia in tot bonis quae egerat nil esse se credidit. Sed haec ipsa superius verba repetentes, ut possumus perstringamus.

CAPUT XXXIII.

517. VERS. 11. — Vestigia ejus secutus est pes meus. 41. Dei longanimitas et pietas nobis unitandae. Exempla Christi sequenda. — Quasi quidam namque gressus Dei sunt, quas cernimus, operationes ejus, quibus bonus quisque malusque regitur, quibus justi injustique suis ordinibus disponuntur, quibus et subjectus quisque ad meliora quotidie ducitur, et adversus ad deteriora corruens toleratur. De quibus nimirum gressibus Propheta dicebat: Visi sunt gressus tui, Deus (Psal. LXVII, 25). Nos itaque cum virtutem longanimitatis atque pietatis ejus intuemur, et intuentes imitari contendimus, quid aliud quam gressuum ejus vestigia sequimur, quia extrema quaedam ejus operationis imitamur. Haec enim Patris sui vestigia Veritas admonebat imitari, cum diceret: Orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos, ut sitis filii Patris vestri, qui in coelis est, qui solem suum oriri facit super malos et bonos (Matth. V, 45; Luc. VI, 28). Potest tamen beatus Job, qui certa fide jam dixerat: Scio quod Redemptor meus vivit, et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum (Job. XIX, 25), sic in futura operatione incarnandae sapientiae intendere, sicut nos ejusdem sapientiae jam praeterita opera per fidem videmus, quod Mediator Dei et hominum benignus ad tribuendum, humilis ad sustinendum, patiens ad exemplum praebendum fuerit. Cujus nimirum vitam dum beatus Job, superno spiritu repletus, sollicita intentione conspiceret, futuram mansuetudinis illius humilitatem praevidens, quasi ad exemplum sibi propositum recurrit, ut quidquid in hac vita ageret, ad imitationis illius vestigia ligaret, quatenus qui occultae dispositionis ejus sublimia videre non poterat, quasi in terra conspiciens, ad imitationem ejus vestigia teneret. De quibus ejus vestigiis per Petrum dicitur: Christus passus est pro nobis, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamini vestigia ejus (I Petr. II, 21). De quo adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXXIV.

IBID. — Viam ejus custodivi, et non declinavi ex ea. 42. Justorum sollicitudo est vias veritatis observare. — Custodit et non declinat, qui hoc ubi intendit operatur. Custodire quippe per intentionem, est non declinare per operationem. Haec namque est sollicitudo justorum, ut actus suos quotidie juxta vias veritatis examinent, et, ea sibi in regulam proponentes, a rectudinis earum tramite non declinent. Super semetipsos quippe quotidie ire contendunt, et quo in virtutum verticem provehuntur, cauta reprehensione dijudicant, quidquid de eis ex semetipsis remanet infra semetipsos, et totos se illo festinant trahere, ubi se inveniunt ex parte pervenisse. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

VERS. 12. — A mandatis labiorum ejus non recessi. 43. Dei voluntatem in Scripturis scrutari, alia justorum sollicitudo. — Sicut bene obsequentes famuli dominorum suorum vultibus semper intenti sunt, ut ea quae praeceperint, festine audiant et implere contendant, sic justorum mentes per intentionem suam omnipotenti Domino assistunt, atque in scriptura ejus quasi os ejus intuentur, ut quia per eam Deus loquitur omne quod vult, tanto a voluntate ejus non discrepent, quanto eamdem voluntatem illius in ejus eloquio agnoscunt. Unde fit ut ejus verba non per eorum aures supervacue transeant, sed haec in suis cordibus figant. Unde hic subditur:

CAPUT XXXVI 518.

IBID. — Et in sinu meo abscondi verba oris ejus. 44. Verba Dei in sinu abscondere, alia justorum sollicitudo. — In sinu etenim cordis verba oris ejus abscondimus, quanto mandata illius non transitorie, sed implenda opere audimus. Hinc est quod de ipsa matre Virgine scriptum est: Maria autem

conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo (Luc. II, 19). Quae nimirum verba, et cum ad operationem prodeunt, in sinu cordis absconsa latent, si per hoc quod foris agitur intus agentis animus non elevatur. Nam cum conceptus sermo ad opus ducitur, si per hoc humana laus quaeritur, sermo Dei in sinu mentis procul dubio non occultatur. Sed nosse velim, beate vir, cur te tanta intentione examines, cur te tanta sollicitudine astringas? Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

. VERS. 13. — Ipse enim solus est, et nemo avertere potest cogitationem ejus. 45. Deus solus est, in cujus essentiae comparatione esse nostrum non esse est. — Nunquid non sunt angeli et homines, coelum et terra, aer et maria, cuncta volatilia, quadrupedia, atque repentia? Et certe scriptum est: Creavit ut essent. omnia (Genes. II, 3, seq.). Cum ergo in rerum natura tam multa sint, cur beati viri voce nunc dicitur: Ipse enim solus est. Sed aliud est esse, aliud principaliter esse; aliud mutabiliter, atque aliud immutabiliter esse. Sunt enim haec omnia, sed principaliter non sunt, quia in semetipsis minime subsistunt, et nisi gubernantis manu teneantur, esse nequaquam possunt. Cuncta namque in illo subsistunt; a quo creata sunt, nec ea quae vivunt sibimetipsis vitam tribuunt, neque ea quae moventur et non vivunt suis nutibus ad motum ducuntur, sed ille cuncta movet, qui quaedam vivificat, quaedam vero non vivificata in extremam essentiam mire ordinans servat. Cuncta quippe ex nihilo facta sunt, eorumque essentia rursum ad nihilum tenderet, nisi eam auctor omnium regiminis manu retineret Omnia itaque quae creata sunt, per se nec subsistere praevalent, nec moveri; sed in tantum subsistunt, in quantum ut esse debeant acceperunt; in tantum moventur, in quantum occulto instinctu disponuntur. Ecce enim peccator flagellandus est de rebus humanis: arescit in ejus laboribus terra, concutitur in ejus naufragiis mare, ignescit in ejus sudoribus aer, obtenebrescit contra

eum inundationibus coelum, inardescunt in ejus oppressionibus homines, moventur in ejus adversitate et angelicae virtutes. Nunquidnam haec, quae inanimata vel quae viventia diximus, suis instinctionibus et non magis divinis impulsionibus agitantur? Quidquid est itaque quod exterius saevit, per hoc ille intuendus est, qui hoc interius disponit. In omni igitur causa solus ipse intuendus est, qui principaliter est. Qui etiam ad Moysen dicit: Ego sum qui sum. Sic dices filiis Israel: Qui est, misit me ad vos (Exod. III, 14). Cum itaque flagellamur per ea quae videmus, illum debemus sollicite metuere, quem non videmus. Vir itaque sanctus despiciat quidquid exterius terret, quidquid per essentiam suam, nisi regeretur, ad nihilum tenderet, et mentis oculo, suppressis omnibus, intueatur unum in cujus essentiae comparatione esse nostrum non esse est, et dicat: Ipse enim solus est. 519. IBID. — Et anima ejus quodcunque voluit, hoc fecit. 47. — Deo nec illa obsistunt quae contra voluntatem illius fieri videntur. — Cum sit cunctis corporibus exterior, cunctis mentibus interior Deus, ea ipsa vis ejus, qua omnia penetrat, cunctaque disponit, anima illius appellatur. Cujus videlicet voluntati nec illa obsistunt, quae contra voluntatem illius fieri videntur, quia ad hoc nonnunquam permittit fieri etiam quod non praecipit, ut per hoc illud certius impleatur quod jubet. Apostatae quippe angeli perversa voluntas est, sed tamen a Deo mirabiliter ordinatur, ut ipsae quoque ejus insidiae utilitati bonorum serviant, quos purgant dum tentant. Sic itaque ejus anima quodcunque voluit hoc fecit, ut inde quoque voluntatem suam impleat, unde voluntati illius repugnari videbatur. Terreatur ergo vir justus, et tantae majestatis pondus considerans, infirmum se esse deprehendat. 48. Sed inter verba haec percunctari libet, ac dicere: O beate Job, inter tot flagella positus cur adhuc adversa formidas? jam tribulationibus cingeris, jam innumeris afflictionibus angustaris. Malum timeri debet quod necdum susceptum est; tu in tanto positus dolore quid metuis? Sed ecce vir justus nostris inquisitionibus satisfaciens adjungit:

CAPUT XXXIX.

VERS. 14. — Cum expleverit in me voluntatem suam, et alia multa similia praesto sunt ei. 49. Ex his quae patimur, formidare discimus quae nondum passi sumus. — Ac si aperte dicat: Jam perpendo quae patior, sed adhuc formido quae pati possum. Explet enim in me voluntatem suam, quia multis me percussionibus affligit. Sed multa similia praesto sunt ei, quia si ferire cogitat, adhuc invenit ubi plaga crescat. Hinc itaque pensandum est quam pavidus ante flagellum fuit, qui etiam percussus adhuc metuit ne feriatur. Incomprehensibilem quippe vim ei inesse considerans et potestatis et examinis, esse vir justus noluit nec de flagello securus. Unde adhuc metuens adjungit:

CAPUT XL.

VERS. 15. — Et idcirco a facie ejus turbatus sum, et considerans eum, timore sollicitor. 50. Malis securitatem prae se ferentibus, justi semper timent. — Bene a facie Domini turbatur, qui terrorem majestatis illius cordis sui obtutibus proponit, et ejus rectitudinis pavore concutitur, dum 520 se reddendis rationibus conspicit idoneum non esse, si dictricte judicetur. Recte autem dicitur: Et considerans eum, timore sollicitor, quia divinae animadversionis vim cum minime quisque considerat, minime formidat; et tanto magis in hac vita quasi securus est, quanto a consideratione internae districtionis alienus. Semper etenim justi viri ad cordis secretarium redeunt vim occultae districtionis intuentur, majestatis intimae judicio assistunt, ut eo magis quandoque securi sint, quo hic quandiu viverent securi esse noluerunt. Nam malorum mentes cum renuunt considerare quod timeant, ad hoc quandoque gaudentes perveniunt quod timentes nullo modo evadant. Sed ecce de beato Job novimus quod crebris Dei sacrificiis deditus, quod hospitalitatibus, quod indigentiis pauperum

impensus, quod suis etiam subditis humilis, quod sibi adversantibus benignus fuit, et tamen tot flagella suscepit nec jam securus exstitit inter flagella, sed adhuc metuit, adhuc divinae districtionis vim considerans contremiscit. Quid nos itaque miseri, quid peccatores dicimus, si sic timet, qui sic egit? Sed tanti timoris pondus an a semetipso habeat, innotestat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLI.

VERS. 16. Deus mollivit cor meum, et Omnipotens conturbavit me. 51. Timor hic donum Dei est. — Ex divino munere cor justi moliri dicitur, quia superni judicii timore penetratur. Molle est enim quod penetrari potest, durum quod penetrari non potest. Unde per Salomonem dicitur: Beatus homo qui semper est pavidus, qui vero mentis est durae corruet in malum (Prov. XXVIII, 14). Virtutem ergo suae formidinis non sibi, sed auctori tribuit, qui ait: Deus mollivit cor meum, et Omnipotens conturbavit me. Non autem secura, sed perturbata sunt corda bonorum, quia dum futuri examinis pondus considerant, quietem hic habere non appetunt, securitatem suam districtionis intimae consideratione perturbant. Qui tamen inter ipsa timoris supplicia saepe animum revocant ad dona, et ut semetipsos consolatione refoveant, inter hoc quod metuunt reducunt oculum ad dona quae acceperunt, ut spes sublevet quem timor premit. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XLII.

VERS. 17. — Non enim perii propter imminentes tenebras, nec faciem meam operuit caligo. 52. Flagella justorum aut mala perpetrata purgant, aut futura devitant. — Ille enim in flagello positus a salute corporis propter imminentes tenebras perit, qui idcirco pro transactis percutitur, ut a futuris suppliciis abscondatur. Flagella quippe bonorum aut vitia perpetrata purgant, aut ea quae poterant perpetrari futura devitant. Beatus autem Job,

quia in flagello positus, nec a peccatis praecedentibus purgabatur, nec ab imminentibus tegebatur, sed ejus tantummodo in flagello virtus augebatur, fiducialiter dicit: Non enim perii propter imminentes tenebras, nec faciem meam operuit caligo. Qui enim semper divinae formidinis pondus aspexit, ejus cordis faciem caligo peccati non operuit. Et is quem supplicia nulla sequebantur, salutem corporis propter imminentes tenebras non amisit. 53. A pravis cogitationibus nemo immunis. — Et notandum quod ipse priora denuntians nequaquam ait: Faciem meam non tetigit; sed: Non operuit caligo. Saepe enim etiam corda justorum 521 subortae cogitationes polluunt, terrenarum rerum delectationibus tangunt, sed dum citius manu sanctae discretionis abiguntur, festine agitur ne cordis faciem caligo operiat, quae hanc jam ex illicita delectatione tangebat. Nam saepe in ipso orationis sacrificio importunae se cogitationes ingerunt, quae hoc rapere vel maculare valeant, quod in nobis Deo flentes immolamus. Unde Abraham cum ad occasum solis sacrificium offerret, insistentes aves pertulit, quas studiose, ne oblatum sacrificium raperent, abegit (Genes. XV, 11). Sic nos cum in ara cordis holocaustum Deo offerimus, ab immundis hoc volucribus custodiamus, ne maligni spiritus et perversae cogitationes rapiant quod mens nostra offerre se Domino utiliter sperat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLIII.

CAP. XXIV, VERS. 1. — Ab Omnipotente non sunt abscondita tempora; qui autem noverunt eum, ignorant dies illius. 54. Dies Dei ejus aeternitas. Deus est quod habet. — Quid dies Dei, nisi ipsa ejus aeternitas appellatur? quae nonnunquam unius diei pronuntiatione exprimitur, sicut scriptum est: Melior est dies una in atriis tuis super millia (Psal. LXXXIII, 11). Nonnunquam vero pro sua longitudine dierum multorum appellatione signatur, de quibus scriptum est: In saeculum saeculi anni tui (Psal. CI, 25). Nos itaque intra tempora volvimur, per hoc quod creatura sumus. Deus

autem qui creator est omnium aeternitate sua tempora nostra comprehendit. Ait ergo: Ab Omnipotente non sunt abscondita tempora; qui autem noverunt eum, ignorant dies illius. Quia ipse quidem nostra comprehensibiliter conspicit, nos autem ea quae ejus sunt comprehendere nullatenus valemus. Sed natura Dei cum simplex sit, mirandum valde est, cur dicit: Qui noverunt eum, ignorant dies illius. Neque enim aliud ipse, atque aliud dies ejus sunt. Deus namque hoc est quod habet. Aeternitatem quippe habet, sed ipse est aeternitas. Lucem habet, sed lux sua ipse est. Claritatem habet, sed ipse est claritas sua. Non est ergo in eo aliud esse, et aliud habere. Quid est itaque dicere: Qui noverunt eum, ignorant dies illius, nisi quia et qui cognoscunt eum adhuc nesciunt? Nam et qui jam eum fide tenent, adhuc per speciem ignorant. Et cum ipse sibi sit aeternitas, quem veraciter credimus, qualiter tamen sit ipsa ejus aeternitas ignoramus. In hoc namque quod de divinae naturae potentia audimus, ea nonnunquam cogitare consuevimus quae per experientiam scimus. Omne enim quod coepit et desinit, initio et fine concluditur. Quod si mora aliquantula differtur ut finiatur, longum dicitur; in qua videlicet longinquitate cum quisque mentis oculos reducit retro per memoriam, tendit ante per exspectationem, quasi per spatium temporis dilatat in mente. Cumque audit aeternitatem Dei, humano more intendenti animo longa vitae spatia proponit, in quibus metiatur semper et quid abiit retro, quod retineatur in memoria, et quid ante restat, quod exspectetur ex intentione. 55. In aeternitate nihil praeteritum aut futurum. — Sed quoties in aeternitate ista cogitamus, aeternitatem necdum cognovimus. Ibi quippe est quod nec initio incipitur, nec fine terminatur, ubi neque exspectatur quod veniet, neque percurrit quod debeat recordari, sed est unum quod 522 semper esse est. Quod etsi nos et angeli cum initio esse videre incipimus, esse tamen hoc sine initio videmus, ubi sic semper sine fine esse est, ut nunquam se animus tendat ad sequentia, ac si multiplicentur quae sunt et longa fiant. Nam etsi per prophetiae spiritum dictum est: Domine, qui

regnas in aeternum, et in saeculum, et adhuc (Fortasse, Exod. XV, 18, ubi legitur: Dominus regnabit in aeternum [Hebr., in saeculum] et ultra), more sacri eloquii, humano modo spiritus hominibus est locutus, ut ibi adhuc diceret, ubi exspectatio non inesset. Adhuc enim aeternitas non habet, quae semper esse habet, in qua nulla pars suae longitudinis praeterit, ut pars alia succedat, sed totum simul esse est, ut nil deesse videatur quod non cernat; in qua omne quod est animus videt et tardum non esse, et longum esse. Sed haec de aeternitatis diebus loquentes, conamur magis videre aliquid quam videmus. Dicatur igitur recte: Qui autem noverunt eum, ignorant dies illius, quia etsi jam Deum per fidem novimus, qualiter tamen sit ejus aeternitas, sine praeterito ante saecula, sine futuro post saecula, sine mora longa, sine praestolatione perpetua, non videmus. Beatus itaque Job sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenens, quia sub magno se scientiae freno moderatur, ne plus sapiat quam oportet sapere, et dies Dei non posse comprehendi testificans, ad haereticorum mox superbiam respectum mentis reducit, qui alta sapere appetunt, et quod capere utcunque non possunt perfecte se scire gloriantur. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XLIV.

VERS. 2. — Alii terminos transtulerunt, diripuerunt greges, et paverunt eos.

56. Haeretici terminos a patribus constitutos transferunt. — Quos aliorum nomine nisi haereticos designat, qui a sanctae Ecclesiae gremio extranei existunt? Ipsi enim terminos transferunt, quia constitutiones patrum praevaricando transcendunt. De quibus nimirum constitutionibus scriptum est: Ne transgrediaris terminos antiquos, quos posuerunt patres tui (Prov. XXII, 28). Qui greges diripiunt et pascunt, quia imperitos quosque perversis ad se persuasionibus trahunt, et doctrinis pestiferis ad interficiendum nutriunt. Nam quod gregum nomine imperiti populi designentur, sponsi verba testantur, qui sponsam suam alloquitur dicens: Nisi cognoveris te, o

pulchra inter mulieres, egredere, et abi post vestigia gregum (Cant. I, 7), id est nisi honorem tuum, quo ad similitudinem Dei es condita, bene vivendo cognoveris, a conspectu meae contemplationis egredere, et imperitorum vitam imitare populorum. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLV.

VERS. 3. — Asinum pupillorum abegerunt, et abstulerunt pro pignore bovem viduae. 57. Electi pupilli sunt. — Quos hoc loco pupillos accipimus, nisi electos Dei, in mentis teneritudine positos, qui magna fidei gratia nutriuntur, et patris sui jam pro se mortui faciem necdum vident? Et sunt plerique in Ecclesia qui quosdam conspiciunt coelestia appetere, terrena omnia despectui habere; et quamvis ipsi in hujus mundi laboribus insudent, eis tamen quos ad coelestia anhelare conspiciunt de rebus quas in hoc mundo possident hujus vitae adjutorium ferunt. Et quamvis ipsi agere spiritalia nequeant, ad summa tamen tendentibus libenter subsidia ministrant. Portare enim asinus 523 onera hominum solet. Quasi ergo quidam asinus electorum est, qui, terrenis actibus deserviens, deportat onera usibus hominum. Et saepe cum haeretici quemlibet talem a sanctae Ecclesiae gremio avertunt, quasi pupillorum asinum abigunt, quia cum hunc ad perfidiam suam pertrahunt, a ministerio bonorum repellunt. 58. Vidua est Ecclesia. — Quae autem vidua nisi sancta Ecclesia debet intelligi, quae occisi viri sui interim visione privata est? Bos autem hujus est viduae, unusquisque praedicator. Et saepe contingit ut haeretici perversis suis dogmatibus ipsos etiam qui praedicatores videbantur trahant. Bovem ergo viduae auferunt, cum de sancta Ecclesia etiam praedicantem tollunt. Ubi recte est adjunctum: Pro pignore. Pignus namque cum tollitur, aliud quidem est quod tenetur, sed tamen adhuc aliud quaeritur. Et plerumque haeretici ideo eos conantur auferre qui praedicant, ut eorum etiam sequaces trahant. Pro pignore ergo bos viduae tollitur, quando idcirco ipse qui praedicabat

rapiatur, ut alii sequantur. Ex cujus ruina plerumque agitur ut hi quoque de sanctae Ecclesiae gremio exeant, qui in ea bonis moribus praediti mites atque humiles esse videbantur. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XLVI.

VERS. 4. — Subverterunt pauperum viam, et oppresserunt pariter mansuetos terrae. 59. Pauperum nomine humiles intelligendi. — Paupertatis namque nomine saepe humilitas designari solet. Et nonnunquam hi qui mansueti atque humiles videntur, si servare discretionem nesciunt, exemplis aliorum cadunt. Sunt vero nonnulli haeretici qui populis admisceri fugiunt, sed recessum vitae secretioris petunt; qui plerumque eos quos inveniunt eo amplius peste suae persuasionis inficiunt, quo quasi ex vitae meritis reverentiores videntur. De quibus subditur:

CAPUT XLVII.

VERS. 5. — Alii quasi onagri in deserto egrediuntur ad opus suum. 60. Onagris similes sunt haeretici. Non Dei opus, sed suum peragunt. — Onager enim agrestis est asinus. Et recte hoc in loco onagris comparantur haeretici, quia, in suis voluptatibus dimissi, a vinculis sunt fidei et rationis alieni. Unde scriptum est: Onager assuetus in solitudine, in desiderio animae suae attraxit ventum amoris sui (Jerem. II, 24). Onager quippe in solitudine assuetus est, quia dum terram cordis sui disciplinae virtute non excolit, ibi habitat ubi fructus non est. Quia in desiderio animae suae ventum amoris sui attrahit, quia ea quae ex desiderio scientiae in mente concipit inflare praevalent, non aedificare. Contra quos dicitur: Scientia inflat, charitas vero aedificat (I Cor. VIII, 1). Unde hic quoque congrue infertur: Egrediuntur ad opus suum. Non enim Dei, sed suum opus peragunt, dum non recta dogmata, sed propria desideria sequuntur. Scriptum quippe est: Ambulans in via immaculata, hic mihi ministrabat (Psal. C, 6).

Qui ergo non in via immaculata ambulat, sibi magis quam Domino ministrat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVIII.

IBID. — Vigilantes ad praedam, praeparant panem liberis. 61. Haeretici ad praedam vigilant. — Ad praedam vigilant qui verba justorum ad sensum proprium semper rapere conantur, ut per haec perversis filiis panem erroris parent. De quo videlicet pane apud Salomonem verbis mulieris pravitatis haereticae typum gerentis dicitur: 524 Aquae furtivae dulciores sunt, et panis absconditus suavior (Prov. IX, 17). Sequitur:

CAPUT XLIX.

VERS. 6. — Agrum non suum demetunt, et vineam ejus quem vi oppresserint vindemiant. 62. Qui agrum non suum, et vineam alienam devastent haeretici. — Potest agri nomine Scripturae sacrae latitudo signari, quam haeretici non suam demetunt, quia ex ea sententias longe a suis sensibus diversas tollunt. Quae vineae quoque appellatione exprimitur, quia per veritatis sententias botros virtutum profert. Cujus vineae dominum, id est Scripturae sacrae conditorem, quasi vi opprimunt, quia ejus sensum in verba sacri eloquii inflectere violenter conantur, qui dicit: Servire me fecisti in peccatis tuis, praebuisti mihi laborem in iniquitatibus tuis (Isai. XLIII, 24). Et eamdem vineam vindemiant, quia ex ea sententiarum botros pro suae intelligentiae intentione coacervant. Potest agri vel vineae nomine universa Ecclesia designari, quam perversi praedicatores demetunt, et auctorem ejus in membris suis opprimendo vindemiant, quia Creatoris nostri gratiam persequentes, dum quosdam de illa qui recti videbantur rapiunt, quid aliud quam spicas vel botros animarum tollunt? De quibus adhuc subditur:

CAPUT L.

VERS. 7. — Nudos dimittunt homines, indumenta tollentes, quibus non est operimentum in frigore. 63. Bona opera destruendo, nudos dimittunt homines haeretici. — Sicut vestimenta corpus, sic bona opera protegunt animam. Unde cuidam dicitur: Beatus qui vigilat, et custodit vestimenta sua, ne nudus ambulet (Apoc. XVI, 15). Haeretici itaque cum in quorumdam mentibus bona opera destruunt, nimirum velamina indumentorum tollunt. Bene autem dicitur: Quibus non est operimentum in frigore. Operimentum quippe ad justitiam pertinet, frigus ad culpam. Et sunt nonnulli qui in quibusdam rebus peccata faciunt, in quibusdam vero recta opera sequuntur. Qui ergo ex aliis actibus delinquit, atque ex aliis justitiam peragit, quid iste nisi in frigore vestitur; alget, et tegitur; quia ex alio opere fervescit ad justitiam, ex alio frigescit ad culpam? Sed cum haeretici bona opera talibus subtrahunt, agunt ne in frigore habeant quo vestiantur. Recte ergo dicitur: Nudos dimittunt homines, indumenta tollentes, quibus non est operimentum in frigore, ut videlicet solum culpae frigus interimat quos calor alterius operis ex parte aliqua tegebat. Potest vero per frigus desiderium, per vestimentum operatio signari. Et sunt plerique qui adhuc perversis desideriis aestuant, sed, contra se spiritaliter decertantes, rectis sibi operibus repugnant, et bonis actibus tegunt hoc quod sinistrum sibi resultare per tentationem sentiunt. Hi itaque unde mala desiderant, inde algent; unde autem bona operantur, inde vestiti sunt. Cum vero haeretici perversis allegationibus rectae fidei opera subtrahunt, quid agunt, nisi ut hi qui adhuc desideriorum carnalium frigora sentiunt, sine bonorum actuum vestimento moriantur? Sequitur:

CAPUT LI.

VERS. 8. — Quos imbres montium rigant, et non habentes velamen amplexantur lapides. 64. Sanctorum Patrum sententiis tanquam fluentis rigamur. Sanctorum martyrum invocatio. — Imbres montium sunt verba doctorum. De quibus montibus voce sanctae Ecclesiae dicitur: Levavi oculos meos ad montes (Psal. CXX, 1). Hos itaque imbres montium rigant, quia sanctorum Patrum 525 fluenta satiant. Velamen autem, ut jam praediximus, boni operis tegmen accipimus, quo quisque tegitur, ut ante omnipotentis Dei oculos, pravitatis ejus foeditas operiatur. Unde scriptum est: Beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata (Psal. XXXI, 1). Quos autem lapidum nomine nisi fortes intra sanctam Ecclesiam viros accipimus? quibus per primum pastorem dicitur: Et vos tanquam lapides vivi superaedificamini (I Pet. II, 5). Hi itaque qui de nullo suo opere confidunt, ad sanctorum martyrum protectionem currunt, atque ad sacra eorum corpora fletibus insistunt, promereri se veniam, eis intercedentibus, deprecantur. Quid ergo isti in hac humilitate faciunt, nisi quia bonae actionis velamen non habent, lapides amplexantur? Sequitur:

CAPUT LII.

VERS. 9. — Vim fecerunt depraedantes pupillos, et vulgus pauperum spoliaverunt. 65. Haeretici infirmos et indoctos, qua vi qua blandimentis aucupantur. — Cum prosperitatem vitae praesentis haeretici non habent, infirmis mentibus verbis blandioribus perversa persuadent. Si qua vero illis prosperitas temporis praesentis arriserit, etiam violenter trahere quos praevalent non desistunt. Pupillorum itaque nomine designantur hi qui adhuc sunt teneri intra sanctam Ecclesiam constituti, quorum vitam misericors pater moriendo servavit, qui ad bonam jam intentionem deducti sunt, sed adhuc in bonis actibus nulla virtute roborantur. Haeretici igitur depraedantes pupillos vim faciunt, quia contra infirmas fidelium mentes verborum et operum violentia grassantur. Vulgus autem pauperum est

populus indoctus, qui si verae sapientiae divitias haberet, vestimentum suae fidei nequaquam amitteret. Quasi quidam quippe intra sanctam Ecclesiam senatores sunt, veri doctores, qui cum scientiam in corde multiplicant, veris apud se divitiis abundant. Sed haeretici vulgus pauperum spoliant, quia dum doctos non praevalent, indoctos quosque a valamine fidei praedicatione pestifera denudant. Sequitur:

CAPUT LIII.

VERS. 10. — Nudis et incedentibus absque vestitu, et esurientibus tulerunt spicas 66. Haeretici sanctorum Patrum doctrinam auferunt otiosis et incautis. — Quod ait nudis, hoc replicat, absque vestitu; sed aliud est nudum esse, aliud nudum incedere. Omnis enim qui nec bona nec mala operatur, nudus est et otiosus; qui autem mala agit, nudus incedit, quia sine velamine boni operis per iter pravitatis pergit. Sunt vero nonnulli qui, malum suae nequitiae cognoscentes, satiari pane justitiae festinant, percipere sacri eloquii dicta desiderant. Qui quoties Patrum sententias pro aedificandis mentibus in cogitatione versant, quasi de bona segete spicas portant. Haeretici igitur nudis et incedentibus absque vestitu et esurientibus spicas tollunt, quia sive quidam otiosi sint, et in nullis se bonis exerceant, seu per iter impudentiae absque velamine boni operis pergant, etiam si quando jam ad poenitentiam redire cupiunt, et pabulum verbi concupiscunt, eis esurientibus spicas tollunt, quia in eorum mente perniciosis persuasionibus Patrum sententias destruunt. Nec immerito spicas signare Patrum sententias dicimus, quia saepe dum per figurata eloquia proferuntur, 526 ab eis tegmen litterae quasi aristarum paleas subtrahimus, ut medulla spiritus reficiamur. Sequitur:

CAPUT LIV.

VERS. 11. — Inter acervos eorum meridiati sunt, qui calcatis torcularibus sitiunt. 67. Persecutionum quas fidelibus haeretici indicunt utilitas. Saeculi potentes adversus eos commovent. — Omnes qui sanctam Ecclesiam persequuntur, quid aliud quam torcular calcant? Quod divina agi dispositione permittitur, ut animarum botri in spiritale vinum defluant, quae, carne corruptibili exutae, ad regna coelestia velut in apothecam currant. Nam injusti dum justos deprimunt, quasi botros sub pedibus mittunt. Compressi autem botri ad superni convivii satietatem exuberant, qui prius quasi in hujus aeris libertate pendebant. Unde David propheta, sanctae Ecclesiae afflictionem conspiciens, psalmum pro torcularibus scribit (Psal. VIII, aut LXXXIII). Sed omnes qui vitam fidelium persequuntur, calcant et sitiunt, quia agendo crudelia, crudeliores fiunt, impietatis suae meritis caecati, eo ambiunt graviora facere, quo jam gravia fecerunt. Haeretici autem cum per se potestatem persecutionis non habent, hujus saeculi potentes commovent, eorumque mentes ad persequendum trahunt, et quibus valent persuasionibus accendunt. Quos cum crudelia agere contra catholicorum vitam conspiciunt, quasi in ipso solis fervore requiescunt. Bene ergo nunc dicitur: Inter acervos eorum meridiati sunt, qui calcatis torcularibus sitiunt, quia eorum se multitudini adjungunt, quos jam vident gravia agere, et adhuc sitire graviora. Quorum fervor dum eorum desideria satiat, in eorum actibus, quasi in meridie, quiescunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT LV.

VERS. 12. — De civitatibus fecerunt viros gemere. 68. Haeretici Ecclesiae unitatem solvere nituntur. — Quia civitates a conviventibus populis appellantur, non immerito civitatum nomine verae sunt fidei Ecclesiae designatae, quae in singulis mundi partibus positae unam catholicam faciunt, in qua fideles omnes de Deo recta sentientes concorditer vivunt. Hanc namque in Evangelio Dominus conviventium populorum etiam per

locorum distinctionem concordiam designavit, cum satiaturus de quinque panibus populum, quinquagenos per turmas, vel centenos discumbere praecepit, ut videlicet turba fidelium escam suam et locis disjuncta et moribus conjuncta perciperet. Jubilaei quippe requies quinquagenarii numeri mysterio continetur, et quinquagenarius bis ducitur, ut ad centenarium perducatur. Quia ergo prius a malo quescitur opere, ut post anima plenius quiescat in cogitatione, alii quinquageni, alii autem centeni discumbunt, quoniam sunt nonnulli qui jam a pravis actibus habent requiem operis, et sunt nonnulli qui a perversis cogitationibus habent jam requiem mentis. Heretici igitur, quia, perversis saepe hujus mundi potentibus adhaerentes, bonorum socialem vitam atque concordiam persequuntur, recte nunc dicitur: De civitatibus fecerunt viros gemere. Quos recte beatus Job memorat viros, quia illos magis haeretici exstinguere ambiunt qui perfectis gressibus per viam Dei non fluxe et enerviter, sed viriliter currunt. Qui cum vulnus perfidiae ingeri in parvulorum fidelium mente conspiciunt, 527 semper ad clamorem et gemitus redeunt. Unde et recte dicitur:

CAPUT LVI.

IBID. — Et anima vulneratorum clamavit, et Deus inultum abire non patitur 69. Haereticorum scelera Deus inulta non relinquet. — Vulneratur quippe anima justorum cum fides turbatur infirmorum, quibus jam hoc ipsum clamare est de alieno lapsu tabescere. Sed Deus inultum abire non patitur, quia etsi justo ordine injustum aliquid fieri permittit, inultum tamen abire non sinit injustum quod fieri juste permisit, quia et per reproborum injustitiam quasdam, quas inesse considerat, culpas percutit electorum, et tamen aeterna justitia ferire non negligit injustitiam ferientium. Sequitur:

CAPUT LVII.

VERS. 13. — Ipsi fuerunt rebelles lumini. 70. Divinum lumen respuentium poena caecitas. — Plerumque perversi et cognoscunt recta quae sequi debeant, et tamen sequi despiciunt quae cognoscunt. Lumini ergo rebelles sunt, quia, sua desideria sequendo, bonum despiciunt quod noverunt. Qui ergo non per ignorantiam, sed per superbiam delinquunt, elationis suae scutum jaculis veritatis objiciunt, ne salubriter in corde feriantur. Ex qua videlicet eorum superbia agitur ut quia nolunt facere quae cognoscunt, nec cognoscant jam bona quae faciant, sed sua eos caecitas a veritatis lumine funditus excludat. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT LVIII IBID.

— Nescierunt vias ejus, nec reversi sunt per semitas illius. 71. Perversi ideo reprobo sensui traduntur, quia divino lumini rebelles fuerunt. — Qui enim prius sciendo rebelles sunt, postmodum caecantur ut nesciant, sicut de quibusdam dicitur: Quia cum cognovissent Deum, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt, aut gratias egerunt (Rom. I, 21). De quibus paulo post additur: Tradidit illos Deus in reprobum sensum, ut faciant ea quae non conveniunt (Ibid., 28). Quia enim glorificare noluerunt quem cognoverant, reprobo sensui traditi, ad hoc relicti sunt, ut nescirent jam pensare mala quae faciebant. Bene autem dicitur: Nescierunt vias ejus, nec reversi sunt per semitas illius. Angustior quippe est semita quam via. Qui autem bona manifestiora agere contemnunt, nequaquam ad subtiliora intelligenda perveniunt. Exspectavit autem omnipotens Deus, ut per ejus semitas pergerent; sed utinam per eas vel reverti voluissent, ut vitae itinera quae noluerunt per innocentiam saltem per poenitentiam tenerent! Qua in re quantae sint misericordiae viscera Dei omnipotentis ostenditur, qui eos quos a se discedentes aspicit, ut revertantur, quaerit. Unde post enumeratas culpas delinquentium Synagogam per vocem propheticam revocat, dicens:

Ergo saltem amodo voca me, pater meus, dux virginitatis meae tu es (Jerem. III, 4). Sequitur:

CAPUT LIX.

VERS. 14. — Mane primo consurgit homicida, interficit egenum et pauperem; per noctem vero erit quasi fur. 72. Perversi prosperitate vitae praesentis ad opprimendos justos abutuntur. — Cum homicida in nece proximorum per nocturnum maxime silentium soleat grassari, cur hoc in loco mane primo consurgere ad interficiendum egenum et pauperem dicitur, in nocte vero quasi fur esse perhibetur? Sed ipsis verbis litterae 528 dum sibi non congruunt, ad indaganda spiritus secreta revocamur. In Scriptura sacra mane aliquando adventus dominicae incarnationis, aliquando adventus jam terribilis et districti judicis, aliquando vero praesentis vitae prosperitas poni consuevit. Mane etenim adventus dominicae incarnationis exstitit, sicut propheta dicit: Venit mane et nox (Isai. XXI, 12), quia et novae lucis primordia in Redemptoris praesentia fulserunt, et tamen a persecutorum cordibus perfidiae suae tenebrae non sunt detersae. Rursum per mane adventus judicis designatur. Unde per Psalmistam dicitur: In matutinis interficiebam omnes peccatores terrae (Psal. C, 8). Sicut et electorum quoque personam exprimens, ait: Mane astabo tibi et videbo (Psal. V, 5). Rursum per mane, praesentis vitae prosperitas designatur, sicut per Salomonem dicitur: Vae tibi, terra, cujus rex est puer, et cujus principes mane comedunt (Eccl. X, 16). Quia enim mane primum diei tempus est, et vespere extremum, nequaquam reficiendi sumus de hujus vitae prosperitatae quae praevenit, sed de his quae in fine diei, id est in mundi termino sequuntur. Mane ergo comedunt, qui de hujus mundi prosperitatibus extolluntur, et dum praesentia vehementer curant, futura non cogitant. Omnis enim qui odit fratem suum, homicida est (I Joan. III. 15). Mane itaque primo consurgit homicida, quia in praesentis vitae gloria

perversus quisque erigitur, et illorum vitam deprimit qui, dum sequentem gloriam sitiunt, quasi satiari in vespere exquirunt. Pravus etenim quisque, in hoc mundo dignitatem transitoriae potestatis arripiens, tanto se acrius ad peragenda mala dilatat, quanto per charitatis viscera nullum amat. Quoties enim cogitationibus contra bonos saevit, toties innocentium vitam interimit. 73. Mali homines adversitate pressi perversis consiliis latenter laedunt. — Qui si, disponente Deo, subito gloriam acceptae potestatis amiserit, locum mutat, sed mentem non mutat, quia ad hoc protinus dilabitur quod subinfertur: Per noctem vero erit quasi fur. [Vet. XXVIII.] In nocte quippe tribulationis atque dejectionis suae, etsi exerere crudelitatis manum non valet, eis tamen quos praevalere conspicit consilia perversitatis praebet; huc illucque discurrit, et quaeque potest in bonorum laesionem suggerit. Qui recte quasi fur dicitur, quia in ipsis suis perversis consiliis metuit ne deprehendatur. Qui ergo contra egenum et pauperem mane homicida est, per noctem quasi fur absconditur, quia perversus quisque, qui in prosperitate vitae praesentis humilium vitam deprimendo interimit, in adversitate atque dejectione positus, per iniqua consilia latenter laedit, atque id quod per se explere non valet, adhaerendo hujus mundi potentibus exercet. Sequitur.

CAPUT LX.

VERS. 15. — Oculus adulteri observat caliginem, dicens: Non me videbit oculus. 74. Verbum Dei adulterant haeretici. — Hoc etiam juxta litteram nil obstat intelligi, quia qui adulterium perpetrare desiderat tenebras exquirit. Sed quia contra haereticos sententia promitur, dignum est ut hoc quod dicitur 529 mystice sentiantur. Nam Paulus ait: Non enim sumus, sicut plurimi, adulterantes verbum Dei (II Cor. XVII, 2). Adulter quippe in carnali coitu non prolem, sed voluptatem quaerit. Et perversus quisque ac vanae gloriae serviens recte adulterare verbum Dei dicitur, quia per sacrum eloquium non Deo filios gignere, sed suam scientiam desiderat ostentare.

Quem enim libido gloriae ad loquendum trahit, voluptati magis quam generationi operam impendit. Ubi et apte subditur: Non me videbit oculus, quia adulterium quod in mente agitur valde est difficile ut ab humano visu penetretur. Quod perversa mens tanto securius perpetrat, quanto se ab hominibus videri non metuit, quos erubescat. Sciendum quoque est quia sicut is qui adulterium facit carnem alienae conjugis sibi illicite conjungit, ita omnes haeretici, cum fidelem animam in suum errorem rapiunt, quasi conjugem alienam tollunt, quia videlicet mens Deo spiritaliter inhaerens, et ei quasi in quodam amoris thalamo conjuncta, cum perversis persuasionibus ad pravitatem dogmatis perducitur, quasi aliena conjux a corruptore maculatur. Bene autem subditur:

CAPUT LXI.

IBID. — Et operiet vultum suum. 75. Haeretici adulterorum more vultum operiunt. — Idcirco faciem suam adulter operit, ne cognoscatur. Omnis autem qui sentiendo vel agendo nequiter vivit, vultum suum operit, quia ad hoc perversitate dogmatis vel operis tendit, ut ab omnipotente Deo in judicio recognosci non possit. Unde quibusdam in fine dicturus est: Nunquam novi vos; discedite a me, qui operamini iniquitatem (Matth. VII, 23). Quid autem vultus cordis humani est, nisi similitudo Dei? Quem videlicet vultum perversus operit, ut cognosci nequeat, cum vitam suam vel malis actibus, vel perfidiae errore confundit. Sed talis quisque cum prosperitate vitae praesentis justos fulciri conspicit, eis perversa suadere minime praesumit; si qua vero illos procella adversitatis invenerit, ad verba protinus pestiferae persuasionis erumpit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT LXII.

VERS. 16. — Perfodiunt in tenebris domos, sicut in die condixerant sibi, et ignoraverunt lucem. 76. Haeretici in adversitatis nocte justorum

conscientiam perfodere tentant. — Quid namque hoc loco domorum nomine nisi conscientiae designantur, in quibus habitamus cum tractando quid agimus? Unde cuidam sanato dicitur: Vade in domum tuam ad tuos, et annuntia illis quanta tibi Dominus fecerit (Luc. VIII, 39), id est, a peccati jam vitio securus ad conscientiam revertere, et in vocem praedicationis excitare. Justi itaque cum in praesenti saeculo die prosperitatis clarescunt, eis errorum magistri perversa suadere metuunt. Sed consilia exquirunt, dejectionem prosperitatis eorum summopere praestolantur, ut in adversitatis tenebris eorum mentes suadendo perfodiant, quibus prospere viventibus perversa loqui minime audebant. Quos mox ut in adversitate viderint, exsurgunt, et non nisi ex peccati merito talia illos perpeti asserunt, quia solam praesentis vitae gloriam diligentes, flagellum damnationem credunt. In tenebris ergo domos perfodiunt, quia bonorum mentes ex ipsa eorum corrumpere adversitate moliuntur. Bene autem dicitur: Sicut in die condixerant sibi, quia cum justos conspicerent 530 prosperitatis luce claruisse, quoniam loqui non poterant, ad maligna solummodo contra eos consilia vacabant. Sive autem haeretici, sive perversi quilibet, cum justos in dejectione conspiciunt, gaudent; cum vero eos ad regendae potestatis viderint culmen erumpere, perturbantur, metuunt, afflictionibus tabescunt. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT LXIII.

VERS. 17. — Si subito apparuerit aurora, arbitrantur umbram mortis. 77. Iniqui ex justorum prosperitate turbantur. — Iniqui semper afflictionem fidelium exspectant, eosque in tribulatione videre desiderant. Et in tenebris domos perfodiunt, dum cor innocentium, sed tamen infirmorum, dejectionis tempore pessima collocutione corrumpunt. Sed plerumque contingit ut dum bonos quosque in dejectione conspiciunt, subito occulta dispensatione divina justus quispiam qui videbatur oppressus, aliqua saeculi potestate

fulciatur, eique prosperitas vitae praesentis arrideat, quem prius adversitatis tenebrae premebant. Quam nimirum prosperitatem illius cum perversi conspiciunt, sicut dictum est, perturbantur. Mox enim ad corda sua redeunt, ante mentis oculos revocant quidquid se perverse egisse meminerunt, vindicari in se omne vitium formidant, et unde lucet ille qui potestatem suscipit, inde perversus quisque qui corrigi metuit in tristitia tenebrescit. Bene ergo dicitur: Si subito apparuerit aurora, arbitrantur umbram mortis. Aurora quippe mens justi est, quae, peccati sui tenebras deserens, ad lucem jam erumpit aeternitatis, sicut de sancta quoque Ecclesia dicitur: Quae est ista quae progreditur quasi aurora consurgens (Cant. VI, 9)? Quo igitur justus quisque justitiae luce irradians in praesenti vita honoribus sublimatur, eo ante perversorum oculos tenebrae mortis fiunt, quia qui perversa se egisse meminerunt corrigi pertimescunt. Semper namque desiderant in suis pravitatibus relaxari, incorrecti vivere, et de culpa gaudium habere. Quorum ipsa lethalis laetitia convenienter exprimitur, cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT LXIV.

IBID. — Et sic in tenebris quasi in luce ambulant. 78. Iniqui ita gaudent in nocte peccati, ac si eos lux justitiae circumfunderet. — Perversa etenim mente gaudent in facinoribus, per culpam suam quotidie ad supplicium trahuntur, et securi sunt. Unde et per Salomonem dicitur: Sunt impii qui ita securi sunt, quasi justorum facta habeant (Eccle. VIII, 14). De quibus rursum scriptum est: Qui laetantur cum male fecerint, et exsultant in rebus pessimis (Prov. II, 14). Sic itaque in tenebris quasi in luce ambulant, quia ita gaudent in nocte peccati, ac si eos lux justitiae circumfundat. Vel certe, quia tenebrae vitam praesentem non inconvenienter exprimunt, in qua alienae conscientiae non videntur; lux vero nostra patria aeterna est, in qua dum vultus aspicimus, corda in nobis nostra vicissim videmus; iniqui autem quia vitam praesentem ita diligunt, atque haec exsilii tempora complectuntur ac

si jam in patria regnent; recte dicitur: Sic in tenebris quasi in luce ambulant, quia sic in praesenti caecitate laeti sunt, ac si jam aeternae patriae luce perfruantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT LXV.

VERS. 18. — Levis est super faciem aquae. 531 79. Iniqui ad omnem tentationis aut erroris ventum leves sunt. — A plurali numero ad singularem redit, quia plerumque unus mala inchoat, et imitando multi subsequuntur. Sed ejus principaliter culpa est qui perversis sequentibus exempla praebuit iniquitatis. Unde ad illum redit crebro sententia qui auctor exstitit in culpa. Aquae autem superficies huc illucque aura impellitur, et nulla stabilitate solidata passim movetur. Iniqui igitur mens plusquam aquae superficies levis est, quia quaelibet hanc aura tentationis attigerit, sine tarditate aliqua retractationis trahit. Si enim cor fluxum cujuslibet perversi cogitamus, quid aliud quam in vento positam aquae superficiem cernimus? Nunc namque illum aura impellit ire, nunc aura superbiae, nunc aura luxuriae, nunc aura invidiae, nunc aura fallaciae pertrahit. Super faciem ergo aquae levis est is quem quilibet erroris ventus cum venerit impellit. Unde bene quoque per Psalmistam dicitur: Deus meus, pone illos ut rotam, et sicut stipulam ante faciem venti (Psal. LXXXII, 14). Ut rota quippe ponuntur iniqui, quia, in circuitu laboris missi, dum ea quae ante sunt negligunt, et ea quae deserenda sunt sequuntur, ex posterioribus elevantur, et in anterioribus cadunt. Qui recte quoque stipulae ante faciem venti comparantur, quia, irruente aura tentationis, dum nulla subnixi sunt ratione gravitatis, elevantur ut corruant, et saepe eo se alicujus meriti existere aestimant, quo eos in alta flatus erroris portat. Sequitur:

CAPUT LXVI.

IBID. — Maledicta sit pars ejus in terra, nec ambulet per viam vinearum. 80. Iniqui, amissa fidei vel justitiae rectitudine, reatu maledictionis ligantur. — Quisquis in vita praesenti recta agit et adversa sustinet, laborare quidem in adversitate cernitur, sed ad benedictionem haereditatis perpetuae consummatur. Quisquis vero perversa agit, et tamen prospera recipit, seque a malis actibus nec donorum largitate compescit, prosperari quidem conspicitur, sed reatu perpetuae maledictionis ligatur. Unde recte nunc dicitur: Maledicta sit pars ejus in terra. Quia etsi ad tempus benedicitur, in reatu tamen maledictionis tenetur. De quo et apte subditur: Nec ambulet per viam vinearum. Via namque vinearum est rectitudo Ecclesiarum. Qua in re sive haereticum, sive carnalem quempiam nil obstat intelligi, quia via vinearum, id est rectitudo Ecclesiarum amittitur, dum vel fides recta, vel rectitudo justitiae non tenetur. Ille namque per viam vinearum ambulat, qui, sanctae universalis Ecclesiae praedicationem pensans, neque a fidei, neque a bonorum actuum rectitudine declinat. In via quippe vinearum ambulare est sanctae Ecclesiae Patres velut dependentes botros aspicere, quorum verbis dum intendit in labore itineris, amore debriatur aeternitatis. Sequitur:

CAPUT LXVII.

VERS. 19. — Ad nimium calorem transeat ab aquis nivium. 81. Sapere ad sobrietatem quam difficile. — Idcirco iniquitas frigori comparatur, quia peccantis mentem torpore constringit. Unde scriptum est: Sicut frigidam fecit cisterna aquam suam, sic frigidam fecit malitiam suam (Jerem. VI, 7). Quo contra charitas calor est, quia videlicet mentem accendit quam replet. De quo calore scriptum est: Abundabit iniquitas, refrigescet charitas multorum (Matth. XXIV, 12). Et sunt nonnulli qui, dum iniquitatum suarum frigora 532 declinant, ad veram fidem, vel ad sanctitatis habitum veniunt. Sed quia plus quam necesse est de suis sensibus praesumunt, saepe in fide, quam accipiunt, ea quae non capiunt perscrutari volunt, ut ratione magis in

Deo quam fide teneantur. Quia vero humana mens perscrutari non valet divina secreta, omne quod ratione perscrutari non possunt credere contemnunt, et per inquisitionem nimiam in errorem labuntur. Hi itaque cum necdum crederent, vel adhuc ad iniquitatis opera vacarent, aquae nivium fuerunt. Sed cum, carnalia facta deserentes, in fide ad quam perducti sunt, plus appetunt perscrutari quam capiunt, amplius profecto calent quam calere debuerunt. Bene ergo de hoc perverso quolibet prophetantis duntaxat sententia, non optantis dicitur: Ad nimium calorem transeat ab aquis nivium. Ac si aperte diceretur: Qui humiliter sub disciplinae vinculo non restringitur, ab infidelitate sua, vel perversi operis frigore, per immoderatam sapientiam in errorem labitur. Unde bene quoque egregius praedicator, discipulorum suorum cordibus hunc exquisitae sapientiae nimium calorem devitans, ait: Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem (Rom. XII, 3). Ne fortasse nimius calor interimeret quos prius aquae nivium, id est infidelitatis, vel torpentium actionum frigora morituros tenebant. Et quia valde difficile est ut is qui se sapientem aestimat mentem ad humilitatem reducat, et recta praedicantibus credat, sensumque suae perversitatis abjiciat, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT LXVIII.

IBID. — Et usque at inferos peccatum illius. 82. Peccatum quod hic non emendatur, irremissibile. — Peccatum quippe usque ad inferos ducitur, quod ante finem vitae praesentis per correctionem ad poenitentiam non emendatur. De quo videlicet peccato per Joannem dicitur: Est peccatum ad mortem, non pro illo dico ut roget quis (I Joan. V, 16). Peccatum namque ad mortem est peccatum usque ad mortem, quia scilicet peccatum quod hic non corrigitur, ejus venia frustra postulatur. De quo adhuc subditur VERS. 20. — Obliviscatur ejus misericordia. Omnipotentis Dei misericordia oblivisci ejus dicitur qui omnipotentis Dei justitiae fuerit oblitus, quia quisquis eum

nunc justum non timet, postea invenire non valet misericordem. Quae nimirum sententia non solum ei intenditur qui verae fidei praedicamenta deserit, sed etiam ei qui in fide recta positus carnaliter vivit, quia ultio aeternae animadversionis non evaditur, utrum in fide an in opere peccetur. Nam etsi damnationis dispar est qualitas, culpae tamen quae nequaquam per poenitentiam tergitur nulla absolutionis suppetit facultas. Sequitur.

CAPUT LXIX VERS.

21. — Dulcedo illius vermis. 83. Carnales delectant curae saeculares, quibus tanquam vermibus roduntur. — Quisquis in hoc appetit mundo prosperari, caeteros excedere, rebus et honoribus tumere, huic nimirum cura saecularis in delectatione est, et quies in labore. Valde etenim fatigatur, si desit cura saeculi qua fatigetur. Quia autem naturae est vermium momentis singulis incessanter moveri, non immerito signatur nomine vermium inquietudo cogitationum. Perversae itaque mentis 533 dulcedo vermis est, quia inde delectabiliter pascitur, unde per inquietudinem incessanter agitatur. Potest quoque apertius vermis nomine caro designari. Unde et superius dicitur: Homo putredo, et filius hominis vermis (Job. XXV, 6). Luxuriosi igitur cujuslibet atque carnis voluptatibus dediti quanta sit caecitas demonstratur cum dicitur: Dulcedo illius vermis. Quid namque caro nisi putredo ac vermis est? Et quisquis carnalibus desideriis anhelat, quid aliud quam vermem amat? Quae enim sit carnis substantia, testantur sepulcra. Quis parentum, quis amicorum fidelium, quamlibet dilecti sui tangere carnem scaturientem vermibus potest? Caro itaque cum concupiscitur, pensetur quid sit exanimis, 534 et intelligitur quid amatur. Nil quippe sic ad edomandum desideriorum carnalium appetitum valet, quam ut unusquisque hoc quod vivum diligit, quale sit mortuum penset. Considerata etenim corruptione carnali, citius cognoscitur quia cum illicite caro concupiscitur, tabes desideratur. Bene ergo de luxuriosi mente dicitur:

Dulcedo illius vermis; quia is qui in desiderio carnalis corruptionis aestuat, ad fetorem putredinis anhelat. Haec sicut in hujus partis tertiae initio (Lib. XI, in exord.) promisisse me memini, sub brevitate transcurri: ut ea quae in hoc opere sequuntur, quia magna obscuritate implicata sunt.

LIBROS SEX LIBER DECIMUS SEPTIMUS.

Quae supersunt ca a versu 20 dimidiato, cum capitibus 25 et 26 integris exponit morali potissimum sensu.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

533 Sancti Doctoris scopus, historiam Job typice et ad mysticum sensum exponere. Quoties in sancti viri historia per novum volumen enodare mysterium typicae expositionis aggredimur, oportet ut ex ejusdem viri vel nomine, vel passione significationem mysticam principaliter proferamus, quatenus habitaculorum more, dum superscriptionem tituli in ipsa postis fronte praefigimus, quia cujus est domus agnoscitur, securius intretur. Crebro autem dixisse me memini quoniam beatus Job passiones Redemptoris nostri, ejusque corporis, id est sanctae Ecclesiae, et passione sua signavit et nomine. Job quippe in interpretatur dolens. Et quis alius in hoc dolente figuratur, nisi is de quo scriptum est: Vere languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit (Isai. LIII, 4)? De quo rursum dicitur: Livore ejus sanati sumus (Ibid., 5). Amici vero ejus haereticorum speciem tenent, qui, ut saepe jam diximus, Deum dum defendere nituntur, offendunt. Sanctus ergo vir per vulnera et verba sic loquatur sua, ut etiam nostra significet, et plerumque per prophetiae spiritum ventura narret, praesentia transcendat; nonnunquam vero sic de praesentibus disserat, ut de futuris 534 reticescat. Cognita itaque discretionis hujus custodia, cum immutatione vocis illius nostra quoque intelligentia alternet, ut tanto verius ejus sensibus congruat, quanto se et cum ejus vocibus immutat. Verbis itaque praecedentibus sanctus vir per disertas prudentiae arte sententias iniqui cujuslibet culpas protulit, et quam sit damnanda ejus actio expressit. De cujus poena mox subjicit, dicens:

CAPUT II [Rec. II].

VERS. 20. Non sit in recordatione, sed conteratur quasi lignum infructuosum. 2. Poena iniquorum est ex Dei memoria deleri.In recordationem enim conditoris non reducitur, quisquis usque ad finem vitae vitiis subjugatur. Nam si hunc superni respectus memoria tangeret, procul dubio ab iniquitate revocaret. Ejus quippe merita exigunt ut funditus ab auctoris recordatione deleatur. Sciendum vero est quod recordari Deus nequaquam proprie dicitur. Qui enim oblivisci non potest, quo pacto recordari potest? Sed quia eos nos quorum recordamur amplectimur, ab his autem quorum obliviscimur elongamur, humano usu et recordari Deus dicitur, cum dona tribuit, et oblivisci, cum in culpa derelinquit. Sed quia cuncta pensat, cuncta sine intermissionis alternatione 535 considerat; et recordatur bonorum, quorum tamen nunquam obliviscitur; et nullatenus recordatur malorum, quos tamen per judicium semper intuetur. Quasi enim redit ad bonorum memoriam, quam tamen nunquam deseruit; et quasi nequaquam malos respicit, quorum tamen facta considerat, sed super haec damnationis judicium in ultimis servat. Hinc enim scriptum est: Oculi Domini contemplantur bonos et malos (Prov. XV, 3). Hinc per Psalmistam dicitur: Vultus Domini super facientes mala, ut perdat de terra memoriam eorum (Psal. XXXIII, 17). Considerat igitur quos puniat, sed eosdem ipsos ante non vidit, quos nescit. Nam quibusdam in fine dicturus est: Nescio vos unde sitis; discedite a me omnes operarii iniquitatis (Matth. VII, 23; Luc. XIII, 27). Miro igitur modo pravorum vitam et intuetur, et obliviscitur, quia quos per districtionem sententiae judicat, quantum est ad memoriam misericordiae ignorat. 3. Qui tanquam infructuosum lignum conterentur.Qui quoniam in ejus recordationem non veniunt, quasi infructuosum lignum ex cujus judicio conteruntur. Terra quippe eos temporali sumptu aluit, praedicationis desuper pluvia infudit. Sed quia eorum vita nequaquam fructum boni operis protulit, iratus hanc agricola abscidit, ut juxta Veritatis

sententiam locum non occupet quem tenere alius ad fructum valet (Luc. XIII, 7). De hoc infructuoso ligno per Joannem dicitur: Jam securis ad radicem arboris posita est. Omnis ergo arbor, quae non facit fructum bonum, excidetur, et in ignem mittetur (Matth. III, 10; Luc. III, 9). Hoc autem loco, ut aeterna reprobi supplicia designentur, nequaquam lignum dicitur abscidi, sed conteri, quia videlicet reprobos mors quidem carnis abscindit, sed poena subsequens conterit. Quasi enim hic inciditur, cum a praesenti vita separatur. Sed in gehenna conteritur, cum perpetua damnatione cruciatur. Vir autem sanctus, quia districtam perversi poenam protulit, protinus ad culpam recurrit, ut ex injustitiae immensitate edoceat quod tanta ejus damnatio non sit injusta. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. III].

VERS. 21. Pavit enim sterilem, et quae non parit, et viduae bene non fecit. 4. Iniquus carnem pascens sterilem, curam animae deserit. Quae hoc loco sterilis, nisi caro nominatur? Quae dum sola praesentia appetit, bonas gignere cogitationes nescit. Quae autem vidua, nisi anima nuncupatur? Quam quia sibi conditor conjungere voluit, ad thalamum uteri carnalis venit, Psalmista attestante, qui ait: Et ipse tanquam sponsus, procedens de thalamo suo (Psal. XVIII, 6). Quae recte vidua dicitur, quia ejus vir pro ea mortem pertulit, et nunc in coeli penetralibus ab ejus oculis occultus, quasi in parte alterius regionis vivit. [Vet. II.] Iniquus ergo sterllem pascit, et viduae benefacere negligit, quia carnis desideriis serviens, curam animae vitamque contemnit. Tota namque intentione omnique studio cogitat, quam sine ullis necessitatibus caro moritura subsistat, et curare animae vitam despicit, quae vel in morte vel in beatitudine procul dubio in perpetuum vivit. Recte autem cum diceretur: Pavit sterilem, protinus adjungitur: Et quae non parit. Quasdam namque ex sacra historia feminas novimus 536 steriles exstitisse, sed tamen in tempore extremo peperisse. Caro autem non

solum sterilis, sed etiam quae non parit dicitur, quia suo sensu bonas cogitationes gignere nec in ultimis valet. A vigore enim jam proprio deficit, et tamen adhuc transitoria concupiscere non desistit, jamque a pristino robore lassata, pene ab ipso quem diligit mundo repellitur, et tamen adhuc annisu improbo obtinere temporalia conatur. Agere jam perversa non sufficit, sed tamen cogitare vel quae non agit nequaquam desistit. Recte ergo non solum sterilis, sed etiam non pariens dicitur, quae suo sensu, ut diximus, ad bonae cogitationis prolem, nec cum infirmata fuerit, fetatur. 5. Labores haereticorum steriles. Quod tamen intelligi etiam de haereticis praedicantibus potest. Unusquisque enim praedicator erroris, dum plebem extra unitatem Ecclesiae positam docet, profecto sterilem, et eam quae parere non valet, pascit, quia et ei usum sui laboris impendit, quae spiritales fructus nequaquam reddit. Bene autem viduae non facit, quia videlicet sanctae universali Ecclesiae, cujus vir adversa mortis pertulit, vivere ac deservire contemnit. Viduae enim benefacere est in ejus quae mortui viri sui amore conteritur consolatione laborare. Unde et Psalmistae voce haec eadem vidua, scilicet sancta Ecclesia queritur, dicens: Consolantem me quaesivi, et non inveni (Psal, LXVIII, 21). Tunc solum quippe consolantem invenit, cum ex ea morte quam vir ejus pertulit multos intra semetipsam surgere ad vitam cernit. Saepe autem praedicator erroris hujus mundi divitibus jungitur, qui pro eo quod terrenis occupationibus incubant, dictorum deprehendere astutias ignorant; et cum potentes esse exterius ambiunt, perversae praedicationis laqueo sine labore capiuntur. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 22. Detraxit fortes in fortitudine sua. 6. In fortitudine quippe suae pravitatis fortes quosque detrahit, cum per sui erroris astutiam mundi hujus potentes rapit. Quos contra per Paulum dicitur: Infirma mundi elegit Deus,

ut confunderet fortia (I Cor. I, 27). Fortitudo autem perversi praedicatoris est elata scientia locutionis, qua inflatus, caeteros despicit, atque in contemptu omnium quasi singulariter apud se peritus intumescit. Qui magna de se sentiens, sed vera de Domino ignorans, longe a fidei cognitione disjungitur, et tamen videri fidei praedicator conatur. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT V [Vet. III].

IBID. Et cum steterit, non credet vitae suoe. 7. Omni peccator incredulitatis reus. Stat in hoc mundo perversus quisque praedicator, quousque terreno vivit in corpore. Sed vitae suae credere renuit, quia de Deo vera cognoscere contemnit. Vitae enim suae crederet, si de conditoris sui substantia recte sentiret. Haec itaque superius de quolibet iniquo prolata dicebamus, sed repente ad erroris praedicatorem intellectum vertimus. Unde sciendum est quia sic ad speciem ducimur, ut nequaquam tamen a genere funditus evellamur. Nam perversus quisque etiam si rectam fidem in sinu universalis Ecclesiae tenere videatur, stat, 537 et vitae suae non credit, quia recta quidem sunt quae per fidem de conditore intelligit, sed tamen fidei opera tenere contemnit; et incredulitatis redarguitur, quia ab eo quod se ostendit credere, vivendo reprobatur. Hinc enim per Joannem dicitur: Qui dicit se nosse Deum, et mandata ejus non custodit, mendax est (I Joan. II, 4). Hinc Paulus ait: Confitentur se nosse Deum, factis autem negant (Tit. I, 16). Hinc Jacobus dicit: Fides sine operibus mortua est (Jac. II, 20, 26). Sed inter haec conditor mira dispensatione consilii et culpas respicit, et vivendi tempora impendit, ut longiora temporalis vitae spatia aut converso fiant in adjutorium muneris, aut non converso ad augmentum damnationis. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT VI [Rec. IV].

VERS. 23. Dedit ei Deus locum poenitentiae, et ille abutitur eo in superbia. 8. Misericordia peccatori impensa et neglecta, in poenam vertitur. Quisquis delinquit et vivit, idcirco hunc divina dispensatio in iniquitate tolerat, ut ab iniquitate compescat. Sed qui diutius toleratur, nec tamen ab iniquitate compescitur, munus quidem supernae patientiae percipit, sed reatus sui vinculis, ex ipso se munere arctius astringit. Nam quia accepta poenitentiae tempora divertit ad culpam, districtus in ultimis judex impensa argumenta misericordiae convertit ad poenam. Hinc namque per Paulum dicitur: An ignoras quia patientia Dei ad poenitentiam te adducit? Tu autem secundum duritiam tuam et cor impoenitens thesaurizas tibi iram in die irae et revelationis justi judicii Dei (Rom. II, 4, 5). Hinc Isaias ait: Puer centum annorum morietur, et peccator centum annorum maledictus erit (Isai. LXV, 20). Ac si aperte nos deterreat, dicens: Vita quidem pueri in longum trahitur, ut a factis puerilibus corrigatur; sed si a peccati perpetratione nec temporis longinquitate compescitur, haec ipsa vitae longinquitas, quam per misericordiam accepit, ei ad cumulum maledictionis crescit. Unde necesse est ut cum nos diutius exspectari conspicimus, ipsa praerogatae pietatis tempora quasi damnationis argumenta timeamus, ne ex clementia judicis crescat supplicium peccatoris; et unde quisque eripi a morte poterat, inde gravius ad mortem tendat. Quod idcirco plerumque agitur, quia nequaquam a praesentibus mentis oculus separatur. Considerare namque peccator Redemptoris vias negligit, et idcirco in suis itineribus sine cessatione veterascit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT VII [Vet.

IV, Rec. V]. IBID. Oculi enim ejus sunt in viis illius. 9. Peccator viis Domini relictis, in suis, hoc est in vitiis delectatur. Vias enim suas peccator intuetur, quia sola cogitare, sola cernere nititur quae sibi ad commodum temporale suffragentur. Hinc etenim Paulus dicit: Omnes quae sua sunt

quaerunt, non quae Jesu Christi (Philip. II, 21). Via namque elati, superbia; via raptoris, avaritia; via est lubrici, concupiscentia carnalis. In viis ergo suis iniquus quisque oculos deprimit, quia solis vitiis, ut per haec animo satisfaciat, intendit. Unde per Salomonem dicitur: Oculi stultorum in finibus terrae (Prov. XVII, 34), quia hoc solum tota cordis intentione conspiciunt, per quod ad finem terreni desiderii perducantur. Nequaquam vero suae considerationis obtutum in terra peccator figeret, si 538 ad sancta sui Redemptoris itinera mentis oculos levaret. Unde per Salomonem rursum dicitur: Oculi sapientis in capite ejus (Eccle. II, 14), quia videlicet sapiens quisque illum tota intentione considerat, cujus se membrum esse per fidem pensat. Has namque humanae conversationis vias videre contempserat, qui dicebat: In mandatis tuis me exercebo, et considerabo vias tuas (Psal. CXVIII, 15). Ac sic aperte spondeat, dicens: Quae mea sunt, jam videre refugio, quia per imitationis tuae viam pergere conversationis gressibus inardesco. Qui enim praesenti jam mundo contradicit, amoris excitatione continua Redemptoris sui vias cordis oculis objicit, ut mens prospera fugiat, ad adversa praeparetur; nihil quod demulcet appetat, nihil quod deterrere creditur pertimescat; moerorem gaudium deputet; praesentis vitae gaudia damna moeroris penset; abjectionis detrimenta non timeat, sed per haec manentis gloriae locum quaerat. Has etenim vias sequentium monstrabat oculis Veritas, cum dicebat: Si quis mihi ministrat, me sequatur (Joan. XII, 26). Ad has vias tumentia discipulorum corda revocabat, cum locum jam gloriae quaererent, sed ejusdem gloriae iter ignorarent, dicens: Potestis bibere calicem quem ego bibiturus sum (Matth. XX, 22)? Confessionis quippe illius celsitudinem a dextris sinistrisque quaesierant, sed quanta ad hanc esset itineris angustia non videbant. Unde et eorum mox oculis imitandus passionis calix objicitur, ut videlicet si ad sublimitatis gaudia tenderent, prius viam humilitatis invenirent. Quia igitur considerare

peccator vias Dei negligit, sed solis in quibus carnaliter delectetur intendit, recte nunc dicitur: Oculi enim ejus sunt in viis illius. Sequitur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 24. Elevati sunt ad modicum, et non subsistent. 10. Inani gloria elatus ad modicum cadit. Iniquorum gloria cum plerumque in annorum multitudinem tenditur, ab infirmorum mentibus esse longa et quasi stabilis aestimatur. Sed cum repentinus hanc finis intercipit, brevem procul dubio fuisse redarguit, quoniam finis determinans innotescit, quia quod praeterire potuit, modicum fuit. Elevantur ergo ad modicum, et minime subsistunt, quia eo ipso quo videri alti appetunt, a vera Dei essentia longe per elationem fiunt. Subsistere etenim nequeunt, quia ab aeternae essentiae soliditate dividuntur, atque hanc primam ruinam tolerant, quia per privatam gloriam in semetipsis cadunt. Hinc enim per Psalmistam dicitur: Dejecisti eos, cum allevarentur (Psal. LXXII, 18), quia eo intrinsecus corruunt, quo male extrinsecus surgunt. [Vet. V]. Hanc brevitatem gloriae temporalis aspiciens, iterum dicit: Vidi impium superexaltatum et elevatum sicut cedros Libani; transivi, et ecce non erat (Psal. XXXVI, 35). Hinc iterum ait: Pusillum adhuc, et non erit peccator (Ibid. 10). Hinc Jacobus dicit: Quae est enim vita vestra? vapor est ad modicum parens (Jac. IV, 15). Hinc propheta brevitatem gloriae carnalis pensans, denuntiat, dicens: Omnis caro fenum, et omnis gloria ejus sicut flos feni (Isai. XL, 6). Iniquorum quippe potentia feni flori comparatur, quia nimirum carnalis gloria dum nitet, cadit; dum apud se extollitur, repentino intercepta fine 539 terminatur. Sic namque aurarum flatu in altum stipula rapitur, sed casu concito ad ima revocatur. Sic ad nubila fumus attollitur, sed repente in nihilum tumescendo dissipatur. Sic ab infimis nebula densescendo se erigit; sed exortus hanc solis radius, ac si non fuerit, abstergit. Sic in herbarum superficie nocturni roris humor aspergitur, sed diurni luminis subito calore siccatur. Sic spumosae aquarum

bullae inchoantibus pluviis excitatae, ab intimis certatim prodeunt; sed eo celerius diruptae depereunt, quo inflatae altius extenduntur. Cumque excrescunt ut appareant, crescendo peragunt ne subsistant. De iniquis igitur temporalis gloriae elatione tumentibus, sed tamen nulla in hac soliditate durantibus, dicatur recte: Elevati sunt ad modicum, et non subsistent. De quibus adhuc subditur:

CAPUT IX.

IBID. Et humiliabuntur sicut omnia, et auferentur. 11. Terra in essentia semper stabit, licet in imagine continuo transeat. Sic provectus esse contemplationis debet, ut ex paucis ad multa, ad omnia consideranda rapiatur, quatenus gradatim educta proficiat, et transitoria omnia dijudicans, ipsa comprehendendo pene incomprehensibiliter excrescat. Unde sanctus vir cum pravorum gloriam defectumque discuteret, ad cuncta protinus mentis oculum tetendit, dicens: Humiliabuntur sicut omnia, et auferentur. Omnia profecto terrena. Ac si aperte dicat: Stare ullo modo nequeunt, quia ipsa quoque fugiunt quibus innituntur; dumque temporalia diligunt, cum his ex temporis volubilitate percurrunt. Sed quaeri potest cum per Salomonem dicitur: Generatio praeterit, et generatio advenit, terra vero in aeternum stat (Eccle. I, 4), cur beatus Job omnia humiliari asserat et auferri? Quod tamen facile discutimus, si terra et coelum vel qualiter transeat, vel qualiter maneat distinguamus. Utraque namque haec per eam quam nunc habent imaginem transeunt, sed tamen per essentiam sine fine subsistunt. Hinc namque per Paulum dicitur: Praeterit enim figura hujus mundi (I Cor. VII. 31). Hinc per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Coelum et terra transibunt, verba autem mea non transibunt (Matth. XXIV, 35). Hinc ad Joannem angelica voce perhibetur: Erit coelum novum, et terra nova (Apac, XXI, 4). Quae quidem non alia condenda sunt, sed haec ipsa renovantur. Coelum igitur et terra et transit et erit quia et ab ea, quam nunc habet, specie per ignem tergitur, et tamen in

sua semper natura servatur. Unde per Psalmistam dicitur: Mutabis ea, et mutabuntur (Psal. CI, 27). Quam quidem ultimam commutationem suam ipsis nobis nunc vicissitudinibus nuntiant, quibus nostris usibus indesinenter alternant. Nam terra a sua specie hiemali ariditate deficit, vernali humore viridescit. Coelum quotidie caligine noctis obducitur, et diurna claritate renovatur. Hinc ergo hinc fidelis quisque colligat et interire haec, et tamen per innovationem refici, quae constat nunc assidue velut ex defectu reparari [Vet. et Rec. VI]. Inter haec igitur vir sanctus cum pravorum cursum conspicit, quanta quandoque animadversione deficiant innotescit, dum protinus subdit:

CAPUT X.

IBID. Et sicut summitates spicarum conterentur. 12. Mali divites etsi ad opprimendos justos concordes, ab invicem cupiditatibus sejuncti sunt. Spicarum quippe summitates, aristae sunt. Aristae autem conjunctae in spica prodeunt, sed crescendo paulisper, a se hirsutae et rigidae disjunguntur. 540 Sic nimirum sic ad hujus mundi gloriam pravi divites surgunt. Naturae enim sibi communione conjuncti sunt, sed contra se vicissim crescendo dividuntur. Alius quippe alium despicit, et alter in alterum invidiae facibus ignescit. Qui ergo ex tumore mentis a charitatis unitate se separant, quasi aristarum more contra se rigidi stant. Quid ergo pravos hujus mundi divites dixerim, nisi aristas quasdam generis humani? Qui dum contra se superbiunt, sed bonorum vitam unanimiter affligunt, adversum se quidem divisi sunt, sed tamen concorditer grana deorsum premunt. 13. Reprobi aristarum more nunc eriguntur; electi ut grana latent. Nunc igitur aristae ad alta prosiliunt, grana latent, quia et reproborum potentia eminet, et electorum gloria non apparet. Illi se honorum fastibus ostendunt, isti in humilitate se deprimunt. Sed triturae tempus adveniet, quod et aristarum rigiditatem frangat, et solida grana non conterat. Tunc

quippe superbia iniquorum comminuitur, tunc electorum vita quanta integritate fulgeat declaratur, quia cum injusti deficiunt, ex hac ipsa aristarum contritione agitur ut grana appareant quae latebant. Cumque aristae franguntur, granorum candor ostenditur, quia iniquis in supplicia aeterna cadentibus, sanctorum justitia quanta veritate candeat demonstratur. Unde recte quoque per Joannem dicitur: Cujus ventilabrum in manu sua est, et permundabit aream suam; et triticum quidem recondet in horreo suo, paleas autem comburet igni inexstinguibili (Matth. III, 12; Luc. III, 17). Beatus igitur Job pravorum elatio quanta animadversione frangatur aspiciat, eosque aristis pereuntibus comparans dicat: Sicut spicarum summitates conterentur, quia nimirum rigiditas superborum triturae ultimae fortitudine frangitur, quae nunc electorum vitam despiciens elevatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XI.

[Rec. VII.] VERS. 25. Quod si non est ita, quis me arguere poterit esse mentitum, et ponere ante Deum verba mea? 14. Justi si delinquant, ab improbis minime corripiendi. Si ita non est ut loquitur, profecto de falsitate hunc omnes arguere possunt. Cur ergo dicitur: Si non ita est, quis me arguere poterit esse mentitum, dum scilicet noverimus quod fallacem cuilibet reprehendere licet? Sed si loquentis sensum subtili interrogatione discutimus, quam sint recta quae protulit citius invenimus. Justus namque etsi quid unquam delinquendo loquitur, dignum non est ut ab injustis et prave viventibus judicetur. Unde sanctus vir amicorum superbiam deprimens, non solum si ita est, verum etiam si ita non est ut protulit, nequaquam se reprehendi posse confidit, quia nimirum illi recte redarguere falsa possunt, qui falsa agere nesciunt. Nam correptionis ausum contra fallaciam perdunt, qui adhuc fallaciter vivunt. Ait ergo: Quod si ita non est, quis me poterit arguere esse mentitum? Ac si aperte dicat: Ita sunt cuncta ut protuli, quae tamen si ita non essent, a vobis redargui nequaquam possem,

quia dum adhuc propriae succumbitis, alienam reprehendere fallaciam non valetis. 15. Judicia nostra coram supremo judice ponderanda. Ubi et apte subditur: Et ponere ante Deum verba mea. Quisquis enim dicta fallacia veraciter reprehendit, audita cogitans, atque haec ex regula veritatis pensans, verba ante Deum ponit: quia 541 apud se in conspectu veritatis examinat, quid foris contra fallaciam decernat. Ante Deum quippe verba ponere est considerato intimo judice, exteriora dicta pensare. Vir igitur sanctus ab amicis superbientibus verba sua ante Deum poni posse non aestimat. Ac si aperte dicat: Idcirco quae loquor ponere ante judicem non valetis, quia ejus vobis faciem peccantes absconditis. Quod tamen et ex typo sanctae Ecclesiae nil obstat intelligi, quae cum de infirmis suis ab haereticorum irrisione reprehenditur, ipsam irrisionis eorum astutiam dedignatur, quia tolerabilius Deo est ut in infirmitate quis atque ignorantia cum humilitate jaceat, quam cum elatione alta comprehendat. Sed quia sanctus vir multa contra eos protulit qui fugitiva potestate superbiunt, et ventosis honoribus intumescunt Baldad Suhites ex ejus correptione proficiens, apud quem vera sit potentia agnoscit, dicens:

CAPUT XII [Vet.

VII, Rec. VIII]. CAP. XXV, VERS. 2 Potestas et terror apud eum est, qui facit concordiam in sublimibus suis. 16. Deus solus potens et metuendus. Ac si aperte dicat: Solus corda mortalium veraciter terret, qui ex divinitatis suae potentia veraciter haec possidet. Humana enim potentia quem terrorem incutit, quae jure ejusdem potentiae quando careat nescit? Recte autem dicitur: Qui facit concordiam in sublimibus suis, quia multa sibimet inferius dissident, sed ad concordem supernorum plenitudinem currunt; et ex internae pacis causa agitur, ut saepe ea quae sunt exterius sine pace disponantur. Nam bonos omnipotens Deus ad meritum provehit, cum contra eorum vitam malos saevire permittit. Atque in concordia componuntur

summa, dum confunduntur infima, quia inde in coelestibus electos suos angelorum choris sociat, unde in terrenis et infimis reproborum mores suis nutibus adversantes portat. 17. Qui angeli summe concordes inter se confligere dicantur. Sed inter haec libet inquirere si pax in sublimibus summa retinetur, quid est quod per angelum Danieli dicitur: Ego veni propter sermones tuos: princeps autem regni Persarum restitit mihi viginti et uno diebus; et ecce Michael, unus de principibus primis, venit in adjutorium mihi (Dan. X, 13). Et paulo post: Nunc revertar ut praelier adversum principem Persarum. Cum enim egrederer, apparuit princeps Graecorum adveniens (Ibid., 20). Quos itaque alios principes gentium, nisi angelos appellat, qui sibi resistere exeunti potuissent? Quae ergo esse pax in sublimibus potest, si inter ipsos quoque angelicos spiritus praeliandi certamen agitur, qui semper conspectui veritatis assistunt? Sed quia certa angelorum ministeria dispensandis singulis quibusque gentibus sunt praelata, cum subjectorum mores adversum se vicissim praepositorum spirituum opem merentur, ipsi qui praesunt spiritus contra se venire referuntur. Is namque angelus qui Danieli loquebatur captivis Israelitici populi in Perside constitutis praelatus agnoscitur. Michael autem eorum qui ex eadem plebe in Judaeae terra remanserant praepositus invenitur. Unde et ab hoc eodem angelo paulo post Danieli dicitur: Nemo est adjutor meus in omnibus his, nisi Michael princeps vester (Ibid. 21). De quo et hoc, quod praemisimus, dicit: Et ecce Michael unus de principibus primis venit in adjutorium mihi (Ibid., 13). Qui dum nequaquam simul esse, sed venire in adjutorium dicitur, 542 aperte ei populo praelatus agnoscitur, qui captivus in alia parte tenebatur. Quid est ergo angelum dicere: Ego veni propter sermones tuos, princeps autem regni Persarum restitit mihi (Ibid., 13), nisi sua subditis opera nuntiare? Ac si aperte dicat: Precum quidem tuarum merita exigunt ut Israeliticus populus a jugo suae captivitatis exuatur, sed est adhuc quod in eodem populo Persarum dominio purgari debeat, ut de

ereptione illius Persarum princeps mihi jure contradicat, quamvis preces tuas eorum quoque lacrymae qui in Judaea relicti sunt adjuvent. Unde hoc quoque quod diximus subjungit: Michael princeps vester venit in adjutorium mihi. Cumque ut adversus principem Persarum praelietur egreditur, Graecorum sibi princeps adveniens apparet. Qua ex re innuitur quod adversum Graecos quoque aliquid Judaea commiserat, quorum profecto causa ereptioni illius resistebat. Prophetae igitur preces angelus exaudit, sed Persarum princeps resistit, quia etsi jam vita justi deprecantis ereptionem populi exigit, ejusdem tamen populi adhuc vita contradicit, ut quia necdum hi qui in captivitatem fuerant ducti plene purgati sunt, jure eis adhuc Persae dominentur. Michael adjuvat, sed Graecorum princeps ad praelium venit, quia mereri quidem veniam tam longa oppressorum captivitas poterat, sed ereptionis eorum beneficio hoc quoque quod in Graecos deliquerant obviabat. Recte ergo dicitur quod contra se angeli veniunt, quia subjectarum sibi gentium vicissim merita contradicunt. Nam sublimes spiritus eisdem gentibus principantes nequaquam pro injuste agentibus decertant; sed eorum facta juste judicantes examinant. Cumque uniuscujusque gentis vel culpa vel justitia ad supernae curiae consilium ducitur, ejusdem gentis praepositus vel obtinuisse in certamine, vel non obtinuisse perhibetur. Quorum tamen omnium una victoria est sui super se opificis voluntas summa, quam dum semper aspiciunt, quod obtinere non valent nunquam volunt. Bene ergo dicitur: Qui facit concordiam in sublimibus suis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII [Rec. IX].

VERS. 3. Nunquid est numerus militum ejus? 18. Angelorum numerus etsi Deo finitus, hominibus est infinitus. In cognitione humanae rationis supernorum spirituum numerus non est, quia quanta sit illa frequentia invisibilis exercitus nescit; de quo per Danielem dicitur: Millia millium

ministrabant ei, et decies millies centena millia assistebant ei (Daniel., VII, 10). Supernorum civium numerus infinitus et definitus exprimitur, ut qui Deo est numerabilis, esse hominibus innumerabilis demonstretur. Quamvis aliud est assistere, aliud ministrare. Assistunt enim illae procul dubio potestates, quae ad quaedam hominibus nuntianda non exeunt. Ministrant vero hi qui ad explenda officia untiorum veniunt, sed tamen ipsi quoque contemplatione ab intimis non recedunt. Et quia plures sunt qui ministrant, quam hi qui principaliter assistunt, assistentium numerus quasi definitus, ministrantium vero indefinitus ostenditur. Vet. VIII] 19. Dei milites cur dicantur. Angelicos vero spiritus recte Dei milites dicimus, quia decertare eos contra potestates aereas non ignoramus. Quae tamen certamina non labore, sed imperio peragunt, quia quidquid agendo contra immundos spiritus appetunt, ex adjutorio cuncta regentis possunt. De hac namque 543 militia, nascente rege nostro, scriptum est: Subito facta est cum angelo multitudo militiae coelestis (Luc., 13). Cui tamen militiae electorum quoque hominum numerus jungitur, qui per sublime mentis desiderium, a terrenae conversationis servitute liberantur. De quibus per Paulum dicitur: Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis saecularibus (II Tim. II, 4). Qui licet nunc pauci appareant, in invisibili tamen patria innumerabiles regnant, quia etsi ex comparatione pravorum pauci sunt, in congregationis suae frequentia metiri nequaquam possunt. Quia vero eorumdem militum virtus non propriis viribus, sed supernae gratiae infusione roboratur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIV.

IBID. Et super quem non surget lumen illius? 20. Non propriis viribus, sed gratiae dono fortes sunt. Lumen quippe Dei est gratia praeveniens. Quae si in nostro corde nequaquam gratuito consurgeret, profecto mens nostra in peccatorum suorum tenebris obscura remaneret. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XV [Rec. X].

VERS. 4. Nunquid justificari potest homo comparatus Deo aut apparere mundus natus de muliere? 21. Nemo justus nisi Dei illustratione, non comparatione. Versus iste superius a beato Job dicitur, et nunc in ejus exprobratione replicatur. Omnis namque vir justus Dei illustratione justus est, non comparatione. Humana quippe justitia, auctori comparata, injustitia est, quia etsi in ipsa sui conditione homo persisteret, creatori non posset aequari creatura (Job. IX, 2). Cui tamen ad graviora defectus pondera, accessit et culpa, quam serpens insidians intulit, et mulier infirmata persuasit (Genes. III, 6). Unde nunc quia homo per mulierem culpae subditam nascitur, reatus primi infirmitas in prole propagatur. Et quia in radice putruit humani generis ramus, in conditionis suae viriditate minime subsistit. Unde recte nunc dicitur: Nunquid justificari potest homo comparatus Deo, aut apparere mundus natus de muliere? Ac si aperte diceretur: Ne contra auctorem suum homo superbiat, consideret unde huc venit, et intelligat quid sit. Sed ecce nonnulli per donum spiritus adjuti contra infirmitatem suae carnis eriguntur, virtutibus emicant, signorum quoque miraculis coruscant; nullus tamen est qui sine culpa vitam transeat, quousque carnem corruptionis portat. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 5.Ecce etiam luna non splendet, et stellae non sunt mundae in conspectu ejus. 22. Nemo ita justus, ut in carne corruptibili omni peccato careat. Quid per lunam, nisi cuncta simul Ecclesia; quid per stellas, nisi singulorum bene viventium animae designantur? qui inter pravorum hominum conversationes, dum magnis virtutibus eminent, quasi in tenebris noctis lucent. Unde per Paulum quoque discipulis dicitur: Inter quos lucetis sicut luminaria in mundo (Philipp. II, 15). Quia enim sancta Ecclesia lunae

appellatione exprimitur, propheta testatur, dicens: Elevatus est sol, et luna stetit in ordine suo (Habac. III, 11). Elevato enim sole, in suo ordine luna statuitur, quia ascendente ad coelos Domino, sancta protinus Ecclesia in praedicationis auctoritate roboratur. Et quia stellarum nomine electi signantur, rursum Paulus insinuat, dicens: Stella enim a stella differt in claritate (I Cor. XV, 41) [Vet. IX.] Luna ergo non splendet, et stellae non sunt mundae in conspectu ejus, quia nec sancta Ecclesia virtute propria tot miraculis emicat, nisi hanc praevenientis gratiae dona perfundant, nec singulorum 544 bene viventium mentes a peccatorum maculis mundae sunt, si remota pietate judicentur, quia apud districti judicis oculos, sua unumquemque corruptibilitas inquinat, nisi hanc quotidie gratia parcentis tergat. Electorum quippe animus prodire ad libertatem justitiae nititur, sed adhuc compede infirmitatis tenetur; et culpas quidem subigere perfecte desiderat, sed quousque corruptione carnis astringitur, ejus vinculis, etiam cum non vult, ligatur. Hinc itaque colligat quanto peccatorum pondere pressi sint qui contra haec decertare negligunt, si plene culpam nec illi superant, qui contra hanc viriliter pugnant. Unde et postquam dictum est: Ecce etiam luna non splendet, et stellae non sunt mundae in conspectu ejus, protinus additur:

CAPUT XVII VERS.

6. Quanto magis homo putredo, et filius hominis vermis? 23. Si sanctiores maculae non sunt expertes, quot sordent qui carnis spurcitiis immerguntur. Ac si aperte diceretur: Si ipsi quoque esse sine contagio non valent, qui inter praesentis vitae tenebras virtutibus lucent, quanto reatu iniquitatis obstricti sunt qui adhuc carnaliter vivunt? Si a peccato esse liberi nequeunt qui jam in coelestibus desideriis conversantur, qui peccatorum pondera tolerant qui, carnis suae voluptatibus dediti, adhuc putredinis jugum portant? Hinc Petrus ait: Si justus vix sulvabitur, impius et peccator ubi

parebunt (I Pet. IV, 18)? Hinc per Isaiam dicitur: Super humum populi mei spinae et vepres ascendent, quanto magis super omnem domum gaudii civitatis exsultantis (Isai. XXXII, 13)? Humum quippe populi sui Dominus electorum omnium mentem vocat, super quam spinas ac vepres ascendere perhibet, quia nec ipsam quoque esse absque punctionibus vitiorum videt. Domus vero gaudii civitatis exsultantis est mens pravorum, quae dum ventura supplicia conspicere negligit, in carnis voluptate se deserens, inaniter hilarescit. Ait ergo: Super humum populi mei spinae et vepres ascendent, quanto magis super omnem domum gaudii civitatis exsultantis? Ac si aperte dicat: Si et illorum mentem vitia deprimunt, qui se pro coelestis patriae desiderio affligunt, quibus culpis substrati sunt qui sine ulla formidine sese in carnis voluptate derelinquunt? 24. Primus homo putredo, cujus filii vermes. Notandum vero in sermone suo quantum Baldad ordinem conditionis nostrae tenuit et nativitatis, qui hominem non vermem, sed putredinem, filium vero hominis vermem vocat. Primus namque humani generis parens, homo, non filius hominis, ex quo quisquis prodiit, non solum homo, sed filius quoque hominis fuit. Sicut ergo ex homine filius hominis, ita ex putredine nascitur vermis. Unde recte homo putredo, filius vero hominis vermis vocatur. Primus quippe homo putredo, non vermis, quia etsi per mortem putruit, non tamen ex putredine per nativitatem venit. Qui autem hominis est filius, vermis dicitur, quia jam ex mortalium corporum corruptione propagatur. 25. Igitur quia amicorum verba finita sunt, beatus Job altiori acumine prosecutionis innititur, ejusque dicta tam sunt valida, quam extrema, quia et sic usus esse jurisperitorum solet, ut argumentum, quo adversariis suis eminere se praevident, ad prosecutionis conclusionem servent. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII [Vet.

X, Rec. XI]. CAP. XXVI, VERS. 1, 2. 545 Respondens autem Job, dixit: Cujus adjutor es? nunquid imbecillis? et sustentas brachium ejus, qui non est fortis? 26. Imbecillem adjuvare velle, charitatis; potentem, elationis est. Adjuvare imbecillem, charitatis est; adjuvare potentem velle, elationis. Quia igitur amici ejus haereticorum speciem tenentes, quasi adjuvantes Deum, sapientiam suam ostendere conabantur, juste Baldad reprehenditur, ut dicatur: Cujus adjutor es? nunquid imbecillis? et sustentas brachium ejus, qui non est fortis? Ac si aperte dicat: Dum eum juvare niteris, sub cujus magnitudine succumbis, omne quod impendis solatium, de ostentatione est, non de pietate. 27. Quo sensu Deum adjuvare dicimur. Sed inter haec sciendum est, quod plerumque etiam Deum, qui videlicet imbecillis non est, humiliter agentes adjuvamus. Unde et per Paulum dicitur: Adjutores enim Dei sumus (I Cor. III, 9). Nam cum ei quem ipse per internam gratiam infundit nos exhortationis voce concurrimus, hoc quod ille per spiritum agit intrinsecus nos exterius ministerio vobis adjuvamus, et tunc solum nostra exhortatio ad perfectionem ducitur, cum in corde Deus fuerit qui adjuvetur. Unde et alias dicit: Neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus (Ibid., 7). Plantare quippe et rigare, adjuvare est. Quod utrumque vacuum erit ministerium, si in corde Deus non dat incrementum. Sed qui de sensu suo alia sapiunt, esse humiliter Dei adjutores nolunt, quia dum se Deo utiles esse aestimant, a fructu se utilitatis alienant. Unde et Veritatis voce discipulis dicitur: Cum feceritis omnia quae praecepta sunt vobis, dicite: Servi inutiles sumus, quod debuimus facere fecimus (Luc. XVII, 10). Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 3. Cui dedisti consilium? forsitan illi, qui non habet sapientiam? 28. Stulto consilium dare, charitatis, sapienti, ostentationis; ipsi sapientiae, perversitatis est. Dare stulto consilium, charitatis est; dare sapienti,

ostentationis; dare vero ipsi Sapientiae, perversitatis. Et quia hi quos tenere haereticorum speciem diximus per locutionem suam ostentationi potius quam utilitati serviebant, recte adhuc contra Baldad subditur: IBID. Et prudentiam tuam ostendisti plurimam. Omnis cui prudentia recta est, plurima non est, quia, juxta Pauli vocem, non plus appetit sapere quam oportet sapere (Rom. XII, 3). Cui vero est plurima, non est recta, quia dum ultra modum tenditur, in quolibet latere culpae declinatur. Prudentiam vero suam plurimam ostendunt qui videri prae aliis prudentiores appetunt. Unde fit plerumque ut cum moderate sapere nesciunt, etiam fatua loquantur. Pro qua re ipse adhuc excessus prudentiae subjungitur, ut dicatur:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 4. Quem docere voluisti? nonne eum, qui fecit spiramentum? 29. Quanta Baldad insipientia, divinae sapientiae suam praeferentis. Per spiramentum vivimus, per prudentiam sapientes sumus. Prius autem nostrum est vivere, postmodum sapere, quia ut sapientes esse valeamus, prius agitur ut simus. Qui ergo vitam dedit, ipse procul dubio et prudentiam contulit. Baldad autem, quia beatum Job flagellatum pro culpa credidit, occultum Dei judicium, quod humiliter venerari debuit, superba nisus est temeritate penetrare. Ipsi ergo se per prudentiam praetulit, cujus judicium non intelligendo judicavit. Ipsi se per prudentiam praetulit, a quo vivendi spiraculum accepit; 546 ac si plus ipso esset sapiens a quo habebat ut esset. Sed quia beatus Job, sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenens, pauca in superborum correptione protulit, quos tenere haereticorum speciem non ignoravit, sicut superius dixit: Disputare cum Deo cupio, prius vos ostendens fabricatores mendacii, et cultores perversorum dogmatum (Job. XIII, 3); repente se ad doctrinam erigit, et contra elatorum imperitiam scientiae suae latitudinem per sententias expandit, dicens:

CAPUT XXI [Vet.

XI, Rec. XII]. VERS. 5. Ecce gigantes gemunt sub aquis. 30. Angeli et homines superbi, ignorantiae abysso involvuntur. Dignum quippe erat ut per increpationem prius tumorem sapientiae terrenae retunderet, et per doctrinam postmodum ad plena mysteriis verba transiret. Gigantes enim vel apostatas angelos, vel superbos quosque homines, nil obstat intelligi. Hinc enim per prophetam dicitur: Mortui non vivent, gigantes non resurgent (Isai. XXVI, 16). Quos namque mortuos nisi peccatores nominat? Et quos gigantes nisi eos qui de peccato etiam superbiunt appellat? Illi autem non vivunt, quia peccando vitam justitiae perdiderunt. Isti etiam resurgere post mortem nequeunt, quia post culpam suam inflati per superbiam, ad poenitentiae remedia non recurrunt. Hinc rursum scriptum est: Vir qui erraverit a via doctrinae, in coetu gigantum commorabitur (Prov. XXI, 16); quia quisquis iter rectitudinis deserit, quorum se numero nisi superborum spirituum jungit? Bene autem contra elatos dicitur: Ecce gigantes gemunt sub aquis. Ac si aperte diceretur: Cur de scientia homo superbiat, cum ignorantiae abyssus et ipsos superbissimos angelorum spiritus premat? 31. Qui caeteris praeesse ambiunt, iisdem supponuntur. Si autem gigantum nomine potentes hujus saeculi designantur, in aquis possunt populi figurari, Joanne attestante, qui ait: Aquae enim sunt populi (Apoc. XVII, 15). Bene autem contra superbientem dicitur: Ecce gigantes gemunt sub aquis, quia elati omnes dum in hac vita assequi honorum celsitudinem cupiunt, sub ponderibus populorum gemunt. Nam quanto quisque hic alterius erigitur, tanto curis gravioribus oneratur; eisque ipsis populis mente et cogitatione supponitur, quibus superponitur dignitate. Et bene his verbis breviter indicatur quia omnis superbia eo ipso in imo jacet quo in alta se erigit, ut inde magis cunctis supposita sit, unde cunctis expetit superesse. Homo quippe in sublimibus elevatus, tantos super se sustinet, quantos suppositos regit. Hi autem qui talibus sociantur, ipsi etiam laboris eorum participatione

deprimuntur. Nam cum eis laborem etiam tolerant ponderis, dum pariter gloriam affectant honoris. Unde cum diceret: Ecce gigantes gemunt sub aquis, protinus adjunxit:

CAPUT XXII.

IBID. Et qui habitant cum eis. 32. Faciliorem vitiis viam aperiunt majores curae. Desideratae dignitates absque peccato ministrari non possunt. Ac si dicat: Pariter gemunt qui eorum gloria ex delectatione sociantur. Ipsa autem occupatio saecularium dignitatum tanto facilioribus vitiis premitur, quanto majoribus curis gravatur. Humanus namque animus videre et devitare peccata utinam valeat vel quietus. Quia ergo vidit desideratas rerum celsitudines absque peccatis ministrari non posse, et quia divinae irae non absconditur quidquid illicitum perpetratur, apte secutus adjunxit:

CAPUT XXIII.

VERS. 6. Nudus est infernus coram illo, et nullum est operimentum perditioni. 33. Irae divinae nullum peccatum absconditur. Quod Paulus Apostolus quoque ait: Omnia 547 enim nuda et aperta sunt oculis ejus (Hebr. IV, 13). Inferni vero et perditionis nomine diabolum omnesque damnationis ejus socios designavit. Quis vero ille sit coram quo infernus est nudus, sequitur dicens:

CAPUT XXIV [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 7. Qui extendit Aquilonem super vacuum. 34. Corda divino amore vacua diabolus replet. Aquilonis nomine, in sacro eloquio appellari diabolus solet, qui ut torporis frigore gentium corda constringeret, dixit: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis (Isa. XIX, 13). Qui super vacuum extenditur, quia illa corda possidet quae divini amoris gratia non replentur.

Sed tamen omnipotenti Deo suppetit etiam vasa diaboli cunctis virtutibus vacua suae gratiae munere implere, in eisque divini timoris soliditatem ponere, quos nulla conspicit rectitudinis actione roborari. Unde apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXV.

IBID. Et appendit terram super nihilum. 35. Ecclesia super gentiles et Judaeos ad nihilum per peccatum redactos fundata. Quid enim terrae nomine nisi sancta Ecclesia designatur, quae dum verba praedicationis suscipit, fructum boni operis reddit? De qua per Moysen dicitur: Audiat terra verba ex ore meo, exspectetur sicut pluvia eloquium meum (Deut. XXXII, 2). Et quid per nihilum, nisi gentiles populi designantur? De quibus per prophetam dicitur: Omnes gentes velut nihilum et inane reputatae sunt (Isai. XL, 17). In eo ergo nihilo terra suspenditur, quod prius vacuum ab Aquilone tenebatur, quia illa corda gentilium repleta sunt charitate Dei, quae pressa prius fuerant torpore diaboli. [Vet. XII.] Potest vero et per hoc vacuum Judaeae infidelitas et per terram, sicut diximus, sanctae Ecclesiae fructificatio designari. Vir ergo sanctus Judaeae pereuntis casum aspiciat, et gentilitatis merita ad veniam redeuntis cernat, ac dicat: Qui extendit Aquilonem super vacuum, et appendit terram super nihilum. Nam quia Judaeorum corda fide vacua diabolo sunt subdita, extendit Aquilonem super vacuum. Quia vero nullis existentibus meritis sicut dictum est: Pro nihilo salvos facies eos (Psal. LV. 8), super gentes Dominus fundavit Ecclesiam suam, quae per prophetam nihilum sunt vocatae, apte secutus adjungit: Appendit terram super nihilum. Hoc vero quo ordine factum sit, mirifica subdens ratione contexit. Ait enim:

CAPUT XXVI [Rec.

XIV] VERS. 8. Qui ligat agnas in nubibus suis, ut non erumpant pariter deorsum. 36. Nubium nomine designati Apostoli et praedicatores.Quid hoc loco aquam nisi scientiam, quid nubes nisi praedicatores appellat? Nam quia in sacro eloquio aliquando aqua scientia dicatur, Salomone attestante didicimus, qui ait: Aqua profunda verba ex ore viri, et torrens redundans fons sapientiae (Prov. XVIII, 4). Aqua signari scientiam David propheta testatur, dicens: Tenebrosa aqua in nubibus aeris (Psal. XVII, 12). Id est, occulta scientia in prophetis, qui ante adventum Domini, dum occultis sacramentis gravidi, mysteria immensa gestarent, intuentium oculis eorum intelligentia caligabat. Nubium vero nomine quid hoc in loco aliud quam praedicatores sancti, id est apostoli, designantur, qui per mundi partes circumquaque transmissi, et verbis noverant pluere, et miraculis coruscare? Quos Isaias propheta longe ante intuens, dixit: Qui sunt 548 isti qui ut nubes volant? Quia igitur vir iste, prophetico plenus spiritu, in hac locutione sua ad laudem Dei initia nascentis Ecclesiae desiderat exordiri, studet ejus ordinem ab apostolorum praedicatione narrare, qui curaverunt summopere rudibus populis plana et capabilia, non summa atque ardua praedicare. Nam si scientiam sanctam, quae hic aquae nomine designatur, ut hauriebant corde, ita ore funderent, immensitate ejus auditores suos opprimerent potius quam rigarent. Unde religata intrinsecus scientia, ut non pariter deorsum erumperet, auditores suos distillatione verborum nutriens, nubes illa loquebatur, dicens: Non potui loqui vobis quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus, tanquam parvulis in Christo lac vobis potum dedi, non escam (I Cor. III, 1, 2). Quis enim ferre potuisset, si raptus ad tertium coelum, raptus in paradisum, etiam arcana verba audiens quae loqui homini non liceret, tam immensos supernae scientiae sinus aperiret (II Cor. XII, 2)? Aut cujus non virtutem auditoris opprimeret, si ea quae intrinsecus haurire poterat, in quantum carnis lingua sufficeret, extrinsecus inundans aquae hujus immensitas emanasset 37. Rudes auditores non inundatione sed distillatione

scientiae sunt irrigandi. Ut vero auditores rudes non inundatione scientiae, sed moderata praedicationis distillatione foveantur, ligat Deus aquas in nubibus, ut non erumpant pariter deorsum, quia doctorum praedicationem temperat, ut auditorum infirmitas, dictorum rore nutrita convalescat. Quod bene in Evangelio mystica descriptione narratur, dum dicitur: Ascendit Jesus in naviculam Petri, et rogavit ut a terra reduceret pusillum, et ita sedens praedicabat turbis (Luc. V, 3). Per navem Petri quid aliud quam commissa Petro Ecclesia designatur? De qua ut Dominus turbis confluentibus praedicet, eam a terra paululum reduci jubet. Quam nec in altum duci, et tamen a terra praecipit removeri, profecto significans praedicatores suos rudibus debere populis, nec alta nimis de coelestibus, nec tamen terrena praedicare. Aqua itaque ligatur in nubibus, quia praedicatorum scientia infirmorum mentibus loquens quantum sentire valet docere prohibetur. [Vet. XIII]. 38. Infirmis mentibus tegenda est altior scientia. Nam plerumque si auditorum cor verbi immensitate corrumpitur, lingua docentium indiscretionis poena multatur. Unde scriptum est: Si quis aperuerit cisternam et foderit, et non operuerit eam, cecideritque bos vel asinus in eam, dominus cisternae reddet pretium jumentorum (Exod. XXI, 33). Quid est enim aperire cisternam, nisi intellectu valido Scripturae sacrae arcana penetrare? Quid autem per bovem et asinum, mundum scilicet et immundum animal, nisi fidelis quisque et infidelis accipitur? Qui ergo cisternam fodit, cooperiat, ne illud bos vel asinus ruat, id est, qui in sacro eloquio jam alta intelligit, sublimes sensus coram non capientibus per silentium tegat, ne per scandalum mentis aut fidelem parvulum, aut infidelem, qui credere potuisset, interimat. Ex morte enim jumentorum debet pretium, quia illud scilicet admisisse convincitur, unde ad agendam poenitentiam reus tenetur. Operienda est itaque cisterna, quia coram parvulis 549 mentibus legenda est alta scientia, ne unde cor docentium ad summa attollitur, inde infirmitas auditorum ad ima dilabatur. Dicatur igitur

recte: Qui ligat aquas in nubibus, ut non erumpant pariter deorsum. Pariter namque aquae erumperent, si coram infirmis auditoribus, quanta est scientia ex ore loquentis emanaret, si simul se omnis plenitudo praedicationis effunderet, et nil sibi cum proficientibus reservaret. Dignum quippe est ut qui praedicat audientis modum consideret, quatenus ipsa praedicatio cum auditoris sui incremen tis crescat. Sic quippe agere unusquisque praedicator debet, sicut cum illo divinitus agitur, ut nequaquam cuncta quae sentit infirmis insinuet, quia et quousque ipse carne mortalitatis infirmus est, ea quae superna sunt cuncta non sentit. Praedicare ergo rudibus non debet quantum cognoscit, quia et ipse de supernis mysteriis cognoscere non valet quanta sint. Hinc est enim quod Paulus apostolus, postquam mysteriis coelestibus interfuit, dicit: Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem (I Cor. XIII, 12). Unde et continuo hic sequitur:

CAPUT XXVII [Rec. XV].

VERS 9. Qui tenet vultum solii sui, et expandit super illud nebulam suam. 39. In hac vita gloria Dei ex parte tantum cognoscitur. In vultu solet cognitio demonstrari. Solii ergo ejus vultus tenetur, quia a nobis in hac vita regni ejus gloria non quanta intrinsecus habetur agnoscitur. Super quo recte expandi nebula dicitur, quia sicut est illa coelestis regni gloria non videtur. Nam corpus quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem (Sap. IX, 15). A videndo ergo eo nebula aspergimur, quia ipsa nostrae ignorantiae obscuritate caligamus. Unde recte per Psalmistam dicitur: Caligo sub pedibus ejus, et ascendit super cherubim, et volavit, volavit super pennas ventorum, et posuit tenebras latibulum suum (Psal. XVII, 10). Caligo namque est ei sub pedibus, quia non in ea claritate ab inferioribus cernitur, qua in superioribus dominatur. Ascendit enim super cherubim, et volavit. Cherubim quippe plenitudo scientiae dicitur. Proinde super plenitudinem scientiae ascendisse

perhibetur, et volasse, quia majestatis ejus celsitudinem scientia nulla comprehendit. Volavit igitur, quia longe in altum ab intellectu nostro se rapuit. Volavit super pennas ventorum, quia scientiam transcendit animarum. Qui posuit tenebras latibulum suum, quia dum caligine nostrae infirmitatis obscuramur per ignorantiam nostram nobis absconditur, ne a nobis modo in aeterna et intima claritate videatur. Unde ei et in Canticis canticorum a sponsa dicitur: Fuge, dilecte mi, fuge (Cant. VIII, 14). [Vet. XIV.] Fugit nos, dicimus, quoties menti nostrae id quod reminisci volumus non occurrit. Fugit nos, dicimus, quando id quod volumus memoria non tenemus. Sancta ergo Ecclesia postquam mortem ac resurrectionem Domini, ascensionemque describit, clamat ei prophetico plena spiritu: Fuge, dilecte mi, fuge. Ac si diceret: Tu qui ex carne comprehensibilis factus es, ex divinitate tua intelligentiam nostri sensus excede, et in teipso nobis incomprehensibilis permare. Tenet ergo vultum solii sui, quia majestatis suae potentiam mortalibus abscondit. 40. Ipsa angelorum ministeria minime cognita. Sed si ejus solium angelicas virtutes accipimus, ipsis quippe velut sedi regiae praesidet, sui nobis 550 solii vultum tenet, quia quandiu in hac mortali carne subsistimus, quae quantaque sint illa Angelorum ministeria non videmus. Et expandit super illud nebulam suam, quia procul dubio et cor nostrum ad quaerendum sublevat, et tamen occulta moderatione agitur, ut ipsa requisitionis suae immensitate reprimatur. Unde scriptum est: Dedit abyssus vocem suam, ab altitudine phantasiae suae (Habac. III, 10). Exclamare enim mens humana in admiratione compellitur, dum in altitudine considerationis in requisitionibus suis eo ipso quo latius extenditur, angustatur. Vel certe, quia solium Dei ipsi nos sumus, vultum solii sui non immerito tenere dicitur, dum nostra scientia progredi ad altiora prohibetur. Super quod solium suum suam nebulam Deus aspergere dicitur, quia invisibilis manens, occulta super nos judicia exerit, ut et fiat in promptis

quod videre possimus, et tamen origo facti lateat in abditis, ut cur fiat, nescire debeamus. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XXVIII [Rec XVI].

VERS. 10. Terminum circumdedit aquis, usque dum finiantur lux et tenebrae. 41. Perfecta aeternitatis scientia, nulli tribuitur quandiu vivimus. Quia plerumque in sacro eloquio, ut supra diximus, aquarum nomine populi designantur, aquas Dominus termino circumdat, quia humani generis ita scientiam moderatur, ut quousque vicissitudines alternantium temporum transeant, perfecte ad cognitionem claritatis intimae non pertingat. Sin vero lucis nomine justos accipimus, tenebrarum vero appellatione peccatores (unde et Paulus dicit: Eratis aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in Domino [Ephes. V, 8]), hoc ipsum quod diximus sentiri nil obstat, quia perfecta aeternitatis scientia nulli tribuitur, quousque cursus justorum injustorumque finiatur. Sed quia mirum non est carnales populos superna nescire, sanctus vir in ejusdem divinae potentiae admiratione se erigit, et quod ipsam quoque angelorum perfectorumque hominum scientiam transeat, intuetur dicens:

CAPUT XXIX [Rec. XVII].

VERS. 11. Columnae coeli contremiscunt, et pavent ad nutum ejus. 42. Columnae coeli sunt vel angeli, vel summi Ecclesiae praedicatores, vel etiam Ecclesiae ipsae. Quid aliud columnas coeli quam vel sanctos angelos, vel summos Ecclesiae praedicatores appellat? Super quos in coelestibus crescens universa spiritalis fabricae structura surrexit, sicut alias sancta Scriptura testatur, dicens: Qui vicerit, faciam illum columnam in templo Dei mei (Apoc. III, 12). Nam quisquis in Dei opere recta intentione firmatur, columna in structura fabricae spiritalis erigitur, ut in hoc templo, quod est Ecclesia, positus, et utilitati sit et decori. Eos vero Job columnas coeli quos

Apostolus columnas vocat Ecclesiae, dicens: Petrus, et Jacobus, et Joannes, qui videbantur columnae esse, dextras dederunt mihi (Galat. II, 9). 43. Possumus etiam columnas coeli et ipsas Ecclesias non inconvenienter accipere, quae multae unam catholicam faciunt toto terrarum orbe diffusam. Unde et septem Ecclesiis scribit Joannes apostolus, ut unam catholicam septiformis gratiae plenam spiritu designaret (Apoc. I, 4; II, 29). Et de Domino novimus dixisse Salomonem: Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum, excidit columnas septem (Prov. IX, 1). Qui ut id de septem Ecclesiis se dixisse innotesceret, secutus etiam sacramenta ipsa diligenter inseruit, dicens: Immolavit victimas, miscuit vinum, et proposuit mensam, 551 misit ancillas suas, ut vocarent ad arcem et maenia civitatis: Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me (Ibid.). Immolavit enim Dominus victimas, seipsum offerendo pro nobis. Miscuit vinum, praeceptorum suorum poculum ex narratione historica et intelligentia spiritali contemperans. Unde alias dictum est: Calix in manu Domini, vini meri, plenus est misto (Psal. LXXIV, 9). Et posuit mensam, id est Scripturam sacram, quae fessos ad se atque a saeculi oneribus venientes pane verbi nos reficit, et contra adversarios sua refectione nos roborat. Unde et alias ab Ecclesia dicitur: Posuisti in conspectu meo mensam, adversus eos qui tribulant me (Psal. XXII, 5). Misit ancillas suas, apostolorum videlicet animas, in ipso suo initio infirmas, ut vocarent ad arcem et moenia civitatis, quia dum internam vitam denuntiant, ad alta nos moenia supernae civitatis levant, quae profecto moenia nisi humiles non ascendunt. Unde illic ab eadem Sapientia subditur: Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me (Prov. IX, 4). Ac si aperte dicat: Quisquis se apud se magnum aestimat, aditum sibi mei accessus angustat, quia tanto ad me altius pertingitur, quanto uniuscujusque mens apud severius humiliatur. [Vet. XV.] 44. Judicia Dei nemo potest indagare. Sed quantalibet quisque virtute proficiat, quantalibet scientia excrescat, penetrate non sufficit quo nos conditor moderamine judiciorum regat. Dicat ergo:

Columnae coeli contremiscunt, et pavent ad nutum ejus, quia in plerisque nec ipsi pertingere ad voluntatis ejus celsitudinem praevalent qui ejusdem voluntatis praemia denuntiantes vident. Quod, sicut superius diximus, de sanctis quoque angelis nil obstat intelligi, quia ipsae quoque virtutes coelestium, quae hunc sine cessatione conspiciunt, in ipsa sua contemplatione contremiscunt. Sed isdem tremor ne eis poenalis sit, non timoris est, sed admirationis. Quia vero quantus pavor sit admirationis ejus intulit, nunc ordinem nostrae salutis narrat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXX [Rec. XVIII].

VERS. 12. In fortitudine illius repente maria congregata sunt, et prudentia ejus percussit superbum. 45. Incarnatione Domini mundus presso tumore domitus. Quid aliud maris nomine quam praesens saeculum designatur, in quo corda hominum terrena quaerentium diversis cogitationum fluctibus intumescunt? qui elatione superbiae concitati, dum alterna intentione se impetunt, quasi adversante se unda collidunt. Sed jam in fortitudine illius maria congregata sunt, quia incarnato Domino discordantia saecularium corda concorditer credunt. Jam Petrus in mari ambulat, quia nimirum Christi praedicatoribus illa quondam tumida humili auditu corda substracta sunt ut recte etiam in Evangelio hujus mundi mansuetudinem figuraverit, quod procellosa maris aqua Domini pedibus, presso tumore, calcata est. Sed quonam modo id actum sit aperitur, dum dicitur: Et prudentia ejus percussit superbum. 46. Deus maluit prudentia percutere diabolum, quam fortitudine. Incarnationis oeconomia. Quis hic superbus alius appellatur, nisi ille qui dixit: Ascendam super altitudinem nubium, similis ero Altissimo (Isai. XVI, 14)? Et de quo voce Dei dicitur: Qui factus est ut nullum timeret, et ipse est rex super omnes filios superbiae (Job. XLI, 25). De quo etiam huic sententiae 552 David propheta concordat, dicens: Tu humiliasti, sicut vulneratum, superbum (Psal. LXXXVIII, 11). Sed quamvis simplici naturae

divinitatis non sit aliud esse, et aliud sapere, nec aliud sapere, et aliud fortem esse, quippe quia ipsa fortitudo quae sapientia, et ipsa sapientia quae divinitatis essentia est, vigilanter tamen intuendum puto quod vir iste prophetico plenus spiritu superbum diabolum prudentia Dei potius maluit dicere quam fortitudine esse percussum. Non enim ait fortitudo, sed prudentia ejus percussit superbum. Nam quamvis, sicut dictum est, propter naturam simplicem, Dei fortitudo sapientia sit, Dominus tamen diabolum, quantum ad faciem spectat, non virtute, sed ratione superavit. Ipse namque diabolus in illa nos parentis primi radice supplantans, sub captivitate sua quasi juste tenuit hominem, qui, libero arbitrio conditus, ei injusta suadenti consensit. Ad vitam namque conditus in libertate propriae voluntatis, sponte sua factus est debitor mortis. Delenda ergo erat talis culpa, sed nisi per sacrificium deleri non poterat. Quaerendum erat sacrificium, sed quale sacrificium poterat pro absolvendis hominibus inveniri? Neque enim justum fuit ut pro rationali homine brutorum animalium victimae caederentur. Unde ait Apostolus: Necesse est ergo exemplaria coelestium his mundari, ipsa autem coelestia hostiis quam istis (Hebr. IX, 23). Ergo si bruta animalia propter rationale animal, id est pro homine, dignae victimae non fuerunt, requirendus erat homo qui pro hominibus offerri debuisset, ut pro rationali peccante rationalis hostia mactaretur. Sed quid, quod homo sine peccato inveniri non poterat, et oblata pro nobis hostia quando nos a peccato mundare potuisset, si ipsa hostia peccati contagio non careret? Inquinata quippe inquinatos mundare non potuisset. Ergo ut rationalis esset hostia, homo fuerat offerendus, ut vero a peccatis mundaret hominem, homo, et sine peccato. Sed quis esset sine peccato homo, si ex peccati commistione descenderet? Proinde venit propter nos in uterum virginis Filius Dei, ibi pro nobis factus est homo. Sumpta est ab illo natura, non culpa. Fecit pro nobis sacrificium, corpus suum exhibuit pro peccatoribus victimam sine peccato, quae et humanitate mori, et justitia mundare potuisset. [Vet. XVI.] Hunc

ergo cum post baptisma vidit antiquus hostis, mox tentationibus impetiit, et per diversos aditus ad interiora ejus molitus inexpugnabilis mentis ejus integritate prostratus (Matt. IV, 1 seq.). 47. Diabolus frustra tentato interius Christo, eum exterius agressus est. Sed qui ad interiora non valuit, ad ejus se exteriora convertit, ut quia mentis virtute victus est, eum quem decipere tentatione non valuit, carnis saltem videretur morte superare, atque, ut ante nos dictum est, permissus est in illud quod ex nobis mortalibus Mediator acceperat. Sed ubi potuit aliquid facere, tibi ex omni parte devictus est; et unde accepit exterius potestatem Dominicae carnis occidendae, inde interior potestas ejus qua nos tenebat occisa est. Ipse namque interius victus est, dum quasi vicit exterius; et qui nos jure debitores mortis tenuit, jure in nobis jus 553 mortis amisit, quia per satellites suos ejus carnem perimendam oppetiit, in quo nil ex culpae debito invenit. Dominus ergo noster pro nobis mortem solvit indebitam, ut nobis mars debita non noceret. Bene itaque dictum est: Prudentia ejus percussit superbum, quia antiquus hostis per excessum praesumptionis suae eum etiam perdidit quem iniquae persuasionis lege possedit; et dum audacter eum in quo nihil sibi competebat appetiit, jure illum quem quasi juste tenebat amisit. Prudentia itaque non virtute percussus est, qui dum ad tentandum Deum solvitur, ab homine possidendo religatur, ut inde eum qui sub ipso erat perderet, unde cum illo qui super ipsum est congredi praesumpsisset. Occiso autem carne Domino, quae praedicatores ejus virtutum gloria sit secuta, narratur, cum subditur:

CAPUT XXXI [Rec. XIX].

VERS. 13. Spiritus ejus ornavit coelos. 48. Infirmitas apostolorum eorumque principis, ante acceptum Spiritum sanctum. Quos coelos, nisi eos de quibus scriptum est: Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei (Psal. XVIII, 1)? Quos tunc ornavit Spiritus, cum replevit. Quod Luca referente didicimus, qui ait:

Factus est repente de coelo sonus, tanquam advenientis spiritus vehementis, et replevit totam domum ubi erant sedentes. Et apparuerunt illis dispertitae linguae tanquam ignis, seditque super singulos eorum. Et repleti sunt omnes Spiritu sancto, et coeperunt loqui variis linguis, prout Spiritus sanctus dabat eloqui illis (Act. II, 2). Ex eo ergo acceperunt ornamenta virtutis, quos immensa ante possederat foeditas timoris. Scimus enim, ille apostolorum, id est coelorum primus, ante acceptam hujus Spiritus gratiam, quoties dum mori timuit, vitam negavit. Qui non poenis, non afflictionibus, non terribili potestate cujusquam, sed unius mancipii sola est interrogatione prostratus. Et quidem mancipium ne sexus firmior terribile demonstraret, ancilla est inquirente tentatus (Matth. XXVI, 70). Rursusque ut talis sexus infirmitas etiam officii sui dejectione vilesceret, non ab ancilla tantummodo, sed ab ostiaria est ancilla requisitus (Joan. XVIII, 25). Ecce quam vilis est ad tentandum persona requisita, ut aperte proderetur quanta eum timoris infirmitas possideret, qui nec ante vocem ostiariae ancillae subsisteret. [Vet. XVII.] 49. Petri fortitudo eo accepto. Sed jam hic paulo ante timidus, qualis post adventum Spiritus exstiterit videamus. Certe, Luca testante didicimus contra sacerdotes ac principes quanta Dominum auctoritate praedicavit. Nam cum facto miraculo, quaestio fuisset exorta (Act. IV, 14), et sacerdotum principes, seniores, ac scribae in apostolorum persecutione concurrerent, eos in medio statuentes in qua virtute miraculum fecerint percunctari curaverunt. Quibus repletus Spiritu sancto Petrus dixit: Principes populi et seniores, si nos hodie dijudicamur in benefacto hominis infirmi, in quo iste salvus est factus, notum sit omnibus vobis, et omni plebi Israel, quia in nomine Jesu Christi Nazareni, quem vos crucifixistis, quem Deus suscitavit a mortuis, in hoc iste astat coram vobis salvus (Ibid. 8). Cumque erga haec persequentium furor excresceret, eosque sacerdotes ac principes Jesum praedicare prohiberent, contra iram principum qua auctoritate Petrus excreverit indicatur, cum illic protinus 554 subditur:

Petrus vero et apostoli dixerunt: Obedire oportet Deo magis quam hominibus (Ibid., I, 9). Sed cum auctoritatem praedicantium, resistentium praecepta non premerent, ad flagella pervenitur. Nam subditur: Tunc principes sacerdotum caesis denuntiaverunt ne loquerentur in nomine Jesu, et dimiserunt eos (Ibid., V, 40). Sed quia apostolorum virtutem premere nec flagella valuerunt, patenter ostenditur, cum protinus subinfertur: Et illi quidem ibant gaudentes a conspectu concilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati (Ibid., 41). Mox etiam post flagellorum gaudia quid agerent indicatur: Omni autem die in templo et circa domos non cessabant docentes et evangelizantes Christum Jesum. Ecce ille paulo ante timidus, jam linguis loquitur, coruscat miraculis, infidelitatem sacerdotum ac principum libera voce increpat, ad praedicandum Jesum, exemplum auctoritatis caeteris praestat, ne in nomine ejus loqui debeat verberibus prohibetur, nec tamen compescitur. Contemnit flagella caedentium, qui paulo ante requirentium verba timuerat; et qui ancillae vires requisitus expavit, vires principum caesus premit. Sancti enim Spiritus jam virtute solidatus, hujus mundi altitudines libertatis calce deprimebat, ut in imo esse cerneret quidquid contra creatoris gratiam altum tumeret. [Vet. XVIII.] 50. Quibus donis et virtutibus, effuso in se Spiritu sancto, fulserint apostoli. Haec sunt ornamenta coelorum, haec sunt dona Spiritus, quae diversis manifestari virtutibus solent, quas occultae dispensationis munere divisas Paulus enumerat, dicens: Alii quidem per Spiritum datur sermo sapientiae, alii autem sermo scientiae secundum eumdem spiritum, alteri fides in eodem spiritu, alii gratia sanitatum in uno spiritu, alii operatio virtutum, alii prophetia, alii discretio spirituum, alii genera linguarum, alii interpretatio sermonum (I Cor. XII, 8, 9, 10). Quae mox generali definitione concludens, ait: Haec autem omnia operatur unus atque idem Spiritus, dividens singulis prout vult. De his etiam coelis in psalmo dictum est: Verbo Domini coeli firmati sunt (Psal. XXXII, 6). De his quoque ornamentis spiritus subditur:

Et spiritu oris ejus omnis virtus eorum. Bene itaque dicitur: Spiritus ejus ornavit coelos, quia praedicatores sancti nisi promissa Paracliti dona perciperent, nullo fortitudinis decore claruissent. Sed quia sanctis apostolis virtutum gratia decoratis, vitae praedicatio contra infidelium corda convaluit, et antiquus hostis obsessas infidelium mentes praedicatorum vocibus expulsus reliquit, post ornamenta coelorum apte subjungitur.

CAPUT XXXII [Rec. XX].

Ibid. Et obstetricante manu ejus, eductus est coluber tortuosus. 51. Serpens antiquus Dei manu ex peccatorum cordibus quasi ex cavernis suis, ejectus est. Quis enim colubri appellatur nomine, nisi antiquus hostis, et lubricus, et tortuosus, qui decipiendo homini colubri ore locutus est? De quo per prophetam dicitur: Leviathan serpentem, vectem tortuosum (Isa. XXVII, 1). Qui idcirco loqui serpentis ore permissus est, ut ex ipso vase ejus homo cognosceret qualis esset qui intus habitaret. Serpens quippe non solum tortuosus est, sed etiam lubricus. Quia ergo in rectitudine veritatis non stetit, tortuosum animal intravit. Quia vero suggestioni ejus, si primae non resistitur, repente totus ad interna cordis dum 555 non sentitur illabitur, verba ad hominem per animal lubricum fecit. Cavernae vero hujus colubri corda fuerunt iniquorum. Quae quia ad pravitatem propriam traxit, quasi in eorum habitatione requievit. Sed obstetricante manu Domini, tortuosus coluber de propriis cavernis expulsus est, quia dum nobis divina gratia medetur, is qui nos tenuerat antiquus a nobis hostis ejicitur, sicut incarnata Veritas dicit: Nunc princeps hujus mundi ejicietur foras (Joan. XII, 31). Unde jam nunc sanctos omnes non tenendo possidet, sed tentando persequitur. Nam quia non in eis intrinsecus regnat, contra eos pugnat extrinsecus; et quia intus dominium perdidit, bella molitur foris. Ille enim eum de carnalibus hominum cordibus expulit, qui propter homines ad incarnationem venit; dumque corda infidelium tenuit, quasi manum ad

latibula serpentis misit. Unde recte per prophetam dicitur: Delectabitur infans ab ubere super foramine aspidis; et in caverna reguli qui ablactatus fuerat manum suam mittet. Non nocebunt, et non occident in universo monte sancto meo (Isai. XI, 8). Quem namque infantem ab ubere, vel eum qui ablactatus fuerit nisi Dominum appellat? Quid vero foramine aspidis et cavernis reguli nisi corda signavit iniquorum? Quia antiquus hostis dum totum se in eorum consensum contulit, quasi in foramine proprio coluber tortuosus, sinus astutiae colligendo glomeravit. Quem et aspidis nomine appellat occulte saevientem, et reguli aperte ferientem. Manum ergo suam Dominus in foramine reguli atque aspidis misit, quando iniquorum corda divina potestate tenuit; et comprehensum exinde aspidem, vel regulum, id est captivum diabolum traxit, ut in monte sancto ejus, quod est Ecclesia, electis fidelibus non noceret. 52. Diabolus leoni comparatus. Hinc namque in Canticis canticorum sponso veniente dicitur: Coronaberis de capite Amana, de vertice Sanir et Hermon, de cubilibus leonum (Cant. IV, 8). Quid enim aliud leonum nomine quam daemonia designantur, quae ira contra nos atrocissimae crudelitatis insaeviunt? Et quia peccatores ad fidem vocati sunt, quorum quondam corda leonum cubilia fuerunt, dum vicisse mortem Dominus eorum confessione creditur, quasi de leonum cubilibus coronatur. Remuneratio quippe victoriae corona est. Toties ergo ei coronam fideles offerunt, quoties hunc vicisse mortem ex resurrectione confitentur. Leo ergo de cubilibus suis pellitur, quia, obstetricante manu Domini, tortuosus coluber in cavernis quas tenuerat habitare prohibetur. Nam victus a fidelium cordibus exiit, qui super haec antea sceptro perfidiae regnavit. 53. Primus Christi adventus in humilitate, secundus in terrore. Ecce in paucis brevibusque sententiis sanctus vir adventus dominici ordinem retulit, pondera expressit, quid ex ejus incarnatione fieri potuit admirando narravit. [Vet. XIX, Rec. XXI.] Sed qui mira fecit in humilitate veniens, considerari non potest cum quanto terrore venturus est, in majestatis suae fortitudine

apparens. Ordo primi adventus illius pensari et conspici in tantum potuit, in quantum ad redimendos carnales veniens, divinitatis suae magnitudinem carnalibus oculis temperavit. Quis vero ejus celsitudinis terrorem ferat, cum secundi adventus potentia per 556 ignem judicium exercens, in potestatis suae majestate canduerit? Unde vir sanctus adventum illius narrat primum, sed lassatur ad secundum, dicens:

CAPUT XXXIII VERS.

14. Ecce haec ex parte dicta sunt viarum ejus; et cum vix parvam stillam sermonum ejus audierimus, quis poterit tonitruum magnitudinis illius intueri? 54. Terribilis judicii Dei descriptio. Quid hoc loco viarum nomine nisi actiones Domini appellat? Unde et per prophetam Dominus dicit: Non enim sunt viae meae sicut viae vestrae (Isai. LV, 8). Adventum ergo Domini narrans, vias Dei ex parte retulerat, quia alia ejus actio fuit, qua nos condidit, alia qua redemit. Ea itaque quae de Domini actione narravit, extremi judicii comparatione levigans, ait: Ecce haec ex parte dicta sunt viarum ejus. Quod et parvam stillam sermonum ejus appellat, quia quidquid altum, quidquid terribile in hac vita positi de ejus consideratione cognoscimus ex immensitate coelestium secretorum, velut tenuis ad nos gutta superni liquoris emanat: Et quis poterit tonitruum magnitudinis ejus intueri? Ac si aperte dicat: Si humilitatis ejus admiranda vix ferimus, sonorum atque terribilem majestatis ejus adventum qua virtute toleramus? Hunc tonitruum adventus illius etiam Psalmista insonat, dicens: Deus manifeste veniet, Deus noster, et non silebit; ignis in conspectu ejus ardebit, et in circuitu ejus tempestas valida (Psal. XLIX, 3). Hinc Sophonias propheta denuntiat, dicens: Juxta est dies Domini magnus, juxta et velox nimis. Vox diei Domini amara, tribulabitur ibi fortis. Dies irae dies illa, dies tribulationis et angustiae, dies calamitatis et miseriae, dies tenebrarum et caliginis, dies nebulae et turbinis, dies tubae et clangoris (Sophon. I, 14).

Terrorem ergo districti examinis, quem Sophonias tubam, beatus Job tonitruum appellat. Quem Joel quoque considerans ait: Conturbentur omnes habitatores terrae, quia venit dies Domini, quia prope est dies tenebrarum et caliginis, dies nubis et turbinis: Magnus enim dies Domini, et terribilis valde, et quis sustinebit eum (Joel. II, 1)? Sed quam incomprehensibilis sit atque inconsiderabilis illa magnitudo, qua in secunda ostensione venturus est, bene utcunque perpendimus, si primi adventus pondera sollicita consideratione pensamus. Certe ut nos a morte redimeret, mori Dominus venit, et defectum nostrae carnis in suo corpore poenasque toleravit. Qui priusquam ad crucis patibulum perveniret, teneri, conspui, illudi, et alapis caedi se pertulit. Ecce ad quanta propter nos venire probra consensit; et tamen priusquam se teneri permitteret, persecutores suos requisivit, dicens (Joan. XVIII, 4): Quem quaeritis? Cui illico responderunt: Jesum Nazarenum. Quibus cum repente diceret, Ego sum, vocem solummodo mitissimae responsionis edidit, et armatos persecutores suos protinus in terram stravit. Quid ergo facturus est, cum judicaturus venerit, qui una voce hostes suos perculit, etiam cum judicandus venit? Quod est illud judicium quod immortalis exerit, qui in una voce non potuit ferri moriturus? Quis ejus iram toleret, cujus et ipsa non potuit mansuetudo tolerari? Consideret ergo vir sanctus, et dicat: Cum vix parvam stillam sermonum ejus audierimus, quis poterit tonitruum magnitudinis illius intueri?

LIBER DECIMUS OCTAVUS.

557 (Continet expositionem capitum XXVIII et libri Job usque ad versum 21 dimidiatum, secundum multiplices sensus). [Rec. I.] 1. Scripturae sacrae obscuritas ad altiorem ejus sensum investigandum nos movet. Plerumque in sacro eloquio sic nonnulla mystica describuntur, ut tamen juxta narrationem historicam prolata videantur. Sed saepe dicta talia in eadem historica narratione permista sunt, per quae superficies historiae cuncta cassetur: quae dum nil historicum resonant, aliud in eis inquirere lectorem cogunt. His enim dictis quae aperta credimus, cum interjecta aliqua obscurius invenimus, quasi quibusdam stimulis pungimur, ut ad aliqua altius intelligenda vigilemus, et obscurius prolata sentiamus, ea etiam quae aperte dicta putavimus. Cum ergo beatus Job de sermone Domini et de magnitudine tonitrui loqueretur, eisdem verbis protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT PRIMUM [Vet.

I, Rec. II]. CAP. XXVII, VERS. 1. Addidit quoque Job, assumens parabolam suam, et ait. 2. Loquendi genus Job parabolicum et mysticum. Quo profecto versu ostenditur hujus sanctissimi viri dicta quam mystice sint prolata, dum parabola, id est similitudo assumpta narratur ab eo qui nihil inferius per comparationem vel similitudinem loquitur. Absit enim ne hoc loco parabolam illud musicae organum sentiamus. Neque enim fas est credere quod in afflitione poenarum musicis uteretur, cum per Scripturam suam veritas dicat: Musica in luctu importuna narratio est (Eccli. XXII, 6). Nominata ergo parabola, ecce textu ipso loquente jam discimus, ne justa textum tantummodo ejus verba pensemus. Ad eam itaque similitudinem cuncta trahenda sunt qua figurate Ecclesia designatur. Et in ipso quidem locutionis exordio dicta aperte prolata sunt, sed subjunctis obscurioribus

implicantur. Nam plana, ut solet, locutione inchoat, sed verba sua per mysticos sensus gravida narratione consumat. Itaque ait:

CAPUT II [Rec. III].

VERS. 2. Vivit Deus, qui abstulit judicium meum, et Omnipotens qui ad amaritudinem adduxit animam meam. 3. Contra verba detrahentium sapientia, contra persequentium gladios patientia necessaria. 3. Quibus nimirum verbis beatus Job et sua narrat, et sanctae Ecclesiae tempora afflictae significat, in quibus aperta infidelium pervicacia premitur, et persecutionis amaritudine perturbatur. Duobus namque modis Ecclesia tentari ab adversariis solet, ut videlicet persecutionem aut verbis patiatur, aut gladiis. Sancta vero Ecclesia summopere habere sapientiam et patientiam studet. Sed exercetur ejus sapientia cum tentatur verbis, exercetur ejus patientia cum tentatur gladiis. Nunc vero de ea persecutione loquitur, in qua non gladiis, sed falsis assertionibus lacessitur. Multos autem novimus qui cum in hac vita aliqua adversa patiuntur, Deum esse credunt. Nonnulli vero Deum esse aestimant, sed res humanas minime curare. De illis quippe per David dicitur: Dixit insipiens in corde suo, Non est Deus (Psal. XIII, 1). Isti vero apud eum dicunt: 558 Quomodo scit Deus, et si est scientia in excelso (Psal. LXXII, 11)? Et rursus: Et dixerunt, non videbit Dominus, nec intelliget Deus Jacob (Psal. LXXXXIII, 7). Vir ergo iste sanctae Ecclesiae typum gestans in ipsa afflictionis suae amaritudine constitutus, contra utrosque respondit. Nam quia essentiam vita habet, mors non habet, ut Deum esse fateretur, ait: Vivit Deus. Ut vero eum res humanas curare perhiberet, subdidit: Qui abstulit judicium meum, et ad amaritudinem adduxit animam meam. Ista etenim quae patitur, non casu se perpeti, sed Deo omnia disponente testatur; nec tentatori suo amaritudinis suae potestatem tribuit, sed auctori. 4. Diabolus nullam, nisi Deo per mittente tentandi potestatem habet. Scit namque quia diabolus licet afflitionem

justorum semper appetat, tamen si ab auctore nostro potestatem non accipit, ad tentationis articulum nullatenus convescit. Unde et omnis voluntas diaboli injusta est, et tamen permittente Deo omnis potestas justa. Ex se enim tentare quoslibet injuste appetit, sed eos qui tentandi sunt, prout tentandi sunt, non nisi tentari Deus juste permittit. [Vet. II.] Unde etiam in libris Regum de diabolo scriptum est: Quia spiritus Domini malus irruebat in Saul (I Reg. XVIII, 10). Ubi juste quaeritur: si Domini, cur malus; et si malus, cur Domini dicatur? Sed duobus verbis comprehensa est et potestas justa in diabolo, et voluntas injusta. Nam et ipse dicitur spiritus malus per nequissimam voluntatem; et idem spiritus Domini per acceptam justissimam potestatem. Bene ergo dicitur: Vivit Deus, qui abstulit judicium meum, et Omnipotens qui ad amaritudinem adduxit animam meam, quia etsi hostis saevit, qui ferire appetit, creator tamen est qui eum ad aliquid praevalere permittit. Sed quia sanctus vir ad aliquid invocat a Dei vita se constrinxit, audiamus quid sese constringendo subjungit. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. IV].

VERS. 34. Quia donec superest halitus in me, et Spiritus Dei in naribus meis, non loquentur labia mea iniquitatem, nec lingua mea meditabitur mendacium. 5. Cum omne amendacium iniquitas sit, ne quidem licet vitam cujuslibet mendacio defendere. Quod prius iniquitatem, hoc postmodum repetens mendacium dicit. Nam et omne mendacium iniquitas est, et omnis iniquitas mendacium, quia profecto ab aequitate discrepat quidquid a veritate discordat. Sed inter hoc quod ait, loqui, et postmodum subdit, meditari, magna distantia est. Nonnunquam enim pejus est mendacium meditari, quam loqui. Nam loqui plerumque praecipitationis est, meditari vero studiosae pravitatis. Et quis ignoret in quanta distantia culpa distinguitur utrum praecipitatione aliquis, an studio mentiatur? Sed vir sanctus, ut perfecte adhaereat veritati, nec studio se perhibet, nec

praecipitatione mentiri. Summopere enim cavendum est omne mendacium, 559 quamvis nonnunquam sit aliquod mendacii genus culpae levioris, si quisquam praestando mentitur. Sed quia scriptum est: Os quod mentitur, occidit animam (Sap. I, 11). Et: Perdes omnes qui loquuntur mendacium (Psal. V, 7), hoc quoque mendacii genus perfecti viri summopere fugiunt, ut nec vita cujuslibet per eorum fallaciam defendatur, ne suae animae noceant, dum praestare vitam carni nituntur alienae; quanquam hoc ipsum peccati genus facillime credimus relaxari. Nam si quaelibet culpa (22, q. 2, c. 20), sequenti solet pia operatione purgari; quanto magis haec facile abstergitur, quam mater boni operis pietas ipsa comitatur? 6. Respondetur objectioni ex obstetricum Aegyptiarum mendacio petitae. Nonnulli vero ex obstetricum fallacia conantur asserere hoc mendacii genus non esse peccatum, maxime quod illis mentientibus scriptum est: Quia aedificavit illis Dominus domos (Exod. I, 21). In qua magis recompensatione cognoscitur quid mendacii culpa mereatur. Nam benignitatis earum merces, quae eis in aeterna potuit vita retribui, pro admista culpa mendacii, in terrenam est recompensationem declinata, ut in vita sua quam mentiendo tueri voluerunt ea quae fecerunt bona reciperent, et ulterius quod exspectarent mercedis suae praemium non haberent. Nam si subtiliter perpendatur, amore vitae praesentis mentitae sunt, non intentione mercedis. Parcendo quippe conatae sunt infantium vitam tegere; mentiendo, suam. 7. In vet. test. mendacium levior erat culpa, quam in novo. Et licet in testamento veteri nonnulla possint talia reperiri, pene nunquam tamen hoc vel tale genus mendacii a perfectis admissum studiosus ibi lector inveniet, quamvis mendacium quamdam tenere veritatis imaginem videatur, et sub veteri forsitan testamento minoris culpae esse potuit, in quo per taurorum hircorumque victimas sacrificium non fuit ipsa veritas, sed umbra veritatis. Nam in testamento novo praeceptis altioribus manifestata per carnem Veritate proficimus; justumque est ut facta quaedam quae in illo populo umbrae veritatis deservierant deseramus. [Vet. III.] Si

quis vero per testamentum vetus vult suum tueri mendacium (22, q. 2, c. 19), quia minus illic quibusdam fortasse nocuerit, dicat necesse est rerum alienarum raptum, et retributionem injuriae, quae infirmis illic concessa sunt, sibi nocere non posse. Quae omnia cunctis liquet quanta adnimadversione Veritas insequitur, quae nobis, jam significationis suae umbra postposita, in vera carne declaratur. Sed quia sanctus vir nec loqui se, nec meditari mendacium spondet, haec ipsa in quibus veritati congruit exsequendo subjungit:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 5. Absit a me ut justos vos esse judicem, donec deficiam, non recedam ab innocentia mea. 8. Peccatoribus adulari quam noxium. Ab innocentia quippe recederet, si bona de malis aestimaret, Salomone attestante, qui ait: Qui justificat impium, et qui condemnat justum, uterque abominabilis est ante Deum (Prov. XVII, 15). Sunt namque nonnulli (Dist. XLVI. c. 2) qui dum male facta hominum laudibus efferunt, augent quae increpare debuerunt. Hinc enim per prophetam dicitur: Vae qui consuunt pulvillos sub omni cubito manus, et faciunt cervicalia sub capite universae aetatis (Ezech. XIII, 18). Ad hoc quippe pulvillus 560 ponitur, ut mollius quiescatur. Quisquis ergo male agentibus adulatur, pulvillum sub capite, vel cubito jacentis ponit, ut qui corripi ex culpa debuerat, in ea fultus laudibus molliter quiescat. Hinc rursum scriptum est: Ipse aedificabat parietem, illi autem liniebant eum (Ibid. XIII, 10). Parietis quippe nomine peccati duritia designatur. Aedificare ergo parietem est contra se quempiam obstacula peccati construere. Sed parietem liniunt, qui peccata perpetrantibus adulantur, ut quod illi perverse agentes aedificant, ipsi adulantes quasi nitidum reddant. Sed sanctus vir sicut mala de bonis non aestimat, ita judicare bona de malis recusat, dicens: Absit a me ut justos vos judicem, donec deficiam, non recedam ab innocentia mea. Ubi aperte subjunxit:

VERS. 6. Justificationem meam quam coepit tenere, non deseram. Coeptam namque justificationem desereret, si in peccantium laudem declinaret. Sed quia tunc verius a peccatis alienis absistimus, cum prius nos a propriis custodimus, cur de eis peccare pertimescat, rationis causas insinuat, cum subjungit:

CAPUT V [Rec. V].

IBID. Neque enim reprehendit me cor meum in omni via mea. 9. Audientes praecepta divina nec facientes coarguit. Ac si aperte dicat: Pro vobis non debeo ad culpam pertrahi, qui peccare in propriis formidavi. Sciendum vero est quod quisquis a praeceptis dominicis discordat opere, quoties ea audit a corde suo reprehenditur atque confunditur, quia id quod non fecerit memoratur. Nam in quo se errasse considerat, ipsa se latenter conscientia accusat. Unde David propheta deprecatur, dicens: Tunc non confundar, dum respicio in omnia mandata tua (Psal. CXVIII, 6). Graviter namque unusquisque confunditur quando mandata Dei vel legendo, vel audiendo respicit, quae vivendo contempsit. Hinc enim Joannis voce dicitur: Si cor nostrum non reprehenderit nos, fiduciam habemus ad Deum; et quidquid petierimus ab eo, accipiemus (Joan. III, 21); ac si diceret: Si id quod praecipit facimus, id quod petimus obtinebimus. 10. Oratione actio, et actione oratio fulciatur. Valde namque apud Deum utraque haec sibi necessario congruunt, ut et oratione operatio, et operatione fulciatur oratio. Hinc enim Jeremias ait: Scrutemur vias nostras, et quaeramus, et revertamur ad Dominum. Levemus corda nostra cum manibus ad Deum in coelos (Thren. III, 40). Vias etenim nostras scrutari est cogitationum interna discutere. Corda vero cum manibus levat, qui orationem suam operibus roborat. Nam quisquis orat, sed operari dissimulat, cor levat, et manus non levat. Quisquis vero operatur, et non orat, manus levat, et cor non levat. Juxta ergo Joannis vocem, tunc cor fiduciam in oratione accipit, cum sibi

vitae pravitas nulla contradicit. De qua recte fiducia a sancto viro nunc dicitur: Neque enim reprehendit me cor meum in omni vita mea. Ac si aperte dicat: Nequaquam se fecisse reminiscitur unde in suis precibus confundatur. [Vet. IV.] Sed quaeri potest quo pacto a corde suo reprehendi se denegat, qui se peccasse superius accusat, dicens: Peccavi, quid faciam tibi, o custos 561 hominum (Job. VII, 20)? Vel certe: Si justificare me voluero, os meum condemnabit me (Job. IX, 20). 11. Quaedam peccata vitari nequeunt. Sed sciendum est quod sunt peccata quae a justis vitari possunt, et sunt nonnulla quae etiam a justis vitari non possunt. Cujus enim cor in hac corruptibili carne consistens in sinistra cogitatione non labitur, vel si usque ad consensus foveam non mergatur? Et tamen haec ipsa prava cogitare peccare est. Sed dum cogitationi resistitur, a confusione sua animus liberatur. Mens ergo justorum etsi libera est a perverso opere, aliquando tamen corruit in perversa cogitatione. Et in peccatum ergo labitur, quia saltem in cogitatione declinatur; et tamen unde semetipsam postmodum flendo reprehendat, non habet, quia ante se reparat, quam per consensum cadat. Recte ergo is qui peccatorem se confessus est, nequaquam se a suo corde reprehendi confitetur, quia etsi qua illicita fortasse cogitando defuit unquam rectitudini, forti tamen mentis certamine restitit cogitationi. Sequitur:

CAPUT VI [Rec. VI].

VERS. 7. Sicut impius inimicus meus, et adversarius meus quasi iniquus. 12. Ecclesia pro infideli habet, quem intra se positum, pravis moribus videt. In sacro eloquio sicut, et quasi, aliquando non pro similitudine ponitur, sed pro veritate. Unde est illud: Vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre (Joan. I, 14). Unde et hic quoque sicut, et quasi, pro affirmatione potius quam pro similitudine dictum videtur. Inter impium vero et iniquum, hoc distare nonnunquam solet, quia omnis impius iniquus, non tamen omnis

iniquus est impius. Impius namque pro infideli ponitur, id est a pietate religionis alienus; iniquus vero dicitur, qui pravitate operis ab aequitate discordat, vel si fortasse Christianae fidei nomen portat. Beati igitur Job voce typica sancta Ecclesia, quae alios rectae fidei contradicentes tolerat. impium se habere fatetur inimicum. Quia vero alios sub praetextu fidei intus positos in pravis operibus patitur, iniquum suum adversarium detestatur. Si autem sicut, et quasi, oportet magis ut pro similitudine positum sentiamus, sancta Ecclesia eos quos viventes carnaliter intra se tolerat de similitudine impiorum notat. Intus quippe ei inimicus est, qui fidelem se dum affirmat vocibus, moribus negat. Et quia eum velut infidelem aestimat qui illam specie tenus intus positus vitio pravae actionis impugnat, recte dicit: Sicut impius inimicus meus, et adversarius meus quasi iniquus. Ac si aperte dicat: A me etiam fide discrepat, qui mihi opere non concordat. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII [Rec. VII].

VERS. 8. Quae enim spes est hypocritae, si avare rapiat, et non liberet Deus animam ejus? 13. Hypocrita avarus est et raptor. Hypocrita, qui Latina lingua dicitur simulator, justus esse non appetit, sed videri. Et idcirco avarus raptor est, quia dum inique agens desiderat de sanctitate venerari, laudem vitae rapit alienae. Studium vero esse hypocritarum solet ut et quod sunt supprimant, et hoc quod non sunt esse se hominibus innotescant, quatenus mensuram suam per aestimationem transeant, et praeire se caeteros actionis nomine ostendant. Refugiunt videri quod sunt, et ante oculos hominum superducta quadam innocentiae honestate se vestiunt. 562 Unde recte per Evangelium voce nostri Redemptoris increpantur, cum eis dicitur: Vae vobis, hypocritae, quia similes facti estis sepulcris dealbatis, quae a foris quidem apparent hominibus speciosa, intus vero sunt plena ossibus mortuorum, et omni spurcitia. Ita et vos foris quidem apparetis hominibus justi, intus vero pleni estis avaritia et iniquitate (Matth. XXIII, 27; Luc. XI,

39). [Vet. V.] Quo contra omnes veraciter sancti non solum gloriam supra modum suum omnino non appetunt, sed etiam hoc ipsum videri refugiunt quod esse meruerunt. Unde ille praedicator egregius veritatis, contra pseudoapostolos loquens, dum virtutes eximias operationis suae pro discipulorum eruditione narraret (II Cor. XI, 13, seq.), dum tot se pericula tolerasse coacervata persecutione describeret, et post haec usque ad tertium coelum, rursumque in paradisum raptum se esse memoraret, ubi tanta cognoscere potuisset, quanta loqui omnino non posset (Ibid. XII, 2), erat de se adhuc fortasse admirabiliora locuturus, sed ab humana laude alta se consideratione temperans, subdit: Parco autem, ne quis me existimet supra id quod videt in me, aut audit aliquid ex me (Ibid. XII, 6). Habebat ergo adhuc dicendum de se aliquid, qui parcit dicere; sed egit utrumque doctor egregius, ut et loquendo quae egerat discipulos instrueret, et tacendo sese intra humilitatis limitem custodiret. Nimis namque esset ingratus, si de se discipulis tota reticeret, et fortasse nimis incautus, si de se tota vel discipulis proderet. Sed mirabiliter, ut dictum est, egit utrumque, ut loquendo erudiret vitam audientium, et tacendo custodiret suam. 14. Sancti aliquando se laudant innoxie. Sciendum vero est quod sancti viri quoties de se aliquid sequentibus innotescunt, morem creatoris sui imitantur. Nam Deus, qui nos prohibet ne proprio ore laudemur, per Scripturam sacram laudes suas loquitur, non quia ipse eis indiget, qui proficere laudibus nescit, sed dum suam nobis magnitudinem narrat, nostram ad se imperitiam sublevat; et bona sua loquendo nos edocet, quem omnino homo non cognosceret, si de se tacere voluisset. Idcirco ergo laudes suas indicat, ut valeamus eum audientes cognoscere, cognoscentes amare, amantes sequi, sequentes adipisci, adipiscentes vero ejus visione perfrui. Unde Psalmista ait: Virtutem operum suorum annuntiabit populo suo, ut det illis haereditatem gentium (Psal. CX, 6). Ac si aperte dicat: Idcirco fortitudinem suae operationis insinuat, ut eam qui audierit donis ditescat. Morem ergo sui

creatoris imitantes sancti viri, nonnunquam quaedam de se, ut audientes instruant, non ut ipsi proficiant, manifestant; et tamen in his alta se consideratione custodiunt, ne dum alios a terrena intentione erigunt, ipsi in terrenae laudis appetitione mergantur. Quorum plerumque dicta imitantur hypocritae, sed dictorum sensum penitus ignorant, quia quod justi agunt ad utilitatem proximi, hoc ipsi faciunt ad extensionem nominis sui. Sanctus autem vir hypocritas intuens, nequaquam gloriam futuram appetere, sed cupere praesentem tenere ait: Quae enim spes est hypocritae? quia dum praesentia diligit, futura minime sperat. Scriptum namque est: Quod enim videt quis, quid sperat (Rom. VIII, 24)? Idcirco ergo ab hypocrita ad aeterna praemia per spem minime tenditur, quia quod alio quaerendum 563 fuerat, hic se tenere gloriatur. Cujus quia culpa prolata est, etiam poena subjungitur, cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 9. Nunquid clamorem ejus audiet Deus, cum venerit super illum angustia? 15. Qui Deum non audit in lege loquentem, orans in extremis a Deo non audietur. Clamorem ejus angustiae tempore Deus non audit, quia tranquillitatis tempore in praeceptis suis ipse clamantem Dominum non audivit. Scriptum quippe est: Qui avertit aurem suam ne audiat legem, oratio ejus erit exsecrabilis (Prov. XXVIII, 9). Sanctus itaque vir intuens quia omnes qui nunc operari recta contemnunt extremo se tempore ad petitionis verba convertunt, dicit: Nunquid clamorem ejus audiet Deus? Quibus profecto verbis vocibus nostri Redemptoris obsequitur, qui ait: Novissime veniunt et fatuae virgines, dicentes: Domine, Domine, aperi nobis. Et respondetur eis: Amen dico vobis, nescio vos (Matth. XXV, 11); quia tanto magna tunc exercetur severitas, quanto nunc major misericordia prorogatur; et districte tunc judicium non correctis exerit, qui pietatem nunc delinquentibus patienter impendit. Hinc etenim propheta ait: Quaerite

Dominum dum inveniri potest, invocate eum dum prope est (Isai. LV, 6). Modo enim non videtur, et prope est; tunc videbitur, et prope non erit. Necdum in judicio apparuit, et si quaeritur, invenitur. Nam miro modo cum in judicio apparuerit, et videri potest, et non potest inveniri. [Vet. VI.] Hinc Salomon sapientiam refert et suaviter blandientem, et terribiliter judicantem, dicens: Sapientia foris praedicat, in plateis dat vocem suam (Prov. I, 20). Cujus vocem quoque insinuat, subdens: Usquequo parvuli diligitis infantiam, et stulti ea quae sibi sunt noxia cupiunt, et imprudentes odibunt scientiam (Ibid., 22)? Convertimini ad correptionem meam; en proferam vobis spiritum meum, et ostendam verba mea (Ibid., 23). En qualibus verbis expressa est dulcedo vocantis. Videamus nunc quibus insinuatur modis severitas increpantis, ut in fine quandoque se exerceat districtio punientis. Quia vocavi, inquit, et renuistis; extendi manum meam, et non fuit qui aspiceret; despexistis omne consilium meum, et increpationes meas neglexistis (Ibid., I, 24). Dicat jam qualiter feriat, quos ad se nullatenus revertentes tanta longanimitate sustentat. Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo et subsannabo, cum vobis quod timebatis advenerit, cum irruerit repentina calamitas, et interitus quasi tempestas ingruerit, quando venerit super vos tribulatio et angustia. Tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam; mane consurgent, et non invenient me (Ibid., I, 26). Ore itaque sapientissimi Salomonis cuncta de superno judicio diligenter expressa sunt, quia et prius dulciter vocat, et postmodum terribiliter increpat, et ad extremum inretractabiliter damnat. Bene ergo dicitur: Nunquid clamorem ejus audiet Deus, quando venerit super illum angustia? Quia nimirum omnis hypocrita tunc remedium in clamore non invenit, qui nunc tempus congruum clamoris perdit. De cujus adhuc pravitate subjungitur:

CAPUT IX [Rec. VIII].

VERS. 10. Aut poterit in Omnipotente delectari? 16. Utrique amores Dei et mundi, uno in corde se non capiunt. Qui enim terrenarum rerum amore vincitur, in Deo nullatenus delectatur. Esse quidem sine delectatione anima nunquam potest, nam aut infimis 564 delectatur aut summis, et quanto altiori studio exercetur ad summa, tanto majori fastidio torpescit ad infima; quantoque acriore cura inardescit ad infima, tanto tepore damnabili frigescit a summis. Utraque enim simul et aequaliter amari non possunt. Unde Joannes apostolus sciens inter spinas amorum saecularium supernae charitatis messem germinare non posse, priusquam aeterni amoris semina proferat, de audientium cordibus sancta verbi manu amorum saecularium spinas eradicat, dicens: Nolite diligere mundum, neque ea quae in mundo sunt (I Joan. II, 15). Moxque subjungit: Quia si quis diligit mundum, non est charitas Patris in eo. Ac si aperte dicat: Utrique se amores in uno corde non capiunt; nec in eo seges supernae charitatis pullulat, in quo illam spinae infimae delectationis necant. Atque illas ex hac infima delectatione nascentes enumerat punctiones, dicens: Quia omne quod in mundo est, concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitae, quae non est ex Patre, sed ex mundo est; et mundus transit, et concupiscentia ejus (Ibid. II, 16). Delectari ergo in Deo hypocrita non valet, quia in ejus mente desideria superna non prodeunt, quam profecto spinae terreni amoris premunt. De quo apte subditur.

CAPUT X.

IBID. Et invocare Deum omni tempore? 17. Hypocrita Deum non invocat, nisi in angustiis positus. Tunc quippe hypocrita Deum invocat, cum hunc terrenarum rerum tribulatio angustat. Nam cum in hoc saeculo effectum quaesitae felicitatis invenerit, auctorem qui hanc ipsam felicitatem tribuit non requirit. Quia vero, ut praediximus, esse ars docentium debet ut in auditorum suorum mentibus prius studeant perversa destruere, et

postmodum recta praedicare, ne bonum sanctae praedicationis semen plena malis corda non capiant; unde ad Jeremiam dicitur: Ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et regna, ut evellas et destruas, et disperdas et dissipes, et aedifices, et piantes (Jerem, I, 10) (prius itaque jubetur ut destruat, et postmodum aedificet; prius ut evellat, et postmodum plantet, quia nequaquam rectae veritatis fundamentum ponitur, nisi prius erroris fabrica destruatur); beatus Job postquam causas universalis Ecclesiae amicorum suorum dictis quasi contra haereticorum verba respondit, eorumque elationem multimoda responsione dextruxit, jam docere se perhibet, ut videlicet aperte videatur in his quae subdidit recta plantare, in his vero quae praemisit evulsisse perversa. Sequitur:

CAPUT XI [Rec. IX].

VERS. 11. Docebo vos per manum Dei, quae Omnipotens habeat, nec abscondam. 18. Sancti Deo suam sapientiam tribuunt, superbi sibi. Sic beatus Job loquitur verbis suis, ut aliquid signet ex nostris. Nam sancta Ecclesia docens, in quantum cognoscere expedit, nihil veritatis abscondit. Quia enim manus Dei vocatur Filius (Omnia quippe per ipsum facta sunt (Joan. I, 3), per manum Dei docere se perhibet eos quos in propria sapientia remanere fatuos videt. Ac si aperte dicat: Ego ex me aliquid nescio; sed quidquid de veritate sentio, hoc ex ejusdem Veritatis largitate comprehendo. Vos idcirco recta non sapitis, quia hanc eamdem vestram sapientiam non Dei manui, sed vobismetipsis datis. Nam hostes sanctae Ecclesiae, si quid veri aliquando sentiunt, id propriis 565 viribus tribuunt; et tanto magis se privant superna sapientia, quanto illam quasi ex suo ingenio habere privatam volunt. Quibus aliquando datur ad judicium suum ut recte quidem aliqua sciant, sed ex ipsa hac scientia obligatiores ad poenam fiant. Unde apte subditur:

CAPUT XII [Vet. VII].

VERS. 12. Ecce vos omnes nostis, et quid sine causa vana loquimini? 19. Quibusdam datur ad judicium ut recte nonnulla sciant. Scriptum est: Servus qui cognovit voluntatem domini sui, et non praeparavit, et non fecit secundum voluntatem ejus, vapulabit multis. Qui autem non cognovit, et non fecit digna, plagis vapulabit paucis (Luc. XII, 47). Rursumque scriptum est: Scienti igitur bonum facere, et non facienti, peccatum est illi (Jac. IV, 17). Ad majoris ergo culpae cumulum hostes suos sancta Ecclesia perhibet et scire quod sequi debeant, et sequi nolle quod sciant. De quibus alias dictum est: Descendant in infernum viventes (Psal. LIV, 16). Vivi sunt qui sentiunt quae erga illos fiunt. Mortui enim nec sciunt omnino, nec sentiunt. Mortui itaque qui non sentiunt pro nescientibus, viventes vero qui sentiunt pro scientibus poni solent. Viventes ergo in infernum descendere est scientes sentientesque peccare. [Rec. X.] Sequitur, VERS. 13, Haec est pars hominis impii apud Deum, et haereditas violentorum, quam ab Omnipotente suscipient. Quam profecto partem haereditatemque protinus insinuat, cum subjungit:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 14. Si multiplicati fuerint filii ejus, in gladio erunt, et nepotes ejus non saturabuntur pane. 20. Haeretici sacrae Scripturae vim inferentes a Deo feriendi. Non absurde impii vocantur haeretici, qui per errorem pravi dogmatis a cognitione sunt veritatis alieni, quos sequenti verbo etiam violentos appellat, quippe qui Scripturae sacrae sententias recta dogmata continentes ad intellectum pravum conantur violenter inflectere. Violenti ergo sunt, et si non rebus hominum, certe sensibus praeceptorum. Filii autem violentorum sunt sequaces haereticorum, qui dum eorum errori consentiunt, quasi ex eorum praedicatione generantur. Sed multiplicati in

gladio erunt, quia quamvis modo immensa multitudine in perdita libertate succrescant, venturi tamen judicis sententia feriuntur. Unde per Moysen Dominus dicit: Gladius meus manducabit carnes (Deut. XXXII, 42). Dei enim gladius carnes comedit, quia in extremo judicio ejus sententia eos qui carnaliter sapiunt occidit. Qua in re quaerendum est cur dicatur quod hanc partem atque haereditatem suam pravi ab Omnipotente percipiunt. Sed recte considerantibus liquet quia etsi a seipsis habuerunt injuste agere, supernae tamen aequitati suppetit injuste acta juste judicare, ut divina sententia ordinet in poenam quos inordinata sua actio traxit ad culpam. De quibus apte subjungitur: Et nepotes ejus non saturabuntur pane. 21. A veritatis cognitione jejunant Scripturam legentes ad quaestionem, non ad refectionem. Nepotes quippe haereticorum sunt qui de errantium filiorum praedicatione nascuntur. Quos nequaquam panis satiat, quia dum in sacri verbi pabulo plus quaerunt sentire quam capiunt, semper a veritatis cognitione jejunant; et praedicamenta doctrinae quae student ad quaestionem quaerere, 566 habere non valent ad refectionem. Quia vero nonnullos ex iisdem haereticis sancta Ecclesia colligit, nonnullos in malitia sua pertinaces relinquit, protinus additur:

CAPUT XIV VERS.

15. Qui reliqui fuerint ex eo, sepelientur in interitu. 22. In errore morientium poena. Ex eo videlicet haereticorum populo derelicti sepeliuntur in interitu, quia dum ad lucem veritatis non redeunt, profecto in poena perpetua, intelligentia terrena deprimuntur. Et quia nonnunquam dum auctor errantium plebium rapitur ad poenam, seductae plebes reformantur ad veritatis scientiam, et tunc ad veram cognitionem redeunt subditi, cum ad aeterna supplicia perveniunt hi qui male fuerant praelati, apte subjungitur: IBID. Et viduae illius non plorabunt. 23. Erroris doctoribus ad poenam raptis, deceptae plebes saepe resipiscunt. Quas viduas ejus accipimus, nisi

subjectas plebes morte illius feliciter destitutas? Quia saepe, ut dictum est, dum praedicator erroris ad aeterna supplicia rapitur, subjectae plebes illius ad cognitionis verae gratiam revertuntur. His enim plebibus perversus praedicator quasi maritus praefuit, quia male eis conjunctus inhaeserat corruptor mentis. Nequaquam ergo viduae, vel destitutae plorant, quia morte pravi doctoris viam veritatis inveniunt, ex cujus interitu affligi posse videbantur. Vel certe non plorant viduae, quia in suo errore remanentes, dum sanctum fuisse aestimant praedicatorem suum, spe falsa ne lugeant consolantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI [Vet.

VIII, Rec. XI]. VERS. 16, 17. Si comportaverit sicut terra margentum, et sicut lutum praeparaverit vestimenta, praeparabit quidem, sed justus vestietur illis, et argentum innocens dividet. 24. Catholici haereticos eisdem Scrip. sacrae testimoniis quae proferunt, debellant. Argentum intelligi sacri eloquii claritas solet, sicut alias dicitur: Eloquia Domini eloquia casta, argentum igne examinatum (Psal. XI, 7). Et quia nonnulli eloquium Dei non interius per exhibitionem, sed exterius per ostensionem habere concupiscunt; idcirco per prophetam dicitur: Disperierunt omnes involuti argento (Saphon. I, 11). Hi nimirum qui eloquio Dei non interiori refectione se replent, sed exteriori ostensione se vestiunt. Unde et horum argentum, id est haereticorum eloquium, terrae est comparatum, quia de Scriptura sacra ut aliquid sciant ex appetitu terrenae laudis elaborant. Qui etiam sicut lutum praeparant vestimenta, quia fluxe et inquinabiliter ea quibus se tueri volunt Scripturae sacrae contexunt testimonia. Praeparabit quidem, sed justus vestietur illis, quia vir recta fide plenus, quae sanctis solet ad justitiam deputari, ea ipsa Scripturae sacrae quae haereticus affert testimonia colligit, et erroris ejus pertinaciam inde convincit. Contra nos namque dum sacrae legis testimonia apportant, secum nobis afferunt unde vincantur. Unde et

David typum Domini, Golias vero haereticorum superbiam signans, hoc rebus locuti sunt quod nos verbis aperimus. Golias quippe cum gladio, David vero cum pera pastorali venit ad praelium. Sed eumdem Goliam David superans suo gladio occidit, quod nos quoque agimus, qui promissi David 567 membra ex ejus fieri dignatione meruimus. Nam cum superbientes haereticos et sacrae Scripturae sententias deferentes, eisdem verbis atque sententiis quas proferunt vincimus, quasi elatum Goliam suo gladio detruncamus. Justus ergo vestitur eis vestimentis quae praeparat injustus, quia vir sanctus eisdem sententiis ad veritatem utitur, quibus se perversus quisque doctum ostendere contra veritatem conatur. 25. Verbum Dei discrete debet exponi, et singulis aptari. Et argentum innocens dividet. Argentum innocens dividere, est eloquia Domini minute discreteque exponere, et unicuique quid digne congruat coaptare. Nam eloquium Domini, quod hic argentum, vel vestimenta, hoc alibi spolia nominatur. Quod etiam Psalmista testatur per comparationem, dicens: Laetabor ego super eloquia tua, sicut qui invenit spolia multa (Psal. CXVIII, 162). Quae spolia idcirco vocata sunt, quia ad fidem Domini gentilitate transeunte, Judaei sacris eloquiis, quibus induti fuerant, exuuntur. [Vet. IX.] De hac quoque argenti vel spoliorum divisione alias dicitur: Benjamin lupus rapax, mane comedet praedam, vespere dividet spolia (Genes. XLIX, 27). Quibus profecto dictis Paulus apostolus designatur, de Benjamin stirpe progenitus, qui mane praedam comedit, quia in primordiis suis fideles quos potuit rapiens crudelitati propriae satisfecit. Vespere spolia divisit, quia fidelis postmodum factus sacra eloquia exponendo distribuit. 26. Discernenda sunt quae salubriter ab haereticis dicta. Quamvis hoc argentum quod dividit innocens intelligi et aliter potest. Haeretici namque, ut facile valeant perversa suadere, dictis suis quaedam recta permiscent, ut animos audientium ex rectis sensibus trahant, ex perversis feriant. Qui in praeceptis Dei, quia sana insanaque locutione variantur, bene in Evangelio decem

leprosorum sunt specie designati (Luc. XVII, 12), quorum colori sano dum vitiosus candor aspergitur, immoderato hoc candore foedantur. Unde admonemur non plus sapere, quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem (Rom. XII, 3). Qui etiam quia necdum Deum diligunt, de quo male sentiunt, nec proximum, a quo dividuntur, decalogi praeceptis adversi sunt, atque ideo ad deprecandum Dominum decem veniunt. Pro eo autem quod sanis insana miscuerunt, coloris diversitate variantur. Sed quia in ejus praeceptis offenderunt, id illum unde offenderant vocant dicentes: Jesu praeceptor (Luc. XVII, 13); unde et mox curari meruerunt. Ergo quia vir catholicus quae ab eis recte, vel quae prave sentiuntur, intelligit, argentum innocens dividit, id est quae ab eis salubriter, vel quae pestifere fuerint dicta discernit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 18. Aedificavit sicut linea domum suam. 27. Haeresum magistri mentes quas occupant corrumpunt. Tinea sibi domum corrumpendo aedificat. Nec meliori potuit comparatione haereticus demonstrari, qui locum suae perfidiae non nisi in mentibus quas corruperit facit, qui etiam sequaces suos ab aeterno igne liberos esse pollicetur. Spondet quippe eis refrigerium quietis aeternae; sed verba ejus soliditatem non habent, quia plenitudine veritatis carent. Unde subjungitur: Et sicut custos fecit umbraculum. Umbraculum namque custodis nullo fundamento solidatur, sed tempore mox transeunte destruitur. Et promissa ab haereticis requies 568 cum tempore destruitur, quae post hanc vitam nullatenus invenitur. Et quia saepe haeretici in contemptu universalis Ecclesiae potentum saeculi patrociniis fulciuntur, eisque divites protectione atque administratione quanta praevalent opitulari non cessant, ipse etiam quilibet contra conditorem suum rebus temporalibus intumescens sancti viri nunc sententia

tangitur, atque ab speciali haereticorum interitu ad generalem elatorum omnium definitionem sermo derivatur, cum subditur:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 19. Dives cum dormierit, nihil secum auferet; aperiet oculos suos, et nihil inveniet. 28. Bona temporalia nobis servando amittimus, pauperibus erogando servamus. Cui nimirum sententiae Psalmsta concinens dicit: Turbati sunt omnes insipientes corde; dormierunt somnum suum, et nihil invenerunt omnes viri divitiarum in manibus suis (Psal. LXXV, 6). Ut enim in sua manu divites post mortem quidquam inveniant, eis ante mortem dicitur divitias suas in quorum manibus ponant: Facite vobis amicos de mammona iniquitatis, ut cum defeceritis, recipiant vos in aeterna tabernacula (Luc. XVI, 9). Dives cum dormierit, nihil secum auferet [Rec. XII]. Res suas cum moreretur secum tolleret, si ad petentis vocem cum viveret sibi tulisset. Nam terrena omnia quae servando amittimus, largiendo servamus; patrimoniumque nostrum retentum perditur, manet erogatum. Diu enim cum rebus nostris durare non possumus, quia aut nos illas moriendo deserimus, aut illae nos viventes quasi deserunt pereundo. Agendum ergo nobis est ut res absolute perituras, in non pereuntem cogamus transire mercedem. [Vet. X.] 29. Peccatoris oculos mors aperit, ut fugere a se bona temporalia videat, poenamque succedere. Sed mirandum valde est quod dicitur: Cum dormierit, aperiet oculos suos, et nihil inveniet. Ut dormiamus quippe, oculos claudimus, et evigilantes aperimus. Sed hac in re, quia homo ex anima constat et corpore, cum unius rei somnus dicitur, alterius vigiliae demonstrantur, quia cum corpus obdormiscit in morte, tunc anima evigilat in vera cognitione. Et dormit ergo dives, et oculos aperit, quia cum carne moritur, ejus anima videre cogitur, quod providere contempsit. Tunc profecto in vera cognitione evigilat, tunc nihil esse conspicit quod tenebat. Tunc se vacuam invenit, quae plenam rebus prae

caeteris se hominibus esse laetabatur. Dormit, et nihil secum aufert, nihil nimirum de rebus quas tenuit. Nam culpa rerum simul ducitur, quamvis hic omnia, pro quibus culpa perpetrata est, relinquantur. Eat ergo nunc, et acceptis rebus tumeat, seseque super caeteros extollat, glorietur se habere quod proximus non habet. Veniet quandoque tempus ut evigilet, et tunc cognoscat quam vacuum fuerit quod in somno tenuerat. Saepe namque contingit dormienti inopi ut se per somnium divitem videat, atque ex eisdem rebus animum extollat, laetetur se habere quod non habuit, jamque dedignari quaerat a quibus dedignatum esse se doluit. Sed repente evigilans, evigilasse se doleat, qui interim divitiarum imaginem vel dormiens tenebat. Gemit enim protinus sub paupertatis pondere, et inopiae suae angustiis premitur; et eo pejus, quo ad tempus brevissimum, vel vacue dives fuit. Sic sic nimirum hujus mundi sunt divites, qui rebus acceptis tument. Bene operari de sua abundantia nesciunt, 569 quasi dormientes sunt divites; sed paupertatem suam evigilantes inveniunt, quia nihil secum ad illud judicium quod permaneat ferunt, et quanto nunc ad breve tempus sublimius elati sunt, tanto contra se in perpetuum gravius ingemiscunt. Dicat ergo: Aperiet oculos suos, et nihil inveniet, quia illic aperit ad supplicia, quos hic ad misericordiam clausos tenebat. Aperit oculos suos, et pietatis fructum non invenit, quos hic clausos tenuit cum invenit. Tarde quoque illi oculos aperiunt, qui, teste Sapientia, damnationis suae tempore dicturi referuntur: Quid nobis profuit superbia, divitiarum jactantia quid contulit nobis? Transierunt omnia illa tanquam umbra, et tanquam nuntius percurrens (Sap. V, 8). Vilia et fugitiva fuisse quae tunuerant, jam amissa cognoscunt, quae quandiu aderant stultis eorum cordibus et magna et mansura videbantur. Sero dives aperuit oculos (Luc. XVI, 23), quando Lazarum requiescentem vidit, quem jacentem ante januam videre contempsit. Intellexit ibi quod hic facere noluit; in damnatione sua cognoscere compulsus est quid fuit quod

perdidit, quando indigentem proximum non agnovit. De quo adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 20. Apprehendet eum quasi aqua inopia, nocte opprimet eum tempestas. 30. Stupenda reprobi divitis post mortem inopia. Videamus nunc inopiam ardentis divitis, cujus tanta abundantia fuit epulantis. Ait enim: Pater Abraham, miserere mei, et mitte Lazarum, ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aquam, et refrigeret linguam meam quia crucior in hac flamma (Luc. XVI, 24). Quibus verbis nobis non hoc innotescitur, quia illic in tanto ardore una tunc ad sufficientiam refrigerii aquae stilla requiratur, sed quod is qui de abundantia peccaverit, illic aestuante nimis crematur inopia. Videmus enim in verbis divitis ex subtilissimo Dei judicio quam digna tali culpae poena responderit. Agente namque inopia, illic usque ad minima petenda compulsus est, qui hic, agente tenacia, usque ad minima neganda pervenit. Quid retribui subtilius, quid districtius potest? Guttam aquae petit, qui micas panis negavit. Apprehendit ergo eum quasi aqua inopia. Non immerito aquae tunc illa inopia comparatur, quia in inferno cruciat, qui susceptos in profundis absorbens, solet lacus nomine designari. Unde per prophetam quoque humani generis voce dicitur: Lapsa est in lacum vita mea (Thren. III, 53). Ereptorum vero exsultatione cantatur: Domine Deus meus, clamavi ad te, et sanasti me; Domine, abstraxisti ab inferis animam meam, salvasti me a descendentibus in lacum (Psal. XXIX, 3). [Vet. XI.] 31. Divini judicii turbo, qua non putat hora, ideoque nocte, eum opprimet. Nocte opprimet eum tempestas. Quid hoc loco noctem, nisi absconditum tempus repentini exitus appellat? Tempestatis vero nomine, judicii turbinem designat. Quod etiam Psalmista testatur, dicens: Deus manifeste veniet, Deus noster, et non silebit; ignis in conspectu ejus ardebit, et in circuitu ejus tempestas valida (Psalm. XLIX, 3). De qua tempestate etiam Sapientia per

Salomonem dicit: Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo, et subsannabo, cum vobis quod timebatis advenerit, cum irruerit repentina calamitas, et interitus quasi tempestas ingruerit (Prov. I, 26). Et quia ipsa venturi exitus ignorantia nox vocatur, nocte opprimet eum tempestas, id est turbo eum divini 570 judicii dum ignorat apprehendet. Hinc est namque quod per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Si sciret paterfamilias qua hora fur veniret, vigilaret utique, et non sineret perfodi domum suam. Et vos estote parati, quia qua hora non putatis Filius hominis veniet (Matth. XXIV, 43). Hinc etiam contra malum servum dicitur: Si autem dixerit malus servus ille in corde suo: Moram facit dominus meus venire, et coeperit percutere conservos suos; manducet autem et bibat cum ebriis; veniet dominus servi illius in die qua non sperat, et hora qua ignorat (Ibid., 48). Hinc Paulus discipulis dicit: Vos autem, fratres, non estis in tenebris, ut vos dies illa tanquam fur comprehendat. Omnes enim vos filii lucis estis, et filii diei: non sumus noctis neque tenebrarum (I Thess. V, 4). Hic superbienti diviti Dei voce dicitur: Stulte, hac nocte animam tuam repetunt a te; quae autem praeparasti, cujus erunt (Luc. XII, 20)? Nocte animam reddere perhibetur qui, mortem non praevidens, in tenebris cordis abstrahitur. Ait ergo: Nocte opprimet eum tempestas. Quia enim non vult agere bona quae videt, deprehenditur interitus sui tempestate quam non videt. De quo adhuc subditur.

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 21. Tollet eum ventus urens, et auferet. 32. Auferetur a diabolo, qui merito dicitur ventus urens. Quis hoc loco ventus urens, nisi malignus spiritus vocatur, qui desideriorum flammas in corde excitat, ut ad aeternitatem suppliciorum trahat? Perversum ergo quemlibet ventus urens tollere dicitur, quia insidiator malignus spiritus, qui viventem quemque accendit ad vitia, morientem trahit ad tormenta. Nam quia ventus urens immundus spiritus solet intelligi, qui malae suggestionis flatu ad terrena

desideria iniquorum corda succendit, Jeremias propheta testatur, dicens: Ollam succensam ego video, et faciem ejus a facie Aquilonis (Jerem. I, 13). Olla namque succensa est cor humanum, saecularium curarum ardoribus, desideriorumque anxietatibus fervens. Quae a facie Aquilonis succenditur, id est diaboli suggestionibus inflammatur. Ipse enim vocari nomine Aquilonis solet, qui dixit: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis, ascendam super altitudinem nubium (Isai. XIV, 13). Ad hujus igitur urentis venti uniuscujusque electi mens adustione temperatur, quando in ea vitiorum fervor exstinguitur, et desideriorum carnalium flamma frigescit. Unde et sancta Ecclesia in sponsi sui laudibus laeta clamat: Sub umbra illius quem desideraveram sedi (Cant. II, 3). De hujus ardoris temperie ei per Isaiam promittente Domino dicitur: Pro saliunca ascendet abies, et pro urtica crescet myrtus (Isai. LV, 13). Pro saliunca namque in ea ascendit abies, dum in sanctorum corde pro abjectione terrenae cogitationis altitudo supernae contemplationis exoritur. Urtica vero igneae omnino naturae est. Myrtus autem temperativae fertur esse virtutis. Pro urtica igitur crescit myrtus, cum justorum mentes a prurigine et ardore vitiorum ad cogitationum temperiem tranquilitatemque perveniunt, dum jam terrena non appetunt, dum flammas carnis desideriis coelestibus exstinguunt. [Vet. XII.] 33. Mentis refrigerium Mariae datum. Propter hoc quoque mentis refrigerium coelitus datum Mariae dicitur: Virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi (Luc. I, 35). Quamvis hac in re per obumbrationis 571 vocabulum incarnandi Dei utraque potuit natura signari. Umbra enim a lumine formatur et corpore. Dominus autem per divinitatem lumen est, qui, mediante anima, in ejus utero fieri dignatus est per humanitatem corpus. Quia ergo lumen incorporeum in ejus erat utero corporandum, ei quae incorporeum concepit ad corpus dicitur: Virtus Altissimi obrumbabit tibi; id est, corpus in te humanitatis accipiet incorporeum lumen divinitatis. Sed jam de iniquo quolibet quod coepimus exsequamur. Tollit ergo eum ventus urens, quia

videlicet malignus spiritus eum quem nunc succenderit igne perversae concupiscentiae, rapit postmodum ad flammas gehennae. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXI.

IBID. Et velut turbo rapiet eum de loco suo. 34. Quis sit iniquorum locus. Locus perversorum est temporalis vitae delectatio et carnis voluptas. Quasi turbine igitur unusquisque de loco suo rapitur, cum a cunctis suis delectiationibus extremo territus die separatur. De quo extremo die apte mox subditur:

CAPUT XXII [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 22.Emittet super eum, et non parcet. 35. Deus electos flagellat hic ut parcat, reprobos ut punire incipiat. Omnis percussio divina, aut purgatio vitae praesentis est, aut initium poenae sequentis.Peccatorem Deus quoties feriendo corrigit, ad hoc flagellum emittit, ut parcat. Cum vero ejus vitam in peccato permanentem feriendo concludit, flagellum emittit, sed nequaquam parcit. Qui enim flagellum emisit ut parceret, ad hoc emittit quandoque ne parcat. In hac namque vita Dominus tanto magis studet ut parcat, quanto magis exspectando flagellat, sicut ipse voce angeli ad Joannem ait: Ego quos amo, arguo et castigo (Apoc. III, 19). Et sicut alias dicitur: Quem diligit Daminus castigat, flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit (Hebr. XII, 6). Econtra autem de flagello damnationis scriptum est: In operibus manuum suarum comprehensus est peccator (Psal. IX, 17). De quo per Jeremiam Dominus dicit, dum incorrigibiliter delinquentes populos videt, quos non jam sub disciplina filios, sed sub districta percussione intuetur ut hostes: Plaga inimici percussi te, castigatione crudeli (Jerem. XXX, 14). Et quod hic dicitur: Non parcet; ibi quoque verbis aliis declaratur: Quid clamas super contritione tua? insanabilis est dolor tuus (Ibid., 15). Unde hoc semper electi provident, ut ante ad justitiam redeant, quam sese ira judicis

inexstinguibiliter accendat, ne ultimo flagello deprehensi simul eis finiatur vita cum culpa. Flagellum namque tunc diluet culpam, cum mutaverit vitam. Nam cujus mores non mutat, non expiat actiones. Omnis ergo divina percussio, aut purgatio in nobis vitae praesentis est, aut initium poenae sequentis. Propter eos enim qui ex flagello proficiunt dictum est: Qui fingis dolorem in praecepto (Psalm. XCIII, 26). Quia dum flagellatur iniquus, et corrigitur; audire praeceptum noluit, audit dolorem. Dolor ergo in praecepto fingitur, ei qui a malis operibus quasi praecepti vice, dolore cohibetur. De his vero quos damnant flagella et non liberant, dicitur: Percussisti eos, nec doluerunt; attrivisti eos, et renuerunt accipere disciplinam (Jerem. V, 3). His flagella ab hac vita inchoant, et in aeterna percussione perdurant. Unde per Moysen Dominus dicit: Ignis exarsit ab ira mea, et ardebit usque ad inferos deorsum (Deut. XXXII, 22). Quantum ad praesentem etenim percussionem spectat, recte 572 dicitur: Ignis exarsit ab ira mea (De Poenit., d. 3, c. 43). Quantum vero ad aeternam damnationem, apte mox subditur: Et ardebit usque ad inferos deorsum. Licet a quibusdam dici soleat illud quod scriptum est: Non judicat Deus bis in idipsum (Nahum. I, 9). Qui tamen hoc quod per prophetam de iniquis dicitur, non attendunt: Et duplici confusione contere eos (Jerem. XVII, 18). Et quod alias scriptum est: Jesus populum de terra Aegypti salvans, secundo eos qui non crediderunt, perdidit (Judae, V). Quibus tamen si consensum praebemus, quamlibet culpam bis feriri non posse, hoc ex peccato percussis atque in peccato suo morientibus debet aestimari, quia eorum percussio hic coepta illic perficitur, ut incorrectis unum flagellum sit quod temporaliter incipit, sed in aeternis suppliciis consummatur, quatenus eis qui omnino corrigi renuunt jam praesentium flagellorum percussio sequentium sit initium tormentorum. Emittet ergo super eum, et non parcet. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIII [Vet. XIII].

IBID. De manu ejus fugiens fugiet. 36. Ferientis manum sola emendatione evadimus.Ille etenim de manu fugit ferientis, qui suae pravitatem corrigit actionis. Vel certe quia in sacro eloquio manus operatio solet intelligi, de manu percussi fugit qui, dum pravi interitum conspicit, vias pravitatis relinquit. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 23.Stringet super eum manus suas. 37. In aliorum poena quid nobis timendum sit conspicimus. Manus quippe stringere est vitae suae opera in rectitudine confirmare. Unde etiam Paulus ait: Remissas manus et dissoluta genua erigite (Hebr. XII, 12). Dum itaque alienum interitum conspiciunt, revocantur ad cor, ut recogitent suum; et unde alius ad tormenta ducitur, a tormento alius inde liberatur. Stringit ergo super eum manus suas, quia conspicit in aliena poena quid timeat; et dum delinquentem sic percussum conspicit, dissoluta sua opera justitiae vigore constringit. Sicque fit ut qui iniquus vivens multos ad culpam traxerat delectatione peccati, quosdam moriens a culpa revocet terrore tormenti. Quod etiam provenire bonis Psalmista testatur, dicens: Laetabitur justus cum viderit vindictam impiorum, manus suas tavabit in sanguine peccatorum (Psal. LVII, 11). In peccatorum morientium sanguinne justi lavantur manus, quia dum eorum poena conspicitur, conspicientis vita mundatur. Sequitur.

CAPUT XXV.

IBID. Et sibilabit super illum, intuens locum ejus. 38. Sicque a peccato compescimur. Quid in sibilo, nisi intentio admirationis exprimitur? Si vero in sibilo alia fortasse significatio quaeritur moriente peccatore, hi qui interitum ejus aspiciunt, os in sibilo stringunt, dum ad ea quae contempserant verba spiritalia convertuntur, ut jam credere et praedicare incipiant quae prius dum iniquum florere cernerent non credebant. Nam fit

plerumque ut infirmorum animus eo magis de auditu veritatis trepidet, quo florere contemptores veritatis videt. Sed dum justa ultio injustos subtrahit, alios a pravitate compescit. Unde per Salomonem dicitur: Multato pestilente, sapientior erit parvulus (Prov. XXI, 11). Vir igitur sanctus postquam potentum poenas qui extolluntur in saeculo sufficienter explevit, 573 rursus ad haereticorum superbiam, qui extolluntur in eloquio, verba convertit. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI [Vet.

et Rec. XIV]. CAP. XXVIII, VERS. 1. Habet argentum, venarum suarum principia: et auro locus est in quo conflatur. 39. Haeretici ad sacras paginas veterumque patrum libros provocandi. In argento eloquium, in auro vitae vel sapientiae claritas designari solet. Et quia haeretici sic de eloquii sui nitore superbiunt, ut nulla sacrorum librorum auctoritate solidentur (qui libri ad loquendum nobis quasi quaedam argenti venae sunt, quia de ipsis locutionis nostrae originem trahimus), eos ad sacrae auctoritatis paginas revocat, ut si vere loqui desiderant, inde sumere debeant quid loquantur. Et ait: Habet argentum, venarum suarum principia. Ac si aperte dicat: Qui ad verae praedicationis verba se praeparat, necesse est ut causarum origines a sacris paginis sumat, ut omne quod loquitur ad divinae auctoritatis fundamentum revocet, atque in eo aedificium locutionis suae firmet. Ut enim praediximus, saepe haeretici dum sua student perversa astruere, ea proferunt quae profecto in sacrorum librorum paginis non tenentur. Unde et discipulum suum praedicator egregius admonet, dicens: O Timothee, depositum custodi, devitans profanas vocum novitates (I Tim. VI, 20); quia dum laudari haeretici tanquam de excellenti ingenio cupiunt, quasi nova quaedam proferunt, quae in antiquorum Patrum libris veteribus non tenentur; sicque fit ut dum videri sapientes desiderant, miseris suis auditoribus stultitiae semina spargant. 40. Sola Ecclesia catholica martyres

habet. Bene autem subditur: Et auro locus est in quo conflatur. Ac si aperte dicat: Vera fidelium sapientia, cui universalis Ecclesia locus est, tribulationem vobis persequentibus patitur, sed a cunctis peccatorum sordibus persecutionis vestrae igne purgatur. Unde scriptum est: In igne probatur aurum et argentum, homines vero receptibiles in camino humiliationis (Eccli. II, 5). Quo in loco potest hoc quoque convenienter intelligi, ut de sua haeretici increpari stulta passione videantur. Nam saepe pro Jesu Christi Domini ac redemptoris nostri nomine multa patiuntur, seseque eisdem passionibus ejus fieri martyres sperant. Quibus sancti viri voce nunc dicitur: Auro locus est in quo conflatur. Nam juxta hoc quod jam et ante nos dictum est (A Cypr., de unitate Eccl., et alibi), quisquis extra unitatem Ecclesiae patitur, poenas pati potest, martyr fieri non potest, quia auro locus est in quo conflatur. Quid itaque ad haec, haeretici, dicitis? Conflari per afflictionem carnis, vel etiam per martyrium vultis, sed locum in quo debeatis conflari nescitis. Audite quid sancti praedicatoris voce dicitur: Auro locus est in quo conflatur. Hunc ergo conflationis locum quaerite, hanc fornacem, qua aurum apte purgari valeat invenite. 41. Quidquid extra Ecclesiam toleratur, curciat, non purgat. Una est Ecclesia in qua qui conflari valuerit ab omni etiam poterit peccatorum sorde purgari. Si quid pro Deo amaritudinis, si quid tribulationis extra hanc positi sustinetis, incendi potestis tantummodo, non purgari. Dicat Jeremias, dicat quomodo conflationis vestrae ignis omni virtute sit vacuus: Frustra conflavit conflator, malitiae enim eorum non sunt consumptae (Jerem. VI, 29). Ecce ignis exterius conflans, et durae passionis admovet poenam, 574 et tamen erroris non excoquit culpam, et tormenta crudelium dat poenarum, et bonorum non facit incrementa meritorum. Hujus etiam conflationis ignis qui extra catholicam toleratur Ecclesiam, quam nullius omnino virtutis sit, Paulus Apostolus insinuat, dicens: Si tradidero corpus meum ut ardeat, charitatem autem non habeam, nihil mihi prodest (I Cor. XII, 3) [Vet. XV.]

Alii quippe prava de Deo sentiunt; alii recta de auctore tenent; sed unitatem cum fratribus non tenent. Illi errore fidei, isti vero schismatis perpetratione divisi sunt. Unde et in ipsa prima parte decalogi utrarumque partium culpae reprimuntur, cum divina voce dicitur: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota virtute tua (Deut. VI, 5). Atque mox subditur: Diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum. Qui enim de Deo perversa sentit, liquet profecto quia Deum non diligit. Qui vero de Deo recta sentiens a sanctae Ecclesiae unitate divisus est, constat quia proximum non amat, quem habere socium recusat. 43. Quia deest charitas tam schismaticis quam haereticis. Quisquis ergo ab hac unitate matris Ecclesiae, sive per haeresim de Deo perversa sentiendo, seu errore schismatis proximum non diligendo dividitur, charitatis hujus gratia privatur, de qua hoc quod praemisimus Paulus ait: Si tradidero corpus meum ut ardeam, charitatem autem non habeam, nihil mihi prodest (I Cor. XIII, 3). Ac si aperta voce diceret: Extra locum suum conflationis mihi ignis adhibitus tormento me cruciat, mundatione non purgat. Hunc omnes sanctae pacis amatores summo studio locum quaerunt, hunc quaerentes inveniunt, hunc invenientes tenent, scientes peccatorum remissio vel ubi, vel quando, vel qualibus detur. Ubi quippe, nisi in catholicae matris sinu? Quando, nisi ante venturi exitus diem? Quia, ecce nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce nunc dies salutis (II Cor. VI, 2). Et: Quaerite Dominum dum inveniri potest, invocate eum dum prope est (Isai. LV, 6). Qualibus, nisi conversis, qui ad parvulorum imitationem, magistra humilitate formantur? Quibus dicitur: Sinite parvulos venire ad me; talium enim est regnum coelorum (Matth. XIX, 14). Et: Nisi conversi fueritis, et efficiamini sicut parvuli, non intrabitis in regnum coelorum (Matth. XVIII, 3). [Rec. XV.] Quia ergo non nisi in catholica Ecclesia veri martyres fiunt, dicitur recte: Auro locus est in quo conflatur, quia non clarescet anima in fulgore aeternae pulchritudinis, nisi, ut ita dicam, prius hic arserit in officina charitatis. 43. Deus alios salvat per innocentiam, alios

per poenitentiam. Pensandum praeterea est quod occulto consilio omnipotens Deus quosdam ab ipsis exordiis suis innocentes custodiens, usque ad virtutum provehit summa, ut aetate crescente, simul in eis proficiat et annorum numerositas, et celsitudo meritorum. Alios vero in exordiis suis deserens, scaturientibus vitiis ire per abrupta permittit. Plerumque tamen etiam eos respicit, et ad sequendum se sancti amoris igne succendit, atque inolitas in eorum cordibus prurigines vitiorum vertit in fervorem virtutum, et eo magnis ignescunt ad desiderium requirendae pietatis Dei, quo magis erubescunt memoriam iniquitatis suae, sicut saepe contigit ut in pugnae certamine miles ante ducis sui 575 oculos constitutus, hostili virtuti turpiter cedat, et enerviter praebens terga feriatur: qui tamen hoc ipsum quod turpiter gessit erubescens, ante ducis sui oculos majores ex ipsa verecundia vires sumit, tantoque post fortia exercet, quantum et praesentem gloriam virtutis peragat, et praeteritam ignominiam debilitatis tegat. Sic ergo nonnunquam quidam in Dei servitio ex anteacta acrius debilitate robarantur, eosque ad custodienda mandata et futurorum trahit desiderium, et impellit memoria praeteritorum, ut hinc ad ventura amor provocet, illinc de praeteritis verecundia instiget. [Vet. XVI.] Quos tamen adversarii Ecclesiae dum summis praeditos virtutibus viderint, eisque in praesenti vita unde derogent quia invenire nequaquam possunt, accusare illos de praeteritis moliuntur, sicut Moysen nostrum Manichaeus impetit, in quo sequentium virtutum gratiam, transacti homicidii conatur culpa foedare. In quo non attendit postmodum quam patiens ad sustinendum, sed prius quam praeceps ad feriendum fuerit. Talibus ergo adversariis beatus Job subtilissima consideratione obvians, postquam dixit: Habet argentum venarum suarum principia, et auro locus est in quo conflatur, apte subdidit:

CAPUT XXVII [Rec. XVI].

VERS. 2. Ferrum de terra tollitur. 44. Non est intuendum quid per se sint Ecclesiae doctores, sed quid per gratiam evaserint. Solent haeretici de justitiae suae contra nos elatione gloriari, atque opera sua ostentationis inflatione jactare, nosque iniquos, ut diximus, aut esse, aut fuisse criminantur. Per humillimam ergo confessionem, et veracem defensionem contra eos vir sanctus loquitur, dicens: Ferrum de terra tollitur. Ac si aperte dicat: Fortes viri, qui acutissimis linguarum gladiis in hac acie defendendae fidei ferrum fiunt, aliquando terra in infimis actionibus fuerunt. Peccanti quippe homini dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Sed de terra ferrum tollitur (Dist. L, c. 18), cum fortis propugnator Ecclesiae a terrena quam prius tenuit actione separatur. Non ergo in eo debet despici quidquid fuit, qui jam coepit esse quod non fuit. An non Matthaeus in terra inventus est, qui terrenis negotiis implicatus telonii usibus serviebat (Matth. IX, 9)? Sed de terra sublatus, in fortitudinem ferri convaluit, cujus videlicet lingua quasi acutissimo gladio Evangelii administratione Dominus infidelium corda transfixit; et qui infirmus prius despectusque fuerat per terrena negotia, fortis postmodum factus est ad coelestia praedicamenta. Unde adhuc subjungitur:

CAPUT XXVIII [Rec. XVII].

IBID. Et lapis solutus calore, in aes vertitur. 45. Gratiae infusione cor emollitur ad amorem, et roboratur ad operationem. Tunc lapis calore solvitur, cum cor durum atque a divini amoris igne frigidum eodem divini amoris igne tangitur, et in fervore spiritus liquatur, ut ad sequentem vitam desideriorum aestu ardeat, quam prius audiens insensibilis manebat. [Vet. XVII.] Ex quo ardore scilicet, et emollitur ad amorem, et roboratur ad operationem, ut sicut prius durus fuerat in amore saeculi, ita se postmodum fortem exerat in amorem Dei; et quod ante audire renuebat, jam et credere et praedicare incipiat. Lapis ergo solutus calore, 576 in aes vertitur, quia

dura mens superni amoris igne liquefacta ad veram fortitudinem commutatur, ut peccator, qui prius insensibilis exstiterat, postmodum et per auctoritatem fortis et per praedicationem sonorus fiat. Quod bene per Isaiam dicitur: Qui confidunt in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem (Isai. XL, 31). Fortitudinem mutamus, cum conversi tanta virtute praesens saeculum fugimus quanta hoc ante quaerebamus. Quia autem male ab adversariis catholicorum moribus ante acta vita reputatur, recte subditur:

CAPUT XXIX.

VERS. 3. Tempus posuit tenebris et universorum finem ipse considerat. 46. Deus electorum et reproborum finem intuetur. Bona facit et ordinat; mala non facit, sed ordinat.Ipse posuit tempus tenebris, iniquis videlicet modum quo iniqui esse desistant. Unde eis per Apostolum dicitur: Eratis aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in Domino. Sicut aliis quoque discipulis isdem doctor egregius dicit: Nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit. Abjiciamus ergo opera tenebrarum, et induamus nos arma lucis; sicut in die honeste ambulemus. (Ephes. V, 8; Rom. XIII, 12). Unde et in Canticis canticorum Ecclesia veniente dicitur: Quae est ista quae progreditur quasi aurora consurgens (Cant. VI, 9)? Apte enim Ecclesia aurorae comparata describitur, quae per cognitionem fidei a peccatorum suorum tenebris in clara luce justitiae commutatur. Tempus ergo posuit tenebris, et universorum finem ipse considerat. Universorum nomine, et electos voluit et reprobos comprehendi. Nam bona faciens et ordinans Deus, mala vero non faciens, sed ab iniquis facta ne inordinate eveniant ipse disponens, considerat universorum finem, et patienter tolerat omnia, atque intuetur electorum terminum, quod ex malo mutentur ad bonum. Intuetur etiam reproborum finem, quod do malo opere dignum se trahantur ad supplicium. Vidit finem persequentis Sauli, quo prostratus diceret: Domine, quid me vis facere (Act. IX, 6)? Vidit finem quasi obsequentis discipuli, quod pro

commisso scelere guttur laqueo stringeret, seque et peccantem puniret, et deterius puniendo deciperet. Vidit Ninivitas delinquentes, sed consideravit finem delinquentium poenitentiam correctorum. Vidit quoque Sodomam delinquentem, sed consideravit finem ardoris luxuriae, ignem gehennae. Vidit gentilitatis finem, quod possessa iniquitatum tenebris, quandoque fidei luce claresceret. Vidit etiam Judaeae terminum, quod ab ea luce fidei quam tenebat obduratae perfidiae se tenebris caecaret. Unde adhuc congrue subditur:

CAPUT XXX [Rec. XVIII].

IBID. VERS. 4. Lapidem quoque caliginis et umbram mortis dividit torrens a populo peregrinante. 47. Probos et malos ignis in extremo judicio dividet.Quid durus ille perfidia Judaeorum populus, qui auctorem vitae per fidem videre noluit, quem per prophetiam praedixit, nisi lapis caliginis fuit? quia et crudelitate durus exstitit, et infidelitate nebulosus. Qui alio quoque vocabulo umbra mortis dicitur. Umbra quippe talis exprimitur, qualia ejus rei, de qua trahitur, fuerint lineamenta. Quis autem mortis nomine, nisi diabolus vocatur? De quo per quamdam ministri sui significationem 577 dicitur: Et nomen illi mors (Apoc. VI, 8). Cujus ille populus umbra exstitit, quia iniquitatem illius sequens, ejus in se imaginem expressit. Quid vero torrentis nomine, nisi ille a conspectu tremendi judicis per ultimum examen egrediens, atque electos et reprobos dividens ignis vocatur? Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Fluvius igneus rapidusque egrediebatur a facie ejus (Dan. VII, 10). [Vet. XVIII, Rec. XIX.] 48. Peregrini sunt in mundo electi omnes. Quis autem in hoc mundo peregrinatur populus, nisi qui ad sortem electorum currens, habere se patriam novit in coelestibus; et tanto magis se illic sperat invenire propria, quanto hic cuncta quae praetereunt esse a se deputat aliena? Peregrinus itaque est populus, omnium numerus electorum, qui hanc vitam quoddam sibi exsilium deputantes, ad supernam patriam tota

cordis intentione suspirant, de quibus Paulus dicit: Confitentes quia peregrini et hospites sunt super terram (Hebr. XI, 13). Qui enim haec dicunt, significant se patriam inquirere. Hanc peregrinationem idem quoque Apostolus tolerabat, cum diceret: Dum sumus in corpore, peregrinamur a Domino. Per fidem enim ambulamus, et non per speciem (II Cor. V, 6). Hujus peregrinationis aerumnas satagebat evadere, cum dicebat: Desiderium habens dissolvi, et cum Christo esse (Philip. I, 23). Et rursum: Mihi vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum (Ibid. I, 21). Hujus peregrinationis pondus grave sentiebat Psalmista, cum diceret: Heu me! quia incolatus meus prolongatus est: habitavi cum habitantibus Cedar, multum incola fuit anima mea (Psal. CXIX, 5). Ab hac eripi quantocius anhelabat, cum supernis desideriis flagrans diceret; Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum; quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei (Psal. XLI, 3)? Sed hoc desiderium nesciunt qui cor in terrenis voluptatibus defigunt. Dum enim sola quae sunt visibilia diligunt, profecto invisibilia, vel si credunt esse, non diligunt, quia dum nimis se exterius sequuntur, etiam mente carnales fiunt. Simul enim in hac vita uterque populus currit, sed non simul ad perpetuam pervenit, quia Lapidem caliginis et umbram mortis dividit torrens a populo peregrinante. Ac si aperte dicat: Eos quos modo vel infidelitas excaecat, vel crudelitas obdurat, flammarum fluvius a conspectu aeterni judicis exiens, ab electorum tunc populo separat, ut tunc a bonis ignis districti examinis dividat quos nunc in suis concupiscentiis tenebrae vitiorum excaecant. 49. Irrigatio praedicationis tanquam torrens dividit bonos a malis. Potest fortasse in torrentis nomine ipsa irrigatio sanctae praedicationis intelligi, juxta id quod per Salomonem dicitur: Oculum qui subsannat patrem, et qui despicit partum matris suae, effodiant illum corvi de torrentibus (Prov. XXX, 17). Perversi quippe dum divina judicia reprehendunt, subsannant patrem. Et quilibet haeretici dum praedicationem sanctae Ecclesiae fecunditatemque illius deridendo contemnunt, quid aliud quam partum

matris despiciunt? Quam non immerito eorum quoque matrem dicimus, quia de ipsa exeunt, qui contra ipsam loquuntur; Joanne attestante, qui ait: A nobis exierunt, sed non erant ex nobis; nam si fuissent ex nobis, mansissent utique nobiscum (I Joan. II, 19). Corvi vero de torrentibus veniunt, cum praedicatores veri ad defensionem sanctae Ecclesiae a sacrorum librorum fluentis procedunt. Qui etiam recte corvi vocati sunt, quia nequaquam de justitiae suae luce superbiunt, 578 sed per humilitatis gratiam peccatorum in se nigredinem confitentur. Unde etiam ab electorum Ecclesia dicitur: Nigra sum, sed formosa (Cant. I, 4). Et Joannes ait: Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos seducimus (I Joan. I, 8). Qui videlicet corvi subsannantis oculum effodiunt, quia pravorum ac pervicacium hominum intentionem vincunt. Ex hoc itaque testimonio, si hic quoque torrens praedicatio debet intelligi, Lapidem caliginis et umbram mortis dividit torrens a populo peregrinante, qui sanctorum praedicatio obduratas mentes reproborum deserit, et ad pia humilium se corda convertit. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXXI [Vet. XIX].

VERS. 4. Eos quos oblitus est pes egentis hominis, et invios. 50. Judaeis relictis, ad gentiles defiuxit. Quis hoc loco alius accipitur egens homo, nisi ille de quo per Paulum dicitur: Qui propter nos egenus factus est, cum dives esset (II Cor. VIII, 9)? Cujus videlicet egentis hominis pedes sancti praedicatores fuerunt, per quorum profecto praesentiam gentilitatem circumiens, mundum perambulavit universum. De quibus per prophetam dicitur: Et inambulabo in eis (Levit. XXVI, 12; II Cor. VI, 16). An pes ejus non erat, qui tentus in compedibus dicebat: Pro quo legatione fungor in catena (Ephes. VI, 20)? Sed eorum qui umbra mortis et lapis caliginis exstiterunt, pes hominis egentis oblitus est, quia in ipso initio nascentis Ecclesiae, dum sancti apostoli coelorum regnum Judaeae praedicare

voluissent, videntes quod ei nihil omnino proficerent, ad praedicandum gentibus defluxerunt, sicut ipsi in suis Actibus dicunt: Vobis oportebat primum loqui verbum Dei; sed quoniam repellitis illud, et indignos vos judicatis aeternae vitae, ecce convertimur ad gentes (Act. XIII, 46). De quibus et per Psalmistam dicitur: Transferentur montes in cor maris (Psal. XLV, 3), quia repulsi a Judaea apostoli in hoc gentilitatis saeculum translati sunt. Qui sunt ergo qui immensa duritia pro obscuritate cordis, quasi quidam lapis caliginis et umbra mortis, a peregrinante sanctorum populo dividuntur, nisi hi quos pes egentis hominis est oblitus, id est quos praedicatores Domini, videlicet per humanitatem pauperis, pro superbiae suae tumore reliquerunt, eorumque omnino obliti sunt, dum praedicationis suae semina ad solam fructificationem gentium transtulerunt? Quos recte quoque et invios vocat, quia dum in infidelitate sua obdurati sunt, verbis vitae ad cor viam praebere noluerunt. Sed Judaea haec, quae sic obduruit, vel qualis dudum fuerit, vel quid post pertulerit, audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 5. Terra de qua oriebatur panis, in loco suo igne subversa est. 51. Synagoga quae legis scripturarumque panem ministrabat, invidia conflagrans, destructa est. Panem Judaea dare consueverat, quae legis verba proferebat. Quam videlicet legem, quia intelligere jam reprobi atque explanare non poterant, propheta Jeremias in lamentis deplorat, dicens: Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis (Thren. IV, 4). Sed haec terra in loco suo igne subversa est, quia fidelium signa conspiciens, invidiae se face concremavit. Quia enim semper invidia de superbia nasci solet, in loco suo igne periit, quae idcirco arsit invidia, quia superbiam non reliquit. Terra ergo quae prius panem habuit, post igne subversa est, quoniam synagoga, quae 579 mandata Dei per legem protulit, nascentem Ecclesiam persequens, invidiae se igne consumpsit. An non aemulationis

suae facibus ardebat, cum Redemptoris nostri signa conspiciens, per quosdam suos diceret: Quid facimus, quia hic homo multa signa facit? vel certe: Videtis quia nihil proficimus, ecce totus mundus post eum vadit (Joan. XI, 47). Videbant unde converti debuerant, atque exinde perversiores fiebant. Quaerebant exstinguere quem cernebant mortuos vivificare. In ore tenebant legem, sed legis persequebantur auctorem. Terra ergo de qua oriebatur panis, in loco suo igne subversa est, quia Judaea in semetipsa et prius habuit legem quae reficeret, et post invidiam quae concremaret. De cujus adhuc descriptione subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

VERS. 6. Locus sapphiri lapides ejus, et glebae illius aurum. 52. Auget Judaeorum casum, donorum et gratiarum quibus prius ornati sunt, copia. Auget reatum culpae sequentis praeconium gloriae praecedentis. Nam uniuscujusque casus tanto majoris est criminis, quanto priusquam caderet majoris potuit esse virtutis. Dicatur ergo Judaea, dicatur quid fuerit, et praecedentium magnitudo virtutum crescat ad cumulum sequentium delictorum. Locus sapphiri lapides ejus, et glebae illius aurum. Quid enim hoc loco per lapides, nisi sanctorum ac fortium mentes accipimus? (Vet. XX). In Scriptura etenim sacra aliquando lapides in malo, aliquando vero in bono accipi solent. Nam cum lapis pro insensibilitate ponitur, dura per lapides corda signantur. Unde et per Joannem dicitur: Potens est Deus de lapidibus istis suscitare filios Abrahae (Matth. III, 9). Qui videlicet nomine lapidum corda gentilium designat, dura tunc atque insensibilia per infidelitatem. Et per prophetam Dominus pollicetur, dicens: Auferam cor lapideum de carne vestra, et dabo vobis cor carneum (Ezech. XI, 19). Rursum per lapides mentes fortium designari solent. Unde et per Petrum sanctis dicitur: Et vos tanquam lapides vivi superaedificamini domus spiritales (I Petr. II, 5). Et per prophetam Dominus venienti Ecclesiae

pollicetur, dicens: Ecce ego sternam per ordinem lapides tuos, et fundabo te in sapphiris, et ponam jaspidem propugnacula tua, et portas tuas in lapides sculptos; et omnes terminos tuos in lapides desiderabiles, universos filios tuos doctos a Domino (Isai. LIV, 11). Stravit namque in illa per ordinem lapides, quia in ea sanctas animas meritorum diversitate distinxit. Fundavit eam in sapphiris, qui scilicet lapides coloris aerei in se similitudinem tenent, quia robur Ecclesiae in animabus coelestia appetentibus solidatur. Et quoniam jaspis viridis est coloris, jaspidem propugnacula ejus posuit, quia illi contra adversarios pro sanctae Ecclesiae defensione objecti sunt, qui, internis desideriis virentes, nulla teporis reprobi ariditate marcescunt. Portas vero ejus posuit in lapides sculptos. Hi quippe portae sunt Ecclesiae, per quorum vitam atque doctrinam intrat in eam multitudo credentium. Qui pro eo etiam quod magnis operibus pollent, et id quod loquentes asserunt, viventes ostendunt, non puri, sed sculpti lapides esse memorantur. In quorum enim vita recta operatio cernitur, quasi in eisdem ipsis exprimitur quod egerunt. Ubi omnem quoque sanctorum numerum generali collectione concludens, subdidit: Omnes terminos tuos in lapides 580 desiderabiles (Ibid. LIV, 12). Et, tanquam si audientes ista peteremus ut hos lapides quos diceret indicaret, adjunxit: Universos filios tuos doctos a Domino. Quia igitur de Judaea nunquam sanctae animae, quae coelestem vitam ducerent defuerunt, dicitur: Locus sapphiri lapides ejus. Et quia magna vitae ac sapientiae claritate per fidem fulsit, adjungitur: Et glebae illius aurum. Quid per glebas, nisi collectiones singulorum ordinum ac multitudines designantur? Glebae autem ex humore et pulvere constringuntur. Omnes ergo qui, rore gratiae infusi, ex mortis debito se pulverem esse veraci cognitione confessi sunt, dum vitae virtute clarescerent, quasi aureae in illa glebae jacuerunt. Glebas haec terra habuit in prophetis, glebas in doctoribus, glebas in Patribus antiquis, qui magna se infusione gratiae in professionis et operis unanimitate tenuerunt. Dicat ergo: Et glebae illius

aurum, quia in ea multitudo spiritalium tanto majori virtute claruit, quanto se in Deum ac proximum majori unanimitate constrinxit. 53. Aurum quo fulgebant, perfidiae tenebris obscuratum. Sed hoc aurum perfidiae est postmodum tenebris obscuratum. Cujus profecto nigredinem Jeremias propheta intuens deplorat, dicens: Quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus (Thren. IV, 1)? Aurum namque obscuratum est, quia in eis antiquus ille fidei atque innocentiae splendor, irruente perfidia, malitiae se nocte fuscavit. Quia igitur quid fuit audivimus: Locus scilicet sapphiri lapides ejus, et glebae illius aurum, nunc jam dilectus ille Deo populus cur tanta haec bona perdiderit audiamus. Sequitur.

CAPUT XXXIV [Vet. XXI].

VERS. 7. Semitam ignoravit avis, nec intuitus est oculos vulturis. 54. Humilitatis Christi vias ignorantes, ejus mortis fructum amiserunt. Quis hoc loco avis nomine, nisi ille signatur, qui corpus carneum quod assumpsit, ascendendo ad aethera libravit? Qui apte quoque etiam vulturis appellatione exprimitur. Vultur quippe dum volat, si jacens cadaver conspicit, ad esum se cadaveris deponit; et plerumque sic in morte capitur, dum ad mortuum animal de summis venit. Recte ergo mediator Dei et hominum redemptor noster vulturis appellatione signatur, qui manens in altitudine divinitatis suae, quasi a quodam volatu sublimi cadaver mortalitatis nostrae conspexit in infimis, et sese de coelestibus ad ima submisit. Fieri quippe propter nos homo dignatus est, et dum mortuum animal petiit, mortem apud nos qui apud se erat immortalis invenit. Sed hujus vulturis oculus fuit ipsa intentio nostrae resurrectionis, quia ipse ad triduum mortuus, ab aeterna nos morte liberavit. Ille ergo perfidus Judaeae populus mortalem vidit; sed quomodo morte sua nostram mortem destrueret, minime attendit. Conspexit quidem vulturem, sed oculos vulturis non aspexit. Qui dum humilitatis ejus vias quibus nos ad alta sublevavit considerare noluit, semitam avis ignoravit.

Neque enim pensare studuit quod ejus nos humilitas levaret ad coelestia et mortis ejus intentio reformaret ad vitam. Semitam igitur ignoravit avis, nec intuitus est oculos vulturis, quia etsi vidit eum quem in morte tenuit, videre noluit quanta vitam nostram gloria de ejus morte sequeretur. Unde et ad crudelitatem quoque persecutionis exarsit, verba vitae 581 recipere renuit, praedicatores regni coelorum prohibendo, saeviendo, feriendo repulit. Qui scilicet repulsi Judaeam ad quam missi fuerant deserentes, in gentilitatis collectionem dispersi sunt. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXXV [Rec. XX].

VERS. 8. Non calcaverunt eam filii institorum, nec pertransivit per eam leaena. 55. Apostoli eorumque successores Judaeam deseruerunt et gentilium conversioni insudarunt.In cunctis Latinis Codicibus institutores positos reperimus, in Graecis vero negotiatores invenimus. Ex qua re colligi valet quod in hoc loco pro institoribus institutores scriptores quique ignorando posuerunt. Institores enim negotiatores dicimus, pro eo quod exercendo operi insistunt. Sed uterque sermo licet in voce dissonet, in intellectu non discrepat, quia omnes qui fidelium mores instituunt, spiritale negotium gerunt, ut cum praedicationem suis auditoribus praebent, ab eis fidem et opera recta percipiant, sicut de sancta Ecclesia scriptum est; Sindonem fecit et vendidit (Prov. XXXI, 24); de qua et paulo post illic dicitur: Vidit quod bona est negotiatio ejus (Ibid. XXXI, 18). Qui hoc loco institutores nisi prophetae sancti vocati sunt, qui synagogae mores ad fidem instituere curaverunt prophetando? Quorum nimirum filii sancti apostoli nuncupantur, qui ut Deum hominem crederent, ad eamdem fidem ex eorum sunt praedicatione generati. De quibus Ecclesiae per Psalmistam dicitur: Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii, constitues eos principes super omnem terram (Psal. XLIV, 17). Sed quia repulsi apostoli a synagogae finibus sunt egressi, recte nunc dicitur: Non calcaverunt eam filii institorum. Calcarent quippe

eam institorum filii, si praedicatores sancti ejusdem synagogae vitia calce virtutis premerent. Si autem institores eosdem sanctae Ecclesiae praedicatores accipimus, institorum filios pastores et doctores, qui apostolorum viam secuti sunt, nil obstat intelligi. Qui Synagogam minime calcaverunt, quia dum eorum patres, id est apostoli, ab illa repulsi sunt, ipsi quoque ab ejus vocatione cessaverunt. [Vet. XXII.] 56. Synagoga relicta, gentibus colligendis Ecclesia studuit. Per quam videlicet Synagogam leaena non pertransiit, quia sancta Ecclesia collectioni gentium dedita nequaquam sese ad illum Judaeae populum diutius occupavit. Recte autem Ecclesia leaena nuncupatur, quia male viventes in vitiis, ore sanctae praedicationis interficit. Unde et ipsi primo pastori quasi hujus leaenae ori dicitur: Macta et manduca (Act. X, 13). Quod mactatur quippe a vita occiditur, id vero quod comeditur, in comedentis corpore commutatur. Macta ergo et manduca dicitur, id est a peccato eos in quo vivunt interfice, et a seipsis illos in tua membra converte. Et quia haec Ecclesia corpus est Domini, ipse etiam Dominus Jacob voce leo vocatur ex se, leaena vocatur ex corpore, dum ei sub Judae specie dicitur: Ad praedam, fili mi, ascendisti, requiescens accubuisti ut leo, et quasi leaena; 582 quis suscitabit eum (Genes. XLIX, 9)? Haec igitur leaena nequaquam dicitur, quia per Judaeam non transiit, sed non pertransiit. Apostolis namque praedicantibus prius ex illa tria millia, postmodum quinque millia crediderunt. Ecclesia itaque per Synagogam transiit, sed non pertransiit, quia ex illa ad fidem paucos rapuit, sed tamen illum infidelem populum a perfidia funditus non exstinxit. Sed, quod saepe jam diximus, repulsa ab infidelitate Judaeorum, deflexit ad vocationem gentium. Unde adhuc de eadem leaena dicitur:

CAPUT XXXVI.

VERS. 9. Ad silicem extendit manum suam, subvertit a radicibus montes. 57. Quarum duritiam emollivit, et superbiam stravit. Manum quippe ad

silicem extendit, quia ad duritiam gentium suae brachium praedicationis misit. Unde et idem beatus Job passionis suae historiam praesciens gentibus innotescendam, dicit: Scribantur haec stylo ferreo in plumbi lamina, vel certe sculpantur in silice (Job. XIX, 24). Qui vero hoc in loco montes, nisi hujus saeculi potentes accipimus, qui pro terrena substantia altum tument? De quibus Psalmista ait: Tange montes, et fumigabunt (Psal. CXLIII, 5). Sed montes a radicibus sunt eversi, quia, praedicante sancta Ecclesia, summae hujus saeculi potestates in adoratum omnipotentis Dei ab intima cogitatione ceciderunt. Radices enim montium cogitationes sunt intimae superborum. Et a radicibus montes cadunt, quia ad colendum Deum potestates saeculi ab imis cogitationibus prosternuntur. Recte etenim per radicem cogitatio occulta signatur, quia per hoc quod intus non cernitur, erumpit quod videatur foris. Unde et in bonam partem per prophetam dicitur: Emittet id quod salvatum fuerit de domo Juda, et quod reliquum est, mittet radicem deorsum, et faciet fructum sursum (Isai. XXXVII, 31). Ac si aperte diceretur: In imis cogitatio nascitur, ut in summis retributio reddatur. Dicat ergo: Ad silicem extendit manum suam, subvertit a radicibus montes, quia dum duritiam gentium sancta praedicatio petiit, superborum altitudinem funditus stravit. Quia vero eos quos a cogitationibus terrenis evacuat donis coelestibus replet, et quos infimis curis exhaurit supernis rigat fluentis, mox subditur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

VERS. 10. In petris rivos excidit. 58. In saxeis gentilium cordibus Deus fluvios praedicationis aperuit. Id est, in duris gentilium cordibus fluvios praedicationis aperuit, sicut per prophetam quoque de irriganda dicitur ariditate gentilium: Posuit desertum in stagnum aquarum, et terram sine aqua in exitus aquarum (Psal. CVI, 35). Atque in Evangelio promittit Dominus, dicens: Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina aquae

vivae de ventre ejus fluent (Joan. VII, 88). Quod promissum tunc audivimus, etiam nunc completum videmus. Ecce enim in sanctis praedicatoribus, et non ex Judaea progenitis, per cunctam Ecclesiam toto orbe diffusam, fluenta caelestium mandatorum ubertim manant ore gentilium. Quia enim in petris rivos aperuit, ex duris quoque 583 cordibus fluvius sanctae praedicationis emanavit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

IBID. Et omne pretiosum vidit oculus ejus. 59. Vilis Deo est mundus, et pretiosae animae quas elegit. Sciendum magnopere est quia tanto unaquaeque anima fit pretiosior ante oculos Dei, quanto prae amore veritatis despectior fuerit ante oculos suos. Hinc ad Saul dicitur: Nonne cum parvulus esses in oculis tuis, caput te constitui in tribubus Israel (I Reg. XV, 17)? Ac si aperte diceret: Magnus mihi fuisti, quia despectus tibi; sed nunc quia magnus tibi es, factus es despectus mihi. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Vae qui sapientes estis in oculis vestris, et coram vobismetipsis prudentes (Isai. V, 21). Tanto ergo fit quisque vilior Deo, quanto pretiosior sibi; tanto pretiosior Deo, quanto propter eum vilior sibi: Quia humilia respicit, et alta a longe cognoscit (Psal. CXXXVII, 6). [Vet. XXIII.] Omne itaque pretiosum vidit oculus ejus. In Scriptura sacra videre Dei, aliquando pro eligere ponitur, sicut in Evangelio scriptum est: Cum esses sub ficu, vidi te (Joan. I, 48); id est, positum te sub umbra legis elegi. Vidit ergo pretiosum quia humilia elegit: Infirma enim mundi elegit Deus, ut confunderet fortia (I Cor. I, 27). Vidit pretiosum, cum humanam animam de se abjecta sapientem gratiae suae illustratione respexit. De qua videlicet anima per prophetam dicitur: Si separaveris pretiosum a vili, quasi os meum eris (Jerem. XV, 19). Vilis quippe Deo est mundus praesens, pretiosa vero ei est anima humana. Qui ergo pretiosum a vili separat, quasi os Domini vocatur, quia per eum Deus verba sua exerit, qui ab amore praesentis saeculi

loquendo quae potest, humanam animam evellit. Et quia novi Testamenti doctores ad hoc usque perducti sunt, ut occultas quoque allegoriarum caligines in veteri Testamento rimentur, recte subditur:

CAPUT XXXIX [Rec. XXI].

VERS. 11. Profunda quoque fluviorum scrutatus est, et abscondita produxit in lucem. 60. Deus doctoribus sacris profunda et abscondita legis ac prophetarum revelavit. Quid namque hic aliud flumina nisi antiquorum Patrum dicta nuncupantur? Quis enim pensare sufficiat quam vehemens fluvius, dum legem conderet, ex pectore Moysi erupit quam vehemens fluvius ex David corde defluxit; quanta a Salomonis ore atque omnium prophetarum fluminum fluenta manarunt? Sed horum fluminum Judaea speciem tenuit, dum litterae superficiem servans, eorum profunda nescivit. Nos vero qui veniente Domino in eis interna spiritalia quaerimus, eorum profunda rimamur. Quod ipse Dominus facere dicitur, quia id nos agere ipso donante praevalemus. Per nos ergo qui non litteram quae occidit, sed spiritum qui vivificat sequimur, profunda fluviorum Dominus scrutatur, et abscondita in lucem producit, quia dicta legis, quae caliginosa nimis historia obscurat, nunc expositio spiritalis illuminat. Unde et loquens in parabolis per Evangelium Veritas discipulis praecepit, dicens: Quod dico vobis in tenebris, dicite in lumine; et quod in aure auditis, praedicate super tecta (Matth. X, 27). Aperte namque dicta exponentium fecerunt nobis esse jam conspicuas sententias antiquorum Patrum. Unde Isaias propheta plana sanctae Ecclesiae expositionis verba conspiciens, et non allegoriarum tenebris obscura, exclamavit dicens: Locus fluviorum rivi latissimi et patentes. (Isai. XXXIII. 21). Testamenti enim veteris dicta quasi angusti et clausi rivi fuerant, qui immensas 584 scientiae suae sententias collectione obscurissima constringebant. At contra doctrina sanctae Ecclesiae rivi et lati et patentes sunt, quia ejus dicta et invenientibus multa sunt et quaerentibus

plana. Ait ergo: Profunda fluviorum scrutatus est, et abscondita produxit in lucem. Quia dum suis expositoribus intelligentiae spiritum infudit, antiquas prophetantium obscuritates aperuit. Et hoc jam sancta Ecclesia per spiritum agnoscit, quod Synagoga prius per litteram intelligere omnino non valuit. Unde et Moyses cum populo loqueretur (Exod. XXXIV, 33), faciem velabat, ut videlicet designaret quod ille Judaeorum populus legis verba cognosceret, sed ejusdem claritatem legis omnimodo non videret. Unde recte et per Paulum dicitur: Usque in hodiernum enim diem cum legitur Moyses, velamen est positum super eor eorum (II Cor. III, 15). Sed quia dicta Dei nullatenus sine ejus sapientia penetrantur (nisi enim qui spiritum ejus acceperit, ejus nullo modo verba cognoscit), sanctus vir de investiganda eadem Dei sapientia verba subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XL [Vet.

XXIV, Rec. XXII]. VERS. 12-15. Sapientia vero ubi invenitur, et quis est locus intelligentiae? Nescit homo pretium ejus, nec invenitur in terra suaviter viventium. Abyssus dicit, Non est in me, et mare loquitur: Non est mecum. Non dabitur aurum obryzum pro ea, nec appendetur argentum in commutatione ejus. 61. Sapientiae Dei locus et pretium assignari non possunt. Notandum prius est quod duo sibi proposuit, et duo subdit respondendo. Ad id namque quod superius dixit: Sapientia vero ubi invenitur, et quis est locus intelligentiae? Isto versu respondit: Abyssus dicit: Non est in me, et mare loquitur: Non est mecum. Ad id vero quod dixerat: Nescit homo pretium ejus, nec invenitur in terra suaviter viventium, inferiorem versum reddidit, dicens: Non dabitur aurum obryzum pro ea, nec appendetur argentum in commutatione ejus. Ad utraque ergo respondit, sed augendo quod objecerat, non solvendo. Cum sapientiae namque locum quaereret, ac deinde inferius responderet: Abyssus dicit: Non est in me, non ubi esset, sed ubi non esset indicavit. Rursus cum ab homine ejus pretium

diceret ignorari, atque ad hoc inferius redderet: Non dabitur aurum obrysum pro ea, non quid esset ejus pretium, sed quid non esset ostendit. Cunctis autem liquet quod neque haec humana sapientia vel teneri loco, vel emi divitiis potest. Sed vir sanctus, mysticis sensibus plenus, ad alia nos intelligenda transmittit, ut non creatam sed creantem sapientiam requiramus. Nam nisi in verbis istis allegoriarum secreta rimemur, ea utique quae sequuntur omnino sunt digna despectu, si ex sola historica narratione pensentur. Paulo post namque dicit: Non adaequabitur ei aurum vel vitrum. Et cum, sicut novimus, vitrum longe atque dissimiliter auro sit vilius, cur post auri nomen, metalli utique pretiosi, pro immensa laude vitrum quoque dixit sapientiae non aequari? Ipsa ergo litterae difficultate compellimur, ut ad sententias horum verborum mysticas vigilemus. Vir itaque sanctus quam sapientiam contemplatur, nisi eam de qua Paulus apostolus dicit: Christum Dei virtutem, et Dei sapientiam (I Cor. I, 24)? De qua per Salomonem scriptum est: Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum (Prov. IX, 1); et de qua Psalmista ait: Omnia in sapientia fecisti (Psal. CIII, 24). Hujus nimirum 585 sapientiae homo pretium nescit, quia nihil dignum aestimatione illius invenit. Non autem hoc sapientiae pretium et esse dicitur et nesciri, sed idcirco nesciri, quia deest: eo scilicet loquendi genere, quo in angustiis quisque deprehensus, cum remedium subventionis non invenit, fateri solet quia quid faciat nescit. 62. Nullius boni operis merito debetur. Hujus ergo sapientiae pretium nescire, est digni operis meritum quo illam percipiat non invenire. Ad hoc namque pretium damus, ut ejus vice rem quam appetimus possidere debeamus. Quid autem nos dedimus ut hanc sapientiam, quae Christus est (Rom. XI, 6), percipere mereremur? Gratia quippe redempti sumus. Illa namque sola opera male vivendo dedimus, quibus si justa retributio servaretur, non Christus, sed supplicia redderentur. Sed aliud homo per justitiam meruit, aliud per gratiam accepit. Testetur Paulus, priusquam mens illius semen gratuitae veritatis acciperet, quibus sentibus

premeretur erroris: Qui prius, inquit, fui blasphemus, et persecutor, et contumeliosus; sed misericordiam consecutus sum, quia ignorans feci in incredulitate (I Tim. I, 13). Testetur pro qualibus Christus mori dignatus est: Cum adhuc, inquit, peccatores essemus, secundum tempus Christus pro impiis mortuus est (Rom. V, 8). Qui ergo veniente sapientia impii inventi sumus, quid boni operis dedimus, quo accipere eamdem sapientiam mereremur? Hujus itaque sapientiae homo pretium nescit, quia quisquis a brutis animalibus rationis intellectu discretus est, quoniam quod suis meritis non sit salvatus intelligit, nihil se dedisse boni operis ut ad fidem veniret agnoscit. Quasi enim ad percipiendam sapientiam pretium dare est cognoscendum Deum actionis suae mercede praevenire. 63. Gratia gratis datur, non ex meritis. Non esse hujus sapientiae pretium cognoverat, qui dicebat: Quis prior dedit illi, et retribuetur ei? (Rom. XI, 35). Hinc iterum scriptum est: Gratia salvi facti estis per fidem, et hoc non ex vobis, sed Dei donum est; non ex operibus, ut ne quis glorietur (Ephes. II, 8). Hinc de semetipso iterum loquitur, dicens: Gratia Dei sum id quod sum (I Cor. XV, 10). Ex cujus nimirum aspiratione gratiae, quia virtutum opera protinus in corde generantur, ut ex libero quoque arbitrio subsequatur actio, cui post hanc vitam retributio aeterna respondeat, illico adjecit: Et gratia ejus in me vacua non fuit (Ibid. XV, 10). [Vet. XXV.] Sed sunt nonnulli qui sanos se suis viribus exsultant, suisque praecedentibus meritis redemptos se esse gloriantur. Quorum profecto assertio invenitur sibimetipsis contraria, quia dum et innocentes se asserunt, et redemptos, hoc ipsum in se redemptionis nomen evacuant. Omnis namque qui redimitur, ex aliqua procul dubio captivitate liberatur. Unde ergo quilibet iste redemptus est, si prius non fuit sub culpa captivus? Liquet itaque quia multum desipit quisquis haec sapit. Hominis quippe meritum superna gratia non ut veniat invenit, sed postquam venerit, facit; atque et ad indignam mentem veniens Deus, dignam 586 sibi exhibet veniendo; et facit in ea meritum quod remuneret, qui hoc solum

invenerat quod puniret. [Ret. XXIII.] 64. Praedestinationis gratuitae exemplum in latrone salutem consecuto. Libet inter haec mentis oculos ad illum latronem reducere, qui de fauce diaboli ascendit crucem, de cruce paradisum. Intueamur qualis ad patibulum venerit, et a patibulo qualis abscessit. Venit reus fraterno sanguine, venit cruentus, sed interna gratia est mutatus in cruce; et ille qui mortem fratri intulit, morientis Domini vitam praedicavit, dicens: Memento mei, Domine, dum veneris in regnum tuum (Luc. XXIII, 42). In cruce clavi manus ejus pedesque ligaverant, nihilque in eo a poenis liberum nisi cor et lingua remanserant. Inspirante Deo totum illi obtulit, quod in se liberum invenit, ut juxta hoc quod scriptum est: Corde crederet ad justitiam, ore confiteretur ad salutem (Rom. X, 10). In corde autem fidelium tres summopere manere virtutes testatur Apostolus, dicens: Nunc autem manent fides, spes, charitas (I Cor. XIII, 13). Quas cunctas subita repletus gratia et accepit latro, et servavit in cruce. Fidem namque habuit, qui regnaturum Dominum credidit, quem secum pariter morientem vidit: spem habuit qui regni ejus aditum postulavit, dicens: Memento mei, Domine, dum veneris in regnum tuum (Luc. XXIII, 42). Charitatem quoque in morte sua vivaciter tenuit, qui fratrem et collatronem pro simili scelere morientem, et de iniquitate sua arguit, et ei vitam quam cognoverat praedicavit dicens: Neque tu times Deum, qui in eadem es damnatione. Et nos quidem juste; nam digna factis recipimus; hic vero nihil mali gessit (Ibid., 40). Ille qui talis ad crucem venit ex culpa, ecce qualis a cruce recedit ex gratia. Confitebatur Dominum, quem videbat secum humana infirmitate morientem, quando negabant apostoli eum quem miracula viderant divina virtute facientem. [Vet. XXVI.] 65. Error eorum qui salvari hominem propriis viribus astruunt. Sed hi qui salvari hominem propriis viribus astruunt, eamdem confessionem hominis ab ipsius esse hominis virtute suspicantur. Quod si ita esset, in Dei laude Psalmista non diceret: Confessio et magnificentia opus ejus (Psal. CX, 3). Ab eo itaque accipimus recta

confiteri, a quo nobis et magna datur operari. Quia ergo nil boni operis dedimus quo hanc sapientiam percipere mereremur, dicatur recte: Nescit homo pretium ejus, quoniam quisquis jam ratione utitur, tanto altius sub hujus sapientiae intellectu se despicit, quanto ejusdem sapientiae verius interna cognoscit, ut indignum se ad hanc pervenisse videat, per quam gratuito agitur ut dignus fiat. De qua bene mox subditur.

CAPUT XLI [Rec. XXIV].

VERS. 13. Nec in terra suaviter viventium. 66. Quisquis hujus vitae voluptatibus pascitur, ab aeternae sapientiae intellectu separatur. Quid hoc in loco terrae signatur nomine, nisi anima humana? De qua Psalmista dicit: Anima mea sicut terra sine aqua tibi (Psal. CXLII, 6). Haec autem sapientia inveniri in terra suaviter viventium non valet, quia quisquis adhuc hujus vitae voluptatibus pascitur, ab aeternae sapientiae intellectu separatur. Nam si vere saperet, expulsus ab internis gaudiis, de ea in quam 587 cecidit, exsilii sui caecitate lugeret. Hinc namque per Salomonem dicitur: Qui apponit scientiam, apponit et dolorem (Eccle. I, 18), quia quanto plus homo coeperit scire quid perdidit, tanto plus lugere incipit corruptionis suae sententiam quam invenit. Considerat namque unde quo lapsus est; quod a paradisi gaudiis ad aerumnas vitae praesentis, ab angelorum societatibus venit ad curas necessitatum; pensat in quot jam periculis jacet, qui prius sine periculo stare contempsit; luget exsilium quod damnatus patitur, et suspirat ad coelestis gloriae statum, quo perfrui securus posset si peccare noluisset. Quod bene Psalmista considerans, ait: Ego dixi in pavore meo: Projectus sum a vultu oculorum tuorum (Psal, XXX, 23). Contemplatus quippe interna gaudia visionis Dei, et socialem frequentiam angelorum persistentium, reduxit oculos ad ima, vidit quo jaceret, qui ad hoc conditus fuerat, ut in coelestibus stare potuisset; pensavit ubi esset, et quo deesset ingemuit; projectumque se a vultu oculorum Dei doluit, quia in

comparatione lucis intimae graviores senserat exsilii sui tenebras quas tolerabat [Vet. XXVII]. Hinc est quod ad animum suum ex praesenti vita nullius gratiae consolationem admittit, dicens: Negavi consolari animam meam (Psal. LXXVI, 3). Nam plerumque hujus saeculi divites solent mentis taedio affecti, bona temporaliter accepta conspicere, et tristitiam delinire. Cum enim moerore quodam se tangi sentiunt, equos aspiciunt, auri argentique sui vascula contemplantur, praedia circumeunt. Cumque per haec temporalia oculos libenter trahunt, obortum animae moerorem vincunt. Unde eis et in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Vae vobis divitibus, qui hic habetis consolationem vestram (Luc. VI, 24). Sed sanctus vir qui hoc luget, quia ab aeternis gaudiis cecidit, consolationem de temporalibus non admittit, dicens: Negavi consolari animam meam. Ac si aperte dicat: Qui de temporalium amissione non lugeo, de temporalium abundantia consolari nequaquam possum. Cui tanquam si nos audientes ista diceremus: Quid igitur quaeris, qui consolari in his quae mundi sunt renuis? illico adjecit: Memor fui Dei, et delectatus sum (Psal. LXXVI, 4). Ac si aperte dicat: Terrenarum rerum me nec abundantia refovet, auctoris autem mei quem adhuc videre non valeo. vel sola memoria delectat. Haec est igitur amaritudo sapientiam, quia dum spe in alta erecti sunt, nullis hic gaudiis animum sternunt. Hinc enim scriptum est: Cor sapientium ubi tristitia est, et cor stultorum ubi laetitia (Eccle. VII, 5). Hinc Jacobus dicit: Miseri estote, et lugete, et plorate, et risus vester in luctum convertatur, et gaudium in moerorem (Jac. IV, 9). Hinc per semetipsam Veritas attestatur, dicens: Beati qui lugent, quoniam ipsi consolabuntur (Matth, V, 5). Inveniri ergo sapientia in eorum terra non potest, qui suaviter vivunt, quia tanto verius stulti sunt, quanto majora perdentes, in minimis laetantur. Hinc Petrus eamdem pravorum stultitiam reprehendit, dicens: Voluptatem existimantes diei delicias, coinquinationis et maculae (II Pet. II, 13). Hinc Salomon ait: Risum deputavi errorem, et gaudio dixi: Quid frustra deciperis (Eccle. II, 2).

Dicat itaque vir sanctus de sapientia: Nec invenitur in terra suaviter viventium, quia nimirum qui in 588 hoc mundo suaviter vivunt ita adhuc stulti sunt, ut hoc ipsum quoque nesciant, unde ceeiderunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLII [Rec. XXV].

VERS. 14. Abyssus dicit, Non est in me. 67. A Dei sapientia sunt alieni, qui secundum carnem mundumque sapiunt. Quid hoc loco abyssum nisi corda hominum vocat? quae et per lapsum fluida et per duplicitatis sunt caliginem tenebrosa. Quae nimirum abyssus non esse in se hanc sapientiam profitetur, quia iniqua mens dum esse sapiens carnaliter appetit, stultam se ad spiritalia ostendit. Nam quia, teste Paulo, Sapientia hujus mundi stultitia est apud Deum (I Cor. III, 19), tanto quisque amplius intus stultus fit, quanto conatur exterius sapiens videri. De hac abysso per Joannem dicitur: Vidi angelum descendentem de coelo, habentem clavem abyssi, et catenam magnam in manu sua; et apprehendit draconem serpentem antiquum, qui est diabolus, et satanas, et ligavit eum per annos mille, et misit in abyssum, et clausit, et signavit super illum, ut non seducat amplius gentes, donec consumentur mille anni (Apoc. XX, 1). Millenario etenim numero non quantitatem temporis, sed universitatem, qua regnat Ecclesia, designavit. Antiquus autem serpens ligatus catena in abyssum mittitur, quia religatus a bonorum cordibus, apud reproborum mentes reclusus, eis atrocius dominatur. Qui paulo post quoque de puteo abyssi educi describitur, quia de iniquorum cordibus nunc occulte saevientibus, tunc accepta contra Ecclesiam potestate, in vim aperte persecutionis erumpet. Haec itaque abyssus, in qua nunc diabolus servatur occultus, non esse in se sapientiam dicit, quia alienam se a vera sapientia iniquis operibus ostendit. Dum enim malitiam quisque tegit in corde, ore autem blandimenta exhibet, dum cogitationes suas duplicitate obnubilat, dum puritatis verba quasi fatuitatem devitat, dum vias simplicis innocentiae declinat, quasi habere se abyssus Dei sapientiam

recusat. Et quia huic mundo mentes deditae praesentis vitae curis et sollicitudinibus perturbantur, et idcirco ejusdem sapientiae tranquillitate perfrui nequaquam possunt, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLIII.

IBID. Et mare loquitur: Non est mecum. 68. Ea non fruuntur, qui terrenis distrahuntur curis. Quid enim maris nomine nisi saecularium mentium amara inquietudo signatur? Quae dum se vicissim inimicitiis impetunt, quasi adversantes se undae collidunt. Recte etenim mare vita saecularium dicitur, quia dum procellosis actionum motibus concitatur, ab internae sapientiae quiete atque stabilitate disjungitur. Quo contra bene per prophetam dicitur: Super quem requiescet spiritus meus, nisi super humilem et quietum, et trementem sermones meos (Isai. LXVI, 2)? A terrenis autem mentibus tanto longius spiritus fugit, quanto apud has quietem non invenit. Hinc est enim quod de quibusdam per Psalmistam dicitur: Contritio et infelicitas in viis eorum, et viam pacis non cognoverunt (Psal. XIII, 3). A qua nimirum contritione perturbationis nos Dominus revocat, dicens: Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego vos reficiam; tollite jugum meum super vos, et discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde, et invenietis requiem animabus vestris (Matth. XI, 28). Quid enim in hac vita laboriosius quam terrenis desideriis aestuare? 589 aut quid hic quietius quam hujus saeculi nihil appetere? [Vet. XXVIII.] Hinc est quod Israeliticus populus custodiam Sabbati accepit in munere (Exod. XVI, 29); hinc e contra est Aegyptus muscarum multitudine percussa (Exod. VIII, 21). Populus namque qui Deum sequitur accipit sabbatum, id est requiem mentis, ut nullo in hac vita desideriorum carnalium appetitu fatigetur. Aegyptus vero quae hujus mundi speciem tenet muscis percutitur. Musca enim nimis insolens et inquietum animal est. In qua quid aliud quam insolentes curae desideriorum carnalium designantur? Unde alias dicitur:

Muscae morientes perdunt suavitatem unguenti (Eccle. X, 1), quia cogitationes superfluae, quae assidue in animo carnalia cogitante et nascuntur et deficiunt, eam suavitatem qua unusquisque intrinsecus per spiritum unctus est perdunt, quoniam integritate ejus perfrui non permittunt. Aegyptus ergo muscis percutitur, quia eorum corda qui terrenam vitam diligunt, dum desideriorum suorum inquietudinibus feriuntur, turbis cogitationum carnalium ad ima depressa sunt, ut ad quietis intimae desiderium non leventur. Unde cum mira ope pietatis ad cor veritas venit, prius ab eo cogitationum carnalium aestus ejicit, et post in eo virtutum dona disponit. Quod bene nobis sacra Evangelii historia innuit, in qua dum ad resuscitandam filiam principis invitatus Dominus duceretur, protinus additur: Et cum ejecta esset turba, intravit, et tenuit manum ejus, et surrexit puella (Matth. IX, 25). Foras ergo turba ejicitur, ut puella suscitetur, quia si non prius a secretioribus cordis expellitur importuna saecularium multitudo curarum, anima quae intrinsecus jacet mortua non resurgit. Nam dum se per innumeras terrenorum desideriorum cogitationes spargit, ad considerationem sui sese nullatenus colligit. In his itaque inquietudinum fluctibus habitare sapientiam non posse cognoscens, ait: Et mare loquitur: Non est mecum. Nullus quippe eam plene recipit, nisi qui ab omni se abstrahere actionum carnalium fluctuatione contendit. Unde et alias dicitur: Sapientiam scribe in tempore otii, et qui minoratur actu, ipse percipiet eam (Eccli. XXXVIII, 25). Et rursum: Vacate et videte, quoniam ego sum Deus (Psal. LV, 11). [Vet. XXIX.] 69. Nisi eis non terreno studio serviatur. Sed quid est quod plerosque antiquorum patrum novimus hanc sapientiam et intrinsecus vivaciter tenuisse, et curas mundi extrinsecus solemniter ministrasse (Genes. XLII, 43, etc.)? An perceptione hujus sapientiae Joseph privatum dicimus, qui famis tempore totius Aegypti curas suscipiens, non solum Aegyptiis alimenta praebuit, sed vitam quoque exterorum advenientium ministerii sui arte servavit? An ab hac sapientia Daniel

alienus exstitit, qui a Chaldaeorum rege in Babylonia princeps magistratuum effectus, tanto majoribus curis occupatus est, quanto et sublimiori dignitate omnibus praelatus (Dan. II, 48)? Cum igitur constet plerumque etiam bonos non terreno studio terrenis curis implicari, patenter agnoscimus quia sic nonnunquam cives Jerusalem angarias solvunt Babyloniae, sicut saepe cives Babyloniae impendunt angarias Jerusalem. Nam sunt nonnulli qui verbum vitae pro sola sapientiae ostentatione praedicant, eleemosynarum opem pro appetitu vanae gloriae subministrant. Et quidem Jerusalem videntur esse quae agunt, sed 590 tamen Babyloniae cives sunt. 70. Deo soli vacare cupiendum est, et curis externis ex Dei voluntate serviendum. Sic itaque aliquando contingit ut qui solam coelestem patriam diligunt, terrenae patriae curis subjacere videantur. Quorum tamen ministerium a pravorum operibus plerumque in actu, nonnunquam vero ante supernum judicem in sola cogitatione discernitur. Pleni quippe superna sapientia discernunt qualiter debeant et ad aliud vacare intrinsecus, et ad aliud extrinsecus occupari ut si forte occulta Dei ordinatione aliquid eis non appetentibus de hujus saeculi curis imponitur, cedant Deo quem diligunt, et prae amore ejus intrinsecus solam illius desiderent visionem; prae timore vero ejus impositam sibi extrinsecus humiliter expleant actionem, ut et vacare Deo appetant ex gratia dilectionis, et rursum curas superimpositas ex conditione expleant servitutis. Cumque occupationes extrinsecus perstrepunt, intrinsecus in amore pacatissima quies tenetur; atque occupationum tumultus exterius perstrepentes dispensat interius praesidens judex ratio, et tranquillo moderamine ea quae circa se minus sunt tranquilla disponit. Sicut enim vigor mentis frenandis praeest motibus carnis, sic saepe superimpositos tumultus occupationis bene regit amor quietis, quia exteriores curae si perverso amore non appetuntur, non confuso, sed ordinato animo ministrari queunt. Sancti etenim viri nequaquam eas appetunt, sed occulto ordine sibi superimpositas gemunt; et quamvis illas

per meliorem intentionem fugiant, tamen per subditam mentem portant. Quas quidem summopere, si liceat, vitare festinant; sed timentes occultas dispensationes Dei, tenent quod fugiunt, et exercent quod vitant. Intrant enim ad cor suum, et ibi consulunt quid velit occulta voluntas Dei; seseque subditos debere esse summis ordinationibus cognoscentes, humiliant cervicem cordis jugo divinae dispensationis. Quisquis vero talis est, quilibet tumultus versentur extrinsecus, nunquam ad ejus interiora perveniunt. Itaque agitur ut aliud intrinsecus voto, aliud extrinsecus teneatur officio; et hac sapientia non jam turbulenta atqua confusa, sed tranquilla corda repleantur. Bene ergo de ea dicitur quia Abyssus dicit: Non est in me, et mare loquitur: Non est mecum. Ac si aperte diceretur: Perturbatae mentes saecularium eo ipso clamant, quoniam a vera sapientia longe divisae sunt, quo quietae non sunt. Quia vero haec Dei sapientia manens cum Patre ante saecula incarnanda erat in fine saeculorum, ut ad redimendum genus humanum non sanctos angelos, non justos homines mitteret, sed in manifestatione visionis per semetipsam veniret, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLIV [Rec. XXVI].

VERS. 15. Non dabitur aurum obryzum pro ea. 71. Angeli ab omni labe mundi, non homines. Quid namque per aurum obryzum nisi sancti angeli designantur? Qui recte et aurum vocantur, et obryzum: aurum, quia fulgent claritate justitiae; obryzum, quia nullum habuerunt unquam contagium culpae. Homines vero justi quandiu in hac carne corruptibili mortaliter vivunt, aurum quidem esse possunt, obryzum omnino non possunt, quia corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem (Sap. IX, 15). 591 Nam quamvis in hac vita ex magna justitiae claritate resplendeant, nequaquam tamen ad purum peccatorum sordibus carent; Joanne Apostolo attestante, qui dicit: Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, nosmetipsos seducimus, et veritas

in nobis non est (I Joan. I, 8); et affirmante Jacobo, qui astruit, dicens: In multis enim offendimus omnes (Jac. III, 2). Propheta etiam deprecante, qui ait: Ne intres in judicium cum servo tuo, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens (Psal. CXLII, 2). Aurum ego obryzum illi nuncupantur, qui in ea qua conditi sunt innocentia perdurantes, et fulgent claritate justitiae, et nullis vel minimis maculantur sordibus culpae. [Vet. XXX.] 72. Nullus tamen angelorum ad redimendum hominem missus est, aut sufficit. Sed quia pro hac sapientia nullus angelorum redemptor humani generis mittendus fuit, ne quis spem in his, quos in adjutorium hominum saepe apparuisse didicimus, angelis poneret, dictum est: Non dabitur aurum obryzum pro ea. Ac si aperte diceretur: Per semetipsam sapientia manifestabitur, ut humanum genus a culpa redimatur. Nullus vice ejus angelus mittitur, quia per creatorem necesse est ut creatura liberetur. Unde et in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Si vos filius liberaverit, vere liberi eritis (Joan. VIII, 36). Sed vir sanctus, spiritu ejusdem sapientiae repletus, quosdam in Judaea praevidit non esse defuturos qui spem in legislatore ponerent, et suae salutis auctorem Moysen putarent, sicut et cuidam sanato maledicentes dicunt: Tu discipulus sis ejus, nos enim Moysi discipuli sumus (Joan. IX, 28). Unde adhuc congrue subinfertur:

CAPUT XLV.

IBID. Nec appendetur argentum in commutatione ejus. 73. Eorum qui Moysen aut quempiam sanctorum, suae salutis auctorem putant, insania. Quia enim argento saepe eloquia divina designantur possunt argenti vocabulo etiam ejusdem eloquii scriptores intelligi, quorum vita inter turbas hominum resplenduit luce virtutum. Sed quia lex peccata indicare potuit, non auferre, non quisquam veterum patrum, non legislator Moyses humani generis redemptor exstitit. Argentum ergo in commutatione hujus sapientiae non appenditur, quia quilibet sancti esse potuerunt, in comparatione

unigeniti Filii Dei nullius meriti fuisse pensantur, qui nisi hujus sapientiae servos se esse cognoscerent, sancti nullatenus fuissent. Ad hoc quippe illi missi sunt, ut in cordibus hominum viam huic sapientiae praedicando praepararent, neque ut pro ea, sed per eam subjectos populos regerent. Quia enim certum erat quod per accessum temporum deficientis saeculi languores excrescerent, actum est ut aeterna Dei sapientia in fine saeculorum per semetipsam veniret ad grandem hunc et nimiae infirmitatis aegrotum, id est per totum mundum jacens languidum genus humanum, ut transmissis prius praedicatoribus, quasi quibusdam visitatoribus, tanto postmodum major veniret potentia medici, quanto magis morbus crevisset aegroti. Quia vero nullus vice ejus ad salvandos nos mittitur, dicatur recte: Nec appendetur argentum in commutatione ejus, quoniam vita justorum praedicantium quantalibet sanctitatis luce poileat, adventum nobis supernae
592 sapientiae per suam praesentiam non commutat. Sed fuere multi gentilium qui, mundi hujus sapientum disciplinis dediti, ea quae sunt inter homines honesta servarent, et salvandos servata honestate se crederent, nec jam mediatorem Dei et hominum quaererent, cum quasi sufficientem sibi philosophorum doctrinam tenerent. In quorum despectu mox subditur:

CAPUT XLVI [Rec. XXVII].

VERS. 16. Non conferetur tinctis Indiae coloribus. 74. Quantum praestet Dei sapientia, fucatae nitore sermonis philosophioe. Quid enim per Indiam quae nigrum populum mittit, nisi hic mundus accipitur, in quo vita hominum per culpam obscura generatur. Tincti autem colores indiae, sunt hujus mundi sapientes; qui quamvis per infidelitatem et plerumque per actionem foedi sint, ante humanos tamen oculos superductae honestatis colore fucantur. Sed coaeterna Dei sapientia tinctis Indiae coloribus non confertur, quia quisquis hanc veraciter intelligit, ab his hominibus quos mundus sapientes coluit quam longe distet agnoscit. Ipsaque ejus

mandatorum verba ab hujus mundi sapientibus differunt, qui dum intendunt eloquentiae, eorum dicta quasi pulchra apparent specie, et fucatione tincturae; et cum virtute rerum careant, aliud se esse quam sunt verborum compositionibus, quasi superductis coloribus, mentiuntur. At contra, doctrina sapientiae et praedicatione pulchra est, et pura veritate conspicua; nec aliud se per fallaciam praetendit exterius, et aliud reservat interius; neque in dictis suis pulchra videri appetit nitore sermonis, sed integritate veritatis. In mandatis igitur suis Dei sapientia non confertur tinctis Indiae coloribus, quia dum fucata eloquentiae ornamenta non habet, quasi vestis sine tinctura placet. Quam fucationem tincturae bene Paulus despexerat, cum dicebat: Quae et loquimur non in doctis humanae saplentiae verbis, sed in doctrina spiritus (I Cor. II, 13). Malebat quippe hanc sapientiam sola puritate veritatis ostendere, non autem eloquii tinctione fucare. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVII.

IBID. Nec lapidi sardonycho pretiosissimo, vel sapphiro. 75. Christo nullus aut hominum aut angelorum comparandus. Sardonychum, vel sapphirum, lapides pretiosos non esse quis nesciat? Et dum multi alii pretiosi sint lapides, qui longe istos aestimatione magnitudinis antecellant, cur sapphirus vel sardonychus potissimum pretiosus nominatus est, cum uterque lapis iste aliorum lapidum comparatione vilissimus sit? nisi ut eos lapides qui pretiosi describuntur, dum pretiosos non esse cognoscimus, in eorum intelligentia aliud exquiramus. Sardonychus quippe terrae rubrae similitudinem tenet, sapphirus vero aeream habet speciem. Possunt ergo in sardonycho per terram rubram homines, in sapphiro autem per aeream visionem angeli designari. Nam cum rubrae terrae speciem lapis sardonychus habeat, non immerito hominem designat, quia et Adam, qui primus est conditus, Latino sermone terra rubra nominatur. Quid est ergo quod dicitur, quia haec sapientia lapidi sardonycho, 593 vel sapphiro non confertur, nisi quod is qui

est Dei virtus, et Dei sapientia, mediator scilicet Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus, tanta magnitudine excellat omnia, ut ei nec in terra primi homines, nec in coelo angeli comparentur? Unde et per Psalmistam, dicitur: Quis in nubibus aequabitur Domino, aut quis similis erit Deo inter filios Dei (Psal. LXXXVIII, 7)? [Vet. XXXI.] 76. Quantum apostoli caelibes antecellant veteris testamenti patres conjugatos. Possunt autem per sardonychum lapidem patres testamenti veteris, per sapphirum vero praedicatores exprimi testamenti novi. Illi quippe quamvis magnam justitiae vitam tenerent, carnali tamen propagationi serviebant. Quia igitur constat quod quaedam terrena agerent, non immerito per sardonychum lapidem, qui, ut praediximus, terrae rubrae tenet speciem, designantur. Per sapphirum vero, qui aetherei est coloris, testamenti novi congrue praedicatores accepimus, qui carnalis propaginis desideria postponentes, coelestia sola sectati sunt. Unde et propheta, conspiciens cuncta carnis desideria sanctos apostolos spiritali ardore transcendere, admiratus ait: Qui sunt hi qui ut nubes volant (Isai. LX, 8)? Ac si aperte dicat: Nos per terram gradimur, qui adhuc conjugiis implicamur, et propagandae soboli opera carnis impendimus; isti vero in terra non ambulant, sed ut nubes volant, qui dum coelestia appetunt, de terrenis desideriis nihil tangunt. Ait ergo quia Dei sapientia sardonycho, vel sapphiro lapidi non confertur, ac si patenter insinuet, dicens: Ei qui homo inter homines cernitur, nec in antiquis quisquam, nec in novis patribus aequatur, quia ex Deitate habet quod in humanitate quemquam similem non habet. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XLVIII.

Vers. 17. Non adaequabitur ei aurum vel vitrum. 77. Beati fulgebunt in coelo tanquam aurum, translucebunt ut vitrum. Quis hoc sanum sapiens juxta litteram sentire dignetur? Vitrum quippe, ut superius diximus, auro longe est vilius; et postquam dictum est quod aurum huic sapientiae non

adaequatur, adhuc quasi crescendo subjungitur quod ei quoque nec vitrum possit aequari. Sed ipsa nos littera ab historico intellectu deficiens, ad indagandum allegoriae mysterium mittit. Auri namque metallum novimus potiori metullis omnibus claritate fulgere. Vitri vero naturae est ut extrinsecus visum, pura intrinsecus perspicuitate luceat. In alio metallo quidquid intrinsecus continetur absconditur; in vitro vero quilibet liquor qualis continetur interius, talis exterius demonstratur, atque, ut ita dixerim, omnis liquor in vitreo vasculo clausus patet. Quid ergo aliud in auro vel vitro accipimus, nisi illam supernam patriam, illam beatorum civium societatem, quorum corda sibi invicem et claritate fulgent, et puritate translucent? Quam Joannes in Apocalypsi conspexerat, cum dicebat: Et erat structura muri ejus ex lapide jaspide; ipsa vero civilas aurum mundum similis, vitro mundo (Apoc. XXI, 18). Quia enim sancti omnes summa in ea beatitudinis claritate fulgebunt, instructa auro dicitur. 78. In eorum vultu intimi animi sensus conspiciuntur. Et quoniam ipsa eorum claritas vicissim sibi in alternis cordibus patet, et cum uniuscujusque vuitus attenditur, simul et conscientia penetratur, 594 hoc ipsum aurum vitro mundo simile esse memoratur. Ibi quippe uniuscujusque mentem ab alterius oculis, membrorum corpulentia non abscondet, sed patebit animus, patebit corporalibus oculis ipsa etiam corporis harmonia, sicque unusquisque tunc erit conspicabilis alteri, sicut nunc esse non potest conspicabilis sibi. [Vet. XXXII.] Nunc autem corda nostra quandiu in hac vita sumus, quia ab altero in alterum videri non possunt, non intra vitrea, sed intra lutea vascula concluduntur, cui scilicet luto per passionem mentis inhaerere Propheta formidabat, cum diceret: Eripe me de luto, ut non inhaeream (Psal. LXVIII, 15). Quod nimirum habitaculum corporum Paulus domum terrestrem nominat, dicens: (Scimus quoniam si terrestris domus nostra hujus habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem ex Deo habemus, domum non manufactam aeternam in coelis (II Cor. V, 1). In hac itaque terrestri domo

quousque vivimus, ipsum, ut ita dicam, corruptionis nostrae parietem mentis oculis nullatenus penetramus, et vicissim in aliis videre occulta non possumus. Unde sancta Ecclesia sponsi sui speciem videre in divinitate desiderans, nec tamen valens, quia aeternitatis illius formam quam intueri concupiverat ab ejus oculis assumpta humanitas abscondebat, in Canticis canticorum moerens dicit: En ipse stat post parietem nostrum (Cant. II, 9). Ac si aperte dicat: Ego hunc in divinitatis suae jam specie videre desidero, sed adhuc a visione illius per assumptae carnis parietem excludor. Quousque itaque in hac corruptibili carne vivimus, cogitationes nostras in alterutrum non videmus. Unde rursum per eumdem Paulum dicitur: Quis scit hominum quae sunt hominis, nisi spiritus hominis qui in ipso est [I Cor. II, 11]? Et rursum: Nolite judicare ante tempus, donec veniat Dominus, qui et illuminabit abscondita tenebrarum, et manifestabit consilia cordium (I Cor. IV, 5). Illa itaque civitas quae sua vicissim singulis corda manifestat, ex auro dicitur similis vitro mundo, ut designetur auro clara, vitro perspicua.
79. Quomodo sancti Deo similes sint et dissimiles. Sed quamvis in ea sancti omnes tanta claritate fulgeant, tanta perspicuitate transluceant, ei tamen sapientiae de cujus imagine habent omne quod sunt, aequari non possunt. Bene ergo dicitur: Non adaequabitur ei aurum vel vitrum. Ad hoc enim sancti omnes ad illa gaudia aeterna perveniunt, ut esse Deo similes possint, sicut scriptum est: Cum apparuerit, similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est (I. Joan. III, 2)? Et tamen scriptum est: Domine Deus virtutum, quis similis tibi (Psal. LXXXVIII, 9)? Et iterum: Aut quis erit similis Deo inter filios Dei? Unde ergo similes, et unde non similes, nisi quia huic sapientiae et similes erunt ad imaginem et tamen non erunt ad aequalitatem? Aspiciendo quippe aeternitatem Dei, fit eis ut aeterni sint; et dum visionis ejus donum percipiunt, ex perceptione beatitudinis imitantur quod vident. Et similes ergo sunt, quia beati fiunt; et tamen creatori similes non sunt, quia creatura sunt. Et habent itaque quamdam Dei similitudinem,

quia non habent finem; et tamen incircumscripti aequalitatem non habent, qui habent circumscriptionem. Dicatur igitur recte: Non adaequabitur ei aurum vel vitrum, 595 quia quantalibet sancti claritate et perspicuitate fulgeant, aliud est homines esse sapientes in Deo, atque aliud esse hominem sapientiam Dei. Quam profecto sapientiam ille veraciter agnovit, qui mediatori Dei et hominum aliquem comparare sanctorum minime praesumpsit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XLIX [Vet. XXXIII].

IBID Nec commutabuntur pro ea vasa auri excelsa et eminentia. 80. Sanctiomnes pertranseundi, ut ad Christum Deum et hominem perveniatur. Excelsum quippe vas auri Elias exstitit, excelsum vas auri Jeremias, excelsa atque eminentia auri vasa priores patres fuere. Sed haec Dei sapientia, ut a carnali nos conversatione redimeret, apparuit in carne, et qui illam veraciter non agnovit, mediatorem Dei et hominum, hominem Jesum Christum unum esse ex prophetis putavit quem electorum oculi fide tenuerunt Deum, cum viderunt hominem. Unde ab eo sanctis discipulis dicitur: Quem dicunt homines esse Filium hominis (Matth. XVI, 13)? Cui cum protinus responderent: Alii Joannem Baptistam, alii Eliam, alii vero Jeremiam, aut unum ex prophetis (Ibid., 14), de suo mox sensu requiruntur: Vos quem me esse dicitis (Ibid., 15)? Cui protinus Petrus totius Ecclesiae voce respondens, ait: Tu es Christus Filius Dei vivi (Ibid., 16). Quia igitur juxta Pauli vocem Christum novimus Dei virtutem, et Dei sapientiam (I Cor. I, 18, 30), Petrus pro hac sapientia vasa auri excelsa et eminentia commutare noluit, quia de illa non aliud quam erat intellexit. Magnum quippe, ut dictum est, vas auri Joannes, magnum vas auri Elias vel Jeremias fuit. Sed quisquis eumdem Deum quemlibet eorum esse credidit, vas auri excelsum et eminens pro sapientia commutavit. Ecclesia vero pro hae sapientia, vasa auri excelsa et eminentia non commutat, quia Christum Filium Dei non

unum esse prophetarum, sed unum prophetarum Dominum credit. Ipsam quippe ad se venisse sapientiam videns, noluit se in illis aureis vasis figere, sed in cam studuit fide certissima pertransire. Unde in Canticis canticorum dicit: Invenerunt me vigiles qui custodiunt civitatem. Num quem diligit anima mea vidistis? Paululum cum pertransissem eos, inveni quem diligit anima mea (Cant. III, 3). Quos enim vigiles qui custodiunt civitatem, nisi priores Patres vel prophetas accipimus, qui studuerunt ad custodiam nostram sanctae praedicationis voce vigilare? Sed cum Redemptorem suum Ecclesia quaereret, in ipsis antiquis praedicatoribus spem figere noluit, quae dicit: Paululum cum pertransissem eos, inveni quem diligit anima mea (Ibid., III, 4). Illum quippe invenire non posset si istos pertransire noluisset. In istis se custodibus infideles fixerant, qui Christum Dei Filium unum quemlibet esse illorum credebant. Voce igitur ac fide Petri inventos vigiles sancta Ecclesia transiit, quae prophetarum Dominum unum quemlibet ex prophetis credere contempsit. Dicatur ergo: Nec commutabuntur pro ea vasa auri excelsa et eminentia, quia electi quique sanctorum vitam et venerantur ex sublimitate, et tamen non suscipiunt ad errorem. Quos enim puros homines esse sciunt, Deo homini omnino non conferunt. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT L.

Vers. 18. Nec commemorabuntur in comparatione ejus. 596 81. Omnes coelestes cives sancti et justi, sed participatione divinae sapientiae, non comparatione. Omnes enim supernae patriae electi, sancti quidem et justi sunt; sed participatione sapientiae, non comparatione. Quid enim sunt homines Deo comparati? Lumen autem sapientia, lumen et servi sapientiae vocari solent. Sed illa lumen illuminans, isti lumen illuminatum, sicut scriptum est: Erat lux vera quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum (Joan. I, 9). Istis autem tantummodo dicitur: Vos estis lux

mundi (Matth. V, 14). Justitia quidem sapientia, justitia et servi sapientiae nuncupantur; sed illa justitia justificans, isti autem justitia justificata. De Deo quippe, qui sapientia est, dicitur: Ut sit ipse justus et justificans (Rom. III, 26); isti vero dicunt: Ut nos efficeremur justitia Dei in ipso (II Cor. V, 21). Aliter ergo venerandum est lumen illuminans, aliter lumen illuminatum; aliter justitia justificans, aliter justitia justificata. [Vet. XXXIV.] Sapientia vero est, et sapit; nec habet aliud esse, aliud sapere; servi autem sapientiae esse quidem sapientes possunt, nec tamen hoc habent esse quod sapere; nam esse possunt, et sapientes non esse. Habet vitam sapientia, sed non aliud habet, et aliud est, quippe cui hoc est esse quod vivere. Servi autem sapientiae cum habent vitam, aliud sunt, et aliud habent, quippe quibus non est hoc ipsum esse quod vivere; nam possunt juxta aliquid esse, nec vivere. Aliud quippe illis est esse, aliud vivere, quia in ipso parente primo essentiam habuere per initium, vitam per accessum; quoniam prius de terra factus est homo, et postmodum, sicut scriptum est: Inspiravit in faciem ejus spiraculum vitae, et factus est homo in animam viventem (Genes. II, 7). Sapientia vero habet essentiam, habet vitam; sed hoc quod habet, ipsa est. Proinde incommutabiliter vivit, quia non ex accidenti, sed essentialiter vivit. Sola ergo cum Patre et sancto Spiritu veraciter est, cujus essentiae comparatum esse nostrum, non esse est. Huic si conjungimur, sumus, vivimus, sapimus; huic si comparamur, nec sapimus, nec vivimus omnino, nec sumus. 82. Sancti quanto magis Deum cognoscunt, tanto sibi vilescunt. Hinc est quod sancti omnes, quando in Dei visione proficiunt, quanto magis divinitatis interna conspiciunt, tanto magis se nihil esse cognoscunt. Nusquam quippe legitur quod Abraham cinerem et pulverem se esse professus est, nisi cum habere Dei meruit collocutionem. Ait enim: Loquar ad Dominum meum, cum sim pulvis et cinis (Genes. XVIII, 27). Esse enim se aliquid fortasse crederet, si veracem essentiam quae super ipsum est minime sensisset. At vero ubi ad incommutabilem

contemplandum super se raptus est, impletus tanta contemplationis potentia, dum videret illum, nil se esse nisi pulverem vidit. Hinc est etiam quod Propheta repletus eadem sapientia, exclamat: Memento, Domine, quod pulvis sumus (Psal. CII, 15). Qui rursus ejusdem incommutabilitatem essentiae contemplatus, ait: Omnia sicut vestimentum veterascent, et sicut opertorium mutabis ea, et mutabuntur; tu autem idem ipse es, et anni tui non deficient (Psal. CI, 27, 28). Hinc ad Moysen dicitur: Ego sum qui sum; et dices filiis Israel: Qui est misit me ad vos (Exod. III, 14, 15). Solus quippe veraciter est, qui solus incommutabiliter permanet. Nam omne quod modo sic, et modo aliter est, juxta non esse est. Permanere enim in statu suo non potest. Atque 597 aliquo modo ad non esse itur, dum ab eo quod fuerat semper ad aliud per momenta temporum ducitur. Ut ergo in participatione illius essentiae aliquid simus, cognoscamus nosmetipsos, quia prope nihil sumus. Bene itaque dicitur: Nec commemorabuntur in comparatione ejus, quia vasa auri excelsa et eminentia, quae ex participatione sapientiae nobis veneranda sunt, in comparatione sapientiae etiam memoranda non sunt. Quia vero haec sapientia humanis cordibus latenter infunditur, sicut de sancto Spiritu quoque dictum est: Spiritus ubi vult spirat, et vocem ejus audis, et nescis unde veniat, aut quo vadat (Joan. III, 8), idcirco subjungitur:

CAPUT LI.

IBID. Trahitur enim sapientia de occultis. 83. Dei sapientia ex occultis revelata. Ecelesia cum deessent aperti hostes, tentari coepit a suis. De occultis sapientia trahitur, quia cum sit invisibilis, non nisi invisibiliter invenitur. Quae recte quoque trahi dicitur, quia sicut flatum trahimus, ut corpus vivat, sic ab intimis sapientiae spiritus ducitur, ut ad vitam anima subsistat. Unde Psalmista ait: Os meum aperui, et attraxi spiritum (Psal. CXVIII, 131). Quae nimirum sapientia, humana carne cum anima rationali suscepta, dum ab intimis apparuisset in promptu, mundus hic quia auctorem

suum invisibilem videre non potuit, quem visibilem conspexit hominem, eum quoque et invisibilem agnovit Deum. Conversa est ab infidelitatis suae tenebris superba prius sua aversione gentilitas, ostensis signis atque prodigiis crevit fides; propagata autem fide, in veneratione omnium sanctae Ecclesiae culmen emicuit. Cui cum deessent aperti adversarii, tentari coepit a suis. Nam multae quoque in ea haereses exortae contra eam duri certaminis bella paraverunt. Exercenda quippe est hoc tempore per laborem, quae sequenti tendit ad remunerationem. Qua ex re factum est ut in ea nonnulli prodirent, qui mediatorem Dei et hominum, hominem Christum Jesum purum hominem creatum dicerent, sed ex gratia deificatum; tantumque ei sanctitatis tribuerent, quantum de sanctis caeteris, ejus videlicet famulis, agnovissent. Quos beatus Job, prophetiae spiritu afflatus, sententiae suae definitione redarguit, dicens:

CAPUT LII [Vet. XXXV].

VERS. 19. Non adaeguabitur ei topazium de Aethiopia. 84. Refelluntur qui Christum tanquam purum hominem caeteris sanctis similem docent. Quid Aethiopiam, nisi praesentem mundum accipimus? quae coloris nigredine designat peccatorem populum, foeditate meritorum. Aliquando vero Aethiopiae nomine specialiter gentilitas designari solet, infidelitatis prius nigra peccatis. Quam veniente Domino Habacuc propheta vidit timore perterritam, et ait: Tanacula Aethiopium expavescunt, tabernacula terrae Madian (Habac. III, 7). David quoque propheta videns quod ad Judaeam redimendam veniret Dominus, sed ante gentilitas crederet, et postmodum Judaea sequeretur, sicut scriptum est: Donec plenitudo gentium introiret, et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret (Rom. XI, 25); dicit: Aethiopia praeveniet manus ejus Deo (Psal. LVII, 32); id est, priusquam Judaea credat, salvandam se offert omnipotenti Deo peccatis nigra gentilitas. Topazium vero pretiosus lapis est; et quia Graeca lingua παν omne dicitur, pro eo quod

omni colore resplendet, topazium quasi topantium vocatur. Dum vero 598 in Deum conversa gentilitas credidit, ex ea multi ita sunt dono sui Spiritus locupletati, ut quasi multis coloribus, sic multis virtutibus luceant. Sed ne acceptis quisquam virtutibus extollatur, a sancto viro nunc dicitur: Non adaequabitur ei topazium de Aethiopia. Ac si aperte dicat: Nullus sanctorum quibuslibet virtutibus plenus, ex ista tamen nigredine mundi collectus, aequari ei potest, de quo scriptum est: Quod nascetur ex te sanctum, vocabitur Filius Dei (Luc. I, 35). Nos quippe etsi sancti efficimur, non tamen sancti nascimur, quia ipsa naturae corruptibilis conditione constringimur, ut cum Propheta dicamus: Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in delictis peperit me mater mea (Psal. L, 7). Ille autem solus veraciter sanctus natus est, qui ut ipsam conditionem naturae corruptibilis vinceret, ex commistione carnalis copulae conceptus non est. 85. Nestorii insania contra Christum. Quem etsi purum hominem, meritis assecutum esse ut Deus fieret, docuit. Refellitur. Modus Incarnationis Verbi. Christus aliud ex Patre, aliud ex matre, non alius. Huic se sapientiae quasi quoddam topazium de Aethiopia aequari voluit, cum quidam haeresiarches dixit: Non invideo Christo Deo facto, quoniam si volo, et ipse possum fieri. Qui Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, non per mysterium conceptionis, sed per profectum gratiae Deum putavit, perversa allegatione astruens cum purum hominem natum, sed, ut Deus esset, per meritum profecisse, atque ob hoc aestimans et se et quoslibet alios posse ei coaequari, qui filii Dei per gratiam fiunt, non intelligens, non attendens, quia non adaequabitur ei topazium de Aethiopia. Aliud est enim natos homines gratiam adoptionis accipere, aliud unum singulariter per divinitatis potentiam Deum ex ipso conceptu prodiisse. Nec aequari potest gloriae Unigeniti habitae per naturam alia accepta per gratiam; Mediator quippe Dei atque hominum, homo Christus Jesus (I Tim. II, 5), non sicut iste haereticus desipit, alter in humanitate, alter in Deitate est. [Vet. XXXVI.] Non purus homo conceptus

atque editus, post per meritum ut Deus esset accepit, sed nuntiante angelo, et adveniente Spiritu, mox Verbum in utero, mox intra uterum Verbum caro, et manente incommutabili essentia, quae ei est cum Patre et cum sancto Spritu coaeterna, assumpsit intra virginea viscera unde et impassibilis pati, et immortalis mori, et aeternus ante saecula temporalis posset esse in fine saeculorum, ut per ineffabile sacramentum, conceptu sancto, et partu inviolabili, secundum veritatem utriusque naturae, eadem virgo et ancilla Domini esset et mater. Sic quippe ei ab Elisabeth dicitur: Unde hoc mihi, ut veniat mater Domini mei ad me (Luc. I, 43)? Et ipsa Virgo concipiens dixit: Ecce ancilla Domini; fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum (Ibid., I, 38). Et quamvis ipse aliud ex Patre, aliud ex Virgine, non tamen alius ex Patre, alius ex Virgine, sed ipse est aeternus ex Patre, ipse temporalis ex matre; ipse qui fecit, ipse qui factus est; ipse speciosus forma prae filiis hominum per divinitatem, et ipse de quo dictum est: Vidimus eum, et non erat aspectus, et non est species ei neque decor (Isai. LIII, 2), per humanitatem. Ipse ante saecula de Patre sine matre, ipse in fine saeculorum de matre sine patre. Ipse templum, ipse conditor templi; ipse auctor operis, ipse opus auctoris; manens unus ex utraque et in utraque natura, nec naturarum copulatione confusus, nec naturarum 599 distinctione geminatus. Sed quia non haec tractanda suscepimus, ad exponendi ordinem redeamus. 86. Superius dictorum recapitulatio. Notandum nobis est quod sanctus vir, ut longe distare ab hac sapientia angelos demonstraret, dicit: Non dabitur aurum obryzum pro ea. Qui ut antiquos etiam Patres sacri eloquii tractatores inferiores ostenderet, adjunxit: Nec appendetur argentum in commutatione ejus. Ut philosophorum quoque sapientiam huic monstraret longe subesse, intulit: Non conferetur tinctis Indiae coloribus. Atque subjunxit: Nec lapidi sardonycho pretiosissimo, vel sapphiro. Ut in illa quoque superna civitate nullum pervenire ad aequalitatem Unigeniti demonstraret, addidit: Non adaequabitur ei aurum vel vitrum. Ut prophetas quoque ei subesse

ostenderet, adjunxit: Nec commutabuntur pro ea vasa auri excelsa et eminentia, nec commemorabuntur in comparatione ejus. Trahitur enim sapientia de occultis. Ad extremum vero ut ipsos quoque in Ecclesia haereticos increparet, qui a gentilitatis errore venientes, fidem quam percipiunt, per superbiam scindunt. addidit: Non adaequabitur ei topazium de Aethiopia. Ac si patenter insinuet, dicens: Hi qui ex peccati nigredine ad conversionem veniunt, aequari Deo homini non possunt, quamvis multis colorum virtutibus resplendere videantur. Quorum ut superbia refutetur, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT LIII.

IBID. Nec tincturae mundissimae componentur. 87. Vere humiles et sancti sunt qui suis meritis nihil tribuunt. Tincturae enim mundissimae vocantur hi qui veraciter sunt humiles et veraciter sancti, qui sciunt quidem quia ex semetipsis virtutum speciem non habent, sed hanc ex dono gratiae supervenientis tenent. Tincti enim non essent si sanctitatem naturaliter habuissent. Sed mundissimae tincturae sunt, quia humiliter custodiunt supervenientem in se virtutum gratiam quam acceperunt. Hinc est enim quod sponsi voce de sancta Ecclesia dicitur: Quae est ista quae ascendit dealbata (Cant. VI, 9; III, 6)? Quia enim sancta Ecclesia coelestem vitam naturaliter non habet, sed superveniente Spiritu, pulchritudine donorum componitur, non alba, sed dealbata memoratur. Et notandum quod superius cum dixisset: Non conferetur tinctis Indiae coloribus, eosdem colores non intulit mundos. Hoc vero in loco ut tincturam veracium virtutum ab illa philosophorum fucatione distingueret, tincturas dicens, addidit mundissimas. Tincturae enim mundissimae recte nominantur hi qui prius per prava opera foedi fuerant, superveniente tamen spiritu, nitore gratiae vestiuntur, ut longe aliud appareant esse quam erant. Unde etiam baptisma, id est tinctio, dicitur ipsa nostra in aquam descensio. Tingimur quippe, et

qui prius indecori eramus deformitate vitiorum, accepta fide reddimur pulchri gratia et ornamento virtutum. Sequitur:

CAPUT LIV [Rec. XXVIII].

VERS. 20, 21. Unde ergo sapientia venit, et quis est locus intelligentiae? Abscondita est ab oculis omnium viventium. 88. Quandiu mortaliter vivimus, Deum non in propria natura, sed per quasdam imagines videmus, nisi prius carnali vitae, funditus exstincto ejus amore, moriamur. Pensandum magnopere est quod a sancto viro requiritur unde sapientia veniat. Ab eo etenim venit a quo orta est. Sed quia ab invisibili et coaeterno Patre nascitur, ejus via occulta est. 600 Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Generationem illius quis enarrabit (Isai. LIII, 8)? Locus vero intelligentiae ejus, est mens humana, quam haec Dei sapientia dum repleverit, sanctam facit. Quia ergo et invisibilis est de quo prodiit, et incertum nobis est in cujus mente intellecta requiescat, recte nunc dicitur: Unde ergo sapientia venit, et quis est locus intelligentiae [Vet. XXXVII]? Sed hoc valde mirum est quod protinus subinfertur: Abscondita est ab oculis omnium viventium. Sapientia quippe quae Deus est, si omnium viventium oculis occulta esset, hanc procul dubio sanctorum nemo vidisset. Sed ecce huic sententiae Joannem audio concordantem, qui ait: Deum nemo vidit unquam (I Joan. IV, 12). Rursumque cum testamenti veteris patres intucor, multos horum, teste ipsa sacrae lectionis historia, Deum vidisse cognosco. Vidit quippe Jacob Dominum, qui ait: Vidi Dominum facie ad faciem, et salva facta est anima mea (Genes. XXXII, 30). Vidit Moyses Deum, de quo scriptum est: Loquebatur Dominus ad Moysen facie ad faciem, sicut loqui solet homo ad amicum suum (Exod. XXXIII, 11). Vidit isdem Job Dominum, qui dicit: Auditu auris audivi te, nunc autem oculus meus videt te (Job. XLII, 5). Vidit Isaias Dominum, qui ait: Anno quo mortuus est rex Ozias, vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum (Isai. VI, 1). Vidit

Michaeas Dominum, qui ait: Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium suum, et omnem exercitum coeli assistentem ei a dextris et a sinistris (III Reg. XXII, 19). Quid est ergo quod tot testamenti veteris patres Deum se vidisse testati sunt, et tamen de hac sapientia quae Deus est, dicitur: Abscondita est ab oculis omnium viventium; et Joannes ait: Deum nemo vidit unquam (I Joan. IV, 12), nisi hoc quod patenter datur intelligi, quia quandiu hic mortaliter vivitur, videri per quasdam imagines Deus potest, sed per ipsam naturae suae speciem non potest, ut anima, gratia spiritus afflata, per figuras quasdam Deum videat, sed ad ipsam vim ejus essentiae non pertingat? Hinc est enim quod Jacob, qui Deum se vidisse testatur, hunc non nisi in angelo vidit (Exod. XXXIII, 11). Hinc est quod Moyses, qui cum Deo facie ad faciem loquebatur, sicut loqui solet homo cum amico suo, ei inter ipsa verba suae locutionis dicit: Si inveni gratiam in conspectu tuo, ostende mihi temetipsum manifeste, ut videam te (Exod. XXXIII, 13). Certe enim si Deus non erat cum quo loquebatur, ostende mihi Deum diceret, et non ostende temetipsum. Si autem Deus erat cum quo facie ad faciem loquebatur, cur se petebat videre quem videbat? Sed ex hac ejus petitione colligitur quia eum sitiebat per incircumscriptae naturae suae claritatem cernere, quem jam coeperat per quasdam imagines videre, ut sic superna essentia mentis ejus oculis adesset, quatenus ei ad aeternitatis visionem nulla imago creata temporaliter interesset. Et viderunt ergo patres testamenti veteris Dominum, et tamen, juxta Joannis vocem: Deum nemo vidit unquam (Joan. IV, 12); et juxta beati Job sententiam, sapientia quae Deus est, abscondita est ab oculis omnium viventium, quia in hac mortali carne consistentibus, et videri potuit per quasdam circumscriptas imagines, et videri non potuit per incircumscriptum lumen aeternitatis. [Vet. XXXVIII.] 89. Sin vero a quibusdam potest in hac adhuc 601 corruptibili carne viventibus, sed tamen inaestimabili virtute crescentibus, quodam contemplationis acumine aeterna Dei claritas videri; hoc quoque a beati Job

sententia non abhorret, qui ait: Abscondita est ab oculis omnium viventium; quoniam quisquis sapientiam, quae Deus est, videt, huic vitae funditus moritur, ne jam ejus amore teneatur. Nullus quippe eam vidit, qui adhuc carnaliter vivit, quia nemo potest Deum simul amplecti et saeculum. Qui enim Deum videt, eo ipso moritur, quo vel intentione cordis, vel effectu operis ab hujus vitae delectationibus tota mente separatur. Unde adhuc ad eumdem quoque Moysen dicitur: Non enim videbit me homo, et vivet (Exod. XXXIII, 21). Ac si aperte diceretur: Nullus unquam Deum spiritaliter videt, et mundo carnaliter vivit. Unde Paulus quoque apostolus, qui adhuc Dei invisibilia, sicut ipse testatur, ex parte cognoverat (I Cor. XIII, 12), jam huic mundo totum se mortuum esse perhibebat, dicens: Mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo (Galat. VI, 14). Sicut enim jam longe superius diximus, non sufficit ut diceret, Mundo crucifixus sum, nisi etiam praemitteret, Mihi mundus crucifixus est, ut non solum se mundo mortuum, sed etiam mundum sibi mortuum esse testaretur, quatenus nec ipse mundum, nec ipsum jam mundus appeteret. Si enim duo fortasse in uno loco sint, quorum unus vivus, alter vero sit mortuus, etsi mortuus viventem non videt, vivus tamen mortuum videt. Praedicator autem Dei ut ostenderet quia per abjectionem qua se humiliando dejecerat, talis jam factus esset, ut nec ipse mundum, nec mundus ipsum concupisceret, non solum ait se mundo crucifixum, ut ipse mundi gloriam quam appeteret tanquam mortuus non videret, sed etiam mundum sibi asseruit crucifixum, in quo tanta se humilitate dejecerat, ut et ipse mundus tanquam ad eum mortuus Paulum humilem atque despectum jam videre nequaquam posset. 90. Refelluntur qui Deum a beatis videri tantum in claritate, non in sua natura asserunt. Sciendum vero est quod fuere nonnulli qui Deum dicerent etiam in illa regione beatitudinis in claritate quidem sua conspici, sed in natura minime videri. Quos nimirum minor inquisitionis subtilitas fefellit. Neque enim illi simplici et incommutabili essentiae aliud est claritas et aliud natura, sed ipsa

ei natura sua claritas, ipsa claritas natura est. Quia enim suis dilectoribus haec Dei sapientia se quandoque ostenderet, ipse pollicetur, dicens: Qui diligit me, diligetur a Patre meo; et ego diligam eum, et manifestabo me ipsum illi (Joan. XIV, 21). Ac si patenter dicat: Qui in vestra me cernitis, restat, ut in mea me natura videatis. Hinc rursus ait: Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt (Matth. V, 8). Hinc Paulus dicit: Nunc videmus per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte, tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum (I Cor. XIII, 12). [Vet. XXXIX.] 91. Refelluntur et qui angelos divinae visionis expertes somniant. Sed quia de Deo per primum Ecclesiae praedicatorem dicitur: In quem desiderant angeli prospicere (I Pet. I, 12), sunt nonnulli qui nequaquam Deum videre vel angelos suspicantur, et tamen dictum per Veritatis sententiam scimus: Angeli eorum in coelis semper vident faciam Patris mei qui in coelis est (Matth. XVIII, 10). Nunquid ergo aliud veritas, aliud praedicator insonat veritatis? Sed si sententia utraque confertur, quia sibi nequaquam discordet agnoscitur. Deum 602 quippe angeli et vident, et videre desiderant; et sitiunt intueri et intuentur. Si enim sic videre desiderant ut effectu sui desiderii minime perfruantur, desiderium sine fructu anxietatem habet, et anxietas poenam. Beati vero angeli ab omni poena anxietatis longe sunt, quia nunquam simul poena et beatitudo conveniunt. Rursum cum eos dicimus Dei visione satiari, quia et Psalmista ait: Satiabor dum manifestabitur gloria tua (Psal. XVI, 15), considerandum nobis est quoniam satietatem solet fastidium subsequi. Ut ergo recte sibi utraque conveniant, dicat veritas: Quia semper vident; dicat praedicator egregius: Quia semper videre desiderant. Ne enim sit in desiderio anxietas, desiderantes satiantur; ne autem sit in satietate fastidium, satiati desiderant. Et desiderant igitur sine labore, quia desiderium satietas comitatur; et satiantur sine fastidio, quia ipsa satietas ex desiderio semper accenditur. Sic quoque et nos erimus quando ad ipsum fontem vitae venerimus. Erit nobis

delectabiliter impressa sitis simul atque satietas. Sed longe abest ab ista siti necessitas, longe a satietate fastidium, quia et sitientes satiabimur, et satiati sitiemus. Videbimus igitur Deum, ipsumque erit praemium laboris nostri, ut post mortalitatis hujus tenebras, accessa ejus luce gaudeamus. 92. Quo sensu Deus lucem habitet inaccessibilem. Sed cum ejus lucem dicimus accessam, obsistit animo quod Paulus dicit: Qui lucem habitat inaccessibilem, quem vidit nullus hominum, sed nec videre potest (I Tim. VI, 16). Et rursum audio quod Psalmista ait: Accedite ad eum, et illuminamini (Psal. XXXIII, 6). Quomodo ergo accedendo illuminamur, si ipsam lucem qua illuminari possumus non videmus? Si vero accedendo ad eum ipsam qua illuminamur lucem vimus, quomodo inaccessibilis esse perhibetur? Qua in re pensandum est quod inaccessibilem dixit ised omni homini humana sapienti. Scriptura quippe sacra omnes carnalium sectatores, humanitatis nomine notare solet. Unde isdem apostolus quibusdam discordantibus dicit: Cum enim sit inter vos zelus et contentio, nonne carnales estis, et secundum hominem ambulatis (I Cor. III, 3, 4)? Quibus paulo post subjicit: Nonne homines estis? Et unde alias testimonium protulit, Quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se (I Cor. II, 2). Et cum hoc hominibus dixisset absconditum, mox subdidit: Nobis autem revelavit Deus per spiritum suum (Ibidem); ipsum se ab hominis vocatione discernens, qui raptus supra hominem divina jam saperet. Ita etiam hoc loco cum lucem Dei inaccessibilem perhiberet, ut ostenderet quibus, subdidit: Quem vidit nullus hominum, sed nec videre potest. More suo homines vocans omnes humana sapientes, quia qui divina sapiunt, videlicet supra homines sunt. Videbimus igitur Deum, si per coelestem conversationem supra homines esse mereamur. Nec tamen ita videbimus sicut videt ipse seipsum. Longe quippe dispariliter videt creator se, quam videt creatura creatorem. Nam quantum ad immensitatem Dei, quidam nobis modus figitur contemplationis, quia eo

ipso pondere circumscribimur, quo creatura sumus. [Vet. XL.] 93. Non videmus Deum sicut ipse se conspicit. Sed profecto non ita conspicimus Deum sicut ipse conspicit se, sicut non ita requiescimus 603 in Deo quemadmodum ipse requiescit in se. Nam visio nostra vel requies erit utcunque similis visioni vel requiei illius, sed aequalis non erit. Ne enim jaceamus in nobis, ut ita dicam, contemplationis penna nos sublevat, atque a nobis ad illum erigimur intuendum, raptique intentione cordis, et dulcedine contemplationis, aliquo modo a nobis imus in ipsum, et jam hoc ipsum ire nostrum minus est requiescere, et tamen sic ire perfecte requiescere est. Et perfecta ergo requies est, quia Deus cernitur; et tamen adaequanda non est requiei illius, qui non a se in alium transit 604 ut quiescat. Est itaque requies, ut ita dicam, similis atque dissimilis, quia quod illius requies est, hoc nostra imitatur. Nam ut beati atque aeterni simus in aeternum, imitamur aeternum. Et magna nobis est aeternitas, imitatio aeternitatis. Nec exsortes sumus ejus quem imitari possumus, quia et videntes participamur, et participantes imitamur. Quae nimirum visio nunc fide inchoatur, sed tunc in specie perficitur, quando coaeternam Deo sapientiam, quam modo per ora praedicantium quasi per decurrentia flumina sumimus, in ipso suo fonte biberimus.

LIBER DECIMUS NONUS.

Ab extrema parte vers. 21 cap. XXVIII usque ad vers. 21 sequentis cap. exclusive perducta expositione, varii sensus non minus docte quam pie aperiuntur, maxime de Christo et Ecclesiae. [Vet. et Rec. I] 1. Quid mirum si aeterna Dei sapientia conspici non valet, quando ipsa quoque invisibilia quae per eam condita sunt humanis oculis comprehendi non possunt? In rebus ergo creatis discimus creatorem omnium quanta humilitate veneremur, ut in hac vita usurpare sibi de omnipotentis Dei specie mens humana nil audeat, quod solum electis suis praemium in subsequenti remuneratione servat. Unde bene postquam dictum est: Abscondita est ab oculis omnium viventium, illico subinfertur:

CAPUT PRIMUM.

CAP. XXVIII, VERS. 21. Volucres quoque coeli latet. 2. Volucres coeli aliquando in malam partem accipiuntur, aliquando in bonam. In Scriptura enim sacra volucres aliquando in malo, aliquando in bono dantur intelligi. Per volucres quippe nonnunquam potestates aereae designantur, bonorum studiis adversae. Unde Veritatis ore dicitur: Quoniam senem quod secus viam cecidit, venerunt volucres, et comederunt illud (Matth. XIII, 4; Luc. VIII, 5); quia nimirum maligni spiritus humanas mentes obsidentes, dum cogitationes noxias ingerunt, verbum vitae a memoria evellunt. Hinc rursum cuidam diviti superba sapienti dicitur: Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres coeli nidos; Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput suum reclinet (Matth. VIII, 20; Luc. IX, 58). Vulpes valde fraudulenta sunt animalia, quae in fossis vel specubus se abscondunt; cumque apparuerint, nunquam rectis itineribus, sed tortuosis anfractibus currunt. Volucres vero, ut novimus, alto volatu se in aera sublevant. Nomine ergo vulpium dolosa atque fraudulenta, nomine autem volucrum, haec eadem superba daemonia designantur. Ac si

dicat: Fraudulenta et elata daemonia in corde vestro, id est in cogitatione superbiae inveniunt habitationem suam; Filius autem hominis ubi caput suum reclinet non habet, id est, humilitas mea requiem in superba mente vestra non invenit. Quasi enim quodam volatu volucris illa prima se extulit, quae per elatam cogitationem dixit: In coelum conscendam, super astra coeli exaltabo solium meum, sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis, ascendam super altitudinem nubium, et ero similis Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 13). Ecce quam alta superbe volando petiit. Quem etiam volatum et primis hominibus persuasit. Ipsi quippe volando quasi super se ire conati sunt, quando eis dictum est, ut gustarent, et essent sicut dii (Genes. III, 5, 19). Cumque similitudinem divinitatis appetunt, immortalitatis munera perdiderunt (Ibid., 19). Qui in terram moriendo non issent, si super terram humiliter stare voluissent. 3. At contra in bono volucres poni solent, sicut in Evangelio Dominus cum similitudinem regni coelestis ex grano sinapis denuntiaret, dixit: Cui simile est regnum Dei, et cui simile aestimabo illud? Simile est grano sinapis, quod acceptum homo misit in, hortum suum, et crevit, et factum est in arborem magnam, et volucres coeli requieverunt in ramis ejus (Matth. XIII, 31). Ipse quippe est granum sinapis qui in horti sepultura plantatus, arbor magna surrexit. Granum namque fuit cum moreretur, arbor cum resurgeret. Granum per humilitatem carnis, arbor per potentiam majestatis. Granum, quia vidimus eum, et non erat aspectus (Isai. LIII, 2); arbor autem, quia speciosus forma prae filiis hominum (Psal. XLIV, 3). [Vet. II.] Hujus arboris rami sancti praedicatores sunt. Et videamus quam late tendantur. Quid enim de eis dicitur? In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum (Psal. XVIII, 5). In istis ramis volucres requiescunt, quia sanctae animae, quae quibusdam virtutum pennis a terrena cogitatione se sublevant, in eorum dictis atque consolationibus ab hujus vitae fatigatione respirant. Hoc igitur in loco postquam de sapientia dictum est: Abscondita est ab oculis omnium

viventium, recte subjungitur: Volucres quoque coeli latet, quia in hac corruptibili carne constituti, naturae ejus potentiam ipsi quoque videndo non penetrant, qui jam per meritum sanctae contemplationis volant. Ubi apte subjungitur:

CAPUT II [Rec. II].

VERS. 22. Perditio et mors dixerunt: Auribus nostris audivimus famam ejus. 4. Superbi angeli divinam sapientiam, quia ea non fruuntur, minime vident.Qui perditionis et mortis nomine nisi maligni spiritus designantur? qui inventores mortis et perditionis exstiterunt, sicut de ipso eorum principe sub ministri ejus specie per Joannem dicitur: Et nomen illi mors (Apoc. VI, 8). Cui subjecti omnes superbiae spiritus de hac sapientia quae Deus est 605 dicunt: Auribus nostris audivimus famam ejus; quia nimirum visionem illius plena beatitudine habere nequiverunt. Videre quippe perfecte coaeternam Deo sapientiam, hoc est quod habere. Unde ad Joannem de munere vincentis dicitur: Dabo illi calculum candidum, et in calculo nomen novum scriptum, quod nemo scit, nisi qui accipit (Apoc. II, 17). In hac enim vita scire aliquid vel videre possumus, etiam quod non accepimus; habere vero nomen novum in calculo scriptum, est in aeterno praemio notitiam Dei humanis sensibus inusitatam, quam scire non potest nisi qui accipit, habere. Quia itaque, ut diximus, videre Deum, hoc est quod habere, ideo iniqui spiritus hanc sapientiam non vident, quia repulsi per superbiam nequaquam eam habere potuerunt. Ad lucem quippe ejus clauserunt oculos cordis, superfusis ejus radiis repugnantes, sicut intelligi etiam de eisdem malignis spiritibus potest, quod scriptum est: Ipsi rebelles fuerunt lumini (Job. XXIV, 13). Famam ergo sapientiae malignis spiritibus audisse, sed eamdem sapientiam non vidisse, est et ejus potentiam ex virtute illius cognovisse, et tamen sub ea humiliter stare noluisse. Unde et Veritatis voce de ipso

malignorum spirituum capite dicitur: Ille homicida erat ab initio, et in veritate non stetit (Joan. VIII, 44). Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. III].

VERS. 23. Deus intelligit viam ejus, et ipse novit locum illius. 5. Homines latuit quando per carnem Sapientia ventura esset ad homines; vel quomodo foris apparens invisibilis apud Patrem permaneret. Haec coaeterna Deo sapientia aliter viam habet, atque aliter locum. Locum vero si quis intelligat, non localem. Nam teneri corporaliter non potest Deus; sed, ut dictum est, locus intelligitur non localis, Locus sapientiae Pater est, locus Patris sapientia. sicut ipsa Sapientia attestante dicitur: Ego in Patre, et Pater in me. Aliter ergo ipsa sapientia habet viam, atque aliter locum. Viam per humanitatis transitum, locum vero per flatum divinitatis. [Vet. III.] Inde enim non transit. unde aeterna est; sed inde transit, unde propter nos apparuit temporalis. Sic namque in Evangelio scriptum est: Quia egrediens ab Jericho Dominus transibat; duo autem caeci sedentes juxta viam clamaverunt, dicentes: Domine, miserere nostri fili David (Joan. XIV, 10, 11; Matth. XX, 29, 30). Ad quorum vocem, sicut illic scriptum est, stetit Jesus, et lumen reddidit. Quid est autem transeundo audire, stando lumen restituere, nisi quod per humanitatem suam nobis misertus est, qui per divinitatis suae potentiam a nobis mentis nostrae tenebras exclusit? Quod enim propter nos natus et passus est, quod resurrexit, ascendit in coelum, quasi transit Jesus, quia haec nimirum actio temporalis est. Sed stans eos tetigit et illuminavit, quia non sicut illa dispensatio temporalis, ita verbi aeternitas transit, quae in se manens innovat omnia. Stare enim Dei, est incommutabili cogitatione mutabilia cuncta disponere. Qui ergo voces petentium transiens audivit, stans lumen reddidit, quia etsi propter nos temporalia pertulit, inde tamen nobis lucem tribuit, unde habere mutabilitatis transitum nescit. Quia igitur quando per carnem appareret

hominibus incertum fuit, 606 recte nunc dicitur: Deus intelligit viam ejus, et ipse novit locum illius. Ac si aperte diceretur: Humanae cogitationi occulta sunt, vel quando per carnem ad homines sapientia veniat, vel quomodo apud Patrem invisibilis, etiam cum foris apparuerit, persistat. 6. Ejusdem adventus et mansio in cordibus hominum ignorantur. Quamvis hoc intelligi et aliter potest. Nam via ejus non inconvenienter accipitur hoc ipsum quod venit ad cor, seseque nobis intrinsecus infundit. Locus vero ejus fit cor, ad quod veniens permanet. De hac quippe via illius dicitur: Vox clamantis in deserto, parate viam Domino (Matth. III, 3); id est, in corde vestro venienti Sapientiae aditum reserate, sicut alias dicitur: Iter facite ei qui ascendit super occasum (Psal. LXVII, 5). Super occasum fuit ascendere, ipsam mortem quam pertulerat resurgendo superasse. Ait ergo: Ei qui ascendit super occasum, iter facite; id est, resurgenti Domino in vestris cordibus per fidem viam praebete. Hinc Joanni per spiritum dicitur: Praeibis ante faciem Domini parare vias ejus (Luc. I, 76). Quisquis etenim praedicando a sordibus vitiorum corda audientium mundat, venienti sapientiae viam praeparat. Habet ergo viam ista sapientia, habet et locum: Viam qua venit, locum quo manet, sicut ipsa ait: Si quis diligit me, sermonem meum servabit; et Pater meus diliget eum, et ad eum veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus (Joan. XIV, 23). Via est igitur qua venit, locus quo manet. Sed quo venit, quae ubique est? An venire est sapientiae per illuminationem mentis nostrae indicare praesentiam majestatis suae? Et quia hominibus incertum est vel in cujus cor veniat, vel in quo postquam venerit permanendo requiescat, recte nunc dicitur: Deus intelligit viam ejus, et ipse novit locum illius, quia solius divinae visionis est cernere, vel quibus modis intellectus sapientiae ad cor hominis veniat, vel cujus mens intellectum vitae, quem perceperit, mortiferis cogitationibus non amittat. Et quia haec eadem sapientia per humanitatis gratiam manifestata in cunctis mundi partibus electorum fuerat corda repletura, recte subditur.

CAPUT IV [Vet. IV].

VERS. 24. Ipse enim fines mundi intuetur, et omnia quae sub coelo sunt respicit. Deus nos respiciendo per gratiam reformat. 7. Respicere quippe Dei est ea quae amissa ac perdita fuerant ad suam gratiam reformare. Unde scriptum est: Rex qui sedet in solio judicii, dissipat omne malum intuitu suo (Prov. XX, 8). Respiciendo namque levitatis nostrae mala coercuit, et magna merita maturitatis dedit. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT V [Rec. IV].

VERS. 25. Qui fecit ventis pondus, 8. Animas vagas figit et gravitate donat. Velocitate enim ac subtilitate ventorum in Scriptura sacra solent animae designari, sicut per Psalmistam de Deo dicitur: Qui ambulat super pennas ventorum Psal. CIII, 3); id est, qui transgreditur virtutes animarum Fecit ergo ventis pondus, quia dum superna sapientia replet animas, eas maturitate indita graves reddit; non illa gravitate qua dicitur: Filii hominum usquequo gravi corde (Psal. IV, 3)? Aliud namque est gravem esse per consilium, aliud per 607 peccatum; aliud est gravem esse per constantiam, aliud per culpam. Ista enim gravitas pondus habet oneris, illa virtutis. Pondus ergo accipiunt animae, ut ab intentione Dei non jam levi motu desiliant, sed in eum fixa constantiae gravitate consistant. Adhuc ille populus leviter movebatur, de quo per prophetam dicitur: Abiit vagus in viam cordis fui; viam ejus vidi, et dimisi eum (Isai. LVII, 17). Grave autem consilium cordis omnem inconstantiam vagationis expellit. Et quoniam sunt animae quae levi motu nunc ista, nunc illa desiderant, omnipotens Deus, quia ipsas leves fluctuationes mentium non leviter pensat, vagationem cordis relinquendo dijudicat. Sed cum per gratiam respicit vagam mentem, in consilii stabilitatem figit. Recte ergo nunc dicitur: Qui fecit ventis pondus, quia cum leves motus animi misericorditer dignatur aspicere, hunc

protinus ad constantiae maturitatem format. Vel certe ventis pondus facere est concessam hic electis de virtutibus gloriam, permista infirmitate temperare. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT VI.

IBID. Et aquas appendit mensura. 9. Virtutes electorum permista, ne extollantur, infirmitate temperat. Aquae in Scriptura sacra aliquando Spiritum sanctum, aliquando scientiam sacram, aliquando scientiam pravam, aliquando tribulationem, aliquando defluentes populos, aliquando mentes fidem sequentium, designare solent. Per aquam quippe sancti Spiritus infusio designatur, sicut in Evangelio dicitur: Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae (Joan. VII, 38). Ubi evangelista secutus adjunxit: Hoc autem dixit de Spiritu, quem accepturi erant credentes in eum. Rursum per aquam sacra scientia designatur, sicut dicitur: Aqua sapientiae salutaris potabit eos (Eccli. XV, 3). Per aquam quoque prava scientia appellari solet, sicut apud Salomonem mulier, quae typum haereseos tenet, callidis suasionibus blanditur dicens: Aquae furtivae dulciores sunt (Prov. IX, 17). Aquarum etiam nomine nonnunquam solent tribulationes intelligi, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Salvum ne fac, Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquae usque ad animam meam (Psal. XLVIII, 2). Per aquam populi designantur, sicut per Joannem dicitur: Aquae vero sunt populi (Apoc. XVII, 15). Per aquam quoque non solum fluxus decurrentium populorum, sed etiam bonorum mentes, fidei praedicamenta sequentium, designantur, sicut propheta ait: Beati qui seminatis super omnes aquas (Isai. XXXII, 20) Et per Psalmistam dicitur: Vox Domini super aquas (Psal. XXVIII, 3) Hoc ergo in loco quid aquarum nomine nisi electorum corda signantur, quae per intellectum sapientiae auditum jam supernae vocis acceperunt? De quibus recte dicitur: Et aquas appendit mensura. [Vet. et. Rec. V]. Quia sancti ipsi qui sancto sublevante

Spiritu ad summa rapiuntur, quandiu in hac vita sunt, ne aliqua elatione superbiant, quibusdam tentationibus reprimuntur, ut nequaquam tantum proficere valeant quantum volunt, sed ne extollantur superbia, sit in eis ipsarum quaedam mensura virtutum. 10. Quod confirmatur exemplo Eliae Jezabelem fugientis. Hinc est enim quod Elias dum tot virtutibus 608 in alta profecisset, quadam mensura suspensus est, dum Jezabel postmodum quamvis reginam, tamen mulierculam fugit (III Reg. XIX, 3). Perpendo quippe hunc mirae virtutis virum, ignem de coelo trahere, et secundo quinquagenarios cum suis omnibus petitione subita concremare, verbo coelos a pluviis claudere, verbo coelos ad pluvias aperire, suscitantem mortuos, ventura quaeque praevidentem; et ecce rursus animo occurrit, quo pavore ante unam mulierculam fugerit. Considero virum timore perculsum de manu Dei mortem petere, nec accipere; de manu mulieris mortem fugiendo vitare. Quaerebat enim mortem dum fugeret, dicens: Sufficit mihi, tolle animam meam; neque enim melior sum quam patres mei (Ibid. XIX, 4). Unde ergo sic potens, ut tot illas virtutes faciat? unde sic infirmus, ut ita feminam pertimescat, nisi quia aquae appenduntur mensura, ut ipsi sancti Dei homines et multum valeant per potentiam Dei, et rursum quadam mensura moderati sint per infirmitatem suam? In illis virtutibus Elias quid de Deo acceperat, in istis infirmitatibus quid de se esse poterat, agnoscebat. Illa potentia virtus fuit, ista infirmitas custos virtutis. In illis virtutibus ostendebat quid acceperat, in istis infirmitatibus hoc quod acceperat custodiebat. In miraculis monstrabatur Elias, in infirmitatibus servabatur. 11. Et Pauli mortem declinantis, aut Satanae tentationes patientis. Sic Paulum video fluminum et latronum, civitatis et solitudinis, maris ac terrae pericula sustinentem (II Cor. XI, 26), frenantem jejuniis ac vigiliis corpus, sustinentem frigoris et nuditatis aerumnam, ad ecclesiarum custodiam vigilanter se ac pastoraliter exercentem, ad tertium coelum raptum, rursumque eum in paradisum raptum (Ibid., XII, 4), et audisse arcana verba

quae non licet homini loqui; et tamen Satanae angelo ad tentandum conceditur (Ibid. XII, 7), orat ut eximi debeat, et non exauditur. Cujus cum ipsa initia conversionis aspicio, perpendo quod ei superna pietas coelos aperit, seseque illi Jesus de sublimibus ostendit. Qui lumen corporis ad tempus perdidit, lumen cordis in perpetuum accepit. Ad Ananiam mittitur (Act. IX, 7), vas electionis vocatur; et tamen de civitate eadem quam post visionem Jesu ingressus fuerat fugiens recedit, sicut ipse testatur dicens: Damasci praepositus gentis Arethae regis custodiebat civitatem Damascenorum, ut me comprehenderet; et per fenestram in sporta dimissus sum per murum, et sic effugi manus ejus (II Cor. XI, 32). Cui licenter dicam: O Paule, in coelo jam Jesum conspicis, et in terra adhuc hominem fugis? In paradisum duceris, secreta Dei verba cognoscis, et adhuc a Satanae angelo tentaris? Unde sic fortis, ut ad coelestia rapiaris? Unde sic infirmus, ut in terra hominem fugias, et adhuc a Satanae angelo adversa toleres, nisi quia ipse qui te sublevat rursum subtilissima te mensura moderatur, ut et in miraculis tuis nobis praedices virtutem Dei, et rursum in timore tuo reminisci nos faciat infirmitatis nostrae? Quae tamen infirmitas ne in desperationem nos pertrahat cum pulsat, dum de infirmitate tua Dominum rogares, 609 quia auditus non es, nobis quoque locutus es quid audisti: Sufficit tibi gratia mea, nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur (II Cor. XII, 9). [Vet. VI.] 12 Custos virtutis est infirmitas. Aperta ergo voce Dei ostenditur quia custos est virtutis infirmitas. Tunc quippe bene interius custodimur, cum per dispensationem Dei tolerabiliter tentamur exterius, aliquando vitiis, aliquando pressuris. Nam eis quoque quos viros novimus fuisse virtutum, tentationes atque certamina non defuere vitiorum. Hinc est enim quod ad consolationem nostram isdem praedicator egregius de se quaedam talia prodere dignatur, dicens: Video aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis (Rom. VII, 23). Ad ima quippe pertrahit

caro, ne extollat spiritus: et ad summa trahit spiritus, ne prosternat caro. Spiritus levat, ne jaceamus in infimis; caro aggravat, ne extollamur ex summis. Si non sublevante spiritu nos caro tentaret, perfectione procul dubio tentationis suae in ima dejiceret. Rursum vero si non tentante carne ad summa nos spiritus sublevaret, in superbiae casu ipsa nos pejus sublevatione prosterneret. Sed fit certo moderamine ut dum unusquisque sanctorum jam quidem interius ad summa rapitur, sed adhuc tentatur exterius, nec desperationis lapsum, nec elationis incurrat, quoniam nec tentatio exterior culpam perficit, quia interior intentio sursum trahit; nec rursum intentio interior in superbiam elevat, quia tentatio exterior humiliat dum gravat. Sicque magno ordine cognoscimus in interiori profectu quid accipimus, in exteriori defectu quid sumus. Et miro modo agitur, ut nec de virtute quisquam extolli debeat, nec de tentatione desperare, quia dum spiritus trahit, et caro retrahit, subtilissimo judicii interni moderamine, infra summa, et supra infima in quodam medio anima libratur. Bene ergo dicitur: Et aquas appendit mensura. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 26, 27. Quando ponebat pluviis legem, et viam procellis sonantibus, tunc vidit illam, et enarravit, et praeparavit, et investigavit. 13. Verbi Dei praeconibus lex posita, ut opere impleant quod praedicant. Hanc legem servantibus ad hominum corda aditus patet. Solent per pluvias praedicantium dicta signari. Unde per Moysen dicitur: Exspectetur sicut pluvia eloquium meum (Deut XXXII, 2). Quorum videlicet verba cum blande persuadent, pluviae sunt; cum vero terribilia de venturo judicio intonant, sonantes procellae. Et notandum quod pluviis lex ponitur, ut via procellis sonantibus aperiatur. Lex quippe est ipsis praedicatoribus posita, ut vivendo impleant quod loquendo suadere festinant. Nam loquendi auctoritas perditur, quando vox opere non adjuvatur. Hinc enim per Psalmistam

dicitur: Peccatori autem dixit Deus: Quare tu enarras justitias meas, et assumis testamentum meum per os tuum? Tu vero odisti disciplinam, et projecisti sermones meos post te (Psal. XLIX, 16). Sermones etenim Dei post se praedicator projicit, cum hoc quod dicit facere contemnit. Quando autem dictis ejus alter obediat, dum ipse respuit opere quod praedicat voce, et dissimulat audire quod narrat? De ista praedicationis lege scriptum est: Qui solverit unum de mandatis istis minimis, 610 et docuerit sic homines, minimus vocabitur in regno coelorum. Qui autem fecerit, et docuerit sic, magnus vocabitur in regno coelorum (Matth. V, 19). Regnum coelorum videlicet Ecclesiam praesentem appellat, de qua scriptum est: Et colligent de regno ejus omnia scandala (Matth. XIII, 41). In superno etenim regno scandala quae ex eo colligi debeant non habentur. Qui ergo solvit opere, et sic docet voce, in isto regno coelorum erit minimus, in illo nec minimus. Viam autem procellis sonantibus posuit, cum praedicatoribus suis ad corda hominum terrore venturi judicii perculsa aditum fecit. Prius itaque lex ponitur, ut post modum via pandatur, quia illa vox cor audientis penetrat, quae hoc quod ore sonuerit, opere conservat. [VET. VII.] Tunc autem cum legem pluviis et viam procellis sonantibus poneret, hanc sapientiam Deus vidit, enarravit, praeparavit, et investigavit. Usitata sacri eloquii locutione videre Deus dicitur, videre nos facere, sicut justo viro Dominus dicit: Nunc cognovi quod timeas Deum (Genes. XXII, 12). Et Israelitae praemonentur: Tentat vos Dominus Deus vester, ut sciat si diligitis eum (Deut. XIII, 3); id est, ut scire vos faciat. Tunc ergo cum legem pluviis poneret, hoc est mandatum custodiae praedicatoribus daret, hanc incarnatam sapientiam videri et enarrari a praedicatoribus, praeparari et investigari ab auditoribus fecit. Sibi quippe illam praeparat, quisquis illam bene vivendo in diem judicii propitiam parat. Et notandum quod de ea quatuor dicta sunt, Ait enim: Vidit, enarravit, praeparavit, investigavit. Vidit namque, quia species est; enarravit, quia verbum; praeparavit, quia remedium; investigavit quia

occultum. Sed hoc quod aeterna Dei sapientia species Patris et Verbum dicitur, quando ad humana mente penetratur? Quis namque intelligat, vel verbum sine tempore, vel speciem sine circumscriptione? Dicendum ergo erat aliquid quod de illa homo cognosceret in se. Unde apte subditur:

CAPUT VIII [Rec. VI].

VERS. 28. Et dixit homini: Ecce timor Domini ipsa est sapientia, et recedere a malo intelligentia. 14. Deum timens ejus sapientiam possidere incipit, et in se cognoscit, quem in ipsius natura cognoscere non potest. Ac si aperte diceretur: Ad temetipsum homo revertere, cordis tui secreta perscrutare. Si Deum te timere deprehendis, profecto constat quia hac sapientia plenus es. Quam si adhuc cognoscere non potes quid sit in se, jam cognoscis interim quid sit in te. Quae enim apud se ab angelis metuitur, apud te timor Domini vocatur, quia hanc habere te certum est, si timere te Deum incertum non est. Hinc etiam per Psalmistam dicitur: Initium sapientiae, timor Domini (Psal. CX, 10); quia tunc penetrare cor inchoat, cum hoc extremi judicii pavore perturbat. Ad parvitatem igitur nostram divinus sermo se attrahit: sicut pater cum parvulo filio loquitur, ut ab eo possit intelligi, sponte balbutit. Quia enim naturam sapientiae penetrare non possumus quid sit in se, ex condescensione Dei audivimus quid sit in nobis, cum dicitur: Ecce timor Domini, ipsa est sapientia. Sed quia ille veraciter vim divini timoris intelligit, qui se a cunctis pravis operibus custodit, recte subditur: Et recedere a malo, intelligentia. Ea igitur quae sequuntur, quia prophetiae spiritu plena sunt, ipsa sacrae historiae verba testantur, cum dicitur:

CAPUT IX [Vet.

VIII, Rec. VII]. Cap. XXIX, VERS. 1. Addidit quoque Job, assumens parabolam suam, et dixit. 15. Job ultima Ecclesiae tempora praenuntiat,

quibus carnales et haereticos passura est. Quia enim parabola similitudo nominatur, aperte constat quod per exteriorum verborum formam mysteria loquitur, qui ad loquendum parabolam assumpsisse memoratur. Cum etenim sua narrat, quaecunque sunt sanctae Ecclesiae ventura denuntiat; et per hoc quod ipse patitur, indicat quid illa patiatur. Nonnunquam vero sic suae historiae verba permiscet, ut nil allegoricum insonet; nonnunquam vero sic suos dolores loquitur, ac si ex voce dolentis Ecclesiae loquatur. In hac vero ultima sui parte sermonis ultimum tempus designat Ecclesiae, quando adversarios suos, id est carnales quosque, vel haereticos atque gentiles, quos nunc studet sapientiae auctoritate comprimere, effrenata jactantia elatos cogitur irrisa tolerare. Unde in hoc quoque sermone dicitur: Nunc autem derident me juniores tempore, quorum non dignabar patres ponere cum canibus gregis mei (Job XXX, 1). Et ipsa ordinis ratio exposcit ut per verba beati Job ultima extremi sanctae Ecclesiae designentur dies, quando, persecutione crescente, apertas haereticorum voces tolerare compellitur, cum motus cordis sui, quos nunc intra cogitationum sinus contegunt, tunc in voce manifestati erroris aperiunt. Nunc enim, sicut per Joannem dicitur (Apoc. XX, 3), draco in abysso clausus tenetur, quia diabolica malitia in eorum subdolis cordibus occultatur. Sed sicut illic dictum est, educetur draco de puteo abyssi, quia quod modo prae timore tegitur, tunc contra Ecclesiam publice de iniquorum cordibus omne serpentinum virus aperitur. Nunc enim abscondit se sub blandiente lingua, saeviens conscientia, et malitia calliditatis, quasi quadam se tegit abysso simulationis; nunc Dominus, sicut Psalmistae voce dicitur, Congregat sicut in utre aquas maris (Psal. XXXII, 7). Uter quippe carnalis est cogitatio. Aquae ergo maris in utre congregatae sunt, cum amaritudo perversae mentis non erumpit exterius in vocem pravae libertatis. Veniet profecto tempus, quando contra hanc perversi atque carnales aperta voce praedicent quod nunc occulta cogitatione moliuntur. Veniet tempus, quando catholicam Ecclesiam non

solum injustis vocibus, sed etiam crudelibus plagis premant. 16. Duobus modis Ecclesia persecutionem patitur, verbis et gladiis. Ab adversariis namque suis duobus modis Ecclesia persecutionem patitur, scilicet aut verbis, aut gladiis. Sed cum verbis persecutionem sustinet, exercetur ejus sapientia; cum vero gladiis, exercetur ejus patientia. Sed verborum persecutiones ab haereticis nunc etiam quotidie toleramus, cum ipsi haeretici linguis nobis subdolis, et falsa humilitate blandiuntur. Persecutiones vero gladiorum juxta finem mundi secuturae sunt, ut grana coelestibus horreis recondenda tanto verius a peccatorum paleis exuantur, quanto arctius affliguntur. Tunc electi omnes qui in illa fuerint tribulatione comprehensi reminiscuntur horum temporum in quibus nunc Ecclesia fidei pacem tenet, et superba haereticorum colla comprimit, non potentatu culminis, sed jugo rationis. Reminiscuntur nostri, qui quieta fidei tempora ducimus; 612 qui etsi in bellis coarctamur gentium, non tamen in dictis expugnamur patrum. Beatus ergo Job sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenens, quae tunc in illis angustiis invenitur; et tamen nostrae, ut dixi, quietis reminiscitur, sua transacta narrat, et aliis ventura denuntiat, dicens:

CAPUT X [Rec. VIII].

VERS. 2. Quis mihi tribuat, ut sim juxta menses pristinos? 17. Etsi gravia jam passa sit Ecclesia, longe graviora passura est. Multa enim talia sancta Ecclesia doloribus pressa dictura est. Tantis quippe illam futurum est tribulationibus angustari, ut haec tempora cum magno suspirio desideret quae nos cum magno dolore toleramus. Dicat ergo, dicat per vocem beati Job: Quis mihi tribuat ut sim juxta menses pristinos? Quia enim statutus dierum numerus menses vocantur, quid aliud nomine signat mensium, nisi collectiones animarum? Dies quippe dum colliguntur in mensibus, subtrahuntur, quia et in hoc tempore sancta Ecclesia, dum veritatis luce splendentes animas colligit, in intimis abscondit. Aliquando etiam mensis

pro perfectione ponitur, sicut propheta ait: Erit mensis ex mense (Isai. LXVI, 23); perfectio videlicet eis in requie, quibus nunc perfectio fuerit in operatione. [Vet. IX.] Reminiscatur ergo perfectionis pristinae, reducat ad memoriam quanta praedicatione sua collectis animabus reportabat lucra, et angustata tribulationibus dicat: Quis mihi tribuat, ut sim juxta menses pristinos? In quibus profecto mensibus qualis fuerit, enumerando subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 2, 3. Secundum dies, quibus Deus custodiebat me, quando splendebat lucerna ejus super caput meum, et ad lumen ejus ambulabam in tenebris. 18. Tunc multi infirmi cadent, fortibus ob eorum casum dolentibus. Tunc quippe videt ex se, persecutione cogente, infirmorum multos cadere, quos nunc ut mater intra pacis sinum parvulos fovet, et intra tranquillas fidei cunas continet, quia admisti fortibus, ipsa fidei tranquillitate nutriuntur. Tunc vero tales multi casuri sunt, et per viscera charitatis, quidquid in damno parvulorum sustinet, se perpeti animus perfectorum dolet. Infirmorum etenim damna ad corda fortium per compassionem transeunt. Unde per Paulum dicitur: Quis infirmatur et ego non infirmor? quis scandalizatur, et ego non uror (II Cor. XI, 29)? Tanto enim quisque perfectus est, quanto perfecte sentit dolores alienos. Unde sancta Ecclesia infirmis tunc cadentibus angustiata, cum horum reminiscitur temporum, jure dictura est: Secundum dies quibus Deus custodiebat me, quia se tunc in illis aestimat cadere, quae se nunc in istis respicit custodiri. Bene autem dicitur: Quando splendebat lucerna ejus super caput meum, et ad lumen ejus ambulabam in tenebris. Lucernae enim nomine, lumen signatur sacrae Scripturae, de qua ipse Ecclesiae pastor dicit: Habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem, cui bene facitis attendentes, quasi lucernae lucenti in caliginoso loco, donec dies illucescat, et lucifer oriatur in

cordibus vestris (II Pet. I, 19). Et Psalmista ait: Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum, Domine (Psal. CXVIII, 105). Quia autem principale nostrum mens est, appellatione capitis mens vocatur. Unde per Psalmistam dicitur: Impinguasti in oleo caput meum (Psal. XXII, 5). Ac 613 si aperte dicat: Charitatis pinguedine replesti mentem meam. Nunc ergo lucerna super caput Ecclesiae splendet, quia sacra eloquia tenebras nostrae mentis irradiant, ut in hoc caliginoso vitae praesentis loco, dum verborum Dei lucem percipimus, quae sunt agenda videamus. Nunc ad lumen ejus in tenebris ambulat, quoniam sancta universalis Ecclesia, etsi alienae occulta cogitationis non penetrat, quia quasi faciem non cognoscit in nocte, tamen ponit gressus boni operis, directa lumine supernae locutionis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XII [Rec. IX].

VERS. 4. Sicut fui in diebus adolescentiae meae, quando secreto Deus erat in tabernaculo meo. 19. Variae Ecclesiae aetates. Infantia, adolescentia, senium. In fine tamen multos susceptura est filios. Sicut uniuscujusque hominis, sic sanctae Ecclesiae aetas describitur. Parvula quippe tunc erat, cum a nativitate recens verbum vitae praedicare non poterat. Hinc enim de illa dicitur: Soror nostra parvula est, et ubera non habet (Cant. VIII, 8), quia nimirum sancta Ecclesia priusquam proficeret per incrementa virtutis, infirmis quibusque auditoribus praebere non potuit ubera praedicationis. Adulta vero Ecclesia dicitur, quando Dei verbo copulata, sancto repleta Spiritu, per praedicationis ministerium in filiorum conceptione fetatur, quos exhortando parturit, convertendo parit. De hac ejus aetate Domino dicitur: Adolescentulae dilexerunt te (Cant. I, 3). Universae quippe Ecclesiae, quae unam catholicam faciunt, adolescentulae vocantur, non jam vetustae per culpam, sed novellae per gratiam; non senio steriles, sed aetate mentis ad spiritalem congruae fecunditatem. Tunc ergo, cum in diebus illis Ecclesia, quasi quodam senio debilitata, per praedicationem filios parere non valet,

reminiscitur foecunditatis antiquae dicens: Sicut fui in diebus adolescentiae meae. Quamvis post eosdem dies quibus deprimitur, jam tamen circa ipsum finem temporum grandi praedicationis virtute roboretur. Nam susceptis ad plenum gentibus, omnem Israeliticum populum, qui tunc inventus fuerit, in fidei sinum trahit. Scriptum quippe est: Donec plenitudo gentium introiret, et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret (Rom. XI, 25). Sed ante illa tempora erunt dies in quibus ab adversariis paululum videbitur oppressa, cum et horum dierum reminiscitur, dicens: Sicut fui in diebus adolescentiae meae, quando secreto Deus erat in tabernaculo meo. 20. [Vet. X]. Qui mandata Dei meditatur, habet Deum inhabitantem. Sancti se foris intusque circumspiciunt. Quid hoc loco tabernaculum, nisi habitationem mentis accipimus? Quia per omne quod cogitando agimus, in consilio nostri cordis habitamus. Quisquis autem mandata Dei tacitus cogitat, secreto illi Deus in tabernaculo est. Habitationem etenim cordis sui ante Dei esse oculos viderat, qui dicebat: Et meditatio cordis mei in conspectu tuo semper (Psal. XVIII, 15). Exteriora namque opera patent oculis hominum, longe vero incomparabiliter interiores ac subtilissimae cogitationes nostrae patent oculis Dei. Omnia enim, sicut scriptum est, nuda et aperta sunt oculis ejus (Hebr. IV, 13). Et saepe in exteriori opere ante oculos hominum inordinati apparere metuimus, et in interiori cogitatione illius respectum non metuimus, quem videntem omnia non videmus. Multo enim magis intrinsecus Deo quam extrinsecus hominibus conspicabiles sumus. Unde et sancti omnes foris 614 se intusque circumspiciunt, et vel reprehendendo se exterius, vel iniquos se interius videri invisibiliter timent. Hinc est quod animalia quae per prophetam videntur, in circuitu et intus plena oculis esse memorantur (Ezech. I, 18; X, 12). Quisquis enim exteriora sua honeste disponit, sed interiora negligit, in circuitu oculos habet, sed intus non habet. Sancti vero omnes, quia et exteriora sua circumspiciunt, ut bona de se exempla fratribus praebeant, et interiora sua vigilanter attendunt, quia sese

irreprobabiles interni judicis obtutibus parant, et oculos in circuitu et intus habere perhibentur; magisque se, quo Deo placeant, in sua interna componunt, sicut per Psalmistam quoque de sancta Ecclesia dicitur: Omnis gloria ejus filiae regis ab intus (Psal. XLIV, 14). Sed qua exteriora sua etiam irreprehensibilia custodit, jure de ea subdidit: In fimbriis aureis circumamicta varietate, ut et pulchra sibi intus sit, et aliis foras; et se provehens per internam gloriam, et alios erudiens per exteriora operum exempla. Beatus igitur Job dicat ex se, dicat ex persona universalis Ecclesiae: Quando secreto Deus erat in tabernaculo meo. Ut enim demonstret quantum intus profecerit, secreto Deum fuisse in suo tabernaculo perhibet. Ut etiam ostendat rectitudinis opera quantum extrinsecus custodivit, adjungit.

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 5. Quando erat Omnipotens mecum, et in circuitu meo pueri mei. 21. Sanctis intus Deo vacantibus, mali sola exteriora quaerunt. Religionem non habent, sed simulant. Omnes autem qui divina praecepta metuunt, Dei tabernaculum fiunt. Unde, ut supra jam diximus (Num. 6), per semetipsam Veritas dicit de eo qui illius mandata custodit: Ego et Pater veniemus, et mansionem apud eum faciemus (Joan. XIV, 23). Quod contra perversi quique dum interna non appetunt, in suis se cogitationibus foras fundunt. Unde eis per prophetam dicitur: Redite praevaricatores ad cor (Isai. XLVI, 8). Et rursum: Vae qui cogitatis inutile (Michae. II, 1). In actionibus quippe suis verentur homines, quos corporaliter vident, et Deum sibi praesentem non aestimant esse, quem non vident. Quod contra in laude justi dicitur, dum Aegypti regem contemneret, et Dei mandatis obediret: Quia invisibilem tanquam videns sustinuit (Hebr. XI, 27). Perversum quippe terrae principem quasi non vidit, quem ab oculis sui cordis abjecit. Regem vero invisibilem tanquam videns sustinuit, quia ab ejus timoris intuitu

mentis oculum non deflexit. Sancta itaque Ecclesia in magnis tunc tribulationibus deprehensa, cum multos a Deo conspicit prava cogitatione discedere, videt profecto mentis eorum habitaculum discendente Deo vacuum remanere, et jure deplorans dicit: Quando secreto Deus erat in tabernaculo meo. [Vet. XI.] Quibus verbis non immerito etiam simulatio religionis plangitur, quia nonnulli etiam nunc Christiani esse non appetunt, sed videri. His videlicet Deus in publico est, non in secreto. Sed sancta Ecclesia Deum in secreto habere desiderat, quia illos vere fideles respicit, quos ad fidei vitam corde pleno permanere cognoscit. Quae juxta exteriorem quoque vigoris sui rectitudinem dicit: Quando erat Omnipotens mecum, et in circuitu meo pueri mei. Pueri scilicet vocantur, qui coelestibus mandatis inserviunt. Unde per prophetam Dominus dicit: Ecce ego et pueri mei quos mihi dedit 615 Deus (Isa. VIII, 18). Et rursus in Evangelio: Pueri, nunquid pulmentarium habetis (Joan. XXI, 5)? Nunc ergo in circuitu ejus sunt pueri, quia in cunctis fere gentibus reperiuntur qui coelestia mandata custodiunt, et spiritalis disciplinae regulis obsequuntur. Qui profecto tunc ad obsequium pueri deerunt, quando pravi qui reperti fuerint spiritalia ejus mandata contemnunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. X].

VERS. 6. Quando lavabam pedes meos butyro. 22. Pedes Domini praedicatores, quos ungit et mundit. Quia Christum et Ecclesiam unam esse personam crebro jam diximus, illum videlicet hujus corporis caput, hanc autem illius capitis corpus, aliter haec verba juxta vocem capitis accipi, atque aliter juxta vocem corporis debent. Quos ergo pedes Domini, nisi sanctos praedicatores accipimus? De quibus dicit: Et inambulabo in eis (Levit. XXVI, 12). Butyro ergo pedes lavantur, quia praedicatores sancti bonorum operum pinguedine replentur. Etenim, ut supra jam diximus (Lib. I, n. 30), vix ipsa praedicatio sine aliquo transitur admisso. Nam quilibet

praedicans, aut ad quantulamcunque indignationem trahitur, si contemnitur; aut ad aliquantulamcunque gloriam, si ab audientibus veneratur. Unde et apostolis pedes loti sunt, ut a quamlibet parvo contagio in ipsa praedicatione contracto, quasi a quodam itinere collecto pulvere mundarentur. Et beatus Jacobus dicit: Nolite plures magistri fieri, fratres mei (Jac. III, 1). Et paulo post: In multis enim offendimus omnes (Ibid., 2). Pedes ergo lavantur butyro, quia pinguedine boni operis infunditur atque mundatur collectus pulvis de gloria praedicationis. Vel certe butyro pedes lavantur, dum sanctis praedicatoribus debita ab audientibus stipendia conferuntur, et quos fatigat injunctus praedicationis labor exhibita a discipulis pinguedo boni operis fovet, non quod ideo praedicent ut alantur, sed ideo alantur ut praedicent; id est, ut praedicare subsistant, non ut in intentionem sumendi victus transeat actio praedicatoris, sed ad utilitatem praedicationis deserviant ministeria sustentationis. Unde a bonis praedicatoribus non causa victus praedicatio impenditur, sed causa praedicationis accipitur victus. Et quoties praedicantibus necessaria ab audientibus conferuntur, non solent de rerum munere, sed de conferentium gaudere mercede. Unde per Paulum dicitur: Non quaero datum, sed requiro fructum (Phil. IV, 17). Datum quippe est res ipsa quae impenditur; fructus vero dati est, si benigna mente futurae mercedis studio aliquid impendatur. Ergo datum in re accipimus, fructum in corde. Et quia discipulorum suorum Apostolus mercede potius quam munere pascebatur, nequaquam datum, sed fructum se quaerere fatetur. Unde et subdidit protinus, dicens: Habeo autem omnia, et abundo (Ibid., 18). Butyro ergo lavantur pedes, cum praedicatores sancti, ut diximus, ipsa praedicatione fatigati, auditorum suorum bonis operibus foventur. Fessos namque pedes butyro unxerat ille qui audiebat: Viscera sanctorum requieverunt per te, frater (Philem. 7). Hoc butyro unctus fuerat pes qui in catena tenebatur, dicens: Det misericordiam Dominus Onesiphori domui; quia saepe me refrigeravit, et catenam meam non erubuit (I Tim. II, 16). Si

ergo ex voce capitis haec verba pensamus, 616 recte pedes, sicut dictum est, praedicatores accipimus. [Vet. XII.] 23. Pedes Ecclesiae sunt inferiores ministri, qui terrena curant. Si autem sentire ista ex voce solius corporis debemus, nimirum pedes Ecclesiae sunt inferiorum operum ministri, qui dum ad usus necessarios ea quae sunt exterius exercent, per extremum ministerium velut pedes terrae inhaerent. Sed debent hi qui praesunt, qui doctrinae studio invigilant, solerti cura occupatorum corda requirere, eisque eam quam ipsi vacando percipiunt, crebrae admonitionis voce, infusionem pinguedinis ministrare. Nam quia in uno corpore invicem pro se membra sollicita sunt, sicut illorum ministeriis nostra extrema fulciuntur, ita necesse est ut nostris studiis illorum interiora repleantur. Quando igitur sancti doctores quibusdam ad extrema ministeria deditis, unctionem dominicae incarnationis praedicant, butyro eloquii pedes lavant. Solent etiam pedes ipsa itineris asperitate lacerari. Unde et omnino difficile est in terrenis actionibus hujus vitae iter agere, et nulla ex labore itineris vulnera sustinere. Cum ergo vigilantes praepositi, auditores suos curis exterioribus intentos ad cor revocant, ut quae inter ipsa licita opera admiserint mala cognoscant, et quae cognoverint defleant, pedes butyro lavant, quia eorum vulneribus poenitentiae unguenta subministrant. Reminiscatur igitur tunc Ecclesia vehementer afflicta, quomodo pacis suae tempore per exhortationis verbum, membra in se etiam extrema mundabat, et dicat: Quando lavabam pedes meos butyro. Quod de beato Job admirabiliter libet intueri, qui inter tot curas rerum, inter tot affectus pignerum, inter tot studia sacrificiorum, subjectis suis quamlibet extremis, bona sequentis vitae praedicabat, ut eos de coelestibus imbueret, qui sibi ad terrena opera deservirent. Quid ad haec nos episcopi dicimus, qui commissis nobis verbum vitae impendere non curamus, quando conjugatum virum prohibere non valuit ab officio praedicationis vel saecularis habitus, vel magnae occupatio facultatis? [Rec. XI]. Sed servata veritate historiae, ad sanctae Ecclesiae jam verba

redeamus, quae per beatum Job, id est per os membri sui loquitur, quanta sint quae tempore extremo patietur, cum transactorum suorum reminiscitur, cum per eam videlicet verbi pinguedinem operantium vita lavaretur. Quae ipsam quoque praedicatorum suorum vigilantiam plenius exsequens, subdit:

CAPUT XV.

IBID. Et petra fundebat mihi rivos olei. 24. In Ecclesia rivi olei sunt vel sacra dogmata, vel sancti Spiritus gratia. Quia petrae nomine Christus accipitur, praedicator egregius fatetur, dicens: Petra autem erat Christus (I Cor. X, 4). Quae videlicet petra nunc ad usum sanctae Ecclesiae olei rivos fundit, quia in ea loquens Dominus, praedicamenta unctionis intimae emanat. De hac petra olei rivus exiit, liber Matthaei, liber Marci, liber Lucae, et liber Joannis. In diversis hujus mundi partibus quod praedicamenta edidit, tot petra haec per ora apostolorum omnium olei rivos fudit. Toties adhuc de petra hac olei rivus funditur, quoties a sancto Spiritu ungendis mentibus auditorum ea quae in libris veteribus de Christo dicta sunt explanantur. Et rivi vocantur olei, 617 quia decurrunt et ungunt. In quibus quisquis tingitur ungitur, quisquis ungitur interius impinguatur [Vet. XIII]. De qua nimirum pinguedine Psalmista ait: Sicut adipe et pinguedine repleatur anima mea (Psal. LXII, 6). Potest nomine olei ipsa sancti Spiritus unctio designari, de qua per prophetam dicitur: Computrescit jugum a facie olei (Isai. X, 27). Jugum quippe a facie olei computrescit, quia dum sancti Spiritus gratia ungimur, a captivitatis nostrae servitute liberamur: dumque maligni spiritus dominatio superba repellitur, jugum conteritur, quo libertatis nostrae colla premebantur. De hoc rursus oleo scriptum est: Vinea facta est dilecto meo in cornu filio olei (Isai. V, 1). Filius quippe olei, fidelis populus dicitur, qui ad fidem Dei interna sancti Spiritus unctione generatur. Multis ergo tunc sancta Ecclesia tribulationibus depressa, dona Spiritus, et mira quae nunc habet praedicamenta, ad memoriam revocet, et suum

silentium deploret, dicens: Petra fundebat mihi rivos olei. Quibus verbis congrue subjicit:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 7-10. Quando procedebam ad portam civitatis, et in platea parabant mihi cathedram. Videbant me juvenes, et abscondebantur, et senes assurgentes stabant. Principes cessabant loqui, et digitum superponebant ori suo. Vocem suam cohibebant duces, et lingua eorum gutturi suo adhaerebat. 25. Bona opera et doctrinae cathedra, Ecclesiae insignia sunt. Mos veterum fuit ut seniores in porta consisterent, et causas introeuntium judicarent, quatenus tanto esset pacificus urbis populus, quanto ad hanc discordes ingredi non liceret. Sed nos sacram historiam venerantes, haec egisse beatum Job pro cultu justitiae certum tenemus, atque ad indaganda allegoriae mysteria ducimur. Quid ergo per civitatis portam, nisi bona quaeque actio designatur, per quam anima ad conventum regni coelestis ingreditur? Unde et Propheta ait: Qui exaltas me de portis mortis, ut annuntiem omnes laudationes tuas in portis filiae Sion (Psal. IX, 15). Portae quippe mortis sunt actiones pravae, quae ad interitum trahunt. Quia autem Sion speculatio dicitur, portas Sion, actiones bonas accipimus, per quas supernam patriam ingredimur, ut Regis nostri gloriam contemplemur. Quid vero per cathedram, nisi magisterii auctoritas designatur? Graeca autem voce platea pro latitudine ponitur. Nunc ergo sancta Ecclesia ad civitatis portam procedit, quia ut aditum coelestis regni percipiat, in sanctis se actionibus exerit. Cui in platea paratur cathedra, quia in magnae auctoritatis latitudine sui magisterii exhibet libertatem. Quae enim recta quae sentit publica voce praedicat, quasi in platea cathedram sedet, cum nullum de sua praedicatione metuit, nullius pressa terroribus, se sub silentio abscondit. An non in publico ad docendum praesidet, quam simul et sentiendi veritas, et docendi potestas fulcit? Sed cum ad portam procederet, et in platea

cathedram sederet, quid a levibus, quidve a gravibus ageretur, adjungit dicens:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 8. Videbant me juvenes, et abscondebantur, et senes assurgentes stabant. 618 26. Ecclesiae vigorem, et rectitudinem imperfecti formidant; diligunt perfecti. Si historiae intendimus, quae dixit credimus; si allegoriae, quae praedixit videmus. Juvenes namque dici solent qui nulla consilii gravitate deprimuntur. Senes vero non eos Scriptura sacra vocare consuevit, qui sola quantitate temporum, sed morum grandaevitate maturi sunt. Unde per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Senectus enim venerabilis est, non diuturna, neque numero annorum computata. Cani autem sunt sensus hominis, et aetas senectutis vita immaculata (Sap. IV, 8). Unde recte quoque Dominus ad Moysen dicit: Congrega mihi septuaginta viros de senioribus Israel, quos tu nosti quod senes populi sunt (Num. XI, 16). In quibus quid aliud quam senectus cordis requiritur, cum tales jubentur eligi qui senes esse sciuntur? Si enim senectus in eis corporis quaereretur, a tantis sciri poterant, a quantis videri. Dum vero dicitur: Quos tu nosti quod senes populi sunt, profecto liquet quia senectus mentis, non corporis, eligenda nuntiatur. [Vet. XIV.] Sanctam ergo Ecclesiam vident nunc juvenes, et absconduntur, senes vero ei assurgentes assistunt, quia vigorem ejus atque rectitudinem immaturi formidant, grandaevi glorificant. Leves quique sunt, fugiunt; graves vero atque perfecti hanc vitae suae meritis assurgendo venerantur. Disciplinam quippe illius perfecti diligunt, imperfecti reprehendunt. Vident ergo hanc juvenes et absconduntur, quia deprehendi in suis occultis actionibus metuunt. Senes vero assurgentes stant, quia perfecti quique ex humilitate indicant, quantum in bona operatione profecerunt. Sed quia haec de suis loquitur, narret quoque qualiter ab exteris timeatur:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 9, 10. Principes cessabant loqui, et digitum superponebant ori suo. Vocem suam cohibebant duces, et lingua eorum gutturi suo adhaerebat. 27. Haeretici silere coacti S. Gregorii temporibus. Haeretici in culpa concordant, in sententiis discrepant. In Ecclesiae adversis, haeretici libere praedicant. Qui hoc loco alii duces intelligi vel principes possunt nisi haereticae pravitatis auctores? De quibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Effusa est contentio super principes eorum, et seduxerunt eos in invio, et non in via (Psal. CVI, 40). Ipsi etenim dum dispensationem Dei perverse interpretari non metuunt, profecto plebes subditas non in eam viam quae Christus est, sed in invium trahunt. Super quos recte quoque effusa contentio dicitur, quia suis sibi vicissim allegationibus contradicunt. Arius quippe tres personas in divinitate suscipiens, tres etiam deos credidit. Quem contra Sabellius unum Deum suscipiens, unam credidit esse personam. Inter quos sancta Ecclesia rectum praedicationis suae tramitem indeclinabiliter tenens, et unum Deum praedicans, tres personas contra Sabellium asserit, et tres personas asserens, unum Deum contra Arium confitetur. Quia autem in sacro eloquio Manichaeus virginitatem laudari comperit, conjugia damnavit. At contra Jovinianus quia concedi conjugia cognovit, virginitatis munditiam despexit. Unde fit ut semper haereticis perversa intelligentia confusis, vicissim sibi eorum nequitia et in culpa concordet, et in sententia discrepet. At contra sancta Ecclesia per medias utrarumque partium lites 619 ordinata pace graditur, et sic scit superiora bona suscipere, ut noverit etiam inferiora venerari, quatenus nec summa aequet infimis, nec rursum ima despiciat, cum summa veneratur. Nunc ergo haereticarum plebium principes, auctoritatem sanctae Ecclesiae perpendentes, cessant loqui, et quasi ori suo digitum superponunt, dum falsis querelis non ratione vocis se reprimi, sed virtutis manu significant. Vocem suam duces cohibent, quia nimirum hi qui post se errantes populos trahere conantur, ne loqui perversa nunc audeant, et

auctoritatis frenantur pondere, et virtute rationis. Quorum lingua suo gutturi adhaeret, quia etsi perversa loqui libera voce non audeant, intus tamen apud se contegunt cuncta quae contra veram fidem proponere falsa moliuntur. Horum ergo temporum, sequenti tribulatione deprehensa, reminiscens Ecclesia deplorat, dicens: Quando procedebam ad portam civitatis, et in platea parabant cathedram mihi. Videbant me juvenes, et abscondebantur, et senes assurgentes stabant. Principes cessabant loqui, et digitum superponebant ori suo. Vocem suam duces cohibebant, et lingua eorum gutturi suo adhaerebat. Ac si aperte dicat: Cum praedicare mihi voce publica licuit, omnis me qui veritati non fuit subjectus expavit. Illo namque tempore cum sancta Ecclesia adversitate premitur, pravis quibusque praedicatoribus licentia locutionis datur. [Vet. XV.] Quod longe ante Jeremias intuens, ait: Sed et lamiae nudaverunt mammam, lactaverunt catulos suos (Thren. IV, 3). Quid namque lamias, nisi haereticos appellat, humanam quidem faciem, sed belluina per impietatem corda gestantes? Qui tunc mammam nudant, cum errorem suum libere praedicant. Tunc catulos lactant, quia male sequaces parvulorum animas dum perversa insinuant, ad impietatem nutriendo confirmant. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX [Rec. XII].

VERS. 11. Auris audiens beatificabat me, et oculus videns testimonium reddebat mihi. 28. Ecclesiae testimonium reddere debemus bene vivendo. Dum beatificari se ab audientibus, sibique testimonium reddi a videntibus fatetur beatus Job, qualis in sermone, qualis in opere fuerit, ostenditur. Neque enim aut in opere jam perfectus est, cui adhuc linguae pravitas contradicit; aut in sermone laudabilis, qui hoc quod loquitur opere non ostendit. Ut igitur beatus Job amicorum suorum increpationibus exactus utraque se habuisse perhibeat, sese et audientibus et videntibus venerationi fuisse manifestat. Quod si ad vocem sanctae Ecclesiae referamus, ille ejus

verba beatificat, quia ea quae audierit opere consummat. Ille ei testimonium reddit, qui exemplis vitae illi bene vivendo respondet. Sanctam etenim Ecclesiam ille veraciter videt, cujus testatur vita quia videt. Ad hoc namque bonorum intra eam rectitudo cernitur, ut quique hanc viderint, a suis pravitatibus corrigantur. Necdum ergo intra sanctam Ecclesiam videt bonos, qui non est emendatus a malis. Sed unde ei testimonium reddatur, ostenditur cum subjungit:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 12, 13. Eo quod liberassem pauperem vociferantem, et pupillum cui non erat adjutor. Benedictio perituri super me veniebat, et cor viduae consolatus sum. 29. Ecclesia filios suos et pascit et protegit. Magnae misericordiae ista sunt opera, liberare 620 vociferantem pauperem, pupillo adjutorium ministrare, periturum eripere, cor viduae consolari. Superius enim dictum est quid exhibuit per doctrinam. Ait namque: Auris audiens beatificabat me. Nunc autem narrat quae per misericordiam impendit, dicens: Eo quod liberassem pauperem vociferantem, et pupillum cui non erat adjutor. Vox quippe cum opere sibi necessario concordat. Haec beatus Job et exhibuit subditis, et tamen per sanctam Ecclesiam exhibenda signavit. Quae utrumque nunc incessabiliter exercet, ut videlicet filios suos et loquendo pascat, et defendendo protegat, quatenus et per verba bonos satiet, et per patrocinia tueatur a malis. Bene autem scriptum est: Germinet terra herbam virentem, et facientem semen, et lignum fructiferum faciens fructum juxta genus suum (Genes. I, 11). Quod sic est veraciter factum, ut significaret aliquid veraciter faciendum. Per terram quippe figuratur Ecclesia, quae et verbi nos pabulo reficit, et patrocinii umbraculo custodit; quae et loquendo pascit, et opitulando protegit, ut non solum herbam refectionis proferat, sed et cum fructu operis arborem protectionis. [Vet. XVI.] 30. In Ecclesiae rectoribus nec vigor sit rigidus, nec mansuetudo

dissoluta. Perpendendum quoque video his qui plebium gubernationibus praesunt, quod superius dicens: Videbant me juvenes, et abscondebantur; nunc astruit: Cor viduae consolatus sum. Quanta disciplina regminis, ut ante eum juvenes abscondantur; quanta mansuetudo pietatis, ut per eum viduarum corda consolentur! Sunt namque (Dist. 45, can. sunt namque) nonnulli ita districti, ut omnem etiam mansuetudinem benignitatis amittant, et sunt nonnulli ita mansueti, ut perdant districti jura regiminis. Unde cunctis rectoribus utraque summopere sunt tenenda, ut nec in disciplinae vigore benignitatem mansuetudinis, nec rursum in mansuetudine districtionem deserant disciplinae, quatenus nec a compassione pietatis obdurescant, cum contumaces corrigunt; nec disciplinae vigorem molliant, cum infirmorum animos consolantur. Regat ergo disciplinae vigor mansuetudinem, et mansuetudo ornet vigorem, et sic alterum commendetur ex altero ut nec vigor sit rigidus, nec mansuetudo dissoluta. 31. Pietatis opera corporaliter et spiritaliter exhibentur ab Ecclesia. Haec autem quae supra diximus pietatis opera sancta Ecclesia et corporaliter exhibet, et spiritaliter exhibere non cessat. Nam pauperem vociferantem liberat, cum peccatori veniam deprecanti eas quas commiserat culpas relaxat. De talibus quippe pauperibus dicitur: Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum coelorum (Matth. V, 3). Et talium pauperum clamor est Psalmistae voce dicentium: Cito nos anticipet misericordia tua, quia pauperes facti sumus nimis (Psal. LXXVIII, 8). Pupillum vero cui non est adjutor liberat, dum unusquisque, mortuo antiquo patre diabolo, ad sanctae Ecclesiae sinum currens, in ea exhortationis adjutorium invenit, qui jam desideria mundi persequentis fugit. Potest pupilli nomine fidelis quisque etiam propter mortem boni patris intelligi, cujus ad tempus visione destitutus est, quamvis solatio destitutus non est. Benedictio etiam perituri super eam venit, cum peccatoris interitum praevenit, et cum sanctis exhortationibus a culpae fovea reducit. Unde scriptum est: Qui converti fecerit peccatorem ab errore

viae 621 suae, et operiet multitudinem peccatorum (Jac. V, 20). Si enim magnae mercedis est a morte eripere carnem quandoque morituram, quanti est meriti a morte animam liberare, in coelesti patria sine fine victuram? Cor autem viduae consolatur, dum fideli cuique animae qui aeternas Domini retributiones narrat, quasi viri sui bona ad memoriam revocat. Cui quia spiritaliter anima juncta est, eo mortuo vidua dicitur, sed sanctae Ecclesiae vocibus ex ejus resurrectione refovetur. Magnam ergo consolationem cor viduae suscipit, quando fidelis anima in verbis Ecclesiae de adventu illius aliquid, cui spiritaliter est conjuncta, cognoscit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 14. Justitia indutus sum, et vestivi me sicut vestimento. 32. Nulla bona opera sunt, si pravis quibusdam maculentur. Vestimento utique cum vestimur, ex omni parte circumdamur. Ille ergo justitia sicut vestimento vestitur, qui se undique bono opere protegit, et nullam partem actionis suae peccato nudam relinquit. Nam qui in aliis actionibus justus est, in aliis injustus; quasi hoc latus cooperuit, illud nudavit, nec jam bona sunt opera, quae subortis aliis pravis operibus inquinantur. Hinc enim per Salomonem dicitur: Qui in uno offenderit, multa bona perdet (Eccle. IX, 18). Hinc Jacobus dicit: Quicunque totam legem servaverit, offendat autem in uno, factus est omnium reus (Jac. II, 10). Quam videlicet sententiam suam ipse diligenter exposuit, cum subjunxit: Qui enim dixit, Non moechaberis, dixit et, Non occides. Quod si non moechaberis, occidas autem, factus es transgressor legis (Ibid., 11). [Vet. XVII.] 33. Hinc adhibenda undique custodia et vigilantia. Frustra munita sunt caetera, cum vel unus hosti panditur aditus. Cordis ergo oculis circumquaque porrectis, undique nobis adhibenda custodia est. Unde recte quoque per Salomonem dicitur: Omni custodia serva cor tuum, quia ex ipso vita procedit (Prov. IV, 23). Dicturus enim custodia, praemisit omni, ut videlicet unusquisque hinc inde se

diligenter inspiciat, et quandiu in hac vita est, contra spiritales inimicos in acie se positum sciat, ne mercedem quam per has actiones colligit, per alias amittat, ne hinc hosti fores obstruat, et aliunde aditum pandat. Si qua etenim civitas contra insidiantes inimicos magno valletur aggere, fortibus cingatur muris, ex omni parte insomni muniatur custodia, unum vero in ea foramen tantummodo immunitum per negligentiam relinquatur; inde procul dubio hostis ingreditur, qui undique exclusus videbatur. Pharisaeus namque ille, qui in templum oraturus ascendit, civitatem mentis suae quanta munitione vallaverit, audiamus: Jejuno, inquit, bis in sabbato, decimas do omnium quae possideo (Luc. XVIII, 12). Qui praemisit: Gratias ago tibi, magna certe munimina adhibuit. Sed videamus ubi insidianti hosti immunitum foramen reliquit: Quia non sum sicut publicanus iste (Ibid., 11). Ecce civitatem cordis sui insidiantibus hostibus per elationem aperuit, quam frustra per jejunium et eleemosynas clausit. Incassum munita sunt caetera, cum locus unus, de quo hosti patet aditus, munitus non est. Gratias recte egit, sed perverse se super publicanum extulit. Civitatem cordis sui extollendo prodidit, quam abstinendo et largiendo servavit. Victa est per abstinentiam gula, destructa ventris ingluvies, superata est 622 largitate tenacia, avaritia depressa. Quibus hoc laboribus actum credimus? Sed o quot labores uno vitio percussi ceciderunt, quanta bona unius culpae gladio sunt perempta! Unde magnopere oportet et bona semper agere, et ab ipsis nos bonis operibus caute in cogitatione custodire, ne si mentem elevant, bona non sint, quae non auctori militant, sed elationi. [Rec. XIII]. 34. Maxime cavendum a superbia. De qua re non inordinate agimus, si ex libris, licet non canonicis, sed tamen ad aedificationem Ecclesiae editis, testimonium proferamus. Eleazar namque in praelio elephantem feriens stravit, sed sub ipso quem exstinxit occubuit (I Mach. VI, 46). Quos ergo iste significat quem sua victoria oppressit, nisi eos qui vitia superant, sed sub ipsa quae subigunt, superbiendo succumbunt? Quasi enim sub hoste

quem prosternit moritur, qui de culpa quam superat elevatur. Pensandum ergo magnopere est quia bona prodesse nequeunt, si mala quae subrepunt non caventur. Perit omne quod agitur, si non sollicite in humilitate custoditur. Unde bene quoque de ipso primo parente dicitur: Posuit eum Dominus in paradiso voluptatis, ut operaretur et custodiret (Genes. II, 15). Operatur quippe qui agit bonum quod praecipitur, sed quod operatus fuerit non custodit, cui hoc subrepit quod prohibetur. Beatus igitur Job, quia ex omni parte bono se opere texerat, dicat: Justitia indutus sum, et vestivi me sicut vestimento. Ubi protinus subditur:

CAPUT XXII [Vet. XVIII].

IBID. Et diademate, judicio meo. 35. Justi sollicite attendunt, quid Deo, quid proximo debeant. Justorum judicia recte diademati comparantur, quia per magni operis gloriam ad retributionis ducunt coronam. Quae nimirum judicia secum quotidie introrsus agunt, quid Deo, quid proximo debeant, solerter aspiciunt, atque ad agenda bona se vehementer accendunt, et de perpetratis malis districte redarguunt. Unde bene quoque per Salomonem dicitur: Cogitationes justorum judicia (Prov. XII, 5). Intus quippe ab omni strepitu saeculari ad corda sua redeunt, ibique ascendunt tribunal mentis, atque ante oculos se et proximum statuunt, deducunt ad medium regulam testamenti, qua dicitur: Quae vultis ut faciant vobis homines, et vos eadem facite illis (Matth. VII, 12). Transferunt in se personam proximi, et sollicite attendunt quid sibi si ita essent fieri vel non fieri juste voluissent, sicque districto jure atque judicio causam suam et proximi juxta tabulas divinae legis in foro cordis examinant. Bene ergo dicitur: Cogitationes justorum judicia, quia ipse eorum intimus motus cordis, quasi quaedam libra est judiciariae potestatis. Quibus peractis, quia retributionem inferius non requirunt, recte eorum judicia diademati comparantur. Diadema quippe in superiori parte corporis ponitur. Justorum ergo judicium diadema dicitur,

quia per hoc non in terrenis et infimis, sed sursum remunerari concupiscunt. Sequitur

CAPUT XXIII [Rec. XIV].

VERS. 15, 16. Oculus fui caeco, et pes claudo. Pater eram pauperum, et causam quam nesciebam, diligentissime investigabam. 36. Bona opera etsi humilitate occultanda, necessitate tamen aliquando publicanda. Inter haec lectoris animus forsitan quaerat cur beatus Job suas tam subtiliter virtutes enumeret. 623 Sanctorum quippe virorum est bona quae fecerint occultare, ne contingat eos lapsum elationis incurrere. Unde per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Attendite ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus, ut videamini ab eis (Matth. VI, 1). Hinc est etiam quod duos caecos juxta viam sedentes illuminans, praecepit dicens: Videte ne quis sciat (Matth. IX, 30). De quibus illico scriptum est quia illi abeuntes diffamaverunt eum per totam terram illam. Sed quaerendum nobis est quid sit hoc quod ipse Omnipotens, cui hoc est velle quod posse, et taceri virtutes suas voluit, et tamen ab his qui illuminati sunt quasi invitus indicatur, nisi quod servis suis se sequentibus exemplum dedit, ut ipsi quidem virtutes suas occultari desiderent, et tamen, ut alii eorum exemplo proficiant, prodantur inviti, et facta quidem sua occultando seipsos custodiant, sed dum produntur inviti, bona ad proximos suos exempla transmittant. Occultentur ergo studio, necessitate publicentur; et eorum occultatio sit custodia propria, eorumque publicatio sit utilitas aliena. Rursum quia scriptum est: Neque accendunt lucernam, et ponunt eam sub modio, sed super candelabrum, ut luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt. Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in coelis est (Matth. V, 15). Aliquando sancti viri et coram hominibus compelluntur bona facere, aut eadem hominibus sua facta narrare; sed ad eum finem omnia referentes, ut non ipsi eisdem operibus, sed Pater eorum qui in coelis est debeat glorificari. Dum enim

sancta praedicant, ipsi praedicatio eorum fortasse despicitur, quorum vita nescitur. Compelluntur ergo vitam suam dicere, ut auditorum suorum valeant vitam mutare. Et facta sua referunt, ut venerationi sint; venerari appetunt, ut reverenter audiantur. Scriptum quippe est: Cum elevarentur animalia de terra, elevabantur pariter et rotae (Ezech. I, 19), quia videlicet cum auditorum mentes praedicantium vitam suspiciunt, necessario utique etiam vim praedicationis admirantur. [Vet. XIX]. 37. Quod sanctus Paulus exempto suo comprobavit. Qui eum imitantur non elationi serviunt, sed humilitati. Hinc est ergo quod praedicatores boni et honorem propter elationem fugiunt, et honorari tamen propter imitationem volunt. Sic nimirum Paulus apostolus discipulis loquens, et honorem fugit, et tamen quantum esset honorandus ostendit. Nam cum Thessalonicensibus diceret: Neque enim aliquando fuimus in sermone adulationis, sicut scitis, neque in occasione avaritiae, Deus testis est (I Thess. II, 5), secutus adjunxit: Neque quaerentes ab hominibus gloriam, neque a vobis, neque ab aliis, cum possimus oneri vobis esse, ut Christi apostoli, sed facti sumus parvuli in medio vestrum (Ibid., 6, 7). Rursus Corinthiis, honorem fugiens, dicit: Non enim nosmetipsos praedicamus, sed Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, nos autem servos vestros per Jesum Christum (II Cor. IV, 5). Quos tamen videns falsorum apostolorum persuasionibus a verae fidei tramite deviare, eis se summopere quantum esset venerandus ostendit, dicens: In quo quis audet, in insipientia dico, audeo et ego. Hebraei sunt, et ego. Israelitae sunt, 624 et ego. Semen Abrahae sunt, et ego. Ministri Christi sunt, et ego. Ut minus sapiens dico, plus ego (II Cor. XI, 21-23). Quibus etiam subjungit quod ei quoque tertii coeli secreta patuerint, quod raptus etiam paradisi arcana penetrarit. Ecce honorem fugiens servum se discipulorum praedicat. Ecce honorem pro utilitate audientium quaerens falsis apostolis vitae suae merita superponit. Egit quippe doctor egregius ut dum ipse qualis esset agnoscitur, et vita et lingua male praedicantium, ejus comparatione

vilesceret. Illos videlicet commendaret, si se absconderet; cumque se non ostenderet, errori locum dedisset. Miro igitur modo et humilitatis exhibet gratiam, et utilitatis quaerit incrementa, ut et servum se discipulorum praedicet, et adversariis potiorem demonstret. Ostendit discipulis quid humilitatis acceperit, ostendit adversariis quid sublimitatis. Innotescit contra adversarios quid habent ex munere, innotescit discipulis qualis apud se maneat in cogitatione, innotescit adversariis qualis foris appareat in operatione. Sancti ergo viri cum coguntur bona narrare quae faciunt, non elationi serviunt, sed utilitati. Unde beatus Job amicis suis se injuste increpantibus, atque idcirco nescientibus bona sua, loquendo aperit, ut nimirum discerent non contra ejus vitam increpantes erigi, sed hanc tacentes imitari, quamvis, ut supra jam diximus, hunc ad memoriam facta sua reducere, invecta ab increpantibus desperatio compellebat. Nam inter tot dolores vulneris et verba desperationis, cum bona quae fecit narrat, quasi collapsum verbis et verberibus ad spem animum reformat. Dicat ergo bona quae fecit, ut non cogatur inter tot mala de se desperare quae audit. Oculus fui caeco, et pes claudo. 38. Justitiae opera praemitti debent operibus misericordiae. Qui eleemosynas largitur, nec abstinet a peccato, rem suam Deo tribuit, et seipsum peccato. Cum sancti operis exempla pensamus, intuendum nobis prius est, quam rectus narrandi ordo servetur, ut ante justitiae, et post misericordiae opera describantur. Ille quippe bene agit quae pia sunt, qui scit prius servare quae justa, ut collatus in proximos rivus misericordiae de justitiae fonte ducatur. [Vet. XX.] Nam multi proximis quasi opera misericordiae impendunt, sed injustitiae facta non deserunt. Qui si veraciter proximis misericordiam facere student, sibi ipsis prius debuerant juste vivendo misereri. Unde scriptum est: Miserere animae tuae placens Deo (Eccli. XXX, 24). Qui ergo misereri vult proximo, a se trahat necesse est originem miserendi. Scriptum namque est: Diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum (Matth. XIX, 19). Quomodo ergo alteri miserendo pius est, qui

adhuc injuste vivendo fit impius sibimetipsi? Unde per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Qui sibi nequam est, cui bonus erit (Eccli. XIV, 5)? Ad exhibendam quippe misericordiam ut indigentibus plene exterius valeat impendi, duo sibi necessaria congruunt, id est homo qui praebeat, et res quae praebeatur. Sed longe incomparabiliter melior est homo quam res. Qui itaque indigenti proximo exteriorem substantiam praebet, sed vitam suam a nequitia non custodit, rem suam Deo tribuit, et se peccato. Hoc quod minus est obtulit auctori, et hoc quod majus est servavit iniquitati. 625 Bene itaque per beatum Job prius dicitur: Justitia indutus sum, et vestivi me sicut vestimento; et sicut diademate, judicio meo. Ac deinde subjungitur: Oculus fui caeco, et pes claudo. Quia tunc est apud Deum oblatio verae rectitudinis, cum de radice justitiae prodeunt rami pietatis. Sed quia in ipso misericordiae opere plus solet apud internum judicem animus pensari quam factum, notandum quod caeco oculum fuisse se asserit, pedem claudo. Haec etenim dicens, profecto indicat quia et illi per semetipsum manum praebuerat, et hunc portando sustinebat. Ex qua re colligitur, super egenos ac debiles quantum misericordiae illius viscera fundebantur. Unde et subditur: Pater eram pauperum. 39. Ecclesia caecos illuminat, claudos sustentat. Quae videlicet verba si ad vocem sanctae Ecclesiae typica interpretatione referamus, ipsa est oculus caeco, quia per verbum lucet, ipsa pes claudo, quia per adjutorium continet. Caecos enim praedicando illuminat, claudos vero opitulando sustentat. Caecus quippe est qui adhuc quo pergat non videt; claudus autem est, qui non potest ire quo videt. Crebro namque peccatum aut ignorantia aut infirmitate perpetratur, ut vel nesciat homo quid velle debeat, vel non omne quod voluerit possit. Quo contra recte per Psalmistam dicitur: Dominus illuminatio mea et salus mea (Psal. XXVI, 1). Quia enim Dominus et scientiam et virtutem praebet, et contra ignorantiam illuminatio, et contra infirmitatem salus vocatur. Hinc etiam de iniquis dicitur: Fiant viae illorum tenebrae, et lubricum (Psal.

XXXIV, 6), ut scilicet per tenebras quo ire debent non videant, qui etsi recta viderent, in eis tamen per lubricum stare non possent. Isti itaque per lubricum inter bona claudicant, illi per tenebras quae bona sequantur ignorant. Sancta itaque Ecclesia extremis tribulationibus deprehensa, antiquorum reminiscitur temporum, quando et docendo illuminare consueverat, et adjuvando firmare, et praecedentis membri sui ore loquitur, dicens: Oculus fui caeco, et pes claudo. [Vet. XXI.] 40. Caeci sunt gentiles, claudi vero Judaei. Quae quia duos in se populos collegit, Judaicum scilicet atque gentilem, recte etiam potest caeco gentilis, claudo autem Judaicus populus designari. Gentilis quippe quasi oculos non habuit, quia non accepta lege non vidit quo ire debuisset. At contra Judaicus habens oculos, claudus fuit, quia legem quidem sciendo tenuit, sed in ea gressum recti operis non tetendit. Si enim gentilis populus caecus minime fuisset, propheta non diceret: Populus qui sedebat in tenebris, vidit lucem magnam (Isai. IX, 2). Rursum si Israeliticus populus a bono opere minime claudicasset, nequaquam voce Domini Psalmista dixisset: Filii alieni mentiti sunt mihi, filii alieni inveterati sunt, et claudicaverunt a semitis suis (Psal. XVII, 46). Qui nimirum populus claudus idcirco nominatur, qui sanum gressum in operatione non habuit, quippe qui utroque pede uti noluit, dum unum Testamentum recepit, aliud sprevit. Quem cum ad se venientem sancta Ecclesia suscipit, quia ei jam Vetus tenenti, etiam Novum Testamentum inserit, ad dirigendos gressus illius, quasi alterum pedem jungit. Qui fidelis sanctae Ecclesiae populus adhuc recte subjungit: Pater eram pauperum, 626 quia videlicet humiles, qui pauperes spiritu dicti sunt, ex ejus praedicatione generantur. Sed oportet ut in his omnibus ipsa historiae subtiliter verba pensemus. Ait enim:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 16. Pater eram pauperum, et causam quam nesciebam diligentissime investigabam. 41. Praestat bonum opus ex affectu facere, quam ex praecepto. Plerumque enim multa homines pauperibus largiuntur, non quia eosdem pauperes diligunt, sed quia si minime tribuant, iram judicis superni formidant; qui si Deum non metuerent, quae habent dare noluissent. Et quidem in bono opere primus incipientium gradus est ut qui adhuc proximum sicut se nescit diligere, jam tamen incipiat judicia superna formidare. Quia igitur aliud est bonum opus ex praecepto, aliud vero etiam ex affectu facere, sanctus vir ut mentem nobis suae operationis insinuel, dicat: Pater eram pauperum. Non enim patronum se, vel proximum, vel adjutorem pauperum, sed patrem fuisse testatur, quia nimirum magno charitatis officio studium misericordiae vertit in affectum naturae, ut eos quasi filios cerneret per amorem, quibus quasi pater praeerat per protectionem. Quia igitur vis misericordiae illius naturam fuerat imitata, patrem se pauperum fuisse commemorat. Ubi etiam subdit.

CAPUT XXV.

IBID. Et causam quam nesciebam diligentissime investigabam. 42. Etsi nulla bona opera negligenda, minora tamen potioribus postponi debent. In quibus videlicet verbis pensanda sunt omnia quam distincte narrentur, quod nulla ab eo merces praetermittitur. Justus quippe est in actionibus suis, pius in infirmitatibus proximorum, strenuus in negotiis pauperum. Qui enim aeternae retributionis bona cogitat, necesse est ut ad omnem se causam secuturae mercedis extendat. Hinc enim per Salomonem dicitur: Qui Deum timet, nihil negligit (Eccle. VII, 19). Hinc etiam Paulus ait: Ad omne opus bonum parati (II Tim. II, 21). Sed inter haec sciendum est quia aliquando in actionibus nostris minora bona praetermittenda sunt pro utilitate majorum. Nam quis ignoret esse boni operis meritum, mortuum sepelire? et tamen cuidam qui ad sepeliendum patrem se dimitti poposcerat dictum est: Sine ut

mortui sepeliant mortuos suos, tu autem vade et annuntia regnum Dei (Luc. IX, 60). Postponendum namque erat obsequium hujus ministerii officio praedicationis, quia illo carne mortuos in terram conderet, isto autem anima mortuos ad vitam resuscitaret. Per prophetam quoque primatibus synagogae dicitur: Quaerite judicium, subvenite oppresso (Isai. I, 17). Et tamen Paulus apostolus dicit: Contemptibiles qui sunt in Ecclesia, illos constituite ad judicandum (I Cor. VI, 4). Auditores etenim suos ad virtutem sapientiae, ad linguarum genera, ad prophetiae quoque indaganda mysteria succendebat, dicens: Aemulamini spiritalia, magis autem ut prophetetis (I Cor. XIV, 1). Sed quia spiritalia dona non caperent, si terrena eos negotia depressissent, longe ante praemisit, dicens: Contemptibiles qui sunt in Ecclesia, illos constituite ad judicandum (I Cor. VI, 4). Ac si aperte dicat, qui minoris meriti sunt in Ecclesia, et nullis magnorum donorum virtutibus pollent, ipsi de terrenis negotiis judicent, quatenus per quos magna nequeunt, bona minora suppleantur. Quos et contemptibiles nominat, et tamen sapientes vocat, cum dicit: Sic non est sapiens inter vos quisquam, qui possit judicare 627 inter fratrem suum (Ibid., 5)? Qua ex re quid colligitur, nisi ut hi terrenas causas examinent, qui exteriorum rerum sapientiam perceperunt? Qui autem spiritalibus donis ditati sunt, profecto terrenis non debent negotiis implicari, ut dum non coguntur inferiora bona disponere, exercitati valeant bonis superioribus deservire. [Vet. XXII.] 43. Qui per se non possunt, per alios officia charitatis exercere tenentur. Sed curandum magnopere est ut hi qui donis spiritalibus emicant nequaquam proximorum infirmantium negotia funditus deserant, sed haec aliis quibus dignum est tractanda committant. Unde Moyses quoque ac populum viros pro se septuaginta constituit, ut quanto se ab exterioribus causis absconderet, tanto ardentius interna penetraret. Sicque fit ut summi viri magis ad spiritalia dona proficiant, dum eorum mentes res infimae non conculcant; et rursum viri in Ecclesia ultimi sine bono opere non vivant, dum in rebus exterioribus

inveniunt recta quae agant. Sancta quippe Ecclesia sic consistit unitate fidelium, sicut corpus nostrum unitum est compage membrorum. Alia namque sunt membra in corpore quae intuendae luci deserviunt, alia quae a terrae tactu minime disjunguntur. Oculus quippe luci intenditur, et ne caecari valeat, a pulvere custoditur. Pes vero tunc suum officium recte peragit, cum suscipiendum terrae pulverem non refugit. Quae tamen corporis membra vicissim sibi sua officia impartiendo copulantur, ut pes oculis currat, et oculus pedi prospiciat. 44. Membra Ecclesiae, etsi officio distincta, sunt charitate conjuncta. Sic itaque sic sanctae Ecclesiae membra debent et officio esse distincta, et charitate conjuncta, ut summi viri eorum viam provideant, qui in terrenis negotiis vacant, quatenus velut ad lumen oculorum pes ambulet, et rursum quidquid terrenis negotiis implicati agunt, hoc ad majorum utilitatem referant, ut pes cujus via prospicitur, non sibi tantummodo, sed etiam oculis gradiatur. Dum itaque sibi invicem alterna administratione conveniunt, miro modo agitur, ut quia electi quique vicissim sibimet impendendo quod valent faciunt, eorum fiant opera etiam quae facere ipsi non possunt. 45. Necessitate suadente, contemplatio intermittenda, ut proximi utilitati serviatur. Sed inter haec sciendum est quia cum proximorum causis exterioribus qui apte deserviant desunt, debent hi quoque qui spiritalibus donis pleni sunt eorum infirmitati condescendere terrenisque illorum necessitatibus, in quantum decenter valeant, charitatis condescensione servire. Nec taedere animum debet, si sensus ejus contemplationi spiritalium semper intentus aliquando dispensandis rebus minimis quasi minoratus inflectitur, quando illud Verbum per quod constant omnia creata, ut prodesset hominibus, assumpta humanitate, voluit paulominus ab angelis minorari. Quid ergo mirum si homo se propter hominem attrahit, dum creator hominum et angelorum formam hominis propter hominem suscepit? Nec tamen minoratur sensus cum sic attrahitur, quia tanto subtilius superiora penetrat, quanto humilius pro amore

conditoris nec inferiora contemnit. Quid indignum nobis vel difficile est, si supra infraque animum ducimus, qui eadem manu corporis lavamus faciem, qua etiam calceamus pedem? Beatus igitur Job 628 quia cum magna ageret minima non despexit, dicat: [Vet. XXIII.] Et causam quam nesciebam diligentissime investigabam. 46. In judiciis non simus praecipites. Majora crimina tardius credenda; sed cum agnoscuntur, citius punienda. Qua in re notandum video ne ad proferendam sententiam unquam praecipites esse debeamus, ne temere indiscussa judicemus, ne quaelibet mala audita nos moveant, ne passim dicta sine probatione credamus. Quod profecto perpetrare pertimescimus, si auctoris nostri subtilius facta pensamus. Ipse quippe ut nos a praecipitata sententiae prolatione compesceret, cum omnia nuda et aperta sint oculis ejus, mala tamen Sodomae noluit audita judicare, qui ait: Clamor Sodomorum et Gomorrhaeorum multiplicatus est, et peccatum eorum aggravatum est nimis; descendam et videbo utrum clamorem qui venit ad me opere compleverint, an non est ita, ut sciam (Genes. XVIII, 20). Omnipotens itaque Dominus (2, q. 1, c. Deus omnipotens) et omnia sciens, cur ante probationem quasi dubitat, nisi ut gravitatis nobis exemplum proponat, ne mala hominum ante praesumamus credere quam probare? Ecce per angelos ad cognoscenda mala descendit, moxque facinorosos percutit; atque ille patiens, ille mitis, ille de quo scriptum est: Tu autem Domine, cum tranquillitate judicas (Sap. XII, 18), ille de quo scriptum est rursum: Dominus patiens est redditor (Eccli. V, 4); tanto crimine involutos inveniens, quasi patientiam praetermisit, et diem extremi judicii exspectare ad vindictam noluit, sed eos igne judicii, ante judicii diem praevenit. Ecce malum quasi cum difficultate credidit cum audivit, et tamen sine tarditate percussit, cum verum cognoscendo reperit, ut nobis videlicet daret exemplum, quod majora crimina et tarde credenda sunt cum audiuntur, et citius punienda sunt cum veraciter agnoscuntur. Hujus ergo diligentiae beatus Job sollicitudinem gerens, ait: Et causam quam

nesciebam, diligentissime investigabam. Quae scilicet verba etiam per vocem Ecclesiae ad interpretationem typicam possumus non inconvenienter referre. Ipsa quippe per electos suos cum mala carnalium judicat, hoc quod nescit investigat, quia mala quae nescit operando investigat per judicium corrigendo. Sancta itaque Ecclesia cum injustorum fuerit ad tempus improbitate compressa, reminiscitur dicens: Causam quam nesciebam diligentissime investigabam. Ac si aperte dicat: Mala quae in electis meis agendo non noveram, in iniquis hominibus districte judicando plectebam. Et quia nunc virtute praedicationis suae diabolum conterit, atque ex ejus ore uniuscujusque quem suscipit animam rapit, sequitur dicens:

CAPUT XXVI [Rec. XV].

VERS. 17. Conterebam molas iniqui, et de dentibus illius auferebam praedam. 47. Ecclesia diabolo praedam eripit, cum aliquem ab errore aut peccato revocat. O qualem de ore diaboli praedam tulit, quando ipsum raptorem Saulum convertendo rapuit quando adhuc spirans minarum, acceptis epistolis, pergebat Damascum, et dum persequendo fideles congregaret praedam diabolo, cognoscendo fidem ipse aggregatus est Christo (Act. IX, 2)! Toties ex iniqui dentibus Ecclesia praedam tulit, quoties ex erroris morsu animam praedicando diripuit. Quis namque iniquus verius dici potest, quam diabolus? Cujus molas conterimus, quoties disserendo contra ejus insidias occulta illius machinamenta 629 monstramus; ac si de ejus dentibus praedam tollimus, quia mentem quam jam ad peccatum frangendo momorderat, ad salutem vitae convertendo revocamus. [Vet. XXIV.] Per molas quippe occultae ejus insidiae, per dentes vero aperta jam culpae perpetratio demonstratur. De quibus nimirum molis ac dentibus per Psalmistam scriptum est: Deus vero conteret dentes eorum in ore ipsorum, molas leonum confringet Dominus (Psal. LVII, 7). Sed sanctus vir ante se asserit molas conterere, ut post de dentibus illius

praedam potuisset auferre, quia tunc veraciter praedam de ejus dentibus tollimus, cum prius molas illius conterere scimus. Prius enim necesse est occulta consiliorum illius machinamenta prodere, ut auditoris nostri animam valeamus postmodum ab aperto lapsu revocare. Hujus iniqui molas ipse summus pastor Ecclesiae praedicando conterebat, cum diceret: Sobrii estote et vigilate, quia adversarius vester diabolus tanquam leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret; cui resistite fortes in fide (I Petr. V, 8). Contra hunc leonem sancta Ecclesia, quia ejus insidias conspicit, fidei caulas munit. Cujus toties molas frangit, quoties haereticorum argumenta destruit; totiesque ab ejus dentibus praedam diripit, quoties ab errore quempiam praedicando convertit. Et quia plerique justorum tunc erunt qui se ecclesiasticae pacis tempore ab hoc mundo exituros esse crediderunt, beatus Job dum sua narrat, voces quoque justorum sequentium indicat, dicens:

CAPUT XXVII [Rec. XVI].

VERS. 18. Dicebamque: In nidulo meo moriar, et sicut palma multiplicabo dies. 48. Ejus filii, si pace frui desiderant, in ejus nido et sinu remaneant. Quid hoc loco per nidi nomen exprimitur, nisi tranquilla quies fidei, qua unusquisque infirmus nutritur? Multitudo quippe illa bonorum, quae persecutionum temporibus fuerit deprehensa, nutrimentorum suorum dies quasi in nido, sic in loco quietis, explere se credidit. Nam nisi sancta Ecclesia infirmos quosque filios nunc in nido pacis enutriret, Psalmista non diceret: Etenim passer invenit sibi domum, et turtur nidum, ubi reponat pullos suos (Psal. LXXXIII, 4). Jam quippe domum invenit sibi passer, quia aeternum coeli habitaculum noster Redemptor intravit. Et turtur invenit nidum, quia sancta Ecclesia amore conditoris affecta, crebris gemitibus utitur, et velut nidum sibi, id est pacatissimam fidei quietem construit, in qua crescentes filios quasi plumescentes pullos, quousque ad superiora

evolent, charitatis gremio calefactos fovet. Igitur quia tunc erunt qui pacis tempore se ad superna migrare, id est a nido evolare crediderunt, eorum vox beati Job voce praevenitur, cum ait: Dicebamque: In nidulo meo moriar. Quia vero hoc ipsum sibi pacis otium ex multorum dierum longitudine promittebant, recto subjungit, dicens: Et sicut palma multiplicabo dies. Palma enim tarde proficit, sed diu in viriditate subsistit. Cum multis autem difficultatibus sancta Ecclesia ad fidei statum venit, et pro collectione plurimorum in ejusdem fidei gloria diutius stare concupiscit. 630 Sicut palma ergo multiplicare se dies credidit, quae, emergente subitae tentationis articulo, pacis suae gratiam et tarde a fidelibus adeptam, et citius ab infidelibus interceptam dolet. [Vet. XXV.] 49. Cur justi palmae comparantur. Nec immerito justorum vita palmae comparatur, quia scilicet palma inferius tactu aspera est, et quasi aridis corticibus obvoluta; superius vero et visu fructibus pulchra; inferius corticum suarum involutionibus angustatur, sed superius amplitudine pulchrae viriditatis expanditur. Sic quippe est electorum vita, despecta inferius, superius pulchra; in imo ista quasi multis corticibus obvolvitur, dum innumeris tribulationibus angustatur, in summo vero illa quasi pulchrae viriditatis foliis amplitudine retributionis expanditur. Habet quidem aliud palma quo a cunctis arborum generibus differt. Omnis namque arbor in suo robore juxta terram vasta subsistit, sed crescendo superius angustatur, et quando paulisper sublimior, tanto in altum subtilior redditur. Palma vero minoris amplitudinis ab imis inchoat, et juxta ramos ac fructus ampliori robore exsurgit; et quae tenuis ab imis proficit, vastior ad summa succrescit. Quibus itaque alia arbusta nisi terrenis mentibus inveniuntur esse similia, inferius vasta, superius angusta? quia nimirum omnes hujus saeculi dilectores in terrenis rebus fortes sunt (Dist. 47, c. 3), in coelestibus debiles. Nam pro temporali gloria usque ad mortem desudare appetunt, et pro spe perpetua ne parum quidem in labore subsistunt. Pro terrenis lucris quaslibet injurias tolerant, et pro coelesti

mercede vel tenuissimi verbi ferre contumelias recusant; terreno judici toto etiam die assistere fortes sunt, in oratione vero coram Domino vel unius horae momento lassantur. Saepe nuditatem, dejectionem, famem, pro acquirendis divitiis atque honoribus tolerant, et earum rerum se abstinentia cruciant ad quas adipiscendas festinant; superna autem laboriose quaerere tanto magis dissimulant, quanto ea retribui tardius putant. Hi itaque quasi aliarum arborum more deorsum vasti sunt, sursum angusti, quia fortes in inferiora subsistunt, sed ad superiora deficiunt. At contra ex qualitate palmarum designatur proficiens vita justorum, qui nequaquam sunt in terrenis studiis fortes, et in coelestibus debiles; sed longius atque distantius studiosos se Deo exhibent quam saeculo fuisse meminerunt. Nam cum quibusdam per praedicatorem nostrum dicitur: Humanum dico, propter infirmitatem carnis vestrae; sicut enim exhibuistis membra vestra servire immunditiae et iniquitati ad iniquitatem, ita nunc exhibete membra vestra servire justitiae in sanctificationem (Rom. VI, 19); eorum procul dubio infirmitati condescenditur, ac si eis apertius diceretur: Si nequaquam amplius potestis, saltem tales estote in fructu bonorum operum, quales fuistis dudum in actione vitiorum, ne debiliores vos habeat sancta libertas charitatis, quos in carne validos habuit usus terrenae voluptatis. [Vet. XXVI.] 50. Non vero palmae comparantur qui cum bene coeperint, minime perseverant. Sunt vero nonnulli qui cum coelestia appetunt, 631 atque hujus mundi noxia facta derelinquunt, ab inchoatione sua quotidie inconstantiae pusillanimitate deficiunt. Quibus hos nisi arbustis reliquis similes dixerim qui nequaquam tales superius surgunt quales inferius oriuntur? Hi quippe ad conversionem venientes non tales quales coeperunt perseverant, et quasi more arborum inchoatione vasti sunt, sed tenues crescunt, quia paulisper per augmenta temporum patiuntur detrimenta virtutum. Sensim quippe in eis desideria superna languescunt; et qui robusta ac fortia proposuerant, debilia atque infirma consummant; dumque aetatis augmento proficiunt, quasi

flexibiles crescunt. Palma vero, sicut dictum est, vastioris in summitate est quam esse coeperit quantitatis ex radice, quia saepe electorum conversio plus finiendo peragit quam proponit inchoando; et si tepidius prima inchoat, ferventius extrema consummat, videlicet semper inchoare se aestimat, et idcirco infatigabilis in novitate perdurat. Hanc scilicet justorum constantiam propheta intuens, ait: Qui confidunt in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem suam, assument pennas ut aquilae, current et non laborabunt, ambulabunt et non deficient (Isai. XL, 31). Mutant quippe fortitudinem, quia fortes student esse in spiritali opere, qui dudum fuerant fortes in carne. Assumunt autem pennas ut aquilae, quia contemplando volant. Currunt et non laborant, quia velocibus magna celeritate praedicant. Ambulant et non deficiunt, quia intellectus sui velocitatem retinent, ut tardioribus condescendant. In cunctis vero bona quae accipiunt quanto aliis libenter accommodant, tanto ipsi incommutabiles in novitate perdurant; et qui tenues a radice inchoationis exeunt, fortes in culminis perfectione convalescunt. Dicat itaque beatus Job ex persona sua, dicat ex voce sanctae Ecclesiae pro his quos pacis tempore ad se conversos habuerat, atque in bonis moribus perseveraturos credebat: Dicebamque: In nidulo meo moriar, et sicut palma multiplicabo dies. Quasi enim palma multiplicare se dies credidit, quae mentes fidelium ad extremum usque robustiores exsurgere putabat. Cum enim multorum corda persecutionibus coeperint lassata mollescere, dolet jam in se quasi ad debilitatem tendere, quos mirabatur fortia proposuisse. Et quia mente semper spiritali scientiae intendit, recte subjungitur

CAPUT XXVIII.

VERS. 19. Radix mea aperta est secus aquas. 51. Spiritali scientiae semper intendit Ecclesia. Juxta aquas enim radix aperitur, quando ad percipienda veritatis fluenta latenter cogitatio mentis expanditur. Ut enim in superiori libro jam diximus (Lib. VIII, n. 81), solet in sacro eloquio radicis nomine

occulta cogitatio designari. Radicem igitur nostram secus aquas aperimus, cum infusioni intimae cogitationem taciti cordis intendimus. [Vet. XXVII.] Quae scilicet verba si ad vocem sanctae Ecclesiae ducimus, radix illius ipsa debet incarnatio Redemptoris intelligi. Quae juxta aquas aperta est, dum Deus invisibilis per assumptionem humanitatis suae patuit aspectibus visionis nostrae. Creator quippe qui in divinitate videri 632 non poterat, assumpsit a nobis unde videretur a nobis. Radix ergo secus aquas aperitur, quia auctor humani generis per humanitatem suam hominibus demonstratur. Unde recte quoque per Psalmistam dicitur: Et erit tanquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum (Psal. I, 3). Decursus quippe aquarum sunt quotidiani transitus deficientium populorum. Et de semetipsa Veritas dicit: Si in ligno viridi haec faciunt, in arido quid fiet (Luc. XXIII, 51)? Lignum ergo secus decursus aquarum est, quia fructum et protectionem sui nobis umbraculi proferens, apparuit creator in carne, ut humanum genus per resurrectionem figeret, quod per defectum quotidie ibat in mortem. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. Et vos morabitur in messione mea. 52. Ejus messio rori gratiae tribuenda. Subaudis, dicebam. Messio enim sanctae Ecclesiae non inconvenienter accipitur, cum perfectae animae a corporibus abstractae, velut maturae segetes a terra decisae, ad coelestia horrea demigrant; quod quia non nostra virtute, sed coelesti gratia largiente agitur, bene ait: Et ros morabitur in messione mea. Ros namque desuper cadit, messis deorsum colligitur. Ergo ros moratur in messione, quia gratia desuper veniens agit ut digni simus qui de inferioribus colligamur. Ipsa quippe nos desuper infundente, fructum bonorum operum ferimus. Unde recte quoque per Paulum dicitur: Gratia Dei sum id quod sum, et gratia ejus in me vacua non fuit (I Cor. XV, 10). Si enim quaeratur quid sit ros desuper veniens, ait:

Gratia Dei sum id quod sum. Si intueamur messem sub rore crescentem, ait: Et gratia ejus in me vacua non fuit, sed abundantius illis omnibus laboravi. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 20. Gloria mea semper innovabitur, et arcus meus in manu mea instaurabitur. 53. Ecclesia deflet filios quos ad veterem vitam redire cognoscit. Subaudis dicebam. Superiori quippe sententiae conjungitur quod locutione continua subinfertur, cum ait: Dicebamque: In nidulo meo moriar, et sicut palma multiplicabo dies. Ac deinde subjungitur: Radix mea aperta est secus aquas, et ros morabitur in messione mea. Gloria mea semper innovabitur, et arcus meus in manu mea instaurabitur. Cunctis vera scientibus liquet quod ad vetustam vitam vitia pertinent, virtutes ad novam. Hinc enim Paulus dicit: Exuentes vos veterem hominem cum actibus suis, et induentes novum (Coloss. III, 9). Hinc rursus ait: Vetus homo noster simul crucifixus est (Rom. VI, 6). Hinc Psalmista ex typo humani generis loquens, inter malignos spiritus deprehensus dicit: Inveteravi inter omnes inimicos meos (Psal. VI, 8). A fervore etenim mentis vel inter spiritales inimicos, vel inter carnales quosque proximos, ipso aliquo modo vivendi usu veterascimus, et assumptae novitatis speciem fuscamus. A qua tamen vetustate quotidie si studia circumspectionis invigilent, orando, legendo, bene vivendo renovamur, quia vita nostra dum lacrymis lavatur, bonis operibus exercetur, sanctis meditationibus tenditur, ad novitatem suam sine cessatione reparatur. Beatus igitur Job sic sua narrat, ut nostra significet, quia sancta Ecclesia cum fideles suos conspicit ad vitae veteris 633 culpas redire, eos quos novitatem mentis intuetur perdere, cogitur plorare. Praedicator quippe egregius discipulis suis dicit: Quae est enim nostra spes, aut gaudium, aut corona gloriae? nonne vos ante Dominum (I Thess. II, 19)? Sancta ergo Ecclesia quasi amissam gloriam deplorat, cum fideles suos

ad vitam veterem redire considerat. Ait enim: Dicebam: Gloria mea semper innovabitur, quia eos quos in se novae vitae militare credidit, vetustis desideriis servire cognoscit. [Vers. XXVIII.] 54. Quot significentur in sacris Scripturis, arcus nomine. Arcus autem nomine in sacro eloquio aliquando malorum insidiae, aliquando dies judicii, aliquando vero ipsa eadem sacra eloquia designantur. Per arcum quippe insidiae figurantur, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Intenderunt arcum suum, rem amaram (Psal. LXIII, 4). Per arcum quoque dies extremi judicii designatur, sicut per eumdem rursum Psalmistam dicitur: Ostendisti populo tuo dura, potasti nos vino compunctionis; dedisti metuentibus te significationem, ut fugiant a facie arcus (Psal. LIX, 5). In arcu enim quanto longe trahitur chorda, tanto de eo districtior exit sagitta. Sic nimirum sic extremi judicii dies quanto longe differtur ut veniat, tanto cum venerit de illo districtior sententia procedit. Idcirco autem diversis nunc cladibus percutimur, ut his correcti paratiores tunc inveniri valeamus. Unde illic praemissum est: Ostendisti populo tuo dura, flagella videlicet saeculi, quae secuturum gravius judicii diem praecurrunt. Potasti nos vino compunctionis, ut terrena gaudia in lacrymas verterentur. Dedisti metuentibus te significationem, ut fugiant a facie arcus. Ac si aperte diceret: Hoc tempus misericordiae est, illud tempus judicii erit. Per ista ergo hujus temporis flagella significas quomodo tunc percussurus es quando non parcens judicas, qui sic districte modo percutis quando parcis. 55. Ipsa Script. sacra arcus est Ecclesiae. Aliquando autem per arcum etiam sacra Scriptura signatur. Ipsa quippe arcus est Ecclesiae, ipsa arcus est Domini, de qua ad corda hominum sicut ferientes sagittae, sic terrentes sententiae veniunt. Unde recte quoque per Psalmistam dicitur: Arcum suum tetendit et paravit illum, et in ipso paravit vasa mortis, sagittas suas ardentibus effecit (Psal. VII, 13). Arcum namque suum Dominus tetendit; quia cunctis peccatoribus per Scripturam sacram minas exhibuit. In quo arcu scilicet vasa mortis praeparat, quia secundum eloquii sui sententiam

eos qui nunc corrigi negligunt reprobos damnat. In quo etiam sagittas suas ardentibus effecit, quia in eos quos per terrorem corrigit, accensas verborum sententias emittit. De hoc praedicatorum arcu per Isaiam dicitur: Cum sagittis et arcu ingrediuntur illuc (Isai. VII, 24), quia nimirum sancti apostoli ad feriendam gentilis vitae duritiam cum districtis verborum spiculis venerunt. Quid igitur hoc in loco arcus nomine nisi sacrum eloquium debet intelligi? In chorda etenim Testamentum Novum, in cornu vero Testamentum Vetus accipitur. In arcu autem dum chorda trahitur, cornu curvatur; sic in hoc eodem sacro eloquio dum Testamentum Novum legitur, duritia Testamenti Veteris emollitur. Ad ejus namque spiritalia et blanda praecepta illius 634 litterae se rigor inclinat, quia Testamentum Novum, dum quasi quodam bonae operationis brachio trahitur, in Testamento Veteri severitatis jura flectuntur. Nec indecenter dicimus chordam Testamento Novo congruere, quod de incarnatione dominica certum est exstitisse. Quasi ergo chorda trahitur, et cornua curvantur, quia dum in Testamento Novo incarnatio mediatoris agnoscitur, ad spiritalem intelligentiam rigor Testamenti Veteris inclinatur. Ait igitur sanctus vir: Dicebam: Gloria mea semper innovabitur, et arcus meus in manu mea instaurabitur. 56. Hoc arcu recte utitur, qui divina eloquia intelligens, opere perficit. Arcus in manu est Scriptura sacra in operatione. In manu etenim arcum tenet qui divina eloquia quae intellectu cognoscit operatione perficit. Instauratur ergo arcus in manu, dum quidquid de sacro eloquio studendo cognoscitur, vivendo completur. Hinc etiam Salomon dum fortes spiritalis pugnae describeret bellatores, ait: Omnes tenentes gladios, et ad bella doctissimi (Cant. III, 8). Quid namque in divina Scriptura per gladium figuretur, Paulus aperuit, dicens: Et gladium spiritus, quod est verbum Dei (Ephes. VI, 17). [Vet. XXIX.] Salomon autem non ait: Omnes habentes gladios, sed tenentes, quia videlicet verbum Dei non est mirabile solummodo scire, sed facere. Habet quippe, sed non tenet gladium, qui divinum quidem eloquium novit, sed

secundum illud vivere negligit. Et doctus esse ad bella jam non valet, qui spiritalem quem habet gladium minime exercet. Nam resistere tentationibus omnino non sufficit, qui hunc verbi Dei tenere gladium male vivendo postponit. Sancta itaque Ecclesia, quae subsequenti persecutione deprimitur, malorum abundantiam et bonorum inopiam pensans, beati Job vocibus damna sua praenuntiet, dicens: Dicebamque: In nidulo meo moriar, et sicut palma multiplicabo dies. Radix mea aperta est secus aquas, et ros morabitur in messione mea. Gloria mea semper innovabitur, et arcus meus in manu mea instaurabitur. Quae videlicet cuncta considerans, nequaquam spe cassa fallebatur. Nam perfecti quique multos nunc ejus conspiciunt adjutores, sed pensant procul dubio quod emergente persecutionis articulo, ex his plerique hostes illius fiunt, qui esse pacis tempore ejus cives videntur. Non autem de omnibus ita desperant, sed tamen plerumque contingit ut hi de quibus majorem fidei fiduciam habuerant, ipsi ejusdem fidei hostes atrociores fiant, ut eos tunc videant contra sacra eloquia agere, ex quorum se operatione crediderant haec eadem sacra eloquia ad praedicationis gratiam restaurare. Quae tamen tempora jam nunc inchoasse ingemiscimus, cum multos intra Ecclesiam positos cernimus, qui aut nolunt operari quod intelligunt, aut hoc ipsum quoque sacrum eloquium intelligere ac nosse contemnunt. A veritate etenim avertentes auditum, ad fabulas convertuntur, dum omnes quae sua sunt quaerunt, non quae sunt Jesu Christi (Philip. II, 21). Scripta Dei ubique reperta opponuntur oculis, sed haec cognoscere homines dedignantur. Pene nullus quaerit scire quod credidit. Multitudo ergo bonorum praecedentium arcum suum destrui doleat, quae sacrum eloquium restaurari semper per studium subsequentium credebat.

LIBER VIGESIMUS.

Explicantur fusius quinque ultimi versus cap. XXIX lib. Job, cum integro cap. XXX, maxime de haereticis et carnalibus Ecclesiam vexantibus.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

635 1. Scriptura sacra caeteris libris anteponenda. Quamvis omnem scientiam atque doctrinam Scriptura sacra sine aliqua comparatione transcendat, ut taceam quod vera praedicat, quod ad coelestem patriam vocat; quod a terrenis desideriis ad superna amplectenda cor legentis immutat; quod dictis obscurioribus exercet fortes, et parvulis humili sermone blanditur, quod nec sic clausa est ut pavesci debeat, nec sic patet ut vilescat, quod usu fastidium tollit, et tanto amplius diligitur quanto amplius meditatur; quod legentis animum humilibus verbis adjuvat, sublimibus sensibus levat, quod aliquo modo cum legentibus crescit, quod a rudibus lectoribus quasi recognoscitur, et tamen doctis semper nova reperitur; ut ergo de rerum pondere taceam, scientias tamen omnes atque doctrinas ipso etiam locutionis suae more transcendit, quia uno eodemque sermone dum narrat textum, prodit mysterium, et sic scit praeterita dicere, ut eo ipso noverit futura praedicare, et non immutato dicendi ordine, eisdem ipsis sermonibus novit et anteacta describere, et agenda nuntiare, sicut haec eadem beati Job verba sunt, qui dum sua dicit, nostra praedicit; dumque lamenta propria per sermonem indicat, sanctae Ecclesiae causas per intellectum sonat. Ait enim:

CAPUT II.

CAP. XXIX, VERS. 21-23. Qui me audiebant, exspectabant sententiam, et intenti tacebant ad consilium meum. Verbis meis addere nihil audebant, et super illos stillabat eloquium meum. Exspectabant me sicut pluviam, et os

suum aperiebant, quasi ad imbrem serotinum. 2. Fideles Ecclesiam docentem audiunt, ejus verba secuturi, non judicaturi. Hanc etenim apud beatum Job fuisse subjectorum reverentiam indubitanter credimus. Sed, sicut jam saepe diximus, sancta Ecclesia, haereticorum vel carnalium tribulationibus pressa, praeteritorum reminiscitur temporum, in quibus omne quod ab ea dicitur cum metu a fidelibus auditur, et adversariorum suorum proterviam deplorans, dicit: [Rec. II.] Qui me audiebant, exspectabant sententiam, et intenti tacebant ad consilium meum. Ac si aperte dicat: Non ut hi protervi ac tumidi, qui dum veritatis verba suscipere renuunt, praedicationis meae sententias quasi docendo praecurrunt. Cujus nunc discipuli intenti ad ejus consilium tacent, quia verba ejus non audent impugnare, sed credere. Ut enim proficere ex ipsis possint, ea procul dubio non judicaturi, sed secuturi audiunt. 3. Ejus doctrinae nihil addunt. Secus haeretici. De quibus recte subjungitur: Verbis meis addere nihil audebant, quia nimirum tunc haeretici cum contra hanc libertate pessima fuerint effrenati, dictis ejus addere aliquid praesumunt, cum praedicamentorum ejus rectitudinem quasi emendare moliuntur, Quae adhuc de bonis auditoribus subdit: Et super illos stillabat eloquium meum. 4. Praedicatores ad auditorum captum debent se contrahere. In hac stillatione eloquii quid aliud quam mensura sanctae praedicationis accipitur? quia oportet 636 ut exhortationis gratia singulis juxta capacitatem ingenii conferatur. Per hoc ergo quod dicitur: Verbis meis addere nihil audebant, reverentia laudatur audientium. Per hoc vero quod subditur: Et super illos stillabat eloquium meum, indicatur dispensatio magistrorum. Debet enim subtiliter is qui docet perspicere, ne plus studeat quam ab audiente capitur praedicare. Debet enim ad infirmitatem audientium semetipsum contrahendo descendere, ne dum parvis sublimia, et idcirco non profutura loquitur, se magis curet ostendere quam auditoribus prodesse. [Vet. II.] Jubente autem Domino, non solum phialae ad mensam tabernaculi, sed etiam cyathi praeparantur (Exod.

XXXVII, 16). Quid enim per phialas nisi larga praedicatio, quid vero per cyathos nisi minima et tenuis de Deo locutio designatur? In mensa igitur Domini et phialae praeparantur et cyathi, quia videlicet in doctrina sacri eloquii, non solum exhibenda sunt magna et arcana quae debriant, sed etiam parva et subtilia quae quasi per gustum notitiam praestant. Hujus ergo discretissimae dispensationis suae sancta Ecclesia extremis pressa temporibus reminiscatur, et dicat: Super illos stillabat eloquium meum. 5. Eorum doctrinae tanquam pluviae serotinae excipiendae humiles os aperiunt. Ubi apte quoque subjungitur: Exspectabant me sicut pluviam, et os suum aperiebant quasi ad imbrem serotinum. Verba quippe sanctae praedicationis sicut pluviam sustinemus, cum vera humilitate ariditatem nostri cordis agnoscimus, ut potu sanctae praedicationis irrigemur. Unde Deo recte per Psalmistam dicitur: Anima mea sicut terra sine aqua tibi (Psal. CXLII, 6). His doctrinae fluentis infundi propheta nos admonet, dicens: Sitientes, venite ad aquas (Isai. LV, 1). Qui dum in extrema parte jam saeculi verba sanctae praedicationis accipimus, quasi ad imbrem serotinum os cordis aperimus. Nam si os in corde non esset, Psalmista non diceret: Labia dolosa in corde, et corde locuti sunt mala (Psal. XI, 3). Os igitur cordis quia verbis intendimus ultimae praedicationis, hoc velut serotinis aperimus fluentis. Quae nimirum praedicatio ex ejus ad nos sacrificio prodiit, qui per Psalmistam dicit: Elevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum (Psal. CXL, 2). Quia enim Redemptor noster juxta mundi finem vim persequentium pertulit, semetipsum pro nobis sacrificium vespertinum dedit. De hoc imbre serotino alias scriptum est: Dabo vobis pluviam temporivam et serotinam (Jerem. V, 24). Temporivam quippe pluviam dedit, quia electis suis priori tempore legis intellectum contulit. Serotinam quoque pluviam tribuit, quia praedicari diebus ultimis incarnationis suae mysterium fecit. Quod quia sancta Ecclesia quotidie

annuntiare non desinit, ora cordis audientium velut ex imbre serotino infundit. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. III].

VERS. 24. Si quando ridebam ad eos, non credebant, et lux vultus mei non cadebal in terram. 637 6. Praelatus sic se gravem exhibeat, ut non sit odiosus; sic hilarem, ut vilis non sit. Hoc si juxta historiae verba percipimus, credi necesse est quod vir sanctus talem se exhibuerit subditis, ut etiam ridens timeri potuisset. Sed cum superius patrem se pauperum, viduarum vero consolatorem fuisse perhibet, magna valde discretione res indiget, quomodo in tanto terrore regiminis, tanta quoque affuerit lenitas, et mansuetudo pietatis. Sine magna enim benignitatis lenitate non fuit hoc, quod se patrem pauperum et viduarum consolatorem dicit. Sed rursum sine magna severitate non potuit etiam ridens timeri. Qua in re quid aliud docemur, nisi quod talis debet esse dispensatio regiminis, ut is qui praeest ea se circa subditos mensura moderetur, quatenus et arridens timeri debeat, et iratus amari? ut eum nec nimia laetitia vilem reddat, nec immoderata severitas odiosum. Saepe enim subjectos frangimus, dum plus justo vigorem justitiae tenemus. Qui profecto vigor jam justitiae non erit, si se sub justo moderamine non custodit. Et saepe a disciplinae metu resolvimus subditos, si nostro regimini hilaritatis frena laxamus, quia dum nos quasi licenter laetos aspiciunt, audacter ipsi ad illicita resolvuntur. [Vet. III.] Sed ut rectoris vultus etiam laetus debeat timeri, necesse est ut ipse vultum sui conditoris sine cessatione timeat. Illi etenim menti difficile de laetitia creditur, quae quod se pro amore Domini continue affligat a subditis scitur. Qui enim incessanti aestu spiritalis desiderii superna appetit, valde de eo in dubium venit hoc, quod aliquando ante homines hilarescit. Unde et isdem beatus Job non longe post dicturus: Semper enim quasi tumentes super me fluctus timui Deum (Job. XXXI, 23). Sic quippe metuebat judicem suum,

quasi subimminentes impetus fluctuum, jamjamque moriturus. Cujus ergo in mentem moeror divini timoris infuderat, recte hilaritati illius subditi non credebant, quia cogebantur ridenti non credere, cujus cor in timore conditoris noverant quam continua moestitia tenebat. 7. Lux nostra in terram cadit, cum terrena concupiscimus. Hoc quoque juxta historiam non inconvenienter accipitur, quod protinus subinfertur: Et lux vultus mei non cadebat in terram. [Rec. IV.] Scriptum quippe est: Oculi stultorum in finibus terrae (Prov. XVII, 24). Rursumque per eumdem Salomonem dicitur: Oculi sapientis in capite ejus (Eccle. II, 14). Paulus quoque ait: Caput viri Christus (I Cor. XI, 3). Oculi ergo sapientis in capite ejus sunt, dum Redemptoris sui semper opera quae imitari debeat, contemplatur. Lux ergo vultus ejus in terram non cecidit, quia ea quae terrena sunt per concupiscentiam non aspexit. 8. Sancti nunquam securi sunt. Grave periculum est incauta securitas. Sed quia superficiem historiae sub brevitate discussimus, quid in his de intellectu mystico lateat perpendamus. Unam esse personam Christum et Ecclesiam plerumque jam diximus, et saepe vox capitis ad vocem corporis, saepe vox corporis ad vocem capitis transit. Qui enim sunt in carne una, nil obstat ut conveniant etiam in voce una. Dicat ergo ex voce capitis de electis suis, dicat Ecclesia: Si quando ridebam ad eos, non credebant. Ridere etenim Dei est sanctorum vias prosequenti favore prosperari, sicut de his quoque per usum dicitur, quos in hoc saeculo felicitatis 638 blandimenta comitantur: Arrisit illis tempus. Unde e contrario, ira appellatur Domini, a bonis actionibus infirmari, sicut scriptum est: Ne quando irascatur Dominus, et pereatis de via justa (Psal. II, 12). Si igitur irasci Dominus perhibetur, cum viam justitiae homines perdunt, recte arridere Dominus dicitur, cum bona nostra opera favor gratiae supernae comitatur. [Res. V.] Sed electi quique quandiu in hac vita sunt, securitatis sibi confidentiam non promittunt. Horis enim omnibus contra tentamenta suspecti, occulti hostis insidias metuunt, qui etiam tentatione cessante, vel

sola graviter suspicione turbantur. Nam saepe multis grave periculum incauta securitas fuit, ut callidi hostis insidias non tentati, sed jam prostrati cognoscerent. Vigilandum quippe semper est, ut mens continue sollicita nunquam relaxetur intentione superna, ne laboriosa deserens, in cogitationibus fluxis, quasi in quibusdam mollibus stramentis jacens, venienti corruptori diabolo mens se resoluta prostituat. Semper vero est ad certamen adversarii erigendus animus; semper contra occultas insidias cautela providenda. Hinc etenim Habacuc propheta ait: Super custodiam meam stabo (Hab. II, 1). Hinc rursum scriptum est: Statue tibi speculam; pone tibi amaritudines, qui evangelizas Sion (Jerem. XXXI, 21). Hinc per Salomonem dicitur: Beatus vir qui semper est pavidus; qui autem mentis est durae, corruet in malum (Prov. XXVIII, 14). Hinc iterum dicit: Uniuscujusque ensis super femur suum, propter timores nocturnos (Cant. III, 8). Nocturni quippe timores sunt insidiae tentationis occultae. Ensis autem super femur est custodia vigilans, carnis illecebras premens. Ne ergo nocturnus timor, id est occulta et repentina tentatio subrepat, semper necesse est ut lemur nostrum superpositus custodiae ensis premat. [Vet. IV.] Sancti etenim viri sic de spe certi sunt, ut tamen semper sint de tentatione suspecti; quippe quibus dicitur: Servite Domino in timore, et exsultate ei cum tremore (Psal. II, 11), ut et de spe exsultatio, et de suspicione nascatur tremor. Quorum voce iterum Psalmista dicit: Laetetur cor meum, ut timeat nomen tuum (Psal. LXXXV, 11). Qua in re notandum quod non ait: Laetetur ut securum sit, sed, Laetetur ut timeat. Meminerunt namque, quamvis eorum actio prosperetur, quia adhuc in hac vita sunt; de qua per eumdem Job dicitur: Tentatio est vita humana super terram (Job. VII, 1). Meminerunt rursum quod scriptum est: Corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem (Sap. IX, 15). Meminerunt et metuunt, et certitudinem sibi in se promittere non praesumunt; sed positi inter gaudium spei, et tentationis metum, confidunt,

et timent; confortantur, et titubant; certiorantur, et suspecti sunt. Bene ergo per vocem electi membri sub figura nostri capitis dicitur: Si quando ridebam ad eos, non credebant, quia Redemptori nostro quasi arridenti non credimus, dum multis jam ejus donis testantibus, et gratiam favoris ejus accipimus, et tamen adhuc sub ejus judicio de nostra infirmitate titubamus.
9. S. Paulus jam ad tertium coelum raptus a timore liber non fuit. Videamus qualiter Paulo et arridetur jam per supernam gratiam, et ipse adhuc quasi non credit per suspicionis metum. Jam e coelo illi Dominus 639 loquens, ejusque interius oculos aperiens, exterius claudens, potentiam suae majestatis ostenderat (Act. IX, 4); jam de eo Ananiae dixerat, Vas electionis mihi est (Ibid. IX, 15), jam ad tertium coelum super se raptus fuerat (II Cor. XII, 2); jam in paradisum ductus arcana verba quae dicere non posset audierat; et tamen adhuc timidus dicit: Castigo corpus meum, et in servitutem redigo, ne forte aliis praedicans ipse reprobus efficiar (I Cor. IX, 27). Ecce arridenti sibi divinae gratiae et jam credit per spem, et necdum tamen credit per securitatem. Nam quia bene haec verba Redemptoris nostri vocibus congruunt, etiam subjuncta testantur, cum dicitur: Et lux vultus mei non cadebat in terram. Quid namque terra, nisi peccator vocatur, cui prima sententia dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19)? Lux ergo vultus Domini in terram nequaquam cadit, quia visionis ejus claritas peccatoribus non apparet. Scriptum namque est: Tollatur impius, ne videat gloriam Dei (Isai. XXVI, 10). Quasi enim lux in terram caderet, si in extremo judicio veniens, claritatem majestatis suae peccatoribus aperiret.
10. Infirmis fortia non praedicanda. Quod si haec verba ex sanctae Ecclesiae voce suscipimus, non incongrue intelligere poterimus lucem vultus ejus in terram non cadere, quia occupatis in terrenis actionibus vetat summa contemplationis suae mysteria praedicare. Dici enim infirmis fortia prohibet, ne dum incapabilia audiunt, praedicationis verbis quibus sublevari debuerant opprimantur. Lux quippe ipsa corporea, quae oculos sanos

irradiat, infirmos obscurat; et dum lippientibus oculis claritati solis intenditur, plerumque eis caecitas ex luce generatur. Sancta itaque Ecclesia oppressa persecutionis tempore, memor autem praeteritae discretionis suae, dicat: Lux vullus mei non cadebat in terram. Sed quia ex ejus capite haec verba intelligere coepimus, in ipso adhuc quod sequitur exsequamur. Nam subditur:

CAPUT IV [Rec. VI].

VERS. 25. Si voluissem ire ad eos, sedebam primus. 11. In carnalium corde Christus ultimus sedet, in corde justorum primus. Quia in corde reproborum priori loco actiones carnis sunt, et posteriori actiones animae, in eorum procul dubio cogitationibus Christus non primus, sed ultimus sedet. Sed electi quique quia ea prae omnibus quae aeterna sunt cogitant, et posteriori cura, ac minima, si qua sunt temporalia disponunt, quibus et magistra voce Veritatis dicitur: Quaerite primum regnum Dei et justitiam ejus, et haec omnia adjicientur vobis (Matth. VI, 33), in eorum corde Dominus primus sedet. Ubi apte praemittitur: Si voluissem ire ad eos. Quia enim, sicut scriptum est (Ephes. I, 5), omnia operatur secundum consilium voluntatis suae; non secundum nostrum meritum, sed quia ipse ita vult, visitatione sua nos Dominus illustrat. Itaque et cum vult venit; et cum venerit, primus sedet, quia et adventus ejus in corde nostro gratuitus est, et appetitus ejus desiderii, in cogitatione nostra aequalis caeteris desideriis non est. Sequitur:

CAPUT V [Rec. VII].

IBID. Cumque sederem quasi rex circumstante exercitu, eram tamen moerentium consolator. 12. Christus in nobis sedens quasi rex moerentes consolatur. Idem praestat Ecclesia. Quasi rex Dominus sedet in corde, quia circumstrepentes regit animorum motus in nostra cogitatione. In mente quippe quam inhabitat, 640 dum torpentia excitat, inquieta frenat, frigida

accendit, accensa moderatur, emollit rigida, fluxa restringit; ex ipsa hac diversitate cogitationum quasi quidam illum exercitus circumstat. Sive certe quasi rex sedet circumstante exercitu, quia praesidentem illum mentibus electorum circumstat turba virtutum. Qui etiam moerentium consolator est, ex ea promissione qua dicit, Beati qui lugent, quoniam ipsi consolabuntur (Matth. V, 5). Et rursus, Iterum videbo vos, et gaudebit cor vestrum; et gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis (Joan. XVI, 22). Ea vero quae de sanctae Ecclesiae capite diximus, nil obstat, si ad vocem quoque ejusdem Ecclesiae referamus. In ea quippe ordo doctorum quasi rex praesidet, quem fidelium suorum turba circumstat. Quae scilicet multitudo fidelium recte quoque exercitus dicitur, quia in procinctu bonorum operum indesinenter quotidie contra tentationum bella praeparatur. [Vet. V.] Corda quoque moerentium sancta Ecclesia consolatur, dum praesentis peregrinationis aerumna afflictas mentes electorum pensat, et has aeternae patriae promissione laetificat. Considerat etiam quod cogitationes fidelium divino sint timore percussae; et quos de Deo conspicit districta audisse ut timeant, agit quoque quatenus et mansuetudinem pietatis ejus audiant ut praesumant.
13. Spem miscet et metum, ne incaute de misericordia confidamus, aut desperate justitiam timeamus. Sic namque sancta Ecclesia fidelibus suis de pietate et justitia Redemptoris in praedicationis serie spem miscet et metum, quatenus nec incaute de misericordia confidant, nec desperate justitiam timeant. Nam verbis sui capitis formidantes refovet, dicens: Nolite timere, pusillus grex, quia complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum (Luc. XII, 32). Atque iterum praesumentes terret cum dicit: Vigilate et orate, ut non intretis in tentationem (Marc. XIV, 38). Rursum formidantes refovet, dicens: Gaudete quia nomina vestra scripta sunt in coelo (Luc. X, 20). Sed in semetipsis praesumentes deterret, cum ait: Videbam satanam sicut fulgur de coelo cadentem (Ibid., X, 18). Formidantes refovet, cum dicit: Oves meae vocem meam audiunt; et ego cognosco eas, et sequuntur me, et ego vitam

aeternam do eis; et non peribunt in aeternum, et non rapiet eas quisquam de manu mea (Joan. X, 27). Sed in semetipsis praesumentes deterret, dicens: Dabunt signa magna et prodigia, ita ut in errorem inducantur, si fieri potest, etiam electi (Matth. XXIV, 24). Formidantes refovet, dicens: Qui perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit (Ibid., 13). Praesumentes deterret, dicens: Cum venerit Filius hominis, putas inveniet fidem in terra (Luc. XVIII, 8)? Metuentes refovet, cum latroni dicit: Hodie mecum eris in paradiso (Luc. XXIII, 43). Sed terret praesumentes, dum Judas ex apostolatus gloria in tartarum labitur. De quo per sententiae definitionem dicitur: Duodecim vos elegi, et unus ex vobis diabolus est (Joan. VI, 70). Formidantem refovet, cum dicit: Si dimiserit vir uxorem suam, et recedens ab eo duxerit virum alterum, nunquid revertetur ad eam ultra? Nunquid non contaminata, et polluta erit mulier illa? Tu autem fornicata es cum amatoribus tuis multis; tamen revertere ad me, dicit Dominus (Jerem. III, 1). Sed praesumentem deterret, cum dicit: Quid clamas super contritione tua? insanabilis est dolor tuus (Jerem. XXX, 12). Formidantem refovet, dicens: Ergo saltem amodo voca me: pater meus, dux 641 virginitatis meae tu es (Jerem. III, 4). Sed praesumentem deterret, dicens, Pater tuus Amorrhaeus, et mater tua Chetea (Ezech. XVI, 3). Formidantem refovet, cum ait: Revertere, adversatrix Israel, et non avertam faciem meam a vobis, quia sanctus ego sum, dicit Dominus, et non irascar in perpetuum (Jerem. III, 12). Sed praesumentem deterret, cum prophetam suum ab intercessione prohibet, dicens: Non assumas pro eis laudem et orationem, quia non exaudiam in tempore clamoris eorum ad me in tempore afflictionis, quia si steterint coram me Moyses et Samuel, non est anima mea ad populum istum (Jerem. VII, 16). [Rec. VIII.] Sancta itaque Ecclesia auditorum suorum mentem et de misericordiae benignitate sublevat, et de judicii districtione perturbat, quatenus in praedicatione sua dum bene utrumque permiscet electi ejus nec de exhibita justitia praesumant, nec de praeterita iniquitate

desperent. 14. In bonis pastoribus sociantur benignitas et auctoritas, misericordia et disciplina. Sed hoc quod ait: Cum sederem quasi rex circumstante exercitu, eram tamen moerentium consolator; sciendum nobis est quod valde lectorem aedificare etiam juxta historiam potest, si perpendat quomodo bonis rectoribus permista sit et regendi auctoritas, et benignitas consolandi. Ait enim: Cumque sederem quasi rex circumstante exercitu, ecce auctoritas regiminis: Eram tamen moerentium consolator; ecce ministerium pietatis. [Vet. VI.] Disciplina enim (Dist. 45, cap. Disciplina) vel misericordia multum destituitur, si una sine altera teneatur. Sed circa subditos suos inesse rectoribus debet et juste consolans misericordia, et pie saeviens disciplina. Hinc est quod semivivi illius vulneribus, qui a Samaritano in stabulum ductus est, et vinum adhibetur et oleum (Luc. X, 33, 34), ut per vinum mordeantur vulnera, per oleum foveantur, quatenus unusquisque qui sanandis vulneribus praeest, in vino morsum districtionis adhibeat, in oleo mollitiem pietatis; per vinum mundentur putrida, per oleum sananda foveantur. Miscenda est ergo lenitas cum severitate, faciendumque quoddam, ex utraque temperamentum, ut neque multa asperitate exulcerentur subditi, neque nimia benignitate solvantur. Hoc nimirum illa tabernaculi arca significat, in qua cum tabulis virga simul, ac manna est (Hebr. IX, 4), quia cum Scripturae sacrae scientia est in boni rectoris pectore, si est virga districtionis, sit et manna dulcedinis. Hinc etiam David ait: Virga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt (Psal. XXII, 4). Virga etenim percutimur, et baculo sustentamur. Si ergo est districtio virgae quae feriat, sit et consolatio baculi quae sustentet. Sit itaque amor, sed non emolliens; sit vigor, sed non exasperans; sit zelus, sed non immoderate saeviens; sit pietas, sed non plus quam expediat parcens. Intueri libet in Moysi pectore misericordiam cum severitate sociatam. Videamus amantem pie, et districte saevientem. Certe cum Israeliticus populus ante Dei oculos pene inveniabilem contraxisset offensam, ita ut ejus rector

audiret: Descende, peccavit populus tuus (Exod. XXXII, 7); ac si ei divina mox diceret: Qui in tali peccato lapsus est, jam meus non est, atque subjungeret: Dimitte me, ut irascatur furor meus contra eos, et deleam eos, faciamque te in gentem magnam; ille semel et iterum pro populo cui praeerat 642 obicem se ad impetum Dei irascentis opponens, ait: Aut dimitte eis hanc noxam; aut si non facis, dele me de libro tuo quem scripsisti (Ibid. XXXII, 32). Pensemus ergo quibus visceribus eumdem populum amavit, pro cujus vita de libro vitae deleri se petiit. Sed tamen iste, qui tanto ejus populi amore constringitur, contra ejus culpas pensemus quanto zelo rectitudinis accendatur. Mox enim ut petitione prima, ne delerentur, culpae veniam obtinuit, ad eumdem populum veniens, ait: Ponat vir gladium suum super femur suum. Ite et redite de porta usque ad portam per medium castrorum, et occidat unusquisque fratrem, et amicum, et proximum suum. Cecideruntque in die illo quasi viginti tria millia hominum (Ibid., XXXII, 27). Ecce qui vitam omnium etiam cum sua morte petiit, paucorum vitam gladio exstinxit. Intus arsit igne amoris, foris accensus est zelo severitatis. Tanta fuit pietas, ut se pro illis coram Domino morti offerre non dubitaret; tanta severitas, ut eos quos divinitus feriri timuerat, ipse judicii gladio feriret. Sic amavit eos quibus praefuit, ut pro eis nec sibi parceret; et tamen delinquentes sic persecutus est, quos amavit, ut eos etiam Domino parcente prosterneret. Utrobique legatus fortis, utrobique mediator admirabilis, causam populi apud Deum precibus, causam Dei apud populum gladiis allegavit. Intus amans, divinae irae supplicando obstitit; foris saeviens, culpam feriendo consumpsit. Succurrit citius omnibus, ostensa morte paucorum. Et idcirco omnipotens Deus fidelem famulum suum citius exaudivit agentem pro populo, quia vidit quid super populum acturus esset ipse pro Deo. In regimine ergo populi utrumque Moyses miscuit, ut nec disciplina deesset misericordiae, nec misericordia disciplinae. Unde hic quoque juxta utramque virtutem dicitur: Cumque sederem quasi rex

circumstante exercitu, eram tamen moerentium consolator. Sedere quippe circumstante exercitu, vigor est ac disciplina regiminis; moerentium vero corda consolari, ministerium pietatis. Sed quia inter haec necesse est ut expositionis sermo ad spiritalem intelligentiam recurrat, sancta Ecclesia, ab adversariis suis extremis temporibus pressa, reminiscitur transacti jura regiminis; reminiscitur et quanta afflictis exhibuerit beneficia pietatis. Cujus videlicet disciplina et misericordia tunc a levibus irridetur. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT VI [Vet.

VII, Rec. IX]. CAP. XXX, VERS. 1. Nunc autem derident me juniores tempore. 15. Omnes haeretici Ecclesia sunt juniores. Omnes haeretici aetati universalis Ecclesiae comparati, juniores tempore congrue vocantur, quia ipsi ab ea, non autem ipsa egressa est ab illis. Unde recte quoque per Joannem dicitur: A nobis exierunt, sed non erant ex nobis; nam si fuissent ex nobis, permansissent utique nobiscum (I Joan. II, 19). Juniores ergo tempore sanctam Ecclesiam irrident, cum hi qui ab ea egressi sunt doctrinae ejus verba despiciunt, de quibus adhuc subditur: IBID. Quorum non dignabar patres ponere cum canibus gregis mei. Quis est grex sanctae Ecclesiae, nisi multitudo fidelium? Vel qui alii hujus gregis canes vocantur, 643 nisi doctores sancti, qui eorumdem fidelium custodes exstiterunt? Qui dum pro Domino suo diurnis nocturnisque vigiliis intenti clama verunt, magnos, ut ita dixerim, latratus praedicationis dederunt. De quibus eidem Ecclesiae per Psalmistam dicitur: Lingua canum tuorum ex inimicis ab ipso (Psal. LXVII, 24). Nonnulli quippe ab idolorum cultibus revocati, facti sunt praedicatores Dei. Lingua ergo canum Ecclesiae ex inimicis prodit, quia conversos gentiles Dominus etiam praedicatores facit. Unde Judaeorum tarditas, qui pro Deo loqui noluerunt, increpante propheta, reprehenditur, qui ait: Canes muti, non valentes latrare (Isai. LVI, 10). 16. Eorum duces, etiam in his quae bene gesta videnter, reprobati. Patres vero haereticorum

dicimus, eos videlicet quos haeresiarchas vocamus; de quorum perversa praedicatione, id est locutionis semine, sequentes sunt populi in errore generati. Sancta ergo Ecclesia cum canibus gregis sui haereticorum patres ponere dedignatur, quia inventores errorum dijudicando respuit, eosque inter veros patres numerare contemnit. Qui etsi quosdam visi sunt a gentilitatis errore revocasse, quorumdam mores ad honesta agenda docuisse, pro eo tamen quod de Deo recta non senserunt, eos cum canibus gregis sui non ponit, quia cum rectis praedicatoribus non ponit, quia cum rectis praedicatoribus non ascribit. Liquet enim quod Arius, Photinus, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Dioscorus, Severus, multique his similes, docendo atque suadendo conati sunt patres videri; sed errores eorum sancta universalis Ecclesia districta severitate dijudicans, eos inter custodes gregis sui non numerat, quos ejusdem gregis unitatem dissipantes damnat. De quibus voce Pauli Ephesiis dicitur: Scio quia post discessum meum ingredientur ad vos lupi graves, non parcentes gregi (Act. XX, 29). Et quia nonnunquam haeretici quanto magis in perfidiae errorem dilabuntur, tanto amplius in exteriori sese operatione custodiunt, ita ut agere prae caeteris magna videantur, sancta universalis Ecclesia cuncta eorum opera despicit, quae ex auctoritate fidei non prodire perpendit. Unde recte quoque beati Job voce subjungitur:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 2. Quorum virtus manuum erat mihi pro nihilo: et vita ipsa putabantur indigni. 17. Quia charitatem Dei et proximi deseruerunt. Quidam haeretici miracula fecerunt. Haeretici vita indigni, quod sub nomine Christi contra Christum militent. Virtus quippe in manu est magnitudo, in operatione. Sed virtus manuum haereticorum sanctae Ecclesiae pro nihilo ducitur, quia nullius esse meriti conspicit, vera fide perdita, quidquid operantur. Charitatem quippe Dei et proximi deserunt, qui et de Deo falsa

sentiunt, et a proximis jurgando dividuntur. Sed virtutem manuum sine charitate testatur praedicator egregius nil valere, qui ait: Si distribuero omnes facultates meas in cibos pauperum, et si tradidero corpus meum ut ardeam, charitatem autem non habeam, nihil mihi prodest (I Cor. XIII, 3). [Vet. VIII.] Nonnunquam vero haeretici signa quoque ac miracula faciunt, sed ut hic praemia afflictionis suae abstinentiaeque recipiant, videlicet laudes, quas quaerunt. Unde et Redemptoris voce dicitur: Multi mihi dicent in illa die: 644 Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in nomine tuo daemonia ejecimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus? Et tunc confitebor illis quia nunquam novi vos; discedite a me qui operamini iniquitatem. Qua nimirum sententia quid datur intelligi, nisi ut hominibus charitatis humilitas, non autem debeant virtutum signa venerari? Unde nunc sancta Ecclesia, etiam si qua fiant haereticorum miracula, despicit, quia haec sanctitatis specimen non esse cognoscit. Probatio quippe sanctitatis non est signa facere, sed unumquemque ut se diligere, de Deo autem vera , de proximo vero meliora quam de semetipso sentire. Nam quia vera virtus in amore est, non autem in ostensione miraculi, veritas demonstrat, quae ait: In hoc cognoscent omnes quia mei discipuli estis, si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem (Joan. XIII, 35). Qui enim non ait: In hoc cognoscetur quia mei discipuli estis, si signa feceritis, sed ait: Si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem, aperte indicat quia veros Dei famulos non miracula, sed sola charitas probat. Testimonium ergo superni discipulatus est donum fraternae dilectionis. Quam videlicet dilectionem, quia omnes haeretici habere refugiunt, dum ab universalis Ecclesiae unitate dividuntur, jure de eis dicitur: Quorum virtus manuum erat mihi pro nihilo. Et quia ad eadem signa quae exhibent nulla humilitate concordant, recte subditur: Et vita ipsa putabantur indigni. Vel certe omnes haereticos sancta Ecclesia vita ipsa fatetur indignos, quia nimirum sub nomine Christi militant contra nomen Christi. De quibus adhuc subditur:

CAPUT VIII [Rec. X].

VERS. 3. Egestate et fame steriles. 18. Curiose divina scrutantes, egestate et sterilitate laborant. Omnes haeretici, dum in sacro eloquio plus secreta Dei student perscrutari quam capiunt, fame sua steriles fiunt. Neque enim ea quaerunt ex quibus semetipsos ad humilitatem erudiant, mores in tranquillitate disponant, patientiam servent, longanimitatem exhibeant; sed ea solummodo quae eos doctos atque loquaces demonstrent, illa scire appetunt ex quibus singulariter eruditi videantur. Plerumque enim audacter de natura divinitatis tractant, cum semetipsos miseri nesciant. Egestate ergo ac fame sua steriles fiunt, quia ea perscrutari desiderant, ex quibus bonae vitae germina non producant. Ultra se quippe sunt quae perscrutantur, dumque ad hoc tendunt quod comprehendere nequeunt, ea cognoscere negligunt ex quibus erudiri potuerant. Quam bene eorum audaciam praedicator egregius refrenat, dicens: Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem (Rom. XII, 3). Hinc Salomon ait: Prudentiae tuae pone modum (Prov. XXIII, 4). Hinc rursum dicit: Mel invenisti, comede quod sufficit tibi, ne forte saturatus evomas illud (Prov. XXV, 16). Dulcedinem quippe spiritalis intelligentiae qui ultra quam capit comedere appetit, etiam quod comederat evomit, quia dum summa intelligere ultra vires quaerit, etiam quae bene intellexerat amittit. Hinc rursum dicit: Sicut qui mel multum comedit, non est ei bonum, sic qui 645 perscrutator est majestatis, opprimetur a gloria (Ibid., 27). Gloria quippe invisibilis conditoris, quae moderate inquisita nos erigit, ultra vires perscrutata premit. Itaque haeretici, quia de sublimi intelligentia quanto amplius repleri ambiunt, tanto amplius inanescunt, bene de eis dicitur: Egestate et fame steriles. Immoderatis namque ausibus cognitionis supernae scientiam quo plus appetunt, plus amittunt. [Vet. IX.] 19. Humiles coelestia intelligunt, aut non intellecta venerantur. At contra, hi qui in sancta Ecclesia veraciter sunt humiles, et veraciter docti, norunt de secretis coelestibus et quaedam

considerata intelligere, et quaedam non intellecta venerari, ut et quae intelligunt veneranter teneant, et quae necdum intelligunt humiliter exspectent. Unde nobis per Moysen dicitur: Ut comedentes agnum, quidquid de eo reliquum fuerit igni comburamus (Exod. XII, 10). Agnum quippe comedimus, cum multa dominicae humanitatis intelligendo recondimus in ventrem mentis. Ex quo quaedam nobis remanent, quae comedi nequeunt, quia multa adhuc de illo restant, quae intelligi nequaquam possunt. Quae tamen igne comburenda sunt, quia ea quae capere de illo non possumus, humiliter sancto Spiritui reservamus. Quae plerumque humilitas ea etiam electorum sensibus aperit, quae ad intelligendum impossibilia esse videbantur. Nam perversae haereticorum mentes dum sibi superbe intellectum tribuunt, quasi certas dare sententias etiam de incognitis praesumunt. Unde fit ut ipsa eos elatio, quae intus apud semetipsos elevat, a veritate foras repellat, vixque in dictis Dei exteriora capiant, qui se secreta spiritalia penetrasse singulariter putabant. Unde hic quoque subditur:

CAPUT IX [Rec. XI].

VERS. 3, 4. Qui rodebant in solitudine, squalentes calamitate et miseria; et mandebant herbas, et arborum cortices. 20. Haeretici non medullam Scripturae sacrae comedunt, sed corticem rodunt. Rodi solet quod comedi non potest. Haeretici autem quia Scripturam sacram intelligere sua virtute moliuntur, eam procul dubio apprehendere nequaquam possunt; quam dum non intelligunt, quasi non edunt. Et quia per supernam gratiam non adjuti hanc comedere nequeunt, quasi quibusdam illam nisibus rodunt. Exterius quippe illam contrectant, cum quidem conantur, sed non ad ejus interiora perveniunt. Qui quia ab universalis Ecclesiae societate disjuncti sunt, non quolibet rodere, sed in solitudine memorantur. Ad quam nimirum solitudinem, quia praedicatores falsi sequaces suos traherent, longe ante Veritas praemonuit, dicens: Si dixerint vobis: Ecce in deserto est, nolite

exire (Matth. XXIV, 26). Qui recte perhibentur calamitate et miseria squalidi, quia et morum sunt pernicie, et sensuum pravitate despecti. Qui herbas quoque et arborum cortices mandunt, quia elationis suae obice repulsi, in sacro eloquio magna et intima percipere nequeunt, sed vix in illo quaedam tenera et exteriora cognoscunt. Per herbas quippe dicta planiora, per arborum cortices Patrum eloquia exteriora signantur. Qui ergo ea scire appetunt ex quibus docti nequaquam sint, sed esse videantur, dum in sacris voluminibus vim charitatis erga Deum ac proximum medullitus non exquirunt, quasi ex herba et cortice pascuntur, quia vel ima, 646 vel exteriora sunt, quae mentes superbientium nutriunt. Vel certe herbas mandere est de Scriptura sacra minima praecepta servare, majora contemnere. Quos bene Veritas increpat, dicens: Vae vobis, Scribae et Pharisaei hypocritae, qui decimatis mentam, et anethum, et cuminum, et reliquistis quae graviora sunt legis (Matth. XXIII, 23). Qui arborum quoque cortices mandunt, quia sunt nonnulli qui in sacris voluminibus solam litterae superficiem venerantur, nec quidquam de spiritali intellectu custodiunt, cum nihil in verbis Dei amplius nisi hoc quod exterius audierint esse suspicantur. Quos tamen in cunctis erroribus suis inanis gloriae appetitus possidet, eosque honoris ambitus captivos tenet, et plerumque per ipsa quae loquuntur nihil aliud quam terrena lucra appetunt. De quibus per Paulum dicitur: Hujusmodi enim Christo Domino non serviunt, sed suo ventri (Rom. XVI, 18). Unde recte quoque subjungitur:

CAPUT X [Rec.

XII] VERS. 4. Et radix juniperorum erat cibus eorum. 21. Sola temporalia lucra quaerunt. Arbor namque juniperi pro foliis punctiones habet. Sic quippe sunt hirsuta quae profert, ut spinis similia contrectantem pungere valeant. Spina vero est omne peccatum, quia dum trahit ad delectationem, quasi pungendo lacerat mentem. Unde justi voce et poenitentis dicitur:

Conversus sum in aerumna mea dum confringitur spina (Psal. XXXI, 4), quia scilicet mens ad lamentum vertitur, ut peccati punctio poenitendo frangatur. In translatione vero alia non confringi, sed configi spina perhibetur, quod videlicet ab eodem sensu non dissonat, quia poenitentis animus ad luctum ducitur, dum perpetrata culpa in memoria fixa retinetur [Vet. X]. Quid ergo per radicem juniperi nisi avaritia designatur, ex qua peccatorum omnium spinae producuntur? De qua per Paulum dicitur: Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas (I Tim. VI, 10). Ipsa quippe latenter oritur in mente, sed punctiones peccatorum omnium patenter producit in opere. Quas videlicet punctiones ab hac radice surgentes, statim praedicator egregius insinuat, cum subdit: Quam quidam appetentes erraverunt a fide, et inseruerunt se doloribus multis (Ibid., 10). Qui enim multos dolores dixit, quasi nascentes innotuit ex hac radice punctiones. In juniperis ergo peccata, in radice vero juniperorum quid aliud quam avaritiam, id est, materiam intelligimus peccatorum? Quia igitur plerumque haeretici sola in verbis suis exteriora lucra sectantur, nec ignorant quia perversa astruunt, sed erroris praedicamenta non deserunt, dum sumptus percipere quasi doctorum volunt, bene de eis sancti viri nunc voce dicitur: Et radix juniperorum erat cibus eorum, quia dum totis mentis suae sensibus avaritiam cogitant, quasi eo alimento vescuntur, de quo nasci procul dubio peccatorum sequentium punctiones solent. Qui si quando in sacro eloquio quaedam quasi prudenter inveniunt, quae dum non intelligunt, pro suis esse assertionibus suspicantur, mox miseris auditoribus suis, quorum non animas, sed substantias appetunt, haec vociferantes apsergunt. Unde congrue subinfertur:

CAPUT XI [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 5. Qui de convallibus ista rapientes, cum singula reperissent, ad ea cum clamore currebant. 22. Obscuras Scripturae sacrae Patrumque sententias ad se detorquent et trahunt. De convallibus illa rapiunt, quia haec

de humilibus dictis Patrum superbo spiritu colligunt. 647 Quae dum pro suis se partibus invenisse gloriantur, ad ea cum clamoribus currunt, quia videlicet omne quod sentiunt appetitu laudis ad aures hominum diffamare conantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XII VERS.

6. In desertis habitabant torrentium, et in cavernis terrae, vel super glaream. 23. Haeretici latebris et instabilitate sunt insignes. Torrentes dicimus rivos qui aquis hiemalibus colliguntur, qui certis etiam temporibus arescunt. Jure itaque inventores perversorum dogmatum torrentes vocantur, quia a calore charitatis frigidi, quasi in torpore temporis hiemalis excrescunt, quia non perpetua plenitudine profluunt, sed Catholicorum allegationibus quasi aestivis solibus exsiccantur. Et quidem inventores perversorum dogmatum contra sanctam Ecclesiam exorti, fervore jam veritatis exstincti sunt, sed tamen eorum discipuli ea quae illi docuerunt tenere ac defendere non desistunt. Hi ergo qui illorum sequuntur errores, in desertis torrentium habitant, id est in eorum praedicatione confidunt, quorum eloquia Catholicorum jam responsione et ratiocinatione siccata sunt. [Vet. XI.] Quid vero aliud cavernas terrae quam occultas haereticorum praedicationes accipimus? Sic enim haeretici inter se clandestinis conventiculis coeunt, ut errori suo reverentiam, quam ex ratione non valent, praebeant ex occultatione, et infirmis animabus pravitatis sermo tanto reverendus appareat, quanto secretus. Unde apud Salomonem mulier ex typo haereseos suadet dicens: Aquae furtivae dulciores sunt, et panis absconditus suavior (Prov. IX, 17). Quae occulta scilicet praedicamenta detestatur Veritas, dicens: Si quis vobis dixerit: Ecce hic est Christus, aut ecce illic, nolite credere. Et rursum: Si dixerint vobis: Ecce in deserto est, nolite exire: ecce in penetralibus, nolite credere. Sicut enim fulgur exit ab Oriente, et paret usque in Occidentem, ita erit et adventus Filii hominis (Matth. XXIV, 23,

26). Hoc itaque illic in penetralibus, quod hic dicitur in cavernis. In cavernis ergo haeretici habitant, quia plerumque errorem suum secretis praedicationibus occultant, ut quo se doctioribus prudentioribusque non indicant, eo ad se vehementius imperitos trahant. Unde bene etiam subinfertur: Vel super glaream. Glaream quippe illos minutissimos lapides dicimus quos aqua fluvialis trahit. Doctores igitur perversorum dogmatum super glaream habitant, quia illas hominum mentes trahunt, quae nulla gravitatis stabilitate solidantur, quas velut de loco semper ad locum flumina errorum ducunt. Unde et praedicator egregius, cum auditores suos non temporaliter duci, sed forti cuperet gravitate solidari, admonuit dicens: Ut jam non simus parvuli fluctuantes, nec circumferamur omni vento doctrinae (Ephes. IV, 14). Sancta itaque Ecclesia ab adversariis ad modicum depressa, cum sibi audaces errantium mentes insultare conspexerit; quae eorum conversatio fuerit, ad memoriam reducit, dicens: In desertis habitabant torrentium, et in cavernis terrae, vel super glaream. Quia enim eorum perversa praedicatio, amisso igne charitatis, ex frigore mentis convaluit, profecto in torrentium desertis habitavit. Quia vero aperta et libera non fuit, in cavernis latuit. Quia autem plebem non fixam, sed mobilem tenuit, non super petram, 648 sed super glaream mansit; de quibus adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XIII [Rec. XIV].

VERS. 7. Qui inter hujuscemodi laetabantur, et esse sub sentibus delicias computabant. 24. In rebus pessimis exsultant et delectantur. Quid nomine sentium nisi eas quas jam supra diximus (Num. 21 hujus lib.) punctiones peccatorum intelligimus? Quia autem perversae mentes gaudent in iniquitatibus, quas flere debuerunt, omnes haeretici tanto se inani laetitia extollunt, quanto magis ad pejora convalescunt; atque esse sub sentibus delicias deputant, quia inde perversam mentem ad gaudium sublevant, unde spinas peccatorum portant. Nam si quando ad errorem suum valuerint

quempiam trahere, sese per laetitiam jactant; atque unde sibi peccata quotidie, etiam alios perdendo, congregant, inde se esse quasi duces ad justitiam exsultant. Bene ergo dicitur: Qui inter hujuscemodi laetabantur, et esse sub sentibus delicias computabant. Trahunt enim quos valent ad perditionem suam, et sub peccatis esse, vel culpis culpas addere credunt se virtutum opulentiam cumulare.

CAPUT XIV [Rec. XV].

VERS. 8. Filii stultorum et ignobilium, et in terra penitus non parentes. 25. Parentes haereticorum stulti et ignobiles. Eorum videlicet filii, qui fuerunt errorum magistri. Filii igitur dicuntur, non de eorum semine, sed de imitatione generati, qui docendo perversa, stulti fuerunt per ignorantiam; vivendo nequiter, ignobiles per actionem. Qui Redemptori nostro nulla sapientiae, nulla vitae cognatione conjuncti sunt. De quo Salomonis voce in laude sanctae Ecclesiae dicitur: Nobilis in portis vir ejus (Prov. XXXI, 23). Hi itaque quia perversa errantium exempla secuti sunt, filii stultorum et ignobilium esse memorantur. Recte autem subjungitur: Et in terra penitus non parentes, quia dum hic videri aliquid appetunt, nimirum a terra viventium exsortes fiunt. 26. Eadem de carnalibus dici possunt quae de haereticis. Sed hoc quod in haereticorum typo diximus, omnino nil obstat si etiam de perversis atque carnalibus, quamvis in recta fide positis, sentiamus. Neque enim sancta electorum Ecclesia solos sibi adversarios deputat qui ab ejus fide positi extra dissentiunt, sed eos quoque qui vitam illius male vivendo interius premunt. Contempletur igitur aerumna irruentis adversitatis afflicta, quomodo prosperitatis suae tempore iniquorum et intra se viventium pravitate gravata sit. Contempletur quod exigentibus meritis quorumdam, non injuste in illa vita turbata sit omnium, et dicat: Qui rodebant in solitudine, squalentes calamitate et miseria. Sicut in prima hujus operis parte praefatus sum, per virtutem contemplationis nonnunquam solet

intelligi solitudo mentis. Sed hoc in loco cum solitudo per objurgationem dicitur, quid aliud quam boni destitutio demonstratur? Unde et sub Judaeae typo Jeremias peccatoris animam deplorat, dicens: Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo (Thren. I, 1)? Sed cum per beatum Job de pravis dicitur: Rodebant in solitudine, libet intueri hoc etiam quod per Psalmistam dictum est: Inimici ejus terram lingent (Psal. LXXI, 9). 649 27. [Vet. XII]. Alii adulatione, alii aperta vi avaritiae student. Duo quippe sunt genera hominum ambitioni suae servientium: unum videlicet quod semper ad avaritiam blandimentis utitur linguae; aliud vero quod aperta vi intendit rapinae. Nam rodimus, cum aliquid exterius forti adnisu atterimus. Lambitur enim quando hoc quod edi facile non potest, impressa linguae lenitate gustatur. Omnes igitur etiam sub specie fidei prave viventes, qui aliena appetunt, sed ea quae appetunt rapere nequaquam possunt, blandis autem sermonibus et quasi mollitie dulcedinis concupita abstrahere conantur, quid aliud quam terram lingunt? quia terrena quaeque quae virtute nequeunt auferre, mollitie linguae moliuntur. Qui vero in hoc mundo aliqua potestate suffulti sunt, et concupiscentes aliena, blandiri quidem ex fraude despiciunt, quia etiam injusto robore possunt implere quod volunt, hi hoc quod appetunt non lambunt, sed rodunt, quoniam propinquorum vitam fortitudine virium velut adnisu dentium demoliuntur. Conspiciat itaque sancta Ecclesia veras divitias aeternae patriae; conspiciat frequentiam supernorum civium; conspiciat in electis suis cultum mentis, et innumerabilium bona virtutum, atque ab eis ad pravorum vitam omni bono destitutam, mentis oculum revocet; et ex illorum comparatione videat qualiter ista cunctis virtutibus sit vacua, quia superna deseruit, et infima concupivit. Videat quomodo plerumque id quod appetit, si fortasse praevalet, etiam violenter rapit. Videat tales quasi intra se positos diu tolerasse, atque ex eorum culpis usque ad bonorum quoque pericula ac detrimenta pervenisse, et dicat: Qui rodebant in solitudine. Ac si aperte

conqueratur, dicens: Aliena etiam violenter rapiendo non roderent, nisi prius ipsi in interioribus suis soli ac vacui a virtutum cultura remanerent. Bene autem eorum qualitatem explicat, dicens: Squalentes calamitate et miseria. Aegra namque caro si studiose curari negligitur, squalore desuper ducto in infirmitate deterius gravatur: et dum calamitati aegritudinis negligentiae miseria additur, gravior molestia oborto squalore toleratur. 28. Naturae necessitatibus plus aequo servientes, ejus infirmitates augemus. Natura igitur humana bene condita, sed ad infirmitatem vitio propriae voluntatis lapsa, in calamitatem cecidit, quia pressa innumeris necessitatibus, nihil in hac vita nisi unde affligeretur invenit. Sed cum eisdem naturae nostrae necessitatibus plerumque plus quam expedit deservimus, mentisque curam negligimus, ex miseria negligentiae infirmitati nostrae addimus squalorem culpae. Necessitates namque naturales hoc habere valde periculosum solent, quod saepe in eis minime discernitur quid circa illas per utilitatis studium et quid per voluptatis vitium agatur. Crebro enim occasione seductionis inventa, dum necessitati debita reddimus, voluptatis vitio deservimus, et infirmitatis velamine ante discretionis oculos excusatio nostra se palliat, ac quasi sub patrocinio explendae utilitatis occultat. Infirmitatem vero naturae nostrae per negligentiam relaxare, nihil est aliud quam calamitati miseriam addere, ac vitiorum squalorem ex eadem miseria multiplicare. Unde sancti viri in omne quod agunt studiosissima intentione discernunt, 650 ne quid plus ab eis naturae suae infirmitas, quam debetur exigat, ne sub necessitatis tegmine in eis vitium voluptatis excrescat. Aliud enim ex infirmitate, aliud ex tentationis suggestione sustinent; et quasi quidam rectissimi arbitri inter necessitatem voluptatemque constituti, hanc consolando sublevant, illam premendo frenant. Unde fit ut et si infirmitatis suae calamitatem tolerent, tamen ad squalorem miseriae per negligentiam non descendant. Hoc ipsum enim esse in calamitate, est necessitates naturae ex carnis adhuc corruptibilis infirmitate sustinere. Quas videlicet necessitates cupiebat

evadere, qui dicebat: De necessitatibus meis eripe me (Psal. XXIV, 17). Sciebat enim plerumque voluptatum culpas ex necessitatum occasione prorumpere; et ne quid sponte illicitum admitteret, hoc ipsum satagebat evelli, quod nolens ex radice tolerabat. 29. Carnales, dum necessitati obsequi videntur, voluptati serviunt. Utinam pravis mors sua sola sufficeret. At contra pravi gaudent in eis corruptionis suae necessitatibus, quia nimirum eas ad usum voluptatum retorquent. Cum enim reficiendis cibo corporibus naturae serviunt, per delectationem gulae in voluptatis ingluvie distenduntur. Cum tegendis membris vestimenta quaerunt, non solum quae tegant, sed etiam quae extollant expetunt; et contra torporem frigoris, non solum quae per pinguedinem muniant, sed etiam quae per mollitiem delectent; non solum quae per mollitiem tactum mulceant, sed etiam quae per colorem oculos seducant. Necessitatis igitur causam in usum voluptatis vertere, quid est aliud quam calamitati suae squalorem miseriae sociare? Pressa itaque tempore adversitatis Ecclesia, reminiscatur eorum ex quorum merito talia sustinet, et dicat: Qui rodebant in solitudine, squalentes calamitate et miseria. Calamitate scilicet non squalerent, si insitis necessitatibus voluptatum miseriam non superadderent. Quas videlicet necessitates ex parentis primi culpa meruimus. Hi vero qui calamitati suae miseriam adjungunt, ex cruciatu poenae ad augmenta prorumpunt culpae. Sed utinam tales cum ad melius permutari despiciunt, ita perversa agerent, ut non ea etiam aliis propinarent. Utinam illis mors sua sola sufficeret, et non virulentis persuasionibus alienam etiam vitam necarent. Invident enim alios esse quod non sunt, dolent alios adipisci quod perdunt. Nam si qua forte in aliorum actibus exoriri bona conspiciunt, mox ea manu pestiferae exprobrationis evellunt. Unde et sequitur [Vet. XIII]: Et mandebant herbas, et arborum cortices. 30. Incipientes et in bono proficientes pervertere conantur. Quid enim per herbas nisi tenera ac terrae proxima bene inchoantium vita, et quid per arborum cortices nisi exteriora opera eorum

qui jam sublimia appetunt designantur? Pravi namque cum recta incipientes aspiciunt, aut irridendo, aut quasi consulendo contradicunt. Cum vero jam quosdam pensant ad summa proficere, quia eorum profectus funditus dissipare nequeunt, a quibusdam illos suis operibus divertunt. Herbas itaque eis et arborum cortices mandere, est vel studia bene inchoantium, vel operationes quorumdam jam more arborum ad superiora tendentium pestiferis persuasionibus quasi quibusdam malitiae suae dentibus 651 dissipare. Herbas mandunt reprobi cum infirmorum initia irridendo consumunt. Arborum quoque cortices mandunt cum manu perversi consilii a vita recte crescentium tegmen bonorum operum subtrahunt. Hos autem in quibusdam actibus velut arbores exspoliant; illos vero velut herbas, quia despicientes trahunt, quasi quae calcant comedunt. Quorumdam jam fortitudinem in alta surgentem ex parte demoliuntur; quorumdam vero teneritudinem et adhuc in imis positam penitus conterunt. Dicat igitur: Mandebant herbas, et arborum cortices, quia pravis irrisionibus in nonnullis exteriora opera, in nonnullis autem per spem virentia corda dissipabant. 31. Aliqui sola virtutis specie, quasi cortice vescuntur. Vel certe herbas mandere est, levia quaedam ac tenera de antiquis patribus imitari. Arborum vero cortices edere est eorum opera superficie tenus agere, sed intentionem rectam in eisdem operibus non tenere. Sunt enim nonnulli, qui dum praesentis mundi gloriam ejusdem mundi actionibus adipisci non possunt, speciem sanctitatis appetunt, habitum venerationis sumunt, imitatores antiquorum patrum videri concupiscunt, et quaedam quidem parva ac levia peragunt, sed eorum fortia, et quae ex solius charitatis radice prodeunt, imitari contemnunt. Hi videlicet herbas edunt, quia magna negligunt, et vilibus satiantur. Plerumque tamen etiam quaedam quasi robustiora opera exercent, sed intentionem rectam in eisdem operibus non tenent. Quibus profecto arborum cortices mandere est exteriores electorum actus assumere, et intentionem bonam in bonis actibus non habere. Dum enim pro humana

laude recta opera exquirunt, sed imitari cor recte operantium negligunt, ex solis arborum corticibus replentur. Toto namque desiderio praesentis vitae gloriam, vel abundantiam quaerunt. Unde et recte subjungitur: Et radix juniperorum erat cibus eorum. 32. Prava actio quae delectat in culpa, pungit in poena. Intus enim quamvis per fidem positi, dum plerumque avaritiae cogitationibus serviunt, quasi illud comedunt, unde in extremo vitae suppliciorum aspera proferuntur. Qui dum frugem divini eloquii non concupiscunt, sed ad rerum temporalium ambitum serviunt, nequaquam pane tritici, sed radice juniperi satiantur. Ipsa quippe eos ab imis atque infimis oborta occupant, quae illos more juniperi postmodum ex duritia retributionum velut ex asperitate foliorum pungant. Contemnentes namque Deum hic, minime sentiunt quantum sit mali quod agunt. Adhuc enim juniperi radicem comedunt, sed hujus radicis quam sint rami asperi non attendunt, quia nimirum prava actio modo quasi ex radice delectat in culpa, sed postmodum quasi ex ramis pungit in poena. Ubi et bene subjungitur: Qui de convallibus ista rapientes, cum singula reperissent, ad ea cum clamore currebant. 33. In praesentis vitae convalle, magno clamore pro vili stipe saepe litigatur. In comparatione videlicet supernorum, omnis praesens vita convallis est. Hi autem quia sublimia montium, id est fortia acta sanctorum contemplari nesciunt, semper in oblectatione infima quasi in convallibus conversantur et dum quodlibet lucrum vel parvi stipendii inveniunt, cum 652 clamore currunt, quia hoc abstrahere etiam jurgando moliuntur. In convalle enim repertis singulis cum clamore currere, est subortis causarum occasionibus etiam pro parva stipe litigare. Plerumque autem quem sanctum bona actio ostentat, oborta terreni commodi occasio examinat. Videas namque nonnullos jam sublimia agere, jam in abstinentiae, jam in doctrinae opere patrum praecedentium exempla sectari; sed cum repente praesentis vitae lucrum quasi fructum convallis invenerint, ad hoc cum clamore currunt, quia dirupta ad illud superductae sanctitatis

tranquillitate prosiliunt. [Vet. XIV]. 34. Multi virtutis praemium, non virtutem quaerunt. Possunt quoque per herbas atque arborum cortices non solum; ut praedictum est, bonorum opera, sed in hac vita consolationes ac prosperitates intelligi. Saepe enim omnipotens Deus electos suos cum donis interioribus ditat, exterioribus etiam honoribus sublevat. Cumque eos praeferendo caeteris honorabiles reddit, latius imitabiles ostendit; et nonnunquam pravi eorum quidem vitam despiciunt, sed felicitatem in hoc mundo assequi concupiscunt. Quia igitur blandimenta hic transitoriae consolationis quaerunt, herbas comedunt, quia in cogitationibus suis exteriorem eorum gloriam meditantur, arborum cortices mandunt. Et quoniam in his omnibus soli avaritiae tota intentione deserviunt, radice juniperi replentur. Quae cuncta de convallibus rapiunt, quia ex amore hujus infimae et corruptibilis vitae immensis cupiditatibus inardescunt. Et cum singula reperiunt, ad ea cum clamoribus currunt, quia videlicet sanctorum patrum, quorum merita adipisci non quaerunt, loca atque regimina apprehendere satagunt; et cum tranquille nequeunt haec plerumque assequi, etiam dirupta concordiae pace moliuntur. 35. Quae justi despiciunt, ea maxime concupiscunt. Qui pro eo quod longe a patrum praecedentium actione disjuncti sunt, recte subjungitur: In desertis habitabant torrentium, et in cavernis terrae, vel super glaream. In bona etenim parte recte torrentes, sanctos praedicatores accipimus, qui dum in praesenti vita divinis nobis eloquiis influunt, aquarum multitudine quasi in hieme colliguntur. Qui et aestivo sole adveniente se subtrahunt, quia cum aeternae patriae lux emicuerit, praedicare cessabunt. Horum torrentium deserta sunt vitae temporalis commoda. Ea namque deserunt, et ad lucra se coelestia adipiscenda convertunt. Cuncta autem haec torrens ille reliquerat, qui dicebat: Propter quem omnia detrimentum feci, et arbitror ut stercora (Phil. III, 8). Sed quia pravorum mentes ea in hac vita adipisci appetunt, quae despicientes justi derelinquunt, in desertis torrentium habitare referuntur.

Illa enim quae sanctis indigna sunt, ipsi percipere pro magno concupiscunt. Cavernae autem terrae sunt cogitationes pravae, in quibus se ab humanis oculis abscondunt. Pravi quippe ut sunt ab hominibus videri refugiunt, dumque aliud quam sunt simulant, sese in conscientiae suae latibulis quasi in terrae cavernis occultant. Qui cuncta haec non agerent, nisi de aeterna et solida vita desperarent, nisi in hoc incerto temporalitatis animum figerent. Unde bene subditur: Vel super glaream. 653 36. Fluxis inhaerentes, ad ima devolvuntur. Glarea namque est vita praesens, quae indesinenter ad terminum suum ipso defectu mutabilitatis, quasi impulsu fluminis ducitur. Super glaream itaque habitare, et fluxui vitae praesentis inhaerere, et ibi intentionem ponere, ubi gressum nequeat fixe stando solidare. Est aliud in glarea quod nequaquam debeat tacendo praeteriri, quia cum pes in ejus superficie ponitur, ipsa ejus volubilitate labitur, atque ad ima devolvitur. Cui videlicet rei in nullo discrepat vita pravorum, quia cum pro amore mundi aliqua student licita atque honesta agere, quasi planum in superficie pedem ponunt; sed repente pes ad ima labitur, quia eorum actio dum plura semper appetit, usque ad iniqua et illicita descendit. Cum ergo sancta Ecclesia hujus temporis contraria tolerat, ad vitam carnalium, quos adversarios sibi etiam in prosperis sustinuit, per memoriam recurrat, et quorum meritis haec patiatur agnoscat, dicens: In desertis habitabant torrentium, et in cavernis terrae, vel super glaream. Quia enim patrum doctrina destituti sunt, in desertis torrentium, quia in occultis se cogitationibus tegunt, in cavernis terrae, quia vero in praesentis saeculi mobilitate intentionem suam figere appetunt, super glaream habitare referuntur. Sed utinam tales, quia peccata nolunt impugnare tentantia, flendo tergerent vel commissa! utinam mala sua saltem perpetrata cognoscerent, atque sterili ficulneae cophinum stercoris, id est infructuosae menti pinguedinem lamentationis admoverent! [Vet. XV]. 37. Malum quod agimus oculo mentis obicem ponit. Sed habet hoc plerumque humanus animus proprium, quod mox ut in culpam labitur, a sui

adhuc longius cognitione separetur. Hoc ipsum namque malum quod agit menti se obicem ante oculum rationis interserit. Unde fit ut anima prius voluntariis tenebris obsessa postmodum bonum jam nec quod quaerat agnoscat. Quanto enim magis malis adhaeret, tanto minus intelligit bona quae perdit. Lux quippe veritatis quia subtiliter reproborum culpas examinat, quo habita negligitur, eo permittit districtius judicans, ut nec amissa requiratur; et cum ab actu repellitur, fugit a sensu, ut cujus quasi facies in opere contemnitur, ejus per recordationem jam nec terga videantur. Hinc itaque est quod reprobi subjecti flendis sceleribus gaudent, de quibus per Salomonem dicitur: Qui laetantur cum malefecerint, et exsultant in rebus pessimis (Prov. II, 14). Hinc est quod lacrymarum causas tripudiantes peragunt; hinc est quod mortis suae negotium ridentes exsequuntur. Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XV [Rec. XVI].

VERS. 7. Qui inter hujuscemodi laetabantur, et esse sub sentibus delicias computabant. 38. In transitoriis laetantes, gravibus curis affliguntur. Inter hujuscemodi laetantur, quia nimirum attendunt transitoria quae percipiunt, et intueri negligunt permanentia bona quae perdunt. Cumque amore temporalium flagrant, veram laetitiam volentes ignorant. Quam si studiose cognoscere quaererent, quam flenda sint gaudia quae appetunt viderent. Sed dum meliora scire contemnunt, sola sibi velut summa eligunt, quae visibiliter oculis fugaci seductione blandiuntur. Visibilia scilicet sequentes cor figunt; et tanto extrinsecus 654 gaudent, quanto recordationem sui intrinsecus non habent. Miscentur tamen eorum gaudiis plerumque tribulationes, atque ex rebus ipsis ex quibus superbiunt flagellantur. Neque enim sine gravibus curarum molestiis possunt temporalia quae appetunt, vel non habita quaerere, vel quaesita servare, inter aequales praestantiorem gloriam appetere, a minoribus reverentiam plus quam oportet exigere, et

minus quam debent eamdem majoribus exhibere; plerumque potentiam per impotentiam ostendere; semper prava agere, et tamen ne opinionem pravitatis habeant, formidolose custodire. Haec profecto omnia miseros pungunt, sed easdem punctiones ipso rerum temporalium victi amore non sentiunt. Unde et recte nunc dicitur: Et esse sub sentibus delicias computabant, quia peccatorum delectationibus pressi, ex affectu vitae praesentis quam sint aspera quae patiuntur ignorant. 39. Delicias aestimant manere sub sentibus. Laetantur itaque, sed sub sentibus, quia rebus quidem temporalibus gaudent, sed tamen dum dispensare sine tribulatione eadem temporalia non valent, ea cura punguntur miseri qua premuntur. Manent sub sentibus, et hoc ipsum delicias aestimant, quia et dura quidem ex praesentis vitae amore tolerant, et tamen affectu nimiae cupiditatis obligati, laborem ejusdem tolerantiae voluptatem putant. Unde recte Jeremias totius in se humanae conversationis speciem sumens, per lamentum queritur, dicens: Inebriavit me absynthio (Thren. III, 15). Ut enim in superiori jam parte praediximus (Lib. VII, n. 25), ebrius quisque quod patitur nescit. Qui vero absynthio debriatur, et hoc quod sumpsit amarum est, et tamen non intelligit eamdem amaritudinem qua repletur. Humanum igitur genus recto Dei judicio in voluptatibus suis sibi dimissum, atque per easdem voluptates spontaneis tribulationibus traditum, absynthio est ebrium, quia et amara sunt quae pro hujus vitae amore tolerat, et tamen eamdem amaritudinem caecitate cupiditatis quasi insensibilitate ebrietatis ignorat. Mundi enim gloriam sitiens, dum multas pro ea tribulationes reperit, amarum est quod bibit. Sed quia hoc nimis inhianter sumpsit, ejusdem amaritudinis malum discernere jam prae ipsa ebrietate non sufficit. [Vet. XVI.] Amant enim perversi homines pro hujus mundi gloria etiam tribulationes, cunctisque pro ea sudoribus libenter serviunt, et gravium laborum jugo devotissime colla submittunt. Quod bene sub Ephraïm specie Osee prophetante describitur, qui ait: Ephraim vitula docta diligere trituram (Osee X, 11). Vitula enim

triturae laboribus assueta, relaxata plerumque ad eumdem laboris usum etiam non compulsa revertitur. Ita pravorum mens hujus mundi servitiis dedita, et rerum temporalium fatigationibus assueta, etiamsi sibi libere vacare liceat, subesse tamen terrenis laboribus festinat, et usum miserae conversationis trituram laboris quaerit, ut a jugo mundanae servitutis cessare non libeat, etiam si liceat. Quod videlicet jugum Dominus a discipulorum cervice solvebat, cum dixit: Attendite vobis, ne forte graventur corda vestra in crapula et ebrietate (Luc. XXI, 34), illico adjunxit: Et in curis hujus vitae; et superveniat in vos repentina dies illa. Et rursus: Venite ad 655 me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos. Tollite jugum meum super vos, et discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde (Matth. XI, 28). Quid est enim Domino mitem se in magisterio atque humilem dicere, nisi relictis exercendae elationis difficultatibus plana quaedam bene vivendi itinera demonstrare? Sed quia pravorum mentes plus per aspera elationis quam per blanda humilitatis ac mansuetudinis delectantur, esse sub sentibus delicias deputant. Dura enim prae amore saeculi quasi quaedam mollia ac delectabilia ferre parati sunt, dum in hac vita rerum culmina apprehendere conantur. 40. Asperitate laboris magis, quam quietis dulcedine, delectantur. Cessationem Dominus a mundi laboribus imperat, sanctae quietis dulcedinem persuadet; et tamen vaesana iniquorum mens plus se assequi aspera carnaliter quam tenere blanda spiritualiter gaudet, plus acerbitate fatigationis quam quietis dulcedine pascitur. Quod aperte in semetipso nobis Israeliticus populus ostendit (Exod. XVI, 3), qui dum refectionem mannae desuper perciperet, ab Aegypto ollas carnium, pepones, porros, cepasque concupivit. Quid enim signatur in manna, nisi esca gratiae, suave sapiens, ad refectionem interioris vitae bene vacantibus desuper data? Et quid per ollas carnium, nisi carnalia opera, vix tribulationum laboribus quasi ignibus excoquenda? Quid per pepones, nisi terrenae dulcedines? Quid per porros ac cepas exprimitur,

quae plerumque qui comedunt, lacrymas emittunt, nisi difficultas vitae praesentis, quae a dilectoribus suis et non sine luctu agitur, et tamen cum lacrymis amatur? Manna igitur deserentes, cum peponibus ac carnibus porros cepasque quaesierunt, quia videlicet perversae mentes dulcia per gratiam quietis dona despiciunt, et pro carnalibus voluptatibus laboriosa hujus vitae itinera, etiam lacrymis plena, concupiscunt; contemnunt habere ubi spiritualiter gaudeant, et desideranter appetunt, ubi et carnaliter gemant. Horum itaque vecordiam veridica voce Job reprehendat, quia nimirum perverso judicio, perturbata tranquillis, dura lenibus, aspera mitibus, transitoria aeternis, suspecta securis anteponunt. Horum vecordiae sancta Ecclesia recordetur, cum saevis extrinsecus adversitatibus premitur, quos intra se velut fideles continuit, sed eorum vitam adversantem fidei diu toleravit, et dicat: Qui inter hujuscemodi laetabantur, et esse sub sentibus delicias computabant, quia nimirum mala quae agunt ex iniquorum praecedentium pravitate didicerunt. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVI [Vet. XVII].

VERS. 8. Filii stultorum et ignobilium. 41. Duplex est stultitia; alia summae nobilitati conjuncta. Sciendum nobis est quod alii intra sanctam Ecclesiam vocantur stulti, sed tamen nobiles, alii vero sunt stulti et ignobiles. Stulti namque dicuntur, sed esse ignobiles nequeunt, qui carnis prudentiam contemnentes, profuturam sibi stultitiam appetunt, et ad novitatem internae prolis virtutis nobilitate sublevantur; qui stultam sapientiam mundi despiciunt, et sapientem Dei stultitiam concupiscunt. Scriptum quippe est: 656 Quod stultum est Dei, sapientius est hominibus (I Cor. I, 25). Hanc nos stultitiam Paulus comprehendere admonet, dicens: Si quis videtur inter vos sapiens esse in hoc saeculo, stultus fiat, ut sit sapiens (Ibid., III, 18). Hanc stultitiam qui perfecte secuti sunt, voce sapientiae audire meruerunt: Vos qui secuti estis me, in regeneratione cum sederit Filius hominis in sede

majestatis suae, sedebitis et vos super duodecim thronos, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel (Matth. XIX, 28). Ecce relinquentes temporalia gloriam potestatis aeternae mercati sunt. Quid itaque in hoc mundo stultius quam sua deserere? Et quid in aeternitate nobilius quam cum Deo judices venire? Horum scilicet judicum nobilitas Salomone attestante memoratur, cum hoc quod jam praefatus sum dicitur: Nobilis in portis vir ejus, quando sederit cum senatoribus terrae (Prov. XXXI, 23). Valde quippe nobiles considerat, quos senatores vocat. Hanc in se nobilitatem Paulus aspexerat, cum cognationi conditoris per spiritum junctus dicebat: Genus ergo cum simus Dei, non debemus aestimare auro, vel argento aut lapidi sculpturae artis, et cogitationi hominis divinum esse simile (Act. XVII, 29). Genus videlicet Dei dicimur, non ex ejus natura editi, sed per spiritum illius, et voluntarie conditi, et adoptive recreati. Tanto ergo ad hanc nobilitatem quisque erigitur, quanto per acceptam imaginem ad similitudinem illius ex imitatione renovatur. 42. Alia ignobilis, qua superna sapientia relinquitur. At contra sunt stulti et ignobiles, qui dum supernam sapientiam, semetipsos sequentes, fugiunt, in sua ignorantia quasi in abjectae prolis vilitate sopiuntur. Quo enim id ad quod conditi sunt, non intelligunt, eo etiam cognationem acceptae per imaginem generositatis perdunt. Stulti sunt ergo et ignobiles, quos ab aeternae haereditatis consortio repellit servitus mentis. Scriptum quippe est: Omnis qui facit peccatum, servus est peccati (Joan. VIII, 34). Et voce egregii praedicatoris dicitur: Sapientia hujus mundi, stultitia est apud Deum (I Cor. III, 19). Qui ergo dum terrena saperent ab intima generositate repulsi sunt, stulti simul et ignobiles fuerunt. Quorum dum plerique actus imitantur, filii stultorum et ignobilium fiunt; dumque eos sensibus ac moribus sequuntur, et stulti sunt, quia veram sapientiam non intelligunt, et ignobiles, quia nulla spiritus libertate renovantur. Sed hi quamvis iniquorum actus exerceant, plerumque tamen in hac vita occupant loca justorum, atque eorum se filios aestimant quorum per honoris

concupiscentiam officia exterius administrant. Quos sancta correptio ad cognitionem sui revocat, ut, videlicet, in pravis desideriis positi, quorum sint filii attendant. Non enim eorum sunt filii quorum loca tenent, sed quorum opera exercent. Dicatur igitur recte: Filii stultorum et ignobilium. Ubi apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVII.

IBID. Et in terra penitus non parentes. 43. Stulti sunt et ignobiles, quos Deus nescire profitetur. Multi veritatem cognoscendo premunt, non tangunt. Sicut enim plerique in terra sunt, et a cognitione hominum abjectione vilitatis suae quasi quadam superductione velaminis absconduntur, ita sunt nonnulli in Ecclesia qui dum se abjectioni pravorum operum subdunt, divino conspectui noti non sunt. Quibus et quandoque dicendum est: Amen dico vobis, nescio vos (Matth. XXV, 12). Esse ergo in terra et apparere, 657 est in fide recta per virtutem operis nobilitatem mentis ostendere. Esse vero in terra et penitus non apparere, et in Ecclesia quidem fide consistere, sed nil dignum fidei in opere demonstrare. Hi itaque intra sanctam Ecclesiam divinitatis oculis et videntur per judicium, et tamen per bonae vitae meritum non videntur, quia ea quae confitendo tenent, vivendo non exhibent. De quibus Paulus dicit: Confitentur se nosse Deum, factis autem negant (Tit. I, 16). Hi in sancta Ecclesia fidem quam tenere se asserunt premunt potius quam venerantur, dum sua magis illius nomine quam ejus adipisci lucra concupiscunt. [Vet. XVIII]. Electi autem dum servare fidei meritum rectis operibus curant, ad auctoris sui notitiam etiam inter reproborum tumultus appropinquant. Quod bene in Evangelio muliere sanguinis fluxu laborante signatum est, de qua cum Dominus diceret: Quis me tetigit (Luc. VIII, 45)? Petrus ratiocinando respondit: Turbae te comprimunt et affligunt, et dicis: Quis me tetigit? Sed audire causas verae rationis meruit, cum ei Dominus dixit: Tetigit me aliquis, nam et ego novi virtutem exisse de me. Ecce turbae

premebant Dominum, sed tamen sola tetigit quae ad illum humiliter venit, quia nimirum multi etiam in sancta Ecclesia reprobi veritatem cognoscendo premunt, quam bene vivendo tangere negligunt. Premunt, et longe sunt, quia divinam notitiam professionibus sequuntur, moribus fugiunt. Premunt, inquam, sed longe sunt, quia eidem fidei, quam loquendo astruunt, agendo contradicunt. Sicut ergo hoc testimonio docemur quia nonnulli Dominum tangendo non tangunt, ita nonnulli non videntur a Domino etiam cum videntur, quia occultis ejus obtutibus et ad damnationis supplicium apparent, et ad electionis meritum non apparent. Dicatur igitur recte: Et in terra penitus non parentes, quia etsi illos specie tenus Ecclesia tenuit, eos tamen intra illam conditor quasi non vidit quos ignoravit. Qui tranquillitatis tempore idcirco fidem verbo tenus tenent, quia eamdem fidem florere generaliter vident. Sed cum repentina contra illam procella adversitatis oboritur, mox ab ea negatione publica disjunguntur, et quidquid prius quasi venerantes tenuerant, contra hoc postmodum deridentes pugnant. Unde apte subditur:

CAPUT XVIII [Res. XVII].

VERS. 9. Nunc in eorum canticum versus sum, et factus sum eis proverbium. 44. Iniquis crescentibus, fides in opprobrium, et veritas in crimen erit. Quibus videlicet verbis illud sanctae Ecclesiae tempus exprimitur, quo publice a reprobis irridetur, quando iniquis crescentibus, in opprobrium fides, et veritas erit in crimen. Tanto quippe despectior unusquisque erit, quanto justior esse potuerit; tanto abominabilis, quanto laudabilis. Sancta itaque electorum Ecclesia afflictionis tempore proverbium pravis efficitur, quia cum bonos mori per tormenta conspiciunt, ab eis similitudinem maledictionis sumunt. Quo enim transitoriam mortem vident, sed permanentem vitam non vident; tanto magis deridendo mala praesentia fugiunt, quanto per intellectum intrisecus ad bona permanentia

non pertingunt. Sed ea quae subjuncta sunt, quia obscurioribus sententiis 658 implicata non sunt, debemus sub brevitate transcurrere, ut ad ea in quibus laborandum est valeamus citius pervenire. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 10. Abominantur me, et longe fugiunt a me, et faciem meam conspuere non verentur. 45. Iniquorum irrisionibus non dejicitur sed erigitur et crescit Ecclesia. Longe a sancta Ecclesia fugiunt omnes iniqui non passibus gresuum, sed qualitatibus morum; longe fugiunt non loco, sed merito; dum, crescente superbia, aperta eam exprobratione contemnunt. Faciem namque ejus conspuere est non tantum in absentia bonis detrahere, sed unumquemque justum etiam in praesentia confutare. Quos tunc pravi dum aperte irridendo despiciunt, in eorum contumeliis fluxa verba quasi defluentes salivas emittunt. [Vet. XIX.] Sed scit sancta Ecclesia in passionibus crescere, atque inter opprobria honorabilem vitam tenere; scit nec de adversis dejici, nec de prosperis gloriari; novit contra prospera mentem suam in dejectione sternere, novit contra adversa animum ad spem superni culminis exaltare; scit bona sua misericordiae Redemptoris, scit mala sua justitiae tribuere judicis; quod et bona illo largiente habeat, et mala illo permittente patiatur. Unde et mox de Domino subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 11. Pharetram enim suam aperuit, et afflixit me. 46. Deo permittente, licet occulto judicio, mala se perpeti novit. Quid per pharetram Dei, nisi occultum consilium designatur? Sagittam vero de pharetra Dominus jacit, quando de occulto consilio apertam sententiam emittit. Quia enim flagellatur quisque, cognoscimus; sed qua ex causa flagellum veniat, ignoramus. Cum vero post flagella vitae correctio sequitur, etiam ipsa consilii virtus aperitur. Pharetra igitur clausa est consilium occultum. Sed

aperta pharetra affligimur, quando per id quod post flagellum sequitur quo consilio flagellamur videmus. Cum peccata Dominus videt, et tamen manum ad vindictam non commovet, quasi clausam pharetram tenet, sed feriendo indicat quantum ei in nobis displicuit hoc quod diu videndo toleravit. Sancta itaque electorum Ecclesia tribulationibus pressa dicat: Pharetram enim suam aperuit, et afflixit me. Quae adversariorum voces insolentes sustinens, dum cernit quod ejus praedicatio non admittitur, quorumdam duritiam deserens, praedicationis suae verba moderatur. Perpendens etenim persecutores suos ad exhortationis suae vocem deteriores existere, magis eligit tacere. Cumque indignos qui audiant conspicit, praedicationem suam obducto silentio astringit. Unde apte subjungit:

CAPUT XXI.

IBID. Et frenum posuit in os meum. 47. A praedicatione feriendum est, cum ii qui verbum Dei excipiunt, inde pejores fiunt. Frenum sibi apud quosdam positum cognoverant, qui dicebant: Vobis oportebat primum loqui verbum Dei, sed quoniam repellitis illud, et indignos vos judicatis aeternae vitae, ecce convertimur ad gentes (Act. XIII, 46). Frenum silentii sibi superimpositum sancti viri apud dura reproborum corda conspiciunt, qui per Prophetam dicunt: Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra aliena (Psal. CXXXVI, 4)? Frenum poni etiam Paulus admonuit, qui discipulo praecepit, dicens: Haereticum post primam et secundam correptionem devita, sciens quia subversus est qui ejusmodi est, et delinquit proprio judicio condemnatus (Tit. III, 10). Sancti quippe doctores 659 plerumque alta consideratione resistentium corda conspiciunt, et dum ea derelicta divinitus vident, afflicti gementesque conticescunt. An non aliquando frenum Salomon doctoribus imponit, qui dicit: Noli arguere derisorem, ne oderit te (Prov. IX, 8). Sed si ab increpatione idcirco reticemus, quia contra

nos insurgere derisoris odia formidamus, non jam lucra Dei, sed nostra quaerimus. Qua in re sciendum est quod nonnunquam cum redarguuntur pravi, deteriores existunt. Ipsis ergo et non nobis parcimus, si ab eorum redargutione pro eorum amore cessamus. Unde necesse est ut aliquando toleremus tacendo quod sunt, quatenus in nobis discant bene vivendo quod non sunt. Quia igitur sancta Ecclesia, quae verba sua semper per charitatem exerit, ea etiam nonnunquam ex charitate restringit, dicat: Frenum posuit in os meum. Ac si aperte fateatur, dicens: Quia in quibusdam provectum non vidi praedicationis, ab eis impetum temperavi, ut vitam meam saltem per patientiam discerent, cum verba mea admittere per oblatam praedicationem nollent. [Vet. XX.] Sed plus nobis hoc plerumque in tribulationibus dolet, quod eas ab illis patimur, in quibus germano amore confidebamus. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXII [Rec. XVII].

VERS. 12. Ad dextram orientis calamitates meae illico surrexerunt. 48. Pro sinistra gentiles, pro dextera Judaei intelligendi. Ad sinistram quippe calamitates surgerent, si a quibuslibet extra religionem positis, et aperte Christum negantibus, persecutionis adversa sustineret. Cum vero ab aliquibus quasi fidelibus tentationem cruciamentorum patitur, quasi ad dexteram illi calamitates oriuntur, quia hi qui sub Christi nomine militant Christi in ea nomen impugnant. Ipso enim locutionis usu pro dextro habere dicimus quod pro magno pensamus, pro sinistro vero id quod despicimus; quod Zacharias aperte insinuat, dicens: Et ostendit mihi Jesum sacerdotem magnum, stantem coram angelo Domini, et Satan stabat a dextris ejus, ut adversaretur ei (Zach. III, 1). Qui ut patentius hoc quod praemisit ostenderet, secutus adjunxit: Et dixit Dominus ad Satan: Increpet Dominus in te, Satan, qui elegit Jerusalem. Nunquid non est iste torris erutus de igne? Et Jesus indutus erat vestibus sordidis (Ibid., 2). Sordidis enim vestibus

Jesus indutus erat, quia quamvis alienus ab omni peccato, tamen in similitudinem venit carnis peccati. Cui venienti Satan a dextris stetit. Pro magno namque Dominus Judaicum populum, et pro nihilo gentes habere videbatur. Sed postquam incarnatus apparuit, gentilitas quae pro sinistro habita fuerat credidit; Judaicus vero populus ad perfidiam declinavit. Satan ergo illi a dextris stetit, quia illum ei populum rapuit, qui dudum dilectus fuit. Sed quia ipse Judaicus populus, modo perditus, in fine est quandoque crediturus, propheta testante, qui ait: Reliquiae salvae fient (Isa. X, 21), Satan a dextris suis Dominus removet, dicens: Increpet Dominus in te, Satan (Zach. III, 1). Et ejusdem populi liberationem indicans, subdit: Quia eligit Jerusalem (Ibid., 2). Qui nimirum populus, quia ad gehennae incendia, perfidia duce, defluebat, sed 660 dum ad fidem reducitur ab eodem aeterni ignis incendio liberatur, statim de eo illic subditur: Nunquid non est iste torris erutus de igne? 49. Et Ecclesiae fidem sectantes, a quibus ipsa aliquando vim patitur. Sicut ergo illic pro dextra plebs Judaica, ita hoc in loco dextrae vocabulo fidelis populus sanctae Ecclesiae designatur. Unde et venturus judex haedos ad sinistram, agnos ad dexteram ponet (Matth. XXV, 33). Sed cum sanctam Ecclesiam adversitatis tempore ipsi quoque lacessunt qui fideles esse videbantur, ei procul dubio calamitates ad dextram surgunt. [Vet. XXI.] Bene autem haec ipsa dextra Orientis vocatur. De ipso quippe ejusdem capite scriptum est: Oriens est nomen ejus (Zach. VI, 12). Nam quia ab Oriente lux surgit, recte Oriens dicitur cujus justitiae lumine nostrae injustitiae nox illustratur. Ad Orientis ergo dextram calamitates surgunt, quia hi quoque ad persecutionem prosiliunt, qui electa membra Redemptoris nostri esse credebantur. Quas videlicet calamitates recte illico asserit surgere, quia dum non erant extranei qui persequuntur, ab eis repente mala et illico fiunt. Si vero dextra hi qui veraciter fideles sunt appellantur, calamitates ad dextram Orientis surgunt, quia erumpente persecutionis articulo, crudeles pravorum impetus justi patiuntur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIII [Rec. XIX].

IBID. Pedes meos subverterunt, et oppresserunt quasi fluctibus semitis suis. 50. Ejus extrema membra quasi pedes quandoque subvertuntur. Quid per pedes Ecclesiae, nisi extrema illius membra signantur? Quae dum ad opera terrena deserviunt, tanto celerius ab adversariis falli possunt, quanto sublimia minus intelligunt. Hos itaque pedes adversarii subvertunt, videlicet cum extrema membra illius ad sui dogmatis errorem trahunt. Subversi pedes viam tenere nequeunt, cum infirmi quique persecutorum suorum vel promissionibus persuasi, vel minis territi, vel cruciatibus fracti, ab itinere recto deviant. Bene autem adversariorum semitae fluctibus comparantur, cum dicitur: Et oppresserunt quasi fluctibus semitis suis, quia scilicet vita pravorum insolenti inquietudine molesta ad obruendam, ut ita dixerim, navem cordis quasi tempestas illabitur. De qua videlicet tempestate per Salomonem dicitur: Quasi tempestas transiens non erit impius (Prov. X, 25). Cumque infirmus quisque perversos florere conspicit, hunc in perversitatis pelagus unda miserae imitationis mergit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 13. Dissipaverunt itinera mea, insidiati sunt mihi, et praevaluerunt, et non fuit qui ferret auxilium. 51. Occultis hostium insidiis ejus viae dissipantur, Deo ad tempus utiliter deserente. Dicat haec beatus Job de malignis spiritibus, videlicet hostibus occultis; dicat universa Ecclesia de pravis persequentibus, scilicet adversariis apertis. Ipsi quippe ejus itinera dissipant, cum in quorumdam infirmorum mentibus, veritatis vias callida persuasione perturbant. Ipsi insidiantes praevalent, cum eos quos aperte ad malum trahere nequeunt, bona simulando pervertunt. Sed mirum valde est quod subbjicit: Non fuit qui ferret auxilium, cum de divino adjutorio Psalmista clamet: Adjutor in opportunitatibus, in tribulatione (Psal. IX, 10);

661 et: Sperent in te, qui noverunt nomen tuum, quoniam non derelinques quaerentes te, Domine. Et cum rursum scriptum sit: Quis speravit in Domino, et confusus est; permansit in mandatis ejus, et derelictus est? Et quis invocavit illum, et despexit eum (Eccli. II, 11, 12)? Qua itaque ratione nunc dicitur: Non fuit qui ferret auxilium, nisi quia omnipotens Deus eos quos in aeternum diligit aliquando ad tempus relinquit? Unde scriptum est: Ad punctum in modico dereliqui te, et in miserationibus magnis congregabo te. In momento indignationis abscondi faciem meam parumper a te, et in misericordia sempiterna misertus sum tui (Isai. LIV, 7). Hinc etiam Psalmista deprecabatur, dicens: Non me derelinquas usquequaque (Psal. CXVIII, 8). Derelinqui igitur sese ad modicum posse utiliter noverat, qui ne usquequaque relinqueretur petebat. Sanctos etenim suos Dominus veniendo adjuvat, relinquendo probat; donis firmat, tribulationibus tentat. Unde recte quoque per quemdam sapientem dicitur: In primis elegit eum, timorem et metum et probationem inducet super illum, et excruciabit illum in tribulatione doctrinae suae, donec tentet illum in cogitationibus illius (Eccli. IV, 18). Justi quippe animam gratia vocat, tentatio interrogat. Et omnipotens Deus electorum suorum adversarios temporaliter permittit excrescere, ut per malorum saevitiam purgetur vita bonorum. 52. Utilitati justorum militat etiam potestas pravorum. Nunquam quippe Dominus adversos bonis esse permitteret, nisi etiam quantum prodessent videret. Nam dum injusti saeviunt, justi purgantur, et utilitati innocentium militat vita pravorum, dum hanc et premendo humiliat, et humiliando semper ad melius format. Unde recte quoque per Salomonem dicitur: Qui stultus est, serviet sapienti (Prov. XI, 29). Et tamen saepe conspicimus sapientes subesse, stultos vero arcem dominii tenere; sapientes serviliter obsequi, stultos tyrannica elatione dominari. Quomodo igitur definitione divinae sententiae sapienti stultus servit, dum plerumque hunc jure temporalis dominii comprimit? Sed sciendum est quia contra sapientis vitam, dum stultus praeeminens terrorem

potestatis exercet, dum hunc laboribus fatigat, contumeliis lacerat, profecto hunc ab omni vitiorum rubigine urendo purgat. Stultus ergo sapienti etiam dominando servit, quem ad meliorem statum premendo provehit. Sic nonnunquam pupillis dominis ad disciplinae magisterium servi praesunt, terrent, premunt, feriunt, et tamen esse servi nullo modo desistunt, quia ad hoc ipsum ordinati sunt, ut proficientibus dominis etiam feriendo famulentur. Quia igitur mala reproborum bonos, dum cruciant, purgant, utilitati justorum militat etiam potestas iniquorum. Sed plerumque justi tribulatione deprehensi, tardam manum subvenientis aestimant, cum se persequentium immanitas paulo longius angustat. Et concita quidem sunt ereptoris remedia, sed hoc quod ab ereptore citius agitur, dolenti tardum videtur. Cumque adesse postulationi auxilium quaeritur, si vocem non statim sequitur, quia desit aestimatur. Unde nunc dicitur: Et non fuit qui ferret auxilium. Qua videlicet in voce ipsa vis passionis exprimitur, quia supernum auxilium, etsi ad est quantum ad ordinatam providentiam 662 protectoris, deesse tamen creditur quantum ad concita vota patientis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXV [Vet.

XXII, Rec. XX]. VERS 14. Quasi rupto muro et aperta janua irruerunt super me, et ad meas miserias devoluti sunt. 53. Lugendus animae status, quando in eam hostes irruunt, rupto fidei muro, vel destructa disciplinae materia. Quid hoc loco muri nomine nisi Redemptor humani generis appellatur? De quo pro sanctae Ecclesiae aedificatione per prophetam dicitur: Ponetur in ea murus et antemurale (Isai. XXVI, 1). Ipse enim nobis murus est, qui ad corda nostra pertingere malignorum spirituum cursum vetat. Qui nostrae quoque fidei etiam antemurale posuit, quia priusquam se per carnem ostenderet praedicatores sui mysterii prophetas misit. Recte quippe antemuralis nomine vocantur, quia dum subsequentem

praedicaverunt Dominum, quasi ante murum steterunt. Sed quasi murus rumpitur cum pravorum persuasionibus fides quae in Redemptore nostro est in quorumdam corde dissipatur. Cumque perversis in hac vita potestas tribuitur, quid aliud quam janua erroris aperitur? Quasi rupto ergo muro, et aperta janua, super bonos irruunt mali, cum, accepta temporaliter potestate, perversi ipsa quoque in quorumdam corde destruere munimina fidei conantur. De quibus apte dicitur: Et ad meas miserias devoluti sunt, quia videlicet prius, ad suas. Nisi enim perverse vivendo, ad suas ante miserias caderent, nequaquam ad eas postmodum et alios suaderent. Sed post suas reprobi et ad nostras miserias devolvuntur, quando ad ea mala in quibus jam ipsi implicati sunt etiam quosdam nobis unitos trahunt. 54. Potest quoque intelligi muri nomine munitio disciplinae; Salomone attestante, qui ait: Per agrum hominis pigri transivi, et per vineam viri stulti; et ecce totum repleverant urticae, operuerant superficiem ejus spinae, et maceria lapidum destructa erat (Prov. XXIV, 30). Per agrum enim hominis pigri atque per vineam viri stulti transire est cujuslibet vitam negligentis inspicere, ejusque opera considerare. Quam urticae vel spinae replent, quia in corde negligentium prurientia terrena desideria et punctiones pullulant vitiorum, quippe quia scriptum est: In desideriis est omnis otiosus (Prov. XXVIII, 19, sec. LXX). Maceria lapidum destructa erat, id est, disciplina patrum ab ejus corde dissoluta. Nam quia destructa maceria lapidum, dissolutam esse disciplinam vidit, protinus illic secutus adjunxit: Quod cum vidissem, posui in corde meo, et exemplo didici disciplinani (Prov. XXIV, 32). Quasi rupto ergo muro hostis ingreditur, cum vel malignorum spirituum, vel pravorum hominum persuasione callida, disciplinae munimina in corde dissipantur. Sed cum ejusdem disciplinae vigor in corde reproborum solvitur, ante eorum oculos cuncta honorum opera despectui habentur, nihilque esse aestimant quidquid de virtutibus electorum vident. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS 15. Redactus sum in nihilum. 55. Despectis veris bonis, carnales fluxis, cum quibus pereunt, innituntur. Apud aestimationem quippe malorum in nihilum redigimur, quando ea quae ipsi quasi summa diligunt bona temporalia non tenemus. Despectis namque supernis promissionibus, terrena desiderant; et si quando in eorum mente aliquid de appetitu aeternitatis oritur, suborta citius transitoria 663 delectatione dissipatur. Unde et statim subjungitur: IBID.Abstulisti quasi ventus desiderium meum. Fidelis quippe populus se pati denuntiat, quod eos quos diligit pati dolet. Ventus ergo desiderium tollit, cum res quaelibet transitoria aeternitatis appetitum destruit. Unde adhuc congrue subinfertur: IBID. Et velut nubes pertransiit salus mea. Nubes quippe in alto eminet, sed hanc ad cursum flatus impellit. Sic nimirum, sic sunt temporalia iniquorum bona. Velut in alto quidem per honoris celsitudinem degere videntur; sed ad cursum vitae quotidie, quasi quibusdam mortalitatis suae flatibus impelluntur. Salus ergo ut nubes transit, quia perversorum gloria, quo alta est, fixa non est. Sed expletis desideriis actibusque infirmantium, ad electorum vocem sermo convertitur, cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT XXVII.

VERS. 16. Nunc autem in memetipso marcescit anima mea, et possident me dies afflictionis. 56. Nunc in se marcescunt electi, sed in Deo virent. Electorum quippe anima nunc marcescit, quia in illa postmodum aeterna exsultatione viridescit. Modo eos dies afflictionis possident, quia dies laetitiae post sequuntur. Scriptum quippe est: Timenti Deum bene erit in extremis (Eccli. I, 13, 19). Et rursum de Ecclesia dicitur: Ridebit in die novissimo (Prov. XXXI, 25). Nunc enim tempus afflictionis est bonis, ut sequatur eos exsultatio quandoque sine tempore. Hinc ab eis alias dicitur: Humiliasti nos in loco afflictionis (Psal. XLIII, 20). Locus namque afflictionis est vita praesens. Justi ergo hic, id est in loco afflictionis,

humiliati sunt, quia in aeterna vita, id est in loco gaudii sublimantur. Cum vero marcescere animam diceret, recte etiam praemisit, In memetipso, quia in nobismetipsis quidem afficitur, sed in Deo mens nostra refovetur; tantoque a viriditate gaudii longe fit, quanto adhuc ab auctoris repulsa lumine ad se recedit. Tunc vero ad verae laetitiae viriditatem pervenit, quando per aeternae contemplationis gratiam sublevata etiam semetipsam transit. Sed haec quae allegorica indagatione transcurrimus, oportet ut per omnia etiam juxta historiam teneamus. Quae tamen nunc idcirco praetereo, quia haec aperta esse legentibus non ignoro. Diebus autem persecutionis ultimae, quia multi sunt qui pereunt, et pauci qui salvantur; idcirco vir sanctus passionis suae tempore et pauca de bonis, et multa de perversis loquitur. Unde et mox ad eorum personam qui corruunt, verba convertit; sicque sua insinuat, ut cadentibus possint congruere quae narrat. Nam sequitur

CAPUT XXVIII [Rec.

XXI, Vet. XXIII]. VERS. 17. Nocte os meum perforatur doloribus, et qui me comedunt non dormiunt. 57. Saeviente persecutione, fortes et qui in corpore Ecclesiae sunt velut ossa deficiunt. Si ipsi historiae intendimus, patet causa, quoniam sancti viri corpus per sinus ulcerum scaturiens vermium multitudo lacerabat. Si vero allegoriae mysterium perscrutamur, quid per ossa nisi fortes quique in sanctae Ecclesiae corpore designantur? 664 Qui quasi suo robore membra continent, dum mores infirmantium stabiliter portant. Sed cum tribulationis ultimae contra eam fervor excreverit, in nocte os illius perforatur doloribus, quia nonnunquam tormentis victi, etiam ipsi ad perfidiam defluunt, qui ad fidem alios tenere videbantur. Ait ergo: Nocte os meum perforatur doloribus. Ac si aperte dicat: Tribulationis tenebris pressi, ita afflictione terebrantur, ut et ipsi qui in me habebant vigorem fortitudinis, quasi jam quoddam habeant foramen

timoris. Bene autem dicitur: Et qui me comedunt non dormiunt, quia maligni spiritus, qui carnales quosque de Ecclesia consumunt, tanto magis quiescere a tentatione nesciunt, quanto nullo carnis pondere gravantur. Sed persecutores sanctae Ecclesiae quia valde perversi sunt, essent utinam pauci. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIX [Rec. XXII].

VERS. 18. In multitudine eorum consumitur vestimentum meum, et quasi capitio tunicae succinxerunt me. 58. Qui Ecclesiae velut vestimentum adhaerent, nonnunquam ab ea, vi tormentorum, separantur. Si historiae intendimus, quid aliud vestimentum beati Job quam ejus corpus accipimus? cujus videlicet vestimentum consumitur dum caro cruciatur. Juxta allegoriae vero mysterium, vestimentum est sanctae Ecclesiae fidelium vita. Nam sicut tota simul Ecclesia vestimentum Christi, ita fideles quique ejusdem Ecclesiae vestimenta deputantur. Si enim sancta Ecclesia vestimentum Christi non esset, Paulus profecto non diceret: Ut exhiberet sibi gloriosam Ecclesiam, non habentem maculam neque rugam (Ephes. V, 27); id est, nec per peccatum habentem maculam, nec per duplicitatem rugam, quia et per justitiam munda est, et per simplicem intentionem tensa. Quae igitur abluta est ne habeat maculam, tensa est ne habeat rugam, utique vestis est. Sicut ergo indumentum Christi tota generaliter Ecclesia dicitur, sic indumentum sunt Ecclesiae singulorum animae, quae ab errore conversae eamdem Ecclesiam credendo eique fideliter inhaerendo circumdant. De quibus eidem Ecclesiae per prophetam Dominus dicit: Vivo ego, quia omnibus his velut ornamento vestieris (Isai. XLIX, 18). Sed cum procella saevae persecutionis oboritur, plerique fidelium ab ejus amore separantur, qui ei sedulo inhaerere videbantur. Dicat ergo: In multitudine eorum consumitur vestimentum meum, quia dum multi sunt qui cruciant, destruuntur plurimi qui ei connexione amoris inhaerebant. 59. Reprobi vitam fidei et

praedicationis vocem, in Ecclesia exstinguere conantur. Bene autem subditur: Et quasi capitio tunicae succinxerunt me. Tunicae quippe capitium collum circumdat induentis. Collum vero si stringitur, vocis usus et vitalis flatus necatur. Sanctam ergo Ecclesiam reprobi quasi capitio tunicae constringunt, quia in ea persecutionibus suis vitam fidei, et praedicationis vocem exstinguere conantur. Hoc quippe conari persecutores ejus specialiter solent, ut ab ea ante omnia verbum praedicationis tollant. Unde et hi qui sanctae fidei primordiis resistebant, caesis Apostolis denuntiabant, dicentes: Praecipiendo praecepimus vobis ne doceretis in nomine isto, et 665 ecce replestis Jerusalem doctrina vestra (Act. V, 28). Corpus ergo sanctae Ecclesiae quasi capitio tunicae cinxerant, qui constrictis praedicatoribus, velut ejus collum prementes, in ea claudere iter vocis volebant. Sed electi quique persecutionis suae tempore paratiores sunt mori quam tacere. Qui dum in morte corporaliter corruunt, a stultis quibusque et carnalibus despecti ac viles aestimantur, quia cum videre reprobi nequeunt quae electi bona spiritaliter teneant, quos carnaliter exstingui conspiciunt, infelices arbitrantur. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 19. Comparatus sum luto, et assimilatus sum favillae et cineri. 60. Hanc tanquam lutum, favillam et cinerem conculcant. In reproborum quippe judicio, sancta electorum Ecclesia luto comparatur, quia temporaliter conculcata despicitur. Favillae assimilatur et cineri, quia dum bona ejus interiora non vident, ad sola hanc mala pervenisse aestimant, quae in ea exhiberi corporaliter vident. Fidelis autem electorum populus, cum multos ex se cadere conspicit, optat, si obtinere valeat, adversitatis suae tempora mutari. Hujus quia oratio differtur, gemitus augetur, Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXXI.

[Vet. XXIV]. VERS. 20.Clamabo ad te, et non exaudies; sto, et non respicis me. 61. Ecclesiae liberari postulantis oratio non continuo exauditur. Qua ratione. Sancta quippe Ecclesia persecutionis suae tempore fide stat, desideriis clamat. Sed dolet se quasi non respici, dum sua videt in tribulationibus vota differri. Alto namque consilio omnipotens Deus, cum sancti ejus adversariorum persecutionibus comprimuntur, eumque assiduis ut liberentur interpellationibus clamant, differre solet voces petentium, ut merita patientium crescant, quatenus eo magis exaudiantur ad meritum, quo citius non exaudiuntur ad votum. Unde alias scriptum est: Deus meus, clamabo per diem, nec exaudies, et nocte (Psal. XXI, 3). Atque ipsa utilitas de exaudiendi mora mox subditur, cum illic protinus subinfertur: Et non ad insipientiam mihi (Ibid.). Ad multiplicandam quippe sanctorum sapientiam proficit quod postulata tarde percipiunt, ut ex dilatione crescat desiderium, ex desiderio intellectus augeatur. Intellectus vero cum intenditur, ejus in Deum ardentior affectus aperitur. Affectus autem ad promerenda coelestia tanto fit capax, quanto fuerit exspectando longanimis. Sed tamen inter haec sanctorum patientiam dolor urget ad vocem, et cum dilati proficiunt, metuunt ne deficientibus viribus despecti reprobentur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXII [Rec. XXIII].

VERS. 21. Mutatus es mihi in crudelem, et in duritia manus tuae adversaris mihi. 62. De Deo nihil dignum dicere aut cogitare possumus. Longe ab hac sententia vetus translatio dissonat, quia quod in hac de Deo dicitur, hoc in illa de adversariis ac persecutoribus memoratur. Sed tamen quia haec nova translatio ex Hebraeo nobis Arabicoque eloquio cuncta verius transfudisse perhibetur, credendum est quidquid in ea dicitur, et oportet ut verba illius nostra expositio subtiliter rimetur. Ait ergo: Mutatus es mihi in crudelem, et in duritia manus tuae adversaris mihi. 666 In Scriptura sancta cum de Deo aliquid indignum dicitur, movetur legentis animus, velut si aliquando de

Deo aliquid dignum dicatur. Pene omne quippe quod de Deo dicitur, eo ipso jam indignum est, quo potuit dici. Nam cujus laudi non sufficit obstupescens conscientia, quando sufficiet loquens lingua? Sanctus autem Spiritus hoc ipsum hominibus intelligentibus insinuans, quam sint ineffabilia summa et divina, his etiam verbis nonnunquam de Deo utitur quae apud homines habentur in vitio, ut ex his quae indigna videntur hominibus, et tamen dicuntur de Deo, admoneantur scire homines quod nec illa jam Deo digna sint quae, dum digna habentur apud homines, digna putantur Deo. 63. Quo sensu dicatur zelari, irasci, poenitere, misereri, praescire. Deo nihil praeteritum est aut futurum. Res non ideo videntur a Deo quia sunt, sed ideo sunt quia videntur. Dicitur enim Deus zelans, sicut scriptum est: Dominus zelotes nomen ejus (Exod. XXXIV, 14). Dicitur iratus, unde scriptum est: Iratus est Dominus contra Israel (Num. XXXII, 13). Dicitur Deus poenitens, sicut scriptum est: Poenitet me fecisse hominem super terram (Genes. VI, 7). Et rursus: Poenitet me quod constituerim Saul regem in Israel (I Reg. XV, 11). Dicitur misericors, sicut scriptum est: Misericors et miserator Dominus, patiens et multum misericors (Psal. LXXXV, 15). Dicitur praescius, sicut de illo ait Apostolus: Quos praescivit, et praedestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui (Rom. VIII, 29), dum nec zelus, nec ira, nec poenitentia, nec proprie misericordia, nec praescientia esse possit in Deo. Haec namque omnia ab humanis in illum qualitatibus tracta sunt, dum ad nostrae infirmitatis verba descenditur, ut, quasi quibusdam nobis gradibus factis, et juxta nos positis, per ea quae nobis vicina conspicimus ad summa ejus ascendere quandoque valeamus. Zelari enim dicitur qui cum cruciatu mentis castitatem custodit uxoris. Irasci dicitur qui fervore animi contra puniendum vitium accenditur. Poenitere dicitur cui id quod fecit displicet, et e contra mutando aliquid aliud facit. Misericors dicitur qui pietate ad proximum permovetur. Misericordia autem a misero corde vocata est, eo quod unusquisque

intueatur quempiam miserum, atque ei compatiens, dum dolore animi tangitur, ipse cor miserum facit, ut eum a miseria liberet cui intendit. Praescire dicitur qui unamquamque rem antequam veniat videt, et id quod futurum est priusquam praesens fiat praevidet. Deus ergo quomodo zelans est, qui in custodienda castitate nostra nullo mentis cruciatu tangitur? Quomodo irascitur, qui in ulciscendis vitiis nostris nulla perturbatione animi commovetur? Quomodo est poenitens, qui id quod semel fecerit se fecisse nequaquam dolet? Quomodo habet misericordiam, qui cor nunquam miserum habet? Quomodo est praescius, dum nulla nisi quae futura sunt praesciantur? Et scimus quia Deo futurum nihil est, ante cujus oculos praeterita nulla sunt, praesentia non transeunt, futura non veniunt, quippe quia omne quod nobis fuit et erit, in ejus conspectu praesto est; et omne quod praesens est, scire potest potius quam praescire. Et tamen dicitur zelans, dicitur iratus, dicitur poenitens, 667 dicitur misericors, dicitur praescius, ut quia castitatem animae uniuscujusque custodit, humano modo zelans vocetur, quamvis mentis cruciatu non tangatur. Et quia culpas percutit, dicitur irasci, quamvis nulla animi perturbatione moveatur. Et quia ipse immutabilis id quod voluerit mutat, poenitere dicitur quamvis rem mutet, consilium non mutet. Et cum miseriae nostrae subvenit, misericors vocatur, quamvis miseris subveniat, et cor miserum nunquam habeat. Et quia ea quae nobis futura sunt videt, quae tamen ipsi semper praesto sunt, praescius dicitur, quamvis nequaquam futurum praevideat, quod praesens videt. Nam et quaeque sunt, non in aeternitate ejus ideo videntur quia sunt, sed ideo sunt, quia videntur. Dum ergo ad verba mutabilitatis nostrae descenditur, ex eis quibusdam gradibus factis ascendat qui potest ad incommutabilitatem Dei, ut videat sine zelo zelantem, sine ira irascentem, sine dolore et poenitentia poenitentem, sine misero corde misericordem, sine praevisionibus praescientem. In illo enim nec praeterita, nec futura reperiri queunt, sed cuncta mutabilia immutabiliter durant, et quae in scipsis

simul existere non possunt, illi simul omnia assistunt, nihilque in illo praeterit quod transit, quia in aeternitate ejus modo quodam incomprehensibili, cuncta volumina saeculorum transeuntia manent, currentia stant. [Vet. XXV.] 64. Deus crudelis videtur, quando, etsi juste feriendo, non parcit. Sicut ergo accipimus sine zelo zelantem, sine ira irascentem, ita a sancto viro etiam sine crudelitate dici potuit crudelis. Crudelis quippe dicitur qui districte feriendo non parcit, ut videlicet hoc loco crudelis districte feriens possit intelligi, et ulciscendae culpae non parcens. Unde Isaias quoque cum videret ultimi judicii diem non jam cum venia, sed cum districtione esse venturum, ait: Ecce dies Domini veniet crudelis, et indignationis plenus, et irae furorisque ejus, ad ponendam terram in solitudine, et peccatores ejus conterendos de ea (Isai. XIII, 9). Sanctus igitur vir ut hanc eamdem crudelitatem sibi potius assereret congruere posse, quam Deo, ait: Mutatus es mihi in crudelem. Ac si aperte dicat: Qui in teipso crudelitatis nihil habes, mihi quem respirare a percussione non sinis, crudelis videris. Ita enim Deus crudelis esse non potest, sicut nec mutari ullatenus potest. Sed quoniam in Deo nec crudelitas, nec mutabilitas unquam venit, dum mihi dicit, quod in semetipso Deum nec crudelem nec mutabilem sentiat ostendit. Nam dum circa nos quaedam prospera et adversa variantur, in eo quod nos mutamur quasi ejus circa nos mutatum animum suspicamur. Ipse vero in se incommutabilis permanens, aliter atque aliter in cogitatione sentitur hominum, pro qualitate meritorum. Nam et lux solis cum nequaquam est sibimetipsi dissimilis, infirmis aspera, sanis autem oculis lenis videtur, eorum videlicet immutatione, non sua. Unde, ut praediximus, dicens: Mutatus es, adjunxit, Mihi, ut ipsa haec crudelitas atque immutatio non sit in qualitate judicis, sed in mente patientis. Quod verbis quoque aliis retexit, dicens: Et in duritia 668 manus tuae adversaris mihi. Manus etenim Dei dura creditur cum, voluntati nostrae contraria, hoc quod ei in nobis displicet feriendo persequitur et flagella

ingeminat cum dolentis anima clementiam exspectat. Quae tamen juxta allegoriae mysterium bene sanctae Ecclesiae verbis congruunt ex vocibus infirmorum, qui plerumque se plus feriri aestimant quam mereri putant, et quasi crudelitatem arbitrantur judicis districtionem aequissimam sectionis, quia et cum vulnus aegri medicinali ferramento abscinditur, medicus crudelis vocatur, qui tamen per secantis manus duritiam adversatur vulneri, sed concordat saluti. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIII [Rec. XXIV].

VERS. 22. Elevasti me, et quasi super ventum ponens, elisisti me valide. 65. Super ventum sedet, qui transitoriis successibus laetatur. Adversitas non dejicit, quem prosperitas non corrumpit. Quia praesentis vitae gloria quasi in alto cernitur, sed nulla stabilitate solidatur, velut elevatus super ventum ponitur, qui prosperitate transitoria laetatur, quoniam ad hoc solum hunc fugitivae felicitatis aura sublevat, ut repente deterius in infimis sternat. Quia enim sancta Ecclesia cunctis in honore est, infirmi quique in ea qui transitoriis successionibus laetantur, quo nisi super ventum positi videntur elevati? quia subsequente persecutionis tempore, dum prosperitatis aura pertransit, eorum protinus elevatio corruit, et repente cadentes discunt, quia elevati prius in ventum sederunt. Quae videlicet verba etiam sancti viri personae specialiter congruunt, non ad id quod erat, sed ad id quod esse videbatur. Neque enim mentem illius prosperitas fugitiva levaverat, quam inter tot rerum affluentias miro semper virtutis pondere premebat; sed juxta hoc quod videri exterius potuit, qui in suis humilis, in alienis oculis elevatus fuit, et quasi super ventum positus, elisus est valide, quia rebus exterioribus fultus, unde aestimabatur surgere, videbatur inde cecidisse. Quem videlicet casum sanctus vir in mente non pertulit, quia nulla adversitas dejicit, quem prosperitas nulla corrumpit. Qui enim veritati inhaeret, vanitati nullo modo

succumbit, quia dum forti pede cogitationis intus intentionem fixerit, omne quod foras mutabiliter agitur, ad arcem mentis minime pertingit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIV [Vet.

XXVI, Rec. XXV]. VERS. 23. Scio quia morti trades me, ubi constituta est domus omni viventi. 66. Nemo mortem effugit; pauci voluptatum foveam et interitum. Elias mortem distulit, non evasit. In superiori hujus operis parte (Supra, lib. XII, ca, Edit. Gussanv. novae, n. 13) tractatum est quod ante adventum Domini ad inferni receptacula etiam justi descenderent, quamvis non in suppliciis, sed in requie servarentur. Quod nunc testimoniis edocere negligimus, quia in ea jam sufficienter probatum putamus. Hoc ergo quod dicitur: Scio quia morti trades me, ubi constituta domus est omni viventi, recte beato Job etiam juxta historiam congruit, dum nimirum constat quia ante Redemptoris gratiam ad inferni claustra etiam justi ducerentur. Ipsa quippe inferni receptio domus omnium viventium dicitur, quia nullus huc venit qui ante Mediatoris adventum non 669 illuc ipsa corruptionis suae conditione pertransiit, nullus huc venit qui ad carnis mortem ejusdem corruptionis suae gressibus non tetendit. De qua videlicet morte per Psalmistam dicitur: Quis est homo qui vivit, et non videbit mortem (Psal. LXXXVIII, 49)? Nam etsi ad coelum raptus Elias esse perhibetur, mortem tamen distulit, non evasit. De ipso quippe ore veritatis dicitur: Elias quidem venturus est, et restituet omnia (Matth. XVII, 11). Veniet enim restituturus omnia, quia ad hoc nimirum huic mundo restituitur, ut et praedicationis munera impleat, et carnis debitum solvat. Quae tamen sancti viri sententia juxta allegoriae mysterium sanctae Ecclesiae vocibus ex persona congruit infirmorum, qui fidem verbo tenus tenent, sed contra praecepta fidei suis desideriis famulantur. Ait etenim: Scio quia morti trades me, ubi constituta domus est omni viventi. Quia enim multos in se voluptatibus deditos conspicit, eorumque jam interitum praescit, pensat quod in via vitae

praesentis suis quidem desideriis serviunt, sed tamen ad mortis domum perveniunt omnes qui in ea carnaliter vivunt. Sunt vero nonnulli qui in voluptatum suarum foveam corruunt, sed tamen per lamenta poenitentiae ab imis citius pedem reducunt, quos supernae percussionis verbera ad eruditionem potius quam ad exstinctionem secant. Ex quibus apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

VERS. 24. Verumtamen non ad consumptionem eorum emittis manum tuam et si corruerint, ipse salvabis. 67. Nonnulli a Deo percussi ad eruditionem non ad exstinctionem a peccato liberantur. In quibus profecto verbis hoc solerter debet intelligi, quod beatus Job, dum sua narrat, in se alios transfigurat. Velut enim de se specialiter dicebat: Elevasti me, et quasi super ventum ponens elisisti me valide; scio quia morti trades me, ubi constituta est domus omni viventi; et tamen non de se, sed de aliis adjugit: Verumtamen non ad consumptionem eorum emittis manum tuam. Dum enim de se loquens ratiocinando causas de aliis subdit, quam multorum personas in se significet ostendit. Manum itaque suam Dominus ad consumptionem peccantium non emittit, cum feriendo a peccatis corripit, et corruentes salvat, dum cadentes ad culpam in salutem corporis vulnerat, ut prostrati exterius, interius surgant, quatenus jacentes corpore ad interiorem statum redeant, qui stantes exterius a statu mentis jacebant. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVI [Rec. XXVI].

VERS. 25. Flebam quondam super eo qui afflictus erat, et compatiebatur anima mea pauperi. 68. Eleemosyna ex mentis affectu quo fit, potissimum aestimanda. Largitorem non faciat rerum abundantia, sed compassio. Quamvis vera compassio est passioni proximi ex largitate concurrere, nonnunquam tamen, cum exteriora quaeque abunde ad largiendum

suppetunt, celerius dantis manus dationem invenit quam animus dolorem. Unde scire necesse est quia ille perfecte tribuit, qui cum eo quod afflicto porrigit afflicti quoque in se animum sumit, ut prius in se dolentis passionem transferat, et tunc contra dolorem illius per ministerium concurrat. Nam saepe, ut praediximus, largitorem muneris rerum facit abundantia, et non virtus compassionis. Qui enim afflicto perfecte compatitur, 670 plerumque et hoc indigenti tribuit, in quo ipse si dederit angustatur. Et tunc plena est cordis nostri compassio, cum malum inopiae pro proximo suscipere non metuimus, ut illum a passione liberemus. 69. Pietatis formam Christus nobis dedit, et docuit Paulus. Quam videlicet pietatis formam Mediator nobis Dei et hominum dedit. Qui cum posset nobis etiam non moriendo concurrere, subvenire tamen moriendo hominibus voluit, quia nos videlicet minus amasset, nisi et vulnera nostra susciperet; nec vim nobis suae dilectionis ostenderet, nisi hoc quod a nobis tolleret ad tempus ipse sustineret. Passibiles quippe mortalesque nos reperit, et qui nos existere fecit ex nihilo, revocare videlicet etiam sine sua morte potuit a passione. Sed ut quanta esset virtus compassionis ostenderet, fieri pro nobis dignatus est quod esse nos noluit, ut in semetipso temporaliter mortem susciperet, quam a nobis in perpetuum fugaret. An non in divinitatis suae divitiis nobis invisibilis permanens, miris nos potuit virtutibus ditare? [Vet. XXVII.] Sed ut ad internas divitias rediret homo, foras apparere dignatus est pauper Deus. Unde et praedicator egregius, ut ad largitatis gratiam viscera nostrae compassionis accenderet, dixit: Propter nos egenus factus est, cum dives esset (II Cor. VIII, 9). Qui sic etiam dicit: Non ut aliis sit remissio, vobis autem tribulatio (Ibid., 13). Haec procul dubio condescendendo infirmis intulit, quoniam quibusdam inopiam ferre non valentibus tolerabilius est minus tribuere quam post largitatem suam ex inopiae angustia murmurare. Nam ut ad magna largiendi studia audientium mentes accenderet, paulo post intulit, dicens: Hoc autem dico: Qui parce

seminat, parce et metet (II Cor. IX, 6). Plus autem nonnunquam esse dicimus compati ex corde, quam dare, quia quisquis perfecte indigenti compatitur, minus aestimat omne quod dat. Nisi enim dantis manum bona voluntas vinceret, idem praedicator egregius discipulis non dixisset: Qui non solum facere, sed et velle coepistis ab anno priori (II Cor. VIII, 10). Facile quippe est in bono opere obedire etiam nolentem. Sed haec magna in discipulis virtus exstiterat, eos bonum quod illis praeceptum est et ante voluisse. 70. Exteriora largiens, aliquid de suo, compassionem impendens, aliquid dat de seipso. Quia itaque vir sanctus apud omnipotentem Deum aliquando majus datum noverat mentis esse quam muneris, dicat: Flebam quondam super eo qui afflictus erat, et compatiebatur anima mea pauperi. Exteriora etenim largiens, rem extra semetipsum praebuit. Qui autem fletum et compassionem proximo tribuit, ei aliquid etiam de semetipso dedit. Idcirco autem plus compassionem quam datum dicimus, quia rem quamlibet plerumque dat etiam qui non compatitur, nunquam autem qui vere compatitur quod necessarium proximo conspicit negat. 71. Ecclesia filiis suis poenitentibus compatiens, lacrymas et orationes jungit. Quae nimirum sententia bene quoque sanctae Ecclesiae vocibus congruit: quae dum afflictos quosque per lamenta poenitentiae conspicit, suos ei oratione continua fletus jungit, et toties egeno 671 compatitur, quoties menti virtutibus nudatae interventionis suae precibus opitulatur. Super afflictum quippe compatientes plangimus, quando aliena damna nostra deputamus, et culpas delinquentium nostris mundare fletibus nitimur. Quod videlicet agentes, plus plerumque nobis quam his pro quibus agitur subvenimus, quia apud intimum arbitrum et gratiam charitatis aspirantem, commissa quaeque perfecte diluit propria, qui pure plangit aliena. Persecutionis igitur ultimae sancta Ecclesia tribulatione deprehensa, reducat ad memoriam pacis tempore bona quae gessit, dicens: Flebam quondam super eo qui afflictus erat, et compatiebatur anima mea pauperi. Quae internae lucis gaudia

aeterna desiderans, sed tamen adhuc dilata, quia malis exterioribus premitur, sancti viri vocibus adjungat:

CAPUT XXXVII [Rec. XXVII].

VERS. 26. Exspectabam bona, et venerunt mihi mala; praestolabor lucem, et eruperunt tenebrae. 72. Electorum, Ecclesiaeque dolor, etiam tempore pacis, a suis persecutionem tolerantium. Fidelis enim populus exspectat bona, sed mala suscipit; praestolatur lucem, et tenebras incurrit, quia per remunerationis gratiam interesse jamjamque angelorum se gaudiis sperat, et tamen hic diutius dilatus, manus persequentium tolerat; et qui se quantocius aestimat aeternae lucis retributione perfrui, hic adhuc compellitur persecutorum suorum tenebras pati. Quae videlicet mala persequentium minus dolerent, si ab infidelibus adversariisque consurgerent. Sed eo deterius mentem electorum cruciant, quo ab illis veniunt, de quibus bona praesumebant. Unde adhuc subditur: VERS. 27. Interiora mea efferbuerunt absque ulla requie. Sanctae quippe Ecclesiae interiora effervescere est ipsos quoque quos per amorem fidei velut viscera ante gestaverat in persecutionis atrocitate tolerare. Qui secreta prius illius cognoscentes, quanto sciunt ubi magis doleat, tanto deterius ab afflictione ejus minime quiescunt. Quos tamen et pacis suae tempore graviter tolerat, quia suis praedicationibus eorum mores contrarios pensat. Gemit enim, cum eorum vitam sibi dissimilem conspicit. De quibus et apte subjungitur: IBID. Praevenerunt me dies afflictionis. [Vet. XXVIII.] Scit namque sancta electorum Ecclesia quod persecutione ultima, mala multa passura sit; sed hanc afflictionis suae dies praeveniunt, quia malorum vitam intra se graviter etiam tempore pacis portat. Nam quamvis diebus ultimis aperta infidelium persecutio sequatur, hanc tamen et priusquam appareat, hi qui in ea verbo tenus fideles sunt, pravis moribus antecurrunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII [Rec. XXVIII].

VERS. 28. Moerens incedebam, sine furore consurgens in turba clamavi. 73. Sancti in honoris culmine humilitatem, in rebus laetis moerorem servant. Contra prosperitatem intus dimicant. Omne quod sine Dei visione abundat, inopia est. Notandum sollicite juxta historiam video quod sanctus vir, qui paulo superius dixit: Elevasti me, inferius adjungit: Moerens incedebam. Miro enim ordine, uno eodemque tempore convenire in actibus bonorum solet et foris honor culminis, et intus afflictae moeror humilitatis. Unde sanctus quoque vir elevatus rebus et honoribus moerens incedebat, quia etsi hunc praelatum hominibus gloria potestatis ostenderat, 672 interius tamen moerore suo secretum sacrificium Domino contriti cordis offerebat. Sacrificium quippe Deo est spiritus contribulatus (Psal. L, 19). Sciunt autem electi quique consideratione intima contra exterioris excellentiae tentamenta pugnare. Qui si ad exteriorem felicitatem suam cor apponerent, justi profecto non essent. Sed quia cor humanum non potest de ipsis prosperitatibus rerum quantulacunque gloria nullo modo tentari, contra ipsam prosperitatem suam sancti viri intrinsecus dimicant, non dico ne in elatione, sed ne in ejus saltem amore succumbant. Cui valde succubuisse est, captivam mentem ejus desideriis subdidisse. Quis autem terrena sapiens, temporalia amplectens, beatum Job inter tot prospera laetum non crederet, cum ei suppeteret salus corporis, vita filiorum, incolumitas familiae, integritas gregum? Sed quia in his omnibus non gauderet, ipse sibi testis est, qui ait: Moerens incedebam. Sancto enim viro adhuc in hac peregrinatione posito omne quod sine visione Dei abundat inopia est, quia cum sibi omnia electi adesse vident, gemunt quod omnium auctorem non vident; eisque totum hoc minus est, quia adhuc species unius deest; sicque eos foris exaltat gratia supernae dispensationis, ut tamen intus sub disciplina teneat moeror magistrae charitatis. Per quam videlicet discunt ut de his quae exterius accipiunt, apud semetipsos semper amplius humilientur, mentem

sub jugo teneant disciplinae, nunquam ex potestatis licentia ad impatientiam erumpant. Unde et apte subjungitur: Sine furore consurgens in turba clamavi. Saepe namque seditiosorum tumultus hominum, praepositorum suorum mentem lacessunt, suique ordinis limitem inordinatis motibus excedunt. 74. Amica potestati pene semper impatientia est, quam superant boni. Et plerumque qui praesunt, nisi in ore cordis Spiritus sancti freno teneantur, in iratae retributionis atrocitatem prosiliunt, quantumque praevalent agere, tantum sibi in subditis aestimant licere. Amica etenim potestati pene semper impatientia est; eique etiam malae subjectae imperat, quia quod ipsa sentit, potestas exsequitur. Sed sancti viri plus se interius patientiae jugo subjiciunt, quam foris hominibus praesunt; et eo veriorem principatum foris exhibent, quo humiliorem Deo intrinsecus famulatum tenent; atque idcirco saepe plus quosdam tolerant, quo se de eis ulcisci amplius possunt; ac ne unquam ad illicita transeant, plerumque nolunt pro se exsequi etiam quod licet; subjectorum strepitus sufferunt, per amorem increpant quos per mansuetudinem portant. Unde nunc recte dicitur: Sine furore consurgens in turba clamavi, quia nimirum boni contra tumultus insolentium clamorem habent, et furorem non habent, quoniam eos quos clementer tolerant docere non cessant. Sed haec quae juxta historiam de uno diximus, juxta allegoriam necesse est ut de diversis electis Ecclesiae sentiamus. Ipsa quippe in electis suis etiam per prospera incedit moerens, quia nil sibi vere prosperum deputat, quousque bonum quod singulariter quaerit apprehendat. Fideles quippe illius temporali quidem pace perfruuntur, sed perpetuo suspirant; honorantur, et afflicti sunt; quia plerumque ibi videntur in culmine, ubi cives non sunt. 673 Ipsa etiam in turba sine furore consurgit, et clamat, quia pravorum vitam studio rectae aemulationis, non autem vesania furoris insequitur. Irascitur et amat, saevit et tranquilla est, quatenus infirmos suos corrigat ex aemulatione, faveat ex pietate. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIX [Rec. XXIX].

VERS. 29. Frater fui draconum, et socius struthionum. 75. Nulla vera sanctitas, nisi quae inter malos probata fuit. Quid draconum nomine nisi malitiosorum hominum vita signatur? De quibus et per prophetam dicitur: Traxerunt ventum quasi dracones (Jerem. XIV, 6). Perversi etenim quique ventum quasi dracones trahunt, cum malitiosa superbia inflantur. Qui autem struthionum appellatione intelligi, nisi simulatores solent? Struthio etenim pennas habet, et volatum non habet; quia simulatores quique speciem sanctitatis habent, sed virtutem sanctitatis non habent. Visio quippe eos bonae actionis decorat, sed a terra minime penna virtutis levat. Electus itaque sanctae Ecclesiae populus, quia pacis suae tempore intra se quosdam malitiosos ac simulatores patitur, dicat: Frater fui draconum, et socius struthionum. Quod beati quoque Job vocibus specialiter congruit, qui ad culmen magnae fortitudinis bonus inter malos fuit. [Vet. XXIX.] Nullus quippe perfectus est, qui inter proximorum mala patiens non est. Qui enim aequanimiter aliena mala non tolerat, ipse sibi per impatientiam testis est quia a boni plenitudine longe distat. Abel quippe esse renuit (7, q. 1, c. Adversitas, § 3, p. Abel), quem Cain malitia non exercet (Genes. IV, 3 seq.). 76. Mali inter bonos hic permisti, cur? Sic in tritura areae grana sub paleis premuntur, sic flores inter spinas prodeunt, et rosa quae redolet crescit cum spina quae pungit. Duos namque filios habuit primus homo, sed unus electus alter reprobus fuit (Genes. IV, 1, 2). Tres quoque filios Noe arca continuit, sed duobus in humilitate persistentibus, unus ad patris irrisionem ruit (Ibid., IX, 18). Duos Abraham filios habuit, sed unus innocens, alius vero fratris persecutor fuit (Ibid., XVI, 15; XXI, 9). Duos quoque Isaac filios habuit, unus in humilitate servatus, alter vero et priusquam nasceretur reprobatus est (Ibid., XXV, 24 seq.). Duodecim Jacob filios genuit, sed ex his unus per innocentiam venditus, caeteri vero per malitiam venditores fratris fuerunt [Ibid., XXXVII, 27). Duodecim quoque apostoli in sancta

Ecclesia sunt electi, sed ne improbati remanerent, unus eis admistus est, qui eos persequens probaret. Sic namque justo peccator cum malitia jungitur, sicut in fornace auro palea cum igne sociatur, ut quo ardet palea, purgetur aurum. Hi ergo veraciter boni sunt, qui in bonitate persistere etiam inter malos possunt. Hinc etiam sponsi voce sanctae Ecclesiae dicitur: Sicut lilium inter spinas, sic amica mea inter filias (Cant. II, 2). Hinc ad Ezechielem Dominus dicit: Fili hominis, increduli et subversores sunt tecum, et cum scorpionibus habitas (Ezech. II, 6). Hinc Petrus vitam beati Lot glorificat, dicens: Et justum Lot oppressum a nefandorum injuria conversatione eripuit (II Pet. II, 7). Aspectu enim et auditu justus erat, habitans apud eos qui de die in diem animam justi iniquis operibus cruciabant. Hinc Paulus discipulorum vitam glorificat, et glorificando 674 confirmat, dicens: In medio nationis pravae et perversae, inter quos lucetis sicut luminaria in mundo, verbum vitae continentes (Philip. II, 15). Hinc per Joannem angelus Pergami Ecclesiae attestatur, dicens: Scio ubi habitas, ubi sedes est Satanae, et tenes nomen meum, et non negasti fidem meam (Apoc. II, 13). Beatus igitur Job ut ostendat cujus fortitudinis fuerit, insinuet cum quibus vixit, dicens: Frater fui draconum, et socius struthionum. Quia minus esset quod ipse bona ageret, nisi et ad bonitatis suae cumulum ab aliis mala toleraret. Sequitur:

CAPUT XL [Rec. XXX].

VERS. 30. Cutis mea denigrata est super me, et ossa mea aruerunt prae caumate. 77. Propter infirmorum casum, fortes zeli sui igne aduruntur. Haec juxta historiam pensare negligimus, quia videlicet sermonis virtus patet ex poena passionis. Sed quia, ut saepe jam diximus, plerumque beatus Job sic narrat gesta, ut gerenda praenuntiet, bene hoc sanctae Ecclesiae vocibus congruit, quae dolorem persecutionis ultimae in infirmis graviter sentit. Cumque ab illa alii pereunt, valentiores quique moerore cruciantur. Exterior

quippe causa ejus est terrena dispensatio, interior vero cura coelestis. Cutis ergo nomine infirmi signantur, qui nunc in ea exteriori utilitati deserviunt. Per ossa vero fortes ejus figurati sunt, in quibus corporis illius tota compago solidatur. Quia igitur aut provocati muneribus, aut persecutionibus afflicti, multi in ea ab statu fidei infirmi cadunt, eamque ipsi postquam ceciderunt persequuntur, quid aliud quam cutis suae nigredinem patitur, ut in ipsis postmodum foeda appareat, in quibus prius pulchra videbatur? Dum enim hi qui prius exteriora bene dispensare consueverant contra electos Dei postmodum saeviunt, quasi cutis Ecclesiae anteactae justitiae colorem perdidit, quae ad nigredinem iniquitatis venit. Quod Jeremias etiam sub praecipui metalli specie deplorat, dicens: Quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus (Thren. IV, 1)? Perversi ergo dum ab ejus sacramentis exeunt, plerumque inter reprobos locum honoris sumunt, ut ipsi contra sanctam Ecclesiam ex auctoritate saeviant, qui hanc atrocius quasi sciendo contemnunt. Unde et cum diceret: Cutis mea denigrata est, addidit, super me, quia hos quos prius ad decorem justitiae quasi candidos habuit, post deterius nigros portat. Sed cum cutis ad nigredinem vertitur, fortes qui in illa sunt zelo fidei contabescunt. Unde apte subjungit: Et ossa mea aruerunt prae caumate. Sic namque et priori tempore os fortissimum sanctae Ecclesiae quadam ariditate taedii Paulus aestuabat, cum quibusdam cadentibus diceret: Quis infirmatur, et ego non infirmor? quis scandalizatur, et ego non uror (II Cor. XI, 29)? Cutis ergo denigratur, et ossa prae caumate arescunt, quia dum infirmi ad iniquitatem prosiliunt, fortes quique zeli sui igne cruciantur, Sequitur:

CAPUT XLI [Vet.

XXX, Rec. XXXI]. Vers. 31. Versa est in luctum cithara mea, et organum meum in vocem flentium. 78. Verbi divini ministri, cum despiciuntur, sileant, et ad poenitentiae luctum confugiant. Abstinentiam discretio

moderetur. Vitia carnis exstinguantur, non caro. Quia organum per fistulas, et cithara per chordas sonat, potest per citharam recta operatio, 675 per organum vero sancta praedicatio designari. Per fistulas quippe organi ora praedicantium, per chordas vero citharae intentionem recte viventium non inconvenienter accipimus. Quae dum ad vitam aliam per afflictionem carnis tenditur, quasi extenuata chorda in cithara per intuentium admirationem sonat. Siccatur etenim chorda, ut congruum in cithara cantum reddat, quia et sancti viri castigant corpus suum, et servituti subjiciunt (I Cor. IX, 27), atque ab infimis ad superiora tenduntur. Pensandum quoque est quod chorda in cithara si minus tenditur, non sonat; si amplius, raucum sonat, quia nimirum virtus abstinentiae aut omnino nulla est, si tantum quisque corpus non edomat quantum valet; aut valde inordinata est, si corpus atterit plus quam valet. Per abstinentiam quippe carnis vitia sunt exstinguenda, non caro; et tanto quisque sibimet debet moderamine praeesse, ut et ad culpam caro non superbiat, et tamen ad effectum rectitudinis in operatione subsistat. Intueri inter haec egregium praedicatorem libet, quanta arte magisterii fidelium animas velut in cithara chordas tensas, alias amplius tendendo extenuat, atque alias a tensione sua relaxando conservat. Aliis etenim dicit: Non in comessationibus et ebrietatibus, non in cubilibus et impudicitiis (Rom. XIII, 13). Et rursus ait: Mortificate membra vestra quae sunt super terram (Coloss. III, 5). Et tamen praedicatori charissimo scribit, dicens: Noli adhuc aquam bibere, sed modico vino utere, propter stomachum tuum, et frequentes tuas infirmitates (I Tim. V, 23). Illas ergo chordas extenuando tendit, ne non tensae omnimodo non sonent; hanc vero a tensione temperat, ne dum plus tenditur, minus sonet. 79. Duplex exhortationis modus, alius verbis, alius operibus. Sive autem sancti praedicatores in Ecclesia, seu quilibet simplices et abstinentes, prout vires accipiunt, in ea proximis suis canticum bonae exhortationis reddunt. Nam et prudentes quique ad praedicationis fructum solerter invigilant, atque ut alios ad vitam pertrahant,

sono magnae persuasionis elaborant; et qui in ea tardioris ingenii videntur, ex ipso suae vitae merito in quantum se posse conspiciunt, exhortationis erga alios 676 auctoritatem sumunt, atque ad coelestem patriam quos valent trahere non desistunt. Sed sancta Ecclesia extremis persecutionibus pressa, cum verba sua a reprobis contemni considerat, amoris sui gratiam ad sola lamenta format, quia nimirum deflet quos exhortando trahere non valet. Dicat ergo: Versa est in luctum cithara mea, et organum meum in vocem flentium. Ac si aperte fateatur dicens: Pacis quidem meae tempore per alios parva more citharae, per alios vero more organi magna et sonora praedicabam, sed nunc in luctum cithara, et organum in vocem flentium versum est, quia dum me contemni conspicio, eos qui praedicationis cantum non audiunt deploro. Haec per quosdam sancta Ecclesia in fine factura est. haec per quosdam in suis jam exordiis fecit. Primus quippe martyr Stephanus Judaeis persequentibus prodesse praedicando conatus est, quos tamen post verba praedicationis, dum videret ad jaciendos lapides convolasse, fixis genibus orabat, dicens: Domine Jesu, ne statuas illic hoc peccatum (Act. VII, 59). Quid ergo buic, qui diu et parva et magna narraverat, nisi jam suae citharae atque organi cantus silebat atque in luctum versa fuerant, quia eos quos praedicando non traxerat, amando flebat? Quod nimirum quotidie sancta Ecclesia agere non desistit, quae praedicationis verbum pene ubique conticuisse jam conspicit. Alii namque loqui dissimulant, alii recta audire contemnunt. Sed electorum mens dum tacere cantum praedicationis conspicit, gemens ac tacita ad fletus redit. Dicat ergo: Versa est in luctum cithara mea, et organum meum in vocem flentium, quia electus quisque quo sanctae praedicationis vox siluit, eo damna Ecclesiae gravius plangit. Hucusque beatus Job descripsit mala quae pertulit, hoc vero ex loco incipit narrare subtilius bona quae fecit. Sed doloris verba historica atque allegorica expositione transcurrimus, virtutum vero opera ex magna

parte juxta solius historiae textum tenemus, ne si haec ad indaganda mysteria trahimus, veritatem fortasse operis vacuare videamur.

LIBER VIGESIMUS PRIMUS.

Exponitur cap. XXXI lib. Job, ad versum 24 exclusive, et laudatis prius castitate, humilitate, misericordia, multa de occasione peccati fugienda potissimum docentur.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. In explicandis sacris Scripturis, nec solus historicus sensus sequendus est, nec semper allegoricus. Intellectus sacri eloquii inter textum et mysterium tanta est libratione pensandus, ut utriusque partis lance moderata, hunc neque nimiae discussionis pondus deprimat, neque rursus torpor incuriae vacuum relinquat. Multae quippe ejus sententiae tanta allegoriarum conceptione sunt gravidae, ut quisquis eas ad solam tenere historiam nititur, earum notitia per suam incuriam privetur. Nonnullae vero ita exterioribus praeceptis inserviunt, ut si quis eas subtilius penetrare desiderat, 677 intus quidem nihil inveniat, sed hoc sibi etiam quod foris loquuntur abscondat. 2. Probatur prior propositio. Unde bene quoque narratione historica per significationem dicitur: Tollens Jacob virgas populeas virides, et amygdalinas, et ex platanis, ex parte decorticavit eas, detractisque corticibus, in his quae exspoliata fuerant candor apparuit; illa vero quae integra erant viridia permanserunt, atque in hunc modum color effectus est varius (Genes. XXX, 37). Ubi et subditur: Posuitque eas in canalibus in quibus effundebatur aqua, ut cum venissent greges ad bibendum, ante oculos haberent virgas, et in aspectu earum conciperent. Factumque est ut in ipso calore coitus oves intuerentur virgas, et parerent maculosa et varia, et diverso colore respersa (Ibid., 38, 39). Quid est enim virgas virides, amygdalinas, atque ex platanis ante gregum oculos ponere, nisi per Scripturae sacrae seriem antiquorum Patrum vitas atque sententias in exemplum populis praebere? Quae nimirum quia juxta rationis examen

rectae sunt, virgae nominantur. Quibus ex parte corticem subtrahit, ut in his quae exspoliantur, intimus candor appareat; et ex parte corticem servat, ut sicut fuerant exterius, in viriditate permaneant; variusque virgarum color efficitur, dum cortex ex parte subtrahitur, ex parte retinetur. Ante considerationis enim nostrae oculos praecedentium patrum sententiae quasi virgae variae ponuntur. In quibus dum plerumque intellectum litterae fugimus, quasi corticem subtrahimus, et dum plerumque intellectum litterae sequimur, quasi corticem reservamus. Dumque ab ipsis cortex litterae subducitur, allegoriae candor interior demonstratur, et dum cortex relinquitur, exterioris intelligentiae virentia exempla monstrantur. Quas bene Jacob in aquae canalibus posuit, quia et Redemptor noster in libris eas sacrae scientiae, quibus nos intrinsecus infundimur, fixit. Has aspicientes arietes cum ovibus coeunt, quia rationales nostri spiritus, dum in earum intentione defixi sunt, singulis quibusque actionibus permiscentur, ut tales fetus operum procreent, qualia exempla praecedentium in vocibus praeceptorum vident; et diversum colorem proles boni operis habeat, quia et nonnunquam subtracto litterae cortice, acutius interna considerat, et reservato nonnunquam historiae tegmine, bene se in exterioribus format. 3. Probatur altera. Nam quia divinae sententiae aliquando interius rimandae sunt, aliquando exterius observandae, per Salomonem quoque dicitur: Qui fortiter premit ubera ad eliciendum lac, exprimit butyrum; et qui vehementer emungit, elicit sanguinem (Prov. XXX, 33). Ubera quippe fortiter premimus, cum verba sacri eloquii subtili intellectu pensamus, qua pressione dum lac quaerimus, butyrum invenimus, quia dum nutriri vel tenui intellectu quaerimus, ubertate internae pinguedinis ungimur. Quod tamen nec nimie nec semper agendum est, ne dum lac quaeritur ab uberibus, sanguis sequatur. Plerumque etenim quidam dum verba sacri eloquii plus quam debent discutiunt, 678 in carnalem intellectum cadunt. Sanguinem quippe elicit, qui vehementer emungit, quia carnale efficitur hoc quod ex

nimia spiritus discussione sentitur. Unde necesse est ut beati Job opera, quae inter increpantium amicorum verba idcirco narrat ne afflicta mens illius in desperatione deficiat, juxta pondus historiae perscrutemur, ne si haec animus plusquam necesse est spiritaliter investiget, a verborum ejus uberibus sanguis nobis pro lacte respondeat. Si quando vero quaedam mystica in suorum operum narratione permiscet, ad haec necesse est ut mens concita redeat, ad quae hanc ipse, ut datur intelligi, ordo loquentis vocat. Nam sanctus vir postquam ea quae sibi per flagellum Domini fuerant inflicta narravit, nunc per ordinem proprias enumerando virtutes, qualis ante flagellum fuerit innotescit; sic vitae suae historiam texens, ut ei perrarum aliquid quod allegorice intelligi possit interserat, quatenus et ex magna parte historica sint quae memorat, et tamen aliquando per haec eadem ad spiritalem intelligentiam consurgat. Qua itaque fortitudine ab omni lapsu exteriora sua custodiae interioris disciplina constrinxerit, insinuat dicens:

CAPUT II.

CAP. XXXI, VERS. 1. Pepigi foedus cum oculis meis, ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine. 4. Ne mens illicita concupiscat, cohibendi sunt sensus exteriores qui sunt aditus mentis. Intueri non decet quod concupiscere non licet. Cum sit invisibilis anima, nequaquam corporearum rerum delectatione tangitur, nisi quod inhaerens corpori quasi quaedam egrediendi foramina ejusdem corporis sensus habet. Visus quippe, auditus, gustus, odoratus, et tactus, quasi quaedam viae mentis sunt, quibus foras veniat, et ea quae extra ejus sunt substantiam concupiscat. Per hos etenim corporis sensus quasi per fenestras quasdam exteriora quaeque anima respicit, respiciens concupiscit. Hinc etenim Jeremias ait: Ascendit mors per fenestras nostras, ingressa est domos nostras (Jerem. IX, 21). Mors quippe per fenestras ascendit, et domum ingreditur, cum per sensus corporis concupiscentia veniens, habitaculum intrat mentis. Quod contra hoc quod jam saepe diximus de

justis per Isaiam dicitur: Qui sunt hi qui ut nubes volant, et quasi columbae ad fenestras suas (Isai. LX, 8)? Justi namque volare ut nubes dicti sunt, quia a terrenis contagiis sublevantur; et quasi columbae ad fenestras suas sunt, quia per sensus corporis exteriora quaeque intentione non respiciunt rapacitatis, eosque foras non rapit concupiscentia carnalis. Quisquis vero per has corporis fenestras incaute exterius respicit, plerumque in delectationem peccati etiam nolens cadit; atque obligatus desideriis, incipit velle quod noluit. Praeceps quippe anima dum ante non providet, ne incaute videat quod concupiscat, caeca post incipit desiderare quod vidit. Unde et Prophetae mens, quae sublevata saepe mysteriis internis intererat, quia alienam conjugem incaute vidit, obtenebrata postmodum sibimet illicite conjunxit (II Reg. XI, 2). Sanctus autem vir, qui acceptis corporis sensibus velut subjectis 679 ministris quidam aequissimus judex praeest, culpas conspicit antequam veniant, et velut insidianti hosti fenestras corporis claudit, dicens: Pepigi foedus cum oculis meis, ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine. Ut enim cogitationes cordis caste servare potuisset, foedus cum oculis pepigit, ne prius incante aspiceret quod postmodum invitus amaret. Valde namque est quod caro deorsum trahit, et semel species formae cordi per oculos illigata vix magni luctaminis manu solvitur. Ne ergo quaedam lubrica in cogitatione versemus, providendum nobis est; quia intueri non decet quod non licet concupisci. Ut enim munda mens in cogitatione servetur a lascivia voluptatis suae deprimendi sunt oculi, quasi quidam raptores ad culpam. Neque enim Eva lignum vetitum contigisset, nisi hoc prius incaute respiceret. Scriptum quippe est: Vidit mulier quod bonum esset lignum ad vescendum, et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile; et tulit de fructu illius, et comedit (Genes. III, 6). Hinc ergo pensandum est quanto debeamus moderamine erga illicita visum restringere nos qui mortaliter vivimus, si et mater viventium per oculos ad mortem venit. Hinc etiam sub Judaeae voce, quae exteriora videndo concupiscens bona interiora

perdiderat, propheta dicit: Oculus meus depraedatus est animam meam (Thren. III, 51). Concupiscendo enim visibilia, invisibiles virtutes amisit. Quae ergo interiorem fructum per exteriorem visum perdidit, per oculum corporis pertulit praedam cordis. Unde nobis ad custodiendam cordis munditiam exteriorum quoque sensuum disciplina servanda est. Nam quantalibet virtute mens polleat, quantalibet gravitate vigeat, carnales tamen sensus puerile quiddam exterius perstrepunt, et nisi interioris gravitatis pondere et quasi juvenili quodam vigore refrenentur, ad fluxa quaeque et levia mentem enervem trahunt. 5. Exemplum Job non solum carnis, sed etiam cordis et mentis luxuriam refrenantis. Per Moysen luxuria perpetrata, per Christum etiam cogitata damnatur. Qui coeli civis est luxuriam deserat, non timore, sed charitate. Videamus igitur quomodo beatus Job id quod in eo fluxum ac puerile caro sapere potuit, juvenili sapientiae vigore restrinxit. Ait enim: Pepigi foedus cum oculis meis. Et quia non in se actionem tantummodo, sed et cogitationem luxuriae exstinxit, secutus adjunxit: Ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine. Sciebat nimirum luxuriam esse in corde refrenandam, sciebat, per sancti Spiritus donum, quod Redemptor noster veniens legis praecepta transcenderet, et ab electis suis non solum luxuriam carnis, sed etiam cordis aboleret, dicens: Scriptum est: Non adulterabis; ego autem dico vobis, quoniam omnis qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam moechatus est eam in corde suo (Matth. V, 27). Per Moysen quippe luxuria perpetrata, per auctorem vero munditiae luxuria cogitata damnatur. Hinc est enim quod discipulis primus Ecclesiae pastor dicit: Propter quod succincti lumbos mentis vestrae, sobrii perfecte sperate in eam quae offertur vobis gratiam (I Pet. I, 13). Lumbos enim carnis succingere est luxuriam ab effectu refrenare. Lumbos vero mentis succingere est hanc etiam a cogitatione restringere. Hinc est quod angelus, qui Joannem alloquitur (Apoc. I, 13), zona aurea super mamillas cinctus 680 esse perhibetur. Quia enim Testamenti Novi munditia etiam cordis luxuriam

frenat, angelus qui in eo apparuit in pectore cinctus venit. Quem bene zona aurea stringit, quia quisquis supernae patriae civis est, non jam timore supplicii, sed amore charitatis immunditiam deserit. Malum vero luxuriae aut cogitatione perpetratur, aut opere. Callidus namque hostis noster cum ab effectu operis expellitur, secreta polluere cogitatione molitur. Unde et serpenti a Domino dicitur: Pectore et ventre repes (Genes. III, 14). Serpens videlicet ventre repit, quando hostis lubricus per humana membra sibimet subdita usque ad expletionem operis luxuriam exercet. Serpens autem repit pectore, quando eos quos in opere luxuriae non valet polluit in cogitatione. Alius itaque luxuriam jam perpetrat actione, huic serpens repit ex ventre. Alius autem perpetrandam versat in mente, huic serpens repit ex pectore. Sed quia per cogitationem ad explenda opera pervenitur, recte serpens prius pectore, et postmodum repere ventre describitur. [Rec. III.] Unde beatus Job, quia disciplinam etiam in cogitatione tenuit, una custodia serpentis pectus ventremque superavit, dicens: Pepigi foedus cum oculis meis, ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine. [Vet. III.] Quam nimirum cordis munditiam quisquis adipisci non appetit, quid aliud quam ejusdem a se munditiae auctorem repellit? Unde et beatus Job protinus subdit:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 2. Quam enim partem Deus haberet in me desuper, et haereditatem Omnipotens de excelsis? 6. Ut Dei haereditas simus, in nobis peccatum non regnet. Nihil prodest vel superba castitas, vel humilitas non casta. Ac si aperte dicat: Si mentem in cogitatione polluero, ejus qui munditiae auctor est, esse haereditas nequaquam possum. Nulla enim bona sunt caetera, si occulti judicis oculis castitatis testimonio non approbantur. Omnes quippe virtutes in conspectu conditoris vicaria ope se sublevant, ut quia una virtus sine alia vel nulla est omnino, vel minima, vicissim sua conjunctione fulciantur. Si enim vel castitatem humilitas deserat, vel humilitatem castitas

relinquat, apud auctorem humilitatis et munditiae prodesse quid praevalet vel superba castitas, vel humilitas inquinata? Sanctus igitur vir ut ab auctore suo in bonis reliquis possideri mereatur, cordis munditiam custodiens, dicat: Pepigi foedus cum oculis meis, ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine. Quam enim partem haberet Deus in me desuper, et haereditatem Omnipotens de excelsis? Ac si aperte fateatur, dicens. Habere me possessionem suam excelsorum conditor renuit, si mens mea ante conspectum illius in infimis desideriis tabescit. 7. Cogitatio immunda non inquinat cum pulsat, sed cum per delectationem subjugat. In carne corruptibili sufficit peccatum non regnare. Sed inter haec (De poenit., dist. 2, c. 23) sciendum est aliud esse quod animus de tentatione carnis patitur, aliud vero cum per consensum delectationibus obligatur. Plerumque enim cogitatione prava pulsatur, sed renititur; plerumque autem cum perversum quid concipit, hoc intra semetipsum etiam per desiderium volvit. Et nimirum mentem nequaquam cogitatio immunda inquinat cum pulsat, sed cum hanc sibi per delectationem subjugat. Hinc etenim praedicator egregius dicit: Tentatio vos non apprehendat, nisi humana (I Cor. X, 13). Humana quippe tentatio est, 681 qua plerumque in cogitatione tangimur etiam nolentes, quia ut nonnunquam et illicita ad animum veniant, hoc utique in nobismetipsis ex humanitatis corruptibilis pondere habemus. Jam vero daemoniaca est, et non humana tentatio, cum ad hoc quod carnis corruptibilitas suggerit per consensum se animus astringit. Hinc iterum dicit: Non regnet peccatum in vestro mortali corpore (Rom. VI, 12). Peccatum quippe in mortali corpore nequaquam non esse, sed regnare prohibuit, quia in carne corruptibili non regnare potest, sed non esse non potest. Hoc ipsum namque ei de peccato tentari peccatum est, quo quia quandiu vivimus perfecte omnimodo non caremus; sancta praedicatio quoniam hoc expellere plene non potuit, ei de nostri cordis habitaculo regnum tulit, ut appetitus illicitus etsi plerumque bonis nostris cogitationibus occulte se quasi fur inserit, saltem si ingreditur,

non dominetur. Vir igitur sanctus dicens: Pepigi foedus cum oculis meis, ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine, nequaquam vult intelligi quia ejus animum culpa in cogitatione non contigit, sed quia nunquam hunc ex consensu superavit. Nam velut integerrimam possessionem Dei mentem suam contra adversarii depraedationem vindicat, qui protinus adjungit: Quam enim partem haberet Deus in me desuper, et haereditatem Omnipotens de excelsis? Ac si aperte dicat: Carne quidem mortali corruptionis conditioni subjaceo, sed auctori unde servio, si ei integrum a consensu culpae animum non defendo? Sequitur:

CAPUT IV [Vet.

et Rec. IV]. VERS. 3. Numquid non perditio est iniquo, et alienatio operantibus iniquitatem. 8. Justi per asperum iter ad salutis patriam, reprobi per amaena prata ad foveam tendunt.Festina consolatio bonorum est consideratus finis malorum. Dum enim ex eorum interitu malum conspiciunt quod evadunt, leve existimant quidquid adversi in hac vita patiuntur. Eant ergo nunc reprobi, et delectationum suarum desideria compleant, in finis sui damnatione sensuri sunt quia mortem male viventes amaverunt. Transitorio autem verbere affligantur electi, ut a pravitate flagella corrigant quos paterna pietas ad haereditatem servat. Nunc etenim flagellatur justus, et verbere disciplinae corrigitur, quia ad aeternae haereditatis patrimonium praeparatur. In suis autem voluptatibus relaxtur injustus, quia tanto ei temporalia bona suppetunt, quanto aeterna denegantur. Injustus ad debitam mortem currens, effrenatis voluptatibus utitur, quia et vituli qui mactandi sunt in liberis pastibus relinquuntur. At contra justus a delectationis transitoriae jucunditate restringitur, quia et nimirum vitulus ad laboris usum vitae deputatus sub jugo retinetur. Negantur electis in hac vita bona terrena, quia et aegris, quibus spes vivendi est, nequaquam a medico cuncta quae appetunt conceduntur. Dantur autem

reprobis bona quae in hac vita appetunt, quia et desperatis aegris omne quod desiderant non negatur. Perpendant igitur justi quae sint mala, quae iniquos manent, et nequaquam eorum felicitati invideant quae percurrit. Quid est enim quod de eorum gaudiis admirentur, quando et ipsi per iter 682 asperum ad salutis patriam, et illi quasi per amoena prata ad foveam tendunt? Dicat ergo vir sanctus: Nunquid non perditio est iniquo, et alienatio operantibus iniquitatem? Quod videlicet alienationis verbum durius sonaret, si hoc interpres in suae linguae voce tenuisset. Quod enim apud nos alienatio, hoc apud Hebraeos anathema dicitur. Tunc ergo alienatio erit reprobis, cum ab haereditate districti judicis se anathema esse conspiciunt, quia hic eum perversis moribus contempserunt. Floreant igitur iniqui, a flore aeternae haereditatis alieni; justi vero semetipsos solerter inspiciant, et in cunctis actionibus suis a Domino se videri pertimescant. Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT V.

VERS 4. Nonne ipse considerat vias meas, et cunctos gressus meos dinumerat? 9. Minutissimae cogitationes, et tenuissima verba quae parvi pendimus, in judicio Dei non praetermittentur. Per gradus culpae, crescit ordo sententiae condemnatoriae. Quid viarum nomine nisi actiones denuntiat? Hinc enim per Jeremiam dicitur: Bonas facite via, vestras et studia vestra (Jerem. VII, 3). Quid vero gressuum appellatione, nisi vel motus mentium, vel profectus accipimus meritorum? Quibus profecto gressibus ad semetipsam nos Veritas vocat, dicens: Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis, et onerati estis (Matth. XI, 28). Ad se quippe venire nos Dominus praecipit, nimirum non gressibus corporis, sed profectibus cordis. Ipse namque ait: Veniet hora quando neque in monte hoc, neque in Jerosolymis adorabitis Patrem (Joan. IV, 21). Et paulo post: Veri adoratores adorabunt Patrem in spiritu et veritate, nam et Pater tales quaerit qui adorent eum

(Ibid., 23). In corde ergo esse gressus insinuat, quando et ut veniamus vocat et tamen motu corporis nequaquam nos ad alia transire denuntiat. [Vet. V.] Sic autem Dominus uniuscujusque considerat vias, sic dinumerat gressus, ut ne minutissimae quidem cogitationes ejus judicio ac verba tenuissima, quae apud nos usu viluerunt, indiscussa remaneant. Hinc enim dicit: Qui irascitur fratri suo, reus erit judicio. Qui dixerit fratri suo: Racha, reus erit concilio. Qui dixerit: Fatue, reus gehennae ignis (Matth. V, 22). Racha quippe in Hebraeo eloquio vox interjectionis est, quae quidem animum irascentis ostendit, nec tamen plenum verbum iracundiae exprimit. Prius ergo ira reprehenditur sine voce, postmodum vero ira cum voce, sed necdum pleno verbo formata; ad extremum quoque cum dicitur: Fatue ira redarguitur, quae cum excessu vocis expletur etiam perfectione sermonis. Et notandum quod in ira perhibet reum esse judicio; in voce irae, quod est racha, reum concilio; in verbo vocis quod est fatue, reum gehennae ignis. Per gradus etenim culpae crevit ordo sententiae, quia in judicio adhuc causa discutitur, in concilio autem jam causae sententia definitur, in gehenna vero ignis ea quae de concilio egreditur sententia expletur. Quia igitur humanorum actuum Dominus subtili examine gressus enumerat, ira sine voce, judicio; ira in voce, concilio; ira vero in voce atque sermone, gehennae ignibus mancipatur. Hanc subtilitatem considerationis ejus propheta aspexerat, cum dicebat: Fortissime, magne, potens Dominus exercituum; nomen tibi, magnus consilio, incomprehensibilis cogitatu, cujus oculi aperti 683 sunt, super omnes vias filiorum Adam, ut reddas unicuique secundum vias suas, et secundum fructum adinventionum ejus (Jerem. XXXII, 18). 10. Nulla sine mercede bona, nulla mala sine poena.Sic easdem vias Dominus subtili examinatione considerat, ut in unoquoque nostrum nec ea quae remuneret bona praetereat, nec mala, quae videlicet displicent, sine increpatione derelinquat. Hinc est enim quod angelum Ecclesiae Pergami et in quibusdam laudat, et in quibusdam redarguit dicens: Scio ubi habitas, ubi

sedes est satanae, et tenes nomen meum, et non negasti fidem meam (Apoc. II, 13, 14). Et paulo post: Sed habeo adversum te pauca, quia habes illic tenentes doctrinam Balaam. Hinc angelo Ecclesiae Thyatirae dicitur: Novi opera tua, et charitatem tuam, et fidem, et ministerium, et patientiam tuam, et opera tua novissima plura prioribus; sed habeo adversum te pauca, quia permittis mulierem Jezabel, quae se dicit propheten, docere et seducere servos meos, et fornicari, et manducare idolothytum (Ibid., 19). Ecce bona memorat, nec tamen resecanda mala sine poenitentia relaxat, quia scilicet sic singulorum vias considerat, sic gressus enumerans pensat, ut subtili examine perpendat vel quantum quisque ad bona proficiat, vel quantum ad mala devians suis profectibus contradicat. Incrementum quippe meritorum, quod bonae vitae studiis augetur, plerumque mali admistione retrahitur; et bonum quod animus operando construit, hoc alia perpetrando pervertit. Unde sancti viri tanto se subtilius in cogitatione constringunt, quanto a superno judice districtius considerari conspiciunt. Mentem quippe discutiunt, invenire si qua dereliquerint quaerunt, ut tanto fiant irreprehensibiles judici, quanta semetipsos quotidie et sine cessatione reprehendunt. Nec tamen hac de re jam gaudia securitatis sumunt, quia ab illo se videri considerant qui in eis et illa videt quae videre ipsi in semetipsis non valent. Et quidem beatus Job perfectionis vitam inter veteres tenuit; sed quia ejus intentio ad Redemptoris adventum prophetico spiritu erumpit in illius praeceptis, pensat ipse quam multa de perfectione minus habeat. Unde et subdit:

CAPUT VI [Vet.

VI, Rec. V]. VERS. 5, 6. Si ambulavi in vanitate, et festinavit in dolo pes meus, appendat me in statera justa, et sciat Deus simplicitatem meam. 11. Sancti merita sua in Christo tanquam in stater curent appendere, ut quod minus habent, agnoscant.Scire Deus dicitur scire nos facere, usitato nostrae

locutionis modo, qui laetum diem dicimus, ex quo contingit ut laetemur. Hinc est enim quod ad Abraham Dominus dicit: Nunc cognovi quod timeas Deum (Genes. 22, 12). Neque enim creator temporum quidquam cognovit ex tempore; sed cognoscere ejus est ex cujuslibet causae emergentis articulo nobis cognitionem praebere. Quis vero staterae nomine nisi Mediator Dei et hominum designatur? In quo aequa lance omnia merita nostra pensantur, et in cujus praeceptis agnoscimus quid in nostra vita minus habeamus. In hac autem statera appendimur, quoties ad vitae ejus exempla provocamur. Hinc namque scriptum est: Christus pro nobis passus est, vobis relinquens exemplum, ut sequamini 684 vestigia ejus, qui peccatum non fecit, nec inventus est dolus in ore ejus. Qui cum malediceretur, non maledicebat; cum pateretur, non comminabatur (I Pet. II, 21). Hinc per Paulum dicitur: Per patientiam curramus ad propositum nobis certamen, aspicientes in auctorem fidei et consummatorem Jesum, qui proposito sibi gaudio sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta (Hebr. XII, 1). Ad hoc itaque Dominus apparuit in carne, ut humanam vitam admonendo excitaret, exempla praebendo accenderet, moriendo redimeret, resurgendo repararet. Cum ergo nulla in se beatus Job jure redarguenda reperit, ad excedentem omnia Redemptoris vitam mentis oculos tendit, ut in illa cognoscat ipse quid minus habeat, cum dicit: Si ambulavi in vanitate, et festinavit in dolo pes meus, appendat me in statera justa, et sciat Deus simplicitatem meam. Ac si aperte dicat: Si qua unquam leviter, si qua perniciose perpetravi, Dei et hominum Mediator appareat, ut in ejus vita cognoscam an ego veraciter simplex fuerim. Qui enim, ut diximus, suorum temporum viros excesserat, Mediatorem Dei et hominum quaerebat, ut in illo pensatus agnosceret si vitam simplicem vere tenuisset. Dicat ergo: Appendat me in statera justa, et sciat Deus simplicitatem meam. Quod est scire me faciat. Ac si patenter fateatur, dicens: Quantum ad humanae vitae modum, nulla in me reprehendenda jam video; sed nisi Mediator Dei et hominum cum subtilioris

vitae praeceptis appareat, quantum adhuc a vera simplicitate discrepem, non cognosco. Rectus vero ordo servatur, si prius in vanitate, et postmodum pes in dolo festinasse dicatur. Vanitas quippe ad levitatem, dolus vero ad malitiam pertinet. Et nonnulli plerumque ad quaedam post malitiosa perveniunt, quia prius levia non declinant. Sequitur.

CAPUT VII [Vet. VII].

VERS. 7. Si declinavit gressus meus de via. 12. A via declinamus, quoties errori consentimus. Toties gressus de via declinat, quoties nostra cogitatio iter rectitudinis per consensum relinquit erroris. Quasi vero tot gressus extra viam ponimus, quot perversis desideriis a coelestis vitae delectatione separamur. Ut enim praefati sumus, adhuc carnis corruptibilis pondere gravati, nequaquam valemus sic vivere, ut nulla nos possit culpae delectatio pulsare. Sed aliud est nolentem tangi, aliud consentientem animum perimi. Sancti autem viri tanto vigilantiori se circumspectione custodiunt, quanto se pulsari sinistris motibus vel transitoriae delectationis dedignantur. Unde et adhuc subditur:

CAPUT VIII [Rec VI].

IBID. Si secutus est ocutus meus cor meum. 13. Cordi illicita concupiscenti oculus famulari deneget. Tentatio aliquando per oculos trahitur, aliquando intrinsecus concipitur. Qui exteriori negligenter utitur, interiori oculo juste caecatur. Ecce iterum per interioris vigoris custodiam ad exteriorum membrorum disciplinam redit, ut si quid fortasse cor illicitum concupisceret, pressus disciplinae magisterio oculus videre recusaret. Sicut enim saepe tentatio per oculos trahitur, sic nonnunquam concepta intrinsecus compellit sibi extrinsecus oculos deservire. Nam plerumque res quaelibet innocenti mente respicitur, sed ipso conspectu animus concupiscentiae gladio confoditur. Non enim, ut exempli causa jam

diximus, 685 David Uriae conjugem ideo studiose respexit, quia concupierat, sed potius ideo concupivit quia incaute respexit. Fit vero rectae retributionis examine ut qui exteriori negligenter utitur, interiori oculo non injuste caecetur. Saepe autem intrinsecus concupiscentia dominatur, et illecebratus animus ad usus suos sensus corporeos famulari more tyrannidis exigit, suisque voluptatibus oculos servire compellit, atque, ut ita dicam, fenestras luminis ad tenebras aperit caecitatis. Unde sancti viri cum sinistra pulsari delectatione se sentiunt, ipsa per quae formae species ad mentem ingreditur disciplinae magisterio lumina restringunt, ne pravae cogitationi visio lenocinata famuletur. Quae si unquam subtiliter custodiri negligitur, cogitationis immunditia protinus ad operationem transit. Unde et mox subditur:

CAPUT IX [Rec. VII].

IBID. Et si in manibus meis adhaesit macula. 14. Ne culpa ad opus prodeat, intus ubi nascitur, exstinguatur. Sanctus ergo vir sciens quod plerumque prava cogitatio per oculos veniat ad mentem, paulo superius dixit: Pepigi foedus cum oculis meis, ut ne cogitarem quidem de virgine. Perpendens etiam quod nonnunquam in mente oritur, sed huic obortae oculi perverse famulantur, ait: Si secutus est oculus meus cor meum. Ac si aperte dicat: Nec passim videre volui quae concupiscerem, nec videndo unquam secutus sum quae concupivi. Dicat ergo: Si secutus est oculus meus cor meum, quia et si quid unquam illicitum mens ejus, ut videlicet humana, concepit, altioris disciplinae magisterio constrictos sequi se per illicita sibique famulari oculos noluit. Pensemus ad haec conscientias nostras, et quanti culminis vir iste fuerit, ex nostri cordis dejectione videamus. Ecce si qua illicita aliquando cogitavit, quia ea citius intra arcana cordis gladio sancti vigoris exstinxit, pervenire illa usque ad opera non permisit. Unde, ut praemisimus, illico subjungit. Et si in manibus meis adhaesit macula. Quando enim

macula in manibus, id est culpa actionibus inhaeret, quam censura disciplinae non sinebat in cogitatione proficere? Neque enim culpa ad opus prodire permittitur, si intus ubi nascitur exstinguatur. Si autem tentationi in corde nascenti festine non resistitur, hac eadem qua nutritur mora roboratur; et existens foris in operibus, vinci vix praevalet, quia ipsam intus membrorum dominam mentem captivam tenet. Quia vero vir sanctus superiora omnia sub conditione intulit, si haec unquam perpetraverit, sententia se maledictionis astringit, dicens:

CAPUT X [Rec. VIII].

VERS. 8. Seram, et alius comedat, et progenies mea eradicetur. 15. Serit jejunus praedicator, et alius comedit, quando quae docet non operatur. More sacri eloquii serere dicimus, verba vitae praedicare. Hinc etenim propheta ait: Beati qui seminatis super omnes aquas (Isai. XXXII, 20). Sanctae quippe Ecclesiae praedicatores super omnes aquas seminare conspexit, quia cunctis late populis verba vitae, quasi coelestis panis grana, tradiderunt. Comedere autem est bonis operibus satiari. Unde per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Meus cibus est ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me (Joan. IV, 34). Si ergo ea quae protulit facere praetermisit, ait: Seram, et alius comedat. Ac si aperte dicat: Quod os meum loquitur, non ego, sed alter operetur. Praedicator quippe 686 qui a suis vocibus moribus descrepat, jejunus serit quod alius manducet, quia suo semine ipse non pascitur, quando a verbi sui rectitudine prava actione vacuatur. [Vet. VIII.] Et quia plerumque discipuli incassum bona audiunt, cum ex magistri vita operum exemplo destruuntur, recte subjungitur: Et progenies mea eradicetur. 16. Ejus progenies eradicatur, quia quos per verbum gignit, per exemplum necat. Doctoris enim progenies eradicatur quando is qui per verbum nascitur per exemplum necatur, quia quem lingua vigilans gignit, vitae negligentia occidit. Neque enim torpenti nobis est mente transeundum quod apud Salomonem mulier

filium, quem vigilans lactare consueverat, dormiens interemit (III Reg. III, 19), quia nimirum magistri vigilantes quidem scientia, sed vita dormientes, auditores suos quos per vigilias praedicationis nutriunt, dum quod dicunt facere negligunt, per somnum torporis occidunt, et negligendo opprimunt quos alere verborum lacte videbantur. Unde plerumque dum ipsi reprehensibiliter vivunt, et habere discipulos vitae laudabilis nequeunt, et alienos sibi attrahere conantur, quantenus dum bonos se habere sequaces ostendunt, apud judicia hominum excusent mala quae agunt, et quasi per subditorum vitam mortiferam tegant negligentiam. Unde illic mulier filium quia exstinxit proprium, quaesivit alienum. Sed tamen veram matrem Salomonis gladius invenit, quia videlicet cujus fructus vivat, vel cujus intereat, extremo examine ira districti judicis demonstrat. Ubi et illud est solerter intuendum, quod vivens filius prius dividi praecipitur, ut soli postmodum matri reddatur, quia in hac vita quasi partiri conceditur vita discipuli, dum ex illa nonnunquam alter apud Deum meritum, alter vero apud homines laudem habere permittitur. 17. Amissis propriis filiis, alienos vivere invidet. Sed falsa mater eum quem non genuit, occidi non metuit, quia arrogantes magistri et charitatis ignari, si plenissimum nomen laudis ex alienis discipulis consequi nequeunt, eorum vitam crudeliter insequuntur. Invidiae enim face succensi, nolunt aliis vivere, quos se conspiciunt non posse possidere. Unde illic perversa mulier clamat. Nec meus sit, nec istius (Ibid., 26). Ut enim diximus, quos sibi obsequi non vident ad gloriam temporalem, eos aliis invident vivere per veritatem. Vera autem mater satagit ut ejus filius saltem apud extraneam sit et vivat, quia concedunt veraces magistri ut ex eorum discipulis alii quidem magisterii laudem habeant, si tamen integritatem vitae iidem discipuli non amittant. Per quae pietatis viscera haec eadem vera mater agnoscitur, quia omne magisterium in examine charitatis approbatur; et sola recipere totum meruit, quae quasi totum concessit, quia fideles praepositi, pro eo quod ex bonis discipulis suis

non solum aliis laudem non invident, sed utilitatem eis etiam profectus exorant, ipsi et integros et viventes filios recipiunt, quando in supremo examine ex eorum vita perfectae retributionis gaudia consequuntur. Haec paucis per excessum diximus, ut auditorum progenies per doctorum negligentiam qualiter exstinguitur monstraremus, quia quisquis juxta hoc quod loquitur non vivit, quos verbo genuit a stabilitate rectitudinis opere evellit. Sed beatus 687 Job, quos praedicatione vigilans edidit, nequaquam actione dormiens exstinxit, atque ideo fidenter dicit: Si quominus praedicta complevi, Seram, et alius comedat, et progenies mea eradicetur. Qui adhuc se de inquinatione pravi operis discutiens, subdit:

CAPUT XI [Vet.

et Rec. IX]. VERS. 9. Si deceptum est cor meum super muliere, et si ad ostium amici mei insidiatus sum. 18. In sacris litteris adulterium et fornicatio aliquando distinguuntur, aliquando idem sonant. Utrumque prohibitum. Ab utriusque vel cogitatione Job abstinuit. Quamvis nonnunquam a reatu adulterii nequaquam discrepet culpa fornicationis, cum Veritas dicat: Qui viderit (D. 32, q. 5, ca) mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam moechatus est eam in corde suo (Matth. V, 28). (Quia enim Graeco verbo moechus adulter dicitur, cum non aliena conjux, sed mulier videri prohibetur, aperte Veritas ostendit quia etiam solo visu cum turpiter vel innupta concupiscitur, adulterium perpetratur.) Tamen plerumque ex loco, vel ordine concupiscentis discernitur, quia scilicet sic hunc in sacro ordine studiosa concupiscentia, sicut illum adulterii inquinat culpa. In personis tamen non dissimilibus idem luxuriae distinguitur reatus, in quibus fornicationis culpa, quia ab adulterii reatu discernitur, praedicatoris egregii lingua testatur, qui inter caetera asserit, dicens: Neque fornicarii, neque idolis servientes, neque adulteri, regnum Dei possidebunt (I Cor. VI, 9). Quod enim disjuncto reatui sententiam subdit, quam valde a se dissideat

ostendit. Per hoc ergo quod dicitur: Si deceptum est cor meum super muliere, neque cogitasse vir sanctus de fornicationis macula demonstratur. Per hoc autem quod subjicit: Et si ad ostium amici mei insiditatus sum, patenter innotescit quod a reatu adulterii liber fuit. Sed ad haec fortasse aliquis dicat: Quid de se mirum sanctus vir asserit, si non solum ab adulterii crimine, verum etiam a fornicationis inquinatione se liberum servavit? Haec autem parvipendimus, si virtutum ejus tempora minime pensamus. Necdum enim ad restrictionem carnis revelatae gratiae districtior censura processerat, quae non solum corporis, sed et cordis lasciviam reprehendit. Necdum multorum continentium castitatis bona imitanda prodierant, et tamen beatus Job exempla munditiae, quae non acceperat, tradebat. A multis autem nunc etiam post prohibitionem Dei carnis immunditia perpetratur. Hinc ergo colligendum est, cum tanta culpa nunc etiam post praeceptum in gravibus delinquitur, cum quanta laude antea a gravibus abstinebatur. Qui si hoc unquam fecerit, eamdem culpam verti sibi expetit in poenam, dicens:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 10. Scortum alterius sit uxor mea, et super illam incurventur alii. 19. Luxuriae crimen usque ad perditionem vorat, omnesque virtutes destruit. Nemo hic sine peccato. Et quia plerumque hoc quod faciendo non perpendimus quam grave sit, patiendo pensamus ejusdem vim facinoris quod se pati, si reus sit, debere denuntiat, exprimendo manifestat, dicens: VERS. 11, 12. Hoc enim nefas est et iniquitas maxima; ignis est usque ad perditionem devorans, et omnia eradicans genimina. 688 Hoc inter peccatum distat et crimen, quod omne crimen peccatum est, non tamen omne peccatum crimen est. Et in hac vita multi sine crimine, nullus vero esse sine peccatis valet. Unde et praedicator sanctus, cum virum dignum gratia sacerdotali describeret, nequaquam dixit: Si quis sine peccato; sed, Si

quis sine crimine est (Tit. I, 6). Quis vero esse sine peccato valeat, cum Joannes dicat: Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, nosmetipsos seducimus, et veritas in nobis non est (I Joan. I, 8). In qua videlicet peccatorum, et criminum distinctione pensandum est quia nonnulla peccata animam polluunt, quam crimina exstinguunt. Unde beatus Job crimen luxuriae definiens, ait: Ignis est usque ad perditionem devorans, quia nimirum reatus hujus facinoris non solum usque ad inquinationem maculat, sed usque ad perditionem vorat. Et quia quamlibet alia fuerint bona opera, si luxuriae scelus non abluitur, immensitate hujus criminis obruuntur, secutus adjunxit: Et omnia eradicans genimina. Genimina quippe sunt animae operationes bonae. Cui tamen si perverso ordine caro dominatur, igne luxuriae omnia bene prolata concremantur. Nulla quippe ante omnipotentis Dei oculos justitiae pietatisque sunt opera, quae corruptionis contagio monstrantur immunda. Quid enim prodest si pie quisquam necessitati compatitur proximi, quando impie semetipsum destruit habitationem Dei? Si ergo per cordis munditiam libidinis flamma non exstinguitur, incassum quaelibet virtutes oriuntur, sicut per Moysen dicitur: Ignis exarsit ab ira mea, et ardebit usque ad inferos deorsum; comedet terram, et nascentia ejus (Deut. XXXII, 22). Ignis quippe terram atque ejus nascentia comedit, cum libido carnem, atque per hanc omnia bene acta consumit. Nam quidquid prodit ex fruge rectitudinis, hoc nimirum concremat flamma corruptionis. Dicat ergo: Ignis est usque ad perditionem devorans, et omnia eradicans genimina, quia si corruptionis malo non resistitur, et illa procul dubio pereunt quae bona videbantur. Sed solent nonnullos ad humilitatem vitia sternere, atque ad tumorem mentis virtutes elevare. [Vet. I.] Quaerendum ergo nobis est, si beatus Job in tanta castitatis munditia etiam humilis fuit. Sed sanctus vir cum alta virtutum teneat, quam de se humilia sentiat, repente aperit, cum subjungit:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 13. Si contempsi judicium subire cum serva meo et ancilla mea, cum disceptarent adversum me. 20. Mira Job in tanta vitae innocentia humilitas.Qui enim judicari cum servis ancillisque non renuit, liquido indicat quod contra nullum unquam proximum apud se tumidus fuit. Inter haec autem libet intueri, vitam suam in omnibus quanta vir sanctus discretione custodivit. Non enim longe superius dixit: Videbant me juvenes, et abscondebantur, et senes assurgentes stabant; principes cessabant loqui, et digitum superponebant ori suo; vocem suam cohibebant duces, et lingua eorum gutturi suo adhaerebat. (Reg. X.] Nunc vero ait: Si contempsi judicium subire cum servo meo et ancilla mea, cum 689 disceptarent adversum me. Quis digne considerare valeat hujus viri tam sublimia virtutum moderamina? In quo tanta est auctoritas regiminis, ut ad silentium restringantur duces: tanta humilitas cordis, ut ex aequo ad judicium venire permittantur ancillae. Ecce apparet miro modo in potestate principibus potior, in certamine servis aequalis; in coetu principum memor regiminis, in certamine famulorum memor conditionis. Se quippe sub vero domino famulum conspicit, ideoque cordis altitudine se super famulos non extollit. Unde et protinus subdit:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 14. Quid enim faciam cum surrexerit ad judicandum Deus? et cum quaesierit, quid respondebo illi? 21. Qui aliis praesunt, Deo se subesse semper attendant. Qui venturum judicem cogitat, indesinenter quotidie rationum suarum in melius causas parat; qui aeternum Dominum tremore cordis intuetur, jura temporalis dominii super subjectos moderari compellitur. Perpendit enim nil esse quod temporaliter praeest caeteris, quando illi ad reddendam rationem subest qui sine fine dominatur. Saepe namque transitoria potestas animum per abrupta elationis rapit. Et quia eo quisque extollitur, quo se esse super aliquos videt, illum oportet qui super se

est semper aspiciat, ut ejus metu qui supra omnia est crescentem intrinsecus animi tumorem premat. Intuetur enim qui sub ipso sint, sed consideret sub quo ipse sit, ut ex consideratione veri domini, decrescat tumor falsae dominationis. Unde beatus Job, quia ejus judicium qui super omnia est metuit, hic ad temporale judicium famulis aequalis venit, dicens: Si contempsi judicium subire cum servo meo et ancilla mea, cum disceptarent adversum me. Quid enim faciam cum surrexerit ad judicandum Deus? et cum quaesierit, quid respondebo illi? Qui ut semper cor in humilitate deprimat, nequaquam in eisdem famulis conspicit, quod sibi status est dispar, sed quod natura communis. Unde etiam subdit:

CAPUT XV [Vet. XI].

VERS. 15. Nunquid non in utero fecit me, qui et illum operatus est, et formavit in vulva unus? 22. Cogitent aequalitatem conditionis, non potestatem ordinis? et plus prodesse quam praeesse studeant. Potentibus viris magna est virtus humilitatis, considerata aequalitas conditionis. Omnes namque homines natura aequales sumus; sed accessit dispensatorio ordine, ut quibusdam praelati videamur. Si igitur hoc a mente deprimimus quod temporaliter accessit, invenimus citius quod naturaliter sumus. Plerumque enim se animo accepta potestas objicit, eumque tumidis cogitationibus fallit. Manu ergo humillimae considerationis deprimendus est tumor elationis. Si enim apud semetipsam mens descendit de vertice culminis, citius planitiem invenit naturalis aequalitatis. Nam, ut praefati sumus, omnes homines natura aequales genuit, sed variante meritorum ordine, alios aliis dispensatio occulta postponit. Ipsa autem diversitas, quae accessit ex vitio, recte est divinis judiciis ordinata, ut quia omnis homo iter vitae aeque non graditur, alter ab altero regatur. Sancti autem viri cum praesunt, non in se potestatem ordinis, sed aequalitatem conditionis attendunt, nec praeesse gaudent hominibus, sed prodesse. Sciunt enim quod antiqui patres nostri,

non tam reges hominum quam pastores pecorum fuisse memorantur. Et cum Noe Dominus filiisque ejus diceret. 690 Crescite et multiplicamini et implete terram, subdit: Et terror vester ac tremor sit super cuncta animalia terrae (Genes. IX, 1, 7). Non enim ait: Sit super homines, qui futuri sunt; sed, Sit super cuncta animalia terrae. 23. Homo irrationalibus animantibus, non autem caeteris hominibus natura est praelatus. Homo quippe animalibus irrationabilibus, non autem caeteris hominibus natura praelatus est; et idcirco ei dicitur, ut ab animalibus et non ab homine timeatur, quia contra naturam superbire est, ab aequali velle timeri, quamvis plerumque a subditis etiam sancti viri timeri appetunt, sed quando ab eisdem subditis Deum minime timeri deprehendunt, ut humana saltem formidine peccare metuant, qui divina judicia non formidant. Nequaquam ergo praepositi ex hoc quaesito timore superbiunt, in quo non suam gloriam, sed subditorum justitiam quaerunt. In eo enim quod metum sibi a perverse viventibus exigunt, quasi a non hominibus, sed brutis animalibus dominantur, quia videlicet ex qua parte bestiales sunt subditi, ex ea etiam debent formidini jacere substrati. 24. Nulla cogente vitii corrigendi necessitate, praelati metui refugiant, et pluris aestimari. Cum vero deest vitium quod corrigatur, non de excellentia potestatis, sed de aequalitate conditionis gaudent; et non solum ab eis metui, sed etiam plus quam necesse est honorari refugiunt. Neque enim leve se perpeti damnum humilitatis credunt, si ab eis pro merito fortasse ordinis pluris aestimentur. Hinc est enim quod primus pastor Ecclesiae, cum, adorante se Cornelio, super se sibi honorem videret oblatum ad aequalitatem conditionis suae citius recurrit, dicens: Surge, et ipse ego homo sum (Act. X, 26). Quis enim nesciat quod conditori suo homo debeat et non homini prosterni? Quia ergo humiliari sibi plus quam debuit proximum vidit, ne ultra humanitatis metas mens intumesceret, esse se hominem recognovit, quatenus illati sibi honoris elationem frangeret ex considerata aequalitate conditionis. Hinc a Joanne angelus adoratus,

creaturam se esse cognovit, dicens: Vide ne feceris; conservus tuus sum, et fratrum tuorum (Apoc. XIX, 10; XXII, 9). Hinc propheta, cum ad videnda sublimia rapitur, filius hominis vocatur (Ezec. III, 1), ut ductus ad coelestia, hominem se esse meminerit. Ac si eum divina vox verbis apertioribus admoneat dicens: Memento quid sis, ne de his ad quae raperis extollaris, sed altitudinem revelationis tempera memoria conditionis. Ex eo ergo colligendum est quanta communis naturae memoria in corde deprimi debeat terrenae potestatis tumor, si ex humanitatis vocabulo agitur, ne cogitationis elatio ex secretis coelestibus generetur. Cujus videlicet humanitatis bene beatus Job semper recordationem tenuit, qui ait: Nunquid non in utero fecit me, qui et illum operatus est, et formavit in vulva unus? Ac si aperte dicat: Cur non aeque debeamus in cujuslibet negotii judicio discuti, qui per conditoris potentiam sumus aequaliter facti? Sed quia castitatis ejus atque humilitatis acta cognovimus, nunc liberalitatis opera cognoscamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI [Vet.

XII, Rec. XI]. VERS. 16. Si negavi quod volebant pauperibus, et oculos viduae exspectare feci. 25. Liberalitas Job pauperibus dantis ad eorum votum. Qui extra metas inopiae petunt, obtinere non merentur.Per haec dicta vir sanctus ostenditur, non solum ad inopiam pauperibus, sed etiam ad habendi desiderium deservisse. Sed quid si ipsa vellent 691 pauperes quae fortasse accipere non expediret? An quia in Scriptura sacra dici pauperes humiles solent, ea sola aestimanda sunt quae accipere pauperes volunt, quae humiles petunt? Et procul dubio oportet ut incunctanter detur quidquid cum vera humilitate requiritur; id est, quod non ex desiderio, sed ex necessitate postulatur. Nam valde jam superbire est, extra metas inopiae aliquid desiderare. Unde et superbe petentibus dicitur: Petitis et non accipitis, ec quod male petatis (Jac. IV, 3). Quia ergo illi sunt veraciter pauperes, qui

inflati per superbiae spiritum non sunt, quos aperte Veritas exprimit, cum dicit: Beati pauperes spiritu (Matth. V, 3); recte nunc per sanctum virum dicitur: Si negavi quod volebant pauperibus, quoniam qui ea volunt quae profecto liquet quod eis non expediunt, eo ipso quod superbiae abundant spiritu, jam pauperes non sunt. Sed beatus Job dum pauperes humiles appellat, quidquid ab eo accipere pauper voluit, non negavit, quia veraciter quisque humilis quod non potuit oportere, nec voluit. 26. Munificentia Job non solum ex munere, sed ex dandi celeritate pensanda. Sed cum largitatem mentis suae indicat, quia ad votum se pauperibus concurrisse manifestat, necesse est ut quaeramus ne lumen misericordiae dationis tarditate fuscaverit. Unde subjungit: Et oculos viduae expectare feci. Petentem se viduam exspectare noluit, ut non solum ex munere, sed etiam ex celeritate muneris, bonorum operum merita augeret. Unde alias scriptum est: Ne dicas amico tuo, vade et revertere, cras dabo tibi, cum statim possis dare (Prov. III, 28). Sed nonnulli solent exterius multa largiri, communis autem vitae gratiam repellentes habere pauperes socios in domestica conversatione refugiunt. Unde beatus Job, ut non solum se insinuet exterius multa praebuisse, sed apud se quosque inopes etiam in domestica conversatione recepisse, protinus adjungit:

CAPUT XVII [Rec. XII].

VERS. 17. Si comedi buccellam meam solus, et non comedit pupillus ex ea. 27. Inopes hospitio recipiendi et ad mensam adhibendi.Scilicet pietati se praejudicium facere aestimans, si solus comederet quod Dominus omnium communiter creasset. Quae profecto communio conversationis esse cum talibus intra domesticos parietes debet, ex quibus aeternae proficiant merita retributionis. Unde sanctus vir non quemlibet, sed ad manducandum socium pupillum se habuisse perhibet. Sed tanta haec pietatis viscera utrum a

semetipso habuerit, an conditoris sui gratia sit consecutus, innotescat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 18. Quia ab infantia mea crevit mecum miseratio, et de utero matris meae egressa est mecum. 28. Sancti bona sua non sibi, sed Deo tribuunt. Quidam dum aetate crescunt, ab innocentia decrescunt. Miseratio etenim etsi ejus fuerit arbitrii, ut cum ipso proficeret, liquet tamen quia ejus arbitrii non fuit ut cum ipso de utero exiret. Constat ergo quia suae virtuti nil tribuit, qui profecto testatur quia hoc ex conditionis munere accepit. Bonum igitur quod a conditione habuisse se intimat, liquet procul dubio quia ad laudem conditoris narrat, indicans ab ipso se accepisse ut pius esset, a quo accepit ut esset, quia sicut suo opere in utero conditus non fuit, ita nec sua virtute ab utero 692 pius fuit. Sed pensandum nobis est, quod asserit: Crevit mecum. Nonnulli enim quoad aetatem crescunt, ab innocentia decrescunt. Electis vero cum foris aetas corporis, intus, si dici liceat, crescit aetas virtutis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX [Vet.

XIII, Rec. XIV]. VERS. 19, 20. Si despexi praetereuntem, eo quod non habuerit indumentum, et absque operimento pauperem; si non benedixerunt mihi latera ejus, et de velleribus ovium mearum calefactus est. 29. Misericordiam in pauperes comitetur humilitas. Qui praemissis probris eleemosynam tribuunt, vix pro illata injuria satisfaciunt. Quod pauperem non despexit, virtutem humilitatis exhibuit; quod autem operuit, pietatis. Duae quippe istae virtutes ita sibimet esse connexae debent, ut vicario semper opere fulciantur; quatenus nec humilitas, cum veneratur proximum, largitatis gratiam deserat, nec pietas cum largitur intumescat. Erga indigentiam itaque proximi humilitatem pietas fulciat, humilitas pietatem, ut

cum indigentem rebus necessariis naturae tuae consortem videris, nec per impietatem desinas tegere, nec per superbiam negligas venerari quem tegis. Nam sunt nonnulli qui mox ut ab egenis fratribus fuerint necessaria postulati, post dona largituri, in eos prius contumeliosa verba jaculantur. Qui etsi rebus ministerium pietatis perficiunt, verbis tamen gratiam humilitatis perdunt; ita ut plerumque videatur quia illatae jam injuriae satisfactionem solvunt, cum post contumelias dona largiuntur. Nec magni est operis quod postulata tribuunt, quia ipso dationis suae munere vix eumdem excessum sermonis tegunt. Quibus bene per Ecclesiasticum librum dicitur: Omni dato non des tristitiam verbi mali (Eccli. XVIII, 16). Et rursum: Ecce verbum super datum bonum, et utraque cum homine justificato (Ibid., 17), videlicet, ut datum exhiberi debeat per pietatem, et bonum verbum tribui per humilitatem. At contra, alii egenos fratres non student rebus fulcire cum possint, sed blandis tantum sermonibus fovere. Quos vehementer Jacobi praedicatio sancta reprehendit, dicens: Si autem frater aut soror nudi sunt, et indigent victu quotidiano, dicat autem aliquis ex vobis illis: Ite in pace, calefacimini et saturamini; non dederitis autem eis quae necessaria sunt corpori, quid vobis proderit? Quos Joannes quoque Apostolus admonet, dicens: Filioli mei, non diligamus verbo, nec lingua, sed opere et veritate (I Joan. III, 13). Dilectio namque nostra semper exhibenda est et veneratione sermonis, et ministerio largitatis. [Vet. XIV.] Pauperibus eleemosynam dantes, patronis munera offerimus. Seminamus quae postea cum magno fenore metamus. Multum vero ad edomandam dantis superbiam valet, si cum terrena tribuit verba sollicite magistri coelestis penset, qui ait: Facite vobis amicos de mammona iniquitatis, ut cum defeceritis, recipiant vos in aeterna tabernacula (Luc. XVI, 9). Si enim eorum amicitiis aeterna tabernacula acquirimus, dantes procul dubio pensare debemus, quia patronis potius munera offerimus quam egenis dona largimur. Hinc per Paulum dicitur: Vestra abundantia illorum inopiam

suppleat, ut et illorum abundantia vestrae inopiae sit supplementum (II Cor. II, 14). Ut videlicet sollicite perpendamus quia et eos quos nunc inopes cernimus, abundantes quandoque videbimus; et 693 qui abundantes aspicimur, si largiri negligimus quandoque inopes erimus. Qui itaque nunc temporale subsidium pauperi tribuit, ab eo postmodum perpetua recepturus, ut ita dicam, quasi ad frugem terram excolit, quae quod acceperit uberius reddit. Restat ergo ut nunquam elatio surgat ex munere quando videlicet dives ex eo quod pauperi tribuit agit ut in perpetuum pauper non sit. Beatus igitur Job ut diligenter ostenderet humilitas atque misericordia quanta in eo fuerit consideratione sociata ait: Si despexi praetereuntem, eo quod non habuerit indumentum, et absque operimento pauperem; si non benedixerunt mihi latera ejus, et de velleribus ovium mearum calefactus est. Ac si aperte diceret: In amore proximi uno eodemque ordine et superbiae vitium, et impietatis premens, praetereuntem quempiam et humiliter aspiciens non despexi, et misericorditer calefeci. Quisquis enim super eum cui aliquid tribuit fastu se elationis extollit, majorem culpam intrinsecus superbiendo peragit, quam extrinsecus largiendo, mercedem, fitque ipse bonis interioribus nudus, cum nudum despicit vestiens; eoque agit ut se ipso deterior fiat, quo se indigenti proximo meliorem putat. Minus quippe inops est qui vestem non habet quam qui humilitatem. Unde necesse est ut cum naturae nostrae consortes exteriora non habere conspicimus, quam multa nobis desint bona interiora pensemus; quatenus sese super inopes cogitatio non elevet, cum solerter videt quia nos tanto verius quanto et interius indigentes sumus. 31. Etiam incognitis erogetur eleemosyna. Et quia sunt nonnulli qui pietatis suae viscera tendere usque ad incognitos nesciunt, sed solis quos per assiduitatem notitiae didicerint miserentur, apud quos nimirum plus familiaritas quam natura valet, dum quibusdam necessaria non quia homines, sed quia noti sunt, largiuntur, bene nunc per beatum Job dicitur: Si despexi praetereuntem, eo quod non habuerit indumentum.

Ignoto enim proximo misertum se indicat, quem praetereuntem vocat, quia videlicet apud piam mentem plus natura valet quam notitia. Nam et unusquisque qui indiget, eo ipso quo homo est, ei jam incognitus non est. Sequitur:

CAPUT XX [Rec. XV].

VERS. 21. Si levavi super pupillum manum meam, etiam cum viderem me in porta superiorem. 32. Sancti libenter injuriam patiuntur, et quae sibi debentur cavent districtius exigere. Mos apud veteres fuit ut ad portam seniores sederent, qui certantium jurgia judiciaria examinatione discernerent; quatenus urbem, in qua concorditer oporteret vivere, discordes minime intrarent. Unde et per prophetam Dominus dicit: Constituite in porta judicium. (Amos. V, 15). Hoc itaque loco quid portae nomine exprimitur nisi id quod agebatur in porta? Sicut enim pugnare castra dicimus, pro eo quod pugnatur ex castris; ita judicium, quod in porta agi consueverat, porta nominatur. In porta ergo se superiorem videt, qui se melioris partis esse in judicio aequitatis merito conspicit. Beatus igitur Job, quia nec tunc contra pupillum manum exeruit, cum se etiam per justitiae meritum potiorem vidit, nobis timoris regulam insinuans, dicit: Si levavi super pupillum 694 manum meam, etiam cum viderem me in porta superiorem. Ac si patenter dicat: Neque tunc utilitatis meae negotia virtute contra pupillum exsequi volui, quando me in judicio etiam ex justitia potiorem vidi. [Vet. XV.] Sancti etenim viri quando cum personis minoribus contentionum negotia subeunt, dum gravare vel in minimis timent, ipsi contra justitiam gravari nequaquam refugiunt. Sciunt quippe quia omnis humana justitia injustitia esse reprehenditur, si divinitus districte judicetur. Unde hoc quod sibi competit cavent vehementer exigere, ne eorum actus supernam rectitudinem contingat subtiliter examinare. Sed ut inveniri justi in divino examine valeant, plerumque apud humana judicia gravari se et

injuste patiuntur. Beatus autem Job vitae suae celsitudinem narrans, et multa sunt et mira quae dixit. Sed quia plerumque humana mens renuit bona credere, quae nescit operari, maledicti sibi sententiam protinus subjicit, si qua horum quae dixerat opere non implevit, dicens:

CAPUT XXI [Rec. XVI].

VERS. 22. Humerus meus a junctura sua cadat, et brachium meum cum ossibus suis conteratur. 33. Concordia in societate, sine patientia perseverare non potest. Quia operatio corporea per humerum ac brachium agitur, bona quae ore protulit, si opere non implevit, cadere sibi humerum et conteri brachium exoptat. Ac si aperte dicat: Si ea quae dixi operari renui, ipsum quod mihi ad operandum datum est corporis membrum perdam, ut videlicet cadat a corpore, quod exercere nolui ad utilitatem. Si vero haec maledicti sententia ad spiritualem est intelligentiam referenda, liquet profecto quod brachium corpori per humerum jungitur. Et sicut per brachium bona operatio, ita per humerum socialis vitae conjunctio designatur. Unde propheta quoque intuens sanctos universalis Ecclesiae populos Deo concorditer servituros, ait: Et servient ei in humero uno (Sophon. III, 9). In eo ergo quod dicit: Si levavi super pupillum manum meam, etiam cum viderem me in porta superiorem, miram virtutem patientiae servasse se asserit, qui gravari se a personis minimis, nec contra hoc quod sibi juste competere poterat, declinavit. Quod tamen si minime fecerit, adjungit: Humerus meus a junctura sua cadat. Quia nimirum qui patientiam servare contemnit socialem vitam citius per impatientiam deserit. A junctura etenim humerus cadit, cum adversitatis aliquid ferre animus non valens, fraternam concordiam relinquit; et quasi membrum separatur a corpore, cum is qui operari bona poterat a bonorum omnium abscinditur universitate. Neque enim unquam servari concordia nisi per solam patientiam valet. Crebro namque in humana actione nascitur, unde

mentes hominum vicissim a sua unitate ac dilectione separentur; et nisi ad adversa toleranda se animus praeparet, procul dubio humerus corpori non inhaeret. Hinc etenim Paulus ait: Invicem onera vestra portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi (Galat. VI, 2). Hinc per semetipsam Veritas dicit: In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras (Luc. XXI, 19). [Vet. XVI.] 34. Sine patientia charitati conjuncta bona opera pereunt. Recte autem, humero cadente, subjungitur: Et brachium meum cum ossibus suis conteratur: 695 quia nimirum cuncta nostra operatio, cum quibuslibet videatur esse virtutibus, solvitur, nisi per charitatis vinculum patientia conservetur. Sua enim bona perdit operari qui aliena mala renuit perpeti. Fervore quippe iracundi spiritus laesus quisque a dilectione resilit, et cum se exterius gravari non tolerat, intus se per amissum lumen charitatis obscurat; nec videt jam quo tendat pedem boni operis, qui oculum perdidit dilectionis. Sed sancti viri humerus a junctura sua non cadit, quia videlicet ejus dilectio a socialis vitae concordia per impatientiam non recedit. Ejusque brachium minime frangitur, quia omnis ejus operatio in conjunctione humeri, id est in charitatis connexione custoditur, Sed qua consideratione bona haec tanta egerit, atque a malis omnibus sese abstinuerit, adjungit dicens.

CAPUT XXII [Rec. XVII].

VERS. 23. Semper enim quasi tumentes super me fluctus timui Deum, et pondus ejus ferre non potui. 35. Timoris Dei quanta vis ad omnium contemptum persuadendum. Extremi judicii signa praevia. A pavore tantae similitudinis pensemus, si possumus, quanta in sancto viro fuerit vis timoris. Fluctus etenim cum tumentes desuper imminent, cumque eam quam deferunt mortem minantur, nulla tunc navigantibus rerum cura temporalium, nulla carnis delectatio ad mentem reducitur; ea ipsa quoque ex navi projiciunt, pro quibus longa navigia sumpserunt; cunctae res in despectum mentis veniunt, amore vivendi. Quasi ergo tumentes super se

fluctus Deum metuit, qui dum veram vitam desiderat, omnia despicit quae hic possidens portat. Nam velut tempestate deprehensi pondus navis abjicimus, quando ab oppressa mente desideria terrena removemus. Fitque ut sublevata navis enatet, quae mergebatur onerata, quia nimirum curae quae in hac vita deprimunt mentem in profundum trahunt. Quae videlicet mens tanto altius inter tentationum fluctus attollitur, quanto sollicitius ab hujus saeculi cogitatione vacuatur. Est vero et aliud quod de maris concussione debeat solerter intueri. Tempestas quippe cum oritur, prius lenes undae, et postmodum volumina majora concitantur; ad extremum fluctus se in alta erigunt, et navigantes quosque ipsa sua altitudine subvertunt. Sic sic nimirum extrema illa properat, quae universum mundum
696 subruat tempestas animarum. Nunc enim bellis et cladibus quasi quibusdam undis sua nobis exordia ostendit, et quanto ad finem quotidie propinquiores efficimur, tanto graviora irruere tribulationum volumina videmus. Ad extremum vero commotis omnibus elementis, supernus judex veniens finem omnium apportat, quia videlicet tunc tempestas fluctus in coelum levat. Unde et dicitur: Adhuc modicum, et ego movebo non solum terram, sed etiam coelum (Aggae. II, 7). Quam scilicet tempestatem quia sancti viri vigilanter aspiciunt quasi tumentes super se quotidie fluctus expavescunt, atque ex his tribulationibus quae mundum feriunt praevident quae sequantur. 36. Judicium extremum sancti formidant; quanto magis expavescere debent peccatores. Bene autem subditur: Et pondus ejus ferre non potui, quoniam qui extremi judicii adventum intenta mente considerat, profecto videt quia tantus pavor imminet, quantum non solum tunc videre, sed se etiam nunc praevidere pertimescat. Consideratione namque tanti terroris metu animus palpitat, et intentionis suae oculos declinans, intueri quod praevidet recusat. Bene ergo dicitur: Et pondus ejus ferre non potui, quia cum supernae majestatis vim ad judicium venientis terroremque tanti examinis considerando animus conatur exquirere, mox ad semetipsum

refugiens, sese expavescit invenisse. Sed inter haec pensandum est quia beatus Job ista de se loquitur laudatus et flagellatus. Si igitur saltem ad meritorum profectum ita percussus est qui sic timuit, quomodo feriendus est qui contemnit? Quomodo depressura sunt Dei judicia eos qui se elevant, si et illos ad tempus deprimunt qui haec semper in humilitate formidant? Quomodo pondus Dei poterit ferre qui despicit, si hoc et ille in verbere pertulit qui per timorem praevidit? Unde summopere formidandum nobis est illud tantae districtionis examen. Constat autem quia in hac vita cum percutit, si percussionem correctio sequitur, disciplina patris est, non ira judicis; amor corrigentis est, non districtio punientis. Ex ipso ergo praesenti verbere judicia aeterna pensanda sunt. Hinc etenim perpendere summopere debemus quomodo feratur illa quae reprobat, si ferri modo vix valet ejus ira quae purgat.

LIBER VIGESIMUS SECUNDUS.

Quod supererat capitis XXXI libri Job explicatur, commendanturque praesertim animi demissio et moderatio, patientia, charitas, et erga subditos sollicitudo.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. Ad cavendam desperationem, licet recte a se gestorum recordari.Quod a me saepe jam dictum est, hoc me crebro repetere onerosum non est, quia et praedicator egregius dicit: Eadem vobis scribere mihi quidem non pigrum, vobis autem necessarium (Phil. III, 1). Beatus Job idcirco gestas virtutes narrat, quia inter increpationis verba et percussionis verbera deprehensus, a spei fiducia mentem suam labefactari considerat. Multa quippe et egisse se mala ab increpantibus amicis audierat, et ne verbis pariter et flagellis pressa in desperationem mens corruat, hanc per suarum virtutum memoriam ad spem reformat, ut nequaquam se debeat in calamitate dejicere, quae tranquillitatis suae tempore se meminerat tam sublimia egisse. Quia igitur intentionis ejus 697 causam diximus, restat ut auditas virtutes illius subtiliter perpendamus. 2. Una virtus sine aliis, aut nulla est, aut minima. Hoc autem primum sciendum est, quia quisquis virtute aliqua pollere creditur, tunc veraciter pollet, cum vitiis ex alia parte non subjacet. Nam si ex alio vitiis subditur, nec hoc est solidum, ubi stare putabatur. Unaquaeque enim virtus tanto minor est, quanto desunt caeterae: Nam saepe quosdam pudicos quidem vidisse nos contigit, sed non humiles; quosdam vero quasi humiles, sed non misericordes; quosdam quasi misericordes, sed nequaquam justos; quosdam vero quasi justos, sed in se potius quam in Domino confidentes. Et certum est quia nec castitas in ejus corde vera est, cui humilitas deest, quippe quia superbia se intrinsecus corrumpente fornicatur, si semetipsum diligens, a divino recedit amore. Nec humilitas

vera est cui misericordia juncta non est, quia nec debet humilitas dici, quae ad compassionem fraternae miseriae nescit inclinari. Nec misericordia vera est quae a rectitudine justitiae existit aliena, quia quae potest per injustitiam pollui, nescit procul dubio sibimetipsi misereri. Nec justitia vera est quae fiduciam suam non in conditore omnium, sed in se fortasse, aut in rebus conditis ponit, quia dum a creatore spem subtrahit, ipse sibi principalis justitiae ordinem pervertit. Una itaque virtus sine aliis, aut omnino nulla est, aut imperfecta. Ut enim, sicut quibusdam visum est, de primis quatuor virtutibus loquar, prudentia, temperantia, fortitudine, atque justitia; tanto perfectae sunt singulae, quanto vicissim sibimet conjunctae. Disjunctae autem perfectae esse nequaquam possunt, quia nec prudentia vera est quae justa, temperans et fortis non est, nec perfecta temperantia quae fortis, justa et prudens non est, nec fortitudo integra quae prudens, temperans et justa non est, nec vera justitia quae prudens, fortis et temperans non est. 3. Omnes in Job convenerunt. Beatus itaque Job, quod non unam sine alia, sed conjunctas in se virtutes habuerit, enumerando singulas innotescit. Nam bona pudicitiae insinuans, dicit: Si deceptum est cor meum super mulierem (Cap. XXXI, 9). Atque ut eidem pudicitiae demonstraret humilitatis gratiam nullatenus defuisse, post caetera subjungit: Si contempsi subire judicium cum servo meo (Vers. 13). Qui ut humilitati suae ostenderet misericordiam fuisse conjunctam, paulo post dicit: Si negavi quod volebant pauperibus (Vers. 16). Atque ut misericordiam suam ostenderet de justitiae radice descendere, paulo superius praemisit, dicens: Si ambulavi in vanitate, et festinavit in dolo pes meus (Vers. 5). Atque ut monstraretur quam fuerit ad cuncta pavidus, et ad omnia circumspectus inferius asserit, dicens: Semper enim quasi tumentes super me fluctus timui Dominum (Vers. 25). Qui scilicet in prosperis positus, atque abundantia rerum fultus, si spem aut in suis actibus aut in circumfluentibus rebus poneret, profecto justus non esset. Sed quando iste vir sanctus in se spem posuit, qui aperte dicit: Ecce non est

auxilium mihi in me (Job. VI, 13)? [Vet. et Rec. II.] Quid ergo nunc superest, nisi ut ipsas quoque divitias qua mente possederit innotescat? Ait enim: 698 CAP. XXXI, VERS. 24. Si putavi aurum robur meum, et obryzo dixi, fiducia mea.

CAPUT II.

4. Non in labentibus divitiis, sed in Deo solo confidendum. Obryzum dicimus obrude aurum. Sanctus ergo vir nec aurum robur, nec sibi esse obryzum, id est rudis auri molem fiduciam credidit, quia spem atque delectationem suam in solius gratia conditoris figens, neque de quantitate auri, neque de specie peccavit. De creatore quippe desperasse fuerat, spem in creatura posuisse. In rebus autem dubiis spem fixerat dives ille, qui dicebat: Anima, habes multa bona reposita in annos plurimos, requiesce, comede, bibe, epulare. Sed hunc superna vox increpat, dicens: Stulte, hac nocte animam tuam repetunt a te; quae autem parasti, cujus erunt (Luc. XII, 19, 20)? Eadem enim nocte sublatus est, qui in rerum sibi abundantia multa tempora fuerat praestolatus, ut scilicet qui in longum sibi subsidia colligendo prospiceret, subsequentem diem vel unum minime videret. Quasi in aquis enim defluentibus fundamentum ponere est in rebus labentibus spei fiduciam velle solidare. Stante enim in perpetuum Deo, transeunt omnia. Quid ergo a stante fugere est, nisi transeuntibus rebus inhaerere? Quis namque unquam decurrentium fluminum tumidis vorticibus raptus manere ipse fixus potuit, deorsum unda defluente? Quisquis ergo defluere devitat, superest ut quod defluit fugiat, ne per hoc quod amat in hoc cogatur pervenire quod vitat. Qui enim rebus labentibus inhaeret, illo videlicet trahitur, quo tendit quod tenet. Prius itaque curandum est ne quis temporalia diligat, ac deinde ne in eisdem temporalibus quae non ad delectationem sibi, sed ad usum retinet, fiduciam ponat, quoniam conjunctus decurrentibus mox statum suum animus perdit. Nam vitae praesentis fluctus trahit quem

levat, et valde demens est qui in unda volvitur, et plantam figere conatur. Sed sunt plerique qui etsi in rebus transeuntibus fiduciam nequaquam ponunt, cum tamen sibimet ad usus necessarios abunde adsunt, mente tacita laetantur. Qua in re dubium non est, quia tanto quisque minus dolet quod desint aeterna, quanto magis gaudet quod adsint temporalia; et qui minus dolet quod desint temporalia, certius exspectat ut adsint aeterna. Hoc itaque de terrenis rebus gaudium beatus Job non se habuisse testificans, subjungit dicens:

CAPUT III [Vet. III].

VERS. 25. Si laetatus sum super multis divitiis meis, et quia plurima reperit manus mea. 5. Sancti bonorum temporalium onus aut largiendo partiuntur, aut contemnendo totum deponunt. Sancti quippe viri in hujus peregrinationis aerumna, quoniam eam quam appetunt adhuc creatoris sui speciem contemplari minime sinuntur, omnem praesentis vitae copiam inopiam deputant, quia videlicet nil extra Deum sufficit menti quae veraciter Deum quaerit; et plerumque eis ipsa sua abundantia fit vehementer onerosa, quia hoc ipsum graviter tolerant, quod festinantes ad patriam in itinere multa portant. Unde fit ut haec cum indigentibus proximis devote partiantur, quatenus dum sumit iste quod non habet, deponat ille quod amplius habebat; nec conviator vacuus ambulet, nec eum quem retardare in via poterat nimium onus gravet. Electi ergo de multa abundantia minime
699 laetantur, quam videlicet pro amore coelestis patrimonii aut largiendo dispergunt, aut despiciendo deserunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 26-28. Si vidi solem cum fulgeret, et lunam incedentem clare; et laetatum est in abscondito cor meum, et osculatus sum manum meam ore meo, quae est iniquitas maxima, et negatio contra Deum altissimum. 6.

Sensus coercent, et continuo studio intra mentem suam se colligunt. Incertum non est quod utraque haec luminaria humanis ministeriis deputata, coeli militiae vocantur. In quorum cultum multos novimus, scriptura teste, cecidisse, sicut scriptum est: Adoraverunt universam militiam coeli (IV Reg. XVII, 16). Et quia sol et luna aliter videntur ad usum, aliter ad venerationem, eo more quo a cultoribus suis venerari solent, solem et lunam beatus Job nequaquam vidisse se perhibet, nec laetatum fuisse cor suum, nec osculatum manum ore suo. In qua videlicet osculatione, quid aliud quam gratia venerationis exprimitur? Quod si fecisset unquam, hoc iniquitatem maximam et Dei negationem vocat. Sed postquam tanta de se locis superioribus virtutum culmina narravit, quid nunc mirum memorat, si solem ac lunam non se adorasse manifestat? Unde pensandum est quod postquam in auro non habuisse fiduciam, nec in multis divitiis laetatum se fuisse testatur, adhuc ad sublimiora ducitur, ut tanto nos magis erudiat, quanto de se aliqua subtilius narrat. Ait enim: Si vidi solem cum fulgeret, et lunam incedentem clare, et laetatum est in abscondito cor meum. Quid hoc in loco videre dicitur, nisi desideranter intueri? Unde Psalmista ait: Iniquitatem si conspexi in corde meo, non exaudiat Deus (Psal. LXV, 18). Quae nimirum iniquitas in ore exprimi non posset, si non conspiceretur in corde. Sed aliud est videre per judicium, aliud per appetitum. Beatus ergo Job fulgentem solem, et clare incedentem lunam nequaquam vidisse se perhibet, ut se demonstret praesentis lucis speciem non appetisse. Ac si post despectum terrenae suae abundantiae patenter insinuet: Quid dicam, quia nequaquam in auro laetatus sum, qui in ipsa quoque luce corporea delectatus non sum? Sancti etenim viri postquam omnia praesentis vitae oblectamenta despiciunt, prae illius lucis internae dulcedine, ab hac exteriori animum luce quasi a tenebris avertunt: multumque secum intrinsecus contendunt, ne hujus lucis, quae fulget extrinsecus, delectatione rapiantur. Lux quippe visibilis si incaute diligitur, a luce invisibili cor

caecatur, quia quanto extra se inhians animus funditur, tanto amplius in internis obtutibus reverberatur. Unde solertes quique ne corporeis sensibus nimis ad exteriora dilabantur, continuo studio intra mentem suam occulta custodiae disciplina se colligunt, ut tanto magis inveniantur interius integri, quanto minus sunt exterius fusi. Hoc enim vigore disciplinae intra mentis suae se arcana constrinxerat, qui exterioris vitae appetitum fugiens, dicebat: Diem hominis non concupivi, tu scis (Jerem. XVII, 16). Quod ergo apud prophetam dicitur: Diem hominis non concupivi, tu scis, hoc de semetipso beatus Job verbis aliis asserit, quia fulgentem solem et lunam incedentem clare non viderit, atque ex his in cordis abditis laetatus non sit, quia nimirum gaudere non poterat de his quae per delectationis desiderium non videbat. [Vet. IV.] 7. Cavent ne suae prudentiae innitantur. Si vero cuncta haec quae juxta historiam tractando 700 discurrimus per allegoriae quoque mysteria perscrutemur, quid hoc in loco aurum accipimus, nisi praeclari intellectus ingenium; quid obryzum, nisi mentem? quae dum igne amoris excoquitur, semper in se servat claritatem pulchritudinis quotidiana innovatione fervoris. Nescit enim mens per torporem veterascere, quae studet per desiderium semper inchoare. Hinc namque per Paulum dicitur: Renovamini spiritu mentis vestrae (Ephes. IV, 23). Hinc Psalmista, qui ad perfectionis jam culmen pervenerat, quasi inchoans dicebat: Dixi, nunc coepi (Psal LXXVI, 11), quia videlicet si lassescere ab inchoatis bonis nolumus, valde necesse est ut inchoare nos quotidie credamus. Nec abhorret a rationis ordine quod auro dicimus ingenium designari, quia sicut in ornamento aurum supponitur, ut gemmarum desuper ordo disponatur, ita clara sanctorum ingenia divinis muneribus humiliter substernuntur, et distincta super se gratiarum dona percipiunt. Et nisi quid simile aurum cum sapientia haberet, quidam sapiens minime dixisset: Sapientia absconsa, et thesaurus invisus, quae utilitas in utriusque (Eccli. XX, 32; XLI, 17)? Sancti autem viri robur suum aurum non deputant, quia quantolibet ingenio

fulgeant, nihil se esse ex suis viribus pensant. Et cum sentire omnia valenter possunt, prius intelligere semetipsos cupiunt, quatenus lumen ingenii more solis prius illustret locum in quo oritur, et postmodum caetera, ad quae procedendo dilatatur, ne si intendendo cognoscendis aliis semetipsos nesciant, ibi solis radius ubi oritur obtenebrescat. Ingenii itaque virtutem ad cognoscendam propriam infirmitatem dirigunt, atque ex infirmitatis suae melius cognitione convalescunt. Aurum ergo robur non creditur, si in accepto ingenio fiducia non habetur. Quod bene Salomon admonens, ait: Habe fiduciam in Domino in toto corde tuo, et ne innitaris prudentiae tuae (Prov. III, 3). Dicat ergo: Si putavi aurum robur meum, et obryzo dixi, fiducia mea. Ac si aperte fateatur, dicens: Nec quae veraciter intellexi, meo ingenio tribui, nec menti propriae, si qua egisse me bona contigit, haec principaliter deputavi. Qui adhuc subtilius humilitatem nobis sui cordis insinuans, adjungit dicens:

CAPUT V [Rec. III].

VERS 25. Si laetatus sum super multis divitiis meis, et quia plurima reperit manus mea. 8. Multa in sacris litteris intelligere periculosum, nisi intellecta custodiantur. Quid multas divitias appellatas per significationem credimus, nisi abundantia acumina consiliorum? Quae quaerentis manus invenit, cum haec cogitatio tractantis gignit. Has etenim Salomon sapientiae divitias contemplatus ait: Corona sapientium divitiae eorum (Prov. XIV, 24). Qui quia divitias non metalla terrena, sed prudentiam nominat, illico per contrarietatem subdit: Fatuitas stultorum imprudentia (Ibid., 24). Si enim coronam sapientium terrenas divitias diceret, procul dubio fatuitatem stultorum paupertatem potius quam imprudentiam fateretur. Sed dum fatuitatem stultorum imprudentiam subdidit, sapientum divitias quia prudentiam dixerit, indicavit. Has in se Paulus scientiae divitias contemplatus, et contemplationem suam consideratione humanae fragilitatis

humilians, ait: Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus (II Cor. IV, 7). Multas itaque apud nos divitias reperimus, cum dona abundantis intelligentiae, sacra eloquia investigando percipimus, atque in his plura, nec tamen sibimet diversa sentimus. Non est autem secura laetitia 701 in divinis paginis vel fortia, vel multa cognoscere, sed cognita custodire. Nam qui bene intelligit, quid intelligendo debeat agnoscit. Quanto enim intellectu latius extenditur, tanto ad explenda opera enixius ligatur. Unde in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Cui multum datum est, multum quaeretur ab eo; et cui commendaverunt multum, plus repetent ab eo (Luc. XII, 48). [Vet. V.] 9. Intelligentia data, est quasi pecunia mutuo accepta, cum fenore reddenda. Deputemus igitur intelligentiam datam quasi pecuniam mutuam, quia quo plus nobis creditur ex benignitate, eo debitores amplius tenemur in opere; et plerumque eadem intelligentiae accepta pecunia, cum ad usuras auditoribus datur, amittitur, nisi caute tribuatur. Neque enim negligenter intuendum est in Regum volumine, quod prophetarum filii cum in Jordane ligna caederent, uni eorum securis ex manubrio in profundum lapsa disparuit (IV Reg. VI). Ferrum quippe in manubrio est donum intellectus in corde. Ligna vero per hoc caedere est prave agentes increpare. Quod nonnunquam dum fluxe agitur, dum lapsus vanae gloriae in accepta eadem scientia non vitatur, ferrum in aqua perditur, quia ex dissoluto opere intelligentia fatuatur. Quam profecto intelligentiam ad hoc novimus dari, ut ante dantis oculos ex bona debeat actione restitui. Unde recte is qui ferrum amiserat clamabat: Heu! heu! heu! domine mi, et hoc ipsum mutuo acceperam (IV Reg. VI, 5). Habent enim hoc electi proprium, ut si quando eis in sua scientia furtiva vanae gloriae culpa subrepit, ad cor velociter redeant, et quidquid in se ante districti judicis oculos damnabile inveniunt, lacrymis insequantur. Qui flentes non solum caute inspiciunt mala quae commiserunt, sed ex accepto munere quae reddere etiam bona debuerunt, quia nimirum tanto se amplius peccatores sentiunt, quanto ex neglectis bonis quae agere poterant debitores

tenentur. Recte ergo qui ferrum perdidit, clamabat: Heu! heu! heu! et hoc ipsum mutuo acceperam. Ac si dicat: Illud per dissolutionem negligentiae perdidi, quod ut per bona opera redderem ex gratia creditoris accepi. Sed nunquam Deus mentem deserit quae in peccatis se veraciter agnoscit. Unde et mox Elisaeus veniens, lignum deorsum mittit, et ferrum in superficiem attollit, quia videlicet Redemptor noster pie nos respiciens, cor peccatoris humiliat, et ei quam amiserat intelligentiam reformat, lignum mergit, et ferrum relevat, quia cor affligit, et scientiam reparat. Unde bene in alia translatione dicitur quod confregit lignum atque jactavit, et sic ferrum sustulit. Lignum namque confringere est cor ab elatione conterere. Lignum ad ima jactare est elatum cor in cognitione, ut diximus, propriae infirmitatis humiliare. Atque illico ferrum ad superficiem redit, quia ad usum exercitationis pristinae intelligentia recurrit. 10. Hinc de dono sibi credito justi plus timent quam gaudeant. Igitur quoniam donum intellectus quod accipitur vix cum tot difficultatibus custoditur (curandum quippe est ne otio torpeat, curandum ne in exercitatione operis vitio elationis evanescat), sancti viri, minime exsultant cum cognoscunt 702 quae faciant, sed cum faciunt quae cognoverant; et si intelligendo congaudent muneri largitoris, moerentes tamen considerant debitum operis, ut videlicet actione persolvant quod eis praerogatum est in cognitione. Stultus namque est debitor qui gaudens pecunias mutuas accipit, et tempus quo reddere debeat non attendit. Moderatur autem laetitia accipiendi, quando solerti providentia etiam constitutum tempus reddendi cogitatur. Quia igitur viri justi in his quae vigilanter intelligunt secura laetitia non extolluntur, dicatur recte: Si laetatus sum super multis divitiis meis, et quia plurima reperit manus mea. Ac si aperte diceretur: Nequaquam me in eo locupletem ex justitia credidi, quo recta quae agere debui etiam multa cognovi, nec intelligentia cor extulit, quia illud consideratio debitae operationis pressit. [Vet. VI.] Sciendum vero est, quod plerumque contingit, ut cum intelligentiae altitudo percipitur, circa

semetipsum animus valde sollicitus ab elationis lapsu teneatur. Sed cum mira quae intelligit etiam operari coeperit, eo ipso nonnunquam quo foras ostenditur labitur, atque in suis actibus se caeteros praeire gloriatur. Beatum igitur Job sicut intelligentiae aurum non extulit, nec lumen quoque ante humanos oculos mirae operationis elevavit. Unde et apte subjungit:

CAPUT VI [Rec. IV].

VERS. 26. Si vidi solem cum fulgeret. 41. Ad bonorum operum suorum fulgorem non exsultant. Non absolvitur debitor qui multa reddit, sed qui omnia. Sol quippe in fulgore est bonum opus in manifestatione. Scriptum namque est: Luceat lux vestra coram hominibus, ut videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent patrem vestrum qui in coelis est (Matth. V, 16). Et rursum: Sint lumbi vestri praecincti, et lucernae ardentes (Luc. XII, 33). Quod enim hoc in loco fulgente sole, id in Evangelio lucernis ardentibus designatur. Bonum quippe opus cum in medio perfidorum lucet, lucerna ardet in nocte; cum vero in Ecclesia resplendet, sol fulget in die. Bonum opus si adhuc tale est, quod soli mali mirantur, lucerna videlicet in nocte est; si autem ita proficit, ut mirari a bonis ac perfectioribus possit, nimirum sol est in die. Bonum opus cum per activam vitam corporis lucet, quasi lucernae more, lumen ex testa resplendet. Cum vero per solam virtutem mentis in contemplatione attollitur, quasi more solis de coelo veniens lux videtur. Quia igitur multa beatus Job hospitalitatis ac misericordiae de se bona narraverat, quae profecto tanto adhuc minima, quanto et corporaliter noverat gesta, ad virtutum spiritalium culmen mentis oculum revocans, perfectionis suae meminit, et lucem exemplorum, quam de se aliis tribuit, solem vocavit. [Reg. V.] Sunt vero nonnulli qui cum bona aliqua faciunt, iniquitatum suarum protinus obliviscuntur, et cordis oculum in consideratione bonorum operum quae exhibent figunt; atque eo se jam sanctos existimant, quo inter bona quae agunt malorum suorum, in quibus et

fortasse adhuc implicati sunt, memoriam declinant. Qui scilicet si districtionem judicis vigilanter attenderent, plus de malis suis metuerent quam de imperfectis bonis exsultarent, 703 plus inspicerent quod de his quae adhuc eis agenda sunt debitores tenentur, quam quod operantes quaedam jam debiti partem solvunt. Neque enim absolutus est debitor qui multa reddit, sed qui omnia; nec ad bravium victoriae pervenit qui in magna parte spectaculi velociter currit, si juxta metas veniens in hoc quod est reliquum deficit. Nec ad quaelibet destinata loca pergentibus inchoando prodest longum iter carpere, si non etiam totum valeant consummare. Qui ergo aeternam vitam quaerimus, qui aliud quam quaedam itinera agimus, per quae ad patriam festinamus? Sed quid prodest quod carpimus tam multa, si ea quae ad perveniendum restant, negligimus reliqua? 12. Non quid itineris jam peractum sit, consideremus, sed quid supersit peragendum. More itaque viatorum, nequaquam debemus aspicere quantum jam iter egimus, sed quantum superest ut peragamus, ut paulisper fiat praeteritum quod indesinenter et timide adhuc attenditur futurum. Amplius igitur debemus inspicere quae bona necdum fecimus, quam ea quae jam nos fecisse gaudemus. Sed habet hoc humana infirmitas proprium, ut plus ei intueri libeat quod sibi in se placet quam quod sibi in se displicet. Aeger quippe oculus cordis, dum laborare in consideratione sua metuit, quasi quoddam stratum delectationis in animo, ubi molliter jaceat, requirit; atque idcirco quae commoda de peractis bonis sit assecutus intelligit, sed quae damna de neglectis patitur nescit. Plerumque enim hoc vitio tentantur etiam electi. Plerumque eorum cordi suggeritur ut bona quaeque quae fecerunt ad animum revocent, et securitatis jam laetitia exsultent. Sed si vere electi sunt, ab eo in quo sibi placent mentis oculos divertunt, omnem in se de peractis bonis laetitiam deprimunt, et de his quae se minus egisse intelligunt tristitiam requirunt, indignos se aestimant, et pene soli bona sua non vident, quae in se videnda omnibus ad exemplum praebent. Hinc est quod Paulus,

dum expleta in se bona postponeret, et sola adhuc reliqua quae essent explenda cogitaret, dixit: Ego me non arbitror apprehendisse (Philip. III, 13). Hinc est quod ut posset se de bonis quae agebat humiliare, studebat ad animum praeterita mala reducere, dicens: Qui prius fui blasphemus, et perseculor, et contumeliosus (I Tim. I, 13). [Vet. VII.] 13. Quando bona a se facta in memoriam revocari, aut narrare liceat. Qui et si aliquando dixit: Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servari (II Tim. IV, 7)? Intuendum summopere est quia illud eo tempore intulit quo jam ex corpore discessurum se esse cognovit. Ibi quippe praemisit dicens: Ego enim jam delibor, et tempus meae resolutionis instat (Ibid., 6). Tunc ergo ad memoriam perfectionem reduxit operis, cum jam praevidit ad largitatis spatium minime subesse tempus operationis. Sicut enim, dum vivimus, debemus bona nostra a memoria repellere, ne extollant, ita appropinquante exitu, plerumque ea ad memoriam iterum revocamus, ut videlicet fiduciam praebeant, et desperatum timorem premant. Qui etsi Corinthiis bona sua enumerando narravit, 704 illos confirmare studuit, non se ostendere. Nam quia eadem bona non in se attenderet, patefacta tribulatione propriae tentationis edocuit qua expressa subjunxit: Propter quod placeo mihi in infirmitatibus meis (II Cor. XII, 10). Ut ergo discipulos instrueret, de se summa referebat; ut vero se in humilitate custodiret, considerationis oculum non in virtutibus suis, sed in infirmitatibus fixerat. Habent itaque proprium sancti viri, ut bona quidem quae agunt videant; et tamen cum peregerint, ab eorum memoria oculos avertant. Unde recte per beatum Job dicitur: Si vidi solem cum fulgeret. Ac si aperte diceret: Opus meum etiam cum aliis exemplorum, lucem tribueret, ad praesumptionis gratiam non attendi, quia dum de eo extolli timui, ab intuendo eo oculos averti. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII.

IBID. Et lunam incedentem clare. 14. Fama ex bonis operibus non aucupanda. Post praemissum solem, apte quoque incedentem clare lunam subdidit, quia videlicet post opus bonum, fama laudabilis sequitur, per quam celebre nomen in hac praesentis vitae nocte possidetur. Si autem verum est quod quidam putant, illustrationem lunam per occultum circulum a radio solis accipere, ut possit lucem nocturnis cursibus exhibere, ab hujus significationis ordine haec quoque suspicio non abhorret. Fama quippe a bono opere vires accipit, et favoris gratiam quasi claritatem luminis aspergit. Est et aliud in luna quod per similitudinem bona spargenti famae conveniat. Lux namque ejus etiam in tenebrarum tempore iter ambulantibus ostendit, quia et dum de aliena vita lux laudis emicat, alios ad exercitium boni operis illustrat; cumque illius opinio clara cognoscitur, huic quasi pergenti in itinere exempli lumen praebetur. Sed nonnunquam opus quod ab aliena opinione sumitur minus mundo desiderio in animo formatur. Nam infirmae mentes cum bona de aliis audiunt, aliquando se ad operationem rectam non amore virtutis, sed delectatione laudis accendunt. Et profecto liquet quia sicut natura solis est ut quaeque attigerit accendat et siccet, ita lunaris ignis est proprium ut quidquid contigerit exurat quidem, sed exurendo humidum reddat. Ad vitam igitur bonam alios pro amore Dei affectus recti operis, alios vero amor laudis inflammat. Sed cum recti operis affectu accendimur, quasi per ignem solis a vitiorum humore siccamur. Eum vero quem ad opus bonum laudis amor provocat, concupita fama, quasi luna, attingit, quia videlicet ejus animum et accendit et resolvit. Accendit scilicet ad exercitium operis, resolvit vero ad concupiscentiam favoris. Plerumque tamen ad exercenda bona opera aliena nos utiliter exempla persuadent. Et cum mente humili opinionis alienae bona suscipimus, nostra vel ad melius bona producimus, vel ad bonum mala permutamus. Cumque nos de vita proximi famae splendor irradiat, mens nostra, ut praediximus, quae ad obtinendum virtutis iter se dirigit, quasi in lunae lumine gressus

ponit. Sed sicut ex aliena opinione proficimus, sic plerumque, si famae nostrae laudibus intendimus, a virtute vacuamur, 705 quia cum delectatur animus in hoc quod de se extrinsecus haberi considerat, illud obliviscitur ad quod introrsus anhelabat. [Vet. VIII.] 15. Intelligentia, bona opera, laudes, humilitati Job (quod raro accidit) nihil nocuerunt. Quia igitur sanctum virum intelligentia scientiae non corrupit, de multis divitiis gaudere despexit. Quia vero eum magnitudo operis non inflavit, solem fulgentem non vidit. Quia autem illum nec fama laudis extulit, clare incedentem lunam minime attendit. Sunt enim nonnulli qui eo in elationem corruunt, quo per subtilem intelligentiam vel quae non faciunt bona cognoscunt. Hi nimirum super multis divitiis laetantur, cum quaelibet summa intelligendo reperiunt, atque in elatione ipsis inventionibus corrumpuntur. Sunt vero nonnulli quos intelligentia quidem non elevat, sed exhibita operatio exaltat. Qui dum actiones suas respiciunt, apud mentem suam sibi caeteros dedignando postponunt. Hi videlicet etsi in multis divitiis non gaudent, solem tamen fulgentem vident quia de sola boni operis magnitudine quasi alios despiciendo tument. Et sunt nonnulli quos nec operatio propria extollit; sed cum laudari ab hominibus pro hac eadem bona operatione coeperint, ipsis hominum favoribus devicti, quasi magnos se quosdam in sua cogitatione conspiciunt, atque a cordis custodia dissolvuntur. Hi profecto etsi fulgentem solem videre noluerunt, lunam tamen clare incedentem respiciunt, quia inter hujus vitae tenebras dum in opinionis suae claritate animum defigunt, humilitatis gratiam quasi ex nocturno lumine amittunt; et intuentes lunam, se non vident, qui semetipsos nescire incipiunt, dum mentis oculos in transitorium favorem defigunt. 16. Varii ad virtutem progressus et gradus. Quid in uno quoque metuendum. Sic autem profectus est hominum, sicut incrementa esse conspicimus arbustorum. Vis quippe futurae arboris prius in semine est, postmodum in ortu, atque ad extremum producitur in ramos. Sic nimirum sic uniuscujusque virtus succrescit operantis. Seminatur

namque in intelligentia, oritur in operatione, atque ad ultimum convalescit usque ad profectus magni latitudinem. Sed cum quemlibet sua intelligentia extollit, arbor quae oriri poterat in semine putrescit. Cum autem post operationem bonam elationis peste corrumpitur, quasi jam orta siccatur. Cum vero neque intelligentia, neque operatio corrumpit, sed excrescente magnitudine, dum favor laudantium sequitur, atque a statu suo bene operantis animum evertit, linguarum ventos arbor pertulit, et omne quod in ea robustum creverat tempestas famae radicitus evulsit. Quo enim arbor altius ad superiora surrexerit, eo ventorum vim vehementius sentit, quia quo plus quisque in bonis operibus attollitur, eo ampliori ab ore laudantium flatu fatigatur. Si itaque adhuc arbor in semine est, metuendum est ne ipsa scientiae cognitione putrefiat. Si jam ad virgultum prodiit, curandum est ne hanc manus elationis tangat, atque a viriditate suae actionis arefaciat. Si autem valenti robore jam ad alta se sublevat, valde formidandum est, ne hanc admotae laudis ventus gravior radicitus evellat. [Vet. IX.] 706 17. Periculo ex fama et humanis laudibus, Deus permittit opponi detractiones. Sed inter haec sciendum est quia ne immoderatis laudibus eruamur, plerumque miro rectoris nostri moderamine etiam detractionibus lacerari permittimur, ut cum nos vox laudantis elevat, lingua detrahentis humiliet, quia et arbor saepe quae unius venti impulsu ita impellitur, ut pene jam erui posse videatur, alterius e diverso venientis flatu erigitur, et quae hac ex parte inflexionem pertulit, ab alia ad statum redit. Unde et illa arbor alte radicata quasi inter adversantes ventos fixa steterat, quae dicebat: Per gloriam et ignobilitatem, per infamiam et bonam famam (II Cor. VI, 8). Saepe enim laus bene agentis auribus insolenter admota, dum foris sermonibus perstrepit, intus quamdam menti per tacitum, elationis tempestatem gignit: fitque ut hoc, quod animus de humanis favoribus gaudet, non facile exterius ostendat, sed tamen corruptionis vim non tenuiter interius sentiat. Et sunt nonnulli quos ita laus inflat, ut usque ad

verba elationis pertrahat. Quidam vero, ut praediximus, hoc ipsum patefacere quod elevantur erubescunt, atque auditis suis praeconiis extolluntur; sed tamen usque ad elationis verba non exeunt, et gaudere se in talibus non ostendunt. Unde beatus Job, quia noverat arrogantem se non solum nullo modo in verbis, sed etiam in cogitatione quoque tacita minime fuisse, postquam dixit: Si vidi solem cum fulgeret, et lunam incedentem clare, illico subdidit:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 27. Et laetatum est in abscondito cor meum. 18. De suis laudibus vel tacite laetari vetitum. Qua videlicet attestatione quid nobis innuitur, nisi quod magno metu et circumspectione opus est, ne mens nostra unquam de suis laudibus vel tacita laetetur? Quisquis enim quasi claritatem lunae famae suae magnitudinem conspicit, sibique in occulto mentis gaudium facit, cui iste nisi auctori se praetulit, cujus dono ut bene operaretur percepit, et tamen in ejus munere de gratia suae laudis hilarescit? Despecto enim honore conditoris, semetipsum plus amare convincitur, cujus praeconiis laetatur. Quamvis nonnunquam etiam sancti viri de bona sua opinione gaudeant; sed cum per hanc ad meliora proficere audientes pensant, non jam de opinione sua, sed de proximorum gaudent utilitate quia aliud est favores quaerere, et aliud de profectibus exsultare. Qua in re necesse est ut cum audientium utilitati non proficit, mentem nostram fama laudabilis non elevet, sed fatiget. Cum enim humanae linguae attestatione laudamur, occulta pulsatione requirimur quid de nobisipsis sentiamus. Superba etenim mens etiam cum de se falsa bona dicuntur exsultat, quia non apud Deum qualiter vivat, sed apud homines qualiter innotescat, excogitat. Judicium enim de se omnipotentis Dei despiciens, et solummodo hominum quaerens, inter auditas laudes extollitur, et quae hoc solum quaesierat, quasi de bravio operis laetatur. At contra, si cor veraciter humile est, bona quae de se audit,

aut minime recognoscit, et quia falsa dicuntur metuit; aut certe si adesse ea sibi veraciter scit, eo ipso formidat ne ab aeterna Dei retributione sint perdita, quo haec considerat hominibus divulgata, 707 pavetque vehementer ne spes futuri muneris in mercedem permutetur transitorii favoris. 19. Sancti suis laudibus cruciantur. Qua ex re agitur ut electorum animus magno laudum suarum igne crucietur, atque ab omni torporis sui rubigine moerore cogitationis excoquatur. Cauta enim consideratione trepidat, ne aut de his in quibus laudatur et non sunt majus Dei judicium inveniat, aut de his in quibus laudatur et sunt competens praemium perdat. Unde plerumque fit ut sicut injustus ex laude sua polluitur, ita vir justus audita sua laude purgetur. Nam dum bona quae egit ab hominibus proferri cognoscit, subtile contra se, ut dictum est, extremi judicii examen metuit, ac trepidus ad conscientiam recurrit, et quidquid illic inest reprehensibile corrigit. Dum enim bona sua innotuisse formidat, subtilitatem secuturi examinis pertimescens, si qua in se mala occulta sunt amputat. Pavet namque si saltem talis Deo non ostenditur qualis ab hominibus putatur, et neque contentus est ut in quo potuit innotescere, in hoc debeat remanere. Jam enim de bonis suis quasi retributionem sibi factam aestimat, nisi eis et alia quae ab hominibus nesciuntur adjungat. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Sicut probatur in conflatorio argentum, et in fornace aurum, ita probatur homo ore laudantis (Prov. XXVII, 21). Argentum quippe vel aurum, si reprobum est, igne consumitur; si probum vero, igne declaratur. Sic nimirum est et sensus operantis. Nam qualis sit, in eo quod laudatur ostenditur. Si enim se auditis suis laudibus extollit, quid iste aliud quam aurum vel argentum reprobum fuit, quem videlicet fornax linguae consumpsit? Si autem favores suos audiens, ad superni judicii considerationem redit, ac ne de his apud occultum arbitrum gravetur metuit, quasi expurgationis igne ad magnitudinem claritatis excrescit, et unde incendium trepidationis sustinet, inde clarius fulget. Beatus igitur Job, quia nequaquam de operatione se

praetulit, fidenter dicit: Si vidi solem cum fulgeret. Quia vero hunc a judicii interioris intuitu fama laudabilis non divertit, adjungit: Et lunam incedentem clare. Quia autem opinionis suae gratia animum devinci, nec tacita cogitatione permisit, protinus subdidit: Et si laetatum est in abscondito cor meum. [Vet. X.] Et quia plerumque inconsiderata mens, dum transitorio favori non renititur, ad hoc usque pertrahitur, ut laudet ipsa quod facit, conditioni quae praemissa est quasi congrue subinfertur:

CAPUT IX.

IBID. Et osculatus sum manum meam ore meo. 20. Deo, non sibi, sua bona opera tribuunt. Gratia praeveniens. Per manum quippe operatio, per os autem locutio designatur; sicut per Salomonem dicitur: Abscondit piger manum suam sub axilla sua, et laborat si ad os suum porrigat eam (Prov. XIX, 24). Pigro labor est manum suam ad os porrigere, quia desidiosus quisque praedicator nec hoc vult operari quod dicit. Manum quippe ad os porrigere est voci suae opere concordare. Manum ergo suam osculatur ore suo, qui laudat quod facit, et testimonio propriae locutionis sibi virtutem tribuit operis. Qua in re quis despicitur, nisi is qui ipsa operandi munera largitur? Unde bene per egregium praedicatorem dicitur: Quid autem habes, quod non accepisti? Si autem 708 accepisti, quid gloriaris, quasi non acceperis (I Cor. IV, 7)? Sancti autem viri sciunt post primi parentis lapsum de corruptibili stirpe se editos, et non virtute propria, sed praeveniente superna gratia ad meliora se vota vel opera commutatos; et quidquid sibi mali inesse cognoscunt, de mortali propagine sentiunt meritum; quidquid vero in se boni inspiciunt, immortalis gratiae cognoscunt donum, eique de accepto munere debitores fiunt, qui et praeveniendo dedit eis bonum velle quod noluerunt, et subsequendo concessit bonum posse quod volunt. Unde bene per Joannem dicitur: Adoraverunt viventem in saecula saeculorum, mittentes coronas suas ante thronum Domini (Apoc. IV, 10). Coronas

namque suas ante thronum Domini mittere est certaminum suorum victorias non sibi tribuere, sed auctori, ut ad illum referant gloriam laudis, a quo se sciunt vires accepisse certaminis. Beatus ergo Job, quia sic bona quae operatus est narrat, ut tamen haec suae operationi non tribuat, sed ad auctoris laudem recurrat, manum suam ore suo osculatum fuisse se denegat. Ac si patenter dicat: Ego mea opera tanquam mea non profero, quia auctoris sui gratiam negare convincitur, quisquis sibi tribuit quod operatur. Unde et protinus subdit:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 28. Quae est iniquitas maxima, et negatio contra Deum altissimum. 21. Deum negat qui de viribus suis praesumit. Liquet etenim quia illum negat, cujus despecta gratia, sibi vires boni operis arrogat. Quod recte quoque et iniquitas maxima vocatur, quoniam omne peccatum quod ex infirmitate est spem nequaquam perdit, quia a superno judice veniam requirit. Praesumptio autem virtutis propriae tanto gravius in desperatione est, quanto longius ab humilitate. Cumque vires sibi tribuit operis, ad adjutorium non recurrit auctoris; fitque ut eo gravius peccator pereat, quo et ipsum hoc, quia est peccator, ignorat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XI [Rec. VI].

VERS. 29. Si gavisus sum ad ruinam ejus qui me oderat, et exsultavi quod invenisset eum malum. 22. Dei discipulos nos facit sola charitas. Charitatis argumenta et signa. Omnipotentis Dei nos esse discipulos, sola custodia charitatis probat. Hinc est enim quod per semetipsam Veritas dicit: In hoc cognoscent omnes, quia mei discipuli estis, si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem (Joan. XIII, 35). Quae nimirum dilectio si cor nostrum veraciter replet, duobus modis ostendi solet, scilicet si et amicos in Deo, et inimicos diligimus propter Deum. Sed sciendum est quia inimici dilectio tunc

veraciter custoditur, cum nec de profectu addicimur, nec de ruina illius laetamur. Nam saepe in dilectionis imagine erga inimicum animus fallitur, seque hunc diligere aestimat, si ejus vitae contrarius non existat. Sed dilectionis vim occulte et veraciter aut profectus inimici, aut casus interrogat. Hac etenim de re ad plenum semetipsam mens hominis nescit, nisi eum quem sibi adversarium credit in defectu vel profectu mutasse modum sui status invenerit. Si enim de prosperitate addicitur, et de calamitate se odientis laetatur, constat quia non amat quem non vult esse meliorem, eumque etiam stantem voto persequitur, quem cecidisse gratulatur. [Vet. XI] 709 23. Qui possumus illaesa charitate de inimici ruina laetari, aut de ejus gloria dolere. Quid hac in re cavendum. Sed inter haec sciendum est quia evenire plerumque solet ut non amissa charitate et inimici nos ruina laetificet, et rursum ejus gloria sine invidiae culpa contristet, cum et ruente eo quosdam bene erigi credimus, et proficiente illo plerosque injuste opprimi formidamus. Qua in re mentem nostram nec ejus jam defectus erigit, nec ejus profectus addicit, si recta nostra cogitatio non quid in ipso, sed quid de ipso circa alios agatur attendit. Sed ad haec servanda valde est necessarium subtilissimae discretionis examen, ne cum nostra odia exsequimur, fallamur sub specie utilitatis alienae. Si enim de inimici morte gaudendum omnino non esset, Psalmista non diceret: Laetabitur justus, cum viderit vindictam impiorum (Psal. LVII, 11). Sed aliud est impium, aliud vero inimicum perpeti. Nam sunt plerique inimici qui non sunt impii; et sunt nonnulli impii, qui nobis specialiter non videntur inimici. Humana autem mens omnem quem inimicum tolerat, etiam impium et iniquum putat, quia ejus culpas apud cogitationem suam livor accusator exaggerat. Quibuslibet vero flagitiis prematur, minus iniquus creditur, si adversarius minime sentitur. Qua in re discernendum est aliud esse quod nobis, aliud vero quod sibi et caeteris noster inimicus nocet. Nam si aliis bonus est, sine nostra forsitan culpa esse non potest nobis malus; nec omnino jam de ejus

ruina gaudendum est, cujus nos solos certum est adversa tolerasse. Cum vero noster ac multorum hostis perimitur, de ereptione proximorum potius quam de inimici interitu necesse est ut animus laetetur. 24. Condolendum est miseriae pereuntis, et congaudendum justitiae judicis. Oportet namque ut pereunte adversario subtiliter pensare debeamus, et quid debemus ruinae peccatoris, et quid justitiae ferientis. Nam cum perversum quemque Omnipotens percutit, et condolendum est miseriae pereuntis, et congaudendum justitiae judicis, ut nobis et in luctu sit poena morientis proximi, et rursus in gaudium veniat exhibita aequitas judicantis Dei, quatenus nec pereunti homini existamus adversarii, nec judicanti Deo inveniamur ingrati. Beatus igitur Job, quia cuncta in adversitate odia perfecte calcavit, dicat: Si gavisus sum ad ruinam ejus qui me oderat, et exsultavi quod invenisset eum malum; qui videlicet et inimicum diligens, dum adversario ruenti condoluit, in malis illius ipse ad bonum crevit, ut inde iste ad benignitatem cresceret, unde illum mala quae merebatur invenissent. Quia vero saepe nonnulli eos quos sibi adversarios aestimant maledictione feriunt, quoniam virtute nequaquam possunt; in quibus patenter apparet quae mala si possent facerent, qui ea quae facere nequeunt imprecari minime desistunt; beatus Job ostendens se a culpa etiam maledictionis alienum, secutus adjunxit:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 30. Non enim dedi ad peccandum guttur meum, ut expeterem maledicens animam ejus. 25. A maledictis abstinendum. Peccaret quippe si hoc optaret a Deo fieri, quod ipse facere, vel omnino non posset, vel, si posset, minime deceret. Nam qui maledictionibus 710 inimicum impetunt, quid aliud in illo facere Deum volunt, nisi quod ipsi facere aut nequeunt, aut erubescunt? Mortem namque adversario exoptant, quam et si possunt inferre metuunt, ne aut perpetrati homicidii rei teneantur, aut iniqui

appareant etiam cum sint. Quid est ergo Deo dicere: Occide quem odi, nisi apertis ei vocibus clamare: Hoc fac meo adversario, quod me in illum facere nec peccatorem decet? In quibus profecto verbis pensandum nobis est, ubi iste vir legerat: Diligite inimicos vestros (Luc. VI, 27, 35); ubi legerat: Benedicite, et nolite maledicere (Rom. XII, 14); et rursum: Non reddentes malum pro malo, nec maledictum pro maledicto (I Petr. III, 9). Sed exterius non audita supernae gratiae praecepta servabat, quia haec in mente illius sancti Spiritus afflatus scribebat. Cui tamen minus esset quod positos extra diligeret, nisi et interius viventes secumque quotidie conversantes etiam familiares adversarios toleraret. Unde subjungit:

CAPUT XIII [Rec. VII].

VERS. 31. Si non dixerunt viri tabernaculi mei: Quis det de carnibus ejus, ut saturemur? 26. Domesticos et familiares nobis adversantes patienter tolerare debemus. Altaris sacrificium. Adversa patienda sunt exterius fortiter, et interius clementer. Quae nimirum sententia potest quoque per mysterium ex voce Redemptoris intelligi. Viri quippe ejus tabernaculi de carnibus illius saturari cupierunt, vel Judaei scilicet persequentes, vel gentiles credentes, quia et illi moliti sunt corpus illius, quasi consumendo, exstinguere, et isti esurientem mentem suam desiderant per quotidianum immolationis sacrificium de ejus carnibus satiare. [Vet. XII.] Sed nunc solius historiae virtutem sequentes, pensemus quanta fortitudine sancti viri animus extra intraque sollicitus ad omnia partitur. Qui si injuste agentibus aut unquam per silentium cederet, aut per rectitudinem non contrairet, profecto adversarios non habuisset. Sed in eo quod vias vitae tenuit, exoptatores suae mortis invenit. Foris patentes adversarios pertulit, intus latentes. Minor est autem virtus certaminis foris quempiam videre mala quae superet, et intus quod toleret non habere. Perfectae autem magnitudinis laus est adversa perpeti ei exterius fortiter, et interius clementer. Nam sunt

nonnulla quae in ipsa quoque familiarium conversatione corrigi nequeunt sine culpa corrigentis; atque ideo cum vel corrigentem inquinant, vel non omnino haec agentem gravant, magna magisterii arte dissimulanda sunt, ipsaque hac dissimulatione toleranda. Quae contra nos illata citius a corde laxamus, si nostra circa proximos errata cognoscimus. Unde bene quoque per Salomonem dicitur: Cunctis sermonibus qui dicuntur ne accommodes cor tuum, ne forte audias servum tuum maledicentem tibi. Scit enim tua conscientia, quia et tu crebro maledixisti aliis (Eccle. VII, 22, 23). Dum enim pensamus quales erga alios fuimus, esse circa nos tales alios minus dolemus, quia aliena injustitia in nobis vindicat quod in se juste nostra conscientia accusat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. VIII].

VERS. 32. Foris non mansit peregrinus, ostium meum viatori patuit. 27. Misericordiae in parcendo succedat misericordia in largiendo. Quia, teste Paulo, charitas patiens et benigna 711 describitur (I Cor. XIII, 4), per patientiam aliena mala aequanimiter tolerat, per benignitatem quoque bona misericorditer impendit sua. Unde beatus Job et patienter domesticos maledicentes pertulit, et viatores atque peregrinos apud se benigne suscepit: illis morum exempla tribuens, istis exteriorum ope concurrens; illis per mansuetudinem non concitus ad irascendum, istis per misericordiam ad subveniendum paratus. Vir enim sanctus Redemptorem generis humani per prophetiae spiritum intuens, praedicamenta quoque illius in opere servabat, quibus nos admonet, dicens: Dimittite, et dimittetur vobis; date, et dabitur vobis (Luc. VI, 37). Dare namque nostrum ad res pertinet quas exterius habemus, dimittere autem ad relaxandum dolorem quem interius ex aliena culpa contraximus. Sed sciendum est quia qui dimittit, et non dat, etsi non plene operatus est, meliorem tamen partem misericordiae tenuit. Qui autem dat, et minime dimittit, omnino misericordiam nullam facit, quia ab

omnipotente Deo munus ex manu non accipitur, quod corde obligato in malitia profertur. 28. Eleemosynae meritoriae conditiones. Mundari etenim debet prius animus qui eleemosynam praebet, quia omne quod datur Deo ex dantis mente pensatur. Cuncta itaque malitiae macula ab interiori nostro homine cogitationis immutatione tergenda est, quia iram judicis placare nescit oblatio, nisi ex munditia placeat offerentis. Unde scriptum est: Respexit Deus ad Abel et ad munera ejus, ad Cain autem et ad munera ejus non respexit (Genes. IV, 4, 5). Neque etenim sacrum eloquium dicit: Respexit ad munera Abel, et ad Cain munera non respexit; sed prius ait quia respexit ad Abel, ac deinde subjunxit, Et ad munera ejus. Et rursum dicit quia non respexit ad Cain, ac deinde subdidit, Nec ad munera ejus. Ex dantis quippe corde id quod datur accipitur. Idcirco non Abel ex muneribus, sed ex Abel munera oblata placuerunt. Prius namque ad eum legitur Dominus respexisse qui dabat, quam ad illa quae dabat. Unde bene beatus Job dicturus nobis in hospitalitatis gratia largitatem suam, prius circa adversarios protulit patientiam et benignitatem suam: quod de ruina non exsultavit inimici, quod verbis maledicis persecutores suos non impetiit, quod saevientes intrinsecus aequanimiter toleravit, et tunc demum hospitalitatis suae munificentiam protulit; ut audito scilicet narrationis ejus ordine, discamus quia exteriora munera ex interna cordis munditia condiuntur, ut virtutum ejus contextio lectorem doceat qualis apud se esse debeat, cum exteriora bona aliis subministrat. 29. In bonis operibus cavenda elatio. Sed quis se inter tanta virtutum culmina sanctum esse non crederet? Quis non utcunque ipsis tot meritis tentaretur, ut si quando ut homo delinqueret, delictum suum hominibus nollet innotesci; et leve esse crederet, si quid in minimis 712 peccaret; culpamque suam mallet silentio tegere quam voce confessionis aperire? Saepe namque contingit ut elatus virtutibus animus, dum multa bona in aestimatione proximorum de se spargi cognoverit, agnosci non velit si quid est quod reprehensibiliter facit. Quas

videlicet erroris tenebras idcirco mens tolerat, quia cordis oculum tumor gravat. Unde beatus Job inter tot eximia facta virtutum, qui tam summus exstitit in operatione, ut demonstraret quam humilis fuerit in mente, protinus adjunxit:

CAPUT XV [Vet.

XIII, Rec. IX]. VERS. 33. Si abscondi quasi homo peccatum meum, et celavi in sinu meo iniquitatem meam. 30. Humilitatis argumentum est culpam suam confiteri; superbiae, excusare. Peccata excusando, graviora reddimus. Haec sunt namque verae humilitatis testimonia, et iniquitatem suam quemque cognoscere, et cognitam voce confessionis aperire. At contra, usitatum humani generis vitium est, et latendo peccatum committere, et commissum negando abscondere, et convictum defendendo multiplicare. Ex illo quippe lapsu primi hominis haec augmenta nequitiae ducimus, ex quo ipsam radicem traximus culpae. Sic namque ille dum lignum vetitum contigisset, abscondit se a facie Domini inter ligna paradisi. In qua absconsione, scilicet quia Deum latere non poterat, non latendi effectus describitur, sed affectus notatur. Qui cum argueretur a Domino, quod de ligno vetito contigisset, illico respondit: Mulier quam dedisti mihi sociam ipsa mihi dedit de ligno, et comedi (Genes. III, 12). Ipsa quoque mulier inquisita respondit, dicens: Serpens decepit me, et comedi (Ibid., 13). Ad hoc quippe requisiti fuerant, ut peccatum quod transgrediendo commiserant confitendo delerent. Unde et serpens ille persuasor, qui non erat revocandus ad veniam, non est de culpa requisitus. Interrogatus itaque homo est ubi esset, ut perpetratam culpam respiceret, et confitendo cognosceret quam longe a conditoris sui facie abesset. Sed adhibere sibimet utrique defensionis solatia quam confessionis elegerunt. Cumque excusare peccatum voluit vir per mulierem, mulier per serpentem, auxerunt culpam, quam tueri conati sunt: oblique Adam Dominum tangens, quod ipse peccati

eorum auctor exstiterit, qui mulierem fecit; et Eva culpam ad Dominum referens, qui serpentem in paradiso posuisset. Qui enim ore diaboli fallentis audierant: Eritis sicut dii (Ibid., 5), quia Deo esse similes in divinitate nequiverunt, ad erroris sui cumulum Deum sibi facere similem in culpa conati sunt. Sic ergo reatum suum dum defendere moliuntur, addiderunt ut culpa eorum atrocior discussa fieret quam fuerat perpetrata. 31. Multi Adamum imitantur, velut arborum foliis peccatum abscondere cogitantem. Peccator e sepulcro exit per confessionem. Unde nunc quoque humani generis rami ex hac adhuc radice amaritudinem trahunt, ut cum de vitio suo quisque arguitur, sub defensionum verba quasi sub quaedam se arborum folia abscondat, et velut ad quaedam excusationis suae opaca secreta faciem conditoris fugiat, dum non vult 713 cognosci quod fecit. In qua videlicet occultatione non se Domino, sed Dominum abscondit sibi. Agit quippe ne omnia videntem videat, non autem ne ipse videatur. Quo contra cuique peccatori jam exordium illuminationis est humilitas confessionis, quia sibimetipsi jam parcere renuit, qui malum non erubescit confiteri quod fecit; et qui defendendo accusari potuit, accusando se celerrime defendit. Unde et mortuo Lazaro, qui mole magna premebatur, nequaquam dicitur: Revivisce, sed: Veni foras (Joan. XI, 43). Ex qua scilicet resurrectione, quae gesta in illius est corpore, signatur qualiter nos resuscitemur in corde, cum videlicet mortuo dicitur: Veni foras, ut nimirum homo in peccato suo mortuus, et per molem malae consuetudinis jam sepultus, quia intra conscientiam suam absconsus jacet per nequitiam, a semetipso foras exeat per confessionem. Mortuo enim Veni foras dicitur, ut ab excusatione atque occultatione peccati ad accusationem suam ore proprio exire provocetur. Unde David propheta, ab illa tanti morte facinoris reviviscens, ad vocem Domini quasi foras exiit, dum, per Nathan correptus, quod fecerat accusavit (II Reg. XII, 13). 32. Occultandi peccati culpa vehementer excrevit. Quia igitur haec occultationis culpa in humano genere vehementer excrevit, bene beatus Job

cum diceret: Si abscondi peccatum meum, interposuit: quasi homo. Hominis quippe esse proprium conspicit, quod ex parentis veteris imitatione descendit. Ubi apte subditur: Et celavi in sinu meo iniquitatem meam. [Vet. XIV, rec. X.] Scriptura etenim sacra plerumque sinum ponere pro mente consuevit, sicut voce Ecclesiae de persecutoribus nostris, qui nobis natura quidem conjuncti sunt, sed vita disjuncti, per Psalmistam dicitur: Redde vicinis nostris septuplum in sinu eorum (Psal. LXXVIII, 12). Ac si aperte diceret: In mente sua recipiant hoc quod in nostris corporibus saevientes operantur, ut dum nos exterius ex parte puniunt, ipsi interius perfecte puniantur. Quia igitur sinus secretum mentis accipitur, in sinu iniquitatem celare est hanc in conscientiae latibulis occultare, nec per confessionem detegere, sed per defensionem velare. Quo contra Jacobus dicit: Confitemini alterutrum peccata vestra, et orate pro invicem, ut salvemini (Jac. V, 16). Salomon quoque ait: Qui abscondit scelera sua, non dirigetur; qui autem confessus fuerit, et dereliquerit ea, misericordiam consequetur (Prov. XXVIII, 13). 33. Ficta est peccati confessio sine humilitate. Sincerae confessionis indicia. Sed inter haec sciendum est quod plerumque homines et culpas confitentur, et humiles non sunt. Nam multos novimus qui arguente nullo peccatores se esse confitentur; cum vero de culpa sua fuerint fortasse correpti, defensionis patrocinium quaerunt, ne peccatores esse videantur. Qui si tunc cum id sponte dicunt peccatores se esse veraci humilitate cognoscerent, cum arguuntur ab aliis, esse se quod confessi fuerant non negarent. Qua in re indicia verae confessionis sunt, si cum quisque se peccatorem dicit, id de se dicenti etiam alteri non contradicit. Nam quia scriptum est: Justus in principio accusator est sui (Prov. XVIII, 17), non magis peccator, sed justus videri appetit, cum peccatorem 714 se quisque nullo arguente confitetur, sed confessionis veritatem probat, cum alter malum quod fecimus increpat. Quod si superbe defendimus, liquet quia peccatores nos ex nobis ficte dicebamus. Unde summopere curandum

est ut mala quae fecimus, et sponte fateamur, et haec aliis arguentibus non negemus. Superbiae quippe vitium est ut quod de se fateri quisque quasi sua sponte dignatur, hoc sibi dici ab aliis dedignetur 34. Job in peccati confessione humilitas. Saepe gravioris certaminis est peccata confiteri quam vitare. Beatus itaque Job quantae fuerit humilitatis ostendit, qui se et inter adversarios noverat vivere, et tamen non verebatur culpas voce confessionis aperire. Sed notandum quod superius virtutes suas loquitur, inferius peccatum fatetur. Hinc enim liquido demonstrat quam vera de bonis suis dixerat, qui noluit tacere de malis. Modo virtutes suas indicat, modo culpam, quia et perpetraverit peccatum, et non tacuerit, manifestat. Unde certissime apparet quantae munditiae in omnipotentis Dei oculis fuerit, qui et vitavit mala, ne committeret, et tamen quae eum committere contigit, hominibus non abscondit, quatenus ei et justitiae sit gloria declinasse peccatum, et justitiae custodia quod non potuit declinare prodidisse. Videatur vir iste cuilibet magnus in virtutibus suis, mihi certe sublimis apparet etiam in peccatis suis. Mirentur in eo qui volunt castitatis continentiam, mirentur integritatem justitiae, mirentur viscera pietatis; ego in eo non minus admiror confessionem humillimam peccatorum quam tot sublimia gesta virtutum. Scio enim quod per infirmitatis verecundiam plerumque gravioris est certaminis commissa peccata prodere quam non admissa vitare, et unumquodque malum quamvis robustius vitetur, tamen humilius proditur. Beatus ergo Job, qui, tot magnis operibus fultus, confiteri culpam non erubuit, ostendit in virtutibus quam humilis fuit. Sed quia ex humilitate vera secura semper auctoritas nascitur, ut tanto foris nil metuat, quanto ad rerum culmina animus per elationis desiderium non anhelat, expressa confessione peccati, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 34. Si expavi ad multitudinem nimiam, et despectio propinquorum terruit me; et non magis tacui, nec egressus sum ostium. 35. Cordis a terrenarum rerum cupiditate liberi mira securitas. Quae tamen a custodiae disciplina non eximit. Magna est securitas cordis, nil concupiscentiae habere saecularis. Nam si ad terrena adipiscenda cor inhiat, securum tranquillumque esse nullatenus potest, quia aut non habita concupiscit ut habeat, aut adepta metuit ne amittat; et dum in adversis sperat prospera, in prosperis formidat adversa, huc illucque quasi quibusdam fluctibus volvitur, ac per modos varios rerum alternantium mutabilitate versatur. Si vero semel in appetitione supernae patriae forti stabilitate animus figitur, minus rerum temporalium perturbatione vexatur. A cunctis quippe externis motibus eamdem intentionem suam quasi quemdam secretissimum secessum petit, ibique incommutabili inhaerens, et mutabilia cuncta transcendens, ipsa jam tranquillitate quietis suae in mundo extra mundum est. Excedit profecto ima omnia intentione summorum, 715 et cunctis rebus quas non appetit libertate quadam se superesse sentit, nec tempestatem rerum temporalium intus sustinet, quam intuetur foris. quia terrena omnia, quae concupita opprimere mentem poterant, despecta subterjacent. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Statue tibi speculam (Jerem. XXXI, 21), ut dum quisque speculatur summa, superemineat infimis. Hinc etiam Habacuc dicit: Super custodiam meam stabo (Habac. II, 1). Stat quippe super custodiam suam, qui per solertiam disciplinae terrenis desideriis non succumbit, sed supereminet, ut dum semper stantem appetit aeternitatem, infra sit ei omne quod transit. 36. Quia carnis infirmitates et perturbationes non excludit. Sancti Dei dono imperturbabiles, propria infirmitate perturbationibus subjacent. Tamen quia sanctus vir quantalibet virtute profecerit, eum in hac vita positum adhuc extrinsecus carnis infirmitas premit, ut scriptum est: Quanquam in imagine Dei ambulet homo, tamen vane conturbatur (Psal. XXXVIII, 7), plerumque agitur, ut et turbetur exterius, et imperturbabilis perduret interius; et quod

vane conturbari potest, de infirmitate carnis sit, quamvis quod in imagine Dei ambulat, de virtute mentis, quatenus et roboretur intus divino adjutorio, et tamen adhuc foris sarcina prematur humana. Unde bene Habacuc iterum unam sententiam protulit ad utraque servientem. Ait enim: Et introivit tremor in ossa mea, et subtus me turbata est virtus mea (Habac. III, 16). Ac si diceret: Non mea virtus est in qua superius raptus imperturbabilis maneo, et mea virtus est in qua inferius turbor. Ipse ergo super se imperturbabilis est, ipse sub se perturbabilis, quia super se ascenderat, in quantum rapiebatur ad summa; et sub semetipso erat, in quantum adhuc reliquias trahebat in infima. Ipse super se imperturbabilis est, quia in Dei jam contemplationem transierat; ipse sub se perturbabilis, quia sub semetipso adhuc infirmus homo remanebat. Huic sententiae David propheta concinens, ait: Ego dixi in excessu mentis meae: Omnis homo mendax (Psal. CXV, 2). Cui responderi potest: Si omnis homo, et tu, falsaque jam erit sententia quam mendax ipse protulisti. Si vero ipse non es mendax, vera jam sententia non erit, quia dum tu verax es, non omnis homo cognoscitur mendax. Sed notandum est quod praemittitur: Ego dixi in excessu mentis meae. Per excessum ergo mentis etiam semetipsum transiit, cum de hominis qualitate definivit. Ac si patenter dicat: De falsitate omnium hominum inde veram sententiam protuli, unde ego ipse super hominem fui. In tantum vero et ipse mendax, in quantum homo; in tantum autem omnino non mendax, in quantum per excessum mentis super hominem. 37. Haec internae quieti et contemplationi non officiunt. Sic itaque sic perfecti omnes, quamvis adhuc aliquid turbulentum de infirmitate carnis tolerent, jam tamen intrinsecus tranquillissimo secreto perfruuntur per contemplationem mentis, ut quidquid acciderit exterius, in nullo turbet interius. Unde beatus Job securitatem sanctae mentis ostendens, postquam de se tot virtutum praedicamenta protulit, hoc quod praemisimus secutus, adjunxit. [Vet. XVI, Rec. XI.] Si expavi ad multitudinem nimiam, et despectio propinquorum

716 terruit me; et non magis tacui, nec egressus sum ostium. Ac si apertius dicat: Turbatis contra me extrinsecus aliis, ipse in me intrinsecus imperturbabilis mansi. Quid namque in hoc loco ostium nisi os debemus accipere? Per hoc quippe quasi egredimur, dum verbis quibus possumus secreta nostri cordis aperimus; et quales intus manemus in conscientia, tales foras egredimur per linguam. 38. Sancti commotionis tempore silent. Secus alii. Silendum, nisi loquendo aliis prodesse possimus. Sunt vero nonnulli qui omnino despici metuunt, ac ne viles fortasse judicentur, sapientes videri appetunt. Hi coguntur ostium egredi, quia pulsati contumeliis, quam magni apud se lateant loquentes denuntiant. Dumque per impatientiam victi quaedam de se quae nesciebantur produnt, tanquam per oris ostium egrediuntur. Unde beatus Job dicturus quod oris ostium non fuisset egressus, bene praemisit: Tacui, quia videlicet impatientia turbatus a domo conscientiae exisset, si tacere nescisset. [Rec. XII.] Sancti etenim viri in commotionis tentatione semetipsos ostendere omnino refugiunt, et cum audientibus prodesse nequeunt, etiam despici tacentes volunt, ne de sapientiae suae ostentatione glorientur. Cumque aliquid dicunt prudenter, non quaerunt gloriam suam, sed auditorum vitam. Cum vero conspiciunt quia auditorum vitam loquendo lucrari non possunt, tacendo abscondunt scientiam suam. Ad imitandam quippe vitam Domini, quasi ad quoddam nobis propositum signum currimus. Ipse enim, quia Herodem vidit non profectum quaerere, sed signa vel scientiam velle mirari, requisitus ab eo tacuit, et quia constanter tacuit, ab eo irrisus exivit. Scriptum namque est: Herodes autem, viso Jesu, gavisus est valde; erat enim cupiens ex multo tempore videre eum, eo quod audiret multa de illo, et sperabat signum aliquod videre ab eo fieri (Luc. XXIII, 8). Ubi et subditur: Interrogabat autem illum multis sermonibus, at ipse nihil illi respondebat. Tacens vero Dominus quam sit despectus ostenditur, cum illic protinus subinfertur: Sprevit illum Herodes cum exercitu suo, et illusit. Quod videlicet factum

oportet nos audientes discere, ut quoties auditores nostri nostra volunt quasi laudanda cognoscere, non autem sua perversa mutare, omnino taceamus, ne si ostentationis studio verbum Dei loquimur, et illorum culpa quae erat esse non desinat, et nostra quae non erat fiat. [Vet. XVII.] 39. Unde sciri queat utrum auditores ex praedicatorum doctrina proficiant. Quid sit loqui ex Deo et coram Deo. Dicat fortasse aliquis: Unde novimus quo corde quis audiat? Sed multa sunt quae audientis animum produnt, maxime si auditores nostri et semper laudant quod audiunt, et nunquam quod laudant sequuntur. Hanc inanem loquendi gloriam praedicator egregius fugerat, cum dicebat: Non enim sumus sicut plurimi, adulterantes verbum Dei; sed ex sinceritate, sicut ex Deo, coram Deo in Christo loquimur. Adulterari namque verbum Dei, est aut aliter de illo sentire quam est, aut ex eo non spiritales fructus, sed adulterinos fetus quaerere laudis humanae. Ex sinceritate vero loqui, est nil in eloquio extra quam oporteat quaerere. 717 Sicut ex Deo autem loquitur qui scit non se a se habere, sed ex Deo accepisse quod dicit. Coram Deo vero loquitur qui in omni quod dicit, non humanos favores appetit, sed omnipotentis Dei praesentiae intendit; non suam, sed auctoris gloriam requirit. Qui autem scit quidem ex Deo se accepisse quod dicit, et tamen dicendo propriam gloriam quaerit, sicut ex Deo loquitur, sed non coram Deo, quia eum quem cordi suo non proponit cum praedicat quasi absentem putat. Sed sancti viri et ex Deo loquuntur, et coram Deo, quia et ab eo se sciunt habere quod dicunt, et ipsum suis sermonibus adesse judicem auditoremque considerant. Unde fit ut cum se a proximis despici agnoscunt, suaque dicta vitae audientium non prodesse, abscondant quantae virtutis sint, ne si secretum cordis inutiliter sermo prolatus aperiat, ad inanem gloriam prorumpat. 40. Job ad suas virtutes narrandas, nec superbia nec impatientia coegit. Beatus igitur Job inter obstinatas mentes non appetens ex virtutis suae patefactione clarescere, ait: Si despectio propinquorum terruit me, et non magis tacui, nec egressus sum ostium. Qui enim per

humilitatem solidus nequaquam despici timuit, hunc ut foras lingua ejiceret impatientia non evicit. Ubi bene praemittitur: Si expavi ad multitudinem nimiam, ut cujus constantiae fuerit agnoscatur, quia videlicet nequaquam terret exterius numerus hominum, quem non devastat interius turba vitiorum. In hac etenim vita, qui nulla prospera appetit, nulla procul dubio adversa pertimescit. 41. Quae de se narrat Job, de Christo sunt intelligenda. Quae scilicet verba si ad intellectum mysticum pertrahimus, in eis citius operationem nostri Redemptoris invenimus. Ipse quippe ad multitudinem nimiam non expavit, qui persecutores suos cum gladiis et fustibus venientes una tantum responsione perculit, dicens: Ego sum (Joan. XVIII, 6). Ipsum despectio propinquorum non terruit, qui nos ab aeternis suppliciis liberans, palmas in facie aequanimiter accepit. Ipse tacuit, et ostium egressus non est, qui sub ipsa jam hora passionis cum humanitatis infirma pateretur, divinitatis suae potentiam exercere noluit. Mediatori quippe Dei et hominum quasi egredi ostium fuisset, si cum teneretur ut homo, majestatis suae potentiam voluisset ostendere, et per divinitatis magnitudinem susceptae carnis infirma transire. Ut enim apertus homo mori posset, Deus mansit occultus: Quia si cognovissent, nunquam Dominum gloriae crucifixissent (I Cor. II, 8). Non est ergo egressus ostium, qui et requisitus a Pilato tacuit; atque inter persecutorum manus et corpus passioni obtulit quod pro electis assumpserat, et resistentibus noluit demonstrare quod erat. Unde etiam per Psalmistam dicitur: Posuerunt me in abominationem sibi, traditus sum, et non egrediebar (Psal. LXXXVII, 9). Cum enim despiceretur quia homo videbatur, egressus fuisset, si occultam majestatem suam ostentare voluisset. Sed quia infirmitatem prodidit, potentiam abscondit; in eo quod persecutoribus suis incognitus mansit, ad eos minime exivit. Qui tamen ad electos exit, quia divinitatis suae suavitatem quaerentibus aperit. Unde ei per prophetam dicitur: Existi in salutem populi tui, ut salvos facias christos tuos (Habac. III, 13). Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII [Vet.

XVIII, Rec. XIII]. 718 VERS. 35. Quis mihi tribuat adjutorem, ut desiderium meum Omnipotens audiat? 42. Nemo suis meritis innitatur. Quaerendus adjutor et Mediator Christus. Sanctus vir postquam tot virtutum suarum sublimia gesta narravit, sciens quod suis meritis ad summa pervenire nequeat, adjutorem quaerit. Et quem nimirum nisi unigenitum Dei Filium contemplatur, qui humanam naturam in hac mortalitate laborantem dum suscepit adjuvit? Ipse quippe adjuvit hominem factus homo, ut quia puro homini via redeundi non patebat ad Deum, via redeundi fieret per hominem Deum. Longe quippe distabamus a justo et immortali, nos mortales et injusti. Sed inter immortalem et justum et nos mortales et injustos apparuit Mediator Dei et hominum mortalis et justus, qui et mortem haberet cum hominibus, et justitiam cum Deo, ut quia per ima nostra longe distabamus a summis, in seipso uno jungeret ima cum summis, atque ex eo nobis via redeundi fieret ad Deum, quo summis suis ima nostra copularet. Hunc ergo beatus Job per totius Ecclesiae significationem loquens, Mediatorem requirit, qui cum dixisset: Quis mihi tribuat adjutorem, apte subdidit: Ut desiderium meum Omnipotens audiat. Sciebat quippe quod ad requiem liberationis aeternae humanae preces nisi per advocatum suum audiri non possent. De quo per Joannem apostolum dicitur: Si quis peccaverit. advocatum habemus apud Patrem Jesum Christum justum, et ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris; non pro nostris autem tantum, sed etiam pro totius mundi (Joan. II, 1, 2). De quo Paulus apostolus dicit: Christus Jesus, qui mortuus est pro nobis, imo qui et resurrexit, qui est in dextera Dei, qui etiam interpellat pro nobis (Rom. VIII, 34). Unigenito enim Filio pro homine interpellare est apud coaeternum Patrem seipsum hominem demonstrare, eique pro humana natura rogasse est eamdem naturam in divinitatis suae celsitudine suscepisse. Interpellat igitur pro nobis Dominus, non voce, sed miseratione, quia quod damnari in electis

noluit, suscipiendo liberavit. Adjutor ergo quaeritur ut desiderium exaudiatur, quia nisi pro nobis interpellatio Mediatoris intercederet, ab aure Dei procul dubio nostrarum precum voces silerent. 43. Non verba sed desideria cordis Deus exaudit. Notandum quoque est quod nequaquam dicitur preces, sed desiderium meum Omnipotens audiat. Vera quippe postulatio non in oris est vocibus, sed in cogitationibus cordis. Valentiores namque voces apud secretissimas aures Dei non faciunt verba nostra, sed desideria. Aeternam etenim vitam si ore petimus, nec tamen corde desideramus, clamantes tacemus. Si vero desideramus ex corde, etiam cum ore conticescimus, tacentes clamamus. Hinc est, quod in eremo populus vocibus perstrepit, et Moyses a strepitu verborum tacet; et tamen silens aure divinae pietatis auditur, cum dicitur: Quid clamas ad me (Exod. XIV, 15)? Intus ergo in desiderio est clamor secretus, qui ad humanas aures non pervenit, et tamen auditum conditoris replet. Hinc est quod Anna ad Templum pergens, ore quidem tacuit, et tamen tot sui desiderii voces emisit (I Reg. I, 13). Hinc in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Intra in cubiculum tuum, et clauso ostio in abscondito, et Pater tuus, qui videt in abscondito, reddet tibi (Matth. VI, 6). 719 Clauso quippe ostio petit in cubiculo, qui, tacente ore, in conspectu supernae pietatis fundit affectum mentis. Et vox auditur in abscondito, cum per sancta desideria silenter clamatur. Unde recte quoque per Psalmistam dicitur: Desiderium pauperum exaudivit Dominus; praeparationem cordis eorum audivit auris tua (Psal. XIX, 17). Sed beatus Job quem sibi in exaudiendo desiderio adjutorem quaerat, subjunctis verbis aperit, dicens:

CAPUT XVIII [Vet. XIX].

IBID. Et librum scribat ipse qui judicat. 44. Quaerendus adjutor Christus, qui est legislator et judex. Ezechielis de eo vaticinium. Quia enim timenti adhuc populo lex est transmissa per servum, diligentibus vero filiis

Evangelii gratia est collata per Dominum, qui ad redemptionem nostram veniens novum nobis testamentum condidit, sed de ejusdem nos testamenti mandato discutiens, quandoque etiam judex venit, necessarium non est ut per expositionem clarescat quia librum scribit ipse qui judicat. Ipsa enim per se Veritas dicit: Pater non judicat quemquam, sed omne judicium dedit Filio (Joan. V, 22). Erit ergo tunc auctor judicii, qui nunc est conditor libri, ut tunc districtus exigat quod modo mansuetus jubet. Sic namque quotidie conspicimus quod magistri pueris elementa litterarum blandientes imponunt, sed haec ab eis saevientes exigunt; et quae dant cum mansuetudine, cum verbere requirunt. Blanda namque nunc sonant eloquii divini mandata, sed erunt aspera in exactione sentienda. Mansueta modo est admonitio vocantis, sed tunc districta ventura est justitia judicis, eo quod certum est quia nihil vel minimi mandati sine discussione praetereat. Quo videlicet constat quia librum scripsit ipse qui judicat. Quem scilicet librum Novi Testamenti, quia ipse per se humani generis Redemptor in extremo conderet, bene Ezechiel propheta denuntiat, dicens: Ecce sex viri veniebant de via portae superioris, quae respicit ad Aquilonem, et uniuscujusque vas interitus in manu ejus. Vir quoque unus in medio eorum vestitus lineis, et atramentarium scriptoris ad renes ejus (Ezech. IX, 2). Quid namque aliud in sex viris venientibus nisi sex aetates humani generis designantur? Qui de via portae superioris veniunt, quia a conditione paradisi, sicut ab ingressu mundi, a superioribus generationibus evolvuntur. Quae porta ad Aquilonem respicit, quia videlicet mens humani generis vitiis aperta, nisi calorem charitatis deserens torporem mentis appeteret, ad hanc mortalitatis latitudinem non exisset. Et uniuscujusque vas interitus in manu ejus, quia unaquaeque generatio singulis quibusque aetatibus evoluta, ante Redemptoris adventum in sua operatione habuit, unde poenam damnationis sumpsit. Vir quoque unus in medio eorum vestitus lineis, quia Redemptor noster, etiam de sacerdotali tribu juxta carnem parentes habere dignatus,

vestitus lineis venire perhibetur. Vel certe quia linum de terra, non autem sicut lana de corruptibili carne nascitur, quia indumentum sui corporis ex matre virgine, non autem ex corruptione commistionis sumpsit, profecto ad nos vestitus lineis venit. Et atramentarium scriptoris ad renes ejus. In renibus posterior corporis pars est. Et quia ipse Dominus postquam pro nobis 720 mortuus est, et resurrexit, et ascendit in coelum, tunc Testamentum Novum per apostolos scripsit, vir iste atramentarium ad renes habuit. Qui enim scripturam Testamenti Novi postquam discessit condidit, atramentarium quasi a tergo portavit. Hoc ergo atramentarium viro lineis vestito inhaerere considerat, qui dicit: Et librum scribat ipse qui judicat. Sed cur, beate Job, ab eo qui judex est, librum scribi desideras? Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX [Vet.

XX, Rec. XIV]. VERS. 36. Ut in humero meo portem illum, et circumdem illum quasi coronam mihi. 45. Scriptura sacra humero portanda per operationem, ut sicut corona circumdetur per remunerationem. Librum quippe in humero portare, est Scripturam sacram operando perficere. Et notandum quam ordinate describitur, et prius in humero portari, et postmodum sicut corona circumdari, quia videlicet sacri eloquii mandata, si modo bene portantur in opere, post nobis coronam victoriae exhibent in retributione. Beatus autem Job cur scribi librum a judice postulat, qui ad Testamenti Novi pervenire tempora non valebat? Sed sicut saepe jam dictum est, electorum vocibus utitur, atque ex eorum significatione postulat, quod profuturum eis per omnia praevidebat. Ipse namque per spiritum, hunc apud se librum jamdudum tenebat, quem per gratiam aspirationis acceperat et vivendo cognoscere et praevidendo nuntiare. Sed inter haec sciendum est quia cum ejusdem sacri eloquii praecepta cogitamus, cumque mentem a vitae corruptibilis amore divertimus, quasi quibusdam cordis passibus ad interiora properamus. Nemo autem infima deserens, repente fit summus,

quia ad obtinendum perfectionis meritum, dum quotidie mens in altum ducitur, ad hoc procul dubio velut ascensionis quibusdam gradibus pervenitur. Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 37. Per singulos gradus meos pronuntiabo illum. 46. Varii sunt gradus ad perfectionem. Ut ad Deum proficiamus a nobis deficiendum. De his quippe meritorum gradibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Ambulabunt de virtute in virtutem (Psal. LXXXIII, 8). De his iterum sanctam Ecclesiam contemplatus, ait: Deus in gradibus ejus dignoscitur, dum suscipiet eam (Psal. XLVII, 4). Neque enim, sicut dictum est, repente ad summa pervenitur, sed ad virtutum celsitudinem per incrementa mens ducitur. Hinc namque est quod Propheta idem iterum dicit: Exercitatus sum, et defecit paulisper spiritus meus (Psal. LXXVI, 4). Quid est itaque, quod ait: Spiritus meus, nisi spiritus hominis, videlicet spiritus elationis? Et quia per occultam gratiam ad amorem Dei temperata desuper mensura proficimus, quanto in nobis quotidie de Dei spiritu virtus crescit, tanto noster spiritus deficit. Qui spiritus erroris, quia non a nobis subito penitus amputatur, bene paulisper defecisse perhibetur. Tunc vero in Deo plene proficimus, cum a nobis ipsis funditus defecerimus. Hae itaque crescentium mensurae virtutum, sancti viri vocibus gradus dicuntur. Electus etenim quisque a rudimenti sui prius teneritudine inchoat, ad robusta postmodum et fortia convalescit. Quod aperte in Evangelio demonstrat Veritas, dicens: Sic 721 est regnum Dei, quemadmodum si jaciat homo sementem in terram, et dormiat, et exsurgat nocte ac die, et semen germinet, et increscat, dum nescit ille (Marc. IV, 26). Cujus nimirum seminis incrementa denuntians, adjungit: Ultro enim terra fructificat, primum herbam, deinde spicam, deinde plenum frumentum in spica. Cujus profectus quoque etiam finem subrogat, dicens: Et cum ex se produxerit fructus, statim mittit falcem, quoniam venit tempus messis. Ecce

Veritatis voce per qualitates frugum distincta sunt incrementa meritorum. Ait enim: Primum herbam, deinde spicam, deinde plenum frumentum in spica. An non herba adhuc tunc fuerat Petrus cum ab ancillae ore subito unius flatu sermonis inflexus est, jam quidem per devotionem viridis, sed adhuc per infirmitatem tener. Plenum vero frumentum in spica inventus est quando persequentibus principibus resistebat, dicens: Obedire oportet magis Deo quam hominibus (Act. V, 29). Plenum vero frumentum in tritura persecutionis tot verbera pertulit, et tamen nequaquam palearum more imminutus est, sed granum integrum mansit. Paulisper quippe in unaquaque anima, ut ita dicam, internae gratiae humor exuberat, ut herba in frugem crescat. Nemo ergo quemlibet proximum, cum adhuc herbam videt, de frumento desperet. Ad herbarum quippe foliis, quae huc illucque molliter defluunt, surgentia frugum grana solidantur. [Vet. XXI.] 47. Diversi profectuum gradus per Danielem expressi. Bene autem Daniel propheta, loquente ad se Domino, dum positionem nobis sui corporis insinuare studuit, haec meritorum incrementa signavit. Ait enim: Audivi vocem verborum ejus, et audiens jacebam consternatus super faciem meam, vultusque meus haerebat terrae. Et ecce manus tetigit me, et erexit me super genua mea, et super articulos manuum mearum, et dixit ad me: Daniel vir desideriorum, intellige verba quae ego loquor ad te, et sta in gradu tuo; nunc enim missus sum ad te. Cumque dixisset mihi sermonem istum, steti tremens, et ait ad me: Noli metuere (Dan. X, 9). Quam videlicet positionem sui corporis, dum verba intrinsecus loquentis audiret, nequaquam nobis tanta cura exprimeret, si a mysteriis vacare cognovisset. In Scriptura enim sacra justi viri non solum quod dicunt prophetia est, sed etiam plerumque quod agunt. Vir itaque sanctus internis mysteriis plenus per positionem quoque corporis exprimit virtutem vocis, et per hoc quod primum in terra prostratus jacuit, per hoc quod se postmodum in manuum suarum articulis et in genibus erexit, per hoc quod ad extremum erectus quidem sed tremens

constitit, in semetipso nobis omnem ordinem nostri profectus innotescit. Verba enim Dei in terra jacentes audimus, cum in peccatis positi, terrenae pollutioni conjuncti, sanctorum voce spiritalia praecepta cognoscimus. Ad quae praecepta quasi super genua et super 722 manuum nostrarum articulos erigimur, quia a terrenis contagiis recedentes, quasi jam ab infimis mentem levamus. Sicut enim totus terrae inhaeret qui consternatus jacet, ita qui in genibus et manuum suarum articulis incurvatur, inchoante profectu ex magna jam parte a terra suspenditur. Ad extremum vero voce dominica erecti quidem, sed trementes assistimus, cum, a terrenis desideriis perfecte sublevati, verba Dei quo plenius cognoscimus plus timemus. Adhuc enim quasi in terra jacet, qui ad coelestia erigi terrenorum desideriis negligit. Quasi sublevatus autem adhuc manibus et genibus incumbit, qui quaedam jam contagia deserit, sed quibusdam adhuc terrenis operibus non contradicit. Jam vero ad verba Dei erectus assistit, qui perfecte mentem ad sublimia erigit, et per immunda desideria incurvari contemnit. 48. A timore ad amorem et charitatem perveniendum.Bene autem trementem se stetisse indicat, quia examen subtilitatis internae, quo plus ad illud proficitur, amplius formidatur. Ubi apte divina voce subjungitur: Noli metuere, quia cum plus ipsi quod timeamus agnoscimus, plus nobis de Deo per internam gratiam infunditur quod amemus; quatenus et contemptus noster paulisper transeat in timorem, et timor transeat in charitatem, ut quia quaerenti nos Deo per contemptum resistimus, per timorem fugimus, et contemptu quandoque et timore postposito, solo ei amore jungamur. Paulisper enim etiam timorem ejus discimus, cujus solius dilectioni inhaeremus. Appositis igitur quasi quibusdam gradibus profectus nostri, mentis pedem prius per timorem in imo ponimus, et postmodum per charitatem ad alta amoris levamus, ut ab eo quo quisque tumet, reprimatur ut timeat, et ab eo quod jam metuit, sublevetur ut praesumat. Hos autem virtutum gradus non magni laboris est prehendere, cum ab una ad alteram transitur. 49. Singularum

virtutum gradus sunt varii. Fidei incrementa. Sed subtilissima disputatione res inindiget, cum mens pensare nititur, in una eademque virtute quibus profectus sui gradibus elevetur. Ut enim prima elementa virtutum, fidem scilicet et sapientiam, loquar, obtineri singula perfecte nequeunt, nisi ad haec distinctis ordinatisque modis, quasi quibusdam gradibus, ascendamus. Ipsa enim fides, quae ad bona alia perfecte capessenda nos imbuit, plerumque in exordiis suis et nutat, et solida est; et jam certissime habetur, et tamen de ejus fiducia adhuc sub dubitatione trepidatur. Pars namque ejus prius accipitur, ut in nobis postmodum perfecte compleatur. Si enim certo gradu in credentis mente non proficeret, requisitus in Evangelio pater sanandi pueri non dixisset: Credo, Domine, adjuva incredulitatem meam (Marc. IX, 23). Adhuc ergo ascendebat ad fidem quam jam perceperat, qui uno eodemque tempore clamabat se et jam credere, et adhuc ex incredulitate dubitare. Hinc est etiam quod Redemptori nostro a discipulis dicitur: 723 Auge nobis fidem (Luc. XVII, 5), ut quae jam accepta per initium fuerat, quasi per augmenta graduum ad perfectionem veniret. [Vet. XXII.] 50. Sapientia bonorum operum magistra, per incrementa tribuitur. Diversi ejus gradus. Ipsa quoque sapientia, quae esse bonorum operum solet magistra, anhelanti menti per incrementa tribuitur, ut ad eam procul dubio magni moderaminis gradibus ascendatur. Quod bene Ezechiel propheta figurata narratione denuntiat, qui de eo viro quem in excelso monte viderat narrat dicens: Mensus est cubitos mille, et transduxit me per aquam usque ad talos. Rursumque mensus est mille, et transduxit me per aquam usque ad genua. Et mensus est mille, et transduxit me per aquam usque ad renes. Et mensus est mille torrentem, quem non potui pertransire, quoniam intumuerunt aquae profundae torrentis, qui non potest transvadari (Ezech. XLVII, 3, 4). Quid namque millenario numero nisi collati muneris plenitudo signatur? Vir itaque qui apparuit mille cubitos metitur, et propheta per aquas usque ad talos ducitur, quia Redemptor noster cum nobis ad se conversis boni exordii

plenitudinem tribuit, dono spiritalis sapientiae prima nostri operis vestigia infundit. Aquam quippe usque ad talos venire est jam nos per acceptam sapientiam desideratae rectitudinis vestigia tenere. Qui rursum mille metitur, et propheta usque ad genua per aquam ducitur, quia cum boni operis plenitudo tribuitur, ad hoc usque nostra sapientia augetur, ut in pravis jam actibus minime flectatur. Hinc namque per Paulum dicitur: Remissas manus et dissoluta genua erigite, et gressus rectos facite pedibus vestris (Hebr. XII, 12). Aqua ergo ad genua pervenit cum nos percepta sapientia perfecte ad boni operis rectitudinem stringit. Qui iterum metitur mille, et propheta per aquam usque ad renes ducitur, quia videlicet tunc in nobis plenitudo operis excrescit quando in nobis percepta sapientia omnem quoque, in quantum est possibile, delectationem carnis exstinxerit. Nisi enim carnis delectatio esset in renibus, Psalmista minime dixisset: Ure renes meos, et cor meum (Psal. XXV, 2). Aqua igitur ad renes venit cum dulcedo sapientiae etiam incentiva carnis interimit, ut ea quae urere mentem poterant delectationis incendia frigescant. Qui adhuc mensus est mille, torrentem videlicet, quem propheta pertransire non potuit, de quo etiam dicit: Quoniam intumuerunt aquae profundae torrentis, qui non potest transvadari. Percepta namque perfectione operis ad contemplationem venitur. In qua scilicet contemplationem dum mens in altum ducitur, sublevata videt in Deo, quia non potest penetrare quod videt, et quasi tangit aquam torrentis, quam pertransire non valet, quia et intuetur speculando quod libeat, et tamen hoc ipsum perfecte non valet intueri quod libet. Propheta ergo quandoque ad aquam pervenit, quam non pertransit, quia ad contemplationem sapientiae cum ad extremum ducimur, ipsa ejus immensitas, quae ex se hominem sublevat, ad se humano animo plenam cognitionem negat, ut hanc et tangendo amet, et tamen nequaquam pertranseundo penetret. 51. His emensis, ad contemplationem pervenitur. Beatus igitur Job haec incrementa virtutum 724 quia distincte hominibus

superno munere tribui conspexit, gradus vocavit, quoniam per ipsos ascenditur ut ad coelestia obtinenda veniatur. Sacri itaque libri, id est divini eloquii, memoriam faciens, dicit: Per singulos gradus meos pronuntiabo illum, quia nimirum ille ad doctrinam Dei veraciter ascendit, qui ad obtinendam hanc gradibus sanctae operationis eruperit. Et quasi per singulos gradus suos librum pronuntiat, qui percepisse se ejus scientiam non per verba tantummodo, sed etiam per opera demonstrat. Unde adhuc subditur: VERS. 37. Et quasi principi offeram eum. Omne enim quod offerimus, in manibus tenemus. Venienti ergo ad judicium principi librum offerre est verba praeceptorum illius in actione tenuisse. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXI [Vet.

XXIII, Rec. XV]. VERS. 38-40. Si adversum me terra mea clamat, et cum ipsa sulci ejus deflent; si fructus ejus comedi absque pecunia, et animam agricolarumm ejus afflixi; pro frumento oriatur mihi tribulus, et pro hordeo spina. 52. De praelatorum injustitia et erratis, minus perfecti clamant et non dolent; perfecti vero tacent et lugent. Perfecti tanto magis de alienis damnis dolent quanto minus de suis. Quid est clamare terram, deflere sulcos, et fructus proprios emendo comedere? Cui unquam necesse est sua emere? Quis clamantem audivit terram? Quis sulcos deflentes vidit? Et cum sulci terrae semper ex terra sint, quid est quod pronuntiatione distincta et clamasse terra, et sulci ejus cum ea deflesse denegantur? Cum enim nihil sit aliud sulcus terrae quam terra, magnae distinctionis ratione non caret, dum subjungit: Et cum ea sulci ejus deflent. Qua videlicet in re quia ordo historiae deficit, sese nobis intellectus mysticus quasi apertis jam foribus ostendit. Ac si patenter clamet: Quia rationem litterae defecisse cognoscitis, nimirum restat ut ad me sine dubitatione redeatis. Omnis enim qui vel privato jure domesticam familiam regit, vel pro utilitate communi fidelibus plebibus praeest, in hoc quod jura regiminis in commissis sibi fidelibus

possidet, quid aliud quam terram incolendam tenet? Ad hoc quippe divina dispensatione caeteris unusquisque praeponitur, ut subjectorum animus, quasi subacta terra, praedicationis illius semine fecundetur. Sed terra contra possessorem clamat, si contra eum qui sibi praeest aliquid justum vel privata domus, vel sancta Ecclesia murmurat. Clamare quippe terram est contra regentis injustitiam rationabiliter subjectos dolere. Ubi recte subjungitur: Et cum ea sulci ejus deflent. Terra enim, etiam nullis operibus exculta, plerumque ad usum hominis aliquod alimentum profert, exarata vero fruges ad satietatem parit. Et sunt nonnulli qui nullo lectionis, nullo exhortationis vomere proscissi, quaedam bona, quamvis minima, tamen ex semetipsis proferunt, quasi terra necdum exarata. Sunt vero nonnulli qui, ad audiendum semper atque retinendum sanctis praedicationibus ac meditationibus intenti, a priori mentis duritia, quasi quodam linguae vomere scissi, semina exhortationis accipiunt, et fruges boni operis per sulcos voluntariae afflictionis reddunt. Saepe vero contingit ut hi qui praesunt injusta aliqua faciant, fitque ut ipsi subjectis noceant qui prodesse debuerant. 725 Quae dum rudes quique conspiciunt, commoti contra rectorem murmurant, nec tamen valde proximis per compassionem dolent. Cum vero hi qui jam aratro lectionis attriti sunt, atque ad frugem boni operis exculti, gravari vel in minimis innocentes aspiciunt, per compassionem protinus ad lamenta convertuntur, quia velut sua plangunt ea quae proximi injuste patiuntur. Perfecti namque cum semper de spiritalibus moveantur, tanto sciunt de alienis corporalibus damnis ingemiscere, quanto jam edocti sunt non dolere de suis. Omnis ergo qui praeest, si perversa in subditis exercet, contra hunc terra clamat, et sulci deflent, quia contra ejus injustitiam rudes quidem populi in murmurationis vocibus erumpunt, sed perfecti quique pro pravo ejus opere sese in fletibus affligunt, quodque imperiti clamant et non dolent, hoc probatioris vitae subjecti deflent et tacent. Cum clamante ergo terra sulcos plangere est per hoc unde multitudo

fidelium juste contra rectorem queritur uberioris vitae homines ad lamenta pervenire. Sulci itaque et ex terra sunt, et tamen a terrae vocabulo distinguuntur, quia hi qui in sancta Ecclesia mentem suam labore sanctae meditationis excolunt, caeteris fidelibus tanto meliores sunt, quanto per accepta semina fecundiores operum fruges reddunt. Et sunt nonnulli qui, sanctis plebibus praelati, vitae quidem stipendia ex ecclesiastica largitate consequuntur, sed exhortationis ministeria debita non impendunt. Contra quos adhuc exemplum sancti viri recte subjungitur, cum ab eo protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT XXII [Rec. XVI].

VERS. 39. Si fructus ejus comedi absque pecunia. 53. Quantum peccent praelati, qui bona ecclesiastica muti comedunt. Quantam sollicitudinem sibi subditis debeant qui praesunt. Fructus etenim terrae absque pecunia comedere est ex Ecclesia quidem sumptus accipere, sed eidem Ecclesiae praedicationis pretium non praebere. De qua videlicet praedicatione auctoris voce dicitur: Oportuit te committere pecuniam meam nummulariis, et veniens ego recepissem utique quod meum erat cum usura (Matth. XXV, 27). Terrae igitur fructus absque pecunia comedit, qui ecclesiastica commoda ad usum corporis percipit, sed exhortationis ministerium populo non impendit. Quid ad haec nos pastores dicimus, qui adventum districti judicis praecurrentes, officium quidem praeconis suscipimus, sed alimenta ecclesiastica muti manducamus? Exigimus quod nostro debetur corpori, sed non impendimus quod subjectorum debemus cordi. Ecce vir sanctus tot in hoc saeculo pignoribus obstrictus, inter occupationes innumeras liber ad studium praedicationis fuit. Qui fructus terrae nunquam sine pecunia comedit, quia nimirum subditis verbum bonae admonitionis reddidit, a quibus fructus corporeae servitutis accepit. Hoc namque debet omnipotenti Deo omnis qui praeest populo, hoc qui multis, hoc qui paucioribus praeest,

ut sic debita ministeria a subditis exigat, quatenus ipse etiam quid semper admonitionis debeat sollicitus attendat. Omnes namque qui sub dispensatione conditoris vicario nobis ministerio jungimur sub uno ac vero Domino, quid nobis aliud 726 nisi invicem servi sumus? Cum igitur is qui subest servit ad obsequium, restat procul dubio ut is qui praeest serviat ad verbum. Cum is qui subest jussis obtemperat, oportet ut is qui praeest curam sollicitudinis ac pietatis impendat. Sicque fit ut dum studiose nunc servire nobis invicem per charitatem nitimur, quandoque cum vero Domino communi exsultatione dominemur. [Vet. XXIV.] Sed sunt nonnulli qui in eo quod officium praedicationis exhibent, aliis invident bonum quod habent, atque ideo jam veraciter non habent. Quibus recte per Jacobum dicitur: Quod si zelum amarum habetis inter vos, et contentiones sunt in cordibus vestris, non est ista sapientia desursum descendens, sed terrena, animalis, diabolica (Jac. III, 14). Unde hic quoque cum dictum est: Si fructus ejus comedi absque pecunia, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIII.

IBID. Et animam agricolarum ejus afflixi. 54. Ecclesiarum rector sibi in praedicatione cooperantibus non invideat. Agricolae quippe hujus terrae sunt hi qui, minori loco positi, quo valent zelo, quanto possunt opere, ad eruditionem sanctae Ecclesiae in praedicationis gratia cooperantur. Quos videlicet terrae hujus agricolas hoc est non affligere, eorum laboribus non invidere, ne rector Ecclesiae dum soli sibi jus praedicationis vindicat, etiam aliis recte praedicantibus invidia se mordente contradicat. Pia etenim pastorum mens, quia non propriam gloriam, sed auctoris quaerit, ab omnibus vult adjuvari quod agit. Fidelis namque praedicator optat, si fieri valeat, ut veritatem quam solus loqui non sufficit ora cunctorum sonent. Unde cum Josue duobus in castris remanentibus atque prophetantibus vellet obsistere, recte per Moysen dicitur: Quid aemularis pro me? Quis tribuat ut

omnis populus prophetet, et det eis Dominus spiritum suum (Num. XI, 29)? Prophetare quippe omnes voluit, qui bonum quod habuit aliis non invidit: Quia igitur beatus Job cuncta haec suspensa intulit, et si ea minime fecerit sententia se maledictionis adstringit, sequitur:

CAPUT XXIV [Rec. XVII].

VERS. 40. Pro frumento oriatur mihi tribulus, et pro hordeo spina. 55. Praelatis sua auctoritate male utentibus oritur pro frumento tribulus, et pro hordeo spina. Ac si aperte dicat: Si injustum quid erga subditos gessi, si exigi debita, et ipse quod debui non impendi, si exercitationem boni operis aliis invidi, pro bonis quae in aeternum reficiunt, retribuantur mihi in judicio mala quae pungunt. Pro frumento quippe tribulus, et pro hordeo spina oritur, cum in retributione ultima, de qua remuneratio laboris quaeritur, punctio doloris invenitur. Et notandum quod sicut a frumento hordeum distat, quamvis utrumque reficiat, sic a tribulo spina, quamvis sit utrumque quod pungat, quia tribulus mollior, et ad pungendum semper durior est spina. Ait ergo: Pro frumento oriatur mihi tribulus, et pro hordeo spina. Ac si patenter dicat: Egisse quidem et magna me et minima bona scio, sed si non ita est, pro bonis magnis mala minima, et pro bonis minimis mihi respondeant mala majora. Quamvis hoc intelligi et aliter potest. In frumento quippe spiritale opus, quod mentem reficit, in hordeo autem terrenarum rerum dispensatio 727 figuratur. In qua saepe dum servire infirmis atque carnalibus cogimur, quasi sua jumentis alimenta praeparamus, atque ipse nostrorum usus operum quasi more hordei habet aliquid de admistione palearum. Et plerumque contingit ut rector qui praeest, dum injusta contra subditos exercet, dum nullo bonos blandimento refovet, dum, quod gravius est, bene operantes quosque ex invidia affligit etiam quaedam bona aliquando faciat, ac si frumentum serat, seseque in dispensandis terrenis rebus nonnunquam non avaritiae studio, sed pro

utilitate carnalium misceat, et sic ejusdem laboris fructum velut messem hordei exspectet. Sed subjecti quique pro eo quod in maximis gravantur, gaudere in ejus bonis minimis nequeunt, quia nec hoc opus coram Deo placet, quod alterius operis injustitia polluit, nec ipsa terrenarum rerum dispensatio pro utilitate subditorum suscipi creditur, quando is qui praeest anhelare per avaritiam videtur. Unde fit ut ad ipsa etiam pauca bona, quae fieri inter multa mala considerant, non laudes, sed gemitus reddant; atque infirmantes murmurent, dum perpendunt puri operis non esse quod vident. Ait ergo: Si adversum me terra mea clamat, et cum ipsa sulci ejus deflent; si fructus ejus comedi absque pecunia, et animam agricolarum ejus afflixi; pro frumento oriatur mihi tribulus, et pro hordeo spina. Ac si aperte dicat: Si magna quae debui sollicite non feci, 728 punctiones murmuris a subjectis recipiam, etiam de bono quod feci. Si neglexi exhibere quod foveat, juste in querelam prosiliens eorum lingua me pungat. 56. Praelati a malis exemplis praebendis, subditi a temerariis judiciis caveant. Qua in re semper sollicita consideratione pensandum est, ne aut hi qui praesunt exempla mali operis subjectis praebeant, eorumque vitam suae gladio pravitatis exstinguant; aut hi qui alieno regimini subjacent, facile judicare audeant facta rectorum, atque per hoc quod de his qui sibi praelati sunt murmurant, non humano, sed ei qui cuncta disponit divino ordini contradicant. Illis namque dicitur: Oves meae his quae conculcata pedibus vestris fuerant pascebantur, et quae pedes vestri turbaverant, haec bibebant (Ezech. XXXIV, 19). Oves enim turbata pedibus bibunt cum subjecti ea ad exemplum vivendi appetunt quae praelati quique pravo opere pervertunt. At contra a praelatis hi audiunt: Nos enim quid sumus? Nec contra nos est murmur vestrum, sed contra Dominum (Exod. XVI, 8). Qui enim contra superpositam sibi potestatem murmurat, liquet quod illum redarguit qui eamdem homini potestatem dedit. Tandem beati Job plenas mystica virtute sententias, in quibus contra amicorum verba respondit, Deo largiente digessimus; nunc superest ut ad

Eliu verba veniamus, quae tanto graviori circumspectione pensanda sunt, quanto et per juventutis audaciam spiritu ferventiore proferuntur.

LIBER VIGESIMUS TERTIUS.

Exponuntur cap. XXXII et XXXIII usque ad versum 22. ubi, silente Job, Eliu junior multa recta et sana, sed non recte et sana intentione edisserit.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

729 Quo Dei consilio, quibusve modis Job probatus fuerit. Praefationem hujus operis toties necessario repeto, quoties hoc in distinctione voluminum locutionis meae pausatione succido, ut cum legendi exordium sumitur, prius ipsa memoriae lectionis causa renovetur, et tanto robustius surgat doctrinae aedificium, quanto ex considerata causae origine studiosius ponitur in mente fundamentum. Beatus Job, Deo soli sibique cognitus, in tranquillitate ad nostram notitiam perducendus tactus est verbere, ut odorem suarum virium tanto latius spargeret, quanto more aromatum melius ex incensione fragraret. Noverat in bonis pie subditos regere, et a malis se districte custodire. Noverat bene uti rebus habitis, sed nesciebamus si patiens permaneret ablatis. Noverat quotidiana Deo pro sanis pignoribus sacrificia solvere, sed incertum erat si ei gratiarum sacrificium et orbatus immolaret. Ne quid ergo vitii salus tegeret, dignum fuit ut hoc dolor aperiret. Data itaque est contra sanctum virum hosti callido tentandi licentia. Qui dum bona ejus multis cognita interimere appetit, etiam bonum patientiae quod latebat ostendit; et quem se angustare persequendo credidit, flagellis auctum et in exemplo dilatavit. Nec sine gravi arte exercuit licentiam quam accepit. Nam combussit greges, extinxit familias, obruit haeredes, percussit salutem corporis, et ad intorquendum gravioris tentationis jaculum, linguam servavit uxoris (Job. I, II, IX, etc.), quatenus sancti viri forte ac solidum pectus et per damna rerum dolore sterneret, et per verba conjugis maledictione perforaret. Sed quot vulnera saeviens intulit, tot sancto viro nesciens victorias ministravit. Nam fidelis Dei famulus, uno eodemque tempore inter

vulnera et verba deprehensus, et dolentem carnem aequanimiter pertulit, et desipientem conjugem 730 prudenter increpavit. Antiquus itaque hostis, quia vinci se in domesticis doluit, protinus exteriora requisivit. Amicos namque ejus de locis singulis, quasi pro exercenda charitate commovit, eorumque ora sub specie consolationis aperuit; sed per haec jacula increpationis intorsit, quae eo durius cor secure audientis infigerent, quo inter ostensae et non servatae charitatis tenebras improvise vulnerarent. Post hos quoque ad contumelias etiam Eliu junior excitatur, ut tranquillitatem tantae mansuetudinis saltem dedignata levitas perturbaret aetatis. Sed contra tot antiqui hostis machinas stetit invicta constantia, stetit aequanimitas infracta. Nam uno eodemque tempore verbis adversantibus opposuit prudentiam, rebus vitam. Nemo igitur sanctum virum, quamvis de illo aperte post flagella scriptum sit: In omnibus his non peccavit Job labiis suis (Ibid., II, 10), saltem postmodum in contentione amicorum aestimet inter verba deliquisse. Satan quippe tentationem illius expetiit; sed Deus, qui hunc laudaverat, in seipso ejus intentionem certaminis accepit. Quisquis ergo beatum Job deliquisse in suis sermonibus queritur, quid aliud quam Deum, qui pro illo proposuit, perdidisse confitetur? 2. Antiqui Patres arboribus fructiferis similes. Eorum fructus fuit Christum signare, et Ecclesiam. Quia vero antiqui Patres fructiferis arboribus similes, non solum pulchri sunt per speciem, sed etiam utiles per ubertatem, sic eorum vita pensanda est, ut cum miramur quae sit viriditas in historia, inveniamus et quanta sit ubertas in allegoria; quatenus cum blandum est quod in foliis redolet, cognoscamus et quam dulce sit quod in fructibus sapit. Nullus quippe supernae adoptionis gratiam habuit, nisi qui hanc per cognitionem Unigeniti accepit. Dignum itaque est ut ipse in eorum vita et lingua resplendeat, qui eos ut resplendere mereantur illustrat. Nam cum in tenebris 731 lucernae lumen accenditur, prius lucerna eadem, quae videri caetera efficit, videtur. Unde necesse est ut si vere intendimus illuminata cernere,

studeamus mentis oculos ad ipsum illuminans lumen aperire. Quod et in eisdem beati Job sermonibus, etiam remotis allegoriarum umbris, quasi depressis altae noctis tenebris, corusci more pertranseuntis intermicat, cum dicitur: Scio quod Redemptor meus vivit, et in carne mea videbo Deum (Job. XIX, 25). Hoc nimirum in nocte historiae, Paulus lumen invenerat, cum dicebat: Omnes in Moyse baptizati sunt in nube et in mari, et omnes eamdem escam spiritalem manducaverunt, et omnes eumdem potum spiritalem biberunt. Bibebant autem de spiritali consequente eos petra, petra autem erat Christus (I Cor. X, 2). Si igitur Redemptoris speciem petra tenuit, cur non figuram illius beatus Job insinuet, qui eum quem voce protulit etiam passione signavit? Unde et non immerito Job videlicet dolens dicitur, quia illius in se imaginem exprimit de quo per Isaiam longe ante annuntiatur quod dolores nostros ipse portavit (Isai. LIII, 4). Sciendum quoque est quod Redemptor noster unam se personam cum sancta Ecclesia, quam assumpsit, exhibuit. De ipso enim dicitur: Qui est caput, Christus (Ephes. IV, 15). Rursumque de ejus Ecclesia scriptum est: Et corpus Christi, quod est Ecclesia (Coloss. I, 24). Beatus igitur Job, qui Mediatoris typum eo verius tenuit quo passionem illius, non loquendo tantummodo, sed etiam patiendo prophetavit, cum in dictis factisque suis expressioni Redemptoris innititur, repente ad significationem corporis aliquando derivatur, ut quod Christum et Ecclesiam unam personam credimus, hoc etiam unius personae actibus significari videamus. 3. Uxor Job, carnales Ecclesiae; amici, haereticos adumbrant. Uxor vero ejus, quae eum ad maledicendum provocat, quid aliud quam pravitatem carnalium signat? Qui intra sanctam Ecclesiam incorrectis moribus positi, eo durius vitam fidelium quo vicinius premunt, quia dum vitari a fidelibus quasi fideles nequeunt, tanto gravius quanto et interius tolerantur. [Vet. II.] Amici vero ejus, qui quasi dum consulunt invehuntur, haereticorum figuram exprimunt, qui sub specie consulendi agunt negotium seducendi. Unde et ad beatum Job dum pro

Domino verba faciunt, a Domino reprobantur, quia videlicet omnes haeretici dum Deum defendere nituntur offendunt. Unde eis apte et ab eodem viro sancto dicitur: Disputare cum Deo cupio, prius vos ostendens fabricatores mendacii, et cultores perversorum dogmatum (Job. XIII, 3, 4). Constat ergo eos haereticorum typum gerere, quos sanctus vir redarguit cultui perversorum dogmatum deservire. Quia igitur Job interpretatur dolens, quo nimirum dolore vel Mediatoris passio, vel sanctae Ecclesiae labor exprimitur, quae multiplici praesentis vitae fatigatione cruciatur, amici quoque ejus ex vocabulo nominis meritum suae indicant actionis. Nam Eliphaz Latina lingua dicitur Dei contemptus. Et quid aliud haeretici faciunt, nisi quod dum falsa de Deo sentiunt, eum superbiendo contemnunt? Baldad interpretatur vetustas sola. Bene autem omnes haeretici in his quae de Domino loquuntur, dum non intentione recta, sed appetitione temporalis gloriae videri praedicatores appetunt, vetustas sola nominantur. Ad loquendum quippe, non zelo novi hominis, 732 sed vitae veteris pravitate concitantur. Sophar quoque Latino sermone dicitur dissipatio speculae, vel speculationem dissipans. Mentes namque fidelium ad contemplanda superna se erigunt; sed dum haereticorum verba pervertere recta contemplantes appetunt, speculam dissipare conantur. In tribus itaque amicorum Job nominibus tres in haereticis perditionum casus exprimuntur. Nisi enim Deum contemnerent, nequaquam de illo perversa sentirent; et nisi vetustatem contraherent, in novae vitae intelligentia non errarent; et nisi speculationem bonorum destruerent, nequaquam eos superna judicia tam districto examine pro verborum suorum culpa reprobarent. Contemnendo igitur Deum, in vetustate se retinent; sed in vetustate se retinendo, pravis suis sermonibus speculationi rectorum nocent. 4. Eliu figura doctorum fidelium sed superborum. Post hos quoque Eliu junior in beati Job exprobratione subjungitur, ex cujus persona videlicet species quorumdam doctorum fidelium sed tamen arrogantium designatur. Cujus verba non

facile intelligimus, nisi ea ex subsequenti dominica correptione pensemus. Ait namque de illo Dominus: Quis est iste involvens sententias sermonibus imperitis (Job. XXXVIII, 2)? Cum vero dicit sententias, sed non addit protinus quales, vult procul dubio bonas intelligi Nam cum sententiae nominantur, nisi etiam malae dicantur, malae sentiri non possunt. In bono enim semper sententias accipimus quae sine reprobationis adjectione ponuntur, sicut scriptum est: Sapientior sibi videtur piger, septem viris loquentibus sententias (Prov. XXVI, 16). Quod vero dicitur, quia ejus sententiae imperitis sermonibus involvuntur, hoc summopere ostenditur, quia ab eo cum elationis fatuitate proferuntur. Magna quippe in eo imperitia est humiliter dicere nescire quod dicit, et veritatis sensibus elationis verba miscere. [Vet. III.] 5. Aliquando mala bene, et bona male dicuntur. Omne enim quod dicitur quadripartita potest qualitate distingui: si aut mala male, aut bona bene, aut mala bene, aut bona male dicantur. Male enim malum dicitur, cum res perversa suadetur, sicut scriptum est: Benedic Deo, et morere (Job. II, 9). Bonum bene dicitur, cum recte recta praedicantur, sicut Joannes ait: Agite poenitentiam, appropinquavit enim regnum coelorum (Matth. III, 2). Malum bene dicitur, quando per os dicentis idcirco vitium exprimitur, ut reprobetur, sicut Paulus ait: Feminae eorum immutaverunt naturalem usum in eum qui est contra naturam (Rom. I, 26). Quo loco exsecranda quoque virorum facinora subdidit; sed honeste inhonesta narravit, ut multos ad honestatis formam inhonesta narrando revocaret. Male autem bonum dicitur, cum rectum aliquid recto studio non profertur, sicut illuminato caeco Pharisaei dixisse perhibentur: Tu sis discipulus ejus (Joan. IX, 28). Quod maledictionis utique dixerunt studio, non orationis voto. Vel sicut Caiphas ait: Expedit unum hominem mori pro populo, ut non tota gens pereat (Joan. XI, 50). Bonum quippe, sed non bene locutus est, quia dum crudelitatem necis appetiit, redemptionis gratiam prophetavit. Hoc igitur modo Eliu quoque dicere non bene bona reprehenditur, quia in his

quae veraciter loquitur arroganter inflatur. Qui in eo speciem arrogantium signat, quo per sensum rectitudinis in tumoris verba se elevat. 733 6. In amicorum Job reconciliatione, agnoscenda haereticorum conversio. Eorum sacrificia Deo non placent, sed quae ab Ecclesia offeruntur. Sed quid est quod tres amicos reconciliari per septem sacrificia, divina vox praecipit; Eliu vero sub unius tantummodo sententiae increpatione derelinquit, nisi quod nonnunquam haeretici, divinae gratiae largitate perfusi, ad unitatem sanctae Ecclesiae redeunt? Quod bene ipsa amicorum reconciliatione signatur, pro quibus tamen beatus Job exorare praecipitur, quia nimirum haereticorum sacrificia accepta Deo esse non possunt, nisi pro eis universalis Ecclesiae manibus offerantur, ut ejus meritis remedium salutis inveniant, quam verborum suorum jaculis impugnando feriebant. Unde et septem pro eis sacrificia memorantur oblata, quia dum septiformis gratiae Spiritum confitentes accipiunt, quasi septem oblationibus expiantur. Hinc in Joannis Apocalypsi per septenarium Ecclesiarum numerum, universalis Ecclesia designatur (Apoc. I, 11). Hinc per Salomonem de sapientia dicitur: Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum, excidit columnas septem (Prov. IX, 1). Ipso ergo sacrificiorum numero reconciliati haeretici quid prius fuerint exprimunt, qui perfectioni septiformis gratiae nonnisi redeundo junguntur. Bene autem tauros pro se et arietes obtulisse describuntur. In tauro quippe cervix superbiae, in ariete autem ducatus gregum sequentium designatur. Quid itaque est pro eis tauros arietesque mactare, nisi eorum superbum ducatum interficere, ut de se humilia sentiant, et post se corda innocentium jam non seducant? Cervice enim tumenti ab Ecclesiae universitate resilierant, et infirmos post se populos quasi sequentes greges trahebant. Veniant igitur ad beatum Job, id est revertantur ad Ecclesiam, et septenario sacrificio tauros et arietes mactandos offerant, qui ut universali Ecclesiae conjungantur, humilitate interveniente, interficiant quidquid prius tumidum de superbo ducatu sapiebant. [Vet. IV.] 7. Non reconciliantur qui recte

praedicando, vanae gloriae serviunt, sed saepissime reprobantur. Eliu vero per quem vanae gloriae amatores signati sunt, intra sanctam Ecclesiam constituti, qui ea quae recte sentiunt humiliter proferre contemnunt, nequaquam per sacrificium reconciliari praecipitur quia arrogantes quidem, sed tamen fideles, pro eo quod jam intus sunt, per septem sacrificia revocari non possunt. Quos tamen sub Eliu specie sententia divina redarguit, atque in eis non veritatis sententias, sed elationis mentem ac verba reprehendit. Quae nimirum reprehensio quid aliud signat, nisi quod eos intra positos supernae districtionis increpatio vel per flagellum corrigit, vel per justum examen sibimetipsis relinquit? Tales quippe intra sanctam Ecclesiam recta quidem praedicant, sed tamen, Deo judice, audire merentur adversa, quia per ea bona quae non propria proferunt, non auctoris sui gloriam, sed propriam laudem quaerunt. Unde hoc quoque caute pensandum est, quod divina voce de Eliu dicitur: Quis est iste (Job. XXXVIII, 2)? Prima quippe exprobratio est talis interrogatio. Nam Quis est iste non dicimus, nisi de eo utique quem nescimus. Nescire autem Dei reprobare est; unde quibusdam quos reprobat in fine dicturus est: Nescio vos unde sitis, discedite a me omnes operarii iniquitatis (Luc. XIII, 27). Quid est ergo 734 de hoc arrogante requirere: Quis est iste? nisi aperte dicere: Ego arrogantes nescio, id est eorum vitam in sapientiae meae virtute non approbo, quia dum laudibus humanis inflantur, a vera gloria aeternae retributionis inanescunt. Cujus dum sententias minime respuit, sed tamen eum ipsum qui illas protulit reprehendit, quasi aperte insinuat, dicens: Novi quae dicit, sed ignoro qui dicit, quia veraciter prolata approbo, sed eum qui de bonis quae profert extollitur non agnosco. 8. Optimi praedicatoris imago eximia. Bona vix sine periculo innotescunt. Qui sapit, studeat esse sapiens, non videri. Ut vero apertius ostendamus in elationis jactantia. Eliu quam turpiter defluat, formam prius ostendere boni praedicatoris debemus, quatenus ex statu hujus rectitudinis monstretur liquido tortitudo quam prava sit incurvationis.

Sanctae universalis Ecclesiae spiritalis quisque praedicator in cunctis quae dicit solerti cura se inspicit, ne in eo quod recta praedicat vitio se elationis extollat; ne vita a lingua discordet; ne pacem, quam in Ecclesia nuntiat, in seipso, dum bene dicit, et male vivit, amittat. Sed studet summopere contra maledicos rumores adversantium et defendere loquendo quod vivit, et ornare vivendo quod dicit. Nec in his omnibus suam, sed auctoris gloriam quaerit; atque omnem sapientiae gratiam, quam ut loqueretur accepit, non suis se aestimat meritis, sed eorum intercessionibus pro quibus loquitur accepisse. Sicque dum se infra dejicit, superest, quia suae nimirum magis mercedi proficit, quod bona quae exercere praevalet alienis meritis reddit. Indignum se omnibus judicat, etiam cum dignius cunctis vivat. Scit enim, quod bona quae innotescunt hominibus, sine periculo esse vix possunt. Et quamvis sapientem se esse sentiat, vellet tamen esse sapiens, nec videri, atque hoc sibi omnimodo quod loquendo proditur pertimescit; et si liceat, tacere appetit, dum esse multis tutius silentium cernit, eosque esse feliciores putat, quos intra sanctam Ecclesiam locus inferior per silentium occultat; et tamen ut sanctam Ecclesiam defendat, quia ad loquendum vi charitatis impellitur, ex necessitate quidem officium locutionis suscipit, sed ex magno desiderio otium taciturnitatis quaerit. Hoc servat voto, illud exercet ministerio. Hanc autem dicendi formulam arrogantes ignorant. Neque enim loquuntur quia causae eveniunt, sed causas evenire appetunt ut loquantur. Quorum nunc Eliu speciem signat, qui in locutione sua immenso se vitio elationis exaltat. Igitur finitis beati Job sermonibus, subditur: CAP. XXXII, VERS. 7. Omiserunt autem tres viri isti respondere Job, eo quod justus sibi videretur. [Vet. V, Rec. II.] Hoc quod de eo dicitur: Eo quod justus sibi videretur, sacrae hujus scriptor historiae ad amicorum judicium retulit, non autem beatum Job de elationis tumore reprobavit. Sequitur:

CAPUT II.

VERS. 2. Et iratus, indignatusque est Eliu filius Barachel Buzites, de cognatione Ram. 9. Per Eliu, ejusque patrem et cognationem, signantur superbi verae fidei tenaces. Bene haec ipsa vel ejus, vel parentis, vel loci, vel cognationis nomina notam propriae exprimunt actionis. Eliu quippe interpretatum sonat, Deus meus iste, vel Deus Dominus. Per quem, sicut superius diximus (Num. 7), designatur recta 735 fides arrogantium intra Ecclesiam positorum. Unde eis et hoc ipsum ejus etiam nomen congruit. Nam quamvis juxta dominica praecepta non vivant, Deum tamen dominum esse recognoscunt; quia in veritate carnis etiam formam Deitatis intelligunt, sicut per Prophetam dicitur: Scitote quod Dominus ipse est Deus (Psal. XCIX, 3). Barachel vero interpretatum dicitur benedictio Dei, Buzites autem contemptibilis. Quod arroganter praedicantibus bene utrumque concordat, quia in praedicationis facundia benedictionem quidem gratiae divinae percipiunt, sed in elatis suis moribus esse eam contemptibilem ostendunt. Ipsa quippe quae acceperunt bona, eo despicabilia faciunt, quo nequaquam eis bene uti noverunt. Apte autem etiam de cognatione Ram dicitur. Ram quippe interpretatur excelsus. Excelsus namque est fidelium populus, qui hujus vitae infima et abjecta contemnit. Excelsi sunt qui dicere cum Paulo noverunt: Nostra conversatio in coelis est (Philip. III, 20). Eliu itaque de cognatione Ram dicitur, quia unusquisque praedicator arrogans intra universalem Ecclesiam positus, sanctis populis fidei veritate sociatur, quamvis ab eorum vita elationis pravitate disjungatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. III].

VERS. 2, 3. Iratus est autem adversus Job, eo quod justum se diceret coram Deo. Porro adversus amicos ejus indignatus est, eo quod non invenissent responsionem rationabilem, sed tantummodo condemnassent Job. 10. Hi simul haereticos premunt recte praedicando, et Ecclesiam superbiendo. Solerter intuendum est quod beatum Job ideo reprehendit quod coram Deo

se justum esse dixerit; amicos vero ejus ideo redarguit, quod condemnantes eum responsionem contra illum rationabilem non dederunt. Istis namque indiciis aperte colligitur quod per eum species amatorum vanae gloriae designatur. Job quippe de praesumpta justitia, amicos vero ejus de stulta responsione redarguit. Cuncti enim vanae gloriae sectatores, dum se omnibus praeferunt, alios quidem de fatuis sensibus, alios autem de indignis meritis reprehendunt; id est, alios censent nihil scire, alios non bene vivere. Et quamvis juste omnes extra Ecclesiam positos prava sentire redarguant, tamen etiam eos qui intus sunt pro vitae despectu contemnunt, et contra illos ex magnitudine recte sentiendi, contra istos vero quasi ex merito bene vivendi superbiunt. [Vet. VI.] Bene autem Eliu modo beatum Job, modo amicos ejus increpare perhibetur, quia amatores vanae gloriae aliquando intra sanctam Ecclesiam constituti, et adversarios premunt, dum vera praedicant, et ejusdem sanctae Ecclesiae moribus contradicunt, dum de ipsa praedicatione gloriantur. Premunt adversarios virtute dicti, premunt sanctam Ecclesiam qualitate dicendi. Illos praedicatione veritatis, istam vitio elationis impugnant. Sequitur: VERS. 4, 5. Igitur Eliu exspectavit Job loquentem, eo quod seniores essent qui loquebantur. Cum autem vidisset quod tres respondere non potuissent, iratus est vehementer. 11. Non nisi post haereticorum certamina prodiere acuti sensus et perplexior indago verborum. Quamvis sancta Ecclesia sit procul dubio adversariis suis antiquior, quia de illa ipsi, non autem exiit ipsa de illis, sicut de eis per Joannem 736 dicitur: Ex nobis exierunt, sed non erant ex nobis (I Joan. II, 19); recte tamen eisdem adversariis Eliu junior fuisse describitur, quia nimirum post exorta haereticorum bella, esse intra sanctam Ecclesiam fastu scientiae inflati arrogantes coeperunt. Cum enim graviora hostium prodiere certamina, tunc sunt profecto subtiliora sensuum spicula requisita, tunc argumentorum obstacula, tunc perplexior indago verborum. Quae saepe viri ferventes ingenio, dum congrue inveniunt, arroganter intumescunt; et, quod

per elationis vitium plerumque contingit, iisdem acutis sensibus quibus hostem feriunt, prosternuntur, dum in his quae recte de Deo sentiunt, non Dei, sed suam gloriam quaerunt. Unde Eliu quoque multa quidem recte loquitur, et tamen divina voce, ac si perversa dixerit, increpatur. Cum vero dicitur quia Eliu exspectavit Job loquentem, eo quod seniores essent qui loquebantur, aperte beato Job non pro sua, sed pro amicorum reverentia honorem reservasse monstratur, quia videlicet arrogantes intra positi eamdem sanctam Ecclesiam, quam defendunt, despiciunt; et plerumque contingit ut plus ingenia male sapientium quam simplicem vitam innocentium venerentur, plus reservent linguis extra loquentium quam meritis intra positorum, quamvis utrisque ex diverso obvient, cum et ab illis rectitudine sensuum, et a sancta Ecclesia morum pravitate discordent. Sequitur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 6, 7. Respondensque Eliu filius Barachel Buzites, dixit: Junior sum tempore, vos autem antiquiores; idcirco demisso capite veritus sum indicare vobis meam sententiam. Sperabam enim quod aetas prolixior loqueretur, et annorum multitudo doceret sapientiam. 12. Tacere, saepe est sapere. Cuncta haec, quae ab eo per tumorem superbiae proferuntur, cursim potius perstringenda sunt quam attentius exponenda. Quae enim soliditate gravitatis carent, expositionis subtilitate non indigent. Sed solum puto breviter intimandum quod Eliu quandiu pro aetatis suae respectu tacuit, sapientior fuit; cum vero in aliis annorum multitudinem, semetipsum praeferens, despicit, quam pueriliter desipiat ostendit. Nam contra ejus sententiam et aetas prolixior loquitur, et per annorum multitudinem sapientia docetur, quia etsi longaevitas sensum non praebet, usu tamen vehementer exercet. Sequitur:

CAPUT VI [Rec. IV].

VERS. 8. Sed, ut video, spiritus est in hominibus, et inspiratio Omnipotentis dat intelligentiam. 13. Quatuor species tumoris in arrogantibus: prima, bonum a semetipso habere se credere; secunda, sibi pro suis meritis datum. Gratia non datur pro meritis. Tertia bonum aliquod falso sibi tribuere; quarta sibi soli, despectis caeteris, illud vindicare. Haec recte diceret si eamdem intelligentiam sibi prae caeteris non arrogaret. Neque enim prava condemnatio est ex eo bono quod communiter datur private gloriari, scire bonum unde acceperit, et nescire quomodo bono uti debeat quod accepit. [Vet. VII.] Quatuor quippe sunt species quibus omnis tumor arrogantium demonstratur, cum bonum aut a semetipsis habere se aestimant, aut si sibi datum desuper credunt, pro suis se hoc accepisse meritis putant; aut certe cum jactant se habere quod non habent; aut, despectis caeteris, singulariter videri appetunt habere quod habent. A semetipso enim bonum se habere jactabat, cui per Apostolum dicitur: Quid autem habes quod non accepisti, 737 quid gloriaris quasi non acceperis (I Cor. IV, 7)? Rursum ne dari nobis bonum gratiae pro nostris praecedentibus meritis crederemus, idem Apostolus admonet, dicens: Gratia estis salvati per fidem, et hoc non ex vobis, sed Dei donum est, non ex operibus, ut ne quis glorietur (Ephes. II, 8). Qui etiam de semetipso ait: Qui prius fui blasphemus, et persecutor, et contumeliosus; sed misericordiam consecutus sum (I Tim. I, 13). Quibus verbis aperte declarat quod gratia non pro meritis tribuatur, dum ex seipso docuit et quid de malitia meruit, et quid de benevolentia accepit. Rursum nonnulli jactant se habere quod non habent, sicut divina voce per prophetam de Moab dicitur: Superbiam ejus, et arrogantiam ejus ego novi, et quod non sit juxta eam virtus ejus (Jerem. XLVIII, 29). Et sicut angelo Ecclesiae Laodiceae dicitur: Quia dicis quod dives sum, et locupletatus, et nullius egeo; et nescis quia tu es miser, et miserabilis, et pauper, et caecus, et nudus (Apoc. III, 17). Rursum nonnulli, despectis caeteris, videri appetunt

singulariter bonum habere quod habent. Unde et Pharisaeus idcirco de templo absque justificatione descendit (Luc. XVIII, 14), quia bonorum operum merita sibi quasi singulariter tribuens, oranti publicano se praetulit. Sancti quoque apostoli ab hoc elationis vitio revocantur, qui de praedicatione redeuntes, cum elati dicerent: Domine, in nomine tuo etiam daemonia nobis subjecta sunt (Luc. X, 17), ne de hac miraculorum singularitate gauderent, illico eis respondit Dominus, dicens: Videbam Satanam velut fulgur de coelo cadentem (Ibid., 18). Ipse quippe singulariter elatus dixerat: Super astra coeli exaltabo solium meum, sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis, similis ero Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 13). Et mire Dominus, ut in discipulorum cordibus elationem premeret, mox judicium ruinae retulit, quod ipse magister elationis accepit, ut in auctore superbiae discerent quid de elationis vitio formidarent. In hac itaque arrogantiae quarta specie crebro humanus animus labitur, ut id quod habet habere se singulariter glorietur. In qua tamen similitudini diabolicae vicinius appropinquat, quia quisquis bonum se habere singulariter gaudet, quisquis videri sublimior caeteris quaerit, illum videlicet imitatur, qui despecto bono societatis angelorum, sedem suam ad Aquilonem ponens, et Altissimi similitudinem superbe appetens, per iniquum desiderium quasi ad quoddam culmen conatus est singularitatis erumpere. Eliu ergo quamvis dari a Domino sapientiam confitetur, in hac tamen elationis specie labitur, ut sapientiorem se caeteris gaudeat, et quasi de singulari bono sese inaniter extollat. Quod verbis sequentibus indicat, dicens:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 9-12. Non sunt longaevi sapientes, nec senes intelligunt judicium. Ideo dicam: Audite me, ostendam vobis ego meam sapientiam. Exspectavi enim sermones vestros, audivi prudentiam vestram, donec disceptaretis sermonibus; et donec putabam vos aliquid dicere, considerabam. 14.

Quidam superbe tacent; et senes audiunt, non ut discant, sed ut judicent. Quantum ad intentionem litterae spectat, loquens Eliu indicat quam superbe tacuerit. Cum enim dicit: Exspectavi enim sermones vestros, et putabam vos aliquid dicere, aperte declarat se ad verba senum judicantis potius studio quam discentis voto tacuisse. Quamvis haec melius vitam 738 arrogantium designant, qui aliquando intra sanctam Ecclesiam positi, cum ejusdem sanctae Ecclesiae adversarios conspiciunt, non in eis annos temporum, sed intentionem solent pensare verborum. Nam quantolibet sint eisdem arrogantibus antiquiores haeretici, eos audacter comprimunt, in quorum verbis dogmata perversa reprehendunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT VIII [Vet. VIII].

VERS. 12, 13. Sed, ut video, non est qui arguere possit Job, et respondere ex vobis sermonibus ejus. Ne forte dicatis: Invenimus sapientiam, Deus projecit eum, non homo. 15. Deus in hac vita solatia aliquando concedit, nullo vitae aeternae detrimento. Saepe haeretici per hoc quod esse et hominibus despicabiles solent, cum a cunctis fere gentibus sanctam Ecclesiam venerari conspiciunt, opinionem ejus quibus valent obtrectationibus lacerare contendunt, dicentes: Idcirco illi cuncta temporalia suppetunt, quia ei praemia aeternorum munerum subtrahuntur. Quorum vocibus Eliu obviat, dicens: Ne forte dicatis: Invenimus sapientiam, Deus projecit eum non homo. Ac si arrogantes intra sanctam Ecclesiam sed tamen fideles contra haereticos dicant: Per hoc quod sanctam Ecclesiam in honore hominum florere temporaliter cernitis, projectam eam a Domino non credatis. Scit enim Redemptor ejus, et in hoc itinere solatia venienti tribuere, et pervenienti ad aeternam patriam superna praemia reservare. Incassum igitur dicitis quia Deus eam et non homo projecerit, cum venerari illam a cunctis fere hominibus videtis, quia sic ei terrenae gloriae

adjumentum tribuitur, ut per hoc multiplicius etiam ad coelestia subvehatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 14. Nihil locutus est mihi, et ego non secundum vestros sermones respondebo illi. 16. Superbi, cum corripiuntur, non audiunt, aut dissimulant. Quid est, quod ait: Nihil locutus est mihi? Nunquid sancta Ecclesia per praedicatores justos cum intra se arrogantes conspicit, erudire ac redarguere praetermittit? Exercet haec, et quotidie exercere non cessat. Sed Eliu, qui loquentem publice beatum Job audierat, dicat: Nihil locutus est mihi, quia nimirum omnes arrogantes voces quidem sanctae Ecclesiae audiunt, sed sibi eas dici dissimulant, quando elationis vitium emendare contemnunt. Nec se de superbia redargui aestimant, quia esse se humiles putant, qui etiam redargui despiciunt, dum sapientiores se et ipsis redarguentibus arbitrantur. Quod vero ait: Et ego non secundum sermones vestros respondebo illi, bene beato Job non secundum sermones eorum respondere se dicit. Arrogantes enim intra sanctam Ecclesiam positi respondent contra eam, sed non sicut haeretici exterius constituti. Neque enim contradicunt ei prava praedicando, sed perverse vivendo, quia nec de Deo, ut haeretici, indigna sentiunt, sed de se plus quam necesse est, digna suspicantur. Sequitur: VERS. 15. Extimuerunt, nec responderunt ultra, abstuleruntque a se eloquium. [Vet. IX.] Bene ad Eliu verba amici Job extimuisse referuntur, quia nonnunquam arrogantes Ecclesiae defensores, quamvis ordinem dicendi non teneant, tamen adversarios ipsa dictorum virtute perturbant. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 16. 739 Quoniam igitur exspectavi, et non sunt locuti; steterunt, nec responderunt ultra. 17. Errantes dum redarguunt, suam sapientiam ostentare tantum cupiunt, non aliis prodesse. Secus boni praedicatores. Finis esse

locutionis sapientium solet, ut eo usque dicant quo adversariis silentium imponant. Non enim se ostendere, sed prava docentes compescere cupiunt. Postquam vero de amicis Job dictum est: Extimuerunt, nec responderunt ultra, abstuleruntque a se eloquium; Eliu subjungens, ait: Exspectavi, et non sunt locuti; steterunt, nec responderunt ultra. Et illis jam silentibus, adhuc verba multiplicat, quia videlicet vir arrogans, et formam in se arrogantium intentans, non adversariorum dicta superare, sed suam sapientiam ostentare festinat. Unde et sequitur: VERS. 17. Respondebo et ego partem meam, et ostendam scientiam meam. Hanc enim partem suam omnis arrogans aestimat, si scientiam non tam habeat quam ostendat, quia nimirum omnes elati scientiam non habere appetunt, sed ostendere. Quo contra bene per Moysen dicitur: Vas quod non habuerit operculum, nec ligaturam desuper, immundum erit (Num. XIX, 15). Tegmen quippe operculi, vel ligatura, est censura disciplinae, qua quisquis non premitur, quasi vas immundum pollutumque reprobatur. An non vas sine operculo Eliu fuerat, qui hanc esse partem suam aestimaverat, si ostenderet scientiam quam habebat? Quasi enim vas sine operculo, vel ligatura, polluitur, qui per studium ostentationis patens, nullo velamine taciturnitatis operitur. [Vet. X.] Praedicatores autem sancti partem suam reputant, si intus quidem ipsi de sapientia sua gaudeant, foris autem alios ab errore compescant; neque a se ipsis ita loquendo exeunt, ut gaudium mentis in ostensione ponant disertae locutionis, sed bonum scientiae in cordis secreto meditantur, et ibi gaudent ubi hoc percipiunt, non ubi inter tot tentationum laqueos innotescere compelluntur, quamvis cum bonum quod accipiunt innotescunt, media interveniente charitate, ex profectu audientium, et non ex propria ostensione gratulantur. Arrogantes enim cum scientiam accipiunt, nihil se accepisse aestimant, si hanc eos occultam habere contingat. Nusquam quippe suum gaudium, nisi in ore hominum ponunt. Unde et fatuae virgines in vasis suis oleum non sumpsisse referuntur (Matth. XXV, 3), quia arrogantes omnes cum se ab

aliquibus fortasse vitiis continent, bonum gloriae intra conscientias habere non possunt. In vase autem proprio sumpserat Paulus oleum, qui dicebat: Gloria nostra haec est, testimonium conscientiae nostrae (II Cor. I, 12). Inane ergo vasculum ferre est intus corde vacuo foris humani oris judicium quaerere. Eliu itaque, quia gloriam dum exterius quaerit intra vas oleum non habet, dicit: Respondebo et ego partem meam, et ostendam scientiam meam. Unde et hoc ipsum, quod de fervore vanae gloriae intus patitur, verbis sequentibus aperit, dicens:

CAPUT XI [Rec. V].

VERS. 18-20. Plenus sum sermonibus, et coarctat me spiritus uteri mei. En venter meus quasi mustum absque spiraculo, quod lagunculas novas disrumpit. Loquar, et respirabo paululum; aperiam labia mea, et respondebo. 18. Locutionis eorum celsitudinem, non utilitatis intentionem imitantur superbi. Nonnunquam arrogantes viri, dum praedicatores 740 sanctos magna eloqui ac pro locutione sua venerari conspiciunt, locutionis eorum celsitudinem et non utilitatem intentionis imitantur; neque hoc amant quod illi appetunt, sed hoc summopere appetunt quod clari hominibus ostendantur. Nam saepe contingit ut sapientes viri cum se non audiri considerant, ori suo silentium indicant; sed plerumque dum conspiciunt quod iniquorum facinora ipsis tacentibus et non corripientibus crescunt, vim quamdam spiritus sui sustinent, ut in locutionem apertae correptionis erumpant. Unde propheta Jeremias cum praedicationis sibi silentium indixisset, dicens: Non recordabor ejus, neque loquar ultra in nomine illius; illico adjunxit: Et factus est in corde meo quasi ignis exaestuans, claususque in ossibus meis, et defeci, ferre non sustinens; audivi enim contumelias multorum (Jerem. XX, 9). Pro eo enim quod se minime audiri conspexit, silentium appetiit; sed cum crescentia mala cerneret, in eodem silentio non permansit. Quia enim foris tacuit, ex taedio locutionis intus ignem pertulit

de zelo charitatis. Inflammantur quippe corda justorum, cum non correpta crescere conspiciunt acta malorum, eorumque culpae se participes credunt quos in iniquitate crescere silendo permittunt. David propheta postquam sibi silentium indixerat, dicens: Posui ori meo custodiam, dum consisteret peccator adversum me; obmutui, et humiliatus sum, et silui a bonis (Psal. XXXVIII, 2), in ipso suo silentio, isto zelo charitatis exarsit, qui illico subdidit: Et dolor meus renovatus est, concaluit cor meum intra me, et in meditatione mea exardescet ignis (Ibid., 3). Intus ergo cor concaluit, quia dilectionis ardor per admonitionem locutionis exterius emanare recusavit. Ignis in meditatione cordis exarsit, quia increpatio delinquentium a correptione oris refrixit. Charitatis enim zelus consolatione admirabili augendo se temperat, quando contra iniquorum opera per vocem correptionis emanat, ut et quae corrigere non valet, increpare non desinat, ne se participem delinquentium ex consensu taciturnitatis addicat. [Vet. XI.] 19. Nonnulla vitia virtutes mentiuntur. Sed quia saepe nonnulla vitia virtutes se esse mentiuntur, sicut effusio nonnunquam misericordia, et tenacia nonnunquam parcimonia, et crudelitas aliquando justitia vult videri, ita plerumque mentem ad loquendi impetum, vanae gloriae anxietas nequaquam se intra silentium capiens, quasi zelus charitatis inflammat, atque appetitae ostensionis vis ad effrenationem locutionis impellit, et quasi sub studio consulendi libido erumpit apparendi. Non enim curat loquendo quid prosit, sed quid appareat; nec studet ut malum quod cernit corrigat, sed bonum quod sentit ostendat. Unde Eliu quoque spiritu elationis extensus, et sese intra silentii claustra non capiens, ait: Plenus sum sermonibus, et coaretat me spiritus uteri mei. En venter meus quasi mustum absque spiraculo, quod lagunculas novas disrumpit. 20. Elationis inflatio, zelum ex afflatu Spiritus sancti quandoque imitatur. Quod si intelligere spiritaliter debemus, hoc loco videlicet ventrem sinum cordis appellat. In musto vero sancti Spiritus fervor accipitur, de quo in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Vinum

novum mittunt in utres novos (Matth. IX, 17). Ex quo dum repente replerentur apostoli (Act. II, 4), dum linguis omnibus 741 loquerentur, a Judaeis nescientibus, sed tamen vera attestantibus, dictum est: Hi musto pleni sunt (Ibid., 13). Lagunculas vero infirmas ipsa humanitate conscientias, vel certe haec terrena corporum vascula, non inconvenienter accipimus, de quibus Paulus apostolus ait; Habemus thesaurum istum in vasis fictilibus (II Cor. IV, 7). Eliu autem, quia, sicut superius diximus, sic inflatione elationis extenditur, ac si ad loquendum per charitatis gratiam ardore Spiritus sancti accendatur, sensus sui spiritum in eo quod tacuit, quasi musto absque spiraculo comparavit. Et bene ait: Quod lagunculas novas disrumpit; quia sancti Spiritus fervor non solum veteri, sed etiam nova vita vix capitur. Mustum ergo lagunculas novas disrumpit, quia fervoris ejus potentia etiam spiritalia corda transcendit. Loquar, et respirabo paululum; aperiam labia mea, et respondebo. Bene ait: Respirabo, quia sicut labor justorum est videre prava, nec corrigere; ita gravis est labor arrogantium, si quod sapiunt non ostendunt. Vim quippe intrinsecus aestuantem ferre vix possunt, si omne quod sentiunt paulo tardius innotescunt. Unde necesse est ut cum res bona agitur prius ejus elatio in corde vincatur, ne si a radice miserae intentionis prodeat, amaros nequitiae fructus producat. [Vet. XII, Rec. VI.] 21. Qui adhuc vitiis subjacent, alios regere non praesumant. Hi ergo qui adhuc vitiorum bello subjacent nequaquam per praedicationis usum praeesse magisterio caeterorum de bent (Dist. 44, cap. Non liceat). Hinc est enim quod, juxta divinae dispensationis vocem ab anno vigesimo et quinto Levitae tabernaculo serviunt, sed a quinquagesimo custodes vasorum fiunt. Quid enim per annum quintum ac vigesimum, in quo flos juventutis oboritur, nisi ipsa contra unumquodque vitium bella signantur? Et quid per quinquagesimum, in quo et jubilaei requies continetur, nisi interna quies edomito bello mentis exprimitur? Quid vero per vasa tabernaculi, nisi fidelium animae figurantur? Levitae ergo ab

anno vigesimo et quinto tabernaculo serviunt, et a quinquagesimo custodes vasorum fiunt, ut videlicet qui adhuc impugnantium vitiorum certamina per consensum delectationis tolerant, aliorum curam suscipere non praesumant; cum vero tentationum bella subegerint, quo apud se jam de intima tranquillitate securi sunt, animarum custodiam sortiantur. Sed quis haec tentationum praelia sibi perfecte subigat, cum Paulus dicat: Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati (Rom. VII, 23)? Sed aliud est bella fortiter perpeti, aliud bellis enerviter expugnari. In istis exercetur virtus, ne extolli debeat; in illis omnimodo exstinguitur, ne subsistat. Qui igitur scit fortiter tentationem ferre certaminis, et cum tentatione concutitur in alta arce praesidet quietis, quia etiam apud semetipsum sub seipso esse contentiones vitiorum conspicit, quibus nulla fractus delectatione consentit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 21, 22. Non accipiam personam viri, et Deum homini non aequabo. Nescio enim quandiu subsistam, et si post modicum tollat me factor meus. 22. Vitae praesentis tempus breve est, quia non permanet. Recta consideratio, quod Deum homini idcirco non aequat, quia quandiu hic subsistat, vel quando ad Dei judicium tollatur, ignorat. Et bene ait: 742 Post modicum tollat me factor meus, quia quamlibet longum fuerit tempus vitae praesentis, eo ipso breve est, quo permanens non est. Neque enim dignum est ut diutinum judicetur, quidquid fine circumscribitur. Sed inter has sententias quas ex veritate solidas profert, ad verba rursum elationis erumpit, dicens:

CAPUT XIII [Rec. VII].

CAP. XXXIII, VERS. 12. Audi igitur, Job, eloquia mea, et omnes sermones meos ausculta. Ecce aperui os meum, loquatur lingua mea in faucibus meis.

23. Superbi sanam doctrinam non sane praedicant, quod insolescant. Pensemus de qua elatione descendit, quod beatum Job audire se admonet, quod os aperuisse se perhibet, quod linguam suam in faucibus loqui promittit. Hoc enim habet proprium doctrina arrogantium (Dist. 46, cap. Hoc habet) ut humiliter nesciant inferre quod docent, et recta quae sapiunt recte ministrare non possint. In verbis enim eorum proditur quod cum docent, quasi in quodam sibi videntur summitatis culmine residere, eosque quos docent ut longe infra se positos veluti in imo respiciunt, quibus non consulendo loqui, sed vix dominando dignantur. Recte autem his per prophetam Dominus dicit: Vos autem cum austeritate imperabatis eis, et cum potentia (Ezech. XXXIV, 4). Cum austeritate enim et potentia imperant, qui subditos suos non tranquille ratiocinando corrigere, sed aspere inflectere dominando festinant. [Vet. XIII.] 24. Vera doctrina elationem fugit. At contra vera doctrina tanto vehementius hoc elationis vitium fugit per cogitationem, quanto ardentius verborum suorum jaculis ipsum magistrum elationis insequitur. Cavet enim ne eum magis elatis moribus praedicet, quem in corde audientium sacris sermonibus insectatur. Humilitatem namque, quae magistra est omnium materque virtutum, et loquendo dicere, et vivendo conatur ostendere, ut eam apud discipulos veritatis plus moribus quam sermonibus eloquatur. Unde Paulus Thessalonicensibus loquens, quasi culminis proprii apostolatus oblitus, ait: Facti sumus parvuli in medio vestrum (I Thess. II, 7). Unde Petrus apostolus, cum diceret: Parati semper ad satisfactionem omni poscenti vos rationem de ea quae in vobis est spe (I Pet. III, 15), in ipsa doctrinae scientia qualitatem docendi asseruit esse servandam, subdens: Sed cum modestia et timore, conscientiam habentes bonam (Ibid., 16). Hoc autem quod discipulo Paulus ait: Praecipe haec, et doce cum omni imperio (I Tim. IV, 11; Tit. II, 15); non dominationem potentiae, sed auctoritatem suadet vitae. Cum imperio quippe docetur quod prius agitur quam dicatur. Nam

doctrinae subtrahit fiduciam, quando conscientia praepedit linguam. Non ergo ei potestatem elatae locutionis, sed bonae fiduciam insinuavit actionis. Unde etiam de Domino scriptum est: Erat enim docens, sicut potestatem habens, non sicut Scribae et Pharisaei (Matth. VII, 29). Singulariter namque ac principaliter solus ex potestate bona locutus est, quia ex infirmitate mala nulla commisit. Ex divinitatis quippe potentia habuit id quod nobis per humanitatis suae innocentiam ministravit. [Vet. XIV, Rec. VIII.] 25. Quid praedicatoribus, ut elationem fugiant, considerandum. Nos enim, quia infirmi homines sumus, cum de Deo hominibus loquimur, debemus primum meminisse quod sumus, ut ex propria infirmitate pensemus quo docendi ordine infirmis fratribus consulamus. Consideremus igitur quia aut tales sumus, 743 quales nonnullos corrigimus; aut tales aliquando fuimus, etsi jam divina gratia operante non sumus, ut tanto temperantius humili corde corrigamus, quanto nosmetipsos verius in his quos emendamus agnoscimus. Si autem tales nec sumus, nec fuimus, quales adhuc illi sunt quos emendare curamus, ne cor nostrum forte superbiat, et de ipsa innocentia pejus ruat, quorum mala corrigimus, alia eorum bona nobis ante oculos revocemus. Quae si omnino nulla sunt, ad occulta Dei judicia recurramus, quia sicut nos meritis nullis hoc ipsum bonum quod habemus accepimus, ita illos quoque potest gratia supernae virtutis infundere, ut excitati posterius etiam ipsa possint bona quae nos ante accepimus praevenire. Quis enim crederet quod per apostolatus meritum Saulus lapidatum Stephanum praecessurus erat (Act. VII, 57), qui in morte ejus lapidantium vestimenta servabat? His ergo primum cogitationibus humiliari cor debet, et tunc demum delinquentium iniquitas increpari. Sed hunc, ut saepe dictum est, locutionis modum Eliu ignorare ostenditur, qui in locutione sua elationis typo quasi potentia cujusdam auctoritatis inflatur, dicens: Audi igitur, Job, eloquia mea, et omnes sermones meos ausculta. Ecce aperui os meum, loquatur lingua mea in faucibus meis. 26. Nonnulli modestiam solum simulant. In faucibus vero

loqui est silenter dicere, et non clamoribus vociferari. Quibus verbis arrogantes intra sanctam Ecclesiam positos signat. Hi enim velut in faucibus loqui dicuntur, quando non contra adversarios extra viventes clamant, sed quosdam intra sinum sanctae Ecclesiae quasi vicinos ac juxta positos increpant. Saepe vero arrogantes eamdem quam tenent arrogantiam se fugere ostendunt; et dum sic cuncta agunt, ut nullum lateant, haec private singulis quasi latenter narrant: quatenus non solum de sensu intelligentiae, sed de ipso apud homines etiam arrogantiae contemptu glorientur. Unde nunc dicitur: Loquatur lingua mea in faucibus meis. Ac si aperte dicatur: Quae contra te prudenter sentio, ecce silenter narro. Aliquando autem in tantam impudentiae elationem prosiliunt, ut aliis tacentibus ipsi soleant laudare quod dicunt. Unde subjungit:

CAPUT XIV.

VERS. 3. Simplici corde meo sermones mei, et sententiam puram labia mea loquentur. 27. De simplicitate falso gloriantur. Magnae virtutis laus est simplicitas locutionis. Quam quia arrogantes non habent, habere se hanc sollicitius asserunt, ut securius audiantur. Et pure se locuturos denuntiant, quae duplicitatis suae malitiam deprehendi formidant. Saepe autem et falsis vera permiscent, ut inde eorum mendacio citius credatur, unde inesse eis assertio veritatis agnoscitur. Quia igitur Eliu et pure se locuturum perhibuit, et dicta sua appellando sententias favore praecucurrit, eamdem jam sententiam quam promisit adjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XV [Vet.

XV, Rec. IX]. VERS. 4. Spiritus Dei fecit me, et spiraculum Omnipotentis vivificavit me. 28. Doctrina inordinate prolata sterilescit et foedat. Subditurus vera, praemisit elata; et dicturus 744 hoc quod recte saperet, ante innotuit quantum tumeret. Sic nimirum, sic arrogantium mentes insaniunt,

ut et in eis quae recte sentiunt elationis suae tortitudine depraventur. Unde fit ut etiam eorum recta auditores nequaquam instruant, quia profecto illos per ea quae tumide sentiunt, non ad sui reverentiam, sed ad contemptum vocant. Dumque dictis prudentibus stultitiae verba miscentur, quia stultitia ab audiente despicitur, etiam prudentia non tenetur. Hinc enim per Moysen dicitur: Vir qui fluxum seminis sustinet immundus erit (Levit. XV, 10). Quid est enim sermo, nisi semen? Qui dum ordinate emittitur, audientis mens quasi concipientis uterus ad boni operis prolem fetatur. Si vero importune defluit, emittentem polluens, generandi virtutem perdit. Nam si sermo semen non esset, de praedicante Paulo nequaquam Athenienses dicerent: Quid vult sibi seminiverbius hic dicere (Act. XVII, 18)? De quo et Lucas dicit: Ipse enim erat dux verbi (Act. XIV, 11). Semen ergo usui propaginis dicatum incompetenter fluens caetera membra coinquinat, cum sermo per quem in audientium sensibus nasci scientia debuit, si inordinate prodeat, etiam quae recte senserit foedat. Unde Eliu quoque etiam quae recte potest sentire commaculat, dum cui vel quid loquatur ignorat; et quasi fluxum seminis sustinet, cum linguam utilitati congruam per verba vanae locutionis movet. Bono autem ordine et factum se astruit, et animatum. Per spiritum factum, et per spiraculum se narrat animatum. Facto quippe Adam, scriptum est: Inspiravit in faciem ejus spiraculum vitae, et factus est homo in animam viventem (Genes. II, 7). Sed haec quae recte astruit utrum recte exsequatur audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 5. Si potes, responde mihi et adversus faciem meam consiste. 29. Insulsa plus justo sibi arrogantium jactantia. Ecce dum narrat ordinem verae conditionis, in fastum subito superbae elationis erumpit, atque aliis verbis hoc idem replicat, dicens: VERS. 6, 7. Ecce et me sicut et te fecit Deus, et de eodem luto ego quoque formatus sum. Verumtamen miraculum meum

non te terreat, eloquentia mea non sit tibi gravis. Quid est hoc, quod Eliu ordinem verae conditionis agnoscit, et modum rectae locutionis ignorat? Quid est, quod se beato Job et conditus exaequat, et locuturus exaltat, nisi hoc, quod arrogantes omnes cunctis quidem hominibus se aequaliter conditos meminerunt, sed per fastum scientiae auditores suos aequales sibi vel esse vel credere dedignantur, eisque se per naturae conditionem conferunt, sed per tumorem scientiae superponunt? Aequales quidem se judicant exstitisse nascendo, sed non aequales remansisse vivendo. Atque in eo quod aequales quasi vivendo jam non sunt, illud ad majus miraculum revocant, quod aequales nascendo fuerunt. Unde inflatus Eliu dicit: Ecce et me sicut et te fecit Deus, et de eodem luto ego quoque formatus sum. Verumtamen miraculum meum 745 non te terreat, et eloquentia mea non sit tibi gravis [Vet. XVI]. Habent hoc etiam arrogantes proprium, quod prius quam dicant, mira se dicere semper existimant, et locutionem suam admirando praeveniunt, quia vel in acutis sensibus ipsa elatio quanta sit fatuitas ignorant. Notandum quoque est quod Paulus, dum mire Hebraeos admoneret, adjunxit: Rogo autem vos, fratres, ut sufferatis verbum solatii; etenim perpaucis scripsi vobis (Hebr. XIII, 22). Eliu autem inania protulit, et quasi consolando subjunxit: Miraculum meum non te terreat, et eloquentia mea non sit tibi gravis. Ille dicta sua verbum solatii, hic vero eloquentiam, et miraculum vocat. Ecce quam distincti sapores pro deunt fructuum ex diversa radice cogitationum. Ille de magnis humiliter sentit, iste de mininis se inaniter erigit. Quid ergo inter haec, nisi hoc solerter est intuendum, quod et ascensuri in imo se esse considerant, et casuri semper in praecipiti stant? Salomone attestante, qui ait: Ante ruinam exaltatur cor, et ante gloriam humiliatur (Prov. XVI, 18). Sequitur: VERS. 8-11. Dixisti ergo in auribus meis, et vocem verborum tuorum audivi. [Rec. X.]. Atque eamdem vocem subjungens, ait: Mundus sum ego, et absque delicto immaculatus, et non est iniquitas in me. Quia querelas in me reperit, ideo

arbitratus est me inimicum sibi. Posuit in nervo pedes meos, custodivit omnes semitas meas. Moxque contra haec verba quae beatum Job dixisse narravit sententiam suam proferens, ait:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 12. Hoc est ergo in quo non es justificatus. 30. Student magis increpare, quam consolari. Profecto beatus Job veraciter dixerat quod absque culpa fuerit flagellatus. Hoc enim ipse de se, quod de illo ad diabolum Dominus dixit: Commovisti me adversus eum, ut affligerem illum frustra (Job. II, 3). Sed Eliu non credidit, cessante culpa, potuisse eum etiam pro gratia flagellari. Nesciebat enim flagellis ejus non deleri vitium, sed meritum augeri, et pro eo quod sine delicto se dixerat flagellatum, hac eum sententia increpat, dicens: Hoc est ergo in quo non es justificatus. Habent enim hoc arrogantes proprium, ut plus arguere appetant quam consolari; et quaeque hominibus evenire cognoscunt, ex solis evenisse iniquitatibus arbitrentur. Nesciunt quippe occulta judicia subtiliter quaerere, atque id quod non intelligunt humiliter perscrutari, quia eos saepe a secretis investigationibus judiciorum Dei ipsa scientiae suae elatio dejicit, dum extollit. 31. Obstaculum est veritatis tumor mentis. Verae scientiae effectus. Obstaculum namque veritatis est tumor mentis, quia dum inflat obnubilat. Qui et si quando scientiam videntur adipisci, quasi de quadam rerum cortice, et non de secretae dulcedinis medulla pascuntur; micantibusque ingeniis saepe exteriora tantummodo attingunt, sed interni gustum saporis ignorant, videlicet foris acuti, sed intus caeci sunt. Neque id de Deo sentiunt, quod dulce interius sapiat, sed quod excussum exterius sonet. Qui etsi secreta quaedam intelligendo percipiunt, eorum dulcedinem experiri non possunt; et si noverunt quomodo sunt, ignorant, ut dixi, 746 quomodo sapiunt. [Vet. XVII.] Et fit plerumque ut fortiter dicant, sed tamen juxta ea quae dicunt vivere nesciant. Unde bene quidam sapiens dixit: Mihi autem

det Deus haec dicere ex sententia (Sap. VII, 15). Sententia quippe a sensu vocata est. Et recta quae intelligit, non ex sola scientia, sed etiam ex sententia dicere appetit, qui nequaquam tantummodo sciendo dicere, sed sentiendo desiderat experiri quod dicit. Sed mens arrogantium dictorum suorum sensum non penetrat, quia ab interno gustu, recto judicio in eos favores reliditur, quos foris amat. Vera autem scientia afficit, non extollit; nec superbientes quos repleverit, sed lamentantes facit. Qua quisque cum repletus fuerit, primo loco se scire appetit; et jam sui conscius, tanto per illam robustius sapit quanto se infirmum in illa verius recognoscit; atque ampliorem viam hujus scientiae ipsa ei humilitas aperit; dumque imbecillitatem suam conspicit, ipsa ei cognitio secretorum sublimium absconditos sinus pandit, qua cognitione pressus, subtilior redditur, quo ad occulta rapiatur. Eliu ergo in flagellis beati Job idcirco veracem rationem non invenit, quia eam quaerere humiliter nescit; et increpare potius quam consolari paratior, dicit: Hoc est ergo, in quo non es justificatus. 32. Superbi saepe alios increpando, mentiuntur. Notandum quoque est quod beatus Job in nervo pedem suum positum dixit, sed nequaquam mundum se hoc modo, quo ei objicitur, absque peccato, vel immaculatum, et sine iniquitate fuisse memoravit. Sed Eliu, dum cum austeritate studuit increpare quae dicta sunt, mentiens addidit quae dicta non sunt. Qui enim semper increpare appetunt, et nunquam fovere, multa plerumque increpando mentiuntur. Nam ut arguere docte videantur, fingunt nonnunquam quae redarguant; et cum ipsi equino more in cursum suae ostentationis inferveant, in subjectorum invectionibus ex fictis sibi iniquitatibus campum parant. Sciendum praeterea est, sicut et superius dixi (Num. 31), quod arrogantes viri inflatis suis sermonibus saepe fortia dicta permiscent, nec considerant aliquando quid vivant, sed pensant studiose quid doceant. Quorum nunc Eliu speciem tenet, qui non recte vivere appetit, sed docere. Quia ergo sciens sed arrogans loquitur, taceamus jam quid tumidum vivit, et audiamus quid solidum dicit.

Post tot itaque elationis verba, tandem scientiam suam ostendere inchoans, ait:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 12. Respondebo tibi quod major sit Deus homine. 33. Quod a Deo nobis meliore patimur, justum credamus. Dicatur fortasse ab aliquo: Quis istud vel cum non audit ignorat? Sed nimirum haec sententia vilis creditur, si non ex ipsa intentionis suae radice pensetur. [Vet. XVIII.] Flagellato videlicet loquebatur, qui et percussionis verbera acceperat, et causas verberum nesciebat. Idcirco ergo intulit: Respondebo tibi quod major sit Deus homine, ut flagellatus homo considerans quia illo major est Deus, in omne quod patitur ejus judicio se postponat, quo se minorem esse non dubitat; et quod a meliore patitur, justum credat, etiam si ejusdem justitiae causas ignorat. Quisquis etiam pro peccato percutitur, nisi murmurando renitatur, eo ipso jam justus esse 747 inchoat, quo ferientis justitiam non accusat. Homo namque sub Deo est conditus, et ad conditionis ordinem redit, quando sibi aequitatem judicis sui, etiam quam non intelligit, anteponit. Bene ergo dicitur: Respondebo tibi quod major sit Deus homine, ut considerata potentia creatoris, deferveat tumor mentis per memoriam conditionis. Unde David propheta, cum percussionis pondere in excessum vocis erumpere cogeretur, ad considerationem conditionis suae se recolligens, ait: Obmutui, et non aperui os meum, quoniam tu fecisti me (Psal. XXXVIII, 3). Pensavit enim conditionis suae ordinem, et justitiam percussionis invenit, quia qui benigne eum qui non erat condidit, eum profecto qui erat non nisi juste percussit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX [Rec. XI].

VERS. 13, 14. Adversus eum contendis, quod non ad omnia verba responderit tibi. Semel loquetur Deus, et secundo idipsum non repetet. 34.

In Scriptura sacra quidquid scire nos decet, docet Deus. Afflicti cordis est proprium ut in omne quod appetit, et tamen rerum ordinem contrarium sentit, si possit fieri, cur ita, vel non ita sit, divinis sibi responderi vocibus velit, ut Deum de cuncta rerum controversia consulat, et responsionis ejus cognita ratione conquiescat. Eliu autem praevidens quod scripturam sacram Dominus conderet, ut in ea vel publicis vel occultis cunctorum quaestionibus responderet, ait: Adversus eum contendis, quod non ad omnia verba responderit tibi. Semel loquetur Deus, et secundo idipsum non repetet. Ac si diceret: Deus singulorum cordibus privatis vocibus non respondet, sed tale eloquium construit, per quod cunctorum quaestionibus satisfaciat. [Vet. XIX.] In scripturae quippe ejus eloquio causas nostras singuli si requirimus, invenimus, nec opus est ut in eo quod specialiter quisque tolerat responderi sibi divina voce specialiter quaerat. Ibi enim nobis omnibus in eo quod specialiter patimur communiter respondetur, ibi vita praecedentium fit forma sequentium. Ut enim unum e pluribus proferamus, ecce dum passione aliqua vel molestia carnis afficimur, scire fortasse occultas causas passionis ejusdem vel molestiae optamus, quatenus in eo quod patimur ex ipsa rerum scientia consolemur. Sed quia de specialibus tentationibus nostris nequaquam nobis singulis specialiter respondetur, ad Scripturam sacram recurrimus. Ibi videlicet invenimus quod Paulus carnis infirmitate tentatus audivit: Sufficit tibi gratia mea, nam virtus in infirmitate perficitur (II Cor. XII, 9). Quod idcirco illi in infirmitate propria dictum est, ne singillatim nobis omnibus diceretur. In Scriptura igitur sacra vocem Dei, afflicto Paulo, audivimus, ne cum fortasse affligimur, singuli audire eam privata consolatione quaereremus. Non ergo Dominus ad omnia 748 verba nobis respondet, quia semel loquetur, et secundo idipsum non repetet; id est, in his quae per Scripturam sacram ad patres nostros protulit, nos erudire curavit. Dicant itaque sanctae Ecclesiae doctores, dicant etiam arrogantes, cum in ea laborare quosdam

pusillanimitate conspiciunt, quia nobis Deus ad verba omnia non respondet, quia semel loquetur Deus, et idipsum secundo non repetet; id est, cogitationibus vel tentationibus singulorum non jam passim per prophetarum voces, non per angelica officia satisfacit, quia in Scriptura sacra quidquid potest singulis evenire comprehendit, atque in illa per exempla praecedentium etiam vitam sequentium informare curavit. 35. Loqui Dei est Verbum genuisse. Quamvis quod ait: Semel loquetur Deus, et secundo idipsum non repetet, hoc intelligi subtilius potest, quod Pater unigenitum consubstantialem sibi Filium genuit. Loqui enim Dei est Verbum genuisse. Semel autem loqui Dei est Verbum aliud praeter unigenitum non habere. Unde et apte subditur: Et secundo idipsum non repetet, quia videlicet hoc ipsum Verbum, id est Filium, nonnisi unicum genuit. Quod autem non ait, Locutus est, sed loquetur, non videlicet tempus praeteritum, sed futurum ponens, liquet omnibus quia Deo nec praeteritum tempus congruit, nec futurum. Tanto ergo in eo quodlibet tempus ponitur libere, quanto nullum vere. Neque enim quodlibet libere dici poterat, si saltem unum proprie diceretur. Inde itaque dici in Deo tempus audacter quoslibet licet, unde in eo dici proprie nullum licet. Verbum namque Pater sine tempore genuit. 36. Hanc generationem mirari debemus, non scrutari. Et quis digne fari queat illam ineffabilem nativitatem, quod de aeterno natus est coaeternus, quod existens ante saecula genuit aequalem, quod gignente natus posterior non est? Quae videlicet nos mirari possumus, sed intueri minime valemus. Illius autem nativitatis vim jam mirari posse, aliquatenus videre est. Sed quomodo videmus quod nequaquam comprehendimus? Est autem quod de usu carnis trahere ad sensum spiritus debemus. Nam si quis in tenebris clausis oculis jaceat, atque ante eum subitum lucernae lumen erumpat, clausi ejus oculi ipso adventu luminis feriuntur, ut patescant. Cur ergo turbati sunt, si clausi nihil viderunt? Nec tamen aliquid perfectum fuit, quod videre clausi potuerunt. Nam si perfecte totum vidissent, cur aperti

quaererent quod viderent? Sic itaque, sic sumus, cum de incomprehensibili nativitate intueri aliquid conamur. Eo ipso enim quo fulgoris admiratione percutitur animus, et quasi videt quod videri non valet, velut in tenebris positus, vim lucis oculis clausis videt. Quia vero 749 haec divinae naturae secreta admiratio non facile occupatis per terrena desideria mentibus innotescit, apte Dei locutio qualiter ad nos fiat insinuat, dicens:

CAPUT XX [Vet.

XX, Rec. XII]. VERS. 15. Per somnium in visione nocturna, quando irruit sopor super homines, et dormiunt in lectulo. 37. Vox Dei auditur quando tranquilla mente ab operibus saecularibus quiescitur. Quid est quod per somnium nobis locutio divinitatis innotescit, nisi quod Dei secreta non cognoscimus, si in terrenis desideriis vigilemus? In somnio enim exteriores sensus dormiunt, et interiora cernuntur. Si ergo interna contemplari volumus, ab externa implicatione dormiamus. Vox videlicet Dei quasi per somnium auditur, quando tranquilla mente ab hujus saeculi actione quiescitur, et in ipso mentis silentio divina praecepta pensantur. Cum enim ab externis actionibus mens sopitur, tunc plenius mandatorum Dei pondus agnoscitur. Tunc verba Dei mens vivacius penetrat, cum ad se admittere curarum saecularium tumultus recusat. Male autem homo vigilat, quando eum saecularium negotiorum aestus insolenter inquietat. Aurem quippe cordis terrenarum cogitationum turba dum perstrepit claudit, atque in secretario mentis, quanto minus curarum tumultuantium sonus compescitur, tanto amplius vox praesidentis judicis non auditur. Neque enim perfecte homo sufficit ad utraque divisus, sed dum sic interius erudiri appetit, ut tamen exterius implicetur, unde exterius auditum aperit, inde interius obsurdescit. Moyses admistus Aegyptiis quasi vigilabat, et idcirco vocem Domini in Aegypto positus non audiebat (Exod. II, 11, 12, seq.). Sed exstincto Aegyptio, postquam in desertum fugit, illic dum quadraginta annis

deguit, quasi ab inquietis terrenorum desideriorum tumultibus obdormivit; atque idcirco divinam vocem percipere meruit, quia per supernam gratiam quanto magis ab appetendis exterioribus torpuit, tanto verius ad cognoscenda interiora vigilavit. Rursus Israelitici populi turbis praelatus, ut legis praecepta percipiat, in montem ducitur, atque ut interna penetret, ab externis tumultibus occultatur (Exod. XIX, 3). [Vet. XXI.] 38. Qui exterioribus ministeriis deserviunt, studiose ad cordis secreta refugiant. Unde et sancti viri qui exterioribus ministeriis deservire officii necessitate coguntur, studiose semper ad cordis secreta refugiunt; ibique cogitationis intimae cacumen ascendunt, et legem quasi in montibus percipiunt, dum, postpositis tumultibus actionum temporalium, in contemplationis suae vertice supernae voluntatis sententiam perscrutantur. Hinc est quod idem Moyses crebro de rebus dubiis ad tabernaculum redit, ibique secreto Dominum consulit, et quid certi decernat agnoscit. Relictis quippe turbis ad tabernaculum redire, est, postpositis exteriorum tumultibus, secretum mentis intrare. Ibi enim Dominus consulitur, et quod foris agendum est publice, intus silenter auditur. Hoc quotidie boni rectores faciunt, cum se res dubias discernere non posse cognoscunt, ad secretum mentis, velut ad quoddam tabernaculum revertuntur; divina lege perspecta, quasi coram posita arca, Dominum consulunt, et quod prius intus tacentes audiunt, hoc foris postmodum agentes innotescunt. Ut enim exterioribus officiis inoffense deserviant, ad secreta cordis recurrere incessabiliter curant; et sic vocem Dei quasi per somnium audiunt, dum in meditatione mentis 750 a carnalibus motibus abstrahuntur. Hinc est quod sponsa in Canticis canticorum sponsi vocem quasi per somnium audierat, quae dicebat: Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat (Cant. V, 2). Ac si diceret: Dum exteriores sensus ab hujus vitae sollicitudinibus sopio, vacante mente vivacius interna cognosco. Foris dormio, sed intus cor vigilat, quia dum exteriora quasi non sentio, interiora solerter apprehendo. 39. Nonnisi obscure et quasi visione

nocturna, divina et interna contemplamur. Bene ergo Eliu ait quia per somnium loquitur Deus, atque apte subdidit, In visione nocturna. Nocturna enim visio apparere contemplatione mentis sub quibusdam imaginibus solet. In diurna autem luce certius cernimus, in nocturna vero visione cunctanter videmus. Et quia sancti omnes quandiu in hac vita sunt divinae naturae secreta quasi sub quadam imaginatione conspiciunt, quia videlicet necdum sicut sunt ea manifestius contemplantur, bene Eliu, postquam dixit Deum nobis per somnium loqui, subdit: In visione nocturna. Nox quippe est vita praesens, in qua quandiu sumus, per hoc quod interna conspicimus, sub incerta imaginatione caligamus. Propheta namque ad videndum Dominum quadam se premi caligine sentiebat, dicens: Anima mea desideravit te in nocte (Isai. XXVI, 9). Ac si diceret: In hac obscuritate vitae praesentis videre te appeto, sed adhuc infirmitatis nubilo circumscribor. David quoque hujus noctis caliginem vitans, claritatem veri luminis praestolatus ait: Mane astabo tibi, et videbo (Psal. V, 5). Adhuc ergo in nocte minus se videre conspicit, qui ad videndum Deum futurum mane concupiscit. Quia vero, ut diximus, ab exteriori actione cessare dormire est, bene Eliu subdit: Quando irruit sopor super homines. Quia autem sancti viri cum exteriori actioni non deserviunt, intra mentis cubilia conquiescunt, apte subjungit: Et dormiunt in lectulo. Sanctis enim viris dormire in lectulo est intra mentis suae cubile quiescere. Unde scriptum est: Exsultabunt sancti in gloria, laetabuntur in cubilibus suis (Psal. CXLIX, 5). Dicatur ergo, quod semel nobis loquitur Deus per somnium in visione nocturna, quando irruit sopor super homines, et dormiunt in lectulo, quia nimirum tunc secreta divinitatis agnoscimus, cum ab hujus mundi tumultuosa concupiscentia intra mentis nostrae cubilia segregamur. Quia vero, ut saepe jam diximus, aurem cordis tumultus saecularium negotiorum claudit, et quies secretae considerationis aperit, apte subjungit: VERS. 16. Tunc aperit aures virorum, et erudiens eos instruit disciplina. 40. Qui ab exterioribus operibus cessant, ad

compunctionem erudiuntur. Cum enim ab exterioribus actionibus sopiuntur, aperta aure interni examinis causas audiunt. Qui dum subtiliter vel flagella publica, vel judicia occulta considerant, semetipsos afficere flendo non cessant. [Rec. XIII.] Unde bene dictum est. Et erudiens eos instruit disciplina, quia consideranti menti, et sese per poenitentiam laceranti, quasi quaedam plagae percussionis sunt lamenta compunctionis. Unde etiam Salomon recte vim percussionis utriusque conjungens ait: Livor vulneris abstergit mala, et plagae in secretioribus ventris (Prov. XX, 30). Per livorem quippe vulneris, disciplinam insinuat corporeae percussionis. Plagae vero in secretioribus ventris sunt interna mentis vulnera, quae per compunctionem fiunt. 751 Sicut enim venter cibis repletus extenditur, ita mens pravis cogitationibus dilatata sublevatur. Abstergunt igitur mala, et livor vulneris, et plagae in secretioribus ventris, quia et disciplina exterior culpas diluit, et extensam mentem compunctio poenitentiae ultione transfigit. Sed hoc inter se utraque haec differunt, quod plagae percussionum dolent, lamenta compunctionum sapiunt. Illae affligentes cruciant, ista reficiunt, dum affligunt. Per illas in afflictione moeror est, per haec in moerore laetitia. Quia tamen ipsa compunctio mentem lacerat, eamdem compunctionem non incongrue disciplinam vocat. 41. Quatuor modis justi in compunctione afficiuntur; quod exemplo Pauli ostenditur et Davidis. Quatuor quippe sunt qualitates quibus justi viri anima in compunctione vehementer afficitur, cum aut malorum suorum reminiscitur, considerans ubi fuit; aut judiciorum Dei sententiam metuens, et secum quaerens, cogitat ubi erit; aut cum mala vitae praesentis solerter attendens, moerens considerat ubi est, aut cum bona supernae patriae contemplatur, quae quia necdum adipiscitur, lugens conspicit ubi non est. Malorum suorum Paulus meminerat, et ex eis se in quibus fuerat affligebat, cum diceret: Non sum dignus vocari apostolus, quia persecutus sum Ecclesiam Dei (I Cor. XV, 9). Rursum divinum judicium subtiliter pensans, in futuro male esse metuebat, dicens: Castigo

corpus meum, et servituti subjicio, ne forte aliis praedicans, ipse reprobus efficiar (I Cor. IX, 27). Rursus mala praesentis vitae pensabat, cum diceret: Dum sumus in hoc corpore, peregrinamur a Domino (II Cor. V, 6). Et: Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis. Infelix ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus (Rom. VII, 23). Et rursum bona aeternae patriae considerabat, dicens: Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate; tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte, tunc autem cognoscam, sicut et cognitus sum (I Cor. XIII, 12). Atque iterum: Scimus quoniam si terrestris domus nostra hujus habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem ex Deo habemus, domum manufactam, aeternam in coelis (II Cor. V, 1). Cujus domus bona intuens, Ephesiis dicit: Ut sciatis quae sit spes vocationis ejus, et quae divitiae gloriae haereditatis ejus in sanctis, et quae sit supereminens magnitudo virtutis ejus in nos, qui credidimus (Ephes. II, 18). Mala vitae praesentis beatus Job considerans, ait: Tentatio est vita humana super terram (Job. VI, 1). Unde David quoque, ait: Universa vanitas omnis homo vivens (Psal. XXXVIII, 6). Et quanquam in imagine Dei ambulet homo, tamen vane conturbabitur. Qui rursum aeternam patriam contemplatus, et haec mala pensans in quibus erat, atque illa bona considerans in quibus adhuc non erat, ait: Heu me! quia incolatus meus prolongatus est (Psal. CXIX 5). Et, Ego dixi in pavore meo: projectus sum a vultu oculorum tuorum (Psal. XXX, 23). Sublevatus in exstasi, quod nostri interpretes pavorem proprie vocaverunt, a vultu oculorum Dei vidit se esse projectum. Post interni quippe luminis visionem, quae in ejus anima per contemplationis gratiam radio claritatis emicuit, ad semetipsum rediit; et cognitione percepta, vel quibus illic bonis deesset, vel quibus malis 752 hic adesset, invenit. Neque enim quis praesentis vitae mala sicut sunt conspicere praevalet, si bona aeternae patriae per contemplationis gustum contingere necdum valet. Unde et a vultu oculorum Dei projectum se esse

cognovit. Sublevatus quippe vidit quod de se hic videre non posse ad se relapsus ingemuit. 42. Compunctionis effectus in perfectis. Perfectam scilicet animam ista compunctio afficere familiarius solet, qua omnes imaginationes corporeas insolenter sibi obviantes discutit, et cordis oculum figere in ipso radio incircumscriptae lucis intendit. Has quippe figurarum corporalium species ad se intus ex infirmitate corporis traxit. Sed perfecte compuncta hic summopere invigilat, ne cum veritatem quaerit, eam imaginatio circumscriptae visionis illudat, cunctasque sibi obviantes imagines respuit. Quia enim per illas infra se lapsa est, sine illis super se ire conatur; et postquam per multa indecenter sparsa est, in unum se colligere nititur, ut si magna vi amoris praevalet, esse unum atque incorporeum contempletur. 43. Contemplationis sapor non nisi raptim mentem afficit. Hinc pii gemitus, delectationis tamen expertes. Unde aliquando ad quamdam inusitatam dulcedinem interni saporis admittitur, ac raptim aliquo modo ardenti spiritu afflata renovatur; tantoque magis inhiat, quanto magis quod amet degustat. Atque hoc intra se appetit quod sibi dulce sapere intrinsecus sentit, quia videlicet ejus amore dulcedinis sibi coram se viluit; et postquam hanc, utcumque percipere potuit, quid sine illa dudum fuisset invenit. Cui inhaerere conatur, sed ab ejus fortitudine sua adhuc infirmitate repellitur; et quia ejus munditiam contemplare non valet, flere dulce habet, sibique ad se cadenti infirmitatis suae lacrymas sternere. Neque enim mentis oculum potest in id quod intra se raptim conspexerit figere, quia ipso vetustatis suae usu deorsum ire compellitur. Inter haec anhelat, aestuat, super se ire conatur, sed ad familiares tenebras suas victa fatigatione relabitur. Quia ergo sic affecta anima contra semetipsam grave certamen tolerat semetipsam, et quia omnis haec de nobis controversia, cum nos afficit, quamvis delectatione permista, non modicum dolorem parit, Eliu, postquam dixit Deum nobis per somnium loqui, et locutione ejus nostras aures aperiri, non immerito eamdem apertionem aurium disciplinam vocat,

quia eo magis nos afficiendo conterit, quo magis ad nos per occultam ejus inspirationis gratiam internae intelligentiae sonus erumpit. Neque enim fleret extrinsecus quisque quod est, si non intrinsecus potuisset sentire quod nondum est. Namque cum nosmetipsos inspicimus bene conditos, sed ad persuasionem diabolicam pestifera consensione deceptos, in nobismetipsis attendimus aliud esse quod fecimus, aliud quod facti sumus; conditione nos integros, sed culpa vitiatos. Proinde compuncti appetimus vitare quod fecimus, ut ad id quod facti fuimus reformemur. Unde et apte sequitur:

CAPUT XXII [Al. XXII].

VERS. 17. Ut avertat hominem ab his quae fecit, et liberet eum de superbia. 44. Compunctione avertimur a peccatis prius perpetratis, et a superbia liberamur. Quid enim homo de seipso nisi peccatum fecit? 753 Et scriptum est: Initium omnis peccati superbia (Eccl. X, 15). Bene ergo dicitur quia homo cum ab his quae fecit avertitur de superbia liberatur. Contra conditorem quippe superbire est praecepta ejus peccando transcendere, quia quasi a se jugum dominationis ejus excutit, cui per obedientiam subesse contemnit. At contra qui id quod fecit vitare appetit, id quod a Deo factus est recognoscit, et ad conditionis suae ordinem humiliter redit, dum sua opera fugiens, talem se qualis a Deo factus est diligit. Quia vero per hanc intelligentiam gloria sempiterna recipitur, supplicia aeterna vitantur, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIII [Rec. XIV].

VERS. 18. Eruens animam ejus de corruptione, et vitam illius, ut non transeat in gladium. 45. Sic eruitur anima a corruptione et a divini judicii gladio. Omnis quippe peccator ab hac corruptione vitiorum illuc ad gladium compellitur transire poenarum, ut unde hic inique delectatus est, inde illic juste crucietur. Notandum est ergo quod Deus nobis per somnium loquens,

prius nos a corruptione, et postmodum a gladio liberat, quia nimirum illius vitam illic eripit ab ultione supplicii, cujus hic mentem subrahit a delectatione peccati. Neque enim illic habet quod formidare debeat de gladio sententiae, quem hic post emendationem suam pollutio non corruperit culpae. Bene ergo dicitur: Eruens animam ejus de corruptione, et vitam illius, ut non transeat in gladium. De corruptione namque ad gladium transire est post peracta vitia ad toleranda supplicia pervenire. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIV [Vet.

XXIII, Rec. XV]. VERS. 19. Increpat quoque per dolorem in lectulo, et omnia ossa ejus marcescere facit. 46. In praesenti vita, omnis quam nobis paramus requies tentationibus turbatur. In quolibet secessu vivere sine tentationibus non possumus. In Scriptura sacra lectus, sive grabatus, seu stratum, aliquando voluptas carnis, aliquando repausatio in bonis operibus, aliquando requies temporalis accipitur. Quid est enim quod in Evangelio sanato cuidam Dominus dicit: Surge, tolle grabatum tuum, et vade in domum tuam (Joan. V, 8), nisi quod per grabatum voluptas corporis designatur? Et jubetur utique ut hoc sanus portet, ubi infirmus jacuerat, quia nimirum omnis qui adhuc vitiis delectatur, infirmus jacet in voluptatibus carnis. Sed sanatus hoc portat ubi infirmus jacuerat, quia divino adjutorio ereptus a vitiis, ejusdem carnis contumelias postmodum tolerat, in cujus prius desideriis requiescebat. Rursum per lectum vel stratum repausatio in bonis operibus designatur. Unde in apostolorum Actibus Petrus apostolus dicit: Aenea, sanet te Dominus Jesus Christus; surge, et sterne tibi (Act, IX, 34). Quid est dicere, Surge, nisi, mala quae perpetrasti, derelinque? Et quid est dicere, Sterne tibi, nisi, mercedis causas in quibus requiescere debeas operare? ut et deserat surgendo quae fecit, et inveniat sternendo quod fecerit. Quod utrumque Propheta breviter comprehendit, dicens: Declina a malo, et fac bonum (Psal. XXXVI, 27). Declinare quippe a malo est ab eo

quo jacuit surgere; bonum vero facere, est mercedis opera, in quibus requiescere debeat, praeparare. Qui enim declinat a malo, sed bona adhuc non facit, surrexit quidem ab eo quo jacuit, sed ubi requiescere debeat, nondum stravit. Et rursum lectus vel stratum requies temporalis accipitur, sicut scriptum est: Universum stratum ejus versasti in infirmitate ejus 754 (Ps. XL, 4). Cum enim quisque curis saecularibus fatigatus deserere per divinam gratiam hujus mundi itinera laboriosa compungitur, cogitare solet quomodo praesentis vitae desideria fugiat, et ab ejus laboribus requiescat, sibique mox desideratae quietis ordinem quaerit, et velut quoddam stratum, sic a cunctis laboribus cessationis locum invenire concupiscit. Sed quia in hac vita adhuc homo positus, in cujuslibet ordinis loco, in cujuslibet secreti secessu vivere sine tentationibus nullatenus potest, plerumque in id quod ad requiem construitur, major dolor tentationis invenitur. Unde recte per Prophetam dicitur: Universum stratum ejus versasti in infirmitate ejus. Ac si diceret: Omne quod hic sibi paravit ad requiem, hoc ei mutasti occulto judicio ad perturbationem. Quod pio quidem Dei consilio agitur, ut hujus peregrinationis tempore electorum vita turbetur. [Vet. XXIV.] 47. Hic optimo Dei consilio affligimur, ne viam pro patria diligamus. Via quippe est vita praesens, qua ad patriam tendimus; et idcirco hic occulto judicio frequenti perturbatione conterimur, ne viam pro patria diligamus. Solent etenim nonnulli viatores, cum amoena fortasse in itinere prata conspiciunt, pergendi moras innectere, et a coepti itineris rectitudine declinare, eorumque gressus tardat pulchritudo itineris, dum delectat. Electis ergo suis ad se pergentibus Dominus hujus mundi iter asperum facit, ne dum quisque vitae praesentis requie, quasi amoenitate viae pascitur, magis eum diu pergere, quam citius pervenire delectet; ne, dum oblectatur in via, obliviscatur quod desiderabat in patria. Quia ergo in hac vita omnis nostra, quam fortasse paravimus, requies turbatur, recte dicitur: Increpat quoque per dolorem in lectulo, id est, in praesentis vitae requie vel tentationis nos

stimulis vel flagelli afflictione conturbat. Nam saepe humanus animus quamlibet brevi tempore sine tentatione in bonis studiis fuerit, mox de eisdem studiis in quibus quiescendo se exerit, de ipsis virtutibus quibus multiplicari nititur, dum proficere se sentit, elevatur. Unde pio rectoris nostri moderamine, impulsu tentationis afficitur, ut in eo ipsa profectus sui elatio comprimatur. Quapropter postquam dixit: Increpat quoque per dolorem in lectulo, apte subjunxit [Rec. XVI]: Et omnia ossa ejus marcescere facit. 48. Per tentationem cognoscimus, quid ex viribus propriis, quid divino ex munere possimus. Ossa in Scriptura sacra virtutes accipimus, sicut scriptum est. Dominus custodit omnia ossa eorum, unum ex eis non conteretur (Psal. XXXIII, 21). Quod utique non de ossibus corporis, sed de viribus dicitur mentis. Nam certe novimus quod et multorum martyrum corporaliter ossa confracta sunt, et persecutores Domini, latronis illius, cui dictum est, Hodie mecum eris in paradiso (Luc. XXIII, 43), sicut latronis alterius in cruce crura fregerunt. Cum ergo increpat per dolorem in lectulo, omnia ossa facit marcescere, quia cum in ea requie quam nobis ab hoc saeculo praeparamus flagello tentationis afficimur, qui fortasse de virtutibus nostris inflari potuimus, cognitae infirmitatis nostrae taedio extenuamur. Cum enim sicut cupimus ad Deum proficimus, si profectum nostrum tentatio nulla pulsaret, alicujus nos fortitudinis esse crederemus. Sed quia nobiscum superna dispensatione agitur, ut infirmitatis nostrae quia proficientes obliviscimur, 755 tentati recolamus, et in profectu nostro quid de divino munere, et in tentatione cognoscimus quid de propriis viribus sumus. Quae nos profecto tentatio ad plenum raperet, nisi protectio superna servaret. Sed pulsat, nec frangit; impellit, nec movet; quatit, nec dejicit, ut de nostra infirmitate sentiamus esse quod quatimur, et de divino munere esse quod stamus. Et quia saepe anima alicujus boni sibi conscia, cum virtutes suas sibi ad memoriam revocat, quadam delectatione pascitur, et quasi gratulatione propriae plenitudinis impinguatur, bene dicitur quod

tentatione pulsante marcescunt ossa, quia dum propria infirmitas tentatione interrogante cognoscitur, omnis illa nostrarum virium, velut pinguis viridisque gratulatio, subito anxietatis moerore siccatur, et qui nos alicujus esse momenti bona nostra pensando credidimus, pulsati paulo amplius perituros nos jam jamque formidamus. Tunc omne bonorum nostrorum gaudium vertitur in pavorem poenarum. Tunc iniquos nos esse deprehendimus, qui sanctos paulo ante credebamus. Tabescit mens, stupent oculi, omne quod prius prosperum arridebat evanescit; lux ipsa fastidio est, et solae se in animo tenebrae moeroris effundunt; nihil quod delectet aspicitur, triste est quidquid occurrit. Unde et apte sequitur:

CAPUT XXV [Rec. XVII].

VERS. 20.Abominabilis ei fit in vita sua panis, et animae illius cibus ante desiderabilis. 49. Per panem in Scriptura sacra multa significantur: 1o Christus; 2o gratia; 3o sacra doctrina; 4o haereticorum praedicatio; 5o subsidium vitae praesentis; 6o jucunditas humanae delectationis. Ac si aperte dicat: Afflicta mens sibi in amaritudinem verti considerat quidquid se antea blande libenterque satiabat. [Vet. XXV.] In Scriptura enim sacra panis aliquando ipse Dominus, aliquando spiritualis gratia, aliquando divinae doctrinae eruditio, aliquando haereticorum praedicatio, aliquando subsidium vitae praesentis, aliquando jucunditas humanae delectationis accipitur. In pane Dominus signatur, sicut ipse in Evangelio dicit: Ego sum panis vivus, qui de coelo descendi (Joan. VI, 51). Rursum per panem gratia doni spiritalis accipitur, sicut per prophetam dicitur: Qui obturat aures suas, ne audiat sanguinem, et claudit oculos suos, ne videat malum, iste in excelsis habitabit: munimenta saxorum sublimitas ejus, panis ei datus est (Isai. XXXIII, 15). Quid est enim obturare aures suas, ne audiat sanguinem, nisi peccatis suadentibus, quae de sanguine et carne nascuntur, non praebere consensum? Et quid est, ne malum videat, oculos claudere, nisi omne quod

rectitudini adversum est non approbare? Iste in excelsis habitabit, quia quamvis eum adhuc caro in inferioribus retinet, mentem jam in sublimibus fixit. Munimenta saxorum sublimitas ejus, quia qui abjecta desideria terrenae conversationis calcat, ad supernam patriam per praecedentium patrum exempla se sublevat. Et quia per contemplationis donum gratia spiritali satiatur, apte subjungitur: Panis ei datus est, id est refectionem spiritalis gratiae percipit, quia se a bonis infimis coelestia sperando suspendit. Hinc etiam de sancta Ecclesia per David Dominus dicit: Pauperes ejus saturabo panibus (Psal. CXXXI, 15), quia in illa mentes humilium positae spiritalium implentur refectione donorum. Rursum per panem divinae doctrinae eruditio 756 designatur, sicut per prophetam dicitur: Qui habitatis in terra Austri, cum panibus occurrite fugienti (Isai. XXI, 14). In terra quippe Austri habitant qui in sancta Ecclesia positi superni Spiritus charitate perflantur. Fugit autem qui hujus mundi mala evadere concupiscit. Qui ergo in terra Austri habitat, fugienti cum panibus occurrat, id est, is qui jam sancto Spiritu intra Ecclesiam plenus est eum qui mala sua evadere nititur eruditionis alloquio consoletur. Fugienti scilicet cum panibus occurrere est metuenti aeterna supplicia doctrinae sacrae escas offerre, et modo tumorem terrore comprimere, modo pavorem exhortatione refovere. Quia panis refectio Scripturae sacrae non inconvenienter accipitur, per eumdem prophetam Judaeis solam litteram servantibus dicitur: Quare appenditis argentum, et non in panibus (Isai. LV, 2)? Ac si diceret: Pensatis sacra eloquia, sed non in refectione, quia dum solam litterae speciem custoditis, de spiritali intelligentia pinguedinem internae refectionis amittitis. Unde illic apte subjungitur: Et laborem vestrum non in saturitate (Ibid.). [Vet. XXVI.] Rursum per panem haereticorum praedicatio designatur, sicut per Salomonem mulier haereticae ecclesiae typum gestans, et stultos convocans, dicit: Panes occultos libenter edite (Prov. IX, 17). Vel, sicut in nostra translatione scriptum est: Aquae furtivae dulciores sunt, et

panis absconditus suavior. Sunt enim nonnullae haereses quae aperte metuunt praedicare quod sentiunt, et apud infirmorum mentes verba sua tanto magis condiunt, quanto quasi amplius reverenter abscondunt. Unde non immerito dicitur: Panes occultos libenter edite. Miseris enim cordibus occulta haereticorum verba eo magis sapiunt, quo cum reliquis communiter non habentur. Rursum per panem subsidium praesentis vitae accipitur, sicut Jacob ad Laban transiens, ait: Domine Deus, si dederis mihi panem ad manducandum, et vestem ad induendum (Genes. XXVIII, 20). Et sicut in Evangelio Dominus turbis se sequentibus dicit: Quaeritis me, non quia vidistis signa, sed quia manducastis ex panibus, et saturati estis (Joan. VI, 26). De septem enim panibus fuerant satiati. Et per eorum personam Dominus illos intra sanctam Ecclesiam detestatur, qui per sacros ordines ad Dominum propinquantes, non in eisdem ordinibus virtutum merita, sed subsidia vitae praesentis exquirunt; nec cogitant quid vivendo imitari debeant, sed quae compendia percipiendo satientur. Satiatos quippe de panibus Dominum sequi est de sancta Ecclesia temporalia alimenta sumpsisse. Et non pro signis est Dominum, sed pro panibus quaerere, ad religionis officium, non pro augendis virtutibus, sed pro requirendis subsidiis inhiare. Rursum per panem jucunditas humanae delectationis accipitur. Unde Jeremias propheta dum synagogae perditos mores defleret, dixit: Omnis populus ejus gemens et quaerens panem: dederunt pretiosa quaeque pro cibo ad refocillandam animam (Thren. I, 11). Gemens enim populus quaerit panem, dum prava hominum multitudo affligitur, quia non ad votum de praesentis vitae jucunditate satiatur. Sed et pretiosa quaeque pro cibo dat, quia virtutes mentis in appetitum delectationis transitoriae inclinat. Et refocillare animam 757 nititur, quia perversis suis desideriis satisfacere conatur. Unde bene mox ex voce illius electae multitudinis subdit: Vide, Domine, et considera quia facta sum vilis (Thren. I, 11). Vilis quippe plebs Dei efficitur, quando pravorum numero crescente, in eis non

summa et coelestia, sed abjecta et terrena sectatur. [Vet. XXVII.] 50. Quidquid sapit, vi tentationis amarescit. Eliu itaque quid aliud panem quam praesentis vitae delectationem vocat? Qui postquam vim tentationis expressit, illico subdidit: Abominabilis ei fit in vita sua panis, et animae illius cibus ante desiderabilis, quia videlicet omne quod prius de ipsa prosperitate vivendi dulce sapiebat, postmodum per vim tentationis amarescit. Nonnunquam vero quidquid gaudii, quidquid virtutis favere videbatur, subito in pavore tentationis amittitur, et quasi evacuatus eisdem virtutibus tristis animus solo moerore possidetur. Cum enim paulo vehementius impulsu tentationis afficitur, quia exerere vim solitae fortitudinis non valet, eam jam velut perditam dolet, seque ex se vacuum sentiens, infirmitatem suam ex ipsa sua inanitate cognoscit. Unde ab omni mox jucunditate quasi frangitur; et escas prioris laetitiae respuens, eo quem solum libenter appetit luctu satiatur. Unusquisque enim cum sibi bene vivendi prosperitas arridet hilarescit, atque ipsa hilaritas animum velut desiderabilis cibus reficit. Sed cum tentatione paulo amplius imminente pulsatur, a mente ejus per moeroris fastidium gaudium omne respuitur, quae prius eodem gaudio quasi satiata laetabatur. Quia igitur homo tentatus ab ore cordis omnem cibum respuit delectationis, nihilque eum aliud quam semetipsum et cognoscere et flere delectat, bene dicitur: Abominabilis ei fit in vita sua panis, et animae illius cibus ante desiderabilis. 51. Tentationum et flagellorum utilitas. Sed, sicut superius diximus (Num. 48), idcirco moderamine occultae dispensationis ita tentari permittimur, ut qui ex divino munere in virtute proficimus, etiam quid sumus ex propria infirmitate memoremur; et qui ex perceptione muneris opera virtutis inferimus, ex infirmitatis nostrae memoria sacrificium humilitatis offeramus. Aliquando autem post profectum virium non solum tentant vitia, sed etiam flagella castigant. Cum autem tentamur vitiis, pia dispensatione nobiscum agitur, ne his virtutibus quibus proficimus extollamur. Cum vero flagellis atterimur,

malis increpantibus admonemur ne mundo blandiente seducamur. Vitia dum nos tentant, proficientes in nos virtutes humiliant; flagella dum tentant, surgentes in corde hujus mundi voluptates eradicant. Per tentantia vitia discimus quid de nobis simus, per ferientia flagella cognoscimus quid de hoc mundo fugiamus. Per illa restringimur, ne intrinsecus extollamur, per ista comprimimur, ne quid extrinsecus appetamus. In hac ergo vita dum sumus, et flagellis atteri, et aliquando tentari vitiis necesse est. Sive enim in laboribus flagellorum, seu in certamine vitiorum, non solum nobis nostra infirmitas innotescit, sed etiam in quanta virtute profecerimus agnoscimus. (Rec. XVIII.] Nemo quippe vires suas in pace cognoscit. Si enim bella desunt, 758 virtutum experimenta non prodeunt. Improvidus miles est, qui fortem se in pace gloriatur. [Vet. XXVIII.] Quia ergo saepe virium merita per flagellorum adversa patefiunt, apte Eliu subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 21. Tabescet caro illius, et ossa quae tecta fuerant nudabuntur. 32. Nemo quantum profecerit, nisi inter adversa cognoscit. Cum enim flagellis prementibus omnis exterior voluptas atteritur, internae fortitudinis ossa nudantur. Quid autem hoc loco carnis nomine nisi ipsa delectatio carnalis accipitur? Vel quid per ossa nisi virtutes animae designantur? Tabescit ergo caro, et ossa nudantur, quia dum flagellis arguentibus carnalis delectatio extenuatur, ea quae dudum quasi sub carne latuerant virtutum fortia patefiunt. Nemo quippe quantum profecerit nisi inter adversa cognoscit. Cum enim adsunt prospera, cerni virium documenta non possunt. Unde alias scriptum est: In die mandavit Dominus misericordiam suam, et nocte declaravit (Psal. XLI, 9); quia videlicet unusquisque superni doni gratiam in tranquillitate quietis percipit, sed quantum perceperit, in adversitate perturbationis ostendit. Tabescat ergo caro, ut nudentur ossa. Feriamur paternis correptionibus, ut quantum proficimus agnoscamus. Flagellis enim

Domini pinguedo carnalis delectationis atteritur, sed virtutum nostrarum ossa patefiunt. Decus nostrum exterius ipsa hujus mundi adversitate foedatur, sed quid in nobis intrinsecus latebat ostenditur. Caesis namque apostolis denuntiatum est ne loquerentur ultra in nomine Jesu, sed magna exsultatione gavisi sunt, quod digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati, suisque adversariis cum fiducia responderunt: Obedire oportet Deo magis quam hominibus (Act. V, 29). Ecce inter adversa validius fidei robur emicuit; ecce concisa est integritas carnium, sed patefacta sunt ossa virtutum. Hinc de eis per Sapientiam dicitur: Deus tentavit illos, et invenit illos dignos se (Sap. III, 5). Tentati sunt quippe adversitate plagarum, sed digni inventi sunt nudatione ossium. Nam quia haec eorum illa tentatio est quae ex flagellis adhibetur, illic aperte declaratur, dum sequitur: Tanquam aurum in fornace probavit illos, et quasi holocausti hostiam accepit illos (Sap. III, 6). Quia ergo uniuscujusque vires non nisi per adversa patefiunt, bene dicitur: Tabescet enim caro ejus, et ossa quae tecta fuerant nudabuntur. Tabescit enim caro, dum omne quod fluxum infirmumque est flagellis atteritur. Nudantur ossa, dum per haec in nobis etiam quod validum latet aperitur. Quia vero, sicut et superius dictum est, in ipsa adversitate tentationis non solum detegitur robur fortitudinis, sed etiam cognoscitur infirmitas humanitatis, et tentatus quisque ostendit quidem quantum de Deo profecerit, sed in ipsis flagellorum afflictionibus etiam quantum de semetipso sit infirmus agnoscit, quia non tantummodo nudantur ossa, sed etiam tabescit caro, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXVII [Rec. XIX].

VERS. 22.Appropinquabit corruptioni anima ejus, et vita illius mortiferis. 53. A corruptela, cum magis imminere videtur in tentatione, liberamur. Tentati enim uniuscujusque justi anima corruptioni appropinquare dicitur quando, ne eam virtus possit extollere, per flagella compellitur quid 759 sit

ex propria infirmitate sentire. Corruptioni videlicet appropinquat, quia ex suis se viribus perditioni proximum non ignorat, ut hoc quod a perditione longe est, non sibi, sed Domino tribuat. Appropinquat vero mortiferis, quia ex infirmitate carnis proximum se peccatis mortem ferentibus respicit, a quibus divino munere tanto magis longe fit, quanto se eis proximum ex suis meritis deprehendit. Per contemplationem conditionis suae David corruptioni appropinquaverat, cum dicebat: Memento, Domine, quod pulvis sumus: homo sicut fenum dies ejus (Psal. CII, 15). Per contemplationem quoque infirmitatis propriae Paulus mortiferis appropinquaverat, cum dicebat: Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis. Infelix ego homo, quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus (Rom. VII, 23)? Corruptioni ergo et mortiferis appropinquare est, considerata infirmitate humanitatis suae, peccatorem se ex suis meritis cernere, atque apud se arrogantiam ex propriis viribus non habere. Quid enim sumus, si a conditoris nostri protectione deseramur? Quae nimirum protectio minus necessaria creditur, si semper habeatur. Sed utiliter plerumque subtrahitur, ut sibimetipsi homo quam sine illa nihil sit ostendatur. Manus igitur Dei aliquando nos nobis per adversa insinuat, quae etiam nescientes nos in prosperis portat. Qua destituti dum cadere incipimus, et tamen adjuti retinemur, et doctrina fit quod in lapsu trepidamus, et custodia quod in statu permanemus. 760 54. Nunquam de viribus nostris praesumendum. Nemo ergo se alicujus virtutis aestimet, etiam cum quid fortiter potest, quia si divina protectio deserat, ibi repente enerviter obruitur, ubi se valenter stare gloriabatur. Quid est enim quod vir Dei contra altare Samariae ad prophetandum directus praesente rege auctoritatem liberae vocis exercuit, ejusdemque regis extensum brachium in rigorem mirabiliter astrinxit, quod tamen mox misericorditer saluti restituit (III Reg. XIII, 4)? cujus in domo invitatus comedere noluit, quia ne in via comederet, prohibitionis dominicae

praecepta servavit? Qui tamen in eadem via et seductus comedit, et pastus interiit. Qua in re quid subtili consideratione colligimus, quid, ut ita dixerim, formidando suspicamur, nisi quod forsitan apud semetipsum tacitus pro praeceptis dominicis regem se contempsisse gloriabatur? Unde ab interna mox soliditate quassatus est; et inde ei in opere culpa subrepsit, unde gloria in corde surrexit, ut prophetae falsi verbis deceptus disceret, quia nequaquam propriae fortitudinis fuerit, quod ad regis verba restitisset. Bene autem ex ejus ore mortis sententiam accepit, cujus seductione a vitae praecepto deviavit, ut inde poenam veraciter sumeret, unde culpam negligenter admisisset. Quia igitur unumquemque electum suum divina gratia tunc magis erudiendo custodit, cum quasi percutiens deserit, dicatur recte: Appropinquabit corruptioni anima ejus, et vita illius mortiferis, ut quo se suis viribus vicinum morti per adversa considerat, eo in cunctis quae fortiter egerit, ad divinae spei munimen fugiens solidius vivat.

LIBER VIGESIMUS QUARTUS.

Exponuntur undecim versus posteriores cap. XXXIII, et octodecim priores cap. XXXIV, praeclaraque de Christo mediatore, de contemplatione, de conversionis ordine, de pastorali officio docentur.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. Cuncti, etiam electi, tentationibus obnoxii sunt. Eliu vim supernae dispensationis insinuans, de electi uniuscujusque percussione intulit, dicens: Appropinquabit corruptioni anima ejus, et vita illius mortiferis. Et dum tentatum hominem demonstrat unum, in qua tentatione sit positum humanum genus ostendit universum; dumque narrat quid specialiter agatur in singulis, liquido intimat quid generaliter agatur in cunctis. Sic enim tentationem expressit quorumdam, proprie singulorum, ut possit intelligi et universaliter omnium. Cunctum quippe electorum genus in hac vita hujus taedio laboris afficitur. Unde et mox huic generali pestilentiae generale subintulit remedium medicinae, dicens:

CAPUT II.

CAP. XXXIII, VERS. 23, 24. Si fuerit pro eo angelus loquens unum de similibus, ut annuntiet hominis aequitatem, miserebitur ejus. [Rec. II.] 2. Christus Deus et homo pro hominibus Deum interpellat. Incarnationis oeconomia. Quis enim est iste angelus, nisi ille qui per prophetam dicitur: Magni consilii angelus (Is. IX, 6, sec. LXX)? Quia enim Graeca lingua evangelizare denuntiare dicitur, semetipsum nobis annuntians Dominus angelus vocatur. Et bene ait: Si fuerit pro eo angelus loquens, quia, sicut ait Apostolus, etiam interpellat pro nobis (Rom. VIII, 34). Sed quid pro nobis loquatur, audiamus: Unum de similibus. Mos medicinae est ut aliquando similia similibus, aliquando contraria contrariis curet. Nam saepe calida

calidis, frigida frigidis; saepe autem frigida calidis, calida frigidis sanare consuevit. Veniens ergo ad nos desuper medicus noster, tantisque nos inveniens languoribus pressos, quiddam nobis simile, et quiddam contrarium apposuit. Ad homines quippe homo venit, sed ad peccatores justus. Concordavit nobis veritate naturae, sed discrepavit a nobis vigore justitiae. Vitiosus enim homo corrigi non poterat nisi per Deum. Videri autem debuit qui corrigebat, ut praebendo imitationis formam, anteactae malitiae mutarent vitam. Sed videri ab homine non poterat Deus; ergo homo factus est, ut videri potuisset. [Vet. II.] Justus igitur atque invisibilis Deus, apparuit 761 similis nobis homo visibilis, ut dum videtur ex simili, curaret ex justo; et dum veritate generis concordat conditioni, virtute artis obviaret aegritudini. 3. Dominus in carne veniens, nec culpam ex vitio, nec poenam ex necessitate suscepit. Quia ergo in carne veniens Dominus, non culpam nostram ex vitio, non poenam ex necessitate suscepit (nulla enim labe peccati pollutus, reatus nostri teneri conditione non potuit, atque ideo mortem nostram omni necessitate calcata, cum voluit, sponte suscepit), recte dicitur quod pro tentato homine iste angelus unum de similibus loquitur, quia nec ita natus ut reliqui, nec ita mortuus, nec ita resuscitatus. Non enim cooperante coitu, sed Spiritu sancto superveniente conceptus est (Luc. I, 33). Natus autem materna viscera et fecunda exhibuit, et incorrupta servavit. Rursum nos omnes cum nolumus morimur, quia ad solvendae poenae debitum culpae nostrae conditione coarctamur; ille autem, quia nulli admistus est culpae, nulli ex necessitate succubuit poenae. Sed quia culpam nostram dominando subdidit, poenam nostram miserando suscepit, sicut ipse ait: Potestatem habeo ponendi animam meam, et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi eam (Joan. X, 18). Qui etiam praemisit: Nemo tollit eam a me, sed ego pono eam a meipso. Rursum non ut reliqui suscitatus est, quia nostra resurrectio in saeculi finem dilata est, illius vero die tertio celebrata. Et nos quidem per illum resurgimus, nam ipse per se. Neque enim qui Deus

erat sicut nos ab alio ut resuscitari potuisset indigebat. In eo ergo ejus resurrectio distat a nostra, quod non per nosmetipsos resurgimus, sicut ipse. Pro eo enim quod simpliciter homines sumus, superiori adjutorio ut resurgere valeamus indigemus. Ille autem ejusdem resurrectionis vim cum Patre et Spiritu sancto Deus exhibuit, quam tamen solus in humanitate percepit. [Vet. III.] Quia igitur Dominus vere natus, vere mortuus, vere suscitatus, in omnibus tamen distat a nobis magnitudine potentiae, sed sola concordat nobis veritate naturae, bene dicitur, quia pro nobis angelus iste unum de similibus loquitur. Cum enim in cunctis operationibus suis immensa nos virtute transcendat, in uno tamen a nobis, id est in formae veritate non discrepat. 4. Pro nobis Patri loquitur, cum se nobis similem ostendit. Per hoc pro nobis Patri loquitur, per quod semetipsum nobis similem ostendit. Loqui quippe ejus, vel interpellare, est ipsum se pro hominibus hominem demonstrare. Et bene cum dixisset: Unum de similibus loquitur, illico adjunxit: Ut annuntiet hominis aequitatem. Quia nisi ille hominibus similis fieret, aequus homo ante Deum non appareret. Inde quippe annuntiat aequitatem nostram, unde suscipere dignatus est infirmitatem nostram. Omnes videlicet nos inimica illa persuasio in culpae contagio ab ipsa radice polluerat (Genes. III, 5), nullusque erat qui apud Deum pro peccatoribus loquens, a peccato liber appareret, quia ex eadem massa editos aeque cunctos par reatus involverat (Rom. V, 11). Proinde venit ad nos Unigenitus Patris, assumpsit ex nobis naturam, non perpetrans culpam. Sine peccato quippe 762 esse debuit, qui pro peccatoribus intervenire potuisset, quia nimirum alienae pollutionis contagia non tergeret, si propria sustineret. Bene ergo dicitur quia in eo quod similis nobis apparuit, aequitatem hominibus annuntiavit. Intercedens enim pro peccatoribus, semetipsum justum hominem qui pro aliis indulgentiam mereretur ostendit. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. III].

VERS. 24. Miserebitur ejus, et dicet: Libera eum, ut non descendat in corruptionem, inveni in quo ei propitier. 5. Solus Christus nos liberavit, Deumque propitiavit. Fortitudo ex humilitate. Mediator Dei et hominum, homo Christus Jesus in eo miseretur homini, quo formam hominis sumpsit (I Tim. II, 5; Philipp. II, 7); qua misericordia pro redempto homine dicit Patri: Libera eum, ut non descendat in corruptionem. Sicut jam supra diximus, dicere ejus est Libera hominem, naturam hominis assumendo liberam demonstrare. Ex ea quippe carne quam sumpsit, etiam hanc ostendit liberam quam redemit. Quae redempta videlicet caro nos sumus, qui cognitione nostri reatus astringimur. Sed Mediatoris tanti aequitate liberamur, sicut ipse ait: Si vos Filius liberaverit, vere liberi eritis (Joan. VIII, 36). Et bene pro hoc redempto homine dicitur: Non descendat in corruptionem. [Vet. IV.] Superius enim dictum fuerat: Appropinquabit corruptioni anima ejus; postmodum dicitur: Non descendat in corruptionem. Ac si diceret: Quia cognoscendo infirmitatem suam, esse se corruptioni proximum non ignorat, idcirco ad corruptionis interitum non descendat. Ad corruptionem enim juste descenderet, si suis viribus longe se a corruptione esse judicaret. Sed quia corruptioni appropinquavit humiliter, debet ab ea misericorditer liberari: ut eo contra impugnantia vitia fortis sit, quo se suis meritis agnoscit infirmum. Quisquis enim supra se extollitur, ipso elationis suae pondere gravatur; et eo se in infimis mergit, quo, in superbiae vitium proruens, ab eo qui vere excelsus est elongavit; atque inde magis ima appetit, unde se conjunctum summis aestimavit; sicut per prophetam extollenti se animae dicitur: Quo pulchrior es descende, et dormi cum incircumcisis [Ezech. XXXII, 19]. Omnis enim qui foeditatem infirmitatis suae considerare negligit, sed per elationis fastum virtutis suae gloriam attendit, unde pulchrior est, inde descendit, quia extollendo se de suis meritis, inde in ima interitus corruit, unde gloriosum se esse judicavit. Qui descendens cum incircumcisis dormit, quia in aeterna morte cum caeteris

peccatoribus deficit. Quia ergo homo iste humiliter corruptioni se propinquum esse cognovit, bene de eo dicitur: Libera eum, ut non descendat in corruptionem, ut eo magis evadat poenam, quo oculos suos non advertit ad culpam. Quia vero nullus erat cujus meritis nobis Dominus propitiari debuisset; Unigenitus Patris, formam infirmitatis nostrae suscipiens, solus justus apparuit, ut pro peccatoribus intercederet (Phil. II, 7). 6. Nullus hominum coram Deo intercessor justus pro hominibus apparuit. Et bene pro redempto homine isto loquens angelus dicit: Inveni in quo propitier ei. Ac si aperte 763 Mediator Dei et hominum dicat: Quia nullus hominum fuit qui coram Deo intercessor justus pro hominibus appareret, memetipsum ad propitiandum hominibus hominem feci, et dum me hominem exhibui, in quo juste hominibus propitiarer inveni. Et quia infirmitatem suscipiens Dominus, dum poenam nostram moriendo toleravit, corruptionem nostram resurgendo mutavit, bene iste angelus mortalitatis nostrae flagella subjungit, eorumque miseretur, dicens:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 25. Consumpta est caro ejus a suppliciis; revertatur ad dies adolescentiae suae. 7. A Deo recedentes, nihil nisi quo affligeremur, invenimus. In illo quippe primo homine a Deo recedente repulsi a paradisi gaudiis, in hanc mortalis vitae aerumnam cecidimus, et quam gravem culpam serpentis suasione commisimus (Genes. III, 23), poena nostrae ultionis sentimus. Huc enim lapsi, nihil extra Deum, nisi quo affligeremur, invenimus. Et quia per oculorum visum carnem secuti sumus, de ipsa carne, quam praeceptis Dei praeposuimus, flagellamur. In ipsa quippe quotidie gemitum, in ipsa cruciatum, in ipsa interitum patimur, ut hoc nobis mira dispositione Dominus in poenam verteret, per quod fecimus culpam; nec aliunde esset interim censura supplicii, nisi unde fuerat causa peccati, ut ejus carnis amaritudine homo erudiretur ad vitam, cujus oblectatione

superbiae pervenit ad mortem. 8. A carnalis vitae suppliciis Christus nos eruit, et innovavit. Quia ergo innumeris humanum genus carnalis vitae suppliciis premebatur, sed Redemptore nostro veniente, et vitia corruptionis nostrae et tormenta deleta sunt, dicatur de redempto homine: [Vet. V, Rec. IV.] Consumpta est caro ejus a suppliciis; revertatur ad dies adolescentiae suae. Ac si diceret: Mortalitatis suae poena in quadam vetustatis suae senectute dejectus est; revertatur ad dies adolescentiae suae, id est prioris vitae integritate renovetur, ut non in eo remaneat quo lapsus est, sed ad hoc redemptus redeat ad quod percipiendum conditus fuit. Scriptura enim sacra saepe adolescentiam pro novitate vitae ponere consuevit. Unde venienti sponso dicitur: Adolescentulae dilexerunt te (Cant. I, 3); id est, electorum animae gratia baptismatis renovatae, quae non in vitae veteris usu deficiunt, sed novi hominis conversatione decorantur. Senectutem quippe veteris hominis inter vitia tabescentem deflebat ille qui ait: Inveteravi inter omnes inimicos meos (Psal. VI, 8). E contra alius gaudere in virtutibus admonens, dicit: Laetare, juvenis, in adolescentia tua (Eccle. XI, 9). Ac si diceret: Fortis quisque gaudeat in renovatione sua; id est, laetitiam suam non in vitae veteris voluptate, sed in conversationis novae virtute constituat. Quia vero ad hoc novitatis robur non nostris viribus, sed Redemptore interveniente revocamur, pro hoc flagellato homine deprecans angelus dicat: Revertatur ad dies adolescentiae suae. Et quia dum Redemptor noster Patrem pro nobis interpellat, nos quoque vitae pristinae torpore discusso, ad sitim orationis accendimur, apte de hoc homine redempto subjungitur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 26. Deprecabitur Deum, et placabilis ei erit. 9. Christus pro nobis orans ad orandum nos accendit. Prius enim postulare angelum, et postmodum hominem dicit, quia nisi ante ipse Dominus 764 per incarnationem suam interpellans Patrem, vitam nostram peteret, nunquam

se insensibilitas nostra ad postulanda ea quae aeterna sunt excitaret. Sed incarnationis ejus praecessit oratio, ut torporis nostri evigilatio subsequatur. [Vet. VI, Rec. V.] Quia vero post tentationes, saepe post immensas amaritudines menti nostrae in occulto gaudio lux veritatis erumpit; bene de hoc tentato homine et deprecante subjungitur:

CAPUT VI.

IBID. Et videbit faciem ejus in juvito. 10. Duplex compunctio, una tristitiae, altera laetitiae lacrymas eliciens. Ex hac ineffabile gaudium oritur. Superius dictum est (Lib. XXIII, n. 40 et seq.), quomodo Deus innotescendo afficit, nunc vero dicitur quomodo dum innotescit exhilarat. Aliter enim quisque compungitur, cum, interna intuens, malorum suorum pavore terretur; aliter vero compungitur, cum, gaudia superna conspiciens, spe quadam et securitate roboratur. Illa compunctio afficientes et tristes, haec vero laetas lacrymas movet. Jubilum namque dicitur, quando ineffabile gaudium mente concipitur, quod nec abscondi possit, nec sermonibus aperiri; et tamen quibusdam motibus proditur, quamvis nullis proprietatibus exprimatur. Unde David propheta intuens electorum animas tantum gaudium mente concipere quantum sermone non valent aperire, ait: Beatus populus, qui scit jubilationem (Psal. LXXXVIII, 16). Non enim ait, Qui loquitur; sed, Qui scit, quia sciri quidem jubilatio intellectu potest, sed dicto exprimi non potest. Sentitur per illam quippe, quod ultra sensum est. Et cum vix ad hoc contemplandum sufficiat conscientia sentientis, quomodo ad hoc exprimendum sufficiat lingua dicentis? Quia ergo cordibus nostris lux se veritatis insinuans, modo districtam justitiam praetendendo contristat, modo interna gaudia aperiendo laetificat; post tentationum amaritudines, post tribulationum luctus, apte subjungitur: Videbit faciem ejus in jubilo. 11. Ad illud non pervenitur nisi prius purgata igne tribulationis mente. Menti enim nostrae de consideratione caecitatis suae prius ignis tribulationis immittitur,

ut omnis vitiorum aerugo concremetur; et tunc mundatis oculis cordis illa laetitia patriae coelestis aperitur, ut prius purgemus lugendo quod fecimus; et postmodum manifestius contemplemur per gaudia quod quaeramus. Prius a mentis acie exurente tristitia interposita malorum caligo detergitur, et tunc resplendente raptim coruscatione incircumscripti luminis illustratur. Quo utcunque conspecto, in gaudio cujusdam securitatis absorbetur, et quasi post defectum vitae praesentis ultra se rapta, in quadam novitate aliquo modo recreatur. Ibi mens ex immenso fonte infusione superni roris aspergitur; ibi non se sufficere ad id quod rapta est contemplatur, et veritatem sentiendo, videt quia quanta est ipsa veritas, non videt. Cui veritati tanto magis se longe existimat, quanto magis appropinquat, quia nisi illam utcunque conspiceret, nequaquam eam conspicere se non posse sentiret. 12. Animus in contemplatione luce divina reverberatus ad se relabitur. Contemplatio non est solida et permanens visio. Adnisus ergo animi, dum in illam intenditur, immensitatis ejus coruscante circumstantia reverberatur. Ipsa quippe cuncta implens, cuncta circumstat; et idcirco mens nostra nequaquam se ad comprehendendam incircumscriptam circumstantiam 765 dilatat, quia eam inopia suae circumscriptionis angustat. Unde et ad semetipsam citius labitur, et prospectis quasi quibusdam veritatis vestigiis, ad sua ima revocatur. Haec ipsa tamen per contemplationem facta non solida et permanens visio, sed, ut ita dixerim, quasi quaedam visionis imitatio, Dei facies dicitur. [Vet. VII.] Quia enim per faciem quemlibet agnoscimus, non immerito cognitionem Dei, faciem ejus vocamus. Unde Jacob postquam cum angelo luctatus est, ait: Vidi Dominum facie ad faciem (Genes. XXXII, 30). Ac si diceret: Cognovi Dominum, quia me cognoscere ipse dignatus est. Quam cognitionem plenissime fieri Paulus testatur in fine dicens: Tunc cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum (I Cor. XIII, 12). Quia ergo post laborum certamina, post tentationum fluctus, saepe in excessu anima suspenditur, ut cognitionem divinae praesentiae contempletur, quam tamen

praesentiam et sentire possit, et explere non possit, recte post tot labores de hoc tentato homine dicitur: Videbit faciem ejus in jubilo. Quia vero unusquisque quanto amplius coelestia contemplatur, tanto magis a terrena operatione corrigitur, bene post gratiam contemplationis, justitiam subdit operationis, dicens:

CAPUT VII.

IBID. Et reddet homini justitiam suam. 13. Qua ratione justitia, nostra dicatur. Justitia nostra dicitur, non quae ex nostro nostra est, sed quae divina largitate fit nostra, sicut in Dominica oratione dicimus: Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie (Matth. VI, 11; Luc. XI, 3). Ecce et nostrum dicimus; et tamen, ut detur oramus. Noster quippe fit, cum accipitur, qui tamen Dei est, quia ab illo datur. Et Dei ergo est ex munere, et noster fit veraciter per acceptionem. Ita ergo hoc loco homini suam justitiam Dominus reddit, non quam ex semetipso habuit, sed quam conditus ut haberet accepit, et in qua lapsus perseverare noluit. Illam ergo justitiam reddet Deus homini, ad quam conditus fuit, ut inhaerere Deo libeat, ut minacem ejus sententiam pertimescat, ut serpentis callidi blandis jam promissionibus non credat. 14. Quotidie diabolus verba Dei de cordibus hominum conatur evellere. Quod enim in paradiso egit (Genes. III, 5), hoc quotidie antiquus hostis agere non desistit. Verba quippe Dei de cordibus hominum molitur evellere, atque in eis ficta promissionis suae blandimenta radicare; quotidie id quod Deus minatur levigat, et ad hoc credendum quod falsum promittit invitat. Falso enim pollicetur temporalia, ut mentibus hominum ea supplicia leviget quae Deus minatur aeterna. Nam cum praesentis vitae gloriam spondet, quid aliud dicit quam, Gustate, et eritis sicut dii? [Vet. VIII.] Ac si aperte dicat: Temporalem concupiscentiam tangite, et in hoc mundo sublimes apparete. Et cum timorem divinae sententiae amovere conatur, quid aliud loquitur quam id quod primis

hominibus dixit: Cur praecepit vobis Deus, ut non comederetis de omni ligno paradisi (Genes. III, 1)? Sed quia divino munere redemptus homo justitiam recepit, quam dudum conditus amisit, robustiorem se jam contra blandimenta callidae persuasionis exercet, quia experimento didicit quantum obediens esse debeat praecepto. Et quem tunc culpa duxit ad poenam, nunc poena sua restringit a culpa, ut tanto magis delinquere metuat, quanto cogente supplicio et ipse jam quod perpetravit accusat. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT VIII [Rec. VI].

VERS. 27 Respiciet homines, et dicet: Peccavi. 766 15. Qui sanctorum Patrum exempla respicit, peccatorem se intelligit, quod justitiae est initium. Se peccatorem non cognosceret, si justitiam non haberet. Nemo quippe tortitudinem suam, nisi cum rectus esse coeperit, deprehendit. Nam qui omnino perversus est, neque hoc potest videre quod est. Qui vero peccatorem se intelligit, jam ex parte aliqua justus esse inchoavit, atque id quod non justus fecerat, ex eo quod justus est accusat. Qua accusatione sua Deo inhaerere inchoat, dum rectum contra se judicium proferens, hoc in se quod illi sentit displicere condemnat. Recepta ergo justitia sua dicit homo iste: Peccavi. Et notandum quod praemittitur: Respicit homines; et tunc deinde subjungitur: Et dicet, Peccavi. Ideo enim nonnulli peccasse se nesciunt, quia homines non attendunt. Nam si considerarent homines, citius agnoscerent quantum peccando infra homines cecidissent. Et quamvis Scriptura sacra aliquando homines ponere soleat humana sapientes, sicut ait Apostolus: Cum enim sit inter vos zelus et contentio, nonne carnales estis (I Cor. III, 3)? et paulo post subjicit, dicens: Nonne homines estis? nonnunquam tamen homines dicit eos quos a bestiis ratio distinguit, id est quos non atteri bestiali passionum motu demonstrat. Quibus per prophetam Dominus dicit: Vos autem greges pascuae meae homines estis (Ezech.

XXXIV, 31), quia illos nimirum Dominus pascit, quos voluptas carnis jumentorum more non afficit. At contra hi qui carnali affectioni succumbunt, non jam homines, sed jumenta nominantur, sicut de quibusdam in peccato suo morientibus per prophetam dicitur: Computruerunt jumenta in stercore suo (Joel. I, 17). Jumenta quippe in stercore suo computrescere est carnales homines in fetore luxuriae vitam finire. Non enim esse homines, sed jumenta declarantur, de quibus per prophetam dicitur: Unusquisque ad uxorem proximi sui hinniebat (Jerem. V, 8). Et de quibus propheta alius dicit: Ut carnes asinorum, carnes eorum; et fluxus equorum, fluxus eorum (Ezech. XXIII, 20). Unde et per David dicitur: Homo cum in honore esset, non intellexit, comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis (Psal. XLVIII, 13). Cum ergo vocentur homines hi qui justitiae ratione suffulti sunt, et irrationabilia jumenta nominentur hi qui carnali delectationi deserviunt, recte de hoc poenitente dicitur: Respiciet homines, et dicet: Peccavi. [Vet. IX.] Ac si dicatur: Sanctorum virorum exempla conspicit, atque eorum comparatione se pensans, iniquum se esse deprehendit. Qui enim plenissime intelligere appetit qualis est, tales nimirum debet conspicere qualis non est ut ex bonorum forma metiatur, quanto ipse deserto bono deformis est. Ex his quippe quibus plenissime bona adsunt, perpendit recte, quae sibi minus sunt, atque in illorum pulchritudine conspicit foeditatem suam, quam in semetipso et potest perpeti, et sentire non potest. Lucem namque debet conspicere, qui vult de tenebris judicare, ut in illa videat quid de tenebris aestimet, per quas videre praepeditur. Peccator namque si incognita vita justorum semetipsum conspicit, peccatorem se nullatenus comprehendit. Videre enim se non potest, quia, fulgorem lucis nesciens, cum semetipsum conspicit, quid aliud quam tenebras attendit? Justorum ergo debemus vitam conspicere, ut subtiliter deprehendamus nostram. Illorum videlicet species, quasi quaedam formanobis imitanda proponitur. 767 16. Justi libri sunt, ex

quibus judicabimur.Viva lectio est vita bonorum; unde et non immerito iidem justi in sacro eloquio libri nominantur, sicut scriptum est: Libri aperti sunt, et alius liber apertus est, qui est vitae, et judicati sunt mortui ex his quae scripta erant in libris (Apoc. XX, 12). Liber namque vitae est ipsa visio advenientis judicis. In quo quasi scriptum est omne mandatum, quia quisquis eum viderit, mox, teste conscientia, quidquid non fecit intelligit. Libri etiam aperti referuntur, quia justorum tunc vita conspicitur, in quibus mandata coelestia opere impressa cernuntur. Et judicati sunt mortui ex his quae scripta erant in libris, quia in ostensa vita justorum, quasi in expansione librorum legunt bonum quod agere ipsi noluerunt, atque ex eorum qui fecerunt comparatione damnantur. Ne ergo unusquisque tunc videns eos quod non fecit defleat, nunc in eis quod imitetur attendat. Quod quidem facere electi non cessant. Meliorum namque vitam considerant, et deterioris usus conversationem mutant. [Vet. X.] 17. Et lilia inter quae pasci debemus. Unde sponsi voce sanctae Ecclesiae in Canticis canticorum dicitur: Duo ubera tua sicut duo hinnuli capreae gemelli, qui pascuntur in liliis, donec aspiret dies, et inclinentur umbrae (Cant. IV, 5). Quae enim sunt duo ubera, nisi ex Judaea ac gentilitate veniens uterque populus, qui in sanctae Ecclesiae corpore per intentionem sapientiae arcano est cordis infixus? Ex quo populo hi qui electi sunt idcirco capreae hinnulis comparantur, quia per humilitatem quidem parvos sese ac peccatores intelligunt, sed eis per charitatem currentibus, si qua obstacula de impedimento temporalitatis obviant, transeunt, et datis contemplationis saltibus, ad superna conscendunt. Qui ut haec agant praecedentium sanctorum exempla conspiciunt. Unde et in liliis pasci referuntur. Quid enim per lilia, nisi illorum vita declaratur, qui veraciter dicunt: Christi bonus odor sumus Deo (II Cor. II, 15)? Electi ergo ut assequi summa praevaleant, conspecta odorifera et candida justorum vita, satiantur. Jam quidem videre Dominum sitiunt, jam de ejus contemplatione satiari

charitatis aestibus inardescunt. Sed quia in hac vita positi necdum valent, per praecedentium interim Patrum exempla pascuntur. Unde et apte illic tempus de ipso liliorum pastu definitur, dum dicitur: Donec aspiret dies, et inclinentur umbrae. Tandiu quippe refici justorum exemplis indigemus, donec praesentis mortalitatis umbras, aeterno die aspirante, transeamus. Cum enim hujus temporalitatis umbra, transacta hac mortalitate, fuerit inclinata, quia ipsius diei internum lumen cernimus, nequaquam jam appetimus ut ad amorem ejus per aliorum exempla flagremus. Nunc autem quia necdum eum intueri possumus, summopere necesse est ut eorum qui illum perfecte secuti sunt conspectis actionibus incitemur. Intueamur ergo quam pulchra est agilitas sequentium, et videamus quam turpis sit nebetudo pigrorum. Statim namque, ut bene agentium gesta respicimus, nosmetipsos confusione intima ulciscente judicamus: mox verecundia mentem concutit, mox juste saeviens reatus addicit; et vehementer hoc etiam displicet, quod adhuc fortasse turpiter libet. 18. Justus templum Dei est, ex cujus conspectu de iniquitatibus nostris confundimur. Unde bene per Ezechielem dicitur: Fili hominis, 768 ostende domui Israel templum, ut confundantur ab iniquitatibus suis, et metiantur fabricam, et erubescant ex omnibus quae fecerunt (Ezech. XLIII, 10). Templum quippe Dei filiis Israel ad confusionem ostenditur, quando uniuscujusque justi anima, quam inspirando Deus inhabitat, quanta sanctitate fulgeat, ad confusionem suam peccatoribus demonstratur, ut in illa bonum quod negligunt videant, et in seipsis malum quod operantur erubescant. Metiri vero fabricam est pensare subtiliter justorum vitam. Sed dum metitur fabricam, necesse est ut ex cunctis quae fecimus erubescamus, quia bonorum vitam quanto subtilius pensando discutimus, tanto severius in nobis omnia inique gesta reprobamus. Bene autem prophetae dicitur ut ostendat templum. Quia enim justorum rectitudinem considerare peccator dissimulat, saltem hanc ex voce praedicantis agnoscat. Templum quippe peccatoribus ostendere est sponte

sua considerare nolentibus rectorum opera narrare. Qui itaque, sicut diximus, perduci ad summa desiderant, semper necesse est ut meliorum provectibus intendant, quatenus tanto districtius in se culpas judicent, quanto in illis altius quod admirentur vident. 19. Ipsi justi ex aliorum sanctorum consideratione proficiunt. Sed quid ista de peccantibus dicimus, cum ipsos quoque operatores justitiae tanta provehi dispensatione videamus (I Cor. XII, 8, 9, 10 et 11)? Alius namque donum scientiae accipit, et tamen ad virtutem mirae abstinentiae non pertingit. Alius magna abstinentiae virtute accingitur, nec tamen in summa scientiae contemplatione dilatatur. Alius per prophetiae spiritum valet omnia ventura praenoscere, sed tamen per curationis gratiam non valet praesentis molestiae mala sublevare. Alius per curationis gratiam mala praesentis molestiae sublevat, sed tamen quia prophetiae spiritum non habet, quid sequatur ignorat. Alius indigentibus multa jam propria largiri potest, sed tamen injuste agentibus obviare libere non potest. Alius injuste agentibus audacter pro Deo obviat, sed tamen indigentibus quae habet tribuere omnia recusat. Alius jam et ab otioso se sermone restringens, linguae lasciviam superat, sed tamen adhuc insurgentes irae stimulos perfecte non calcat. Alius insurgentem iram jam perfecte edomat, sed tamen adhuc linguam in laetitiam relaxat. Quid est hoc, quod iste eo bono indiget quo alius pollet; et ille, cum multis polleat, abunde aliis bonum adesse considerat quod sibi deesse suspirat, nisi quod mira nobiscum dispensatione agitur, ut per hoc quod alter habet, et iste non habet, unus altero melior ostendatur, quatenus tanto ardentius ad humilitatem quisque proficiat, quanto ex bonis quae non habet inferiorem se habentibus pensat? Sicque fit ut dum ille in isto, atque hic in illo respicit quod admiretur, distincta bona et ab altitudine elationis reprimant, et ad studium profectus accendant. Magna namque sollicitudine ad curam nostrae meliorationis accingimur, quando id virtutis in aliis cernimus quod non habemus. Unde Ezechiel propheta, cum volantia animalia descripsisset,

adjunxit: Et audivi post me vocem commotionis magnae: Benedicta gloria Domini de loco sancto suo, et vocem alarum animalium percutientium 769 alteram ad alteram (Ezech. III, 12). Quid namque alas animalium, nisi virtutes debemus sentire sanctorum? Qui dum terrena despiciunt, ad coelestia volando sublevantur. [Vet. XI.] Unde recte etiam per Isaiam dicitur: Qui confidunt in Domino, mutabunt fortitudinem, assument pennas ut aquilae (Isai. XL, 31). Volantia itaque animalia alis suis se vicissim feriunt, quia sanctorum mentes in eo quod superna appetunt, consideratis invicem alternis virtutibus excitantur. Ala enim sua me percutit, qui exemplo sanctitatis propriae me ad melius accendit. Et ala mea vicinum animal ferio, si aliquando alteri opus bonum quod imitetur ostendo. 20. Quod exemplo sanctorum apostolorum Pauli et Petri confirmatur. Sed quia sanctorum vitam significari istis animalibus diximus, libet in ipso volatu animalium oculos mentis attollere, et quanta vicissim alarum percussione se excitent, subtili consideratione pensare. Paulus namque, cum caeterorum sanctorum sollicitudinem in praedicatione robustius laborando transcenderet, ut ab elatione se premeret, et vires suas in humilitatis gremio nutriret, crudelitatis suae antiquae non immemor, apostolorum omnium innocentiam contemplatus, ait: Ego enim sum minimus apostolorum, qui non sum dignus vocari apostolus, quia persecutus sum Ecclesiam Dei (I Cor. XV, 9). Et tamen eorumdem omnium apostolorum primus, quasi accepti principatus oblitus, ac si minus ipse aliquid saperet, in Paulo sapientiam miratur, dicens: Sicut et charissimus frater noster Paulus secundum datam sibi sapientiam scripsit vobis, sicut et in omnibus epistolis, loquens in eis de his in quibus sunt quaedam difficilia intellectu (II Petr. III, 15). Ecce Paulus in apostolis miratur innocentiam, ecce apostolorum princeps miratur in Paulo sapientiam. [Vet. XII.] Quid est hoc, nisi quod sancti viri, dum virtutum consideratione vicissim sibi alios praeferunt, volantia animalia alarum percussione se tangunt, ut eo ad volatum se altius

excitent, quo humilius alter in altero quod admiretur videt? Hinc itaque colligendum est quanta debemus sollicitudine meliorum vitam conspicere nos, qui in infimis jacemus, si et hi qui jam tanta sanctitate sublimes sunt, ut per humilitatis gressum ad majora proficiant, adhuc quaerunt in aliis quod imitantes admirentur. 21. Reprobi ad deteriorum exempla semper convertuntur. Sed haec reprobi nesciunt, quia mentis oculos semper in infimis premunt, qui et si quando in viam Domini veniunt, non ad meliorum vestigia, sed ad intuenda semper deteriorum exempla vertuntur. Neque enim eorum vitam considerant, quibus se humiliando postponant, sed quibus superbiendo se praeferant. Deteriores namque respiciunt, quibus meliores se esse gloriantur; et idcirco proficere ad meliora non possunt, quia hoc sibi sufficere aestimant, quod pessimos antecedunt. O miseri, viam pergunt, et in terga respiciunt. Per spem quidem, quasi ante se pedem proferunt, sed per considerationem pravorum hominum post se oculos tendunt. Recti videri appetunt, sed ad inveniendos se tortam regulam sumunt. Si enim semetipsos quales sunt cognoscere appetunt, non deteriorum conspicere, sed meliorum exempla debuerant. Idcirco ergo peccatores se esse non intelligunt, quia homines non attendunt. Nam si homines attenderent quantum 770 peccando distarent a bonis hominibus, invenirent. De hoc ergo poenitente qui idcirco bonorum exempla considerat ut sibimetipsi quantum a bono recessit innotescat bene dicitur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 27. Respiciet homines et dicet: Peccavi et vere deliqui, et ut eram dignus non recepi. 22. Dum se ficte peccatores esse confitentur, de confessione peccati ornari volunt, non humiliari.Peccatores se esse plerumque confitentur etiam qui se peccasse non credunt. Nam saepe contingit ut passim se homines iniquos esse fateantur, sed cum peccata sua veraciter aliis arguentibus audiunt, defendunt se summopere, atque

innocentes videri conantur. Unusquisque ergo cum talis est, si deliquisse se dicit, vere non dicit, quippe qui peccatorem se non ex cordis intimo, sed verbotenus asserit. Quia enim scriptum est: Justus in principio accusator est sui (Prov. XVIII, 17), iste de confessione peccati ornari voluit, non humiliari; per accusationem suam humilis appetiit videri, non esse. Nam si confitendo peccatum esse humilis veraciter appeteret, de perpetratione peccati arguentes se alios non impugnaret. Itaque justus vitam suam judicans per exempla meliorum ex cordis intimo cognoscit se esse quod dicit. Ait enim: Peccavi, et vere deliqui. Atque de eo ipso quod tolerat flagello subjungit: Et ut eram dignus non recepi. 23. Qui pro peccatis flagellatur, minus se percussum quam mereatur, agnoscat. Paena nos interrogat, si vere culpam agnoscamus. Unusquisque enim in flagello positus minus adhuc peccata sua considerat, si vel tantum vel amplius se percussum quam merebatur existimat. Iste autem, quia quanto majorum exempla considerat, tanto districtiori examinatione se pensat, minus se percussum quam merebatur agnoscit, quia in illorum justitia conspicit quam gravis sibi culpa fuerit quod erravit; et idcirco hoc quod patitur districtum esse non sentit, quia districte novit pensare quod fecit. Valde autem facile est ut peccatorem se quisque, cum nihil pro peccato suo patitur fateatur. Secure videlicet iniquos nos dicimus, cum vindictam nullam de iniquitate sentimus. Nam peccatores nos quidem in tranquillitate loquimur, sed cum de peccatis ipsis flagello interveniente corripimur, murmuramus. Poena ergo nos interrogat, si veraciter cognoscimus culpam. Vir itaque justus, quia culpam suam districte considerat, etiam in flagello positus dicat: Et ut dignus eram non recepi. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 28. Liberavit enim animam suam, ne pergeret in interitum. 24. Gratiae praevenientis et liberi arbitrii subsequentis concordia. Quia

praeveniente divina gratia in operatione bona, nostrum liberum arbitrium sequitur, nosmetipsos liberare dicimur, qui liberanti nos Domino consentimus. Unde Paulus, cum diceret: Abundantius illis omnibus laboravi (I Cor. XV, 10), ne labores suos sibi tribuisse videretur, illico adjunxit: Non autem ego, sed gratia Dei mecum. Quia enim praevenientem Dei gratiam in se per liberum arbitrium fuerat subsecutus, apte subjungit, Mecum: ut et divino muneri non esset ingratus, et tamen a merito liberi arbitrii non remaneret extraneus. De hoc autem qui liberatori suo semetipsum cognoscendo consensit, recte dicit: Liberavit animam suam, ne pergeret in interitum. Sequitur: IBID. Sed vivens lucem videret. Lucem scilicet veritatis quam corde mortuus videre non posset. Vel certe, quia Dominus dixit: Ego sum lux mundi (Joan. VIII, 12), videbunt lucem etiam mortui, 771 quando omnes injusti eum venire ad judicium in humanitatis forma conspexerint. Sed vivens tunc lucem respicit, qui liberis oculis cordis in forma eum divinitatis attendit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XI.

[Rec. VII]. VERS. 29. Haec omnia operatur Deus tribus vicibus per singulos. 25. Tribus vicibus electi prius maerore, posterius gaudio affici solent. De hoc tentato flagellatoque homine dictum superius fuerat: Abominabilis ei fit in vita sua panis; et appropinquavit corruptioni anima ejus, et vita illius mortiferis. Inferius vero subnexum est: Deprecabitur Deum, et placabilis ei erit; et videbit faciem ejus in jubilo, et liberavit animam suam, ne pergeret in interitum, sed vivens lucem videret. In his itaque jam collectis coacervatisque sententiis, et supra moeror amaritudinis, et infra subjuncta est laetitia securitatis; moxque post haec dicitur: Haec omnia operatur Deus tribus vicibus per singulos. Ac si diceret: Quod semel de uno dixi, hoc tribus vicibus per singulos agitur. Sed solerter intuendum est quae tres istae vices sint quibus unusquisque homo anxietate moeroris

afficitur, et post moerorem protinus ad securitatem laetitiae revocatur. Id enim superius, sicut jam dixi, narraverat, quod et gravis prius moeror afficit, et magna postmodum laetitia attollit. Igitur si vigilanter intendimus, has tres vices moeroris et laetitiae in uniuscujusque electi animo istis alternari modis invenimus, id est conversione, tentatione et morte. 26. 1. In conversione, cum hinc spiritus vocat, hinc caro revocat. In prima quippe quam diximus conversionis vice gravis moeror est, cum sua unusquisque peccata considerans, curarum saecularium vult compedes rumpere, et viam Dei per spatium securae conversationis ambulare; desideriorum temporalium onus grave abjicere, et leve jugum Domini libera servitute portare. Cogitanti enim ista occurrit illa familiaris sua delectatio carnalis, quae inveterata dudum, quanto eum diutius tenuit, tanto arctius astringit, atque a se tardius abire permittit. Et quis ibi moeror, quae anxietas cordis, quando hinc spiritus vocat, hinc caro revocat; hinc amor novae conversationis invitat, hinc usus vetustae perversitatis impugnat; hinc desiderio ad coelestem patriam flagrat, et hinc in semetipso carnalem concupiscentiam tolerat, quae eum etiam aliquo modo invitum delectat? Recte ergo de hoc amarescente homine dici potest: Abominabilis ei fit in vita sua panis; et appropinquavit corruptioni anima ejus, et vita illius mortiferis. Sed quia divina gratia diu nos istis difficultatibus affici non permittit, ruptis peccatorum nostrorum vinculis citius nos ad libertatem novae conversationis consolando perducit, et praecedentem tristitiam subsequens laetitia refovet; ita ut conversi uniuscujusque animus eo magis ad votum suum perveniendo gaudeat, quo magis se pro illo meminit laborando doluisse. Fit cordi immensa laetitia, quia ei quem desiderat, jam per spem securitatis propinquat, ut recte de hoc dici debeat: Deprecabitur Deum, et placabilis ei erit; et videbit faciem ejus in jubilo. Vel certe: Liberavit animam suam ne pergeret in interitum, sed vivens lucem videret. 27. 2. In tentationum exercitatione. Acriores sunt post conversionem tentationum stimuli. At ne conversus quisque jam sanctum se

esse credat, et quem moeroris pugna superare non valuit, ipsa postmodum securitas sternat, dispensante Deo 772 permittitur ut post conversionem suam tentationum stimulis fatigetur. Jam quidem per conversionem Rubrum mare transitum est; sed adhuc in eremo vitae praesentis ante faciem hostes occurrunt. Jam peccata praeterita velut exstinctos Aegyptios post terga relinquimus; sed adhuc nocentia vitia, quasi alii hostes obviant, ut ad terram promissionis pergentibus coeptum iter intercludant. Jam priores culpae, velut insequentes adversarii, sola divina virtute prostratae sunt, sed tentationum stimuli, quasi hostes alii contra faciem veniunt, qui et cum nostro labore superentur. Conversio videlicet securitatem parit, mater autem negligentiae solet esse securitas. Ne ergo securitas negligentiam generet, scriptum est: Fili, accedens ad servitutem Dei, sta in justitia et timore, et praepara animam tuam ad tentationem (Eccli. II, 1). Non enim ait, ad requiem, sed ad tentationem, quia hostis noster adhuc in hac vita nos positos, quanto magis nos sibi rebellare conspicit, tanto amplius expugnare contendit. Eos enim pulsare negligit, quos quieto jure possidere se sentit. Contra nos vero eo vehementius incitatur, quo ex corde nostro quasi ex jure propriae habitationis expellitur. Hoc enim in seipso Dominus sub quadam dispensatione figuravit (Matth. IV, 1), qui diabolum non nisi post baptisma se tentare permisit, ut signum nobis quoddam futurae conversionis innueret, quod membra ejus postquam ad Deum proficerent, tunc acriores tentationum insidias tolerarent. Post primam igitur vicem moeroris atque laetitiae, quam unusquisque per studium conversionis agnoscit, haec secunda suboritur, quia ne securitatis negligentia dissolvatur, impulsu tentationis afficitur. Et quidem quisque in ipso conversionis initio magna plerumque excipitur dulcedine consolationis, sed durum laborem postmodum experitur probationis. [Vet. XIII.] 28. Tres conversionis gradus. Tres quippe modi sunt conversorum, inchoatio, medietas, atque perfectio. In inchoatione autem inveniunt blandimenta dulcedinis, in medio quoque

tempore certamina tentationis, ad extremum vero perfectionem plenitudinis. Prius ergo illos dulcia suscipiunt, quae consolentur; postmodum amara, quae exerceant; et tunc demum suavia atque sublimia, quae confirment. Nam et sponsam suam vir quisque prius dulcibus blandimentis fovet, quam tamen jam conjunctam asperis increpationibus probat, probatam vero securis cogitationibus possidet. Unde et plebs Israelitica, cum despondente se Deo ad sacras mentis nuptias ex Aegypto vocaretur, quasi arrharum vice prius accepit blandimenta signorum; conjuncta autem, probationibus exercetur in eremo; probata vero, in repromissionis terra virtutis plenitudine confirmatur. Ante igitur in miraculis degustavit quod appeteret, postmodum in labore tentata est si custodire noverit quod gustasset; ad extremum quoque plenius accipere meruit, quod laboribus probata custodivit. Ita ergo vitam uniuscujusque conversi, et inchoatio blanda permulcet, et aspera medietas probat, et plena post perfectio roborat. 29. Initia conversionis pacatissima excipiunt graves tentationes. Nam saepe conversi quique in ipso adhuc aditu inchoationis suae, vel tranquillitatem pacatissimam carnis, vel dona prophetiae, vel praedicamenta doctrinae, 773 vel signorum miracula, vel gratiam curationis accipiunt (I Cor. XII, 10); post haec autem duris tentationum probationibus fatigantur, a quibus tentationibus adhuc, cum inciperent, valde liberos se esse crediderunt. Quod divinae gratiae dispensatione agitur, ne in inchoatione sua tentationum asperitate tangantur, quia si eorum initia amaritudo tentationis exciperet, tam facile ad ea quae reliquerant redirent quam nec longius discesserant; nam contemptis prius vitiis, quasi juxta positis replicarentur [Quasi reimplicarentur, seu iterum implicarentur]. Unde et scriptum est: Cum emisisset Pharao populum, non eos duxit Dominus per viam terrae Philisthiim, quae vicina est, reputans ne forte poeniteret eum, si vidisset adversum se bella consurgere, et reverteretur in Aegyptum (Exod. XIII, 17). Ex Aegypto itaque exeuntibus e vicino bello subtrahuntur, quia derelinquentibus saeculum qnaedam prius

tranquillitas ostenditur, ne in ipsa sua teneritudine atque inchoatione turbati, ad hoc territi redeant quod evaserunt. Prius ergo suavitatem securitatis sentiunt, prius pacis quiete nutriuntur; post cognitam vero dulcedinem, tanto jam tolerabilius tentationum certamina sustinent, quanto in Deo altius cognovere quod ament. Unde et Petrus prius in montem ducitur, prius claritatem transfigurationis Dominicae contemplatur (Marc. IX, 1), et tunc demum tentari ancilla interrogante permittitur (Matth. XXVI, 70), ut per tentationem factus sibi ex infirmitate conscius, ad illud flendo et amando recurreret quod vidisset; et cum eum timoris unda in peccati pelagus raperet (Matth. XIV, 24), esset prioris dulcedinis anchora quae retineret. Saepe autem tam diutina sunt tentationum certamina, quam longa inchoationum fuerant blandimenta. Saepe vero majus datur in inchoatione dulcedinis, minus autem in labore probationis. Saepe minus in inchoatione dulcedinis, majus in labore probationis. Nunquam vero laborem tentationis dispar sequitur perfectio firmitatis, quia juxta summam certaminis remuneratur quisque plenitudine perfectionis. Plerumque autem in eo quisque conversus labitur, quod dum quibusdam donis gratiae, dulcedine inchoationis excipitur, confirmationem accepisse se perfectionis arbitratur, et plenitudinis consummationem aestimat, quae adhuc blandimenta esse inchoationis ignorat. Unde fit ut dum subita tentationis procella tangitur, despectum se Deo et perditum suspicetur. Qui si inchoationi suae non passim crederet, adhuc in prosperis positus, mentem ad adversa praepararet, et vitiis venientibus postmodum tam firmius resisteret quam ea etiam sagacius praevidisset. Quae quidem tranquillius si praevidet tolerat. Eorum tamen omnino certamina, etiamsi praevideat, non declinat, quia cursus nostri itineris nequaquam peragitur sine pulvere tentationis. 30. Cur tentationes post conversionem acriores quam ante videantur. Plerumque autem conversus quisque talibus tentationum stimulis agitatur, qualibus ante conversionis gratiam nunquam pulsatum se esse reminiscitur, non quia tunc

haec eadem radix tentationis deerat, sed quia non apparebat. [Vet. XIV.] Humanus quippe animus multis cogitationibus occupatus, saepe sibimetipsi aliquo modo manet incognitus, ut omnino quod tolerat nesciat, quia dum per multa 774 spargitur, ab interna sui cognitione removetur. Si autem Deo vacare appetat, et ramos multimodae cogitationis abscidat, tunc libere conspicit, quod de intima radice carnis procedit. Carduus namque si nascatur in via, itinerantium pedibus teritur, atque ipso usu transeuntium ejus superficies ne appareat confricatur. Sed quamvis desuper fruticantes spinae non appareant, subter tamen radix occulta perdurat. Si autem eum transeuntium pedes terere et calcare cessaverint, mox in superficiem surgendo progreditur, et per spinam prodit in publicum quidquid in radice vivebat occultum. Ita et in corde saecularium saepe occulta quaedam tentationum radix non facile apparet exsurgere, quia velut in via actionum sita transeuntium teritur pede cogitationum, et per innumeras curas quasi multis itinerantibus premitur, ne videatur. Si autem per conversionis gratiam a via cordis curarum turba removetur, ut nulla actionum insolentia conterat, nullus cogitationum tumultus premat, tunc quod occultum latebat agnoscitur, tunc de radice vitiorum pungit libere spina tentationum. Contra quam bene viventis manu agitur ut, in quantum potest fieri, non tegatur occulta, sed radicitus evellatur. Quod donec fiat, uniuscujusque conversi animum ita haec spina conturbat, ut saepe percussione subita pene superari se sentiat, ejusque vulnus medullitus inflictum exitialiter pertimescat. [Vet. XV.] 31. Tentationes, cum ob assiduitatem despiciuntur, periculosae. Deus tentationibus probat, non reprobat. Plerumque vero ipsi tentationum stimuli, dum in usum veniunt, dilatantur, et non quidem acriores, sed longiores existunt. Minus autem dolent, sed magis inficiunt, quia dum menti diutius adhaerent, tanto fiunt minus pavendi, quanto magis assueti. Inter haec ergo deprehensa mens huc illucque distenditur, et multiplicibus tentationum aestibus dissipatur, et saepe hinc inde provocata, cui tentanti vitio obviet,

vel quod primum impugnet, ignorat. Unde plerumque evenit ut dum nimis insurgentia vitia cruciant, dum repugnantis animum jamjamque quasi in lapsum desperationis inclinant, conversus quisque hanc ipsam sublimitatis viam, quam sibi ad remedium eligit, expavescat, et quasi in summo eductus titubat, qui in imo solidius stabat. Ita vero circumfrementibus tentationum motibus angustatur, ut recte de eo dici debeat: Abominabilis ei fit in vita sua panis, et animae illius cibus ante desiderabilis. Vel certe: Appropinquavit corruptioni anima ejus, et vita illius mortiferis. Sed quia misericors Deus probari nos permittit tentationibus, non reprobari, sicut scriptum est: Fidelis autem Deus, qui non patitur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet cum tentatione etiam proventum, ut possitis sustinere (I Cor. X, 13), citius nobis consolationis ope succurrit, et surgentes tentationum stimulos mitigat, impugnantesque se cogitationum motus interna pace tranquillat. Moxque anima immensam de spe coelesti laetitiam percipit, dum devictum malum respicit, quod toleravit, ut jure de hoc tentato liberatoque homine dici debeat: Videbit faciem ejus in jubilo; et, liberavit animam suam, ne pergeret in interitum, sed vivens lucem videret. Istis itaque duabus vicibus, id est conversionis et probationis, per moerorem 775 laetitiamque transactis, superest tertia, cujus et moerorem adhuc sustineat, et gaudia consequatur. [Vet. XVI.] 32. Tertia vice justi ex pavore mortis et timore extremi judicii auxiliantur. Post conversionis namque certamina, post probationis aerumnam, restat adhuc dura tentatio, quia venire non potest ad petrectae gaudia libertatis, nisi prius debitum solverit humanae conditionis. Conversus autem quisque sibi caute sollicitus, tacite secum considerare non cessat, aeternus judex quam districtus adveniat, suumque terminum quotidie prospicit, et ante severitatem tantae justitiae quas rationes vitae suae sit positurus attendit. Etsi cuncta prava opera, quae intelligere potuit, devitavit, venturus tamen coram districto judice, illa magis quae in semetipso non intelligit, pertimescit. Quis enim considerare valeat quanta mala per

momenta temporum ipsis inconstantibus cogitationum motibus perpetramus? Facile est enim opera perversa vitare, sed nimis difficile est ab illicita cogitatione cor tergere. Et tamen scriptum est: Vae vobis qui cogitatis inutile (Mich. II, 1). Et rursum: In die cum judicabit Dominus occulta hominum (Rom. II, 16). Qui etiam praemisit: Inter se invicem cogitationum accusantium, aut etiam defendentium (Ibid., 15). Et rursum: Labia dolosa in corde, et corde locuti sunt mala (Psal. XI, 3). Et rursum: Etenim in corde iniquitates operamini in terra (Psal. LVII, 3). Humana autem anima semel aeternitatis statum deserens, ad fluxum temporalitatis delapsa, hanc mutabilitatem alternantium motionum, quam dum caderet volens appetiit, dum conatur surgere, cogitur invita tolerare. Inde quippe punita est unde delectata, quia inde conversa habet laborem certaminis, unde perversa appetiit gaudium voluptatis. [Vet. XVII.] Saepe ergo electis etiam nolentibus in cogitatione subrepitur quod in se quidem solerter inspiciunt, et ante Dei oculos quanti sit reatus attendunt; et cum de his omnibus semper judicia districta pertimescant, tunc tamen haec vehementer metuunt, cum ad solvendum humanae conditionis debitum venientes, districto judici appropinquare se cernunt. Et fit tanto timor acrior, quanto et retributio aeterna vicinior. Ante oculos autem cordis nihil inane tunc transvolat de phantasmate cogitationis, quia subductis e medio omnibus, se et illum tantummodo considerant, cui appropinquant. Crescit pavor vicina retributione justitiae, et urgente solutione carnis, quanto magis districtum judicium jamjamque quasi tangitur, tanto vehementius formidatur. Et si ea quae sciunt nunquam se praetermisisse meminerunt, formidant tamen illa quae nesciunt, quia videlicet semetipsos dijudicare et comprehendere omnino non possunt, atque urgente exitu, subtiliori terrentur metu. Unde Redemptor noster solutioni carnis appropinquans, et membrorum suorum servans speciem, factus in agonia, coepit prolixius orare (Luc. XXII, 44). Quid enim pro se ille cum in agonia esset peteret, qui in terris positus

coelestia cum potestate tribuebat? Sed appropinquante morte, nostrae mentis in se certamen expressit, qui vim quamdam terroris ac formidinis patimur, cum per solutionem carnis aeterno propinquamus judicio. Neque enim tunc cujuslibet anima immerito terretur, quando post pusillum hoc invenit, quod in aeternum mutare non possit. [Vet. XVIII.] 33. Quid imminente morte sit formidandum. Consideramus quippe quod viam vitae praesentis 776 nequaquam sine culpa transire potuimus, consideramus etiam quia nec hoc quidem sine aliquo reatu nostro est, quod laudabiliter gessimus, si remota pietate judicemur. Quis enim nostrum vitam praecedentium patrum valeat vel superare, vel assequi? Et tamen David dicit: Ne intres in judicium cum servo tuo, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens (Psal. CXLII, 2). Paulus cum diceret: Nihil mihi conscius sum, caute subjunxit: Sed non in hoc justificatus sum (I Cor. IV, 4). Jacobus dicit: In multis enim offendimus omnes (Jac. III, 2). Joannes dicit: Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus, et veritas in nobis non est (I Joan. I, 8). Quid ergo facient tabulae, si tremunt columnae? Aut quomodo virgulta immobilia stabunt, si hujus pavoris turbine etiam cedri quatiuntur. Solutioni ergo carnis appropinquans, nonnunquam terrore vindictae etiam justi anima turbatur. Cui et si quid tranquillum in hac vita sapere potuit, mortis articulo interveniente concutitur, ut jure dici debeat: Abominabilis fit ei panis in vita sua, et animae ejus cibus ante desiderabilis. Vel certe propter pavoris poenam hoc, quod illic subditur: Appropinquavit corruptioni anima ejus, et vita illius mortiferis. 34. Justorum animae hoc pavore a levibus culpis purgantur. Sed quia justorum animae a levibus quibusque contagiis ipso saepe mortis pavore purgantur, et aeternae retributionis gaudia jam ab ipsa carnis solutione percipiunt, plerumque vero contemplatione quadam retributionis internae etiam priusquam carne exspolientur hilarescunt, et dum vetustatis debitum solvunt, novi jam muneris laetitia perfruuntur, recte dicitur: Videbit

faciem ejus in jubilo. Vel certe: Liberavit animam suam, ne pergeret in interitum, sed vivens lucem videret. Justi itaque anima in jubilo faciem Dei conspicit, quia tantum de laetitia interna percipit, quantum capere vel assumpta vix possit. Ibi igitur lucem vivens videt, quia spiritalem oculum in radios aeterni solis infigit. Ibi lucem vivens videt, quia omni jam mutabilitatis vicissitudine atque obumbratione calcata, veritati aeternitatis inhaeret; eique inhaerendo quem cernit, ad similitudinem incommutabilitatis assurgit, atque in semetipsam auctoris sui inconversibilem speciem dum respicit assumit. Quae enim ad mutabilitatem per semetipsam lapsa est, ad immutabilitatis statum immutabilitatem videndo formatur. Igitur Eliu de afflicto hoc liberatoque homine, quia prius moeroris amaritudinem et postmodum gaudia consolationis expressit, apte subjunxit: Haec omnia operatur Deus tribus vicibus per singulos, videlicet conversionis, probationis, et mortis, quia per tria haec, et duris primum stimulis moeroris afficitur, et magnis postmodum securitatis gaudiis refovetur. Et quia electi uniuscujusque mens iisdem tribus vicibus, id est vel labore conversionis, vel tentatione probationis, vel formidine solutionis atteritur, atque ipsa attritione purgata liberatur, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XII [Vet. XIX].

VERS. 30. Ut revocet animas eorum a corruptione, et illuminet luce viventium. 35. Lux praesens, morientium est; lux aeterna, viventium. Lux quippe morientium est, quam corporeis oculis cernimus. Qui autem adhuc huic mundo vivunt, luce morientium tenebrescunt. Illuminantur autem luce viventium, qui, despecto temporali lumine, ad splendorem internae claritatis recurrunt, 777 ut ibi vivant, ubi verum lumen sentiendo videant, ubi non aliud lumen, atque aliud vita, sed ubi ipsa lux vita sit, ubi sic nos lux exterius circumscribat, ut interius impleat; sic interius impleat, ut incircumscripta exterius circumscribat. Illuminantur ergo hac luce

viventium, quam tanto tunc subtilius conspiciunt, quanto nunc ad illam purius vivunt. 36. Superbi veris et mysticis inania et tumida solent permiscere. Magna Eliu ac valde fortia protulit, sed hoc unusquisque arrogans habere proprium solet, quod dum vera ac mystica loquitur, subito per tumorem cordis quaedam inania et superba permiscet. Foris enim placere appetit in hoc quod veraciter sentit; et inde mox inanescit a vero, unde per elationis typum recedit ab intimo. Quia enim approbari doctus exterius quaerit, intus plenitudinem qua docebatur amittit. Unde et Eliu, quem tenere arrogantium typum saepe jam diximus, postquam multa sapientiae profunda digessit, subito post easdem sententias veraces ac mysticas fastu scientiae inflatus extollitur, cujus mox inflationis merito ejus sensus ad inania verba derivatur. Nam subdidit, dicens:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 31-33. Attende, Job, et audi me, et tace dum ego loquor. Si autem habes quod loquaris, responde mihi: loquere, volo enim te apparere justum. Quod si non habes, audi me; tace, et docebo te sapientiam. 37. Quando aliquid humiliter loquuntur, diu in ejusdem humilitatis specie non perseverant. Qualem se apud se habeat hac locutione manifestat, qua dicit: Attende, Job, et audi me, et tace dum ego loquor. Immensa enim superbia est, a seniore sibi reverentiam exigere, et silentium imperare meliori se. [Vet. XX.] Quia autem praedicatores justi dum quoslibet corripiunt, saepe per humilitatis gratiam ad cogitationum suarum intima revertuntur, atque in eo ipso quod corripiunt, ne quid fortasse fallantur exquirunt, correptisque licentiam tribuunt ut si quid pro seipsis justius sentiant fateantur, hoc nonnunquam etiam arrogantes imitari appetunt. Paulisper enim in verbis elatione postposita, quasi eorum quos corripiunt, si forte reperire potuerint, justitiam quaerunt, non quia ita sentiunt, sed quia ornari per humilitatis speciem concupiscunt. Metuunt enim ne superbi ac tumidi, quia sunt, esse

videantur. Unde Eliu statim subdidit, dicens: Si autem habes quod loquaris, responde mihi; loquere, volo enim te apparere justum. Sed quia haec ex corde non protulit, audire quod quaesierat non exspectavit. Nam illico subjunxit: Quod si non habes, audi me; tace, et docebo te sapientiam. Qui enim veraciter quaerunt audire quod justum est, aequanimiter exspectant audire quod quaerunt. Eliu autem, quia veraciter requisitionis verba non protulit, dici quod quaesierat non permisit, sed mox quod intrinsecus gestabat erupit, qualemque se in oculis suis habebat ostendit, dicens: Tace, et docebo te sapientiam. Arrogantes enim viri quando aliquid humiliter sonant, diu in ejusdem humilitatis specie non perdurant. Cum fortasse quaerunt ut audiant, mox loquendo obviant ne doceantur, quia superficiem vocis quam protulerant citius ostentationis intentio 778 comprimit, quae ex radice cordis exsurgit, atque eamdem humilitatis formam specie tenus sumptam eo celerius probant quia aliena est, quo illam diutius tenere non possunt. Ecce Eliu justitiam cum requirit ut discat, promittit quia doceat. Ecce quasi requirendo quod justum est aliquid planum sonuerat lingua; sed mox celare non potuit hoc quod altum tumebat conscientia. Nam repente subjunxit: Tace, et docebo te sapientiam. Quia vero arrogantes omnes in eo quod proferunt typho superbiae inflantur, et, velut in alto positi sic doctorum speciem sumunt ac si eorum verba dignatione quadam super indignos homines coelitus effundantur, bene a scriptore hujus historiae versus interponitur, quo dicatur:

CAPUT XIV [Vet.

XXI, Rec. VIII]. CAP. XXXIV, VERS. 1.Pronuntians quoque Eliu, etiam haec locutus est. 38. Justi ex radice humilitatis loquuntur; secus iniqui. Quid enim per hujus pronuntiationis vocabulum, nisi inflatio elationis ostenditur, ut verba, quae de alta superbiae radice veniebant, cum quadam quasi altitudine et distinctione procederent. Ita videlicet praedicare omnes

arrogantes solent? Cum quodam enim fastu proferunt hoc quod singulariter intellexisse se credunt; et fortasse tunc humilitatem praedicant, cum per elationis typhum exempla superbiae ostentant. Unde fit ut eorum praedicatio concors sibi manere non possit, quia id quod rectum loquentes seminant, perverse tumentes impugnant. Humilibus namque auditoribus verba sua non compatiendo, sed vix dedignando largiuntur. Longe quippe se in altum positos aestimant, et super eosdem auditores suos quasi praecedentes doctrinae respectum vix de summo dignanter inclinant. At contra verba justorum ex radice veniunt humilitatis, ut fructum valeant ferre pietatis: et quidquid salubre potuerint, non tumendo, sed compatiendo subministrant. Per verba quippe charitatis vel se in auditoribus suis, vel auditores suos in se ita transformant, ac si et illi per istos hoc quod audiunt doceant, et isti per illos hoc quod docendo proferunt discant. Eliu ergo typum arrogantium tenens, et cum pronuntiationis ostentatione inchoans, quid dicat audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 2, 3. Audite, sapientes, verba mea, et eruditi auscultate me. Auris enim verba probat, et guttur escas gustu dijudicat. 39. Superbi doctores non quaerunt auditores suos sapientes efficere, sed suam sapientiam ostentare. Ac si diceret: Sicut nec auris escas, nec guttur verba cognoscit; ita nec stultus quisque sententiam sapientis intelligit. Sapientes ergo atque eruditi audite quod dico, qui potestis ea quae fuerint dicta cognoscere. Videamus igitur quantum tumeat, qui verba sua non nisi a sapientibus audiri decenter existimat. Verus autem sapientiae praedicator dicit: Sapientibus et insipientibus debitor sum (Rom. I, 14). At contra arrogans in praedicatione sua aures tantummodo sapientium exspectat, quia non ideo praedicat ut possit quoslibet sapientes efficere, sed ideo sapientes quaerit, ut possit quod senserit superbiendo monstrare. Sicut enim superius dictum est, non illos

appetit erudire, sed se ostendere; nec intuetur quam justi qui audiunt fiant, sed ipse quam doctus , cum a doctis auditur 779 appareat. [Vet. XXII.] Quia vero praedicationem arrogantium nullus admitteret, si non et aliquid de humilitatis imagine permiscerent, bene Eliu postquam per tumida verba se extulit, rursum quasi ad aequalitatis concordiam condescendit, dicens:

CAPUT XVI VERS.

4. Judicium eligamus nobis, et inter nos videamus quid sit melius. 40. Humilitatem quandoque prae se ferunt, sed fictam. Sed utrum hoc judicium ex humili corde quaesierit, facile cognoscimus, si subsequentia ejus verba pensemus. Sequitur: VERS. 5, 6. Quia dixit Job: Justus sum, et Deus subvertit judicium meum. In judicando enim me mendacium est; et violenta sagitta mea absque ullo peccato. Justos falsorum criminum insimulant. Haec beatum Job dixisse queritur, quae tamen quia minime dixerit, requisita sacrae historiae verba testantur. Sed qui judicium aeque quaesierat, ex culpa quam finxit, protinus sententiam promulgat. Nam sequitur: VERS. 7, 8. Quis est vir, ut est Job, qui bibit subsannationem quasi aquam, qui graditur cum operantibus iniquitatem, et ambulat cum viris impiis? [Rec. IX.] Ecce judicium quaerens judicium protulit, et post allegationem suam nulla beati Job exspectata sententia, eum damnatione dignum ex reproborum societate judicavit. Ait enim: Quis est vir, ut est Job? Ut utique subaudiamus, nullus. Atque subjungit: Qui bibit subsannationem quasi aquam. Aqua autem cum bibitur, ita liquide sumitur, ut ad sorbendum nulla sui pinguedine retardetur. Subsannationem vero ut aquam bibere est Deum sine aliquo obstaculo cogitationis irridere, ut in eo quod superbit lingua vel conscientia, nulla trepidatio contradicat. Haec autem ejus sententia super beatum Job quantum a tramite veritatis exorbitet, illa Domini attestatione cognoscimus, qua ad diabolum dicit: Nunquid considerasti servum meum Job, quod non sit ei similis in terra (Job. I, 8)? Ecce quem Veritas dicit absque comparatione

justum, eum Eliu asserit absque comparatione peccatorem. Sed haec esse propria arrogantium praedicatorum solent, ut etiam afflictos auditores suos magis districte corripere appetant, quam blande refovere. Plus enim student, ut mala objurgando increpent, quam bona laudando confirment. Superiores quippe videri desiderant, et magis gaudent cum eorum animum ira elevat, quam cum charitas exaequat. Semper invenire optant quod increpando rigide feriant. Unde scriptum est: In ore stulti virga superbiae (Prov. XIV, 3), quia videlicet percutere rigide scit, sed compati humiliter nescit. 41. Sancti praedicatores, cum alios correpturi sunt, blandimenta praemittunt. Ut periti medici, prius palpant, postea feriunt.Solent etiam praedicatores justi auditores suos objurgando corripere, solent in eorum vitia districta increpatione saevire. Unde scriptum est: Verba sapientium quasi stimuli, et sicut clavi in altum defixi (Eccl. XII, 11). Recte autem eorum verba clavi vocati sunt, quia culpas delinquentium nesciunt palpare, sed pungere. An Joannis verba clavi non erant, cum dicebat: Progenies viperarum, quis vobis demonstravit fugere ab ira ventura (Matth. III, 7)? An verba Stephani clavi non erant, cum dicebat: Vos 780 semper Spiritui sancto resistitis (Act. VII, 51). An verba Pauli clavi non erant, cum dicebat: O insensati Galatae, quis vos fascinavit (Galat. III, 1)? Et rursum cum Corinthiis diceret: Cum enim sit inter vos zelus et contentio, nonne carnales estis, et secundum hominem ambulatis (I Cor. III, 3)? Sed necesse est ut caute videamus quia praedicatores justi in ipsis quos corrigunt, cum ex parte alia fortasse aliquid bonae operationis inveniunt, ad eadem objurgationis verba cum quanta dispensatione descendunt. Ecce Paulus Corinthios docens, eosque in culpa divisionis aspiciens exorsus est, dicens: Gratias ago Deo meo semper pro vobis, in gratia Dei, quae data est vobis in Christo Jesu, quia in omnibus divites facti estis in illo (I Cor. I, 4). Multum profecto laudavit quos in Christo divites in omnibus dixit. Et ecce adhuc blandimenta multiplicat, dicens: In omni verbo et in omni scientia, sicut testimonium Christi

confirmatum est in vobis (Ibid., 5). Testimonium Christi confirmatum est in vobis, dixit, ac si opere peregissent quod doctrina didicerant. Et mox in laudis consummatione subjunxit: Ita ut nihil vobis desit in ulla gratia, exspectantibus revelationem Domini nostri Jesu Christi. Quaeso te, Paule, istis tot favoribus jam quo tendas insinues. Et ecce paulo post sequitur: Obsecro vos autem, fratres, per misericordiam Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ut idipsum dicatis omnes, et non sint in vobis schismata. Significatum est enim mihi de vobis, fratres mei, ab his qui sunt Chloes, quia contentiones inter vos sunt. (Ibid., 10). De quibus contentionibus paulo post subdidit, dicens: Cum enim sit inter vos zelus et contentio, nonne carnales estis, et secundum hominem ambulatis (I Cor. III, 3)? Ecce quibus laudibus ad aperta correptionis verba descendit; ecce in corde audientium quam blanda favoris manu viam districtae increpationis aperuit. Prius namque superborum brachia studuit per blandimentorum vincula religare, ut postmodum potuisset vulnus superbiae ferro correptionis incidere. Erant profecto in Corinthiis et quae laudari debuissent, erant et quae argui. Peritus itaque medicus prius sana membra, quae circa vulnus erant, laudando palpavit, et postmodum putridum sinum vulneris feriendo transfixit. Habet ergo in sanctis praedicatoribus ad utraque aptum doctrinae regula pondus suum, ut et recta faventes nutriant, et perversa animadvertentes abscindant. [Vet. XXIV, Rec. X.] 42. Aliud est percutere cum justitia stimulat, aliud cum inflat superbia. Quis in correptione servandus modus. Hunc ignorant superbi. Nonnunquam vero etiam praedicatores justi rigide feriunt. Sed aliud est cum justitia stimulat, aliud cum superbia inflat. Justi cum severe corrigunt, internae dulcedinis gratiam non amittunt. Nam saepe pro inquietudine refrenanda pravorum duritiam districti vigoris assumunt, sed intus charitatis igne liquefiunt, atque eorum amore ardent, in quos aspera correptione saeviunt; seque etiam eis intrinsecus in secreto cordis humiliant, quos foris duris animadversionum stimulis quasi despiciendo castigant.

Plerumque autem et non despiciendo despiciunt, et non desperando desperant, ut tanto eos celerius a culpa pavescere ac resilire faciant, quanto jam quasi vicinius mortis foveam ostentant. Saepe etiam quodam decenti moderamine 781 suas culpas coram discipulis indicant, ut illi audientes discant quomodo semetipsos de suis actionibus subtiliter reprehendant. Tanta autem dispensatione se temperant, ut neque cum se erigunt intrinsecus rigidi sint, neque rursum cum se humiliant extrinsecus remissi, quia et in disciplina humilitatem custodiunt, et in humilitate disciplinam. Paulus disciplinam tenuit, cum Corinthiis diceret: Cum enim sit inter vos zelus et contentio, nonne carnales estis, et secundum hominem ambulatis (I Cor. III, 3)? Sed humilitatem in disciplina non perdidit, quia deprecando praemisit, dicens: Obsecro vos, fratres, per misericordiam Dei, ut idipsum dicatis omnes, et non sint in vobis schismata (I Cor. I, 10). Rursum humilitatem tenuit, cum eisdem Corinthiis loquens paulo latius fortasse quam voluerat, semetipsum reprehendit, dicens: Factus sum insipiens (II Cor. XII, 11). Sed disciplinam in hac humilitate non perdidit, quia illico adjunxit: Vos me coegistis. Exemplum magnae humilitatis exhibuit, cum discipulis dixit: Non enim nosmetipsos praedicamus, sed Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, nos autem servos vestros per Christum (II Cor. IV, 5). Sed in hac humilitate disciplinae justitiam non amisit, qui eisdem delinquentibus dicit: Quid vultis, in virga veniam ad vos (I Cor. IV, 21)? et caetera. Sciunt ergo praedicatores sancti utroque moderamine artem magisterii temperare, et cum delinquentium reatus inveniunt, sciunt modo severe corripere, modo humiliter deprecari. Sed cum arrogantes viri eos imitari appetunt, sumunt ab eis aspera verba correptionis, et sumere ab eis veraciter nesciunt preces humilitatis. Magis enim terribiles possunt esse quam mites; et idcirco discunt unde se erigant, et discere negligunt, ut animum submittant. Cumque admonere delinquentes placide nesciunt, nimio rigoris usu per invectionis iracundiam, etiam contra recte agentes effrenantur. Quorum iste

Eliu speciem tenens, beatum Job non refovet, sed objurgat, dicens: Quis est vir, ut est Job, qui bibit subsannationem quasi aquam, qui graditur cum operantibus iniquitatem, et ambulat cum viris impiis? [Vet. XXV.] Et quia aliena semper est a veritate superbia, mox et ad falsa prorumpit, dicens:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 9. Dixit enim: Non placebit vir Deo, etiamsi cucurrerit cum eo. 43. Aliena semper est a veritate superbia. Quod profecto quia minime dixerit, quisquis beati Job verba legit agnoscit. Sed qui idcirco loquitur, ut semetipsum ostendendo superbiat, quid mirum si in altero fingit quod reprehendat? Quomodo enim veritati cohaereat in verbis increpationis, quem intra semetipsum longe ab eadem veritate dirimit tumor mentis? Sequitur: VERS. 10. Ideo viri cordati audite me. Ecce iterum fastu superbiae inflatus, eos tantummodo, qui quasi digne intelligendo, se assequi valeant quaerit, et sic quod sentiebat erumpit, dicens:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 10 et 11. Absit a Deo impietas, et ab Omnipotente iniquitas. Opus enim hominis reddet ei, et juxta vias singulorum restituet eis. 782 44. Deus in hac vita non semper reddit singulis juxta opera. Bene dixit, quia in omnipotente Deo iniquitas vel impietas non est. Sed in hac vita nequaquam semper hoc agitur, quod subjunxit, quia juxta opus suum singulis et juxta vias proprias reddit. Nam et multos illicita et perversa perpetrantes gratuito praevenit, atque ad opera sancta convertit, et nonnullos rectis actibus deditos flagello interveniente corripit, ac sic placentes quasi displiceant affligit, Salomone attestante, qui ait: Sunt justi quibus multa eveniunt, quasi opera egerint impiorum; et sunt impii qui ita securi sunt, ac si justorum facta habeant (Eccle. VIII, 14). Quod nimirum omnipotens Deus inaestimabili pietate dispensat, ut et justos flagella crucient, ne opera

extollant; et injusti saltem sine poena hanc vitam peragant, quia ad tormenta quae sine fine sunt male agendo festinant. Nam quia aliquando justi nequaquam juxta opera flagellantur, hac ipsa historia quam tractamus ostenditur. Neque enim idem beatus Job pro culpa fuerat flagellatus, qui ante flagelli stimulum ipso judice attestante laudatus est. Verius ergo Eliu diceret, si dixisset: Quia in omnipotente Deo impietas atque iniquitas non est, etiam cum juxta vias proprias hominibus reddere non videtur. Nam et quod a nobis non intelligitur, ex occulti judicii non injusta lance profertur. Quia vero praedicatores arrogantes, dum multa inania spargunt, etiam saepe vera ac solida proferunt, Eliu recte subjungit:

CAPUT XIX [Vet. XXVI].

VERS. 12. Vere enim Deus non condemnabit frustra, nec Omnipotens subvertet judicium. 45. Justa Dei judicia, etsi occulta. Ad diabolum Dominus dicit: Commovisti me adversus eum, ut afflgerem eum frustra (Job. II, 3). Eliu autem dicit: Quia non condemnabit Dominus frustra. Quod utique discordare dictis Veritatis creditur, nisi subtili consideratione pensetur. Aliud namque est damnare, aliud affligere. Affligit ergo juxta aliquid frustra, sed frustra non damnat. An non juxta aliquid frustra Job afflixerat, cum non delebatur vitium, sed meritum augebatur? Frustra enim condemnare non potest, quia damnatio fieri non ex parte ad aliquid potest, quae videlicet in extremo punit omne quod hic quisque inique commiserit. Nec omnipotens Deus subvertit judicium, quia etsi minus recta videntur esse quae patimur, recte tamen in occulto examine decernuntur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XX [Rec. XI].

VERS. 13. Quem constituit alium super terram, aut quem posuit super orbem, quem fabricatus est? 46. Quem per se condidit mundum, per se quoque regit. Ut videlicet subaudias nullum. Per se quippe mundum regit,

quem per se condidit; nec eget alienis adjutoriis ad regendum, qui non eguit ad faciendum. Sed haec idcirco colliguntur, ut liquido indicet quia omnipotens Deus, si per semetipsum regere non negligit quod creavit, quod bene creavit utique bene regit, quia quod pie condidit impie non disponit; et qui necdum facta curavit ut essent, quae sunt facta non deserit. Quia ergo praesens est in regimine qui auctor exstitit in creatione, ideo curam nostri non praeterit. Unde et apte subjungit:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 14. Si direxerit ad eum cor suum, spiritum illius et flatum ad se trahet. 783 47. Curva hominum corda, cum vult, ad se erigendo, dirigit. Curvum cor est cum ima appetit, dirigitur cum ad superna sublevatur. Si ergo homo cor suum ad Dominum dirigit, spiritum et flatum illius Dominus ad se trahit. Spiritum videlicet pro internis cogitationibus, flatum vero qui per corpus trahitur, pro externis actionibus ponit. Deo ergo spiritum hominis et flatum a se trahere est ad conversionem sui desiderii et interiora nostra et exteriora commutare, ut nihil jam menti exterius libeat, nihil caro inferius, vel si appetit, adipisci conetur; sed omne quod homo est ad eum videlicet a quo est et interius desiderando ferveat, et exterius se edomando constringat. Unde et apte subjungit:

CAPUT XXII [Rec. XII].

VERS. 15. Deficiet omnis caro simul, et homo in cinerem revertetur. 48. Tunc caro deficiet, et homo in cinerem per humilitatem revertitur. Simul enim omnis caro deficit, quando jam nullis suis moribus servit, quia praesidens spiritus cuncta ejus fluxa restringit, et quodam districtionis suae gladio omne quod in illa male vivebat, interficit. Hoc nimirum disciplinae gladio semetipsum Jeremias interfecerat, cum dicebat: Postquam convertisti me, egi poenitentiam; et postquam ostendisti mihi percussi femur meum

(Jerem. XXXI, 19). Quid enim in femore, nisi voluptas carnis accipitur? Et quid est quod ait: Postquam ostendisti mihi, percussi femur meum, nisi quod postquam superna spiritaliter vidit, omne quod in se inferius carnaliter vivebat exstinxit, ut quanto magis summa patescerent, tanto amplius ima quae tenuerat non liberent? Nam quanto incipit quisque superius vivere, tanto et inchoat inferius interire. Juxta affectum namque carnalis operationis omnis caro Pauli simul interierat, cum dicebat: Vivo autem jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus (Galat. II, 29). [Vet. XXVII.] 49. Peccator mortalitatis suae obliviscitur, secus justus. Bene etiam Eliu hoc loco subdidit: Et homo in cinerem revertetur. In peccato enim quisque positus mortalitatis suae obliviscitur, et terram se esse non meminit, dum adhuc per superbiam inflatur. Post conversionis vero suae gratiam, cum humilitatis spiritu tangitur, quid esse se aliud quam cinerem recordatur? Jam in cinerem David reversus fuerat, cum dicebat: Memento, Domine, quod pulvis sumus (Psal. CII, 15). Abraham in cinerem reversus fuerat, dicens: Loquar ad Dominum meum, cum sim pulvis et cinis (Genes. XVIII, 27). Et si viventem carnem necnon in terra mors solverat, hoc tamen apud se erant, quod se futuros absque dubitatione praevidebant. Hinc alias dicitur: Auferes spiritum eorum, et deficient, et in pulverem suum revertuntur (Psal. CIII, 29). Qui autem spiritus, nisi spiritus superbiae nominatur? Tollatur ergo spiritus eorum ut deficiant, id est subducto superbiae spiritu, nihil se de se esse cognoscant. Et revertantur in pulverem, id est humilientur ex infirma conditione. Propter hunc pulverem, ad cujus memoriam qui semetipsos considerant revocantur, per Sapientiam dicitur: Justi fulgebunt, et sicut scintillae in arundineto discurrent (Sap. III, 7). Sancti enim viri dum peccatoribus permiscentur, eos exemplorum suorum igne succendunt, atque omne quod nitent, in cinerem redigunt, quia pietatis flamma consumpti, dum infirmitatem conditionis suae conspiciunt, nihil aliud quam favillam se esse cognoscunt, ut a superbiae suae duritia resoluti, per poenitentiam

dicant id quod supra protulimus: Memento, Domine, quia pulvis sumus (Psal. CII, 15). 784 Bene ergo dicitur quia cum ad se spiritum hominis Dominus trahit, deficiet omnis caro simul, et homo in cinerem revertetur. [Rec. XIII.] Haec Eliu et vera sunt et magna, quae dicit; sed quia male mox ex eo quod bene sensit intumuit, verbis sequentibus prodit, dicens:

CAPUT XXIII [Vet. XXVIII].

VERS. 16. Si habes ergo intellectum, audi quod dicitur, et ausculta vocem eloquii mei. 50. Superbi plus videndo caligant et caecutiunt. Quo magis superbiae vitium patimur, minus videmus. Habent hoc proprium omnes arrogantes, ut cum fortasse acutum aliquid sentiunt, inde mox ad vitium elationis erumpant, sensusque omnium in sui comparatione despiciant, seque in suo judicio aliorum meritis anteponant. Quibus contingit miseris ut plus videndo tenebrescant, quia dum subtilia attendunt, semetipsos intueri nesciunt; et quo intelligentiam acutius percipiunt, eo per superbiam deterius cadunt. Qui bene quidem subtilia conspicerent, si in eo quod proferunt se viderent. Superius namque Eliu dixerat: Si habes quod loquaris, responde mihi: loquere, volo enim te apparere justum (Job XXXIII, 32). Nunc autem ait: Si habes intellectum, audi quod dicitur. Ecce quomodo paulisper elatio per verborum incrementa proficit. Superius dubitavit si posset beatus Job proferre quod justum est; nunc vero discutit si hoc quod dicitur saltem possit audire. Ibi dixit: Si habes quod loquaris, responde mihi. Ac si diceret: Dic aliquid, si tamen dignus poteris esse qui dicas. Hic autem ait: Si habes intellectum, audi quod dicitur. Ac si aperte dicat: Audi me, si tamen dignus poteris esse qui audias. Isti sunt quotidiani defectus, qui in cordibus reproborum fiunt, quibus indesinenter ad deteriora descendunt, quia dum minora incaute negligunt, ad majora perniciose prorumpunt. Jam et hoc de superbia fuerat, quod beatum Job id quod justum est loqui posse dubitabat. Sed dum hanc in semetipso considerare negligit, ad nequiora pervenit, ut

non solum posse ab eo dici quod justum est dubitet, sed etiam dicentem se justa ab eo intelligi posse desperet. Unde vitium superbiae ab ipsa mox radice secandum est, ut cum latenter oritur, tunc vigilanter abscidatur, ne provectu vigeat, ne usu roboretur. Difficile enim in se quisque inveteratam superbiam deprehendit, quia nimirum hoc vitium quanto magis patimur, tanto minus videmus. Sic quippe in mente superbia, sicut in oculis caligo generatur. Quo se haec latius dilatat, eo vehementius lumen angustat. Paulisper ergo elatio in praecordiis crescit, et cum se vastius extenderit, oppressae mentis oculum funditus claudit, ut captivus animus typum elationis et pati possit, et tamen id quod patitur videre non possit. Sed quia arrogantes viri aliquando, ut diximus, recta non recte sentiunt, et bona invenire noverunt, sed haec bene proferre contemnunt, Eliu post elationis typum, quo dixerat: Si habes intellectum, audi quod dicitur, subdit dicens:

CAPUT XXIV [Vet. XXIX].

VERS. 17. Nunquid qui non amat judicium sanari potest? Quomodo tu eum qui justus est in tantum condemnas? 51. In omnibus quae dicimus attendendum; quid, cui, quando et quomodo dicatur. Bonam quidem sententiam protulit, sed beato Job proferenda non fuit. In omni enim quod dicitur summopere intuendum est quid dicatur, cui dicatur, quando dicatur, quomodo dicatur. Eliu autem attendit quid diceret, sed cui diceret non attendit. Beatus quippe Job amabat judicium, 785 quia causas suas cum Domino pensare subtiliter noverat. Nec condemnaverat eum qui justus est, sed cur sine peccato percussus fuerat in dolore positus cum humilitate requirebat. Amat judicium quisquis vias suas subtiliter discutit, et secretarium cordis ingressus, quid Dominus ipsi tribuat, quid ipse Domino debeat pensat. Quod beatus Job quomodo non fecerat, qui tam crebra sacrificia in expiatione filiorum etiam pro cogitationibus offerebat? Quia ergo Eliu dixit quod is qui judicium non amat sanari non possit, arguens

beatum Job quod judicium non amaret, et quia eum qui justus est condemnasset, illico ejusdem justi, id est Domini, justitiam subdit, dicens:

CAPUT XXV [Rec.

XIV] VERS. 18. Qui dicit regi, apostata; qui vocat duces impios. 52. Apostata est qui aliis praeest non ut prosit, sed ut dominetur. Saepe novimus quod plerique qui praesunt inordinatum sibi metum a subditis exigunt, et non tam propter Dominum quam pro Domino venerari volunt. Intus enim se tumore cordis extollunt, cunctosque subditos in sui comparatione despiciunt, nec condescendendo consulunt, sed dominando premunt, quia videlicet alta cogitatione se erigunt, et aequales se illis quibus eos praeesse contingit non agnoscunt. Contra hunc tumorem per Ecclesiasticum librum dicitur: Ducem te constituerunt; noli extolli, sed esto in illis quasi unus ex illis (Eccli. XXXII, 1). Hunc tumorem Dominus per prophetam in pastoribus increpans ait: Vos autem cum austeritate imperabatis eis, et cum potentia (Ezech. XXXIV, 4). Ipsa enim bona quae subditis dicunt dominando potius quam consulendo proferunt, quia videlicet quidquam eis quasi ex aequo dicere semetipsos existimant dejecisse. Singularitate enim gaudent culminis, et non aequalitate conditionis. Sed quia haec tumentia corda rectorum subtiliter Dominus pensat, bene contra eos dicitur: Qui dicit regi, apostata. Unusquisque enim superbus rector toties ad culpam apostasiae dilabitur, quoties, praeesse hominibus delectatus, honoris sui singularitate laetatur. Sub quo enim sit non considerat, et quod aequalibus quasi non sit aequalis exsultat. Unde autem haec vitiorum radix pullulat in corde regentium, nisi ex imitatione illius qui, despectis angelorum societatibus, dixit: Ascendam super altitudinem nubium, et similis ero Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 14)? Quia ergo unusquisque rector quoties extollitur in eo quod caeteros regit, toties per lapsum superbiae a summi rectoris servitio separatur; et cum aequales sibi subditos despicit, ejus super se dominium

sub quo omnes aequales sunt non agnoscit, recte dicitur: Qui dicit regi, apostata. [Vet. XXX.] 53. Impius est, si suae superbiae exemplo, subditos in praeceps trahat. Quia vero cum dominando praesunt, exemplo suae superbiae subditos ad impietatem trahunt, apte subjungitur. Qui vocat duces impios. Ad viam namque pietatis ducerent, si subditorum oculis humilitatis exempla monstrarent. [Rec. XV.] Dux autem est impius, qui a tramite veritatis exorbitat; et dum ipse in praeceps ruit, ad abrupta sequentes invitat. Dux est impius, qui per tumoris exempla viam ostendit erroris. Paulus dux esse impietatis metuebat, cum potestatis suae celsitudinem reprimebat, dicens: Nec quaerentes ab hominibus gloriam, neque a vobis, neque ab aliis, cum possimus oneri esse, 786 ut Christi apostoli, sed facti sumus in medio vestrum parvuli (I Thessal. II, 6). Parvulus in medio eorum factus fuerat, quia timebat ne si inter discipulos honorem suae celsitudinis vindicaret, exempla elationis ostenderet. Timebat nimirum ne dum ipse sibi potestatem pastoralis potentiae quaereret, grex subditus per abrupta sequeretur, et ad impietatem sequentes duceret, qui pietatis officium suscepisset. 54. Sibi subditis virtutum splendore praeluceat. Eorum culpas prudenter et humiliter corrigat. Unde necesse est ut is qui praeest quae exempla subditis praebeat solerter attendat; et tantis se sciat vivere, quantis praeesse; ac vigilanter inspiciat ne in eo quod praelatus est intumescat; ne jura debitae potestatis immoderatius exigat; ne disciplinae jus mutetur in rigorem superbiae; et unde a perversitate subditos restringere poterat, inde magis intuentium corda pervertat; ne, ut dictum est, impietatis dux per officium pietatis existat. Non autem debet hominum ducatum suscipere, qui nescit homines bene vivendo praeire; ne qui ad hoc eligitur ut aliorum culpas corrigat, quod resecare debuit, ipse committat. Hinc inde ergo se qui praesunt circumspiciant, ut sibi et subditis vivant, ut bonum quod faciunt, et intra sinum mentis abscondant, et tamen ex eo ad provectum sequentium exempla rectae operationis impartiant, ut subditorum animadvertentes

culpas corrigant, nec tamen per vim ejusdem animadversionis intumescant, ut quaedam leniter correpta tolerent, nec tamen disciplinae vincula eadem lenitate dissolvant, ut quaedam tolerando dissimulent, nec tamen ea crescere dissimulando permittant. Laboriosa sunt ista, et nisi divina gratia fulciat, ad custodiendum difficilia. Recte vero de adventu districti judicis per Sapientiae librum dicitur: Horrende et cito apparebit, quoniam judicium durissimum his qui praesunt fiet (Sap. VI, 6). Quia ergo plerumque per potestatem regiminis ad culpam prorumpitur elationis, atque apud districtum judicem ipsa elatio impietas aestimatur, bene de Domino per Eliu dicitur: Qui vocat duces impios. De ipso quippe ducatu dum superbiunt, exemplo suo subditos ad impietatem trahunt. 55. Alios judicans, superno judici assidue se sistat. Potestas accepta non honor, sed onus aestimanda. Ambitus infinita mala. Cura pastoralis nec cupiditate amplectenda, nec formidine deferenda. Unde magnopere curandum est ut qui regendis hominibus praefertur, apud se intra secretarium mentis in cathedra praesideat humilitatis. Cumque judicanti ei a caeteris foris assistitur, vigilanti oculo incessanter aspiciat, cui quandoque judici ipse de his judicandus assistat, ut quanto nunc ante eum quem non videt, sollicitius trepidat, tanto eum cum viderit securior cernat. [Rec. XVI.] Penset ergo qui ad satisfaciendum districto judici de sua tantummodo anima fortasse vix sufficit, quia quot regendis subditis praeest, reddendae apud eum rationis tempore, ut ita dicam, tot solus animas habet. Quae nimirum cogitatio, si assidue mentem excoquit, omnem superbiae tumorem premit. Et rector providus tanto jam neque rex apostata, neque dux impius vocabitur, quanto ei cogitatione sollicita potestas quae accepta est, non honor, sed onus aestimatur. Nam cui esse nunc judiciem libet, huic videre tunc judicem non libet. Numerari enim culpae nequeunt, quae habendae potestatis amore perpetrantur. Tunc solum vero 787 potestas bene geritur, cum non amando, sed timendo retinetur. Quae ut ministrari recte valeat, oportet primum ut

hanc non cupiditas, sed necessitas imponat. Percepta autem nec pro formidine debet deseri, nec ex libidine amplecti; ne aut pejus quis quasi ex humilitate superbiat, si divinae dispensationis ordinem fugiendo contemnat; aut eo jugum 788 superni rectoris abjiciat, quo eum super caeteros privatum regimen delectat. Potestas ergo cum percipitur, non ex libidine amanda est, sed ex longanimitate toleranda, ut inde tunc ad judicium salubriter levis sit, unde nunc ad ministerium patienter gravis innotescit.

LIBER VIGESIMUS QUINTUS.

In explicatione capitis XXXIV, a versu 19 ad 30, de reproborum poena occultisque Dei judiciis disseritur.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. Error illorum qui in hominibus quod habent, non quod sunt, attendunt. Ipsa humanae conditionis qualitas indicat quam longe rebus caeteris praestat. Nam collata homini ratio asserit quantum omnia quae vel vita, vel sensu, vel ratione carent, natura rationalis antecedit. Et tamen, quia ab internis atque invisibilibus oculos claudimus, et visibilibus pascimus, plerumque hominem non ex eo quod ipse est, sed ex his quae circa ipsum sunt veneramur. Cumque non intuemur quid ipse sit, sed quid possit in acceptione personarum, non ex personis, sed ex rebus adjacentibus ducimur. Sicque fit ut is quoque apud nos intus in despectionem veniat, qui foris honoratur, quia dum pro his quae circa illum sunt honorabilis habetur, rebus suis in examine nostro postponitur. Sed omnipotens Deus vitam hominum ex sola qualitate interrogat meritorum; et saepe inde plus punit, unde hic majora ad ministerium contulit, Veritate attestante, quae ait: Cui multum datum est, multum quaeretur ab eo (Luc. XII, 48). Unde bene nunc per Eliu dicitur:

CAPUT II.

CAP. XXXIV, VERS. 19. Qui non accipit personam principum, nec cognovit tyrannum cum disceptaret contra pauperem. 2. Non est acceptio personarum apud Deum. Potest autem per principem vel tyrannum quisque superbus intelligi; per pauperem vero humilis designari. Tyrannum ergo disceptantem contra pauperem non cognoscit, quia superbos omnes vitam nunc humilium deprimentes, in judicio nescire se perhibet, dicens: Nescio

vos unde sitis (Luc. XIII, 25). Et quia sic potenter cum vult destruit, sicut cum voluit potenter creavit, apte ratiocinando subjungitur: IBID. Opus enim manuum ejus sunt universi. [Rec. II.] Atque mox subditur:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 20. Subito morientur, et in media nocte curvabuntur populi, et pertransibunt. 3. Iniquorum omnium mors subita, quia non praevisa. Quamlibet sero de hac vita tollantur iniqui, subito et repente tolluntur, quia finem suum cogitando praevidere nesciunt. Subitum est homini, quod ante cogitare non potuit. Subito dives ille tultus est, qui horrea quae praeparabat deseruit, et inferni locum quem non praevidebat invenit. Ad aliud exercebat animam per cogitationem, sed ad aliud emisit per sententiam; aliud dum viveret contemplatus est, aliud dum moreretur expertus. Reliquit enim diu tractata temporalia, et inopinata invenit aeterna. Unde ei propter hanc ignorantiam caecitatis suae bene per divinam sententiam dicitur: Hac nocte repetunt animam tuam a te (Luc. XII, 20). In nocte quippe ablata est, quae in obscuritate est cordis amissa. In nocte ablata est, quae considerationis lucem habere noluit, ut quod poterat pati praevideret. Unde bene discipulis futura cogitantibus Paulus apostolus dicit: Vos autem fratres, non estis in tenebris, ut vos dies illa tanquam fur comprehendat. Omnes enim vos filii lucis estis, et filii diei; non sumus noctis neque tenebrarum (I Thess. V, 4). Dies enim exitus tanquam fur in nocte comprehendit, quando stultorum animas futura non praevidentes ejicit. Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur: Et in media nocte curvabuntur populi, et pertransibunt. In media nocte curvati pertranseunt, qui obscuritate suae negligentiae humiliati rapiuntur. Tunc curvabuntur per sententiam judicis, qui nunc curvari negligunt per humilitatem cordis. Electi autem ne inviti curventur in morte, sponte curvantur in humilitate. Unde sanctae Ecclesiae de conversa prole persecutorum dicitur: Venient ad te curvi filii eorum, qui humiliaverunt te

(Isai. LX, 14). 4. Vita hominis post peccatum, transitus est: secus ante peccatum. Et bene de morientibus populis non ait: Transibunt, sed pertransibunt, quia etiam vivendo temporaliter quotidie ad finem tendimus, et praesentem vitam quasi quamdam viam subigendo transimus. Hoc ipsum enim morituros vivere quasi ad mortem ire est. Et quot dies vitae peragimus, quasi in itinere ad locum propositum tot passibus propinquamus. Ipsa quippe augmenta detrimenta sunt temporum, quia vitae nostrae spatia quanta esse coeperint, incipiunt jam tanta non esse. [Vet. II.] Primus vero homo ita conditus fuit, ut manente illo decederent tempora, ne cum temporibus ipse transiret. Stabat enim momentis decurrentibus, quia nequaquam ad vitae terminum per dierum incrementa tendebat. Stabat tanto robustius quanto semper stanti arctius inhaerebat. At ubi vetitum contigit, mox 789 offenso creatore coepit ire cum tempore. Statu videlicet immortalitatis amisso, cursus eum mortalitatis absorbuit (Genes. III, 4). Et dum juventute ad senium, senio traheretur ad mortem, transeundo didicit stando quid fuit. Cujus nos quia de propagine nascimur, radicis amaritudinem quasi in virgulto retinemus. Nam quia ex illo originem ducimus, ejus cursum nascendo sortimur, ut eo ipso quotidiano momento quo vivimus incessanter a vita transeamus, et vivendi nobis spatium unde crescere creditur, inde decrescat. Quia ergo ad summam moriendi quotidie tendimus per incrementa vivendi, bene de morientibus nequaquam transibunt dicitur, sed pertransibunt, quia transeunt etiam dum vivunt, sed pertranseunt dum moriuntur: Sequitur.

CAPUT IV [Rec. III].

Ibid. Et auferent violentum absque manu. 5. Iniquos non praevisa Dei manus ad supplicium rapit. Subaudis divina judicia. Absque manu vero auferent eum qui manu violentus fuit. Absque manu auferent, quia videlicet subito exitu urgente invisibiliter rapitur, qui visibiliter rapiebat. Vidit ipse

quos rapuit, sed quis illum in morte rapiat non videt. Absque manu ergo violentus aufertur, quia et raptorem suum non intuetur, et tamen ducitur. Quem tanto sequitur districtior sententia, quanto peccanti ei magna est patientia prorogata, quia divina severitas eo iniquum acrius punit, quo diutius pertulit. Saepe vero evenit, ut dum peccatores superna clementia exspectat, in majorem cordis caecitatem prosiliant. Unde scriptum est: An ignoras, quia benignitas Dei ad poenitentiam te adducit? Tu autem secundum duritiam tuam et cor impoenitens, thesaurizas tibi iram in die irae, et revelationis justi judicii Dei (Rom. II, 4). Et ecce dum violentus quisque quos valuerit rapit, dum invalidos opprimit, et dum diu omne quod nequiter concupiscit exercet, quia non subito percutitur, sed ejus in finem poena differtur, nequissima ejus actio a Deo videri non creditur. Unde apte postquam ejus narravit interitum, illico de Domino adjungit, dicens:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 21. Oculi enim ejus super vias hominum, et omnes gressus eorum considerat. 6. Stulte et impie peccator ex Dei patientia cogitat, sua flagitia aut non videri a Deo, aut approbari. Oculos aperiet poena, quos culpa clausit. Tunc enim nequaquam considerare credebatur, quando violentus iste omne malum quod poterat inulte perpetrabat. Aestimabatur Deus injusti acta non cernere, quia differebat juste damnare; et magna ejus patientia quasi quaedam negligentia putabatur. Iniquus quoque ipse toties se in peccatis suis non videri a Deo credidit, quoties inulte peccavit. Cui per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Ne dicas, peccavi, et quid accidit mihi triste (Eccli. V, 4)? Emendare non vult nequitiam, pro qua dignam non pertulit poenam; et quo pie exspectatus est, eo est ad peccandum nequiter instigatus; et patientiae supernae longanimitatem despiciens, unde corrigere culpam suam debuit, inde cumulavit, sicut per eumdem Job dicitur: Dedit ei Deus locum poenitentiae, et ille abutitur eo in superbia (Job XXIV, 23). Saepe

etiam, quia poenam quam meretur repente non suscipit, hoc ipsum Deo non aestimat displicere quod facit. [Vet. III.] Eat itaque nunc, et ad quaslibet blasphemias praesumendo prorumpat; voluptatum suarum nequitias impleat, aliena rapiat, innocentium oppressione 790 satietur, et quia necdum percutitur, vias suas a Domino aut non videri aestimet, aut quod pejus est, approbari! Veniet profecto, veniet aeterna et repentina percussio; et tunc cognoscet a Deo cuncta conspici, quando se improviso exitu viderit pro cunctorum retributione damnari. Tunc in poena sua oculos aperiet, quos diu tenuit clausos in culpa. Tunc considerasse omnia verum judicem sentiet, quando malorum suorum meritum jam evadere sentiendo non possit. Iniquus ergo qui diu exspectatus est, idcirco est repente sublatus, quia oculi Domini super vias hominum, et omnes gressus eorum considerat. Ac si diceret: Quia ea quae diu patienter conspicit, quandoque inulta non deserit. Nam ecce subito violentum rapuit, et mala ejus quae exspectando pertulit animadvertendo resecavit. Nemo igitur dicat humana facta Deum non cernere, cum iniquum quempiam iniquitates suas libere prospicit cumulare. Subito enim tollitur, qui diu toleratur. 7. Gressus hominis quos Deus considerat, qui sint. Gressus vero hominum vocat, vel singulas operationes quibus innitimur, vel alternantes motus intimae cogitationis quibus quasi passibus, vel longe a Domino recedimus, vel pie Domino propinquamus. Ad Deum enim quasi tot gressibus mens accedit, quot bonis motibus proficit. Et rursum tot gressibus longe fit, quot malis cogitationibus deterescit. Unde plerumque contingit ut necdum procedat in opere motus mentis, et tamen perfecta jam culpa sit ex ipso reatu cogitationis, sicut scriptum est: Manus in manu non erit innocens malus (Prov. XI, 21). Manus enim manui jungi solet, quando quiescit in otio, et nullus eam usus laboris exercet. Manus ergo in manu non erit innocens malus. Ac si diceret: Et cum manus cessat ab iniquo opere, malus tamen non est innocens per cogitationem. Quia ergo novimus quod districte omnia non solum facta, sed

saltem cogitata pensentur, quid faciemus de incessu mali operis, si sic subtiliter Deus judicat gressus cordis? Ecce occulta mentis nostrae itinera nullus hominum videt, et tamen ante Dei oculos tot gressus ponimus quot affectus movemus. [Vet. IV.] Toties ante illum labimur quoties a recto itinere infirme cogitationis pede claudicamus. Nisi enim in conspectu ejus iste assiduus nostrarum mentium lapsus incresceret, per prophetam scilicet non clamaret: Auferte malum cogitationum vestrarum ab oculis meis (Isai. I, 16). Haec nimirum dicens, vim coopertae nostrae malitiae quasi ferre se non posse testatur. Quae cooperta illi esse non potest, quia videlicet importune ejus conspectui ingeritur quidquid a nobis illicitum occulte cogitatur Omnia enim, sicut scriptum est, nuda et aperta sunt oculis ejus (Hebr. IV, 13). Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur:

CAPUT VI [Rec. IV].

VERS. 22. Non sunt tenebrae, et non est umbra mortis, ut abscondantur ibi qui operantur iniquitatem. 8. Nemo judicio Dei qui nihil aut obliviscitur aut ignorat, absconditur. Quid per tenebras, nisi ignorantiam, et quid per umbram mortis, nisi oblivionem studuit designare? De quorumdam quippe ignorantia dicitur: Tenebris obscuratum habentes intellectum (Ephes. IV, 18). Et rursum de oblivione quae in morte contingit scriptum est: In illa die peribunt omnes cogitationes eorum (Psal. CXLV, 4). Quia ergo 791 per mortem funditus oblivioni traditur quidquid vivendo cogitatur, quasi quaedam umbra mortis oblivio est. Sicut enim agit mors interveniens non esse quod fuit in vita, ita interveniens agit oblivio non esse quod fuit in memoria. Recte itaque umbra ejus dicitur, quia velut de ipsa exprimitur, dum vim illius sopiendo sensus imitatur. Deus autem quia mala hominum nec cogitata ignorat, nec perpetrata obliviscitur, nisi ab ejus oculis poenitendo deleantur, congrue dictum est: Non sunt tenebrae et non est umbra mortis, ut abscondantur ibi qui operantur iniquitatem. Ac si diceret:

Idcirco ejus judicio nullus absconditur, quia nullatenus potest aut non videre quod facimus, aut oblivisci quod videt. 9. Omnis mutabilitatis Deus est expers. Non homo, non angeli. Quamvis intelligi tenebrae vel umbra mortis, etiam aliter possunt. Omnis namque immutatio velut quaedam mortis imitatio est. Id enim quod mutat quasi ab eo quod erat interficit, ut desinat esse quod fuit, et incipiat esse quod non fuit. Lumen igitur verum, creator videlicet noster, quia nulla mutabilis vicissitudine tenebrescit, nullis naturae suae defectibus obumbratur, sed ejus esse sine mutabilitate fulgere est, tenebrae vel umbra mortis dicitur ei non inesse. Unde alias scriptum est: Apud quem non est transmutatio, nec vicissitudinis obumbratio (Jac. I, 17). Et unde rursus Paulus apostolus dicit: Qui solus habet immortalitatem, et lucem habitat inaccessibilem (I Tim. VI, 16). [Vet. V.] Sed cum cuncti noverimus quod et humana anima et angelici spiritus sint immortales instituti, cur ab Apostolo solus Deus immortalitatem habere perhibetur, nisi quia solus Deus vere non moritur, qui solus nunquam mutatur? 10. Humana quippe anima in lapsum non caderet, si mutabilis non fuisset; quae a paradisi quoque gaudiis expulsa, si mutabilis non esset, ad vitam nunquam rediret. In hoc ipso vero quod ad vitam redire nititur, defectus suos cogitur alternante semper mutabilitate tolerare. Quia ergo ex nihilo est condita ex se nihilominus infra se tendit, nisi ad boni desiderii statum artificis sui manu teneatur. Ex eo itaque quod creatura est, deorsum ire habet. Virtute namque propria in praeceps posse se ire considerat, sed ad creatorem suum amoris manu se retinet, ne cadat, quousque ad immutabilitatem transeat, et eo vere immortaliter, quo immutabiliter vivat. 11. Ipsi quoque angelici spiritus mutabiles ex natura sunt conditi, quatenus aut sua sponte caderent aut ex arbitrio starent. Sed quia humiliter elegerunt ei inhaerere, a quo creati sunt, hanc ipsam in se mutabilitatem suam standi jam immutabilitate vicerunt: ut hoc ipsum merito transcenderent, quod naturae suae ordine mutabilitati subesse potuissent. Quia ergo solius divinae naturae est umbras ignorantiae

mutabilitatisque non perpeti, dicatur recte, Non sunt tenebrae, et non est umbra mortis, ut abscondantur ibi qui operantur iniquitatem. [Vet. VI.] Lux enim aeterna, quae Deus est, quanto incommutabiliter 792 fulget, tanto penetrabiliter videt; et neque occulta nescit, quia cuncta penetrat, neque penetrata obliviscitur, quia incommutabilis durat. Proinde quoties indignum aliquid corde concipimus, toties in luce peccamus, quia ipsa nobis et non sibi praesentibus praesto est, et perverse gradientes in ipsam impingimus, a qua per meritum longe sumus. Cum vero nos videri non credimus, in sole clausos oculos tenemus. Illum videlicet nobis abscondimus, non nos illi. Nunc ergo dum possumus, a conspectu aeterni judicis et male cogitata, et pejus perpetrata deleamus; revocemus ante oculos cordis quidquid perverse egimus per nequitiam praesumptionis. Nihil sibi nostra blandiatur infirmitas, atque in his quae recolit, semetipsam delicate non palpet, sed quanto sibi mali sit conscia, tanto in se benignius sit severa, proponat contra se futurum judicium, et quaeque in se sentit districte ferienda per sententiam judicis, haec in se pie feriat per poenitentiam conversionis. Unde apte postquam violenti hujus poena descripta est, sequitur:

CAPUT VII [Rec. V].

VERS. 23. Neque enim ultra in hominis potestate est ut veniat ad Deum in judicium. 12. Dei judicium praevenire debemus nosmetipsos judicando. Versus iste tanto majore disputatione indiget, quanto hoc quod dicit, si negligitur, acrius dolet. Hic nimirum non illud judicium designatur, quod per aeternam retributionem punit, sed quod mente conceptum per conversationem diluit. Ad illud quippe venire non desiderat, quisquis se per illud damnari formidat. Dum ergo dicitur: Neque enim ultra in hominis potestate est, ut veniat ad Deum in judicium, profecto ostenditur esse quoddam judicium quod quandoque etiam a damnatis ac reprobis desideretur. Et quod est illud, nisi hoc, de quo Paulus apostolus dicit: Si

nosmetipsos dijudicaremus, non utique judicaremur (I Cor. XI, 31)? et de quo per prophetam dicitur: Non est judicium in gressibus eorum (Isai. LIX, 8); et de quo David ait: Honor regis judicium diligit (Psal. XCVIII, 4); videlicet qui jam Deum honorat ex fide, sollicite judicet quid ei debeat in operatione. Unde rursum scriptum est: Judicare coram Domino, et exspecta eum (Job. XXXV, 14). Coram Domino scilicet judicatur, qui corde Dominum conspicit, et actus suos sub ejus praesentia, sollicita inquisitione discernit. Quem tanto quis securius exspectat, quanto quotidie vitam suam suspectus examinat. Qui enim ad extremum ejus judicium venit, non jam coram illo, sed ab illo judicatur. De hoc quoque mentis judicio obliviscenti animae per prophetam Dominus dicit: Reduc me in memoriam, ut judicemur simul; narra si quid habes, ut justificeris (Isai. XLIII, 26). [Rec. VI.] 13. Judicii hujus ordo. Accusat conscientia, ratio judicat, timor ligat, dolor cruciat. Debet enim uniuscujusque mens et causas suas apud Dominum, et causas Domini contra se sollicita inquisitione discutere; debet caute pensare, vel quae ab eo bona perceperit, vel quae mala bonis illius perverse vivendo responderit. Quod electi quidem quotidie facere omnino non cessant. Unde bene Salomon ait: Cogitationes justorum, judicia (Prov. XII, 5). 793 Accedunt enim ad secretarium judicis intra sinum cordis: considerant quam districte quandoque feriat qui diu patienter exspectat; metuunt in his quae se egisse meminerunt, et puniunt flendo quod perpetrasse se intelligunt; timent subtilia Dei judicia, etiam de his quae in semetipsis intelligere fortasse non possunt. Vident enim videri divinitus quod ipsi in se per humanitatem non vident; conspiciunt districtum judicem, qui quo tardius venit, eo severius percutit. Sanctorum etiam patrum residere conventum cum eo pariter contemplantur, eorumque vel exempla, vel dicta se contempsisse reprehendunt, atque in hoc secreto interioris judicii, ipsa mentis suae exsecutione constricti, poenitendo feriunt quod superbiendo commiserunt. Ibi namque adversum se quidque se impugnat, enumerant: ibi

ante oculos suos omne quod defleant, coacervant; ibi quidquid per iram districti judicis decerni possit, intuentur; ibi tot patiuntur supplicia, quot pati timent; nec deest in hoc judicio mente cencepto omne ministerium, quod punire reos suos plenius debeat. Nam conscientia accusat, ratio judicat, timor ligat, dolor excruciat. Quod judicium eo certius punit, quo interius saevit, quia videlicet ab exterioribus non accedit. Unusquisque enim cum causam hujus examinis contra se aggredi coeperit, ipse est actor qui exhibet, ipse reus qui exhibetur; odit se qualem fuisse se meminit, et ipse qui est, per semetipsum insequitur illum qui fuit, atque ab ipso homine adversus semetipsum fit quaedam rixa in animo, parturiens pacem cum Deo. Hanc cordis rixam Dominus requirebat, cum per prophetam diceret: Attendi et auscultavi, nemo quod bonum est loquitur, nullus est qui agat poenitentiam super peccato suo, dicens: Quid feci (Jerem. VIII, 6)? Ista cordis humani rixa placatus est, cum prophetae suo de Achab rege semetipsum reprehendente loqueretur, dicens: Vidisti Achab humiliatum coram me? Quia igitur humiliatus est mei causa, non inducam malum in diebus ejus (III Reg. XXI, 29). 14. Hoc judicium quod mali declinant, justi semper exercent, quam utiliter subeamus. Sic a peccati vetustate renovamur. Quia ergo nunc in potestate est internum mentis nostrae contra nos subire judicium, recognoscendo accusemus nosmetipsos, et quales fuimus poenitendo torqueamus; non cessemus dum licet judicare quod fecimus, audiamus caute quod dicitur: Neque enim ultra in hominis potestate est, ut veniat ad Deum in judicium. Reproborum namque esse proprium solet, semper prava agere, et nunquam quae egerint retractare. Omne enim quod faciunt caeca mente pertranseunt, factumque suum nisi cum puniti fuerint, non agnoscunt. At contra electorum est actus suos quotidie ab ipso cogitationis fonte discutere, et omne quod turbidum profluit ab intimis exsiccare [Vet. VII]. Sicut enim non sentimus quomodo crescunt membra, proficit corpus, mutatur species, nigredo capillorum albescit in canis (haec

quippe omnia nobis nescientibus aguntur in nobis), ita mens nostra per momenta vivendi ipso curarum usu a semetipsa permutatur, et non agnoscimus, nisi vigilanti custodia ad interiora nostra residentes, provectus nostros quotidie defectusque pensemus. Hoc ipsum enim in hac mortali vita consistere, quasi ad vetustatem ire est, 794 et cum indiscussa mens relinquitur, in quodam senio torporis sopitur, quia sui negligens, propositum robur insensibiliter perdens, a forma prioris fortitudinis dum nescit senescit. Unde et per prophetam sub Ephraim specie dicitur: Comederunt alieni robur ejus, et nescivit; sed et cani effusi sunt in eo, et ipse ignoravit (Oseae II, 9). Cum vero semetipsam quaerit, et subtiliter poenitendo se discutit, ab ipsa hac vetustate sua lota lacrymis et moerore incensa renovatur, et quae jam pene inveterata frixerat, per subministrata interni amoris studia novum calet. Unde Paulus apostolus usu mortalis vitae veterascentes discipulos admonet, dicens: Renovamini spiritu mentis vestrae (Ephes. IV, 23). [Rec. VII.] 15. Ut hoc agamus, nos admonent exempla SS. Patrum et divina praecepta. Sed ad haec agenda valde exempla patrum et sacri eloquii praecepta nos adjuvant. Si enim sanctorum opera inspicimus, et divinis jussionibus aurem praebemus, alia nos contemplata, alia audita succendunt, et cor nostrum torpore non constringitur, dum imitatione provocatur. Unde bene ad Moysen dicitur: Ignis in altari semper ardebit, quem nutriet sacerdos, subjiciens mane lingua per singulos dies (Levit. VI, 12). Altare quippe Dei est cor nostrum, in quo jubetur ignis semper ardere, quia necesse est ex illo ad Dominum charitatis flammam indesinenter ascendere. Cui per singulos dies sacerdos ligna subjiciat, ne exstinguatur. Omnis enim Christi fide praeditus membrum utique summi sacerdotis effectus est, sicut cunctis fidelibus Petrus apostolus dicit: Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium (I Pet. II, 9). Et sicut Joannes apostolus dicit: Fecisti nos Deo nostro regnum et sacerdotes (Apoc. II, 6). Sarcerdos ergo in altari ignem nutriens, quotidie ligna subjiciat, id est fidelis quisque, ne in eo charitatis

flamma deficiat, in corde suo tam exempla praecedentium quam sacrae Scripturae testimonia congerere non desistat. Nam quasi quaedam fomenta igni dare est in excitatione charitatis vel exempla patrum vel praecepta dominica ministrare. Quia etenim interna novitas nostra ipsa quotidie hujus vitae conversatione veterascit, ignis iste adhibitis lignis nutriendus est, ut dum per usum se nostrae vetustatis extenuat, per patrum testimonia et exempla reviviscat. Et bene illic praecipitur ut mane ligna per dies singulos congerantur. Haec quippe non fiunt, nisi cum nox caetitatis exstinguitur. Vel certe quia mane prima pars diei est, postpositis cogitationibus vitae praesentis, hoc primo loco quisque fidelium cogitet, ut quod in se jamjamque quasi deficit, quibus valet nisibus studium charitatis inflammet. Ignis enim iste in altari Domini, id est in corde nostro citius exstinguitur, nisi solerter adhibitis exemplis patrum et dominicis testimoniis reparetur. 16. Ita charitatis igne succensi, holocaustum Deo sumus. Bene autem illic subjungitur: Et imposito holocausto desuper adolebit adipes pacificorum (Levit. VI, 12). Nam quisquis in se ignem hunc charitatis accendit, semetipsum utique holocaustum desuper imponit, quia omne vitium quod in se male vivebat exurit. Cum enim cogitationum suarum interna considerat, et vitam reprobam per immutationis gladium nactat, in ara se sui cordis imposuit, et igne charitatis 795 incendit. De qua hostia pacificorum adipes redolent, quia interna novae charitatis impinguatio pacem inter nos et Deum faciens, odorem de nobis suavissimum reddit. Quia vero eadem charitas in cordibus electorum inexstinguibilis manet, apte illic subditur: Ignis est iste perpetuus, qui nunquam deficiet de altari (Ibid., 13). Nunquam profecto de altari ignis iste deficiet, quia etiam post hanc vitam eorum mentibus fervor charitatis accrescit. Aeterna quippe contemplatione agitur, ut omnipotens Deus quo magis visus fuerit, eo amplius diligatur. [Vet. VIII.] 17. Divinis praeceptis et sanctorum exemplis adjuti, libertatem consequimur. Quod autem divinis admonitionibus et praecedentium exemplis adjuti de hujus

vitae profundo liberamur, bene etiam propheta Jeremia in puteum misso signatum est, qui ut levetur ex puteo, funes ad eum et panni veteres deponuntur (Jerem. XXXVIII, 11). Quid enim funibus nisi praecepta dominica figurantur? Quae quia nos in mala operatione positos, et convinciunt, et eripiunt, quasi ligant et trahunt, coarctant et levant. Sed ne ligatus his funibus dum trahitur incidatur, simul etiam panni veteres deponuntur, quia ne divina praecepta nos terreant, antiquorum patrum nos exempla confortant, et ex eorum comparatione facere nos posse praesumimus, quod ex nostra imbecillitate formidamus. Si ergo levari de hoc profundo festinamus, ligemur funibus, id est praeceptis dominicis astringamur. Intersint etiam panni veteres, cum quibus melius teneantur funes; id est, praecedentium confortemur exemplis, ne infirmos nos ac timidos praecepta subtilia vulnerent dum levant. Quasi quosdam pannos veteres Paulus apostolus subjungebat, cum levandis discipulis suis praeceptis spiritalibus exempla veterum commodaret, dicens: Justi ludibria et verbera experti, insuper et vincula et carceres: lapidati sunt, secti sunt, tentati sunt, in occisione gladii mortui sunt (Hebr. XI, 36). Et paulo post: Habentes itaque tantam impositam nubem testium, deponentes omne pondus, et circumstans nos peccatum, per patientiam curramus ad propositum nobis certamen (Hebr. XII, 1). Et iterum: Mementote praepositorum vestrorum, qui vobis locuti sunt verbum Dei; quorum intuentes exitum conversationis, imitamini fidem (Hebr. XIII, 7). Superius videlicet, dum spiritalia praecepta loqueretur, quasi funes miserat, postmodum vero memorans exempla majorum, quasi veteres pannos adhibebat. 18. A rebus exterioribus ad cor redeundum. Excitati ergo tot vocibus praeceptorum, adjuti tot comparationibus exemplorum, ad corda nostra redeamus, discutiamus omne quod agimus, et quidquid in nobis divinae rectitudinis regulam offendit, accusemus, ut apud districtum judicem ipsa nos accusatio excuset. In hoc enim mentis nostrae judicio tanto

citius absolvimur, quanto nos districtius reos tenemus. Nec ad haec agenda praetermittenda sunt tempora, quibus vacat, quia ad haec agenda post hujus vitae tempora non vacat. Vacue quippe non dicitur: Neque enim ultra in hominis potestate est ut veniat ad Deum in judicium. Idcirco namque memoramur quod tunc non possumus, 796 ne nunc quod possumus negligamus. Sed ecce negotia occupant quae nobis incessanter apposita a considerandis nobismetipsis mentis nostrae oculum declinant. In istis namque visibilibus quae intuetur cor nostrum extra se spargitur, et quid de se intrinsecus agatur obliviscitur dum extrinsecus occupatur. Divina autem vox terribilibus sententiis suis quasi quibusdam clavis illud pungit ut evigilet, ut homo occulta super se judicia quae pressus torpore dissimulat, terrore saltem pulsatus expavescat. Ut enim superius diximus, ipso usu vitae veteris mens male assueta deprimitur, et in haec quae spectat exterius quasi dormiens sopitur: quae postquam semel se ad appetenda visibilia foras fudit, a contemplandis invisibilibus intus evanuit. Unde nunc necesse est ut quae per visibilia spargitur de invisibilibus judiciis feriatur; et quia in iis se exterioribus male delectata prostravit, saltem percussa requirat quod deseruit. Ecce autem Scriptura sacra terrore quodam torpentia corda transfigit, ne in his inhaereant quae exterius defluunt, sed quae interius aeterna perdiderunt. Indicat quid sententia occulta decernitur, ne immoderate a nobis haec publica cogitentur. Dicit quid super nos agatur de nobis, ut ab hoc publico temporalitatis colligamus oculum cordis ad secretum internae dispositionis. [Vet. IX.] Nam postquam multa narrata sunt de poena malorum, subito infertur occultum judicium, quod pie super nos justeque disponitur, quomodo alii perdunt quod tenere videbantur, et alii accipiunt quod alii ex meritis perdunt. Ait enim:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 24. Conteret multos et innumerabiles, et stare faciet alios pro eis. 19. Alii perdunt quod tenere videbantur, alii prius perditum recipiunt. In exteriora respui reprobationis signum; sicut praedestinationis, ad interiora trahi. Hoc quotidie agitur. Sed quia adhuc finis partium utrarumque non cernitur, minus timetur. Nunquam enim culpam suam reprobi nisi in poena cognoscunt. Et quia poena differtur, culpa despicitur. Labuntur vero a statu justitiae, et locum vitae, illis cadentibus, alii sortiuntur. Sed eo lapsum suum negligunt, quo interitum qui se in aeternum maneat non attendunt. Si enim ad illud quod illic passuri sunt oculos suos mitterent, hoc quod hic faciunt timerent. Cunctis autem liquet quod in illa extrema requisitione examen publicum facturus est omnipotens Deus, ut alios ad tormenta deserat, alios ad participationem regni coelestis admittat. Sed hoc nunc secreto judicio quotidie agitur, quod tunc publico demonstratur. Nam juste ac misericorditer singulorum corda vel examinans, vel disponens, alios in exteriora respuit, alios ad ea quae sunt intrinsecus trahit; hos accendit interna appetere, illos pro voluptatibus suis deserit exteriora cogitare; horum mentem ad superna erigit, illorum superbiam in infimis desideriis mergit. Aliena autem corda humanis oculis clausa sunt, et nescitur qui repellitur, quia penetrari nequeunt quae ab unoquoque cogitantur. Nam saepe corde perverso necdum processit usque ad effectum operis deliberatio cogitationis, et adhuc fortasse per habitum intus astringitur, qui jam 797 mente foris vagatur. Sed talis quilibet iste tunc ante oculos interni judicis cecidit, cum ab appetendis interioribus per desiderium exivit. Nonnunquam vero alii post malae operationis usum ad spem coelestem subito amore reviviscunt; et qui in perversa actione se sparserant, ad sinum internae retractationis semetipsos increpando recolligunt. Hos adhuc respicientes homines quales dudum in opere noverant, tales putant. At contra illi per districtae considerationis examen vitam suam qualem fuisse recolunt insequuntur, sciturque quid fuerint, sed quid jam coeperint esse nescitur. In

hoc ergo utroque genere hominum saepe contingit ut et ii qui videntur stare humano judicio jam in conspectu aeterni judicis jaceant; et qui adhuc coram hominibus jacent, jam in conspectu aeterni judicis stent. Quis enim hominum aestimare potuisset Judam vivendi sortem etiam post ministerium apostolatus amittere (Luc. XXIII, 40)? Et quis e contra latronem crederet causam vitae etiam in ipso articulo mortis invenire? Occultus autem judex praesidens, et utrorumque corda discernens, alterum pie statuit, alterum juste confregit. Illum districte exterius repulit, hunc introrsus misericorditer traxit. Unde bene etiam per prophetam casuros alios passionis suae tempore atque alios resurrecturos annuntians, ait: Potum meum cum fletu temperabam (Psal. CI, 10). Potus quippe ab exterioribus interius trahitur, fletus autem ab interioribus exterius emanat. Potum ergo Domino cum fletu temperare est alios ab exterioribus introrsus trahere, alios ab interioribus in exteriora reprobare. [Vet. X, Rec. VIII.] Conteret ergo multos et innumerabiles, et stare faciet alios pro eis. 20. Reprobatio prius intus agitur, et postea extrinsecus ostenditur. Electorum numerus certus et definitus. Sicut autem superius diximus, haec contritio prius intus agitur, ut post extrinsecus ostendatur. Hac contritione nonnunquam adhuc quorumdam exteriora quasi sana sunt, sed jam interiora putruerunt. Scriptum namque est: Ante ruinam exaltatur cor (Prov. XVI, 18). Ibi ergo feriuntur, ubi superbiunt. Unde scriptum est: Contrivi cor eorum fornicans et recedens a me (Ezech. VI, 9). Interius enim fornicari est exterius vetitis delectari. Magna autem contritio cordis est haec eadem elatio superbientis. Eo quippe ipso ab integritate salutis corruit, quo jactantia cujuslibet virtutis intumescit. Superbientes enim Deum despiciunt, et relicta creatoris sui gloria, propriam quaerunt. Quibus jam hoc ipsum cecidisse est, amissa superioris sui potentia, in se venisse. Conteruntur etiam, quia, relictis coelestibus, terram quaerunt. Quae autem major poterit esse contritio quam deserto creatore creaturam quaerere; desertis supernis gaudiis, infimis rebus inhiare? Unde

bene per Prophetam dicitur: Humiliat autem peccatores usque ad terram (Psal. CXLVI, 6). Amissis enim coelestibus, terrenum est omne quod sitiunt; et dum plus videri conantur, minus est quod appetunt. De quibus recte per Jeremiam dictum est: Recedentes a te, in terra scribentur (Jerem. XVII, 13). At contra de electis dicitur: Gaudete, quia nomina vestra scripta sunt in coelis (Luc. X, 20). Ista ergo contritio prius serpit in mente, ut postmodum procedat in opere; prius fundamenta cogitationis concutit, ut postmodum fabricam operationis allidat. Unde summa est cura 798 satagendum ut illic vitetur ubi oritur. Scriptum namque est: Omni custodia serva cor tuum, quoniam ex ipso vita procedit (Prov. IV, 23). Et rursum scriptum est: Ex corde exeunt cogitationes malae (Matth. XV, 18). Intus ergo vigilandum est ne mens dum extollitur cadat. Intus servemus omne quod foris agimus. Si enim semel medullam cordis elationis putredo consumpserit, citius corruit cortex vacua externae visionis. Notandum vero est quia dum aliis cadentibus ad standum alii solidari perhibentur, electorum numerus certus et definitus ostenditur. Unde etiam Philadelphiae Ecclesiae per angelum dicitur: Tene quod habes, ne alius accipiat coronam tuam (Apoc. III, 11). [Vet. XI.] 21. Doctrina Ecclesiae de praedestinatione et reprobatione spem nutrit humilium, et elationem superborum premit. Innumerabiles sunt reprobi. Hac ergo sententia, qua narratur aliorum erigi, aliorum autem vita confringi, et spes nutritur humilium, et elatio premitur superborum, dum et illi bona possunt amittere de quibus superbiunt, et isti ea percipere quae quia non habebant contemnuntur. Formidemus igitur in his quae accepimus, nec eos qui illa necdum assecuti sunt desperemus. Quid enim sumus hodie novimus, quid autem post paululum possimus esse nescimus. Hi vero quos fortasse despicimus, et tarde possunt incipere, et tamen vitam nostram ferventioribus studiis anteire. Timendum itaque est ne etiam nobis cadentibus surgat, qui a nobis stantibus irridetur; quamvis stare jam non novit, qui non stantem novit irridere. Hunc autem supernorum

judiciorum metum Paulus apostolus discipulorum cordibus incutiens, ait: Qui se existimat stare, videat ne cadat (I Cor. X, 12). Quod autem dicens: Conterit multos, illico adjunxit, Innumerabiles, vel multitudinem exprimere studuit reproborum, quae humanae rationis numerum transit; vel certe indicare voluit quod omnes qui pereunt intra electorum numerum non habentur, ut eo sint innumerabiles, quo extra numerum currunt. Unde Propheta intuens tantos hoc Ecclesiae tempore specie tenus credere, quantos nimirum certum est electorum numerum summamque transire, ait: Multiplicati sunt super numerum (Psal. XXXIX, 6). Ac si diceret: multis Ecclesiam intrantibus, etiam hi ad fidem specie tenus veniunt qui a numero regni coelestis excluduntur, quia electorum summam sua videlicet multiplicitate transcendunt. Unde et per Jeremiam prophetam dicitur: Aedificabitur civitas Domino a turre Ananehel usque ad portam anguli, et exibit ultra normam mensurae (Jerem. XXXI, 38). Civitatem quippe esse Domini sanctam Ecclesiam nullus ignorat. Ananehel vero Dei gratia interpretatur. In angulo autem duplex paries jungitur. Civitas ergo Domini a turre Ananehel usque ad portam anguli aedificari perhibetur, quia sancta Ecclesia a celsitudine supernae gratiae inchoans, usque ad ingressum susceptionemque construitur utrorumque populorum, Judaici videlicet atque gentilis. Sed quia in ea crescente multitudine etiam reprobi colliguntur, apte subditur: Et exibit ultra normam mensurae, quia usque ad eos quoque extenditur, qui normam justitiae transeuntes, intra mensurae coelestis numerum non sunt. Unde per Isaiam quoque eidem Ecclesiae dicitur: Ad dexteram enim et ad laevam dilataberis, et semen tuum gentes haereditabit (Isai. LIV, 3). In tanta quippe multitudine gentium ad dexteram 799 extenditur, dum quosdam justificandos suscipit. Ad laevam quoque dilatatur, dum ad se quosdam etiam in iniquitate permansuros admittit. Propter hanc multitudinem, quae extra electorum numerum jacet, in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Multi sunt vocati, pauci vero electi (Matth. XX,

16). Sed quia hoc quod electis aliis alii conteruntur, de merito patientis est, non de iniquitate punientis: Non enim iniquus Deus, qui infert iram, apte subjungitur (Rom. III, 5).

CAPUT IX [Rec. IX].

VERS. 25. Novit enim opera eorum, et idcirco inducet noctem, et conterentur. 22. Deus peccatorem aliquando punit excaecatione. Sciendum summopere est quod iniquus quisque duobus modis in nocte conteritur, vel cum exterioris poenae tribulatione percutitur, vel cum occulta sententia interius caecatur. In nocte corruit, cum per extremum judicium vivendi lumen in perpetuum amittit. Unde scriptum est: Ligate ei manus et pedes, et mittite eum in tenebras exteriores (Matth. XXII, 13). Tunc enim coactus in tenebras exteriores mittitur, quia nunc in interioribus excaecatur voluntarie. Rursum in nocte iniquus conteritur, cum pecatorum praecedentium confusione damnatus, veritatis lumen non invenit, et quid deinceps agere debeat non agnoscit. [Vet. XII.] Omne quippe peccatum, quod tamen citius poenitendo non tergitur, aut peccatum est et causa peccati, aut peccatum et poena peccati. Peccatum namque quod poenitentia non diluit ipso suo pondere mox ad aliud trahit. Unde fit ut non solum peccatum sit, sed peccatum et causa peccati. Ex illo quippe vitio culpa subsequens oritur, ex quo caecata mens ducitur ut pejus ex alio ligetur. Sed peccatum quod ex peccato oritur, non jam peccatum tantummodo, sed peccatum est et poena peccati, quia justo judicio omnipotens Deus cor peccantis obnubilat, ut praecedentis peccati merito etiam in aliis cadat. Quem enim liberare noluit, deserendo percussit. Non ergo immerito poena peccati dicitur, quod justa desuper irrogata caecitate, ex praecedentis peccati ultione perpetratur. Quod videlicet agitur dispositione superius ordinata, sed inferius iniquitate confusa, ut et praecedens culpa sit causa subsequentis, et rursum culpa subsequens sit poena praecedentis. Quod bene in infidelibus et lubricis

Paulus quasi quoddam semen erroris aspexerat, cum dicebat: Qui cum cognovissent Deum, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt, aut gratias egerunt; sed evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis (Rom. I, 21). Sed quod ex hujus erroris semine pullulavit, illico adjungit, dicens: Propter quod tradidit illos Deus in desideria cordis eorum, in immunditiam, ut contumeliis afficiant corpora sua in semetipsis (Ibid., 24). Quia enim cognoscentes Deum peccatum superbiae intelligendo commiserunt, caecantur etiam ne intelligant quod committunt. Et qui intelligentiam suam sequi nolunt in peccato et causa peccati, et ipsum lumen intelligentiae perdunt in peccato et poena peccati. Prioris ergo peccati merito peccatorum subsequentium fovea tegitur, ut qui malum sciens perpetrat, deinceps juste in aliis etiam nesciens cadat. 23. Culpae culpis puniuntur, ut ex vitiorum incremento supplicia augeantur. Hoc quippe agitur, ut culpae culpis feriantur, quatenus supplicia fiant peccantium ipsa incrementa vitiorum. Nam quia omnipotens Deus ad poenitentiam tempus indulget, quod tamen humana malitia ad usum suae iniquitatis intorquet, 800 nimirum justo Dei judicio augeri culpa permittitur, ut ad feriendum altius quandoque cumuletur. Hinc enim rursum de quibusdam Paulus apostolus dicit: Ut impleant peccata sua semper (I Thess. II, 16). Hinc voce angeli ad Joannem dicitur: Qui nocet, noceat adhuc; et qui in sordibus est, sordescat adhuc (Apoc. XXII, 11). Hinc David ait: Appone iniquitatem super iniquitatem eorum, ut non intrent in justitiam tuam (Psal. LXVIII, 28). [Vet. XIII.] Hinc rursum de Domino ab eodem Psalmista dicitur: Immissiones per angelos malos viam fecit semitae irae suae (Psal. LXXVII, 49). Cor quippe Dominus prioribus meritis aggravatum juste permittit etiam subsequentibus malignorum spirituum persuasionibus falli, quod cum digne in culpa trahitur, reatus ejus in poena cumulatur. Unde et irae suae Dominus viam de semita fecisse perhibetur. Latior enim est via quam semita. Ex semita vero irae suae viam facere est irae causas districte judicando dilatare, ut qui illuminati agere recte noluerunt, juste caecati

adhuc faciant, unde amplius puniri mereantur. Hinc per Moysen dicitur: Nondum completa sunt peccata Amorrhaeorum (Genes. XV, 16). Hinc per eumdem Moysen Dominus dicit: Ex vinea enim Sodomorum vitis eorum, et propago eorum ex Gomorrha (Deut. XXXII, 32). Uva eorum uva fellis, et botrus amaritudinis in ipsis. Furor draconum vinum eorum, et furor aspidum insanabilis. Nonne haec omnia congregata sunt apud me, et signata in thesauris meis? In die ultionis reddam eis (Ibid., 33, 34). Quam multa eorum mala narravit, et tamen illico adjungit: In tempore quo lapsus fuerit pes eorum (Ibid., 35). Ecce atrocissima illorum facinora describuntur, et tamen ad ultionis diem adhuc subsequens lapsus aspicitur, quo eorum culpae cumulentur. Habent jam quidem unde feriri mereantur; sed sustinetur tamen adhuc peccatum crescere, ut peccantes possit atrocior poena cruciare. Jam meretur supplicium peccatum et causa peccati; sed exspectatur adhuc, ut augmentum supplicii subroget peccatum, et poena peccati. 24. Idem peccatum aliquando poena est et causa peccati. Deus excaecat a caecitate non liberando. Plerumque vero unum atque idem peccatum, et peccatum est ut et poena et causa peccati. Quod melius ostendemus si res ipsas ad medium deducamus. Effrenata enim ventris ingluvies in fervorem luxuriae plenitudinem carnis instigat. Perpetrata autem luxuria saepe aut perjurio, aut homicidio tegitur, ne humanarum legum ultione puniatur. Ponamus ergo ante oculos quod quidam voracitatis sibi frena laxavit, qua voracitate superatus adulterii facinus admisit; deprehensus autem in adulterio, latenter virum adulterae, ne ad judicium traheretur, occidit. Hoc itaque adulterium, inter voracitatem et homicidium positum, de illa videlicet nascens, hoc generans, peccatum est et poena et causa peccati. Peccatum profecto est per semetipsum; poena vero peccati est, quia culpam voracitatis auxit; causa autem peccati est, quia subsequens etiam homicidium genuit. Unum ergo idemque peccatum est et poena praecedentis, et causa culpae subsequentis, quia et transacta dum exaggerat damnat, et adhuc sequentia quae damnari

debeant seminat. Igitur quia peccatis praecedentibus caecatur oculus cordis, ipsa caecitas quae peccantis animum ex anteactae culpae damnatione confundit merito nox vocatur, quia per hanc ab oculis delinquentis 801 lumen veritatis absconditur. Bene itaque dicitur: Novit enim opera eorum, et idcirco inducet noctem, et conterentur, quia, ut saepe dictum est, praecedentia nimirum mala faciunt, ut ad peccandum iterum tenebris subsequentibus involvantur, ut eo jam lumen justitiae videre non possint, quo illud et quando poterant videre noluerunt. Inducere autem noctem Dominus dicitur, non quod ipse tenebras inferat, sed quod obscura corda peccantium misericorditer non illustret, ut hoc ipsum in nocte caecasse sit a caecitatis tenebris liberare noluisse. Sequitur:

CAPUT X [Rec. X].

VERS. 26. Quasi impios percussit eos in loco videntium. 25. In Ecclesiae sinu inique viventes, divina ultio quasi impios percutit. Quasi quid significat in Scripturis. Ecclesia locus est videntium. In Scriptura sacra quasi aliquando pro similitudine, aliquando pro veritate poni consuevit. Pro similitudine enim quasi ponitur, sicut Apostolus dicit: Quasi tristes, semper autem gaudentes (II Cor. VI, 10). Pro veritate vero ponitur, sicut Joannes ait: Vidimus gloriam ejus, gloriam quasi unigeniti a Patre (Joan. I, 14). Hoc autem loco nihil differt utrum pro similitudine an pro veritate sit positum, quia quolibet dicatur ordine, aperte prava malorum vita signatur. Impios vero Scriptura sacra proprie infideles appellat. Hac namque distantia peccatores ab impiis discernuntur, quia cum omnis impius sit peccator, non tamen omnis peccator est impius. Peccator enim dici etiam qui in fide pius est potest. Unde Joannes ait: Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus (I Joan. I, 8). Impius vero proprie dicitur qui a religionis pietate separatur. De talibus enim propheta ait: Non resurgent impii in judicio (Psal. I, 5). [Vet. XIV.] Locus autem videntium sancta Ecclesia

vocatur. In ipsa enim recte consistitur, ut lumen verum, quod Deus est, videatur. Unde ad Moysen dicitur: Est locus penes me, et stabis supra petram cum transeat mea majestas (Exod. XXXIII, 21). Et post paululum: Auferam manum meam et videbis posteriora mea (Ibid., 23). Per locum quippe Ecclesia, per petram Dominus, per Moysen vero multitudo plebis Israeliticae figuratur, quae Domino in terra praedicante non credidit. Ipsa ergo in petra stetit, terga Domini transeuntis aspiciens, quia videlicet post passionem ascensionemque dominicam, intra sanctam Ecclesiam deducta, fidem Christi percipere meruit; et cujus praesentiam non vidit, ejus posteriora cognovit. Dicatur ergo de his, quos intra sanctam Ecclesiam divina ultio invenit in iniquitatibus perdurantes, dicatur de his quorum vitam Paulus apostolus notat, Qui confitentur se nosse Deum, factis autem negant (Tit. I, 16): Quasi impios percussit eos in loco videntium. Ibi quippe stabant, ubi Deum videre videbantur. Ibi tenebras dilexerunt, ubi lumen veritatis aspicitur. Et quamvis apertos habuerunt oculos in fide, tenuerunt tamen eos clausos in opere. Unde bene et de Judaea dicitur: Speculatores ejus caeci (Isai. LVI, 10), quia videlicet non videbant opere quod professione cernebant. Unde etiam de Balaam scriptum est: Qui cadens apertos habet oculos (Num. XXIV, 16). Cadens quippe in opere apertos tenuit oculos in contemplatione. Ita ergo hi etiam oculos aperientes in fide, et non videntes in opere, intra Ecclesiam positi pia specie, extra Ecclesiam inventi sunt impia conversatione. De quibus alias bene scriptum est: Vidi impios sepultos, qui cum adviverent, in loco sancto erant, et laudabantur in civitate quasi justorum operum (Eccle. VIII, 10). 802 26. Multos falsos Christianos Ecclesiae pax abscondit. Quidam ex professione Christianae religionis gloriam quaerunt. Multos enim peste propriae pravitatis obsessos sub Christiano nomine ipsa tranquillitas ecclesiasticae pacis abscondit. Quos tamen si levis persecutionis aura pulsaverit, mox extra aream velut paleas tollit. [Vet. XV.] Quidam vero idcirco Christianitatis vocatione

signantur, quia Christi nomine sublimiter exaltato, pene omnes jam videri fideles aspiciunt; et pro eo quod hoc vocari alios cernunt, ipsi non videri fideles erubescunt, sed esse negligunt quod dici gloriantur. Rem enim virtutis intimae ad decorem sumunt visionis externae; et qui ante supernum judicem nudi conscientiae infidelitate consistunt, ante humanos oculos professione sancta verbo tenus palliantur. 27. Fideles qui nequiter vivunt saepe divino judicio fidei jacturam faciunt. Multi in domo fidei, sine fide moriuntur. Iis vero fidelium societas in supplicii cumulum cedit. Nonnulli autem fidem medullitus tenent, sed vivere fideliter nullatenus curant. Insequuntur enim moribus quod credulitate venerantur. Quibus divino judicio saepe contingit ut per hoc quod nequiter vivunt, et illud perdant quod salubriter credunt. Incessanter namque se pravis actionibus polluunt, et super hoc vindictam justi judicii retribui posse diffidunt; et saepe cum bene vivere negligunt, etiam persequente nullo usque ad perfidiam dilabuntur. Nam qui imminere districtum judicium non credunt, qui inulte se peccare suspicantur, quod pacto vel esse vel dici fideles possunt? Fidem quippe perdidisse, est incorrectis malis operibus digna supplicia reddi posse non credere. Quia ergo digna fidei opera servare contemnunt, etiam fidem perdunt, quam tenere videbantur. Super quos bene per Prophetam sub Jerusalem specie inimicorum destruentium verba memorantur, a quibus scilicet dicitur: Exinanite, exinanite usque ad fundamentum in ea (Psal. CXXXVI, 7). Paulus quippe ait: Fundamentum aliud nemo potest ponere praeter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Jesus (I Cor. III, 11). Inimici ergo destruentes usque ad fundamentum Jerusalem exinaniunt, quando perversi spiritus a corde fidelium, destructo prius aedificio boni operis, soliditatem quoque exhauriunt religionis. Sicut enim supra fundamentum fabrica, sic super fidem opera construuntur. Usque ad fundamentum ergo exinanisse est everso bene vivendi opere etiam robur fidei dissipasse. Hinc etiam ad Judaeam per Jeremiam dicitur: Filii quoque Mempheos et

Taphneos constupraverunt te usque ad verticem (Jerem. II, 16). Usque ad verticem quippe constuprari est post malae operationis usum etiam in ipsa fidei sublimitate corrumpi. Cum enim nequissimi spiritus uniuscujusque animam in pravis operibus involvunt, sed integritatem fidei vitiare non possunt, quasi adhuc inferiora membra polluunt, sed ad verticem non pertingunt. Quisquis autem in fide corrumpitur, jam usque ad verticem constupratur. Malignus enim spiritus quasi ab inferioribus membris usque ad summa pertingit, quando activam vitam polluens, castam celsitudinem fidei diffidentiae morbo corrumpit. Quia igitur cuncta haec humanis oculis absconsa sunt, sed divinis obtutibus patent, et multi in hac domo fidei sine fide moriuntur, dicatur recte: Quasi impios percussit eos in loco videntium. Pios enim se in Ecclesia hominibus ostendunt; sed quia divina judicia latere non possunt quasi impii feriuntur. Quibus hoc magis 803 ad supplicii cumulum crescit, quod unusquisque eorum in Ecclesia fidelibus admistus veritatem fidei sciendo contemnit; atque eo gravior ultio sequitur, quo per exempla rectorum etiam bene vivendi eos scientia comitatur. Quot enim eis modo recti ac fideles fratres ostenduntur, tot in venturo judicio testibus impugnantur. Sciunt ergo quod sequi negligunt. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XI [Vet.

XVI, Rec. XI]. VERS. 27.Qui quasi de industria recesserunt ab eo. 28. Peccatum aut ignorantia, aut infirmitate, aut studio, quod gravius, perpetratur. Aliud bonum non facere, aliud nec amare, aliud odisse. Sciendum quippe est quod peccatum tribus modis committitur (De poenit., dist. 2, can., Sciendum). Nam aut ignorantia, aut infirmitate aut studio perpetratur. Et gravius quidem infirmitate quam ignorantia, sed multo gravius studio quam infirmitate peccatur. Ignorantia Paulus peccaverat, cum dicebat: Qui prius fui blasphemus, et persecutor, et contumeliosus; sed misericordiam consecutus sum, quia ignorans feci in incredulitate (I Tim. I,

13). Petrus vero infirmitate peccavit, quando in eo omne robur fidei quod Domino perhibuit una vox puellae concussit, et Deum quem corde tenuit voce denegavit (Luc. XXII, 57). Sed quia infirmitatis culpa vel ignorantiae eo facilius tergitur, quo non studio perpetratur, Paulus quae ignoravit sciendo correxit, et Petrus motam et quasi arescentem jam radicem fidei lacrymis rigando solidavit. Ex industria vero peccaverant ii de quibus ipse magister dicebat: Si non venissem et locutus fuissem eis, peccatum non haberent; nunc autem excusationem non habent de peccato suo (Joan. XV, 22). Et paulo post: Et viderunt, et oderunt me et Patrem meum (Ibid., 24). Aliud est enim bona non facere, aliud bonorum odisse doctorem; sicut aliud est praecipitatione, aliud deliberatione peccare. Saepe enim peccatum praecipitatione, committitur, quod tamen consilio et deliberatione damnatur. Ex infirmitate enim plerumque solet accidere amare bonum, sed implere non posse. Ex studio vero peccare est bonum nec facere nec amare. Sicut ergo nonnunquam gravius est peccatum diligere, quam perpetrare, ita nequius est odisse justitiam quam non fecisse. Sunt ergo nonnulli in Ecclesia qui non solum bona non faciunt, sed etiam persequuntur; et quae ipsi facere negligunt, etiam in aliis detestantur. Horum peccatum scilicet non ex infirmitate vel ignorantia, sed ex solo studio perpetratur, quia videlicet si vellent implere bona, nec tamen possent, ea quae in se negligunt saltem in aliis amarent. Si enim ea ipsi vel solo voto appeterent, facta ab aliis non odissent; sed quia bona eadem audiendo cognoscunt, vivendo despiciunt, animadvertendo persequuntur, recte dicitur: Qui ex industria recesserunt ab eo. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XII.

IBID. Et omnes vias ejus intelligere noluerunt. 29. Quam graviter delinquant, qui sua ignorantia impunitatem peccandi quaerunt. Aliud est nescisse, aliud scire noluisse. Non enim ait: Infirmitate non intelligunt, sed,

intelligere noluerunt, quia saepe quae facere despiciunt, etiam scire contemnunt. Quia enim scriptum est: Servus nesciens voluntatem domini sui, et faciens digna plagis, vapulabit paucis; et servus sciens voluntatem domini sui, et non faciens juxta eam, plagis vapulabit multis (Luc. XII, 47); impunitatem peccandi existimant remedium nesciendi. 804 Qui nimirum sola superbiae caligine tenebrescunt, atque ideo non discernunt quia aliud est nescisse, aliud scire noluisse. Nescire enim ignorantia est; scire noluisse, superbia. Et tanto magis excusationem non possunt habere quia nesciant, quanto magis eis etiam nolentibus opponitur quod cognoscant. Unde per Salomonem dicitur: Nunquid non sapientia clamitat, et prudentia dat vocem suam, in summis excelsisque verticibus super viam in mediis stans semitis (Prov. VIII, 1)? Transire fortasse per viam vitae temporalis cum ejus ignorantia poteramus, si haec eadem sapientia in semitae angulis constitisset. 30. Viae divinae sapientiae per Incarnationem omnibus patent. Vias Dei intelligere, quid sit. Lumen intelligentiae humilitas aperit, superbia claudit. Investiganda fuerat, si occultari voluisset. Sed postquam incarnationis suae mysteria publice ostendit, postquam humilitatis exempla superbientibus praebuit, semetipsam nobis quasi transeuntibus in mediis semitis fixit, ut videlicet in eam, quam quaerere nolumus, impingamus; et quam transeuntes videre negligimus, tangamus offendentes. Dicatur itaque: Et omnes vias ejus intelligere noluerunt. Via quippe est incarnatae sapientiae omnis actio quam temporaliter gessit. Viae ejus sunt vivendi ordines, quos ad se venientibus stravit. Tot itaque ad se venientibus vias praebuit, quot bene vivendi exempla monstravit. Humilitatis ejus vias Propheta aspexerat, cum suspirabat, dicens: In mandatis tuis me exercebo, et considerabo vias tuas (Psal. CXVIII, 15). Hinc rursum de unoquoque justo dicitur qui curat ut per dominica exempla gradiatur: A Domino gressus hominis diriguntur, et viam ejus cupit nimis (Psal. XXXVI, 23) [Vet. XVII]. Quia ergo superbi quique humiliatis dominicae facta

contemnunt, recte dicitur: Vias ejus intelligere noluerunt. Viae enim istae visione despectae sunt, sed intellectu reverendae. Aliud quippe est in eis quod cernitur, aliud quod exspectatur. Quid enim in hac vita aliud quam dejectionem, sputa, ludibria, mortemque intuentium oculis ostendit? Sed per haec infima transitur ad summa, per haec dedecora quae praecedunt aeterna nobis et gloriosa pollicentur. Viderunt ergo superbi vias Dei, sed intelligere noluerunt, quia dum abjecta quae in se illae ostendunt despiciunt, perdiderunt isti sublimia quae promittunt. Vias itaque Dei intelligere est et humiliter tolerare transitoria, et perseveranter exspectare mansura, ut exemplo Domini coaeterna quaeratur gloria opprobriis temporalibus comparata, et non quod hic quisque tolerat, sed in id quod exspectat intendat. Ad haec ergo superbi clausos oculos tenuerunt, quia dum in gloria praesentis vitae superbiunt, humilitatis Dominicae celsitudinem non viderunt. Lumen enim intelligentiae humilitas aperit, superbia abscondit. Nam secretum quoddam pietatis est, et tanto minus ad illud animus pervenit, quanto magis intumescit, quia eo ipso foras repellitur, quo insanius afflatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII [Rec. XII].

VERS. 28. Ut pervenire facerent ad eum clamorem egeni, et audiret vocem pauperum. 31. Clamor pauperum ad Deum quando perveniat. Fictus est pastor qui praedicatione neglecta, curis saecularibus occupatur. Confessionis necessitas. Cum enim isti superbiunt, clamant ad Deum hi qui ab ipsis superbientibus opprimuntur. Vel certe idcirco dicitur quod ad Deum fecerunt clamorem pauperum 805 pervenire, quia istis cadentibus, in eorum locum pauperes, id est spiritu humiles subrogantur. Et quia hoc eorum casu factum est, ipsi fecisse referuntur, eo videlicet locutionis genere, quo pugnare castra dicimus, quia pugnatur ex illis. Vel certe quia cuncta quae superius dicta sunt referri etiam ad rectores Ecclesiasticos possunt, qui

relicto praedicationis studio, sub occasione regiminis, terrenis negotiis involvuntur, apte subjungitur: Ut pervenire facerent ad eum clamorem egeni, et audiret vocem pauperum; quia nimirum dum ipsi curis saecularibus occupati praedicationis officium deserunt, gregem subditum in querelarum prorumpere clamorem compellunt, ut quasi jure unusquisque subjectus de vita ficti pastoris immurmuret, cur teneat magistri locum, qui non exercet officium. Quamvis fortasse melius per tumorem potentium superbia Judaeorum, et per clamorem pauperum desideria gentium figurantur, sicut, attestante Veritate, per epulantem splendide divitem Judaicus populus designatur; copiam scilicet legis non ad necessitatem salutis, sed ad pompam elationis assumens, atque in praeceptorum verbis non semetipsum ordinate reficiens, sed jactanter ostendens; et per vulneratum Lazarum, qui interpretatur adjutus, forma populi gentilis exprimitur, quem divinum adjutorium tanto magis erigit, quanto minus de suarum virium facultate confidit. Qui pauper et plenus vulneribus esse describitur, quia gentilitas corde humilis peccatorum suorum aperuit confessiones. Nam sicut in vulnere ab internis trahitur virus in cute, ita in confessione peccati, dum in publicum secreta panduntur, quasi mali humores a visceribus intimis foras prorumpunt. Illis ergo peccantibus, pauperum clamor auditur, quia dum Judaei contra Deum superbiunt, ad Deum vota gentilium pervenerunt. Unde et mox haec ipsa immensa ac profunda judicia perhorrescens, non ea curat ratione discutere, sed admiratione venerari, atque ait:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 29. Ipso enim concedente pacem, quis est qui condemnet? ex quo absconderit vultum suum, quis est qui contempletur eum? 32. Cur unus vocetur et trahatur, alter repellatur, nemo discutiat. Nemo ergo discutiat cur, stante Judaico populo, dudum in infidelitate gentilitas jacuit; et cur, ad

finem gentilitate surgente, judaicum populum infidelitatis culpa prostravit. Nemo discutiat cur alius trahatur ex dono, alius repellatur ex merito. Si enim gentilitatem miraris assumptam, Ipso concedente pacem, quis est qui condemnet? Si Judaeam obstupescis perditam, ex quo absconderit vultum suum, quis est qui contempletur eum? Itaque consilium summae et occultae virtutis satisfactio fit apertae rationis. Unde et in Evangelio Dominus, cum de hujus rei causa loqueretur, ait: Confiteor tibi, Pater Domine coeli et terrae, quia abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis. Ita, pater (Matth. XI, 25). Atque mox tanquam rationem quamdam absconsionis ac revelationis adjungens, ait: Quia sic fuit placitum ante te. Quibus nimirum verbis exempla humilitatis accipimus, ne temere discutere superna consilia de aliorum vocatione, aliorum vero repulsione praesumamus. Cum enim intulisset utrumque, non mox rationem reddidit, sed sic Deo placitum dixit, 806 hoc videlicet ostendens, quia injustum esse non potest quod placuit justo. Unde et in vinea laborantibus mercedem reddens, cum quosdam operarios inaequales in opere aequaret in praemio, et plus in mercede quaereret qui labori amplius insudasset, ait: Nonne ex denario convenisti mecum? Volo autem et huic novissimo dare sicut et tibi; an non licet mihi quod volo facere (Matth. XX, 13)? In cunctis ergo quae exterius disponuntur, aperta causa rationis est occultae justitia voluntatis. Dicatur itaque: Ipso enim concedente pacem, quis est qui condemnet? ex quo absconderit vultum suum, quis est qui contempletur eum? [Vet. XIX.] Et quia sic minima sicut maxima, sic singula Deus judicat sicut cuncta, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XV.

IBID. Et super gentem, et super omnes homines. 33. Deus minimis providet ut maximis; et singulis ut universis. Ac si aperte admoneamur intendere, quia hoc judicium, quod super unam gentem describitur, etiam super omnes

homines invisibili examinatione celebratur, ut alius eligatur, alius repellatur occulte, sed nullus injuste. Hoc ergo quod in maximis fieri cernimus, etiam in nobis singulis caute timeamus. Sic enim intenduntur divina judicia super unam animam, sicut super unam urbem; sic super unam urbem, sicut super unam gentem; sic super unam gentem, sicut super universam generis humani multitudinem; quia et sic intendit Dominus singulis, ac si vacet a cunctis; et sic simul intendit omnibus, ac si vacet a singulis. Qui enim omnia administrando implet, regit implendo; nec universis deest, cum disponit unum; nec uni deest, cum disponit universos, cuncta scilicet naturae suae potentia quietus operatur. Quid ergo mirum quia non angustatur intentus, qui operatur quietus? Dicatur itaque quia hoc subtile judicium exercet et super gentem, et super omnes homines. [Rec. XIV.] Quia igitur de specie transivit ad genus, nunc de genere se convertit ad speciem, et quid Judaea proprie mereatur, ostendit dicens:

CAPUT XVI [Vet. XX].

VERS. 30. Qui regnare facit hominem hypocritam propter peccata populi. 34. Qui malis praelatis subjacent, id suae culpae tribuant. Propter peccata populorum regnaturus est Antichristus. Verum namque regem super se Judaea regnare noluit, et idcirco exigentibus meritis hypocritam accepit, sicut ipsa quoque Veritas in Evangelio dicit: Ego veni in nomine Patris mei, et non accepistis me; si alius venerit in nomine suo, illum accipietis (Joan. V, 43). Et sicut Paulus ait: Pro eo quod charitatem veritatis non receperunt, ut salvi fierent, ideo mittet illis Deus operationem erroris, ut credant mendacio (II Thess. II, 10). In eo ergo quod dicitur: Qui regnare facit hominem hypocritam propter peccata populi, potest ipsum omnium hypocritarum caput Antichristus designari. Seductor quippe ille tunc sanctitatem simulat, ut ad iniquitatem trahat. Sed propter peccata populi regnare permittitur, quia nimirum tunc ipsi sub illius regimine

praeordinantur, qui ejus dominio digni ante saecula praesciuntur, qui peccatis subsequentibus exigunt, ut sub illo judiciis praecurrentibus disponantur. Quod ergo tunc Antichristus super impios regnat, non est ex injustitia judicantis, sed ex culpa patientis; quamvis plerique et principatum illius non viderunt, et tamen ejus principatui peccatorum suorum conditione deserviunt, quia et quem dominantem sibi minime conspiciunt, eum proculdubio perverse vivendo venerantur. An non 807 ejus membra sunt, qui per affectatae sanctitatis speciem appetunt videri quod non sunt? Ille namque principaliter hypocrisim sumit, qui cum sit damnatus homo, et nequam spiritus, Deum se esse mentitur. Sed proculdubio ex ejus nunc corpore prodeunt, qui iniquitates suas sub tegmine sacri honoris abscondunt, ut professione videri appetant, quod esse operibus recusant. Quia enim scriptum est: Omnis qui facit peccatum, servus est peccati, quanto nunc liberius peragunt perversa quae volunt, tanto ejus servitio obnixius obligantur (Joan. VIII, 34). Sed nullus, qui talem rectorem patitur, cum quem patitur accuset, quia nimirum sui fuit meriti perversi rectoris subjacere ditioni. Culpam ergo proprii magis, accuset operis quam injustitiam gubernantis. Scriptum namque est: Dabo tibi reges in furore meo (Osee XIII, 11). Quid ergo illos nobis praeesse despicimus, quorum super nos regimina ex Domini furore suscipimus? Si igitur irascente Deo secundum nostra merita rectores accipimus, in illorum actione colligimus, quid ex nostra aestimatione pensemus. Quamvis plerumque et electi subjaceant reprobis. Unde et diu David Saulem pertulit (I Reg. XVIII, 11); sed subsequente culpa adulterii proditur, quia dignus tunc fuit qui tanta praepositi asperitate premeretur. 35. Ob delicta gregis aliquando bonus pastor pervertitur. Sic ergo secundum merita subditorum tribuuntur personae regentium, ut saepe qui videntur boni, accepto mox regimine permutentur; sicut Scriptura sacra de eodem Saule intulit, quia cor cum dignitate mutavit. Unde scriptum est: Cum esses parvulus in oculis tuis,

caput te constitui in tribubus Israel (I Reg. XV, 17). Sic pro qualitatibus subditorum disponuntur acta regentium, ut saepe pro malo gregis etiam vere boni delinquat vita pastoris. Ille enim, Deo attestante, laudatus, ille supernorum mysteriorum conscius David propheta, tumore repentinae elationis inflatus, populum numerando peccavit, et tamen vindictam populus, David peccante, suscepit (II Reg. XXIV, 9). Cur hoc? quia videlicet secundum meritum plebium disponuntur corda rectorum. Justus vero judex peccantis vitium ex ipsorum animadversione corripuit, ex quorum causa peccavit. Sed quia ipse scilicet sua voluntate superbiens, a culpa alienus non fuit, vindictam culpae etiam ipse suscepit. Nam ira saeviens, quae corporaliter populum perculit, rectorem quoque populi intimo cordis dolore prostravit. Certum vero est quod ita sibi invicem et rectorum merita connectantur et plebium, ut saepe ex culpa pastorum deterior fiat vita plebium, et saepe ex plebium merito mutetur vita pastorum. [Vet. XXI.] 36. Subditi praelatos etiam malos tolerent, si salva fide possint. Humilitas recti magistra. Sed quia rectores habent judicem suum, magna cautela subditorum est non temere vitam judicare regentium. Neque enim frustra per semetipsum Dominus aes nummulariorum fudit, et cathedras vendentium columbas evertit (Matth. XXI, 21); nimirum significans quia per magistros quidem vitam judicat plebium, sed per semetipsum facta examinat magistrorum. Quamvis etiam subditorum vitia, 808 quae a magistris modo vel dissimulantur judicari, vel nequeunt, ejus procul dubio judicio reservantur. Igitur dum salva fide res agitur, virtutis est meritum, si quidquid prioris est toleratur. Debet tamen humiliter suggeri, si fortasse valeat quod displicet emendari. Sed curandum summopere est ne in superbiam transeat justitiae inordinata defensio, ne dum rectitudo incaute diligitur, ipsa magistra rectitudinis humilitas amittatur; ne eum sibi praeesse quisque despiciat, quem fortasse contingit ut in aliqua actione reprehendat. Contra hunc tumorem superbiae, subditorum mens ad custodiam humilitatis

edomatur, si infirmitas propria incessanter attenditur. Nam vires nostras veraciter examinare negligimus; et quia de nobis fortiora credimus, idcirco eos qui nobis praelati sunt districte judicamus. Quo enim nosmetipsos minus agnoscimus, eo illos quos reprehendere nitimur plus videmus. Singula haec mala sunt, quae saepe a subditis in praelatos, saepe a praelatis in subditos committuntur, quia et omnes subditos hi qui praesunt minus quam ipsi sunt sapientes arbitrantur, et rursum qui subjecti sunt rectorum suorum actiones judicant, et si ipsos regimen habere contingeret, se potuisse agere melius putant. Unde plerumque fit ut et rectores minus prudenter ea quae agenda sunt videant, quia eorum oculos ipsa nebula elationis obscurat; et nonnunquam is qui subjectus est hoc cum praelatus fuerit faciat, quod dudum fieri subjectus arguebat; et pro eo quod illa quae judicaverat perpetrat, saltem quia judicavit erubescat. Igitur sicut praelatis curandum est ne eorum corda aestimatione singularis sapientiae locus superior extollat, ita subjectis providendum est ne sibi rectorum facta displiceant. [Vet. XXII.] 37. Pastores mali honorandi, non imitandi. Si autem magistrorum vita jure reprehenditur, oportet ut eos subditi, etiam cum displicent, venerentur. [Rec. XV.] Sed hoc est solerter intuendum, ne aut quem venerari necesse est, imitari appetas, aut quem imitari despicis, venerari contemnas. Subtilis etenim via tenenda est rectitudinis et humilitatis, ut sic reprehensibilia magistrorum facta displiceant, quatenus subditorum mens a servanda magisterii reverentia non recedat. Quod bene in Noe debriato exprimitur, cujus nudata verecundiora boni filii aversi veniendo texerunt (Genes. IX, 21). Aversari quippe dicimur quod reprobamus. Quid est ergo quod filii verecunda patris superjecto dorsis pallio aversi venientes operiunt, nisi quod bonis subditis sic praepositorum suorum mala displicent, ut tamen haec ab aliis occultent? Operimentum aversi deferunt, quia judicantes factum, et venerantes magisterium, nolunt videre quod tegunt. [Rec. XVI.] 38. Pastores temporalibus vacantes contemnere, est Deum accusare. Potestas

regiminis ministrari non potest sine studio curae temporalis. Sunt vero nonnulli qui si parum quid de spiritali conversatione inchoant, cum rectores suos temporalia agere et terrena considerant, mox ordinem supernae dispositionis accusant, quod nequaquam bene ad regendum praelati sint, per quos conversationis infimae exempla monstrantur. Sed hi nimirum dum temperare se a rectorum suorum 809 reprehensione negligunt, culpae suae exigentibus meritis, usque ad reprehensionem conditoris excedunt: cujus profecto dispensatio inde ab humilibus rectior agnoscitur, unde ab elatis non recta judicatur. Quia enim potestas regiminis ministrari non potest sine studio curae temporalis, aliquando omnipotens Deus mira dispensatione pietatis, ut tenerae spiritalium mentes a terrena cura disjunctae sint, onus regiminis duris ac laboriosis cordibus injungit, ut tanto illae ab hoc mundo securius lateant, quanto haec in terrenis sollicitudinibus libenter elaborant. In exhibitione quippe suscepti oneris pro ipsis quoque utilitatibus subditorum durae viae sunt mundanae servitutis. 39. Quantum debeamus iis qui a temporalium cura, ipsis vacando, nos liberant. Et saepe, ut dictum est, misericors Deus quo suos tenere diligit, eo illos sollicite ab externis actionibus abscondit. Nam et plerumque paterfamilias ad eum laborem servos dirigit, a quo subtiles filios suspendit; et inde filii sine vexatione decori sunt, unde servi in pulvere foedantur. Quod quam recte in Ecclesia divinitus agitur, ipsa tabernaculi constructione signatur. Ad Moysen quippe divina voce praecipitur ut ad tegenda interius sancta sanctorum ex bysso, cocco atque hyacintho vela texantur, jussumque est ut ad protegendum tabernaculum, vela cilicina et pelles extenderet, quae nimirum vel pluvias, vel ventos, vel pulverem tolerarent (Exod. XXVI, 1). Quid ergo per pelles et cilicia, quibus tabernaculum tegitur, nisi grossas hominum mentes accipimus, quae aliquando in Ecclesia occulto Dei judicio, quamvis durae sint, praeferuntur? Quae quia servire curis temporalibus non timent, oportet ut tentationum ventos et pluvias de hujus mundi contrarietatibus portent.

Quid vero per hyacinthum, coccum, byssumque signatur, nisi sanctorum vita tenera, sed clara? Quae dum caute in tabernaculo sub ciliciis et pellibus absconditur, sua ei integra pulchritudo servatur. Ut enim in interioribus tabernaculi byssus fulgeat, coccus coruscet, hyacinthus caeruleo colore resplendeat, desuper pelles et cilicia imbres, ventos et pulverem portant. Qui igitur magnis virtutibus in sanctae Ecclesiae sinu proficiunt, praepositorum suorum vitam despicere non debent, cum vacare eos rebus exterioribus vident, quia hoc quod ipsi securi intima penetrant, ex illorum adjumento est qui contra procellas hujus saeculi exterius laborant. Quam enim candoris sui gratiam retineret, si byssum pluvia tangeret? Aut quid fulgoris atque claritatis coccus vel hyacinthus ostenderet, si haec susceptus pulvis foedaret? Sit ergo desuper textura cilicii fortis ad pulverem, sit inferius color hyacinthinus aptus ad decorem. Ornent Ecclesiam qui solis rebus spiritalibus vacant, tegant Ecclesiam, quos et labor rerum corporalium non gravat. Nequaquam ergo contra rectorem suum exteriora 810 agentem murmuret is qui intra Ecclesiam sanctam jam spiritaliter fulget. Si enim tu secure interius ut coccus rutilas, cilicium quo protegeris cur accusas? [Vet. XXIII.] 40. Prava praelatorum exempla Deus ordinat in poenam superborum subditorum. Dum maledicere videntur prophetae, praedicunt. Sed a quibusdam quaeritur quia dum saltem pro utilitate subditorum rectores nimium temporalibus curis inserviunt, plerique in Ecclesia eorum exemplo deterescunt. Quod verum valde esse quis abneget, cum curari a pastoribus terrena quam coelestia sollicitius videt? Sed neque haec injusta sunt, si, ut superius diximus, res praesidentium juxta subditorum merita disponuntur. Occulte namque et sponte perpetratae culpae exigunt ut prava et a pastoribus exempla praebeantur, quatenus justo judicio is qui de via Dei superbus exorbitat, in via qua graditur etiam per ducatum pastoris offendat. Unde per prophetam quoque praenuntiantis studio dicitur, non maledicentis voto: Obscurentur oculi eorum, ne videant, et dorsum eorum semper

incurva (Psal. LXVIII, 24). Ac si dicat: Qui humanae vitae actionibus quasi praevidendis itineribus praesunt, veritatis lucem non habeant, ut et qui sequuntur subditi, iniquitatum suarum oneribus incurvati, omnem statum rectitudinis amittant. Quod factum procul dubio in Judaea novimus, cum in ipso nostri Redemptoris adventu pharisaeorum turba atque sacerdotum a vero lumine mentis oculos clausit, et per praepositorum exempla gradiens in infidelitatis tenebris populus erravit. 41. Quo sensu Deus faciat regnare hypocritam. Sed quaeri rationabiliter potest quomodo hoc in loco dicitur quod regnare hypocritam Dominus facit, cum de hac re specialiter per prophetam conqueritur, dicens: Ipse regnaverunt, et non ex me; principes exstiterunt, et non cognovi (Osae. VIII, 4). Quis enim recte sentiens dicat quia facit Dominus quod minime cognoscit? Sed quia scire Dei approbare est, nescire reprobare; unde quibusdam quos reprobat dicit: Nescio vos unde sitis, discedite a me omnes operarii iniquitatis (Luc. XIII, 25); et aliquando facere Dei est id quod fieri prohibet, irascendo permittere; unde et regis Aegypti cor se obdurare asseruit (Exod. IV, 21), quia videlicet obdurari permisit; miro modo hypocritas Dominus et regnare facit et nescit: facit sinendo, nescit reprobando. Unde necesse est ut ad omne quod in hac vita concupiscitur prius voluntas interna requiratur. Quam cum humani cordis auris percipere appetit, sciat quia haec non verbis, sed rebus sonat. Locus ergo regiminis cum regendus offertur, in se prius necesse est ut quisque discutiat, si loco vita congruit, si ab honore actio non dissentit, ne justus omnium rector eo post in tribulatione preces non audiat, quod ipsa quoque ejus, de quo tribulatio oritur, exordia honoris ignorat.

LIBER VIGESIMUS SEXTUS.

Exponit sanctus Doctor septem ultimos versus cap. XXXIV, et caput XXXV ex integro, cum uno et viginti prioribus versibus cap. XXXVI. Ubi latissime in sensus tum allegoricos tum morales excurrit.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. 811 Fictae ac verae humilitatis indicia. In locutionibus suis hoc arrogantes viri habere inter alia proprium solent, quod ab auditoribus suis ne quid fortasse inordinatum dixerint tunc requirunt, cum se laudabiliter aliquid dixisse cognoscunt. Haec videlicet faciunt, non quod de dictis suis ambigant, sed quod ab audientium judicio favores quaerant. Nam inveniri facile poterit quo animo percunctantur, si quisquam cum eorum bona laudat, etiam mala reprehendat. Certum quippe est quia sicut inflantur laudibus, ita correptionibus inflammantur; et cum a quolibet se vel juste reprehendi conspiciunt, mox in malis suis fomitem defensionis exquirunt. Quomodo ergo de bonis suis humiliter ambigunt, qui mala sua defendere etiam perverse moliuntur? Ille est enim vere humilis in bonis, qui non est defensor in malis. Nam qui de malis suis arguitur, et contra verba arguentis accenditur, quando de bonis suis quasi humiliter titubat, per humilitatis vocem ornari appetit, non doceri. Eliu itaque vitam arrogantium signans, postquam multa interna et sublimia intulit, ecce in verbis formam humilitatis assumit, et aequitate proposita, sub quadam discipulatus imagine beatum Job alloquitur dicens:

CAPUT II.

CAP. XXXIV, VERS. 31, 32.Quia ego locutus sum ad Deum, te quoque non prohibebo. Si erravi, tu doce me; si iniquitatem locutus sum, ultra non addam. 3. Humilitatis larva cito abjicitur. Sicut saepe contingit ut bona

loquantur et mali, multa Eliu fortia paulo superius se dixisse meminerat, et securus idcirco ne fortasse erraverit requirebat. Neque enim requireret, si se errasse credidisset. Est namque, ut dixi, propria arrogantium fraus ut tunc de errore requirere studeant, quando se noverint non errasse. Qui rursum requirere vel argui de errore despiciunt, si quando se errasse veraciter praecognoscunt. Non enim esse, sed videri humiles appetunt; et tunc requirendo speciem humilitatis assumunt, quando de ipsa magis requisitione laudantur. Sed quia omnino difficile est ut elatio quae regnat in corde non erumpat in voce; auditores arrogantium si eorum dicta paulisper taciti exspectant atque considerant, citius corda illorum subsequentia verba manifestant. Diu quippe morari non possunt in ipsa humilitatis imagine, quam specie tenus sumunt. Superbis enim mentibus humilitas alta est, et cum ejus formam conscendere ambiunt, lassatis animi gressibus quasi a clivosis atque asperis itineribus dilabuntur. Alienum est scilicet quod videri appetunt, et idcirco ejus imagini diu inhaerere nequaquam possunt. Grave pondus aestimant, cum eam saltem specie tenus portant, et quousque 812 hanc abjiciant, vim quamdam in corde patiuntur, quia videlicet elationis usui male dominanti deserviunt, atque ejus imperio semetipsos quales sint prodere compelluntur, ne diu possint videri quod non sunt. Unde Eliu quoque postquam de errore doceri se petiit, postquam iniquitatem non se ultra locuturum promisit, subito ab humilitatis specie ad verba tumidae causationis exsilivit. Nam subdidit, dicens:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 33. Nunquid a te Deus expetit eam, quia displicuit tibi? 3. Sancti humanum judicium non metuunt, sed divinum, ad quod etiam provocare simulant mali. Ac si diceret: Ego coram Domino rationes positurus sum cur modo iniquitas mea a te reprehenditur, quae constat quod in judicio a te non requiratur. Recti viri cum injuste ab hominibus impetuntur, ad supernum

judicium recurrunt. [Vet. et Rec. II.] Unde et ab eodem beato Job dicitur: Ecce in coelo testis meus, et conscius meus in excelsis (Job. XVI, 19). Et quia ei placere summopere cupiunt, ejus solius testimonium requirunt. Perversi quoque, quia justorum vitam deserunt, sed nonnunquam eloquia sequuntur, cum de suis male gestis increpantur, hoc assumunt in argumentum defensionis, quod justi proferunt in testimonium puritatis. Unde eis et consuetudo jam facta est, ut si quis eos de factis suis arguat, Dei magis judicium quam hominum quaerant. A Deo enim et cum se damnandos noverint, judicari non metuunt, et judicari ab hominibus erubescunt. Proponunt ergo majus quod non metuunt, ut hoc minus declinare valeant quod erubescunt. Scriptum quippe est: Unusquisque nostrum pro se rationem reddet Deo (Rom. XIV, 12). Quia ergo tunc damnatio uniuscujusque manifesta est, exinde modo iniqui colligunt, ut etiam perversa uniuscujusque actio sit secura; ne modo eam quilibet justus arguendo discutiat, a qua constat quod in judicio alienus existat. At contra piorum conscientiae grande sibi conferri praemium credunt, cum de quibusdam modo suis actionibus illicitis arguuntur. Proponunt etenim ante oculos cordis quia districtum Dei judicium tanto verius tunc super eos mitigabitur, quanto nunc acrius arguente homine praevenitur; et temporalem iram super se lucrum computant, per quam se aeternam posse evadere non ignorant. Eliu ergo typum cunctorum arrogantium tenens, et magis eligens aeterna invectione percuti, quam temporaliter increpari, dicat: Nunquid a te Deus expetit eam, quia displicuit tibi? Quia vero esse culpabiliores solent hi qui loqui in contentione inchoant, quam qui respondent, subdidit, dicens:

CAPUT IV.

IBID. Tu enim coepisti loqui, et non ego. 4. Frustra se innocentes putant, qui pulsati dura respondent. Eo se innocentem credidit, quo pulsatus erupit; 813 nimirum nesciens quia innocentia non tempore defenditur, sed ratione.

Quid enim ejus defensionibus adminiculatur, quod etsi tacenti nulla intulit, recte tamen inchoanti prava respondit? Postquam vero in verbis elationis ostenditur, ecce iterum sub requisitionis velamine palliatur, atque infert, dicens: IBID. Quod si quid melius nosti, loquere. Quamvis dum non ait: Quia melius nosti, sed, Si quid melius nosti, loquere, nimis hoc ipsum superbisse est, de melioris scientia dubitasse. Hoc tamen, quod beato Job locum loquendi tribuit, humilitatem se exhibuisse indicavit. Sed, sicut supra dictum est, quia in actione arrogantium omne quod superducto sermone tegitur, prorumpente rursum intentione elationis aperitur, citius Eliu innotuit qua mente beatum Job loqui postulavit. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT V [Rec. III].

VERS. 34, 35. Viri intelligentes loquantur mihi, et vir sapiens audiat me. Job autem stulte locutus est, et verba illius non sonant disciplinam. 5. Mentiri non licet humilitatis gratia. Ecce dum quasi humiliter beato Job loqui tribuit, quid intrinsecus gestaret ostendit, dicens: Viri intelligentes loquantur mihi; dedignatus videlicet si beatus Job loqui praesumeret, qui quasi ejus intelligere verba non posset. Et quia non solum ad loquendum, sed etiam ad audiendum, beatum Job indignum fuisse judicavit, illico adjunxit: Vir sapiens audiat me. Ac si diceret: Huic loqui injuste conceditur, qui etiam audire verba sapientium non meretur. Atque mox aperte, quam despecta de illo sentiat, manifestat, dicens: Job autem stulte locutus est, et verba illius non sonant disciplinam. Sine disciplina locutum beatum Job credidit, quia justum se in suis operibus fuisse memoravit. Verum fortasse Eliu diceret, si ea quae beatus Job de seipso narraverat, non de illo haec eadem ipse disciplinae auctor existimasset. Innocenter enim Job se asseruit flagellatum, quem Deus etiam perhibuit frustra percussum (Job. II, 3). Quid ergo vox percussi superbum sonuit, quae a sententia ferientis nullatenus discrepavit? Incaute sunt humiles (22, q. 2, c. Incaute), qui se mendacio

illaqueant, dum arrogantiam vitant; imo mentiendo superbiunt, quia contra veritatem se erigunt quam relinquunt. Qui enim, necessitate cogente, vera de se bona loquitur, tanto magis humilitati jungitur, quanto et veritati sociatur. An Paulus humilis non fuit, quando aemulatione veritatis contra falsos apostolos tot de se discipulis fortia gesta narravit (I Tim. II, 7; Act. XX, 18, 19) Qui nimirum veritati inimicus existeret, si abscondendo virtutes proprias, praedicatores errorum praevalere permisisset. Sed quia arrogantes viri in eo quod bonorum dicta superbe examinant, verborum magis superficiem quam rerum ordinem pensant, Eliu beati Job sententias disciplinam credidit non sonasse. [Vet. III.] Quia vero saepe asperitas superborum usque ad duritiam maledictionis extenditur, illico contra beatum Job, quasi ad Deum faciens verba, subjungit:

CAPUT VI [Rec. IV].

VERS. 36. Pater mi, probetur Job usque ad finem. 814 6. Superbi afflictis compati nesciunt. In correptione sic tumentia premenda sunt, ut cruenta foveantur. Ecce hoc quod de arrogantiae tumore conceperat in verbis etiam maledictionis exaltat. Sed fortasse benevolae vim probationis optaret, si stetisse eum in probatione judicasset. Ut ergo aperte malitia ejus crudelitatis appareat, probari eum adhuc per flagella deprecatur, quem inter flagella lapsum fuisse jam queritur. Praemisit quod sensit, ut apertius cognosci debeat quod optavit. Adhuc feriri postulat quem jam peccasse sub manu ferientis accusat. Propria haec arrogantium vota sunt, ut vitam dolentium examinari acrius deprecentur, quia quanto sibimetipsis justiores sunt, tanto alienis doloribus duriores existunt. Nesciunt enim in se passionem alienae infirmitatis trahere, et sicut suae, ita etiam proximi imbecillitati misereri. Quia enim de se alta sentiunt, idcirco humilibus nullatenus condescendunt. Eliu beatum Job pro culpa percussum credit, atque ideo exhibenda ei pietatis viscera nec inter tot dolores aestimavit. Viri autem veraciter sancti

cum flagellari quempiam etiam pro culpa cognoscunt, etsi quaedam ejus inordinata corripiunt, ad quaedam tamen dolentia compatiuntur; et sic sciunt tumentia premere, ut sciant etiam cruenta refovere, quatenus in eis cum dura emolliuntur, infirma roborentur. [Vet. IV, Rec. V.] At contra arrogantes viri quia charitatis viscera non habent, non solum non compatiuntur etiam justis dolentibus, sed eos insuper sub specie justae increpationis affligunt; et vel si qua in eis sunt parva mala exaggerant, vel ea quae vere bona sunt male apud se interpretando commutant. 7. Sancti doctores delinquentium vitia exaggerare solent. Quid sit cordis parietem fodere. Quamvis etiam casti doctores saepe exaggerare soleant delinquentium vitia, et ex quibusdam signis publicis occulta rimari, ut possint ex minimis majora cognoscere. Unde ad Ezechielem dicitur: Fili hominis, fode parietem (Ezech. VIII, 8). Ubi mox subdidit: Et cum fodissem parietem, apparuit ostium unum, et dixit ad me: Ingredere, et vide abominationes pessimas, quas isti faciunt hic. Et ingressus vidi; et ecce omnis similitudo reptilium, et animalium abominatio, et universa idola domus Israel depicta erant in pariete (Ibid., IX, 10). Per Ezechielem quippe praepositorum persona signatur, per parietem duritia subditorum. Et quid est parietem fodere, nisi asperis correptionibus duritiam cordis aperire? Quem cum perfodisset, apparuit ostium, quia cum cordis duritia asperis correptionibus aperitur, quasi quaedam janua ostenditur, ex qua omnia in eo qui corripitur cogitationum interiora videantur. Unde et bene illic sequitur: Et dixit ad me: Ingredere, et vide abominationes pessimas, quas isti faciunt hic. Quasi ingreditur ut abominationes aspiciat, qui discussis quibusdam signis exterius apparentibus, ita corda subditorum penetrat, ut cuncta ei quae illici e cogitantur innotescant. Unde et subdidit: Et ingressus vidi; et ecce omnis similitudo reptilium, et animalium abominatio. In reptilibus, cogitationes omnino terrenae signantur; in animalibus vero, jam quidem aliquantulum a terra suspensae, sed adhuc terrenae mercedis praemia requirentes. Nam

reptilia toto ex corpore terrae 815 inhaerent; animalia autem ventre a terra suspensa sunt, appetitu tamen gulae ad terram semper inclinantur. Reptilia itaque sunt intra parietem, quando cogitationes volvuntur in mente quae a terrenis desideriis nunquam levantur. Animalia quoque sunt intra parietem, quando et si qua jam justa, si qua honesta cogitantur, appetendis tamen lucris temporalibus honoribusque deserviunt; et per semetipsa quidem jam quasi a terra suspensa sunt, sed adhuc per ambitum quasi per gulae desiderium sese ad ima submittunt. Unde et bene subditur: Et universa idola domus Israel depicta erant in pariete. Scriptum quippe est: Et avaritia, quae est idolorum servitus (Coloss. III, 5). Recte ergo post animalia idola describuntur, quia etsi honesta actione quasi a terra se erigunt, ambitione tamen inhonesta semetipsos ad terram deponunt. Bene autem dicitur: Depicta erant, quia dum exteriorum rerum intrinsecus species attrahuntur, in corde quasi depingitur quidquid fictis imaginibus cogitatur. [Vet. V.] 8. Rectoris animarum in scrutandis cordis piaculis pia severitas. Qui a correptione cessat, damnari metuat. Notandum itaque est quia prius foramen in pariete, ac deinde ostium cernitur, et tunc demum occulta abominatio demonstratur, quia nimirum uniuscujusque peccati prius signa forinsecus, deinde janua apertae iniquitatis ostenditur, et tunc demum omne malum quod intus latet aperitur. Idcirco ergo solent etiam sancti doctores graviter minuta discutere, ut ab extremis exterioribus ad occulta possint majora pervenire. Verba asperae increpationis movent, ut spinas mortiferae cogitationis eradicent; et haec cum agunt, charitatis amore saeviunt, non inflatione elationis intumescunt. Mori enim pro ipsis parati sunt, quos quasi usque ad mortem saevientes affligunt. Servant in cogitatione quod diligunt, sumunt in specie quod persequuntur. Bona praedicantes insinuant, mala autem caventes praenuntiant, non ut Eliu desiderantes exorant. Erga commissos sibi ita nonnunquam in correptione fervent, ac si de tranquillitate nihil habeant; sed ita in dilectione tranquilli sunt, ac si nullus

eos fervor accendat. Valde enim metuunt ne si a pravorum correptione cessaverint, ipsi pro eorum damnatione puniantur; et cum ad verba invectionis inflammantur, inviti quidem ad haec veniunt, sed tamen haec defensionem sibi apud districtum judicem praeparant. 9. Corripiendorum et erudiendorum ad poenitentiam et pietatem delinquentium ordo. Unde et eidem rursus Ezechieli dicitur: Fili hominis, sume tibi laterem, et pones eum coram te, et describes in eo civitatem Jerusalem, et ordinabis adversus eam obsidionem, et aedificabis munitiones, et comportabis aggerem, et dabis contra eam castra, et pones arietes in gyro. Et tu sume tibi sartaginem ferream, et pones eam murum ferreum inter te et inter civitatem (Ezech. IV, 1, seq.). Cujus enim Ezechiel nisi magistrorum speciem tenet? cui dicitur: Sume tibi laterem, et pones eum coram te, et describes in eo civitatem Jerusalem. Doctores quippe sancti sibi laterem sumunt, quando terrenum cor auditorum ut doceant apprehendunt. Quem laterem coram se ponunt, quia tota illud sollicitudinis intentione custodiunt. In quo et civitatem Jerusalem 816 jubentur describere, quia praedicando terrenis cordibus curant summopere quanta sit supernae pacis visio demonstrare. Cui bene etiam dicitur: Et ordinabis adversus eam obsidionem, et aedificabis munitiones. Sancti enim praedicatores obsidionem circa laterem in quo Jerusalem civitas descripta est ordinant, quando terrenae menti, sed jam supernam patriam requirenti, quanta eam in hujus vitae tempore vitiorum impugnet adversitas demonstrant. Cum enim unumquodque peccatum quomodo menti insidietur ostenditur, quasi obsidio circa Jerusalem civitatem voce praedicatoris ordinatur. Sed quia non solum insinuant quomodo mentem insidiantia vitia expugnent, sed etiam quomodo custoditae virtutes roborent, recte subjungitur: Et aedificabis munitiones. Munitiones quippe sanctus praedicator aedificat, quando quae virtutes quibus vitiis obvient, insinuare non cessat. Et quia virtutibus crescentibus plerumque bella tentationis augentur, recte adhuc additur: Et comportabis

aggerem; et dabis contra eam castra, et pones arietes in gyro. Aggerem namque comportat, quando praedicator quisque molem crescentis tentationis indicat. Et contra Jerusalem castra erigit, quando rectae intentioni audientium hostis callidi circumventiones quasi incomprehensibiles insidias praedicit. Atque in gyro arietes ponit, quando tentationum aculeos in hac vita nos undique circumdantes, et virtutum murum perforantes innotescit. 10. Quis et quantus zelus ad id necessarius. Ubi bene additur: Et tu sume tibi sartaginem ferream, et pones eam murum ferreum inter te et inter civitatem (Ezech. IV, 3). Per sartaginem namque frixura, per ferrum vero fortitudo ostenditur. Quid autem ita magistri atque doctoris mentem quam zelus Domini frigit et excruciat? Unde et Paulus hujus sartaginis incendebatur frixura, cum diceret: Quis infirmatur, et ego non infirmor? et quis scandalizatur, et ego non uror (II Cor. XI, 29) Et quia quisquis zelo Dei contra peccantes accenditur, forti in perpetuum custodia munitur, ne ex neglecta praedicationis et regiminis cura damnetur, recte dicitur: Pones eam murum ferreum inter te et inter civitatem (Ezech. IV, 3). Sartago enim ferrea murus ferreus inter prophetam et civitatem ponitur, quia cum nunc fortem zelum doctores exhibent, eumdem zelum postmodum inter se et auditores suos fortem munitionem tenent, ne tunc ad vindictam destituti sint, si nunc fuerint in correptione dissoluti. Hanc sartaginem propheta idem, ut inter se et auditores suos murum sumeret, audiebat, cum ei divina vox praemitteret, dicens: Si tu annuntiaveris impio, et ille non fuerit conversus ab impietate sua, et a via sua impia, ipse quidem in impietate sua morietur, tu autem animam tuam liberasti (Ezech. III, 19). Hanc sartaginem inter se et discipulos murum Paulus posuerat, cum dicebat: Mundus sum a sanguine omnium vestrum; non enim subterfugi quominus annuntiarem omne consilium Dei vobis (Act. XX, 26). Nunc ergo doctores necesse est ut appetant zeli ardoribus frigi, ne cogantur post de torpore negligentiae igne gehennae cruciari. [Vet. VI.] 11. Qua discretione

exercendus. Ex occulto odio non prodeat. Sed aliud est quod injustis et subditis, aliud 817 quod justis et non subditis debemus. Ad illorum nos correptionem atque custodiam reddendarum rationum debet timor accendere; ad istorum vero venerationem ipsa considerata aequitas inclinare. Sed arrogantes viri, quia hujus formam discretionis ignorant, hoc justis et non subditis exhibent, quod a bonis praedicatoribus fieri et injustis et subditis vident. Qui cum ad fervorem invectionis injuste prosiliunt, etiam per verba maledictionis excedunt. Quia enim nequaquam proximos sicut se diligunt, proximis optare non desinunt quod ipsi sibimet evenire pertimescunt. Unde Eliu occultum odium in manifestatione maledictionis exsudans, ait: Pater mi, probetur Job usque ad finem, ne desinas ab homine iniquitatis. Hominem iniquitatis vocat, quem Deus justum prae omnibus superna attestatione denuntiat. Et quia multa adhuc sub hac indiscretione subjuncta sunt, breviter ea aestimo transcurrenda. Dicta enim quae gravitate carent, intenta expositione non indigent. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII [Rec. VI].

VERS. 37. Qui addidit super peccata sua blasphemiam. 12. Eliu eos adumbrat, qui cum pro veritate loqui videantur, a veritate sunt alieni. Accusat eum et pro peccatis flagella meruisse, et post flagella peccasse. Longe vero aliter Dominus judicat, qui et frustra flagellatum insinuat, et bona duplicia post flagella retribuit (Job. II, 3). Poena enim debetur culpae, non praemium. Beatus ergo Job sine culpa locutus ostenditur, quem post locutionem praemia subsequuntur (Job. XLII, 10). Eliu itaque, quia pro Domini defensionibus loquens, de beato Job aliud quam Dominus sentit, quasi dum pro veritate verba multiplicat, a veritate discordat. Sequitur:

CAPUT VIII.

IBID. Inter nos interim constringatur, et tunc ad judicium provocet sermonibus suis Deum. 13. Non solum inepta dicere student, sed multa. Ac si diceret: Ex nostra assertione cognoscat quia nequaquam divinae examinationi sufficiat. Et quia arrogantes viri non solum student inepta dicere, sed etiam multa; versus qui sequitur, bene de illo frequenter infertur.

CAPUT IX [Vet.

et Rec. VII]. CAP. XXXV, VERS. 1. Igitur Eliu haec rursum locutus est. 14. Superborum immensa loquacitas. Omnis qui multa loquitur, in locutione sua semper incipere studet, quatenus inchoatione ipsa suspensos auditores faciat, ut eo attentius taceant, quo quasi novum audire aliquid exspectant. Eliu vero alia finiens, alia incessanter exorditur, ut immensa loquacitas per subjuncta semper initia continuetur. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 2. Nunquid aequa tibi videtur tua cogitatio, ut diceres: Justior sum Deo? 15. Innocentes quam injuste soleant accusare. Quia beatus Job justiorem se Deo non dixerit, omnis qui textum historiae legit, agnoscit, sed ait: Proponat aequitatem contra me, et perveniet ad victoriam judicium meum (Job. XXIII, 7). Vitam suam videlicet pensans, et causas percussionis ignorans, ut saepe jam dictum est, pro diluendis peccatis se credidit et non pro augendis meritis flagellari; et idcirco judicium suum ad victoriam pervenire confisus est, quia culpam in se, pro qua debuisset percuti, non invenit. Quod quidem de illo et Dominus ad diabolum dixit: Commovisti me adversus eum, ut affligerem eum frustra (Job. II, 3). Quid ergo haec loquendo peccavit, qui verbis istis divinae de se et occultae sententiae etiam nesciendo consensit? Aut quid obest si a rectitudine veritatis humano judicio verba nostra superficie tenus discrepant, quando in cordis 818 cardine ei compaginata concordant? Humanae aures verba nostra talia

judicant qualia foris sonant (22, q. 5, c. Humanae); divina vero judicia talia ea audiunt qualia ex intimis proferuntur. Apud homines cor ex verbis, apud Deum vero verba pensantur ex corde. Beatus ergo Job dum hoc ait exterius quod interius Dominus dixit, omne quod locutus est tanto juste exterius intulit, quanto pie ab interna sententia non recessit. Quamvis prophetico spiritu repletus, in eo quod ait: Proponat aequitatem contra me, et perveniet ad victoriam judicium meum (Job. XXIII, 7), intueri Redemptoris nostri praesentiam potuit. Ipse enim qui est virtus Patris et sapientia, etiam ejus aequitas non inconvenienter accipitur. Unde scriptum est: Qui factus est nobis a Deo sapientia, et justitia, et sanctificatio (I Cor. I, 30). Quam scilicet aequitatem, quia Deus iniquis fugentibus incarnatam ostendendo contra posuit, eos protinus ab iniquitate revocavit, et humanum genus in eo judicio antiquum adversarium vicit, quo aequitatem Dei adversantem suis itineribus invenit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 3. Dixisti enim: Non tibi placet quod rectum est, vel quid tibi proderit si ego peccavero? 16. Aut falsa loquuntur, aut si vera, at non convenientia. Si tota libri series attenditur, nihil horum beatus Job dixisse monstratur. Sed arrogantes viri, sicut et superius diximus, habere hoc proprium solent, ut dum in nimia invectione prodeunt, etiam invehendo mentiantur; et cum non possunt juste reprehendere quae sunt, reprehendant mentiendo quae non sunt. Sequitur: VERS. 4. Itaque ego respondebo sermonibus tuis et amicis tuis tecum. Dictis superioribus quasi beati Job culpabilia verba narravit, atque ex eis sibi materiam loquendi proposuit; sed verbis subsequentibus forti acumine discutit hoc quod sibi ad dicendi materiam fallaciter finxit. Et fortes quidem sunt sententiae quae sequuntur, sed beati Job personae non congruunt; tantoque eum increpationis hujus tela non feriunt, quanto contra eum injuste mittuntur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XII [Rec. VIII].

VERS. 5-7. Suspice coelum, et intuere, et contemplare aethera quod altior te sit. Si peccaveris, quid ei nocebis; et si multiplicatae fuerint iniquitates tuae, quid facies contra eum? Porro si juste egeris quid donabis ei, aut quid de manu tua accipiet? 17. Vestigia Dei sunt creaturae. Quamvis beato Job scienti majora nequaquam dici ista debuerint, vera tamen sunt quae dicuntur, quod videlicet Deo nec peccata nostra noceant, nec bene gesta concurrant. Unde subsecutus, adjunxit: VERS. 8. Homini qui similis tui est nocebit impietas tua, et filium hominis adjuvabit justitia tua. Sed inter haec illud est solerter intuendum, quod ait: Suspice coelum, et intuere, et contemplare aethera quod altior te sit. Haec enim dicens, nimirum colligit ut considerare debeat quanto minus Deo actione sua aut prosit aut noceat, qui altitudini coeli atque aetheris prodesse vel nocere non possit. Quamvis in coelo vel aethere possimus supernas potestates accipere, divinis semper obtutibus inhaerentes, ut cum angelicos spiritus longe adhuc a nobis distare conspicimus, ipsi creatori atque dominatori spirituum quam longe distamus inferius agnoscamus, corpoream tamen coeli aetherisque materiam hoc loco sentire nil obstat. [Vet. VIII.] Nam si vigilanter exteriora conspicimus, per ipsa 819 eadem ad interiora revocamur. Vestigia quippe creatoris nostri sunt mira opera visibilis creaturae. Ipsum namque adhuc videre non possumus; sed jam ad ejus visionem tendimus, si eum in his quae fecit miramur. Ejus ergo vestigia creaturam dicimus, quia per haec quae ab ipso sunt sequendo imus ad ipsum. Unde Paulus ait: Invisibilia ejus per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur, sempiterna quoque virtus ejus et divinitas (Rom. I, 20). Unde et in libro Sapientiae scriptum est: Per magnitudinem enim creaturae et speciem potest intelligibiliter creator videri (Sap. XIII, 5). Menti enim nostrae peccato suo exterius sparsae necdum Deus sicut est interius innotescit; sed dum facturae suae decus foris proponit, quasi quibusdam nobis nutibus innuit, et quae intus sequamur ostendit, ae miro

modo ipsis formis exterioribus nos ad interiora perducit; innuit immensa admiratione quod est, mira haec exterius ostendendo quae non est. Hinc enim de sapientia scriptum est: In viis ostendit se illis hilariter, et omni providentia occurrit illis (Sap. VI, 17). 18. Vitae sunt ad Creatorem. Per visibilia a Deo recessimus; per eadem ad Deum reverti debemus. Viae quippe ad Creatorem sunt opera considerata creaturae. Quae dum facta cernimus, potentiam factoris miramur. In istis viis a sapientia omni nobis providentia occurritur, quia factoris nobis virtus inquirenda proponitur in omne quod mirabiliter factum videtur; et quocumque se verterit anima, si vigilanter intendit, in iisdem ipsis Deum invenit, per quae reliquit; ejusque potentiam ex eorum rursus consideratione cognoscit, quorum amore deseruit; et per quae perversa cecidit, per haec conversa revocatur. Ubi enim lapsi sumus, ibi incumbimus ut surgamus; et quasi ibi surgendo manum considerationis figimus, ubi pede amoris lubrici corruentes negligendo jacebamus. Quia enim ab invisibilibus per visibilia cecidimus, dignum est ut ad invisibilia ipsis rursum visibilibus innitamur, ut quo casu anima venit ad infima, eo gradu revertatur ad summa; atque eisdem quibus corruit passibus surgat, dum, sicut dictum est, illa nos ad Deum bene considerata revocant, quae nos ab eo male electa diviserunt. Eliu itaque, ut vim considerationis admoveret, atque ex corporeis rebus ostenderet quanto sit homine excelsior Deus, bene intulit: Suscipe coelum, et intuere, et contemplare aethera quod altior te sit. Ipsis enim rebus creatis atque corporeis agnoscimus quantum a creatoris nostri sublimitate distamus, quia per omne quod cernimus esse humiles admonemur, ut quasi quaedam sit lectio menti nostrae species considerata creaturae. Dicat ergo: Suscipe coelum; et intuere, et contemplare aethera quod altior te sit. Si peccaveris, quid ei nocebis? et si multiplicatae fuerint iniquitates tuae, quid facies contra eum? Porro si juste egeris, quid donabis ei, aut quid de manu tua accipiet? Ac si diceret: Ex ipsis creaturis intellige quas altiores te esse corporaliter vides, quantum a

divinae potentiae sublimitate disjungeris; atque ex hac tua consideratione collige quia Deum nec bene vivendo adjuves, nec rursus malis actionibus graves. 19. Angelis inferiores sumus, quanto magis Deo! Si vero, sicut superius diximus, in coelo vel aethere supernas potestates accipimus, verbis istis 820 Eliu considerare nos admonet, ut quia ipsi angelici spiritus creatoris nostri potentiam plene contemplari non possunt, de quibus tamen certum est quia nobis eo ipso altiores sunt quo lapsi in infimis non sunt, videlicet colligamus quanto Deo inferiores existimus, qui etiam creaturis sublimibus sed longe illo inferioribus subjacemus. Ac si diceret: Vide quantum a divina celsitudine separaris, a cujus potentia etiam potestates illae humilitate contremiscunt quae te immensa sublimitate transcendunt, et quanto ipse summo inferior es, qui inferiorem te esse etiam inferioribus deprehendis. Ostendendo vero summa, reducit ad aequalia, atque ait:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 8. Homini qui similis tui est nocebit impielas tua, et filium hominis adjuvabit justitia tua. 20. Homo homini nocere aut prodesse potest, non angelis. (1, quaest. 4, can. Homini.) Humana impietas ei nocet, quem pervertendo inquinat. Et rursus eum adjuvat nostra justitia quem a pravis actionibus immutat. Nocere enim vel juvare nesciunt ea quae vel a bono corrumpere vel a malo permutare non possunt. Supernae igitur potestates eo laedi vel juvari nequeunt, quo esse jam incommutabiles acceperunt. Sed considerare haec nequeunt, qui terrenis desideriis implicantur. Sparsis enim foris mentibus ad semetipsas redire difficile est, quia prava itinera semel captas tanto delectabiliter tenent, quanto in eis omne quod libuerit licet. Nullus quippe disciplinae murus obviat qui constringat, nulla retributionis prospicitur poena quae terreat, sed clausis oculis cordis eo anima praecipitatur in infimis, quo obscuratur a summis; et tanto securius mala temporalia perpetrat, quanto durius bona aeterna desperat. [Vet. et Rec. IX.]

21. Mali bonos premendo purgant. Sed ista reproborum nequitia triturae more electorum vitam quasi grana a paleis separans, premit ut purget. Mali enim bonos magis ab hujus mundi desideriis expediunt, dum affligunt; quia dum multa eis hic violenta ingerunt, festinare illos ad superna compellunt. Quod bene de Israelitico populo vocante Moyse et Pharaone rege saeviente signatum est (Exod. III, 7). Tunc namque Moyses ad vocandum missus est, cum jam Pharao duris operibus ad opprimendum fuerat excitatus, ut Israelitarum mentes Aegypto deformiter inhaerentes, alius dum vocaret quasi traheret, alius quasi impelleret dum saeviret; et plebs in servitio turpiter fixa, vel provocata bonis, vel malis impulsa moveretur. Hoc quotidie agitur, dum praedicatis coelestibus praemiis, saevire in electos reprobi permittuntur, ut si ad repromissionis terram vocati exire negligimus, pressuris saltem saevientibus impellamur, atque haec Aegyptus, videlicet vita praesens, quae nos oppressit blandiens, adjuvet premens; et quae dum fovit, servitutis jugo contrivit, libertatis viam dum cruciat ostendat. Haec utique causa est quod ab injustis justi sinuntur affligi, ut scilicet dum futura audiunt bona quae cupiant, patiantur etiam mala praesentia quae perhorrescant, atque ad faciliorem exitum dum amor provocat, cruciatus impellat. Unde Eliu eosdem labores electorum sub oppressionibus reproborum exsequens, ait:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. X].

821 VERS. 9. Propter multitudinem culumniatorum clamabunt et ejulabunt propter vim brachii tyrannorum. 22. Pejores sunt qui pravis exemplis, virtutibus nos spoliant, quam qui exterioribus bonis. Calamniatores recte dicere possumus omnes iniquos, non solum qui exteriora bona rapiunt, sed etiam qui malis suis moribus, et vitae reprobae exemplo interna nostra dissipare contendunt. Illi namque ea quae nobis extra sunt invadere ambiunt, isti vero nos praedari interius quaerunt. Illi amore rerum, isti non

cessant odio saevire virtutum. Illi invident quod habemus, isti quod vivimus. Illi student rapere bona exteriora, quia placent; isti satagunt interiora bona dissipare, quia displicent. Quanto igitur morum vita a rerum distat substantia, tanto gravior calumniator est qui male videndo vim nostris infert moribus, quam qui violenter opprimendo damna ingerit rebus. Nihil iste de nostra sustentatione subtraxit, sed exempla nobis perditionis apposuit. Eo ergo graviorem calumniam intulit, quo quietum cor in tentatione commovit. Qui etsi nequaquam nobis actionis suae opera persuasit, pugnam tamen tentationis ingessit. Gravem igitur de vita ejus calumniam sustinemus, quia nimirum iutus patimur quod cum labore vincamus. Et quia in hoc mundo abundat malorum vita quae cruciet, recte dicitur: Propter multitudinem calumniatorum clamabunt. 23. Alii vitia suadens, alii jubent et tyrannica vi ad ea cogunt. Quia vero ea quae verbis suadere non valent extorquere nonnunquam etiam effrenatis viribus student, apte subjungitur: Et ejulabunt propter vim brachii tyrannorum. [Vet. X.] Quisquis enim male vivere suo nos exemplo compellit, adhuc in nobis voce calumniatoris utitur; quisquis vero peccatum suadens etiam terrere nos appetit, jam contra nos brachio tyrannidis saevit. Aliud est enim vitia suadere vivendo, aliud jubere terrendo. Dum ergo exempla malae actionis aspicimus, quasi adhuc strepitum calumniatoris audimus; dum vero vi peccare cogimur, jam tyrannum in corde sustinemus. 24. Eorum tamen conatibus resistunt electorum mentes. Ad Deum eundum est, non solum per mollia, sed etiam per aspera. Sed robustorum mentes in Deo immobiliter fixae tanto ista despiciunt, quanto cernunt quod contra praecepta conditoris excrescunt. Aeternitatis quippe praemia praestolantes vires ex adversitatibus sumunt, quia crescente pugna gloriosiorem sibi non ambigunt manere victoriam. Sic itaque electorum desideria dum praemuntur, adversitate proficiunt, sicut ignis flatu premitur ut crescat; et unde quasi extingui cernitur, inde roboratur. In eo namque ostendimus quanta ad Dominum

cupiditate flagramus, si non solum ad eum per tranquilla et mollia, sed etiam per aspera et dura transimus. Hinc namque propheta ait: Qui perfecit pedes meos quasi cervi (Psal. XVII, 34). Cervus enim cum montium juga conscendit, quaeque aspicit aspera, quaeque se objiciunt sentibus illigata, dato saltu transgreditur, et absque ullo cursus sui obstaculo in superiora elevatur. Ita etiam electorum mentes quaeque sibi in hoc mundo obsistere atque obviare conspiciunt, contemplationis saltu transcendunt, et more cervorum, despectis terrenarum rerum sentibus, in superna se evehunt. Hinc rursum dicit: Et in Deo meo transgrediar murum (Ibid., 30). 822 Murus quippe est omne quod itineri nostro objicitur, ne ad eum qui diligitur, transeatur. Sed murum transgredimur, cum prae amore supernae patriae, quaeque in hoc mundo fuerint objecta calcamus. Hinc per eumdem Prophetam certanti animae Dominus dicit: Exaudivi te in abscondito tempestatis, probavi te ad aquas contradictionis (Psal. LXXX, 8). Absconditum quippe tempestatis est, cum in corde contrito cogitationum tentantium fluctus intumescunt, cum contra amoris sancti studia curarum saecularium se tumultus illidunt. In abscondito ergo tempestatis auditur, quia clamor deprecantis est haec ipsa tribulationis fluctuatio. Quia vero omnino non desunt qui bona quaerentibus suadere perversa moliantur, aquae contradictionis sunt populi resistentes. Et quia tunc probatur desiderium cum aliqua ei adversitate resistitur, recte dicitur: Probavi te ad aquas contradictionis. His itaque virtutum nisibus robusti ex adversitate proficiunt, sed infirmi saepe in desideriis suis, si qua eis fuerint, ex adverso objecta, languescunt, et cum valida tribulatione pulsantur, pusillanimitate deficiunt. Unde Eliu beato Job probra pusillanimitatis impingens, praemissis malorum oppressionibus, infirmorum mox pusillanimitates exsequitur, dicens:

CAPUT XV [Rec. XI].

VERS. 10. Et non dixit, Ubi est Deus qui fecit me? 25. Qui tentatione frangitur, Dei providentiam serio non cogitat. Mos sacrae Scripturae est ut a singulari numero ad pluralem subito transeat, atque a plurali saepe se ad singularem vertat. Unde Eliu cum diceret: Clamabunt, et ejulabunt, nequaquam subdidit: Non dixerunt, ubi est Deus: Non dixit ubi est Deus. A plurali quippe numero in singularem veniens, ad personam subito infirmi uniuscujusque transivit, fortasse quia a singulis melius recognoscitur quidquid dici de eis singulariter auditur, ut ad cor suum quisque redeat, et in semetipso hoc quod de unoquoque dicitur reprehendat. Singularem igitur numerum tenuit, dicens: Non dixit, Ubi est Deus qui fecit me. Quisquis enim adversitatum tribulatione frangitur a quo factus est minime contemplatur. Nam qui quod non erat fecit, factum sine gubernatione non deserit; et qui benigne hominem condidit, nequaquam injuste cruciari permittit; nec sinit neglecte perire quod est, qui hoc etiam quod non fuit creavit ut esset. Cum ergo causam tribulationis nostrae requirimus, et fortasse tardius invenimus, est ista consideratio, quod nihil injuste patiamur, quia si Deo auctore sumus qui non fuimus, Deo regente non affligimur injuste qui sumus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI [Vet.

XI, Rec. XII]. IBID. Cui dedit carmina in nocte 26. Ne vincamur, Deus tribulationes consolatione condit. Carmen in nocte est laetitia in tribulatione, quia etsi pressuris temporalitatis affligimur, spe jam tamen de aeternitate gaudemus. Carmina Paulus in nocte praedicabat, dicens: Spe gaudentes, in tribulatione patientes (Rom. XII, 12). Carmen in nocte David sumpserat, qui dicebat: Tu mihi es refugium a pressura quae circumdedit me, exsultatio mea, redime me a circumdantibus me (Psal. XXXI, 7). Ecce noctem pressuram nominat, et tamen liberatorem suum inter angustias exsultationem vocat. Foris quidem nox erat in circumdatione pressurae, sed

intus carmina 823 resonabant de consolatione laetitiae. Quia enim ad aeterna gaudia redire non possumus, nisi per temporalia detrimenta, tota sacrae Scripturae intentio est ut spes manentis laetitiae nos inter haec transitoria adversa corroboret. Unde et Ezechiel propheta librum se accepisse testatur, in quo scriptae erant lamentationes, carmen et vae (Ezech. II, 9). Quid enim libro hoc, nisi divina eloquia figurantur? Quae quia nobis lacrymas luctusque praecipiunt, lamentationes in eo scriptae referuntur. Carmen quoque et vae continent, quia sic de spe gaudium praedicant, ut in praesenti tamen pressuras atque angustias incident. Carmen et vae continent, quia etsi illic dulcia appetimus, prius necesse est ut hic amara toleremus. Carmen et vae discipulis praedicabat Dominus, cum dicebat: Haec locutus sum vobis, ut in me pacem habeatis; in mundo pressuram habebitis (Joan. XVI, 33). Ac si aperte diceret: Sit vobis de me interius quod consolando reficiat, quia erit de mundo exterius quod saeviendo graviter premat. Quia ergo infirmus quisque cum premitur, a spe gaudii nimia pusillanimitate lassatur, et dum foris adversa tolerat, intus obliviscitur quo gaudebat, bene dicitur: Non dixit, Ubi est Deus qui fecit me, qui dedit carmina in nocte? Si enim ista diceret, vim quam patitur temperaret; et per hoc quod mansurum intus quaereret, id quod foris transitorium sustinet esse intolerabile non aestimaret. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 11. Qui docet nos super jumenta terrae, et super volucres coeli erudit nos. 27. Deus nos docet carnis voluptates, et spiritus elationem cavere. Jumenta terrae sunt, qui usu vitae carnalis ima appetunt; volucres vero coeli sunt, qui superbae curiositatis studio sublimia perscrutantur. Illi vivendo se deponunt infra quam sunt, isti inquirendo se elevant ultra quam possunt. Illos in infimis voluptas dejicit carnis, istos quasi in superioribus erigit libido curiositatis. Illis per sacra eloquia dicitur: Nolite fieri sicut

equus et mulus, quibus non est intellectus (Psal. XXXI, 9); istorum superbus labor increpatur, dum dicitur: Altiora te ne quaesieris, et fortiora te ne scrutatus fueris (Eccli. III, 22). Illis dicitur: Mortificate membra vestra, quae sunt super terram, fornicationem, immunditiam, libidinem, concupiscentiam malam (Coloss. III, 5); istis dicitur: Nemo vos decipiat per philosophiam et inanem fallaciam (Coloss. II, 8). Docet igitur nos Deus super jumenta terrae et volucres coeli, quia dum hoc quod sumus agnoscimus, nec carnis nos infirmitas dejicit, nec superbiae spiritus elevat; nec defluendo imis subjicimur, nec superbiendo de sublimibus inflamur. Qui enim carne labitur, jumentorum appetitu prosternitur; qui vero extollitur mente, more volucrum quasi levitatis penna sublevatur. [Vet. XII.] 28. Superbia luxuriae seminarium. Caro mergit quos superba scientia sublevat. Juste mens amittit carnis dominium si Deo servire deneget. Sed si vigilanter intenditur, ut et mentis humilitas, et carnis castimonia teneatur, cito cognoscimus, quia alterum custoditur ex altero. Nam multis saepe superbia luxuriae seminarium fuit, quia dum eos spiritus quasi in altum erexit, caro in infimis mersit. Hi enim prius secreto elevantur, sed postmodum publice corruunt, quia dum occultis intumescunt motibus cordis, apertis cadunt lapsibus corporis. 824 Sic sic elati justa fuerant retributione feriendi, ut quia superbiendo se hominibus praeferunt, luxuriando usque ad jumentorum similitudinem devolvantur. Homo quippe cum in honore esset, non intellexit, comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis (Psal. XLVIII, 13). Quasi scientiae enim illos in altum penna sublevaverat, de quibus Paulus hoc quod et superius protulimus dicebat: Quia cum cognovissent Deum, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt, aut gratias egerunt, sed evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis (Rom. I, 21). Quomodo autem in jumentorum, aut plusquam jumentorum voluptatem deciderint, subdidit dicens: Tradidit eos Deus in desideria cordis eorum, in immunditiam (Ibid., 24). Ecce caro mersit quos superba scientia sublevavit, et a volatu volucrum

ultra appetitum lapsi sunt jumentorum; atquae inde sub se prostrati sunt, unde super se ire videbantur. Curandum itaque est, et omni custodia mens a superbiae tumore servanda. Non enim ante oculos Dei vacuae transvolant cogitationes nostrae; et nulla momenta temporis per animum transeunt sine statu retributionis. Intus ergo videt Deus quod mentem elevat, et idcirco permittit foris invalescere quod deponat. Intus prius extollitur, quod foris postmodum luxuriae corruptione feriatur. Occultam videlicet culpam sequitur aperta percussio, ut malis exterioribus interiora puniantur et cor publice corruat, quod latenter tumebat. Hinc quippe per Osee contra Israelitas dicitur: Spiritus fornicationis in medio eorum, et Dominum non cognoverunt (Ose. V, 4). Qui ut ostenderet quod causa libidinis ex culpa proruperit elationis, mox subdidit dicens: Et respondebit arrogantia Israel in faciem ejus (Ibid., 5). Ac si diceret: Culpa quae per elationem mentis in occulto latuit per carnis luxuriam in aperto respondit. Proinde per humilitatis custodiam servanda est munditia castitatis. Si enim pie spiritus sub Deo premitur, caro illicite super spiritum non levatur. Habet quippe spiritus commissum sibi dominium carnis, si tamen sub Domino recognoscit jura legitimae servitutis. Nam si auctorem suum superbiendo contemnit, jure et a subjecta carne praelium suscipit. Unde et ille primus inobediens mox ut superbiendo peccavit, pudenda contexit (Genes. III, 7). Quia enim contumeliam spiritus Deo intulit, mox contumeliam carnis invenit. Et quia auctori suo esse subditus noluit, jus carnis subditae quam regebat amisit, ut in seipso videlicet inobedientiae suae confusio redundaret, et superatus disceret, quid elatus amisisset. [Vet. XIII.] 29. Si cordis humilitatem negligamus, Deus carnis integritatem despicit. Nullus ergo postquam superna appetere coeperit, si carnis voluptate prosternitur, tunc se victum judicet, cum aperte superatur. Si enim plerumque virus libidinis de radice nascitur elationis, tunc caro vicit, cum spiritus latenter intumuit: jam tunc anima per originem culpae in petulantiam jumentorum cecidit, cum

efferendo se, more volucrum, ultra quam debuit evolavit. Hinc est enim quod longa continentia repente solvitur, hinc quod plerumque et usque ad senium virginitas servata vitiatur. Quia enim negligitur 825 humilitas cordis, rectus judex despicit etiam integritatem corporis; et quandoque per apertum malum reprobos annuntiat, quos dudum reprobos in occulto tolerabat. Nam qui diu servatum bonum subito perdidit, apud semetipsum intus aliud malum tenuit, ex quo aliud subito erupit per quod ab omnipotente Deo etiam tunc alienus exstitit, quando se ei per munditiam corporis inhaerere monstravit. Quia igitur mentis elatio ad pollutionem pertrahit carnis, reproborum cor a volatu volucrum ad petulantiam mergitur jumentorum. Sancti autem viri ne appetitu bestiali ad luxuriae voraginem devolvantur, sollicite cogitationes mentis a superbiae volatu custodiunt; ac ne in infima desipiendo corruant, omne quod sublimiter sapiunt, humiliter premunt. Recte itaque dicitur: Qui docet nos super jumenta terrae, et super volucres coeli erudit nos. Subaudis, hoc quoque non dixit. 30. In adversis deficimus, quia prosperis uti moderate nescimus. Hoc itaque quod jumentis ac volucribus antecellit, eum non dicit in tribulatione memorari; ac si diceret: Infirmus quisque idcirco nequaquam se in perturbatione corroborat, quia et in tranquillitate non temperat; et ideo nescit adversa tolerare, quia constitutus in prosperis cogitatione se non novit a volatu volucrum premere, nec carnales motus a jumentorum ingluvie sublevare. Sed hoc beato Job tanto inconvenienter dicitur, quanto vita ejus inter alta et infima mirabiliter temperatur. Quod quidem intelligi et aliter potest: Qui docet nos super jumenta terrae, et super volucres coeli erudit nos. Nam sicut jumentorum vocabulo signatur vita hominum carnis adhuc motibus subditorum, ita appellatione volucrum figuratur elatio spirituum superborum, ut per jumenta quidem terreni homines, per volucres vero daemonia designentur. Unde cum semina Dominus juxta viam diceret cecidisse, subjungit: Venerunt volucres coeli, et comederunt ea (Matth. XIII, 4), nimirum per

volucres signans aereas potestates. 31. Sancti dum Deo se subdunt, cuncta transitoria superant et despiciunt. Sancti autem viri, quia nec infima hominum exempla appetunt, nec rursum daemoniaca subtilitate falluntur, et super jumenta terrae, et super coeli volucres virtute eruditionis excrescunt. Super jumenta enim terrae edocti sunt, quia quidquid in imis potest ambiri despiciunt. Super volucres quoque coeli eruditi sunt, quia omnes immundorum spirituum insidias comprehendunt. Super jumenta terrae edocti sunt, quia nihil in hac vita quod praeterit quaerunt. Super voluores coeli eruditi sunt, quia potestates aereas, quas adhuc per carnis infirmitatem tolerant, jam vitae meritis calcant. Paulus jam super jumenta terrae edoctus fuerat, dicens: Multi enim ambulant. Et paulo post: Quorum finis interitus, quorum deus venter est, et gloria in confusione ipsorum, qui terrena sapiunt. Nostra autem conversatio in coelis est (Philip. III, 18, 19). Et rursum super volucres coeli eruditum se noverat, cum dicebat: Nescitis quoniam angelos judicabimus (I Cor. VI, 3)? Sub se jumenta cernebat, quia videlicet in terra adhuc positus calcabat mores hominum qui in infimis conversantur. Et rursum volatum volucrum meritorum dignitate transcenderat, quia subiturus coelestia judicaturum se angelos non ignorabat. In illis immundorum infima, in istis superborum summa 826 calcabat. [Vet. XIV.] Mentes quippe sanctorum transitoria cuncta despiciunt, et sub se labi quidquid superbit, quidquid praeterit, contemplantur; et quasi in quodam rerum vertice constitutae, tanto sibi omnia subesse conspiciunt, quanto semetipsas verius auctori omnium subdunt; atque inde cuncta transcendunt, unde creatori cunctorum vera se humilitate substernunt. Dicat ergo: Qui docet nos super jumenta terrae, et super volucres coeli erudit nos. Ac si diceret: Infirmus pusillanimitate victus ista non dixit, et idcirco eum adversitas tentationis perculit, quia tranquillitatis tempore haec cuncta transeuntia nulla perfectione superavit. Hujus enim vitae adversa non perhorresceret, si perfectionis merito etiam secunda calcasset. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII [Rec. IV].

VERS. 12. Ibi clamabunt, et non exauaret propter superbiam malorum. 32. Justi permittuntur opprimi ut purgentur, et ut oppressorum nequitia consummetur. Ibi videlicet in tribulatione, ut e contra de gaudio scriptum est: Filii servorum tuorum inhabitabunt ibi (Psal. CI, 29). Sed videtur incertum utrum dicat: Propter superbiam malorum non exaudiet; an, propter superbiam malorum clamabunt. Intelligi autem melius potest, si non exaudiri potius propter malorum superbiam, quam clamare referantur. Nam quod propter malorum superbiam clamant, jam supra dictum est, eo versu quo dicitur: Propter multitudinem violentorum clamabunt. Aliquid ergo nobis hoc versu innuitur quod paulo subtilius attendatur, quia saepe oppressi quidam dum clamaverint, ex se quidem merentur audiri, sed tamen eorum desideria propter opprimentium superbiam differuntur. Justus quippe Deus et suos permittit temporaliter opprimi, et violentorum malitiam nequiter augeri, ut dum horum vita in purgatione teritur, illorum nequitia consummetur. [Vet. XV.] Plerumque vero accidit, ut justi in tribulatione deprehensi, supernum solatium etiam temporaliter percipiant, quod tamen non temporaliter implorant. Salvari enim non propter se, sed propter adversariorum salutem concupiscunt, ut dum illos omnipotens Deus ab immensis periculis facto quodam miraculo liberat, virtutem suam ipsis etiam persecutoribus innotescat; atque inde adversarios ad aeternitatem redimat, unde suos temporaliter salvat, sicut Propheta quoque vocem martyrum suscipiens, ait: Propter inimicos meos eripe me (Psal. LXVIII, 19). Ac si diceret: Propter me quidem eripi de temporali tribulatione non appeto, sed tamen eripi propter adversarios meos concupisco, ut dum mea vita salvari mirabiliter cernitur, ipso miraculorum visu inimicorum duritia convertatur. Sicut ergo saepe Dominus suorum vitam temporaliter pro inimicorum conversione eripit, ita saepe suorum voces propter damnationem persequentium non exaudit, ut videlicet inde reatum suum

cumulent, unde praevaluisse se nequiter gaudent. Nam qui invisibilia despiciunt, moveri nonnunquam visibilibus miraculis possunt. Sed idcirco cum justis plerumque nil mirum visibiliter agitur, quia eorum adversarii illuminari invisibiliter non merentur. Dicatur ergo: Ibi clamabant, et non exaudiet propter superbiam malorum. Ac si diceret: Reatus opprimentium audire voces prohibet oppressorum. Nec eripiuntur visibiliter justi, 827 quia salvari invisibiliter non merentur injusti. Unde rursum per Prophetam dicitur: Cum viderit sapientes morientes, simul insipiens et stultus peribunt (Psal. XLVIII, 11). Quos enim visibiliter mori conspiciunt, invisibiliter vivere posse non credunt; atque eo reatum infidelitatis suae cumulant, quo visa morte fidelium de aeternitate desperant. Igitur violenti quique inde deterius deficiunt, unde contra vitam innocentium exterius convalescunt; tantoque illos intima veritas a se foras ejicit, quanto eos contra suos temporaliter quod volunt posse permittit. 33. Malorum poena gravior, est prosperitas. Manifestum est reprobationis indicium. Quisquis itaque bonorum vitam persequitur, tunc pejore ultione damnatur, cum nulla ei adversitate resistitur; et tunc fortioris irae periculis subjacet, cum prospere peragit quod nequiter concupiscit, quia videlicet vindicta superni judicii ad futura eum supplicia reservando deseruit, cui hic in malo obviare contempsit. Hinc enim per Prophetam Dominus dicit: Dimisi eos secundum desideria cordis eorum, et ibunt in voluntatibus suis (Psal. LXXX, 13). Hinc rursum dicitur: Non est virga Dei super illos (Job. XXI, 9). Hinc etiam de ipso eorum capite scriptum est: Faciet et prosperabitur (Dan. VIII, 12). Hinc rursus de eodem dicitur: Et dolus in manu ejus dirigetur (Dan. VIII, 25). In manu quippe Antichristi dolus dirigitur, quia in hoc quod contra bonos proposuerit implere temporaliter nulla adversitate praepeditur. Hinc rursus per Salomonem dicitur: Prosperitas stultorum perdet illos (Prov. I, 32). [Vet. XVI.] Manifestum ergo perditionis indicium est, quando affectatis iniquitatibus subsequens favet effectus, et nulla contrarietas impedit quod

mens perversa conceperit. Nam saepe pravorum hominum dum tardantur vota, mutantur; et dum difficultatem perfectionis sentiunt, reatum malae actionis agnoscunt; et quibus prius invitis contradicitur, volentes postmodum hoc quod conceperant, adversantur. Quia igitur malos cum deserit Dominus praevalere permittit, et unde superborum nequitia perficitur, inde humilium longanimitas consummatur, dicatur recte: Ibi clamabunt, et non exaudiet propter superbiam malorum. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIX [Rec. XV].

VERS. 13. Neque enim frustra audiet Deus, et Omnipotens singulorum causas intuebitur. 34. Desideria sanctorum eo cumulatius exaudiuntur, quo tardius. Notandum quod duo sunt dicta, quia et clamantem non frustra audit, et tamen quod patitur respicit, et exaudire voces dissimulat, et quod unusquisque tolerat non ignorat. Nemo ergo qui tardius auditur credat quod a superna cura negligatur. Saepe enim nostra desideria, quia celeriter non fiunt, exaudiuntur; et quod impleri concite petimus, et ipsa melius tarditate prosperatur. Saepe vox nostra eo perficitur quo differtur; et cum superficietenus petitio negligitur, vota nostra altius in cogitationum radice complentur: sicut et semina messium gelu pressa solidantur; et quo ad superficiem tardius exeunt, eo ad frugem multipliciora consurgunt. Desideria itaque nostra dilatione extenduntur, ut proficiant; proficiunt, ut ad hoc quod perceptura sunt convalescant; exercitantur in certamine, ut 828 majoribus cumulentur praemiis in retributione, labor protrahitur pugnae, ut crescat corona victoriae. Suos ergo Dominus cum velociter non exaudit, quo repellere creditur trahit. Internus quippe est medicus, et peccatorum in nobis contagia quae inesse medullitus reprobat secat, abscindit virus putredinis ferro tribulationis; et quo voces aegri audire dissimulat, eo aegritudinis finem procurat. Hinc enim Propheta ait: Deus meus, clamabo per diem, et non exaudies; et nocte, et non ad insipientiam mihi (Psal. XXI, 3). Ac si

diceret: Nequaquam mihi ad insipientiam proficit quod die ac nocte clamantem me continue non exaudis, quia unde me in temporali tribulatione quasi deseris, inde ad aeternam sapientiam plus erudis. Hinc etiam dicit: Adjutor in opportunitatibus, in tribulatione (Psal. IX, 10). Tribulationem quippe dicturus, opportunitates praemisit, quia saepe et tribulatione conterimur, et tamen opportunum nondum est ut ad desiderium ereptionis adjuvemur. Dicatur ergo: Neque enim frustra audiet Deus, et Omnipotens singulorum causas intuebitur. [Vet. XVII.] Sed quia plerumque nonnulli et ipsa adjutorii tarditate franguntur, apte subjungit: CAPUT. XX [Rec. XVI]. VERS. 14. Etiam cum dixeris: Non considerat, judicare coram illo, et exspecta eum. 35. Desperationis procella ingruente, ad memoriam revocanda sunt Dei beneficia. Fortasse enim dum clamor noster quasi negligitur, spes quae cordi inerat infirmatur; et superna adjutoria defutura credimus, quia tardius impetramus; ac pene inconsiderata Deo esse ingemiscimus, quae inulta toleramus. Sed cum ista nos desperationis procella conturbat, concussa mens citius in portum spei se collocat, si causas suas cum Domino subtiliter pensat, si bona ejus ad memoriam revocat, si mala quae bonis ejus reddidit apud semetipsam callide non excusat, si perpendit quid ab eo juste meruit et quid clementer accepit, si vitam suam vivaciter discutit, si ante Dei oculos omne quod agit examinans semetipsam sibimet non abscondit, si factam se quae non erat meminit, si illuminatam se atque sublevatam quae in tenebris jacebat agnoscit. Haec ergo in semetipsa cuncta recolligens, dum bona accepta considerat, adversa quae tolerat non accusat; nec desperatione frangitur, quae tantorum munerum consolatione roboratur, quia spem de futuris recipit, dum transacta beneficia recognoscit. Dicat itaque: Etiam cum dixeris: Non considerat, judicare coram illo, et exspecta eum. Ac si diceret: Cum idcirco Deus considerare non creditur, quia tarde miseretur, intima cogitationis ingredere, atque illic coram ejus oculis causae tuae judicium suscipe; et

quae ipse vivendo contulisti, vel quae misericorditer percepisti, discerne; et tunc ad spei fiduciam redis, dum bona tantae benignitatis erubescis, quatenus inter adversa fidenter exspectes quem et post delicta propitium recolis. Speranda etenim fuerant superna adjutoria, etiam si nulla beneficia praecessissent. Sciendumque quia Deus hominem quem benigne condidit inique non spernit. 36. Qui praeterita munera considerat, futura non desperet. Pensandum est igitur quanti est periculi transacta munera cernere, et futura desperare; 829 quanti est periculi si in hac procella tribulationum desperationis naufragio frangimur, qui ad portum spei velut immensis funibus praeteritis donis ligamur. Dicatur itaque recte: Judicare coram illo, et exspecta eum. Nam qui semetipsum coram Deo non judicat, eum dum affligitur non exspectat. Cujus enim bona praecessisse dissimulat, adjutoria subsequi posse desperat; et cum praeteritorum obliviscitur, etiam subsequentium largitate fraudatur. Sed ecce dum nos affligimur, dum consolationis gratiam longanimiter sustinemus, mali ad pejora prorumpunt, atque eo iniquitatis exaggeratione proficiunt, quo sine verbere relinquuntur. Et tamen omnipotens peccantes misericorditer exspectat, tempus ad poenitentiam tribuit, quod non conversis ad gravioris reatus testimonium vertit; patienter iram retinet, quam quandoque irretractabiliter effundit. Unde apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXI [Vet.

XVIII, Rec. XVII]. VERS. 15. Nunc enim non infert furorem suum, nec ulciscitur valde scelus. 37. Deus hic diu tolerat quos in aeternum est damnaturus. Diu quippe Deus tolerat quem in perpetuum damnat; et furorem nunc inferre dissimulat, quia effundendum sine fine in posterum servat. Electorum namque est hic conteri, ut ad praemia debeant aeternae haereditatis erudiri. Nostrum est hic flagella percipere, quibus servatur de aeternitate gaudere. Hinc enim scriptum est: Flagellat omnem filium quem

recipit (Hebr., XII, 6). Hinc ad Joannem dicitur: Ego quos amo arguo et castigo (Apoc. III, 19). Hinc Petrus ait: Tempus est ut incipiat judicium de domo Dei (I Petr. IV, 17). Ubi mox admirando subjungit: Si autem primum a nobis, qui finis eorum qui non credunt Dei Evangelio (Ibid., 17)? Peccata quippe nequaquam divina severitas inulta remanere permittit, sed ira judicii a nostra hic correptione inchoat, ut in reproborum damnatione conquiescat. Eant ergo nunc reprobi, et voluptatum suarum desideria inulta iniquitate consumment; atque eo temporalia flagella non sentiant, quo aeterna eos supplicia exspectant. Bene autem inulta eorum nequitia Cham peccante signata est, cui a patre dicitur: Maledictus Chanaan puer, servus erit fratribus suis (Gen. IX, 25). Chanaan videlicet Cham filius. Et quid est quod Cham peccante Chanaan ejus filius sententiam ultionis accipit? Quid est quod non in se, sed in posteritate percutitur, nisi quod reproborum nequitiae hic quidem inultae proficiunt, sed in posterum feriuntur? Dicatur ergo: Nunc enim non infert furorem suum, nec ulciscitur valde scelus. 38. Eos tamen aliquando hac in vita ferire inchoat. Notandum vero est quod subintulit, Valde, quia etsi quaedam longanimiter tolerat, quaedam tamen etiam in hac vita flagellat et hic nonnunquam ferire inchoat, quod aeterna damnatione consummat. Ergo et nonnulla percutit, et nonnulla inulta derelinquit, quia si nulla resecaret, quis Deum res humanas curare crederet? Et rursus, si hic cuncta percuteret, extremum judicium unde 830 restaret? Quaedam igitur feriuntur, ut rectoris nostri super nos sollicitudinem formidemus; quaedam vero inulta servantur, ut adhuc judicium restare sentiamus. Bene ergo dicitur: Nec ulciscitur valde scelus, quia dum exiguum quiddam de iniquitatepercutitur, inconversis mentibus aeterni jam judicii sententia propinatur. 39. Aliud est rectum dicere, aliud recte. Totum itaque hoc ab Eliu rectum dicitur, si recte diceretur. Scit enim quid loqui debeat, sed cui loquatur ignorat. Vera sunt namque quae dixit, sed a beati Job increpationibus aliena, quia tanto hac correptione non eguit, quanto nec

aliqua pusillanimitate peccavit. [Vet. XIX.] Sed quia justis viris solet occasio esse virtutum elatio superborum, occulto judicio cum beato Job agitur, ut post flagella poenarum etiam per verba arrogantium crescat. Ecce enim tanto magis a superbiae ministro despicitur quanto a magistra veritate intrinsecus idem refovetur. Nam Eliu postquam tot fortia se dixisse cognovit, quid elationis gestaret aperuit, atque beatum Job alta de se sentiendo despexit, dicens:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 16. Ergo Job frustra aperit eos suum, et absque scientia verba multiplicat. 40. Superborum vitia sunt loquacitas, et audiendi impatientia. Haec nimirum inferens, beatum Job et nil scisse asserit, et multa dixisse; et cum ipse quae sentit loquaciter inferat, hunc de vitio loquacitatis accusat. Sed hoc quoque esse proprium arrogantium vitium solet, ut et pauca credant quae ipsi multa dixerint, et multa credant quae ipsis pauca dicuntur. Quia enim sua dicere semper volunt, aliena audire non possunt; vim se pati existimant, si ea quae immoderate sentiunt immoderatius non effundant. Et quamvis beatus Job ad ejus verba tacuerit, Eliu tamen de locutione illius, qua amicis responderat, causam invectionis invenit, ut sibi exhibere latius ejus silentium posset, atque ut ipse multa respondeat, illum verba multiplicasse confirmat. Nam et mox initia prolixae locutionis exorditur; et quasi adhuc nil dixerit, inchoare conatur. Unde subditur:

CAPUT XXIII [Vet.

XX, Rec. XVIII]. CAP. XXXVI, VERS. 1, 2. Addens quoque Eliu, etiam haec locutus est: Sustine me paululum, et indicabo tibi. 41. Ex multiloquio suam doctrinam metiuntur. Dum sese ostentant, pro Deo loqui fingunt. Multa jam dixerat, et sustineri adhuc paululum sperat, quia videlicet arrogantes grave se damnum perpeti judicant, si scientiam suam loquendi

brevitate constringant. Tanto enim semetipsos credunt doctiores ostendere, quanto se potuerint multiplicitate loquacitatis aperire. Sed quia saepe sibi sentiunt silentii reverentiam non deferri, Domini nonnunquam potentiam de quo quasi loquuntur insinuant, ac sub praetextu illius sibi silentium exigunt, quod minime merentur; et dum specietenus Deum proferunt, auditum sibi ex reverentia ejus exigentes, se student magis ostendere quam illius facta praedicare. Unde et Eliu subjungit, dicens: IBID. Adhuc enim habeo quod pro Deo loquar. 831 Quia vero nonnunquam doctores sancti crebro repetunt si qua obscurius dicunt, ut quae occulta praedicant auditorum cordibus voce haec iterationis infundant, plerumque hoc appetunt etiam arrogantes imitari, et insolenter ea quae dixerint replicant, non quo auditorum cordibus insinuare res appetant, sed quo eorum judicio videri eloquentes volunt. Unde Eliu subjungens ait: VERS. 3. Repetam scientiam meam a principio. Sed quia nominata scientia, tumor cordis in voce claruerat; arrogans aperte cognoscitur, si non citius aliquo velamine pallietur. Unde mox in occultatione suae arrogantiae Domini justitiam subinferens, ait: IBID. Et operatorem meum probabo justum. Ut dum quasi pro Dei justitia loquitur, apud humana judicia quidquid arroganter effluit excusetur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 4. Vere enim absque mendacio sermones mei. 42. Testimonium a Deo non habentes, ab hominibus quaerunt. Cum ab infirmis auditoribus se intelligi non posse conspiciunt, solent plerumque etiam justi laudare bona quae dicunt, non quo ipsi suis laudibus inhient, sed quo auditores suos ad audiendi sollicitudinem accendant, ut dum eorum voce proferuntur, ab illorum cordibus ardentiori affectu rapiantur. Unde Paulus cum mira Corinthiis et multa dixisset: adjunxit Os nostrum patet ad vos, o Corinthii, cor nostrum dilatatum est (II Cor, VI, 11). Sed arrogantes dum cor bonorum nesciunt, et solas aliquando voces imitantur, efferunt laudando quae dicunt,

non quod eis torpor audientium displicet, sed quod sibi inhianter placent. Justorum vocem imitantes simulant, sed vim vocis ignorant. Vident quod justi proferunt, sed nesciunt quod requirunt. Cum enim sancti doctores laudem praedicationis exaltant, quasi manu vocis ab imis cogitationibus corda audientium levant, ut excussa velociter dictis sequentibus velut in itinere occurrant et tanto ea intelligentiae amplexu constringant, quanto illa et quasi priusquam cernerent in voce laudantis amaverant. Sed haec, ut dixi, arrogantes nesciunt. Quia enim foris est quod appetunt, quid sit intus desiderabile sentire non possunt. De electorum quippe Ecclesia scriptum est: Omnis gloria ejus filiae regum ab intus (Psal. XLIV, 14). Et sapientes virgines in vasis oleum portare referuntur (Matth. XXV, 4). Unde et sanctorum voce dicitur: Gloria nostra haec est, testimonium conscientiae nostrae (II Cor. I, 12). Arrogantes autem, quia coram Deo conscientiae suae testimonium non habent, quaerunt coram hominibus testimonium vocis alienae; quam cum tarde reperiunt, ipsi etiam in impudentiam sui favoris erumpunt. Si enim non inveniunt voces hominum, quas inhianter exspectant, ipsi scientiam suam laudantes praedicant. Unde et Eliu subdit dicens:

CAPUT XXV.

IBID. Et perfecta scientia probabitur tibi. 43. Cordis elatio licet occulta, inexcusabilis; quanto magis quae verbis foras erumpit. Nimirum sensit se magna dicturum, sed tumenti corde hoc quod de semetipso sublimiter aestimavit tacere non potuit: et idcirco quod rectum sensit laudando praecucurrit: quia jam quidem divino judicio reus esset, si magna de se saltem silendo sensisset. Ante subtile enim veritatis examen securi omnino non sumus, etiam si humano 832 judicio quod in nobis reprehendi debeat non habemus. Nam plerumque negligentius cogitantes elatione pulsamur, quam tamen tacentes premimus. Sed nisi retractatione concita tumor

occultus in ipso cubili cordis, in quo oritur, suffocetur, coram districto judice omne meritum nostrae actionis exstinguitur. Hinc ergo pensandum est illa cordis elatio quanta animadversione damnabitur, quae usque ad audaciam vocis nutritur, si neque haec est excusabilis quae in corde latenter oboritur. Considerandum quoque qualis intrinsecus regnat, quae eo usque servata est, ut etiam foras erumpere non erubescat. Eliu ergo quia magna sensit, semetipsum humiliter temperare nescivit, scientiae celsitudinem tenuit, humilitatis gratiam recusavit; et dum sequitur bonum quo bene dicere appetiit, bonum quo bene vivere potuisset amisit. Scientia quippe instat, charitas vero aedificat (I Cor. VIII, 1). Sed jam nunc rectum dicat, quod tamen recte dicere ignorat. Nam postquam inflatas animi cogitationes per verba elationis exhalavit, fortem sententiam subdidit, dicens:

CAPUT XXVI [Vet.

XXI, Rec. XIX]. VERS. 5. Deus potentes non abjicit, cum et ipse sit potens. 44. Potentia temporalis, etsi bona, elationis tentationi est obnoxia. Qui se videt plus caeteris posse, plus sapere facile credit. Hic Satanae similis. In usu vitae mortalis quaedam ex semetipsis sunt noxia, quaedam vero ex his quae circa ipsa versantur. Ex semetipsis quaedam sunt noxia, sicut peccata atque flagitia. Quaedam vero nonnunquam nobis ex his quae circa ipsa sunt nocent, sicut temporalis potentia, vel copula conjugalis. Bonum namque est conjugium, sed mala sunt quae circa illud ex hujus mundi cura succrescunt. Unde Paulus ait: Qui autem cum uxore est cogitat quae sunt mundi, quomodo placeat uxori (I Cor. VII, 33). Unde et quibusdam meliora persuadens, eos a conjugio revocat, dicens: Hoc autem dico, non ut laqueum vobis injiciam, sed ad id quod honestum est, et quod facultatem praebeat sine impedimento Dominum obsecrandi (Ibid., 35). Dum ergo tenetur quod non nocet, ex rebus juxta positis committitur plerumque quod nocet; sicut saepe rectum mundumque iter pergimus, et tamen ortis juxta viam vepribus

per vestimenta retinemur. In via quidem munda non offendimus, sed a latere nascitur quo pungamur. Magna est etiam potentia temporalis, quae habet apud Deum meritum suum de bona administratione regiminis; nonnunquam tamen eo ipso quo praeeminet caeteris, elatione cogitationis intumescit; et dum ad usum cuncta subjacent, dum ad votum velociter jussa complentur, dum omnes subditi si qua bene gesta sunt laudibus efferunt, male gestis autem nulla auctoritate contradicunt, dum plerumque laudant etiam quod objurgare debuerunt, seductus ab his quae infra subduntur, super se animus tollitur; et dum foris immenso favore circumdatur, intus veritate vacuatur; atque oblitus sui, in voces se spargit alienas; talemque se credit, qualem foris audit, non qualem intus discernere debuit; subjectos despicit, eosque aequales sibi naturae ordine non agnoscit; et quos sorte potestatis excesserit, transcendisse se etiam vitae meritis credit; cunctis se aestimat amplius sapere, quibus se videt amplius posse. In quodam quippe se constituit culmine apud semetipsum; et qui aequa caeteris naturae conditione constringitur, 833 ex aequo respicere caeteros dedignatur; sicque usque ad ejus similitudinem ducitur de quo scriptum est: Omne sublime videt, et ipse est rex super universos filios superbiae (Job. XLI, 25). Et de cujus corpore dicitur: Generatio cujus excelsi sunt oculi, et palpebrae ejus in alta surrectae (Prov. XXX, 13). Ad ejus similitudinem ducitur, qui singulare culmen appetens, et socialem angelorum vitam despiciens, ait: Ascendam super altitudinem nubium; similis ero altissimo (Isai. XIV, 14). Miro ergo judicio intus foveam dejectionis invenit, dum foris se in culmine potestatis extollit. Apostatae quippe angelo similis efficitur, dum homo hominibus esse similis dedignatur. Sic Saul ab humilitatis merito in tumorem superbiae culmine potestatis excrevit. Per humilitatem quippe praelatus est per superbiam reprobatus, Domino attestante qui ait: Nonne cum esses parvulus in oculis tuis, caput te constitui in tribubus Israel (I Reg. XV, 17)? Parvulum se ante potestatem viderat, sed, fultus temporali potentia, jam se parvulum non

videbat. Caeterorum namque comparatione se praeferens, magnum se apud se esse judicabat. Miro autem modo cum apud se parvulus, apud Dominum magnus; cum vero apud se magnus, apud Dominum parvulus fuit. Magnos nos Dominus apud nos esse prohibet per prophetam dicens: Vae qui sapientes estis in oculis vestris, et coram vobismetipsis prudentes (Isai. V, 21). Ne magni apud nos esse debeamus, Paulus admonens, ait: Nolite prudentes esse apud vosmetipsos (Rom. XII, 15). Plerumque ergo dum ex subjectorum affluentia animus inflatur, in luxum superbiae ipso potentiae fastigio lenocinante corrumpitur. 45. Legitima potestas ea est, quae super culpas, non super homines erigitur. S. Petri exemplum, et S. Pauli. Sed aliud est quaelibet bona non esse, aliud bona bene habere nescire. Bona namque est ordine suo potentia, sed cauta regentis indiget vita. Igitur bene hanc exercet, qui et retinere illam noverit, et impugnare. Bene hanc exercet, qui scit per illam super culpas erigi, et scit cum illa caeteris aequalitate componi. Humana enim mens plerumque extollitur, etiam cum nulla potestate fulcitur; quanto magis in altum se erigit, cum se etiam ei potestas adjungit? Et tamen corrigendis aliorum vitiis apta exsecutione praeparatur. Unde et per Paulum dicitur: Minister enim Dei est, vindex in iram ei qui malum agit (Rom. XIII, 4). [Vet. XXII.] Cum ergo potentiae temporalis ministerium suscipitur, summa cura vigilandum est, ut sciat quisque et sumere ex ea quod adjuvat, et expugnare quod tentat; et aequalem se cum illa caeteris cernere, et tamen se peccantibus zelo ultionis praeferre. Quam discretionem plenius cognoscimus, si etiam potestatis ecclesiasticae exempla cernamus. Petrus namque, auctore Deo, Ecclesiae principatum tenens a bene agente Cornelio, et sese ei humiliter prosternente, immoderatius venerari recusavit, seque illi similem recognovit, dicens: Surge, ne feceris, et ego ipse homo sum (Act. X, 26). Sed cum Ananiae et Sapphirae culpam reperit, mox quanta super caeteros potentia excrevisset ostendit (Act. V, 5, seq.). Verbo enim eorum vitam perculit, quam spiritu

perscrutante deprehendit; et summum se intra Ecclesiam contra peccata recoluit, quod, honore sibi vehementer impenso, coram bene agentibus fratribus non agnovit. Illic communionem aequalitatis meruit sanctitas actionis, 834 hic zelus ultionis jus aperuit potestatis, Paulus bene argentibus fratribus praelatum se esse nesciebat, cum diceret: Non quia dominamur fidei vestrae, sed adjutores sumus gaudii vestri (II Cor. I, 23). Atque illico adjunxit: Fide enim statis. Ac si diceret: Ideo non dominamur fidei vestrae, quia fide statis. Aequales enim vobis sumus, ubi vos stare cognoscimus. Quasi praelatum se fratribus esse nesciebat, cum diceret: Facti sumus parvuli in medio vestrum (I Thess. II, 7), et, Nos autem servos vestros per Jesum Christum (II Cor. IV, 5). Sed cum culpam quae corrigi debuisset invenit, illico magistrum se esse recoluit, dicens: Quid vultis? in virga veniam ad vos (I Cor. IV, 5)? 46. Praelati dum culpas puniunt jure potestatis, aequales se iis qui corriguntur agnoscant per humilitatis custodiam. Ipsis etiam se postponant, quare. Summus itaque locus bene regitur, cum is qui praeest vitiis potius quam fratribus dominatur. Cunctos quippe natura aequales genuit; ut autem alii ad regendum aliis committantur, non eos natura, sed culpa postponit. Vitiis ergo se debent rectores erigere, quorum et causa praeferuntur; et cum delinquentes corrigunt, sollicite attendant, ut per disciplinam culpas quidem jure potestatis feriant, sed per humilitatis custodiam aequales se ipsis fratribus qui corriguntur agnoscant. Quamvis plerumque etiam dignum est ut eosdem quos corrigimus tacita nobis cogitatione praeferamus. Illorum namque per nos vitia disciplinae vigore feriuntur; in his vero quae ipsi committimus ne verbi quidem ab aliquo invectione laceramur. Tanto ergo apud Dominum obligatiores sumus quanto apud homines inulte peccamus. [Vet. XXIII.] Disciplina autem nostra subditos tanto divino judicio liberiores reddit, quanto hic eorum culpas sine vindicta non deserit. Servanda itaque est in corde humilitas, et in opere disciplina. Atque inter haec solerter intuendum,

ne dum immoderatius custoditur virtus humilitatis, solvantur jura regiminis; et dum praelatus quisque plus se quam decet dejicit, subditorum vitam stringere sub disciplinae vinculo non possit. Teneamus ergo exterius quod pro aliorum utilitate suscipimus, teneamus interius quod de nostra aestimatione sentimus. Sed tamen decenter quibusdam erumpentibus signis tales nos apud nos esse ipsi etiam qui nobis commissi sunt non ignorent, ut et de auctoritate nostra quod formident videant, et de humilitate quod imitentur agnoscant. Servata autem auctoritate regiminis, ad cor nostrum sine cessatione redeamus, et consideremus assidue quod sumus aequaliter cum caeteris conditi, non quod temporaliter caeteris praelati. Potestas enim quanto exterius eminet, tanto premi interius debet, ne cogitationem vincat, ne in delectationem sui animum rapiat, ne jam sub se mens eam regere non possit, cui se libidine dominandi supponit. 47. Potestatis humiliter administratae exemplum in David. Bene David regni potentiam regere noverat, qui elationem ejusdem potentiae semetipsum premendo vincebat, dicens: Domine, non est exaltatum cor meum (Psal. CXXX 1). Quippe in ejus humilitatis augmentum subjunxit: Neque elati sunt oculi mei. Atque addidit: Neque ambulavi in magnis. Et adhuc subtilissima semetipsum inquisitione discutiens, ait: Neque in mirabilibus super me. Omnesque etiam cogitationes suas a fundo cordis exhauriens, 835 subjungit, dicens: Si non humiliter sentiebam sed exaltavi animam meam. Ecce humilitatis hostiam ab intimo cordis oblatam crebro replicat, et iterum atque iterum confitendo offerre non cessat; eamque multipliciter loquens judicis sui oculis ostentat. Quid est hoc? et quomodo istud sacrificium Deo placere cognoverat, quod in conspectu ejus tanta iteratione vocis immolabat, nisi quod vicina esse superbia potentibus solet, et pene semper rebus affluentibus elatio sociatur, quia et saepe humoris abundantia duritiam dat tumoris? [Vet. XXIV.] 48. Rara humilitatis et potestatis societas. Mirum vero valde est cum in cordibus sublimium regnat humilitas morum. Unde

pensandum est quia potentes quique cum humiliter sapiunt, culmen extraneae et quasi longe positae virtutis attingunt, et recte hac virtute Dominum quantocius placant, quia illud ei sacrificium humiliter offerunt, quod potentes invenire vix possunt. Subtilissima namque ars vivendi est culmen tenere, gloriam premere; esse quidem in potentia, sed potentem se esse nescire; ad largienda bona potentem se cognoscere, ad rependenda noxia omne quod potenter valet ignorare. Recte itaque de talibus dicitur: Deus potentes non abjicit, cum et ipse sit potens. Deum quippe imitari desiderat, qui fastigium potentiae alienis intentus utilitatibus, et non suis laudibus elatus administrat, qui praelatus caeteris prodesse appetit, non praeesse. Tumoris namque elatio, non ordo potestatis in crimine est. Potentiam Deus tribuit, elationem vero potentiae malitia nostrae mentis invenit. Tollamus ergo quod de nostro contulimus, et bona sunt quae Deo largiente possidemus. Quia enim nequaquam justa potentia, sed actio prava damnatur, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXVII [Rec. XX].

VERS. 6. Sed non salvat impios, et judicium pauperibus tribuit. 49. Deus potestatis superbiam non celsitudinem damnat. Scriptura sacra plerumque pauperes, humiles vocare consuevit. Unde in Evangelio cum adjectione spiritus nominantur, dum dicitur: Beati pauperes spiritu, quoniam ipsorum est regnum coelorum (Matth. V, 3). Quia enim divitiae visibiliter potentes ostendunt, apud semetipsos pauperes sunt, qui elati in suis conscientiis non sunt. Eos vero impios vocat, qui aut a fidei pietate disjuncti sunt, aut in hoc quod fideliter credunt pravis sibi moribus contradicunt. Quia ergo omnipotens Deus malitiae superbiam, non potentiae celsitudinem damnat, postquam dictum est: Deus potentes non abjicit, cum et ipse sit potens, recte subjungitur: Sed non salvat impios, et judicium pauperibus tribuit. Id est, elatos destruit, humiles vero per judicium liberos reddit. Vel certe judicium

pauperibus tribuit, quia hi qui nunc nequiter opprimuntur, ipsi tunc super oppressores suos judices veniunt. 50. Reproborum alii judicantur, alii non judicantur. Duae quippe sunt partes, electorum scilicet, atque reproborum. Sed bini ordines eisdem singulis partibus continentur. Alii namque judicantur et pereunt, alii non judicantur et pereunt. Alii judicantur et regnant, alii non judicantur et 836 regnant. Judicantur et pereunt quibus Dominica inclamatione dicitur: Esurivi, et non dedistis mihi manducare; sitivi, et non dedistis mihi potum; hospes eram, et non collegistis me; nudus, et non operuistis me; aeger et in carcere, et non visitastis me (Matth. XXV, 42, 43). Quibus praemittitur: Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus (Ibid., 41). Alii vero in extremo judicio non judicantur et pereunt, de quibus Propheta ait: Non resurgunt impii in judicio (Psal. I, 5). Et de quibus Dominus dicit: Qui autem non credit, jam judicatus est (Joan. III, 18). Et de quibus Paulus ait: Qui sine lege peccaverunt, sine lege peribunt (Rom. II, 12). Resurgunt ergo etiam omnes infideles, sed ad tormentum, non ad judicium. Non enim eorum tunc causa discutitur, quia ad conspectum districti judicis jam cum damnatione suae infidelitatis accedunt. Professionem vero fidei retinentes, sed professionis opera non habentes, redarguunt ut pereant. Qui vero nec fidei sacramenta tenuerunt increpationem judicis in extrema examinatione non audiunt, quia, praejudicati infidelitatis suae tenebris, ejus quem despexerant invectione redargui non merentur. Illi saltem judicis verba audiunt, quia ejus fidei saltem verba tenuerunt. Isti in damnatione sua aeterni judicis nec verba percipiunt, quia ejus reverentiam nec verbo tenus servare voluerunt. Illi legaliter pereunt, quia sub lege positi peccaverunt; istis in perditione sua de lege nihil dicitur quia nihil legis habere conati sunt. [Vet. XXV.] Princeps namque terrenam rempublicam regens, aliter punit civem interius delinquentem, atque aliter exterius hostem rebellantem. In illo jura sua consulit, eumque sub verbis dignae invectionis addicit; contra

hostem vero bella movet, instrumenta perditionis exercet, dignaque ejus malitiae tormenta retribuit, de malo vero ejus quid lex habeat non requirit. Neque enim lege necesse est perimi, qui lege nunquam potuit teneri. Ita ergo in extremo judicio et legalis illum invectio percutit qui ab eo quod professione tenuit, actione declinavit; et iste sine judicii invectione perimitur, qui lege fidei non tenetur. 51. Electorum quoque alii judicium subeunt, alii non, sed judices sedent. Ex electorum vero parte alii judicantur et regnant, qui vitae maculas lacrymis tergunt, qui mala praecedentia factis sequentibus redimentes, quidquid illicitum aliquando fecerunt ab oculis judicis eleemosynarum superductione cooperiunt. Quibus judex veniens in dextera consistentibus dicit: Esurivi, et dedistis mihi manducare; sitivi, et dedistis mihi bibere; hospes eram, et collegistis me; nudus, et cooperuistis me; infirmus, et visitastis me; in carcere eram, et venistis ad me (Matth. XXV, 35). Quibus praemittit, dicens: Venite, benedicti Patris mei, possidete paratum vobis regnum a constitutione mundi (Ibid., 34). Alii autem non judicantur et regnant qui etiam praecepta legis perfectione virtutum transcendunt, quia nequaquam hoc solum quod cunctis divina lex praecipit implere contenti sunt, sed praestantiori desiderio plus exhibere appetunt quam praeceptis generalibus audire potuerunt. Quibus dominica voce dicitur: Vos qui reliquistis omnia, et secuti estis me, cum sederit Filius hominis 837 in sede majestatis suae, sedebitis et vos super duodecim thronos, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel (Matth. XIX, 28). Et de quibus propheta ait: Dominus ad judicium veniet cum senioribus populi sui (Isai. III, 14). Et de quibus Salomon, cum de sanctae Ecclesiae sponso loqueretur, intulit dicens: Nobilis in portis vir ejus, quando sederit cum senatoribus terrae (Prov. XXXI, 23). Hi itaque in extremo judicio non judicantur et regnant, quia cum auctore suo etiam judices veniunt. Relinquentes quippe omnia plus prompta devotione exsecuti sunt quam juberi generaliter audierunt. Speciali namque jussione paucis perfectioribus, et non generaliter

omnibus, dicitur hoc quod adolescens dives audivit: Vade et vende omnia quae habes, et da pauperibus, et habebis thesaurum in coelo, et veni et sequere me (Matth. XIX, 21). Si enim sub hoc praecepto cunctos jussio generalis astringeret, culpa profecto esset aliquid nos de hoc mundo possidere. Sed aliud est quod per sacram Scripturam omnibus generaliter praecipitur, aliud quod specialiter perfectioribus imperatur. Hi ergo recte sub generali judicio non tenentur, qui et praecepta generalia vivendo vicerunt. Sicut enim non judicantur et pereunt, qui suadente perfidia lege teneri contemnunt, ita non judicantur et regnant, qui, suadente pietate, etiam ultra generalia divinae legis praecepta proficiunt. Hinc est quod Paulus, etiam specialia praecepta transcendens, plus opere exhibuit quam institutione permissionis accepit (I Thess. II, 7). Cum enim accepisset ut Evangelium praedicans de Evangelio viveret, et Evangelium audientibus contulit, et tamen Evangelii sumptibus sustentari recusavit. Cur ergo iste judicetur ut regnet, qui minus quod servaret accepit, sed majus quod viveret invenit? Dicatur igitur recte: Judicium pauperibus tribuit, quia quanto huic mundo magna humilitate despecti sunt, tanto tunc acceptis sedibus majore culmine potestatis excrescunt. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XXVIII [Rec. XXI].

VERS. 7. Non auferet a justo oculos suos, et reges in solio collocat in perpetuum, et illic eriguntur. 52. Deus justos tunc magis respicit, cum injuste affliguntur. Abstulisse enim a justis oculos suos fortasse Dominus creditur, quia injustorum crudelitatibus hic sine vindicta lacerantur; sed famulos suos tunc magis respicit, cum injuste eos nequitia persequentis affligit. Videns enim quid hic humiliter tolerent, nimirum jam praevidet quid illic eis misericorditer recompenset. Non ergo aufert a justo oculos suos. Ecce iste humiliter ingemiscit, ille superbit et nequiter floret. Iste cor conterit, ille se de gloria iniquitatis extollit. Horum ergo quis divinis

obtutibus longe est, qui injustitiam pertulit, an qui eam patientibus irrogavit; qui supernam gratiam inter maeroris tenebras tenuit, an qui inter exteriora gaudia lumen justitiae intus amisit? [Vet. XXVI.] 53. Cur sancti, reges in S. Scriptura vocantur. Sanctos in throno cum Christo sedere est ex ejus potestate judicare. Bene autem sancti viri Scripturae sacrae testimonio reges vocantur, quia, praelati cunctis motibus carnis, modo luxuriae appetitum frenant, 838 modo aestum avaritiae temperant, modo gloriam elationis inclinant, modo suggestionem livoris obruunt, modo ignem furoris exstingnunt. Reges ergo sunt, quia tentationum suarum motibus non consentiendo succumbere, sed regendo praeesse noverunt. Quia igitur ab hac potestate regiminis ad potestatem transeunt retributionis, dicatur recte: Reges in solio collocat in perpetuum. Semetipsos enim regendo, ad tempus fatigati sunt, sed in regni erectionis aeternae solio in perpetuum collocantur; et eo illic accipiunt alios digne judicare, quo hic nesciunt sibimetipsis nequiter parcere. Hinc enim alias dicitur: Donec justitia convertatur in judicium (Psal. XCIII, 15). Paulus de se suisque consortibus dicit: Ut nos efficeremur justitia Dei in ipso (II Cor. V, 21). Justitia ergo in judicium vertitur, quia hi qui nunc juste atque irreprehensibiliter vivunt, tunc judicandi potentiam nanciscuntur. Hinc Laodiceae Ecclesiae Dominus dicit: Qui vicerit, dabo ei sedere mecum in throno meo, sicut et ego vici, et sedi cum Patre meo in throno ejus (Apoc. III, 21). Vincens Dominus in throno cum Patre sedisse se asserit, quia post passionis certamina, post resurrectionis palmam, clarius se omnibus quod potestati Patris esset aequalis indicavit, eique se non disparem calcato mortis aculeo innotuit. Unde et Mariae necdum credenti se Patri similem, dicit: Noli me tangere, nondum enimascendi ad Patrem (Joan. XX, 17). Nobis enim in throno filii sedere, est ex ejusdem Filii potestate judicare. Quia enim judicii principatum ex ejus virtute percipimus, velut in throno ejus residemus. [Vet. XXVII.] Nec abhorret a vero quod alias super duodecim thronos venturos

testatur esse discipulos (Matth. XIX, 28), hic vero in throno suo perhibet esse sessuros. Per thronos quippe duodecim universale judicium, per thronum vero Fili singulare culmen judiciariae potestatis ostenditur. Hoc ergo duodecim thronis, quod uno throno Filii designatur, quia videlicet universale judicium ex Mediatoris nostri interventione percipitur. Dicatur ergo: Reges in solio collocat in perpetuum. 54. Sanctorum sessio est aeterna. Prius humiliati, erigentur. Apte autem in perpetuum subdens aperte quid dicat insinuat. Si enim de terreni regni solio diceret, nullatenus in perpetuum subdidisset, quia qui illud arripiunt, profecto non in eo in perpetuum, sed temporaliter collocantur. Bene autem subdidit: Et illic eriguntur. Ac si intentioni audientis innueret, dicens: Quia hic humiliati sunt, illic eriguntur. Sanctis namque viris iste locus humilitatis est, ut ille sit celsitudinis. Unde alias scriptum est: Humiliasti eos in loco afflictionis (Psal. XLIII, 20). Locus quippe afflictionis est vita praesens: Qui ergo ad aeternam patriam tendunt, nunc semetipsos temporaliter in afflictionis loco despiciunt, ut tunc in loco gaudii veraciter sublimentur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIX Rec.

[XXII]. VERS. 8, 9. Et si fuerint in catenis, et vinciantur funibus paupertatis, indicabit eis opera eorum, et scelera eorum, quia violenti fuerint 55. Catenis ligari se putant sancti, quandiu hic vivunt. Catenae obligationis sunt ipsa adhuc retentio 839 peregrinationis. Ligatum se his catenis Paulus aspexerat, cum dicebat: Desiderium habens dissolvi, et cum Christo esse (Philip. I, 23). Paupertatis funibus vinctum se esse cernebat, quando veras divitias intuens, eas etiam discipulis exorabat, dicens: Ut sciatis quae sit spes vocationis ejus, quae divitiae gloriae haereditatis ejus in sanctis (Ephes. I, 18). Bene autem post ista subditur: Indicabit eis opera eorum, et scelera eorum, quia violenti fuerint. Cum enim supernam gloriam magis amando cognoscimus, tunc mala quae egimus graviora fuisse sentimus.

Unde et Paulus post perceptam gratiam supernorum ea quae in se studia virtutum crediderat fuisse jam scelera cognoscebat, dicens: Qui prius fui blasphemus, et persecutor, et contumeliosus; sed misericordiam consecutus sum, quia ignorans feci in incredulitate (I Tim. I, 13). Vel certe: Sed quae mihi fuerunt lucra, haec arbitratus sum propter Christum detrimenta (Philip. III, 7). Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 10.Revelabit quoque aurum eorum, ut corripiat; et loquetur, ut revertantur ab iniquitate. 56. Amore coelestis gloriae graviora fiunt peccata prius perpetrata. Aurem ab iniquitate revelare est intellectum cognitionis aperire. Revelata vero aure unusquisque corripitur, quando intrinsecus aeternorum bonorum desiderium percipit, et quae mala extrinsecus perpetravit agnoscit Potest vero in catenis et funibus paupertatis poena etiam temporalis afflictionis intelligi, quia saepe qui jubentis verba non audiunt, ferientis verberibus admonentur, ut ad bona desideria saltem poenae trahant, quos praemia non invitant. Unde per Prophetam dicitur: In camo et freno maxillas eorum constringe, qui non approximant ad le (Psal. XXXI, 9). Si vero etiam flagella despiciunt, constat nimirum quod tanto illic gravioris vindictae supplicia sentiant, quanto hic majoris providentiae gratiam calcant. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 11, 12. Si audierint et observaverint, complebunt dies suos in bono, et annos suos in gloria. Si autem non audierint, transibunt per gladium, et consumentur stultitia. 57. Quam severe puniendi, qui a perditis moribus nec flagellis coercentur. Per bonum recta actio, per gloriam vero superna retributio designatur. Qui ergo obedire praeceptis coelestibus student, dies suos in bono complent, annos in gloria, quia et cursum praesentis temporis

in recto opere, et consummationem suam perficiunt felici retributione. Si vero non audierint, transibunt per gladium, et consumentur stultitia, quia et vindicta eos in tribulatione percutit, et finis in fatuitate concludit. [Vet. XXVIII.] Sunt enim nonnulli quos a perditis moribus nec tormenta compescunt. De quibus per prophetam dicitur: Percussisti eos nec doluerunt; flagellasti eos, et renuerunt accipere disciplinam (Jerem. V, 3). Et de quibus sub Babylonis specie dicitur: Curavimus Babylonem, et non est sanata (Jerem. LI, 9). De quibus rursum dicitur: Interfeci et perdidi populum meum, et tamen a viis suis non sunt reversi (Jerem. XV, 7). Hi nonnunquam deteriores existunt ex verbere, quia pulsati doloribus, aut contumaci pertinacia duriores existunt, aut, quod pejus est, in blasphemiae etiam exasperationem prosiliunt. Bene ergo dicitur quod per gladium transeunt, et stultitia consumuntur, quia peccata quae flagellis emendare 840 debuerant, flagellis exaggerant. Et hic jam poenas percussionis sentiunt, et illic justae retributionis supplicia non evadunt. Fatuitas quippe stultitiae est quod illos sic imquitas obligat, ut a culpa eos nec poena compescat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXII [Rec. XXIII].

VERS. 13. Simulatores et callidi provocant iram Dei. 58. Simulatoris callidi imago. Cum simulatores diceret, apte subjungit et callidi, quia nisi ingenio calleant, quod videri appetunt congrue simulare non possunt. Sunt enim nonnulla vitia quae etiam a sensu tardioribus facile perpetrantur. Elatione namque intumescere, avaritiae aestibus inhiare, luxuriae pulsanti succumbere, etiam quilibet obtusis sensibus potest; simulationis vero falsitatem exsequi, nisi qui subtilioris ingenii fuerit, non potest. Quisquis enim talis est, ad custodienda duo videlicet continua observatione dividitur, ut callide noverit et occultare quod est, et ostentare quod non est; et vera mala premere, et falsa bona monstrare; nec se aperte in hoc quod videtur extollere, atque, ut majorem gloriam teneat, saepe se simulare gloriam

declinare. Quia enim ante oculos hominum sequendo eam apprehendere non potest, studet plerumque gloriam tenere fugiendo. Haec itaque simplicibus minime congruunt, quia si congruunt, jam simplices non sunt. 59. Iram Dei non solum meretur, sed provocat. Bene autem cum diceret: Simulatores et callidi, non subdidit, merentur, sed provocant iram Dei. Iram quippe Dei mereri, est etiam nesciendo peccare. Provocare vero est mandatis illius sciendo contraire; scire bonum, sed despicere; facere posse, nec velle. Hi enim perpetratione nequitiae intrinsecus tenebrescunt, et ostentatione justitiae superficie tenus dealbantur. Quibus voce Dominica dicitur: Vae vobis, Scribae et Pharisaei hypocritae, quia similes estis sepulcris dealbatis, quae foris parent hominibus speciosa, intus vero plena sunt ossibus mortuorum, et omni spurcitia; ita et vos quidem foris apparetis hominibus justi, intus autem pleni estis hypocrisi et iniquitate. (Matth. XXIII, 27). Foris ergo ostendendo servant quae vivendo intus impugnant. Intus vero mala cogitantes exaggerant quae foris aliud superducentes occultant. Ante districtum itaque judicem excusationem jam de ignorantia habere non possunt, quia dum ante oculos hominum omnem modum sanctitatis ostentant, ipsi sibi sunt testimonio quia bene vivere non ignorant. Dicatur igitur recte: Simulatores et callidi provocant iram Dei. Quid vero eos ad extremum sequatur, adjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XXXIII.

Ibid. Neque clamabunt cum vincti fuerint. 60. Etiam percussus peccata confiteri erubescit. Omnis iniquus qui cum iniquus sit, sanctus videri non appetit, in flagelli percussione deprehensus, fateri quod iniquus sit non erubescit. Qui vero iniqua agens, humana de se judicia sub specie sanctitatis intercipit, etiam cum flagello percutitur, iniquum se prodere refugit, quia sanctus videri consuevit. Si quando autem graviter coarctatur, iniquum se vix superficie tenus confitetur, quia interna sua detegere veraci confessione

confunditur. Quasi liberi vero sumus, cum nulla correptione castigamur; vincimur autem, cum flagello percussionis astringimur. Vincti igitur tanto
841 clamamus altius, quanto in percussione positi peccata nostra veracius confitemur. Apud aures quippe Dei vox valida devota confessio est. Quia ergo simulatores quosque, etiam cum percussionis flagella corripiunt, ad confessionem simplicem non perducunt (cognosci enim peccatores refugiunt, quia sancti omnium opinione ferebantur), quamvis eos ad extremum jam flagella feriant, quamvis duci se ad aeterna supplicia non ignorent, tales tamen cupiunt apud humana judicia remanere, quales se studuerant semper ostendere. Deprehensi ergo etiam flagello percussionis extremae, quia confessionem puram vel afflicti exerere negligunt, quasi vincti clamare contemnunt. Bene ergo dicitur: Neque clamabunt cum vincti fuerint. 61. Hypocritae sanctos se, non quia sunt, sed quia dicuntur, existimant. Vana spe delusi, ad confessionis remedium etiam in extremis non confugiunt. Ab homine longe saepe distat ejus cor. Quamvis intelligi etiam aliter potest. Omnis enim qui, cum iniquus sit, dici sanctus ab hominibus non pertimescit, etsi iniquum se tacita cogitatione reprehendit, tamen dum saepius sanctum audire se coeperit, hoc quod de se intrinsecus tenebat amittit. Cor quippe exterius fundit, et quia libenter foris falsum de se testimonium recipit, qualem se intus habeat non requirit. Unde fit ut vacuae laudis fomenta etiam cum defuerint quaerat, et oblitus quod est appetat videri quod non est. [Vet. XXIX.] Igitur qui tales sunt, dum justos se ante humana judicia simulant, dum actiones suas laudibus dignas intuentium oculis ostentant, occulta cum eis justitia agitur, ut quo nituntur foris alios fallere, eo de se intus etiam ipsi fallantur. Nam omnem circa se sollicitae investigationis oculum perdunt. Vitam enim suam et discutere et perscrutari dissimulant, sed tales se quales audiunt putant, sanctosque se esse, non quia ita vivunt, sed quia ita dicuntur, existimant. Subtile autem Dei judicium, seque ipsos intueri negligunt, quia fidem sui meriti in

attestatione ponunt oris alieni. Cum vero subita percussione feriuntur, iniquos se vel veraciter fateri, vel sicut sunt, deprehendere omnino non possunt, quia videlicet sanctos se humana professione crediderunt. Bene ergo dicitur: Neque clamabunt cum vincti fuerint. Spe enim vacua tales se ante supernum judicem venire confidunt, quales se hominibus innotuisse cognoscunt; seque ipsos miseri nec inter tormenta deprehendunt, et dum testimonium falsae laudis aspiciunt, remedium verae confessionis amittunt. Etiam vincti ducuntur, et non clamant, quia, humanae laudis importunitate superati, sanctos se miseri et cum in peccatis moriuntur putant. Quibus bene per prophetam dicitur: Redite, praevaricatores, ad cor (Isai. XLVI, 8). Si enim ad cor redirent, per exterioris attestationis se verba non funderent. Nam quid vicinius nobis est corde nostro? quid vicinius nobis est ea re quae intra nos est? Et tamen cum per pravas cogitationes spargitur, a nobis cor nostrum longius evagatur. Longe ergo prophetas praevaricatorem mittit, cum eum ad cor suum redire compellit, quia quo se exterius fudit, eo ad se unde possit redire vix invenit. Quia vero simulatorum mens pro eo quod ab una aeternitatis intentione dividitur, cogitationum multiplicium inundatione vastatur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXIV.

VERS. 14. Morietur in tempestate amma ecrum. 842 62. Tempestate subita hypocritae moriuntur. Quasi tranquille namque videbantur vivere, cum de sanctitatis curarent laude gaudere. Sed tempestatesubita eorum anima moritur, quae humanae laudis pessima tranquillitate laetabatur. Plerumque subito inopinata tempestas omne quod aer serenum blanditur immutat; et eo periculum vitari non potest, quo nec potuit praevideri. Unde simulatores, qui vitae suae custodiam negligunt, in tempestate mori referuntur. Hinc quippe eos turbo subitus internae percussionis ejicit, quos arrogantia externi favoris extollit; et dum amplectuntur in laude quod non sunt, repente

inveniunt in ultione quod sunt. [Vet. XXX.] Bene autem per Salomonem dicitur: Quomodo probatur in conflatorio argentum, et in fornace aurum, sic probatur homo ore laudantis (Prov. XXVII, 21). Laus quippe sua justos cruciat, iniquos exaltat. Sed justos dum cruciat purgat, iniquos dum laetificat reprobos monstrat. Isti enim sua laude pascuntur, quia auctoris sui gloriam non requirunt. Illi autem qui auctoris gloriam quaerunt, sua laude cruciantur, ne non sit intus quod foris dicitur, ne, si est etiam quod dicitur, ante Dei oculos ipsis favoribus vacuetur: ne humana laus robur mentis emolliat, eamque in sui delectatione prosternat; et quae adjumentum debet esse augendi operis, jam retributio sit laboris. Cum vero sua praeconia in Dei laudem tendere sentiunt, ea etiam desiderabiliter amplectuntur. Scriptum namque est: Videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in coelis est (Matth. V, 16). Viam se ergo hominibus faciunt, quoties in se aliquid quo Deus cognoscatur ostendunt, quia non student in se humanam laudem figere, sed quaerunt eam per se medios ad auctoris gloriam pertransire. Arrogantes autem humanis laudibus mollia corda prostituunt, quia suis amoribus corrumpuntur. De quibus alias dicitur: Erunt homines seipsos amantes (II Tim. III, 2). Apte vero hic de hac eorum corruptione subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXV.

IBID. Et vita eorum inter effeminatos. 63. Effeminati sunt qui laudibus humanis corrumpuntur. Si enim virditer viverent, laus transitoria nulla eos corruptione vitiaret. Unde electis Propheta persuadet, dicens: Viriliter agite, et confortetur cor vestrum (Psal. XXX, 25). Dicens enim Viriliter agite, et confortetur cor vestrum, illico subdidit, quasi sexum cordis munire curavit. Luxuriosi quippe mens corrumpitur, si rebus transitoriis delectatur. Igitur simulatorum vita inter effeminatos moritur, quia laudis luxuria corrupta reperitur. Translatione vero alia non habetur: Vita eorum inter effeminatos,

sed, Vita eorum vulneretur ab angelis. Utramque tamen etsi sermone discrepat, ratione concordat, quia effeminatorum vitam angeli vulnerant, dum nuntii veritatis eam jaculis sanctae praedicationis impugnant. Quia igitur de damnatione reproborum quid agatur audivimus, de ereptione humilium quid sequatur audiamus: VERS. 15. Eripiet pauperem de angustia sua. 64. Humiles, cum moriuntur, de angustia liberantur. Pauper de angustia sua eripitur cum unusquisque humilis de hac peregrinationis suae afflictione liberatur. Nam et assiduis hic tribulationis premitur, ut ad requirendum verae consolationis gaudium provocetur. Unde et sequitur: IBID. 843 Et revelabit in tribulatione aurem ejus. Aurem in tribulatione revelare est auditum cordis verberum plagis aperire. Cum enim praecepta despicimus, pia districtione nobiscum agitur, ut flagella timeamus. Aurem itaque cordis tribulatio aperit, quam saepe hujus mundi prosperitas claudit. Per Salomonem namque dicitur: Aversio parvulorum interficiet eos, et prosperitas stultorum perdet illos (Prov. I, 32). Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVI [Rec. XXIV].

VERS. 16. Igitur salvabit te de ore angusto latissime. 65. Peccati consuetudo puteus arctissimus, ex quo sola gratia nos potest educere. Omnis qui vitae viam deserens in peccatorum se tenebras dejicit, semetipsum quasi in puteum vel foveam mergit. Si vero diutina perpetratione etiam consuetudine iniquitatis opprimitur ne ad superiora jam possit exsurgere, quasi angusto ore putei coarctatur. Unde David propheta sub specie peccantium exorat, dicens: Non me demergat tempestas aquae, neque absorbeat me profundum, neque urgeat super me puteus os suum (Psal. LXVIII, 16). Quem enim mali operis iniquitas a bona stabilitate commovit, quasi tempestas aquae rapuit; sed si adhuc longa consuetudine non praevaluit, non demersit. Jam in puteum cecidit qui hoc quod divina lex prohibet perpetravit. Sed si adhuc longa consuetudo non deprimit,

nequaquam os suum puteus coangustavit. Tanto erga facilius egreditur, quanto minori consuetudine coarctatur. Unde Jeremias propheta, dum Judaeam iniquitatibus longa consuetudine obrutam fuisse conspiceret, in lamentis suis sub ejus specie semetipsum deplorat, dicens: Lapsa est in lacum vita mea, et posuerunt lapidem super me (Thren. III, 53). [Vet. XXXI.] In lacum quippe vita labitur cum labe iniquitatis inquinatur. Lapis vero superponitur cum etiam dura consuetudine mens in peccato devoratur, ut etsi velit exsurgere, jam utcumque non possit, quia moles desuper malae consuetudinis premit. Sed quia divinae potentiae subjacet, et post angustiam pravae consuetudinis ad bonae actionis amplitudinem revocatur, idcirco dicitur: Salvabit te de ore angusto latissime. Latissime quippe de ore angusto salvatur, qui et post iniquitatis jugum ad libertatem boni operis poenitendo reducitur. 66. Quanta angustia est ab opprimente mala consuetudine exsurgere velle nec posse. Quaedam namque ab opprimente mala consuetudine exsurgere velle, nec posse; jam quidem desiderio ad superna tendere, sed adhuc actu in infimis remanere; praeire corde, nec tamen sequi opere, atque in semetipso contradictionem perpeti semetipsum. Cum vero ita tendens anima manu gratiae exaltantis adjuvatur, ab angusto ore ad latitudinem pervenit, quia, victis difficultatibus, opera bona perficit quae concupiscit. David propheta conclusionem angusti oris conspexerat, cum dicebat: Salvam fecisti de necessitatibus animam meam, nec conclusisti me in manus inimici (Psal. XXX, 9). Latissime autem salvatum se noverat, cum subderet, dicens: Statuisti in loco spatioso pedes meos (Ibid.). In spatioso quippe loco pedes stabiliti sunt, quando et ad congruentia bona tendimus, et nulla difficultate praepedimur. Quasi enim per latum locum quo volumus pergimus, quia nullis objectis difficultatibus angustamur. 844 67. In hunc puteum cecidisse Job immerito creditus. Sed haec Eliu recte diceret, si beato Job ejus sententia conveniret. Pro culpa enim flagellatum credidit, et idcirco eum in os angustum cecidisse judicavit.

Quo enim validioribus vidit eum plagis affici, eo deterioribus credidit iniquitatibus praegravari, profecto nesciens quod flagella ejus augmentum essent meriti, non poena peccati. Cum vero eum in os angustum cecidisse fateatur, ad huc quasi latius exsequitur in quanta Job profunditate teneatur dicens:

CAPUT XXXVII [Vet. XXXII].

IBID. Et non habente fundamentum subter se. 68. Quem includit puteus arctus malae consuetudinis, infernus absorbet, et desperationis abyssus. Omne peccatum fundamentum non habet, quia non ex propria natura subsistit. Malum quippe sine substantia est. Quod tamen, utcunque sit, in boni natura coalescit. Igitur os angustum nullum subter se dicitur habere fundamentum, quia peccati inquinatio subsistendi jus non habet proprium. Quia vero a fundo dicitur fundamentum, possumus etiam fundamentum pro fundo positum non inconvenienter accipere, sicut auditus ab aure dicitur, et tamen plerumque ipsa auris auditus nomine designatur. Cum ergo diceret os angustum, explere profundi voraginem volens, subdidit: Et non habente fundamentum subter se. Quem enim rapit iniquitas, infernus absorbet. Internus vero recte fundum non habere creditur, quia quisquis ab illo rapitur, in immenso profundo devoratur. Immensam namque ejus explere latitudinem volens propheta, ait: Dilatavit infernus animam suam, et aperuit os suum absque ullo termino (Isai. V, 14). Sicut ergo sine termino dilatatus dicitur qui ad se plurimos trahit, ita sine fundo altus non incongrue creditur, quia eos quos in se suscipit, quasi in quadam abysso suae immensitatis absorbet. Itaque cum diceret: Salvabit te de ore angusto latissime, apte subjunxit: Et non habente fundamentum subter se. Ac si diceret: De ore angusto salvabit quod sub se fundum non habet, quia enim per peccatum tenditur ad infernum, quem a peccato salvat, de ore angusto liberat. Quem vero de ore angusto eripit, ab inferni profundo subducit. 69. Quamvis etiam

aliter intelligi potest. Nam sicut qui in puteum mergitur putei profundo retinetur, ita corruens quasi in quodam fundi loco consisteret anima, si semel lapsa in aliqua se peccati mensura retineret. Sed cum peccato in quod labitur non potest esse contenta, dum quotidie ad deteriora dejicitur, quasi in puteo quo cecidit fundum non invenit quo figatur. Esset enim fundus putei, si fuisset mensura peccati; unde bene alias dicitur: Peccator cum venerit in profundum malorum, contemnit (Prov. XVIII, 3). Redire namque dissimulat, quia misereri sibi posse desperat. Sed cum desperando amplius peccat, quasi puteo suo fundum subtrahit, ne ubi retineri possit inveniat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

IBID. Requies autem mensae tuae erit plena pinguedine. 70. Quem eripit gratia, internae satietatis delectatione replet. Requies mensae est refectio satietatis internae; quae pinguedine plena dicitur, quia in aeternae voluptatis delectatione praeparatur. Hujus mensae epulas esuriebat Propheta, cum diceret: Satiabor dum manifestabitur gloria tua (Psal. XVI, 15). Hujus mensae pocula sitiebat, dicens: Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum; 845 quando veniam, et apparebo ante faciem Dei (Psal. XLII, 3)? Eliu itaque in beato Job temporalia verbera aeternorum volens retributione consolari, quod jure ei debebatur ex meritis, ex semetipso quasi gratuito promittit, dicens: Requies autem mensae tuae erit plena pinguedine. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIX [Rec. XXV].

VERS. 17. Causa tua quasi impii judicata est, causam judiciumque recipies. 71. Flagellantur justi, ut ad majorem vigilantiam orudiantur. Bonorum causa justitia est. Quorum causa quasi impii judicatur, quia eorum hic justitia paterno flagello fatigatur, ut ad ampliorem vigilantiam non solum praeceptione mandatorum, sed etiam verberum percussione doceantur. Sed

causam judiciumque recipiunt, quia ex ea justitia qua modo vivunt tunc in culmine judiciariae potestatis enitescunt, ut tanto tunc potentius cuncta judicent, quanto nunc in eis subtilius cuncta judicantur. Haec Eliu quasi nova spondendo intulit, quae beatus Job semper credendo stabiliter tenuit. [Vet. XXXIII.] Habent profecto haec propria omnes arrogantes, ut et malum mentientes exaggerent, et si quod forsitan bonum dicunt, hoc velut incognitum proferant. Unde fit ut etiam doctiores se docere audeant, quia videlicet se scire talia solos putant. Cum vero ad aliqua consolationis verba descendunt, statim viluisse se aestimant, et per increpationis tumidae asperitatem quasi quoddam sibi ingenium reformant, ut qui condescendisse blandientes testes visi sunt, exorta subito increpatione timeantur. Unde et mox Eliu subdidit, dicens:

CAPUT XL.

[Rec. XXVI]. VERS. 18-21. Non te ergo superet ira, ut aliquem opprimas; nec multitudo locorum inclinet te. Depone magnitudinem tuam absque tribulatione, et omnes robustos fortitudine. Ne protrahas noctem, ut ascendant populi pro eis. Cave ne declines ad iniquitatem; hanc enim coepisti sequi post miseriam. 72. Superbi quidquid ab aliis recte fit, carpunt. In plerisque Codicibus, donorum; in paucis vero, sed antiquioribus, locorum invenimus. Sed quia expositione non indiget si dicatur: Nec multitudo donorum inclinet te, hoc magis exponi placuit quod cum difficultate aliquantula videtur aperiri. Haec autem quantae elationis verba sint, ipse qui ea formavit tumor ostendit. Sed quia Eliu arrogantium et beatum Job tenere typum diximus electorum, si ea subtilius discernimus, etiam nunc intra Ecclesiam quomodo arrogantibus congruant demonstramus. Sancti viri aliena opera etiam parva mirantur, sua vero etiam magna despiciunt. At contra, arrogantes aliena etiam magna despiciunt, sua vel quae parva sunt admirantur; et plerumque de suis malis bona aestimant, de alienis autem

bonis mala sentire non cessant. Nam dum propriam gloriam quaerunt, perniciose student ut quidquid virtutis ab aliis agitur iniquitatis nota laceretur, et bonae pondus actionis vertunt in maculam criminis. Saepe enim cum vident ab Ecclesia districte pravos corrigi, quasi queruntur injuste innocentes affligi, et nitorem disciplinae ejus commutant appellatione nequitiae. Unde Eliu figuram 846 arrogantium servans, beatum Job quasi admonens, ait: Non te ergo superet ira, ut aliquem opprimas. [Vet. XXXIV.] Arrogantes enim irae motum deputant, quidquid a sancta Ecclesia geritur censura disciplinae. Et quia humanae laudis appetitu benigni student semper apparere, nullos censent districtione severitatis corrigendos. Unde et a bonis rectoribus, sicut superius dictum est, opprimi aestimant quos invitos cernunt a vitiis coerceri. 73. Ecclesiae in cunctis mundi partibus potentia temporalis. Hanc immerito Ecclesiae hostes ei exprobrant. Etsi quidam intra ejus sinum sint qui de ipsius gloria superbiant. Auctore autem Domino, quia in cunctis mundi partibus sancta Ecclesia culmine religionis excrevit, hanc ipsam temporalem potentiam, qua quidem bene utitur, obtrectando in vitium elationis inflectunt. [Rec. XXVII.] Unde Eliu subjungit, dicens: Nec multitudo locorum inclinet te. Ac si eidem sanctae Ecclesiae humilitatem magis in prosperis conservanti arrogantium voce dicatur: Quia ubique fidei reverentia coleris, cave ne ejusdem reverentiae fascibus extollaris. Quosdam quippe conspiciunt qui sub religionis obtentu vitio elationis intumescunt, et quod in quibusdam jure reprehendunt, hoc injuste ad crimen omnium pertrahunt: nequaquam videlicet perpendentes quod sint in ea qui et despicientes noverint perfecte temporalia regere, et amantes aeterna plenis desideriis exspectare; et dispensationem potestatis acceptae peragere, et humilitatis insitae ministerium custodire, ut nec humilitatis causa curam suscepti regiminis negligant, nec rursum occasione regiminis in eis humilitas intumescat. Etsi quidam fortasse intra ipsam sunt qui non Dei sed suae gloriae sub religionis praetextu deserviunt, studet tamen eos, aut, si

valet, districte corrigere, aut, si non valet, aequanimiter tolerare; et vel corrigendo illos quasi filios amplectitur, vel tolerando quasi ab hostibus exercetur. Scit namque quod per eorum superbiam laceretur vita justorum, scit quod in ejus crimen extenditur quidquid talium pravitate peccatur, sed notam alieni criminis sustinere tanto minus metuit quanto et caput suum talia tolerasse cognoscit. De illo quippe scriptum est: Et cum iniquis deputatus est (Marc. XV, 28). De illo rursum dicitur: Languores nostros ipse tulit, et dolores nostros ipse portavit (Isai. LIII, 4). Eant ergo arrogantes, et aestimatione pravorum vitam mordeant innocentum. Scit electorum Ecclesia et illorum facta, et horum verba tolerare, scit pravorum mentes tolerando convertere. Qui etsi converti nequiverint, eorum tamen ignominiam aequanimiter suffert. Perpendit quippe quia ad duplex ejus praemium proficit quod ex eorum meritis foris despicitur, quorum et intus vita laceratur. 74. Qui temporaliter extollitur, cadit. Notandum vero quod non ait: Nec multitudo locorum extollat te, sed ait: Nec multitudo locorum inclinet te. Omnis enim qui temporaliter extollitur eo ipso quo extollitur inclinatur, quia cum se exterius erigit, intus cadit. Eliu itaque casum cordis in elatione intuens, ait: Nec multitudo locorum inclinet te. Ac si voce arrogantium sanctae Ecclesiae diceretur: Cave ne, si universitatis veneratione extolleris, 847 ab interna intentione curveris. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLI [Rec.

XXVIII). VERS. 19. Depone magnitudinem tuam absque tribulatione, et omnes robustos fortitudine. 75. Apostolis et Ecclesiae fortibus ad praemia vocatis, Deus eorum vice debiles ad certamina roboravit. Quos alios sanctae Ecclesiae robustos accipimus, nisi eos qui ad vincenda mundi hujus desideria et coeptis sublimibus et consummatis profectibus convalescunt? Magnitudo itaque ejus in robustorum suorum vita consistit, quia tunc gloriosior redditur, cum pro defensione veritatis ad mortem usque ab electis

illius constanti virtute certatur. Arrogantes igitur viri subductis de hoc mundo apostolis, subductis ad superna martyribus, quia fortasse doctiores valentioresque praepositos abunde deesse conspiciunt, quasi solos se remansisse intra Ecclesiam suspicantur. Unde dum se praeferunt, ei velut consulentes illudunt, dicentes: Depone magnitudinem tuam absque tribulatione, et omnes robustos fortitudine. Ac si apertis exprobrationibus dicant: Nequaquam te magnitudinem habere confidas, quia subductis prioribus, patribus jam non habes de quorum vita glorieris. Dicunt haec profecto, nescientes quia omnipotens Deus Ecclesiam suam digna sine administratione non deserit. Nam cum fortes ad praemium vocat, eorum vice debiles ad certamina roborat; cum illos suscipiendo remunerat, istis laborum vires, quas remuneret, subministrat. De quibus eidem sanctae Ecclesiae dicitur: Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii, constitues eos principes super omnem terram (Psal. XLIV, 17). In virtutem quippe antiquorum patrum, hi qui postmodum praelati sunt subrogantur, quia et cum annosa arbusta succiduntur, in eorum robur tenera virgulta succrescunt. Sed arrogantes viri convalescere non credunt quos infirmos aliquando noverunt; et permutatos venerari despiciunt, quos despicabiles fuisse meminerunt. [Vet. XXXV.] 76. In Ecclesia justi multo pauciores quam iniqui. Superbi pastores quae patres eorum moriendo severunt, hoec exsultando metunt. Quia vero in ea justiores paucos, iniquos autem numerosiores aspiciunt, sicut et in tritura frugum major est multitudo palearum, etiam justorum vitam ex iniquorum aestimatione contemnunt. Vident profecto quod nonnulli rectores illius, temporali potestate subnixi, ejusdem potestatis elatione pascuntur. Vident quod religionis reverentiam, quam huic mundo patres moriendo servaverunt, hi exsultando in terrenis gaudiis metunt; et perpendunt quidem quia robusti sunt, sed non fortitudine. Nam dum temporali potestate fulciuntur, quasi quadam debilitate roborantur. Quanto enim exterius fortes sunt, tanto a cunctis fortitudinis

viribus intus inanescunt. Et idcirco ab arrogantibus ei dicitur: Depone robustos fortitudine. Ac si aperte dicatur: Illi tibi veraciter robusti inhaeserant, qui in te hoc quod docendo locuti sunt, vivendo tenuerunt; nunc vero hi qui tibi praesident visione robusti sunt, non fortitudine, quia honorabiles quidem se ostentare non desin unt, sed tanto imbecilliores et contemptibiliores sunt, quanto honoris sui gloriam despici pro veritate pertimescunt. Quod arrogantes quidem de plerisque veraciter sentiunt, sed eo in elationis vitium corruunt, quo omnes quos praeesse conspiciunt tales arbitrantur. 848 Neque enim debet plurimorum malum tendere in aestimationem cunctorum, quia etsi iniqui sunt quos cognoscentes dijudicant, nonnulli tamen sancti sunt quos ignorant. Triturae quippe tempus est, et adhuc grana sub paleis latent. Nullus ergo ex area fructus exspectabitur, si hoc solum in ea esse creditur, quod superficie tenus videtur. Igitur quia quos cernunt, despiciunt, et in antiquorum patrum ordinibus hos quos norunt subrogari contemnunt, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLII.

VERS. 20. Ne protrahas noctem, ut ascendant populi pro eis. 77. Nox Ecclesiae est, cum doctorum et fortium loca indocti ac debiles obtinent. Ac si aperte arrogantes dicant: Ignorantiae tuae obscuritate non agas, ut in loco fortium numerositatem subroges infirmorum. Populi quippe nomine designantur, qui quasi vulgari consuetudini dediti, in cunctis quae appetunt passim vivunt. Noctem vero protrahere est ut pro robustis populi ascendant, si per negligentiam agitur ut doctorum et fortium loca indocti ac debiles sortiantur. Populi pro robustis ascendunt quando hi qui vivere inique didicerunt pastorum loca percipiunt. Quod recte quidem dici poterat si humiliter diceretur. Arrogantes enim, etiam cum bona admonent, superstitionis suae vitium exercent. Nam plus, sicut et superius dictum est, increpando ferire appetunt quam consolando refovere. Unde mox

subjungitur: VERS. 21.Ne declines ad iniquitatem; hanc enim coepisti sequi post miseriam. Hoc profecto arrogantes Ecclesiae miseriam vocant, quod despectam Deo ejus multitudinem suspicantur; et eo illam altiori elatione contemnunt, quo et despectam Deo funditus suspicantur. His igitur figurata expositione transcursis, jam nunc inferenda sunt quae moraliter sentiuntur, ut figura Ecclesiae cognita, quam expressam generaliter credimus, audiamus etiam quid ex his verbis in singulis specialiter colligamus. Ait itaque:

CAPUT XLIII [Vet. XXXVI].

CAP. XXXVI, VERS. 18. Non te ergo superet ira, ut aliquem opprimas. 78. SENSUS MORALIS. In facienda correctione, subesse debet ira, non praeesse. Omnis per quem necesse est aliena vitia corrigi semetipsum prius debet solerter intueri, ne dum aliorum culpas ulciscitur, ipse ulciscendi furore superetur. Plerumque enim mentem sub obtentu justitiae irae immanitas vastat, et dum quasi saevit zelo rectitudinis, rabiem explet furoris, justeque se facere aestimat, quidquid ira nequiter dictat. Unde et modum saepe ulciscendi transgreditur, quia mensura justitiae non frenatur. Dignum quippe est ut cum aliena corrigimus prius nostra metiamur, ut prius mens a sua accensione deferveat, prius intra semetipsam zeli sui impetum tranquilla aequitate componat, ne si ad animadvertenda vitia abrupto furore trahimur, peccatum corrigendo peccemus, et qui culpam dijudicando insequimur, immoderate feriendo faciamus. Non autem jam correctio delinquentis, sed magis oppressio sequitur, si in ultione ira ultra quam culpa meretur extenditur. In correptione quippe vitiorum subesse menti debet iracundia, non praeesse, ut exsecutionem justitiae non dominando praeveniat, sed famulando subsequatur, et notum judicium 849 possessa impleat, non possidens praecurrat. Bene itaque dicitur: Non te ergo superet ira, ut aliquem opprimas. Quia videlicet si is qui corrigere nititur ira

superatur, opprimit antequam corrigat. Nam dum plus quam debet accenditur, sub justae ultionis obtentu ad immanitatem crudelitatis effrenatur. Quod plerumque idcirco evenit, quia corda rectorum minus amori sunt solius creatoris intenta. Nam dum multa in hac vita appetunt, innumeris cogitationibus disperguntur; et cum subito subditorum culpas reperiunt, digne cum Deo eas judicare nequeunt, quia corda sua in curis transitoriis sparsa ad districtionis culmen colligere repente non possunt. Commoti ergo tanto minus ad ulciscenda peccata libram aequitatis inveniunt, quanto eam tranquillitatis suae tempore non requirunt. Unde cum Eliu diceret: Non te superet ira, ut aliquem opprimas, quatenus easdem causas injustitiae et irae superantis exprimeret, illico adjunxit:

CAPUT XLIV.

IBID. Nec multitudo locorum inclinet te. 79. Ex originali peccato inquieta hominis mutabilitas oritur. Cum qualitate rerum non possit, varietate saltem quaerit satiari. In tot quippe locis inclinamur in quot supervacuis curis extendimur. Nam sicut locus est corporis spatium corporale, ita locus est mentis unaquaeque intentio cogitationis. Quae dum huc illucque impellitur, si delectatione aliqua cogitationis suae libenter occupatur, velut in quodam loco ponitur ut quiescat. Nam quoties victi taedio a cogitatione in cogitationem ducimur, quasi fessa mente de loco ad locum migramus. Tot itaque loca culmen mentis inclinant, quot subortae cogitationes unitatem bonae intentionis dissipant. Recta etenim mens staret, si uni cui debuerat cogitationi semper inhaereret. Recta mens staret, si non se innumeris motibus fluxa mutabilitate prosterneret. Sed dum nunc ista pertractat, nunc ad alia dilabitur, quasi per locorum multitudinem a statu suae rectitudinis inclinatur; et dum per plura se tendit, ab una, cui adhaerere debuit, intentione se dejicit. Qui tamen mutabilitatis usus ex primae praevaricationis vitio jam quasi in naturam venit. Nam cum stare animus in

semetipso nititur, a semetipso aliquo modo etiam nesciendo derivatur. Humana namque anima ab unaquaque re cui intenditur fastidio impellente removetur. Sed dum inhianter cogitanda appetit, et repente cogitata fastidit, docet quod aliunde pendet, quae quolibet posita non requiescit. Ad illum quippe suspensa est a quo formata. Et quia ad Deum solum appetendum facta est, omne autem quod infra appetit minus est, jure ei non sufficit quod Deus non est. Hinc est quod huc illucque spargitur, et ab unaquaque re, ut diximus, fastidio impellente removetur. Delectationis videlicet avida, quaerit quo pauset, unum vero quem sufficienter habere poterat amisit. Unde nunc per multa ducitur, ut quia qualitate rerum non potest, saltem varietate satietur. [Vet. XXXVII.] 80. Sancti adhaerendo Deo, huic anxietati medentur.Sancti autem viri causa se observatione custodiunt, ne ab intentione sua mutabiliter dissolvantur, et quia idem esse appetunt, ad cogitationem qua Deum diligunt se solerter astringunt. In contemplatione namque creatoris hoc accepturi sunt, ut una semper mentis stabilitate perfruantur. 850 Nulla eos tunc mutabilitas dissipat, quia scilicet eorum cogitatio sibimetipsi semper indissimilis perseverat. Hoc ergo cum labore nunc conantes imitantur, quod post in munere gaudentes accipiunt. Cui se Propheta immutabilitati virtute amoris astrinxerat, cum dicebat: Unam petii a Domino, hanc requiram, ut inhabitem in domo Domini (Psal. XXVI, 4). Huic Paulus unitati intentione adhaeserat, dicens: Unum autem, quae retro sunt oblitus, ad ea quae ante sunt extentus, sequor ad palmam supernae vocationis Dei in Christo (Philip. III, 13). Nam si quid in eorum corde humanitus diffluit, mox hoc discussio severa restringit; et cum quasi pueriliter cogitatio labitur, juvenili mox coercitione refrenatur. Unde fit ut sparsam mentem continuo colligant, et in una quantum praevalent cogitatione componant. Quia igitur status mentis cogitationum mutabilitate curvatur, recte ab Eliu dicitur: Nec multitudo locorum inclinet te. 81. Deo ita vacantibus cavenda elatio. Sed saepe dum viri justi animus in ipsa

intentionis suae arce consistit, dum ab omni mutabilitatis se sparsione colligit, dum quidquid in se superflue oboritur premit; ipsa suae rectitudinis gloria tangitur, et in tumore propriae praesumptionis elevatur. Qui enim magna agit, quamvis de se humilia sentiat, scit tamen magna esse quae agit. Nam si magna esse nescit, ea procul dubio minime custodit. Quae dum custodire negligit, aut in eis minus proficit, aut ea funditus amittit. Dum ergo bona nostra opera scire necesse est ut custodiamus, ex ipsa eorum scientia elationis aditus panditur, et ad operantis cor culpae manus admittitur, qua vastante rapiantur. Mira autem dispensatione agitur, ut conditor noster sublevatum prosperis animum subita concuti tentatione permittat, quatenus semetipsum in infirmitate verius videat, et ab eo quem de virtutibus sumpserat, jam seipso melior elationis fastu descendat. Unde et bene nunc subditur:

CAPUT XLV.

VERS. 19. Depone magnitudinem tuam absque tribulatione, et omnes robustos fortitudine. 82. Ne de nobis praesumamus, Deus tentatione nos pulsari permittit. Robusti quippe sunt motus cordis, cum nulla nisi quae virtutis sunt sentiunt. Sed magnitudinem et robustos motus deponimus, quando pulsante vitio cogimur pensare quid sumus. Robustos motus deponimus, quando jam non de virtute attollimur, sed in culpa consentiendo obrui de ipsa qua quatimur infirmitate formidamus. Multum namque de se animus confidit quando sibi ad votum vires suppetere conspicit. Jam sibi fiduciam sanctitatis arrogat, jam se idoneum etiam ad cuncta virtutum culmina quae sola cogitatione conceperit putat. Sed cum hunc tentatio subito oborta transverberat, eas quae natae de virtutibus fuerant, elatas cogitationes funditus turbat. Quasi securam quippe urbem inopinatus hostis ingreditur, et repentino gladio superborum civium colla feriuntur. Nihil ergo tunc nisi continuus luctus agitur, dum capta urbs animi a magnatum suorum

gloria caede interveniente vacuatur. Unde nunc dicitur: Depone magnitudinem tuam absque tribulatione, et omnes robustos fortitudine. Ac si aperte diceretur: Omne quod intrinsecus de bona actione intumueras 851 reprime, et cordis motus quos ex recto opere robustos habueras depone, quia jam in ipsa adversitatis tentatione consideras quam frustra prius de te magna elatus aestimabas. Quae videlicet magnitudo idcirco absque tribulatione deponenda dicitur, quia nimirum cum per tentationem humilitas proficit, prospera est ipsa adversitas quae mentem ab elatione custodit. [Vet. XXXVIII]. Sed tamen sine magna tribulatione non agitur, cum tranquilla mens irruente tentatione quasi repentino hoste turbatur. Ipsa namque tentationis adversitas dum se menti inserit, quasdam in illa tenebras gignit, eamque obscuritate suae amaritudinis turbat, quae apud se dudum virtutum dulcedine irradiante claruerat. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLVI.

VERS. 20. Ne protrahas noctem ut ascendant populi pro eis. 83. Tentatio tenebras gignit, et procellas excitat. Nox quippe protrahitur cum suborta de tentatione tristitia consolatione concita non finitur. Nox protrahitur quia moeror animi confusis cogitationibus elongatur. Nam dum mens posita in tentatione considerat quod a virtutis suae pristina soliditate repellitur, superductis moeroribus, quasi quibusdam tenebris caecatur, atque ab omni luce gaudii ejus oculus clauditur, dum sollicita trepidat ne hoc quod esse dudum coeperat funditus amittat. Unde et bene dicitur quod in hac nocte pro robustis populi ascendunt, quia videlicet in hoc moerore tentationis pro robustis motibus indignae cogitationes et multiplices in corde prosiliunt. Nam dum se in perturbatione conspicit jam pene amisisse quod fuerat, fluctus in se innumeros tumultusque coacervat, modo tranquillitatem suam quia perdidit dolet; modo ne usque ad prava opera corruat pertimescit; modo in quo culmine steterat meminit; modo in quo vitiorum profundo per

delectationem jaceat attendit; modo ad resumendas vires se reparat; modo se eas posse resumere quasi victus jam fractusque desperat. 84. Hac in nocte multiplices cogitationes quasi populi tumultuantes premunt.Cum ergo super addictam mentem tam multiplices cogitationes prodeunt, hanc quasi in nocte populi consurgentes premunt. Quos nimirum populos non per se, sed per divinae protectionis auxilium Propheta subigere se posse praesumpserat, cum dicebat: Protector meus, et in ipso sperabo, subjiciens populos sub me (Psal. CXLIII, 2). Sanctis quippe mentibus populi subiguntur, cum ab eis per districtae severitatis praesentiam cogitationes stultae dissiliunt, ut non per abrupta phantasmatum rapiant, sed rationi subditae a corde humiliter conquiescant. Quia ergo positus in tentatione animus, qui de se in prosperis majora praesumebat, tumultus spei desperationisque tolerat, recte nunc dicitur: Ne protrahas noctem, ut ascendant populi pro eis. Ac si aperte diceretur: In tentatione deprehensus, citius tenebras moeroris incide, ne qui in tranquillitate 852 de te alta senseras, in perturbatione quoque deterius cogitationum te caligine confundas. Quod recte Eliu diceret, si tamen cui diceret sciret. Nam haec beato Job tanto minus congruunt, quanto ab illo omnia altius sciuntur. Quia vero, ut saepe diximus, arrogantes, dum praesumunt docere quos non debent, usque ad contumeliosa increpationum verba dilabuntur, subditur.

CAPUT XLVII [Rec. XXIX].

VERS. 21. Cave ne declines ad iniquitatem; hanc enim coepisti sequi post miseriam. 85. Tunc cavenda est impatientia, quae in Job immerito impingitur. Iniquitatem post miseriam sequitur, qui post mala quae pro correptione sustinet ferventi corde impatientiae se facibus inflammat. Quod beatum Job perpetrasse Eliu credidit, qui eum inter flagella positum liberis effari vocibus audivit, videlicet nesciens, quia omne quod dixit, non hoc de iniquitate impatientiae, sed de virtute veritatis protulit, qui ab interni judicis

sententia nec cum se justificaret erravit. [Vet. XXXIX.] Sed considerandum valde est quomodo cum diceret: Ne declines ad iniquitatem, de eadem iniquitate protinus subdidit: Hanc enim coepisti sequi post miseriam. 86. Superbi in arguendo modum servare nesciunt. Quid est hoc quod dum ad eam declinare vetat, de ea protinus quasi ad quam declinatum jam fuerit damnat, nisi quod arrogantes viri plus videri judices quam consolatores volunt? Unde et nonnunquam ea districtis sententiis feriunt, quae nata in corde suspicantur et priusquam certa sit culpa delinquentium, profertur invectio districta verborum; et ante per sententiam percutitur, quam prodeat quod feriatur. 87. Sanctorum discretio in corripiendo. Quamvis et justi viri plerumque pravis et occultis cogitationibus arguendo obviant; sed cum easdem cogitationes aliqua quae praeeunt opera demonstrant, plerumque ab auditorum suorum cordibus ea vitia quae necdum prolata sunt manu correptionis eradicant, sed jam illa subsequi conspiciunt ex aliis quae praecedunt. Sicut enim corporales medici quasdam aegritudines jam venisse inveniunt, quasdam vero ne veniant medentur, ita doctores sancti aliquando inventa vulnera saluti restituunt, aliquando vero agunt in mentibus ne vulnerentur. In quibus solerter intuendum est, quia sicut certa plerumque cum asperitate redarguunt, ita incertis vitiis et cum tranquillitate contradicunt; certa ferientes increpant, incerta praemunientes devitant. Quam quia arrogantes viri discretionis regulam nesciunt, sententiarum suarum jaculis sicut nota, sic incognita; sicut certa, sic etiam incerta configunt. Unde nunc ab Eliu dicitur: Cave ne declines ad iniquitatem; hanc enim coepisti sequi post miseriam. Quia vero ea quae subnexa sunt longiori allegatione protrahuntur, istum libellum hoc fine constringimus, ne immoderatius extendatur.

LIBER VIGESIMUS SEPTIMUS.

Duodecim ultimi versus capitis XXXVI exponuntur, cum integro capite XXXVII, ingeniose quaesitis ad astruendam, tum doctrinam, tum ethicen christianam sensibus.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

853 1. Ex superborum recte dictis sumendum quod prosit, respuendum quod noceat. Quisquis de magnis dictis arrogantium sumere scientiam nititur, providere solerter debet, ne hoc quod eorum scientia altum tumet, imitetur, ne cum virtutum verbis morum vitia colligat, et in eo quod loquendi notitiam assequitur, vivendi se imperitia transfigat. Hos namque cum fortia dicere audimus, sed tamen de dictis fortibus tumere conspicimus, quasi doctrinae hortum ingressi, de spinis rosas attingimus. Discreta ergo nobis sollicitudine opus est, et carpere quod redolet, et cavere quod pungit, ne si fortasse improvide dictorum flos legitur, incauta legentis manus morum spina laceretur. Eliu itaque doctus et arrogans profert aliquando quod redoleat, aliquando quod pungat. Sic igitur sumendum est de ejus doctrina quod fragrat, ut tamen sollicite cavendum sit de elatione quod vulnerat. Qui multa quidem superius moraliter intulit, sed in verbis sequentibus ad sola se prophetiae arcana sustulit. Ima enim moralitatis deserit, et ad prophetiae summa conscendit. 2. Superbi spiritu prophetiae aliquando repleti. Nec mirandum quod vir arrogans impleri prophetico spiritu potuit, cum Saul etiam in numero prophetarum fuit (I Reg. X, 6). Sed hoc de Saule cur dicimus, cum ex visione angeli accepisse verba rationabilia et asinam noverimus (Num. XXII, 28)? Sed sicut irrationale animal rationis verba edidit, nec tamen ad permutationem naturae rationalis accessit, ita saepe quilibet indignus sancta verba per prophetiae spiritum accipit, sed tamen ad promerendam sanctitatis gloriam non pertingit, ut et

supra se loquendo emineat, et infra se vivendo torpescat. Unde nunc Eliu Redemptoris nostri adventum humilem non humilis conspicit, et eum prophetando praedicat, quem elatis moribus impugnat, dicens:

CAPUT II.

CAP. XXXVI, VERS. 22. Ecce Deus excelsus in fortitudine sua, et nullus ei similis in legislatoribus. 3. Christus simul humilis in infirmitate et excelsus in fortitudine caeteros legislatores longe antecellit. Ac si aperte dicat: Qui humilis videbitur in infirmitate, excelsus manet in fortitudine, Paulo hoc etiam attestante, qui ait: Quia et si crucifixus est ex infirmitate, sed vivit ex virtute Dei (II Cor. XIII, 4). De quo recte subjungitur: Nullus ei similis in legislatoribus. Legislator Moyses, legislator Josue, legislatores etiam prophetae; legislatores cunctos dicere possumus, quos ex lege admonuisse recta populum scimus. Sed huic Mediatori in legislatoribus similis nullus est, quia isti gratuito vocati ex peccatis ad innocentiam redeunt, et ab his quae in semetipsis experti sunt praedicando alios reducunt. Redemptor autem noster homo sine peccato est, filius sine adoptione, nec perpetravit unquam quod redarguit, et sic mundo ex humanitate loquitur, ut tamen 854 eidem mundo ante saecula ex divinitate dominetur. Hunc Mediatorem Dei et hominum quidam legislatoribus similem fuisse crediderunt. Nam requirenti: Quem dicunt homines esse filium hominis? responderunt discipuli, dicentes: Alii Joannem Baptistam, alii Eliam, alii Jeremiam, aut unum ex prophetis (Matth. XVI, 13). Sed nimirum Petro quam excelsus in fortitudine esset aperuit, cum eum veraciter intuens, a legislatorum aequalitate discrevit, dicens: Tu es Christus Filius Dei vivi (Ibid., 16). Unde recte de illo sponsa in Canticis canticorum dicit: In lectulo meo per noctes quaesivi quem diligit anima mea, quaesivi illum, et non inveni (Cant. III, 1). Et paulo post: Invenerunt me vigiles, qui custodiunt civitatem. De quibus rursum dicit: Vulneraverunt me, tulerunt pallium meum. Quos iterum

percunctatur, dicens: Num quem diligit anima mea vidistis? Paululum cum pertransissem eos, inveni quem diligit anima mea (Cant. III, 3). 4. Qui in nocte quaeritur, sed non nisi transcensis prophetis et patriarchis invenitur. Dilectus namque per noctes in lectulo quaeritur, quia intra secreta cordis cubilia in tribulatione spiritus desideratur. Quem tamen quaerens sponsa non invenit, quia electa quaeque anima jam quidem amoris ejus facibus flagrat, sed adhuc quaesita negatur species, ut amantis desiderium crescat; et quasi in siti aqua subtrahitur, ut ejusdem sitis aestus augeatur, et quo hanc diutius sitiens desiderat, eo quandoque cum invenerit avidius sumat. Sed hanc quaerentem vigiles inveniunt, eamque vulnerant, et ejus pallium tollunt, quia unamquamque animam redemptoris sui jam speciem requirentem, cum solliciti doctores inveniunt, hanc per praedicationis verbum coelestis amoris spiculis vulnerant, et si quod ei adhuc de vetusta conversatione tegmen inest, subtrahunt, ut quo exuta ab hujus mundi onere redditur, eo is qui quaeritur, ab illa citius inveniatur. Bene autem subditur: Paululum cum pertransissem eos, inveni quem diligit anima mea. Quia visionis ejus mens avida, nisi prophetarum aestimationem, nisi patriarcharum celsitudinem, nisi cunctorum hominum mensuram transcenderet, eum qui est super homines non inveniret. Transire ergo est vigiles, etiam eos quos miratur anima in ejus comparatione postponere. Et tunc is qui quaerebatur, cernitur, si homo quidem, sed tamen extra mensuras hominum credatur. Unde bene nunc dicitur: Nullus ei similis in legislatoribus. Sed is videlicet per infirmitatem carnis nostris obtutibus apparens, dum alios reprobat, alios vocat, mira judicia exhibuit, quae a nobis et cogitari possint, et comprehendi non possint. Ait 855 namque: In judicium ego in hunc mundum veni, ut qui non vident videant, et qui vident caeci fiant (Joan. IX, 39). Et rursum: Confiteor tibi, Pater, Domine coeli et terrae, quia abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis (Matth. XI, 25). In quibus nimirum judiciis Judaea repellitur,

gentilitas aggregatur. Quod videlicet factum mirari possumus, sed perscrutari nullatenus valemus. Unde et bene nunc ab Eliu subditur:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 23. Quis poterit scrutari vias ejus? aut quis audet ei dicere: Operatus es iniquitatem? 5. Judicia ejus scrutam, multo minus reprehendere non debemus. Ac si dicat: Cujus perscrutari actio non potest, quo pacto reprehendi potest? Nemo enim bene judicat quod ignorat. Tanto ergo debemus sub ejus judiciis silendo quiescere, quanto et rationem judiciorum illius nos cernimus non videre. Unde et bene subditur:

CAPUT IV [Vet.

et Rec. II]. VERS. 24. Memento quod ignores opus ejus, de quo cecinerunt viri. 6. Angeli et doctores ea, etsi laudent, minime tamen cognoscunt. In Scriptura sacra viri aliquando angeli, aliquando autem perfectae vitae homines memorantur. Nam quia aliquando vir angelus dicitur, Daniel propheta testatur, dicens: Ecce vir Gabriel (Dan. IX, 21). Rursum, quia virorum nomine perfectae vitae homines exprimuntur, in Proverbiis sapientia loquitur, dicens: O viri, ad vos clamito (Prov. VIII, 4). De Domino igitur viri canunt, cum ejus nobis potentiam vel superni spiritus, vel perfecti quique doctores innotescunt. Sed tamen opus ejus ignoratur, quia nimirum judicia illius ipsi etiam qui hunc praedicant impenetrata venerantur. Et sciunt ergo quem praedicant, et tamen ejus opera ignorant, quia cognoscunt per gratiam eum a quo facti sunt, sed ejus judicia comprehendere nequeunt, quae ab illo etiam super ipsos fiunt. Quod enim omnipotens Deus perspicue in sua actione non cernitur, Psalmista testatur, dicens: Qui posuit tenebras latibulum suum (Psal. XVII, 12). Et rursum: Judicia tua abyssus multa (Psal. XXXV, 7). Atque iterum: Abyssus sicut pallium amictus ejus (Psal, CIII, 6). Unde bene etiam per Salomonem dicitur: Sicut ignoras quae sit via

spiritus, et qua ratione compingantur ossa in ventre praegnantis, sic nescis opera Dei, qui fabricator est omnium (Eccle. XI, 5). 7. Occultorum Dei judiciorum exemplum in parvulis sine baptismo, vel post baptismum morientibus. Ut enim unum e multis loquar, duo ad hanc lucem parvuli veniunt, sed uni datur ut ad redemptionem per baptisma redeat, alter ante subtrahitur quam hunc regenerans unda perfundat. Et saepe fidelium filius sine fide rapitur, saepe infidelium concesso fidei sacramento renovatur. Sed fortasse aliquis dicat quod hunc Deus acturum prave etiam post baptisma noverat, et idcirco eum ad baptismatis gratiam non perducat. Quod si ita est, peccata quorumdam proculdubio priusquam sint perpetrata puniuntur. Et quis ista recte sentiens dixerit quia omnipotens Deus, qui alios a perpetratis facinoribus liberat, haec in aliis etiam non perpetrata condemnet? Occulta itaque sunt ejus judicia; et quanta obscuritate nequeunt conspici, tanta debent humilitate venerari. Dicat ergo: Memento quod ignores opus ejus, de quo cecinerunt viri. Ac si aperte diceret: De quo fortes quique locuti sunt, ejus opera tuae mentis oculis absconduntur, quia mensuram tuae notitiae eo ipso quo humanitate circumscriberis transeunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT V [Rec. III].

856 VERS. 25. Omnes homines vident eum, unusquisque intuetur procul. 8. Deus nonnisi procul, etiam ab electis videtur. Omnis homo eo ipso quo rationalis est conditus, debet ex ratione colligere eum qui se condidit Deum esse. Quem nimirum jam videre est damnationem illius ratiocinando conspicere. Cum vero dictum sit: Omnes homines vident eum, recte subjungitur: Unusquisque intuetur procul. Procul quippe eum intueri est non jam illum per speciem cernere, sed adhuc ex sola operum suorum admiratione pensare. Procul illum hic etiam electi conspiciunt, quia necdum claritatem illius per acumen intimae visionis apprehendunt. Cui etsi jam per amorem juxta sunt, adhuc tamen ab illo terrenae inhabitationis pondere

disjunguntur; et quamvis ei bene vivendo inhaereant, a contemplationis ejus specie longe se esse suspirant. Quem nimirum reprobi etiam cum ad judicium venientem viderint, procul intuentur, quia non eum in divinitatis forma, sed in sola qua et comprehendi potuit humanitate conspiciunt, quia videlicet eorum oculos reducta tunc ad memoriam sua male gesta reverberant, et dum ejus humanitatem vident, cujus divinitatis claritatem non vident, miro modo ab ejus visione quem conspiciunt longe fiunt. [Vet. III.] Sed cum dicitur: Memento quod ignores opus ejus, ac deinde subjungitur: Omnes homines vident eum, quem, sicut diximus, videre est transcendentem omnia ejus essentiam ex ratione colligere, valde mirandum est quod et ipsum cernimus, et ejus opus ignoramus. Dubii quippe de ejus essentia non sumus, et tamen in ejus judiciis incerti remanemus. Patet nobis quod summum est, absconditur quod minimum. Minus quippe sunt ejus opera quam ipse; et agentem cernimus, sed in actione caligamus: quia videlicet cur quid fiat incertum est, sed quis sit qui haec incerta faciat, incertum non est. Dicat ergo: Memento quod ignores opus ejus, de quo cecinerunt viri: Omnes homines vident eum, unusquisque intuetur procul, quia eum, cujus judicia minime comprehendimus, esse per rationem videmus; quem tamen adhuc procul cernimus, quia ab ejus fortitudine nubilo infirmitatis nostrae separamur. Sequitur:

CAPUT VI [Rec. IV].

VERS. 26. Ecce Deus magnus vincens scientiam nostram. 9. De Deo tunc tantum aliquid intelligere incipimus, cum eum nos digne cognoscere non posse sentimus. Superius dixerat: Ecce Deus excelsus: nunc iterum dicit: Ecce Deus magnus. Quid est quod de Deo loquens ecce dicit, et ecce repetit, nisi quod ecce dicimus de ea re quam in praesenti monstramus? et quia Deus ubique praesens est, cum de illo ecce dicitur, etiam non videntibus adesse memoratur. Bene autem eum vincere scientiam nostram narrat, quem

videri ab omnibus dixerat, quia etsi ex ratione conspicitur, magnitudo tamen illius nulla nostri sensus subtilitate penetratur. Quidquid namque de claritate ejus magnitudinis scimus, infra ipsum est; et tanto ab ejus scientia longe repellimur, quanto ejus potentiam nos comprehendisse suspicamur. Nam quamvis in altum mens nostra rapiatur, ejus tamen magnitudinis immensitate transcenditur. Cujus tunc aliquid quasi ex parte cognoscimus, quando eum nos digne cognoscere non posse sentimus. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII.

Ibid. Numerus annorum ejus inaestimabilis. 857 10. Deus sine spatio immensus, sine initio aut fine aeternus. Dicere utcunque aeternitatem voluit, et ipsam aeternitatis longitudinem annos vocavit. Cum enim brevitatem temporis dilatare volumus, momenta per horas, horas per dies, dies per menses, menses autem per annos extendimus. Quia ergo peramplum quiddam dicere voluit, sed quid diceret latius non invenit, in Deo annos sine aestimatione numeri multiplicavit, dicens: Numerus annorum ejus inaestimabilis, ut dum ea quae apud se sunt prolixa multiplicat, aeternitatis longitudinem se metiri non posse infirmitas humana cognoscat. Tende itaque oculum in aeternitatem, ut videas Deum, vel quando est a principio, vel quousque; et nusquam finis superior, quia esse non incipit; nusquam finis inferior, quia esse non desinit. Intra ipsum omnia coangustantur, ipse vero circa omnia sine spatio extenditur, sine loco dilatatur. Ecce cuncta quae facta sunt, ea ipsa circumscriptione qua creata sunt, superiori et inferiori fine cinguntur. Lege enim sua, quia a non esse incipiunt, festinant non esse. 11. Quaedam aeterna futura sunt, sed non fuerunt. Sed quaedam mirabiliter acceperunt ut quamvis ea finis superior inchoat, finis tamen inferior non constringat; et licet esse incipiant, esse in perpetuum non desistant. Horum vero aeternitas idcirco summae est aeternitati dissimilis, quia aeterna esse coeperunt. Cum ad extrema prospicimus, horum finem, qui omnino deest,

non comprehendimus; eorum tamen initia cernimus, cum mentem retro revocamus; et dum in eis infra supraque animum ducimus, non capimus omnino quousque sunt, sed videmus ex quo. Deus autem quia quasi quiddam in eo per aeternitatem longum est, quod nec initio oritur, nec fine terminatur, nec ex quo in semetipso recipit, nec quousque, dicatur ergo: Numerus annorum ejus inaestimabilis. Per hoc ergo quod annorum illius numerus dicitur, diutinum ejus esse ostenditur. Per hoc vero quod inaestimabilis memoratur, hoc ipsum esse infinitum et incomprehensibile demonstratur. Sed quia humanis mentibus innotescat agnovimus, dum omnes homines vident eum; et quia ejus magnitudinem admirantes cernimus, dum annorum ejus numerus inaestimabilis habetur, restat jam ut etiam quid agat audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT VIII [Vet.

IV, Rec. V]. VERS. 27. Qui aufert stellas pluviae , et effundit imbres ad instar gurgitum. 12. Sancti patriarchae et prophetae stellae fuerunt pluviam generantes. Duo in hac vita sunt genera justorum: unum videlicet bene viventium, sed nulla docentium; aliud vero recte viventium, et eadem recta docentium, sicut et in coeli facie aliae stellae prodeunt quas nullae pluviae subsequuntur, aliae prodeunt quae arentem terram magnis imbribus infundunt. Igitur quoties in sancta Ecclesia recte quidam vivunt, sed tamen praedicare eamdem rectitudinem nesciunt, stellae quidem sunt, sed in siccitate aeris natae; quia per exemplum bene vivendi lucere caeteris possunt, sed per praedicationis verbum pluere nequeunt. Cum vero in ea quidam et recte vivunt, et aliis eamdem rectitudinem verbis praedicationis influunt, quasi ad proferendas pluvias in coelo stellae producuntur, quae sic vitae suae meritis luceant, ut etiam sermone praedicationis pluant. An non in hoc coelo astrum pluviae Moyses exstitit, 858 qui cum de supernis emicuit, corda peccantium quasi arentem inferius terram sanctae

exhortationis pluvia ad ubertatem germinis infudit? An non Isaias astrum pluviae ostensus est, qui in eo quod lucem veritatis praevidens tenuit, siccitatem infidelium prophetando annuntians rigavit? An non Jeremias et prophetae caeteri, velut in coelo positi astra pluviae fuerunt, qui in praedicationis culmine erecti, dum pravitatem peccantium libere increpare ausi sunt, quasi verborum guttis obcaecationis humanae pulverem rigando presserunt? Quorum videlicet animas ab hac corruptibili carne susceptas, quia ex praesenti vita superna judicia auferunt, quasi a coeli facie stellae pluviae subtrahuntur, et ad occultum astra redeunt, dum peractis suis cursibus sanctorum animae in thesauris dispositionis intimae reconduntur. 13. His subductis, missi apostoli, qui imbres tanquam gurgites effuderunt. Sed quia terra aresceret si subductis stellis pluviae superna funditus fluenta cessarent, recte dicitur: Qui aufert stellas pluviae, et effundit imbres ad instar gurgitum. Nam cum prophetas abstulit, eorum vice Dominus apostolus misit, qui in similitudinem gurgitum pluerent, postquam subductis antiquis Patribus exteriora legis praedicamenta tacuissent. Stellas ergo pluviae abscondit, et ad instar gurgitum imbres fudit, quia dum praedicatores legis ad secreta et intima retulit, per dicta sequentium uberior vis praedicationis emanavit. [Vet. V.] 14. Post apostolos, sancti Patres doctrinam sacram auxerunt. Possunt quoque per stellas pluviae, sancti apostoli designari, de quibus Judaeae reprobatae per Jeremiam dicitur: Prohibitae sunt stellae pluviarum imber non fuit (Jerem. III, 3). Stellas ergo pluviae Dominus abstraxit, atque ad instar gurgitum imbres fudit, quia cum de Judaea praedicantes apostolos abstulit, doctrina novae gratiae mundum rigavit. Quod utrumque factum in Ecclesia potest non inconvenienter intelligi, quia cum solutis corporibus ad secretos supernorum sinus apostolorum animas retulit, quasi a coeli facie stellas pluviae abscondit. Sed ablatis stellis pluviae, in morem gurgitum imbres dedit, quia etiam reductis ad superna apostolis, per expositorum sequentium linguas, divinae fluenta

scientiae diu abscondita largiori effusione patefecit. Nam quod illi sub brevitate locuti sunt, hoc exponendo isti multipliciter auxerunt. Unde et non immerito ipsa expositorum praedicatio gurgitibus comparatur: quia dum multorum praecedentium dicta colligunt, ipsi in eo quod astruunt profundius dilatantur. Nam dum testimonia testimoniis jungunt, quasi ex guttis gurgites faciunt. Quorum verbis dum quotidie gentilitas docetur, quia peccatorum mens coelestem scientiam accipit, quasi stans in terra aqua gurgites ostendit. Sed nequaquam se eisdem apostolis expositores in scientia praeferant, cum exponendo latius loquuntur. Meminisse quippe incessanter debent, per quos ejusdem scientiae inventiones acceperunt. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 28. Qui de nubibus fluunt. 15. Nec tamen apostolis hujus doctrinae primis traditoribus praeferendi. Hi quippe de nubibus gurgites fluunt, quia si ex sanctis apostolis vis intelligentiae non inciperet, nequaquam per doctorum ora largior manaret. In Scriptura enim sacra aliquando per nubes, 859 mobiles quique homines, aliquando prophetae, aliquando autem apostoli designantur. Per nubes quippe mobilitas humanae mentis exprimitur, sicut Salomon ait: Qui ventum observat, non seminat; et qui considerat nubes, nunquam metit (Eccle. XI, 4). Ventum procul dubio immundum spiritum, nubes vero subjectos ei homines appellat; quos toties huc illucque impellit et revocat, quoties tentationes ejus in eorum cordibus suggestionum flatibus alternant. Qui igitur ventum observat, non seminat, quia qui tentationes venturas metuit, cor ad bona opera non proponit. Et qui considerat nubes, non metit, quia is qui ante humanae mutabilitatis terrorem trepidat, mercedis aeternae retributione se privat. Per nubes prophetae figurantur, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Tenebrosa aqua in nubibus aeris (Psal. XVII, 12); id est, occulta scientia in prophetis. [Vet. VI.] Per nubes

quoque apostoli designantur, sicut per Isaiam dicitur: Mandabo nubibus, ne pluant super eam imbrem (Isai. V, 6). Ipsi igitur stellae, quia vitae meritis lucent; ipsi nubes, quia arentem nostri pectoris terram coelestis intelligentiae fluentis rigant. Si enim nubes non essent, nequaquam eos intuens propheta dixisset: Qui sunt isti, qui ut nubes volant (Isai. LX, 8)? Imbrium itaque gurgites de nubibus fluunt, quia profundae praedicationes sequentium intelligentiae originem a sanctis apostolis acceperunt. De quibus adhuc nubibus apte subjungitur:

CAPUT X.

IBID. Quae praetexunt cuncta desuper. 16. Nubes cur apostoli dicantur. Nubes cum desuper aerem praetexunt, si in coelum oculos attollimus, non coelum, sed ipsas intuemur; nec visus noster aethereas plagas penetrat, quia ei illas ipsa sua infirmitas occultat; et cum de coelo sol rutilat, prius interfuso aere pascitur, ut post in coelo solis radios contempletur. Quia ergo carnales homines sumus, cum superna appetere nitimur, quasi in coelum oculos levamus, et velut in coelum aciem intendimus, quia, pressi usu rerum corporalium, docere spiritalia conamur. Sed quia transire intellectus noster ad divina non sinitur, nisi prius per sanctorum praecedentium exempla formetur, quasi jam coetum noster oculus suscipit, sed nubes videt, quia comprehendere ea quae Dei sunt appetit, sed vix mirari ea quae hominibus collata sunt potest. Unde et alias dicitur: Illuminans tu mirabiliter a montibus aeternis (Psal. LXXV, 5). Qui enim orientem solem contemplari non valet, irradiatos montes aspicit, et quia sol ortus sit deprehendit. Ex aeternis ergo montibus nos Deus illuminat, quia per admiratam vitam Patrum praecedentium, radio nos suae claritatis illustrat. Ecce in studio devotionis dominicae et charitatis accendimur, sed in hac devotione atque charitate melius harum nubium contemplatione formamur. Quid enim devotius Petro (Matth. XIV. 29)? Quid charius Joanne (Joan. XIII, 23)? Ille

per devotionem fluida maris dorsa calcare non timuit, iste per amorem in ipso auctoris nostri pectore requievit; et qui ad corporalis coenae refectionem venerat, spiratale pabulum de sinu Redemptoris sumpsit. [Ver. VII.] 17. Cur prophetae et antiqui Patres nubes quoque dicantur. Abraham obedientiam nos docet; Isaac patientiam; Jacob laboriosam vitam; Joseph castitatem; Moyses mansuetudinem; Josue constantiam; Samuel benignitatem; David pietatem et humilitatem. Sed quia signari per nubes etiam prophetas diximus, necesse est ut adhuc ad medium superiorum Patrum exempla deducamus. Ecce cum praeceptis coelestibus subdi per obedientiam cupimus, 860 consideratis antiquorum patrum vestigiis juvamur. Quid enim Abraham obedientius, qui ad unam vocem dominicam cognatos ac patriam deserit, et pro adipiscenda aeterna haereditate ipsum ferire non trepidat quem senex jam et pene moriturus acceperat haeredem (Genes. XII, 4)? Cum patientiae virtutem apprehendere conamur, praecedentium exempla conspicimus. Quid enim Isaac patientius, qui ligna portat, de holocausto interrogat, atque post paululum ligatur, et non loquitur; arae superponitur et non reluctatur (Genes. XXII, 7)? Quid ergo isto viro dici patientius potest, qui quasi ad solatium ducitur, et requirit; ad feriendum ligatur, et conticescit; et oblaturus holocaustum interrogat, offerendus in holocaustum tacet? Cum accingi ad laborum tolerantiam nitimur, exemplis praecedentibus sublevamur. Quid enim Jacob laboriosius, qui apud Laban tam longo tempore propinquus jure cognationis, opera exercuit servitutis, et vice obsecutus est famuli, ut perfrueretur praemiis haeredis (Genes. XXX, 26)? Cum arcem continentiae et castitatis ascendere nitimur, exemplis praecedentium sublevamur. Quid enim Joseph castius, qui ad desiderium petulantis dominae, jugo luxuriae premi non potuit etiam captivus? Et quidem hominibus exstitit servus, sed contra dominantem nequitiam et in servitio liber fuit (Genes. XXXIX, 12). Cum mansuetudine repleri concupiscimus, praecedentium exemplis adjuvamur. Quid enim

Moyse mansuetius, qui commissi sibi populi seditionem tolerat, et tamen irascentem Dominum pro eisdem suis persecutoribus rogat, seque pro illis divino furori objicit, quia in sancto ejus pectore etiam ex persecutione charitas ignescit (Exod. XXXII, 32)? Cum contra adversa mundi formare mentis constantiam nitimur, praecedentium consideratione fulcimur. Quid enim Josue constantius, qui ad explorandam gentium qualitatem missus, nec proceritatis magnitudinem, nec numerositatis multitudinem expavit. Unde et easdem gentes, quas explorando non timuit, etiam praeliando prostravit (Josue X, 7). Cum benignitatis culmen apprehendere conamur, praecedentium exemplis instruimur. Quid enim Samuele benignius, qui de principatu regendi populi dejectus, successorem sibi humiliter requirit, inventumque ungit in regem, unctum mox patitur persecutorem (I Reg. X; XII, 1). A quo ne moriatur, trepidat; et tamen ne ei Dominus irascatur, rogat. Ipse quippe cum mitteretur, ait: Audiet Saul, et interficiet me (I Reg. XVI, 2). Et ei per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Quousque tu luges Saulem, cum ego abjecerim eum (Ibid., 1)? Quid ergo isto viro benignius dici potest, qui et hunc non vult divinitus percuti a quo formidat occidi? Cum ad pietatis atque humilitatis celsitudinem tendimus, praecedentium exemplis levamur. Quid enim David misericordius, quid humilius dici potest, qui a rege reprobo pro victoriis contumelias recepit, qui de manu hostili Israeliticam gentem fortis eripuit, et tamen ipse ne moriatur quasi debilis fugit (I Reg. XVII, 18, 19); qui et se electum divino judicio, et persecutorem suum reprobum agnoscit, et tamen eidem persecutori suo crebrae satisfactionis humilitate se subjicit, qui persecutoris lanceam tollit, oram chlamydis detruncat, atque ad cacumen montis protinus properat, et uno eodemque tempore quia 861 occidendi potestatem habuerit ostentat, et ne occidatur rogat? 18. More nubium extensa super nos illorum sanctorum vita legimur. Quia ergo in cunctis quae spiritaliter appetimus exemplis praecedentibus informamur, bene de his nubibus dicitur: Quae praetexunt cuncta desuper.

More enim nubium extensa super nos patrum vita tegimur, ut ad fructum fecundi germinis infundamur. Et quasi intuentes coelum prius nubes aspicimus, quia ante bonorum facta admirando cernimus, et post illa quae sunt coelestia experiendo penetramus. Sed quia nequaquam harum nubium, id est antiquorum patrum, vita nobis virtusque patesceret, nisi eam nubes aliae, id est sancti apostoli lumine suae praedicationis aperirent, ad has nubes quae praedicando mundum circumeunt sermo redeat, et quid per illas Dominus in mundo egerit ostendat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XI [Rec. VI].

VERS. 29, 30. Si voluerit extendere nubes quasi tentorium suum, et fulgurare lumine suo desuper, cardines quoque maris operiet. 19. Sancti Dei tentoria sunt, in quibus apud nos habitat et ambulat. Paulo Romam petente, latens in ejus pectore quasi sub tentorio ibat Deus. Extendit nubes Dominus, dum ministris suis viam praedicationis aperiens, eos in mundi latitudinem circumquaque diffundit. Bene autem dictum est: Quasi tentorium suum. Tentorium quippe in itinere poni solet. Et cum praedicatores sancti in mandum mittuntur, iter Deo faciunt. Unde scriptum est: Ecce mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam, qui praeparabit viam tuam ante te (Malac. III 1). Et unde rursum per Psalmistam dicitur: Iter facite ei qui ascendit super occasum (Psal. LXVII, 5). Et rursum: Deus, cum egredereris coram populo tuo, dum transgredereris per desertum, terra mota est (Ibid., 8). Deus enim, qui per semetipsum non localiter ubique est, per praedicatores suos in mundi partes localiter ambulat. Unde etiam per prophetam dicitur: Et inambulabo in eis (Levit. XXVI, 12; II Cor. VI, 16). Iter quippe per eos agit, dum humanis cordibus eorum se eloquio infundit. Atque in hoc itinere tentoria Dei sunt haec eadem corda sanctorum, quibus quasi in via quiescendo tegitur, dum per haec ad mentes hominum veniens, agit quae disposuit, et non videtur. [Vet. VIII.] Hinc est quod simul omnis synagoga

tentorium vocatur, cum cessasse a praedicatione sacerdotes Dominus per Jeremiam queritur, dicens: Non est qui extendat ultra tentorium meum, et erigat pelles meas (Jerem. X, 20). Hinc rursum de exterminatione ejus dicitur: Dissipavit quasi hortum tentorium suum, demolitus est tabernaculum suum (Thren. II, 6). Quia enim in unius populi cultu tunc Dominus inter homines latuit, eumdem sibi populum tentorium vocavit. Unde et recte nunc nubes istae ejus tentorium dicuntur, quia ad nos Deus per gratiam veniens, intra praedicatorum suorum mentes operitur. An Paulus ejus tentorium non erat, cum a Jerusalem per circuitum usque ad Illyricum ad corda mortalium veniens, in ejus mente Dominus quiescebat (Rom. XV, 19)? Nubes quippe erat hominibus, tentorium Deo, quia quem praedicando, infundebat audientibus, hunc invisibiliter in mente retinebat. Idem rursus dum catenis vinctus Romam peteret Paulus occupaturus mundum, latens in ejus pectore quasi sub tentorio ibat Deus (Act. XXVIII, 15), quia et occultus videri non poterat, et per verba praedicationis proditus iter inchoatae gratiae sine cessatione peragebat. Nubes ejus Moyses exstitit, cum priusquam plebi Israeliticae ducatum praeberet, quadraginta annis in deserto 862 permanens, et sublimia appetens, a conversatione populi segregatus vixit. Sed tentorium Dei factus est, cum ad revocandum populum in Aegyptum missus ibat (Exod. III, 10), portans invisibilem in corde veritatem, cum omnipotens Deus, qui patescebat in opere, latebat in corde. Et ubique praesens omnia continens, iter in suo famulo in Aegyptum veniens faciebat. Unde scriptum est: Ivit Deus in Aegyptum, ut redimeret sibi populum (Exod. XV, 13, sec. LXX). Ecce ire dicitur, per cujus incircumscriptam praesentiam cuncta continentur, quia is qui ubique ex majestate est quasi in via gressus ponit ex praedicatione. 20. Deus per sanctos fulgurat, cum edit miracula. Haec in praedicatoribus necessaria. Sed eisdem sanctis praedicatoribus nequaquam ad persuadendum verba sufficiunt, nisi etiam miracula addantur. Unde cum dictum sit: Si voluerit

extendere nubes quasi tentorium suum, recte subjungitur: Et fulgurare lumine suo desuper. Quid enim sentire fulgura, nisi miracula debemus? de quibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Fulgura multiplicabis, et conturbabis eos (Psal. CXLIII, 6, sec. LXX). Per has ergo nubes lumine suo desuper fulgurat, quia per praedicatores sanctos insensibilitatis nostrae tenebras etiam miraculis illustrat. 21. Extremorum etiam terminorum mundi conversio. Britannia fidei subdita. Cumque nubes istae verbis pluunt, cumque miraculis vim coruscae lucis aperiunt, extremos etiam mundi terminos in divinum amorem convertunt. Unde recte subditur: Cardines quoque maris operiet. Quod faciendum quidem Eliu vocibus audivimus, sed auctore Deo jam factum cernimus. Omnipotens enim Dominus coruscantibus nubibus cardines maris operuit, quia emicantibus praedicatorum miraculis, ad fidem etiam terminos mundi perduxit. Ecce enim pene cunctarum jam gentium corda penetravit; ecce in una fide Orientis limitem Occidentisque conjunxit; ecce lingua Britanniae, quae nil aliud noverat, quam barbarum frendere, jam dudum in divinis laudibus Hebraeum coepit Alleluia resonare. Ecce quondam tumidus, jam substratus sanctorum pedibus servit Oceanus, ejusque barbaros motus, quos terreni principes edomare ferro nequiverant, hos pro divina formidine sacerdotum ora simplicibus verbis ligant; et qui catervas pugnantium infidelis nequaquam metuerat, jam nunc fidelis humilium linguas timet. Quia enim perceptis coelestibus verbis, clarescentibus quoque miraculis, virtus ei divinae cognitionis infunditur, ejusdem divinitatis terrore refrenatur, ut prava agere metuat, ac totis desideriis ad aeternitatis gratiam pervenire concupiscat. Unde hic quoque convenienter adjungitur:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 31. Per haec enim judicat populos, et dat escas multis mortalibus. 22. Per eosdem praedicatores nubibus designatos, et terror infligitur, et esca

datur. Per haec nimirum verba praedicatorum, id est guttas nubium, per haec fulgura miraculorum Deus populos judicat, quia eorum corda territa ad poenitentiam vocat. Nam dum superna audiunt, dum mira opera attendunt, mox ad corda sua redeunt, et se de anteactis pravitatibus affligentes, aeterna tormenta pertimescunt. Sed per easdem nubes per quas terror infligitur, etiam esca datur, quia magna praedicatorum dispensatio est, ut sic sciant superbientium mentes affligere, ut etiam afflictas noverint consolationis eloquio nutrire, quatenus et peccantes de aeternis suppliciis terreant, et poenitentes de superni regni gaudiis pascant. Unde bene ipse 863 dispensationis ordo servatus est, ut ordinate Eliu diceret quod per has nubes prius judicat populos, et postmodum escas praebet, quia nimirum omnipotens Deus per praedicatores suos prius nos de prava actione corripiens concutit, et postmodum per spem consolans nutrit. Si enim divina dispensatio per has nubes judicium modo non ageret, nequaquam eisdem nubibus dixisset: Accipite Spiritum sanctum; quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt (Joan. XX, 22). Et rursum, si per eas jejuna nostra corda non pasceret, nequaquam de esurientibus populis discipulis Dominus diceret: Date illis vos manducare (Matth. XIV, 16). Quod sic tunc eorum manibus factum credimus, ut hoc eorum verbis quotidie fieri sine cessatione videamus. Quid enim agit Petrus, cum per epistolas loquitur, nisi ut verbi pabulo corda nostra male jejuna satientur? Quid Paulus, quid Joannes per epistolas loquentes operantur, nisi ut mentes nostrae coelestia alimenta percipiant, et inediae suae fastidium quo moriebantur vincant? Dicatur ergo: Si voluerit extendere nubes quasi tentorium suum, et fulgurare lumine suo desuper, cardines quoque maris operiet. Per haec enim judicat populos, et dat escas multis mortalibus. Ac si aperte diceret: Si sanctos suos in ministerium praedicationis extendit, eorumque verba miraculis adjuvat, totius mundi limites ad fidem vocat, per quae et prius superbientes judicat, et post per verbum consolationis nutriens

in spe humiles roborat. [Vet. IX.] 23. Non omnibus fides datur. Sed cum escas dare mortalibus diceret, notandum quod non ait, omnibus, sed multis, quia vid licet scriptum est: Non omnium est fides (II Thess. III, 2). Et quibusdam dicitur: Propterea vos non auditis, quia ex Deo non estis (Joan, VIII, 47). Et rursum: Nemo potest venire ad me, nisi Pater, qui misit me, traxerit eum (Joan. VI, 44). Et rursum: Novit Dominus qui sunt ejus (II Tim. II, 19). Unde in ipsa quoque sancta Ecclesia plurimi fidem tenent, et vitam fidei non tenent; humilitatis dominicae sacramenta percipiunt, sed humiliari dominica imitatione contemnunt; blanda divini eloquii praedicamenta communicant, sed apud se immanes in tumore perseverant. Unde hic quoque, postquam per cardines maris aggregatae Ecclesiae latitudo signata est, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIII [Rec. VII].

VERS. 32.Immanibus abscondit lucem. 24. Superbientibus veritatis cognitio denegatur. Immanes quippe sunt, qui se elatis cogitationibus extollunt. Quos contra per Isaiam dicitur: Vae qui sapientes estis in oculis vestris, et coram vobismetipsis prudentes (Isai. V, 21). Quos contra etiam Paulus ait: Nolite prudentes esse apud vosmetipsos (Rom. XII, 16). Sed his immanibus lux absconditur, quia nimirum superbientibus veritatis cognitio denegatur. Unde per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Confiteor tibi, Pater Domine coeli et terrae, quia abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis (Matth. XI, 25): sapientes et prudentes videlicet superbientes vocans. Qui enim non subjunxit: Revelasti ea stultis, sed parvulis, tumorem se damnasse innotuit, non acumen. Unde et alias dicitur: Custodiens parvulos Dominus (Psal. CXIV, 6). Atque ut ostendatur haec eadem parvitas quid vocatur, adjungitur: Humiliatus sum, et liberavit me (Ibid., 6). Quia ergo sunt multi in Ecclesia, qui 864 parvuli esse despiciunt, etiam in humilitatis loco immanes apud se esse minime desistunt. Hos

plerumque videas honoribus extolli, voluptatibus perfrui, rerum multiplicitate dilatari. Hi saepe nil praecipue nisi praeesse caeteris appetunt, a multis timeri gratulantur; recte vivere negligunt, et rectae vitae famam habere concupiscunt; adulationes quaerunt, favoribus intumescunt. Et quia in rebus sibi copiose praesentibus prompti sunt, ventura gaudia non requirunt. Cumque eos multiplex actio occupat, etiam a semetipsis alienos demonstrat [Vet. X]. Et tamen si qua fidei tentatio exsurgat, quia in ea saltem specie tenus continentur, hanc verbis, hanc laboribus defendunt, et patriam coelestem vindicant, nec tamen amant. 25. Multi pro repromissionis terra pugnant, quam minime tamen diligunt. Exemplum Gaditarum et Rubenitarum. Quos bene apud Moysen filii Ruben et Gad, et dimidia tribus Manasse exprimunt, qui multa pecora et jumenta possidentes, dum extra Jordanem ea quae viderant campestria concupiscunt, in repromissionis terra haereditatem habere noluerunt, dicentes: Terra quam percussit Dominus in conspectu filiorum Israel, regionis uberrimae est ad pastum animalium; et nos servi tui habemus jumenta plurima precamurque, si invenimus gratiam coram te, ut des nobis famulis tuis eam in possessionem, nec facias nos transire Jordanem (Num. XXXII, 4). Qui igitur jumenta plurima possident, Jordanem transire refugiunt, quia quos multa mundi implicamenta occupant, habitationem coelestis patriae non requirunt. Sed ipsa eos quam specie tenus tenent, fides increpat, ne otii delectatione torpescant, atque exemplo suo alios a laboris tolerantia, et studio longanimitatis frangant. Unde eis per Moysen dicitur: Nunquid fratres vestri ibunt ad pugnam, et vos hic sedebitis? Cur subvertitis mentes filiorum Israel (Ibid., 7)? Sed quia erubescunt non defendere quod confitentur, pro eadem fide quam professi sunt, ad certamen properant, eamque non sibi, sed proximis vindicant. Unde et ad Moysen dicunt: Caulas ovium fabricabimus, et stabula jumentorum, parvulisque nostris urbes munitas; nos autem ipsi armati et accincti pergemus ad praelium ante filios Israel (Ibid., 16). Qui mox fortes pro aliis

veniunt, et repromissionis terram ab hostibus liberant, et relinquunt; atque ad pascenda armenta extra Jordanem redeunt. Multi quippe quamvis fideles, curis praesentibus occupati, quasi armenta extra Jordanem pascunt, quia contra fidem baptismatis tota mente omnique desiderio rebus perituris inserviunt. Qui tamen ut, diximus, cum fidei tentatio oritur, defensionum armis accinguntur. Hostes fidei superando trucidant, et haereditatem terrae repromissionis, id est fructum fidei non amant; sicque pro illa pugnant, ut tamen sua pignora extra illam deponant. Quia enim parvulos foris habent, affectum in ejus habitatione non habent. Unde ad campestria redeunt, quia ab altis cacuminibus montium quasi a spe coelestium dilabuntur, ut extra repromissionis terram bruta animalia nutriant, quia ad pascendos variis desideriis irrationabiles animi motus elaborant, quia aeternae lucis quanta sit claritas nesciunt qui transitoriis occupationibus obcaecantur; et dum de terrenis rebus superbiunt, coelestis sibi luminis aditum 865 claudunt. [Vet. XI.] Unde recte nunc dicitur: Immanibus abscondit lucem. Sed tamen aliquando hos immanes superna gratia respicit, atque ipsis rerum abundantium occupationibus affligit, eorumque prosperitatibus adversas quidem, sed utiles tribulationes interserit, ut contristati ad cor redeant, atque in perituris rebus quam inaniter occupentur agnoscant. Unde hic quoque postquam subtracta lux dicitur, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIV.

IBID. Et praecipit ei ut rursus adveniat. 26. Veritatis lumen, quod elatis occupatisque mentibus absconditur, afflictis et humiliatis revelatur. Quia veritatis lumen, quod elatis occupatisque mentibus absconditur, afflictis humiliatisque revelatur. Lex quippe advenit, cum afflicta mens ipsas quas de perituris rebus tribulationum tenebras tolerat agnoscit, quia nisi aliquid ex lumine interno perciperet, nec hoc ipsum quia lumen perdiderat videret. Quod intelligi specialiter etiam de Judaeis potest, qui idcirco Redemptori

nostro in carne venienti contradicere ausi sunt, quia apud semetipsos immanes exstiterunt. Sed his immanibus lux absconsa est, quia superbi lumen veritatis dum persequuntur, amiserunt. Sed quia in fine mundi ad fidem recipiendi sunt, recte subjungitur: Et praecipit ei ut rursus adveniat. Unde etiam per Isaiam dicitur: Si fuerit numerus filiorum Israel quasi arena maris, reliquiae salvae fient (Isai. X, 22). Tunc quippe ad eos lux revertitur, cum ipsi ad confitendam Redemptoris nostri potentiam revertuntur. 27. Deus, ut vult, lumen aut abscondit, aut revelat. Si autem in manibus, nequaquam per dativum casum unum nomen, sed duas partes orationis accipimus; potest intelligi, quia in manibus lux absconditur, cum apud rectum judicem iniqui quique in suis operibus caecantur. Cui tamen praecipitur ut rursus adveniat, quia dum peccatores se suis viribus salvari non posse cognoverint, gratiae lumen accipiunt, et protectionis intimae radiis illustrantur, ut majore ardore postmodum coelestem patriam diligant, quam prius in terrena delectatione flagrabant. Sed haec cum de coelesti patria loquimur, cui inesse mira claritate praedita angelorum agmina audimus, cui rerum omnium conditor praesidet, quam visione sua reficiens replet, cui vera haereditas lux est et defectus ejusdem luminis nullus est, ad nosmetipsos mentem reducimus, et quod terrena gestemus membra cogitamus, pensamus quod, nati in tenebris atque a radiis intimae lucis alieni, tanto nequius viximus quanto, rebus corporalibus dediti, a spiritualibus longius degebamus. Qua consideratione permotum cor ac male sibi conscium trepidat, et tantae illius quam audit patriae civem se fieri posse desperat. Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur, quo mens pavida ad fiduciam reducatur. Nam de hac luce mox subditur:

CAPUT XV [Rec. VIII].

VERS. 33. Annuntiat de ea amico suo quod possessio ejus sit, et ad eam possit ascendere. 28. Hominibus pene desperantibus coelestem gloriam

promittit Deus. Amicus veritatis est rectae amator actionis. Unde et ipsa Veritas discipulis dicit: Vos amici mei estis, si feceritis quae ego praecipio vobis (Joan. XV, 14). Amicus quippe animae custos dicitur. Unde non immerito qui custodire voluntatem Dei in praeceptis illius nititur, ejus amicus vocatur. Hinc est quod rursum eisdem discipulis Veritas dicit: Vos autem dixi amicos, quia omnia quaecunque audivi a Patre meo, nota feci vobis (Ibid., 15). De hac igitur luce aeternae patriae amico suo 866 Deus annuntiat quod possessio ejus sit, ut nequaquam se infirmitatis suae fragilitate desperet, nequaquam hoc quod creatus, sed quod recreatus est penset, sed tanto certius sciat quia illius lucis claritatem possideat, quanto nunc vitiorum pulsantium tenebras verius calcat. Bene autem in promissione subjungitur: Et ad eam possit ascendere. Quid enim difficilius quam homini in terra edito terrena et fragilia membra gestanti, coelorum alta conscendere, supernorum spirituum arcana penetrare? 29. Christus pacem inter angelos et homines composuit. Aequales nos angelis fecit. Sed eorumdem spirituum ad nos conditor venit, seque hominem etiam sub ipsis exhibuit, sicut de illo Patri per Prophetam dicitur: Minuisti eum paulo minus ab angelis (Psal. VIII, 6). Et quia inter nos et eosdem spiritus discordantis vitae scandalum reperit, mira potentia, mirabiliori etiam pietate summa creans, ima suscipiens, ima cum summis junxit. Hinc est quod eodem Rege nato, angelorum chori in ejus annuntiatione prodeunt, hymnum dicunt, et devicta pravae vitae discordia, hos quos dudum despexerant, cives agnoscunt, consono ore praedicantes: Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II, 14). Ac si aperte dicant: Quos a nobis malitia disjunxerat, jam nunc in terra nata bonitas jungat. Hinc est quod ante incarnationem ejus in Testamento veteri adorasse homo angelum legitur, nec tamen adorare prohibetur (Genes. XVIII, 2); sed post Mediatoris adventum, cum se Joannes adorando angelo prostravisset, audivit: Vide ne feceris, conservus tuus sum et fratrum tuorum (Apoc. XIX, 10; XXII, 9).

Quid est enim quod prius aequanimiter se concedebant adorari, post ab homine angeli recusant, nisi quod prius hominem carnalibus corruptionibus deditum, nec ab eisdem carnalibus corruptionibus redemptum, quo abjectiorem noverant, justius contemnebant; postmodum vero humanam naturam eo jam subjectam habere non poterant, quo hanc in auctore suo etiam super semetipsos ductam videbant? Neque enim jam debebat in membris subjecta despici, quae in ipso membrorum capite meruit praelata venerari. Is ergo qui propter nos minor angelis exstitit aequales non angelis virtute suae minorationis fecit. Unde et moriendo docuit mortem non metui, resurgendo de vita confidi, ascendendo de coelestis patriae haereditate gloriari, ut quo caput praeisse conspiciunt, illuc se subsequi et membra gratulentur. Unde bene ab eodem nostro capite dicitur: Ubicunque corpus fuerit, illuc congregabuntur et aquilae (Matth. XXIV, 28). Unde Petrus ait: In haereditatem incorruptibilem, et incontaminatam, et immarcescibilem, conservatam in coelis (I Pet. I, 4). Unde Paulus dicit: Scimus quoniam si terrestris domus nostra hujus habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem ex Deo habemus domum non manufactam, aeternam in coelis (II Cor. V, 1). 30. Solus Christus coelum ascendit, quod solis ejus membris patet. Sed si nos quoque, qui editi in terra sumus, coelum conscendimus, ubi est quod rursum Veritas dicit: Nemo ascendit in coelum, nisi qui de coelo descendit, Filius hominis qui est in coelo (Joan. III, 13)? Cui nimirum sententiae statim obiviat quod haec eadem Veritas dicit: Pater, volo ut ubi ego sum, et illi sint mecum (Joan. XVII, 24). Quae sibi in verbis suis non discrepat, sed ad inquirenda haec quasi discordantia studium nostrae mentis inflammat. Omnes enim nos qui in ejus fide nati sumus, 867 ejus procul dubio corpus existimus. Quia igitur mira dispensatione pietatis membrorum suorum Dominus caput factus est, repulsa reproborum multitudine, solus est etiam nobiscum. Nemo igitur ascendit in coelum, nisi qui descendit de coelo, Filius hominis qui est in coelo (Joan. III, 13), quia dum nos unum cum illo

jam facti sumus, unde solus venit in se, illuc solus redit etiam in nobis; et is qui in coelo semper est, ad coelum quotidie ascendit, quia qui divinitate super omnia permanet, humanitatis suae compage sese quotidie ad coelos trahit. Non ergo se desperet humana fragilitas, unigeniti sanguinem consideret, et in pretio suo conspiciat quam magna est quae tanti valet. Perpendat sollicite quo caput praecessit, et quae ad vivendum praeceptis astringitur, ad sperandum exemplo roboretur; confidat coelos, speret supernam patriam, angelorum se sociam sciat, atque in suo capite praelatam se etiam angelis gaudeat. Dicatur igitur recte de hac luce aeternae patriae: Annuntiat de ea amico suo quod possessio ejus sit, et ad eam possit ascendere. [Vet. XII.] Sed valde mira sunt ista, valde terribilia, quod homo in terra editus, atque a coelesti patria exigentibus meritis longe damnatus, non solum ad statum conditionis reducitur, sed etiam gloriosius exaltatur, ut qui paradisum perdidit coelum recipiat; et non solum hunc debiti sui reatus non teneat, sed huic post culpam dona cumulatius excrescant, ut ille contemptor Dei, ille imitator diaboli, si ad fructum poenitentiae redeat, usque ad celsitudinem contemplandae intimae lucis ascendat. Cujus itaque cor non in hujus pietatis admiratione exsiliat? Cujus torpor non in sublevatione tantae considerationis expavescat? Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVI [Rec. IX].

CAP. XXXVII, VERS. 1. Super hoc expavit cor meum, et motum est de loco suo. 31. Considerata aeternae patriae luce, mens in ecstasim rapitur. Quia pavor dum mentem percutit, hanc a semetipsa alienam reddit, nonnunquam Latini interpretes cestasim pavorem vocant, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Ego dixi in pavore meo, projectus sum a vultu oculorum tuorum (Psal. XXX, 23). Ubi videlicet non pavor, sed excessus dici poterat; sed pavor illic pro excessu ponitur, quia sicut in excessu, ita in pavore alienatur animus. Unde hic quoque considerata luce aeternae patriae, recte

subjungitur: Super hoc expavit cor meum. Ac si dicat: In admirationis excessu se transtulit, et quia novae spei spiritu mens afflata est, semetipsam qualis in vetusta cogitatione fuerat reliquit. 32. Cor, terrenis despectis, ad sola coelestia suspirat. Bene autem dicitur: Et motum est de loco suo. Locus quippe humani cordis est delectatio vitae praesentis. Sed cum divina aspiratione tangitur locus nostri cordis, fit amor aeternitatis. Consideratione igitur aeternae patriae de loco suo animus movetur, quia derelictis infimis, in supernis cogitationibus ponitur. Prius enim quae essent aeterna nesciebat, in praesentium delectatione torpuerat, simulque ipse transiens amore transeuntia tenebat. Sed postquam quae essent aeterna cognovit, postquam supernae lucis radios raptim contemplando contigit, admiratione summorum sese ab infimis suscitatus elevavit, ut nulla jam ei nisi quae aeterna sunt libeant, et, despectis transeuntibus, sola quae permanent, requirat. Bene ergo dicitur: Super hoc expavit 868 cor meum, et motum est de loco suo, quia pigrum cor, et terrenis dudum cogitationibus deditum, cum repente per excessum se ad summa suspendit, cogitationis infimae locum mutavit. Sed quia per semetipsam in amore praesentis saeculi prostrata mens dormitat, et nisi divinae gratiae aspiratione pulsetur, in suis delectationibus frigida insensibilisque torpescit, necesse est ut quomodo interna cogitatione tangatur, vel qualiter ad spiritalia sensificetur, adjungat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII [Vet.

XIII, Rec. X]. VERS. 2. Audiet auditionem in terrore vocis ejus, et sonum de ore illius procedentem. 33. Deus prius timore judicii nos castigat, postea coelestis dulcedinis consolatione reficit. Mos sacri eloquii est ut cum audire aliquid per auditum insinuat, audiri eumdem auditum dicat, sicut Habacuc ait: Domine, audivi auditum tuum, et timui (Habac. III, 1). Unde hic quoque dicitur: Audiet auditionem in terrore vocis ejus. Notandum vero est quod vox Dei non in gaudio, sed in terrore audiri perhibetur, quia nimirum

peccator quisque dum sola quae terrena sunt cogitat, dum cor oppressum infimis cogitationibus gestat, si repente divinae gratiae aspiratione tangitur, hoc ante omnia intelligit, quod cuncta quae agit districta aeterni judicis animadversione puniantur. Auditio igitur vocis Dei prius in terrore fit, ut postea vertatur in dulcedinem, quia ante nos districti judicii timore castigat, ut jam castigatos supernae dulcedinis consolatione reficiat. Nam cum nos violenta rerum temporalium delectatio possidet, et mentis nostrae oculos in somno torporis premit, si manu subita superni respectus excitamur, diu clausos mox eosdem ad veritatis lucem oculos mentis aperimus, quae egimus mala meminimus, quam districtus judex contra haec veniat videmus: versatur mente quantus ille sit tanti judicis adventus, quae tunc illa sit hominum angelorumque frequentia, quanta vi contra reprobos et ardentia pugnent elementa, quam terribiliter aeterna prodeat de districti judicis ore sententia, qua reprobis dicitur: Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, qui praeparatus est diabolo et angelis ejus (Matth. XXV, 41). Eorumdem poena reproborum ante oculos volvitur, et quae sint gehennae tenebrae, cum gravi amaritudinis obscuritate pensatur. Quia ergo superbum cor prius terrore concutitur, ut concussum in amore solidetur, recte nunc dicitur: Audiet auditionem in terrore vocis ejus. Ubi et bene subjungitur: Et sonum de ore illius procedentem 34. Utrumque praestat spiritus sanctus de ore Domini procedens. Sonus de ore Dei est vis timoris de superna irruens aspiratione, quia cum nos de venturis Dominus aspirando replet, procul dubio de male gestis praeteritis terret. Potest autem per os Dei, unigenitus designari Filius, qui sicut brachium ejus dicitur, quia per eum cuncta Pater operatur, de quo propheta ait: Et brachium Domini cui revelatum est (Isai. LIII, 1)? de quo Joannes dicit: Omnia per ipsum facta sunt (Joan. I, 3); ita etiam os dicitur. Hinc est enim quod propheta ait: Os enim Domini locutum est haec (Isai. LVIII, 14). Per quem nobis omnia loquitur, ac si oris nomine patenter diceretur verbum, sicut nos quoque pro verbis linguam dicere

solemus, ut cum Graecam, vel Latinam linguam dicimus, Latina vel Graeca verba monstramus. Os ergo Domini non immerito ipsum accipimus. 869 Unde et ei sponsa in Canticis canticorum dicit: Osculetur me osculo oris sui (Cant. I, 1). Ac si dicat: Tangat me dulcedine praesentiae unigeniti Filii redemptoris mei. [Vet. XIV.] Per sonum vero oris potest ejusdem Domini sanctus Spiritus designari. Unde et alias in ejusdem Spiritus significatione scriptum est: Factus est repente de coelo sonus tanquam advenientis spiritus vehementis (Act. II, 2). Sonus igitur de ore Domini procedit, cum consubstantialis ei Spiritus ad nos per Filium veniens, surditatem nostrae insensibilitatis rumpit, sicut de eodem sono incircumscripto atque incorporeo os Domini loquitur, dicens: De meo accipiet, et annuntiabit vobis (Joan. XVI, 15). Potest ergo et per terrorem vocis vis formidinis, et per sonum oris dulcedo consolationis intelligi, quia quos Spiritus sanctus replet, prius eos de terrena actione terrificat, et postmodum spe coelestium consolatur, ut tanto post confidendo de praemiis gaudeant quanto prius sola supplicia conspiciendo metuebant. Hinc est quod de unigeniti Spiritu quasi de hoc oris sono Paulus dicit: Non enim accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timorem, sed accepistis spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus, Abba pater (Rom. VIII, 15). Hinc per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Accipite Spiritum sanctum, quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt (Joan. XX, 22). Ecce conversorum terror vertitur in potestatem, quia dum mala sua poenitendo puniunt, usque ad exercendum judicium ascendunt; ut hoc in Deo posse accipiant, quod prius de Deo ipsi metuebant. Judices quippe fiunt qui supernum judicium perfecte timuerunt, et aliena jam peccata incipiunt dimittere qui prius formidaverant ne retinerentur sua. Sed quia hoc ipsum judicium quod spiritaliter agitur modo a carnalibus non videtur, sunt nonnulli qui Deum res humanas curare non aestimant, et eas ferri fortuitis motibus putant. Contra quos recte subditur:

CAPUT XVIII [Rec. XI].

VERS. 3. Subter omnes coelos ipse considerat, et lumen illius super terminos terrae. 35. Dei erga summa et infirma providentia. Ac si aperte diceretur: Qui summa regit, etiam extrema non deserit, quia sic impenditur maximis, ut tamen haec eadem cura regiminis non praepediatur a parvis. Qui enim ubique praesens, et ubique aequalis est, etiam in dissimilibus sibi ipsi dissimilis non est. Aeque ergo omnia respicit, aeque cuncta disponit, qui in omnibus locis praesens, nec localiter tenetur, nec varia curando variatur. Si autem coelos sanctos praedicatores accipimus, Propheta attestante qui ait: Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei (Psal. XVIII, 1), postquam per sonum oris adventus Spiritus sancti designatur, recte subjungitur: Subter omnes coelos ipse considerat, et lumen illius super terminos terrae. 36. Miracula cur in Ecclesiae exordiis concessa. Sunt namque nonnulli qui cum mira apostolorum opera audiunt, quod accepto Spiritu sancto mortuos verbo suscitarent, ab obsessis daemonia pellerent, umbra infirmitates amoverent (Act. V, 12, seq.), ventura quaeque prophetando praedicerent, et unigenitum Verbum Dei, omnium gentium loquentes lingua, praedicarent (Act. II, 4), quia has virtutes nunc in Ecclesia non vident, subtractam jam ab Ecclesia supernam gratiam suspicantur, nescientes pensare quod scriptum est: Adjutor in opportunitatibus, in tribulatione (Psal. IX, 10). Tunc quippe sancta Ecclesia miraculorum 870 adjutoriis indiguit, cum eam tribulatio persecutionis pressit. Nam postquam superbiam infidelitatis edomuit, non jam virtutum signa, sed sola merita operum requirit, quamvis et illa per multos cum opportunitas exigit ostendat. Scriptum quippe est: Linguae in signum sunt non fidelibus, sed infidelibus (I Cor. XIV, 22). Ubi ergo omnes fideles sunt, quae causa exigit ut signa monstrentur? Unde citius fortasse satisfacimus, si quid de ipsa apostolica dispensatione memoremus. 37. Signa non fidelibus, sed infidelibus data. Paulus namque egregius praedicator Melitem veniens, et plenam infidelibus insulam sciens, patrem Publii dysenteria febribusque vexatum, orando salvavit (Act. XXVIII, 8), et

tamen aegrotanti Timotheo praecepit, dicens: Modico vino utere propter stomachum tuum et frequentes tuas infirmitates (I Tim. V, 23). Quid est, Paule, quod aegrum infidelem orando ad salutem revocas, et tantum adjutorem Evangelii more medici per alimenta curas, nisi quod idcirco fiunt exteriora miracula ut mentes hominum ad interiora perducatur, quatenus per hoc quod mirum visibiliter ostenditur ea quae admirabiliora sunt invisibilia credantur? Signo quippe virtutis pater Publii sanandus fuerat, ut mente revivisceret, dum miraculo ad salutem rediret; Timotheo autem adhibendum foris miraculum non erat, quia jam totus intus vivebat. Quid est ergo mirum si, propagata fide, crebro miracula non fiunt, quando haec ipsi quoque apostoli in quibusdam jam fidelibus non fecerunt? [Vet. XV.] Elevatis ergo coelis, Dominus inferiora considerat, quia et ablatis summis praedicatoribus, incessanter etiam infima nostrae infirmitatis curat. Et quasi subter coelos lumen illius, terminos respicit, quia post sublimem vitam praecedentium etiam peccatorum mores actusque gratiae suae illustratione comprehendit. Qui etsi virtutum signa nunc per vitam fidelium crebro non exerit, ab eisdem tamen fidelibus per virtutem operum nunquam recedit. Potest etiam lumen illius super terminos terrae ita intelligi, quod praedicatio supernae gratiae dum gentes ad fidem colligit, intra semetipsam mundi limites clausit. 38. Divinae gratiae miraculum in conversione peccatorum in extremis positorum. Vel certe termini terrae. sunt fines hominum peccatorum. Et saepe contingit ut plerique Deum deserant, et vitae suae tempora in desideriis carnalibus expendant; sed tamen superna gratia respecti in extremis suis ad Deum redeunt, quae sint judicia aeterna cognoscunt, cunctaque quae se perverse egisse meminerint, fletibus puniunt, atque haec vere se insequi rectis operibus ostendunt. Quibus subsequente justitia, profecto totum dimittitur quod ante deliquerunt. Hinc enim per prophetiae spiritum Anna dicit: Dominus judicabit fines terrae (I Reg. II, 10), quia nimirum anteactam vitam Deus non judicat, quando

posteriora peccatorum respectu supernae pietatis illustrat. Hinc Moyses ait: Primogenita asini mutabis ove (Exod. XIII, 13). Per asinum quippe immunditia, per ovem vero innocentia designatur. Asini ergo primogenita ove mutare, est immundae vitae primordia in innocentiae simplicitatem convertere, ut postquam illa peccator egit, quae ut immunda Dominus respuit, ea jam agendo proferat, quae Dei sacrificio imponat. Quia ergo post prava opera peccator convertitur, et ab actionum suarum tenebris juxta finem aliquando revocatur, recte nunc dicitur: 871 Et lumen illius super terminos terrae. Sed gravi luctu afficit eadem gratia, quae post facinora mentem replet. Nam male gesta ad memoriam reducit, sibique hominem quam sit juste damnandus ostendit. Unde fit ut peccatum omne quod se egisse reminiscitur, quotidianis fletibus insequatur; et quo magis valet jam quod justum est cernere, eo ardentius appetit injustum sese gemitibus punire. Unde apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIX (Rec XII].

VERS. 4. Post eum rugiet sonitus. 39. Afflante et lucente gratia, poenitentiae gemitus et rugitus audiuntur. Quem enim Dominus illustrando repleverit, ejus vitam proculdubio in lamentum vertit; atque illuminatae menti quo magis aeterna supplicia insinuat, eo hanc durius de transacta nequitia gemitibus fatigat; et dolet homo quod fuit, quia bonum jam incipit videre quod non fuit; odit qualem se fuisse meminit, amat qualem se esse debuisse cognoscit, et solam jam poenitentiae amaritudinem diligit, quia caute considerat in quantis voluptatibus sua delectatione peccavit. Bene ergo dicitur: Post eum rugiet sonitus, quia cum mentem Deus ingreditur, constat proculdubio quod mox poenitentiae gemitus sequatur, ut ei jam salubriter flere libeat, quae prius de iniquitatibus flenda jucunditate gaudebat. [Vet. XVI.] Sed quo uberius culpa fletur, eo altius cognitio veritatis attingitur, quia ad videndum internum lumen polluta dudum

conscientia lacrymis baptizata renovatur. Unde post poenitentiae rugitum apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XX [Rec. XIII].

IBID. Tonabit voce magnitudinis suae. 40. Vox Dei torpentem peccatorem excitans, tonitrui similis. Voce enim magnitudinis suae Deus tonat, cum se nobis bene jam per lamenta praeparatis quam sit magnus in supernis insinuat. Quasi enim de coelo tonitrusprocedit cum nos incuria negligentiaque torpentes respectus gratiae pavore subito percutit, atque in terra positi sonum de superioribus audimus, quia terrena cogitantes superni terroris sententiam repente pertimescimus, et mens bene jam de summis sollicita trepidat, quae prius in infimis male secura torpebat. Sed istius visitationis occultae quibus modis se nobis insinuet terror ignoratur; neque ipsius mentis acie comprehenditur, cujus ad melius intentio commutatur. Unde apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXI.

IBID. Et non investigabitur, cum audita fuerit vox ejus. 41. Quibus modis haec vox se in aures cordis insinuet ignoratur. Vox Domini auditur cum gratiae ejus aspiratio mente concipitur, cum insensibilitas occultae surditatis rumpitur, et cor ad studium summi amoris excitarum virtutis intimae clamore penetratur. Sed istam vocem supervenientis Spiritus, quae se in aures cordis insinuat, nec ipsa mens quae per hanc illustrata fuerit investigat. Pensare enim non valet invisibilis virtus quibus sibi meatibus influat, quibus ad se modis veniat, quibus recedat. Unde et bene per Joannem dicitur: Spiritus ubi vult spirat; et vocem ejus audis, sed nescis unde veniat, et quo vadat (Joan. III, 8). Vocem enim spiritus audire, est vi compunctionis intimae in amorem invisibilis conditoris assurgere. Sed nemo scit unde veniat, quia ignoratur per ora praedicantium quibus se ad

nos occasionibus fundat. Et nemo scit quo vadat, quia cum unam praedicationem multi audiunt, intelligi proculdubio 872 non potest quem deserens abjiciat, aut cujus ingrediens in corde requiescat. Una quippe res foris agitur, sed non per hanc uno modo intuentium corda penetrantur, quia qui invisibiliter visibilia modificat, in humanis cordibus causarum semina incomprehensibiliter plantat. Hinc est quod resuscitato Lazaro quidam crediderunt, sed tamen Judaeorum plurimi ad persecutionis zelum ex hac ipsa resuscitatione commoti sunt (Joan. XI, 45). Unum ergo idemque que miraculum quod aliis lumen fidei praebuit, alios per invidiae tenebras a lumine mentis excaecavit. Hinc est quod uterque latro et eamdem et suae morti similem mortem Redemptoris vidit (Luc. XXIII, 39); sed eum superbiendo alter contumeliis lacessere non timuit, quem timendo alter honoravit; atque in una re una utriusque cogitatio non fuit, quia hanc internus arbiter invisibiliter modificando distinxit. Sed hi occultae aspirationis modi, quia comprehendi nostra cogitatione nequeunt, nimirum divinae vocis vestigia nesciuntur. Bene ergo dicitur: Et non investigabitur, cum audita fuerit vox ejus. Unde et adhuc subjungitur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 5. Tonabit Deus voce sua mirabiliter. 42. Mirabiliter sonat Deus, quia silenter et occulta vi coelesti simul cibo reficit. Voce sua Deus mirabiliter tonat, quia occulta vi corda nostra incomprehensibiliter penetrat. Quae dum latentibus motibus premit in timore, et format in amore, quanto ardore sequendus sit aliquo modo silenter clamat, et fit cujusdam impulsionis nimietas in mente, cum nihil sonet in voce. Quae tanto apud nos valentius perstrepit, quanto et ab omni exteriori strepitu aurem nostri surdescere cordis facit. [Vet. XVII.] Unde et anima ad semetipsam mox hoc intimo clamore collecta miratur quod audit, quia vim compunctionis incognitae percipit. Cujus ipsa admiratio bene apud Moysen manna desuper

veniente signatur (Exod. XVI, 15). Dulcis enim cibus qui de supernis accipitur manhu vocatur. Manhu enim dicitur Quid est hoc? Et quid est hoc dicimus, quando hoc quod cernimus nescientes admiramur. Supernum igitur manna anima percipit, cum per vocem compunctionis elevata novam speciem internae refectionis obstupescit, ut divina dulcedine repleta jure respondeat, Quid est hoc? quia dum ab infima cogitatione suspenditur, ea quae de supernis conspicit insolite miratur. Et quia cum hac voce torporis nostri surditas rumpitur, vetustae vitae protinus usus mutatur, ut anima superno spiritu afflata, et in summis appetat quae contempserat, et contemnat in infimis quae appetebat, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIII.

IBID. Qui facit magna et inscrutabilia. 43. Mira et stupenda in peccatoris conversione Deus operatur. Ut enim homo terrenis usibus deditus, iniquis desideriis pressus, subito ad nova efferveat, atque ad consueta frigescat, exterioribus curis renuntiet, in internis contemplationibus anhelet, quis hanc virtutem supernae vocis considerare sufficiat? quis considerando comprehendat? Magna sunt quae per vocem suam Dominus facit, sed minus magna essent si perscrutari potuissent. Facit ergo magna et inscrutabilia, quia ostendit foris perfectionem operis, sed latet intus ipsa qualitas operationis. Voce sua foris etiam per apostolos insonat, sed corda audientium per seipsum interius illustrat, 873 Paulo attestante qui ait: Ego plantavi, Apollo rigavit, Deus autem incrementum dedit. Neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus (I Cor. III, 6). Quamvis ergo nostris mentibus supernae vocis auditum non ipsi praebeant, missi tamen sunt, ut verbis nobis exterioribus condescendant. Unde apte subjungitur.

CAPUT XXIV [Rec. XIV].

VERS. 6. Qui praecipit nivi ut descendat in terram, et hiemis pluviis, et imbri fortitudinis suae. 44. Sancti praedicatores quorum conversatio in coelis est, infirmis tamen fratribus condescendunt. Quia Psalmista ait: Lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor (Psal. L, 8), quid hoc loco nivem, nisi per lucem justitiae candida accipimus corda sanctorum? Aquae autem ductae in superioribus constipantur, ut nives fiant. Sed cum hae ipsae nives ad terram veniunt, in aquarum iterum liquorum vertuntur. Aquae igitur sunt praedicatorum mentes: quae dum ad contemplanda superna se erigunt, altiori intellectu solidantur. Cumque in summa consideratione rapiuntur, virtutem confirmationis accipiunt. Sed quia adhuc in terris fraterna dilectione retinentur, semetipsas ab alto intellectu modificant, et infirmis humiliter praedicantes more nivium corda arentia liquatae rigant. Nives ergo ad terram de coelestibus veniunt, cum sublimia corda sanctorum quae jam solida contemplatione pascuntur pro fraterna charitate ad humilia praedicationis verba descendunt. [Vet. XVIII.] Sicut enim nix terram cum jacet operit, cum vero liquatur rigat, ita sanctorum virtus et per firmitatem suam apud Deum vitam peccatorum protegit, et per condescensionem suam quasi liquefacta arentem terram ut fructus proferat infundit. Et quia aqua prius ab infimis trahitur, ut post a superioribus sparsa reddatur, sancti quique etiam cum in virtutum arce consistunt, unde elevati sunt considerant, ne alienae infirmitatis abjecta contemnant. Quasi ergo aquae ad terras de quibus sublevatae sunt redeunt, dum condescendentes justi peccatoribus reminisci non desinunt quod fuerunt. Certe aqua in terris adhuc Paulus fuerat, cum legem carnaliter sapiebat; sed ductus ad coelestia, in nivem versus est; quia quod prius infirmum sapuit ad soliditatem verae intelligentiae commutavit; et tamen condescendens fratribus quasi nix ima repetiit, quia et post virtutum culmina quam fuerit indignus agnoscit, dicens: Qui prius fui blasphemus et persecutor (I Tim. I, 13), etc. Ecce quam clementer suae imbecillitatis reminiscitur, ut aliorum aequanimiter

infirma patiatur. Quasi enim ad terram de qua sumpta fuerat post coelum aqua rediit, dum post tanta suae contemplationis arcana peccatorem se Paulus meminit, ut prodesse humiliter peccatoribus possit. Videamus itaque aqua haec in nivis soliditatem vertenda qualiter trahatur ad summa. Ait: Sive mente excedimus, Deo (II Cor. V, 13). Videamus qualiter ad ima nix redeat, ut dum liquatur infundat. Ait: Sive sobrii sumus, vobis (Ibid.). Videamus qua manu ducitur, ut et jacens elevari valeat, et sublevata revocari. Ait: Charitas enim Christi urget nos (Ibid., 14). Quia igitur charitas Christi, quae sanctorum mentes ad superna sublevat, eas pio moderamine pro fraterna dilectione etiam ad humilitatem condescensionis format, recte dicitur: Qui praecipit nivi ut descendat in terram. Ubi et apte subjungitur: Et hiemis pluviis 874 et imbri fortitudinis suae. 45. Hiems est vita praesens, in qua sanctorum praedicatorum abundant pluviae. Hiems quippe est vita praesens, in qua nos etsi jam spes ad superna erigit, adhuc tamen mortalitatis nostrae frigidus torpor astringit, quia scriptum est: Corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena habitatio sensum multa cogitantem (Sap. IX, 15). Habet autem haec hiems pluvias, rectorum procul dubio praedicationes. De quibus videlicet pluviis per Moysen dicitur: Exspectetur sicut pluvia eloquium meum, et descendant sicut ros verba mea (Deut. XXXII, 2). Hae nimirum pluviae hiemi congruunt, aestate cessabunt, quia cum nunc carnalium oculis vita coelestis absconditur, necesse est ut sanctorum nobis praedicationibus irroretur. Cum vero aeterni judicii aestus incanduerit, nullus verba praedicantium necessaria tunc habebit, quia, veniente judice, ad cor suum quisque reducitur, ut sancta jam cum agere non valet sentiat, et rectum quod sequi debuit ex tortitudinis suae poena cognoscat. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Congrega eos quasi gregem ad victimam, et sanctifica eos in die occisionis (Jerem. XII, 3). In die enim occisionis sanctificantur reprobi, quia tunc sancta quae debuerunt agere sentiunt, cum digna pravitatis suae supplicia jam declinare non possunt.

Quia autem praedicationes sanctae cum vita praesenti, id est pluviae cum hieme cessabunt, recte exeunti animae, atque ad aeternae felicitatis aestiva properanti, sponsi voce suadentis dicitur: Surge, propera, amica mea, formosa mea, et veni; jam enim hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit (Cant. II, 10). Transeunte quippe hieme, imber recedit, quia cum vita praesens peragitur, in qua nos ignorantiae nubilo carnis corruptibilis torpor astrinxerat, omne ministerium praedicationis cessat. Clarius quippe per nos tunc videbimus hoc quod sanctorum vocibus nunc obscurius audimus. Praecipit igitur Dominus nivi, et hiemis pluviis, ut in terram descendant, dum aspiratione sancti spiritus pro corrigendis peccatoribus corda sanctorum ad ministerium praedicationis humiliat. Ubi recte additur: Et imbri fortitudinis suae. [Rec. XV.] 46. Imber fortitudinis, praedicatio divinitatis; imber infirmitatis, praedicatio humanitatis Christi. Imber quippe fortitudinis Dei est praedicatio divinitatis. Nam imber infirmitatis est praedicatio ejus incarnationis, de qua per Paulum dicitur: Quod infirmum est Dei, fortius est hominibus (I Cor. I, 25). Et rursum: Si crucifixus est ex infirmitate, sed vivit ex virtute Dei (II Cor. XIII, 4). Sic autem sancti viri humanitatis ejus infirma praedicant, ut auditorum suorum cordibus etiam divinitatis fortia infundant. Audiamus per tonitruum nubis, imbrem fortitudinis: In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Joan. I, 1). Audiamus etiam imbrem infirmitatis: Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis (Ibid., 14). Audiamus imbrem fortitudinis: Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil. Quod factum est, in ipso vita erat (Ibid., 3). Audiamus etiam imbrem infirmitatis: In propria venit, et sui eum non receperunt (Ibid., 11). Imbri ergo fortitudinis suae praecipit ut in terram descendat, quia sanctorum suorum vocibus sic nobis humanitatis suae infirma praedicat, ut nobis etiam mira et fortia suae divinitatis innotescat. Sed cum virtutem nostri conditoris audimus, statim ad corda nostra formidine compellente reducimur, et tantum super nos judicem

perpendentes, 875 quae digne, quaeve egimus indigne, pensamus. Unde et bene subjungitur:

CAPUT XXV [Rec. XVI].

VERS. 7. Qui in manu omnium hominum signat, ut noverint singuli opera sua. 47. Cognoscendo Deum nosmet agnoscimus, et severius judicamus. Mala enim quae agunt homines, pensare contemnunt. Sed cum virtutem supernae districtionis audiunt, pravorum operum hoc quod se deprimit pondus agnoscunt. Praedicationis quippe verbis pulsati evigilant, ut pensent ad quae supplicia sese antiquae actionis meritum trahat. Dum ergo imber fortitudinis in terram descendit, in manu uniuscujusque signatur, ut sua opera sciat, quia dum virtus incomprehensibilis majestatis agnoscitur, ab unoquoque subtilius sua vita pensatur 48. Naturali lumine, tanquam lege mentis, pravum et rectum innotescunt. Quod tamen intelligi et aliter potest. Creator namque omnipotens a cunctis insensibilibus irrationabilibusque distinctum rationabilem creaturam hominem condidit, quatenus quod egerit ignorare non possit. Naturae enim lege scire compellitur, seu pravum sive rectum sit quod operatur. Nam ad judicium pro actione cur venit, si potuit nescire quod egit? Et ipsi ergo qui praeceptis dominicis erudiri contemnunt, utrum bona an mala sint quae faciunt sciunt. Nam si bona se facere nesciunt, cur de aliquibus factis in ostentatione gloriantur? Rursum si mala se agere ignorant, cur in eisdem factis alienos oculos declinant? Ipsi enim sibi testes sunt, quia sciunt malum esse quod agunt, quod videri ab aliis verentur. Si enim veraciter malum esse non crederent, nequaquam hoc ab aliis videri formidarent. Unde et bene per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Cum sit timida nequitia, dat testimonium condemnationi (Sap. XVII, 10). Quia dum de facto suo conscientiam pulsans timor redarguit, ipsa sibi testimonium perhibet damnabile esse quod agit. Quo contra per Joannem dicitur: Si cor nostrum non reprehenderit nos, fiduciam habemus apud

Deum (I Joan. III, 21). Fugiant ergo iniqui humanos oculos, semetipsos certe fugere non possunt. Quia enim malum quod faciunt noverunt, habent testem conscientiam, habent judicem rationem suam. In peccato igitur quod committunt prius contra se judicium suae rationis inveniunt, et post ad districtionem aeterni examinis perducuntur. Et hoc est fortasse quod per Psalmistam dicitur: Abyssus abyssum invocat in voce cataractarum tuarum (Psal. XLI, 8). Quia dum miro ordine dispositionis occultae malum non permittitur nesciri quod agitur, et suo se jam judicio peccator in conscientia condemnat, et post condemnationem propriam ad aeterni judicis sententiam properat. Abyssum ergo abyssum invocare est de judicio ad judicium pervenire. Eant ergo praedicatores sancti, redarguant facta peccantium, auditores autem pravi contemnant verba justorum, defendant quantum voluerint pravitates suas, atque impudenter gestas impudentius defendendo multiplicent: certe ipsi sibi in conscientia testes sunt quia excusabiles non sunt. Eo enim ipso quo rationabilem creaturam Deus hominem condidit, in manu omnium hominum signat, ut noverint singuli opera sua. 876 Sed quia Eliu de pravitate singulorum sententiam protulit, illico ad ipsum pravitatis auctorem, per quem unumquodque malum oboritur, mentis oculos deflectit, ut quia uno hoc versu pravi capitis membra perstrinxerat, etiam hoc ipsum membrorum caput sub brevitate describat. Vel certe quia superius (Num. XIX), nubium Dei virtutes intulerat, agit nunc ut contra bonorum vitam etiam adversarii impugnationes innotescat. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI [Vet.

XIX, Rec. XVII]. VERS. 8. Ingredietur bestia latibulum suum, et in antro suo morabitur. 49. Diaboli antrum Antichristus, et reprobi omnes. Quis alius nomine bestiae, nisi antiquus hostis accipitur, qui deceptionem primi hominis saevus impetiit, et integritatem vitae illius male suadendo laniavit? Contra quem prophetae vocibus de sancta electorum Ecclesia in antiquum

statum restauranda promittitur: Et mala bestia non transibit per eam (Isai. XXXV, 9). Sed haec bestia cum post Redemptoris adventum, post praedicatorum voces, quasi post tonitruum nubium in fine mundi illum damnatum hominem qui Antichristus vocatur invaserit, quid aliud quam latibulum suum ingreditur, ut in antro proprio demoretur? Vas quippe illud diaboli antrum ac latibulum bestiae est, ut insidians hominibus viam hujus vitae carpentibus, in illo et per signa lateat, et per malitiam occidat. Qui tamen omnium reproborum corda etiam nunc priusquam apertus appareat possidet, eaque per occultam malitiam quasi proprium antrum tenet, atque ad omne quod nocere bonis appetit in eorum se obscuris mentibus abscondit. An Judaeorum persequentium corda antrum hujus bestiae non fuerunt, in quorum diu consiliis latuit, sed repente vocibus erupit clamantium: Crucifige, crucifige (Joan. XIX, 6)? Et quia ad lacerationem mentis pertingere tentando non potuit in Redemptore nostro (Matth. IV, 3), ad mortem carnis anhelavit. Haec nimirum bestia multa electorum corda tenuit, sed hanc ab illis moriens Agnus excussit. Unde et in Evangelio dicit: Nunc princeps hujus mundi ejicietur foras (Joan. XII, 31). Qui miro rectoque judicio dum confessiones humilium illuminans suscepit, superborum oculos deserens clausit. Unde ei per Psalmistam dicitur: Posuisti tenebras, et facta est nox, in ipsa pertransibunt omnes bestiae silvarum; catuli leonum rugientes ut rapiant, et quaerant a Deo escam sibi (Psal. CIII, 20, 21). Tenebras quippe Dominus ponit, cum peccatis judicia rependens, lumen suae intelligentiae subtrahit. Et nox efficitur, quia pravorum mens ignorantiae suae erroribus caecatur. In qua omnes bestiae silvae pertranseunt, dum maligni spiritus sub opacitate fraudis latentes in reproborum corda pravitates suas explendo percurrunt. In qua et catuli leonum rugiunt, quia nequissimarum sed tamen eminentium potestatum ministri spiritus importunis tentationibus insurgunt. Qui tamen a Deo escam expetunt, quia nimirum capere animas nequeunt, nisi justo judicio

praevalere divinitus permittantur. Ubi et apte subjungitur: Ortus est sol, et congregati sunt, et in cubilibus suis se collocaverunt (Psal. CIII, 20). Quia veritatis lumine per carnem apparente, a fidelium mentibus excussi, quasi ad cubilia sua reversi sunt, dum sola infidelium corda tenuerunt. 877 Quod igitur illic leonum cubile, hic antrum bestiae dicitur. 50. Bonorum mentes diabolus aliquando ingreditur, sed in eis non moratur. Notandum vero magnopere aestimo quod bestia haec non solum antrum suum ingredi, sed in eo etiam morari perhibetur. Aliquando namque etiam bonorum mentes ingreditur, illicita suggerit, tentationibus fatigat, rectitudinem spiritus ad delectationem carnis deflectere conatur, delectationem quoque ad consensum perducere nititur, sed tamen resistente superno adjutorio praevalere prohibetur. Intrare ergo in mentes bonorum potest, sed in eis morari non potest, quia cor justi hujus bestiae antrum non est. Quos enim quasi proprium antrum possidet, eorum mentes procul dubio immorans tenet, quia et prius in eis cogitationes usque ad iniqua desideria et post iniqua desideria usque ad nequissima opera perducit. Neque enim student reprobi suggestiones ejus recta judicii manu repellere, cujus voluntatibus appetunt subdita delectatione servire. Cumque in eorum cordibus pravum quid oritur, mox per studium delectationis enutritur; et cum sibi minime resistitur, protinus ex consensu roboratur, statimque consensus ad opus perducitur, opus vero etiam consuetudine gravatur. Recte ergo in antro suo morari haec bestia dicitur, quae tandiu cogitationes reproborum tenet, quousque eorum vitam etiam aculeo pravi operis perforet. Unde bene ad Judaeam Dominus per prophetam dicit: Quousque morabuntur in te cogitationes noxiae (Jerem. IV, 14)? Neque enim reprehendit cur veniant, sed cur morentur. Et in bona enim corda cogitationes illicitae veniunt, sed tamen morari prohibentur, quia recti quique ne captivandam domum conscientiae praebeant, ab ipso cordis limine hostem fugant. Qui et si quando repentinis suggestionibus usque ad primum vestibulum subripuerit,

ad consensus tamen januam non pertingit. Huic nimirum bestiae, impulsu subitae formidinis victus, januam cordis Petrus negando aperuit, sed citius cognoscendo restitit, flendo clausit (Matth. XXVI, 70). [Vet. XX.] Quia vero antiquus hostis persecutorum corda non solum intrando tenuit, sed etiam tenendo possedit, dicatur recte: Ingredietur bestia latibulum suum, et in antro suo morabitur. Quantum namque in Judaeorum mentibus demorata sit discimus, cum illorum consilia attestatione evangelicae narrationis audimus. In illa namque describitur, cum Redemptorem nostrum vivificare mortuos cernerent, in mortem ejus quanta anxietate crudelitatis insanirent, quot explere contra illum prava desideria ardenter vellent, sed tamen populum timerent (Joan. XI, 24, 49); quot occasiones occidendi quaererent, et invenire non possent (Matth. XXVI, 3, 4); quot ad votum suae saevitiae alienigenarum manibus usi sunt, quia eum quem legaliter interimere ipsi non poterant feriendum gentibus tradiderunt, ut ex sola potestate Romanus praeses ageret quod ex sola malitia ut agi debuisset ipsi anhelarent (Joan. XVIII, 28). Unde et apte subjungitur.

CAPUT XXVII [Rec. XVIII].

VERS. 9. Ab interioribus egredietur tempestas, et ab Arcturo frigus. 51. Christus a Judaeis et gentilibus persecutionem passus. Scriptura sacra cum contra Arcturum interiora memorat, diversam Aquilonis partibus Austri plagam designat. Unde in hoc eodem libro scribitur: Qui facit Arcturum, et Orionas, et interiora 878 Austri (Job. IX, 9). Quia igitur interiora Austri sol ferventior tenet, in Arcturo vero cursum omnimodo non habet, interiorum nomine plebs Judaica, Arcturi autem vocabulo hoc in loco populus gentilis exprimitur. Hi enim qui unum atque invisibilem Deum noverant, ejusdemque legi saltem carnaliter serviebant, quasi sub meridiano sole ferventes in fidei calore tenebantur. Gentiles autem quia nullam scientiam supernae cognitionis attigerant, velut sine sole frigidi sub Aquilone

remanebant. Quia vero tempestas impellit, frigus autem torpore opprimit, recte nunc dicitur: Ab interioribus egredietur tempestas, et ab Arcturo frigus. Ac si aperte diceretur: A Judaeis surgit malitia persequens, et a gentilibus potestas premens. Neque enim miracula fieri legis praecepta vetuerant, et tamen Judaei pro eisdem miraculis interimere humani generis Redemptorem quaerebant (Joan. XI, 48). Unde explere hoc quod coeperant non valentes, ad Pilati praetorium concurrerunt, ut ipse hunc perimeret quem injuste perimentem lex nulla cohiberet (Joan. XVIII, 28). Ab interioribus ergo tempestas atque ab Arcturo frigus prodiit, dum quod Judaea ex invidia petiit, hoc gentilis judex ex Romana auctoritate perpetravit. Unde bene contra hanc eamdem invidiam adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXVIII [Vet. XXI].

VERS. 10. Flante Deo concrescit gelu. 52. Judaeorum corda invidiae gelu obduruerant. Quia quo fidelium cordibus Spiritus sanctus aspiravit, quo majora virtutum miracula contulit, eo in infidelium mentibus gravioribus invidiae torpor excrevit, atque inde contra Deum plebs infidelis obduruit, unde humilis populus anteactam duritiam, qua se astrinxerat emollivit. Deo enim flante in gelu versi fuerant, qui visis miraculis invidentes dicebant: Ecce totus mundus post eum abiit (Joan. XII, 19). Conspiciebant signa, cernebant per ministros ejus miracula, totum jam mundum secuturum fidei praedicamenta praevidebant; et tamen quo sanctus Spiritus mundum repleverat (Sap. I, 7), eo illorum mentes arctius invidiae malitia ligabat. Aqua ergo in gelu versa fuerat dum, eunte post Deum mundo, Judaea in invidia pigra remanebat. Sed quia supernae potestati suppetiit etiam tantae crudelitatis duritiam solvere atque ad amandum se corda infidelium liquare, post hoc gelu mox bene subditur:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. Et rursum latissimae funduntur aquae. 53. Quorumdam postea emollita, et in pluviam liquata. Post gelu quippe Dominus latissimas aquas fudit, quia postquam Judaeorum saevitiam usque ad mortem pertulit, eorum corda protinus ab infidelitatis duritia amoris sui aspiratione liquefecit; ut tanto post desiderabilius ad obediendum currerent, quanto praeceptis illius prius obstinatius restitissent. Unde bene per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Sicut glacies in sereno, sic resolventur peccata tua (Eccli. III, 17). Ab hoc frigidi torporis gelu solvi Propheta desideraverat, cum dicebat: Converte, Domine, captivitatem nostram, sicut torrens in Austro (Psal. CXXV, 4). De his aquis, id est ad Deum concurrentibus populis, rursum dicitur: Mittet verbum suum, et liquefaciet ea, flabit spiritus ejus, et fluent aquae (Psal. CXLVII, 18). Aquae de gelu currunt, quia plerique ex duris persecutoribus magni praedicatores fiunt. Gelu igitur in aqua liquatur, cum torpor interni frigoris ad irrigationem 879 vertitur praedicationis. An Paulus gelu non erat, qui acceptis epistolis Damascum pergens (Act. IX, 2), in corde fidelium quasi in terra jactata verbi Dei semina, ne ad perfectionem operum surgerent, restringere quaerebat? Sed gelu hoc in aquam rediit, quia quos persequendo prius premere studuit, hos postmodum fluentis sanctae exhortationis infudit; ut tanto uberior electorum messis exsurgeret, quanto hanc imber Dei etiam ab ore persecutoris irrigaret. Unde et bene subditur

CAPUT XXX [Vet.

XXII, Rec. XIX]. VERS. 11. Frumentum desiderat nubes. 54. Electi frumentum sunt, cui Verbi divini imber necessarius. Quid enim electi quique sunt, nisi frumenta Dei coelestibus horreis recondenda? Quae nunc in tritura areae paleas tolerant, quia in hac purgatione sanctae Ecclesiae mores contrarios reproborum portant, quousque haec internus agricola ventilabro judicii dirimat, et in superna habitacula electos suos, quasi munda jam grana suscipiens, aeternis paleas ignibus tradat. Unde bene per

Joannem dicitur: Cujus ventilabrum in manu sua, et permundabit aream suam, et congregabit triticum in horreum suum, paleas autem comburet igni inexstinguibili (Matth. III, 12). Sed hoc frumentum quousque ad perfectionem fructuum veniat, nubium pluvias exspectat ut crescat, quia bonorum mens praedicantium verbis infunditur, ne ab humore charitatis desideriorum carnalium sole siccetur. Hoc frumentum supernus agricola in mundo surgere ac nubes desiderare conspexerat, cum dicebat: Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. Rogate autem Dominum messis, ut mittat operarios in messem suam (Matth. IX, 37). Qui igitur hic frumentum, illic messis, qui vero hic nubes, illic operarii vocantur, quia praedicatores sancti et nubes sunt, et operarii; nubes videlicet per doctrinam, operarii per vitam; nubes quia verbis influunt, operarii quia non desinunt agere quod loquuntur. Unde et subditur;

CAPUT XXXI.

IBID., 6. Et nubes spargunt lumen suum. 55. Nubes sunt sancti praedicatores.Nubes enim lumen spargere est praedicatores sanctos exempla vitae et loquendo et agendo dilatare. Sed quamvis annuntiationis intimae lumen spargant, non tamen ad convertenda omnium quae appetunt corda perveniunt. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 12. Quae lustrant cuncta per circuitum, quocunque eas voluntas gubernantis duxerit. 56. Universa lustrant, Deo eorum cursus gubernante. Saepe enim praedicatores sancti exhortari quosdam volunt, sed nequeunt. Saepe quosdam declinare appetunt, sed tamen internae instigationis impulsu exhortari eos instantissime compelluntur. Videamus nubem Dei quomodo gubernantis manu, et ad ea quae non appetit, ducitur, atque ab impulsu suo iterum gubernantis manu retinetur. Certe Paulus cum vestimenta sua

excutiens a Corinthiis discedere vellet, audivit: Noli timere, sed loquere, et ne taceas, propter quod ego tecum sum, et nemo opponetur tibi ut noceat te, quoniam multus est mihi populus in hac civitate (Act. XVIII, 9). Rursum cum ad Thessalonicenses voluisset ire, retentus est, dicens: Volui venire ad vos ego quidem Paulus, et semel et iterum, sed impedivit me Satanas (I Thess. II, 18). Neque enim per semetipsum Satan praepedire tanti apostoli vias potuit, sed occultae dispensationis usibus, 880 dum adversatur, nesciens deservivit; ut nimirum Paulus dum ad alios vellet accedere, nec valeret, eis a quibus recedere non poterat aptius prodesset. Nubes igitur Dei cuncta per circuitum lustrant, quia praedicationis luce mundi fines illuminant. Sed quia divinis nutibus subditae nequeunt explere quod volunt, ire non possunt, nisi quo eas voluntas gubernantis duxerit. Unde et adhuc subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXIII.

IBID. Ad omne quod praeceperit eis super faciem orbis terrae. 57. Et internos motus moderante. Saepe enim cum gubernantis voluntate perducuntur; aliter agere appetunt, sed aliter disponuntur. Nam plerumque quosdam auditores suos student blande corrigere, et tamen eorum sermo in asperitatem ducitur. Plerumque quosdam resecare aspere appetunt, sed tamen eorum vigor per mansuetudinis spiritum refrenatur. Sicut ergo non possunt ire quo volunt, ita etiam nequeunt agere sicut volunt. Quia enim eos internus arbiter tenet cum mittit, ita illos etiam modificans suscipit cum perducit, ut aliquando in cogitatione alia disponant, sed alia in opere peragant; aliquando aliter inchoent, sed aliter consumment. Quia igitur juxta hoc quod sibi praecipitur serviunt, dicatur recte: Quocunque eas voluntas gubernantis duxerit, ad omne quod praeceperit illis super faciem orbis terrae. Eo enim apertiorem viam praedicationis inveniunt, quo ad hanc non suis, sed praeceptoris sui nutibus ducuntur. Unde adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XXXIV [Rec. XX].

VERS. 13. Sive in una tribu, sive in terra sua, sive in quocunque loco misericordiae suae eas jusserit inveniri. 58. Non Judaeis tantum, sed etiam gentilibus concessa Evangelii praedicatio. Una tribus profecto Juda intelligitur, quae in Scriptura sacra clara ac multiplex prae caeteris memoratur. Quae in hoc quod ex se Redemptoris nostri carnem protulit, speciale prae omnibus munus accepit. Terra autem Dei simul omnis Judaea nominatur, quia quae tunc ei fidei suae fructum protulit, cum totus sub idolorum cultu delapsis gentibus mundus erravit. Locus autem misericordiae Dei est ipsa gentilitas, cujus culpas districtus judex si juste animadverteret, ad reconciliationem gratiae nunquam veniret. Quae cum nulla apud Deum merita habuit, reconciliationis tamen gratiam ex sola misericordia accepit. Unde bene per Paulum dicitur: Gentes autem super misericordia honorare Deum (Rom. XV, 9). Unde rursus scriptum est: Qui quondam non consecuti misericordiam, nunc autem misericordiam consecuti (I Pet. II, 10). Nubes ergo suas Deus ducit, sive in una tribu, sive in terra sua, seu in quocunque loco misericordiae suae eas jusserit inveniri, quia praedicatores Veteris Novique Testamenti aliquando soli tribui Judae contulit, et Israel pene totum ex prava regum gubernatione reprobavit. Aliquando et in terra sua has pluere nubes facit, quia eumdem Israeliticum populum ad antiquam gratiam post correptionem captivitatemque revocavit. Aliquando de loco suae misericordiae eas clarescere voluit, quia per praedicatores sanctos etiam gentibus virtutum miracula ostendit, ut sola misericordia a jugo erroris absolveret, quos ingenitae perfidiae ira deprimebat. [Vet. XXIII.] Sed 881 ecce Eliu, quia futura per propheticum spiritum sensit, quia multa sublimiter protulit, vir arrogans elationis suae pondere lassatus non valet portare quae dicit. Nam per jactantiam protinus adjungit:

CAPUT XXXV.

VERS. 14. Ausculta haec, Job; sta, et considera miracula Dei. 59. Quid sit Dei miracula stando, quid jacendo considerare. Quasi in comparatione sui jacentem vidit, quem ad verba tantae praedicationis ut staret admonuit. Quamvis et per hoc quod dicit Ausculta, gravem beato Job contumeliam irrogat, quia, sicut jam de illo et superius diximus (Lib. XII, n. 38, et saepe deinceps), arrogantia minoris est auditum sibi velle extorquere majoris. Sed licet Eliu bona quae dicit nesciat pensare cui dicat, nos qui erudiri ab omnibus quaerimus, indagare verba doctrinae illius subtiliter debemus. Nam magna fortassis virtutis arte dicitur: Sta, et considera miracula Dei. Sunt nonnulli quippe qui Dei miracula jacentes considerant, quia operationis ejus potentiam non sequentes admirantur. Stare quippe est recte agere. Unde et per Paulum dicitur: Qui se existimat stare, videat ne cadat (I Cor. X, 12). Et saepe quidem superna judicia mirantur, praedicamenta coelestis patriae cum audiunt diligunt, mira opera internae dispositionis obstupescunt, sed tamen amando et vivendo ad haec eadem opera assurgere negligunt. Jacentes ergo Dei miracula considerant, qui ejus potentiam sciendo pensant, sed vivendo non amant. Per contemplationem quidem in consideratione oculos tendunt, sed tamen per intentionem sese a terra non erigunt. Unde bene in Balaam exprobrationem dicitur: Qui cadens apertos habet oculos (Num. XXII, 16). Multa namque de adventu Redemptoris dixerat, et quae in novissimis temporibus erant ventura praevidebat, sed tamen ei vivendo assurgere noluit, quem praevidendo praedicavit. Jacens ergo apertos oculos habuit, cum ejus mentem et prophetia ad coelestia tenderet, et avaritia in terra retineret. Jacens apertos oculos habuit, quia eum videre de superioribus potuit, quem prostratus in infimis non amavit. Eliu itaque, qui beatum Job nequaquam credidit vivendo tenuisse quod dixit, quasi admonens dicit: Sta, et considera miracula Dei. Quem adhuc de venturis discutit, et quasi de ignorantia humilians adjungit:

CAPUT XXXVI [Rec. XXI].

IBID. 15. Nunquid scis quando praeceperit Deus pluviis, ut ostenderent lucem nubium ejus? 60. Deo afflati praedicatores irrigant et lucent. Si nubes sancti praedicatores sunt, pluviae nubium sunt verba praedicationum. Sed nubes cum per aera transvolant, nisi pluviae deorsum veniant, nescitur quantam aquarum immensitatem portant. Nisi coruscus sol inter pluvias erumpat, intelligi non valet quid in eis etiam claritatis lateat, quia nimirum praedicatores sancti si taceant, et nequaquam loquentes ostendant, quanta sit coelestis spei claritas, quam in cordibus gestant, aut reliquis hominibus similes, aut longe his despectiores videntur. Cum autem aperire per praedicationem coeperint quae sit supernae patriae remuneratio quam intrinsecus tenent; cum persecutione pressi in qua virtutis arce profecerint innotescunt, cum visione despecti loquendo insinuant unde timeantur, ipsae quae de nubibus influunt pluviae lucem nobis earumdem nubium ostendunt. Per verba enim praedicatorum cognoscimus ut in eis claritatem vitae quam appetunt cum magna humilitate veneremur. 882 Hanc nimirum lucem Paulus discipulis ostendebat, cum diceret: Ut sciatis quae sit spes vocationis ejus, quae divitiae gloriae haereditatis ejus in sanctis, et quae sit supereminens magnitudo virtutis ejus in nos qui credimus (Ephes. I, 18). Hanc lucem Corinthii per scriptorum verba quasi per pluviae guttas agnoverant, cum dicebant: Epistolae graves sunt et fortes, praesentia autem corporis infirma, et sermo contemptibilis (II Cor. X, 10). Sed plerumque praedicatores sancti ostendere semetipsos ut prosint cupiunt, nec tamen possunt; plerumque latere ut quieti sint appetunt, nec tamen permittuntur. Nemo igitur scit quando lucem nubium pluviae ostendant, quia nemo comprehendit quando Deus virtutem praedicationis praebeat, ut praedicantium gloria clarescat. Dicit ergo: Nunquid scis quando praeceperit Deus pluviis ut ostenderent lucem nubium ejus? Ac si aperte dicat: Nunquid si venturos in mundo praedicatores jam conspicis, quando eos ad

praedicandum Dominus repletione sancti Spiritus impellat, quibusve modis eorum vitae claritatem mundo innotescat apprehendis? Unde adhuc apte subjungitur.

CAPUT XXXVII [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 16. Nunquid nosti semitas nubium magnas, et perfectas scientias? 61. Arcta bene vivendi doctrina, non est ampla via, sed semita. Habent istae nubes semitas subtilissimas, scilicet sanctae praedicationis vias. Angusta quippe porta est, quae ducit ad vitam (Matth. VII, 14). Eos ergo per semitas astringunt, qui ab intentionis eorum tramite per lata mundi desideria evagando non exeunt. Arcta enim bene vivendi censura non est ampla via, sed semita, in qua praedicator quisque studiose constringitur, quia sub praeceptorum custodia sollicite coangustatur. An non quasi quaedam angustia est itineris, in hoc quidem mundo vivere, sed de hujus mundi concupiscentia nihil habere, aliena non appetere, propria non tenere, laudes mundi despicere, et pro Deo opprobria amare, gloriam fugere, despectum sequi, adulantes despicere, despicientes honorare, mala nocentium ex corde dimittere, et erga eos dilectionis gratiam immobilem in corde retinere? Quae videlicet omnia semitae sunt, sed magnae, quia quanto in praesenti vita pro ipsa vivendi custodia angustae sunt, tanto amplius in aeterna retributione dilatantur. Unde et bene subditur: Et perfectas scientias. 62. Perfecta scientia est, scire se nihil esse. Perfecta quippe scientia est, et cuncta haec sollicite agere, et se de suis meritis scire nihil esse. Unde et ipsae nubes de hac perfecta scientia docentur, cum eis voce Veritatis dicitur: Cum feceritis omnia quae praecepta sunt vobis, dicite: Servi inutiles sumus (Luc. XVII, 10). Perfecta scientia est scire omnia, et tamen juxta quemdam modum scientem se esse nescire, quia etsi jam Dei praecepta novimus, etsi jam virtutem verborum illius sollicita intentione pensamus, etsi jam quae intellexisse nos credimus agimus, adhuc tamen acta eadem qua districtione

examinis sint discutienda nescimus, necdum Dei faciem cernimus, necdum occulta ejus consilia videmus. Quanta ergo est nostra scientia, quae quousque mortalitatis pondere premitur, ipso suae incertitudinis nubilo caecatur? De qua bene per Paulum dicitur: Qui se existimat scire aliquid, nondum cognovit quemadmodum oporteat eum scire (I Cor. VIII, 2). In hoc itaque mundo dum vivimus, tum perfecte quae scienda sunt scimus, cum proficientes per intelligentiam, nihil nos 883 perfecte scire cognoscimus. Dicit igitur: Nunquid nosti semitas nubium magnas, et perfectas scientias? Ac si aperte dicat: Nunquid jam summa acta praedicantium conspicis, qui postquam per scientiam ad alta se elevant, deorsum se humiliter per cognitionem suae ignorantiae inclinant? Quod quia solius sancti Spiritus dono agitur, ut humanum cor non solum de scientia, sed etiam de ipsa sua ignorantia perfecte doceatur, et calore amoris ad superna ferveat, dum minora esse quae cognovit in infimis pensat, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII [Rec. XXIII].

VERS. 17. Nonne vestimenta tua calida sunt, cum perflata fuerit terra Austro? 63. Qui Ecclesiae inhaerent, afflatu sancti Spiritus incalescunt. Saepe beatum Job figuram sanctae Ecclesiae tenere jam diximus. Vestimenta vero Ecclesiae sunt omnes qui ei fidei adunatione junguntur. De quibus eidem Ecclesiae per prophetam Dominus dicit: Vivo ego, quia omnibus his velut ornamento vestieris (Isai. XLIX, 18). Per Austrum vero, qui nimirum calidus ventus est, non immerito Spiritus sanctus designatur, quo quisque dum tangitur, ab iniquitatis suae torpore liberatur. Unde bene in Canticis canticorum dicitur: Surge, Aquilo, et veni, Auster, perfla hortum meum, et fluant aromata illius (Cant. IV, 16). Aquilo enim jubetur ut surgat, ut nimirum is qui mortalium corda restringit adversarius spiritus fugiat. Auster enim venit et hortum perflat, ut ejus aromata diffluant, quia per adventum sancti Spiritus, dum mens hominum repletur, ex ea mox opinio

virtutum aspergitur, ut jure jam sanctorum lingua quasi hortus Austro perflatus dicat: Christi bonus odor sumus Deo (I Cor. II, 15). Vestimenta ergo sanctae Ecclesiae calida sunt, dum terra Austro perflatur, quia hi qui ei per fidem inhaerent, ferventibus charitatis studiis inardescunt, dum eorum mens sancti Spiritus afflatu perfunditur. Quod quidem et de eodem beato Job nihil obstat intelligi, quia sic haec generaliter in sancta Ecclesia dicimus, ut tamen per membra ejus singula specialiter teneamus. 64. Ex doctorum et auditorum concordia mutua in eis fervet charitas. Unusquisque enim qui recte vivit, atque hoc et alios docere consuevit, quasi tot vestimenta habet, quot auditores ei concorditer inhaerent. [Vet. XXV.] Natura namque vestimentorum est ut per semetipsa calere non possint, sed adjuncta viventi corpori, dum exhalantes membrorum poros contegunt, emanantem ab intimis calorem premunt, quo nimirum calore haec eadem vestimenta calefiunt, sed calefacta calorem quem acceperint retinendo ad corpus reddunt. Quid ergo per vestimenta viventi corpori adhaerentia nisi discipulorum vita magistris bene viventibus conjuncta signatur? Quae quasi per poros calorem accipit, quia ad amorem Dei et exemplo actionis et impulsu exhortationis ignescit. Quae velut frigus proprium expellit, dum a pristina iniquitate discedit; calorem quem accepit retinet, quia in eo quem praedicando sumpserit fervore convalescit. Doctores autem sancti dum auditores suos in amorem Dei proficere sentiunt, ipsi amplius in doctrinae virtute fervescunt; et quia eos ad summa inardescere et fervescere conspiciunt, ad praedicanda bona coelestis patriae validius succenduntur. Qui et si quando pro eo quod adhuc vitam corruptibilem humanae infirmitatis agunt de qualibet culpa saltem tenuiter in opere, in locutione, in cogitatione tentantur, discipulorum suorum profectum conspiciunt, 884 et ipsi vel in minimis esse reprehensibiles erubescunt, ne qua forte exempla tortitudinis praebeant eis quos praedicationis voce ad regulam intimae rectitudinis vocant. Dum ergo verbo doctorum accenduntur auditores, quasi

ex viventi corpore vestimenta calefiunt. Sed dum ex profectu auditorum etiam vita docentium proficit, quasi ex calefactis vestimentis calor ad corpus redit. Sed nequaquam sibi doctores tribuant quod per exhortationem suam ad summa proficere auditores vident, quia nisi Spiritus sanctus eorum corda repleat, ad aures corporum vox docentium incassum sonat. Formare enim vocem magistri exterius possunt, sed hanc imprimere interius non possunt: Neque enim qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus (I Cor. III, 7). Dicatur ergo: Nonne vestimenta tua calida sunt, cum perflata fuerit terra Austro? Quia nimirum tunc auditores qui jam bene viventibus doctoribus inhaerent calorem superni amoris accipiunt, cum per afflatum sancti Spiritus excitantur, ac si aperte beato Job diceret: Incassum tibi tribuis si quos per te profecisse in virtutibus contemplaris, quia hi quos per te incaluisse aestimas, nisi eos Spiritus sancti fervor attingeret, frigidi in sua insensibilitate remanerent. Postquam vero haec fortiter dixit, per arrogantiam leviter motus, irrisionis illico verba subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XXXIX [Rec. XXIV].

VERS. 18. Tu forsitan cum eo fabricatus es coelos, qui solidissimi quasi aere fusi sunt. 65. Per coelos quasi aere fusos, sancti angeli, et electorum mentes signantur. Possunt per coelos hi qui in coelestibus sunt conditi angelici spiritus designari. Unde et in oratione nostra dicere voce Veritatis instruimur: Fiat voluntas tua sicut in coelo et in terra. Ut nimirum voluntas Dei, sicut a superiori creatura agitur, ita in omnibus etiam ab humana infirmitate servetur. De quibus bene dicitur: Qui solidissimi quasi aere fusi sunt (Matth. VI, 10). Naturae namque aeris est, rubigine difficile consumi. Et virtutes angelicae quae in divino amore fixae perstiterunt, lapsis superbientibus angelis, hoc in munere retributionis acceperunt, ut nulla jam rubigine subripientis culpae mordeantur, ut in contemplatione conditoris

sine felicitatis fine permaneant, et in hoc quod sunt conditae aeterna stabilitate subsistant. Quod bene apud Moysen ipsa de mundi origine historiae verba testantur (Genes. I, 6), cum et prius factum coelum dicitur, et hoc idem postmodum firmamentum vocatur, quia videlicet natura angelica et prius subtilius est in superioribus condita, et post ne unquam potuisset cadere, mirabilius confirmata. Possunt etiam per coelos, ut saepe diximus, electorum mentes exprimi, a cunctis terrenis contagiis intimo amore suspensae. Qui quamvis corpore degant in infimis, quia tamen corde jam inhaerent summis, veraciter dicunt: Nostra conversatio in coelis est (Phil. III, 20). Qui solidissimi ut aere fusi sunt, quia ab integritate coeptae fortitudinis nulla mutabilitatis rubigine consumuntur. Quibus et fortiter contra adversa durantibus, auctoris voce dicitur: Vos estis amici mei, qui permansistis mecum in tentationibus meis. Sed quamvis doctus et arrogans cum irridere sanctum virum nititur, irrisioni suae fortia dicta permisceat, a dictis tamen fortibus semper ad supervacua verba relabitur. Nam iterum deridendo subjungit: VERS. 19. Ostende nobis quid dicamus illi, nos quippe involvimur tenebris. 885 66. Ac si dicat: Tu, qui jam magna intelligentiae luce perfrueris, docere nos qui ignorantiae tenebris involvimur debes. Qui mox ab irrisione resiliens, despiciendo subjungit: VERS. 20. Quis narrabit ei quoe loquor? Ac si aperte dicat: Quae ego ei de suis laudibus acute sentiens non audita loquor, quis haec narrare vel postquam audierit potest? Sed quia cum doctrina et arrogantia in unius mentis habitatione confligit, a loquentis ore non solum sonat vivendi levitas, sed etiam gravitas sentiendi, postquam Eliu per arrogantiam leviter intumuit, dicens: Quis narrabit ei quae loquor? mox per doctrinam subdidit:

CAPUT XL [Vet.

XXVI, Rec. XXV]. IBID. Etiam si locutus fuerit homo, devorabitur. 67. Hominem de Deo loqui, est caecum de lumine disserere. Omne quod

aliquid devorat, hoc introrsus trahens, ab intuentium oculis occultat, et rem quae videri in superficie potuit in profundum rapit. Homo igitur cum de Deo tacet, per rationem in qua est conditus esse aliquid videtur. At si loqui de Deo coeperit, illico quam sit nihil ostenditur, quia magnitudinis illius immensitate devoratur, et quasi in profundum raptus absconditur, quia fari ineffabilem cupiens, ipsa suae ignorantiae angustia deglutitur. Loquitur enim caro de spiritu, circumscriptus spiritus de incircumscripto, creatura de creatore, temporalis de aeterno, mutabilis de immutabili, mortalis de vivificante; et cum in tenebris positus internum lumen sicut est nesciat, homo, de aeternitate disserere cupiens, caecus de luce loquitur. Si ergo locutus fuerit homo, devorabitur, quia si effari homo aeternitatem sicut est appetit, etiam hoc sibi subtrahit quod de illa vel tacitus sentit. Sed ecce aeternitas tunc hominibus vere innotuit, cum se eis humanitate suscepta monstravit. Quae quia necdum revelata fuerat, de eisdem hominibus recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLI.

VERS. 21. At nunc non vident lucem. 68. Per Christum lux hominibus affulsit. De qua nimirum luce etiam per Prophetam dicitur: Populus qui sedebat in tenebris, vidit lucem magnam (Matth. IV, 16; Isai. IX, 2). Sed haec eadem lux qualiter ab hominibus videatur, insinuat, cum protinus subdit: IBID. Subito aer cogetur in nubes. Aer quippe ita ipsa sua tenuitate spargitur, ut nulla firmitate solidetur. Nubes autem tanto firmiores sunt quanto densiores. Quid ergo per aerem nisi mentes saecularium designantur, quae, innumeris hujus vitae desideriis deditae, huc illucque more aeris fluidae disperguntur? Sed aer in nubes cogitur, cum fluxae mentes per superni respectus gratiam virtutis soliditate roborantur, ut intra sinum cordis recta sentiendo se colligant, et in vanis cogitationibus non liquescant. 69. Petrus et caeteri apostoli per gratiam in nubes solidati. Aer Petrus fuerat,

cum per terrena desideria sparsus, eum quasi aura transiens pro vita carnis cura piscationis agitabat (Matth. IV, 18). Aer etiam apostoli omnes exstiterant, qui jam per legem alta didicerant, sed necdum per fidem firma sapiebant (Ibid.). Subito autem aer in nubes coactus est, quia per respectum supernae gratiae fluxa corda piscantium in soliditatem versa sunt praedicatorum, ut eorum infirmae cogitationes fortia sentiendo densescerent, ac more nubium aquas scientiae caperent, et subter jacentem terram verbis praedicationis irrigarent, quo peracto ministerio, ad coeli secreta recurrerent, atque ad aeternam requiem finito labore pervenirent. Unde 886 et bene mox subditur:

CAPUT XLII.

IBID. Et ventus transiens fugabit eas. 70. Irrigato praedicatione Evangelii mundo, nubes illae a nostris oculis fugatae. Ventus quippe transiens est vita praesens. Ventus ergo transiens nubes fugat, quia mortalis vita percurrens praedicatores sanctos a nostris oculis corporaliter occultat. Ventus transiens nubes fugat, quia vitae temporalis excursus a carne apostolos subtrahit, et eos a terrae superficie in secreta requie quasi in coelorum cardine abscondit. Sed quia usque ad mortem praedicare non desinunt, et praesentis vitae spatium more nubium cum verborum pluvia excurrunt, quid eorum laboribus in sancta Ecclesia agatur adjungit, cum protinus subdit:

CAPUT XLIII [Rec. XXVI].

VERS. 22. Ab Aquilone aurum veniet. 71. A gentilibus Christiana religio potissimum propagata. Quid per Aquilonem, nisi peccati frigore constricta gentilitas designatur? quam ille sub jugo suae tyrannidis tenuit qui superbiens dixit: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis, ascendam super altitudinem nubium, similis ero Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 13, 14). Quid vero auri nomine, nisi animae fideles exprimuntur? De quibus per

Jeremiam dicitur: Quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus (Thren. IV, 1)? Aurum quippe obscuratum doluit, quia in quibusdam claritatem innocentiae versam in culpae nigredinem vidit. Ab Aquilone ergo aurum venire dicitur, quia per respectum gratiae Redemptoris a gentilitate dudum perfidiae torpore frigida intra sanctam Ecclesiam pretiosa Deo vita fidelium multiplicatur. Ab Aquilone etenim aurum venit cum ab ipsis idolorum cultoribus vera in Domino fides clarescit. Sed conversis ad fidem gentibus, Judaea contradicit, et ad praemiorum retributionem coelestium dedignatur suscipere eos qui dudum fuerant cultores idolorum. Unde post conversionem gentium Petro dicitur: Quare introisti ad viros praeputium habentes, et comedisti cum eis (Act. XI, 3)? Quo contra recte per Isaiam Dominus dicit: Dicam Aquiloni: Da; et Austro: Noli prohibere (Isai. XLIII, 6). Sicut enim per Aquilonem gentilitas, sic per Austrum Judaea signatur, quae quasi meridiano sole incaluit, quia, Redemptore in carne apparente, fervorem fidei prima suscepit. Aquiloni ergo da dicitur cum offerre Deo suae fidei munera gentilitas imperatur. Austro autem jubetur ne prohibeat, quia Hebraeis in fide consistentibus praecipitur ne vitam gentium repellendo condemnent. Unde hic quoque quia dictum est: Ad Aquilone aurum veniet, apte subjungitur: IBID. Et a Deo formidolosa laudatio. 72. De gentium conversione apostoli et alii ex circumcisione fideles Deum laudaverunt. Sic enim formidolosa laudatio a Deo venire dicitur, ac si ab his qui in parte Dei sunt id est a fidelibus venire diceretur. Auro igitur ab Aquilone veniente, a Deo formidolosa laudatio prodiit, quia dum claritatem suae fidei gentilitas obtulit, multitudo Hebraeorum fidelium divina judicia pertimescendo laudavit. Sed quomodo ab Aquilone veniat aurum, quomodo ab his qui sub Deo sunt formidolosa laudatio erumpat, ipsa nobis historia sacri eloquii ostendit. Scriptum quippe est: Cornelius centurio cohortis quae dicitur Italica, religiosus et timens Deum, cum omni domo sua, faciens eleemosynas multas plebi, et deprecans

Deum semper, vidit in visu manifeste, quasi hora diei nona, angelum Dei introeuntem ad se, et dicentem sibi: Corneli. At ille intuens eum, timore correptus dixit: Quis 887 es, Domine? Dixit autem illi: Orationes tuae et eleemosynae tuae ascenderunt in memoriam in conspectu Dei (Act. X, 1 seq.). Aurum ergo ab Aquilone venit, dum in conspectu Dei ex gentibus cum eleemosynis oratio ascendit. Quod cum Petrus fratribus retulisset (Ibid., 12), quomodo vel Cornelius angelum, vel ipse de coelo submitti ad se linteum cum bestiis reptilibus ac volatilibus vidisset, vel quomodo Spiritus sanctus etiam ante baptisma gentilium corda perfuderit, qui nunquam in Judaeorum mentibus nisi post aquam baptismatis venit, protinus scriptum est: His auditis tacuerunt, et glorificaverunt Deum, dicentes: Ergo et gentibus Deus poenitentiam ad vitam dedit (Act. XI, 18). Multitudo ergo fidelium formidolosam Deo laudem obtulit, quae, salvatis gentibus, a suo se murmure, dona coelestis gratiae admirando, compressit. Unde ipse quoque Petrus miratur, dicens: In veritate comperi quod non est personarum acceptor Deus (Act. X, 34). 73. Et de Judaeorum reprobatione timuerunt. Sed cum gentes fidem suscipiunt, cur ab eis qui jam fideles sunt formidolosa venire laudatio dicitur, cum laeta venire potius quam formidolosa debuisset? Sed idcirco conversis gentibus, ab Hebraeis jam fidelibus formidolosa laudatio prodiit, quia nimirum juste Judaea repulsa est, dum pie est gentilitas vocata; et damna suae repulsionis timuit, dum lucra alienae vocationis vidit. Unde nos quoque quotidie, dum iniquos quosque ad inopinatam vitae celsitudinem provehi repente conspicimus, sub occultis Dei judiciis timendo gaudemus, ne per occulta judicia quosdam Deus qui digni putantur deserat, qui per haec ad se eos qui indigni aestimantur vocat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLV.

VERS. 23. Digne eum invenire non possumus. 74. De Deo qui magnus est fortitudine, judicio et justitia, digne sentire non possumus. Et si invenire jam eum possimus, non tamen digne, quia quidquid in illo sentimus ex fide est, et non ex specie. Hoc tamen quod jam se invenisse considerat adjungit, dicens: IBID. Magnus fortitudine et judicio et justitia, et enarrari non potest. Magnus quippe est fortitudine, quia fortem adversarium superat, et de domo illius vasa contumeliae auferens in misericordiae vasa permutat. Magnus judicio, quia etsi hic electos suos per adversa deprimit, eos quandoque in gloria aeternae prosperitatis extollit. Magnus justitia, quia etsi hic diu tolerat, quandoque tamen reprobos sine termino damnat. Bene autem subditur: Et enarrari non potest. Qui enim sentiri digne non valet, quanto minus dici? Sed melius hunc utcunque dicimus, si sub considerationis ejus formidine admirando taceamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVI [Rec. XXVII].

VERS. 24. Ideo timebunt eum viri, et non audebunt contemplari omnes qui sibi videntur esse sapientes. 75. Qui recte praedicant, sed non vivunt, damnationis suae praecones fiunt. Hoc loco Eliu viros eos qui ad intelligentiam sunt fortes appellat. Et notandum quod non ait: Et non audebunt contemplari sapientes; sed, Qui sibi videntur esse sapientes. Quibus videlicet verbis peritos quidem, sed arrogantes insinuat. Eliu ergo dum multa fortiter sentit, in locutionis suae fine se tetigit. Viri namque arrogantes et docti cum recte non vivunt, sed tamen recta dicere doctrinae impulsionibus compelluntur, ipsi damnationis suae aliquomodo praecones fiunt, quia dum ea quae agere respuunt praedicantes insinuant, suis 888 se vocibus damnatos clamant. Contra quos bene per Psalmistam dicitur: Conversi sunt in arcum perversum (Psal. LXXVII, 57). Arcus quippe perversus ipsum a quo intenditur percutit. In dictis autem suis arrogantium linguae arcui perverso sunt similes, quia dum contra elationem verba

faciunt in suis auctoribus sagittas figunt. Unde summa cura providendum est ne accepta sapientia, cum ignorantiae tenebras illuminat, lumen humilitatis tollat, et jam sapientia esse nequeat. Quae etsi virtute locutionis fulgeat, elationis tamen velamine cor loquentis obscurat. 76. Alia bona summa, alia media. Alia namque sunt bona summa, alia bona media. Bona enim summa sunt, fides, spes, charitas. Quae cum veraciter habentur, in malum inflecti non possunt. Bona autem sunt media, prophetia, doctrina, curationum virtus, et caetera (I Cor. XII, 10), quae ita inter utrumque sunt posita, ut aliquando per haec sola aeterna patria, aliquando vero gloria terrena requiratur. Medias ergo has virtutes dicimus, quas ad quodcunque mens appetit inclinamus. Quibus perceptis ita uti animus sicut terrenis divitiis potest. Per terrenas namque divitias alii in gloriae ostentatione superbiunt, alii erga proximorum indigentiam ministeria pietatis operantur. Cum per doctrinam igitur atque prophetiam laus exterior quaeritur, quasi per corporales divitias terrenae gloriae culmen ambitur. Cum vero doctrina atque prophetia lucrandis animabus impenditur, quasi acceptae divitiae egenis fratribus largiuntur. Quia ergo saepe per ipsa dona, quae se percipere exsultat, a manu dantis incautus animus elongat, vigilanti provisione curandum est ut et prius subigantur vitia, et post sub circumspectione dona teneantur. Nam si in eis mens incaute se deserit, non per haec adjuta subvehitur, sed quasi pro anteactis laboribus remunerata reprobatur. Unde fit etiam ut accepta virtus dum in usu transitoriae laudis assumitur, quia vitio militat, virtus non sit. Quia enim origo virtutis humilitas est, illa in nobis virtus veraciter pullulat, quae in radice propria, id est in humilitate perdurat. A qua nimirum si abscinditur arescit, quia vivificantem se in intimis humorem charitatis perdit. 77. Mira Davidis in summis humilitas. Pugnando hostes; humilitatem sectando semetipsum vicit. Sed quia per hoc quod ab Eliu dicitur, Non audebunt contemplari omnes qui sibi videntur esse sapientes, occulta cordis elatio reprobatur, intueri libet quanta virtutum

munera David perceperat, atque in his omnibus quam forti se humilitate servabat (I Reg. XVII, 36; XVIII, 25). Quem enim non extolleret ora leonum frangere, ursorum brachia dissipare, despectis prioribus fratribus eligi, reprobato rege ad regni gubernacula ungi, timendum cunctis uno lapide Goliam sternere, a rege proposita, extinctis Allophylis, numerosa praeputia reportare, promissum tandem regnum percipere, cunctumque Israeliticum populum sine ulla contradictione possidere (II Reg. III, 18)? Et tamen cum arcam Dei in Jerusalem revocat (Ibid., VI, 14), quasi oblitus praelatum se omnibus, admistus populis ante arcam saltat. Et quia coram arca saltare, ut creditur, vulgi mos fuerat, rex se in divino obsequio per saltum rotat. Ecce quem Dominus cunctis singulariter praetulit, sese sub Domino et exaequando minimis, et abjecta exhibendo contemnit. Non potestas regni ad memoriam reducitur, non subjectorum 889 oculis saltando vilescere metuit, non se honore praelatum caeteris ante ejus arcam qui honorem dederat recognoscit. Coram Deo egit vilia vel extrema, ut illa ex humilitate solidaret quae coram hominibus gesserat fortia. Quid de ejus factis ab aliis sentiatur ignoro; ego David plus saltantem stupeo quam pugnantem. Pugnando quippe hostes subdidit, saltando autem coram Domino semetipsum vicit. Quem Michol filia Saul adhuc ex tumore regii generis insana, cum humiliatum despiceret, dicens: Quam gloriosus fuit hodie rex Israel discooperiens se ante ancillas servorum suorum, et nudatus est, quasi si nudetur unus de scurris (Ibid., 20), protinus audivit: Vivit Dominus, quia ludam ante Dominum, qui elegit me potius quam patrem tuum. Ac paulo post ait: Et ludam, et vilior fiam plus quam factus sum, eroque humilis in oculis meis (Ibid., 22). Ac si aperte dicat: Vilescere coram hominibus appeto, quia servare me coram Domino ingenuum per humilitatem quaero. 78. Alii humiliter de se sentiendo, despici metuunt; alii despici cupiendo de sua humilitate superbiunt. Sunt vero nonnulli qui de semetipsis humilia sentiunt, quia in honoribus positi nil se esse nisi

pulverem favillamque perpendunt, sed tamen coram hominibus despecti apparere refugiunt, et contra hoc quod de se interius cogitant, quasi rigida exterius venustate palliantur. Et sunt nonnulli qui viles videri ab hominibus appetunt, atque omne quod sunt dejectos se exhibendo contemnunt: sed tamen apud se introrsus quasi ex ipso merito ostensae vilitatis intumescunt, et tanto magis in corde elati sunt quanto amplius in specie elationem premunt. Quae utraque unius elationis bella magna David circumspectione deprehendit, mira virtute superavit. Quia enim, de semetipso intus humilia sentiens, honorem exterius non quaerit insinuat, dicens: Ludam et vilior fiam (Ibid., 22). Et quia per hoc quod vilem se exterius praebuit, nequaquam interius intumescit, adjungit: Eroque humilis in oculis meis (Ibid., 22). Ac si dicat: Qualem me exterius despiciens exhibeo, talem me et interius attendo. Quid ergo acturi sunt quos doctrina elevat, si David ex carne sua venturum Redemptorem noverat, ejusque gaudia prophetando nuntiabat, et tamen in semetipso cervicem cordis valida discretionis calce deprimebat, dicens: Eroque humilis in oculis meis? 890 79. Dei sapientiam contemplari nequeunt qui sibi sapientes videntur. Sectanda laudabilis fatuitas. Bene ergo per Eliu dicitur: Ideo timebunt eum viri, et non audebunt contemplari omnes qui sibi videntur esse sapientes. Contemplari enim Dei sapientiam non possunt qui sibi sapientes videntur, quia tanto ab ejus luce longe sunt, quanto apud semetipsos humiles non sunt, quia in eorum mentibus dum tumor elationis crescit, aciem contemplationis claudit; et unde se lucere prae caeteris aestimant, inde se lumine veritatis privant. Si igitur veraciter sapientes esse atque ipsam sapientiam contemplari appetimus, stultos nos humiliter cognoscamus. Relinquamus noxiam sapientiam, discamus laudabilem fatuitatem. Hinc quippe scriptum est: Stulta mundi elegit Deus, ut confundat sapientes (I Cor. I, 27). Hinc rursum dicitur: Si quis videtur inter vos sapiens esse in hoc saeculo, stultus fiat, ut sit sapiens (Ibid., III, 18). Hinc evangelicae historiae verba testantur quia

Zachaeus cum videre prae turba nihil posset, sycomori arborem ascendit, ut transeuntem Dominum cerneret. Sycomorus quippe ficus fatua dicitur. Pusillus itaque Zachaeus sycomorum subiit, et Dominum vidit (Luc. XIX, 4 seq.), quia qui mundi stultitiam humiliter eligunt, ipsi Dei sapientiam subtiliter contemplantur. Pusillitatem namque nostram ad videndum Dominum turba praepedit, quia infirmitatem humanae mentis, ne lucem veritatis intendat, curarum saecularium tumultus premit. Sed prudenter sycomorum ascendimus, si provide eam quae divinitus praecipitur stultitiam mente tenemus. Quid enim in hoc mundo stultius quam amissa non quaerere, possessa rapientibus relaxare, nullam pro acceptis injuriis injuriam reddere, imo et adjunctis aliis patientiam praebere? Quasi enim sycomorum nos ascendere Dominus praecipit, cum dicit: Qui aufert quae tua sunt ne repetas (Luc. VI, 30). Et rursum: Si quis te percusserit in dextram maxillam, praebe illi et alteram (Matth. V, 39). Per sycomorum Dominus transiens cernitur, quia per hanc sapientem stultitiam etsi necdum ut est solide, jam tamen per contemplationis lumen Dei sapientia quasi in transitu videtur. Quam juxta Eliu verba videre nequeunt, qui sibi sapientes esse videntur, quia ad conspiciendum Dominum in elata cogitationum suarum turba deprehensi, adhuc sycomori arborem non invenerunt. Pars sexta, et ultima, OCTO LIBROS COMPLECTENS

LIBER VIGESIMUS OCTAVUS.

Explicantur undecim priores versus capitis XXXVIII, multiplici sensu, praesertim morali. 891 PRAEFATIO. Nihil gravius nocet animae quam conscia virtus, nisi correptionibus exerceatur. Job maximus, quia solo Deo minor. Post damna rerum, post funera pignorum, post vulnera corporis, post verba male suadentis uxoris, post contumeliosa dicta consolantium, post suscepta fortiter jacula tot dolorum, de tanta virtute constantiae laudandus a judice beatus Job fuerat, si jam de praesenti saeculo esset evocandus. At postquam hic adhuc duplicia recepturus est, postquam saluti pristinae restituitur, ut rebus redditis diutius utatur, ne per elationis gladium ipsa illum sua victoria sternat, debet omnipotens Deus increpare per districtam justitiam quem servat ad vitam. Quid enim pejus plerumque animam quam conscia virtus interficit? Quae illam dum consideratione sua inflat, a plenitudine veritatis evacuat; et dum se ad percipienda praemia sufficere suggerit, eam a meliorationis intentione distendit. Justus igitur Job ante flagella exstitit, sed justior post flagella permansit; et laudatus antea Dei voce, postmodum crevit ex verbere. Profecto velut tuba ductilis ex percussione producta in laudem Dei tanto altius elevatus est, quanto majori castigatione percussus. Sed humiliandus erat iste qui, prostratus ulceribus, sic virtutibus stabat. Humiliandus erat, ne tam robustissimum pectus elationis tela confoderent, quod constabat certe quia et illata vulnera non vicissent. Requirendus nimirum fuit homo cujus debuisset comparatione superari. Sed quid est quod de eo voce Domini dicitur: Vidisti servum meum Job, quod non sit ei similis vir super terram (Job. I, 8; II, 3)? Cujus ergo comparatione poterat vinci, de quo Deo attestante dicitur quia nullius hominis comparatione possit aequari? Quid itaque agendum est, nisi ut ex persona sua 892 ipse Dominus suas illi virtutes narret, et dicat ei: Nunquid producis luciferum in tempore suo, et vesperum super filios terrae consurgere facis? Et iterum: Nunquid apertae sunt tibi portae mortis, et ostia

tenebrosa vidisti? Vel certe: Nunquid post ortum tuum praecepisti diluculo, et ostendisti aurorae locum suum (Job. XXXVIII, 32, 17, 12)? Quis vero ista, nisi Dominus potest? Et tamen interrogatur homo, ut cognoscat quia ista non potest, quatenus vir qui tam immensis virtutibus crevit, et nullius hominis exemplo vincitur, ne extolli debeat, Dei comparatione superetur. Sed o quam potenter erigitur qui tam sublimiter humiliatur! O quanta est hominis victoria, ex Dei comparatione perdidisse! O quanto hominibus major est qui testimoniis convincitur Deo minor! Multum quippe potens est qui tali interrogatione ostenditur quia potens non est. Sed quia ad obscura nimis disserenda ducimur, ad ejusdem textus jam verba veniamus:

CAPUT PRIMUM [Vet.

et Rec. II]. CAP. XXXVIII, VERS. 1. Respondens autem Dominus Job de turbine dixit. 1. Quot quibusve modis ad homines loquatur Deus. Notandum video quia si sano atque incolumi locutio facta diceretur, nequaquam de turbine Dominus locutus fuisse scriberetur. Sed quia flagellato loquitur, de turbine locutus fuisse describitur. Aliter enim Dominus servis suis loquitur, cum eos intrinsecus per compunctionem provehit, aliter cum per districtionem ne extollantur premit. Per blandam enim locutionem Domini amanda dulcedo ejus ostenditur; per terribilem vero potestas ejus metuenda monstratur. In illa persuadetur animae ut proficiat, in ista reprimitur quae proficit. In illa discit quod appetat, in ista quod metuat. Per illam dicit: Gaude et laetare, filia Sion, quia ecce venio, et habitabo in medio tui (Zach. II, 10); 893 per istam dicitur: Dominus in tempestate veniet, et in turbine viae ejus (Isai. LXVI, 15). Blandus quippe est qui ut in medio inhabitet venit. Cum vero se per tempestatem et turbinem insinuat, nimirum quae tangit corda perturbat; atque ad edomandam elationem se exerit, quando potens et terribilis innotescit. 2. Aut per angelos loquitur Deus, aut per semetipsum. Sciendum praeterea est quia duobus modis locutio divina

distinguitur. Aut per semetipsum namque Dominus loquitur, aut per creaturam angelicam ejus ad nos verba formantur. Sed cum per semetipsum loquitur, sola nobis vi internae inspirationis aperitur. Cum per semetipsum loquitur, de verbo ejus sine verbis ac syllabis cor docetur, quia virtus ejus intima quadam sublevatione cognoscitur. Ad quam mens plena suspenditur, vacua gravatur. Pondus enim quoddam est quod omnem animam quam replet levet. Incorporeum lumen est quod et interiora repleat, et repleta exterius circumscribat. Sine strepitu sermo est, qui et auditum aperit, et habere sonitum nescit. Quod enim de adventu sancti Spiritus scriptum est: Factus est repente de coelo sonus, tanquam advenientis spiritus vehementis, et replevit totam domum ubi erant sedentes; et apparuerunt illis dispertitae linguae quasi ignis, seditque supra singulos eorum (Act. II, 2); per ignem quidem Dominus apparuit, sed per semetipsum locutionem interius fecit. Et neque ignis Deus, neque ille sonitus fuit, sed per hoc quod exterius exhibuit, expressit hoc quod interius gessit. Quia enim discipulos et zelo succensos, et verbo eruditos intus reddidit, foris linguas igneas ostendit. In significatione igitur admota sunt elementa, ut ignem et sonitum sentirent corpora, igne vero invisibili et voce sine sonitu docerentur corda. Foris ergo fuit ignis qui apparuit, sed intus qui scientiam dedit. Et cum reginae Candacis eunuchus currui praesidens iter caperet, atque Isaiam non intelligens in manibus haberet, in corde nimirum spiritus Philippo dixerat: Adjunge te ad currum (Act. VIII, 29). Et cum ad evocandum Petrum timentes Deum milites Cornelius direxisset, in mente procul dubio a spiritu Petrus audivit: Ecce tres viri quaerunt te, surge itaque, descende et vade cum eis (Act. X, 19). Spiritum enim Dei quasi quaedam nobis verba dicere est occulta vi ea quae agenda sunt intimare, et cor hominis ignarum, non adhibito strepitu et tarditate sermonis, peritum repente de absconditis reddere. Nam quia auditus ea quae ad se fiunt non simul omnia dicta comprehendit, quippe qui et causas per verba, et particulatim verba per

syllabas percipit; visus autem noster in eo quod se dirigit, totum subito et simul apprehendit; Dei locutio ad nos intrinsecus facta videtur, potius quam audiatur, quia dum semetipsum sine mora sermonis insinuat, repentina luce nostrae ignorantiae tenebras illustrat. Unde et Baruch, Neriae filius, cum requisitus exponeret quemadmodum verba Jeremiae prophetantis audisset, ait: Ex ore suo loquebatur quasi legens, et ego scribebam (Jerem. XXXVI, 18). Qui enim legens loquitur, alio intendit, sed alio verbum facit, quia 894 quod videt dicit. Prophetae ergo Dei, quia ejus verba vident potius in corde quam audiunt, quasi legentes loquuntur. 3. Quomodo per angelos loqui soleat. Aliquando verbis utendo; aliquando rebus; aliquando simul verbis et rebus; aliquando imaginibus cordis aut corporis oculis ostensis. Cum vero per angelum voluntatem suam Dominus indicat, aliquando eam verbis, aliquando rebus demonstrat, aliquando simul verbis et rebus, aliquando imaginibus cordis oculis ostensis, aliquando imaginibus et ante corporeos oculos ad tempus ex aere assumptis, aliquando coelestibus substantiis, aliquando terrenis; aliquando simul terrerenis et coelestibus. Nonnunquam vero etiam per angelum humanis cordibus ita loquitur Deus, ut ipse quoque angelus mentis obtutibus praesentetur 4. Verbis namque per angelum loquitur Deus, cum nil in imagine ostenditur, sed supernae verba locutionis audiuntur, sicut dicente Domino: Pater, clarifica filium tuum, ut et filius tuus clarificet te, protinus respondetur: Clarificavi, et iterum clarificabo (Joan. XVII, 1). Neque enim Deus, qui sine tempore vi impulsionis intimae clamat, in tempore per suam substantiam illam vocem edidit, quam circumscriptam tempore per humana verba distinxit, sed nimirum, de coelestibus loquens, verba sua quae ab hominibus audiri voluit rationali creatura administrante formavit. 5. Aliquando rebus per angelos loquitur Deus, cum nil verbo dicitur, sed ea quae futura sunt, assumpta de elementis imagine, nuntiantur; sicut Ezechiel, nil verborum audiens, electri speciem in medio ignis vidit; ut videlicet dum solam speciem aspiceret, quae essent in

novissimis ventura sentiret (Ezech. I, 4). Electrum quippe ex auri argentique metallo miscetur, in qua permistione argentum quidem clarius redditur, sed tamen fulgor auri temperatur. Quid ergo in electro nisi mediator Dei et hominum demonstratur? Qui dum semetipsum nobis ex divina atque humana natura composuit, et humanam per deitatem clariorem reddidit, et divinam per humanitatem nostris aspectibus temperavit. Quia enim virtute divinitatis ejus tot miraculis humanitas fulsit, ex auro crevit argentum; et quod per carnem Deus cognosci potuit, quodque per carnem tot adversa toleravit, quasi ex argento temperatum est aurum. Quod bene et in medio ignis ostenditur, quia incarnationis ejus mysterium subsequentis judicii flamma comitatur. Scriptum quippe est: Pater non judicat quemquam, sed omne judicium dedit Filio (Joan. V, 22). [Vet. III.] 6. Aliquando per angelos verbis simul et rebus loquitur Deus, cum quibusdam motibus insinuat hoc quod sermonibus narrat. Neque enim Adam post culpam in divinitatis substantia audire Dominum potuit, sed increpationis verba per angelum audivit, de quo scriptum est: Cum audisset vocem Domini Dei deambulantis in paradiso ad auram post meridiem, abscondit se inter ligna paradisi (Genes. III, 8). Quid est enim quod post peccatum hominis in paradiso Dominus jam non stat, sed deambulat, nisi quod irruente culpa se a cordis hominis motum demonstrat? Quid est quod ad auram post meridiem, nisi 895 quod lux ferventior veritatis abscesserat, et peccatricem animam culpae suae frigora constringebant? Increpavit ergo Adam deambulans, ut caecis mentibus nequitiam suam non solum sermonibus, sed etiam rebus aperiret, quatenus peccator homo et per verba quod fecerat audiret, et per deambulationem, amisso aeternitatis statu, mutabilitatis suae inconstantiam cerneret, et per auram, fervore charitatis expulso, torporem suum animadverteret, et per declinationem solis cognosceret quod ad tenebras propinquaret. [Vet. IV.] 7. Aliquando imaginibus cordis oculis ostensis per angelos loquitur Deus, sicut Jacob subnixam coelo scalam dormiens vidit

(Genes. XXVIII, 12); sicut Petrus linteum reptilibus ac quadrupedibus plenum in ecstasi raptus aspexit (Act. X, 11), qui nisi incorporeis oculis haec cerneret, in ecstasi non fuisset; sicut Paulo in visione noctis vir Macedo apparuit (Act. XVI, 9), qui transire eum in Macedoniam rogavit. Aliquando imaginibus et ante corporeos oculos ad tempus ex aere assumptis per angelos loquitur Deus, sicut Abraham non solum tres viros videre potuit, sed etiam habitaculo terreno suscipere, et non solum suscipere, sed eorum usibus etiam cibos adhibere (Genes. XVIII, 2, seq.). Nisi enim Angeli quaedam nobis interna nuntiantes ad tempus ex aere corpora sumerent, exterioribus profecto nostris obtutibus non apparerent; nec cibos cum Abraham caperent, nisi propter nos solidum aliquid ex coelesti elemento gestarent. Nec mirum quod illic ipsi qui suscepti sunt, modo angeli, modo Dominus vocantur, quia angelorum vocabulo exprimuntur qui exterius ministrabant, et appellatione Domini ostenditur qui eis interius praeerat, ut per hoc praesidentis imperium, et per illud claresceret officium ministrantium. [Vet. V.] 8. Varii alii modi quibus Deus loquitur hominibus. Aliquando coelestibus substantiis per angelos loquitur Deus, sicut, baptizato Domino, scriptum est quia de nube vox sonuit, dicens: Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui (Matth. III, 17). Aliquando terrenis substantiis per angelos loquitur Deus, sicut cum Balaam corripuit, in ore asinae humana verba formavit (Num. XXII, 28). Aliquando simul et terrenis et coelestibus substantiis per angelos loquitur Deus, sicut ad Moysen in monte cum jussionis suae verba edidit, ignem rubumque sociavit, atque aliud superius, aliud inferius junxit (Exod. III, 2). Quod tamen tunc solum agitur, cum ex ipsa aliquid conjunctione signatur. Nam per succensum rubum Moysen alloquens, quid aliud ostendit, nisi quod ejus populi ductor fieret qui et legis flammam perciperet, et tamen peccati spinam nequa quam vitaret; vel quod ex illo populo exiret qui in igne Deitatis carnis nostrae peccata quasi rubi spinas susciperet, et inconsumptam humanitatis nostrae

substantiam etiam in ipsa divinitatis flamma servaret? [Vet. VI.] 9. Inspirati quandoque prophetae per angelos. Nonnunquam vero humanis cordibus etiam per angelos Deus secreta eorum praesentia virtutem suae aspirationis infundit. Unde et Zacharias ait: Et dixit ad me angelus qui loquebatur in me (Zach. I, 14). Dum ad se quidem sed in se tamen loqui angelum dicit, liquido ostendit quod is qui ad 896 ipsum verba faceret per corpoream speciem extra non esset. Unde et paulo post subdidit: Et ecce angelus qui loquebatur in me egrediebatur (Ibid., II, 3). Saepe enim non exterius apparent, sed sicut sunt angelici spiritus voluntatem Dei prophetarum sensibus innotescunt, atque eos ad sublimia sublevant, et quaeque in rebus futura sunt in causis originalibus praesentia demonstrant. Humanum namque cor ipso carnis corruptibilis pondere gravatum hanc ipsam corpulentiam suam quasi obicem sustinens, interna non penetrat, et grave exterius jacet, quia levantem manum interius non habet. Unde fit, sicut dictum est, ut prophetarum sensibus ipsa ut est subtilitas angelicae virtutis appareat, eorumque mens quo subtili spiritu tangitur, levetur; et non jam pigra torpensque in imis jaceat, sed repleta intimis afflatibus, ad superna conscendat, atque inde quasi de quodam rerum vertice, quae infra se ventura sunt videat. Sed ne quis in praedictis Zachariae verbis angeli designatum nomine vel Patrem, vel Filium, vel Spiritum sanctum putet, si textum Scripturae sacrae considerat, quod sentit velociter emendat, quae nunquam Patrem, nunquam Spiritum sanctum, et non nisi per incarnationis suae praedicationem Filium angelum vocat. Unde et in ejusdem Zachariae verbis aperte ostenditur quod in illo vere angelus, id est creatura, loqueretur, cum dicitur: Et ecce angelus qui loquebatur in me, egrediebatur (Zach. II, 3). Statimque subjungitur: Et alius angelus egrediebatur in occursum ejus, et dixit ad eum: Loquere ad puerum istum, dicens: Absque muro habitabitur Jerusalem (Ibid., II, 3). Non est itaque Deus angelus qui mittitur, cui verba ab angelo quae dicere debeat jubentur. Sed quia in conspectu conditoris

angelica ministeria ordinata graduum positione distincta sunt, ut et pro communi felicitate beatitudinis opificem suum simul videntes gaudeant, et tamen pro dispositione dignitatis aliis alii subministrent, ad prophetam angelus angelum mittit, et quem secum de Deo gaudere communiter conspicit, et docet, et dirigit, quia eum et per superiorem scientiam virtute cognitionis, et per praestantiorem gratiam culmine potestatis excedit. 10. Quomodo Deus Job responderit. Haec igitur dicta sunt ut quibus modis loquatur Deus hominibus demonstraretur. Cum vero beato Job respondisse Dominus de turbine dicitur, utrum per semetipsum, an ei per angelum sit locutus ambigitur. Potuerunt quippe per angelum commotiones aeris fieri, et haec ei quae subjuncta sunt per eum verba mandari. Rursumque potuit et exterius angelus in turbine aerem excutere, et tamen interius per semetipsum Dominus vim suae sententiae cordi ejus sine verbis insonare, ut credatur quod dicta dominica quae sequuntur ipse jam per verba protulit, qui, repletus Deo, haec sine verbis audivit. [Vet. VII, Rec. III.] Itaque dicitur:

CAPUT II.

VERS. 2. Quis est iste involvens sententias sermonibus imperitis? 11. Recte sentientes at superbe loquentes reprobantur. Prima angeli stultitia elatio fuit. Sicut et superiori parte jam diximus, prima exprobratio est talis interrogatio, qua dicitur: 897 Quis est iste? Eliu enim arroganter locutus fuerat. Et quis est iste? non dicimus nisi de eo utique quem nescimus. Scire autem Dei approbare est, nescire reprobare. Unde quibusdam quos reprobat dicit: Nescio vos unde sitis; discedite a me, omnes operarii iniquitatis (Luc. XIII, 25, 27). Quid est ergo de hoc arrogante requirere Quis est iste? nisi aperte dicere: Ego arrogantes nescio, id est eorum vitam in sapientiae meae arce non approbo? Quia dum laudibus humanis inflantur, a vera gloria aeternae retributionis inanescunt. In eo vero quod ait, Sententias, et non addidit

quales, bonas utique accipimus, quas quidem imperitis asserit sermonibus involutas, quia cum verbis jactantiae fuerant prolatae. Imperitiae quippe vitium est rectum non recte sapere, id est coeleste donum ad appetitum terrenae laudis inclinare. Sicut enim saepe contingit ut et bona male et mala bene proferantur, ita Eliu arrogans recta non recte protulit, quia humiles in Dei defensione sententias non humiliter dixit. Unde et eorum qui intra catholicam Ecclesiam inani gloriae student, non immerito typum tenet: qui dum se prae caeteris peritos credunt, divino judicio de imperitia redarguuntur, quia sicut Apostolus ait: Si quis se existimat scire aliquid, nondum cognovit quemadmodum oporteat eum scire (I Cor. VIII, 2). Quia enim prima stultitia Angeli elatio cordis fuit, vera sapientia efficitur hominis humilitas suae aestimationis. Quam quisquis vel magna sapiendo deserit, eo ipso vehementer desipit, quo semetipsum nescit. Unde Eliu et sententias protulit et imperitis sermonibus involutas, quia et de Deo rectum quod diceret noverat, et tamen de semetipso dicta illius elatio stulta infatuabat. Hoc itaque despecto, ad erudiendum Job verba vertuntur:

CAPUT III [Rec.

IV.] VERS. 3. Accinge sicut vir lumbos tuos. 12. Coercenda est luxuria non solum carnis, sed etiam elati cordis. Scriptura sacra viros vocare consuevit qui nimirum vias Domini fortibus et non dissolutis gressibus sequuntur. Unde per Psalmistam dicitur: Viriliter agite, et confortetur cor vestrum (Psal. XXX, 25). Unde Paulus ait: Remissas manus et dissoluta genua erigite (Hebr. XII, 12). Unde et Sapientia in Proverbiis: O viri, ad vos clamito (Prov. VIII, 4). Ac si aperte diceret: Ego non feminis, sed viris loquor, quia hi qui fluxa mente sunt mea verba percipere nequaquam possunt. Lumbos vero accingere est vel in opere luxuriam vel in cogitatione refrenare. Delectatio namque carnis in lumbis est. Unde et sanctis praedicatoribus dicitur: Sint lumbi vestri praecincti, et lucernae ardentes

(Luc. XII, 35). Per lumbos enim luxuria, per lucernas autem bonorum operum claritas designatur. Jubentur ergo lumbos accingere, et lucernas tenere. Ac si aperte audiant: Prius in vobismetipsis luxuriam restringite, et tunc de vobis aliis bonorum operum exempla monstrate. Sede cum beatum Job tanta praeditum castitate noverimus, cur ei post tot flagella dicitur: Accinge sicut vir lumbos tuos, id est, sicut fortis restringe luxuriam, nisi quia alia est luxuria carnis qua castitatem corrumpimus, alia vero luxuria cordis est qua de castitate gloriamur? Dicitur ergo ei: Accinge sicut vir lumbos tuos, ut qui 898 prius luxuriam corruptionis vicerat, nunc luxuriam restringat elationis, ne de patientia vel castitate superbiens, tanto pejus intus ante Dei oculos luxuriosus existeret, quanto magis ante oculos hominum et patiens et castus appareret. Unde bene per Moysen dicitur: Circumcidite praeputia cordis vestri (Deut. X, 16), id est, postquam luxuriam a carne exstinguitis, etiam superflua cogitationum resecate. Sequitur:

CAPUT IV [Rec.

V.] IBID. Interrogabo te, et responde mihi. 13. Tribus modis nos interrogat Deus: flagellando; dura praecipiendo; aliqua nobis abscondendo. Tribus modis nos conditor noster interrogare consuevit, cum aut flagelli districtione nos percutit, et quanta nobis insit, vel desit patientia ostendit: aut quaedam quae nolumus praecipit, et nostram nobis obedientiam vel inobedientiam patefacit; aut aliqua nobis occulta aperit, et aliqua abscondit, et nobis mensuram humilitatis nostrae innotescit. Flagello namque interrogat cum mentem bene sibi per tranquillitatem subditam afflictionibus pulsat, sicut idem Job et laudatur attestatione judicis, et tamen ictibus conceditur percussoris (Job II, 3, 7), ut ejus patientia tanto verius claresceret quanto inquisita durius fuisset. Praecipiendo autem dura nos interrogat, sicut Abraham terram suam jubetur egredi et pergere quo nesciebat (Genes. XII, 1), in montem unicum filium ducere, et quem ad consolationem senex

acceperat immolare (Genes. XXII, 2). Cui nimirum ad interrogationem bene respondenti, id est ad jussionem obedienti dicitur: Nunc cognovi quia times Deum (Ibid., 12). Vel sicut scriptum est: Tentat vos Dominus Deus vester, ut sciat si diligitis eum (Deut. XIII, 3). Tentare quippe Dei est magnis nos jussionibus interrogare. Scire quoque ejus est nostram obedientiam nosse nos facere. [Vet. VIII.] Aperiendo vero nobis quaedam, atque claudendo quaedam nos interrogat Deus, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Palpebrae ejus interrogant filios hominum (Psal. X, 6). Palpebris quippe apertis cernimus, clausis nihil videmus. Quid ergo palpebras Dei, nisi ejus judicia accipimus? Quae juxta aliquid clauduntur hominibus, et juxta aliquid reserantur, ut homines qui se nesciunt sibimetipsis innotescant, quatenus dum quaedam intelligendo comprehendunt, quaedam vero cognoscere omnino non possunt, eorum corda sese latenter inquirant, si illos divina judicia vel clausa non stimulant, vel aperta non inflant. Hac enim interrogatione Paulus probatus est, qui post perceptam internam sapientiam, post aperta claustra paradisi, post ascensum tertii coeli, post supernae locutionis mysteria, adhuc dicit: Ego me non arbitror comprehendisse (Philip. III, 13). Et rursum: Ego sum minimus apostolorum, qui non sum dignus vocari apostolus (I Cor. XV, 9). Et rursum: Non quia sufficientes sumus aliquid cogitare a nobis, quasi ex nobis; sed sufficientia nostra ex Deo est (II Cor. III, 5). Apertis ergo palpebris Dei interrogatus Paulus recte respondit, qui et superna secreta attigit, et tamen in humilitate cordis sublimiter stetit. Qui rursum cum secreta Dei judicia de repulsione Judaeorum et gentium vocatione discuteret, atque ad ea pervenire non posset, quasi clausis Dei palpebris interrogatus est. Sed rectum valde responsum 899 reddidit, qui Deo se in ipsa sua ignorantia scienter inclinavit, dicens: O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei, quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viae ejus! Quis enim cognovit sensum Domini, aut quis consiliarius ejus fuit (Rom. XI, 33)? Ecce enim absconsis mysteriis quasi

clausis palpebris inquisitus placita ac recta respondit, qui secreti aditum pulsans, quia per cognitionem intromitti ad interiora non valuit, per confessionem ante januas humilis stetit; et quod intus comprehendere non potuit, foris timendo laudavit. Unde nunc quoque beatus Job post interrogationem verberis discutitur interrogatione sermonis, ut quae sint superna consideret; quae dum minime comprehendit, ad semetipsum redeat, et quam sit juxta nihilum in supernorum comparatione cognoscat. Audiat itaque: Interrogabo te, et responde mihi. Ac si apertius dicatur: Verbis meis ad sublimia consideranda te excito, et dum ea quae super te sunt nescire te perspicis, tibimetipsi te notiorem reddo. Tunc enim mihi vere respondes, si quae ignoras intelligis. Sequitur:

CAPUT V [Rec.

VI.] VERS. 4-6. Ubi eras quando ponebam fundamenta terrae? Indica mihi, si habes intelligentiam. Quis posuit mensuras ejus, si nosti, vel quis tetendit super eam lineam? Super quo bases illius solidatae sunt? 14. Per fundamenta Ecclesiae intelligi debent apostoli; per fundamentum, solus Christus. Ecce omnia quasi de mundi origine narratione historica contexuntur. Repente vero subjungitur quod non de mundi, sed de Ecclesiae dictum conditione videatur. Nam dicitur: Aut quis dimisit lapidem angularem ejus? Per hoc enim quod non in mundi origine factum est, et illud superius ostenditur, quia de mundi origine dictum non est. Idcirco namque rebus planis ac patentibus obscura quaedam ac dissona permiscentur, ut per hoc quod ab intellectu litterae discrepat et illud inquiratur mystice quod dictum juxta litteram sonat. Namque sicut aliis apertis rebus alia clausa cognoscimus, ita aliis clausis compellimur et illa altiori intellectu pulsare quae aperta credebamus. Dicat ergo: Ubi eras quando ponebam fundamenta terrae. [Vet. IX.] In Scriptura sacra quid aliud fundamenta quam praedicatores accipimus? Quos dum primos Dominus in

sancta Ecclesia posuit, tota in eis sequentis fabricae structura surrexit. Unde et sacerdos cum tabernaculum ingreditur (Exod. XXVIII, 17) duodecim lapides portare in pectore jubetur, quia videlicet semetipsum pro nobis sacrificium offerens pontifex noster, dum fortes in ipso exordio praedicatores exhibuit, duodecim lapides sub capite in prima sui corporis parte portavit. Sancti itaque apostoli et pro prima ostensione ornamenti lapides sunt in pectore, et pro prima soliditate aedificii in solo fundamenta. Unde David propheta cum sanctam Ecclesiam in sublimibus apostolorum mentibus poni aedificarique conspiceret: Fundamenta ejus, inquit, in montibus sanctis (Psal. LXXXVI, 1). Cum vero in sacro eloquio non fundamenta, sed singulari numero fundamentum dicitur, nullus alius nisi ipse Dominus designatur, per cujus divinitatis potentiam, nutantia infirmitatis nostrae corda solidantur. De quo et Paulus ait: Fundamentum aliud nemo potest ponere, praeter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Jesus (I Cor. III, 11). Ipse quippe fundamentum fundamentorum est, quia et origo est inchoantium, et constantia 900 robustorum. Quia igitur fundamenta nostra sunt hi qui iniquitatum nostrarum pondera portaverunt, ne beatus Job in superbiam de virtutum suarum potentia sublevetur, in ipsa dominici prima parte sermonis de sanctorum praedicatorum commemoratione discutitur, ut quanto illos admirabiles venire conspiceret, tanto in eorum comparatione de se vilius aestimaret. Quod idcirco a Domino jam quasi praeteritum describitur, quia quidquid foris futurum est in opere, intus jam factum est in praedestinatione. Dicitur itaque ei: Ubi eras quando ponebam fundamenta terrae? Ac si aperte diceretur: Virtutem fortium considera, meque eorum ante saecula auctorem pensa; et cum eos quos in tempore condidi mirabiles suspicis, perpende quantum mihi subdi debeas, quem auctorem mirabilium sine tempore esse cognoscis. Sequitur:

CAPUT VI.

VERS. 4, 5. Indica mihi, si habes intelligentiam, quis posuit mensuras ejus, si nosti, vel quis tetendit super eam lineam? 15. Ejus nutu sancti praedicatores ad quasdam orbis partes missi, ab aliis repulsi. Mensurarum lineae in terrarum partitione tenduntur, ut dimensionis aequitas ex ipsa linearum tensione teneatur. In carne autem Dominus ad Ecclesiam veniens mensuras terrae lineis mensus est, quia fines Ecclesiae occulti judicii subtilitate distinxit. Hujus terrae occultae mensurae vel lineae tendebantur quando praedicatores sancti agente Spiritu in alias partes mundi vocabantur ut irent, ab aliis vero partibus arcebantur ne accederent. Paulus namque apostolus cum Macedoniae praedicare negligeret, per visum illi apparuit vir Macedo qui diceret: Transiens in Macedoniam adjuva nos (Act. XVI, 9). At contra, sicut scriptum est: Tentabant apostoli ire in Bithyniam, et non permisit eos Spiritus Jesu (Ibid., 7). Dum ergo praedicatores sancti et vocantur ad Macedoniam, et ab Asia prohibentur, ista occultarum mensurarum linea illic ducta est, hinc reducta. Illic tenditur, ut Macedonia intra sanctae Ecclesiae spatia colligatur; hinc attrahitur, ut extra fines fidei Asia relinquatur. Erant quippe tunc in ea qui colligendi non erant, quibus juxta meritum suum perditis, jam nunc Asia intra mensuras Ecclesiae Deo largiente suscepta est. 16. Intra mensuras a Christo positas electi, extra reprobi. In Dei non in hominis manu ejus dispositio. Intra has ergo mensuras sunt omnes electi, extra has omnes reprobi, etiam si intra fidei limitem esse videantur. Unde et in Apocalypsi scriptum est: Atrium quod foris templum est ejice foras, et ne metiaris illud (Apoc. XI, 2). Quid enim aliud atrium quam latitudinem significat vitae praesentis? Et recte foris templum sunt qui per atrium designantur, atque ideo metiendi non sunt, quia angusta est porta quae ducit ad vitam (Matth. VII, 14), et latitudo vitae pravorum non admittitur ad mensuras et regulas electorum. Istae spiritales lineae occulto judicio tendebantur quando cuidam dicenti: Magister, sequar te quocunque ieris (Matth. VIII, 19), ejusdem magistri voce responsum est:

Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres coeli nidos, Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput suum reclinet (Ibid., 20). Istae mensurae et lineae tendebantur cum cuidam dicenti: Domine, permitte me primum ire sepelire patrem meum (Luc. IX, 59), ejusdem magistri voce responsum est: Sine ut mortui sepeliant mortuos suos; tu autem vade, annuntia regnum Dei (Ibid., 60). Ecce alius secuturum se promittit, et repellitur: alius relaxandum se postulat, et retinetur. Unde hoc, nisi quia super occulta cordis spatia 901 supernorum judiciorum lineae tendebantur, ut et hunc intus incomprehensibiles mensurae constringerent, et ille foris non injuste remaneret? Sed cum nullus nesciat quia Deus has occultorum judiciorum lineas tendat, cur ad Job dicitur: Indica mihi, si habes intelligentiam, quis posuit mensuras ejus, si nosti, vel quis tetendit super eam lineam? An idcirco requiritur, ut quod nosse, sed tamen praetermittere poterat, memoretur, quatenus pondus secretorum Dei sollicitius penset, dispositionem videlicet hominis non in humanis viribus, sed in manu consistere conditoris, ut dum considerat invisibiliter ista quis agat, suae virtuti nihil tribuat, nec jam de se audeat aliquid, cum Dei judicia occulta formidat; sed perpendens desuper mensuras et lineas incomprehensibiliter tensas, tanto magis in humilitate formidinis consistat, quanto pendere videt omnia in potestate mensoris. Sequitur

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 6. Super quo bases illius solidatae sunt? 17. Bases Ecclesiae sunt sancti doctores et prophetae. Quid aliud hujus terrae bases quam sanctae Ecclesiae doctores accipimus? In basibus quippe columnae, in columnis autem totius fabricae pondus erigitur. Non ergo immerito doctores sancti basium nomine designantur, quia dum recta praedicant, et praedicationi suae vivendo concordant, omne pondus Ecclesiae fixa morum suorum gravitate sustentant, asperas ab infidelibus tentationes ferunt; et quaeque in

praeceptis Dei velut difficilia a fidelibus formidantur, exemplis operum facilia ostendunt. Unde et bene cum in typo Ecclesiae tabernaculum figeretur, ad Moysen dicitur: Facies columnas quatuor, et bases earum vesties argento (Exod. XXVI, 32). In argento enim quid aliud quam claritas divini sermonis accipitur? sicut scriptum est: Eloquia Domini eloquia casta, argentum igne examinatum, probatum terrae, purgatum septuplum (Psal. XI, 7). Bases ergo argento vestitae quatuor columnas tabernaculi sustinent, quia praedicatores Ecclesiae divino eloquio decorati, ut cunctis se exemplum praebeant, quatuor evangelistarum dicta et ore et operibus portant 18. Possunt per bases etiam prophetae signari, qui dum primi aperte de dominica incarnatione locuti sunt, quasi quasdam bases eos conspicimus a fundamento consurgere, et superpositae fabricae pondera sustinere. Unde ad Moysen rursum Dominus, cum tabernaculi tabulas erigi praecepit, fundi earum bases argenteas jubet (Exod. XXVI, 32). Quid enim per tabulas nisi apostoli extensa in mundum praedicatione dilatati, quid per bases argenteas nisi prophetae signantur? qui superimpositas tabulas ipsi firmi ac fusiles sustinent, quia apostolorum vita dum eorum praedicatione instruitur, eorum et auctoritate solidatur. Unde et conjunctae binae bases singulis tabulis supponuntur, quia dum prophetae sancti in verbis suis de Mediatoris incarnatione concordant, subsequentes praedicatores Ecclesiae indubitanter aedificant; et cum a semetipsis non discrepant, illos in se robustius figunt. Nec immerito bases quibus prophetae signantur, ut ex argento fundi debeant praecipitur. Argenti quippe claritas ex usu servatur, sine usu autem in nigredinem vertitur. Prophetarum quoque dicta ante Mediatoris adventum, quia in 902 usu spiritalis intelligentiae non erant, dum conspici prae obscuritate non poterant, quasi nigra remanebant. At postquam Mediator veniens ea ante oculos nostros incarnationis suae manu tersit, quidquid in eis lucis latebat inclaruit, sensusque patrum praecedentium in usum dedit, quia verba rebus exposuit. Sive itaque prophetas, seu doctores extremis

temporibus subsequentes, basium appellatione significet, dicat: Super quo bases illius solidatae sunt? subaudis, nisi super me, qui cuncta mirabiliter teneo, et bonis exterioribus intus principaliter originem praesto. Qui enim sibi quod bonum est tribuit, solida basis non est, quia dum fundamento non innititur, ipso suo pondere in ima praecipitatur. Sed cum jam multa de sanctae Ecclesiae constructione referantur, audire mens appetit inimicae nationes qua virtute conjunctae sint, id est diversa hujus domus aedificia qua sibi arte concordent. Sequitur:

CAPUT VIII.

IBID. Aut quis dimisit lapidem angularem ejus? 19. Christus lapis angularis, in quo Judaei gentilesque convenerunt. Jam per divinam gratiam omnibus liquet, quem Scriptura sacra angularem lapidem vocet, illum profecto qui, dum in se hinc Judaicum illinc gentilem populum suscipit, in una Ecclesiae fabrica quasi duos parietes jungit, illum de quo scriptum est: Fecit utraque unum (Ephes. II, 14). Qui angularem se lapidem non solum in inferioribus, sed et in supernis exhibuit, quia et in terra plebi Israeliticae nationes gentium et utramque simul angelis in coelo sociavit. Eo quippe nato clamaverunt angeli: In terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II, 14). In ortu enim Regis nequaquam pro magno offerrent hominibus pacis gaudia, si discordiam non haberent. De hoc lapide per Prophetam dicitur: Lapidem quem reprobaverunt aedificantes, hic factus est in caput anguli (Psal. CXVII, 22). Hujus lapidis typum Jechonias rex tenuit, quem Matthaeus dum quaterdenas generationes describeret, secundo numeravit (Matth. I, 11). Quem enim fini secundae, ipsum rursum initio tertiae generationis inseruit. Ipse namque in Babyloniam cum Israelitica plebe migratus est, qui dum ab aliis ad alia ducitur, pro utriusque parietis latere non immerito secundo numeratur. Cujus migrationis flexu angularem lapidem designat. Ubi enim ordo a rectitudine deflectitur, ut eat in

diversum, tanquam angulum facit. Recte ergo numerari bis potuit, quia per utrumque parietem quasi duo in se latera ostendit, unde et ejus bene imaginem tenuit, qui in Judaea ortus, gentilitatem colligens, quasi a Jerosolymis Babyloniam venit, atque hanc in semetipso fidei fabricam prius discordiae studio scissam arte charitatis intexuit. Sed haec quae de significatione sanctae Ecclesiae dicta sunt placet ut breviata replicatione moraliter disserantur. Dignum namque est ut per ea quae beato Job dici cognoscimus ad corda nostra revocemur, quia verba Dei tunc mens verius intelligit cum in eis semetipsam quaerit. Ecce enim dicitur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 4. Ubi eras quando ponebam fundamenta terrae? SENSUS MORALIS. 20. Quid ex nobis fuerimus semper considerandum, ne quod sumus ex Dei munere, nobis tribuamus. Si peccatoris animus pulvis est, qui in superficie attollitur, et tentationis aura raptatur, unde scriptum est: Non sic impii, non sic, sed tamquam pulvis, quem projicit ventus a facie terrae (Psal. I, 5), 903 nil obstat terram intelligi animam justi, de qua scriptum est: Terra enim saepe venientem super se bibens imbrem, et generans herbam, opportunam illis a quibus colitur accipit benedictionem (Hebr. VI, 7). [Vet. X.] Sed hujus terrae fundamentum fides est. Hujus terrae fundamentum jacitur, quando in occultis cordis prima soliditatis causa divinus timor inspiratur. Iste necdum credit aeterna quae audit; huic cum fides datur, ad aedificium subsequentis operis jam fundamentum ponitur. Ille aeterna jam credit, nec tamen metuit, venturi judicii terrorem despicit, peccatis se carnis et spiritus audenter involvit; huic repente cum futurorum timor infunditur, ut bonae vitae surgat aedificium, jam fundamenta construuntur. Posito itaque prosperae formidinis fundamento, cum virtutum fabrica in altum ducitur, necesse est ut unusquisque proficiens vires suas caute metiatur, ut cum divina constructione magnus esse jam coeperit, semetipsum respiciat

sine cessatione quod fuit, quatenus attendens humiliter quod per meritum inventus est, nequaquam sibi arroget quod per gratiam factus est. Unde et nunc beatus Job per supernam vocem ad semetipsum reducitur, et ne de virtutibus gloriari audeat, de anteacta vita memoratur, eique dicitur: Ubi eras quando ponebam fundamenta terrae? Ac si justificato peccatori aperte Veritas dicat: Virtutes a me acceptas tibi non tribuas, noli contra me de meo munere extolli. Recole ubi te inveni quando meo timore prima in te fundamenta virtutum posui. Recole ubi te inveni quando meo te timore solidavi. Ut ergo ego in te non destruam quod construxi, ipse non cesses considerare quod reperi. Quem enim Veritas nisi aut in flagitiis aut in excessibus invenit? Sed post haec bene possumus servare quod sumus, si nunquam negligimus pensare quod fuimus. Nonnunquam tamen clandestina elatio etiam sollicitis cordibus subrepere solet, ut bonorum cogitatio, licet subtilis sit ac pressa, cum valde in virtutibus crescit, oblita infirmitatis propriae, nequaquam ad memoriam revocet quid in vitiis fuerit. Unde et omnipotens Deus, quia augeri infirmitatem etiam de remediis salutis conspicit, mensuram ipsis nostris profectibus imponit, ut habeamus quaedam virtutum bona quae nunquam quaesivimus, et quaeramus quaedam, nec tamen habere valeamus, quatenus mens nostra dum haec non potest habere quae appetit, et illa se intelligat de semetipsa non habere quae habet, et per ea quae adsunt considerentur illa quae desunt, et per ea quae utiliter desunt serventur humiliter bona quae adsunt. Unde et recte pro hujus terrae, id est justae animae dispensatione subjungitur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 4, 5. Indica mihi, si habes intelligentiam, quis posuit mensuras ejus, si nosti, vel quis tetendit super eam lineam? 21. Quam sapienter Deus dona sua, non omnia omnibus, sed singula singulis distribuat. Quis enim nisi conditor noster hujus terrae mensuras ponit (I Cor. XII, 8)? Qui, interni

judicii secreto moderamine, alii sermonem sapientiae, alii sermonem scientiae, alii plenam fidem, alii gratiam sanitatum, alii operationem virtutum, alii prophetiam, alii discretionem spirituum, alii genera linguarum, alii 904 interpretationem sermonum tribuit, quatenus in uno eodemque spiritu iste verbo sapientiae polleat, nec tamen sermone scientiae, id est doctrinae, fulciatur, quia sentire atque invenire sufficit etiam quod per discendi studium non apprehendit; ille sermone scientiae fulgeat, nec tamen in verbo sapientiae convalescat, quia et explere sufficit quantum didicit, et tamen ad sentiendum ex semetipso subtile aliquid non assurgit. Iste per fidem elementis imperat, nec tamen per sanitatum gratiam infirmitates corporum curat; ille orationis ope morbos subtrahit, nec tamen arenti terrae verbo pluvias reddit. Iste operatione virtutum ad praesentem vitam etiam mortuos revocat, et tamen, prophetiae gratiam non habens, quae sibi ventura sunt ignorat; ille ventura quaeque velut praesentia attendit, et tamen in nulla signorum operatione se exerit. Iste per discretionem spirituum in factis subtiliter mentes conspicit, sed tamen diversi generis linguas nescit; ille diversi generis linguas examinat, sed tamen in rebus similibus dissimilia corda non pensat. Alius in una lingua quam novit sermonum pondera interpretando prudenter discutit, et tamen reliquis bonis quae non habet patienter caret. 22. Sic humilitati cavetur et charitati. Sic itaque creator noster atque dispositor cuncta moderatur, ut qui extolli poterat ex dono quod habet humilietur ex virtute quam non habet. Sic cuncta moderatur, ut cum per impensam gratiam unumquemque sublevat, etiam per disparem alteri alterum subdat, et meliorem quisque dono alio eum qui sibi subjicitur attendat, ac licet se praeire et aliis sentiat, eidem tamen quem superat se in aliis postponat. Sic cuncta moderatur, ut dum singula quaeque sunt omnium, interposita quadam charitatis necessitudine, fiant omnia singulorum, et unusquisque sic quod non accepit in altero possideat, ut ipse alteri possidendum quod accepit humiliter impendat. [Vet. XI.] Hinc enim per

Petrum dicitur: Unusquisque sicut accepit gratiam, in alterutrum illam administrantes, sicut boni dispensatores multiformis gratiae Dei (I Petr. IV, 10). Tunc namque bene multiformis Dei gratia dispensatur, quando acceptum donum et ejus qui hoc non habet creditur, quando propter eum cui impenditur sibi datum putatur. Hinc per Paulum dicitur: Per charitatem servite invicem (Galat. V, 13). Tunc enim nos charitas a jugo culpae liberos reddit, cum vicissim nos nostro per amorem servitio subjicit, cum et aliena bona nostra credimus, et nostra aliis quasi sua offerentes exhibemus. Hinc rursum per Paulum dicitur: Nam et corpus non est unum membrum, sed multa. Si dixerit pes: Quoniam non sum manus, non sum de corpore, num ideo non est de corpore? Et si dixerit auris: Quoniam non sum oculus, non sum de corpore, num ideo non est de corpore? Si totum corpus oculus, ubi auditus? si totum auditus, ubi odoratus (I Cor. XII, 14, seq.)? Et paulo post: Quod si essent omnia unum membrum, ubi corpus? Nunc autem multa quidem membra, unum vero corpus (Ibid., 19). 23. In corpore Ecclesiae alius est oculus, alius manus, alius pes, etc. Quid enim sancta Ecclesia, nisi superni sui capitis corpus est? In qua alius alta videndo oculus, 905 alius recta operando manus, alius ad injuncta discurrendo pes, alius praeceptorum vocem intelligendo auris, alius malorum fetorem bonorumque fragrantiam discernendo naris est. Qui, corporalium more membrorum, dum vicissim sibi accepta officia impendunt, unum de semetipsis omnibus corpus reddunt; et cum diversa in charitate peragunt, diversum esse prohibent ubi continentur. Si autem unum quid cuncti agerent, corpus utique quod ex multis continetur non essent, quia videlicet multipliciter compactum non existeret, si hoc concors membrorum diversitas non teneret. Quia ergo sanctis membris Ecclesiae virtutum dona Dominus dividit, terrae mensuras ponit. Unde iterum Paulus dicit: Unicuique sicut Deus divisit mensuram fidei (Rom. XII, 3). Et rursum: Ex quo totum corpus compactum et connexum per omnem juncturam subministrationis, secundum operationem

in mensuram uniuscujusque membri, augmentum corporis facit in aedificationem sui in charitate (Ephes. IV, 16). 24. Singula membra assignatis sibi officiis fungantur, non aliena usurpent. Sed cum miro consilio auctor ac dispositor noster huic illa largitur quae alii denegat, alii haec denegat quae isti largitur, mensuras sibi positas egredi nititur quisquis posse plus quam acceperit conatur, ut si fortasse is cui tantummodo datum est praeceptorum occulta disserere tentet etiam miraculis coruscare, aut is quem supernae virtutis donum ad sola miracula roborat etiam divinae legis pandere occulta contendat. In praecipitio enim pedem porrigit qui mensurarum suarum limitem non attendit. Et plerumque amittit et quod poterat qui audacter ea ad quae pertingere non valet arripere festinat. Nam et membrorum nostrorum tunc bene ministeriis utimur cum sua eis officia distincte servamus. Lucem quippe oculis cernimus, vocem vero auribus audimus. Si quis autem mutato ordine voci oculos, luci aures accommodet, huic incassum utraque patent. Si quis odores velit ore discernere, sapores nare gustare, utriusque sensus sibi ministerium, quia pervertit. interimit. Dum enim propriis haec usibus non aptantur, et sua officia deserunt, et ad extranea non assurgunt. 25. Intra mensuras illas David sese continuit, et Paulus. Bene itaque David propheta intra acceptas ex divina largitate mensuras pedem cordis presserat, cum dicebat: Neque ambulavi in magnis, neque in mirabilibus super me (Psal. CXXX, 1). Super se quippe in mirabilibus ambularet, si apparere magnus ultra quam poterat quaereret. Super se namque in mirabilibus attollitur qui et in his ad quae non sufficit videri idoneus conatur. Bene intra has mensuras etiam in ipsa Paulus praedicationis suae se latitudine coarctabat, cum diceret: Non enim audeo aliquid loqui eorum quae per me non efficit Christus (Rom. XV, 18). Tunc autem recte accepta mensura servatur, cum anteposita oculis virorum spiritualium vita respicitur. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 5. Vel quis tetendit super eam lineam? 26. A sanctis sumenda est vivendi regula. Super hanc enim terram linea tenditur, quando electae unicuique animae ad sumendam vivendi regulam patrum praecedentium exempla monstrantur, ut ex illorum vita consideret quid in suis actibus servet, quatenus respecto justi limitis tramite, nec infra minima negligens deficiat, nec ultra maxima 906 superbiens tendat, nec minus conetur explere quam sufficit, nec plus arripiat quam accepit, ne aut ad mensuram quam debet non perveniat, aut eamdem mensuram deserens, extra limitem cadat. Angusta quippe porta est quae ducit ad vitam (Matth. VII, 14); et ille hanc ingreditur qui in cunctis quae agit discretionis subtilitate propter hanc sollicite coarctatur. Nam qui per voluntates proprias secura mente se dilatat, angustae sibi portae aditum damnat. Ut ergo hujus terrae mensura servetur, super eam divinitus linea tenditur, quia ut nostra opera, vel minora proficiant, vel majora moderentur, per sacra eloquia subtilis ante nos sanctorum vita expanditur, et quid nobis quantumque agendum sit ostensa illorum discretione definitur. [Vet. XII.] 27. In exemplis Petri proponitur mensura auctoritatis et humilitatis. Ecce aliquis vel damna rerum, vel afflictionem corporis metuens, minas terrenae potentiae pertimescit, et contra vim resistentium veritatem defendere non praesumit. Hunc Petrus, quia in timore angustum respicit, ostensa exemplorum suorum linea, ad virtutis latitudinem tendit. Ipse quippe flagellatus a principibus populi (Act. V, 40), cum idcirco se relaxari conspiceret, ut a praedicatione cessaret; cum prohiberetur loqui in posterum, nequaquam saltem in praesens cessit. Nam respondens protinus, dixit: Obedire oportet Deo magis quam hominibus (Ibid., IV, 29). Et rursum: Non enim possumus quae vidimus et audivimus non loqui. At ille dudum debilis, et praesentia damna formidans, dum exempla tantae fortitudinis contemplatur, in auctoritate verbi jam Petri lineam sequitur, jam nil adversitatis metuit, jam resistentes Deo potestates saeculi etiam cum corporis laceratione contemnit. Sed tamen quanto vires

persequentium patiendo fortiter destruit, et quanto inter adversa nullis terroribus cedit, tanto plerumque et in his etiam quae inter fideles positus senserit se caeteris praeponit, sua magis consilia eligit, et sibi potius quam aliis credit. Hic nimirum dum, injustis objectionibus non cedens, in virtute se exerit, etiam recta aliorum consilia non recipiens, pedem extra limitem tendit. Hunc Petrus intra mensurae lineam revocat, qui postquam libertate vocis auctoritatem principum pressit, per humilitatem cordis de non circumcidendis gentibus Pauli consilium audivit (Act. XV, 7). Sic enim semetipsum contra adversarios ex auctoritate curabat erigere, ut tamen sibimetipsi non crederet in his quae non recte sentiret, ut et libertate fortitudinis tumentes potestates excederet, et humilitate mansuetudinis obedientiam in recto consilio etiam minoribus fratribus exhiberet, et modo per semetipsum aliis, modo sibimetipsi cum aliis obviaret. In factis igitur Petri quaedam ante oculos nostros auctoritatis et humilitatis linea tenditur, ne mens nostra aut per timorem ad mensuram non perveniat, aut per tumorem limitem excedat. 28. Ejusdem virtutis opera aliquando exercere, aliquando omittere suadet discretio. Dictum est quomodo linea tenditur, ne per alterius actionis fortitudinem ad alterius causae vitium transeatur; dicatur nunc quemadmodum in una eademque virtute discretionis lineam deserimus, si hanc et aliquando agere et aliquando postponere nesciamus. Non enim res eadem semper est virtus, quia per momenta temporum saepe 907 merita mutantur actionum. Unde fit ut cum quid bene agimus, plerumque melius ab ejus actione cessemus, et laudabilius ad tempus deserat quod in suo tempore laudabiliter mens tenebat. Nam si pro nostris bonis minimis, quibus actis proficimus, nec tamen intermissis interimus, majora laborum mala proximis, imminent, necessario nos virtutum augmenta seponimus, ne infirmioribus proximis fidei detrimenta generemus, ne tanto jam quod agimus virtus non sit, quanto per occasionem sui in alienis cordibus fundamenta virtutum destruit. 29. Discretionis hujus

exemplum in sancto Paulo. Quam discretionis lineam bene ante intuentium oculos Paulus tetendit, qui et gentiles ad libertatem fidei venientes circumcidi prohibuit (Act. XV, 2), et tamen Lystris atque Iconium transiens, ipse Timotheum, qui gentili patre editus fucrat, circumcidit (Act. XVI, 3). Videns enim quod nisi se mandata litterae servare ostenderet, Judaeorum rabiem etiam in eos qui sibi tunc comites aderant excitaret, assertionis suae vim postposuit, et sine damno fidei se suosque comites a persecutionis immanitate custodivit. Fecit quod fieri fidei amore prohibuit, sed ad fidei retorsit ministerium quod quasi non fideliter fecit. Plerumque enim virtus cum indiscrete tenetur amittitur; cumque discrete intermittitur, plus tenetur. Nec mirum si in incorporeis intelligimus quod agi et in corporeis rebus videmus. Ex studio namque arcus distenditur, ut in suo tempore cum utilitate tendatur. Qui si otium relaxationis non accipit, feriendi virtutem ipso usu tensionis perdit. Sic aliquando in exercitatione virtus, cum per discretionem praetermittitur, reservatur, ut tanto post vitia valenter feriat, quanto a percussione interim prudenter cessat. Subtilis igitur discretionis super hanc terram linea tenditur, quando ostensis unicuique animae exemplis praecedentium patrum, et utiliter ad operationem virtus accenditur, et nonnunquam utilius temperatur [Vet. XIII.] 30. Cavendum ne discretionis nomine, propriis commodis serviatur. Sed cum parumper ab opere zeli fortitudo seponitur, alta consideratione opus est, ne fortasse nequaquam communis boni consilio, sed timore proprio vel cujuslibet ambitionis studio a virtutis exercitatione cessetur. Quod nimirum cum agitur, jam non dispensationi, sed culpae servitur. Unde curandum sollicite est ut cum quis susceptum negotium cum virtutis cessatione dispensat, semetipsum prius in radice cordis inspiciat, ne sibi per hoc aliquid avarus appetat, sibi per hoc soli timidus pareat; et eo fiat pravum quod in opere sequitur, quo non ex recta cogitationis intentione generatur. Unde bene in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Lucerna corporis tui est oculus tuus. Si oculus tuus

simplex fuerit, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit. Si autem oculus tuus nequam fuerit, totum corpus tuum tenebrosum erit (Matth. VI, 22). Quid enim per oculum exprimitur, nisi opus suum praeveniens cordis intentio? quae priusquam se in actione exerceat, hoc jam quod appetit contemplatur. Et quid appellatione corporis designatur, nisi unaquaeque actio, quae intentionem suam quasi intuentem oculum sequitur? Lucerna itaque corporis est oculus, quia per bonae intentionis 908 radium merita illustrantur actionis. Et si oculus tuus simplex fuerit, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit, quia si recte intendimus per simplicitatem cogitationis, bonum opus efficitur, etiam si minus bonum esse videatur. Et si oculus tuus nequam fuerit, totum corpus tuum tenebrosum erit, quia cum perversa intentione quid vel rectum agitur, etsi splendere coram hominibus cernitur, apud examen tamen interni judicis obscuratur. Unde et recte subjungitur: Vide ergo ne lumen quod in te est tenebrae sint. Si lumen quod in te est tenebrae sunt, ipsae tenebrae quantae erunt (Ibid., 23)? quia si hoc quod bene nos agere credimus, ex mala intentione fuscamus, quanta ipsa mala sunt quae mala esse etiam cum agimus non ignoramus? Et si ibi nil cernimus, ubi quasi discretionis lumen tenemus, qua caecitate in illa offendimus quae sine discretione perpetramus? Vigilanti igitur cura per cuncta opera intentio nobis nostra pensanda est, ut nil temporale in his quae agit appetat, totam se in soliditate aeternitatis figat, ne si extra fundamentum actionis nostrae fabrica ponitur, terra dehiscente solvatur. Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 6. Super quo bases illius solidatae sunt? 31. Bases animae sunt intentiones. Bases quippe uniuscujusque sunt animae intentiones suae. Nam sicut fabrica columnis, columnae autem basibus innituntur, ita vita nostra in virtutibus, virtutes vero in intima intentione subsistunt. Et quia scriptum est: Fundamentum aliud nemo potest ponere, praeter id quod positum est, quod

est Christus Jesus (I Cor. III, 11), tunc bases in fundamento sunt, cum intentiones nostrae in Christo roborantur. Incassum vero alta super se bases aedificia erigunt, si non ipsae in fundamenti soliditate consistunt, quia nimirum quamlibet summa opera inaniter faciunt, si intentiones cordium extra aeternitatis certitudinem deflectuntur, et vitae verae praemia non requirunt, tantoque graviora ruinae super se damna aedificant, quanto altiora aedificia extra fundamentum portant, quia cum aeternae vitae praemiis non intendunt, quo plus se quasi in virtutibus erigunt, eo in gloriae inanis foveam profundius cadunt. Non ergo pensandum est bases quid sustinent, sed ubi sustinentur, quia profecto humana corda divinitus perscrutantur, non solum quae faciunt, sed quod in operibus quaerunt. Unde cum districtum judicem Paulus describeret, atque actionum bona narraret, dicens: Qui reddet unicuique secundum opera ejus, his quidem, secundum patientiam boni operis, gloriam et corruptionem (Rom. II, 6); quia, nominata boni operis patientia quasi totam electae actionis fabricam dixerat, subtiliter illico ubi bases ejusdem fabricae consisterent exquisivit, dicens: Gloriam et honorem et incorruptionem quaerentibus, vitam aeternam (Ibid., 7). Ac si aperte diceret: Et si quidam patientiam boni operis ostendunt, gloriam et incorruptionem non recipiunt, si intentiones cordis, id est bases fabricae, in fundamento non figunt, quia videlicet Deus vel honestae vitae aedificium non inhabitat quod extra se positum non ipse sustentat. 32. Ad spem aeternitatis sunt dirigendae. Quia igitur intentiones electae uniuscujusque animae spei aeternitatis innituntur, recte voce 909 Dominica de hac terra dicitur: Super quo bases illius solidatae sunt? Ac si aperte diceret, Nisi super me. Cui dum justa quaeque anima intendit, omne quod temporaliter facit, in me procul dubio non temporaliter construit. Quia vero tunc robustius in fundamento solidamur, cum verba Dei et in exterioribus praeceptis sequimur, et in intimis sensibus subtilius intelligendo pensamus, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIII [Vet. XIV].

IBID. Vel quis dimisit lapidem angularem ejus? 33. Christus lapis angularis, quod vitam activam et contemplativam in se conjunxerit. Lapis quippe angularis est ad sacra eloquia intellectus duplex. Qui tunc divinitus dimittitur, quando nequaquam districto judicio ignorantiae suae tenebris illigatur; sed quadam libertate perfruitur, dum in praeceptis Dei sufficit vel exsequendo exteriora agere, vel contemplando interna sentire. Ad quod nunquam noster intellectus assurgeret, si ad suscipiendam naturam nostram ipse noster conditor non veniret. Qui aliter angularis lapis dicitur, quia duos in se populos junxit; atque aliter, quia conjunctae utriusque vitae, activae videlicet et contemplativae, in se exempla monstravit. Ab activa enim vita longe contemplativa distat; sed incarnatus Redemptor noster veniens, dum utramque exhibuit, in se utramque sociavit. Nam cum in urbe miracula faceret, in monte vero orando continue pernoctaret, exemplum suis fidelibus praebuit, ut nec contemplationis studio proximorum curam negligant, nec rursum cura proximorum immoderatius obligati contemplationis studia derelinquant; sed sic in utrisque mentem partiendo conjungant, quatenus nec amorem Dei praepediat amor proximi, nec amorem proximi, quia transcendit, abjiciat amor Dei. Quia igitur humano cordi quid ageret ignoranti Dei atque hominis Mediator apparuit, qui et agendo transitoria disponeret, et contemplando ostenderet unde cuncta penderent, recte dicitur: Vel quis dimisit lapidem angularem ejus? Ac si aperte Dominus diceret: Nisi ego, qui unicum quem sine tempore genui servandis hominibus cum tempore ostendi, in cujus vita discerent etiam diversa vivendi studia non discrepare. Et notandum quod eum non se emisisse, sed dimisisse asserit, quia profecto humanam naturam Filius suscipiens ad ima de sublimibus venit. Cujus incarnationis mysterium quia et electi angeli mirati sunt, qui eodem mysterio redempti non sunt, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. VII].

VERS. 7. Cum me laudarent simul astra matutina. 34. Angeli astra matutina cur appellati. Quia enim prima in tempore condita natura rationabilium spirituum creditur, non immerito matutina astra angeli vocantur. Quod si ita est, dum terra esset invisibilis et incomposita, dum tenebrae essent super abyssum (Genes. I, 2), venturum diem subsequentis saeculi per lucem sapientiae existendo praevenerunt. Nec negligenter audiendum est quod additur, Simul, quia nimirum astra matutina etiam cum vespertinis Redemptoris potentiam laudant, dum electi angeli etiam cum redemptis in mundi fine hominibus largitatem gratiae supernae glorificant. Ipse quippe ut nos ad laudem conditoris accenderent, hoc quod superius diximus, orta per carnem luce, clamaverunt: Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II, 14). Simul ergo 910 laudant, quia redemptioni nostrae voces suae exultationis accommodant. Simul laudant; quia dum nos conspiciunt recipi, suum numerum gaudent repleri. Qui et fortasse ideo matutina astra memorantur, quia saepe ad exhortandos homines missi sunt; et dum venturum mane nuntiant, ab humanis cordibus praesentis vitae tenebras fugant. Sed ecce angeli divinam potentiam laudant, quia ipsa eos tantae claritatis visio dilatat. Nos autem qui redimimur, sed tamen corruptione adhuc carnis gravamur, donum quod percipimus, qua virtute laudamus? Quomodo enim valebit lingua dicere, quod non sufficit mens nostra sentire? Sequitur:

CAPUT XV IBID.

Et jubilarent omnes filii Dei. 35. Quid sit jubilatio, et cur homines deceat, non angelos. Jubilatio quippe dicitur cum cordis laetitia oris efficacia non expletur; sed quibusdam modis gaudium prodit, quod ipse qui gaudet, nec tegere praevalet, nec explere. Laudent itaque angeli, qui jam

tantae claritatis altitudinem in sublimibus vident. Jubilent vero homines, qui adhuc in inferioribus oris sui angustias sustinent. Quae quia certo futura Dominus noverat, non tam facienda insinuat, quam facta narrat. Sed quid agimus, quod cum boni de redemptionis suae mysterio jubilant, malos invidia inflammat; dum electi proficiunt, reprobi ad rabiem furoris excitantur, et bona nascentia, quia nolunt imitari, persequuntur? Sed tamen inter haec etiam qui redemit, non relinquit. Scriptum quippe est: Fidelis autem Deus, qui non patietur vos tentari supra quam potestis, sed faciet etiam cum tentatione proventum, ut possitis sustinere (I Cor. X, 13). Novit enim conditor noster, quando exsurgere persecutionis procellam sinat, quando exsurgentem reprimat. Novit pro custodia nostra restringere quod contra nos egredi pro nostra exercitatione permittit, ut saeviens nos diluat procella, et non mergat. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XVI [Vet.

XV, Rec. VIII]. VERS. 8. Quis conclusit ostiis mare, quando erumpebat, quasi de vulva procedens? 36. Saeculum contra sanctos saeviens a Deo conclusum. Humiliatis terrenis principibus, per eos Dominus Ecclesiam supra mundi culmen evexit. Quid enim mare nisi saeculum, quid vulvam, nisi conceptum carnalis cogitationis accipimus? Hoc enim loco vulvae nomine occulta et malitiosa carnalium cogitatio designatur. Quae vulva non ad proferendam prolem concipit substantiam corporis, sed ad explendam nequitiam causam doloris. De hac vulva cordis iniquorum alias dicitur: Concepit dolorem, et peperit iniquitatem (Psal. VII, 15). Per hanc vulvam pravi concipiunt, cum mala cogitant. Per hanc vulvam pariunt, cum mala quae cogitaverint operantur. Erumpebat ergo mare quasi de vulva procedens, cum minarum saecularium fluctus de carnalis cogitationis iniquitate concepti, in sanctae Ecclesiae interitum saevirent. Sed auctore Deo, ostiis hoc mare conclusum est, quia contra tumores persequentium

sancti viri quasi quaedam ostia oppositi sunt, ut eorum miraculis atque reverentia irae persequentium frangerentur. Humiliatis quippe Dominus terrenis principibus, per eos sanctam Ecclesiam supra mundi culmen evexit, et saevientis maris impetus, crecta ejusdem Ecclesiae potestate, coercuit. Sed huic saevienti mari quid Dominus fecerit, audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII [Rec.

IX.] VERS. 9. 911 Cum ponerem nubem vestimentum ejus, et caligine illud quasi pannis infantiae obvolverem. 37. Persecutorum malitiam Deus constrinxit puerilia sapientem. Mare saeviens nube induitur, quia crudelitas persequentium stultitiae suae velamento vestitur. Interposita enim caligine infidelitatis suae, perspicuam veritatis lucem videre non sufficit; et id quod agit per crudelitatis impulsum, per caecitatis suae meritum non agnoscit. Nam si cognovissent, ut ait Apostolus, nunquam Dominum gloriae crucifixissent (I Cor. II, 8). Haec nubes non solum solet infideles extra positos premere, sed quosdam etiam viventes carnaliter intra Ecclesiam tenebrare. Unde sancti viri, qui etiam alienae negligentiae compatiuntur, et se pati aestimant quod perpeti alios sentiunt, Deo orantes dicunt: Opposuisti nubem, ne transeat oratio (Thren. III, 44). Ac si aperte dicant: Menti nostrae terrenis voluptatibus assuetae curarum suarum phantasmata justo judicio objicis, quibus eam in ipsa orationis suae intentione confundis; et quam desideriis infimis deditam non ignoras, recte caecatam ab intuenda lucis tuae perspicuitate reverberas, ut cum in te intenditur, ipso a te cogitationum suarum nubilo reflectatur; et quae terrena haec assidue cogitat quia vult, haec etiam toleret in oratione cum non vult. Quia igitur ipsa persecutorum nequitia superna dispensatione constringitur, ne contra sanctos viros inquantum voluerit effrenetur, postquam dixit: Cum ponerem nubem vestimentum ejus; apte subdidit: Et caligine illud quasi pannis infantiae obvolverem. Pannis quippe infantiae pedes ac brachia constringuntur, ne

huc atque illuc dissoluta libertate jactentur. Quia ergo persecutores sanctae Ecclesiae instabilitate cordis inquieti, atque huic saeculo dediti, non grandaeva, sed puerilia sapiunt, qui quidem obscuritate atque caligine, non intellectu superni judicii constringuntur, ne tantum persequi valeant quantum volunt, pannis infantiae referuntur obvoluti, quia, sicut dictum est, puerilia quidem sapiunt, sed divina dispensatione constricti, quo volunt brachia non extendunt, et si cuncta mala leviter perpetrare appetunt, nequaquam tamen implere cuncta quae appetunt permittuntur. Sequitur: VERS. 10. Circumdedi illud terminis meis. Terminis suis Dominus mare circumdat, quia iras persequentium, judiciorum suorum dispensatione modificat, ut insani tumida unda fervoris plano frangatur littore occultae dispensationis. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII [Vet. XVI].

VERS. 10, 11. Et posui vectem et ostia, et dixi: Hucusque venies, et non procedes amplius, et hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos. 38. Sancti praedicatores tanquam ostia mari saecus saevienti opposita, tundi fluctibus, non effringi potuerunt, Christo eos roborante. Haec ostia humilibus aperta, et superbis clausa. Quid per ostia nisi praedicatores sancti, quid per vectem nisi incarnatus Dominus designatur? Qui haec videlicet ostia contra saevientis maris impetum tanto valentiora opposuit, quanto ea sua observatione roboravit. Quia enim ista sanctae Ecclesiae ostia vectis hujus oppositione solidata sunt, potuerunt quidem tundi fluctibus, sed effringi nequiverunt, ut ea exterius unda persecutionis illideret, sed nequaquam cordis eorum interna penetraret. Et quia doctores sancti praedicatione quidem sequentibus aperti sunt, auctoritate autem sua 912 resistentibus clausi, non immerito ostia vocantur, id est aperta conversationi humilium, et clausa terroribus superborum. Non immerito ostia vocantur, quia et ingressum fidelibus aperiunt, et rursum sese perfidis ne ingrediantur

opponunt. Pensemus quale Ecclesiae ostium exstitit Petrus, qui investigantem fidem Cornelium recepit, pretio quaerentem miracula Simonem repulit. Illi dicens: In veritate comperi quoniam non est personarum acceptor Deus (Act. X, 34), secreta regni benigne aperuit. Huic inquiens: Pecunia tua tecum sit in perditionem (Act. VIII, 20), per districtae damnationis sententiam coelestis aulae aditum claudit. Quid cuncti apostoli nisi sanctae Ecclesiae ostia existunt, cum voce Redemptoris sui audiunt: Accipite Spiritum sanctum; quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis; et quorum retinueritis, retenta sunt (Joan. XX, 22)? Ac si illis aperte diceretur: Per vos ingredientur ad me hi quibus vosmetipsos panditis; et repellentur quibus obseratis. Igitur dum mare saevit, Dominus vectem et ostia opponit, quia ab amaris et perfidis cordibus dum persecutionis procella se dilatat in mundo, Deus unigeniti sui gloriam praedicatorumque ejus reverentiam exaltat; et dum innotescit mysteria divinae fortitudinis, frangit in impiis fluctus furoris. 39. Divina providentia persecutionis procella aut prosilit, aut conquiescit. Bene autem dicitur: Hucusque venies, et non procedes amplius. Quia nimirum judicii occulti mensura est, et quando persecutionis procella prosiliat, et quando conquiescat, ne aut non exagitata electos non exerceat, aut non moderata in profundum mergat. Cum vero notitia fidei usque ad persequentes extenditur, turbati maris tumor sedatur; ibique fluctus suos mare frangit, quia ad cognitionem veritatis veniens, omne quod nequiter egit erubescit. Fracta quippe unda in se reliditur, quia victa nequitia etiam per cogitationem sui cordis accusatur; et quasi ipsam vim quam intulerat recipit, quia de pravitate quam gesserat reatus sui stimulos sentit. Unde quibusdam per Paulum dicitur: Quem ergo fructum habuistis tunc in illis in quibus nunc erubescitis (Rom. VI, 21)? Ac si diceretur: Quid se in altum fluctus vestrae pravitatis extulerunt, qui nunc in semetipsis fracti, unde perversos vos inflaverant, conversos inde confundunt? Recte itaque dicitur: Et hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos. Quod vero in hac conclusione maris

secundo de ostiis dicitur, more sacri eloquii, res semel dicta pro confirmatione replicatur. 40. Per mare intelligi potest saeculum, cui Deus ostia opposuit, legis et Novi Testamenti praecepta. Si autem hoc in loco mare accipere non specialiter turbam persequentium, sed generaliter saeculum debemus, secundo contra hoc mare Dominus ostia opposuit, quia et prius humano generi praecepta legis, et postmodum novae gratiae testamentum dedit. Secundo objectis ostiis hujus maris impetum clausit, quia eos quos ad obsequium sui cultus assumpsit, et prius ab idolis data lege coercuit, et post ab intellectu carnali gratia revelata correxit. Secundo mare ostia accepit, quia humanum genus prius Deus ab operibus iniquitatis prohibuit, postmodum vero etiam a cogitationis culpa constrinxit. Videamus quemadmodum prima tumenti mari Dominus ostia imponat. Ecce enim per 913 Legem dicitur: Non occides, non moechaberis, non furtum facies, non falsum testimonium dices (Exod. XX, 13, 14). Videamus quemadmodum secundis hoc mare Dominus ostiis claudat. Ecce in Evangelio dicit: Audistis quia dictum est antiquis: Non moechaberis; ego autem dico vobis, quoniam omnis qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam moechatus est eam in corde suo (Matth. V, 27). Rursumque dicitur: Audistis quia dictum est: Diliges proximum tuum, et odio habebis inimicum tuum; ego autem dico vobis, diligite inimicos vestros, et benefacite his qui oderunt vos (Ibid. V, 43, 44). Qui igitur prius nequitias operis prohibet, et postmodum culpas cordis exhaurit, nimirum tumenti mari, ne circumducta justitiae littora transeat, bis ostia imponit. [Vet. XVII.] 41. Mundo suae origini adhuc vicino, leges positae. Cui tamen Deus nondum illuxerat. Sub litterae caligine quasi pannis infantiae obvolutus mundus. Prius timore ligatus, postea libertatem consecutus. Lex vetus imperfecta et infirma. Bene autem cum diceret: Quis conclusit ostiis mare. Illico et tempus adjunxit, dicens: Quando erumpebat, quasi de vulva procedens. Quia videlicet tunc humano generi praeceptis legis obviavit, quando adhuc saeculum suae origini

vicinum, quasi ab ortu proprio ad profectum vitae carnalis exibat. De vulva quippe procedere est in luce praesentis gloriae carnaliter apparere. Et recte subjungitur: Cum ponerem nubem vestimentum ejus. Quia nimirum Deus hominibus non tunc aperta ostensione se intulit, sed dum eos ab errore perfidiae eripuit, nec tamen illis claritatem sui luminis patefecit, quasi ex tenebris eos abstulit, sed adhuc nube vestivit, ut et pristina pravitatis acta relinquerent, et tamen ventura bona adhuc certius non viderent. Unde et apte subditur: Et caligine illud quasi pannis infantiae obvolverem. Dum enim rudes populos non aperta spiritus praedicatione edocuit, sed figurata locutione praeceptis litterae astrinxit, adhuc infirma sapientes verborum suorum caligine quasi pannis infantiae obvolvit, ut mandatis grossioribus ligati crescerent, ne male liberi in suis voluptatibus perirent. Quos ad viam justitiae dum non jam charitas, sed adhuc timor astringeret, divina dispensatio quasi pressit ut nutriret. Infirmus namque populus cum praeceptorum pannos nolens pertulit, ad firmiorem statum ex ipsa sua ligatione pervenit. Quia enim timor eum prius a culpa coercuit, competenter postmodum in libertatem spiritus exivit. Hos pannos infantiae, quos inchoantibus dedit, ipse per prophetam Dominus reprehendit, dicens: Dedi eis praecepta non bona (Ezech. XX, 25). Mala enim quasi mala esse desinunt comparatione pejorum, et bona quasi bona non sunt comparatione meliorum. Nam sicut pejus delinquenti Judaeae de Sodoma atque Samaria dicitur: Justificasti sorores tuas in omnibus abominationibus tuis, quas operata es (Ezech. XVI, 51), ita melioribus Novi Testamenti praeceptis subsequentibus praecepta bona quae rudibus data sunt non bona esse memorantur. Neque enim mentes usui vitae carnalis inhaerentes evehi ab infimis possent, nisi gradatim ducta praedicatione proficerent. Hinc quippe est quod, in Aegypto positis pio justoque moderamine latenti eorum concupiscentiae condescenditur, et vicinorum suorum vasis aureis argenteisque sublatis, discedere jubentur (Exod. III, 22). Qui ad Sina

montem ducti, accepta lege, mox audiunt: Non concupisces rem proximi tui (Exod. XX, 17). Et hinc est 914 quod in eadem lege oculum pro oculo, dentem pro dente praecipiuntur exigere (Exod. XXI, 24), et quandoque tamen, revelata gratia, percussi maxillam alteram jubentur praebere (Matth. V, 3). Quia enim plus semper ira in vindicta exigit quam injuria accepit, dum discunt mala non multiplicius reddere, quandoque discerent ea et multiplicata sponte tolerare. Hinc est quod eumdem rudem populum a quibusdam prohibuit, quaedam vero ei in usum pristinum servavit, sed haec ipsa tamen in melioris vitae figura composuit. Bruta namque animalia idolis in Aegypto mactabant, eique in usum postmodum animalium mactationem retinuit, sed idolorum cultum vetavit, ut dum de usu suo aliquid amitteret, consolaretur ejus infirmitas per hoc quod de usu suo aliquid haberet. Mira autem dispensatione consilii, quod ei Dominus de consuetudine carnali retinuit, hoc in figuram spiritus potentius vertit. Quid enim sacrificia illorum animalium nisi unigeniti mortem designant? Quid sacrificia illorum animalium nisi exstinctionem carnalis nostrae vitae significant? Unde ergo imbecillitati populi rudis condescenditur, inde ei per obumbratas allegoriarum species major fortitudo spiritus nuntiatur. Recte itaque dicitur: Et caligine illud quasi pannis infantiae obvolverem, quia unde ejus teneritudinis infirma pertulit, inde altam significationum spiritalium nubem fecit. [Vet. XVIII.] 42. Immoderatis animi motibus opposita novae vitae praecepta exemplis Christi roborata. Quem quia praeceptorum limite ab immoderatis animi evagationibus cinxit, recte subjicit: Circumdedi illud terminis meis. Et quia hujus humani generis motus misso Mediatore coercuit, apte subjungit: Et posui vectem et ostia. Vectem quippe et ostia posuit, quia Redemptore nostro contra culpas delinquentium misso, novae vitae praedicamenta firmavit. Clausa namque ostia opposito vecte roborantur. Vectem ergo Deus opposuit, quia contra lascivos motus humani generis unigenitum misit, qui praecepta spiritalia, quae loquendo docuit,

agendo solidavit. Bene autem subditur: Et dixi: Hucusque venies, et non procedes amplius, et hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos. Hoc quippe mare ostia priora transcenderat, quia claustra legis oppositae humani tumoris unda transiliebat. At postquam mundus oppositum sibi unigenitum reperit, elationis suae impetum fregit, et transire non valuit, quia ejus fortitudine furoris sui terminum clausum invenit. Unde recte per Prophetam dicitur: Mare vidit, et fugit (Psal. CXIII, 3). Possunt etiam per ostia apertae passiones ejus non inconvenienter intelligi. Quibus ex occulto vectem posuit, quia eas ex invisibili divinitate roboravit. Contra quas mundi fluctus veniunt, sed fracti dissiliunt, quia superbi eas videndo despiciunt, sed earum vires experiendo pertimescunt. Nam dum passiones unigeniti humanum genus prius irrisit, postmodum expavit; quasi contra opposita ostia, more elidendi maris, et tumore elatum venit, et fractum virtute dissiluit. Sed quia idcirco hoc ad beatum Job dicitur, ut de tot virtutibus cordis ejus gloria premeretur, ne sibi fortasse tribuat quod se stare sublimiter non ignorat, cum quanta ejus aedificatione sint dicta perpendimus, 915 si haec etiam moraliter disseramus. Dicat itaque:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 8. Quis conclusit ostiis mare? 43. Cor humanum mare fervens, quod Deus solus valet coercere. Quid est mare, nisi cor nostrum furore turbidum, rixis amarum, elatione superbiae tumidum, fraude malitiae obscurum? Quod mare quantum saeviat, attendit quisquis in se occultas cogitationum tentationes intelligit. Ecce enim jam perversa relinquimus, jam desideriis rectis inhaeremus, jam prava opera foris abscindimus; sed tamen latenter intus ea cum qua huc venimus vitae veteris procella fatigamur, quam nisi respectu judicii et aeterni pavore tormenti immensi timoris claustra constringerent, cuncta in nobis penitus superaedificati operis fundamenta corruissent. Si enim quod per suggestionem saevit intrinsecus, per

deliberationem foras erumperet, vitae nostrae fabrica funditus eversa jacuisset. In iniquitate namque concepti, et in delicto editi (Psal. L, 7), per insitae corruptionis molestias pugnam nobiscum huc deferimus, quam cum labore vincamus. Unde et recte de hoc mari dicitur: Quando erumpebat, quasi de vulva procedens. Vulva enim pravae cogitationis adolescentia est. De qua per Moysen Dominus dicit: Sensus enim et cogitatio humani cordis prona est in malum ab adolescentia sua (Genes. VIII, 21). Corruptionis namque malum, quod unusquisque nostrum ab ortu desideriorum carnalium sumpsit, in provectu aetatis exercet; et nisi hoc citius divinae formidinis manus reprimat, omne conditae naturae bonum repente culpa in profundum vorat. Nemo igitur sibi cogitationum suarum victoriam tribuat, cum Veritas dicat: Quis conclusit ostiis mare, quando erumpebat, quasi de vulva procedens? Quia nisi ab ipso cogitationis primordio cordis fluctus gratia divina retineret, tentationum procellis mare saeviens terram procul dubio humanae mentis obruisset, ut salsis fluctibus perfusa aresceret, id est perniciosis carnis voluptatibus delectata deperiret. Solus ergo Dominus ostiis mare concludit, qui pravis motibus cordis claustra inspiratae formidinis objicit. Quia vero ea quae cernimus sequi prohibemur, quia a corporearum rerum delectatione retundimur, libet etiam ad invisibilia oculos mentis attollere, atque haec ipsa quae sequi praecipimur videre. Sed quid agimus? Infirmis illa obtutibus necdum patent. Ecce ad eorum amorem vocamur, sed tamen a visione restringimur, quia et si quando aliquid furtim parumque aspicimus, sub incerto nimis adhuc visu caligamus. Unde apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XX [Vet. XIX].

VERS. 9. Cum ponerem nubem vestimentum ejus, et caligine illud quasi pannis infantiae obvolverem. 44. Hoc mare tenebris et caligine obvolvitur. Hoc mare tumultuosum, videlicet cogitationibus fluctuans cor nostrum nube

vestitur, quia ne internam quietem pure conspiciat, inquietudinis suae confusione tenebratur. Hoc mare caligine quasi pannis infantiae obvolvitur, quia a contemplandis sublimibus adhuc teneris sensibus suae infirmitatis ligatur. Videamus Paulum quadam caligine quasi infantiae pannis obvolutum, dum ait: Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte, tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum (I Cor. XIII, 12). Qui si se ad comprehendenda coelestia infantem non cerneret, aetatis suae 916 ad haec comparationem nullo modo praemisisset, dicens: Cum essem parvulus, loquebar ut parvulus, sapiebam ut parvulus, cogitabam ut parvulus. Tunc ergo ad robur juvenile conscendimus, cum forti sensu eam ad quam tendimus vitam videmus; nunc autem quia intentionis nostrae acies per infirmitatem suam ab interna luce retunditur, mens nostra ligata infantiae pannis tenetur. Ubi apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 10. Circumdedi illud terminis meis. 45. Qui termini huic mari positi. Terminis enim suis Dominus hoc mare circumdat, quia cor nostrum adhuc corruptionis suae molestia et cura turbulentum sub mensura contemplationis humiliat, ut licet plus appetat, ultra tamen quam sibi conceditur non ascendat. Vel certe terminis suis Dominus hoc mare circumdat, quia cor nostrum tentationibus tumidum occultis donorum distributionibus mitigat, modo agens ne prava suggestio ad delectationem veniat, modo ne prava delectatio usque ad consensum prorumpat. Qui ergo illicitos motus cordis respicit, et in quibusdam eos usque ad consensum venire prohibet, in quibusdam vero illos etiam a delectatione restringit, nimirum furenti mari terminos imponit, ut nequaquam in opere exeat, sed intra sinum mentis tentationum submurmurans se unda collidat. Quae quia tunc valenter restringitur, cum ei delectatione Dei atque inspiratis virtutibus obviatur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXII VERS.

10, 11. Et posui vectem et ostia, et dixi. Hucusque venies, et non procedes amplius; et hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos. 46. Virtutes dissipat illud mare saeviens, nisi charitate firmentur. Quid enim moraliter per ostia, nisi virtutes; quid per vectem, nisi robur charitatis accipimus? Haec itaque ostia, scilicet operationum virtututes, mare saeviens dissipat, nisi eas ex occulto mentis opposita charitas astringat. Facile autem omne virtutum bonum tentatione cordis irruente destruitur, nisi ab intimis fixa charitate solidetur. Unde et Paulus in suis praedicationibus dum quaedam virtutum ostia mari tentationis opponeret, illico eisdem ostiis quasi robur vectis adjunxit, dicens: Super omnia autem haec charitatem habentes, quod est vinculum perfectionis (Coloss. III, 14). Perfectionis enim vinculum charitas dicitur, quia omne bonum quod agitur nimirum per illam ne pereat ligatur. A tentatore namque citius quodlibet opus evellitur, si solutum a vinculo charitatis invenitur; si autem mens Dei ac proximi dilectione constringitur, cum tentationum motus quaelibet ei injusta suggesserint, obicem se illis ipsa dilectio opponit, et pravae suasionis undas virtutum ostiis ac vecte intimi amoris frangit. [Vet. XX.] Quia ergo Dominus per inspiratae charitatis fortitudinem nascentia in corde vitia reprimit, insurgentis maris impetum per obserata claustra compescit. Ira fortasse in occulto exasperat; sed ne quies superna perdatur, perturbationi mentis officium linguae subtrahitur, ne usque ad vocem exeat, quod in sinu cordis tumultuosum sonat. Luxuria in occultis cogitationibus accenditur; sed ne supernam munditiam mens amittat, conceptae immunditiae ea quae famulari poterant membra castigat, ne usque ad corruptionem corporis exhalet fetor cordis. Avaritia stimulat; sed ne coelesti regno mens careat, 917 intra claustra se parcimoniae contenta propriis ligat, ne in pravo se opere dilatet, et usque ad exteriores actus internae concupiscentiae aestus exsudet. Superbia inflat; sed ne veram celsitudinem amittat, considerando quisque quia pulvis est ab

altitudine se conceptae elationis humiliat, certans nimirum ne quod in suggestione cogitationis tolerat in exercitationem operis erumpat. Bene ergo dicitur: Posui vectem et ostia, et dixi: Hucusque venies, et non procedes amplius, et hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos, quia dum electus quisque et tentatur vitiis, et tamen facere male suggesta renititur, quasi mare clausum tenetur. Quod 918 etsi intus tumultuosis cogitationum fluctibus mentem percutit, statuta tamen bene vivendi littora non excedit. Quod mare quidem in tumore se erigit, sed dum fixa deliberatione cordis illiditur, fractum redit. Beatus igitur Job ne sibi tribuat quod contra procellas cordis fortiter stat, voce divina audiat: Quis conclusit ostiis mare, quando erumpebat, quasi de vulva procedens, et caetera. Ac si ei aperte diceretur: Incassum te exterius in bonis operibus pensas, si non me interius, qui in te tentationis undas compesco, consideras. Ut enim tu fluctus ferre possis in opere, meae virtutis est, qui fluctus frango tentationis in corde.

LIBER VIGESIMUS NONUS.

Explicantur capitis XXXVIII versus duo supra viginti a 12 ad 33 inclusive; multaque docentur, praesertim de Satanae artibus et insidiis, de gratia, de praedestinatione, reprobatione occultisque Dei judiciis.

CAPUT PRIMUM 1.

Dei Filius in aeterna nativitate nobis ignotus, nasci voluit in tempore, ut se imitandum praeberet. Dominus Deus noster Jesus Christus in eo quod virtus et sapientia Dei est, de Patre ante tempora natus est (I Cor. I, 24); vel potius quia nec coepit nasci, nec desiit, dicamus verius semper natus. Non autem possumus dicere semper nascitur, ne imperfectus videatur. At vero ut aeternus designari valeat et perfectus, semper dicamus et natus, quatenus et natus ad perfectionem pertineat, et semper ad aeternitatem, ut quocunque modo illa essentia sine tempore temporali valeat designari sermone; quamvis hoc ipso quod perfectum dicimus, multum ab illius veritatis expressione deviamus, quia quod factum non est non potest dici perfectum. Et tamen infirmitatis nostrae verbis Dominus condescendens, ait: Estote perfecti, sicut et Pater vester coelestis perfectus est (Matth. V, 48). In illa itaque nativitate divina ab humano genere cognosci non poterat; proinde in humanitate venit ut videretur, videri voluit ut imitaretur. Quae carnis nativitas despecta visa est sapientibus mundi; contempserunt namque infirma humanitatis ejus, Deo haec indigna judicantes. Cui tanto magis homo debitor fuit, quanto pro illo Deus etiam indigna suscepit. Quia enim non cognovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere credentes (I Cor. I, 21). Ac si diceret: Cum Deum, qui est sapientia, nequaquam per sapientiam suam mundus inveniret, placuit ut Deum hominem factum per humanitatis stultitiam cognosceret, quatenus ejus sapientia ad nostra stulta descenderet, et lucem supernae

prudentiae luto suae carnis illuminata nostra caecitas videret. Natus igitur ex Patre sine tempore, ex matre nasci est dignatus in tempore, ut per hoc quod ortum suum inter initium finemque concluderet, humanae mentis oculis ortum, qui nec initio sumitur, nec fine angustatur, aperiret. Unde bene nunc ad beatum Job dicitur:

CAPUT II [Rec.

II.] VERS. 12. Nunquid post ortum tuum praecepisti diluculo, et ostendisti aurorae locum suum? 2. Orto Domino, Ecclesia tanquam aurora a tenebris in lucem versa. Subaudis ut ego. Ortus quippe divinitatis ejus ante et post non habet. Cui dum semper esse est per aeternitatem, dum omne quod labitur circumscribit, intra semetipsum temporum discursus claudit. Ortus vera humanitatis ejus, quia et coepit, et desiit, et ante et post habere a tempore accepit. Sed quia, dum ipse umbras nostrae temporalitatis suscepit, lumen nobis suae aeternitatis infudit, recte post hunc ortum quem creator sibi in tempore condidit locum suum sine tempore aurora cognovit. Quia enim diluculum vel aurora a tenebris in lucem vertitur, non immerito diluculi vel aurorae nomino omnis electorum Ecclesia designatur. Ipsa namque dum ab infidelitatis nocte ad lucem fidei ducitur, velut aurorae more in diem post tenebras splendore supernae claritatis aperitur. Unde et bene in Canticis canticorum dicitur: Quae est ista quae progreditur quasi aurora consurgens (Cant. VI, 9)? Sancta enim Ecclesia coelestis vitae praemia appetens, aurora vocata est, quia dum peccatorum tenebras deserit, justitiae luce fulgescit. [Vet. II.] 3. Quandiu vivimus, aurora est, non perfectus dies. Habemus tamen subtilius aliquid quod considerata qualitate diluculi vel aurorae pensemus. Aurora namque vel diluculum noctem quidem praeteriisse nuntiant, nec tamen diei claritatem integram ostentant; sed dum illam pellunt, hanc suscipiunt, lucem tenebris permistam tenent. Quid itaque in hac vita omnes qui veritatem sequimur, nisi aurora vel

diluculum sumus? quia et quaedam jam quae lucis sunt agimus, et tamen in quibusdam adhuc tenebrarum reliquiis non caremus. Per Prophetam quippe Deo dicitur: Non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens (Psal. CXLII, 2). Rursumque scriptum est: In multis offendimus omnes (Jac. III, 2). Paulus quoque ait: Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis (Rom. VII, 23). Ubi ergo lex peccati 919 cum lege mentis contendit, profecto adhuc aurora est, quia lux quae jam emicuit, necdum praetereuntes funditus tenebras pressit. Adhuc aurora est, quia dum lex carnis legem mentis, et lex mentis legem carnis percutit, inter se vicissim lux et umbra confligit. Unde rursum Paulus cum diceret: Nox praecessit (Rom. XIII, 12), nequaquam subdidit, Dies venit, sed Dies autem appropinquavit. Qui enim post discessum noctis jam non venisse sed appropinquasse diem insinuat, esse se procul dubio ante solem post tenebras adhuc in aurora demonstrat. 4. Dies erit, cum nullae peccati tenebrae supererunt. Tunc autem plene sancta electorum Ecclesia dies erit, cum ei admista peccati umbra jam non erit. Tunc plene dies erit, quando interni luminis perfecto fervore claruerit. Tunc plene dies erit, quando nullam malorum suorum tentantem memoriam tolerans, omnes a se tenebrarum etiam reliquias abscondet. Unde et bene haec aurora quasi adhuc in transitu demonstratur, cum dicitur: Et ostendisti aurorae locum suum. Cui enim locus suus ostenditur, profecto ex alio ad aliud vocatur. Quid est enim locus aurorae, nisi perfecta claritas visionis aeternae? Ad quem cum perducta venerit, jam de transactae noctis tenebris nihil habet. Nunc autem adhuc tentationum molestias sustinens, quia per intentionem cordis ad aliud festinat Ecclesia, ad locum suum tendit aurora. Quem locum si mente non cerneret, in hujus vitae nocte remaneret. Sed cum quotidie contendit perfici, et in lucem quotidie augeri, locum suum jam conspicit, et plene sibi clarescere solem quaerit. Locum suum aurora considerat, quando sancta anima ad contemplandam conditoris sui speciem

flagrat. Ad locum suum pertingere aurora satagebat, cum David diceret: Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum, quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei (Psal. XLI, 3)? Locum suum veritas aurorae monstrabat, cum per Salomonem diceret: Quid habet amplius sapiens a stulto; et quid pauper, nisi ut pergat illuc ubi est vita (Eccl. VI, 8)? Quem profecto locum etiam praecedentibus incarnationem suam patribus post ortum suum Dominus ostendit, quia nisi per prophetiae spiritum, incarnandum supernae patriae regem cognoscerent, bona ejusdem patriae quam essent desiderabilia non viderent. Locum suum veritas aurorae patefecit, cum Patrem coram discipulis petiit, dicens: Pater, quos dedisti mihi, volo ut ubi ego sum et illi sint mecum (Joan. XVII, 24). Locum suum aurorae monstravit, cum diceret: Ubicunque fuerit corpus, illic congregabuntur et aquilae (Matth. XXIV, 28). Ad hunc locum quem cognoverat pervenire aurora festinabat, cum Paulus desiderium habere se diceret dissolvi, et cum Christo esse.: Et rursum Mihi vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum (Philip. I, 21). Et rursum: Scimus quoniam si terrestris domus nostra hujus habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem ex Deo habemus, domum non manufactam, aeternam in coelis (II Cor. V, 4). Bene autem post ortum suum locum proprium aurorae ostendisse se perhibet, quia futurae retributionis beatitudinem, priusquam per corpus ipse innotesceret, in paucorum intellectu continuit. Cum vero humanae nativitatis infirma suscepit, venturae claritatis notitiam 920 in multitudinis innumerae amore dilatavit. Sed cum divini operis mysterium sic misericordia peragat, ut tamen et ira comitetur, quatenus occultus arbiter alios respiciens redimat, alios deserens perdat, quia cognovimus quomodo per incarnationem suam electos illuminet, audiamus nunc quomodo reprobos damnet. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. III].

VERS. 13. Nunquid tenuisti concutiens extrema terrae, et excussisti impios ex ea? 5. Dominus abjectos et humiles elegit. Extrema terrae Dominus tenuit, quia in fine saeculorum ad destitutam jam et alienigenis regibus subditam synagogam venit; atque ex illa impios excussit, quia spiritalia fidei praedicamenta renuentes, etiam a carnalis sacrificii gloria repulit. Vel certe extrema terrae tenuit, quia ex Judaea paucos abjectos et humiles elegit (Matth. IV, 18, seq.). Extrema terrae tenuit, quia legis doctores deserens, piscatores assumpsit. Dumque ejus extrema tenet, ex ea impios excutit, quia dum infirmos fideles roborat, fortes in illa infideles damnat. Recte vero etiam concutiens addidit, quia per adventum suum immensa formidine etiam reproborum corda commovit. Concussi quippe fuerant qui dicebant: Nihil proficimus, ecce totus mundus post eum abiit (Joan. XII, 19). Res autem quae concutitur huc illucque ducta fatigatur. Concussa ergo Judaea fuerat, quae de Christo per alios dicebat: Quia bonus est (Joan. VII, 12). Et per alios resistebat, dicens: Non, sed seducit turbas (Ibid.). Per alios dicebat: Nisi hic esset a Deo, non poterat facere quidquam (Joan. IX, 33). Atque ad extremum per alios clamat; Si non esset hic malefactor, non tibi tradidissemus eum (Joan. XVIII, 30). Concussi quidem, sed non prostrati sunt reprobi, cum modo miracula obstupescentes cernerent, modo infirmitatis opprobria despicientes irriderent. An non concussi fuerant, qui dicebant: Quousque animam nostram tollis? si tu es Christus, dic nobis palam (Joan. X, 24). Vel certe extrema terrae concussit et tenuit, quia cum infirma corda humilium pio timore terruit, nequaquam ea judicio districto dereliquit. Inde enim multitudo credentium in Deum robustius stetit, unde in se humiliata trepidavit. Nam quia eum Deus quem concutit tenet, insinuat per prophetam, dicens: Super quem requiescet spiritus meus, nisi super humilem et quietum, et trementem sermones meos (Isai. LXVI, 2, sec. LXX)? Quia eum quem concutit tenet, Salomone attestante intimatur, quia ait: Beatus vir qui semper est pavidus; qui autem mentis est durae, corruit in

malum (Prov. XXVIII, 14). Igitur quia extrema Judaeae Dominus in apostolis tenuit, atque ex illa Scribas et Pharisaeos ac pontifices impietatis suae merito exigente reprobavit, quid adhuc de eorum damnatione subdatur audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 14. Restituetur ut lutum signaculum, et stabit sicut vestimentum. 6. Judaei ab lateritio opere prius liberati, dum terrena sapiunt, iterum ad lateres redierunt. Quid aliud Dominus plebem Israeliticam nisi lutum reperit, quam obsequiis gentilium deditam in Aegypto servientem lateribus invenit? Quam dum tot miraculis ad terram repromissionis duxit (Exod. V, seq.), dum perductam cognitionis suae scientia implevit, dum tot arcana secretorum ei per prophetiam contulit; quid eam aliud quam servandi mysterii signaculum fecit? Ipsa quippe divina prophetia clausum continuit quidquid de se Veritas 921 in fine revelavit. Sed dum post tot divina secreta, post tot percepta miracula in Redemptoris sui adventu, plus terram quam veritatem dilexit, per sacerdotes dicens: Si dimittimus eum sic, omnes credent in eum, et venient Romani, et tollent nostrum locum et gentem (Joan. XI, 48), quasi ad eos quos in Aegypto reliqueret lateres rediit; et quae facta jam Dei signaculum fuerat, ad hoc se iterum quod deseruerat inflexit; lutumque se post signaculum in oculis veritatis exhibuit, cum per impietatis malitiam accepti verbi mysteria perdidit, et sola terrena sapere quae inquinant elegit. 7. Soli litterae servientes Deo per charitatem adhaerere noluerunt. Ubi apte subjungitur: Et stabit sicut vestimentum. Impolita namque et grossiora vestimenta etiam cum induta fuerint, quia induentis membris bene applicata non inhaerent, stare feruntur. Judaea igitur circa veritatis notitiam etiam cum servire videretur, sicut vestimentum stetit, quia per exteriora mandata servire se Domino ostendit, sed adhaerere ei per charitatis intelligentiam noluit. Dum solam in praeceptis Dei litteram tenuit, et nequaquam se per

spiritum sensibus intimis junxit, quasi ei qui se induerat non adhaesit. Ubi et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 15. Auferetur ab impiis lux sua. 8. Cognitionem legis amiserunt, quod credere veritati renuerint. Quia dum credere veritati renuunt, cognitionem legis in perpetuum amittunt; et dum de accepta lege superbiunt, nimirum de scientiae suae gloria caecantur. Scriptum quippe est: Obscurentur oculi eorum, ne videant (Psal. LXVIII, 24). Rursumque scriptum est: Excaeca cor populi hujus, et aures ejus aggrava (Isai. VI, 10). Et rursum scriptum est: In judicium ego in hunc mundum veni, ut qui non vident, videant; et qui vident, caeci fiant (Joan. IX, 39). Et quia semetipsos de legis operibus contra conditorem legis extulerunt, apte subditur:

CAPUT VI.

IBID. Et brachium excelsum conteretur. 9. Superba legis observatio reprobata. Excelsum quippe brachium conteritur, quando, praedicata fidei gratia, superba legis operatio reprobatur, cum dicitur: Ex operibus legis non justificabitur omnis caro (Rom. III, 20). 10. Extrema Ecclesiae qui Deus et teneat et concutiat. Cuncta tamen haec intelligi et aliter possunt. Terram quippe Scriptura sacra vocare consuevit Ecclesiam. Extrema igitur terrae Dominus tenet et concutit, quia Ecclesiae suae ultima per adventum Antichristi persecutione immanissima turbari permittit, nec tamen permittendo deserit. Hanc terram aliquando Dominus tenet, et non concutit; aliquando tenet et concutit, quia modo eam tranquilla pace fidei possidet, modo commoveri impetu persecutionis jubet. 11. In Ecclesiae persecutionibus falsi Christiani excutiuntur sicut paleae. Bene autem cum diceret: Nunquid tenuisti concutiens extrema terrae, illico adjunxit: Et excussisti impios ex ea? Attestante enim Paulo, plerique in ea sunt qui

confitentur se nosse Deum, factis autem negant (Tit. I, 16). Impios ergo ex ea Dominus excutit, quia hi quos nunc intima vitia possident, tunc in voraginem apertae infidelitatis cadent; atque in acervum palearum transeunt, cum tentationis illius aura commoventur. Et quamvis se nunc sub specie fidei intra areae sinum tegant, tunc nimirum extra granorum cumulum districti examinis ventilabro resilient. [Rec. IV.] 922 12. In illis signaculum fidei vertitur in lutum. Unde et apte subjungitur: Restituetur ut lutum signaculum. Ac si aperte diceret: Hi qui nunc videntur in Ecclesiae sinu signaculum, tunc ante oculos omnium restituentur ut lutum, id est, nequaquam judicia hominum de professione religionis fallunt, sed quod terrena sapiant, demonstrantur. Solet enim Scriptura sacra pro fide appellare signaculum, pro iniquitate lutum. Nam filius junior qui, consumpta substantia, ad patrem rediit (Luc. XV, 22), in munere annulum accepit. Gentilis enim populus, qui, immortalitate perdita, ad Deum poenitendo revertitur, per fidei signaculum munitur. Unde et a sponso suo Ecclesiae dicitur: Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum (Cant. VIII, 6). Idcirco namque signaculum rebus ponitur, ne qua diripientium praesumptione temerentur. Sponsus ergo in corde signaculum ponitur quando fidei ejus mysterium in custodia nostrae cogitationis imprimitur, ut ille infidelis servus, nimirum noster adversarius, cum signata fide corda considerat, tentando ea irrumpere non praesumat. Per lutum vero terrena contagia demonstrantur, attestante Psalmista qui ait: Eduxisti me de lacu miseriae, et de luto faecis (Psal. XXXIX, 3). Quia igitur multi in terrenis contagiis inventi, perducti ad Ecclesiam, coelestis fidei sacramento signantur, et tamen ab iniquis operibus non recedunt, seque nunc fidei velamine contegunt, sed cum tempus invenerint, quid sint veraciter ostendunt, recte dicitur: Restituetur ut lutum signaculum. Quos enim nunc fideles credimus, ipsos tunc fidei hostes inveniemus; et quamvis appareant non tentati signaculum, erunt procul dubio tentati lutum. Unde et recte dicitur,

Restituetur, quia qualis eorum conscientia esse ante fidem potuit, tales eos post modum reproba vita convincit. De quibus apte subjungitur: Et stabit sicut vestimentum. 13. Multis nunc quasi vestimentis ornatur Ecclesia, quibus, flagrante persecutione, nudabitur. Tot nunc quasi vestibus sancta Ecclesia induitur, quot fidelium veneratione decoratur. Unde et ei ostensis gentilibus, a Domino per prophetam dicitur: Vivo ego, dicit Dominus, quia omnibus his velut ornamento vestieris (Isai. XLIX, 18). Multis tamen quasi fidelibus nunc specie tenus induitur, sed pulsante persecutionis impetu, tunc eis exuta nudabitur; de quorum sorte hic dicitur: Et stabit sicut vestimentum. Stare vero hoc loco ponitur in peccato persistere. Unde scriptum est: Et in via peccatorum non stetit (Psal. I, 1). Vel certe reprobus quisque sicut vestimentum stare dicitur, ut non posse stare monstretur, quia sicut induta vestis in visionis suae specie per corpus tenditur, exuta autem fracta complicatur, ita unusquisque qui a sanctae Ecclesiae tunc statu recesserit, tensus ac decorus quasi dum indueretur fuit, sed exutus postmodum, confractus atque abjectus jacebit. Si vero stare intelligimus perdurare, sicut vestimentum stat quisque reprobus qui in hac vita quam diligit breviter durat. Unde et per Prophetam dicitur: Omnia sicut vestimentum veterascent, et sicut opertorium mutabis ea, et mutabuntur (Psal. CI, 28). Haec itaque, quae allegoriarum nube recta intulit, nunc verbis apertioribus innotescit, subdens:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 15. Auferetur ab impiis lux sua. 14. Credentibus et male viventibus fidei lumen auferetur, maxime persecutionis Antichristi tempore. Neque enim eos nunc Dei lumen illustrat, 923 qui iniquitatis suae malitiam fidei nomine palliant. [Vet. III, Rec. V.] Nam dum juxta praedicationem fidei vivere negligunt, et tamen eamdem fidem specie tenus venerantur, honorem vitae praesentis ex nomine religionis quaerunt, hocque eis ex fide lucet,

quod eos fides coram hominibus refovet. Sunt vero nonnulli, qui aeterna quae audiunt veraciter credunt, et tamen eidem quam tenent fidei male vivendo contradicunt. Habent hi quoque in tenebris lucem suam, quia dum perversa agunt, et tamen de Deo recta sentiunt, ne tenebrescant funditus, ex quadam parte fulgore luminis illustrantur. Qui dum plus terrena quam coelestia, plus quae vident quam quae audiunt, diligunt, pulsante persecutionis articulo, quod rectum credere videbantur amittunt. Quod illo maxime tempore multiplicius agitur, quando, surgente ipso iniquorum capite, in sanctam Ecclesiam persecutione ultima, liberis suis viribus ejus fortitudo grassatur. Ibi tunc cor uniuscujusque ostenditur, ubi quidquid in occultis latebat aperitur; et qui nunc ore sunt pii, et corde sunt impii, publicata malitia corruunt, et lucem fidei quam specie tenus tenuerant perdunt. Sed inter haec necesse est ut unusquisque nostrum ad cordis sui secretum redeat, et actionis suae damna pertimescat, ne, exigentibus meritis, per districtam justitiam judiciorum Dei in talium hominum numerum incurrat. [Rec. VI.] 15. Jam in membris suis vivit et saevit Antichristus. Nemo autem sibi incaute blandiatur, et idcirco se a tali casu extraneum credat, quia ad illius tempestatis procellam pervenire se non existimat. O quanti illius tentationis tempora non viderunt, et tamen in ejus tentationis procella versantur. Cain tempus Antichristi non vidit, et tamen membrum Antichristi per meritum fuit (Genes. IV). Judas saevitiam persecutionis illius ignoravit, et tamen viribus crudelitatis ejus, avaritia suadente, succubuit (Matth. XXVI, 15). Simon divisus longe ab Antichristi temporibus exstitit, et tamen ejus se superbiae, miraculorum potentiam perverse appetendo, conjunxit (Act. VIII, 19). Sic iniquum corpus suo capiti, sic membris membra junguntur, cum et cognitione se nesciunt, et tamen prava sibi actione copulantur. Neque enim Pergamus Balaam libros aut verba cognoverat, et tamen ejus nequitiam sequens, voce supernae increpationis audiebat: Habes illic tenentes doctrinam Balaam, qui docebat

Balac mittere scandalum coram filiis Israel, edere et fornicari (Apoc. II, 14). Thyatirae quoque ecclesiam a Jezabel notitia et tempora et loca dividebant; sed quia eam par vitae reatus astrinxerat, inesse ei Jezabel dicitur, atque operibus perversis insistere, angelo attestante, qui ait: Habeo adversus te aliqua; quia permittis mulierem Jezabel, quae se dicit propheten, docere et seducere servos meos, fornicari et manducare de idolothytis (Ibid., 20). Ecce quia reperiri potuerunt, qui Jezabel vitam reproba actione secuti sunt, Jezabel illic inventa memoratur, quia videlicet pravum corpus conjuncti mores unum faciunt, etiam si hoc loca vel tempora scindunt. Unde fit ut in perversis suis imitatoribus et iniquus quisque maneat qui jam praeteriit, et in suis operatoribus ipse iniquorum auctor jam appareat, 924 qui necdum venit. Hinc Joannes ait: Nunc Antichristi multi facti sunt (I Joan. II, 18), quia iniqui omnes jam ejus membra sunt, quae scilicet perverse edita caput suum male vivendo praevenerunt. Hinc Paulus ait: Ut reveletur in suo tempore; nam mysterium jam operatur iniquitatis (II Thess. II, 6). Ac si diceret: Tunc Antichristus manifestus videbitur; nam in cordibus iniquorum secreta sua jam nunc occultus operatur. Ut enim de apertioribus criminibus taceam, ecce alius fratri in corde suo tacitus invidet, et si occasionem reperiat, eum supplantare contendit; cujus alterius membrum est, nisi ejus de quo scriptum est: Invidia diaboli mors intravit in orbem terrarum (Sap. II, 24)? Alius magni meriti esse se aestimans, per tumorem cordis cunctis se praeferens, omnes semetipso inferiores credit; cujus alterius membrum est, nisi ejus de quo scriptum est: Omne sublime videt, et ipse est rex super universos filios superbiae (Job. XLI, 25)? Alius mundi hujus potentiam quaerit, non quo aliis prosit, sed quo ipse alteri subditus non sit; cujus alterius membrum est, nisi ejus de quo scriptum est: Qui dixit: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis; ascendam super altitudinem nubium; similis ero Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 18)? Solus quippe Altissimus ita dominatur super omnia, ut alteri subesse non possit. Quem diabolus imitari

perverse voluit, cum suum dominium quaerens, ei subesse recusavit. Imitatur ergo diabolum quisquis idcirco potestatem suam appetit, quia ei qui sibi est superna ordinatione praepositus subesse fastidit. [Vet. IV.] 16. Infidelitatis rei sunt, qui veritatem negant. Sunt praeterea plurima quae quosdam in ipsa pace Ecclesiae constitutos infideles esse renuntient. Video namque nonnullos ita personam potentis accipere, ut requisiti ab eo, pro favore ejus non dubitent in causa proximi veritatem negare. Et quis est veritas, nisi ille qui dixit: Ego sum via, veritas, et vita (Joan. XIV, 6)? Neque enim Joannes Baptista de confessione Christi, sed de justitiae veritate requisitus occubuit (Marc. VI, 28); sed quia Christus est veritas, ad mortem usque idcirco pro Christo, quia videlicet pro veritate, pervenit. Ponamus ergo ante oculos quod aliquis percunctatus personam potentis accepit, et ne verbi saltem injuriam pateretur, veritatem negavit. Quid rogo iste faceret in dolore poenarum, qui Christum erubuit inter flagella verborum? Ecce et post haec ante oculos hominum adhuc Christianus est, et tamen si eum Dominus districte disposuit judicare, jam non est. 17. Et qui corrigere, cum teneantur, negligunt. Non desunt in pace Ecclesiae Antichristi tentamenta. Video autem alios, quibus per locum magisterii exhortandi sunt officia arguendique commissa, qui vident aliquid illicitum admitti, et tamen dum quorumdam potentum offendere gratiam metuunt, arguere non praesumunt. Quisquis iste est, quid aliud facit, nisi videt lupum venientem, et fugit (Joan. X, 12)? Fugit, quia tacuit; tacuit, quia, despecta aeterna gratia, temporalem gloriam plus amavit. Ecce ante potentis faciem intra sui se latebras silentii abscondit, et sicut persecutioni publicae, sic occulto locum dedit timori. Bene de talibus dicitur: Dilexerunt gloriam hominum magis quam Dei (Joan. XII, 43). Quisquis igitur talis est, si haec districte judicantur, etsi persecutio publica defuit, tamen tacendo 925 Christum negavit. Non ergo desunt vel in pace Ecclesiae Antichristi tentamenta. Nemo itaque illa persecutionis extremae tempora quasi sola

perhorrescat. Apud iniquos namque quotidie res Antichristi agitur, quia in eorum cordibus mysterium suum jam nunc, occultus operatur. Et si multi nunc specie tenus intra Ecclesiam constituti simulant se esse quod non sunt, in adventu tamen judicis prodentur quod sunt: de quibus bene Salomon ait: Vidi impios sepultos, qui etiam cum adhuc viverent, in loco sancto erant, et laudabantur in civitate, quasi justorum operum (Eccle. VIII, 10). Igitur postquam de iniquis dictum est, Restituetur ut lutum signaculum, et stabit sicut vestimentum, et auferetur ab impiis lux sua, quod utique in illa est Antichristi persecutione faciendum, mox, de ejusdem Antichristi perditione nos consolans, ait

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. 15. Et brachium excelsum conteretur. 18. Antichristi superbia et casus. Angelus et homo lapsi, quia Deo similes esse per potentiam, non per justitiam, voluerunt. Quid namque aliud excelsum brachium accipitur, nisi superba Antichristi celsitudo, quae super reprobas mentes hominum fastu gloriae saecularis erigitur, ita ut homo peccator, et tamen aestimari homo despiciens, Deum se super homines mentiatur? Unde et Paulus apostolus dicit: Ita ut in templo Dei sedeat, ostendens se tanquam sit Deus (II Thess. II, 4). Cujus ut tumorem plenius ostenderet, praemisit: Qui adversatur et extollitur super omne quod dicitur Deus, aut quod colitur (Ibid.). Deus enim dici aliquando et homo potest, juxta quod ad Moysen dicitur: Ecce constitui te Deum Pharaonis (Exod. VII, 1). Deus vero coli purus homo non potest. Quia vero se Antichristus et super sanctos quosque homines, et super ipsius potentiam divinitatis extollit, per exactum sibi nomen gloriae, et hoc quod Deus dicitur, et hoc quod Deus colitur, transire conatur. Notandum vero est in quantam superbiae foveam cecidit, qui in mensura ruinae qua lapsus est non permansit. Diabolus quippe vel homo a statu conditionis propriae elata mente corruerunt, ut vel ille diceret: Ascendam super altitudinem nubium,

similis ero Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 13); vel iste audiens crederet: Aperientur oculi vestri, et eritis sicut dii (Genes. III, 5). Idcirco ergo uterque cecidit, quia esse Deo similis non per justitiam, sed per potentiam concupivit. Sed homo per gratiam liberatus, qui Dei similitudinem perverse appetendo ceciderat, in reatu criminis sui longe Deo imparem se esse cognoscens clamat: Domine, quis similis tibi (Psal. LXXXVIII, 8)? Diabolus vero in lapsu sui criminis justi dimissus, in mensura ruinae suae minime permansit; sed quanto diutius ab omnipotentis gratia defuit, tanto magis reatum criminis cumulavit. Nam qui ideo cecidit, quia perverso ordine Deo esse similis voluit, eo usque perductus est, ut in Antichristum veniens, videri Deo similis dedignetur, atque eum quem habere non potuit superbus aequalem, damnatus inferiorem putet. Nam cum de illo hoc quod jam praemisimus dicitur: Extollens se supra omne quod dicitur Deus, aut quod colitur (II Thess. II, 4), aperte monstratur quia appetendo dudum Dei similitudinem, quasi juxta Deum erigere se voluit, sed in superbiae culpa crescendo, jam se supra omne quod Deus dicitur et colitur extollit. Quia ergo haec ejus superbia districti judicis erit adventu ferienda, sicut scriptum est: Quem Dominus Jesus interficiet spiritu oris sui, 926 et destruet illustratione adventus sui (Ibid., 8), recte dicitur: Et brachium excelsum conteretur. 9. Verbi divini, quo plus teritur, virtus magis augetur. Cuncta tamen haec, quae bis discussa sunt, adhuc intelligi et aliter possunt. Verba enim Dei quasi pigmenta quaedam nostri sunt adjutorii. Et sicut pigmentum quanto plus teritur, tanto plus in poculo ejus virtus augetur, ita divina eloquia quo magis exponendo conterimus, eo audientes amplius quasi bibentes juvamus. [Vet. V.] Quia igitur misericors Deus diu peccata hominum tolerat, et cum jam vicinum finem respicit, plerumque mentes peccantium immutat, recte de se, vim tantae pietatis insinuans, ait:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 13. Nunquid tenuisti concutiens extrema terrae, et excussisti impios ex ea? 20. Deus hominem non deserit, et in extremis electos sollicitius purgat. Per terram quippe homo infima sapiens designatur, cui peccanti dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Sed quia pius conditor facturam suam non deserit, mala hominum et per suam sapientiam tolerat, et per eorum quandoque conversionem relaxat. Cum autem duras atque insensibiles mentes respicit, modo eas minis, modo verberibus, modo revelationibus terret, ut quae pessima securitate duruerant, salubri timore molescant, quatenus vel sero redeant, et hoc ipsum saltem, quod diu exspectati sunt erubescant. Sic enim Dominus quia extrema vitae nostrae plus judicat, et idcirco electos suos in fine sollicitius purgat. Scriptum quippe est: Deus judicabit fines terrae (I Reg. II, 10). Tanto ergo impensius ultimis nostris invigilat, quanto in ipsis pendere initia vitae sequentis pensat. Quod quia misericorditer facit, pietate sua in medium deducta, qua etiam sero conversos peccatores recipit, beati Job justitiam erudit, dicens: Nunquid tenuisti concutiens extrema terrae, et excussisti impios ex ea? Subaudis ut ergo, qui in suis ultimis saepe peccatores terrendo concutio, convertendo teneo, atque ab eorum cordibus impios cogitationum motus evello. Et recte beato Job Dominus quomodo juxta finem peccatores convertat insinuat. Ac si aperte dicat: Misericordiae meae potentiam respice, et tuae justitiae elationem preme. Quae extrema hominis quia, etiam cum convertitur per carnis mortem, illa antiquae culpae vindicta comitatur, protinus insinuat, cum dicit.

CAPUT X.

VERS. 14. Restituetur ut lutum signaculum, et stabit sicut vestimentum. 21. Homo Dei signaculum et imago, in poenam superbiae, per mortem fit terra et cinis. Hominem quippe Dominus, quem ad suam similitudinem condidit, quasi quoddam suae potentiae signaculum fecit. Quod tamen ut lutum

restituetur, quia licet aeterna supplicia per conversionem fugiat, in ultione tamen perpetratae superbiae carnis morte damnatur. Ex luto quippe homo conditus, et mentis accepta ratione, similitudine divinae imaginis decoratus, elatione cordis intumescens, quod de infimis formatus esset oblitus est. Unde mira conditoris justitia actum est ut quia per sensum intumuit, quem rationabilem accepit, rursus terra per mortem fieret, quam esse se considerare humiliter noluit; et quia peccando Dei similitudinem perdidit, moriendo vero ad limi sui materiam redit, recte dicitur: Restituetur ut lutum signaculum. Et quia de corpore dum spiritus vocatur, quodam quasi involucro suae carnis exuitur, 927 apte de eodem luto subjungitur: Et stabit sicut vestimentum. Lutum namque nostrum sicut vestimentum stare est usque ad resurrectionis tempus inane exutumque perdurare. Sed quia hanc poenam superbiae nec illi transeunt, qui et eamdem superbiam vivendo humiliter vincunt; quae sit superbientium specialis poena, subjungit dicens:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 15. Auferetur ab impiis lux sua, et brachium excelsum confringetur. 22. Mors quae electos luci restituit, reprobis lucem, nimirum praesentis vitae gloriam tollit. Mors enim carnis, quae electos luci suae restituit, lucem suam reprobis tollit. Lux namque superbientis est gloria vitae praesentis. Quae ei lux tunc subtrahitur, cum per carnis interitum ad retributionum suarum tenebras vocatur. Ibi tunc excelsum brachium confringitur, quia celsitudo cordis ultra naturae ordinem violenter arrepta opprimentis se divinae justitiae mole dissipatur, ut quia se perverse in brevi erexerat, per pondus judicii in aeternum fracta cognoscat. Nullus autem nostrum quid post mortem sequeretur agnosceret, nisi vitae nostrae conditor ad poenam usque mortis nostrae veniret. Nisi enim ipse misericorditer infima peteret, nequaquam nos post suam imaginem perditos juste ad summa revocaret. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XII [Rec. VII].

VERS. 16. Nunquid ingressus es profundum maris, et in novissimis abyssi deambulasti? 23. Dominus non solum in mundum, sed etiam in infernum pro nobis descendit. Ac si dicat: Ut ego, qui non solum mare, id est saeculum, per assumptam humanam carnem atque animam petii, sed etiam per eam sponte in morte positam, usque ad ultima inferni, quasi ad maris profunda descendi. Si enim mare, more divini eloquii, saeculum debet intelligi, nihil prohibet profunda maris inferni claustra sentiri. Quod profundum maris Dominus petiit, cum inferni novissima, electorum suorum animas erepturus, intravit. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Posuisti profundum maris viam, ut transirent liberati (Isai. LI, 10). Hoc namque profundum maris ante Redemptoris adventum non via, sed carcer fuit, quia in se etiam bonorum animas, quamvis non in locis poenalibus, clausit. Quod tamen profundum viam Dominus posuit, quia illuc veniens, electos suos a claustris inferni ad coelestia transire concessit. Unde et apte illic dicitur: Ut transirent libertati (Ibid., 10). Quod vero profundum maris dixerat, hoc, aliis verbis replicans, abyssi novissimum vocat, quia sicut aquarum abyssus nulla nostra visione comprehenditur, ita occulta inferni nullo a nobis cognitionis sensu penetrantur. Qui enim hinc subtrahantur cernimus, sed quae illos juxta meritum retributio suppliciorum maneat, non videmus. [Vet. VI.] 24. In inferno deambulavit, quia liber ad ligatos venit. Vigilanti vero est cura pensandum quod in novissimo abyssi deambulasse se perhibet. Deambulare quippe non constricti, sed liberi est. Quem enim vincula stringunt, ejus nihilominus gressus impediunt. Quia igitur Dominus nulla peccati vincula pertulit, in inferno deambulavit. Liber quippe ad ligatos venit. Unde scriptum est: Factus sum sicut homo sine adjutorio, inter mortuos liber (Psal. LXXXVII, 5). In novissimis ergo abyssi Domino deambulare est in loco damnationis nihil suae retentionis invenire, attestante Petro, qui ait: Solutis doloribus inferni, juxta quod impossibile erat teneri

illum ab eo (Act. II, 24). Vel certe quia deambulando nos cum de loco 928 ad locum ducimur, hic illicque praesentes invenimur; deambulasse in inferno Dominus dicitur, ut electis animabus in locis singulis per divinitatis potentiam praesens fuisse monstraretur. Unde et spiritus sapientiae mobilis describitur (Sap. VII, 4), ut per hoc quod nusquam deest, ubique nobis occurrere designetur. Quam descensionem suam Dominus tanto mirabilem respicit, quanto eam redempto homini crebrius infundit. Eam namque adhuc replicans subdit:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 17. Nunquid apertae sunt tibi portae mortis, et ostia tenebrosa vidisti? 25. Portas mortis, hoc est potestates adversas superavit. Portae enim mortis sunt potestates adversae. Quas descendens Dominus aperuit, quia earum fortitudinem moriendo superavit. Quae appellatione quoque alia tenebrosa ostia vocantur, quia dum per occultationis suae insidias non videntur, deceptis mentibus viam mortis aperiunt. Quae tenebrosa ostia Dominus videt, quia immundorum spirituum fraudulentam malitiam et respicit et premit. Quos nisi ipse nobis nescientibus videndo prohiberet, et nil de insidiis eorum mens nostra cognosceret, et eisdem insidiis capta deperiret. Quae tenebrosa etiam nos ostia cernimus, quando supernae lucis radiis illustramur. Unde et per prophetam dicitur: Dominus mihi adjutor est, et ego videbo inimicos meos (Psal. CXVII, 7). Hostes igitur nostros ipse videt, qui suo eos munere nobis visibiles facit. Vel certe tenebrosa tunc ostia Dominus vidit, cum claustra inferni penetrans, crudeles spiritus perculit, et mortis praepositos moriendo damnavit. Quod idcirco hic non adhuc de futuro, sed jam de praeterito dicitur, quia hoc quod facturus erat in opere, nimirum jam fecerat in praedestinatione. Quia vero post mortem resurrectionemque ejus crevit Ecclesia, atque in cunctis est gentibus dilatata, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XIV [Vet. VII].

VERS. 18. Nunquid considerasti latitudinem terrae? 26. Morte Christi crevit Ecclesia. Tanquam Samson, plures hostium moriens exstinxit quam vivens. Dum enim Dominus angustias mortis petiit, fidem suam in gentibus dilatavit, atque ad innumera corda credentium sanctam Ecclesiam extendit. Cui per prophetam dicitur: Dilata locum tentorii tui, et pelles tabernaculorum tuorum extende, ne parcas, longos fac funiculos tuos, et clavos tuos consolida; ad dexteram enim et ad laevam penetrabis, et semen tuum gentes haereditabit (Isai. LIV, 2). Quae latitudo terrae profecto non fieret, nisi ipse prius et vitam quam novimus moriendo despiceret, et vitam quam non novimus resurgendo monstraret. In morte quippe sua nostrae oculos mentis aperuit, et quae esset vita quae sequeretur ostendit. Unde et hunc in Evangelio ordinem tenens, discipulis dicit: Sic oportebat Christum pati, et resurgere a mortuis tertia die, et praedicari in nomine ejus poenitentiam, et remissionem peccatorum per omnes gentes (Luc. XXIV, 46). Pauci enim ex plebe Israelitica ipso praedicante crediderunt; innumeri vero gentium populi viam vitae moriente illo secuti sunt. Superbos namque dum adhuc passibilis viveret pertulit, a passibili vero vita mortuus stravit. Quod bene Samson in semetipso dudum figuraliter expressit (Judic. XVI, 30), qui paucos quidem dum viveret interemit; destructo autem templo, hostes innumeros cum moreretur occidit, quia nimirum Dominus ab elatione superbiae paucos cum viveret, plures vero cum templum 929 sui corporis solveretur exstinxit (Joan. II, 19); atque electos ex gentibus quos vivendo sustinuit, simul omnes moriendo prostravit. Recte itaque postquam inferna penetrasse se docuit, considerandam mox terrae latitudinem subjunxit: Nunquid considerasti latitudinem terrae? Ac si flagellato homini diceret: Perpende quid pertuli, et pensa quod emi; nec queraris ipse de verbere, dum nescis quae te praemia maneant in retributione. Inter haec itaque verba creatoris operae pretium puto, si a bono communi ac publico parumper

oculos flectimus, et quid in singulis nobis latenter agat intuemur. Dicit enim:

CAPUT XV [Rec. VIII].

VERS. 16. Nunquid ingressus es profundum maris? 27. Maris profundum Deus ingreditur, cum peccatoris mentem visitat. Mare quippe est mens humana, cujus profunda Deus ingreditur quando per cognitionem suam ad lamenta poenitentiae ab intimis cogitationibus perturbatur, quando prioris vitae nequitias ad memoriam reducit, et fluctuantem in confusione sua animum concutit. Profundum maris Deus penetrat, quando etiam desperata corda permutat. Ipse enim mare intrat quando cor saeculare humiliat, profundum maris ingreditur quando visitare mentes etiam pressas sceleribus non dedignatur. Unde et recte percunctando subjungitur: Et in novissimis abyssi deambulasti? Quae enim est abyssus, nisi mens humana, quae dum semetipsam comprehendere non valet, sese in omne quod est, velut obscura abyssus, latet? Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Dedit abyssus vocem suam, ab altitudine phantasiae suae (Habac. III, 10), quia dum semetipsam mens humana non penetrat, ex comparatione sui, divinae naturae potentiam quam comprehendere non sufficit humilius laudat. 28. In novissimis abyssi deambulat, cum nequissimorum corda convertit. In novissimis ergo abyssi Deo deambulare est etiam nequissimorum corda hominum convertere, et desperatas mentes visitationis suae vestigiis tangendo mirabiliter reformare. Cum enim post immensa scelera, unusquisque compungitur, quid aliud quam in novissimis abyssi Deus deambulans videtur? Quasi in abysso namque Deus deambulat, cum obscurum cor penetrans, fluctus invisibiles vitiorum calcat. Plerumque enim praeterita alia plangimus, et aliis praesentibus urgemur, ut modo superbia, modo ira, modo luxuria, modo avaritia tentante fatigemur. Sed cum cuncta haec in corde nostro Dominus occultae visitationis suae timore reprimit, quid aliud quam in abysso gressus

ponit? Quos gressus mente conspicimus, quando contra insurgentia vitia quomodo timoris ejus obvient dona pensamus. Hos namque gressus Propheta conspexerat, cum dicebat: Visi sunt ingressus tui, Deus, ingressus Dei mei, regis mei, qui est in sancto ipsius (Psal. LXVII, 25). Qui enim inordinatos motus animi divinorum judiciorum memoria in se reprimi conspicit, quasi deambulantis in se gressus Domini videt. Dicatur ergo beato Job: Nunquid ingressus es profundum maris, et in novissimis abyssi deambulasti? Subaudis ut ego, qui mira misericordia in peccatorum cordibus modo iram, modo luxuriam, modo avaritiam, modo surgentem superbiam calco. 930 Ac si ei aperte diceretur: Si latentia cordis vitia me solum reprimere conspicis, tu extolli de propria justificatione cessabis. [Vet. VIII.] Et quia cum divinitus visitamur etiam de occultis et illicitis motibus mentis ad confessionem ducimur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 17. Nunquid apertae sunt tibi portae mortis? 29. Portae mortis sunt cogitationes pravae, quas Deo per confessionem pandimus. Portae enim mortis sunt cogitationes pravae, quas Deo pandimus, quando eas in poenitentia flendo confitemur. Quas etiam non confessas intuetur, sed confessas ingreditur. Tunc quippe viam sibi in portis mortis aperit, quando, solutis pravis cogitationibus, ad nos post confessionem venit. Quae portae mortis idcirco vocatae sunt, quia profecto via ad interitum per iniquas semper cogitationes aperitur. Quod adhuc replicatur, cum subditur: IBID. Et ostia tenebrosa vidisti? 30. Tenebrosa namque ostia sunt latentia mentis mala. Tenebrosa namque ostia sunt latentia mentis mala, quae et haberi intrinsecus possunt, et tamen ab altero videri non possunt. Quae tamen Dominus cernit, quando ea occulto respectu gratiae destruit. Scriptum quippe est: Rex qui sedet in solio judicii, dissipat omne malum intuitu suo (Prov. XX, 8). Et quia omne vitium angustat, omnis vero virtus animum

dilatat, post destructa vitia recte subjungitur: Nunquid considerasti latitudinem terrae? Nisi enim virtus animum dilataret, nequaquam Paulus Corinthiis diceret: Dilatamini et vos, et nolite jugum ducere cum infidelibus (II Cor. VI, 13). Solerter vero intuendum est quod dicitur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 18. Considerasti latitudinem terrae? 31. Sancti dum exterius angustiis premuntur, intus dilatantur. Latitudo namque bonorum interiorum nequaquam comprehenditur, nisi caute consideretur. Nam plerumque eos exterius inopia humiliat, poenae cruciatus angustat; sed tamen inter haec semper interior fortitudo se usque ad speranda coelestia dilatat. Angustati apostoli exterius fuerant, quando flagella sustinebant; sed in magna stabant intus latitudine liberi, qui apud se haec eadem flagella in gaudium verterant. Scriptum namque est: Ibant apostoli gaudentes a conspectu concilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pati (Act. V, 41). Hanc latitudinem inter angustias Paulus invenerat, qui dicebat: Scire autem vos volo, fratres, quia quae circa me sunt magis ad profectum venerunt Evangelii, ita ut vincula mea manifesta fierent in omni praetorio (Philip. I, 12). Hanc latitudinem David inter angustias obtinebat, dicens: In tribulatione dilatasti me (Psal. IV, 2). Tunc itaque haec terra, id est sanctorum conscientia, dilatatur, cum mundi hujus adversitatibus; exterius premitur. Nam cum a praesentis vitae securitate repellitur, intus ad se impingitur, ut ad speranda superna tendatur. Cumque evagari exterius non permittitur, quasi in sinum suum revocata dilatatur. Nos autem quae boni viri adversa tolerent cernimus, sed intus quantum gaudeant non videmus. Mentis eorum latitudinem modo in verbis, modo in operibus considerando cognoscimus, sed tamen quanta in eis amplitudo sit ejusdem latitudinis ignoramus. Audiat ergo 931 humana sapientia, et se insipientem discat: Nunquid considerasti latitudinem terrae? Ac si dicat: ut ego, qui flagellis

cinctam, occultam justorum laetitiam solus plene considero, quia solus misericorder formo. Vel certe idcirco beatus Job utrum terrae latitudinem consideraverit inquiritur, ut exemplo alienae latitudinis humilietur. Ac si ei aperte diceretur: Eos quos innumera mala praesentis vitae nequeunt angustare considera, et de statu cordis tui inter verbera gloriari cessa. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII [Vet.

et Rec. IX]. VERS. 18-20. Indica mihi, si nosti omnia, in qua via habitet lux, et tenebrarum quis locus sit, ut ducas unumquodque ad terminos suos, et intelligas semitas domus ejus. 32. Per lucem justitia, per tenebras iniquitas designatur. Qui in justitia perseveraturi sint, aut in peccato morituri, nos latet. Beatus Job gravi quaestione discutitur, ut et de via lucis, et tenebrarum loco requiratur; ut unumquodque ad suos terminos ducat, ac semitas domus ejus intelligat. Quid enim lucis nomine, nisi justitia accipitur? et quid per tenebras, nisi iniquitas designatur? Unde quibusdam conversis a peccatorum nequitia dicitur: Eratis aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in Domino (Ephes. V, 8). Et de quibusdam in peccato manentibus memoratur: Qui dormiunt, nocte dormiunt (I Thess. V, 7). Beato itaque Job dicitur: Indica mihi si nosti omnia, in qua via habitet lux, et tenebrarum quis locus sit? Ac si dicatur ei: Si plenam te habere scientiam suspicaris, dic vel in cujus cor ea quae nunc deest, innocentia veniat, vel in cujus corde ea quae nunc est malitia perseveret. In qua via habitet lux, id est cujus mentem veniens justitia impleat: Et tenebrarum quis locus sit, id est, in quo iniquitas caeca perduret: Ut ducas unumquodque ad terminos suos, id est, ut dijudices si vel is qui nunc iniquus cernitur, in iniquitate vitam finiat; vel is qui justus cernitur extremitatem vitae suae cum justitiae perfectione concludat: Et intelligas semitas domus ejus, id est, consideres atque discernas, vel cui bona actio perseverans aeternam mansionem praestet in

regno, vel quem usque ad terminum suum actio prava constringens in aeternum damnet supplicium. Domus quippe pro mansione ponitur, semita pro actione. Semita igitur ad domum ducit, quia actio ad mansionem pertrahit. Sed quis hominum ista discussus dicat? quis ista saltem imperterritus audiat? Multos enim videmus quotidie, qui justitiae luce resplendent, et tamen ad finem suum nequitiae obscuritate tenebrantur; et multos cernimus peccatorum tenebris obvolutos, et tamen juxta vitae suae terminum repente reddi luci justitiae liberos. Multos etiam novimus semel inventam viam justitiae illibate usque ad mortem tenuisse, et plerosque conspeximus usque ad exitum coepta semel crimina sine cessatione cumulasse. 33. Judiciorum Dei nubila, mentis nostrae radiis impervia. Quis vero inter ista occultorum judiciorum nubila mentis suae radium mittat, ut aliqua consideratione discernat, vel quis perduret in malo, vel quis perseveret in bono, vel quis ab infimis 932 convertatur ad summa, vel quis a summis revertatur ad infima? Latent haec sensus hominum, nec quidquam de cujuslibet fine cognoscitur, quia divinorum judiciorum abyssus humanae mentis oculo nullatenus penetratur. Videmus namque quod illa adversa Deo gentilitas justitiae luce perfusa est, et Judaea dudum dilecta perfidiae est nocte caecata. Scimus etiam quod latro de patibulo transivit ad regnum (Luc. XXIII, 43), Judas de apostolatus gloria est lapsus in tartarum (Matth. XXVII, 5). Rursumque quia aliquando sortes quae coeperint non mutantur, et latronem novimus alium pervenisse ad supplicium, et apostolos scimus percepisse propositum quod desideraverant regnum. Quis ergo discutiat in qua via habitet lux, et tenebrarum quis locus sit, ut ducat unumquodque ad terminos suos, et intelligat semitas domus ejus? Video Paulum ex illa persecutionis saevitia ad gratiam apostolatus vocatum (Act. IX, 1, seq.), et tamen sic inter judicia occulta formidat, ut reprobari se, etiam postquam vocatus est, timeat. Ait enim: Castigo corpus meum, et in servitutem redigo, ne forte aliis praedicans, ipse reprobus efficiar (I Cor. IX, 27). Et rursum:

Ego me non arbitror comprehendisse; unum autem, quae quidem retro sunt oblitus, ad ea quae sunt priora extendens meipsum, ad destinatum sequor, ad palmam supernae vocationis Dei, in Christo Jesu. Sequor autem si comprehendam, in quo et comprehensus sum (Philip. III, 13). Et certe jam de illo voce dominica dictum fuerat: Vas electionis mihi est (Act. IX, 15); et tamen adhuc castigans corpus suum metuit ne reprobetur. 34. Spem nostram potius comitetur timor quam securitas. Vae laudabili etiam vitae, si remota pietate judicetur. Vae miseris nobis, qui de electione nostra nullam adhuc Dei vocem cognovimus, et jam in otio quasi de securitate torpemus. Debet profecto, debet in spe esse non solum securitas, sed etiam timor in conversatione, ut et illa certantes foveat, et iste torpentes pungat. Unde recte per prophetam dicitur: Qui timent Dominum, sperent in Domino (Psal. CXIII, 11). Ac si aperte diceret: De spe incassum praesumit, qui timere Deum in suis operibus renuit. Sed cur beatus Job de tam valida quaestione requiritur, quae omnino ab hominibus ignoratur, ut justorum iniquorumque terminum comprehendat, nisi ut aliorum finem cognoscere non valens, ad suum recurrat, quia sicut aliorum, sic etiam suum nesciat, et nesciens timeat, timens humilietur, humiliatus jam de operibus suis extolli non debeat, et non elatus in gratiae arce persistat? Dicatur ergo ei: Indica mihi, si habes intelligentiam, in qua via habitet lux, et tenebrarum quis locus sit; ut ducas unumquodque ad terminos suos. Ac si diceretur: Sicut qui de malis convertantur ad bona, vel qui de bonis ad mala redeant, nescis, ita etiam nec de te quid tuis meritis exigentibus agatur intelligis. Et sicut alienum nullatenus comprehendis, ita etiam tuum terminum praenoscere non vales. Jam enim quantum ipse profeceris scis, sed quid adhuc de te ego in occulto sentiam nescis. Jam justitiae tuae acta consideras, sed quam districte apud me pensentur ignoras. Vae etiam laudabili vitae 933 hominum, si remota pietate judicetur, quia districte discussa inde ante oculos judicis unde se placere suspicatur obruitur. Unde recte Deo per Prophetam dicitur: Non

intres in judicium cum servo tuo, quia non justificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis vivens (Psal. CXLII, 2). Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Sunt justi atque sapientes, et opera eorum in manu Dei, et tamen nescit homo utrum amore, an odio dignus sit, sed omnia in futurum servantur incerta (Eccle. IX, 1). Hinc rursum per eumdem Salomonem dicitur: Quis hominum intelligere poterit viam suam (Prov. XX, 24)? Et nimirum bona malave quis faciens conscientia attestante cognoscitur. Sed idcirco dicitur quod via sua ab hominibus nesciatur, quia etiam si recta se quisque opera agere intelligat, sub districto tamen examine quo tendat, ignorat. [Vet. et Rec. X.] Igitur postquam illum de ista finis sui consideratione perterruit, ad examinandum ejus exordium redit; ac ne conqueratur cur finem suum nesciat, commemoratur etiam quia nec quo huc initio accessit intelligat. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 21. Sciebas tunc quod nasciturus esses, et numerum dierum tuorum noveras? 35. Nullus hominum suum initium novit aut finem. Ac si aperte diceret: Quid mirum si terminum tuum non intelligis, qui nec initium comprehendis? Et qui ignoras quo huc initio veneris, quid mirum si nescias quo fine subtraharis? Si ergo meum fuit te per initium ex occultis ad prompta producere, meum quoque erit etiam te ex promptis ad occulta revocare. Cur de vitae tuae dispensatione aliquid quereris, qui in manu artificis temetipsum nesciens teneris? Extolli itaque tanto magis non debes in eo quod agis, quanto intra sinum aeternitatis clausus, nec quo huc ordine veneris, nec quando vel quomodo hinc educaris agnoscis. 36. Ab hac lege Christus eximitur. Haec tamen intelligi et aliter possunt: Sciebas tunc quod nasciturus esses, et numerum dierum tuorum noveras? Subaudis ut ego, qui me nasciturum novi, quia et ante humanitatis ortum in divinitate semper substantialiter vixi. Homines quippe tunc esse incipiunt, cum in matrum

suarum ventre nascuntur. Nam ipsa quoque conceptio nativitas dicitur, juxta hoc quod scriptum est: Quod in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est (Matth. I, 20). Et idcirco se nascituros nesciunt, quia nec priusquam creentur existunt. Deus vero qui sine initio semper exstitit praescivit de se hoc quod in utero Virginis initium sumpsit; et quia praescivit, disposuit; quia disposuit, nihil profecto in humana forma sine sua voluntate toleravit. Convincatur ergo cur de flagellis suis homo queritur, qui ortum suum praescire non potuit, si ipse etiam qui ortum suum praesciendo disposuit se inter homines ad flagella praeparavit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XX [Rec. XI].

VERS. 22, 23. Nunquid ingressus es thesauros nivis, aut thesauros grandinis aspexisti, quae praeparavi in tempus hostis, in diem pugnae et belli? 37. Improbi ad justorum probationem servantur. Quid aliud nive vel grandine, nisi frigida ac dura intelligenda sunt corda pravorum? Sicut enim fervore charitas, sic solet in sacro eloquio frigore malitia designari. Scriptum namque est: Sicut frigidam facit cisterna aquam suam, sic frigidam facit animam malitia sua (Lerem. VI, 7). Et rursum: Abundabit iniquitas, et refrigescet charitas multorum (Matth. XXIV, 12). In 934 frigore ergo nivis, vel in duritia grandinis, quid accipi aptius potest quam vita pravorum, quae et per torporem frigescit, et per duritiae malitiam percutit? Quorum tamen vitam Dominus tolerat, quia eos ad justorum suorum probationem servat. Unde et recte subjunxit: Quae praeparavi in tempus hostis, in diem pugnae et belli. Ut cum adversarius noster diabolus tentare nos nititur, eorum moribus quasi suis contra nos armis utatur. Per ipsos quippe nos saeviens cruciat, sed nesciens purgat. Peccatis namque nostris ipsi flagella fiunt, de quorum tali vita dum percutimur, ab aeterna morte liberamur. Unde agitur ut electorum vitae proficiat etiam perdita vita reproborum, et utilitati nostrae dum illorum perditio militat, mira

dispensatione fiat quatenus electis Dei non pereat etiam omne quod perit. [Vet. XI.] 38. Aliqui ex illis electi sunt, et ad maxima vocati. Intelligi hoc quoque aliter potest, ut quia verbis praecedentibus videtur annexum, a superioris versus expositione non discrepet. Nam quia indicaverat vel bonos ad malum, vel malos ad bonum posse converti, illico secutus adjunxit: Nunquid ingressus es thesauros nivis, aut thesauros grandinis aspexisti, quae praeparavi in tempus hostis, in diem pugnae et belli? In nive vel grandine frigida, vel dura, ut dictum est, accipimus corda pravorum. Sed quia omnipotens Deus sanctos suos de talibus elegit, et quam multos electos adhuc inter pravorum vitam repositos habeat novit, apte in nive, vel grandine thesauros habere se perhibet. Thesaurus quippe ἀπὸ τῆς θέσεως, id est a positione nominatur. Et plerosque in vita frigida diu latentes respicit, quos ad medium cum jubet producit, et justitiae nitore candidos per supernam gratiam ostendit. Scriptum quippe est: Lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor (Psal. L, 9). Quos ad diem belli pugnaeque praeparatos diu intra suae praescientiae sinum tegit; sed cum repente eos eduxerit, resistentia adversariorum pectora illorum verbis ac redargutionibus quasi quibusdam grandinibus percutit. Unde alias scriptum est: Prae fulgore in conspectu ejus nubes transierunt, grando et carbones ignis (Psal. XVII, 13). Prae fulgore enim nubes transeunt, quia praedicatores sancti universa mundi spatia miraculorum claritate percurrunt. Qui etiam grando et carbones ignis vocati sunt, quia et per correptionem feriunt, et per flammam charitatis accendunt. Ipsa quoque libera sanctorum increpatio natura grandinis convenienter exprimitur. Grando enim veniens percutit, liquata rigat. Sancti autem viri corda audientium et terrentes feriunt, et blandientes infundunt. Nam quemadmodum feriant Propheta testatur, dicens: Virtutem terribilium tuorum dicent, et magnitudinem tuam narrabunt (Psal. CXLIV, 6). Et quemadmodum blandientes rigent secutus adjunxit: Memoriam abundantiae suavitatis tuae eructabunt, et justitia tua exsultabunt (Ibid., 7). In nive ergo

vel grandine habentur thesauri, quia plerique iniquitatis torpore frigidi, ad supernam gratiam assumpti, in sancta Ecclesia justitiae luce fulgescunt, et pravam adversariorum scientiam doctrinae suae ictibus tundunt. Unde et apte subditum est: Quae praeparavi in tempus hostis, in diem pugnae et belli. [Vet. XII.] Nix quippe vel grando fuerat Saulus per frigidam insensibilitatem; sed nix et grando contra adversariorum 935 pectora factus est, vel candore justitiae, vel districti eloquii correptione. O qualem hunc thesaurum in nive et grandine habuit, quando illum inter pravorum vitam positum jam tunc electum suum Dominus latenter vidit! O ad quanta adversariorum pectora ferienda hanc in manu sua grandinem sumpsit, per quam tot sibi resistentia corda prostravit. 39. Nemo extollatur, nemo desperet. Nemo itaque de suis operibus extollatur, nemo desperet eos quos adhuc frigidos videt, quia thesauros Dei in nive et grandine non videt. Quis enim crederet quod per apostolatus gratiam lapidatum Stephanum ille praecederet qui in morte ejus omnium lapidantium vestimenta servavit (Act. VII, 57)? Si ergo ad ista dona vel judicia occulta recurrimus, nullos omnino desperantes, nec illis nos in corde nostro praeferimus, quibus pro tempore praelati sumus, quia etsi jam videmus quantum praecessimus, nescimus quantum cum currere coeperint praecedamur. Bene ergo ad beatum Job dicitur: Nunquid ingressus es thesauros nivis, aut thesauros grandinis aspexisti, quae praeparavi in tempus hostis, in diem pugnae et belli? Ac si aperte diceretur: Nulli te de operibus tuis praeferas, quia de his quos intueris adhuc per culpam frigidos, quantos operatores justitiae et defensores rectae fidei sim facturus ignoras. Quod quia per adventum Mediatoris agitur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXI [Rec. XII].

VERS. 24. Per quam viam spargitur lux? 40. Per adventum Mediatoris lux sparsa. Ipse quippe via est, qui ait: Ego sum via, veritas et vita (Joan. XIV,

6). Per hanc ergo viam lux spargitur, quia per ejus praesentiam cuncta gentilitas illustratur. Spargitur autem convenienter dixit, quia per apostolorum voces non angustata atque coarctata, sed late fulgens lux praedicationis emicuit. Quia vero, accepta luce conversionis, inardescit intrinsecus vis amoris, ut vel transacta mala anxie lugeantur, vel ventura bona flagrantissime requirantur, competenter adjungitur:

CAPUT XXII.

IBID. Dividitur aestus super terram. 41. Ex hac luce flagrat ardor charitatis et persecutionis aestus. Sparsa enim luce aestus super terram dividitur, quia, per apertum justitia praedicata, ad requirendum Deum cordis anxietas in virtutem exercitatione dilatatur, ut iste in sermone sapientiae, ille in sermone scientiae fulgeat; hic in curationum gratia, ille in virtutum operatione convalescat; et dona sancti Spiritus dum dispariliter singuli accipiunt, necessario sibimet juncti omnes unanimiter accendantur (I Cor. XII, 8). [Vet. XIII.] Sed postquam spargi lux dicitur, potest convenienter intelligi quod per aestum persecutio designatur, quia ut lux praedicationis inclaruit, mox a perfidorum cordibus ardor persecutionis exarsit. Nam quod per aestum persecutio exprimitur, dominicus sermo testatur, de jactatis seminibus super petrosam terram dicens: Sole orto aestuaverunt omnia, et quia non habebant radicem, aruerunt (Matth. XIII, 6). Quod paulo post cum exposuit, aestum persecutionem vocavit. Sparsa igitur luce aestus super terram divisus est, quia clarescente vita fidelium, accensa est crudelitas perfidorum. Divisus namque aestus erat, quando nunc Jerosolymis, nunc Damasci, nunc in aliis longe regionibus persecutio saeviebat. Scriptum quippe est: Facta est in 936 illa die persecutio magna in Ecclesia, quae erat Jerosolymis, et omnes dispersi sunt per regionem Judaeae et Samariae (Act. VIII, 1). Rursumque scriptum est: Saulus adhuc spirans minarum et caedis in discipulos Domini, accessit ad principem sacerdotum, et petiit ab eo

epistolas, quas deferret in Damascum ad synagogas, ut si quos invenisset hujus vitae viros ac mulieres, vinctos deduceret in Jerusalem (Act. IX, 1, seq.). Quia ergo nunc hic, nunc illic persecutio excreverat, hi qui lucem veritatis agnoverant, quasi sub ardore divisi aestus anhelabant. 42. Lux est justitia, quae non nisi successive spargitur. Sed quia beatum Job de occultis judiciis requisitum superioribus dictis audivimus, oportet ut hoc quod de sparsa luce vel diviso aestu dictum est subtilius perscrutemur. Adhuc enim alta interrogatione discutitur, ut saltem quia nesciat doceatur, eique dicatur: Per quam viam spargitur lux, dividitur aestus super terram? Quid enim lucis nomine, nisi justitia designatur? De qua scriptum est: Populus qui sedebat in tenebris, vidit lucem magnam (Isai. IX, 2). Omne autem quod spargitur, non continue, sed sub quadam intermissione jactatur. Et idcirco spargi lux dicitur, quia etsi jam quaedam ut sunt perspicimus, quaedam tamen ita ut videnda sunt non videmus. Cor namque Petri lux sparsa tenuerat, qui tanto fidei, tanto miraculorum fulgore claruerat, et tamen conversis gentibus dum circumcisionis pondus imponeret, quid rectum diceret nesciebat. Lux ergo in hac vita spargitur, quia ad omnis rei intelligentiam continua non habetur. Dum enim aliud sicut est comprehendimus, et aliud ignoramus, quasi sparsa luce et ex parte cernimus, et in obscuritate ex parte remanemus. Tunc vero lux nobis sparsa jam non erit, quando mens nostra ad Deum funditus rapta fulgescet. 43. Quibus modis humano cordi insinuetur, ignoramus. Et quia haec eadem lux quibus modis humano cordi insinuetur ignoratur, recte in percunctatione dicitur: Per quam viam spargitur lux? Ac si aperte diceretur: Dic quo ordine justitiam meam occultis sinibus cordium infundo, cum et per accessum non videor, et tamen visibilia opera hominum invisibiliter immuto, cum unam eamdemque mentem modo hac, modo illa virtute irradio, et tamen per sparsan, lucem adhuc ex parte aliqua eam in tentationis tenebris remanere permitto. Requiratur homo nesciens per quam viam spargitur lux, ac si patenter dicatur: Dum dura corda emollio, dum rigida

inflecto, dum aspera mitigo, dum frigida accendo, dum debilia roboro, dum vaga stabilio, dum nutantia confirmo, intuere, si vales, incorporaliter veniens quibus ea meatibus illustro. Haec quippe omnia nos facta cernimus, nam qualiter intrinsecus efficiantur ignoramus. Hanc viam lucis esse nobis invisibilem, in Evangelio Veritas ostendit, dicens: Spiritus ubi vult spirat; et vocem ejus audis, et nescis unde veniat et quo vadat (Joan. III, 8). [Vet. XIV.] 44. Hac luce crescente, tentationes succrescunt. Sed quia cum lux spargitur mox ab occulto adversario contra fulgentem mentem tentamenta succrescunt, recte subjungitur: Dividitur aestus super terram. Hostis namque callidus quos justitiae luce enitescere conspicit, eorum mentes illicitis desideriis inflammare contendit, ut plerumque plus 937 se urgeri tentationibus sentiant, quam tunc cum lucis internae radios non videbant. Unde et Israelitae postquam vocati sunt, contra Moysen et Aaron de excrescente labore conqueruntur, dicentes: Videat Dominus et judicet, quoniam fetere fecistis odorem nostrum coram Pharaone et servis ejus, et praebuistis ei gladium, ut interficeret nos (Exod. V, 21). Volentibus quippe ex Aegypto discedere, Pharao paleas subtraxerat, et tamen ejusdem mensurae opera requirebat. Quasi ergo contra legem mens submurmurat, post cujus cognitionem tentationum stimulos acriores portat; et cum sibi labores crescere conspicit, in eo quod adversario displicet, quasi fetere se in oculis Pharaonis dolet. Post lucem ergo aestus sequitur, quia post illuminationem divini muneris tentationis certamen augetur. 45. Pro unius cujusque indole hostis ad malum nos sollicitat. Recte vero etiam dividi aestus dicitur, quia nimirum non singuli omnibus, sed quibusdam vicinis ac juxta positis vitiis fatigantur. Prius enim conspersionem uniuscujusque antiquus adversarius perspicit, et tunc tentationis laqueos apponit. Alius namque laetis, alius tristibus, alius timidis, alius elatis moribus existit. Quo ergo occultus adversarius facile capiat, vicinas conspersionibus deceptiones parat. Quia etenim laetitiae voluptas juxta est, laetis moribus luxuriam

proponit. Et quia tristitia in iram facile labitur, tristibus poculum discordiae porrigit. Quia timidi supplicia formidant, paventibus terrores intentat. Et quia elatos extolli laudibus conspicit, eos ad quaeque voluerit blandis favoribus trahit. Singulis igitur hominibus vitiis convenientibus insidiatur. Neque enim facile captivaret, si aut luxuriosis praemia, aut avaris scorta proponeret, si aut voraces de abstinentiae gloria, aut abstinentes de gulae imbecillitate pulsaret, si mites per studium certaminis aut iracundos capere per pavorem formidinis quaereret. Quia ergo in tentationis ardore callide singulis insidians vicinos moribus laqueos abscondit, recte dicitur: Dividitur aestus super terram. 46. Deus tentationes moderatur, ne aut multae sint, aut nimiae. Sed cum praemittitur: Per quam viam spargitur lux. Statimque subjungitur: Dividitur aestus super terram. Nimirum per eamdem viam per quam lux spargitur etiam dividi aestus indicatur. Alta quippe atque incomprehensibilis Spiritus sancti gratia cum luce sua nostras mentes irradiat, etiam tentationes adversarii dispensando modificat, ut simul multae non veniant, aut ipsae tantummodo quae ferri possunt illustratam jam a Deo animam tangant, ut cum tactus sui ardore nos cruciant, perfectionis incendio non exurant; Paulo attestante qui ait: Fidelis autem Deus, qui non patietur vos tentari supra id quod potestis, sed faciet cum tentatione etiam exitum, ut possitis sustinere (II Cor. X, 13). Hunc ergo aestum aliter dividit callidus supplantator, aliter misericors conditor. Ille dividit ut per illum citius interimat, iste ut eum tolerabilem reddat. Et quia cum tentatione fatigamur, non solum interno Dei spiritu instruimur, sed etiam exterioribus praedicantium verbis adjuvamur, recte post divisum aestum subditur:

CAPUT XXIII.

[Vet. XV, Rec. XIII]. VERS. 25. 938 Quis dedit vehementissimo imbri cursum? 47. Crescente persecutione, crevit apostolorum et sanctorum praedicatorum ardor. Praedicatio, cessante gratia, ad cor non transit. Si vero,

ut superius diximus (Num. 41), divisi aestus nomine illa in Judaeae regionibus persecutio designatur, quia ipsa persecutionis asperitas praedicatores sanctos superno munere adjutos a praedicationis suae ministerio nullo timore compescuit, apte subjungit: Quis dedit vehementissimo imbri cursum? Ac si diceret: nisi ego. Diviso enim aestu, cursum vehementissimo imbri dedisse est inter ipsas persecutionis angustias praedicationis impetum roborasse, ut tanto magis virtus praedicantium cresceret, quanto magis persequentium crudelitas obviaret, quatenus arentia corda audientium pluviae guttis infunderent, et siccitatem perfidiae uberius irrigarent, ut quamvis contra eos saevitiae aestus candesceret, per eos tamen vox gratiae non taceret. Hunc persecutionis aestum Paulus et tolerabat et irrigabat, cum diceret: Laboro usque ad vincula, quasi male operans, sed verbum Dei non est alligatum (II Tim. II, 9). De hoc imbre alias dicitur: Mandabo nubibus ne pluant super eam imbrem (Isai. V, 6). De hoc cursu imbris qui in electorum cordibus agitur Psalmista testatur, dicens: Velociter currit sermo ejus (Psal. CXLVII, 15). Plerumque vero imber est, et cursum non habet, quia praedicatio ad aures venit, sed, cessante interna gratia, ad corda audientium non pertransit. De cujus praedicationis verbis propter electos dicitur: Etenim sagittae tuae pertransierunt (Psal. LXXVI, 19). Sagittae quippe Dei pertranseunt quando verba praedicationis ejus ab auribus ad corda descendunt. Quod quia solo divino munere agitur, imbri cursum Dominus se dedisse testatur. 48. Verbi divini efficacia persuadentis omnia relinquere, omnia tolerare. Sed notandum video quod eumdem imbrem non vehementem, sed vehementissimum vocat. Imber vehemens est vis magna, imber vero vehementissimus vis immensa praedicationis. Vehemens namque imber erat cum praedicatores sancti credere gaudia aeterna suadebant. Imber autem vehementissimus, quando propter spem admonebant rem deseri, cuncta visibilia propter invisibilia contemni, et propter audita gaudia praesentis saeculi poenas cruciatusque tolerari. Sed

cum, fide cognita, saeviente aestu persecutionis, tot electi possessa reliquerunt, carnalis affectus obliti sunt, et prae gaudio spiritus in cruciatibus membra posuerunt, quid aliud Dominus fecit, nisi etiam vehementissimo imbri cursum praebuit, qui usque ad exsequenda summa praecepta per verba corporis invisibilia cordis irrigavit? Ubi et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIV [Vet. XVI].

IBID.Et viam sonanti tonitrui. 49. Tonitruo hinc simile dicitur. Solus Deus corda per gratiam aperit. Quid enim per tonitruum, nisi praedicatio superni terroris accipitur? Quem terrorem dum percipiunt humana corda quatiuntur. Aliquando vero in tonitruo ipse incarnatus Dominus figuratur, qui ex antiquorum patrum conveniente prophetia ad notitiam nostram quasi ex nubium concursione prolatus est. Qui inter nos visibiliter apparens, ea quae super nos erant terribiliter sonuit. Unde et ipsi sancti apostoli de ejus gratia generati, Boanerges, id est filii tonitrui sunt vocati (Marc. III, 17). Aliquando autem, sicut dictum est, tonitruus ipsa ejus praedicatio accipitur, 939 per quam supernorum judiciorum terror auditur. Sed quia quilibet praedicator verba dare auribus potest, corda vero aperire non potest; et nisi per internam gratiam solus omnipotens Deus praedicantium verbis ad corda audientium invisibiliter aditum praestet, incassum praedicatio aure audientis percipitur, quae pervenire ad intima corde surdo prohibetur, se Dominus viam sonanti tonitrui dare asserit, qui cum praedicationis verba tribuit, per terrorem corda compungit. Hanc viam Paulus praedicator egregius, dum superna mysteria terribiliter insonaret, se a se habere non posse conspiciens, discipulos admonebat, dicens: Orantes simul et pro nobis, ut Deus aperiat nobis ostium verbi, ad loquendum mysterium Christi (Colos. IV, 3). Qui ergo loquebatur mysteria, sed in corde audientium eisdem mysteriis a Domino aperiri ostium precabatur, habebat quidem jam tonitruum, sed dari

ei desuper viam quaerebat. Hanc viam nequaquam se Joannes dare posse cognoverat, qui dicebat: Non necesse habetis ut aliquis doceat vos, sed sicut unctio ejus docet vos de omnibus (I Joan. II, 27). Hanc viam rursum Paulus quis daret intimabat, dicens: Neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus (I Cor. III, 7). Accepta igitur via quid iste imber ac tonitruus agat audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXV [Rec. XIV].

VERS. 26. Ut plueret super terram absque homine in deserto, ubi nullus mortalium commoratur. 50. Gentilitas desertum est, coelesti gratia tanquam imbre irroratum. Super terram absque homine in deserto pluere est verbum Dei gentilitati praedicare. Quae dum nullum cultum Divinitatis tenuit, nullamque in se speciem boni operis ostendit, videlicet desertum fuit. In qua quia legislator non fuit, et qui rationabiliter Deum quaereret non fuit, quasi hominum nullus fuit, et velut solis bestiis occupata, vacua a mortalibus exstitit. De hac deserti terra alias dicitur: Posuit in deserto viam (Isai. XLIII, 19). De hac praedicatione gentilitati concessa Psalmista testatur, dicens: Posuit flumina in deserto (Ps. CVI, 33). [Vet. XVII.] Notandum vero est quod postquam aestus super terram divisus est, cursum vehementissimus imber accepit, ut in deserto plueret, quia postquam in Judaea asperitas persecutionis inhorruit, ut non solum fidem minime reciperet, sed etiam eam gladiis impugnaret, ad Israel missus quisque praedicator ad evocandas gentes deflexit. Unde sancti apostoli Hebraeis persequentibus, quos deserunt, dicunt: Vobis oportebat primum loqui verbum Dei; sed quia repellitis illud, et indignos vos judicatis aeternae vitae, ecce convertimur ad gentes (Act. XIII, 46). Diviso igitur aestu, deserta et absque homine terra compluitur, quia dispersa in Judaeae regionibus persecutione fidelium, derelicta dudum et quasi ab infusione rationis aliena, praedicationis guttis gentilitas irroratur. Quae gentilitas quasi adhuc a praedicatoribus sit inventa

ostenditur, cum subditur: VERS. 27. Ut impleret inviam et desolatam. Quid vero compluta reddidit, monstratur, cum illico adjungitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

IBID. Et produceret herbas virentes. 51. Prius invia prophetiae, patuit gratiae. Invia namque dudum gentilitas fuit, ad quam via Dei verbo non patuit. Redemptore quippe nostro veniente, sic accepit vocationem gratiae, 940 ut non in ea prius fuerit via prophetiae. Desolata etiam recte vocata est, vel ratione videlicet consilii, vel fructu boni operis destituta. Dedit ergo Dominus vehementissimo imbri cursum, et viam sonanti tonitrui, ut in deserto plueret, et impleret inviam et desolatam, et produceret herbas virentes; id est, exteriori praedicationi internam aspirationem contulit, ut corda gentilium arentia virescerent, clausa patescerent, inania complerentur, infecunda germinarent. [Vet. XVIII.] 52. Aeternae vitae opera doctrinamque germinavit. In Scriptura enim sacra aliquando herba viror gloriae temporalis accipitur, aliquando refectio diaboli, aliquando sustentatio praedicatorum, aliquando bona operatio, aliquando aeternae vitae scientia atque doctrina. Viror namque gloria temporalis accipitur, sicut Propheta ait: Mane sicut herba transeat, mane floreat et pertranseat (Psal. LXXXIX, 6). Mane namque sicut herba florere atque transire est in prosperitate hujus saeculi temporalis gloriae decus velociter arescere. Herba refectio diaboli accipitur, sicut de illo a Domino dicitur: Huic montes herbas ferunt (Job. XL, 15). Ac si diceret: Superbi ac tumidi dum se illicitis cogitationibus atque actionibus efferunt, suis illum iniquitatibus pascunt. Herba sustentatio praedicantium demonstratur, cum dicitur: Producit in montibus fenum, et herbam servituti hominum (Psal. CXL, 8). In montibus quippe fenum et servituti hominum herba producitur, cum sublimes hujus saeculi, ad fidei cognitionem vocati, sanctis praedicatoribus in hujus vitae itinere transitoria alimenta largiuntur. Herba bona operatio ponitur, sicut scriptum est: Germinet terra herbam

virentem (Genes. I, 11). Quod licet in conditione mundi ita historice factum teneamus, terram tamen Ecclesiam figurasse non inconvenienter accipimus, quae in eo germinavit herbam virentem, in quo ad verbum Dei fecunda misericordiae opera protulit. Herbam aliquando scientiam atque doctrinam aeternae viriditatis accipimus, sicut per Jeremiam dicitur: Onagri steterunt in rupibus, traxerunt ventos quasi dracones, defecerunt oculi eorum, quia non erat herba (Jerem. XIV, 5). Quo dicto superba ac nequissima Judaeorum est persecutio prophetata. Ipsi quippe onagri pro mentis elatione, ipsi dracones pro virulenta cogitatione vocati sunt. Qui steterunt in rupibus, quia non in Deo, sed in summis potestatibus hujus mundi confisi sunt dicentes: Regem non habemus nisi Caesarem (Joan. XIX, 15). Traxerunt ventos quasi dracones, quia spiritu elationis inflati superbia malitiosa tumuerunt. Defecerunt oculi eorum, quia scilicet spes eorum ab eo quod intendebat corruit. Quae temporalia diligens, praestolari aeterna neglexit, et terrena ideo quia Deo praeposuit amisit. Dixerunt enim: Si dimittimus eum sic, omnes credent in eum, et venient Romani, et tollent nostrum locum et gentem (Joan. XI, 48). Timuerunt ne locum non occiso Domino perderent, et tamen occiso perdiderunt. Sed cur ista miseris evenerint, subdit: Quia non erat herba; id est, quia eorum cordibus defuit aeternitatis scientia, et nullo eos refecit pabulo viriditatis internae doctrinae. Hoc igitur loco quid aliud virentes herbas nisi sanctae doctrinae scientiam vel congruas operationes accipimus? Deserta igitur terra 941 compluitur, ut ab ea virentes herbae producantur, quia dum sanctae praedicationis imbrem gentilitas percepit, et vitae opera et doctrinae herbam germinavit. Ista viriditas voce prophetica desertae terrae pollicetur, cum dicitur: In cubilibus in quibus prius dracones habitabant orietur viror calami et junci (Isai. XXXV, 7). Quid enim per calamum nisi praedicatores, quid per juncum qui juxta aquae humorem semper nascitur nisi pusilli ac teneri auditores sacri eloquii designantur? In draconum ergo cubilibus viror calami et junci oritur, quia in eis populis

quos antiqui hostis malitia possidebat, et doctorum scientia, et auditorum obedientia coacervatur. [Vet. XIX.] 53. Singulorum corda sunt velut desertum, antequam imbre gratiae fecundentur. Haec tamen quae generaliter de gentilitate dicta sunt si solerter inspicimus, intra sinum sanctae Ecclesiae agi in singulis videmus. Sunt enim plerique ad verba Dei valde insensibiles, qui fidei quidem nomine censentur, verba vitae auribus audiunt, sed ea transire usque ad interna cordis minime permittunt. Hi quid aliud quam deserta terra sunt? Quae scilicet terra hominem non habet, quia eorum mens sensu rationis caret. Et nullus mortalium in hac terra commoratur, quia et si quando in eorum conscientia rationabilium sensuum cogitationes veniunt, non persistunt. Prava enim desideria in eorum cordibus sedem inveniunt, recta vero si quando venerint, ac si impellantur, decurrunt. Sed cum misericors Deus imbri suo cursum et sonanti tonitrui viam dare dignatur, compuncti per internam gratiam verbis vitae aures cordis aperiunt. Et impletur terra invia, quia dum praebet auditum verbo, cumulatur mysterio. Et producit herbas virentes, quia per gratiam compunctionis infusa, praedicationis verba non solum libenter recipit, sed etiam ubertim reddit, ut quod audire non poterat jam loqui concupiscat; et quae non audiendo etiam intrinsecus aruerat, jam loquendo quae sancta sunt viriditate sua quoslibet esurientes pascat. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Emitte spiritum tuum et creabuntur, et renovabis faciem terrae (Psal. CIII, 30). Sic enim sic facies terrae virtute renovationis immutatur, dum sicca dudum mens gratia veniente compluitur, et post ariditatem pristinam, quasi productis herbis, scientiae viriditate vestitur. Quae conditoris nostri gratia adhuc nobis altius commendatur, cum subditur:

CAPUT XXVII [Vet.

XX, Rec. XV]. VERS. 28. Quis est pulviae pater? vel quis genuit stillas roris? 54. Imber hic voluntarius, non pro nostris meritis datur. Aliquando

tanquam ros stillat, aliquando ut pluvia ubertim manat. Ac si diceret nisi ego, qui siccam terram humani cordis guttis scientiae gratuito aspergo. De hac enim pluvia alias dicitur: Pluviam voluntariam segregabis, Deus, haereditati tuae (Psal. LXVII, 10). Voluntariam quippe pluviam haereditati suae Dominus segregat, quia non eam nobis pro nostris meritis, sed pro suae munere benignitatis praestat. Et idcirco hoc loco pater pluviae dicitur, quia superna nobis praedicatio non de nostro merito, sed de ejus gratia generatur. Stillae enim roris ipsi sancti praedicatores sunt, qui arva pectoris nostri inter mala vitae praesentis, quasi inter tenebras siccae noctis arentia, gratia supernae largitatis infundunt. De his stillis contumaci Judaeae dicitur: Propterea prohibitae sunt 942 stillae pluviarum, et serotinus imber non fuit (Jerem. III, 3). Ipsae quippe stillae roris sunt quae stillae pluviarum. Quando enim dispensatione aliqua praedicationem temperant, quasi rorem tenerum aspergunt. Quando vero ea quae de supernis sentiunt virtute qua praevalent loquuntur, quasi ubertim manantem pluviam fundunt. Rorem aspergebat Paulus, cum Corinthiis diceret: Non enim judicavi scire me aliquid inter vos, nisi Christum Jesum, et hunc crucifixum (I Cor. II, 2). Et rursum pluviam manabat, dicens: Os nostrum patet ad vos, o Corinrinthii, cor nostrum dilatum est (II Cor. VI, 11). Hinc est quod Moyses, qui et valida fortibus, et tenera infirmis dicturum se noverat, dicebat: Exspectetur sicut pluvia eloquium meum, et descendant sicut ros verba mea (Deut. XXXII, 2). Sed ecce audivimus quo munere gentilitas vocatur; audiamus nunc qua districtione Judaea repellitur. Audivimus quomodo deserta excolat, arentia infundat; audiamus nunc quomodo ea quae quasi videntur interna projiciat. Neque enim sic colligit electos, ut non etiam judicet reprobos; neque sic quibusdam culpas relaxat, ut non et in quibusdam feriat. Scriptum quippe est: Misericordia enim et ira ab illo (Eccli V, 7). Unde hic quoque postquam tot dona gratiae intulit, etiam irae suae judicia non abscondit. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XXVIII [Vet. XXI].

VERS. 29. De cujus utero egressa est glacies, et gelu de coelo quis genuit? 55. Judaei reprobati, quasi ex misericordiae divinae utero ejecti, licet a sanctis patriarchis orti. Quid enim aliud in gelu vel glacie nisi frigida et perfidiae torpore constricta accipimus corda Judaeorum? Qui quondam per acceptionem legis, per custodiam mandatorum, per ministeria sacrificii, per mysteria prophetiae, sic intra sinum gratiae, quasi intra uterum creatoris, habebantur. Sed quia, veniente Domino, constricti frigore perfidiae, fervorem fidei et caritatis amiserunt, a secreto gratiae sinu projecti, quasi glacies, de utero creatoris egressi sunt: Et gelu de coelo quis genuit? Quid hic aliud coelum, nisi sublimis debet intelligi vita sanctorum? cui coelo dicitur: Attende coelum, et loquar (Deut. XXXII, 1). Non enim insensibili, sed rationabili creaturae loquebatur. De hoc coelo Dominus ait: Coelum mihi sedes est (Isai LXVI, 1). De qua sede alias scriptum est : Anima justi sedes sapientiae est. Quia ergo sapientia est Deus, si sedes Dei coelum est, et anima justi sedes est sapientiae, coelum est utique anima justi. Coelum fuit Abraham, coelum Isaac, coelum Jacob. Sed quia persecutores Domini pontifices Judaeorum perfidiae torpore frigidi de illorum patrum progenie processerunt, quasi de coelo gelu exiit, quia de sublimi prole sanctorum processit frigida plebs infidelium. Cum enim de Abraham natus est Caiphas, quid aliud nisi gelu de coelo processit? Quod tamen gelu idcirco Dominus genuisse se dicit, quia Judaeos, quos naturaliter ipse bonos condidit, justo judicio per eorum malitiam frigidos a se exire permisit. Dominus enim auctor est naturae, non culpae. Genuit ergo creando naturaliter quos iniquos permisit vivere tolerando patienter. Et quia illa quondam tenera ac fidei penetrabilia corda Judaeorum, in perfidiae postmodum obstinatione durata sunt, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIX.

VERS. 30. In similitudinem lapidis aquae durantur. 943 56. Ex filiis Abrahae facti sunt lapides, ob cordis duritiam; et gentiles prius lapides in filios Abrahae converti sunt. Aquas enim populos accipi jam saepius edocuisse me memini. In lapide vero pro ipsa duritia aliquando gentiles populi designantur. Ipsi quippe lapides coluerunt. Et de his per prophetam dictum est: Similes illis fiant qui faciunt ea, et omnes qui confidunt in eis (Psal. XIII, 8). Unde Joannes Judaeos aspiciens se de stemmate generationis extollere, et gentiles praevidens ad Abrahae prolem fidei cognitione transire, ait: Ne velitis dicere intra vos, Patrem habemus Abraham. Dico enim vobis quia potens est Deus de lapidibus istis suscitare filios Abrahae (Matth. III, 9); lapides utique duros perfidia gentiles vocans. Quia ergo primum Judaea Deo credidit, gentilitate omni in perfidiae suae obstinatione remanente, postmodum vero ad fidem gentilium corda mollita sunt, et Judaeorum infidelitas obdurata, bene dictum est: In similitudinem lapidis aquae durantur. Ac si diceret: Illa mollia ac penetrabilia fidei corda Judaeorum in insensibilitatem vertuntur gentium. Cum enim misericors Deus gentes traxit, iratus Judaeam repulit. Actumque est ut sicut dudum ad percipiendam fidem gentilitas fuerat obdurata, ita postmodum ad fidem gentilitate suscepta, Judaeae populus perfidiae torpore duresceret. Unde Paulus apostolus eisdem gentibus dicit: Sicut aliquando vos non credidistis Deo, nunc autem misericordiam consecuti estis propter illorum incredulitatem; ita et isti non crediderunt in vestra misericordia, ut et ipsi misericordiam consequantur. Conclusit enim Deus omnia in incredulitate, ut omnium misereatur (Rom. XI, 30). Quam sententiam suam primum quidem de vocatione Judaeorum, et repulsione gentium, postmodum vero de vocatione gentium, et repulsione Judaeorum subtiliter pensans, seque occulta Dei judicia comprehendere non posse considerans, exclamando subjunxit: O altitudo divitiarum sapientiae et scientiae Dei, quam incomprehensibilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viae ejus (Ibid., 33)!

Unde hic quoque cum de Judaeorum perfidia Dominus diceret: In similitudinem lapidis aquae durantur, ut de repulsione eorum occulta esse sua judicia demonstraret, apte subdidit:

CAPUT XXX [Vet. XXII].

IBID. Et superficies abyssi constringitur. 57. Judicia Dei abyssus multa. Quia superjecto quodam ignorantiae nostrae velamine, incomprehensibilitatem divini judicii humanae mentis oculus nullatenus penetrat. Scriptum quippe est: Judicia tua abyssus multa (Psal. XXXV, 7). Nemo ergo perscrutari appetat cur cum alius repellitur, alius eligatur; vel cur cum alius eligitur, alius repellatur; quia superficies abyssi constringitur, et, attestante Paulo: Inscrutabilia sunt judicia ejus, et investigabiles viae ejus (Rom. XI, 33). 58. Dicta de Judaeorum duritia et reprobatione, de Satana possunt intelligi. Per hoc vero quod dictum est: De cujus utero egressa est glacies, et gelu de coelo quis genuit? etiam Satan in gelu et glacie nil obstat intelligi. Ipse quippe quasi de Dei utero glacies processit, quia a calore secretorum ejus, malitiae torpore frigidus, magister iniquitatis exivit. Ipse gelu de coelo est genitus, quia constricturus corda reproborum, a summis cadere est ad ima permissus. Qui bene in coelestibus conditus, in culpae frigore mentes sequacium quasi gelu dum cecidit astrinxit. 944 Qui ad terram veniens, quid in hominibus egerit, expletur cum subditur: In lapidis similitudinem aquae durantur. Per aquas namque populi, per lapidem vero ejusdem Satanae duritia designatur. Illo igitur ad ima veniente, in similitudinem lapidis aquae duratae sunt, quia ejus malitiam imitati homines, mollia viscera charitatis amiserunt. Cujus fraudulenta consilia quia a seductis hominibus deprehendi non possunt, recte subjungitur: Et superficies abyssi constringitur. Aliud quippe ei intrinsecus latet, atque aliud extrinsecus ostendit. Transfigurat enim se velut angelum lucis (II Cor. XI, 14), et callida deceptionis arte plerumque proponit laudabilia, ut ad

illicita pertrahat. Abyssi ergo superficies constringitur, quia dum quasi bona persuasionis ejus species velut solida desuper glacies ostenditur, in profundo latens ejus malitia non videtur. 59. Et de superbis propter accepta dona insolescentibus. Cuncta tamen haec intelligere et aliter possumus, si moraliter exquiramus. [Vet. XXIII]. Mentes namque hominum omnipotens Deus dum in suo timore format, quasi concipit, easque ad apertas virtutes, dum provehit, gignit; sed si de acceptis virtutibus extolluntur, relinquit. Et saepe quosdam cognovimus malorum suorum consideratione compungi, divini terroris pavore fervescere, et per pavoris exordia usque ad virtutum summa pervenire; sed dum de eisdem virtutibus quas accipiunt extolluntur, inanis gloriae laqueo astricti, ad antiquum torporem redeunt. Recte ergo cum tales Dominus projicit dicit: De cujus utero egressa est glacies? Quasi enim de Dei utero glacies egreditur, quando hi qui jam intus incaluerant ex virtutum dono frigescunt; et inde exteriorem gloriam torpentes appetunt, unde ad interna diligenda ardentius flagrare debuerunt. Dumque iste signis, ille scientia, iste prophetia, ille magnis operibus pollet, atque per haec dona placere hominibus appetit, omne quod prius intimum caluerat, exteriorem laudem diligens, in torporem vertit. Quasi ergo glacies de utero egreditur, dum post donorum beneficia a visceribus pietatis supernae separatur. An non sunt glacies, qui in virtutibus quas accipiunt laudes ab hominibus quaerunt? Et tamen venienti judici dona sua ad ejus memoriam revocantes, dicunt: Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in nomine tuo daemonia ejecimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus (Matth. VII, 22)? Sed quomodo hanc glaciem Dominus projiciat ostendit, dicens: Nescio vos unde sitis, discedite a me, omnes operarii iniquitatis (Ibid.). Hanc glaciem nunc in utero Dominus portat, quia intra sinum Ecclesiae tolerat. Sed tunc aperte ejicit, cum tales a secretis coelestibus per extremum et publicum judicium repellit. His itaque verbis quid aperte agitur, nisi ut beatus Job de summis suis virtutibus humilietur, ne in hoc quod bene

vivendo caluerat, superbiendo frigescat, et a Divinitatis utero repulsus exeat, si intra sinum sui cordis se tumidus extollat? [Vet. XXIV.] 60. Superbiae poena, induratio. Quo sensu Deus dicatur indurare. Et quia justo judicio superbas mentes ad culpam egredi ex accepta virtute permittit, recte adhuc subjungitur: Et gelu de coelo quis genuit? Plerumque enim sacri eloquii scientiam praestat, sed dum de eadem scientia is qui accipit extollitur, 945 ira districti judicis in ipso sacro eloquio caecatur, ut exteriores favores per illam sequens, ejus jam interna non videat; et qui intus manens calere poterat, exeundo frigescat, duratusque in ima corruat, qui ad cognitionem Dei prius tractabilis in summis liquidus stabat. An sacrum eloquium coelum non est, quod diem nobis intelligentiae aperiens, sole nos justitiae illustrat, quod dum nos vitae praesentis nox continet, stellis nobis mandatorum fulget? Sed quia oportet esse haereses, ut probati manifesti fiant (I Cor. XI, 19), cum ab intellectu sano mens superba repellitur, ultione districti judicis gelu de coelo generatur, ut cum ipsa Scriptura sacra in electorum cordibus caleat, eos qui se superbe scire appetunt a se frigidos emittat. Ibi quippe errant ubi corrigere errata debuerant; et dum a superna intelligentia resplendentis eloquii, et obdurati ipsi, et seducturi caeteros, corrunt, ad ima venientes ut gelu, et alios astringuat. Semetipsum tamen Dominus hoc gelu gignere perhibet, non quod pravorum mentes ipse ad culpam formet, sed quod a culpa non liberat, sicut scriptum est: Ego obdurabo cor Pharaonis (Exod. X, 27). Quod quia misericorditer emollire noluit, profecto districte se obdurasse nuntiavit. 61. Amissa virtutis, virtute imago saepe retinetur. Quia vero cum inchoata divini timoris virtus amittitur, propter humanas laudes virtutis imago retinetur, recte subjungitur: In similitudinem lapidis aquae durantur, et superficies abyssi constringitur. Aquae enim per glaciem in superficie durescunt, sed fluidae in intimis remanent. Et quid per aquas nisi fluxa accipimus corda reproborum? Quae cum ex proposito virtutem deserunt,

fortes se in bonis operibus per hypocrisim ostendunt; dumque in intimis suis ad vitia defluunt, et foris se sanctorum ac fortium imitatores fingunt, Aquae in similitudinem lapidis durantur, et superficies abyssi constringitur, quia per superductam sanctitatis speciem fluxa ac instabilis eorum conscientia hominibus tegitur. Nam cum sibimetipsis intrinsecus turpes sint, ante alienos tamen oculos quadam vivendi vetustate vestiuntur. 63. Praeposteros virtutis fructus Deus sapienter premit. Sed ne quis haec verba Domini in bonam intelligi partem velit, debemus sic etiam quaerentibus astruere, dummodo minime judicemur quae perscrutanda fuerant neglexisse. Superiori enim versu dicitur: Quis est pluviae pater vel quis genuit stillas roris? Statimque additur: De cujus utero egressa est glacies, et gelu de coelo quis genuit? Si ergo dictis praecedentibus sequens sententia non dispari sensu conjungitur, profecto et in bonam partem nobis ejus intelligentia sine obstaculo difficultatis aperitur. [Vet. XXV.] Terra enim cum compluitur, jactata in eam semina feracius ligantur. Sed rursum si illam pluvia immoderatius irrigat, in culmo pinguedinem frumenti virtutemque mutat. Sin vero jactatum semen post pluviam gelu premitur, quo foris citius apparere repellitur, eo intus fecundius radicatur; et quo vetatur progredi, cogitur multiplicari, quia cum ab immaturo ortu restringitur, ex conceptionis suae 946 tarditate laxatum ad fructum uberius impletur. Quid est ergo quod Dominus prius quidem patrem se pluviae insinuat, postmodum vero de suo egredi utero glaciem narrat, seque gelu gignere de coelo pronuntiat, nisi quod miro modo nostri pectoris terram ad suscipienda verbi semina, et prius per occultae gratiae pluviam infundit, et postmodum, ne in conceptis virtutibus immoderatius profluat, disciplina intimae dispensationis premit, ut quam acceptae gratiae pluvia irrigat, etiam disciplinae rigor astringat, ne si aut antequam debet, aut plusquam necesse est conceptas virtutes proferat, fruges in herbam vertat? Plerumque enim ab inchoantibus opus bonum dum priusquam oportet ostenditur, a grano perfectionis inanitur, et plerumque

virtutes dum plus quam necesse est exuberant exhalant. Unde et electorum suorum Dominus vel ante tempus desideria renuit, vel rursum in tempore ultra mensuram profectus premit, ne si aut antequam debent, aut plus quam debent, proficiant, per profectus sui magnitudinem in elationis defectum cadant. Nam cum cor post peccata compungitur, terra quae aruerat infusione pluviae rigatur; et cum relictis iniquitatibus bona exsequi opera proponit, quasi post infusionem semen accipit. Et plerique cum desideria sancta concipiunt, in summis jam exerceri virtutibus inardescunt ut non solum culpa operationem non inquinet, sed nec cogitationem pulset. Et adhuc quidem in corpore positi sunt, sed nil jam perpeti de communione praesentis vitae volunt; imitari per intentionem internam mentis stabilitatem appetunt, sed intervenientibus tentationibus reverberantur, ut videlicet infirmitatis suae meminerint, et elati de virtutibus quas accipiunt non sint. Quod dum mira disciplinae repressione agitur, quid aliud quam super infusam terram gelu de coelo generatur? Quid aliud quam de Dei utero glacies producitur, quando de interno secreto dispensatio egreditur, et voluntates nostrae etiam in bonis desideriis frenantur? 63. Quod exemplo S. Pauli confirmatur. Videamus, Paulus, infusa videlicet terra, quanta disciplinae glacie prematur, dum ait: Velle adjacet mihi, perficere autem bonum non invenio (Rom. VII, 18). Qui enim velle habere se asserit, jam per infusionem gratiae, quae in se lateant semina ostendit. Sed dum perficere bonum non invenit, profecto indicat quanta illum dispensationis supernae glacies premat. An ista glacies eorum corda non presserat, quibus dicebat, Ut non quaecunque vultis, illa faciatis (Gal. V, 17)? Ac si aperte diceret: Occulta cordis vestri semina jam prodire in frugem quaerunt, sed superni moderaminis gelu premuntur, ut tanto post fecundius exeant, quanto divini judicii prementia pondera patientius portant. [Vet. XXVI.] 64. Inde graves emergunt tentationes, quae bene vivendi consuetudine superantur. Et quia plerumque humana corda quoniam erumpere ad virtutes quas appetunt non valent, eo ipso quo ab

intentionis suae perfectione resiliunt, tentationum stimulis fatigantur, sed tamen easdem tentationes cogitationum comprimunt, seque per 947 exercitationis usum in quodam vivendi rigore componunt, bene subditur: In similitudinem lapidis aquae durantur. Quia etsi fluxae cogitationes interius lacessunt, nequaquam tamen usque ad consensum pravi operis trahunt. Sed mens sub inolita bene vivendi consuetudine quasi sub quadam duritia exterius abscondit quidquid intus ex tentationis pulsatione mollescit. Unde et bene subjungitur: Et superficies abyssi constringitur. Quia prava cogitatio et si usque ad suggestionem venit, usque ad consensum non prosilit, quia fluctuantes motus animi superductus rigor sanctae deliberationis premit. 65. Adversitas valentiores efficit sanctos. Potest etiam in gelu vel glacie praesentis vitae adversitas designari, quae dum asperitate sua sanctos comprimit, valentiores reddit. Dum enim nos omnipotens Deus molestiis exerceri permittit, atque ad melioris vitae statum interveniente tristitia provehit, miro consilio super futuram frugem gelu et glaciem gignit, ut electus quisque in hac vita, tanquam in hieme, adversa ventorum et frigorum toleret, et velut in aestiva serenitate postmodum fructus quos hic conceperit demostret. Unde et sponsi voce unicuique animae post hujus mundi turbines ad illa aeternitatis amoena properanti dicitur: Surge, propera, amica mea, formosa mea, et veni; jam enim hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit (Cant. II, 10). Et quia si sola nobis adsunt prospera solvimur, ad virtutes vero melius per adversa solidamur, recte subjungitur: [Vet. XXVII.] In similitudinem lapidis aquae durantur. Mentes enim quae per prospera molliter fluxerant constrictae adversitatibus durescunt; et ad similitudinem lapidis aqua perducitur, quando infirmus quisque per acceptam desuper tolerantiam passiones sui Redemptionis imitatur. In similitudinem quippe lapidis aqua duruerat, cum ille prius impatiens persecutor postmodum Paulus dicebat: Impleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi in carne mea (Coloss. I, 24). 66. Et ad interna dona custodienda

magis sollicitos. Et quia cum deprimuntur adversis, solertius in terna dona custodiunt, recte additur: Et superficies abyssi constringitur. Solet enim laetitia arcana mentis aperire, atque aperiendo amittere; adversa vero cum nos exterius deprimunt, interius cautiores reddunt. Post gelu itaque vel glaciem superficies abyssi constringitur, quia mens nostra, ad conservanda profunda dona quae acceperit, adversitatibus munitur. Abyssi enim suae superficiem Isaias constrinxerat, cum dicebat: Secretum meum mihi, secretum meum mihi (Isai. XXIV, 16). Abyssi suae superficiem Paulus constrinxerat, qui tot periculis ac adversitatibus insudans, sub praetextu cujusdam de semetipso loquitur, dicens: Audivi arcana verba, quae non licet homini loqui (II Cor. XII, 4). Et rursum: Parco autem, ne quis me existimet supra id quod videt in me, aut audit aliquid ex me (Ibid., 6). Qui igitur foris adversa tolerans, ne fortasse in laudibus deflueret, arcana sua aperire metuebat, quid aliud quam secretorum suorum abyssum per constrictam superficiem presserat? Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXI [Rec. XVI].

VERS. 31. Nunquid conjungere valebis micantes stellas Pleiades, aut gyrum Arcturi poteris dissipare? 948 67. Quid Pleiades et Arcturus. Dei omnipotentiam pensates, infirmitatis nostrae admonemur. Pleiades stellae ἀπὸ τοῦ πλέιστου, id est a pluralitate vocatae sunt. Ita autem vicinae sibi et divisae sunt conditae, ut et simul sint, et tamen conjungi nequaquam possint, quatenus vicinitate quidem conjunctae sint, sed tactu disjunctae. Arcturus vero ita nocturna tempora illustrat, ut in coeli axe positus per diversa se vertat, nec tamen occidat. Neque enim extra se currens volvitur, sed in loco situs, in cunctis mundi partibus nequaquam casurus inclinatur. Quid ergo est quod homo ex terra factus, atque in terra positus (Genes. II, 7), de coelesti administratione discutitur, quia Pleiades conjungere non valet, quas vicinas sibimetipsis conditas et pene conjunctas videt, quia

Arcturi gyrum dissipare non potest, quem tamen cernere ipsa sua vertigine pene dissipatum potest? An ut in istis ministeriis auctoris potentiam pensans, infirmitatis suae meminerit, et eum quem adhuc in majestate sua videre non poterat quam sit inaestimabilis in ipsa ministeriorum coelestium gubernatione perpendat? SENSUS MYSTICUS. Pleiadum nomine sancti designantur. 68. Sed cur ista loquimur, qui stimulo rationis urgemur, ut haec verba mysticis sensibus gravida cognoscamus? [Vet. XXVIII.] Quid enim micantes Pleiades, quae et septem sunt, aliud quam sanctos omnes denuntiant, qui inter praesentis vitae tenebras septiformis Spiritus gratiae nos lumine illustrant, qui ab ipsa mundi origine usque ad ejus terminum diversis temporibus ad prophetandum missi, et juxta aliquid sibi conjuncti sunt, et juxta aliquid disjuncti? Stellae enim Pleiades, sicut supra dictum est, vicinitate sibi conjunctae sunt, et tactu disjunctae. Simul quidem sitae sunt, et tamen lucis suae Ita omnes sancti aliis atque aliis ad praedicandum temporibus apparentes, et disjuncti sunt per visionem suae imaginis, et conjuncti per intentionem mentis. Simul micant, quia unum praedicant; sed non semetipsos tangunt, quia in divisis temporibus partiuntur. 69. Omnes, etiam qui Christum praecesserunt, eum praedicant, et Trinitatis mysterium. Quam diversis temporibus Abel, Isaias, et Joannes apparuerunt! Divisi quidem fuerunt tempore, sed non praedicatione. Nam Abel Redemptoris nostri passionem significans, agnum in sacrificio obtulit (Genes. IV, 4), de cujus passione Isaias ait: Sicut agnus coram tondente se obmutescet, et non aperiet os suum (Isai, LIII, 7). De quo Joannes quoque ait: Ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi (Joan. I, 29). Ecce divisis quidem temporibus missi, et tamen concorditer de Redemptoris nostri innocentia sentientes, eumdem agnum Joannes ostendendo, Isaias praevidendo, Abel offerendo locutus est; et quem Joannes in ostensione, quem Isaias in locutione, hunc Abel significando in manibus tenuit. 70. Quia igitur quomodo Pleiades stellae de humanitate Redemptoris sibi concinant diximus, nunc quomodo

in ostendenda unitate Trinitatis concorditer luceant demonstremus. Diversis quippe temporibus huic mundo David, Isaias et Paulus apparuit; sed tamen nullus eorum alteri diversum sensit, quia etsi semetipsos non noverant facie, unum tamen didicerant ex divina cognitione. David quippe ut auctorem omnium Deum in Trinitate ostenderet, dixit: Benedicat nos Deus, Deus 949 noster, benedicat nos Deus (Psal. LXVI, 8). Ac ne tertio Deum nominans tres Deos dixisse putaretur, illico unitatem ejusdem Trinitatis insinuans addidit: Et metuant eum omnes fines terrae (Ibid.). Qui enim nos eos, sed eum subdidit, unum tria quae dixerat intimavit. Isaias quoque cum laudem de unitate Trinitatis aperiret, Seraphim voces exprimens, ait: Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus (Isai. VI, 3); ac ne tertio sanctum nominans unitatem divinae substantiae scindere videretur, adjunxit: Dominus Deus sabaoth. Quia ergo non domini dii, sed Dominus Deus addidit, unum existere quod tertio sanctum vocaverat indicavit. Paulus quoque ut operationem sanctae Trinitatis ostenderet, ait, Ex ipso, et per ipsum, et in ipso sunt omnia (Rom. XI, 36). Atque ut unitatem ejusdem Trinitatis intimaret, protinus addidit: Ipsi gloria in saecula saeculorum, amen (Ibid.). Qui igitur non ipsis, sed ipsi subdidit, unum naturaliter, tria secundum personas innotuit, quod superius tertio idipsum dixit. Quasi ergo et uno in loco Pleiades sitae sunt, quia de Deo concorditer sentiunt, et tamen semetipsas non tangunt, quia sicut dictum est per hujus mundi tempora diversa partiuntur. 71. Sancti omnes fidei ac virtutum unanimitate conjunguntur. Quod bene ac breviter Ezechiel propheta describit, qui cum diversi generis animalia videre se diceret, adjunxit: Junctaeque erant pennae eorum alterius ad alterum (Ezech. I, 9). Pennae quippe animalium alterius ad alterum junctae sunt, quia etsi dissimilia sunt quae agunt, uno tamen eodemque sensu sibi sanctorum voces virtutesque sociantur. Et quamvis alius rationabiliter cuncta agendo sit homo, alius in passionibus fortis adversa mundi non timendo sit leo, alius per abstinentiam semetipsum vivam hostiam offerendo sit vitulus,

alius se in alta rapiendo contemplationis volatu sit aquila, pennis se tamen dum volant tangunt, quia et confessione vocum, et virtutum sibi unanimitate junguntur. Quod quia solius divinae virtutis est, et disjunctis temporibus missos in fidei praedicatione conjungere, et dissimilibus virtutibus praeditos fulgore intentionis unire, recte dicitur, Nunquid conjungere valebis micantes stellas Pleiades? Ac si dicat ut ego, qui unus omnia impleo, atque in unitatis sensu electorum mentes implendo conjungo. 72. Arcturus totam Ecclesiam significat. Docet fidei simul ac bonorum operum necessitatem. In Arcturo autem, qui per gyrum suum nocturna spatia non occasurus illustrat, nequaquam particulatim edita vita sanctorum, sed tota simul Ecclesia designatur, quae fatigationes quidem patitur, nec tamen ad defectum proprii status inclinatur: gyrum laborum tolerat, sed ad occasum cum temporibus non festinat. Neque enim ad ima poli Arcturus cum nocturno tempore ducitur, sed dum ipse volvitur, nox finitur, quia nimirum dum sancta Ecclesia innumeris tribulationibus quatitur, praesentis vitae umbra terminatur; eaque stante nox praeterit, quia illa in sua incolumitate perdurante, mortalitatis hujus vita percurrit. [Vet. XXIX.] Est in Arcturo quod consideratius possimus intueri. In septem quippe stellis volvitur, et modo quidem tres ad summa elevat, atque ad ima quatuor inclinat, modo 950 quatuor superius erigit, et tres inferius premit. Sancta quoque Ecclesia cum modo infidelibus Trinitatis notitiam, modo autem fidelibus virtutes quatuor, id est prudentiam, fortitudinem, temperantiam, justitiam praedicat, quasi rotatu praedicationis status sui speciem quodammodo immutat. Nam cum quibusdam de operibus suis gloriantibus confidentiam proprii laboris evacuat, et fidem Trinitatis exaltat, quid aliud facit nisi tres stellas Arcturus elevat, quatuor inclinat? Et dum quosdam bona opera non habentes de sola fide praesumere prohibet, sed operari enixius quae praecepta sunt jubet, quid aliud Arcturus facit, nisi quatuor stellas erigit, tres deponit? Videamus quomodo tres elevet, quatuor deponat. Ecce per Paulum contra fidem de

opere superbientibus dicitur: Si Abraham ex operibus justificatus est, habet gloriam, sed non apud Deum (Rom. IV, 2). Quid enim Scriptura dicit? Credidit Abraham Deo, et reputatum est illi ad justitiam (Genes. XV, 6). Videamus quomodo quatuor elevet, tres deponat. Ecce per Jacobum de fide contra opera superbientibus dicitur: Sicut corpus sine spiritu mortuum est, ita fides sine operibus mortua est (Jac. II, 26). Arcturus itaque volvitur, quia sancta Ecclesia juxta auditorum suorum mentes in diverso latere praedicationis arte versatur. Arcturus volvitur, quia haec in noctis hujus tribulationibus rotatur. Sed hunc Arcturi gyrum quandoque Dominus dissipat, quia labores Ecclesiae ad requiem permutat. Tunc et Pleiades plenius jungit, cum gyrum Arcturi destruit, quia tunc nimirum sancti omnes etiam visionis sibi specie copulantur, quando in fine mundi sancta Ecclesia ab his quos nunc sustinet laboribus solvitur. Dicat ergo: Nunquid conjungere valebis micantes stellas Pleiades, aut gyrum Arcturi poteris dissipare? Subaudis ut ego, qui tunc sanctorum vitam etiam per speciem unio, cum gyrum universalis Ecclesiae corporaliter solvo. Et quis hominum solius divinae hoc esse virtutis ignorat? Sed ut cognoscat homo quid ipse sit, memoretur assidue quid solus Dominus possit. 73. Rursum per Arcturum lex vetus, per Pleiades Novi Testamenti gratia signatur. Habemus adhuc quod de stellis Pleiadibus atque Arcturo aliud sentiamus. Pleiades quippe ab Oriente, Arcturus vero ex parte Aquilonis surgit. Quocumque autem se per gyrum suum Arcturus verterit, Pleiades ostendit; et cum lux diei jam vicina efficitur, stellarum ejus ordo distenditur. Potest igitur per Arcturum, qui a plaga frigoris nascitur, lex; per Pleiades vero, quae ab Oriente surgunt Testamenti Novi gratia designari. Quasi enim ab Aquilone lex venerat, quae tanta subditos rigiditatis asperitate terrebat. Nam dum pro culpis suis alios praeciperet lapidibus obrui, alios gladii morte mulctari, plaga torpens, et velut a sole charitatis aliena, praeceptorum suorum semina plus premebat ex frigore quam ex calore nutriebat. Cujus oppressionis

pondus Petrus horruerat, cum dicebat: Quid tentatis Deum, imponere jugum super cervicem discipulorum, quod neque patres nostri neque nos portare potuimus (Act. XV, 10)? Nec mirum quod per Arcturi septem stellas Testamentum Vetus exprimitur, quia et veneratione legis 951 dies septimus exstitit venerabilis, et per hebdomadam integram constituti sacrificii vota tendebantur. Pleiades vero quae ipsae quoque, sicut superius diximus, septem sunt, Testamenti Novi gratiam tanto apertius indicant, quanto cuncti liquido cernimus, quod per illam fideles suos Spiritus sanctus septiformis muneris lumine illustrat. Quaqua igitur se Arcturus vertit, Pleiades ostendit, quia per omne quod Testamentum Vetus loquitur Testamenti Novi opera nuntiantur. Sub textu enim litterae tegit mysterium prophetiae. Et quasi inclinat se Arcturus et demonstrat, quia ad dum spiritalem intellectum flectitur, significata per illud lux gratiae septiformis aperitur. Et propinquante diei luce, stellarum ejus ordo distenditur, quia postquam per semetipsam nobis Veritas innotuit, ab obsequiis carnalibus litterae praecepta laxavit. [Vet. XXX.] 74. Christus solus omnes sancti Spiritus operationes in se manentes habuit. Redemptor autem noster in carne veniens Pleiades junxit, quia operationes septiformis Spiritus simul in se et cunctas et manentes habuit. De quo per Isaiam dicitur: Egredietur virga de radice Jesse, et flos de radice ejus ascendet, et requiescet super eum Spiritus Domini, spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis, et replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini (Isai. XI, 1). De quo Zacharias ait: Super lapidem unum septem oculi sunt (Zach. III, 9). Atque iterum: Et in candelabro aureo lucernae septem (Ibid., IV, 2). Nullus vero hominum operationes sancti Spiritus simul omnes habuit, nisi solus Mediator Dei et hominum, cujus est idem Spiritus, qui de Patre ante saecula procedit. Bene ergo dicitur: Super lapidem unum septem oculi sunt. Huic enim lapidi septem oculos habere est simul omnem virtutem Spiritus septiformis gratiae in operatione retinere. Alius namque prophetiam, alius

scientiam, alius virtutes, alius genera linguarum, alius interpretationes sermonum juxta distributionem sancti Spiritus accipit (I Cor. XII, 8); ad habenda vero cuncta ejusdem Spiritus munera nemo pertingit. At vero conditor noster infirma nostra suscipiens, quia per divinitatis suae potentiam simul se habere omnes sancti Spiritus virtutes edocuit, micantes procul dubio Pleiades junxit. Dum vero Pleiades jungit, Arcturi gyrum dissipat, quia dum semetipsum factum hominem habere cunctas sancti Spiritus operationes innotuit, in Testamento Veteri litterae laborem solvit, ut fidelis quisque jam cum libertate spiritus illud intelligat cui prius in formidine inter tot discrimina serviebat. Audiat itaque beatus Job: Nunquid conjungere valebis micantes stellas Pleiades? Ac si aperte diceretur: Habere quidem lumina quarumdam virtutum potes, sed nunquid exercere simul omnes operationes sancti Spiritus sufficis? Me ergo conjungentem Pleiades in cunctis virtutibus contemplare, et tu de paucis ab elatione compescere. Audi quod dicitur: Aut gyrum Arcturi poteris dissipare? Ac si ei aperte diceretur: Et si ipse jam quae recta sunt sentis, nunquid virtute tua etiam in alienis cordibus laborem grossioris intelligentiae destruis? 952 Me itaque considera, qui carnalium stulta corrigo, dum me per carnis stultitiam manifesto, ut tanto magis haec quae putas virtutum tuarum fortia humilies, quanto nec vestigia meae infirmitatis apprehendis. Quia vero in ipso dominicae incarnationis mysterio aliis lux veritatis ostenditur, aliorum vero per scandalum corda tenebrantur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXII [Rec. XVII].

VERS. 32. Nunquid producis luciferum in tempore suo, et vesperum super filios terrae consurgere facis? 75. Christus verus lucifer, maxime in resurrectione; vesper autem Antichristus. Huic juste subduntur homines terrae dediti. Pater quippe in tempore suo luciferum produxit, quia, sicut scriptum est: Cum venit plenitudo temporis, misit Deus Filium suum, natum

ex muliere, factum sub lege, ut eos qui sub lege erant, redimeret (Gal. IV, 4). Qui natus ex Virgine, velut lucifer inter tenebras nostrae noctis apparuit, quia fugata obscuritate peccati, aeternum nobis mane nuntiavit. Luciferum vero se innotuit, quia diluculo ex morte surrexit, et fulgore sui luminis mortalitatis nostrae terram caliginem pressit. Cui bene per Joannem dicitur: Stella splendida et matutina (Apoc. XXII, 16). Vivus quippe apparens post mortem, matutina nobis stellas factus est, quia dum in semetipso exemplum nobis resurrectionis praebuit, quae lux sequatur indicavit. Vesperum vero super terrae filios Dominus consurgere facit, quia infidelibus Judaeorum cordibus dominari Antichristum eorum merito exigente permittit. Qui idcirco a Domino huic vesperi juste subduntur, quia ipsi sponte sua filii terrae esse voluerunt. Terrena quippe et non coelestia requirentes, a perspicienda luciferi nostri claritate excaecati sunt; et dum praeesse sibi vesperum expetunt, subsequentis damnationis aeterna nocte merguntur. Hinc in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Ego veni in nomine Patris mei, et non accepistis me; alius veniet in nomine suo, et ipsum recipietis (Joan. V, 43). Hinc Paulus ait: Eo quod charitatem veritatis non receperunt, ut salvi fierent, ideo mittet illis Deus operationem erroris, ut credant mendacio, ut judicentur omnes qui non crediderunt veritati, sed consenserunt iniquitati (II Thess. II, 10). Nequaquam ergo super eos vesper consurgeret, si coeli filii esse voluissent. Sed dum visibilia appetunt, amisso cordis lumine, sub noctis duce tenebrescunt. [Vet. XXXI.] 76. Sermo Dei qui electis lucifer est, reprobis fit vesper. Quod tamen si moraliter discutimus, quomodo quotidie agatur invenimus, quia nimirum et electis lucifer oritur, et reprobis Deo permittente vesper dominatur. Unus enim atque idem sermo Dei est in ore praedicantis. Quem dum isti gaudendo, illi vero invidendo audiunt, claritatem sibi luciferi in vesperi tenebras vertunt. Dum isti humiliter vocem sanctae praedicationis accipiunt, quasi ad stellae lucem oculos cordis aperiunt; dum vero illi benedicenti invident, et non salutis causam, sed

elationis gloriam quaerunt, prorumpente iniquitatis suae vespere in somnum mortis oculos claudunt. Per occultum ergo judicium is qui electis est lucifer reprobis auditoribus fit vesper, quia exhortatione sancta qua boni ad vitam redeunt pravi deterius in culpa moriuntur. Unde bene per Paulum dicitur: Christi 953 bonus odor sumus Deo in his qui salvi fiunt, et in his qui pereunt; aliis quidem odor mortis in mortem, aliis autem odor vitae in vitam (II Cor. II, 15). Verbum itaque suum auditoribus esse luciferum simul et vesperum vidit, per quod et alios ab iniquitate suscitari, et e contra alios sopiri in iniquitate conspexit. Quod quia occultis Dei judiciis agitur, quae in hac vita ab hominibus comprehendi non possunt, recto illic subdidit: Et ad haec quis tam idoneus (Ibid., 16)? Ac si diceret: Idonei quidem sumus ad haec consideranda quia fiunt, sed idonei non sumus ad haec investiganda cur fiant. Unde hic quoque Dominus, quia aliis produci luciferum, aliis vero consurgere vesperum dixerat, ne perscrutari homo occulta Dei judicia audeat, illico subjungit:

CAPUT XXXIII [Vet.

XXXII, Rec. XVIII]. VERS. 33. Nunquid nosti ordinem coeli, et pones rationem ejus in terra. 77. Judiciorum et praedestinationis Dei causas nemo scit; nemo scrutetur. Ordinem coeli nosse est supernarum dispositionum occultas praedestinationes videre. Rationem vero ejus in terra ponere, est ante humana corda talium secretorum causas aperire. Rationem videlicet coeli in terra ponere est supernorum judiciorum mysteria vel considerando discutere, vel loquendo manifestare. Quod utique facere in hac vita positus nullus potest. Ut enim a parvis ad majora veniamus, quis intelligat quae esse ratio secretorum potest, quod saepe vir justus a judicio non solum non vindicatus, sed etiam punitus redeat, et iniquus ejus adversarius non solum non punitus, sed etiam victor abscedat? Quis intelligat cur vivit alius insidians mortibus proximorum, et moritur alius qui profuturus esset vitae

multorum? Alius culmen potestatis assequitur, qui non nisi laedere studet; alius tantummodo laesos defendere concupiscit, et tamen ipse oppressus jacet. Alius vacare appetit, et innumeris negotiis implicatur; alius negotiis 954 implicari desiderat, et coactus vacat. Alius male inchoans usque ad vitae suae terminum ad pejora protrahitur; alius bene incipiens per longitudinem temporum proficit ad augmenta meritorum. At contra, alius male vivens diu reservatur ut se corrigat, alius vero bene quidem videtur vivere, sed in hac vita eo usque durat quoad in perversa prorumpat. Alius in errore infidelitatis natus in errore deficit, alius in catholicae fidei rectitudine genitus in catholicae fidei rectitudine consummatur. E contra vero alius catholicae matris ventre editus juxta vitae terminum erroris voragine devoratur, alius autem vitam suam in catholica pietate consummat, qui ortus in perfidia cum lacte matris hauserat virus erroris. Alius celsitudinem bene vivendi appetere et vult, et valet; alius nec vult, nec valet. Alius vult, et non valet; alius valet, et non vult. Quis ergo ista judiciorum coelestium secreta discutiat? Quis intelligat secretam lancem aequitatis occultae? Ad cognoscendos quippe istos judiciorum secretorum sinus nullus ascendit. Dicatur ergo homini, ut se nescire cognoscat; nescientem vero se cognoscat ut timeat; timeat ut humilietur, humilietur ne praesumat in se; non praesumat in se, ut conditoris sui auxilium requirat; et qui in se fidens mortuus est, auctoris sui adjutorium appetens vivat. Audiat itaque vir justus jam quidem se sciens, sed adhuc quae supra se sunt nesciens: Nunquid nosti ordinem coeli, et pones rationes ejus in terra? id est, nunquid occultos ordines judiciorum coelestium comprehendis, aut aperire humanis auribus sufficis? Beatus igitur Job de judiciorum incomprehensibilium investigatione requiritur, ac si ei aperte diceretur: Cuncta quae pateris tanto tolerare patientius debes, quanto secretorum coelestium ignarus cur haec pateris nescis.

LIBER TRIGESIMUS.

Expositionem octo versuum ultimorum capitis XXXVIII, et totidem capitis XXXIX, complectitur. Ubi de Evangelii praedicatione praesertim plurima pie ac erudite sanctus Doctor edisserit. 955 [Vet. et Rec. I.] 1. Cur Job a Deo de tot tantisque interrogatus. Beatus Job talia utrumne fecerit, Domino interrogante, requiritur, qualia utique facere non potest homo, ut dum se ista facere non posse deprehendit, ad eum refugiat quem solum talia quia facere possit intelligit, atque ante oculos judicis sui magis potens appareat, si sua verius infirma cognoscat. Quod ergo mire a Domino fieri non ignoratur, de eo divina Job voce requiritur; diciturque ei:

CAPUT PRIMUM.

CAP. XXXVIII, VERS. 34. Nunquid elevabis in nebula vocem tuam, et impetus aquarum operiet te? 2. In nebula verbum Dei spargitur, dum infidelibus annuntiatur. Vocem quippe suam in nebula Dominus elevat, quando per praedicatorum suorum linguas ad caliginosa corda infidelium exhortationem format; eumque aquarum impetus operit, dum bene agentia membra ejus turba resistentium populorum premit. Hinc est enim quod scriptum est: Factum est verbum Domini ad Jeremiam dicens: Sta in atrio domus Domini, loquens ad omnes civitates Juda, de quibus veniunt, ut adorent in domo Domini, universos sermones quos ego mandavi tibi (Jerem. XXVI, 2). Et paulo post: Et audierunt sacerdotes et prophetae et omnis populus Jeremiam loquentem verba haec in domo Domini. Cumque complevisset Jeremias loquens, apprehenderunt eum sacerdotes et prophetae et omnis populus, dicens: Morte moriatur, quare prophetavit in nomine Domini (Ibid., 7)? Ecce in nebula Dominus vocem levavit, quia obscuras mentes superbientium directo propheta corripuit. Ecce aquarum impetus eum protinus operuit, quia ab insurgentibus populis, et causa suae

correptionis instigatis, ipse in Jeremia cuncta pertulit, qui correptionis verba mandavit. Per semetipsum quoque Dominus in nebula vocem levavit, quando praesentem se etiam assumpto corpore exhibens, multa suis persecutoribus sed figuris aenigmatum velata praedicavit. In nebula vocem levavit, quia veritatem suam non secuturis infidelibus quasi per caliginem sonuit. Unde et bene in libris Regum scriptum est: Nebula implevit domum Domini, et non poterant sacerdotes ministrare propter nebulam (III Reg. VIII, 10, 11). Exigentibus enim meritis, dum superbi Judaeorum pontifices divina mysteria per parabolas audiunt, sacerdotes in domo Domini quasi propter nebulam ministrare nequiverunt. Qui et in Testamento Veteri dum sensus mysticos litterae velamine coopertos inter obscuras allegoriarum caligines investigare despiciunt, debitum fidei suae ministerium propter nebulam perdiderunt. Quibus et nunc in nebula doctrinae suae vocem Dominus protulit, cum de se etiam 956 aperta narravit. Quid est enim apertius quam: Ego et Pater unum sumus (Joan. X, 30)? Quid apertius dicere quam: Antequam Abraham fieret, ego sum (Joan. VIII, 58)? Sed quia auditorum mentes infidelitatis caligo repleverat, quasi emissum solis radium nebula interjacens abscondebat. [Vet. II.] 3. Verbi divini praedicatores impetus aquarum operit, cum in eos infideles saeviunt. Ad hanc namque elevationem vocis eum protinus aquarum impetus operuit, quia contra illum mox saeviens populorum turba surrexit. Scriptum quippe est: Propterea ergo quaerebant eum Judaei inter ficere, quia non solum solvebat sabbatum, sed et Patrem suum dicebat Deum, aequalem se faciens Deo (Joan. V, 18). De hoc aquarum impetu per Prophetam clamat: Circumdederunt sicut aqua tota die, circumdederunt me simul (Psal. LXXXVII, 18). Et rursum: Salvum me fac, Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquae usque ad animam meam (Psal. LXVIII, 2). Quas profecto aquas in semetipso ante mortem, in suis autem et post ascensionem pertulit. Hinc est enim quod et de superioribus clamat: Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris (Act. IX, 4)? Ecce jam coelum

conscenderat, et tamen adhuc eum Saulus aquarum infidelium impetu persequens, et tumidior caeteris unda tangebat. Ipse quippe est qui per bonos recta loquitur, ipse qui in bonorum passione laceratur. Ut ergo mirifica Dominus charitatis unitate, monstraret se esse qui indignis auditoribus per sanctorum suorum ora praedicat, ait: Nunquid elevabis in nebula vocem tuam? Ut vero ostenderet se esse qui in sanctis suis omnia adversa pateretur, subdidit: Et impetus aquarum operiet te? subaudis ut me, quem iniqui omnes neque per praedicantes sanctos loquentem intelligunt, neque per morientes patientem vident. Narrat ergo Dominus quod ab hominibus patitur, ut dolor afflicti hominis mitigetur, ac si illi aperte dicat: Mea subtiliter pensa, et tua aequanimiter tempera. Multo enim minus est te vulnera quam me humana tolerare. 4. Ad arcanas inspirationes Dei etiam justorum corda caligant. Adhuc tamen verba haec subtilius perscrutari possumus, si inter dona coelestia nostra sollicite corda pensamus. Jam quidem fideles sumus, jam quae audimus superna credimus, jam quae credimus amamus. Sed dum quibusdam supervacuis curis premimur, obducta confusione caligamus; et cum nobis etiam talibus mira quaedam Dominus de se sentienda insinuat, quasi in nebula vocem levat. Dum caliginosis nostris mentibus semetipsum loquitur, velut in nebula is qui non cernitur auditur. Summa sunt namque quae de illo cognoscimus, sed tamen adhuc eum in secreta inspiratione qua instruimur non videmus. Qui igitur 957 cordibus nostris praebet quidem locutionem, sed occultat speciem, velut in nebula format vocem. Sed ecce jam verba Dei intrinsecus semetipsum loquentis audimus, jamque amori ejus qua continuatione, quo studio inhaerere debeamus agnoscimus, et tamen ab internae considerationis culmine ad consueta nostra ex ipsa mortalitatis hujus mutabilitate relabimur, et imminentium peccatorum male sedula importunitate tentamur. Cum ergo caecis nostris mentibus subtilia de semetipso insinuat, in nebula vocem levat. [Vet. III.] 5. Tentationibus intellectum de Deo obruentibus, ipse Deus

quasi aquis operitur. Deus nos, ne quidem dum respuitur, non relinquit. Cum vero tentatione vitiorum ipse de Deo noster intellectus opprimitur, quasi aquarum impetu in voce sua Deus operitur. Tot enim super illum aquas mittimus, quot post inspirationem ejus gratiae, cogitationes illicitas in corde versamus. Nec tamen nos vel oppressos deserit, nam illico ad mentem redit, tentationum nebulas discutit, imbrem compunctionis infundit, et subtilis intelligentiae solem reducit; atque sic ostendit quantum nos diligit, qui nos nec cum respuitur relinquit, ut saltem sic erudita humana conscientia ad se tentationes erubescat admittere, quam Redemptor suus et vagantem non cessat amare. Hoc in nobis per semetipsum tolerat, hoc ab infidelibus per suos quotidie praedicatores portat. Ejus enim donum suborta in nobis tentatione repellitur, et tamen ab infundendo intrinsecus munere nequaquam nostra infirmitate revocatur. Ejus publice verba respuuntur, et tamen ab eroganda gratiae largitate nulla infidelium iniquitate compescitur. Nam cum pravi homines praedicamenta despiciunt, adjungit etiam miracula quae venerentur. Unde post editam vocem, post inundantium aquarum impetum, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT II [Rec. II].

VERS. 35. Nunquid mittes fulgura, et ibunt, et revertentia dicent tibi, Adsumus? 6. A Deo exeunt sancti praedicatores et ad eum revertuntur, miracula quibus coruscant, illi soli tribuendo. Fulgura quippe ex nubibus exeunt, sicut mira opera ex sanctis praedicatoribus ostenduntur. Qui, ut saepe diximus, idcirco nubes vocari solent, quia et coruscant miraculis, et verbis pluunt. Et quia humana corda, postquam per praedicationem mota non fuerint, istis miraculorum fulgoribus conturbantur, Propheta attestante didicimus, qui ait: Fulgura multiplicabis, et conturbabis eos (Psal. XVII, 15). Ac si diceret: Dum verba praedicationis tuae non audiuat, per praedicantium miracula conturbantur. Unde alias scriptum est: In lumine

jacula tua ibunt, in splendore fulgoris armorum tuorum (Habac. III, 11). Jacula Dei in lumine ire est verba ejus aperta veritate resonare. Sed quia saepe homines verba vitae etiam intellecta despiciunt, adjunguntur etiam miracula. Unde illic subdidit: In splendore fulgoris armorum tuorum. Fulgor quippe armorum est claritas miraculorum. Armis namque nos tuemur, jaculis adversa destruimus. Arma ergo cum jaculis sunt miracula cum praedicamentis. Sancti enim praedicatores verbis suis quasi quibusdam jaculis adversarios feriunt; 958 armis vero, id est miraculis, semetipsos tuentur, ut et quantum sint audiendi sonent per impetum jaculorum, et quantum sint reverendi clarescant per arma miraculorum. [Vet. IV.] Dicitur ergo ad beatum Job: Nunquid mittes fulgura, et ibunt, et revertentia dicent tibi, Adsumus? subaudis ut mihi. Vadunt enim fulgura cum praedicatores miraculis coruscant et superna reverentia auditorum corda transfigunt. Revertentia vero dicunt, Adsumus, cum non sibi, sed Dei viribus tribuunt quidquid se fortiter egisse cognoscunt. Quid est ergo Deo dicere, Adsumus? Quoddam namque in hoc verbo obsequium declaratur. Revertentes itaque praedicatores sanctos dicere est, adsumus, illi laudem tribuere gratiae a quo se accepisse sentiunt victoriam pugnae, ne sibi tribuant quod operantur. Et ire quidem fulgura operando possunt, sed reverti superbiendo non possunt.
7. Id praestitit Petrus. Videamus itaque fulgur vadens; claudo cuidam ait Petrus: Argentum et aurum non est mihi, quod autem habeo, hoc tibi do: In nomine Jesu Christi Nazareni surge et ambula. Et apprehensa ejus manu dextera allevavit eum, et protinus consolidatae sunt bases ejus et plantae, et exiliens stetit, et ambulabat (Act. III, 6). Sed cum de hoc facto Judaeorum fuisset turba commota, videamus nunc fulgur rediens, quod ait: Viri Israelitae, quid admiramini in hoc, aut nos quid intuemini, quasi nostra virtute aut potestate fecerimus hunc ambulare? Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, Deus Jacob, Deus patrum nostrorum glorificavit Filium suum Jesum (Ibid., 12). Et paulo post: Cujus nos testes sumus, et in fide nominis ejus hunc,

quem vidistis et nostis, confirmavit nomen ejus, et fides quae per eum est dedit integram sanitatem istam in conspectu omnium vestrum. Ivit ergo fulgur cum Petrus miraculum fecit, rediit cum non sibi tribuit, sed auctori quod fecit. Vadunt fulgura cum praedicatores sancti mira opera ostendunt, sed revertendo dicunt adsumus, cum in eo quod faciunt ad potentiam auctoris recurrunt. 8. Praedicatores ad publicum operationis missi, ad secretum contemplationis redire curent. Quod tamen intelligi et aliter potest. Fulgura etenim, sicut superius dictum est, sancti viri mittuntur et eunt cum a secreto contemplationis ad publicum operationis exeunt. Mittuntur et vadunt cum ex abscondito speculationis intimae in activae vitae latitudinem diffunduntur. Sed revertentes dicunt Deo, adsumus, quia post opera exteriora quae peragunt semper ad sinum contemplationis recurrunt, ut illic ardoris sui flammam reficiant, et quasi ex tactu supernae claritatis ignescant. Citius enim inter ipsa licet bona exteriora opera frigescerent, nisi intentione sollicita ad contemplationis ignem incessanter redirent. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Ad locum, de quo exeunt flumina revertuntur, ut iterum fluant (Eccle. I, 7). Ipsi quippe illic flumina qui hic fulgura sunt vocati. Quia enim corda audientium rigant, flumina; quia vero accendunt, fulgura memorantur. De quibus 959 alias scriptum est: Elevaverunt flumina, Domine; elevaverunt flumina voces suas (Psal. XCII, 3). Et rursum: Illuxerunt fulgura ejus orbi terrae (Psal. XCVI, 4). Ad locum ergo de quo exeunt flumina revertuntur, quia sancti viri etsi a conspectu creatoris sui, cujus claritatem mente conspicere conantur, foras propter nos ad activae vitae ministerium veniunt, incessanter tamen ad sanctum contemplationis studium recurrunt, et si in praedicatione sua exterius nostris auribus per corporalia verba se fundunt, mente tamen tacita ad considerandum semper ipsum fontem luminis revertuntur. De quibus et bene dicitur: Ut iterum fluant. Nisi enim ad contemplandum Deum sollicita semper mente recurrerent, nimirum interna siccitas etiam exteriora praedicationis eorum

verba siccaret. Sed dum videre Deum indesinenter sitiunt, quasi decursura foras flumina intus semper oriuntur, quatenus illic amando sumant unde ad nos praedicando defluant. Dicatur igitur recte: Nunquid mittes fulgura, et ibunt, et revertentia dicent tibi, Adsumus? Subaudis ut ego, qui praedicatores meos cum voluero post contemplationis gratiam ad activae vitae ministerium compono; quos tamen semper a bonis exterioribus ad internum culmen contemplationis revoco, ut modo jussi ad exercenda opera exeant, modo revocati ad speculationis studium apud me familiarius vivant. Revertentes itaque dicunt Adsumus, quia quamvis per exteriora acta parum quid contemplationi deesse videantur, per ardorem tamen desiderii, quem in mente sua continue accendunt, obsequentes Deo suam praesentiam ostendunt. Adsumus namque dicere est praesentes se amando monstrare. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. III].

VERS. 36. Quis posuit in visceribus hominis sapientiam? vel quis dedit gallo intelligentiam? 9. Praedicatoribus per gallum diem cantu praenuntiantem figuratis, data a Deo intelligentia. Galli hujus cur lumbi succincti. Qui hoc loco alii galli nomine designantur, nisi modo alio repetiti iidem praedicatores sancti, qui inter tenebras vitae praesentis student venturam lucem praedicando, quasi cantando, nuntiare? Dicunt enim: Nox praecessit, dies autem appropinquavit (Rom. XIII, 12). Qui vocibus suis somnum nostri torporis excutiunt, clamantes: Hora est jam nos de somno surgere (Rom. XIII, 11). Et rursum: Evigilate, justi, nolite peccare (I Cor. XV, 34). [Vet. V.] De hoc gallo rursum scriptum est: Tria sunt quae bene gradiuntur, et quartum quod feliciter incedit: leo fortissimus bestiarum, ad nullius pavebit occursum; gallus succinctus lumbos, et aries, nec est rex qui resistat ei (Prov. XXX, 29). Ipse quippe hoc loco leo ponitur de quo scriptum est: Vicit leo de tribu Juda (Apoc. V, 5). Qui fortissimus bestiarum

dicitur, quia in illo hoc quod infirmum est Dei, fortius est hominibus (I Cor. I, 25). Qui ad nullius pavet occursum. Dicit enim: Venit princeps mundi hujus, et in me non habet quidquam (Joan. XIV, 30). Gallus succinctus lumbos, id est praedicatores sancti inter hujus noctis tenebras verum mane nuntiantes. Qui succincti lumbos sunt, quia a membris suis luxuriae fluxia restringunt. In lumbis quippe luxuria est. Unde et eisdem a Domino dicitur: Sint lumbi vestri praecincti (Luc. XII, 35). Et aries, nec est rex qui resistat ei. Quem alium hoc loco arietem accipimus nisi primum intra Ecclesiam ordinem sacerdotum? De quibus scriptum est: Afferte Domino filios arietum (Psal. XXVIII, 1); qui per exempla sua gradientem 960 populum, quasi subsequentem ovium gregem trahunt. Quibus spiritaliter recteque viventibus nullus rex sufficit omnino resistere, quia quilibet persecutor obviet, intentionem eorum non valet praepedire. Sciunt enim ad eum quem desiderant, et anxie currere, et moriendo pervenire. Ponitur ergo primus leo, secundus gallus, tertius aries. Apparuit enim Christus, deinde sancti praedicatores apostoli, et tunc demum spiritales patres Ecclesiarum praepositi, videlicet duces gregum, quia doctores sequentium populorum. 10. Antichristus elevatus in sublime, stultus apparebit. In hac vita non omne quod bene, feliciter, nec omne quod feliciter, bene. Sed haec adhuc melius affirmamus, si ejusdem loci etiam reliqua exponendo subjiciamus. Nam quia post haec et Antichristus apparebit, hoc illic quartum subdidit, dicens: Et qui stultus apparuit, postquam elevatus est in sublime. Si enim intellexisset, ori imposuisset manum (Prov. XXX, 32). Ipse quippe in sublime elevabitur, cum Deum se esse mentietur. Sed elevatus in sublime stultus apparebit, quia in ipsa elevatione sua per adventum veri judicis deficiet. Quod si intellexisset, ori imposuisset manum; id est, si supplicium suum cum superbire exorsus est praevidisset, bene aliquando conditus in tantae jactationem superbiae non fuisset elatus. De quo nequaquam moveat quod superius dictum est: Quartum quod incedit feliciter (Ibid., 29). Tria

quippe incedere bene dixit, et quartum feliciter. Non enim omne quod feliciter, bene; neque in hac vita omne quod bene, feliciter. Nam leo, gallus, et aries bene incedunt, sed non hic feliciter, quia persecutionem bella patiuntur. Quartum vero feliciter, et non bene incedit, quia in fallacia sua Antichristus gradietur, sed juxta breve tempus vitae praesentis ipsa illi fallacia prosperabitur, sicut de eo sub Antiochi specie per Danielem dictum est: Robur datum est ei contra juge sacrificium, propter peccata, et prosternetur veritas in terra, et faciet et prosperabitur (Dan. VIII, 12). Quod Salomon ait: Incedit feliciter, hoc Daniel dicit prosperabitur. Juxta hoc itaque testimonium quod per Salomonem dicitur: Gallus succinctus lumbos (Prov. XXX, 31), apte etiam hoc loco gallum sanctos praedicatores accipimus. Ad se ergo cuncta referens Dominus dicit: Quis posuit in visceribus hominis sapientiam? vel quis dedit gallo intelligentiam? Ac si diceret: In cor hominis humana sapientis supernae sapientiae gratiam quis infudit? vel ipsis sanctis praedicatoribus quis, nisi ego, intelligentiam dedit, ut sciant quando vel quibus debeant venturum mane nuntiare? Idcirco enim quando et quid agant sentiunt, quia hoc intrinsecus me revelante cognoscunt. Notandum vero est quod sapientia divinitus inspirata in visceribus hominis quia nimirum quantum ad electorum numerum spectat, non in solis vocibus, sed etiam in sensibus datur, ut juxta quod loquitur lingua vivat conscientia, et lux ejus tanto clarius resplendeat in superficie quanto verius inardescit in corde. [Rec. IV.] 11. Quantum animarum rectores discretione indigeant. Magni autem laboris est hoc quod additur: Vel quis dedit gallo intelligentiam, subtiliori adhuc expositione discutere. Intelligentia quippe doctorum tanto esse subtilior debet, quanto se ad penetranda invisibilia exercet, quanto nil materiale discutit, quanto et per vocem corporis loquens, 961 omne quod est corporis transit. Quae profecto nullatenus summis congrueret, nisi cantanti eam gallo, id est praedicanti doctori, ipse summorum conditor ministraret. Intelligentiam quoque gallus

accepit, ut prius nocturni temporis horas discutiat, et tunc demum vocem excitationis emittat, quia videlicet sanctus quisque praedicator in auditoribus suis prius qualitatem vitae considerat, et tunc demum ad erudiendum congruam vocem praedicationis format. Quasi enim horas noctis discernere est peccatorum merita dijudicare, quasi horas noctis discernere est actionum tenebras apta increpationis voce corripere. Gallo itaque intelligentia desuper tribuitur, quia doctori veritatis, virtus discretionis, ut noverit, quibus, quid, quando, vel quomodo inferat, divinitus ministratur. [Vet. VI.] 12. Exhortatio quae quibusdam prodest aliis nocet. Non enim una eademque cunctis exhortatio convenit, quia nec cunctos par morum qualitas astringit. Saepe enim aliis officiunt quae aliis prosunt. Nam et plerumque herbae quae haec animalia reficiunt, alia occidunt; et lenis sibilus equos mitigat, catulos instigat; et medicamentum quod hunc morbum imminuit, alteri vires jungit; et panis qui vitam fortium roborat, parvulorum necat. Pro qualitate igitur audientium formari debet sermo doctorum, et ad sua singulis congruat, et tamen a communis aedificationis arte nunquam recedat. Quid enim sunt intentae mentes auditorum, nisi quasi quaedam in cithara tensiones stratae chordarum? quas tangendi artifex, ut non sibimetipsis dissimile canticum faciant, dissimiliter pulsat. Et idcirco chordae consonam modulationem reddunt, quia uno quidem plectro, sed non uno impulsu feriuntur. Unde et doctor quisque, ut in una cunctos virtute charitatis aedificet, ex una doctrina, sed non una eademque exhortatione tangere corda audientium debet. 13. Pro singulorum qualitate, varia monita dentur.Aliter namque viri, aliter admonendae sunt feminae; aliter juvenes, aliter senes; aliter inopes, aliter locupletes; aliter laeti, aliter tristes; aliter subditi, aliter praelati; aliter servi, aliter domini aliter hujus mundi sapientes, aliter hebetes; aliter impudentes, aliter verecundi; aliter protervi, aliter pusillanimes; aliter impatientes, aliter patientes; aliter benevoli, aliter invidi; aliter simplices, aliter impuri; aliter incolumes, aliter aegri; aliter qui

flagella metuunt, et propterea innocenter vivunt; aliter qui sic in iniquitate duruerunt, ut nec per flagella corrigantur; aliter nimis taciti, aliter multiloquio vacantes; aliter timidi, aliter audaces; aliter pigri, aliter praecipites; aliter mansueti, aliter iracundi; aliter humiles, aliter elati; aliter pertinaces, aliter inconstantes; aliter gulae dediti, aliter abstinentes; aliter qui sua misericorditer tribuunt, aliter qui aliena rapere contendunt; aliter qui nec aliena rapiunt, nec sua largiuntur, aliter qui et ea quae habent sua tribuunt, et aliena rapere non desistunt; aliter discordes, aliter pacati; aliter seminantes jurgia, aliter pacifici; aliter admonendi sunt qui sacrae legis verba non recte intelligunt, aliter qui recte quidem intelligunt, sed haec humiliter 962 non loquuntur; aliter qui, cum praedicare digna valeant, prae nimia humilitate formidant, aliter quos a praedicatione imperfectio vel aetas prohibet, et tamen praecipitatio impellit; aliter qui in hoc quod temporaliter appetunt prosperantur, aliter qui quidem quae mundi sunt concupiscunt, sed tamen adversitatis labore fatigantur; aliter conjugiis obligati, aliter a conjugii nexibus liberi; aliter commistionem carnis experti, aliter ignorantes; aliter qui peccata deplorant operum, aliter qui cogitationum; aliter qui commissa plangunt, nec tamen deserunt; aliter qui deserunt, nec tamen plangunt; aliter qui illicita quae faciunt etiam laudant, aliter qui accusant prava nec tamen devitant; aliter qui repentina concupiscentia superantur, aliter qui in culpa ex consilio ligantur; aliter qui licet minima, crebro tamen illicita faciunt, atque aliter qui se a parvis custodiunt, sed aliquando in gravibus demerguntur; aliter qui bona nec inchoant, aliter qui inchoata minime consummant; aliter qui mala occulte agunt, et bona publice, aliter qui bona quae faciunt abscondunt, et tamen quibusdam factis publice mala de se opinari permittunt. Et quidem de singulis quis sit admonitionis ordo subtiliter insinuare debuimus, sed formidata locutionis prolixitate praepedimur. Auctore autem Deo in alio opere id explere appetit animus, si tamen laboriosae hujus vitae adhuc aliquantulum tempus

restaverit. [Vet. VII.] 14. Iniqui altis et magnis vocibus increpandi, lenibus et blandis admonendi qui ab iniquitate recesserunt. Habemus vero aliud quod de galli hujus intelligentia considerare debeamus, quia profundioribus horis noctis valentiores ac productiores edere cantus solet, cum vero matutinum jam tempus appropinquat, leniores et minutiores omnimodo voces format. In quibus galli hujus intelligentia quid nobis innuat considerata praedicatorum discretio demonstrat. Qui cum iniquis adhuc mentibus praedicant, altis et magnis vocibus aeterni judicii terrores intimant, quia videlicet quasi in profundae noctis tenebris clamant. Cum vero jam auditorum suorum cordibus veritatis lucem adesse cognoscunt, clamoris sui magnitudinem in lenitatem dulcedinis vertunt, et non tam illa quae sunt de poenis terribilia quam ea quae sunt blanda de praemiis proferunt. Qui etiam minutis tunc vocibus cantant, quia appropinquante mane subtilia quaeque de mysteriis praedicant, ut sequaces sui eo minutiora quaeque de coelestibus audiant, quo luci veritatis appropinquant, et quos dormientes longus galli clamor excitaverat, succisior vigilantes delectet; quatenus correcto cuilibet de regno cognoscere subtiliter dulcia libeat, qui prius adversa de judicio formidabat. Quod bene per Moysen exprimitur, cum ad producendum exercitum tubae clangere concisius jubentur. Scriptum namque est: Fac tibi duas tubas argenteas ductiles (Num. X, 2). Et paulo post: Cum concisus clangor increpuerit, movebuntur castra (Ibid, 5). Per duas enim tubas exercitus ducitur, quia per duo praecepta charitatis ad procinctum fidei populus vocatur. Quae idcirco argenteae fieri praecipiuntur, ut praedicatorum verba lucis nitore pateant, 963 et auditorum mentem nulla sui obscuritate confundant. Idcirco autem ductiles, quia necesse est ut hi qui venturam vitam praedicant tribulationum praesentium tunsionibus crescant. Bene autem dicitur: Cum concisus clangor increpuerit, movebuntur castra (Num. X, 5), quia nimirum praedicationis sermo cum subtilius ac minutius agitur, auditorum corda contra tentationum certamina

ardentius excitantur. 15. Qui alios ex officio adhortantur, prius se in bonis operibus exerceant. Est adhuc aliud in gallo solerter intuendum, quia cum jam edere cantus parat, prius alas excutit, et semetipsum feriens, vigilantiorem reddit. Quod patenter cernimus, si sanctorum praedicatorum vitam vigilanter videamus. Ipsi quippe cum verba praedicationis movent, prius se in sanctis actionibus exercent, ne in semetipsis torpentes opere, alios excitent voce; sed ante se per sublimia facta excutiunt, et tunc ad bene agendum alios sollicitos reddunt. Prius cogitationum alis semetipsos feriunt, quia quidquid in se inutiliter torpet, sollicita investigatione deprehendunt, districta animadversione corrigunt. Prius sua punire fletibus curant, et tunc quae aliorum sunt punienda denuntiant. Prius ergo alis insonant quam cantus emittant, quia antequam verba exhortationis proferant omne quod locuturi sunt operibus clamant; et cum perfecte in semetipsis vigilant, tunc dormientes alios ad vigilias vocant. 16. Ut recte suo munere defungantur praedicatores et doctores, habent a Deo. Sed unde tanta haec doctori intelligentia, ut et sibi perfecte vigilet, et dormientes ad vigilias sub quibusdam clamoris provectibus vocet, ut et peccatorum tenebras prius caute discutiat, et discrete postmodum lucem praedicationis ostendat, ut singulis juxta modum et tempora congruat, et simul omnibus quae illos sequantur ostendat? Unde ad tanta et tam subtiliter tenditur, nisi intrinsecus ab eo a quo est conditus doceatur? Quia ergo laus tantae intelligentiae non praedicatoris virtus est, sed auctoris, recte per eumdem auctorem dicitur: Vel quis dedit gallo intelligentiam? Ac si diceret: Nisi ego, qui doctorum mentes quas mire ex nihilo condidi ad intelligenda quae occulta sunt mirabilius instruxi. Unde bene ut in dictis praedicantium non solum inspiratorem se intelligentiae, sed etiam auctorem locutionis ostendat, adjungit: VERS. 37. Quis enarrabit coelorum rationem? [Rec. V.] Quorum tamen verba quia cum sese nobis per speciem ostenderit subtrahit, protinus subdidit:

CAPUT IV.

IBID. Et concentum coeli quis dormire faciet? 17. Deo in majestate sua revelato, praedicatio cessabit. Spiritus sanctus Patris et Filii est, utrique coaeternus. In hac enim vita infirmitati nostrae Dominus non aperta specie majestatis suae, sed praedicatorum suorum voce locutus est, ut corda adhuc carnalia carnalis lingua pulsaret, et tanto facilius insueta perciperent, quanto ea per sonitum consuetae vocis audirent. At postquam per mortem in pulverem caro resolvitur, et per resurrectionem pulvis animatur, tunc de Deo audire verba non quaerimus, quia unum ipsum quod implet omnia jam per speciem Dei verbum videmus. Quod nobis 964 tanto altius sonat quanto et mentes nostras vi intimae illustrationis penetrat. Sublatis namque fortis et occidentibus verbis, quasi quidam sonus aeternae praedicationis fit ipsa imago internae visionis. Unde et recte nunc ad beatum Job Dominus dicit: Quis enarrabit coelorum rationem, et concentum coeli quis dormire faciet? Quid enim coelorum ratio accipitur, nisi vis superna secretorum? Quid per coeli concentum nisi concors praedicantium sermo signatur? Conditor igitur noster cum coelorum rationem narrare coeperit, dormire coeli concentum facit, quia cum jam nobis per speciem ostenditur, nimirum praedicantium verba subtrahuntur. Hinc enim per Jeremiam Dominus dicit: Non docebit ultra vir proximum suum, et fratrem suum, dicens: Cognosce Dominum. Omnes enim cognoscent me a minimo eorum usque ad maximum, dicit Dominus (Jerem. XXXI, 34). Hinc Paulus ait: Sive prophetiae evacuabuntur, sive linguae cessabunt, sive scientia destruetur (I Cor. XIII, 8). [Vet. VIII.] Vel certe coelorum ratio est ipsa vivificatrix virtus, quae spiritus format angelorum. Deus enim sicut est causa causarum, sicut vita viventium, ita etiam ratio rationabilium creaturarum. Tunc ergo coelorum rationem Dominus narrat, cum semetipsum nobis quomodo electis spiritibus praesit insinuat. Tunc coelorum rationem narrat, cum, detersa mentis nostrae caligine, clara se visione manifestat. Unde et in Evangelio Dominus

dicit: Venit hora cum jam non in proverbiis loquar vobis, sed palam de Patre annuntiabo vobis (Joan. XVI, 25). Palam quippe de Patre annuntiare se asserit, quia per patefactam tunc majestatis suae speciem, et quomodo ipsi gignenti non impar oriatur. et quomodo utrorumque Spiritus utrique coaeternus procedat ostendit. Aperte namque tunc videbimus quomodo hoc quod oriendo est ei de quo oritur subsequens non est, quomodo is qui per processionem producitur a proferentibus non praeitur. Aperte tunc videbimus quomodo et unum divisibiliter tria sint, et indivisibiliter tria unum. Lingua ergo tunc narrantis Dei est visa claritas sublevantis. Et concentus coeli tunc dormiet, quia apparente in judicio retributore operum, exhortationum jam verba cessabunt. Unde et aperte ipsum resurrectionis tempus adjungitur, cum illico profertur:

CAPUT V.

VERS. 38. Quando fundabatur pulvis in terram, et glebae compingebantur. 18. Resurrectionis tempus a Job praevisum et praenuntiatum. More enim suo quae adhuc futura sunt quasi jam praeterita divinus sermo describit, hoc in se videlicet servans quod per eum dicitur: Qui fecit quae futura sunt (Isai. XLV, 11, sec. LXX). Pulvis itaque tunc in terram fundatur, quia in solida membra reducitur. Et glebae compinguntur, quia nimirum firma corpora ex pulvere collecta consurgunt. Sed postquam verba haec dominica quomodo de futuro intelligenda sint diximus, nunc etiam quid de praesenti insinuent indicemus. [Vet. IX.] 19. Reprobis absconduntur coelestia, revelantur electis. Quis enarrabit coelorum rationem, et concentum coeli quis dormire faciet? Coelorum rationem Dominus narrat, dum nunc insinuando superna 965 secreta electorum suorum mentes illuminat. Concentum vero coeli dormire facit, dum concordes angelorum hymnos atque illa coelestium virtutum gaudia reproborum cordibus justo judicio abscondit. Qui concentus coeli, quamvis in se intrinsecus vigilet, in ipsa tamen reproborum

ignorantia extrinsecus dormit. Enarratur ergo secreti coelestis ratio, et tamen concentus coeli dormire permittitur, quia et aliis per inspirationem supernae retributionis scientia panditur, et aliis quae sit internae laudis suavitas occultatur. 20. Visibilia reprobos hic morantur, sanctos autem ad meliora compellunt. Narratur coelorum ratio, quia electorum mentibus quae sit supernorum retributio indesinenter aperitur, ut nimirum sine cessatione proficiant, et transcurrentes visibilia sese ad invisibilia extendant. Omne enim visibile quod in hac vita reprobos figit, hoc electos ad alia impellit, quia dum bona quae facta sunt respiciunt, in eum a quo facta sunt inardescunt; tantoque eum praestantius amant, quanto illum hoc quod ipse bonum condidit praeire considerant. Loquitur quippe hoc eis intrinsecus silenter sonans invisibilis lingua compunctionis. Quam tanto plenius intus audiunt, quanto ab exteriorum desideriorum strepitu perfectius avertuntur. His itaque concentus coeli non dormit, quia eorum mens quae sit laudis supernae suavitas, apposita amoris aure, cognoscit. Intus enim quod appetunt audiunt, et de coelestium bonorum praemiis ipso desiderio Divinitatis instruuntur. Unde et praesentem vitam non solum adversantem, sed etiam faventem graviter tolerant, quia eis onerosum est omne quod cernitur, dum ab eo quod intus audiunt differuntur. Omne quod sibi praesto est grave aestimant, quia illud non est ad quod anhelant; indesinenter autem eorum mens ipsis temporalitatis laboribus fessa in illud coeleste gaudium resumenda suspenditur, dum, in aure cordis intro erumpente concentu coeli, societatem sibi quotidie supernorum civium praestolantur. Iste concentus supernae laudis in illius aure eruperat, qui dicebat: Ingrediar in locum tabernaculi admirabilis, usque ad domum Dei in voce exsultationis et confessionis, sonus civitatis epulantis (Psal. XLI, 5). Qui igitur intus vocem exsultationis et confessionis ac sonum civitatis epulantis audierat, quid illum aliud nisi coeli concentus excitabat? 21. Concentus coelorum a pravis non auditur. Qui tamen concentus reprobis dormit, quia eorum cordibus

nequaquam per vocem compunctionis innotescit. Non enim considerare illam desiderabilem supernorum civium frequentiam student, nullo ardoris radio illa solemnitatis internae festa conspiciunt, nulla in intimis contemplationis penna sublevantur. Solis namque visibilibus serviunt, et idcirco nihil supernae suavitatis intrinsecus audiunt, quia eos, sicut superius diximus, in aure cordis curarum saecularium surdi tumultus premunt. Quia igitur occulti dispensatione judicii quod aliis aperitur aliis clauditur, quod aliis detegitur aliis occultatur, dicatur recte: Quis enarrabit coelorum rationem, et concentum coeli quis dormire faciet? Quod tamen tunc nobis latius innotuit, cum Redemptor noster per dispensationis 966 mysterium apparens, et indignis misericordiam praebuit, et eos a se qui digni videbantur exclusit. Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur:

CAPUT VI [Vet.

X, Rec. VI]. VERS. 38. Quando fundabatur pulvis in terram, et glebae compingebantur. 22. Peccatores pulveri similes, quolibet tentationis flatu rapiuntur. Spiritus sancti gratia solidantur, et charitate compinguntur. Quis in pulvere nisi peccatores accipimus, qui nullo rationis pondere solidati cujuslibet tentationis flatu rapiuntur? De quibus scriptum est: Non sic impii non sic, sed tanquam pulvis quem projicit ventus a facie terrae (Psal. I, 5). Pulvis ergo in terram fundatus est, cum peccatores vocati in Ecclesia traditae fidei sunt ratione solidati, ut qui prius inconstantia mobiles tentationis aura levabantur, immobiles postmodum contra tentamenta consisterent, et Deo perseveranter inhaerentes, fixum bene vivendi pondus tenerent. Glebae vero ex humore coagulantur et pulvere. In hac itaque terra glebae compactae sunt, quia vocati peccatores et per Spiritus sancti gratiam infusi In collectione sunt charitatis uniti. Istae glebae in terra compactae sunt, quando populi qui prius quasi in dispersione pulveris diversa sentiebant, postmodum, sancti Spiritus gratia accepta, in illa pacatissima

unanimitatis concordia convenerunt, ut cum essent tria millia, vel rursum quinque millia, Scriptura testante, diceretur quia erat in eis cor unum et anima una (Act. IV, 32). Has glebas ex uno quidem pulvere, sed quasi diversa mole distinctas quotidie Dominus in terra compingit, quia, servata unitate sacramenti, juxta varietatem morum atque linguarum fideles in Ecclesia populos colligit. Has glebas jam tunc Dominus designavit, quando ad esum panis et piscium quinquagenos discumbere vel centenos jussit (Matth. XIV, 19, 20). 23. In Ecclesia diversi sunt ordines. Quas tamen glebas si in Ecclesia ex diversitate meritorum attendimus, fortasse adhuc distinguere subtilius valemus. Nam dum alius est ordo praedicantium, alius auditorum; alius regentium, atque alius subditorum; alius conjugum, alius continentium, alius poenitentium, alius virginum; quasi ex una terra est diversa glebarum forma distincta, dum in una fide, in una charitate disparia demonstrantur bene operantium merita. Has glebas populus ille significavit, qui ad constructionem tabernaculi sub uno studio diversa donaria obtulit, de quo scriptum est: Quidquid in cultum tabernaculi et ad vestes sanctas necessarium erat, viri cum mulieribus praebuerunt, armillas et inaures, annulos et dextralia, omne vas aureum in donaria Domini separatum est. Si quis habuit hyacinthum, purpuram, coccumque bis tinctum, byssum et pilos caprarum (Exod. XXXV, 22), etc. 24. Singuli, ad Ecclesiae cultum implendum, dona offerunt. In ornamento ergo tabernaculi viri dona cum mulieribus offerunt, quia in explendo cultu sanctae Ecclesiae, et fortium facta sublimia, et infirmorum opera extrema numerantur. Quid autem per armillas quae lacertos astringunt nisi praepositorum valide laborantium opera demonstrantur? Et quid per inaures nisi subditorum obedientia exprimitur? Quid per annulos nisi signaculum secretorum? Plerumque enim magistri signant quod ab auditoribus capi non posse considerant. Et quid per dextralia nisi primae operationis ornamenta 967 memorantur? Quid per vas aureum in donaria Domini separatum nisi divinitatis intelligentia accipitur,

quae tanto ab inferiorum amore disjungitur, quanto ad sola quae aeterna sunt amanda sublevantur? Quid per hyacinthum nisi spes coelestium? Quid per purpuram nisi cruor ac tolerantia passionum amore regni perpetui exhibita? Et quid per bis tinctum coccum nisi charitas demonstratur, quae pro perfectione bis tingitur, quia Dei et proximi dilectione decoratur? Quid per byssum nisi immaculata carnis incorruptio? Et quid per pilos caprarum, ex quibus ciliciorum asperitas texitur, nisi dura poenitentium afflictio designatur? Dum igitur alii per armillas et annulos forte magisterium exercent, alii per inaures et dextralia devotam obedientiam rectamque operationem exhibent, alii per separatum vas aureum praeclaram subtilioremque Dei intelligentiam tenent; alii per hyacinthum, purpuram et coccum, audita coelestia sperare, credere, amare non desinunt, etiam quae adhuc subtiliori intellectu minime cognoscunt, alii per byssum incorruptionem carnis offerunt; alii per caprarum pilos deplorant aspere quod libenter commiserunt; quasi ex una terra innumerae glebae proferuntur, quia ex uno et pari obsequio facta fidelium disparia procedunt. Quae nimirum glebae nequaquam concretae ex pulvere surgerent, nisi aquam prius pulvis acciperet, et concepto se humore solidaret, quia nisi peccatores quosque sancti Spiritus gratia infunderet, constrictos eos ad fidei opera charitatis unitas non teneret. Quando igitur Dominus enarrabit coelorum rationem, vel concentum coeli dormire faciet, aperiat. Ait enim: Quando fundabatur pulvis in terram, et glebae compingebantur. Ac si diceret: Tunc primum vocatione et discretione manifesta, secreta spiritalia et non sine misericordia aliis aperui, et non sine justitia aliis clausi, cum alios respuerem, et alios intra Ecclesiam concordia charitatis adunarem. Quae sancta Ecclesia quia a perfidia Judaeorum repulsa, ad rapiendas gentes se contulit, atque in suo corpore convertendas, quod quidem non suis, sed Domini viribus fecit, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT VII [Vet.

XI, Rec. VII]. VERS. 39. Nunquid capies leaenae praedam, et animam catulorum ejus implebis? 25. Ecclesia leaena est, cujus catuli fuerunt apostoli. Ista nimirum illa leaena est de qua Job dicebat, cum superbientem Judaeam cerneret praedicante Ecclesia praetermissam: Non calcaverunt eam filii institorum, nec pertransivit per eam leaena (Job. XXVIII, 8). Huic ergo leaenae Dominus praedam capit, ut animam catulorum ejus impleat, quia ad augmentum hujus Ecclesiae innumeros de gentilitate diripuit, et per animarum lucrum esurientia apostolorum vota satiavit. Ipsi quippe catuli pro mentis teneritudine et formidinis infirmitate vocati sunt, quia, passo Domino, clausis foribus residebant, sicut de illis scriptum est: Cum esset sero die illo una Sabbatorum, et fores essent clausae ubi erant discipuli congregati propter metum Judaeorum, venit Jesus, et stetit in medio eorum (Joan. XX, 19). Unde hic quoque de eisdem catulis apte subjungitur:

CAPUT VIII.

VERS. XL. Quando cubant in antris, et in specubus insidiantur. 26. In antris prius cubarunt, unde in mundum praedas acturi exsilierunt. Cum enim nequaquam sancti apostoli contra membra diaboli in voce liberae praedicationis exsurgerent, et necdum post passionem Domini 968 sancti Spiritus effusione solidati Redemptorem suum firma auctoritate praedicarent, adhuc contra adversarios suos quasi in antris insidiabantur. Clausis quippe foribus quasi in quibusdam abditis specubus suis catuli rapturi mundum cubabant, ut animarum praedam postmodum praesumentes diriperent, de quibus tunc certum est quod mundi impetum etiam sibimetipsis latendo formidarent. Illis foribus clausis isti catuli mortem mortis nostrae insidiati quaesierunt, ut culpam nostram interficerent, omnemque in nobis peccati vitam necarent. Horum primo illi esurienti catulo, sed jam valenti, ostensa per linteum gentilitate, quasi monstrata praeda, dicitur: Macta et manduca (Act. X, 13). His catulis velut adhuc

infirmis ut cubare in antris debeant jubetur, cum eis dominica voce dicitur: Sedete hic in civitate quoadusque induamini virtute ex alto (Luc. XXIV, 49). An non recte leaenae catuli vocantur, qui in Ecclesia editi adversantem mundum ore rapuerunt? 27. Illos imitantur perfecti doctores. Ille scit recte dicere, qui novit ordinate tacere. Et haec quidem facta a sanctis apostolis novimus, haec nunc etiam fieri a perfectis doctoribus videmus. Ipsi enim etsi subsequentium populorum patres sunt, tamen sunt praecedentium filii; unde et non immerito catuli dicuntur. Vel certe quia etsi quorumdam fidelium magistri sunt, universalis tamen Ecclesiae discipulos se esse gloriantur. Leaenae itaque praedam Dominus capit, quia virtute suae inspirationis ab errore vitam delinquentium diripit; et animas catulorum illius replet, quia conversione multorum piis doctorum desideriis satisfacit. De quibus catulis bene subjungitur: Quando cubant in antris, et in specubus insidiantur. Neque enim cuncta tempora doctrinae sunt congrua. Nam plerumque dictorum virtus perditur, si intempestive proferantur. Saepe vero et quod lenius dicitur conventu temporis congruentis animatur. Ille ergo scit recte dicere, qui et ordinate novit tacere. Quid enim prodest eo tempore irascentem corripere, quo alienata mente non solum non aliena verba percipere, sed semetipsum vix valet tolerare? Furentem quippe qui per invectionem corripit, quasi ei qui non sentiat, plagas ebrio imponit. Doctrina itaque ut pervenire ad cor audientis valeat, quae sibi congrua sint temporum momenta perpendat. Bene ergo de his catulis dicitur: Quando cubant in antris, et in specubus insidiantur. Doctores enim sancti quando et arguenda conspiciunt et tamen se per silentium in cogitationibus retinent, quasi in specubus latent, et velut in antris se contegunt quia in suis cordibus occultantur. Sed cum opportunum tempus invenerint, repente prosiliunt, nulla quae dicenda sunt reticent, et cervicem superbientium morsu asperae increpationis tenent. Sive itaque per apostolos, sive per doctores, quos in apostolorum locum subrogavit, huic leaenae Dominus quotidie praedam

capit, et per eos quos cepit alios etiam capere non desistit. Ad hoc quippe justi hujus mundi peccatores rapiunt, ut per conversos eos etiam alii ex mundo rapiantur. Unde et ipsa geminitas, quae pio apostolorum ore rapta est, tanta nunc fame alios esurit quanta se ab apostolis concupitam fuisse cognoscit. Proinde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT IX [Vet.

XII, Rec. VIII]. VERS. 41. Quis praeparat corvo escam suam, quando pulli 969 ejus clamant ad Deum, vagantes eo quod non habeant cibos? 28. Gentilitas conversa corvus est, cujus pulli sunt sancti praedicatores. Quid enim corvi pullorumque ejus nomine nisi peccatis nigra gentilitas designatur? De qua per Prophetam dicitur: Qui dat jumentis escam ipsorum, et pullis corvorum invocantibus eum (Psal. CXLVI, 9). Jumenta quippe escam accipiunt, dum sacrae Scripturae pabulo mentes dudum brutae satiantur. Pullis vero cervorum, filiis scilicet gentium esca datur, cum eorum desiderium nostra conversatione reficitur. Iste corvus esca fuit dum ipsum sancta Ecclesia quaereret. Sed nunc escam accipit, quia ipse ad conversionem alios exquirit. 29. Hi sua virtute nihil se posse sciunt. Cujus videlicet pulli, id est praedicatores ex eo editi, non in se praesumunt, sed in viribus Redemptoris sui. Unde bene dicitur: Quando pulli ejus clamant ad Deum. Nihil enim sua virtute posse se sciunt. Et quamvis animarum lucra piis votis esuriant, ab illo tamen qui cuncta intrinsecus operatur haec fieri exoptant. Vera enim fide comprehendunt, quia neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus (I Cor. III, 7). 30. Zelo lucrandarum animarum aestuant. Quod vero dictum est: vagantes eo quod non habeant cibos, in hac vagatione nihil aliud quam aestuantium praedicatorum vota signantur. Qui dum in Ecclesiae sinum recipere populos ambiunt, magno ardore succensi, nunc ad hos, nunc ad illos colligendos desiderium mittunt. Quasi quaedam quippe vagatio est ipsa cogitationis

aestuatio; et velut ad loca varia mutatis nutibus transeunt, dum pro adunandis animabus in modos innumeros ac in partes diversas esurienti mente discurrunt. [Vet. XIII.] 31. Pauli pro omnibus pene ecclesiis sollicitudo. Charitas, quae divisa unit, cor Pauli per multa dividebat. Hanc vagationem pulli corvorum, id est filii gentilium, ab ipso gentium magistro didicerunt. Ipse quippe quam valida charitate flagrat, tam nimia ex locis ad loca se vagatione permutat; transire ad alia ex aliis appetit, quia ipsa eum quae implet charitas impellit. Longe namque a Romanis positus scribit: Memoriam vestri facio semper in orationibus meis, obsecrans si quo modo tandem aliquando prosperum iter habeam in voluntate Dei veniendi ad vos; desidero enim videre vos (Rom. I, 9, 10). Retentus Ephesi Corinthiis scribit: Ecce tertio hoc paratus sum venire ad vos (II Cor. XII, 14). Rursum Ephesi commorans, Galatis loquitur, dicens: Vellem modo esse apud vos, et mutare vocem meam (Gal. IV, 20). Romae quoque custodia carceris clausus, quia ire ad Philippenses per semetipsum non permittitur, transmittere se discipulum pollicetur, dicens: Spero in Domino Jesu, Timotheum me cito mittere ad vos, ut et ego bono animo sim, cognitis quae circa vos sunt (Philip. II, 10). Constrictus etiam vinculis atque Ephesi retentus, Colossensibus scribit: Nam si corpore absens sum, sed spiritu vobiscum sum (Coloss. II, 5). Ecce quomodo sancto desiderio quasi vagatur: hic corpore tenetur, illuc spiritu ducitur; et paterni amoris affectum istis praesentibus exhibet, illis absentibus ostendit; coram positis impendit opera, audientibus exprimit vota, efficaciter praesens eis cum quibus erat, nec tamen 970 illis absens cum quibus non erat. Cujus vagationem melius cognoscimus, si ejus adhuc ad Corinthios verba pensamus. Ait enim: Veniam ad vos, cum Macedoniam pertransiero. Nam Macedoniam pertransibo; apud vos autem forsitan manebo, vel etiam hiemabo (I Cor. XVI, 5). Perpendamus, quaeso, quae sit ista vagatio. Ecce alio interim manet, alio se iturum perhibet, atque alio deflexurum promittit. Quid est

quod tam anxie per tot loca partitur, nisi quod circa omnes una charitate constringitur? Charitas enim quae divisa unire consuevit, unum cor Pauli per multa dividi compellit. Quod tamen tanto arctius in Deo colligit, quanto latius per sancta desideria spargit. Praedicando igitur Paulus vult simul omnia dicere, amando vult simul omnes videre, quia et in carne permanendo vult omnibus vivere, et de carne transeundo per sacrificium fidei vult omnibus prodesse. Vagentur itaque pulli corvorum, id est magistrum suum imitentur filii gentium, torporem mentis excutiant, et cum animarum lucrum, id est cibum suum minime reperiunt, non quiescant; ad profectum se ex provectibus extendant, et, aestuantes in utilitate multorum, refectionem suam quasi vagantes esuriant. Quia vero per praedicationum opera discurrendo, refectione fidei gentilitatem satiare non cessant, dicatur recte: Quis praeparat corvo escam suam, quando pulli ejus clamant ad Deum, vagantes eo quod non habeant cibos. [Vet. XIV.] 32. Corvi quoque nomine plebs Judaica significatur. Visa gentilium conversione, olim resipiscet ac de sua stultitia erubescet. Potest etiam corvi nomine nigra per infidelitatis meritum plebs Judaica designari. Nam pulli ejus ad Deum clamare referuntur, ut eidem corvo a Domino esca praeparetur, quia nimirum sancti apostoli, plebis Israeliticae carne generati, dum pro gente sua preces ad Dominum funderent, quasi pulli corvorum, eum de quo carnaliter editi sunt spiritali intelligentia parentem populum paverunt. Igitur dum pulli ejus clamant, corvo esca praeparatur, quia dum apostoli exorant, plebs dudum perfida ad cognitionem fidei ducitur, et ex praedicatione filiorum quasi ex pullorum voce satiatur. Illud tamen in hoc versu debemus solerter intueri, quod huic corvo esca dicitur primum pullis clamantibus et postmodum vagantibus praeparari. Clamantibus namque pullis corvo esca praeparata est, cum praedicantibus apostolis verbum Dei Judaea audiens, modo in tribus millibus, modo in quinque millibus spirituali est intelligentia satiata. Sed cum per reproborum multitudinem crudelitatem suam contra

praedicantes exerceret, et quasi pullorum vitam necaret, iidem pulli in universa mundi spatia dispersi sunt. Unde et eisdem carnalibus patribus spiritali praedicationi resistentibus dicunt: Vobis oportebat primum loqui verbum Dei; sed quia repellitis illud, et indignos vos judicatis aeternae vitae, ecce convertimur ad gentes (Act. XIII, 46); scientes profecto quod postquam gentilitas crederet, etiam Judaea ad fidem veniret. Unde et scriptum est: Donec plenitudo gentium introiret, et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret (Rom. XI, 25). Quia igitur summopere sancti apostoli et studuerunt prius 971 audientibus praedicare, et postmodum resistentibus exempla conversae gentilitatis ostendere, quasi esurientes pulli huic corvo escam suam prius clamando et postmodum vagando quaesierunt. Unde enim vagantur pulli, inde escam corvus invenit, quia dum per laborem praedicantium conversam ad Deum gentilitatem Judaicus populus respicit, ad extremum quandoque stultitiam suae infidelitatis erubescit; et tunc Scripturae sacrae sententias intelligit, cum prius quam sibi eas gentibus innotuisse cognoscit, atque, expleta vagatione pullorum, ad percipienda sacra eloquia os cordis aperit; quia peractis in mundum cursibus apostolorum, sero ea spiritaliter percipit: quibus diu se perfidia astringente jejunavit. Quae quia omnia solius divinae potentiae virtus operatur, recte dicitur: Quis praeparat corvo escam suam, quando pulli ejus clamant ad Deum, vagantes eo quod non habeant cibos? Subandis nisi ego, qui infidelem populum filiis suis et exorantibus tolero, et praedicantibus pasco, atque ad alia vagantibus convertendum quandoque in fine sustineo. [Vet. XV.] 33. Periti magistri, discipulis non satis humiliter de se sentientibus, sublimioris doctrinae cibum subtrahunt. Est adhuc aliud quod de corvo moraliter possit intelligi. Editis namque pullis, ut fertur, escam plene praebere dissimulat, priusquam plumescendo nigrescant, eosque inedia affici patitur, quoadusque in illis per pennarum nigredinem sua similitudo videatur. Qui huc illucque vagantur in nido, et ciborum expetunt aperto ore

subsidium. At cum nigrescere coeperint, tanto eis praebenda alimenta ardentius requirit, quanto illos alere diutius distulit. Corvus profecto est doctus quisque praedicator, qui magna voce clamat, dum peccatorum suorum memoriam atque cognitionem infirmitatis propriae quasi quamdam coloris nigredinem portat. Cui quidam nascuntur in fide discipuli, sed fortasse adhuc considerare infirmitatem propriam nesciunt, fortasse a peccatis praeteritis memoriam avertunt, et per hoc eam quam assumi oportet contra hujus mundi gloriam humilitatis nigredinem non ostendunt. Hi velut ad accipiendas escas os aperiunt, cum doceri de secretis sublimibus quaerunt. Sed eis doctor suus alimenta praedicamentorum sublimium tanto minus tribuit, quanto illos peccata praeterita minus digne deflere cognoscit. Exspectat quippe atque admonet ut a nitore vitae praesentis prius per poenitentiae lamenta nigrescant, et tunc demum congrua praedicationis subtilissimae nutrimenta percipiant. Corvus in pullis ora inhiantia respicit, sed ante in eis pennarum nigredine indui corpora quaerit. Sic et discretus doctor interna mysteria eorum sensibus non ministrat, quos adhuc ab hoc saeculo nequaquam se abjecisse considerat. Quanto igitur discipuli exterius per cultum vitae praesentis minus quasi nigri sunt, tanto per cibum verbi interius minus replentur; et quo se a corporali gloria non evacuant, eo a spiritali refectione jejunant. 34. Secus si in confessione peccatorum humilientur.Si vero in confessione vitae praeteritae lamenti sui gemitus velut nigrescentes plumas proferant, illico in contemplatione doctor ad escam de sublimibus deferendam, quasi pullorum refectionem cogitans corvus, volat, eisque hiantibus in ore 972 cibum revocat, dum ex ea intelligentia quam coeperit esurientibus discipulis alimenta vitae loquendo subministrat. Quos tanto ardentius de supernis reficit, quanto verius a mundi nitore nigrescere poenitentiae lamentatione cognoscit. 35. Quo major est humilitas, major etiam spes provectus. Pulli autem dum nigro se pennarum colore vestiunt, de se etiam volatum promittunt, quia quo magis discipuli

abjecta de se sentiunt, quo magis sese despicientes affligunt, eo amplius spem provectus sui in altiora pollicentur. Unde et curat doctor festinantius alere quos jam per quaedam indicia providet posse et aliis prodesse. Hinc enim Timotheum Paulus admonet, velut plumescentes pullos sollicitius nutrire, dum dicit: Quae audisti a me per multos testes, haec commenda fidelibus hominibus, qui idonei erunt et alios docere (II Tim. II, 2). Quae doctrinae discretio dum caute a praedicatore custoditur, ei divinitus largior copia praedicationis datur. Dum enim per charitatem compati afflictis discipulis novit, dum per discretionem congruum doctrinae tempus intelligit, ipse non solum pro se, sed etiam pro eis, quibus laboris sui studia impendit, majora intelligentiae suae munera percipit. Unde hic quoque apte dicitur: Quis praeparat corvo escam suam, quando pulli ejus clamant ad Deum, vagantes eo quod non habeant cibos? Cum enim pulli ut satientur clamant, corvo esca praeparatur, quia dum verbum Dei boni auditores esuriunt, pro reficiendis eis majora doctoribus intelligentiae dona tribuuntur. Sequitur:

CAPUT X [Vet.

XVI, Rec. IX]. CAP. XXXIX, VERS. 1. Nunquid nosti tempus partus ibicum in petris, vel parturientes cervas observasti? 36. Cur magistri spirituales in ibicibus et cervis signati. Ibicum descriptio. Qui cervi flumina transmittant. Quae agimus apud Deum eo magis crescunt quo apud nos per humilitatem decrescunt. Meridiana pars ibices aves vocat, quae Nili fluentis inhabitant. Orientalis vero Occidentalisque plaga parva quadrupedia ibices nominat quibus et moris est in petris parere, quia neque sciunt nisi in petris habitare. Quae si quando etiam de altis saxorum cacuminibus ruunt, in suis se cornibus illaesa suscipiunt. Caput quippe ruentes feriunt, cujus dum prima cornua opponunt fit omne corpus a jactura casus alienum. Cervarum vero moris est inventos serpentes exstinguere, eorumque membra morsibus

dilaniare. Fertur autem quia si quando flumina transeunt, capitum suorum onera dorsis praecedentium superponunt, sibique invicem succedentes laborem ponderis omnino non sentiunt. Quid est ergo quod beatus Job de partu ibicum cervarumque discutitur, nisi quia in cervis vel ibicibus magistrorum spiritalium persona signatur? Ipsi quippe velut ibices in petris pariunt, quia in doctrina patrum, qui petrae pro soliditate vocati sunt, ad conversionem animas gignunt. Ipsi velut ibices nullius casus damna sentiunt, dum in suis cornibus excipiuntur, quia quidquid eis ruinae temporalis accesserit, in testamentis sacrae Scripturae se suscipiunt, et quasi cornuum exceptione salvantur. De his enim testamentis dictum est: Cornua sunt in manibus ejus (Habac. III, 4). Ad Scripturarum ergo consolationem refugiunt, dum aliqua temporalis casus jactura feriuntur. An non more ibicum, hujus mundi adversitatibus cadens, quasi in suis se cornibus excipiebat Paulus, cum diceret: Quaecunque scripta sunt, ad nostram doctrinam 973 scripta sunt, ut per patientiam et consolationem scripturarum spem habeamus (Rom. XV, 4)? Ipsi etiam cervae vocati sunt, sicut per Jeremiam de doctoribus genitos filios incaute deserentibus dicitur: Cerva in agro peperit, et reliquit (Jerem. 14, 5). Ipsi, more cervarum, interemptis vitiis, quasi exstinctis serpentibus vivunt, et de ipsa exstinctione vitiorum, ad fontem vitae acrius inardescunt. Unde Psalmista ait: Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus (Psal. XLI, 1). Ipsi etiam dum labentia hujus temporalitatis momenta quasi quaedam flumina transeunt, compatientes charitate, onera sua sibi invicem superponunt, quia cauta observatione custodiunt id quod scriptum est: Invicem onera vestra portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi (Galat. VI, 2). Quia vero post adventum Domini spiritales magistri per mundum sparsi sunt, qui auditorum animas in conversione parere praedicando potuissent, et quia hoc idem tempus incarnationis Domini ante prophetarum voces cognitum non fuit, quamvis futura ipsa incarnatio praecognita omnibus

electis fuit, bene beatus Job de tempore partus ibicum cervarumque discutitur, eique dicitur: Nunquid nosti tempus partus ibicum in petris, vel parturientes cervas observasti? Ac si dicatur ei: Idcirco te egisse aliquid sublimiter credis, quia illud tempus necdum praevides quo spiritales magistri in mundum missi per doctrinam antiquorum patrum filios generant, suisque laboribus animarum mihi lucra comportant. Nam si illorum fructum quasi ibicum cervarumque partus aspiceres, valde humiliter de tua virtute sentires. Magna quippe quae agimus quasi minima ducimus, cum haec per fortiora exempla pensamus. Sed tunc apud Deum crescunt per meritum, cum apud nosmetipsos per humilitatem decrescunt. [Vet. XVII.] 37. Per cervas, doctores; per ibices, auditores possunt intelligi. Exempla sanctorum inspicienda. Regis David humilitas et patientia. Contumeliosa verba non convicia, sed adjutoria credidit. Iis gratia magis quam ira debetur. Possunt vero cervarum significatione doctores, appellatione autem ibicum, qui animalia sunt minima, auditores intelligi. In petris vero ibices pariunt, quia ad exercenda sancta opera per exempla patrum praecedentium fecundantur, ut cum fortasse praecepta sublimia audiunt, et, infirmitatis propriae conscii, ea se implere posse diffidunt, majorum vitam conspiciant, atque in eorum considerata fortitudine bonorum operum fetus ponant. Ut enim pauca de multis loquar, quatenus studiosus lector multa in paucis intelligat, iste, verborum contumeliis pressus, cum virtutem patientiae servare non sufficit, David factum ad memoriam reducat, quem cum tot Semei conviciis urgeret, et armati proceres ulcisci contenderent, ait: Quid mihi et vobis filii Sarviae? Dimittite eum ut maledicat; Dominus enim praecepit ei ut malediceret David; et quis est qui audeat dicere, quare sic fecerit (II Reg. XVI, 10)? Et paulo post: Dimittite eum ut maledicat juxta praeceptum Domini, si forte respiciat Dominus afflictionem meam, et reddat mihi bonum pro maledictione hac hodierna (Ibid., 12). Quibus profecto verbis indicat quia pro perpetrato Bethsabee scelere, exsurgentem contra se filium fugiens,

reduxit ad animum malum quod perpetravit, et aequanimiter pertulit quod audivit; et contumeliosa verba non tam convicia quam adjutoria credidit, quibus se 974 purgari sibique misereri posse judicavit. Tunc enim illata convicia bene toleramus, cum in secreto mentis ad male perpetrata recurrimus. Leve quippe videbitur quod injuria percutimur, dum in actione nostra conspicimus quia pejus est quod mereremur; sicque fit ut contumeliis gratia magis quam ira debeatur, quarum interventu Deo judice poena gravior declinari posse confiditur. [Vet. XVIII.] 38. Qua arte Joseph luxuriam vicerit. Illatam gratiam exteriorum Dei munerum, in arma virtutum convertamus. Contra Deum ex ejus beneficiis pugnare nos pudeat. Ecce alius dum mundi hujus successibus proficit, lenocinante cordis laetitia, tentari se luxuriae stimulis sentit; sed Joseph factum ad memoriam revocat, et in arce se castitatis servat. Qui dum sibi a domina conspiceret pudicitiae damna suaderi, ait: Ecce dominus meus, omnibus mihi traditis, ignorat quid habeat in domo sua, nec quidquam est quod non in mea sit potestate, vel non tradiderit mihi praeter te, quae uxor ejus es; quomodo ergo possum hoc malum facere, et peccare in dominum meum (Genes. XXXIX, 8)? Quibus verbis ostenditur quia bona quae assecutus fuerat repente memoriae intulit, et malum quod se pulsabat evicit; et quia perceptae gratiae meminit, vim culpae imminentis fregit. Cum enim voluptas lubrica tentat in prosperis, haec ipsa sunt prospera aculeo tentationis opponenda, ut eo erubescamus prava committere, quo nos a Deo meminimus gratuito bona percepisse, et illatam gratiam exteriorum munerum vertamus in arma virtutum, ut sint ante oculos quae percepimus, et quae nos alliciunt subigamus. Quia enim voluptas ipsa ex prosperitate nascitur, ejusdem prosperitatis est consideratione ferienda, quatenus hostis noster unde oritur, inde moriatur. Considerandum quippe est ne acceptum munus vertamus in vitium, ne per favorem vitae nos absorbeat vorago nequitiae. Iram namque contra nos superni judicis inexstinguibiliter accendimus, si contra benignitatem illius

etiam ex ipsa sua largitate pugnamus. 39. Ad contemplationem anhelanti Daniel imitandus. Sapor carnalium reprimendus. Exteriorum evagationem cohibenti, secessus interior aperitur. Alius internae scientiae dulcedinem quaerens, nec tamen secreta ejus contingere praevalens, Danielis vitam ad imitandum conspicit, et desideratum scientiae culmen apprehendit. Ille quippe qui postmodum voce angelica pro cognitionis internae concupiscentia vir desiriorum dicitur (Dan. X, 11), prius in aula regia carnis in se desideria edomuisse memoratur, ut nil ex delectabilibus cibis attingeret, sed lautis ac mollioribus duriora atque asperiora cibaria praeferret (Dan. I, 12), ut dum sibi exterioris cibi blandimenta subtraheret, ad interni pabuli delectamenta perveniret; et tanto avidius gustum sapientiae intus acciperet, quanto saporem carnis pro eadem sapientia foris robustius repressisset. Si enim a carne hoc quod libet abscindimus, mox in spiritu quod delectet invenimus. Intentioni quippe animae, si exterior evagatio clauditur, interior secessus aperitur. Nam quo extra se spargi propter disciplinam mens non potest, eo super se intendere per profectum potest, quia et in altum crescere arbor cogitur, quae per ramos diffundi prohibetur; et cum rivos fontis obstruimus, fluenta surgere ad superiora provocamus. Igitur dum studiosi quique sanctorum vitam imitando conspiciunt, in petris ibices fetus ponunt. Hinc est quod auditores suos quasi ibices in petris parere Paulus admonebat, 975 cum enumeratis majorum virtutibus diceret: Habentes tantam impositam nubem testium, deponentes omne pondus, et circumstans nos peccatum, per patientiam curramus ad propositum nobis certamen (Hebr. XII, 1). Et rursum: Quorum intuentes exitum conversationis, imitamini fidem (Hebr. XIII, 7). [Vet. XIX.] 40. Cum divina praecepta concipimus, non statim parturimus. Sed cum divina praecepta corde concipimus, non statim quasi jam solide cogitata parturimus. Unde et beatus Job non de partu ibicum, sed de tempore partus inquiritur. Quod videlicet tempus si in nobismetipsis vix comprehendimus, multo magis in

aliena mente nescimus. Prius enim superni timoris semina utero cordis suscepta per meditationem studii coagulantur ut maneant, postmodum, stricta intentione cogitationis affixa, dum ad discretionis rationem tendunt, quasi in membrorum distinctionem formantur; dehinc, usu perseverantiae confirmata velut in soliditatem ossium veniunt; ad extremum vero, perfecta auctoritate roborata, quasi in partum procedunt; quae incrementa divinorum seminum nullus in aliena mente considerat, nisi ipse qui creat. Nam etsi quemlibet jam vim supernae concupiscentiae concepisse quarumdam rerum attestatione cognoscimus, quando tamen in partu erumpat ignoramus. 41. Quidam fetus abortivi sunt, quia praematuri. Bona tenera humana laus exstinguit. Saepe autem concepta mente semina pervenire ad perfectionem nequeunt, quia oriendo tempus partus antecedunt. Et quia necdum plene in cogitatione formata ante humanos oculos prodeunt, velut abortiva moriuntur. Bona quippe adhuc tenera, plerumque humana lingua, dum jam quasi fortia laudat, exstinguit. Tanto enim celerius occidunt, quanto ad favoris notitiam intempestive prorumpunt. Nonnunquam vero imperfecta nostra cogitatio necdum roborata, dum citius hominibus ostenditur, resistentium adversitate dissipatur; et cum conatur ante tempus videri quia sit, agit ut non sit. Sancti autem viri, quia cuncta quae bene cogitant student ut occulte convalescant, et quasi processuros fetus prius intra uterum mentis formant, recte beatus Job de partus tempore discutitur, quod videlicet unicuique quando sit congruum nisi a creatore nescitur. Qui dum penetralia cordis aspicit, quando ad humanam notitiam bona nostra congrue nascantur, apprehendit. Bene itaque dicitur: Nunquid nosti tempus partus ibicum in petris? Ac si aperte dicat. Ut ego, qui idcirco electorum fetus vivaces facio, quia praescito in tempore produco. Bene autem expleto fetu auditorum subditur: Vel parturientes cervas observasti? Parturientes enim cervas observare est illos labores patrum qui spiritales filios generant cauta consideratione pensare. 42. Praedicatorum animas parturientium qui

dolores, quae dotes. Solerter quippe intuendum est quod hic sermo tam vigilanter imprimitur, ut dicatur, observasti, quia utique perpaucorum est pensare quis labor sit in praedicationibus patrum; quantis doloribus, quasi quibusdam conatibus animas in fide et conversatione parturiunt; quam cauta se observatione circumspiciunt, ut sint fortes in praeceptis, 976 compatientes in infirmitatibus, in minis terribiles, in exhortationibus blandi, in ostendendo magisterio humiles, in rerum temporalium contemptu dominantes, in tolerandis adversitatibus rigidi, et tamen dum vires suas sibimet non tribuunt, infirmi; quantus sit eis dolor de cadentibus, quantus de stantibus timor; quo fervore alia adipisti appetunt, quo pavore alia adepta conservant. Quia igitur perpaucorum est ista pensare, bene ei dicitur: Vel parturientes cervas observasti? [Vet. XX.] 43. Qui per vigorem disciplinae patres sunt, per pietatis viscera sint matres. Nil vero obstat quod verba Deus de doctoribus faciens, non cervorum, sed cervarum eos specie designat, quia nimirum illi veri doctores sunt, qui cum per vigorem disciplinae patres sunt, per pietatis viscera esse matres noverunt. Qui labores sanctae conceptionis tolerant, et proferendos Deo filios intra uterum charitatis portant. In edenda enim prole amplius matres laborant, quae crescentem intra uterum conceptionem, longo mensium tempore sustinent, et quae ex utero procedentem non sine magnis doloribus deponunt. Unde et hic apta consideratione subjungitur:

CAPUT XI [Rec. X].

VERS. 2. Dinumerasti menses conceptus eorum? 44. Per congruum tempus concepta soboles in cordis utero gestanda ut vivat. Sancti enim viri cum de profectu auditorum cogitant, quasi jam in utero conceptionem portant. Sed cum nonnulla quae dicenda sunt differunt, et aptum suis exhortationibus tempus quaerunt, velut a partu quem fieri appetunt in mensium prolixitate dilatantur. Et saepe dum quaedam quae sentiunt, intempestive dicere

audientibus nolunt, in ipsa tarditate proferendae sententiae, sive ad haec quae suadenda sunt, seu ad illa quae increpanda, consilio altiori firmantur. Et dum cogitatur vita filiorum, nec tamen ante tempus lingua consilium mentis ejicit, quasi jam concepta soboles intra uterum crescit, ut ad auditorum notitiam tunc sententia cordis exeat, quando prolata utiliter quasi per congruum tempus partus vivat. Et quia haec homines in magistrorum mente quando vel quomodo agantur ignorant, Deus vero ad retributionis gloriam non solum effectum considerat, sed etiam momenta cogitationum signat, recte ad beatum Job dicitur: Dinumerasti menses conceptus earum? Subaudis ut ego, qui in sanctis praedicatoribus non solum fructus exteriorum operum, sed ipsas diutinas cogitationes numero, qui et eas ad retributionem servo. [Vet. XXI.] 45. Qui se ad praedicandum parant, prius se interius virtutibus innovent. Possunt per menses, quia congesti dies sunt, etiam multiplicatae virtutes intelligi. In mensibus quoque luna renascitur; nilque obstat si per menses nova regenerationis creatura signetur. De qua Paulus apostolus dicit: In Christo Jesu neque circumcisio aliquid valet, neque praeputium, sed nova creatura (Galat. V, 6; VI, 15). Sancti igitur viri, cum se ad praedicandum parant, prius se interius virtutibus innovant, ut ad hoc quod loquendo docent, vivendo concordent. Prius sua interna considerant, atque a cunctis se vitiorum sordibus emundant, curantes summopere ut contra iram patientiae luce resplendeant, contra carnis luxuriam etiam cordis munditia fulgescant, 977 contra torporem zelo candeant, contra confusos praecipitationis motus serena gravitate rutilent, contra superbiam vera humilitate luceant, contra timorem radiis auctoritatis clarescant. Quia ergo tanta in se prius studia congerunt, quasi in conceptu sanctae praedicationis menses virtutum fiunt. Quos menses Dominus solus dinumerat, quia eadem bona in eorum cordibus non nisi qui dedit pensat. Et quia juxta mensuram virtutum effectus etiam subsequitur fructuum, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XII.

IBID. Et scisti tempus partus earum? 46. Virtutum mensuram fructus ratio sequitur. Subaudis, Ut ego, qui dum in cogitatione virtutum menses dinumero, quando hoc quod implere appelunt parere valeant scio, quia nimirum dum cordis occulta conspicio, futurum foris effectum operis intus in pondere cogitationis penso. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 3. Incurvantur ad fetum, et pariunt, et rugitus emittunt. 47. Praedicatores nisi flendo spiritualiter gignere non possunt. Rugiunt quippe, dum per incurvationem suam in conversatione lucis auditorum animas gignunt, quia ab aeternis nos suppliciis removere nisi flendo et dolendo non possunt. Praedicatores enim sancti nunc in lacrymis seminant, ut segetem postmodum gaudiorum metant. Nunc quasi cervae in dolore partus sunt, ut spiritali prole postmodum sint fecundi. Ut enim unum de multis loquar, video Paulum quasi quamdam cervam in partu suo magni doloris rugitus emittentem. Ait enim: Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis, vellem esse apud vos modo, et mutare vocem meam, quoniam confundor in vobis (Galat. IV, 19). Ecce mutare vult vocem in partu suo, ut praedicationis sermo in rugitum vertatur doloris. Vult mutare vocem suam, quia quos jam praedicando pepererat, reformando gemens iterum parturiebat. Qualem rugitum haec cerva pariens emittebat, quando eisdem post se redeuntibus exclamare cogebatur, dicens: O insensati Galatae, quis vos fascinavit; et sic stulti estis, ut cum spiritu coeperitis, nunc carne consummemini (Galat. III, 1)? vel certe: Currebatis bene, qui vos impedivit veritati non obedire (Galat. V, 7)? Qualis in hujus cervae partu rugitus fuit, quae diu conceptos filios cum tot difficultatibus peperit, et quandoque partos ad malitiae uterum redisse cognovit? Consideremus quid

doloris habuerit, quid laboris, quae et postquam potuit concepta edere, rursum compulsa est exstincta suscitare. [Vet. XXII.] 48. Nisi ad infirmitatem nostram descenderent et incurvarentur, filios in fide non procrearent. Sapere ad sobrietatem debent. Notandum vero summopere est quod istae cervae incurvantur ut pariant, quia nimirum si erectae starent, parere non valerent. Nisi enim praedicatores sancti ab illa immensitate contemplationis internae quam capiunt, ad infirmitatem nostram humillima praedicatione quasi quadam incurvatione descenderent, nunquam utique in fide filios procrearent. Nobis quippe prodesse non possent, si in suae altitudinis erectione persisterent. Sed videamus cervam sese ut pariat incurvantem: Ego, inquit, non potui vobis loqui quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus, tanquam parvulis in Christo lac vobis potum dedi, non escam (I Cor. III, 1). Atque mox ejusdem incurvationis causas exsequitur, dicens: Nondum enim poteratis, sed nec adhuc quidem potestis (Ibid., 2). Sed hanc cervam, quae propter nos incurvata est, quaeso videamus 978 erectam. Ait: Sapientiam loquimur inter perfectos (I Cor. II, 6). Et rursum: Sive mente excedimus, Deo (II Cor. V, 13). Cum vero mente excedit Deo, excessum ejus nos omnino non capimus. Ut ergo nos lucretur, incurvatur ad nos. Unde illic apte subjungit: Sive sobrii sumus vobis (Ibid.). Si enim sancti viri ea nobis praedicare vellent quae capiunt, cum in superna contemplatione debriantur, et non magis scientiam suam quodam moderamine et sobrietate temperarent, adhuc angusto intelligentiae sinu illa superni fontis fluenta quis caperet? Incurvatae autem istae cervae, alias coeli vocatae sunt, de quibus dicitur: Domine, inclina coelos tuos, et descende (Psal. CXLIII, 5). Cum enim inclinantur coeli, descendit Dominus, quia cum se in praedicatione sua sancti doctores attrahunt, divinitatis notitiam nostris cordibus infundunt. Nequaquam quippe ad nos Dominus descenderet, si praedicatores ejus in contemplationis rigore inflexibiles permanerent. Inclinantur ergo coeli ut descendat Dominus, incurvantur cervae ut nos in

nova fidei luce nascamur. Istae incurvatae cervae in Canticis canticorum sponsae ubera sunt vocatae, sicut scriptum est: Meliora sunt ubera tua vino (Cant. I, 1). Ista enim sunt ubera quae in arca pectoris fixa lacte nos potant, quia ipsi arcanis summae contemplationis inhaerentes, subtili nos praedicatione nutriunt. Ut igitur ab aeterno gemitu et dolore nos retrahant, nunc incurvantur cervae, atque in partu rugitus emittunt. Quia vero ipsi, qui sancta Patrum praedicatione nascuntur, aliquando doctores suos patiendo praeveniunt, ut eis adhuc in hac vita durantibus ipsi jam martyrio consummentur, apte sequitur:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. XI].

VERS. 4. Separantur filii earum, et pergunt ad pastum; egrediuntur, et non revertuntur ad eas. 49. Eorum filii ad sacrae Scripturae pastum pergunt. Eos Verbum ex natura divinitatis illustrat. Pastum Scriptura sacra illud viriditatis aeternae pabulum vocat, ubi jam nostra refectio nullius defectus ariditate marcescet. De quo pastu per Psalmistam dicitur: Dominus regit me, et nihil mihi deerit, in loco pascuae ibi me collocavit (Psal. XXII, 2). Et rursum: Nos autem populus ejus, et oves pascuae ejus (Psal. XCIV, 7). De quibus nimirum pascuis Veritas per semetipsam dicit: Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur; et ingredietur, et egredietur, et pascua inveniet (Joan. X, 9). Pergunt ergo ad pastum, quia de corporibus exeuntes illa pabula internae viriditatis inveniunt. Egrediuntur, et non revertuntur ad eas, quia in illa suscepti contemplatione gaudiorum, jam nullatenus indigent verba audire docentium. Egressi itaque ad eas jam non redeunt, quia angustias vitae praesentis evadentes, ultra a doctoribus praedicationem vitae accipere non requirunt. Tunc quippe impletur quod scriptum est: Non docebit ultra vir proximum suum, et vir fratrem suum, dicens: Cognosce Dominum; omnes enim cognoscent me a minimo eorum usque ad maximum, dicit Dominus (Jerem. XXXI, 34). Tunc impletur quod in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Palam

de Patre meo annuntiabo vobis (Joan. XVI, 25). Filius quippe de Patre palam annuntiat, quia sicut superius diximus, per hoc quod Verbum est, ex natura nos divinitatis illustrat. Verba enim tunc docentium quasi quosdam humanae linguae rivulos non quaerunt, quando de ipso jam veritatis fonte derivantur. Igitur postquam figurata incurvatione cervarum, multa de magistrorum virtute narrata sunt, 979 nunc ad eorum vitam, qui remotae conversationis secreta appetunt, verba vertuntur: qui et ipsa cessandi otia, quia divino adjutorio et non suis viribus assequuntur, de eis a Domino dicitur:

CAPUT XV [Vet.

XXIII, Rec. XII]. VERS. 5. Quis dimisit onagrum liberum, et vincula ejus quis solvit? 50. Onagri liberi nomine intelliguntur, qui a servitute secularium rerum expediti, solitudini vacant. Subaudis nisi ego. Onager enim, qui in solitudine commoratur, non incongrue vitam eorum significat, qui remoti a turbis popularibus conversantur. Qui apte etiam liber dicitur: quia magna est servitus saecularium negotiorum, quibus mens vehementer atteritur, quamvis in eis sponte desudet. Cujus servitutis conditione carere est in mundo jam nil concupiscere. Quasi enim quodam jugo servitutis premunt prospera dum appetuntur, premunt adversa dum formidantur. At si quis semel a dominatione desideriorum temporalium colla mentis excusserit, quadam jam etiam in hac vita libertate perfruitur, dum nullo desiderio felicitatis afficitur, nullo adversitatis terrore coarctatur. Hoc grave servitutis jugum Dominus vidit saecularium cervicibus impressum, cum diceret: Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos. Tollite jugum meum super vos, et discite a me quia mitissum, et humilis corde, et invenietis requiem animabus vestris. Jugum enim meum suave est, et onus meum leve (Matth. XI, 28). Asperum quippe jugum, et durae, sicut diximus, servitutis pondus est, subesse temporalibus, ambire

terrena, retinere labentia, velle stare in non stantibus, appetere quidem transeuntia, sed cum transeuntibus nolle transire. Dum enim contra votum cuncta fugiunt, quae prius mentem ex desiderio adeptionis afflixerant, post ex pavore amissionis premunt. Liber ergo dimittitur qui, calcatis terrenis desideriis, ab appetitione rerum temporalium securitate mentis exoneratur. Et vincula ejus, quis solvit? Subaudis nisi ego. 51. Divino adjutorio desideriorum carnalium retinacula rumpuntur. Solvuntur vero uniuscujusque vincula, dum divino adjutorio interna desideriorum carnalium retinacula dirumpuntur. Cum enim pia intentio ad conversionem vocat, sed adhuc ab hac intentione carnis infirmitas revocat, quasi quibusdam vinculis anima ligata praepeditur. Multos enim saepe videmus vitam quidem sanctae conversationis appetere; sed ne hanc assequi valeant, modo irruentes casus, modo futura adversa formidare. Qui in certa mala dum quasi cauti prospiciunt, in peccatorum suorum vinculis incauti retinentur. Multa enim ante oculos ponunt, quae si eis in conversatione eveniant, subsistere se non posse formidant. De quibus bene Salomon ait: Iter pigrorum, quasi sepes spinarum (Prov. XV, 19). Nam cum viam Dei appetunt, eos velut spinae obstantium sepium sic formidinum suarum oppositae suspiciones pungunt. Quod quia electos praepedire non solet, bene illic secutus adjungit: Via justorum absque offendiculo (Ibid.). Justi quippe in conversatione sua quodlibet eis adversitatis obviaverit, non impingunt, quia temporalis adversitatis obstacula aeternae spei et internae contemplationis saltu transcendunt. Solvit itaque 980 Deus onagri vincula, quando ab electi uniuscujusque animo infirmarum cogitationum nodos rumpit, et propitius dissipat omne quod illectam mentem ligabat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI.

VERS. 6. Cui dedi in solitudine domum, et tabernacula ejus in terra salsuginis. 52. Duplex solitudo, cordis et corporis. Haec sine alia non

prodest. Hoc loco solitudinem debemus intelligere corporis, an solitudinem cordis? Sed quid prodest solitudo corporis, si solitudo defuerit cordis? Qui enim corpore remotus vivit, sed tumultibus conversationis humanae terrenorum desideriorum cogitationibus se inserit, non est in solitudine. Si vero prematur aliquis corporaliter popularibus turbis, et tamen nullos curarum saecularium tumultus in corde patiatur, non est in urbe. Itaque bene conversantibus primum solitudo mentis tribuitur, ut exsurgentem intrinsecus strepitum terrenorum desideriorum premant, ut ebullientes ab infimis curas cordis per superni gratiam restringant amoris, omnesque motus importune se offerentium levium cogitationum, quasi quasdam circumvolantes muscas ab oculis mentis abigant manu gravitatis, et quoddam sibi cum Domino intra se secretum quaerant, ubi cum illo exteriori cessante strepitu per interna desideria silenter loquantur. [Vet. XXIV.] 53. Silentium contemplationis, hac in vita non potest esse perfectum. De hoc secreto cordis alias dictum est: Factum est silentium in coelo, quasi dimidia hora (Apoc. VIII, 1). Coelum quippe ecclesia vocatur electorum, quae ad aeterna et sublimia dum per sublevationem contemplationis intendit, surgentes ab infimis cogitationum tumultus premit, atque intra se Deo quoddam silentium facit. Quod quidem silentium contemplationis, quia in hac vita non potest esse perfectum, factum dimidia hora dicitur. Nolenti quippe animo dum cogitationum tumultuosi se strepitus ingerunt, etiam sublimibus intendentem, rursum ad respicienda terrena cordis oculum violenter trahunt. Unde scriptum est: Corpus quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem (Sap. IX, 15). Bene ergo factum hoc silentium non integra, sed dimidia hora describitur, quia hic contemplatio nequaquam perficitur, quamvis ardenter inchoetur. Quod etiam per Ezechielem prophetam congruenter exprimitur (Ezech. XL, 5), qui pro mensura civitatis in monte conditae, in manu viri calamum sex cubitorum et palmi, se vidisse testatur. In monte quippe electorum ecclesia

sita est, quia fundata in infimis desideriis non est. Quid autem per cubitum, nisi operatio; quid per senarium numerum, nisi perfectio operationis ostenditur, quia et sexto die cuncta opera Dominus explesse memoratur? Quid ergo super sex cubitos palmus insinuat (Genes. II, 1), nisi contemplationis vim, quae jam initia aeternae et septimae quietis demonstrat? Quia enim aeternorum contemplatio hic minime perficitur, mensura septimi cubiti non expletur. Electorum itaque ecclesia, quia cuncta quae operanda sunt perficit, in sex cubitis sese in monte posita civitas ostendit. Quia vero hic adhuc sola initia contemplationis 981 inspicit, de septimo cubito non nisi palmum tangit. 54. Culmen contemplationis non attingitur, nisi ab exteriorum curarum oppressione liberemur. Sciendum vero est quia nequaquam culmen contemplationis attingimus, si non ab exterioris curae oppressione cessemus. Nequaquam nosmetipsos intuemur, ut sciamus aliud in nobis esse rationale quod regit, aliud animale quod regitur, nisi ad secretum hujus silentii recurrentes, ab omni exterius perturbatione sopiamur. Quod silentium nostrum bene etiam Adam dormiens figuravit (Ibid.), de cujus mox latere mulier processit, quia quisquis ad interiora intelligenda rapitur, a rebus visibilibus oculos claudit; et tunc in semetipso vel quae praeesse viriliter debeant, vel quae subesse possint infirma distinguit, ut aliud in illo sit quod regere valeat tanquam vir, aliud tanquam femina quod regatur. In hoc itaque silentio cordis, dum per contemplationem interius vigilamus, exterius quasi obdormiscimus. Quia ergo remoti viri, id est a desideriis carnalibus alieni, hoc silentium mentis inhabitant, huic onagro Dominus in solitudine domum dedit, ut turba desideriorum temporalium non prematur. [Vet. XXV.] 55. Sancti quandiu vivunt, desiderio supernae patriae aestuant. Sequitur: Et tabernacula ejus in terra salsuginis. Salsugo accendere sitim solet. Et quia sancti viri quandiu in hujus vitae tabernaculis degunt, ad supernam patriam desiderii sui quotidianis aestibus accenduntur, in terra salsuginis tabernacula habere

perhibentur. Incessanter quippe accenduntur ut sitiant, sitiunt ut satientur; sicut scriptum est: Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur (Matth. V, 6). Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 7. Contemnit multitudinem civitatis. 56. Terrenorum hominum multitudinem sequi dedignantur. Multitudinem civitatis contemnere est humanae conversationis prava studia devitare, ut jam non libeat terrenorum hominum, qui prae abundantia iniquitatis multi sunt, perditos mores imitari. Cum paucis namque ingredi angustam portam desiderant, et non cum multis lata itinera ingredi appetunt, quae ad interitum ducunt (Matth. VII, 13). Solerter quippe a quo et ad quid sunt creati conspiciunt, et recta consideratione acceptae imaginis sequi vulgi multitudinem dedignantur. Unde et sponsi voce sponsae in Canticis canticorum dicitur: Nisi cognoveris te, o pulchra inter mulieres, egredere, et abi post vestigia gregum, et pasce haedos tuos (Cant. I, 7). Semetipsam namque ea quae est pulchra inter mulieres cognoscit, quando electa quaeque anima etiam inter peccantes posita quia ad auctoris sui imaginem ac similitudinem sit condita meminit (Genes. I, 26), et juxta perceptae similitudinis ordinem incedit. Quae si se non cognoscit, egreditur, quia a secreto sui cordis expulsa, in exterioribus concupiscentiis dissipatur. Egressa vero abit post vestigia gregum, quia sua interna deserens, ad latam videlicet viam ducitur, et sequitur exempla populorum. Nec jam agnos, sed haedos pascit, quia non innoxias cogitationes mentis, sed nutrire pravos motus carnis intendit. Quia ergo electus quisque ac continens abire post gregum vestigia despicit, dicatur recte: Contemnit multitudinem civitatis. Ubi et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVIII [Rec. XIII].

IBID. Clamorem exactoris non audit. 57. Vehementioribus diaboli tentationibus aures claudunt, et ventris clamoribus. Quis intelligi exactor alius, nisi diabolus potest, 982 qui semel in paradiso homini malae persuasionis nummum contulit (Genes. III, 6, seq.), et quotidie ab eo hujus debiti exigere reatum quaerit? Hujus exactoris sermo est malae suggestionis inchoatio. Hujus exactoris clamor est jam non lenis, sed violenta tentatio. Hic exactor clamat, cum fortiter tentat. Clamorem ergo exactoris non audire est violentis tentationum motibus minime consentire. Audiret enim si ea quae suggerit faceret. Sed cum perversa agere despicit, recte dicitur: Clamorem exactoris non audit. [Vet. XXVI.] 58. Nonnulli vero hoc loco per exactorem intelligi ventrem volunt. Ipse namque a nobis quoddam debitum exigit, quia quotidianum fructum sibi humani laboris impendi etiam per naturam quaerit. Abstinentes igitur viri, qui hoc loco onagri vocabulo figurantur, dum violenter gulae desideria reprimunt, quasi clamantis exactoris verba contemnunt. Sed cum continenti viro contra innumera vitia multa virtutum certamina suppetant, cur sub exactoris clamore contempto, de solo hic ventre dicitur quod ejus impetum impulsumque restringat, nisi quod nullus palmam spiritualis certaminis apprehendit, qui non in semetipso prius per afflictam ventris concupiscentiam carnis incentiva devicerit? Neque enim ad conflictum spiritalis agonis assurgitur, si non prius intra nosmetipsos hostis positus, gulae videlicet appetitus, edomatur, quia si non ea quae nobis sunt viciniora prosternimus, nimirum inaniter ad ea quae longius sunt impugnanda transimus. Incassum namque contra exteriores inimicos in campo bellum geritur, si intra ipsa urbis moenia civis insidians habetur. Mens quoque ipsa certantis sub gravi confusionis dedecore a spiritalis certaminis congressione repellitur, quando infirma in carnis praelio gulae gladiis confossa superatur. Nam cum se parvis prosterni conspicit, confligere majoribus erubescit. 59. Qui gulam edomare non curant, incaute ad spiritalia bella consurgunt. Nonnulli vero ordinem certaminis ignorantes,

edomare gulam negligunt, et jam ad spiritalia bella consurgunt. Qui aliquando multa etiam quae magnae sunt fortitudinis faciunt, sed, dominante gulae vitio, per carnis illecebram omne quod fortiter egerint perdunt; et dum venter non restringitur, per carnis concupiscentiam simul cunctae virtutes obruuntur. Unde et de Nabuchodonosor vincente scribitur : Princeps coquorum destruxit muros Jerusalem. Quid enim per muros Jerusalem significans Scriptura exprimit, nisi virtutes animae, quae ad pacis visionem tendit? Aut quis coquorum princeps, nisi venter accipitur, cui diligentissima a coquentibus cura servitur? Muros igitur Jerusalem princeps coquorum destruit, quia virtutes animae dum non restringitur venter, perdit. Hinc est quod Paulus contra Jerusalem moenia decertanti vires coquorum principi subtrahebat, cum diceret: Castigo corpus meum, et servituti subjicio, ne forte aliis praedicans, ipse reprobus efficiar (I Cor. IX, 27). Hinc etiam praemisit, dicens: Sic curro, non quasi in incertum; sic pugno, non quasi aerem verberans (Ibid., 26). Quia cum carnem restringimus, ipsis abstinentiae nostrae ictibus non aerem, sed immundos spiritus verberamus; et cum hoc quod est intra nos subjicimus; extra positis adversariis pugnos damus. Hinc est 983 quod cum rex Babylonis succendi fornacem jubet (Dan. III), naphthae, stuppae, picis et malleoli ministrari congeriem praecepit; sed tamen abstinentes pueros hoc igne minime consumit, quia antiquus hostis licet innumeras ciborum concupiscentias nostris obtutibus opponat, quibus libidinis ignis crescat, bonis tamen mentibus superni Spiritus gratia insibilat, ut a carnalis concupiscentiae aestibus illaesae perdurent, ut etsi usque ad tentationem cordis flamma ardeat, usque ad consensum tamen tentatio non exurat. [Vet. XXVII.] 60. Quinque modis gula nos tentat. Non cibus, sed appetitus in vitio est. Sciendum praeterea est quia quinque nos modis gulae vitium tentat (De consecr., d. 5, c. Quinque modis). Aliquando namque indigentiae tempora praevenit; aliquando vero tempus non praevenit, sed cibos lautiores quaerit; aliquando quaelibet quae

sumenda sint praeparari accuratius expetit, aliquando autem et qualitati ciborum et tempori congruit, sed in ipsa quantitate sumendi mensuram moderatae refectionis excedit. Nonnunquam vero et abjectius est quod desiderat, et tamen ipso aestu immensi desiderii deterius peccat. Mortis quippe sententiam patris ore Jonathas meruit, quia in gustu mellis constitutum edendi tempus antecessit (I Reg. XIV, 27). Et ex Aegypto populus eductus, in eremo occubuit, quia, despecto manna, cibos carnium petiit, quos lautiores putavit (Num. XXI, 5). Et prima filiorum Heli culpa suborta est, quod ex eorum voto sacerdotis puer, non antiquo more coctas vellet de sacrificio carnes accipere, sed crudas quaereret, quas accuratius exhiberet (I Reg. II, 12, seq.). Et cum ad Jerusalem dicitur: Haec fuit iniquitas Sodomae sororis tuae, superbia, saturitas panis, et abundantia (Ezech. XVI, 49), aperte ostenditur quod idcirco salutem perdidit, quia cum superbiae vitio mensuram moderatae refectionis excessit. Et primogenitorum gloriam Esau amisit, quia magno aestu desiderii vilem cibum, scilicet lenticulam, concupivit (Genes. XXV, 33); quam dum vendendis etiam primogenitis praetulit, quo in illam appetitu anhelaret indicavit. Neque enim cibus, sed appetitus in vitio est. Unde et lautiores cibos plerumque sine culpa sumimus, et abjectiores non sine reatu conscientiae degustamus. Hic quippe quem diximus, Esau, primatum per lenticulam perdidit, et Elias in eremo virtutem corporis carnes edendo servavit (III Reg. XVII, 6). Unde et antiquus hostis quia non cibum, sed cibi concupiscentiam esse causam damnationis intelligit, et primum sibi hominem non carne, sed pomo subdidit (Genes. III, 6), et secundum non carne, sed pane tentavit (Matth. IV, 3). Hinc est quod plerumque Adam culpa committitur, etiam cum abjecta et vilia sumuntur. Neque enim Adam solus ut a vetito se pomo suspenderet praeceptum prohibitionis accepit. Nam cum alimenta quaedam saluti nostrae Deus contraria indicat, ab his nos quasi per sententiam vetat. Et dum concupiscentes noxia attingimus,

profecto quid aliud quam vetita degustamus? 61. Edenda quae necessitas quaerit, non quae libido suggerit. Quanta ad hoc discretio necessaria. Ea itaque sumenda sunt quae naturae necessitas quaerit, et non quae edendi libido suggerit. Sed magnus discretionis labor est huic exactori et aliquid impendere, et aliquid denegare; et non dando gulam restringere, et dando naturam nutrire. [Rec. XIV.] Quae fortasse discretio subinfertur, cum dicitur: Clamorem exactoris non audit. Sermo namque 984 hujus exactoris est necessaria postulatio naturae. Clamor vero ejus est mensuram necessitatis transiens appetitus gulae. Hic itaque onager exactoris hujus sermonem audit, clamorem non audit, quia discretus vir ac continens et usque ad temperandam necessitatem ventrem reficit, et a voluptate restringit. [Vet. XXVIII.] 62. Voluptas sub necessitatis specie se palliat. Sciendum vero est quia sic voluptas sub necessitate se palliat, ut vix eam perfectus quisque discernat. Nam dum solvi debitum necessitas petit, voluptas expleri desiderium suppetit; et tanto gulam securius in praeceps rapit, quanto sub honesto nomine necessitatis explendae se contegit. Saepe autem in ipsa edendi via furtive adjuncta voluptas subsequitur; nonnunquam vero impudenter libera etiam praeire conatur. Facile autem est deprehendere cum voluptas ejus necessitatem praevenit, sed valde est difficile discernere cum in ipso esu necessario se occulta subjungit. Nam quia praeeuntem naturae appetitum sequitur, quasi a tergo veniens tardius videtur. Eo enim tempore quo necessitati debitum solvitur, quia per esum voluptas necessitati miscetur, quid necessitas petat, et quid, sicut dictum est, voluptas suppetat, ignoratur. Saepe vero et discernimus; et quia utramque sibi conjunctam novimus, in hoc quod extra metas rapimur, libet ut sciendo fallamur; et dum sibi mens ex necessitate blanditur, ex voluptate decipitur. Scriptum quippe est: Carnis curam ne feceritis in desideriis (Rom. XIII, 14). Quae igitur fieri in desiderio prohibetur, in necessitate conceditur. 63. Carnis desideria, non caro occidenda. Cavendum ne, dum hostem insequimur, civem quem

diligimus, trucidemus. Sed saepe dum incaute necessitati condescendimus, desideriis deservimus. Nonnunquam vero dum desideriis immoderatius obviare nitimur, necessitatis miserias augemus. Sic enim necesse est ut arcem quisque continentiae teneat, quatenus non carnem, sed vitia carnis occidat. Nam plerumque dum plus justo caro restringitur, etiam ab exercitatione boni operis enervatur, ut ad orationem quoque vel praedicationem non sufficiat, dum incentiva vitiorum in se funditus suffocare festinat. Adjutorem quippe habemus intentionis internae hunc hominem quem exterius gestamus, et ipsi insunt motus lasciviae, ipsi effectus suppetunt operationis bonae. Saepe vero dum in illo hostem insequimur, etiam civem quem diligimus trucidamus; et saepe dum quasi concivi parcimus, ad praelium hostem nutrimus. Eisdem namque alimentis vitia superbiunt, quibus nutritae virtutes vivunt. Et cum virtus alitur, plerumque vires vitiis augentur. Cum vero immensa continentia vitiorum vires extenuat, etiam virtus deficiens anhelat. Unde necesse est ut interior homo, noster aequus quidam arbiter praesideat inter se, et eum quem exterius gestat, quatenus ei homo suus exterior et semper ad debitum ministerium servire sufficiat, et nunquam superbe libera cervice contradicat; nec moveat si quid suggerendo submurmurat, dummodo eum semper superposita calce dominationis premat. Sicque fit ut dum repressa vitia reniti quidem nobis patimur, et tamen haec nobiscum congredi ex aequo prohibemus, nec vitia contra virtutem praevaleant, nec rursum virtus cum vitiorum 985 omnimoda exstinctione succumbat. Qua in re sola elatio funditus exstinguitur, quia quamvis victoriae serviat, ad edomandam tamen cogitationum superbiam continua nobis pugna servatur. Unde bene hic, quia unusquisque vir continens et debitae necessitati congruit, et violentae voluptati contradicit, voce dominica dicitur: Clamorem exactoris non audit. Quia autem discretus vir eo ad intelligenda superiora se elevat, quo in se

carnis incentiva castigat, recte post contemptum exactoris clamorem subditur.

CAPUT XIX [Rec. XV].

VERS. 8. Circumspicit montes pascuae suae. 64. Ad intelligenda sublimia valet ascendere, qui carnis incentiva castigavit. Montes pascuae sunt altae contemplationes internae refectionis. Sancti enim viri quanto magis se exterius despiciendo dejiciunt, tanto amplius interius revelationum contemplatione pascuntur. Unde scriptum est: Ascensus in corde ejus disposuit in convalle lacrymarum (Psal. LXXXIII, 6, 7), quia quos exterius in fletu continet convallis humilitatis, eos interius sublevat ascensus contemplationis. [Vet. XXIX.] Montes etiam pascuae sunt sublimes virtutes angelorum. Quae idcirco hic nos ministrando et adjuvando reficiunt, quia illic interno contemplationis rore pinguescunt. Quae quia largiente Deo in omni nos certamine protegunt, recte circumspici dicuntur. Undique enim nobis adesse circumspicimus, quorum defensione contra adversarios ex omni latere munimur. Possunt adhuc montes pascuae accipi altae sententiae Scripturae sacrae, de quibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Montes excelsi cervis (Psal. CIII, 18), quia hi qui jam dare contemplationis saltus noverunt, altos sententiarum divinarum vertices quasi cacumina montium ascendunt, ad quae profecto cacumina quia infirmi pervenire non valent, recte illic subditur: Petra refugium erinaciis (Ibid.), quia videlicet invalidos non sublimiter intelligentia exercet, sed sola in Christo fides humiliter continet. Sequitur:

CAPUT XX.

IBID. Virentia quaeque perquirit. 65. Despectis transitoriis, in aeternum mansura desiderantur. Arentia quippe sunt omnia quae temporaliter condita venturo fine a jucunditate vitae praesentis quasi aestivo sole siccantur.

Virentia autem sunt vocata, quae nulla temporalitate marcescunt. Huic ergo onagro virentia perquirere, est sancto unicuique viro, despectis rebus transitoriis, in aeternum mansura desiderare. Cuncta vero haec quae de onagro dicta sunt intelligi etiam et aliter possunt. Quae repetito superiori versu exponimus, ut lectoris judicio quod eligendum crediderit relinquamus. Igitur postquam praedicatorum dispensatio sub cervarum praetextu descripta est, ut ostenderetur per quem haec eadem virtus praedicationis datur, illico commemoratio de dominica incarnatione subnectitur, ut dicatur:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 5. Quis dimisit onagrum liberum? ALLEGORICUS SENSUS. 66. Christus onagro merito comparatur. Nec indignum quis judicet per tale animal incarnatum Dominum posse figurari, dum constat omnibus quia per significationem quamdam in Scriptura sacra et vermis et scarabaeus ponatur, sicut scriptum est: Ego autem sum vermis, et non homo (Psal. XXI, 7). Et sicut apud Septuaginta interpretes per 986 prophetam dicitur: Scarabaeus de ligno clamavit (Habac. II, 2). Cum ergo nominatis rebus tam abjectis et vilibus figuratur, quid de illo contumeliose dicitur, de quo constat quod proprie nihil dicatur? Vocatur etenim agnus, sed propter innocentiam. Vocatur leo, sed propter potentiam. Aliquando etiam serpenti comparatur, sed propter mortem vel sapientiam. Atque ideo per haec omnia dici figuraliter potest, quia de his omnibus credi aliquid essentialiter non potest. Si enim unum horum quodlibet essentialiter existeret, alterum jam dici non posset. Nam si agnus proprie diceretur, leo jam vocari non poterat. Si leo proprie diceretur, per serpentem signari non posset. Sed haec in illo omnia dicimus tanto latius in figura, quanto longius ab essentia. Potest ergo onager incarnatum Dominum designare. Agreste quippe animal est onager. Et quia incarnatus Dominus gentilitati magis, quam Judaeae profuit, animale corpus assumens, quasi non in domum, sed potius in agrum venit. De quo agro

gentilitatis per Psalmistam dicitur: Species agri mecum est (Ps. XLIX, 11). Incarnatus itaque Dominus qui in forma Dei aequalis est Patri, in forma servi minor est Patre, qua minor est etiam seipso (Philip. II). [Vet. XXX.] Dicatur ergo a Patre de Filio secundum formam servi: Quis dimisit onagrum liberum, et vincula ejus quis solvit? Omnis quippe qui peccat, servus est peccati (Joan. VIII, 35). Et quia incarnatus Dominus particeps nostrae factus est naturae, non culpae, liber dimissus dicitur, quia sub peccati dominio non tenetur. De quo alias scriptum est: Inter mortuos liber (Psal. XXXVII, 5). Liber dimissus dicitur, quia naturam nostram suscipiens, iniquitatis jugo nullo modo tenetur. Quem quamvis macula culpae nostrae non attigit, passio tamen nostrae mortalitatis astrinxit. Unde et postquam liber dimissus dicitur, recte de illo adjungitur:

CAPUT XXII.

IBID. Et vincula ejus quis solvit? 67. Hujus onagri vincula soluta sunt, cum infirmitates passionis, in resurrectionis gloriam sunt commutatae. Vincula quippe ejus tunc soluta sunt cum infirmitates passionis illius in resurrectionis sunt gloriam commutatae. Quasi quaedam vincula Dominus habuit ea quae nos nequitiae merito patimur, nostrae mortalitatis infirma, quibus et usque ad mortem sponte ligari se voluit, et quae per resurrectionem mirabiliter solvit. Esurire enim, sitire, lassescere, teneri, flagellari, crucifigi, nostrae mortalitatis vinculum fuit. Sed cum expleta morte velum templi rumperetur, scinderentur petrae, monumenta panderentur, inferni claustra patescerent; quid aliud tot argumentis tantae virtutis ostenditur, nisi quod illa infirmitatis nostrae vincula solvebantur, ut is qui ad suscipiendam servi formam venerat, in ipsa servi forma ab inferni vinculis absolutus, ad coelum etiam cum membris liber rediret? De quibus ejus vinculis Petrus apostolus attestatur dicens: Quem Deus suscitavit solutis doloribus inferni, juxta quod impossibile erat illum teneri ab eo (Act.

II, 24). Et quia post mortem suam atque resurrectionem ad gratiam fidei gentilitatem vocare dignatus est, postquam dicta sunt soluta ejus vincula, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIII.

987 VERS. 6. Cui dedi in solitudine domum, et tabernaculum ejus in terra salsuginis. 68. Cui datus in solitudine locus et in terra salsuginis, cum gentilitas eum recepit. In gentilitate enim in qua patriarcha non fuit, propheta non fuit; ad intelligendum Deum, qui ratione uteretur, homo pene non fuit. De hac solitudine per Isaiam dicitur: Laetabitur deserta et invia, et exsultabit solitudo, et florebit quasi lilium (Isai. XXXV, 1). Et rursum de Ecclesia dicitur: Ponet desertum ejus quasi delicias, et solitudinem ejus quasi hortum Domini (Isai. LI, 3). Terra vero salsuginis haec eadem solitudo repetita est, quae priusquam veram Dei sapientiam cognosceret, salsuginem protulerat, quia nullam viriditatem boni intellectus proferens, perversa sapiebat. Domum ergo in solitudine et tabernaculum in terra salsuginis accepit, quia incarnatus pro hominibus Deus, derelicta Judaea, gentilitatis corda possedit. Unde ei Patris voce per prophetam dicitur: Postula a me, et dabo tibi gentes haereditatem tuam, et possessionem tuam terminos terrae (Psal. II, 8). Qui juxta hoc quod Deus est, cum Patre dat omnia, juxta hoc vero quod homo est, a Patre accipit inter omnia, sicut scriptum est: Potestatem dedit ei et judicium facere, quia filius hominis est (Joan. V, 27). Et rursum scriptum est: Sciens quia omnia dedit ei Pater in manus (Joan. XIII, 1). Vel sicut ipse dicit: Omne quod dat mihi Pater, ad me veniet (Joan. VI, 37). Jam vero si quaeritur quid inter domum ac tabernaculum distet, domus in habitatione est, tabernaculum in itinere. Corda itaque gentilium quasi quaedam tabernacula habuit veniendo. sed ea per justitiam firmans, domum fecit habitando. Et quia eorum vitam ad quos venerat imitari despexit, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIV.

VERS. 7. Contemnit multitudinem civitatis. 69. Multitudinis exempla non est secutus, sed sua sequenda proposuit. Vita praesens non propter se amanda est, sed propter futuram toleranda. Id est, mores despicit humanae conversationis. Homo quippe inter homines factus, usum tenere hominum noluit. Idcirco namque inter nos homo factus est, ut non solum nos sanguine fuso redimeret, sed etiam ostenso exemplo commutaret. In conversatione igitur nostra et veniendo alia invenit, et vivendo alia docuit. Studebant enim omnes superba Adam stirpe progeniti, prospera vitae praesentis appetere, adversa devitare, opprobria fugere, gloriam sequi. Venit inter eos Dominus incarnatus adversa appetens, prospera spernens, opprobria amplectens, gloriam fugiens. Nam cum Judaei illum regem sibi constituere voluissent, fieri rex refugit (Joan. VI, 15). Cum vero eum interficere molirentur, sponte ad crucis patibulum venit (Ibid., XVIII, 4). Fugit ergo quod omnes appetunt, appetiit quod omnes fugiunt. Sed cum fugit quod omnes appetunt, appetiit quod omnes fugiunt, fecit quod omnes mirarentur, ut et mortuus ipse resurgeret, et morte sua alios de morte resuscitaret. [Vet. XXXI.] Duae quippe vitae sunt hominis in corpore consistentis, una ante mortem, alia post resurrectionem: quarum unam omnes agendo noverant, alteram nesciebant; et humanum genus soli huic quam noverat intendebat. Venit per carnem Dominus, et dum suscepit unam; alteram demonstravit. Dum hanc nobis cognitam suscepit, illam quae nobis est incognita ostendit. Moriendo quippe vitam exercuit quam tenemus, resurgendo aperuit quam quaeramus, 988 exemplo suo nos docens quod haec vita quam ante mortem ducimus non propter se amanda sit, sed propter alteram toleranda. Quia ergo nova conversatione usus inter homines, mores Babyloniae secutus non est, bene de eo scriptum est: Contemnit multitudinem civitatis. 70. Christus multitudinem per spatiosa vagantem deseruit. Vel certe quod multos per spatiosam viam vagantes deseruit, et per angusta gradientes paucos elegit.

Multitudinem namque civitatis contemnere est humani generis partem quae latam viam ingreditur (Matth. VII, 13), quae et pro abundantia iniquitatis multa est, a regni sui sorte reprobare. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXV.

IBID. Clamorem exactoris non audit. 71. Exactoris, scilicet diaboli clamorem non audivit. Sicut supra dictum est, quis hoc loco exactor accipi nisi diabolus potest? Qui male suadendo spem contulit immortalitatis, sed decipiendo exigit tributum mortis; qui suadendo intulit culpam, saeviendo exigit poenam. Hujus exactoris sermo est ante mortem hominis astuta persuasio, clamor vero ejus est violenta jam rapina post mortem. Quos enim ante mortem latenter intercipit, hos ad supplicii sui consortium post mortem violenter rapit. Sed quia ad mortem veniens Dominus, hujus exactoris violentos impetus non expavit, sicut ipse ait: Venit enim princeps hujus mundi et in me non habet quidquam (Joan. XIV, 30), bene dicitur: Clamorem exactoris non audit. Venit quippe ad eum exactor humani generis, quia illum hominem vidit. Sed quem infirmitate despectum hominem credidit, virtute supra hominem sensit. [Rec. XVI.] 72. Hujus exactoris typus, Laban; Christi, Jacob; Ecclesiae, Rachel fuit. Hujus nimirum exactoris typum Laban tenuit, quando cum furore veniens sua apud Jacob idola requisivit (Genes. XXXI, 1, seq.). Laban quippe interpretatur dealbatio. Dealbatio autem non inconvenienter diabolus accipitur; qui cum sit tenebrosus ex merito, transfigurat se in angelum lucis (II Cor. XI, 14). Huic servivit Jacob, id est ex parte reproborum Judaicus populus, cujus ex carne incarnatus Dominus venit. Potest etiam per Laban mundus hic exprimi, qui cum furore Jacob persequitur, quia electos quosque qui Redemptoris nostri membra sunt, persequendo opprimere conatur. Hujus filiam, id est sive mundi, sive diaboli, Jacob abstulit, cum sibi Christus Ecclesiam ex gentilitate conjunxit. Quam et de domo patris

abstrahit, quia ei per Prophetam dicit: Obliviscere populum tuum, et domum patris tui (Psal. XLIV, 11). Quid vero in idolis, nisi avaritia designatur? Unde per Paulum dicitur: Et avaritia, quae est idolorum servitus (Coloss. III, 5). Laban ergo veniens apud Jacob idola non invenit, quia ostensis mundi thesauris, diabolus in Redemptore nostro vestigia concupiscentiae terrenae non reperit. Sed quae Jacob non habuit, ea Rachel sedendo cooperuit. Per Rachel quippe, quae et ovis dicitur, Ecclesia figuratur. Sedere autem, est humilitatem poenitentiae appetere, sicut scriptum est: Surgite postquam sederitis (Psal. CXXVI, 2). Rachel ergo idola sedendo operuit, quia sancta Ecclesia Christum sequens terrenae concupiscentiae vitia poenitendo texit. De hac coopertione vitiorum per Psalmistam dicitur: Beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata (Psal. XXXI, 1). Nos igitur Rachel illa 989 signavit, qui idola sedendo premimus, si culpas avaritiae poenitendo damnamus. Quae utique avaritia illis non solet evenire, qui in via Domini viriliter currunt, quibus dicitur: Viriliter agite, et confortetur cor vestrum (Psal. XXX, 25), sed his maxime qui quasi effeminato gressu gradientes per blandimenta saeculi resolvuntur. Unde et illic ejusdem Rachelis haec verba sunt: Juxta consuetudinem feminarum nunc accidit mihi (Genes. XXXI, 35). Apud Jacob ergo idola Laban non reperit, quia exactor callidus quid in Redemptore nostro reprehenderet, non invenit. De quo exactore Redemptori nostro gentilitatem ab ejus dominio liberanti per prophetam dicitur: Jugum enim oneris ejus, et virgam humeri ejus, et sceptrum exactoris ejus superasti, sicut in die Madian (Isai. IX, 4). Eripiens quippe gentilitatem Dominus, superavit jugum oneris ejus, cum eam adventu suo ab illa daemoniacae tyrannidis servitute liberavit. Superavit virgam humeri ejus, cum percussionem illius, quae ex perverso opere graviter deprimebat, ab humano genere redempto compescuit. Superavit sceptrum exactoris ejus, cum regnum ejusdem diaboli, qui pro pestifera perpetratione vitiorum exigere consueverat debita tributa

poenarum, de fidelium corde destruxit. [Vet. XXXII, Rec. XVII.] 73. Gedeonis contra Madianitas insolens pugna, Christi certamen praesignavit. Sed quomodo haec acta sunt audiamus. Subjunctum est illico: Sicut in die Madian. Non abs re arbitror si hoc Madianitarum bellum quod in comparatione adventus Dominici a propheta vigilanter illatum est aliquando latius disseramus. In libro quippe Judicum (Judic. VII, 1 seq.), Gedeon contra Madianitas dimicasse describitur. Is cum exercitus multitudinem ad bella produceret, divina illi admonitione praeceptum est ut ad fluvium veniens, omnes quos flexis genibus aquas haurire conspiceret, a bellorum conflictu removeret. Actumque est ut trecenti viri tantummodo, qui stantes manibus aquas hauserant, remanerent. Cum his ad praelium pergit, eosque non armis, sed tubis, lampadibus et lagenis armavit (Ibid., 19, seq.). Nam, sicut illic scriptum est, accensas lampades miserunt intra lagunculas, et tubas in dextra, lagenas autem in sinistra tenuerunt; et ad hostes suos cominus venientes, cecinerunt tubis, confregerunt lagunculas, lampades apparuerunt; et hinc tubarum sonitu, illinc lampadum coruscatione territi hostes, sunt in fugam conversi. Quid hoc est, quod tale bellum per prophetam ad medium adducitur, et adventui Redemptoris nostri istius pugnae victoria comparatur? An indicare propheta nobis studuit, quod adventum Redemptoris nostri contra diabolum illa sub Gedeon duce pugnae victoria designavit? Talia illic nimirum acta sunt, quae quanto magis usum pugnandi transeunt, tanto amplius a prophetandi mysterio non recedunt. Quis enim unquam cum lagenis et lampadibus ad praelium venit? Quia contra arma veniens, arma deseruit? Ridicula nobis haec profecto fuerant, si terribilia hostibus non fuissent. Sed victoria ipsa testante didicimus, ne parvi haec quae facta sunt perpendamus. Gedeon itaque ad praelium veniens, Redemptoris nostri signat adventum, 990 de quo scriptum est: Tollite portas principes vestras, et elevamini portae aeternales, et introibit rex gloriae. Quis est iste rex gloriae? Dominus fortis et potens, Dominus potens in

praelio (Psal. XXIII, 7). Hic Redemptorem nostrum non solum opere, sed etiam nomine prophetavit. Gedeon namque interpretatur, circumiens in utero. Dominus enim noster per majestatis potentiam omnia complectitur, et tamen per dispensationis gratiam intra uterum Virginis humanitatem sumens venit. Quis est ergo circumiens in utero, nisi omnipotens Deus sua dispensatione nos redimens, divinitate cuncta complectens, et humanitatem intra uterum sumens? In quo utero et incarnatus est, et clausus non est, quia et intra uterum fuit per infirmitatis substantiam, et extra mundum per potentiam majestatis. Madian vero interpretatur, de judicio. Ut enim hostes ejus repellendi destruendique essent, non de vitio repellentis, sed de judicio juste judicantis fuit. Et idcirco de judicio vocantur, quia alieni a gratia Redemptoris, justae damnationis meritum etiam in vocabulo nominis trahunt. [Vet. XXXIII.]. 74. Quid significent trecenti milites cum Gedeone pugnantes. Contra hos Gedeon cum trecentis pergit ad praelium. Solet in centenario numero plenitudo perfectionis intelligi. Quid ergo per ter ductum centenarium numerum designatur, nisi perfecta cognitio Trinitatis? Cum his quippe Dominus noster adversarios fidei destruit, cum his ad praedicationis bella descendit, qui possunt divina cognoscere, qui sciunt de Trinitate, quae Deus est, perfecta sentire. Notandum vero est quia iste trecentorum numerus in tau littera continetur, quae crucis speciem tenet. Cui si super transversam lineam id quod in cruce eminet adderetur, non jam crucis species, sed ipsa crux esset. Quia ergo iste trecentorum numerus in tau littera continetur, et per tau litteram, sicut diximus, species crucis ostenditur, non immerito in his trecentis Gedeonem sequentibus illi designati sunt, quibus dictum est: Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me (Luc. IX, 23). Qui sequentes Dominum tanto verius crucem tollunt, quanto acrius et se edomant, et erga proximos suos charitatis compassione cruciantur. Unde et per Ezechielem prophetam dicitur: Signa tau super frontes virorum gementium et dolentium (Ezech. IX, 4). Vel certe

in his trecentis, qui in tau littera continentur, hoc exprimitur, quod ferrum hostium crucis ligno superetur. Ductique sunt ad fluvium, ut aquas biberent, et quicunque aquas flexis genibus hauserunt, a bellica intentione remoti sunt. Aquis namque, doctrina sapientiae; stante autem genu, recta operatio designatur. Qui ergo dum aquas bibunt, genuflexisse perhibentur, a bellorum certamine prohibiti recesserunt, quia cum illis Christus contra hostes fidei pergit ad praelium, qui cum doctrinae fluenta hauriunt, rectitudinem operum non inflectunt. Omnes quippe tunc bibisse aquam, sed non omnes recto genu stetisse narrati sunt. Reprobatique sunt, qui genua, dum aquas biberent, inflexerunt; quia attestante Apostolo: Non auditores legis justi sunt apud Deum, sed 991 factores legis justificabuntur (Rom. II, 13). Quia enim, ut diximus, dissolutio operum in ipsa genuum incurvatione signatur, recte rursum per Paulum dicitur: Remissas manus et dissoluta genua erigite, et gressus rectos facite pedibus vestris (Hebr. XII, 12). Hi ergo Christo duce ad bellum procedunt, qui hoc quod ore annuntiant opere ostendunt, qui fluenta doctrinae spiritualiter hauriunt, nec tamen in pravis operibus inflectuntur carnaliter, quia sicut scriptum est: Non est speciosa laus in ore peccatoris (Eccli. XV, 9). 75. Quid tubae, lampades et lagenae, cum quibus ad praelium perrexerunt, et hostes debellarunt. Itum ergo est ad praelium cum tubis, cum lampadibus, cum lagenis. Inusitatus iste, ut diximus, fuit ordo praeliandi. Cecinerunt tubis, et sinistris lagenae tenebantur: intra lagenas autem sunt missae lampades; confractis vero lagenis lampades ostensae sunt, quarum coruscante luce, hostes territi in fugam vertuntur. Designatur itaque in tubis clamor praedicantium, in lampadibus, claritas miraculorum, in lagenis fragilitas corporum. Tales quippe secum dux noster ad praedicationis praelium duxit, qui despecta salute corporum, hostes suos moriendo prosternerent, eorumque gladios non armis, non gladiis, sed patientia superarent. Armati enim venerunt sub duce suo ad praelium martyres nostri; sed tubis, sed lagenis, sed lampadibus. Qui

sonuerunt tubis, dum praedicant; confregerunt lagenas, dum solvenda in passione sua corpora hostilibus gladiis opponunt; resplenduerunt lampadibus, dum post solutionem corporum miraculis coruscaverunt. Moxque hostes in fugam conversi sunt; quia dum mortuorum martyrum corpora miraculis coruscare conspiciunt, luce veritatis fracti, quod impugnaverunt, crediderunt. Cecinerunt ergo tubis, ut lagenae frangerentur; lagenae fractae sunt, ut lampades apparerent; apparuerunt lampades, ut hostes in fugam verterentur; id est, praedicaverunt martyres, donec eorum corpora in morte solverentur; corpora eorum in morte soluta sunt, ut miraculis coruscarent; coruscaverunt miraculis, ut hostes suos ex divina luce prosternerent, quatenus nequaquam Deo erecti resisterent, sed eum subditi formidarent. 76. Fidei praedicatores plus morte sua, quam praedicatione profecerunt. Et notandum quod steterunt hostes ante lagenas, fugerunt ante lampades, quia nimirum persecutores sanctae Ecclesiae, fidei praedicatoribus adhuc in corpore positis restiterunt; post solutionem vero corporum apparentibus miraculis in fugam versi sunt, quia, pavore conterriti, a persecutione fidelium cessaverunt. Praedicatione scilicet tubarum, fractis lagenis corporum, visis timuerunt lampadibus miraculorum. [Vet. XXXIV.] 77. Cui major est cura corporis quam praedicationis, metuenda reprobatio. Intuendum est etiam id quod illic scriptum est, quia in dextera tubas, lagenas autem in sinistra tenuerunt. Pro dextero enim habere dicimur quidquid pro magno pensamus; pro sinistro vero quod pro nihilo ducimus. Bene ergo illic scriptum est quod in dextera tubas, lagenas autem in sinistra tenuerunt, quia Christi martyres pro magno habent praedicationis gratiam, corporum vero utilitatem pro minimo. Quisquis enim plus facit utilitatem corporis, quam gratiam praedicationis, in sinistra tubam, atque in dextera lagenam tenet. Si enim priori loco gratia praedicationis attenditur, 992 et posteriori utilitas corporis, certum est quia in dextris tubae, et sinistris lagenae teneantur. Hinc Dominus in Evangelio ait: Neque

accendunt lucernam, et ponunt eam sub modio, sed super candelabrum (Matth. V, 15). In modio enim commodum temporale, in lucerna autem lux praedicationis accipitur. Lucernam ergo sub modio ponere est propter temporale commodum, gratiam praedicationis abscondere, quod nemo utique electorum facit. Et bene illic additur: Sed super candelabrum. In candelabro enim status corporis designatur, cui lucerna superponitur, dum eidem corpori cura praedicationis antefertur. Bene itaque per Prophetam dictum est: Sceptrum exactoris ejus superasti, sicut in die Madian (Isai. IX, 4). Sed quia exponendi prophetici testimonii gratia longe digressi sumus, ad operis nostri ordinem revertamur. Igitur postquam dictum est: Clamorem exactoris non audiit, quia videlicet antiqui hostis insidias Dominus in carne manifestatus despexit, quid etiam de electis suis fecerit recte subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XXVI.

VERS. 8. Circumspicit montes pascuae suae. 78. Etiam superbos in sua membra transformavit Christus. Convertit eos quos aspicit. Montes accipimus omnes elatos hujus saeculi, qui in corde suo altitudine terrena tumuerunt. Sed quia etiam tales Dominus Ecclesiae suae corpori conversos inviscerat, eosque a priori elatione commutans, in sua membra transformat, isti montes pascuae ejus sunt, quia nimirum de conversione errantium, et de superborum humilitate satiatur, sicut ipse ait: Meus cibus est, ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui me misit (Joan. IV, 34). Et sicut apostolis ad praedicationem missis praecepit, dicens: Operamini non cibum qui perit, sed qui permanet in vitam aeternam (Joan. VI, 27). De his montibus per Prophetam dicitur: Non repellet Dominus plebem suam, quoniam in manu ejus sunt omnes fines terrae, et altitudines montium ipse conspicit (Psal. XCXIV, 4). Altitudines enim montium elationes sunt utique superborum. Quas Dominus conspicere dicitur, id est ab iniquitate sua in melius

commutare. Convertit namque Dominus eum quem conspicit. Unde scriptum est: Conversus Dominus respexit Petrum, et recordatus est Petrus verbi Domini sicut dixerat: Quia priusquam gallus cantet, ter me negabis; et egressus foras flevit amare (Luc. XXII, 61). Et sicut Salomon ait: Rex qui sedet in solio judicii, dissipat omne malum intuitu suo (Prov. XX, 8). De hoc respectu montium rursum per prophetam dicitur: Montes sicut cera fluxerunt a facie Domini (Psal. XCXVI, 5), quia post perversitatis suae duritiam, divina formidine liquefacti, ab illo prius rigido tumore substrati sunt. 79. Bonis operibus conversorum pascitur. Magnum Christo convivium fecit Matthaeus, imo fuit. Intuendum etiam quod non ait inspicit, sed circumspicit montes pascuae suae. In Judaea quippe incarnatus est Dominus, quae posita in medio gentium fuit. Atque ideo circumspexit montes, quia elatos hujus saeculi circumquaque positos ex gentilitatis universitate collegit. In his itaque montibus pascitur, quia bonis operibus conversorum quasi herbis virentibus satiatur. Hinc est quod ei sponsae voce in Canticis canticorum dicitur: Indica mihi ubi pascas, ubi cubes in meridie (Cant. I, 6). Pascitur quippe Dominus, cum bonis nostris actibus delectatur. Cubat vero in meridie, cum ex desideriis carnalibus ardenti corde reproborum apud 993 electorum suorum pectora refrigerium invenit cogitationis bonae. Mons enim quidam Matthaeus fuerat, quando in telonii lucris tumebat; de quo et scriptum est quia postquam credidit, invitato in domum suam Domino, convivium magnum fecit (Luc. V, 29). Mons itaque iste huic onagro virentis pascuae herbas protulit, quia et foris eum convivio, et intus epulis virtutum pavit. Quod adhuc plenissime expletur, cum subditur:

CAPUT XXVII.

IBID.Virentia quaeque perquirit. 80. Arentia corda Christus deserit; fide ac spe virentia requirit. Arentia enim deserit, et virentia quaeque perquirit.

Arentia namque corda sunt hominum, quae in hujus saeculi spe peritura plantata, aeternitatis fiduciam non habent. Virent autem quae illi haereditati inhaerent, de qua Petrus apostolus dicit: In haereditatem incorruptibilem, et incontaminatam, et immarcescibilem (I Pet. I, 4). Tanto enim verius quique virentes sunt, quanto in haereditatis immarcescibilis sorte cogitationis radicem figunt. Quisquis itaque intrinsecus arere formidat, arentia extrinsecus mundi hujus desideria fugiat. Quisquis a Domino perquiri desiderat, aeternam patriam appetens, in interna cordis plantatione viridescat. 81. S. Gregorii modestia et humilitas. Haec autem de onagro exposita sub duplici intellectu sufficiant. Lectoris vero judicio relinquendum est quid magis duxerit eligendum. Et si utriusque expositionis intelligentiam fortasse despexerit, libenter ipse lectorem meum subtilius veriusque sentientem, velut magistrum discipulus sequar, quia mihi proprie donatum credo, quidquid illum me melius sentire cognosco. [Vet. XXXV.] Omnes enim qui fide pleni de Deo aliquid sonare nitimur, organa veritatis sumus; et in ejusdem veritatis potestate est, utrum per me sonet alteri, an per alterum mihi. Ipsa quippe in medio nostri, etiam non aeque viventibus omnibus aequa est, et saepe alium tangit, ut bene audiat quod per alium ipsa sonuerit; saepe vero alium tangit, ut bene quod ab aliis audiatur sonet. 82. Saepe doctori verbum aut propter auditoris meritum tribuitur, aut propter cuipam subtrahitur. Saepe doctori verbum pro gratia tribuitur auditoris, et saepe propter auditoris culpam subtrahitur sermo doctori. In his ergo quae ubertim praedicat doctor, nulla elatione se efferat, ne fortasse 994 non pro sua, sed pro auditoris gratia ejus repleatur lingua; et in his quae doctor steriliter dicit, auditor non succenseat, ne fortasse doctoris lingua non pro sua, sed pro auditoris reprobatione torpescat. Pro auditoris namque gratia boni, datur etiam malis sermo doctoribus, sicut potuerunt Pharisaeis suppetere verba praedicationis, de quibus scriptum est: Omnia ergo quaecunque dixerint vobis, servate et facite; secundum vero opera eorum

nolite facere (Matth. XXIII, 3). Propter auditorum vero reprobationem bonis etiam doctoribus sermo subtrahitur, sicut ad Ezechielem contra Israel dicitur: Linguam tuam adhaerere faciam palato tuo, et eris mutus, nec quasi vir objurgans, quia domus exasperans est (Ezech. III, 26). 83. Aliquando pro doctoris et auditorum merito vel culpa, datur aut negatur. De accepto nemo extollatur. Spem comitetur timor. Aliquando autem sermo praedicationis propter utrosque datur, aliquando propter utrosque subtrahitur. Propter utrosque enim datur, sicut divina voce Paulo apud Corinthios dicitur: Noli timere, sed loquere (Act. XVIII, 9). Et paulo post: Quia populus multus est mihi in hac civitate (Ibid. 10). Propter utrosque vero subtrahitur, sicut Heli sacerdos et pravam filiorum cognovit actionem, et dignam increpationis non exercuit vocem; cum profecto futurum esset ut in mortis supplicio et istos reatus flagitii, et illum silentii poena multaret (I Reg. III, 12, seq.). Inter haec igitur cum vel pro quo sermo detur, vel propter quem subtrahatur, ignoramus, unum est salubre remedium, nec de his quae aliis magis accepimus, nosmetipsos extollere, nec de eo alterum quod minus acceperit irridere; sed fixo humilitatis pede, graviter et constanter incedere, quia in hac vita tanto veracius docti sumus, quanto doctrinam nobis a nobismetipsis suppetere non posse cognoscimus. Cur ergo quilibet de doctrina superbiat, qui occulto judicio vel cui quando detur, vel quando cui subtrahatur ignorat? Quamvis enim securitati timor semper longe videatur abesse, nobis tamen nihil est securius quam sub spe semper timere, ne incauta mens aut desperando se in vitiis dejiciat, aut extollendo de donis ruat. Ante districti enim ac pii judicis oculos quanto de se sub spe humilius trepidat, tanto in illo robustius stat.

LIBER TRIGESIMUS PRIMUS.

Explicatur versus nonus cum reliquis capitis XXXIX, omissis tantum tribus ultimis; et divinae gratiae, in Evangelii praedicatione peccatorumque conversione, efficacia praesertim demonstratur.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

995 1. Inflictum homini a superbo diabolo vulnus, Dei humilitate sanatum In paradiso sano homini diabolus invidens superbiae vulnus inflixit, ut qui mortem non acceperat conditus, mereretur elatus (Genes. III). Sed quia divinae potentiae suppetit, non solum bona de nihilo facere, sed ea etiam ex malis quae diabolus perpetraverat, reformare, contra hoc inflictum vulnus superbientis diaboli medicina apparuit inter homines humilitas Dei, ut auctoris exemplo humiliati surgerent, qui imitatione hostis elati ceciderant. Contra ergo superbientem diabolum apparuit inter homines homo factus humilis Deus. Hunc potentes hujus saeculi, id est membra diaboli superbientis, eo despicabilem crediderunt, quo humilem conspexerunt. Vulnus enim cordis eorum quanto magis tumuit, tanto amplius medicamentum mite despexit. Repulsa igitur a vulnere superborum medicina nostra pervenit ad vulnus humilium: Infirma quippe mundi elegit Deus, ut confundat fortia (I Cor. I, 27); actumque est cum pauperibus quod post etiam divites erati mirarentur. Nam dum novas in illis virtutes aspiciunt, eorum quorum prius contempsere vitam postmodum obstupuere miracula. Unde mox pavidi ad sua corda redeuntes, extimuerunt sanctitatem in miraculis, quam despexerant in praeceptis. Per infirma ergo confusa sunt fortia, quia dum in venerationem vita surgit humilium, elatio cecidit superborum. Igitur quia beatus Job sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenet, et omnipotens Deus praevidit quod in primordiis nascentis Ecclesiae, potentes

hujus saeculi leve ejus jugum suscipere crassa cordis cervice recusarent, dicat:

CAPUT IX.

CAP. XXXIX, vers. 9. Numquid volet rhinoceros servire tibi? 2. Per rhinocerotem intelligendi elati et potentes a Christo domiti, et Ecclesiae servire coacti. Eorum superbiam miraculis fregit. Rhinoceros enim indomitae omnino naturae est; ita ut si quando captus fuerit, teneri nullatenus possit. Impatiens quippe, ut fertur, illico moritur. Ejus vero nomen Latina lingua interpretatum sonat, in nare cornu. Et quid aliud in nare nisi fatuitas, quid in cornu nisi elatio designatur? Nam quia in nare fatuitas solet intelligi, Salomone attestante didicimus, qui ait: Circulus aureus in naribus suis, mulier pulchra et fatua (Prov. XI, 22). Haereticam namque doctrinam nitore vidit eloquii resplendere, nec tamen sapientiae apto intellectu congruere, et ait: Circulus aureus in naribus suis, id est pulchra et circumflexa locutio in sensibus mentis stultae, cui ex eloquio aurum pendet, sed tamen ex terrenae intentionis pondere, more suis, ad superiora non respicit. Quod secutus exposuit, dicens: Mulier pulchra et fatua; id est, doctrina haeretica: pulchra per verbum, fatua per intellectum. In cornu vero, quia elatio frequenter accipitur, 996 Propheta attestante didicimus, qui ait: Dixi iniquis, nolite inique agere, et delinquentibus, nolite exaltare cornu (Psal. LXXIV, 5). Quid ergo in rhinocerote hoc nisi potentes hujus saeculi designantur, vel ipsae in eo summae principatuum potestates, qui typho fatuae jactationis elati, dum falsis exterius inflantur honoribus, veris miseriis intus inanescunt? Quibus bene dicitur: Quid superbis, terra et cinis (Eccli. X, 9)? In ipsis vero initiis nascentis Ecclesiae, dum contra illam divitum se potestas extolleret, atque in ejus necem immensitate tantae crudelitatis anhelaret, dum tot cruciatibus anxia, tot persecutionibus pressa succumberet, quis tunc credere potuit quod illa recta et aspera superborum

colla sibi subjiceret, et jugo sancti timoris edomita, mitibus fidei loris ligaret? Diu quippe in exordiis suis rhinocerotis hujus cornu ventilata, et quasi funditus interimenda percussa est. Sed divina gratia dispensante, et illa moriendo vivificata convaluit, et cornu suum rhinoceros iste feriendo lassatus inclinavit; quodque impossibile hominibus fuit, Deo difficile non fuit, qui potestates hujus mundi rigidas non verbis, sed miraculis fregit. Ecce enim quotidie servire rhinocerotes agnoscimus, dum potentes mundi hujus, qui in viribus suis fatua dudum fuerant elatione confisi, Deo subditos jam videmus. Quasi de quodam indomito rhinocerote Dominus loquebatur, cum diceret: Dives difficile intrabit in regnum coelorum (Matth. XIX, 23). Cui cum responsum esset: Et quis poterit salvus fieri? Illico adjunxit: Apud homines hoc impossibile est, apud Deum autem omnia possibilia sunt (Ibid., 26). Ac si diceret: Rhinoceros iste humanis viribus mansuescere non potest, sed tamen divinis subdi miraculis potest. Unde hic quoque apte beato Job sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenenti dicitur: Nunquid volet rhinoceros servire tibi? [Rec. II.] Subaudis: Ut mihi, qui eum praedicamentis quidem hominum diu resistere pertuli, sed tamen repente, cum volui, miraculis stravi. Ac si apertius dicat: Nunquid hi qui fatua elatione superbiunt sine meis adjutoriis tuae praedicationi subduntur? Per quem itaque praevaleas considera, et in omne quod praevales elationis sensum inclina. Vel certe ad beati Job notitiam pro humilianda ejus virtute deducitur, quam mira quandoque per apostolos agantur, qui mundum Deo subjiciunt, eique edomitam potentum hujus saeculi superbiam flectunt, ut tanto de se beatus Job minus aestimet, quanto aggregari Deo tam difficiles animas per alios videt. Dicat ergo: Nunquid volet rhinoceros tibi? Subaudis: Sicut per eos quos misero serviet mihi. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Vet. II].

997 IBID. Aut morabitur ad praesepe tuum? 3. Scripturae sanctae pabulo Christus hos rhinocerotes nutrit. Praesepe hoc loco ipsa Scriptura sacra non inconvenienter accipitur, in qua verbi pabulo animalia sancta satiantur, de quibus per Prophetam dicitur: Animalia tua habitabunt in ea (Psal. LXVII, 11). Hinc etiam natus Dominus a pastoribus in praesepi reperitur (Luc. II, 16), quia ejus incarnatio, in ea quae nos reficit Prophetarum scriptura cognoscitur. Rhinoceros itaque iste, videlicet omnis elatus in primordiis nascentis Ecclesiae, cum patriarcharum dicta, cum prophetarum mysteria, cum Evangelii arcana audiret, irridebat, quia tanto in praedicatorum praesepi claudi satiarique contempserat, quanto in voluptatibus propriis dimissus, desperationis suae campum tenebat. Quem superborum campum bene Paulus insinuat, dicens: Qui desperantes semetipsos tradiderunt impudicitiae in operationem immunditiae omnis, in avaritiam (Ephes. IV, 19). Tanto enim se quisque in malis praesentibus latius relaxat, quanto post hanc vitam se assequi bona aeterna desperat. Sed omnipotens Deus diu quidem rhinocerotem hunc per pravae voluptatis campum vagantem pertulit, et tamen cum voluit, repente ad suum praesepe religavit, ut vitae pabulum bene clausus accipiat, ne vitam funditus male liber amittat. Ecce enim jam cernimus quod potentes hujus saeculi, ejusque principes praedicamenta dominica libenter audiunt, constanter legunt, passimque a praesepi non exeunt, quia praecepta Dei, quae aut legendo, aut audiendo cogoscunt, nequaquam vivendo transcendunt; sed ad verbi pabulum quasi clausi stare aequanimiter tolerant, ut edendo et permanendo pinguescant. Quod cum Deo agente conspicimus, quid aliud quam rhinocerotem hunc ad praesepe morantem videmus? Quia vero post acceptum pabulum praedicationis rhinoceros iste fructum debet ostendere operis, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT IV [Vet.

et Rec. III]. VERS. 10. Nunquid alligabis rhinocerotem ad arandum loro tuo? 4. Saeculi principes divina praecepta quibus alligantur, praedicant et servari curant. Lora sunt Ecclesiae praecepta disciplinae. Arare vero est per praedicationis studium humani pectoris terram vomere linguae proscindere. Hic igitur rhinoceros quondam superbus ac rigidus jam nunc loris fidei tenetur ligatus; atque a praesepi ad arandum ducitur, quia eam praedicationem qua ipse refectus est innotescere. et aliis conatur. Scimus enim rhinoceros iste, terrenus videlicet princeps, quanta prius contra Dominum crudelitate saevierit, et nunc agente Domino cernimus quanta se ei humilitate substernit. Hic rhinoceros non solum ligatus, sed etiam ad arandum ligatus est, quia videlicet disciplinae loris astrictus, non solum se a pravis operibus retinet, sed etiam in sanctae fidei praedicationibus exercet. Ecce enim, sicut superius dictum est, ipsos humanarum rerum rectores ac principes dum metuere Deum in suis actionibus cernimus, quid aliud quam loris ligatos videmus? Cum vero eam fidem, quam dudum persequendo impugnaverant, nunc prolatis legibus praedicare non cessant, quid aliud faciunt, nisi aratri laboribus insudant? 5. Saecularis potestatis et humilitatis christianae mirus consensus. Libet videre hunc rhinocerotem, id est terrae principem fidei loris ligatum, quemadmodum 998 et cornu portat per potentiam saeculi, et jugum fidei sustinet per amorem Dei. Timeri iste rhinoceros valde poterat, nisi ligatus esset. Cornu quippe habet, sed ligatus est. Habent ergo in loris ejus quod humiles diligant, habent in cornu ejus quod elati pertimescant. Strictus enim loris, servat pietatem mansuetudinis, sed fultus cornu terrenae gloriae exercet dominium potestatis. Plerumque autem cum exigente ira ad feriendum rapitur, divino timore revocatur. Et quidem per exasperatam potentiam in furorem se elevat; sed quia aeterni judicis reminiscitur, cornu ligatus se inclinat. Saepe ipse vidisse me memini, quod cum se ad feriendum graviter hic rhinoceros accenderet, et quasi elevato cornu bestiolis minimis mortes, exsilia, damnationesque subjectis

immensis terroribus intentaret, repente fronti signo crucis impresso, omne in se incendium furoris exstinxit, conversus minas deposuit; et quia ad deliberata progredi non posset, ligatus agnovit. Et non solum in se iras edomat, sed in subjectorum etiam sensibus omne quod rectum est inserere festinat, ut quia omnes sanctam Ecclesiam ex intima cogitatione venerentur, exemplo ipse suae humilitatis demonstret. Dicatur igitur beato Job: Nunquid alligabis rhinocerotem ad arandum loro tuo? Ac si aperte dicat: Nunquid potentes hujus saeculi in sua fatua elatione confidentes, ad laborem praedicationis dirigis, et sub disciplinae vincula restringis? Subaudis: Ut ego, qui id egi cum volui, qui persecutores meos, quos prius hostes pertuli, ipsos postmodum rectae fidei defensores feci. Sequitur:

CAPUT V [Vet. IV].

IBID. Aut confringet glebas vallium post te? 6. Qui prius fidei persecutores, postmodum praedicatores et assertores facti. Solent excultae terrae superjacentes glebae jactata semina premere, et nascentia suffocare. Quibus glebis hoc loco illi signantur, qui per duritiam suam atque pestiferam vitam, nec ipsi semina verbi recipiunt, nec receptorum seminum fructus alios ferre permittunt. Sanctus enim quisque praedicator in mundum veniens, evangelizando pauperibus, quasi molles vallium terras araverat; sed quorumdam duritiam elatorum Ecclesia rumpere non valens, eos quasi superjectas labori suo glebas oppressa tolerabat. Multi enim perversae mentis ipsa terrenorum principum infidelitate confisi, surgentem Ecclesiam male vivendi pondere premebant, cum diu quos possent modo damnabilibus exemplis, modo minis, modo blandimentis destruerent, ne terra cordis auditorum ad spiritalis seminis fructum exculta perveniret. At cum omnipotens Deus hunc rhinocerotem loris suis subdidit, per eum illico glebarum duritiam fregit. Mox quippe terrenum principatum suae fidei subjugavit, dura persequentium corda contrivit, ut quasi confractae glebae

non jam obduratae premerent, sed ad percepta verbi semina resolutae germinarent. Unde recte nunc ait: Aut confringet glebas vallium post te? Ac si diceret sicut post me, qui postquam mentem cujuslibet elatae potestatis ingredior, non solum eam mihi subditam reddo, sed etiam ad conterendos fidei hostes exerceo, ut potentes hujus saeculi meae formidinis loris ligati, non solum in me credentes permaneant, sed et pro me 999 alieni cordis duritiam zelantes frangant. 7. In suo sinu multos hostes habet Ecclesia, contra quos terrenorum principum opem quaerit. Hoc autem quod de infidelibus diximus, in plerisque etiam qui fidei nomine censentur videmus. Multi namque in medio humilium fratrum positi fidem verbo tenus tenent, sed dum elationis typhum non deserunt, dum quos possunt illatis violentiis premunt, dum fructificantibus aliis ipsi nequaquam semina verbi recipiunt, sed ab exhortantis voce aurem cordis avertunt, isti quid aliud, quam obduratae glebae in exaratis vallibus jacent? Qui eo nequiores sunt, quo nec ipsi humilitatis fructum proferunt, et quod est deterius, proferentes humiles premunt. Ad horum duritiam dissolvendam nonnunquam sancta Ecclesia, quia propria virtute non sufficit, rhinocerotis hujus, id est terreni principis opitulationem quaerit, ut ipse superjacentes glebas conterat, quas Ecclesiarum humilitas quasi planities vallium portat. Has itaque glebas rhinoceros pede premit ac comminuit, quia pravorum potentiumque duritiam, cui ecclesiastica humilitas resistere non valet, principalis religio ex potestate dissolvit. Quod quia sola divina virtute agitur, ut terreni regni culmina ad provectum regni coelestis inclinentur, recte nunc dicitur: Aut confringet glebas vallium post te? Ut vero de suis virtutibus beatus Job humilia sentiat, et adhuc de hujus mundi potestatibus sub rhinocerotis nomine sublimia cognoscat, sequitur:

CAPUT VI.

VERS. 11.Nunquid fiduciam habebis in magna fortitudine ejus, et derelinques ei labores tuos? 8. Temporalis principis potestatem sibi servire cogit Christus, eique suam Ecclesiam credidit ac commendavit. In rhinocerotis fortitudine fiduciam Dominus habere se asserit, quia vires quas temporaliter terreno principi contulit, ad cultum suae venerationis inclinavit, ut ex accepta potestate, per quam dudum contra Deum tumuerat, religiosum nunc Deo obsequium impendat. Quo enim in mundum plus potest, eo pro mundi auctore plus praevalet. Nam quia a subjectis ipse metuitur, tanto facilius persuadet, quanto et cum potestate indicat qui vere metuatur. Dicatur ergo: Nunquid fiduciam habebis in magna fortitudine ejus? Ac si diceretur: Ut ego, qui vires terrenorum principum meo cultui servituras aspicio. Tanto enim ea quae nunc agis, minora aestimo, quanto jam praevideo, quia et majores hujus mundi mihi potestates inclinabo. Bene autem subditur: Et derelinques ei labores tuos? Labores enim suos huic rhinoceroti Dominus reliquit, quia converso terreno principi eam quam sua morte mercatus est, Ecclesiam credidit: quia videlicet in ejus manu quanta sollicitudine pax fidei sit tuenda commisit. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII [Vet.

V, Rec. IV]. VERS. 12. Nunquid credes ei quod reddat sementem tibi, et aream tuam congreget? 9. Pro Ecclesia leges promulgat; qui dudum contra eam saeviebat. Qui aliud semen, nisi verbum praedicationis accipitur? sicut in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Exiit qui seminat, seminare (Matth. XIII, 3); et sicut propheta ait: Beati qui seminatis super omnes aquas (Isai. XXXII, 20). Quid aliud area nisi Ecclesia debet intelligi? de qua Praecursoris voce dicitur: Et permundabit aream suam (Matth. III, 12). Quis ergo in initio nascentis Ecclesiae crederet, dum contra eam ille indomitus principatus terrae tot minis et cruciatibus saeviret, quia rhinoceros iste Deo sementem redderet, id est acceptum praedicationis verbum operibus repensaret? Quis

1000 posset tunc infirmorum credere quod ejus aream congregaret? Ecce enim modo pro Ecclesia leges promulgat, qui dudum contra eam per varia tormenta saeviebat. Ecce quaslibet gentes capere potuerit ad fidei illas gratiam suadendo perducit; eisque aeternam vitam indicat, quibus captis praesentem servat. Cur hoc? Quia videlicet aream nunc congregat, quam aliquando superbo cornu dispergendo ventilabat. Audiat igitur beatus Job quid gentilitatis principes faciant, et nequaquam se apud semetipsum de gloria tantae suae virtutis extollat. Audiat et rex potens, potentiores hujus mundi reges quanta Deo devotione famulentur, et virtutem suam quasi pro singularitate non trahat in elationis vitium, qui habet in aliis exemplum, quia etsi tunc ei similem Dominus non vidit, multos tamen per quos ejus gloriam retunderet praevidit. 10. Qui terrenorum principum metu, Ecclesiam aperta vi vexare non audent, ad varia fraudis argumenta convertuntur. Sine hoste esse non potest Ecclesia. Igitur quia terreni principes magna se Deo humilitate substernunt, pravi homines qui dudum contra Ecclesiam in infidelitate positi aperta adversitate saeviebant, nunc ad alia fraudis argumenta vertuntur. Quia enim illos religionem venerari conspiciunt, ipsi cultum religionis assumunt, et bonorum vitam sub despectis vestibus iniquis moribus premunt. Mundi quippe dilectores sunt, hocque in se quod homines venerentur ostendunt, atque eis qui vere semetipsos despiciunt, non mente, sed veste copulantur. Quia enim praesentem gloriam amantes assequi non possunt, quasi despicientes sequuntur. Qui quid sentiunt contra bonos ostenderent, si aptum nequitiae tempus invenirent. [Vet. VI.] Sed haec etiam argumenta pravorum ad electorum purgamenta proficiunt. Sancta enim Ecclesia transire sine labore tentationis non potest tempora peregrinationis, quae etsi foris apertos hostes non habet, intus tamen tolerat fictos fratres. Nam contra vitia semper in acie est, et habet etiam pacis tempore bellum suum; et fortasse gravius affligitur cum non extraneorum ictibus, sed suorum moribus impugnatur. Sive itaque

illo, seu isto tempore, est tamen semper in labore. Nam et in persecutione principum timet ne amittant boni quod sunt, et in conversione principum tolerat, quia mali simulant bonos se esse, quod non sunt. Unde omnipotens Deus, quia rhinocerotem hunc loris ligatum dixit, illico pravorum hypocrisim subdidit, dicens:

CAPUT VIII [Rec. V].

VERS. 13. Penna struthionis similis est pennis herodii et accipitris. 11. Struthioni pennas habenti, sed non volatum, similes sunt hypocritae. Quis herodium et accipitrem nesciat aves reliquas quanta volatus sui velocitate transcendant? Struthio vero pennae eorum similitudinem habet, sed volatus eorum celeritatem non habet. A terra quippe elevari non valet, et alas quasi ad volatum specie tenus erigit, sed tamen nunquam se a terra volando suspendit. Ita sunt nimirum omnes hypocritae, qui dum bonorum vitam simulant, imitationem sanctae visionis habent, sed veritatem sanctae actionis non habent. Habent quippe volandi pennas per speciem, sed in terra repunt per actionem, quia alas per figuram sanctitatis extendunt, sed curarum saecularium pondere praegravati, nullatenus a terra sublevantur. Speciem namque Pharisaeorum reprobans Dominus, quasi struthionis pennam 1001 redarguit, quae in opere aliud exercuit, et in colore aliud ostendit, dicens: Vae vobis, Scribae et Pharisaei hypocritae, quia similes estis sepulcris dealbatis, quae foris quidem apparent hominibus speciosa, intus vero sunt plena ossibus mortuorum; ita et vos foris apparetis hominibus justi, intus vero pleni estis avaritia et iniquitate (Matth. XXIII, 27). Ac si diceret: Sublevare vos videtur species pennae, sed in infimis vos deprimit pondus vitae. De hoc pondere per Prophetam dicitur: Filii hominum, usquequo graves corde (Psal. IV, 3)? Hujus struthionis conversurum se hypocrisim Dominus pollicetur, cum per prophetam dicit: Glorificabunt me bestiae agri, dracones et struthiones (Isai. XLIII, 20). Quid

enim draconum nomine, nisi in aperto malitiosae mentes exprimuntur, quae per terram semper in infimis cogitationibus repunt? Quid vero per struthionum vocabulum nisi hi qui se bonos simulant designantur, qui sanctitatis vitam quasi volatus pennam per speciem retinent, sed per opera non exercent? Glorificari itaque se Dominus a dracone vel struthione asserit, quia et aperte malos, et ficte bonos plerumque ad sua obsequia ex intima cogitatione convertit. Vel certe agri bestiae, id est dracones struthionesque Dominum glorificant, cum fidem quae in illo est ea quae in hoc mundo dudum membrum diaboli fuerat gentilitas exaltat. Quam et propter malitiam draconum nomine exprobrat, et propter hypocrisim vocabulo struthionum notat. Quasi enim pennas accepit gentilitas, sed volare non potuit, quae et naturam rationis habuit, et actionem rationis ignoravit. 12. Electi pauca habent hic quae eos deprimant, multa quae sursum tollant; secus reprobi. Habemus adhuc quod in consideratione struthionis hujus de accipitre et herodio attentius perpendamus. Accipitris quippe et herodii parva sunt corpora, sed pennis densioribus fulta, et idcirco cum celeritate transvolant, quia eis parum inest quod aggravat, multum quod levat. At contra struthio raris pennis induitur, et immani corpore gravatur, ut etsi volare appetat, ipsa pennarum paucitas molem tanti corporis in aera non suspendat. Bene ergo in herodio et accipitre electorum persona signatur, qui quandiu in hac vita sunt, sine quantulocunque culpae contagio esse non possunt. Sed cum eis parum quid inest quod deprimit, multa virtus bonae actionis suppetit quae illos in superna sustollit. At contra hypocrita, etsi facit pauca quae elevent, perpetrat multa quae gravent. Neque enim nulla bona agit hypocrita, sed quibus ea ipsa deprimat, multa perversa committit. Paucae igitur pennae corpus struthionis non sublevant, quia parvum bonum hypocritae multitudo pravae actionis gravat. Haec quoque ipsa struthionis penna ad pennas herodii et accipitris similitudinem coloris habet, virtutis vero similitudinem non habet. Illorum namque

conclusae et firmiores sunt, et volatu aerem premere virtute suae soliditatis possunt. At contra struthionis pennae dissolutae, eo volatum sumere nequeunt, quo ab ipso quem premere debuerant aere transcenduntur. Quid ergo in his aspicimus nisi quod electorum virtutes solidae evolant, ut ventos humani favoris premant? Hypocritarum vero actio quamlibet recta videatur, volare non sufficit, quia videlicet fluxae virtutis pennam humanae laudis aura pertransit. 1002 [Vet. VII.] 13. Veri Christiani a falsis, ex fructibus discernendi. Sed ecce cum unum eumdemque bonorum malorumque habitum cernimus, cum ipsam in electis ac reprobis professionis speciem videmus, unde nostrae intelligentiae suppetat ut electos a reprobis, a falsis veros comprehendendo discernat? Quod tamen citius agnoscimus, si intimata in memoriam praeceptoris nostri verba signamus, qui ait: Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos (Matth. VII, 20). Neque enim pensanda sunt quae ostendunt in imagine, sed quae servant in actione. Unde hic postquam speciem struthionis hujus intulit, mox facta subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 14. Quae derelinquit in terra ova sua. 14. Hypocritae quos gignunt, bonis exemplis fovere et nutrire negligunt. Quid enim per ova, nisi tenera adhuc proles exprimitur, quae diu fovenda est, ut ad vivum volatile perducatur? Ova quippe insensibilia in semetipsis sunt, sed tamen calefacta, in viva volatilia convertuntur. Ita nimirum parvuli auditores ac filii certum est, quod frigidi insensibilesque remaneant, nisi doctoris sui sollicita exhortatione calefiant. Ne igitur derelicti in sua insensibilitate torpescant, assidua doctorum voce fovendi sunt, quousque valeant et per intelligentiam vivere, et per contemplationem volare. Quia vero hypocritae quamvis perversa semper operentur, loqui tamen recta non desinunt; bene autem loquendo in fide vel conversatione filios pariunt, sed eos bene vivendo nutrire non possunt, recte de hac struthione dicitur: Quae derelinquit in terra

ova sua. Curam namque filiorum hypocrita negligit, quia ex amore intimo rebus se exterioribus subdit, in quibus quanto magis extollitur, tanto minus de prolis suae defectu cruciatur. Ova ergo in terra dereliquisse est natos per conversionem filios nequaquam a terrenis actibus interposito exhortationis nido suspendere. Ova in terra dereliquisse est nullum coelestis vitae filiis exemplum praebere. Quia enim hypocritae per charitatis viscera non calent, de torpore prolis editae, id est de ovorum suorum frigore nequaquam dolent; et quanto se libentius terrenis actibus inserunt, tanto negligentius eos quos generant agere terrena permittunt. Sed quia derelictos hypocritarum filios superna cura non deserit, nonnullos namque etiam ex talibus intima electione praescitos, largitae gratiae respectu calefacit, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT X [Rec. VI].

IBID. Tu forsitan in pulvere calefacies ea? 15. Pravorum et bonorum doctorum filios Dei gratia calefacit. Ac si dicat: Ut ego, qui illa in pulvere calefacio, quia scilicet parvulorum animas, et in medio peccantium sitas, amoris mei igne succendo. Quid pulvis, nisi peccator accipitur? Unde et ille hostis hujus peccatoris perditione satiatur, de quo per prophetam dicitur: Serpenti pulvis panis ejus (Isai. LXV, 25). Quid per pulverem, nisi ipsa iniquorum instabilitas demonstratur? De qua David ait: Non sic impii non sic, sed tanquam pulvis quem projicit ventus a facie terrae (Psal. I, 4). Ova ergo Dominus in pulvere derelicta calefacit, quia parvulorum animas praedicatorum suorum sollicitudine destitutas, etiam in medio peccantium positas amoris sui igne succendit. Hinc est quod plerosque cernimus et in medio populorum vivere, et tamen vitam torpentis populi non tenere. Hinc est quod plerosque cernimus, et malorum turbas non fugere, et tamen superno ardore flagrare. Hinc est quod plerosque cernimus, 1003 ut ita dixerim, in frigore calere. Unde enim nonnulli in terrenorum hominum torpore positi supernae spei desideriis inardescunt, unde et inter frigida

corda succensi sunt, nisi quia omnipotens Deus derelicta ova scit etiam in pulvere calefacere, et frigoris pristini insensibilitate discussa, per sensum spiritus vitalis animare, ut nequaquam jacentia in infimis torpeant; sed in viva volatilia versa sese ad coelestia contemplando, id est volando, suspendant? Notandum vero est quod in his verbis non solum hypocritarum actio perversa reprobatur, sed bonorum etiam magistrorum, si qua fortasse subrepserit elatio premitur. Nam cum de se Dominus dicit quod derelicta ova in pulvere ipse calefaciat, profecto aperte indicat quia ipse operatur intrinsecus per verba doctoris, qui et sine verbis ullius hominis calefacit quos voluerit in frigore pulveris. Ac si aperte doctoribus dicat: Ut sciatis quia ego sum qui per vos loquentes operor, ecce cum voluero cordibus hominum etiam sine vobis loquor. [Vet. VIII.] Humiliata igitur cogitatione doctorum, ad exprimendum hypocritam sermo convertitur, et qua fatuitate torpeat, adhuc sub struthionis facto plenius indicatur. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XI [Rec. VII].

VERS. 15. Obliviscitur quod pes conculcet ea, aut bestia agri conterat. 16. Pravi doctores de sua prole non sunt solliciti, secus boni. Quid in pede, nisi transitus operationis accipitur? Quid in agro, nisi mundus iste signatur? De quo in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Ager autem est mundus (Matth. XIII, 38). Quid in bestia nisi antiquus hostis exprimitur, qui hujus mundi rapinis insidians, humana quotidie morte satiatur? De qua per Prophetam, pollicente Domino, dicitur: Et mala bestia non transibit per eam (Isai. XXXV, 9). Struthio itaque ova sua deserens obliviscitur quod pes conculcet ea, quia videlicet hypocritae eos quos in conversatione filios generant derelinquunt, et omnino non curant, ne aut exhortationis sollicitudine, aut disciplinae custodia destitutos, pravorum operum exempla pervertant. Si enim ova quae gignunt diligerent, nimirum metuerent ne quis ea, perversa opera demonstrando, calcaret. Hunc Paulus pedem infirmis discipulis, quasi

ovis quae posuerat, metuebat, cum diceret: Multi ambulant, quos saepe dicebam vobis, nunc autem et flens dico, inimicos crucis Christi (Phil. III, 18). Et rursum: Videte canes, videte malos operarios (Ibid., 2). Et rursum: Denuntiamus vobis, fratres, in nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ut subtrahatis vos ab omni fratre ambulante inordinate, et non secundum traditionem quam acceperunt a nobis (II Thess. III, 6). Hunc pedem Joannes Caio formidabat, qui cum multa Diotrephis mala praemisisset, adjunxit: Charissime, noli imitari malum, sed quod bonum est (III Joan. 11). Hunc ipse Synagogae dux infirmo suo gregi metuebat, dicens: Quando ingressus fueris terram quam Dominus Deus dabit tibi, cave ne imitari velis abominationes illarum gentium (Deut. XVIII, 9). Obliviscitur etiam quod bestia agri conterat, quia nimirum si diabolus in hoc mundo saeviens editos in bona conversatione filios rapiat, hypocrita omnino non curat. Hanc autem agri bestiam Paulus ovis quae posuerat metuebat dicens: Timeo, ne sicut serpens Evam seduxit astutia sua, ita corrumpantur sensus vestri a charitate, quae est 1004 in Christo Jesu (II Cor. XI, 3). Hanc agri bestiam discipulis metuebat Petrus, cum diceret: Adversarius vester diabolus, quasi leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret, cui resistite fortes in fide (I Pet. V, 8). Habent ergo veraces magistri super discipulos suos timoris viscera ex virtute charitatis: hypocritae autem tanto minus commissis sibi metuunt, quanto nec sibimetipsis quid timere debeant deprehendunt. Et quia obduratis cordibus vivunt, ipsos etiam quos generant filios nulla pietate debiti amoris agnoscunt. Unde adhuc sub struthionis specie subditur:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 16. Duratur ad filios suos, quasi non sint sui. 17. Hi charitate flagrant erga filios, non illi. Quem enim charitatis gratia non infundit, proximum suum etiam si ipse hunc Deo genuit, extraneum respicit, ut profecto sunt omnes hypocritae, quorum videlicet mentes dum semper

exteriora appetunt, intus insensibiles fiunt; et in cunctis quae agunt, dum sua semper expetunt, erga affectum proximi nulla charitatis compassione mollescunt. O quam mollia viscera gestabat Paulus, quando circa filios suos tanto aestu amoris inhiabat, dicens: Nos vivimus, si vos statis in Domino (I Thess. III, 8). Et, Testis mihi est Deus, quomodo cupiam omnes vos in visceribus Christi Jesu (Phil. I, 8). Romanis quoque ait: Testis est mihi Deus, cui servio in spiritu meo, in Evangelio Filii ejus, quod sine intermissione memoriam vestri semper facio in orationibus meis, obsecrans si quo modo tandem aliquando prosperum iter habeam in voluntate Dei veniendi ad vos; desidero enim videre vos (Rom. I, 9, seq.). Timotheo quoque ait: Gratias ago Deo meo, cui servio a progenitoribus meis in conscientia pura, quia sine intermissione habeam tui memoriam in orationibus meis, nocte ac die desiderans te videre (II Tim. I, 3). Thessalonicensibus quoque amorem suum indicans, dicit: Nos autem, fratres, desolati a vobis ad tempus horae, aspectu, non corde, abundantius festinavimus faciem vestram videre cum multo desiderio (I Thess. II, 17). Qui duris persecutionibus pressus, et tamen de filiorum salute sollicitus, adjunxit: Misimus Timotheum fratrem nostrum, et ministrum Dei in Evangelio Christi, ad confortandos vos; et exhortandos pro fide vestra, ut nemo moveatur in tribulationibus istis. Ipsi enim scitis quod in hoc positi sumus (I Thess. III, 2). Ephesiis quoque ait: Peto ne deficiatis in tribulationibus meis pro vobis quae est gloria vestra (Ephes. III, 13). Ecce in tribulatione positus alios exhortatur, et in hoc quod ipse sustinet alios roborat. Non enim filiorum suorum fuerat more struthionis oblitus, sed metuebat nimis ne ejus discipuli in praedicatore suo tot persecutionum probra cernentes, fidem in eo despicerent, contra quam innumerae passionum contumeliae praevalerent. Et idcirco minus dolebat in tormentis, sed magis filiis de tormentorum suorum tentatione metuebat. Parvipendebat in se plagas corporis, dum formidaret in filiis plagas cordis. Ipse patiendo

suscipiebat vulnera tormentorum, sed filios consolando, curabat vulnera cordium. Pensemus ergo cujus charitatis fuerit, inter dolores proprios aliis timuisse, pensemus cujus charitatis fuerit, filiorum salutem inter sua detrimenta requirere, et statum mentis in proximis etiam ex sua dejectione custodire. 1005 [Vet. IX.] 18. Quia per concupiscentiam in exteriora bona feruntur. Quae apud se tota non est mens, cogitare se non potest. Sed haec hypocritae charitatis viscera nesciunt, quia eorum mens quanto per mundi concupiscentiam in exteriora resolvitur, tanto per inaffectionem suam interius obduratur; et torpore insensibili frigescit intrinsecus, quia amore damnabili mollescit foris; seque ipsam considerare non valet, quia cogitare se minime studet. Cogitare vero se mens non potest, quae tota apud semetipsam non est. Tota vero esse apud semetipsam non sufficit, quia per quot concupiscentias rapitur, per tot a semetipsa species dissipatur, et sparsa in infimis jacet, quae collecta, si vellet, ad summa consurgeret. 19. Mira justorum intra se collectorum perspicacia.Unde justorum mens, quia per custodiam disciplinae a cunctorum visibilium fluxo appetitu constringitur, collecta apud semetipsam intrinsecus integratur; qualisque Deo vel proximo esse debeat, plene conspicit, quia nihil suum exterius derelinquit; et quanto ab exterioribus abstracta compescitur, tanto aucta in intimis inflammatur; et quo magis ardet, eo ad deprehendenda vitia amplius lucet. Hinc est enim quod sancti viri dum se intra semetipsos colligunt, mira ac penetrabili acie occulta etiam aliena delicta deprehendunt. Unde bene per Ezechielem prophetam dicitur: Emissa similitudo manus apprehendit me in cincinno capitis mei, et elevavit me spiritus inter terram et coelum, et adduxit me in Jerusalem in visione Dei juxta ostium interius, quod respiciebat ad Aquilonem, ubi erat statutum idolum zeli, ad provocandam aemulationem (Ezech. VIII, 3). Quid est enim cincinnus capitis, nisi collectae cogitationes mentis, ut non sparsae diffluant, sed per disciplinam constrictae subsistant? Manus ergo desuper mittitur, et propheta per cincinnum capitis elevatur,

quia cum nostra mens sese per custodiam colligit, vis superna sursum nos ab infimis trahit. Bene vero inter terram et coelum sublatum se asserit, quia quilibet sanctus in carne mortali positus, plene quidem adhuc ad superna non pervenit, sed jam tamen ima derelinquit. In visione vero Dei in Jerusalem ducitur, quia videlicet unusquisque proficiens per charitatis zelum, qualis esse Ecclesia debeat contemplatur. Bene quoque additur. Juxta ostium interius, quod respiciebat ad Aquilonem, quia nimirum sancti viri dum per aditum internae contemplationis aspiciunt, plus prava intra Ecclesiam fieri quam recta deprehendunt; et quasi in Aquilonis parte oculos, id est ad solis sinistram flectunt, quia contra vitiorum frigora charitatis se stimulis accendunt. Ubi et recte subjungitur: Quia illic erat statutum idolum zeli ad provocandam aemulationem. Dum enim intra sanctam Ecclesiam a nonnullis specie sola fidelibus, rapinas et vitia perpetrari considerant, quid aliud quam in Jerusalem idolum vident? Quod idolum zeli dicitur, quia per hoc contra nos aemulatio superna provocatur: et tanto districtius delinquentes ferit, quanto nos charius Redemptor amat. [Vet. X.] 20. Hypocritarum ad coelestia torpor, ardor ad terrena. Hypocritae igitur, quia cogitationes mentis non colligunt, per cincinnum capitis minime tenentur. Et qui sua nesciunt, commissorum sibi quando delicta deprehendunt? Hi itaque torpent 1006 a coelestibus, ad quae flagrare debuerant; et flagrant terrenis rebus anxie, a quibus laudabiliter torpuissent. Postposita quippe filiorum cura, saepe eos videas se contra pericula immensi laboris accingere, maria transmeare, adire judicia, pulsare principatus, palatia irrumpere, jurgantibus populorum cuneis interesse, et terrena patrimonia laboriosa observatione defendere. Quibus si fortasse dicatur: Cur ista vos agitis, qui saeculum reliquistis? respondent illico Deum se metuere, et idcirco tanto studio defendendis patrimoniis insudare. Unde bene adhuc de struthionis hujus stulto labore subjungitur:

CAPUT XIII [Rec. VIII].

VERS. 16. Frustra laboravit, nullo timore cogente. 21. Neglecta filiorum custodia, temporalia damna vel leviora jurgiis propulsat. Erga ea quae possidemus qua mente simus, nisi cum amittuntur, ignoramus. Illic namque trepidaverunt timore, ubi non erat timor (Psal. XIII, 5). Ecce enim divina voce praecipitur: Si quis tibi tulerit tunicam, et voluerit tecum judicio contendere, dimitte illi et pallium (Matth. V, 40). Et rursum: Si quis quod tuum est tulerit, ne repetas (Luc. VI, 30). Paulus quoque apostolus discipulos suos cupiens exteriora despicere, ut valeant interna servare, admonet, dicens: Jam quidem omnino delictum est in vobis, quod judicia habetis inter vos, quare non magis injuriam accipitis, quare non magis fraudem patimini (I Cor. VI, 7)? Et tamen hypocrita, assumpto sanctae conversationis habitu, filiorum custodiam deserit, et temporalia quaeque defendere etiam jurgiis quaerit. Exemplo suo eorum perdere corda non trepidat, et quasi per negligentiam amittere patrimonia terrena formidat. In errorem discipulus labitur, et tamen cor hypocritae nullo dolore sauciatur. Ire in iniquitatis voraginem commissos sibi conspicit, et haec quasi inaudita pertransit; at si quod sibi leviter inferri temporale damnum senserit, in ultionis iram repente ab intimis inardescit. Mox patientia rumpitur, mox dolor cordis in vocibus effrenatur, quia dum animarum damna aequanimiter tolerat, jacturam vero rerum temporalium repellere etiam cum spiritus commotione festinat, cunctis veraciter indicat teste mentis perturbatione quid amat. Ibi quippe est grande studium defensionis, ubi et gravior vis amoris. Nam quanto magis terrena diligit, tanto privari eis vehementius pertimescit. Qua enim mente aliquid in hoc mundo possidemus, non docemur, nisi cum amittimus. Sine dolore namque amittitur, quidquid sine amore possidetur. Quae vero ardenter diligimus habita, graviter suspiramus ablata. Quis autem nesciat quia nostris usibus res terrenas Dominus condidit, suis autem animas hominum creavit? Plus ergo Deo se amare convincitur, qui, neglectis his quae ejus sunt, propria tuetur. Perdere

namque hypocritae ea quae Dei sunt, id est animas hominum, non timent, et quae sua sunt amittere, videlicet res cum mundo transeuntes, quasi districto judici posituri rationes timent, ac si placatum inveniant, cui, desideratis rebus, id est rationabilibus, perditis, insensibilia et non quaesita conservant. Possidere aliquid in hoc mundo volumus, et ecce Veritas clamat: Nisi quis renuntiaverit omnibus quae possidet, non potest meus esse discipulus (Luc. XIV, 33). 22. Quo animo, cum necessitas et charitas cogunt litigandum. Perfectus igitur Christianus quomodo debet res terrenas jurgando defendere, quas non praecipitur 1007 possidere? Itaque cum res proprias amittimus, si perfecte Deum sequimur, in hujus vitae itinere a magno onere levigati sumus. Cum vero curam rerum ejusdem nobis itineris necessitas imponit, quidam dum eas rapiunt, solummodo tolerandi sunt; quidam vero conservata charitate prohibendi, non tamen sola cura ne nostra subtrahant, sed ne rapientes non sua, semetipsos perdant. Plus quippe ipsis raptoribus debemus metuere, quam rebus irrationabilibus defendendis inhiare. Ista namque etiam non rapta morientes amittimus, cum illis vero et nunc conditionis ordine, etsi corrigi studeant, post perceptionem muneris, unum sumus. Quis autem nesciat quia minus ea quibus utimur, et plus debemus amare quod sumus? Si ergo et pro sua utilitate raptoribus loquimur, non jam solum nobis quae temporalia, sed ipsis etiam quae sunt aeterna vindicamus. 23. Qua moderatione litigandum. Qua in re illud est solerter intuendum, ne per necessitatis metum cupiditas subrepat rerum, et zelo succensa prohibitio, impetus immoderatione distensa, usque ad odiosae turpitudinem contentionis erumpat. Dumque pro terrena re pax a corde cum proximo scinditur, liquido apparet quia plus res quam proximus amatur. Si enim charitatis viscera etiam circa raptorem proximum non habemus, nosmetipsos pejus ipso raptore persequimur, graviusque nos quam alter poterat devastamus, quia dilectionis bonum sponte deserentes, a nobis ipsis intus est quod amittimus, qui ab illo sola exteriora perdebamus. Sed hanc

hypocrita formam charitatis ignorat, quia plus terrena quam coelestia diligens, contra eum qui temporalia diripit sese in intimis immani odio inflammat. [Vet. XI.] 24. Qui discrepent ab hypocritis nonnulli acrius bona temporalia tuentes. Hi qua cautela reprehendendi. Sciendum vero est quia sunt nonnulli quos charitatis gremio nutriens mater Ecclesia tolerat, quousque ad spiritalis aetatis incrementa perducat, qui nonnunquam et sanctitatis habitum tenent, et perfectionis meritum exsequi non valent. Ad dona namque spiritalia minime assurgunt, et idcirco his qui sibi conjuncti sunt ad tuenda ea quae terrena sunt serviunt, et nonnunquam in defensionis ejusdem iracundia excedunt. Hos nequaquam credendum est in hypocritarum numerum incurrere, quia aliud est infirmitate, aliud malitia peccare. Hoc itaque inter hos et hypocritas distat, quod isti infirmitatis suae conscii malunt a cunctis de culpa sua redargui, quam de ficta sanctitate laudari; illi vero et iniqua se agere certi sunt, et tamen apud humana judicia de nomine sanctitatis intumescunt. Isti non metuunt pravis hominibus etiam de bona actione displicere, dum supernis tantummodo judiciis placeant; illi vero nunquam quid agant, sed quomodo de actione qualibet hominibus possint placere considerant. Isti juxta modum suae intelligentiae etiam in rebus saeculi militant caucausis Dei; illi vero per causas Dei intentioni deserviunt saeculi, quia inter ipsa quoque quae se agere sancta opera ostendunt, non conversionem 1008 quaerunt hominum, sed auras favorum. 25. Igitur dum quosdam non despectae conversationis viros iracunde vel nimie defendere terrena conspicimus, debemus hoc in illis per charitatem reprehendere, nec tamen eos reprehendendo desperare, quia plerumque uni eidemque homini et insunt quaedam judicabilia quae apparent, et magna quae latent. In nobis autem saepe magna in facie prodeunt, et nonnunquam quae reprehendenda sunt occultantur. Hinc ergo humilianda est nostrae mentis elatio, quod et illorum infirma sunt publica, et nostra secreta; et rursum fortia illorum secreta sunt, et in publico nostra vulgantur. Quos ergo

de aperta infirmitate reprehendimus, superest ut de occultae fortitudinis aestimatione veneremur; et si de aperta se infirmitate nostra mens elevat, occulta sua infirma considerans, sese in humilitate premat. Saepe enim nonnulli multis praeceptis obsequuntur, et quaedam pauca praetereunt, et nos multa praetermittimus cum pauca servamus. Unde fit plerumque ut quia quod servare nos novimus, hoc praeterire alios videmus, illico nostra se in elatione mens elevet, obliviscens quam multa praetereat, cum valde sint pauca quae servat. Necesse est igitur ut in quibus alios reprehendimus, elationem sollicitae nostrae cogitationis inclinemus, quia si sublimiorem se caeteris noster animus conspicit, quasi in praecipitia singularitatis ductus, eo pejus ruit. Sed cur hypocrita coelestia lucra deserens terrenis elaboret, sub struthionis adhuc nomine subjungit, dicens:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. IX].

VERS. 17. Privavit eam Deus sapientia, nec dedit illi intelligentiam. 26. Deus obdurat cor, non quia duritiam confert, sed quia exigentibus peccatis, non emollit. Quamvis aliud sit privare, aliud non dare, hoc tamen repetiit subdendo, Non dedit, quod praemisit, Privavit. Ac si diceret: Quod dixi, Privavit, non injuste sapientiam abstulit, sed juste non dedit. Unde et Pharaonis cor Dominus obdurasse describitur, non quod ipse duritiam contulit, sed quod, exigentibus ejus meritis, nulla illud desuper infusi timoris sensibilitate mollivit. Sed nunc hypocrita (Exod. VII, 3), quod sanctum se simulat, quod sub imagine boni operis occultat, sanctae Ecclesiae pace premitur, et idcirco ante nestros oculos religionis visione vestitur. Si qua vero tentatio fidei erumpat, statim lupi mens rabida habitu se ovinae pellis exspoliat; quantumque contra bonos saeviat, persequens demonstrat. Unde et recte subditur:

CAPUT XV.

VERS. 18. Cum tempus fuerit, in altum alas erigit; deridet equitem et ascensorem ejus. 27. Hypocrita non solum sanctos deridet, sed Deum ipsum. Quid enim alas hujus struthionis accipimus, nisi pressas hoc tempore quasi complicatas hypocritae cogitationes? Quas cum tempus fuerit, in altum elevat? quia opportunitate comperta, eas superbiendo manifestat. Alas in altum erigere est per effrenatam superbiam cogitationes aperire. Nunc autem quia sanctum se simulat, quia in semetipso stringit quae cogitat, quasi alas in corpore 1009 per humilitatem plicat. [Vet. XII.] Notandum vero est quod non ait: Deridet equum et ascensorem, sed equitem et ascensorem ejus. Equus quippe est unicuique sanctae animae corpus suum, quod videlicet novit et ab illicitis continentiae freno restringere, et rursum charitatis impulsu in exercitatione boni operis relaxare. Equitis ergo nomine anima sancti viri exprimitur, quae jumentum corporis bene subditum regit. Unde et Joannes apostolus in Apocalypsi Dominum contemplatus ait: Et exercitus qui sunt in coelo, sequebantur eum in equis albis (Apoc. XIX, 14). Multitudinem quippe sanctorum quae in hoc martyrii bello sudaverat, recte exercitum vocat: qui idcirco in equis albis sedere referuntur, quia nimirum eorum corpora et luce justitiae et castimoniae candore claruerunt. Deridet ergo hypocrita equitem, quia cum ipse in aperto iniquitatis eruperit, electorum despicit sanctitatem, et elatus fatuos appellat, quos, pace pressus fidei, callida arte simulabat. Quis vero alius hujus ascensor est equitis, nisi Omnipotens Deus, qui et ea quae non erant praevidens condidit, et ea quae sunt possidens regit? Ascendit quippe equitem, quia justi uniuscujusque viri animum possidet, sua bene membra possidentem. Huic ergo hypocritae deridere equitem est santos despicere; deridere vero ascensorem equitis est prosilire usque ad injuriam creatoris. 28. In lapsibus a minimo incipitur, et ad graviora pervenitur. Multos malos occultos Ecclesia tolerat. Cur in Ecclesia mali bonis immisti. Rhinocerotis aut unicornis nomine judaicus populus intelligendus. Rhinoceros qua arte mitigetur. Quia enim in

unoquoque lapsu a minimis semper incipitur, et succrescentibus defectibus ad graviora pervenitur, recte hypocritae hujus iniquitas per supposita detrimenta distinguitur, ut dicatur prius bonum se quod non sit ostendere, postmodum vero bonos aperte despicere, ad extremum quoque usque ad injuriam conditoris exilire. Nunquam quippe illic anima quo ceciderit jacet, quia voluntarie semel lapsa, ad pejora pondere suae iniquitatis impellitur, ut in profundum corruens, semper adhuc profundius obruatur. Eat ergo hypocrita, et nunc suas laudes appetat; postmodum vitam proximorum premat, et quandoque se in irrisione sui conditoris exerceat, ut quo elatiora semper excogitat, eo se suppliciis atrocioribus immergat. O quam multos tales nunc sancta Ecclesia tolerat, quos cum tempus eruperit, tentatio aperta manifestat. Qui voluntates suas, quia contra eam modo non exerunt, quasi complicatas interim alas cogitationum premunt. Quia enim a bonis malisque haec vita communiter ducitur, nunc Ecclesia ex utrorumque numero visibiliter congregatur, sed Deo invisibiliter judicante discernitur, atque in exitu suo a reproborum societate separatur. Modo vero esse in ea nec boni sine malis, nec mali sine bonis possunt. Hoc enim tempore conjuncta utraque pars sibi necessario congruit, ut et mali mutentur per exempla bonorum, et boni purgentur per tentamenta malorum. Atque ideo Dominus postquam sub struthionis specie multa de hypocritarum reprobatione intulit, mox ad electorum sortem verba convertit, ut qui in illis audierant quod fugientes tolerent, in istis audiant quod imitantes ament. Sequitur [Rec. X]. Nunquid praebebis equo fortitudinem, aut circumdabis collo ejus hinnitum? 29. Sed fortasse prius quam hujus equi fortitudinem 1010 hinnitumque disseramus, ab aliquibus quaeritur ut aliter etiam moralitate postposita, et rhinocerotis virtus, et struthionis hujus fatuitas exponatur. Manna quippe est verbum Dei, et quidquid bene voluntas suscipientis appetit, hoc profecto in ore comedentis sapit. (Exod. XVI). Terra est verbum Dei, quam quanto labor inquirentis exigit, tanto largius fructum reddit. Debet ergo intellectus

sacri eloquii multiplici inquisitione ventilari, quia et terra, quae saepius arando vertitur, ad frugem uberius aptatur. Quae igitur et aliter de rhinocerothe ac struthione sentimus, sub brevitate perstringimus, quia ad ea quae obligatiora sunt, enodanda properamus [Vet. XIII]. Rhinoceros iste, qui etiam monoceros in Graecis exemplaribus nominatur, tantae esse fortitudinis dicitur, ut nulla venantium virtute capiatur; sed sicut hi asserunt, qui describendis naturis animalium laboriosa investigatione sudaverunt, virgo ei puella proponitur, quae ad se venienti sinum aperit, in quo ille omni ferocitate postposita caput deponit, sicque ab eis a quibus capi quaeritur, repente velut inermis [Al., enervus] invenitur. Buxei quoque coloris esse describitur, qui etiam cum elephantis quando certamen aggreditur, eo cornu quod in nare singulariter gestat, ventrem adversantium ferire perhibetur, ut cum ea quae molliora sunt vulnerat, impugnantes se facile sternat. Potest ergo per hunc rhinocerotem, vel certe monocerotem, scilicet unicornem, ille populus intelligi qui dum de accepta lege non opera, sed solam inter cunctos homines elationem sumpsit, quasi inter caeteras bestias cornu singulare gestavit. Unde passionem suam Dominus, Propheta canente, pronuntians, ait: Libera me de ore leonis, et de cornibus unicornium humilitatem meam (Psal. XXI, 22). Tot quippe in illa gente unicornes, vel certe rhinocerotes exstiterunt, quod contra praedicamenta veritatis de legis operibus, singulari et fatua elatione confisi sunt, Beato igitur Job sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenenti dicitur:

CAPUT XVI.

CAP. XXXIX, VERS. 9. Nunquid votet rhinoceros servire tibi? 30. Ex Judaeis ferox, Saulus a Christo domitus. Ac si apertius dicatur: Nunquid illum populum, quem superbire in nece fidelium stulta sua elatione consideras, sub jure tuae praedicationis inclinas? subaudis ut ego, qui et contra me illum singulari cornu extolli conspicio, et tamen mihi cum

voluero protinus subdo. Sed hoc melius ostendimus, si de genere ad speciem transeamus. Ille ergo ex hoc populo et prius in superbia, et postmodum praecipuus testis in humilitate nobis ad medium Paulus ducatur, qui dum contra Deum se quasi de custodia legis nesciens extulit, cornu in nare gestavit. Unde et hoc ipsum naris cornu per humilitatem postmodum inclinans, dicit: Qui prius fui blasphemus, et persecutor, et contumeliosus; sed misericordiam consecutus sum, quia ignorans feci (I Tim. I, 13). In nare cornu gestabat, qui placiturum se Deo de crudelitate confidebat, sicut ipse postmodum semetipsum redarguens dicit: Et proficiebam in Judaismo supra multos coaetaneos meos in genere meo, abundantius aemulator existens paternarum mearum traditionum (Galat. I, 14). Hujus autem rhinocerotis fortitudinem omnis venator extimuit, quia Saulis saevitiam unusquisque praedicator expavit. Scriptum namque est: Saulus adhuc spirans minarum
1011 et coedis in discipulos Domini, accessit ad principem sacerdotum, et petiit ab eo epistolas in Damascum ad synagogas, ut si quos invenisset hujus viae viros ac mulieres, vinctos perduceret in Jerusalem (Act. IX, 1). Cum flatus nare reddendus trahitur, spiratio vocatur, et illud saepe per odorem nare deprehendimus, quod oculis non videmus. Rhinoceros ergo iste nare gestabat cornu quo percuteret, quia minarum et caedis in Domini discipulos spirans, postquam praesentes interfecerat, absentes quaerebat. Sed ecce omnis ante illum venator absconditur, id est omnis homo rationale sapiens opinione timoris ejus effugatur. Ut ergo hunc rhinocerotem capiat, sinum suum virgo, id est secretum suum ipsa per se inviolata in carne Dei sapientia expandat. Scriptum quippe est quod cum Damascum pergeret; subito circumfulsit illum die media lux de coelo, et vox facta est, dicens: Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris? Qui prostratus in terra respondit: Quis es, Domine? Cui illico dicitur: Ego sum Jesus Nazarenus, quem tu persequeris (Act. IX, 4, 5, seq.). Virgo nimirum rhinoceroti sinum suum aperuit, cum Saulo incorrupta Dei sapientia incarnationis suae mysterium de

coelo loquendo patefecit; et fortitudinem suam rhinoceros perdidit, quia prostratus humi, omne quod superbum tumebat amisit. Qui dum, sublato oculorum lumine, manu ad Ananiam ducitur, patet jam rhinoceros iste, quibus Dei loris astringitur, quia videlicet uno in tempore caecitate, praedicatione, baptismate ligatur. Qui etiam ad Dei praesaepe moratus est, quia ruminare verba Evangelii dedignatus non est. Ait enim: Ascendi Jerosolymam cum Barnaba, assumpto et Tito. Ascendi autem secundum revelationem, et contuli cum illis Evangelium (Galat. II, 1, 2). Et qui prius jejunus audierat: Durum est tibi contra stimulum calcitrare (Act. IX, 9, 5): mira postmodum virtute praesidentis pressus, ex verbi pabulo vires obtinuit, et calcem superbiae amisit. 31. Iste rhinoceros ad agrum dominicum arandum ligatus Loris quoque Dei non tantum a feritate restringitur, sed quod magis sit mirabile, ad arandum ligatur, ut non solum homines crudelitatis cornu non impetat, sed eorum etiam refectioni serviens, aratrum praedicationis trahat. Ipse quippe de evangelizantibus quasi de arantibus dicit: Debet enim in spe qui arat arare; et qui triturat, in spe fructus percipiendi (I Cor. IX, 10). Qui igitur tormenta prius fidelibus irrogaverat, et pro fide postmodum flagella libenter portat, qui scriptis etiam epistolis humilis ac despectus praedicat, quod dudum terribilis impugnabat; profecto bene ligatus sub aratro desudat ad segetem, qui vivebat in campo male liber a timore. De quo recte dicitur:

CAPUT XVII [Vet. XIV].

VERS. 10. Aut confringet glebas vallium post te? 32. Glebas hoc est mentium duritiam fregit. Jam scilicet Dominus quorumdam mentes intraverat, qui illum veraciter humani generis redemptorem credebant. Qui tamen cum nequaquam a pristina observatione recederent, cum dura litterae praedicamenta custodirent, eis praedicator egregius dicit: Si circumcidamini, Christus vobis nihil proderit (Gal. V, 2). Qui ergo in humili

mente fidelium legis duritiam redarguendo contrivit, quid aliud quam in valle post Dominum glebas fregit? ne videlicet grana seminum quae excisus aratro fidei sulcus cordis exciperet per custodiam litterae 1012 pressa deperirent. De quo bene adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XVIII.

VERS. 11. Nunquid fiduciam habebis in magna fortitudine ejus, et derelinques ei labores tuos? 33. In ejus fortitudine quam Deus fiduciam habuerit. In rhinocerotis hujus fortitudine fiduciam Deus habuit, quia quanto illum crudelius sibi dura inferentem pertulit, tanto pro se constantius tolerantem adversa praescivit. Cui labores etiam quos ipse in carne pertulerat dereliquit, quia conversum illum usque ad imitationem propriae passionis traxit. Unde et per eumdem rhinocerotem dicitur: Suppleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi in carne mea (Coloss. I, 24). De quo adhuc subditur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 12. Nunquid credes illi quod reddat sementem tibi, et aream tuam congreget? 34. Arcam Dei prius ventilavit, postea congregavit. Consideremus Saulum quis fuerit, cum ab ipsa adolescentia lapidantium adjutor existeret, cum alia Ecclesiae loca vastaret, et acceptis epistolis vastanda alia peteret, cum mors ei fidelium nulla sufficeret, sed semper ad aliorum interitum aliis exstinctis anhelaret (Act. VII); et profecto cognoscimus quia nullus tunc fidelium crederet, quod ad jugum Deus suae formidinis vim tantae elationis inclinaret. Unde et Ananias voce dominica hunc et postquam conversum audivit, extimuit, dicens: Domine, audivi a multis de viro hoc quanta mala sanctis tuis fecerit in Jerusalem (Act. IX, 13). Qui tamen repente commutatus, ab hoste praedicator efficitur, et in cunctis mundi partibus Redemptoris sui nomen insinuat, supplicia pro

veritate tolerat, pati se quae irrogaverat exsultat; alios blandimentis vocat, alios ad fidem terroribus revocat. Istis regnum pollicetur coelestis patriae, illis minatur ignem gehennae. Hos per auctoritatem corrigit, illos ad viam rectitudinis per humilitatem trahit, atque in omni latere ad manum se sui rectoris inclinat, et tanta arte Dei aream congregat, quanta illam prius elatione ventilabat. [Vet. XV] 35. Paulus abstinentia corpus castigans, ventri deditos ferit. Sed neque hoc abhorret a Paulo, quod rhinoceros buxei coloris dicitur, et elephantorum ventres cornu ferire perhibetur. Quia enim vivere sub rigore legis assuevit, arctius caeteris in illo custodia uniuscujusque virtutis inolevit Quid enim per colorem buxeum, nisi abstinentiae pallor exprimitur? Cui ipse se tenaciter adhaerere testatur, dicens: Castigo corpus meum, et servituti subjicio, ne forte aliis praedicans ipse reprobus efficiar (I Cor. IX, 27). Qui divinae legis eruditione praeditus, dum aliorum ingluviem redarguit, cornu elephantes in ventrem ferit. In ventrem quippe elephantes percusserat, cum dicebat: Multi ambulant, quos saepe dicebam vobis; nunc autem et flens dico, inimicos crucis Christi, quorum finis interitus, quorum deus venter est, et gloria in confusione ipsorum (Philip. III, 18). Et rursum: Hujusmodi Christo Domino non serviunt, sed suo ventri (Rom. XVI, 18). Cornu suo igitur rhinoceros iste non jam homines, sed bestias percutit, quando illa Paulus doctrinae suae fortitudine nequaquam perimendos humiles impetit, sed superbos ventris cultores occidit. Quae ergo in Paulo scripta cognovimus, superest ut facta et in aliis credamus. Multi quippe ad humilitatis gratiam ex illius populi elatione conversi sunt, quorum saevitiam Dominus dum sub jugo inspirati timoris edomuit, nimirum rhinocerotis sibi fortitudinem subegit. Sed quia mira Dei 1013 potentia quid de electis egerit audivimus, nunc mira ejus patientia in his quos reprobat quid toleraverit audiamus:

CAPUT XX.

VERS. 13. Penna struthionis similis est pennis herodii et accipitris. 36. Synagoga struthioni similis, alas habens humi repit. Quid struthionis nomine, nisi synagoga signatur? quae alas Legis habuit, sed corde in infimis repens, nunquam se a terra sublevavit. Quid vero per herodium et accipitrem, nisi antiqui patres exprimuntur, qui ad ea quae potuerunt intelligendo perspicere, valuerunt etiam vivendo pervolare? Penna igitur struthionis, herodii et accipitris pennis est similis, quia Synagogae vox priorum doctrinam loquendo tenuit, sed vivendo nescivit. Unde et ejusdem Synagogae populos de Pharisaeis atque Scribis Veritas admonet, dicens: Super cathedram Moysi sederunt Scribae et Pharisaei. Omnia ergo quaecunque dixerint vobis, servate et facite, secundum opera vero eorum nolite facere (Matth. XXIII, 2). Multa autem dicere de herodii vita potuimus; sed quia penna ejus tantummodo ad memoriam deducitur, de vita loqui prohibemur.

CAPUT XXI [Vet. XVI].

VERS. 14.Quando derelinquit in terra ova sua, tu forsitan in pulvere calefacies ea? 37. Quos genuit apostolos dereliquit, Christi gratia postea vivificatos. In ovis aliud est quod cernitur, aliud quod speratur; et videri spes non potest, Paulo attestante qui ait: Quod enim videt quis, quid sperat (Rom. VIII, 24)? Quid ergo per struthionis ova nisi de Synagogae carne editi apostoli designantur, qui dum se in mundo despectos atque humiles exhibent, sperare gloriam in supernis docent? Abjecti namque et quasi nullius momenti apud elatos habiti, in terra velut ova jacuerunt; sed intus in eis latebat unde viverent, et sublevati spei pennis ad coelestia volarent. Quae ova struthio in terra derelinquit, quia eos quos carne genuerat Synagoga apostolos audire contemnens, vocandae gentilitati deseruit. Mira autem potentia Dominus haec eadem in pulvere ova calefacit, quia vivos apostolorum fetus in illa abjecta dudum gentilitate suscitavit; et quos

synagoga velut insensatos invivificatosque despexerat, ipsi nunc in veneratione gentium per doctrinae magisterium viventes volant. Ova sua struthio in pulvere derelinquit, quia omnes quos praedicando Synagoga genuit, a terrenis desideriis minime suspendit. Quae nimirum desideria quia antiquus hostis concepta in corde invenit, obsessas mentes etiam in scelera rapit. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 15. Obliviscitur quod pes conculcet ea, et bestia agri conterat. 38. Humana corda, dum terrena cogitant et appetunt, diabolo conterenda se sternunt. Tunc ova pes calcat, et bestia agri conterit, cum in terra deseruntur, quia videlicet humana corda dum semper terrena cogitare, semper quae ima sunt agere appetunt, ad conterendum se agri bestiae, id est diabolo, sternunt. ut cum diu in infima cogitatione abjecta sunt, quandoque etiam majorum criminum perpetratione frangantur. Synagoga ergo ova quae genuit, a terra suspendere bene vivendo neglexit. Sed omnipotens Deus multos ejus filios, quamvis in terrenis desideriis mortuos ac frigidos reperit, calore tamen sui amoris animavit. Sed vitam, quam filiis synagoga non dedit, 1014 hanc postmodum invidit, dum moliretur persequendo exstinguere quos se ad bona opera non meminerat fovendo genuisse. Unde et apte de hoc struthione subditur: VERS. 16. Duratur ad filios suos quasi non sint sui. 39. Synagogae in filios crudelitas. Quasi non suos despicit quos aliter vivere quam docuit ipsa deprehendit, et durescente saevitia terrores admovet, seque in eorum cruciatibus exercet, atque invidiae facibus inflammata, in quibus non laboravit ut possint vivere, laborat ut debeant interire; et cum Domini membra persequitur, placere se per hoc Domino suspicatur. Unde et eisdem struthionis ovis Veritas dicit: Venit hora ut omnis qui interficit vos arbitretur obsequium se praesture Deo (Joan. XVI, 2). Quia ergo dum crudelitate ad persequendum Synagoga ducitur, hoc se agere impulsu divini

timoris arbitratur, recte subjungitur: IBID. Frustra laboravit, nullo timore cogente. 40. Sic saeviens obsequium praestare Deo credit. In labore quippe illam persecutionis anhelare non timor, sed crudelitas coegit. Sed quia plerumque vitia, colore virtutum tincta, tanto nequiora sunt, quanto et esse vitia minime cognoscuntur, eo in persecutione synagoga durior exstitit, quo religiosiorem se fieri fidelium mortibus aestimavit; et idcirco quae ageret discernere omnino non potuit, quia lumen sibi intelligentiae per superbiae objectionem clausit. Unde et bene subditur: VERS. 17. Privavit eam Deus sapientia, nec dedit illi intelligentiam. 41. Intelligentiae lumen per superbiam amisit. Districtum quippe est occultae retributionis examen, et quia sciens humilitatem perdidit, etiam veritatis intelligentiam nesciens amisit. Valde autem minora sunt vulnera quae in Redemptoris adventu fidelibus intulit, quam ea quibus sanctam Ecclesiam adhuc per adventum Antichristi ferire contendit. Ad illud namque se tempus praeparat, ut vitam fidelium coacervatis viribus premat. Unde et apte subditur:

CAPUT XXIII [Vet. XVII].

VERS. 18. Cum tempus fuerit, in altum alas erigit; deridet equitem et ascensorem ejus. 42. Synagoga prius contra Deum clam, postea palam erecta. In altum struthio alas erigit, quando suo conditori Synagoga non ut antea formidando, sed aperte jam repugnando contradicit. In membra quippe diaboli transiens, et mendacii hominem Deum credens, contra fideles tanto in altum extollitur, quanto et Dei corpus se esse gloriatur. Quae quia non solum humanitatem Domini, sed ipsam etiam divinitatem despicit, non tantum equitem, sed ascensorem etiam equitis irridet. Nam custodita unitate personae valet intelligi, quia Verbum Dei tunc equitem ascendit, quando animatam carnem sibi intra uterum Virginis condidit. Tunc equitem ascendit, quando humanam animam propriae carni praesidentem, divino cultui semetipsum creando subjugavit. Carnem quippe divinitas anima

mediante suscepit, et per hoc totum simul equitem tenuit, quia in semetipso non solum illam quae regebatur, sed hanc etiam quae regebat astrinxit. Judaea igitur, per adventum superbientis Antichristi laqueo seductionis capta, quia Redemptorem nostrum humilem fuisse inter homines despicit, 1015 deridet equitem, quia vero ejus in omnibus divinitati contradicit, deridet nihilominus et ascensorem. Sed Redemptor noster unus idemque et eques, et equitis est ascensor; et cum in mundum venit, fortes contra mundum praedicatores exhibuit; et cum in mundi termino Antichristi fallaciam tolerat, virtutem pro se certantibus subministrat; ut cum antiquus hostis in illa sua citius finienda libertate laxatur, fideles nostri tanto majores vires accipiant, quanto contra adversarium solutum pugnant. Unde hic cum struthio alas elevare, ascensorem et equitem deridere describitur, illico fortium praedicatorum memoria subrogatur, et dicitur:

CAPUT XXIV [Vet XVIII].

VERS. 19. Nunquid praebebis equo fortitudinem, aut circumdabis collo ejus hinnitum? 43. Equi nomine multa in Scriptura sacra significantur: lubrici; dignitas temporalis; praesens saeculum, cujus extrema premit coluber Antichristus. Praeparatio rectae intentionis; sancti praedicatores. In Scriptura sacra equi nomine aliquando lubrica vita pravorum, aliquando dignitas temporalis, aliquando hoc ipsum praesens saeculum, aliquando praeparatio rectae intentionis, aliquando sanctus praedicator exprimitur. Equi enim nomine lubrica pravorum vita signatur, sicut scriptum est: Nolite fieri sicut equus et mulus (Psal. XXXI, 9). Et sicut per prophetam alium dicitur: Equi amatores, et emissarii facti sunt, unusquisque ad uxorem proximi sui hinniebat (Jerem. V, 8). Equi nomine dignitas temporalis accipitur, Salomone attestante, qui ait: Vidi servos in equis, et principes ambulantes quasi servos super terram (Eccle. X, 7). Omnis quippe qui peccat servus est peccati, et servi in equis sunt cum peccatores praesentis

vitae dignitatibus efferuntur. Principes vero quasi servi ambulant, cum multos dignitate virtutum plenos nullus honor erigit, sed summa hic adversitas velut indignos deorsum premit. Hinc rursum dicitur: Dormitaverunt qui ascenderunt equos (Psal. LXXV, 7); id est, in morte animae mentis oculos a veritatis luce clauserunt, qui in praesentis vitae honore confisi sunt. Equi nomine hoc ipsum praesens saeculum designatur, sicut Jacob voce dicitur: Fiat Dan coluber in via cerastes in semita, mordens ungulas equi, ut cadat ascensor ejus retro (Genes. XLIX, 17). Quo in testimonio quid equus significet melius ostendimus, si et ea quae circumstant paulo subtilius exponamus. Nonnulli enim de tribu Dan venire Antichristum ferunt, pro eo quod hoc loco Dan et coluber asseritur et mordens. Unde et non immerito dum Israeliticus populus terras in castrorum partitione susciperet, primus Dan ad Aquilonem castrametatus est (Num. II, 25); illum scilicet signans, qui in corde suo dixerat: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis; ascendam super altitudinem nubium, similis ero Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 13). De quo et per prophetam dicitur: A Dan auditus est fremitus equorum ejus (Jerem. VIII, 16). Qui non solum coluber, sed etiam cerastes vocatur. Κέρατα enim Graece cornua Latine dicuntur, serpensque hic cornutus esse perhibetur, per quem digne Antichristi adventus asseritur, quia contra fidelium vitam cum morsu pestiferae praedicationis armatur etiam cornibus potestatis. Quis autem nesciat semitam angustiorem esse quam viam? Fit ergo Dan coluber in via, quia in praesentis vitae latitudine eos ambulare provocat, quibus quasi parcendo blanditur; 1016 sed in via mordet, quia eos quibus libertatem tribuit, erroris sui veneno consumit. Fit cerastes in semita, quia quos fideles reperit, et sese ad praecepti coelestis angusta itinera constringentes, non solum nequitia callidae persuasionis impetit, sed etiam terrore potestatis premit, et in persecutionis angore, post beneficia fictae dulcedinis, exercet cornua potestatis. Quo in loco equus hunc mundum insinuat, qui per

elationem suam in cursu labentium temporum spumat. Et quia Antichristus extrema mundi apprehendere nititur, cerastes iste equi ungulas mordere perhibetur. Ungulas quippe equi mordere est extrema saeculi feriendo contingere. Ut cadat ascensor ejus retro (Genes. XLIX, 17). Ascensor equi est quisquis extollitur in dignitatibus mundi. Qui retro cadere dicitur, et non in faciem, sicut Saulus cecidisse memoratur (Act. IX, 4). In faciem enim cadere est in hac vita suas unumquemque culpas agnoscere, easque poenitendo deflere. Retro vero quo non videtur, cadere, est ex hac vita repente decedere, et ad quae supplicia ducatur ignorare. Et quia Judaea erroris sui laqueis capta, pro Christo Antichristum expectat, bene Jacob eodem loco repente in electorum voce conversus est, dicens: Salutare tuum exspectabo, Domine (Genes. XLIX, 18); id est, non sicut infideles Antichristum, sed eum qui in redemptionem nostram venturus est, verum credo fideliter Christum. Equi nomine praeparatio rectae intentionis accipitur, sicut scriptum est: Equus paratur in diem belli, sed Dominus salutem tribuit (Prov. XXI, 31), quia contra tentationem quidem se animus praeparat, sed nisi adjuvetur, salubriter non decertat. Equi nomine sanctus quisque praedicator accipitur, propheta attestante, qui ait: Misisti in mare equos tuos, turbantes aquas multas (Habac. III, 15). Quietae quippe aquae jacuerunt, quia humanae mentes diu vitiorum suorum torpore sopitae sunt. Sed equis Dei mare turbatum est, quia missis sanctis praedicatoribus, omne cor quod pestifera securitate torpuit, impulsu salutiferi timoris expavit. Hoc itaque loco equi nomine sanctus praedicator accipitur, cum beato Job dicitur: [Vet. XIX, Rec. XI.] Nunquid praebebis equo fortitudinem, aut circumdabis collo ejus hinnitum? 44. Praedicator tanquam equus habeat a Deo fortitudinem, ut recte agat; et hinnitum, ut optime doceat.Sed quid est quod huic equo Dominus se prius dare fortitudinem, et postmodum collo ejus hinnitum circumdare asserit? Hinnitu enim vox praedicationis exprimitur. Verus autem quisque praedicator ante fortitudinem, et

postmodum hinnitum accipit, quia cum in se prius vitia exstinxerit, tunc pro erundiendis aliis ad vocem praedicationis venit. Equus iste habet fortitudinem, quia adversa constanter tolerat. Habet hinnitum, quia ad superna blandiens vocat. Huic equo Dominus et fortitudinem et hinnitum se dare testatur, quia in praedicatore ejus nisi et vita et sermo convenerint, nequaquam virtus perfectionis apparebit. Non enim multum prodest si sublimis vitae operatione suffultus sit, si tamen loquendo non valet ad hoc alios excitare quod sentit. Vel quid prodest bene loquendo alios accendere, si semetipsum indicat male vivendo torpuisse? Quia ergo in praedicatore necesse est ut ad perfectionem 1017 utraque conveniant, equo suo Dominus et cum actionis fortitudine hinnitum vocis et cum hinnitu vocis fortitudinem ministrat actionis. Et notandum cur hinnitus, qui interius nimirum per guttur ducitur, equi collo circumdari, id est quasi per gyrum trahi exterius, dicatur, quia videlicet praedicationis vox de internis emanat, sed extra circumdat. Nam quo alios ad bene vivendum suscitat, eo ad bene agendum et opera praedicantis ligat, ne extra sermonem actio transeat, ne voci vita contradicat. Collo ergo equi hinnitus circumducitur, quia ne ad perversa opera prodeat, suis vocibus etiam vita praedicantis obsidetur. Hinc est enim quod potenter dimicantibus in munere torques datur, ut quia signa virtutum gestant, majora semper exerceant, et debilitatis crimen incurrere metuant, dum in semetipsis jam fortitudinis est praemium, quod ostentant. Unde recte in laude sapientiae auditori cuilibet per Salomonem dicitur: Coronam gratiarum accipies capiti tuo, et torquem auream collo tuo (Prov. I, 9). Sequitur:

CAPUT XXV [Rec. XII].

VERS. 20. Nunquid suscitabis eum quasi locustas? 45. Per locustas quae debeant intelligi. Judaicus populus. Saltus quosdam dedit, et in terram statim cecidit. Locustarum nomine aliquando Judaicus populus, aliquando

conversa gentilitas, aliquando adulantium lingua, aliquando vero per comparationem resurrectio dominica, vel praedicatorum vita signatur. Quia enim Judaeorum populum locustae exprimant, vita Joannis signat, de quo scriptum est: Locustas et mel silvestre edebat (Matth. III, 4). Joannes quippe eum quem prophetiae auctoritate pronuntiat, etiam specie ciborum clamat. In semetipso enim designavit Dominum, quem praevenit. Qui nimirum in redemptionem nostram veniens, quia infructuosae gentilitatis dulcedinem sumpsit, mel silvestre edit. Quia vero Judaeorum plebem in suo corpore ex parte convertit, in cibo locustas accepit. Ipsos namque locustae significant subitos saltus dantes, sed protinus ad terram cadentes. Saltus enim dabant cum praecepta Domini se implere promitterent; sed citius ad terram cadebant, cum per prava opera haec se audisse denegarent. Videamus in eis quasi quemdam locustarum saltum: Omnia verba quae locutus est Dominus, et faciemus et audiemus (Exod. XXIV, 3). Videamus autem quomodo citius ad terram ruunt: Utinam mortui essemus in Aegypto, et non in hac vasta solitudine. Utinam pereamus, et non inducat nos Dominus in terram istam (Num. XIV, 3). Locustae ergo erant, quia habebant saltum per vocem, et casum per actionem. [Vet. XX.] 46. Gentiles locustis significati, et adulantium linguae quae bonorum operum fructus devastant.Locustarum quoque nomine gentilitas designatur, Salomone attestante, qui ait: Florebit amygdalus, impinguabitur locusta, dissipabitur capparis (Eccle. XII, 5). Amygdalus quippe florem prius cunctis arboribus ostendit. Et quid in flore amygdali nisi sanctae Ecclesiae primordia designantur? quae in praedicatoribus suis primitivos virtutum flores aperuit, et ad inferenda poma bonorum operum, venturos sanctos, quasi arbusta sequentia praevenit. In qua mox locusta impinguata est, quia sicca gentilitatis sterilitas pinguedine est gratiae coelestis infusa. Capparis dissipatur, quia cum gratiam fidei vocata gentilitas attigit, Judaea, in sua sterilitate remanens, bene vivendi ordinem amisit. Hinc rursum per eumdem Salomonem dicitur: Regem 1018

locusta non habet, et egreditur universa per turmas suas (Prov. XXX, 27), quia videlicet derelicta gentilitas aliena dudum a divino regimine exstitit, sed tamen ordinata postmodum contra adversantes spiritus ad fidei bellum processit. 47. Locustae vocabulo lingua adulantis exprimitur: quod exhibitae coelitus Aegyptiae plagae testantur, quae exigentibus meritis corporaliter semel illatae sunt; sed quae mala pravas mentes quotidie feriant, spiritaliter signaverunt. Scriptum namque est: Ventus urens levabat locustas, quae ascenderunt super universam terram Aegypti, operueruntque universam faciem terrae, vastantes omnia. Devorata est igitur herba terrae, et quidquid pomorum in arboribus fuit (Exod. X, 13, 14). His enim Aegyptus plagis affecta est, in quibus, exteriori percussione commota, dolensque, perpenderet quae devastationis damna interius negligens toleraret, ut dum foris perire minima, sed amplius dilecta cerneret, per eorum speciem quae intus pertulerat graviora sentiret. Quid autem per significationem locustae portendunt, quae plus quam caetera minima quaeque animantia humanis frugibus nocent, nisi linguas adulantium, quae terrenorum hominum mentes, si quando bona aliqua proferre conspiciunt, haec immoderatius laudando corrumpunt? Fructus quippe Aegyptiorum est operatio cenodoxorum ; quam locustae exterminant, dum adulantes linguae ad appetendas laudes transitorias cor operantis inclinant. Herbam vero locustae comedunt, quando adulatores quique verba loquentium favoribus extollunt. Poma quoque arborum devorant, quando vanis laudibus quorumdam jam quasi fortium et opera enervant. 48. Locusta significat etiam Christi resurrectionem, et praedicatores, qui modo ad contemplativam vitam saliunt, modo resiliunt. Locustae nomine per comparationem Redemptoris nostri resurrectio designatur. [Vet. XXI.] Unde et voce ejus per Prophetam dicitur: Excussus sum sicut locusta (Psal. CVIII, 23). Teneri enim se a persecutoribus usque ad mortem pertulit; sed sicut locusta excussus est, quia ab eorum manibus saltu subitae resurrectionis evolavit.

49. Quod referri quoque ad praedicatorum numerum potest. In ipsis quippe sicut locusta excussus est, quia Judaea in sua persecutione saeviente, dum per diversa fugiunt, quasi quosdam recessionis suae saltus dederunt. Quia vero ille praedicator ad perfectionis culmen erigitur, qui non activa solummodo, sed etiam contemplativa vita solidatur, recte ipsa praedicatorum perfectio locustis exprimitur, quae quoties se in aera attollere conantur, primum se cruribus impellentes sublevant, et postmodum alis volant. Ita nimirum sunt sancti viri, qui dum superna appetunt, primum quidem activae vitae bonis operibus innituntur, et tunc demum se ad sublimia per contemplationis saltum volando suspendunt. Crura figunt, et alas exerunt, quia recte agendo se stabiliunt, et ad alta vivendo sublevantur. Qui in hac vita positi, diu in divina contemplatione manere non possunt, sed, quasi locustarum more, a saltu quem dederant in pedibus suis se excipiunt, dum post contemplationum sublimia ad necessaria activae vitae opera revertuntur, nec tamen in eadem vita activa remanere contenti sunt. Sed dum ad contemplationem desideranter exsiliunt, quasi rursus aera volantes 1019 petunt; vitamque suam quasi locustae ascendentes descendentesque peragunt, dum sine cessatione semper et summa videre ambiunt, et ad semetipsos naturae corruptibilis pondere revolvuntur. 50. In pace Ecclesiae humiles, in persecutione fortes et erecti. Est adhuc aliud quod locustae simile sanctis praedicatoribus gerunt. Matutinis namque horis, id est teporis tempore vix a terra se sublevant; cum vero aestus exarserit, tanto altius, quanto alacrius volant. Sanctus autem quisque praedicator dum quieta fidei tempora conspicit, humilis ac despectus aspicitur, et locustae more quasi vix a terra sublevatur. Si autem persecutionis ardor incaleat, corde coelestibus inhaerens, mox quantae sit sublimitatis ostendit; et pulsatus alis in altum rapitur, qui quietus in imis torpuisse videbatur. De hoc ergo equo, id est praedicatore suo, beato Job Dominus dicit: Nunquid suscitabis eum quasi locustas? Subaudis ut ego, qui

eo illum ad altiora excitando sublevo, quo graviore persecutionis aestu excruciari permitto, ut tunc in illo robustior virtus evigilet, cum se ei ardentior infidelium crudelitas illidit. Sed cum multa exterius sanctus praedicator patitur, cum dira persequentium vexatione cruciatur, quis intueri valet quid est quod intus conspicit, qui tot sua exterius damna non sentit? Nisi enim essent mira quae salubriter intus pascerent, ea procul dubio quae admoventur exterius usque ad cor tormenta pervenirent. Sed in arce spei se animus sublevat, et idcirco objectae obsidionis jacula minime formidat. Unde et hoc loco Dominus, ut ostendat equus iste quam suavia jam de internis odoretur, cum tot adversa in exterioribus patitur, recte subjungit:

CAPUT XXVI.

IBID. Gloria narium ejus terror. 51. Cum tot exterius adversa patiuntur, mira interius de aeterna beatitudine odorantur. In Scriptura sacra vocabulo narium aliquando fatuitas, aliquando antiqui hostis instigatio, aliquando vero praescientia solet intelligi. Naribus namque fatuitas designatur, sicut jam superius Salomone attestante docuimus qui ait: Circulus aureus in naribus suis mulier pulchra et fatua (Prov. XI, 22). Narium nomine exhalantes insidiae atque instigatio antiqui hostis accipitur, quod in hoc eodem libro de illo Dominus attestatur, dicens: De naribus ejus procedit fumus (Job. XLI, 11). Ac si dicat: De perversa instigatione illius in humanis cordibus caligo nequissimae cogitationis surgit, per quam videntium oculi tenebrescunt. Naribus quoque praescientia designatur, sicut per prophetam dicitur: Quiescite ab homine, cujus spiritus est in naribus ejus, quia excelsus reputatus est ipse (Isai. II, 22). Saepe enim id quod non videmus odore comprehendimus, ita ut nonnullae res etiam cum longe jaceant fragrantia nobis suae qualitatis innotescant, dumque per nares spiritum ducimus, plerumque aliqua et invisa praescimus. Redemptoris ergo nostri spiritus esse in ejus naribus dicitur, ut videlicet scientia illius esse in praescientia

designetur, quia quaecunque se scire in natura humanitatis innotuit, haec nimirum ante saecula ex divinitate praescivit. Qui unde spiritum in naribus
1020 habuerit, mox per prophetam subjunxit, dicens: Quia excelsus reputatus est ipse (Isai. II, 22). Ac si diceret: In inferioribus ventura desuper praescivit, quia ad ima de coelestibus venit. Sancti etiam viri, quia ab illo audita crediderunt, ipsi quoque jam ventura praesciunt; dumque ejus fideliter praeceptis inserviunt, adventum illius spe certa praestolantur. Unde et hoc loco equi hujus naribus, praedicatoris sancti praescientia ac praestolatio designatur. Dum enim venire extremum judicium, ostendi coelestem patriam, persolvi justis praemia appetit, quasi per nares spiritum de futuris trahit. 52. Unde gloriatur justus, terretur peccator. Sed gloria narium ejus terror est, quia visionem districti judicis, quam justus vehementer exspectat, injustus venire formidat. Iste namque labores suos considerans, mercedem retributionis quaerit; et causae suae meritum sciens, praesentiam judicis expetit, eumque ut veniat in flamma ignis, dans vindictam impiis, et contemplationis suae speciem in retributionem deferens piis, summo ardore concupiscit. Ille vero qui injustitiae suae meminit, venire in judicium perhorrescit, actusque suos examinari metuit, quia damnari se, si examinentur, novit. Gloria ergo narium ejus terror est, quia justus inde gloriatur, unde peccator addicitur. Videamus equum quomodo de his quae adhuc non videt jam per nares spiritum trahit, videamus quanta gloria attollitur cum jam ventura praestolatur. Ecce labores suos intuens praedicator egregius dicit: Ego jam delibor, et tempus meae resolutionis instat. Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi. De reliquo reposita est mihi corona justitiae quam reddet mihi Dominus in illa die justus judex (II Tim. IV, 6, 7, 8). Ubi et apte subjungit: Non solum autem mihi, sed et his qui diligunt adventum ejus (Ibid., 8). Ac si dicat: Sed et omnibus qui sibi de bona operatione sunt conscii. Adventum enim judicis non diligunt, nisi qui in causa sua se habere justitiae meritum sciunt. Quia

igitur unde gloriatur justus, inde terretur injustus, dicatur recte Gloria narium ejus terror. Sed sanctus iste praedicator, dum venturam gloriam praestolatur, dum venire ante faciem judicis nititur, dumque a laboris sui adhuc mercede differtur, in hac vita interim positus quid agat audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVII [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 21. Terram ungula fodit. 53. Praedicatoris officium est, in auditoribus et in scripto terrenas cogitationes effodere. Solet in equi ungula laboris fortitudo cognosci. Quid ergo per ungulam nisi in praedicatore sancto virtutum perfectio designatur? Qua videlicet ungula terram fodit, cum de corde audientium exemplo suorum operum terrenas cogitationes ejicit. Ungula terram fodit, quia auditorum corda a saecularibus curis evacuat, cum doctor bonus contemni saeculum opere ostentat. Videamus Paulum terram cordis audientium qua ostensae virtutis ungula fodiat. Ipse namque discipulis dicit: Haec cogitate, quae et didicistis et accepistis et audistis et vidistis in me, haec agite, et Deus pacis erit vobiscum (Philip. IV, 8, 9, 10). Et rursum: Imitatores mei estote, fratres, sicut et ego Christi (Ibid., III, 17). Qui igitur exemplo sui operis alios corrigit, nimirum ungula 1021 terram fodit. [Vet. XXII.] Habemus aliud quod adhuc subtilius de hujus ungulae effossione tractemus. Sancti enim viri quamvis intento mentis oculo in superna evigilent, quamvis cuncta quae in ima praeterfluunt pede rigidi contemptus calcent; ex corruptione tamen terrenae carnis, cui adhuc illigati sunt, plerumque cogitationum pulverem in corde patiuntur. Cumque foris aliis ad appetenda coelestia persuadent, semetipsos semper intrinsecus subtili inquisitione discutiunt, ne qua immorante in se diu infima cogitatione polluantur. Equus ergo iste ungula terram fodit cum praedicator quisque inquisitione forti terrenas in se cogitationes discutit. Equus ungula terram fodit quando is cui jam Dominus praesidet quae sibi moles

congeritur ex vetusta cogitatione considerat, seque ab illa flendo evacuare non cessat. Unde bene et Isaac apud alienam gentem puteos fodisse describitur (Genes. XXVI). Quo videlicet exemplo discimus ut in hac peregrinationis aerumna positi, cogitationum nostrarum profunda penetremus; et quousque nobis verae intelligentiae aqua respondeat, nequaquam nostrae inquisitionis manus ab exhaurienda cordis terra torpescat. Quos tamen puteos allophyli insidiantes replent (Ibid.), quia nimirum immundi spiritus cum nos studiose cor fodere conspiciunt, congestas nobis tentationum cogitationes ingerunt. Unde semper meus evacuanda est, incessanterque fodienda: ne si indiscussa relinquitur, usque ad tumorem perversorum operum, cogitationum super nos terra cumuletur. Hinc ad Ezechielem dicitur: Fili hominis, fode parietem (Ezech. VIII, 8); id est, cordis duritiam crebris perscrutationum ictibus rumpe. Hinc ad Isaiam Dominus dicit: Ingredere in petram, abscondere fossa humo, a facie timoris Domini, et a gloria majestatis ejus (Isai. II, 10). Petram quippe ingredimur, cum cordis nostri duritiam penetramus; atque a facie timoris Domini fossa humo abscondimur, si terrenas cogitationes egerentes ab ira districti judicis in humilitate nostrae mentis celamur. Quo enim plus terra fodiendo projicitur, eo pavimentum semper inferius demonstratur. Unde et nos si a nobis studiosius terrenas cogitationes ejicimus, quo apud nosmetipsos abscondamur, humilius invenimus. 54. De imminente judicii die S. Gregorii sententia.Ecce enim quia divini judicii dies imminet, quasi ipsa jam timoris ejus facies apparet; tantoque magis necesse est ut unusquisque illum terribilius timeat, quanto jam gloria majestatis ejus appropinquat. Quid ergo agendum est, quove fugiendum? Quo enim quis latere potest eum qui ubique est? Sed ecce petram ingredi, fossa humo occultari praecipimur, ut videlicet cordis nostri duritiam dirumpentes, eo iram invisibilem declinemus, quo ab amore rerum visibilium apud nosmetipsos in corde subtrahimur, ut cum pravae cogitationis terra ejicitur, mens apud

semetipsam tanto tutius quanto et humilius abscondatur (Deut. XXIII, 12). Hinc Israelitico populo per Moysen a Domino jubetur, ut cum egreditur ad requisita naturae, mittat paxillum in balteo, et fossa humo abscondat quae egesta fuerint. Naturae enim corruptibilis pondere gravati, a mentis nostrae utero quaedam cogitationum superflua quasi ventris gravamina erumpunt. Sed portare paxillum sub balteo debemus, ut videlicet ad reprehendendos nosmetipsos semper accincti, 1022 acutum circa nos stimulum compunctionis habeamus, qui incessanter terram mentis nostrae poenitentiae dolore confodiat, et hoc quod a nobis fetidum erumpit abscondat. Ventris quippe egestio fossa humo per paxillum tegitur, cum mentis nostrae superfluitas subtili redargutione discussa, ante Dei oculos, per compunctionis suae stimulum celatur. Quia igitur sancti viri quaecunque inutilia cogitant reprehendere ac dijudicare non cessant, de equo suo Dominus dicat: Terram ungula fodit, id est quidquid in mente sua terrenum versari conspicit, hoc nimirum superductae poenitentiae duris percussionibus rumpit. Cum vero se interius districta subtilitate dijudicant, jam nihil est quod exterius pertimescant. Tanto enim minus ad mala praesentia trepidant, quanto semetipsos plenius bonis venturis parant. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XXVIII [Vet.

XXIII, Rec. XIV]. Ibid. Exsultat audacter, in occursum pergit armatis. 55. Sanctum virum nec adversa dejiciunt, nec prospera corrumpunt. Apostolorum inter flagella exsultatio, in primis Pauli. Haeretici potestatum saecularium patrocinium ambiunt. Infractae virtutis est rerum terrenarum contemptus. Exsultat audacter, quia sic adversis non frangitur, sicut nec prosperis elevatur. Adversa namque non dejiciunt, quem prospera nulla corrumpunt. Equus itaque iste et fortis et sub freno est. Ne ergo prematur adversis, habet vim fortitudinis; ne elevetur prosperis, habet pondus desuper

insidentis. Decurrunt quippe tempora, sed idcirco justum trahere non valent, quia levare non possunt. Illos nimirum trahunt, quos levant; irata dejiciunt, quos blanda sustollunt. Vir autem bene Deo subditus scit inter transeuntia stare, scit inter lapsus decurrentium temporum mentis gressum figere, scit nec ad subjecta se erigere, nec ad objecta trepidare. Plerumque autem quia exerceri se utilius contritionis suae laboribus novit, in adversis hilarescit, quae dum constanter pro veritate patitur, augeri sibi virtutis meritum laetatur. Hinc est quod tunc apostolos exsultasse legimus, cum pro Christo illos contigit flagella tolerasse, sicut scriptum est: Ibant gaudentes a conspectu concilii, quoniam digni habiti sunt pro nomine Jesu contumeliam pali (Act. V, 41). Hinc Paulus cum duris in Macedonia fuisset persecutionibus pressus, in eo quod se afflictum insinuat, etiam jucundatum demonstrat, dicens: Nam cum venissemus Macedoniam, nullam requiem habuit caro nostra (II Cor. VII, 5). Ac si aperte diceret quia spiritus requiem habuit dum per profectum animae persecutionum supplicia caro toleravit. Contra hunc itaque equum ab adversariis sanctae Ecclesiae parantur gladii de dolore poenarum, parantur arma de patrociniis saecularium potestatum. Solent namque haeretici potentum mundi defensionibus, quasi quibusdam armis, se tegere; solent omnes infideles praedicationem fidei excitatis etiam saeculi potestatibus impugnare. Sed equus Dei exsultat audacter, et exteriora tormenta non metuit, quia internam delectationem quaerit, potestatum mundi iracundiam non formidat, quia ipsius quoque vitae praesentis desiderium per mentis excessum calcat. Hinc per Salomonem dicitur: Non contristabit justum quidquid ei acciderit (Prov. XII, 21). Hinc in eo rursum scriptum est: Justus quasi leo confidens absque terrore erit (Prov. XXVIII, 1). In occursu bestiarum idcirco leo non trepidat, quia praevalere se omnibus non ignorat. Unde justi viri securitas recte leoni comparatur, quia contra se cum quoslibet insurgere conspicit, ad mentis suae confidentiam redit; 1023 et scit quia cunctos adversantes superat, quia

illum solum diligit, quem invitus nullo modo amittat. Quisquis enim exteriora, quae et nolenti subtrahuntur, appetit sua se sponte extraneo timori substernit. Infracta autem virtus est concupiscentiae terrenae contemptus, quia et in alto mens ponitur, cum a rebus infimis spei suae judicio sublevatur, atque a cunctis adversantibus tanto minus attingitur quanto in supernis sita tutius munitur. 56. Justus adversantibus intrepidus occurrit. Equus itaque iste non solum contra se venientes minime metuit, sed eis etiam in occursum pergit. Unde bene hic additur: In occursum pergit armatis. Plerumque enim quieti atque inconcussi relinquimur, si obviare pravis pro justitia non curamus. Sed si ad aeternae vitae desiderium animus exarsit, si jam verum lumen intrinsecus respicit, si in se flammam sancti fervoris accendit, in quantum locus admittit, in quantum causa exigit, debemus pro defensione justitiae nosmetipsos objicere, et perversis ad injusta erumpentibus, etiam cum ab eis non quaerimur, obviare. Nam cum justitiam, quam nos amamus, in aliis feriunt, nos nihilominus sua percussione confodiunt, etiam si venerari videantur. Quia ergo vir sanctus pravis ac male agentibus sese etiam cum non quaeritur opponit, recte de equo Dei dicitur: In occursum pergit armatis. 57. S. Pauli exemplum. Intueri libet illum sessoris sui calcaribus excitatum contra armatos hostes, quantus Paulum fervor accenderat, quando eum Ephesi ad irrumpendas theatri turbas zeli flamma rap ebat. Scriptum quippe est: Repleti sunt ira, et exclamaverunt dicentes: Magna Diana Ephesiorum; et impleta est civitas confusione, et impetum fecerunt uno animo in theatrum, rapto Caio et Aristarcho Macedonibus, comitibus Pauli (Act. XIX, 28, 29). Atque mox subditur: Paulo autem volente intrare in populum, non permiserunt discipuli. Quidam autem et de Asiae principibus, qui erant amici ejus, miserunt ad eum, rogantes ne se daret in theatrum (Ibid., 30, 31). In quibus profecto verbis agnoscimus quo impetu contra cuneos adversantes irrueret, nisi eum per amicos et discipulos charitatis frena tenuissent. 58.

Declinandum tamen aliquando prudenter periculum, si ex illo periculo modicus tantum fructus speretur. Hoc Paulus exemplo docuit. Sed si obviare hostibus, si ultro pugnam petere, si nosmetipsos semper relinquere in cursu nostri fervoris debemus, quid est quod idem praedicator egregius de semetipso fatetur, dicens: Damasci praepositus gentis Aretae regis custodiebat civitatem Damascenorum, ut me comprehenderet, et per fenestram in sporta demissus sum per murum, et sic effugi manus ejus (II Cor. XI, 32, 33)? Quid est quod equus iste modo sponte armatorum cuneos impetit, et modo se ab armatis hostibus quasi trepidus abscondit, nisi hoc, quod necesse est ut in ejus artificiosa virtute discamus adversariorum pugnam et constanter aliquando appetere, et prudenter aliquando declinare? [Vet. XXIV.] Necesse quippe est ut per omne quod agimus in mentis trutina positum hinc pondus, illinc fructum nostri laboris aestimemus; et cum pondus fructum superat, laborem quisque innoxie declinet, dummodo se in aliis exerceat, in quibus lucro fructuum pondus laboris vincat. Cum vero sub 1024 sequenti quantitate fructuum mensura laboris aut aequatur, aut vincitur, labor non sine gravi culpa declinatur. Unde praedicator sanctus, cum Damasci valde obstinatas mentes persequentium cerneret, eorum noluit adversitati confligere, quia et semetipsum, quem profuturum multis noverat, vidit posse deficere, et aut nullis se ibi aut paucis prodesse. Secessum ergo a certamine petiit, et pugnaturum felicius ad alia se bella servavit. Non enim loco virtus, sed locus virtuti defuit; et idcirco fortissimus miles ab obsidionis angustia certaminis campum quaesivit. Ubi autem subjuganda regi proprio multa adversariorum colla conspexit, subire bellum vel cum morte non timuit; sicut ipse cum Jerosolymam pergeret, eumque discipuli, passione illius per prophetiam praescita, prohiberent, sibimetipsi attestatur, dicens: Ego non solum alligari, sed et mori in Jerusalem paratus sum pro nomine Domini Jesu (Act. XXI, 13). Neque enim facio animam meam pretiosiorem quam me (Ibid., XX, 24). Qui igitur hic hostiles cuneos etiam

praescita passione sua imperterritus petiit, illic de dispensatione fuisse edocuit, non de timore quod fugit. 59. Cavendum ne timore potius quam cauta dispensatione fugiamus. Qua in re pensandum est quia ille labores quosdam per dispensationis judicium laudabiliter declinat, qui pro Deo majores alios fortiter tolerat. Nam saepe ab hominibus timor debilis cauta dispensatio vocatur; et quasi prudenter impetum declinasse se asserunt, cum fugientes turpiter in terga feriuntur. Unde necesse est ut in causa Dei, cum res dispensationis agitur, metus cordis subtilissima libratione pensetur, ne per infirmitatem timor subrepat, et sese per dispensationis imaginem rationem confingat, ne culpa se prudentiam nominet; jamque nec ad poenitentiam animus redeat, quando hoc quod inique perpetrat virtutem vocat. Restat igitur ut in dubiis quisque deprehensus, cum quaelibet sibi adversitas imminet, prius intra semetipsum contra formidinem et praecipitationem pugnet, quatenus nec formidolose se subtrahat, nec praecipitanter opponat. Valde enim praeceps est qui semper se adversis objicit, et valde pavidus qui semper abscondit. 60. Peritus dux hosti exercitum nec semper admovet, nec semper subducit. Sed haec melius in bellis spiritalibus discimus, si formam exercitii a corporalibus bellis trahamus. Non enim ille dux sapiens est, qui semper contra hostiles cuneos exercitum praeceps admovet; neque ille dux fortis, qui semper hunc ab hostis facie cavendo subducit. Scire namque dux debet modo ab hostili impetu exercitum caute subtrahere, modo hostem circumfusis cornibus coarctare. Quod nimirum sollicite perfecti praedicatores exhibent, cum modo persecutionis rabiem declinantes, noverunt sapienter sed non enerviter cedere; modo autem persecutionis impetum contemnentes, noverunt ei fortiter, sed non praecipitanter obviare. Quia autem sanctus vir, cum congruum cernit, ictibus pectus objicit, et venientia jacula vel moriens retundit, recte dicitur: In occursum pergit armatis. De quo adhuc bene subditur:

CAPUT XXIX.

VERS. 22. Contemnit pavorem, nec cedit gladio. 1025 61. Paulus pavorem omnem, omnem hostilem impetum despexit. Videamus quomodo pavorem despiciat, qui ipsos adversariorum gladios enumerans calcat. Ait enim: Quis nos separabit a charitate Dei? tribulatio an angustia, an fames, an persecutio (Rom. VIII, 35)? In pavore autem ventura poena metuitur, in gladio vero jam dolor de praesenti percussione sentitur. Quia ergo vir sanctus ventura adversa non metuit, pavorem despicit; quia vero nec superveniente percussione vincitur, nequaquam gladiis cedit. Contra hunc itaque equum tot sunt gladii hostium, quot genera persecutionum; quae cuncta obvians superat, quia amore vitae sese ad interitum parat. Sed quia tam robustissimum pectus quomodo se jaculis opponat audivimus, nunc quid ab adversariis agatur audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXX.

VERS. 23. Super ipsum sonabit pharetra. 62. Victi hostes ad dolos, sed incassum confugiunt.In Scriptura sacra pharetrae nomine aliquando justum Dei occultumque consilium, aliquando vero clandestina pravorum machinatio designatur. Per pharetram justum Dei occultumque consilium exprimitur, sicut idem beatus Job superiore parte testatur, dicens: Pharetram enim suam aperuit, et afflixit me (Job. XXX, 11). Id est, occultum suum consilium detexit, et publica me percussione vulneravit. Sicut enim in pharetra sagittae, sic in occulto Dei consilio latent sententiae; et quasi ex pharetra sagitta educitur, quando ex occulto consilio apertam Deus sententiam jaculatur. Pharetrae quoque nomine pravorum machinatio designatur, sicut per prophetam dicitur: Paraverunt sagittas suas in pharetra, ut sagittent in obscuro rectos corde (Psal. X, 3). [Vet. XXV.] Iniqui enim cum dolos quos bonis excogitant secretis machinationibus occultant, quasi

in pharetra sagittas parant, et in hac praesentis vitae caligine, velut in obscuro, rectos corde feriunt, quia malitiosa eorum jacula et sentiri per vulnus possunt, et tamen venientia deprehendi non possunt. Igitur quia equus Dei nulla adversitate terretur, eique quo magis obviatur, eo vi intentionis suae super armatos hostes ferventior ducitur, persecutores ejus, qui se etiam ferientes vinci sentiunt, turbati ad consilium revertuntur, dolos praeparant, et velut ex longinquo mittendo vulnera occultant. Unde nunc recte dicitur: (Rec. XV.] Super ipsum sonabit pharetra; ut eum ex absconsa machinatione longe feriant, cui apertis congressionibus inaniter appropinquant. Haec tunc super equum Dei pharetra sonuerat, cum quadraginta viri qui in ejus mortem conjuraverant educi de carcere Paulum quaerebant (Act. XXIII, 16), ut consiliorum suorum ictibus quasi clam sagittarum dolo interficerent quem congressione persecutionis publicae superare nequaquam possent. Pharetra ergo sonuit, quia occultae machinationis ad Paulum causa pervenit. 63. Artes suas aliquando occultant, aliquando, ut incutiant terrorem, ostentant. Quamvis si vigilanter quaerimus, adhuc in pharetrae sonitu aliquid subtilius invenimus. Saepe enim adversarii consilia contra bonos ineunt, pravis inventionibus innituntur, ad excogitandos dolos se conferunt, sed tamen qui eosdem dolos prodere bonis debeant, ipsi instituunt, latenter ipsi transmittunt, ut credulis suppliciorum praeparatio dum quasi furtim innotescitur, amplius timeatur, et audientis animum plus suspecta vulnera quam percepta perturbent. In pharetra enim sagittae 1026 dum latent et sonant mortem etiam non visae denuntiant. Pharetra ergo contra equum sonitum reddit, cum contra praedicatorem sanctum occulta pravorum machinatio consilium suum, quod fraudulenter operit, fraudulentius innotescit, ut praemissis minis quasi ex sonitu pharetrae terreat, cum praedicator Dei apertas contumelias velut cominus ferientia jacula non formidat. Cum vero eisdem minis minime terretur, mox persecutorum crudelitas ad supplicia manifesta perducitur.

Unde bene postquam dictum est: Super ipsum sonabit pharetra, illico additur:

CAPUT XXXI.

IBID.Vibrabit hasta. 64. A minis ad aperta supplicia prorumpunt.Contra praedicatorem Dei post pharetrae sonitum hasta vibratur, quando post terrores exhibitos e vicino jam feriens aperta poena producitur. Praedicatores autem sancti, cum pro defensione fidei supplicia subeunt, ad eamdem fidem, quos valent, rapere et inter verbera non desistunt; et cum patienter vulnera suscipiunt, prudenter contra corda infidelium sagittas praedicationis reddunt. Unde nonnunquam agitur ut ipsi qui in persecutione saeviunt non tam doleant quod cor praedicatoris non emolliunt quam quod per ejus verba etiam alios amittant. Quia igitur eum feriendo non superant, ne fortasse et alii qui illum audiunt se derelinquant, mox contra loquentis verba scutum responsionis parant. Unde cum diceret: Vibrabit hasta, recte subjungit: IBID. Et clypeus. 65. Rationes quas opponant, etiam quaerunt. Persecutor enim saeviens postquam praedicatoris corpus supplicio percutit, auditorum cor quasi clypeo verbis suae disputationis munit. Vir igitur sanctus ut feriri debeat, hasta vibratur; sed ne audiri possit, clypeus opponitur. Habent namque defensores Dei in praelio sagittas suas quas eo citius in auditorum corda injiciunt, quo illas de spiritali arcu, id est de intima cordis tensione distringunt. His quippe se in bello fidei Paulus armaverat, cum dicebat: Laboro usque ad vincula quasi male operans, sed verbum Dei non est alligatum (II Tim. II, 9). Ac si diceret: Hasta quidem suppliciorum ferior, sed tamen verborum sagittas emittere non desisto. Vulnera crudelitatis accipio, sed cor infidelium vera loquendo transfigo. Dicatur ergo: Super ipsum sonabit pharetra, vibrabit hasta et clypeus. Contra equum quippe Dei, quia pravorum consilia perstrepunt, pharetra sonat, quia aperta poena exquiritur, hasta vibratur; quia vero ei etiam

disputatione resistitur, clypeus antefertur. Sed nunquid a fervore suo per ista compescitur? Vir enim sanctus quo majore persecutione premitur, eo ad praedicandam veritatem acrius instigatur; et cum patienter persecutores tolerat, ardenter ad se auditores trahere festinat. Unde et bene adhuc de equo Dei subditur:

CAPUT XXXII.

VERS. 24. Fervens et fremens sorbet terram, nec reputat tubae sonare clangorem. 66. Despectis illorum conatibus, pius praedicator peccatorum conversioni semper insudat. Primo namque peccanti homini dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Tubae autem clangunt, cum hujus saeculi potestates loqui sanctos terribiliter prohibent. Quia igitur praedicator zelo sancti Spiritus inflammatus, vel inter supplicia positus, quoslibet peccatores ad se trahere non desistit, fervens 1027 procul dubio terram sorbet, quia vero persecutorum minas minime formidat, clangorem tubae sonare non reputat. Tuba enim, quae discrimen belli denuntiat, quid est aliud quam vox saecularium potestatum, quae contempta resistentibus mortis certamen parat? 67. Exemplum Apostolorum, praesertim S. Pauli. Haec a principibus sacerdotum tuba sonuerat, cum flagellatos apostolos de Deo loqui prohibebant, sicut scriptum est: Caesis denuntiaverunt, ne loquerentur in nomine Jesu (Act. V, 40). Sed videamus quomodo equum Dei clangor tubae non terreat. Ait Petrus: Obedire oportet Deo magis quam hominibus (Ibid., 29). Qui aliis quoque persequentibus dicit: Non enim possumus quae vidimus et audivimus, non loqui (Act. IV, 20). Equus ergo Dei clangorem tubae non metuit, quia praedicator egregius despectis potestatibus saeculi, nullos minarum sonitus pertimescit. 68. Videamus alium equum Dei quomodo terram sorbeat, quomodo nullus eum tubae terror attingat (Act. XIV, 18, 19, 20, 21). Scriptum est: Supervenerunt quidam ab Antiochia et Iconio Judaei, et persuasis turbis, lapidantes Paulum

traxerunt extra civitatem, aestimantes eum mortuum esse. Circumdantibus autem eum discipulis, surgens intravit civitatem, et postero die profectus est cum Barnaba in Derben. Cumque evangelizassent civitati illi, et docuissent multos, reversi sunt Lystrum et Iconium et Antiochiam, confirmantes animas discipulorum. Perpendamus ergo quae hunc possent equum minae compescere, quando eum ab intentione sua non valet mors ipsa prohibere. Ecce lapidibus obruitur, nec tamen a veritatis sermone removetur. Occidi potest, superari non potest; velut exstinctus extra urbem projicitur, sed intra urbem die alio illaesus praedicator invenitur. O quam fortis huic viro inest infirmitas! o quam victrix poena! o quam dominatrix patientia! Ad agendum repulsione provocatur, ad praedicandam salutem plagis erigitur, ad propellendam laboris lassitudinem poena refovetur. Quae ergo hunc adversitas superet, quem poena fovet? Sed equus iste Dei et pharetrae sagittas despicit, quia malitiae consilia contemnit; vibratam hastam superat, quia et contra apertae persecutionis vulnera pectus firmat; oppositum clypeum rumpit, quia disputationem resistentium ratiocinando subigit; terram sorbet, quia peccatores in suum corpus exhortando convertit; clangorem buccinae sonare non reputat, quia vocem quamlibet terribilis prohibitionis calcat. Minus est autem quod dicitur, quia fortis perseverat in laboribus, adhuc, quod majus est, exsultat in adversis. Unde sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIII [Rec. XVI].

VERS. 25. Ubi audierit buccinam, dicit Vah. 69. Sancti, imminente certamine, licet mortis metu concutiantur, de futuro tamen praemio gaudent.Quibus profecto verbis et illud ostenditur, quod hoc loco a Domino de equo irrationabili nil dicatur. Neque enim vah dicere brutum animal potest; sed dum asseritur dicere quod omnino dicere non valet, innuitur quem designet. Vah quippe sermo exsultationis est. Equus ergo, audita buccina, vah dicit, quia fortis quisque praedicator cum certamen passionis

sibi propinquare considerat, de exercitio virtutis exsultat; nec terretur pugnae periculo, quia victoriae laetatur triumpho. 1028 Equo itaque est vah dicere, praedicatorem sanctum de ventura passione gaudere. [Vet. XXVI.] Sed si praedicator fortis gloriam passionis appetit, si discrimen mortis subire pro Domino laetus quaerit, quid est quod ipsi fortissimo praedicatori, qui ex robusto corde virtutem traxit in nomine, Petro Veritas dixit: Cum senueris, extendes manus tuas, et alius te cinget, et ducet quo non vis (Joan. XXI, 12). Quomodo de passione gaudet, qui, cinctus ab alio, ire quo ducitur non volet? Sed si pensamus qualiter animus appropinquante passione et mortis metu qualitur, et tamen de venturo regni praemio laetatur, intelligimus quomodo gloriosi certaminis subire periculum volens nolit, quia et in morte considerat quod tolerans paveat, et in fructu mortis aspicit quod appetens quaerat. 70. Paulus amat quod refugit, fugere videtur quod amat. Videamus Paulum quomodo amet quod refugit, quomodo refugiat quod amat. Ait enim: Desiderium habens dissolvi, et cum Christo esse (Philip. I, 23). Et, Mihi vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum (Ibid., 21). Et tamen dicit: Qui sumus in hoc habitaculo, ingemiscimus gravati, eo quod nolumus exspoliari, sed supervestiri, ut absorbeatur quod mortale est a vita (II Cor. V, 4). Ecce et mori desiderat, et tamen carne exspoliari formidat. Cur hoc? Quia etsi victoria in perpetuum laetificat, ipsa nihilominus ad praesens poena perturbat; et quamvis vincat amor subsequentis muneris, tangit tamen non sine moerore animum pulsus doloris. Sicut enim vir fortis, cum vicino jam belli certamine armis accingitur, et palpitat et festinat, tremit et saevit, quasi pavere per pallorem cernitur, sed per iram vehementer urgetur; ita vir sanctus, cum passioni se propinquare conspicit, et naturae suae infirmitate concutitur, et spei suae soliditate roboratur; et de vicina morte trepidat, et tamen quod moriendo verius vivat, exsultat. Ad regnum quippe non potest nisi interposita morte transire; et idcirco confidendo quasi ambigit, et quasi ambigendo confidit; et gaudens metuit, et metuens gaudet,

quia scit quod ad bravium quietis non perveniat, nisi hoc quod interjacet cum labore transcendat. Sic nos, cum morbos a corpore repellere cupimus, tristes quidem amarum purgationis poculum sumimus, certi autem de subsequenti salute gaudemus. Quia enim pervenire corpus aliter ad salutem non valet, in potu libet etiam quod taedet. Cumque amaritudini inesse vitam animus conspicit, moerore turbatus hilarescit. Dicatur ergo: Ubi audierit buccinam, dicit Vah, quia praedicator fortis cognito certaminis nuntio, etsi ut homo ad vim persecutionis trepidat, per spei tamen certitudinem ad praemium remunerationis exsultat. Sed nequaquam ad hoc passionis bellum inconcussus existeret, nisi eamdem passionem intenta cogitatione meditando praeveniret. Malum namque quod consilio praevenitur, decertanti contra se animo ex ratione subjicitur, quia tanto quisque minus adversitate vincitur, quanto contra illam praesciendo paratus invenitur. Saepe enim grave timoris pondus usu levigatur, saepe mors ipsa sicut inopinata perturbat, ita deliberatione praeventa laetificat. Unde et recte de hoc equo subjungitur: IBID. 1029 Procul odoratur bellum. 71. Ad reportandam victoriam certamen praevideatur.Ac si apertius dicatur: Idcirco quodlibet certamen exsuperat, quia mentem certamini ante certamen parat. Bellum quippe procul odorari est adversa quaeque longe adhuc posita cogitando praenoscere, ne fortasse valeant improvisa superare. Hoc bellum procul odorari discipulos Paulus admonebat, cum diceret: Vosmetipsos tentate si estis in fide, ipsi vos probate (II Cor. XIII, 5). Ac si aperte praeciperet, dicens: Persecutionum certamina ad mentem reducite, et cordis vestri intima atque occulta pensantes, quales inter supplicia existere valeatis invenite. Hoc bellum sancti viri procul odorantur, quando et in pace universalis Ecclesiae positi, vel haereticorum bella, vel imminentia ab infidelibus persecutionum tormenta conspiciunt. Qui dum recte vivunt, saepe pro bonis mala recipiunt, detractionum contumelias aequanimiter ferunt, ut si persecutionis occasio suppetat, tanto illos fortiores aperti hostes

inveniant, quanto eos et intra Ecclesiam falsorum fratrum jacula non expugnant. Nam qui a statu patientiae ante linguarum vulnera corruit, ipse sibi testis est quia contra manifestae persecutionis gladios non subsistit. Quia ergo vir Dei exercitatus praesentibus contra ventura, et exercitatus minimis contra majora nititur, recte de equo Dei dictum est, quod bellum procul odoratur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXIV.

IBID. Exhortationem ducum, et ululatum exercitus. 72. Subodorandum quid auctores errorum, quid turba ipsis subdita possint insanire. Duces adversae partis sunt erroris auctores, de quibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Effusa est contentio super principes eorum, et seduxerunt eos vana eorum, et errare fecit eos in invio, et non in via (Psal. CVI, 40). De quibus per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Caecus si caeco ducatum praebet, ambo in foveam cadunt (Matth. XV, 14). Hos autem duces exercitus sequitur pravorum scilicet turba, quae iniquis eorum praeceptionibus famulatur. Notandum quoque quod duces exhortari, exercitum vero dicit ululare, quia videlicet hi qui infidelibus vel haereticis praesunt prava quae teneri praecipiunt quasi ex ratione persuadent. Turba vero eis subdita, quia sine judicio eorum voces sequitur, dum per confusionis insaniam perstrepit, bestiali mente ululare perhibetur. Lupis quippe proprie ululatus convenit. Et quia catervae reproborum contra vitam moresque fidelium sola rapacitate inhiant, quasi per ululatum clamant. [Vet. XXVII.] Equus ergo Dei exhortationem ducum et ululatum exercitus procul odoratur, dum sanctus quisque praedicator longe ante considerat quid vel auctores errorum contra electos valeant praecipere, vel turba eis subdita quam possit immaniter insanire. Hanc exhortationem ducum odorabatur Paulus, cum diceret: Per dulces sermones et benedictiones seducunt corda innocentium (Rom. XVI, 18). Hunc ululatum exercitus odorabatur, dicens: Intrabunt post discessionem meam

lupi graves in vos (Act. XX, 29). Exhortationem ducum odoratus est Petrus, cum de quibusdam discipulos admoneret, dicens: In avaritia fictis verbis de vobis negotiabuntur (II Pet. II, 3). Ululatum quoque exercitus odorabatur, cum praemitteret, dicens: 1030 Et multi sequentur eorum luxurias, per quos via veritatis blasphematur (Ibid., 2). [Rec. XVII.] 73. Fidelibus accommodantur, quae de praedicatoribus et doctoribus sunt dicta. Igitur quia sanctus quisque praedicator atque in persecutionis bello dux fidei, qualem se possit exhibere narravimus, nunc sub hujus equi specie unumquemque Christi militem describamus, ut et qui ad praedicationis culmen necdum se pervenisse considerat, hac tamen voce dominica, si jam bene vivere coeperit, expressum se esse cognoscat, quatenus hinc colligat quantum Deo notus sit, si ad majora pervenerit, quem signanter Deus eloqui nec in minimis praetermittit. Singula itaque quae de equo dicta sunt repentes, intimemus quomodo miles Dei a primaeva conversatione proficiat, quomodo a minimis ad majora succrescat, vel quibus gradibus ab infimis ad superna perveniat. Dicatur ergo:

CAPUT XXXV.

VERS. 19. Nunquid praebebis equo fortitudinem, aut circumdabis collo ejus hinnitum? 74. Militem Dei primum armet fides. Unicuique animae, cui Dominus misericorditer praesidet, ante omnia fidei fortitudinem praebet, de qua Petrus ait: Adversarius vester diabolus, sicut leo rugiens, circuit quaerens quem devoret; cui resistite fortes in fide (I Pet. V, 8). Huic autem fortitudini hinnitus jungitur, dum fit quod scriptum est: Corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem (Rom. X, 10). Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVI [Vet. XXVIII].

VERS. 20. Nunquid suscitabis eum quasi locustas? 75. Dei erga incipientes indulgentia. Unusquisque qui Deum sequitur, in ipso suo exordio ut locusta

suscitatur, quia etsi in quibusdam actionibus locustarum more flexis poplitibus terrae inhaeret, in quibusdam tamen expansis alis sese in aera suspendit. Conversionum quippe initia, bonis moribus malisque permista sunt, dum et nova jam per intentionem agitur, et vetus adhuc vita ex usu retinetur. Tanto autem minus permistis interim malis laedimur, quanto contra illa quotidie sine cessatione pugnamus. Nec suos nos jam culpa vindicat, cujus pravo usui nostra sollicite mens resultat. Minus itaque nobis inchoantibus terrena opera officiunt, quia in nobis diutius demorari prohibentur. Proinde quoniam in ipso nostrae conversionis initio infirma quaedam pie de nobis Dominus tolerat, ut nos quandoque ad coelestia ex perfectione perducat, quasi locustas nos in exordio suscitat, quia etsi in volatu virtutis sublevat, non tamen de terreni operis casu desperat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

IBID. Gloria narium ejus terror. 76. Inchoantes inter spem et metum positi, propter certamina carnis, quam idcirco fortiter edomant. Pro eo quod non visa res odore deprehenditur, non immerito narium nomine spei nostrae cogitationes exprimuntur, quibus venturum judicium, quod etsi oculis adhuc non cernimus, jam tamen sperando praevidemus. Omnis autem qui bene vivere incipit, audiens quod per extremum judicium justi ad regnum vocentur, hilarescit; sed quia quaedam mala adhuc ex reliquiis sibi inesse considerat, hoc ipsum judicium, de quo exsultare inchoat, appropinquare formidat. Vitam quippe suam bonis malisque permistam conspicit, et cogitationes suas aliquo modo spe et timore 1031 confundit. Nam cum audit quae sint regni gaudia, mox mentem laetitia sublevat; et rursum cum respicit quae sint gehennae tormenta, mox mentem formido perturbat. Bene ergo gloria narium ejus terror dicitur, quia inter spem et metum positus, dum futurum judicium mente conspicit, hoc ipsum timet unde gloriatur. Ipsa ei sua gloria terror est, quia inchoatis jam bonis, spe de judicio laetus est; et

necdum finitis omnibus malis, perfecte securus non est. Sed inter haec sollicite ad mentem revertitur, et procellas tantae formidinis renuens, seque in solius pacis tranquillitate disponens, totis viribus a districto judice inveniri liber conatur. Servile quippe aestimat dominicam praesentiam formidare; ac ne conspectum patris metuat, illa agit per quae se filium recognoscat. Discit ergo judicem tota exspectatione diligere, atque, ut ita dixerim, timendo renuit timere. Oriri autem cordi formidinem pro carnali actione considerat, et idcirco ante omnia carnem forti edomatione castigat. Unde postquam dictum est: Gloria narium ejus terror, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII.

VERS. 21. Terram ungula fodit. 77. Ungula namque terram fodere est districta abstinentia carnem edomare. Quo autem plus caro premitur, eo de coelesti spe animus securius laetatur. Unde effossa terra apte subnectitur: Exsultat audacter. Quia enim valenter reprimit quod impugnat, audacter exsultat de his quae in aeterna pace desiderat; tantoque mens melius ad superna appetenda componitur, quanto ab illicitis arctius corpus edomatur. Unde recte per Salomonem dicitur: Diligenter exerce agrum tuum, ut postea aedifices domum tuam (Prov. XXIV, 27). Ille quippe bene mentis domum aedificat, qui prius agrum corporis a spinis vitiorum purgat, ne si desideriorum sentes in carnis agro proficiant, intus tota virtutum fabrica fame boni operis crescente destruatur. In ipso autem quisque belli certamine positus, tanto subtilius fraudem hostium conspicit, quanto et districtius corpus proprium quasi quemdam hostium adjutorem premit. Unde et post contritionem corporis, post laetitiam cordis recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXIX.

IBID. In occursum pergit armatis. 78. Hostis insidias et dolos explorant inchoantes, et in alienis etiam cordibus praeveniunt. Hostes armati sunt

immundi spiritus, innumeris contra nos fraudibus accincti. Qui cum suadere nobis iniqua nequeunt, ea sub virtutum specie nostris obtutibus opponunt, et quasi sub quibusdam armis se contegunt, ne in sua malitia a nobis nudi videantur. Quibus armatis hostibus in occursum pergimus, quando eorum insidias longe praevidemus. Effossa igitur terra, armatis hostibus in occursum pergere, est, edomita carnis superbia, dolos immundorum spirituum mirabiliter explorare. Effossa terra armatis hostibus in occursum pergere, est devicta carnali nequitia contra spiritalia vitia certamen subire. Nam qui adhuc secum enerviter pugnat, frustra contra se bella extra posita suscitat. Qui enim semetipsum carnalibus subjugat, quomodo spiritalibus vitiis resultat? Aut quomodo de labore externi certaminis triumphare appetit, qui adhuc apud semetipsum domestico libidinis bello succumbit. [Vet. XXIX.] 79. Vel certe armatis hostibus in occursum pergimus, quando per exhortationis studium eorum insidias et in alieno corde praevenimus. Quasi enim 1032 ex loco in quo fuimus ad locum alium obviam hostibus venimus, quando, nostra cura ordinate postposita, accessum immundorum spirituum a proximi mente prohibemus. Unde fit plerumque ut hostes callidi militem Dei jam de intestino bello victorem tanto de semetipso terribilius tentent, quanto illum contra se et in alieno corde praevalere fortiter vident; ut dum illum ad se tuendum revocant, aliena corda liberius quae exhortatione ejus protegebantur invadant. Cumque cum superare non possint, saltem occupare conantur; quatenus dum miles Dei de semetipso concutitur, non ipse, sed is quem defendere consueverat perimatur. Sed mens in Deum immobiliter fixa tentationum spicula despicit, nec cujuslibet terroris jacula pertimescit. Supernae enim gratiae fretus auxilio, sic vulnera infirmitatis suae curat, ut aliena non deserat. Unde et bene de hoc equo subjungitur:

CAPUT XL.

VERS. 22. Contemnit pavorem, nec cedit gladio. 80. Minas hostis contemnunt inchoantes. Contemnit pavorem, quia nullius tentationis formidine ad hoc usque terretur ut taceat. Nec cedit gladio, quia etsi violenta illum tentatio percutit, a cura tamen proximi non repellit. Unde et Paulus exemplum nobis invictae conversationis insinuans, et quos ab hoste gladios suscipiat dicit, et quomodo eisdem gladiis non cedat ostendit. Omni enim jam carnalis operis pugna superata, carnalis tentationis gladium ab hoste susceperat, qui dicebat: Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis (Rom. VII, 23). Sed eidem gladio quem in se vicerat etiam in aliis non cedebat, cum profecto proximis diceret: Non regnet peccatum in vestro mortali corpore ad obediendum desideriis ejus (Rom. VI, 12). Et rursum: Mortificate membra vestra quae sunt super terram, fornicationem, immunditiam, libidinem, concupiscentiam malam (Coloss. III, 5). Gravis illum tentationum gladius feriebat, de quibus ipse ait: In laboribus plurimis, in carceribus abundantius, in plagis supra modum, in mortibus frequenter. A Judaeis quinquies quadragenas una minus accepi; ter virgis caesus sum, semel lapidatus sum, ter naufragium feci, nocte et die in profundo maris fui (II Cor. XI, 23), et caetera, quae ipse tolerare potuit, et nos enumerare lassamur. Sed quomodo eidem gladio in proximi dilectione non cedat, post multa ipse subjungit: Praeter illa quae extrinsecus sunt, instantia mea quotidiana, solicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum (Ibid., 28). Equus ergo Dei gladio percutitur, nec tamen percussione eadem a cursu prohibetur, dum fortis spiritalis certaminis miles et ipse vulnera ab hoste suscipit, et tamen ad salutem alios stringit. Sed erga tam durum coelestis militis pectus antiquus hostis tanto acutiora spicula perquirit, quanto se despici robustius conspicit. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XLI [Vet. XXX].

VERS. 23. Super ipsum sonabit pharetra, vibrabit hasta et clypeus. 81. Saepe qui aliis regendis praesunt, gravioribus a diabolo tentationibus exercentur: modo aperta vi, modo fraude et dolo, aliquando vi simul et dolo.Quia enim videt sanctae mentis studium contra se et aliis prodesse, multiplicata hanc satagit tentatione confodere. Unde saepe contingit ut hi qui regendis aliis praesunt tentationum certamina fortiora patiantur, quatenus corporalium more bellorum dum dux ipse ad fugam vertitur, resistentis exercitus constipata unanimitas sine labore 1033 dissipetur. Hostis itaque callidus contra coelestem militem diversa percussionum vulnera exquirens, modo ex pharetra per insidias eum sagitta vulnerat, modo ante ejus faciem hastam vibrat, quia videlicet vitia et alia sub virtutum specie contegit, et alia ut sunt aperta ejus oculis opponit. Ubi enim infirmari Dei militem conspicit, illic fraudis velamina non requirit. Ubi autem sibi resistere fortem considerat, illic contra vires procul dubio dolos parat. Nam cum infirmum quempiam in carnis illecebra videt, aperte speciem corporis quae concupisci valeat ejus obtutibus objicit. Si autem fortasse validum contra avaritiam cernit, importune ejus cogitationibus domesticorum suorum inopiam suggerit, ut dum mens ad provisionis curam quasi pie flectitur, seducta furtim in rerum ambitu inique rapiatur. Equum ergo Dei sagitta per insidias impetit, quando ei hostis callidus sub virtute vitium abscondit. Hasta autem cominus vulnerat, cum manifesta nequitia etiam scientem tentat. 82. Saepe vero coelesti militi uno eodemque tempore utrumque ab hoste objicitur, ut in qualibet una percussione perimatur. Dolosus namque adversarius simul ferire nititur, et aperte saeviens, et in insidiis latens, ut dum de occulto sagitta metuitur, minus ante faciem hasta timeatur; vel dum ante faciem hastae resistitur, nequaquam ex occulto veniens sagitta videatur. Saepe enim tentationem proponit libidinis, et subito fraudulentius cessans, elationem suggerit de servata castitate. Et sunt nonnulli qui dum multos ex castitatis arce in elationis foveam cecidisse

conspiciunt, vitae suae custodiam negligentes, in immunditiam libidinis demerguntur. Sunt vero e diverso nonnulli qui dum libidinis immunditiam fugiunt, per castitatis culmen in voraginem elationis ruunt. Quasi ergo aperte feriens hasta est culpa de vitio, et quasi ex occulto vulnerans de pharetra sagitta est culpa de virtute. Sed equus Dei et ante faciem hastam superat cum libidinem calcat, et a latere sagittam circumspicit cum in castitatis munditia se ab elatione custodit. Unde et bene inter utraque certanti per Salomonem dicitur: Dominus erit in latere tuo, et custodiet pedem tuum ne capiaris (Prov. III, 26). Pes namque in anteriora tendit. Anteriora autem non videt, qui ea quae sunt a latere conspicit. Rursumque qui pedis custodiam praevidens anteriora cernit, circumspectionem lateris deserit. Dum vero ante faciem positae virtutis aliquid agimus, quasi quo pes debeat poni praevidemus; sed dum ex virtute eadem furtim culpa suboritur, quasi dum in anteriora respicitur, ad sagittam latus nudatur. Saepe vero dum suborientem culpam metuimus, virtutem quae agenda est declinamus; et quasi dum latus circumspicitur, nequaquam cernitur pes in anteriora quomodo ponatur. Bene ergo dicitur: Dominus erit in latere tuo, et custodiet pedem tuum ne capiaris, quia miles Dei divinae gratiae clypeo protectus, et quae ex latere possint prodire circumspiciendo considerat, et gressum ante faciem ferre proficiendo non cessat. Cui fraudulentus hostis invidens, quia per pharetram et hastam nequaquam se praevalere conspicit, clypeum opponit, ut si resistentis pectus feriendo non perforat, saltem quibusdam objectionibus proficientis iter intercludat. 1034 Quasdam namque difficultates ipsis ejus conatibus objicit; et cum superare non valet, vel resistit. Sed quid contra tot argumenta bellorum equus Dei agat audiamus:

CAPUT XLII.

VERS. 24. Fervens et fremens sorbet terram, nec reputat tubae sonare clangorem. 83. Utrique, per sanctum fervorem et proficiendi curam

resistitur. Contra equum clangor tubae insonat, quando electi mentem in eo quod agit fortiter e vicino quaedam posita culpa terribiliter tentat. Sed fervens et fremens sorbet terram, quia nimio ardore semetipsum discutit; et quidquid in se terrenum reperit, quotidie proficiendo consumit. Et clangorem tubae sonare non reputat, quia consideratione forti omne vitium quod de virtutis gloria nascitur sollicitus declinat. Sonare enim clangorem tubae reputaret, si fortasse propter aliud quod prave suboritur alia agere recta metueret. Quia ergo ad agenda fortia ante insonantia tentamenta non trepidat, in fervore suo positus clangorem tubae minime formidat. Saepe autem dum prosperari se virtutibus conspicit, ne ipsa illum virtutum prosperitas elevet, pulsari se tentationibus gaudet. Unde et apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XLIII.

VERS. 25. Ubi audierit buccinam, dicit Vah. 84. Quia multos diuturna pax inertes reddit, sancti tentari gaudent. Multos enim pejus sua felicitas stravit, multos diuturna pax inertes reddidit; eoque illos inopinatus hostis gravius perculit, quo longo quietis usu negligentes invenit. Unde sancti viri cum multa se proficere virtutum prosperitate considerant, quodam dispensationis supernae moderamine exerceri se etiam tentationibus exsultant, quia tanto robustius acceptam virtutum gloriam custodiunt, quanto tentationis impulsu concussi infirmitatem suam humilius agnoscunt. Equus ergo, audita buccina, vah dicit, quia videlicet praeliator Dei, cum vim tentationis incumbere conspicit, utilitatem supernae dispensationis considerans, ex ipsa validius adversitate confidit. Cujus adversitatis certamina idcirco illum non superant, quia nunquam improvisa tentant. Longe quippe praenotat ex unaquaque re, cujus vitii pugna succrescat. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XLIV.

IBID. Procul odoratur bellum. 85. Nulla eos improvisa tentant; unde nec superant.Bellum namque procul odorari est ex causis praecedentibus quae vitiorum pugnae subsequantur agnoscere. Quia enim, sicut jam saepe dictum est, odore res non visa cognoscitur, bellum procul odorari est, sicut flatu narium, sic provisione cogitationum, nequitias latentes indagare. De quo odoratu Dominus recte in Ecclesiae suae laudibus dicit: Nasus tuus sicut turris, quae est in Libano (Cant. VII, 4). Per nasum quoque odores fetoresque discernimus. Et quid per nasum, nisi sanctorum provida discretio designatur? Turris vero speculationis in altum ponitur, ut hostis veniens longe videatur. Recte ergo nasus Ecclesiae turri in Libano similis dicitur, quia sanctorum provida discretio dum sollicite circumquaque conspicit in altum posita, priusquam veniat culpa deprehendit, eamque quo vigilanter praenotat, eo fortiter declinat. Hinc Habacuc ait: Super custodiam meam stabo (Habac. II, 1). [Vet. XXXI.] Hinc uniuscujusque electi animam Jeremias admonens, dicit: Statue tibi speculam, pone tibi amaritudines (Jerem. XXXI, 21). Speculam quippe sibi statuere est ventura vitiorum certamina ex alta consideratione praenoscere. Sibique electi mens amaritudines ponit, quando 1035 et in virtutum pace constituta, dum mala insidiantia conspicit, secura quiescere non consentit. 86. Primo curandum ne mala faciamus, secundo ne bona incaute. Plerumque ex bonis mala nascuntur. Primo autem ne mala quaelibet, secundo vero loco considerat ne bona incaute faciat; et postquam prava subegerit, ipsa etiam sibi subjicere recta contendit, ne si mentis dominium transeant, in clationis culpam vertantur. Quia enim, sicut superius dictum est, plerumque ex bonis per incuriae vitium mala nascuntur, vigilanti studio contemplatur quomodo ex doctrina arrogantia, ex justitia crudelitas, ex pietate remissio, ex zelo ira, ex mansuetudine torpor oriatur. Cumque bona haec agit, quod hi contra se hostes per haec exsurgere valeant conspicit. Nam cum adipiscendis doctrinae studiis elaborat, mentem sollicite contra certamen arrogantiae

praeparat. Cum culpas delinquentium juste ulcisci desiderat, sagacissime evitat ne modum justitiae crudelitas vindictae transcendat. Cum pietate frenare se nititur, solerter prospicit ne qua disciplinae dissolutione vincatur. Cum se recti zeli stimulis excitat, summopere providet ne plus quam necesse est irae se flamma succendat. Cum magna mansuetudinis tranquillitate se temperat, vigilanter observat ne torpore frigescat. Quia ergo spiritalis militis cogitatione omne vitium prius quam subrepere possit aspicitur, recte de equo Dei dicitur: Procul odoratur bellum. Perpendit etiam quae turba iniquitatum proruat, si mala ad se ingredi vel pauca permittat. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XLV.

IBID. Exhortationem ducum, et ululatum exercitus. 87. Exercitus diaboli dux superbia, cujus soboles, septem principalia vitia. Tentantia quippe vitia, quae invisibili contra nos praelio regnanti super se superbiae militant, alia more ducum praeeunt, alia more exercitus subsequuntur. Neque enim culpae omnes pari accessu cor occupant. Sed dum majores et paucae neglectam mentem praeveniunt, minores et innumerae ad illam se catervatim fundunt. Ipsa namque vitiorum regina superbia cum devictum plene cor ceperit, mox illud septem principalibus vitiis, quasi quibusdam suis ducibus devastandum tradit. Quos videlicet duces exercitus sequitur, quia ex eis procul dubio importunae vitiorum multitudines oriuntur. Quod melius ostendimus, si ipsos duces atque exercitum specialiter, ut possumus, enumerando proferamus. Radix quippe cuncti mali superbia est, de qua, Scriptura attestante, dicitur: Initium omnis peccati est superbia (Eccli. X, 15). Primae autem ejus soboles, septem nimirum principalia vitia, de hac virulenta radice proferuntur, scilicet inanis gloria, invidia, ira, tristitia, avaritia, ventris ingluvies, luxuria. Nam quia his septem superbiae vitiis nos captos doluit, idcirco Redemptor noster ad spiritale liberationis praelium

spiritu septiformis gratiae plenus venit. 88. Singula vitia capitalia suum habent exercitum. Sed habent contra nos haec singula exercitum suum. Nam de inani gloria inobedientia, jactantia, hypocrisis, contentiones, pertinaciae, discordiae, et novitatum praesumptiones oriuntur. De invidia, odium, susurratio, detractio, exsultatio in adversus proximi, afflictio autem in prosperis nascitur. De ira, rixae, tumor mentis, contumeliae, clamor, indignatio, blasphemiae proferuntur. De tristitia, malitia, rancor, pusillanimitas, desperatio, torpor circa praecepta, vagatio mentis 1036 erga illicita nascitur. De avaritia, proditio, fraus, fallacia, perjuria, inquietudo, violentiae, et contra misericordiam obdurationes cordis oriuntur. De ventris ingluvie, inepta laetitia, scurrilitas, immunditia, multiloquium, hebetudo sensus circa intelligentiam propagantur. De luxuria, caecitas mentis, inconsideratio, inconstantia, praecipitatio, amor sui, odium Dei, affectus praesentis saeculi, horror autem vel desperatio futuri generantur. Quia ergo septem principalia vitia tantam de se vitiorum multitudinem proferunt, cum ad cor veniunt, quasi subsequentis exercitus catervas trahunt. Ex quibus videlicet septem quinque spiritalia, duoque carnalia sunt. 89. Unumquodque vitium oritur ex altero. Sed unumquodque eorum tanta sibi cognatione jungitur, ut non nisi unum de altero proferatur. Prima namque superbiae soboles inanis est gloria, quae dum oppressam mentem corruperit, mox invidiam gignit, quia nimirum dum vani nominis potentiam appetit, ne quis hanc alius adipisci valeat tabescit. Invidia quoque iram generat, quia quanto in erno livoris vulnere animus sauciatur, tanto etiam mansuetudo tranquillitatis amittitur; et quia quasi dolens membrum tangitur, idcirco oppositae actionis manus velut gravius pressa sentitur. Ex ira quoque tristitia oritur, quia turbata mens quo se inordinate concutit, eo addicendo confundit: et cum dulcedinem tranquillitatis amiserit, nihil hanc nisi ex perturbatione subsequens moeror pascit. Tristitia quoque ad avaritiam derivatur, quia dum confusum cor bonum laetitiae in semetipso intus

amiserit, unde consolari debeat foris quaerit; et tanto magis exteriora bona adipisci desiderat, quanto gaudium non habet ad quod intrinsecus recurrat. Post haec vero duo carnalia vitia, id est ventris ingluvies et luxuria, supersunt. Sed cunctis liquet quod de ventris ingluvie luxuria nascitur, dum in ipsa distributione membrorum ventri genitalia subnexa videantur. Unde dum unum inordinate reficitur, aliud procul dubio ad contumelias excitatur. [Vet. XXXII.] 90. Fallacia argumenta, quibus capitalia vitia mentem decipere moliuntur. Bene autem duces exhortari dicti sunt, exercitus ululare, quia prima vitia deceptae menti quasi sub quadam ratione se inserunt, sed innumera quae sequuntur, dum hanc ad omnem insaniam pertrahunt, quasi bestiali clamore confundunt. Inanis namque gloria devictum cor quasi ex ratione solet exhortati, cum dicit: Debes majora appetere, ut quo potestate valueris multos excedere, eo etiam valeas et multis prodesse. Invidia quoque devictum cor quasi ex ratione solet exhortari, cum dicit: In quo illo vel illo minor es? cur ergo eis vel aequalis, vel superior non es? Quanta vales quae illi non valent? Non ergo tibi aut superiores esse, aut etiam aequales debent. Ira etiam devictum cor quasi ex ratione solet exhortari, cum dicit: Quae erga te aguntur aequanimiter ferri non possunt, imo haec patienter tolerare peccatum est, quia etsi non eis cum magna exasperatione resistitur, contra te deinceps sine mensura cumulantur. Tristitia quoque devictum cor quasi ex ratione solet exhortari, cum dicit: Quid habes unde gaudeas, cum tanta mala de proximis portas? Perpende cum quo moerore omnes intuendi sunt qui in tanto contra te amaritudinis 1037 felle vertuntur. Avaritia quoque devictum animum quasi ex ratione solet exhortari, cum dicit: Valde sine culpa est, quod quaedam habenda concupiscis, quia non multiplicari appetis sed egere pertimescis; et quod male alius retinet, ipse melius expendis. Ventris quoque ingluvies devictum cor quasi ex ratione solet exhortari, cum dicit: Ad esum Deus omnia munda condidit, et qui satiari cibo respuit, quid aliud quam muneri concesso contradicit? Luxuria

quoque devictum cor quasi ex ratione solet exhortari, cum dicit: Cur te in voluptate tua modo non dilatas, cum quid te sequatur ignoras? Acceptum tempus in desideriis perdere non debes, quia quam citius pertranseat nescis. Si enim misceri Deus hominem in voluptate coitus nollet, in ipso humani generis exordio masculum et feminam non fecisset (Genes. I, 27). Haec est ducum exhortatio, quae dum incaute ad secretum cordis admittitur, familiarius iniqua persuadet. Quam videlicet exercitus ululans sequitur, quia infelix anima semel a principalibus vitiis capta, dum multiplicatis iniquitatibus in insaniam vertitur, ferali jam immanitate vastatur. 91. Quid, ne vitia noceant, agendum. Sed miles Dei, quia solerter praevidere vitiorum certamina nititur, bellum procul odoratur, quia mala praeeuntia, quid menti persuadere valeant, dum cogitatione sollicita respicit, exhortationem ducum naris sagacitate deprehendit. Et quia a longe praesciendo subsequentium iniquitatum confusionem conspicit, quasi ululatum exercitus odorando cognoscit. Igitur quia vel praedicatorem Dei, vel quemlibet spiritalis certaminis militem descriptum equi narratione cognovimus, nunc eumdem iterum in avis significatione videamus, ut qui per equum didicimus ejus fortitudinem, etiam per avem discamus illius contemplationem. Quia enim per descriptam equi magnitudinem audivimus quantum contra certamina vitiorum vir sanctus per patientiam tolerat, nunc per avium speciem cognoscamus quantum per contemplationem volat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVI [Rec. XVIII].

VERS. 26. Nunquid per sapientiam tuam plumescit accipiter expandens alas suas ad Austrum? 92. Gratia Dei veterem hominem exspoliamus. De accipitre quaedam notatu digna. Quia per annos singulos pennam veterem accipiter nova nascente projiciat, ac sine intermissione plumescat, pene nullus ignorat. Non autem hic illud plumae tempus dicitur, quo in nido vestitur, quia tunc nimirum adhuc videlicet pullus ad Austrum alas

expandere non valet, sed illa annua pluma describitur, quae laxata veteri penna renovatur. Et quidem domesticis accipitribus quo melius plumescere debeant humida ac tepentia loca requiruntur. Agrestibus vero moris est ut flante Austro alas expandant, quatenus eorum membra ad laxandam pennam veterem venti tepore concalescant. Cum vero ventus deest, alis contra radios solis extensis atque percussis, tepentem sibi auram faciunt, sicque apertis poris vel veteres exsiliunt, vel novae succrescunt. Quid est ergo accipitrem in Austro plumescere, nisi quod unusquisque 1038 sanctorum tactus flatu sancti Spiritus concalescit, et, usum vetustae conversationis abjiciens, novi hominis formam sumit? Quod Paulus admonet, dicens: Exspoliantes vos veterem hominem cum actibus suis, et induentes novum (Coloss. III, 9). Et rursum: Licet is qui foris est noster homo corrumpatur, tamen is qui intus est renovatur de die in diem (II Cor. IV, 16). Vetustam autem pennam projicere est inveterata studia dolosae actionis amittere, et novam pennam sumere est mitem ac simplicem bene vivendo sensum tenere. Penna namque veteris conversationis gravat, et pluma novae immutationis sublevat, ut ad volatum tanto leviorem quanto noviorem reddat. [Vet. XXXIII.] 93. Ad hanc renovationem necessaria confessio. Et bene ait: Expandit alas suas ad Austrum. Alas quippe nostras ad Austrum expandere est per adventum sancti Spiritus nostras confitendo cogitationes aperire, ut jam non libeat defendendo nos tegere, sed accusando publicare. Tunc ergo accipiter plumescit, cum ad Austrum alas expanderit, quia tunc unusquisque se virtutum pennis induit, cum sancto Spiritui cogitationes suas confitendo substernit. Qui enim vetera fatendo non detegit, novae vitae opera minime producit, qui nescit lugere quod gravat, non valet proferre quod sublevat. Ipsa namque compunctionis vis poros cordis aperit, et plumas virtutum fundit; cumque se studiose mens de pigra vetustate redarguit, alacri novitate juvenescit. Dicatur ergo beato Job: Nunquid per sapientiam tuam plumescit accipiter, expandens alas suas ad Austrum? id est, Nunquid cuilibet electo

tu intelligentiam contulisti, ut flante sancto Spiritu, cogitationum alas expandat, quatenus pondera vetustae conversationis abjiciat, et virtutum plumas in usum novi volatus sumat? Ut hinc videlicet colligat quia vigilantiam sensus in semetipso ex se non habet, qui hanc ex se conferre aliis nequaquam valet. Potest etiam per hunc accipitrem renovata gentilitas designari, ac si beato Job aperte diceretur: Futuras virtutum plumas in gentilitate respice, et vetustas superbiae pennas amitte. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVII [Rec. XIX].

VERS. 27. Nunquid ad praeceptum tuum elevabitur aquila, et in arduis ponet nidum sibi? 94. Quid aquilae nomine Scriptura sacra significet. Insidiatores spiritus, potestatem terrenam, subtilem sanctorum intelligentiam, vel Christi ascensionem.In Scriptura sacra vocabulo aquilae aliquando maligni spiritus raptores animarum, aliquando praesentis saeculi potestates, aliquando vero vel subtilissimae sanctorum intelligentiae, vel incarnatus Dominus ima celeriter transvolans, et mox summa repetens designatur. Aquilarum nomine insidiatores spiritus exprimuntur, Jeremia attestante, qui ait: Velociores sunt persecutores nostri aquilis coeli (Thren. IV, 19). Persecutores enim nostri aquilis coeli velociores sunt, cum tanta contra nos maligni homines faciunt, ut ipsas etiam aereas potestates inventionibus malitiae praeire videantur. Aquilae etiam vocabulo potestas terrena figuratur. Unde per Ezechielem prophetam dicitur: Aquila grandis, magnarum alarum, longo membrorum ductu plena plumis et varietate, venit ad Libanum, et tulit medullam cedri, et summitatem 1039 frondium ejus evulsit (Ezech. XVII, 3). Qua videlicet aquila quis alius quam Nabuchodonosor rex Babyloniae designatur? Quae pro immensitate exercitus magnarum alarum, pro diuturnitate temporum longo membrorum ductu, pro multis vero divitiis plena plumis, pro innumera autem terrenae gloriae compositione plena varietate describitur. Qui venit ad Libanum, et

tulit medullam cedri, et summitatem frondium ejus evulsit, quia Judaeae celsitudinem petens, nobilitatem regni ejus, quasi medullam cedri abstulit; et dum tenerrimam regum prolem a regni sui culmine captivando sustulit, quasi summitatem frondium ejus evulsit. Subtilem sanctorum intelligentiam, vel Christi ascensionem. Aquila fixis oculis solem intuetur. Aquilae vocabulo vel subtilis sanctorum intelligentia, vel volatus dominicae ascensionis exprimitur. Unde idem propheta dum sub animalium specie evangelistas quatuor se vidisse describeret (Ezech. X, 1), in eis sibi hominis, leonis, bovis, et aquilae faciem apparuisse testatur, quartum procul dubio animal Joannem per aquilam designans, qui volando terram deseruit, quia per subtilem intelligentiam interna mysteria Verbum videndo penetravit. Cui nimirum propheticae sententiae ipse quoque Joannes in revelatione sua de semetipso non dissonat, dicens: Animal primum simile leoni, secundum animal simile vitulo, tertium animal habens faciem quasi hominis, quartum animal simile aquilae volanti (Apoc. IV, 7). Et quamvis singula ad unumquemque evangelistam recte conveniant, dum alius humanae nativitatis ordinem, alius per mundi sacrificii mactationem, quasi vituli mortem, alius potestatis fortitudinem quasi leonis clamorem insinuat, alius nativitatem Verbi intuens, quasi ortum solem aquila aspectat, possunt tamen haec quatuor animalia ipsum suum caput, cujus sunt membra, signare. Ipse namque et homo est, quia naturam nostram veraciter suscepit, et vitulus, quia pro nobis patienter occubuit; et leo, quia per divinitatis fortitudinem susceptae mortis vinculum rupit; et ad extremum aquila, quia ad coelum, de quo venerat, rediit. Homo ergo nascendo, vitulus moriendo, leo resurgendo, aquila ad coelos ascendendo vocatus est. [Vet. XXXIV.] Sed hoc loco aquilae nomine subtilis sanctorum intelligentia et sublimis eorum contemplatio figuratur. Cunctarum quippe avium visum acies aquilae superat, ita ut solis radius fixos in se ejus oculos nulla lucis suae coruscatione reverberans claudat. Ad praeceptum ergo Dei elevatur aquila,

dum jussionibus divinis obtemperans, in supernis suspenditur fidelium vita. Quae et in arduis nidum ponere dicitur, quia desideria terrena despiciens, spe jam de coelestibus nutritur. In arduis nidum ponit, quia habitationem mentis suae in abjecta et infima conversatione non construit. Hinc est quod Cinaeo Balaam prophetante dicitur: Robustum quidem est habitaculum tuum, sed si in petra posueris nidum tuum (Num. XXIV, 21). Cinaeus namque possessor interpretatur. Et qui sunt qui praesentia possident, nisi hi qui ingenio sapientiae saecularis callent? Qui in hoc veraciter robustum sibi habitaculum construunt, si per humilitatem parvuli apud semetipsos facti, in Christi sublimitate nutriantur; 1040 si semetipsos infirmos sentiant, et in excelsa humilitate cogniti Redemptoris fovendam mentis fiduciam ponant; si ima non appetant, si omne quod praeterit cordis volatu transcendant. 95. Paulus aquilae similis. Videamus aquilam nidum spei sibi in arduis construentem. Ait: Nostra conversatio in coelis est (Philip. III, 20). Et rursum: Qui conresuscitavit et consedere nos fecit in coelestibus (Ephes. II, 6). In arduis habet nidum, quia profecto in supernis figit consilium. Non vult mentem in ima dejicere, non vult per abjectionem conversationis humanae in infimis habitare. Tunc Paulus fortasse in carcere tenebatur, cum se consedere Christo in coelestibus testaretur. Sed ibi erat, ubi ardentem jam mentem fixerat, non illic ubi illum necessario pigra adhuc caro retinebat. 96. Electi terrena omnia despiciunt. Hoc namque esse speciale specimen electorum solet, quod sic sciunt praesentis vitae iter carpere, ut per spei certitudinem noverint jam se ad alta pervenisse, quatenus cuncta quae praeterfluunt sub se esse videant, atque omne quod in hoc mundo eminet amore aeternitatis calcent. Hinc est enim quod sequenti se animae per prophetam Dominus dicit: Sustollam te super altitudines terrae (Isai. LVIII, 14). Quasi quaedam namque inferiora terrae sunt, damna, contumeliae, egestas, abjectio, quae ipsi quoque amatores saeculi dum per latae viae planitiem ambulant, vitando calcare non cessant. Altitudines autem terrae

sunt, lucra rerum, blandimenta subditorum, divitiarum abundantia, honor, et sublimitas dignitatum; quae quisquis per ima adhuc desideria incedit, eo ipso alta aestimat, quo magna putat. At si semel cor in coelestibus figitur, mox quam abjecta sint cernitur quae alta videbantur. Nam sicut qui in montem conscendit eo paulisper caetera subterjacentia despicit, quo ad altiora gressum amplius tendit, ita qui in summis intentionem figere nititur, dum annisu ipso nullam praesentis vitae gloriam esse deprehendit, super terrae altitudines elevatur; et quod prius in imis desideriis positus super se credidit, post ascendendo proficiens sibi subesse cognoscit. Quae ergo illic Dominus facturum se esse pollicetur, dicens: Sustollam te super altitudines terrae (Ibid.), haec apud beatum Job solum sese facere posse testatur, dicens: Nunquid ad praeceptum tuum elevabitur aqurla, et ponet in arduis nidum sibi? Ac si diceret: Ut ad meum, qui quod exterius praecipio hoc intrinsecus gratia occultae largitatis inspiro. Sequitur:

CAPUT XLVIII.

VERS. 28. In petris manet. 97. In petris, hoc est in sanctorum patrum celsitudine et constantia nidum ponunt. In sacro eloquio cum singulari numero petra nominatur quis alius quam Christus accipitur? Paulo attestante, qui ait: Petra autem erat Christus (I Cor. X, 4). Cum vero petrae pluraliter appellantur, membra ejus, videlicet sancti viri, qui illius robore solidati sunt exprimuntur. Quos nimirum Petrus apostolus lapides vocat, dicens: Vos tanquam lapides vivi, coaedificamini domus spiritales (I Pet. II, 5). Ista itaque aquila, quae ad veri solis radios cordis oculos erexit, in petris manere dicitur, quia in dictis antiquorum et fortium patrum mentis statione collocatur. Eorum quippe vitam quos in 1041 via Dei praeisse conspicit ad memoriam reducit, atque in celsitudine illorum fortitudinis studendo nidum sibi construit sanctae meditationis. Cumque eorum acta dictaque tacite cogitat, cum praesentis vitae gloriam in comparatione aeternae excellentiae

quam sit abjecta considerat, quasi sub se esse ima terrarum in petris residens observat. [Vet. XXXV.] 98. Petrarum nomine coeli potestates designantur. Possunt etiam petrae sublimes virtutum coelestium potestates intelligi, quas non jam quasi more arborum huc atque illuc ventus nostrae mutabilitatis inclinat, quia velut petrae in arduis sitae ab omni motu mutabilitatis alienae sunt, et ad soliditatem fixae celsitudinis ipsa cui inhaerent aeternitate duruerunt. Vir itaque sanctus, cum terrena despicit, more se aquilae ab altiora suspendit, et per contemplationis spiritum sublevatus perennem angelorum gloriam praestolatur, atque in hoc mundo hospes, illa appetendo quae aspicit, jam in sublimibus figitur. Recte ergo dicitur: In petris manet, id est intentione cordis inter illas coelestes virtutes residet, quae et per aeternitatis suae fortitudinem tanta jam soliditate fixae sunt, ut in nullo culpae latere mutabilitatis varietate flectantur. Unde et apte sequitur:

CAPUT XLIX.

IBID. Et in praeruptis silicibus commoratur, atque inaccessis rupibus. 99. In Christo restaurata sunt omnia, quae in coelis et quae in terris. Qui enim sunt alii praerupti silices, nisi illi fortissimi angelorum chori, qui quamvis non integri, sed tamen in proprio statu fixi, cadente cum suis angelis diabolo remanserunt? Praerupti enim sunt, quia pars eorum cecidit, pars remansit. Qui integri quidem stant per qualitatem meriti, sed per numeri quantitatem praerupti. Hanc praeruptionem restituere Mediator venit ut redempto humano genere illa angelica damna sarciret, et mensuram coelestis patriae locupletius fortasse cumularet. Propter hanc praeruptionem de Patre dicitur: Proposuit in eo, in dispensatione plenitudinis temporum, instaurare omnia in Christo, quae in coelis, et quae in terra sunt in ipso (Ephes. I, 9, 10). In ipso quippe restaurantur ea quae in terra sunt, dum peccatores ad justitiam convertuntur. In ipso restaurantur ea quae in coelis sunt, dum illuc humiliati

homines redeunt unde apostatae angeli superbiendo ceciderunt. Quod vero ait: Inaccessis rupibus, nimirum qui praerupti silices, ipsi sunt inaccessae rupes. Cordi enim peccatorum hominum valde inaccessa est claritas angelorum, quia quo ad pulchra corporalia cecidit, eo a spiritali specie oculos clausit. Sed quisquis ita contemplatione rapitur, ut per divinam gratiam sublevatus, intentionem suam jam angelorum choris interserat, et fixus in sublimibus, ab omni se infima actione suspendat, non ei sufficit gloriam angelicae claritatis aspicere, nisi eum etiam qui est super angelos valeat videre. Sola namque ejus visio vera mentis nostrae refectio est. Unde cum dixisset hanc aquilam in petris manere, et in praeruptis silicibus atque inaccessis rupibus commorari, illico subdidit:

CAPUT L [Rec. XX].

VERS. 29. Inde contemplatur escam. 100. Dei visio mentis nostrae cibus. Id est, ex illis choris angelicis tendit oculum mentis ad contemplandam gloriam supernae majestatis, 1042 qua non visa adhuc esurit, qua tandem visa satiatur. Scriptum quippe est: Pro eo quod laboravit anima ejus, videbit et saturabitur (Isai. 53, 11). Et rursum: Beati qui esuriunt et sitiunt justitiam, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur (Matth. V, 6). Quis vero mentis nostrae cibus sit, indicatur aperte cum dicitur: Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt (Ibid., 8). Et quia, interpositione corruptibilis carnis gravati, Deum sicut est videre non possumus, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT LI.

IBID. Oculi ejus de longe prospiciunt. 101. Deum hic, nonnisi de longe prospicimus. Quantumlibet enim in hac vita positus quisque profecerit, necdum Deum per speciem, sed per aenigma et speculum videt. E vicino autem cum respicimus, verius cernimus; cum vero longius aciem tendimus, sub incerto visu caligamus. Quia igitur sancti viri in altam se

contemplationem erigunt, et tamen Deum, sicut est, videre non possunt, bene de hac aquila dicitur: Oculi ejus de longe prospiciunt. Ac si diceret: Intentionis aciem fortiter tendunt, sed necdum propinquum aspiciunt, cujus claritatis magnitudinem penetrare nequaquam possunt. A luce enim incorruptibili caligo nos nostrae corruptionis obscurat; cumque et videri aliquatenus potest, et tamen videri lux ipsa, sicut est, non potest, quam longe sit indicat. Quam si mens utcunque non cerneret, nec quia longe esset videret. Si autem perfecte jam cerneret, profecto hanc quasi per caliginem non videret. Igitur quia nec omnino cernitur, nec rursum omnino non cernitur, recte dictum est, quia a longe Deus videtur. 102. Isaiae hac de re testimonium. Activae vitae gradibus ad contemplationis culmen ascenditur. Libet ad medium Isaiae verba deducere, atque haec et illa quam uno spiritu proferantur indicare. Qui cum activae vitae virtutes exprimeret, dicens: Qui ambulat in justitiis, et loquitur veritatem, qui projicit avaritiam ex calumnia, et excutit manus suas ab omni munere, qui obturat aures suas ne audiat sanguinem, et claudit oculos suos ne videat malum (Isai. XXXIII, 15), illico ab ejusdem activae vitae gradibus ad quae contemplationis culmina ascendatur adjunxit, dicens: Iste in excelsis habitabit, munimenta saxorum sublimitas ejus, panis ei datus est, aquae ejus fideles sunt. Regem in decore suo videbunt oculi ejus, cernent terram de longe (Ibid., 16). In excelsis namque habitare est cor in coelestibus ponere. Et munimenta saxorum sublimitas nostra est, cum fortium patrum praecepta et exempla respicimus atque ab infima cogitatione separamur. Munimenta saxorum sublimitas nostra est, cum mente choris castrisque coelestibus jungimur, et insidiantes malignos spiritus stantes in arce cordis quasi subterpositos expugnamus. Tunc nobis etiam panis datur, quia in supernis erecta intentio, aeternitatis contemplatione reficitur. Aquae enim nostrae fideles sunt, quia doctrina Dei quod hic per spem promittit, hoc illic in munere exhibet. Sapientia namque hujus mundi infidelis est, quia mansura post mortem non est. Aquae nostrae

fideles sunt, quia verba vitae quod ante mortem insinuant, hoc etiam post mortem demonstrant. Regem in decore suo oculi nostri conspiciunt, quia Redemptor noster in judicio et a reprobis 1043 homo videbitur, sed ad divinitatis ejus intuendam celsitudinem soli qui electi sunt sublevantur. Quasi enim quamdam foeditatem Regis videre est solam servilem formam in qua ab iniquis despectus est cernere. Sed ab electis in decore suo Rex cernitur, quia ultra semetipsos rapti, in ipso divinitatis fulgore oculos cordis figunt. Et quia quandiu in hac vita sunt, illam viventium patriam, sicut est, videre non possunt, recte adjungitur: Cernent terram de longe (Ibid., 17). Quod ergo hic ait: Elevabitur aquila, et in arduis ponet nidum sibi, hoc illic dicitur: In excelsis habitabit. Quod hic dicitur: In petris manet, et in praeruptis silicibus commoratur, atque inaccessis rupibus, hoc illic subjicitur: Munimenta saxorum sublimitas ejus. Quod rursus hic subinfertur: Inde contemplatur escam, hoc illic quoque subditur: Panis ei datus est, aquae ejus fideles sunt, Regem in decore suo videbunt oculi ejus. Et quod hic subjungitur: Oculi ejus de longe prospiciunt, hoc illic apte subjicitur: Cernent terram de longe. [Vet. XXXVI.] 103. Paulus quam sublimis aquila. Consideremus quam sublimis aquila fuerit Paulus, qui usque ad tertium coelum volavit (II Cor. XII, 2), sed tamen in hac vita positus e longinquo adhuc Deum prospicit, qui ait: Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem (I Cor. XIII, 12). Et rursum: Ego me non arbitror comprehendisse (Philip. III, 13). Sed quamvis aeterna valde minus quam sunt ipse conspiciat, quamvis ea se cognoscere perfecte non posse cognoscat, infirmis tamen auditoribus ea ipsa infundere praedicando non potest, quae videre saltem per speculum et imaginem potest. De semetipso quippe tanquam de alio loquitur, dicens: Audivit arcana verba, quae non licet homini loqui (II Cor. XII, 4). Interna ergo quamvis minima et extrema videantur, fortibus tamen praedicatoribus summa sunt, infirmis vero auditoribus incapabilia. Unde et praedicatores

sancti, cum auditores suos divinitatis verbum capere non posse conspiciunt, ad sola incarnationis dominicae verba descendunt. Unde bene hic, dum sublevata in arduis aquila longe videre dicitur, illico subinfertur:

CAPUT LII [Rec. XXI].

VERS. 30. Pulli ejus lambunt sanguinem. 104. Passionis Christi meditatione pasci debemus. Ac si aperte diceretur: Ipsa quidem divinitatis contemplatione pascitur, sed quia auditores ejus divinitatis percipere arcana nequaquam possunt, cognito crucifixi Domini cruore satiantur. Sanguinem namque lambere est passionis Dominicae infirma venerari. Hinc est quod idem Paulus, qui, sicut paulo ante jam diximus, ad tertii coeli secreta volaverat, discipulis dicebat: Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Christum Jesum, et hunc crucifixum (I Cor. II, 2). Ac si aperte haec aquila diceret: Ego quidem escam meam divinitatis ejus potentiam de longe prospicio, sed vobis adhuc parvulis incarnationis ejus tantummodo lambendum sanguinem trado. Nam qui per praedicationem suam tacita divinitatis celsitudine, infirmos auditores de solo cruore crucis edocet, quid aliud quam sanguinem pullis praebet? Quia vero uniuscujusque sancti praedicatoris anima corruptione carnis exuta ad eum mox ducitur, qui pro nobis sponte sua in mortem cecidit, et de morte surrexit, apte de hac aquila subditur:

CAPUT LIII.

IBID. Et ubicunque cadaver fuerit, statim adest. 105. Christus in coelis regnans electos ad se colligit.Cadaver quippe a casu dicitur. Et non immerito 1044 corpus Domini propter casum mortis cadaver vocatur. [Rec. XXII.] Quod autem hic de hac aquila dicitur: Ubicunque cadaver fuerit, statim adest (Matth. XXIV, 28), hoc de egredientibus animabus fieri Veritas spopondit, dicens: Ubicunque fuerit corpus, illic congregabuntur et aquilae.

Ac si aperte dicat: Qui coelesti sedi incarnatus Redemptor vester praesideo, electorum quoque animas cum carne solvero, ad coelestia sublevabo. [Vet. XXXVII.] 106. Omnis peccator cadaver; ad quod advolant aquilae, pii videlicet praedicatores peccatorum salutem esurientes. Haec volatus Pauli orbem peragrantis causa. Sed hoc quod de hac aquila dicitur: Ubicunque fuerit cadaver statim adest, intelligi et aliter potest. Omnis enim qui in peccati mortem ceciderit, non inconvenienter poterit cadaver vocari. Quasi exanimis namque jacet, qui justitiae vivificantem spiritum non habet. Quia ergo sanctus quisque praedicator ubi peccatores esse considerat, illuc anxie pervolat, ut in peccati morte jacentibus lucem vivificationis ostendat, bene de hac aquila dicitur: Ubicunque cadaver fuerit, statim adest. Id est, illuc tendit, ubi utilitatem praedicationis prospicit, ut ex eo quod jam spiritaliter vivit, aliis in morte sua jacentibus prosit, quos corripiendo quasi edit, sed ab iniquitate ad innocentiam permutando in sua membra quasi edendo convertit. Ecce ipse, quem ad testimonium jam saepe deduximus, Paulus cum nunc Judaeam, nunc Corinthum, nunc Ephesum, nunc Romam, nunc Hispanias peteret, ut in peccati morte jacentibus, aeternae vitae gratiam nuntiaret, quid se aliud quam esse aquilam demonstrabat; quae velociter omnia transvolans, ubicunque jacens cadaver quaerebat, ut dum voluntatem Dei lucratis peccatoribus faceret, quasi escam suam in cadavere reperiret? Esca quippe justorum est conversio perversorum, de qua dicitur: Operamini non cibum qui perit, sed qui permanet in vitam aeternam (Joan. VI, 27). Auditis itaque tot sanctorum virtutibus, beatus Job obstupuisse intelligitur, et sub admirationis terrore siluisse. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT LIV [Rec. XXIII].

VERS. 31, 32. Adjecit Dominus, et locutus est ad Job: Nunquid qui contendit cum Deo tam facile conquiescit? Utique qui arguit Deum debet et respondere illi. 107. Pia et moderata Dei ad Job increpatio. Vir sanctus tanta

hac districtione flagelli non aestimavit augeri sibi merita, sed vitia resecari. Quae quia in se nulla cognovit, percussum injuste se credidit, et percutientem prorsus arguere est de percussione murmurare. Considerans autem Dominus quod ea quae protulit non ex tumore superbiae, sed ex qualitate collegerat vitae, pie illum increpat dicens: Nunquid qui contendit cum Deo tam facile conquiescit? Utique qui arguit Deum debet et respondere illi. Ac si apertius diceret: Qui tanta de tua actione locutus es, cur audita sanctorum vita siluisti? Me enim fuit arguere, de percussione mea an fuerit justa dubitare. Et bona quidem tua veraciter protulisti, sed haec quo tenderent flagella nescisti, quia etsi non habes jam quod corrigas, habes adhuc tamen quo crescas. In quantam vero virtutis arcem quam plurimos sublevem, me ecce narrante cognovisti. Ipse considerabas tuam, sed aliorum celsitudinem nesciebas. Auditis igitur aliorum virtutibus, si quid vales, responde de tuis. Scimus autem quod cordis sui oculum per elationis tenebras exstinguit, qui, cum recta agit, considerare meliorum merita negligit. 1045 At contra magno humilitatis radio sua opera illustrat, qui aliorum bona subtiliter pensat, quia dum ea quae ipse fecerit facta foris et ab aliis conspicit, eum qui de singularitate intus erumpere nititur superbiae tumorem premit. Hinc est quod voce Dei ad Eliam solum se aestimantem dicitur: Reliqui mihi septem millia virorum qui 1046 non curvaverunt genua ante Baal (III Reg. XIX, 18), ut dum non solum se remansisse cognosceret, elationis gloriam, quae ei de singularitate surgere poterat, evitare posset. Beatus itaque Job nihil perverse egisse reprehenditur, sed de aliorum etiam bene gestis docetur, ut dum se aequales et alios habere consideraret, ei qui singulariter summus est, se humiliter subdat.

LIBER TRIGESIMUS SECUNDUS.

Duobus ultimis versiculis capitis XXXIX explicatis, quatuor supra decem priores cap. XL exponuntur; multaque tum de infinita Dei potentia, tum de Satanae noxiis in homines consiliis docentur.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. Sancti, unde digniores efficiuntur, inde sibi magis videntur indigni. Sancti viri quo apud Deum altius virtutum dignitate proficiunt, eo subtilius indignos se esse deprehendunt, quia dum proximi luci fiunt, quidquid eos in seipsis latebat inveniunt; et tanto magis foris sibi deformes apparent, quanto nimis pulchrum est quod intus vident. Unusquisque enim sibi, dum tactu veri luminis illustratur, ostenditur; et unde agnoscit quid est justitia, inde eruditur, ut videat quid est culpa. Hinc est quod saepe mens nostra quamvis frigida in conversationis humanae actione torpescat, quamvis in quibusdam delinquat et nesciat, quamvis peccata quaedam quasi nulla perpendat; cum tamen ad appetenda sublimia orationis compunctione se erigit, ipso suae compunctionis oculo excitata ad circumspiciendam se post fletum vigilantior redit. Nam cum neglectam se deserit, et noxio tepore torpescit, vel otiosa verba, vel inutiles cogitationes minoris esse reatus omnimodo credit. At si, igne compunctionis incalescens, a tepore suo, tacta subito afflatu contemplationis, evigilet, illa quae levia paulo ante credidit mox ut gravia ac mortifera perhorrescit. Cuncta enim vel in minimis noxia, quasi atrocissima refugit, quia videlicet per conceptionem spiritus gravida, introire ad se jam inania nulla permittit. Ex eo enim quod intus conspicit, quam sint horrenda haec quae exterius perstrepunt sentit; et quanto amplius sublevata profecerit, tanto magis refugit infima, in quibus prostrata defecit. Nihil quippe eam nisi id quod interius viderat pascit; atque eo gravius tolerat quidquid se ei extrinsecus ingerit, quo illud non est quod intrinsecus

vidit, sed ex his interioribus quae raptim videre potuit, ad exteriora quae tolerat judicandi regulam sumit. Super se enim rapitur dum sublimia contemplatur; et semetipsam jam liberius excedendo conspiciens, quidquid ei ex seipsa sub seipsa remanet, subtilius comprehendit. Ex qua re miro modo agitur, ut, sicut superius dictum est, unde dignior efficitur, inde sibimet indigna videatur, et tunc rectitudini se longe esse sentiat, cum appropinquat. Unde Salomon ait: Cuncta tentavi in sapientia, et dixi: Sapiens efficiar, et ipsa longius recessit a me (Eccle. VII, 24). Quaesita enim sapientia longe recedere dicitur, quia appropinquanti altior videtur. Qui vero hanc nequaquam quaerunt, tanto se ei propinquos aestimant, quanto et ejus rectitudinis regulam ignorant, quia siti in tenebris mirari lucis claritatem nesciunt, quam nunquam viderunt; cumque in formam ejus pulchritudinis non tenduntur, in semetipsis libenter quotidie deformiores fiunt. Nam quisquis ejus radiis tangitur, sua illi manifestius tortitudo monstratur; et eo verius invenit quantum flectatur in vitio, quo, sagacius summa considerans, conspicit quantum distat a recto. Unde beatus Job humanum genus virtutibus transiens, amicos loquendo superavit; sed loquente Deo, sublimius eruditus, semetipsum cognoscendo reticuit. Illos namque injuste loquentes subdidit, sed ad verba locutionis intimae reum se juste cognovit. Et quidem cur flagellatus sit nescit, sed tamen cur flagella veneratus non sit, silendo redarguit. Divina enim judicia cum nesciuntur, non audaci sermone discutienda sunt, sed formidoloso silentio veneranda, quia et cum causas rerum conditor in flagello non aperit, eo justas indicat, quo se eas facere qui summe justus est demonstrat. Vir ergo sanctus, et prius de locutione, et post de silentio reprehensus, quid de semetipso sentiat innotescat. Ait enim:

CAPUT II.

CAP. XXXIX, VERS. 34. Qui leviter locutus sum, respondere quid possum? 2. De verbo otioso ne sancti quidem excusari possunt. Sed linguae culpas vitae meritis tegere curant. Ac si dicat: Sermonem meum defenderem, si hunc cum rationis pondere protulissem. At postquam lingua levitate usa convincitur, quid restat nisi ut conticendo refrenetur? Sequitur: IBID. Manum meam ponam super os meum. Usu sacri eloquii in manu operatio, in ore locutio solet intelligi. Manum ergo super os ponere est virtute boni operis culpas tegere incautae locutionis. Quis vero inveniri potest qui, quamlibet perfectus sit, de otioso tamen sermone non peccet? Jacobo attestante, qui ait: Nolite plures magistri fieri, in multis enim offendimus omnes (Jacob. III, 1). Et rursum: Linguam nullus hominum domare potest (Ibid. 8). Cujus culpas redarguens per semetipsam Veritas, dicit: Dico autem vobis quoniam omne verbum otiosum quod locuti fuerint homines, reddent de eo 1047 rationem in die judicii (Matth. XII, 36). Sed sancti viri ante Dei oculos student culpas linguae tegere meritis vitae, student bonorum operum pondere premere immoderata verborum. Unde in sancta Ecclesia manus super os ponitur, dum in electis ejus quotidie otiosae locutionis vitium bonae actionis virtute operitur. Scriptum namque est: Beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata (Psal. XXXI, 1). Sed rursum cum scriptum sit: Omnia nuda et aperta sunt oculis ejus (Hebr. IV, 13), quomodo tegi possunt quae ejus oculis cui cuncta nuda sunt abscondi nequaquam possunt? Sed quia hoc quod tegimus, inferius ponimus, atque hoc unde tegimus nimirum superducimus, ut quod est subterpositum tegamus, tegere peccata dicimur quae quasi subterponimus dum abdicamus, eisque aliud superducimus, dum bonae actionis opus ad hoc post eligimus ut praeferamus. Qui ergo priora mala deserit, et bona posterius facit, per hoc quod addit, transactam nequitiam tegit, cui boni operis merita superducit. Beatus igitur Job sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenens, et in verbis suis sua allegans, nostra designans, dicat ex se, dicat ex nobis:

Manum meam ponam super os meum; id est, hoc quod districto judici de sermone meo in me displicuisse considero, ante ejus oculos sub velamine recti operis abscondo. Sequitur:

CAPUT III.

VERS. 35. Unum locutus sum, quod utinam non dixissem; et alterum, quibus ultra non addam. 3. Job Deo increpanti humiliter se peccasse confitetur. Si transacta beati Job verba discutimus, nihil eum nequiter dixisse reperimus. Si vero dicta ejus, quae cum veritate ac libertate prolata sunt, in aliquod superbiae vitium flectimus, duo jam solummodo non erunt, quia multa erunt. Sed quia loqui nostrum est hominibus occultum sensum verbis aperire, loqui vero nostrum ad divinas aures est motum mentis etiam expressione actionis ostendere, beatus Job ad libram se subtilissimi examinis pensans, locutione sua secundo se deliquisse confitetur. Unum enim loqui illicite est res flagello dignas agere, aliud loqui est etiam de flagello murmurare. Qui ergo ante increpationem dominicam in omni opere hominibus praelatus fuit ipsa in altum increpatione proficiens, et minus se rectum prius in opere, et minus se patientem post in verbere agnovit. Unde semetipsum redarguit, dicens: Unum locutus sum, quod utinam non dixissem; et alterum, quibus ultra non addam. Ac si dicat: Rectum me quidem inter homines credidi: sed, te loquente, et ante flagella pravum, et post flagella me rigidum inveni. Quibus ultra non addam, quia jam quanto nunc te loquentem subtilius intelligo, tanto meipsum humilius investigo. [Vet. II, Rec. IV.] 4. Poenitentiae objectum sunt bona neglecta, et mala perpetrata. Activa vita multorum est, contemplativa paucorum. Et quia beatus Job sanctae Ecclesiae typum tenet, possunt electis omnibus haec ejus verba congruere, qui cognoscentes Dominum, in uno et alio deliquisse se sentiunt, quia se intelligunt vel in cogitatione et opere, vel in Dei ac proximi neglecta dilectione peccasse. Quibus se promittunt ultra nil addere, quia per

conversionis gratiam curant poenitendo quotidie etiam transacta purgare. Per hoc tamen quod beatus Job de duobus se poenitendo redarguit, liquido ostendit quod 1048 peccator omnis in poenitentia duplicem habere gemitum debet, nimirum quia et bonum quod oportuit non fecit, et malum quod non oportuit fecit. Hinc est enim quod per Moysen de eo qui juramentum protulit, ut vel male quid vel benefaceret, et hoc ipsum oblivione transcendit, dicitur: Offerat agnam de gregibus sive capram, orabitque pro eo sacerdos, et pro peccato ejus. Sin autem non potuerit offerre pecus, offerat duos turtures, vel duos pullos columbarum, unum pro peccato, et alterum in holocaustum (Levit. v. 6, 7, 8). Juramentum namque proferre est voto nos divinae servitutis alligare. Et cum bona opera promittimus, bene nos facere spondemus. Cum vero abstinentiam cruciatumque carnis nostrae vovemus, male ad praesens nos nobis facere juramus. Sed quia nullus in hac vita ita perfectus est, ut quamlibet Deo devotus sit, inter ipsa quantulumcunque pia vota non peccet, pro peccato agna offerri de gregibus sive capra praecipitur. Quid enim per agnam nisi activae vitae innocentia, quid per capram, quae in summis saepe extremisque rupibus pendens pascitur, nisi contemplativa vita signatur? Qui ergo se conspicit promissa ac proposita non implesse, ad sacrificium Dei sese studiosius debet vel innocentia boni operis, vel sublimi pastu contemplationis accingere. Et bene agna de gregibus, capra vero offerri de gregibus non jubetur, quia activa vita multorum est, contemplativa paucorum. Et cum haec agimus quae multos agere et egisse conspicimus, quasi agnam de gregibus damus. Sed cum offerentis virtus ad agnam capramque non sufficit, in remedium poenitentis adjungitur, ut duo pulli columbarum, vel duo turtures offerantur. Scimus quia columbarum pulli vel turtures pro cantu gemitus habent. Quid ergo per duos columbarum pullos, vel duos turtures, nisi duplex poenitentiae nostrae gemitus designatur, ut cum ad offerenda bona opera non assurgimus, nosmetipsos dupliciter defleamus, quia et recta non fecimus, et prava

operati sumus? Unde et unus turtur pro peccato, alter vero offerri in holocau tum jubetur. Holocaustum namque totum incensum dicitur. Unum ergo turturem pro peccato offerimus, cum pro culpa gemitum damus; de altero vero holocaustum facimus, cum pro eo quod bona negleximus, nosmetipsos funditus succendentes, igne doloris ardemus. Quia igitur duplex in poenitentia gemitus debetur, beatus Job divinae vocis increpatione proficiens, atque in sua reprehensione succrescens, dixisse se unum et alterum poenitens fatetur, ac si aperte dicat: Et erga bona per negligentiam torpui, et ad mala per audaciam prorupi: CAP. XL, VERS. 1, 2. Respondens autem Dominus Job de turbine, dixit: Accinge sicut vir lumbos tuos, interrogabo te, et indica mihi. [Vet. III, Rec. V.] Quid sit Dominum de turbine respondere, quid beatum Job lumbos accingere, quid interrogare Dei, quid hominis indicare, primo jam Domini sermone tractatum est (Sup. lib. XXVIII, n. 1 et seq.). Quia ergo lectoris taedio parcimus, curamus summopere ne dicta replicemus. Sequitur:

CAPUT IV.

VERS. 3. Nunquid irritum facies judicium meum, et condemnabis me, ut tu justificeris? 1049 5. Job juste correptus, ut occultis Dei judiciis etiam nesciens subderetur. Quisquis contra Domini flagella semetipsum defendere nititur, flagellantis judicium evacuare conatur. Nam cum culpa sua feriri se denegat, quid aliud quam injustitiam ferientis accusat? Beatum itaque Job non idcirco flagella coelestia percusserunt, ut in eo culpas exstinguerent, sed potius ut merita augerent, quatenus qui tranquillitatis tempore in tanta sanctitate claruerat, et ex percussione patesceret quae in eo etiam patientiae virtus latebat. Qui quidem culpam suam inter flagella non inveniens, nec tamen flagella eadem causam sibi esse augendi meriti deprehendens, injuste se feriri credidit, cum quid in se debuisset corrigi non invenit. Sed ne ipsa innocentia in tumorem elationis infletur, divina voce corripitur, et mens ejus

ab iniquitate libera, sed verberibus pressa, ad judicia occulta revocatur, ut superna sententia, etsi non est cognita, non tamen credatur injusta; sed eo saltem justum credat omne quod patitur, quo nimirum constat quia Deo auctore patiatur. Magna enim satisfactio percussionis est voluntas justa conditoris. Quae cum injustum facere nihil solet, justa agnoscitur etiam si latet. Nam cum pro injustitiae peccato percutimur, si in percussione nostra divinae voluntati conjungimur, mox a nostra injustitia ipsa conjunctione liberamur. Quisquis enim jam percussionem tolerat, sed adhuc causas percussionis ignorat, si justum credens hoc ipsum contra se judicium amplectitur, eo ipso ab injustitia sua jam correctus est, quo percussum se juste gratulatur. In vindicta enim sua Deo se socians, sese contra se erigit; et magna est jam justitia, quod voluntati judicis concordat in poena, cui discrepavit in culpa. Vir igitur sanctus, quia in nulla Deo culpa discrepaverat, quasi cum difficultate ei inter supplicia concordabat. Neque enim credidit quod flagella quae solent vitia exstinguere in illo sola merita augerent. Unde nunc juste corripitur, ut occultis judiciis et nesciens subderetur, eique dicitur: Nunquid irritum facies judicium meum, et condemnabis me ut tu justificeris? Ac si aperte diceretur: Tua quidem bene acta consideras, sed mea occulta judicia ignoras. Si ergo ex tuis meritis contra mea flagella disputas, quid aliud quam me de injustitia addicere te justificando festinas? Sequitur:

CAPUT V [Vet.

IV, Rec. VI]. VERS. 4. Si habes brachium sicut Deus, et si voce simili tonas. 6. Contemplata Dei sanctitate, ad humilitatem provocantur etiam sanctiores. Quia humanum genus beatus Job meritis transcendebat, eum pius conditor et eruditor ad considerandam similitudinem suae magnitudinis provocat, ut cognita tanta dissimilitudine, in humilitate se premat. 7. Deus, etsi corporis expers, cum rebus corporeis comparatur.

Anthropomorphitarum haeresis. Deo cur oculi et scapulae tribuantur. Recordari quo sensu dicitur. Quid Dei alae. Sed cum in Deo vox et brachium dicitur, cavendum summopere est, ne quid in eo mens corporeum suspicetur. In Anthropomorphitarum namque haeresim cadere est, eum qui incircumscripte implet et circumplectitur omnia intra corporalia lineamenta concludere. Sed omnipotens Deus ad sua nos trahens, usque ad nostra se humiliat, atque ut alta insinuet, humilibus condescendit, quatenus parvulorum animus rebus cognitis enutritus, ad inquirenda exsurgat incognita, atque 1050 ab eo qui longe super ipsum est quaedam juxta se audiens, quasi quibusdam ad illum passibus moveatur. Unde fit ut per Scripturam suam aliquando a corporibus hominum, aliquando a mentibus, aliquando vero ab avibus, aliquando etiam ab insensatis rebus quasdam longe dissimiles in se similitudines trahat. Plerumque enim a corporibus hominum in se similitudinem trahit, sicut de eo propheta ad Israelitas dicit: Qui tetigit vos, tangit pupillam oculi ejus (Zach. II, 8). Et sicut de eo rursum speranti homini per Prophetam dicitur: In scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi (Psal. XC, 4). Constat nimirum quod in natura sua nec oculum Deus, nec scapulas habeat, sed quia nos per oculum cernimus, in scapulis vero onera sustinemus. Deus quod omnia videt, oculum habere perhibetur; quod vero nos tolerat, atque eo ipso quo tolerat servat, obumbrare nobis in scapulis dicitur. Ait enim: In scapulis suis obumbravit tibi. Ac si diceret peccatori homini, et post peccatum veniam deprecanti: Ea pietate Dominus te protegit, qua te pietate toleravit. Obumbrat enim in scapulis suis, quia dum portat, defendit. [Vet. V.] Aliquando vero a mentibus in se similitudinem trahit, sicut per prophetam ad Israel dicit: Recordatus sum tui, miserans adolescentiam tuam (Jerem. II, 2). Et rursum per sponsae comparationem loquens ait: Et si illa oblita fuerit, ego tamen non obliviscar tui (Isai. XLIX, 15). Quis enim nesciat quia Dei memoria nec oblivione rumpitur, nec recordatione sarcitur? Sed dum aliqua deserens praetermittit, more mentium

oblivisci dicitur; et cum post longum tempus quae voluerit visitat, nostrae mutabilitatis consuetudine recordatus vocatur. Quo enim pacto divinitatis ejus vim oblivio dissipat, cui ipsa quoque laudabilis memoria essentialiter non concordat? Nulla namque nisi aut praeterita, aut absentia recordantur. Quomodo ergo Deus praeteritorum reminiscitur, cum ipsa quae in semetipsis praetereunt ejus nutui semper praesentia assistunt? Aut quomodo absentium recordatur, dum omne quod est per hoc illi praesto est, quod in ipso est? Quod si ei praesto non esset, omnino non esset; nam non existentia videndo creat, existentia videndo continet. Quidquid ergo creator non videt, essentia subsistendi caret. Aliquando autem ab avibus in illum similitudo trahitur, sicut per Moysen dicitur: Expandit alas suas, et assumpsit eos (Deut. XXXII, 11). Et propheta ait: Sub umbra alarum tuarum protege me (Psal. XVI, 9). Quia enim nos parvulos dum protegit nutrit, et non gravi atque onerosa, sed levi et blanda protectione nos refovet, dum suas in nos misericordias exerit, quasi more avium super nos alas tendit. Aliquando etiam insensatis rebus, propter infirmitatem nostram alta condescensione se comparat, sicut per prophetam dicit: Ecce ego stridebo super vos, sicut stridet plaustrum onustum feno (Amos. II, 13). Quia enim fenum est vita carnalium, sicut scriptum est: Omnis caro fenum (Isai. XL, 6), in eo quod Dominus vitam carnalium patitur, more plaustri fenum se portare testatur. Cui sub feni onere stridere est pondera et iniquitates peccantium cum querela tolerare. Cum ergo longe dissimiles in se similitudines trahat, solerter intuendum est quod quaedam talia aliquando dicantur in Deo propter 1051 effectum operis, aliquando autem ad indicandam ejus substantiam majestatis. Nam cum in Deo oculus, scapulae, pes atque alae nominantur, effectus quidem operationis ostenditur. Cum vero manus, brachium, dextera vel vox in Deo dicitur, per haec vocabula consubstantialis ei Filius demonstratur. Ipse quippe est et manus et dextera, de cujus ascensione per Moysen Pater loquitur, dicens: Tollam in coelum

manum meam, et jurabo per dexteram meam (Deut. XXXII, 40). Ipse brachium, de quo propheta ait: Et brachium Domini cui revelatum est. (Isai. LIII, 1)? Ipse vox, quia eum Pater gignendo dixit: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te (Psal. II, 7). Et de quo scriptum est: In principio erat. Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Joan. I, 1). Per hoc Verbum fecisse Patrem omnia David asserit, dicens: Dixit, et facta sunt (Psal. XXXII, 9). Deum ergo brachium babere est operantem Filium gignere, voce tonare est consubstantialem sibi Filium mundo terribiliter demonstrare. Beato igitur Job cum dicit Dominus: Si habes brachium sicut Deus, et si voce simili tonas, mira dispensatione pietatis eum dum increpat exaltat, quia eum quem sua comparatione superat superiorem cunctis demonstrat. Cui in hac propositione subjungit:

CAPUT VI [Rec. VII].

VERS. 5. Circumda tibi decorem, et in sublime erigere, et esto gloriosus, et speciosis induere vestibus. 8. Angeli et Ecclesia, Dei decor et ornamentum sunt. Subaudis, ut ego. Ipse enim sibi circumdat decorem, de quo scriptum est: Dominus regnavit, decorem induit (Psal. XCII, 1). Ipse apud nos in sublime erigitur, cum nostris mentibus in natura sua esse impenetrabilis demonstratur. Ipse vero gloriosus est, qui dum seipso perfruitur, accedentis laudis indigens non est. Ipse speciosis induitur vestibus, quia sanctorum angelorum choros, quos condidit, in usum sui decoris assumpsit, et velut quamdam vestem gloriosam sibi Ecclesiam exhibet non habentem rugam, aut maculam (Ephes. V, 27). Unde ei per prophetam dicitur: Confessionem et decorem induisti, amictus lumine sicut vestimento (Psal. CIII, 2). Hic quippe confessionem induit, illic decorem, quia quos hic per poenitentiam confitentes fecerit, illic fulgentes per decorem justitiae ostendet. Luce ergo sicut vestimento amictus est, quia sanctis omnibus, quibus dictum est: Vos estis lux mundi (Matth. V, 14), in illa aeterna gloria vestietur. Unde et per

Evangelium dicitur, quia, transfigurato in monte Domino vestimenta ejus facta sunt candida sicut nix (Matth. XVII, 2). In qua transfiguratione quid aliud quam resurrectionis ultimae gloria nuntiatur? In monte enim vestimenta ejus sicut nix facta sunt, quia in supernae claritatis culmine sancti omnes ei luce justitiae fulgentes adhaerebunt. [Vet. VI.] Sed quia speciosarum vestium nomine justos sibi quomodo adjungat insinuat, injustos etiam quomodo a se disjungat ostendit. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII.

VERS. 6. Disperge superbos in furore tuo. 9. Deus tranquille irascitur. Subaudis ut ego, qui eos et tranquillitatis tempore unitos contra me tolero, et districtus quandoque veniens, in meo eos furore dispergo. Sed inter haec solerter intuendum est quod gravis perfidiae error admittitur, si fortasse quis aestimet quod in illa divinitatis substantia furor et tranquillitas varietur. Creator namque omnium eo summe immortalis est, quo creaturae more mutabilis 1052 non est. Hinc de illo per Jacobum dicitur: Apud quem non est transmutatio, nec vicissitudinis obumbratio (Jac. I, 17). Hinc rursum scriptum est: Tu autem, Domine, cum tranquillitate judicas (Sap. XII, 18). Hinc propheta ait: Deserta facta est terra a facie irae columbae, a facie furoris Domini (Jerem. XXV, 38). Quod enim iram columbae praedixerat, hoc furorem Domini subjunxit. Columba namque valde simplex est animal; et quia in Deum nulla furoris inaequalitas serpit, furorem Domini iram columbae nominavit. Ut enim divinae districtionis vim imperturbabilem demonstraret, et iram dixit, et columbae, ac si apertius diceret: Districtum judicium inconcussus exerit, qui permanens mansuetus injustos punit. Unde et in extremo judicio, in semetipso incommutabilis manens, nulla vicissitudine ac mutabilitate variatur, sed tamen electis ac reprobis nequaquam sub specie ejusdem incommutabilitatis ostenditur, quia et tranquillus justis, et iratus apparebit injustis. Teste enim conscientia intra

semetipsos deferunt, unde eorum mentes aeque unum respiciant, sed non aequaliter modificentur, quia et istis eum benignum ostendit anteacta justitia, et illis terribilem culpa. Quorum pavorem quis explicet, cum contigerit miseris et intra se culpas cernere, et ante se judicem justum videre? Hoc nimirum quotidie in usu vitae praesentis agitur, ut de qualitate venturi judicis mortalium corda doceantur. Nam cum duo ad judicium pergunt, alius innocentiae sibi conscius, alius culpae, ante prolatam sententiam adhuc tacentem judicem utrique conspiciunt, et tamen culpae debitor gravem contra se iram hoc ipsum judicis silentium suspicatur. Quam iram sibi non denuntiat perturbatio judicis, sed recordatio pravitatis, quia etsi adhuc foris reum sententia non clamat, intus tamen graviter conscientia accusat. At contra justitiae amicus decernentis vultum conspicit, sed intus de testimonio bonae recordationis hilarescit, et quo apud se quod metuat non habet, eo omne quod erga semetipsum est blandum videt. Hoc itaque loco furor Domini dicitur non perturbatio divinae substantiae, sed super peccatores male sibi conscios examinatio justae vindictae. Quamvis enim eum tranquillum in judicio videant, tamen quia feriendos se ab illo non dubitant, eum in suis motibus perturbatum putant. Sequitur:

CAPUT VIII.

IBID. Et respiciens omnem arrogantem humilia. 10. Omnis arrogans aut poenitendo cognoscit culpam, aut pereundo percipit poenam. Ac si dicat ut ego. Apte autem ad vindictae ordinem arrogantibus superborum culpa praeponitur, quia nimirum non superbia de arrogantia, sed generatur arrogantia de superbia. Duobus autem modis a Domino peccator unusquisque respicitur, cum aut a peccato convertitur, aut ex peccato punitur. De respectu enim conversionis dicitur: Quia respexit Dominus Petrum, et recordatus Petrus verbi Jesu flevit amare (Luc. XXII, 61). De respectu ultionis rursus dicitur: Vultus autem Domini super facientes mala,

ut perdat de terra memoriam eorum (Psal. XXXIII, 17). Utrisque autem modis in humilitate arrogans sternitur, quia aut poenitendo cognoscit culpam, aut pereundo percipit poenam:

CAPUT IX [Vet. VII].

VERS. 7. Respice cunctos superbos, et confunde eos, et contere impios in loco suo. 1053 11. Superbi dum elevatur dejectio. Subaudis ut ego. Superbi enim ex respectu Domini confunduntur, aut hic de pietate cognoscentes et damnantes crimina, aut illic supplicia de justitia sentientes. Impiorum vero locus ipsa superbia est, quia cum scriptum sit: Initium omnis peccati superbia (Eccli. X, 15), unde oritur impietas, ibi continetur, quamvis nec quidquam a superbia distat impietas. Valde enim superbire est impia de auctore sentire. Impius ergo in loco suo conteritur, quia ipsa superbia qua elevatur opprimitur; cumque, efferendo se in cogitationibus erigit, lumen sibi justitiae quod invenire debuisset abscondit. Saepe autem dum contra Deum falsa gloria exterius proficit, vera miseria interius inanescit. Unde Propheta ait: Dejecisti eos dum allevarentur (Psal. LXXII, 18). Non enim ait: Dejecisti eos postquam elevati sunt, sed dum allevarentur, quia hoc ipsum sit superbis interius dejici, quod eis falsa contingit gloria exterius elevari. Ordinante enim divino judicio, non eis hic aliud culpa est, atque aliud poena, sed sua illis in poenam vertitur culpa, ut elatis fastu superbiae hoc ipsum sit vere intus cadere quod foris ostenditur profecisse. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 8. Absconde eos in pulvere, simul et facies eorum demerge in foveam. 12. Deus corda superborum, terrenis negotiis et desideriis opprimi permittit. Ac si dicat ut ego. Superbos enim atque impios justo judicio Dominus in pulvere abscondit, quia eorum corda ipsis quae, despecto amore creatoris, eligunt terrenis opprimi negotiis permittit. Unde et illorum vitam

cum in extremo judicio discutit, tanquam sibi absconditam non agnoscit, dicens: Nescio qui estis (Luc. XIII, 27). Vita pravorum sub pulvere absconditur, quia abjectis et infimis desideriis gravatur. Quisquis enim adhuc ea quae mundi sunt appetit, quasi ante faciem veri luminis non apparet, quia nimirum sub pulvere terrenae cogitationis latet. Hunc pravarum cogitationum pulverem oppressa mens tolerat, quem ventus nequissimae tentationis apportat. [Vet. VIII.] Hinc est enim quod de unaquaque anima terrenis desideriis aggravata sub Ephraim specie per prophetam dicitur: Factus est Ephraim panis subcinericius, qui non reversatur (Osee. VII, 8). Ex natura quippe bene condita est nobis intentio, quae surgat in Deum; sed ex conversatione nequiter assueta inest voluptas, quae praesens premat in saeculum. Panis autem subcinericius ex ea parte est mundior, quam inferius occultat, atque ex ea parte sordidior, qua desuper cinerem tolerat. Quisquis ergo intentionem qua Deum debuisset quaerere negligit, quasi more panis subcinericii mundiorem partem inferius premit, et cum curas saeculi libenter tolerat, quasi congestum cinerem superius portat. Reversaretur autem panis subcinericius, si desideriorum carnalium cinerem repelleret, et intentionem bonam, quam in se dudum despiciendo oppresserat, superius ostentaret. Sed reversari renuit, cum mens, amore curarum saecularium pressa, molem superpositi cineris abjicere negligit, dumque assurgere in intentionem bonam non appetit, quasi mundiorem faciem subter premit. 13. Dum superbiendo altiora petunt, ad inferiora retruduntur. Apte autem subjungitur: Simul et facies eorum demerge in foveam. Ac si dicat, Ut ego. Justo namque judicio superborum facies Dominus in foveam mergit, quia intentionem cordis eorum sese ultra homines erigentem inferius dejicit. Ima enim 1054 respicit, cujus facies foveam attendit. Et bene de superbis dicitur quod eorum facies in foveam demerguntur, quia ima petunt, dum superbiendo altiora appetunt; et quo magis extollendo se erigunt, eo magis ruendo inferius tendunt. Terrenam

quippe gloriam quaerunt, et infima sunt quae prospiciunt, dum superbiendo alta sectantur. Unde miro et diverso modo res agitur, ut humiles coelum petant, dum se inferius dejiciunt; superbi infima appetant, dum despiciendo caeteros quasi in altioribus extolluntur. Isti se, dum despiciunt, coelestibus junguntur; illi, dum se erigunt, a superioribus dividuntur, atque, ut ita dixerim, illi se elevantes deprimunt, isti deprimentes elevant. Et bene de superbientibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Humiliat autem peccatores usque ad terram (Psal. CXLVI, 6), quia ea quae infra sunt ambientes, dum extollendo se erigunt, amisso coelo quid aliud quam terram petunt? Quibus hoc ipsum jam in imis cecidisse est relictis superioribus ima quaesisse. Recte ergo eorum facies in foveam demergi perhibentur, quia sequentes infima, ad inferni barathrum tendunt. Justo enim judicio agitur, ut quos hic voluntaria aversio excaecat, illic ab intuitu veri luminis digna supplicii fovea abscondat. Igitur quia vir sanctus tanto divinae potentiae terrore discussus est, ut ei diceretur: Si habes brachium ut Deus, et si voce simili tonas, disperge superbos in furore tuo, et respiciens omnem arrogantem humilia, et caetera quae Deus quidem facere, sed homo vix sufficit audire, cuncta haec qua Dominus intentione praemiserit, fine subditae conclusionis ostendit, dicens:

CAPUT XI [Vet.

IX, Rec. VIII]. VERS. 9. Et ego confitebor quod salvare te possit dextera tua. 14. Pelagianorum error suis viribus salvari posse confidentium. Ac si aperte diceret: Si potes terribilia haec facere, ipse quae protuli, tibi et non mihi deputo bona omnia quae fecisti. Si vero peccantes alios respiciendo non potes perdere, liquet quod a reatu nequitiae tua te non vales virtute liberare. Ecce divina voce ad beatum Job dicitur quod sua dextera non salvetur, et tamen nonnulli hominum, qui ab hujus viri viribus longe sunt, despecto Dei adjutorio, sua se fortitudine salvari posse confidunt. Pro

quibus quid deprecari aliud debemus, nisi ut si jam dona bonorum operum perceperunt, hoc quoque donum accipiant, ut a quo haec acceperint discant? Quia autem praemissis verbis Dominus potentiam suae magnitudinis intulit, nunc in subsequentibus nequitiam antiqui hostis ostendit, ut bonus famulus et, auditis prius virtutibus Domini, sciret quantum diligeret, et, cognita post calliditate diaboli, disceret quantum timeret. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Leo rugiet, quis non timebit? Dominus Deus (ocutus est, quis non prophetabit (Amos III, 8)? Postquam enim virtus ei sui conditoris innotuit, nequaquam illum vires adversarii latere debuerunt, ut eo magis defensori suo se humilius subderet quo hostis sui nequitias subtilius agnovisset, protectoremque suum tanto ardentius quaereret, quanto terribiliorem hostem cognosceret quem vitaret. Certum quippe est quia minus diligit ereptorem suum qui minus intelligit periculum quod evasit, et vile solatium deputat defensoris qui virtutem adversarii debilem putat. Unde bene ereptionem suam Domino tribuens propheta dicebat: Diligam te, Domine, virtus mea (Psal. XVII, 1), aperte videlicet dicens: Eo te magis diligo, quo infirmitatem 1055 propriam sentiens, virtutem meam te esse cognosco. Hinc rursum ait: Mirifica misericordias tuas, qui salvos facis sperantes in te (Psal. XVI, 7), quia tunc nimirum misericordiae Domini mirae apud nosmetipsos qui eripimur fiunt, cum per easdem misericordias quam gravia fuerint pericula quae evasimus, agnoscuntur. 15. Vires fraudes que hostis nostri describuntur. Et quia sermone praecedenti Dominus beato Job mira opera sanctorum sequentium patefecit, ut his auditis disceret de virtutum suarum culmine quam humilia sentire debuisset, nunc ei cum quo hoste bellum gerat ostenditur, et vires fraudesque illius subtilius indicantur, ut qui ad colloquium auctoris sui perductus est, argumenta adversarii aperte cognoscat. Verbis enim sequentibus fideli famulo Dominus cunctas hostis callidi machinationes insinuat, omne quod opprimendo rapit, omne quod insidiando circumvolat, omne quod minando terret, omne quod suadendo

blanditur, omne quod desperando frangit, omne quod promittendo decipit. Cuncta ergo tergiversationis ejus certamina exorditur, dicens:

CAPUT XII [Vet.

X, Rec. IX]. VERS. 10. Ecce Behemoth, quem feci tecum. 16. Omnia creata sunt simul secundum substantiam, non secundum speciem. Quem sub Behemoth nomine nisi antiquum hostem insinuat, qui interpretatus ex Hebraea voce, in Latina lingua animal sonat? Cujus inferius, dum malitia subditur, patenter persona monstratur. Sed cum de Deo scriptum sit quia fecit omnia simul (Eccli. XVIII, 1), cur hoc animal cum homine fecisse se indicat, dum cuncta quia simul fecerit constat? Rursum quaerendum est, quomodo Deus cuncta simul condidit, dum Moyses sex dierum mutatione variante distincte creata describat (Genes. I, 32). Quod tamen citius agnoscimus, si ipsas causas originum subtiliter indagamus. Rerum quippe substantia simul creata est, sed simul species formata non est, et quod simul exstitit per substantiam materiae non simul apparuit per speciem formae. Cum enim simul factum coelum terraque describitur, simul spiritalia atque corporalia, simul quidquid de coelo oritur, simul factum quidquid de terra producitur indicatur. Sol quippe, luna et sidera quarto die in coelo facta perhibentur, sed quod quarto die processit in specie primo die in coeli substantia exstitit per conditionem. Primo die creata terra dicitur, et tertio arbusta condita, et cuncta terrae virentia describuntur; sed hoc quod die tertio se in specie protulit, nimirum primo die in ipsa de qua ortum est terrae substantia conditum fuit. Hinc est quod Moyses distincte per dies singulos condita omnia retulit, et tamen simul omnia creata subjunxit, dicens: Istae sunt generationes coeli et terrae, quando creatae sunt in die quo fecit Dominus coelum et terram, et omne virgultum agri, antequam oriretur in terra, omnemque herbam regionis (Genes. II, 4, 5). Qui enim diversis diebus creatum coelum et terram, virgultum, herbamque narraverat, nunc uno die

facta manifestat, ut liquido ostenderet quod creatura omnis simul per substantiam exstitit, quamvis non simul per speciem processit. Hinc illic quoque scriptum est: Creavit Deus hominem ad imaginem suam, ad imaginem Dei creavit illum, masculum et feminam fecit eos (Genes. I, 27). Necdum enim Eva facta describitur, et jam homo masculus et femina perhibetur. Sed quia ex Adae latere 1056 procul dubio femina erat processura, in illo jam computatur per substantiam, a quo fuerat producenda per formam. Considerare tamen haec et in minimis possumus, ut ex minimis majora pensemus. Herba namque cum creatur, necdum in illa fructus, necdum fructus sui semen ostenditur. Inest vero ei etiam cum non apparet fructus et semen, quia nimirum simul sunt in radicis substantia quae non simul prodeunt per temporis incrementa. 17. Quo sensu angelus et homo simul creati. Angelus desertor peccando dona gratiae amisit, non naturae. Duo Manichaeorum principia rejiciuntur. Sed quia haec simul creata per substantiam dicimus, quae prodire alia ex aliis invenimus, quo pacto cum beato Job Behemoth creatus asseritur, cum neque una sit substantia angeli et hominis, neque homo ex angelo, neque angelus ex homine proferatur? Si vero propter hoc factus Behemoth cum beato Job dicitur, quod creatura omnis ab auctore, qui in actione sua nequaquam temporis protelatione distenditur, simul condita non dubitatur, cur de Behemoth specialiter dicitur quod commune cum creaturis omnibus generaliter habetur? Sed si rerum causas subtili discussione pensamus, simul angelum factum hominemque cognoscimus, simul videlicet non unitate temporis, sed cognitione rationis; simul per acceptam imaginem sapientiae, et non simul per conjunctam substantiam formae. Scriptum namque de homine est: Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram (Genes. I, 26). Et per Ezechielem ad Satan dicitur: Tu signaculum similitudinis, plenus sapientia et perfectus decore in deliciis paradisi Dei faisti (Ezech. XXVIII, 12). In cuncta igitur creatura, homo et angelus simul conditus exstitit quia ab omni creatura

irrationali distinctus processit. Quia ergo in cuncta conditione rerum nullum rationale animal nisi angelus et homo est, quidquid ratione uti non potest, cum homine factum non est. Dicatur itaque homini, dicatur de angelo, qui etsi potentiam sublimitatis perdidit, subtilitatem tamen naturae rationalis non amisit: Ecce Behemoth, quem feci tecum. Ut dum homo eum qui in ratione secum factus est, periisse considerat, vicinum sibi casum superbiae ex ipsa propinqui sui perditione pertimescat. In his autem verbis solerter intuendum est quod aperte voce dominica nefarium Manichaei dogma reprehenditur, qui dum duo principia loquitur, tenebrarum gentem non factam asserere conatur. Quomodo enim non facta gens nequissima dicitur, dum Behemoth istum, videlicet auctorem nequitiae per naturam bene conditum se Dominus fecisse testatur? Sed quia Behemoth iste, cum quo sit factus audivimus, perditus quid agat audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII [Rec. X].

IBID. Fenum sicut bos comedet. 18. Diabolus mundam spiritualium vitam labefactare potissimum cupit. Si prophetarum sollicite verba discutimus, haec et illa uno spiritu prolata reperimus. Isaias namque cum cerneret vitam peccantium ab antiquo et insatiabile hoste devorari, ait: Leo sicut bos comedet paleas (Isai. XI, 7). Quid autem feni palearumque nomine nisi carnalium vita signatur? De qua per prophetam dicitur: Omnis caro fenum (Isai. XL, 6). Qui ergo hic Behemoth, illic leo; qui hic fenum, illic paleae nominantur. Sed perscrutari mens nititur cur iste vel apud Isaiam leo, vel hic dominica voce Behemoth, in comestione feni vel paleae, utroque 1057 loco, non equo, sed bovi comparetur. Quod tamen citius agnoscimus, si in utrisque animalibus quae sit nutrimentorum distantia perpendamus. Equi namque fenum quamlibet sordidum comedunt, aquam vero non nisi mundam bibunt. Boves autem aquam quamlibet sordidam bibunt, sed feno non nisi mundo vescuntur. Quid est ergo quod bovi, qui mundo pabulo

pascitur, Behemoth iste comparatur, nisi hoc quod de isto antiquo hoste per prophetam alium dicitur: Esca ejus electa (Habac. I, 16)? Neque enim se eos gaudet rapere, quos pravis ac sordidis actionibus implicatos in imis secum respicit voluntarie jacere. Fenum ergo comedere sicut bos appetit, quia suggestionis suae dente conterere mundam vitam spiritalium quaerit. 19. Multi videntur electi, et non sunt. Sed quaerendum video quomodo Behemoth iste, fenum sicut bos comedens, vitam spiritualium consumere dicitur, cum, sicut supra dictum est, feni nomine vita carnalium designatur. Esca quoque ejus electa jam non erit, si fenum comedens carnalem rapit. Sed ad haec citius occurrit, quia nonnulli hominum et apud Deum fenum sunt, et apud homines sanctitatis nomine censentur, cum et ante humanos oculos aliud ostendit vita, et ante divina judicia aliud intendit conscientia. Ii itaque apud humana judicia electi sunt, sed apud subtile Domini examen fenum. An ante divinos oculos Saul fenum non erat, de quo Samuel propheta populo dicebat: Certe videtis quem elegit Dominus (I Reg. X, 24); et de quo paulo superius dicitur: Electus et bonus? Quem enim peccans populus meruit, et apud Deum reprobus exstitit, et tamen causarum ordine electus et bonus fuit. [Vet. XI.] Quia multi fenum, sunt, et electos se ex humana aestimatione suspicantur, bene per Salomonem dicitur: Vidi impios sepultos, qui etiam dum adhuc viverent, in loco sancto erant, et laudabantur in civitate quasi justorum operum (Eccle. VIII, 10). Quia multi fenum sunt, sed tamen sanctitatis favore vallantur, bene quidam sapiens indicat, dicens: Transi, hospes, et orna mensam (Eccli. XXIX, 33). Transeundo namque hospes ornare mensam dicitur, quia si ad altare Dei quis positus, per bona opera gloriam propriam quaerit, et de ostentatione sanctitatis ejus laus altaris extenditur, et ipse tamen apud Deum in numero civium non habetur. Aliis ejus opinio proficit, et tamen a Deo extraneus ipse pertransit. Mensam itaque transeundo decoravit, quia stare ad sacra noluit qui per omne quod agere studuit ad humanas laudes mente decurrit. Quia ergo nonnulli

mundam quidem vitam per studium ducunt, sed ex illa intus placere non appetunt, recte et esca ejus electa dicitur, et tamen fenum sicut bos comedere Behemoth iste perhibetur. Quasi enim ante os Behemoth istius mundum fenum in terra atque in infimis jacet, cum et vita quasi innocens per mandatorum custodiam agitur, et tamen inter actionem quae bona ostenditur cor ad appetenda sublimia non elevatur. Quid itaque utilitatis agit qui in se munditiam vitae custodit, si per intentionem infimam in ore Behemoth hujus inveniendum se in terra derelinquit? Quia igitur omnipotens Deus quid hostis noster agat insinuat, nunc quomodo praevaleat innotescat, ut calliditatis ejus nequitia quo apertius cognoscitur, eo facilius 1058 superetur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. XI].

VERS. 11. Fortitudo ejus in lumbis ejus, et virtus illius in umbilico ventris ejus. 20. Diabolus per luxuriam utrique hominum sexui plerumque dominatur. Seminaria coitus viris in lumbis esse, inesse autem feminis in umbilico perhibetur. Hinc est enim quod Veritas discipulis dicit: Sint lumbi vestri praecincti (Luc. XII, 35). Hinc Petrus, cum luxuriam a corde restringeret, admonebat, dicens: Succincti lumbos mentis vestrae (I Pet. I, 13). Hinc Paulus cum per Abrahae sacrificium Melchisedech tempore Levi sacerdotium diceret decimatum, ubi tunc in Abrahae corpore Levi lateret ostendens, ait: Adhuc enim in lumbis patris erat (Hebr. VII, 10). Quia vero seminarium luxuriae feminis in umbiculo continetur propheta testatur, qui, sub specie feminae prostitutae, Judaeae petulantiam increpans, ait: In die ortus tui non est praecisus umbilicus tuus (Ezech. XVI, 4). In die quippe ortus umbilicum praecidere est conversionis tempore carnis luxuriam resecare. Quia enim difficile est male inchoata corrigere, et semel formata deformiter in melius reformare, de ortu suo Judaea reprehenditur, quae dum in Deo nata est, impraecisum umbilicum retinuit, quia fluxa luxuriae non

abscidit. Quia igitur potestate diaboli utriusque generis sexus valde ex luxuriae infirmitate substernitur, et fortitudo ejus in lumbis contra masculos, et virtus illius contra feminas in umbilico perhibetur. [Vet. XII.] 21. Spiritus superbiam sequi solet carnis corruptio. Sed cur cum Behemoth istum fenum comedere intulit, prima deceptionis ejus argumenta luxuriae damna subjunxit, nisi quod liquido omnibus patet quia postquam semel hominis spiritum superbia ceperit, mox se ad corruptionem carnis extendit? Quod in ipsis quoque hominibus primis agnoscimus, qui, dum post perpetratam superbiam pudenda membra contegunt, patenter indicarunt quia postquam apud semetipsos intus arripere alta conati sunt, mox in carne foris erubescenda pertulerunt (Genes. III, 7). Behemoth itaque iste insatiabiliter saeviens, et devorare totum simul hominem quaerens, modo in superbiam mentem erigit, modo carnem luxuriae voluptate corrumpit. Bene autem nequaquam fortitudo ejus in lumbis vel umbilico eorum dicitur qui prosternuntur, sed, fortitudo ejus in lumbis ejus, et virtus illius in umbilico ventris ejus. Ac si aperte diceretur: Fortitudo ejus in lumbis suis, et virtus illius in umbilico ventris sui, quia nimirum ejus proprie corpus fiunt, qui, suggestionum turpium blandimentis decepti, ei per luxuriae fluxa succumbunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV [Rec. XII].

VERS. 12. Stringit caudam suam quasi cedrum. 22. Diabolus divina potestate ligatus, olim solvetur, et per Antichristum multa signa faciet. Multa in his suppetunt, quae instruendis moribus proferantur; sed prius Behemoth istius violenta discutimus, ut post subtilius astuta detegamus. In Scriptura sacra cedri nomine aliquando alta excellentia gloriae coelestis exprimitur, aliquando autem pravorum rigida elatio designatur. Cedri nomine coelestis gloriae celsitudo exprimitur, sicut Psalmista testatur: Justus ut palma florebit, sicut cedrus Libani multiplicabitur (Psal. XCI, 13).

Cedri rursus nomine superba pravorum potentia designatur, sicut per eumdem Prophetam dicitur: Vox Domini confringentis cedros (Psal. XXVIII, 5). Quid autem cauda Behemoth istius, nisi illa antiqui hostis extremitas dicitur; cum nimirum vas proprium illum perditum hominem 1059 ingreditur, qui specialiter Antichristus nuncupatur? Qui quoniam modo honoribus saeculi, modo signis et prodigiis fictae sanctitatis in tumorem potentiae elevari permittitur, recte voce Dominica cauda illius cedro comparatur. Sicut enim cedrus arbusta caetera in altum crescendo deserit, ita tunc Antichristus mundi gloriam temporaliter obtinens, mensuras hominum et honoris culmine, et signorum potestate transcendet. Spiritus quippe in illo est qui, in sublimibus conditus, potentiam naturae suae non perdidit vel dejectus. Cujus idcirco virtus nunc minime ostenditur, quia dispensatione divinae fortitudinis ligatur. Unde per Joannem dicitur: Vidi angelum descendentem de coelo, habentem clavem abyssi, et calenam magnam in manu sua; et apprehendit draconem serpentem antiquum, qui est diabolus et Satanas, et ligavit eum per annos mille, et misit eum in abyssum, et clausit et signavit super eum (Apoc. XX, 1, 2, 3). Ligatus quippe missus in abyssum perhibetur, quia retrusus in pravorum cordibus, potentia divinae dispensationis astringitur, ne in quantum nocere valet effrenetur, ut quamvis per eos occulte saeviat, ad violentas tamen rapinas superbiae non erumpat. Sed illic quomodo in mundi fine sit solvendus intimatur, cum dicitur: Et postquam consummati fuerint mille anni, solvetur satan de carcere suo, et exibit, et seducet gentes (Ibid., 7). Millenario namque numero universum pro perfectione sua hoc quantumlibet sit Ecclesiae sanctae tempus exprimitur. Quo peracto, antiquus hostis suis viribus traditus, pauco quidem in tempore, sed in multa contra nos virtute, laxatur. 23. Saeviet, sed ad breve tempus. Quem quamvis saevitia ad crudelitatem dilatet, superna tamen misericordia dierum brevitate coangustat. Hinc enim Veritas per semetipsam dicit: Erit tunc tribulatio magna, qualis non fuit ab initio mundi

usque modo, neque fiet (Matth. XXIV, 21). Hinc rursum ait: Nisi breviati fuissent dies illi, non fieret salva omnis care (Ibid., 22). Quia enim et superbos nos et infirmos Dominus conspicit, dies quos singulariter malos intulit misericorditer breviatos dicit, profecto et ut superbiam terreat de adversitate temporis, et infirmitatem refoveat de brevitate dierum. [Vet. XIII.] 24. Ex signis quae faciet plus metuendus, quam ex poenis quas martyribus intulit. Sed considerandum valde est, cum Behemoth iste caudam suam sicut cedrum sublevat, in quo tunc atrocior quam nunc se exerit surgat. Quae enim poenarum genera novimus, quae non jam vires martyrum exercuisse gaudemus? Alios namque improviso ictu immersus jugulo gladius stravit, alios crucis patibulum affixit, in quo et mors provocata repellitur, et repulsa provocatur. Alios hirsutis serra dentibus attrivit, alios armata ferro insulcans ungula carpsit, alios belluina rabies morsibus detruncando comminuit, alios ab intimis viscerum per cutem pressa vis verberum rupit, alios effossa terra viventes operuit, alios in altum demersos in mortem praecipitium fregit, alios in se projectos aqua replendo absorbuit, alios edax flamma usque ad cineres depasta consumpsit. Cum igitur Behemoth iste caudam suam in fine mundi nequius dilatat, quid est quod in his tormentis 1060 tunc atrocius crescat, nisi hoc quod in Evangelio Veritas per semetipsam dicit: Surgent pseudochristi et pseudoprophetae, et dabunt signa magna et prodigia; ita ut in errorem mittantur, si fieri potest, etiam electi (Matth. XXIV, 24)? Nunc enim fideles nostri mira faciunt, cum perversa patiuntur; tunc autem Behemoth hujus satellites, etiam cum perversa inferunt, mira facturi sunt. Pensemus ergo quae erit humanae mentis illa tentatio, quando pius martyr et corpus tormentis subjicit, et tamen ante ejus oculos tortor miracula facit. Cujus tunc virtus non ab ipso cogitationum fundo quatiatur, quando is qui flagris cruciat signis coruscat? Dicatur igitur recte: Stringit caudam suam quasi cedrum, quia nimirum et altus tunc erit veneratione prodigii, et durus crudelitate tormenti [Vet. XIV.]

25. Antichristus alios mentitis virtutibus decipiet, alios vi superabit. Non enim sola tunc potestate erigitur, sed etiam signorum ostensione fulcitur. Unde et per David dicitur: Insidiatur in occulto, quasi leo in cubili suo (Psal. IX, 30, vel Psal. X, 9). Ad apertam namque potentiam suffecisset ut leo esset, etiamsi insidians non fuisset; rursumque ad occultas versutias suffecisset, ut insidians subriperet, etiam si leo non esset. Sed quia hic antiquus hostis in cunctis suis viribus effrenatur, saevire per utraque permittitur, ut contra electos in certamine et fraude et virtute laxetur, virtute per potentiam, fraude per signa. Recte ergo et leo et insidians dicitur: insidians per miraculorum speciem, leo per fortitudinem saecularem. Ut enim eos qui aperte iniqui sunt pertrahat, saecularem potentiam ostentat; ut vero justos etiam fallat, signis sanctitatem simulat. Illis enim suadet elationem magnitudinis, istos decipit ostensione sanctitatis. De hac cauda Behemoth istius sub draconis specie per Joannem dicitur: Et cauda ejus trahebat tertiam partem stellarum coeli, et misit eas in terram (Apoc. XII, 4). Coelum namque est Ecclesia quae in hac nocte vitae praesentis, dum in se innumeras sanctorum virtutes continet, radiantibus desuper sideribus fulget. Sed draconis cauda in terram stellas dejicit, quia illa Satanae extremitas, per audaciam assumpti hominis erecta, quosdam quos velut electos Dei in Ecclesia invenit obtinendo reprobos ostendit. Stellas itaque de coelo in terram cadere est relicta nonnullos spe coelestium, illo duce, ad ambitum gloriae saecularis inhiare. 26. Per Antiochum praesignatus est. Hinc Daniel sub Antiochi specie contra hanc draconis caudam loquitur, dicens: Dejecit de fortitudine, et de stellis, et conculcavit eas, et usque ad principem fortitudinis magnificatus est, et ab eo abstulit juge sacrificium, et dejecit locum sanctificationis ejus. Robur autem datum est ei contra juge sacrificium, propter peccata; et prosternetur veritas in terra, et faciet, et prosperabitur (Dan. VIII, 10-12). De fortitudine quippe et de stellis dejicit, cum nonnullos et luce justitiae resplendentes, et virtute operis robustos

frangit. Qui usque ad principem fortitudinis magnificatur, quia contra ipsum auctorem virtutis extollitur. Juge sacrificium tollit, quia studium conversationis Ecclesiae in eis quos ceperit interrumpit. Robur vero ei propter peccata contra juge sacrificium datur, quia nisi percuntium merita 1061 exigerent, eos qui recti credebantur, obtinere adversarius nequaquam posset. Veritas in terra prosternitur, quia fides tunc rerum coelestium ad desiderium vitae temporalis inclinatur. Et faciet, et prosperabitur, quia tunc non solum in reproborum mentibus, sed etiam in electorum corporibus crudelitate inaestimabili, sine qualibet objectione grassabitur. Hinc rursum per Danielem dicitur: Consurget rex impudens facie, et intelligens propositiones, et roborabitur fortitudo ejus, sed non in suis viribus (Dan. VIII, 23). Illius namque hominis fortitudo non suis viribus roboratur, quia Satanae virtute in gloriam perditionis attollitur. Hinc rursum ait: Interficiet robustos et populum sanctorum secundum voluntatem suam, et dirigetur dolus in manu ejus (Ibid., 24, 25). Robustos namque interficit, cum eos qui mente invicti sunt corporaliter vincit. Vel certe robustos et populum sanctorum secundum voluntatem suam interficit, cum eos qui robusti ac sancti credebantur ad nutum suae voluntatis trahit. In cujus manu dolus dirigitur, quia in illo fraus per opus adjuvatur. Quod enim fallendo dicit, hoc mira faciendo asserit; nam quidquid mendax lingua simulat, hoc quasi verum esse manus operis ostentat. 27. Daniel et Paulus de Antichristo eadem docent. Hinc rursum dicit: Contra principem principum consurget, et sine manu conteretur (Ibid., 25). Hinc Paulus ait: Ita ut in templo Dei sedeat ostendens se tanquam sit Deus (II Thess. II, 4). Hinc rursum ait. Quem Dominus Jesus interficiet spiritu oris sui, et destruet illustratione adventus sui. Quod enim per Danielem dictum est: Contra Principem principum consurget (Dan. VIII, 25), hoc per Paulum dicitur: Ita ut in templo Dei sedeat, ostendens se tanquam sit Deus. Et quod per Danielem subjungitur: Sine manu conteretur (Ibid., 25), hoc per Paulum exprimitur: Quem

Dominus Jesus interficiet spiritu oris sui (II Thess. II, 8). Sine manu quippe conteretur, quia non angelorum bello, non sanctorum certamine, sed per adventum judicis solo oris spiritu aeterna morte ferietur. De hujus Behemoth elatione item per Paulum dicitur: Qui adversatur et extollitur supra omne quod dicitur Deus, aut quod colitur (Ibid., 4). De quo Daniel cum quartam bestiam diceret decem cornibus fultam, protinus adjunxit: Considerabam cornua, et ecce cornu aliud parvulum ortum est de medio eorum, et tria de cornibus primis evulsa sunt a facie ejus; et ecce oculi quasi oculi hominis erant in cornu isto, et os loquens ingentia (Dan. VII, 8). Undecimum quippe hujus bestiae cornu esse describitur, quia regni ejus potentia iniquitate roboratur. [Vet. XV.] Omne enim peccatum undenarium est, quia dum perversa agit, praecepta decalogi transit. Et quia in cilicio peccatum plangitur, hinc est quod in tabernaculo vela cilicina undecim fiunt (Exod. XXVI, 7). Hinc per undecimum Psalmum dicitur: Salvum me fac, Domine, quoniam defecit sanctus (Psal. XI, 1). Hinc in undenario numero remanere Apostolos Petrus metuens, Matthiam duodecimum, sorte missa, requisivit (Act. I, 26). Nisi enim signari culpam per undenarium cerneret, impleri apostolorum numerum tam festine duodenario non curaret. Quia ergo per undenarium transgressio exprimitur, hujus bestiae cornu undecimo ipse auctor transgressionis indicatur. Quod videlicet parvulum oritur, quia 1062 purus homo generatur: sed immaniter crescit, quia usque ad conjunctam sibi vim angelicae fortitudinis proficit. Quod tria cornua quae ei ante faciem sunt evellit, quia ditioni suae regna totidem quae sibi vicina sum subigit. Cujus oculi sunt ut oculi hominis, sed os ingentia loquitur, quia in illo humana quidem forma cernitur, sed verbis suis ultra homines elevatur. Quod ergo per Paulum dicitur: Extollens se super omne quod dicitur Deus, aut quod colitur, hoc Daniel propheta testatur, dicens: Os loquens ingentia (II Thess. II, 4). Quod vero illum vel Daniel ingentia loqui, vel Paulus perhibet supra cultum Deitatis extolli, hoc est quod apud beatum

Job divino eloquio cedro comparatur. More enim cedri ab alta nititur, dum in omni fastu fallaciae, et virtutis robore et culminis elatione prosperatur. Bene autem stringere caudam dicitur, quia tota ejus virtus in uno illo damnato homine congesta densatur, ut tanto per illum fortia ac mira faciat, quanto illum collectis suis viribus instigat. Sed quia quale sit iniquorum caput audivimus, nunc huic capiti quae membra adhaereant agnoscamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 12. Nervi testiculorum ejus perplexi sunt. 28. Praedicatorum diaboli argumenta perplexa. Antichristi testes multi jam sunt. Tot iste Behemoth testes habet quot iniquitatis suae praedicatores possidet. An ejus testes non sunt, qui pravis persuasionibus corda hominum, vinulenta erroris sui semina fundendo, corrumpunt? Apte autem dicitur quod testiculorum ejus nervi perplexi sunt, quia videlicet praedicatorum illius argumenta dolosis assertionibus innodantur, ut recta esse simulent quae perversa suadent, ut allegationum implicatio, quasi nervorum perplexitas, etsi videri possit, solvi non possit. Nervos ejus testiculi perplexos habent, quia acumina praedicatorum illius sub argumentis duplicibus latent. Plerumque autem cum verbis corda inficiunt, in opere innocentiam ostendunt. Neque enim ad se bonos persuasione sua traherent, si se et in actionibus perversos exhiberent. Sed quia testes sunt hujus belluae, et perplexis nervis illigantur, et rectos se ostentant ut lateant, et perversa praedicant ut corrumpant, ipsum nimirum suum caput imitantes, qui quasi leo in insidiis et saevit per potentiam terreni culminis, et blanditur per speciem sanctitatis. Sed haec bellua utinam tunc solum talia ageret, et nunc quoque ad corrumpenda fidelium viscera hos luxuriae testiculos non haberet! Neque enim malum sola locutione oris infunditur, sed pejus et a pluribus operis exemplo propinatur. Quam multi enim Antichristum non viderunt, sed tamen testiculi

ejus sunt, quia corda innocentium actionis suae exemplo corrumpunt. Quisquis namque in superbia extollitur, quisquis avaritiae desideriis cruciatur, quisquis luxuriae voluptatibus solvitur, quisquis injustae atque immoderatae irae flagris ignitur, quid aliud quam Antichristi testis est? Qui dum se libenter ejus usibus implicat, exemplo suo aliis erroris fetus ministrat. Iste prava agit, ille prava agentibus adhaeret, et non solum non obviat, sed etiam favet. Quid ergo aliud quam Antichristi testis est, qui perdita auctoritate promissae Deo fidei, testimonium praestat errori? Quos tamen si quis redarguat, mox se 1063 sub quodam velamine defensionis occultant, quia videlicet eorum nervi perplexi sunt et male impliciti, corruptione solvi nequaquam possunt. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII [Vet.

XVI, Rec. XIV]. VERS. 13. Ossa ejus velut fistulae aeris. 29. Qui sint Antichristi ossa. In corpore ossa sunt quae continent membra, et quae continentur. Habet ergo carnes haec bellua, habet et ossa, quia et iniqui sunt alii, qui tamen ab aliis in errore retinentur, et nequiores alii, qui in errore et alios retinent. Quid itaque aliud ossa Antichristi quam quoslibet in ejus corpore valentiores accipimus? in quorum corde iniquitas dum vehementer induruit, per eos tota ejus corporis compago subsistit. Multi namque in hoc mundo divites videntur, qui dum rebus opibusque subnixi sunt, quasi ex fortitudine solidantur; sed largiendo haec ipsa quibus fulti sunt, ad suum alios errorem trahunt. Modo nonnullos ut pravi fiant donis illiciunt, modo nonnullos ut pravi permaneant muneribus astringuat. Quid itaque hi nisi Antichristi ossa sunt, qui dum malos continendo multiplicant, in ejus corpore carnes portant? Hi nonnunquam in decipiendis auditoribus exhibent linguae dulcedinem, quia et spinae proferunt flores; et apparet quidem in eis quod oleat, sed latet quod pungat. Amaris dulcia, noxiis blanda permiscent, et potestate quidem admirandi videri appetunt, sed fallendi arte per remissa

colloquia quasi humilitet substernuntur, et per sermonem de se insinuant quod per exhibitionem negant. 30. Cur fistulis aeris comparantur. Unde et recte ossa Behemoth istius aeris fistulis comparantur, quia nimirum, more metalli insensibilis, sonum bene loquendi habent, sed sensum bene vivendi non habent. Hoc namque quasi humiliter loquendo asserunt, quod elate vivendo contemnunt. Unde bene per Paulum dicitur: Si linguis hominum loquar et angelorum, charitatem autem non habeam, factus sum velut aes sonans aut cymbalum tinniens (I Cor. XIII, 1). Bona quippe loquens, sed per amorem eadem bona non sequens, velut aes aut cymbalum sonitum reddit, quia ipse non sentit verba quae ipse facit. [Vet. XVII.] Sunt vero nonnulli in hujus belluae corpore non honorus claibri, non divitiis fulti, non virtutum specie decorati, non scientia calliditatis periti, sed tamen videri quales non sunt ambiunt, et idcirco contra bonorum vitam nequiores fiunt, de quibus et sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII [Rec.

XV] IBID. Cartilago illius, quasi laminae ferreae. 31. Qui in Antichristi corpore debiliores sunt, ad perpetranda mala nequiores existunt. Cartilago namque ossis quidem speciem habet, sed ossis fortitudinem non habet. Quid est ergo quod cartilago ejus laminis ferreis comparatur, nisi quod hi qui in illo debiliores sunt, ad perpetranda mala nequiores existunt? Ferro quippe caetera metalla conciduntur, et cartilago ejus ferro similis dicitur, quia hi qui in ejus corpore ad ostensionem virtutum non sufficiunt contra necem fidelium acrius accenduntur. Quia enim cum eo se facere signa et prodigia non posse considerant, fideles se illi per crudelitatem probant; et pro eo quod innocentium corda corrumpere persuadendo non possunt, multiplicius caeteris bonorum corpora se exstinguere gloriantur. Bene ergo dicitur: 1064 Cartilago ejus ut laminae ferreae, quia in ejus corpore quod infirmius quisque crediderit, hoc est quod nequius incidit. Qui recte non ferro

tantummodo, sed laminis ferreis comparantur, quia dum se circumquaque in crudelitate dilatare ambiunt, quasi in ferri se laminas extendunt. [Rec. XVI.] 32. Libet arctiori inquisitionis manu haec eadem verba conditoris, quae jam videntur discussa, distinguere, atque uberiores intelligentiae fructus instruendis moribus apportare. Nam quia antiquus hostis quid per assumptum hominem contra homines agat audivimus, superest ut nunc quid in hominibus etiam per semetipsum sine homine moliatur exploremus. Ecce enim dicitur:

CAPUT XIX.

VERS. 12. Stringit caudam suam quasi cedrum. 33. Prima diaboli suggestio tenera est et facile conteritur. Sed postea robur ejus fit intolerabile. Peccatum tribus modis admittitur. Prima quidem serpentis suggestio mollis ac tenera est, et facile virtutis pede conterenda, sed si haec invalescere negligenter admittitur, eique ad cor aditus licenter praebetur, tanta se virtute exaggerat, ut captam mentem deprimens, usque ad intolerabile robur excrescat. Caudam itaque quasi cedrum stringere dicitur, quia semel ejus in corde recepta tentatio, in cunctis quae subsequenter intulerit velut ex jure dominatur. Hujus ergo Behemoth caput herba est, cauda cedrus, quia ex prima quidem suggestione blandiens substernitur, sed per usum vehementer invalescens, succrescente tentationis fine, roboratur. Superabile namque est omne quod initio suggerit, sed inde sequitur, quod vinci vix possit. Prius enim quasi consulens blanda ad animum loquitur; sed cum semel dentem delectationis infixerit, violenta post consuetudine pene insolubiliter innodatur. Unde et bene stringere caudam dicitur. Dente enim vulnerat, cauda ligat, quia suggestione prima percutit, sed percussam mentem, ne evadere valeat, invalescente fine tentationis, astringit. Quia enim peccatum tribus modis admittitur, cum videlicet serpentis suggestione, carnis delectatione, spiritus consensione perpetratur, Behemoth iste, prius illicita

suggerens, linguam exerit; post, ad delectationem pertrahens, dentem figit; ad extremum vero, per consensionem possidens, caudam stringit. Hinc est enim quod nonnulli peccata longo usu perpetrata in semetipsis ipsi reprehendunt, atque haec ex judicio fugiunt, sed vitare opere nec decertantes possunt, quia dum Behemoth istius caput non conterunt, plerumque cauda et nolentes ligantur. Quae contra eos cedri more induruit, quia a blanda voluptate exordii usque ad violentiam retentionis excrevit. Dicatur ergo: Stringit caudam suam quasi cedrum, ut tanto quisque debeat initia tentationis fugere, quanto finem ejus intelligit citius solvi non posse. [Vet. XVIII.] 34. Diabolus cum vitae finis imminet, tunc graviores tentationes suggerit. Sciendum quoque est quod plerumque eis quos ceperit tunc graviores culpas ingerit, cum praesentis vitae termino illos propinquare cognoscit; et quo se consummaturum tentationem considerat, eo eis iniquitatum pondera graviora coacervat. Behemoth igitur caudam suam quasi cedrum stringit, quia quos per prava initia ceperit, ad finem deteriores reddit, ut tentamenta ejus quo citius cessatura sunt, eo valentius compleantur. Quia enim suis poenis eorum satagit aequare supplicium, 1065 in eis ardentius ante mortem nititur omne exaggerare peccatum. Plerumque vero Behemoth iste jam cor male subditum possidet, sed tamen divina illum gratia repellit, et manus misericordiae ejicit, quem ad se captiva voluntas introduxit. Cumque a corde expellitur, acriores infigere iniquitatum stimulos conatur, ut eos tentationum fluctus mens ab illo impugnata sentiat, quos etiam possessa nesciebat. Quod bene in Evangelio exprimitur, cum exire ab homine immundus spiritus Domino jubente narratur. Nam cum daemoniacus puer fuisset oblatus, scriptum est: Comminatus est Jesus spiritui immundo, dicens: Surde et mute spiritus, ego tibi praecipio, exi ab eo, et amplius ne introeas in eum. Et exclamans, et multum discerpens eum, exivit ab eo (Marc. IX, 24). Ecce eum non discerpserat cum tenebat, exiens discerpsit, quia nimirum tunc pejus cogitationes mentis dilaniat, cum jam

egressui divina virtute compulsus appropinquat. Et quem mutus possederat, cum clamoribus deserebat, quia plerumque cum possidet, minora tentamenta irrogat; cum vero de corde pellitur, acriori infestatione perturbat. Bene itaque dicitur: Stringit caudam suam quasi cedrum, quia et cor possidens semper in malitia ex posterioribus crescit, et cor deserens vehementioribus cogitationum stimulis percutit. [Rec. XVII.] Adhuc autem Behemoth istius mira pietate conditoris astutiora argumenta panduntur, cum subditur:

CAPUT XX.

IBID. Nervi testiculorum ejus perplexi sunt. 36. Peccata ita implicata sunt, ut dum unum vitatur, fere semper labamur in aliud. Tribus ordinibus constat Ecclesia. Nervi testiculorum ejus sunt pestifera argumenta machinationum (Dist. 13, can. 2). Per ipsa quippe calliditatis suae vires erigit, et fluxa mortalium corda corrumpit. Testiculi ejus sunt suggestiones pravae, quibus in mentis corruptione fervescit, atque in construprata anima iniqui operis prolem gignit. Sed horum testiculorum nervi perplexi sunt, quia suggestionum illius argumenta implicatis inventionibus illigantur, ut plerosque ita peccare faciant, quatenus si fortasse peccatum fugere appetant, hoc sine alio peccati laqueo non evadant; et culpam faciant dum vitant, ac nequaquam se ab una valeant solvere, nisi in alia consentiant ligari. [Vet. XIX.] Quod melius ostendimus, si qua ex conversatione hominum illigationis hujus exempla proferamus. Quia vero in tribus ordinibus sancta Ecclesia constat, conjugatorum videlicet, continentium, atque rectorum; unde et Ezechiel tres viros liberatos vidit, videlicet Noe, Daniel, et Job (Ezech. XIV, 14, seq.); et in Evangelio Dominus dum alios in agro, alios in lecto, atque esse in molendino alios perhibet (Luc. XVII, 34, 35), tres procul dubio in Ecclesia ordines ostendit; liquido satisfacimus, si singula ex singulis exquiramus. 36. Tentationes saeculo militantium. Ecce enim

quidam dum mundi hujus amicitias appetit, cuilibet alteri similem sibi vitam ducenti quod secreta illius omni silentio contegat se jurejurando constringit; sed is cui juratum est adulterium perpetrare cognoscitur, ita ut etiam maritum adulterae occidere conetur. Is autem qui jusjurandum praebuit ad mentem revertitur, et 1066 diversis hinc inde cogitationibus impugnatur, atque hoc silere formidat, ne silendo, adulterii simul et homicidii particeps fiat; et prodere trepidat, ne reatu se perjurii obstringat. Perplexis ergo testiculorum nervis ligatus est, quia in quamlibet partem declinet, metuit ne a transgressionis contagio liber non sit. 37. Deo servire per obedientiam ambientium, praelatorum. Alius cuncta quae mundi sunt deserens, atque per omnia frangere proprias voluntates quaerens, alieno se subdere regimini appetit, sed eum qui sibi apud Deum praeesse debeat minus cauta inquisitione discernit. Cui fortasse is qui sine judicio eligitur, cum praeesse jam coeperit, agi quae Dei sunt prohibet, quae mundi sunt jubet. Pensans itaque subditus vel quae sit culpa inobedientiae, vel quod contagium saecularis vitae, et obedire trepidat, et non obedire formidat, ne aut obediens Deum in suis praeceptis deserat, aut rursum non obediens Deum in electo priore contemnat; et aut, illicitis obtemperans, hoc quod pro Deo appetit contra Deum exerceat, aut rursum, non obtemperans, eum quem suum judicem quaesierat suo judicio supponat. Aperte ergo iste per indiscretionis suae vitium perplexis testiculorum nervis astringitur, quia aut obtemperans, aut certe non obtemperans, in culpa transgressionis ligatur. Studebat proprias voluntates frangere, et curat eas etiam contempto priore solidare. Decrevit mundum funditus relinquere, et ad mundi curas vel ex aliena voluntate compellitur redire. Perplexi itaque nervi sunt, cum sic nos argumenta hostis illigant, ut culparum nodi quo quaeruntur solvi, durius astringant. 38. Alius pensare pondus honoris ecclesiastici negligens, ad locum regiminis praemiis ascendit. Sed quia omne quod hic eminet plus moeroribus afficitur quam honoribus gaudet, dum cor tribulationibus

premitur, ad memoriam culpa revocatur, doletque se ad laborem cum culpa pervenisse, et quam sit iniquum quod admiserit ex ipsa fractus difficultate agnoscit. Reum igitur se cum impensis praemiis agnoscens, vult adeptae sublimitatis locum deserere, sed timet ne gravius delictum sit suscepti gregis custodiam reliquisse; vult suscepti gregis curam gerere, sed formidat ne deterior culpa sit regimina pastoralis gratiae empta possidere. Per honoris ergo ambitum ligatum culpa hinc inde se conspicit. Esse quippe sine reatu criminis neutrum videt, si aut susceptus semel grex relinquatur, aut rursum sacra actio saeculariter empta teneatur. Undique metuit, et suspectus latus omne pertimescit, ne aut stans in empto regimine non digne lugeat, quod non etiam deserens emendat; aut certe regimen deserens, dum aliud flere nititur, rursus aliud de ipsa gregis destitutione committat. Quia ergo Behemoth iste ita inexplicabilibus nodis ligat, ut plerumque mens in dubium adducta, unde se a culpa solvere nititur, inde in culpa arctius astringatur, recte dicitur. Nervi testiculorum ejus perplexi sunt. Argumenta namque machinationum ejus quasi quo laxantur 1067 ut relinquant, eo magis implicantur ut teneant. [Vet. XX.] 39. Ubi nullus evadendi sine peccato patet aditus, quid agendum. Conjugatorum concubitus pro explenda libidine culpae non expers. Est tamen quod ad destruendas ejus versutias utiliter fiat, ut dum mens inter minora et maxima peccata constringitur, si omnino nullus sine peccato evadendi aditus patet, minora semper eligantur, quia et qui murorum undique ambitu ne fugiat clauditur, ibi se in fugam praecipitat, ubi brevior murus invenitur. Et Paulus dum quosdam in Ecclesia incontinentes aspiceret, concessit minima, ut majora declinarent, dicens: Propter fornicationem autem unusquisque uxorem suam habeat (I Cor. VII, 2). Et quia tunc solum conjuges in admistione sine culpa sunt cum non pro explenda libidine, sed pro suspicienda prole miscentur, ut hoc etiam quod concesserat sine culpa, quamvis minima, non esse monstraret, illico adjunxit: Hoc autem dico secundum indulgentiam, non secundum imperium

(Ibid., 6). Non enim est sine vitio quod ignoscitur, et non praecipitur. Peccatum profecto vidit, quod posse indulgere praevidit. Sed cum in dubiis constringimur, utiliter minimis subdimur, ne in magnis sine venia peccemus. Itaque plerumque nervorum Behemoth istius perplexitas solvitur dum ad virtutes maximas per commissa minora transitur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 13. Ossa ejus sicut fistulae aeris. 40. Quantum ex astutis diaboli consiliis periculum immineat. Quid per ossa Behemoth istius, nisi consilia designantur? Nam sicut in ossibus positio corporis roburque subsistit, ita in fraudulentis consiliis tota se ejus malitia erigit. Neque enim vi quempiam premit, sed calliditate pestiferae persuasionis interficit. Et rursum, sicut ossa quae irrigant medullae confortant, ita ejus consilia per spiritalis naturae potentiam infusa ingenii subtilitas roborat. Hoc vero testiculi ejus ab ossibus, id est suggestiones a consiliis, distant, quod per illas aperte noxia inserit, per haec autem quasi ex bono consulens ad culpam trahit, per illas pugnando superat, per haec velut consulendo supplantat. Unde et bene ejus ossa, id est haec eadem consilia, aeris fistulis comparantur. Aeris quippe listulae sonoris aptari cantibus solent, quae admotae auribus dum blandum carmen subtiliter concinunt, interiora mentis in exteriora delectationis trahunt; et dum dulce est quod auribus sonant, virilitatem cordis in voluptatis fluxu debilitant. Cumque auditus ad delectationem trabitur, sensus a statu suae fortitudinis enervatur. Ita quoque astuta ejus consilia dum quasi blanda provisione consulunt, cor a forti intentione invertunt; et dum dulcia resonant, ad noxia inclinant. Quasi ergo aeris fistulae sunt, quae dum libenter audiuntur, ab interna intentione animum in exterioris vitae delectationem dejiciunt. Hoc enim Behemoth iste magnopere ad exsequendam deceptionem satagit, ut dum perversitatis suae consilium quasi utile ostendit, suaviter valeat sonare quod dicit, quatenus et ostensa

utilitate mentem mulceat, et absconsa iniquitate corrumpat. [Vet. XXI.] 41. Exemplis palam fit. Qua arte divitiis acquirendis insudare suadeat. Quae apertius in cunctis ostendimus, si pauca breviter consiliorum ejus argumenta pandamus. Ecce enim quidam rebus contentus propriis, decrevit nullis mundi hujus occupationibus implicari, valde formidans quietis suae commoda perdere, et valde despiciens cum peccatis lucra cumulare. 1068 Ad hunc hostis callidus veniens, ut intentionem bonae devotionis subruat, quasi utilitatis consilium subministrat, dicens: Ea quidem quae habes, in praesenti sufficiunt, sed his deficientibus quid acturus es? Si enim post haec nulla providentur, adsunt quae ad praesens impendenda sunt filiis, sed tamen paranda sunt quae serventur. Deesse potest citius etiam quod adest, si sollicitudo provida cesset parare quod deest. An non et terrena potest actio peragi, et tamen in actione culpa declinari, quatenus et exteriora stipendia praebeat, et tamen internam rectitudinem non inflectat? Haec interim blandiens insinuat, et seorsum jam in negotio terreno quod providet peccati laqueos occultat. Ossa itaque ejus sicut fistulae aeris sunt, quia perniciosa ejus consilia auditori suo consulentis vocis suavitate blandiuntur. 42. Et mundo nuntium remittere meditantem avertat.Alius quoque non solum decrevit terrena commoda non quaerere, sed etiam cunctis quae possidet renuntiare ut in discipulatu coelestis magisterii tanto se liberior exerceat, quanto et expeditior redditus, ea quae possidentem premere poterant deserens calcat. Hujus cor hostis insidians occulta suggestione alloquitur, dicens: Unde haec temeritatis tantae surrexit audacia, ut credere audeas quod omnia relinquendo subsistas? Aliter te creator condidit, atque aliter tu teipsum disponis; valentiorem te robustioremque faceret, si sequiste sua vestigia cum inopiae necessitate voluisset. An non plerique et terrena patrimonia nequaquam deserunt, et tamen ex his per misericordiae opera supernae sortis bona aeterna mercantur? Haec blandiens suggerit, seorsum vero in eisdem rebus quas retinere admonet ante retinentis oculos

delectationes pestiferas decipiens apponit, quatenus seductum cor ad blandimenta exteriora pertrahat, in intima perfectionis vota pervertat. Ossa itaque ejus sicut fistulae aeris sunt, quia dolosa ejus consilia dum blandum ex exterioribus sonum reddunt, perniciosum dispendium de interioribus ingerunt. 43. Maxime si ad monasticae perfectionis culmen tendat.Alius, relictis omnibus quae exterius possederat, ut ordinem sublimioris discipulatus apprehendat, etiam intimas frangere voluntates parat, ut rectioribus se alterius voluntatibus subdens, non solum pravis desideriis, sed ad perfectionis cumulum etiam in bonis votis sibimetipsi renuntiet, et cuncta quae sibi agenda sunt ex alieno arbitrio observet. Hunc hostis callidus tanto mollius alloquitur, quanto ab excelsiori loco dejicere ardentius conatur, moxque virulenta suggestione blandiens, dicit: O quanta per temetipsum miranda agere poteris, si nequaquam te judicio alterius subdis! Cur profectum tuum sub studio meliorationis imminuis? Cur intentionis tuae bonum, dum ultra quam necesse est extendere niteris, frangis? Quae enim dum voluntate propria usus es, perversa perpetrasti? Qui ergo tibi plene ad bene vivendum sufficis, alienum super te judicium cur requiris? Haec blandiens intimat, seorsum vero in voluntatibus ejus propriis exercendae superbiae causas parat; et dum laudat cor de intestina rectitudine, investigat callide ubi subruat in pravitate. Ossa itaque ejus sicut fistulae aeris sunt, quia clandestina ejus consilia unde quasi animum blanda delectant, 1069 inde perniciosa a recta intentione dissipant. 44. Quomodo ab officiis charitatis avocare student. Alius fractis plene voluntatibus suis, multa jam vetusti hominis vitia et mutatione vitae, et lamentatione poenitentiae correxit; et tanto majori zelo contra aliena peccata accenditur, quanto sibimetipsi funditus mortuus, iniquitatibus propriis non tenetur. Hunc hostis callidus, quia zelo justitiae etiam caeteris prodesse cognoscit, quasi prospera consulentibus verbis impetit, dicens: Quid te ad aliena curanda dilatas? Utinam tua considerare convalescas. An non perpendis

quia cum ad aliena extenderis, erga ea curanda quae tua sunt minor inveniris? Et quid prodest alieni vulneris cruorem tergere, et putredinem proprii negligendo dilatare? Haec dum quasi consulens dicit, zelum charitatis adimit, et omne bonum quod prodire ex charitate poterat, gladio subintroducti torporis exstinguit. Si enim proximos sicut nosmetipsos diligere praecipimur (Matth. XIX, 19; XXII, 39), dignum est ut sic eorum zelo contra vitia, sicut et nostro, flagremus. Quia igitur dum suaviter consulit, mentem ab intentione propria alienam reddit, recte dicitur: Ossa ejus sicut fistulae aeris. Quando enim per fraudulenta consilia audientis animo blandum sonat, quasi cum fistula aeris cantat, ut unde mulcet, inde decipiat [Vet. XXII]. Sed Behemoth iste valde mollius certamen movet, quando se in insidiis sub praetextu infirmitatis exercet. Tunc autem duriores tentationes excitat, quando ante tentati oculos iniquitatis laqueos sub specie virtutis occultat. Unde et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 13. Cartilago ejus quasi laminae ferreae. 45. Duriores tentationes excitat cum laqueos sub specie virtutis occultat. Quid enim per cartilaginem, nisi simulatio ejus accipitur? Cartilago namque ossis ostendit speciem, sed ossis non habet firmitatem. Et sunt nonnulla vitia quae ostendunt in se rectitudinis speciem, sed ex pravitatis prodeunt infirmitate. Hostis enim nostri malitia tanta se arte palliat, ut plerumque ante deceptae mentis oculos culpas virtutes fingat, ut inde quisque quasi exspectet praemia, unde dignus est aeterna invenire tormenta. Plerumque enim in ulciscendis vitiis crudelitas agitur, et justitia putatur, atque immoderata ira justi zeli meritum creditur; et cum a distortis moribus peccantes dirigi caute debeant, violenta inflexione franguntur. Plerumque dissoluta remissio quasi mansuetudo ac pietas habetur; et dum plus quam decet delinquentibus temporaliter parcitur, ad aeterna supplicia crudeliter reservantur.

Nonnunquam effusio misericordia creditur, et dum male servare culpa sit, pejus spargi quod acceptum est non timetur. Nonnunquam tenacia parcitas putatur, et cum grave sit vitium non tribuere, virtus creditur accepta retinere. Saepe malorum pertinacia constantia dicitur, et dum mens a pravitate sua flecti non patitur, quasi ex recti defensione gloriatur. Saepe inconstantia quasi tractabilitas habetur, et quo quisque fidem integram nulli servat, eo amicum se hominibus aestimat. Aliquando timor incompetens humilitas creditur, et cum temporali formidine pressus quisque a defensione veritatis tacet, arbitratur quod juxta Dei ordinem humilem se potioribus exhibeat. 1070 Aliquando vocis superbia veri libertas aestimatur, et cum per elationem veritati contradicitur, loquendi procacitas veritatis defensio putatur. Plerumque pigritia quasi continentia quietis attenditur, et cum gravis culpae sit recta studiose non agere, magnae virtutis meritum creditur a prava tantum actione cessare. Plerumque inquietudo spiritus, vigilans sollicitudo nominatur; et cum quietem quisque non tolerat, agendo quae appetit, virtutis debitae implere se exercitium putat. Saepe ad ea quae agenda sunt incauta praecipitatio laudandi studii fervor creditur; et cum desideratum bonum intempestiva actione corrumpitur, eo agi melius quo celerius aestimatur. Saepe accelerandi boni tarditas consilium putatur; et cum exspectatur ut ex retractatione proficiat, hoc insidians mora supplantat [Vet. XXIII]. Igitur cum culpa velut virtus aspicitur, necessario pensandum est quia tanto tardius mens vitium suum deserit, quanto hoc quod perpetrat, non erubescit; et tanto mens tardius vitium deserit, quanto, per virtutis speciem decepta, praemiorum etiam de eo retributionem quaerit. Facile autem culpa corrigitur quae et erubescitur quia esse culpa sentitur. Quia itaque error cum virtus creditur difficilius emendatur, recte dicitur: Cartilago ejus quasi laminae ferreae. Behemoth enim iste que sub praetextu boni calliditatem suam fraudulentius exhibet, eo in culpa mentem durius tenet. 46. Qui viam sanctitatis appetunt, aliquando in errorem lapsi, tardius

emendantur. Frigidis mentibus frigidiores fiunt. Hinc est quod nonnunquam hi qui viam sanctitatis appetunt in errorem lapsi tardius emendantur. Rectum quippe aestimant esse quod agunt, et sicut excolendae virtuti, sic vitio perseverantiam jungunt. Rectum existimant quod agunt, et idcirco suo judicio enixius serviunt. Unde bene Jeremias cum diceret: Candidiores Nazaraei ejus nive, nitidiores lacte, rubicundiores ebore antiquo, sapphiro pulchriores; denigrata est super carbones facies eorum, et non sunt cogniti in plateis, illico adjunxit: Adhaesit culis eorum ossibus, aruit, et facta est quasi lignum (Thren. IV, 7). Quid enim Nazaraeorum nomine, nisi abstinentium et continentium vita signatur, quae nive et lacte nitidior dicitur? Nix enim ex aqua congelascit quae desuper venit, lac autem ex carne exprimitur quae in inferioribus nutritur. Quid ergo per nivem nisi candor vitae coelestis, quid per lac nisi temporalis dispensationis administratio demonstratur? Et quia plerumque continentes viri in Ecclesia tam mira opera faciunt, ut ab eis multi qui coelestem vitam tenuerunt, multi qui terrena bene dispensaverunt, superari videantur, et candidiores nive, et nitidiores lacte referuntur. Qui etiam, quia per fervorem spiritus, antiquorum ac fortium patrum nonnunquam vincere vitam videntur, recte subjungitur: Rubicundiores ebore antiquo. Dum enim ruboris nomen imprimitur, sancti desiderii flamma signatur. Ebur vero esse os magnorum animalium non ignoramus. Ebore itaque antiquo rubicundiores sunt, quia saepe ante humanos oculos nonnullis praecedentibus patribus studii ferventioris existunt. De quibus ut totum simul ostendatur, adjungitur: Sapphiro pulchriores. Aetherei quippe coloris est sapphirus. Et quia praecedentes multos, atque ad superna tendentes per coelestem conversationem 1071 videntur vincere, narrantur sapphiro pulchriores exstitisse. Sed plerumque dum virtutum copia etiam plus quam expedit prosperatur, in quamdam sui fiduciam mens adducitur, et decepta praesumptione propria, repente peccato subripiente fuscatur; unde recte subjungitur: Denigrata est super carbones

facies eorum. Nigri enim post candorem fiunt, quia, amissa Dei justitia, cum de se praesumunt, in ea etiam quae non intelligunt, peccata dilabuntur; et quia post amoris ignem ad frigus torporis veniunt, exstinctis carbonibus ex comparatione, praeferuntur. Nonnunquam enim dum timorem Dei per sui fiduciam deserunt, etiam frigidis mentibus frigidiores fiunt. De quibus recte subjungitur: Non sunt cogniti in plateis. Platea quippe sermonis Graeci ratione pro latitudine dicitur. Quid vero est humanae menti angustius quam voluntates proprias frangere? De qua fractione Veritas dicit: Intrate per angustam portam (Matth. VII, 13). Quid autem latius quam nullis propriis voluntatibus reluctari, et quaquaversum impulsus arbitrii duxerit se sine retractione diffundere? Qui ergo per fiduciam sanctitatis postposito meliorum judicio se sequuntur, quasi per plateas pergunt. Sed non sunt cogniti in plateis, quia de vita sua aliud ostenderant quando frangendo voluntates proprias in angusto se calle retinebant. Et bene additur: Adhaesit cutis eorum ossibus. Quid in osse nisi duritia fortitudinis, quid in cute nisi mollities exprimitur infirmitatis? Cutis ergo corum adhaerere ossibus dicitur, quia ab eis prava sentientibus infirmitas vitii duritia virtutis putatur. Infirma enim sunt quae faciunt, sed, elationis fiducia decepti, fortibus ea suspicionibus jungunt, et quo de se magna sentiunt, eo de sua nequitia emendari contemnunt. Unde et recte adjungitur: Aruit et facta est quasi lignum. Culpa quippe eorum tanto insensibilior redditur, quanto apud eos etiam laudabilis habetur. Quam recte aridam asserit, quia nulla sui cogitatione viridescit. Quod ergo apud Jeremiam per infirmitatem cutis, hoc apud beatum Job per fragilitatem dicitur cartilago; et quod illic ossa per duritiam, hoc hic laminae ferreae esse memorantur. [Vet. XXIV.] Sed Behemoth iste, qui per membra sua extremo tempore contra electos Dei tanta se arte iniquitatis exercet, qui etiam per semetipsum ad decipiendas mentes in tanta insidiarum tergiversatione se exhibet, cujus naturae, cujus sit conditionis audiamus. Neque enim tam mira vel in maligna operatione

posset, si non ex magna conditione subsisteret. Unde et mox mira pietate Dominus, ac si causas tantae astutiae tantaeque fortitudinis redderet, adjunxit, dicens:

CAPUT XXIII [Rec. XVIII].

VERS 14. Ipse est principium viarum Dei. 47. Prima et nobilior creatura fuit angelus qui cecidit. Velut si aperte diceret: Idcirco ad tam multa fortiter sufficit, quia in natura rerum hunc creando per substantiam conditor primum fecit. Quid enim vias Dei, nisi ejus actiones accipimus. De quibus per prophetam dicit: Non enim sunt viae meae sicut viae vestrae (Isai. LV, 8). Et principium viarum Dei Behemoth dicitur (De poenit., dist. 2, c. 44), quia nimirum cum cuncta creans ageret, hunc primum condidit, quem reliquis angelis eminentiorem fecit. Hujus primatus eminentiam conspicit propheta cum dicit: Cedri 1072 non fuerunt altiores illo in paradiso Dei; abietes non adaequaverunt summitatem ejus; platani non fuerunt aequae frondibus illius; omne lignum paradisi Dei non est assimilatum illi et pulchritudini ejus, quoniam speciosum fecit eum in multis condensisque frondibus (Ezech. XXXI, 8, 9). Qui namque accipi in cedris, abietibus et platanis possunt, nisi illa virtutum coelestium procerae celsitudinis agmina in aeternae laetitiae viriditate plantata? Quae quamvis excelsa sint condita, huic tamen nec praelata sunt, nec aequata. Qui speciosus factus in multis condensisque frondibus esse dicitur, quia praelatum caeteris legionibus, tanta illum species pulchriorem reddidit, quanta et supposita angelorum multitudo decoravit. Ista arbor in paradiso Dei tot quasi condensas frondes habuit, quot sub se positas supernorum spirituum legiones attendit. Qui idcirco peccans sine venia damnatus est, quia magnus sine comparatione fuerat creatus. Hinc ei rursum per eumdem prophetam dicitur: Tu signaculum similitudinis Dei, plenus sapientia et perfectus decore, in deliciis paradisi Dei fuisti (Ezech. XXVIII, 12, 13). Multa enim de ejus

magnitudine locuturus, primo verbo cuncta complexus est. Quid namque boni non habuit, si signaculum Dei similitudinis fuit? De sigillo quippe annuli talis similitudo imaginaliter exprimitur, qualis in sigillo eodem essentialiter habetur. Et licet homo ad similitudinem Dei creatus sit (Genes. I, 27), angelo tamen quasi majus aliquid tribuens, non eum ad similitudinem Dei conditum, sed ipsum signaculum Dei similitudinis dicit, ut quo subtilior est in natura, eo in illo similitudo Dei plenius credatur expressa. [Vet. XXV]. 48. Ejus primatus in novem angelorum ordines. Cherub quid significet. Hinc est quod primatus ejus potentiam adhuc insinuans idem propheta, subjungit: Omnis lapis pretiosus operimentum tuum, sardius et topazius et jaspis, chrysolithus, onyx, et berillus, sapphirus, carbunculus et smaragdus (Ezech. XXVIII, 13). Novem dixit genera lapidum, quia nimirum novem sunt ordines angelorum. Nam cum per ipsa sacra eloquia angeli, archangeli, throni, dominationes, virtutes, principatus, potestates, cherubim, et seraphim, aperta narratione memorantur, quantae sint supernorum civium distinctiones ostenditur. Quibus tamen Behemoth iste opertus fuisse describitur, quia eos quasi vestem ad ornatum suum habuit, quorum dum claritatem transcenderet, ex eorum comparatione clarior fuit. De cujus illic adhuc descriptione subjungit: Aurum opus decoris tui et foramina tua in die qua conditus es, praeparata sunt (Ibid., 13). Aurum opus decoris ejus exstitit, quia sapientiae claritate canduit, quam bene creatus accepit. Foramina vero idcirco in lapidibus fiunt, ut vinculati auro in ornamenti compositione jungantur, et nequaquam a se dissideant, quos interfusum aurum repletis foraminibus ligat. Hujus ergo lapidis in die conditionis suae foramina praeparata sunt, quia videlicet capax charitatis est conditus. Qua si repleri voluisset, stantibus angelis tanquam positis in regis ornamento lapidibus potuisset inhaerere. Si enim charitatis auro sese penetrabilem praebuisset, sanctis angelis sociatus, in ornamento, ut diximus, regio lapis fixus maneret. Habuit ergo lapis iste foramina, 1073 sed per

superbiae vitium charitatis auro non sunt repleta. Nam quia idcirco ligantur auro ne cadant, idcirco iste cecidit, quia etiam perforatus manu artificis, amoris vinculis ligari contempsit. Nunc autem caeteri lapides, qui huic similiter fuerant perforati, penetrante se invicem charitate ligati sunt, atque hoc in munere, isto cadente, meruerunt ut nequaquam jam de ornamento regio cadendo solvantur. Hujus principatus celsitudinem adhuc idem propheta intuens, adjungit: Tu cherub extentus et protegens in monte sancto Dei, in medio lapidum ignitorum perfectus ambulasti (Ezech. XXVIII, 14). Cherub quippe plenitudo scientiae interpretatur; et idcirco iste Cherub dicitur, quia transcendisse cunctos scientia non dubitatur. Qui in medio ignitorum lapidum perfectus ambulavit, quia inter angelorum corda charitatis igne succensa, clarus gloria conditionis exstitit. Quem bene extentum ac protegentem dicit. Omne enim quod extenti protegimus, obumbramus. Et quia comparatione claritatis suae caeterorum claritatem obumbrasse creditur, ipse extentus et protegens fuisse perhibetur. Reliquos enim quasi obumbrando operuit, qui eorum magnitudinem excellentia majore transcendit. Quod ergo illic speciosus in multis frondibus, quod illic signaculum similitudinis, quod illic cherub, quod illic protegens dicitur, hoc hic voce dominica Behemoth iste viarum Dei principium vocatur. [Vet. XXVI.] 49. Ex angeli casu discat homo non superbire. De quo idcirco tam mira in quibus fuit et quae amisit insinuat ut territo homini ostendat quid ipse si superbiat de elationis suae culpa passurus sit, si feriendo illi parcere noluit quem creando in gloriam tantae claritatis elevavit. Consideret ergo homo quid elatus in terra mereatur, si et praelatus angelis angelus in coelo prosternitur. Unde et bene per prophetam dicitur: Inebriatus est in coelo gladius meus (Isai. XXXIV, 5). Ac si aperte diceret: Qua ira feriam superbos terrae perpendite, si ipsos etiam quos in coelo juxta me condidi pro elationis vitio percutere non peperci? Tot itaque hostis antiqui virtutibus auditis, tanta conditionis ejus magnitudine cognita, quis non immensa

formidine corruat? quis non desperationis percussione succumbat? Sed quia elationem nostram ostensa hostis nostri potentia reprimit, etiam infirmitatem nostram Dominus patefacta gratiae suae dispensatione fovet. Unde cum eum principium viarum suarum diceret, illico adjunxit:

CAPUT XXIV [Rec. XIX].

IBID. Qui fecit eum, applicavit gladium ejus. 50. Angeli apostatae potentiam Deus coercet. Gladius quippe Behemoth istius ipsa nocendi malitia est Sed ab eo a quo bonus per naturam factus est, ejus gladius applicatur, quia ejus malitia divina dispensatione restringitur, ne ferire tantum mentes hominum quantum appetit permittatur. Quia ergo hostis noster et multum potest, et minus percutit, ejus gladium pietas conditoris astringit, ut replicatus intra ejus conscientiam lateat, et ultra quam desuper juste disponitur, sese in mortes hominum ejus malitia non extendat. Quod igitur ad multa fortiter praevalet, hoc de principio magnae conditionis potest, quod vero a quibusdam vincitur, ejus nimirum gladius ab auctore replicatur. 1074 Iste namque Behemoth, qui principium viarum Dei est, cum contra sanctum virum licentiam tentationis accepit, gentes movit, greges abstulit, ignem de coelo deposuit, perturbato aere ventos excitavit, domum concutiens subruit, convivantes filios exstinxit, uxoris mentem in dolo pravae suasionis exercuit, mariti carnem inflictis vulneribus confodit (Job. I, 13, seq.); sed ejus gladius a conditore replicatur, cum dicitur: Animam illius serva (Ibid., II, 6). Qui replicato gladio quantae sit infirmitatis, evangelista testante describitur, quia nec manere in obsesso homine potuit, nec rursus invadere bruta animalia nisi jussus praesumpsit, dicens: Si ejicis nos, mitte nos in gregem porcorum (Matth. VIII, 31). Malitiae quippe ejus gladius quam sit replicatus ostenditur, cui si potestas summa licentiam non praeberet, nec grassari in porcorum gregem valeret. Quando ergo iste sua sponte nocere factis ad Dei imaginem hominibus audeat, de quo nimirum

constat quod non jussus contingere nec porcos praesumat? 51. Arii haeresis confutatur. Notandum quoque est quod dum viarum Dei principium Behemoth dicitur, vesanum dogma Arii aperta ratione dissipatur. Facturam quippe Dei Filium fatetur, et ecce. Behemoth in factura rerum primus creatus ostenditur. Superest ergo ut Arius aut non factum Filium praedicet, aut eum post Behemoth conditum stultus putet. Quia vero omne quod applicatur in semetipsum reducitur, recte applicatus Behemoth gladius dicitur. In semetipsam namque se ejus malitia decoquit, cum ad votum suum sese contra electorum vitam prohibita non exercet. Multos autem exigentibus meritis ferire permittitur, ut cum Deum deserunt, damnato hosti famulentur. Ab electis vero eo valentius vincitur, quo soli auctori omnium humilius substernuntur. Quia igitur per hoc quod viarum Dei principium dicitur, per hoc quod permittente Domino valde intolerabilis demonstratur, aperte cognoscimus cum quanto hoste pugnemus. Superest igitur ut unusquisque nostrum tanto se plenius auctori subjiciat, quanto contra se verius violentas adversarii vires pensat. Quid namque nos nisi pulvis sumus? Quid vero ille, nisi unus ex coelestibus spiritibus, et, quod adhuc majus est, summus? Quid ergo de propria virtute audeat, quando contra angelorum principem pulvis pugnat? Sed quia supernorum spirituum conditor terrenum corpus assumpsit, recte jam superbientem angelum humilis pulvis vincit. Inhaerendo quippe verae fortitudini vires accipit, quas transfuga spiritus, cum semetipsum sequitur, amisit. Et dignum est ut vincatur a pulvere, qui fortem se credidit deserto creatore; ut superatus inveniat, quia defecit elatus. Valde autem anhelat saeviens, quod cum ipsum ima cruciant, homo ad summa conscendat; quod in illa celsitudine subvecta caro permanet, a qua tantus ipse spiritus sine fine projectus jacet. Sed loca mentium mutavit ordo meritorum. Sic sic superbia meruit dejici, sic humilitas exaltari, quatenus et coelestis spiritus erigendo se tartarum toleret, et terra humilis sine termino super coelos regnet.

LIBER TRIGESIMUS TERTIUS.

Expositionem versus decimi quinti et reliquorum capitis XL, nec non duodecim priorum cap. XLI exhibet, ubi variae daemonis artes deteguntur, doceturque praedestinatio gratuita, et cum libero arbitrio conciliatur. 1075 [Vet. et Rec. I.] 1. Superbi diabolo familiarius serviunt. Antiquo hosti, qui sub Behemoth nomine dominica voce describitur, superbi quique tanto familiarius serviunt, quanto hujus vitae successibus apud semetipsos altius intumescunt. His namque cum gloria augetur elatio, cum elatione vero additur cura, huc illucque animus tenditur, quia et desideria cum rebus crescunt. Cumque cogitationes innumeras quasi agri fenum proferunt, eisdem cogitationibus velut desiderato pabulo Behemoth istius famem pascunt. Unde nunc recte dicitur:

CAPUT PRIMUM.

VERS. 15. Huic montes herbas ferunt 2. Quid mons, quidve montes in sacra Scriptura significent. In Scriptura sacra cum numero singulari mons ponitur, aliquando incarnatus Dominus, aliquando sancta Ecclesia, aliquando testamentum Dei, aliquando apostata angelus, aliquando quilibet haereticus designatur. Cum vero montes plurali numero nominantur, aliquando celsitudo apostolorum atque prophetarum, aliquando vero saecularium potestatum tumor exprimitur. Mons namque Dominum designat, sicut scriptum est: Et erit in novissimis diebus praeparatus mons domus Domini in vertice montium (Isai. II, 2). Mons quippe est in vertice montium incarnatus Dominus, transcendens celsitudinem prophetarum. Rursum per montem sancta designatur Ecclesia, sicut scriptum est: Qui confidunt in Domino, sicut mons Sion (Psal. CXXIV, 1). Sion namque speculatio dicitur, per quam scilicet speculationem contemplans Deum Ecclesia figuratur. Rursum per montem testamentum Dei exprimitur, sicut Habacuc ait: Deus a

Libano veniet, et sanctus de monte umbroso et condenso (Habac. III, 3). Qui enim venturum se per testamenti sui paginas spopondit, quasi inde venit, unde velut sub promissione se tenuit. Quod videlicet testamentum bene mons umbrosus et condensus dicitur, quia spissis allegoriarum obscuritatibus opacatur. Rursum per montem angelus apostata designatur, sicut sub Babylonis regis specie de antiquo hoste praedicatoribus dicitur: Super montem caliginosum levate signum (Isai. XIII, 2). Praedicatores quippe sancti super caliginosum montem signum elevant, quando contra Satanae superbiam, qui saepe sub nebula simulationis absconditur, virtutem crucis exaltant. Rursum per montem haereticus quilibet exprimitur, sicut ex voce Ecclesiae Psalmista ait: In Domino confido, quomodo dicitis animae meae, Transmigra in montem sicut passer (Psal. X, 1)? Cum enim fideli animae unitate relicta, in tumenti doctrina confidere haeretici praedicatoris dicitur, deserto Domino quasi in montem transmigrare suadetur. Rursum per montes apostolorum atque prophetarum celsitudo designatur, sicut scriptum est: Justitia tua sicut montes Dei (Psal. XXXV, 7). Et voce Pauli dicitur: Ut nos efficeremur justitia Dei in ipso (II Cor. V, 21). Vel sicut iterum vore sperantis Ecclesiae Psalmista ait: Levavi 1076 oculos meos in montes, unde veniet auxilium mihi (Psal. CXX, 1). Rursum per montes saecularium potestatum tumor exprimitur, de quibus Psalmista ait: Montes sicut cera fluxerunt a facie Domini (Psal. XCVI, 5), quia multi qui prius alta rigiditate tumuerant. Deo in carne apparente, magno sunt per poenitentiam timore liquefacti. Vel sicut idem Propheta iterum dicit: Ascendunt montes, et descendunt campi (Psal. CIII, 8). Plerique enim persecutores Domini superbi contra eum veniunt, sed ab eo humiles revertuntur. Qui montes ascendunt per tumorem potentiae, sed campi descendunt, plani videlicet facti per cognitionem culpae. [Vet. II.] 3. Elati male operando daemones alunt. Sed quia nonnulli in elationis suae altitudine remanent, et ad divina obsequia flecti humiliter dedignantur, eo quod juxta desiderium antiqui

hostis prava cogitare ac perpetrare non desinunt, recte hoc loco de Behemoth dicitur: Huic montes ferunt herbas. Elati namque saeculi huic Behemoth herbas ferunt, quia ex eo illum reficiunt, quod nequiter operantur, Huic Behemoth herbas ferunt, quia suas illi offerunt fluxas et lubricas voluptates. Erunt enim, ait Apostolus, homines seipsos amantes (II Tim. III, 2). Quorum descriptionem complexus est, dicens: Voluptatum amatores magis quam Dei (Ibid., 4). Quae est ergo herba montium, nisi voluptas fluxa, quae ex corde gignitur superborum? Qui nisi Deum superbiendo contemnerent, nequaquam tot lubrica lasciviendo perpetrarent. Quibus nimirum herbis iste Behemoth pascitur, quia in eis poenam aeternae mortis esuriens, eorum perditis moribus satiatur. Superbi enim hujus saeculi, etsi quando supernae dispensationis ordine praepediti, ab expletione pravorum operum cessant, prava tamen in cogitatione multiplicant, modo ut se potentiores caeteris, rebus et honoribus ostendant, modo ut eamdem suam potentiam in studio alienae laesionis exerceant, modo ut, lubricis motibus ducti, per levia se facta voluptatesque dissolvant. Qui dum rebus divinitus acceptis nequaquam recta, sed prava semper agere cogitant, quid aliud faciunt, nisi suis contra Deum donis pugnant? Quia igitur Behemoth iste in superborum mentibus sua semper desideria recognoscit, quasi herbas in montibus invenit, quibus refectum suae malitiae ventrem tendit. Bene autem subditur:

CAPUT II [Rec. II].

IBID. Omnes bestiae agri ludent ibi. 4. Ludus daemonum est humanas mentes de vitio in vitium rotare. Quid per bestias nisi immundi spiritus, quid per agrum nisi praesens saeculum designatur? Unde de ipso malignorum spirituum principe contra Ephraim dicitur: Bestia agri scindet eos (Osee XIII, 8). Vel sicut Isaias ait: Et mala bestia non ascendet per eam (Isai. XXXV, 9). Quia autem agri nomine mundus accipiatur, dominicus per

Evangelium sermo testatur, qui ait: Ager autem est mundus (Matth. XIII, 38). Agri ergo bestiae in herbis montium ludunt, 1077 quia projecta de superioribus in hoc mundo daemonia pravis superborum operibus delectantur. Bestiae in herbis ludunt cum reprobi spiritus humana corda in illicitas cogitationes pertrahunt. An non immundis spiritibus ludere est mentes hominum ad imaginem Dei conditas, modo ficta promissione decipere, modo vacuis terroribus irridere, modo eis transitoria gaudia quasi mansura imprimere, modo mansuras poenas quasi transitorias levigare? Harum procul dubio bestiarum illusionem pertimuerat, qui dicebat: Deus meus, in te confido, non erubescam; neque irrideant me inimici mei (Psal. XXIV, 2). Quia igitur superborum cor ad omne vitium sternitur, ut cuilibet maligno spiritui irruenti prava cogitatione praeparetur, recte de herbis montium dicitur: Omnes bestiae agri ludent ibi. Pro eo enim quod superbi quique nullum malum cogitando praetereunt, nulla est agri bestia, quae non horum montium herbis satietur. Nam etsi quando carnis luxuriam fugiunt, interioris luxuriae vitium de ipsa castitate gloriando committunt. Si quando nil avare exterius rapiunt, nequaquam ab illecebra avaritiae mundi sunt, quia etsi res nullas ambiunt, favore tamen hominum laudem de continentia rapere conantur. Huic ergo Behemoth montes herbas ferunt, et omnes bestiae agri ludunt ibi, quia in superborum corde quilibet malignus spiritus tanto latius pascitur, quanto et omne vitium de superbia generatur. [Vet. III.] Sed quia audivimus quid iste Behemoth comedat, nunc audiamus necesse est ubi Interim per pravum suum desiderium requiescat. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. III].

VERS. 16. Sub umbra dormit in secreto calami, in locis humentibus. 5. Quid per umbram Scriptura intelligat. Obumbratio in sacro eloquio aliquando incarnatio Domini ponitur, vel mentis refrigerium a fervore carnalium cogitationum, unde appellatione umbrae ex superna protectione

hoc ipsum refrigerium cordis insinuari solet. Aliquando vero umbra, recedente charitate, torpor frigidae mentis accipitur. Nam quod dominica incarnatio servata veritate historiae, obumbrationis appellatione signetur, angelicus sermo testatur, qui ad Mariam ait: Virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi (Luc. I, 35). Quia enim umbra non aliter exprimitur, nisi per lumen et corpus, virtus ei Altissimi obumbravit, quia in ejus utero lux incorporea corpus sumpsit. Ex qua videlicet obumbratione omne in se refrigerium mentis accepit. Rursum per umbram ex superna protectione refrigerium cordis exprimitur, sicut Psalmista ait: Sub umbra alarum tuarum protege me (Psal. XVI, 9). Vel sicut sponsa in Canticis canticorum adventum sponsi praestolata praenuntiat, dicens: Sub umbra illius quem desideraveram sedi (Cant. II, 3). Ac si dicat: Ab aestu desideriorum carnalium sub adventus illius protectione requievi. Rursum per umbram recedente charitate, torpor frigidae mentis exprimitur, sicut de peccante homine scriptum est, quia secutus est umbram (Genes. III). Calorem enim charitatis fugiens, veritatis solem homo deseruit, et sub umbra se interni frigoris abscondit. Unde et voce ejusdem Veritatis dicitur: Abundabit iniquitas, et refrigescet charitas multorum (Matth. XXIV, 12). Unde 1078 primus homo post culpam inter arbores paradisi ad auram post meridiem absconsus invenitur (Genes. III, 8). Quia enim meridianum charitatis calorem perdiderat, jam sub peccati umbra quasi sub frigore aurae torpebat. 6. Satanas in his quos frigidos facit, facile quasi sub umbra requiescit. In illis securus jacet. Iste igitur Behemoth quia in illis quasi quamdam requiem invenit, quos a veri solis ardore subtrahendo frigidos facit, sub umbra dormire perhibetur. Nonnunquam vero per umbram, si tamen cum adjectione mortis ponatur, vel mors carnis exprimitur, vel quilibet reprobi, qui antiqui hostis tenebras studio pravae operationis imitantur. Unde voce martyrum per Psalmistam dicitur: Humiliasti nos in loco afflictionis, et cooperuit nos umbra mortis (Psal. XLIII, 20). Umbra enim mortis electos Dei operit, cum mors carnis, quae

imago mortis aeternae est, ab hac eos vita disjungit, quia sicut illa animam a Deo, ita haec ab anima separat corpus. Vel certe umbra eos mortis operit, quia de antiquo hoste scriptum est: Nomen illi mors (Apoc. VI, 8). Umbra ergo mortis sunt omnes reprobi, quia illius nequitiam elationis imitantur; ejusque imaginem quasi umbram exprimunt, dum ejus in se malitiae similitudinem trahunt. Qui electos Dei operiunt, dum contra illos in atrocitate persecutionis temporaliter convalescunt. Hoc autem loco umbra nequitiae torpor accipitur, in qua iste Behemoth dormit, quia contra corda charitate calentia sollicitus vigilat, in frigidis autem mentibus securus jacet. Dormire enim in sanctorum mentibus non potest, quia et si quando se in eis ad breve momentum collocat, ipse eum desideriorum coelestium aestus fatigat, et quasi toties ut recedat pungitur, quoties ab eis amore intimo ad aeterna suspiratur. Tantae eum voces excitant, quantae ex illorum mentibus sanctae cogitationes ad coelum clamant. Unde fit ut bonarum actionum armis territus, ac suspiriorum spiculis percussus fugiat, et ad corda reproborum frigida rediens, eam quam securus possideat malitiae umbram quaerat. Quae ubi ab illo inveniatur ostenditur, cum protinus subinfertur: In secreto calami. [Vet. IV.] 7. Calami et arundinis variae significationes in sacra Scriptura. In sacro eloquio calami vel arundinis appellatione aliquando verbum manens, aliquando doctorum peritia, aliquando mobilitas mentis, aliquando nitor gloriae temporalis accipitur. Per calamum quippe Verbi aeternitas designatur, cum voce Patris per Psalmistam dicitur: Lingua mea calamus scribae velociter scribentis (Psal. XLIV, 2). Quia enim quod loquimur transit, quod scribimus permanet, lingua Patris scribae calamus dicitur, quia ab eo est Verbum illi coaeternum, ac sine transitu generatum. Rursum per calamum scriptorum doctrina exprimitur, sicut de sancta Ecclesia propheta pollicetur, dicens: In cubilibus in quibus dracones prius habitabant, orietur viror calami et junci (Isai. XXXV, 7). Qua nimirum sententia, sicut in hoc opere longe superius diximus (Sup. lib. XXIX, n. 51),

per calamum exprimitur doctrina scribentium, per juncum viriditas auditorum. Rursum per calamum, seu certe arundinem, mentis mobilitas designatur, sicut Judaeorum turbis in Joannis laude a Domino dicitur: Quid existis in desertum videre? arundinem vento agitatam (Matth. XI, 7)? ut videlicet 1079 subintelligatur non. Joannes quippe arundo vento agitata non erat, quia ejus mentem Spiritu sancto solidam per diversas partes nullus linguarum flatus inclinabat. Rursum per calamum vel arundinem nitor gloriae temporalis exprimitur, sicut de justis per Sapientiam dicitur: Fulgebunt justi, et tanquam scintillae in arundineto discurrent (Sap. III, 7). Arundinetum namque vitam saecularium appellat, qui more arundinum per temporalem gloriam foris quasi ad alta proficiunt, sed intus a soliditate veritatis inanescunt. Unde et Judaeorum regnum calamo comparatur, cum per prophetam apparente in veritate carnis Domino dicitur: Calamum quassatum non confringet, et linum fumigans non exstinguet (Isai. XLII, 3). Quid enim calami nomine, nisi Judaici populi temporale regnum denuntiat, nitens quidem exterius, sed interius vacuum? Et quia in eodem populo genus jam regale defecerat, et regnum ejus alienigena possidebat, apte hoc idem regnum calamum quassatum vocat. Quid vero per linum, nisi ejus sacerdotium exprimitur, quod lineis nimirum vestibus utebatur? Quod quia in adventu Domini charitatis ardorem perdidit, quasi amisso jam igne fidei, non ardens, sed fumigans fuit. Incarnatus autem Dominus calamum quassatum non confregit, et linum fumigans non exstinxit, quia Judaeae regnum, quod pene destructum jam fuerat, ejusque sacerdotium quod ignem fidei non tenebat, non potestate judicii perculit, sed cum patientiae longanimitate toleravit. 8. Mentes saecularium gloriae temporali deditae, arundini similes. Hoc ergo loco quid aliud appellatione calami, nisi mentes saecularium temporali gloriae deditae designantur? Qui tanto apud semetipsos intus inanescunt, quanto alti et nitidi exterius ostenduntur, quia dum ad exteriorem gloriam per superficiem defluunt, nulla intus firmitate

solidantur. More quippe calami intus sunt quidem per fatuitatem vacui, sed foris per speciem et ostentationem pulchri; sed quanto ab eis exterior gloria studiosius quaeritur, tanto eorum corda gravioribus cogitationum stimulis agitantur. Unde recte nunc Behemoth iste in secreto calami dormire perhibetur, quia quorum studia ad appetitum temporalis nitoris atque altitudinis commovet, eorum corda tacitus tenet; et quasi ipse ibi quietus dormit, ubi eos quos possidet quiescere non permittit. Dum enim excedere caeteros bonorum altitudine ambiunt, dum more calami per nitorem exterioris munditiae justorum speciem, quasi solidarum arborum corticem, vincunt, in hoc quod ipsi interius vacui remanent, locum Behemoth isti, ubi apud se requiescere debeat, praebent. [Vet. V.] Unde et in Evangelio Dominus dicit quod spiritus exiens qui in locis aridis et inaquosis requiem non invenit, quia domum quam reliquerat vacuam scopisque mundatam reperit, hanc multiplicior intravit (Matth. XII, 43, seq.). Quia enim fluxa fit terra quae infunditur, loca arentia atque inaquosa sunt corda justorum, quae per disciplinae fortitudinem ab omni carnalis concupiscentiae humore siccantur. Unde hic quoque adhuc ubi Behemoth iste dormiat, demonstratur, cum protinus subditur: In locis humentibus. 1080 9. Carnales homines locis humidis similes. Diabolus hominibus per elationem vel per luxuriam dominatur. Loca enim humentia sunt terrenorum hominum mentes, quas humor carnalis concupiscentiae, quia replet, fluidas facit. In quibus Behemoth iste iniquitatis suae vestigia tanto altius imprimit, quanto in eisdem mentibus pertransitus illius quasi in fluxa terra descendit. Loca quippe humentia sunt opera voluptuosa. Pes quippe in arida terra non labitur, fixus vero in lubrica vix tenetur. In locis ergo humentibus iter vitae praesentis faciunt, qui in hac ad justitiam recti stare non possunt. In his itaque locis humentibus Behemoth dormit, quia in reproborum hominum lubrica operatione requiescit. Nonnulli vero loca humentia, membra genitalia suspicantur. Quod si ita est, quid aperte aliud locis humentibus nisi

luxuria designatur, ut et per calamum gloria superbiae, et per loca humentia luxuria corporis exprimatur? Duo quippe haec sunt vitia, quae humano generi immaniter dominantur, unum videlicet spiritus, atque aliud carnis. Elatio namque spiritum erigit, luxuria carnem corrumpit. Antiquus itaque hostis humanum genus vel per elationem praecipue, vel per luxuriam premens, in secreto calami atque in locis humentibus dormit, quia hominem damnatum sub ditione suae dominationis aut per elationem spiritus, aut per carnis corruptionem tenet. Quosdam vero in utroque possidet, quia cum eos superbiae spiritus elevat, a tumore suae altitudinis nec verecundia corruptionis inclinat. Sed nunquid contra hos intra sanctam Ecclesiam incessanter quotidie virtutum magistri non vigilant? Nunquid redarguere voluptates infimas, et suadere gaudia patriae coelestis cessant? Sed pravorum mentes tanto obstinatius summa non audiunt, quanto arctius infimis inhaeserunt. Quibus neque hoc sufficit, ut ipsi pereant, sed adhuc, quod est deterius, cum quoslibet argui emendarique conspiciunt, justorum increpationibus obviant, ne saltem alii corrigantur. Unde et bene subditur:

CAPUT IV [Rec. IV].

VERS. 17. Protegunt umbrae umbram ejus. 10. Umbrae sunt diaboli peccatores qui se invicem protegunt. Crimen dum defenditur, augetur. Umbrae quippe sunt diaboli, omnes iniqui: qui dum imitationi iniquitatis ejus inserviunt, quasi ab ejus corpore imaginis speciem trahunt. Sicut autem umbrae ejus sunt pluraliter reprobi, ita singulariter umbra ejus est unusquisque peccator. Sed dum doctrinae justorum mali contradicunt, dum ab eis iniquum quemlibet corrigi non permittunt, umbrae Behemoth istius umbram ejus protegunt, quia peccatores quique in quo sibi male sunt conscii, in eo et alium peccantem defendunt. Umbrae umbram ejus protegunt, dum nequissimorum facta nequlores perversis patrociniis tuentur. Quod hoc nimirum studio faciunt, ne dum culpa in qua et ipsi obligati sunt,

in aliis corrigitur, ad ipsos quandoque veniatur. Se igitur tegunt dum alios protegunt, quia suam vitam inde praevident impeti, unde alios considerant libera correptione confundi. Sicque fit ut summa criminum dum defenditur augeatur, et uniuscujusque nequitia eo sit ad perpetrandum facilis, quo difficilis ad puniendum. Scelera quippe peccantium tanto majora incrementa percipiunt, quanto per defensionem potentium diu inulla tolerantur. Sed 1031 tales quique seu extra, seu intra sanctam Ecclesiam esse videantur, tanto se apertiores Dei hostes exhibent, quanto majores sunt patroni vitiorum. Contra illum quippe suis defensio nibus pugnant, cui ea displicent, quae defendendo multiplicant. Quod factum bene per prophetam Dominus sub Babylonis specie redarguit, dicens: Oriuntur in domibus ejus spinae et urticae, et paliurus in munitionibus ejus (Isai. XXXIV, 13). Quid namque per urticas nisi cogitationum prurigines, quid vero per spinas nisi vitiorum punctiones accipimus? In domibus igitur Babylonis urticae et spinae pullulant, quia in confusione mentis reprobae et desideria cogitationum surgunt quae exasperant, et operum peccata quae pungunt. Sed haec agentes habent etiam nequiores alios defensores suos. Unde illic apte protinus subdidit: Et paliurus in munitionibus ejus. Paliurus quippe tanta spinarum circumdatione densescit, ut prae asperitate tangi vix possit. Intus igitur urtica et spina nascitur, sed utrumque hoc exterius per paliurum munitur, quia videlicet minores iniqui mala quaelibet faciunt, sed ea nequissimi majores tuentur. Unde bene et hic dicitur: Protegunt umbrae umbram ejus. Dum enim malum pejor vindicat, quasi umbra umbram, ne a veritatis lumine irradietur, obscurat. Sequitur:

CAPUT V [Vet.

VI, Rec. V]. IBID. Circumdabunt eum salices torrentis. 11. Mali salicibus similes: virent quidem, sed fructum non ferunt. Infructuosae quidem arbores sunt salices; sed tamen tantae viriditatis sunt, ut arescere vel abscissae

radicitus et projectae vix possint. Unde in sacro eloquio salicum nomine aliquando pro viriditate boni, aliquando pro sterilitate, reprobi designantur. Nisi enim electorum vitam per constantiam suae viriditatis exprimerent, nequaquam de sanctae Ecclesiae filiis propheta dixisset: Germinabunt inter herbas, sicut salices juxta praeterfluentes aquas (Isai. XLIV, 4). Sanctae enim Ecclesiae filii inter herbas sicut salices germinant, dum inter arescentem vitam carnalium hominum, et multiplici numerositate, et perpetua mentis viriditate perdurant. Qui bene juxta praeterfluentes aquas germinare perhibentur, quia unusquisque eorum ubertatem ad fructum percipit ex doctrina sacri eloquii, quae temporaliter percurrit. Et rursum nisi per sterilitatem salicum vita peccantium signaretur, nequaquam ex voce praedicantium contra Babyloniam Psalmista dixisset: In salicibus in medio ejus suspendimus organa nostra (Psal. CXXXVI, 2). Babylonis quippe medio inesse salices describuntur, quia nimirum infructuosi quique, atque ab amore patriae coelestis alieni, totis visceribus cordis in hac saeculi confusione radicantur. Unde et praedicatores sancti in istis salicibus non exercent organa, sed suspendunt, quia cum infructuosas ac reprobas mentes aspiciunt, vim suae praedicationis non exhibent, sed potius lugentes silent. Quid etiam per torrentem, nisi hujus mortalis vitae cursus exprimitur? De quo rursum per Prophetam dicitur: De torrente in via bibet, propterea exaltabit caput (Psal. CIX, 7), quia videlicet Redemptor noster mortalis vitae poenam in quodam transitu attigit, et idcirco diu eidem morti cui sponte succubuit non inhaesit. Unde die tertia hoc quod moriendo posuerat resurgendo caput elevavit. 1082 Quid est ergo quod de Behemoth isto dicitur: Circumdabunt eum salices torrentis, nisi quod amatores vitae mortalis a bonis actibus quasi a fructibus alieni, tanto illi arctius inhaerent, quanto eos largius delectatio transitoriae voluptatis infundit? Hos enim quasi in radicibus torrens rigat, dum in suis cogitationibus amor vitae carnalis inebriat. Qui scilicet more salicum fructus non ferunt, sed in foliis

viridescunt, quia ea quae gravia ad dicendum non sunt, aliquando honestatis verba proferunt, sed nullum vitae pondus ex bonis operibus ostendunt. Bene igitur dicitur: Circumdabunt eum salices torrentis, quia infructuosi quique dum amori vitae temporalis inserviunt, antiquo hosti perversis moribus familiarius obsequuntur. [Vet. VII.] Sed quia quid ei a suis clientibus impendatur audivimus, nunc etiam quid in illis agat ipse audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT VI [Rec. VI].

VERS. 18. Absorbebit fluvium, et non mirabitur, et habet fiduciam quod influat Jordanis in os ejus. 12. Satanas homines pene omnes absorbuit ante Redemptorem; et post, non paucos deglutu. Quid enim hoc loco fluvii nomine nisi humani generis decursio designatur, quae velut a fontis sui origine nascendo surgit, sed quasi ad ima defluens moriendo pertransit? Qui autem signantur appellatione Jordanis, nisi qui jam imbuti sunt sacramento baptismatis? Quia enim Redemptor noster in hoc flumine baptizari dignatus est, ejus nomine debent omnes baptizati exprimi, in quo hoc ipsum contigit sacramentum baptismatis inchoari. Quia igitur Behemoth iste a mundi origine exortum, vix paucis electis evadentibus, humanum genus in ima defluens usque ad redemptionis tempora quasi quemdam in se fluvium traxit, bene nunc dicitur: Absorbebit fluvium, et non mirabitur. Quia vero et post Mediatoris adventum quosdam qui recte vivere negligunt etiam fideles rapit, recte subjungitur: Et habet fiduciam quod influat Jordanis in os ejus. Ac si aperte diceretur: Ante Redemptorem mundi mundum non miratus absorbuit, sed, quod est gravius, etiam post Redemptoris adventum quosdam qui baptismatis sacramento signati sunt deglutire se posse confidit. Alios namque sub Christianitatis nomine positos devorat, quia in ipso eos fidei errore supplantat. Alios a rectitudine fidei nequaquam deviat, sed ad usum pravae operationis inclinat. Alios quantum vult in operatione

immunditiae inflectere non valet, sed apud semetipsos intus in studio intentionis intorquet, ut dum a charitate mentem dividunt, rectum non sit quidquid extrinsecus operentur. Et fidem tenent, sed vitam fidei non tenent, quia aut aperte illicita faciunt, aut ex perverso corde quae agunt prava sunt, etiam si sancta videantur. Quia enim nonnulli confitendo fideles sunt, non vivendo, hinc est quod voce Veritatis dicitur: Non omnis qui dicit mihi, Domine, Domine, intrabit in regnum coelorum (Matth. VII, 21). Hinc rursum ait: Quid autem vocatis me, Domine, Domine, et non facitis quae dico (Luc. VI, 46)? Hinc Paulus ait: Confitentur se nosse Deum, factis autem negant (Tit. I, 16). Hinc Joannes dicit: Qui dicit se Deum nosse, et mandata ejus non custodit, mendax est (I Joan. II, 4). Hinc est quod de ipsa sua prima plebe Dominus conqueritur, dicens: Populus hic labiis 1083 me honorat, cor autem eorum longe est a me (Marc. VII, 6, ex Isai. XXIX, 13). Hinc etiam Psalmista ait: Dilexerunt eum in ore suo, et lingua sua mentiti sunt ei (Psal. LXXVII, 36). Sed minime mirum fuit quod Behemoth iste ante lavacri undam, ante sacramenta coelestia, ante corpoream praesentiam Redemptoris, humani generis fluvium hiatu profundae persuasionis absorbuit; sed hoc valde mirum, hoc valde terribile est, quia multos aperto ore etiam post cognitionem Redemptoris suscipit, post lavacri undam polluit, post sacramenta coelestia ad inferni profundum rapit. Dicatur ergo, dicatur terribiliter voce Veritatis: Absorbebit fluvium, et non mirabitur, et habet fiduciam quod influat Jordanis in os ejus. Neque enim pro magno diabolus habuit, quod infideles tulit; sed toto nunc annisu in illorum mortem se erigit, quos contra se regeneratos tabescit. Nemo igitur sibi fidem sine operibus sufficere posse confidat, cum scimus quod scriptum sit: Fides sine operibus mortua est (Jac. II, 20). Nullus Behemoth morsum ex sola confessione fidei plene evasisse se existimet, quia jam quidem fluvium absorbuit, sed adhuc Jordanem sitit; et toties in os illius Jordanis fluit, quoties Christianus quisque ad iniquitatem defluit. Os quidem ejus jam fide

nos sublevante fugimus, sed magno studio curandum est, ne in hoc lubrica operatione dilabamur. Si ambulandi cautela negligitur, incassum credendo rectum iter tenetur, quia via quidem fidei ad coelestem patriam proficit, sed offendentes minime perducit. [Vet. VIII.] 13. Iis praesertim qui sanitate praestant, insidiatur. Qui nisi summam vigilantiam adhibeant, pejus de alto ruunt. Habemus adhuc quod hac in re subtilius perpendamus. Hi enim quos per Jordanem diximus exprimi, possunt per fluvium designari. Qui enim fidem jam veritatis agnoverunt, sed vivere fideliter negligunt, recte fluvius dici possunt, quia videlicet deorsum fluunt. Jordanis vero Hebraeo vocabulo descensio eorum dicitur. Et sunt nonnulli qui viam veritatis appetentes semetipsos abjiciunt, atque a vitae veteris elatione descendunt; cumque aeterna cupiunt, valde se ab hoc mundo alienos reddunt, dum non solum aliena non appetunt, sed etiam sua derelinquunt, et non solum in eo gloriam non quaerunt, sed hanc cum se obtulerit, etiam contemnunt. Hinc est enim quod voce Veritatis dicitur: Si quis vult venire post me, abneget semetipsum (Luc. IX, 23). Semetipsum enim abnegat, qui, calcato typho superbiae, ante Dei oculos esse se a se alienum demonstrat. Hinc Psalmista ait: Memor ero tui de terra Jordanis et Hermoniim (Psal. XLI, 7), Jordanis quippe, ut dixi, descensio, Hermoniim autem anathema, id est alienatio, interpretatur. De terra igitur Jordanis et Hermoniim Dei reminiscitur, qui in eo quod semetipsum dejicit, atque a se alienus existit, ad conditoris sui memoriam revocatur. Sed antiquus hostis hoc pro magno non habet, quod sub jure suae tyrannidis terrena quaerentes tenet. Propheta quippe attestante cognovimus quia esca ejus electa (Habac. I, 16). Neque enim 1084 mirum deputat, si eos absorbeat, quos superbia erigit, avaritia tabefacit, voluptas dilatat, malitia angustat, ira inflammat, discordia separat, invidia exulcerat, luxuria inquinans necat. Absorbebit ergo fluvium, et non mirabitur, quia pro magno non aestimat cum eos devorat, qui per ipsa suae vitae studia deorsum currunt; sed illos magnopere rapere nititur, quos, despectis terrenis studiis,

jungi jam coelestibus contemplatur. [Vet. IX.] Unde absorpto fluvio recte subjungitur: Et habet fiduciam quod influat Jordanis in os ejus, quia illos insidiando rapere appetit, quos pro amore supernae patriae a praesentis vitae gloria semetipsos dejicere agnoscit. Nonnulli quippe mundum deserunt, honorum transeuntium vana derelinquunt, et, ima humilitatis appetentes, humanae conversationis morem bene vivendo transcendunt; atque in tanta studiorum arce proficiunt, ut signorum jam virtutes operentur; sed quia semetipsos circumspiciendo tegere negligunt, inanis gloriae telo percussi, pejus de alto ruunt. Hinc est enim quod aeternus judex, qui occulta cordis examinat, ejusdem ruinae casum praenuntians intentat, cum dicit: Multi dicent mihi in illa die: Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in nomine tuo daemonia ejecimus, et in tuo nomine virtutes multas fecimus? Et tunc confitebor illis quia nunquam novi vos, discedite a me qui operamini iniquitatem, nescio qui estis (Matth. VII, 22, 23). Hinc etiam per prophetam dicitur: Vocavit Dominus judicium ad ignem et devoravit abyssum multam, et comedet partem domus Domini (Amos. VII, 4). Judicium quippe ad ignem vocatur, cum justitiae sententia ad poenam jam aeternae concremationis ostenditur. Et multam abyssum devorat, quia iniquas atque incomprehensibiles hominum mentes concremat, quae nunc se hominibus etiam sub signorum miraculis occultant. Pars autem domus Domini comeditur, quia illos quoque gehenna devorat, qui nunc quasi in sanctis actibus de electorum numero se esse gloriantur. Qui ergo hic Jordanis, ipsi illic pars domus Domini vocantur. Antiquus ergo hostis habet fiduciam quod in os ejus et Jordanis influat, quia nonnunquam calliditatis suae insidiis eos etiam qui jam electi putantur necat. [Vet. X.] Sed cujus cordis duritiam non ista Domini verba perturbent? cujus mentis constantia non ab intimis cogitationum radicibus quatiatur, cum hostis noster tantae esse contra nos fortitudinis demonstratur? Nullumne erit consolationis adjutorium? Erit certe, nam subditur:

CAPUT VII [Rec. VII].

VERS. 19. In oculis ejus quasi hamo capiet eum. 14. Diabolus Christum deglutire cupiens, quasi hamo captus est. Notandum valde est quod Scripturae suae verba misericorditer temperans Deus, modo nos asperis incitationibus terret, modo blandis consolationibus refovet, et terrorem fomentis miscet, et fomenta terrori, ut dum circa nos utrumque mira magisterii arte temperatur, nec desperate inveniamur territi, nec incaute securi. Nam cum Behemoth astutas insidias, 1085 atque effrenatas vires multiplicibus sententiis indicasset, protinus unigeniti Filii sui Redemptoris nostri commendat adventum, et quo ab illo ordine Behemoth iste sit perimendus insinuat, ut quia cor nostrum narrata illius virtute perculerat, moerorem nostrum citius indicata ejus perditione relevaret. Igitur postquam dixit: Absorbebit fluvium, et non mirabitur, et habet fiduciam quod influat Jordanis in os ejus, ipsum illico dominicae incarnationis adventum annuntiat, dicens: In oculis ejus quasi hamo capiet eum. Quis nesciat quod in hamo esca ostenditur, aculeus occultatur? Esca enim provocat, ut aculeus pungat. Dominus itaque noster ad humani generis redemptionem veniens, velut quemdam de se in necem diaboli hamum fecit. Assumpsit enim corpus, ut in eo Behemoth iste quasi escam suam mortem carnis appeteret. Quam mortem dum in illo injuste appetit, nos quos quasi juste tenebat amisit. In hamo ergo ejus incarnationis captus est, quia dum in illo appetit escam corporis, transfixus est aculeo divinitatis. Ibi quippe inerat humanitas quae ad se devoratorem duceret, ibi divinitas quae perforaret, ibi aperta infirmitas quae provocaret, ibi occulta virtus quae raptoris faucem transfigeret. In hamo igitur captus est, quia inde interiit unde devoravit. Et quidem Behemoth iste Filium Dei incarnatum noverat, sed redemptionis nostrae ordinem nesciebat. Sciebat enim quod pro redemptione nostra incarnatus Dei Filius fuerat, sed omnino quod idem Redemptor noster illum moriendo transfigeret nesciebat. Unde et bene dicitur: In oculis ejus quasi

hamo capiet eum. In oculis quippe habere dicimus quod coram nobis positum videmus. Antiquus vero hostis humani generis Redemptorem ante se positum vidit, quem, cognoscendo confessus, confitendo pertimuit, dicens: Quid nobis et tibi, Flii Dei? venisti ante tempus torquere nos (Matth. VIII, 29). In oculis itaque suis hamo captus est, quia et novit, et momordit; et cognovit prius quem pertimesceret, et tamen post non timuit, cum in illo quasi escam propriam, mortem carnis esuriret. [Vet. XI.] Igitur quia caput nostrum per se quid fecit audivimus, nunc per membra sua quid faciat audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT VIII [Rec. VIII].

IBID. Et in sudibus perforabit nares ejus. 15. Sagacissimas ejus insidias detegendo, sancti veluti sude nares ipsius perforant. Quid aliud sudes, id est palos accipimus, qui videlicet exacuuntur ut figantur, nisi acuta sanctorum consilia? Quae hujus Behemoth nares perforant, dum sagacissimas ejus insidias et vigilando circumspiciunt, et superando transfigunt. Per nares vero odor trahitur, et deducto flatu hoc agitur, ut res etiam quae longe est posita cognoscatur. Naribus ergo Behemoth callidae ejus insidiae designantur, per quas sagacissime nititur et occulta cordis nostri bona cognoscere et haec pessima persuasione dissipare. In sudibus itaque Dominus nares ejus perforat, quia callidas ejus insidias acutis sanctorum sensibus penetrans enervat. Saepe autem bonorum vias tanta insidians arte circumvolat, ut per ea quae ab eis bene gesta cognoverit, ad malitiam aditum quaerat. Nam unde alium largiri quid conspicit, inde alium in discordiae flamma succendit; et cum hunc respicit misereri, illi persuadet irasci, ut dum bonum quasi non communiter 1086 factum insinuat, concordes animos a bono gratiae communis abscindat. Quia enim justorum mentes ad mala suadendo non valet frangere, bonis satagit actibus inter eas mala seminare. Sed sancti viri has ejus insidias tanto celerius vincunt,

quanto et subtilius deprehendunt. Quod melius ostendimus, si unum e multis assertoribus veritatis in testimonium Paulum vocemus, sub quo quidam Corinthius dum incesti facinus perpetrasset, cum doctor egregius in carnis interitum ad satisfactionem poenitentiae Satanae tradidit, et in diem Domini salvum ejus spiritum reservavit (I Cor. V, 5). Magna quippe arte magisterii ipsi est traditus coactus in poenam cui sponte est substratus in culpa, ut qui auctor fuerat ad vitium nequitiae, ipse flagellum fieret disciplinae. Qua tamen bene gesta poenitentia, dum cognovisset Corinthios super eum jam misericorditer motos, ait: Cui aliquid donastis, et ego; nam et ego quod donavi, si quid donavi, propter vos in persona Christi (II Cor. II, 10). Communionis vero gratiam cogitans ait: Cui aliquid donastis, et ego. Ac si diceret: A bono vestro non dissentio, meum sit quidquid ipsi fecistis. Atque mox subdidit: Et ego si quid donavi, propter vos. Ac si diceret: Vestris actibus bonum addidi, quidquid propter vos misericorditer feci. Vestra ergo est utilitas bonitas mea, mea est utilitas bonitas vestra. Qui ipsam mox compagem cordium, in qua sic tenetur, adjungens subdidit: In persona Christi. Cui velut si dicere praesumamus: Quare te ita caute discipulis copulas? quare vel te illorum, vel illos tuis actionibus tam sollicita mente conformas? illico subjunxit: Ut non circumveniamur a satana (Ibid., 11). Cujus sagaces insidias quam acuto sensu transfigat insinuat subdens: Non enim ignoramus cogitationes ejus. Ac si verbis aliis dicat: Acutae auctore Domino sudes sumus, et nares Behemoth istius subtiliter circumspiciendo penetramus, ne hoc quod bene mens inchoat, ipse in malitiae finem vertat. [Vet. XII.] 16. Christi divinitatem explorans, ejus verbis in naso confixus est et captus. Possunt per sudes acuta ipsius per carnem manifestatae sapientiae verba signari, ut quia naribus odor trahitur, per Behemoth nares illa antiqui hostis exploratio figuretur. Qui cum Deum incarnatum esse dubitaret, hoc expetitis miraculis voluit tentando cognoscere, dicens: Si Filius Dei es, dic ut lapides isti panes fiant (Matth.

IV, 3). Quia ergo signorum indiciis odorem divinitatis ejus cognoscere concupivit, quasi flatum naribus traxit. Sed dum ei protinus respondetur: Non in pane solo vivit homo. Et: Non tentabis Dominum Deum tuum (Ibid., 4, 7), quia sententiarum suarum acuminibus indagationem antiqui hostis veritas perculit, quasi nares ejus sudibus perforavit. Sed quia Behemoth iste per varia fraudum argumenta distenditur, adhuc adjuncto et alio nomine notatur: nam subditur:

CAPUT IX [Rec. IX].

VERS. 20. An extrahere poteris Leviathan hamo? 17. Divinitas in carne velut hamus in esca satanam transfixit. Leviathan quippe additamentum eorum dicitur. Quorum videlicet, nisi hominum? quibus semel culpam praevaricationis intulit, et hanc usque ad aeternam mortem quotidie pessimis suggestionibus extendit. Quibus dum reatum fenore peccati multiplicat, poenas procul dubio sine cessatione coacervat. Potest quoque Leviathan etiam per irrisionem vocari. Primo quippe homini persuasione callida 1087 divinitatem additurum se perhibuit, sed immortalitatem tulit (Genes. III, 5). Additamentum ergo hominum per irrisionem dici potest, quibus dum hoc quod non erant se addere spopondit, etiam hoc quod erant fallendo subtraxit. Sed Leviathan iste hamo captus est, quia in Redemptore nostro dum per satellites suos escam corporis momordit, divinitatis illum aculeus perforavit. Quasi hamus quippe fauces glutientis tenuit, dum in illo et esca carnis patuit, quam devorator appeteret, et divinitas passionis tempore latuit, quae necaret. In hac quippe aquarum abysso, id est in hac immensitate generis humani, ad omnium mortem inhians, vitam pene omnium vorans, huc illucque aperto ore cetus iste ferebatur, sed ad mortem ceti istius hamus in hac aquarum profunditate caliginosa mira est dispositione suspensus. Hujus hami linea illa est per Evangelium antiquorum patrum propago memorata. Nam cum dicitur: Abraham genuit

Isaac, Isaac genuit Jacob (Matth. I, 2); cumque caeteri successores interposito Joseph nomine usque ad Mariam virginem desponsatam describuntur, quasi quaedam linea torquetur, in cujus extremo incarnatus Dominus, id est hamus iste ligaretur, quem in his aquis humani generis dependentem aperto ore iste cetus appeteret, sed eo per satellitum suorum saevitiam morso, mordendi vires ulterius non haberet. Ne ergo iste humanis mortibus cetus insidians quos vellet ultra devoraret, hamus hic raptoris fauces tenuit, et sese mordentem momordit. Incarnationem igitur unigeniti Filii fideli famulo indicans Deus, ait: An extrahere poteris Leviathan hamo? Subaudis ut ego, qui ad raptoris mortem incarnatum unigenitum Filium mitto, in quo dum mortalis caro conspicitur, et immortalitatis potentia non videtur, quasi hamus quidam inde devorantem perimit unde acumen potentiae quo transfigat occultat. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

IBID. Et fune ligabis linguam ejus. 18. Ejus linguam Dominus ligavit, dum silere coegit errores. Subaudis ut ego. Scriptura enim sacra fune aliquando dimensionum sortes, aliquando peccata, aliquando fidem designare consuevit. Nam propter haereditarias dimensionum sortes dicitur: Funes ceciderunt mihi in praeclaris; etenim haereditas mea praeclara est mihi (Psal. XV, 6). Funes quippe in praeclaris cadunt, dum per humilitatem vitae sortes nos patriae melioris excipiunt. Rursum quia fune peccata signantur, per prophetam dicitur: Vae qui trahitis iniquitatem in funiculis vanitatis (Isai. V, 18). Iniquitas namque in funiculis vanitatis trahitur, dum per augmentum culpa protelatur. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur: Funes peccatorum circumplexi sunt me (Psal. CXVIII, 61). Quia enim funis addendo torquetur ut crescat, non immerito peccatum in fune figuratur, quod perverso corde saepe, dum defenditur, multiplicatur. Rursum fune fides exprimitur, Salomone attestante, qui ait: Funiculus triplex difficile

rumpitur (Eccle. IV, 12), quia fides videlicet, quae de cognitione Trinitatis ab ore praedicantium texitur, fortis in electis permanens, in solo reproborum corde dissipatur. Hoc itaque loco funis nomine sive peccatum, sive fidem nil obstat intelligi. [Vet. XIII.] Incarnatus etenim Dominus noster fune Leviathan linguam ligavit, 1088 quia in similitudine carnis peccati apparuit, et omnia errorum ejus praedicamenta damnavit (Rom. VIII, 3). Unde Paulo attestante dicitur: Et de peccato damnavit peccatum (Ibid.). Fune linguam ligavit, quia per similitudinem carnis peccati ab electorum suorum cordibus cuncta ejus fallaciae argumenta destruxit. Ecce enim apparente in carne Domino, Leviathan lingua ligata est, quia ejus veritate cognita, illae falsitatis doctrinae tacuerunt. 19. Academici et Mathematici refelluntur. Ubi enim nunc est Academicorum error, qui certe conantur astruere certum nil esse, qui impudenti fronte assertionibus suis fidem ab auditoribus exigunt, cum vera esse nulla testantur? Ubi Mathematicorum superstitio qui, dum signorum cursus suspiciunt, vitas hominum in siderum momenta suspendunt? Quorum aperte doctrinam saepe geminorum nativitas dissipat, qui cum uno eodemque momento horae prodeant, non in una conversationis qualitate perdurant. Ubi tot praedicamenta falsitatis, quae enumerare fugimus, ne ab exponendi ordine longe recedamus? Sed cuncta jam erroris doctrina conticuit, quia Leviathan linguam Dominus incarnationis suae fune constrinxit. Unde bene etiam per prophetam dicitur: Et desolabit Dominus linguam maris Aegyptii (Isai. XI, 15). Lingua quippe maris est scientia doctrinae saecularis. Bene autem mare Aegyptium dicitur, quia peccati obscuritate fuscatur. Linguam ergo maris Aegyptii Dominus desolavit, quia hujus mundi falsam sapientiam per carnem se ostendendo destruxit. Fune ergo Leviathan lingua constringitur, quia per similitudinem carnis peccati ligata est praedicatio vetusti peccatoris. 20. Disseminata sanctissimae Trinitatis fide scientia saecularis tacuit. Si autem fides fune signatur, isdem nobis iterum intellectus innuitur, quia dum per praedicatores sanctos in

mundo fides Trinitatis innotuit, contra electorum mentes erumpere mundi doctrina cessavit. Unde bene Domino per prophetam dicitur: Tu dirupisti fontes et torrentes, tu siccasti fluvios Ethan (Psal. LXXIII, 15). Ethan quippe interpretatur fortis. Et quis est hic fortis, nisi de quo per Evangelium Dominus dicit: Nemo potest vasa fortis ingressus domum diripere, nisi prius fortem alliget (Marc. III, 27)? Fontes itaque et torrentes Dominus dirupit, dum in apostolorum suorum cordibus fluenta veritatis aperuit. De quibus rursum per prophetam alium dicitur: Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris (Isai. XII, 3). Ad eorum quippe doctrinam sitientes pergimus, ut veritatis plenas cordium nostrorum lagunculas reportemus. Sed emanantibus suis fontibus Ethan fluvios exsiccavit, dum doctrinam fortis et maligni spiritus ostenso radio suae veritatis arefecit. Leviathan ergo lingua fune stringitur, quia, extensa fide Trinitatis, errorum praedicamenta siluerunt. Sed quia jam se aperte extollere non valet, huc illucque circumiens per insidias mordet. [Vet. XIV.] Mira autem misericordia contra hunc pro nobis Dominus vigilat, atque eum et in hoc quod fraudibus molitur expugnat. Unde subditur:

CAPUT XI [Rec. X].

VERS. 21. Nunquid pones circulum in naribus ejus? 21. Circulus in naribus diaboli divinae virtutis omnipotentia. Sicut per nares insidiae, ita per circulum divinae virtutis omnipotentia designatur. Quae cum apprehendi nos tentationibus prohibet, miris ordinibus 1089 antiqui hostis insidias circumplectens tenet. Circulus ergo ei in naribus ponitur, dum circumducta protectionis supernae fortitudine, ejus sagacitas retinetur, ne contra infirmitatem hominum tantum praevaleat, quantum perditionis argumenta latenter explorat. Potest etiam circuli nomine occulti judicii adjutorium designari, quod in hujus Behemoth naribus ponitur, cum a callida sua crudelitate refrenatur. Unde bene per prophetam, cum ab Israelitarum

laesione prohibetur, regi Babyloniae dicitur: Ponam circulum in naribus tuis (Isai. XXXVII, 29). Ac si aperte diceretur: Cogitando insidias suspiras; sed explere quod appetis non valendo omnipotentiae meae circulum in naribus portas, ut cum bonorum mortem ardentius anhelas, ab eorum vita vacuus redeas. Quod vero hoc loco circulum, hoc et Scriptura sacra per Joannem in Apocalypsi falcem vocat. Ait enim: Vidi, et ecce nubem candidam, et super nubem sedentem similem Filio hominis, habentem in capite suo coronam auream, et in manu sua falcem acutam (Apoc. XIV, 14). Potestas enim divini judicii, quia undique stringit, circulus dicitur; et quia intra se omnia incidendo amplectitur, falcis appellatione signatur. In falce enim quidquid inciditur, quaquaversum flectitur, intus cedit. Et quia potestas superni judicii nullatenus evitatur, intra ipsam quippe sumus, quo libet fugere conemur, recte cum venturus judex ostenditur, falcem tenere perhibetur, quia cum potenter ad omnia obviat, incidendo circumdat. Esse se intra judicii falcem Propheta vidit, cum diceret: Si ascendero in coelum, tu illic es; si descendero ad infernum ades. Si sumpsero pennas meas ante lucem, et habitavero in extremis maris, etenim illuc manus tua deducet me, et tenebit me dextera tua (Psal. CXXXVIII, 8, 9, 10). Intra quamdam falcem se vidit, cum ex nullo sibi loco patere fugae aditum posse cognovit, dicens: Quia neque ab oriente, neque ab occidente, neque a desertis montibus (Psal. LXXIV, 7); subaudis patet via fugiendi, atque mox ipsam supernae potentiae omnimodam comprehensionem subdens, ait: Quoniam Deus judex est. Ac si diceret: Fugiendi via undique deest, quia ille judicat qui ubique est. Divina itaque judicia sicut signantur falce, quia circumvallantia incidunt, ita exprimuntur circulo, quia undique stringunt. In Leviathan itaque naribus a Domino circulus ponitur, quia judicii ejus potentia in insidiis suis ne quantum vult praevaleat coarctatur. Dicatur ergo: Nunquid pones circulum in naribus ejus? Subaudis ut ego, qui astutas ejus insidias

omnipotenti judicio constringo, ut nec tantum tentet quantum appetit, nec tantum capiat quantum tentat. Sequitur:

CAPUT XII.

IBID. Aut armilla perforabis maxillam ejus? 22. Haec plurimos quos devoravit, ab ejus faucibus extrahit. Ab intellectu circuli armilla non discrepat, quia ipsa hoc quoque ubi ponitur ambiendo constringit. Sed quia armilla latius tenditur, per armillam occulti ejus judicii erga nos protectio impensior designatur. Armilla ergo Dominus maxillam Leviathan istius perforat, quia ineffabili misericordiae suae potentia sic malitiae antiqui hostis obviat, ut aliquando eos etiam quos jam cepit amittat; et quasi ab ore illius cadunt, qui post perpetratas culpas ad innocentiam redeunt. Quis enim ore illius semel raptus maxillam ejus evaderet, 1090 si perforata non esset? An non in ore Petrum tenuit, cum negavit (Matth. XXVI, 71)? An non in ore David tenuit, cum in tantam se luxuriae voraginem mersit (II Reg. XI, 4)? Sed cum ad vitam uterque per poenitentiam rediit, Leviathan iste eos aliquo modo quasi per maxillae suae foramina amisit. Per foramen ergo maxillae ab ejus ore subtracti sunt qui post perpetrationem tantae nequitiae poenitendo redierunt. Quis autem hominum Leviathan istius os evadat, ut nulla illicita committat? Sed hinc cognoscimus quantum redemptori humani generis debitores sumus, qui non solum nos in os Leviathan ire prohibuit, sed ab ore etiam redire concessit; qui spem peccatori non abstulit, quia maxillam ejus, ut evadendi viam tribueret, perforavit, ut saltem post morsum fugiat, qui incautus prius morderi nequaquam metuebat. Ubique ergo nobis occurrit superna medicina, quia et dedit homini praecepta ne peccet, et tamen peccandi dedit remedia, ne desperet. Unde cavendum summopere est ne quis delectatione peccati Leviathan istius ore rapiatur, et tamen, si raptus fuerit, non desperet, quia si peccatum perfecte lugeat, adhuc foramen in maxilla ejus invenit, per quod evadat. Jam dentibus

teritur, sed adhuc si evadendi via quaeritur, in maxilla ejus foramen invenitur. Habet etiam captus quo exeat, qui praevidere noluit ne caperetur. Quisquis ergo nondum captus est, maxillam ejus fugiat; quisquis vero jam captus est, in maxilla foramen quaerat. Pius enim ac justus est conditor noster. [Vet. XV.] 23. Ante culpam justitia Dei metuenda; post culpam speranda misericordia. Ruina majorum sit cautela minorum. Sed nemo dicat: Quia pius est, venialiter pecco. Et nemo qui peccaverit dicat: Quia justus est, de peccati remissione despero. Relaxat enim Deus facinus quod defletur, sed perpetrare quisque timeat quod si digne deflere possit ignorat. Ante culpam ergo justitiam metuat, post culpam tamen de pietate praesumat; neque ita justitiam timeat, ut nulla spei consolatione convalescat; neque ita confidat de misericordia, ut adhibere vulneribus suis dignae poenitentiae negligat medicinam; sed quem praesumit sibi pie parcere, semper etiam cogitet et districte judicare. Sub pietate itaque ejus spes peccatoris gaudeat, sed sub districtione illius poenitentis correctio contremiscat. Spes igitur praesumptionis nostrae habeat etiam morsum timoris, ut ad corrigenda peccata justitia judicantis terreat, quem ad fiduciam veniae gratia parcentis invitat. Hinc enim per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Ne dixeris, Miserationes Domini multae sunt, peccatorum meorum non memorabitur (Eccli. V, 6). Pietatem namque ejus protinus, et justitiam subdit, dicens: Misericordia enim et ira ab illo (Ibid., 7). Divina itaque clementia maxillam Behemoth istius perforans, ubique humano generi et misericorditer et potenter occurrit, quia nec libero admonitionem praecavendi tacuit, nec capto remedium fugiendi subtraxit. Ad hoc quippe in Scriptura sacra virorum talium, id est David et Petri, peccata sunt indita, ut cautela minorum sit ruina majorum. Ad hoc vero utrorumque illic et poenitentia insinuatur et venia, ut spes pereuntium sit recuperatio perditorum. De statu ergo suo David cadente, nemo superbiat. De lapsu etiam suo David surgente, 1091 nemo desperet. Ecce quam mirabiliter

Scriptura sacra eodem verbo superbos premit, quo humiles levat. Unam namque rem gestam retulit, et diverso modo superbos quidem ad humilitatis formidinem, humiles vero ad spei fiduciam revocavit. O inaestimabile novi generis medicamentum, quod uno eodemque ordine positum, et premendo tumentia exsiccat, et sublevando arentia infundit! De majorum nos lapsu terruit, sed de reparatione roboravit. 24. Incassum sperat misericordiam, qui justitiam non timet. Sic quippe semper, sic nos divinae dispensationis misericordia et superbientes reprimit, et ne ad desperationem corruamus fulcit. [Vet. XVI, Rec. XI.] Unde etiam per Moysen admonet, dicens: Non accipies loco pignoris superiorem, aut inferiorem molam (Deut. XXIV, 6). Accipere namque aliquando dicimus auferre. Unde et aves illae quae sunt rapiendis avibus avidae, accipitres vocantur. Unde Paulus apostolus dicit: Sustinetis enim si quis devorat, si quis accipit (II Cor., XI, 20). Ac si diceret, Si quis rapit. Pignus vero debitoris est confessio peccatoris. A debitore enim pignus accipitur, cum a peccatore jam peccati confessio tenetur. Superior autem et inferior mola est spes et timor. Spes quippe ad alta subvehit, timor autem cor inferius premit. Sed mola superior et inferior ita sibi necessario junguntur, ut una sine altera inutiliter habeatur. In peccatoris itaque pectore incessanter debet spes et formido conjungi, quia incassum misericordiam sperat, si non etiam justitiam timeat; incassum justitiam metuit, si non etiam de misericordia confidat. Loco igitur pignoris mola superior aut inferior tolli prohibetur, quia qui peccatori praedicat, tanta dispensatione componere praedicationem debet, ut nec derelicta spe timorem subtrahat, nec subtracta spe, in solo eum timore derelinquat. Mola enim superior aut inferior tollitur, si per praedicantis linguam in peccatoris pectore aut timor a spe, aut spes a timore dividatur. 25. Cur Deus electos a carnalibus vitiis illaesos non custodit. Superbia majus peccatum quam luxuria. Homo de medicamento vulnus facit, Deus de vulnere medicamentum. Sed quia, exigente causa, David ad medium deducto, tanti

facinoris memoriam fecimus, lectoris fortasse animus movetur, cur eos omnipotens Deus, quos in perpetuum elegit, quos ad donorum quoque spiritalium culmen assumpsit, illaesos a corporalibus vitiis non custodit. Unde quia satisfieri citius credimus, breviter respondemus. Nonnulli enim per accepta dona virtutum, per impensam gratiam bonorum operum in superbiae vitium cadunt, sed tamen quo ceciderint, non cognoscunt. Proinde contra eos hostis antiquus, quia jam interius dominatur, etiam exterius saevire permittitur, ut qui in cogitatione elati sunt, per carnis luxuriam prosternantur. Scimus autem quia aliquando minus est in corporis corruptionem cadere quam cogitatione tacita ex deliberata elatione peccare; sed cum minus turpis superbia creditur, minus vitatur. Luxuriam vero eo magis erubescunt homines, quo simul omnes turpem noverunt. Unde fit plerumque ut nonnulli post superbiam in luxuriam corruentes, ex aperto casu malum culpae latentis erubescant; et tunc etiam majora corrigunt, cum prostrati in minimis gravius confunduntur. Reos enim se inter minora conspiciunt, qui se liberos inter graviora crediderunt. Pia ergo Domini dispensatione laxatus nonnunquam Behemoth iste de culpa ad culpam trahit, et 1092 dum plus percutit, inde eum quem ceperat amittit, atque unde vicisse cernitur, inde superatur. Considerare libet intra munitum gratiae sinum quanto Deus favore misericordiae nos continet. Ecce qui de virtute se extollit per vitium ad humilitatem redit. [Vet. XVI.] Qui vero acceptis virtutibus extollitur, non gladio, sed, ut ita dixerim, medicamento vulneratur. Quid est enim virtus, nisi medicamentum? et quid est vitium, nisi vulnus? Quia ergo nos de medicamento vulnus facimus, facit ille de vulnere medicamentum, ut qui virtute percutimur, vitio curemur. Nos namque virtutum dona retorquemus in usum vitiorum, ille vitiorum illecebras assumit in artem virtutum, et salutis statum percutit ut servet, ut qui humilitatem currentes fugimus, ei saltem cadentes haereamus. Sed inter haec sciendum est quod plerique hominum, quo in multis corruunt, arctius

ligantur; cumque eos Behemoth iste ex uno vitio percutit ut concidant, ex alio quoque illigat ne resurgant. Consideret itaque homo cum quo hoste bellum gerat; et si jam se in aliquo deliquisse perpendit, saltem ad culpam pertrahi ex culpa pertimescat, ut studiose vitentur vulnera, quibus frequenter interficit, quia valde rarum est, quod hostis noster electorum saluti etiam vulneribus servit. 26. Tentatio aliquando meritorum est custodia. Diabolus tentando sanctos ad regnum servat invitus. Maxilla tamen Behemoth istius perforata intelligi et aliter potest, ut in ore tenere dicatur non quos jam perfecte peccato implicavit, sed quos adhuc peccati persuasionibus tentat, quatenus ei quemlibet mandere sit de peccati eum delectatione tentare. Mandendum quidem, sed non deglutiendum acceperat Paulum, quando illum post tot revelationum sublimia stimulis carnis agitabat (II Cor. XII, 7). Tunc ergo cum contra illum licentiam tentationis accepit, in maxilla eum tenuit, sed perforata. Qui vero elatus perire poterat, tentatus est ne periret. Tentatio ergo illa non vorago vitiorum, sed custodia meritorum fuit, quia Leviathan iste fatigando eum in afflictione contrivit, sed non in culpa capiendo devoravit. Elatos autem in sanctitate viros non amitteret, nisi tentaret. Sancti quippe non essent, qui de sanctitatis gloria superbirent, et tanto sub ejus jure caderent, quanto se in suis virtutibus elevarent. Sed miro dispensationis ordine dum tentantur humiliantur, dum humiliantur ejus esse jam desinunt. Bene ergo maxilla Behemoth istius perforata dicitur, quia electos Dei unde conterit, inde amittit; unde tentat ut perdat, agit inde ne pereant. Antiquus itaque hostis, occultis Dei dispensationibus serviens, sanctorum animas ad interitum tentat volens, sed ad regnum tentando servat invitus. Maxilla ergo ejus perforata est, quia eos quos tentando, id est mandendo conterit, quasi cum deglutit amittit. Quod quia non humana sed divina providentia agitur, ut utilitati justorum ipsa vetusti adversarii astutia suffragetur, quatenus cum electos tentat, eos magis tentando custodiat, bene ad beatum Job dicitur: Aut armilla perforabis maxillam ejus? Subaudis ut

ego, qui provide cuncta disponens, electos meos inde robustius in integritate custodio, unde eos per maxillam Leviathan istius labefactari aliquo modo ab integritate permitto. Sequitur:

CAPUT XIII [Vet.

XVIII, Rec. XII]. VERS. 22. Nunquid multiplicabit ad te preces, aut loquetur tibi mollia? 1093 27. Satanas sive per se, sive per membra sua, nimirum reprobos, Christo preces adhibuit. Subaudis ut mihi. Si enim ad personam Filii haec verba referantur, incarnato ei mollia loquebatur cum diceret: Scio quia sis sanctus Dei (Luc. IV, 34). Ad quem Leviathan iste multiplicavit preces, cum per subditam sibi legionem dixit: Si ejicis nos, mitte nos in gregem porcorum (Matth. VIII, 31). Quamvis intelligi potest apertius, quia ad Dominum preces multiplicat, cum extremi die judicii iniqui qui ejus corpus sunt sibi parci deprecantur, cum membra ejus, videlicet reprobi, sero clamantes dicunt: Domine, Domine, aperi nobis (Luc. XIII, 25). Quibus protinus dicitur: Nescio vos unde sitis. Tunc etiam Domino per membra sua mollia loquetur, quando multi ex ejus corpore dicturi sunt: Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in nomine tuo daemonia ejecimus, et in nomine tuo virtutes multas fecimus (Matth. VII, 22)? Mollia quidem deprecantes dicunt, cum ejus nomine replicant quae fecerunt, sed duro corde illa cum facerent, in suam laudem rapuerunt. Unde mox audiunt: Nescio qui estis (Ibid., 23). Sequitur:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. XIII].

VERS. 23. Nunquid feriet tecum pactum? Subaudis ut mecum: Et accipies eum servum sempiternum. 28. Sanctos tentans eorum utilitati servit, ac Dei voluntati. Subaudis ut ego. Sed valde solerter intuendum est quod pactum cum Domino Leviathan iste feriat, ut sempiternus ab eo servus habeatur. In pacto enim, discordantium partium voluntas impletur, ut ad votum suum

quaeque perveniat, et jurgia desiderato fine concludat. Antiquus itaque hostis a sinceritate divinae innocentiae malitiae suae face succensus discordat, sed ab ejus judicio etiam discordando non discrepat; nam viros justos semper malevole tentare appetit, sed tamen hoc Dominus vel misericorditer fieri, vel juste permittit. Haec ipsa ergo tentationis licentia pactum vocatur, in qua etdesiderium tentatoris agitur, et tamen per eam miro modo voluntas justi dispensatoris impletur. Erudiendos enim, sicut nuper diximus, electos suos Dominus saepe tentatori subjicit, sicut post paradisi claustra, post tertii coeli secreta, ne revelationum magnitudine Paulus extolii potuisset, ei Satanae angelus datus est (II Cor. XII, 7). Sed, ut praefati sumus, ipsa hac tentatione disponitur, ut qui elati perire poterant, humiliati a perditione serventur. Secreto ergo dispensationis ordine, unde saevire permittitur iniquitas diaboli, inde pie perficitur benignitas Dei. Et bene ex hoc pacto quod cum Domino ferire dicitur, servus accipi perhibetur, quia inde obtemperat nutibus supernae gratiae, unde exercet iram nequissimae voluntatis suae. [Vet. XIX.] Servus ergo ex pacto est, qui dum voluntatem suam implere permittitur, a superni consilii voluntate ligatur, ut electos Dei, sicut dictum est, volens tentet, et tentando nesciens probet. 29. Reproborum poena Dei electorumque gloriae famulatur. Sed quia tandiu in hac vita electorum usibus servit, quandiu malitiae suae nequitiam tentationibus exercere potuerit, hoc autem in loco a Domino non solum ex pacto servus, sed sempiternus servus accipi dicitur, investigare compellimur quomodo et post praesentis vitae terminum servire eum in perpetuum Domino demonstremus. Neque enim tunc justos coelesti felicitate pollentes adhuc tentare permittitur, cum ante eorum oculos aeternis gehennae ignibus mancipatur, quia nequaquam 1094 in illa superna patria tentationibus erudiendi sunt, in qua jam pro tentationum laboribus remunerantur. Sed tunc Leviathan iste cum suo corpore, reprobis videlicet omnibus, flammis ultricibus traditur, quibus sine fine crucietur. Quos scilicet cruciatus dum

justi conspiciunt, in Dei laudibus crescunt, quia et in se cernunt bonum quo remunerati sunt, et in illis inspiciunt supplicium quod evaserunt. Ita enim tunc pulchra erit universitas, dum et gehenna juste cruciat impios, et aeterna felicitas juste remunerat pios. Sicut enim niger color in pictura substernitur, ut superjectus albus vel rubeus pulchrior ostendatur, ita tunc etiam malos bene ordinans Deus, feliciora exhibet gaudia beatorum, ostensis ante eorum oculos suppliciis reproborum. Et quamvis illud ex visione dominica eorum gaudium non sit quod crescat, magis tamen auctori suo esse se debitores sentiunt, quando et bonum cernunt quod juste remunerati percipiunt, et malum quod misericorditer adjuti vicerunt. [Rec. XIV] Igitur si utilitati justorum et hic tentatio Leviathan istius, et illic damnatio proficit, sempiternus servus est dum Dei laudibus nesciens servit, et illic poena ejus justa, et hic voluntas injusta. Sequitur:

CAPUT XV [Vet. XX].

VERS. 24. Nunquid illudes ei quasi avi? 30. Diabolus animal quadrupes per actionis immundae fatuitatem; draco per nocendi malitiam; avis per elationem. Quid est quod adversarius noster prius Behemoth, postmodum Leviathan dicitur, nunc vero avi in perditionis suae illusione comparatur? Behemoth, quippe, ut diximus, bellua interpretatur, quae quadrupes ostenditur, dum sicut bos fenum comedere perhibetur. Leviathan vero, quia hamo capitur, procul dubio serpens in aquis innotescitur. Nunc vero ad avis similitudinem ducitur, cum dicitur: Nunquid illudes ei quasi avi? Cur ergo bellua, vel jumentum, cur draco, cur avis appelletur, indagemus. Citius enim nomina ejus agnoscimus, si tergiversationis illius astutiam subtiliter exploremus. De coelo quippe ad terram venit, et ad spem coelestium nulla jam respiratione se erigit. Irrationale ergo et quadrupes animal est per actionis immundae fatuitatem, draco per nocendi malitiam, avis per subtilis naturae levitatem. Quia enim hoc quod contra se agit ignorat, bruto sensu

bellua est; quia malitiose nobis nocere appetit, draco est; quia vero de naturae suae subtilitate superbe extollitur, avis est. Rursum, quia in hoc quod inique agit ad utilitatem nostram divina virtute possidetur, jumentum est; quia vero latenter mordet, serpens est; quia autem nonnunquam per indomitam superbiam se etiam lucis angelum simulat, avis est. Humanum etenim genus quamvis inexplicabili iniquitatis arte lacessat, tribus tamen vitiis valde tentat, ut videlicet alios sibi per luxuriam, alios per malitiam, alios per superbiam subdat. 31. Secundum varias illas formas, varie tentat. Satanae escam ostendit Christus, laqueum abscondit. Non ergo immerito in eo quod agere nititur ex ipso suarum actionum nomine vocatur, cum jumentum, draco, vel avis dicitur. In eis quippe quos ad stultitiam luxuriae excitat, jumentum est; in eis quos ad nocendi malitiam inflammat, draco est; in eis autem quos in fastum superbiae quasi alta sapientes elevat, avis est; in illis vero quos pariter in luxuria et superbia et malitia polluit, jumentum, 1095 draco, simul et avis existit. Per tot namque ad deceptorum cor se species intulit, in quot eos nequitias implicavit. Multarum igitur rerum nomine vocatur, quia ante deceptorum mentes in varias formarum species vertitur. Cum enim hunc per carnis luxuriam tentat, et tamen minime superat, mutata suggestione cor illius in malitiam inflammat. Quia ergo ad eum venire bellua non valuit, draco venit. Illum veneno malitiae corrumpere non valet, sed tamen bona sua ejus oculis opponit, et cor illius in superbiam extollit. Huic ergo ut draco subrepere non valuit, sed tamen adducto phantasmate inanis gloriae, coram cogitationis ejus obtutibus quasi avis volavit. Quae nimirum avis tanto contra nos immanius extollitur, quanto nulla naturae suae infirmitate praepeditur. Quia enim carnis morte non premitur, et Redemptorem nostrum carne mortalem vidit, altiori fastu elationis intumuit; sed ubi contra auctorem suum penna se superbiae extulit, ibi laqueum suae mortis invenit. Nam ea ejus carnis morte prostratus est, quam expetiit elatus; et inde pertulit laqueum, unde quasi escam suae

malitiae mortem justi concupivit. [Vet. XXI.] Dicatur ergo: Nunquid illudes ei quasi avi? Quasi avi quippe Dominus illusit, dum ei in passione unigeniti Filii sui ostendit escam, sed laqueum abscondit. Vidit enim quod ore perciperet, sed non vidit quod gutture teneret. Nam quamvis eum fuerat ipse confessus Filium Dei, velut purum tamen illum hominem mori credidit, ad cujus mortem Judaeorum persequentium animos concitavit (Matth. VIII, 29). Sed in ipso traditionis ejus tempore tarde jam cognovisse intelligitur, quod ipse illa ejus morte puniretur. Unde et Pilati conjugem somniis terruit, ut vir illius a justi persecutione cessaret (Matth. XXVII, 19). Sed res interna dispensatione disposita nulla valuit machinatione refragari. Expediebat namque ut peccatorum mortem juste morientium solveret mors justi injuste morientis. Quod quia Leviathan iste usque ad tempus passionis illius ignoravit, quasi more avis illusus, divinitatis ejus laqueum pertulit, dum humanitatis ejus escam momordit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI [Rec. XV].

IBID. Aut ligabis eum ancillis tuis. 32. Christus infirma mundi eligens, diaboli fortitudinem debellavit. Domus sapientiae Christi corpus, et Ecclesia. Ad praedicandum Evangelium soli assumpti sunt qui per se non essent idonei. Subaudis ut ego. In servis etsi despecta est conditio, virilitas viget; in ancillis autem cum conditione pariter sexus jacet. Bene ergo Dominus Leviathan istum non servis, sed ancillis suis ligare se asserit, quia ad nostram redemptionem veniens, et suos contra mundi superbiam praedicatores mittens, relictis sapientibus insipientes, relictis fortibus debiles, relictis divitibus pauperes elegit. Ancillis ergo suis Leviathan hujus fortitudinem Dominus ligavit, quia attestante Paulo: Infirma mundi elegit Deus, ut confundat fortia (I Cor. I, 27). Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Sapientia aedificavit sibi domum, excidit columnas septem, immolavit victimas, miscuit vinum, proposuit mensam, misit ancillas suas ut vocarent

ad arcem et moenia civitatis (Prov. IX, 1, 2, 3). Sapientia quippe domum sibi condidit, cum unigenitus Dei Filius in semetipso intra uterum Virginis, mediante anima, humanum sibi corpus creavit. Sic quippe corpus Unigeniti domus Dei dicitur, sicut etiam templum vocatur; ita vero, ut unus idemque Dei atque hominis filius ipse sit qui 1096 inhabitat, ipse qui inhabitatur. Quod tamen recte et aliter accipitur, si domus sapientiae Ecclesia vocetur. Quae septem sibi columnas excidit, quia ab amore praesentis saeculi disjunctas ad portandam ejusdem Ecclesiae fabricam mentes praedicantium erexit. Quae pro eo quod perfectionis virtute subnixae sunt, septenario numero designantur. Immolavit victimas, quia vitam praedicantium mactari in persecutione permisit. Vinum miscuit, quia divinitatis et humanitatis suae nobis pariter arcana praedicavit. Mensam quoque proposuit, quia Scripturae sacrae nobis pabula aperiendo praeparavit. Ancillas etiam suas misit, quae ad arcem nos atque civitatis moenia vocarent, quia praedicatores infirmos abjectosque habere studuit, qui fideles populos ad spiritalis patriae aedificia superna colligerent. Unde in Evangelio Dominus Nathanaelem laudat (Joan. I, 47), nec tamen in sorte praedicantium numerat, quia ad praedicandum eum tales venire debuerant, qui de laude propria nihil habebant, ut tanto solidius veritatis esse cognosceretur quod agerent, quanto et aperte cerneretur quia ad hoc agendum per se idonei non fuissent. Ut ergo mira potentia per praedicatorum linguas claresceret, prius mirabilius actum est ut eorumdem praedicantium meritum nullum esset. Ancillas ergo Dominus misit, et Leviathan hujus fortitudinem ligavit, quia infirmos praedicatores mundo exhibuit, et potentes quosque, qui ejus corpus fuerant, sub terroris sui vinculo restrinxit. Et in semetipso Leviathan iste ancillis ligatur, cum infirmis praedicantibus, veritatis clarescente lumine, contra electorum mentes antiquus hostis non quantum vult saevire permittitur; sed ne sub infidelitatis captivitate cunctos quos appetit teneat, signis et virtutibus coarctatur. Ipse ergo per se hoc fortiter facit, qui contra contra illum vires

non fortibus tribuit. Sed quia quos contra eum Dominus mittat insinuat, nunc etiam quid ipsi agant qui mittuntur, adjungit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII [Vet.

XXII, Rec. XVI]. VERS. 25. Concident eum amici, divident illum negotiatores. 33. Diaboli membra conciduntur, cum ab ejus corpore peccatores separantur Christo sociandi. Praedicatores sunt negotiatores. Leviathan iste toties conciditur, quoties divini verbi gladio sua ab illo membra separantur. Iniqui enim cum verbum veritatis audiunt, et, sancto timore perculsi, ab antiqui se hostis imitatione suspendunt, ipse in corpore suo dividitur, cui hi qui prave inhaeserant subtrahuntur. Ipsos vero amicos nominat, quos superius ancillas vocat; ipsos etiam negotiatores appellat, quos amicos dixerat. Sancti etenim praedicatores prius ancillae sunt per formidinem, post amici per fidem, ad extremum quoque negotiatores per actionem. Ipsis quippe infirmantibus dicitur: Nolite timere, pusille grex, quia complacuit Patri vestro dare vobis regnum (Luc. XII, 32). Ipsis rursum convalescentibus dicitur: Vos autem dixi amicos, quia omnia quaecunque audivi a Patre meo, nota feci vobis (Joan. XV, 15). Ipsis ad extremum in negotii operationem pergentibus jubetur: Euntes in mundum universum, praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae (Marc. XVI, 15). In praedicatione quippe fidei quasi quoddam negotium geritur, dum verbum datur, et fides ab auditoribus sumitur. Quasi quoddam negotium faciunt, qui praedicationem praerogant, et a populis fidem reportant. Fidem impartiunt, et eorum sanctam protinus vitam sumunt. Si enim justorum 1097 praedicatio negotium non fuisset, profecto Psalmista non diceret: Sumite psalmum, et date tympanum (Psal. LXXX, 2). In tympano etenim corium siccatur ut sonet. Quid est ergo dicere: Sumite psalmum, et date tympanum, nisi accipite spiritale canticum cordis, et reddite temporalem macerationem corporis? Si superna praedicatio negotium non fuisset, nequaquam sub typo

fortis mulieris Salomon de sancta Ecclesia diceret: Sindonem fecit et vendidit, et cingulum tradidit Chananaeo (Prov. XXXI, 24). Quid enim signatur per linteum sindonis, nisi subtilis intextio sanctae praedicationis? In qua molliter quiescitur, quia mens in illa fidelium spe superna refovetur. Unde et Petro animalia in linteo demonstrantur (Act. X, 11), quia peccatorum animae misericorditer aggregatae, in blanda fidei quiete continentur. Hanc ergo sindonem Ecclesia fecit, et vendidit, quia fidem quam credendo texuerat loquendo dedit, et ab infidelibus vitam rectae conversationis accepit. Quae et Chananaeo cingulum tradidit, quia per vigorem demonstratae justitiae, fluxa opera gentilitatis astrinxit, ut hoc quod praecipitur vivendo teneatur: Sint lumbi vestri praecincti (Luc. XII, 35). Praedicatores ergo suos Dominus quaerendo ancillas invenit, permutando amicos facit, ditando negotiatores exhibet. Qui enim mundi prius minas infirmi timuerunt, post ad cognoscenda divina consilia ascendunt. Ditati autem virtutibus, usque ad exercendum fidei negotium perducuntur, ut Leviathan istius membra increpando atque suadendo tanto severius incidant, quanto et amici facti amori veritatis semetipsos verius copulant, atque ab eo peccantium animas tanto celerius subtrahant, quanto negotiatores idonei effecti in semetipsis amplissimas apothecas virtutum monstrant. Quia enim per praedicatores Dei valde laudabiliter a Leviathan isto res possessa dividitur, veritatis vox per prophetam pollicetur, dicens: Et si separaveris pretiosum a vili, quasi os meum eris (Jerem. XV, 19). Pretiosum quippe a vili separat, qui humanas mentes a reproba antiqui hostis imitatione disjungit. Recte os Dei dicitur, quia per eum procul dubio eloquia divina formantur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVIII [Rec. XVII].

VERS. 26. Nunquid implebis sagenas pelle ejus, et gurgustium piscium capite illius? 34. In Ecclesiae sagena prius capti piscatores, deinde per eos

rhetores et philosophi. Quid per sagenas vel gurgustium piscium nisi ecclesiae fidelium, quae unam Ecclesiam catholicam faciunt, designatur? Unde in Evangelio scriptum est: Simile est regnum coelorum sagenae missae in mare, et ex omni genere piscium congreganti (Matth. XIII, 47). Regnum coelorum scilicet vocatur Ecclesia, cujus dum mores Dominus ad superna sublevat, jam haec ipsa in Domino per coelestem conversationem regnat. Quae recte etiam sagenae missae in mare comparatur, ex omni genere piscium congreganti, quia missa in hoc gentilitatis saeculum, nullum respuit; sed malos cum bonis, superbos cum humilibus, iracundos cum mitibus, et fatuos cum sapientibus cepit. In pelle vero Leviathan istius, stultos ejus corporis, in capite autem prudentes accipimus. Vel certe pelle, quae est exterius, subditi ad haec extrema servientes, capite autem praepositi, designantur. Et bene Dominus, servato ordine, has sagenas vel gurgustium piscium, id est 1098 Ecclesiam suam, et vota fidelium prius se pelle ejus et postmodum capite asserit impleturum, quia, sicut superius diximus (Sup., c. 16 hujus lib., n. 32), prius elegit infirma, ut post confunderet fortia. Elegit quippe stulta mundi, ut confunderet sapientes (I Cor. I, 27). Prius namque collegit indoctos, et postmodum philosophos; et non per oratores docuit piscatores, sed mira potentia per piscatores subegit oratores. Dicit ergo: Nunquid implebis sagenas pelle ejus, aut gurgustium piscium capite illius. Subaudis, ut ego, qui intra Ecclesiam fidelium prius quasi pellem diaboli extremos atque infimos colligo, et postmodum caput illius, id est prudentes mihi adversarios, subdo. Sequitur: Pones super eum manum tuam? Id est ut ego, qui forti illum potentia reprimens, non plus quam expediat saevire permitto, ejusque saevitiam quantum permisero in electorum meorum utilitatem retorqueo. Vel certe manum super eum ponere est virtutis potestate superare. Beato igitur Job per interrogationem dicitur: VERS. 27. Pones super eum manum tuam? [Vet. XXIII.] Ac si aperte

diceretur? Nunquid virtute illum propria reprimes? Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT XIX.

IBID. Memento belli, nec ultra addas loqui. 35. Quam alta dispensatione Deus famulos suos vel minis, vel etiam flagellis premat. Alta dispensatio judiciorum Dei idcirco saepe bene merentes famulos vel minis impetit, vel flagellis premit, vel quibusdam superimpositis oneribus gravat, vel laboriosis occupationibus implicat, quia mira potentia praevidet quod si quieti ac liberi in tranquillitate persisterent, tentationes ferre adversarii non valentes, mentis prostrati vulneribus jacerent. Dum ergo eos foris tolerandis flagellis vel oneribus occupat, a suscipiendis intus tentationum jaculis occultat. Moris quippe medicinalis est, ut saepe fervorem viscerum in pruriginem cutis trahat, et plerumque inde interius curat, unde exterius sauciat. Ita nonnunquam divinae dispensationis medicamine agitur ut exterioribus doloribus internum vulnus adimatur, et flagellorum sectionibus repellatur ea quae occupare mentem poterat interior putredo vitiorum; et tamen saepe dum patentis culpae sibi homines conscii non sunt, et aut doloribus cruciantur, aut laboribus deprimuntur, contra justum atque omnipotentem judicem in querelam prosiliunt, scilicet minus intuentes contra quam fortem adversarium bellum gerunt. Cujus si intolerabiles vires sollicite attenderent, nequaquam de his quae exterius tolerant murmurarent. 36. Haec gravia non videntur, si bella occulti adversarii graviora ponderemus. Non patris flagellum sed hostis gladium formidemus. Sed ideo videntur nobis haec gravia, quia bella occulti adversari nolumus pensare graviora. A quibus plerumque bellis, ut diximus, dum flagellamur, defendimur, dum affligimur, occultamur. Caro enim nostra prius quam resurrectionis incorruptione solidetur, si nullo moerore afficitur, in tentationibus effrenatur. Quis autem nesciat quod multo melius sit ardere

flamma febrium quam igne vitiorum? Et tamen cum febre corripimur, quia vitiorum aestum qui occupare nos poterat considerare negligimus, de percussione murmuramus. Quis nesciat quod multo melius sit duris in servitio hominibus subjici, quam blandientibus 1099 daemoniacis spiritibus subdi? Et tamen cum alto Dei judicio jugo humanae conditionis atterimur, in querelam prosilimus, nimirum quia minus attendimus quod si nos nulla conditio servitutis opprimeret, fortasse mens nostra multis iniquitatibus pejus libera deserviret. Ideo ergo haec quae toleramus, gravia credimus, quia bella hostis callidi, quam sint contra nos dura atque intolerabilia non videmus. Menti enim nostrae omne pondus vilesceret, si ea quae se opprimere poterant, occulti adversarii bella pensaret. Quid enim si omnipotens Deus onera quae patimur sublevet, sed tamen sua nobis adjutoria subtrahat, et inter Leviathan istius nos tentamenta derelinquat? Saeviente tanto hoste quo ibimus, si nullis auctoris nostri protectionibus defendamur? Quia ergo beatus Job culpae sibi conscius non erat, et dura tamen flagella tolerabat, ne fortasse in vitio murmurationis excedat, memoretur quod timeat, et dicatur ei: Memento belli, nec ultra addes loqui. [Rec. XVIII.] Ac si ei aperte diceretur: Si occulti hostis contra te bellum consideras, quidquid a me pateris, non accusas. Si impetentem te adversarii gladium prospicis, flagellum patris nullatenus perhorrescis. Vides enim quali flagello te ferio, sed intueri negligis a quanto te hoste flagellando liberum servo. Memento ergo belli, nec ultra addas loqui, id est, tanto te ad disciplinam patris exhibe tacitum, quanto te prospicis ad bella hostis infirmum. Dum ergo me corripiente percuteris, ut aequanimiter feras, hostem tuum ad memoriam revoca, et durum non aestimes omne quod pateris, dum externis cruciatibus ab interna passione liberaris. Quia autem Leviathan iste de divina misericordia falsa sibi promissione blanditur, postquam terrorem fortitudinis ejus intulit, et beati Job animum in ejus

circumspectione commovit, dicens: Memento belli, nec ultra addas loqui; ut irremissibilem reatum ejus ostenderet, illico adjunxit:

CAPUT XX [Vet.

XXIV, Rec. XIX]. VERS. 28.Ecce spes ejus frustrabitur eum. 37. Diaboli et reproborum omnium aeterna damnatio, praesentibus omnibus electis publicanda. Quod sic de eo debet intelligi, ut referri etiam ad illius corpus possit, quia iniqui omnes qui districtionem justitiae divinae non metuunt, incassum sibi de misericordia blandiuntur. Moxque ad consolationem nostram rediens, extremi judicii futurum ejus interitum praenuntiat, dicens: Et videntibus cunctis praecipitabitur. Cunctis enim videntibus praecipitabitur, quia aeterno tunc judice terribiliter apparonte, astantibus legionibus angelorum, assistente cuncto ministerio coelestium potestatum, atque electis omnibus ad hoc spectaculum deductis, ista bellua crudelis et fortis in medium captiva deducitur, et cum suo corpore, id est cum reprobis omnibus, aeternis gehennae incendiis mancipatur, cum dicitur: Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, qui praeparatus est diabolo et angelis ejus (Matth. XXV, 41). O quale erit illud spectaculum, quando haec immanissima bestia electorum oculis ostendetur, quae hoc belli tempore nimis illos terrere potuerat, si videretur! Sed occulto ac miro Dei consilio agitur, ut et nunc per ejus gratiam a pugnantibus non visa vincatur, et tunc a laetis victoribus jam captiva videatur. 1100 Tunc autem justi divino adjutorio quantum debitores sunt plenius recognoscunt, quando tam fortem bestiam viderint quam nunc infirmi vicerunt, et in hostis sui immanitate conspiciunt quantum debeant gratiae defensoris sui. Redeunt enim de hoc praelio tunc milites nostri virtutum trophaea referentes; et receptis corporibus, cum jam in illo judicio coelestis regni introitum sortiuntur, prius immanissimas vires hujus antiqui serpentis aspiciunt, ne vile aestiment quod evaserunt. Bene ergo dicitur: Et videntibus cunctis praecipitabitur, quia visa

mors ejus tunc gaudium exhibet, cujus tolerata vita nunc justis quotidie in cruciatibus bellum movet. Sed audientes ista, ac si protinus quereremur, Domino dicentes: Domine, qui Leviathan istum tantae esse fortitudinis non ignoras, eum in certamine infirmitatis nostrae cur suscitas? illico adjunxit: CAP. XLI, VERS. 1. Non quasi crudelis suscitabo eum. [Vet. XXV, Rec. XX.] Et velut si mox a nobis causa rationis quaereretur. Quomodo non eum quasi crudelis suscitas, quem scimus quia tantos invadere et devorare permittis? statim subdidit, dicens:

CAPUT XXI.

VERS. 1, 2. Quis enim resistere potest vultui meo? et quis ante dedit mihi, ut reddam ei? 38. Gratia Dei gratuita. Quibus duobus versibus et virtutem suae potentiae, et omne pondos rationis explevit. Nam propter potentiam dixit: Quis enim resistere potest vultui meo? Et propter rationem subdidit: Quis ante dedit mihi, ut reddam ei? Ac si diceret: Non eum quasi crudelis suscito, quia de ejus fortitudine et electos meos potenter eripio, et rursum reprobos non injuste, sed rationabiliter damno; id est, et eos quos benigne eligo eripere mirabiliter possum, et eos quos respuo non injuste derelinquo. Nemo quippe ut divina illum gratia subsequatur prius aliquid contulit Deo. Nam si nos Deum bene operando praevenimus, ubi est quod Propheta ait: Misericordia ejus praeveniet me (Psal. LVIII, 11). Si quid nos bonae operationis dedimus, ut ejus gratiam mereremur, ubi est quod Apostolus dicit: Gratia salvati estis per fidem; et hoc non ex vobis, sed Dei donum est, non ex operibus (Ephes. II, 8)? Si nostra dilectio Deum praevenit, ubi est quod Joannes apostolus dicit: Non quia nos dilexerimus Deum, sed quia ipse prior dilexit nos (I Joan. IV, 10)? Ubi est quod per Osee Dominus dicit: Diligam eos spontanee (Oseae XIV, 5)? Si sine ejus munere nostra virtute Deum sequimur, ubi est quod per Evangelium Veritas protestatur, dicens: Sine me nihil potestis facere (Joan. XV, 5)? Ubi est quod ait: Nemo potest

venire ad me, nisi Pater qui misit me, traxerit eum (Ibid. VI, 43)? Ubi est quod iterum dicit: Non vos me elegistis, sed ego elegi vos (Ibid. XV, 16)? Si saltem dona bonorum operum virtute nostra bene cogitando praevenimus, ubi est quod rursum per Paulum tam salubriter dicitur, ut omnis de se humanae mentis fiducia ab ipsa cordis radice succidatur, cum dicit: Non quia sufficientes simus aliquid cogitare a nobis quasi ex nobis, sed sufficientia nostra ex Deo est (II Cor. III, 5)? Nemo ergo Deum meritis praevenit, ut tenere eum quasi debitorem possit; sed miro modo aequus omnibus conditor, et quosdam praeelegit, et quosdam in suis pravis moribus juste derelinquit. 1101 39. Nec electis pietas sine justitia, nec reprobis justitia sine misericordia exhibetur. Nec tamen electis suis pietatem sine justitia exhibet, quia hic eos duris afflictionibus premit; nec rursum reprobis justitiam sine misericordia exercet, quia hic aequanimiter tolerat quos quandoque in perpetuum damnat. Si ergo et electi praevenientem se gratiam sequuntur, et reprobi juxta quod merentur accipiunt, et de misericordia inveniunt electi quod laudent, et de justitia non habent reprobi quod accusent. Bene itaque dicitur: Quis ante dedit mihi, ut reddam ei? Ac si aperte diceretur: Ad parcendum reprobis nulla ratione compellor, quia eis debitor ex sua actione non teneor. Idcirco enim nequaquam coelestis patriae praemia aeterna percipiunt, quia ea nunc dum promereri poterant, ex libero arbitrio contempserunt. Quod videlicet liberum arbitrium in bono formatur electis, cum eorum mens a terrenis desideriis gratia aspirante suspenditur. [Vet. XXVI.] 40. Bonum quod agimus et Dei est, et nostrum. Bonum quippe quod agimus, et Dei est, et nostrum: Dei per praevenientem gratiam, nostrum per obsequentem liberam voluntatem. Si enim Dei non est, unde ei gratias in aeternum agimus? Rursum si nostrum non est, unde nobis retribui praemia speramus? Quia ergo non immerito gratias agimus, scimus quod ejus munere praevenimur; et rursum, quia non immerito retributionem quaerimus, scimus quod obsequente libero arbitrio bona elegimus quae

ageremus. Sequitur: Omnia quae sub coelo sunt mea sunt. Omnibus liquet quod non solum ea quae sub coelo sunt, sed ipsa quoque quae super coelos condita coelestia vocantur ejus voluntati serviunt a quo se creata esse meminerunt. Cur ergo tantummodo de inferioribus loquens ait.

CAPUT XXII.

IBID. Omnia quae sub coelo sunt, mea sunt? 41. Omnia Deo serviunt. Sed quia de Leviathan loquitur, qui jam non in aetherei coeli sede continetur, cuncta quae sub coelo sunt asserit sua esse, ut eum quoque qui de coelo cecidit, suae doceat potestati servire, ac si diceret: Leviathan iste beatitudinem quidem meam perdidit, sed dominium non evasit, quia et ipsae mihi potestates inserviunt quae mihi pravis actionibus adversantur. Sequitur: VERS. 3. Non parcam ei verbis potentibus, et ad deprecandum compositis. [Rec. XXI.] 42. Qua ratione diabolus dicitur Deum deprecari. Quis hoc, quod legisse se nequaquam novit, existimet, quia culparum suarum diabolus sit veniam petiturus? Sed ille fortasse homo, quem Leviathan iste in mundi termino vas sibi proprium facit , quem, attestante Paulo, Dominus Jesus interficiet spiritu oris sui, et destruet illustratione adventus sui (II Thess. II, 8), territus tantae majestatis praesentia, quia exercere vires suas non valet, ad preces inclinatur. Quod tamen de ejus corpore, id est iniquis omnibus intelligi aptius potest, qui sero ad petitionum verba veniunt, quia nunc exsequi facta contemnunt. Unde per Evangelium Veritas dicit: Novissime veniunt et reliquae virgines, dicentes: Domine, Domine, aperi nobis (Matth. XXV, 11). Quibus illico respondetur: Amen dico vobis, nescio vos (Ibid., 12). Sed cum verba potentia ad deprecandum componere dicitur, urget magis ut quod de ejus corpore in futuro diximus in hoc tempore sentiamus. [Vet. XXVII.] 1102 43. Irritae sunt preces quas pia vita non sequitur. Nonnullis in usum negotiationis vertitur oratio. Veram orationem efficiunt amari gemitus, non verba composita. Sunt namque intra

sanctam Ecclesiam nonnulli, qui prolixas ad Dominum preces habent, sed vitam deprecantium non habent; nam promissa coelestia petitionibus sequuntur, operibus fugiunt. Hi nonnunquam etiam lacrymas in oratione percipiunt, sed cum post orationis tempora eorum mentem superbia pulsaverit, illico in fastu elationis intumescunt; cum avaritia instigat, mox per incendia avidae cogitationis exaestuant; cum luxuria tentaverit, illicitis protinus desideriis anhelant; cum ira suaserit, mox mansuetudinem mentis flamma insaniae concremat. Ut ergo diximus, et fletus in prece percipiunt, et tamen, expletis precibus, cum vitiorum suggestione pulsantur, nequaquam pro aeterni regni desiderio se flevisse mensinerunt. Quod aperte de se Balaam innotuit, qui justorum tabernacula conspiciens, ait: Moriatur anima mea morte justorum, et fiant novissima mea horum similia (Num. XXIII, 10). Sed cum compunctionis tempus abscessit, contra eorum vitam quibus se similem fieri etiam moriendo poposcerat, consilium praebuit; et cum occasionem de avaritia reperit, illico oblitus est quidquid sibi de innocentia optavit. Virtutis igitur pondus oratio non habet, quam nequaquam perseverantia continui amoris tenet. Quo contra bene de Anna flente perhibetur: Vultusque ejus non sunt amplius in diversa mutati (I Reg. I, 18), quia videlicet mens ejus nequaquam post preces inepta laetitia lasciviendo perdidit, quod orationis suae tempore gemituum rigore exquisivit. Nonnullis vero in usum negotiationis vertitur labor orationis. De quibus in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Devorant domos viduarum sub obtentu prolixae orationis. Hi accipient prolixius judicium (Marc. XII, 40). Quia ergo iniquorum petitionibus qui Leviathan istius corpus sunt nullo modo parcitur, cum eorum preces opere destruuntur, recte nunc dicitur: Non parcam ei verbis potentibus et ad deprecandum compositis. Quamvis et per hoc quod verba potentia et ad deprecandum composita referuntur, aperte inanitas orationis ostenditur. Veraciter namque orare, est amaros in compunctione gemitus, et non composita verba resonare. [Vet. XXVIII.]

Sed quia antiquus hostis quo districtius frangitur, eo nequius per multiplicia argumenta dilatatur, cujus tamen insidias Dominus quanto subtilius occultari considerat, tanto nobis misericordius manifestat, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXIV [Rec. XXII].

VERS. 14. Quis revelabit faciem indumenti? 44. Satan aliter religiosas mentes, aliter mundo deditas tentat. Leviathan iste aliter religiosas hominum mentes, aliter vero huic mundo deditas tentat; nam pravis mala quae desiderant aperte objicit, bonis autem latenter insidians, sub specie sanctitatis illudit. Illis velut familiaribus suis iniquum se manifestius insinuat; istis vero velut extraneis cujusdam quasi honestatis praetextu se palliat, ut mala quae eis publice non valet, tecta bonae actionis velamine subintromittat. Unde et membra ejus saepe cum aperta nequitia nocere non possunt, bonae actionis habitum sumunt; et prava quidem se opere exhibent, sed sancta specie mentiuntur. Iniqui enim si aperte mali essent, a bonis recipi omnino non possent; sed sumunt aliquid de visione bonorum, 1103 ut dum boni viri in eis recipiunt speciem quam amant, permistum sumant etiam virus quod vitant. Unde quosdam Paulus apostolus intuens sub praedicationis velamine ventris studio servientes, ait: Ipse enim Satanas transfigurat se in angelum lucis (II Cor. XI, 14). Quid ergo mirum si ministri ejus transfigurantur velut ministri justitiae? Hanc transfigurationem Josue timuit, quando videns angelum, cujus esset partis inquisivit, dicens: Noster es, an adversariorum (Josue V, 13)? ut videlicet si adversae virtutis esset, eo ipso quo se suspectum cognosceret, ab illusione resiliret. Quia ergo Leviathan iste in eo quod iniquitatis opus molitur, saepe specie sanctitatis induitur; et quia nisi per divinam gratiam simulationis ejus detegi indumenta non possunt, bene dicitur: Quis revelabit faciem indumenti ejus? Subaudis nisi ego, qui servorum meorum mentibus gratiam subtilissimae discretionis inspiro, ut revelata malitia faciem ejus nudam videant, quam

coopertam ille sub habitu sanctitatis occultat. Et quia aliquando fidelium mentes corrumpere ostensione sua, aliquando suggestione conatur (agit enim modo opere, modo persuasione), recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXV.

IBID. Et in medium oris ejus quis intrabit? 45. Deus electis calliditatem ejus revelat. Subaudis nisi ego, qui per discretas electorum mentes suggestionum ejus verba dicutio, et non ita haec esse ut sonuerunt manifesto. Bonum namque videntur promittere, sed ad perditum finem trahunt. In medium igitur oris ejus intrare est calliditatis ejus verba penetrare, ut nequaquam pensetur quid resonant, sed quo intendant. Intrare Adam in medium oris ejus noluit, quando intentionem persuasionis illius caute pensare neglexit; divinitatem quippe se per illum accipere credidit, et immortalitatem amisit (Genes. III). Unde ergo ab intellectu verborum ejus incaute exterius stetit, inde se ori illius devorandum funditus praebuit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXVI.

[Rec. XXIII]. VERS. 5. Portas vultus ejus quis aperiet? 46. Portae Leviathan pseudopraedicatores appellantur. Has Dominus aperit, magistros errorunt manifestando. Portae vultus ejus sunt iniqui doctores, qui idcirco portae vultus ejus vocati sunt, quia per ipsos quisque ingreditur, ut Leviathan iste quasi in potestatis suae principatu videatur. Sicut enim Scriptura sacra sanctos viros portas Sion vocare consuevit (Sion quippe speculatio interpretatur, et non immirito praedicatores sanctos portas Sion dicimus, quia per eorum vitam atque doctrinam abscondita supernae contemplationis intramus), ita etiam portis Leviathan istius errorum magistri signantur, quorum dum praedicatio perversa recipitur, miseris auditoribus via perditionis aperitur. Sed portae istae ante oculos hominum

plerumque ad introducendum quidem apertae sunt, sed tamen ad deprehendendum clausae, quia recta in specie exhibent, sed opere prava persuadent. Ad deprehendendum ergo clausae sunt, quia ne intrinsecus cognosci valeant, exteriori simulatione muniuntur. Quas tamen mira potentia Dominus aperit, quia electis suis hypocritarum mentes comprehensibiles facit. Portas ergo vultus ejus quis aperiet? Subaudis nisi ego, qui electis meis magistros errorum sub specie sanctitatis absconditos 1104 perspicua cognitione manifesto. Et quia Antichristus veniens ipsas etiam summas hujus saeculi potestates obtinebit, qui duplici errore saeviens conatur ad se corda hominum et missis praedicatoribus trahere, et commotis potestatibus inclinare, bene de Leviathan isto Dominus subdidit, dicens:

CAPUT XXVII [Vet. XXIX].

IBID. Per gyrum dentium ejus formido. 47. Dentes Leviathan iidem falsi doctores. Mutato namque nomine, hos ejus dentes insinuare aliter voluit, quos superius portas vocavit. Perversi enim praedicatores portae ejus sunt, quia ingressum perditionis aperiunt. Dentes ejus sunt, quia eos quos in errore capiunt, a veritatis soliditate confringunt. Sicut enim sanctae Ecclesiae dentes accipimus eos qui praedicationibus suis peccantium duritiam conterunt, unde ei per Salomonem dicitur: Dentes tui sicut greges detonsarum ascendentium de lavacro (Cant. IV, 2); qui non immerito detonsis ac lotis ovibus comparantur, quia innocuam vitam sumentes, in lavacro baptismatis conversationis pristinae vellera vetusta posuerunt; ita etiam dentibus Leviathan istius errorum magistri figurantur, quia reproborum vitam mordendo dilaniant, et eos a veritatis integritate subductos in sacrificio falsitatis mactant. Quorum quidem praedicatio facile despici ab auditoribus poterat, sed hanc ante humana judicia adjunctus saecularium potestatum terror exaltat. 48. Muniunt illos saeculi potestates. Alii verbis, alii gladiis saeviunt. Insidiae Antichristi ex falsis miraculis.

Recte ergo dicitur: Per gyrum dentium ejus formido, id est, iniquos praedicatores Antichristi perversae hujus saeculi protegunt potestates. Nam quos illi appetunt loquendo seducere, multi potentium student saeviendo terrere. Per gyrum ergo dentium ejus formido est, ac si aperte diceretur: Idcirco isti perversi praedicatores aliquos suadentes conterunt, quia circa ipsos sunt alii qui infirmorum mentes terrentes affligunt. Quale itaque illud tempus persecutionis apparebit, quando ad pervertendam fidelium pietatem alii verbis saepiunt, alii gladiis? Quis enim etiam infirmus Leviathan istius dentes non despiceret, si non eos per circuitum potestatum saecularium terror muniret? Sed duplici contra eos calliditate agitur, quia quod eis ab aliis verbis blandientibus dicitur, hoc ab aliis gladiis ferientibus imperatur. Quae utrorumque actio, id est potentium atque loquentium, in Joannis Apocalypsi brevi est sententia comprehensa, qua dicitur: Potestas equorum in ore et in caudis eorum erat (Apoc. IX, 19). In ore namque doctorum, scientia; in cauda vero, saecularium potentia figuratur. Per caudam quippe, quae retro est, hujus saeculi postponenda temporalitas designatur, de qua Paulus apostolus dicit: Unum autem, quae retro sunt oblitus, ad ea quae ante sunt extentus (Philip. III, 13). Retro enim est omne quod transit, ante vero est omne quod veniens permanet. Istis ergo equis, id est nequissimis praedicatoribus, ubique carnali impulsu currentibus, in ore et in cauda potestas est, quia ipsi quidem perversa suadendo praedicant, sed temporalibus potestatibus fulti, per ea se quae retro sunt exaltant. Et quia ipsi apparere despicabiles possunt, ab iniquis auditoribus suis per eos sibi reverentiam exigunt, quorum patrociniis fulciuntur. Unde hic quoque 1105 non immerito per gyrum dentium ejus formido inesse describitur, quia multis terroribus agitur, ut in perversis eorum praedicationibus etsi non veritatis sententia, certe temporalis potentia timeatur. Unde bene eumdem Antichristum Psalmista descripsit, dicens: Sub lingua ejus labor et dolor, sedet in insidiis cum divitibus in occultis (Psal. IX, 28). Propter enim

perversa dogmata sub lingua ejus labor et dolor est; propter miraculorum vero speciem sedet in insidiis; propter saecularis autem potestatis gloriam, cum divitibus in occultis. Quia enim simul et miraculorum fraude et terrena potestate utitur, et in occultis et cum divitibus sedere perhibetur:

CAPUT XXVIII [Rec. XXIV].

VERS. 6. Corpus illius quasi scuta fusilia. 49. Mali corripientibus scutum excusationis opponunt. Sacra Scriptura scuti nomine aliquando uti in parte prospera, aliquando in adversa consuevit. Nam saepe scuti defensio pro divina protectione ponitur, nonnunquam vero pro humana repugnatione memoratur. Pro divina enim protectione ponitur, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Scuto bonae voluntatis tuae coronasti nos (Psal. V, 13). Scuto nos Dominus coronare perhibetur, quia quos protegens adjuvat, remunerans coronat. Rursum pro humana repugnatione per eumdem Prophetam scutum ponitur sicut alibi ait: Ibi confregit cornua, arcum, scutum, gladium et bellum (Psal. LXXV, 4). In cornibus quippe elatio superborum, in arcu vero insidiae longe ferientium, in scuto autem obstinata duritia defensionum, in gladio vicina percussio, in bello vero ipsa contra Dominum mentis motio designatur. Quod nimirum totum in sancta Ecclesia confringitur, dum mentes Deo resistentium, superposito jugo humilitatis, edomantur. Hinc rursum per eumdem Psalmistam dicitur: Arcum conteret, et confringet arma, et scuta comburet igni (Psal. XLV, 10). Arcum enim Dominus conterit, cum occulta insidiantium machinamenta dissolvit. Arma confringit, cum ea quae contra se erecta fuerant patrocinia humana comminuit. Scuta igni comburit, cum peccantium mentes obstinata se duritia defendentes, ad poenitentiae et confessionis ardorem sancti Spiritus calore succendit. [Vet. XXX.] Quod vero in hoc loco corpus Leviathan istius scutis fusilibus comparatur, perscrutandum nobis innuitur, quia durum quidem, sed tamen cum labitur, fragile solet esse vas omne quod fusile est.

Scuta ergo si sunt fusilia, in suscipienda sagittarum percussione robusta sunt, sed casu fragilia. Ictu quidem ferientium minime penetrantur, sed suo se lapsu per fragmenta dissolvunt. Corpus ergo Leviathan istius, id est omnes iniqui, quia per obstinationem duri sunt, sed per vitam fragiles, scutis fusilibus comparantur. Cum enim verba praedicationis audiunt, nulla correptionis jacula se penetrare permittunt, quia in omni peccato quod faciunt, scutum superbae defensionis opponunt. Nam cum talium quisque de reatu suae iniquitatis arguitur, non mox cogitat quomodo culpam corrigat, sed quid in adjutorio suae defensionis opponat. Nulla igitur veritatis sagitta penetratur, quia verba sanctae correptionis in scuto excipit superbae defensionis. Unde bene de Judaeis contra praecepta Domini superba se defensione tuentibus per Jeremiam dicitur; Reddes eis vicem, Domine, juxta opera manuum suarum (Thren. III, 64). 1106 Moxque eamdem vicem expressius subdidit dicens: Dabis eis scutum cordis laborem tuum (Ibid., 65). Labor quippe Domini apparens inter homines passibilis ejus humanitas fuit, quam Judaei superbe sapientes dum cernerent, despexerunt; eumque immortalem credere dedignati sunt, quem natura passibili mortalem viderunt. Cumque ejus humilitatem conspicerent, superbiae fastibus obdurati, summa cura moliti sunt, ne eorum mentes sancta praedicantium verba penetrarent. Dum ergo eis Dominus vicem malorum operum redderet, dedit illis scutum cordis laborem suum, quia recto judicio inde illos contra se superbe obstinatos exhibuit, unde ipse pro nobis infirmitate laboravit. Repulerunt quippe a se verba praedicantium, quia dedignati sunt in Domino infirma passionum. Laborem igitur Domini contra eumdem Dominum scutum cordis habuerunt, quia superba sapientibus eo despectus apparuit, quo propter eos humilis fuit. [Vet. XXXI.] 50. Hoc scuto usi Adam et Eva. Hoc scutum, sicut jam superius diximus, primus ille peccator tenuit, qui, requirente Domino cur lignum vetitum contigisset, non ad se culpam retulit, sed a muliere quam Dominus

dederat se accepisse respondit (Genes. III, 12); ut quasi reatum suum oblique in auctorem relideret, qui ei mulierem dederat quae talia persuaderet. Hoc scutum etiam requisita mulier tenuit, quando neque ipsa ad se culpam retulit, sed serpentis illud persuasionibus replicavit, dicens: Serpens decepit me, et comedi (Ibid., 13), ut ipsa quoque reatum suum oblique in creatorem reduceret, qui illuc intrare serpentem persuasurum talia permisisset. Serpens vero jam non requiritur, quia nec ejus poenitentia quaerebatur. Hi autem quorum poenitentia quaesita est, scutum nequissimae defensionis contra justissimae correptionis verba protulerunt (Genes. III). Unde nunc usque in usum peccantium trahitur, ut culpa cum arguitur defendatur; et unde finiri reatus debuit, inde cumuletur. Bene ergo dicitur: Corpus illius quasi scuta fusilia, quia omnes iniqui, ne ad se corripientium verba perveniant, quasi contra adversariorum jacula scuta defensionum parant. Quod videlicet ejus corpus adhuc nobis expressus detegit, dum subjungit:

CAPUT XXIX.

IBID. Compactum squamis se prementibus. 51. Squamis tecti reprobi jaculis veritatis resistunt. Fertur quia draconis corpus squamis tegitur, ne citius jaculatione penetretur. Ita corpus omne diaboli, id est multitudo reproborum, cum de iniquitate sua corripitur, quibus valet tergiversationibus se excusare conatur, et quasi quasdam defensionis squamas objicit, ne transfigi sagitta veritatis possit. Quisquis enim dum corripitur, peccatum suum magis excusare appetit quam deflere, quasi squamis tegitur, dum a sanctis praedicatoribus gladio verbi jaculatur. Squamas habet, et idcirco ad ejus praecordia transeundi viam verbi sagitta non habet. Duritia enim carnali repellitur, ne spiritalis ei gladius infigatur. 52. His squamis obduratum cor Sauli, gratiae sagittis patuit. Carnali sapientia contra Deum Saulus obduruerat, quando cor ejus nulla praedicationis Evangelicae sagitta

nulla penetrabat. Sed postquam forti coelitus increpatione jaculatus, et superno respectu caecatus est (lumen quippe ut acciperet amisit), ad Ananiam veniens illuminatur. In qua 1107 illuminatione quia defensionum suarum duritia caruit, bene de eo scriptum est: Ceciderunt quasi squamae ab oculis ejus (Act. IX, 18). Carnalis videlicet tegumenti illum duritia presserat, et idcirco radios veri luminis non videbat. Sed postquam superbae repugnationes ejus victae sunt, defensionum ejus squamae ceciderunt. Quae quidem sub Ananiae manibus ab oculis ceciderunt corporis, sed ante jam sub dominica increpatione ceciderant ab oculis cordis. Cum enim altae invectionis jaculo confossus jaceret, humili jam et penetrato corde requirebat, dicens: Domine, quid me vis facere (Act. XI, 6)? Repulsis videlicet squamis, jam ad cordis viscera veritatis sagitta pervenerat, quando, deposita elatione superbiae, eum quem impugnaverat, Dominum confitens, et quid ageret nesciens, requirebat. Intueri libet ubi est saevus ille persecutor, ubi lupus rapax. [Vet. XXXII.] Ecce in ovem jam versus est, qui percunctatur pastoris semitam quam sequatur. Et notandum quod cum diceret: Quis es, Domine (Act. XXII, 8)? non ei a Domino respondetur: Ego sum unigenitus Patris, ego principium, ego Verbum ante saecula. Quia enim Saulus incarnatum Dominum credere contemnebat, et ejus humanitatis infirma despexerat, de coelo hoc quod contempserat audivit: Ego sum Jesus Nazarenus, quem tu persequeris (Ibid., 8). Ac si diceret: Hoc a me audi de superioribus, quod in me de inferioribus despicis. Auctorem coeli venisse despexeras in terram, ex terra ergo hominem cognosce de coelo, ut tanto in me amplius sacramenta infirmitatis metuas, quanto et haec perducta in coelestibus ad excellentiam potestatis probas. Prosternens igitur te, nequaquam tibi hoc astruo quod ante saecula Deus sum; sed illud a me audis quod de me credere dedignaris. Postquam enim dixit Jesus, adhuc in expressionem terrenae inhabitationis subdidit Nazarenus; velut si apertius diceretur: Humilitatis meae infirma suscipe, et tuae superbiae squamas

amitte. 53. In hypocritis duriores illae squamae. Malitiosae mentes hericiis similes. Sciendum tamen est quod istae defensionum squamae, quamvis pene omne humanum genus contegant, hypocritarum tamen specialiter et callidorum hominum mentes premunt. Ipsi etenim culpas suas tanto vehementius confiteri refugiunt, quanto se stultius videri ab hominibus peccatores erubescunt. Correpta itaque sanctitatis simulatio, et malitia occulta deprehensa, squamas objicit defensionis, et veritatis gladium repellit. Unde bene per Prophetam contra Judaeam dicitur: Ibi cubavit lamia, et invenit sibi requiem, ibi habuit foveam hericius (Isai. XXXIV, 14, 15). Per lamiam quippe hypocritae, per hericium vero malitiosi quique, qui diversis se defensionibus contegunt, designantur. Lamia etenim humanam habere dicitur faciem, sed corpus bestiale. Sic et omnes hypocritae in prima facie quod ostendunt quasi ex ratione sanctitatis est; sed bestiale est corpus quod sequitur, quia valde iniqua sunt quae sub boni specie moliuntur. Hericii autem nomine malitiosarum mentium defensio designatur, quia videlicet hericius cum apprehenditur ejus et caput cernitur, 1108 et pedes videntur, et corpus omne conspicitur; sed mox ut apprehensus fuerit, semetipsum in sphaeram colligit, pedes introrsus subtrahit, caput abscondit; et intra tenentis manum totum simul amittitur, quod totum simul ante videbatur. Sic nimirum sic malitiosae mentes sunt, cum in suis excessibus comprehenduntur. Caput enim hericii cernitur, quia quo initio peccator ad culpam accesserit videtur. Pedes hericii conspiciuntur, quia quibus vestigiis nequitia sit perpetrata cognoscitur; et tamen, adductis repente excusationibus, malitiosa mens introrsus pedes colligit, quia cuncta iniquitatis suae vestigia abscondit. Caput subtrahit, quia miris defensionibus nec inchoasse se pravum aliquid ostendit; et quasi sphaera in manu tenentis remanet, quia is qui corripit, cuncta quae jam cognoverat subito amittens, involutum intra conscientiam peccatorem tenet, et qui totum jam deprehendendo viderat, tergiversatione pravae defensionis illusus, totum

pariter ignorat. Foveam ergo hericius in reprobis habet, quia malitiosa mens sese intra se colligens in tenebris defensionis abscondit. Sed in hoc quod se peccator excusat, in hoc quod caliginosis defensionibus fixum in se oculum corripientis obnubilat, divinus nobis sermo etiam quomodo a similibus fulciatur ostendit. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXX [Vet. XXXIII].

VERS. 7. Una uni conjungitur, et ne spiraculum quidem incedit per eas. 54. Iniqui alterna se invicem defensione tuentur. Istae squamae peccantium, ne ab ore praedicantium aliquo vitae spiraculo penetrentur, et obduratae sunt et conjunctae. Quos enim similis reatus sociat, concordi pertinacia etiam defensio perversa constipat, ut de facinoribus suis alterna se invicem defensione tueantur. Sibi enim quisque metuit, dum admoneri vel corrigi alterum cernit; et idcirco contra corripientium verba unanimiter assurgit, quia se in altero protegit. Bene ergo dicitur: Una uni conjungitur, et ne spiraculum quidem incedit per eas, quia in iniquitatibus suis, dum vicissim superba se defensione protegunt, sanctae exhortationis spiracula ad se nullatenus intrare permittunt. Quorum pestiferam concordiam adhuc apertius subdidit, dicens:

CAPUT XXXI.

VERS. 8. Una alteri adhaerebunt, et tenentes se nequaquam separabuntur. 55. Qui divisi vix corrigi poterant, quomodo emendabuntur uniti? Qui enim divisi corrigi poterant, in iniquitatum suarum pertinacia uniti perdurant, et tanto magis quotidie a cognitione justitiae separabiliores sunt, quanto a se invicem nulla increpatione separantur. Nam sicut esse noxium solet si unitas desit bonis, ita perniciosum est si non desit malis. Perversos quippe unitas corroborat, dum concordat; et tanto magis incorrigibiles, quanto unanimes facit. De hac unitate reproborum per Sapientem dicitur: Stuppa collecta,

synagoga peccantium (Eccli. XXI, 10). De hac Nahum propheta ait: Sicut spinae invicem se complectuntur, sic convivium eorum pariter potantium (Nahum I, 10). Convivium namque reproborum est delectatio temporalium voluptatum. In quo nimirum convivio pariter potant qui delectationis suae illecebris 1109 se concorditer debriant. Igitur quia membra Leviathan istius, id est iniquos omnes, quos Dei sermo squamarum compactionibus comparat, ad defensionem suam par culpa concordat, bene dicitur: Una alteri adhaerebunt, et tenentes se nequaquam separabuntur. Tenentes enim se separari nequeunt, quia eo ad defensionem suam vicissim constricti sunt, quo se sibi per omnia similes esse meminerunt. Descripto itaque ejus corpore, ad caput sermo reducitur, et quid per semetipsum extremae persecutionis tempore antiquus hostis exerceat nuntiatur. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT XXXII [Vet.

XXXIV, Rec. XXV]. VERS. 9. Sternutatio ejus splendor ignis. 56. Quanta commotio ex Antichristi signis et virtutibus immineat. Quod melius exponimus, si prius sternutatio quomodo agatur indagemus. In sternutatione quippe inflatio a pectore exsurgit, quae cum apertos ad emanandum poros non invenit, cerebrum tangit, et congesta per nares exiens, totum caput protinus concutit. In hoc itaque Leviathan corpore, id est sive in malignis spiritibus, sive in reprobis hominibus, qui illi per similitudinem iniquitatis inhaeserunt, quasi inflatio surgit a pectore, dum elatio se erigit ex praesentis saeculi potestate. Quae quasi ad emanandum poros non invenit, quia in hoc quod contra justos extollitur, disponente Deo, quantum appetit praevalere prohibetur. Exsurgens autem cerebrum tangit et concutit, quia collecta elatio Satanae sensum in fine mundi arctius percutit, et caput turbat, dum ipsum auctorem malignorum spirituum per eum qui Antichristus dicitur in persecutione fidelium vehementius excitat. Tunc congesta inflatio per ejus nares egreditur, quia tota superbiae ejus iniquitas apertis malitiae flatibus

demonstratur. Quia ergo sternutatio caput maxime concutit, Leviathan istius sternutatio vocatur illa ejus extrema commotio qua damnatum hominem ingreditur, et per eum reprobis principatur. Qui tanta tunc virtute se commovet, ut membra Domini, si potest fieri, etiam electa perturbet; tantis signis et prodigiis utitur, ut miraculorum potentia quasi quodam ignis lumine resplendere videatur. Quia ergo commotum caput illius miraculis clarescere nititur, recte ejus sternutatio splendor ignis vocatur. In eo enim quod se ad persequendos justos commovet, ante reproborum oculos signorum virtutibus lucet. Et quia ejus tyrannidi sapientes mundi adhaerent, eorumque consiliis omne quod pravum molitur exercet, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXIII [Vet. XXXV].

IBID. Et oculi ejus ut palpebrae diluculi. 57. Oculi ejus, id est consiliarii, cur palpebris diluculi comparantur. Per oculos quippe, qui, inhaerentes capiti, utilitati visionis inserviunt, non immerito ejus consiliarii designantur, qui dum perversis machinationibus quae qualiter agenda sunt, praevident, malignis ejus operariis quasi ostensum pedibus iter praebent. Qui recte palpebris diluculi comparantur. Palpebras namque diluculi, extremas noctis horas accipimus, in quibus quasi nox oculos aperit, dum venturae lucis jam initia ostendit. Prudentes igitur saeculi, malitiae Antichristi perversis consiliis inhaerentes, quasi palpebrae sunt diluculi, quia fidem quam in Christo inveniunt quasi erroris noctem asserunt, et venerationem Antichristi verum esse mane pollicentur. Spondent enim se tenebras repellere et veritatis lucem signis clarescentibus 1110 nuntiare, quia nec persuadere quae volunt possunt, nisi exhibere se meliora fateantur. Unde hic ipse coluber in paradiso primis hominibus loquens (Genes. III, 5), in eo quod se melius aliquid providere simulavit, quasi diluculi palpebras aperuit, quando in innocentibus mentibus humanitatis ignorantiam reprehendit, et scientiam divinitatis promisit. Quasi ignorantiae enim tenebras repellebat, et aeternae

scientiae divinum mane nuntiabat, dicens: Aperientur oculi vestri, et eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum (Ibid.). Ita in illo tunc damnato homine veniens, ejus oculi palpebris diluculi comparantur, quia sapientes illius simplicitatem verae fidaei quasi transactae noctis tenebras respuunt, et ejus signa mendacia quasi exsurgentis solis radios ostendunt. Sed quia Leviathan iste non solum habet oculos qui malignis consiliis perversa provideant, sed os quoque ad pervertendas mentes hominum aperit, quoniam per praedicatores pravos ad diligendam erroris fallaciam auditorum corda succendit, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXIV [Rec. XXVI].

VERS. 10. De ore ejus lampades procedunt. 58. Os Antichristi sunt ejus praedicatores. Qui enim provident oculi, qui autem praedicant os vocantur. Sed de hoc ore lampades exeunt, quia mentes audientium ad amorem perfidiae accendunt; et unde quasi per sapientiam lucent, inde procul dubio per nequitiam concremant. Sed qualis ipsa sapientia eorum lux sit ostenditur, cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT XXXV [Vet. XXXVI].

IBID. Sicut taedae ignis accensae. 59. Ardent per malitiam, lucent per virtutis simulationem. Ecce jam hypocrisis eorum aperte describitur quorum praedicatio taedarum lampadibus comparatur. Taeda enim cum accenditur odorem quidem suavem habet, sed lumen obscurum. Ita isti praedicatores Antichristi, quia sanctitatis sibi speciem arrogant, sed tamen opera iniquitatis exercent, quasi blandum quidem est quod redolent, sed nigrum quod lucent. Olent enim per simulationem justitiae, sed obscurum ardent per nequitiae perpetrationem. Quorum simulationis malitiam Joannes in Apocalypsi brevi descriptione comprehendit, dicens: Vidi aliam bestiam ascendentem de terra, habentem duo cornua similia agni, et loquebatur ut

draco (Apoc. XIII, 11). Priorem quippe bestiam, id est Antichristum superiore jam descriptione narraverat; post quem etiam haec alia bestia ascendisse dicitur, quia post eum multitudo praedicatorum illius ex terrena potestate gloriatur. De terra quippe ascendere est de terrena gloria superbire. Quae habet duo cornua agni similia, quia per hypocrisim sanctitatis eam quam in se veraciter Dominus habuit singularem sibi inesse et sapientiam mentitur et vitam. Sed quia sub agni specie auditoribus reprobis serpentinum virus infundit, recte illic subditur: Et loquebatur ut draco. Ista ergo bestia, id est praedicantium multitudo, si aperte ut draco loqueretur, agno similis non appareret; sed assumit agni speciem, ut draconis exerceat operationem. Quod hic utrumque per taedarum lampades exprimitur, quia et obscurum ardent per effectum malitiae, et quasi suave redolent per simulationem vitae. 60. Multi jam exstant Antichristi praedicatores. Eorum vita exploranda ut moneta. Antiquorum patrum institutis concordet. Sed nequaquam aestimandum est quod tunc solum Antichristi praedicatores apparebunt, et nunc ab humanis deceptionibus desunt. Modo 1111 namque priusquam per semetipsum appareat, nonnulli illum vocibus, plerique autem moribus praedicant. An praedicatores simulationis illius non sunt, qui cum sacros Dei ordines obtinent, fugientem totis desideriis mundum tenent; qui virtutes esse ostendunt quae faciunt, sed vitium est omne quod agunt? [Vet. XXXVII.] Sed electorum mens quanto magis internae luci inhaeret, tanto subtilius quo modo virtutes a vitiis discernere debeat videt. Quid autem mirum est hoc nos spiritaliter agere quod quotidie corporaliter cernimus nummularios implere? Qui cum numisma percipiunt, prius qualitatem illius, post figuram, ad extremum vero pondus examinant, ne aut sub auri specie aes lateat, aut hoc quod veraciter aurum est monetae reprobae figura dehonestet; aut quod et aurum, et rectae figurae est, hoc non integrum pondus legivet. Cum igitur mira ignotorum hominum facta conspicimus, residere ad mentis nostrae trutinam quasi solertes nummularii debemus, ut

prius discretio aurum examinet, ne sub virtute se vitium occultet, et quod prava intentione agitur, recti visione pallietur. Cujus si intentionis qualitas approbatur, impressae mox formulae figura quaerenda est, si a probatis monetariis, id est ab antiquis patribus ducitur, et ab eorum vitae similitudine nullo errore vitiatur. Cum vero et per intentionem qualitas, et recta per exemplum figura cognoscitur, restat ut integrum ejus pondus exquiratur. Bonum quippe quod per signa et miracula coruscat, si perfectionis summam non habet, pensari sollicite per cautelam circumspectionis debet, ne dum imperfecta res quasi pro perfecta accipitur, in accipientis damnum vertatur. Praedicatores itaque Antichristi quomodo veram numismatis qualitatem tenent, qui in his quae agunt intentionis rectae vim nesciunt, quia per haec non coelestem patriam, sed culmen gloriae temporalis exquirunt? Quomodo a monetae figura non discrepant, qui ab omni pietate justorum justos persequendo discordant? Quomodo in se integritatis pondus ostendunt, qui non solum humilitatis perfectionem nequaquam assecuti sunt, sed neque ipsam primam ejus januam contigerunt? Hinc ergo, hinc electi cognoscant quomodo eorum signa despiciant, quorum profecto actio omne quod a piis patribus gestum memoratur impugnat. Sed ipsi quoque electi dum tot signa conspiciunt, dum contemnentes vitam tanta ejus miracula perhorrescunt, quoddam dubietatis nubilum in corde patiuntur, quia dum se per prodigia illius malitia elevat, in istis aliquatenus visus certior caligat. Unde recte subditur:

CAPUT XXXVI [Rec. XXVII].

VERS. 11. De naribus ejus procedit fumus. 61. Visis Antichristi prodigiis, electi turbabuntur et titubabunt. Ut in errore plene capiantur fieri non potest. Oculorum quippe acies fumo sauciatur. Fumus ergo de ejus naribus procedere dicitur, quia de miraculorum ejus insidiis ad momentum caliginosa dubietas etiam in electorum corde generatur. De Leviathan

naribus fumus exit, quia ex ejus prodigiis mendacibus etiam bonarum mentium oculos trepidationis caligo confundit. Tunc namque in electorum cordibus conspectis terribilibus signis, obscura cogitatio conglobatur. Unde 1112 hoc quod jam supra protulimus veritatis ore per Evangelium dicitur: Surgent pseudochristi et pseudoprophetae, et dabunt signa et prodigia, ita ut in errorem inducantur, si fieri potest, etiam electi (Marc. XIII, 22). Qua in re valde quaerendum est quomodo aut hi qui electi sunt induci in errorem possunt, aut cur Si fieri potest quasi ex dubietate subditur, cum quid faciendum sit Dominus omnia praesciens praestolatur. Sed quia electorum cor et trepida cogitatione concutitur, et tamen eorum constantia non movetur, una hac sententia Dominus utrumque complexus est, dicens: Ita ut in errorem inducantur, si fieri potest, etiam electi. Quasi enim jam errare est in cogitatione titubare; sed protinus Si fieri potest subjungitur, quia procul dubio fieri non potest ut in errore plene electi capiantur. Bene autem in hac fumi caligine ipse etiam animorum fervor exprimitur cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT XXXVII.

IBID. Sicut ollae succensae atque ferventis. 62. Quanto tunc zelo aestuabunt. Quid diabolus fumo pestiferi halitus, in humanis cordibus operetur. Deus nisi a tranquillo corde cognosci non potest. Velut enim olla fervens est unaquaeque tunc anima, cogitationum suarum impetus quasi spumas ardentium undarum sustinens, quas et ignis zeli commovet, et ipsa temporalis oppressio more ollae intrinsecus clausas tenet. Unde Joannes quoque cum hujus bestiae signa narraret, adjunxit: Ita ut ignem faciat de coelo descendere (Apoc. XIII, 13). Ignem quippe de coelo descendere est de coelestibus electorum animis sancti zeli flammas emanare. [Vet. XXXVIII.] Quia vero Leviathan iste alias non solum serpens, sed etiam regulus dicitur, pro eo quod immundis spiritibus, vel reprobis hominibus principatur, sicut

Isaias ait: De radice colubri egredietur regulus (Isai. XIV, 29), inspiciendum nobis summopere est qualiter regulus perimat, ut, ex operatione reguli, hujus nobis malitia apertius innotescat. Regulus namque non morsu perimit, sed flatu consumit. Saepe quoque aerem flatu afficit, et quidquid vel positum longe contigerit sola narium inspiratione tabefacit. 63. Hinc, ergo, hinc pensare compellimur, per hoc quod de naribus ejus fumus procedere dicitur, etiam priusquam apertus appareat, quid quotidie in humanis cordibus fumo pestiferae exhalationis operetur. Quia enim, sicut et superius diximus, fumo oculorum acies infirmatur, non immerito de ejus naribus fumus procedere asseritur, cujus noxiis inspirationibus prava in humanis cordibus cogitatio nascitur, per quam acies mentis obtunditur, ne lux interna videatur. Quasi enim flatu narium caliginem emittit, quia in reproborum cordibus insidiarum suarum aspirationibus ex amore vitae temporalis aestum congerit multiplicium cogitationum. Et velut fumi globos multiplicat, quia inanissimas praesentis vitae curas in terrenorum hominum mente coacervat. Iste fumus ex ejus naribus prodiens aliquando ad tempus etiam electorum oculos tangit. Hunc namque intrinsecus fumum patiebatur Propheta, cum dixit: Turbatus est prae ira oculus meus (Psal. VI, 8). Hujus inundatione premebatur, dicens: Cor meum conturbatum est in me, et lumen oculorum meorum non est mecum (Psal. XXXVII, 11). Fumus quippe iste obtundit aciem cordis, quia caliginis suae nubilo serenitatem intimae turbat quietis. 1113 Cognosci vero nisi tranquillo corde non potest Deus. Unde per eumdem prophetam rursus dicitur: Vacate et videte quoniam ego sum Deus (Psal. XLV, 11). Vacare autem mens non potest quae hujus fumi inundationibus premitur, quia in ea terrenarum cogitationum volumina ex praesentis vitae amore glomerantur. Lumen ergo quietis internae hoc fumo amittitur, quia curarum prurigine cordis oculus dum confunditur tenebratur. 64. Iste fumus aliter electorum mentes turbat, aliter reproborum oculos excaecat. Sed fumus iste aliter electorum animos turbat, aliter reproborum

oculos excaecat. A bonorum quippe oculis spiritalium desideriorum flatu respergitur, ne praevalente misera cogitatione densetur. In reproborum vero mentibus quo se licentius per tetras cogitationes colligit, eo ab eis funditus veritatis lumen tollit. Fumus iste reproborum cordibus quot illicita desideria ingerit, quasi per tot ante illos globos intumescit. [Vet. XXXIX.] 65. In carnali anima, alii fumi concupiscentiae globi superius inanescunt, alii inferius surgunt. Vitia vitiis succedunt. Et certe fumi globos novimus, quia cum alii superius inanescunt, alii inferius surgunt; sic et in cogitatione carnali, etsi alia pravitatis desideria transeunt, alia succedunt. Saepe autem mens misera quid jam transierit videt, sed ubi adhuc retineatur non videt. Gaudet de quibusdam vitiis quod eis subjecta jam non sit, et praecavere ac gemere negligit, quia eorum vice successerunt alia, quibus fortasse nequius succumbit; sicque fit ut dum alia vitia transeunt, et semper alia succedunt, ab hoc serpente cor reproborum sine intermissione teneatur. Unde bene per Joel prophetam dicitur: Residuum erucae comedit locusta, et residuum locustae comedit bruchus, et residuum bruchi comedit rubigo. Expergiscimini ebrii, et flete (Joel. I, 4, 5). Quid enim per erucam, quae toto corpore in terra repit, nisi luxuria designatur? quae cor quod tenet, ita polluit, ut in superioris munditiae surgere amorem non possit. Quid per locustam quae saltibus evolat, nisi inanis gloria exprimitur, quae se vanis praesumptionibus exaltat? Quid per bruchum, cujus pene totum corpus in ventrem colligitur, nisi edendi ingluvies figuratur? Quid per rubiginem, quae dum tangit incendit, nisi ira innuitur? Residuum ergo erucae locusta comedit, quia saepe cum luxuriae vitium a mente recesserit, inanis gloria succedit. Nam quia jam per amorem cordis non sternitur, quasi sanctam se ex castitate gloriatur. Et residuum locustae bruchus comedit, quia saepe cum inani gloriae, quae quasi ex sanctitate veniebat, resistitur, vel ventri vel quibuslibet ambitionis desideriis immoderatius indulgetur. Mens enim Dei nescia, tanto atrocius ad quemlibet ambitum ducitur, quanto nullo vel

humanae laudis amore refrenatur. Residuum bruchi rubigo consumit, quia saepe dum ventris ingluvies per abstinentiam restringitur, irae impatientia acrius dominatur; quae more rubiginis quasi exurendo messem comedit, quia virtutum fructus impatientiae flamma tabefacit. Cum ergo vitia vitiis succedunt, agrum mentis alia pestis devorat, dum alia relinquit. [Vet. XL.] 66. Ebrii sunt qui mundi hujus amore turbati, mala quae patiuntur non sentiunt. Bene autem illic subditur: Expergiscimini ebrii, et flete (Ibid.). Ebrii quippe vocati sunt qui, mundi hujus amore confusi, mala non sentiunt quae patiuntur. Quid est ergo dicere: Expergiscimini, ebrii, 1114 et flete (Joel. I, 5), nisi somnum vestrae insensibilitatis excutite, et, in devastatione cordis tot sibi succedentibus vitiorum pestibus, vigilantibus lamentis obviate? Per tot igitur globos de Leviathan naribus fumus surgit, per quot nimirum pestes frugem cordis reprobi occulta aspiratione consumit. Cujus adhuc fumi vim sollicite Dominus exprimit, cum illico subjungit: Sicut ollae succensae atque ferventis. Olla enim succenditur cum mens humana maligni hostis suasionibus instigatur. Olla autem fervet cum jam etiam per consensum in desideriis pravae persuasionis accenditur. Et tot undas quasi fervendo projicit, per quot se nequitias usque ad exteriora opera extendit. Hunc namque carnalis conscientiae, id est ollae fervorem, ex Leviathan fumo venientem propheta conspexerat, cum dicebat: Ollam succensam ego video, et faciem ejus a facie Aquilonis (Jerem. I, 13). Ab Aquilonis namque facie humani cordis olla succenditur, dum instigatione adversarii spiritus illicitis desideriis inflammatur. Ille namque qui ait: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis (Isai. XIV, 13), mentem quam semel ceperit malignis persuasionis suae flatibus, quasi suppositis ignibus, accendit, quatenus, non contenta praesentibus, indesinenter per desideria aestuet, ut alia contemnenda appetat, alia adepta contemnat: ut modo suis compendiis inhiet, modo alienis commodis etiam cum proprio detrimento contradicat, modo carnis illecebris satisfaciat, modo quasi in quodam

culmine per cogitationis superbiam rapta, carnali cura postposita, totam se in typho elationis attollat. Quia ergo cor per varia desideria abducitur, quod instigationibus Leviathan istius inflammatur, recte ejus fumus succensae et ferventi ollae similis esse perhibetur, quia per tot se fervores afflata ejus tentationibus conscientia erigit, per quot intra se cogitationes intumescit. Quod verbis aliis adhuc veritas apertius exsequitur, dum subjungitur:

CAPUT XXXVIII [Rec. XXVIII].

VERS. 12. Halitus ejus prunas ardere facit. 67. Carnalis mens, tanquam pruna flatu diaboli inflammata. Quid enim prunas nisi succensas in terrenis concupiscentiis reproborum hominum mentes appellat? Ardent enim cum quodlibet temporale appetunt, quia nimirum urunt desideria quae quietum ac integrum esse animum non permittunt. Toties igitur Leviathan halitus prunas accendit, quoties ejus occulta suggestio humanas mentes ad delectationes illicitas pertrahit. Alias namque superbiae, alias invidiae, alias luxuriae, alias avaritae facibus inflammat. Superbiae quippe facem menti Evae supposuit, cum hanc ad contemnenda verba dominicae jussionis instigavit (Genes. III, 5). Invidiae quoque flamma Cain animum succendit, cum de accepto fratris sacrificio doluit, et per hoc usque ad fratricidii facinus pervenit (Genes. IV, 8). Luxuriae facibus cor Salomonis exussit, quem tanto mulieribus amore subdidit, ut, usque ad idolorum venerationem deductus, dum carnis delectationem sequeretur, conditoris reverentiae oblivisceretur (III Reg. XI, 4). Avaritiae quoque igne Achab animum concremavit, cum eum ad appetendam alienam vineam impatientibus desideriis impulit, et per hoc usque ad reatum homicidii pertraxit (III Reg. XXI). Tanto igitur Leviathan iste halitu in prunis flat, 1115 quanto annisu suggestionis occultae humanas mentes ad illicita inflammat. Unde et bene mox subditur:

CAPUT XXXIX [Vet.

XLI] IBID. Et flamma de ore ejus egreditur. 68. Per Antichristum ardentius saeviet. Non comburit nisi lignum, fenum, stipulam. Ejus flammam exstinguunt lacrymae. Flamma quippe oris ejus est ipsa instigatio occultae locutionis. Pravae enim suasionis verba ad uniuscujusque animum facit, sed flamma est quod de ejus ore egreditur, quia ardet in desideriis animus cum ejus suggestionibus instigatur. Haec quotidie suggerit, haec usque ad praesentis vitae terminum suggerere non desistit; sed tunc se nequius dilatat, cum per illum damnatum hominem veniens, in hujus mundi se gloria apertius ostentat. Tunc ab ejus naribus vastior fumus procedit, quia humana corda signorum ejus admirationibus territa amplior instigatio percutit. Tunc ejus halitus vehementius prunas ardere facit, quia reproborum mentes, quas jam calentes amore gloriae temporalis invenerit, 1116 suggestionis suae flatibus usque ad nequitiam exercendae crudelitatis incendit. Tunc de ore ejus flamma egreditur, quia quidquid per se, quidquid per praedicatores suos loquitur, ignis est quo infructuosa ligna concremantur. Igne autem terrenae concupiscentiae eorum mens tangitur, qui nequaquam fieri pretiosa metalla concupiscunt. Qui ergo oris ejus non vult flamma affici, juxta doctoris veri sententiam, non lignum, fenum, stipula, sed aurum, argentum, et pretiosus lapis curet inveniri (I Cor. III, 12), quia tanto ignis suasionis illius amplius incendit, quanto se ei ad consentiendum molliorem quisque praebuerit. Sed quia nulla ratione conceditur ut mens in hac corruptibili carne posita nequaquam suasionis illius ardore tangatur, restat ut malignis flatibus adusta, ad orationis opem se sine cessatione convertat. Flammam quippe suggestionum illius exstinguit citius unda lacrymarum.

LIBER TRIGESIMUS QUARTUS.

Exponitur capitis XLI versus 13 cum reliquis, de diaboli praesertim superbia et saevissimis in sanctos Antichristi persecutionibus.

CAPUT PRIMUM.

1. Senescente mundo, tribulationes cum temporibus crescunt. Diabolus tanto acrius saevit, quanto poenae consummationi est vicinior. Quia ex hoc mundo corpus gerimus, universitatis terminum ex ea qua nos sumus parte pensemus. Citius quippe qualis sit mundi finis agnoscimus, si sollicite aspicimus hoc quod de mundo gestamus. Aetas etenim nostra per juveniles annos robustius viget, in senili autem tempore crebrescentibus morbis excoquitur; et dum diutius distenditur ut subsistat, moriendi vice quotidie deficit per momenta vivendi. Ita etiam mundi tempus dum venientibus annis augetur, crebrescentibus malis afficitur; et unde aetatis augmentum percipit, inde salutis dispendium sentit. Tribulationes namque illi cum temporibus crescunt, et eo detrimenta vitae debilior tolerat, quo quasi ad vitam provectior durat. Totis enim contra illum hostis antiquus viribus solvitur, qui quamvis jam nunc interiit pro eo quod supernae conditionis beatitudinem amisit, tunc tamen plenius exstinguitur, quando, et a tentandi licentia abstractus, aeternis incendiis religatur. Unde et extrema mundi atrocius tentaturus aggreditur, quia tanto fit ferventior ad saevitiam, quanto se viciniorem sentit ad poenam. Considerat quippe quod juxta sit ut licentiam nequissimae libertatis amittat, et quantum brevitate temporis angustatur, tantum multiplicitate crudelitatis expanditur, sicut de illo voce angelica ad Joannem dicitur: Vae terrae et mari, quia descendit diabolus ad vos habens iram magnam, sciens quod modicum tempus habet (Apoc. XII, 12). Tunc ergo in magnae irae fervorem se dilatat, ne qui in beatitudine stare non potuit, in damnationis suae foveam cum paucis ruat. Tunc quidquid nequiter

valuerit, callidius exquirit; tunc cervicem superbiae altius erigit, et per damnatum illum quem gestat hominem omne quod temporaliter praevalet nequiter ostendit. Unde et divina voce recte nunc dicitur:

CAPUT II [Rec. II].

VERS. 13. In collo ejus morabitur fortitudo. 2. Superbiae Antichristi accedet explendae nequitiae potestas. Quid enim collo Leviathan istus, nisi elationis extensio designatur? qua. contra Deum se erigens, cum simulatione sanctitatis etiam tumore potestatis extollitur. Quia enim per collum superbia exprimitur, Isaias propheta testatur, qui Jerusalem filias redarguit, dicens: Ambulaverunt extento collo (Isai. III, 16). In collo ergo Leviathan istius fortitudo demorari dicitur, quia elationi illius etiam subjuncta potentia suffragatur. Nam quidquid tunc superbe extollitur, quidquid callide machinatur, etiam cum virtute potentiae saecularis exsequitur. Quod Daniel propheta intuens, ait: Dolus in manu ejus dirigetur (Dan. VIII, 25). Dolus quippe in manu ejus est fraus in virtute, quia omne quod nequiter vult, hoc ad tempus exsequi etiam fortiter potest. Dolus vero ejus dirigi dicitur, quia fraudis ejus malitia nulla difficultate praepeditur. Hoc enim Leviathan iste vel vasa ejus habere crebro proprium solent, quod ad iniquitatis suae cumulum ea quae nequiter appetunt explere nequius possunt. 3. Divini muneris est erga electos, quod cogitatum malum perpetrare nequeant. Nam cum fortasse infirmantur electi, atque in desideriis illicitis ruunt, in hoc plerumque divini muneris manu retinentur, quod voluntatis miserae nullos effectus inveniunt. Cumque eorum votis valida contrarietas nascitur, plerumque ex ipsa impossibilitate corriguntur, et miro internae dispositionis ordine, per conversionem mutatio malae voluntatis sequitur, dum per infirmitatem perfectio denegatur. Hinc est enim quod, sub specie uniuscujusque animae, de infirmante Judaea, atque in pravis itineribus gradiente, per prophetam Dominus dicit: Ecce ego sepiam

viam tuam 1117 spinis, et sepiam eam maceria, et semitas suas non inveniet, et sequetur amatores suos, et non apprehendet eos, et quaeret eos, et non inveniens dicet: Vadam et revertar ad virum meum priorem, quia mihi bene erat tunc magis quam nunc (Osee, II, 6). Spinis enim electorum viae sepiuntur, dum dolorem punctionis inveniunt in hoc quod temporaliter concupiscunt. Quasi interposita maceria viis eorum obviat, quorum nimirum desideria perfectionis difficultas impugnat. Horum profecto animae amatores suos quaerunt, et non inveniunt, dum sequendo malignos spiritus, nequaquam eas quas appetunt hujus saeculi voluptates apprehendunt. Bene autem subditur quod ex ipsa difficultate mox dicat: Vadam et revertar ad virum meum priorem, quia bene mihi erat tunc magis quam nunc (Matth. XII, 44). Prior quippe vir Dominus est, qui castam sibi animam sancti Spiritus interposito amore conjunxit. Quem tunc mens uniuscujusque desiderat, cum multiplices amaritudines velut quasdam spinas invenit in iis delectationibus quas temporaliter concupiscit. Nam dum adversitatibus mundi quem diligit morderi anima coeperit, tunc plenius intelligit quanto illi cum priore viro melius fuit. 4. Quos voluntas prava pervertit, saepe corrigit adversitas. Eos ergo quos voluntas prava pervertit, plerumque adversitas corrigit. Unde et nimis timendum est ne sequantur prospera cum desiderantur injusta, quia difficilius malum corrigitur, quod perfectionis etiam prosperitate fulcitur. Leviathan itaque iste qui cum membris suis aeternis est cruciatibus deputatus, et dolus in manu ejus dirigitur, et in collo ejus fortitudo demoratur, quia hoc quod temporaliter perversa contra bonos voluntate desiderat, perversiore facultate consummat, ut tanto ei de adversitate in praesenti nil obstet, quanto ei in posterum de prosperitate nihil remanet. Et quia omnis qui perversis moribus amicitiis ejus innotescit prius veras mentis divitias amittit, apte subjungitur:

CAPUT III [Vet.

II, Rec. III]. IBID. Et faciem ejus praecedet egestas. 5. Electorum paupertas est coelestes divitias amisisse. Per faciem quippe solet notitia designari. Unde scriptum est: Et facies mea praecedet te (Exod. XXXIII, 14), id est notitia ducatum praebebit. Sciendum vero est quod egestas in sacro eloquio aliter electorum ponitur, atque aliter reproborum. Egestas namque electorum est, cum verae divitiae coelestis patriae ad eorum animum redeunt, et in hoc aerumnoso praesentis vitae exsilio positi, pauperes se esse meminerunt. Illas quippe divitias sine cessatione suspirant, de quibus Paulus dicit: Ut sciatis quae sit spes vocationis ejus, et quae divitiae gloriae haereditatis ejus in sanctis (Ephes. I, 18). Et quia adhuc eas nequaquam conspiciunt, studiose interim in aerumna istius paupertatis gemunt. Hanc procul dubio paupertatem Jeremias inspexerat, cum dicebat: Ego vir videns paupertatem meam in virga indignationis ejus (Thren. III, 1). Virga enim indignationis Dei est percussio districtionis. Quam indignationem tunc homo pertulit, cum ex paradiso pulsus, veras interni gaudii divitias amisit (Genes. III, 24). Sed quia electi quique incessanter conspiciunt quod in praesentis vitae penuriam ab illa potestatis ingenitae facultate ceciderunt, bene dicitur: Ego vir videns paupertatem meam (Thren. III, 1). Quisquis enim haec adhuc visibilia appetit, peregrinationis suae malum 1118 non intelligit, et hoc ipsum quod patitur videre nescit. Hanc paupertatem David propheta intuens, ait: Infirmata est in paupertate virtus mea (Psal. XXX, 11). In paupertate etenim virtus infirmari dicitur, quia lapsus in hac peregrinatione animus, et corruptionis suae molestiis reverberatus, hoc quod perdidit contemplari praepeditur. 6. Hanc paupertatem reprobi nesciunt. Virtutum divitiis vacuantur, nec intelligunt. Sed hanc paupertatem reprobi considerare nesciunt, quia dum sequuntur ea quae conspiciunt, cogitare invisibilia negligunt quae perdiderunt. Unde et egestas eorum proprie dicitur, quia dum replentur vitiis, virtutum divitiis vacuantur. Quibus saepe evenit ut per elationis dementiam sublevati, dum nequaquam ruinae suae damna

considerant, esse se etiam a bonis actionibus inopes non cognoscant. Unde voce angelica praedicatori Laodiceae dicitur: Dicis quod dives sum, et locupletatus, et nullius egeo, et nescis quia tu es miser, et miserabilis, et pauper, et caecus, et nudus (Apoc. III, 17). Quasi divitem se asserit, qui per arrogantiam sanctitatis extollitur, sed pauper, caecusque et nudus arguitur. Pauper utique, quia virtutum divitias non habet; caecus, quia nec paupertatem quam patitur videt; nudus, quia primam stolam perdidit, sed pejus, quia nec se perdidisse cognoscit. Quia ergo, ut diximus, egestas reproborum est defraudatio meritorum, recte de Leviathan dicitur: Faciem ejus praecedet egestas. Nemo quippe cognitioni ejus jungitur, nisi prius virtutum divitiis denudetur. Prius enim bonas cogitationes subtrahit, et tunc eis apertiorem notitiam suae iniquitatis infundit. Egestas ergo faciem illius praecedere dicitur, quia prius facultas virium perditur, ut quasi per familiaritatem postmodum ejus notitia cognoscatur. Vel certe quia multis ita fraudulenter subrepit, ut ab eis deprehendi nequaquam possit, et sic eorum virtutes evacuat, quatenus astutiae suae malitiam non ostendat, faciem ejus egestas praeire perhibetur, ac si aperte diceretur, quia cum insidians tentat, priusquam videatur exspoliat. Hinc est enim quod de Ephraim per prophetam dicitur: Comederunt alieni robur ejus, et ipse ignoravit (Osee VII, 9). Alieni quippe intelligi apostatae angeli solent, qui robur comedunt, dum virtutem mentis pervertendo consumunt. Quod Ephraim et pertulit, et nescivit, quia in tentatione malignorum spirituum et robur animae perdidit, et hoc ipsum quia perdiderit non intellexit. Leviathan ergo faciem egestas antecedit, quia negligentium mentes ante tentando spoliat, quam ejus insidias is qui tentatur agnoscat. Per hoc ergo quod dictum est: In collo ejus morabitur fortitudo, virtus violentiae ostenditur. Per hoc vero quod subditur: Et faciem ejus praecedet egestas; fraudis subtilitas designatur. 7. Ante adventum Antichristi, virtutum signa Ecclesiae subtrahentur, aut pauca supererunt. Quamvis de eo quod ejus faciem egestatem praeire

cognoscimus, suppetit aliud quod tamen tristius exponamus. Terribili quippe ordine dispositionis occultae, priusquam Leviathan iste in illo damnato homine quem assumit appareat, a sancta Ecclesia virtutum signa subtrahuntur. Nam prophetia absconditur, curationum gratia aufertur, prolixioris abstinentiae virtus imminuitur, doctrinae verba conticescunt, miraculorum prodigia tolluntur. Quae quidem nequaquam superna dispensatio 1119 funditus subtrahit, sed non haec sicut prioribus temporibus aperte ac multipliciter ostendit. Quod tamen mira dispensatione agitur, ut una ex re divina simul pietas et justitia compleatur. Dum enim subtractis signorum virtutibus sancta Ecclesia velut abjectior apparet, et bonorum praemium crescit, qui illam pro spe coelestium, et non propter praesentia signa venerantur, et malorum mens contra illam citius ostenditur, qui sequi quae promittit invisibilia negligunt, dum signis visibilibus non tenentur. Dum igitur humilitas fidelium multitudine et manifestatione signorum quasi destituitur, terribili occultae dispositionis examine inde bonis misericordia largior, unde malis justa ira cumulatur. Quia ergo Leviathan iste priusquam manifestus et conspicuus veniat ex magna parte in sancta Ecclesia signa virtutum cessant, recte nunc dicitur: Faciem ejus praecedet egestas. Ante enim a fidelibus miraculorum divitiae subtrahuntur, et tunc contra eos antiquus ille hostis per aperta prodigia ostenditur, ut quo ipse per signa extollitur, eo a fidelibus sine signis robustius laudabiliusque vincatur. Quamvis etiam fidelibus in ejus certamine signa non deerunt, sed tanta erunt illius, ut nostrorum aut pauca, aut nulla videantur. Quorum nimirum virtus omnibus signis fit potior, cum omne quod ab illo terribiliter fieri conspicit, per internae constantiae calcem premit. Sed malignus hostis tanto contra eos acriori immanitate se exhibet, quanto se despici etiam clarescentibus miraculis dolet. Totum ergo se in eorum interitum colligit, cunctosque reprobos in necem fidelium unanimi crudelitate conjungit, ut

saevitiam suam tanto robustius exerat, quanto et in eis quae perverse agere appetit, nulla sibi sui corporis membra discordant. Unde et recte dicitur:

CAPUT IV [Rec. IV].

VERS. 14. Membra carnium ejus cohaerentia sibi. 8. Reproborum cum Satana et inter se noxia concordia. Carnes vero Leviathan istius sunt omnes reprobi, qui ad intellectum spiritalis patriae per desiderium non assurgunt. Membra vero sunt carnium hi qui eisdem perverse agentibus, et sese ad iniquitatem praecedentibus junguntur, sicut e contra per Paulum dominico corpori dicitur: Vos estis corpus Christi, et membra de membro (I Cor. XII, 27). Aliud quippe est membrum corporis, aliud membrum membri. Membrum quippe corporis pars ad totum, membrum vero membri est particula ad partem. Membrum namque membri est digitus ad manum, manus ad brachium; membrum vero est corporis totum hoc simul ad corpus universum. Sicut ergo in spiritali dominico corpore membra de membro dicimus eos qui in ejus Ecclesia ab aliis reguntur, ita in illa Leviathan istius reproba congregatione membra sunt carnium qui iniquo opere quibusdam se nequioribus junguntur. Sed quia hostis malignus sibi in perverso opere a primis usque ad extrema concordat, divinus sermo in eo membra carnium sibimet cohaerentia memorat. Sic namque perversa unanimiter sentiunt, ut nulla contra se vicissim disputatione dividantur. Nulla eos diversitatis altercatio tunc scindit, et idcirco contra bonos vehementer praevalent, quia in malo se concorditer tenent. [Vet. III.] Sicut enim jam superius diximus (Lib. XXXIII, num. 55), 1120 ut perniciosum est si unitas desit bonis, ita perniciosius est si non desit malis. Reproborum quippe unitas bonorum viam tanto durius praepedit quanto ei se per collectionem durior opponit. 9. Hanc unitatem dissolvere licet, exemplo Pauli. Hanc unitatem reproborum perniciosam sibi Paulus conspexerat, cum in medio Sadducaeorum Pharisaeorumque deprehensus dicebat: De spe et resurrectione mortuorum

ego judicor (Act. XXIII, 6). Qua nimirum voce percussa, protinus contra se vicissim audientium turba dissiluit. Cumque in duas partes tumultuantium multitudo dividitur, Paulo via ereptionis aperitur, quia quem turba persequentium unita constrinxerat, divisa laxabat. Eripiuntur ergo justi dum dividuntur injusti, et electorum vota ad perfectum perveniunt dum reproborum agmina per discordiam confunduntur. Quod bene etiam maris Rubri scissione designatur (Exod. XIV, 21, seq.). Dum enim in duas partes unda dividitur, ab electo populo ad terram repromissionis tenditur, quia dum malorum unitas scinditur, bonae mentes ad hoc quod appetunt perducuntur. Si malorum unitas noxia non fuisset, nequaquam divina providentia superbientium linguas in tanta diversitate dissipasset (Genes. XI, 8). Si malorum unitas noxia non fuisset, de sanctae Ecclesiae hostibus Propheta non diceret: Praecipita, Domine, et divide linguas eorum (Psal. LIV, 10). Quia ergo Leviathan iste tunc contra electos Dei in suis viribus effrenatur, ad augmentum suae malitiae unitatem quoque in reprobis habere permittitur, ut tanto contra nos robustius vires suas exerat, quanto non solum nos ictu fortitudinis, sed etiam mole adunationis impugnat. Sed quis contra ista sufficiat? Quae mens ad tantae elationis et compagis pondera non ab ipsa cogitationum radice contremiscat? Unde quia trepidare nos per infirmitatem conspicit, protinus divina clementia quid per semetipsam faciat? adjungit. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT V [Rec. V].

IBID. Mittet contra eum fulmina, et ad locum alium non ferentur. 16. Fulmine conterentur in judicio, justis illaesis et gaudentibus. Quid appellatione fulminum nisi tremendae illae extremi judicii sententiae designantur? Quae idcirco fulmina vocantur, quia nimirum eos quos feriunt in perpetuum incendunt. Fulmina namque super eum Paulus venire conspexerat, cum dicebat: Quem Dominus Jesus interficiet spiritu oris sui,

et destruet illustratione adventus sui (II Thess. II, 8). Haec autem quae in eum mittuntur fulmina, ad locum alium non feruntur, quia justis gaudentibus, solos tunc reprobos feriunt. Nam post trituram vitae praesentis, in qua nunc triticum sub paleis gemit, ita illo extremi judicii ventilabro inter triticum paleasque discernitur, ut nec in tritici horreum paleae transeant, nec in palearum ignem horrei grana delabantur. Illa ergo fulmina locum alium nequaquam tangunt, quia videlicet igne suo non grana, sed paleas incendunt. Sed quia Leviathan istum poena non corrigit, insinuat dum subjungit:

CAPUT VI [Rec. VI].

VERS. 15. Cor ejus indurabitur quasi lapis. 11. Satanae impoenitentia. Incudi similis optime dicitur. Cor enim antiqui hostis ut lapis indurabitur, quia nulla unquam conversionis poenitentia mollietur. Qui quia solis ictibus aeternae ultionis aptabitur, recte protinus subinfertur: IBID. Et stringetur quasi malleatoris incus. 1121 Incudem quippe malleator solis aptam percussionibus figit. Ad hoc namque incus statuitur, ut crebris ictibus feriatur. Leviathan ergo ut malleatoris incus stringitur, quia inferni vinculis coarctabitur, ut aeterni supplicii continua percussione tundatur. Qui modo quoque percutitur, dum justi quique, illo in insidiis vigilante, sed doloribus tabescente, salvantur. In incude autem alia vasa formantur, ipsa vero tot percussionibus in vas aliud non transfertur. Recte ergo Leviathan iste incudi comparatus est, quia nos illo persequente componimur, ipse autem et semper percutitur, et in vas utile nunquam mutatur. Aeternae illum percussioni relinquimus, et nos, superni artificis manu in ejus tentatione percussi, per illum quasi vascula formata transimus. In ipso enim tundimur, sed ut ad usum domus supernae veniamus. Ipse vero quasi incus stringitur, quia etsi nunc tentando mundum circuit, in inferno tamen positus, jam sub ictu sententiae non vagatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT VII [Rec. VII].

VERS. 16. Cum sublatus fuerit, timebunt angeli, et territi purgabuntur. 12. Reprobis angelis cadentibus, territi sunt boni, et timore solidati. Scriptura sacra ita nonnunquam tempus praeteritum futurumque permiscet, ut aliquando futuro pro praeterito, aliquando vero utatur praeterito pro futuro. Futuro namque pro praeterito utitur cum Joanni mulier paritura masculum, qui regat gentes in virga ferrea, demonstratur (Apoc. XII, 5). Quod quia incarnato Domino veniente jam tunc factum fuerat, res gesta nuntiabatur. Rursum praeterito utitur pro futuro, sicut per Psalmistam Dominus loquitur, dicens: Foderunt manus meas et pedes meos, dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea (Psal. XXI, 18). Quibus videlicet verbis species dominicae passionis quasi jam transacta describitur, sed tamen adhuc longe post futura nuntiatur. Hoc ergo loco quo dicitur: Cum sublatus fuerit, timebunt angeli, nil obstat intelligi quia sub futuri temporis modo praeterita describuntur. Nec rectae intelligentiae sensum relinquimus, si credamus Leviathan isto ab arce beatitudinis cadente, in ruina ejus etiam electos angelos expavisse, ut cum istum ex illorum numero superbiae lapsus ejiceret, illos ad robustius standum timor ipse solidaret. [Vet. IV.] Unde et sequitur: Et territi purgabantur. 13. Qua ratione tunc purgati. Aliis cadentibus, caeteris datum ut cadere non possent. Purgati vero sunt, quia nimirum isto cum reprobis legionibus exeunte, soli in coelestibus sedibus qui beate in aeternum viverent remanserunt. Hujus itaque lapsus eos terruit et purgavit: terruit, ne conditorem suum superbe despicerent; purgavit vero, quia, excuntibus reprobis, actum est ut electi soli remanerent. Et quia cunctorum opifex Deus scit ad bonorum custodiam etiam bene uti mala actione reproborum, lapsum cadentium vertit in profectum manentium; et unde punita est culpa superbientium, inde humilibus angelis et inventa et solidata sunt augmenta meritorum. Istis namque cadentibus, illis in munere datum est ut cadere omnino non possent. Sancti enim angeli, dum in istis naturae suae damna

conspiciunt, in seipsis jam cautius robustiusque consistunt. Unde fit, auctore omnium rerum Domino cuncta mirabiliter ordinante, ut illi electorum spirituum patriae etiam ruinae suae damna proficiant, dum inde 1122 firmius constructa sit unde fuerat ex parte destructa. 14. Sancti praedicatores angeli dicuntur. Sed quia saepe Scriptura sacra praedicatores Ecclesiae, pro eo quod gloriam patriae coelestis annuntiant, angelorum solet nomine designare, possumus hoc loco angelos sanctos praedicatores accipere. Hinc est enim quod Joannes in Apocalypsi, septem Ecclesiis scribens, angelis Ecclesiarum loquitur, id est praedicatoribus populorum (Apoc. I, 4). Hinc propheta ait: Et angeli pacis amare flebunt (Isai. XXXIII, 7). Hinc rursum Malachias propheta ait: Labia sacerdotis custodiunt scientiam, et legem inquirunt ex ore ejus, quia angelus Domini exercituum est (Malac. II, 7). Hinc Paulus ait: Magnum est pietatis sacramentum, quod manifestatum est in carne, justificatum in spiritu, apparuit angelis, praedicatum est gentibus, creditum est in hoc mundo, assumptum est in gloria (I Tim. III, 16). Qui igitur dispensationis mysterium postquam apparuisse angelis dixit, praedicatum esse gentibus subdidit, profecto angelorum nomine praedicatores sanctos, id est veritatis nuntios designavit. 15. Hi ex angelorum casu et poena terrentur, et purgantur. Si ergo hoc quod dicitur: Cum sublatus fuerit, timebunt angeli, et territi purgabuntur, ad futurum tempus refertur, adveniente districto judice, extrema hic istius Leviathan damnatio designatur, quia de hoc mundo per iram judicii tollitur, qui nunc mira mansuetudinis longanimitate toleratur. Tanto autem hinc pondere terroris excutitur, ut sanctorum etiam praedicatorum fortitudo turbetur; Cum enim sublatus fuerit, timebunt angeli, quia cum judicii turbine rapitur, hi qui in corporibus reperiri potuerint, immenso terrore concussi, etiam supernae patriae nuntii contremiscunt. Quamvis enim fortes jam atque perfecti sunt, adhuc tamen; quia in carne sunt positi, non possunt in tanti terroris turbine nulla formidine concuti. Sed cum Leviathan iste

rapitur, cumque omnia in ejus interitu elementa quatiuntur, praedicatores sanctos, quos, ut dixi, adhuc in suis corporibus illud tempus judicii invenerit, spes de regni propinquitate laetificat, et carnis infirmitas de irae ostensione perturbat. Erit ergo in eis aliquo modo tremor laetus, et timor securus, quia et coelesti regno se remunerari certi sunt, et per tanti turbinis metum pro carnis infirmitate contremiscunt. 16. Justis trementibus, quanta reproborum futura concussio. Consideremus ergo quomodo tunc iniquorum conscientia concutitur, quando etiam justorum vita turbatur. Hi qui oderunt adventum judicis, quid facient, si terrorem tanti judicii etiam qui diligunt expavescunt? Et quia in sanctis praedicatoribus hoc pavore excoquitur, si qua eis inesse potuit levium rubigo vitiorum, postquam dixit: Cum sublatus fuerit, timebunt angeli, apte mox subdidit: Et territi purgabuntur. Sed quia haec de Leviathan istius fine cognovimus, interim priusquam pereat quid agat audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT VIII [Rec. VIII].

VERS. 17. Cum apprehenderit eum gladius, subsistere non poterit neque hasta, neque thorax. 17. Antichristus diaboli gladius recte appellatur. In Scriptura sacra aliquando per gladium sancta praedicatio, aliquando aeterna damnatio, aliquando tribulatio temporalis, aliquando antiqui hostis ira vel persuasio designatur. Gladius enim 1123 pro sancta praedicatione ponitur, sicut Paulus ait: Et gladium spiritus, quod est verbum Dei (Ephes. VI, 17). Gladii nomine aeterna damnatio designatur, sicut de praedicante haeretico scriptum est: Si multiplicati fuerint filii ejus, in gaudio erunt (Job. XXVII, 14), quia quantalibet hic numerositate germinent, aeterna damnatione consumuntur. Gladius tribulatio temporalis accipitur, sicut Mariae de secuturis tribulationibus, dicitur: Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius (Luc. II, 35). Rursum per gladium ira vel persuasio maligni hostis exprimitur, sicut Psalmista ait: Qui liberasti David servum tuum de gladio

maligno (Psal. CXLIII, 10). Benignus quippe sanctae praedicationis est gladius, quo percutimur ut a culpa moriamur. Malignus vero est diabolicae persuasionis gladius, quo male quisque percutitur ut a vita rectitudinis exstinguatur. Antiqui ergo hostis est gladius, ille tunc damnatus homo, in usum ministerii ejus assumptus. Ipsum quippe per malitiam fraudis exacuit, et infirmorum corda transfigit. Hunc ergo Leviathan istius gladius apprehendit, cum eum suus damnatus homo susceperit. Si autem gladii nomine ejus ira signatur, recte non apprehendere gladium, sed a gladio apprehendi describitur. In tantam quippe tunc insaniam vertitur, ut dominari omnibus appetens, nequaquam suae irae dominetur. Nos namque cum iram in usu justitiae assumimus, gladium tenemus, quia eam sub aequitate judicii possidendo moderamur. Ille autem quia per abrupta furoris rapitur, non apprehendere gladium, sed a gladio apprehendi perhibetur. Non enim iram possidens tenet, sed ab ira saeviens tenetur. [Vet. V.] 18. Huic gladio cedere hastam et thoracem quo sensu dictum. Cunctis autem liquet quod hasta adversarium percutimus, thorace vero ab adversario munimur. Per hastam vulnera inferimus, per thoracem tegimur ne vulneremur. Quid igitur per hastam nisi praedicationis jaculum, quid per thoracem nisi fortitudo patientiae designatur? Leviathan ergo iste, quia per assumptum reprobum hominem in ira omnimodae crudelitatis effrenatur, apprehendi a gladio dicitur. Nam per ostensionem immensae tunc fortitudinis exhibet quidquid nequiter potest. Et neque hasta neque thorax subsistere poterit, quia in Antichristum veniens, tantae virtutis apparebit, ut si supernum adjutorium desit, et praedicantium acumen obtundat, et longanimitatem patientium destruat. Nisi enim justorum vitam superna gratia solidet, non subsistit hasta, quia praedicatorum virtus frangitur; non subsistit thorax, quia constantium patientia dirupta penetratur. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT IX.

VERS. 18. Reputabit enim ut paleas ferrum, et quasi lignum putridum aes. 19. Saeviente Antichristo praedicatorum virtus et fortiorum constantia periclitabuntur. Quod superius hastam dixit, hoc inferius ferri appellatione replicavit; et quod thoracem protulit, hoc rursum aeris commemoratione signavit. Ferrum namque acuitur ut adversarius vulneretur, aes autem rubigine pene nulla consumitur. Ferro ergo praedicationis jacula, aere autem longanimitatis constantia designatur. Unde et sub Aser specie de sancta Ecclesia per Moysen dicitur: Ferrum et aes calceamentum ejus (Deut. XXXIII, 25). Calceamentum quippe in Scriptura sacra munimen praedicationis 1124 accipitur, sicut scriptum est: Calceati pedes in praeparatione Evangelii pacis (Ephes. VI, 16). Quia ergo per ferrum virtus, per aes autem perseverantia exprimitur, ferrum et aes calceamentum ejus dicitur, cum praedicatio ejus acumine simul et constantia munitur. Per ferrum enim mala adversantia penetrat, per aes autem bona quae proposuit longanimiter servat. Cujus profecto perseverantiam illic apertius insinuat, dicens: Sicut dies juventutis ejus, ita erit et senectus illius (Deut. XXXIII, 25). [Rec. IX.] Sed Leviathan iste quando illum gladium quem sacra eloquia Antichristum vocant in exercitationem suae iniquitatis assumpserit, et ferrum velut paleas, et aes velut lignum putridum reputabit, quia nisi divina gratia protegat, et praedicantium vires velut paleas nequitiae suae igne consumet, et patientium constantiam quasi lignum putridum in pulverem rediget. Et acumen igitur ferri, et aeris fortitudo deficit, dum per violentiam virtutis illius et praedicationis sensus obtunditur, et patientiae longanimitas dissipatur. 20. Et nisi Deus opem ferat, deficient. Nisi ergo electos suos opitulatio divina roboret, ubi tunc infirmi erunt, si fortes sicut paleae reputantur? Quid tunc Leviathan iste de paleis faciet, si ferrum quasi paleas aestimabit? Quid de putridis lignis acturus est, si quasi lignum putridum aeris fortitudinem solvet? Sed o quam multi, qui suis viribus ferrum se vel aes aestimant, in illo tunc tribulationis igne se paleas esse deprehendunt; et

quam multi, qui per infirmitatem propriam se esse paleas metuunt, per divinum adjutorium fulti, in ferri atque aeris soliditate roborantur, ut contra adversarium suum tanto magis in Deo fortes sint, quanto de se amplius infirmos se esse meminerunt. Sed quanto altius Behemoth iste contra electos Dei per miracula erigitur, tanto contra eum sancti quique vehementius ad praedicationis se verba constringunt. Qui tamen ita reproborum mentes possidet, ut eas nulla confossus veritatis jaculatione relinquat. Unde et subditur: IBID. 19. Non fugabit eum vir sagittarius. 21. A reproborum cordibus non fugat Satanam sancta praedicatio.Quid enim sagittas, nisi verba praedicatorum accipimus? Quae dum voce bene viventium distinguntur, audientium corda transfigunt. His sagittis sancta Ecclesia percussa fuerat, quae dicebat: Vulnerata charitate ego sum (Cantic. II, 5). De his sagittis Psalmistae voce narratur: Sagittae parvulorum factae sunt plagae eorum (Psal. LXIII, 8), quia scilicet verba humilium penetraverunt animos superborum. De his sagittis venienti propugnatori dicitur: Sagittae tuae acutae, potentissime, populi sub te cadent in corde (Psal. XLIV, 6). Vir itaque est sagittarius qui per sanctae intentionis arcum audientium cordibus verba rectae exhortationis infigit. Quia ergo Leviathan iste verba praedicantium despicit, et, cum reproborum mentes male suadendo momorderit, durus inter jacula omnimodo eas non relinquit, recte dicitur: Non fugabit eum vir sagittarius. Ac si aperte dicatur: A reproborum cordibus eum sancti praedicatoris sagitta non excutit, quia quisquis ab illo apprehenditur, verba jam praedicantium audire contemnit. Unde bene peccatis praecedentibus irascens, de his quos in manu antiqui hostis deserit, Dominus per prophetam dicit: Immittam vobis serpentes regulos, 1125 quibus non est incantatio (Jerem. VIII, 17). Ac si diceret: Justo judicio talibus vos immundis spiritibus tradam, qui a vobis excuti exhortatione praedicantium quasi incantantium sermone non valeant. Quia vero Leviathan iste a cordibus reproborum sanctae praedicationis spiculis non

movetur, ipse etiam sanctorum virorum contemptus adjicitur, cum illico subinfertur:

CAPUT XI [Vet. VI].

IBID. In stipulam versi sunt ei lapides fundae. 22. Contra eum et Antichristum sanctorum robur videtur stipula. Nihil tamen contra eorum animam potest. Quid per fundam, nisi sancta Ecclesia figuratur? Funda namque dum in gyrum mittitur, sic de illa lapides exeunt quibus adversariorum pectora feriantur; ita sancta Ecclesia dum volubilitate temporum per tribulationum circuitum ducitur, fortes ex illa viri prodeunt quibus quasi lapideis ictibus iniquorum corda tundantur. Unde ad prophetam de bonis doctoribus Dominus dicit: Devorabunt, et subjicient lapidibus fundae (Zach. IX, 15). Sancti quippe doctores qui ad virtutem et alios instruunt, hostes devorant, dum eos intra corpus suum per vim conversionis immutant. Quos lapidibus fundae subjiciunt, quia dum fortes quosque in sancta Ecclesia viros instituunt, per eos adversariorum superbientium pectora dura confringunt. Unde et Golias immanissimus saxo fundae moritur (I Reg. XVII, 49), quia singulari sanctae Ecclesiae lapide diabolica celsitudo superatur. Leviathan itaque iste quia, damnato illo homine assumpto, quoslibet fortes Ecclesiae velut infirmos despicit, eorumque vires temporaliter premit, recte nunc dicitur: In stipulam versi sunt ei lapides fundae. Ac si aperte diceretur: Sanctorum robur quasi in stipulae mollitiem redigit, quorum lingua prius pectus illius duris ictibus tutudit. Omnem quippe tunc fortitudinem suae iniquitatis exercens, quanto se ab eis vinci spiritaliter dolet, tanto atrocius contra eos corporaliter praevalet. Et quia nil se contra eorum spiritum praevalere considerat, in eorum carne crudelitatis suae omnia argumenta consummat. [Vet. VII.] Sed quid mirum si humanas vires despicit, qui ipsa etiam superni in se judicii aeterna tormenta contemnit? Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XII.

VERS. 20. Quasi stipulam aestimabit malleum. 23. Dei vindictam superbus contemnit. Ac si diceret: Etiam pondus ejus animadversionis despicit, quae se per supplicium desuper veniens ferit. In Scriptura enim sacra mallei nomine aliquando diabolus designatur, per quem nunc delinquentium culpae feriuntur; aliquando vero percussio coelestis accipitur, qua vel electi supernos ictus sentiunt, ut a pravis itineribus corrigantur, vel justa ira reprobos percutit, ut jam supplicia aeterna praeveniens, quid etiam in posterum mereantur ostendat. Nam quia appellatione mallei antiquus hostis exprimitur, propheta testatur, cum super eum vim extremi judicii contemplatur, dicens: Quomodo confractus est et contritus malleus universae terrae (Jerem. L, 23)? Ac si dicerei: Eum per quem vascula sua Dominus in ministerii usum formanda percutit, quis perpendat quo turbine, veniente extremo judicio, in aeterna damnatione confringit? Rursum per malleum percussio coelestis exprimitur, quod Salomone templum aedificante signatur, cum dicitur: Domus autem cum aedificaretur, de lapidibus 1126 dolatis atque perfectis aedificata est, et malleus et securis, et omne ferramentum non sunt audita in domo, cum aedificaretur (III Reg. VI, 7). Quid enim domus illa nisi sanctam Ecclesiam, quam in coelestibus Dominus inhabitat, figurabat? Ad cujus aedificationem electorum animae, quasi quidam expoliti lapides deferuntur. Quae cum aedificatur in coelis, nullus illic jam disciplinae malleus resonat, quia dolati atque perfecti illuc lapides ducimur, ut locis juxta meritum congruis disponamur. Hic enim foris tundimur, ut illuc sine reprehensione veniamus. Hic malleus, hic secucuris, hic omnia tunsionum resonant ferramenta. In domo autem Dei nulli ictus audiuntur, quia in aeterna patria omnes jam percussionum strepitus conticescunt. Nequaquam ibi malleus percutit, quia nulla animadversio affligit. Nequaquam securis incidit, quia receptos interius nulla foras severitatis sententia projicit. Nequaquam ferramenta perstrepunt,

quia nec quaelibet minima ultra jam flagella sentiuntur. Quia ergo per malleum desuper venientem coelestis pondus percussionis exprimitur, quid est quod Leviathan iste malleum despicit, nisi quod supernae animadversionis ictus formidare contemnit? Et quasi stipulam malleum deputat, quia ad justae irae se pondera velut contra terrores levissimos parat. Unde et adhuc expressius subditur:

CAPUT XIII [Rec. XI].

IBID. Et deridebit vibrantem hastam. 24. Futuri judicii comminationem irridet, inde factus crudelior. Contra Leviathan enim Dominus hastam vibrat, quia in ejus interitu districtam minatur sententiam. Hastam quippe vibrare est aeternam ei mortem ex districta animadversione praeparare. Sed apostata spiritus auctorem vitae etiam cum sua morte despiciens, hastam vibrantem deridet, quia ex districto judicio quidquid grave, quidquid horribile esse praevidet, pati non metuit; sed quo se aeterna tormenta non posse evadere conspicit, eo in exercenda nequitia durior assurgit. Quem cum plerique hujus mundi sapientes in cunctis quae appetit tanta pertinacia, tanta fortitudine stringi considerant, corda sua ad famulatum ejus tyrannidis inclinant, et omne quod Deo largiente sapiunt, hoc contra eum ad servitium hostis illius inflectunt. Unde et recte subditur:

CAPUT XIV [Rec. XII].

IBID. 21. Sub ipso erunt radii solis. 25. Illi subduntur nonnulli, qui doctrina aut sanctitate in Ecclesia lucere videbantur. In Scriptura enim sacra cum figurate sol ponitur, aliquando Dominus, aliquando persecutio, aliquando de re qualibet manifestae visionis ostensio, aliquando autem intelligentia sapientium designatur. Per solem quippe Dominus figuratur, sicut Sapientiae libro perbibetur, quod omnes impii in extremi die judicii cognita sua damnatione dicturi sunt: Erravimus a via veritatis, et lumen justitiae non

luxit nobis, et sol non est ortus nobis (Sap. V, 6). Ac si aperte dicant: Interni nobis luminis radius non refulsit. Unde et Joannes ait: Mulier amicta sole, et luna sub pedibus ejus (Apoc. XII, 2). In sole enim illustratio veritatis, in luna autem, quae menstruis suppletionibus deficit, mutabilitas temporalitatis accipitur. Sancta autem Ecclesia, quia superni luminis splendore protegitur, quasi sole vestitur, quia vero cuncta temporalia despicit, lunam sub pedibus pre mit. Rursum sole persecutio designatur, sicut 1127 in Evangelio Veritas dicit, quod nata sine radicibus semina orto sole aruerunt (Matth. XIII, 6), quia videlicet verba vitae in corde terrenorum hominum temporali momento virentia, superveniente persecutionis ardore, siccantur. Rursum sole manifestae visionis ostensio designatur, sicut Propheta Dominum cunctorum oculis apparentem denuntiat, dicens: In sole posuit tabernaculum suum (Psal. XVIII, 6). Ac si diceret: Humanitatis assumptae sacramentum in lumine manifestae visionis ostendit. Et sicut eidem Prophetae divina voce per Nathan dicitur: Tu fecisti in abscondito, ego vero faciam verbum istud in conspectu omnis Israel, et in conspectu solis (II Reg. XII, 12). Quid enim per conspectum solis, nisi cognitionem insinuat manifestae visionis? Rursum solis nomine, sapientium intellectus exprimitur, sicut in Apocalypsi scriptum est: Quartus angelus effudit phialam suam in solem, et datum est illi aestu afficere homines et igni (Apoc. XVI, 8). Phialam videlicet in solem effundere est persecutionis supplicia viris sapientiae splendore fulgentibus irrogare: Et datum est illi ut afficeret homines aestu et igni, quia dum sapientes viri, cruciatibus victi, male agendi errore tanguntur, illorum exemplo persuasi infirmi quique temporalibus desideriis inardescunt. Ruinae namque fortium augmenta praestant perditionibus infirmorum. Quia sole acumen sapientiae designatur, per comparationem quoque a Salomone dicitur: Sapiens ut sol permanet, stultus ut luna mutatur (Eccli. XXVII, 12). [Vet. VIII.] Hoc ergo loco quid per solis radios nisi acumina sapientium demonstrantur? Quia enim multi, qui in sancta Ecclesia luce sapientiae

resplendere videbantur, tunc vel persuasionibus capti, vel minis territi, vel cruciatibus fracti, Leviathan istius seditioni subjiciuntur, recte dicitur: Sub ipso erunt radii solis. Ac si aperte diceretur: Hi qui intra sanctam Ecclesiam per acumina sapientiae quasi radios videbantur lucis aspergere, et per auctoritatem rectitudinis desuper resplendere, potestati Leviathan istius iniqua se operatione substernunt, ut non jam recta praedicando desuper luceant, sed ei perverse obsequendo famulentur. Solis ergo radii sub ipso sunt, cum nonnulli etiam docti viri sapientiae suae acumina non libere agendo sublevant, sed ad vestigia Leviathan istius et perversitate operis, et blandimento adulationis inclinant, ut intelligentia, quae illis sicut sol desuper fuit ex coelesti munere, antiqui hostis pedibus substernatur ex terrena cupiditate. Unde et nunc cum quisque sapientium atque doctorum pro commodo vel gloria vitae temporalis per adulationis lapsum terrenis se potestatibus prave agentibus subjicit, quasi sub vestigiis venientis Antichristi solis se radiis sternit. Et velut coeli lucem sibi Behemoth humiliat, dum per pestiferum assensum sapientium mentes calcat. Toties vero Leviathan istius pedibus se radii solis subdunt, quoties hi qui doctrinae videntur lumine resplendere, immoderato acumine prava in sacro eloquio sentiunt, perversisque sensibus ejus se erroribus substernunt, quia dum contra fidelia veritatis praedicamenta se erigunt, Leviathan istius vestigiis falsa sentiendo famulantur. Toties radii solis sub ipso sunt, quoties docti quippe, et intelligentiae luce 1128 pollentes, vel despectis caeteris in elatione se erigunt; vel summa quae sapiunt postponentes, sordidis carnis desideriis inquinantur; vel obliti coelestium, terrena ambiunt; vel non reminiscentes quia terra sunt, de cognitione coelestium inaniter gloriantur. Unde et recte ibi subjungitur:

CAPUT XV [Rec. XIII].

IBID. Sternet sibi aurum quasi lutum. 26. Quid significet aurum, in sacra Scriptura. Appellatione quippe auri in sacro eloquio aliquando divinitatis claritas, aliquando splendor supernae civitatis, aliquando charitas, aliquando nitor gloriae saecularis, aliquando pulchritudo sanctitatis accipitur. Auri enim nomine ipsa intima divinitatis claritas designatur, sicut in Canticorum canticis sponsi species describitur: Caput ejus aurum optimum (Cant. V, 11). Quia enim caput Christi Deus, nil vero est in metallis auro fulgentius, sponsi caput aurum dicitur, quia ejus humanitas ex divinitas suae nobis claritate principatur. Rursum auri nomine splendor supernae civitatis accipitur, sicut hanc Joannes se vidisse testatur, dicens: Ipsa civitas aurum mundum simile vitro mundo (Apoc. XXI, 18). Aurum namque ex quo illa civitas constat, simile vitro dicitur, ut et per aurum clara, et per vitrum perspicua designetur. Rursum auri nomine charitas intimatur, sicut Angelum quem sibi loqui idem Joannes aspexit (Apoc. I, 13), ad mamillas zona aurea cinctum vidit, quia nimirum supernorum civium pectora dum poenali jam nequaquam timori subjecta sunt, atque a se vicissim nulla scissione solvuntur, ex sola se charitate constringunt. Zonam vero auream circa mamillas habere, est cunctos mutabilium cogitationum motus per solius jam amoris vincula restringere. Rursum auri nomine, nitor gloriae temporalis exprimitur, sicut per Prophetam dicitur: Calix aureus Babylon (Jerem. LI, 7). Quid enim Babylonis nomine, nisi hujus mundi gloria designatur? Quae calix aureus dicitur, quia dum pulchra esse temporalia ostentat, stultas mentes in sua concupiscentia debriat, ut speciosa temporalia appetant, et invisibilia pulchra contemnant. Hoc aureo calice prima sponte sua Eva debriata est, de qua historia veritatis dicit, quia cum vetitum lignum concupisceret, vidit quod esset pulchrum visu, aspectuque delectabile et comedit (Genes. III, 6). Aureus ergo Babylon calix est, quia dum visum exterioris pulchritudinis ostendit, sensum internae rectitudinis subtrahit. Rursum auri nomine splendor sanctitatis accipitur, sicut Judaicum populum

a splendore justitiae ad nequitiae tenebras commutatum Jeremias deplorat dicens: Quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus (Thren. IV, 1)? Sicut enim superius diximus, aurum obscuratur, cum subsequantibus iniquitatum tenebris, justitiae pulchritudo deseritur. Color optimus mutatur, cum splendor innocentiae in foeditatem vertitur culpae. [Vet. IX.] 27. Quid lutum. Luti quoque nomine, in sacro eloquio aliquando terrenarum rerum multiplicitas, aliquando sordidum sapiens iniqua doctrina, al quando desiderii carnalis illecebra designatur. Per lutum quippe terrenarum rerum multiplicitas figuratur, sicut per Habacuc prophetam dicitur: Vae ei qui multiplicat non sua! usquequo aggravat contra se 1129 densum lutum (Habac. II, 6)? Denso enim se luto aggravat, qui per avaritiam terrena multiplicans, peccati sui se oppressione coangustat. Rursum luti nomine doctrina sordidum sapiens designatur, sicut per eumdem prophetam Domino dicitur: Viam fecisti in mari equis tuis, in luto aquarum multarum (Habac. III, 15). Ac si diceret: Aperuisti iter praedicatoribus tuis inter doctrinas hujus saeculi sordida et terrena sapientes. Per lutum quoque desiderium sordidae voluptatis exprimitur, sicut Psalmista deprecans ait: Eripe me de luto, ut non inhaeream (Psal. LXVIII, 15). Luto quippe inhaerere, est sordidis desideriis concupiscentiae carnalis inquinari. 28. Antiquus hostis aliis sub specie sanctitatis illudit, alios per foeda vitia inescat. Hoc ergo loco aurum claritas sanctitatis accipitur, lutum vero vel terrenarum rerum avaritiam, vel pravarum contagia doctrinarum, vel sordes carnalium voluptatum nil obstat intelligi. Quia enim multos Leviathan iste, qui intra sanctam Ecclesiam fulgore justitiae resplendere videbantur, tunc vel terrenarum rerum concupiscentia, vel errantis doctrinae contagio, vel carnalibus sibi voluptatibus subjicit, aurum sibi procul dubio quasi lutum sternit. Aurum enim quasi lutum sternere, est in quibusdam vitae munditiam per illicita desideria conculcare, ut hi etiam sordidis ejus vestigiis serviant, qui contra illum prius virtutum splendore rutilabant. Antiquus itaque hostis

aliis tunc sub specie sanctitatis illudit, alios autem per foeda vitia vitae carnalis intercipit. Sed tunc per haec aperte grassabitur, nunc autem multorum cordibus occulte dominatur, sicut Paulus Apostolus dicit: Ut reveletur in suo tempore, nam mysterium jam operatur iniquitatis (II Thes. II, 6). Toties igitur etiam nunc aurum sibi quasi lutum subjicit, quoties castitatem fidelium per carnis vitia sternit. Toties aurum velut lutum calcat, quoties sensum continentium per immunda desideria dissipat. Quod tunc tanto vehementius peragit, quanto, suae perditae libertati commissus, hoc quod appetit, effrenatius perpetrat. 29. Qui diabolo substernuntur, etsi aurum videantur, lutum sunt. Et fortasse quempiam moveat cur misericors Deus fieri ista permittat, ut Leviathan iste seu nunc per suggestiones callidas, sive tunc per damnatum illum quem replet hominem, vel solis radios, id est doctos quosque sapientesque subjiciat, vel aurum, hoc est viros sanctitatis claritate fulgentes, quasi lutum sibi vitiis coinquinando substernat. Sed citius respondemus quia aurum quod pravis ejus persuasionibus quasi lutum sterni potuerit, aurum ante Dei oculos nunquam fuit (De poenit., dist. 2, c. Citius). Qui enim seduci quandoque non reversuri possunt, quasi habitam sanctitatem oculos hominum videntur amittere; sed eam ante oculos Dei nunquam habuerunt. Saepe namque homo multis occulte peccatis involvitur, et in una aliqua virtute magnus videtur. Quae ipsa quoque virtus inanescens deficit, quia dum innotescit hominibus, procul dubio laudatur, ejusque laus inhianter appetitur. Unde fit ut et ipsa virtus ante Dei oculos virtus non sit, dum abscondit quod displicet, prodit quod placet. Quae itaque esse merita apud Deum possunt, quando et mala occulta sunt, et bona publica? Plerumque enim, sicut diximus, latet superbia, et castitas innotescit; atque ideo ostensa diu castitas circa vitae finem perditur, quia cooperta superbia usque ad finem incorrecta retinetur. Alius 1130 eleemosynis vacat, propria distribuit; sed tamen multis injustitiis servit, vel fortasse linguam in detractionibus exercet. Et fit plerumque ut is

qui misericors fuerat juxta vitae suae terminum rapacitatis et crudelitatis stimulis inardescat. Quod valde justo judicio agitur, ut et perdat ante homines unde hominibus placuit, qui hoc unde Deo displicuit, corrigere nunquam curavit. Alius patientiae studet; sed dum invidere aliis, et servare in corde malitiam non cavet, fit quandoque impatiens, qui diu latuit dolens. Hi itaque et per aliquid aurum sum, et per aliquid lutum sunt. Atque hoc aurum quasi lutum sternitur, quando occultis peccatis exigentibus, etiam virtus quae publice claruerat dissipatur. Sed operae pretium credimus si in his virtutem superni ordinis subtilius perpendamus [Vet. X.] 30. Deus occulta quorumdam mala tolerat, ut quae in aperto faciunt bona, electis prosint. Saepe enim omnipotens Deus occulta quorumdam mala tolerat, ut aperta eorum bona electorum suorum usibus profutura dispenset. Nam nonnulli mundum nequaquam funditus deserentes, non perseveraturi angustum iter arripiunt, sed ad quaerendam angustam viam exemplo suo eos qui perseveraturi sunt accendunt. Unde plerumque contingit ut ipsum hoc quod bene videntur vivere, non sibi, sed solis potius electis vivant, dum exemplis suis ad bene vivendi studia perseveraturos alios non perseveraturi provocant. Saepe enim quosdam videmus viam ingredi, ad locum propositum festinare, quos alii quia euntes conspiciunt sequuntur; eumdemque locum pariter petunt. Sed fit plerumque ut, irruente aliquo implicationis articulo, post se redeant qui praeibant, et hi ad locum perveniant qui sequebantur. Ita nimirum sunt qui non perseveraturi viam sanctitatis arripiunt. Idcirco enim virtutis iter non perventuri inchoant, ut eis qui perventuri sunt qua gradiantur ostendant. Quorum etiam casus, utilitate non modica, electorum profectibus servit, quia illorum lapsum dum conspiciunt, de suo statu contremiscunt; et ruina quae illos damnat istos humiliat. Discunt enim in superni adjutorii protectione confidere, dum plerosque conspiciunt de suis viribus cecidisse. Quando ergo bene agere videntur reprobi, quasi planum iter electis sequentibus monstrant; quando

vero in lapsum nequitiae corruunt, electis post se pergentibus quasi cavendam superbiae foveam ostendunt. Erat ergo Leviathan iste, et solis sibi radios subdat, atque aurum luti more subjiciat. Scit omnipotens Deus ad electorum suorum solatium bene uti malo reproborum, quando hi qui ad illum perventuri sunt, et suis ad eum meritis proficiunt, et saepe in eo quod superbe sapiunt, alienis lapsibus corriguntur. Sed si haec Leviathan iste agit in eis etiam quos claros aliqua virtus ostendit, quid de illis facturus est quorum mens vel ex parte aliqua sublevata a terrenis concupiscentiis non est? Quos tamen divinus sermo aperte exprimit, dum subjungit:

CAPUT XVI [Rec. XIV].

VERS. 22. Fervescere faciet quasi ollam profundum mare. 31. In ultima persecutione ira reproborum ebulliet in Sanctos. Quid per mare nisi vita saecularium, quid per profundum, nisi altae et abditae eorum cogitationes exprimuntur? Quod profundum mare Leviathan iste quasi ollam facit fervescere, quia nimirum constat, quod persecutionis extremae tempore contra electorum vitam studeat animos reproborum 1131 per flammam crudelitatis excitare. Tunc profundum mare quasi olla fervescit, cum corda dilectorum saeculi valido ardore succendit, et quae hoc pacis tempore intra suam malitiam clausa latuerunt, tunc in aestum immanissimae persecutionis ebulliunt, ac per abruptam crudelitatis apertae licentiam ea quae diu presserant odia antiqui livoris exhalant. Quia autem pestifero errore persuasi, sic in istis famulantur Antichristo, ut tunc verius praebere se aestiment obsequium Christo, postquam dixit: Fervescere faciet quasi ollam profundum mare, apte subjunxit:

CAPUT XXVII [Vet.

XI] IBID.Ponet quasi cum unguenta bulliunt. 32. Qui Antichristo contra sanctos militabunt, obsequium Deo praestare credent. Unguenta quippe cum

bulliunt, fragrantiam suavitatis reddunt. Quia ergo Leviathan iste ita seducet corda reproborum, ut quidquid agunt ex iniquitate perfidiae pro veritate rectae fidei se agere suspicentur, quasi bene eis olet id quod zelo religionis exercent. Unde in Evangelio discipulis Veritas dicit: Ut omnis qui interficit vos, arbitretur obsequium se praestare Deo (Joan. XVI, 2). Igitur sicut olla fervent, dum crudeliter persequuntur; sed apud eos ipsa persecutio unguentorum fragrantiam redolet, dum mens eorum, vanis suspicionibus decepta, aestimat quia Deo obsequium persolvat. In Scriptura enim sacra unguentorum odoribus opinio solet signari virtutum. Unde sponsa in Canticis canticorum sponsum desiderans dicit: In odore unguentorum tuorum currimus (Cant. I, 3). Et unde Paulus apostolus virtutum laude fragrare se sciens, ait: Christi bonus odor sumus Deo (II Cor. II, 15). Itaque quia Leviathan iste ministros illius perditi vasis sui in crudelitatis opera sub opinione laudis et praetextu vitututis intercipit, postquam dixit: Fervescere faciet quasi ollam profundum mare, recte mox subdidit: Ponet quasi cum unguenta bulliunt. Quod enim per crudelitatis incendium mare fervet, hoc in eorumdem judicio qui excitantur falso nomine virtutis, ac si unguenta bulliant, ostendit, ut tanto atrociores ad crudelitatem fiant, quanto se etiam mereri praemia quasi pro zelo religionis existimant. Justumque hoc est divino judicio, ut qui pietatatis vim perpendere et custodire negligunt, suspicionis suae odore fallantur. Unde et, ad illusionis augmentum, eos crudelia perpetrantes signa quoque ac prodigia subsequuntur, sicut et recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XVIII [Vet.

XII, Rec. XV]. VERS. 23. Post eum lucebit semita. 33. Antichristi semita miraculis lucebit. Post Leviathan quippe semita lucere perhibetur, quia quaqua transit, admirationem nimiam ex miraculorum suorum claritate derelinquit; et sive per se, seu per ministros suos quolibet prodeat,

mendacibus signis coruscat. Unde et hoc quod jam saepe protulimus in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Surgent pseudochristi et pseudoprophetae, et dabunt signa et prodigia, ita ut in errorem inducantur, si fieri potest, etiam electi (Marc. XIII, 22). Semita igitur post Leviathan lucet, quia quorum corda penetrat, eorum opera prodigiis illustrat, ut nimirum tanto altius eorum mentes in erroris tenebris teneat, quanto per eos foris quasi potentius lucem de miraculis ostentat. Sed sunt nonnulli qui in memoria 1132 et verba prophetica, et Evangelica praecepta retinentes, sciant et falsa esse signa quae exhibet, et vera supplicia ad quae decipiens trahit. Horum corda Leviathan iste, quia sanctitatis ostentatione non intercipit, in alia se eis illusione componit. Quosdam namque haec scientes, sed tamen praesentem vitam diligentes conspicit, quorum protinus mentibus ventura supplicia levigat, finienda quandoque districtionis judicia asserit, et deceptos callide ad praesentes voluptates rapit. Unde et apte mox subditur:

CAPUT XIX [Rec. XVI].

IBID. Aestimabit abyssum quasi senescentem. 34. Poenarum aeternitatem non credunt reprobi, a diabolo in errorem inducti. Eorum falsis rationibus respondetur. Quod aeterna incomprehensibiliaque judicia, abyssi soleant nomine designari, Psalmista testatur dicens: Judicia tua abyssus multa (Psal. XXXV, 7). Senectus vero aliquando pro finis propinquitate ponitur. Unde Apostolus ait: Quod antiquatur et senescit, prope interitum est (Hebr. VIII, 13). Leviathan itaque iste aestimabit abyssum quasi senescentem, quia reproborum corda sic infatuat, ut suspicionem eis de venturo judicio quod quasi finiatur infundat. Abyssum namque senescere aestimat, qui terminari quandoque in suppliciis supernam animadversionem putat. Igitur antiquus iste persuasor in membris suis, id est in mentibus iniquorum, futuras poenas levigat, quas quasi certo fine determinat, ut eorum culpas sine termino correptionis extendat; et eo magis hic peccata non finiant, quo istic

aestimant peccatorum supplicia finienda. 35. Sunt enim nunc etiam qui idcirco peccatis suis ponere finem negligunt, quia habere quandoque finem futura super se judicia suspicantur. Quibus breviter respondemus: Si quandoque finienda sunt supplicia reproborum, quandoque finienda sunt ergo et gaudia beatorum. Per semetipsam namque Veritas dicit: Ibunt hi in supplicium aeternum, justi autem in vitam aeternam (Matth. XXV, 46). Si igitur hoc verum non est quod minatus est, neque illud verum est quod promisit. At inquiunt: Ideo aeternam poenam peccantibus minatus est, ut eos a peccatorum perpetratione compesceret, quia creaturae suae aeterna supplicia minari debuit, non inferre. Quibus citius respondemus: Si falsa minatus est ut ab injustitia corrigeret, etiam falsa pollicitus est ut ad justitiam provocaret. Et quis hanc eorum vesaniam toleret, qui dum promissionibus suis reproborum supplicia finiri asserunt, assertione sua etiam electorum praemia remunerationesque confundunt? Quis hanc eorum vesaniam toleret, qui conantur astruere verum non esse, quod Veritas de aeterno igne minata est, et dum satagunt Deum perhibere misericordem, non verentur praedicare fallacem? 36. Aeternis poenis addici peccatores quam aequum sit. At inquiunt: Sine fine puniri non debet culpa cum fine. Justus nimirum est omnipotens Deus, et quod non aeterno peccato commissum est, aeterno non debet puniri tormento. Quibus citius respondemus quod recte dicerent, si judex justus districtusque veniens, non corda hominum, sed facta pensaret. Iniqui enim ideo cum fine deliquerunt, quia cum fine vixerunt. Voluissent quippe sine fine vivere, ut sine fine potuissent in iniquitatibus permanere. Nam magis appetunt peccare 1133 quam vivere; et ideo hic semper vivere cupiunt, ut nunquam desinant peccare, cum vivunt. Ad districti ergo judicis justitiam pertinet, ut nunquam careant supplicio, quorum mens in hac vita nunquam voluit carere peccato; et nullus detur iniquo terminus ultionis, quia quandiu valuit, habere noluit terminum criminis. [Vet. XIII.] 37. Justi videntes in malorum cruciatibus quae

supplicia evaserint, ad Dei laudes excitantur. At inquiunt: Nullus justus crudelitatibus pascitur, et delinquens servus a justo domino idcirco caedi praecipitur, ut a nequitia corrigatur. Ad aliquid ergo caeditur cum non ejus dominus cruciatibus delectatur. Iniqui autem gehennae ignibus traditi quo fine semper ardebunt? Et quia certum est quod pius atque omnipotens Deus non pascitur cruciatibus iniquorum, cur cruciantur miseri, si non expiantur? Quibus citius respondemus quod omnipotens Deus, quia pius est, miserorum cruciatu non pascitur; quia autem justus est, ab iniquorum ultione in perpetuum non sedatur. Sed iniqui omnes aeterno supplicio, e quidem sua iniquitate, puniuntur; et tamen ad aliquid concremantur, scilicet ut justi omnes et in Deo videant gaudia quae percipiunt, et in istis respiciant supplicia quae evaserunt, ut tanto in aeternum magis divinae gratiae debitores se esse cognoscant, quanto in aeternum mala puniri conspiciunt quae ejus adjutorio vitare potuerunt. 38. Cur sancti pro suis inimicis gehennae addictis amplius non orant. At inquiunt: Et ubi est quod sancti sunt, si pro inimicis suis, quos tunc ardere viderint, non orabunt, quibus utique dictum est: Pro inimicis vestris orate (Matth. V, 44)? Sed citius respondemus: Orant pro inimicis suis eo tempore, quo possunt ad fructuosam poenitentiam eorum corda convertere, atque ipsa conversione salvare. Quid enim aliud pro inimicis orandum est, nisi hoc quod Apostolus ait: Ut det illis Deus poenitentiam, et resipiscant piscant a diaboli laqueis, a quo capti tenentur, ad ipsius voluntatem (II Tim. II, 25, 26? Et quomodo pro illis tunc orabitur, quando jam nullatenus possunt ad justitiae opera ab iniquitate commutari. Eadem itaque causa est cur non oretur tunc pro hominibus aeterno igne damnatis, quae nunc etiam causa est ut non oretur pro diabolo angelisque ejus aeterno supplicio deputatis. Quae nunc etiam causa est, ut non orent sancti homines pro hominibus infidelibus impiisque defunctis, qui de eis utique quos aeterno deputatos supplicio jam noverunt ante illum judicis justi conspectum orationis suae meritum cassari refugiunt.

Quod si nunc quoque viventes justi mortuis et damnatis injustis minime compatiuntur, quando adhuc aliquid judicabile de sua carne se perpeti etiam ipsi noverunt, quanto districtius tunc iniquorum tormenta respiciunt, quando, ab omni vitio corruptionis exuti, ipsi jam justitiae vicinius atque arctius inhaerebunt? Sic quippe eorum mentes per hoc quod justissimo judici inhaerent, vis districtionis absorbet, ut omnino eis non libeat quidquid ab illius internae regulae subtilitate discordat. Sed quia, suborto occasionis articulo, haec contra Origenistas breviter diximus, ad eum quem praetermisimus exponendi ordinem recurramus. 1134 Postquam misericors Dominus callida machinamenta Leviathan istius indicavit, aperte praedicens omne quod electos exterius vehementer opprimit, omne quod interius suggestione sua reprobis blandienter infundit, mox immanitatem virtutis illius breviter insinuans subdit:

CAPUT XX [Vet.

XIV, Rec. XVII]. VERS. 24. Non est super terram potestas quae comparetur ei. 39. Diabolus, amissa felicitate, naturae tamen angelicae magnitudinem servavit. Potestas ejus super terram cunctis eminentior perhibetur, quia etsi actionis suae merito infra homines cecidit, omne tamen humanum genus naturae angelicae conditione transcendit. Quamvis enim internae felicitatis beatitudinem perdidit, naturae tamen suae magnitudinem non amisit, cujus adhuc viribus humana omnia superat, licet sanctis hominibus meritorum suorum dejectione subjaceat. Unde et eisdem sanctis contra hunc decertantibus eo retributionis suae meritum crescit, quo ille ab eis vincitur qui per naturae potentiam quasi jure se hominibus superesse gloriatur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXI.

IBID. Qui factus est ut nullum timeret. 40. Primus angelus sic conditus, ut Deum caste timeret. Vinxit eum libertas quam appetiit. Sic quidem factus est per naturam, ut conditorem suum caste timere debuisset, timore videlicet sobrio et securo; non timore quem foras charitas mittit, sed timore, qui in saeculum saeculi permanet (I Joan. IV, 18), id est quem charitas gignit. Aliter enim timet conjugem uxor amans, aliter dominum ancilla peccans. Sic ergo fuerat iste conditus, quatenus timore laeto auctorem suum et amans metueret, et metuens amaret. Sed sua perversitate talis factus est, ut nullum timeret. Ei quippe a quo conditus fuerat subesse despexit. Ita enim Deus super omnia est, ut ipse sub nullo sit. Leviathan vero iste ejus celsitudinis culmen aspiciens, jus perversae libertatis appetit, ut et praeesset caeteris, et nulli subesset, dicens: Ascendam super altitudinem nubium, et similis ero Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 14). Cujus eo ipso similitudinem perdidit, quo esse ei superbe similis in celsitudine concupivit. Qui enim charitatem ejus imitari debuit, subditus ambiit ejus celsitudinem, et hoc quod imitari poterat, amisit elatus. Celsus nimirum esset, si ei qui veraciter celsus est, inhaerere voluisset. Celsus esset, si participatione verae celsitudinis contentus fuisset. Sed dum privatam celsitudinem superbe appetiit, jure perdidit participatam. Relicto enim eo cui debuit inhaerere principio, suum sibi appetiit quodammodo esse principium. Relicto eo qui vere illi sufficere poterat, se sibi sufficere posse judicavit; et tanto magis infra se cecidit, quanto magis se contra gloriam sui conditoris erexit. Nam quem exaltabat libera servitus, dejecit captiva libertas. Qua libertate nunc ut nullum timeat effrenatur, sed ipsa graviter effrenatione restringitur. Superno enim judicio cuncta mirabiliter ordinante, vinxit illum libertas quam appetiit, quia nunc omnimodo non timens omnibus suppliciis subjacet, qui elementis etiam superesse poterat, si unum quem debuit timere voluisset. Unum profecto timeret omnia possidens, qui nunc unum non timens omnia patitur. 41. Dei timorem amisit. Quanto sui damno. Factus est ergo ut nullum timeret,

nullum videlicet, 1135 quia nec Deum, sed neque hoc quod passurus est metuit. Cui nimirum felicius fuerat timendo vitare supplicia quam non timendo tolerare. Appetitum itaque celsitudinis vertit in rigorem mentis, ut jam per duritiam se male egisse non sentiat, qui praeesse per gloriam quaerebat. Nam quia jus quaesitae potestatis non obtinuit, quasi quoddam superbiae suae remedium insaniam insensibilitatis invenit; et quia provectu transgredi cuncta non potuit, despectu se contra cuncta praeparavit. [Vet. XV.] Cujus adhuc superbia studiose describitur, cum protinus subinfertur:

CAPUT XXII.

VERS. 25. Omne sublime videt. 42. Diaboli ejusque membrorum immensa superbia. Saul propter elationem reprobatus. Davidis in suprema dignitate humilitas. Id est, cunctos velut infra se positos quasi de sublimi respicit, quia dum per intentionem contra auctorem nititur, aestimare sibi quemlibet similem dedignatur. Quod apte etiam ejus membris congruit, quia omnes iniqui per tumorem cordis elati cunctos quos cernunt superbiae fastu despiciunt; et si quando exterius venerantur, intus tamen in secreto cordis, ubi apud se sua aestimatione magni sunt, cunctorum sibi vitam meritumque postponunt, eosque infra se esse respiciunt, quia per elatam cogitationem cordis in cujusdam se altitudinis arce posuerunt. Quibus bene per prophetam dicitur: Vae qui sapientes estis in oculis vestris, et coram vobismetipsis prudentes (Isai. V, 21). Hinc etiam Paulus ait: Nolite prudentes esse apud vosmetipsos (Rom. XII, 16). Hinc ad Saul divina increpatione dicitur: Nonne cum esses parvulus in oculis tuis, caput te constitui in tribubus Israel (I Reg. XV, 17). Parvulus quippe in oculis suis est, qui in eo quod semetipsum considerat, imparem se alienis meritis pensat. Nam quasi grandem se aspicit, quisquis se super aliena merita elatione cogitationis extendit. Saul autem reprobus in bono quod coeperat non permansit, quia fastu susceptae potestatis intumuit. [Vet. XVI.] At

contra, David semper de se humilia sentiens, ejusdemque Saul se comparationi postponens, postquam feriendi locum reperit, et pepercit eidem saevienti adversario, humili se professione prostravit, dicens: Quem persequeris, rex Israel? quem persequeris? Canem mortuum, et pulicem unum (I Reg. XXIV, 15)? Et certe jam unctus in regem fuerat, jam exorante Samuele, et cornu super se oleum fundente didicerat quod eum divina gratia, Saul reprobato, ad regni gubernacula possidenda servabat, et tamen persequenti adversario mente humili se substernebat, cui divino judicio praelatum se esse noverat. Illi itaque se humiliter postponebat quo per electionis gratiam incomparabiliter se noverat esse meliorem. Discant ergo quomodo humiliari proximis debeant, qui adhuc quo loco apud Deum habeantur nesciunt, si sic se electi etiam illius humiliant, quibus jam se per interna judicia antepositos deprehendunt. 43. Humilitas electorum propria. Hoc autem proprium esse specimen electorum solet, quod de se semper sentiunt infra quam sunt. Hinc namque ab eodem David dicitur: Si non humiliter sentiebam, sed exaltavi animam meam (Psal. CXXX, 2). Hinc Salomon ad sapientiam parvulos vocat, dicens: Si quis est parvulus, veniat ad me (Prov. IX, 4). 1136 Qui enim necdum semetipsum despicit, humilem Dei sapientiam non apprehendit. Hinc in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Confiteor tibi, Domine pater coeli et terrae, quia abscondisti haec a sapientibus et prudentibus, et revelasti ea parvulis (Matth. XI, 25). Hinc rursum Psalmista ait: Custodiens parvulos Dominus (Ps. CXIV, 6). Hinc magister gentium dicit: Facti sumus parvuli in medio vestri (I Thess. II, 7). Hinc discipulos admonens, ait: Superiores sibi invicem arbitrantes (Philip. II, 3). Nam quia iniquus quisque inferiorem se omnem quem cognovit putat, e diverso justus studet ut superiorem quemlibet proximum attendat. Ac ne dum se alii alter humiliat, humiliatio iret alteri in elationem, bene utramque partem admonuit, dicens: Superiores sibi invicem arbitrantes, ut in cogitationibus cordis et ego mihi illum praeferam, et vicissim ille me sibi, ut

cum ab utraque parte cor inferius premitur, nullus ex impenso honore sublevetur. 44. Hanc humilitatis formam reprobi non tenent, sed contemnunt. Sed hanc humilitatis formam reprobi, quia Leviathan hujus membra sunt, vel cognoscere, vel tenere contemnunt, quia etsi quando se humiles specie tenus ostendunt, humilitatis vim servare intrinsecus negligunt. Quibus saepe accidit ut si quando unum quodlibet bonum vel minimum faciant, a malis suis omnibus respectum mentis protinus avertant, atque hoc quod vel extremum bonum fecerint, tota intentione semper inspiciant, et ex eo sese jam quasi sanctos aspiciant, obliti malorum omnium quae commiserunt, unius sui tantummodo boni memores, quod fortasse facere nec perfecte potuerunt, sicut evenire contra electis solet, ut cum multarum virtutum gratia polleant, unum eos vel tenuissimum vitium valde defatigans pulset, quatenus dum ex quadam parte sese infirmari considerant, de his virtutibus in quibus praevalent se minime extollant; dumque de infirmitate trepidant, hoc quoque ubi fortes sunt humilius servant. Saepe ergo reprobi per hoc quod unum vel minimum bonum suum incaute conspiciunt, mala multa et gravia in quibus demersi sunt non agnoscunt. Et saepe electi per hoc quod ad tenuissimum malum suum infirmari trepidant, mira dispensatione agitur, ut magna bona ad quae provecti sunt, non amittant. 45. Electos adjuvant mala, reprobis bona nocent. Bono male utitur reprobus, et bene malo probus.Justi itaque et occulti examinis mensura disponitur, ut et istos mala adjuvent, et illos bona gravent, dum et isti ad provectum boni utuntur levibus malis, et illi ad augmentum mali utuntur minimis bonis. Isti quippe inde perfectius in bono proficiunt, unde de malo tentantur; illi autem inde ad majus malum deficiunt, unde de bono gloriantur. Sic itaque male bono utitur reprobus, et bene malo utitur probus; sicut saepe contingit ut alius ex cibo salutifero inordinate sumpto pestem languoris incurrat; alius, veneno serpentis in medicamine ordinatae confectionis adhibito, languoris molestiam vincat.

Ille ergo qui cibo salutifero uti recte noluit, inde perniciose moritur, unde alii salubriter vivunt; iste autem qui veneno serpentis caute uti studuit, inde salubriter vivit, unde alii perniciose moriuntur. Venenum ergo serpentis 1137 non ipsam nequitiam, sed suggestionem nequitiae dicimus, qua nolentes saepe renitentesque tentamur. Quod tunc in medicamen vertitur cum mens virtutibus erecta conspectis contra se tentationibus humiliatur. Iniqui igitur atque ab approbatione interni examinis reprobi, quaelibet opera faciant, in quibuslibet virtutibus enitescant, humilitatis sensum penitus ignorant, quia nimirum Leviathan hujus membra sunt, de quo superna voce dicitur, [Rec. XVIII.] Omne sublime videt, quia non sotum per semetipsum, sed per eorum quoque corda quos ceperit quasi de sublimi cunctos inferius despicit. [Vet. XVII.] 46. Superbia per oculos quasi per quasdam fenestras se ostendit. Notandum vero quod Leviathan iste, qui per corpoream bestiam designatur, sublime videre describitur, quia videlicet cordis superbia cum exterius usque ad corpus extenditur, prius per oculos indicatur. Ipsi quippe per fastum tumoris inflati, quasi ex sublimi respiciunt, et quo se deprimunt, altius extollunt. Nisi enim superbia per oculos quasi per quasdam se fenestras ostenderet, nequaquam Deo Psalmista dixisset: Populum humilem salvum facies, et oculos superborum humiliabis (Psal. XVII, 28). Nisi se superbia per oculos funderet, Salomon quoque de Judaeae elatione non diceret: Generatio cujus excelsi sunt oculi, et palpebrae ejus in altum subrectae (Prov. XXX, 13). Quia ergo per corporeum animal Leviathan iste signatur, et superbia usque ad corpus prodiens apertius oculis principatur, antiquus hostis quasi de sublimi omnes videre describitur. Sed quia multa ad ostendendum humani generis inimicum prolata sunt, valde mens appetit, ut in fine locutionis dominicae, unum aliquid manifestius exprimatur, unde membra illius brevi nobis designatione monstrentur. Sequitur:

CAPUT XXIII.

IBID. Ipse est rex super universos filios superbiae. 47. Radix vitiorum et malorum omnium superbia. Ut Leviathan iste in cunctis quae superius dicta sunt caderet, sola se superbia perculit. Neque enim per tot illos vitiorum ramos aresceret, nisi per hanc prius in radice putruisset. Scriptum est namque: Omnis peccati initium superbia (Eccli. X, 15). Per hanc enim ipse succubuit, per hanc se sequentem hominem stravit. Eo etenim telo salutem nostrae immortalitatis impetiit, quo vitam suae beatitudinis exstinxit. Sed idcirco hanc Dominus fini suae locutionis inseruit, ut cum post mala omnia Leviathan istius superbiam diceret, quid esset malis omnibus deterius indicaret. Quamvis etiam per hoc quod in imo ponitur vitiorum radix esse monstretur. Sicut enim inferius radix tegitur, sed ab illa rami extrinsecus expanduntur, ita se superbia intrinsecus celat, sed ab illa protinus aperta vitia pullulant. Nulla quippe mala ad publicum prodirent, nisi haec mentem in occulto constringeret. Haec est quae Leviathan istius sensum fervescere sicut ollam facit. Unde et humanas mentes in quodam fervore insaniae concutit, sed per aperta opera qualiter concussi animam evertat ostendit. Intus namque prius ebullit in elatione, quod foris postmodum spumat in opere [Vet. XVIII.] 48. Non unam tantum virtutem, ut caetera vitia, sed omnes expugnat. Sed quia occasio de superbiae disputatione se praebuit, debemus hanc subtilius sollicitiusque discutere, atque ad humanas mentes quanta vel qualis veniat, 1138 et quibus qualiterve subripiat, demonstrare. Alia quippe vitia eas solummodo virtutes impetunt quibus ipsa destruuntur, ut videlicet ira patientiam, gastrimargia abstinentiam, libido continentiam expugnet. Superbia autem, quam vitiorum radicem diximus, nequaquam unius virtutis exstinctione contenta, contra cuncta animae membra se erigit, et quasi generalis ac pestifer morbus corpus omne corrumpit, ut quidquid illa invadente agitur, etiam si esse virtus ostenditur, non per hoc Deo, sed soli vanae gloriae serviatur. Quasi enim tyrannus quidam obsessam civitatem intercipit, cum mentem superbia irrumpit; et quo ditiorem

quemque ceperit eo in dominio durior exsurgit, quia quo amplius res virtutis sine humilitate agitur, eo latius ista dominatur. Quisquis vero ejus in se tyrannidem captiva mente susceperit, hoc primum damnum patitur, quod, clauso cordis oculo, judicii aequitatem perdit. Nam cuncta quae ab aliis vel bene geruntur displicent, et sola ei quae ipse vel prave egerit placent. Semper aliena opera despicit, semper miratur quae ipse facit, quia et quidquid egerit, egisse se singulariter credit, atque in eo quod exhibet per gloriae cupiditatem, sibimetipsi favet per cogitationem, et cum se in cunctis transcendere caeteros aestimat, per lata cogitationum spatia secum deambulans, laudes suas tacitus clamat. Nonnunquam vero ad tantam elationem mens ducitur, ut in eo quod tumet, etiam per ostentationem locutionis effrenetur. Sed tanto facilius ruina sequitur, quanto apud se quisque impudentius exaltatur. Hinc enim scriptum est: Ante ruinam exaltatur cor (Dan. IV, 26). Hinc per Danielem dicitur: In aula Babylonis deambulabat rex, responditque, et ait: Nonne haec est Babylon magna, quam ego aedificavi in domum regni, in robore fortitudinis meae, in gloria decoris mei (Prov. XVI, 18)? Sed hunc tumorem quam concita vindicta represserit, illico adjunxit, dicens: Cum adhuc sermo esset in ore regis, vox de coelo ruit: Tibi dicitur, Nabochodonosor rex: Regnum transiet a te, et ab hominibus te ejicient, et cum bestiis ferisque erit habitatio tua; fenum quasi bos comedes, et septem tempora mutabuntur super te (Ibid., 28). Ecce quia tumor mentis usque ad aperta verba se protulit, patientia judicis protinus usque ad sententiam erupit; tantoque hunc districtius perculit, quanto ejus se superbia immoderatius erexit; et quia enumerando bona dixit in quibus sibi placuit, enumerata mala in quibus feriretur, audivit. [Vet. XIX.] 49. Alia ex saecularibus rebus, alia ex spiritualibus oritur elatio. Alia praelatorum superbia, alia subjectorum virtutum mater humilitas. Soli ruinae crescit quod aedificant superbi. Sciendum vero est quod ipsa haec de qua tractamus elatio alios ex rebus saecularibus, alios vero ex spiritalibus possidet. Alter

namque intumescit auro, alter eloquio, alter infimis et terrenis rebus, alter summis coelestibusque virtutibus; una tamen eademque res ante oculos Dei agitur, quamvis ad humana corda veniens in eorum obtutibus diverso amictu pallietur. Nam cum is qui de terrena prius gloria superbiebat postmodum de sanctitate extollitur, nequaquam cor ejus elatio deseruit, sed ad eum consueta veniens, ut cognosci nequeat, vestem mutavit. 1139 50. Sciendum quoque est quod aliter haec praepositos atque aliter subditos tentat. Praelato namque in cogitationibus suggerit quia solo vitae merito super caeteros excrevit; et si qua ab eo bene aliquando gesta sunt, haec importune ejus animo objicit; et cum hunc Deo singulariter placuisse insinuat, quo facilius suggesta persuadeat, ipsam ad testimonium potestatis traditae retributionem vocat, dicens quia nisi omnipotens Deus te his hominibus meliorem cerneret, omnes hos sub tuo regimine non dedisset; ejusque mox mentem erigit, viles atque inutiles eos qui subjecti sunt ostendit, ita ut nullum jam quasi dignum respiciat cui aequanimiter loquatur. Unde et mox mentis tranquillitas in iram vertitur, quia dum cunctos despicit, dum sensum vitamque omnium sine moderamine reprehendit, tanto effrenatius se in iracundiam dilatat, quanto eos qui sibi commissi sunt esse sibimet indignos putat. [Vet. XX.] 51. At contra cum subjectorum cor superbia instigat, hoc summopere nititur agere, ut sua acta considerare funditus negligant, et semper tacitis cogitationibus rectoris sui judices fiant; qui dum in illo quod reprehendere debeant importune respiciunt, in semetipsis quod corrigant nunquam vident. Unde et tanto atrocius pereunt, quanto a se oculos avertunt, quia in hujus vitae itinere offendentes corruunt, dum alibi intendunt. Et quidem peccatores se asserunt, nec tamen tantum ut tam noxiae in regimine personae traderentur. Et dum ejus facta despiciunt, dum praecepta contemnunt, ad tantam usque insaniam devolvuntur, ut Deum res humanas curare non aestiment, quia ei qui quasi jure reprehenditur esse se commissos dolent. Sicque dum contra rectorem superbiunt, etiam contra

judicia conditoris intumescunt; et dum pastoris sui vitam dijudicant, ipsam quoque sapientiam omnia disponentis impugnant. Saepe autem rectoris sui dictis proterve obviant, et eamdem vocis superbiam libertatem vocant. Sic quippe elatio se quasi pro libertatis rectitudine objicit, sicut saepe se et timor pro humilitate supponit. Nam sicut plerique reticent ex timore, et tamen tacere se aestimant ex humilitate, ita nonnulli loquuntur per impatientiam elationis, et tamen loqui se credunt per libertatem rectitudinis. Aliquando autem subditi proterva quae sentiunt nequaquam produnt; et hi quorum loquacitas vix compescitur, nonnunquam ex sola amaritudine intimi rancoris obmutescunt. Qui, per dolorem mentis procacitatis suae verba subtrahentes, cum male loqui soleant, pejus tacent, quia cum peccantes aliquid de correctione audiunt, indignantes etiam responsionis verba suspendunt. Cum his quando aspere agitur, saepe ad querelae vocem de hac ipsa asperitate prosiliunt. Cum vero eos magistri sui blande praeveniunt, de hac ipsa humilitate qua praeventi sunt gravius indignantur, et tanto eorum mens vastius accenditur, quanto consideratius infirma judicatur. Hi nimirum, quia humilitatem, quae virtutum mater est, nesciunt, usum laboris sui perdunt, etiamsi qua bona sunt quae operari videantur, quia surgentis fabricae 1140 robusta celsitudo non figitur, quae nequaquam per fundamenti fortitudinem in petra solidatur. Soli ergo ruinae crescit quod aedificant, quia ante molem fabricae humilitatis fundamina non procurant. Quos bene ab intimis prodimus, si paucis in exterioribus ostendamus. 52. Imago superbi. Cunctis namque superba apud se cogitatione tumentibus inest clamor in locutione, amaritudo in silentio, dissolutio in hilaritate, furor in tristitia, inhonestas in actione, honestas in imagine, erectio in incessu, rancor in responsione. Horum mens semper est ad irrogandas contumelias valida, ad tolerandas infirma; ab obediendum pigra, ad lacessendos vero alios importuna; ad ea quae facere et debet et praevalet ignava, ad ea autem quae facere non debet nec praevalet parata. Haec in eo quod sponte non appetit

nulla exhortatione flectitur, ad hoc autem quod latenter desiderat quaerit ut cogatur, quia dum metuit ex desiderio suo vilescere, optat vim in ipsa sua voluntate tolerare. [Vet. XXI.] 53. Exhortatio ad humilitatem. Igitur quia humanos animos aliter tentari ex rebus carnalibus, atque aliter ex spiritualibus diximus, audiant illi: Omnis caro fenum, et gloria ejus sicut flos feni (Isai. XL, 6). Audiant et isti, quod quibusdam post miracula dicitur: Nescio vos unde sitis, discedite a me, omnes operarii iniquitatis (Luc. XIII, 27). Audiant illi: Divitiae si affluant, nolite cor apponere (Psal. LXI, 11). Audiant isti quia fatuae virgines, quae cum vacuis vasculis veniunt, ab internis nuptiis excluduntur (Matth. XXV, 12). Rursum, quia aliter tentari praelatos, atque aliter subditos praefati sumus, audiant illi quod per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Ducem te constituerunt? noli extolli, sed esto in illis quasi unus ex eis (Eccli. XXXII, 1). Audiant isti: Obedite praepositis vestris, et subjacete eis; ipsi enim pervigilant quasi rationem reddituri pro animabus vestris (Hebr. XIII, 17). Audiant illi, cum de accepta potestate gloriantur, hoc quod Abrahae voce ardenti diviti dicitur: Memento, fili, quia recepisti bona in vita tua (Luc. XVI, 25). Audiant isti, cum contra rectores suos in querelas prosiliunt, hoc quod murmuranti populo Moysi et Aaron vocibus respondetur: Nec contra nos est murmur vestrum, sed contra Dominum. Nos enim quid sumus (Exod. XVI, 8)? Audiant illi: Turbabuntur in conspectu ejus patris orphanorum et judiciis viduarum (Psal. LXVII, 5). Audiant isti qui contra contumaciam subditorum dicitur: Qui resistit potestati, Dei ordinationi resistit (Rom. XIII, 2). Audiant simul omnes: Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam (Jac. IV, 6). Audiant omnes: Immundus est apud Deum omnis qui exaltat cor suum (Prov. XVI, 5, juxta text. Hebr. et LXX). Audiant omnes: Quid superbis, terra et cinis (Eccli. X, 9)? Contra hujus languoris pestem audiamus cuncti quod magistra Veritas docet dicens: Discite a me, quia mitis sum et humilis corde (Matth. XI, 29). [Vet. XXII.] 54. Hominem superbum non esse, docet Deus humilis.

Ad hoc namque unigenitus Dei Filius formam infirmitatis nostrae suscepit, ad hoc invisibilis, non solum visibilis, sed etiam despectus apparuit, ad hoc contumeliarum ludibria, irrisionum opprobria, passionumque tormenta toleravit, ut superbum non esse hominem doceret humilis Deus. Quanta ergo humilitatis virtus est, propter quam solam veraciter edocendam is qui sine aestimatione 1141 magnus est, usque ad passionem factus est parvus? Quia enim originem perditioni nostrae superbia praebuit diaboli, instrumentum redemptionis nostrae inventa est humilitas Dei. Hostis quippe noster magnus inter omnia conditus, videri super omnia voluit elatus. Redemptor autem noster magnus manens super omnia, fieri inter omnia dignatus est parvus. 55. Quid mortis auctor doceat, quid vitae conditor. Sed melius et elationis causam detegimus, et fundamenta humilitatis aperimus, si brevi commemoratione perstringimus quid mortis auctor, quid vitae conditor dicat. Ille namque ait: In coelum ascendam (Isa. XIV, 13); iste autem per Prophetam dicit: Repleta est malis anima mea, et vita mea inferno appropinquavit (Psal. LXXXVII, 4). Ille dicit: Supra astra coeli exaltabo solium meum (Isai. XVI, 13); iste humano generi a paradisi sedibus expulso dicit: Ecce venio cito, et habitabo in medio tui (Zach. II, 10). Ille dicit: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis (Isai. XIV, 13): iste dicit: Ego sum vermis, et non homo, approbrium hominum, et abjectio plebis (Psal. XXI, 7). Ille dicit: Ascendam super altitudinem nubium, similis ero Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 14); iste, cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo, sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens (Philip. II, 6); et per membra sua loquitur dicens: Domine, quis similis tibi (Psal. XXXIV, 10)? Ille per membra sua loquitur, dicens: Nescio Dominum, et Israel non dimittam (Exod. V, 2). Iste per semetipsum dicit: Si dixero quia non novi eum, ero similis vobis mendax; sed novi eum, et sermonem ejus servo (Joan. VIII, 55). Ille dicit: Mea sunt flumina, et ego feci ea (Ezech. XXIX, 9); iste dicit:

Non possum a meipso facere quidquam (Joan. V, 30), et rursum: Pater meus in me manens, ipse facit opera (Joan. XIV, 10). Ille regna omnia ostendens, dicit: Tibi dabo potestatem hanc universam et gloriam illorum, quia mihi tradita sunt, et cui volo do illa (Luc. IV, 6); iste dicit: Calicem quidem meum bibetis, sedere autem ad dexteram, vel ad sinistram meam, non est meum dare vobis, sed quibus paratum est a Patre meo (Matth. XX, 23). Ille dicit: Eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum (Genes. III, 5); iste dicit: Non est vestrum nosse tempora vel momenta quae Pater posuit in sua potestate (Act. I, 7). Ille ut voluntas divina despici, et ut possit propria suaderi, dicit: Cur praecepit vobis Deus ut non comederetis ex omni ligno paradisi (Genes. III, 1)? Et paulo post: Scit enim Deus, 1142 quod in quacunque die comederitis ex eo, aperientur oculi vestri (Ibid. 5); iste dicit: Non quaero voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me (Joan. V, 30). Ille per membra sua loquitur, dicens: Nullum pratum sit quod non pertranseat luxuria nostra; coronemus nos rosis antequam marcescant, ubique relinquamus signa laetitiae nostrae (Sap. II, 8); iste membris suis praenuntiat, dicens: Plorabitis et flebitis vos, mundus autem gaudebit (Joan. XVI, 20). Ille nihil aliud mentes sibi subditas docet quam celsitudinis culmen appetere, cuncta aequalia mentis tumore transcendere, societatem omnium hominum alta elatione transire, ac sese et contra potentiam conditoris erigere, sicut de eisdem per Psalmistam dicitur: Transierunt in dispositionem cordis, cogitaverunt et locuti sunt nequitias, iniquitatem in excelso locuti sunt (Psal. LXXII, 6, 7, 8); iste ad sputa, ad palmas, ad colaphos, ad spineam coronam, ad crucem, ad lanceam, atque ad mortem veniens, membra sua admonet, dicens: Si quis mihi ministrat, me sequatur (Joan. XII, 26). [Vet. XXIII.] 56. Evidentissimum reprobationis signum, superbia; electionis, humilitas. Quia igitur Redemptor noster corda regit humilium, et Leviathan iste rex dicitur superborum, aperte cognoscimus quod evidentissimum reproborum signum superbia est, at contra humilitas

electorum. Cum ergo quam quisque habeat cognoscitur, sub quo rege militet invenitur. Unusquisque enim quasi quemdam titulum portat operis, quo facile ostendat sub cujus serviat potestate rectoris. Unde et per Evangelium dicitur: Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos (Matth. VII, 16). Ne igitur nos Leviathan istius membra vel mira faciendo fallerent, apertum signum Dominus quo deprehendi valeant demonstravit, dicens: Ipse est rex super universos filios superbiae. Qui etsi quando fictam speciem humilitatis assumunt, semetipsos tamen celare in omnibus nequaquam possunt, quia eorum superbia diu latere non sustinens, cum ex alia tegitur, ex alia actione denudatur. Qui vero sub rege humilitatis militant, semper pavidi, atque ex omni latere circumspecti, adversum jacula elationis pugnant, et quasi contra venientes ictus solum magis in suo corpore oculum custodiunt, dum in semetipsis principaliter humilitatem tuentur.

LIBER TRIGESIMUS QUINTUS, ET ULTIMUS.

In quo per anacephalaeosim multa jam dicta revocantur, et immensum hoc opus demississima humanae infirmitatis confessione absolvitur. [Vet. et Rec. I.] 1143 1. Quid hoc libro sit praestandum. Quia iste ultimus hujus operis liber est, et, locis difficilioribus pertractatis, minus obscura sunt quae supersunt, libet hunc indulgentius remissiusque transcurrere. Velut emenso enim magno mari, jam littus cernimus, et intentionis nostrae vela deponentes, non eodem quo prius impetu ducimur, sed tamen adhuc ex impulsione pristini flatus imus. Quasi anxietatis nostrae ventus cecidit, sed tamen ejus vis jam seipsa tranquillior usque ad stationem nos littoris impellit. Igitur postquam fideli famulo Dominus Leviathan hostis ejus quam sit et fortis et callidus ostendit, dum vires illius subtiliter fraudesque patefecit, beatus Job ad utraque respondit, dicens:

CAPUT PRIMUM [Rec. II].

CAP. XLII, VERS. 2. Scio quia omnia potes, et nulla te latet cogitatio. 2. Diaboli viribus Dei omnipotentia, machinationibus infinita Sapientia opponitur. Contra immanes quippe vires ejus intulit: Scio quia omnia potes; contra occultas vero machinationes illius subjunxit: Et nulla te latet cogitatio. Unde et mox Leviathan eidem exprobrat, dicens: VERS. 3. Quis est iste qui celat consilium absque scientia? Absque scientia enim Leviathan celat consilium; quia quamvis contra infirmitatem nostram multis fraudibus occultetur, protectoris tamen nostri sancta nobis inspiratione detegitur. Absque scientia celat consilium, quia licet tentatos lateat, latere tamen protectorem non potest tentatorum. Igitur audita fortitudine et calliditate diaboli, audita etiam creatoris nostri potentia, quae et illum valenter reprimit, et nos misericorditer tegit, quaesumus, beate Job, ut quae de temetipso sentis nobis minime occultes. Sequitur:

CAPUT II.

IBID. Ideo insipienter locutus sum, et quae ultra modum excederent scientiam meam. 3. Quidquid in rebus creatis, Deo comparatur, inane fit et nihil. Omnis humana sapientia quantolibet acumine polleat, divinae sapientiae comparata, insipientia est. Omnia enim humana, quae justa, quae pulchra sunt, Dei justitiae et pulchritudini comparata, nec justa nec pulchra sunt, nec omnino sunt. Beatus itaque Job ea quae dixerat sapienter se dixisse crederet, si verba superioris sapientiae non audiret. 1144 In cujus comparatione stultum est nostrum omne quod sapit. Et qui sapienter quidem locutus hominibus fuerat, divinas tamen sententias audiens, sapientius se cognoscit non esse sapientem. Hinc est quod Abraham inter verba dominica nil se nisi pulverem vidit, dicens: Loquar ad Dominum meum, cum sim pulvis et cinis (Genes. XVIII, 27). Hinc est quod Moyses omni Aegyptiorum sapientia instructus, ex quo loquentem Dominum audivit, impeditioris et tardioris linguae se esse deprehendit, dicens: Obsecro, Domine, non sum eloquens; ab heri enim et nudiustertius, ex quo locutus es ad servum tuum, impeditioris et tardioris linguae sum (Exod. IV, 10). Hinc est quod Isaias, postquam sedentem Dominum super solium excelsum atque elevatum vidit, postquam seraphim duabus alis faciem, duabus velare pedes, et duabus volare conspexit, postquam id quod est Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus Dominus Deus exercituum, alterum ad alterum clamare audivit (Isai. VI), ad seipsum rediens, ait: Vae mihi quia tacui, quoniam vir pollutus labiis ego sum, et in medio populi polluta labia habentis ego habito (Ibid., 5). Moxque ipsam pollutionem unde cognoverat subdens, ait: Et regem Dominum exercituum vidi oculis meis (Ibid.). Hinc etiam Jeremias divina verba audiens, verba se non habere cognovit, dicens: A a a, Domine Deus, ecce nescio loqui, quia puer ego sum (Jerem. I, 6). [Vet. II.] Hinc Ezechiel loquens de quatuor animalibus, dicit: Cum fieret vox supra firmamentum, quod erat supra caput eorum, stabant et submittebant alas suas (Ezech. I,

25). Quid enim per volatum animalium, nisi evangelistarum atque doctorum sublimitas designatur? Vel quid sunt alae animalium, nisi sanctorum contemplationes eos ad coelestia sublevantes? Sed cum fit vox supra firmamentum, quod super caput eorum est, stantes submittunt alas suas, quia cum internam vocem supernae sapientiae audiunt, quasi volatus sui alas deponunt, quia videlicet ipsam veritatis altitudinem minus se contemplari posse cognoscunt. Ad vocem ergo desuper venientem alas deponere est cognita superna potentia, virtutes proprias humiliare et consideratione creatoris nil de se aliud quam abjecta sentire. Sancti itaque viri dum divinitatis sententias audiunt, quanto magis contemplando 1145 proficiunt, tanto amplius despiciendo quod sunt, aut nihil, aut prope nihil se esse cognoscunt. Respondeat ergo divinis sermonibus beatus Job, et sapienter proficiens, stultum se esse deprehendat, dicens: Insipienter locutus sum, et quae ultra modum excederent scientiam meam. Ecce tanto se amplius redarguit, quanto amplius proficit, et scientiam suam ultra modum excessisse se credidit, quia in verbis Domini plus quam aestimaverat secreta ejus sapientiae agnovit. Sequitur:

CAPUT III [Rec. III].

VERS. 4. Audi, et ego loquar; interrogabo te, et responde mihi. 4. Quid sit hominem interrogare Deum; quidve Deum homini respondere. Audire nostrum est sono aliunde venienti aurem alio positam commodare. At contra Deo, cui nil extra est, audire proprie est sub semetipso surgentia desideria nostra percipere. Ad Deum ergo, qui et tacentium corda cognoscit, loqui nostrum est non vocibus gutturis id quod sentimus prodere, sed promptis ad illum desideriis inhiare. Et quia ideo quisque interrogat, ut discere valeat quod ignorat, homini Deum interrogare est in conspectu ejus nescientem se cognoscere. Respondere autem Dei, est eum qui se humiliter nescientem cognoverit occultis inspirationibus erudire. Ait ergo beatus Job:

Audi, et ego loquar. Ac si diceret: Misericorditer desideria mea percipe, ut dum haec tua pietas percipiens adjuvat, ad te multipliciora consurgant. Bona quippe vota quoties effectum percipiunt, multiplicantur. Unde alias scriptum est: Ego clamavi, quoniam exaudisti me (Psal. XVI, 6). Non enim ait: Quia clamavi, exaudisti me; sed clamavi, quoniam exaudisti me. Qui enim loquens exauditus fuerat, votis proficientibus exauditus clamabat: Interrogabo te, et responde mihi. Ac si diceret: Nescientem me ex tuae scientiae contemplatione cognosco. Interroganti igitur responde, id est stultitiam propriam humiliter cognoscentem doce. Quia enim interrogaret ipse ex desiderio humilitatis, et Deum sibi respondere quaereret ex magisterio aspirationis, verbis sequentibus declaratur. Interrogaturum quippe se perhibuit, sed nihil interrogando subjungit. Nam sola de se humilia sentiens, et quae misericorditer a Domino perceperit agnoscens, protinus subdit:

CAPUT IV [Rec. IV].

VERS. 5. Auditu auris audivi te, nunc autem oculus meus videt te. 5. Quantum Job per flagella in Dei et sui cognitione profecerit. His nimerum verbis aperte indicat quia quanto visus superior est auditu, tanto differt ab eo quod prius exstitit, et hoc quod postmodum per flagella profecit. Et quia interno oculo veritatis lumen magis conspexerat, humanitatis suae tenebras dijudicans plus videbat. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT V [Rec. V].

VERS. 6. Idcirco ipse me reprehendo. 6. Quanto se quisque magis videt, sibi magis displicet. Quanto enim quisque se minus videt, tanto sibi minus displicet; et quanto majoris gratiae lumen percipit, tanto amplius reprehensibilem se esse cognoscit. Cum enim intrinsecus sublevatur per omne quod est, ad eam quam super se conspicit regulam congruere nititur.

Et quia adhuc humana infirmitas praepedit, cernit quia ei ex non minima parte dissentit; totumque ex se illi onerosum est, quod internae regulae conveniens non est. Quam regulam beatus Job post flagella proficiens amplius suscipit, et a semetipso in magna sui redargutione dissentit, 1146 dicens: Idcirco ipse me reprehendo. Sed quia nulla est cognitio reprehensionis, si non sequantur etiam lamenta poenitudinis, recte post reprehensionem subditur:

CAPUT VI.

IBID. Et ago poenitentiam in favilla et cinere. 7. Vana est nostri cognitio quam non sequitur poenitentia. In cilicio et cinere poenitentiae quid considerandum. In favilla etenim et cinere poenitentiam agere est, contemplata summa essentia, nil aliud quam favillam se cineremque cognoscere. Unde et civitati reprobae in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Si in Tyro et Sidone factae fuissent virtutes quae factae sunt in vobis, olim in cilicio et cinere poenitentiam egissent (Matth. XI, 21). In cilicio quippe asperitas et punctio peccatorum, in cinere autem pulvis ostenditur mortuorum. Et idcirco utrumque hoc adhiberi ad poenitentiam solet, ut in punctione cilicii cognoscamus quid per culpam fecimus, et in favilla cineris perpendamus quid per judicium facti sumus. Considerentur ergo in cilicio pungentia vitia, consideretur in cinere per mortis sententiam subsequens justa poena vitiorum. Quia enim post peccatum carnis contumeliae surrexerunt, videat homo in asperitate cilicii superbiendo quid fecit, videat in cinere usquequo peccando pervenit. Potest quoque cilicio ipsa per recordationem atque poenitentiam dolorum punctio designari. Nam hoc quod ait beatus Job: Ipse me reprehendo, quasi quodam cilicio pungitur, dum in mente sua asperis redargutionum stimulis confricatur. In cinere autem agit poenitentiam, quia ex primo peccato quid per justum judicium factus sit solerter attendit, dicens: Ago poenitentiam in favilla et cinere. Ac

si aperte dicat: De nullo auctoris mei dono superbio, quia sumptus ex pulvere, per illatae mortis sententiam ad pulverem me redire cognosco. [Vet. III.] 8. Dei de Job et amicis ejus judicium. Auditis igitur cunctis sermonibus Job, cognitis etiam responsionibus amicorum, libet ad interni judicis sententiam spectationem mentis nostrae convertere, eique dicere: Ecce, Domine, utrasque in conspectu tuo disserentium partes audivimus, et Job quidem in hoc certamine virtutis suae facta revolvere, et amicos ejus contra eum cognovimus tuae justitiae gloriam defensare. Inter haec autem quid nostra mens sentiat agnoscis. Neque enim possumus eorum nos dicta reprehendere, quos defensioni tuae cognoscimus deservire. Sed ecce assistunt partes, exspectant sententiam; profer ergo, Domine, ex invisibili regula subtilissimum tuae discretionis examen, et quis in contentione ista sit rectius locutus ostende. Sequitur: VERS. Postquam autem locutus est Dominus verba haec ad Job, dixit ad Eliphaz Themanitem: Iratus est furor meus in te, et in duos amicos tuos, quoniam non estis locuti coram me rectum, sicut servus meus Job. 9. Ille absolvitur, condemnantur illi. Cur? O Domine, judicii tui sententia indicat quantum a luce tuae rectitudinis caecitas nostra discordat. Ecce te judice beatum Job victorem esse cognoscimus, quem in te peccasse loquendo credebamus. Te judice addicti sunt, qui beati Job se merita transcendere pro te loquendo crediderunt. Quia igitur ex divina sententia quid de partibus aestimemus agnovimus, nunc ejusdem sententiae paulo subtilius verba pensemus. Quomodo enim superius beatus Job reprehenditur, si in comparatione ejus rectitudinis amici illius nequaquam 1147 coram Domino locuti rectum memorantur? An adhuc illa de eo sententia confirmatur, qua antiquo hosti dicitur: Vidisti servum meum Job, quod non sit ei similis super terram (Job. I, 8). Sed quid est hoc, quod et laudatur hosti, et in seipso reprehenditur: in seipso autem reprehenditur, et tamen amicis loquentibus antefertur, nisi quod sanctus vir cunctos meritorum suorum virtute transcendit; sed eo ipso quod homo fuit,

ante Dei oculos sine reprehensione esse non potuit? In sancto quippe homine in hac interim vita commorante, divini examinis regula habet adhuc quod judicet, quamvis jam ex comparatione caeterorum hominum habeat quod laudet. Beatus igitur Job pro culpa se credidit, et non pro gratia, flagellari; resecari in se aestimavit vitia, non autem merita augeri. Et in eo reprehenditur, quod intentionem flagelli fuisse aliam suspicatur, et tamen amicis resistentibus interni judicii definitione praelatus est. [Vet IV.] Unde aperte colligitur quantae justitiae fuerit in eo quod contra amicorum verba innocentiam suae operationis astruxit, qui divino judicio etiam ipsis ejusdem divini judicii defensoribus antefertur. In exordio autem libri hujus agnovimus quia de illo Satan Domino dixerat: Mitte manum tuam, et tange eum, et vide si non in faciem benedicat tibi (Job. II, 5). Ad quam petitionem beatus Job damnis, orbitate, vulneribus et verborum scandalis tangi permittitur, quia videlicet certus qui eum laudaverat exstitit quod nequaquam juxta assertionem diaboli sanctus vir in maledictionis culpam laberetur. Sicut ergo et superius diximus, quisquis beatum Job in locutione sua aestimat post flagella peccasse, aperte Dominum judicat in sua assertione perdidisse. Et quamvis Dominus ad diabolum loquens, bona illius praesentia praetulit, non autem ejus perseverantiam spopondit, sciendum tamen est quia nequaquam ejus justitiam permittendo tentari praetulisset, si eum justum in tentatione persistere non posse praevideret. Permisso itaque divinitus in ejus tentatione diabolo, quisquis eum in tentatione succubuisse existimat, ignorantiam permittentis accusat. 10. Alia Dei, alia hominum judicia. Approbemus igitur in dictis suis veraciter Job, ne Deum in sua providentia nequiter accusemus. Et quidem quantum ad humana judicia, in verbis suis amici ejus multa illo rectius dixisse crederentur; sed veritas aliam ex occulto regulam proferens, ait: Non estis locuti coram me rectum, sicut servus meus Job. Coram me, ait, id est intus, ubi saepe multorum vita displicet, quae etiam foris hominibus placet. Unde caute nimis in laudem

justorum conjugum dictum est: Erant justi ambo ante Deum (Luc. I, 6). Non enim secura laus est, justos ante homines apparere. Saepe enim humana sententia velut in Deo magnum quempiam approbat; sed hunc omnipotens Deus, qui quasi ex se approbatur, ignorat. Hinc est enim quod Psalmista vigilanter exorat, dicens: Dirige in conspectu tuo viam meam (Psal. V, 9). 1148 Nimirum quia plerumque in conspectu hominum recta via creditur etiam quae a veritatis itinere depravatur. Et notandum quod non dicitur: Non estis locuti coram me rectum sicut Job, sed, sicut servus meus Job, ut videlicet interpositione servitutis, dum eum quasi sub quadam peculiaritate commemorat, cuncta quae in defensione sua dixerat, quia non contumaci superbia, sed humili veritate dixerit ostendat. [Vet. V.] Sed quia justus est et misericors Deus, amicos ejus et per justitiam districte redarguit, et per misericordiam benigne convertit. Nam sequitur:

CAPUT VIII [Rec. VII].

VERS. 8. Sumite vobis septem tauros et septem arietes, et ite ad servum meum Job, et offerte holocaustum pro vobis. Job autem servus meus orabit pro vobis; faciem ejus suscipiam, ut non vobis imputetur stultitia. 11. Deus amicos Job per justitiam redarguit, et per misericordiam convertit. Ecce justus et misericors Deus nec culpas sine increpatione deserit, nec reatum sine conversione derelinquit. Quia enim internus est medicus, primo putredinem vulneris innotuit, et post remedia consequendae salutis indicavit. Saepe autem jam diximus quod amici beati Job haereticorum speciem teneant, qui Deum dum defendere nituntur offendunt, quoniam in dictis suis veritati rebelles sunt, cui famulari se in falsa assertione suspicantur. Quia igitur omnipotens Deus saepe illos corpori sanctae Ecclesiae per cognitionem veritatis inviscerat, bene ipsa quoque eorum conversio, quae saepe misericorditer agitur, per hanc veniam quam amici Job percipiunt designantur. 12. Haeretici per sacrificium a se oblatum,

Deum placare nequeunt. Reconciliari non possunt nisi per Ecclesiam. Notandum vero magnopere est quod conversionis suae sacrificium Domino non per se, sed per Job jubentur offerre. Nimirum haeretici cum ab errore redeunt, erga se iram Domini suo per se oblato sacrificio placare nequaquam possunt, nisi ad catholicam Ecclesiam, quam beatus Job significat, convertantur, ut salutem suam ejus precibus obtineant, cujus fidem perversis assertionibus impugnabant. Ait enim: Job servus meus orabit pro vobis; faciem ejus suscipiam, ut non vobis imputetur stultitia. Ac si aperte haereticis dicat: Sacrificia vestra non accipio, petitionum vestrarum verba non audio, nisi per intercessionem illius, cujus professionis verba de me veracia recognosco. Et vos quidem tauros atque arietes ad exhibenda sacrificia conversionis vestrae deducite, sed a me salutem vestram per catholicam Ecclesiam, quam diligo, postulate. Ipsi enim volo dimittere id quod mihi in ipsa deliquistis, ut haec vestram incolumitatem obtineat, quae ex vestro languore laborabat. [Vet. VI.] 13. Ecclesiae praerogativae. Sola quippe est per quam sacrificium Dominus libenter accipiat (24, q. 1, c. 22, § Sola quippe), sola quae pro errantibus fiducialiter intercedat. Unde etiam de agni hostia Dominus praecepit, dicens: In una domo comedetur, nec efferetis de carnibus ejus foras (Exod. XII, 46). In una namque domo agnus comeditur, quia in una catholica Ecclesia vera hostia Redemptoris immolatur. 1149 De cujus carnibus divina lex efferri foras prohibet, quia dari sanctum canibus vetat (Matth. VII, 6). Sola est in qua opus bonum fructuose peragitur, unde et mercedem denarii non nisi qui intra vineam laboraverant acceperunt (Matth. XX, 8). Sola est quae intra se positos valida charitas compage custodit. Unde et aqua diluvii arcam quidem ad sublimiora sustulit, omnes autem quos extra arcam invenit exstinxit (Genss. VII, 20, 21, seq.). Sola est in qua superna mysteria veraciter contemplemur. Unde et ad Moysen Dominus dicit.: Est locus apud me, et stabis supra petram (Exod. XXXIII, 21). Et paulo post: Tollam

manum meam, et videbis posteriora mea (Ibid., XXIII, 24). Quia enim ex sola catholica Ecclesia veritas conspicitur (Q. 1, c. 22), apud se esse locum Dominus perhibet de quo videatur. In petra Moyses ponitur, ut Dei speciem contempletur, quia nisi quis fidei soliditatem tenuerit, divinam praesentiam non cognoscit. De qua soliditate Dominus dicit: Super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam (Matth. XVI, 18). Quid est ergo hoc loco dicere ad amicos Job: Ite ad Job, nisi petram ascendite? Quid est, Faciem ejus pro vobis suscipiam, ut non vobis imputetur stultitia, nisi id quod illic dicitur: Posteriora mea videbis (Exod. XXXIII, 23)? id est, ejus quae postmodum futura est mysteria incarnationis intelliges. 14. Haereticis ut ad Ecclesiam redeant quid praestandum. Haeretici autem pro eo quod in petra stare contemnunt, transeuntis Domini posteriora non aspiciunt, quia extra Ecclesiam positi, incarnationis ejus, sicut sunt, mysteria non agnoscunt. Sicut autem et superius diximus, per tauros cervix superbiae, per arietes vero ducatus exprimitur, qui ab haereticis, persuasis plebibus, quasi seductis gregibus, agitur. De haereticis namque superbientibus dicitur, qui infirmorum mentes male suadendo corrumpunt: Concilium taurorum inter vaccas populorum (Psal. LXVII, 31). Et quia sequentes se populos velut greges trahunt, arietes aliquando nominantur. Gregem scilicet arietes ducunt. Unde per increpationem Jeremias ait: Principes tui velut arietes (Thren. I, 6). Quia igitur haeretici cum ad sanctam Ecclesiam redeunt, superbiae elationem deserunt, et nequaquam jam quasi sequentes greges populorum cuneos ad interitum ducunt, amici beati Job offerre tauros et arietes jubentur. Tauros enim et arietes offerre in sacrificio est superbum ducatum conversionis humilitate mactare, ut edomita cervice superbiae discant obediendo sequi, qui dudum docendo praeire conabantur. Recte quoque eorum haec superbia septem sacrificiis expiatur, quia haeretici ad Ecclesiam revertentes per humilitatis hostiam dona Spiritus gratiae septiformis accipiunt, ut qui elationis suae vetustate tabuerant, novitate

gratiae reformentur. 15. Septenarius numerus perfectus. Quid significet? Perfectionem aeternitatis, vitae praesentis tempus, Ecclesiae universitatem. Septenarius autem numerus apud sapientes hujus saeculi quadam sua habetur ratione perfectus, quod ex primo pari et ex primo impari consummatur. Primus enim impar ternarius est, primusque par quaternarius. Ex quibus duobus septenarius constat, qui eisdem partibus suis multiplicatus in duodenarium surgit. Nam sive tres per quatuor, seu quatuor per tres ducimus, ad duodenarium pervenimus. Sed nos quia a superno munere veritatis praedicamenta percipimus, haec fixa scientiae altitudine despiciendo calcamus, hoc procul dubio 1150 inconcussa fide retinentes, quia quos Spiritus gratiae septiformis repleverit perficit, eisque non solum Trinitatis notitiam, sed etiam virtutum quatuor, id est prudentiae, temperantiae, fortitudinis atque justitiae operationem praebet. Qui in ipsis quoque quos ingreditur suis quodammodo partibus augetur, dum et per Trinitatis notitiam quatuor virtutum actio accipitur, et per operationem virtutum quatuor usque ad manifestam Trinitatis speciem pervenitur. Et apud nos ergo septenarius perfectus est, sed longe dissimiliter, quia plene et non inaniter in duodenarium surgit, dum et per fidem opera, et rursum per opera perficit fidem. Sancti quoque apostoli gratiae septiformis Spiritu implendi, duodecim sunt electi. In quatuor enim mundi partibus Trinitatem, quae Deus est, innotescere mittebantur. Duodecim ergo electi sunt ut etiam ex ipsius numeri ratione causa claresceret quod per quatuor infima tria summa praedicarent. 16. Sive itaque hac, seu alia qualibet fortasse ratione, in Scriptura tamen sacra septenario numero aliquando secura requies aeternitatis, aliquando universitas praesentis hujus temporis, aliquando autem sanctae Ecclesiae universitas designatur. Septenario quippe numero perfectio aeternitatis innuitur, cum dies septimus in requiem Domini sanctificatus vocatur (Genes. II, 2). Cui jam vespera inesse non dicitur, quia aeternae beatitudinis requies nullo termino coarctatur. Hinc est etiam quod

lege data dies septimus feriatus esse praecipitur (Exod. XX, 11), ut aeterna per illum requies designetur. Hinc est quod in annorum curriculo septenarius numerus septies multiplicatus, monade addita, ad quinquagenarium ducitur, ut perpetuam beatitudinem signans jubilaei sacratissima requies observetur (Levit. XXV, 8, 9). Hinc est quod resurgens Dominus et frequenter apparens (Joan. XXI), ultimo jam convivio cum septem discipulis comedisse describitur, quia hi qui in illo nunc perfecti sunt, aeterna per illum refectione satiantur. [Vet. VII.] 17. Rursum per septenarium numerum haec universitas temporalitatis accipitur. Hinc est enim quod per septem dies hoc totum vitae praesentis tempus evolvitur. Hinc est quod in typo sanctae Ecclesiae, quae omni tempore hunc mundum praedicando circuit, arca Domini tubis clangentibus muros Jericho diebus septem circumacta confregit (Josue. VI, 20). Hinc Propheta ait: Septies in die laudem dixi tibi (Psal. CXVIII, 164). Quod ipse rursum pro toto atque universo suae deprecationis tempore se dixisse significans, ait: Semper laus ejus in ore meo (Psal. XXXIII, 1). Quod vero per septenarium numerum praesentis vitae universitas designatur, tunc magis ostenditur, cum post eum quoque etiam octonarius subinfertur. Septenarium quippe cum adhuc alius sequitur, ex ipso ejus augmento exprimitur quod finienda temporalitas aeternitate concludatur. Hinc est enim quod Salomon admonet, dicens: Da partes septem, necnon et octo (Eccle. XI, 2). Per septenarium quippe numerum hoc quod septem diebus agitur praesens tempus expressit; per octonarium vero vitam perpetuam designavit, quam sua nobis Dominus resurrectione patefecit. Dominico scilicet die resurrexit, qui dum diem septimum, id est Sabbatum sequitur, 1151 a conditione octavus invenitur. Bene autem dicitur: Da partes septem, necnon et octo, quia ignoras quid mali futurum sit super terram (Ibid.). Ac si aperte diceretur: Sic dispensa temporalia, ut appetere non obliviscaris aeterna. Oportet namque ut in posterum bene agendo provideas, qui de venturo judicio quanta tribulatio

sequatur ignoras. Hinc est quod quindecim gradibus templum ascenditur, ut ex ipsa ejus ascensione discatur quatenus per septem et octo et temporalis sollicite dispensetur actio, et provide mansio aeterna requiratur. Hinc est etiam quod dum monas in denarium surgit, centum quinquaginta psalmos Propheta cecinit. Propter hunc septenarium numerum temporalia, octonarium vero aeterna signantem, super centum viginti fideles in coenaculo residentes Spiritus sanctus effusus est (Act. II). Per septem quippe et octo quindecim componuntur, et si ab uno usque ad quindecim numerando paulatim per incrementa consurgimus, usque ad centesimum et vigesimum numerum pervenimus. Qua scilicet effusione Spiritus sancti didicerunt ut et temporalia tolerando transirent, et aeterna inhianter appeterent. 18. Rursum septenario numero sanctae Ecclesiae universitas designatur. Unde Joannes in Apocalypsi septem Ecclesiis scribit (Apoc. I, 4); sed per eas quid aliud quam universalem Ecclesiam intelligi voluit? Quae nimirum universalis Ecclesia ut plena septiformis gratiae Spiritu signaretur, Elisaeus super puerum mortuum septies inspirasse describitur. (IV Reg. IV, 34). Super exstinctum quippe populum Dominus veniens quasi septies oscitat, quia ei dona Spiritus septiformis gratiae misericorditer tribuit. Quia igitur saepe septenario numero sanctae Ecclesiae universitas figuratur, veniant ad beatum Job amici illius, et jussum divinitus offerant holocaustum. Sed vigilanter omnino septenarii numeri arcana custodiant, ut videlicet hi qui extra sunt positi prius se universitati sanctae Ecclesiae misceant, et tunc demum veniam de reatu pristinae elationis exquirant. Pro culpa sua septem sacrificia offerant, quia reatus sui ablutionem non accipiunt, nisi gratiae septiformis Spiritu universali paci a qua excisi fuerant aggregentur. Dicatur igitur: Sumite vobis septem tauros et septem arietes, et ite ad servum meum Job, et offerte holocaustum pro vobis; Job autem servus meus orabit pro vobis; faciem ejus suscipiam, ut non vobis imputetur stultitia. Ac si haereticis redeuntibus aperte diceretur: Universali vos

Ecclesiae per humilitatem poenitentiae jungite, atque eam qua per vosmetipsos digni non estis veniam ejus a me precibus obtinete, qui cum per hanc veraciter sapere discitis, priores apud me vestrae sapientiae stultitiam deletis. Sequitur:

CAPUT IX [Vet. VIII].

VERS. 8. Neque enim locuti estis coram me rectum, sicut servus meus Job. 19. Sententiae iteratio in sacris litteris ejus immutabilitatis est argumentum. Haec paulo ante jam Dominus protulit, et tamen haec eadem iterando subjungit. Quid est hoc, nisi quod sententiam, quam semel judicando dixerat, iterum replicando confirmat? atque ut manifestius beati Job justitia amicorumque ejus injustitia demonstretur, ejus laus illorumque reprehensio iterata voce depromitur, ut replicata foris appareant quam fixa intus habeantur. Namque 1152 cum rex Aegypti metuenda venturae famis tempora sub boum spicarumque specie gemina visione cognovisset, voce sancti interpretis audivit: Quod vidisti secundo ad eamdem rem pertinens somnium, firmitatis indicium est (Genes. XLI, 32). Qua ex re aperte colligitur quia quidquid in eloquio divino repetitur, robustius confirmatur. Sed quia quid judex decrevit audivimus, addicti quoque quid faciant audiamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT X.

VERS. 9. Abierunt ergo Eliphaz Themanites, et Baldad Suhites, et Sophar Naamathites, et fecerunt sicut locutus fuerat ad eos Dominus, et suscepit Dominus faciem Job. 20. Ordo veniae. Horum interpretationem nominum idcirco reticemus, quia in hujus operis exordio de ea nos latius disseruisse meminimus. Intuendum vero est quia ita caute, sicut praedictum fuerat, ordo acceptae veniae custoditur, ut in sacrificiis Dominus non illorum, sed

beati Job faciem suscepisse referatur. Sed quia quisquis pro aliis intercedere nititur, sibi potius ex ipsa charitate suffragatur, recte subjungitur:

CAPUT XI.

VERS. 10. Dominus quoque conversus est ad poenitentiam Job, cum oraret pro amicis suis. 21. Citius pro nobis orantes exaudimur, si oratio nostra proximi et maxime adversarii dilectione condiatur. Jam enim superius pro amicis suis exauditus ostenditur, cum factum quod praediximus memoratur: Fecerunt sicut locutus fuerat ad eos Dominus, et suscepit Dominus faciem Job. Sed cum protinus subinfertur: Dominus quoque conversus est ad poenitentiam Job, cum oraret pro amicis suis, aperte ostenditur quia etiam pro semetipso poenitens tanto citius exaudiri meruit, quanto devote pro aliis intercessit. Plus enim pro se valere preces suas efficit, qui has et pro aliis impendit. Libentius quippe sacrificium orationis accipitur, quod in conspectu misericordis judicis proximi dilectione conditur. Quod tunc veraciter quisque cumulat, si hoc etiam pro adversariis impendat. Hinc est enim quod magistra Veritas dicit: Orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos (Luc. VI, 28). Hinc rursum ait: Cum stabitis ad orandum, dimittite si quid habetis adversus aliquem, ut et Pater vester qui in coelis est dimittat vobis peccata vestra (Marc. XI, 25). Quantum vero pro se obtinuit, qui pro aliis intervenit, illico demonstratur, cum subditur:

CAPUT XII [Rec. VIII].

Ibid. Addidit Dominus omnia quaecunque fuerant Job duplicia. 22. Juxta afflictionis pondus disponitur mensura consolationis. Cuncta quae amiserat duplicia recepit, quia per pietatem benigni judicis tentationis nostrae dispendium vincunt suffragia consolationum. Minus autem tentat probatio quam remuneratio consolatur, ut ex retributionis merito leve fuisse quod toleravit agnoscat, qui ex percussionis pondere grave se aliquid tolerare

judicabat. Unde afflictae quoque Judaeae dicitur: Ad punctum in modico dereliqui te, et in miserationibus magnis congregabo te (Isai. LIV, 7). Aliquando vero juxta afflictionis pondus disponitur mensura consolationis. Unde alias scriptum est: Secundum multitudinem dolorum meorum in corde meo consolationes tuae laetificaverunt animam meam (Psal. XCIII, 19). In ea enim mensura consolatum se in qua afflictus fuerat indicat, qui laetificatum se secundum multitudinem dolorum clamat. Non autem minime lector instruitur, si ipsum remunerationis ordinem contempletur. Excessum quippe correctio, correctionem poenitentia, poenitentiam venia, 1153 veniam vero munera subsequuntur. Sed quia, divinae dispensationis permissione percussus, etiam amicorum verbis afflictus est, divinae pietatis muneribus consolatus, etiam humana debet charitate refoveri; ut undique ei consolationis gaudia respondeant, quem undique dolorum tristia et adversa lacerabant. Unde et subditur:

CAPUT XIII.

VERS. 11. Venerunt autem ad eum omnes fratres sui, et universae sorores suae, et cuncti qui noverant eum prius; et comederunt cum eo panem in domo ejus, et moverunt super eum caput. 23. Non solum divinae, sed etiam humanae. Quid in comestione panis nisi charitas, quid vero motione capitis, nisi admiratio designatur? Bene autem subditur: IBID. Et consolati sunt eum super omne malum, quod intulerat Dominus super eum. Percussi enim moerorem consolari est ei post percussionem de venia congaudere. Nam quanto quisque de restituta proximi salute cernitur hilarescere, tanto se indicat de ablata doluisse.

CAPUT XIV [Rec. IX].

IBID. Et dederunt ei unusquisque ovem unam, et inaurem auream unam. 24. Ecclesia receptura est aliquando duplicia. Licet cuncta haec juxta historiam

veraciter dicta sint, ipsis tamen oblatis muneribus cogimur ut ad allegoriae mysterium recurramus. Neque enim otiose debemus accipere quod ovem, quod unam, quod inaurem auream obtulere, quod unam. Et si fortasse juxta litteram mirum non est ovis oblata cur una, valde tamen mirum est inauris oblata cur una. Quid vero aut ovis ad inaurem pertinet, aut quid inauris ad ovem? Ex ipso ergo munerum fine compellimur ut priora quoque, quae superficie tenus juxta solam historiam contingendo transcurrimus, in allegoriae mysteriis indagemus. Quia igitur Christus et Ecclesia, id est caput et corpus una persona est, saepe beatum Job diximus modo capitis, modo figuram corporis designare [Vet. IX]. Servata ergo historiae veritate, sub typo gestum sanctae Ecclesiae sentiamus id quod scriptum est: Addidit Dominus omnia quaecunque fuerant Job duplicia. Sancta quippe Ecclesia etsi multos nunc percussione tentationis amittit, in fine tamen hujus saeculi ea quae sua sunt duplicia recipit, quando susceptis ad plenum gentibus, ad ejus fidem currere omnis quae tunc inventa fuerit, etiam Judaea consentit. Hinc namque scriptum est: Donec plenitudo gentium introiret, et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret (Rom. XI, 25). Hinc in Evangelio quoque Veritas dicit: Elias veniet, et ille restituet omnia (Matth. XVII, 11). Nunc enim amisit Israelitas Ecclesia, quos convertere praedicando non valuit, sed tunc Elia praedicante, dum quotquot invenerit colligit, velut plenius recipit quod amisit. 25. Ante resurrectionem sancti singulas stolas accipiunt, binas post resurrectionem. Vel certe sanctae Ecclesiae in fine suo duplum recipere est in singulis nobis et de beatitudine animae, et de carnis incorruptione gaudere. Hinc est enim quod per prophetam de electis dicitur: In terra sua duplicia possidebunt (Isai. LXI, 7). Hinc est enim quod Joannes apostolus de sanctis finem mundi quaerentibus dicit: Data sunt illis singulae stolae albae, et dictum est eis ut requiescerent tempus adhuc modicum, donec compleretur numerus conservorum et fratrum eorum (Apoc. VI, 11). Sicut enim longe superius diximus (scilicet praefationis, c. 10, n. 20), ante

resurrectionem sancti singulas 1154 stolas accipiunt, quia sola animarum beatitudine perfruuntur; in fine autem mundi binas habituri sunt, quia cum mentis beatitudine etiam carnis gloriam possidebunt. 26. Conversio Judaeorum in fine mundi praenuntiata. Sed ea quae subnexa sunt, in fine magis hujus saeculi conversionem se Judaici populi nuntiare testantur. Nam subditur: Venerunt autem ad eum omnes fratres sui, et universae sorores suae, et cuncti qui noverant eum prius, et comederunt cum eo panem in domo ejus. Tunc quippe fratres sui ac sorores ad Christum veniunt, quando ex plebe Judaica quotquot invecti fuerint convertuntur. Ex illo enim populo carnis materiam sumpsit. Tunc ergo ad eum fratres ac sorores accedunt, quando ex ea plebe quae ei per cognationem juncta est, vel qui fortes futuri sunt, velut fratres, vel infirmi, velut sorores, ad eum per cognitionem fidei devota gratulatione concurrunt. Tunc apud eum celeberrimae festivitatis convivium exhibent, quando eum jam nequaquam quasi purum hominem contemnentes, propinquitatis suae memores, divinitati se ejus inhaerere congaudent. Tunc in domo ejus panem comedunt, cum, postposita observatione subjacentis litterae, in sancta Ecclesia mystici eloquii quasi frugis medulla pascuntur [Vet. X]. Bene autem subjungitur: Cuncti qui noverant eum prius. Prius quippe noverant, quem in passione sua quasi incognitum contempserunt. Nam nasciturum Christum nullus qui plene legem didicit ignoravit. Unde et Herodes rex, magorum occursione perterritus, sacerdotes et principes studuit solerter inquirere ubi Christum nasciturum esse praescirent; cui protinus responderunt: In Bethleem Judae (Matth. II, 5). Prius ergo noverant quem passionis suae tempore dum despicerent ignorabant. Quorum et notitia prior, et ignorantia posterior bene ac breviter Isaac caligante signatur. Qui dum Jacob benediceret, et quid eveniret in futuro praevidebat, et quis illi praesens assisteret nesciebat (Genes. XXVII). Sic quippe Israelitarum populus fuit, qui prophetiae mysteria accepit, sed tamen caecos in contemplatione oculos habuit, quia

eum praesentem non vidit, de quo tam multa in futuro praevidit. Ante se enim positum nequaquam cernere valuit, cujus adventus potentiam longe ante nuntiavit. Sed ecce in fine mundi veniunt, et eum quem prius noverant recognoscunt. Ecce in domo ejus panem comedunt; quia in sancta Ecclesia sacri eloquii fruge pascuntur, et omnem insensibilitatem pristini torporis excutiunt. Unde et subditur: Et moverunt super eum caput. Quid enim in capite, nisi principale mentis accipitur? sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Impinguasti in oleo caput meum (Psal. XXII, 5). Ac si aperte diceretur: Arentem in suis cogitationibus mentem meam charitatis unctione rigasti. Caput ergo movetur, cum, per formidinem veritatis tacta, ab insensibilitate sua mens quatitur. Veniant ergo parentes ad convivium, atque excusso torpore moveant caput, id est hi qui Redemptori nostro carne conjuncti fuerant refectionem quandoque verbi in fide percipiant, et insensibilitatis pristinae duritiam amittant. Unde bene per Habacuc dicitur: Pedes ejus steterunt, et mota est terra (Habac. III, 5). Stante enim Domino terra procul dubio movetur, quia cum 1155 cordi nostro timoris sui vestigia imprimit, cuncta in nobis cogitatio terrena contremiscit. Hoc taque loco caput movere est immobilitatem mentis excutere, et ad cognitionem fidei credulitatis gressibus propinquare. 27. Quanta ex eorum conversione Ecclesiae consolatio. Quae conversi, Christo debeant offerre. Sed quia sancta Ecclesia nunc Hebraeorum aversione afficitur, et tunc conversione relevatur, recte subjungitur [Vet. XI]: Et consolati sunt eum super omni malo, quod intulerat Dominus super eum. Consolantur videlicet Christum, consolantur Ecclesiam, qui ab infidelitatis pristinae errore resipiscunt, et pravitatem vitae, per quam recta docentibus repugnaverant, deserunt. Annon gravis moeror est duris cordibus infructuose praedicare, laborem in ostendenda veritate sumere, sed nullum de conversione audientium fructum laboris invenire? At contra, magna praedicatorum consolatio est subsequens profectus auditorum. Relevatio quippe docentis est immutatio proficientis.

Et notandum quod in flagello positum consolari noluerunt, sed ad consolandum eum post flagellum veniunt, quia nimirum passionis ejus tempore Hebraei, praedicamenta fidei contemnentes, quem hominem ex morte probaverant Deum credere despexerunt. Unde per Psalmistam Dominus dicit: Sustinui qui simul mecum contristaretur, et non fuit; consolantem me quaesivi, et non inveni (Psal. LXVIII, 21). Consolantem quippe in passione minime invenit, quia in despectu mortis etiam ipsos hostes pertulit, pro quibus ad mortem venit. Post flagella ergo propinqui ad consolationem veniunt, quia in membris suis nunc quoque Dominus patitur; sed extremo tempore Israelitae omnes ad fidem, cognita Eliae praedicatione, concurrunt, atque ad ejus protectionem quem fugerant redeunt, et tunc illud eximium multiplici aggregatione populorum convivium celebratur. Tunc post flagella quasi Job sanus ostenditur, quando a conversis atque credentibus post passionem suam ac resurrectionem Dominus in coelis immortalis vivere per certitudinem fidei scitur. Tunc quasi remuneratus Job cernitur, quando in majestatis suae potentia sicut est Deus creditur, et ejus fidei subjici hi qui prius restiterant videntur. In fine igitur mundi credentes Hebraei conveniant, et humani generis redemptori in potentia divinitatis quasi sano Job oblationem suarum vota persolvant [Vet. XII]. Unde et bene subditur: Et dederunt ei unusquisque ovem unam, et inaurem auream unam. Quid per ovem nisi innocentia, quid per inaurem nisi obedientia designatur? Per ovem quippe simplex animus, per inaurem vero ornatus humilitatis gratia auditus exprimitur. [Rec. X.] 28. Obedientiae commendatio. Obedientia usque ad mortem servanda. Sed quia ad ostendendam virtutem obedientiae occasio opportuna se praebuit, libet hanc paulo vigilantius sollicitiusque discutere, et quanti sit meriti demonstrare. Sola namque virtus est obedientia quae virtutes caeteras menti inserit, insertasque custodit. Unde et primus homo praeceptum quod servaret accepit (Genes. II, 1), cui se si vellet obediens subdere, ad aeternam

beatitudinem sine labore perveniret. Hinc Samuel ait: Melior est obedientia quam victimae, et auscultare magis quam offerre adipem arietum, quoniam quasi peccatum ariolandi est repugnare, et quasi scelus idololatriae nolle acquiescere (I Reg. XV, 22). Obedientia quippe victimis jure praeponitur (8, q. 1. can. sciendum, § Obedientia), quia per victimas aliena caro, per obedientiam vero 1156 voluntas propria mactatur. Tanto igitur quisque Deum citius placat, quanto ante ejus oculos repressa arbitrii sui superbia, gladio praecepti se immolat. Quo contra ariolandi peccatum inobedientia dicitur, ut quanta sit virtus obedientia demonstretur. Ex adverso igitur melius ostenditur, quid de ejus laude sentiatur. Si enim quasi ariolandi peccatum est repugnare, et quasi scelus idololatriae nolle acquiescere, sola est quae fidei meritum possidet, sine qua quisque infidelis esse convincitur, etiamsi fidelis esse videatur. Hinc per Salomonem in ostensione obedientiae dicitur: Vir obediens loquitur victorias (Prov. XXI, 28). Vir quippe obediens victorias loquitur, quia dum alienae voci humiliter subdimur, nosmetipsos in corde superamus. Hinc in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Eum qui venit ad me, non ejiciam foras, quia de coelo descendi, non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me (Joan. VI, 37). Quid enim? si suam faceret eos qui ad se veniunt repulisset? Quis autem nesciat quod voluntas Filii a Patris voluntate non discrepet? Sed quoniam primus homo, quia suam facere voluntatem voluit, a paradisi gaudio exivit (Genes. III, 24), secundus ad redemptionem hominum veniens, dum voluntatem se Patris et non suam facere ostendit, permanere nos intus docuit. Cum igitur non suam sed Patris voluntatem facit, eos qui ad se veniunt foras non ejicit, quia dum exemplo suo nos obedientiae subjicit, viam nobis egressionis claudit. Hinc rursum ait: Non possum ego a meipso facere quidquam, sed sicut audio (Joan. V, 30) judico. Nobis quippe obedientia usque ad mortem servanda praecipitur. Ipse autem si sicut audit judicat, tunc quoque obedit, cum judex venit. Ne igitur nobis usque ad praesentis vitae terminum obedientia laboriosa

appareat, Redemptor noster indicat, quia hanc etiam cum judex venerit servat. Quid ergo mirum si homo peccator se obedientiae in praesentis vitae brevitate subjicit (11, q. 3, c. Quid ergo), quando hanc mediator Dei et hominum et cum obedientes remunerat, non relinquit? [Vet. XIII.] 19. Malum nunquam fieri debet per obedientiam, sed bonum aliquando intermitti. Sciendum vero est quod nunquam per obedientiam malum fieri aliquando autem debet per obedientiam bonum quod agitur, intermitti. Neque enim mala in paradiso arbor exstitit, quam Deus homini ne contingeret interdixit (Genes. II). Sed ut melius per obedientiae meritum homo bene conditus cresceret, dignum fuerat ut etiam a bono prohiberetur, quatenus tanto verius hoc quod ageret virtus esset, quanto et a bono cessans, auctori suo se subditum humilius exhiberet. Sed notandum quod illic dicitur: Ex omni ligno paradisi comedite, de ligno autem scientiae boni et mali ne tetigeritis (Ibid., 16). Qui enim ab uno quolibet bono subjectos vetat, necesse est ut multa concedat, ne obedientis mens funditus intereat, si a bonis omnibus penitus repulsa jejunat. Omnes autem paradisi arbores ad esum Dominus concessit, cum ab una prohibuit, ut creaturam suam, quam nolebat exstingui, sed provehi, tanto facilius ab una restringeret, quanto ad cunctas latius relaxaret. 30. Quando nullius meriti sit obedientia, quando minimi. Sed quia nonnunquam nobis hujus mundi prospera, nonnunquam vero jubentur adversa, sciendum summopere est quod obedientia aliquando, si de suo aliquid habeat, nulla est; aliquando autem, si de suo aliquid non habeat, minima (8, q. 1, c. Sciendum). Nam cum hujus mundi successus praecipitur, 1157 cum locus superior imperatur, is qui ad percipienda haec obedit, obedientiae sibi virtutem evacuat, si ad haec etiam ex proprio, desiderio anhelat. Neque enim se sub obedientia dirigit, qui ad accipienda hujus vitae prospera libidini propriae ambitionis servit. Rursum cum mundi despectus praecipitur, cum probra adipisci et contumeliae jubentur, nisi ex seipso animus haec appetat, obedientiae sibi meritum minuit, quia ad ea

quae in hac vita despecta sunt invitus nolensque descendit. Ad detrimenta quippe obedientia ducitur, cum mentem ad suscipienda probra hujus saeculi nequaquam ex parte aliqua etiam sua vota comitantur. Debet ergo obedientia et in adversis ex suo aliquid habere, et rursum in prosperis ex suo aliquid omnimodo non habere, quatenus et in adversis tanto sit gloriosior quanto divino ordini etiam ex desiderio jungitur, et in prosperis tanto sit verior quanto a praesenti ipsa quam divinitus percipit gloria funditus ex mente separatur. 31. Subeunda prospera ex sola jussione, adversa vero etiam ex devotione, docemur exemplo Mosis et Pauli. Sed hoc virtutis pondus melius ostendimus, si coelestis patriae duorum hominum facta memoremus. Moyses namque cum in deserto oves pasceret, a Domino per angelum in igne loquente vocatus est, ut eripiendae omni Israelitarum multitudini praeesset (Exod. III). Sed quia apud se mente humilis exstitit, oblatam protinus tanti regiminis gloriam expavit, moxque ad infirmitatis patrocinium recurrit, dicens: Obsecro, Domine, non sum eloquens; ab heri et nudiustertius ex quo coepisti loqui ad servum tuum, tardioris et impeditioris linguae sum factus (Ibid. IV, 10). Et, se postposito, alium deposcit, dicens: Mitte quem missurus es (Ibid. 13). Ecce cum auctore linguae loquitur, et ne tanti regiminis potestatem suscipiat, elinguem se esse causatur. Paulus quoque divinitus fuerat ut in Jerusalem debuisset ascendere admonitus, sicut ipse Galatis dicit: Deinde post annos quatuordecim iterum ascendi Jerosolymam, assumpto Barnaba et Tito; ascendi autem secundum revelationem (Galat. II, 1). Isque in itinere cum prophetam Agabum reperisset, quanta se adversitas in Jerosolymis maneret audivit (Act. XXI). Scriptum quippe est quod idem Agabus zonam Pauli suis pedibus inserens, dixit: Virum cujus haec zona est sic alligabunt in Jerusalem (Ibid., 11). A Paulo autem protinus respondetur: Ego non solum alligari, sed et mori in Jerusalem paratus sum pro nomine Jesu, neque enim pretiosiorem facio animam meam quam me (Ibid., 13). Praeceptione igitur revelationis

Jerosolymam pergens, adversa cognoscit, et tamen haec libenter appetit; audit quae timeat, sed ad haec ardentius anhelat. Moyses itaque ad prospera de suo nihil habet, quia precibus renititur, ne Israeliticae plebi praeferatur. Paulus ad adversa etiam ex suo voto ducitur, quia malorum imminentium cognitionem percipit, sed devotione spiritus etiam ad acriora fervescit. Ille praesentis potestatis gloriam Deo voluit jubente declinare; iste, Deo aspera et dura disponente, se studuit ad graviora praeparare. Praeeunte ergo utrorumque ducum infracta virtute instituimur, ut si obedientiae palmam apprehendere veraciter nitimur, prosperis hujus saeculi ex sola jussione, adversis autem etiam ex devotione militemus. 1158 [Vet. XIV.] 32. Innocentiae ornamentum est obedientia. Notandum vero est quod hoc loco cum inaure ovis, cum ove inauris offertur, quia nimirum innocuis mentibus ornamentum semper obedientiae jungitur; Domino attestante, qui ait: Oves meae vocem meam audiunt, et ego cognosco eas, et sequuntur me (Joan. X, 27). Beato igitur Job nemo inaurem sine ove, nemo ovem sine inaure obtulit, quia profecto Redemptori suo non obedit, qui innocens non est; et innocens esse non potest, qui obedire contemnit. Quia vero ipsa obedientia non servili metu sed charitatis affectu servanda est, non terrore poenae, sed amore justitiae, cuncti qui ad convivium veniunt, auream inaurem obtulisse perhibentur, ut videlicet in ea quae exhibetur obedientia, charitas fulgeat, quae virtutes omnes quasi auri more caetera metalla transcendat. 33. Nulla potest esse aut innocentia aut obedientia, nisi in una vera Ecclesia. Sed quia nulla esse innocentia, nulla esse vera obedientia in multiplicibus haereticorum divisionibus potest, ad cognitionem fidei venientes offerant ovem, sed unam; offerant inaurem, sed unam; id est, tales veniant, qui in unitate sanctae Ecclesiae innocui obedientesque persistant. Unum quippe dividi per numeros non potest, quia et hoc ipsum unum quod dicimus numerus non est. Offerant igitur ovem, sed unam; offerant inaurem, sed unam; id est, ad sanctam Ecclesiam cum innocentia atque obedientia

venientes, eam mentem deferant quam sectarum schismata non dividant. [Vet. XV.] 34. Quantum de Judaeorum conversione futurum in Ecclesia gaudium, et celebrandum aliquando convivium. Aperire libet oculos fidei, et illud extremum sanctae Ecclesiae de susceptione Israelitici populi convivium contemplari. Ad quod nimirum convivium magnus ille veniens Elias convivantium invitator adhibetur; et tunc propinqui, tunc noti ad eum cum muneribus veniunt, quem in flagello paulo ante positum contempserunt. Appropinquante enim die judicii, vel praecursoris vocibus, vel quibusdam erumpentibus signis, ipsa eis jam aliquo modo advenientis Domini virtus interlucet. Cujus iram dum praevenire festinant, conversionis suae tempus accelerant. Conversi autem cum muneribus veniunt, quia eum quem paulo ante in passione deriserunt, tunc virtutum opera quasi munera offerendo, venerantur, illud procul dubio hac sua oblatione complentes quod et cernimus magna ex parte jam factum, et adhuc credimus perfecte faciendum: Adorabunt eum filiae Tyri in muneribus (Psal. XLIV, 13). Tunc namque illum plenius filiae Tyri in muneribus adorant, cum Israelitarum mentes hujus nunc mundi subditae desideriis, ei quem superbientes negaverunt, quandoque cognito, suae hostias confessionis apportant. Et quamvis eisdem temporibus quibus Antichristus appropinquat, aliquatenus vita fidelium minoris esse virtutis appareat, quamvis in conflictu illius perditi hominis gravis etiam corda fortium formido constringat: Elia tamen praedicante roborati, non solum fideles quique in sanctae Ecclesiae soliditate persistunt, sed, sicut superius diximus, ad cognitionem fidei multi quoque ex infidelibus convertuntur; ita ut Israeliticae gentis reliquiae, quae repulsae prius funditus fuerant, ad sinum matris Ecclesiae pia omnimodo devotione concurrant. Unde et bene nunc subditur:

CAPUT XV [Vet. XVI].

VERS. 12. 1159 Dominus autem benedixit novissimis Job magis, quam principio ejus. 35. Deus novissimis Ecclesiae, multiplici animarum collectione benedicet. Haec historice facta credimus, haec mystice facienda speramus. Magis enim novissimis Job quam principio benedicitur, quia quantum ad Israelitici populi susceptionem pertinet, urgente fine praesentis saeculi, dolorem sanctae Ecclesiae Dominus animarum multiplici collectione consolatur. Tanto quippe locupletius ditabitur, quanto et manifestius innotescit quod ad finem praesentis vitae temporalitas urgetur. Praedicatores namque sanctae Ecclesiae benedictione extremi temporis Psalmista ditari conspexerat, cum dicebat: Adhuc multiplicabuntur in senecta uberi, et bene patientes erunt, ut annuntient (Psal. XCI, 15). In senecta scilicet uberi multiplicantur, quia cum eorum vita differtur, semper ad melius fortitudo producitur, eisque per augmentum temporum crescunt etiam lucra meritorum. Bene autem patientes sunt ut annuntient, quia coelestia praedicantes, tanto robustius adversa tolerant, quanto et per tolerantiam suam animarum commoda locupletius reportant. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVI [Rec. XI].

VERS. 12, 13. Et facta sunt ei quatuordecim millia ovium, et sex millia camelorum, et mille juga boum, et mille asinae; et fuerunt ei septem filii, et tres filiae. 36. In duplicatis Job armentis et gregibus, aggregata fidelium universitas designatur: innocentium, in vitiis olim superbientium, jugo legis subditorum, gentilium. Quod septem millia ovium, et tria millia camelorum, et quingenta juga boum, et quingentas asinas ante probationem percussionis habuerit, ipsa ejusdem historiae praefatio ostendit; quae per flagellum perdita, ea nunc sunt duplicia restituta. Filii autem totidem sunt redditi quot amissi. Septem quippe filios et tres filias habuit, septem autem nunc filios et tres filias recepisse describitur, ut et hi qui exstincti fuerant vivere demonstrentur. Dum enim dicitur: Addidit Dominus quaecunque fuerant

Job duplicia (Job I), et tamen totidem filios ei restituit quot amisit, et liberos dupliciter addidit, cui decem postmodum in carne restituit, decem vero qui amissi fuerant in occulta animarum vita reservavit [Vet. XVII]. Si quis autem in praedictis animalibus, postposito culmo historiae, ut intellectuale videlicet animal, pasci mysteriorum fruge desiderat, necesse est ut quae sentimus agnoscat. Intelligere enim possumus quod in his animalibus aggregata fidelium universitas designatur. Hinc est namque quod per Psalmistam Patri de Filio dicitur: Omnia subjecisti sub pedibus ejus, oves et boves universas, insuper et pecora campi (Psal. VIII, 8). Hinc est quod idem propheta sanctam Ecclesiam simplices quosque inhabitare conspiciens, ait: Animalia tua habitabunt in ea (Psal. LXVII, 11). 37. Quid ergo in ovibus nisi innocentes, quid in camelis nisi eos qui caeterorum mala transeunt exuberantium tortuosa mole vitiorum, quid in jugatis bobus nisi Israelitas legi subditos, quid in asinis nisi simplices gentilium mentes accipimus? Nam quia innocentes quique ovium nomine designantur, testatur Psalmista, qui ait: Nos autem populus ejus, et oves pascuae ejus (Psal. XCIV, 7). Neque enim qui servare innocentiam negligunt, illa internae pascuae refectione satiantur. 38. Cameli vero nomine aliquando in sacro eloquio Dominus, aliquando gentilium superbia exprimitur, quasi excrescente desuper tumore tortuosa. 1160 Quia enim ad suscipienda onera sponte se camelus humiliat, non immerito Redemptoris nostri gratiam designat, qui in eo quod infirmitatis nostrae onera suscipere dignatus est, a potestatis suae celsitudine sponte descendit. Unde et per Evangelium dicit: Potestatem habeo ponendi animam meam, et potestatem habeo iterum sumendi eam (Joan. X, 18), et nemo tollit eam a me. Et unde iterum dicit: Facilius est camelum per foramen acus transire quam divitem intrare in regnum coelorum (Matth. XIX, 24). Quid enim nomine divitis nisi quemlibet elatum, quid cameli appellatione, nisi propriam condescensionem signat? Camelus enim per foramen acus transiit, cum idem Redemptor noster usque

ad susceptionem mortis per angustias passionis intravit. Quae passio velut acus exstitit, quia dolore corpus pupugit. Facilius autem camelus per foramen acus transit quam dives coelorum regnum ingreditur, quia nisi ipse prius infirmitatis nostrae onera suscipiens per passionem suam foramen nobis humilitatis ostenderet, nequaquam se ad humilitatem illius superba nostra rigiditas inclinaret. Rursum cameli nomine tortuosa ac plena vitiis gentilitas designatur, sicut per Moysen dicitur quod inclinata jam die egressum in agro Isaac in camelo sedens Rebecca conspexerit, ac protinus de camelo descendit, et sese pallio ad visionem illius verecundata cooperuit (Genes. XXIV, 64). Quem enim Isaac alium, in eo quod inclinata jam die in agro egressus fuerat, designabat, nisi eum qui extremo hujus mundi tempore, velut in diei fine veniens, quasi in agrum foras exiit? quia cum sit invisibilis, in hoc mundo se visibilem demonstravit. Quem in camelo sedens Rebecca conspexit, quia eum Ecclesia ex gentibus veniens, dum adhuc vitiis esset innixa, et necdum spiritualibus, sed animalibus motibus inhaereret, attendit. Sed protinus de camelo descendit, quia vitia quibus prius fuerat superbe elata deseruit, seque etiam pallio operire curavit, quia, viso Domino, infirmitatem suae actionis erubuit, et illa quae prius in camelo libera gestabatur, descendens postmodum verecunda tegitur. Unde eidem Ecclesiae a priore elatione conversae per apostolicam vocem, quasi Rebeccae de camelo descendenti sibique pallium superducenti, dicitur: Quem enim fructum habuistis tunc in illis, in quibus nunc erubescitis (Rom. VI, 21)? [Vet. XVIII.] 39. In bobus vero aliquando luxuriosorum dementia, aliquando laboriosa fortitudo praedicantium, aliquando humilitas exprimitur Israelitarum. Quia enim bovis nomine per comparationem luxuriosorum dementia designatur, Salomon indicat, qui cum male suadentis mulieris petulantiam praemisisset, adjunxit: Statimque eam sequitur, quasi bos ductus ad victimam (Prov. VII, 22). Rursum quia bovis nomine labor praedicatoris exprimitur; legis verba testantur, quae ait: Non obturabis os

bovi trituranti (Deut. XXV, 4). Ac si aperte diceret: Praedicatores verbi a stipendiorum suorum perceptione non prohibebis. Rursum quia bovis nomine plebs Israelitica figuratur, propheta asserit, qui Redemptoris adventum denuntians dicit: Cognovit bos possessorem suum, et asinus praesepe Domini sui (Isai. I, 3), per bovem scilicet Israeliticum populum jugo legis edomi tum signans, 1161 per asinum vero gentilem populum indicans, voluptatibus deditum, et gravius brutum. 40. Asinorum quoque et asinarum nomine aliquando luxuriosorum petulantia, aliquando mansuetudo simplicium, aliquando vero, ut praediximus, stultitia gentilium designatur. Quia enim luxuriosorum petulantia asinorum appellatione per comparationem exprimitur aperte declaratur cum per prophetam dicitur: Quorum carnes sunt ut carnes asinorum (Ezech. XXIII, 20). Rursum quia asinarum nomine simplicium vita figuratur, Redemptor noster cum Jerusalem pergeret, asinam sedisse memoratur. Jerusalem quippe visio pacis dicitur. Quid igitur signat quod Dominus sedendo asinam Jerusalem ducit, nisi quod simplices mentes dum praesidendo possidet, eas usque ad visionem pacis sua sacra sessiono perducit? Rursum quia asinorum nomine stultitia gentilium designatur propheta testatur, dicens: Beati qui seminatis super omnes aquas, immittentes pedem bovis et asini (Isai. XXXII, 20). Super omnes quippe aquas seminare est cunctis populis fructuosa vitae verba praedicare. Pedem vero bovis et asini immittere est vias Israelitici et gentilis populi per praeceptorum coelestium vincula religare. [Vet. XIX.] 41. Sacrae Scripturae littera praeterita referuntur, et futura praedicuntur. Litterae igitur veritate servata, sub beati Job nomine cunctis his animalibus non immerito credimus sanctae Ecclesiae populos designari, quatenus ea quae scripta sunt dispensatione sancti Spiritus cuncta mirabiliter ordinante, et transacta nobis referant, et futura praedicant. Agnoscamus ergo in ovibus fideles atque innocentes ex Judaea populos, legis dudum pascuis satiatos. Agnoscamus in camelis ad fidem simplices ex gentilitate venientes, qui

prius sub ritu sacrilego, quasi quadam deformitate membrorum, valde turpes ostensi sunt, videlicet foeditate vitiorum. Et quia saepe, ut praediximus, sacra eloquia curant repetere quod affirmant, possunt rursum in bobus Israelitae accipi, quasi jugo legis attriti; asinis vero, ut dictum est, gentiles populi designari, qui dum se colendis lapidibus inclinabant, non reluctante mente, quasi dorso stulte supposito, quibuslibet idolis bruto sensu serviebant. Sancta ergo Ecclesia quae in exordiis suis innumeris tentationibus pressa, vel Israeliticum populum, vel multos ex gentibus amisit, videlicet quos lucrari non potuit, duplicia in fine recipit, quia in ea ex utraque natione fidelium numerus multiplicior excrescit. Possunt etiam per jugatos boves praedicatores intelligi. Unde cum eos ad annuntiandum Dominus mitteret, teste Evangelio (Marc. VI, 7), binos misisse describitur, ut quia vel duo sunt praecepta charitatis, vel quia haberi societas minus quam inter duos non potest, praedicatores sancti ex ipsa qualitate suae missionis cognoscerent quantum concordiam societatis amarent. Possunt, sicut praediximus, per asinas mentes simplicium designari. Sancta vero Ecclesia duplices boves atque asinas, recipit quia praedicatores sancti, qui, pressi formidine, in ejus dudum tentatione tacuerant, et mentes simplicium, quae, victae terroribus, veritatem illius confiteri formidabant, tanto jam nunc robustius in confessione veritatis 1162 voces suas exerunt, quanto debilius ante timuerunt. 42. Latentia in diversis numeris mysteria, et in nominibus trium Job filiarum. Haec in significatione Ecclesiae breviter diximus: quae quomodo ejusdem sanctae Ecclesiae capiti serviant, in exordio hujus operis latius nos dixisse memoramus (Praefat., num. 14). Qui ergo de his sibi plenius satisfieri nititur, secundum hujus operis librum (Maxime num. 43) legere dignetur. Jam vero si quaerimur ut etiam de ipso animalium numero disseramus, cur mille juga boum, vel mille asinae, et sex millia camelorum, et quatuordecim millia ovium numerentur, dicere breviter possumus quod apud saecularem quidem scientiam millenarius

numerus idcirco perfectus habetur, quia denarii numeri quadratum solidum reddit. Decem quippe decies ducta fiunt centum, quae jam figura quadrata, sed plana est. Ut autem in altitudinem surgat, et solida fiat, rursus centum decies multiplicantur, et mille sunt. Senarius autem numerus idcirco perfectus est, quia primus in numeris completur partibus suis, id est sexta sui parte, et tertia, et dimidia, quae sunt unum, et duo, et tria, quae in summam ducta sex fiunt. Nec alius ante senarium numerum reperitur, qui in suis partibus dum dividitur, tota ejus summa compleatur. [Vet. XX, Rec. XII.] Sed quia cuncta haec per sacrae Scripturae celsitudinem proficiendo transcendimus, ibi senarium, ibi septenarium, ibi denarium, ibi millenarium unde sit perfectus invenimus. Senarius quippe numerus in Scriptura sacra perfectus est, quia in mundi origine Dominus ea quae primo die coepit sexto die opera implevit (Genes. II, 2). Septenarius in ea perfectus est, quia omne opus bonum septem per Spiritum virtutibus agitur, ut et fides simul et opera consummentur. Denarius numerus in ea perfectus est, quia lex in decem praeceptis concluditur, omnisque culpa non amplius quam per decem verba cohibetur, atque, enarrante Veritate, operatores vineae denario remunerantur (Matth. XX, 10, 11). In denario quippe tria junguntur ad septem. Homo autem, qui ex anima constat et corpore, in septem qualitatibus continetur. Nam tribus spiritaliter, et quatuor corporaliter viget. In dilectione etenim Dei tribus qualitatibus spiritaliter excitatur, cum ei per legem dicitur: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex tota mente tua, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota virtute tua (Matth. XXII, 37). Corporaliter vero quatuor qualitatibus continetur, quia videlicet ex materia calida et frigida, humida et sicca componitur. Homo ergo qui ex septem qualitatibus constat denario remunerari dicitur, quia in illa perceptione supernae patriae septem nostra ad tria junguntur aeterna, ut homo contemplationem Trinitatis accipiat, et de remuneratione operis quasi quodam denario consummatus vivat. Vel certe quod septem virtutes sunt quibus in hac vita laboratur, dumque eis in

remuneratione contemplatio Trinitatis redditur, vita laborantium denario remuneratur. Sed perfectus quisque etiam in hac vita denarium accipit, dum eisdem septem virtutibus, spem, fidem, charitatemque conjungit. Millenarius quoque numerus in sacro eloquio perfectus accipitur, quia appellatione ejus universitas designatur. Unde scriptum est: 1163 Verbi quod mandavit in mille genera iones (Psal. CIV, 8). Cum enim nequaquam credendum sit quod ad centum generationes mundus extenditur, quid aliud mille generationibus nisi universitas generationum figuratur? Beatus igitur Job quatuordecim millia ovium recepit. Quia enim in sancta Ecclesia virtutum perfectio ad utrumque sexum ducitur, septenarius in ea numerus duplicatur. Et sex millia camelorum, quia plenitudinem in illa operis accipiunt qui ab illa dudum vitiorum suorum foeditate perierunt. Mille quoque juga boum, ac mille asinas recepit, quia Israelitas atque gentiles, doctos ac simplices, post tentationum casus in culmen perfectionis assumit. [Rec. XIII.] Septem quoque filios, et tres filias recepit, quia eorum mentibus quos septem virtutibus genuerat ad perfectionis summam, spem, fidem, charitatemque conjungit, ut tanto verius prole sua gaudeat, quanto suis fidelibus nil deesse virtutis pensat. [Vet. XXI.] Sed quia haec succincte transcurrimus, nunc ipsis quoque indagandis filiarum vocabulis intendamus. Sequitur:

CAPUT XVII.

VERS. 14. Et vocavit nomen unius Diem, et nomen secundae Casiam, et nomen tertiae Cornustibii. 43. Haec nomina, pro eo quod a virtutibus sumpta sunt, apte curavit interpres non ea sicut in Arabico sermone inventa sunt ponere, sed in Latinum eloquium versa apertius demonstrare. Quis enim nesciat Diem vel Casiam Latina esse vocabula? At vero in Cornustibii (quamvis non cornus, sed cornu dicitur, nec cantantium fistula Tibium, sed tibia vocatur) in Latina tamen lingua sermonis genere minime custodito,

rem, credo, prodere maluit, atque in ejus linguae de qua transferebat proprietate perdurare. Vel quia per cornu et tibiam unum verbum ex utroque composuit, utrumque verbum per unam orationis partem in Latina lingua transfusum quo voluit genere licite vocavit. (Vet. XXII.] Quid est ergo quod prima filia beati Job Dies dicitur, secunda Casia, tertia vero Cornustibii vocata memoratur, nisi quia universum genus humanum, quod benignitate conditoris atque ejusdem misericordia redemptoris eligitur, istis nominibus designatur? Homo namque quasi dies ex conditione claruit, quia hunc auctor suus ingenitae innocentiae splendore respersit. Sed sponte sua ad peccati tenebras lapsus, quia veritatis lucem deseruit, quasi in nocte se erroris abscondit, quia alias dicitur secutus umbram. Sed quia auctori nostro non defuit largitas bonitatis suae, etiam contra tenebras iniquitatis nostrae eum quem prius potenter ad justitiam condidit potentius redimendo postmodum ab errore revocavit. Cui quia post casum suum illa conditionis suae pristina firmitas defuit, eum contra bella intima repugnantis corruptionis multiplicibus donorum suorum virtutibus fulsit. Quae nimirum virtutes proficientium in notitia caeterorum hominum quasi suavitate fragrant odorum. Hinc est enim quod per Paulum dicitur: Christi bonus odor sumus Deo (II Cor. II, 15). Hinc est quod sancta Ecclesia, in electis suis quamdam fragrantiam suavitatis odorata, in canticorum Cantico 1164 loquitur, dicens: Donec rex in recubitu suo est, nardus mea dedit odorem suum (Cantic. I, 11). Ac si aperte dicat: Quousque meis obtutibus rex apud se in requie secreti coelestis absconditur, electorum vita miris virtutum odoribus exercetur, ut quo adhuc eum quem appetit non videt, ardentius per desiderium flagret. Rege quippe in recubitu suo posito, nardus odorem dat, dum, quiescente in sua beatitudine Domino, sanctorum virtus in Ecclesia magnae nobis gratiam suavitatis administrat. Quia ergo et conditum luce innocentiae claruit, et redemptum genus humanum exercitio bonorum operum odorem suavitatis aspersit, prima filia recte Dies, et secunda non

incongrue Casia nominatur. Bene autem Casia dicitur, quae in tanto sublimis vitae odore dilatatur. In ipsa quippe sua origine in qua justus homo conditus fuerat tantis quantis nunc opus est virtutibus non indigebat, quia si stare sicut est conditus vellet, hostem extra positum vincere sine difficultate potuisset. Postquam vero per assensum hominis semel adversarius ad intima irrupit, laboriosius jam victor ejicitur, qui adhuc impugnans sine labore repelleretur. 44. Multis virtutibus, quae in paradiso necessariae non fuissent, indigemus. Multa namque nunc exhibenda sunt quae in paradiso necessaria non fuerunt. Nunc quippe opus est virtute patientiae, laboriosa eruditione doctrinae, castigatione corporis, assiduitate precis, confessione delictorum, inundatione lacrymarum; quorum profecto omnium conditus bono non eguit, quia salutis bonum ex ipsa sua conditione percepit. Aegro quippe poculum amarum porrigitur, ut ad salutis statum morbo sublato revocetur. Sano autem nequaquam praecipitur quid accipiat ut convalescat, sed a quibus caveat ne languescat. Nunc ergo majoribus studiis utimur, cum salutem nequaquam servamus habitam, sed reparare curamus ablatam. Et quia omnes hi annisus nostrae reparationis magnis intra sanctam Ecclesiam opinionibus pollent, nomen secundae filiae velut casia ex merito redolet, ut quia prima filia quasi dies exstitit per dignitatem conditionis, secunda casia sit per fragrantiam fortitudinis ex gratia redemptionis. [Vet. XXIII.] Unde et eidem venienti Redemptori per Prophetam dicitur: Myrrha, et gutta, et casia a vestimentis tuis a gradibus eburneis, ex quibus te delectaverunt filiae regum in honore tuo (Psal. XLIV, 9). Quid enim myrrhae, guttae et casiae, nomine nisi virtutum suavitas designatur? Quid eburneis gradibus nisi magna nitens fortitudine proficentium ascensus exprimitur? Redemptor igitur veniens myrrha, gutta et casia, in vestimento utitur, quia ex electis suis, quibus se misericorditer induit, myrrhae virtutis fragrantiam aspergit. In quibus iste odor eburneis gradibus ducitur, quia in eis virtutum opinio non ex ostensione simulationis, sed ex veri ac solidi operis ascensu

generatur. Bene autem subditur: Ex quibus delectaverunt te filiae regum in honore tuo. Sanctae namque animae ab antiquis patribus ad cognitionem veritatis editae Redemptorem suum in ejus honore delectant, 1165 quia ex eo quod bene agunt suae laudi nihil vindicant. Quia vero tertio ordine humanum genus etiam carnis resurrectione renovatum in illo concentu aeternae laudis assumitur, tertia filia Cornustibii vocatur. Quid enim per Cornustibii nisi laetantium cantus exprimitur? Ibi enim veraciter adimpletur quod modo per Prophetam dicitur: Cantate Domino canticum novum (Psal. CXLIX, 1). Ibi veraciter adimpletur, ubi canticum laudis Dei non jam ex fide, sed ex specie contemplata cantabitur. Ibi a nobis conditor noster laudum suarum veraces cantus recipit, qui humanum genus et condendo diem, et redimendo casiam, et assumendo cornustibii fecit. Qui enim lux fuimus conditi, et nunc sumus casia redempti, erimus quandoque cornustibii, in exsultatione aeternae laudis assumpti. Sed priusquam ad nuptiarum thalamum sponsa perveniat, omnem a se vitae foeditatem respuit, et sponsi amori praeparans sese per species virtutum ornat et comit. Studet quippe interni arbitri judicio placere, et, intimis desideriis sublevata, foedos mores conversationis humanae transcendere. Unde bene et de eisdem filiabus beati Job subditur:

CAPUT XVIII [Rec. XIV].

VERS. 15. Non sunt autem inventae mulieres speciosae sicut filiae Job, in universa terra. 45. Electorum pulchritudo. Electorum quippe animae omne humanum genus, quod in terra secundum hominem conversatur, suae pulchritudinis decore transcendunt; quantoque se exterius affligendo despiciunt, tanto verius se intus componunt. Hinc est enim quod sanctae Ecclesiae, quae electorum pulchritudine decoratur, per Psalmistam dicitur: Concupivit rex speciem tuam (Psal. XLIV, 12). De qua paulo post subditur: Omnis gloria ejus filiae regum ab intus (Ibid., 14). Nam si foris gloriam

quaereret, intus speciem, quam rex concupisceret, non haberet. [Vet. XXIV.] In qua quidem quamvis multi virtutum decore fulgeant, atque ipsa vivendi perfectione caeterorum merita transcendant, nonnulli tamen quia ad altiora assequenda non sufficiunt, infirmitatis suae conscii, pietatis ejus gremio continentur. Qui in quantum praevalent mala vitant, quamvis in quantum appetunt altiora bona non impleant. Quos tamen benigne Dominus suscipit, eosque apud se pro modo dignae retributionis admittit. Unde et sequitur:

CAPUT XIX.

IBID. Deditque eis pater suus haereditatem inter fratres earum. 46. Christus inter fortes et perfectos, infirmos et humiles ad supernae haereditatis sortem admittit. Ipsae ergo ex perfectorum merito speciosae memorantur, ipsae etiam quasi ex imperfectorum typo velut infirmae haereditatem inter fratres accipiunt. Usus namque vitae veteris non habebat ut haereditatem feminae inter masculos sortirentur, quia legis severitas fortia eligens, infirma contemnens, districta potius studuit quam benigna sancire. 1166 Sed pio nostro Redemptore veniente, nullus infirmitatis suae conscius de sortienda coelestis patrimonii haereditate desperet. Pater enim noster inter masculos etiam feminis jura successionis tribuit, quia inter fortes atque perfectos, infirmos et humiles ad sortem supernae haereditatis admittit. Unde ipsa Veritas in Evangelio dicit: In domo Patris mei mansiones multae sunt (Joan. XIV, 2). Apud Patrem quippe mansiones multae sunt, quia in illa beatitudinis vita non dispari unusquisque juxta dispar meritum locum disparem percipit, sed ejusdem disparilitatis damna non sentit, quia tantum sibi quantum perceperit sufficit. Sorores ergo cum fratribus ad haereditatem veniunt, quia infirmi illuc cum fortibus admittuntur, quatenus si quis per imperfectionem non erit summus, ab haereditatis tamen sorte per humilitatem non sit extraneus. Quas bene Paulus mansiones unicuique secundum merita distributas insinuat, cum ait: Alia claritas solis, et alia

claritas lunae, et alia claritas stellarum. Stella enim ab stella differt in claritate (I Cor. XV, 41). Sequitur:

CAPUT XX [Rec.XV].

VERS. 16. Vixit autem post haec flagella Job centum quadraginta annis; et vidit filios suos, et filios filiorum suorum usque ad quartam generationem; et mortuus est senex, et plenus dierum. 47. Qui dicantur pleni dierum in sacris litteris. Job pristino statui, auctis etiam rebus, restitutus, typus est Ecclesiae. In Scriptura sacra non facile plenus dierum ponitur, nisi is cujus per eamdem scripturam vita laudatur. Vacuus quippe dierum est qui, et quamlibet multum vixerit, aetatis suae tempora in vanitate consumpsit. At contra plenus dierum dicitur cui nequaquam dies sui pereundo transeunt, sed ex quotidiana mercede boni operis apud justum judicem et postquam transacti fuerint reservantur. [Vet. XXV.] 48. Sed quia sunt qui haec etiam in typo sanctae Ecclesiae interpretari desiderant, quorum votis tanto magis obediendum est quanto et eorum spiritali intelligentiae congaudendum, si quatuordecim per denarium ducimus, ad centesimum et quadragesimum numerum pervenimus. Et recte vita sanctae Ecclesiae multiplicata per decem et quatuor computatur, quia utrumque Testamentum custodiens, et tam secundum legis decalogum, quam secundum quatuor Evangelii libros vivens, usque ad perfectionis culmen extenditur. Unde et Paulus apostolus quamvis Epistolas quindecim scripserit, sancta tamen Ecclesia non amplius quam quatuordecim tenet, ut ex ipso Epistolarum numero ostenderet quod doctor egregius legis et Evangelii secreta rimatus esset. Bene autem beatus Job post flagella vivere dicitur, quia et sancta Ecclesia prius disciplinae flagello percutitur, et postmodum vitae perfectione roboratur. Quae etiam filios suos et filios filiorum suorum usque ad quartam generationem conspicit, quia in hac aetate quae 1167 annuis quatuor temporibus volvitur, usque ad finem mundi per ora praedicantium nascentes sibi quotidie soboles

contemplatur. Nec abhorret a vero quod per generationes dicimus tempora designari. Quid enim unaquaeque successio, nisi quaedam propago est generis? Et pincerna regis Aegypti cum vidisset somnium quod tres propagines duceret (Genes. XL, 12), Joseph praeditus in solutione somniorum, tres propagines, tres dies renuntiat designare. Si ergo per tres propagines spatium trium dierum exprimitur, cur non etiam per quatuor generationes annua quatuor tempora figurentur? Sancta itaque Ecclesia videt filios suos, cum primam fidelium sobolem conspicit. Videt filios filiorum, cum ab eisdem fidelibus ad fidem gigni et filios cognoscit. Quae etiam senex et plena dierum moritur, quia, subsequente luce ex mercede quotidianorum operum, deposito corruptionis pondere, ad incorruptionem spiritalis patriae mutatur. Plena videlicet dierum moritur cui labentes anni non transeunt, sed stantium actuum retributione solidantur. Plena dierum moritur quae per haec transeuntia tempora id quod non transit operatur. Unde et apostolis dicitur: Operamini non cibum qui perit, sed qui permanet in vitam aeternam (Joan. VI, 27). Dies itaque suos sancta Ecclesia, etiam cum praesentem vitam deserit, non amittit, quia in electis suis tanto eorum lucem multiplicius invenit, quanto nunc in eis ab omni tentatione se cautius sollicitiusque custodit. Dies suos Ecclesia non amittit, quia sese in hac vita vigilanter quotidie pensare non negligit, et ad omnia quae recte facere valeat inertia nulla torpescit. Hinc est enim quod de illa per Salomonem dicitur: Considerat semitas domus suae, et panem otiosa non comedit (Prov. XXXI, 27). Semitas quippe domus suae considerat, quia cunctas suae conscientiae cogitationes subtiliter investigat. Panem otiosa non comedit, quia hoc quod de sacro eloquio intelligendo perceperit, ante aeterni judicis oculos exhibendo operibus ostendit. Mori autem dicitur, quia cum illam aeternitatis contemplatio absorbuerit, ab hac mutabilitatis suae vicissitudine funditus exstinguit, ut in ea jam hoc quod acumen intimae visionis impediat ullo modo nihil vivat. Tanto enim verius tunc interna conspicit, quanto cunctis

exterioribus plenius occumbit. Hanc itaque mortem, hanc dierum plenitudinem, et in beato Job, uno scilicet membro Ecclesiae, credamus factam, et in tota simul Ecclesia speremus esse faciendam, quatenus ita teneatur rei gestae Veritas, ut non evacuetur rei gerendae prophetia. Bona enim, quae de sanctorum vita cognoscimus, si veritate carent, nulla sunt; si mysteria non habent, minima. Quae ergo per Spiritum sanctum bonorum vita describitur, et per intellectum nobis spiritalem fulgeat, et tamen sensus a fide historiae non recedat, quatenus tanto fixior animus in suo intellectu permaneat, quanto hunc quasi in quodam medio constitutum, et erga futura spes, et erga praeterita fides ligat. [Vet. XXVI, Rec. XVI.] 49. Conclusio totius operis. Quam formidandum ne qui de Deo loquuntur, aut mala incaute dicant, aut bona non bene. Intentioni placendi Deo humanae laudis intentio se interserit. Expleto itaque hoc opere, ad me mihi video esse redeundum. 1168 Multum quippe mens nostra etiam cum recte loqui conatur, extra semetipsam spargitur. Integritatem namque animi, dum cogitantur verba qualiter proferantur, quia eum trahunt intrinsecus, minuunt. Igitur a publico locutionis redeundum est ad curiam cordis, ut quasi in quodam concilio consultationis ad meipsum discernendum convocem cogitationes mentis, quatenus ibi videam ne aut incaute mala, aut bona non bene dixerim. Tunc enim bene dicitur bonum, cum is qui dicit, soli ei a quo accepit per id appetit placere quod dicit. Et quidem mala me aliqua etsi dixisse non invenio, tamen quia omnino non dixerim, non defendo. Bona vero si qua divinitus accipiens dixi, meo videlicet vitio minus me bene dixisse profiteor. Nam ad me intrinsecus rediens, postpositis verborum foliis, postpositis sententiarum ramis, dum ipsam subtiliter radicem meae intentionis inspicio, Deo quidem ex ea me summopere placere voluisse cognosco, sed eidem intentioni qua Deo placere studeo furtim se nescio quomodo intentio humanae laudis interserit. Quod cum jam postmodum tardeque discerno, invenio me aliter agere quod scio me aliter inchoasse. Sic etenim saepe

intentionem nostram, dum ante Dei oculos recte incipitur, et eam velut in itinere comprehendens, intentio humanae laudis assequitur, sicut pro necessitate quidem cibus sumitur, sed in ipso esu, dum furtim gula subrepit, edendi delectatio permiscetur. Unde plerumque contingit ut refectionem corporis, quam salutis causa coepimus, causa voluptatis expleamus Fatendum est igitur quod rectam quidem intentionem nostram, quae soli Deo placere appetit, nonnunquam intentio minus recta, quae de donis Dei placere hominibus quaerit, insidiando comitatur. Si autem de his divinitus districte discutimur, quis inter ista remanet salutis locus, quando et mala nostra pura mala sunt, et bona quae nos habere credimus pura bona esse nequaquam possunt? Sed hoc mihi operae pretium credo, quod fraternis auribus omne quod in me latenter ipse reprehendo, incunctanter aperio. Quia enim exponendo, non celavi quod sensi, confitendo non abscondo quod patior. Per expositionem patefeci dona, per confessionem detego vulnera. Et quia in hoc tam magno humano genere, nec parvuli desunt qui dictis meis debeant instrui, nec magni desunt qui cognitae meae valeant infirmitati misereri, per haec utraque aliis fratribus quantum possum curam confero, ab aliis spero. Illis dixi exponendo quod faciant, istis aperio confitendo quod parcant. Illis verborum medicamenta non subtraho, istis lacerationem vulnerum non abscondo. Igitur quaeso ut quisquis haec legerit, apud districtum judicem solatium mihi suae orationis impendat, et omne quod in me sordidum deprehendit fletibus diluat. Orationis autem atque expositionis virtute collata, lector meus in recompensatione me superat, si cum per me verba accipit, pro me lacrymas reddat.

Dialogi

CONTENTS

Liber I

Prologus

Quadam die nimiis quorumdam saecularium tumultibus depressus, quibus in suis negotiis plerumque cogimur solvere etiam quod nos certum est non debere, secretum locum petii amicum moeroris, ubi omne quod de mea mihi occupatione displicebat, se patenter ostenderet, et cuncta quae infligere dolorem consueverant, congesta ante oculos licenter venirent. Ibi itaque cum afflictus valde et diu tacitus sederem, dilectissimus filius meus Petrus diaconus adfuit, mihi a primaevo juventutis flore amicitiis familiariter obstrictus, atque ad sacri verbi indagationem socius. Qui gravi excoqui cordis languore me intuens, ait: Nunquidnam novi tibi aliquid accidit, quod plus te solito moeror tenet? Cui, inquam: Moeror, Petre, quem quotidie patior, et semper mihi per usum vetus est, et semper per augmentum novus. Infelix quippe animus meus occupationis suae pulsatus vulnere, meminit qualis aliquando in monasterio fuit; quomodo ei labentia cuncta subter erant; quantum rebus omnibus quae volvuntur eminebat; quod nulla nisi coelestia cogitare consueverat; quod etiam retentus corpore, ipsa jam carnis claustra contemplatione transibat; quod mortem quoque, quae pene cunctis poena est, videlicet ut ingressum vitae et laboris sui praemium amabat At nunc ex occasione curae pastoralis saecularium hominum negotia patitur, et post tam pulchram quietis suae speciem, terreni actus pulvere foedatur. Cumque se pro condescensione multorum ad exteriora sparserit, etiam cum interiora appetit, ad haec procul dubio minor redit. Perpendo itaque quid tolero, perpendo quod amisi. Dumque intueor illud quod perdidi, fit hoc gravius quod porto. Ecce etenim nunc magni maris fluctibus quatior, atque in navi mentis tempestatis validae procellis illidor. Et cum prioris vitae recolo, quasi post tergum ductis oculis viso littore suspiro. Quodque adhuc

gravius est, dum immensis fluctibus turbatus feror, vix jam portum videre valeo quem reliqui, quia et ita sunt casus mentis, ut prius quidem perdat bonum quod tenet, si tamen se perdidisse meminerit; cumque longius recesserit, etiam boni ipsius quod perdiderat obliviscatur; fitque ut post neque per memoriam videat, quod prius per actionem tenebat. Unde hoc agitur quod praemisi, quia cum navigamus longius, jam nec portum quietis quem reliquimus videmus. Nonnunquam vero in augmentum mei doloris adjungitur, quod quorumdam vita qui praesens saeculum tota mente reliquerunt, mihi ad memoriam revocatur. Quorum dum culmen aspicio, quantum ipse in infimis jaceam agnosco; quorum plurimi Conditori suo in secretiori vita placuerunt, qui ne per humanos actus a novitate mentis veterascerent, eos omnipotens Deus hujus mundi laboribus noluit occupari. Sed jam quae prolata sunt, melius insinuo, si ea quae per inquisitionem ac responsionem dicta sunt, sola nominum praenotatione distinguo. PETRUS: Non valde in Italia aliquorum vitam virtutibus fulsisse cognovi; ex quorum igitur comparatione accenderis ignoro. Et quidem bonos viros in hac terra fuisse non dubito, signa tamen atque virtutes aut ab eis nequaquam facta existimo, aut ita sunt hactenus silentio suppressa, ut utrumne sint facta nesciamus. GREGORIUS: Si sola, Petre, referam, quae de perfectis probatisque viris unus ego homuncio, vel bonis ac fidelibus viris attestantibus, agnovi, vel per memetipsum didici; dies, ut opinor, ante quam sermo, cessabit. PETRUS: Vellem quaerenti mihi de eis aliqua narrares. Neque pro hac re interrumpere expositionis studium grave videatur, quia non dispar aedificatio oritur ex memoria virtutum. In expositione quippe qualiter invenienda atque tenenda sit virtus, agnoscitur; in narratione vero signorum cognoscimus inventa ac retenta qualiter declaretur. Et sunt nonnulli, quos ad amorem patriae coelestis plus exempla, quam praedicamenta succendunt. Fit vero plerumque audientis animo duplex adjutorium in exemplis Patrum, quia si ad amorem venturae vitae ex

praecedentium comparatione accenditur, etiam si se esse aliquid existimat, dum meliora de aliis cognoverit, humiliatur. GREGORIUS: Ea quae mihi sunt virorum venerabilium narratione comperta, incunctanter narro sacrae auctoritatis exemplo, cum mihi luce clarius constet quia Marcus et Lucas Evangelium quod scripserunt, non visu, sed auditu didicerunt. Sed ut dubitationis occasionem legentibus subtraham, per singula quae describo, quibus haec auctoribus mihi comperta sint manifesto. Hoc vero scire te cupio, quia in quibusdam sensum solummodo, in quibusdam vero et verba cum sensu teneo; quia si de personis omnibus ipsa specialiter verba tenere voluissem, haec rusticano usu prolata stylus scribentis non apte susciperet. Seniorum valde venerabilium didici relatione quod narro.

CAPUT I. De Honorato abbate monasterii Fundensis.

Venantii quondam patricii in Samnii partibus villa fuit, in qua colonus ejus filium Honoratum nomine habuit, qui ab annis puerilibus ad amorem coelestis patriae per abstinentiam exarsit. Cumque magna conversatione polleret, seque jam ab otioso quoque sermone restringeret, multumque, ut praefatus sum, per abstinentiam carnem domaret, die quadam parentes ejus vicinis suis convivium fecerunt, in quo ad vescendum carnes paratae sunt: quas dum ille ad esum contingere pro abstinentiae amore recusaret, coeperunt eum parentes ejus irridere, ac dicere: Comede; nunquid piscem in his montibus tibi allaturi sumus? Illa vero in loco pisces audiri consueverant, non videri. Sed cum his sermonibus Honoratus irrideretur, repente in convivio aqua ad ministerium defuit; et cum situla lignea, sicut illic moris est, mancipium ad fontem perrexit. Dumque hauriret aquam, piscis situlam intravit. Reversumque mancipium ante ora discumbentium piscem cum aqua fudit, qui ad totius diei victum potuisset Honorato sufficere. Mirati omnes, totaque illa parentum irrisio cessavit. Coepere namque in Honorato venerari abstinentiam, quam ante deridebant; sicque a

Dei homine irrisionis detersit opprobria piscis de monte. Qui cum magnis virtutibus cresceret, a praedicto domino suo libertate donatus est, atque in eo loco qui Fundis dicitur, monasterium construxit, in quo ducentorum ferme monachorum Pater exstitit, ibique vita illius circumquaque exempla eximiae conversationis dedit. Nam quadam die ex eo monte qui ejus monasterio in excelso prominet ingentis saxi moles erupta est, quae per devexum montis latus veniens, totius ruinam cellae, omniumque fratrum interitum minabatur. Quam cum venientem desuper vir sanctus vidisset, frequenti voce nomen Christi invocans, extensa mox dextera signum ei crucis opposuit, eamque in ipso devexi montis latere cadentem fixit, sicut religiosus vir Laurentius perhibet. Et quia locus ei non fuerat quo inhaerere potuisset, aspicitur ita ut hucusque montem cernentibus, casura pendere videatur. PETRUS: Putamus, hic tam egregius vir, ut post magister discipulorum fieret, prius habuit magistrum? GREGORIUS: Nequaquam hunc fuisse cujusquam discipulum audivi, sed lege non constringitur sancti Spiritus donum. Usus quidem rectae conversationis est, ut praeesse non audeat, qui subesse non didicerit; nec obedientiam subjectis imperet, quam praelatis non novit exhibere. Sed tamen sunt nonnulli qui ita per magisterium Spiritus intrinsecus docentur, ut etsi eis exterius humani magisterii disciplina desit, magistri intimi censura non desit. Quorum tamen libertas vitae ab infirmis in exemplum non est trahenda, ne dum se quisque similiter sancto Spiritu impletum praesumit, discipulus hominis esse despiciat, et magister erroris fiat. Mens autem quae divino spiritu impletur, habet evidentissime signa sua; virtutes scilicet et humilitatem, quae si utraque perfecte in una mente conveniunt, liquet quod de praesentia sancti Spiritus testimonium ferunt. Sic quippe etiam Joannes Baptista magistrum habuisse non legitur, neque ipsa Veritas, quae corporali praesentia apostolos docuit, eum corporaliter inter discipulos aggregavit; sed quem intrinsecus docebat, extrinsecus quasi in sua libertate reliquerat. Sic Moyses in eremo

edoctus mandatum ab angelo didicit, quod per hominem non cognovit. Sed haec, ut praediximus, infirmis veneranda sunt, non imitanda. PETRUS: Placet quod dicis; sed peto ut mihi dicas si tantus hic Pater aliquem sui imitatorem discipulum reliquit.

CAPUT II. De Libertino praeposito ejusdem monasterii.

GREGORIUS: Vir reverentissimus Libertinus, qui tempore Totilae regis Gothorum ejusdem Fundensis monasterii praepositus fuit, in discipulatu illius conversatus atque eruditus est. De quo quamvis virtutes multas plurimorum narratio certa vulgaverit, praedictus tamen Laurentius religiosus vir, qui nunc superest, et ei ipso in tempore familiarissimus fuit, multa mihi dicere de illo consuevit, ex quibus quae recolo, pauca narrabo. In eadem provincia Samnii, quam supra memoravi, idem vir pro utilitate monasterii carpebat iter. Dumque Darida Gothorum dux cum exercitu in loco eodem venisset, Dei servus ex caballo in quo sedebat, ab hominibus ejus projectus est. Qui jumenti perditi damnum libenter ferens, etiam flagellum quod tenebat, diripientibus obtulit, dicens: Tollite, ut habeatis qualiter hoc jumentum minare possitis; quibus dictis protinus se in orationem dedit. Cursu autem rapido praedicti ducis exercitus pervenit ad fluvium, nomine Vulturnum, ibique equos suos coeperunt singuli hastis tundere, et calcaribus cruentare; sed tamen equi verberibus caesi, calcaribus cruentati, fatigari poterant, moveri non poterant; sicque aquam fluminis tangere quasi mortale praecipitium pertimescebant. Cumque diu caedendo sessores singuli fatigarentur, unus eorum intulit, quia ex culpa quam servo Dei in via fecerant, illa sui itineris dispendia tolerabant. Qui statim reversi, post se Libertinum reperiunt in oratione prostratum. Cui cum dicerent: Surge, tolle caballum tuum; ille respondit: Ite cum bono, ego caballo opus non habeo. Descendentes vero, invitum eum in cabellum de quo deposuerant, levaverunt, et protinus abscesserunt. Quorum equi tanto cursu

illud quod prius non poterant transire flumen, transierunt, ac si ille fluminis alveus aquam minime haberet. Sicque factum est ut cum servo Dei unus caballus suus redditur, omnes a singulis reciperentur. Eodem quoque tempore in Campaniae partibus Buccellinus cum Francis venit. De monasterio vero praefati famuli Dei rumor exierat, quod pecunias multas haberet. Ingressi oratorium Franci, coeperunt saevientes Libertinum quaerere, Libertinum clamare, ubi in oratione ille prostratus jacebat. Mira valde res: quaerentes, saevientesque Franci, ingredientes in ipso impingebant, et ipsum videre non poterant; sicque sua caecitate frustrati, a monasterio sunt vacui regressi. Alio quoque tempore pro causa monasterii, abbatis jussu, qui Honorato ejus magistro successerat, Ravennam pergebat. Pro amore vero ejusdem venerabilis Honorati, quocunque Libertinus ibat, ejus semper caligulam in sinu portare consueverat. Itaque dum pergeret, accidit ut quaedam mulier exstincti filii corpusculum ferret. Quae dum servum Dei fuisset intuita, amore filii succensa, jumentum ejus per frenum tenuit, atque cum juramento dixit: Nullatenus recedes, nisi filium meum suscitaveris. At ille inusitatum habens tale miraculum, expavit petitionis illius juramentum: declinare mulierem voluit, sed nequaquam praevalens, animo haesit. Considerare libet quale quantumque in ejus pectore certamen fuerit. Ibi quippe pugnabat inter se humilitas conversationis, ac pietas matris: timor ne inusitata praesumeret, dolor ne orbatae mulieri non subveniret. Sed ad majorem Dei gloriam vicit pietas illud pectus virtutis, quod ideo fuit validum, quia devictum; virtutis enim pectus non esset, si hoc pietas non vicisset. Itaque descendit, genua flexit, ad coelum manus tetendit, caligulam de sinu protulit, et super exstincti pueri pectus posuit. Quo orante, anima pueri ad corpus rediit: quem manu comprehendit, ac flenti matri viventem reddidit, atque iter quod coeperat peregit. PETRUS: Quidnam hoc esse dicimus? virtutem tanti miraculi Honorati egit meritum, an petitio Libertini? GREGORIUS: In ostensione tam admirabilis signi cum

fide feminae virtus convenit utrorumque; atque ideo Libertinum existimo ista potuisse, quia plus didicerat de magistri, quam de sua virtute confidere. Cujus enim caligulam in pectore exstincti corpusculi posuit, ejus nimirum animam obtinere quod petebat aestimavit. Nam Elisaeus quoque magistri pallium ferens, atque ad Jordanem veniens, percussit semel, et aquas minime divisit. Sed cum repente diceret: Ubi est Deus Eliae etiam nunc? percussit fluvium magistri pallio, ac iter inter aquas fecit. Perpendis, Petre, quantum in exhibendis virtutibus humilitas valet? Tunc exhibere magistri virtutem potuit, quando magistri nomen ad memoriam reduxit. Quia enim ad humilitatem sub magistro rediit, quod magister fecerat et ipse fecit. PETRUS: Libet quod dicis; sed, quaeso te, estne aliquid aliud quod adhuc de ipso ad nostram aedificationem narres? GREGORIUS: Est plane, sed si sit qui velit imitari. Ego enim virtutem patientiae signis et miraculis majorem credo. Quadam namque die is qui post venerabilis Honorati exitum monasterii regimen tenebat, contra eumdem venerabilem Libertinum gravi iracundia exarsit, ita ut eum manibus caederet. Et quia virgam qua eum ferire posset, minime invenit, comprehenso scabello suppedaneo, ei caput ac faciem tutudit, totumque illius vultum tumentem ac lividum reddidit: qui vehementer caesus, ad stratum proprium tacitus recessit. Die vero altera erat pro utilitate monasterii causa constituta. Expletis igitur hymnis matutinalibus, Libertinus ad lectum abbatis venit, orationem sibi humiliter petiit. Sciens vero ille quantum a cunctis honoraretur, quantumque diligeretur, pro injuria quam ei ingesserat, recedere eum a monasterio velle putabat, atque requisivit, dicens: Ubi vis ire? Cui ille respondit: Monasterii causa constituta est, Pater, quam declinare nequeo, quia hesterno die me hodie iturum promisi, illuc ire disposui. Tunc ille a fundo cordis considerans asperitatem et duritiam suam, humilitatem ac mansuetudinem Libertini, ex lecto prosiliit, pedes Libertini tenuit, se peccasse, seque reum esse testatus est, qui tanto talique viro tam crudelem facere contumeliam

praesumpsisset. At contra Libertinus sese in terram prosternens, ejusque pedibus provolutus, suae culpae, non illius saevitiae fuisse referebat quod pertulerat. Sicque actum est ut ad magnam mansuetudinem perduceretur Pater, et humilitas discipuli magistra fieret magistri. Cumque pro utilitate monasterii ad constitutionem causae egressus fuisset, multi viri noti ac nobiles qui eum valde honorabant, vehementer admirati, sollicite requirebant quidnam hoc esset, quod tam tumentem ac lividam haberet faciem. Quibus ille dicebat: Hesterno die sero, peccatis meis facientibus, in scabello suppedaneo impegi, atque hoc pertuli. Sicque vir sanctus servans in pectore honorem veritatis et magistri, nec patris prodebat vitium, nec falsitatis incurrebat peccatum. PETRUS: Putasne vir iste venerabilis Libertinus, de quo tot signa et miracula retulisti, in tam ampla congregatione imitatores suos in virtutibus non reliquit?

CAPUT III. De hortulano monacho monasterii ejusdem.

GREGORIUS: Felix qui appellatur Curvus, quem ipse bene nosti, qui ejusdem monasterii nuper praepositus fuit, multa mihi de fratribus ejusdem monasterii admiranda narrabat: ex quibus aliqua quae ad memoriam veniunt supprimo, quia ad alia festino. Sed unum dicam, quod ab eo narratum praetereundum nullo modo aestimo. In eodem monasterio quidam magnae vitae monachus erat hortulanus. Fur vero venire consueverat, per sepem ascendere, et occulte olera auferre. Cumque ille multa plantaret, quae minus inveniret, et alia pedibus conculcata, alia direpta conspiceret; totum hortum circumiens, invenit iter unde fur venire consueverat. Qui in eodem horto deambulans, reperit etiam serpentem, cui praecipiens dixit: Sequere me: atque ad aditum furis perveniens, imperavit serpenti, dicens: In nomine Jesu praecipio tibi ut aditum istum custodias, ac furem huc ingredi non permittas. Protinus serpens totum se in itinere in transversum tetendit, et ad cellam monachus rediit. Cumque meridiano tempore cuncti fratres

quiescerent, more solito fur advenit, ascendit sepem; et cum in hortum pedem deponeret, vidit subito quia tensus serpens clausisset viam; et tremefactus post semetipsum concidit, ejusque pes per calceamentum in sude sepis inhaesit, sicque usque dum hortulanus rediret, deorsum capite pependit. Consueta hora venit hortulanus, pendentem in sepe furem reperit, serpenti autem dixit: Gratias Deo, implesti quod jussi; recede modo. Qui statim abscessit. Ad furem vero perveniens, ait: Quid est, frater? Tradidit te mihi Deus. Quare in labore monachorum furtum toties facere praesumpsisti? Et haec dicens, pedem illius a sepe in qua inhaeserat, solvit, eumque sine laesione deposuit. Cui dixit: Sequere me. Quem sequentem duxit ad horti aditum, et olera quae furto appetebat auferre, ei cum magna dulcedine praebuit, dicens: Vade, et post haec furtum non facias; sed cum necesse habes, huc ad me ingredere, et quae tu cum peccato laboras tollere, ego tibi devotus dabo. PETRUS: Nuncusque, ut invenio, incassum ego non fuisse Patres in Italia qui signa facerent aestimabam.

CAPUT IV. De Equitio abbate provinciae Valeriae.

GREGORIUS: Fortunati viri venerabilis abbatis monasterii quod appellatur Balneum Ciceronis, aliorumque etiam virorum venerabilium didici relatione quod narro. Vir sanctissimus Equitius nomine, in Valeriae provinciae partibus, pro vitae suae merito apud omnes illic magnae admirationis habebatur, cui Fortunatus idem familiariter notus fuit. Qui nimirum Equitius pro suae magnitudine sanctitatis multorum in eadem provincia monasteriorum Pater exstitit. Hunc cum juventutis suae tempore acri certamine carnis incentiva fatigarent, ipsae suae tentationis angustiae ad orationis studium solertiorem fecerunt. Cumque hac in re ab omnipotenti Deo remedium continuis precibus quaereret, nocte quadam assistente angelo eunuchizari se vidit, ejusque visioni apparuit, quod omnem motum ex genitalibus ejus membris abscideret; atque ex eo tempore ita alienus

exstitit a tentatione, ac si sexum non haberet in corpore. Qua virtute fretus ex omnipotentis Dei auxilio, ut viris ante praeerat, ita coepit postmodum etiam feminis praeesse; nec tamen discipulos suos admonere cessabat, ne se ejus exemplo in hac re facile crederent, et casuri tentarent donum quod non accepissent. Eo autem tempore quo malefici in hac sunt Romana urbe deprehensi, Basilius, qui in magicis operibus primus fuit, in monachico habitu Valeriam fugiens petiit. Qui ad virum reverentissimum Castorium Amiterninae civitatis episcopum pergens, petiit ab eo ut eum Equitio abbati committeret, ac sanandum monasterio illius commendaret. Tunc ad monasterium venit episcopus, secumque Basilium monachum deduxit, et Equitium Dei famulum rogavit, ut eumdem monachum in congregationem susciperet. Quem statim vir sanctus intuens, ait: Hunc quem mihi commendas, Pater, ego non video monachum esse, sed diabolum. Cui ille respondit: Occasionem quaeris ne debeas praestare quod peto. Ad quem mox Dei famulus dixit: Ego quidem hoc eum esse denuntio, quod video; ne tamen nolle me obedire existimes, facio quod jubes. Susceptus itaque in monasterio est. Non post multos dies idem Dei famulus pro exhortandis ad desideria superna fidelibus, paulo longius a cella digressus est. Quo discedente contigit ut in monasterio virginum, in quo ejusdem Patris cura vigilabat, una earum quae juxta carnis hujus putredinem speciosa videbatur febricitare inciperet, et vehementer anxiari, magnisque jam non vocibus, sed stridoribus clamare: Modo moritura sum, nisi Basilius monachus veniat, et ipse mihi per suae curationis studium salutem reddat. Sed in tanti Patris absentia accedere quisquam monachorum in congregationem virginum non audebat; quanto minus ille qui novus advenerat, cujusque adhuc vitam congregatio fratrum nesciebat. Missum repente est, et Dei famulo Equitio nuntiatum, quod sanctimonialis illa immensis febribus aestuaret, et Basilii monachi visitationem anxie quaereret. Quo audito vir sanctus, dedignando subrisit, atque ait: Nunquid non dixi quod diabolus esset iste, non

monachus? Ite et eum de cella expellite. De ancilla autem Dei, quae anxietate febrium urgetur, nolite esse solliciti, quia ex hac hora neque febribus laboratura est, neque Basilium quaesitura. Regressus est autem monachus, et ea hora saluti restitutam Dei virginem agnovit, qua eamdem salutem illius Dei famulus Equitius longe positus dixit; in virtute scilicet miraculi exemplum tenens Magistri, qui invitatus ad filium reguli, eum solo verbo restituit saluti, ut revertens pater ea hora filium restitutum vitae cognosceret, qua vitam illius ex ore Veritatis audisset. Omnes autem monachi jussionem Patris sui implentes, eumdem Basilium ex monasterii habitatione repulerunt. Qui repulsus dixit, frequenter se cellulam Equitii magicis artibus in aera suspendisse, nec tamen ejus quempiam laedere potuisse. Qui non post longum tempus, in hac Romana urbe, exardescente zelo Christiani populi, igne crematus est. Quadam vero die una Dei famula ex eodem monasterio virginum hortum ingressa est: quae lactucam conspiciens concupivit, eamque signo crucis benedicere oblita, avide momordit; sed arrepta a diabolo protinus cecidit. Cumque vexaretur, eidem Patri Equitio sub celeritate nuntiatum est, ut veniret concitus, et orando succurreret. Moxque hortum idem Pater ut ingressus est, coepit ex ejus ore quasi satisfaciens ipse qui hanc arripuerat diabolus clamare, dicens: Ego quid feci? ego quid feci? Sedebam mihi super lactucam; venit illa, et momordit me. Cui cum gravi indignatione vir Dei praecepit ut discederet, et locum in omnipotentis Dei famula non haberet. Qui protinus abscessit, nec eam ultra contingere praevaluit. PETRUS: Vellem etiam Patris hujus opus agnoscere, qui fertur talia dona percepisse. GREGORIUS: Opus, Petre, ex dono est, non donum ex opere, alioquin gratia jam non est gratia. Omne quippe opus dona praeveniunt, quamvis ex subsequenti opere ipsa etiam dona succrescunt; ne tamen vitae ejus cognitione frauderis, bene hunc reverentissimus vir Albinus Reatinae antistes Ecclesiae cognovit, et adhuc supersunt multi qui scire potuerunt. Sed quid plus quaeris operis, quando

concordabat vitae munditia cum studio praedicationis? Tantus quippe illum fervor ad colligendas Deo animas accenderat, ut sic monasteriis praesset, quatenus per ecclesias, per castra, per vicos, per singulorum quoque fidelium domos circumquaque discurreret, et corda audientium ad amorem patriae coelestis excitaret. Erat vero valde vilis in vestibus, atque ita despectus, ut si quis illum fortasse nesciret, salutatus etiam resalutare despiceret, et quoties alia tendebat ad loca, jumentum sedere consueverat, quod despicabilius omnibus jumentis in cella potuisset reperiri; in quo etiam capistro pro freno, et vervecum pellibus pro sella utebatur. Super semetipsum sacros codices in pelliceis sacculis missos dextro laevoque portabat latere, et quocunque pervenisset, Scripturarum aperiebat fontem, et rigabat prata mentium. Hujus quoque opinio praedicationis ad Romanae urbis notitiam pervenit; atque ut est lingua adulantium auditoris sui animam amplectendo necans, eodem tempore clerici hujus apostolicae sedis antistiti adulando questi sunt, dicentes: Quis est iste vir rusticus, qui auctoritatem sibi praedicationis arripuit, et officium apostolici nostri Domini sibimet indoctus usurpare praesumit? Mittatur ergo, si placet, qui huc eum exhibeat, ut quis sit ecclesiasticus vigor agnoscat. Sicut autem moris est ut occupato in multis animo adulatio valde subrepat, si ab ipso cordis ostio nequaquam fuerit citius repulsa, suadentibus se clericis consensum pontifex praebuit, ut ad Romanam urbem deduci debuisset, et quaenam sua esset mensura cognosceret. Julianum tamen tunc defensorem mittens, qui Sabinensi Ecclesiae postmodum in episcopatu praefuit, hoc praecepit, ut magno cum honore eum deduceret, nec quidquam Dei famulus ex conventione eadem injuriae sentiret. Qui parere de eo clericorum votis concitus volens, festine ad ejus monasterium cucurrit, ibique absente illo antiquarios scribentes reperit, ubi abbas esset inquisivit. Qui dixerunt: In valle hac quae monasterio subjacet, fenum secat. Idem vero Julianus superbum valde atque contumacem puerum habuit, cui vix poterat vel ipse dominari. Hunc ergo

misit, ut ipsum ad se sub celeritate perduceret. Perrexit puer, et protervo spiritu pratum velociter ingressus, omnesque illic intuens fenum secantes, requisivit quisnam esset Equitius. Moxque ut audivit quis esset, eum adhuc longe positus aspexit, et immenso timore correptus, coepit tremere, lassescere, seque ipsum nutanti gressu vix posse portare. Qui tremens ad Dei hominem pervenit, atque ulnis humiliter ejus genua deosculans, strinxit, suumque dominum ei occurrisse nuntiavit. Cui resalutato Dei famulus praecepit, dicens: Leva fenum viride, porta pabulum jumentis in quibus venistis: ecce ego, quia parum superest, opere expleto te subsequor. Is autem qui missus fuerat, Julianus defensor mirabatur valde quidnam esset quod redire moraretur puer: cum ecce revertentem puerum conspicit, atque in collo fenum ex prato deferentem; qui vehementer iratus coepit clamare, dicens: Quid est hoc? Ego te misi hominem deducere, non fenum portare. Cui puer respondit: Quem quaeris, ecce subsequitur. Tum ecce vir Dei, clavatis calceatus caligis, falcem fenariam in collo deferens, veniebat: quem adhuc longe positum puer suo domino quia ipse esset quem quaereret indicavit. Idem vero Julianus repente ut vidit Dei famulum, ex ipso habitu despexit, eumque qualiter deberet alloqui proterva mente praeparabat. Mox vero ut servus Dei cominus adfuit, ejusdem Juliani animum intolerabilis pavor invasit, ita ut tremeret, atque ad insinuandum hoc ipsum quod venerat, vix sufficere lingua potuisset. Qui humiliato mox spiritu ad ejus genua cucurrit, orationem pro se fieri petiit, et quia pater ejus apostolicus pontifex eum videre vellet indicavit. Vir autem venerandus Equitius coepit immensas gratias omnipotenti Deo agere, asserens quod se per summum pontificem gratia superna visitasset. Illico vocavit fratres, praecepit hora eadem jumenta praeparari, atque exsecutorem suum coepit vehementer urgere ut statim exire debuissent. Cui Julianus ait: Hoc fieri nullatenus potest, quia lassatus ex itinere hodie non valeo exire. Tunc ille respondit: Contristas me, fili, quia si hodierna die non egredimur, jam crastina non

exibimus. Dei itaque famulus exsecutoris sui lassitudine coactus, in monasterio suo eadem nocte demoratus est. Cum ecce sequenti die sub ipso lucis crepusculo vehementer equo in cursu fatigato ad Julianum puer cum epistola pervenit, in qua praeceptum est ei ne servum Dei contingere vel movere de monasterio auderet. Quem cum ille requireret cur sententia esset mutata, cognovit, quia nocte eadem, in qua ipse exsecutor illuc missus est, per visum pontifex fuerat vehementer exterritus, cur ad exhibendum Dei hominem mittere praesumpsisset. Qui protinus surrexit, seque venerandi viri commendans orationibus, ait: Rogat Pater noster ne fatigari debeatis. Cumque hoc Dei famulus audisset, contristatus ait: Nunquid non die hesterno dixi tibi, quia si statim non pergeremus, jam pergere minime liceret? Tunc pro charitatis exhibitione aliquantulum exsecutorem suum in cella detinuit, eique laboris sui commodum coacto renitentique dedit. Cognosce igitur, Petre, in quanta Dei custodia sunt qui in hac vita seipsos despicere noverunt; cum quibus intus civibus in honore numerantur, qui despecti foris hominibus esse non erubescunt; quia econtra in Dei oculis jacent, qui apud suos et proximorum oculos per inanis gloriae appetitum tument. Unde et quibusdam Veritas dicit: Vos estis qui justificatis vos coram hominibus, Deus autem novit corda vestra: quia quod hominibus altum est, abominabile est ante Deum. PETRUS: Miror valde quod de tali viro subripi pontifici tanto potuerit. GREGORIUS: Quid miraris, Petre, quia fallimur qui homines sumus? An mente excidit quod S. David, qui prophetiae spiritum habere consueverat, contra innocentem Jonathae filium sententiam dedit, cum verba pueri mentientis audivit? Quod tamen quia per S. David factum est, et occulto Dei judicio justum credimus, et tamen humana ratione qualiter justum fuerit, non videmus. Quid ergo mirum si ore mentientium aliquando in aliud ducimur, qui prophetae non sumus? Multum vero est quod uniuscujusque praesulis mentem curarum desitas devastat. Cumque animus dividitur ad multa, fit minor ad singula: tantoque ei in una qualibet

re subripitur, quando latius in multis occupatur. PETRUS: Vera sunt valde quae dicis. GREGORIUS: Silere non debeo, quod de hoc viro abbate quondam meo reverentissimo Valentino narrante, agnovi. Aiebat namque quia corpus ejus dum in beati Laurentii martyris oratorio esset humatum, super sepulcrum illius rusticus quidam arcam cum frumento posuit, nec quantus qualisque vir illic jaceret, perpendere ac vereri curavit. Tunc repente turbo coelitus factus, rebus illic omnibus in sua stabilitate manentibus, arcam, quae superposita sepulcro ejus fuerat, extulit, longeque projecit, ut palam cuncti cognoscerent quanti esset meriti is cujus illic corpus jaceret. Etiam ea quae subjungo, praedicti venerabilis viri Fortunati, qui valde mihi aetate, opere et simplicitate placet, relatione cognovi. Eamdem Valeriae provinciam Langobardis intrantibus, ex monasterio reverentissimi viri Equiti in praedicto oratorio ad sepulcrum ejus monachi fugerunt. Cumque Langobardi saevientes oratorium intrassent, coeperunt eosdem monachos foras trahere, ut eos aut per tormenta discuterent, aut gladiis necarent. Quorum unus ingemuit, atque acri dolore commotus clamavit: Heu, heu, sancte Equiti, placet tibi quod trahimur, et nos non defendis? Ad cujus vocem protinus saevientes Langobardos immundus spiritus invasit. Qui corruentes in terram tandiu vexati sunt, quousque hoc cuncti, etiam qui foris erant, Langobardi cognoscerent, quatenus locum sacrum temerare ulterius non auderent. Sicque vir sanctus dum discipulos defendit, etiam multis post remedium illuc fugientibus praestitit.

CAPUT V. De Constantio mansionario Ecclesiae sancti Stephani.

Cujusdam coepiscopi mei didici relatione quod narro: qui in Anconitana urbe per annos multos in monachico habitu deguit, ibique vitam non mediocriter religiosam duxit; cui etiam quidam nostri jam provectioris aetatis, qui ex eisdem sunt partibus, attestantur. Juxta eam namque civitatem ecclesia beati martyris Stephani sita est, in qua vir vitae venerabilis,

Constantius nomine, mansionarii functus officio deserviebat: cujus sanctitatis opinio sese ad notitiam hominum longe lateque tetenderat, quia idem vir funditus terrena despiciens, toto annisu mentis ad sola coelestia flagrabat. Quadam vero die dum in eadem Ecclesia oleum deesset, et praedictus Dei famulus unde lampades accenderet omnino non haberet, omnes lampades Ecclesiae implevit aqua, atque ex more in medio papyrum posuit; quas allato igne succendit, sicque aqua arsit in lampadibus ac si oleum fuisset. Perpende igitur, Petre, cujus meriti vir iste fuerit, qui necessitate compulsus, elementi naturam mutavit. PETRUS: Mirum est valde quod audio; sed nosse vellem cujus humilitatis apud se esse intus potuit iste, qui tantae excellentiae foris fuit. GREGORIUS: Inter virtutes animum congrue requiris, quia multum valde est quod tentatione sua intus mentem lacessunt mira quae foris fiunt. Sed si hujus Constantii venerabilis unum quod fecit audis, cujus humilitatis fuerit, citius agnosces. PETRUS: Postquam facti illius tale miraculum dixisti, superest etiam ut me de humilitate mentis ejus aedifices. GREGORIUS: Quia valde opinio sanctitatis ejus excreverat, multi hunc ex diversis provinciis anxie videre sitiebant. Quadam vero die ex longinquo loco ad videndum eum quidam rusticus venit. Eadem vero hora casu contigerat, ut sanctus vir stans in ligneis gradibus, reficiendis deserviret lampadibus. Erat autem pusillus valde, exili forma atque despecta. Cumque is qui ad videndum eum venerat quisnam esset inquireret, atque obnixe peteret ut sibi debuisset ostendi, hi qui illum noverant monstrarunt quis esset. Sed sicut stultae mentis homines merita ex qualitate corporis metiuntur, eum parvulum atque despectum videns, ipsum hunc esse coepit omnino non credere. In mente etenim rustica inter hoc quod audierat et videbat, quasi facta fuerat quaedam rixa; et aestimabat tam brevem per visionem esse non posse, quem tam ingentem habuerat per opinionem. Cui ipsum esse dum a pluribus fuisset assertum, despexit et coepit irridere, dicens: Ego grandem hominem credidi, iste

autem de homine nihil habet. Quod ut vir Dei Constantius audivit, lampades quas reficiebat protinus laetus relinquens, concitus descendit, atque in ejusdem rustici amplexum ruit, eumque ex amore nimio constringere coepit brachiis, et osculari, magnasque gratias agere quod is de se talia judicasset, dicens: Tu solus in me apertos oculos habuisti. Qua ex re pensandum est cujus apud se humilitatis fuerit, qui despicientem se rusticum amplius amavit. Qualis enim quisque apud se lateat, contumelia illata probat. Nam sicut superbi honoribus, sic plerumque humiles sua despectione gratulantur. Cumque se et in alienis oculis viles aspiciunt, idcirco gaudent, quia hoc judicium confirmari intelligunt, quod de se et ipsi apud semetipsos habuerunt. PETRUS: Ut agnosco, vir iste magnus foris fuit in miraculis, sed major intus in humilitate cordis.

CAPUT VI. De Marcellino Anconitanae civitatis episcopo.

GREGORIUS: Ejusdem quoque Anconitanae antistes Ecclesiae vir vitae venerabilis Marcellinus fuit, cujus gressum dolore nimio podagra contraxerat, eumque familiares sui sicubi necesse erat in manibus ferebant. Quadam vero die per culpam incuriae eadem civitas Anconitana succensa est. Cumque vehementer arderet, concurrerunt omnes ut ignem exstinguerent. Sed illis aquam certatim projicientibus, ita crescebat flamma, ut jam totius urbis interitum minari videretur. Cumque propinquiora sibi quaeque loca ignis invaderet, jamque urbis partem non modicam consumpsisset, et obsistere nullus valeret, deductus in manibus venit episcopus, et tanta periculi necessitate compulsus, familiaribus suis se portantibus praecepit, dicens: Contra ignem me ponite. Quod ita factum est, atque in eo loco est positus, ubi tota vis flammae videbatur incumbere. Coepit autem miro modo in semetipsum incendium retorqueri, ac si reflexione sui impetus exclamaret se episcopum transire non posse. Sicque factum est ut flamma incendii illo termino refrenata, in semetipsa

refrigesceret, et contingere ulterius quidquam aedificii non auderet. Perpendis, Petre, cujus sanctitatis fuerit aegrum hominem sedere, et exorando flammas premere? PETRUS: Et perpendo et obstupesco.

CAPUT VII. De Nonnoso praeposito monasterii in monte Soractis.

GREGORIUS: De vicino nunc loco tibi aliquid narrabo, quod et viri venerabilis Maximiani episcopi, et Laurionis, quem nosti veterani monachi, qui uterque nuncusque superest, relatione cognovi; qui scilicet Laurio in illo monasterio quod juxta Nepesinam urbem Suppentonia vocatur, ab Anastasio viro sanctissimo nutritus est. Qui nimirum Anastasius, vitae venerabilis viro Nonnoso praeposito monasterii, quod in Soractis monte situm est, et propinquitate loci et morum magnitudine, et virtutum studiis assidue jungebatur. Idem vero Nonnosus sub asperrimo sui monasterii degebat Patre: sed ejus mores mira semper aequanimitate tolerabat. Sicque fratribus praeerat in mansuetudine, sicut crebro Patris iracundiam ex humilitate mitigabat. Quia vero ejus monasterium in summo montis cacumine situm est, ad quemlibet parvum hortum fratribus excolendum nulla patebat planities: unus autem brevissimus locus in latere montis excreverat, quem ingentis saxi naturaliter egrediens moles occupabat. Quadam die dum Nonnosus vir venerabilis cogitaret, quod saltem ad condimenta olerum nutrienda locus idem aptus potuisset existere, si hunc moles saxi illius non teneret, occurrit animo, quod eamdem molem quinquaginta boum paria movere non possent. Cumque de humano labore facta esset desperatio, ad divinum se solatium contulit, seque illic nocturno silentio in orationem dedit. Cumque mane facto ad eumdem locum fratres venirent, invenerunt molem tantae magnitudinis ab eodem loco longius recessisse, suoque secessu largum fratribus spatium dedisse. Alio quoque tempore cum idem vir venerabilis lampades vitreas in oratorio lavaret, una ex ejus manibus cecidit, quae per innumeras partes fracta dissiluit: qui

vehementissimum Patris monasterii furorem timens, lampadis protinus omnia fragmenta collegit, atque ante altare posuit, seque cum gravi gemitu in orationem dedit. Cumque ab oratione caput levasset, sanam lampadem reperit, quam timens per fragmenta collegerat. Sicque in duobus miraculis duorum Patrum virtutes imitatus est: in mole scilicet saxi, factum Gregorii qui montem movit; in reparatione vero lampadis, virtutem Donati, qui fractum calicem pristinae incolumitati restituit. PETRUS: Habemus, ut video, de exemplis veteribus nova miracula. GREGORIUS: Visne aliquid in operatione Nonnosi de imitatione quoque Elisaei cognoscere? PETRUS: Volo, atque inhianter cupio. GREGORIUS: Dum quadam die in monasterio vetus oleum deesset, jamque colligendae olivae tempus incumberet, sed fructus in oleis nullus appareret, visum Patri monasterii fuerat ut circumquaque fratres in colligendis olivis ad exhibenda extraneis opera pergerent, quatenus ex mercede sui operis aliquantulum monasterio oleum deportarent. Quod vir Domini Nonnosus fieri cum magna humilitate prohibuit, ne exeuntes fratres ex monasterio dum lucra olei quaererent, animarum damna paterentur. Sed quia in monasterii arboribus olivae paucae inesse videbantur, eas colligi praecepit, et in praelo mitti, et quamlibet parum olei exire potuisset, sibimet deferri. Factumque est, et susceptum in parvo vasculo oleum fratres Nonnoso Dei famulo detulerunt: quod ipse protinus ante altare posuit, cunctisque egredientibus oravit, atque accersitis postmodum fratribus praecepit, ut hoc quod detulerant oleum levarent, et per cuncta vasa monasterii exigue fundendo dividerent, quatenus benedictione ejusdem olei omnia infusa viderentur: quae protinus ut erant vacua claudi fecit. Die vero altera aperta omnia plena reperta sunt. PETRUS: Probamus quotidie impleri verba Veritatis, quae ait: Pater meus usque modo operatur, et ego operor .

CAPUT VIII. De Anastasio abbate monasterii, quod Suppentonia vocatur.

GREGORIUS: Eodem quoque tempore venerandus vir Anastasius, cujus superius memoriam feci, sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae, cui Deo auctore deservio, notarius fuit. Qui soli Deo vacare desiderans, scrinium deseruit, monasterium elegit, atque in eo loco quem praefatus sum, qui Suppentonia vocatur, per annos multos in sanctis actibus vitam duxit, eique monasterio solerti custodia praefuit. Quo videlicet in loco ingens desuper rupes eminet, et profundum subter praecipitium patet. Quadam vero nocte cum jam omnipotens Deus ejusdem venerabilis viri Anastasii labores remunerare decrevisset, ab alta rupe vox facta est, quae producto sonitu clamaret, dicens: Anastasi, veni. Quo vocato alii quoque septem fratres vocati sunt ex nomine. Parvo autem momento ea quae fuerat emissa vox siluit, et octavum fratrem vocavit. Quas dum aperte voces congregatio audisset, dubium non fuit quin eorum qui vocati fuerant obitus appropinquasset. Intra paucos igitur dies primus venerandus vir Anastasius, caeteri autem in eo ordine ex carne educti sunt, quo de rupis vertice fuerant vocati. Frater vero ille ad quem vocandum vox parum siluit, atque eum ita nominavit, morientibus aliis, paucis diebus vixit, et tunc vitam finivit; ut aperte monstraretur quia interjectum vocis silentium parvum vivendi spatium signaverit. Sed mira res contigit, quia venerabilis vir Anastasius dum de corpore exiret, erat quidam frater in monasterio qui super cum vivere nolebat: provolutus vero ejus pedibus coepit cum lacrymis ab eo postulare, dicens: Per illum ad quem vadis, te adjuro, ne septem dies super te in hoc mundo faciam; ante cujus septimum diem etiam ipse defunctus est, qui tamen in illa nocte inter caeteros non fuerat vocatus, ut aperte claresceret, quia ejus obitum sola venerabilis Anastasii intercessio obtinere potuisset. PETRUS: Cum idem frater et vocatus inter caeteros non est, et tamen sancti viri intercessionibus ex hac luce subtractus est, quid aliud datur intelligi, nisi quod hi qui apud Dominum magni sunt meriti, obtinere aliquando possunt ea etiam quae non sunt praedestinata? GREGORIUS: Obtineri nequaquam possunt quae

praedestinata non fuerint; sed ea quae sancti viri orando efficiunt, ita praedestinata sunt, ut precibus obtineantur. Nam ipsa quoque perennis regni praedestinatio ita est ab omnipotenti Deo disposita, ut ad hoc electi ex labore perveniant, quatenus postulando mereantur accipere quod eis omnipotens Deus ante saecula disposuit donare. PETRUS: Probari mihi apertius velim, si potest praedestinatio precibus juvari. GREGORIUS: Hoc quod ego, Petre, intuli, concite valet probari. Certe etenim nosti, quia ad S. Abraham Dominus dixit: In Isaac vocabitur tibi semen. Cui etiam dixerat: Patrem multarum gentium constitui te . Cui rursum promisit, dicens: Benedicam tibi, et multiplicabo semen tuum sicut stellas coeli, et sicut arenam quae est in littore maris. Ex qua re aperte constat quia omnipotens Deus semen Abrahae multiplicare per Isaac praedestinaverat, et tamen scriptum est: Deprecatus est Isaac Dominum pro uxore sua, eo quod esset sterilis, qui exaudivit eum, et dedit conceptum Rebeccae. Si ergo multiplicatio generis Abrahae per Isaac praedestinata fuit, cur conjugem sterilem accepit? Sed nimirum constat quia praedestinatio precibus impletur, quando is in quo Deus multiplicare semen Abrahae praedestinaverat, oratione obtinuit ut filios habere potuisset. PETRUS: Quia secretum ratio aperuit nihil mihi dubietatis remansit. GREGORIUS: Vis tibi aliquid de Tusciae partibus narrem, ut cognoscas quales in ea viri fuerint, et omnipotentis Dei notitiae quantum propinqui? PETRUS: Volo, atque hoc omnimodo exposco.

CAPUT IX. De Bonifacio Ferentinae civitatis episcopo.

GREGORIUS: Fuit vir vitae venerabilis Bonifacius nomine, qui in ea civitate quae Ferentis dicitur episcopatum officio tenuit, et moribus implevit. Hujus multa miracula is qui adhuc superest Gaudentius presbyter narrat. Qui nutritus in ejus obsequio, tanto valet de illo quaeque veracius dicere, quanto eis hunc contigit interesse. Hujus Ecclesiae gravis valde

paupertas inerat, quae bonis mentibus esse solet custos humilitatis, nihilque aliud ad omne stipendium, nisi unam tantummodo vineam habebat: quae quodam die ita grandine irruente vastata est, ut in ea paucis in vitibus vix parvi rarique racemi remanerent. Quam cum Dei praedictus vir reverentissimus Bonifacius episcopus fuisset ingressus, magnas omnipotenti Deo gratias retulit, quia in ipsa sua adhuc inopia sese angustiari cognovit. Sed cum jam tempus exigeret ut ipsi quoque racemi qui remanserant, maturescere potuissent custodem vineae ex more posuit, eamque solerti vigilantia servari praecepit. Quadam vero die mandavit Constantio presbytero nepoti suo, ut cuncta vini vascula in episcopio, omniaque dolia, ita ut ante consueverat, pice superfusa praepararet. Quod cum nepos illius presbyter audisset, valde admiratus est quod quasi insana praeciperet, ut vini vascula praeparari faceret, qui vinum minime haberet; nec tamen praesumpsit inquirere cur talia juberet, sed jussis obtemperans, omnia ex more praeparavit. Tunc vir Dei vineam ingressus racemos collegit, ad calcatorium detulit, omnesque exinde egredi praecepit, solusque ibi cum uno parvulo puerulo remansit, quem in eodem calcatorio deposuit, et calcare ipsos paucissimos racemos fecit. Cumque ex iisdem racemis parum aliquid vini deflueret, coepit hoc vir Dei suis manibus in parvo vase suscipere, et per cuncta dolia omniaque vasa quae parata fuerant, pro benedictione dividere, ut ex eodem vino omnia vascula vix infusa viderentur. Cum vero ex liquore vini parum aliquid in vasis omnibus misisset, vocato protinus presbytero, jussit pauperes adesse. Tunc coepit vinum in calcatorio crescere ita ut omnia quae allata fuerant pauperum vascula impleret. Quibus cum se idonee satisfecisse conspiceret, ex calcatorio jussit puerum descendere, apothecam clausit, atque impresso sigillo proprio munitam reliquit, moxque ad Ecclesiam rediit. Die vero tertia praedictum Constantium presbyterum vocavit, et oratione facta apothecam aperuit, et vasa in quibus tenuissimum liquorem infuderat, ubertim vinum

fundentia invenit, ita ut pavimentum omne excrescentia vina invaderent, si adhuc episcopus tardius intrasset. Tunc terribiliter presbytero praecepit ne quousque ipse in corpore viveret, hoc miraculum cuiquam indicaret; pertimescens videlicet ne in virtute facti favore humano pulsatus, inde intus inanesceret, unde foris hominibus magnus appareret: exemplum etiam Magistri sequens, qui ut nos ad viam humilitatis instrueret, de semetipso discipulis praecepit, dicens ut ea quae vidissent, nemini dicerent, quousque Filius hominis a mortuis resurgeret. PETRUS: Quia occasio apta se praebuit, libet inquirere quidnam sit quod Redemptor noster cum duobus caecis lumen reddidit, jussit ut nemini dicerent, et illi abeuntes diffamaverunt eum in totam terram illam. Nunquidnam unigenitus Filius, Patri et sancto Spiritui coaeternus, hac in re velle habuit, quod non potuit implere, ut miraculum quod taceri voluit, minime potuisset abscondi? GREGORIUS: Redemptor noster per mortale corpus omne quod egit, hoc nobis in exemplum actionis praebuit, ut pro nostrarum virium modulo ejus vestigia sequentes, inoffenso pede operis praesentis vitae carpamus viam. Miraculum namque faciens, et taceri jussit, et tamen taceri non potuit; ut videlicet et electi ejus exempla doctrinae illius sequentes, in magnis quae faciunt, latere quidem in voluntate habeant, sed ut prosint aliis, prodantur inviti; quatenus et magnae humilitatis sit quod sua opera taceri appetunt, et magnae utilitatis sit quod eorum opera taceri non possunt. Non ergo voluit Dominus quidquam fieri, et minime potuit; sed quid velle ejus membra debeant, quidve de eis etiam nolentibus fiat, doctrinae magisterio exemplum dedit. PETRUS: Placet quod dicis. GREGORIUS: Adhuc pauca aliqua quae de Bonifacii episcopi opere supersunt, quia ejus memoriam fecimus, exsequamur. Alio namque tempore beati Proculi martyris natalitius propinquabat dies, quo in loco vir nobilis Fortunatus nomine manebat: qui magnis precibus ab eodem venerabili viro postulavit ut cum apud beatum martyrem missarum solemnia ageret, ad benedictionem dandam in suam

domum declinaret. Vir autem Dei negare non potuit quod ab eo ex Fortunati mente charitas poposcit. Peractis igitur missarum solemniis, cum ad praedicti Fortunati venisset mensam, prius quam Deo hymnum diceret, sicut quidam ludendi arte victum solent quaerere, repente ante januam cum simia vir astitit, et cymbala percussit. Quem sanctus vir sonitum audiens dedignatus, dixit: Heu, heu, mortuus est miser iste, mortuus est miser iste. Ego ad mensam refectionis veni, os adhuc ad laudem Dei non aperui, et ille cum simia veniens percussit cymbala. Subjunxit tamen et ait: Ite et pro charitate ei cibum potumque tribuite; scitote tamen quia mortuus est. Qui infelix vir dum panem ac vinum ex eadem domo percepisset, egredi januam voluit, sed saxum ingens subito de tecto cecidit, eique in verticem venit. Ex qua percussione prostratus in manibus jam semivivus levatus est: die vero altera secundum viri Dei sententiam funditus finivit vitam. Qua in re, Petre, pensandum est quantus sit viris sanctis timor exhibendus; templa enim Dei sunt. Et cum ad iracundiam vir sanctus trahitur, quis alius ad irascendum nisi ejusdem templi inhabitator excitatur? Metuenda ergo tanto est ira justorum, quanto et constat quia in eorum cordibus ille praesens est, qui ad inferendam ultionem quam voluerit, invalidus non est. Alio quoque tempore praedictus Constantius presbyter nepos ejus, equum suum duodecim aureis vendidit, quos in propriam arcam ponens, ad exercendum opus aliquod discessit. Cum subito ad episcopium pauperes venerunt, qui importune precabantur ut eis sanctus vir Bonifacius episcopus ad consolationem suae inopiae aliquid largiri debuisset. Sed vir Dei quia quid tribueret non habebat, aestuare coepit in cogitatione ne ab eo pauperes vacui exirent. Cui repente ad memoriam rediit, quia Constantius presbyter nepos ejus, equum quem sedere consueverat, vendidisset, atque hoc ipsum in arca sua pretium haberet. Absente igitur eodem nepote suo accessit ad arcam, et pie violentus claustra arcae comminuit, duodecim aureos tulit, eosque indigentibus, ut placuit, divisit. Itaque Constantius presbyter reversus ex opere, arcam

fractam reperit, et caballi sui pretium quod in eam posuerat, non invenit. Coepit itaque voce magna perstrepere, et cum furore nimio clamare: Omnes hic vivunt, solus ego in domo hac vivere non possum. Ad cujus nimirum voces venit episcopus, omnesque qui in eodem episcopio aderant. Cumque eum locutione blanda vir Dei temperare voluisset, coepit ille cum jurgio respondere, dicens: Omnes tecum vivunt, solus ego hic ante te vivere non possum: redde mihi solidos meos. Quibus vocibus commotus episcopus, beatae Mariae semper virginis Ecclesiam ingressus est, et elevatis manibus extenso vestimento, stando coepit exorare, ut ei redderet unde presbyteri furentis insaniam mitigare potuisset. Cumque subito oculos ad vestimentum suum inter extensa brachia reduxisset, repente in sinu suo duodecim aureos invenit ita fulgentes, tanquam si ex igne producti eadem hora fuissent. Qui mox de Ecclesia egressus, eos in sinum furentis presbyteri projecit, dicens: Ecce habes solidos quos quaesisti; sed hoc tibi notum sit, quia post mortem meam tu hujus Ecclesiae episcopus non eris propter avaritiam tuam. Ex qua sententiae veritate colligitur quia, eosdem solidos presbyter pro adipiscendo episcopatu parabat. Sed viri Dei sermo praevaluit, nam idem Constantius in presbyteratus officio vitam finivit. Alio quoque tempore duo ad eum Gothi hospitalitatis gratia venerunt, qui Ravennam se festinare professi sunt. Quibus ipse parvum vas ligneum vino plenum manu sua praebuit, quod fortasse in prandio itineris habere potuissent: ex quo illi quoadusque Ravennam pervenirent, biberunt Gothi. Aliquantis autem diebus in eadem civitate morati sunt, et vinum quod a sancto viro acceperant, quotidie in usu habuerunt. Sicque usque ad eumdem venerabilem Patrem Ferentis reversi sunt, ut nullo die cessarent bibere, et tamen vinum eis ex illo vasculo nunquam deesset, ac si in illo vase ligneo quod Episcopus dederat, vinum non augeretur, sed nasceretur. Nuper quoque de ejusdem loci partibus senex quidam clericus advenit, qui ea de illo narrat, quae silentio non sunt premenda. Nam dicit quod quadam die ingressus hortum, magna hunc

erucae multitudine invenit esse coopertum: qui omne olus deperire conspiciens, ad easdem erucas conversus, dixit: Adjuro vos in nomine Domini Dei nostri Jesu Christi, recedite hinc, atque haec olera comedere nolite. Quae statim ad viri Dei verbum ita omnes egressae sunt, ut ne una quidem intra spatium horti remaneret. Sed quid mirum quod haec de episcopatus ejus tempore narramus, quando jam apud omnipotentem Deum ordine simul et moribus creverat, dum illa magis miranda sint quae eum hic senex clericus adhuc puerulum fecisse testatur? Nam ait quod eo tempore quo cum matre sua puer habitabat, egressus hospitium, nonnunquam sine linea, crebro etiam sine tunica revertebatur, quia mox ut nudum quempiam reperisset, vestiebat hunc, se expolians, ut se ante Dei oculos illius mercede vestiret. Quem mater sua frequenter increpare consueverat, dicens quod justum non esset ut ipse inops pauperibus vestimenta largiretur. Quae die quadam horreum ingressa, pene omne triticum quod sibi in stipendio totius anni paraverat, invenit a filio suo pauperibus expensum. Cumque semetipsam alapis pugnisque tunderet, quod quasi anni subsidia perdidisset, supervenit Bonifacius puer Dei, eamque verbis quibus valuit consolari coepit. Quae cum nihil consolationis admitteret, hanc rogavit ut ab horreo exire debuisset, in quo ex omni eorum tritico parum quid inventum est remansisse. Puer autem Dei sese illic protinus in orationem dedit, qui post paululum egressus, ad horreum matrem reduxit, quod ita tritico plenum inventum est, sicut plenum ante non fuerat, cum mater illius totius anni sumptus se congregasse gaudebat. Quo viso miraculo cumpuncta mater, ipsa jam coepit agere ut daret, qui sic celeriter posset quae petiisset accipere. Haec itaque in hospitii sui vestibulo gallinas nutrire consueverat: sed eas ex vicino rure vulpes veniens auferebat. Quadam vero die dum in eodem vestibulo puer Bonifacius staret, vulpes ex more venit, et gallinam abstulit. Ipse autem concitus Ecclesiam intravit, et se in orationem prosternens, apertis vocibus dixit: Placet tibi, Domine, ut de nutrimentis

matris meae manducare non possim? Ecce enim gallinas quas nutrit vulpes comedit. Qui ab oratione surgens, Ecclesiam est egressus. Mox autem vulpes rediit, gallinam quam ore tenebat dimisit, atque ipsa moriens ante ejus oculos in terram cecidit. PETRUS: Valde mirum quod exaudire preces in se sperantium etiam in rebus vilibus dignatur Deus. GREGORIUS: Hoc, Petre, ex magna Conditoris nostri dispensatione agitur, ut per minima quae percipimus, sperare majora debeamus; exauditus namque est in rebus vilibus puer sanctus et simplex, ut in parvis disceret quantum de Deo praesumere in magnis petitionibus deberet. PETRUS: Placet quod dicis.

CAPUT X. De Fortunato Tudertinae civitatis episcopo.

GREGORIUS: Alius quoque vir vitae venerabilis in eisdem partibus fuit Fortunatus nomine, Tudertinae antistes Ecclesiae, qui in effugandis spiritibus immensae virtutis gratia pollebat, ita ut nonnunquam ab obsessis corporibus legiones daemonum pelleret, et continuae orationis studio intentus, objectas contra se eorum multitudines superaret. Hujus viri familiarissimus fuit Julianus nostrae Ecclesiae defensor, qui ante non longum tempus in hac urbe defunctus est. Cujus ego quoque hoc didici relatione quod narro, quia saepe gestis illius ausu familiaritatis intererat, ejusque post memoriam ad instructionem nostram quasi favi dulcedinem in ore retinebat. Matrona quaedam nobilis in vicinis partibus Tusciae nurum habebat, quae intra breve tempus quo filium ejus acceperat, cum eadem socru sua ad dedicationem oratorii beati Sebastiani martyris fuerat invitata. Nocte vero eadem qua subsequente die ad dedicationem praedicti oratorii fuerat processura, voluptate carnis devicta, a viro suo sese abstinere non potuit; cumque mane facto conscientiam deterreret perpetrata carnis delectatio, processionem vero imperaret verecundia, plus erubescens vultum hominum, quam Dei judicium metuens, cum socru sua ad dedicationem oratorii processit. Mox vero ut reliquiae beati Sebastiani martyris oratorium

ingressae sunt, eamdem praedictae matronae nurum malignus spiritus arripuit, et coram omni populo vexare coepit. Ejusdem vero oratorii presbyter dum eam vehementissime vexari conspiceret, ex altari protinus sindonem tulit, eamque operuit; sed hunc simul repente diabolus invasit. Et quia ultra vires voluit quidquam praesumere, compulsus est cognoscere in sua vexatione quid esset. Hi vero qui aderant, puellam in manibus ex oratorio sublatam ad domum propriam deportaverunt. Cumque hanc antiquus hostis vexatione continua vehementer attereret, propinqui sui eam carnaliter amantes, et amando persequentes, ad obtinendum salutis remedium maleficis tradiderunt; ut ejus animam funditus exstinguerent, cujus carni magicis artibus ad tempus prodesse conarentur. Ducta est itaque ad fluvium, atque in aquam mersa; ibique diutius incantationibus agere malefici moliebantur, ut is qui eam invaserat diabolus exiret. Sed miro omnipotentis Dei judicio, dum arte perversa unus ab ea repellitur, in eam subito legio intravit. Coepit ex hoc illa tot motibus agitari, tot vocibus clamoribusque perstrepere, quot spiritibus tenebatur. Tunc inito consilio parentes ejus suae perfidiae culpam fatentes, hanc ad venerabilem virum Fortunatum episcopum duxerunt, eique reliquerunt. Qua ille suscepta, multis se diebus ac noctibus in orationem dedit; tantoque annisu precibus incubuit, quanto et in uno corpore contra se assistere legionis aciem invenit. Cum non post multos dies ita sanam atque incolumen reddidit, ac si in ea jus proprium diabolus nunquam habuisset. Alio quoque tempore idem vir omnipotentis Dei famulus ex obsesso quodam homine immundum spiritum excussit. Qui malignus spiritus cum vesperascente jam die secretam ab hominibus horam cerneret, peregrinum quempiam esse se simulans, circuire coepit civitatis plateas et clamare: O virum sanctum Fortunatum episcopum! ecce quid fecit? peregrinum hominem de hospitio suo expulit. Quaero ubi requiescere debeam, et in civitate ejus non invenio. Tunc quidam in hospitio cum uxore sua et parvulo filio ad prunas sedebat, qui

vocem ejus audiens, et quid episcopus ei fecerit requirens, hunc invitavit hospitio, sedere secum juxta prunas fecit. Cumque vicissim aliqua confabularentur, parvulum ejus filium idem malignus spiritus invasit, atque in easdem prunas projecit, ibique mox ejus animam excussit. Qui orbatus miser, vel quem ipse susceperit, vel quem episcopus expulisset, agnovit. PETRUS: Quidnam hoc esse dicimus, ut occidendi ausum in ejus hospitio antiquus hostis acciperet, qui hunc peregrinum aestimans, ad se hospitalitatis gratia vocasset? GREGORIUS: Multa, Petre, videntur bona, sed non sunt, quia bono animo non fiunt. Unde et in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Si oculus tuus nequam fuerit, totum corpus tuum tenebrosum erit. Quia cum perversa est intentio quae praecedit, pravum est omne opus quod sequitur, quamvis esse rectum videatur. Ego namque hunc virum, qui dum quasi hospitalitatem exhiberet orbatus est, non pietatis opere delectatum aestimo, sed episcopi derogatione; nam poena subsequens innotuit, quia praecedens illa susceptio sine culpa non fuit. Sunt namque nonnulli, qui idcirco bona facere student, ut gratiam alienae operationis obnubilent; nec pascuntur bono quod faciunt, sed laude boni qua caeteros premunt. Qua de re existimo hunc virum qui malignum spiritum in hospitalitatem suscepit, ostentationi potius intendisse quam operi, ut meliora quam episcopus fecisse videretur; quatenus ipse susciperet eum, quem vir Domini Fortunatus expulisset. PETRUS: Ita est ut dicis; nam finis operis probabat, quod munda intentio in operatione non fuerit. GREGORIUS: Alio quoque tempore, cum oculorum quidam lumen amisisset, ad hunc deductus intercessionis ejus opem petiit, et impetravit. Nam cum vir Dei oratione facta oculis ejus signum crucis imprimeret, ab eis, protinus luce reddita, nox caecitatis abscessit. Praeterea equus cujusdam militis in rabiem fuerat versus, ita ut a multis teneri vix posset: sed et quoscunque potuisset invadere, eorum membra morsibus dilaniaret. Tunc utcunque a multis ligatus ad virum Dei deductus est. Qui mox ejus capiti extensa manu signum crucis edidit, cunctam ejus rabiem in

mansuetudinem mutavit, ita ut postea mitior existeret, quam ante illam insaniam fuisset. Tunc idem miles equum suum, quem celerrimo miraculi imperio a sua vesania vidit immutatum, eidem sancto viro decrevit offerendum. Quem cum suscipere ille renueret, ipse vero in precibus, ne despiceretur ejus oblatio, perseveraret, sanctus vir mediam duarum partium viam tenens, et petitionem militis audivit, et munus recipere pro exhibita virtute recusavit; prius namque dignum pretium praebuit, et postea equum qui sibi offerebatur accepit. Quia enim si non susciperet, eum contristari conspexerat, charitate cogente emit quod necessarium non habebat. Neque hoc silere de hujus viri virtutibus debeo, quod ante dies fere duodecim agnovi. Quidam namque ad me deductus est senex pauper; atque ut mihi senum collocutio esse semper amabilis solet, studiose hunc unde esset inquisivi, qui se esse de Tudertina civitate respondit. Cui inquam: Quaeso te, Pater, num Fortunatum episcopum nosti? Qui ait: Novi, et bene novi. Tunc ipse subjunxi: Dic, rogo, si qua illius miracula nosti, et desideranti mihi qualis vir fuerit innotesce. Qui ait: Homo ille longe fuit ab istis hominibus quos videmus modo. Nam quidquid ab omnipotenti Deo petiit, ita dum peteret impetravit. Cujus hoc unum narro miraculum, quod ad praesens animo occurrit. Quadam namque die Gothi juxta Tudertinam civitatem venerunt, qui ad partes Ravennae properabant, et duos parvos puerulos de possessione abstulerant, quae possessio praefatae Tudertinae civitati subjacebat. Hoc cum viro sanctissimo Fortunato nuntiatum fuisset, protinus misit, atque eosdem Gothos ad se evocari fecit. Quos blando sermone alloquens, eorum prius studuit asperitatem placare, ac post intulit, dicens: Quale vultis pretium dabo, et puerulos quos abstulistis reddite, mihique hoc gratiae vestrae munus praebete. Tunc is qui prior eorum esse videbatur, respondit dicens: Quidquid aliud praecipis, facere parati sumus, nam istos puerulos nullatenus reddemus. Cui venerandus vir blande minatus est, dicens: Contristas me, fili, et non audis patrem tuum: noli me

contristare, ne non expediat tibi. Sed idem Gothus in cordis sui feritate permanens, negando discessit. Die vero altera digressurus, rursus ad episcopum venit, quem eisdem verbis pro praedictis puerulis iterum episcopus rogavit. Cumque ad reddendum nullo modo consentire voluisset, contristatus episcopus dixit: Scio quia tibi non expedit quod me contristato discedis. Quae Gothus verba despexit, atque ad hospitium reversus, eosdem pueros de quibus agebatur, equis superimpositos cum suis hominibus praemisit. Ipse vero statim ascendens equum subsecutus est. Cumque in eadem civitate ante beati Petri apostoli ecclesiam venisset, equo ejus pes lapsus est; qui cum eo corruit, et ejus coxa mox fracta est, ita ut in duabus partibus os esset divisum. Tunc levatus in manibus, reductus est ad hospitium. Qui festinus misit, et pueros quos praemiserat reduxit, et viro venerabili Fortunato mandavit, dicens: Rogo te, Pater, mitte ad me diaconum tuum. Cujus diaconus dum ad jacentem venisset, pueros quos redditurum se episcopo omnino negaverat, ad medium deduxit, eosque diacono illius reddidit, dicens: Vade, et dic domino meo episcopo: Quia maledixisti mihi, ecce percussus sum; sed pueros quos quaesisti, recipe, et pro me, rogo, intercede. Susceptos itaque puerulos diaconus ad episcopum reduxit, cui benedictam aquam venerabilis Fortunatus statim dedit, dicens: Vade citius, et eam super jacentis corpus projice. Perrexit itaque diaconus, atque ad Gothum introgressus, benedictam aquam super membra illius aspersit. Res mira et vehementer stupenda! mox ut aqua benedicta Gothi coxam contigit, ita omnis fractura solidata est, et saluti pristinae coxa restituta, ut hora eadem de lecto surgeret, et ascenso equo ita coeptum iter ageret, ac si nullam unquam laesionem corporis pertulisset. Factumque est ut qui sancto viro Fortunato pueros cum pretio reddere obedientiae subjectus noluit, eos sine pretio poena subactus daret. His igitur expletis studebat adhuc senex de eo et alia narrare. Sed quia nonnulli aderant ad quos exhortandos occupabar, jamque diei tardior hora incubuerat,

venerabilis Fortunati facta diu mihi audire non licuit, quae audire, si liceat, semper volo. Sed die alia idem senex rem de illo magis adhuc mirabilem narravit, dicens: In eadem Tudertina urbe Marcellus quidam, bonae actionis vir, cum duabus sororibus suis habitabat: qui eveniente molestia corporis, ipso sacratissimo vesperascente jam Sabbato paschali, defunctus est. Cujus corpus cum longius esset efferendum, die eodem sepeliri non potuit. Cumque mora esset temporis ad explendum debitum sepulturae, sorores ejus, morte ejus afflictae, cucurrerunt flentes ad venerabilem virum Fortunatum, eique magnis vocibus clamare coeperunt: Scimus quia apostolorum vitam tenes, leprosos mundas, caecos illuminas, veni, et resuscita mortuum nostrum. Qui mox ut cognovit earum fratrem defunctum, flere ipse etiam de morte ejus coepit, eisque respondit, dicens: Recedite, et haec dicere nolite, quia fussio omnipotentis Dei est, cui contraire nullus hominum potest. Illis itaque discedentibus, tristis ex morte ejus mansit episcopus. Subsequente autem die Dominico ante exsurgentis lucis crepusculum, vocatis duobus diaconibus suis, perrexit ad domum defuncti; accedensque ad locum ubi corpus jacebat exanime, ibi se in orationem dedit. Expleta autem prece surrexit, et juxta corpus defuncti sedit; non autem grandi voce defunctum per nomen vocavit, dicens: Frater Marcelle. Ille autem, ac si leviter dormiens, ad vicinam vocem quamvis modicam fuisset excitatus, statim oculos aperuit, atque ad episcopum respiciens, dixit: O quid fecisti? o quid fecisti? Cui episcopus respondit, dicens: Quid feci? At ille: Duo hesterno die venerunt, qui me ejicientes ex corpore in bonum locum duxerunt, hodie autem unus missus est qui dixit: Reducite eum, quia Fortunatus episcopus in domum ejus venit. Quibus verbis expletis, mox ex infirmitate convaluit, et in hac vita diutius mansit. Nec tamen credendum est quia locum quem acceperat perdidit, quia dubium non est quod intercessoris sui precibus potuit post mortem melius vivere, qui et ante mortem studuit omnipotenti Deo placere. Sed cur multa de ejus vita

dicimus, cum nunc usque ad corpus illius tot virtutum documenta teneamus? Daemoniacos quippe absolvere, aegros curare quoties ex fide petitur, ut vivus consueverat hoc indesinenter facere, et apud mortua sua ossa perseverat. Sed libet, Petre, adhuc ad Valeriae provinciae partes narrationis meae verba reducere, de quibus me eximia valde miracula ex ore venerabilis Fortunati, cujus longe superius memoriam feci, contigit audisse. Qui crebro ad me nunc usque veniens, dum facta mihi veterum narrat, nova refectione me satiat.

CAPUT XI. De Martyrio monacho provinciae Valeriae.

Quidam namque in eadem provincia, Martyrius nomine, devotus valde omnipotentis Dei famulus exstitit, qui hoc de virtutis suae testimonio signum dedit. Dum quadam die fratres illius panem subcinericium fecissent, eique obliti essent crucis signum imprimere, sicut in hac provincia crudi panes ligno signari solent, ut per quadras quatuor partiti videantur, idem Dei famulus adfuit, eisque referentibus signatum non fuisse cognovit. Cumque jam panis ille prunis esset et cineribus coopertus, dixit: Quare hunc minime signastis? Qui hoc dicens, signum crucis digito contra prunas fecit. Quo signante protinus immensum crepitum panis dedit, ac si ingens in ignibus olla crepuisset. Qui dum coctus postmodum fuisset ab igne subtractus, ea cruce signatus inventus est, quam non contactus, sed fides fecit.

CAPUT XII. De Severo presbytero ejusdem provinciae.

In eo etiam loco Interorina vallis dicitur, quae a multis verbo rustico Interocrina nominatur, in qua erat quidam vir vitae valde admirabilis, nomine Severus, Ecclesiae beatae Mariae Dei genitricis semper virgnis sacerdos. Hunc cum quidam paterfamilias ad extremum venisset diem, missis concite nuntiis, rogavit ut ad se quantocius veniret, suisque orationibus pro peccatis ejus intercederet, ut, acta de malis suis poenitentia,

solutus culpa ex corpore exiret. Qui videlicet sacerdos inopinate contigit ut ad putandam vineam esset occupatus, atque ad se venientibus diceret: Antecedite, ecce ego vos subsequor. Cumque videret sibi in eodem opere parum aliquid superesse, paululum moram fecit, ut opus quod minimum restabat expleret, quo expleto, coepit ad aegrum pergere. Eunti vero in itinere occurrentes hi qui prius venerant, obviam facti sunt, dicentes: Pater, quare tardasti? Noli fatigari, quia jam defunctus est. Quo audito, ille contremuit, magnisque vocibus se interfectorem illius clamare coepit. Flens itaque pervenit ad corpus defuncti, seque coram lecto illius cum lacrymis in terram dedit. Cumque vehementer fleret, in terram caput funderet, seque reum mortis illius clamaret, repente is qui defunctus fuerat animam recepit. Quod dum multi qui circumstabant aspicerent, admirationis vocibus emissis, coeperunt amplius flere prae gaudio. Cumque eum requirerent ubi fuerit, vel quomodo rediisset, ait: Tetri valde erant homines qui me ducebant, ex quorum ore et naribus ignis exibat, quem tolerare non poteram. Cumque per obscura loca me ducerent, subito pulchrae visionis juvenis cum aliis nobis euntibus obviam factus est, qui me trahentibus dixit: Reducite illum, quia Severus presbyter plangit, ejus enim lacrymis Dominus eum donavit. Qui scilicet Severus protinus de terra surrexit, eique poenitentiam agenti opem suae intercessionis praebuit. Et dum per dies septem de perpetratis culpis poenitentiam aeger redivivus ageret, octava die laetus de corpore exivit. Perpende, Petre, quaeso, hunc de quo loquimur Severum, quam dilectum Dominus attendit, quem contristari nec ad modicum pertulit. PETRUS: Admiranda sunt valde haec, quae me invenio nunc usque latuisse. Sed quid esse dicimus quod modo tales viri nequeunt inveniri. GREGORIUS: Ego, Petre, multos tales in hoc saeculo nec modo deesse existimo: neque enim si talia signa non faciunt, ideo tales non sunt. Vitae namque vera aestimatio in virtute est operum, non in ostensione signorum. Nam sunt plerique, qui etsi signa non faciunt, signa tamen facientibus

dispares non sunt. PETRUS: Unde mihi, rogo, ostendi potest, quod sint quidam qui signa non faciunt, et tamen signa facientibus dissimiles non sunt? GREGORIUS: Numquidnam nescis quoniam Paulus apostolus Petro apostolorum primo in principatu apostolico frater est? PETRUS: Scio plane, nec dubium est quia etsi minimus omnium apostolorum, plus tamen omnibus laboravit. GREGORIUS: Quod bene ipse reminisceris, Petrus super mare pedibus ambulavit, Paulus in mari naufragium pertulit: et in uno eodemque elemento ibi Paulus ire cum navi non potuit, ubi Petrus pedibus iter fecit. Aperte igitur constat, quia cum utriusque virtus fuerit dispar in miraculo, utriusque tamen meritum dispar non est in coelo. PETRUS: Placet, fateor, omnino quod dicis: ecce enim aperte novi, quia vita et non signa quaerenda sunt. Sed quoniam ipsa signa quae fiunt, bonae vitae testimonium ferunt, quaeso te adhuc si qua sunt referas, ut esurientem me per exempla bonorum pascas. GREGORIUS: Vellem tibi in laudibus redemptoris de viri venerabilis Benedicti miraculis aliqua narrare, sed ad haec explenda hodiernum tempus video non posse sufficere. Liberius itaque haec loquemur, si aliud exordium sumamus.

Liber II

CAPUT I. Ortus, educatio, capisterium precibus reparatum: Vita in specu Sublacensi acta. Regimen monasterii relictum.

Fvit vir vitae venerabilis, gratia Benedictus et nomine, ab ipso suae pueritiae tempore cor gerens senile. Aetatem quippe moribus transiens, nulli voluptati animum dedit: sed dum in hac terra adhuc esset, quo temporaliter libere adhuc vti potuisset, despexit iam, quasi aridum mundum cum flore. Qui liberiori genere ex a prouincia Nursiae exortus, [Natus in prouincia Nursiae,] Romae liberalibus studiis traditus fuerat: sed cum in eis multos ire per abrupta vitiorum cerneret, eum, quem quasi in ingressu mundi posuerat, retraxit pedem: ne si quid de scientia eius attingeret, ipse quoque in immane praecipitium totus iret. Despectis itaque litterarum studiis, relicta domo rebusque patris, [studia Romae coepta deserit.] soli Deo placere desiderans, sanctae conuersationis habitum quaesiuit. Recessit igitur scienter nesciens, et sapienter indoctus. Huius ego omnia gesta non didici: sed pauca, quae narro, quatuor discipulis illius referentibus, agnoui: Constantino scilicet, reuerendissimo valde viro, qui ei in monasterii regimine successit; Valentiniano quoque, qui annis multis Lateranensi monasterio praefuit; Simplicio, qui congregationem illius post eum tertius rexit: Honorato etiam, qui nunc adhuc cellae eius, in qua prius conversatus fuerat, praeest.

Hic itaque cum iam, relictis litterarum studiis, petere deserta decreuisset, [Effiden cum nutrice discedit:] nutrix, quae hunc arctius amabat, sola secuta est. Cumque ad locum venissent, qui Effide dicitur, multisque honestioribus viris pro caritate se illic detinentibus in B. Petri ecclesia demorarentur, praedicta nutrix illius ad purgandum triticum a vicinis mulieribus praestari sibi capisterium petiit: quod super mensam incaute derelictum, casu accidente fractum est, sic vt in duabus partibus inveniretur divisum. Quod

mox rediens nutrix illius, vt ita inuenit, [fractum capisterium oratione integrum reddit,] vehementissime flere coepit, quia vas, quod praestitum acceperat, fractum videbat. Benedictus autem religiosus et pius puer, cum nutricem suam flere conspiceret, eius dolori compassus, ablatis secum vtrisque fracti capisterii partibus, sese cum lacrymis in orationem dedit: qui ab oratione surgens, ita iuxta se vas sanum reperit, vt in eo inueniri fracturae nulla vestigia potuissent: moxque nutricem suam blande consolatus, ei sanum capisterium reddidit, quod fractum tulerat. Quae res in eodem loco a cunctis est agnita, atque in tanta admiratione habita, [diu in ecclesia suspensum] vt hoc ipsum capisterium eius loci incolae in ecclesiae ingressu suspenderent, quatenus et praesentes et secuturi omnes agnoscerent, Benedictus puer conuersationis gratiam quanta perfectione coepisset. Quod annis multis illic ante omnium oculos fuit, et vsque ad haec Longobardorum tempora super fores ecclesiae pependit. Sed Benedictus plus appetens mala mundi perpeti quam laudari, et pro Deo laboribus fatigari quam vitae huius fauoribus extolli; nutricem suam occulte fugiens, deserti loci secessum petiit, cui Sublacus vocabulum est: [Sublacum solus fugit,] qui ab Romana vrbe quadraginta fere millibus distans, frigidas atque perspicuas emanat aquas: quae illic videlicet aquarum abundantia in extenso prius lacu colligitur, ad extremum vero in amnem derivatur. Quo dum fugiens pergeret, monachus quidam, Romanus nomine, hunc euntem reperit: quo tenderet, requisivit. Cuius cum desiderium cognouisset, et secretum tenuit et adiutorium impendit, [in specu 3 annos degit:] eique sanctae conuersationis habitum tradidit, et inquantum licuit ministrauit. Vir autem Dei ad eumdem locum perueniens, in arctissimum specum se tradidit, et tribus annis, excepto Romano monacho, omnibus hominibus ibi incognitus mansit. Qui videlicet Romanus non longe in monasterio sub Theodati Patris Regula degebat: sed pie eiusdem Patris sui oculis furabatur horas, et quem sibi ad manducandum surripere poterat, diebus certis Benedicto panem ferebat. Ad

eumdem vero specum a Romani cella iter non erat, quia excelsa desuper rupes eminebat: [panem a S. Romano monacho quotidie accipit:] sed ex eadem rupe in longissimo fune ligatum Romanus deponere panem consueuerat: in qua etiam resti paruum tintinnabulum inseruit: vt ad eius sonum vir Dei cognosceret, quando sibi Romanus panem praeberet, quem exiens acciperet. Sed antiquus hostis vnius caritati inuidens, alterius refectioni: cum quadam die submitti panem conspiceret, iactauit lapidem, et tintinnabulum fregit: Romanus tamen horis congruentibus ministrare non desiit.

Cum vero iam Deus omnipotens et Romanum vellet a labore quiescere, [et Dei monitu in Paschate a Sacerdote cibos:] et Benedicti vitam in exemplum hominibus demonstrare, vt posita supra candelabrum lucerna claresceret, quatenus omnibus, qui in domo Dei sunt, luceret: cuidam Presbytero longius manenti, qui refectionem sibi in Paschali festiuitate parauerat, per visum Dominus apparere dignatus est, dicens: Tu tibi delicias praeparas, et seruus meus illo in loco fame cruciatur. Qui protinus surrexit, atque in ipsa solennitate Paschali cum alimentis, quae sibi parauerat, ad locum tetendit, et virum Dei per abrupta montium, per concaua vallium, per defossa terrarum quaesiuit, eumque latere in specu reperit. Cumque oratione facta, benedicentes Dominum omnipotentem consedissent, post dulcia vitae colloquia is, qui aduenerat, Presbyter dixit: Surge, sumamus cibum: quia hodie Pascha est. Cui vir Dei respondit, dicens: Scio, quia Pascha est: quia hodie videre te merui. Longe quippe ab hominibus positus, quia die eodem Paschalis solennitas esset, ignorabat. Venerabilis autem Presbyter rursus asseruit, dicens: Veraciter hodie Resurrectionis Dominicae Paschalis dies est: abstinere tibi minime congruit: quia et ego ad hoc missus sum, vt omnipotentis Dei dona pariter sumamus. [saepe etiam a Pastoribus aliisque quos instruit:] Benedicentes igitur Dominum, sumpserunt cibum, expletaque refectione et colloquio, ad ecclesiam suam Presbyter recessit.

Eodem quoque tempore hunc in specu latitantem etiam Pastores inuenerunt: quem dum vestitum pellibus inter fruteta cernerent, aliquam bestiam esse crediderunt: sed cognoscentes Dei famulum, eorum multi ad pietatis gratiam a bestiali mente mutati sunt. Nomen itaque eius per vicina loca innotuit cunctis: factumque est, vt ex illo iam tempore a multis frequentari coepisset: qui cum ei cibum afferrent corporis, ab eius ore in suo pectore alimenta referebant vitae.

Quadam vero die, dum solus esset, tentator affuit: [volante ave signo Crucis fugata,] nam nigra parvaque avis, quae vulgo merula nominatur, circa eius faciem volitare coepit, eiusque vultui importune insistere, ita vt manu capi posset, si hanc vir sanctus tenere voluisset: sed signo Crucis edito, recessit auis. Tanta autem carnis tentatio, aue eadem recedente, secuta est, quantam vir sanctus numquam fuerat expertus. [tentatione carnis vexatur:] Quamdam namque aliquando faeminam viderat, quam malignus spiritus ante eius mentis oculos reduxit: tantoque igne serui Dei animum in specie illius accendit, vt, dum in eius pectore amoris flamma vim caperet, etiam paene deserere eremum, voluptate victus deliberaret. Tunc subito superna gratia respectus, ad semetipsum reuersus est, atque vrticarum et veprium iuxta densa succrescere fruteta conspiciens, [inter vrticas et vepres nudus volutatus,] exutus indumento, nudum se in illis spinarum aculeis, et vrticarum incendiis proiecit: ibique diu volutatus, toto ex eis corpore vulneratus exiit, et per cutis vulnera eduxit a corpore vulnus mentis, quia voluptatem traxit in dolorem. Cumque bene poenaliter foris arderet, extinxit quod intus illicite ardebat: vicit itaque peccatum, quia mutauit incendium. Ex quo videlicet tempore, sicut post discipulis ipse perhibebat, [liberatur in perpetuum:] ita in eo est tentatio voluptatis edomita, vt tale aliquid in se minime sentiret. Coeperunt postmodum multi iam mundum relinquere, atque ad eius monasterium festinare: liber quippe a tentationis vitio, vero iure iam factus est virtutum magister: vnde et per Moysen in Exodo

praecipitur, vt Leuitae a viginti quinque annis et supra ministrare debeant, ab anno vero quinquagesimo custodes vasorum fiant. [Num. 2.] [multos accipit discipulos:] PETRUS: Iam quidem prolati testimonii mihi aliquantum intellectus interlucet: sed tamen hoc plenius exponi postulo. GREGORIUS: Liquet, Petre, quod in iuuentute carnis tentatio ferueat, ab anno autem quinquagesimo calor corporis frigescat: vasa autem sacra sunt fidelium mentes. Electi ergo, cum adhuc in tentatione sunt, subesse eos ac seruire necesse est, et obsequiis laboribusque fatigari: cum vero iam mentis aetate tranquilla calor recesserit tentationis, custodes vasorum sunt, quia Doctores animarum fiunt. PETRUS: Fateor, placet, quod dicis: sed quia prolati testimonii clausa reserasti, quaeso, vt de vita Iusti debeas ea, quae sunt inchoata, percurrere.

GREGORIUS: Recedente igitur tentatione, vir Dei, quasi spinis erutis exculta terra, de virtutum segete feracius fructus dedit. [curam monasterii vicini inuitus suscipit:] Praeconio itaque eximiae conuersationis celebre nomen eius habebatur. Non autem longe monasterium fuit, cuius congregationis Pater defunctus est: omnisque ex illo congregatio ad eumdem venerabilem Benedictum venit, et magnis precibus, vt eis praeesse deberet, petiit. Qui diu negando distulit: suis illorumque Fratrum moribus se convenire non posse praedixit: sed victus quandoque precibus assensum dedit. Cumque in eodem monasterio Regularis vitae custodiam teneret, nullique, vt prius, [a dissolutis monachis non toleratur:] per actus illicitos in dexteram laeuamque partem deflectere a conuersationis itinere liceret; suscepti Fratres insane saeuientes, semetipsos prius accusare coeperunt, quia hunc sibi praeesse poposcerant, quorum scilicet Fortitudo in norma eius rectitudinis offendebat. Cumque sibi sub eo conspicerent illicita non licere, et se dolerent adsueta relinquere, durumque esset, quod in mente veteri cogebantur noua meditari, et quia grauis est semper prauis moribus vita bonorum; tractare de eius morte aliqui conati sunt, qui inito consilio

venenum vino miscuerunt. Et cum vas vitreum, in quo ille pestifer potus habebatur, [signo Crucis vas, in quo venenum erat, frangit:] recumbenti Patri ex more monasterii ad benedicendum fuisset oblatum, extensa manu Benedictus signum Crucis edidit, et vas, quod longius tenebatur, eodem signo rupit: sicque confractum est, acsi in illo vase mortis pro Cruce lapidem dedisset.

Intellexit protinus vir Dei, quia potum mortis habuerat, quod portare non potuit signum vitae: atque illico surgens, vultu placido, mente tranquilla, [discedit:] conuocatos Fratres allocutus est, dicens: Misereatur vestri, Fratres, omnipotens Deus: quare in me ista facere voluistis? Numquid non prius dixi vobis, quia vestris ac meis moribus minime conueniret? Ite, et iuxta vestros mores Patrem vobis quaerite: quia posthac me habere minime potestis. Tuncque ad locum dilectae solitudinis rediit, et solus in superni spectatoris oculis habitauit secum. PETRUS: [secum habitat.] Minus patenter intelligo quidnam sit, habitauit secum. GREGORIUS: Si sanctus vir contra se vnanimiter conspirantes, suae conuersationi longe dissimiles, coactos diu sub se tenere voluisset; fortasse sui vigoris vsum et modum tranquillitatis abscinderet, atque a contemplationis lumine suae mentis oculum declinasset; dumque quotidie illorum correptione fatigatus, minus curaret sua, et se forsitan relinqueret, et illos non inueniret. Nam quoties per cogitationis motum nimium extra nos ducimur, et nos sumus et nobiscum non sumus: quia nosmetipsos minime videntes, per alia vagamur. An illum secum fuisse dicimus, qui in longinquam regionem abiit, portionem quam acceperat consumpsit, vni in ea ciuium adhaesit, porcos pauit, [in se reuersus non instar filii prodigi,] quos et manducare videret siliquas, et esuriret? Qui tamen cum postmodum coepit cogitare bona, quae perdidit, scriptum de illo est: In se reuersus, dixit: Quanti mercenarii in domo Patris mei abundant panibus? Si igitur secum fuit, vnde ad se rediit? Hunc ergo venerabilem virum secum habitasse dixerim, quia in sua semper custodia

circumspectus, ante oculos Conditoris se semper adspiciens, se semper examinans, extra se mentis suae oculum non divulgauit. PETRUS: Quid ergo, quod de Apostolo Petro scriptum est, dum de carcere ab Angelo eductus fuisset: Qui ad se reuersus, dixit: Nunc scio vere, quia misit Dominus Angelum suum, et eripuit me de manu Herodis et de omni expectatione plebis Iudaeorum? [Actor. 12] GREGORIUS: Duobus modis, Petre, extra nos ducimur: quia aut per cogitationis lapsum sub nosmetipsos recidimus, aut per contemplationis gratiam super nosmetipsos leuamur. Ille itaque qui porcos pauit, vagatione mentis et immunditia sub semetipsum cecidit; iste vero, quem Angelus solvit eiusque mentem in ecstasim rapuit, extra se quidem sed super semetipsum fuit. Vterque ergo ad se rediit, [sed instar S. Petri e carcere ab Angelo educti:] quando et ille ab errore operis se collegit ad cor, et iste a contemplationis culmine ad hoc rediit, quod in intellectu communi, vt prius, fuit. Venerabilis igitur Benedictus in illa solitudine habitabat secum, inquantum se intra cogitationis claustra custodiuit: nam quotiescumque hunc contemplationis ardor in altum rapuit, se procul dubio sub se reliquit.

PETRUS: Placet quod dicis, sed quaeso respondeas, si deserere Fratres debuit, quos semel suscepit? GREGORIUS: Vt ego, Petre, existimo, [ministerium susceptum licite potuit deserere.] ibi adunati aequanimiter portandi sunt mali, vbi inueniuntur aliqui, qui adiuuentur, boni. Nam vbi omnimodo de bonis fructus deest, fit aliquando de malis labor vacuus; maxime si e vicino caussae suppetant, quae fructum Deo ferre valeant meliorem. Vir itaque sanctus, propter quem custodiendum staret, qui omnes vnanimiter se persequentes cerneret? Et saepe agitur in animo perfectorum, quod silentio praetereundem non est: quia cum laborem suum sine fructu esse considerent, in locum alium ad laborem cum fructu migrant. Vnde ille quoque egregius Praedicator, qui dissolui cupit et cum Christo esse, cui viuere Christus est et mori lucrum, qui passionum certamina non solum ipse

appetiit sed ad toleranda haec et alios accendit; Damasci persecutionem passus, vt posset euadere, murum, funem, sportamque quaesiuit, seque latenter deponi voluit. Numquid non Paulum mortem dicimus timuisse, [Exemplo S. Pauli Damasco fugientis ad meliores fructus.] quam se ipse pro amore Iesu testatur appetere? Sed cum in eodem loco minorem sibi fructum adesse conspiceret et grauem laborem, ad laborem se alibi cum fructu seruauit. Fortis etenim praeliator Dei teneri intra claustra noluit, certaminis campum quaesiuit. Vnde idem quoque venerabilis Benedictus, si libenter audis, citius agnoscis, quia non tantos ipse indociles deseruit, quantos in locis aliis a morte animae suscitauit. PETRUS: Ita esse vt doces, et manifesta ratio et prolatum congruum testimonium declarat. Sed quaeso, vt de vita tanti Patris ad narrationis ordinem redeas.

CAPUT II. Monasteria XII extructa, daemon fugatus, fons elicitus: alia miracula. Discessus Sublaco Casinum.

GREGORIUS: Cum sanctus vir diu in eadem solitudine virtutibus signisque succresceret, multi ab eo in eodem loco ad omnipotentis Dei sunt seruitium congregati: ita vt illic duodecim monasteria cum omnipotentis Iesu Christi Domini opitulatione construeret, in quibus statutis Patribus duodenos monachos deputauit, paucos vero secum retinuit, quos adhuc in sua praesentia aptius erudiri iudicauit. Coepere etiam tunc ad eum Romanae vrbis nobiles et religiosi concurrere, suosque ei filios omnipotenti Deo nutriendos dare. Tunc quoque bonae spei suas soboles, Eutychius a Maurum, Tertullius vero Patricius Placidum tradidit: [SS. Maurum et Placidum discipulos accipit:] e quibus Maurus iunior, cum bonis polleret moribus, Magistri adiutor coepit existere; Placidus vero puerilis adhuc indolis gerebat annos. In vno autem ex eis monasteriis, quae circumquaque construxerat, quidam monachus erat, qui ad orationem stare non poterat; sed mox vt se Fratres ad studium orationis inclinabant, ipse egrediebatur foras,

et mente vaga terrena aliqua et transitoria agebat. Cumque ab Abbate suo saepius fuisset admonitus, ad virum Dei deductus est: [monachum tempore orationis vagantem reprehendit:] qui ipse quoque stultitiam eius vehementer increpauit, et ad monasterium reuersus, vix duobus diebus viri Dei admonitionem tenuit: nam die tertia ad vsum proprium reuersus, vagari tempore orationis coepit. Quod cum seruo Dei ab eodem monasterii Patre, quem constituerat, nuntiatum fuisset, dixit: Ego venio, eumque per memetipsum emendo. Cumque vir Dei venisset ad idem monasterium, et constituta hora, expleta psalmodia, sese Fratres in orationem dedissent; adspexit, quod eumdem monachum, qui in oratione manere non potuit, quidam niger puerulus per vestimenti fimbrias foras traheret. Tunc eidem Patri monasterii, [eumdem per diabolum ab oratione abstrahi videt cum S. Mauro,] Pompeiano nomine, et Mauro Dei famulo secrete dixit: Numquid non adspicitis, quis est, qui istum monachum foras trahit? Qui respondentes, dixerunt: Non. Quibus ait: Oremus, vt vos etiam videatis, quem iste monachus sequitur. Cumque per biduum esset oratum, Maurus monachus vidit: Pompeianus vero eiusdem monasterii Pater, videre non potuit. Die igitur alia, expleta oratione, [castigatum virga a daemone liberat:] vir Dei oratorium egressus, stantem foris monachum reperit, quem pro caecitate cordis sui virga percussit: qui ex illo die nil persuasionis vlterius a nigro iam puerulo pertulit, sed ad orationis studium immobilis permansit: sicque antiquus hostis dominari non ausus est in eius cogitatione, acsi ipse percussus fuisset ex verbere.

Ex his autem monasteriis, quae in eodem loco construxerat, tria sursum in rupibus montis erant: [monachos ob defectum aquae conquerentes solatur,] et valde erat Fratribus laboriosum, quod semper ad lacum oportebat descendere, vt aquam haurire debuissent: maxime quia e devexo montis latere erat grave descendentibus in timore periculum. Tunc collecti Fratres ex eisdem tribus monasteriis, ad Dei famulum Benedictum venerunt,

dicentes: Laboriosum nobis est propter aquam quotidie vsque ad lacum descendere, et idcirco necesse est ex eodem loco monasteria mutari. Quos blande consolans, dimisit: et nocte eadem cum parvo puerulo, nomine Placido, cuius superius memoriam feci, eiusdem montis rupem ascendit, ibique diutius orauit: et oratione completa, tres petras in loco eodem pro signo posuit; atque ad suum, cunctis illis nescientibus, monasterium rediit. Cumque die alia ad eum pro necessitate aquae praedicti Fratres rediissent, dixit: Ite, et rupem illam, [et precibus e rupe fontem elicit:] in qua tres super inuicem positas petras inueneritis, in modico cavate: valet enim omnipotens Deus etiam in illo montis cacumine aquam producere, vt vobis laborem tanti itineris dignetur auferre. Qui euntes, rupem montis, quam Benedictus praedixerat, iam sudantem inuenerunt. Cumque in ea concauum locum fecissent, statim aqua repletus est: quae tam sufficienter emanauit, vt nunc vsque ubertim defluat, atque ab illo montis cacumine vsque ad inferiora derivetur.

Alio quoque tempore Gotthus quidam, pauper spiritu, ad conuersionem venit: quem Dei vir Benedictus libentissime suscepit. Quadam vero die ei dari ferramentum iussit, [ferrum falcastri in lacum delapsum,] quod ad falcis similitudinem falcastrum vocatur, vt de loco quodam vepres abscinderet, quatenus illic hortus fieri deberet. Locus autem ipse, quem mundandum Gotthus susceperat, super ipsam laci ripam iacebat. Cumque Gotthus idem densitatem veprium totius virtutis annisu succideret, ferrum de manubrio prosiliens in lacum cecidit, vbi scilicet tanta erat aquarum profunditas, vt spes requirendi ferramenti nulla iam esset. Itaque ferro perdito, tremebundus ad Maurum monachum cucurrit Gotthus; damnum quod fecerat nuntiauit, et reatus sui poenitentiam egit: quod Maurus quoque monachus mox Benedicto famulo Dei curauit indicare. Vir igitur Domini Benedictus haec audiens accessit ad laum: [manubrio etiam proiecto, recipit:] tulit de manu Gotthi manubrium et misit in lacum: et mox ferrum a

profundo rediit atque in manubrium intrauit: qui statim ferramentum Gottho reddidit, dicens: Ecce, labora, et noli contristari.

Quadam vero die dum idem venerabilis Benedictus in cella consisteret, praedictus Placidus puer, sancti viri monachus, ad hauriendam de lacu aquam egressus est: qui vas, quod tenuerat, in aquam incaute submittens, ipse quoque cadendo secutus est: quem mox vnda rapuit, et paene ad vnius sagittae cursum, eum a terra introrsus traxit. [S. Placidum in lacum delapsum] Vir autem Dei intra cellam positus, hoc protinus agnouit, et Maurum festine vocauit, dicens: Frater Maure, curre, quia puer ille, qui ad hauriendam aquam perrexerat, in lacum cecidit, iamque eum longius vnda trahit. Res mira, et post Petrum Apostolum inusitata! Benedictione etenim postulata atque percepta, ad Patris sui imperium concitus perrexit Maurus, atque vsque ad eum locum quo ab vnda deducebatur puer, per terram se ire existimans, super aquam cucurrit, eumque per capillos tenens, cursu rapido rediit. [per S. Maurum super aquas currentem iubet extrahi:] Qui mox vt terram tetigit, ad se reuersus, post tergum respexit, et quia super aquas cucurrisset agnouit: et quod praesumere non potuisset vt fieret, miratus extremuit factum. Reuersus itaque ad Patrem, rem gestam retulit. Vir autem venerabilis Benedictus hoc non suis meritis, sed illius obedientiae deputare coepit; at contra Maurus pro solo eius imperio factum dicebat; seque conscium in illa virtute non esse, quam nescius fecisset. Sed in hac humilitatis mutua et amica contentione accessit arbiter puer, qui ereptus est; namque dicebat: Ego cum ex aqua traherer, super caput meum melotem Abbatis videbam, atque ipsum me ex aquis educere considerabam. PETRUS: Magna sunt valde, quae narras, et multorum aedificationi profutura: ego autem boni viri miracula, quo plus bibo, eo plus sitio.

GREGORIUS: Cum iam loca eadem in amorem Domini nostri Iesu Christi, [a Florentio Presbytero iniuriam patitur,] longe lateque feruescerent, et secularem vitam multi relinquerent, et sub leui Redemptoris iugo

ceruicem cordis edomarent; sicut mos prauorum est, inuidere aliis virtutis bonum, quod ipsi habere non appetunt; vicinae ecclesiae Presbyter, Florentius nomine, huius nostri Subdiaconi Florentii avus, antiqui hostis malitia percussus, sancti viri studiis coepit aemulari, eiusque conuersationi derogare, quosque etiam posset ab illius visitatione compescere. Cumque iam se conspiceret eius profectibus obviare non posse, et conuersationis illius opinionem crescere, atque multos ad statum vitae melioris ipso quoque opinionis eius praeconio indesinenter vocari; inuidiae facibus magis magisque succensus, deterior fiebat: [ab eo infectum veneno panem accipit:] quia conuersationis illius appetebat habere laudem, sed habere laudabilem vitam nolebat. Quin eiusdem inuidiae tenebris caecatus, ad hoc vsque perductus est, vt seruo omnipotentis Dei infectum veneno panem quasi pro benedictione transmitteret: quem vir Dei cum gratiarum actione suscepit: sed eum, quae pestis lateret in pane, non latuit. Ad horam vero refectionis illius ex vicina sylua corvus venire consueuerat, et panem de manu eius accipere: qui cum more solito venisset, panem, quem Presbyter transmiserat, vir Dei ante corvum proiecit, eique praecepit, dicens: In nomine Iesu Christi Domini nostri tolle hunc panem, et tali eum in loco proiice, vbi a nullo hominum possit inueniri. Tunc coruus aperto ore, expansis alis, circa eumdem panem coepit discurrere et crocitare, [iubet a coruo deferri in locum abstrusum,] ac si aperte diceret, et obedire se velle et tamen iussa implere non posse. Cui vir Domini praecipiebat, iterum atque iterum dicens: Leua, leua securus, atque ibi proiice, vbi inueniri non possit. Quem diu demoratus, quandoque corvus momordit, leuauit, et recessit: post trium vero horarum spatium, abiecto pane, rediit, et de manu hominis Dei annonam, quam consueuerat, accepit. Venerabilis autem Pater contra vitam suam inardescere Sacerdotis animum videns, illi magis quam sibi doluit. Sed praedictus Florentius, quia Magistri corpus necare non potuit, [ob tentatos obiectis puellis discipulos inde migrat:] se ad extinguendas

discipulorum animas accendit; ita vt in horto cellae, cui Benedictus inerat, ante eorum oculos nudas septem puellas mitteret, quae coram eis sibi inuicem manus tendentes et diutius ludentes, illorum mentes ad peruersitatem libidinis inflammarent. Quod vir sanctus de cella conspiciens, lapsumque adhuc tenerioribus discipulis pertimescens, [hoste subita morte a Deo punito,] idque pro sua solius persecutione fieri pertractans, invidiae locum dedit: atque oratoria et cuncta, quae construxerat, sub statutis Praepositis adiunctisque Fratribus ordinauit, et paucis secum monachis ablatis, habitationem mutauit loci. Moxque vt vir Dei eius odia humiliter declinauit, hunc omnipotens Deus terribiliter percussit. Nam cum praedictus Presbyter, stans in solario, Benedictum discessisse cognosceret et exultaret, perdurante immobiliter tota domus fabrica, hoc ipsum tantum, in quo stabat, solarium cecidit, et Benedicti hostem conterens extinxit. Quod viri Dei discipulus, Maurus nomine, [lamentatur:] statim venerabili Patri Benedicto, qui adhuc a loco eodem vix decem millibus aberat, aestimauit esse nuntiandum, dicens: Reuertere, quia Presbyter, qui te persequebatur, extinctus est. Quod vir Dei Benedictus audiens, sese in grauibus lamentis dedit: vel quia inimicus occubuit, vel quia de inimici morte discipulus exultauit. Qua de re factum est, vt eidem quoque discipulo poenitentiam indiceret, quod mandans talia, gaudere de inimici interitu praesumpsisset. PETRUS: Mira sunt et multum stupenda, quae dicis: nam in aqua ex petra producta, Moysen; in ferro vero, quod ex profundo aquae rediit, Elisaeum; in aquae itinere, Petrum; in corvi obedientia, Eliam; in luctu autem mortis inimici, [spiritu iustorum] Dauid video; et perpendo quia vir iste spiritu iustorum omnium plenus fuit. GREGORIUS: Vir domini Benedictus, Petre, vnius Dei spiritum habuit, qui per concessae redemptionis gratiam electorum corda omnium, impleuit, de quo Ioannes dicit: Erat lux vera, quae illuminat omnem hominem venientem in hunc mundum: de quo rursus scriptum est: [et Dei donatus:] De plenitudine eius nos omnes accepimus.

[Io. 1] Nam sancti Dei homines potuerunt a Domino virtutes habere, non etiam aliis tradere. [Matth. 12] Illa autem signa virtutis dedit subditis, qui se daturum signum Ionae promisit inimicis, vt coram superbis mori dignaretur, coram humilibus resurgere: quatenus et illi viderent quod contemnerent, et isti quod venerantes amare debuissent. Ex quo mysterio actum est, vt dum superbi adspiciunt despectum mortis, humiles contra mortem acciperent gloriam potestatis. PETRUS: Quaeso te, post haec, ad quae loca vir sanctus migrauerit, vel si aliquas in eis virtutes postmodum ostenderit, innotesce. GREGORIUS: Sanctus vir ad alia demigrans, [Casinum petit:] locum non hostem mutauit: nam tanto post grauiora praelia pertulit quanto contra se aperte pugnantem ipsum malitiae magistrum inuenit. Castrum namque, quod Casinum dicitur, in excelsi montis latere situm est (qui videlicet mons distenso sinu hoc idem castrum recipit, sed per tria millia in altum se subrigens, velut ad aëra cacumen tendit) vbi vetustissimum fanum fuit, in quo, ex antiquorum more Gentilium, a stulto rusticorum populo Apollo colebatur. Circumquaque etiam in cultu daemonum luci succreuerant, in quibus adhuc eodem tempore infidelium insana multitudo sacrificiis sacrilegis insudabat. Illuc itaque vir Dei perueniens, contriuit idolum, subuertit aram, succendit lucos, atque in ipso templo Apollinis oraculum B. Martini, vbi vero ara eiusdem Apollinis fuit, [aram Apollinis euertit.] oraculum S. Ioannis construxit, et commorantem circumquaque multitudinem praedicatione continua ad fidem vocabat.

CAPUT III. Praestigiae daemonium sublatae: absentia cognita et futura praescita, etiam in Totila Rege.

Sed haec antiquus hostis tacite non ferens, non occulte per somnium, [Oratoria erigit:] sed aperta visione eiusdem Patris oculis sese ingerebat, et magnis clamoribus vim se perpeti conquerebatur: ita vt voces illius etiam Fratres audirent, [Diabolum in se frementem videt:] quamuis imaginem

minime cernerent. Vt enim discipulis suis venerabilis Pater dicebat, corporalibus eius oculis idem antiquus hostis teterrimus et succensus apparebat, qui in eum ore oculisque flammantibus saeuire videbatur. Iam vero quae diceret, audiebant omnes: prius enim hunc vocabat ex nomine. Cui cum vir Dei minime responderet, ad eius mox contumelias erumpebat. Nam cum clamaret, dicens: Benedicte, Benedicte, et eum sibi nullo modo respondere conspiceret; protinus adiungebat: Maledicte, maledicte, et non Benedicte, quid mecum habes? quid me persequeris? Sed iam nunc expectanda sunt contra Dei famulum antiqui hostis noua certamina: cui pugnam quidem volens intulit, sed occasiones victoriae ministrauit inuitus. [lapidem a diabolo aggrauatum benedictione mobilem facit:] Quadam die dum Fratres habitacula eiusdem cellae construerent, lapis in medio iacebat, quem in aedificium leuare decreuerunt. Cumque eum duo vel tres mouere non possent, plures adiuncti sunt: sed ita immobilis mansit, ac si radicitus in terra teneretur: vt palam daretur intelligi, quod super eum ipse per se antiquus hostis sederet, quem tantorum virorum manus mouere non possent. Difficultate igitur facta, ad virum Dei missum est, vt veniret et orando hostem repelleret, vt lapidem leuare possent. Qui mox venit, et orationem faciens, benedictionem dedit: et tanta lapis celeritate leuatus est, ac si nullum prius pondus habuisset.

Tunc in conspectu viri Dei placuit, vt in eodem loco terram foderent: [alias praestigias daemonum tollit:] quam dum fodiendo altius penetrarent, aereum illic idolum Fratres inuenerunt: quo ad horam casu in coquinam proiecto, exire ignis repente visus est, atque in cunctorum monachorum oculis, quia omne eiusdem coquinae aedificium consumeretur, ostendit. Cumque iaciendo Fratres aquam ad ignem quasi extinguendo perstreperent; pulsatus eodem tumultu vir Dei aduenit: qui eumdem ignem in oculis Fratrum esse, in suis vero non esse considerans, caput protinus in orationem flexit: et eos, quos phantastico reperit igne deludi, vocauit Fratres: monuit

vt oculos suos signarent, et vt sanum illud coquinae aedificium assistere cernerent, et flammas, quas antiquus hostis finxerat, non viderent.

Rursus dum Fratres parietem, quia res ita exigebat, paullo altius erigerent; [puerum muro a daemone euerso oppressum,] vir Dei in orationis studio intra cellae suae claustra morabatur: cui antiquus hostis insultans apparuit, et ei, quod ad laborantes Fratres pergeret, indicauit. Quod vir Dei per nuntium celerrime Fratribus indicauit, dicens: Fratres, caute vos agite: quia ad vos hac hora malignus spiritus venit. Is, qui mandatum detulit, vix verba compleuerat, et malignus spiritus eumdem parietem, qui aedificabatur, euertit; atque vnum puerulum monachum, cuiusdam curialis filium opprimens, ruina contriuit. Contristati omnes ac vehementer afflicti, non damno parietis, sed contritione Fratris, venerabili Patri Benedicto celeriter cum graui luctu nuntiarunt. Tunc idem pater Benedictus dilaceratum puerum ad se deferri iubet: [ad vitam sanum resuscitat:] quem portare non nisi in sago potuerunt, quia collapsi saxa parietis, non solum eius membra, sed etiam ossa contriuerant. Praecepitque vir Dei statim eum in cella sua in psiathio, quod vulgo matta vocatur, quo orare consueuerat, proiici: missisque foras Fratribus, cellam clausit: qui orationi instantius, quam solebat, incubuit. Mira res! eadem hora hunc incolumem, atque vt prius valentem, ad eumdem iterum laborem misit, vt ipse quoque parietem cum Fratribus perficeret, de cuius se interitu antiquus hostis Benedicto insultare credidisset.

Coepit vero inter ista, vir Dei prophetiae etiam spiritu pollere, ventura praedicere, [Absens nouit, quos cibos et vbi comedissent monachi et quoties bibissent:] praesentibus etiam absentia nuntiare. Mos etenim cellae fuit, vt, quoties ad responsum aliquod egrederentur Fratres, cibum potumque extra cellam minime sumerent: cumque hoc de vsu Regulae solicite seruaretur, quadam die ad responsum Fratres egressi sunt, et in eo tardiori compulsi sunt hora demorari: qui manere iuxta religiosam faeminam voluerunt, cuius

ingressi habitaculum sumserunt cibum. Cumque iam tardius ad cellam rediissent, benedictionem Patris ex more petierunt. Quos ille protinus percontatus est, dicens: Vbi comedistis? Qui responderunt: Nusquam. Quibus ille ait: Quare ita mentimini? Numquid illius talis faeminae habitaculum non intrastis? numquid hos atque illos cibos non accepistis? numquid tot calices non bibistis? Cumque eis venerabilis Pater et hospitium mulieris, et genera ciborum, et numerum potionum diceret; cognoscentes cuncta quae egerant, ad eius pedes tremefacti ceciderunt, et se deliquisse confessi sunt. Ipse autem protinus culpae pepercit, perpendens, quod in eius absentia vltra non facerent, quem praesentem sibi esse in spiritu scirent.

Frater quoque Valentiniani, eius monachi cuius superius memoriam feci, vir erat laicus, sed religiosus: qui vt serui Dei orationem perciperet et germanum fratrem videret, annis singulis de loco suo ad cellam eius ieiunus venire consueuerat. [Num. 1.] Quadam igitur die dum iter ad monasterium faceret, sese illi alter viator adiunxit, qui sumendos cibos in itinere portabat: cumque iam hora tardior excrevisset, dixit: Veni frater, sumamus cibum, ne lassemur in via. Cui ille respondit: Absit frater, hoc non faciam: quia ad venerabilem Patrem Benedictum ieiunus semper peruenire consueui. Quo responso percepto, ad horam conuiator tacuit: sed cum post hoc aliquantulum itineris spatium egissent, rursus admonuit, vt manducarent. Noluit consentire qui ieiunus peruenire decreuerat: tacuit quidem, qui ad manducandum inuitauerat, et cum eo ieiunus adhuc pergere modicum consensit: cumque iter longius agerent, et eos tardior hora fatigaret ambulantes, inuenerunt in itinere pratum et fontem, et quaeque poterant ad reficiendum corpus delectabilia videri. Tunc conuiator ait: Ecce aquam, ecce pratum, ecce amoenus locus, in quo possumus refici et parum quiescere, vt valeamus iter nostrum postmodum incolumes explere. Cum igitur et verba auribus, [obiicit cuidam, quod comedendo absens commiserat.] et loca oculis blandirentur, tertia admonitione persuasus,

consensit et comedit: vespertina vero hora peruenit ad cellam. Praesentatus aurem venerabili Benedicto Patri, sibi orationem petiit: sed mox ei vir sanctus hoc, quod in via egerat, improperavit, dicens: Quid est, Frater, quod malignus hostis, qui tibi per conuiatorem tuum locutus est, semel tibi persuadere non potuit, secundo non potuit, tertio vero persuasit, et te ad hoc quod voluit superauit? Tunc ille reatum infirmae suae mentis agnoscens, eius pedibus prouolutus, tanto magis coepit culpam deflere et erubescere, quanto se cognouit etiam absentem in Benedicti Patris oculis deliquisse. PETRUS: Ego sancti viri praecordiis Elisaei spiritum video inesse, qui absenti discipulo praesens extitit.

GREGORIUS: Oportet, Petre, vt interim sileas, quatenus adhuc maiora cognoscas. Gotthorum namque temporibus, cum Rex eorum Totila sanctum virum prophetiae habere spiritum audisset, ad eius monasterium pergens, paullo longius substitit, eique se venturum esse nuntiauit. Cui dum protinus mandatum de monasterio fuisset vt veniret ipse, sicut perfidae mentis fuit, [famulum a Totila instar Regis ad se missum reprehendit de simulatione:] an vir Dei prophetiae spiritum haberet, explorare conatus est. Quidam vero eius spatharius Riggo dicebatur, cui calceamen sua praebuit, eumque indui vestibus regalibus fecit, quem quasi in persona sua pergere ad Dei hominem praecepit: in cuius obsequio tres, qui sibi prae ceteris adhaerere consueuerant, Comites misit, scilicet Vultericum, Rudericum et Blindinum, vt ante serui Dei oculos ipsum Regem Totilam esse simulantes, eius lateri obambularent: cui alia quoque obsequia, alios spatharios praebuit, vt tam ex eisdem obsequiis, quam ex purpureis vestibus Rex esse putaretur. Cumque idem Riggo decoratis vestibus, obsequentum frequentia comitatus, monasterium fuisset ingressus, vir Dei eminus sedebat: quem venientem conspiciens, cum iam ab eo audiri potuisset, clamauit, dicens: Pone fili, pone: hoc quod portas non est tuum. Qui Riggo protinus in terram cecidit, et quia tanto viro illudere praesumpsisset, expauit, omnesque qui cum eo ad

hominem Dei veniebant, terrae consternati sunt. Surgentes autem, ad eum minime propinquare praesumpserunt: sed ad suum Regem reuersi, nuntiauerunt trepidi, in quanta velocitate fuerant deprehensi.

Tunc per se idem Totila ad Dei hominem accessit: [Totilam in terram prostratum erigit, futura et mortem praedicit:] quem cum longe sedentem cerneret, non ausus accedere, sese in terram dedit. Cui cum vir Dei bis terue diceret, Surge; sed ipse ante eum de terra erigere se non auderet, Benedictus Christi Iesu famulus per semetipsum dignatus est accedere ad Regem, prostratumque de terra levavit, et de suis actibus increpauit: atque in paucis sermonibus cuncta, quae illi erant ventura, praenuntiauit, dicens: Multa mala facis, multa mala fecisti: iam aliquando ab iniquitate conquiesce: equidem Romam ingressurus es, mare transiturus, nouem annis regnans, decimo morieris. Quibus auditis, Rex vehementer territus, oratione petita recessit: atque ex illo iam tempore minus crudelis fuit, et non multo post Romam adiit, ad Siciliam perrexit: anno autem regni sui decimo, omnipotentis Dei iudicio, regnum cum vita perdidit. Praeterea Canusinae Antistites Ecclesiae ad eumdem Dei famulum venire consueuerat, quem vir Dei pro vitae suae merito valde diligebat: is itaque dum cum illo de ingressu regis Totilae et Romanae vrbis perditione colloquium haberet, [Romam tempestatibus et terraemotu perituram indicat.] dixit: Per hunc Regem ciuitas ista destruetur, vt iam amplius non inhabitetur. Cui vir Domini respondit; Roma a Gentibus non exterminabitur, sed tempestatibus, coruscis turbinibus, ac terraemotu fatigata, marcescet in semetipsa. Cuius prophetiae mysteria nobis iam facta sunt luce clariora, qui in hac vrbe dissoluta moenia, euersas domus, destructas ecclesias turbine cernimus, eiusque aedificia, longo senio lassata, quia ruinis crebrescentibus, prosternantur, videmus: quamuis hoc Honoratus eius discipulus, cuius mihi relatione compertum est, nequaquam ex ore illius audisse se perhibet: sed qui hoc dixerit, dictum sibi a Fratribus fuisse testatur.

Eodem quoque tempore quidam Aquinensis Ecclesiae, Clericus daemonio vexabatur, qui a venerabili viro Constantio, eiusdem Ecclesiae Antistite, per multa fuerat Martyrum loca transmissus, vt sanari potuisset. Sed sancti Dei Martyres noluerunt ei sanitatis donum tribuere, [Clericum energumenum liberat] vt, quanta esset in Benedicto gratia, demonstrarent. Ductus itaque est ad omnipotentis Dei famulum Benedictum: qui Iesu Christo Domino preces fundens, [praedicit, si sacros Ordines suscipiat a daemone obsidendum.] antiquum hostem de obsesso homine protinus expulit. Cui sanato praecepit, dicens: Vade, et posthac carnem non comedas, ad sacrum Ordinem numquam accedere praesumas: quacumque autem die ad sacrum ordinem accedere praesumpseris, statim iuri diaboli iterum mancipaberis. Discessit igitur Clericus sanus, et sicut terrere solet animum poena recens, ea, quae vir Dei praeceperat, interim custodiuit: cum vero post annos multos omnes priores illius de hac luce migrassent, et minores suos sibimet superponi in sacris Ordinibus cerneret, verba viri Dei quasi ex longo tempore oblitus postposuit, atque ad sacrum Ordinem accessit; quem mox is, qui reliquerat diabolus tenuit, eumque vexare, quousque animam eius excuteret, non cessauit.
PETRUS: Iste vir Dei diuinitatis, vt video, [vnus ipse cum Deo spiritus,] etiam secreta penetrauit: quia perspexit hunc Clericum idcirco diabolo traditum, ne ad sacrum Ordinem auderet accedere. [1 Cor. 6] GREGORIUS: Quare diuinitatis secreta non nosset, qui diuinitatis praecepta seruaret, cum scriptum sit: Qui adhaeret Domino, vnus spiritus est cum eo? PETRUS: Si vnus sit cum Domino spiritus qui Domino adhaeret, quid est, quod iterum idem egregius praedicator dicit: Quis cognouit sensum Domini, aut quis consiliarius eius fuit? [Rom. 11] Valde enim esse inconueniens videtur, eius sensum, cum quo vnum factus fuerit, ignorare. GREGORIUS: Sancti viri, inquantum cum Deo vnum sunt, sensum Domini non ignorant: nam idem quoque Apostolus dicit: Quis enim scit hominum, quae hominis sunt, nisi

spiritus hominis, qui est in ipso? [1. Cor. 2] Ita et quae Dei sunt, nemo cognouit, nisi spiritus Dei, qui vt se ostenderet, nosse, quae Dei sunt, adiunxit: Nos autem non spiritum huius mundi accepimus, sed spiritum, qui ex Deo est. Hinc iterum dicit: Quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audiuit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparauit Deus diligentibus se, nobis autem reuelauit per spiritum suum. [Ibidem.] PETRUS: Si ergo eidem Apostolo ea quae Dei sunt per Dei spiritum sunt reuelata, quomodo super hoc quod proposuit, praemisit dicens: O altitudo diuitiarum, sapientiae et scientiae Dei, quam incomprehensibilia sunt iudicia eius, et inuestigabiles viae eius! [Rom 11]. Sed rursum mihi haec dicenti, alia suboritur quaestio: nam Dauid propheta Domino loquitur, dicens: In labiis meis pronuntiaui omnia iudicia oris tui. [Psalm. 118] Et cum minus sit nosse, quam etiam pronuntiare, quid est, quod Paulus incomprehensibilia esse Dei iudicia asserit: Dauid autem se omnia non solum nosse, sed etiam in labiis pronuntiasse testatur? GREGORIUS: Ad vtraque haec tibi superius sub breuitate respondi, dicens, quod sancti viri, [cum Sanctis varia Deiiudicia sciuit:] inquantum cum Domino vnum sunt, sensum Domini non ignorant: omnes enim, qui deuote Dominum sequuntur, etiam deuotione cum Deo sunt; et adhuc carnis corruptibilis grauati pondere, cum Deo non sunt: occultaque Dei iudicia, inquantum coniuncti sunt, sciunt; inquantum disiuncti sunt, nesciunt. Quia enim secreta eius adhuc perfecte non penetrant, incomprehensibilia eius iudicia esse testantur: quia vero mente ei inhaerent, atque inhaerendo vel sacris Scripturae eloquiis vel occultis reuelationibus inquantum accipiunt cognoscunt, haec et nouerunt et pronuntiant. Iudicia enim, quae Deus tacet, nesciunt, quae Deus loquitur sciunt. Vnde et Dauid Propheta cum dixisset: In labiis meis pronuntiaui omnia iudicia: protinus addidit, Oris tui: ac si aperte dicat: Illa ego iudicia et nosse et pronuntiasse potui, quae te dixisse cognoui: nam ea quae ipse non loqueris, a nostra proculdubio cognitione abscondis. Concordat ergo prophetia Apostolicaque sententia: quia et

incomprehensibilia sunt Dei iudicia, [scilicet quae a Deo reuelantur.] et tamen, quae de ore eius prolata fuerint, humanis labiis pronuntiantur: quoniam sciri ab hominibus et prolata per Deum possunt et occulta non possunt. PETRUS: In obiectione meae quaestiunculae patuit caussa rationis. Sed quaeso te, si qua sunt adhuc de viri huius virtute, subiunge.

CAPUT IV. Cognita futura, absentia, arcana cordis. Apparitio absentibus facta. Contumaces puniti.

GREGORIUS: Vir quidam nobilis, Theoprobus nomine, eiusdem Benedicti Patris fuerat admonitione conuersus: [Praedicit excidium coenobii Casinensis a Longobardis factum.] qui pro vitae suae merito magnam apud eum familiaritatis fiduciam habebat. Hic cum quadam die eius cellam esset ingressus, hunc amarissime flentem reperit: cumque diu subsisteret, eiusque non finiri lacrymas videret, nec tamen, vt vir Dei consueuerat, orando plangeret sed moerendo; quaenam caussa tanti luctus existeret, inquisiuit. Cui vir Dei illico respondit: Omne hoc monasterium quod construxi, et cuncta quae Fratribus praeparaui, omnipotentis Dei iudicio Gentibus tradita sunt: vix autem obtinere potui, vt mihi ex hoc loco animae concederentur. Cuius vocem tunc Theoprobus audiuit, nos autem cernimus, qui destructum modo a Longobardorum gente eius monasterium scimus. Nocturno enim tempore, quiescentibus Fratribus, nuper illic Longobardi ingressi sunt: qui diripientes omnia, ne vnum quidem hominem illic tenere potuerunt: sed impleuit omnipotens Deus, quod fideli famulo Benedicto promiserat, vt, si res Gentibus traderet, animas custodiret. Qua in re Pauli vicem video tenuisse Benedictum, cuius dum navis rerum omnium iacturam pertulit, ipse in consolatione vitam omnium, qui eum comitabantur, accepit.

Quodam quoque tempore Exhilaratus noster, quem ipse Conuersum nosti, transmissus a domino suo fuerat, vt Dei viro in monasterium vino plena duo lignea vascula, quae vulgo flascones vocantur, deferret:

[flasconem vini furto absconditum scivit,] qui vnum detulit, alterum vero pergens in itinere abscondit. Vir autem Domini, quem facta absentia latere non poterant, vnum cum gratiarum actione suscepit, et discedentem puerum monuit, dicens: Vide, fili, ne de illo flascone, quem abscondisti, bibas: sed inclina illum caute, et inuenies quid intus habet. Qui confusus valde a Dei homine exiuit; et reuersus, volens adhuc probare quod audierat, cum flasconem inclinasset, de eo protinus serpens egressus est. Tunc praedictus Exhilaratus puer per hoc, quod in vino reperit, expauit malum quod fecit.

Non longe autem a monasterio vicus erat, in quo non minima multitudo hominum ad fidem Dei ab idolorum cultu Benedicti fuerat exhortatione conuersa: [Cernit absens mappulas dari monacho:] ibi quoque quaedam sanctimoniales faeminae inerant, et crebro istuc pro exhortandis animabus Fratres suos mittere Benedictus Dei famulus curabat. Quadam vero die misit ex more: sed is qui missus fuerat monachus, post admonitionem factam, a sanctimonialibus faeminis rogatus mappulas accepit, sibique eas abscondit in sinu. Qui mox vt reuersus est, eum vir Dei vehementissima amaritudine coepit increpare, dicens: Quomodo ingressa est iniquitas in sinum tuum? At ille obstupuit, et quid egisset oblitus, vnde corripiebatur ignorabat. Cui ait: Numquid ego illic praesens non eram, quando ab ancillis Dei mappulas accepisti, tibique eas in sinu misisti? Qui mox eius vestigiis prouolutus, stulte se egisse poenituit, et eas quas in sinu absconderat mappulas abiecit.

Quadam quoque die, dum venerabilis Pater vespertina iam hora corporis alimenta perciperet, [occultas videt monachi cogitationes.] eius monachus, cuiusdam Defensoris filius fuerat, qui ante mensam lucernam tenebat. Cumque vir Dei ederet, ipse autem cum lucernae ministerio adstaret; coepit per superbiae spiritum in mente sua tacitus voluere et per cogitationem dicere: Quis est hic, cui ego manducanti assisto, lucernam teneo, seruitium impendo? Quis sum ego, vt isti inseruiam? Ad quem vir Dei statim

conuersus, vehementer coepit eum increpare, dicens: Signa cor tuum, Frater. Quid est, quod loqueris? Signa cor tuum. Vocatisque statim Fratribus, praecepit ei lucernam de manibus tolli: ipsum vero iussit a ministerio recedere, et ibi hora eadem quietum sedere. Qui requisitus a Fratribus quid habuerit in corde, per ordinem narrauit, quanto superbiae spiritu intumuerat, et quae contra virum Dei verba per cogitationem tacitus dicebat. Tunc liquido omnibus patuit, quod venerabilem Benedictum latere nil posset, in cuius auribus tacitae etiam cogitationis verba sonuissent.

Alio quoque tempore in eadem Campaniae regione fames incubuerat, [in communi fame, vt praedixerat,] magnaque omnes alimentorum indigentia coangustabat: iamque in Benedicti monasterio triticum deerat, panes vero paene omnes consumpti fuerant, vt non plusquam quinque ad refectionis horam fratribus inueniri potuissent. Cumque eos venerabilis Pater contristatos cerneret, eorum pusillanimitatem studuit modesta increpatione corrigere, et rursum promissione subleuare, dicens: Quare de panis inopia vester animus contristatur? Hodie quidem minus est, sed die crastina abundanter habebitis. [farinam diuinitus allatam pro suis accipit:] Sequenti autem die ducenti farinae modii ante fores cellae in saccis inuenti sunt, quos omnipotens Deus, quibus deferentibus transmisisset, nunc vsque manet incognitum. Quod cum Fratres cernerent, Domino gratias referentes, didicerunt iam de abundantia nec in egestate dubitare. PETRUS: Dic, quaeso te, numquid non credendum est, huic Dei famulo semper prophetiae spiritum adesse potuisse, an per interualla temporum eius mentem prophetiae spiritus implebat? GREGORIUS: Prophetiae spiritus, Petre, prophetarum mentes non semper irradiat: quia sicut de sancto Spiritu scriptum est, Vbi vult, spirat; ita sciendum est, quia et quando vult, adspirat. [Ioa. 3] Hinc enim est, quod Nathan a Rege requisitus, si construere templum posset, prius consensit, et postmodum prohibuit. Hinc est, quod Elisaeus cum flentem mulierem cerneret, caussamque nescisset; ad

prohibentem hanc puerum dicit: Dimitte eam, quia anima eius in amaritudine est, et Dominus celauit a me, et non indicauit mihi. Quod omnipotens Deus ex magnae pietatis dispensatione disponit: [Spiritus prophetiae subinde Sanctis subtrahitur.] quia dum prophetiae spiritum aliquando dat, et aliquando subtrahit, prophetantium mentes et eleuat in celsitudine et custodit in humilitate: vt et accipientes spiritum, inueniant quid de Deo sint: et rursum prophetiae spiritum non habentes, cognoscant quid sint de semetipsis. PETRUS: Ita hoc esse, vt asseris, magna ratio clamat: sed, quaeso, de venerabili Patre Benedicto, quicquid adhuc animo occurrit, exequere.

GREGORIUS: Alio quoque tempore a quodam fideli viro fuerat rogatus, vt in eius praedio iuxta Taracinensem vrbem, missis discipulis suis, construere monasterium debuisset. Qui roganti consentiens, deputatis Fratribus Patrem constituit, et quis ei secundus esset, ordinauit: quibus euntibus spopondit, dicens: Ite, et die illo ego venio, et ostendo vobis, in quo loco oratorium, in quo refectorium Fratrum, in quo susceptionem hospitum, [Addicit se certo die coram omnia pro nouo monasterio extruendo ordinaturum:] vel quaeque sunt necessaria, aedificare debeatis. Qui benedictione percepta, illico perrexerunt, et constitutum diem magnopere praestolantes, parauerunt omnia, quae his, qui cum tanto Patre venire potuissent, videbantur esse necessaria. Nocte vero eadem, qua promissus illucescebat dies, eidem seruo Dei, quem illic Patrem constituerat, atque eius Praeposito, vir Domini in somnis apparuit, et loca singula, vbi quid aedificare debuissent, subtiliter designauit. Cumque vtrique a somno surgerent, sibi inuicem, quid viderant retulerunt: non tamen visioni illi omnimodo fidem dantes, virum Dei, sicut se venire promiserat, expectabant. Cumque vir Dei constituto die minime venisset ad eum, [id in somno praestat,] cum moerore reuersi sunt, dicentes: Expectauimus, Pater, vt venires, sicut promiseras, et nobis ostenderes, vbi quid aedificare

deberemus, et non venisti. Quibus ipse ait: Quare Fratres, quare ista dicitis? Numquid sicut promisi, non veni? Cui cum ipsi dicerent, Quando venisti? Respondit, Numquid vtrisque vobis dormientibus non apparui, [et se fecisse indicat:] et loca singula designaui? Ite, et sicut per visionem vidistis, omne habitaculum monasterii ita construite. Qui haec audientes, vehementer admirati, ad praedictum praedium sunt reuersi, et cuncta habitacula, sicut ex reuelatione didicerant, construxerunt. PETRUS: Doceri velim, quo fieri ordine potuit, vt longe iret, responsum dormientibus diceret, quod ipsi per visionem audirent, et recognoscerent. GREGORIUS: Quid est, quod perscrutans rei gestae ordinem, [instar Abacuc ad Danielem,] ambigis Petre? Liquet profecto, quia nobilioris naturae est spiritus quam corpus. Et certe, Scriptura teste, nouimus quod Propheta ex Iudaea subleuatus, repente est cum prandio in Chaldaea depositus, quo videlicet prandio Prophetam refecit, seque repente in Iudaea iterum inuenit. Si igitur tam longe Abacuc potuit sub momento corporaliter ire et prandium deferre, quid mirum, si Benedictus Pater obtinuit, quatenus iret per spiritum, [in spiritu ad illos missus.] et Fratrum quiescentium spiritibus necessaria narraret: vt sicut ille ad cibum corporis corporaliter perrexit, ita iste ad institutionem spiritalis vitae spiritaliter pergeret? PETRUS: Manus tuae locutionis tersit meae (fateor) dubietatem mentis: sed velim nosse, in communi locutione qualis iste vir fuit.

GREGORIUS: Vix ipsa, Petre, communis eius locutio a virtutis erat pondere vacua: quia, cuius cor sese in alta suspenderat, [Sanctimonialibus ob linguam procacem minatur excommunicationem,] nequaquam verba de ore illius incassum cadebant. Si quid vero vmquam non iam decernendo, sed minando diceret, tantas vires sermo illius habebat, acsi hoc non dubie atque suspense, sed iam per sententiam protulisset. Nam longe ab eius monasterio duae quaedam sanctimoniales faeminae, nobiliori genere exortae, in loco proprio conuersabantur, quibus quidam religiosus vir ad

exterioris vitae vsum praebebat obsequium. Sed sicut nonnullis solet nobilitas generis parare ignobilitatem mentis, vt minus se in hoc mundo despiciant, qui plus se ceteris aliquid fuisse meminerunt; necdum praedictae sanctimoniales faeminae perfecte linguam suam sub habitus sui fraeno restrinxerant, et eumdem religiosum virum, qui ad exteriora necessaria eis obsequium praebebat, incautis saepe sermonibus ad iracundiam prouocabant. Qui dum diu ista toleraret, perrexit ad Dei hominem, quantasque pateretur verborum contumelias enarrauit. Vir autem Dei haec de illis audiens, eis protinus mandauit, [quas mortuas, ab aliis a Missa ideo visas exire,] dicens: Corrigite linguam vestram: quia si non emendaueritis, excommunico vos: quam videlicet excommunicationis sententiam non proferendo intulit sed minando. Illae autem a pristinis moribus nihil mutatae, intra paucos dies defunctae sunt, atque in ecclesia sepultae. Cumque in eadem ecclesia Missarum solennia celebrarentur, atque ex more Diaconus clamaret, Si quis non communicat, det locum: nutrix earum, quae pro eis oblationem Domino offerre consueuerat, eas de sepulcris suis progredi et exire videbat. Quod dum saepius cerneret, quia ad vocem Diaconi clamantis exibant foras, atque intra ecclesiam permanere non poterant; ad memoriam reduxit quae vir Dei illis adhuc viuentibus mandauit: eas quippe se communione priuare dixerat, nisi mores suos et verba corrigerent. [factis precibus absoluit:] Tunc seruo Dei cum graui moerore indicatum est: qui manu sua protinus oblationem dedit, dicens: Ite, et hanc oblationem pro eis offerri Domino facite, et vlterius excommunicatae non erunt. Quae dum oblatio pro eis fuisset immolata, et a Diacono iuxta morem clamatum est, vt non communicantes ab ecclesia exirent, illae exire ab ecclesia vlterius visae non sunt. Qua ex re indubitanter patuit, quia dum inter eos, qui communione priuati sunt, minime recederent, communionem a Domino per servum Domini recepissent. PETRUS: Mirum valde quod dicis, quamuis venerabilem et sanctissimum virum, adhuc tamen

in hac carne corruptibili degentem, potuisse animas soluere, in illo iam inuisibili iudicio constitutas. GREGORIUS: Numquidnam, Petre, in hac adhuc carne non erat, qui audiebat, Quodcumque ligaueris super terram, erit ligatum et in caelis: [facta potestate a Deo absoluendi etia spiritus.] et quae solueris super terram; soluta erunt et in caelis? [Matth. 16] Cuius nunc vicem ligando et soluendo obtinent, qui locum sancti regiminis fide et moribus tenent. Sed vt tanta valeat homo de terra, caeli et terrae Conditor in terram venit e caelo: atque vt iudicare caro etiam de spiritibus possit, hoc ei largiri dignatus est, factus pro hominibus Deus caro: quia inde surrexit vltra se infirmitas nostra, vnde sub se infirmata est firmitas Dei. PETRUS: Cum virtute signorum concorditer loquitur ratio verborum.

Gregorius. Quadam quoque die dum quidam eius puerulus monachus parentes suos ultra quam deberet diligens, atque ad eorum habitaculum tendens, sine benedictione de monasterio exiisset, eodem die mox ut ad eos pervenit, defunctus est. Cumque esset sepultus, die altero proiectum foras corpus eius inventum est, quod rursus tradere sepulturae curaverunt. Sed sequenti die iterum proiectum exterius atque inhumatum sicut prius invenerunt. Tunc concite ad Benedicti Patris vestigia currentes, cum magno fletu petierunt ut ei suam gratiam largiri dignaretur. Quibus vir Dei manu sua protinus communionem dominici corporis dedit dicens: Ite, atque hoc dominicum corpus super pectus eius cum magna reverentia ponite, et sic sepulturae eum tradite. Quod dum factum fuisset, susceptum corpus eius terra tenuit, nec ultra proiecit. Perpendis, Petre, apud Iesum Christum Dominum cuius meriti iste vir fuerit, ut eius corpus etiam terra proiecerit, qui Benedicti gratiam non haberet. Petr. Perpendo plane, et vehementer stupeo.

GREGORIUS: Quidam autem eius monachus mobilitati mentis deditus erat, [instabilem monachum dimittit: dracone apparente territam recipit.] et permanere in monasterio nolebat. Cumque eum vir Dei assidue corriperet,

et frequenter admoneret, ipse vero nullo modo consentiret in congregatione persistere, atque importunis precibus, vt relaxaretur, immineret; quadam die idem venerabilis Pater, nimietatis eius taedio affectus, iratus iussit vt discederet. Qui mox vt monasterium exiit, contra se assistere aperto ore draconem in itinere inuenit: cumque eum idem draco, qui apparuerat, deuorare vellet; coepit ipse tremens et palpitans magnis vocibus clamare, dicens: Succurrite, succurrite: quia draco iste me deuorare vult. Currentes autem Fratres, draconem minime viderunt; sed trementem atque palpitantem monachum ad monasterium reduxerunt: qui statim promisit numquam se esse a monasterio recessurum, atque ex hora eadem in sua promissione permansit: quippe qui sancti viri orationibus contra se assistere draconem viderat, quem prius non videndo sequebatur.

CAPUT V. Miracula varia, etiam mortui resuscitati.

Sed neque hoc silendum puto, quod illustri viro Antonio narrante, [Pellit elephantinum morbum,] cognoui; qui aiebat patris sui puerum morbo elephantino fuisse correptum, ita vt iam pilis cadentibus, cutis intumesceret, atque increscentem saniem occultare non posset: qui ad virum Dei ab eodem patre eius missus est, et saluti pristinae sub omni celeritate restitutus.

Neque illud taceam, quod eius discipulus, Peregrinus nomine, narrare consueuerat: quia die quadam fidelis vir quidam necessitate debiti compulsus, vnum fore sibi remedium credidit, [iuvat aere alieno pressum,] si ad Dei virum pergeret, et quae eum vrgeret debiti necessitas indicaret. Venit itaque ad monasterium, omnipotentis Dei famulum reperit: quia a creditore suo pro duodecim solidis grauiter affligeretur, intimavit. Cui venerabilis Pater nequaquam se habere duodecim solidos, respondit, sed tamen eius inopiam blanda locutione consolatus, ait: Vade, et post biduum reuertere: quia deest hodie quod tibi debeam dare. In ipso autem biduo more suo in oratione fuit occupatus: cumque die tertio is, qui necessitate debiti

affligebatur, rediit; super arcam monasterii, quae erat frumento plena, subito tredecim solidi sunt inuenti: quos vir Dei deferri iussit, et afflicto petitori tribuit, dicens, vt duodecim redderet, et vnum in expensis propriis haberet. Sed ad ea nunc redeam, quae eius discipulis, in libri huius exordio praedictis, referentibus agnoui. Quidam vir grauissima aduersarii sui aemulatione laborabat, cuius ad hoc vsque odium prorupit, vt ei nescienti in potu venenum daret. Qui quamuis vitam auferre non valuit, cutis tamen colorem mutauit, [sanat veneno infectum:] ita vt diffusa in corpore eius varietas, leprae morem imitari videretur. Sed ad Dei hominem deductus, salutem pristinam citius recepit: nam mox vt eum tetigit, omnem cutis illius varietatem fugauit.

Eo quoque tempore, quo alimentorum inopia Campaniam grauiter affligebat, [benignus in egenos:] vir Dei diuersis indigentibus monasterii sui cuncta tribuerat, vt paene nihil in cellario, nisi parum quid olei in vitreo vase remaneret. Tunc quidam Subdiaconus, Agapitus nomine, aduenit, magnopere postulans; vt sibi aliquantulum olei dari debuisset. [oleum petenti iussit dari:] Vir autem Domini, qui cuncta decreuerat in terra tribuere, vt in caelo omnia reseruaret, hoc ipsum parum, quod remanserat, olei iussit petenti dari. Monachus vero, qui cellarium tenebat, audiuit quidem iubentis verba, sed implere distulit. Cumque post paullulum, si id quod iusserat, datum esset inquireret, respondit monachus, se minime dedisse: quia si illud ei tribueret, omnino nihil Fratribus remaneret. [cum vase vitreo illaesum,] Tunc vir Dei iratus aliis praecepit, vt hoc ipsum vas vitreum, in quo parum olei remansisse videbatur, per fenestram proiicerent, ne in cella aliquid per inobedientiam remaneret. Factumque est. [cum miraculo seruatum,] Sub fenestra autem eadem ingens praecipitium patebat, saxorum molibus asperum. Proiectum itaque vas vitreum venit in saxis, sed sic mansit incolume, acsi proiectum minime fuisset, ita vt neque frangi, neque oleum effundi potuisset: quod vir Domini praecepit leuari, atque vt

erat integrum petenti tribui. Tunc collectis Fratribus inobedientem monachum de infidelitate sua et superbia coram omnibus increpauit.

Qua increpatione completa, sese cum eisdem Fratribus in orationem dedit. In eo autem loco, [precibus impetrat oleo dolium impleri:] vbi cum Fratribus orabat, vacuum erat ab oleo dolium coopertum: cumque sanctus vir in oratione persisteret, coepit operimentum eiusdem dolii oleo excrescente subleuari: quo commoto atque subleuato, oleum, quod excreuerat, ora dolii transiens, pauimentum loci, in quo incubuerat, inundabat. Quod Benedictus Dei famulus vt aspexit, protinus orationem compleuit, atque in pauimentum oleum defluere cessauit. Tunc diffidentem inobedientemque Fratrem latius admonuit, vt fidem habere disceret et humilitatem. Idem vero Frater salubriter correptus erubuit, quia venerabilis Pater virtutem omnipotentis Dei, quam admonitione intimauerat, miraculis ostendebat: nec erat iam, vt quisquam de eius promissionibus dubitare posset, qui in vno eodemque momento pro vitreo vase paene vacuo, plenum oleo dolium reddidisset.

Quadam die dum ad S. Ioannis oratorium, quod in ipsa montis celsitudine situm est, pergeret, ei antiquus hostis in mulo medici specie obuiam factus est, cornu et tripedicam ferens. Quem cum requisisset, dicens: Quo vadis? Ille respondit: Ecce ad Fratres vado, potionem eis dare. [alapa pellit daemonem:] Itaque perrexit venerabilis Pater Benedictus ad orationem, qua completa, concitus rediit: malignus vero spiritus vnum seniorem monachum inuenit aquam haurientem; in quem statim ingressus est, eumque in terram proiecit et vehementissime vexauit. Quem cum vir Dei ab oratione rediens, tam crudeliter vexari conspiceret, ei solummodo alapam dedit, et malignum ab eo spiritum protinus excussit, ita vt ad eum redire vlterius non auderet. PETRUS: Velim nosse, si haec tanta miracula virtute semper orationis impetrabat, an aliquando etiam solo voluntatis exhibebat nutu. GREGORIUS: Qui deuota mente Deo adhaerent, [Miracula

facit,] cum rerum necessitas exposcit, exhibere signa modo vtroque solent, vt mira quaeque aliquando ex prece faciant, aliquando ex potestate. [Ioan. I] Cum enim Ioannes dicat: Quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri: qui filii ex potestate sunt, quid mirum, si signa facere ex potestate valeant? Quia enim vtroque modo miracula exhibeant, testatur Petrus, qui Tabitham mortuam orando suscitauit: Ananiam vero et Saphiram mentientes, morti increpando tradidit. Neque enim orasse in eorum extinctione legitur, sed solummodo culpam, quam perpetrauerant, increpasse. Constat ergo, quod aliquando haec ex potestate, aliquando vero exhibent ex postulatione, [tum precibus tum accepta potestate:] dum et istis vitam increpando abstulit, et illi reddidit orando. Nam duo quoque fidelis famuli Dei Benedicti facta nunc replico, in quibus aperte clareat, aliud hunc accepta diuinitus ex potestate, aliud ex oratione potuisse.

Gothorum quidam, Zalla nomine, perfidiae fuit Arianae, qui Totilae Regis eorum temporibus, contra Catholicae Ecclesiae religiosos viros ardore immanissimae crudelitatis exarsit, [ita lora, quibus a Gotho Ariano adstrictus erat rusticus] ita vt quisquis ei Clericus monachusue ante faciem venisset, ab eius manibus vivus nullo modo exiret. Quadam vero die auaritiae suae aestu succensus, in rapinam rerum inhians, dum quemdam rusticum tormentis crudelibus affligeret, eumque per supplicia diuersa laniaret; victus poenis rusticus, sese res suas Benedicto Dei famulo commendasse professus est, vt dum hoc a torquente crederetur, suspensa interim crudelitate, ad horam vita repararetur. Tunc idem Zalla cessauit rusticum tormentis affligere, sed eius brachia loris fortibus adstringens, ante equum suum coepit impellere, vt quis esset Benedictus qui eius res susceperat, demonstraret. Quem ligatis brachiis rusticus antecedens, duxit ad sancti viri monasterium, eumque ante ingressum cellae solum sedentem reperit et legentem. Eidem autem subsequenti et saeuienti Zallae rusticus dixit: Ecce iste est, de quo dixeram tibi, Benedictus Pater. Quem dum

feruido spiritu cum peruersae mentis insania fuisset intuitus, eo terrore quo consueuerat acturum se existimans, magnis coepit vocibus clamare, dicens, Surge, surge, et res istius rustici redde quas accepisti. Ad cuius vocem vir Dei protinus oculos leuauit a lectione, eumque intuitus, mox etiam rusticum qui ligatus tenebatur attendit. Ad cuius brachia dum oculos deflexisset, miro modo tanta se celeritate coeperunt illigata brachiis lora dissoluere, [celerrime dissoluit:] vt dissolui tam concite nulla hominum festinatione potuissent. Cumque is, qui ligatus venerat, coepisset subito adstare solutus, ad tantae potestatis vim tremefactus Zalla, ad terram corruit, et ceruicem crudelitatis rigidae ad eius vestigia inclinans, se orationibus illius commendauit. Vir autem sanctus a lectione minime surrexit: sed vocatis Fratribus, eum introrsus tolli, vt benedictionem acciperet, praecepit: quem ad se reductum, vt a tantae crudelitatis insania quiescere deberet, admonuit. Qui fractus, recedens, nil vlterius petere a rustico praesumpsit, [et ferocitatem Gothi reprimit:] quem vir Domini non tangendo, sed respiciendo soluerat. Ecce est, Petre, quod dixi, quia hi, qui omnipotenti Deo familiarius seruiunt, aliquando mira facere etiam ex potestate possunt. Qui enim ferocitatem Gotthi terribilis sedens repressit, lora vero nodosque ligaturae, quae innocentis brachia adstrinxerant, oculis dissoluit; ipsa miraculi celeritate indicat, quia ex potestate acceperat habere quod fecit. Rursum quoque quale quantumque miraculum orando valuit obtinere, subiungam.

Quodam die cum Fratribus ad agri opera fuerat egressus: quidam vero rusticus defuncti filii corpus in vlnis ferens, orbitatis luctu aestuans, ad monasterium venit, [puerum mortuum] Benedictum Patrem quaesiuit. Cui cum dictum esset, quia idem Pater cum Fratribus in agro moraretur, protinus ante monasterii ianuam corpus extincti filii proiecit, et dolore turbatus, ad inueniendum venerabilem Patrem sese in cursum concitus dedit: eadem vero hora vir Dei ab agri opere iam cum Fratribus reuertebatur. Quem mox

vt orbatus rusticus adspexit, clamare coepit: Redde filium meum, redde filium meum. Vir autem Dei in hac voce substitit, dicens: Numquid ego filium tuam tibi abstuli? Cui ille respondit: Mortuus est: veni, resuscita eum. Quod vt mox Dei famulus audiuit, valde contristatus est, dicens: Recedite Fratres, recedite: haec nostra non sunt, sed sanctorum Apostolorum. Quid nobis onera vultis imponere, quae non possumus portare? [post humilem excusationem] At ille, quem nimius cogebat dolor, in sua petitione persistit, iurans quod non recederet, nisi eius filium resuscitaret. Quem mox Dei famulus inquisiuit, dicens: Vbi est? Cui ille respondit: Ecce corpus eius ad ianuam monasterii iacet. Vbi cum vir Dei cum Fratribus peruenisset, flexit genu, et super corpusculum infantis incubuit, seseque erigens, ad caelum palmas tetendit, [precibus restituit vitae:] dicens: Domine, non adspicias peccata mea, sed fidem huius hominis, qui resuscitari filium suum rogat, et redde in hoc corpusculum animam, quam abstulisti. Vix in oratione verba compleverat, et regrediente anima ita corpusculum pueri omne contremuit, vt sub oculis omnium, qui aderant, apparuerit, concussione mirifica tremendo palpitasse: cuius mox manum tenuit, et eum patri viuentem atque incolumen dedit. Liquet, Petre, quia hoc miraculum in potestate non habuit, quod prostratus petiit vt exhibere potuisset. PETRUS: Sic cuncta esse, vt asseris, constat patenter: quia verba, quae proposueras, rebus probas. Sed quaeso te, vt indices, si sancti viri omnia quae volunt, possunt; et cuncta impetrant, quae desiderant obtinere.

CAPUT VI. Colloquium cum S. Scholastica. Huius et S. Germani animae visae deferri in caelum. Obitus S. Benedicti.

GREGORIUS: Quisnam erit, Petre, in hac vita Paulo sublimior, [S. Scholasticam ad se quotannis venientem in vicina aliqua dome invisit:] qui de carnis suae stimulo ter Dominum rogauit, et tamen quod voluit obtinere

non valuit? Ex qua re necesse est, vt tibi de venerabili Patre Benedicto narrem, quia fuit quiddam quod voluit, sed non valuit implere. Soror namque eius, a Scholastica nomine, omnipotenti Domino ab ipso infantiae tempore dedicata, ad eum semel per annum venire consueuerat, ad quam vir Dei non longe extra ianuam in possessionem monasterii descendebat. Quadam vero die venit ex more, atque ad eam cum discipulis venerabilis eius descendit frater: qui totum diem in Dei laudibus sacrisque colloquiis ducentes, incumbentibus iam noctis tenebris, simul acceperunt cibos. Cumque adhuc ad mensam sederent, et inter sacra colloquia tardior se hora protraheret, eadem sanctimonialis faemina soror eius eum rogauit, dicens: Quaeso te, vt ista nocte me non deseras, vt vsque mane de caelestis vitae gaudiis loquamur. Cui ille respondit: Quid est, quod loqueris soror? Manere extra cellam nullatenus possum. Tanta vero erat caeli serenitas, vt nulla in aëre nubes appareret: sanctimonialis autem faemina, cum verba fratris negantis audisset, [redire cupiens impeditur, tempestate precibus S. Scholasticae impetrata:] insertas digitis manus super mensam posuit, et caput in manibus, omnipotentem Dominum rogatura, declinauit. Cumque de mensa leuaret caput, tanta coruscationis et tonitrui virtus, tantaque inundatio pluviae erupit, vt neque venerabilis Benedictus, neque Fratres, qui cum eo aderant, extra loci limen, quo consederant, pedem mouere potuissent. Sanctimonialis quippe faemina caput in manibus declinans, lacrymarum fluuium in mensam fuderat, per quas serenitatem aëris ad pluviam traxit. Nec paullo tardius post orationem inundatio illa secura est: sed tanta fuit convenientia orationis et inundationis, vt de mensa caput iam cum tonitruo leuaret, quatenus vnum idemque esset momentum, et leuare caput et pluuiam deponere. Tunc vir Dei inter coruscos et tonitruos atque ingentis pluuiae inundationem videns se ad monasterium non posse remeare, coepit conqueri contristatus, dicens: Parcat tibi omnipotens Deus, soror: quid est quod fecisti? Cui illa respondit: Ecce te rogaui, et audire me noluisti: rogaui

Dominum meum, et audiuit me. Modo ergo, si potes, egredere, et me dimissa, ad monasterium recede. Ipse autem exire extra tectum non valens, quia remanere sponte noluit, in loco mansit inuitus: sicque factum est, vt totam noctem peruigilem ducerent, atque per sacra spiritalis vitae colloquia sese vicaria relatione satiarent. Qua de re dixi eum voluisse aliquid, sed minime potuisse: quia si venerabilis viri mentem adspicimus, dubium non est, quin eamdem serenitatem voluerit, in qua descenderat, permanere: sed contra hoc, quod voluit, in virtute omnipotentis Dei ex faeminae pectore miraculum inuenit. Nec mirum, quod plus illo faemina, quae diu fratrem videre cupiebat, in eodem tempore valuit: quia enim iuxta Ioannis vocem, Deus caritas est; iusto valde iudicio illa plus potuit, quae amplius amauit. PETRUS: Fateor, multum placet quod dicis. [1. Ioan. 4.]

GREGORIUS: Cumque die altero eadem venerabilis faemina ad cellam propriam recessisset, [animam eius videt in columbae specie caelum petere:] vir Dei ad monasterium rediit. Cum ecce post triduum in cella consistens, eleuatis in aëra oculis, vidit eiusdem sororis suae animam de eius corpore egressam, in columbae specie caeli secreta penetrare. Qui tantae eius gloriae congaudens, omnipotenti Deo in hymnis et laudibus gratias reddidit, eiusque obitum Fratribus denuntiauit. Quos etiam protinus misit, vt eius corpus ad monasterium deferrent, atque in sepulcro, quod sibi ipse parauerat, ponerent: quo facto contigit, vt quorum mens vna semper in Domino fuerat, eorum quoque corpora nec sepultura separaret.

[Seruandum Diaconum et Abbatem excipit sancto colloquio:] Alio quoque tempore Seruandus Diaconus atque Abbas eius monasterii, quod in Campaniae partibus a Liberio quondam Patricio fuerat constructum, ad eum visitationis gratia ex more venire consueuerat: eius quippe monasterium frequentabat, vt quia idem quoque vir doctrina gratiae caelestis influebat, dulcia sibi inuicem vitae verba transfunderent, et suauem cibum caelestis patriae, quia adhuc perfecte gaudendo non poterant, saltem suspirando

gustarent. Cumque hora iam quietis exigeret, in cuius turris superioribus se venerabilis Benedictus, in eius quoque inferioribus se Seruandus Diaconus collocauit: quo videlicet in loco inferiora ad superiora pervius continuabat ascensus: ante eamdem vero turrim largius erat habitaculum, in quo vtriusque discipuli quiescebant. Cumque vir Dei Benedictus, quiescentibus adhuc Fratribus, instans vigiliis, nocturnae orationis tempora praeuenisset, ad fenestram stans et omnipotentem Deum deprecans; subito intempesta noctis hora respiciens, vidit fusam lucem desuper, cunctas noctis tenebras effugasse, tantoque splendore clarescere, vt diem vinceret lux illa, [videt animam S. Germani Episcopi Capuani ferri in caelum.] quae in tenebris radiasset. Mira autem res valde in hac speculatione secuta est: quia, sicut post ipse narrauit, omnis etiam mundus, velut sub vno solis radio collectus, ante oculos eius adductus est. Qui venerabilis Pater dum intentam oculorum aciem in hoc splendore coruscae lucis infigeret, vidit Germani Capuani Episcopi animam in sphaera ignea ab Angelis in caelum ferri. Tunc tanti sibi testem volens adhibere miraculi: Seruandum Diaconum, iterato bis terque eius nomine, cum clamoris magnitudine vocauit. Cumque ille fuisset insolito tanti viri clamore turbatus, [testem adhibet Seruandum,] ascendit, respexit, partemque iam lucis exiguam vidit: cui tantum hoc obstupescenti miraculum, vir Dei per ordinem, quae fuerant gesta, narrauit: statimque in Cassinum castrum religioso viro Theoprobo mandauit, vt ad Capuanam vrbem sub eadem nocte transmitteret, et quid de Germano Episcopo ageretur, agnosceret et indicaret. Factumque est et reuerendissimum virum Germanum Episcopum is qui missus fuerat iam defunctum reperit, et requirens subtiliter, agnouit eodem momento fuisse illius obitum, quo vir Domini eius cognouit ascensum. PETRUS: Mira res valde, et vehementer stupenda! Sed hoc, quod dictum est, quia ante oculos ipsius quasi sub vno solis radio collectus omnis mundus adductus est, sicut numquam expertus sum, ita nec coniicere scio, quonam ordine fieri potest, vt mundus omnis ab

homine vno videatur. GREGORIUS: Fixum tene, Petre, [eleuatus in Deum mundum sub radio solis collectum vidit:] quod loquor: quia animae videnti Creatorem angusta est omnis creatura. Quamlibet etenim parum de luce Creatoris adspexerit, breue ei fit omne, quod creatum est: quin ipsa luce visionis, intimae mentis laxatur sinus, tantumque expanditur in Deo, vt superior existat mundo. Fit vero ipsa videntis anima etiam super semetipsam; cumque in Dei lumine rapitur, super se in interioribus ampliatur; et dum se sub se conspicit, exaltata comprehendit quam breue sit, quod comprehendere humiliata non poterat. Vir ergo Dei, qui in turri globum igneum, Angelos quoque ad caelum redeuntes videbat, haec proculdubio cernere non nisi in Dei lumine poterat. Quid itaque mirum, si mundum ante se collectum vidit, qui subleuatus in mentis lumine, extra mundum fuit? Quod autem collectus mundus ante eius oculos dicitur, non caelum et terra contracta est, sed videntis animus est dilatatus: qui in Deo raptus, videre sine difficultate potuit omne, quod infra Deum est. In illa ergo luce, quae exterioribus oculis fulsit, lux interior in mente fuit, quae videntis animum cum ad superiora rapuit, ei quam angusta essent omnia inferiora monstrauit. PETRUS: Videor mihi vtiliter non intellexisse quae dixeras, quando ex tarditate mea tantum creuit expositio tua. Sed quia haec liquide meis sensibus infudisti, quaeso vt ad narrationis ordinem redeas.

[Scribit regulam discretione praecipuam,] GREGORIUS: Libet, Petre, adhuc de hoc venerabili Patre multa narrare; sed quaedam eius studiose praetereo, quia ad aliorum gesta reuoluenda festino. Hoc autem nolo te lateat, quod vir Dei inter tot miracula, quibus in mundo claruit, doctrinae quoque verbo non mediocriter fulsit. Nam scripsit monachorum Regulam, discretione praecipuam, sermone luculentam: cuius si quis velit subtilius mores vitamque cognoscere, potest in eadem institutione regulae omnes magisterii illius actus inuenire: quia sanctus vir nullo modo potuit aliter docere quam vixit.

[Mortem praedicit:] Eodem vero anno, quo de hac vita erat exiturus, quibusdam discipulis secum conuersantibus, quibusdam longe manentibus, sanctissimi sui obitus denuntiauit diem: praesentibus indicens, vt audita per silentium tegerent, absentibus indicans, quod vel quale eis signum fieret, quando eius anima de corpore exiret. Ante sextum vero sui exitus diem aperiri sibi sepulturam iubet: qui mox correptus febribus, [sepulcrum aperiri iubet:] acri coepit ardore fatigari. Cumque per dies singulos languor ingrauesceret, sexta die portari se in oratorium a discipulis fecit, ibique exitium suum Dominici Corporis et Sanguinis perceptione muniuit, atque inter discipulorum manus imbecillia membra sustentans, erectis in caelum manibus stetit, et vltimum spiritum inter verba orationis efflavit. Qua scilicet die duobus de eo Fratribus, vni in cella commoranti, [accepto viatico moritur:] alteri autem longius posito, reuelatio vnius atque indissimilis visionis apparuit. Viderunt namque, quia strata palliis atque innumeris corusca lampadibus via, recto Orientis tramite ab eius cella in caelum vsque tendebatur: cui venerando habitu vir desuper clarus assistens, cuius esset via, quam cernerent inquisiuit. Illi autem se nescire professi sunt. Quibus ipse ait: Haec est via, [in caelum ascendisse ostenditur:] qua dilectus Domino caelum Benedictus ascendit. Tunc itaque sancti viri obitum, sicut praesentes discipuli viderunt, ita absentes ex signo, quod eis praedictum fuerat, agnouerunt. Sepultus vero est in oratorio S. Ioannis Baptistae, quod, destructa ara Apollinis, [sepelitur.] ipse construxit: qui et in eo specu, in quo prius habitauit, nunc vsque, si petentium fides exigat, miraculis coruscat.

[Amens mulier redit ad sanitatem.] Nuper namque est res gesta, quam narro. Quaedam mulier mente capta, dum funditus sensum perdidisset, per montes et valles, et syluas et campos die noctuque vagabatur, ibique tantummodo quiescebat, vbi hanc quiescere lassitudo coëgisset. Quadam vero die dum vaga nimium erraret, ad beati viri Benedicti specum deuenit,

ibique nesciens ingressa mansit. Mane autem facto, ita sanato sensu egressa est, ac si eam numquam insania capitis vlla tenuisset: quae omni vitae suae tempore in eadem, quam accepit, salute permansit. PETRUS: Quidnam esse dicimus, quod plerumque in ipsis quoque patrociniis Martyrum sic esse sentimus; vt non tanta per corpora sua, quanta beneficia per Reliquias ostendant; atque illic maiora signa faciant, vbi minime per semetipsos iacent? GREGORIUS: Vbi in suis corporibus sancti Martyres iacent, dubium, Petre, non est, quod multa valeant signa demonstrare, sicut et faciunt, et pura mente quaerentibus innumera miracula ostendunt: sed quia ab infirmis potest mentibus dubitari, vtrumne ad exaudiendum ibi praesentes sint, vbi constat, quia in suis corporibus non sunt; ibi necesse est eos maiora signa ostendere, vbi de eorum praesentia potest mens infirma dubitare. [Sancti vbique possunt ipsos inuocantes exaudire.] Quorum vero mens in Deo fixa est, tanto maius habet fidei meritum, quanto illic eos nouit et non iacere corpore, et tamen non deesse ab exauditione. Vnde ipsa quoque Veritas, vt fidem discipulis augeret, dixit: Si ego non abiero, Paracletus non veniet ad vos. Cum enim constet, quia Paracletus Spiritus a Patre semper procedat et Filio, cur se Filius recessurum dicit, vt ille veniat, qui a Filio numquam recedit? Sed quia discipuli Dominum in carne cernentes, corporeis hunc oculis semper videre sitiebant, recte eis dicitur: Nisi ego abiero, Paracletus non veniet: acsi aperte diceretur: Si corpus non subtraho, quis sit amor spiritus non ostendo: et nisi me desieritis carnaliter cernere, numquam me discetis spiritaliter amare. PETRUS: Placet quod dicis. GREGORIUS: Aliquantum iam a locutione cessandum est, ut si ad aliorum miracula enarranda tendimus, loquendi vires interim per silentium reparemus.

Liber III

CAPUT I. De Paulino Nolanae urbis episcopo.

Dum vicinis valde Patribus intendo, majorum facta reliqueram, ita ut Paulini miraculum, Nolanae urbis episcopi, qui multos quorum memini virtute et tempore praecessit, memoriae defuisse videatur. Sed ad priora nunc redeo, eaque quanta valeo brevitate perstringo. Sicut enim bonorum facta innotescere citius similibus solent, senioribus nostris per justorum exempla gradientibus praedicti venerabilis viri celebre nomen innotuit, ejusque opus admirabile ad eorum se instruenda studia tetendit, quorum me necesse fuit grandaevitati tam certo credere, ac si ea quae dicerent meis oculis vidissem. Cum saevientium Vandalorum tempore fuisset Italia in Campaniae partibus depopulata, multique essent de hac terra in Africanam regionem transducti, vir Domini Paulinus cuncta quae ad episcopii usum habere potuit captivis indigentibusque largitus est. Cumque jam nihil omnino superesset quod petentibus dare potuisset, quodam die quaedam vidua advenit, quae a regis Vandalorum genero suum filium in captivitatem fuisse ductum perhibuit, atque a viro Dei ejus pretium postulavit, si forte illius dominus hoc dignaretur accipere, et hunc concederet ad propria remeare. Sed vir Dei magnopere petenti feminae quid dare potuisset inquirens, nihil apud se aliud nisi se invenit, petentique feminae respondit, dicens: Mulier, quod possim dare non habeo, sed memetipsum tolle, servum me juris tui esse profitere, atque ut filium tuum recipias, me vice illius in servitium trade. Quod illa ex ore tanti viri audiens, irrisionem potius credidit quam compassionem. At ille, ut erat vir eloquentissimus, atque apprime exterioribus quoque studiis eruditus, dubitanti feminae citius persuasit ut audita crederet, et pro receptione filii sui in servitium episcopum tradere non dubitaret. Perrexere igitur utrique ad Africam.

Procedenti autem regis genero, qui ejus filium habebat, vidua rogatura se obtulit, ac prius petiit ut ei filium donare debuisset. Quod cum vir barbarus typho superbiae turgidus, gaudio transitoriae prosperitatis inflatus, non solum facere, sed etiam audire despiceret, vidua subjunxit, dicens: Ecce hunc hominem pro eo vicarium praebeo, solummodo pietatem in me exhibe, mihique unicum filium redde. Cumque ille venusti vultus hominem conspexisset, quam artem nosset inquisivit. Cui vir Dei Paulinus respondit, dicens: Artem quidem aliquam nescio, sed hortum bene excolere scio. Quod vir gentilis valde libenter accepit, cum in nutriendis oleribus quia peritus esset audivit. Suscepit itaque servum, et roganti viduae reddidit filium. Quo accepto, vidua ab Africana regione discessit. Paulinus vero excolendi horti suscepit curam. Cumque idem regis gener crebro ingrederetur hortum, suumque hortulanum quaedam requireret, et sapientem valde esse hominem videret, amicos coepit et familiares deserere, et saepius cum suo hortulano colloqui, atque ejus sermonibus delectari. Cui Paulinus quotidie ad mensam odoriferas virentesque herbas deferre consueverat, et accepto pane ad curam horti remeare. Cumque hoc diutius ageretur, quadam die suo domino secum secretius loquenti ait: Vide quid agas, et Vandalorum regnum qualiter disponi debeat provide, quia rex citius et sub omni celeritate est moriturus. Quod ille audiens, quia ab eodem rege prae caeteris diligebatur, ei minime tacuit, sed quid a suo hortulano, sapienti scilicet viro, agnovisset indicavit. Quod dum rex audisset, illico respondit: Ego vellem hunc de quo loqueris hominem videre. Cui gener ejus, venerabilis Paulini temporalis dominus, respondit dicens: Virentes herbas mihi ad prandium deferre consuevit, has itaque huc ad mensam eum deportare facio, ut quis sit qui mihi haec est locutus agnoscas. Factumque est. Et dum rex ad prandendum discubuit, Paulinus ex suo opere odora quaeque et virentia delaturus advenit. Cumque hunc rex subito conspexisset, intremuit, atque, accersito ejus domino, sibi per filiam propinquo, ei secretum quod prius absconderat indicavit, dicens:

Verum est quod audisti; nam nocte hac in somnio, sedentes in tribunalibus contra me judices vidi, inter quos iste etiam simul sedebat, et flagellum quod aliquando acceperam eorum mihi judicio tollebatur. Sed percunctare quisnam sit; nam ego hunc tanti meriti virum, popularem, ut conspicitur, esse non suspicor. Tunc regis gener secreto Paulinum tulit, et quisnam esset inquisivit. Cui vir Domini respondit: Servus tuus sum, quem pro filio viduae vicarium suscepisti. Cumque instanter ille requireret ut non quid esset, sed quid in terra sua fuisset indicaret, atque hoc ab eo iteratione frequentis inquisitionis exigeret, vir Domini, constrictus magnis conjurationibus, jam non valens negare quid esset, episcopum se fuisse testatus est. Quod possessor ejus audiens, valde pertimuit, atque humiliter obtulit, dicens: Pete quod vis, quatenus ad terram tuam a me cum magno munere revertaris. Cui vir Domini Paulinus ait: Unum est quod mihi impendere beneficium potes, ut omnes civitatis meae captivos relaxes. Qui cuncti protinus in Africana regione requisiti, cum onustis frumento navibus pro venerandi viri Paulini satisfactione, in ejus comitatu laxati sunt. Post non multos vero dies Vandalorum rex occubuit, et flagellum quod ad suam perniciem, dispensante Deo, pro fidelium disciplina acceperat amisit. Sicque factum est ut omnipotentis Dei famulus Paulinus vera praediceret, et qui se in servitium solum tradiderat, cum multis a servitio ad libertatem rediret, illum videlicet imitatus qui formam servi assumpsit, ne nos essemus servi peccati. Cujus sequens vestigia Paulinus, ad tempus voluntarie servus factus est solus, ut esset postmodum liber cum multis. PETRUS: Dum me audire contingit quod imitari non valeo, flere magis libet quam aliquid dicere. GREGORIUS: De cujus etiam morte apud ejus Ecclesiam scriptum est, quia cum dolore esset lateris tactus, ad extrema perductus est. Dumque ejus omnis domus in sua soliditate persisteret, cubiculum in quo jacebat aeger, facto terrae motu, contremuit, omnesque qui illic aderant nimio terrore concussit; sicque sancta illa anima carne soluta est. Factumque est ut

magnus pavor invaderet eos qui Paulini mortem videre potuissent. Sed quia haec, quam superius dixi, Paulini virtus valde est intima, nunc, si placet, ad miracula exteriora veniamus, quae et multis jam nota sunt, et ego tam religiosorum virorum relatione didici, ut de his omnimodo ambigere non possim.

CAPUT II. De sancto Joanne papa.

Gothorum tempore, cum Joannes vir beatissimus hujus Romanae Ecclesiae pontifex ad Justinum seniorem principem pergeret, in Corinthi partibus advenit, cui necesse fuit ut in itinere ad sedendum equus requiri debuisset. Quod illic quidam vir nobilis audiens, equum, quem pro magna mansuetudine ejus conjux sedere consueverat, ita ei obtulit, ut cum ad loca alia pervenienti aptus equus inveniri potuisset, deberet ille quem dederat propter suam conjugem retransmitti. Factumque est, et usque ad certum locum praedictus vir equo eodem subvehente perductus est. Qui mox ut alium reperit, illum quem acceperat retransmisit. Cumque eum praedicti nobilis viri conjux sedere ex more voluisset, ultra non valuit, quia post sessionem tanti pontificis mulierem ferre recusavit. Coepit namque immenso flatu et fremitu, atque incessanti totius corporis motu quasi despiciendo prodere, quia post membra pontificis mulierem ferre non posset. Quod vir ejus prudenter intuitus, hunc ad eumdem venerabilem virum protinus retransmisit, magnis precibus petens ut equum ipse possideret, quem juri suo sedendo dedicasset. De quo etiam illud mirabile a nostris senioribus narrari solet, quod in Constantinopolitana urbe ad portam quae vocatur Aurea, veniens, populorum turbis sibi occurrentibus, in conspectu omnium roganti caeco lumen reddidit, et manu superposita oculorum tenebras fugavit.

CAPUT III. De sancto Agapito papa.

Post non multum vero temporis, exigente causa Gothorum, vir quoque beatissimus Agapitus hujus sanctae Romanae Ecclesiae pontifex, cui Deo dispensante deservio, ad Justinianum principem accessit. Cui adhuc pergenti quadam die in Graeciarum jam partibus curandus oblatus est mutus et claudus, qui neque ulla verba edere, neque ex terra unquam surgere valebat. Cumque hunc propinqui illius flentes obtulissent, vir Domini sollicite requisivit an curationis illius haberent fidem. Cui dum in virtute Dei, ex auctoritate Petri, fixam salutis illius spem habere se dicerent, protinus venerandus vir orationi incubuit, et missarum solemnia exorsus, sacrificium in conspectu Dei omnipotentis immolavit. Quo peracto, ab altari exiens, claudi manum tenuit, atque assistente et aspiciente populo, eum mox a terra in propriis gressibus erexit. Cumque ei Dominicum corpus in os mitteret, illa diu muta ad loquendum lingua soluta est. Mirati omnes flere prae gaudio coeperunt, eorumque mentes illico metus et reverentia invasit, cum videlicet cernerent quid Agapitus facere in virtute Domini ex adjutorio Petri potuisset.

CAPUT IV. De Datio Mediolanensi episcopo.

Ejusdem quoque principis tempore cum Datius Mediolanensis urbis episcopus causa fidei exactus, ad Constantinopolitanam urbem pergeret, Corinthum devenit. Qui dum largam domum ad hospitandum quaereret, quae comitatum illius totum ferre potuisset, et vix inveniret, aspexit eminus domum congruentis magnitudinis, eamque sibi praeparari ad hospitandum jussit. Cumque ejusdem loci incolae dicerent, in ea hunc manere non posse, quia multis jam annis hanc diabolus inhabitaret, atque ideo vacua remansisset, vir venerabilis Datius respondit, dicens: Imo ideo hospitari in domo eadem debemus, si hanc spiritus malignus invasit, et ab ea hominum inhabitationem repulit. In ea igitur sibi parari praecepit, securusque illam, antiqui hostis certamina toleraturus, intravit. Itaque intempestae noctis

silentio, cum vir Dei quiesceret, antiquus hostis immensis vocibus magnisque clamoribus coepit imitari rugitus leonum, balatus pecorum, ruditus asinorum, sibilos serpentium, porcorum stridores et soricum. Tunc repente Datius tot bestiarum vocibus excitatus surrexit, vehementer iratus, et contra antiquum hostem magnis coepit vocibus clamare, dicens: Bene tibi contigit, miser, tu ille es qui dixisti: Ponam sedem meam ad Aquilonem, et ero similis Altissimo; ecce per superbiam tuam porcis et soricibus similis factus es; et qui imitari Deum indigne voluisti, ecce, ut dignus es, bestias imitaris. Ad quam ejus vocem, ut ita dicam, dejectionem suam malignus spiritus erubuit. An non erubuit, qui eamdem domum ad exhibenda monstra quae consueverat ulterius non intravit? Sicque postmodum fidelium habitaculum facta est, quia dum eam unus veraciter fidelis ingressus est, ab ea protinus mendax spiritus atque infidelis abscessit. Sed oportet jam ut priora taceamus, ad ea quae diebus nostris sunt gesta veniendum est,

CAPUT V. De Sabino Canusinae civitatis episcopo.

Quidam enim religiosi viri Apuliae provinciae partibus cogniti, hoc quod apud multorum notitiam longe lateque percrebuit, de Sabino Canusinae urbis episcopo testari solent, quia idem vir longo jam senio oculorum lumen amiserat, ita ut omnimodo nil videret. Quem rex Gothorum Totila prophetiae habere spiritum audiens, minime credidit, sed probare studuit quod audivit. Qui cum in iisdem partibus devenisset, hunc vir Domini ad prandium rogavit. Cumque jam ventum esset ad mensam, rex discumbere noluit, sed ad Sabini venerabilis viri dexteram sedit. Cum vero eidem patri puer ex more poculum vini praeberet, rex silenter manum tetendit, calicem abstulit, eumque per se episcopo vice pueri praebuit, ut videret an spiritu providente discerneret quis ei poculum praeberet. Tunc vir Dei, accipiens calicem, sed tamen ministrum non videns, dixit: Vivat ipsa manus. De quo verbo rex laetatus erubuit, quia quamvis ipse deprehensus fuisset, in viro

tamen Dei quod quaerebat invenit. Hujus autem venerabilis viri, cum ad exemplum vitae sequentium in longum senium vita traheretur, ejus archidiaconus ambitione adipiscendi episcopatus accensus, eum exstinguere veneno molitus est. Qui cum vini fusoris ejus animum corrupisset, ut mistum vino veneni ei poculum praeberet, refectionis hora cum jam vir Dei ad edendum discumberet, ei praemiis corruptus puer hoc quod ab archidiacono ejus acceperat veneni poculum obtulit. Cui statim venerabilis episcopus dixit: Bibe tu hoc quod mihi bibendum praebes. Tremefactus puer, deprehensum se esse sentiens, maluit moriturus bibere quam poenas pro illa tanti homicidii culpa tolerare. Cumque sibi ad os calicem duceret, vir Domini compescuit, dicens: Non bibas, da mihi, ego bibo; sed vade, dic ei qui tibi illud dedit: Ego quidem venenum bibo, sed tu episcopus non eris. Facto igitur signo crucis, venenum episcopus bibit securus. Eademque hora in loco alio quo inerat archidiaconus ejus defunctus est, ac si per os episcopi ad archidiaconi viscera illa venena transissent. Cui tamen ad inferendam mortem venenum quidem corporale defuit, sed hunc in conspectu aeterni judicis venenum suae malitiae occidit. PETRUS: Mira sunt haec, et nostris valde stupenda temporibus; sed talis ejusdem viri vita perhibetur ut qui conversationem ejus agnoverit, virtutem non debeat mirari.

CAPUT VI. De Cassio Narniensis civitatis episcopo.

GREGORIUS: Neque hoc, Petre, sileam quod multi nunc qui hic de Narniensi civitate adsunt mihi sedulo testificantur. Eodem namque Gothorum tempore, cum praefatus rex Totila Narniam venisset, ei vir vitae venerabilis Cassius ejusdem urbis episcopus occurrit. Cui quia ex conspersione semper facies rubere consueverat, hoc rex Totila non conspersionis esse credidit, sed assiduae potationis, eumque omnimodo despexit. Sed omnipotens Deus, ut quantus vir esset qui despiciebatur ostenderet, in Narniensi campo quo rex advenerat, malignus spiritus coram

omni exercitu ejus spatharium invasit, eumque vexare crudeliter coepit. Qui cum ante regis oculos ad venerandum virum Cassium fuisset adductus, hunc ab eo vir Domini oratione facta, signo crucis expulit, qui in eum ingredi ulterius non praesumpsit. Sicque factum est ut rex barbarus servum Dei ab illo jam die veneraretur ex corde, quem despectum valde judicabat ex facie. Nam quia virum tantae virtutis vidit, erga illum illa mens effera ab elationis fastu detumuit.

CAPUT VII. De Andrea Fundanae civitatus episcopo.

Sed ecce dum facta fortium virorum narro, repente ad memoriam venit quid erga Andream Fundanae civitatis episcopum divina misericordia fecerit. Quod tamen ad hoc legentibus ut valeat exopto, quatenus qui corpus suum continentiae dedicant, habitare cum feminis non praesumant; ne ruina menti tanto repentina subripiat, quanto ad hoc quod male concupiscitur etiam praesentia concupitae formae famulatur. Nec res est dubia quam narro, quia pene tanti in ea testes sunt, quanti et ejusdem loci habitatores existunt. Hic namque venerabilis vir cum vitam multis plenam virtutibus duceret, seque sub sacerdotali custodia in continentiae arce custodiret, quamdam sanctimonialem feminam, quam secum prius habuerat, noluit ab episcopii sui cura repellere, sed certus de sua ejusque continentia, secum hanc permisit habitare. Ex qua re actum est ut antiquus hostis apud ejus animum aditum tentationis exquireret. Nam coepit speciem illius oculis mentis ejus imprimere, ut illectus nefanda cogitaret. Quadam vero die Judaeus quidam ex Campaniae partibus Romam veniens, Appiae carpebat iter: qui ad Fundanum clivum perveniens, cum jam diem vesperascere cerneret, et quo declinare posset minime reperiret, juxta Apollinis templum fuit, ibique se ad manendum contulit. Qui ipsum loci illius sacrilegium pertimescens, quamvis fidem crucis minime haberet, signo tamen se crucis munire curavit. Nocte autem media, ipso solitudinis pavore turbatus, pervigil jacebat, et

repente conspiciens vidit malignorum spirituum turbam quasi in obsequium cujusdam potestatis praeire, eum vero qui caeteris praeerat, in ejusdem gremio loci consedisse: qui coepit singulorum spirituum obsequentium sibi causas actusque discutere, quatenus unusquisque quantum nequitiae egisset inveniret. Cumque singuli spiritus ad inquisitionem ejus exponerent quid operati contra bonos fuissent, unus in medium prosiliit, qui in Andreae episcopi animum per speciem sanctimonialis feminae, quae in episcopio ejus habitabat, quantam tentationem carnis commovisset aperuit. Cum vero hoc malignus qui praeerat spiritus inhianter audiret, et tanto sibi factum lucrum grande crederet, quanto sanctioris viri animum ad lapsum perditionis iclinaret, ille spiritus, qui haec eadem fatebatur, adjunxit quia usque ad hoc quoque, die praeterito, vespertina hora, ejus mentem traxerit, ut in terga ejusdem sanctimonialis feminae blandiens alapam daret. Tunc malignus spiritus atque humani generis antiquus inimicus exhortatus hunc blande est, ut perficeret quod coepisset; quatenus ruinae illius singularem inter caeteros palmam teneret. Cumque Judaeus qui advenerat hoc vigilans cerneret, et magnae formidinis anxietate palpitaret, ab eodem spiritu qui cunctis illic obsequentibus praeerat jussum est ut requirerent quisnam esset ille qui jacere in templo eodem praesumpsisset. Quem maligni spiritus pergentes, et subtilius intuentes, crucis mysterio signatum viderunt, mirantesque dixerunt: Vae, vae, vas vacuum et signatum. Quibus hoc renuntiantibus, cuncta illa malignorum spirituum turba disparuit. Judaeus vero qui haec viderat, illco surrexit, atque ad episcopum sub festinatione pervenit. Quem in Ecclesia sua reperiens, seorsum tulit, qua tentatione urgeretur inquisivit. Cui confiteri episcopus tentationem suam verecundatus noluit. Cum vero ille diceret quod in illa tali Dei famula pravi amoris oculos injecisset, atque adhuc episcopus negaret, adjunxit, dicens: Quare negas quod inquireris, qui ad hoc usque vespere hesterno perductus es, ut posteriora illius alapa ferires? Ad quae nimirum verba deprehensum se

episcopus intuens, humiliter confessus est quod prius pertinaciter negavit. Cujus ruinae et verecundiae idem Judaeus consulens, qualiter hoc cognovisset, vel quae in conventu malignorum spirituum de eo audivisset, indicavit. Quod ille agnoscens, se ad terram protinus in orationem dedit. Moxque de suo habitaculo non solum eamdem Dei famulam, sed omnem quoque feminam, quae in ejus illic obsequio habitabat, expulit. In eodem vero templo Apollinis, beati Andreae apostoli repente oratorium fecit, atque omni illa tentatione carnis funditus caruit. Judaeum vero, cujus visione atque increpatione salvatus est, ad aeternam salutem traxit. Nam sacramentis fidei imbutum, atque aqua baptismatis emundatum, ad sanctae Ecclesiae gremium perduxit. Sicque factum est ut Hebraeus idem, dum saluti alienae consuluit, perveniret ad suam, et omnipotens Deus inde alterum ad bonam vitam perduceret, unde in bona vita alterum custodisset. PETRUS: Res haec gesta quam audivi, et metum mihi praebet et spem. GREGORIUS: Utique sic oportet et de Dei nos semper miseratione confidere, et de nostra infirmitate formidare. Ecce enim paradisi cedrum concussam audivimus, sed non evulsam, quatenus infirmis nobis et de ejus concussione nascatur timor, et de ejus stabilitate fiducia.

CAPUT VIII. De Constantio Aquinae civitatis episcopo.

Vir quoque venerabilis vitae Constantius Aquinae civitatis episcopus fuit, qui nuper praedecessoris mei tempore beatae memoriae Joannis papae defunctus est. Hunc prophetiae habuisse spiritum multi testantur, qui eum familiariter scire potuerunt. Cujus inter multa hoc ferunt religiosi veracesque viri qui praesentes fuerunt, quod in die obitus sui cum a circumstantibus civibus utpote discessurus Pater tam amabilis amarissime plangeretur, eum flendo requisierunt, dicentes: Quem post te, Pater, habebimus? Quibus ipse Pater per prophetiae spiritum respondit, dicens: Post Constantium, mulionem; post mulionem, fullonem. O te, Aquine, et

hoc habes. Quibus prophetiae verbis editis, vitae spiritum exhalavit extremum. Quo defuncto, ejus Ecclesiae pastoralem suscepit curam Andreas diaconus illius, qui quondam in stabulis itinerum cursum servaverat equorum. Atque hoc ex hac vita subducto, ad episcopatus ordinem Jovinus accersitus est, qui in eadem urbe fullo fuerat. Quo adhuc superstite, ita cuncti inhabitatores civitatis illius et barbarorum gladiis et pestilentiae immanitate vastati sunt, ut post mortem illius nec quis episcopus fieret, nec quibus fieret inveniri potuisset. Sic itaque completa est viri Dei sententia, quatenus post decessum duorum se sequentium ejus Ecclesia pastorem minime haberet.

CAPUT IX. De Frigdiano Lucensis civitatis episcopo.

Sed neque hoc sileam, quod narrante viro venerabili Venantio Lunensi episcopo me ante biduum contigit agnovisse. Lucanae namque Ecclesiae, sibimet propinquae, fuisse mirae virtutis virum Frigdianum nomine narravit episcopum: cujus hoc opinatissimum a cunctis illic habitantibus testatur memorari miraculum, quod Auseris fluvius, qui juxta illius urbis muros influebat, saepe inundatione facta cursus sui alveum egressus per agros diffundi consueverat, ut quaeque sata et plantata reperiret everteret. Cumque hoc crebro fieret, et magna ejusdem loci incolas necessitas urgeret, dato studio operis, eum per loca alia derivare conati sunt. Sed quamvis diutius laboratum fuisset, a proprio alveo deflecti non potuit. Tunc vir Domini Frigdianus rastrum sibi parvulum fecit, ad alveum fluminis accessit, et solus orationi incubuit; atque eidem flumini praecipiens ut se sequeretur, per loca quaeque ei visa sunt rastrum per terram traxit. Quem relicto alveo proprio tota fluminis aqua secuta est, ita ut funditus locum consueti cursus desereret, et ibi sibi alveum, ubi tracto per terram rastro vir Domini signum fecerat, vindicaret, et quaeque essent alimentis hominum profutura sata vel plantata ultra non laederet.

CAPUT X. De Sabino episcopo Placentino, qui Padum flumen per litteras suas compescuit.

Hujus quoque venerabilis viri Venantii episcopi aliud miraculum relatione cognovi, quod in Placentina urbe perhibet gestum; quod vir quoque veracissimus Joannes in hac modo Romana civitate locum praefectorum servans, qui in eadem Placentina urbe est ortus et nutritus, ita ut episcopus memorat, quia gestum fuerit attestatur. In ea namque civitate Sabinum nomine fuisse asserunt mirae virtutis episcopum. Cui dum die quadam suus diaconus nuntiasset quod cursus sui Padus alveum egressus Ecclesiae agros occupasset, totaque illic loca nutriendis hominibus profutura aqua ejusdem fluminis teneret, venerabilis vitae Sabinus episcopus respondit, dicens: Vade, et dic ei: Mandat tibi episcopus ut te compescas, et ad proprium alveum redeas. Quod diaconus ejus audiens, despexit et irrisit. Tunc vir Dei, accersito notario, dictavit, dicens: Sabinus Domini Jesu Christi servus, commonitorium Pado: Praecipio tibi in nomine Jesu Christi Domini nostri ut de alveo tuo in locis istis ulterius non exeas, nec terras Ecclesiae laedere praesumas. Atque eidem notario subjunxit, dicens: Vade, hoc scribe, et in aquam ejusdem fluminis projice. Quo facto, sancti viri praeceptum suscipiens, statim se a terris Ecclesiae fluminis aqua compescuit, atque ad proprium alveum reversa, exire ulterius in loca eadem non praesumpsit. Qua in re, Petre, quid aliud quam inobedientium hominum duritia confunditur, quando in virtute Jesu et elementum irrationabile sancti viri praeceptis obedivit?

CAPUT XI. De Cerbonio Populonii episcopo.

Vir quoque vitae venerabilis Cerbonius Populonii episcopus, magnam diebus nostris sanctitatis suae probationem dedit. Nam cum hospitalitatis studio valde esset intentus, die quadam transeuntes milites hospitio suscepit,

quos Gothis supervenientibus abscondit, eorumque vitam ab illorum nequitia abscondendo servavit. Quod dum Gothorum regi perfido Totilae nuntiatum fuisset, crudelitatis immanissimae vaesania succensus, hunc ad locum qui ab octavo hujus urbis milliario Merulis dicitur, ubi tunc ipse cum exercitu sedebat, jussit deduci, cumque in spectaculo populi ursis ad devorandum projici. Cumque idem rex perfidus in ipso quoque spectaculo consedisset ad inspiciendam mortem episcopi, magna populi turba confluxit. Tunc episcopus deductus in medium est, atque ad ejus mortem immanissimus ursus exquisitus, qui dum humana membra crudeliter carperet, saevi regis animum satiaret. Dimissus itaque ursus ex cavea est: qui accensus et concitus episcopum petiit, sed subito suae feritatis oblitus, deflexa cervice, submissoque humiliter capite, lambere episcopi pedes coepit, ut patenter omnibus daretur intelligi quia erga illum virum Dei et ferina corda essent hominum, et quasi humana bestiarum. Tunc populus qui ad spectaculum venerat mortis, magno clamore versus est in admirationem venerationis. Tunc ad ejus reverentiam colendam rex ipse permotus est, quippe cum quo superno judicio actum erat, ut qui Deum sequi prius in custodienda vita episcopi noluit, saltem ad mansuetudinem bestiam sequeretur. Cui rei hi qui tunc praesentes fuerunt adhuc nonnulli supersunt, eamque cum omni illic populo se vidisse testantur. De quo etiam viro aliud quoque miraculum Venantio Lunensi episcopo narrante cognovi. In ea namque Populonii ecclesia cui praeerat sepulcrum sibi praeparavit. Sed cum Langobardorum gens in Italiam veniens cuncta vastasset, ad Ilvam insulam recessit. Qui ingruente aegritudine ad mortem veniens, clericis suis sibique obsequentibus praecepit, dicens: In sepulcro meo quod mihi praeparavi Populonii me ponite. Cui illi cum dicerent: Corpus tuum illuc qualiter reducere possumus, qui a Langobardis teneri loca eadem, et ubique eos illic discurrere scimus? Ipse respondit: Reducite me securi, nolite metuere, sed festine sepelire me curate; mox autem ut sepultum fuerit corpus meum, ex

eodem loco sub omni festinatione recedite. Defuncti igitur corpus imposuerunt navi; cumque Populonium tenderent, collecto in nubibus aere, immensa nimis pluvia erupit. Sed ut patesceret omnibus cujus viri corpus navis illa portaret, per illud maris spatium quod ab Ilva insula usque Populonium duodecim millibus distat, circa utraque navis latera procellosa valde pluvia descendit, et in navem eamdem una pluviae gutta non cecidit. Pervenerunt itaque ad locum clerici, et sepulturae tradiderunt corpus sacerdotis sui. Cujus praecepta servantes, ad navem sub festinatione reversi sunt. Quam mox ut intrare potuerunt, in eumdem locum ubi vir Domini sepultus fuerat, Langobardorum dux crudelissimus Gummarith advenit. Ex cujus adventu virum Dei habuisse spiritum prophetiae claruit, qui ministros suos a sepulturae suae loco sub festinatione discedere praecepit.

CAPUT XII. De Fulgentio Utriculanae civitatis episcopo.

Hoc vero quod de divisa pluvia factum narravi miraculum, etiam in alterius episcopi veneratione monstratum est. Nam quidam clericus senex, qui adhuc superest, eidem rei praesto se fuisse testatur, dicens: Fulgentius episcopus qui Utriculensi Ecclesiae praeerat, regem crudelissimum Totilam infensum omnimodo habebat. Cumque ad easdem partes cum exercitu propinquasset, curae fuit episcopo per clericos suos xenia ei transmittere, ejusque furoris insaniam, si posset, muneribus mitigare. Quae ille ut vidit, protinus sprevit, atque iratus suis hominibus jussit ut eumdem episcopum sub omni asperitate constringerent, eumque ejus examini servarent. Quem dum feroces Gothi, ministri scilicet crudelitatis illius, tenuissent, circumdantes eum uno in loco stare praeceperunt, eique in terra circulum designaverunt, extra quem pedem tendere nullo modo auderet. Cumque vir Dei in sole nimio aestuaret, ab eisdem Gothis circumdatus, et designatione circuli inclusus, repente coruscationes et tonitrua, et tanta vis pluviae erupit, ut hi qui eum custodiendum acceperant, immensitatem pluviae ferre non

possent. Et dum magna nimis inundatio fieret, intra eamdem designationem circuli in qua vir Domini Fulgentius stetit, ne una quidem pluviae gutta descendit. Quod dum regi crudelissimo nuntiatum esset, illa mens effera ad magnam ejus reverentiam versa est, cujus poenam prius insatiabili furore sitiebat. Sic omnipotens Deus contra elatas carnalium mentes, potentiae suae miracula per despectos operatur; ut qui superbe contra praecepta veritatis se elevant, eorum cervicem veritas per humiles premat.

CAPUT XIII. De Herculano Perusinae civitatis episcopo.

Nuper quoque Floridus venerabilis vitae episcopus narravit quoddam memorabile valde miraculum, dicens: Vir sanctissimus Herculanus nutritor meus, Perusinae civitatis episcopus fuit, ex conversatione monasterii ad sacerdotalis ordinis gratiam deductus. Totilae autem perfidi regis temporibus, eamdem urbem annis septem continuis Gothorum exercitus obsedit, ex qua multi civium fugerunt, qui famis periculum ferre non poterant. Anno vero septimo nondum finito, obsessam urbem Gothorum exercitus intravit. Tunc comes qui eidem exercitui praeerat, ad regem Totilam nuntios misit, exquirens quid de episcopo vel populo fieri juberet. Cui ille praecepit, dicens: Episcopo prius a vertice usque ad calcaneum corrigiam tolle, et tunc caput ejus amputa; omnem vero populum qui illic inventus est, gladio exstingue. Tunc idem comes venerabilem virum Herculanum episcopum super urbis murum deductum capite truncavit, ejusque cutem jam mortui a vertice usque ad calcaneum incidit, ut ex ejus corpore corrigia sublata videretur. Moxque corpus illius extra murum projecit. Tunc quidam, humanitatis pietate compulsi, abscissum caput cervici apponentes, cum uno parvulo infante, qui illic exstinctus inventus est juxta murum, corpus episcopi sepulturae tradiderunt. Cumque post eamdem caedem die quadragesimo rex Totila jussisset ut cives urbis illius qui quolibet dispersi essent ad eam sine aliqua trepidatione remearent, hi

qui prius famem fugerant, vivendi licentia accepta reversi sunt. Sed, cujus vitae eorum episcopus fuerat memores, ubi sepultum esset corpus illius quaesierunt, ut hoc juxta honorem debitum in Ecclesia beati Petri apostoli humarent. Cumque itum esset ad sepulcrum, effossa terra, invenerunt corpus pueri pariter humati, utpote jam die quadragesimo, tabe corruptum, et vermibus plenum; corpus vero episcopi ac si die eodem esset sepultum. Et quod est adhuc magna admiratione venerandum, quia ita caput ejus unitum fuerat corpori, ac si nequaquam fuisset abscissum, sic videlicet, ut nulla vestigia sectionis apparerent. Cumque hoc et in terga verterent, exquirentes si quod signum vel de alia monstrari incisione potuisset, ita sanum atque intemeratum omne corpus inventum est, ac si nulla hoc incisio ferri tetigisset. PETRUS: Quis non obstupescat talia signa mortuorum, quae fiunt pro exercitatione viventium?

CAPUT XIV. De Isaac servo Dei.

Prioribus quoque Gothorum temporibus fuit juxta Spoletanam urbem vir vitae venerabilis Isaac nomine, qui usque ad extrema pene Gothorum tempora pervenit, quem nostrorum multi noverunt, et maxime sacra virgo Gregoria, quae nunc in hac Romana urbe juxta Ecclesiam beatae Mariae semper virginis habitat. Quae dum adolescentiae suae tempore constitutis jam nuptiis in ecclesiam fugisset, et sanctimonialis vitae conversationem quaereret, ab eodem viro defensa, atque ad eum quem desiderabat habitum, Domino protegente, perducta est. Quae quia sponsum fugit in terra, habere sponsum meruit in coelo. Multa autem de eodem viro, narrante venerabili Patre Eleutherio, agnovi, qui et hunc familiariter noverat, et ejus verbis vita fidem praebebat. Hic itaque venerabilis Isaac ortus ex Italia non fuit, sed ea illius norro miracula quae conversatus in Italia fecit. Cum primum de Syriae partibus ad Spoletanam urbem venisset, ingressus ecclesiam a custodibus petiit ut sibi quantum vellet licentia concederetur orandi, eumque horis

secretioribus egredi non urgerent. Qui mox ad orandum stetit, diemque totum peregit in oratione, cui sequentem continuavit et noctem. Secundo etiam die, cum nocte subsequenti indefessus in precibus perstitit, diem quoque tertium in oratione conjunxit. Cumque hoc unus ex custodibus superbiae spiritu inflatus cerneret, unde proficere debuit, inde ad defectus damna pervenit. Nam hunc simulatorem dicere, et verbo rustico coepit impostorem clamare, qui se tribus diebus et noctibus orare ante oculos hominum demonstraret. Qui protinus currens, virum Dei alapa percussit, ut, quasi religiosae vitae simulator, de ecclesia cum contumelia exiret. Sed hunc repente ultor spiritus invasit, et ad viri Dei vestigia stravit, ac per os illius clamare coepit: Isaac me ejicit. Vir quippe peregrinus quo censeretur nomine nesciebatur, sed ejus nomen ille spiritus prodidit, qui se ab illo posse ejici clamavit. Mox autem super vexati corpus vir Dei incubuit, et malignus spiritus qui eum invaserat abscessit. In tota urbe tunc statim quid in ecclesia factum fuisset innotuit. Currere viri et feminae nobiles atque ignobiles pariter coeperunt, certatimque eum in suis rapere domibus conabantur. Alii ad construendum monasterium praedia, alii pecunias, alii subsidia quaeque poterant, offerre viro Dei suppliciter volebant. Sed servus omnipotentis Domini horum nihil accipiens, egressus urbem non longe desertum locum reperit, ibique sibi humile habitaculum construxit. Ad quem dum multi pergunt, exemplo illius aeternae vitae accendi desiderio coeperunt, atque sub ejus magisterio in omnipotentis se Domini servitium dederunt. Cumque ei crebro discipuli humiliter imminerent, ut pro usu monasterii possessiones quae offerebantur acciperet, ille sollicitus suae paupertatis custos fortem sententiam tenebat, dicens: Monachus qui in terra possessionem quaerit monachus non est. Sic quippe metuebat paupertatis suae securitatem perdere, sicut avari divites solent perituras divitias custodire. Ibi itaque prophetiae spiritu magnisque miraculis cunctis longe lateque habitantibus vita ejus inclaruit. Nam die quadam ad vesperum in

hortum monasterii fecit jactari ferramenta, quae usitato nos nomine vangas vocamus. Dixit itaque discipulis suis: Tot vangas in hortum projicite, et citius redite. Nocte vero eadem dum ex more cum fratribus ad exhibendas laudes Domino surrexisset, praecepit, dicens: Ite et operariis nostris pulmentum coquite, ut mane primo paratum sit. Facto autem mane, fecit deferri pulmentum quod parari jusserat, atque hortum cum fratribus ingressus, quot vangas jactari praeceperat, tot in eo laborantes operarios invenit. Ingressi quippe fures fuerant, sed mutata mente per spiritum apprehenderunt vangas quas invenerunt, et ab ea hora qua ingressi sunt, quousque vir Domini ad eos veniret, cuncta horti illius spatia quae inculta fuerant coluerunt. Quibus vir Domini mox ut ingressus est, ait: Gaudete, fratres, multum laborastis, jam quiescite. Quibus illico alimenta quae detulerat praebuit, eosque post tanti laboris fatigationem refecit. Sufficienter autem refectis ait: Nolite malum facere, sed quoties de horto aliquid vultis, ad horti aditum venite, tranquille petite, cum benedictione percipite, et a furti pravitate cessate. Quos statim collectis oleribus onustari fecit. Actumque est ut qui ad hortum nocituri venerant cum laboris sui praemio et repleti ab eo et innocui redirent. Alio quoque tempore accesserunt ad eum peregrini quidam misericordiam postulantes, scissis vestibus, pannis obsiti, ita ut pene nudi viderentur. Cumque hunc vestimenta peterent, eorum verba vir Domini tacitus audivit; qui unum ex discipulis suis protinus silenter vocavit, eique praecepit, dicens: Vade, atque in illa silva in loco tali cavam arborem require; et vestimenta quae in ea inveneris defer. Cumque discipulus abiisset, arborem sicut fuerat jussum requisivit, vestimenta reperit, et latenter detulit magistro. Quae vir Dei suscipiens, peregrinis nudis atque petentibus ostendit et praebuit, dicens: Venite, quia nudi estis, ecce tollite, et vestite vos. Haec illi intuentes, recognoverunt quae posuerant, magnoque pudore consternati sunt; et qui fraudulenter vestimenta quaerebant aliena, confusi receperunt sua. Alio quoque tempore

quidam se ejus orationibus commendans, sportas duas plenas alimentis ei per puerum transmisit, quarum unam idem puer subripuit, atque in itinere abscondit: unam vero ad Dei hominem detulit, et petitionem illius qui se ei per xenium commendaverat enarravit. Quam vir Domini benigne suscipiens, eumdem puerum admonuit, dicens: Gratias agimus, sed vide, sportam quam in itinere posuisti ne incaute tangere praesumas, quia in eam serpens ingressus est. Esto ergo sollicitus, ne si tollere incaute volueris, a serpente feriaris. Quibus verbis puer valde confusus, exsultavit quidem quod mortem evaserit, sed tristis ad modicum factus est, quia quamvis salubrem poenam, tamen pertulit verecundiam suam. Qui reversus ad sportam, caute ac sollicite attendit, sed eam jam, sicut vir Dei praedixerat, serpens tenebat. Hic itaque cum virtute abstinentiae, contemptu rerum transeuntium, prophetiae spiritu, orationis intentione esset incomparabiliter praeditus, unum erat quod in eo reprehensibile esse videbatur, quod nonnunquam tanta ei laetitia inerat, ut illis tot virtutibus nisi sciretur esse plenus, nullo modo crederetur. PETRUS: Quidnam, quaeso te, hoc esse dicimus? Sponte sibi laetitiae frena laxabat, an tot virtutibus pollens, aliquando ad praesens gaudium etiam renitens ejus animus trahebatur? GREGORIUS: Magna est, Petre, omnipotentis Dei dispensatio, et plerumque contingit ut quibus majora bona praestat, quaedam minora non tribuat, ut semper eorum animus habeat unde se ipse reprehendat; quatenus dum appetunt perfecti esse, nec possunt, et laborant in hoc quod non acceperunt, nec tamen laborando praevalent, in his quae accepta habent se minime extollant, sed discant quia ex semetipsis majora bona non habent, qui in semetipsis vincere parva vitia atque extrema non possunt. Hinc est enim quod perducto Dominus ad terram repromissionis populo, cunctos fortes atque praepotentes adversarios ejus exstinguens, Philisthaeos atque Chananaeos diutius reservavit, ut, sicut scriptum est, in eis experiretur Israel; quia nonnunquam, ut dictum est, eis etiam quibus magna dona

tribuit, parva quaedam reprehensibilia relinquit, ut semper habeant contra quod bellum gerant, et devictis magnis hostibus mentem non erigant, quando eos adhuc adversarii etiam minimi fatigant. Fit itaque ut miro modo una eademque mens et virtute polleat, et ex infirmitate lassescat, quatenus et ex parte constructa sit, et ex parte se conspiciat esse destructam, ut per bonum quod quaerit, et habere non valet, illud servet humiliter quod habet. Sed quid mirum quod hoc de homine dicimus, quando illa superna regio in civibus suis ex parte damna pertulit, et ex parte fortiter stetit, ut electi angelorum spiritus dum alios per superbiam cecidisse conspicerent, ipsi tanto robustius quanto humilius starent? Illi ergo regioni sua etiam detrimenta profecerunt, quae ad aeternitatis statum ex parte suae destructionis est solidius instructa. Sic ergo et in unaquaque anima agitur, ut in humilitatis custodiam aliquando ad lucra maxima ex minimo damno servetur. PETRUS: Placet quod dicis.

CAPUT XV. De Eutychio et Florentio servis Dei.

GREGORIUS: Neque hoc sileam quod ex regione eadem venerabilis viri Sanctuli presbyteri narratione cognovi; de cujus verbis ipse non dubitas, quia ejus vitam fidemque minime ignoras. Eodem quoque tempore in Nursiae provinciae partibus duo viri in vita atque habitu sanctae conversationis habitabant, quorum unus Eutychius, alter vero Florentius dicebatur. Sed idem Eutychius in spirituali zelo atque in fervore virtutis excreverat, multorumque animas ad Deum perducere exhortando satagebat; Florentius vero simplicitati atque orationi deditam ducebat vitam. Non longe autem erat monasterium, quod rectoris sui morte erat destitutum, ex quo sibi monachi eumdem Eutychium praeesse voluerunt. Qui eorum precibus acquiescens, multis annis monasterium rexit, discipulorumque animas in studio sanctae conversationis exercuit. Ac ne oratorium in quo prius habitaverat solum remanere potuisset, illic venerabilem virum

Florentium reliquit. In quo dum solus habitaret, die quadam sese in orationem prostravit, atque ab omnipotenti Domino petiit ut ei illic ad habitandum aliquod solatium donare dignaretur. Qui mox ut implevit orationem, oratorium egressus, ante fores ursum reperit stantem. Qui dum ad terram caput deprimeret, nihilque feritatis in suis motibus demonstraret, aperte dabat intelligi quod ad viri Dei obsequium venisset, quod vir quoque Domini protinus agnovit. Et quia in eadem cella quatuor vel quinque pecudes remanserant, quas omnino deerat qui pasceret et custodiret, eidem urso praecepit, dicens: Vade, atque oves has ad pastum ejice, ad horam vero sextam revertere. Coepit itaque hoc indesinenter agere. Injungebatur urso cura pastoralis, et quas manducare consueverat, pascebat oves bestia jejuna. Cum vir Domini jejunare voluisset, ad nonam horam praecipiebat urso cum ovibus reverti; cum vero noluisset, ad sextam. Atque ita in omnibus mandato viri Dei obtemperabat ursus, ut neque ad sextam jussus, rediret ad nonam, neque ad nonam jussus, rediret ad sextam. Cumque diu hoc ageretur, coepit in loco eodem tantae virtutis fama longe lateque crebrescere. Sed quia antiquus hostis unde bonos cernit enitescere ad gloriam, inde perversos per invidiam rapit ad poenam, quatuor viri ex discipulis venerabilis Eutychii vehementer invidentes quod eorum magister signa non faceret, et is qui solus ab eo relictus fuerat, tanto hoc miraculo clarus appareret, eumdem ursum insidiantes occiderunt. Cumque hora qua jussus fuerat non rediret, vir Dei Florentius suspectus est redditus, quem usque ad horam vesperi exspectans, affligi coepit, quod is quem ex simplicitate multa fratrem vocare consueverat ursus minime reverteretur. Die vero altera perrexit ad agrum, ursum pariter ovesque quaesiturus; quem occisum reperit. Sed sollicite inquirens, citius a quibus fuerat occisus invenit. Tunc sese in lamentis dedit, Fratrum malitiam magis quam ursi mortem deplorans. Quem venerandus vir Eutychius ad se deductum consolari studuit; sed idem vir Domini, coram eo doloris magni stimulis

accensus, imprecatus est, dicens: Spero in omnipotenti Deo, quia in hac vita ante oculos omnium ex sua malitia vindictam recipiant qui nihil se laedentem ursum meum occiderunt. Cujus vocem protinus ultio divina secuta est. Nam quatuor monachi qui eumdem ursum occiderant statim elephantino morbo percussi sunt, ut membris putrescentibus interirent. Quod factum vir Dei Florentius vehementer expavit, seque ita fratribus maledixisse pertimuit. Omni enim vitae suae tempore flebat quia exauditus fuerat, se crudelem, se in eorum morte clamabat homicidam. Quod idcirco omnipotentem Dominum fecisse credimus, ne vir mirae simplicitatis, quantolibet dolore commotus, intorquere ultra praesumeret jaculum maledictionis. PETRUS: Nunquidnam valde grave esse credimus, si fortasse cuilibet exagitanti iracundia maledicamus? GREGORIUS: De hoc peccato cur me percunctaris an grave sit, cum Paulus dicat: Neque maledici regnum Dei possidebunt? Pensa itaque quam gravis culpa est, quae separat a regno vitae. PETRUS: Quid si homo non fortasse ex malitia, sed ex linguae incuria, maledictionis verbum jaculatur in proximum? GREGORIUS: Si apud districtum judicem, Petre, otiosus sermo reprehenditur, quanto magis et noxius? Pensa ergo quantum sit damnabilis, qui a malitia non vacat, si et ille sermo poenalis est, qui a bonitate utilitatis vacat. PETRUS: Assentio. GREGORIUS: Idem vir Dei egit aliud, quod sileri non debeat. Cum enim magna ejus opinio longe lateque crebresceret, quidam diaconus longe positus ad eum pergere studuit, ut ejus se orationibus commendaret. Qui ad ejus cellulam veniens, omnem locum per circuitum invenit innumeris serpentibus plenum. Cumque vehementer expavisset, clamavit, dicens: Serve Dei, ora. Erat autem tunc mira serenitas. Egressus vero Florentius, ad coelum oculos et palmas tetendit, ut illam pestem, sicut sciret Dominus, auferret. Ad cujus vocem subito coelum intonuit, atque idem tonitrus omnes illos, qui eumdem locum occupaverant, serpentes interemit. Quos cum vir Dei Florentius interemptos aspiceret,

dixit: Ecce illos occidisti, Domine, quis eos hinc levat? Moxque ad ejus vocem tantae aves venerunt, quanti serpentes occisi fuerant: quae asportantes singulos, et longius projicientes, locum habitationis illius mundum a serpentibus omnimodo reddiderunt. PETRUS: Quid virtutis, quid fuisse meriti dicimus, quod ejus ori tantum factus est proximus omnipotens Deus? GREGORIUS: Apud omnipotentis Dei singularem munditiam, atque ejus simplicem naturam multum, Petre, humani cordis munditia atque simplicitas valet. Hoc ipsum namque quod ejus famuli a terrenis actionibus segregati, otiosa loqui nesciunt, et mentem per verba spargere atque inquinare devitant, auctoris sui prae caeteris exauditionem impetrant. Cui in quantum est possibile, ipsa puritate ac simplicitate cogitationis, quasi ex quadam jam similitudine concordant. Nos autem turbis popularibus admisti, dum frequenter otiosa, nonnunquam vero etiam graviter noxia loquimur, os nostrum omnipotenti Deo tanto longinquum fit, quanto huic mundo proximum. Multum quippe deorsum ducimur, dum locutione continua saecularibus admiscemur. Quod bene Isaias postquam regem Dominum exercituum vidit, in semetipso reprehendit, et poenituit, dicens: Vae mihi, quia tacui, quia vir pollutus labiis ego sum. Qui cur polluta labia haberet, aperuit, cum subjunxit: In medio populi polluta labia habentis ego habito. Pollutionem namque labiorum habere se doluit; sed unde hanc contraxerit, indicavit, cum in medio populi polluta labia habentis se habitare perhibuit. Valde enim difficile est ut lingua saecularium mentem non inquinet quam tangit, quia dum plerumque eis ad quaedam loquenda condescendimus, paulisper assueti, hanc ipsam locutionem quae nobis indigna est etiam delectabiliter tenemus, ut ex ea jam redire non libeat, ad quam velut ex condescensione ducti venimus inviti. Sicque fit ut ab otiosis ad noxia, a levibus ad graviora verba veniamus; et os nostrum ab omnipotenti Domino tanto jam minus exaudiatur in prece, quanto amplius inquinatur stulta locutione, quia sicut scriptum est: Qui avertit aurem suam

ne audiat legem, oratio ejus erit exsecrabilis. Quid ergo mirum si postulantes tarde a Domino audimur, qui praecipientem Dominum aut tarde aut nullo modo audimus? Et quid mirum si Florentius in prece sua citius est auditus, qui in praeceptis suis Dominum citius audivit? PETRUS: Nihil est quod responderi valeat apertae rationi. GREGORIUS: Eutychius vero, qui praedicti Florentii in via Domino socius fuerat, magnus post mortem claruit in virtute signorum. Nam cum multa cives urbis illius de eo soleant narrare miracula, illud tamen est praecipuum, quod usque ad haec Langobardorum tempora omnipotens Deus per vestimentum illius assidue dignabatur operari. Nam quoties pluvia deerat, et aestu nimio terram longa siccitas exurebat, collecti in unum cives urbis illius, ejus tunicam levare atque in conspectu Domini cum precibus offerre consueverant. Cum qua, dum per agros pergerent exorantes, repente pluvia tribuebatur, quae plene terram satiare potuisset. Ex qua re patuit, ejus anima quid virtutis intus, quid meriti haberet, cujus foris ostensa vestis iram Conditoris averteret.

CAPUT XVI. De Martino monacho de monte Marsico.

Nuper quoque in parte Campaniae vir valde venerabilis Martinus nomine in monte Marsico solitariam vitam duxit, multisque annis in specu angustissimo inclusus fuit, quem multi ex nostris noverunt, ejusque actibus praesentes exstiterunt. De quo multa ipse et beatae memoriae papa Pelagio decessore meo, et aliis religiosissimis viris narrantibus agnovi. Cujus hoc miraculum primum fuit, quod mox ut se in praedicti montis foramine contulit, ex petra eadem, quae in semetipsa concava angustum specum fecerat, aquae stilla prorupit, quae Martino Dei famulo in usu quotidiano sufficeret, et nec plus adesset, nec necessitati deesset. Qua in re ostendit omnipotens Deus quantam sui famuli curam gereret, cui vetusto miraculo potum in solitudine ex petrae duritia ministraret. Sed antiquus hostis humani generis, ejus viribus invidens, hunc usitata arte pellere ex eo specu

molitus est. Nam amicam sibi bestiam, serpentem scilicet, ingressus, hunc ab eadem habitatione ejicere facto terrore conatus est. Coepit etenim serpens in speluncam venire solus cum solo, eoque orante se ante illum sternere, et cum cubante pariter cubare. Sed vir sanctus omnino imperterritus, ejus ori manum vel pedem extendebat, dicens: Si licentiam accepisti ut ferias, ego non prohibeo. Cumque hoc continue per triennium gereretur, die quadam antiquus hostis tanta hac ejus fortitudine victus infremuit, seque per devexum montis latus in praecipitium serpens dedit, omniaque arbusta loci illius flamma ex se exeunte concremavit. Qui in eo quod montis latus omne combussit, cogente omnipotente Deo, monstrare compulsus est, quantae virtutis fuerat, per quem victus abscedebat. Perpende, quaeso, iste vir Domini in quo mentis vertice stetit, qui cum serpente per triennium jacuit securus. PETRUS: Auditu paveo. GREGORIUS: Vir iste vitae venerabilis, inclusionis suae tempore primo, decreverat ut ultra mulierem non videret, non quia aspernabatur sexum, sed ex contemplata specie tentationis incurrere metuebat vitium. Quod quaedam mulier audiens, audacter ascendit montem, atque ad ejus specum impudenter prorupit. At ille paulo longius intuens, et venientis ad se muliebria indumenta conspiciens, sese in orationem dedit, in terram faciem depressit, et eo usque prostratus jacuit, quo impudens mulier a fenestra cellulae illius fatigata recederet. Quae die eodem, mox ut de monte descendit, vitam finivit, ut ex mortis ejus sententia daretur intelligi quia valde omnipotenti Deo displicuit, quod ejus famulum ausu improbo contristavit. Alio quoque tempore dum multi ad hunc religiosa devotione concurrerent, atque arcta esset semita quae in devexo montis latere ad ejus cellulam properantes ducebat, puer parvulus, incaute gradiens, ex eodem monte cecidit, et usque ad vallem corruit, quae, sub monte eodem sita, quasi in profundo conspicitur. In loco quippe eodem tanta mons ipse altitudine excrevit, ut arbusta ingentia, quae ex eadem valle prodeunt, ex monte

aspicientibus quasi fruteta esse videantur. Perturbati itaque sunt cuncti qui veniebant, summaque cura quaesitum est sicubi corpus elapsi pueri potuisset inveniri. Quis enim aliud nisi exstinctum crederet? quis vel corpus ad terram integrum pervenisse suspicaretur, dum interpositis ubique scopulis in partes discerpi potuisset? Sed requisitus puer in valle inventus est non solum vivus, sed etiam incolumis. Tunc cunctis patenter innotuit quod ideo laedi non potuit, quia hunc in casu suo Martini oratio portavit. In specu vero illius magna desuper rupes eminebat, quae cum ex parte exigua monti videretur affixa, Martini cellae prominens, casum suum quotidie, et illius interitum ruitura minabatur. Ad hanc Mascator illustris viri Armentarii nepos, cum magna rusticorum multitudine veniens, precabatur ut vir Dei de specu eodem dignaretur exire, quatenus ipse ruituram rupem ex monte potuisset evellere, atque in specu suo Dei famulus jam securus habitaret. Cumque hoc vir Dei nequaquam acquiesceret, ei quod posset ut faceret praecepit, et ipse in cellae suae remotiori se parte contulit. Si tamen ingens moles rueret, dubium non erat quod simul et specum destrueret, et Martinum necaret. Itaque dum ea quae venerat multitudo conaretur, si posset, sine periculo viri Dei, ingens illud, quod desuper incubuerat, saxum levare, cunctis videntibus, repente res valde admirabilis contigit, quia moles ipsa quam conabantur evellere, subito ab eisdem laborantibus evulsa, ne speluncae Martini tectum tangeret, saltum dedit, et quasi servi Dei laesionem fugiens, longius cecidit. Quod ad jussum omnipotentis Dei angelico ministerio actum intelligit, qui divina providentia disponi omnia fideliter credit. Hic cum primum se in eumdem montem contulit, necdum clauso specu habitans, catena sibi ferrea pedem ligavit, eamque saxo ex parte altera affixit, ne ei ultra liceret progredi, quam catenae ejusdem quantitas tendebatur. Quod vir vitae venerabilis Benedictus audiens, cujus superius memoriam feci, ei per discipulum suum mandare curavit: Si servus Dei es, non teneat te catena ferri, sed catena Christi. Ad quam vocem

Martinus protinus eamdem compedem solvit, sed nunquam postmodum solutum tetendit pedem ultra locum quo ligatum hunc tendere consueverat, atque in tanto se spatio sine catena coercuit, in quanto et antea ligatis mansit. Qui dum se postmodum in ejusdem loci specu conclusisset, coepit etiam discipulos habere, qui ab ejus specu seorsum habitantes, ad usum vitae aquam de puteo haurire consueverant. Sed funis in quo ad hauriendum aquam situla dependebat crebro rumpebatur. Unde factum est ut eamdem catenam quam ex pede suo vir Domini solverat ejus discipuli peterent, eamque funi adjungerent, atque in illa situlam ligarent. Ex quo jam tempore contigit ut idem funis et quotidie tingeretur aqua, et nullo modo rumperetur. Quia enim catenam viri Dei funis ille contigit, ipse quoque ad tolerandam aquam, ferri in se fortitudinem traxit. PETRUS: Facta haec placent, quia mira; et multum, quia recentia.

CAPUT XVII. De monacho ex monte Argentario, qui mortuum suscitavit.

GREGORIUS: Nostris modo temporibus quidam vir, Quadragesimus nomine, Buxentinae Ecclesiae subdiaconus fuit qui ovium suarum gregem pascere in ejusdem Aureliae partibus solebat. Cujus valde veracis viri narratione res mira innotuit, quae secreto fuerat gesta. Is namque, ut praediximus, dum gregis sui in Aurelia curam gereret, in diebus ejusdem vir fuit e monte, qui Argentarius vocatur, venerabilis vitae, qui habitum monachi, quem praetendebat specie, moribus explebat. Hic itaque ad Ecclesiam beati Petri apostolorum principis ab eodem monte Argentario annis singulis venire consueverat, atque ad hunc, quem praedixi, Quadragesimum subdiaconum, sicut ipse narravit, hospitalitatis gratia declinabat. Quadam vero die, dum ejus hospitium, quod non longe ab Ecclesia aberat, intrasset, cujusdam pauperculae mulieris maritus juxta defunctus est: quem ex more lotum, vestimentis indutum, et sabano

constrictum, superveniente vespere, sepelire nequiverunt. Igitur juxta defuncti corpus viduata mulier sedit, quae in magnis fletibus noctem ducens, continuis lamentorum vocibus satisfaciebat dolori. Cumque hoc diutius fieret et flere mulier nullo modo cessaret, vir Dei, qui receptus hospitio fuerat, Quadragesimo subdiacono compunctus ait: Dolori hujus mulieris anima mea compatitur; rogo, surge, et oremus. Perrexerunt igitur utrique ad vicinam ecclesiam, seseque pariter in orationem dederunt. Cumque diutius orassent, complere orationem Quadragesimum subdiaconum servus Dei petiit. Qua completa ab altaris crepidine pulverem collegit, atque cum eodem Quadragesimo ad defuncti corpus accessit, seseque ibidem in orationem dedit. Cumque diutius orasset, jam non, sicut prius fecerat, orationem compleri per subdiaconum voluit, sed ipse benedictionem dedit, statimque surrexit. Et quia manu dextera collectum pulverem gestabat, sinistra pallium quo facies defuncti velabatur abstulit. Quod cum mulier fieri cerneret, contradicere vehementer coepit et mirari quid vellet facere. Ablato itaque pallio, diu eo quem collegerat pulvere defuncti faciem fricavit. Qui cum diutius fricaretur, recepit animam, oscitavit, oculos aperuit, seseque elevans resedit, quid erga se ageretur miratus est, ac si de gravissimo somno fuisset excitatus. Quod cum mulier lamentis fatigata conspiceret, coepit ex gaudio magis flere, et voces amplius edere. Quam vir Domini modesta prohibitione compescuit, dicens. Tace, tace; sed si quis vos requisiverit qualiter factum sit, hoc solummodo dicite: quia Dominus Jesus Christus opera sua fecit. Dixit hoc, atque ab ejus hospitio exivit, Quadragesimum subdiaconum protinus reliquit, et in loco eodem ultra non apparuit. Temporalem namque honorem fugiens, egit ut ab his a quibus visus in tanta virtute fuerat nunquam jam in hac vita videretur. PETRUS: Quid alii sentiant ignoro: ego autem cunctis miraculis hoc potius existimo esse miraculum, quod ad vitam mortui redeunt, eorumque animae ad carnem ex occulto revocantur. GREGORIUS: Si visibilia attendimus, ita

necesse est ut credamus; si vero invisibilia pensamus, nimirum constat, quia majus est miraculum praedicationis verbo atque orationis solatio peccatorem convertere, quam carne mortuum resuscitare. In isto enim resuscitatur caro iterum moritura, in illo vero anima in aeternum victura. Cum enim propono duos, in quo horum existimas majori factum virtute miraculum? Lazarum quippe, quem jam fidelem credimus fuisse, carne Dominus suscitavit; Saulum vero resuscitavit in mente. Et quidem post resurrectionem carnis de Lazari virtutibus tacetur. Nam post resurrectionem animae, capere nostra infirmitas non valet quanta in sacro eloquio de Pauli virtutibus dicuntur: quod illius praedicatione crudelissimae cogitationes ad pietatis mollia conversae sunt viscera; quod mori cupit pro fratribus, in quorum prius morte gaudebat; quod, plenus omnis scripturae scientia, nil se scire judicat, nisi Christum Jesum, et hunc crucifixum; quod pro Christo virgis libenter caeditur, quem gladiis insequebatur; quod Apostolatus honore sublimis est, sed tamen sponte fit parvulus in medio discipulorum; quod ad coeli tertii secreta ducitur, et tamen mentis oculum per compassionem reflectit ad disponendum cubile conjugatorum, dicens: Uxori vir debitum reddat, similiter et uxor viro, quod admiscetur in contemplatione coetibus angelorum, et tamen non aspernatur cogitare atque disponere facta carnalium; quod gaudet in infirmitatibus, sibique in contumeliis placet; quod ei vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum; quod totum jam extra carnem est, hoc ipsum quod vivit in carne. Ecce qualiter vivit, qui ab inferno mentis ad vitam pietatis rediit. Minus est ergo quempiam in carne suscitari, nisi forte per vivificationem carnis ad vitam reducatur mentis; ut ei hoc agatur per exterius miraculum, quatenus conversus interius vivificetur. PETRUS: Valde infra credidi hoc, quod modo quam sit incomparabiliter superius agnovi. Sed, quaeso, coepta prosequere, ut dum tempus vacat, sine aedificatione hora non transeat.

CAPUT XVIII. De Benedicto monacho.

GREGORIUS: Frater quidam mecum est in monasterio conversatus, in Scriptura sacra studiosissimus, qui me aetate praeibat, et ex multis quae nesciebam, me aedificare consueverat. Hujus itaque narratione didici quod fuit quidam in Campaniae partibus intra quadragesimum Romanae urbis miliarium nomine Benedictus; et quidem aetate juvenis, sed moribus grandaevus, et in sanctae conversationis regula se fortiter stringens. Quem Totilae regis tempore cum Gothi reperissent, hunc incendere cum sua cella moliti sunt. Ignem namque supposuerunt, sed in circuitu arserunt omnia, cella vero illius igne comburi non potuit. Quod videntes Gothi, magisque saevientes, atque hunc ex suo habitaculo trahentes, non longe aspexerunt succensum clibanum, qui coquendis panibus parabatur, eumque in illo projecerunt, clibanumque clauserunt. Sed die altero ita illaesus inventus est, ut non solum ejus caro ab ignibus, sed neque extrema ullo modo vestimenta cremarentur. PETRUS: Antiquum trium puerorum miraculum audio, qui projecti in ignibus laesi non sunt. GREGORIUS: Illud, ut opinor, miraculum ex parte aliqua dissimiliter gestum est. Tunc quippe tres pueri ligatis pedibus ac manibus in ignem projecti sunt, quos die altera rex requirens, in camino illaesis vestibus deambulantes reperit. Ex qua re colligitur quia ignis in quo jactati fuerant, qui eorum vestimenta non contigit, eorum vincula consumpsit, ut uno eodemque tempore in obsequio justorum et haberet flamma virtutem suam ad solatium, et non haberet ad tormentum.

CAPUT XIX. De Ecclesia beati Zenonis martyris Veronae, in qua aquae ultra portam apertam inundantes minime intraverunt.

Huic tam antiquo miraculo, diebus nostris res similis e contrario evenit elemento. Nam nuper Joannes tribunus relatione sua me docuit, quod Pronulphus comes, cum illic adesset, se cum rege Autharico eo tempore in loco eodem ubi mira res contigit adfuisse, eamque se cognovisse testatus

est. Praedictus etenim tribunus narravit, dicens: quia ante hoc fere quinquennium, quando apud hanc Romanam urbem alveum suum Tiberis egressus est, tantum crescens, ut ejus unda super muros urbis influeret, atque inde in ea jam maximas regiones occuparet, apud Veronensem urbem fluvius Athesis excrescens, ad beati Zenonis martyris atque pontificis ecclesiam venit. Cujus ecclesiae dum essent januae apertae, aqua in eam minime intravit. Quae paulisper crescens, usque ad fenestras ecclesiae, quae erant tectis proximae, pervenit; sicque stans aqua ecclesiae januam clausit, ac si illud elementum liquidum in soliditatem parietis fuisset mutatum. Cumque essent multi inventi interius, sed et aquarum multitudine omni ecclesia circumdata, qua possent egredi non haberent, ibique se siti ac fame deficere formidarent, ad ecclesiae januam veniebant, ad bibendum hauriebant aquam, quae, ut praedixi, usque ad fenestras excreverat, et tamen intra ecclesiam nullo modo diffluebat. Hauriri itaque ut aqua poterat, sed diffluere ut aqua non poterat. Stans autem ante januam ad ostendendum cunctis meritum martyris ut aqua erat ad adjutorium, et quasi aqua non erat ad invadendum locum. Quod ego antiquo antedicti ignis miraculo vere praedixi non fuisse dissimile, qui trium puerorum et vestimenta non contigit, et vincula incendit. PETRUS: Mira sunt valde sanctorum facta quae narras, et praesenti infirmitati hominum vehementer stupenda. Sed quia tantos nuper in Italia fuisse audio admirandae virtutis viros, nosse velim si nullas eos contigit antiqui hostis insidias pertulisse, an ex insidiis profecisse. GREGORIUS: Sine labore certaminis non est palma victoriae. Unde ergo victores sunt, nisi quod contra antiqui hostis insidias decertaverunt? Malignus quippe spiritus cogitationi, locutioni, atque operi nostro semper insistit, si fortasse quid inveniat unde apud examen aeterni judicis accusator existat. Vis etenim nosse quomodo ad decipiendum semper assistat?

CAPUT XX. De Stephano presbytero provinciae Valeriae, cui diabolus caligas e tibiis traxit.

Quidam qui nunc nobiscum sunt rem quam narro testantur. Vir vitae venerabilis, Stephanus nomine, Valeriae provinciae presbyter fuit, hujus nostri Bonifacii diaconi atque dispensatoris Ecclesiae agnatione proximus. Qui quadam die de itinere domum regressus, mancipio suo negligenter loquens praecepit, dicens: Veni, diabole, discalcea me. Ad cujus vocem mox coeperunt se caligarum corrigiae in summa velocitate dissolvere, ut aperte constaret quod ei ipse qui nominatus fuerat ad extrahendas diabolus caligas obedisset. Quod mox ut presbyter vidit, vehementer expavit, magnisque vocibus clamare coepit, dicens: Recede, miser, recede; non enim tibi, sed mancipio meo locutus sum. Ad cujus vocem protinus recessit, et ita ut inventae sunt, magna jam ex parte dissolutae, corrigiae remanserunt. Qua in re colligi potest, antiquus hostis, qui jam praesto est factis corporalibus, quam nimiis insidiis nostris cogitationibus insistat. PETRUS: Laboriosum est valde atque terribile contra inimici insidias semper intendere, et continue quasi in acie stare. GREGORIUS: Laboriosum non erit, si custodiam nostram non nobis, sed gratiae supernae tribuimus; ita tamen, ut et ipsi, quantum possumus, sub ejus protectione vigitemus. Si autem antiquus hostis a mente coeperit expelli, ex divina largitate plerumque agitur, ut non solum jam timeri non debeat, sed ipse etiam bene viventium virtute terreatur.

CAPUT XXI. De puella conversa, cujus solo imperio homo est a daemone liberatus.

Rei namque quam narro, vir sanctissimus Eleutherius senex Pater, cujus memoriam superius feci, testis exstitit, mihique hoc intimare curavit: quod in Spoletana urbe puella quaedam jam nubilis cujusdam primarii filia,

coelestis vitae desiderio exarsit, eique pater ad viam vitae resistere conatus est; sed contempto patre, conversationis sanctae habitum suscepit. Qua ex re factum est ut eam Pater suae substantiae exhaeredem faceret, nihilque ei aliud nisi sex uncias unius possessiunculae largiretur. Ejus vero exemplo provocatae coeperunt apud eam multae nobilioris generis puellae converti, atque omnipotenti Domino dedicata virginitate servire. Quadam vero die idem Eleutherius abbas, vir vitae venerabilis, ad eam gratia exhortationis atque aedificationis accesserat, et cum ea de verbo Dei colloquens sedebat; cum repente ex eodem fundo, quem in sex unciis a patre perceperat cum xenio rusticus venit. Qui dum ante eos assisteret, maligno spiritu correptus cecidit, fatigatique nimiis stridoribus atque balatibus coepit. Tunc sanctimonialis femina surrexit, atque irato vultu magnis clamoribus imperavit, dicens: Exi ab eo, miser, exi ab eo, miser. Ad cujus vocem mox per os vexati diabolus respondit, dicens: Et si de isto exeo, in quem intrabo? Casu autem juxta porcus parvulus pascebatur. Tunc sanctimonialis femina praecepit, dicens: Exi ab eo, et in hunc porcum ingredere. Qui statim de homine exivit, porcum quem jussus fuerat invasit, occidit, et recessit. PETRUS: Velim nosse si saltem porcum concedere spiritui immundo debuit. GREGORIUS: Propositae regulae nostrae actioni sunt facta Veritatis. Ipsi etenim Redemptori nostro a legione, quae hominem tenebat, dictum est: Si ejicis nos, mitte nos in gregem porcorum. Qui hanc et ab homine expulit, et in porcos ire, eosque in abyssum mittere concessit. Ex qua re etiam hoc colligitur, quod absque concessione omnipotentis Dei nullam malignus spiritus contra hominem potestatem habeat, qui in porcos intrare non potuit nisi permissus. Illi ergo nos necesse est sponte subdi, cui et adversa omnia subjiciuntur invita, ut tanto nostris hostibus potentiores simus, quanto eum auctore omnium unum efficimur per humilitatem. Quid autem mirum, si electi quique in carne positi multa facere mirabiliter

possunt, quorum ipsa quoque ossa mortua plerumque in multis miraculi vivunt?

CAPUT XXII. De presbytero provinciae Valeriae, qui furem ad sepulcrum suum tenuit.

In Valeria namque provincia res est haec gesta quam narro, mihique beatae memoriae abbatis mei Valentionis relatione cognita. Ibi etenim quidam venerabilis sacerdos erat, qui cum clericis suis, Dei laudibus bonisque operibus intentus, sanctae conversationis vitam ducebat. Superveniente autem vocationis suae die defunctus est, atque ante ecclesiam sepultus. Eidem vero ecclesiae caulae inhaerebant ovium, atque idem locus in quo sepultus est ad easdem oves tendentibus pervius erat. Quadam autem nocte cum, clericis intra ecclesiam psallentibus, fur venisset, ut ingressus caulas furtum faceret, vervecem tulit, et concitus exiit. Cum vero pervenisset ad locum ubi vir Domini sepultus erat, repente haesit, et gressum movere non potuit. Vervecem quidem de collo deposuit, eumque dimittere voluit, sed manum laxare non valuit. Coepit igitur stare miser cum praeda sua reus et ligatus. Volebat vervecem dimittere, nec valebat; volebat egredi cum vervece, nec poterat. Miro itaque modo fur, qui a vivis videri timuerat, hunc mortuus tenebat. Cumque ita gressus manusque illius fuissent obstricta, immobilis perstitit. Facto autem mane expletisque laudibus Dei, ab Ecclesia egressi sunt clerici, et invenerunt ignotum hominem vervecem tenentem manu. Res venit in dubium, utrum vervecem tolleret, an offerret, sed culpae reus citius indicavit poenam. Mirati omnes quia ingressus fur viri Dei merito ad praedam suam stabat ligatus. Qui se pro eo protinus in orationem dederunt, suisque precibus vix obtinere valuerunt ut qui res eorum venerat rapere saltem vacuus exire mereretur. Itaque fur, qui diu steterat cum praeda captivus, quandoque exiit vacuus et liber. PETRUS: Apparet quantae sit

super nos dulcedinis omnipotens Deus, cujus erga nos fiunt tam jucunda miracula.

CAPUT XXIII. De abbate Praenestini montis, ejusque presbytero.

GREGORIUS: Praenestinae urbi mons praeeminet, in quo beati Petri Apostoli monasterium situm est virorum Dei: quorum relatione adhuc in monasterio positus audisse me contigit magnum hoc quod narro miraculum, quod ejusdem monasterii monachi nosse se testabantur. In eo namque monasterio fuit Pater vitae venerabilis, qui quemdam monachum nutriens, usque ad reverendos provexit mores. Cumque eum in timore Domini videret excrevisse, in eodem sibi monasterio tunc presbyterum fecit ordinari. Cui post ordinationem suam, quia non longe abesset ejus exitus, revelatione indicatum est. A praedicto autem Patre monasterii petiit quatenus ei concederet, ut sibi sepulcrum pararet. Cui ille respondit: Ante te quidem ego moriturus sum, sed tamen vade, et, sicut vis, praepara sepulcrum tuum. Recessit igitur, et praeparavit. Cum non post multos dies senex pater febre praeventus ad extrema pervenit, atque assistenti presbytero jussit, dicens: In tuo sepulcro pone me. Cumque ille diceret: Scis quia ego modo te secuturus sum, utrosque capere non potest, abbas protinus respondit, dicens: Ita fac ut dixi, quia sepulcrum tuum ambos nos capit. Defunctus itaque est, atque in sepulcro eodem quod sibi presbyter paraverat positus. Mox quoque et presbyterum corporis languor secutus est, quo languore crescente citius presbyter vitam finivit. Cumque ad sepulcrum quod sibi ipsi paraverat corpus illius fuisset a fratribus deportatum, aperto eodem sepulcro viderunt omnes qui aderant locum non esse ubi poni potuisset, quia corpus patris monasterii, quod illic ante positum fuerat, omne illud sepulcrum tenebat. Cumque fratres qui presbyteri corpus detulerant, factam sibi sepeliendi difficultatem viderent, unus eorum exclamavit, dicens: O Pater, ubi est quod dixisti, quia sepulcrum istud ambos nos caperet? Ad cujus vocem subito,

cunctis videntibus abbatis corpus, quod illic ante positum fuerat, et supinum jacebat, sese vertit in latere, et vacantem sepulcri locum ad sepeliendum presbyteri corpus praebuit; et quia utrosque ille locus caperet, sicut vivus promiserat, mortuus implevit. Sed quia hoc quod praedixi apud Praenestinam urbem in beati Petri apostoli monasterio gestum est, visne aliquid etiam in hac urbe de ejus ecclesiae custodibus, ubi sacratissimum corpus illius est positum, audire? PETRUS: Volo, atque id ut fiat magnopore deprecor.

CAPUT XXIV. De Theodoro mansionario ecclesiae beati Petri apostoli urbis Romae.

GREGORIUS: Adhuc supersunt aliqui qui Theodorum ejus ecclesiae custodem noverunt, cujus narratione innotuit res quae ei contigit, valde memorabilis: quod quadam nocte dum citius ad melioranda juxta januam luminaria surrexisset, ex more in ligneis gradibus sub lampade positis stabat, et lampadis refovebat lumen. Tunc repente beatus Petrus apostolus in stola candida deorsum in pavimento constitit, eique dixit: Conliberte, quare tam citius surrexisti? Quo dicto, ab oculis aspicientis evanuit. Sed tantus in eum pavor irruit, ut tota in illo corporis virtus deficeret, et per dies multos de stratu suo surgere non valeret. Qua in re quid idem beatus apostolus servientibus sibi voluit, nisi praesentiam sui respectus ostendere, quia quidquid pro ejus veneratione agerent, ipse hoc pro mercede retributionis sine intermissione semper videret? PETRUS: Mihi hoc non tam apparet mirum quia visus est; sed quia is qui eum vidit, cum sanus esset, aegrotavit. GREGORIUS: Quid super hac re miraris, Petre? Nunquidnam menti excidit, quia cum Daniel propheta magnam illam ac terribilem visionem vidit, ex qua etiam visione contremuit, protinus adjunxit: Et ego elangui, et aegrotavi per dies plurimos ? Caro enim ea quae sunt spiritus capere non valet; et idcirco nonnunquam cum mens humana ultra se ad videndum

ducitur, necesse est ut hoc carneum vasculum, quod ferre talenti pondus non valet, infirmetur. PETRUS: Scrupulum cogitationis meae aperta ratio dissolvit.

CAPUT XXV. De Acontio mansionario ejusdem ecclesiae beati Petri.

GREGORIUS: Alius illic non ante longa tempora, sicut nostri seniores referunt, custos ecclesiae Acontius dictus est, magnae humilitatis atque gravitatis vir, ita omnipotenti Deo fideliter serviens, ut idem beatus Petrus apostolus signis ostenderet quam de illo haberet aestimationem. Nam cum quaedam puella paralytica, in ejus ecclesia permanens, manibus reperet, et dissolutis renibus corpus per terram traheret, diuque ab eodem beato Petro apostolo peteret ut sanari mereretur, nocte quadam ei per visionem astitit, et dixit: Vade ad Acontium mansionarium, et roga illum, et ipse te saluti restituet. Cumque illa de tanta visione certa esset, sed quis esset Acontius ignoraret, coepit huc illucque per ecclesiae loca se trahere, ut quis esset Acontius investigaret. Cui repente ipse factus est obvius, quem quaerebat, eique dixit: Rogo te, Pater, indica mihi quis est Acontius custos? Cui ille respondit: Ego sum: At illa inquit: Pastor et nutritor noster beatus Petrus apostolus ad te me misit, ut ab infirmitate ista liberare me debeas. Cui ille respondit: Si ab ipso missa es, surge. Manumque ejus tenuit, et eam in statum suum protinus erexit. Sicque ex illa hora omnes in ejus corpore nervi ac membra solidata sunt, ut solutionis illius signa ulterius nulla remanerent. Sed si cuncta quae in ejus ecclesia gesta cognovimus, evolvere conamur, ab omnium jam proculdubio narratione conticescimus. Unde necesse est ut ad modernos Patres, quorum vita per Italiae provincias claruit, narratio se nostra retorqueat.

CAPUT XXVI. De Mena monacho solitario.

Nuper in Samnii provincia quidam venerabilis vir, Menas nomine, solitariam vitam ducebat, qui nostrorum multis cognitus, ante hoc fere decennium defunctus est. De cujus operis narratione unum auctorem non infero, quia pene tot mihi in ejus vita testes sunt, quot Samnii provinciam noverunt. Hic itaque nihil ad usum suum aliud, nisi pauca apum vascula possidebat. Huic cum Langobardus quidam in eisdem apibus rapinam voluisset ingerere, prius ab eodem viro verbo correptus est, et mox per malignum spiritum ante ejus vestigia vexatus. Qua ex re factum est ut sicut apud omnes incolas, ita etiam apud eamdem barbaram gentem ejus celebre nomen haberetur, nullusque ultra praesumeret ejus cellulam nisi humilis intrare. Saepe vero ex vicina silva venientes ursi, apes ejus comedere conabantur: quos ille deprehensos, ferula, quam portare manu consueverat, caedebat. Ante cujus verbera immanissimae bestiae rugiebant, et fugiebant; et quae gladios formidare vix poterant, ex ejus manu ictus ferulae pertimescebant. Hujus studium fuit nihil in hoc mundo habere, nihil quaerere; omnes qui ad se charitatis causa veniebant, ad aeternae vitae desideria accendere. Si quando autem quorumlibet culpas agnosceret, nunquam ab increpatione parcere, sed, amoris igne succensus, studebat in eis vehementer per linguam saevire. Consuetudinem vero vicini vel longe positi ejusdem loci accolae fecerant ut diebus singulis per hebdomadam unusquisque ei oblationes suas transmitteret, ut esset quod ipse ad se venientibus offerre potuisset. Quodam vero tempore possessor quidam, Carterius nomine, immundo desiderio devictus, quamdam sanctimonialem feminam rapuit, sibique illicito matrimonio conjunxit. Quod mox ut vir Domini cognovit, ei per quos potuit quae fuerat dignus audire mandavit. Cumque ille sceleris sui conscius timeret, atque ad virum Dei nequaquam accedere praesumeret, ne forte hunc aspere, ut delinquentes solebat, increparet, fecit oblationes suas, easque inter oblationes aliorum misit, ut ejus munera saltem nesciendo susciperet. Sed cum coram eo fuissent

oblationes omnium deportatae, vir Dei tacitus sedit, sigillatim omnes considerare studuit, et omnes alias eligens atque seorsum ponens, oblationes quas idem Carterius transmiserat cognovit per spiritum, sprevit atque abjecit, dicens: Ite et dicite ei: Oblationem suam omnipotenti Domino abstulisti, et mihi tuas oblationes transmittis? Ego oblationem tuam non accipio, quia suam abstulisti Deo. Qua ex re factum est ut praesentes quosque magnus timor invaderet, cum vir Domini tam scienter de absentibus judicaret. PETRUS: Multos horum suspicor martyrium subire potuisse, si eos tempus persecutionis invenisset. GREGORIUS: Duo sunt, Petre, martyrii genera, unum in occulto, alterum in publico. Nam etsi persecutio desit exterius, martyrii meritum in occulto est, cum virtus ad passionem prompta flagrat in animo. Quia enim esse possit et sine aperta passione martyrium, testatur in Evangelio Dominus, qui Zebedaei filiis adhuc prae infirmitate mentis majora sesionis loca quaerentibus dicit: Potestis bibere calicem quem ego bibiturus sum? Cui videlicet cum responderent: Possumus; ait utrisque: Calicem quidem meum bibetis; sedere autem ad dexteram meam vel sinistram, non est meum dare vobis. Quid autem calicis nomen, nisi passionis poculum signat? Et cum nimirum constet quia Jacobus in passione occubuit, Joannes vero in pace Ecclesiae quievit, incunctanter colligitur, esse et sine aperta passione martyrium, quando et ille calicem Domini bibere dictus est, qui ex persecutione mortuus non est. De his autem talibus tantisque viris, quorum superius memoriam feci, cur dicamus quia si persecutionis tempus exstitisset, martyres esse potuissent, qui occulti hostis insidias tolerantes, suosque in hoc mundo adversarios diligentes, cunctis carnalibus desideriis resistentes, per hoc quod se omnipotenti Deo in corde mactaverunt, etiam pacis tempore martyres fuerunt, dum nostris modo temporibus viles quoque et saecularis vitae personas, de quibus nil coelestis gloriae praesumi posse videbatur, oborta occasione, contigit ad martyrii coronas pervenisse?

CAPUT XXVII. De quadraginta rusticis, qui pro eo quod carnes comedere immolatitias noluerunt, a Langobardis occisi sunt.

Nam ante hos ferme annos quindecim, sicut hi testantur qui interesse potuerunt, quadraginta rustici a Langobardis capti, carnes immolatitias comedere compellebantur. Qui cum valde resisterent, et contingere cibum sacrilegum nollent, coepere Langobardi qui eos tenuerant, nisi immolata comederent, mortem eis minari. At illi aeternam potius vitam quam praesentem ac transitoriam diligentes, fideliter perstiterunt, atque in sua constantia simul omnes occisi sunt. Quid itaque isti, nisi veritatis martyres fuerunt, qui, ne vetitum comedendo, Conditorem suum offenderent, elegerunt gladiis vitam finire?

CAPUT XXVIII. De multitudine captivorum, qui pro eo quod caput caprae adorare noluerunt, occisi sunt.

Eodem quoque tempore, dum fere quadringentos captivos alios Langobardi tenuissent, more suo immolaverunt caput caprae diabolo, hoc ei per circuitum currentes et carmine nefando dedicantes. Cumque illud ipsi prius submissis cervicibus adorarent, eos quoque quos ceperant hoc adorare pariter compellebant. Sed ex eisdem captivis maxima multitudo magis eligens moriendo ad vitam immortalem tendere quam adorando vitam mortalem tenere, obtemperare jussis sacrilegis noluerunt, et cervicem quam semper Creatori flexerant creaturae inclinare contempserunt. Unde factum est ut hostes qui eos ceperant, gravi iracundia accensi, cunctos gladiis interficerent, quos in errore suo participes non haberent. Quid ergo mirum si, erumpente persecutionis tempore, illi martyres esse potuissent, qui in ipsa quoque pace Ecclesiae semetipsos semper affligendo angustam martyrii tenuerant viam, quando, irruente persecutionis articulo, hi etiam meruerunt martyrii palmas accipere, qui in pace Ecclesiae latas hujus

saeculi vias sequi videbantur? Nec tamen hoc, quod de eisdem electis dicimus viris, de cunctis jam quasi in regulam tenemus. Nam cum persecutionis apertae tempus irruit, sicut plerique martyrium subire possunt, qui esse in pace Ecclesiae despicabiles videntur; ita nonnunquam in debilitatis formidinem corruunt, qui in pace prius Ecclesiae fortiter stare credebantur. Sed eos de quibus praediximus, fieri martyres potuisse fidenter fatemur, quia hoc jam ex eorum fine colligimus. Cadere enim nec in aperta persecutione poterant hi de quibus constat quia et usque ad finem vitae in occulta animi virtute perstiterunt. PETRUS: Ut asseris ita est, sed super indignos nos divinae misericordiae dispensationem miror, qui Langobardorum saevitiam ita moderatur, ut eorum sacerdotes sacrilegos, qui esse fidelium quasi victores videntur, orthodoxorum fidem persequi minime permittat.

CAPUT XXIX. De Ariano episcopo caecato.

GREGORIUS: Hoc, Petre, facere plerumque conati sunt, sed eorum saevitiae miracula superna restiterunt. Unde unum miraculum narro quod per Bonifacium monasterii mei monachum, qui usque ante quadriennium cum Langobardis fuit, adhuc ante triduum agnovi. Cum ad Spoletanam urbem Langobardorum episcopus, scilicet Arianus, venisset, et locum illic ubi solemnia sua ageret non haberet, coepit ab ejus civitatis episcopo Ecclesiam petere, quam suo errori dedicaret. Quod dum valde episcopus negaret, idem qui venerat Arianus, beati Pauli apostoli Ecclesiam illic cominus sitam se die altero violenter intraturum esse professus est. Quod ejusdem ecclesiae custos audiens, festinus cucurrit, ecclesiam clausit, seris munivit; facto autem vespere, lampades omnes exstinxit, seque in interioribus abscondit. In ipso autem subsequentis lucis crepusculo Arianus episcopus collecta multitudine advenit, clausas ecclesiae januas effringere paratus. Sed repente cunctae simul portae divinitus concussae, abjectis

longius seris, apertae sunt, atque cum magno sonitu omnia ecclesiae claustra patuerunt; effuso desuper lumine, omnes quae exstinctae fuerant lampades accensae sunt. Arianus vero episcopus, qui vim facturus advenerat, subita caecitate percussus est, atque alienis jam manibus ad suum habitaculum reductus. Quod dum Langobardi in eadem regione positi omnes agnoscerent, nequaquam ulterius praesumpserunt catholica loca temerare. Miro enim modo res gesta est, ut quia ejusdem Ariani causa lampades in ecclesia beati Pauli fuerant exstinctae, uno eodemque tempore et ipse lumen perderet, et in ecclesiam lumen rediret.

CAPUT XXX. De Arianorum ecclesia, quae in Romana urbe catholica consecratione dedicata est.

Sed neque hoc sileam, quod ad ejusdem Arianae haereseos damnationem in hac quoque urbe ante biennium pietas superna monstravit. Ex his quippe quae narro alia populus agnovit, alia autem sacerdos et custodes Ecclesiae se audisse et vidisse testantur. Arianorum ecclesia in regione urbis hujus quae Subura dicitur, cum clausa usque ante biennium remansisset, placuit ut in fide catholica, introductis illic beati Sebastiani et sanctae Agathae martyrum reliquiis, dedicari debuisset; quod factum est. Nam cum magna populi multitudine venientes, atque omnipotenti Domino laudes canentes, eamdem Ecclesiam ingressi sumus. Cumque in ea jam missarum solemnia celebrarentur, et prae ejusdem loci angustia populi se turba comprimeret, quidam ex his qui extra sacrarium stabant porcum subito intra suos pedes huc illucque discurrere senserunt. Quem dum unusquisque sentiret, et juxta se stantibus indicaret, idem porcus ecclesiae januas petiit, et omnes per quos transiit in admirationem commovit; sed videri a nullo potuit, quamvis sentiri potuisset. Quod idcirco divina pietas ostendit, ut cunctis patesceret quia de loco eodem immundus habitator exiret. Peracta igitur celebratione missarum recessimus; sed adhuc nocte eadem magnus in ejusdem Ecclesiae

tectis strepitus factus est, ac si in eis aliquis errando discurreret. Sequenti autem nocte gravior sonitus excrevit, cum subito tanto terrore insonuit, ac si omnis illa ecclesia a fundamentis fuisset eversa; et protinus recessit, et nulla illic ulterius inquietudo antiqui hostis apparuit; sed per terroris sonitum quem fecit, innotuit a loco quem diu tenuerat quam coactus exibat. Post paucos vero dies, in magna serenitate aeris super altare ejusdem Ecclesiae nubes coelitus descendit, suoque illud velamine operuit, omnemque Ecclesiam tanto terrore ac suavitate odoris replevit, ut patentibus janauis nullus illic praesumeret intrare. Sacerdos quoque et custodes, vel hi qui ad celebranda missarum solemnia venerant, rem videbant, ingredi minime poterant, et suavitatem mirifici odoris trahebant. Die vero alio, cum in ea lampades sine lumine dependerent, emisso divinitus lumine sunt accensae. Post paucos iterum dies, cum, expletis missarum solemniis, exstinctis lampadibus custos ex eadem ecclesia egressus fuisset, post paululum intravit, et lampades quas exstinxerat lucentes reperit. Quas negligenter exstinxisse se credidit, eas jam sollicitius exstinxit, et exiens atque ecclesiam sollicitius clausit. Sed post horarum trium spatium regressus, lucentes lampades quas exstinxerat invenit, ut videlicet ex ipso lumine aperte claresceret quia locus ille a tenebris ad lucem venisset. Petr. Etsi in magnis sumus tribulationibus positi, quia tamen a conditore nostro non sumus omnino despecti, testantur ea quae audio ejus stupenda miracula. Gregor. Quamvis sola quae in Italia gesta sunt narrare decreveram, visne tamen ut, pro ostendenda ejusdem Arianae haereseos damnatione, transeamus verbo ad Hispanias, atque inde per Africam ad Italiam redeamus? PETRUS: Perge quo libet; nam laetus ducor, laetus reducor.

CAPUT XXXI. De Herminigildo rege Liuvigildi Visigothorum regis filio, pro fide catholica ab eodem patre suo occiso.

GREGORIUS: Sicut multorum qui ab Hispaniarum partibus veniunt relatione cognovimus, nuper Herminigildus rex Leuvigildi regis Visigothorum filius, ab Ariana haeresi ad fidem catholicam, viro reverentissimo Leandro Hispalitano episcopo, dudum mihi in amicitiis familiariter juncto, praedicante conversus est. Quem pater Arianus, ut ad eamdem haeresim rediret, et praemiis suadere, et minis terrere conatus est. Cumque ille constantissime responderet nunquam se veram fidem posse relinquere, quam semel agnovisset, iratus pater eum privavit regno, rebusque exspoliavit omnibus. Cumque nec sic virtutem mentis illius emollire valuisset, in arcta illum custodia concludens, collum manusque illius ferro ligavit. Coepit itaque idem Herminigildus rex juvenis terrenum regnum despicere, et forti desiderio coeleste quaerens, in ciliciis vinculatus jacere, omnipotenti Deo ad confortandum se preces effundere, tantoque sublimius gloriam transeuntis mundi despicere, quanto et religatus agnoverat nil fuisse quod potuerit auferri. Superveniente autem paschalis festivitatis die, intempestae noctis silentio ad eum perfidus pater Arianum episcopum misit, ut ex ejus manu sacrilegae consecrationis communionem perciperet, atque per hoc ad patris gratiam redire mereretur. Sed vir Deo deditus Ariano episcopo venienti exprobravit ut debuit, ejusque a se perfidiam dignis increpationibus repulit; quia etsi exterius jacebat ligatus, apud se tamen in magno mentis culmine stabat securus. Ad se itaque reverso episcopo, Arianus pater infremuit, statimque suos apparitores misit, qui constantissimum confessorem Dei illic ubi jacebat occiderent; quod et factum est. Nam mox ut ingressi sunt, securem cerebro ejus infigentes, vitam corporis abstulerunt; hocque in eo valuerunt perimere, quod ipse quoque qui peremptus est, in se constituerat despexisse. Sed pro ostendenda vera ejus gloria, superna quoque non defuere miracula. Nam coepit in nocturno silentio psalmodiae cantus ad corpus ejusdem regis et martyris audiri; atque ideo veraciter regis, quia et martyris. Quidam etiam ferunt

quod illic nocturno tempore accensae lampades apparebant; unde et factum est quatenus corpus illius, ut videlicet martyris, jure a cunctis fidelibus venerari debuisset. Pater vero perfidus et parricida commotus poenitentia, hoc fecisse se doluit, nec tamen usque ad obtinendam salutem. Nam quia vera esset catholica fides agnovit, sed gentis suae timore perterritus, ad hanc pervenire non meruit. Qui oborta aegritudine ad extrema perductus, Leandro episcopo, quem prius vehementer afflixerat, Recharedum regem filium, quem in sua haeresi relinquebat, commendare curavit, ut in ipso quoque talia faceret, qualia et in fratre illius suis cohortationibus fecisset. Qua commendatione expleta defunctus est. Post cujus mortem Recharedus rex non patrem perfidum, sed fratrem martyrem sequens, ab Arianae haereseos pravitate conversus est, totamque Visigothorum gentem ita ad veram perduxit fidem, ut nullum in suo regno militare permitteret, qui regno Dei hostis existere per haereticam perfidiam non timeret. Nec mirum quod verae fidei praedicator factus est, qui frater est martyris, cujus hunc quoque merita adjuvant, ut ad omnipotentis Dei gremium tam multos reducat. Qua in re considerandum nobis est, quia totum hoc agi nequaquam posset, si Herminigildus rex pro veritate mortuus non fuisset. Nam sicut scriptum est: Nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet; si autem mortuum fuerit, multum fructum affert. Hoc fieri videmus in membris, quod factum scimus in capite. In Visigothorum etenim gente unus mortuus est, ut multi viverent; et dum unum granum fideliter cecidit ad obtinendam vitam animarum, seges multa surrexit. PETRUS: Res mira, et nostris stupenda temporibus.

CAPUT XXXII. De episcopis Africanis qui pro defensione catholicae fidei abscissa ab Arianis Vandalis lingua nullum locutionis solitae sustinuere dispendium.

GREGORIUS: Justiniani quoque Augusti temporibus, dum contra catholicorum fidem exorta a Vandalis persecutio Ariana in Africa vehementer insaniret, quidam in defensione veritatis episcopi fortiter persistentes, ad medium sunt deducti. Quos Vandalorum rex verbis ac muneribus ad perfidiam flectere non valens, tormentis frangere posse se credidit. Nam cum eis in ipsa defensione veritatis silentium indiceret, nec tamen ipsi contra perfidiam tacerent, ne tacendo forsitan consensisse viderentur, raptus in furorem, eorum linguas abscidi radicitus fecit. Res mira et multis nota senioribus, quia ita post pro defensione veritatis etiam sine lingua loquebantur, sicut prius loqui per linguam consueverant. PETRUS: Mirandum valde et vehementer stupendum. GREGORIUS: Scriptum, Petre, est de Unigenito summi Patris: In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. De cujus etiam virtute subjungitur: Omnia per ipsum facta sunt. Quid igitur miramur, si verba edere sine lingua potuit Verbum quod fecit linguam? PETRUS: Placet quod dicis. GREGORIUS: Hi itaque, eo tempore profugi, ad Constantantinopolitanam urbem venerunt. Eo quoque tempore quo pro explendis responsis Ecclesiae ad principem ipse transmissus sum, seniorem quemdam episcopum reperi qui se adhuc eorum ora sine linguis loquentia vidisse testabatur, ita ut apertis oribus clamarent: Ecce videte, quia linguas non habemus et loquimur. Videbatur enim a respicientibus, ut ferebat, quia abscissis radicitus linguis, quasi quoddam barathrum patebat in gutture, et tamen ore vacuo plena ad integrum verba formabantur. Quorum illic unus in luxuriam lapsus, mox privatus est dono miraculi; recto videlicet omnipotentis Dei judicio, ut qui carnis continentiam servare neglexerat, sine lingua carnea non haberet verba virtutis. Sed haec nos pro Arianae haereseos damnatione dixisse sufficiat, nunc ad ea quae nuper in Italia gesta sunt signa redeamus.

CAPUT XXXIII. De Eleutherio servo Dei.

GREGORIUS: Is autem, cujus superius memoriam feci, Eleutherius Pater monasterii beati evangelistae Marci, quod in Spoletanae urbis pomeriis situm est, diu mecum est in hac urbe in meo monasterio conversatus, ibique defunctus est. Quem sui discipuli referebant orando mortuum suscitasse. Vir autem tantae simplicitatis erat et compunctionis, ut dubium non esset quod illae lacrymae ex tam humili simplicique mente editae apud omnipotentem Deum multa obtinere potuissent. Hujus ergo aliquod miraculum narro, quod inquisitus mihi simpliciter et ipse fatebatur. Quadam namque die dum iter carperet, facto vespere cum ad secedendum locus deesset, in monasterium virginum devenit, in quo quidam puer parvulus erat, quem malignus spiritus omni nocte vexare consueverat. Sed sanctimoniales feminae ut virum Dei susceperunt eum rogaverunt, dicentes: Tecum, Pater, hac nocte puer iste maneat. Quem ipse benigne suscepit, secumque eum nocte eadem jacere permisit. Facto autem mane coeperunt sanctimoniales feminae eumdem Patrem vigilanter inquirere, si quid ei puer quem dederant nocte eadem fecisset. Qui miratus cur ita requirerent, respondit: Nihil. Tunc illae ejusdem pueri innotuerunt causam, et quod malignus spiritus nulla ab eo nocte recederet indicaverunt, summopere postulantes ut hunc secum ad monasterium tolleret, quia jam vexationem illius videre ipsae non possent. Consensit senex, puerum ad monasterium duxit. Qui cum multo tempore in monasterio fuisset, atque ad hunc antiquus hostis accedere minime praesumpsisset, ejusdem senis animus de salute pueri immoderatius per laetitiam tactus est. Nam coram positis fratribus dixit: Fratres, diabolus ibi cum illis sororibus jocabatur; at vero ubi ad servos Dei ventum est, ad hunc puerum accedere non praesumpsit. Post quam vocem, hora eadem ac momento, idem puer coram cunctis fratribus diabolo se invadente vexatus est; quo viso senex, se protinus in lamentum dedit. Quem dum lugentem diu fratres consolari voluissent, respondit, dicens: Credite mihi, quia in nullius vestrum ore hodie panis ingreditur, nisi puer iste a daemonio fuerit ereptus.

Tunc se in orationem cum cunctis fratribus stravit, et eo usque oratum est, quousque puer a vexatione sanaretur, Qui tam perfecte sanatus est, ut ad hunc malignus spiritus accedendi ausum ulterius non haberet. PETRUS: Credo quod ei elatio parva subrepserat, et ideo ejus discipulos omnipotens Deus facti illius esse voluit adjutores. GREGORIUS: Ita est; nam quia pondus miraculi solus portare non potuit, divisit hoc cum fratribus, et portavit. Hujus viri oratio quantae virtutis esset, in memetipso expertus sum. Nam cum quodam tempore in monasterio positus incisionem vitalium paterer, crebrisque angustiis per horarum momenta ad exitum propinquarem (quam medici molestiam Graeco eloquio syncopin vocant), et nisi me frequenter fratres cibo reficerent, vitalis mihi spiritus funditus intercidi videretur, paschalis supervenit dies. Et cum sacratissimo Sabbato, in quo omnes et parvuli pueri jejunant, ego jejunare non possem, coepi plus moerore quam infirmitate deficere. Sed tristis animus consilium citius invenit, ut eumdem virum Dei secreto in oratorium ducerem, eumque peterem quatenus mihi ut die illo virtus ad jejunandum daretur, suis apud omnipotentem Dominum precibus obtineret; quod et factum est. Nam mox ut oratorium ingressi sumus, a me humiliter postulatus, sese cum lacrymis in orationem dedit, et post paululum completa oratione exiit. Sed ad vocem benedictionis illius, virtutem tantam meus stomachus accepit, ut mihi funditus a memoria tolleretur cibus et aegritudo. Coepi mirari quis essem, quis fuerim, quia et cum ad animum redibat infirmitas, nihil in me ex his quae memineram recognoscebam. Cumque in dispositione monasterii occupata mens esset, obliviscebar funditus aegritudinis meae. Si vero, ut praedixi, rediret aegritudo ad memoriam, cum tam fortem me esse sentirem, mirabar si non comedissem. Qui ad vesperam veniens, tantae me fortitudinis inveni, ut si voluissem, jejunium usque ad diem alterum transferre potuissem. Sicque factum est ut in me probarem ea etiam de illo vera esse quibus ipse minime interfuissem. PETRUS: Quia eumdem virum

magnae compunctionis fuisse dixisti, ipsam lacrymarum vim largius addiscere cupio. Unde quaeso ut quot sunt genera compunctionis mihi edisseras.

CAPUT XXXIV. Quot sunt compunctionis genera.

GREGORIUS: In multas species, compunctio dividitur, quando singulae quaeque a poenitentibus culpae planguntur. Unde ex voce quoque poenitentium Jeremias ait: Divisiones aquarum deduxit oculus meus. Principaliter vero compunctionis genera duo sunt, quia Deum sitiens anima prius timore compungitur, post amore. Prius enim sese in lacrymis afficit, quia dum malorum suorum recolit, pro his perpeti aeterna supplicia pertimescit. At vero cum longa moeroris anxietudine fuerit formido consumpta, quaedam jam de praesumptione veniae securitas nascitur, et in amore coelestium gaudiorum animus inflammatur; et qui prius flebat ne duceretur ad supplicium, postmodum amarissime flere incipit, quia differtur a regno. Contemplatur etenim mens qui sint illi angelorum chori, quae ipsa societas beatorum spirituum, quae majestas aeternae visionis Dei; et amplius plangit quia a bonis perennibus deest, quam flevit prius cum mala aeterna metuebat. Sicque fit ut perfecta compunctio formidinis, trahat animum compunctioni dilectionis. Quod bene in sacra veracique historia figurata narratione describitur, quae ait quod Axa filia Caleb sedens super asinum suspiravit. Cui dixit pater suus: Quid habes? At illa respondit: Da mihi benedictionem; terram Australem et arentem dedisti mihi, junge et irriguam. Deditque ei pater suus irriguum superius et irriguum inferius. Axa quippe super asinum sedet, cum irrationabilibus carnis suae motibus anima praesidet. Quae suspirans a patre terram irriguam petit, quia a Creatore nostro cum magno gemitu quaerenda est lacrymarum gratia. Sunt namque nonnulli qui jam in dono perceperunt libere pro justitia loqui, oppressos tueri, indigentibus possessa tribuere, ardorem fidei habere; sed adhuc

gratiam lacrymarum non habent. Hi nimirum terram Australem et arentem habent, sed adhuc irrigua indigent, quia in bonis operibus positi, in quibus magni atque ferventes sunt, oportet, oportet nimis, ut aut timore supplicii, aut amore regni coelestis mala etiam quae antea perpetraverunt deplorent. Sed quia, ut dixi, duo sunt compunctionis genera, dedit ei pater suus irriguum superius et irriguum inferius. Irriguum quippe superius accipit anima, cum sese in lacrymis coelestis regni desiderio affligit. Irriguum vero inferius accipit, cum inferni supplicia flendo pertimescit. Et quidem prius inferius, ac post irriguum superius datur. Sed quia compunctio amoris dignitate praeeminet, necesse fuit ut prius irriguum superius, et post irriguum inferius commemorari debuisset. PETRUS: Placet quod dicis. Sed postquam hunc venerandae vitae Eleutherium hujus meriti fuisse dixisti, libet inquirere si nunc in mundo esse credendum est aliquos tales.

CAPUT XXXV. De Amantio presbytero provinciae Tusciae.

GREGORIUS: Floridus Tiburtinae Ecclesiae episcopus, cujus veritatis atque sanctitatis est dilectioni tuae incognitum non est. Hic mihi esse apud se presbyterum quemdam Amantium nomine praecipuae simplicitatis narravit virum; quem hoc habere virtutis perhibet, ut apostolorum more manum super aegros ponat, et saluti restituat, et quantumlibet vehemens aegritudo sit, ad tactum illius abscedat. Quem hoc etiam habere miraculi adjunxit, quia in quolibet loco quamvis immanissimae asperitatis serpentem repererit, mox ut eum signo crucis signaverit, exstinguit, ita ut virtute crucis quam vir Dei digito ediderit, diruptis visceribus moriatur. Quem si quando serpens in foramine fugerit, signo crucis os foraminis benedicit, statimque ex foramine serpens jam mortuus trahitur. Quem tantae virtutis virum ipse etiam videre curavi, eumque ad me deductum in infirmorum domo paucis diebus manere volui, ubi, si qua adesset curationis gratia, citius probari potuisset. Ibi autem quidam inter aegros alios mente captus jacebat, quem

medici Graeco vocabulo phreneticum appellant. Qui nocte quadam cum magnas voces, scilicet ut insanus, ederet, cunctosque aegros immensis clamoribus perturbaret, ita ut nulli illic capere somnum liceret, fiebat res valde miserabilis, quia unde unus male, inde omnes deterius habebant. Sed sicut et prius a reverentissimo viro Florido episcopo, qui tunc cum praedicto presbytero illic pariter manebat, et post a puero qui nocte eadem aegrotantibus serviebat, subtiliter agnovi, idem venerabilis presbyter de proprio stratu surgens, ad lectum phrenetici silenter accessit, et super eum positis manibus oravit. Moxque illum melius habentem tulit, atque in superiora domus secum ad oratorium duxit, ubi pro eo liberius orationi incubuit, et statim eum sanum ad lectum proprium reduxit, ita ut nullas ulterius voces ederet, nec jam aegrotorum quempiam aliquo clamore perturbaret; nec jam aegritudinem auxit alienam, qui perfecte receperat mentem suam. Ex quo ejus uno facto didicimus ut de eo illa omnia audita crederemus. PETRUS: Magna vitae aedificatio est, videre viros tam mira facientes, atque in civibus suis Jerusalem coelestem in terra conspicere.

CAPUT XXXVI. De Maximiano Syracusanae civitatis episcopo.

GREGORIUS: Neque hoc silendum puto, quod omnipotens Deus super Maximianum famulum suum, nunc Syracusanum episcopum, tunc autem mei monasterii Patrem, dignatus est monstrare miraculum. Nam dum jussione pontificis mei in Constantinopolitanae urbis palatio responsis ecclesiasticis deservirem, illuc ad me idem venerabilis Maximianus charitate exigente cum fratribus venit. Qui cum ad monasterium meum Romam rediret, in mari Adriatico nimia tempestate deprehensus, inaestimabili ordine atque inusitato miraculo erga se cunctosque qui cum eo aderant, omnipotentis Dei et iram cognovit, et gratiam. Nam cum in eorum morte ventorum nimietatibus elevati fluctus saevirent, ex navi clavi perditi, arbor abscissa est, vela in undis projecta, totumque vas navis quassatum

nimiis fluctibus, ab omni fuerat sua compage dissolutum. Rimis itaque patentibus intravit mare, atque usque ad superiores tabulas implevit navem, ita ut non tam navis intra undas quam undae jam intra navem esse viderentur. Tunc in eadem navi residentes non jam ex morte vicina, sed ex ipsa ejus praesentia ac visione turbati omnes, sibimet pacem dederunt, corpus et sanguinem Redemptoris acceperunt, Deo se singuli commendantes, ut eorum animas benigne susciperet, quorum corpora in tam pavenda morte tradiderat. Sed omnipotens Deus, qui eorum mentes mirabiliter terruit, eorum quoque vitam mirabilius servavit. Nam diebus octo navis eadem usque ad superiores tabulas aquis plena, iter proprium peragens enatavit; nono autem die in Cotronensis castri portum deducta est. Ex qua exierunt omnes incolumes, qui cum praedicto venerabili viro Maximiano navigabant. Cumque post eos ipse quoque fuisset egressus, mox in ejusdem portus profundum navis demersa est, ac si illis egredientibus pro pondere sublevatione caruisset; et quae plena hominibus in pelago aquas portaverat, atque nataverat, Maximiano cum suis fratribus recedente, aquas sine hominibus in portu non valuit portare; ut hinc omnipotens Deus ostenderet quia hanc onustam sua manu tenuerat, quae ab hominibus vacua et derelicta super aquas non potuit manere.

CAPUT XXXVII. De Sanctulo presbytero provinciae Nursiae.

GREGORIUS: Ante dies quoque fere quadraginta vidisti apud me eum, cujus superius memoriam feci, venerabilis vitae presbyterum Sanctulum nomine, qui ad me ex Nursiae provincia annis singulis venire consuevit. Sed ex eadem provincia quidam monachus ante triduum venit, qui gravis nuntii moerore me perculit, quia eumdem virum obiisse nuntiavit. Hujus ergo viri, etsi non sine gemitu dulcedinis recolo, jam tamen sine formidine virtutes narro, quas a vicinis ejus sacerdotibus mira veritate et simplicitate praeditis agnovi. Et sicut inter amantes se animos magnum charitatis

familiaritas ausum praebet, a me plerumque ex dulcedine exactus, ipse quoque de his quae egerat extrema quaedam fateri cogebatur. Hic namque quodam tempore cum in prelo Langobardi olivas premerent, ut in oleum liquari debuissent, sicut jocundi erat et vultus et animi, utrem vacuum ad prelum detulit, laborantesque Langobardos laeto vultu salutavit, utrem protulit, et jubendo potius quam petendo eum impleri sibi dixit. Sed gentiles viri, qui tota jam die frustra laboraverant, atque ab olivis exigere oleum torquendo non poterant, verba illius moleste susceperunt, eumque injuriis insectati sunt. Quibus vir Domini laetiori adhuc vultu respondit, dicens: Sic pro me oretis, istum utrem Sanctulo impleatis, et sic a vobis revertetur. Cumque illi ex olivis oleum defluere non cernerent, et virum Dei ad implendum utrem sibi insistere viderent, vehementer accensi, majoribus hunc verborum contumeliis detestari coeperunt. Vir autem Dei videns quod ex prelo oleum nullo modo exiret, aquam sibi dari petiit, quam cunctis videntibus benedixit, atque in prelum suis manibus jactavit. Ex qua protinus benedictione tanta ubertas olei erupit, ut Langobardi, qui prius diu incassum laboraverant, non solum sua vascula omnia, sed utrem quoque quem vir Dei detulerat implerent, et gratias agerent, quia is qui oleum petere venerat, benedicendo dedit quod postulabat. Alio quoque tempore vehemens ubique fames incubuerat, et beati Laurentii martyris ecclesia fuerat a Langobardis incensa. Quam vir Dei restaurare cupiens, artifices multos, ac plures subministrantes operarios adhibuit, quibus necesse erat ut quotidiani sumptus laborantibus sine dilatione praeberentur. Sed exigente ejusdem famis necessitate, panis defuit; coeperuntque laborantes instanter victum quaerere, quia vires ad laborem per inopiam non haberent. Quod vir Dei audiens, eos verbis consolabatur foris, promittendo quod deerat; sed ipse graviter anxiabatur intus, exhibere cibum non valens quem promittebat. Cum vero huc illucque anxius pergeret, devenit ad clibanum, in quo vicinae mulieres pridie panes coxerant, ibique incurvatus aspexit, ne forte panis a

coquentibus remansisset. Tunc repente panem mirae magnitudinis, atque insoliti candoris invenit: quem quidem tulit, sed deferre artificibus noluit, ne fortasse alienus esset, et culpam velut ex pietate perpetraret. Per vicinas itaque hunc mulieres detulit, eumque omnibus ostendit, ac ne cui earum remansisset inquisivit. Omnes autem quae pridie panem coxerant, suum hunc esse negaverunt, atque panes suos numero integro se a clibano retulisse professae sunt. Tunc laetus vir Domini perrexit ad multos artifices cum uno pane; ut omnipotenti Deo gratias agerent admonuit; et quia eis annonam praebuerat, indicavit; eisque ad refectionem protinus invitatis inventum panem apposuit. Quibus sufficienter pleneque satiatis, plura ex eo quam ipse panis fuerat, fragmenta collegit. Quae die quoque altero eis ad refectionem intulit; sed id quod ex fragmentis supererat, ipsa quoque, quae apposita fuerant, fragmenta superabat. Factumque est ut per dies decem omnes illi artifices atque operarii ex illo uno pane satiati, hunc et quotidie ederent, et ex eo quotidie quod edi posset in crastinum superesset, ac si fragmenta panis illius per esum crescerent, et cibum comedentium ora repararent. PETRUS: Mira res, atque in exemplum Dominici operis vehementer omnibus stupenda. GREGORIUS: Ipse, Petre, multos de uno pane pavit per servum, qui ex quinque panibus quinque millia hominum satiavit per semetipsum, qui pauca seminis grana in innumera segetum frumenta multiplicat, qui ipsa quoque semina produxit ex terra et simul omnia creavit ex nihilo. Sed ne diutius mireris quid in virtute Domini venerandus vir Sanctulus exterius fecerit, audi ex virtute Domini qualis interius fuit. Die etenim quadam a Langobardis captus quidam diaconus tenebatur ligatus, eumque ipsi qui tenuerant, interficere cogitabant. Advesperascente autem die, vir Dei Sanctulus ab eisdem Langobardis petiit ut relaxari eique vita concedi debuisset, quod posse se facere omnino negaverunt. Cumque mortem illius deliberasse eos cerneret, petiit ut sibi ad custodiam tradi debuisset. Cui protinus responderunt: Tibi quidem eum ad

custodiendum damus, sed ea conditione interposita, ut si iste fugerit, pro eo ipse moriaris. Quod vir Domini libenter accipiens, praedictum diaconum in suam suscepit fidem; quem nocte media cum Langobardos omnes somno gravi depressos aspiceret, excitavit et ait: Surge, et concitus fuge, liberet te omnipotens Deus. Sed idem diaconus promissionis ejus non immemor, respondit dicens: Fugere, Pater, non possum, quia si ego fugero, pro me sine dubio ipse morieris. Quem vir Domini Sanctulus ad fugiendum compulit, dicens: Surge, et vade, te omnipotens Deus eripiat; nam ego in manu ejus sum, tantum in me possunt facere, quantum ipse permiserit. Fugit itaque diaconus, et quasi deceptus in medio fidejussor remansit. Facto igitur mane Langobardi, qui diaconum ad custodiendum dederant, venerunt, quem dederant petierunt; sed hunc venerandus presbyter fugisse respondit. Tunc illi inquiunt: Scis ipse melius quid convenit. Servus autem Domini constanter ait: Scio. Cui dixerunt: Bonus homo es, nolumus te per varios cruciatus mori, elige tibi mortem quam vis. Quibus vir Domini respondit, dicens: In manu Dei sum, ea morte me occidite qua me occidi ipse permiserit. Tunc omnibus qui illic aderant Langobardis placuit ut eum capite truncare debuissent, quatenus sine gravi cruciatu vitam ejus compendiosa morte terminarent. Cognito itaque quod Sanctulus qui inter eos pro sanctitatis reverentia magni honoris habebatur occidendus esset, omnes qui in eodem loco inventi sunt Langobardi convenerunt (sicut sunt nimiae crudelitatis) laeti ad spectaculum mortis. Circumsteterunt itaque acies. Vir autem Domini deductus in medium est, atque ex omnibus viris fortibus electus est unus, de quo dubium non esset quin uno ictu caput ejus abscinderet. Venerandus igitur vir inter armatos deductus, ad sua arma statim cucurrit; nam petiit ut sibi paululum orandi licentia daretur. Cui dum concessum fuisset, in terram se stravit et oravit. Qui dum paulo diutius oraret, hunc electus interfector calce pulsavit ut surgeret, dicens: Surge, et flexo genu tende cervicem. Surrexit autem vir Domini, genuflexit, cervicem

tetendit, sed tenso collo eductam contra se spatham intuens, hoc unum publice fertur dixisse: Sancte Joannes, suscipe illam. Tunc electus carnifex evaginatum gladium tenens, nisu forti in altum brachium percussurus levavit, sed deponere nullo modo potuit, nam repente diriguit, et erecto in coelum gladio brachium inflexibile remansit. Tunc omnis Langobardorum turba quae ad illud mortis spectaculum aderat, in laudis favorem conversa, mirari coepit, virumque Dei cum timore venerari, quia profecto claruerat cujus sanctitatis esset, qui carnificis sui brachium in aere ligasset. Itaque postulatus ut surgeret, surrexit; postulatus ut brachium sui carnificis sanaret, negavit, dicens: Ego pro eo nullo modo orabo, nisi mihi ante juramentum dederit quia cum ista manu Christianum hominem non occidat. Sed Langobardus idem, qui, ut ita dicam, brachium contra Deum tendendo perdiderat, poena sua exigente, compulsus est jurare se Christianum hominem nunquam occidere. Tunc vir Domini praecepit, dicens: Depone manum deorsum. Qui statim deposuit. Atque illico adjunxit: Remitte gladium in vaginam. Et statim remisit. Omnes ergo tantae virtutis hominem cognoscentes, boves et jumenta quae depraedati fuerant, certatim ei offerre in munere volebant; sed vir Domini tale munus suscipere renuit, munus autem bonae mercedis quaesivit, dicens: Si mihi aliquid vultis concedere, omnes captivos quos habetis mihi tribuite, ut habeam unde pro vobis debeam orare. Factumque est; et omnes captivi cum eo dimissi sunt, atque, superna gratia disponente, cum se unus pro uno morti obtulit, multos a morte liberavit. PETRUS: Mira res, et quamvis hanc ab aliis et ipse cognoverim, vere tamen fateor quia mihi quoties narratur innovatur. GREGORIUS: Nihil in hac re in Sanctulo mireris, sed pensa, si potes, quis ille spiritus fuerit, qui ejus tam simplicem mentem tenuit, atque in tanto virtutis culmine erexit. Ubi enim ejus animus fuit, quando mori pro proximo tam constanter decrevit, et pro temporali vita fratris unius suam despexit, atque sub gladio cervicem tetendit? Quae ergo vis amoris illud cor tenuit,

quod mortem suam pro unius salute proximi non expavit? Scimus certe quia idem venerabilis vir Sanctulus ipsa quoque elementa litterarum bene non noverat. Legis praecepta nesciebat; sed quia plenitudo legis est charitas, legem totam in Dei ac proximi dilectione servavit; et quod foris in cognitione non noverat, intus vivebat in amore. Et qui nunquam fortasse legerat quod de Redemptore Joannes Apostolus dixit: Quoniam sicut ille pro nobis animan suam posuit, sic et nos debemus pro fratribus animas ponere, tam sublime apostol cum praeceptum faciendo magis quam sciendo noverat. Comparemus, si placet, cum hac nostra indocta scientia illius doctam ignorantiam. Ubi haec nostra jacet, ibi illius disciplina eminet. Nos de virtutibus vacui loquimur, et quasi inter fructifera arbusta positi, odoramus poma, nec manducamus; ille virtutum fructus carpere noverat, quamvis hos in verbis odorare nesciebat. PETRUS: Quidnam, quaeso te, esse existimas, quod boni quique subtrahuntur; et qui vivere ad aedificationem multorum poterant, aut penitus inveniri nequeunt, aut certe jam omnimodo rarescunt? GREGORIUS: Malitia remanentium meretur, ut hi qui prodesse poterant festine subtrahantur: et cum mundi finis appropinquat, electi tolluntur, ne deteriora videant. Hinc enim proheta ait: Justus perit, et nemo est qui recogitet in corde suo; et viri misericordiae colliguntur, quia non est qui intelligat. Hinc rursus scriptum est: Aperite, ut exeant qui conculcent eam, tollite de via lapides. Hinc Salomon ait: Tempus mittendi lapides, et tempus colligendi. Quo igitur finis mundi urget, eo necesse est ut vivi lapides ad aedificium coeleste colligantur, quatenus Jerusalem nostra in mensuram suae constructionis excrescat. Nec tamen ita omnes electos subtrahi credimus, ut soli in mundo perversi remaneant, quia nunquam peccatores ad lamentum poenitentiae redirent, si nulla essent bonorum exempla, quae eorum mentem traherent. PETRUS: Incassum subtrahi bonos queror, qui perire catervatim et malos video.

CAPUT XXXVIII. De visione Redempti Ferentinae civitatis episcopi.

GREGORIUS: Hac de re nihil, Petre, mireris; nam Redemptum Ferentinae civitatis episcopum, vitae venerabilis virum, qui ante hos fere annos septem ex hoc mundo migravit, tua dilectio cognitum habuit. Hic sicut mihi adhuc in monasterio posito valde familiariter jungebatur, hoc quod Joannis junioris praedecessoris mei tempore de mundi fine cognoverat, sicut longe lateque claruerat, a me requisitus mihi ipse narrabat. Aiebat namque quia quadam die dum parochias suas ex more circuiret, pervenit ad Ecclesiam beati Eutychii martyris. Advesperascente autem die stratum fieri sibi juxta sepulcrum martyris voluit, atque ibi post laborem quievit, cum nocte media, ut asserebat, nec dormiebat, nec perfecte vigilare poterat; sed depressus, ut solet, somno, gravabatur quodam pondere vigilans animus, atque ante eum idem beatus martyr Eutychius astitit, dicens: Redempte, vigilas? Cui respondit: Vigilo. Qui ait: Finis venit universae carnis, finis venit universae carnis, finis venit universae carnis. Post quam trinam vocem visio martyris, quae mentis ejus oculis apparebat, evanuit. Tunc vir Dei surrexit, seque in orationis lamentum dedit. Mox enim illa terribilia in coelo signa secuta sunt, ut hastae atque acies igneae ab Aquilonis parte viderentur. Mox effera Langobardorum gens de vagina suae habitationis educta, in nostram cervicem grassata est atque humanum genus, quod in hac terra prae nimia multitudine quasi spissae segetis more surrexerat, succisum aruit. Nam depopulatae urbes, eversa castra, concrematae ecclesiae, destructa sunt monasteria virorum ac feminarum, desolata ab hominibus praedia, atque ab omni cultore destituta, in solitutudine vacat terra, nullus hanc possessor inhabitat, occupaverunt bestiae loca quae prius multitudo hominum tenebat. Et quid in aliis mundi partibus agatur, ignoro. Nam in hac terra, in qua nos vivimus, finem suum mundus jam non nuntiat, sed ostendit. Tanto ergo nos necesse est instantius aeterna quaerere, quanto a nobis cognoscimus velociter temporalia fugisse. Despiciendus a nobis hic mundus fuerat, etiam si blandiretur, si rebus prosperis demulceret animum; at postquam tot

flagellis premitur, tanta adversitate fatigatur, tot nobis quotidie dolores ingeminat, quid nobis aliud quam ne diligatur clamat? Multa autem fuerant quae adhuc de electorum factis narrari debuissent, sed haec silentio supprimo, quia ad alia festino. PETRUS: Quia multos intra sanctae Ecclesiae gremium constitutos de vita animae post mortem carnis perpendo dubitare, quaeso ut debeas, vel quae ex ratione suppetunt, vel si qua animarum exempla animo occurrunt, pro multorum aedificatione dicere, ut hi qui suspicantur, discant cum carne animam non finiri. GREGORIUS: Laboriosum valde hoc opus est, et maxime occupato animo atque ad alia tendenti. Sed si sunt quibus prodesse valeat, voluntatem meam procul dubio postpono utilitati proximorum, et, in quantum Deo largiente valuero, quod anima post carnem vivat subsequenti hoc quarto volumine demonstrabo.

Liber IV

CAPUT I. Quod aeterna ac spiritalia ideo a carnalibus minus credantur, quia ea quae audiunt per experimentum minime noverunt.

GREGORIUS: Postquam de paradisi gaudiis, culpa exigente, expulsus est primus humani generis parens, in hujus caecitatis atque exsilii quam patimur venit aerumnam, quia peccando extra semetipsum fusus, jam illa coelestis patriae gaudia, quae prius contemplabatur, videre non potuit. In paradiso quippe assueverat homo verbis Dei perfrui, beatorum angelorum spiritibus cordis munditia et celsitudine visionis interesse; sed postquam huc cecidit, ab illo quo implebatur mentis lumine recessit. Ex cujus videlicet carne nos in hujus exsilii caecitate nati, audivimus quidem coelestem esse patriam, audivimus ejus cives angelos Dei, audivimus eorumdem angelorum socios spiritus justorum et perfectorum. Sed carnales quique, quia illa invisibilia scire non valent per experimentum, dubitant utrumne sit quod corporalibus oculis non vident. Quae nimirum dubietas in primo parente nostro esse non potuit, quia exclusus a paradisi gaudiis, hoc quod amiserat, quia viderat recolebat. Hi autem sentire vel recolere audita non possunt, quia eorum nullum, sicut ille, saltem de praeterito, experimentum tenent. Ac si enim praegnans mulier mittatur in carcerem, ibique pariat puerum, qui natus puer in carcere nutriatur et crescat; cui si fortasse mater quae hunc genuit, solem, lunam, stellas, montes et campos, volantes aves, currentes equos nominet, ille vero qui est in carcere natus et nutritus nihil aliud quam tenebras carceris sciat, et haec quidem esse audiat, sed quia ea per experimentum non novit, veraciter esse diffidat; ita in hac exsilii sui caecitate nati homines, dum esse summa et invisibilia audiunt, diffidunt an vera sint, quia sola haec infima in quibus nati sunt visibilia noverunt. Unde factum est ut ipse invisibilium et visibilium Creator ad

humani generis redemptionem Unigenitus Patris veniret, et sanctum Spiritum ad corda nostra mitteret, quatenus per eum vivificati crederemus, quae adhuc scire per experimentum non possumus. Quotquot ergo hunc spiritum haereditatis nostrae pignus accepimus, de vita invisibilium non dubitamus. Quisquis autem in hac credulitate adhuc solidus non est, debet procul dubio majorum dictis fidem praebere, eisque jam per Spiritum sanctum invisibilium experimentum habentibus credere, quia et stultus est puer si matrem ideo aestimet de luce mentiri, quia ipse nihil aliud quam tenebras carceris agnovit. PETRUS: Placet valde quod dicis. Sed qui esse invisibilia non credit, profecto infidelis est; qui vero infidelis est, in eo quod dubitat, fidem non quaerit, sed rationem.

CAPUT II. Quod sine fide neque infidelis vivat.

GREGORIUS Audenter dico, quia sine fide neque infidelis vivit. Nam si eumdem infidelem percunctari voluero, quem patrem vel quam matrem habuerit, protinus respondebit, illum atque illam. Quem si statim requiram utrumne noverit quando conceptus sit, vel viderit quando natus, nihil horum se vel nosse, vel vidisse fatebitur, et tamen quod non vidit, credit. Nam illum patrem illamque se habuisse matrem absque dubitatione testatur. PETRUS: Fateor quia nunc usque nescivi quod infidelis haberet fidem. GREGORIUS: Habent etiam infideles fidem, sed utinam in Deum. Quam si utique haberent, infideles non essent. Sed hinc in sua perfidia redarguendi sunt, hinc ad fidei gratiam provocandi, quia si de ipso suo visibili corpore credunt quod minime viderunt, cur invisibilia non credunt, quae corporaliter videri non possunt;

CAPUT III. Quod tres vitales spiritus sunt creati.

Nam quia post mortem carnis vivat anima, patet ratio, sed fidei admista. Tres quippe vitales spiritus creavit omnipotens Deus: unum qui carne non

tegitur; alium qui carne tegitur, sed non cum carne moritur; tertium qui carne tegitur, et cum carne moritur. Spiritus namque est qui carne non tegitur, angelorum; spiritus qui carne tegitur, sed cum carne non moritur, hominum; spiritus qui carne tegitur, et cum carne moritur, jumentorum omniumque brutorum animalium. Homo itaque sicut in medio creatus est, ut esset inferior angelo, superior jumento, ita aliquid habet commune cum summo, aliquid commune cum infimo: immortalitatem scilicet spiritus cum angelo, mortalitatem vero carnis cum jumento; quousque et ipsam mortalitatem carnis gloria resurrectionis absorbeat, et inhaerendo spiritui caro servetur in perpetuum, quia et ipse spiritus inhaerendo carni servatur in Deum. Quae tamen caro nec in reprobis inter supplicia perfecte deficit, quia semper deficiendo subsistit; ut qui spiritu et carne peccaverunt, semper essentialiter viventes, et carne et spiritu sine fine moriantur. PETRUS: Rationi fidelium placent cuncta quae dicis. Sed quaeso te, dum spiritus hominum atque jumentorum tanta distinctione discernas, quid est quod Salomon ait: Dixi in corde meo de filiis hominum, ut probaret eos Deus, et ostenderet similes esse bestiis; idcirco unus interitus est hominis et jumentorum, et aequa utriusque conditio ? Qui adhuc eamdem suam sententiam subtiliter exsequens, adjungit: Sicut moritur homo, sic et illa moriuntur, similiter spirant omnia, et nihil habet homo jumentis amplius. Quibus adhuc verbis generalem definitionem subinfert dicens: Cuncta subjacent vanitati, et omnia pergunt ad unum locum; de terra facta sunt, et in terram pariter revertuntur.

CAPUT IV. De quaestione Salomonis qua dicitur: Unus interitus est hominis et jumentorum.

GREGORIUS: Salomonis liber in quo haec scripta sunt, Ecclesiastes appellatus est. Ecclesiastes autem proprie concionator dicitur. In concione vero sententia promitur, per quam tumultuosae turbae seditio comprimatur.

Et cum multi diversa sentiunt, per concionantis rationem ad unam sententiam perducuntur. Hic igitur liber idcirco concionator dicitur, quia Salomon in eo quasi tumultuantis turbae suscepit sensum, ut ea per inquisitionem dicat, quae fortasse per tentationem imperita mens sentiat. Nam quot sententias quasi per inquisitionem movet, quasi tot in se personas diversorum suscipit. Sed concionator verax velut extensa manu omnium tumultus sedat, eosque ad unam sententiam revocat, cum in ejusdem libri termino ait: Finem loquendi omnes pariter audiamus: Deum time, et mandata ejus observa; hoc est enim omnis homo. Si enim in libro eodem per locutionem suam multorum personas non susceperat, cur ad audiendum loquendi finem secum pariter omnes admonebat? Qui igitur in fine libri dicit: Omnes pariter audiamus, ipse sibi testis est quia in se multorum personas suscipiens, quasi solus locutus non est. Unde et alia sunt quae in libro eodem per inquisitionem moventur, atque alia quae per rationem satisfaciunt; alia quae ex tentati profert animo, atque adhuc hujus mundi delectationibus dediti; alia vero in quibus ea quae rationis sunt disserit, ut animum a delectatione compescat. Ibi namque ait: Hoc itaque mihi visum est bonum, ut comedat quis et bibat, et fruatur laetitia ex labore suo. Et longe inferius subjungit: Melius est ire ad domum luctus, quam ad domum convivii. Si enim bonum est manducare et bibere, melius fuisse videbatur ad domum convivii pergere quam ad domum luctus. Ex qua re ostenditur quia illud ex infirmantium persona intulit, hoc vero ex rationis definitione subjunxit. Nam ipsas protinus rationis causas edisserit, et de domo luctus quae sit utilitas ostendit, dicens: In illa enim finis cunctorum admonetur hominum, et vivens cogitat quid futurus sit . Rursum illic scriptum est: Laetare, juvenis, in adolescentia tua. Et paulo post subditur: Adolescentia enim et voluptas vana sunt. Qui dum hoc postmodum vanum esse redarguit, quod prius admonuisse videbatur, patenter indicat, quia illa quasi ex desiderio carnali verba intulit, haec vero ex judicii veritate subjunxit. Sicut

ergo delectationem prius carnalium exprimens, curis postpositis, denuntiat bonum esse manducare et bibere, quod tamen postmodum ex judicii ratione reprehendit, cum esse melius dicit ire ad domum luctus quam ad domum convivii; et sicut laetari debere juvenem in adolescentia sua, quasi ex deliberatione carnalium proponit, et tamen postmodum per definitionem sententiae adolescentiam et voluptatem vana esse redarguit; ita etiam concionator noster, velut ex mente infirmantium humanae suspicionis sententiam proponit, dum dicit: Unus interitus est hominis et jumentorum, et aequa utriusque conditio. Sicut moritur homo, sic et illa moriuntur; similiter spirant omnia, et nihil habet homo jumentis amplius. Qui tamen ex definitione rationis suam postmodum sententiam profert, dicens: Quid habet amplius sapiens a stulto, et quid pauper, nisi ut pergat illuc ubi est vita? Qui igitur dixit: Nihil habet homo jumentis amplius, ipse rursum definivit, quia habet aliquid sapiens non solum amplius a jumento, sed etiam ab homine stulto, videlicet ut pergat illuc ubi est vita. Quibus verbis primum indicat quia hic hominum vita non est, quam esse alibi testatur. Habet ergo homo hoc amplius jumentis, quia illa post mortem non vivunt, hic vero tunc vivere inchoat, cum per mortem carnis hanc visibilem vitam consummat. Qui etiam longe inferius dicit: Quodcunque potest manus tua facere, instanter operare, quia nec opus, nec ratio, nec scientia, nec sapientia erit apud inferos, quo tu properas. Quomodo ergo unus interitus est hominis et jumenti, et aequa utriusque conditio? Aut quomodo nihil habet homo jumentis amplius, cum jumenta post mortem carnis non vivunt; hominum vero spiritus pro malis suis operibus post mortem carnis ad inferos deducti, nec in ipsa morte moriuntur? Sed in utraque tam dispari sententia demonstratur quia concionator verax et illud ex tentatione carnali intulit, et hoc postmodum ex spiritali veritate definivit. PETRUS: Libet nescisse quod requisivi, dum me in tanta subtilitate contigit discere quod nescivi. Sed quaeso te, ut me aequanimiter feras, si ipse quoque apud te more

Ecclesiastis nostri, infirmantium in me personam suscepero, ut eisdem infirmantibus prodesse propinquius quasi per eorum inquisitionem possim. GREGORIUS: Cur condescendentem te infirmitati proximorum aequanimiter non feram, cum Paulus dicat: Omnibus omnia factus sum, ut omnes facerem salvos? Quod ipse quoque dum ex condescensione charitatis egeris, in hac re amplius venerari debes, in qua morem egregii praedicatoris imitaris.

CAPUT V. De quaestione animae invisibiliter exeuntis, an sit quae videri non potest.

PETRUS: Quodam fratre moriente praesentem me fuisse contigit. Qui repente dum loqueretur, vitalem emisit flatum; et quem prius mecum loquentem videbam, subito extinctum vidi. Sed ejus anima utrum egressa sit, an non, non vidi; et valde durum videtur ut credatur res esse, quam nullus valeat videre. GREGORIUS: Quid mirum, Petre, si egredientem animam non vidisti, quam et manentem in corpore non vides? Nunquidnam modo cum mecum loqueris quia videre in me non vales animam meam, idcirco me esse exanimem credis? Natura quippe animae invisibilis est, atque ita ex corpore invisibiliter egreditur, sicut in corpore invisibiliter manet.

CAPUT VI. Quod vita animae manentis in corpore sicut deprehenditur ex motu membrorum, sic vita animae post corpus in sanctis pensanda est ex virtute miraculorum.

PETRUS: Sed vitam animae in corpore manentis pensare possum ex ipsis motibus corporis, quia nisi corpori anima adesset, ejusdem membra corporis moveri non possent; vitam vero animae post carnem in quibus motibus quibusve operibus video, ut ex rebus visis esse colligam quod videre non possum? GREGORIUS: Non quidem similiter, sed dissimiliter dico, quia

sicut vis animae vivificat et movet corpus, sic vis divina implet quae creavit omnia; et alia inspirando vivificat, aliis tribuit ut vivant, aliis vero hoc solummodo praestat ut sint. Quia vero esse non dubitas creantem et regentem, implentem et circumplectentem, transcendentem et sustinentem, incircumscriptum atque invisibilem Deum, ita dubitare non debes hunc invisibilia obsequia habere. Debent quippe ea quae ministrant ad ejus similitudinem tendere cui ministrant, ut quae invisibili serviunt, esse invisibilia non dubitentur. Haec autem quae esse credimus, nisi sanctos angelos, et spiritus justorum? Sicut ergo motum considerans corporis, vitam animae in corpore manentis perpendis ab imo, ita vitam animae exeuntis a corpore perpendere debes a summo, quia potest invisibiliter vivere, quam oportet in obsequio invisibilis Conditoris manere. PETRUS: Recte totum dicitur, sed mens refugit credere, quod corporeis oculis non valet videre. GREGORIUS: Cum Paulus dicat: Est enim fides sperandarum substantia rerum, argumentum non apparentium, hoc veraciter dicitur credi, quod non valet videri. Nam credi jam non potest quod videri potest. Ut tamen te breviter reducam ad te, nulla visibilia nisi per invisibilia videntur. Ecce enim cuncta corporea oculus tui corporis aspicit, nec tamen ipse corporeus oculus aliquid corporeum videret, nisi hunc res incorporea ad videndum acueret. Nam tolle mentem quae non videtur, et incassum patet oculus qui videbat. Subtrahe animam corpori, remanent procul dubio oculi in corpore aperti. Si igitur per se videbant, cur discedente anima nihil vident? Hinc ergo collige quia ipsa quoque visibilia non nisi per invisibilia videntur. Ponamus quoque ante oculos mentis aedificari domum, immensas moles levari, pendere magnas in machinis columnas; quis, quaeso te, hoc opus operatur, corpus visibile quod illas moles manibus trahit, an invisibilis anima quae vivificat corpus? Tolle enim quod non videtur in corpore, et mox immobilia remanent cuncta quae moveri videbantur, visibilia corpora metallorum. Qua ex re pensandum est quia in hoc quoque mundo visibili

nihil nisi per creaturam invisibilem disponi potest. Nam sicut omnipotens Deus aspirando vel implendo ea quae ratione subsistunt, et vivificat, et movet invisibilia; ita ipsa quoque invisibilia implendo movent atque vivificant carnalia corpora quae videntur. PETRUS: Istis, fateor, allegationibus libenter victus, prope nulla jam esse haec visibilia existimare compellor, qui prius in me infirmantium personam suscipiens, de invisibilibus dubitabam. Itaque placent cuncta quae dicis; sed tamen sicut vitam animae in corpore manentis ex motu corporis agnosco, ita vitam animae post corpus, apertis quibusdam rebus attestantibus, cognoscere cupio. GREGORIUS: Hac in re si cor paratum tuae dilectionis invenio, in allegatione minime laboro. Nunquidnam sancti apostoli et martyres Christi praesentem vitam despicerent, et in mortem carnis animas ponerent, nisi certiorem animarum vitam subsequi scirent? Tu vero ipse inquies quia vitam animae in corpore manentis ex motibus corporis agnoscis; et ecce hi qui animas in mortem posuerunt, atque animarum vitam post mortem carnis esse crediderunt, quotidianis miraculis coruscant. Ad exstincta namque eorum corpora viventes aegri veniunt, et sanantur; perjuri veniunt, et daemonio vexantur, daemoniaci veniunt, et liberantur; leprosi veniunt, et mundantur; deferuntur mortui, et suscitantur. Pensa itaque eorum animae qualiter vivunt illic ubi vivunt, quorum hic mortua corpora in tot miraculis vivunt. Si igitur vitam animae manentis in corpore deprehendis ex motu membrorum, cur non perpendis vitam animae post corpus, etiam per ossa mortua in virtute miraculorum? PETRUS: Nulla, ut opinor, huic allegationi ratio obsistit, in qua ex rebus visibilibus cogimur credere quod non videmus.

CAPUT VII. De egressibus animarum.

GREGORIUS: Paulo superius questus es, morientis cujusdam egredientem animam te non vidisse; sed hoc ipsum jam culpae fuit, quod corporeis

oculis rem videre invisibilem quaesisti. Nam multi nostrorum mentis oculum fide pura et ubere oratione mundantes, egredientes e carne animas frequenter viderunt. Unde nunc mihi necesse est vel qualiter egredientes animae visae sint, vel quanta ipsae dum egrederentur viderint enarrare, quatenus fluctuanti animo, quod plene ratio non valet, exempla suadeant. In secundo namque hujus operis libro jam praefatus sum quod vir venerabilis Benedictus, sicut a fidelibus ejus discipulis agnovi, longe a Capuana urbe positus, Germani ejusdem urbis episcopi animam nocte media in globo igneo ad coelum ferri ab angelis aspexit. Qui eamdem quoque ascendentem animam intuens, mentis laxato sinu quasi sub uno solis radio cunctum in suis oculis collectum mundum vidit.

CAPUT VIII. De egressu animae Speciosi monachi.

Eisdem quoque discipulis illius narrantibus didici, quia duo nobiles viri, atque exterioribus studiis eruditi germani fratres, quorum unus Speciosus, alter vero Gregorius dicebatur, ejus se regulae in sancta conversatione tradiderunt. Quos idem Pater venerabilis in monasterio, quod juxta Terracinensem urbem construxerat, fecit habitare. Qui multas quidem pecunias in hoc mundo possederant, sed cuncta pauperibus pro animarum suarum redemptione largiti sunt, et in eodem monasterio permanserunt. Quorum unus, scilicet Speciosus, dum pro utilitate monasterii juxta Capuanam urbem missus fuisset, die quadam frater ejus Gregorius cum fratribus ad mensam sedens atque convescens, per spiritum sublevatus aspexit, et vidit Speciosi germani sui animam tam longe a se positi de corpore exire; quod mox fratribus indicavit, atque festinans cucurrit, jamque eumdem fratrem suum sepultum reperit, quem tamen hora ea qua viderat exisse de corpore invenit.

CAPUT IX. De anima cujusdam inclusi.

Quidam religiosus atque fidelissimus vir adhuc mihi in monasterio posito narravit quod aliqui de Siciliae partibus navigio Romam petentes, in mari medio positi, cujusdam servi Dei qui in Samnio fuerat inclusus, ad coelum ferri animam viderunt. Qui descendentes ad terram, causamque an ita esset acta perscrutantes, illo die invenerunt obiisse Dei famulum, quo eum ad coelestia regna ascendisse cognoverunt.

CAPUT X. De egressu animae Spei abbatis.

Adhuc in monasterio meo positus cujusdam valde venerabilis viri relatione cognovi quod dico. Aiebat enim quia venerabilis Pater nomine Spes, monasterium construxit in loco cui vocabulum Cample est, qui sexti ferme milliarii interjacente spatio a vetusta Nursiae urbe disjungitur. Hunc omnipotens et misericors Deus ab aeterno verbere flagellando protexit, eique dispensationis suae maximam severitatem servavit et gratiam; quantumque eum prius flagellando diligeret, postmodum perfecte sanando monstravit. Ejus namque oculos per quadraginta annorum spatium continuae caecitatis tenebris pressit, nullum ei lumen vel extremae visionis aperiens. Sed quia nemo in verbere illius gratia se destituente subsistit, et nisi idem misericors Pater qui poenam irrogat patientiam praestet, mox per impatientiam peccatum nobis ipsa auget correptio peccatorum, fitque modo miserabili ut culpa nostra unde sperare debuit terminum, inde sumat augmentum; idcirco nostra Deus infirma conspiciens, flagellis suis custodiam permiscet, atque in percussione sua electis filiis nunc misericorditer justus est, ut sint quibus postea debeat juste misereri. Unde venerabilem senem dum exterioribus tenebris premeret, interna nunquam luce destituit. Qui cum flagello fatigaretur corporis, habebat per sancti Spiritus custodiam, consolationem cordis. Cum vero jam anni quadragesimi fuisset in caecitate tempus expletum, ei Dominus lumen reddidit, et vicinum suum obitum denuntiavit, atque ut monasteriis circumquaque constructis

verbum vitae praedicaret admonuit, quatenus corporis recepto lumine, visitatis in circuitu fratribus, cordis lumen aperiret. Qui statim jussis obtemperans, fratrum coenobia circuivit, mandata vitae quae agendo didicerat praedicavit. Quinto decimo igitur die ad monasterium suum peracta praedicatione reversus est, ibique fratribus convocatis astans in medio, sacramentum dominici corporis et sanguinis sumpsit, moxque cum eis mysticos psalmorum cantus exorsus est. Qui illis psallentibus orationi intentus animam reddidit. Omnes vero fratres qui aderant ex ore ejus exisse columbam viderunt, quae mox, aperto tecto oratorii egressa, aspicientibus fratribus, penetravit coelum. Cujus idcirco animam in columbae specie apparuisse credendum est, ut omnipotens Deus ex hac ipsa specie ostenderet quam simplici corde ei vir ille servisset.

CAPUT XI. De egressu animae Nursini presbyteri.

Sed neque hoc sileam quod vir venerabilis abbas Stephanus, qui non longe ante hoc tempus in hac urbe defunctus est, quem ipse etiam bene nosti, in eadem provincia Nursiae contigisse referebat. Aiebat enim quod illic presbyter quidam commissam sibi cum magno timore Domini regebat Ecclesiam. Qui ex tempore ordinationis acceptae presbyteram suam ut sororem diligens, sed quasi hostem cavens, ad se propius accedere nunquam sinebat, eamque sibimet propinquare nulla occasione permittens, ab ea sibi communionem funditus familiaritatis absciderat. Habent quippe sancti viri hoc proprium; nam ut semper ab illicitis longe sint, a se plerumque etiam licita abscindunt. Unde idem vir, ne in aliquam per eam incurreret culpam, sibi etiam per illam ministrari recusabat necessaria. Hic ergo venerabilis presbyter cum longam vitae implesset aetatem, anno quadragesimo ordinationis suae inardescente graviter febre correptus, ad extrema deductus est. Sed cum eum presbytera sua conspiceret solutis jam membris, quasi in morte distentum, si quod adhuc ei vitale spiramen inesset, naribus ejus

apposita curavit aure dignoscere. Quod ille sentiens, cui tenuissimus inerat flatus, quantulo adnisu valuit, ut loqui potuisset, infervescente spiritu collegit vocem atque erupit, dicens: Recede a me, mulier, adhuc igniculus vivit, paleam tolle. Illa igitur recedente, crescente virtute corporis, cum magna coepit laetitia clamare, dicens: Bene veniant domini mei; bene veniant domini mei; quid ad tantillum servulum vestrum estis dignati convenire? venio, venio, gratias ago, gratias ago. Cumque hoc iterata crebro voce repeteret, quibus hoc diceret noti sui, qui illum circumsteterant, requirebant. Quibus ille admirando respondit, dicens: Nunquid hic convenisse sanctos apostolos non videtis? beatum Petrum et Paulum primos apostolorum non aspicitis? Ad quos iterum conversus, dicebat: Ecce venio, ecce venio; atque inter haec verba animam reddidit. Et quia veraciter sanctos apostolos viderit, eos etiam sequendo testatus est. Quod plerumque contingit justis, ut in morte sua sanctorum praecedentium visiones aspiciant, ne ipsam mortis suae poenalem sententiam pertimescant, sed dum eorum menti internorum civium societas ostenditur, a carnis suae copula sine doloris et formidinis fatigatione solvantur.

CAPUT XII. De anima Probi Reatinae civitatis episcopi.

Qua de re neque hoc sileam, quod Probus omnipotentis Dei famulus, qui nunc in hac urbe monasterio praeest, quod appellatur Renati, de Probo patruo suo Reatinae civitatis episcopo mihi narrare consuevit, dicens quia, appropinquante vitae ejus termino, eum gravissima depressit aegritudo. Cujus pater nomine Maximus, pueris circumquaque transmissis colligere medicos studuit, si fortasse ejus molestiae subvenire potuisset. Sed congregati ex vicinis locis undique medici, ad tactum venae denuntiaverunt ejus exitum citius adfuturum. Sed cum jam tempus refectionis incumberet, atque diei hora tardior excrevisset, venerandus episcopus de illorum potius quam de sua salute sollicitus, eos qui aderant admonuit cum suo patre in

superioris episcopii sui partes ascendere, seque post laborem reficiendo reparare. Omnes igitur ascenderunt domum, unus ei tantummodo parvulus relictus est puer, quem nunc quoque praedictus Probus asserit superesse. Qui dum lecto jacentis assisteret, subito aspexit intrantes ad virum Dei quosdam viros stolis candidis amictos, qui eumdem quoque candorem vestium, vultuum suorum luce vincebant. Qua splendoris etiam claritate perculsus, quinam illi essent, emissa coepit voce clamare. Qua voce etiam Probus episcopus commotus, intrantes eos aspexit et agnovit, atque eumdem stridentem vagientemque puerum consolari coepit, dicens: Noli timere, fili, quia ad me sanctus Juvenalis et sanctus Eleutherius martyres venerunt. Ille autem tantae visionis novitatem non ferens, cursu concito extra fores fugit, atque eos quos viderat patri ac medicis nuntiavit. Qui concite descenderunt; sed aegrum quem reliquerant jam defunctum invenerunt, quia illi eum secum tulerant, quorum visionem puer ferre non potuit, qui hic remansit.

CAPUT XIII. De transitu Gallae ancillae Dei.

Interea neque hoc silendum arbitror quod mihi personarum gravium atque fidelium est relatione compertum. Gothorum namque temporibus Galla hujus urbis nobilissima puella Symmachi consulis ac patricii filia, intra adolescentiae tempora marito tradita, in unius anni spatio ejus est morte viduata. Quam dum, fervente mundi copia, ad iterandum thalamum et opes et aetas vocarent, elegit magis spiritalibus nuptiis copulari Deo, in quibus a luctu incipitur, sed ad gaudia aeterna pervenitur, quam carnalibus nuptiis subjici, quae a laetitia semper incipiunt, et ad finem cum luctu tendunt. Huic autem cum valde ignea conspersio corporis inesset, coeperunt medici dicere, quia nisi ad amplexus viriles rediret, calore nimio contra naturam barbas esset habitura, quod ita quoque post factum est. Sed sancta mulier nihil exterioris deformitatis timuit, quae interioris sponsi speciem amavit,

nec verita est si hoc in illa foedaretur, quod a coelesti sponso in ea non amaretur. Mox ergo ut ejus maritus defunctus est, abjecto saeculari habitu, ad omnipotentis Dei servitium sese apud beati Petri apostoli ecclesiam monasterio tradidit, ibique multis annis simplicitati cordis atque orationi dedita, larga indigentibus eleemosynarum opera impendit. Cumque omnipotens Deus perennem jam mercedem reddere ejus laboribus decrevisset, cancri ulcere in mamilla percussa est. Nocturno autem tempore ante lectum ejus duo candelabra lucere consueverant, quia videlicet amica lucis, non solum spiritales, sed etiam corporales tenebras odio habebat. Quae dum nocte quadam ex hac eadem jaceret infirmitate fatigata, vidit beatum Petrum apostolum inter utraque candelabra ante suum lectum consistentem; nec perterrita timuit, sed ex amore sumens audaciam exsultavit, eique dixit: Quid est, Domine mi, dimissa sunt mihi peccata mea? Cui ille benignissimi ut est vultus, inclinato capite annuit, dicens: Dimissa; veni. Sed quia quamdam sanctimonialem feminam in eodem monasterio prae caeteris diligebat, illico Galla subjunxit: Rogo ut soror Benedicta mecum veniat. Cui ille respondit: Non, sed illa talis veniat tecum; haec vero quam petis, die erit trigesimo secutura. His itaque expletis, visio apostoli assistentis et colloquentis ei ablata est. At illa protinus cunctae congregationis accivit Matrem, eique quid viderit, quidve audierit, indicavit. Tertio autem die cum ea quae jussa fuerat sorore defuncta est; illa vero quam ipsa poposcerat die est trigesimo subsecuta. Quod factum nunc usque in eodem monasterio manet memorabile, sicque hoc a praecedentibus Matribus traditum narrare illic solent subtiliter juniores quae nunc sunt sanctimoniales virgines, ac si illo in tempore huic tam grandi miraculo et ipsae adfuissent.

CAPUT XIV. De transitu Servuli paralytici.

Sed inter haec sciendum est quia saepe animabus exeuntibus electorum, dulcedo solet laudis coelestis erumpere, ut dum illam libenter audiunt, dissolutionem carnis ab anima sentire minime permittantur. Unde in Homiliis quoque Evangelii jam narrasse me memini quod in ea porticu quae euntibus ad ecclesiam beati Clementis est pervia, fuit quidam, Servulus nomine, cujus te quoque non ambigo meminisse, qui quidem pauper rebus, sed meritis dives erat, quem longa aegritudo dissolverat. Nam ex quo illum scire potuimus, usque ad finem vitae paralyticus jacebat. Quid dicam quia stare non poterat, qui nunquam in lecto surgere vel ad sedendum valebat, nunquam manum suam ad os ducere, nunquam se potuit ad latus aliud declinare? Huic ad serviendum mater cum fratre aderat, et quidquid ex eleemosyna potuisset accipere, hoc eorum manibus pauperibus erogabat. Nequaquam litteras noverat, sed Scripturae sacrae sibimet Codices emerat, et religiosos quosque in hospitalitatem suscipiens, hos coram se studiose legere faciebat. Factumque est ut juxta modum suum plene sacram Scripturam disceret, cum, sicut dixi, litteras funditus ignoraret. Studebat semper in dolore gratias agere, hymnis Deo et laudibus diebus ac noctibus vacare. Sed cum jam tempus esset ut tanta ejus patientia remunerari debuisset, membrorum dolor ad vitalia rediit. Cumque jam se morti proximum agnovisset, peregrinos viros, atque in hospitalitatem susceptos, admonuit ut surgerent, et cum eo psalmos pro exspectatione sui exitus decantarent. Cumque cum eis et ipse moriens psalleret, voces psallentium repente compescuit cum terrore magni clamoris, dicens: Tacete; nunquid non auditis quantae resonent laudes in coelo? Et dum ad easdem laudes quas intus audierat, aurem cordis intenderet, sancta illa anima carne soluta est. Qua scilicet exeunte, tanta illic fragrantia odoris aspersa est, ut omnes qui illic aderant inaestimabili suavitate replerentur, ita ut per hoc patenter cognoscerent quod eam laudes in coelo suscepissent. Cui rei monachus noster interfuit, qui nunc usque vivit, et cum magno fletu attestari solet,

quia quousque corpus ejus sepulturae traderent, ab eorum naribus odoris illius fragrantia non recessit.

CAPUT XV. De transitu Romulae ancillae Dei.

In eisdem quoque Homiliis rem narrasse me recolo, quam Speciosus compresbyter meus, qui hanc noverat, me narrante attestatus est. Eo namque tempore quo monasterium petii, anus quaedam Redempta nomine, in sanctimoniali habitu constituta in urbe hac juxta beatae Mariae semper virginis ecclesiam manebat. Haec illius Herundinis discipula fuerat, quae magnis virtutibus pollens, super Praenestinos montes vitam eremiticam duxisse ferebatur. Huic autem Redemptae duae in eodem habitu discipulae aderant, una nomine Romula, et altera, quae nunc adhuc superest, quam quidem facie scio, sed nomine nescio. Tres itaque hae in uno habitaculo commanentes, morum quidem divitiis plenam, sed tamen rebus pauperem vitam ducebant. Haec autem quam praefatus sum Romula aliam quam praedixi condiscipulam suam magnis vitae meritis anteibat. Erat quippe mirae patientiae, summae obedientiae, custos oris sui ad silentium, studiosa valde ad continuae orationis usum. Sed quia plerumque hi, quos jam homines perfectos aestimant, adhuc in oculis summi opificis aliquid imperfectionis habent, sicut saepe imperiti homines necdum perfecte sculpta sigilla conspicimus, et jam quasi perfecta laudamus, quae tamen adhuc artifex considerat et limat, laudari jam audit, et tamen ea tundere meliorando non desinit; haec quam praediximus Romula ea quam Graeco vocabulo medici paralysin vocant molestia corporali percussa est, multisque annis in lectulo decubans, pene omni jacebat membrorum officio destituta, nec tamen haec eadem ejus mentem ad impatientiam flagella perduxerant. Nam ipsa ei detrimenta membrorum facta fuerant incrementa virtutum, quia tanto sollicitius ad usum orationis excreverat, quanto et aliud quodlibet agere nequaquam valebat. Nocte igitur quadam eamdem Redemptam quam

praefatus sum, quae utrasque discipulas suas filiarum loco nutriebat, vocavit, dicens: Mater, veni, mater, veni. Quae mox cum alia ejus condiscipula surrexit, sicut utrisque referentibus et multis eadem res claruit, et ego quoque eodem tempore agnovi. Cumque noctis medio lectulo jacentis assisterent, subito coelitus lux emissa omne illius cellulae spatium implevit, et splendor tantae claritatis emicuit, ut corda assistentium inaestimabili pavore perstringeret, atque, ut post ipsae referebant, omne in eis corpus obrigesceret, et in subito stupore remanerent. Coepit namque quasi cujusdam magnae multitudinis ingredientis sonitus audiri, ostiumque cellulae concuti, ac si ingredientium turba premeretur; atque, ut dicebant, intrantium multitudinem sentiebant, sed nimietate timoris et luminis videre non poterant, quia earum oculos et pavor depresserat, et ipsa tanti luminis claritas reverberabat. Quam lucem protinus est miri odoris fragrantia subsecuta, ita ut earum animum quem lux emissa terruerat odoris suavitas refoveret. Sed cum vim claritatis illius ferre non possent, coepit eadem Romula assistentem et trementem Redemptam suorum morum magistram blanda voce consolari, dicens: Noli timere, mater, non morior modo. Cumque hoc crebro diceret, paulatim lux quae fuerat emissa subtracta est, sed is qui subsecutus est odor remansit. Sicque dies secundus et tertius transiit, ut aspersa odoris fragrantia remaneret. Nocte igitur quarta eamdem magistram suam iterum vocavit; qua veniente, viaticum petiit, et accepit. Necdum vero eadem Redempta, vel illa alia ejus discipula a lectulo jacentis abscesserant, et ecce subito in platea ante ejusdem cellulae ostium duo chori psallentium constiterunt, et sicut se dicebant sexus ex vocibus discrevisse, psalmodiae cantus dicebant viri, et feminae respondebant. Cumque ante fores cellulae exhiberentur coelestes exsequiae, sancta illa anima carne soluta est. Qua ad coelum ducta, quanto chori psallentium altius ascendebant, tanto coepit psalmodia lenius audiri, quousque et ejusdem psalmodiae sonitus, et odoris suavitas elongata finiretur.

CAPUT XVI. De transitu Tharsillae sacrae virginis.

Nonnunquam vero in consolatione egredientis animae ipse apparere solet auctor ac retributor vitae. Unde et hoc quod de Tharsilla amita mea in Homiliis Evangelii dixisse me recolo replicabo; quae inter duas alias sorores suas virtute continuae orationis, gravitate vitae, singularitate abstinentiae, ad culmen sanctitatis excreverat. Huic per visionem Felix atavus meus hujus Romanae Ecclesiae antistes apparuit, eique mansionem perpetuae claritatis ostendit, dicens: Veni, quia in hac te lucis mansione suscipio. Quae subsequenti mox febre correpta, ad diem pervenit extremum. Et sicut nobilibus feminis virisque morientibus, multi conveniunt qui eorum proximos consolentur, eadem hora exitus ipsius multi viri ac feminae ejus lectulum circumsteterunt. Cum subito illa sursum respiciens, Jesum venientem vidit, et cum magna animadversione coepit circumstantibus clamare, dicens: Recedite, recedite, Jesus venit. Cumque in eum intenderet quem videbat, sancta illa anima e corpore est egressa. Tantaque subito fragrantia miri odoris aspersa est, ut ipsa quoque suavitas cunctis ostenderet illic auctorem suavitatis venisse. Cumque corpus ejus ex more mortuorum ad lavandum esset nudatum, longo orationis usu in cubitis ejus et genibus camelorum more inventa est obdurata cutis excrevisse; et quid vivens ejus spiritus semper egerit, caro mortua testabatur.

CAPUT XVII. De transitu Musae puellae.

Sed neque hoc sileo quod praedictus Probus Dei famulus de sorore sua, nomine Musa, puella parva, narrare consuevit, dicens, quod quadam nocte ei per visionem sancta Dei genitrix semper virgo Maria apparuit, atque coaevas ei in albis vestibus puellas ostendit. Quibus illa cum admisceri appeteret, sed se eis jungere non auderet, beatae Mariae virginis voce requisita est an velit cum eis esse atque in ejus obsequio vivere. Cui cum

puella eadem diceret, Volo, ab ea protinus mandatum accepit, ut nihil ultra leve et puellare ageret, et a risu et jocis abstineret, sciens per omnia quod inter easdem virgines quas viderat, ad ejus obsequium die trigesimo veniret. Quibus visis, in cunctis suis moribus puella mutata est, omnemque a se levitatem puellaris vitae magnae gravitatis detersit manu. Cumque eam parentes ejus mutatam esse mirarentur, requisita rem retulit, quid sibi Dei Genitrix jusserit, vel qua die itura esset ad obsequium ejus indicavit. Tunc post vigesimum quintum diem febre correpta est. Die autem trigesimo cum hora ejus exitus propinquasset, eamdem beatam Genitricem Dei cum puellis quas per visionem viderat, ad se venire conspexit. Cui se etiam vocanti respondere coepit, et depressis reverenter oculis aperta voce clamare: Ecce, Domina, venio, ecce, Domina, venio. In qua etiam voce spiritum reddidit, et ex virgineo corpore, habitatura cum sanctis virginibus exivit. PETRUS: Cum humanum genus multis atque innumeris vitiis sit subjectum, Jerusalem coelestis maximam partem ex parvulis vel infantibus arbitror posse compleri.

CAPUT XVIII. Quod quibusdam parvulis regni coelestis aditus a parentibus clauditur, cum ab eis male nutriuntur; et de puero blasphemo.

GREGORIUS: Etsi omnes baptizatos infantes, atque in eadem infantia morientes ingredi regnum coeleste credendum est, omnes tamen parvulos qui scilicet jam loqui possunt, regna coelestia ingredi credendum non est, quia nonnullis parvulis ejusdem regni coelestis aditus a parentibus clauditur, si male nutriantur. Nam quidam vir cunctis in hac urbe notissimus, ante triennium filium habuit annorum, sicut arbitror, quinque; quem nimis carnaliter diligens remisse nutriebat. Atque idem parvulus (quod dictu grave est) mox ut ejus animo aliquid obstitisset, majestatem Dei blasphemare consueverat: qui in hac urbe ante triennium mortalitate percussus, venit ad

mortem. Cumque eum suus pater in sinu teneret, sicut hi testati sunt qui praesentes fuerunt, malignos ad se venisse spiritus trementibus oculis puer aspiciens, coepit clamare: Obsta, pater, obsta, pater. Qui clamans declinabat faciem, ut se ab eis in sinu patris absconderet. Quem cum ille trementem requireret quid videret, puer adjunxit, dicens: Mauri homines venerunt, qui me tollere volunt. Qui cum hoc dixisset, majestatis nomen protinus blasphemavit, et animam reddidit. Ut enim omnipotens Deus ostenderet pro quo reatu talibus fuisset traditus exsecutoribus, unde viventem pater suus noluit corrigere, hoc morientem permisit iterare; ut qui diu per Divinitatis patientiam blasphemus vixerat, quandoque per Divinitatis judicium blasphemaret, et moreretur; quatenus reatum suum pater ejus agnosceret, qui parvuli filii animam negligens, non parvulum peccatorem gehennae ignibus nutrisset. Sed interim hoc triste seponentes, ad ea quae narrare coeperamus laeta redeamus.

CAPUT XIX. De Transitu Stephani viri Dei.

Praedicto etenim Probo aliisque religiosis narrantibus viris agnovi ea quae indicare audientibus de venerabili Patre Stephano in Homiliis Evangelii curavi. Fuit enim vir, sicut idem Probus et multi alii testantur, nihil in hoc mundo possidens, nihil requirens; solam cum Deo paupertatem diligens, inter adversa semper patientiam amplectens, conventus saecularium fugiens, vacare semper orationi concupiscens. De quo unum bonum virtutis refero, ut ex hoc uno valeant ejus multa pensari. Is namque cum quadam die messem quam sua manu severat decisam ad aream deduxisset, nihilque aliud cum discipulis suis ad totius anni stipendium haberet, quidam perversae voluntatis vir, antiqui hostis stimulis instigatus, eamdem messem, igne supposito, ita ut erat in area, incendit. Quod factum dum alter conspiceret, eidem Dei famulo cucurrit et nuntiavit. Quod postquam indicavit, adjunxit, dicens: Vae, vae, pater Stephane, quid tibi contigit? Cui

statim vultu ac mente placida ille respondit: Vae illi contigit qui hoc fecit; nam mihi quid contigit? In quibus ejus verbis ostenditur in quo virtutis culmine sedebat, qui unum quod in sumptus mundi habuerat tam secura perdebat mente, magisque illi condolebat qui peccatum commiserat, quam sibi qui peccati illius damna tolerabat; nec pensabat quid ipse exterius, sed culpae reus quantum perdebat intus. Hunc itaque cum dies mortis egredi de corpore urgeret, convenerunt multi, ut tam sanctae animae de hoc mundo recedenti suas animas commendarent. Cumque lecto illius hi qui convenerant omnes assisterent, alii ingredientes angelos viderunt, sed dicere aliquid nullo modo potuerunt, alii omnino nil viderunt; sed omnes qui aderant, ita vehementissimus timor perculit, ut nullus, egrediente illa sancta anima, illic stare potuisset. Et hi ergo qui viderant, et hi qui omnino nihil viderant, uno omnes timore perculsi et territi fugerunt, ut palam daretur intelligi quae et quanta vis esset quae illam egredientem animam susciperet, cujus egressum nemo mortalium ferre potuisset.

CAPUT XX. Quod aliquando animae meritum non in ipso egressu, sed post mortem verius declaratur.

Sed inter haec sciendum est quia aliquando animae meritum non in ipso suo egressu ostenditur, post mortem vero certius declaratur. Unde et sancti martyres ab infidelibus crudelia multa perpessi sunt, qui tamen, ut praediximus, ad ossa sua mortua signis quotidie et miraculis clarescunt.

CAPUT XXI. De duobus monachis Valentionis abbatis.

Vitae namque venerabilis Valentio, qui post in hac Romana urbe mihi, sicut nosti, meoque monasterio praefuit, prius in Valeriae provincia suum monasterium rexit. In quo dum Langobardi saevientes venissent, sicut ejus narratione didici, duos ejus monachos in ramis unius arboris suspenderunt, qui suspensi eodem die defuncti sunt. Facto autem vespere utrorumque

eorum spiritus claris illic apertisque vocibus psallere coeperunt, ita ut ipsi quoque qui eos occiderant, cum voces psallentium audirent, nimium mirati terrerentur. Quas videlicet voces captivi quoque omnes qui illic aderant audierunt, atque eorum psalmodiae postmodum testes exstiterunt. Sed has voces spirituum omnipotens Deus idcirco pertingere voluit ad aures corporum, ut viventes quique in carne discerent, quia si Deo servire studeant, post carnis mortem verius vivant.

CAPUT XXII. De transitu Surani abbatis.

Quibusdam religiosis quoque viris attestantibus, adhuc in monasterio positus agnovi quod hoc Langobardorum tempore, juxta in hac provincia quae Sura nominatur, quidam monasterii Pater vitae venerabilis, Suranus nomine, fuerit, qui captivis advenientibus, atque a Langobardorum depraedatione fugientibus, cuncta quae in monasterio videbatur habere, largitus est. Cumque in eleemosynis vestimenta sua ac fratrum omnia, et cellarium consumpsisset, quidquid habere in horto potuit, expendit. Expensis vero rebus omnibus, Langobardi ad eum subito venerunt, eumque tenuerunt, et aurum petere coeperunt. Quibus cum ille diceret se omnino nihil habere, in vicino monte ab eis ductus est, in quo silva immensae magnitudinis stabat. Ibi captivus quidam fugiens in cava arbore latebat, ubi unus ex Langobardis educto gladio praedictum venerabilem occidit virum. Cujus corpore in terram cadente, mons omnis protinus et silva concussa est, ac si se ferre non posse pondus sanctitatis ejus diceret terra, quae tremuisset.

CAPUT XXIII. De transitu diaconi Ecclesiae Marsorum.

Alius quoque in Marsorum provincia vitae valde venerabilis diaconus fuit; quem inventum Langobardi tenuerunt, quorum unus educto gladio caput ejus amputavit. Sed cum corpus ejus in terram caderet, ipse qui hunc capite truncaverat, immundo spiritu correptus, ad pedes corruit, et quod amicum

Dei occiderit, inimico Dei traditus ostendit. PETRUS: Quid est hoc, quaeso te, quod omnipotens Deus sic permittit mori, quos tamen post mortem cujus sanctitatis fuerint, non patitur celari?

CAPUT XXIV. De morte viri Dei, qui missus Bethel fuerat.

GREGORIUS: Cum scriptum sit: Justus quacunque morte praeventus fuerit, justitia ejus non auferetur ab eo, electi, qui procul dubio ad perpetuam vitam tendunt, quid eis obest si ad modicum dure moriuntur? Et est fortasse nonnunquam eorum culpa, licet minima, quae in eadem debeat morte resecari. Unde fit ut reprobi potestatem quidem contra viventes accipiant, sed illis morientibus hoc in eis gravius vindicetur, quod contra bonos potestatem suae crudelitatis acceperunt, sicut idem carnifex qui eumdem venerabilem diaconum viventem ferire permissus est, gaudere super mortuum permissus non est. Quod sacra quoque testantur eloquia. Nam vir Dei contra Samariam missus, quia per inobedientiam in itinere comedit, hunc leo in eodem itinere occidit. Sed statim illic scriptum est: Quia stetit leo juxta asinum, et non comedit de cadavere. Ex qua re ostenditur quod peccatum inobedientiae in ipsa fuerit morte laxatum, quia idem leo, quem viventem praesumpsit occidere, contingere non praesumpsit occisum. Qui enim occidendi ausum habuit, de occisi cadavere comedendi licentiam non accepit, quia is qui culpabilis in vita fuerat, punita inobedientia, erat jam justus ex morte. Leo ergo qui prius peccatoris vitam necaverat, custodivit postmodum cadaver justi. PETRUS: Placet quod dicis; sed nosse velim si nunc ante restitutionem corporum in coelo recipi valeant animae justorum.

CAPUT XXV. Si ante restitutionem corporis recipiantur in coelo animae justorum.

GREGORIUS: Hoc neque de omnibus justis fateri possumus, neque de omnibus negare. Nam sunt quorumdam justorum animae quae a coelesti

regno quibusdam adhuc mansionibus differuntur. In quo dilationis damno quid aliud innuitur, nisi quod de perfecta justitia aliquid minus habuerunt? Et tamen luce clarius constat quia perfectorum justorum animae, mox ut hujus carnis claustra exeunt, in coelestibus sedibus recipiuntur, quod et ipsa per se Veritas attestatur, dicens: Ubicunque fuerit corpus, illuc congregabuntur et aquilae; quia ubi ipse Redemptor noster est corpore, illuc procul dubio colliguntur justorum animae. Et Paulus dissolvi desiderat, et esse cum Christo. Qui ergo Christum in coelo esse non dubitat, nec Pauli animam esse in coelo negant. Qui etiam de dissolutione sui corporis, atque de inhabitatione coelestis patriae, dicit: Scimus quoniam si terrestris domus nostra hujus habitationis dissolvatur, quod aedificationem habemus ex Deo, domum non manufactam, sed aeternam in caelis. PETRUS: Si igitur nunc sunt in coelo animae justorum, quid est quod in die judicii pro justitiae suae retributione recipiant? GREGORIUS: Hoc eis nimirum crescit in judicio, quod nunc animarum sola, postmodum vero etiam corporum beatitudine perfruuntur, ut in ipsa quoque carne gaudeant, in qua dolores pro Domino cruciatusque pertulerunt. Pro hac quippe germinata eorum gloria scriptum est: In terra sua duplicia possidebunt. Hinc etiam ante resurrectionis diem de sanctorum animabus scriptum est: Datae sunt illis singulae stolae albae, et dictum est illis ut requiescerent tempus adhuc modicum, donec impleatur numerus conservorum et fratrum eorum. Qui itaque nunc singulas acceperunt, binas in judicio stolas habituri sunt, quia modo animarum tantummodo, tunc autem animarum simul et corporum gloria laetabuntur. PETRUS: Assentio; sed velim scire, quonammodo agitur quod plerumque morientes multa praedicunt?

CAPUT XXVI. Quibus modis morientes aliqua praedicunt; et de quodam advocato, de Gerontio ac Mellito monachis, et Armentario puero.

GREGORIUS: Ipsa aliquando animarum vis subtilitate sua aliquid praevidet. Aliquando autem exiturae de corpore animae, per revelationem ventura cognoscunt. Aliquando vero dum jam juxta sit ut corpus deserant, divinitus afflatae in secreta coelestia incorporeum mentis oculum mittunt. Nam quod vis animae aliquando subtilitate sua ea quae sunt ventura cognoscit patet ex eo quod quidam advocatus qui in hac urbe ante biduum lateris dolore defunctus est, paululum antequam moreretur, vocavit puerum suum, pararique sibi vestimenta ad procedendum jussit. Quem dum puer quasi insanire cerneret, ejusque praeceptis minime obediret, surrexit, vestimento se induit, et per viam Appiam ad beati Xysti Ecclesiam se esse processurum dixit. Cumque post modicum, ingravescente molestia, esset defunctus, deliberatum fuerat ut apud beatum Januarium martyrem Praenestina via ejus corpus poni debuisset. Sed quia longum hoc his qui funus ejus curaverant visum est, repente orto consilio exeuntes cum ejus funere per viam Appiam, nescientesque quid ille dixerat, in ipsa eum ecclesia quam praedixerat posuerunt. Et cum eumdem virum curis saecularibus obligatum lucrisque terrenis inhiantem fuisse noverimus, unde hoc praedicere potuit, nisi quia id quod futurum erat ejus corpori ipsa vis animae ac subtilitas praevidebat? Quod autem saepe etiam revelationibus agitur ut a morituris futura praesciantur, ex his colligere possumus quae apud nos gesta in monasteriis scimus. In monasterio etenim meo quidam frater ante decennium Gerontius dicebatur. Qui cum gravi molestia corporis fuisset depressus, in visione nocturna albatos viros, et clari omnimodo habitus in hoc ipsum monasterium descendere de superioribus aspexit. Qui dum coram lecto jacentis assisterent, unus eorum dixit: Ad hoc venimus, ut de monasterio Gregorii quosdam fratres in militiam mittamus; atque alteri praecipiens adjunxit: Scribe Marcellum, Valentinianum, Agnellum, atque alios quorum nunc minime recordor. Quibus expletis addidit, dicens: Scribe et hunc ipsum qui nos aspicit. Ex qua visione certus redditus praedictus

frater, facto mane innotuit fratribus, qui et qui essent in brevi ex eadem cella morituri, quos se etiam denuntiavit esse secuturum, cum die alio praedicti fratres mori coeperunt, atque sub eodem ordine se in morte secuti sunt quo fuerant in descriptione nominati. Ad extremum vero et ipse obiit, qui eosdem fratres morituros praevidit. In ea quoque mortalitate quae ante triennium hanc urbem vehementissima clade vastavit, in Portuensis civitatis monasterio, Mellitus dictus est monachus, adhuc in annis juvenilibus constitutus, sed mirae simplicitatis atque humilitatis vir: qui, appropinquante vocationis die, eadem clade percussus ad extrema deductus est. Quod vir vitae venerabilis Felix ejusdem civitatis episcopus audiens, cujus et haec relatione cognovi, ad eum accedere studuit, et ne mortem timere debuisset, verbis hunc persuasoriis confortare, cui etiam adhuc de divina misericordia longiora vitae spatia polliceri coepit. Sed ad haec ille respondit, cursus sui tempora esse completa, dicens apparuisse sibi juvenem, atque epistolas detulisse, dicentem: Aperi, et lege. Quibus apertis, asseruit quia se et omnes qui eodem tempore a praedicto episcopo in Paschali festivitate fuerant baptizati scriptos in eisdem epistolis litteris aureis invenisset. Primum quidem, ut dicebat, suum nomen reperit, ac inde omnium illo in tempore baptizatorum. Qua de re certum tenuit, et se et illos de hac vita esse sub celeritate migraturos. Factumque est ut die eadem ipse moreretur, atque post eum cuncti illi qui baptizati fuerant ita secuti sunt, ut intra paucos dies nullus eorum in hac vita remaneret. De quibus nimirum constat quod eos praedictus Dei famulus idcirco auro scriptos viderat, quia eorum nomina apud se fixa aeterna claritas habebat. Sicut itaque hi revelationibus potuerunt ventura cognoscere, ita nonnunquam egressurae animae possunt etiam mysteria coelestia non per somnium, sed vigilando praelibare. Ammonium namque monasterii mei monachum bene nosti, qui dum esset in saeculari habitu constitutus, Valeriani hujus urbis advocati naturalem filiam in conjugio sortitus, ejus obsequiis sedule atque

incessanter adhaerebat, et quaeque in ejusdem domo agebantur noverat. Qui mihi jam in monasterio positus narravit quod in ea mortalitate quae patricii Narsae temporibus hanc urbem vehementer afflixit, in domo praedicti Valeriani puer Armentarius fuit praecipuae simplicitatis et humilitatis. Cum vero ejusdem advocati domus eadem clade vastaretur, idem puer percussus est, et usque ad extremum deductus. Qui subito sublatus a praesentibus, postmodum rediit, sibique dominum suum vocari fecit. Cui ait: Ego in coelo fui, et qui de hac domo morituri sunt agnovi. Ille, ille, atque ille morituri sunt; tu vero ne timeas, quia in hoc tempore moriturus non es. Ut vero scias quod me in coelo fuisse verum fateor, ecce accepi illic ut linguis omnibus loquar. Nunquid tibi incognitum fuit Graecam me linguam omnino non nosse? et tamen Graece loquere ut cognoscas an verum sit quod me omnes linguas accepisse testificor. Cui tunc Graece dominus suus locutus est, atque ita ille in eadem lingua respondit, ut cuncti qui aderant, mirarentur. In ea quoque domo praedicti Narsae spatharius Bulgar manebat: qui festine ad aegrum deductus, ei Bulgarica lingua locutus est; sed ita puer ille in Italia natus et nutritus, in eadem barbara locutione respondit ac si ex eadem fuisset gente generatus. Mirati sunt omnes qui audiebant, atque ex duarum linguarum experimento quas eum antea nescisse noverant, crediderunt de omnibus quas probare minime valebant. Tunc per biduum mors ejus dilata est, sed die tertio, quo occulto judicio nescitur, manus ac brachia lacertosque suos dentibus labiavit, atque ita de corpore exivit. Quo mortuo, omnes illi quos praedixerat ex hac protinus luce subtracti sunt, nullusque in illa domo eadem tempestate defunctus est qui voce illius denuntiatus non est. PETRUS: Valde terribile est, ut qui tale donum percipere meruit, tali etiam post hoc poena plecteretur. GREGORIUS: Quis occulta Dei judicia sciat? Ea quae in divino examine comprehendere non possumus, timere magis quam discutere debemus.

CAPUT XXVII. De morte Theophanii comitis.

Ut autem de egredientibus animabus, quae multa praenoscunt, ea quae coepimus exsequamur, neque hoc silendum est quod de Theophanio, Centumcellensis urbis comite, in eadem urbe positus, multis attestantibus agnovi. Fuit namque vir misericordiae actibus deditus, bonis operibus intentus, hospitalitati praecipue studens. Exercendis quidem comitatus curis occupatus, agebat terrena et temporalia, sed, ut post in fine claruit, magis ex debito quam ex intentione. Nam dum appropinquante mortis ejus tempore gravissima aeris tempestas obsisteret, ne ad sepeliendum duci potuisset, eumque uxor sua cum fletu vehementissimo inquireret, dicens: Quid faciam? quomodo te ad sepeliendum ejicio, quae ostium domus hujus egredi prae nimia tempestate non possum? tunc ille respondit: Noli, mulier, flere, quia mox ut ego defunctus fuero, eadem hora aeris serenitas redibit. Cujus protinus vocem mors, et mortem serenitas secuta est. Quod signum etiam alia signa sunt comitata. Nam manus ejus et pedes podagrae humore tumescentes versi in vulneribus fuerant, et profluente sanie patebant. Sed dum corpus ejus ex more ad lavandum fuisset nudatum, ita manus pedesque ejus sani inventi sunt ac si nunquam vulneris aliquid habuissent. Ductus itaque ac sepultus est, ejusque conjugi visum est ut quarto die in sepulcro illius marmor quod superpositum fuerat mutari debuisset. Quod videlicet marmor corpori ejus superpositum dum fuisset ablatum, tanta ex corpore ipsius fragrantia odoris emanavit, ac si ex putrescente carne illius pro vermibus aromata ferbuissent. Quod factum dum, narrante me in homiliis, infirmis quibusdam venisset in dubium, die quadam, sedente me in conventu nobilium, ipsi artifices qui in sepulcro illius marmor mutaverant adfuerunt, aliquid me de propria causa rogaturi. Quos ego de eodem miraculo coram clero, nobilibus ac plebe requisivi, qui et eadem odoris fragrantia miro modo se repletos fuisse testati sunt, et quaedam alia in augmento miraculi, quae nunc narrare longum aestimo, de eodem sepulcro ejus addiderunt. PETRUS: Inquisitioni meae sufficienter jam video

satisfactum, sed hoc est adhuc quod quaestione animum pulsat: quia cum superius dictum sit esse jam sanctorum animas in coelo, restat procul dubio ut iniquorum quoque animae esse non nisi in inferno credantur. Et quid hac de re veritas habeat ignoro. Nam humana aestimatio non habet peccatorum animas ante judicium posse cruciari.

CAPUT XXVIII. Quod sicut perfectorum animae in coelo, ita post dissolutionem corporis iniquorum animae in inferno esse credendae sunt.

GREGORIUS: Si esse sanctorum animas in coelo sacri eloquii satisfactione credidisti, oportet ut per omnia esse credas et iniquorum animas in inferno, quia ex retributione aeternae justitiae, ex qua justi jam gloriantur, necesse est per omnia ut et injusti crucientur. Nam sicut electos beatitudo laetificat, ita credi necesse est quod a die exitus sui ignis reprobos exurat. PETRUS: Et qua ratione credendum est quia rem incorpoream tenere ignis corporeus possit?

CAPUT XXIX. Qua ratione credendum sit ut incorporeos spiritus tenere ignis corporeus possit.

GREGORIUS: Si viventis hominis incorporeus spiritus tenetur in corpore, cur non post mortem, cum incorporeus sit spiritus, etiam corporeo igne teneatur? PETRUS: In vivente quolibet idcirco incorporeus spiritus tenetur in corpore, quia vivificat corpus. GREGORIUS: Si incorporeus spiritus, Petre, in hoc teneri potest quod vivificat, quare non poenaliter et ibi teneatur ubi mortificatur? Teneri autem spiritum per ignem dicimus, ut in tormento ignis sit videndo atque sentiendo. Ignem namque eo ipso patitur, quo videt; et quia concremari se aspicit, concrematur. Sicque fit ut res corporea incorpoream exurat, dum ex igne visibili ardor ac dolor invisibilis trahitur, ut per ignem corporeum mens incorporea etiam incorporea flamma

crucietur. Quamvis colligere ex dictis evangelicis possumus quia incendium anima non solum videndo, sed etiam experiendo patiatur. Veritatis etenim voce dives mortuus in inferno dicitur sepultus. Cujus anima quia in igne teneatur insinuat vox ejusdem divitis qui S. Abraham deprecatur, dicens: Mitte Lazarum ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aquam, et refrigeret linguam meam, quia crucior in hac flamma . Dum ergo peccatorem divitem damnatum Veritas in ignem perhibet, quisnam sapiens reproborum animas teneri ignibus neget? PETRUS: Ecce ratione ac testimonio ad credulitatem flectitur animus, sed dimissus iterum ad rigorem redit. Quomodo enim res incorporea a re corporea teneri atque affligi possit ignoro. GREGORIUS: Dic, quaeso te, apostatas spiritus a coelesti gloria dejectos, esse corporeos, an incorporeos suspicaris? PETRUS: Quis sanum sapiens ess spiritus corporeos dixerit? GREGORIUS: Gehennae ignem esse incorporeum, an corporeum fateris? PETRUS: Ignem gehennae corporeum esse non ambigo, in quo certum est corpora cruciari. GREGORIUS: Certe reprobis Veritas in fine dictura est: Ite in ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus. Si igitur diabolus ejusque angeli, cum sint incorporei, corporeo sunt igne cruciandi, quid mirum si animae et antequam recipiant corpora, possint corporea sentire tormenta? PETRUS: Patet ratio, nec debet animus de hac ulterius quaestione dubitare.

CAPUT XXX. De morte Theodorici regis Ariani.

GREGORIUS: Postquam laboriose credidisti, operae pretium credo, si ea quae mihi a viris fidelibus sunt digesta narravero. Julianus namque hujus Romanae Ecclesiae, cui Deo auctore deservio, secundus defensor, qui ante septem ferme annos defunctus est, ad me adhuc in monasterio positum crebro veniebat, et mecum colloqui de animae utilitate consueverat. Hic itaque mihi quadam die narravit, dicens: Theodorici regis temporibus pater soceri mei in Sicilia exactionem canonis egerat, atque jam ad Italiam

redibat. Cujus navis appulsa est ad insulam quae Liparis appellatur. Et quia illic vir quidam solitarius magnae virtutis habitabat, dum nautae navis armamenta repararent, visum est praedicto patri soceri mei ad eumdem virum Dei pergere, seque ejus orationibus commendare. Quos vir Domini cum vidisset, eis inter alia colloquens, dixit: Scitis quia rex Theodoricus mortuus est? Cui illi protinus responderunt: Absit, nos eum viventem dimisimus, et nihil tale ad nos de eo nuncusque perlatum est. Quibus Dei famulus addidit, dicens: Etiam mortuus est: nam hesterno die hora nona inter Joannem papam et Symmachum patricium discinctus atque discalceatus et vinctis manibus deductus, in hanc vicinam Vulcani ollam jactatus est. Quod illi audientes, sollicite conscripserunt diem, atque in Italiam reversi, eo die Theodoricum regem invenerunt fuisse mortuum quo ejus exitus atque supplicium Dei famulo fuerat ostensum. Et quia Joannem papam affligendo in custodia occidit, Symmachum quoque patricium ferro trucidavit, ab illis juste in ignem missus apparuit, quos in hac vita injuste judicavit.

CAPUT XXXI. De morte Reparati.

Eo quoque tempore quo primum remotae vitae desideriis anhelabam, quidam honestus senex, Deusdedit nomine, valde hujus urbis nobilibus amicus, mihi quoque in amicitiis sedule jungebatur, qui mihi narrabat, dicens: Gothorum tempore quidam spectabilis vir, Reparatus nomine, venit ad mortem. Qui dum diu jam mutus ac rigidus jaceret, visum est quod ab eo funditus flatus vitalis exisset, atque exanime remansisset corpus. Cumque et multi qui convenerant, et eum jam mortuum familia lugeret, subito rediit, et cunctorum plangentium in stuporem versae sunt lacrymae. Qui reversus ait: Citius ad Ecclesiam beati Laurentii martyris, quae ex nomine conditoris Damasi vocatur, puerum mittite, et quid de Tiburtio presbytero agatur videat et renuntiare festinet. Qui videlicet tunc Tiburtius carnalibus desideriis

subjacere ferebatur: cujus adhuc vitae morumque bene quoque Florentius ejus nunc Ecclesiae presbyter meminit. Cum vero puer pergeret, narravit idem Reparatus, qui ad se reversus fuerat, quid de illo ubi ductus fuerat agnovit, dicens: Paratus fuerat rogus ingens, deductus autem Tiburtius presbyter in eo est superpositus, atque supposito igne concrematus. Alius autem parabatur rogus, cujus a terra in coelum cacumen tendi videbatur. Cui emissa voce clamatum est cujus esset. His igitur dictis statim Reparatus defunctus est: puer vero qui transmissus fuerat ad Tiburtium, jam eum mortuum invenit. Qui videlicet Reparatus ductus ad loca poenarum, dum vidit, rediit, narravit, et obiit, aperte monstratur quia nobis illa, non sibi viderit, quibus dum adhuc concessum est vivere, licet etiam a malis operibus emendare. Rogum vero construi Reparatus vidit, non quod apud infernum ligna ardeant ut ignis fiat; sed narraturus haec viventibus, illa de incendio pravorum vidit, ex quibus nutriri apud viventes corporeus ignis solet, ut per haec assueta audientes discerent quid de insuetis timere debuissent.

CAPUT XXXII. De morte Curialis, cujus sepultura incensa est.

Terribile etiam quiddam in Valeriae provincia contigisse vir vitae venerabilis Maximianus, Syracusanus episcopus, qui diu in hac urbe meo monasterio praefuit, narrare consuevit, dicens: Quidam Curialis illic sacratissimo paschali Sabbato juvenculam cujusdam filiam in baptismate suscepit. Qui post jejunium domum reversus, multoque vino inebriatus, eamdem filiam suam secum manere petiit, eamque nocte illa (quod dictu nefas est) perdidit. Cumque mane facto surrexisset, reus cogitare coepit ut ad balneum pergeret, ac si aqua balnei lavaret maculam peccati. Perrexit igitur, lavit, coepitque trepidare ecclesiam ingredi. Sed si tanto die non iret ad ecclesiam, erubescebat homines; si vero iret, pertimescebat judicium Dei. Vicit itaque humana verecundia, perrexit ad ecclesiam: sed

tremebundus ac pavens stare coepit, atque per singula momenta suspectus qua hora immundo spiritui traderetur, et coram omni populo vexaretur. Cumque vehementer timeret, ei in illa missarum celebritate quasi adversi nihil contigit. Qui laetus exiit, et die altero ecclesiam jam securus intravit. Factumque est ut per sex continuos dies laetus ac securus procederet, aestimans quod ejus scelus Dominus aut non vidisset, aut misericorditer dimisisset. Die autem septimo subita morte defunctus est. Cumque sepulturae traditus fuisset, per longum tempus cunctis videntibus de sepulcro illius flamma exiit, et tandiu ossa ejus concremavit, quousque omne sepulcrum consumeret, et terra quae in tumulum collecta fuerat defossa videretur. Quod videlicet omnipotens Deus faciens ostendit quid ejus anima in occulto pertulit, cujus etiam corpus ante humanos oculos flamma consumpsit. Qua in re nobis quoque haec audientibus exemplum formidinis dare dignatus est, quatenus ex hac consideratione colligamus, quid anima vivens ac sentiens pro reatu suo patiatur, si tanto ignis supplicio etiam insensibilia ossa concremantur. PETRUS: Nosse velim si vel boni bonos in regno, vel mali malos in supplicio agnoscant.

CAPUT XXXIII. Si boni bonos in regno, et mali malos in supplicio agnoscunt.

GREGORIUS: Hujus rei sententia in verbis est dominicis, quae jam superius protulimus, luce clarius demonstrata. In quibus cum dictum esset: Homo quidam erat dives, qui induebatur purpura et bysso, et epulabatur quotidie splendide; et erat quidam mendicus nomine Lazarus, qui jacebat ad januam ejus ulceribus plenus, cupiens saturari de micis quae cadebant de mensa divitis, et nemo illi dabat; sed et canes veniebant, et lingebant ulcera ejus. Subjunctum est quod mortuus Lazarus portatus est ab angelis in sinum Abrahae, et mortuus dives sepultus est in inferno. Qui elevans oculos suos cum esset in tormentis, vidit Abraham a longe, et Lazarum in sinu ejus, et

ipse clamavit, dicens: Pater Abraham, miserere mei, et mitte Lazarum, ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aquam, et refrigeret linguam meam, quia crucior in hac flamma. Cui Abraham dixit: Fili, recordare quia recepisti bona in vita tua, et Lazarus similiter mala. Dives autem jam spem salutis de seipso non habens, ad promerendam suorum salutem convertitur, dicens: Rogo te, pater, ut mittas eum in domum patris mei; habeo enim quinque fratres, ut testetur illis, ne et ipsi veniant in locum hunc tormentorum. Quibus verbis aperte declaratur quia et boni bonos, et mali malos cognoscunt. Si enim Abraham Lazarum minime recognovisset, nequaquam ad divitem in tormentis positum de transacta ejus contritione loqueretur, dicens quod mala receperit in vita sua. Et si mali malos non recognoscerent, nequaquam dives in tormentis positus fratrum suorum etiam absentium meminisset. Quomodo enim praesentes non posset agnoscere, qui etiam pro absentium memoria curavit exorare? Qua in re illud quoque ostenditur, quod nequaquam ipse requisisti, quia et boni malos, et mali cognoscunt bonos. Nam et dives ab Abraham cognoscitur, cui dictum est: Recepisti bona in vita tua; et electus Lazarus a reprobo est divite cognitus, quem mitti precatur ex nomine, dicens: Mitte Lazarum, ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aquam, et refrigeret linguam meam. In qua videlicet cognitione utriusque partis cumulus retributionis excrescit: ut et boni amplius gaudeant, qui secum eos laetari conspiciunt quos amaverunt, et mali, dum cum eis torquentur quos in hoc mundo, despecto Deo, dilexerunt, eos non solum sua, sed etiam eorum poena consumat. Fit autem in electis quiddam mirabilius, quia non solum eos agnoscunt quos in hoc mundo noverant, sed velut visos ac cognitos recognoscunt bonos quos nunquam viderunt. Nam cum antiquos Patres in illa aeterna haereditate viderint, eis incogniti per visionem non erunt, quos in opere semper noverunt. Quia enim illic omnes communi claritate Deum conspiciunt, quid est quod ibi nesciant, ubi scientem omnia sciunt?

CAPUT XXXIV. De quodam religioso, qui prophetas moriens vidit.

Nam quidam noster religiosus, vir vitae valde laudabilis, cum ante hoc quadriennium moreretur, sicut religiosi alii qui praesentes fuerunt testati sunt, in hora exitus sui S. Jonam prophetam, S. Ezechielem quoque et S. Danielem coepit aspicere, eosque dominos suos ex nomine clamare. Quos dum ad se venisse diceret, et depressis luminibus eis reverentiae obsequium praeberet, ex carne eductus est. Qua in re aperte datur intelligi quae erit in illa incorruptibili vita notitia, si vir iste adhuc in carne corruptibili positus prophetas sanctos, quos nimirum nunquam viderat, agnovit.

CAPUT XXXV. Quod se etiam ignotae animae nonnunquam in exitu recognoscunt, quae vel pro culpis tormenta, vel pro bonis actibus similia sunt praemia recepturae; et de morte Joannis et Ursi, Eumorphii, et Stephani.

Solet autem plerumque contingere ut egressura anima eos etiam recognoscat cum quibus pro aequalitate culparum, vel etiam praemiorum, in una est mansione deputanda. Nam vir vitae venerabilis Eleutherius senex, de quo praecedente libro multa narravi, in monasterio suo germanum fratrem nomine Joannem se habuisse perhibuit, qui ante dies quatuordecim suum fratribus exitum praedixit. Cumque decrescentes quotidie computaret dies, ante triduum quam vocaretur ex corpore, febre correptus est. Ad horam vero mortis veniens, mysterium Dominici corporis, et sanguinis accepit. Vocatisque fratribus, coram se psallere praecepit, quibus tamen antiphonam ipse per semetipsum imposuit, dicens: Aperite mihi portas justitiae, et ingressus in eas confitebor Domino: haec porta Domini, justi intrabunt per eam. Cumque coram eo assistentes fratres psallerent, emissa subito et producta voce clamavit dicens: Urse, veni. Quod mox ut dixit, eductus e corpore mortalem vitam finivit. Mirati sunt fratres: quia hoc quod

moriens frater clamaverat, ignorabant. Quo defuncto, in monasterio facta est magna tristitia. Quarto autem die quiddam fratribus necessarium fuit, ut ad monasterium aliud longe positum transmitterent. Illuc ergo euntes fratres, omnes ejusdem monasterii monachos tristes vehementer invenerunt. Quibus cum dicerent: Quid habetis, quod vos in tanto moerore deprimitis? responderunt, dicentes: Loci hujus desolationem gemimus, quia unus Frater, cujus nos vita in hoc monasterio continebat, hodie quartus est dies quod ex hac luce subtractus est. Cumque fratres qui venerant, studiose inquirerent qualiter dictus fuisset, responderunt: Ursus. Qui vocationis ejus horam subtiliter inquirentes, ipso eum momento cognoverunt exisse de corpore, quo per Joannem, qui apud eos defunctus est, fuerat vocatus. Qua ex re colligitur, quia utrorumque par fuerat meritum, eisque datum est, ut in una mansione socialiter viverent, quibus e corpore contigit socialiter exire. Sed neque hoc sileam, quod dum adhuc laicus viverem, atque in domo mea, quae mihi in hac urbe ex jure patris obvenerat, manerem, de quibusdam vicinis meis me contigit agnovisse. Quaedam namque juxta me vidua, Galla dicebatur. Haec Eumorphium nomine juvenem filium habebat, a quo non longe quidam Stephanus, qui in numero Optio fuit, habitabat. Sed idem Eumorphius ad extrema vitae veniens, vocavit puerum suum, eique praecepit, dicens: Vade citius, et dic Stephano Optioni, ut concitus veniat, quia ecce navis parata est ut ad Siciliam duci debeamus. Cumque hunc puer insanire crederet, et obedire recusaret, coepit ille vehementer imminere, dicens: Vade et nuntia illi quod dico, quia non insanio. Egressus est itaque puer ut ad Stephanum pergeret. Cumque in medium iter venisset, ei alius quidam obvius factus est, qui hunc requisivit, dicens: Quo vadis? Cui ille respondit: Ad Stephanum Optionem a domino meo missus sum. Atque ille protinus dixit: Ab eo venio, sed ante me hac hora defunctus est. Reversus vero est puer ad Eumorphium dominum suum, sed jam eum mortuum invenit. Sicque factum est, ut dum alter obviam venit, et ex medio itinere

puer reversus est, ex mensura spatii potuisset colligi, quia uno momento utrique fuerant vocati. PETRUS: Terribile est valde, quod dicitur: sed quaeso te, cur egredienti animae navis apparuit, vel cur se ad Siciliam duci moriturus praedixit? GREGORIUS: Anima vehiculo non eget: sed mirum non est, si adhuc homini in corpore posito illud apparuit, quod per corpus assueverat videre, ut per hoc intelligi daretur quo ejus anima spiritualiter duci potuisset. Quod vero se ad Siciliam duci testatus est, quid sentiri aliud potest, nisi quod prae ceteris locis in ejus terrae insulis eructante igne tormentorum ollae patuerunt? Quae, ut solent narrare qui noverunt, laxatis quotidie sinibus excrescunt, ut mundi termino appropinquante, quanto certum est illuc amplius exurendos colligi, tanto et eadem tormentorum loca amplius videantur aperiri. Quod omnipotens Deus ad correptionem viventium in hoc mundo voluit ostendi; ut mentes infidelium, quae inferni tormenta esse non credunt, tormentorum loca videant, quae audita credere recusant. Quod vero sive electi, sive reprobi, quorum communis causa in opere fuerit, ad loca etiam communia deducantur, Veritatis nobis verba satisfacerent, etiamsi exempla deessent. Ipsa quippe propter electos in Evangelio dicit: In domo Patris mei mansiones multae sunt. Si enim dispar retributio in illa aeterna beatitudine non esset, una potius mansio quam multae essent. Multae ergo mansiones sunt, in quibus distincti bonorum ordines, et propter meritorum consortia communiter laetantur, et tamen unum denarium omnes laborantes accipiunt. Qui multis mansionibus distinguuntur; quia et una est beatitudo quam illic percipiunt, et dispar retributionis qualitas, quam per opera diversa consequuntur. Quae nimirum Veritas judicii sui diem denuntians, ait: Tunc dicam messoribus: Colligite zizania, et ligate ea in fasciculos ad comburendum. Messores quippe angeli zizania ad comburendum in fasciculos ligant, cum pares paribus in tormentis similibus sociant, ut superbi cum superbis, luxuriosi cum luxuriosis, avari cum avaris, fallaces cum fallacibus, invidi cum invidis,

infideles cum infidelibus ardeant. Cum ergo similes in culpa ad tormenta similia deducuntur, quia eos in locis poenalibus angeli deputant, quasi zizaniorum fasciculos ad comburendum ligant. PETRUS: Ad inquisitionem meam responsionis satisfactione patuit causa rationis. Sed quidnam est, quaeso te, quod nonnulli quasi per errorem extrahuntur e corpore, ita ut facti exanimes redeant, et eorum quisque audisse se dicat, quia ipse non fuerit qui erat jussus deduci?

CAPUT XXXVI. De his qui quasi per errorem educi videntur e corpore, et de vocatione et revocatione Petri monachi, et de morte et resuscitatione Stephani, ac de visione cujusdam militis.

GREGORIUS: Hoc cum fit, Petre, si bene perpenditur, non error, sed admonitio est. Superna enim pietas ex magna misericordiae suae largitate disponit, ut nonnulli etiam post exitum repente ad corpus redeant, et tormenta inferni, quae audita non crediderant, saltem visa pertimescant. Nam quidam Illiricianus monachus, qui in hac urbe in monasterio mecum vivebat, mihi narrare consueverat, quia quodam tempore cum adhuc in eremo moraretur, agnoverit quod Petrus quidam monachus ex regione ortus Iberiae, qui ei in loco vastae solitudinis, cui Evasa nomen est, inhaerebat, sicut ipso narrante didicerat, priusquam eremum peteret, molestia corporis interveniente defunctus est: sed protinus corpori restitutus, inferni supplicia atque innumera loca flammarum se vidisse testabatur. Qui etiam quosdam hujus saeculi potentes in eisdem flammis suspensos se vidisse narrabat. Qui cum jam ductus esset ut in illas et ipse mergeretur, subito angelum corusci habitus apparuisse fatebatur, qui eum in ignem mergi prohiberet. Cui etiam dixit: Egredere, et qualiter tibi posthac vivendum sit, cautissime attende. Post quam vocem paulatim recalescentibus membris, ab aeternae mortis somno evigilans, cuncta quae circa illum fuerant gesta narravit. Tantisque se postmodum jejuniis vigiliisque constrinxit, ut inferni eum vidisse et

pertimuisse tormenta, etiamsi taceret lingua, conversatio loqueretur: quippe cui omnipotentis Dei mira largitate in morte actum est ne mori debuisset. Sed quia humanum cor gravis valde duritiae est, ipsa quoque poenarum ostensio non aeque omnibus utilis est. Nam illustris vir Stephanus, quem bene nosti, de semetipso mihi narrare consueverat, quia in Constantinopolitana urbe pro quadam causa demoratus, molestia corporis superveniente defunctus est. Cumque medicus atque pigmentarius ad aperiendum eum atque condiendum esset quaesitus, et die eodem minime inventus, subsequente nocte corpus jacuit inhumatum. Qui ductus ad inferni loca, vidit multa quae prius audita non credidit. Sed cum praesidenti illic judici praesentatus fuisset, ab eo receptus non est, ita ut diceret: Non hunc deduci, sed Stephanum ferrarium jussi. Qui statim reductus in corpore est, et Stephanus ferrarius qui juxta eum habitabat, eadem hora defunctus est. Sicque probatum est vera fuisse verba quae audierat, dum haec effectus mortis Stephani demonstravit. Ante triennium quoque in hac pestilentia quae hanc urbem clade vehementissima depopulavit, in qua etiam corporali visu sagittae coelitus venire, et singulos quosque ferire videbantur, sicut nosti, Stephanus idem defunctus est. Quidam vero miles in hac eadem urbe nostra percussus, ad extrema pervenit. Qui eductus in corpore exanimis jacuit, sed citius rediit, et quae cum eo fuerant gesta narravit. Aiebat enim, sicut tunc res eadem etiam multis innotuit, quia pons erat, sub quo niger atque caliginosus foetoris intolerabilis nebulam exhalans fluvius decurrebat. Transacto autem ponte, amoena erant prata atque virentia, odoriferis herbarum floribus exornata, in quibus albatorum hominum conventicula esse videbantur. Tantusque in eodem loco odor suavitatis inerat, ut ipsa suavitatis fragrantia illic deambulantes habitantesque satiaret. Ibi mansiones diversorum singulae, magnitudine lucis plenae. Ibi quaedam mirae potentiae aedificabatur domus, quae aureis videbatur laterculis construi, sed cujus esset, non potuit agnosci. Erant vero super ripam praedicti fluminis

nonnulla habitacula, sed alia exurgentis foetoris nebula tangebantur, alia autem exurgens foetor e flumine minime tangebat. Haec vero erat in praedicto ponte probatio ut quisquis per eum vellet injustorum transire, in tenebrosum foetentemque fluvium laberetur: justi vero quibus culpa non obsisteret, securo per eum gressu ac libero ad loca amoena pervenirent. Ibi se etiam Petrum ecclesiasticae familiae majorem qui ante quadriennium est defunctus, deorsum positum, in locis teterrimis magno ferri pondere religatum ac depressum vidisse confessus est. Qui dum requireret cur ita esset, ea se dixit audisse, quae nos qui eum in hac ecclesiastica domo novimus, scientes ejus acta recolimus. Dictum namque est: Haec idcirco patitur, quia si quid ei pro facienda ultione jubebatur, ad inferendas plagas plus ex crudelitatis desiderio, quam ex obedientia serviebat. Quod sic fuisse, nullus qui illum novit, ignorat. Ibi se etiam quemdam peregrinum presbyterum vidisse fatebatur, qui ad praedictum pontem veniens, tanta per eum auctoritate transiit, quanta et hic sinceritate vixit. In eodem quoque ponte hunc quem praediximus Stephanum se recognovisse testatus est. Qui dum transire voluisset, ejus pes lapsus est, et ex medio corpore jam extra pontem dejectus, a quibusdam teterrimis viris ex flumine surgentibus, per coxas deorsum, atque a quibusdam albatis et speciosissimis viris coepit per brachia sursum trahi. Cumque hoc luctamen esset, ut hunc boni spiritus sursum, mali deorsum traherent, ipse qui haec videbat, ad corpus reversus est, et quid de eo plenius gestum sit, minime cognovit. Qua in re de ejusdem Stephani vita datur intelligi, quia in eo mala carnis cum eleemosynarum operatione certabant. Qui enim per coxas deorsum, per brachia trahebatur sursum, patet nimirum, quia et eleemosynas amaverat, et carnis vitiis perfecte non restiterat, quae eum deorsum trahebant. Sed in illo occulti arbitri examine quid in eo vicerit, et nos, et eum qui vidit et revocatus est, latet. Constat tamen, quia idem Stephanus postquam, sicut superius narravi, et inferni loca vidit, et ad corpus rediit, perfecte vitam minime correxit, qui

post multos annos de corpore adhuc ad certamen vitae et mortis exiit. Qua de re colligitur, quia ipsa quoque inferni supplicia cum demonstrantur, aliis hoc ad adjutorium, aliis vero ad testimonium fiat: ut isti videant mala quae caveant, illi vero eo amplius puniantur, quod inferni supplicia nec visa, et cognita vitare noluerunt. PETRUS: Quid est hoc, quaeso te, quod in amoenis locis cujusdam domus laterculis aureis aedificari videbatur? Ridiculum est valde, si credimus quod in illa vita adhuc metallis talibus egeamus.

CAPUT XXXVII. Quid sibi vult in amoenis locis domus constructio: et de Deusdedit, cujus domus sabbato videbatur aedificari: et de poena Sodomorum.

GREGORIUS: Quis hoc, si sanum sapit, intelligat? Sed per hoc quod illic ostensum est, quisquis ille est cui mansio ista construitur, aperte datur intelligi quid est quod hic operatur. Nam qui praemium aeternae lucis eleemosynarum largitate promerebitur, nimirum constat, quia auro aedificat mansionem suam. Quod enim superius memoriam fugit ut dicerem, idem miles, qui haec viderat, narrabat quod eosdem laterculos aureos ad aedificationem domus, senes ac juvenes, puellae et pueri ferebant. Qua ex re colligitur, quia hi quibus hic pietas facta est, ipsi illic operatores esse videbantur. Hic etiam quidam juxta nos, Deusdedit nomine, religiosus, habitabat, qui calceamenta solebat operari, de quo alter per revelationem vidit quod ejus domus aedificabatur, sed in ea constructores sui solo die sabbati videbantur operari. Qui ejusdem viri postmodum subtiliter vitam requirens, invenit quia ex his quae diebus singulis laborabat, quidquid ex victu atque vestitu superesse potuisset, die sabbato ad beati Petri Ecclesiam deferre consueverat, atque indigentibus erogare. Qua ex re perpende, quia non immerito domus ipsius fabrica sabbato crescebat. PETRUS: Hac de re mihi idonee video satisfactum: sed quaeso te, quid esse dicimus, quod

quorumdam habitacula foetoris nebula tangebantur, quorumdam vero tangi non poterant: vel quid quod pontem, quid est quod fluvium vidit? GREGORIUS: Ex rerum, Petre, imaginibus pensamus merita causarum. Per pontem quippe ad amoena loca transire justos aspexit: Quia angusta valde est semita quae ducit ad vitam. Et foetentem fluvium decurrentem vidit, quia ad ima defluit quotidie carnalium hic putredo vitiorum. Et quorumdam habitacula fetoris nebula tangebat, quorumdam vero ab ea tangi non poterant: quia sunt plerique qui multa jam bona opera faciunt, sed tamen adhuc carnalibus vitiis in cogitationis delectatione tanguntur. Et justum valde est, ut illic nebula fetoris obsideat, quos hic adhuc carnis fetor delectat. Unde et eamdem delectationem carnis esse beatus Job in fetore conspiciens, de luxurioso ac lubrico sententiam protulit, dicens: Dulcedo illius vermes. Qui autem perfecte cor ab omni delectatio e carnis excutiunt, constat nimirum quia eorum habitacula fetoris nebula non tanguntur. Et notandum quod idem fetor esse et nebula visa sit, quia nimirum carnalis delectatio mentem quam inficit obscurat, ut veri luminis claritatem non videat, sed unde delectatur inferius, inde caliginem ad superna patiatur. PETRUS: Putamusne hoc auctoritate sacri eloquii posse monstrari, ut culpae carnalium fetoris poena puniantur? GREGORIUS: Potest; nam libro Geneseos attestante didicimus, quia super Sodomitas Dominus ignem et sulphur pluit, ut eos et ignis incenderet, et fetor sulphuris necaret. Quia enim amore illicito corruptibilis carnis exarserant, simul incendio et fetore perierunt, quatenus in poena sua cognoscerent quia aeternae mortis fetoris sui se delectatione tradidissent. PETRUS: De his in quibus dubius fui, nihil mihi, fateor, quaestionis remansit.

CAPUT XXXVIII. Quod quorumdam animae adhuc in corpore positae poenale aliquid de spiritalibus vident; et de Theodoro puero; ac de morte Chrysaorii, et monachi cujusdam Iconii.

GREGORIUS: Sciendum quoque est quia nonnunquam animae adhuc in suis corporibus positae poenale aliquid de spiritalibus vident, quod tamen quibusdam ad aedificationem suam, quibusdam vero contingere ad aedificationem audientium solet. Nam is de quo in Homiliis coram populo me narrasse jam memini, inquietus valde. Theodorus nomine, puer fuit, qui in monasterium meum, fratrem suum necessitate magis quam voluntate secutus est. Cui nimirum grave erat si quis ei pro salute sua aliquid loqueretur. Bona enim non solum facere, sed etiam audire non poterat. Nunquam se ad sanctae conversationis habitum venire, jurando, irascendo, deridendo testabatur. In hac autem pestilentia quae nuper hujus urbis populum magna ex parte consumpsit, percussus in inguine, perductus est ad mortem. Cumque extremum spiritum ageret, convenerunt fratres, ut egressum illius orando protegerent. Jam corpus ejus ab extrema parte fuerat praemortuum, in solo tantummodo pectore vitalis adhuc calor anhelabat. Cuncti autem fratres tanto pro eo coeperunt enixius orare, quanto eum jam videbant sub celeritate discedere. Cum repente coepit eisdem fratribus assistentibus clamare, atque cum magnis vocibus orationes eorum interrumpere, dicens: Recedite, recedite, ecce draconi ad devorandum datus sum, qui propter vestram praesentiam devorare me non potest. Caput meum jam in suo ore absorbuit, date locum ut me amplius non cruciet, sed faciat quod facturus est. Si ei ad devorandum datus sum, quare propter vos moras patior? Tunc fratres coeperunt ei dicere: Quid est quod loqueris, frater? Signum tibi sanctae crucis imprime. Respondebat ille cum magnis clamoribus, dicens: Volo me signare, sed non possum, quia squamis hujus draconis premor. Cumque hoc fratres audirent, prostrati in terra cum lacrymis coeperunt pro ereptione illius vehementius orare. Et ecce subito melioratus aeger coepit cum magnis vocibus clamare, dicens: Gratias Deo, ecce draco qui me ad devorandum acceperat fugit, orationibus vestris expulsus stare non potuit. Pro peccatis meis modo intercedite, quia converti

paratus sum, et saecularem vitam funditus relinquere. Homo ergo qui, sicut jam dictum est, ab extrema corporis parte fuerat praemortuus, reservatus ad vitam, toto corde ad Deum conversus est. Et postquam, mutatus mente, diu est flagellis attritus, tunc ejus anima carne soluta est. At contra Chrysaorius, sicut Probus propinquus illius, cujus jam superius memoriam feci, narrare consuevit, vir in hoc mundo valde idoneus fuit, sed tantum plenus vitiis, quantum rebus, superbia tumidus, carnis suae voluptatibus subditus in acquirendis rebus avaritiae facibus accensus. Sed cum tot malis Dominus finem ponere decrevisset, corporali hunc molestia percussit. Qui ad extremum veniens, eadem hora qua jam de corpore erat exiturus, apertis oculis vidit tetros et nigerrimos spiritus coram se assistere, et vehementer imminere, ut ad inferni claustra eum raperent. Coepit tremere, pallescere, sudare, et magnis vocibus inducias petere, filiumque suum nomine Maximum, quem ipse jam monachus monachum vidi, nimiis et turbatis clamoribus vocare, dicens: Maxime, curre, nunquam tibi mali aliquid feci, in fide tua me suscipe. Turbatus mox Maximus adfuit, lugens ac perstrepens familia convenit. Eos autem quos ille insistentes sibi graviter tolerabat, ipsi malignos spiritus videre non poterant, sed eorum praesentiam, in confusione, et pallore, ac tremore illius qui trahebatur videbant. Pavore autem tetrae eorum imaginis huc illucque vertebatur in lectulo; jacebat in sinistro latere, aspectum eorum ferre non poterat; vertebatur ad parietem, ibi aderant. Cumque constrictus nimis relaxari se jam posse desperaret, coepit magnis vocibus clamare: Inducias vel usque mane, inducias vel usque mane. Sed cum haec clamaret, in ipsis vocibus de habitaculo suae carnis evulsus est. De quo nimirum constat quia pro nobis ista, non pro se, viderit, ut ejus visio nobis proficiat, quos adhuc divina patientia longanimiter exspectat. Nam illi tetros spiritus ante mortem vidisse et inducias petiisse quid profuit, qui easdem inducias quas petiit non accepit? Est etiam nunc apud nos Athanasius Isauriae presbyter, qui in diebus suis Iconii rem

terribilem narrat evenisse. Ibi namque, ut ait, quoddam monasterium dicitur, in quo quidam monachus magnae aestimationis habebatur. Bonis quippe cernebatur moribus, atque in omni sua actione compositus; sed sicut ex fine res patuit, longe aliter quam apparebat fuit. Nam cum jejunare se cum fratribus demonstraret, occulte manducare consueverat, quod ejus vitium fratres omnino nesciebant. Sed corporis superveniente molestia, ad vitae extrema perductus est. Qui cum jam esset in fine, fratres ad se omnes qui monasterio aderant congregari fecit. At illi tali, ut putabant, viro moriente, magnum quid ac delectabile se ab eo audire crediderant. Quibus ipse afflictus et tremens compulsus est prodere cui hosti traditus cogebatur exire. Nam dixit: Quando me vobiscum credebatis jejunare, occulte comedebam, et ecce nunc ad devorandum draconi traditus sum, qui cauda sua mea genua pedesque colligavit, caput vero suum intra meum os mittens, spiritum meum ebibens extrahit. Quibus dictis statim defunctus est, atque ut poenitendo liberari potuisset, a dracone quem viderat exspectatus non est. Quod nimirum constat quia ad solam utilitatem audientium viderit, qui eum hostem cui traditus fuerat et innotuit et non evasit. PETRUS: Doceri vellem si post mortem purgatorius ignis esse credendus est.

CAPUT XXXIX. An post mortem purgatorius ignis sit.

GREGORIUS: In Evangelio dicit Dominus: Ambulate dum lucem habetis. Per Prophetam quoque ait: Tempore accepto exaudivi te, et in die salutis adjuvi te. Quod Paulus apostolus exponens, dicit: Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce nunc dies salutis. Salomon quoque ait: Quodcumque potest manus tua facere, instanter operare, quia nec opus, nec ratio, nec scientia, nec sapientia erit apud inferos, quo tu properas. David quoque ait: Quoniam in saeculum misericordia ejus. Ex quibus nimirum sententiis constat quia qualis hinc quisque egreditur, talis in judicio praesentatur. Sed tamen de quibusdam levibus culpis esse ante judicium purgatorius ignis

credendus est, pro eo quod Veritas dicit, quia si quis in sancto Spiritu blasphemiam dixerit, neque in hoc saeculo remittetur ei, neque in futuro. In qua sententia datur intelligi quasdam culpas in hoc saeculo, quasdam vero in futuro posse laxari. Quod enim de uno negatur, consequens intellectus patet, quia de quibusdam conceditur. Sed tamen, ut praedixi, hoc de parvis minimisque peccatis fieri posse credendum est, sicut est assiduus otiosus sermo, immoderatus risus, vel peccatum curae rei familiaris, quae vix sine culpa vel ab ipsis agitur, qui culpam qualiter declinare debeant sciunt; aut in non gravibus rebus error ignorantiae, quae cuncta etiam post mortem gravant, si adhuc in hac vita positis minime fuerint relaxata. Nam cum Paulus dicat Christum esse fundamentum, atque subjungat: Si quis superaedificaverit super hoc fundamentum, aurum, argentum, lapides pretiosos, ligna, fenum, stipulam; uniuscujusque opus quale sit, ignis probabit; si cujus opus manserit quod superaedificavit, mercedem accipiet; si cujus opus arserit, detrimentum patietur; ipse autem salvus erit, sic tamen quasi per ignem. Quamvis hoc de igne tribulationis in hac nobis vita adhibito possit intelligi, tamen si quis hoc de igne futurae purgationis accipiat, pensandum sollicite est quia illum per ignem dixit posse salvari, non qui super hoc fundamentum, ferrum, aes, vel plumbum aedificat, id est peccata majora, et idcirco duriora, atque tunc jam insolubilia; sed ligna, fenum, stipulam, id est peccata minima atque levissima, quae ignis facile consumat. Hoc tamen sciendum est, quia illic saltem de minimis nihil quisque purgationis obtinebit, nisi bonis hoc actibus in hac adhuc vita positus, ut illic obtineat, promereatur.

CAPUT XL. De anima Paschasii diaconi.

Nam cum adhuc essem juvenculus, atque in laico habitu constitutus, narrari a majoribus atque scientibus audivi, quod Paschasius hujus apostolicae sedis diaconus, cujus apud nos rectissimi et luculenti de sancto Spiritu libri

exstant, mirae sanctitatis vir fuerit, eleemosynarum maxime operibus vacans, cultor pauperum, et contemptor sui. Sed hic in ea contentione quae inardescente zelo fidelium inter Symmachum atque Laurentium facta est ad pontificatus ordinem Laurentium elegit; et omnium post unanimitate superatus, in sua tamen sententia usque ad diem sui exitus perstitit, illum amando atque praeferendo, quem episcoporum judicio praeesse sibi Ecclesia refutavit. Hic itaque cum temporibus Symmachi apostolicae sedis Praesulis esset defunctus, ejus dalmaticam feretro superpositam daemoniacus tetigit, statimque salvatus est. Post multum vero temporis Germano Capuano episcopo, cujus superius memoriam feci medici pro corporis salute dictaverant, ut in Angulanis thermis lavari debuisset. Qui ingressus easdem thermas, praedictum Paschasium diaconum stantem et obsequentem in caloribus invenit. Quo viso vehementer extimuit, et quid illic tantus vir faceret inquisivit. Cui ille respondit: Pro nulla alia causa in hoc poenali loco deputatus sum, nisi quia in parte Laurentii contra Symmachum sensi. Sed quaeso te, pro me Dominum deprecare, atque in hoc cognosces quod exauditus sis, si huc rediens me non inveneris. Qua de re vir Domini Germanus se in precibus constrinxit, et post paucos dies rediit, sed jam dictum Paschasium in loco eodem minime invenit. Quia enim non malitia, sed ignorantiae errore peccaverat, purgari post mortem a peccato potuit. Quod tamen credendum est, quia ex illa eleemosynarum suarum largitate hoc obtinuit, ut tunc potuisset promereri veniam, cum jam nihil posset operari. PETRUS: Quid hoc est, quaeso, quod in his extremis temporibus tam multa de animabus clarescunt, quae ante latuerunt; ita ut apertis revelationibus atque ostensionibus venturum saeculum inferre se nobis atque aperire videatur?

CAPUT XLI. Cur in extremis temporibus, tam multa de animabus clarescunt, quae antea latuerunt.

GREGORIUS: Ita est; nam quantum praesens saeculum propinquat ad finem, tantum futurum saeculum ipsa jam quasi propinquitate tangitur, et signis manifestioribus aperitur. Quia enim in hoc saeculo cogitationes nostras vicissim minime videmus, in illo autem nostra in alterutrum corda conspicimus, quid hoc saeculum nisi noctem, et quid venturum nisi diem dixerim? Sed quemadmodum cum nox finiri et dies incipit oriri, ante solis ortum, simul aliquo modo tenebrae cum luce commistae sunt, quousque discedentis noctis reliquiae in lucem diei subsequentis perfecte vertantur, ita hujus mundi finis jam cum futuri saeculi exordio permiscetur, atque ipsae reliquiarum ejus tenebrae quadam jam rerum spiritalium permistione translucent. Et quae illius mundi sunt, multa jam cernimus, sed necdum perfecte cognoscimus, quia quasi in quodam mentis crepusculo haec velut ante solem videmus. PETRUS: Placet quod dicis. Sed de tanto viro Paschasio hoc animum ad quaestionem movet, quod post mortem ad poenalem locum ductus est, cujus feretri vestis tanti potuit ut malignus spiritus ab obsesso homine fugaretur. GREGORIUS: Hac in re magna debet omnipotentis Dei dispensatio et quam sit multiplex agnosci. Cujus judicio actum est ut idem vir Paschasius et ipse intus ad aliquantum temporis reciperet quod peccasset, et tamen ante humanos oculos mira per corpus suum post mortem faceret, qui ante mortem eis quoque cognoscentibus pia opera fecisset; ut neque hi qui bona ejus viderant, de eleemosynarum illius aestimatione fallerentur, neque ipsi sine ultione laxaretur culpa, quam nec esse culpam credidit, et idcirco hanc fletibus non exstinxit. PETRUS: Perpendo quae dicis, verumtamen hac ratione constrictus, non solum quae intelligo sed etiam ipsa quae non intelligo in me cogor jam peccata formidare. Sed quaeso, quia paulo superius sermo de locis poenalibus inferni versabatur, ubinam esse infernum putamus? super hanc terram, an sub terra esse credendus est?

CAPUT XLII. Ubi e se infernus credendus sit.

GREGORIUS: Hac de re temere definire nil audeo. Nonnulli namque in quadam terrarum parte infernum esse putaverunt: alii vero hunc sub terra esse aestimant. Sed tamen hoc animum pulsat, quia si idcirco infernum dicimus quia inferius jacet, quod terra ad coelum est, hoc esse infernus debet ad terram. Unde et fortasse per Psalmistam dicitur: Liberasti animam meam ex inferno inferiori; ut infernus superior in terra, infernus vero inferior sub terra esse videatur. Et Joannis vox in aestimatione ista concordat, qui cum signatum septem sigillis librum vidisse se diceret, quia nemo inventus est dignus neque in coelo, neque in terra, neque subtus terram aperire librum, et solvere signacula ejus, adjunxit: Et ego flebam multum. Quem tamen librum postea per leonem de tribu Juda dicit aperiri. Quo videlicet in libro quid aliud quam sacra Scriptura signatur? Quam solus Redemptor noster aperuit, qui homo factus, moriendo, resurgendo, ascendendo, cuncta mysteria quae in eo fuerant clausa patefecit. Et nullus in coelo, quia neque angelus; nullus in terra, quia neque homo vivens in corpore; nullus subtus terram dignus inventus est, quia neque animae corpore exutae aperire nobis praeter Dominum sacri eloquii secreta potuerunt. Cum ergo ad solvendum librum nullus sub terra inventus dignus dicitur, quid obstet non video ut sub terra infernus esse credatur. PETRUS: Quaeso te, unus esse gehennae ignis credendus est; an quanta peccatorum diversitas fuerit, tanta quoque aestimanda sunt et ipsa incendia esse praeparata?

CAPUT XLIII. Utrum unus gehennae ignis sit, an diversi.

GREGORIUS: Unus quidem est gehennae ignis, sed non uno modo omnes cruciat peccatores. Uniuscujusque etenim quantum exigit culpa, tanta illic sentitur poena. Nam sicut in hoc mundo sub uno sole multi consistunt, nec tamen ejusdem solis ardorem aequaliter sentiunt, quia alius plus aestuat, atque alius minus; ita illic in uno igne non unus est modus incendii; quia

quod hic diversitas corporum, hoc illic agit diversitas peccatorum, ut et ignem non dissimilem habeant, et tamen eosdem singulos dissimiliter exurat. PETRUS: Nunquidnam, quaeso te, dicimus eos qui semel illic mersi fuerint, semper arsuros?

CAPUT XLIV. Si semper ardeant qui gehennae incendiis deputantur.

GREGORIUS: Constat nimis, et incunctanter verum est quia sicut finis non est gaudio bonorum, ita finis non erit tormento malorum. Nam cum Veritas dicat: Ibunt impii in supplicium aeternum, justi autem in vitam aeternam, quia verum est quod promisit, falsum procul dubio non erit quod minatus est Deus. PETRUS: Quid si quis dicat: Idcirco peccantibus aeternam poenam minatus est, ut eos a peccatorum perpetratione compesceret? GREGORIUS: Si falsum est quod minatus est ut ab injustitia corrigeret, etiam falsum est pollicitus ut ad justitiam provocaret. Sed quis hoc dicere vel insanus praesumat? Et si minatus est quod non erat impleturus, dum asserere eum misericordem volumus, fallacem (quod dici nefas est) praedicare compellimur. PETRUS: Scire velim quomodo justum sit ut culpa quae cum fine perpetrata est sine fine puniatur. GREGORIUS: Hoc recte diceretur, si districtus judex non corda hominum, sed facta pensaret. Iniqui enim ideo cum fine deliquerunt, quia cum fine vixerunt. Nam voluissent utique, si potuissent, sine fine vivere, ut potuissent sine fine peccare. Ostendunt enim quia in peccato semper vivere cupiunt, qui nunquam desinunt peccare dum vivunt. Ad magnam ergo justitiam judicantis pertinet ut nunquam careant supplicio, qui in hac vita nunquam voluerunt carere peccato. PETRUS: Sed nullus justus crudelitate pascitur, et delinquens servus a justo domino idcirco caedi praecipitur, ut a nequitia corrigatur; ad hoc ergo vapulat, ut emendari debeat. Iniqui autem gehennae ignibus traditi, si ad correctionem non perveniunt, quo fine semper ardebunt? GREGORIUS: Omnipotens Deus, quia pius est, miserorum cruciatu non

pascitur; quia vero justus est, ab iniquorum ultione in perpetuum non sedatur. Sed iniqui omnes aeterno supplicio deputati, sua quidem iniquitate puniuntur, et tamen ad aliquid ardebunt, scilicet ut justi omnes et in Deo videant gaudia quae percipiunt, et in illis respiciant supplicia quae evaserunt, quatenus tanto magis in aeternum gratiae divinae debitores se esse cognoscant, quanto in aeternum mala puniri conspiciunt quae ejus adjutorio vicerunt. PETRUS: Et ubi est quod sancti sint, si pro inimicis suis quos tunc ardere viderint non orabunt, quibus utique dictum est: Pro inimicis vestris orate? GREGORIUS: Pro inimicis suis orant eo tempore quo possunt ad fructuosam poenitentiam eorum corda convertere, atque ipsa conversione salvare. Quid enim aliud pro inimicis orandum est, nisi hoc quod Apostolus ait: Ut det illis Deus poenitentiam ad cognoscendam veritatem, et resipiscant a diaboli laqueis, a quo captivi tenentur ad ipsius voluntatem? Et quomodo pro illis tunc orabunt, qui jam nullatenus possunt ad justitiae opera ab iniquitate commutari? Eadem itaque causa est cur non oretur tunc pro hominibus igni aeterno damnatis, quae nunc etiam causa est ut non oretur pro diabolo angelisque ejus aeterno supplicio deputatis. Quae nunc etiam causa est ut non orent sancti homines pro hominibus infidelibus impiisque defunctis, nisi quia pro eis utique quos aeterno deputatos supplicio jam noverunt, ante illum judicis justi conspectum orationis suae meritum cassari refugiunt. Quod si nunc quoque viventes justi mortuis et damnatis injustis minime compatiuntur, quando adhuc aliquid judicabile de sua carne sese perpeti etiam ipsi noverunt; quanto districtius tunc iniquorum tormenta respiciunt, quando, ab omni vitio corruptionis exuti, ipsi jam justitiae vicinius atque arctius inhaerebunt? Sic quippe eorum mentes per hoc quod justissimo judici inhaerent vis districtionis absorbet, ut omnino eis non libeat quidquid ab illius aeternae regulae subtilitate discordat. PETRUS: Non est jam quod responderi debeat apertae rationi. Sed haec

nunc quaestio mentem movet, quomodo anima immortalis dicitur, dum constet quod in perpetuo igne moriatur.

CAPUT XLV. Quomodo anima immortalis dicitur, si constat quod mortis damnatione puniatur.

GREGORIUS: Quia duobus modis vita dicitur, duobus etiam modis mors debet intelligi. Aliud namque est quod in Deo vivimus, aliud vero quod in hoc quod conditi vel creati sumus; id est, aliud beate vivere, atque aliud est essentialiter. Anima itaque et mortalis esse intelligitur, et immortalis. Mortalis quippe, quia beate vivere amittit; immortalis autem, quia essentialiter vivere nunquam desinit, et naturae suae vitam perdere non valet, nec cum in perpetua fuerit morte damnata. Illic enim posita beata esse perdit, et esse non perdit. Qua ex re cogitur semper, ut et mortem sine morte, et defectum, sine defectu, et finem sine fine patiatur; quatenus ei mors immortalis sit, et defectus indeficiens, et finis infinitus. PETRUS: Quis hanc tam inexplicabilem damnationis sententiam, cujuslibet sit operis, ad exitum veniens non pertimescat, quando etsi jam novit quod egit, adhuc tamen facta illius quam subtiliter judicentur ignorat?

CAPUT XLVI. De quodam sancto viro qui ad mortem veniens expavit.

GREGORIUS: Ut asseris ita est, Petre. Sed plerumque de culpis minimis ipse solus pavor egredientes justorum animas purgat, sicut narrari de quodam sancto viro mecum frequenter audisti. Qui ad mortem veniens vehementer timuit, sed post mortem discipulis in stola alba apparuit, et quam praeclare sit susceptus indicavit.

CAPUT XLVII. Quod quidam ne in morte timeant, revelatione roborantur; et de Antonio, et Merulo, et Joanne monachis.

Nonnunquam vero omnipotens Deus trepidantium mentes quibusdam prius revelationibus roborat, ut in morte minime pertimescant. Nam quidam mecum in monasterio frater Antonius nomine, vivebat, qui multis quotidianisque lacrymis ad gaudia patriae coelestis anhelabat. Cumque studiosissime, et cum magno fervore desiderii sacra eloquia meditaretur, non in eis verba scientiae, sed fletum compunctionis inquirebat, quatenus per haec excitata mens ejus inardesceret, et ima deserens, ad regionem coelestis patriae per contemplationem volaret. Huic per visionem nocturnam dictum est: Paratus esto, et quia Dominus jussit, migra. Cumque ille non habere se sumptus ad migrandum diceret, responsum protinus audivit, dicens: Si de peccatis tuis agitur, dimissa sunt. Quod cum semel audisset, et magno adhuc metu trepidaret, nocte quoque alia eisdem verbis est admonitus. Tunc post quinque dies febre correptus, cunctis fratribus orantibus flentibusque, defunctus est. Alius etiam frater in eodem monasterio Merulus dicebatur, vehementer lacrymis atque orationibus intentus: psalmodia vero ex ore illius pene nullo tempore cessare consueverat, excepto cum aut alimentum corpori, aut membra dedisset sopori. Huic nocturna visione apparuit quod ex albis floribus corona de coelo in caput illius descendebat. Qui mox molestia corporis occupatus, cum magna securitate animi atque hilaritate defunctus est. Ad cujus sepulcrum dum Petrus, qui nunc monasterio praeest, sibi sepulturam facere post annos quatuordecim voluisset, tanta, ut asserit, de eodem sepulcro illius fragrantia suavitatis emanavit, ac si illic florum omnium fuissent odoramenta congregata. Qua ex re manifeste patuit quam verum fuit quod per nocturnam visionem vidit. In eodem quoque monasterio alius quidam Joannes dictus est, magnae indolis adolescens, qui aetatem suam intellectu et humilitate, dulcedine et gravitate transibat. Huic aegrotanti atque ad extremum deducto, per nocturnam visionem quidam senex apparuit, et hunc virga tetigit, eique dixit: Surge, ex hac enim molestia modo minime

morieris, sed paratus esto, quia longum tempus hic facturus non eris. Qui dum jam esset a medicis desperatus, repente sanatus est, atque convaluit. Rem quam viderat narravit; seque per biennium in Dei servitio, sicut praedixi, ultra aetatis suae annos exhibuit. Ante hoc autem triennium, cum quidam frater fuisset mortuus, atque in ejusdem monasterii coemeterio a nobis sepultus, cunctis nobis ab eodem coemeterio exeuntibus, idem Joannes, sicut postmodum pallens et tremens indicavit, illic nobis discedentibus inventus, ab eodem fratre qui mortuus fuerat de sepulcro vocatus est. Quod mox etiam subsequens finis edocuit. Nam post dies decem, invasus febribus carne solutus est. PETRUS: Doceri velim si hoc quod per nocturnas visiones ostenditur debeat observari.

CAPUT XLVIII. An observanda sint somnia, et quot sint modi somniorum.

GREGORIUS: In hoc, Petre, sciendum est quia sex modis tangunt animum imagines somniorum. Aliquando namque somnia ventris plenitudine vel inanitate, aliquando vero illusione, aliquando cogitatione simul et illusione, aliquando revelatione, aliquando autem cogitatione simul et revelatione generantur. Sed duo quae prima diximus, omnes experimento cognoscimus; subjuncta autem quatuor, in sacrae Scripturae paginis invenimus. Somnia etenim, nisi plerumque ab occulto hoste per illusionem fierent, nequaquam hoc vir sapiens indicaret, dicens: Multos enim errare fecerunt somnia, et exciderunt sperantes in illis. Vel certe, Non augurabimini, nec observabitis somnia. Quibus profecto verbis cujus sint detestationis ostenditur, quae auguriis conjunguntur. Rursum nisi aliquando ex cogitatione simul et illusione procedederent, vir sapiens minime dixisset: Multas curas sequuntur somnia. Et nisi aliquando somni ex mysterio revelationis orirentur, nec Joseph praeferendum se fratribus somnio videret; nec sponsum Mariae, ut ablato puero in Aegyptum fugeret, per somnium

Angelus admoneret. Rursum nisi aliquando ex cogitatione simul et revelatione procederent, nequaquam Daniel propheta, Nabuchodonosor visionem disserens, a radice cogitationis inchoasset, dicens: Tu rex coepisti cogitare in stratu tuo quid esset futurum post haec, et qui revelat mysteria ostendit tibi quae ventura sunt. Et paulo post: Videbas, et ecce quasi statua una grandis, statua illa magna, et statura sublimis stabat contra te, etc. Daniel itaque dum somnium et implendum reverenter insinuat. et ex qua ortum sit cogitatione manifestat, patenter ostenditur, quia hoc plerumque ex cogitatione simul et revelatione generetur. Sed nimirum cum somnia tot rerum qualitatibus alternent, tanto eis credi difficilius debet, quanto et ex quo impulsu veniant, facilius non elucet. Sancti autem viri inter illusiones atque revelationes ipsas visionum voces aut imagines quodam intimo sapore discernunt, ut sciant vel quid a bono spiritu percipiant, vel quid ab illusione patiantur. Nam si erga haec mens cauta non fuerit, per deceptorem spiritum multis se vanitatibus immergit, qui nonnunquam solet multa vera praedicere, ut ad extremum valeat animam ex aliqua falsitate laqueare.

CAPUT XLIX. De quodam viro cui per somnium longa vitae spatia promissa sunt, et in brevi tempore morte resecata.

Sicut cuidam nostrum nuper certum est contigisse, qui dum somnia vehementer attenderet, ei per somnium longa spatia hujus vitae promissa sunt. Cumque multas pecunias pro longioris vitae stipendiis collegisset, ita repente defunctus est, ut intactas omnes relinqueret, et ipse secum nihil ex bono opere portaret.

CAPUT L. An prosit animabus, si mortuorum corpora in ecclesia fuerint sepulta.

PETRUS: Quis ille sit memini: sed, quaeso te, ea quae coepimus, exsequamur. Putamusne animabus aliquid prodesse si mortuorum corpora

fuerint in Ecclesiis sepulta? GREGORIUS: Quos gravia peccata non deprimunt, hoc prodest mortuis si in ecclesia sepeliantur, quod eorum proximi quoties ad eadem sacra loca conveniunt, suorum quorum sepulcra conspiciunt, recordantur, et pro eis Domino preces fundunt. Nam quos peccata gravia deprimunt, non ad absolutionem potius quam ad majorem damnationis cumulum eorum corpora in ecclesiis ponuntur. Quod melius ostendimus, si ea quae diebus nostris gesta sunt, breviter enarremus.

CAPUT LI. De quadam sanctimoniali femina in Ecclesia sancti Laurentii sepulta, quae dimidia apparuit incensa.

Vir namque vitae venerabilis Felix, Portuensis episcopus, in Sabinensi provincia ortus atque nutritus est. Qui quamdam sanctimonialem feminam in loco eodem fuisse testatur, quae carnis quidem continentiam habuit, sed linguae procacitatem atque stultiloquium non declinavit. Haec igitur defuncta, atque in ecclesia sepulta est. Eadem autem nocte custos ejusdem ecclesiae per revelationem vidit quia deducta ante sacrum altare per medium secabatur, et pars una illius igne cremabatur, et pars altera intacta remanebat. Cumque hoc surgens mane fratribus narrasset, et locum vellet ostendere in quo fuerat igne consumpta, ipsa flammae combustio ita ante altare in marmoribus apparuit, ac si illic eadem femina igne corporeo fuisset concremata. Qua ex re aperte datur intelligi quia hi quibus peccata dimissa non fuerint, ad evitandum judicium sacris locis post mortem non valeant adjuvari.

CAPUT LII. De Valeriani patricii sepultura.

Joannes quoque vir magnificus, in hac urbe locum praefectorum servans, cujus gravitatis atque veritatis sit novimus: qui mihi testatus est Valerianum patricium in civitate quae Brixa dicitur fuisse defunctum. Cui ejusdem civitatis episcopus, accepto pretio, locum in ecclesia praebuit, in quo

sepeliri debuisset. Qui videlicet Valerianus usque ad aetatem decrepitam levis ac lubricus exstitit, modumque suis pravitatibus ponere contempsit. Eadem vero nocte qua sepultus est, beatus Faustinus martyr, in cujus Ecclesia corpus illius fuerat humatum, custodi suo apparuit, dicens. Vade, et dic episcopo ut projiciat hinc has fetentes carnes quas hic posuit; quod si non fecerit, die trigesimo ipse morietur. Quam visionem custos episcopo timuit confiteri, et rursus admonitus declinavit. Die autem trigesimo ejusdem civitatis episcopus, cum vespertina hora sanus atque incolumis ad lectum redisset, subita et inopinata morte defunctus est.

CAPUT LIII. De corpore Valentini ab ecclesia post mortem projecto.

Adest quoque in praesenti venerabilis frater Venantius Lunensis episcopus, et magnificus Liberius vir nobilissimus atque veracissimus, qui se scire, suosque homines interfuisse testantur ei rei quam narrant nuper in Genuensi urbe contigisse. Ibi namque, ut dicunt, Valentinus nomine, ecclesiae Mediolanensis defensor, defunctus est, vir valde lubricus, et cunctis levitatibus occupatus, cujus corpus in ecclesia beati martyris Syri sepultum est. Nocte autem media in eadem ecclesia factae sunt voces, ac si quis violenter ex ea expelleretur atque traheretur foras. Ad quas nimirum voces cucurrerunt custodes, et viderunt duos quosdam teterrimos spiritus, qui ejusdem Valentini pedes quadam ligatura strinxerant, et eum ab ecclesia clamantem ac nimium vociferantem foras trahebant, qui videlicet exterriti ad sua strata reversi sunt. Mane autem facto aperientes sepulcrum in quo idem Valentinus positus fuerat, ejus corpus non invenerunt. Cumque extra ecclesiam quaererent ubi projectum esset, invenerunt hoc in sepulcro alio positum, ligatis adhuc pedibus, sicut ab ecclesia fuerat abstractum. Ex qua re, Petre, collige quia hi quos peccata gravia deprimunt, si in sacro loco sepeliri se faciant, restat ut etiam de sua praesumptione judicentur, quatenus eos sacra loca non liberent, sed etiam culpa temeritatis accuset.

CAPUT LIV. De tinctoris corpore in Ecclesia sepulto, et postmodum non invento.

Nam quid quoque in hac urbe contigerit, tinctorum, qui hic habitant, plurimi testantur, quod quidam artis eorum primus, cum defunctus fuisset, in Ecclesia beati Januarii martyris juxta portam sancti Laurentii a conjuge sua sepultus est. Sequenti autem nocte ex eadem sepultura, audiente custode, ejus spiritus coepit clamare: Ardeo, ardeo. Cum vero diu has voces emisisset, custos hoc ejus nuntiavit uxori. Uxor vero illius eos qui diligenter inspicerent artis ejusdem viros transmisit ad ecclesiam, volens cognoscere qualiter ejus corpus esset in sepulcro, de quo talia clamaret. Qui aperientes sepulcrum, vestimenta quidem intacta repererunt, quae nunc usque in eadem ecclesia pro ejusdem causae testimonio servantur, corpus vero illius omnino non invenerunt, ac si in sepulcro eodem positum non fuisset. Qua ex re colligendum est qua ultione anima ejus damnata sit, cujus et caro est ab ecclesia projecta. Quid igitur sacra loca sepultis prosunt, quando hi qui indigni sunt ab eisdem sacris locis divinitus projiciuntur?

CAPUT LV. Quid sit quod post mortem valeat ad absolutionem animas adjuvare; et de Centumcellensi presbytero; ac de anima Justi monachi.

PETRUS: Quidnam ergo esse poterit, quod mortuorum valeat animabus prodesse? GREGORIUS: Si culpae post mortem insolubiles non sunt, multum solet animas etiam post mortem sacra oblatio hostiae salutaris adjuvare; ita ut hanc nonnunquam ipsae defunctorum animae expetere videantur. Nam praedictus Felix episcopus a quodam vitae venerabilis presbytero, qui usque ante biennium vixit, et in dioecesi Centumcellensis urbis habitabat, atque ecclesiae beati Joannis, quae in loco qui Taurania dicitur sita est, praeerat, cognovisse se asserit quod idem presbyter in eodem loco in quo aquae calidae vapores nimios faciunt, quoties corporis

necessitas exigebat, lavari consueverat. Ubi dum die quadam fuisset ingressus, invenit quemdam incognitum virum ad suum obsequium praeparatum, qui sibi de pedibus calceamenta abstraheret, vestimenta susciperet, et exeunti de caloribus sabana praeberet, atque omne ministerium cum magno famulatu perageret. Cumque hoc saepius fieret, idem presbyter die quadam ad balnea iturus, intra semetipsum cogitans, dixit: Viro illi qui mihi solet tam devotissime ad lavandum obsequi ingratus apparere non debeo, sed aliquid me necesse est ei pro munere portare. Tunc duas secum oblationum coronas detulit. Qui mox ut pervenit ad locum, hominem invenit, atque ex more ejus obsequio in omnibus usus est. Lavit itaque, et cum jam vestitus voluisset egredi, hoc quod secum detulerat, obsequenti sibi viro pro benedictione obtulit, petens ut benigne susciperet quod ei gratia charitatis offerret. Cui ille moerens afflictusque respondit: Mihi ista quare das, Pater? Iste panis sanctus est, ego hunc manducare non possum. Ego etenim quem vides, hujus loci dominus aliquando fui, sed pro culpis meis hic post mortem deputatus sum. Si autem mihi praestare vis, omnipotenti Deo pro me offer hunc panem, ut pro peccatis meis intervenias. Et tunc exauditum te esse cognosce, cum huc ad lavandum veneris, et me minime repereris. In quibus verbis disparuit, et is qui homo esse videbatur, evanescendo innotuit quia spiritus fuit. Idem vero presbyter hebdomada continua se pro eo in lacrymis afflixit, salutarem hostiam quotidie obtulit, et reversus post ad balneum, eum jam minime invenit. Qua ex re quantum prosit animabus immolatio sacrae oblationis ostenditur, quando hanc et ipsi mortuorum spiritus a viventibus petunt, et signa indicant quibus per eam absoluti videantur. Sed neque hoc silendum existimo quod actum in meo monasterio ante hoc triennium reminiscor. Quidam namque monachus, Justus nomine, medicinali arte fuerat imbutus, qui mihi in eodem monasterio constituto sedule obsequi, atque in assiduis aegritudinibus meis excubare consueverat. Hic itaque languore corporis praeventus, ad

extremum deductus est. Cui in ipsa sua molestia frater germanus, nomine Copiosus, serviebat, qui ipse quoque nunc in hac Urbe per eamdem medicinae artem temporalis vitae stipendia sectatur. Sed praedictus Justus cum jam se ad extremum pervenisse cognovisset, eidem Copioso fratri suo quia occultos tres aureos haberet innotuit. Quod nimirum fratribus non potuit celari, sed subtiliter indagantes, atque illius omnia medicamenta perscrutantes, eosdem tres aureos invenerunt absconsos in medicamine. Quod mox ut mihi nuntiatum est, tantum malum de fratre qui nobiscum communiter vixerat aequanimiter ferre non valui, quippe quia ejusdem nostri monasterii semper regula fuerat ut cuncti fratres ita communiter viverent, quatenus eis singulis nulla habere propria liceret. Tunc nimio moerore perculsus cogitare coepi vel quid ad purgationem morientis facerem, vel quid ad exemplum viventibus fratribus providerem. Pretioso igitur, ejusdem monasterii praeposito, ad me accersito, dixi: Vade, et nullus ex fratribus se ad eum morientem jungat, nec sermonem consolationis ex cujuslibet eorum ore percipiat; sed cum in morte constitutus fratres exquisierit, ei suus carnalis frater dicat, quia pro solidis quos occulte habuit a cunctis fratribus abominatus sit, ut saltem in morte de culpa sua mentem ipsius amaritudo transverberet, atque a peccato quod perpetravit, purget. Cum vero mortuus fuerit, corpus illius cum fratrum corporibus non ponatur, sed quolibet in sterquilinio fossam facite, in ea corpus ejus projicite, ibique super eum tres aureos, quos reliquit, jactate, omnes simul clamantes: Pecunia tua tecum sit in perditionem; et sic eum terra operite. In quibus utrisque rebus, unam morienti, alteram vero volui prodesse fratribus viventibus, ut et illum amaritudo mortis a culpa solubilem faceret, et istos avaritiae tanta damnatio misceri in culpa prohiberet, quod ita factum est. Nam cum idem monachus pervenisset ad mortem, atque anxie se quaereret commendare fratribus, et nullus e fratribus ei applicari et loqui dignaretur, ei carnalis frater cur ab omnibus esset abominatus indicavit. Qui protinus de

reatu suo vehementer ingemuit, atque in ipsa sua tristitia e corpore exivit, qui ita est sepultus ut dixeram. Sed fratres omnes eadem ejus sententia conturbati, coeperunt singuli extrema quaeque et vilia, et quae eis habere regulariter semper licuerat, ad medium proferre, vehementerque formidare ne quid apud se esset unde reprehendi potuissent. Cum vero post mortem ejus triginta jam essent dies evoluti, coepit animus meus defuncto fratri compati, ejusque cum dolore gravi supplicia pensare, et si quod esset ereptionis ejus remedium quaerere. Tunc evocato ad me eodem Pretioso monasterii nostri praeposito, tristis dixi: Diu est quod frater ille qui defunctus est in igne cruciatur, debemus ei aliquid charitatis impendere, et eum in quantum possumus, ut eripiatur, adjuvare. Vade itaque, et ab hodierna die diebus triginta continuis offerre pro eo sacrificium stude, ut nullus omnino praetermittatur dies quo pro absolutione illius hostia salutaris non immoletur. Qui protinus abscessit, et dictis paruit. Nobis autem alia curantibus, atque dies evolutos non numerantibus, idem frater qui defunctus fuerat, nocte quadam fratri suo germano Copioso per visionem apparuit. Quem ille cum vidisset, inquisivit, dicens: Quid est, frater, quomodo es? Cui respondit: Nunc usque male fui, sed jam modo bene sum, quia hodie communionem recepi. Quod idem Copiosus pergens protinus indicavit fratribus in monasterio. Fratres vero sollicite computaverunt dies, et ipse dies exstiterat quo pro eo tricesima oblatio fuerat impleta. Cumque Copiosus nesciret quid pro eo fratres agerent, et fratres ignorassent quid de illo Copiosus vidisset, uno eodemque tempore dum cognoscit ille quid isti egerant, atque isti cognoscunt quid ille viderat, concordante simul visione et sacrificio, res aperte claruit quia frater qui defunctus fuerat per salutarem hostiam evasit supplicium.

CAPUT LVI. De vita et transitu Cassii Narniensis episcopi.

PETRUS: Mira sunt valde quae audio, et non mediocriter laeta. GREGORIUS: Ne nobis in dubium veniant verba mortuorum, confirmant haec facta viventium. Nam vir vitae venerabilis Cassius Narniensis episcopus, qui quotidianum offerre consueverat Deo sacrificium, seque in lacrymis inter ipsa sacrificiorum arcana mactabat; mandatum Domini per cujusdam sui presbyteri visionem suscepit, dicens: Age quod agis, operare quod operaris, non cesset pes tuus, non cesset manus tua, natali Apostolorum venies ad me, et retribuam tibi mercedem tuam. Qui post annos septem ipso natalitio apostolorum die cum missarum solemnia peregisset, et mysteria sacrae communionis accepisset, e corpore exivit.

CAPUT LVII. De quodam ab hostibus capto, cujus vincula oblationis hora solvebantur; et de Baraca nauta per salutarem hostiam a naufragio liberato.

Hoc quoque audivimus, quemdam apud hostes in captivitate positum, et in vinculis religatum fuisse, pro quo sua conjux diebus certis sacrificium offerre consueverat: qui longo post tempore ad conjugem reversus, quibus diebus ejus vincula solverentur innotuit, ejusque conjux illos fuisse dies in quibus pro eo sacrificium offerebat recognovit, et ex alia nobis re quae ante annos septem gesta est certissime confirmatur. Agatho enim Panormitanus episcopus, sicut fideles mihi ac religiosi viri multi testati sunt atque testantur, cum beatae memoriae antecessoris mei tempore jussus esset ut Romam veniret, vim nimiae tempestatis pertulit, ita ut se ex tanto undarum periculo evadere posse diffideret. Nauta vero illius, Baraca nomine, qui nunc ejusdem Ecclesiae clericatus officio fungitur, post navem carabum regebat, ruptoque fune cum eodem carabo quem regebat inter undarum cumulos repente disparuit. Navis autem cui episcopus praeerat, tandem post multa pericula ad Usticam insulam fluctibus quassata pervenit. Cumque die tertio episcopus nautam qui ab eo abreptus in carabo fuerat in nulla maris

parte videret apparere, vehementer afflictus mortuum credidit, sed, per obsequium charitatis, unum quod mortuo debebat impendit, ut omnipotenti Deo pro absolutione ejus animae offerre sacrificium victimae salutaris juberet. Quo oblato, restaurata nave, perrexit ad Italiam. Cumque ad Romanum portum venisset, illic nautam reperit quem mortuum putabat. Tunc inopinata exsultatione gavisus est, et eum qualiter tot diebus in illo tanto maris periculo vivere potuisset inquisivit. Qui videlicet indicavit quoties in illius tempestatis fluctibus cum eodem quem regebat fuisset carabo versatus, qualiter cum illo undis pleno nataverat, et quoties eo a superiori parte deorsum verso ipse carinae ejus supersederat; adjungens cum diebus ac noctibus hoc incessanter faceret, jamque ejus virtus funditus ex fame simul et labore cecidisset, quo eum ordine divina misericordia servaverit, indicavit. Etenim quod etiam nunc usque testatur, dicens: Laborans in fluctibus atque deficiens, subito mentis pondere sum gravatus, ita ut neque vigilare me crederem, neque depressus somno essem; et ecce in eodem medio mari me posito, quidam apparuit, qui mihi panem ad refectionem detulit. Quem mox ut comedi, vires recepi, nec longe post navis transiens adfuit, quae me ab illo undarum periculo suscepit, atque ad terram deduxit. Quod scilicet episcopus audiens requisivit diem atque illum fuisse diem reperit quo pro eo presbyter in Usticula insula Deo omnipotenti hostiam sacrae oblationis immolavit. PETRUS: Ea quae narras, ipse quoque in Sicilia positus agnovi. GREGORIUS: Idcirco credo, quia hoc tam aperte cum viventibus ac nescientibus agitur, ut cunctis haec agentibus ac nescientibus ostendatur quia si insolubilos culpae non fuerint, ad absolutionem prodesse etiam mortuis victima sacrae oblationis possit. Sed sciendum est quia illis sacrae victimae mortuis prosint, qui hic vivendo obtinuerunt ut eos etiam post mortem bona adjuvent, quae hic pro ipsis ab aliis fiunt.

CAPUT LVIII. De virtute ac mysterio victimae salutaris.

Inter haec autem pensandum est quod tutior sit via ut bonum quod quisque post mortem suam sperat agi per alios, agat ipse dum vivit per se. Beatius quippe est liberum exire, quam post vincula libertatem quaerere. Debemus itaque praesens saeculum vel quia jam conspicimus defluxisse, tota mente contemnere, quotidiana Deo lacrymarum sacrificia, quotidianas carnis ejus et sanguinis hostias immolare. Haec namque singulariter victima ab aeterno interitu animam salvat, quae illam nobis mortem Unigeniti per mysterium reparat, qui licet resurgens a mortuis jam non moritur, et mors ei ultra non dominabitur, tamen in semetipso immortaliter atque incorruptibiliter vivens, pro nobis iterum in hoc mysterio sacrae oblationis immolatur. Ejus quippe ibi corpus sumitur, ejus caro in populi salutem partitur; ejus sanguis non jam in manus infidelium, sed in ora fidelium funditur. Hinc ergo pensemus quale sit pro nobis hoc sacrificium, quod pro absolutione nostra passionem unigeniti Filii semper imitatur. Quis enim fidelium habere dubium possit, in ipsa immolationis hora ad sacerdotis vocem coelos aperiri, in illo Jesu Christi mysterio angelorum choros adesse, summis ima sociari, terrena coelestibus jungi, unumque ex visibilibus atque invisibilibus fieri?

CAPUT LIX. De affligendo corde inter sacra mysteria, et de mentis custodia post compunctionem.

Sed necesse est ut cum haec agimus, nosmetipsos Deo in cordis contritione mactemus, quia qui passionis dominicae mysteria celebramus, debemus imitari quod agimus. Tunc ergo vere pro nobis hostia erit Deo, cum nos ipsos hostiam fecerimus. Sed studendum nobis est ut etiam post orationis tempora, in quantum Deo largiente possumus, in ipso animam suo pondere et vigore servemus; ne post cogitatio fluxa dissolvat, ne vana menti laetitia subrepat, et lucrum compunctionis anima per incuriam fluxae cogitationis perdat. Sic quippe quod proposcerat Anna obtinere meruit, quia post lacrymas in eodem mentis vigore permansit. De qua nimirum scriptum est:

Vultusque ejus non sunt amplius in diversa mutati. Quae igitur non est oblita quod petiit, non est privata munere quod poposcit.

CAPUT LX De relaxandis culpis alienis, ut nostrae nobis relaxentur.

Sed inter haec sciendum est quia ille recte sui delicti veniam postulat, qui prius hoc quod in ipso delinquitur relaxat. Munus enim non accipitur, nisi ante discordia ab animo repellatur, dicente Veritate: Si offers munus tuum ante altare, et ibi recordatus fueris quia frater tuus habet aliquid adversum te, relinque munus tuum ante altare, et vade prius reconciliari fratri tuo, et tunc veniens offeres munus tuum. Qua in re pensandum est, cum omnis culpa munere solvatur, quam gravis est culpa discordiae, pro qua nec munus accipitur. Debemus itaque ad proximum quamvis longe positum, longeque disjunctum, mente ire, eique animum subdere, humilitate illum ac benevolentia placare, ut scilicet Conditor noster dum tale placitum nostrae mentis aspexerit, a peccato nos solvat, qui munus pro culpa sumit. Veritatis autem voce attestante, didicimus quia servus qui decem millia talenta debebat, cum poenitentiam ageret, absolutionem debiti a Domino accepit; sed quia conservo suo centum sibi denarios debenti debitum non dimisit, et hoc est jussus exigi quod ei fuerat jam dimissum. Ex quibus videlicet dictis constat, quia si hoc quod in nos delinquitur, ex corde non dimittimus, et illud rursus a nobis exigitur quod nobis jam per poenitentiam dimissum fuisse gaudebamus. Igitur dum per indulti temporis spatium licet, dum judex sustinet, dum conversionem nostram is qui culpas examinat exspectat, conflemus in lacrymis duritiam mentis, formemus in proximis gratiam benignitatis. Et fidenter dico quia salutari hostia post mortem non indigebimus, si ante mortem Deo ipsi hostia fuerimus.

Regulae Pastoralis Liber

CONTENTS

PRIMA PARS. AD JOANNEM EPISCOPUM CIVITATIS RAVENNAE

Reverentissimo et sanctissimo fratri Joanni coepiscopo, Gregorius. Pastoralis curae me pondera fugere delitescendo voluisse, benigna, frater carissime, atque humili intentione reprehendis; quae ne quibusdam levia esse videantur, praesentis libri stylo exprimo de eorum gravedine omne quod penso, ut et haec qui vacat, incaute non expetat; et qui incaute expetiit, adeptum se esse pertimescat. Quadripartita vero disputatione liber iste distinguitur, ut ad lectoris sui animum ordinatis allegationibus quasi quibusdam pastibus gradiatur. Nam cum rerum necessitas exposcit, pensandum valde est ad culmen quisque regiminis qualiter veniat; atque ad hoc rite perveniens, qualiter vivat; et bene vivens, qualiter doceat; et recte docens, infirmitatem suam quotidie quanta consideratione cognoscat, ne aut humilitas accessum fugiat, aut perventioni vita contradicat; aut vitam doctrina destituat; aut doctrinam praesumptio extollat. Prius ergo appetitum timor temperet: post autem magisterium quod a non quaerente suscipitur, vita commendet; ac deinde necesse est ut pastoris bonum quod vivendo ostenditur, etiam loquendo propagetur. Ad extremum vero superest ut perfecta quaeque opera consideratio propriae infirmitatis deprimat, ne haec ante occulti arbitrii oculos tumor elationis exstinguat. Sed quia sunt plerique mihi imperitia similes, qui dum metiri se nesciunt, quae non didicerint docere concupiscunt; qui pondus magisterii tanto levius aestimant, quanto vim magnitudinis illius ignorant; ab ipso libri hujus reprehendantur exordio; ut quia indocti ac praecipites doctrinae arcem tenere appetunt, a praecipitationis suae ausibus in ipsa locutionis nostrae janua repellantur.

CAPUT PRIMUM

Ne venire imperiti ad magisterium audeant.

Nulla ars doceri praesumitur, nisi intenta prius meditatione discatur. Ab imperitis ergo pastorale magisterium qua temeritate suscipitur, quando ars est artium regimen animarum. Quis autem cogitationum vulnera occultiora esse nesciat vulneribus viscerum? Et tamen saepe qui nequaquam spiritalia praecepta cognoverunt, cordis se medicos profiteri non metuunt: dum qui pigmentorum vim nesciunt, videri medici carnis erubescunt. Sed quia auctore Deo ad religionis reverentiam omne jam praesentis saeculi culmen inclinatur, sunt nonnulli qui intra sanctam Ecclesiam per speciem regiminis gloriam affectant honoris; videri doctores appetunt, transcendere caeteros concupiscunt, atque attestante Veritate, primas salutationes in foro, primos in coenis recubitus, primas in conventibus cathedras quaerunt (Matth. XXIII, 6, 7); qui susceptum curae pastoralis officium ministrare digne tanto magis nequeunt, quanto ad humilitatis magisterium ex sola elatione pervenerunt. Ipsa quippe in magisterio lingua confunditur, quando aliud discitur, et aliud docetur. Quos contra Dominus per prophetam queritur, dicens: Ipsi regnaverunt, et non ex me; principes exstiterunt, et ego ignoravi (Osee VIII, 4). Ex se namque, et non ex arbitrio summi Rectoris regnant, qui nullis fulti virtutibus nequaquam divinitus vocati, sed sua cupidine accensi, culmen regiminis rapiunt potius quam assequuntur. Quos tamen internus judex et provehit, et nescit, quia quos permittendo tolerat, profecto per judicium reprobationis ignorat. Unde ad se quibusdam et post miracula venientibus dicit: Recedite a me operarii iniquitatis, nescio qui estis (Luc. XIII, 27). Pastorum imperitia voce Veritatis increpatur, cum per Prophetam dicitur: Ipsi pastores ignoraverunt intelligentiam (Isai. LVI, 11). Quos rursum Dominus detestatur, dicens: Et tenentes legem nescierunt me (Jer. II, 8). Et nesciri ergo se ab eis Veritas queritur, et nescire se principatum nescientium protestatur, quia profecto hi qui ea quae sunt Domini nesciunt, a Domino nesciuntur, Paulo attestante qui ait: Si quis autem ignorat, ignorabitur (I Cor. XIV, 38). Quae nimirum Pastorum saepe imperitia

meritis congruit subjectorum, quia quamvis lumen scientiae sua culpa exigente non habeant, districto tamen judicio agitur, ut per eorum ignorantiam hi etiam qui sequuntur offendant. Hinc namque in Evangelio per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Si caecus caeco ducatum praebeat, ambo in foveam cadunt (Matth. XV, 14). Hinc Psalmista non optantis animo, sed prophetantis ministerio denuntiat, dicens: Obscurentur oculi eorum ne videant, et dorsum illorum semper incurva (Psal. LXVIII, 24). Oculi quippe sunt, qui in ipsa honoris summi facie positi, providendi itineris officium susceperunt: quibus hi nimirum qui subsequenter inhaerent; dorsa nominantur. Obscuratis ergo oculis dorsum flectitur, quia cum lumen scientiae perdunt qui praeeunt, profecto ad portanda peccatorum curvantur onera qui sequuntur.

CAPUT II

Ne locum regiminis subeant, qui vivendo non perficiunt quae meditando didicerunt.

Et sunt nonnulli qui solerti cura spiritalia praecepta perscrutantur, sed quae intelligendo penetrant, vivendo conculcant; repente docent quae non opere, sed meditatione didicerunt; et quod verbis praedicant, moribus impugnant. Unde fit ut cum Pastor per abrupta graditur, ad praecipitium grex sequatur. Hinc namque per prophetam Dominus contra contemptibilem Pastorum scientiam queritur, dicens: Cum ipsi limpidissimam aquam biberetis, reliquam pedibus vestris turbabatis; et oves meae quae conculcata pedibus vestris fuerant, pascebantur; et quae pedes vestri turbaverant, haec bibebant (Ezech. XXXIV, 18, 19). Aquam quippe limpidissimam Pastores bibunt, cum fluenta veritatis recte intelligentes hauriunt. Sed eamdem aquam pedibus perturbare, est sanctae meditationis studia male vivendo corrumpere. Aquam scilicet eorum turbatam pedibus oves bibunt, cum

subjecti quique non sectantur verba quae audiunt, sed sola quae conspiciunt exempla pravitatis imitantur. Qui cum dicta sitiunt, quia per opera pervertuntur, quasi corruptis fontibus in potibus lutum sumunt. Hinc quoque scriptum est per prophetam: Laqueus ruinae populi mei, sacerdotes mali (Osee. V, 1; IX, 8). Hinc rursum de sacerdotibus Dominus per prophetam dicit: Facti sunt domui Israel in offendiculum iniquitatis. Nemo quippe amplius in Ecclesia nocet, quam qui perverse agens, nomen vel ordinem sanctitatis habet. Delinquentem namque hunc redarguere nullus praesumit; et in exemplum culpa vehementer extenditur, quando pro reverentia ordinis peccator honoratur. Indigni autem quique tanti reatus pondera fugerent, si veritatis sententiam sollicita cordis aure pensarent, quae ait: Qui scandalizaverit unum de pusillis istis qui in me credunt, expedit ei ut suspendatur mola asinaria in collo ejus, et demergatur in profundum maris (Matth. XVIII, 6). Per molam quippe asinariam, secularis vitae circuitus ac labor exprimitur, et per profundum maris extrema damnatio designatur. Qui ergo ad sanctitatis speciem deductus, vel verbo caeteros destruit, vel exemplo; melius profecto fuerat, ut hunc ad mortem sub exteriori habitu terrena acta constringerent, quam sacra officia in culpa caeteris imitabilem demonstrarent, quia nimirum si solus caderet, utcumque hunc tolerabilior inferni poena cruciaret.

CAPUT III

De pondere regiminis; et quod adversa quaeque despicienda sunt, et prospera formidanda.

Haec itaque breviter diximus, ut quantum sit pondus regiminis monstraremus, ne temerare sacra regimina quisquis his impar est audeat, et per concupiscentiam culminis, ducatum suscipiat perditionis. Hinc enim pie Jacobus prohibet, dicens: Nolite plures magistri fieri, fratres mei (Jac. III,

1). Hinc ipse Dei hominumque Mediator regnum percipere vitavit in terris, qui supernorum quoque spirituum scientiam sensumque transcendens, ante saecula regnat in coelis. Scriptum quippe est: Jesus ergo cum cognovisset quia venturi essent ut raperent eum, et facerent eum regem, fugit iterum in montem ipse solus (Joan. VI, 15). Quis enim principari hominibus tam sine culpa potuisset, quam is qui hos nimirum regeret, quos ipse creaverat? Sed quia idcirco in carne venerat, ut non solum nos per passionem redimeret, verum etiam per conversationem doceret, exemplum se sequentibus praebens, rex fieri noluit, ad crucis vero patibulum sponte convenit; oblatam gloriam culminis fugit, poenam probrosae mortis appetiit; ut membra ejus videlicet discerent favores mundi fugere, terrores minime timere, pro veritate adversa diligere, prospera formidando declinare, quia et ista saepe per tumorem cor inquinant, et illa per dolorem purgant. In istis se animus erigit, in illis autem etiamsi quando se erexerit, sternit. In istis sese homo obliviscitur, in illis vero ad sui memoriam nolens etiam coactusque revocatur. In istis saepe et anteacta bona depereunt, in illis autem longi quoque temporis admissa terguntur. Nam plerumque adversitatis magisterio sub disciplina cor premitur: quod si ad regiminis culmen eruperit, in elationem protinus usu gloriae permutatur. Sic Saul, qui indignum se prius considerans fugerat, mox ut regni gubernacula suscepit, intumuit (I Reg. X, 22; XV, 17, 30); honorari namque coram populo cupiens, dum reprehendi publice noluit, ipsum qui in regnum se unxerat, scidit (Act. XIII, 22). Sic David auctoris judicio pene in cunctis actibus placens, mox ut pressurae pondere caruit, in tumorem vulneris erupit (II Reg. XI, 3, seq.), factusque est in morte viri crudeliter rigidus, qui in appetitu feminae fuit enerviter fluxus; et qui malis ante noverat pie parcere, in bonorum quoque necem post didicit sine obstaculo retractationis anhelare (Ibid., 15). Prius quippe ferire deprehensum persecutorem noluit, et post cum damno desudantis

exercitus etiam devotum militem exstinxit. Quem profecto ab electorum numero culpa longius raperet, nisi hunc ad veniam flagella revocassent.

CAPUT IV

Quod plerumque occupatio regiminis soliditatem dissipet mentis.

Saepe suscepta cura regiminis cor per diversa diverberat, et impar quisque invenitur ad singula, dum confusa mente dividitur ad multa. Unde quidam sapiens provide prohibet, dicens: Fili, ne in multis sint actus tui (Eccli. XI, 10), quia videlicet nequaquam plene in uniuscujusque operis ratione colligitur, dum mens per diversa partitur. Cumque foras per insolentem curam trahitur, a timoris intimi soliditate vacuatur: fit in exteriorum dispositione sollicita, et sui solummodo ignara, scit multa cogitare, se nesciens. Nam cum plus quam necesse est se exterioribus implicat, quasi occupata in itinere obliviscitur quo tendebat; ita ut ab studio suae inquisitionis aliena, ne ipsa quidem quae patitur damna consideret, et per quanta delinquat ignoret. Neque enim peccare se Ezechias credidit (IV Reg. XX, 13), cum venientibus ad se alienigenis aromatum cellas ostendit; sed in damnationem secuturae prolis ex eo iram judicis pertulit, quod se facere licenter aestimavit (Isai. XXXIX, 4). Saepe dum multa suppetunt, dumque agi possunt, quae subjecti quia acta sunt admirentur, in cogitatione se animus elevat, et plene in se iram judicis provocat, quamvis per iniqua foras opera non erumpat. Intus quippe est qui judicat, intus quod judicatur. Cum ergo in corde delinquimus, latet homines quod apud nos agimus, sed tamen ipso judice teste peccamus. Neque enim rex Babyloniae tunc reus de elatione exstitit (Dan. IV, 16, seq.), cum ad elationis verba pervenit; quippe qui ore prophetico et ante cum ab elatione tacuit, sententiam reprobationis audivit. Culpam namque perpetratae superbiae jam ante deterserat, qui omnipotentem Deum quem se offendisse reperit, cunctis sub se gentibus

praedicavit. Sed post haec successu suae potestatis elevatus, dum magna se fecisse gauderet, cunctis prius in cogitatione se praetulit, et post adhuc tumidus dixit: Nonne haec est Babylon magna, quam ego aedificavi in domum regni, et in robore fortitudinis meae, et in gloria decoris mei? (Ibid., IV, 27.) Quae videlicet vox illius irae vindictam aperte pertulit, quam occulta elatio accendit. Nam districtus judex prius invisibiliter vidit quod postea publice feriendo reprehendit. Unde et in irrationale animal hunc vertit, ab humana societate separavit, agri bestiis mutata mente conjunxit, ut districto videlicet justoque judicio homo quoque esse perderet, qui magnum se ultra homines aestimasset. Haec itaque proferentes, non potestatem reprehendimus, sed ab appetitu illius cordis infirmitatem munimus, ne imperfecti quique culmen arripere regiminis audeant, et qui in planis stantes titubant, in praecipiti pedem ponant.

CAPUT V

De his qui in regiminis culmine prodesse exemplo virtutum possunt, sed quietem propriam sectando refugiunt.

Nam sunt nonnulli, qui eximia virtutum dona percipiunt, et pro exercitatione caeterorum magnis muneribus exaltantur, qui studio castitatis mundi, abstinentiae robore validi, doctrinae dapibus referti, patientiae longanimitate humiles, auctoritatis fortitudine erecti, pietatis gratia benigni, justitiae severitate districti sunt. Qui nimirum culmen regiminum si vocati suscipere renuunt, ipsa sibi plerumque dona adimunt, quae non pro se tantummodo, sed etiam pro aliis acceperunt. Cumque sua et non aliorum lucra cogitant, ipsis se, quae privata habere appetunt, bonis privant. Hinc namque ad discipulos Veritas dicit: Non potest civitas abscondi super montem posita; neque accendunt lucernam, et ponunt eam sub modio, sed super candelabrum, ut luceat omnibus qui in domo sunt (Matth. V, 15). Hinc

Petro ait: Simon Joannis, amas me? (Joan. XV, 16, 17.) Qui cum se amare protinus respondisset, audivit: Si diligis me, pasce oves meas. Si ergo dilectionis est testimonium cura pastionis, quisquis virtutibus pollens gregem Dei renuit pascere, pastorem summum convincitur non amare. Hinc Paulus dicit: Si Christus pro omnibus mortuus est, ergo omnes mortui sunt. Et si pro omnibus mortuus est, superest ut qui vivunt, jam non sibi vivant, sed ei qui pro ipsis mortuus est, et resurrexit (II Cor. V, 15). Hinc Moyses ait (Deuteron. XXV, 5), ut uxorem fratris sine filiis defuncti, superstes frater accipiat, atque ad nomen fratris filios gignat: quam si accipere forte renuerit, huic in faciem mulier exspuat, unumque ei pedem propinquus discalciet, ejusque habitaculum domum discalceati vocet. Frater quippe defunctus ille est, qui post resurrectionis gloriam apparens, dixit: Ite, dicite fratribus meis (Matth. XXVIII, 10). Qui quasi sine filiis obiit, quia adhuc electorum suorum numerum non implevit. Hujus scilicet uxorem superstes frater sortiri praecipitur, quia dignum profecto est, ut cura sanctae Ecclesiae ei qui hanc bene regere praevalet imponatur. Cui nolenti in faciem mulier exspuit, quia quisquis ex muneribus quae perceperit prodesse aliis non curat, bonis quoque ejus sancta Ecclesia exprobrans, ei quasi in faciem salivam jactat. Cui ex uno pede calceamentum tollitur, ut discalceati domus vocetur. Scriptum quippe est: Calceati pedes in praeparatione Evangelii pacis (Ephes. VI, 15). Si ergo ut nostram, sic curam proximi gerimus, utrumque pedem per calceamentum munimus. Qui vero suam cogitans utilitatem, proximorum negligit, quasi unius pedis calceamentum cum dedecore amittit. Sunt itaque nonnulli qui magnis, ut diximus, muneribus ditati, dum solius contemplationis studiis inardescunt, parere utilitati proximorum in praedicatione refugiunt, secretum quietis diligunt, secessum speculationis appetunt. De quo si districte judicentur, ex tantis proculdubio rei sunt, quantis venientes ad publicum prodesse potuerunt. Qua enim mente is qui proximis profuturus enitesceret, utilitati caeterorum secretum

praeponit suum, quando ipse summi Patris unigenitus, ut multis prodesset, de sinu Patris egressus est ad publicum nostrum?

CAPUT VI

Quod hi qui pondus regiminis per humilitatem fugiunt, tunc vere sunt humiles, cum divinis judiciis non reluctantur.

Et sunt nonnulli qui ex sola humilitate refugiunt, ne eis quibus se impares aestimant praeferantur. Quorum profecto humilitas, si caeteris quoque virtutibus cingitur, tunc ante Dei oculos vera est, cum ad respuendum hoc quod utiliter subire praecipitur pertinax non est. Neque enim vere humilis est, qui superni nutus arbitrium ut debeat praeesse intelligit, et tamen praeesse contemnit. Sed divinis dispositionibus subditus, atque a vitio obstinationis alienus, cum sibi regiminis culmen imperatur, si jam donis praeventus est, quibus et aliis prosit, et ex corde debet fugere, et invitus obedire.

CAPUT VII

Quod nonnunquam praedicationis officium et nonnulli laudabiliter appetunt, et ad hoc nonnulli laudabiliter coacti pertrahuntur.

Quamvis nonnunquam praedicationis officium et nonnulli laudabiliter appetunt, et ad hoc nonnulli laudabiliter coacti pertrahuntur: quod liquido cognoscimus, si duorum prophetantium facta pensamus, quorum unus ut ad praedicandum mitti debuisset sponte se praebuit, quo tamen alter pergere cum pavore recusavit. Isaias quippe Domino quaerenti quem mitteret, ultro se obtulit, dicens: Ecce ego, mitte me (Isai. VI, 8). Jeremias autem mittitur, et tamen ne mitti debeat humiliter reluctatur, dicens: A, a, a, Domine Deus, ecce nescio loqui, quia puer ego sum (Jerem. I, 6). En ab utrisque exterius

diversa vox prodiit, sed non a diverso fonte dilectionis emanavit. Duo quippe sunt praecepta charitatis, Dei videlicet amor et proximi. Per activam igitur vitam prodesse proximis cupiens Isaias officium praedicationis appetit; per contemplativam vero Jeremias amori conditoris sedulo inhaerere desiderans, ne mitti ad praedicandum debeat contradicit. Quod ergo laudabiliter alter appetiit, hoc laudabiliter alter expavit: iste ne tacitae contemplationis lucra loquendo perderet, ille ne damna studiosi operis tacendo sentiret. Sed hoc in utrisque est subtiliter intuendum, quia et is qui recusavit, plene non restitit; et is qui mitti voluit, ante per altaris calculum se purgatum vidit; ne aut non purgatus adire quisque sacra ministeria audeat, aut quem superna gratia elegit, sub humilitatis specie superbe contradicat. Quia igitur valde difficile est purgatum se quemlibet posse cognoscere, praedicationis officium tutius declinatur; nec tamen declinari, ut diximus, pertinaciter debet, cum ad suscipiendum hoc superna voluntas agnoscitur. Quod Moyses utrumque miro opere explevit, qui praeesse tantae multitudini et noluit et obedivit. Superbus enim fortasse esset, si ducatum plebis innumerae sine trepidatione susciperet; et rursum superbus existeret, si auctoris imperio obedire recusaret. Utrobique ergo humilis, utrobique subjectus, et praeesse populis semetipsum metiendo noluit, et tamen de imperantis viribus praesumendo consensit. Hinc ergo, hinc quique praecipites colligant cum quanta culpa ex appetitu proprio caeteris praeferri non metuunt, si sancti viri plebium ducatum suscipere Deo etiam jubente timuerunt. Moyses suadente Domino trepidat, et infirmus quisque ut honoris onus percipiat anhelat; et qui ad casum valde urgetur ex propriis, humerum libenter opprimendus ponderibus submittit alienis; quae egit ferre non valet, et auget quod portet.

CAPUT VIII

De his qui praeesse concupiscunt, et ad usum suae libidinis instrumentum Apostolici sermonis arripiunt.

Plerumque vero qui praeesse concupiscunt, ad usum suae libidinis instrumentum Apostolici sermonis arripiunt, quo ait: Si quis episcopatum desiderat, bonum opus desiderat (I Tim. III, 1); qui tamen laudans desiderium, in pavorem vertit protinus quod laudavit, cum repente subjungit: Oportet autem episcopum irreprehensibilem esse (Ibid., 2). Cumque virtutum necessaria subsequenter enumerat, quae sit irreprehensibilitas ipsa manifestat. Et favet ergo ex desiderio, et terret ex praecepto, ac si aperte dicat: Laudo quod quaeritis, sed prius discite quid quaeratis; ne dum vosmetipsos metiri negligitis, tanto foedior vestra reprehensibilitas appareat, quanto et a cunctis conspici in honoris arce festinat. Magnus enim regendi artifex favoribus impellit, terroribus retrahit, ut auditores suos et descripto irreprehensibilitatis culmine restringat a superbia, et officium laudando quod quaeritur, componat ad vitam. Quamvis notandum quod illo in tempore hoc dicitur, quo quisquis plebibus praeerat, primus ad martyrii tormenta ducebatur. Tunc ergo laudabile fuit episcopatum quaerere, quando per hunc quemque dubium non erat ad supplicia graviora pervenire. Unde ipsum quoque episcopatus officium boni operis expressione definitur, cum dicitur: Si quis episcopatum desiderat, bonum opus desiderat (I Tim. III, 1). Ipse ergo sibi testis est quia episcopatum non appetit, qui non per hunc boni operis ministerium, sed honoris gloriam quaerit. Sacrum quippe officium non solum non diligit omnino, sed nescit, qui ad culmen regiminis anhelans, in occulta meditatione cogitationis caeterorum subjectione pascitur, laude propria laetatur, ad honorem cor elevat, rerum affluentium abundantia exsultat. Mundi ergo lucrum quaeritur sub ejus honoris specie quo mundi destrui lucra debuerunt. Cumque mens humilitatis culmen arripere ad elationem cogitat, quod foris appetit, intus immutat.

CAPUT IX

Quod mens praeesse volentium plerumque sibi ficta bonorum operum promissione blanditur.

Sed plerumque hi qui subire magisterium pastorale cupiunt, nonnulla quoque bona opera animo proponunt; et quamvis hoc elationis intentione appetant, operaturos tamen se magna pertractant; fitque ut aliud in imis intentio supprimat, aliud tractantis animo superficies cogitationis ostendat. Nam saepe sibi de se mens ipsa mentitur, et fingit se de bono opere amare quod non amat, de mundi autem gloria non amare quod amat: quae principari appetens, fit ad hoc pavida cum quaerit, audax cum pervenerit. Tendens enim, ne non perveniat trepidat; sed repente perveniens, jure sibi hoc debitum ad quod pervenerit putat. Cumque percepti principatus officio perfrui saeculariter coeperit, libenter obliviscitur quidquid religiose cogitavit. Unde necesse est ut cum cogitatio extra usum ducitur, protinus mentis oculus ad opera transacta revocetur; ac penset quisque quid subjectus egerit, et repente cognoscit si praelatus bona agere quae proposuerit possit, quia nequaquam valet in culmine humilitatem discere, qui in imis positus non desiit superbire. Nescit laudem cum suppetit fugere, qui ad hanc didicit cum deesset anhelare. Nequaquam vincere avaritiam potest, quando ad multorum sustentationem tenditur is cui sufficere propria nec soli potuerunt. Ex anteacta ergo vita se quisque inveniat, ne in appetitu se culminis imago cogitationis illudat. Quamvis plerumque in occupatione regiminis ipse quoque boni operis usus perditur, qui in tranquillitate tenebatur, quia quieto mari recte navem et imperitus dirigit; turbato autem tempestatis fluctibus, etiam peritus se nauta confundit. Quid namque est potestas culminis, nisi tempestas mentis? In qua semper cogitationum procellis navis cordis quatitur, huc illucque incessanter impellitur, ut per repentinos excessus oris et operis quasi per obviantia saxa frangatur. Inter

haec itaque quid sequendum est, quid tenendum, nisi ut virtutibus pollens coactus ad regimen veniat, virtutibus vacuus nec coactus accedat? Ille si omnino renititur, caveat ne acceptam pecuniam in sudarium ligans, de ejus occultatione judicetur (Matth. XXV, 18). Pecuniam quippe in sudario ligare, est percepta dona sub otio lenti torporis abscondere. At contra, iste cum regimen appetit, attendat ne per exemplum pravi operis, Pharisaeorum more, ad ingressum regni tendentibus obstaculum fiat: qui juxta Magistri vocem (Matth. XXIII, 13) nec ipsi intrant, nec alios intrare permittunt. Cui considerandum quoque est, quia cum causam populi electus praesul suscipit, quasi ad aegrum medicus accedit. Si ergo adhuc in ejus opere passiones vivunt, qua praesumptione percussum mederi properat, qui in facie vulnus portat?

CAPUT X

Qualis quisque ad regimen venire debeat.

Ille igitur, ille modis omnibus debet ad exemplum vivendi pertrahi, qui cunctis carnis passionibus moriens jam spiritaliter vivit, qui prospera mundi postposuit, qui nulla adversa pertimescit, qui sola interna desiderat. Cujus intentioni bene congruens, nec omnino per imbecillitatem corpus, nec valde per contumeliam repugnat spiritus. Qui ad aliena cupienda non ducitur, sed propria largitur. Qui per pietatis viscera citius ad ignoscendum flectitur, sed nunquam plus quam deceat ignoscens, ab arce rectitudinis inclinatur. Qui nulla illicita perpetrat, sed perpetrata ab aliis ut propria deplorat. Qui ex affectu cordis alienae infirmitati compatitur, sicque in bonis proximi sicut in suis provectibus laetatur. Qui ita se imitabilem caeteris in cunctis quae agit insinuat, ut inter eos non habeat quod saltem de transactis erubescat. Qui sic studet vivere, ut proximorum quoque corda arentia doctrinae valeat fluentis irrigare. Qui orationis usu et experimento jam didicit, quod obtinere a

Domino quae poposcerit, possit, cui per effectus vocem jam quasi specialiter dicitur: Adhuc loquente te, dicam, Ecce adsum (Isai. LVIII, 9). Si enim fortasse quis veniat, ut pro se ad intercedendum nos apud potentem quempiam virum, qui sibi iratus, nobis vero est incognitus, ducat, protinus respondemus: Ad intercedendum venire non possumus, quia familiaritatis ejus notitiam non habemus. Si ergo homo apud hominem de quo minime praesumit fieri intercessor erubescit, qua mente apud Deum intercessionis locum pro populo arripit, qui familiarem se ejus gratiae esse per vitae meritum nescit? Aut ab eo quomodo aliis veniam postulat, qui utrum sibi sit placatus ignorat? Qua in re adhuc aliud est sollicitius formidandum, ne qui placare posse iram creditur, hanc ipse ex proprio reatu mereatur. Cuncti enim liquido novimus, quia cum is qui displicet ad intercedendum mittitur, irati animus ad deteriora provocatur. Qui ergo adhuc desideriis terrenis astringitur, caveat ne districti iram judicis gravius accendens, dum loco delectatur gloriae, fiat subditis auctor ruinae.

CAPUT XI

Qualis quisque ad regimen venire non debeat.

Solerter ergo se quisque metiatur ne locum regiminis assumere audeat, si adhuc in se vitium damnabiliter regnat, ne is quem crimen depravat proprium, intercessor fieri appetat pro culpis aliorum. Hinc etenim superna voce ad Moysen dicitur: Loquere ad Aaron: Homo de semine tuo per familias qui habuerit maculam, non offeret panes Domino Deo suo, nec accedet ad ministerium ejus (Lev. XXI, 17). Ubi et repente subjungitur: Si caecus fuerit, si claudus, si vel parvo, vel grandi et torto naso, si fracto pede, si manu, si gibbus, si lippus, si albuginem habens in oculo, si jugem scabiem, si impetiginem in corpore, vel ponderosus (Ibid., 18). Caecus quippe est, qui supernae contemplationis lumen ignorat; qui praesentis vitae

tenebris pressus, dum venturam lucem nequaquam diligendo conspicit, quo gressus operis porrigat nescit. Hinc etenim prophetante Anna dicitur, Pedes sanctorum suorum servabit, et impii in tenebris conticescent (I Reg. II, 9). Claudus vero est qui quidem quo pergere debeat aspicit, sed per infirmitatem mentis, vitae viam perfecte non valet tenere quam videt, quia ad virtutis statum dum fluxa consuetudo non erigitur, quo desiderium innititur, illuc gressus operis efficaciter non sequuntur. Hinc enim Paulus dicit: Remissas manus et dissoluta genua erigite, et gressus rectos facite pedibus vestris, ut non claudicans quis erret, magis autem sanetur (Heb. XII, 12, 13). Parvo autem naso est, qui ad tenendam mensuram discretionis idoneus non est. Naso quippe odores fetoresque discernimus. Recte ergo per nasum discretio exprimitur, per quam virtutes eligimus, delicta reprobamus. Unde et in laude sponsae dicitur: Nasus tuus sicut turris quae est in Libano (Cant. VII, 4), quia nimirum sancta Ecclesia quae ex causis singulis tentamenta prodeant, per discretionem conspicit, et ventura vitiorum bella ex alto deprehendit. Sed sunt nonnulli qui dum aestimari hebetes nolunt, saepe se in quibusdam inquisitionibus plus quam necesse est exercentes, ex nimia subtilitate falluntur. Unde hic quoque subditur: Vel grandi et torto naso. Nasus enim grandis et tortus est discretionis subtilitas immoderata, quae dum plus quam decet excreverit, actionis suae rectitudinem ipsa confundit. Fracto autem pede vel manu est, qui viam Dei pergere omnino non valet, atque a bonis actibus funditur exsors vacat, quatenus haec non ut claudus saltem cum infirmitate teneat, sed ab his omnimodo alienus existat. Gibbus vero est quem terrenae sollicitudinis pondus deprimit, ne unquam ad superna respiciat, sed solis his quae in infimis calcantur intendat. Qui et si quando aliquid ex bono patriae coelestis audierit, ad hoc nimirum perversae consuetudinis pondere praegravatus, cordis faciem non attollit, quia cogitationis statum erigere non valet, quem terrenae usus sollicitudinis curvum tenet. Ex horum quippe specie Psalmista dicit: Incurvatus sum et

humiliatus sum usquequaque (Psal. XXXVIII, 8, sec. LXX). Quorum culpam quoque per semetipsam Veritas reprobans, ait: Semen autem quod in spinis cecidit, hi sunt qui audierunt verbum, et a sollicitudinibus et divitiis et voluptatibus vitae euntes suffocantur, et non referunt fructum (Luc. VIII, 14). Lippus vero est, cujus quidem ingenium ad cognitionem veritatis emicat, sed tamen hoc carnalia opera obscurant. In lippis quippe oculis pupillae sanae sunt, sed humore defluente infirmatae palpebrae grossescunt; quorum, quia infusione crebro atteruntur, etiam acies pupillae vitiatur. Et sunt nonnulli quorum sensum carnalis vitae operatio sauciat, qui videre recta subtiliter per ingenium poterant, sed usu pravorum actuum caligant. Lippus itaque est, cujus sensum natura exacuit; sed conversationis pravitas confundit. Cui bene per angelum dicitur: Collyrio inunge oculos tuos ut videas (Apoc. III, 18). Collyrio quippe oculos ut videamus inungimus, cum ad cognoscendam veri luminis claritatem intellectus nostri aciem medicamine bonae operationis adjuvamus. Albuginem vero habet in oculo, qui veritatis lucem videre non sinitur, quia arrogantia sapientiae seu justitiae caecatur. Pupilla namque oculi nigra videt, albuginem tolerans nil videt, quia videlicet sensus humanae cogitationis si stultum se peccatoremque intelligit, cognitionem intimae claritatis apprehendit. Si autem candorem sibi justitiae seu sapientiae tribuit, a luce se supernae cognitionis excludit; et eo claritatem veri luminis nequaquam penetrat, quo se apud se per arrogantiam exaltat; sicut de quibusdam dicitur: Dicentes enim se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt (Rom. I, 22). Jugem vero habet scabiem, cui carnis petulantia sine cessatione dominatur. In scabie etenim fervor viscerum ad cutem trahitur, per quam recte luxuria designatur, quia si cordis tentatio usque ad operationem prosilit, nimirum fervor intimus usque ad cutis scabiem prorumpit; et foris jam corpus sauciat, quia dum in cogitatione voluptas non reprimitur, etiam in actione dominatur. Quasi enim cutis pruriginem Paulus curabat abstergere, cum dicebat: Tentatio vos non

apprehendat, nisi humana (I Cor. X, 13); ac si aperte diceret: Humanum quidem est tentationem in corde perpeti, daemoniacum vero est in tentationis certamine et in operatione superari. Impetiginem quoque habet in corpore, quisquis avaritia vastatur in mente: quae si in parvis non compescitur, nimirum sine mensura dilatatur. Impetigo quippe sine dolore corpus occupat, et absque occupati taedio excrescens membrorum decorem foedat, quia et avaritia capti animum dum quasi delectat, exulcerat; dum adipiscenda quaeque cogitationi objicit, ad inimicitias accendit, et dolorem in vulnere non facit, quia aestuanti animo ex culpa abundantiam promittit. Sed decor membrorum perditur, quia aliarum quoque virtutum per hanc pulchritudo depravatur; et quasi totum corpus exasperat, quia per universa vitia animum supplantat, Paulo attestante qui ait: Radix omnium malorum est cupiditas (I Tim. VI, 10). Ponderosus vero est, qui turpitudinem non exercet opere, sed tamen ab hac cogitatione continua sine moderamine gravatur in mente; qui nequaquam quidem usque ad opus nefarium rapitur, sed ejus animus voluptate luxuriae sine ullo repugnationis stimulo delectatur. Vitium quippe est ponderis, cum humor viscerum ad virilia labitur, quae profecto cum molestia dedecoris intumescunt. Ponderosus ergo est, qui totis cogitationibus ad lasciviam defluens, pondus turpitudinis gestat in corde; et quamvis prava non exerceat opere, ab his tamen non evellitur mente. Nec ad usum boni operis in aperto valet assurgere, quia gravat hunc in abditis pondus turpe. Quisquis ergo quolibet horum vitio subigitur, panes Domino offerre prohibetur, ne profecto diluere aliena delicta non valeat is quem adhuc propria devastant. Quia igitur paucis ad pastorale magisterium dignus qualiter veniat, atque hoc indignus qualiter pertimescat ostendimus, nunc is qui ad illud digne pervenerit, in eo qualiter vivere debeat demonstremus.

SECUNDA PARS. DE VITA PASTORIS

CAPUT PRIMUM

Is qui ad regimen ordinate pervenerit, qualem se in ipso regimine debeat exhibere.

Tantum debet actionem populi actio transcendere praesulis, quantum distare solet a grege vita pastoris. Oportet namque ut metiri sollicite studeat quanta tenendae rectitudinis necessitate constringitur, sub cujus aestimatione populus grex vocatur. Sit ergo necesse est cogitatione mundus, actione praecipuus, discretus in silentio, utilis in verbo, singulis compassione proximus, prae cunctis contemplatione suspensus, bene agentibus per humilitatem socius, contra delinquentium vitia per zelum justitiae erectus, internorum curam in exteriorum occupatione non minuens, exteriorum providentiam in internorum sollicutidine non relinquens. Sed haec quae breviter enumerando perstrinximus, paulo latius replicando disseramus.

CAPUT II

Ut rector cogitatione sit mundus.

Rector semper cogitatione sit mundus, quatenus nulla hunc immunditia polluat, qui hoc suscepit officii, ut in alienis quoque cordibus pollutionis maculas tergat, quia necesse est ut esse munda studeat manus, quae diluere sordes curat: ne tacta quaeque deterius inquinet, si sordida insequens lutum tenet. Hinc namque per prophetam dicitur: Mundamini qui fertis vasa Domini (Isai. LII, 11). Domini etenim vasa ferunt, qui proximorum animas ad aeterna sacraria perducendas in suae conversationis fide suscipiunt. Apud semetipsos ergo quantum debeant mundari conspiciant, qui ad aeternitatis templum vasa viventia in sinu propriae sponsionis portant. Hinc

divina voce praecipitur (Exod. XXVIII, 15), ut in Aaron pectore rationale judicii vittis ligantibus imprimatur, quatenus sacerdotale cor nequaquam cogitationes fluxae possideant, sed ratio sola constringat; nec indiscretum quid vel inutile cogitet, qui ad exemplum aliis constitutus, ex gravitate vitae semper debet ostendere quantam in pectore rationem portet. In quo etiam rationali vigilanter adjungitur, ut duodecim patriarcharum nomina describantur. Ascriptos etenim patres semper in pectore ferre, est antiquorum vitam sine intermissione cogitare. Nam tunc sacerdos irreprehensibiliter graditur, cum exempla patrum praecedentium indesinenter intuetur, cum Sanctorum vestigia sine cessatione considerat, et cogitationes illicitas deprimit, ne extra ordinis limitem operis pedem tendat. Quod bene etiam rationale judicii vocatur, quia debet rector subtili semper examine bona malaque discernere, et quae vel quibus, quando vel qualiter congruant, studiose cogitare; nihilque proprium quaerere, sed sua commoda propinquorum bona deputare. Unde illic scriptum est: Pones autem in rationali judicii doctrinam et veritatem, quae erunt in pectore Aaron quando ingredietur coram Domino, et gestabit judicium filiorum Israel in pectore suo in conspectu Domini semper (Ibid., 30). Sacerdoti quippe judicium filiorum Israel in pectore coram Domini conspectu gestare, est subjectorum causas pro sola interni judicis intentione discutere, ut nihil se ei humanitatis admisceat in hoc quod divina positus vice dispensat, ne correptionis studia privatus dolor exasperet. Cumque contra aliena vitia aemulator ostenditur, quae sua sunt exsequatur, ne tranquillitatem judicii aut latens invidia maculet, aut praeceps ira perturbet. Sed dum consideratur terror ejus qui super omnia praesidet, videlicet judicis intimi, non sine magno regantur timore subjecti. Qui nimirum timor dum mentem rectoris humiliat, purgat; ne hanc aut praesumptio spiritus levet, aut carnis delectatio inquinet, aut per terrenarum rerum cupidinem importunitas pulvereae cogitationis obscuret: quae tamen non pulsare rectoris animum nequeunt, sed festinare necesse

est, ut repugnatione vincantur, ne vitium quod per suggestionem tentat, mollitie delectationis subigat, cumque haec ab animo tarde repellitur, mucrone consensus occidat.

CAPUT III

Ut rector semper sit operatione praecipuus.

Sit rector operatione praecipuus, ut vitae viam subditis vivendo denuntiet, et grex qui pastoris vocem moresque sequitur, per exempla melius quam per verba gradiatur. Qui enim loci sui necessitate exigitur summa dicere, hac eadem necessitate compellitur summa monstrare. Illa namque vox libentius auditorum cor penetrat, quam dicentis vita commendat, quia quod loquendo imperat, ostendendo adjuvat ut fiat. Hinc enim per prophetam dicitur: Super montem excelsum ascende tu qui evangelizas Sion (Isai. XL, 9). Ut videlicet qui coelesti praedicatione utitur, ima jam terrenorum operum deserens, in rerum culmine stare videatur; tantoque facilius subditos ad meliora pertrahat, quanto per vitae meritum de supernis clamat. Hinc divina lege armum sacerdos in sacrificium et dextrum accipit et separatum (Exod. XXIX, 22), ut non solum sit ejus operatio utilis, sed etiam singularis; nec inter malos tantummodo quae recta sunt faciat, sed bene quoque operantes subditos, sicut honore ordinis superat, ita etiam morum virtute transcendat. Cui in esu quoque pectusculum cum armo tribuitur, ut quod de sacrificio praecipitur sumere, hoc de semetipso auctori discat immolare. Et non solum pectore quae recta sunt cogitet, sed spectatores suos ad sublimia arma operis invitet: nulla prospera praesentis vitae appetat, nulla adversa pertimescat; blandimenta mundi respecto intimo terrore despiciat, terrores autem considerato internae dulcedinis blandimento contemnat. Unde supernae quoque vocis imperio (Exod. XXIX, 5) in utroque humero sacerdos velamine superhumeralis astringitur, ut contra adversa ac prospera virtutum

semper ornamento muniatur; quatenus, juxta vocem Pauli (II Cor. VI, 7), per arma justitiae a dextris sinistrisque gradiens, cum ad sola quae interiora sunt nititur, in nullo delectationis infimae latere flectatur. Non hunc prospera elevent, non adversa perturbent, non blanda usque ad voluntatem demulceant, non aspera ad desperationem premant; ut dum nullis passionibus intentionem mentis humiliat, quanta in utroque humero superhumeralis pulchritudine tegatur ostendat. Quod recte etiam superhumerale ex auro, hyacintho, purpura, bis tincto cocco, et torta fieri bysso praecipitur (Exod. XXVIII, 8), ut quanta sacerdos clarescere virtutum diversitate debeat demonstretur. In sacerdotis quippe habitu ante omnia aurum fulget, ut in eo intellectus sapientiae principaliter emicet. Cui hyacinthus, qui aereo colore resplendet adjungitur, ut per omne quod intelligendo penetrat, non ad favores infimos, sed ad amorem coelestium surgat; ne dum suis incautus laudibus capitur, ipso etiam veritatis intellectu vacuetur. Auro quoque et hyacintho purpura permiscetur; ut videlicet sacerdotale cor, cum summa quae praedicat sperat, in semetipso etiam suggestiones vitiorum reprimat, eisque velut ex regia potestate contradicat, quatenus nobilitatem semper intimae regenerationis aspiciat, et coelestis regni sibi habitum moribus defendat. De hac quippe nobilitate spiritus per Petrum dicitur: Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium (I Petr. II, 9). De hac etiam potestate, quia vitia subigimus, Joannis voce roboramur, qui ait: Quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri (Joan. I, 12). Hanc dignitatem fortitudinis Psalmista considerat, dicens: Mihi autem nimis honorificati sunt amici tui, Deus, nimis confortatus est principatus eorum (Psal. CXXXVIII, 17). Quia nimirum sanctorum mens principaliter in summis erigitur, cum exterius perpeti abjecta cernuntur. Auro autem, hyacintho ac purpurae bis tinctus coccus adjungitur, ut ante interni judicis oculos omnia virtutum bona ex charitate decorentur; et cuncta quae coram hominibus rutilant, haec in conspectu occulti arbitri flamma

intimi amoris accendat. Quae scilicet charitas, quia Deum simul ac proximum diligit, quasi ex duplici tinctura fulgescit. Qui igitur sic ad auctoris speciem anhelat, ut proximorum curam negligat, vel sic proximorum curam exsequitur, ut a divino amore torpescat, quia unum horum quodlibet negligit, in superhumeralis ornamento habere coccum his tinctum nescit. Sed cum mens ad praecepta charitatis tenditur, restat procul dubio ut per abstinentiam caro maceretur. Unde et his tincto cocco torta byssus adjungitur. De terra etenim byssus nitenti specie oritur. Et quid per byssum, nisi candens decore munditiae corporalis castitas designatur? Quae videlicet torta, pulchritudini superhumeralis innectitur; quia tunc castimonia ad perfectum munditiae candorem ducitur, cum per abstinentiam caro fatigatur. Cumque inter virtutes caeteras etiam afflictae carnis meritum proficit, quasi in diversa superhumeralis specie byssus torta candescit.

CAPUT IV

Ut sit rector discretus in silentio, utilis in verbo.

Sit rector discretus in silentio, utilis in verbo, ne aut tacenda proferat, aut proferenda reticescat. Nam sicut incauta locutio in errorem pertrahit, ita indiscretum silentium hos qui erudiri poterant, in errore derelinquit. Saepe namque rectores improvidi humanam amittere gratiam formidantes, loqui libere recta pertimescunt; et juxta Veritatis vocem (Joan. X, 12), nequaquam jam gregis costodiae Pastorum studio, sed mercenariorum vice deserviunt, quia veniente lupo fugiunt, dum se sub silentio abscondunt. Hinc namque eos per prophetam Dominus increpat, dicens: Canes muti non valentes latrare (Isai. LVI, 10). Hinc rursum queritur, dicens: Non ascendistis ex adverso, nec opposuistis murum pro domo Israel, ut staretis in praelio in die Domini (Ezech. XIII, 5). Ex adverso quippe ascendere, est pro defensione gregis voce libera hujus mundi potestatibus contraire. Et in die Domini in

praelio stare, est pravis decertantibus ex justitiae amore resistere. Pastori enim recta timuisse dicere, quid est aliud quam tacendo terga praebuisse? qui nimirum si pro grege se objicit, murum pro domo Israel hostibus opponit. Hinc rursum delinquenti populo dicitur: Prophetae tui viderunt tibi falsa et stulta, nec aperiebant iniquitatem tuam; ut te ad poenitentiam provocarent (Thren. II, 14). Prophetae quippe in sacro eloquio nonnunquam doctores vocantur; qui dum fugitiva esse praesentia indicant, quae sunt ventura manifestant. Quos divinus sermo falsa videre redarguit, quia dum corripere culpas metuunt, incassum delinguentibus promissa securitate blandiuntur; qui iniquitatem peccantium nequaquam aperiunt, quia ab increpationis voce conticescunt. Clavis quippe apertionis est sermo correptionis, quia increpando culpam detegit, quam saepe nescit ipse etiam qui perpetravit. Hinc Paulus ait: Ut potens sit exhortari in doctrina sana, et eos qui contradicunt arguere (Tit. I, 9). Hinc per Malachiam dicitur: Labia sacerdotis custodiunt scientiam, et legem requirent ex ore ejus, quia angelus Domini exercituum est (Malac. II, 7). Hinc per Isaiam Dominus admonet, dicens: Clama, ne cesses, quasi tuba exalta vocem tuam (Isaiae. LVIII, 1). Praeconis quippe officium suscipit, quisquis ad sacerdotium accedit, ut ante adventum judicis qui terribiliter sequitur, ipse scilicet clamando gradiatur. Sacerdos ergo si praedicationis est nescius, quam clamoris vocem daturus est praeco mutus? Hinc est enim quod super Pastores primos in linguarum specie Spiritus sanctus insedit (Act. II, 3); quia nimirum quos repleverit, de se protinus loquentes facit. Hinc Moysi praecipitur ut tabernaculum sacerdos ingrediens, tintinnabulis ambiatur (Exod. XXVIII, 33), ut videlicet voces praedicationis habeat, ne superni spectatoris judicium ex silentio offendat. Scriptum quippe est: Ut audiatur sonitus quando ingreditur et egreditur sanctuarium in conspectu Domini, et non moriatur (Ibid., 35). Sacerdos namque ingrediens vel egrediens moritur, si de eo sonitus non auditur, quia iram contra se occulti judicis exigit, si sine praedicationis

sonitu incedit. Apte autem tintinnabula vestimentis illius describuntur inserta. Vestimenta etenim sacerdotis quid aliud quam recta opera debemus accipere? Propheta attestante qui ait: Sacerdotes tui induantur justitiam (Psalm. CXXXI, 9). Vestimentis itaque illius tintinnabula inhaerent, ut vitae viam cum linguae sonitu ipsa quoque sacerdotis opera clament. Sed cum rector se ad loquendum praeparat, sub quanto cautelae studio loquatur attendat, ne si inordinate ad loquendum rapitur, erroris vulnere audientium corda feriantur, et cum fortasse sapiens videri desiderat, unitatis compagem insipienter abscidat. Hinc namque Veritas dicit: Habete sal in vobis, et pacem habete inter vos (Marc. IX, 49). Per sal quippe, verbi sapientia designatur. Qui igitur loqui sapienter nititur, magnopere metuat ne ejus eloquio audientium unitas confundatur. Hinc Paulus ait: Non plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem (Rom. XII, 3). Hinc in sacerdotis veste juxta divinam vocem tintinnabulis mala punica conjunguntur (Exod. XXVIII, 34). Quid enim per mala punica, nisi fidei unitas designatur? Nam sicut in malo punico, uno exterius cortice multa interius grana muniuntur; sic innumeros sanctae Ecclesiae populos unitas fidei contegit, quos intus diversitas meritorum tenet. Ne igitur rector incautus ad loquendum proruat, hoc quod jam praemisimus, per semetipsam Veritas discipulis clamat: Habete sal in vobis, et pacem habete inter vos (Marc. IX, 49). Ac si figurate per habitum sacerdotis dicat: Mala punica tintinnabulis jungite, ut per omne quod dicitis, unitatem fidei cauta observatione teneatis. Providendum quoque est sollicita intentione rectoribus ut ab eis non solum prava nullo modo, sed ne recta quidem nimie et inordinate proferantur; quia saepe dictorum virtus perditur, cum apud corda audientium loquacitatis incauta importunitate levigatur; et auctorem suum haec eadem loquacitas inquinat, quae servire auditoribus ad usum profectus ignorat. Unde bene per Moysen dicitur: Vir qui fluxum seminis patitur, immundus erit (Levit. XV, 2). In mente quippe audientium semen

secuturae cogitationis est auditae qualitas locutionis, quia dum per aurem sermo coneipitur, cogitatio in mente generatur. Unde et ab hujus mundi sapientibus praedicator egregius seminiverbius est vocatus (Act. XVII, 18). Qui ergo fluxum seminis sustinet, immundus asseritur, quia multiloquio subditus, ex eo se inquinat, quod si ordinate promeret, prolem rectae cogitationis edere in audientium corda potuisset; dumque incautus per loquacitatem diffluit, non ad usum generis, sed ad immunditiam semen effundit. Unde Paulus quoque cum discipulum de instantia praedicationis admoneret, dicens: Testificor coram Deo et Christo Jesu, qui judicaturus est vivos et mortuos, per adventum ipsius et regnum ejus, praedica verbum, insta opportune, importune (II Tim. IV, 1); dicturus importune, praemisit opportune, quia scilicet apud auditoris mentem ipsa sua vilitate se destruit, si habere importunitas opportunitatem nescit.

CAPUT V

Ut sit rector singulis compassione proximus, prae cunctis contemplatione supsensus.

Sit rector singulis compassione proximus, prae cunctis contemplatione suspensus, ut et per pietatis viscera in se infirmitatem caeterorum transferat, et per speculationis altitudinem semetipsum quoque invisibilia appetendo transcendat, ne aut alta petens, proximorum infirma despiciat, aut infirmis proximorum congruens, appetere alta derelinquat (II Cor. XII, 3). Hinc est namque quod Paulus in paradisum ducitur, coelique tertii secreta rimatur, et tamen illa invisibilium contemplatione suspensus, ad cubile carnalium aciem mentis revocat, atque in occultis suis qualiter debeant conversari dispensat, dicens: Propter fornicationem autem unusquisque suam uxorem habeat, et unaquaeque suum virum habeat. Uxori vir debitum reddat; similiter autem et uxor viro (I Cor. VII, 2). Et paulo post (Ibid., 5): Nolite

fraudare invicem, nisi forte ex consensu ad tempus, ut vacetis orationi; et iterum revertimini in idipsum, ne tentet vos Satanas. Ecce jam coelestibus secretis inseritur, et tamen per condescensionis viscera carnalium cubile perscrutatur; et quem sublevatus ad invisibilia erigit, hunc miseratus ad secreta infirmantium oculum cordis flectit. Coelum contemplatione transcendit, nec tamen stratum carnalium sollicitudine deserit, quia compage charitatis summis simul, et infimis junctus, et in semetipso virtute spiritus ad alta valenter rapitur, et pietate in aliis aequanimiter infirmatur. Hinc etenim dicit: Quis infirmatur, et ego non infirmor? quis scandalizatur, et ego non uror (II Cor., XI, 29)? Hinc rursus ait: Factus sum Judaeis tanquam Judaeus (I Cor. IX, 20). Quod videlicet exhibebat non amittendo fidem, sed extendendo pietatem, ut in se personam infidelium transfigurans, ex semetipso disceret qualiter aliis misereri debuisset, quatenus hoc illis impenderet, quod sibi ipse, si ita esset, impendi recte voluisset. Hinc iterum dicit: Sive mente excedimus, Deo; sive sobrii sumus, vobis (II Cor. V, 13); quia et semetipsum noverat contemplando transcendere, et eumdem se auditoribus condescendendo temperare.

Hinc Jacob Domino desuper innitente, et uncto deorsum lapide, ascendentes ac descendentes angelos vidit (Gen. XXVIII, 12); quia scilicet praedicatores recti non solum sursum sanctum caput Ecclesiae, videlicet Dominum, contemplando appetunt, sed deorsum quoque ad membra illius miserando descendunt. Hinc Moyses crebro tabernaculum intrat et exit; et qui intus in contemplationem rapitur, foris infirmantium negotiis urgetur. Intus Dei arcana considerat, foris onera carnalium portat. Qui de rebus quoque dubiis semper ad tabernaculum recurrit, coram testamenti arca Dominum consulit: exemplum proculdubio rectoribus praebens, ut cum foris ambigunt quid disponant, ad mentem semper quasi ad tabernaculum redeant; et velut coram testamenti arca Dominum consulant, si de his in quibus dubitant apud semetipsos intus sacri eloquii paginas requirant. Hinc ipsa Veritas per

susceptionem nostrae humanitatis nobis ostensa, in monte orationi inhaeret, miracula in urbibus exercet (Luc. VI, 12); imitationis videlicet viam bonis rectoribus sternens; ut etsi jam summa contemplando appetunt, necessitatibus tamen infirmantium compatiendo misceantur, quia tunc ad alta charitas mirabiliter surgit, cum ad ima proximorum se misericorditer attrahit; et quo benigne descendit ad infirma, valenter recurrit ad summa. Tales autem sese qui praesunt exhibeant, quibus subjecti occulta quoque sua prodere non erubescant; ut cum tentationum fluctus parvuli tolerant, ad Pastoris mentem quasi ad matris sinum recurrant; et hoc quod se inquinari pulsantis culpae sordibus praevident, exhortationis ejus solatio, ac lacrymis orationis lavent. Unde et ante fores templi ad abluendas ingredientium manus mare aeneum, id est luterem, duodecim boves portant (III Reg. VII, 23, seq.): qui quidem facie exterius eminent, sed ex posterioribus latent. Quid namque duodecim bobus, nisi universus pastorum ordo designatur? De quibus Paulo disserente lex dicit: Non obturabis os bovi trituranti (I Cor. IX, 9; ex Deuteron. XXV, 4). Quorum quidem nos aperta opera cernimus, sed apud districtum judicem quae illos posterius maneant in occulta retributione nescimus. Qui tamen cum condescensionis suae patientiam diluendis proximorum confessionibus praeparant, velut ante fores templi luterem portant; ut quisquis intrare aeternitatis januam nititur, tentationes suas menti pastoris indicet, et quasi in boum lutere cogitationis vel operis manus lavet. Et fit plerumque ut dum rectoris animus aliena tentamenta condescendendo cognoscit, auditis tentationibus etiam ipse pulsetur, quia et haec eadem per quam populi multitudo diluitur, aqua proculdubio luteris inquinatur. Nam dum sordes diluentium suscipit, quasi suae munditiae serenitatem perdit. Sed haec nequaquam pastori timenda sunt, quia Deo subtiliter cuncta pensante, tanto facilius a sua eripitur, quanto misericordius ex aliena tentatione fatigatur.

CAPUT VI

Ut sit rector bene agentibus per humilitatem socius, contra delinquentium vitia per zelum justitiae erectus.

Sit rector bene agentibus per humilitatem socius, contra delinquentium vitia per zelum justitiae erectus; ut et bonis in nullo se praeferat, et cum pravorum culpa exigit, potestatem protinus sui prioratus agnoscat, quatenus et honore suppresso aequalem se subditis bene viventibus deputet, et erga perversos jura rectitudinis exercere non formidet. Nam sicut in libris Moralibus dixi se me memini (Lib. XXI, Moral., ca, nunc n. 22), liquet quod omnes homines natura aequales genuit, sed variante meritorum ordine alios aliis culpa postponit. Ipsa autem diversitas quae accessit ex vitio, divino judicio dispensatur; ut quia omnis homo aeque stare non valet, alter regatur ab altero. Unde cuncti qui praesunt, non in se potestatem debent ordinis, sed aequalitatem pensare conditionis; nec praeesse se hominibus gaudeant, sed prodesse. Antiqui etenim patres nostri non reges hominum, sed pastores pecorum fuisse memorantur. Et cum Noe Dominus filiisque ejus diceret: Crescite et multiplicamini, et replete terram (Gen. IX, 21), protinus adjunxit: Et terror vester ac tremor sit super cuncta animalia terrae. Quorum videlicet terror ac tremor, quia esse super animalia terrae praecipitur, profecto esse super homines prohibetur. Homo quippe brutis animalibus, non autem hominibus caeteris natura praelatus est; et idcirco ei dicitur ut ab animalibus et non ab hominibus timeatur, quia contra naturam superbire est ab aequali velle timeri. Et tamen necesse est ut rectores a subditis timeantur, quando ab eis Deum minime timeri deprehendunt; ut humana saltem formidine peccare metuant, qui divina judicia non formidant. Nequaquam namque praepositi ex hoc quaesito timore superbiunt, in quo non suam gloriam, sed subditorum justitiam quaerunt. In eo enim quod metum sibi a perverse viventibus exigunt, quasi non hominibus, sed animalibus dominantur, quia videlicet ex qua parte bestiales sunt subditi, ex ea debent etiam formidini jacere substrati. Sed plerumque

rector eo ipso quo caeteris praeeminet, elatione cogitationis intumescit, et dum ad usum cuncta subjacent, dum ad votum velociter jussa complentur, dum omnes subditi, si qua bene gesta sunt, laudibus efferunt, male gestis autem nulla auctoritate contradicunt, dum plerumque laudant etiam quod reprobare debuerant, seductus ab his quae infra suppetunt, super se animus extollitur; et dum foris immenso favore circumdatur, intus veritate vacuatur, atque oblitus sui in voces se spargit alienas, talemque se credit, qualem se foris audit, non qualem intus descernere debuit. Subjectos despicit, eosque aequales sibi naturae ordine non agnoscit; et quos sorte potestatis excesserit, transcendisse se etiam vitae meritis credit. Cunctis se aestimat amplius sapere, qubius se videt amplius posse. In quodam quippe se constituit culmine apud semetipsum, et qui aequa caeteris naturae conditione constringitur, ex aequo respicere caeteros dedignatur; sicque usque ad ejus similitudinem ducitur, de quo scriptum est: Omne sublime videt, et ipse est rex super universos filios superbiae (Job XLI, 25). Qui singulare culmen appetens, et socialem angelorum vitam despiciens, ait: Ponam sedem meam ad Aquilonem, et ero similis Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 13). Miro ergo judicio intus foveam dejectionis invenit, dum foris se in culmine potestatis extollit. Apostatae quippe angelo similis efficitur, dum homo hominibus esse similis dedignatur. Sic Saul post humilitatis meritum in tumorem superbiae culmine potestatis excrevit: per humilitatem quippe praelatus est, per superbiam reprobatus, Domino attestante, qui ait: Nonne cum esses parvulus in oculis tuis, caput te constitui in tribubus Israel? (I Reg. XV, 17.) Parvulum se in suis prius oculis viderat, sed fultus temporali potentia, jam se parvulum non videbat. Caeterorum namque comparationi se praeferens, quia plus cunctis poterat, magnum se prae omnibus aestimabat. Miro autem modo cum apud se parvulus, apud Deum magnus; cum vero apud se magnus apparuit, apud Deum parvulus fuit. Plerumque ergo dum ex subjectorum affluentia animus inflatur, in fluxum superbiae ipso potentiae fastigio lenocinante

corrumpitur. Quam videlicet potentiam bene regit, qui et tenere illam noverit et impugnare. Bene hanc regit, qui scit per illam super culpas erigi, et scit cum illa caeteris aequalitate componi. Humana etenim mens plerumque extollitur, etiam cum nulla potestate fulcitur; quanto magis in altum se erigit, cum se ei etiam potestas adjungit? Quam tamen potestatem recte dispensat qui sollicite noverit et sumere ex illa quod adjuvat, et expugnare quod tentat, et aequalem se cum illa caeteris cernere, et tamen se peccantibus zelo ultionis anteferre. Sed hanc discretionem plenius agnoscimus, si Pastoris primi exempla cernamus. Petrus namque auctore Deo sanctae Ecclesiae principatum tenens, a bene agente Cornelio, et sese ei humiliter prosternente, immoderatius venerari recusavit, seque illi similem recognovit, dicens: Surge, ne feceris, et ego ipse homo sum (Act. X, 26). Sed cum Ananiae et Sapphirae culpam reperit (Act. V, 5), mox quanta potentia super caeteros excrevisset ostendit. Verbo namque eorum vitam perculit, quam spiritu perscrutante, deprehendit: et summum se intra Ecclesiam contra peccata recoluit, quod honore sibi vehementer impenso coram bene agentibus fratribus non agnovit. Illic communionem aequalitatis meruit sanctitas actionis, hic zelus ultionis jus aperuit potestatis. Paulus bene agentibus fratribus praelatum se esse nesciebat, cum diceret: Non quia dominamur fidei vestrae, sed adjutores sumus gaudii vestri (II Cor. I, 23). Atque illico adjunxit: Fide enim statis. Ac si id quod protulerat aperiret, dicens: Ideo non dominamur fidei vestrae, quia fide statis; aequales enim vobis sumus in quo vos stare cognoscimus. Quasi praelatum se fratribus esse nesciebat, cum diceret: Facti sumus parvuli in medio vestrum (I Thess. II, 7). Et rursum: Nos autem servos vestros per Christum (II Cor. IV, 5). Sed cum culpam quae corrigi debuisset invenit, illico magistrum se esse recoluit, dicens, Quid vultis? In virga veniam ad vos (I Cor. IV, 21). Summus itaque locus bene regitur, cum is qui praeest, vitiis potius quam fratribus dominatur. Sed cum delinquentes subditos praepositi corrigunt,

restat necesse est ut sollicite attendant, quatenus per disciplinae debitum culpas quidem jure potestatis feriant, sed per humilitatis custodiam aequales se ipsis fratribus qui corriguntur, agnoscant: quamvis plerumque etiam dignum est ut eosdem quos corrigimus, tacita nobis cogitatione praeferamus. Illorum namque per nos vitia disciplinae vigore feriuntur, in his vero quae ipsi committimus, ne verbi quidem ab aliquo invectione laceramur. Tanto ergo apud Dominum obligatiores sumus, quanto apud homines inulte peccamus. Disciplina autem nostra subditos divino judicio tanto liberiores reddit, quanto hic eorum culpas sine vindicta non deserit. Servanda itaque est et in corde humilitas, et in opere disciplina. Atque inter haec solerter intuendum est, ne dum immoderatius custoditur virtus humilitatis, solvantur jura regiminis; et dum praelatus quisque plus se quam decet dejicit, subditorum vitam stringere sub disciplinae vinculo non possit. Teneant ergo rectores exterius quod pro aliorum utilitate suscipiunt; servent interius quod de sua aestimatione pertimescunt. Sed tamen quibusdam signis decenter erumpentibus, eos apud se esse humiles etiam subjecti deprehendant, quatenus et in auctoritate eorum quod formident videant, et de humilitate quod imitentur agnoscant. Studeant igitur sine intermissione qui praesunt, ut eorum potentia quanto magna exterius cernitur, tanto apud eos interius deprimatur, ne cogitationem vincat, ne in delectationem sui animum rapiat, ne jam sub se mens eam regere non possit, cui se libidine dominandi supponit. Ne enim praesidentis animus ad elationem potestatis suae delectatione rapiatur, recte per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Ducem te constituerunt, noli extolli, sed esto in illis quasi unus ex illis (Eccli. XXXII, 1). Hinc etiam Petrus ait: Non dominantes in clero, sed forma facti gregis (I Petr. V, 3). Hinc per semetipsam Veritas ad altiora nos virtutum merita provocans, dicit: Scitis quia principes gentium dominantur eorum, et qui majores sunt, potestatem exercent in eos. Non ita erit inter vos, sed quicunque voluerit inter vos major fieri, sit vester minister; et qui voluerit

inter vos primus esse, erit vester servus: sicut Filius hominis non venit ministrari, sed ministrare (Matth. XX, 25, seq.). Hinc est quod servum ex suscepto regimine elatum, quae post supplicia maneant, indicat, dicens: Quod si dixerit mallus ille servus in corde suo: Moram facit Dominus meus venire, et coeperit percutere conservos suos, manducet autem et bibat cum ebriis; veniet dominus servi illius, in die qua non sperat, et hora qua ignorat, et dividet eum, partemque ejus ponet cum hypocritis (Matth. XXIV, 48 seq.). Inter hypocritas enim jure deputatur, qui ex simulatione disciplinae ministerium regiminis vertit in usum dominationis; et tamen nonnunquam gravius delinquitur si inter perversos plus aequalitas quam disciplina custoditur. Quia enim falsa pietate superatus ferire Heli delinquentes filios noluit, apud districtum judicem semetipsum cum filiis crudeli damnatione percussit (I Reg. IV, 17, 18). Hinc namque divina ei voce dicitur: Honorasti filios tuos magis quam me (Ibid., II, 29). Hinc pastores increpat per prophetam, dicens: Quod fractum est non alligastis, et quod abjectum est non reduxistis (Ezech. XXXIV, 4). Abjectus enim reducitur cum quisque in culpa lapsus, ad statum justitiae ex pastoralis sollicitudinis vigore revocatur. Fracturam vero ligamen astringit, cum culpam disciplina deprimit, ne plaga usque ad interitum defluat, si hanc districtionis severitas non coarctat.

Sed saepe deterius frangitur, cum fractura incaute colligatur, ita ut gravius scissuram sentiat, si hanc immoderatius ligamenta constringant. Unde necesse est ut cum peccati vulnus in subditis corrigendo restringitur, magna se sollicitudine etiam districtio ipsa moderetur, quatenus sic jura disciplinae contra delinquentes exerceat, ut pietatis viscera non amittat. Curandam quippe est ut rectorem subditis et matrem pietas, et patrem exhibeat disciplina. Atque inter haec sollicita circumspectione providendum, ne aut districtio rigida, aut pietas sit remissa. Nam sicut in libris Moralibus jam diximus (Lib. XX Moral., n. 14, c. 8, et epist. 25, lib. I), disciplina vel misericordia multum destituitur, si una sine altera teneatur. Sed erga

subditos suos inesse rectoribus debet et juste consulens misericordia, et pie saeviens disciplina. Hinc namque est quod docente Veritate (Luc. X, 34), per Samaritani studium semivivus in stabulum ducitur, et vinum atque oleum vulneribus ejus adhibetur, ut per vinum scilicet mordeantur vulnera, per oleum foveantur. Necesse quippe est ut quisquis sanandis vulneribus praeest, in vino morsum doloris adhibeat, in oleo mollitiem pietatis, quatenus per vinum mundentur putrida, per oleum foveantur sananda. Miscenda ergo est lenitas cum severitate; faciedum quoddam ex utroque temperamentum, ut neque multa asperitate exulcerentur subditi, neque nimia benignitate solvantur. Quod juxta Pauli vocem (Hebr. IX, 4) bene illa tabernaculi arca significat, in qua cum tabulis virga simul et manna est; quia cum Scripturae sacrae scientia in boni rectoris pectore, si est virga districtionis, sit et manna dulcedinis. Hinc David ait: Virga tua et baculus tuus, ipsa me consolata sunt (Psal. XXII, 4). Virga enim percutimur, baculo sustentamur. Si ergo est districtio virgae quae feriat, sit et consolatio baculi quae sustentet. Sit itaque amor, sed non emolliens; sit vigor, sed non exasperans; sit zelus, sed non immoderate saeviens; sit pietas, sed non plus quam expediat parcens; ut dum se in arce regiminis justitia clementiaque permiscet, is qui praeest corda subditorum et terrendo demulceat, et tamen ad terroris reverentiam demulcendo constringat.

CAPUT VII

Ut sit rector internorum curam in exteriorum occupatione non minuens, exteriorum providentiam in internorum sollicitudine non relinquens.

Sit rector internorum curam in exteriorum occupatione non minuens, exteriorum providentiam in internorum sollicitudine non relinquens; ne aut exterioribus deditus ab intimis corruat, aut solis interioribus occupatus, quae foris debet proximis non impendat. Saepe namque nonnulli velut obliti quod

fratribus animarum causa praelati sunt, toto cordis adnisu saecularibus curis inserviunt: has, cum adsunt, se agere exsultant; ad has etiam cum desunt, diebus ac noctibus cogitationis turbidae aestibus anhelant. Cumque ab his, cessante forsitan opportunitate, quieti sunt, ipsa deterius sua quiete fatigantur. Voluptatem namque censent si actionibus deprimuntur, laborem deputant si in terrenis negotiis non laborant. Sicque fit, ut dum se urgeri mundanis tumultibus gaudent, interna quae alios docere debuerant ignorent. Unde subjectorum quoque proculdubio vita torpescit, quia cum proficere spiritaliter appetit, in exemplo ejus qui sibi praelatus est, quasi in obstaculo itineris offendit. Languente enim capite membra incassum vigent, et in exploratione hostium frustra exercitus velociter sequitur, si ab ipso duce itineris erratur. Nulla subditorum mentes exhortatio sublevat, eorumque culpas increpatio nulla castigat; quia dum per animarum praesulem terreni exercetur officium judicis, a gregis custodia vacat cura pastoris; et subjecti veritatis lumen apprehendere nequeunt, quia dum pastoris sensus terrena studia occupant, vento tentationis impulsus Ecclesiae oculos pulvis caecat. Quo contra recte humani generis Redemptor, cum nos a ventris voracitate compesceret, dicens: Attendite autem vobis, ut non graventur corda vestra in crapula et ebrietate (Luc. XXI, 34), illico adjunxit: Aut in curis hujus vitae. Ubi pavorem quoque protinus intente adjiciens: Ne forte, inquit, superveniat in vos repentina dies illa (Ibid.). Cujus adventus etiam qualitatem denuntiat, dicens: Tanquam laqueus enim veniet super omnes qui sedent super faciem omnis terrae (Ibid., 35). Hinc iterum dicit: Nemo potest duobus dominis servire (Luc. XVI, 13). Hinc Paulus religiosorum mentes a mundi consortio contestando, ac potius conveniendo suspendit, dicens: Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis saecularibus, ut ei placeat cui se probavit (II Tim. II, 4). Hinc Ecclesiae rectoribus et vacandi studia praecipit, et consulendi remedia ostendit, dicens: Saecularia igitur judicia si habueritis, contemptibiles qui sunt in Ecclesia, illos constituite ad

judicandum (I Cor. VI, 14); ut ipsi videlicet dispensationibus terrenis inserviant, quos dona spiritalia non exornant. Ac si apertius dicat: Quia penetrare intima nequeunt, saltem necessaria foris operentur. Hinc Moyses, qui cum Deo loquitur (Exod. XVIII, 17, 18), Jethro alienigenae reprehensione judicatur, quod terrenis populorum negotiis stulto labore deserviat: cui et consilium mox praebetur, ut pro se alios ad jurgia dirimenda constituat, et ipse liberius ad erudiendos populos spiritalium arcana cognoscat.

A subditis ergo inferiora gerenda sunt, a rectoribus summa cogitanda; ut scilicet oculum, qui praevidendis gressibus praeeminet, cura pulveris non obscuret. Caput namque subjectorum sunt cuncti qui praesunt; et ut recta pedes valeant itinera carpere, haec proculdubio caput debet ex alto providere, ne a provectus sui itinere pedes torpeant, cum curvata rectitudine corporis caput sese ad terram declinat. Qua autem mente animarum praesul honore pastorali inter caeteros utitur, si in terrenis negotiis quae reprehendere in aliis debuit, et ipse versatur? Quod videlicet ex ira justae retributionis per prophetam Dominus minatur, dicens: Et erit sicut populus, sic sacerdos (Oseae IV, 9). Sacerdos quippe est ut populus, quando ea agit is qui spiritali officio fungitur, quae illi nimirum faciunt qui adhuc de studiis carnalibus judicantur. Quod cum magno scilicet dolore charitatis Jeremias propheta conspiciens, quasi sub destructione templi deplorat, dicens: Quomodo obscuratum est aurum, mutatus est color optimus, dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite omnium platearum (Thren. IV, 1)? Quid namque auro, quod metallis caeteris praeeminet, nisi excellentia sanctitatis? Quid colore optimo, nisi cunctis amabilis reverentia religionis exprimitur? Quid sanctuarii lapidibus, nisi sacrorum ordinum personae signantur? Quid platearum nomine, nisi praesentis vitae latitudo figuratur? Quia enim Graeco eloquio “??????” latitudo dicitur, profecto a latitudine plateae sunt vocatae. Per semetipsam vero Veritas dicit: Lata et spatiosa via est quae

ducit ad perditionem (Matth. VII, 13). Aurum igitur obscuratur, cum terrenis actibus sanctitatis vita polluitur. Color optimus commutatur, cum quorumdam qui degere religiose credebantur, aestimatio anteacta minuitur. Nam cum quilibet post sanctitatis habitum terrenis se actibus inserit, quasi colore permutato ante humanos oculos ejus reverentia despecta pallescit. Sanctuarii quoque lapides in plateas disperguntur, cum causarum secularium foras lata itinera expetunt hi qui ad ornamentum Ecclesiae internis mysteriis quasi in secretis tabernaculi vacare debuerunt. Ad hoc quippe sanctuarii lapides fiebant, ut intra sancta sanctorum in vestimento summi sacerdotis apparerent. Cum vero ministri religionis a subditis honorem Redemptoris sui ex merito vitae non exigunt, sanctuarii lapides in ornamento pontificis non sunt. Qui nimirum sanctuarii lapides dispersi per plateas jacent, cum personae sacrorum ordinum voluptatum suarum latitudini deditae, terrenis negotiis inhaerent. Et notandum quod non hos dispersos in plateis, sed in capite platearum dicit; quia et cum terrena agunt, summi videri appetunt, ut et lata itinera teneant ex voluptate delectationis, et tamen in platearum sint capite ex honore sanctitatis.

Nil quoque obstat si sanctuarii lapides eosdem ipsos quibus constructum sanctuarium existebat accipimus: qui dispersi in platearum capite jacent. quando sacrorum ordinum viri terrenis actibus ex desiderio inserviunt, ex quorum prius officio sanctitatis gloria stare videbatur. Saecularia itaque negotia aliquando ex compassione toleranda sunt, numquam vero ex amore requirenda; ne cum mentem diligentis aggravant, hanc suo victam pondere ad ima de coelestibus mergant. At contra, nonnulli gregis quidem curam suscipiunt, sed sic sibimet vacare ad spiritalia appetunt, ut rebus exterioribus nullatenus occupentur. Qui cum curare corporalia funditus negligunt, subditorum necessitatibus minime concurrunt. Quorum nimirum praedicatio plerumque despicitur; quia dum delinquentium facta corripiunt, sed tamen eis necessaria praesentis vitae non tribuunt, nequaquam libenter

audiuntur. Egentis etenim mentem doctrinae sermo non penetrat, si hunc apud ejus animum manus misericordiae non commendat. Tunc autem verbi semen facile germinat, quando hoc in audientis pectore pietas praedicantis rigat. Unde rectorem necesse est ut interiora possit infundere, cogitatione innoxia etiam exteriora providere. Sic itaque Pastores erga interiora studia subditorum suorum ferveant, quatenus in eis exterioris quoque vitae providentiam non relinquant. Nam quasi jure, ut diximus, a percipienda praedicatione gregis animus frangitur, si cura exterioris subsidii a pastore negligatur. Unde et primus pastor sollicite admonet, dicens: Seniores qui in vobis sunt, obsecro consenior et testis Christi passionum, qui et ejus quae in futuro revelanda est, gloriae communicatur, pascite qui in vobis est gregem Dei (I Pet. V, 1). Qui hoc in loco pastionem cordis an corporis suaderet aperuit, cum protinus adjunxit: Providentes non coacte, sed spontanee secundum Deum, neque turpis lucri gratia, sed voluntarie. Quibus profecto verbis pastoribus pie praecavetur, ne dum subjectorum inopiam satiant, se mucrone ambitionis occidant, ne cum per eos carnis subsidiis reficiuntur proximi, ipsi remaneant a justitiae pane jejuni. Hanc Pastorum sollicitudinem Paulus excitat, dicens: Qui suorum, et maxime domesticorum curam non habet, fidem negavit, et est infideli deterior (I Tim. V, 8). Inter haec itaque metuendum semper est, et vigilanter intuendum, ne dum cura ab eis exterior agitur, ab interna intentione mergantur. Plerumque enim, ut praediximus, corda rectorum dum temporali sollicitudini incaute deserviunt, ab intimo amore frigescunt; et foras fusa oblivisci non metuunt, quia animarum regimina susceperunt. Sollicitudo ergo quae subditis exterius impenditur, sub certa necesse est mensura teneatur. Unde bene ad Ezechielem dicitur: Sacerdotes caput suum non radent, neque comam nutrient, sed tondentes attondeant capita sua (Ezech. XLIV, 20). Sacerdotes namque jure vocati sunt, qui ut sacrum ducatum praebeant, fidelibus praesunt. Capilli vero in capite, exteriores sunt cogitationes in mente: qui

dum super cerebrum insensibiliter oriuntur, curas vitae praesentis designant; quae ex sensu negligenti, quia importune aliquando prodeunt, quasi nobis non sentientibus procedunt. Quia igitur cuncti qui praesunt, habere quidem sollicitudines exteriores debent, nec tamen eis vehementer incumbere, sacerdotes recte et caput prohibentur radere, et comam nutrire; ut cogitationes carnis de vita subditorum nec a se funditus amputent, nec rursum ad crescendum nimis relaxent. Ubi et bene dicitur: Tondentes tondeant capita sua (Ibid.); ut videlicet curae temporalis sollicitudinis et quantum necesse est prodeant, et tamen recidantur citius, ne immoderatius excrescant. Dum igitur et per administratam exteriorem providentiam corporum vita protegitur, et rursus per moderatam cordis intentionem non impeditur, capilli in capite sacerdotis et servantur ut cutem cooperiant, et resecantur ne oculos claudant.

CAPUT VIII

Ne placere rector suo studio hominibus appetat, sed tamen ad quod placere debeat, intendat.

Inter haec quoque necesse est ut rector solerter invigilet, ne hunc cupido placendi hominibus pulset; ne cum studiose interiora penetrat, cum provide exteriora subministrat, se magis a subditis diligi quam veritatem quaerat; ne cum, bonis actibus fultus, a mundo videtur alienus, hunc auctori reddat extraneum amor suus. Hostis namque Redemptoris est, qui per recta opera quae facit, ejus vice ab Ecclesia amari concupiscit, quia adulterinae cogitationis reus est, si placere puer sponsae oculis appetit, per quem sponsus dona transmisit. Qui nimirum amor proprius cum rectoris mentem ceperit, aliquando hanc inordinate ad mollitiem, aliquando vero ad asperitatem rapit. Ex amore etenim suo mens rectoris in mollitiem vertitur; quia cum peccantes subditos respicit, ne erga hunc eorum dilectio torpeat,

corripere non praesumit; nonnunquam vero errata subditorum quae increpare debuerat, adulationibus demulcet. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Vae his qui consuunt pulvillos sub omni cubito manus, et faciunt cervicalia sub capite universae aetatis ad capiendas animas (Ezech. XIII, 18). Pulvillos quippe sub omni cubito manus ponere, est cadentes a sua rectitudine animas, atque in hujus mundi se delectatione reclinantes, blanda adulatione refovere. Quasi enim pulvillo cubitus, vel cervicalibus caput jacentis excipitur, cum correptionis duritia peccanti subtrahitur, eique mollities favoris adhibetur, ut in errore molliter jaceat, quem nulla asperitas contradictionis pulsat. Sed haec rectores, qui semetipsos diligunt, his procul dubio exhibent, a quibus se noceri posse in studio gloriae temporalis timent. Nam quos nil contra se valere conspiciunt, hos nimirum asperitate rigidae semper invectionis premunt, nunquam clementer admonent, sed pastoralis mansuetudinis obliti, jure dominationis terrent. Quos recte per prophetam divina vox increpat, dicens: Vos autem cum austeritate imperabatis eis et cum potentia (Ezech. XXXIV, 4). Plus enim se suo auctore diligentes, jactanter erga subditos se erigunt, nec quid agere debeant, sed quid valeant attendunt; nil de subsequenti judicio metuunt, improbe de temporali potestate gloriantur; libet ut licenter et illicita faciant, et subditorum nemo contradicat. Qui ergo et prava studet agere, et tamen ad haec vult caeteros tacere, ipse sibimet testis est, quia plus veritate se appetit diligi, quam contra se non vult defendi. Nemo quippe est qui ita vivat, ut aliquatenus non delinquat. Ille ergo se ipso amplius veritatem desiderat amari, qui sibi a nullo vult contra veritatem parci. Hinc etenim Petrus increpationem Pauli libenter accepit (Galat. II, 11); hinc David correptionem subditi humiliter audivit (II Reg. XII, 7); quia rectores boni dum privato diligere amore se nesciunt, liberae puritatis verbum a subditis obsequium humilitatis credunt. Sed inter haec necesse est ut cura regiminis tanta moderaminis arte temperetur, quatenus subditorum mens cum quaedam recte sentire potuerit,

sic in vocis libertatem prodeat, ut tamen libertas in superbiam non erumpat; ne dum fortasse immoderatius linguae eis libertas conceditur, vitae ab his humilitas amittatur. Sciendum quoque est quod oporteat ut rectores boni placere hominibus appetant, sed ut suae aestimationis dulcedine proximos in affectum veritatis trahant, non ut se amari desiderent, sed ut dilectionem suam quasi quamdam viam faciant, per quam corda audientium ad amorem Conditoris introducant. Difficile quippe est, ut quamlibet recta denuntians praedicator qui non diligitur, libenter audiatur. Debet ergo qui praeest, et studere se diligi, quatenus possit audiri, et tamen amorem suum pro semetipso non quaerere, ne inveniatur ei cui servire per officium cernitur, occulta cogitationis tyrannide resultare. Quod bene Paulus insinuat, cum sui nobis studii occulta manifestat, dicens: Sicut et ego per omnia omnibus placeo (I Cor. X, 33). Qui tamen rursus dicit: Si adhuc hominibus placerem, Christi servus non essem (Galat. I, 10). Placet ergo Paulus, et non placet, quia in eo quod placere appetit, non se, sed per se hominibus placere veritatem quaerit.

CAPUT IX

Quod scire sollicite rector debet, quia plerumque vitia virtutes se esse mentiuntur.

Scire etiam rector debet quod plerumque vitia virtutes se esse mentiuntur. Nam saepe sub parcimoniae nomine se tenacia palliat, contraque se effusio sub appellatione largitatis occultat. Saepe inordinata remissio pietas creditur, et effrenata ira spiritalis zeli virtus aestimatur. Saepe praecipitata actio velocitatis efficacia, atque agendi tarditas gravitatis consilium putatur. Unde necesse est ut rector animarum virtutes ac vitia vigilanti cura discernat, ne aut cor tenacia occupet, et parcum se videri in dispensationibus exsultet; aut cum effuse quid perditur, largum se quasi

miserando glorietur; aut remittendo quod ferire debuit, ad aeterna supplicia subditos pertrahat; aut immaniter feriendo quod delinquitur, ipse gravius delinquat; aut hoc quod agi recte ac graviter potuit, immature praeveniens leviget; aut bonae actionis meritum differendo, ad deteriora permutet.

CAPUT X

Quae esse debet rectoris discretio correptionis et dissimulationis, fervoris et mansuetudinis.

Sciendum quoque est quod aliquando subjectorum vitia prudenter dissimulanda sunt, sed quia dissimulantur, indicanda; aliquando et aperte cognita, mature toleranda, aliquando vero subtiliter et occulta perscrutanda; aliquando leniter arguenda, aliquando autem vehementer increpanda. Nonnulla quippe, ut diximus, prudenter dissimulanda sunt, sed quia dissimulantur, indicanda; ut cum delinquens et deprehendi se cognoscit et perpeti, has quas in se tacite tolerari considerat, augere culpas erubescat, seque se judice puniat, quem sibi apud se rectoris patientia clementer excusat. Qua scilicet dissimulatione bene Judaeam Dominus corripit, cum per prophetam dicit: Mentita es, et mei non es recordata, neque cogitasti in corde tuo, quia ego tacens et quasi non videns (Isaiae LVII, 11). Et dissimulavit ergo culpas, et innotuit, quia et contra peccantem tacuit, et hoc ipsum tamen quia tacuerit dixit. Nonnulla autem vel aperte cognita, mature toleranda sunt, cum videlicet rerum minime opportunitas congruit, ut aperte corrigantur. Nam secta immature vulnera deterius infervescunt, et nisi cum tempore medicamenta conveniant, constat procul dubio quod medendi officium amittant. Sed cum tempus subditis ad correptionem quaeritur, sub ipso culparum pendere patientia praesulis exercetur. Unde bene per Psalmistam dicitur: Supra dorsum meum fabricaverunt peccatores (Psal. CXXVIII, 3). In dorso quippe onera sustinemus. Supra dorsum igitur suum

fabricasse peccatores queritur, ac si aperte dicat: Quos corrigere nequeo, quasi superimpositum onus porto.

Nonnulla autem occulta subtiliter sunt perscrutanda, ut quibusdam signis erumpentibus, rector in subditorum mente omne quod clausum latet, inveniat, et interveniente correptionis articulo, ex minimis majora cognoscat. Unde recte ad Ezechielem dicitur: Fili hominis, fode parietem (Ezech. VIII, 8). Ubi mox idem propheta subjungit: Et cum fodissem parietem, apparuit ostium unum. Et dixit ad me: Ingredere, et vide abominationes pessimas, quas isti faciunt hic. Et ingressus vidi; et ecce omnis similitudo reptilium, et animalium abominatio, et universa idola domus Israel depicta erant in pariete (Ibid. 9, 10). Per Ezechielem quippe praepositorum persona signatur, per parietem duritia subditorum. Et quid est parietem fodere, nisi acutis inquisitionibus duritiam cordis aperire? Quem cum fodisset, apparuit ostium; quia cum cordis duritia vel studiosis percunctationibus, vel maturis correptionibus scinditur, quasi quaedam janua ostenditur, ex qua omnia in eo qui corripitur cogitationum interiora videantur. Unde et bene illic sequitur: Ingredere et vide abominationes pessimas, quas isti faciunt hic (Ibid.). Quasi ingreditur ut abominationes aspiciat, qui, discussis quibusdam signis exterius apparentibus, ita corda subditorum penetrat, ut cuncta ei quae illicite cogitantur innotescant. Unde et subdidit: Et ingressus vidi; et ecce omnis similitudo reptilium, et animalium abominatio (Ibid.). In reptilibus cogitationes omnino terrenae signantur, in animalibus vero jam quidem aliquantulum a terra suspensae, sed adhuc terrenae mercedis praemia requirentes. Nam reptilia toto ex corpore terrae inhaerent, animalia autem magna parte corporis a terra suspensa sunt, appetitu tamen gulae ad terram semper inclinantur. Reptilia itaque sunt intra parietem, quando cogitationes volvuntur in mente, quae a terrenis desideriis nunquam levantur. Animalia quoque sunt intra parietem, quando et si qua jam justa, si qua honesta cogitantur, appetendis tamen

lucris temporalibus honoribusque deserviunt; et per semetipsa quidem jam quasi a terra suspensa sunt, sed adhuc per ambitum quasi per gulae desiderium sese ad ima submittunt. Unde et bene subditur: Et universa idola domus Israel depicta erant in pariete (Ezech. VIII, 10). Scriptum quippe est: Et avaritia, quae est idolorum servitus (Coloss. III, 5). Recte ergo post animalia, idola describuntur, quia etsi honesta actione nonnulli jam quasi a terra se erigunt, ambitione tamen inhonesta semetipsos ad terram deponunt. Bene autem dicitur, Depicta erant; quia dum exteriorum rerum intrinsecus species attrahuntur, quasi in corde depingitur quidquid fictis imaginibus deliberando, cogitatur. Notandum itaque est quia prius foramen in pariete, ac deinde ostium cernitur, et tunc demum occulta abominatio demonstratur; quia nimirum uniuscujusque peccati prius signa forinsecus, deinde janua apertae iniquitatis ostenditur, et tunc demum omne malum quod intus latet aperitur Nonnulla autem sunt leniter arguenda: nam cum non malitia, sed sola ignorantia vel infirmitate delinquitur, profecto necesse est ut magno moderamine ipsa delicti correptio temperetur. Cuncti quippe quousque in hac mortali carne subsistimus, corruptionis nostrae infirmitatibus subjacemus. Ex se ergo debet quisque colligere qualiter alienae hunc oporteat imbecillitati misereri, ne contra infirmitatem proximi si ad increpationis vocem ferventius rapitur, oblitus sui esse videatur. Unde bene Paulus admonet, dicens: Si praeoccupatus fuerit homo in aliquo delicto, vos qui spiritales estis, instruite hujusmodi in spiritu mansuetudinis, considerans teipsum, ne et tu tenteris (Galat. VI, 1). Ac si aperte dicat: Cum displicet ex aliena infirmitate quod conspicis, pensa quod es; ut in increpationis zelo se spiritus temperet, dum sibi quoque quod increpat timet.

Nonnulla autem sunt vehementer increpanda, ut cum culpa ab auctore non cognoscitur, quanti sit ponderis, ab increpantis ore sentiatur. Et cum sibi quis malum quod perpetravit levigat, hoc contra se graviter ex corripientis asperitate pertimescat. Debitum quippe rectoris est supernae patriae gloriam

per vocem praedicationis ostendere, quanta in hujus vitae itinere tentamenta antiqui hostis lateant aperire, et subditorum mala quae tolerari leniter non debent, cum magna zeli asperitate corrigere; ne si minus contra culpas accenditur, culparum omnium reus ipse teneatur. Unde bene ad Ezechielem dicitur: Sume tibi laterem, et pones eum coram te, et describes in eo civitatem Jerusalem (Ezech. IV, 1). Statimque subjungitur: Et ordinabis adversus eam obsidionem, et aedificabis munitiones, et comportabis aggerem, et dabis contra eam castra, et pones arietes in gyro. Eique ad munitionem suam protinus subinfertur: Et tu sume tibi sartaginem ferream, et pones eam in murum ferreum inter te et inter civitatem. Cujus enim Ezechiel propheta nisi magistrorum speciem tenet? Cui dicitur: Sume tibi laterem, et pones eum coram te, et describes in eo civitatem Jerusalem.

Sancti quippe doctores sibi laterem sumunt, quando terrenum auditorum cor, ut doceant, apprehendunt. Quem scilicet laterem coram se ponunt, quia tota illud mentis intentione custodiunt. In quo et civitatem Jerusalem jubentur describere; quia praedicando terrenis cordibus curant summopere quae sit supernae pacis visio demonstrare. Sed quia incassum gloria patriae coelestis agnoscitur, nisi et quanta hic irruant hostis callidi tentamenta discantur, apte subjungitur: Et ordinabis adversus eam obsidionem, et aedificabis munitiones. Sancti quippe praedicatores obsidionem circa laterem, in quo Jerusalem civitas descripta est, ordinant, quando terrenae menti, sed jam supernam patriam requirenti, quanta eam in hujus vitae tempore vitiorum impugnet adversitas demonstrant. Nam cum unumquodque peccatum quomodo proficientibus insidietur ostenditur, quasi obsidio circa civitatem Jerusalem voce praedicatoris ordinatur. Sed quia non solum debent innotescere qualiter vitia impugnent, verum etiam quomodo custoditae nos virtutes roborent, recte subjungitur: Et aedificabis munitiones. Munitiones quippe sanctus praedicator aedificat, quando quae virtutes quibus resistant vitiis demonstrat. Et quia, crescente virtute,

plerumque bella tentationis augentur, recte adhuc additur: Et comportabis aggerem, et dabis contra eam castra, et pones arietes in gyro. Aggerem namque comportat, quando praedicator quisque molem crescentis tentationis enuntiat. Et contra Jerusalem castra erigit, quando rectae intentioni audientium hostis callidi circumspectas et quasi incomprehensibiles insidias praedicit. Atque arietes in gyro ponit, cum tentationum aculeos in hac vita nos undique circumdantes, et virtutum murum perforantes innotescit. Sed cuncta haec licet subtiliter rector insinuet, nisi contra delicta singulorum aemulationis spiritu ferveat, nullam sibi in perpetuum absolutionem parat. Unde illic adhuc recte subjungitur: Et tu sume tibi sartaginem ferream, et pones eam murum ferreum inter te et inter civitatem. Per sartaginem quippe frixura mentis, per ferrum vero increpationis fortitudo signatur. Quid vero acrius doctoris mentem, quam zelus Dei frigit et excruciat? Unde Paulus hujus sartaginis urebatur frixura, cum diceret: Quis infirmatur, et ego non infirmor? quis scandalizatur, et ego non uror? (II Cor. XI, 29.) Et quia quisquis zelo Dei accenditur, ne damnari ex negligentia debeat, forti in perpetuum custodia munitur, recte dicitur: Pones eam murum ferreum inter te et civitatem. Sartago enim ferrea murus ferreus inter prophetam et civitatem ponitur; quia cum nunc fortem zelum rectores exhibent, eumdem zelum postmodum inter se et auditores suos fortem munitionem tenent; ne tunc ad vindictam destituti sint, si nunc fuerint in correptione dissoluti. Sed inter haec sciendum est quia dum ad increpationem se mens doctoris exasperat, difficile valde est ut non aliquando et ad aliquid quod dicere non debet erumpat. Et plerumque contingit ut dum culpa subditorum cum magna invectione corripitur, magistri lingua usque ad excessus verba pertrahatur. Cumque increpatio immoderate accenditur, corda delinquentium in desperatione deprimuntur. Unde necesse est ut exasperatus rector, cum subditorum mentem plus quam debuit percussisse considerat, apud se semper ad poenitentiam recurrat; ut

per lamenta veniam in conspectu veritatis obtineat, ex eo etiam quod per zeli ejus studium peccat. Quod figurate Dominus per Moysen praecipit, dicens: Si quis abierit cum amico suo simpliciter in silvam ad ligna caedenda, et lignum securis fugerit manu, ferrumque lapsum de manubrio amicum ejus percusserit et occiderit, hic ad unam supradictarum urbium fugiet, et vivet; ne forte proximus ejus, cujus effusus est sanguis, doloris stimulo persequatur et apprehendat eum, et percutiat animam ejus (Deut. XIX, 4, 5). Ad silvam quippe cum amico imus, quoties ad intuenda subditorum delicta convertimur. Et simpliciter ligna succidimus, cum delinquentium vitia pia intentione resecamus. Sed securis manu fugit, cum sese increpatio plus quam necesse est in asperitatem pertrahit. Ferrumque de manubrio prosilit, cum de correptione sermo durior excedit. Et amicum percutit et occidit, quia auditorem suum prolata contumelia a spiritu dilectionis interficit. Correpti namque mens repente ad odium proruit, si hanc immoderata increpatio plus quam debuit addicit. Sed is qui incaute ligna percutit et proximum exstinguit, ad tres necesse est urbes fugiat, ut in una earum defensus vivat; quia si ad poenitentiae lamenta conversus, in unitate sacramenti sub spe et charitate absconditur, reus perpetrati homicidii non tenetur. Eumque exstincti proximus et cum invenerit non occidit; quia cum districtus judex venerit, qui sese nobis per naturae nostrae consortium junxit, ab eo proculdubio culpae reatum non expetit, quem sub ejus venia fides, spes, et charitas abscondit.

CAPUT XI

Quantum rector sacrae legis meditationibus esse debeat intentus.

Sed omne hoc rite a rectore agitur, si supernae formidinis et dilectionis spiritu afflatus, studiose quotidie sacri eloquii praecepta meditetur; ut in eo vim sollicitudinis, et erga coelestem vitam providae circumspectionis, quam

humanae conversationis usus indesinenter destruit, divinae admonitionis verba restaurent; et qui ad vetustatem vitae per societatem saecularium ducitur, ad amorem semper spiritalis patriae compunctionis aspiratione renovetur. Valde namque inter humana verba cor defluit; cumque indubitanter constet quod externis occupationum tumultibus impulsum a semetipso corruat, studere incessabiliter debet, ut per eruditionis studium resurgat. Hinc est enim quod praelatum gregi discipulum Paulus admonet, dicens: Dum venio attende lectioni (I Tim. IV, 13). Hinc David ait: Quomodo dilexi legem tuam, Domine, tota die meditatio mea est (Ps. CXVIII, 97). Hinc Moysi Dominus de portanda arca praecepit, dicens: Facies quatuor circulos aureos, quos pones per quatuor arcae angulos, faciesque vectes de lignis sethim, et operies auro, inducesque per circulos qui sunt in arcae lateribus, ut portetur in eis qui semper erunt in circulis, nec unquam extrahentur ab eis (Exod. XXV, 12, seq.). Quid per arcam, nisi sancta Ecclesia figuratur? Cui quatuor circuli aurei per quatuor angulos jubentur adjungi, quia in eo quod per quatuor mundi partes dilatata tenditur, procul dubio quatuor sancti Evangelii libris accincta praedicatur. Vectesque de lignis sethim fiunt, qui eisdem ad portandum circulis inseruntur; quia fortes perseverantesque doctores velut imputribilia ligna quaerendi sunt, qui instructioni sacrorum voluminum semper inhaerentes, sanctae Ecclesiae unitatem denuntient, et quasi intromissi circulis arcam portent. Vectibus quippe arcam portare, est bonis doctoribus sanctam Ecclesiam ad rudes infidelium mentes praedicando deducere. Qui auro quoque jubentur operiri, ut dum sermone aliis insonant, ipsi etiam vitae splendore fulgescant. De quibus apte subditur: Qui semper erunt in circulis, nec unquam extrahentur ab eis. Quia nimirum necesse est ut qui ad officium praedicationis excubant, a sacrae lectionis studio non recedant. Ad hoc namque vectes esse in circulis semper jubentur, ut cum portari arcam opportunitas exigit, de intromittendis vectibus portandi tarditas nulla generetur; quia videlicet cum

spiritale aliquid a subditis Pastor inquiritur, ignominiosum valde est si tunc quaerat discere, cum quaestionem debet enodare. Sed circulis vectes inhaereant, ut doctores semper in suis cordibus eloquia sacra meditantes, testamenti arcam sine mora elevent, si quidquid necesse est, protinus docent. Unde bene primus pastor Ecclesiae pastores caeteros admonet, dicens: Parati semper ad satisfactionem omni poscenti vos rationem de ea quae in vobis est spe (I Petr. III, 15). Ac si aperte dicat: Ut ad portandam arcam nulla mora praepediat, vectes a circulis nunquam recedant.

TERTIA PARS. QUALITER RECTOR BENE VIVENS DEBEAT DOCERE ET ADMONERE SUBDITOS

PROLOGUS

Quia igitur qualis esse debeat pastor ostendimus, nunc qualiter doceat demonstremus. Ut enim longe ante nos reverendae memoriae Gregorius Nazianzenus edocuit (Orat. 1), non una eademque cunctis exhortatio congruit, quia nec cunctos par morum qualitas astringit. Saepe namque aliis officiunt, quae aliis prosunt. Quia et plerumque herbae quae haec animalia nutriunt, alia occidunt; et lenis sibilus equos mitigat, catulos instigat. Et medicamentum quod hunc morbum imminuit, alteri vires jungit; et panis qui vitam fortium roborat, parvulorum necat. Pro qualitate igitur audientium formari debet sermo doctorum, ut et ad sua singulis congruat, et tamen a communis aedificationis arte nunquam recedat. Quid enim sunt intentae mentes auditorum, nisi ut ita dixerim, quaedam in cithara tensiones stratae chordarum? quas tangendi artifex, ut non sibimetipsi dissimile canticum faciat, dissimiliter pulsat. Et idcirco chordae consonam modulationem reddunt, quia uno quidem plectro, sed non uno impulsu feriuntur. Unde et doctor quisque, ut in una cunctos virtute charitatis aedificet, ex una doctrina, non una eademque exhortatione tangere corda audientium debet.

CAPUT PRIMUM

Quanta debet esse diversitas in arte praedicationis.

Aliter namque admonendi sunt viri, atque aliter feminae.
Aliter juvenes, aliter senes.

Aliter inopes, aliter locupletes.

Aliter laeti, aliter tristes.

Aliter subditi, aliter praelati.

Aliter servi, aliter domini.

Aliter hujus mundi sapientes, aliter hebetes.

Aliter impudentes, aliter verecundi.

Aliter protervi, aliter pusillanimes.

Aliter impatientes, aliter patientes.

Aliter benevoli, aliter invidi.

Aliter simplices, aliter impuri.

Aliter incolumes, aliter aegri.

Aliter qui flagella metuunt, et propterea innocenter vivunt; aliter qui sic in iniquitate duruerunt, ut neque per flagella corrigantur.

Aliter nimis taciti, aliter multiloquio vacantes.

Aliter pigri, aliter praecipites.

Aliter mansueti, aliter iracundi.

Aliter humiles, aliter elati.

Aliter pertinaces, aliter inconstantes.

Aliter gulae dediti, aliter abstinentes.

Aliter qui sua misericorditer tribuunt, aliter qui aliena rapere contendunt.

Aliter qui nec aliena rapiunt, nec sua largiuntur: aliter qui et ea quae habent tribuunt, et tamen aliena rapere non desistunt.

Aliter discordes, aliter pacati.

Aliter seminantes jurgia, aliter pacifici.

Aliter qui sacrae legis verba non intelligunt recte; aliter qui recte quidem intelligunt, sed haec humiliter non loquuntur.

Aliter qui cum digne praedicare valeant, prae nimia humilitate formidant; aliter quos a praedicatiore imperfectio vel aetas prohibet, et tamen praecipitatio impellit.

Aliter qui in hoc quod temporaliter appetunt, prosperantur; aliter qui ea quidem quae mundi sunt concupiscunt, sed tamen adversitatis labore fatigantur.

Aliter conjugiis obligati, aliter a conjugii nexibus liberi.

Aliter admistionem carnis experti, aliter ignorantes.

Aliter qui peccata deplorant operum, aliter qui cogitationum.

Aliter qui commissa plangunt, nec tamen deserunt; aliter qui deserunt, nec tamen plangunt.

Aliter qui illicita quae faciunt, etiam laudant; aliter qui accusant prava, nec tamen devitant.

Aliter qui repentina concupiscentia superantur, atque aliter qui in culpa ex consilio ligantur.

Aliter qui licet minima, crebro tamen illicita faciunt; aliter qui se a parvis custodiunt, sed aliquando in gravioribus demerguntur.

Aliter qui bona nec inchoant, aliter qui inchoata minime consummant.

Aliter qui mala occulte agunt, et bona publice; aliter qui bona quae faciunt abscondunt, et tamen quibusdam factis publice mala de se opinari permittunt.

Sed quid utilitatis est, quod cuncta haec collecta numeratione transcurrimus, si non etiam admonitionis modos per singula, quanta possumus brevitate, pandamus.

Aliter igitur admonendi sunt viri, atque aliter feminae, quia illis graviora, istis vero injungenda sunt leviora, ut illos magna exerceant, istas autem levia demulcendo convertant. Aliter admonendi sunt juvenes, atque aliter senes, quia illos plerumque severitas admonitionis ad profectum dirigit; istos vero ad meliora opera deprecatio blanda componit. Scriptum quippe est: Seniorem ne increpaveris, sed obsecra ut patrem (I Tim. V, 1).

CAPUT II

Quomodo admonendi sint inopes et divites.

Aliter admonendi sunt inopes, atque aliter locupletes; illis namque offerre consolationis solatium contra tribulationem, istis vero inferre metum contra elationem debemus. Inopi quippe a Domino per prophetam dicitur: Noli timere, quia non confunderis (Isai. LIV, 4). Cui non longe post blandiens, dicit: Paupercula tempestate convulsa (Ibid., 11). Rursumque banc

consolatur, dicens: Elegi te in camino paupertatis (Ibid., XLVIII, 10). At contra Paulus discipulo de divitibus dicit: Divitibus hujus saeculi praecipe non superbe sapere, neque sperare in incerto divitiarum suarum (I Tim. VI, 17). Ubi notandum valde est, quod humilitatis doctor memoriam divitum faciens non ait, Roga, sed Praecipe, quia etsi impendenda est pietas infirmitati, honor tamen non debetur elationi. Talibus ergo rectum quod dicitur, tanto rectius jubetur, quanto et in rebus transitoriis altitudine cogitationis intumescunt. De his in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Vae vobis divitibus, qui habetis consolationem vestram (Luc. VI, 24). Quia enim quae sunt aeterna gaudia nesciunt, ex praesentis vitae abundantia consolantur. Offerenda est ergo eis consolatio, quos caminus paupertatis excoquit; atque illis inferendus est timor, quos consolatio gloriae temporalis extollit; ut et illi discant quia divitias quas non conspiciunt possident, et isti cognoscant quia eas quas conspiciunt nequaquam tenere possunt. Plerumque tamen personarum ordinem permutat qualitas morum, ut sit dives humilis, sit pauper elatus. Unde mox praedicantis lingua cum audientis debet vita componi, ut tanto districtius in paupere elationem feriat, quanto eam nec illata paupertas inclinat; et tanto lenius humilitatem divitum mulceat, quanto eos nec abundantia quae sublevat, exaltat. Nonnunquam tamen etiam superbus dives exhortationis blandimento placandus est, quia et plerumque dura vulnera per lenia fomenta mollescunt, et furor insanorum saepe ad salutem medico blandiente reducitur; cumque eis in dulcedine condescenditur, languor insaniae mitigatur. Neque enim negligenter intuendum est, quod cum Saulem spiritus adversus invaderet, apprehensa David cithara, ejus vesaniam sedabat (I Reg. XVIII, 10). Quid enim per Saulem, nisi elatio potentum; et quid per David innuitur, nisi humilis vita sanctorum? Cum ergo Saul ab immundo spiritu arripitur, David canente, ejus vesania temperatur; quia cum sensus potentum per elationem in furorem vertitur, dignum est ut ad salutem mentis quasi dulcedine citharae,

locutionis nostrae tranquillitate revocetur. Aliquando autem cum hujus saeculi potentes arguuntur, prius per quasdam similitudines velut de alieno negotio requirendi sunt; et cum rectam sententiam quasi in alterum protulerint, tunc modis congruentibus de proprio reatu feriendi sunt; ut mens temporali potentia tumida contra corripientem nequaquam se erigat, quae suo sibi judicio superbiae cervicem calcat; et in nulla sui defensione se exerceat, quam sententia proprii oris ligat. Hinc est enim quod Nathan propheta arguere regem venerat, et quasi de causa pauperis contra divitem judicium quaerebat (II Reg. XII, 4, 5, seq.); ut prius rex sententiam diceret, et reatum suum postmodum audiret, quatenus nequaquam justitiae contradiceret, quam ipse in se protulisset. Vir itaque sanctus et peccatorem considerans et regem, miro ordine audacem reum prius per confessionem ligare studuit, et postmodum per invectionem secare. Celavit paululum quem quaesivit, sed percussit repente quem tenuit. Pigrius enim fortasse incideret, si ab ipso sermonis exordio aperte culpam ferire voluisset; sed praemissa similitudine, eam quam occultabat exacuit increpationem. Ad aegrum medicus venerat, secandum vulnus videbat, sed de patientia aegri dubitabat. Abscondit igitur ferrum medicinale sub veste, quod eductum subito fixit in vulnere, ut secantem gladium sentiret aeger antequam cerneret, ne si ante cerneret, sentire recusaret.

CAPUT III

Quomodo admonendi laeti et tristes.

Aliter admonendi sunt laeti, atque aliter tristes. Laetis videlicet inferenda sunt tristia quae sequuntur ex supplicio; tristibus vero inferenda sunt laeta quae promittuntur ex regno. Discant laeti ex minarum asperitate quod timeant; audiant tristes praemiorum gaudia de quibus praesumant. Illis quippe dicitur: Vae vobis qui ridetis nunc, quoniam flebitis (Luc. VI, 25);

isti vero eodem magistro docente audiunt: Iterum videbo vos, et gaudebit cor vestrum, et gaudium vestrum nemo tollet a vobis (Joan. XVI, 22). Nonnulli autem laeti vel tristes non rebus fiunt, sed conspersionibus existunt. Quibus profecto intimandum est quod quaedam vitia quibusdam conspersionibus juxta sunt. Habent enim laeti ex propinquo luxuriam, tristes iram. Unde necesse est ut non solum quisque consideret quod ex conspersione sustinet, sed etiam quod ex vicino deterius perurget; ne dum nequaquam pugnat contra hoc quod tolerat, ei quoque a quo se liberum aestimat, vitio succumbat.

CAPUT IV

Quomodo admonendi subdili et praelati.

Aliter admonendi sunt subditi, atque aliter praelati. Illos ne subjectio conterat, istos ne locus superior extollat. Illi ne minus quae jubentur impleant, isti ne plus justo jubeant quae compleantur. Illi ut humiliter subjaceant, isti ut temperanter praesint. Nam quod intelligi et figuraliter potest, illis dicitur: Filii, obedite parentibus vestris in Domino; istis vero praecipitur: Et patres, nolite ad iracundiam provocare filios vestros (Coloss. III, 20, 21). Illi discant quomodo ante occulti arbitri oculos sua interiora componant, isti quomodo etiam commissis sibi exempla bene vivendi exterius praebeant. Scire etenim praelati debent quia si perversa unquam perpetrant, tot mortibus digni sunt, quot ad subditos suos perditionis exempla transmittunt. Unde necesse est ut tanto se cautius a culpa custodiant, quanto per prava quae faciunt, non soli moriuntur sed aliorum animarum, quas pravis exemplis destruxerunt, rei sunt. Unde admonendi sunt illi; ne districtius puniantur si absoluti reperiri nequiverint saltem de se; isti ne de subditorum erratibus judicentur, etiamsi se jam de se securos inveniunt. Illi ut tanto circa se sollicitius vivant, quanto eos aliena cura non

implicat; isti vero ut sic aliorum curas expleant, quatenus et suas agere non desistant, et sic in propria sollicitudine ferveant, ut a commissorum custodia minime torpescant. Illi enim sibimet vacanti dicitur: Vade ad formicam, o piger, et considera vias ejus, et disce sapientiam (Proverb. VI, 6). Iste autem terribiliter admonetur, cum dicitur: Fili mi, si spoponderis pro amico tuo, defixisti apud extraneum manum tuam, et illaqueatus es verbis oris tui, et captus propriis sermonibus (Ibid., 1). Spondere namque pro amico, est alienam animam in periculo suae conversationis accipere. Unde et apud extraneum manus defigitur, quia apud curam sollicitudinis quae ante deerat, mens ligatur. Verbis vero oris sui illaqueatus est, ac propriis sermonibus captus; quia dum commissis sibi cogitur bona dicere, ipsum prius necesse est quae dixerit custodire. Illaqueatur igitur verbis oris sui, dum ratione exigente constringitur, ne ejus vita ad aliud quam admonet relaxetur. Unde apud districtum judicem cogitur tanta in opere exsolvere, quanta eum constat aliis voce praecepisse. Ubi et bene mox exhortatio subditur, ut dicatur: Fac ergo quod dico, fili mi, et temetipsum libera, quia incidisti in manus proximi tui: discurre, festina, suscita amicum tuum; ne dederis somnum oculis tuis, nec dormitent palpebrae tuae (Prov. VI, 3). Quisquis enim ad vivendum aliis in exemplo praeponitur, non solum ut ipse vigilet, sed etiam ut amicum suscitet admonetur. Ei namque vigilare bene vivendo non sufficit, si non et illum cui praeest, a peccati torpore disjungit. Bene autem dicitur: Ne dederis somnum oculis tuis, nec dormitent palpebrae tuae (Ibid., 4). Somnum quippe oculis dare, est intentione cessante, subditorum curam omnino negligere. Palpebrae vero dormitant, cum cogitationes nostrae ea quae in subditis arguenda cognoscunt, pigredine deprimente dissimulant. Plene enim dormire est commissorum acta nec scire, nec corrigere. Non autem dormire, sed dormitare est, quae quidem reprehendenda sunt cognoscere, sed tamen propter mentis taedium dignis ea increpationibus non emendare. Dormitando vero oculus ad plenissimum

somnum ducitur, quia dum plerumque qui praeest malum quod cognoscit non resecat, ad hoc quandoque negligentiae suae merito pervenit, ut quod a subjectis delinquitur, nec agnoscat. Admonendi sunt itaque qui praesunt, ut per circumspectionis studium oculos pervigiles intus et in circuitu habeant, et coeli animalia fieri contendant. (Ezech. I, 18). Ostensa quippe coeli animalia in circuitu et intus oculis plena describuntur (Apoc. IV, 6). Dignum quippe est ut cuncti qui praesunt intus atque in circuitu oculos habeant, quatenus et interno judici in semetipsis placere studeant, et exempla vitae exterius praebentes, ea etiam quae in aliis sunt corrigenda deprehendant. Admonendi sunt subditi, ne praepositorum suorum vitam temere judicent, si quid eos fortasse agere reprehensibiliter vident; ne unde mala recte redarguunt, inde per elationis impulsum in profundiora mergantur. Admonendi sunt, ne cum culpas praepositorum considerant, contra eos audaciores fiant, sed sic si qua valde sunt eorum prava, apud semetipsos dijudicent, ut tamen divino timore constricti ferre sub eis jugum reverentiae non recusent. Quod melius ostendimus, si David factum ad medium deducamus (I Reg. XXIV, 4, seq.). Saul quippe persecutor, cum ad purgandum ventrem speluncam fuisset ingressus, illic cum viris suis David inerat, qui jam tam longo tempore persecutionis ejus mala tolerabat. Cumque eum viri sui ad feriendum Saul accenderent, fregit eos responsionibus, quia manum mittere in christum Domini non deberet. Qui tamen occulte surrexit, et oram chlamydis ejus abscidit. Quid enim per Saul, nisi mali rectores; quid per David, nisi boni subditi designantur? Saul igitur ventrem purgare, est pravos praepositos conceptam in corde malitiam usque ad opera miseri odoris extendere, et cogitata apud se noxia factis exterioribus exsequendo monstrare. Quem tamen David ferire metuit, quia piae subditorum mentes ab omni se peste obtrectationis abstinentes, praepositorum vitam nullo linguae gladio percutiunt, etiam cum de imperfectione reprehendunt. Qui etsi quando pro infirmitate sese abstinere

vix possunt, ut extrema quaedam atque exteriora praepositorum mala, sed tamen humiliter loquantur, quasi oram chlamidis silenter incidunt; quia videlicet dum praelatae dignitati saltem innoxie et latenter derogant, quasi regis superpositi vestem foedant, sed tamen ad semetipsos redeunt seque vehementissime vel de tenuissima verbi laceratione reprehendunt. Unde bene et illic scriptum est: Post haec David percussit cor suum, eo quod abscidisset oram chlamidis Saul (Ibid., 6). Facta quippe praepositorum oris gladio ferienda non sunt, etiam cum recte reprehendenda judicantur. Si quando vero contra eos vel in minimis lingua labitur, necesse est ut per afflictionem poenitentiae cor prematur; quatenus ad semetipsum redeat, et cum praepositae potestati deliquerit, ejus contra se judicium a quo sibi praelata est perhorrescat. Nam cum praepositis delinquimus, ejus ordinationi qui eos nobis praetulit obviamus. Unde Moyses quoque cum contra se et Aaron conqueri populum cognovisset, ait: Nos enim quid sumus? Nec contra nos est murmur vestrum, sed contra Dominum (Exod. XVI, 8).

CAPUT V

Quomodo admonendi servi et domini.

Aliter admonendi sunt servi, atque aliter domini. Servi scilicet, ut in se semper humilitatem conditionis aspiciant; domini vero, ut naturae suae qua aequaliter sunt cum servis conditi, memoriam non amittant. Servi admonendi sunt ne dominos despiciant, ne Deum offendant si ordinationi illius superbiendo contradicunt; domini quoque admonendi sunt, quia contra Deum de munere ejus superbiunt, si eos quos per conditionem tenent subditos, aequales sibi per naturae consortium non agnoscunt. Isti admonendi sunt ut sciant se servos esse dominorum: illi admonendi sunt ut cognoscant se conservos esse servorum. Istis namque dicitur: Servi, obedite

dominis carnalibus (Coloss. III, 22). Et rursum: Quicunque sunt sub jugo servi, dominos suos omni honore dignos arbitrentur (I Tim. VI, 1); illis autem dicitur: Et vos domini eadem facite illis, remittentes minas, scientes quod et illorum et vester Dominus est in coelis (Ephes. VI, 2).

CAPUT VI

Quomodo admonendi sapientes et hebetes.

Aliter admonendi sunt sapientes hujus saeculi, atque aliter hebetes. Sapientes quippe admonendi sunt, ut amittant scire quae sciunt; hebetes quoque admonendi sunt, ut appetant scire quae nesciunt. In illis hoc primum destruendum est, quod se sapientes arbitrantur; in istis jam aedificandum est quidquid de superna sapientia cognoscitur, quia dum minime superbiunt, quasi ad suscipiendum aedificium corda paraverunt. Cum illis laborandum est, ut sapientius stulti fiant, stultam sapientiam deserant, et sapientem Dei stultitiam discant; istis vero praedicandum est, ut ab ea quae putatur stultitia, ad veram sapientiam vicinius transeant. Illis namque dicitur: Si quis videtur inter vos sapiens esse in hoc soeculo, stultus fiat, ut sit sapiens (I Cor. III, 18); istis vero dicitur: Non multi sapientes secundum carnem (Ibid., I, 22). Et rursum: Quae stulta sunt mundi elegit Deus, ut confundat sapientes (Ibid., 27). Illos plerumque ratiocinationis argumenta, istos nonnunquam melius exempla convertunt. Illis nimirum prodest, ut in suis allegationibus victi jaceant; istis vero aliquando sufficit ut laudabilia aliorum facta cognoscant. Unde et magister egregius, sapientibus et insipientibus debitor (Rom. I, 14), cum Hebraeorum quosdam sapientes, quosdam vero etiam tardiores admoneret, illis de completione Testamenti Veteris loquens, eorum sapientiam argumento superavit, dicens: Quod enim antiquatur et senescit, prope interitum est (Hebr. VIII, 13). Cum vero solis exemplis quosdam trahendos cerneret, in eadem Epistola adjunxit: Sancti

ludibria et verbera experti, insuper et vincula et carceres, lapidati sunt, secti sunt, tentati sunt, in occisione gladii mortui sunt (Ibid., XI, 36, 37). Et rursum: Mementote praepositorum vestrorum, qui vobis locuti sunt verbum Dei, quorum intuentes exitum conversationis, imitamini fidem (Ibid., XIII, 7); quatenus et illos victrix ratio frangeret, et istos ad majora conscendere imitatio blanda suaderet.

CAPUT VII

Quomodo admonendi impudentes et verecundi.

Aliter admonendi sunt impudentes, atque aliter verecundi. Illos namque ab impudentiae vitio non nisi increpatio dura compescit; istos autem plerumque ad melius exhortatio modesta componit. Illi se delinquere nesciunt, nisi etiam a pluribus increpentur; istis plerumque ad conversionem sufficit quod eis doctor mala sua saltem leniter ad memoriam reducit. Illos melius corrigit qui invehendo reprehendit; istis autem major profectus adducitur, si hoc quod in eis reprehenditur quasi ex latere tangatur. Impudentem quippe Judaeorum plebem Dominus aperte increpans, ait: Frons mulieris meretricis facta est tibi, noluisti erubescere (Jerem. III, 3). Et rursum verecundantem refovet, dicens: Confusionis adolescentiae tuae oblivisceris, et opprobrii viduitatis tuae non recordaberis, quia dominabitur tui qui fecit te (Isai. LIV, 4). Impudenter quoque delinquentes Galatas aperte Paulus increpat, dicens: O insensati Galatae, quis vos fascinavit (Galat. III, 1)? Et rursum: Sic stulti estis, ut cum spiritu coeperitis, nunc carne consummamini (Ibid. 3)? Culpas vero verecundantium quasi compatiens reprehendit, dicens: Gavisus sum in Domino vehementer, quoniam tandem aliquando refloruistis pro me sentire sicut et sentiebatis; occupati enim eratis (Philipp. IV, 10); ut et illorum culpas increpatio dura detegeret, et horum negligentiam mollior sermo velaret.

CAPUT VIII

Quomodo admonendi protervi et pusillanimes.

Aliter admonendi sunt protervi, atque aliter pusillanimes. Illi enim dum valde de se praesumunt, exprobrando caeteros dedignantur; isti autem dum nimis infirmitatis suae sunt conscii. plerumque in desperationem cadunt. Illi singulariter summa aestimant cuncta quae agunt, isti vehementer despecta putant esse quae faciunt, et idcirco in desperatione franguntur. Subtiliter itaque ab arguente discutienda sunt opera protervorum, ut in quo sibi placent, ostendantur quia Deo displicent.

Tunc enim protervos melius corrigimus, cum ea quae bene egisse se credunt, male acta monstramus; ut unde adepta gloria creditur, inde utilis subsequatur confusio. Nonnunquam vero cum se vitium proterviae minime perpetrare cognoscunt, compendiosius ad correctionem veniunt, si alterius culpae manifestioris ex latere requisitae improperio confunduntur; ut ex eo quod defendere nequeunt, cognoscant se tenere improbe quod defendunt. Unde cum proterve Paulus Corinthios adversum se invicem videret inflatos, ut alius Pauli, alius Apollo, alius Cephae, alius Christi esse se diceret (I Cor. I, 12; III, 4), incestus culpam in medium deduxit, quae apud eos et perpetrata fuerat, et incorrecta remanebat, dicens: Auditur inter vos fornicatio, et talis fornicatio, qualis nec inter gentes, ita ut uxorem patris quis habeat. Et vos inflati estis, et non magis luctum habuistis, ut tolleretur de medio vestrum qui hoc opus fecit (I Cor. V, 1, 2). Ac si aperte dicat: Quid vos per proterviam, hujus vel illius dicitis, qui per dissolutionem negligentiae, nullius vos esse monstratis?

At contra, pusillanimes aptius ad iter bene agendi reducimus, si quaedam illorum bona ex latere requiramus, ut dum in eis alia reprehendendo corripimus, alia amplectendo laudemus, quatenus eorum teneritudinem laus

audita nutriat, quam culpa increpata castigat. Plerumque autem utilius apud illos proficimus, si et eorum bene gesta memoramus. Et si qua ab eis inordinate gesta sunt, non jam tanquam perpetrata corripimus, sed quasi adhuc ne perpetrari debeant prohibemus, ut et illa quae approbamus, illatus favor augeat, et contra ea quae reprehendimus magis apud pusillanimes exhortatio verecunda convalescat. Unde idem Paulus cum Thessalonicenses in accepta praedicatione perdurantes, quasi de vicino mundi termino quadam cognosceret pusillanimitate turbatos, prius in eis quae fortia prospicit laudat, et caute monendo postmodum quae infirma sunt roborat. Ait enim: Gratias agere debemus Deo semper pro vobis, fratres, ita ut dignum est, quoniam supercrescit fides vestra, et abundat charitas uniuscujusque vestrum in invicem; ita ut et nos ipsi in vobis gloriemur in ecclesiis Dei, pro patientia vestra et fide (II Thes. I, 3, 4). Qui cum blanda haec vitae eorum praeconia praemisisset, paulo post subdidit, dicens: Rogamus autem vos, fratres, per adventum Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et nostrae congregationis in ipsum, ut non cito moveamini a vestro sensu, neque terreamini, neque per spiritum, neque per sermonem, neque per epistolam tanquam per nos missam, quasi instet dies Domini (Ibid. II, 1). Egit enim verus doctor, ut prius audirent laudati quod recognoscerent, et postmodum quod exhortati sequerentur; quatenus eorum mentem ne admonitio subjuncta concuteret, laus praemissa solidaret; et qui commotos eos vicini finis suspicione cognoverat, non jam redarguebat motos, sed quasi transacta nesciens, adhuc commoveri prohibebat; ut dum de ipsa levitate motionis praedicatori suo se incognitos crederent, tanto reprehensibiles fieri, quanto et cognosci ab illo formidarent.

CAPUT IX

Quomodo admonendi sint impatientes et patientes.

Aliter admonendi sunt impatientes, atque aliter patientes. Dicendum namque est impatientibus quia dum refrenare spiritum negligunt, per multa etiam quae non appetunt iniquitatum abrupta rapiuntur, quia videlicet mentem impellit furor quo non trahit desiderium; et agit commota velut nesciens, unde post doleat sciens. Dicendum quoque impatientibus, quia dum motionis impulsu praecipites, quaedam velut alienati peragunt, vix mala sua postquam fuerint perpetrata cognoscunt. Qui dum perturbationi suae minime obsistunt, etiamsi qua a se tranquilla mente fuerant bene gesta confundunt, et improviso impulsu destruunt, quidquid forsitan diu labore provido construxerunt. Ipsa namque quae mater est omnium custosque virtutum, per impatientiae vitium virtus amittitur charitatis. Scriptum quippe est: Charitas patiens est (I Cor. XIII, 4). Igitur cum minime est patiens, charitas non est. Per hoc quoque impatientiae vitium ipsa virtutum nutrix doctrina dissipatur. Scriptum namque est: Doctrina viri per patientiam noscitur (Prov. XIX, 14). Tanto ergo quisque minus ostenditur doctus, quanto minus convincitur patiens. Neque enim potest veraciter bona docendo impendere, si vivendo nescit aequanimiter aliena mala tolerare.

Per hoc quoque impatientiae vitium plerumque mentem arrogantiae culpa transfigit; quia dum despici in mundo hoc quisque non patitur, bona si qua sibi occulta sunt, ostentare conatur, atque sic per impatientiam usque ad arrogantiam ducitur; dumque ferre despectionem non potest, detegendo semetipsum in ostentatione gloriatur. Unde scriptum est: Melior est patiens arrogante (Eccle. VII, 9). Quia videlicet eligit patiens quaelibet mala perpeti quam per ostentationis vitium bona sua occulta cognosci. At contra eligit arrogans bona de se vel falsa jactari, ne mala possit vel minima perpeti. Quia igitur cum patientia relinquitur, etiam bona reliqua quae jam gesta sunt destruuntur, recte ad Ezechielem in altari Dei fieri fossa praecipitur, ut in ea videlicet superposita holocausta serventur (Ezech. XLIII, 13). Si enim in altari fossa non esset, omne quod in eo sacrificium reperiret, superveniens

aura dispergeret. Quid vero accipimus altare Dei, nisi animam justi, quae quot bona egerit, tot super se ante ejus oculos sacrificia imponit? Quid autem est altaris fossa, nisi bonorum patientia, quae dum mentem ad adversa toleranda humiliat, quasi more foveae hanc in imo positam demonstrat? Fossa ergo in altari fiat, ne superpositum sacrificium aura dispergat: id est, electorum mens patientiam custodiat, ne commota vento impatientiae, et hoc quod bene operata est amittat. Bene autem haec eadem fossa unius cubiti esse monstratur (Ibid.); quia nimirum si patientia non deseritur, unitatis mensura servatur. Unde et Paulus ait: Invicem onera vestra portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi (Galat. VI, 2). Lex quippe Christi est charitas unitatis, quam soli perficiunt, qui nec cum gravantur excedunt. Audiant impatientes quod scriptum est: Melior est patiens viro forti, et qui dominatur animo suo, expugnatore urbium (Prov. XVI, 32). Minor enim est victoria urbium, quia extra sunt quae subiguntur; valde autem majus est quod per patientiam vincitur, quia ipse a se animus superatur, et semetipsum sibimetipsi subjicit, quando eum patientia intra se frenare compellit. Audiant impatientes quod electis suis Veritas dicit: In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras (Luc. XXI, 19). Sic enim conditi mirabiliter sumus, ut ratio animam, et anima possideat corpus. Jus vero animae a corporis possessione repellitur, si non prius anima a ratione possidetur. Custodem igitur conditionis nostrae patientiam Dominus esse monstravit, qui in ipsa nos possidere nosmetipsos docuit. Quanta ergo sit impatientiae culpa cognoscimus, per quam et hoc ipsum amittimus possidere quod sumus. Audiant impatientes quod per Salomonem rursum dicitur: Totum 44 spiritum suum profert stultus, sapiens autem differt et reservat in posterum (Prov. XXIX, 11). Impatientia quippe impellente agitur ut totus foras spiritus proferatur; quem idcirco perturbatio citius ejicit, quia nulla interius disciplina sapientiae circumcludit. Sapiens autem differt et reservat in posterum. Laesus enim, in praesens se ulcisci non desiderat, quia

etiam tolerans parci optat, sed tamen juste vindicari omnia extremo judicio non ignorat.

At contra admonendi sunt patientes, ne in eo quod exterius portant, interius doleant, ne tantae virtutis sacrificium quod integrum foras immolant, intus malitiae peste corrumpant; et cum ab hominibus non agnoscitur, sed tamen sub divina examinatione peccatur, tanto deterior culpa doloris fiat, quanto sibi ante homines virtutis speciem vindicat.

Dicendum itaque est patientibus, ut studeant diligere quos sibi necesse est tolerare; ne si patientiam dilectio non sequatur, in deteriorem culpam odii virtus ostensa vertatur. Unde Paulus cum diceret: Charitas patiens est, illico adjunxit: Benigna est (I Cor. XIII, 4); videlicet ostendens quia quos ex patientia tolerat, amare etiam ex benignitate non cessat. Unde idem doctor egregius cum patientiam discipulis suaderet, dicens: Omnis amaritudo, et ira, et indignatio, et clamor, et blasphemia tollatur a vobis (Ephes. IV, 31), quasi cunctis exterius jam bene compositis ad interiora convertitur, dum subjungit: Cum omni malitia (Ibid.); quia nimirum frustra indignatio, clamor et blasphemia ab exterioribus tollitur, si in interioribus vitiorum mater malitia dominatur; et incassum foras nequitia ex ramis inciditur, si surrectura multiplicius intus in radice servatur. Unde et per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Diligite inimicos vestros, benefacite his qui oderunt vos, et orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos (Luc. VI, 27). Virtus itaque est coram hominibus, adversarios tolerare; sed virtus coram Deo, diligere; quia hoc solum Deus sacrificium accipit, quod ante ejus oculos in altari boni operis flamma charitatis incendit. Hinc est quod rursum quibusdam patientibus, nec tamen diligentibus dicit: Quid autem vides festucam in oculo fratris tui, et trabem in oculo tuo non vides (Matth. VII, 3; Luc. VI, 41)? Pertubatio quippe impatientiae festuca est; malitia vero in corde, trabes in oculo. Illam namque aura tentationis agitat, hanc autem consummata

nequitia pene immobiliter portat. Recte vero illic subjungitur: Hypocrita, ejice primum trabem de oculo tuo, et tunc videbis ejicere festucam de oculo fratris tui (Ibid.). Ac si dicatur menti iniquae interius dolenti, et sanctam se exterius per patientiam demonstranti: Prius a te molem malitiae excute, et tunc alios de impatientiae levitate reprehende, ne dum non studes simulationem vincere, pejus tibi sit aliena prava tolerare.

Evenire etiam plerumque patientibus solet ut eo quidem tempore quo vel adversa patiuntur, vel contumelias audiunt, nullo dolore pulsentur, et sic patientiam exhibeant, ut custodire etiam cordis innocentiam non omittant; sed cum post paululum haec ipsa quae pertulerint, ad memoriam revocant, igne se doloris inflammant, argumenta ultionis inquirunt, et mansuetudinem quam tolerantes habuerunt, retractantes in malitiam vertunt. Quibus citius a praedicante succurritur, si quae sit hujus permutationis causa pandatur. Callidus namque adversarius bellum contra duos movet, unum videlicet inflammans ut contumelias prior inferat, alterum provocans ut contumelias laesus reddat. Sed plerumque dum hujus jam victor est qui injuriam persuasus irrogat, ab illo vincitur qui illatam sibi aequanimiter portat. Unius ergo victor quem commovendo subjugavit, tota contra alterum virtute se erigit, eumque obsistentem fortiter et vincentem dolet; quem quia commovere in ipsa contumeliarum jaculatione non potuit, ab aperto certamine interim quiescens, et secreta suggestione cogitationem lacescens, aptum deceptionis tempus inquirit. Quia enim publico bello perdidit, ad exercendas occulte insidias exardescit. Quietis namque tempore jam ad victoris animum redit, et vel rerum damna, aut injuriarum jacula ad memoriam reducit, cunctaque quae sibi illata sunt, vehementer exaggerans, intolerabilia ostendit; tantoque mentem moerore conturbat, ut plerumque vir patiens illa se aequanimiter tolerasse post victoriam captivus erubescat, seque non reddidisse contumelias doleat, et deteriora rependere, si occasio praebeatur, quaerat. Quibus ergo isti sunt similes, nisi his qui per

fortitudinem in campo victores sunt, sed per negligentiam postmodum intra urbis claustra capiuntur? Quibus sunt similes, nisi iis quos irruens gravis languor a vita non subtrahit, sed leniter veniens recidiva febris occidit? Admonendi sunt igitur patientes, ut cor post victoriam muniant, ut hostem publico bello superatum insidiari moeniis mentis intendant; ut languorem plus reserpentem timeant, ne hostis callidus eo in deceptione postmodum majori exsultatione gaudeat, quo illa dudum contra se rigida colla victorum calcat.

CAPUT X

Quomodo admonendi benevoli et invidi.

Aliter admonendi sunt benevoli, atque aliter invidi. Admonendi namque sunt benevoli, ut sic alienis bonis congaudeant, quatenos habere propria concupiscant. Sic proximorum facta diligendo laudent, ut ea etiam imitando multiplicent, ne si in hoc praesentis vitae stadio ad certamen alienum devoti fautores, sed pigri spectatores assistant, eo post certamen sine bravio remaneant, quo nunc in certamine non laborant; et tunc eorum palmas afflicti respiciant, in quorum nunc laboribus otiosi per durant. Valde quippe peccamus, si aliena bene gesta non diligimus. Sed nil mercedis agimus, si ea quae diligimus, in quantum possumus non imitamur. Dicendum itaque est benevolis, quia si imitari bona minime festinant quae laudantes approbant, sic eis virtutum sanctitas sicut stultis spectatoribus ludicrarum artium vanitas placet. Illi namque aurigarum et histrionum gesta favoribus efferunt, nec tamen tales esse desiderant, quales illos conspiciunt esse quos laudant. Mirantur eos placita egisse, sed tamen devitant similiter placere. Dicendum est benevolis ut cum proximorum facta conspiciunt, ad suum cor redeant, et de alienis actibus non praesumant; ne bona laudent, et agere

recusent. Gravius quippe extrema ultione feriendi sunt, quibus placuit quod imitari noluerunt.

Admonendi sunt invidi, ut perpendant quantae caecitatis sunt, qui alieno provectu deficiunt, aliena exsultatione contabescunt. Quantae infelicitatis sunt, qui melioratione proximi deteriores fiunt; dumque augmenta alienae prosperitatis aspiciunt, apud semetipsos anxie afflicti, cordis sui peste moriuntur. Quid istis infelicius, quos dum conspecta felicitas afficit, poena nequiores reddit? Aliorum vero bona quae habere non possunt, si diligerent, sua facerent. Sic quippe sunt universi consistentes in fide, sicut multa membra uno in corpore: quae per officium quidem diversa sunt, sed eo quo sibi vicissim congruunt, unum fiunt. Unde fit ut pes per oculum videat, et per pedes oculi gradiantur; ori auditus aurium serviat, et ad usum suum auribus oris lingua concurrat; suffragetur venter manibus, ventri operentur manus. In ipsa igitur corporis positione accipimus, quod in actione servemus. Nimis itaque turpe est non imitari quod sumus. Nostra sunt nimirum, quae etsi imitari non possumus, amamus in aliis; et amantium fiunt quaeque amantur in nobis. Hinc ergo pensent invidi, charitas quantae virtutis est, quae alieni laboris opera, nostra sine labore facit. Dicendum itaque est invidis, quia dum se a livore minime custodiunt, in antiquam versuti hostis nequitiam demerguntur. De illo namque scriptum est: Invidia autem diaboli mors intrarit in orbem terrarum (Sap. II, 24). Quia enim ipse caelum perdidit, condito hoc homini invidit, et damnationem suam perditus adhuc alios perdendo cumulavit. Admonendi sunt invidi ut cognoscant quantis lapsibus succrescentis ruinae subjaceant, quia dum livorem a corde non projiciunt, ad apertas operum nequitias devolvuntur. Nisi enim Cain invidisset acceptam fratris hostiam, minime pervenisset ad exstinguendam vitam. Unde scriptum est: Et respexit Dominus ad Abel et ad munera ejus; ad Cain vero et ad munera ejus non respexit. Iratusque est Cain vehementer, et concidit vultus ejus (Genes. IV, 4). Livor itaque sacrificii, fratricidii

seminarium fuit. Nam quem meliorem se esse doluit, ne utcumque esset amputavit. Dicendum est invidis quia dum se ista intrinsecus peste consumunt, etiam quidquid in se aliud boni habere videntur interimunt. Unde scriptum est: Vita carnium sanitas cordis, putredo ossium invidia (Prov. XIV, 30). Quid enim per carnes nisi infirma quaedam ac tenera, et quid per ossa nisi fortia acta signantur? Et plerumque contingit ut quidam cum cordis innocentia in nonnullis suis actibus infirmi videantur, quidam vero jam quaedam ante humanos oculos robusta exerceant, sed tamen erga aliorum bona intus invidiae pestilentia tabescant. Bene ergo dicitur: Vita carnium sanitas cordis; quia si mentis innocentia custoditur, etiam si qua foris infirma sunt quandoque roborantur. Et recte illic subditur: Putredo ossium invidia, quia per livoris vitium ante Dei oculos pereunt etiam quae humanis oculis fortia videntur. Ossa quippe per invidiam putrescere, est quaedam etiam robusta deperire.

CAPUT XI

Quomodo admonendi simplices et versipelles.

Aliter admonendi sunt simplices, atque aliter impuri. Laudandi sunt simplices quod studeant numquam falsa dicere, sed admonendi sunt ut noverint nonnunquam vera reticere. Sicut enim semper dicentem falsitas laesit, ita nonnunquam quibusdam audita vera nocuerunt. Unde coram discipulis Dominus locutionem suam silentio temperans, ait: Multa habeo vobis dicere, sed nunc non potestis illa portare (Joan. XVI, 12). Admonendi sunt igitur simplices, ut sicut fallaciam semper utiliter vitant, ita veritatem semper utiliter proferant. Admonendi sunt ut simplicitatis bono prudentiam adjungant, quatenus sic securitatem de simplicitate possideant, ut circumspectionem prudentiae non amittant. Hinc namque per doctorem gentium dicitur: Volo vos sapientes esse in bono, simplices autem in malo

(Rom. XVI, 19). Hinc electos suos per semetipsam Veritas admonet, dicens: Estote prudentes sicut serpentes, et simplices sicut columbae (Matth. X, 16). Quia videlicet in electorum cordibus debet et simplicitatem columbae astutia serpentis acuere, et serpentis astutiam columbae simplicitas temperare, quatenus nec seducti per prudentiam calleant, nec ab intellectus studio ex simplicitate torpescant.

At contra admonendi sunt impuri, ut quam gravis sit, quem cum culpa sustinent, duplicitatis labor agnoscant. Dum enim deprehendi metuunt, semper improbas defensiones quaerunt, semper pavidis suspicionibus agitantur. Nil autem est ad defendendum puritate tutius, nil ad dicendum veritate facilius. Nam dum fallaciam suam tueri cogitur, duro cor labore fatigatur. Hinc namque scriptum est: Labor labiorum ipsorum operiet eos (Psal. CXXXIX, 10). Qui enim nunc implet, tunc operit, quia cujus nunc animum per blandam inquietudinem exerit, tunc per asperam retributionem premit. Hinc per Jeremiam dicitur: Docuerunt linguam suam loqui mendacium, ut inique agerent laboraverunt (Jerem. IX, 5). Ac si aperte diceretur: Qui amici esse veritatis sine labore poterant, ut peccent laborant; cumque vivere simpliciter renuunt, laboribus exigunt ut moriantur. Nam plerumque in culpa deprehensi, dum quales sint cognosci refugiunt, sese sub fallaciae velamine abscondunt, et hoc quod peccant, quodque jam aperte cernitur, excusare moliuntur; ita ut saepe is qui eorum culpas corripere studet, aspersae falsitatis nebulis seductus, pene amisisse se videat quod de eis jam certum tenebat. Unde recte sub Judaeae specie per prophetam contra peccantem animam excusantemque se, dicitur: Ibi habuit foveam ericius (Isai. XXXIV, 15). Ericii quippe nomine impurae mentis seseque callide defendentis duplicitas designatur; quia videlicet ericius cum apprehenditur, ejus et caput cernitur, et pedes videntur, et corpus omne conspicitur; sed mox ut apprehensus fuerit, semetipsum in sphaeram colligit, pedes introrsus subtrahit, caput abscondit, et intra tenentis manus

totum simul amittitur, quod totum simul ante videbatur. Sic nimirum, sic impurae mentes sunt, cum in suis excessibus comprehenduntur. Caput enim ericii cernitur, quia quo initio ad culpam peccator accesserit videtur. Pedes ericii conspiciuntur, quia quibus vestigiis nequitia sit perpetrata cognoscitur, et tamen adductis repente excusationibus impura mens introrsus pedes colligit, quia cuncta iniquitatis suae vestigia abscondit. Caput subtrahit, quia miris defensionibus nec inchoasse se malum aliquod ostendit. Et quasi sphaera in manu tenentis remanet, quia is qui corripit, cuncta quae jam cognoverat subito amittens, involutum intra conscientiam peccatorem tenet; et qui totum jam deprehendendo viderat, tergiversatione pravae defensionis illusus totum pariter ignorat. Foveam ergo habet ericius in reprobis, quia malitiosae mentis duplicitas sese intra se colligens abscondit in tenebris defensionis.

Audiant impuri quod scriptum est: Qui ambulat simpliciter, ambulat confidenter (Prov. X, 9). Fiducia quippe magnae securitatis est simplicitas actionis. Audiant quod sapientis ore dicitur: Spiritus sanctus disciplinae effugiet fictum (Sap. I, 5). Audiant quod Scriptura rursum teste perhibetur: Cum simplicibus sermocinatio ejus (Prov. III, 32). Deo enim sermocinari, est per illustrationem suae praesentiae humanis mentibus arcana revelare. Cum simplicibus igitur sermocinari dicitur; quia de supernis mysteriis illorum mentes radio suae visitationis illuminat, quos nulla umbra duplicitatis obscurat. Est autem speciale duplicium malum, quia dum perversa et duplici actione caeteros fallunt, quasi praestantius caeteris prudentes se esse gloriantur; et quia districtionem retributionis non considerant, de damnis suis miseri exsultant. Audiant autem quomodo super illos propheta Sophonias vim divinae animadversionis intendat, dicens: Ecce dies Domini venit magnus et horribilis, dies irae dies illa, dies tenebrarum et caliginis, dies nebulae et turbinis, dies tubae et clangoris super omnes civitates munitas, et super omnes angulos excelsos (Soph. I,

14, 15). Quid enim per civitates munitas exprimitur, nisi suspectae mentes et fallaci semper defensione circumdatae, quae quoties earum culpa corripitur, veritatis ad se jacula non admittunt? Et quid per excelsos angulos (duplex quippe semper est in angulis paries) nisi impura corda signantur? quae dum veritatis simplicitatem fugiunt, ad semetipsa quodammodo duplicitatis perversitate replicantur, et, quod est deterius, apud cogitationes suas in fastu prudentiae ex ipsa se culpa impuritatis extollunt. Dies igitur Domini vindictae atque animadversionis plena super civitates munitas et super excelsos angulos venit, quia ira extremi judicii humana corda et defensionibus contra veritatem clausa destruit, et duplicitatibus involuta dissolvit. Tunc enim munitae civitates cadunt, quia mentes Deo impenetratae damnabuntur. Tunc excelsi anguli corruunt, quia corda quae se per impuritatis prudentiam erigunt, per justitiae sententiam prosternuntur.

CAPUT XII

Quomodo admonendi sunt incolumes et aegri.

Aliter admonendi sunt incolumes, atque aliter aegri.

Admonendi sunt incolumes, ut salutem corporis exerceant ad salutem mentis; ne si acceptae incolumitatis gratiam ad usum nequitiae inclinent, dono deteriores fiant; et eo postmodum supplicia graviora mereantur, quo nunc largioribus bonis Dei male uti non metuunt. Admonendi sunt incolumes, ne opportunitatem salutis in perpetuum promerendae despiciant. Scriptum namque est: Ecce nunc tempus acceptabile, ecce nunc dies salutis (II Cor. VI, 2). Admonendi sunt ne placere Deo si cum possunt noluerint, cum voluerint sero non possint. Hinc est enim quod eos post sapientia deserit, quos prius diutius renuentes vocavit, dicens: Vocavi, et renuistis; extendi manum meam, et non fuit qui aspiceret; despexistis omne consilium meum, et increpationes meas neglexistis; ego quoque in interitu vestro

ridebo, et subsannabo, cum vobis quod timebatis advenerit (Prov. I, 24, seq.). Et rursum: Tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam; mane consurgent, et non invenient me. Salus itaque corporis quando ad bene operandum accepta despicitur, quanti sit muneris amissa sentitur. Et infructuose ad ultimum quaeritur, quae congruo concessa tempore utiliter non habetur. Unde bene per Salomonem rursum dicitur: Ne des alienis honorem tuum, et annos tuos crudeli; ne forte impleantur extranei viribus tuis, et labores tui sint in domo aliena, et gemas in novissimis, quando consumpseris carnes et corpus tuum (Ibid. V, 9, seq.). Qui namque alieni a nobis sunt, nisi maligni spiritus, qui a coelestis sunt patriae sorte separati? Quis vero honor noster est, nisi quia in luteis corporibus conditi, ad Conditoris tamen nostri sumus imaginem et similitudinem creati? Vel quis alius crudelis est, nisi ille angelus apostata, qui et semetipsum poena mortis superbiendo perculit, et inferre mortem humano generi etiam perditus non pepercit? Honorem itaque suum alienis dat, qui ad Dei imaginem et similitudinem conditus, vitae suae tempora malignorum spirituum voluptatibus administrat. Annos etiam suos crudeli tradit, qui ad voluntatem male dominantis adversarii accepta vivendi spatia expendit. Ubi bene subditur: Ne forte impleantur extranei viribus tuis, et labores tui sint in domo aliena. Quisquis enim per acceptam valetudinem corporis, per tributam sibi sapientiam mentis, non exercendis virtutibus, sed perpetrandis vitiis elaborat, nequaquam suis viribus suam domum, sed extraneorum habitacula, id est immundorum spirituum facta multiplicat, nimirum vel luxuriando, vel superbiendo agens, ut etiam se addito, perditorum numerus crescat. Bene autem subditur: Et gemas in novissimis, quando consumpseris carnes et corpus tuum. Plerumque enim accepta salus carnis per vitia expenditur; sed cum repente subtrahitur, cum molestiis caro atteritur, cum jam egredi anima urgetur, diu male habita quasi ad bene vivendum salus amissa requiritur. Et tunc gemunt homines quod Deo servire noluerunt, quando damna negligentiae suae

recuperare serviendo nequaquam possunt. Unde alias dicitur: Cum occideret eos, tunc requirebant eum (Psal. LXXVII, 34). At contra admonendi sunt aegri, ut eo se filios Dei sentiant, quo illos disciplinae flagella castigant. Nisi enim correctis haereditatem dare disponeret, erudire eos per molestias non curaret. Hinc namque ad Joannem Dominus per angelum dicit: Ego quos amo arguo et castigo (Apoc. III, 19; Prov. III, 11). Hinc rursum scriptum est: Fili mi, noli negligere disciplinam Domini, neque fatigeris cum ab eo argueris. Quem enim diligit Dominus castigat, flagellat autem omnem filium quem recipit (Hebr. XII, 5, 6). Hinc Psalmista ait: Multae tribulationes justorum, et de omnibus his liberavit eos Dominus (Psal. XXXIII, 20). Hinc quoque beatus Job in dolore exclamans, ait: Si justus fuero, non levabo caput, saturatus afflictione et miseria (Job. X, 15). Dicendum est aegris, ut si coelestem patriam, suam credunt, necessario in hac labores velut in aliena patiantur. Hinc est enim quod lapides extra tunsi sunt, ut in constructione templi Domini absque mallei sonitu ponerentur; quia videlicet nunc foris per flagella tundimur, ut intus in templum Dei postmodum sine disciplinae percussione disponamur, quatenus quidquid in nobis est superfluum, modo percussio resecet, et tunc sola nos in aedificio concordia charitatis liget. Admonendi sunt aegri, ut considerent pro percipiendis terrenis haereditatibus quam dura carnales filios disciplinae flagella castigent. Quae ergo nobis divinae correptionis poena gravis est, per quam et nunquam amittenda haereditas percipitur, et semper mansura supplicia vitantur? Hinc etenim Paulus ait: Patres quidem carnis nostrae habuimus eruditores, et reverebamur eos; non multo magis obtemperabimus patri spirituum, et vivemus? Et illi quidem in tempore paucorum dierum secundum voluntatem suam erudiebant nos; hic autem ad id quod utile est in recipiendo sanctificationem ejus (Hebr. XII, 9, 10).

Admonendi sunt aegri, ut considerent quanta salus cordis sit molestia corporalis, quae ad cognitionem sui mentem revocat, et quam plerumque

salus abjicit, infirmitatis memoriam reformat, ut animus qui extra se in elationem ducitur, cui sit conditioni subditus, ex percussa quam sustinet carne memoretur. Quod recte per Balaam (si tamen vocem Dei subsequi obediendo voluisset) in ipsa ejus itineris retardatione signatur (Num. XXII, 23, seq.). Balaam namque pervenire ad propositum tendit, sed ejus votum animal cui praesidet praepedit. Prohibitione quippe immorata asina angelum videt, quem humana mens non videt; quia plerumque caro per molestias tarda flagello suo menti Deum indicat, quem mens ipsa carni praesidens non videbat, ita ut anxietatem spiritus proficere in hoc mundo cupientis, velut iter tendentis impediat, donec ei invisibilem qui sibi obviat innotescat. Unde et bene per Petrum dicitur: Correptionem habuit suae vesaniae subjugale mutum, quod in hominis voce loquens prohibuit prophetae insipientiam (II Petr. II, 15). Insanus quippe homo a subjugali muto corripitur, quando elata mens humilitatis bonum quod tenere debeat ab afflicta carne memoratur. Sed hujus correptionis donum idcirco Balaam non obtinuit, quia ad maledicendum pergens, vocem, non mentem mutavit. Admonendi sunt aegri ut considerent quanti sit muneris molestia corporalis, quae et admissa peccata diluit, et ea quae admitti poterant compescit; quae sumpta ab exterioribus plagis, concussae menti poenitentiae vulnera infligit. Unde scriptum est: Livor vulneris abstergit mala, et plagae in secretioribus ventris (Prov. XX, 30). Mala enim livor vulneris abstergit, quia flagellorum dolor vel cogitatas, vel perpetratas nequitias diluit. Solet vero ventris appellatione mens accipi; quia sicut venter consumit escas, ita mens petractando excoquit curas. Quia enim venter mens dicitur, ea sententia docetur qua scriptum est: Lucerna Domini spiraculum hominis, quae investigat omnia secreta ventris (Ibid.). Ac si diceret: Divini afflatus illuminatio, cum in mentem hominis venerit, eam sibimetipsi illuminans ostendit, quae ante Spiritus sancti adventum cogitationes pravas et portare poterat, et pensare nesciebat. Livor ergo vulneris abstergit mala, et plagae in secretioribus

ventris; quia cum exterius percutimur, ad peccatorum nostrorum memoriam taciti afflictique revocamur, atque ante oculos nostros cuncta quae a nobis sunt male gesta reducimus, et per hoc quod foris patimur, magis intus quod fecimus dolemus. Unde fit ut inter aperta vulnera corporis amplius nos abluat plaga secreta ventris, quia sanat nequitias pravi operis occultum vulnus doloris. Admonendi sunt aegri quatenus patientiae virtutem servent, ut incessanter quanta Redemptor noster ab his quos creaverat, pertulit mala, considerent; quod tot abjecta conviciorum probra sustinuit; quod de manu antiqui hostis captivorum animas quotidie rapiens, insultantium alapas accepit; quod aqua salutis nos diluens, a perfidorum sputis faciem non abscondit; quod advocatione sua nos ab aeternis suppliciis liberans, tacitus flagella toleravit; quod inter angelorum choros perennes nobis honores tribuens, colaphos pertulit; quod a peccatorum nos punctionibus salvans, spinis caput supponere non recusavit, quod aeterna nos dulcedine inebrians in siti sua fellis amaritudinem accepit; quod qui pro nobis Patrem, quamvis divinitate esset aequalis, adoravit, sub irrisione adoratus tacuit; quod vitam mortuis praeparans, usque ad mortem ipse vita pervenit. Cur itaque asperum creditur, ut a Deo homo toleret flagella pro malis, si tanta Deus ab hominibus pertulit mala pro bonis? Aut quis sana intelligentia de percussione sua ingratus existat, si ipse hinc sine flagello non exiit, qui hic sine peccato vixit?

CAPUT XIII

Quomodo admonendi qui flagella metuunt, et qui contemnunt.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui flagella metuunt, et propterea innocenter vivunt; atque aliter admonendi sunt, qui sic in iniquitate durerunt, ut neque per flagella corrigantur. Dicendum namque est flagella timentibus, ut et bona temporalia nequaquam pro magno desiderent, quae adesse etiam pravis

vident; et mala praesentia nequaquam velut intolerabilia fugiant, quibus hic plerumque etiam bonos affici non ignorant. Admonendi sunt ut si malis veraciter carere desiderant, aeterna supplicia perhorrescant, neque in hoc suppliciorum timore remaneant, sed ad amoris gratiam nutrimento charitatis excrescant. Scriptum quippe est: Perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem (I Joan. IV, 18). Et rursum scriptum est: Non accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore, sed spiritum adoptionis filiorum, in quo clamamus: Abba pater (Rom. VIII, 15). Unde idem doctor iterum dicit: Ubi spiritus Domini, ibi libertas (II Cor. III, 17). Si ergo adhuc a prava actione formidata poena prohibet, profecto formidantis animum nulla spiritus libertas tenet. Nam si poenam non metueret, culpam proculdubio perpetraret. Ignorat itaque mens gratiam libertatis, quam ligat servitus timoris. Bona enim pro semetipsis amanda sunt, et non poenis compellentibus exsequenda. Nam qui propterea bona facit, quia tormentorum mala metuit, vult non esse quod metuat, ut audenter illicita committat. Unde luce clarius constat quod coram Deo innocentia amittitur, ante cujus oculos desiderio peccatur. At contra hi, quos ab iniquitatibus nec flagella compescunt, tanto acriori invectione feriendi sunt, quanto majori insensibilitate duruerunt. Plerumque enim sine dedignatione dedignandi sunt, sine desperatione desperandi; ita duntaxat, ut et ostensa desperatio formidinem incutiat, et subjuncta admonitio ad spem reducat. Districte itaque contra illos divinae sententiae proferendae sunt, ut ad cognitionem sui considerata aeterna animadversione revocentur. Audiant enim in se impletum esse quod scriptum est: Si confuderis stultum in pila, quasi ptisanas ferienti desuper pilo, non auferetur ab eo stultitia ejus (Prov. XXVII, 22). Contra hos propheta Domino conqueritur, dicens: Attrivisti eos, et renuerunt accipere disciplinam (Jer. V, 3). Hinc est quod Dominus dicit: Interfeci et perdidi populum istum, et tamen a viis suis non sunt reversi (Isai. IX, 13). Hinc rursum ait: Populus non est reversus ad percutientem se (Jer. XV, 6). Hinc voce flagellantium propheta conqueritur,

dicens: Curavimus Babylonem et non est sanata (Jer. LI, 9). Babylon quippe curatur, nec tamen ad sanitatem reducitur, quando mens in prava actione confusa, verba correptionis audit, flagella correptionis percipit, et tamen ad recta salutis itinera redire contemnit. Hinc captivo Israelitico populo, nec tamen ab iniquitate converso Dominus exprobrat, dicens: Versa est mihi domus Israel in scoriam; omnes isti aes, et stannum, et ferrum, et plumbum in medio fornacis (Ezech. XXII, 18). Ac si aperte dicat: Purgare eos per ignem tribulationis volui, et argentum illos vel aurum fieri quaesivi, sed in fornace mihi in aes, stannum, et ferrum, et plumbum versi sunt, quia non ad virtutem, sed ad vitia etiam in tribulatione proruperunt. Aes quippe dum percutitur, amplius metallis caeteris sonitum reddit. Qui igitur in percussione positus erumpit ad sonitum murmurationis, in aes versus est in medio fornacis. Stannum vero cum ex arte componitur, argenti speciem mentitur. Qui ergo simulationis vitio non caret in tribulatione, stannum factus est in fornace. Ferro autem utitur, qui vitae proximi insidiatur. Ferrum itaque in fornace est qui nocendi malitiam non amittit in tribulatione. Plumbum quoque caeteris metallis est gravius. In fornace ergo plumbum invenitur, qui sic peccati sui pondere premitur, ut etiam in tribulatione positus a terrenis desideriis non levetur. Hinc rursum scriptum est: Multo labore sudatum est, et non exivit de ea nimia rubigo ejus neque per ignem (Ezech. XXIV, 12). Ignem quippe nobis tribulationis admovet, ut in nobis vitiorum purget; sed nec per ignem rubiginem amittimus, quando et inter flagella vitio non caremus. Hinc Propheta iterum dicit: Frustra conflavit conflator; malitiae eorum non sunt consumptae (Jer. VI, 29).

Sciendum vero est, quod nonnunquam cum inter flagellorum duritiam remanent incorrecti, dulci sunt admonitione mulcendi. Quos enim cruciamenta non corrigunt, nonnunquam ab iniquis actionibus lenia blandimenta compescunt; quia et plerumque aegros, quos fortis pigmentorum potio curare non valuit, ad salutem pristinam tepens aqua

revocavit; et nonnulla vulnera quae curari incisione nequeunt, fomentis olei sanantur. Et durus adamas incisionem ferri minime recipit, sed leni hircorum sanguine mollescit.

CAPUT XIV

Quomodo admonendi taciturni et verbosi.

Aliter admonendi sunt nimis taciti, atque aliter multiloquio vacantes. Insinuari namque nimis tacitis debet, quia dum quaedam vitia incaute fugiunt, occulte deterioribus implicantur. Nam saepe linguam quia immoderatius frenant, in corde gravius multiloquium tolerant; ut eo plus cogitationes in mente ferveant, quo illas violenta custodia indiscreti silentii angustat. Quae plerumque tanto latius diffluunt, quanto se esse securius aestimant, quia foris a reprehensoribus non videntur. Unde nonnunquam mens in superbiam extollitur, et quos loquentes audit, quasi infirmos despicit. Cumque os corporis claudit, quantum se vitiis superbiendo aperiat non agnoscit. Linguam etenim premit, mentem elevat; et cum suam nequitiam minime considerat, tanto apud se cunctos liberius, quanto et secretius accusat. Admonendi sunt igitur nimis taciti, ut scire sollicite studeant, non solum quales foris ostendere, sed etiam quales se debeant intus exhibere, ut plus ex cogitationibus occultum judicium quam ex sermonibus reprehensionem metuant proximorum. Scriptum namque est: Fili mi, attende sapientiam meam, et prudentiae meae inclina aurem tuam, ut custodias cogitationes (Prov. V, 1). Nil quippe in nobis est corde fugacius, quod a nobis toties recedit, quoties per pravas cogitationes defluit. Hinc etenim Psalmista ait: Cor meum dereliquit me (Ps. XXXIX, 13). Hinc ad semetipsum rediens, ait: Invenit servus tuus cor suum ut oraret te (II Reg. VII, 27). Cum ergo cogitatio per custodiam restringitur, cor quod fugere consuevit invenitur.

Plerumque autem nimis taciti cum nonnulla injusta patiuntur, eo in acriorem dolorem prodeunt, quo ea quae sustinent non loquuntur. Nam si illatas molestias tranquille lingua diceret, a conscientia dolor emanaret. Vulnera enim clausa plus cruciant. Nam cum putredo quae interius fervet ejicitur, ad salutem dolor aperitur. Scire igitur debent, qui plus quam expedit tacent, ne inter molesta quae tolerant, dum linguam tenent, vim doloris exaggerent. Admonendi sunt enim ut si proximos sicut se diligunt, minime illis taceant unde eos juste reprehendunt. Vocis enim medicamine utrorumque saluti concurritur, dum et ab illo qui infert actio prava compescitur, et ab hoc qui sustinet doloris fervor vulnere aperto temperatur. Qui enim proximorum mala respiciunt, et tamen in silentio linguam premunt, quasi conspectis vulneribus usum medicaminis subtrahunt, et eo mortis auctores fiunt, quo virus quod poterant curare noluerunt. Lingua itaque discrete frenanda est, non insolubiliter obliganda. Scriptum namque est: Sapiens tacebit usque ad tempus (Eccli. XX, 7), ut nimirum cum opportunum considerat, postposita censura silentii, loquendo quae congruunt, in usum se utilitatis impendat. Et rursum scriptum est: Tempus tacendi, et tempus loquendi (Eccle. III, 7). Discrete quippe vicissitudinum pensanda sunt tempora, ne aut cum restringi lingua debet, per verba inutiliter defluat; aut cum loqui utiliter potest, semetipsam pigre restringat. Quod bene Psalmista considerans, dicit: Pone, Domine, custodiam ori meo, et ostium circumstantiae labiis meis (Ps. CXL, 3). Non enim poni ori suo parietem, sed ostium petit, quod videlicet aperitur et clauditur. Unde et nobis caute discendum est, quatenus os discretum et congruo tempore vox aperiat, et rursum congruo taciturnitas claudat. At contra abmonendi sunt multiloquio vacantes, ut vigilanter aspiciant a quanto rectitudinis statu depereunt, dum per multiplicia verba dilabuntur. Humana etenim mens aquae more circumclusa ad superiora colligitur, quia illud repetit unde descendit; et relaxata deperit, quia se per infima inutiliter spargit. Quot enim supervacuis verbis a silentii sui censura dissipatur, quasi

tot rivis extra se ducitur. Unde et redire interius ad sui cognitionem non sufficit, quia per multiloquium sparsa, a secreto se intimae considerationis excludit. Totam vero se insidiantis hostis vulneribus detegit, quia nulla munitione custodiae circumcludit. Unde scriptum est: Sicut urbs patens et absque murorum ambitu, ita vir qui non potest in loquendo cohibere spiritum suum (Prov. XXV, 28). Quia enim murum silentii non habet, patet inimici jaculis civitas mentis; et cum se per verba extra semetipsam ejicit, apertam se adversario ostendit. Quam tanto ille sine labore superat, quanto et ipsa quae vincitur, contra semetipsam per multiloquium pugnat.

Plerumque autem quia per quosdam gradus desidiosa mens in lapsum casus impellitur, dum otiosa cavere verba negligimus, ad noxia pervenimus; ut prius loqui aliena libeat, postmodum detractionibus eorum vitam de quibus loquitur mordeat, ad extremum vero usque ad apertas lingua contumelias erumpat. Hine seminantur stimuli, oriuntur rixae, accenduntur faces odiorum, pax exstinguitur cordium. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Qui dimittit aquam, caput est jurgiorum (Prov. XVII, 14). Aquam quippe dimittere est linguam in fluxum eloquii relaxare. Quo contra in bona etiam parte iterum dicitur: Aqua profunda, verba ex ore viri (Ibid., XVIII, 4). Qui ergo dimittit aquam, caput est jurgiorum, quia qui linguam non refrenat, concordiam dissipat. Unde e diverso scriptum est: Qui imponit stulto silentium, iras mitigat (Ibid., XXVI. 10). Quod autem multiloquio quisque serviens, rectitudinem justitiae tenere nequaquam possit, testatur Propheta qui ait: Vir linguosus non dirigetur super terram (Ps. CXXXIX, 12). Hinc quoque Salomon iterum dicit: In multiloquio non deerit peccatum (Prov. X, 19). Hinc Isaias ait: Cultus justitiae silentium (Is. XXXII, 17), videlicet indicans quia mentis justitia desolatur quando ab immoderata locutione non parcitur. Hinc Jacobus ait: Si quis putat se religiosum esse non refrenans linguam suam, sed seducens cor suum, hujus vana est religio (Jac. I, 26). Hinc rursum ait: Sit omnis homo velox ad audiendum, tardus autem ad

loquendum (Ibid., 19). Hinc iterum, linguae vim definiens, adjungit: Inquietum malum, plena veneno mortifero (Jac. II, 8). Hinc per semetipsam nos Veritas admonet, dicens: Omne verbum otiosum quod locuti fuerint homines, reddent de eo rationem in die judicii (Matth. XII, 36). Otiosum quippe verbum est, quod aut ratione justae necessitatis, aut intentione piae utilitatis caret. Si ergo de otioso sermone ratio exigitur, pensemus quae poena multiloquium maneat, in quo etiam per noxia verba peccatur.

CAPUT XV

Quomodo admonendi pigri et praecipites.

Aliter admonendi sunt pigri, atque aliter praecipites. Illi namque suadendi sunt, ne agenda bona, dum differunt, amittant; isti vero admonendi sunt, ne dum bonorum tempus incaute festinando praeveniunt, eorum merita immutent. Pigris itaque intimandum est quod saepe dum opportune agere quae possumus nolumus, paulo post cum volumus non valemus. Ipsa quippe mentis desidia dum congruo fervore non accenditur, a bonorum desiderio funditus, convalescente furtim torpore mactatur. Unde aperte per Salomonem dicitur: Pigredo immittit soporem (Prov. XIX, 15). Piger enim recte sentiendo quasi vigilat, quamvis nil operando torpescat; sed pigredo soporem immittere dicitur, quia paulisper etiam recte sentiendi vigilantia amittitur, dum a bene operandi studio cessatur. Ubi recte subjungitur: Et anima dissoluta esuriet (Ibid.). Nam quia se ad superiora stringendo non dirigit, neglectam se inferius per desideria expandit; et dum studiorum sublimium vigore non constringitur, cupiditatis infimae fame sauciatur; ut quo se per disciplinam ligare dissimulat, eo se esuriens per voluptatum desideria spargat. Hinc ab eodem rursus Salomone scribitur: In desideriis est omnis otiosus (Prov. XXI, 26). Hinc ipsa Veritate praedicante (Matth. XII, 44, 45), uno quidem exeunte spiritu munda domus dicitur, sed

multiplicius redeunte dum vacat occupatur. Plerumque piger dum necessaria agere negligit, quaedam sibi difficilia opponit, quaedam vero incaute formidat; et dum quasi invenit quod velut juste metuat, ostendit quod in otio quasi non injuste torpescat. Cui recte per Salomonem dicitur: Propter frigus piger arare noluit; mendicabit ergo aestate, et non dabitur ei (Prov. XX, 4). Propter frigus quippe piger non arat, dum desidiae torpore constrictus, agere quae debet bona dissimulat. Propter frigus piger non arat, dum parva ex adverso mala metuit, et operari maxima praetermittit. Bene autem dicitur: Mendicabit aestate, et non dabitur ei. Qui enim nunc in bonis operibus non exsudat, cum sol judicii ferventior apparuerit, quia frustra regni aditum postulat, nil accipiens aestate mendicat. Bene huic per eumdem Salomonem rursum dicitur: Qui observat ventum, non seminat; et qui considerat nubes, numquam metit (Eccle. XI, 4). Quid enim per ventum, nisi malignorum spirituum tentatio exprimitur? Et quid per nubes quae moventur a vento, nisi adversitates pravorum hominum designantur? A ventis videlicet impelluntur nubes, quia immundorum spirituum afflatu pravi excitantur homines. Qui ergo observat ventum, non seminat; et qui considerat nubes, nunquam metit; quia quisquis tentationem malignorum spirituum, quisquis persecutionem pravorum hominum metuit, neque nunc grana boni operis seminat, neque tunc manipulos sanctae retributionis secat.

At contra, praecipites dum bonorum actuum praeveniunt tempus, meritum pervertunt, et saepe in malis corruunt, dum bona minime discernunt. Qui nequaquam quae quando agant inspiciunt, sed plerumque acta quia ita non debuerunt agere cognoscunt. Quibus sub auditoris specie recte apud Salomonem dicitur: Fili, sine consilio nihil facias, et post factum non poenitebis (Eccli. XXXII, 24). Et rursum: Palbebrae tuae precedant gressus tuos (Prov. IV, 25). Palpebrae quippe gressus praecedunt, cum operationem nostram consilia recta praeveniunt. Qui enim negligit considerando praevidere quod facit, gressus tendit, oculos claudit, pergendo iter conficit,

sed praevidendo sibimetipsi non antecedit, atque idcirco citius corruit, quia quo pedem operis ponere debeat, per palpebram consilii non attendit.

CAPUT XVI

Quomodo admonendi mansueti et iracundi.

Aliter admonendi sunt mansueti, atque aliter iracundi. Nunnunquam enim mansueti cum praesunt, vicinum et quasi juxta positum torporem desidiae patiuntur. Et plerumque nimia resolutione lenitatis, ultra quam necesse est vigorem districtionis emolliunt. At contra iracundi cum regiminum loca percipiunt, quo impellente ira in mentis vaesaniam devolvuntur, eo etiam subditorum vitam dissipata quietis tranquillitate confundunt. Quos cum furor agit in praeceps, ignorant quidquid irati faciunt, ignorant quidquid a semetipsis patiuntur irati. Nunnunquam vero, quod est gravius, irae suae stimulum justitiae zelum putant. Et cum vitium virtus creditur, sine metu culpa cumulatur. Saepe ergo mansueti dissolutionis torpescunt taedio; saepe iracundi rectitudinis falluntur zelo. Illorum itaque virtuti vitium latenter adjungitur; his autem suum vitium quasi virtus fervens videtur. Admonendi sunt igitur illi ut fugiant quod juxta ipsos est, isti quod in ipsis est attendant; illi quod non habent discernant, isti quod habent. Amplectantur mansueti sollicitudinem, damnent iracundi perturbationem. Admonendi sunt mansueti, ut habere etiam aemulationem justitiae studeant; admonendi sunt iracundi, ut aemulationi quam se habere existimant, mansuetudinem subjungant. Idcirco namque Spiritus sanctus in columba nobis est et in igne monstratus, quia videlicet omnes quos implet, et columbae simplicitate mansuetos, et igne zeli ardentes exhibet.

Nequaquam ergo sancto Spiritu plenus est, qui aut in tranquillitate mansuetudinis fervorem aemulationis deserit, aut rursum in aemulationis ardore virtutem mansuetudinis amittit. Quod fortasse melius ostendimus, si

in medium Pauli magisterium proferamus, qui duobus discipulis et non diversa charitate praeditis, diversa tamen adjutoria praedicationis impendit. Timotheum namque admonens, ait: Argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientia et doctrina (II Tim. IV, 2). Titum quoque admonet dicens: Haec loquere, et exhortare, et argue cum omni imperio (Tit. II, 15). Quid est quod doctrinam suam tanta arte dispensat, ut in exhibenda hac, alteri imperium, atque alteri patientiam proponat, nisi quod mansuetioris spiritus Titum, et Paulo ferventioris vidit esse Timotheum? Illum per aemulationis studium inflammat, hunc per lenitatem patientiae temperat. Illi quod deest jungit, huic quod super est subtrahit. Illum stimulo impellere nititur, hunc freno moderatur. Magnus quippe susceptae Ecclesiae colonus, alios palmites ut crescere debeant rigat; alios cum plus justo crescere conspicit resecat, ne aut non crescendo non ferant fructus, aut, immoderate crescendo, quos protulerint amittant. Sed longe alia est ira quae sub aemulationis specie subripit, alia quae turbatum cor et sine justitiae praetextu confundit. Illa enim in hoc quod debet inordinate extenditur, haec autem semper in his quae non debet inflammatur. Sciendum quippe est quia in hoc ab impatientibus iracundi differunt, quod illi ab aliis illata non tolerant, isti autem etiam quae tolerentur important. Nam iracundi saepe etiam se declinantes insequuntur, rixae occasionem commovent, labore contentionis gaudent; quos tamen melius corrigimus, si in ipsa irae suae commotione declinamus. Perturbati quippe quid audiant ignorant, sed ad se reducti tanto liberius exhortationis verba recipiunt, quanto se tranquillius toleratos erubescunt. Menti autem furore ebriae, omne rectum quod dicitur, perversum videtur. Unde et Nabal ebrio culpam suam Abigail laudabiliter tacuit, quam digesto vino laudabiliter dixit (I Reg. XXV, 37). Idcirco enim malum quod fecerat, cognoscere potuit, quia hoc ebrius non audivit.

Cum vero ita iracundi alios impetunt, ut declinari omnino non possint, non aperta exprobratione, sed sub quadam sunt cautela reverentiae parcendo

feriendi. Quod melius ostendimus, si Abner factum ad medium deducamus. Hunc quippe cum Asael vi incautae praecipitationis impeteret, scriptum est: Locutus est Abner ad Asael, dicens: Recede, noli me persequi, ne compellar confodere te in terram. Qui audire contempsit, et noluit declinare. Percussit ergo eum Abner aversa hasta in inguine, et transfodit eum, et mortuus est (II Reg. II, 22, 23). Cujus enim Asael typum tenuit, nisi eorum, quos vehementer arripiens furor in praeceps ducit? Qui in eodem furoris impetu tanto caute declinandi sunt, quanto et insane rapiuntur. Unde et Abner, qui nostro sermone patris lucerna dicitur, fugit, quia doctorum lingua quae supernum Dei lumen indicat, cum per abrupta furoris mentem cujuspiam ferri conspicit, cumque contra irascentem dissimulat verborum jacula reddere, quasi persequentem non vult ferire. Sed cum iracundi nulla consideratione se mitigant, et quasi Asael persequi et insanire non cessant, necesse est ut hi qui furentes conantur reprimere, nequaquam se in furore erigant, sed quidquid est tranquillitatis ostendant; quaedam vero subtiliter proferant, in quibus ex obliquo furentis animum pungant. Unde et Abner cum contra persequentem substitit, non eum recta, sed aversa asta transforavit. Ex mucrone quippe percutere, est impetu apertae increpationis obviare. Aversa vero hasta persequentem ferire, est furentem tranquille ex quibusdam tangere, et quasi parcendo superare. Asael autem protinus occumbit, quia commotae mentes dum et parci sibi sentiunt, et tamen responsorum ratione in intimis sub tranquillitate tanguntur, ab eo quod et erexerant statim cadunt. Qui ergo a fervoris sui impetu sub lenitatis percussione resiliunt, quasi sine ferro moriuntur.

CAPUT XVII

Quomodo admonendi humiles et elati.

Aliter admonendi sunt humiles, atque aliter elati. Illis insinuandum est quam sit vera excellentia quam sperando tenent; istis vero intimandum est quam sit nulla temporalis gloria, quam et amplectentes non tenent. Audiant humiles quam sint aeterna quae appetunt, quam transitoria quae contemnunt; audiant elati quam sint transitoria quae ambiunt, quam aeterna quae perdunt. Audiant humiles ex magistra voce Veritatis: Omnis qui se humiliat, exaltabitur (Luc. XVIII, 14); audiant elati: Omnis qui se exaltat, humiliabitur (Ibid.). Audiant humiles: Gloriam praecedit humilitas; audiant elati: Ante ruinam exaltatur spiritus (Prov. XV, 33; XVI, 18). Audiant humiles: Ad quem respiciam, nisi ad humilem et quietum, et trementem sermones meos (Isai. LXVI, 2)? audiant elati: Quid superbit terra et cinis (Eccli. X, 9)? Audiant humiles: Deus humilia respicit; audiant elati: Et alta a longe cognoscit (Psal. CXXXVII, 6). Audiant humiles, quia Filius hominis non venit ministrari, sed ministrare (Matth. XX, 28); audiant elati, quia initium omnis peccati superbia est (Eccli. X, 15). Audiant humiles, quia Redemptor noster humiliavit semetipsum, factus obediens usque ad mortem (Philip. II, 8); audiant elati quod de eorum capite scriptum est: Ipse est rex super universos filios superbiae (Job. XLI, 25). Occasio igitur perditionis nostrae facta est superbia diaboli, et argumentum redemptionis nostrae inventa est humilitas Dei. Hostis enim noster inter omnia conditus, voluit videri supra omnia elatus: Redemptor autem noster magnus manens super omnia, fieri inter omnia dignatus est parvus.

Dicatur ergo humilibus, quia dum se dejiciunt, ad Dei similitudinem ascendunt: dicatur elatis, quia dum seerigunt, in apostatae angeli imitationem cadunt. Quid itaque elatione dejectius, quae dum supra se tenditur, ab altitudine verae celsitudinis elongatur? Et quid humilitate sublimius, quae dum se in ima deprimit, auctori suo manenti super summa conjungit? Est tamen aliud quod in eis debeat caute pensari, quia saepe quidam humilitatis decipiuntur specie, quidam vero elationis suae

ignoratione falluntur. Nam plerumque nonnullis qui sibi humiles videntur, is qui hominibus deferri non debet, conjunctus est timor; plerumque vero elatos comitari solet liberae vocis assertio. Et cum quaedam increpanda sunt vitia, illi reticent ex timore, et tamen tacere se aestimant ex humilitate, isti loquuntur per impatientiam elationis, et tamen se credunt loqui per libertatem rectitudinis. Illos ut perversa non increpent, sub specie humilitatis premit culpa formidinis; istos ad increpanda quae non debent, aut magis increpanda quam debent, sub imagine libertatis effrenatio impellit tumoris. Unde et elati admonendi sunt, ne plus quam decet sint liberi; et humiles admonendi sunt, ne plus quam expedit sint subjecti, ne aut illi defensionem justitiae vertant in exercitationem superbiae, aut isti cum student plus quam necesse est hominibus subjici, compellantur eorum etiam vitia venerari.

Considerandum vero est quod plerumque elatos utilius corripimus, si eorum correptionibus quaedam laudum fomenta misceamus. Inferenda namque illis sunt aut alia bona quae in ipsis sunt, aut dicendum certe quae poterant esse si non sunt; et tunc demum resecanda sunt mala quae nobis displicent, cum prius ad audiendum eorum placabilem mentem fecerint praemissa bona quae placent. Nam et equos indomitos blanda prius manu tangimus, ut eos nobis plenius postmodum etiam per flagella subigamus. Et amaro pigmentorum poculo mellis dulcedo adjungitur, ne ea quae saluti profutura est, in ipso gustu aspera amaritudo sentiatur; dum vero gustus per dulcedinem fallitur, humor mortiferus per amaritudinem vacuatur. Ipsa ergo in elatis invectionis exordia, permixta sunt laude temperanda, ut dum admittunt favores quos diligunt, etiam correptiones recipiant quas oderunt.

Plerumque autem persuadere elatis utilia melius possumus, si profectum eorum nobis potius quam illis profuturum dicamus, si eorum meliorationem nobis magis quam sibi impendi postulemus. Facile enim ad bonum elatio

flectitur, si et aliis ejus inflexio prodesse credatur. Unde Moyses, qui regente se Deo, deserti iter aerea columna duce pergebat cum Hobab cognatum suum a gentilitatis conversatione vellet educere, et omnipotentis Dei dominio subjugare: Proficiscimur ad locum quem Dominus daturus est nobis; veni nobiscum, ut bene faciamus tibi, quia Dominus bona promisit Israeli. Cui cum respondisset ille: Non vadam tecum, sed revertar in terram meam in qua natus sum; illico adjunxit: Noli nos relinquere; tu enim nosti in quibus locis per desertum castra ponere debeamus, et eris ductor noster (Num. X, 29, seq.). Neque enim Moysi mentem ignorantia itineris angustabat, quem et ad prophetiae scientiam cognitio Divinitatis expanderat, quem columna exterius praeibat, quem de cunctis interius per conversationem cum Deo sedulam locutio familiaris instruebat. Sed videlicet vir providus elato auditori colloquens, solatium petivit ut daret; ducem requirebat in via, ut dux ei fieri potuisset ad vitam. Egit itaque ut superbus auditor voci ad meliora suadenti eo magis fieret devotus, quo putaretur necessarius; et unde se exhortatorem suum praecedere crederet, inde se sub verbis exhortantis inclinaret.

CAPUT XXIII

Quomodo admonendi pertinaces et inconstantes.

Aliter admonendi sunt pertinaces, atque aliter inconstantes. Illis dicendum est quod plus de se quam sunt sentiunt, et idcirco alienis consiliis non acquiescunt; istis vero intimandum est quod valde se despicientes negligunt, et ideo levitate cogitationum a suo judicio per temporum momenta flectuntur. Illis dicendum est quia nisi meliores se caeteris aestimarent, nequaquam cunctorum consilia suae deliberationi postponerent; istis dicendum est quia si hoc quod sunt, utcumque attenderent, nequaquam eos per tot varietatis latera mutabilitatis aura versaret. Illis per Paulum dicitur:

Nolite prudentes esse apud vosmetipsos (Rom. XII, 16); at contra isti audiunt: Non circumferamur omni vento doctrinae (Ephes. IV, 14). De illis per Salomonen dicitur: Comedent fructus viae suae, suisque consiliis saturabuntur (Prov. I, 31); de istis autem ab eo rursus scribitur: Cor stultorum dissimile erit (Ibid., XV, 7). Cor quippe sapientum sibimetipsi semper est simile; quia dum rectis persuasionibus acquiescit, constanter se in bono opere dirigit. Cor vero stultorum dissimile est, quia dum mutabilitate se varium exhibet, numquam id quod fuerat manet. Et quia quaedam vitia sicut ex semetipsis gignunt alia, ita ex aliis oriuntur, sciendum summopere est quod tunc ea corripiendo melius tergimus, cum ab ipso amaritudinis suae fonte siccamus. Pertinacia quippe ex superbia, inconstantia vero ex levitate generatur. Admonendi igitur sunt pertinaces, ut elationem suae cogitationis agnoscant, et semetipsos vincere studeant; ne dum rectis aliorum suasionibus foris superari despiciunt, intus a superbia captivi teneantur. Admonendi sunt, ut solerter aspiciant quia Filius hominis, cui una semper cum Patre voluntas est, ut exemplum nobis frangendae nostrae voluntatis praebeat, dicit: Non quaero voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me Patris (Joan. V, 30). Qui ut hujus adhuc virtutis gratiam commendaret, servaturum se hoc in extremo judicio praemisit, dicens: Ego a me ipso non possum facere quidquam, sed sicut audio, judico (Ibid.). Qua itaque conscientia dedignatur homo alienae voluntati acquiescere, quando Dei et hominis Filius, cum virtutis suae gloriam venit ostendere, testatur se non a semetipso judicare? At contra admonendi sunt inconstantes, ut mentem gravitate roborent. Tunc enim genimina in se mutabilitatis arefaciunt, cum a corde prius radicem levitatis abscidunt, quia et tunc fabrica robusta construitur, cum prius locus solidus, in quo fundamentum poni debeat, providetur. Nisi ergo ante mentis levitas caveatur, cogitationum inconstantia minime vincitur. A quibus se alienum Paulus fuisse perhibuit, cum dicit: Nunquid levitate usus sum? aut quae

cogito, secundum carnem cogito, ut sit apud me, est et non (I Cor. I, 17)? Ac si aperte dicat: Idcirco mutabilitatis aura non moveor, quia levitatis vitio non succumbo.

CAPUT XIX

Quomodo admonendi qui intemperantius, et qui parcius cibo utuntur.

Aliter admonendi sunt gulae dediti, atque aliter abstinentes. Illos enim superfluitas locutionis, levitas operis, atque luxuria; istos vero saepe impatientiae, saepe vero superbiae culpa comitatur. Nisi enim gulae deditos immoderata loquacitas raperet, dives ille qui epulatus quotidie dicitur splendide in lingua gravius non arderet, dicens: Pater Abraham, miserere mei, et mitte Lazarum, ut intingat extremum digiti sui in aquam, ut refrigeret linguam meam, quia crucior in hac flamma (Luc. XVI, 24). Quibus profecto verbis ostenditur quia epulando quotidie crebrius in lingua peccaverat, qui totus ardens refrigerari se praecipue in lingua requirebat. Rursum quia gulae deditos levitas protinus operis sequitur, auctoritas sacra testatur, dicens: Sedit populus manducare et bibere, et surrexerunt ludere (Exod. XXXII, 6). Quos plerumque edacitas usque ad luxuriam pertrahit, quia dum satietate venter extenditur, aculei libidinis excitantur. Unde et hosti callido, qui primi hominis sensum in concupiscentia pomi aperuit, sed in peccati laqueo strinxit, divina voce dicitur: Pectore et venire repes (Gen. III, 14), ac si ei aperte diceretur: Cogitatione et ingluvie super humana corda dominaberis. Quia gulae deditos luxuria sequitur, propheta testatur, qui dum aperta narrat, occulta denuntiat, dicens: Princeps cocorum destruxit muros Jerusalem (Jer. XXXIX, 9; IV Reg. XXV, 10, sec. LXX). Princeps namque cocorum venter est, cui magna cura obsequium a cocis impenditur, ut ipse delectabiliter cibis impleatur. Muri autem Jerusalem virtutes sunt animae, ad desiderium supernae pacis elevatae. Cocorum igitur princeps

muros Jerusalem dejicit; quia dum venter ingluvie extenditur, virtutes animae per luxuriam destruuntur.

Quo contra nisi mentes abstinentium plerumque impatientia a sinu tranquillitatis excuteret, nequaquam Petrus cum diceret: Ministrate in fide vestra virtutem, in virtute autem scientiam, in scientia autem abstinentiam (II Petr. I, 5); protinus vigilanter adjungeret, dicens: In abstinentia autem patientiam. Deesse quippe abstinentibus patientiam praevidit, quae eis ut adesset admonuit. Rursum nisi cogitationes abstinentium nonnumquam superbiae culpa transfigeret, Paulus minime dixisset: Qui non manducat, manducantem non judicet (Rom. XIV. 3). Qui rursum ad alios loquens, dum de abstinentiae virtute gloriantium praecepta perstringeret, adjunxit: Quae sunt rationem quidem habentia sapientiae in superstitione et humilitate, et non ad parcendum corpori, non in honore aliquo ad saturitatem carnis (Coloss. II, 23). Qua in re notandum est quod in disputatione sua praedicator egregius superstitioni humilitatis speciem jungit, quia dum plus quam necesse est per abstinentiam caro atteritur, humilitas foris ostenditur, sed de hac ipsa humilitate graviter interius superbitur. Et nisi aliquando mens ex abstinentiae virtute tumesceret, nequaquam hanc velut inter magna merita Pharisaeus arrogans studiose numeraret, dicens: Jejuno bis in Sabbato (Luc. XVIII, 12). Admonendi ergo sunt gulae dediti, ne in eo quod escarum delectationi incubant, luxuriae se mucrone transfigant; et quanta sibi per esum loquacitas, quanta mentis levitas insidietur, aspiciant, ne dum ventri molliter serviunt, vitiorum laqueis crudeliter astringantur. Tanto enim longius a secundo parente receditur, quanto per immoderatum usum dum manus ad cibum tenditur, parentis primi lapsus iteratur. At contra admonendi sunt abstinentes, ut sollicite semper aspiciant, ne cum gulae vitium fugiunt, acriora his vitia quasi ex virtute generentur; ne dum carnem macerant, ad impatientiam spiritus erumpant: et nulla jam virtus sit quod caro vincitur, si spiritus ab ira superatur. Aliquando autem dum mens

abstinentium ab ira se deprimit, hanc quasi peregrina veniens laetitia corrumpit, et eo abstinentiae bonum deperit, quo sese a spiritalibus vitiis minime custodit. Unde recte per prophetam dicitur: In diebus jejuniorum vestrorum inveniuntur voluntates vestrae (Isai. LVIII, 3, sec. LXX). Et paulo post: In judicia et rixas jejunatis, et percutitis pugnis (Ibid.). Incassum ergo per abstinentiam corpus atteritur, si inordinatis dimissa motibus mens vitiis dissipatur. Rursumque admonendi sunt, ut abstinentiam suam et semper sine imminutione custodiant et numquam hanc apud occultum judicem eximiae virtutis credant, ne si fortasse magni esse meriti creditur, cor in elationem sublevetur. Hinc namque per prophetam dicitur: Nunquid tale est jejunium quod elegi? Sed frange esurienti panem tuum, et egenos vagosque induc in domum tuam (Ibid., 5).

Qua in re pensandum est virtus abstinentiae quam parva respicitur, quae nonnisi ex aliis virtutibus commendatur. Hinc Joel ait: Sanctificate jejunium. Jejunium quippe sanctificare, est adjunctis aliis bonis dignam Deo abstinentiam carnis ostendere. Admonendi sunt abstinentes, ut noverint quia tunc placentem Deo abstinentiam offerunt, cum ea quae sibi de alimentis subtrahunt, indigentibus largiuntur. Solerter namque audiendum est, quod per prophetam Dominus redarguit, dicens: Cum jejunaretis et plangeretis in quinto et in septimo mense per hos septuaginta annos, numquid jejunium jejunastis mihi? Et cum comedistis et bibistis, numquid non vobismetipsis comedistis, et vobismetipsis bibistis (Zach. VII, 5 seq.)? Non enimDeo, sed sibi quisque jejunat, si ea quae ventri ad tempus subtrahit, non egenis tribuit, sed ventri postmodum offerenda custodit. Itaque ne aut illos appetitus gulae a mentis statu dejiciat, aut istos afflicta caro ex elatione supplantet, audiant illi ex ore Veritatis: Attendite autem vobis, ne forte graventur corda vestra in crapula et ebrietate, et curis hujus mundi (Luc. XXI, 34). Ubi utilis quoque pavor adjungitur: Et superveniat in vos repentina dies illa. Tanquam laqueus enim superveniet in omnes, qui sedent

super faciem omnis terrae (Ibidem, 35). Audiant isti: Non quod intrat in os, coinquinat hominem, sed quod procedit ex ore, coinquinat hominem (Matth. XV, 11). Audiant illi: Esca ventri, et venter escis; Deus autem et hunc et has destruet (I Cor. VI, 13). Et rursum: Non in commessationibus et ebrietatibus (Rom. XIII, 13). Et rursum: Esca nos non commendat Deo (I Cor. VIII, 8). Audiant isti, quia omnia munda mundis; coinquinatis autem et infidelibus nihil est mundum (Tit. I, 15). Audiant illi: Quorum deus venter est, et gloria in confusione ipsorum (Philip. III, 19). Audiant isti: Discedent quidam a fide (I Tim. IV, 1, 3). Et paulo post: Prohibentium nubere, abstinere a cibis, quos Deus creavit ad percipiendum cum gratiarum actione fidelibus et his qui cognoverunt veritatem. Audiant illi: Bonum est non manducare carnem, neque bibere vinum: neque in quo frater tuus scandalizatur (Rom. XIV, 21). Audiant isti: Modico vino utere propter stomachum et frequentes tuas infimitates (I. Tim. V, 23). Quatenus et illi discant cibos carnis inordinate non appetere, et isti creaturam Dei quam non appetunt, non audeant condemnare.

CAPUT XX

Quomodo admonendi qui sua distribuunt, et qui rapiunt aliena.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui jam sua misericorditer tribuunt, atque aliter qui adhuc et aliena rapere contendunt. Admonendi namque sunt qui jam sua misericorditer tribuunt, ne cogitatione tumida super eos se quibus terrena largiuntur, extollant; ne idcirco se meliores aestiment, quia contineri per se caeteros vident. Nam terrenae domus dominus famulorum ordines ministeriaque dispertiens, hos ut regant, illos vero statuit ut ab aliis regantur. Istos jubet ut necessaria caeteris praebeant, illos ut accepta ab aliis sumant. Et tamen plerumque offendunt qui regunt, et in patrisfamilias gratia permanent qui reguntur. Iram merentur qui dispensatores sunt, sine

offensione perdurant qui ex aliena dispensatione subsistunt. Admonendi sunt igitur qui jam quae possident misericorditer tribuunt, ut a coelesti Domino dispensatores se positos subsidiorum temporalium agnoscant; et tanto humiliter praebeant, quanto et aliena esse intelligunt quae dispensant. Cumque in illorum ministerio quibus accepta largiuntur constitutos se esse considerant, nequaquam eorum mentes tumor sublevet, sed timor premat. Unde et necesse est ut sollicite perpendant ne commissa indigne distribuant; ne quaedam quibus nulla, ne nulla quibus quaedam; ne multa quibus pauca, ne pauca praebeant quibus impendere multa debuerunt; ne praecipitatione hoc quod tribuunt inutiliter spargant; ne tarditate petentes noxie crucient; ne recipiendae hic gratiae intentio subrepat; ne dationis lumen laudis transitoriae appetitio exstinguat; ne oblatum munus conjuncta tristitia obsideat; ne in bene oblato munere animus plus quam decet hilarescat, ne sibi quidquam, cum totum recte impleverint, tribuant, et simul omnia postquam peregerint perdant. Ne enim sibi virtutem suae liberalitatis deputent, audiant quod scriptum est: Si quis administrat, tanquam ex virtute quam administrat Deus (I Petr. IV. 11). Ne in benefactis immoderatius gaudeant, audiant quod scriptum est: Cum feceritis omnia quae praecepta sunt vobis, dicite: Servi inutiles sumus, quod debuimus facere, fecimus (Luc. XVII, 10). Ne largitatem tristitia corrumpat, audiant quod scriptum est: Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus (II Cor. IX, 7). Ne ex impenso munere transitoriam laudem quaerant, audiant quod scriptum est: Nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua (Matth. VI, 3); Id est, piae dispensationi nequaquam se gloria vitae praesentis admisceat, sed opus rectitudinis appetitio ignoret favoris. Ne impensae gratiae vicissitudinem requirant, audiant quod scriptum est: Cum facis prandium aut coenam, noli vocare amicos tuos, neque fratres tuos, neque cognatos, neque vicinos divites, ne forte et ipsi te reinvitent, et fiat tibi retributio: sed cum facis convivium, voca pauperes, debiles, claudos coecos; et beatus eris, quia non habent unde

retribuere tibi (Luc. XIV, 12 seq. etc.). Ne quae praebenda sunt citius, sero praebeantur, audiant quod scriptum est: Ne dicas amico tuo: Vade et revertere, et cras dabo tibi, cum statim possis dare (Prov. III, 28). Ne sub obtentu largitatis ea quae possident inutiliter spargant, audiant quod scriptum est: Sudet eleemosyna in manu tua. Ne cum multa necesse sint, pauca largiantur, audiant quod scriptum est: Qui parce seminat, parce et metet (II Cor. IX, 6). Ne cum pauca oportet, plurima praebeant et ipsi postmodum minime inopiam tolerantes ad impatientiam erumpant, audiant quod scriptum est: Non ut aliis sit remissio, vobis autem tribulatio, sed ex aequalitate, vestra abundantia illorum inopiam suppleat, et ut illorum abundatia vestrae inopiae sit supplementum (Ibid. VIII, 13, 14). Cum enim dantis mens ferre inopiam nescit, si multa sibi subtrahit, occasionem contra se impatientiae exquirit. Prius namque praeparandus est patientiae animus, et tunc aut multa sunt aut cuncta largienda, ne dum minus aequanimiter inopia irruens fertur, et praemissae largitatis merces pereat, et adhuc mentem deterius murmuratio subsequens perdat. Ne omnino nihil eis praebeant, quibus conferre aliquid parvum debent, audiant quod scriptum est: Omni petenti te tribue (Luc. VI, 30). Ne saltem aliquid praebeant, quibus omnino conferre nil debent, audiant quod scriptum est: Da bono, et non receperis peccatorem; benefac humili, et non dederis impio (Eccli. XII, 4). Et rursum; Panem tuum et vinum super sepulturam justi constitue, et noli ex eo manducare et bibere cum peccatoribus (Tob. IV, 17).

Panem enim suum et vinum peccatoribus praebet, qui iniquis subsidia pro eo quod iniqui sunt impendit. Unde et nonnulli hujus mundi divites, cum fame crucientur Christi pauperes, effusis largitatibus nutriunt histriones. Qui vero indigenti etiam peccatori panem suum, non quia peccator, sed quia homo est, tribuit; nimirum non peccatorem, sed justum pauperem nutrit, quia in illo non culpam, sed naturam diligit.

Admonendi sunt etiam qui jam sua misericorditer largiuntur, ut sollicite custodire studeant, ne cum commissa peccata eleemosynis redimunt, adhuc redimenda committant; ne venalem Dei justitiam aestiment, si cum curant pro peccatis nummos tribuere, arbitrentur se posse inulte peccare. Plus est namque anima quam esca, et corpus quam vestimentum (Matth. VI, 25; Luc. XII, 23). Qui ergo escam aut vestimentum pauperibus largitur, sed tamen animae vel corporis iniquitate polluitur, quod minus est justitiae obtulit, et quod majus est, culpae; sua enim Deo dedit, et se diabolo.

At contra admonendi sunt qui adhuc et aliena rapere contendunt, ut sollicite audiant quid veniens in judicium Dominus dicat. Ait namque: Esurivi, et non dedistis mihi manducare; sitivi, et non dedistis mihi bibere; hospes eram, et non collegistis me; nudus, et non operuistis me; infirmus et in carcere, et non visitastis me (Matth. XXV, 35, 36). Quibus etiam praemittit, dicens: Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus (Matth. XXV, 41). Ecce nequaquam audiunt, quia rapinas vel quaelibet alia violenta commiserunt, et tamen aeternis gehennae ignibus mancipantur. Hinc ergo colligendum est quanta damnatione plectendi sunt qui rapiunt aliena, si tanta animadversione feriuntur qui sua indiscrete tenuerunt. Perpendant quo eos obliget reatu res rapta, si tali subjicit poenae non tradita. Perpendant quid mereatur injustitia illata, si tanta percussione digna est pietas non impensa.

Cum aliena rapere intendunt, audiant quod scriptum est: Vae ei qui multiplicat non sua; usquequo aggravat contra se densum lutum (Habac. II, 6)? Avaro quippe contra se densum lutum aggravare, est terrena lucra cum pondere peccati cumulare. Cum multiplicare large habitationis spatia cupiunt, audiant quod scriptum est: Vae qui conjungitis domum ad domum, et agrum agro copulatis, usque ad terminum loci. Nunquid habitabitis soli vos in medio terrae (Isai. V, 8)? Ac si aperte diceret: Quousque vos

extenditis, qui habere in communi mundo consortes minime potestis? Conjunctos quidem premitis, sed contra quos valeatis vos extendere, semper invenitis. Cum augendis pecuniis inhiant, audiant quod scriptum est: Avarus non impletur pecunia; et qui amat divitias, non capiet fructus ex eis (Eccle. V, 9). Fructus quippe ex illis caperet, si eas bene spargere non amando voluisset. Qui vero eas diligendo retinet, hic utique sine fructu derelinquet. Cum repleri cunctis simul opibus inardescunt, audiant quod scriptum est: Qui festinat ditari, non erit innocens (Prov. XXVIII, 20); profecto enim qui augere opes ambit, vitare peccatum negligit; et more avium captus, cum escam terrenarum rerum avidus conspicit, quo stranguletur peccati laqueo non agnoscit. Cum quaelibet praesentis mundi lucra desiderant, et ea quae de futuro damna patientur, ignorant, audiant quod scriptum est: Haereditas ad quam festinatur in principio, in novissimo benedictione carebit (Prov. XX, 21). Ex hac quippe vita initium ducimus, ut ad benedictionis sortem in novissimo veniamus: qui itaque in principio haereditari festinant, sortem sibi in novissimo benedictionis amputant; quia dum per avaritiae nequitiam hic multiplicari appetunt, illic ab aeterno patrimonio exhaeredes fiunt. Cum vel plurima ambiunt, vel obtinere cuncta quae ambierint possunt, audiant quod scriptum est: Quid prodest homini si totum mundum lucretur, animae vero suae detrimentum faciat (Matth. XVI, 26)? Ac si aperte Veritas dicat: Quid prodest homini si totum quod extra se est congregat, si hoc ipsum solum quod ipse est, damnat? Plerumque autem citius raptorum avaritia corrigitur, si in verbis admonentis quam fugitiva sit praesens vita, monstretur: si eorum ad medium memoria deducatur, qui et ditari in hoc mundo diu conati sunt, et tamen in adeptis divitiis diu manere nequiverunt, quibus festina mors repente et simul abstulit quidquid eorum nequitia nec simul nec repente congregavit; qui non solum hic rapta reliquerunt, sed secum ad judicium causas rapinae detulerunt. Horum itaque exempla

audiant, quos in verbis suis procul dubio et ipsi condemnant; ut cum post verba ad cor redeunt, imitari saltem quos judicant, erubescant.

CAPUT XXI

Quomodo admonendi qui aliena non appetunt, sed sua retinent; et qui sua tribuentes, aliena tamen rapiunt.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui nec aliena appetunt, nec sua largiuntur; atque aliter qui et ea quae habent tribuunt, et tamen aliena rapere non desistunt. Admonendi sunt qui nec aliena appetunt, nec sua largiuntur, ut sciant sollicite quod ea de qua sumpti sunt, cunctis hominibus terra communis est, et idcirco alimenta quoque omnibus communiter profert. Incassum ergo se innocentes putant, qui commune Dei munus sibi privatum vindicant; qui cum accepta non tribuunt, in proximorum nece grassantur, quia tot pene quotidie perimunt, quot morientium pauperum apud se subsidia abscondunt. Nam cum quaelibet necessaria indigentibus ministramus, sua illis reddimus, non nostra largimur; justitiae debitum potius solvimus, quam misericordiae opera implemus. Unde et ipsa Veritas cum de misericordia caute exhibenda loqueretur, ait: Attendite ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus (Matth. VI, 1). Cui quoque sententiae etiam Psalmista concinens dicit: Dispersit dedit pauperibus, justitia ejus manet in aeternum (Psal. CI, 9). Cum enim largitatem impensam pauperibus praemisisset, non hanc vocare misericordiam, sed justitiam maluit; quia quod a communi Domino tribuitur, justum profecto est, ut quicunque accipiunt, eo communiter utantur. Hinc etiam Salomon ait: Qui justus est, tribuet et non cessabit (Prov. XXI, 26). Admonendi sunt quoque ut sollicite attendant quod ficulnea quae fructum non habuit, contra hanc districtus agricola queritur, quod etiam terram occupavit. Terram quippe ficulnea sine fructu occupat, quando mens tenacium hoc quod prodesse multis poterat, inutiliter servat.

Terram ficulnea sine fructu occupat, quando locum quem exercere alius per solem boni operis valuit, stultus per desidiae umbram premit.

Hi autem nonnunquam dicere solent: Concessis utimur, aliena non quaerimus, et si digna misericordiae retributione non agimus, nulla tamen perversa perpetramus. Quod idcirco sentiunt, quia videlicet aurem cordis a verbis coelestibus claudunt.

Admonendi sunt tenaces, ut noverint quod hanc primam injuriam faciunt Deo, quia danti sibi omnia, nullam misericordiae hostiam reddunt. Hinc enim Psalmista ait: Non dabit Deo propitiationem suam, nec pretium redemptionis animae suae (Psal. XLVIII, 8). Pretium namque redemptionis dare, est opus bonum praevenienti nos gratiae reddere. Hinc Joannes exclamat dicens: Jam securis ad radicem arboris posita est. Omnis arbor quae non facit fructum bonum, excidetur, et in ignem mittetur (Luc. III, 9). Qui ergo se innoxios, quia aliena non rapiunt aestimant, ictum securis vicinae praevideant, et torporem improvidae securitatis amittant, ne cum ferre fructum boni operis negligunt, a praesenti vita funditus quasi a viriditate radicis exsecentur. At contra admonendi sunt, qui et ea quae habent tribuunt, et aliena rapere non desistunt, ne valde munifici videri appetant, et de boni specie deteriores fiant. Hi etenim propria indiscrete tribuentes, non solum ut supra jam diximus, ad impatientiae murmurationem proruunt; sed cogente se inopia, usque ad avaritiam devolvuntur. Quid ergo eorum mente infelicius, quibus de largitate nascitur avaritia, et peccatorum seges quasi ex virtute seminatur? Prius itaque admonendi sunt ut tenere sua rationabiliter sciant, et tunc demum ut aliena non ambiant. Si enim radix culpae in ipsa effusione non exuritur, nunquam per ramos exuberans avaritiae spina siccatur. Occasio ergo rapiendi subtrahitur, si bene prius jus possidendi disponatur. Tunc vero admoniti audiant, quomodo quae habent misericorditer tribuant, quando nimirum

didicerunt ut bona misericordiae per interjectam rapinae nequitiam non confundant. Violenter enim exquirunt quae misericorditer largiuntur. Sed aliud est pro peccatis misericordiam facere, aliud pro misericordia facienda peccare: quae jam nequaquam misericordia nuncupari potest, quia ad dulcem fructum non proficit quae per virus pestiferae radicis amarescit. Hinc est enim quod ipsa etiam sacrificia per prophetam Dominus reprobat, dicens: Ego Dominus diligens judicium, et odio habens rapinam in holocausto (Isai. LXI, 8). Hinc iterum dixit: Hostiae impiorum abominabiles, quae offeruntur ex scelere (Prov. XXI, 27). Qui saepe quoque et indigentibus subtrahunt quae Deo largiuntur. Sed quanta eos animadversione renuat per quemdam sapientem Dominus demonstrat, dicens: Qui offert sacrificium de substantia pauperis, quasi qui victimat filium in conspectu patris sui (Eccli. XXXIV. 24). Quid namque esse intolerabilius potest, quam mors filii ante oculos patris? Hoc itaque sacrificium quanta ira aspiciatur ostenditur, quod orbati patris dolori comparatur. Et tamen plerumque quanta tribuunt, pensant; quanta autem rapiunt, considerare dissimulant. Quasi mercedem numerant, et perpendere culpas recusant. Audiant itaque quod scriptum est: Qui mercedes congregavit, misit eas in sacculum pertusum (Aggaei. VI). In sacculo quippe pertuso videtur, quando pecunia mittitur; sed quando amittitur, non videtur. Qui ergo quanta largiuntur aspiciunt, sed quantum rapiunt non perpendunt, in pertuso sacculo mercedes mittunt, quia profecto has in spem suae fiduciae intuentes congerunt, sed non intuentes perdunt.

CAPUT XXIII

Quomodo admonendi sunt discordes et pacati.

Aliter admonendi sunt discordes, atque aliter pacati. Discordes namque admonendi sunt ut certissime sciant quia quantislibet virtutibus polleant,

spiritales fieri nullatenus possunt, si uniri per concordiam proximis negligunt. Scriptum quippe est: Fructus autem spiritus est charitas, gaudium, pax (Gal. V, 22). Qui ergo servare pacem non curat, ferre fructum spiritus recusat. Hinc Paulus ait: Cum sit inter vos zelus et contentio, nonne carnales estis (I Cor. III, 3)? Hinc iterum quoque dicit: Pacem sequimini cum omnibus, et sanctimoniam, sine qua nemo videbit Deum (Hebr. XII, 14). Hinc rursum admonens ait: Solliciti servare unitatem spiritus in vinculo pacis: unum corpus et unus spiritus, sicut vocati estis in una spe vocationis vestrae (Ephes. IV, 3, 4). Ad unam ergo vocationis spem nequaquam pertingitur, si non ad eam unita cum proximis mente curratur. At saepe nonnulli quo quaedam specialiter dona percipiunt, eo superbiendo donum concordiae quod majus est, amittunt; ut si fortasse carnem prae caeteris gulae refrenatione quis edomat, concordare eis quos superat abstinendo contemnat. Sed qui abstinentiam a concordia separat, quid admoneat Psalmista perpendat; ait enim: Laudate eum in tympano et choro (Psal. CL, 4). In tympano namque sicca et percussa pellis resonat, in choro autem voces societate concordant. Quisquis itaque corpus affligit, sed concordiam deserit, Deum quidem laudat in tympano, sed non laudat in choro. Saepe vero dum quosdam major scientia erigit, a caeterorum societate disjungit, et quasi quo plus sapiunt, eo a concordiae virtute desipiscunt. Hi itaque audiant quid per semetipsam Veritas dicat: Habete sal in vobis, et pacem habete inter vos (Marc. IX, 49). Sal quippe sine pace non virtutis est donum, sed damnationis argumentum. Quo enim quisque melius sapit, eo deterius delinquit; et idcirco inexcusabiliter merebitur supplicium, quia prudenter si voluisset, potuit vitare peccatum. Quibus recte quoque per Jacobum dicitur: Quod si zelum amarum habetis, et contentiones sunt in corde vestro, nolite gloriari, et mendaces esse adversum veritatem. Non est ista sapientia desursum descendens, sed terrena, animalis, diabolica. Quae autem desursum est sapientia primum quidem pudica est, deinde pacifica

(Jac. III, 14, 15, 17). Pudica videlicet, quia caste intelligit; pacifica autem, quia per elationem se minime a proximorum societate disjungit. Admonendi sunt dissidentes, ut noverint quod tandiu nullum boni operis Deo sacrificium immolant, quandiu a proximorum charitate discordant. Scriptum namque est: Si offers munus tuum ad altare, et ibi recordatus fueris quia frater tuus habet aliquid adversum te, relinque ibi munus tuum ante altare, et vade prius reconciliari fratri tuo, et tunc veniens offeres munus tuum (Matth. V, 28, 24). Ex qua scilicet praeceptione pensandum est quorum hostia repellitur, quam intolerabilis culpa monstratur. Nam cum mala cuncta bonis sequentibus diluantur, pensemus quanta sint mala discordiae, quae nisi exstincta funditus fuerint, bonum subsequi non permittunt. Admonendi sunt discordes, ut si aures a mandatis coelestibus declinant, mentis oculos ad consideranda ea quae in infimis versantur aperiant; quod saepe aves unius ejusdemque generis sese socialiter volando non deserunt, et quod gregatim animalia bruta pascuntur. Quia si solerter aspicimus, concordando sibi irrationalis natura indicat, quantum malum per discordiam rationalis natura committat, quando haec a rationis intentione perdidit, quod illa motu naturali custodit.

At contra admonendi sunt pacati, ne dum plus quam necesse est, pacem quam possident amant, ad perpetuam pervenire non appetant. Plerumque enim gravius intentionem mentium rerum tranquillitas tentat; ut quo non sunt molesta quae tenent, eo minus amabilia fiant quae vocant; et quo delectant praesentia, eo non inquirantur aeterna. Unde et per semetipsam Veritas loquens, cum terrenam pacem a superna distingueret, atque ad venturam discipulos ex praesenti provocaret, ait: Pacem relinquo vobis, pacem meam do vobis (Joan. XIV, 27). Relinquo scilicet transitoriam, do mansuram. Si ergo in ea cor quae relicta est figitur, numquam ad illam quae danda est, pervenitur. Pax igitur praesens ita tenenda est, et ut diligi debeat et contemni; ne si immoderate diligitur, diligentis animus in culpa capiatur.

Unde et admonendi sunt pacati, ne dum nimis humanam pacem desiderant, pravos hominum mores nequaquam redarguant; et consentiendo perversis, ab auctoris sui se pace disjungant; ne dum humana foras jurgia metuunt, interni foederis discissione feriantur. Quid est enim pax transitoria, nisi quoddam vestigium pacis aeternae? Quid ergo esse dementius potest, quam vestigia in pulvere impressa diligere, sed ipsum a quo impressa sunt, non amare? Hinc David dum totum se ad foedera pacis internae constringeret, testatur quod cum malis concordiam non teneret, dicens: Nonne qui te oderunt, Deus, oderam illos, et super inimicos tuos tabescebam? Perfecto odio oderam illos, inimici facti sunt mihi (Psal. CXXXVIII, 21, 22). Inimicos etenim Dei perfecto odio odisse, est et quod facti sunt diligere, et quod faciunt increpare; mores parvorum premere, vitae prodesse. Pensandum ergo est, quando ab increpatione quiescitur, quanta culpa cum pessimis pax tenetur, si propheta tantus hoc velut in hostiam Deo obtulit, quod contra se pro Domino pravorum inimicitias excitavit. Hinc est quod tribus Levi assumptis gladiis per castrorum media transiens, quia feriendis noluit peccatoribus parcere, Deo manus dicta est consecrasse (Exod., XXXII, 27, seq.). Hinc Phinees peccantium civium gratiam spernens, coeuntes cum Madianitis perculit, et iram Domini iratus placavit (Num. XXV, 9). Hinc per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Nolite arbitrari, quia venerim pacem mittere in terram. Non veni pacem mittere, sed gladium (Matth. X, 34). Malorum namque cum incaute amicitiis jungimur, culpis ligamur. Unde Josaphat, qui tot de anteacta vita praeconiis attollitur, de Achab regis amicitiis pene periturus increpatur. Cui a Domino per prophetam dicitur: Impio praebes auxilium, et his qui oderunt Dominum, amicitia jungeris; et idcirco iram quidem Domini merebaris, sed bona opera inventa sunt in te, eo quod abstuleris lucos de terra Juda (II Par. XIX, 24). Ab illo enim qui summe rectus est, eo ipso jam discrepat, quo perversorum amicitiis vita nostra concordat. Admonendi sunt pacati, ne si ad correptionis verba

prosiliant, temporalem pacem sibi perturbare formident. Rursumque admonendi sunt, ut eamdem pacem dilectione integra intrinsecus teneant, quam per invectionem vocis sibi extrinsecus turbant. Quod utrumque provide se David servasse perhibet, cum dicit: Cum his qui oderunt pacem, eram pacificus, cum loquebar illis, impugnabant me gratis (Psal. CXIX, 7). Ecce et loquens impugnabatur; et tamen impugnatus, erat pacificus, quia nec insanientes cessabat reprehendere, nec reprehensos negligebat amare. Hinc etiam Paulus ait: Si fieri potest, quod ex vobis est, cum omnibus hominibus pacem habentes (Rom. XII, 18). Hortaturus enim discipulos ut pacem cum omnibus haberent, praemisit, dicens: Si fieri potest, atque subjunxit: Quod ex vobis est. Difficile quippe erat ut si male acta corriperent, habere pacem cum omnibus possent. Sed cum temporalis pax in pravorum cordibus ex nostra increpatione confunditur, inviolata necesse est ut in nostro corde servetur. Recte itaque ait: Quod ex vobis est. Ac si nimirum dicat: Quia pax ex duarum partium consensu subsistit, si ab eis qui corripiuntur expellitur, integra tamen in vestra qui corripitis mente teneatur. Unde idem rursum discipulos admonet, dicens: Si quis non obedit verbo nostro, per epistolam hunc notate: et non commisceamini cum illo, ut confundatur (II Thess. III, 14). Atque illico adjunxit: Et nolite ut inimicum existimare illum, sed corripite ut fratrem (Ibid., 15). Ac si diceret: Pacem cum eo exteriorem solvite, sed interiorem circa illum medullitus custodite; ut peccantis mentem sic vestra discordia feriat, quatenus pax a cordibus vestris nec abnegata discedat.

CAPUT XXIII

Quomodo admonendi qui jurgia serunt, et pacifici.

Aliter admonendi sunt seminantes jurgia, atque aliter pacifici. Admonendi namque sunt qui jurgia seminant, ut cujus sint sequaces agnoscant. De

apostata quippe angelo scriptum est, cum bonae messi inserta fuisset zizania: Inimicus homo hoc fecit (Matth. XIII, 28). De cujus etiam membro per Salomonem dicitur: Homo apostata, vir inutilis, graditur ore perverso, annuit oculis, terit pede; digito loquitur, pravo corde machinatur malum, et omni tempore jurgia seminat (Prov. VI, 12). Ecce quem seminantem jurgia dicere voluit, prius apostatam nominavit: quia nisi more superbientis angeli a conspectu Conditoris prius intus aversione mentis caderet, foras postmodum usque ad seminanda jurgia non veniret. Qui recte describitur quod annuit oculis, digito loquitur, terit pede. Interior namque est custodia, quae ordinata servat exterius membra. Qui ergo statum mentis perdidit, subsequenter foras in inconstantiam motionis fluit, atque exteriori mobilitate indicat, quod nulla interius radice subsistat. Audiant jurgiorum seminatores quod scriptum est: Beati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur (Matth. V, 9). Atque e diverso colligant, quia si filii Dei vocantur qui pacem faciunt, proculdubio Satanae sunt filii qui confundunt. Omnes autem qui per discordiam separantur a viriditate dilectionis, arefiunt. Qui etsi boni operis fructus in suis actionibus proferunt, profecto nulli sunt, quia non ex unitate charitatis oriuntur. Hinc ergo perpendant seminantes jurgia, quam multipliciter peccant: qui dum unam nequitiam perpetrant, ab humanis cordibus cunctas simul virtutes eradicant. In uno enim malo innumera peragunt, quia seminando discordiam, charitatem quae nimirum virtutum omnium mater est, exstinguunt. Quia autem nihil pretiosius est Deo virtute dilectionis, nil est desiderabilius diabolo exstinctione charitatis. Quisquis ergo seminando jurgia dilectionem proximorum perimit, hosti Dei familiarius servit, quia qua ille amissa cecidit, hanc iste vulneratis cordibus subtrahens, eis iter ascensionis abscidit.

At contra admonendi sunt pacifici, ne tantae actionis pondus levigent, si inter quos fundare pacem debeant, ignorent. Nam sicut multum nocet si unitas desit bonis, ita valde est noxium si non desit malis. Si ergo

perversorum nequitia in pace jungitur, profecto eorum malis actibus robur augetur; quia quo sibi in malitia congruunt, eo se robustius bonorum afflictionibus illidunt. Hinc namque est quod contra damnati illius vasis, videlicet Antichristi praedicatores, divina voce beato Job dicitur: Membra carnium ejus cohaerentia sibi (Job. XLI, 14). Hinc sub squamarum specie de ejus satellitibus perhibetur: Una uni conjungitur, et ne spiraculum quidem incedit per eas (Ibid., 7). Sequaces quippe illius quo nulla inter se discordiae adversitate divisi sunt, eo in benorum gravius nece glomerantur. Qui ergo iniquos pace sociat, iniquitati vires administrat, quia bonos deterius deprimunt, quos et unanimiter persequuntur. Unde praedicator egregins gravi Pharisaeorum Sadducaeorumque persecutione deprehensus, inter semetipsos dividere studuit, quos contra se graviter unitos vidit, cum clamavit, dicens: Viri fratres, ego Pharisaeus sum, filius Pharisaeorum, de spe et resurrectione mortuorum ego judicor (Act. XXIII, 6). Dumque Sadducaei spem resurrectionemque mortuorum esse denegarent, quam Pharisaei juxta sacri eloquii praecepta crederent, facta in persecutorum unanimitate dissensio est, et divisa turba illaesus Paulus exivit, quae hunc unita prius immaniter pressit. Admonendi itaque sunt qui faciendae pacis studiis occupantur, ut pravorum mentibus prius amorem debeant internae pacis infundere, quatenus eis postmodum valeat exterior pax prodesse; ut dum eorum cor in illius cognitione suspenditur, nequaquam ad nequitiam ex hujus perceptione rapiatur; dumque supernam provident, terrenam nullo modo ad usum suae deteriorationis inclinent. Cum vero perversi quique tales sunt, ut nocere bonis nequeant, etiamsi concupiscant, inter hos nimirum debet terrena pax construi et priusquam ab eis valeat superna cognosci; ut hi scilicet quos contra dilectionem Dei malitia suae impietatis exasperat, saltem ex proximi amore mansuescant; et quasi e vicino ad melius transeant, ut ad illam quae a se longe est, pacem Conditoris ascendant.

CAPUT XXIV

Quomodo admonendi rudes in doctrina sacra, et docti, sed non humiles.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui sacrae legis verba non recte intelligunt; atque aliter qui recte quidem intelligunt, sed haec humiliter non loquuntur. Admonendi enim sunt qui sacrae legis verba non recte intelligunt, ut perpendant, quia saluberrimum vini potum in veneni sibi poculum vertunt, ac per medicinale ferrum vulnere mortali se feriunt, dum per hoc in se sana perimunt, per quod salubriter abscindere sauciata debuerunt. Admonendi sunt, ut perpendant quo Scriptura sacra in nocte vitae praesentis quasi quaedam nobis lucerna sit posita, cujus nimirum verba dum non recte intelligunt, de lumine tenebrescunt. Quos videlicet ad intellectum pravum intentio perversa non raperet, nisi prius superbia inflaret. Dum enim se prae caeteris sapientes arbitrantur, sequi alios ad melius intellecta despiciunt; atque ut apud imperium vulgus scientiae sibi nomen extorqueant, student summopere et ab aliis recte intellecta destruere, et sua perversa roborare. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Secuerunt praegnantes Galaad ad dilatandum terminum suum (Amos I, 13). Galaad namque acervus testimonii interpretatur. Et quia cuncta simul congregatio Ecclesiae per confessionem servit testimonio veritatis, non incongrue per Galaad Ecclesia exprimitur, quae ore cunctorum fidelium, de Deo quaeque vera sunt testatur. Praegnantes autem vocantur animae, quae intellectum verbi ex divino amore concipiunt, si ad perfectum tempus veniant, conceptam intelligentiam operis ostensione pariturae. Terminum vero suum dilatare, est opinionis suae nomen extendere. Secuerunt ergo praegnantes Galaad ad dilatandum terminum suum; quia nimirum haeretici mentes fidelium quae jam aliquid de veritatis intellectu conceperant perversa praedicatione perimunt, et scientiae sibi nomen extendunt. Parvulorum corda jam de verbi conceptione gravida, erroris gladio scindunt, et quasi doctrinae sibi

opinionem faciunt. Hos ergo cum conamur instruere ne perversa sentiant, admoneamus prius necesse est, ne inanem gloriam quaerant. Si enim radix elationis absciditur, consequenter rami pravae assertionis arefiunt. Admonendi sunt etiam, ne errores discordiasque generando, legem Dei quae idcirco data est ut sacrificia Satanae prohibeat, eamdem ipsam in Satanae sacrificium vertant. Unde per prophetam Dominus queritur, dicens: Dedi eis frumentum, vinum et oleum, et argentum multiplicavi eis et aurum, quae fecerunt Baal (Oseae II, 8). Frumentum quippe a Domino accipimus, quando in dictis obscurioribus subducto tegmine litterae per medullam spiritus legis interna sentimus. Vinum suum Dominus nobis praestat, cum Scripturae suae alta praedicatione nos debriat [inebriat]. Oleum quoque suum nobis tribuit, cum praeceptis apertioribus vitam nostram blanda lenitate disponit. Argentum multiplicat cum nobis luce veritatis plena eloquia subministrat. Auro quoque nos ditat, quando cor nostrum intellectu summi fulgoris irradiat. Quae cuncta haeretici Baal offerunt, quia apud auditorum suorum corda corrupte omnia intelligendo pervertunt. Et de frumento Dei, vino atque oleo, argento pariter et auro, Satanae sacrificium immolant, quia ad errorem discordiae verba pacis inclinant. Unde admonendi sunt ut perpendant, quia dum perversa mente de praeceptis pacis discordiam faciunt, justo Dei examine ipsi de verbis vitae moriuntur.

At contra admonendi sunt qui recte quidem verba legis intelligunt, sed haec humiliter non loquuntur; ut in divinis sermonibus prius quam aliis eos proferant, semetipsos requirant, ne insequentes aliorum facta, se deserant; et cum recte cuncta de sacra Scriptura sentiunt, hoc solum quod per illam contra elatos dicitur, non attendant. Improbus quippe et imperitus est medicus, qui alienum mederi appetit, et ipse vulnus quod patitur nescit. Qui igitur verba Dei humiliter non loquuntur, profecto admonendi sunt, ut cum medicamina aegris apponunt, prius virus suae pestis inspiciant, ne alios medendo ipsi moriantur. Admoneri debent, ut considerent ne a virtute dicti,

dicendi qualitate discordent, ne loquendo aliud, et ostendendo aliud praedicent. Audiant itaque quod scriptum est: Si quis loquitur, quasi sermones Dei (I Petr. IV, 11). Qui ergo verba quae proferunt, ex propriis non habent, cur quasi de propriis tument? Audiant quod scriptum est: Sicut ex Deo coram Deo in Christo loquimur (II Cor. II, 17). Ex Deo enim coram Deo loquitur, qui praedicationis verbum et quia a Deo accepit intelligit, et placere per illud Deo non hominibus quaerit. Audiant quod scriptum est: Abominatio Domini est omnis arrogans (Prov. XVI, 15). — Quia videlicet dum in verbo Dei gloriam propriam quaerit, jus dantis invadit; eumque laudi suae postponere nequaquam metuit, a quo hoc ipsum quod laudatur accepit. Audiant quod praedicatori per Salomonem dicitur: Bibe aquam de cisterna tua, et fluenta putei tui. Deriventur fontes tui foras, et in plateis aquas divide. Habeto eas solus, nec sint alieni participes tui (Prov. V, 15). Aquam quippe praedicator de cisterna sua bibit, cum ad cor suum rediens, prius audit ipse quod dicit. Bibit sui fluenta putei, si sui irrigatione verbi infunditur. Ubi bene subjungitur: Diriventur fontes tui foras, et in plateis aquas divide (Ibid., 18). Rectum quippe est ut ipse prius bibat, et tunc praedicando aliis influat. Fontes namque foras derivare, est exterius aliis vim praedicationis infundere. In plateis autem aquas dividere, est in magna auditorum amplitudine juxta uniuscujusque qualitatem divina eloquia dispensare. Et quia plerumque inanis gloriae appetitus subrepit dum sermo Dei ad multorum notitiam currit, postquam dictum est: In plateis aquas divide, recte subjungitur: Habeto eas solus, nec sint alieni participes tui (Ibid.). Alienos quippe malignos spiritus vocat, de quibus per Prophetam tentati hominis voce dicitur: Alieni insurrexerunt in me, et fortes quaesierunt animam meam (Ps. LIII, 5). Ait ergo: Aquas et in plateis divide, et tamen solus habe. Ac si apertius dicat: Sic necesse est ut praedicationi exterius servias, quatenus per elationem te immundis spiritibus non conjungas, ne in divini verbi ministerio hostes tuos ad te participes

admittas. Aquas ergo et in plateis dividimus, et tamen soli possidemus, quando et exterius late praedicationem fundimus, et tamen per eam humanas laudes assequi minime ambimus.

CAPUT XXV

Quomodo admonendi qui officium praedicationis nimia humilitate detrectant, et qui praecipiti festinatione occupant.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui cum praedicare digne valeant, prae nimia humilitate formidant; atque aliter admonendi sunt quos a praedicatione imperfectio vel aetas prohibet, et tamen praecipitatio impellit. Admonendi namque sunt qui cum praedicare utiliter possunt, immoderata tamen humilitate refugiunt; ut ex minori consideratione colligant quantum in majoribus rebus derelinquant. Si enim indigentibus proximis ipsi quas haberent pecunias absconderent, adjutores proculdubio calamitatis exstitissent. Quo ergo reatu constringantur aspiciant, qui dum peccantibus fratribus verbum praedicationis subtrabunt, morientibus mentibus vitae remedia abscondunt. Unde et bene quidam sapiens dicit: Sapientia abscondita et thesaurus invisus, quae utilitas in utrisque (Eccli. XX, 32)? Si populos fames attereret, et occulta frumenta ipsi servarent, auctores proculdubio mortis existerent. Qua itaque plectendi sunt poena considerent, qui cum fame verbi animae pereant, ipsi panem perceptae gratiae non ministrant. Unde et bene per Salomonem dicitur: Qui abscondit frumenta, maledicetur in populis (Prov. XI, 26). Frumenta quippe abscondere, est praedicationis sanctae apud se verba retinere. In populis autem talis quisque maledicitur, quia in solius culpa silentii pro multorum quos corrigere potuit poena damnatur. Si medicinalis artis minime ignari secandum vulnus cernerent, et tamen secare recusarent, profecto peccatum fraternae mortis ex solo torpore committerent. Quanta ergo culpa involvantur aspiciant, qui

dum cognoscunt vulnera mentium, curare ea negligunt sectione verborum. Unde et bene per prophetam dicitur: Maledictus qui prohibet gladium suum a sanguine (Jer. XLVIII, 10). Gladium quippe a sanguine prohibere, est praedicationis verbum a carnalis vitae interfectione retinere. De quo rursum gladio dicitur: Et gladius meus manducabit carnes (Deut. XXXII, 42).

Hi itaque cum apud se sermonem praedicationis occultant, divinas contra se sententias terribiliter audiant, quatenus ab eorum cordibus timorem timor expellat. Audiant quod talentum qui erogare noluit, cum sententia damnationis amisit (Matth. XXV, 24, seq.). Audiant quod Paulus eo se a proximorum sanguine mundum credidit, quo feriendis eorum vitiis non pepercit, dicens: Contestor vos hodierna die, quia mundus sum a sanguine omnium: non enim subterfugi quominus annuntiarem omne consilium Dei vobis (Act. XX, 26, 27). Audiant quod voce angelica Joannes admonetur, cum dicitur: Qui audit, dicat: Veni (Apoc. XXII, 17). Ut nimirum cui se vox interna insinuat, illuc etiam clamando alios quo ipse rapitur trahat; ne clausas fores etiam vocatus inveniat, si vocanti vacuus appropinquat. Audiant quod Isaias quia a verbi ministerio tacuit, illustratus superno lumine, magna voce poenitentiae se ipse reprehendit, dicens: Vae mihi quia tacui (Isai. VI, 5). Audiant quod per Salomonem in illum praedicationis scientia multiplicari promittitur, qui in hoc quod jam obtinuit, torporis vitio non tenetur. Ait namque: Anima quae benedicit, impinguabitur; et qui inebriat, ipse quoque inebriabitur (Prov. XI, 25). Qui enim exterius praedicando benedicit, interioris augmenti pinguedinem recipit; et dum vino eloquii auditorum mentem debriare [inebriare] non desinit, potu multiplicati muneris debriatus excrescit. Audiant quod David hoc Deo in munere obtulit, quod praedicationis gratiam quam acceperat non abscondit, dicens: Ecce labia mea non prohibebo. Domine, tu cognovisti; justitiam tuam non abscondi in corde meo, veritatem tuam et salutare tuum dixi (Ps. XXXIX, 10, 11). Audiant quod sponsi colloquio ad sponsam dicitur: Quae habitas in

hortis, amici auscultant; fac me audire vocem tuam (Cant. VIII, 13). Ecclesia quippe in hortis habitat, quae ad viriditatem intimam exculta plantaria virtutum servat. Cujus vocem amicos auscultare, est electos quosque verbum praedicationis illius desiderare: quam videlicet vocem sponsus audire desiderat, quia ad praedicationem ejus per electorum suorum animas anhelat. Audiant quod Moyses cum irascentem Deum populo cerneret, et assumi ad ulciscendum gladio juberet; illos a parte Dei denuntiavit existere, qui delinquentium scelera incunctanter ferirent, dicens: Si quis Domini est, jungatur mihi; ponat vir gladium super femur suum: ite et redite de porta usque ad portam per medium castrorum, et occidat unusquisque fratrem, et amicum, et proximum suum (Exod. XXXII, 27). Gladium quippe super femur ponere, est praedicationis studium voluptatibus carnis anteferre; ut cum sancta quis studet dicere, curet necesse est illicitas suggestiones edomare. De porta vero usque ad portam ire, est a vitio usque ad vitium, per quod ad mentem mors ingreditur, increpando discurrere. Per medium vero castrorum transire, est tanta aequalitate intra Ecclesiam vivere, ut qui delinquentium culpas redarguit, in nullius se debeat favorem declinare. Unde et recte subjungitur: Occidat vir fratrem, et amicum, et proximum suum. Fratrem scilicet et amicum et proximum interficit, qui cum punienda invenit, ab increpationis gladio nec eis quos per cognationem diligit parcit. Si ergo ille Dei dicitur qui ad ferienda vitia zelo divini amoris excitatur, profecto esse se Dei denegat, qui inquantum sufficit, increpare vitam carnalium recusat. At contra admonendi sunt quos a praedicationis officio vel imperfectio, vel aetas prohibet, et tamen praecipitatio impellit, ne dum tanti sibi onus officii praecipitatione arrogant, viam sibi subsequentis meliorationis abscidant; et cum arripiunt intempestive quod non valent, perdant etiam quod implere quandoque tempestive potuissent; atque scientiam, quia incongrue conantur ostendere, juste ostendantur amisisse. Admonendi sunt ut considerent quod pulli avium

si ante pennarum perfectionem volare appetant, unde ire in alta cupiunt, inde in ima merguntur. Admonendi sunt ut considerent quod, structuris recentibus necdum solidatis, si tignorum pondus superponitur, non babitaculum, sed ruina fabricatur. Admonendi sunt ut considerent quod conceptas soboles feminae si priusquam plene formentur proferunt, nequaquam domos, sed tumulos replent. Hinc est enim quod ipsa Veritas, quae repente quos vellet roborare potuisset, ut exemplum sequentibus daret, ne imperfecti praedicare praesumerent, postquam plene discipulos de virtute praedicationis instruxit, illico adjunxit: Vos autem sedete in civitate quoadusque induamini virtute ex alto (Luc. XXIV, 49). In civitate quippe considemus, si intra mentium nostrarum nos claustra constringimus, ne loquendo exterius evagemur; ut cum virtute divina perfecte induimur, tunc quasi a nobismetipsis foras etiam alios instruentes exeamus. Hinc per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Adolescens loquere in causa tua vix; et si bis interrogatus fueris, habeat initium responsio tua (Eccli. XXXII, 10). Hinc est quod idem Redempter noster, cum in coelis sit conditor, et ostensione suae potentiae semper doctor angelorum, ante tricennale tempus in terra magister noluit fieri hominum; ut videlicet praecipitatis vim saluberrimi timoris infunderet, cum ipse etiam, qui labi non posset, perfectae vitae gratiam non nisi perfecta aetate praedicaret. Scriptum quippe est: Cum factus esset annorum duodecim, remansit puer Jesus in Jerusalem (Luc. II, 42). De quo a parentibus requisito, paulo post subditur: Invenerunt illum in templo sedentem in medio doctorum, audientem illos et interrogantem (Ibid., 46). Vigilanti itaque consideratione pensandum est, quod cum Jesus annorum duodecim dicitur in medio doctorum sedens, non docens, sed interrogans invenitur. Quo exemplo scilicet ostenditur ne infirmus docere quis audeat, si ille puer doceri interrogando voluit, qui per divinitatis potentiam verbum scientiae ipsis suis doctoribus ministravit. Cum vero per Paulum discipulo dicitur: Praecipe haec et doce: nemo adolescentiam tuam

contemnat (I Tim. IV, 12); sciendum nobis est quia in sacro eloquio aliquando adolescentia juventus vocatur. Quod citius ostenditur, si Salomonis ad medium verba proferantur, qui ait: Laetare juvenis in adolescentia tua (Eccle. XI, 9). Si enim utraque unum esse non decerneret, quem monebat in adolescentia, juvenem non vocaret.

CAPUT XXVI

Quomodo admonendi quibus omnia ex sententia succedunt, et quibus nulla.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui in hoc quod temporaliter appetunt prosperantur; atque aliter qui ea quidem quae mundi sunt concupiscunt, sed tamen adversitatis labore fatigantur. Admonendi namque sunt qui in hoc quod temporaliter appetunt prosperantur, ne cum cuncta ad votum suppetunt, dantem quaerere negligant; sed in his quae dantur animum figant; ne peregrinationem pro patria diligant, ne subsidia itineris in obstacula perventionis vertant, ne nocturno lunae lumine delectati, claritatem solis videre refugiant. Admonendi itaque sunt ut quaeque in hoc mundo consequuntur, calamitatis solatia, non autem praemia retributionis credant; sed contra favores mundi mentem erigant, ne in eis ex tota cordis delectatione succumbant. Quisquis enim prosperitatem qua utitur, apud judicium cordis, melioris vitae amore non reprimit, favorem vitae transeuntis in mortis perpetuae occasionem vertit. Hinc est enim quod sub Idumaeorum specie, qui vincendos se prosperitati suae reliquerunt, in hujus mundi successibus laetantes increpantur cum dicitur: Dederunt terram meam sibi in haereditatem cum gaudio, et toto corde, et ex animo (Ezech. XXXVI, 5). Quibus verbis perpenditur, quod non solum quia gaudeant, sed quod toto corde et ex animo gaudeant, districta reprehensione feriantur. Hinc Salomon ait: Aversio parvulorum interficiet eos, et prosperitas stultorum perdet illos (Prov. I, 32). Hinc Paulus admonet dicens: Qui emunt,

tamquam non possidentes, et qui utuntur hoc mundo, tanquam non utantur (I Cor. VII, 30). Ut videlicet sic nobis quae suppetunt, exterius serviant, quatenus a supernae delectationis studio animum non inflectant, ne luctum nobis internae peregrinationis temperent eaque in exsilio positis subsidium praebent; et quasi felices in transitoriis nos gaudeamus, qui ab aeternis nos interim miseros cernimus. Hinc namque est quod electorum voce dicit Ecclesia: Laeva ejus sub capite meo, et dextera illius amplexabitur me (Cant. II, 6). Sinistram Dei, prosperitatem videlicet vitae praesentis, quasi sub capite posuit, quam intentione summi amoris premit. Dextera vero Dei eam amplectitur; quia sub aeterna ejus beatitudine tota devotione continetur. Hinc rursum per Salomonem dicitur: Longitudo dierum in dextera ejus, in sinistra vero illius divitiae et gloria. (Prov. III, 16). Divitiae itaque et gloria qualiter sint habenda docuit, quae posita in sinistra memoravit. Hinc Psalmista ait: Salvum me fac dextera tua (Ps. CVII, 7). Neque enim ait manu, sed dextera; ut videlicet cum dexteram diceret, quia aeternam salutem quaereret, indicaret. Hinc rursum scriptum est: Dextera manus tua, Domine, confregit inimicos (Exod. XV, 6, sec. LXX). Hostes enim Dei etsi in sinistra ejus proficiunt, dextera franguntur quia plerumque pravos vita praesens elevat, sed adventus aeternae beatitudinis damnat.

Admonendi sunt qui in hoc mundo prosperantur, ut solerter considerent quia praesentis vitae prosperitas aliquando idcirco datur ut ad meliorem vitam provocet, aliquando vero ut in aeternum plenius damnet. Hinc est enim quod plebi Israeliticae Chanaan terra promittitur, ut quandoque ad aeterna speranda provocetur. Neque enim rudis ille populus promissionibus Dei in longinquum crederet, si a promissore suo non etiam e vicino aliquid percepisset. Ut ergo ad aeternorum fidem certius roboretur, nequaquam solummodo spe ad res, sed rebus quoque ad spem trahitur. Quod liquido Psalmista testatur, dicens: Dedit eis regiones gentium, et labores populorum possederunt: ut custodiant justificationes ejus, et legem ejus requirant (Ps.

CIV, 44). Sed cum largientem Deum humana mens boni operis responsione non sequitur, unde nutrita pie creditur, inde justius damnatur. Hinc enim per Psalmistam rursum dicitur: Dejecisti eos, dum allevarentur (Ps. LXXII, 18). Quia videlicet reprobi cum recta opera divinis muneribus non rependunt, cum totos se hic deserunt, et affluentibus prosperitatibus dimittunt, unde exterius proficiunt, inde ab intimis cadunt. Hinc est quod in inferno cruciato diviti dicitur: Recepisti bona in vita tua (Luc. XVI, 25). Idcirco enim bona hic recepit et malus, ut illic plenius mala reciperet, quia hic fuerat nec per bona conversus.

At contra admonendi sunt, qui ea quidem quae mundi sunt concupiscunt, sed tamen adversitatis labore fatigantur, ut sollicita consideratione perpendant, Creator dispositorque cunctorum quanta super eos gratia vigilat, quos in sua desideria non relaxat. Aegro quippe quem medicus desperat, concedit ut cuncta quae concupiscit accipiat. Nam qui sanari posse creditur, a multis quae appetit prohibetur: et pueris nummos subtrahimus, quibus tota simul patrimonia haeredibus reservamus. Hinc ergo de spe aeternae haereditatis gaudium sumant, quos adversitas vitae temporalis humiliat; quia nisi salvandos in perpetuum cerneret, erudiendos sub disciplinae regimine divina dispensatio non frenaret. Admonendi itaque sunt qui in his quae temporaliter concupiscunt, adversitatis labore fatigantur, ut sollicite considerent quod plerumque etiam justos cum temporalis potentia sustollit, velut in laqueo culpa comprehendit. Nam sicut in priori hujus voluminis parte jam diximus (I parte, c. 3), David Deo amabilis rectior fuit in servitio, quam cum pervenit ad regnum (I Reg. XXIV, 18). Servus namque amore justitiae, deprehensum adversarium ferire timuit; rex autem persuasione luxuriae devotum militem etiam sub studio fraudis exstinxit (II Reg. XI, 17). Quis ergo opes, quis potestatem, quis gloriam quaerat innoxie, si et illi exstiterunt noxia, qui haec habuit non quaesita? Quis inter haec sine magni discriminis labore salvabitur, si ille in

his culpa interveniente turbatus est, qui ad haec fuerat Deo eligente praeparatus? Admonendi sunt ut considerent quia Salomon qui post tantam sapientiam usque ad idololatriam cecidisse describitur, nihil in hoc mundo priusquam caderet, adversitatis habuisse memoratur; sed concessa sapientia funditus cor deseruit, quod nulla vel minima tribulationis disciplina custodivit (III Reg. XI, 4).

CAPUT XXVII

Quomodo admonendi conjugati et caelibes.

Aliter admonendi sunt conjugiis obligati, atque aliter a conjugii nexibus liberi. Admonendi namque sunt conjugiis obligati, ut cum vicissim quae sunt alterius cogitant, sic eorum quisque placere studeat conjugi, ut non displiceat Conditori; sic ea quae hujus mundi sunt agant, ut tamen appetere quae Dei sunt non omittant; sic de bonis praesentibus gaudeant, ut tamen sollicita intentione mala aeterna pertimescant; sic de malis temporalibus lugeant, ut tamen consolatione integra spem in bonis perennibus figant; quatenus dum in transitu cognoscunt esse quod agunt, in mansione quod appetunt; nec mala mundi cor frangant, cum spes bonorum coelestium roborat; nec bona praesentis vitae decipiant, cum suspecta subsequentis judicii mala contristant. Itaque animus Christianorum conjugum et infirmus et fidelis, qui et plene cuncta temporalia despicere non valet, et tamen aeternis se conjungere per desiderium valet; quamvis in delectatione carnis interim jaceat, supernae spei refectione convalescat. Et si habet quae mundi sunt in usu itineris, sperat quae Dei sunt in fructu perventionis; nec totum se ad hoc quod agit conferat, ne ab eo quod robuste sperare debuit funditus cadat. Quod bene ac breviter Paulus exprimit, dicens: Qui habent uxores, tanquam non habentes sint; et qui flent, tanquam non flentes; et qui gaudent, tanquam non gaudentes (I Cor. VII, 29, 30). Uxorem quippe quasi non

habendo habet, qui sic per illam carnali consolatione utitur, ut tamen numquam ad prava opera a melioris intentionis rectitudine ejus amore flectatur. Uxorem quasi non habendo habet, qui transitoria esse cuncta conspiciens, curam carnis ex necessitate tolerat, sed aeterna gaudia spiritus ex desiderio exspectat. Non flendo autem flere, est sic exteriora adversa plangere, ut tamen noverit aeternae spei consolatione gaudere. Et rursum, non gaudendo gaudere, est sic de infimis animum attollere, ut tamen nunquam desinat summa formidare. Ubi apte quoque paulo post subdit: Praeterit enim figura hujus mundi (Ibid., 1). Ac si aperte diceret: Nolite constanter mundum diligere, quando et ipse non potest, quem diligitis, stare. Incassum cor quasi manentes figitis, dum fugit ipse quem amatis.

Admonendi sunt conjuges, ut ea in quibus sibi aliquando displicent, et patientes invicem tolerent, et exhortantes invicem salvent. Scriptum namque est: Invicem onera vestra portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi (Galat. IV, 2). Lex quippe Christi charitas est; quia ex illo nobis et largiter sua bona contulit, et aequanimiter mala nostra portavit. Tunc ergo legem Christi imitando complemus, quando et nostra bona benigne conferimus, et nostrorum mala pie sustinemus. Admonendi quoque sunt, ut eorum quisque non tam quae ab altero tolerat, quam quae ab ipso tolerantur attendat. Si enim sua quae portantur considerat, ea quae ab altero sustinet, levius portat.

Admonendi sunt conjuges, ut suscipiendae prolis se meminerint causa conjunctos, et cum immoderatae admistioni servientes, propagationis articulum in usum transferunt voluptatis, perpendant quod licet extra non exeant, in ipso tamen conjugio conjugii jura transcendunt. Unde necesse est ut crebris exorationibus deleant quod pulchram copulae speciem admistis voluptatibus foedant. Hinc est enim quod peritus medicinae coelestis Apostolus non tam sanos instituit, quam infirmis medicamenta monstravit, dicens: De quibus scripsistis mihi: Bonum est homini mulierem non

tangere; propter fornicationem autem unusquisque suam habeat uxorem, et unaquaeque suum virum habeat (I Cor. VII, 1, seq. etc.). Qui enim fornicationis metum praemisit, profecto non stantibus praeceptum contulit; sed ne fortasse in terram ruerent, lectum cadentibus ostendit. Unde adhuc infirmantibus subdidit: Uxori vir debitum reddat, similiter et uxor viro (Ibid.). Quibus dum in magna honestate conjugii aliquid de voluptate largiretur, adjunxit: Hoc autem dico secundum indulgentiam, non secundum imperium (Ibid.). Culpa quippe esse innuitur, quod indulgeri perhibetur; sed quae tanto citius relaxetur, quanto non per hanc illicitum quid agitur, sed hoc quod est licitum, sub moderamine non tenetur. Quod bene Loth in semetipso exprimit, qui ardentem Sodomam fugit; sed tamen Segor inveniens, nequaquam mox montana conscendit (Gen. XIX, 30). Ardentem quippe Sodomam fugere, est illicita carnis incendia declinare. Altitudo vero montium, est munditia continentium. Vel certe quasi in monte sunt qui etiam carnali copulae inhaerent, sed tamen extra suscipiendae prolis admistionem debitam, nulla carnis voluptate solvuntur. In monte quippe stare est, nisi fructum propaginis in carne non quaerere. In monte stare, est carni carnaliter non adhaerere. Sed quia multi sunt qui scelera quidem carnis deserunt, nec tamen in conjugio positi usus solummedo debiti jura conservant, exiit quidem Loth Sodomam, sed tamen mox ad montana non pervenit, quia jam damnabilis vita relinquitur, sed adhuc celsitudo conjugalis continentiae subtiliter non tenetur. Est vero in medio Segor civitas, quae fugientem salvet infirmum, quia videlicet cum sibi per incontinentiam miscentur conjuges, et lapsus scelerum fugiunt, et tamen venia salvantur. Quasi parvam quippe civitatem inveniunt in qua ab ignibus defendantur, quia conjugalis haec vita non quidem in virtutibus mira est, sed tamen a suppliciis secura. Unde idem Loth ad angelum dicit: Est civitas hic juxta, ad quam possum fugere, parva; et salvabor in ea. Numquid non modica est, et vivet anima mea in ea (Genes. XIX, 20)? Juxta ergo dicitur,

et tamen ad salutem tuta perhibetur, quia conjugalis vita nec a mundo longe divisa est, nec tamen a gaudio salutis aliena. Sed tunc in hac actione vitam suam conjuges quasi in parva civitate custodiunt, quando pro se assiduis deprecationibus intercedunt. Unde et recte per angelum ad eumdem Loth dicitur: Ecce etiam in hoc suscepi preces tuas, ut non subvertam urbem pro qua locutus es (Ibid. 21). Qui videlicet cum deprecatio funditur Deo nequaquam talis conjugii vita damnatur. De qua deprecatione Paulus quoque admonet, dicens: Nolite fraudare invicem, nisi forte ex consensu ad tempus, ut vacetis orationi (I Cor. VII, 5).

At contra admonendi sunt qui ligati conjugiis non sunt, ut praeceptis coelestibus eo rectius serviant, quo eos ad curas mundi nequaquam jugum copulae carnalis inclinat; ut quos onus licitum conjugii non gravat, nequaquam pondus illicitum terrenae sollicitudinis premat; sed tanto eos paratiores dies ultimus, quanto et expeditiores inveniat; ne quo meliora agere vacantes possunt, sed tamen negligunt, eo supplicia deteriora mereantur. Audiant quod Apostolus cum quosdam ad caelibatus gratiam instrueret, non conjugium sprevit, sed curas mundi nascentes ex conjugio repulit, dicens: Hoc ad utilitatem vestram dico, non ut laqueum vobis injiciam; sed ad id quod honestum est, et quod facultatem praebeat sine impedimento Domino observiendi (Ibid., 35). Ex conjugiis quippe terrenae sollicitudines prodeunt; et idcirco magister gentium auditores suos ad meliora persuasit, ne sollicitudine terrena ligarentur. Quem igitur caelibem curarum saecularium impedimentum praepedit, et conjugio se nequaquam subdidit, et tamen conjugii onera non evasit. Admonendi sunt caelibes, ne sine damnationis judicio misceri se feminis vacantibus putent. Cum enim Paulus fornicationis vitium tot criminibus exsecrandis inseruit, cujus sit reatus indicavit, dicens: Neque fornicatores, neque idolis servientes, neque adulteri, neque molles, neque masculorum concubitores, neque fures, neque avari, neque ebriosi, neque maledici, neque rapaces regnum Dei

possidebunt (I Cor. VI, 9, 10). Et rursum: Fornicatores autem et adulteros judicabit Deus (Hebr. XIII, 4). Admonendi itaque sunt, ut si tentationum procellas cum difficultate salutis tolerant, conjugii portum petant. Scriptum namque est: Melius est nubere, quam uri (I Cor. VII, 9). Sine culpa scilicet ad conjugium veniunt, si tamen necdum meliora voverunt. Nam quisquis bonum majus subire proposuit, bonum minus quod licuit, illicitum fecit. Scriptum quippe est: Nemo mittens manum suam ad aratrum, et respiciens retro, aptus est regno caelorum (Luc. IX, 62). Qui igitur fortiori studio intenderat, retro convincitur respicere, si relictis amplioribus bonis ad minima retorquetur.

CAPUT XXVIII

Quomodo admonendi peccata carnis experti, et eorum expertes.

Aliter admonendi sunt peccatorum carnis conscii, atque aliter ignari. Admonendi namque sunt peccata carnis experti, ut mare saltem post naufragium metuant, et perditionis suae discrimina vel cognita perhorrescant; ne qui pie post perpetrata mala servati sunt, haec improbe repetendo moriantur. Unde peccanti animae et numquam a peccato desinenti dicitur: Frons mulieris meretricis facta est tibi, noluisti erubescere (Jerem. III, 3).

Admonendi itaque sunt ut studeant quatenus si accepta naturae bona integra servare noluerunt, saltem scissa resarciant. Quibus nimirum necesse est ut perpendant in tam magno fidelium numero quam multi et se illibatos custodiant, et alios ab errore convertant. Quid ergo isti dicturi sunt, si aliis in integritare stantibus, ipsi nec post damna resipiscunt. Quid dicturi sunt, si cum multi et alios secum deferunt ad regnum, hi exspectanti Domino nec semetipsos reducunt? Amonendi sunt, ut praeterita commissa considerent, et imminentia devitent. Unde sub Judaeae specie per prophetam Dominus

corruptis in hoc mundo mentibus transactas ad memoriam culpas revocat, quatenus pollui in futuris erubescant, dicens: Fornicatae sunt in Aegypto, in adolescentia sua fornicatae sunt; ibi subacta sunt ubera earum, et fractae sunt mammae pubertatis earum (Ezech. XXIII, 3). In Aegypto quippe ubera subiguntur, cum turpi hujus mundi desiderio humanae mentis voluntas substernitur. In Aegypto pubertatis mammae franguntur, quando naturales sensus adhuc in semetipsis integri, pulsantis concupiscentiae corruptione vitiantur.

Admonendi sunt peccata carnis experti, ut vigilanti cura conspiciant post delicta nobis ad se redeuntibus Deus quanta benevolentia sinum suae pietatis expandat, cum per prophetam dicat: Si dimiserit vir uxorem suam, et illa recedens duxerit virum alium, numquid revertetur ad eam ultra? Nunquid non polluta et contaminata erit mulier illa? Tu autem fornicata es cum amatoribus multis, tamen revertere ad me, dicit Dominus (Jerem. III, 1). Ecce de fornicante et relicta muliere argumentum justitiae proponitur, et tamen nobis post lapsum redeuntibus non justitia, sed pietas exhibetur. Ut hinc utique colligamus, si nobis delinquentibus tanta pietate parcitur, a nobis nec post delictum redeuntibus quanta improbitate peccatur; aut quae ab illo erit super improbos venia, qui non cessat vocare post culpam. Quae nimirum bene per prophetam post delictum misericordia vocationis exprimitur, cum averso homini dicitur: Et erunt oculi tui videntes praeceptorem tuum, et aures tuae audient verbum post tergum monentis (Isai. XXX, 20). Humanum quippe genus Dominus in faciem monuit, quando in paradiso condito homini atque in libero arbitrio stanti, quid facere, quidve non facere deberet, indixit. Sed homo in Dei faciem terga dedit, cum superbiens ejus jussa contempsit. Nec tamen superbientem Deus deseruit, qui ad revocandum hominem legem dedit, exhortantes angelos misit, in carne nostrae mortalitatis ipse apparuit. Ergo post tergum stans nos admonuit, qui ad recuperationem nos gratiae etiam contemptus vocavit.

Quod igitur generaliter simul potuit dici de cunctis, hoc necesse est specialiter sentiri de singulis. Quasi enim coram Deo positus quisque verba monitionis ejus percipit, cum priusquam peccata perpetret, voluntatis ejus praecepta cognoscit. Adhuc enim ante faciem ejus stare, est necdum eum peccando contemnere. Cum vero derelicto bono innocentiae, iniquitatem eligens appetit, jam terga in ejus faciem mittit. Sed ecce adhuc et post tergum Deus subsequens monet, qui etiam post culpam ad se redire persuadet. Aversum revocat, commissa non respicit, revertenti sinum pietatis expandit. Vocem ergo post tergum monentis audimus, si ad invitantem nos Dominum saltem post peccata revertimur. Debemus igitur pietatem vocantis erubescere, si justitiam nolumus formidare; quia tanto graviori improbitate contemnitur, quanto et contemptus adhuc vocare non dedignatur.

At contra admonendi sunt peccata carnis ignorantes, ut tanto sollicitius praecipitem ruinam metuant, quanto altius stant. Admonendi sunt, ut noverint, quia quo magis loco prominenti consistunt, eo crebrioribus sagittis insidiatoris impetuntur. Qui tanto ardentius solet erigi, quanto robustius se conspicit vinci; tantoque intolerabilius dedignatur vinci, quanto contra se videt per integra infirmae carnis castra pugnari. Admonendi sunt ut incessanter praemia suscipiant, et libenter proculdubio tentationum quas tolerant labores calcabunt. Si enim attendatur felicitas quae sine transitu attingitur, leve fit quod transeundo laboratur. Audiant quod per prophetam dicitur: Haec dicit Dominus eunuchis: Qui custodierint sabbata mea, et elegerint quae volui, et foedus meum tenuerint: dabo eis in domo mea et in muris meis locum et nomen melius a filiis et filiabus (Isa. LVI, 4, 5). Eunuchi quippe sunt, qui compressis motibus carnis, affectum in se pravi operis abscidunt. Quo autem apud Patrem loco habeantur, ostenditur; quia in domo Patris videlicet aeterna mansione etiam filiis praeferuntur. Audiant quod per Joannem dicitur: Hi sunt qui cum mulieribus non sunt coinquinati:

virgines enim sunt, et sequuntur Agnum quocunque ierit (Apoc. XIV, 4). Et quod canticum cantant, quod nemo potest dicere, nisi illa centum quadraginta quatuor millia. Singulariter quippe canticum Agno cantare, est cum eo in perpetuum prae cunctis fidelibus etiam de incorruptione carnis gaudere. Quod tamen electi caeteri canticum audire possunt, licet dicere nequeant, quia per charitatem quidem in illorum celsitudine laeti sunt, quamvis ad eorum praemia non assurgant. Audiant peccatorum carnis ignari quod per semetipsam de hac integritate Veritas dicit: Non omnes capiunt verbum hoc (Matth. XIX, 11). Quod eo innotuit summum, quo denegavit omnium; et dum preadicit quia difficile capitur, audientibus innuit captum cum qua cautela teneatur.

Admonendi sunt itaque peccata carnis ignorantes, ut et praeeminere virginitatem conjugio sciant, et tamen se super conjuges non extollant, quatenus dum et virginitatem praeferunt, et se postponunt; et illud non deserant quod melius esse aestimant, et se custodiant quo se inaniter non exaltant. Admonendi sunt ut considerent quod plerumque actione saecularium vita continentium confunditur, cum et illi ultra habitum assumunt opera, et isti juxta ordinem proprium non excitant corda. Unde bene per prophetam dicitur: Erubesce, Sidon, ait mare (Isai. XXIII, 4). Quasi enim per vocem maris ad verecundiam Sidon adducitur, quando per comparationem vitae saecularium atque in hoc mundo fluctuantium, ejus qui munitus et quasi stabilis cernitur, vita reprobatur. Saepe enim nonnulli ad Dominum post carnis peccata redeuntes, tanto se ardentius in bonis operibus exhibent, quanto damnabiliores se de malis vident. Et saepe quidam in carnis integritate perdurantes, cum minus se respiciunt habere quod defleant, plene sibi sufficere vitae suae innocentiam putant, atque ad fervorem spiritus nullis se ardoris stimulis inflammant. Et fit plerumque Deo gratior amore ardens vita post culpam, quam securitate torpens innocentia. Unde et voce judicis dicitur: Remittuntur ei peccata multa, quia

dilexit multum (Luc. VII, 47). Et: Gaudium erit in coelo super uno peccatore poenitente, magis quam super nonaginta novem justis, quibus non opus est poenitentia (Luc. XV, 10). Quod citius ex ipso usu colligimus, si nostrae mentis judicia pensemus. Plus namque terram diligimus quae post spinas exarata fructus uberes producit, quam quae nullas spinas habuit, sed tamen exculta sterilem segetem gignit. Admonendi sunt peccata carnis ignorantes, ne superioris ordinis celsitudine se caeteris praeferant, cum ab inferioribus quanta se melius agantur ignorant. In examine namque recti judicis mutat merita ordinum, qualitas actionum. Quis enim consideratis ipsis rerum imaginibus, nesciat quod in natura gemmarum carbunculus praeferatur hyacintho? Sed tamen caerulei coloris hyacinthus praefertur pallenti carbunculo; quia et illi quod naturae ordo subtrahit, species decoris adjungit; et hunc quem naturalis ordo praetulerat, coloris qualitas foedat. Sic ergo in humano genere et quidam in meliori ordine deteriores sunt, et quidam in deteriori meliores, quia et isti sortem extremi habitus bene vivendo transcendunt, et illi superioris loci meritum moribus non exsequendo diminuunt.

CAPUT XXIX

Quomodo admonendi qui peccata operum lugent, et qui solum cogitationum.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui peccata deplorant operum, atque aliter qui cogitationum. Admonendi quippe sunt qui peccata deplorant operum, ut consummata mala perfecta diluant lamenta, ne plus astringantur in debito perpetrati operis, et minus solvant fletibus satisfactionis. Scriptum quippe est: Potum dedit nobis in lacrymis in mensura (Psal. LXXIX, 6); ut videlicet uniuscujusque mens tantum poenitendo compunctionis suae bibat lacrymas, quantum se a Deo meminit aruisse per culpas. Admonendi sunt ut

incessanter admissa ante oculos reducant, atque vivendo agant, ut a districto judice videri non debeant. Unde David cum peteret, dicens: Averte oculos tuos a peccatis meis (Psal. L, 11), paulo superius intulit: Delictum meum coram me est semper (Ibid., 5). Ac si diceret: Peccatum meum ne respicias postulo, quia hoc respicere ipse non cesso. Unde et per prophetam Dominus dicit: Et peccatorum tuorum memor non ero, tu autem memor esto (Isai. XLIII, 25, 26, sec. LXX). Admonendi sunt ut singula quaeque admissa considerent, et dum per unumquodque erroris sui inquinationem deflent, simul se ac totos lacrymis mundent. Unde bene per Jeremiam dicitur, cum Judaeae singula delicta pensarentur: Divisiones aquarum deduxit oculus meus (Thren. III, 48). Divisas quippe ex oculis aquas deducimus, quando peccatis singulis dispertitas lacrymas damus. Neque enim uno eodemque tempore aeque mens de omnibus dolet; sed dum nunc hujus, nunc illius culpae memoria acrius tangitur, simul de omnibus in singulis commota purgatur.

Admonendi sunt, ut de misericordia quam postulant, praesumant, ne vi immoderatae afflictionis intereant. Neque enim pie Dominus ante delinquentium oculos flenda peccata opponeret, si per semetipsum ea districte ferire voluisset. Constat enim quod a suo judicio abscondere voluit, quos miserando praeveniens sibimetipsis judices fecit. Hinc enim scriptum est: Praeveniamus faciem Domini in confessione (Psal. XCIV, 2). Hinc per Paulum dicitur: Si nosmetipsos dijudicaremus, non utique judicaremur (I Cor. XI, 31). Rursumque admonendi sunt, ut sic de spe fiduciam, habeant, ne tamen incauta securitate torpescant. Plerumque enim hostis callidus mentem quam peccato supplantat, cum de ruina sua afflictam respicit, securitatis pestiferae blanditiis seducit. Quod figurate exprimitur, cum factum Dinae memoratur. Scriptum quippe est: Egressa est Dina ut videret mulieres regionis illius; quam cum vidisset Sichem filius Hemor Hevaei, princeps terrae illius, adamavit eam, et rapuit, et dormivit cum illa, vi

opprimens virginem; et conglutinata est anima ejus cum ea, tristemque blanditiis delinivit (Genes. XXXIV, 1-3). Dina quippe ut mulieres videat extraneae regionis, egreditur, quando unaquaeque mens sua studia negligens, actiones alienas curans, extra habitum atque extra ordinem proprium vagatur. Quam Sichem princeps terrae opprimit, quia videlicet inventam in curis exterioribus diabolus corrumpit. Et conglutinata est anima ejus cum ea (Ibid.); quia unitam sibi per iniquitatem respicit. Et quia cum mens a culpa resipiscit, addicitur, atque admissum flere conatur: corruptor autem spes ac securitates vacuas ante oculos revocat, quatenus utilitatem tristitiae subtrahat, recte illic adjungitur: Tristemque blanditiis delinivit (Ibid.). Modo enim aliorum facta graviora, modo nil esse quod perpetratum est, modo misericordem Deum loquitur, modo adhuc tempus subsequens ad poenitentiam pollicetur; ut dum per haec decepta mens ducitur, ab intentione poenitentiae suspendatur; quatenus tunc bona nulla percipiat, quam nunc mala nulla contristant: et tunc plenius obruatur suppliciis, quae nunc etiam gaudet in delictis. At contra admonendi sunt qui peccata cogitationum deflent, ut sollicite considerent intra mentis arcana utrum delectatione tantummodo, an etiam consensu deliquerint. Plerumque enim tentatur cor, et ex carnis nequitia delectatur, et tamen eidem nequitiae ex ratione renititur, ut in secreto cogitationis et contristet quod libet, et libeat quod contristat. Nonnumquam vero ita mens baratro tentationis absorbetur, ut nullatenus renitatur, sed ex deliberatione sequitur hoc, unde ex delectatione pulsatur; et si facultas exterior suppetat, rerum mox effectibus interiora vota consummat. Quod videlicet si justa animadversio districti judicis respicit, non est jam cogitationis culpa, sed operis; quia etsi rerum tarditas foras peccatum distulit, intus hoc consensionis opere voluntas implevit.

In primo autem parente didicimus quia tribus modis omnis culpae nequitiam perpetramus, suggestione scilicet, delectatione et consensu.

Primum itaque per hostem, secundum vero per carnem, tertium per spiritum perpetratur. Insidiator enim prava suggerit, caro se delectationi subjicit, atque ad extremum spiritus victus delectatione consentit. Unde et ille serpens prava suggessit, Eva autem quasi caro se delectationi subdidit, Adam vero velut spiritus suggestione ac delectatione superatus assensit. Suggestione itaque peccatum agnoscimus, delectatione vincimur, consensu etiam ligamur. Admonendi sunt igitur qui nequitias cogitationis deflent, ut sollicite considerent in qua peccati mensura ceciderunt, quatenus juxta ruinae modum quam in semetipsis introrsus sentiunt, etiam mensura lamentationis erigantur, ne si cogitata mala minus cruciant, usque ad perpetranda opera perducant. Sed inter haec ita terrendi sunt, ut tamen minime frangantur. Saepe enim misericors Deus eo citius peccata cordis abluit, quo haec exire ad opera non permittit; et cogitata nequitia quando citius solvitur, quia effectu operis districtius non ligatur. Unde recte per Psalmistam dicitur: Dixi, pronuntiabo adversum me injustitias meas Domino, et tu remisisti impietatem cordis mei (Ps. XXXI, 3). Qui enim impietatem cordis subdidit, quia cogitationum injustitias pronuntiare vellet indicavit. Dumque ait: Dixi, pronuntiabo, atque illico adjunxit, Et tu remisisti; quam sit super haec facilis venia ostendit. Qui dum se adhuc petere promittit, hoc quod petere se promittebat, obtinuit; quatenus quia usque ad opus non venerat culpa, usque ad cruciatum non perveniret poenitentia, sed cogitata afflictio mentem tergeret, quam nimirum tantummodo cogitata iniquitas inquinasset.

CAPUT XXX

Quomodo admonendi qui a peccatis quae deflent, non abstinent; et qui cum abstineant, non deflent.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui admissa plangunt, nec tamen deserunt; atque aliter qui deserunt, nec tamen plangunt. Admonendi sunt enim qui admissa plangunt, nec tamen deserunt, ut considerare sollicite sciant quia flendo inaniter se mundant, qui vivendo se nequiter inquinant, cum idcirco se lacrymis lavant, ut mundi ad sordes redeant. Hinc enim scriptum est: Canis reversus ad suum vomitum, et sus lota in volutabro luti (Prov. XXVI, 11; II Petr. II, 22). Canis quippe cum vomit, profecto cibum qui pectus deprimebat, projicit; sed cum ad vomitum revertitur, unde levigatus fuerat, rursus oneratur. Et qui admissa plangunt, profecto nequitiam, de qua male satiati fuerant, et quae mentis intima deprimebat, confitendo projiciunt, quam post confessionem dum repetunt, resumunt. Sus vero in volutabro luti cum lavatur, sordidior redditur. Et qui admissa plangit, nec tamen deserit, poenae gravioris culpae se subjicit; quia et ipsam quam flendo potuit impetrare veniam contemnit, et quasi in lutosa aqua semetipsum volvit, quia dum fletibus suis vitae munditiam subtrahit, ante Dei oculos sordidas ipsas etiam lacrymas facit. Hinc rursum scriptum est: Ne iteres verbum in oratione tua (Eccli. VII, 15). Verbum namque in oratione iterare, est post fletum committere quod rursum necesse sit flere. Hinc per Isaiam dicitur: Lavamini (Isai. I, 16), mundi estote. Post lavacrum enim mundus esse negligit, quisquis post lacrymas vitae innocentiam non custodit. Et lavantur ergo et nequaquam mundi sunt, qui commissa flere non desinunt, sed rursus flenda committunt. Hinc per quemdam sapientem dicitur: Qui baptizatur a mortuo, et iterum tangit illum, quid proficit lavatio ejus (Eccli. XXXIV, 30)? Baptizatur quippe a mortuo, qui mundatur fletibus a peccato; sed post baptisma mortuum tangit, qui culpam post lacrymas repetit.

Admonendi sunt qui admissa plangunt, nec tamen deserunt, ut ante districti judicis oculos eis se esse similes agnoscant, qui venientes ad faciem quorumdam hominum, magna eis submissione blandiuntur; recedentes autem, inimicitias ac damna quae valent atrociter inferunt. Quid est enim

culpam flere, nisi humilitatem Deo suae devotionis ostendere? Et quid est post fletum prava agere, nisi superbas in eum quem rogaverat, inimicitias exercere? Jacobo attestante qui ait: Quicumque voluerit amicus esse saeculi hujus, inimicus Dei constituitur (Jac. IV, 4). Admonendi sunt qui admissa plangunt, nec tamen deserunt, ut sollicite considerent quia ita plerumque mali inutiliter compunguntur ad justitiam, sicut plerumque boni innoxie tentantur ad culpam. Fit quippe mira exigentibus meritis dispositionis internae mensura, ut et illi dum de bono aliquid agunt, quod tamen non perficiunt, superbe inter ipsa quae etiam plenissime perpetrant mala confidant; et isti dum de malo tentantur, cui nequaquam consentiunt, quo per infirmitatem titubant, eo gressus cordis ad justitiam per humilitatem verius figant. Balaam quippe, justorum tabernacula respiciens, ait: Moriatur anima mea morte justorum, et fiant novissima mea horum similia (Num. XXIII, 10). Sed cum compunctionis tempus abscessit, contra eorum vitam, quibus se similem fieri etiam moriendo poposcerat, consilium praebuit; et cum occasionem de avaritia reperit, illico oblitus est quidquid sibi de innocentia optavit (Ibid., XXIV, 14). Hinc vero doctor et praedicator gentium Paulus, ait: Video aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivum me ducentem in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis (Rom. VII, 23). Qui profecto idcirco tentatur, ut in bono robustius ex ipsa infirmitatis suae cognitione solidetur. Quid est ergo quod ille compungitur, et tamen justitiae non appropinquat; iste tentatur, et tamen eum culpa non inquinat, nisi hoc quod aperte ostenditur, quod nec malos bona imperfecta adjuvant, nec bonos mala inconsummata condemnant?

At contra admonendi sunt qui admissa deserunt, nec tamen plangunt; ne jam relaxatas aestiment culpas, quas etsi agendo non multiplicant, nullis tamen fletibus mundant. Neque enim scriptor, si a scriptione cessaverit, quia alia non addidit, etiam illa quae scripserat delevit; nec qui contumelias irrogat, si solummodo tacuerit, satisfecit, cum profecto necesse sit ut verba

praemissae superbiae verbis subjectae humilitatis impugnet; nec debitor absolutus est quia alia non multiplicat, nisi et illa quae ligaverat solvat. Ita et cum Deo delinquimus, nequaquam satisfacimus si ab iniquitate cessamus, nisi voluptates quoque quas dileximus, e contrario appositis lamentis insequamur. Si enim nulla nos in hac vita operum culpa maculasset, nequaquam nobis hic adhuc degentibus ipsa ad securitatem innocentia nostra sufficeret, quia illicita animum multa pulsarent. Qua ergo mente securus est, qui perpetratis iniquitatibus ipse sibi testis est quia innocens non est? Neque enim Deus nostris cruciatibus pascitur, sed delictorum morbos medicamentis contrariis medetur, ut qui voluptatibus delectati discessimus, fletibus amaricati redeamus; et qui per illicita defluendo cecidimus, etiam a licitis nosmetipsos restringendo surgamus; et cor quod insana laetitia infuderat, salubris tristitia exurat; et quod vulneraverat elatio superbiae, curet abjectio humilis vitae. Hinc enim scriptum est: Dixi iniquis, Nolite inique agere; et delinquentibus, Nolite exaltare cornu (Ps. LXXIV, 5). Cornu quippe delinquentes exaltant, si nequaquam se ad poenitentiam ex cognitione suae iniquitatis humiliant. Hinc rursum dicitur: Cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non spernit (Ps. L, 19). Quisquis enim peccata plangit, nec tamen deserit, cor quidem conterit, sed humiliare contemnit. Qui vero peccata jam deserit, nec tamen plangit, jam quidem humiliat, sed tamen cor conterere recusat. Hinc Paulus ait: Et haec quidem fuistis; sed abluti estis, sed sanctificati estis (I Cor. VI, 11). Quia nimirum illos emendatior vita sanctificat, quos per poenitentiam abluens afflictio fletuum mundat. Hinc Petrus cum quosdam territos malorum suorum consideratione conspiceret, admonuit, dicens: Poenitentiam agite, et baptizetur unus quisque vestrum (Act. II, 38). Dicturus enim baptisma, praemisit poenitentiae lamenta, ut prius se aqua suae afflictionis infunderent, et postmodum sacramento baptismatis lavarent. Qua igitur mente qui transactas culpas flere negligunt, vivunt securi de venia, quando ipse summus Pastor Ecclesiae huic etiam

Sacramento addendam poenitentiam credidit, quod peccata principaliter exstinguit?

CAPUT XXXI

Quomodo admonendi qui illicita quorum sunt conscii laudant; et qui condemnantes, minime tamen cavent.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui illicita quae faciunt etiam laudant; atque aliter qui accusant prava, nec tamen devitant. Admonendi sunt enim qui illicita quae faciunt etiam laudant, ut considerent quod plerumque plus ore quam opere delinquant. Opere namque per semetipsos solos prava perpetrant; ore autem per tot personas iniquitatem exhibent, quot audientium mentes iniqua laudantes docent. Admonendi ergo sunt, ut si eradicare mala dissimulant, saltem seminare pertimescant. Admonendi sunt, ut eis perditio privata sufficiat. Rursumque admonendi sunt, ut si mali esse non metuunt, erubescant saltem videri quod sunt. Plerumque enim culpa dum absconditur, effugatur, quia dum mens erubescit videri quod tamen esse non metuit, erubescit quandoque esse quod fugit videri. Cum vero pravus quisque impudenter innotescit, quo liberius omne facinus perpetrat, eo etiam licitum putat; et quod licitum suspicatur, in hoc proculdubio multiplicius mergitur. Unde scriptum est: Peccatum suum sicut Sodoma praedicaverunt, nec absconderunt (Isai. III, 9). Peccatum enim suum si Sodoma absconderet, adhuc sub timore peccaret. Sed funditus frena timoris amiserat, quae ad culpam nec tenebras inquirebat. Unde et rursum scriptum est: Clamor Sodomorum et Gomorrhae multiplicatus est (Gen. XVIII 20). Peccatum quippe cum voce, est culpa in actione; peccatum vero etiam cum clamore, est culpa cum libertate.

At contra admonendi sunt qui accusant prava, nec tamen devitant, ut provide perpendant quid in districto Dei judicio pro sua excusatione dicturi

sunt, qui de reatu suorum criminum etiam semetipsis judicibus non excusantur. Hi itaque quid aliud quam praecones sunt sui? Voces contra culpas proferunt, et semetipsos operibus reos trahunt. Admonendi sunt ut videant quia de occulta jam retributione judicii est, quod eorum mens malum quod perpetrat illuminatur ut videat, sed non conatur ut vincat; ut quo melius videt, eo deterius pereat, quia et intelligentiae lumen percipit, et actionis pravae tenebras non relinquit. Nam cum acceptam ad adjutorium scientiam negligunt, hanc contra se in testimonium vertunt; et de lumine intelligentiae augent supplicia, quod profecto acceperant ut possent delere peccata. Quorum nimirum nequitia cum malum agit quod dijudicat, venturum jam judicium hic degustat; ut cum aeternis suppliciis servatur obnoxia, suo hic interim examine non sit absoluta; tantoque illic graviora tormenta percipiat, quanto hic malum non deserit, etiam quod ipsa condemnat. Hinc enim Veritas dicit: Servus qui cognovit voluntatem Domini sui, et non praeparavit, et non fecit secundum voluntatem ejus, vapulabit multis (Luc. XII, 47). Hinc Psalmista, ait: Descendant in infernum viventes (Psal. LIV, 16). Vivi quippe quae circa illos aguntur sciunt et sentiunt, mortui autem sentire nil possunt. Mortui enim in infernum descenderent, si mala nesciendo perpetrarent. Cum vero sciunt mala, et tamen faciunt, ad iniquitatis infernum viventes miseri sentientesque descendant.

CAPUT XXXII

Quomodo admonendi qui subito motu, et qui consulto peccant.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui repentina concupiscentia superantur, atque aliter qui in culpa ex consilio ligantur. Admonendi quippe sunt quos repentina concupiscentia superat, ut in bello praesentis vitae se quotidie positos attendant, et cor quod praevidere vulnera non potest, scuto solliciti timoris

tegant; ut occulta insidiantis hostis jacula perhorrescant, et in tam caliginoso certamine intentione continua intra mentis castra se muniant. Nam si a circumspectionis sollicitudine cor destituitur, vulneribus aperitur, quia hostis callidus tanto liberius pectus percutit, quanto nudum a providentiae lorica deprehendit. Admonendi sunt qui repentina concupiscentia superantur, ut curare nimis terrena desuescant; quia intentionem suam dum rebus transitoriis immoderatius implicant, quibus culparum jaculis transfigantur ignorant. Unde et per Salomonem vox percussi et dormientis exprimitur, qui ait: Verberaverunt me, sed non dolui; traxerunt me, et ego non sensi. Quando evigilabo, et rursum vina reperiam (Prov. XXVIII, 35)? Mens quippe a cura suae sollicitudinis dormiens verberatur et non dolet, quia sicut imminentia mala non prospicit, sic nec quae perpetraverit agnoscit. Trahitur et nequaquam sentit, quia per illecebras vitiorum ducitur, nec tamen ad sui custodiam suscitatur. Quae quidem evigilare optat, ut rursum vina reperiat, quia quamvis somno torporis a sui custodia prematur, vigilare tamen ad saeculi curas nititur, ut semper voluptatibus debrietur [inebrietur]; et cum ad illud dormiat in quo solerter vigilare debuerat, ad aliud vigilare appetit, ad quod laudabiliter dormire potuisset. Hinc superius scriptum est: Et eris quasi dormiens in medio mari, et quasi sopitus gubernator amisso clavo (Ibid., 34). In medio enim mari dormit, qui in hujus mundi tentationibus positus, providere motus irruentium vitiorum quasi imminentes undarum cumulos negligit. Et quasi clavum gubernator amittit, quando mens, ad regendam navem corporis, studium sollicitudinis perdit. Clavum quippe in mari amittere, est intentionem providam inter procellas hujus saeculi non tenere. Si enim gubernator clavum sollicite stringit, modo in fluctibus ex adverso navem dirigit, modo ventorum impetus per obliquum findit. Ita cum mens vigilanter animam regit, modo alia superans calcat, modo alia providens declinat; ut et praesentia laborando subjiciat, et contra futura certamina prospiciendo convalescat.

Hinc rursum de fortibus supernae patriae bellatoribus dicitur: Uniuscujusque ensis super femur suum, propter timores nocturnos (Cant. III, 8). Ensis enim super femur ponitur, quando acumine sanctae praedicationis prava suggestio carnis edomatur. Per noctem vero caecitas nostrae infirmitatis exprimitur, quia quidquid adversitatis in nocte imminet non videtur. Uniuscujusque ergo ensis super femur suum ponitur propter timores nocturnos, quia videlicet sancti viri dum ea quae non vident metuunt, ad intentionem certaminis parati semper assistunt. Hinc rursum sponsae dicitur: Nasus tuus sicut turris quae est in Libano (Cant. VII, 4). Rem namque quam oculis non cernimus, plerumque odore praevidemus. Per nasum quoque odores fetoresque discernimus. Quid ergo per nasum Ecclesiae, nisi sanctorum provida discretio designatur? Qui etiam turri similis quae est in Libano dicitur, quia discreta eorum providentia ita in alto sita est, ut tentationum certamina et priusquam veniant videat, et contra ea dum venerint munita subsistat. Quae enim futura praevidentur, cum praesentia fuerint, minoris virtutis fiunt; quia dum contra ictum quisque paratior redditur, hostis qui se inopinatum credidit, eo ipso quo praevisus est, enervatur.

At contra admonendi sunt qui in culpa ex consilio ligantur, quatenus provida consideratione perpendant, quia dum mala ex judicio faciunt, districtius contra se judicium accendunt; ut tanto eos durior sententia feriat, quanto illos in culpa arctius vincula deliberationis ligant. Citius fortasse delicta poenitendo abluerent, si in his sola praecipitatione cecidissent. Nam tardius peccatum solvitur quod et per consilium solidatur. Nisi enim mens omni modo aeterna despiceret, in culpa ex judicio non periret. Hoc ergo praecipitatione lapsis per consilium pereuntes differunt, quod cum hi a statu justitiae peccando concidunt, plerumque simul et in laqueum desperationis cadunt. Hinc est quod per prophetam Dominus non tam praecipitationum prava, quam delictorum studia reprehendit, dicens: Ne forte egrediatur ut

ignis indignatio mea, et succendatur, et non sit qui exstinguat, propter malitiam studiorum vestrorum. Hinc iterum iratus dicit: Visitabo super vos juxta fructum studiorum vestrorum (Ibid. XXIII, 2). Quia ergo peccatis aliis differunt peccata quae per consilium perpetrantur, non tam prave facta Dominus quam studia pravitatis insequitur. In factis enim saepe infirmitate, saepe negligentia, in studiis vero malitiosa semper intentione peccatur. Quo contra recte beati viri expressione per Prophetam dicitur: Et in cathedra pestilentiae non sedit (Ps. I, 1). Cathedra quippe judicis esse vel praesidentis solet. In cathedra autem pestilentiae sedere, est ex judicio prava committere: in cathedra pestilentiae sedere, est et ex ratione mala discernere, et tamen ex deliberatione perpetrare. Quasi in perversi consilii cathedra sedet, qui tanta iniquitatis elatione attollitur, ut adimplere malum etiam per consilia conetur. Et sicut assistentibus turbis praelati sunt qui cathedrae honore fulciuntur, ita delicta eorum qui praecipitatione corruunt, exquisita per studium peccata transcendunt. Admonendi ergo sunt, ut hinc colligant qui in culpa etiam se per consilium ligant, qua quandoque ultione feriendi sunt, qui nunc pravorum non socii, sed principes fiunt.

CAPUT XXXIII

Quomodo admonendi qui minimis, sed crebris noxis, et qui minimas caventes gravibus aliquando immerguntur.

At contra admonendi sunt qui se a parvis custodiunt, sed aliquando in gravibus demerguntur, ut sollicite seipsos deprehendant, quia dum cor eorum de custoditis minimis extollitur, ad perpetranda graviora ipso elationis suae barathro devorantur; et dum foris sibi parva subjiciunt, sed per inanem gloriam intus intumescunt, languore superbiae intrinsecus victam mentem etiam foras per mala majora prosternunt. Admonendi ergo sunt qui se a parvis custodiunt, sed aliquando in gravibus demerguntur, ne

ubi se stare extrinsecus aestimant, ibi intrinsecus cadant, et juxta districti judicis retributionem elatio minoris justitiae via fiat ad foveam gravioris culpae. Qui enim vane elati, boni minimi custodiam suis viribus tribuunt, juste derelicti culpis majoribus obruuntur; et cadendo discunt non fuisse proprium quod steterunt, ut mala immensa cor reprimant, quod minima bona exaltant.

CAPUT XXXIV

Quomodo admonendi qui bona nec inchoant et qui inchoata non absolvunt.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui bona nec inchoant, atque aliter qui inchoata minime consummant. Qui enim bona nec inchoant, non sunt eis prius aedificanda quae salubriter diligant, sed destruenda ea in quibus semetipsos nequiter versant. Neque enim sequuntur quae inexperta audiunt, nisi prius quam perniciosa sint ea quae sibi sunt experta, deprehendant, quia nec levari appetit, qui et hoc ipsum quia cecidit nescit; et qui dolorem vulneris non sentit, salutis remedia non requirit. Prius ergo ostendenda sunt, quam sint vana quae diligunt, et tunc demum vigilanter intimanda quam sint utilia quae praetermittunt. Prius videant fugienda quae amant, et sine difficultate postmodum cognoscant amanda esse quae fugiunt. Melius enim inexperta recipiunt, si de expertis quidquid disputationis audiunt, veraciter cognoscunt. Tunc igitur pleno voto discunt vera bona quaerere, cum certo judicio deprehenderint falsa se vacue tenuisse. Audiant ergo quod bona praesentia et a delectatione citius transitura sunt, et tamen eorum causa ad ultionem sine transitu permansura; quia et nunc quod libet invitis subtrahitur, et tunc quod dolet invitis in supplicium reservatur. Itaque eisdem rebus terreantur salubriter, quibus noxie delectantur; ut dum perculsa mens alta ruinae suae damna conspiciens, sese in praecipitium pervenisse deprehendit, gressum post terga revocet, et pertimescens quae

amaverat, discat diligere quae contemnebat. Hinc est enim quod Jeremiae misso ad praedicationem dicitur: Ecce constitui te hodie super gentes et super regna, ut evellas et destruas, et disperdas et dissipes, et aedifices et plantes (Jer. I, 10). Quia nisi prius perversa destrueret, aedificare utiliter recta non posset; nisi ab auditorum suorum cordibus spinas vani amoris evelleret, nimirum frustra in eis sanctae praedicationis verba plantaret. Hinc est quod Petrus prius evertit, ut postmodum construat, cum nequaquam Judaeos monebat quid jam facerent, sed de his quae fecerant, increpabat dicens: Jesum Nazarenum virum approbatum a Deo in vobis, virtutibus et prodigiis et signis quae per illum fecit Deus in medio vestri, sicut vos scitis: hunc definito consilio et praescientia Dei traditum, per manus iniquorum affigentes interemistis, quem Deus suscitavit solutis doloribus inferni (Act. II, 22-24); ut videlicet crudelitatis suae cognitione destructi, aedificationem sanctae praedicationis quanto anxie quaererent, tanto utiliter audirent. Unde et illico respondet: Quid ergo faciemus, viri fratres? Quibus mox dicitur: Agite poenitentiam, et baptizetur unusquisque vestrum (Ibid., 37, 38). Quae aedificationis verba profecto contemnerent, nisi prius salubriter ruinam suae destructionis invenissent. Hinc est quod Saulus cum super eum coelitus lux emissa resplenduit, non jam quid recte deberet facere, sed quid prave fecisset, audivit. Nam cum prostratus requireret, dicens: Quis es, Domine? Respondetur protinus: Ego sum Jesus Nazarenus, quem tu persequeris (Act. IX, 4, seq., XXII, 8, seq.). Et cum repente subjungeret: Domine, quid me jubes facere (Ibid.)? Illico adjungitur: Surgens ingredere civitatem, et ibi dicetur tibi quid te oporteat facere (Ibid.). Ecce de coelo Dominus loquens persecutoris sui facta corripuit, nec tamen illico quae essent facienda monstravit. Ecce elationis ejus fabrica jam tota corruerat, et post ruinam suam humilis aedificari requirebat, et cum superbia destruitur, aedificationis tamen verba retinentur; ut videlicet persecutor immanis diu destructus jaceret, et tanto post in bonis solidius surgeret, quanto prius funditus

eversus a pristino errore cecidisset. Qui ergo nulla adhuc agere bona coeperunt, a rigiditate antea suae pravitatis, correctionis manu evertendi sunt, ut ad statum postmodum rectae operationis erigantur, quia et idcirco altum silvae lignum succidimus, ut hoc in aedificii tegmine sublevemus; sed tamen non repente in fabrica ponitur, ut nimirum prius vitiosa ejus viriditas exsiccetur, cujus quo plus in infimis humor excoquitur, eo ad summa solidius levatur At contra admonendi sunt qui inchoata bona minime consummant, ut cauta circumspectione considerent quia dum proposita non perficiunt, etiam quae fuerant coepta convellunt. Si enim quod videtur gerendum sollicita intentione non crescit, etiam quod fuerat bene gestum decrescit. In hoc quippe mundo humana anima quasi more navis est contra ictum fluminis conscendentis: uno in loco nequaquam stare permittitur, quia ad ima relabitur, nisi ad summa conetur. Si ergo inchoata bona fortis operantis manus ad perfectionem non sublevat, ipsa operandi remissio contra hoc quod operatum est, pugnat. Hinc est enim quod per Salomonem dicitur: Qui mollis et dissolutus est in opere suo, frater est sua opera dissipantis (Prov. XVIII, 9). Quia videlicet qui coepta bona districte non exsequitur, dissolutione negligentiae manum destruentis imitatur. Hinc Sardis Ecclesiae ab angelo dicitur: Esto vigilans, et confirma caetera quae moritura erant, non enim invenio opera tua plena coram Deo meo (Apoc. III, 2). Quia igitur plena coram Deo ejus opera inventa non fuerant, moritura reliqua etiam quae erant gesta praedicebat. Si enim quod mortuum in nobis est ad vitam non accenditur, hoc etiam exstinguitur, quod quasi adhuc vivum tenetur. Admonendi sunt ut perpendant quod tolerabilius esse potuisset recti viam non arripere, quam arrepta post tergum redire. Nisi enim retro aspicerent,erga coeptum studium nullo torpore languerent. Audiant ergo quod scriptum est: Melius erat eis non cognoscere viam justitiae, quam post agnitionem retrorsum converti (II Petr. II, 21). Audiant quod scriptum est: Utinam frigidus esses, aut calidus; sed quia tepidus es, et

nec frigidus, nec calidus, incipiam te evomere ex ore meo (Apoc. III, 15). Calidus quippe est qui bona studia et arripit et consummat; frigidus vero est qui consummanda nec inchoat. Et sicut a frigore per teporem transitur ad calorem, ita a calore per teporem reditur ad frigus. Quisquis ergo amisso infidelitatis frigore vivit, sed nequaquam tepore superato excrescit ut ferveat, procul dubio calore desperato, dum noxio in tepore demoratur, agit ut frigescat. Sed sicut ante teporem frigus sub spe est, ita post frigus tepor in desperatione. Qui enim adhuc in peccatis est, conversionis fiduciam non amittit. Qui vero post conversionem tepuit, et spem quae esse potuit de peccatore subtraxit. Aut calidus ergo quisque esse, aut frigidus quaeritur, ne tepidus evomatur; ut videlicet aut necdum conversus, adhuc de se spem conversionis praebeat, aut jam conversus in virtutibus inardescat; ne evomatur tepidus, qui a calore quem proposuit torpore ad noxium frigus redit.

CAPUT XXXV

Quomodo admonendi qui mala clam et bona palam faciunt; ac qui versa vice.

Aliter admonendi sunt qui mala occulte agunt, et bona publice; atque aliter qui bona quae faciunt abscondunt, et tamen quibusdam factis publice mala de se opinari permittunt. Admonendi enim sunt qui mala occulte agunt, et bona publice, ut pensent humana judicia quanta velocitate evolant, divina autem quanta immobilitate perdurant. Admonendi sunt ut in fine rerum mentis oculos figant, quia et humanae laudis attestatio praeterit, et superna sententia, quae et abscondita penetrat, ad retributionem perpetuam convalescit. Dum igitur occulta mala sua divinis judiciis, recta autem sua humanis oculis anteponunt, et sine teste est bonum quod publice faciunt, et non sine aeterno teste est quod latenter delinquunt. Culpas itaque suas

occultando hominibus, virtutesque pandendo, et unde puniri debeant abscondentes detegunt, et unde remunerari poterant, detegentes abscondunt. Quos recte sepulcra dealbata speciosa exterius, sed mortuorum ossibus plena Veritas vocat (Matth. XXIII, 27), quia vitiorum mala intus contegunt, humanis vero oculis quorumdam demonstratione operum, de solo foris justitiae colore blandiuntur. Admonendi itaque sunt, ne quae agunt recta despiciant, sed ea meriti melioris credant. Valde namque bona sua dijudicant, qui ad eorum mercedem sufficere humanos favores putant. Cum enim pro recto opere laus transitoria quaeritur, aeterna retributione res digna vili pretio venundatur. De quo videlicet pretio percepto Veritas dicit: Amen dico vobis, receperunt mercedem suam (Matth. VI, 2, 5). Admonendi sunt ut considerent quia dum pravos se in occultis exhibent, sed tamen exempla de se publice in bonis operibus praebent, ostendunt sequenda quae fugiunt, clamant amanda quae oderunt, vivunt postremo aliis, et sibi moriuntur. At contra admonendi sunt qui bona occulte faciunt, et tamen quibusdam factis publice de se mala opinari permittunt, ne cum bona semetipsos actionis rectae virtute vivificant, in se alios per exemplum pravae aestimationis occidant; ne minus quam se proximos diligant, et cum ipsi salubrem potum vini sorbeant, intentis in sui consideratione mentibus pestiferum veneni poculum fundant. Hi nimirum in uno proximorum vitam minus adjuvant, in altero multum gravant, dum student et recta occulte agere, et quibusdam factis, ad exemplum de se prava seminare. Quisquis enim laudis concupiscentiam calcare jam sufficit, aedificationis fraudem perpetrat, si bona quae agit, occultat; et quasi jactato semine germinandi radices subtrahit, qui opus quod imitandum est, non ostendit. Hinc namque in Evangelio Veritas dixit: Videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in coelis est (Matth. V, 16). Ubi illa quoque sententia promitur, quae longe aliud praecepisse videtur, dicens: Attendite ne justitiam vestram faciatis coram hominibus, ut videamini ab eis (Matth. VI, 1). Quid est ergo

quod opus nostrum et ita faciendum est ne videatur, et tamen ut debeat videri praecipitur, nisi quod ea quae agimus, et occultanda sunt, ne ipsi laudemur, et tamen ostendenda sunt, ut laudem coelestis Patris augeamus? Nam cum nos justitiam nostram coram hominibus facere Dominus prohiberet, illico adjunxit: Ut videamini ab eis. Et cum rursus videnda ab hominibus bona opera nostra praeciperet, protinus subdidit: Ut glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in coelis est (Matth. V, 16). Qualiter igitur videnda essent, vel qualiter non videnda, ex sententiarum fine monstravit, quatenus operantis mens opus suum et propter se videri non quaereret, et tamen hoc propter coelestis Patris gloriam non celaret. Unde fit plerumque ut bonum opus et in occulto sit, cum fit publice; et rursus in publico, cum agitur occulte. Qui enim in publico bono opere non suam, sed superni Patris gloriam quaerit, quod fecit abscondit; quia solum illum testem habuit, cui placere curavit. Et qui in secreto suo bono opere deprehendi ac laudari concupiscit; et nullus fortasse vidit quod exhibuit, et tamen hoc coram hominibus fecit, quia tot testes in bono opere secum duxit, quot humanas laudes in corde requisivit. Cum vero prava aestimatio, in quantum sine peccato valet, ab intuentium mente non tergitur, cunctis mala credentibus per exemplum culpa propinatur. Unde et plerumque contingit, ut qui negligenter de se mala opinari permittunt, per semetipsos quidem nulla iniqua faciant; sed tamen per eos qui se imitati fuerint, multiplicius delinquant. Hinc est quod Paulus immunda quaedam sine pollutione comedentibus, sed imperfectis tentationis scandalum sua hac comestione moventibus dicit: Videte ne forte haec licentia vestra offendiculum fiat infirmis (I Cor. VIII, 9). Et rursus: Et peribit infirmus in tua conscientia frater, propter quem Christus mortuus est. Sic autem peccantes in fratres, et percutientes conscientiam eorum infirmam, in Christum peccatis (Ibid., 11, 12). Hinc est quod Moyses cum diceret: Non maledices surdo, protinus adjunxit: Nec coram caeco pones offendiculum (Levit. XIX, 14). Surdo

quippe maledicere, est absenti et non audienti derogare: coram caeco vero offendiculum ponere, est discretam quidem rem agere, sed tamen ei qui lumen discretionis non habet, scandali occasionem praebere.

CAPUT XXXVI

De exhortatione multis exhibenda, ut sic singulorum virtutes adjuvet, quatenus per hanc contraria virtutibus vitia non excrescant.

Haec sunt quae praesul animarum in praedicationis diversitate custodiat, ut sollicitus congrua singulorum vulneribus medicamina opponat. Sed cum magni sit studii ut exhortandis singulis serviatur ad singula, cum valde laboriosum sit unumquemque de propriis sub dispensatione debitae considerationis instruere, longe tamen laboriosius est auditores innumeros ac diversis passionibus laborantes, uno eodemque tempore voce unius et tanta arte vox temperanda est, ut cum diversa sint auditorum vitia, et singulis inveniatur congrua, et tamen sibimetipsi non sit diversa; ut inter passiones medias uno quidem ductu transeat, sed more bicipitis gladii tumores cogitationum carnalium ex diverso latere incidat, quatenus sic superbis praedicetur humilitas, ut tamen timidis non augeatur metus, sic timidis infundatur auctoritas, ut tamen superbis non crescat effrenatio. Sic otiosis ac torpentibus praedicetur sollicitudo boni operis, ut tamen inquietis immoderatae licentia non augeatur actionis. Sic inquietis ponatur modus, ut tamen otiosis non fiat torpor securus. Sic ab impatientibus exstinguatur ira, ut tamen remissis ac lenibus non crescat negligentia. Sic lenes accendantur ad zelum, ut tamen iracundis non addatur incendium. Sic tenacibus infundatur tribuendi largitas, ut tamen prodigis effusionis frena minime laxentur. Sic prodigis praedicetur parcitas, ut tamen tenacibus periturarum rerum custodia non augeatur. Sic incontinentibus laudetur conjugium, ut tamen jam continentes non revocentur ad luxum. Sic continentibus laudetur

virginitas corporis, ut tamen in conjugibus despecta non fiat fecunditas carnis. Sic praedicanda sunt bona, ne ex latere juventur et mala. Sic laudanda sunt bona summa, ne desperentur ultima. Sic nutrienda sunt ultima, ne dum sufficere creduntur, nequaquam tendatur ad summa.

CAPUT XXXVII

De exhortatione quae uni adhibenda est contrariis passionibus laboranti.

Et gravis quidem praedicatori labor est, in communis praedicationis voce, ad occultos singulorum motus causasque vigilare, et palaestrarum more in diversi lateris arte se vertere; multo tamen acriori labore fatigatur, quando uni e contrariis vitiis servienti praedicare compellitur. Plerumque enim quis laetae nimis conspersionis existit; sed tamen eum repente tristitia oborta immaniter deprimit. Curandum est itaque praedicatori quatenus sic tergatur tristitia quae venit ex tempore, ut non augeatur laetitia quae suppetit ex conspersione; et sic frenetur laetitia quae ex conspersione est, ut tamen non crescat tristitia quae venit ex tempore. Iste gravatur usu immoderatae praecipitationis, et aliquando tamen ab eo quod festine agendum est, eum vis praepedit subito natae formidinis. Ille gravatur usu immoderatae formidinis, et aliquando tamen in eo quod appetit, temeritate impellitur praecipitationis. Sic itaque in isto reprimatur subito oborta formido, ut tamen non excrescat enutrita diu praecipitatio. Sic in illo reprimatur repente oborta praecipitatio, ut tamen non convalescat impressa ex conspersione formido. Quid autem mirum si mentium medici ista custodiunt, dum tanta discretionis arte se temperant, qui non corda sed corpora medentur? Plerumque enim debile corpus opprimit languor immanis, cui languori scilicet obviari adjutoriis fortibus debet, sed tamen corpus debile, adjutorium forte non sustinet. Studet igitur qui medetur, quatenus sic superexistentem morbum subtrahat, ut nequaquam supposita corporis

debilitas crescat, ne fortasse languor cum vita deficiat. Tanta ergo adjutorium discretione componit, ut uno eodemque tempore et languori obviet et debilitati. Si igitur medicina corporis indivise adhibita servire divisibiliter potest (tunc enim vere medicina est, quando sic per eam vitio superexistenti succurritur, ut etiam suppositae conspersioni serviatur), cur medicina mentis una eademque praedicatione apposita, morum morbis diverso ordine obviare non valeat, quae tanto subtilior agitur, quanto de invisibilibus tractatur?

CAPUT XXXVIII

Quod aliquando leviora vitia relinquenda sunt, ut graviora subtrahantur.

Sed quia plerumque dum duorum vitiorum languor irruit, hoc levius, illud fortasse gravius premit; ei nimirum vitio rectius sub celeritate subvenitur, per quod festine ad interitum tenditur. Et si hoc a vicina morte restringi non potest, nisi illud etiam quod existit contrarium crescat tolerandum praedicatori est, ut per exhortationem suam artificioso moderamine unum patiatur crescere, quatenus possit aliud a vicina morte retinere. Quod cum agit, non morbum exaggerat, sed vulnerati sui, cui medicamentum adhibet, vitam servat, ut exquirendae salutis congruum tempus inveniat. Saepe enim quis a ciborum se ingluvie minime temperans, jamjamque pene superantis luxuriae stimulis premitur, qui hujus pugnae metu territus, dum se per abstinentiam restringere nititur, inanis gloriae tentatione fatigatur: in quo nimirum unum vitium nullatenus extinguitur, nisi aliud nutriatur. Quae igitur pestis ardentius insequenda est, nisi quae periculosius premit? Tolerandum numquam est ut per virtutem abstinentiae interim arrogantia contra viventem crescat, ne eum per ingluviem a vita funditus luxuria exstinguat. Hinc est quod Paulus, cum infirmum auditorem suum perpenderet, aut prava adhuc velle agere, aut de actione recta humanae

laudis retributione gaudere, ait: Vis non timere potestatem? bonum fac, et habebis laudem ex illa (Rom. XIII, 3). Neque enim ideo bona agenda sunt ut potestas hujus mundi nulla timeatur, aut per haec gloria transitoriae laudis sumatur. Sed cum infirmam mentem ad tantum robur ascendere non posse pensaret, ut et pravitatem vitaret simul et laudem; praedicator egregius ei, admonendo aliquid obtulit, et aliquid tulit. Concedendo enim lenia, subtraxit acriora; ut quia ad deserenda cuncta simul non assurgeret, dum in quodam suo vitio animus familiariter relinquitur, a quodam suo sine labore tolleretur.

CAPUT XXXIX

Quod infirmis mentibus omnino non debent alta praedicari.

Sciendum vero est praedicatori, ut auditoris sui animum ultra vires non trahat, ne, ut ita dicam, dum plus quam valet tenditur, mentis chorda rumpatur. Alta enim quaeque debent multis audientibus contegi, et vix paucis aperiri. Hinc namque per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Quis putas est fidelis dispensator et prudens, quem constituit dominus super familiam suam, ut det illis in tempore tritici mensuram (Matth. XXIV, 45; Luc. XII, 42)? Per mensuram quippe tritici exprimitur modus verbi, ne cum angusto cordi incapabile aliquid tribuitur, extra fundatur. Hinc Paulus ait: Non potui vobis loqui quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus. Tanquam parvulis in Christo lac vobis potum dedi, non escam (I Cor. III, 1). Hinc Moyses a secreto Dei exiens, coruscantem coram populo faciem velat (Exod. XXXIV, 33), quia nimirum turbis claritatis intimae arcana non indicat. Hinc per eum divina voce praecipitur (Ibid. XXI, 33), ut is qui cisternam foderit, si operire neglexerit, corruente in ea bove vel asino, pretium reddat; quia ad alta scientiae fluenta perveniens, cum haec apud bruta audientium corda non contegit, poenae reus addicitur, si per verba ejus in scandalum, sive munda

sive immunda mens capiatur. Hinc ad beatum Job dicitur? Quis dedit gallo intelligentiam (Job. XXXVIII, 36)? Praedicator etenim sanctus dum caliginoso hoc clamat in tempore, quasi gallus cantat in nocte, cum dicit: Hora est jam nos de somno surgere (Rom. XIII, 11). Et rursum: Evigilate justi, et nolite peccare (I Cor. XV, 34). Gallus autem profundioribus horis noctis altos edere cantus solet; cum vero matutinum jam tempus in proximo est, minutas ac tenues voces format, quia nimirum qui recte praedicat, obscuris adhuc cordibus aperta clamat, nil de occultis mysteriis indicat, ut tunc subtiliora quaeque de coelestibus audiant, cum luci veritatis appropinquant.

CAPUT XL

De opere praedicationis et voce.

Sed inter haec ad ea quae jam superius diximus, charitatis studio retorquemur, ut praedicator quisque plus actibus quam vocibus insonet, et bene vivendo vestigia sequacibus imprimat potius, quam loquendo quo gradiantur ostendat. Quia et gallus iste, quem pro exprimenda boni praedicatoris specie in locutione sua Dominus assumit, cum jam edere cantus parat, prius alas excutit, et semetipsum feriens vigilantiorem reddit, quia nimirum necesse est ut hi qui verba sanctae praedicationis movent, prius studio bonae actionis evigilent, ne in semetipsis torpentes opere, alios excitent voce; prius se per sublimia facta excutiant, et tunc ad bene vivendum alios sollicitos reddant; prius cogitationum alis semetipsos feriant; quidquid in se inutiliter torpet, sollicita investigatione deprehendant, districta animadversione corrigant; et tunc demum aliorum vitam loquendo componant; prius punire propria fletibus curent, et tunc quae aliorum punienda sunt denuntient; et antequam verba exhortationis insonent, omne quod locuturi sunt, operibus clament.

QUARTA PARS. QUALITER PRAEDICATOR OMNIBUS RITE PERACTIS AD SEMETIPSUM REDEAT, NE HUNC VEL VITA VEL PRAEDICATIO EXTOLLAT

Sed quia saepe dum praedicatio modis congruentibus ubertim funditur, apud semetipsum de ostensione sui occulta laetitia loquentis animus sublevatur, magna cura necesse est ut timoris laceratione se mordeat, ne qui aliorum vulnera medendo ad salutem revocat, ipse per negligentiam suae salutis intumescat, ne proximos juvando se deserat, ne alios erigens cadat. Nam quibusdam saepe magnitudo virtutis occasio perditionis fuit; ut cum de confidentia virium inordinate securi sunt, per negligentiam inopinate morerentur. Virtus namque cum vitiis renititur, quadam delectatione ejus sibimetipsi animus blanditur; fitque ut bene agentis mens metum suae circumspectionis abjiciat, atque in sui confidentia secura requiescat; cui jam torpenti seductor callidus omne quod bene gessit enumerat, eamque quasi prae caeteris praepollentem in tumore cogitationis exaltat. Unde agitur, ut ante justi judicis oculos, fovea mentis sit memoria virtutis; quia reminiscendo quod gessit, dum se apud se erigit, apud humilitatis auctorem cadit. Hinc namque superbienti animae dicitur: Quo pulchrior es, descende, et dormi cum incircumcisis (Ezech. XXXII, 19). Ac si aperte diceretur: Quia ex virtutum decore te elevas, ipsa tua pulchritudine impelleris ut cadas. Hinc sub Jerusalem specie, virtute superbiens anima reprobatur, cum dicitur: Perfecta eras in decore meo, quem posueram super te, dicit Dominus; et habens fiduciam in pulchritudine tua, fornicata es in nomine tuo (Ezech. XVI, 14, 15). Fiducia quippe suae pulchritudinis animus attollitur, cum de virtutum meritis laeta apud se securitate gloriatur. Sed per hanc eamdem fiduciam ad fornicationem ducitur; quia cum interceptam mentem cogitationes suae decipiunt, hanc maligni spiritus per innumera vitia seducendo corrumpunt. Notandum vero quod dicitur: Fornicata es in nomine tuo; quia cum respectum mens superni rectoris deserit, laudem

protinus privatam quaerit, et sibi arrogare incipit omne bonum, quod ut largitoris praeconio serviret accepit; opinionis suae gloriam dilatare desiderat, satagit ut mirabilis cunctis innotescat. In suo ergo nomine fornicatur, quae legalis thori connubium deserens, corruptori spiritui in laudis appetitu substernitur. Hinc David ait: Tradidit in captivitatem virtutem eorum, et pulchritudinem eorum in manus inimici (Psal. LXXVII, 61). In captivitatem etenim virtus, et pulchritudo in manus inimici traditur, cum deceptae menti antiquus hostis ex boni operis elatione dominatur: quae tamen virtutis elatio, quamvis plene non superat, utcumque tamen et electorum animum saepe tentat; sed cum sublevatus destituitur, destitutus ad formidinem revocatur. Hinc etenim David iterum ait: Ego dixi in abundantia mea, non movebor in aeternum (Psal. XXIX, 7). Sed quia de confidentia virtutis intumuit, paulo post quid pertulit adjunxit: Avertisti faciem tuam a me, et factus sum conturbatus (Ibid., 8). Ac si aperte dicat: Fortem me inter virtutes credidi, sed quantae infirmitatis sim derelictus agnovi. Hinc rursum dicit: Juravi et statui custodire judicia justitiae tuae (Ps. CXVIII, 106). Sed quia ejus virium non erat manere in custodia quam jurabat, debilitatem suam protinus turbatus invenit. Unde et ad precis opem repente se contulit, dicens: Humiliatus sum usquequaque, Domine; vivifica me secundum verbum tuum (Ibid., CVII). Nonnumquam vero superna moderatio priusquam per munera provehat, infirmitatis memoriam ad mentem revocat, ne de acceptis virtutibus intumescat. Unde Ezechiel propheta quoties ad contemplanda coelestia ducitur, prius filius hominis vocatur; ac si hunc aperte Dominus admoneat, dicens: Ne de his quae vides, in elatione cor subleves, cautus perpende quod es; ut cum summa penetras, esse te hominem recognoscas, quatenus dum ultra te raperis, ad temetipsum sollicitus infirmitatis tuae freno revoceris. Unde necesse est ut cum virtutum nobis copia blanditur, ad infirma sua mentis oculus redeat, seseque salubriter deorsum premat; nec recta quae egit, sed quae agere neglexit

aspiciat; ut dum cor ex memoria infirmitatis atteritur, apud humilitatis auctorem robustius in virtute solidetur. Quia et plerumque omnipotens Deus idcirco Rectorum mentes quamvis ex magna parte perficit, imperfectas tamen ex parva aliqua parte derelinquit; ut cum miris virtutibus rutilant, imperfectionis suae taedio tabescant, et nequaquam se de magnis erigant, dum adhuc contra minima innitentes laborant; sed quia extrema non valent vincere, de praecipuis actibus non audeant superbire. Ecce, bone vir, reprehensionis meae necessitate compulsus, dum monstrare qualis esse debeat Pastor invigilo, pulchrum depinxi hominem pictor foedus; aliosque ad perfectionis littus dirigo, qui adhuc in delictorum fluctibus versor. Sed in hujus quaeso vitae naufragio orationis tuae me tabula sustine, ut quia pondus proprium deprimit, tui meriti manus me levet.

Homiliarum in Ezechielem Prophetam

CONTENTS

LIBER PRIMUS

PRAEFATIO.

Dilectissimo fratri, Mariano episcopo, Gregorius episcopus servus servorum Dei. Homilias quae in beatum Ezechielem prophetam, ita ut coram populo loquebar, exceptae sunt, multis curis irruentibus in abolitione reliqueram. Sed post annos octo, petentibus fratribus, notariorum schedas requirere studui, easque, favente Domino transcurrens, inquantum ab angustiis tribulationum licuit emendavi. Tua itaque dilectio has sibi ad legendum mitti poposcerat, sed valde incongruum credidi ut aquam despicabilem hauriret quem constat de beatorum Patrum Ambrosii atque Augustini torrentibus profunda ac perspicua fluenta assidue bibere. Sed rursum dum cogito quod saepe inter quotidianas delicias etiam viliores cibi suaviter sapiunt, transmisi minima legenti potiora, ut dum cibus grossior velut pro fastidio sumitur, ad subtiliores epulas avidius redeatur.

HOMILIA I

Prophetam expositurus sanctus Doctor de prophetiae temporibus et modis praefatur.

1. Dei omnipotentis aspiratione de Ezechiele propheta locuturus, prius debeo tempora et modos aperire prophetiae, ut dum accessus ejus ostenditur, virtus melius cognoscatur. Prophetiae tempora tria sunt, scilicet praeteritum, praesens et futurum. Sed sciendum est quod in duobus temporibus prophetia etymologiam perdit. Quia cum ideo prophetia dicta sit quod futura praedicat, quando de praeterito vel praesenti loquitur, rationem sui nominis amittit, quoniam non prodit quod venturum est, sed vel ea memorat quae transacta sunt, vel ea quae sunt. Quae tamen tria prophetiae tempora verius loquimur, si ex sacrae Scripturae testimoniis ostendamus. Prophetia de futuro est: Ecce Virgo concipiet et pariet filium (Isai. VII, 14). Prophetia de praeterito: In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram (Genes. I, 1). De illo enim tempore dixit homo quo non erat homo. Prophetia de praesenti est, quando Paulus apostolus dicit: Si autem omnes prophetent, intret autem quis infidelis vel idiota, convincitur ab omnibus, dijudicatur ab omnibus; occulta enim cordis ejus manifesta fiunt, et ita cadens in faciem adorabit Deum, pronuntians quod vere Deus in vobis sit (I Cor. XIV, 24). Cum igitur dicitur: Occulta cordis ejus manifesta fiunt, profecto monstratur quia per hunc modum prophetiae spiritus non praedicit quod futurum est, sed ostendit quod est. Quo autem pacto prophetiae dicatur spiritus, qui nihil futurum indicat, sed praesens narrat? Qua in re animadvertendum est quod recte prophetia dicitur, non quia praedicit ventura, sed quia prodit occulta. Rem quippe quamlibet, sicut ab oculis nostris in futuro subtrahunt tempora, ita ab oculis nostris in praesenti subtrahit causa. Ventura etenim [res occultatur in futuro tempore, praesens autem cogitatio absconditur in latenti corde. Est etiam prophetia praesens cum res quaelibet non per animum, sed per absentem locum tegitur, quae tamen per spiritum denudatur. Et ibi fit

praesens prophetantis animus, ubi per praesentiam non est corpus. Nam Giezi longe a propheta recesserat cum Naaman Syri munera percipiebat, cui tamen idem Propheta dicit: Nonne cor meum in praesenti erat quando reversus est homo de curru suo in occursum tibi (IV Reg. V, 26)?

2. Sciendum quoque est quia prophetiae tempora invicem sibi concinunt ad probationem, ut aliquando ex futuris praeterita, aliquando vero ex praeteritis probentur futura. Dixerat enim Moyses: In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram (Genes. I, 1). Sed quis crederet quia verum de praeterito diceret, si de futuro etiam aliquid non dixisset? In ipsius etenim libri fine, in cujus exordio illa de praeterito dixerat, aliquid prophetiae per Jacob vocem de venturis permiscuit, dicens: Non auferetur sceptrum de Juda, et dux de femoribus ejus, donec veniat qui mittendus est, et ipse erit exspectatio gentium (Genes. XLIX, 10). Qui etiam per semetipsum eumdem qui mittendus erat ei quem ducebat populo prophetavit, dicens: Prophetam suscitabit vobis Dominus Deus vester de fratribus vestris, tanquam me ipsum audietis. Erit autem, quicunque non audierit prophetam illum, exterminabitur de populo suo (Deut. XVIII, 15). Cur ergo praeteritis ventura permiscuit, nisi ut, dum implerentur ea quae de futuro praediceret, ostenderet etiam quia de praeterito vera dixisset?

3. Quia itaque docuimus qualiter ex futurorum prophetia probentur praeterita, restat nunc ut adhuc de sacris eloquiis ostendamus quomodo in ipso prophetiae spiritu ex praeteritis probentur futura. Certe rex Babylonicus, cum somnium vidisset (Dan. II, 2), misit ad magos et ariolos, omnesque sapientes Babyloniae convocavit, nec ab eis solummodo interpretationem somnii, sed etiam somnium quaesivit, ut nimirum ex praeterito colligeret si quid in eorum responsionibus de venturo certum teneret. Qui cum dicere nullatenus potuissent, S. Daniel deductus ad medium est, qui de interpretatione somnii, et de narratione requisitus, non solum hoc respondit quod interrogatus est, sed ipsam somnii originem

replicavit, dicens: Tu, rex, caepisti cogitare in stratu tuo quid esset futurum post haec (Ibid., 29). Et paulo post: Tu, rex, videbas, et ecce quasi statua una grandis (Ibid., 31), et caetera. Cujus videlicet somnii mox ut ordinem dixit, quidquid ex eodem venturum sequebatur aperuit. Pensemus ergo ordinem prophetiae. A cogitationibus venit ad somnium, a somnio pervenit ad futura. Qui ergo ipsam, ut ita dicam, radicem somnii protulit, profecto ex praeteritis probavit quam vera essent quae de futuris diceret. Prophetia autem praesentis temporis nec praeteriti attestatione indiget, nec futuri, quia cum res occulta per prophetiae verba detegitur, veritati illius res ipsa quae ostenditur attestatur.

4. Igitur quia de temporibus prophetiae tractavimus, restat ut de modis ejus ac qualitatibus aliqua disseramus. Spiritus quippe prophetiae nec semper, nec eodem modo prophetae animum tangit. Aliquando enim spiritus prophetiae ex praesenti tangit animum prophetantis, et ex futuro nequaquam tangit; aliquando ex futuro tangit, et ex praesenti non tangit. Aliquando vero ex praesenti et ex futuro tangit; aliquando autem ex praeterito, et ex praesenti, atque ex futuro pariter tangitur animus prophetantis. Aliquando tangit ex praeterito prophetiae spiritus, nec tangit ex futuro; aliquando autem tangit ex futuro, nec tangit ex praeterito. Aliquando vero in praesenti ex parte tangit, et ex parte non tangit; aliquando in futuro ex parte tangit, et ex parte non tangit. Sed haec ipsa, si possumus, eo ordine quo praemissa sunt sacrae Scripturae testimoniis ostendamus.

5. Ex praesenti enim prophetiae spiritus prophetantis animum tangit, atque ex futuro non tangit, sicut Joannes Baptista venientem Dominum videns, ait: Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi (Joan. I, 29). Sed cum jam moriturus esset, missis discipulis, requirebat, dicens: Tu es qui venturus es, an alium exspectamus (Matth. XI, 3)? In quibus verbis ostenditur quia in terris quidem venisse Redemptorem noverat, sed an per semetipsum ad aperienda inferni claustra descenderet dubitabat. Ex

praesenti enim per prophetiae spiritum tactus fuerat, qui humanitatem Mediatoris videns, et divinitatem ejus intelligens, confitebatur Agnum qui peccata mundi tolleret; sed tactus ex futuro non fuerat, quia adventum illius in infernum nesciebat.

6. Aliquando vero prophetiae spiritus animum prophetantis ex futuro tangit, atque ex praesenti non tangit, sicut aperte libri Geneseos historia testatur, cum Isaac Esau filium suum ad venandum misit (Genes. XXVII, 3, seq.), cui minorem filium Rebecca ad benedicendum supposuit, qui hoedinis pellibus indutus paterno palpatui corpus fraternum finxit. Cui ille minori filio tanquam majori benedictionem dedit, quaeque ei essent longe futura nuntiavit; sed quis esset qui coram se assisteret, scire non potuit. Prophetiae ergo spiritus ex futuro animum prophetantis tetigit, atque ex praesenti non tetigit, quando caligantibus oculis pater et ventura praedicebat, et praesentem filium nesciebat.

7. Aliquando prophetantis animum ex praesenti pariter et ex futuro tangit, quod ex eodem libro Geneseos liquido docemur (Genes. XLVIII). In illo quippe scriptum est quia cum vitae jam termino propinquaret Jacob, et duos filios suos Joseph fecit assistere, ut ex benedictione illius possent longe post futura promereri, cui majorem ad dexteram, minorem vero posuit ad sinistram (Ibid., 10). Cumque ille, oculis senectute caligantibus, nepotes suos quis prior, quisve esset minor, humano visu discernere nequaquam posset, ductis in obliquum brachiis, dexteram manum minori, sinistram majori imposuit. Quod dum corrigere filius vellet, dicens: Non ita convenit, pater, quia hic est primogenitus, audivit: Scio, fili mi, scio: et iste quidem erit in populos, et multiplicabitur, sed frater ejus junior major illo erit (Ibid., 18, 19). Prophetiae ergo spiritus ex praesenti pariter et ex futuro prophetantis animum tetigit, dum Jacob et ventura nuntiabat, et eos quos corporeis oculis videre non poterat, ante se positos per spiritum discernebat. Sic Ahiae prophetae animum prophetiae spiritus ex praesenti atque ex

futuro tetigerat, cum, caligantibus oculis, eam quae se esse aliam simulabat, et uxorem Jeroboam esse cognovit, et quidquid ei futurum esset aperuit, dicens: Ingredere, uxor Jeroboam, quare aliam te esse simulas? Ego autem missus sum ad te durus nuntius. Vade et dic Jeroboam: Haec dicit Dominus Deus Israel: Quia operatus es mala super omnes qui fuerunt ante te, et fecisti tibi deos alienos et conflatiles, ut me ad iracundiam provocares, me autem projecisti post corpus tuum, idcirco ego inducam mala super domum Jeroboam (III Reg. XIV, 6). Ex praesenti enim atque ex futuro pariter prophetantis animus tactus fuerat, qui et ingredientem deprehendere potuit, et ei ventura nuntiare.

8. Aliquando autem ex praeterito et ex praesenti, atque ex futuro pariter animus tangitur prophetantis, sicut Elisabeth venire ad se Mariam conspiciens quia incarnatum Verbum gestaret in utero agnovit, eamque jam Domini sui matrem vocavit, dicens: Unde hoc mihi, ut veniat mater Domini mei ad me (Luc. I, 43)? De cujus conceptione per angelum quoque ad Joseph dicitur: Quod enim in ea natum est, de Spiritu sancto est (Matth. I, 20). Quae videlicet Elisabeth dixit: Beata quae credidisti, quoniam perficientur ea quae dicta sunt tibi a Domino (Luc. I, 45). Dicens enim: Beata quae credidisti, aperte indicat quia verba angeli quae dicta ad Mariam fuerant per spiritum agnovit; atque subjungens: Perficientur ea quae dicta sunt tibi a Domino, quae eam etiam in futuro sequerentur praevidit. Simul ergo de praeterito et praesenti atque ex futuro per prophetiae spiritum tacta est, quae et eam promissionibus angeli credidisse cognovit, et matrem nominans, quia Redemptorem humani generis in utero portaret intellexit; et cum omnia perficienda praediceret, quid etiam de futuro sequeretur aspexit.

9. Aliquando vero prophetiae spiritus ex praeterito tangit animum, nec tangit ex futuro, sicut in Paulo apostolo aperte ostenditur, qui discipulis dicit: Notum vobis facio, fratres, Evangelium, quod evangelizatum est a me, quia non est secundum hominem; neque enim ego ab homine accepi illud,

neque didici, sed per revelationem Jesu Christi (Gal. I, 11). Unde aliis quoque discipulis dicit: Secundum revelationem notum factum est mihi sacramentum (Ephes. III, 3). Qui tamen hoc ipsum Evangelium quod per revelationem cognoverat, cum Jerosolymam praedicaturus ascenderet, ait: Ecce ego alligatus spiritu vado in Jerusalem, quae in ea ventura sunt mihi ignorans (Act. XX, 22). Hoc quippe Evangelii sacramentum est, quia Unigenitus Patris incarnatus atque perfectus homo factus est, qui crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus, die tertia surrexit; die quoque quadragesima ascendit in coelum, atque in dextera Patris sedet. Qui ergo per revelationem Evangelium agnovit, prophetiae spiritu de praeterito tactus est; sed quia quid pro eodem Evangelio passurus esset ignoravit, de futuro procul dubio tactus non est. Nam sic dicit: Nisi quod Spiritus sanctus per omnes civitates protestatur mihi, dicens: Quoniam vincula et tribulationes Jerosolymis me manent (Ibid., 23), aperte ostendens quia ea quae ipsi futura essent aliis de ipso revelata erant, non autem ipsi de se, sicut de illo per Agabum dicitur: Virum, cujus haec zona est ita alligari oportet in Jerusalem (Act. XXI, 11).

10. Aliquando autem prophetiae spiritus tangit ex futuro, nec tangit ex praeterito; sicut de Elisaei facto scriptum est, quia cum unus ex filiis prophetarum materiam succideret, huic ferrum securis in aquam cecidit, qui exclamavit: Heu! heu! Domine mi, et hoc ipsum mutuum acceperam. Dixit autem homo Dei: Ubi cecidit? At ille monstravit ei locum. Praecidit ergo lignum, et misit illuc, natavitque ferrum (IV Reg. VI, 5). In quo videlicet prophetae facto cognoscitur quia qui requirit ubi ceciderat quid esset facturus noverat; sed tamen cum requirit, constat quia ubi ferrum cecidisset ignorabat. Prophetiae ergo spiritus Elisaei mentem ex futuro tetigerat, sed ex praeterito non tangebat, qui et ferrum in profundis demersum, quia revocaturus esset ad superficiem, scire potuit; sed ubi ceciderat omnino nescivit.

11. Aliquando vero prophetiae spiritus in praesenti ex parte tangit, et ex parte non tangit. Quod Petri apostoli historia testatur, cum missi ad eum a Cornelio milites ei sunt per spiritum nuntiati; scriptum quippe est: Et dixit spiritus ei: Ecce viri tres quaerunt te. Ad quos ille descendit, et requirens dixit: Quae causa est propter quam venistis (Act. X, 20)? In cujus verbis ostenditur quia eamdem causam per spiritum non audierat quam a militibus requirebat. In praesenti ergo mentem Petri spiritus ex parte tetigerat, et ex parte non tetigerat, qui et adesse milites dixit, et pro qua causa venerant tacuit.

12. Aliquando spiritus prophetiae in futuro ex parte tangit, et ex parte non tangit; sicut prophetarum filii de auferendo Elia ad Elisaeum dicunt: Nunquid nosti quia hodie Dominus tollat dominum tuum a te (IV Reg. II, 3, 5)? Quo tamen ablato, sese per diversa dispergunt, eumque in rupibus et vallibus quaerunt. In futuro ergo eorum mentem prophetiae spiritus ex parte tetigerat, et ex parte non tangebat, quando eum quem tollendum noverant non inveniendum quaerebant. Ex parte itaque tacti sunt, atque ex parte non tacti, quia et sciebant quod tolli posset, et nesciebant quod inveniri non posset. Idem quoque Elisaeus per prophetiae spiritum de futuro ex parte tactus est, et ex parte non tactus, cum regi Israel diceret: Percute jaculo terram. Et cum percussisset tribus vicibus, et stetisset, iratus est contra eum vir Dei, et ait: Si percussisses quinquies, aut sexies, sive septies, percussisses Syriam usque ad consumptionem: nunc autem tribus vicibus percuties eam (IV Reg. XIII, 18, 19). Qui itaque noverat quia toties percuteret Syriam, quoties percussisset terram; sed cum ei diceret, Percute terram, quoties eam percussurus esset ignorabat (quippe quia et indignatus est terram tertio fuisse percussam), profecto constat quia de futuro ex parte tactus fuerat, et ex parte non tactus, qui Syriam percuti praedixit, sed terram amplius percuti voluit. Sic Samuel cum ad unguendum S. David a Domino mitteretur, respondit: Quomodo vadam? Audiet enim Saul, et interficiet me

(I Reg. XVI, 2). Qui et David unxit, nec tamen a Saule occisus est. Ex parte ergo de futuro tactus prophetae animus fuerat, et ex parte non tactus, qui et unguendum S. David in regno noverat, et quia a Saule non esset occidendus ignorabat.

13. Sciendum quoque est quod prophetae quidem e proximo tanguntur, atque e longinquo minime tanguntur; alii vero e longinquo, et non tanguntur e proximo; alii autem et e longinquo, et e proximo, prophetiae spiritu tanguntur. Nam quidam tanguntur e proximo, et non e longinquo, sicut Samuel perisse asinas noverat, easque inventas esse nuntiavit, et Saul regem futurum praedicit (I Reg. IX, 15, 20); S. David quoque quia in ejus regno succederet nuntiat, sed quia pater Regis aeterni futurus sit non praedicit (I Reg. XVI, 12). Quidam vero tanguntur e longinquo, et non tanguntur e proximo, sicut idem David incarnandum Dei Unigenitum noverat, de Judaea dicens: Homo factus est in ea, et ipse fundavit eam Altissimus (Psal. LXXXVI, 5). Atque hunc ad coelos ascensurum, et ad Patris dexteram sessurum intelligit, dicens: Dixit Dominus Domino meo, sede a dextris meis (Psal. CIX, 1). Et tamen multa quae e vicino acta sunt minime praevidit. Ut enim pauca de multis loquar, servum Miphiboseth sibi contra suum dominum mentientem non intellexit (II Reg. XVI, 3, 4); et Amasae promittens, dicit: Haec faciat mihi Deus, et haec addat, si non magister militiae fueris coram me omni tempore pro Joab (Ibid. XIX, 13), videlicet quid sequeretur ignorans, quia Amasa idem non solum principatum militiae pro Joab non susciperet, sed etiam per Joab post paululum vitam finiret (Ibid., XX, 10). Et cum templum Deo construere voluit, quid e vicino sequeretur nesciens, prophetam alterum requisivit (Ibid. VII, 3).

14. Quidam vero et e longinquo tanguntur et e proximo, sicut Isaias longe post futura praenuntiat, dicens: Ecce virgo concipiet, et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel (Isai. VII, 14). De quo rursus ait: Parvulus natus est nobis, et filius datus est nobis; et factus est principatus

super humerum ejus, et vocabitur nomen ejus admirabilis, consiliarius, Deus, fortis, pater futuri saeculi, princeps pacis. Multiplicabitur ejus imperium, et pacis non erit finis (Ibid. IX, 6). Qui etiam de Ezechia rege prophetiae spiritu tactus e vicino, quia eum de infirmitate sua surgeret praedixit, et quot annis post infirmitatem viveret nuntiavit (Ibid. XXXVIII, 5).

15. Aliquando vero prophetiae spiritus prophetis deest, nec semper eorum mentibus praesto est, quatenus cum hunc non habent, se hunc agnoscant ex dono habere cum habent. Unde Elisaeus cum flentem Sunamitem mulierem a suis pedibus per Giezi puerum avelli prohiberet, dixit: Dimitte illam, anima enim ejus in amaritudine est, et Dominus celavit a me, et non indicavit mihi (IV Reg. IV, 27). Sic quoque cum eum Josaphat de futuris requireret, et prophetiae ei spiritus deesset, psaltem fecit applicari, ut prophetiae ad hunc spiritus per laudem psalmodiae descenderet, atque ejus animum de venturis repleret (Ibid., III, 11, 15). Vox enim psalmodiae cum per intentionem cordis agitur, per hanc omnipotenti Domino ad cor iter paratur, ut intentae menti vel prophetiae mysteria, vel compunctionis gratiam infundat. Unde scriptum est: Sacrificium laudis honorificabit me, et illic iter est quo ostendam illi salutare Dei (Psal. XLIX, 23). Quod enim Latine salutare, hoc Hebraice Jesus dicitur. In sacrificio igitur laudis fit Jesu iter ostensionis, quia dum per psalmodiam compunctio effunditur, via nobis in corde fit, per quam ad Jesum in fine pervenitur, sicut ipse de sua ostensione loquitur, dicens: Qui diligit me, diligetur a Patre meo, et ego diligam eum, et manifestabo ei meipsum (Joan. XIV, 21). Hinc quoque scriptum est: Cantate Domino, psalmum dicite nomini ejus, iter facite ei qui ascendit super occasum, Dominus nomen est ei (Psal. LXVII, 5). Ipse etenim super occasum ascendit, qui mortem resurgendo calcavit. Cui dum cantamus, iter facimus, ut ad nostrum cor veniat, et sui nos amoris gratia accendat. Quia autem prophetis prophetiae spiritus non semper adest,

etiam vir Dei indicat, qui, contra Samariam missus, mala quae ei ventura erant nuntiavit (III Reg. XIII); qui, tamen, prohibitus a Domino in via comedere, prophetae falsi persuasione deceptus est (Ibid., XVIII, 19); quem fallax sermo non deciperet, si prophetiae spiritum praesentem habuisset.

16. Sciendum quoque est quod aliquando prophetae sancti dum consuluntur, ex magno usu prophetandi quaedam ex suo spiritu proferunt, et se haec ex prophetiae spiritu dicere suspicantur; sed quia sancti sunt, per sanctum Spiritum citius correcti, ab eo quae vera sunt audiunt, et semetipsos quia falsa dixerint reprehendunt. Nathan etenim prophetam sanctum virum fuisse quis nesciat? Qui David regem et de culpa aperte reprehendit, et quae ei pro culpa eadem essent ventura nuntiavit; quem tamen dum idem David, quia templum Deo vellet construere, requisisset, illico respondit: Omne quod est in corde tuo, vade et fac, quia Dominus tecum est (II Reg. VII, 3). De quo illic statim subditur: Factum est autem in nocte illa, et ecce sermo Domini ad Nathan, dicens: Vade et loquere ad servum meum David. Haec dicit Dominus Deus: Nunquid tu aedificabis mihi domum ad habitandum? Neque enim habitavi in domo ex die qua eduxi filios Israel de terra Aegypti usque in diem hanc (Ibid. 4). Et paulo post: Cum completi fuerint dies tui, et dormieris cum patribus tuis, suscitabo semen tuum post te, quod egredietur de utero tuo, et firmabo regnum ejus; ipse aedificabit domum nomini meo (Ibid. 12, 13). Ecce Nathan propheta qui prius regi dixerat: Vade et fac, ipse postmodum per prophetiae spiritum edoctus, hoc fieri non posse denuntians, et regis consiliis et suis sermonibus contradixit, quia quod ex suo spiritu dixerat, falsum fuisse deprehendit.

17. Qua in re inter prophetas veros ac falsos ista distantia est, quia prophetae veri si quid aliquando per suum spiritum dicunt, hoc ab auditorum mentibus per Spiritum sanctum eruditi citius corrigunt.

Prophetae autem falsi et falsa denuntiant, et alieni a sancto Spiritu in sua falsitate perdurant.

18. Consideratis igitur prophetiae temporibus et modis, intueri libet qualiter omnipotens Deus ad provectum hominum suae irae moderamina dispensat. Israeliticus quippe populus conditori suo deliquerat, et idcirco regi Babylonio in captivitate serviebat; cum quo tamen S. Ezechiel propheta in captivitatem mittitur (Ezech. III, 11), quem divina gratia ita sibi placabilem fecerat, ut per eum ventura quaeque praediceret, et afflicti populi mentem consolari dignaretur. Consideremus ergo, si possumus, quanta est dispensatio supernae pietatis, quia sic iratus est populo suo Dominus, ut tamen omnimodo non irasceretur. Nam si iratus non esset, in captivitatem populum minime tradidisset; et si omnimodo iratus esset, electos suos in captivitatem cum illo non mitteret. Sed agit haec divina misericordia, ut ex una eademque re, ex qua carnalibus dat flagellum, ex ea spiritualibus virtutis praestet incrementum. Cumque illos per tribulationem purgat, istos ex societate tribulantium ad majora promerenda excitat. Et sic injustis irascitur, ut tamen eorum corda per justorum consortium consoletur; ne si omni modo deserat, nullus post culpas ad veniam redeat. Tenendo igitur repellit, et repellendo tenet, quando cum his quos dijudicat simul in tribulationem mittit quos amat. Quis ista tantae pietatis viscera pensare sufficiat? Quod et culpas populi Dominus sine vindicta non deserit, et tamen delinquentem populum a se funditus non repellit. Sic cum Moyses ad repromissionis terram exploratores duodecim misisset (Num. XIII), ex quibus cum decem postmodum desperationem populo facerent, idem populus in ira murmurationis accensus, seductum se a Domino esse conquestus est, ut ejus cadavera jacerent in deserto (Ibid., XIV); cui omnipotens Deus iratus dixit quod nullus eorum in terram repromissionis intraret (Ibid.): quo terrore compuncti, prave se egisse cognoverunt, sese in lacrymis afflixerunt, et accincti armis, protinus coeperunt contra hostes

ascendere, ut repromissionis terram post lacrymas intrare potuissent (Ibid. 42). Quibus per S. Moysen Dominus dicit: Dic eis, Nolite ascendere, neque pugnetis; non enim sum vobiscum, ne cadatis coram inimicis vestris (Deut. I, 42). Qua in re pensandum est, si cum ipsis non erat, cur eos ne caderent ascendere prohibebat? Si autem cum ipsis erat, quid est quod ait: Non enim sum vobiscum? Sed mira dispensatione disciplinae ac misericordiae, et cum ipsis erat, et cum ipsis non erat. Cum ipsis non erat ut vincerent, sed tamen cum ipsis erat ne ab hostibus perirent. O ineffabilia pietatis viscera! Culpas insequitur, et tamen peccantes protegit. Iratum se indicat, et tamen ab hostibus defendit. Sic plerumque parvulo filio delinquenti irascitur mater, reprehendit, increpat, verberat; sed si hunc in praeceps ire conspexerit, ubi in mortis periculum ruat, manum tendit et retinet, et quae sic irata verberaverat ac si non diligeret, sic diligendo retinet, ac si irata non verberasset.

19. Haec in sola praefatione colloquentes, navigii nostri quasi intra portum exercitium fecimus, ut ad indaganda prophetiae mysteria, velut in immensitatem pelagi, post vela pandamus. Quod tamen non in nostra virtute praesumimus, sed in eo qui linguas infantium facit disertas, quia spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum, et hoc quod continet omnia scientiam habet vocis (Sap. I, 7). Omnipotens enim Deus, sermo Patris omnipotentis est, et qui de illo loqui concupiscimus, muti in illo nullo modo erimus. Dabit verba utilia omnipotens Verbum, quod pro nobis incarnatum vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA II

Prophetiae Ezechielis quinque priores versus, juxta multiplicem sensum, allegoricum praesertim et moralem exponuntur.

1. Usus propheticae locutionis est ut prius personam, tempus locumque describat, et postmodum dicere mysteria prophetiae incipiat, quatenus ad veritatem solidius ostendendam, ante historiae radicem figat, et post fructus spiritus per signa et allegorias proferat. S. Ezechiel itaque aetatis suae tempus indicat, dicens: EZECH. I, 1. — Et factum est in tricesimo anno, in quarto mense, in quinta mensis. Locum quoque denuntians, adjungit: IBID. — Cum essem in medio captivorum juxta fluvium Chobar, aperti sunt coeli, et vidi visiones Dei. Tempus etiam insinuat, subdens: VERS. 2. — In quinta mensis, ipse est annus quintus transmigrationis regis Joachin. Qui ut bene personam indicet, etiam genus narrat, cum subditur: VERS. 3. — Et factum est verbum Domini ad Ezechielem filium Buzi, sacerdotem.

2. Sed prima quaestio nobis oritur cur is qui nihil adhuc dixerat ita exorsus est, dicens: Et factum est in tricesimo anno. Et namque sermo conjunctionis est, et scimus quia non conjungitur sermo subsequens nisi sermoni praecedenti. Qui igitur nihil dixerat cur dicit: Et factum est, cum non sit sermo cui hoc quod incipit subjungat? Qua in re intuendum est quia sicut nos corporalia, sic prophetae sensus spiritalia aspiciunt, eisque et illa sunt praesentia quae nostrae ignorantiae absentia videntur. Unde fit ut in mente prophetarum ita conjuncta sint exterioribus interiora, quatenus simul utraque videant, simulque in eis fiat et intus verbum quod audiunt, et foras quod dicunt. Patet igitur causa cur qui nihil dixerat inchoavit dicens: Et factum est in tricesimo anno. Quia hoc verbum quod foris protulit illi verbo quod intus audierat conjunxit. Continuavit ergo verba quae protulit visioni intimae, et idcirco incipit dicens: Et factum est. Subjungit enim hoc quod exterius loqui inchoat, ac si et illud foris sit quod intus videt.

3. Hoc autem quod dicitur, quia tricesimo anno spiritum prophetiae acceperit, indicat aliquid nobis considerandum, videlicet quia juxta rationis usum doctrinae sermo non suppetit nisi in aetate perfecta. Unde et ipse Dominus anno duodecimo aetatis suae in medio doctorum in templo sedens, non docens, sed interrogans voluit inveniri (Luc. II, 46). Ut enim non auderent homines in infirma aetate praedicare, ille anno duodecimo aetatis suae interrogare homines est dignatus in terra, qui per divinitatem suam semper angelos docet in coelo. Quia enim ipse est Dei sapientia, de ipso angeli videndo vivunt hoc quod beatitudine aeterna satiantur. Quod Moyses quoque sub allegoriae mysterio admonet, dicens: Non arabis in primogenito bovis (Deut. XV, 19). Primogenitum enim bovis accipimus in infirma aetate primi nostri temporis bonam operationem. In qua tamen arandum non est, quia cum prima sunt adolescentiae vel juventutis nostrae tempora, nobis adhuc a praedicatione cessandum est, ut vomer linguae nostrae proscindere non audeat terram cordis alieni. Quoadusque etenim infirmi sumus, continere nos intra nosmetipsos debemus, ne dum tenera bona citius ostendimus, amittamus, quia et arbusta plantata si prius in terra radicata non fuerint, manu tacta citius arescunt; at si semel radicem fixerint, manus tangit, et tamen nil officit; venti impellunt, nec tamen impellentes laedunt. Et constructi parietes si impellantur, eruuntur, nisi a suo prius fuerint humore siccati. Mens itaque quousque ab humore pravitatis suae perfecte non fuerit exsiccata, alienae linguae manu tangi non debet, ne priusquam plene percipiat, perdat soliditatem suam, ne impulsa ruat, ne velut arbustum sine radicibus, dum plus quam tolerare valet concutitur, arescat. Ad exemplum ergo non sunt ostendenda nisi quae firma sunt. Prius etenim convalescere debet mens, atque ad utilitatem proximorum postmodum demonstrari, cum jam nec per laudem elevata corruat, nec per vituperationem percussa contabescat. Nam etsi Timotheo dicitur: Praecipe haec, et doce; nemo adolescentiam tuam contemnat (I Tim. IV, 11, 12),

sciendum est quod in sacro eloquio nonnunquam adolescentia juventus vocatur. Unde scriptum est: Laetare, juvenis, in adolescentia tua (Eccle. XI, 9). Propheta igitur, ut ostendatur cujus auctoritatis sit in praedicatione, aetatis solidae esse describitur, quatenus ei cum vita et spiritu omnia quae ad praedicandum congruunt concordare videantur.

4. Nec contra haec quempiam movere debet quod Jeremias (Jerem. I, 5) atque Daniel (Dan. XIII, 45) prophetiae spiritum pueri perceperunt, quoniam miracula in exemplum operationis non sunt trahenda. Omnipotens enim Deus et linguas infantium facit disertas (Sap. X, 21), et ex ore infantium atque lactentium perficit laudem (Psal. VIII, 3). Sed aliud est quod nos de doctrinae usu atque disciplina discimus, aliud quod de miraculo scimus.

5. Jam vero si quaeritur ut in ipsa quoque aetatis illius expressione mysticum aliquid designetur, absurdum non est quod propheta Dominum, quem verbis denuntiat, ipso quoque aetatis suae tempore ostendat. Anno tricesimo Ezechielis prophetae coeli aperti sunt, et vidit visiones Domini juxta fluvium Chobar, quia quasi tricesimo aetatis suae anno Dominus ad fluvium Jordanem venit. Ibi itaque coeli aperti sunt, quia Spiritus in columba descendit; vox quoque de coelo sonuit, dicens: Hic est filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui (Matth. III, 17).

6. Sed et ipsa Hebraea verba multum nobis ad mysterium interpretandum valent. Nam Chobar interpretatur gravitudo, vel gravitas; Ezechiel, fortitudo Dei; Buzi, despectus vel contemptus; Chaldaei, captivantes, vel quasi daemones. Venit ergo Ezechiel juxta fluvium Chobar; quia enim Chobar gravitudo, vel gravitas dicitur, quid per Chobar fluvium, nisi humanum genus congrue designatur? Quod ab ortu defluit ad mortem, et grave sibi est ex peccatis, quae et perpetrat et portat, quia, sicut scriptum est: Iniquitas in talentum plumbi sedet (Zach. V, 7). Omne enim peccatum grave est, quia non permittit animam ad sublimia levari. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur:

Filii hominum, usquequo gravi corde (Psal. IV, 3)? Scriptum vero de Domino est, Quia ipse est Dei virtus, et Dei sapientia (I Cor. I, 18). Venit ergo Ezechiel juxta fluvium Chobar, quia fortitudo Dei per incarnationis suae mysterium propinquare dignata est peccatorum suorum pondera portanti generi humano, quod ab ortu suo quotidie defluit ad mortem, sicut de illo per Psalmistam dicitur: Et erit tanquam lignum quod plantatum est secus decursus aquarum (Psal. I, 3). Juxta decursus quippe aquarum plantatus est, quia juxta lapsus incarnatus est defluentium populorum. Ezechielem autem fortitudinem Dei, Buzi vero despectum interpretari diximus. Sed Ezechiel filius est Buzi, quia ex illo populo unigenitus Dei incarnari dignatus est, quem propter culpam perfidiae Dominus despexit. Fortitudo ergo Dei ex contemptu, vel despectu nascitur, quia Redemptor noster humanitatem assumere ex populo perfido et contempto dignatus est. Venit vero in terram Chaldaeorum. Chaldaei interpretantur, ut diximus, captivantes, vel quasi daemones. Iniqui etenim, quia et ipsi iniquitates perpetrant, et ad iniquitatem alios persuadendo trahunt, nimirum captivantes sunt. Qui recte quoque et quasi daemones interpretantur, quia et hi qui alios ad iniquitatem suadendo pertrahunt, in semetipsis ministerium daemonum ad iniquitatem suscipiunt, quamvis daemones per naturam non sint. Venit ergo fortitudo Dei in terram Chaldaeorum, quia inter eos Unigenitus Patris apparuit qui in semetipsis ad peccatum defluxerant, et ad peccata alios captivantes trahebant. Sed expositionis sermo ad prophetae nunc personam redeat. VERS. 3. — Et facta est super eum ibi manus Domini.

7. Manus vel brachium Domini Filius dicitur, quia per ipsum omnia facta sunt. De quo etiam Psalmista ait: Fiat manus tua ut salvum me faciat (Psal. CXVIII, 173). Manus quippe Dei quae per divinitatem non est facta, sed genita, per humanitatem facta est, ut humani generis vulnera sanaret. Ibi ergo propheta incarnationem Unigeniti agnovit, ubi super se manum

Domini factam vidit. Quod vero hic subditur: VERS. 4. — Et vidi, et ecce ventus turbinis veniebat ab Aquilone.

8. Intuendum nobis est quis sit in prophetae verbis ordo locutionis. Qui enim superius de se ipso dixerat: Aperti sunt coeli, et vidi visiones Dei, postea tanquam si de alio narret, adjungit: Et facta est super eum ibi manus Domini. Ac deinde quasi ad se revertitur, et dicit: Et vidi, et ecce ventus turbinis veniebat ab Aquilone. Quid est hoc, quod modo Ezechiel loquitur, modo de Ezechiele? Si per totum diceret de se, quaestio non esset. Si per totum diceret quasi de alio, nihilominus quaestio non fuisset. Quid est ergo hoc quod sic variatur sermo propheticus, ut modo Propheta de se loquatur, modo autem de ipso quasi alius loqui videatur? Sed sciendum est quia hi qui prophetiae spiritu replentur, per hoc quod aperte nonnunquam loquuntur de se, et nonnunquam sic de se verba tanquam de aliis proferunt, indicant quia non propheta, sed Spiritus sanctus loquitur per prophetam. Pro eo enim quod per ipsos sermo fit, ipsi loquuntur de se; et pro eo quod aspirante Spiritu sancto loquuntur, idem Spiritus sanctus per ipsos loquitur de ipsis, Veritate attestante quae dicit: Non enim vos estis qui loquimini, sed Spiritus Patris vestri qui loquitur in vobis (Matth. X, 20). Hinc etiam Moyses ait: Erat Moyses vir mitissimus super omnes homines qui morabantur in terra (Num. XII, 3). Qui enim non dicit eram, sed erat, profecto aperte indicat quia is qui per illum de illo loquebatur alius erat. Hinc Joannes ait: Vidit illum discipulum quem ditigebat Jesus (Joan. XXI, 20). Unde et Paulus ut non se esse qui loquebatur ostenderet, dixit: An experimentum quaeritis ejus qui in me loquitur Christus (II Cor. XIII, 3)? Quia igitur in locutione prophetica alter est qui praesidet, alter qui obsequitur, cum de se ipso propheta loquitur persona obsequentis est, cum vero per prophetam Spiritus sanctus loquitur de propheta, sublimitas praesidentis ostenditur. Recte ergo et tanquam de alio dicitur: Et facta est super eum ibi manus Domini; et de se protinus adjungit: Et vidi, et ecce ventus turbinis veniebat ab Aquilone.

Nunc itaque discutiendum nobis est quid sit quod dicit: Et ecce ventus turbinis veniebat ab Aquilone, et nubes magna.

9. Pro eo quod ventus Aquilo constringit in frigore, non incongrue Aquilonis nomine torpor maligni spiritus designatur. Quod Isaias quoque propheta testatur, qui dixisse diabolum denuntiat: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis (Isai. XIV, 13). Malignus enim spiritus montem testamenti tenuit, quia Judaicum populum, qui legem acceperat, sibi in perfidiam subjugavit. Quando enim corda doctorum tenet, monti testamenti diabolus praesidet. Qui etiam in lateribus Aquilonis sedet, quia mentes hominum frigidas possidet. Unde et sponsi voce in Cantico canticorum dicitur: Surge, Aquilo, et veni, Auster, perfla hortum meum, et fluant aromata illius (Cant. IV, 5). Cum enim, jubente Domino, frigidus spiritus recedit, calidus spiritus mentem fidelium occupat; qui hortum Dei, id est sanctam Ecclesiam perflat, ut opiniones virtutum ejus ad multorum notitiam velut aromata defluant. Recedente etenim Aquilone, id est maligno spiritu, sanctus Spiritus mentem quasi Auster replet. Qui dum calefaciendo flaverit, statim de fidelium cordibus aromata virtutum fluunt. Propheta ergo ea quae essent in finem ventura conspiciens, venire ab Aquilone ventum turbinis vidit, quia in extremo saeculi mentes hominum torporis sui frigore malignus spiritus gravius occupabit. Unde scriptum est: Vae terrae et mari, quia descendit diabolus ad vos habens iram magnam, sciens quia modicum tempus habet (Apoc. XII, 12). Antiquus quippe adversarius insidiarum suarum molimina in humanis mentibus gravius exaggeravit. Contra cujus excrescentem superbiam incarnati manifestata est humilitas Dei: atque ut humanum genus a suo languore sanaret, tunc magna apparuit potentia medici, cum languor crevit aegroti.

10. Bene autem maligni spiritus immissio, ventus turbinis appellatur. Turbo quippe aedificium quod tangit, concutiendo subruit. Et omnis antiqui hostis tentatio, quae agitur in mente, ventus est turbinis; quia hanc

concutiendo per desideria, a statu suae rectitudinis evellit. Sed nos ista reticentes quae humano generi erunt ab hoste callido in finem ventura, ad solam Judaeam, ex qua Propheta fuit, et cujus perditionem prophetando conspicit, verba vertamus. Quae incarnato Domino tanto gravius ab Aquilone ventum turbinis pertulit, quanto a sua rectitudine concussa cadens, per torporem mentis in perfidia frigida remansit. Ventus ergo turbinis ab Aquilone venit, cum vitam Judaici populi malignus spiritus in tentatione concussit. Ubi et recte additur: IBID. — Et nubes magna.

11. Quia quanto plus quisque exarsit in crudelitate, tanto amplius obcaecari meruit in ignorantiae suae caligine. Redemptorem quippe humani generis, quem in lege ac prophetis intelligentes exspectaverant, videntes negabant. Unde actum est ut eorum mens magna ignorantiae suae nube tegeretur, ne hunc post inquirentes agnoscerent, quem prius et denuntiare poterant, et amare renuebant. Nam cum modo ejus virtutes et miracula, modo autem passiones conspicerent, in infidelium cordibus nubes magna ab Aquilone venerat, quia ex peccati sui frigore propter infirmitatem passionis illius et inter signa caligabant. Quid vero ex illa nubis magnae caligine sit secutum, subjungitur, cum protinus dicit: IBID. — Et ignis involvens.

12. Ignis enim nomine, cum per significationem dicitur, aliquando Spiritus sanctus, aliquando autem mentis malitia designatur. De bono enim igne scriptum est: Ignem veni mittere in terram; et quid volo, nisi ut accendatur (Luc. XII, 49). Ignis quippe in terram mittitur cum per ardorem sancti Spiritus afflata terrena mens a carnalibus suis desideriis concrematur. De malo autem igne dicitur: Et nunc ignis adversarios consumet (Hebr. X, 27), quia cor pessimum ex sua malitia tabescit. Sicut autem ignis amoris mentem erigit, ita ignis malitiae involvit, quia et Spiritus sanctus cor quod replet elevat, et ardor malitiae ad inferiora semper incurvat. Judaea igitur nube suae ignorantiae caecata, quia mox ad persecutionis nequitiam erupit, igne suo involuta est, quae in obligatione se nequitiae per eamdem ipsam

crudelitatem qua arsit implicavit. Ventus autem turbinis veniebat ab Aquilone, et nubes magna, et ignis involvens, quia ex torporis sui frigore ad ignorantiae caliginem perducta, usque ad malitiam persecutionis erupit. Unde ad alium quoque prophetam dicitur: Quid tu vides? Qui illico respondit: Ollam succensam ego video, et faciem ejus a facie Aquilonis (Jerem. I, 13). Judaeorum quippe mens in persecutione saeviens, atque in crudelitate malitiae undas cogitationum volvens, quid aliud quam olla succensa fuit? Cujus facies a facie Aquilonis esse dicitur, quia si se adverso spiritui per torporem mentis non subderet, contra bonos in tanta malitia non exarsisset. Nubem itaque sequitur ignis involvens, quia in eis caecitatem mentis secuta est crudelitas persecutionis. Si enim cognovissent, nunquam Dominum gloriae crucifixissent (I Cor. II, 8). Sed iste ignis alibi arsit, atque alibi splenduit. Nam subditur: IBID. — Et splendor in circuitu ejus.

13. Dum enim persecutio in Judaea agitur, sancta apostolorum praedicatio in universo mundo dispersa est, sicut ipsi dicunt: Vobis missum fuerat verbum Dei, sed quia indignos vos judicastis, ecce imus ad gentes (Act. XIII, 46). De crudelitate ergo malitiae, quae mentem Judaeae concremavit, omnipotens Deus lucem gentibus sparsit, quia per hoc quod illa Redemptorem suum ac membra ejus persecuta est, sanctis apostolis per diversa dispersis, nos qui in Judaeae circuitu positi in tenebris fuimus, dono coelestis gratiae splendorem veri luminis vidimus. Unde scriptum est: Sedentibus in tenebris et umbra mortis, lux orta est eis (Isai. IX, 2). Iste itaque ignis malitiae qui a Judaeorum cordibus arsit in persecutione, priusquam sanctos apostolos saeviendo affligeret, in ipso se exercuit auctore ac redemptore generis humani. Unde et subditur: IBID. — Et de medio ejus quasi species electri, id est de medio ignis.

14. Quid electri specie, nisi Christus Jesus Mediator Dei et hominum designatur (I Tim. II, 5)? Electrum quippe ex auro et argento est. In electro dum aurum argentumque miscetur, argentum ad claritatem crescit, aurum

vero a suo fulgore pallescit. Illud ad claritatem proficit, hoc a claritate temperatur. Quia igitur in unigenito Dei Filio naturae divinitatis unita est natura nostra, in qua adunatione humanitas in majestatis gloriam excrevit, divinitas vero a sui fulgoris potentia humanis se oculis temperavit, per hoc quod humana natura clarior facta est, quasi per aurum crevit argentum. Et quia divinitas a fulgore suo nostris est aspectibus temperata, quasi aurum nobis palluit per argentum. Illa enim natura immutabilis, quae in se manens innovat omnia, si ita ut est nobis apparere voluisset, fulgore suo nos incenderet potius quam renovaret. Sed claritatem suae magnitudinis temperavit nostris oculis Deus, ut dum nobis ejus claritas temperatur, etiam nostra infirmitas per ejus similitudinem in ejus luce claresceret, et per acceptam gratiam, ut ita dicam, suae habitudinis colorem mutaret. Quasi electrum ergo in igne est Deus factus homo in persecutione. Sequitur: VERS. 5. — Et in medio ejus similitudo quatuor animalium.

15. Quod in medio ejus dicitur, sive electri sive ignis, nil obstat intelligi, quia quatuor haec animalia, sancti scilicet evangelistae, et ex ejusdem Domini incarnatione ad fidei virtutem solidati sunt, et in igne persecutionis multis tribulationibus afflicti.

16. Quod si quis haec quae de primo Domini adventu diximus etiam de secundo velit accipere, celeri assensu sequendus est, quia saepe prophetiae spiritus in uno quod loquitur multa simul intuetur. Ventus enim turbinis ab Aquilone venit, quia nimirum causa peccatorum exigit ut districti judicii concussio omnia simul elementa perturbet. Terror enim perturbationis ultimae inde venire dicitur, unde generatur. Nam quia ad feriendas frigidas peccatorum mentes judicium perturbationis ultimae agitur, recte ab Aquilone ventus turbinis venire perhibetur. Quae videlicet concussio apte ventus turbinis dicitur, quia in illo die cunctorum qui tunc in carne mortali inventi fuerint, in pavore nimio corda commovebuntur. Cum enim coeperit impleri quod scriptum est: Sol obscurabitur, et luna non dabit lumen suum,

et stellae cadent de coelo, et virtutes coelorum commovebuntur (Matth. XXIV, 29), quae mens erit hominis aeterni Judicis sententiam non formidantis? Ibi enim tunc cuncta simul peccata ante oculos redeunt, ibi omnia quae cum delectatione acta sunt ad memoriam cum pavore revocantur, ibi caligo cogitationis miserae ex poena proximae damnationis. Unde et subditur: Et nubes magna. Tunc quippe ex peccatorum memoria sensum mentis deprimit caligo caecitatis, cum unigenitum Dei Filium in forma divinitatis conspicere reprobi non permittuntur. Videbunt enim in quem transfixerunt (Joan. XIX, 37; Zach. XII, 10). Et, Tollatur impius, ne videat gloriam Dei (Isai. XXVI, 10). Ubi et aperte subditur: Et ignis involvens. Quia videlicet ignis ille judicii, qui coelum aereum et terram concremabit, peccatores jam in sua superbia non permittet erigi, sed involvet, quos procul dubio in poena suae damnationis confringet.

17. Et splendor in circuitu ejus. Quia sicut fulgur exit ab Oriente, et paret usque ad Occidentem, ita erit adventus Filii hominis (Matth. XXIV, 27). Ubi nullus tunc a judicio in sua mente latere permittitur, quia ipso judicis fulgore penetratur. De quo mox subditur: Et in medio ejus quasi species electri, id est de medio ignis. Ipse enim angelis atque archangelis omnibusque virtutibus praesidens Redemptor noster, qui velut in electri similitudinem unus ex utraque et in utraque natura et Deus permansit cum Patre, et ad redemptionem nostram factus est mortalis cum hominibus, in suo tunc terrore videbitur, eique ignis judicii in reproborum vindicta famulabitur. Hinc enim scriptum est: Dies Domini declarabit quia in igne revelabitur (I Cor. III, 13). Hinc Psalmista ait: Deus manifestus veniet, Deus noster, et non silebit; ignis in conspectu ejus ardebit, et in circuitu ejus tempestas valida (Psal. XLIX, 3). Hinc Petrus apostolus dicit: Adveniet dies Domini ut fur, in quo coeli magno impetu transibunt, elementa vero ignis ardore solventur (II Pet. III, 10). Et quia tunc sancti omnes qui mundum perfecte reliquerunt judices veniunt, apte mox subditur:

18. Et in medio ejus similitudo quatuor animalium. Quid enim per quatuor animalia, nisi quatuor evangelistae signantur? Nec immerito per evangelistas quatuor perfectorum omnium numerus exprimitur, quia omnes qui in Ecclesia modo perfecti sunt perfectionis suae rectitudinem per eorum Evangelium didicerunt. In medio enim ejus similitudo quatuor animalium, quia illi tunc ejus corpori uniti ejus majestati conjuncti, et simul facti cum eo judices videbuntur, qui modo perfecta opera juxta Evangelica praecepta secuti sunt. Hinc est enim quod ipsis sanctis apostolis dicitur: Vos qui secuti estis me, in regeneratione, cum sederit Filius hominis in sede majestatis suae, sedebitis et vos super sedes duodecim, judicantes duodecim tribus Israel (Matth. XIX, 28). Hinc Isaias ait: Dominus ad judicium veniet cum senioribus populi sui (Isai. III, 14). Hinc Salomon de Ecclesia loquitur, dicens: Nobilis in portis vir ejus, cum sederit cum senatoribus terrae (Prov. XXXI, 23). His itaque sub brevitate transcursis, adventus primi ordinem, sicut coepimus, exsequentes, ad Evangelistarum personas in expositione redeamus. Sequitur: VERS. 5. — Et hic aspectus eorum, similitudo hominis in eis.

19. Cum paulo post sancta haec animalia singulis distincta imaginibus describantur, ut aliud homini, aliud leoni, aliud vitulo, aliud aquilae simile dicatur, quid est quod hoc loco de omnibus simul dicitur, Similitudo hominis in eis? Sed quis hoc loco homo describitur, nisi ille de quo scriptum est: Qui cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo; sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus, et habitu inventus ut homo (Philip. II, 6)? Haec itaque animalia ut surgere ad sanctitatis virtutem valeant, ad hujus hominis similitudinem tendunt. Sancta enim non essent, si hujus hominis similitudinem non haberent, quia quidquid in eis de visceribus pietatis, quidquid de mansuetudine spiritus, quidquid de zelo rectitudinis, quidquid de custodia humilitatis, quidquid de fervore charitatis est, hoc ab ipso fonte

misericordiae, ab ipsa radice mansuetudinis, ab ipsa virtute justitiae, id est a Mediatore Dei et hominum Deo Domino traxerunt. Hujus se hominis similitudinem habere egregius praedicator ostendit, dicens: Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi (I Cor. IV, 16). Ad ejus nos similitudinem surgere admonet, cum dicit: Primus homo de terra terrenus, secundus homo de coelo coelestis. Sicut portavimus imaginem terreni, portemus et imaginem ejus qui de coelo descendit (I Cor. XV, 47). Sanctus etenim quisque in tantum ad similitudinem hujus hominis ducitur, in quantum vitam sui Redemptoris imitatur. Nam ab ejus mandatis atque operibus discordare, quid est aliud quam a similitudine longe recedere? Plangunt autem vitam delinquentium praedicatores sancti: sed de ipso nostro capite scriptum est, quia flevit super Jerusalem (Luc. XIX, 41). Gaudent de bonis actibus subditorum, et recte operantes diligunt; sed de Redemptore nostro scriptum est quia cum adolescens quidam diceret: Haec omnia custodivi a juventute mea (Matth. XIX, 20), magis dilexit eum. Portant illatas contumelias praedicatores sancti, et nullam ad invicem contumeliam reddunt; sed cum Redemptori nostro diceretur: Daemonium habes (Joan. VIII, 48), non injuriam reddidit, sed mansuete respondit, dicens: Ego daemonium non habeo (Ibid., 49). Fervent zelo rectitudinis praedicatores sancti; sed Redemptor omnium, flagello de resticulis facto, vendentes et ementes ejecit de templo, cathedras vendentium columbas evertit, et nummulariorum effudit aes. (Matth. XXI, 12; Joan. II, 15). In omni quod fortiter agunt, humilitatem tota intentione custodiunt; sed per Redemptorem nostrum dicitur: Discite a me, quia mitis sum, et humilis corde (Matth. XI, 29). Persecutores quoque suos diligunt praedicatores sancti; sed ipse, auctor omnium ac redemptor in passione positus, pro persecutoribus intercedit, dicens: Pater, ignosce illis, quia nesciunt quid faciunt (Luc. XXIII, 34). Membra sua ponunt in passione pro fratribus; sed pro electorum vita usque ad mortem se tradidit auctor vitae. Dicatur ergo de sanctis animalibus quod

similitudo hominis in eis est, quia quod sancta, quod mira sunt, hoc in eis de specie similitudinis est, id est de virtute imitationis. Caput quippe omnium nostrum Redemptor noster est. Et per Salomonem dicitur: Oculi sapientis in capite ejus, stultus autem in tenebris ambulat (Eccle. II, 14). Tunc enim in capite oculos habemus, cum vitam Redemptoris nostri tacita cogitatione conspicimus, cum omnis nostra intentio in ejus imitationem se erigit, ne si vias lucis aspicere oculus mentis neglexerit, statim clausus in tenebris erroris cadat. Ad hujus similitudinem hominis surgere festinabat Propheta, cum diceret: In mandatis tuis exercebor, et considerabo vias tuas (Psal. CXVIII, 15). Qui enim vias Domini tacitus in mente considerat, et se exercere in mandatis illius festinat, quid aliud in semetipso nisi imaginem novi hominis reformat? Quod quia in sanctorum cordibus incessanter agitur, recte nunc de animalibus dicitur: Similitudo hominis in eis.

20. Post hanc vero similitudinem quae nunc in moribus tenetur, quandoque ad similitudinem gloriae pervenitur. Hinc etenim Joannes dicit: Nunc filii Dei sumus, et nondum apparuit quid erimus. Scimus autem quoniam cum apparuerit, similes ei erimus (I Joan. III, 2). Qui mox unde hoc fieri valeat adjungit dicens: Quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est (Ibid.). Esse enim Dei est aeternum hunc atque incommutabilem permanere. Nam omne quod mutatur desinit esse quod fuit, et incipit esse quod non fuit; Dei vero esse, est dissimiliter nunquam esse. Unde ad Moysen dicitur: Ego sum qui sum. Et dices filiis Israel: Qui est, misit me ad vos (Exod. III, 14). Jacobus quoque ait: Apud quem non est transmutatio, nec vicissitudinis obumbratio (Jac. I, 17). Itaque per Joannem dicitur: Similes ei erimus, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est, quia per hoc quod aspicimus ejus essentiam naturae, a mutabilitate nostra liberati, figimur in aeternitate. Immutabimur quippe in ipso quem videbimus, quia morte carebimus videndo vitam, Mutabilitatem nostram transcendemus videndo immutabilem. Corruptione nulla tenebimur videndo incorruptum.

21. Erit autem tunc similitudo hominis etiam in corporibus nostris. Hinc etenim per Paulum dicitur: Nostra conversatio in coelis est; unde etiam Salvatorem exspectamus Dominum Jesum Christum, qui reformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae, configuratum corpori claritatis suae (Philip. III, 20). Erunt ergo tunc electorum corpora claritati dominici corporis configurata, quae etsi aequalitatem gloriae ejus non habent per naturam, similitudinem tamen configurationis ejus habebunt per gratiam. Quia itaque similitudo vitae ejus nunc in moribus trahitur electorum, et in resurrectione sequitur similitudo aeternitatis in mente, quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est; et quia similitudinem quoque illius etiam corpora nostra percipient in configuratione, dicatur recte de sanctis animalibus: Similitudo hominis in eis. Haec nos in expositionis exordio praelibasse sufficiat, ut loquendi virtus silentio refota, ad indaganda mysteria quae sequuntur robustior exsurgat. Certi etenim sumus quia ipsum, de quo loquimur habemus adjutorem, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA III

Exponuntur quatuor versus, a sexto ad decimum, de sanctis praedicatoribus et de duplici eorum vita, activa et contemplativa.

1. Sancta quatuor animalia quae per prophetiae spiritum futura praevidentur subtili narratione describuntur cum dicitur: EZECH. I, 6. — Quatuor facies uni, et quatuor pennae uni. Quid per faciem nisi notitia, et quid per pennas nisi volatus exprimitur? Per faciem quippe unusquisque cognoscitur, per pennas vero in altum avium corpora sublevantur. Facies itaque ad fidem pertinet, penna ad contemplationem. Per fidem namque ab omnipotenti Deo cognoscimur, sicut ipse de suis ovibus dicit: Ego sum pastor bonus, et cognosco oves meas, et cognoscunt me meae (Joan. X, 14). Qui rursus: Ego scio quos elegerim (Joan. XIII, 18). Per contemplationem vero quia super nosmetipsos tollimur, quasi in aera levamur. Quatuor ergo facies uni sunt, quia si requiras quid Matthaeus de incarnatione Domini sentiat, hoc nimirum sentit quod Marcus, Lucas et Joannes. Si quaeras quid Joannes sentiat, hoc procul dubio quod Lucas, Marcus et Matthaeus. Si quaeras quid Marcus, hoc quod Matthaeus, Joannes et Lucas. Si quaeras quid Lucas, hoc quod Joannes, Matthaeus et Marcus sentit. Quatuor ergo facies uni sunt, quia notitia fidei, qua cognoscuntur a Deo, ipsa est in uno, quae est simul in quatuor. Quidquid enim in uno inveneris, hoc in omnibus simul quatuor recte cognoscis.

2. Et quatuor pennae uni, quia Dei omnipotentis Filium Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum simul omnes concorditer praedicant, et ad divinitatem ejus mentis oculos levantes, penna contemplationis volant. Evangelistarum ergo facies ad humanitatem Domini pertinent, penna ad divinitatem, quia in eo quem corporeum aspiciunt, quasi facies intendunt. Sed dum hunc esse incircumscriptum atque incorporeum ex divinitate annuntiant, per contemplationis pennam quasi in aera levantur. Quia itaque et una fides incarnationis ejus in omnibus, et par contemplatio divinitatis

ejus in singulis, recte nunc dicitur: Quatuor facies uni, et quatuor pennae uni. Sed quae virtus esset, si fidem atque contemplationem Domini habentes praedicatores illius sancta opera non haberent? Sequitur: VERS. 7. — Et pedes eorum pedes recti.

3. Quid per pedes nisi gressus actuum designantur? Quatuor ergo animalium pedes recti esse describuntur, quia sanctorum evangelistarum atque omnium perfectorum opera ad sequendam iniquitatem non sunt retorta. Hi autem pedes rectos non habent, qui ad mala mundi quae reliquerunt reflectuntur. De quibus scriptum est: Canis reversus ad suum vomitum, et sus lota in volutabro luti (Prov. XXVI, 11; II Pet. II, 22). Dolebat de quibusdam doctor egregius, quod pedum rectitudinem retro retorserant, quibus per increpationem dicebat: Quomodo convertimini iterum ad infirma et egena elementa, quibus denuo servire vultis? Dies observatis, et menses, et tempora, et annos. Timeo vos, ne forte sine causa laboraverim in vobis (Galat. IV, 9). Qui alios admonet, dicens: Propter quod remissas manus, et soluta genua erigite, et gressus rectos facite pedibus vestris (Hebr. XII, 12). Ut vero in eisdem sanctis praedicatoribus vitae gravitas, fortitudo, atque discretio monstraretur, recte subjungitur: IBID. — Planta pedis eorum quasi planta pedis vituli.

4. Quia enim praedicatores sancti boum nomine designantur docet Paulus apostolus, legis testimonium exponens: Non obturabis os bovi trituranti (I Cor. IX, 9; Deut. XXV, 4). In sanctis ergo praedicatoribus planta pedis est vituli, scilicet mature incedens, et fortis, et divisa, quia unusquisque praedicator et venerationem habet in maturitate, et fortitudinem in opere, et divisionem ungulae in discretione. Non enim facile praedicatio ejus accipitur, si levis in moribus esse videatur. Et nulla erit maturitatis ostensio, si contra adversa omnia non adfuerit operis fortitudo. Virtutis autem meritum ipsa fortitudo operis admittit, si discreta in intellectu non fuerit. Ecce enim sacram Scripturam legimus: si omnia ad litteram

sentiamus, virtutem discretionis amisimus; si omnia ad spiritalem allegoriam ducimus, similiter indiscretionis stultitia ligamur. Legunt enim sacra eloquia praedicatores sancti, et aliquando in historia litteram suscipiunt, aliquando vero per significationem litterae spiritum requirunt. Et modo bona facta patrum praecedentium, sicut juxta litteram inveniunt, imitantur; modo quaedam, quae juxta historiam imitanda non sunt, spiritaliter intelligunt, et ad provectum tendunt. Quid ergo aliud praedicatores sancti in suo opere nisi in pede ungulam findunt? De quibus adhuc apte subditur: IBID. — Et scintillae quasi aspectus aeris candentis.

5. Aeris metallum valde sonorum est. Et recte voces praedicantium aeri comparantur, quia in omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum (Psal. XVIII, 5). Bene autem aes candens dicitur, quia vita praedicantium sonat et ardet. Ardet enim desiderio, sonat verbo. Aes ergo candens est praedicatio accensa. Sed de candente aere scintillae prodeunt, quia de eorum exhortationibus verba flammantia ad aures audientium procedunt. Recte autem praedicatorum verba scintillae appellata sunt, quia eos quos in corde tetigerint incendunt. Considerandum quoque est quod scintillae subtiles sunt valde et tenues, quia cum praedicatores sancti de coelesti patria loquuntur, non tantum valent aperire verbo quantum possunt ardere desiderio. Ex eorum ergo lingua quasi quaedam ad nos scintillae veniunt, quia de coelesti patria in eorum voce vix tenue aliquid cognoscitur, quod tamen ab eis non tenuiter amatur. Neque enim coelestem gloriam aut tantum videre sufficiunt quantum est, aut tantum loqui praevalent quantum vident. Candens ergo aes scintillas projicit quando vix tenuiter praedicator loqui sufficit hoc unde ipse fortiter ignescit. Divina autem pietate agitur ut ex ipsis scintillis tenuissimis audientis animus inflammetur, quia sunt quidam qui dum parva audiunt majore desiderio replentur; et inde perfecte in Dei amore ardent, unde vix tenuissimas verborum scintillas acceperunt.

6. Verbum quippe praedicationis semen in corde audientis est. Et auditor bonus inde profert postmodum magnam messem scientiae, unde parvum prius acceperat semen linguae. Cui rei bene concinit factum in vidua ab Elisaeo propheta miraculum, quae, ne duos filios auferente creditore amitteret, prophetae dictis obedivit, et ex eo quod parum olei habebat, per vasa vacua effudit, quae cuncta post usque ad summum repleta sunt, et ex eorum repletione mulier a creditoris sui debito est soluta (IV Reg. IV, 2, seq.). Quae videlicet mulier quam aliam nisi sanctam Ecclesiam signat, duorum populorum, id est Judaici et gentilis, quasi duorum filiorum matrem? Quae prius ex perverso opere per callidi spiritus persuasionem quasi quemdam peccati nummum a creditore acceperat, et duos quos in fide genuit amittere filios timebat. Sed prophetae verbis, id est Scripturae sacrae praeceptis, obediens, ex parvo quod habebat olei vasa vacua infudit, quia dum ab unius ore doctoris parum quid de amore Divinitatis multorum vacuae mentes audiunt, exuberante gratia, unguento divini amoris usque ad summum replentur. Et multorum jam nunc corda, quae prius fuerant vacua vascula, unguento spiritus plena sunt, quae ex paucitate olei solummodo infusa videbantur. Quod dum aliis atque aliis datur, et ab auditoribus fides accipitur, Sareptana mulier, videlicet sancta Ecclesia, sub creditoris sui jam debito non tenetur. Sequitur: VERS. 8. — Et manus hominis sub pennis eorum in quatuor partes.

7. Possunt hoc in loco quatuor partes quatuor mundi regiones accipi, scilicet Oriens, Occidens, Meridies, et Septentrio, quia sanctorum praedicatio auctore Deo in cunctis mundi partibus est egressa.

8. Possumus etiam per quatuor partes principales quatuor virtutes accipere, ex quibus reliquae virtutes oriuntur, videlicet prudentiam, fortitudinem, justitiam atque temperantiam. Quas nimirum virtutes tunc veraciter accipimus, cum earum ordinem custodimus. Prima quippe prudentia, secunda fortitudo, tertia justitia, quarta temperantia est. Quid

enim prodesse potest prudentia, si fortitudo desit? Scire etenim cuiquam quod non potest facere poena magis quam virtus est. Sed qui prudenter intelligit quod agat, et fortiter agit quod intellexerit, jam procul dubio justus est; sed ejus justitiam temperantia sequi debet, quia plerumque justitia, si modum non habet, in crudelitatem cadit. Ipsa ergo justitia vere justitia est, quae se temperantiae freno moderatur, ut in zelo quo quisque fervet, sit etiam temperans; ne si plus ferveat, perdat justitiam, cujus servare moderamina ignorat.

9. Duae autem sunt sanctorum praedicatorum vitae, activa scilicet, et contemplativa; sed activa prior est tempore quam contemplativa, quia ex bono opere tenditur ad contemplationem. Contemplativa autem major est merito quam activa, quia haec in usu praesentis operis laborat, illa vero sapore intimo venturam jam requiem degustat. Quid itaque per manus nisi activa, et quid per pennas nisi contemplativa vita signatur? Manus ergo hominis sub pennis eorum est, id est virtus operis sub volatu contemplationis. Quod bene in Evangelio duae illae mulieres designant, Martha scilicet et Maria. Martha etenim satagebat circa frequens ministerium; Maria autem sedebat ad pedes Domini, et verba ejus audiebat (Luc. X, 39, 40). Erat ergo una intenta operi, altera contemplationi. Una activae serviebat per exterius ministerium, altera contemplativae per suspensionem cordis in verbum. Et quamvis activa bona sit, melior tamen est contemplativa, quia illa cum mortali vita deficit, ista vero in immortali vita plenius excrescit. Unde dicitur: Maria optimam partem elegit, quae non auferetur ab ea (Ibid., 42). Quia igitur activa minor est merito, quam contemplativa, recte nunc dicitur: Manus hominis sub pennis eorum. Nam etsi per activam boni aliquid agimus, ad coeleste tamen desiderium per contemplativam volamus. Unde et apud S. Moysen activa servitus, contemplativa autem libertas vocatur.

10. Et cum utraque vita ex dono sit gratiae, quandiu tamen inter proximos vivimus, una nobis in necessitate est, altera in voluntate. Quis enim cognoscens Deum ad ejus regnum ingreditur, nisi prius bene operetur? Sine contemplativa ergo vita intrare possunt ad coelestem patriam, qui bona quae possunt operari, non negligunt; sine activa autem intrare non possunt, si negligunt bona operari quae possunt. Illa ergo in necessitate, haec in voluntate est. Illa in servitute, ista in libertate. Hinc est enim quod ad Moysen dicitur: Si emeris servum Hebraeum, sex annis serviet tibi, in septimo egredietur liber gratis. Cum quali veste intraverit, cum toli exeat. Si habens uxorem, et uxor egrediatur simul. Sin autem dederit illi dominus uxorem, et pepererit filios et filias, mulier et liberi ejus erunt domini sui, ipse vero exibit cum vestitu suo. Quod si dixerit servus, Diligo dominum meum, et uxorem ac liberos, non egrediar liber, offerat eum dominus diis, et applicabitur ad ostium et postes, perforabitque aurem ejus subula, et erit ei servus in saeculum (Exod. XXI, 2, seq.). Paulo latius testimonium dedimus, ut distinctionem servitutis atque libertatis in utraque vita monstraremus. Sed onerosum esse non debet si hoc exponendo exsequimur, unde haec ipsa quae diximus affirmemus.

11. Hebraeus enim transiens interpretatur. Et servus Hebraeus emitur quando unusquisque qui jam ab hoc saeculo mente transit servitio omnipotentis Domini subditur. Ille etenim vero Deo servire appetit, qui ab hoc saeculo mente transire didicerit. Sic S. Moyses transivit, ut videret visum (Exod. III, 3). Sic S. David cum videret impium exaltatum et elevatum super cedros Libani, transivit, et ecce non erat (Psal. LXVI, 35). Quia iniquorum potentias esse magnum aliquid fortasse credimus, nisi ad permanens saeculum mente transeamus. Servus vero Hebraeus emptus sex annis servire praecipitur, ita ut in septimo liber exeat gratis. Quid enim per senarium numerum nisi activae vitae perfectio designatur? quid per septenarium nisi contemplativa exprimitur? Sex ergo annis servit, et

septimo egreditur liber, qui per activam vitam quam perfecte exhibuerit ad contemplativae vitae libertatem transit. Et notandum quod gratis liber egreditur, quia ii qui postquam omnia fecerint dicunt se inutiles servos (Luc. XVII, 10), eis procul dubio sicut ipsa activa fuit ex munere, ita erit ex gratia etiam contemplativa. Cum quali veste intraverit, cum tali exeat, quia omnino necesse est ut unusquisque nostrum in hoc quod incipit perseveret, atque usque ad finem operis in ea qua inchoavit intentione perduret. Ille quippe bene ad contemplativam transit, qui in activa vita intentionis suae vestem ad deteriora non mutaverit. Et sunt nonnulli qui priusquam omnipotentis Dei servitio in sancta conversatione socientur, jam bona operari diligunt. Sunt vero alii qui bona opera, postquam ad servitium omnipotentis Dei venerint, discunt. Qui ergo operationem bonam et priusquam ad Dei servitium venerit habere studuit, Hebraeus servus cum uxore emptus est.

12. Et plerumque is qui talis est potest ad contemplativam vitam transire, et tamen activam non deserere. Unde et illic subditur: Si habens uxorem, et uxor egrediatur simul. Cum eo enim ad libertatem et uxor egreditur, quando is qui ad contemplationem pervenit etiam foris actionem boni operis qua prodesse possit aliis non relinquit. Sin autem Dominus dederit illi uxorem, et pepererit filios et filias, mulier et liberi ejus erunt Domini sui, ipse vero exibit cum vestitu suo. Servo empto dominus dat uxorem, cum praedicator quisque eum quem juri omnipotentis Dei mancipaverit, bonae actioni conjungit. Nam et praedicatores domini vocantur, sicut Elisaeo prophetae de praedicatore suo dicitur: Scis quod dominus tuus tollatur a te (IV Reg. II, 3)? Uxor vero servi emptitii filios et filias parit, quando bona actio fortes vel teneros fructus generat. Sed mulier quae a domino data est eidem domino cum filiis remanet, ipse vero servus exit cum vestitu suo, quia bona actio, vel ejusdem bonae actionis fructus, praedicatoris mercedi reputantur. Ipse vero in desiderii sui intentione perdurans, per supernam gratiam ad

contemplationem liber egreditur: Quod si dixerit servus, Diligo dominum meum, et uxorem ac liberos; non egrediar liber (Exod. XXI, 5). Servus dominum suum diligit, quando praedicatoris verba sollicita mente custodit. Uxorem quoque amans et liberos, liber egredi recusat, quando activam vitam ejusque fructus diligens, transire ad contemplativam non vult, quia bona se opera habere in ministerii sui servitute considerans, ad libertatis quietem recusat secedere. Sed offerat eum dominus diis, et applicetur ad ostium et postes, et perforet aurem ejus subula, ut sit ei servus in saeculum. Is enim qui in activa disposuit vita perdurare, a domino diis offertur, quando a praedicatore suo antiquorum patrum dictis imbuitur, qui nobis in via omnipotentis Domini sacerdotes fuerunt. Atque ad ostium et postes tabernaculi ducitur, ut de ingressu coelestis habitaculi altius aliquid audiat, et tremendi judicii diem subtiliter agnoscat, ne per bona opera quae facit placere hominibus appetat. Sicque auris ejus subula perforatur, dum mens illius timoris Dei subtilitate percutitur, ut, verbi acumine transfixa, per omne quod agit noverit ingressum regni semper attendere, et quasi ab ostio et poste tabernaculi perforatam aurem portare.

13. Qui erit servus in saeculum, ut esse post saeculum liber possit. In saeculum etenim servus est, qui per activam vitam hominibus servire disposuit, ut post praesens saeculum ad libertatem veram valeat pervenire. De qua per Paulum dicitur: Quia et ipsa creatura liberabitur a servitute corruptionis in libertatem gloriae filiorum Dei. Tunc enim in nobis vera libertas erit, cum ad gloriam filiorum Dei adoptio nostra pervenerit. Nunc vero non solum activa vita in servitute est, sed ipsa quoque contemplatio, qua super nos rapimur, libertatem mentis adhuc perfecte non obtinet, sed imitatur, quia illa quies intima in aenigmate videtur. Ipsa tamen in quantalibet sit contemplationis angustia, activa vita jam valde est latior atque sublimior, quae ad quamdam mentis libertatem transit, temporalia non cogitans, sed aeterna. Quia itaque contemplativa vita ad superiora evolat, et

activae vitae longe superest quadam, ut ita dicam, dignitate securitatis suae, apte nunc dicitur: Et manus hominis sub pennis eorum.

14. Sin vero hoc in loco homo Redemptor noster accipitur, manus hominis sub pennis eorum est, quia nisi Deus homo fieret, qui mentes praedicantium ad coelestia sublevasset, illa quae apparent animalia non volarent. Nec immerito manus hominis esse sub pennis dicitur, quia de eodem Redemptore nostro scriptum est: Qui cum sit splendor gloriae, et figura substantiae ejus, portansque omnia (Hebr. I, 3). Ejus ergo manus corda nostra portat, ejus manus in contemplatione nos sublevat. Nisi enim, ut dictum est, omnipotens Verbum propter homines homo fieret, humana corda ad contemplandam Verbi excellentiam non volarent. Inde ergo excelsae factae sunt hominum mentes, unde inter homines apparuit humilis Deus. Dicatur itaque de sanctis animalibus, dicatur: Et manus hominis sub pennis eorum. De quibus adhuc subditur: VERS. 8, 9. — Et facies et pennas per quatuor partes habebant, junctaeque erant pennae eorum alterius ad alterum.

15. Per quatuor partes facies et pennas habent, quia in cunctis mundi regionibus praedicantes demonstrant quidquid de humanitate, quidquid de divinitate nostri Redemptoris sentiunt. Quia dum incarnatum Deum ubique praedicant, in quatuor mundi partibus faciem demonstrant. Dumque eum esse unum cum Patre et Spiritu sancto annuntiant, ubique penna contemplationis volant. Quorum pennae junctae sunt alterius ad alterum, quia omnis eorum virtus, omnisque sapientia, qua caeteros homines contemplationis suae volatu transcendunt, vicissim sibi in pace atque unanimitate conjungitur. Unde scriptum est: Quae desursum est sapientia, primum quidem pudica est, deinde pacifica (Jac. III, 17). Unde et eisdem suis praedicatoribus Veritas dicit: Habete in vobis sal, et pacem habete inter vos (Marc. IX, 49). Penna ergo animalium alterius ad alterum jungitur, quia sanctorum praedicatorum virtus atque sapientia vicissim sibi in charitatis

atque concordiae pace sociatur. Penna autem alterius ab altero divisa esset, si in hoc quod unusquisque in sapientiam evolat, habere pacem cum altero recusaret. Sequitur: VERS. 9. — Non revertebantur cum incederent, sed unumquodque ante faciem suam gradiebatur.

16. Pennata animalia, videlicet praedicatores sancti, cum incedunt, minime revertuntur, quia sic a terrenis actibus ad spiritalia pertranseunt, ut ad ea quae reliquerunt, ulterius nullatenus reflectantur. Quasi enim per quamdam viam eis incedere est mente ire semper ad meliora. Quo contra de reprobis dicitur quia reversi sunt corde in Aegyptum (Num. XIV, 3, 4). Et per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Nemo mittens manum in aratrum, et aspiciens retro, aptus est regno Dei (Luc. IX, 62). Manum quippe in aratrum mittere est quasi per quemdam compunctionis vomerem ad proferendos fructus terram sui cordis aperire. Sed retro post aratrum aspicit, qui post exordia boni operis ad mala revertitur quae reliquit. Quod quia electis Dei minime contingit, recte nunc per prophetam dicitur: Non revertebantur cum incederent.

17. Qui cur non revertantur indicat cum subjungit: Unumquodque ante faciem suam gradiebatur. Ante nos enim aeterna sunt, post nos temporalia, quia et illa pergentes invenimus, et ista recedentes quasi post dorsum relinquimus. Unde et magnum illud pennatum animal dicebat quod usque ad coeli tertii secreta volaverat: Unum vero, quae retro sunt oblitus, in ea quae sunt ante extendens me, sequor ad palmam supernae vocationis (Philip. III, 13, 14). In anteriora etenim extentus, eorum quae retro sunt oblitus fuerat, quia, temporalia despiciens, sola quae sunt aeterna requirebat. Ante faciem ergo suam gradiuntur sancta animalia, quia et ea quae reliquerunt nullo jam appetitu respiciunt, et in aeternis quae appetunt sub contemplationis suae oculis boni operis pedem ponunt.

18. Quisquis itaque jam ante faciem suam ambulare decreverit, magna ei consideratione pensandum est quod aliter retro respicitur ex opere, atque

aliter ex cogitatione. Sunt etenim quidam qui magna deliberant, et, peccatorum suorum conscii, multa ex his quae possident egenis distribuere pertractant, ut culpas suas ante Dei oculos misericordiae visceribus redimant. Jamque haec operari inchoant, et plerumque cum operantur paupertatis timor eorum animum concutit, atque, timentes ne egeant, erga egentes tenaces fiunt, seseque ab ea quam coeperunt bona operatione suspendunt. Hi nimirum incedentes reversi sunt, quia ante faciem suam ambulare noluerunt. Contra quos recte per Salomonem dicitur: Propter frigus piger arare noluit, mendicabit ergo aestate, et non dabitur ei (Prov. XX, 4). Qui enim nunc propter pavorem mentis atque torporem bene operari negligit, cum sol justitiae in judicio velut in aestate claruerit, mendicat vitam, sed non accipit, quia propter illam bona operari contempsit. Alius, despectis carnis desideriis, cuncta relinquere et omnipotentis Dei se subdere servitio pertractat, seque ipsum restringere sub continentiae et castitatis freno deliberat; sed cum cecidisse alios etiam post castitatem conspicit, hoc ipsum facere quod deliberaverat pertimescit. Fitque ut retro per cogitationem redeat, qui ad anteriora respiciens jam mentis gressibus ad alta ibat. De quo bene per Salomonem dicitur: Qui observat ventum, non seminat; et qui considerat nubes, nunquam metet (Eccle. XI, 4). Venti quippe nomine malignus spiritus, qui mentem tentationibus impellit; nubis vero appellatione peccator exprimitur, qui tentationis impulsione commovetur. Qui ergo attendit ventum, non seminat, et qui considerat nubes, nunquam metit, quia is qui tentationes maligni spiritus metuens, et iniquorum lapsus conspiciens, semetipsum desperat, neque nunc exercetur in bono semine operis, neque post reficietur de munere justae retributionis. Sunt vero nonnulli qui bona quidem quae noverunt operantur, atque haec operantes, meliora deliberant; sed retractantes meliora quae deliberaverant, immutant; et quidem bona agunt quae coeperant, sed a melioribus quae deliberaverant succumbunt. Hi nimirum ante humana judicia stare videntur

in opere, sed ante omnipotentis Dei oculos ceciderunt in deliberatione. Unde fit plerumque ut et bonum opus eorum minus Deo placeat, quia cum pes mentis in meliori gradu deliberationis inconstanter ponitur, hoc ipsa cogitationis inconstantia accusat. Sed quia perfecti quique magna se discretionis subtilitate conspiciunt, ne ad deteriora unquam vel in opere, vel in cogitatione delabantur, quantum quotidie proficiant incessanter pensant, recte de his dicitur: Non revertebantur cum incederent, sed unumquodque ante faciem suam gradiebatur.

19. Inter haec igitur considerare libet nos ad ista tractanda qui sumus, et unde venimus, et usque ad quae sacri eloquii mysteria perscrutanda sublevamur. Certe in antiquis parentibus nostris cultores idolorum fuimus, sed ecce per spiritum gratiae verba jam coelestia rimamur. Unde hoc nobis? Sed implevit Redemptor humani generis quod per prophetam dixit: Et deserta in ubertatem versa advenae comedent (Isa. V, 17). Haec quippe prophetarum dicta deserta apud Judaeos fuerunt, quia per intellectum mysticum ea excolere inquirendo noluerunt. Nobis autem in ubertatem versa sunt, quia juxta historiam visionis dicta largiente Deo menti nostrae spiritaliter sapiunt, et jam advenae comedimus quae cives legis manducare noluerunt. Sint gratiae Unigenito, sit laus aeternae Sapientiae, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA IV

In explicatione versuum decimi, undecimi et duodecimi inchoati, multa praecepta moralia, praesertim de continua in Deum intentione, et ad se attentione proponuntur.

1. Per sanctum prophetiae spiritum pennata animalia subtiliter describuntur, ut per haec Evangelistarum significari personas ipsa nobis subtilitas descriptionis aperiat, nihilque sermo Dei nostro intellectui dubietatis relinquat. Ecce enim dicitur: VERS. 10. — Similitudo autem vultus eorum, facies hominis, et facies leonis a dextris ipsorum quatuor; facies autem bovis a sinistris ipsorum quatuor; et facies aquilae desuper ipsorum quatuor. Quod enim quatuor haec pennata animalia sanctos quatuor Evangelistas designent, ipsa uniuscujusque libri evangelici exordia testantur. Nam quia ab humana generatione coepit, jure per hominem Matthaeus; quia per clamorem in deserto, recte designatur per leonem Marcus; quia a sacrificio exorsus est, bene per vitulum Lucas; quia vero a divinitate Verbi coepit, digne per aquilam significatur Joannes, qui dicens: In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum (Joan. I, 1), dum in ipsam Divinitatis substantiam intendit, quasi more aquilae oculos in solem fixit. Sed quia electi omnes membra sunt Redemptoris nostri, ipse autem Redemptor noster caput est omnium electorum, per hoc quod membra ejus figurata sunt, nihil obstat si etiam in his omnibus et ipse signetur. Ipse enim unigenitus Dei Filius veraciter factus est homo; ipse in sacrificio nostrae redemptionis dignatus est mori ut vitulus: ipse per virtutem suae fortitudinis surrexit ut leo. Leo etiam apertis oculis dormire perhibetur, quia in ipsa morte in qua ex humanitate Redemptor noster dormire potuit, ex divinitate sua immortalis permanendo vigilavit. Ipse etiam post resurrectionem suam ascendens ad coelos, in superioribus est elevatus ut aquila. Totum ergo simul nobis est, qui et nascendo homo, et moriendo vitulus, et resurgendo leo, et ad coelos

ascendendo aquila factus est. Sed quia per haec animalia evangelistas quatuor, et sub eorum specie simul perfectos omnes jam superius significari diximus (Hom. 3), restat ut quomodo unusquisque electorum istis animalium visionibus exprimitur ostendamus.

2. Omnis etenim electus atque in via Dei perfectus, et homo, et vitulus, et leo simul et aquila est. Homo enim rationale est animal. Vitulus autem in sacrificio mactari solet. Leo fortis est bestia, sicut scriptum est: Leo vero fortissimus bestiarum, ad nullius pavebit occursum (Prov. XXX, 30). Aquila ad sublimia evolat, et irreverberatis oculis solis radiis intendit. Omnis itaque qui in ratione perfectus est, homo est. Et quoniam semetipsum ab hujus mundi voluptate mortificat, vitulus est. Quia vero ipsa sua spontanea mortificatione contra adversa omnia fortitudinem securitatis habet, unde scriptum est: Justus autem quasi leo confidens absque terrore erit (Prov. XXVIII, 1), leo est. Quia vero sublimiter contemplatur ea quae coelestia atque aeterna sunt, aquila est. Igitur quoniam justus quisque per rationem homo, per sacrificium mortificationis suae vitulus, per fortitudinem securitas leo, per contemplationem vero efficitur aquila, recte per haec sancta animalia signari unusquisque perfectus potest. Quod idcirco dicimus, ut ea quae de quatuor animalibus dicta sunt, pertinere quoque etiam ad perfectorum singulos demonstremus.

3. Sed magna nobis de eisdem evangelistis et sanctis praedicatoribus quaestio oritur, cur homo et leo a dextris ipsorum quatuor, vitulus vero a sinistris ipsorum quatuor esse perhibetur. Neque enim sine admiratione est cur duo illa a dextris et unum hoc esse a sinistris dicitur. Et rursum quaerendum cur aquila non a dextris, vel sinistris, sed desuper ipsorum quatuor esse memoratur. Duas itaque nobis quaestiones objecimus, quas oportet ut aperiente Domino dissolvamus. Homo igitur et leo a dextris, vitulus vero a sinistris esse perhibetur. A dextris etenim laeta, a sinistris vero tristia habemus. Unde et sinistrum nobis esse dicimus hoc quod

adversum esse deputamus. Et, sicut praefati sumus, per hominem incarnatio, per vitulum passio, per leonem vero auctoris nostri resurrectio designatur. De incarnatione autem unigeniti Filii, qua redempti sumus, omnes electi laetati sunt; de morte vero illius ipsi electorum primi sancti apostoli contristati, qui iterum de ejus resurrectione gavisi sunt. Quia ergo ejus et nativitas et resurrectio laetitiam discipulis praebuit, quos ejus passio contristavit, homo et leo a dextris, vitulus vero a sinistris ejus fuisse describitur. Ipsi namque evangelistae sancti de ejus humanitate gavisi sunt, de ejus resurrectione confirmati, qui de ejus passione fuerant contristati. Homo ergo et leo eis a dextris est, quia Redemptoris nostri eos incarnatio vivificavit, resurrectio confirmavit. Sed vitulus a sinistris, quia mors illius eos ad momentum temporis in infidelitate prostravit. Jure autem locus aquilae non juxta, sed desuper esse describitur, quia sive per hoc quod ejus ascensionem signat, seu quia Verbum Patris Deum apud Patrem esse denuntiat, super evangelistas caeteros virtute contemplationis excrevit; cum quibus etsi simul de ejus Deitate loquitur, hanc tamen omnibus subtilius contemplatur. Sed si aquila cum tribus aliis adjuncta, quatuor animalia esse memorantur, mirum quomodo desuper ipsorum quatuor esse describitur, nisi quia Joannes per hoc quod in principio Verbum vidit, etiam super semetipsum transiit. Nam nisi et se transisset, Verbum in principio non vidisset (Joan. I, 1). Quia ergo et semetipsum transgressus est, non jam solummodo super tria, sed adjuncto et se, super quatuor fuit. Sequitur: VERS. 11. — Et facies eorum et pennae eorum extentae desuper.

4. Facies et pennae extentae desuper describuntur, quia omnis intentio omnisque contemplatio sanctorum super se tendit, ut illud possit adipisci quod in coelestibus appetit. Sive enim bono operi, sive vero invigilet contemplationi, tunc veraciter hoc quod agit bonum est, quando ei complacere concupiscit a quo est. Nam qui bona agere videtur, et per haec non Deo, sed hominibus placere desiderat, intentionis suae faciem deorsum

premit. Et qui idcirco in sacro eloquio ea quae divinitatis sunt contemplatur, ut per hoc quod intelligit occupari ad quaestiones possit, quia non dulcedine quaesitae beatitudinis satiari appetit, sed doctus videri, iste nimirum intellectus sui pennas desuper non extendit; sed quoniam sensus sui vigilantiam in terreno appetitu occupat, pennas quas sublevare in altum et quibus sublevari ipse potuit in imis deponit. Qua in re pensandum est, ut omne bonum quod agitur per intentionem semper ad coelestia levetur. Qui enim per bona quae facit terrenam gloriam concupiscit, pennas suas et faciem suam deorsum deprimit. Hinc etenim per prophetam de quibusdam dicitur: Victimas in profundum deferebant (Osee V, 2). Quid enim sunt aliud lacrymae orationis, nisi victimae oblationis nostrae? sicut scriptum est: Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus (Psal. L, 19). Et sunt nonnulli qui idcirco se in prece lamentis afficiunt, ut aut terrena commoda acquirant, aut hominibus sancti esse videantur. Quid isti, nisi victimas in profundum deferunt? Qui per hoc quod in imo sunt quae requirunt, orationis suae sacrificium deorsum deponunt. Electi autem qui et in bono opere omnipotenti Deo placere appetunt, et per contemplationis gratiam aeternam jam beatitudinem degustare concupiscunt, facies et pennas desuper extendunt. Sequitur: IBID. — Duae pennae singulorum jungebantur, et duae tegebant corpora eorum.

5. Dictum fuerat: Et facies et pennae eorum extentae desuper, atque mox subjunctum est quod protulimus, quia duae pennae singulorum jungebantur. Ubi aperte intelligitur quia et extendebantur desuper et jungebantur, duae vero tegebant corpora eorum. Quid autem pennae animalium, nisi alae nominantur? Qua in re nobis diligenti perscrutatione quaerendum est quae sint quatuor pennae sanctorum, ex quibus duae superius extensae junguntur, duae vero eorum corpora contegunt. Si enim vigilanter aspicimus, quatuor esse virtutes invenimus quae a terrenis actibus omne pennatum animal levant, in futuris videlicet amor et spes, de praeteritis autem timor et

poenitentia. Pennae ergo sibimet junctae superius extenduntur, quia sanctorum mentem amor et spes ad superna sublevant. Quae apte quoque conjunctae nominantur, quia electi procul dubio et amant coelestia quae sperant, et sperant quae amant. Duae vero corpora contegunt, quia timor et poenitentia ab omnipotentis Dei oculis eorum mala praeterita abscondunt. Duae itaque, ut dictum est, pennae junguntur sursum, quando amor et spes electorum corda ad superiora elevant, ad coelestia suspendunt. Duae autem pennae tegunt corpora, quando eorum mala praeterita a conspectu aeterni judicis timor et poenitentia abscondunt. In eo enim quod se peccasse meminerunt, quia pertimescunt et deflent, quid aliud quam corpus cooperiunt? Qui facta carnalia per superducta bona opera a districto examine abscondunt. Scriptum quippe est: Beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata (Psal. XXXI, 1). Peccata enim tegimus, cum bona facta malis actibus superponimus. Omne enim quod operitur, inferius ponitur; et hoc unde operitur, desuper ducitur. Quando ergo abdicamus mala quae fecimus, et eligimus bona quae faciamus, quasi tegimen ei rei superducimus, quam erubescimus videri.

6. Quamlibet enim sancti viri in hac adhuc vita sint, habent tamen quod ante Dei oculos operire debeant, quia omnino est impossibile, ut aut in opere, aut in locutione, aut in cogitatione nunquam delinquant. Unde et beatus Job, qui perfecta quidem hominibus dixerat, Dei tamen vocem audiens, seque ipsum de ipsa sua perfecta locutione reprehendens, dicebat: Manum meam ponam super os meum (Job. XXXIX, 34). In manu quippe operatio, in ore locutio est. Manum ergo super os ponere est peccata locutionis per virtutem boni operis tegere. Libet, fratres charissimi, ad hujus rei testimonium magistrum gentium vocare, et qualiter sanctum illud animal alis quatuor innitatur aspicere, ex quibus duabus ad superiora evolat; duabus vero pennis corpus contegit, quia praeterita quae egerat abscondit. Videamus igitur quantus hunc amor ad coelestia elevet: Mihi vivere

Christus est, et mori lucrum (Philip. I, 21). Cognoscamus quanta spe ad superiora tollitur: Nostra conversatio in coelis est, unde etiam Salvatorem exspectamus Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum (Ibid., III, 20). Videamus si et in tantis virtutibus positus adhuc timet: Castigo corpus meum, et servituti subjicio, ne forte, cum aliis praedicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar (I Cor. IX, 27). Cognoscamus si hunc mala fecisse poenitet: Ego minimus apostolorum sum, qui non sum dignus vocari apostolus, quia persecutus sum Ecclesiam Dei (I Cor. XV, 9). In cujus verbis quid aliud quam duritia nostrae mentis accusatur? Quia ipse plangit quod ante baptisma commiserat, nos vero et post baptisma multa commisimus, et tamen flere recusamus. Quatuor itaque pennis sancta animalia utuntur, quia per amorem et spem ad coelestia evolant, et per timorem et poenitentiam facta in se illicita deplorant.

7. Sed quia dictum est: Duae pennae singulorum jungebantur, hoc fortasse intelligitur, quod non pennas proprias elevantes jungant, sed unius ad alterum pennae conjunctae sint, ut pennae videlicet elevatae vicissim sibi in conjunctione concordent. Qua in re quaestio oritur, quia si duae pennae quae elevant amorem et spem, duae vero quae corpora contegunt timorem et poenitentiam designant, cur duae quae extentae sunt dicuntur esse conjunctae, et duae quae corpus contegunt non dicuntur? Sed hac in re facilis, largiente Domino, ratio occurrit, quod sanctorum duae pennae conjunctae sunt amor et spes, duae vero quae corpora contegunt, sibimetipsis ad alterutrum conjunctae non sunt, timor et poenitentia. David enim pro lapsu carnis timendo et poenitendo affligitur (II Reg. XII, 13). Petrus casum perfidiae flevit amare (Matth. XXVI, 75). Paulus in se crudelitatem praeteritae persecutionis plangit (I Cor. XV, 9). Omnes tamen unam patriam appetunt, ad unum auctorem omnium pervenire festinant. Duae ergo singulorum pennae conjunctae sunt, et duae non sunt, quia per amorem et spem unum est quod desiderant, sed per timorem et poenitentiam

diversum est quod deplorant. Sequitur: VERS. 12. — Et unumquodque eorum coram facie sua ambulabat.

8. Dictum superius fuerat: Unumquodque eorum ante faciem suam gradiebatur, nunc autem dicitur: Coram facie sua ambulabat. Ipsa itaque repetita videtur esse sententia. Sed quia coram in praesenti dicimus (Id est, significat in praesenti), possumus subtilius inquirendo discernere quod aliud sit ante faciem ambulare, atque aliud in praesenti. Ante faciem quippe ambulare est anteriora appetere; in praesenti vero ambulare est sibimetipsi absentem non esse. Omnis etenim justus qui vitam suam sollicitus aspicit, et diligenter considerat quantum quotidie in bonis crescat, aut fortasse quantum a bonis decrescat, iste quia se ante se ponit, coram se ambulat, quippe qui vigilanter videt utrum surgat, an defluat. Quisquis vero vitae suae custodiam negligit, discutere quae agit, quae loquitur, quae cogitat, aut despicit, aut nescit, coram se iste non ambulat; quia qualis sit in suis moribus, vel in actibus, ignorat. Nec sibimetipsi praesens est qui semetipsum quotidie exquirere atque cognoscere sollicitus non est. Ille autem veraciter se ante se ponit, sibique in praesenti est, qui se in suis actibus tanquam alium attendit.

9. Nam sunt multa peccata quae committimus, sed idcirco nobis gravia non videntur, quia privato nos amore diligentes, clausis nobis oculis, in nostra deceptione blandimur. Unde fit plerumque ut et nostra gravia leviter, et proximorum mala levia graviter judicemus. Scriptum quippe est: Erunt homines seipsos amantes (II Tim. III, 2). Et scimus quia vehementer claudit oculum cordis amor privatus. Ex quo fit ut hoc quod nos agimus, et grave esse non existimamus, plerumque agatur a proximo, et nimis nobis detestabile esse videatur. Sed quare hoc quod nobis vile videbatur in nobis grave videtur in proximo, nisi quia nec nos sicut proximum, nec proximum conspicimus sicut nos? Si enim nos sicut proximum aspiceremus, nostra reprehensibilia districte videremus. Et rursum si proximum aspiceremus ut

nos, nunquam nobis ejus actio appareret intolerabilis, qui saepe fortasse talia egimus, et nil nos proximo intolerabile fecisse putabamus. Hoc male divisum mentis nostrae judicium corrigere per legis praeceptum S. Moyses studuit, cum dixit ut justus deberet esse modius, aequusque sextarius (Levit. XIX, 36). Hinc Salomon ait: Pondus et pondus, mensura et mensura, utrumque abominabile est apud Deum (Prov. XX, 10). Scimus quia in negotiatorum duplici pondere aliud majus, aliud minus est. Nam aliud pondus habent ad quod pensant sibi, et aliud pondus ad quod pensant proximo. Ad dandum pondera leviora, ad accipiendum vero graviora praeparant. Omnis itaque homo qui aliter pensat ea quae sunt proximi, et aliter ea quae sua sunt, pondus et pondus habet. Utrumque ergo abominabile est apud Deum, quia si sic proximum ut se diligeret, hunc in bonis sicut se amaret. Et si sic se sicut proximum aspiceret, se in malis sicut proximum judicaret. Debemus ergo nosmetipsos sollicite sicut alios videre, nosque ipsos, ut dictum est, ante nos ponere, ut pennata animalia incessanter imitantes, ne nesciamus quid agimus, coram facie nostra semper ambulemus. Perversi autem, sicut paulo ante jam diximus, coram facie sua non ambulant, quia ea quae agunt nunquam considerant, ad interitum tendunt, in pravis actibus exsultant. De quibus scriptum est: Qui laetantur cum malefecerint, et exsultant in rebus pessimis (Prov. II, 14). Saepe vero justus qui eos conspicit deflet, sed ipsi phreneticorum more planguntur, et rident.

10. Alii indigentibus de rebus propriis multa largiuntur, sed cum occasionis tempus invenerint, indigentes opprimunt, eosque quibus valuerint rapinis devastant. Ponunt ante oculos cogitationis suae bona quae faciunt, et non ponunt pessima quae committunt. Hi videlicet coram facie sua non ambulant, quia si sibimetipsis praesentes essent, cuncta subtiliter quae agunt viderent, qualiter bona opera malis actibus perdant agnoscerent, sicut scriptum est: Et qui mercedes congregavit misit eas in sacculum

pertusum (Aggae. I, 6). De pertuso quippe sacculo aliunde exit quod aliunde mittitur), quia indiscretae mentes mercedem quae ex bono opere acquiritur non aspiciunt quomodo ex malo opere perdatur. Alius castitatem corporis servat, seque vigilanter circumspicit, ne quid foris reprehensibiliter admittat, suis contentus est, aliena non diripit, sed tamen in corde odium fortasse contra proximum servat. Et cum scriptum sit: Qui odit fratrem suum, homicida est (I Joan. III, 15), considerat quam sit mundus foris in opere, et non perpendit quam sit crudelis in mente. Quid iste nisi sibimetipsi absens est, qui in cordis sui tenebris ambulat et ignorat? Alius jam aliena non diripit, jam corpus ab immunditia custodit, jam mente pura proximum diligit, et malorum praeteritorum conscius lamentis se in precibus afficit; sed, finita prece, laeta de quibus in hoc mundo gaudeat requirit, et temporalibus gaudiis negligentem animum demittit, nec curat ne in eo lacrymarum mensuram immoderata gaudia transeant; fitque ut bonum nimie ridendo perdat, quod plangendo lucratus est. Hic itaque coram facie sua non ambulat, quia damna quae patitur conspicere recusat. Scriptum quippe est: Cor sapientium ubi tristitia est, et cor stultorum ubi laetitia (Eccle. VII, 5). In cunctis ergo quae agimus diligenter nosmetipsos conspicere interius exteriusque debemus, ut pennata animalia sequentes, nobismetipsis praesentes simus, et coram facie nostra semper ambulemus, habentes adjutorem unicum Patris Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum, qui cum eo vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA V

In expositione trium versuum a duodecimo ad decimum quintum docte disseritur de Spiritu sancto ejusque in sanctis impulsu, motu et inhabitatione.

1. O quam mira est profunditas eloquiorum Dei! Libet huic intendere, libet ejus intima, gratia duce, penetrare. Hanc quoties intelligendo discutimus, quid aliud quam silvarum opacitatem ingredimur, ut in ejus refrigerio ab hujus saeculi aestibus abscondamur? Ibi viridissimas sententiarum herbas legendo carpimus, tractando ruminamus. In ea locutione quae ad vos, fratres charissimi, nudiustertius facta est qualiter ostensa animalia vel Redemptorem nostrum, vel quatuor ejus evangelistas atque perfectos omnes significent, dictum est. Quorum videlicet animalium adhuc subtilius virtus exprimitur, ut ad eorum imitationem nos quoque infirmi et despicabiles, in quantum, Domino largiente, possumus, extendamur. Ecce enim dicitur: VERS. 12. Ubi erat impetus spiritus, illuc gradiebantur.

2. In electis et reprobis diversi sunt impetus. In electis videlicet impetus spiritus in reprobis impetus carnis. Impetus quippe carnis ad odium, ad elationem, ad immunditiam, ad rapinam, ad exteriorem gloriam, ad crudelitatem, ad perfidiam, ad desperationem, ad iram, ad jurgia, ad voluptates animum impellit. Impetus vero spiritus ad charitatem, ad humilitatem, ad continentiam, ad largitatem misericordiae, ad interiorem provectum, ad pietatis opera, ad aeternorum fidem, ad spem sequentisgaudii, ad patientiam, ad pacem, ad considerationem vitae mortalis, ad lacrymas mentem pertrahit. Unde necesse est ut magna semper cura considerare debeamus in omne quod agimus quis nos impetus ducat; utrum nostra cogitatio per impetum carnis, an per impetum spiritus impellatur. Amare enim terrena, temporalia aeternis praeponere, exteriora bona non ad usum necessarium habere, sed ad voluptatem concupiscere,

ultionem de inimico quaerere, de aemuli casu gaudere, impetus carnis est. At contra, amare coelestia, contemnere terrena, non ad fructum voluptatis transitoria, sed ad usum necessitatis quaerere, de inimici morte tribulari, impetus spiritus est. Et quia perfecti quique in istis se semper virtutibus exercent, recte nunc de sanctis animalibus dicitur: Ubi erat impetus spiritus, illuc gradiebantur.

3. Sed sciendum nobis est quod plerumque impetus carnis se sub velamine spiritalis impetus palliat, et quod carnaliter facit mentitur sibi ipsa cogitatio quia hoc spiritaliter faciat. Nam saepe quis, iracundiae stimulis victus, contra delinquentes zelo ulciscendae justitiae plus quam necesse est inflammatur, et justitiae limitem in ultione transiens agit crudeliter, quod se agere juste suspicatur. Impetus igitur carnis huic sub specie spiritus velatus est, quando hoc quod juste agi creditur sub discretionis moderamine non tenetur. Et saepe alius, nimiae mansuetudini studens, subjectorum vitia aspicit, atque haec per fervorem zeli corrigere recusat, quae in eis crudeliter non corrigendo multiplicat; fitque ut ejus lenitas et sibi sit et subjectis inimica, qui torporem mentis suae quia patientiam deputat, per carnis spiritum ab impetu spiritus elongat. Prima ergo nos cogitatio in inquisitionem nostri cordis debet excutere, ne ad quaedam quae agimus per apertum carnis impetum ducamur, ne pravis delectationibus animus seductus mala esse cognoscat, et tamen faciat. Secunda vero nos cura debet vigilantes reddere, ne se impetus carnis quasi sub impetu spiritus latenter subjiciat, et culpas quas agimus nobis virtutes fingat.

4. Sciendum vero est quia graviores culpae sunt quae superducta specie virtutes imitantur, quia illae in aperto cognitae animum in confusionem dejiciunt, atque ad poenitentiam trahunt; istae vero non solum in poenitentiam non humiliant, sed etiam mentem operantis elevant, dum virtutes potantur. Hoc autem quod de sanctis animalibus dictum superius

fuerat, ut altius confirmetur, iterum replicatur: IBID. — Non revertebantur cum ambularent.

5. Quia electi quique sic ad bona tendunt, ut ad mala perpetranda non redeant: Qui enim perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit (Matth. X, 22). Et sicut per Salomonem dicitur: Justorum semita quasi lux splendens procedit et crescit usque ad perfectum diem (Prov. IV, 18). In eorum namque animis bonum desiderium atque intellectus lucis intimae jam pars diei est, sed quia usque ad finem vitae in virtute proficiunt, ad perfectum diem tunc veniunt, quando, ad regna coelestia perducti, in ea luce quam desiderant jam minus aliquid non habebunt. Sequitur: VERS. 13. — Et similitudo animalium, et aspectus eorum quasi carbonum ignis ardentium, et quasi aspectus lampadarum.

6. Aspectus animalium carbonibus ignis ardentibus atque lampadibus comparatur. Quisquis enim carbonem tangit, incenditur, quia qui sancto viro adhaeret, ex ejus assiduitate visionis, usu locutionis, exemplo operis accipit ut accendatur in amorem veritatis, peccatorum suorum tenebras fugiat, in desiderio lucis exardescat, et jam per verum amoremardeat, qui prius in iniquitate tantum mortuus, quantum frigidus jacebat. Lampades vero lucem suam longius spargunt, et cum in alio loco sint, in alio resplendent. Qui enim spiritu prophetiae, verbo doctrinae, miraculorum pollet gratia, hujus opinio longe lateque ut lampas lucet; et quique bona ejus audiunt, quia per haec ad amorem coelestium surgunt, in eo quod se per bona opera exhibent, quasi ex lampadis lumine resplendent. Quia ergo sancti viri quosdam juxta se positos quasi tangendo ad amorem patriae coelestis accendunt, carbones sunt. Quia vero quibusdam longe positis lucent, eorum itineri, ne in peccati tenebras corruant, lampades fiunt. Hoc vero inter carbones et lampades distat, quod carbones ardent quidem, sed ejus loci in quo jacuerint tenebras non expellunt; lampades autem, quia magno flammarum lumine resplendent, diffusas circumquaque tenebras effugant.

7. Qua ex re notandum est quia sunt plerique sanctorum ita simplices et occulti, seseque in locis minoribus sub magno silentio contegentes, ut vix eorum vita ab aliis possit agnosci. Quid itaque isti nisi carbones sunt? Qui etsi per fervorem spiritus ardorem habent, tamen exempli flammam non habent. Nec in alienis cordibus tenebras peccatorum vincunt, quia vitam suam omnino sciri refugiunt. Sibimetipsis quidem accensi sunt, sed aliis in exemplo luminis non sunt. Hi autem qui et exempla virtutum praerogant, et lumen boni operis per vitam et verbum itinerantibus demonstrant, jure lampades appellantur, quia et per ardorem desiderii, et per flammam verbi, a peccatorum cordibus erroris tenebras expellunt. Qui igitur in occulto bene vivit, sed alieno provectui minime proficit, carbo est. Qui vero, in imitatione sanctitatis positus, lumen ex se rectitudinis multis demonstrat, lampas est, quia et sibi ardet, et aliis lucet. Sequitur: IBID. — Et haec erat visio discurrens in medio animalium, splendor ignis, et de igne fulgur egrediens.

8. In medio animalium discurrens ignis videtur, quia nisi ab igne veritatis pennata illa animalia calorem susciperent, ipsa in carbonum atque lampadarum similitudinem non arderent. Ignis enim nomine sanctus Spiritus significari solet. De quo in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Ignem veni mittere in terram, et quid volo nisi ut accendatur (Luc. XII, 49)? Cum enim carnalis mens Spiritum sanctum accipit, spiritali amore succensa malum plangit quod fecit. Et terra ardet, quando accusante se conscientia cor peccatoris uritur, atque in dolore poenitentiae crematur. Hinc rursum scriptum est: Deus tuus ignis consumens est. (Deut. IV, 24). Quia enim mentem quam repleverit, eam a peccatorum rubigine mundam reddit, creator noster et ignis dicitur, et consumens. Sanctus ergo Spiritus in medio animalium splendor ignis, et de igne fulgur egrediens discurrere dicitur, quia universam Ecclesiam replens, in electorum cordibus ex seipso flammas

amoris projicit, ut corusci more per terrorem feriat, et ad amorem suum corda torpentia accendat.

9. Sed quia Spiritus sanctus Deus ante saecula Patri est et Filio coaeternus, quaerendum nobis est cur discurrere dicatur. Omnis etenim qui discurrit accedit ad locum in quo non fuit, et eum deserit in quo fuit. Qua igitur ratione discurrere spiritum dicamus, dum cuncta intra ipsum sint, et locus nusquam sit ubi non sit? Sicut scriptum est: Spiritus Domini replevit orbem terrarum (Sap. I, 7). Et tamen, cum laus sapientiae describeretur, adjunctum est: Est enim in illa spiritus intellectus, spiritus unicus, multiplex, subtilis, mobilis (Ibid. VII, 22). Et paulo post: Humanus stabilis (Ibid., 23).

10. In quibus rursum verbis magna nobis quaestio oritur, cur iste spiritus qui implet omnia simul mobilis et stabilis dicatur. Sed si ad usum consuetudinis humanae recurrimus, sensum citius loquentis invenimus. Homo quippe, qui in ea regione in qua est ubique discurrit, procul dubio ubique obviam venit, et repente ubi non creditur, invenitur. Omnipotens ergo Spiritus, ut ubique praesentia signaretur, simul et mobilis et stabilis dicitur. Stabilis, quia per naturam omnia continet, mobilis autem dicitur quia ubique etiam nescientibus occurrit. Tenens ergo omnia stabilis, praesentem se omnibus exhibens mobilis appellatur. Splendor ergo ignis, et de igne fulgur egrediens inter pennata animalia discurrit, quia Spiritus sanctus simul singulis atque omnibus praesto fit, et incendit quos contigerit, et illuminat quos incendit, ut post frigus pristinum accensi ardeant, et per ignem amoris quem acceperint flammas exemplorum reddant. Fulgur quippe de hoc igne egrediens torpentes mentes percutit, easque percutiendo excitat et inflammat, ut post amorem illus ardentes pariter et lucentes currant. Unde alias scriptum est: Thronus ejus flamma ignis, rotae ejus ignis accensus (Dan. VII, 9). Hi enim qui animarum custodes sunt, et pascendi gregis onera susceperunt, mutare loca minime permittuntur. Sed quia uno in

loco positi, divinitatis in se praesentiam portant et ardent, thronus Dei flamma ignis dicitur. Hi autem qui amore Domini in praedicatione discurrunt, rotae ejus ignis ardens sunt, quia cum ex ejus desiderio per varia loca discurrunt, unde ipsi ardent et alios accendunt.

11. Potest tamen discursus atque mobilitas Spiritus requisitione alterius considerationis intelligi. In Sanctorum quippe cordibus juxta quasdam virtutes semper permanet, juxta quasdam vero recessurus venit, et venturus recedit. In fide etenim, spe, atque charitate, et in bonis aliis, sine quibus ad coelestem patriam non potest perveniri, sicut est humilitas, castitas, justitia, atque misericordia, perfectorum corda non deserit. In prophetiae vero virtute, doctrinae facundia, miraculorum exhibitione, electis suis aliquando adest, aliquando se subtrahit. Adest ut eleventur, et semetipsum subtrahit ut humilientur. Adest ut eos ostensa virtute glorificet, recedit ut semetipsos subtracta ejus virtute cognoscant. Adest ut ostendat quid per ipsum sint, recedit ut patefaciat qui vel quales, remaneant sine ipso. In his itaque virtutibus sine quibus ad vitam minime pervenitur, sanctus Spiritus in electorum suorum cordibus permanet; unde recte stabilis esse perhibetur. In his vero per quas sanctitatis virtus ostenditur, aliquando misericorditer praesto est, et aliquando misericorditer recedit, unde recte mobilis nuncupatur. Discurrens ergo et mobilis Spiritus dicitur, quia in signis atque virtutibus juxta uniuscujusque votum continue non habetur. Bene autem inter sancta animalia discurrere perhibetur. Discursus quippe ad celeritatem pertinet. Inter perfectos autem discurrit spiritus, quia etsi ab eorum corde ad momentum recesserit, citius redit. Sequitur: VERS. 14. — Et animalia ibant, et revertebantur in similitudinem fulguris coruscantis.

12. Cum superius dictum sit: Non revertebantur cum ambularent, qua ratione nunc dicitur: Animalia ibant et revertebantur? Valde sibi haec videntur esse contraria, quia ibant et non revertebantur, et ibant et revertebantur. Sed qualiter intelligendum sit citius agnoscimus si duas vitas,

activam scilicet et contemplativam, sollicite discernamus. In una enim fixi permanere possumus, in altera autem intentam mentem tenere nullo modo valemus. Cum enim torporem nostrum relinquimus, nosque ipsos ad bonae operationis studium excitamus, quo alibi nisi ad activam imus? A qua reverti post nos nullo modo debemus, quia qui post illam ad torporem negligentiae, ad pravitatis nequitias quas reliquerat redit, esse sine dubio coeleste animal nescit. Cum vero ab activa vita ad contemplativam surgimus, quia diu mens stare in contemplatione non valet, sed omne quod de aeternitate per speculum et in aenigmate conspicit, quasi furtim hoc et per transitum videt, ipsa sua infirmitate ab immensitate tantae celsitudinis animus repulsus in semetipso relabitur. Et necesse est ut ad activam redeat, seque ipsum continue in usu bonae operationis exerceat, ut cum mens surgere ad contemplanda coelestia non valet, quaeque potest bona agere non recuset. Sicque fit ut ipsis suis bonis actibus adjuta ad superiora rursus in contemplationem surgat, et amoris pastum de pabulo contemplatae veritatis accipiat. In qua quia diu se tenere ipsa corruptionis infirmitas non potest, ad bona rursus opera rediens, suavitatis Dei memoria pascitur, et foris piis actibus, intus vero sanctis desideriis nutritur. Hinc etenim de perfectis viris post contemplationem suam redeuntibus dicitur: Memoriam suavitatis tuae eructabunt (Psal. CXLIV, 7). Dulcedinem quippe suavitatis intimae, quia utcunque possunt, velut quodam ex corusco, praegustando tangere, ejus memoriam student recolendo semper et loquendo eructare. Unde et apte nos Psalmista admonet, dicens: Lux orta est justo, et rectis corde laetitia. Laetamini justi in Domino, et confitemini memoriae sanctitatis ejus (Psal. XCVI, 11, 12). Qui rursum ait: Quam magna multitudo dulcedinis tuae, Domine (Psal. XXX, 20)! Quae videlicet quam magna esset nullo modo cognosceret, nisi hanc aliquatenus contemplando gustasset. Hinc iterum dicit: Ego dixi in ecstasi mea, projectus sum a vultu oculorum tuorum (Ibid., 23). Nisi enim in mentis excessu sublevatus dulcedinem suavitatis

aeternae cognovisset, in hoc adhuc mundo retentus non discerneret quam longe projectus jaceret. Ostensa ergo animalia vadunt et non revertuntur, atque vadunt et redeunt; quia sancti viri et ab activa vita quam apprehenderunt ad iniquitates non corruunt, et a contemplativa, quam tenere jugiter non possunt, in activam relabuntur. Sicut enim dictum est, ipso infirmitatis suae pondere devicti, ad semetipsos repulsi redeunt, ut euntes discant quid desiderent, et revertentes ubi jaceant sciant. Euntes intelligant ubi nondum sint, revertentes quid sint.

13. Sed qualiter haec sancta animalia redeant, demonstratur cum subditur: In similitudinem fulguris coruscantis. Bene autem revertentia animalia coruscanti fulguri comparantur, quia sancti viri cum ad superna contemplanda evolant, cum primitias sui spiritus in coelestis patriae amore ligant, sed gravati humanae conversationis pondere ad semetipsos redeunt, bona coelestia quae saltem per speculum contemplari potuerunt, fratribus denuntiant, eorumque animos in amorem intimae claritatis accendunt, quam nec videre sicut est, nec loqui praevalent sicut viderunt. Loquentes autem verbis suis corda audientium feriunt et incendunt. Quasi ergo fulgur coruscans redeunt, qui, cum coelestia loquuntur, quia per eos supernum lumen intermicat, ad amorem coelestis patriae mentes audientium inflammant. More itaque coruscantis fulguris cum loquendo percutiunt, ignem spiritalis desiderii spargunt.

14. Alio quoque modo sancta animalia vadunt et redeunt. Vadunt enim cum ad insinuandam coelestis doni gratiam in praedicationem mittuntur, atque ut ad fidem trahant, mira coram infidelibus faciunt; sed redeunt, quia, haec omnipotentis Domini virtuti tribuentes, sibimetipsis quae fecerint non ascribunt. Cum enim stupenda faciunt, fulgur sunt, quia corda intuentium concutiunt, terrent, illuminant, et accendunt. Unde scriptum est: In lumine jacula tua ibunt, in splendore fulguris armorum tuorum (Habac. III, 11). Jacula Domini sunt verba Sanctorum, quae corda peccantium feriunt. Sed

ista jacula habent arma. Scitis, fratres, quia praeliatores viri jacula mittunt, armis vero muniuntur. Dum ergo verbis addunt miracula, quasi armis se muniunt, ne ipsi feriantur: In lumine jacula tua ibunt, quia in aperto exeunt verba Dei. Sed quia comitari debent sententias sanctorum doctorum facta miraculorum, recte subjungitur: In splendore fulguris armorum tuorum, quia dum addis eis arma miraculorum, mentes persequentium fulgurant, ut eos persequi non praesumant. Haec itaque animalia vadunt et revertuntur in similitudinem fulguris coruscantis, quia postquam mira sancti inter homines faciunt, postquam corda audientium sparso lumine incendunt, ad dandam auctori suo gloriam redeunt, ut illi laudem reddant per quem se posse talia sciunt.

15. Sic Petrus, cum, sanato homine qui claudus ex utero matris fuerat, signum fecit quod omnes qui cognoscerent valde mirarentur, dixit: Quid miramini in hoc, aut nos quid intuemini, quasi nostra virtute aut potestate fecerimus hunc ambulare? Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, et Deus Jacob, Deus patrum nostrorum glorificavit Filium suum Jesum (Act. III, 12, 13). Et paulo post: In fide nominis ejus hunc quem vidistis et nostis, confirmavit nomen ejus (Ibid., 16). Signum quippe faciens, intuentium oculos miraculi lumine perstrinxit; sed humilitatem custodiens, et laudem auctori reddens, quasi unde venerat rediit, quia lux fulguris unde fuerit ostendit. Sancta itaque animalia cum ad signa operanda veniunt, et cum ad reddendam auctori suo gloriam intus apud semetipsa redeunt, fulgur sunt, quia et ostendendo miracula, et exempla humilitatis praebendo, mentes intuentium feriunt et incendunt.

16. In omne autem quod faciunt, idcirco semper ad laudem Creatoris redeunt, ut in ea virtute quam accipiunt, vera stabilitate persistant. Nam si quid sibi tribuerent, in hoc quod acceperant, stare non possent. Unde bene etiam per Salomonem dicitur: Ad locum de quo exeunt flumina revertentur ut iterum fluant (Eccle. I, 7). Sive enim in virtutibus, seu in doctrina, quid

aliud sunt sancti viri quam flumina quae terram cordis carnalium aridam rigant? Sed sive in operatione quam faciunt, seu in doctrinae verbis, citius siccarentur, nisi per intentionem cordis semper sollicite ad locum de quo exeunt redirent. Si enim introrsus ad cor non redeant, ac sese in amore conditoris desideriorum vinculis non astringant, et manus ab eo quod agebat deficit, et lingua ab eo quod loquebatur arescit. Sed intus semper per amorem redeunt, et hoc quod in publico operantes atque loquentes fundunt, in secreto suo de fonte amoris hauriunt. Amando enim discunt quod docendo proferunt. Ad locum ergo de quo exeunt flumina revertuntur ut iterum fluant, quia aquam sapientiae inde semper hauriunt unde oritur, ne cum cucurrerit exsiccetur. Per omne ergo quod agimus ad fontem veri luminis sollicita mente redeamus. Reddamus Creatori nostro gratias de bonis quae accipimus, eique cum Isaia propheta suppliciter dicamus: Omnia opera nostra operatus es nobis (Isai. XXVI, 12). Bona enim nostra ejus sunt opera, cujus visceribus non suffecit ut nos erigeret, nisi et semetipsum pro nobis inclinaret. Si enim coaeternus Patri Deus ante saecula non fieret homo in tempore, quando homo temporalis saperet aeterna? Descensio ergo veritatis ascensio facta est humilitatis nostrae. Demus ei gloriam, demus laudem, qui vivit cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA VI

Explanantur versus 15, 16, 17, cum media decimi octavi parte; deflexo ad sacrae Scripturae, ad Evangelii praesertim commendationem, prophetici sermonis sensu.

1. Tenebrosa aqua in nubibus aeris (Psal. XVII, 12), quia obscura est scientia in prophetis. Sed Salomonis voce attestante didicimus: Gloria regum celare verbum, et gloria Dei est investigare sermonem, quia et honor est hominum eorum secreta abscondere, et gloria Dei est mysteria sermonis ejus aperire (Prov. XXV, 2). Ipsa autem per se Veritas discipulis dicit: Quae dico vobis in tenebris, dicite in lumine (Matth. X, 27); id est, aperte exponite quae in allegoriarum obscuritatibus auditis. Magnae vero utilitatis est ipsa obscuritas eloquiorum Dei, quia exercet sensum ut fatigatione dilatetur, et exercitatus capiat quod capere non posset otiosus. Habet quoque adhuc aliud majus, quia Scripturae sacrae intelligentia, quae si in cunctis esset aperta vilesceret, in quibusdam locis obscurioribus tanto majore dulcedine inventa reficit, quanto majore labore fatigat animum quaesita. Ecce enim sancti Ezechielis nunc voce dicitur: VERS. 15. — Cumque aspicerem animalia, apparuit rota una super terram.

2. Quid autem rota, nisi sacram Scripturam signat, quae ex omni parte ad auditorum mentes volvitur, et nullo erroris angulo a praedicationis suae via retinetur? Ex omni autem parte volvitur, quia inter adversa et prospera recte et humiliter incedit. Circulus quippe praeceptorum illius modo sursum, modo deorsum est, quae perfectioribus spiritaliter dicuntur, infirmis juxta litteram congruunt; et ipsa quae parvuli juxta litteram intelligunt, docti viri per spiritalem intelligentiam in altum ducunt. Quis namque parvulorum in facto Esau et Jacob, quod alter ad venatum mittitur ut benedicatur, alter vero per suppositionem matris a patre benedicitur (Genes. XXVII, 3, 28), nisi juxta sacrae lectionis historiam pascitur? In qua videlicet historia si ad intellectum paulo subtilius astringatur, videt quia Jacob primogeniti

benedictionem non per fraudem subripuit, sed sibi debitam accepit, quam, concedente fratre, datae lentis mercede emerat.

3. At vero si quis altius sentiens utrorumque facta velit per allegoriae arcana discutere, protinus ab historia in mysterium surgit. Quid est enim quod Isaac de majoris filii sui venatione vesci concupiscit, nisi quod omnipotens Deus Judaici populi bona operatione pasci desideravit? Sed illo tardante, minorem Rebecca supposuit, quia dum Judaicus populus bona opera foris quaerit, gentilem populum mater gratia instruxit, ut omnipotenti patri cibum boni operis offerret, benedictionemque majoris fratris acciperet. Qui eosdem cibos ex domesticis animalibus praebuit, quia gentilis populus placere Deo de exterioribus sacrificiis non quaerens, per vocem Prophetae dicit: In me sunt, Deus, vota tua, quae reddam, laudationes tibi (Psal. LV, 12). Quid est quod idem Jacob manus ac brachia et collum haedinis pellibus texit, nisi quod haedus pro peccato offerri consuevit? Et gentilis populus carnis quidem in se peccata mactavit, sed coopertum se peccatis carnalibus confiteri non erubuit Quid est quod vestimentis fratris majoris induitur, nisi quod sacrae Scripturae praeceptis quae majori populo data fuerant in bona operatione vestitus est? Et eis minor in domo utitur, quae major foras exiens intus reliquit, quia illa gentilis populus praecepta tenet in mente, quae Judaicus populus habere non potuit, dum solam in eis litteram attendit. Et quid est quod Isaac eumdem filium nescit quem benedicit, nisi hoc quod de gentili populo Dominus per Psalmistam dixit: Populus quem non cognovi, servivit mihi, ob auditum auris obedivit mihi (Psal. XVII, 45)? Quid est quod praesentem non vidit, et tamen quae ei in futuro veniant vidit, nisi quod omnipotens Deus, cum per prophetas suos praediceret gentilitati gratiam praerogandam, eam et in praesenti per gratiam non vidit, quia tunc in errore dereliquit, et tamen quia hanc quandoque collecturus erat, per benedictionis gratiam praevidit? Unde et eidem Jacob, gentilis populi figuram tenenti, in benedictione dicitur: Ecce odor filii mei sicut odor agri

pleni, cui benedixit Dominus Deus (Genes. XXVII, 27). Sicut enim in Evangelio Veritas dicit, Ager est hic mundus (Matth. XIII, 38), et quia gentilis populus ad fidem perductus per electos suos in universo mundo virtutibus redolet, odor filii odor est agri pleni.

4. Aliter namque olet flos uvae, quia magna est virtus et opinio praedicatorum quae debriant mentes audientium; aliter flos olivae, quia suave est opus misericordiae quod more olei refovet et lucet; aliter flos rosae, quia mira est fragrantia quae rutilat et redolet ex cruore martyrum; aliter flos lilii, quia candida vita carnis est de incorruptione virginitatis; aliter flos violae, quia magna est virtus humilium, qui ex desiderio loca ultima tenentes, se per humilitatem a terra in altum non sublevant, et coelestis regni purpuram in mente servant; aliter redolet spica, cum ad maturitatem perducitur, quia bonorum operum perfectio ad satietatem eorum qui justitiam esuriunt praeparatur. Quia ergo gentilis populus in electis suis ubique per mundum sparsus est, et ex eis virtutibus quas agit omnes qui intelligunt odore bonae opinionis replet, dicatur recte: Ecce odor filii mei sicut odor agri pleni. Sed quia easdem virtutes ex semetipso non habet, adjungat: Cui benedixit Dominus Deus.

5. Et quoniam idem electorum populus per quosdam etiam in contemplationem surgit, per quosdam vero in activae vitae solummodo opera pinguescit, recte illic additur: Det tibi Deus de rore coeli, et de pinguedine terrae (Genes. XXVII, 28). Ros enim desuper et subtiliter cadit. Et toties de rore coeli accipimus, quoties per infusionem contemplationis intimae de supernis aliquid tenuiter videmus. Cum vero bona opera etiam per corpus agimus, de terrae pinguedine ditamur.

6. Quid est autem quod Esau tarde ad patrem redit, nisi quod Judaicus populus ad placendum Domino sero revertitur? Cui et hoc in benedictione dicitur: Tempusque erit cum solvatur jugum de collo tuo (Ibid., 40). Quia a servitute peccati Judaicus populus in fine liberatur, sicut scriptum est:

Donec plenitudo gentium introiret, et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret (Rom. XI, 25).

7. Quem non parvulorum ipsa evangelica historia in miraculi operatione reficiat, quod hydrias vacuas Dominus aqua impleri praecepit, eamdemque aquam protinus in vinum vertit (Joan. II, 7)? Sed cum haec vigilantiores ingenio audiunt, et sacram historiam credendo venerantur, et quid interius innuat requirunt. Qui enim mutare aquam in vinum potuit, etiam vacuas hydrias valuit vino statim replere. Sed impleri hydrias aqua jubet, quia prius per sacrae lectionis historiam corda nostra replenda sunt. Et aquam nobis in vinum vertit, quando ipsa historia per allegoriae mysterium in spiritalem nobis intelligentiam commutatur. Rota ergo quasi per terram trahitur, quia parvulis humili sermone concordat, et tamen magnis spiritalia infundens, quasi circulum in altum levat; et inde sursum erigitur, unde terram tangere paulo ante videbatur.

8. Quia vero undique aedificat, quasi per circulum rota currit. Unde et in lege scriptum est: Facies et candelabrum ductile de auro mundissimo, hastile ejus et calamos, scyphos et sphaerulas ac lilia ex ipso procedentia (Exod. XXV, 31; XXXVII, 17). Quis in candelabro nisi Redemptor humani generis designatur? Qui in natura humanitatis infulsit lumine divinitatis, ut mundi candelabrum fieret, quatenus in ejus lumine omnis peccator in quibus jaceret tenebris videret. Qui pro eo quod naturam nostram sine culpa suscepit, candelabrum tabernaculi ex auro purissimo fieri jubetur. Ductile autem feriendo producitur, quia et Redemptor noster qui ex conceptione et nativitate perfectus Deus et homo exstitit, passionum dolores pertulit, et sic ad resurrectionis gloriam pervenit. Ex auro ergo mundissimo ductile candelabrum fuit, quia et peccatum non habuit, et tamen ejus corpus per passionis contumelias ad immortalitatem profecit. Nam juxta virtutes animae quo percussionibus potuisset proficere, omnino non habuit. In membris autem suis, quae nos sumus, quotidie percussionibus proficit, quia

dum nos tundimur et afficimur ut ejus corpus esse mereamur, ipse proficit. De cujus corpore scriptum est: Ex quo totum corpus per nexus et conjunctiones subministratum et constructum crescit in augmentum Dei (Coloss. II, 19). Corpus quippe illius nos omnes sumus. Per nexus vero et conjunctiones corpus ligatur, quia dum capiti pectus, dum pectori brachia, dum brachiis manus, digiti manibus sunt conjuncti, ac membra caetera membris inhaerent, corpus omne perficitur, sicut sancti apostoli, quia Redemptori nostro propinqui steterunt, quasi pectus capiti adhaesit. Quos quia martyres sunt secuti, quasi conjuncta brachia pectori fuerunt. Quibus dum pastores et doctores subjuncti sunt per bona opera, manus brachiis inhaeserunt. Hoc vero omne corpus Redemptoris nostri quotidie per nexus et conjunctiones subministratur in coelo, quia cum ad eum illuc electae animae ducuntur, ei sua membra colligantur. De quo bene dicitur: Subministratum et constructum crescit in augmentum Dei (Ibid.), quia Deus omnipotens redemptor noster, qui in se quo proficiat non habet, adhuc per membra sua quotidie augmentum habet. Unde rursum scriptum est: Donec occurramus omnes in virum perfectum, in mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi (Ephes. IV, 13). Hastile vero ejusdem candelabri ipsa Ecclesia debet intelligi, quae corpus ejus est, quia inter tot adversa liber stat. Calami autem qui de hastili prodeunt, praedicatores sunt, qui dulcem sonum in mundo ediderunt, videlicet canticum novum. Scyphi autem vino repleri solent. Quid ergo mentes auditorum nisi scyphi sunt, quae a sanctis praedicatoribus vino scientiae replentur? Sphaerula autem quid est aliud nisi volubilitas praedicationis? Sphera enim ex omni parte volvitur. Et praedicatio, quae nec adversitate retineri potest, nec prosperitatibus elevatur, sphaera est, quia est et inter adversa fortis, et inter prospera humilis, nec timoris habet angulum, nec elationis. In cursu ergo suo figi non valet, quia per cuncta se volubiliter trahit.

9. Ut autem hoc quod exempli causa protulimus exsequamur, bene post calamos, scyphos et sphaerulas, in candelabro lilia describuntur, quia post eam quam diximus praedicationis gratiam atque volubilitatem, illa virens patria sequitur, quae animabus sanctis, id est floribus vernat aeternis. Sphaerulae ergo ad laborem pertinent, lilia ad retributionem. Itaque sicut apud Moysen sphaerula, doctrina praedicationis accipitur; ita hic per rotam ipsa sacra Scriptura signatur. Propheta igitur dum sancta animalia videret, adjunxit: Cumque aspicerem animalia, apparuit rota una super terram.

10. Qua in re quaerendum est, cum inferius rotae describuntur, cur una rota prius apparuisse dicitur, nisi quia antiquo populo Vetus solummodo Testamentum datum est, quod ad erudiendam mentem illius quasi rota volveretur? Bene autem rota eadem super terram apparuisse dicitur. Peccanti enim homini dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Rota ergo super terram apparuit, quia Deus omnipotens legem super corda peccantium dedit. Sed quia haec pennata animalia sanctos, ut ante diximus, evangelistas designant, quomodo prius animalia, et postmodum rota una aspicitur, cum ante Testamentum Vetus fuerit, et postmodum sancti evangelistae secuti sint? Sed intelligere in his possumus quod illi prius a propheta visi sunt qui merito transcendunt. Nam quanto sanctum Evangelium Testamentum Vetus praecellit, tanto et praedicatores ejus in descriptione prophetica praeferri debuerunt.

11. Quamvis sit adhuc aliud quod in hac descriptione considerari debeat, quia prophetiae spiritus sic intra semetipsum anteriora et posteriora simul colligit, ut haec simul prophetae lingua proferre non possit. Sed ampla quae videt de dispertitis sermonibus emanat, et nunc ultima post prima, nunc vero prima post ultima loquitur. Unde Ezechiel propheta sub figura sanctae universalis Ecclesiae, et evangelistarum gloriam per quatuor animalium similitudinem videt, et tamen repente illa subjungit, quae anterioribus temporibus gesta sunt, ut patenter indicet simul se vidisse quod carnis

lingua non sufficeret simul dicere. Quia vero per quatuor animalia etiam perfectos omnes significari diximus, considerandum quoque est quosdam sanctorum et ante legem fuisse, qui naturali lege districte viverent, et omnipotenti Domino placerent. Post animalia ergo rota describitur, quia electorum multi apud omnipotentem Dominum perfecti et ante legem fuerunt. Sin vero animalia solos, ut diximus, Evangelistas debemus accipere, est adhuc aliud quod considerare debeamus. Videbat enim sanctus propheta quia haec ipsa verba quae obscuritatibus obvoluta proferebat, non Judaico populo, sed gentibus panderentur. Nobis igitur loquens prius animalia et post rotam describere debuit, quia nos ad fidem Domino largiente venientes, non per legem Evangelium, sed per sanctum Evangelium legem didicimus. Ubi vero, vel qualis rota apparuerit, adjungit cum dicit: — VERS. 15. — Juxta animalia habens quatuor facies. Ubi adhuc subditur: VERS. 16. — Et aspectus rotarum et opus earum quasi visio maris; et una similitudo ipsarum quatuor, et aspectus earum et opera, quasi si sit rota in medio rotae.

12. Quid est hoc, quod cum una rota diceretur, paulo post adjungitur, Quasi si sit rota in medio rotae, nisi quod in Testamenti Veteris littera Testamentum Novum latuit per allegoriam? Unde et rota eadem quae juxta animalia apparuit quatuor facies habere describitur, quia Scriptura sacra per utraque Testamenta in quatuor partibus est distincta. Vetus etenim Testamentum in lege et prophetis, Novum vero in Evangeliis atque apostolorum Actibus et dictis. Scimus autem quia ubi faciem intendimus, ibi quod necesse est videmus. Rota ergo quatuor habet facies, quia prius resecanda mala in populis vidit per legem, postmodum vidit per prophetas, subtilius vero per Evangelium, ad extremum autem per apostolos ea quae in culpis hominum resecarentur aspexit. Potest quoque intelligi quod quatuor facies rota habeat, propter hoc quod Scriptura sacra per gratiam praedicationis extensa in quatuor mundi partes innotuit. Unde et bene rota

eadem una prius juxta animalia apparuisse et postmodum quatuor facies habuisse describitur, quia nisi lex Evangelio concordaret, in quatuor mundi partibus non innotesceret.

13. Sequitur: Et aspectus rotarum, et opus earum quasi visio maris. Recte sacra eloquia visioni maris similia narrantur, quia in eis magna sunt volumina sententiarum, cumuli sensuum. Nec immerito mari similis Scriptura sacra dicitur, quia firmantur in ea sententiae locutionis, sacramento baptismatis. Vel certe considerandum est quia navibus in mare navigamus, cum ad desideratas terras tendimus. Nobis autem quid est in desiderio nisi illa terra de qua scriptum est: Portio mea in terra viventium (Psal. CXLI, 6)? Ligno autem, ut dixi, evehitur qui mare transit. Et scimus quia sacra Scriptura lignum crucis per legem nobis praenuntiat, cum dicit: Maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno (Deut. XXI, 23). Quod Redemptori nostro Paulus attestatur, dicens: Factus pro nobis maledictum (Galat. III, 13). Per prophetas quoque lignum annuntiat, cum dicitur: Dominus regnabit a ligno (Psal. XCV, 10). Et rursum: Mittamus lignum in panem ejus (Jerem. XI, 9). Per Evangelium vero lignum crucis aperte ostenditur, ubi ipsa Domini passio quae prophetata est declaratur. Per apostolos autem haec eadem crux etiam in verbis et operibus tenetur, cum Paulus dicit: Mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo (Galat. VI, 14). Et rursus: Mihi autem absit gloriari nisi in cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi (Ibid., 14). Nobis ergo qui ad aeternam patriam tendimus Scriptura sacra per quatuor suas facies mare est. Quae crucem annuntiat, quia nos ad terram viventium ligno portat. Nisi autem mari Scripturam sacram similem cerneret propheta, minime dixisset: Repleta est terra scientia Domini, sicut aquae maris operientis (Isai. XI, 9). Sequitur: VERS. 16. — Et una similitudo ipsarum quatuor, et aspectus earum et opera, quasi si sit rota in medio rotae.

14. Una similitudo ipsarum est quatuor, quia quod praedicat lex, hoc etiam prophetae; quod denuntiant prophetae, hoc exhibet Evangelium; quod

exhibuit Evangelium, hoc praedicaverunt apostoli per mundum. Una ergo est similitudo ipsarum quatuor, quia divina eloquia etsi temporibus distincta, sunt tamen sensibus unita.

15. Et aspectus earum et opera, quasi si sit rota in medio rotae. Rota intra rotam est Testamentum Novum, sicut diximus, intra Testamentum Vetus, quia quod designavit Testamentum Vetus, hoc Testamentum Novum exhibuit. Ut enim pauca de multis loquar, quid est quod Adam dormiente Eva producitur (Genes. II, 21, 22), nisi quod moriente Christo Ecclesia formatur? Quid est quod Isaac ad immolandum ducitur, et ligna portat, arae superimponitur et vivit (Genes. XXII, 6), nisi quod Redemptor noster ad passionem ductus lignum sibi crucis ipse portavit? Et sic in sacrificio pro nobis ex humanitate est mortuus, ut tamen immortalis maneret ex divinitate. Quid est quod homicida post mortem summi pontificis absolutus ad terram propriam redit (Num. XXXV, 25; Josue XX, 6), nisi quod humanum genus quod peccando sibimetipsi mortem intulit, post mortem veri sacerdotis, videlicet Redemptoris nostri peccatorum suorum vinculis solvitur, et in paradisi possessione reparatur? Quid est quod in tabernaculo propitiatorium fieri jubetur (Exod. XXV, 17), super quod duo cherubim, unum a summitate una, et alterum a summitate alia, ex auro mundissimo ponuntur expandentes alas, et operientes oraculum, qui se mutuo respiciunt versis vultibus in propitiatorium (Exod. XXV, 20), nisi quod utraque Testamenta ita sibi in Mediatore Dei et hominum congruunt, ut quod unum designat, hoc alterum exhibeat? Quid enim per propitiatorium, nisi ipse Redemptor humani generis designatur? De quo per Paulum dicitur: Quem proposuit Deus propitiationem per fidem in sanguine ipsius (Rom. III, 25). Quid vero per duo Cherubim, quae plenitudo scientiae dicuntur, nisi utraque Testamenta signata sunt? Ex quibus unum a summitate una propitiatorii, aliud vero a summitate altera stat, quia quod Testamentum Vetus de incarnatione nostri Redemptoris coepit prophetando promittere, hoc Testamentum Novum

perfecte narrat expletum. Duo autem cherubim ex auro mundissimo facta sunt, quia utraque Testamenta pura ac simplici veritate describuntur. Expandunt vero alas, et oraculum operiunt, quia nos qui omnipotentis Dei oraculum sumus, a culpis imminentibus, Scripturae sacrae aedificatione protegimur. Cujus dum sententias sollicite aspicimus, ab errore ignorantiae, ejus alis velamur. Duo ergo cherubim se mutuo respiciunt versis vultibus in propitiatorium, quia utraque Testamenta in nullo a se discrepant. Et quasi ad semetipsa vicissim facies tenent, quia quod unum promittit, hoc aliud exhibet, dum inter se positum Mediatorem Dei et hominum vident. Facies quippe a semetipsis cherubim averterent, si quod unum Testamentum promitteret, aliud negaret. Sed dum concorditer de Mediatore Dei et hominum loquuntur, ut vicissim se respiciant, in propitiatorium intendunt. Rota ergo in medio rotae est, quia inest Testamento Veteri Testamentum Novum. Et, sicut saepe jam diximus, quod Testamentum Vetus promisit, hoc Novum exhibuit; et quod illud occulte annuntiat, hoc istud exhibitum aperte clamat. Prophetia ergo Testamenti Novi, Testamentum Vetus est; et expositio Testamenti Veteris, Testamentum Novum. Sequitur: VERS. 17. — Per quatuor partes earum ibant, et non revertebantur.

16. Quo alibi divina eloquia, nisi ad corda hominum vadunt? Sed per quatuor partes euntes ibant, quia Scriptura sacra per legem ad corda hominum vadit, signando mysterium. Per prophetas vadit paulo apertius, prophetando Dominum. Per Evangelium vadit, exhibendo quem prophetavit. Per apostolos vadit, praedicando eum quem Pater pro nostra redemptione exhibuit. Habent ergo rotae facies et vias, quia ostendunt sacra eloquia notitiam praeceptorum cum exhibitione operum. Et per quatuor partes vadunt, quia distinctis, ut praediximus, temporibus loquuntur, vel certe quia in cunctis mundi regionibus incarnatum Dominum praedicant. De quibus aperte mox subditur: IBID. — Et non revertebantur, cum ambularent.

17. Haec superius de animalibus dicta sunt, sed non eadem intelligi de rotis quae de animalibus possunt. Rotas quippe signare Testamenta diximus. Et Testamentum Vetus ambulavit quidem, quia per praedicationem ad mentes hominum venit, sed post semetipsum reversum est, quia juxta litteram in praeceptis suis et sacrificiis usque ad finem servari non potuit. Non enim sine immutatione permansit, cum in eo spiritalis intelligentia defuit. Sed cum Redemptor noster in mundum venit, hoc spiritaliter fecit intelligi, quod carnaliter invenit teneri. Itaque dum spiritaliter littera ejus intelligitur, omnis in eo illa carnalis exhibitio vivificatur. Testamentum vero Novum etiam per Testamenti Veteris paginas testamentum aeternum appellatum est, quia intellectus illius nunquam mutatur. Bene ergo dicitur quod rotae euntes ibant, et non revertebantur cum ambularent, quia dum Novum Testamentum non rescinditur, dum Vetus jam spiritaliter intellectum tenetur, post se non redeunt, quae usque ad finem mundi immutabilia persistunt. Ambulant ergo, sed non revertuntur, quia sic spiritaliter ad cor nostrum veniunt, ut eorum praecepta vel studia ulterius non mutentur. Sequitur: VERS. 18. — Statura quoque erat rotis, et altitudo, et horribilis aspectus.

18. Quid est quod in Scripturae sacrae eloquiis tria haec inesse narrantur, ut staturam, altitudinem et horribilem aspectum, id est terribilem habere memorentur? Quaerendum nobis magnopere est quae divinae Scripturae statura, quae altitudo, qui horribilis aspectus dicitur. Sciendum ergo est quia stare ad vitam congruit bene operantis. Unde per Paulum dicitur: Qui stat, videat ne cadat (I Cor. X, 12). Qui etiam discipulis dicit: Sic state in Domino, charissimi (Philip. IV, 1). Et propheta, qui se vita ac moribus ante Dominum stare videbat, ait: Vivit Dominus, in cujus conspectu sto (IV Reg. III, 14). Altitudo vero est, coelestis regni promissio. Ad quam tunc pertingitur, quando jam mortalis vitae omnis corruptio subjugatur. Horribilis vero aspectus est terror gehennae, quae sine fine reprobos cruciat, et semper

in cruciatu conservat. Statura ergo in rectitudine praeceptionis est, altitudo in celsitudine supernae promissionis, horribilis vero aspectus in minis atque terroribus supplicii sequentis. Scriptura igitur sacra staturam habet, quia mores ad standum dirigit, ut auditorum mentes ad terrenam concupiscentiam non curventur. Altitudinem habet, quia in coelesti patria aeternae vitae gaudia promittit. Horribilem quoque aspectum habet, quia omnibus reprobis gehennae supplicia minatur. Ostendit igitur staturam suam in aedificatione morum, ostendit altitudinem in promissione praemiorum, ostendit horribilem aspectum in terroribus suppliciorum. Recta est enim in praeceptis, alta in promissionibus, horribilis in minis. Habet staturam cum per prophetam dicit: Quiescite agere perverse, discite benefacere, quaerite judicium, subvenite oppresso, judicate pupillum, defendite viduam (Isai. I, 17). Et rursum: Frange esurienti panem tuum, et egenos vagosque induc in domum tuam; cum videris nudum, operi eum, et domesticos seminis tui ne despexeris (Ibid. LVIII, 7). Habet altitudinem cum per eumdem prophetam dicit: Non erit tibi sol amplius ad lucendum per diem, nec splendor lunae illuminabit te; sed erit tibi Dominus in lucem sempiternam, et Deus tuus in gloriam tuam (Ibid. LX, 19). Habet horribilem aspectum cum, infernum describens, dicit: Dies ultionis Domini, annus retributionis judicii Sion; et convertentur torrentes ejus in picem, et humus ejus in sulphur; et erit terra in picem ardentem, nocte et die non exstinguetur in sempiternum (Isai. XXXIV, 8, seq.). Quam beatus quoque Job describit, dicens: Terram tenebrosam et opertam mortis caligine, terram miseriae et tenebrarum, ubi umbra mortis, et nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitans (Job. X, 21, 22). Habet staturam cum per eam Dominus propitius pollicetur, dicens: Sicut coeli novi et terra nova, quae ego stare facio coram me, dicit Dominus; sic stabit semen vestrum et nomen vestrum (Isai. LXVI, 22). Illi enim veraciter coram Domino stant, qui vitam suam in pravitate non dissipant. Habet altitudinem cum statim subdit: Et erit mensis ex mense, et

Sabbatum ex Sabbato, et veniet omnis caro ut adoret coram facie mea, dicit Dominus (Ibid., 23). Quid est mensis nisi perfectio dierum? Et quid est Sabbatum nisi requies in qua fieri opus servile non liceat? Mensis ergo ex mense est, quia qui hic perfecte vivunt, illuc ad perfectionem gloriae perducuntur. Sabbatum vero ex Sabbato est, quia qui hic cessant a perverso opere, illic quiescunt in coelesti retributione. Habet etiam horribilem aspectum cum protinus adjungit: Et egredientur et videbunt cadavera virorum, qui praevaricati sunt in me. Vermis eorum non morietur, et ignis eorum non exstinguetur (Ibid., 24). Quid enim horribilius dici, quid cogitari potest, quam damnationis vulnera suscipere, et dolores vulnerum nunquam finire! De hoc horribili aspectu rotarum bene per Sophoniam dicitur, cum supervenire duris mentibus dies judicii denuntiatur: Juxta est dies Domini magnus, juxta et velox nimis. Vox diei Domini amora, tribulabitur ibi fortis. Dies irae dies illa, dies tribulationis et angustiae, dies calamitatis et miseriae, dies tenebrarum et caliginis, dies nebulae et turbinis, dies tubae et clangoris (Soph. I, 14).

19. Sed quia exterioris rotae dicta posuimus, restat nunc ut interioris quoque staturam, altitudinem, et horribilem aspectum proferre debeamus. Habet quippe rota interior staturam suam cum per sanctum Evangelium ad terrena desideria incurvare nos prohibet, Redemptoris nostri vocibus dicens: Attendite ut non graventur corda vestra in crapula et ebrietate, aut in curis hujus vitae (Luc. XXI, 34). Habet altitudinem cum de eodem Redemptore promittit, dicens: Quotquot autem crediderunt in eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri (Joan. I, 12). Quid enim hac potestate altius, quid hac altitudine sublimius dici potest, in qua creatus quisque efficitur filius creatoris? Habet horribilem aspectum cum de reprobis loquitur, dicens: Ibunt hi in supplicium aeternum (Matth. XXV, 46). Habet staturam cum Veritas discipulos admonet, dicens: Vendite quae possidetis, et date eleemosynam. Facite vobis sacculos non veterascentes (Luc. XII, 33).

Habet promissionis altitudinem cum dicit: Venient ab Oriente et Occidente, et recumbent cum Abraham et Isaac et Jacob in regno coelorum (Matth. VIII, 11). Habet horribilem aspectum cum subdit: Filii autem regni ejicientur in tenebras exteriores; ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium (Ibid., 12). Quibus rursum voce Veritatis dicitur: Vos in peccatis vestris moriemini (Joan. VIII, 21, 24). Habet staturam cum primi pastoris vocibus dicit: Ministrate in fide vestra virtutem, in virtute autem scientiam, in scientia autem abstinentiam, in abstinentia autem patientiam, in patientia autem pietatem, in pietate autem amorem fraternitatis, in amore autem fraternitatis charitatem (II Petr. I, 5). Habet altitudinem cum paulo post dicit: Sic enim abundanter ministrabitur vobis introitus in aeternum regnum Domini et Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi (Ibid., 11). Qui rursus bonis pastoribus pollicetur, dicens: Cum apparuerit princeps pastorum, percipietis immarcescibilem gloriae coronam (I Petr. V, 4). Habet horribilem aspectum cum dicit: Adveniet autem dies Domini ut fur, in qua coeli magno impetu transibunt, elementa vero calore solventur (II Petr. III, 10, 6). Cum haec igitur omnia dissolvenda sint, quales oportet vos esse in sanctis conversationibus et pietatibus, exspectantes et properantes in adventum diei Dei per quam coeli ardentes solventur, elementa vero ignis ardore tabescent? Habet staturam cum per Paulum nos a terrenis desideriis erigit, dicens: Mortificate membra vestra quae sunt super terram, fornicationem, immunditiam, libidinem, concupiscentiam malam, et avaritiam, quae est idolorum servitus (Coloss. III, 5). Habet altitudinem cum promittit, dicens: Vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo. Cum enim Christus apparuerit vita vestra, tunc et vos apparebitis cum ipso in gloria (Ibid., 3). Habet horribilem aspectum cum minatur, dicens: In revelatione Domini nostri Jesu Christi de coelo, cum angelis virtutis ejus in flamma ignis, dantis vindictam his qui non noverunt Deum, et qui non obediunt Evangelio Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui poenas dabunt in interitu aeternas a facie

Domini, et a gloria virtutis ejus (II Thess. I, 7). Habet staturam cum nos admonet, dicens: Videte, ne quis alicui malum pro malo reddat, sed semper quod bonum est sectamini in invicem et in omnes (I Thess. V, 15). Habet altitudinem cum promittit, dicens: Si commorimur, et convivemus, si sustinemus, et conregnabimus (II Tim. II, 11). Et rursum: Non sunt condignae passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam, quae revelabitur in nobis (Rom. VIII, 18). Habet horribilem aspectum cum minatur, dicens: Terribilis quaedam exspectatio judicii, et ignis aemulatio, quae consumptura est adversarios (Hebr. X, 27). Qui rursus ait: Horrendum est incidere in manus Dei viventis (Ibid., 31). Quae omnia brevi quoque sententia stringit, dicens: Ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis quae sit latitudo, et longitudo, et sublimitas, et profundum (Ephes. III, 18). Lata quippe est charitas, quia et inimicorum dilectionem capit, et per eam charitatem qua nos Deus omnipotens late diligit etiam longanimiter portat. Hoc ergo nos debemus exhibere proximis, quod indignis nobis a creatore nostro conspicimus exhiberi. Latitudo itaque et longitudo ad staturam pertinet, quia per amorem mores dilatat, ut fraterna mala charitas longanimiter portet. Sublimitas autem est aeternorum illa remuneratio praemiorum, de cujus immensitate dicitur: Quia nec oculus vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se (I Cor. II, 9). Habet ergo in sublimitate altitudinem, quia aeterna sanctorum gaudia nulla nunc praevalent cogitatione penetrari. Profundum quoque est illa inaestimabilis damnatio suppliciorum, quae eos quos susceperit in ima demergit. In quibus sacra eloquia horribilem aspectum habent, quia inaestimabilem terrorem audientibus incutiunt, cum supplicia inferni loquuntur. Bene ergo dicitur: Statura quoque erat rotis, et altitudo, et horribilis aspectus, quia Scriptura sacra in utroque Testamento et admonendo recta est, et promittendo alta, et minando terribilis. Haec nos, fratres charissimi, hodierna die largiente Domino, dixisse sufficiat, ut ad

disserenda ea quae subjuncta sunt otio reparati redeamus, in auctore omnium Deo et Domino nostro Jesu Christo confidentes, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA VII

Exponitur versus 18 cum quinque sequentibus, maxime de sacrae lectionis utilitate, et de exhibendis ea cautione charitatis officiis, ut nobis potissimum per poenitentiam intendamus.

1. Sicut nostis, fratres charissimi, consuetudo prophetiae est nunc ista, nunc illa aspicere, et ab aliis in aliud subito verba derivare, sicut Psalmista cum de Domino loqueretur, dicens: Deus judex justus, fortis et longanimis, nunquid irascitur per singulos dies? Nisi convertamini, gladium suum vibravit, arcum suum tetendit, et paravit illum; et in ipso paravit vasa mortis, sagittas suas ardentibus effecit (Psal. VII, 12, seq.); repente subjungit: Concepit dolorem, et peperit iniquitatem; lacum aperuit, et effodit eum, et incidit in foveam quam fecit (Ibid., 15). Ecce cum Domini narraret justitiam, quasi non mutata voce, repente peccatoris intulit culpam. Quod unum me exempli causa dixisse sufficiat, quia quisquis in prophetis usum lectionis habet, quam crebro ista faciant non ignorat. Unde nunc Ezechiel propheta cum de rotis loqueretur, adjunxit: VERS. 18. — Et totum corpus plenum oculis in circuitu ipsorum quatuor.

2. Qui enim non ipsarum, sed ipsorum dixit, profecto indicat quia repente sermo ejus a rotis ad animalia rediit. Per quae nimirum perfecti quique, ut praedictum est, designantur. Corpora itaque animalium idcirco plena oculis describuntur, quia sanctorum actio ab omni parte circumspecta est, bona desiderabiliter providens, mala solerter cavens. Et hoc est laboriosius, ubi sanctorum mens vehementer invigilat, ne se ante eorum oculos mala sub bonorum specie abscondant. Circumspecta ergo est vita sanctorum, ne sic sit libera, ut superba sit, quia saepe superbia excedit in verbis, et videri appetit libertas puritatis. Ne sic sit humilis, ut formidolosa, quia aliquando timor restringit animum, et loqui quae recta sunt non praesumit, sed tamen in ipsa timida cogitatione humilitatem esse se simulat. Ne sic sit parca, ut tenax sit, quia plerumque tenacia parcimonia appetit

aestimari, ut juste ac necessarie videatur tenere quidquid egenti proximo misericorditer non vult impendere. Ne sic sit misericors, ut effusa sit, quia nonnunquam effusionem esse misericordiam putat. Aliud enim est pietatis studio necessaria proximis dare, atque aliud ea quae possidentur sine mercedis intentione dispergere. Quidquid ergo agitur, in radice intentionis pensandum est quo merito apud judicium creatoris habeatur. Unde et idem creator dicit: Si oculus tuus simplex fuerit, totum corpus tuum lucidum erit (Luc. XI, 34). Oculum videlicet intentionem, corpus vero actionem nominans. Quia si nostra intentio apud Deum simplex fuerit, in ejus judicio nostra actio tenebrosa non erit. Igitur quia sancti viri solerter invigilant ut se undique aspiciant, et ubique custodiant, ne aut mala propter ea ipsa appetant, aut haec eadem sub specie bonorum agant, scilicet ne se eis vitia virtutes esse mentiantur, totum corpus plenum in circuitu oculis habent, quia omnis eorum actio providentia sollicitudinis et repletur et circumdatur.

3. Hinc est quod Paulus apostolus dum cuidam poenitenti de perpetrato facinore Corinthios prospiceret voluisse misereri, ait: Si cui aliquid donastis, et ego. Nam et ego quod donavi, propter vos in persona Christi, ut non circumveniamur a Satana. Non enim ignoramus cogitationes ejus (II Cor. II, 10). Si enim parcendum erat, cur se humilitate tanta voluntati discipulorum magister egregius sociat, ut neque ipse discipulis, neque ab eo discipuli in compassionis causa divisi viderentur, nisi quia sollicito providentiae oculo attendit, quod plerumque dum alter donat, alter irascitur? Et quale est jam misericordiae sacrificium, quod cum discordia proximi offertur? Unde recte ait: Ut non circumveniamur a Satana. Non enim ignoramus cogitationes ejus. Quia videlicet inde alterius cordi rixae malum solet immittere, unde alterum conspicit pietatis negotium fecisse. Imperfectum enim bonum est quod sic agitur, ut ne quid ei ex alio latere mali subrepat non attendatur, nisi forte hoc quod sine cujuspiam scandalo fieri non potest, culpa sit non fecisse.

4. Hoc vero ideo dicimus, ut notum vestrae dilectioni faciamus quia in nostro bono opere aliquando cavendum est scandalum proximi, aliquando vero pro nihilo contemnendum. Quod in ipso nostro auctore didicimus, qui, dum tributum Petro inquisito peteretur, prius paradigma proposuit, per quod se nihil debere respondit, dicens: Reges terrae a quibus accipiunt tributum vel censum, a filiis suis, an ab alienis (Matth. XVII, 24, 25)? Cui cum diceretur ab alienis, illico respondit: Ergo liberi sunt filii. Sed postquam liberum se esse monstravit, ne fortasse scandalum cuiquam faceret, subdidit: Ut autem non scandalizemus eos, vade ad mare, et mitte hamum, et eum piscem qui primus ascenderit tolle, et aperto ore ejus invenies staterem; illum sumens da eis pro me et te (Ibid., 26). Qui rursum cum diceret quia omne quod in os intrat non coinquinat hominem, tunc accedentes discipuli dixerunt ei: Scis quia Pharisaei, audito hoc verbo, scandalizati sunt? (Matth. XV, 11, seq.) At ille respondens, ait: Omnis plantatio quam non plantavit Pater meus coelestis, eradicabitur. Sinite illos, caeci sunt, et duces caecorum. Ecce magistra Veritas, ne in quorumdam cordibus scandalum gigneretur, quod non debuit tributum dedit; et rursum quia generari scandalum in quorumdam cordibus contra veritatem vidit, in suo eos scandalo remanere permisit.

5. Ex qua re nobis considerandum est quia, in quantum sine peccato possumus, vitare proximorum scandalum debemus. Si autem de veritate scandalum sumitur, utilius permittitur nasci scandalum quam veritasrelinquatur. Corpora ergo animalium plena sunt oculis cum se hinc inde caute circumspiciunt.

6. Sed sciendum nobis est quia saepe, dum aliis rebus intendimus, fit ut alias negligamus; et ubi negligimus, ibi procul dubio oculum non habemus. Nam Pharisaeus ille qui ascenderat in templum orare, testante Evangelio, quid dixit agnovimus. Ait enim: Deus, gratias ago tibi (Luc. XVIII, 11). Recte autem gratias Deo agebat, a quo acceperat bona quae fecerat. Qui

etiam subjungit: Quia non sum sicut caeteri hominum, raptores, injusti, adulteri, velut etiam hic Publicanus; jejuno bis in Sabbato, decimas do omnium quae possideo (Ibid., 12). Ecce ad exhibendam abstinentiam, ad impendendam misericordiam, ad referendas Deo gratias oculum Pharisaeus habuerat, sed ad humilitatis custodiam oculum non habebat. Et quid prodest quod contra hostium insidias pene tota civitas caute custoditur, si unum foramen apertum relinquitur, unde ab hostibus intretur? Quid ergo prodest custodia quae pene ubique circumponitur, quando inimicis tota civitas per neglectum loci unius aperitur? Pharisaeus autem qui jejunium exhibuit, decimas dedit, Deo gratias retulit, quasi pene per circuitum in suae civitatis custodia vigilavit. Sed quia unum in se foramen superbiae non attendit, ibi hostem pertulit, ubi per negligentiam oculum clausit. Quia ergo sanctorum mentes undique se circumspicientes invigilant, atque in omni suo opere pavoris et sollicitudinis oculum circumducunt, ne aut prava agant, aut recta quae praecepta sunt non agant, aut bonis actibus expletis, in suis cogitationibus intumescant, et tanto gravius offendant quanto justi videntur foris et occultius peccant, recte dicitur: Totum corpus eorum plenum oculis in circuitu.

7. Sciendum quoque quod in translatione veteri non habetur: Totum corpus eorum plenum oculis in circuitu, sed dicitur: Dorsa eorum plena oculis. Quae videlicet sententia ab aedificationis intellectu non discrepat. Ea enim quae sunt in facie saepe etiam peccatores homines custodire solent. Justi autem viri, quia se et in eis custodiunt quae in promptu et in facie non videntur, in dorsis oculos habere referuntur. Qui ergo et ea quae in occultis sunt discutiunt, atque ab ipsis se custodiant quae latent, profecto oculos in dorsis habent. Quod tamen intelligi et aliter potest, quia ea quae sunt ante faciem nostram videmus, dorsa autem nostra alius in nobis videt, et nos videre non possumus. Quia autem sancti viri solerter se aspiciunt in quibus ab aliis judicari possunt, et districte se vident, sicut saepe districte ab aliis

videntur, qui in se nec ea quae se latere poterant ignorant, lumen in dorso portant. Sequitur: VERS. 19. — Cumque ambularent animalia, ambulabant pariter et rotae juxta ea; et cum elevarentur animalia de terra, elevabantur simul et rotae.

8. Ambulant animalia cum sancti viri in Scriptura sacra intelligunt quemadmodum moraliter vivant. Elevantur vero a terra animalia, cum sancti viri se in contemplatione suspendunt. Et quia unusquisque sanctorum quanto ipse in Scriptura sacra profecerit, tanto haec eadem Scriptura sacra proficit apud ipsum, recte dicitur: Cum ambularent animalia, ambulabant pariter et rotae; et cum elevarentur animalia de terra, elevabantur simul et rotae, quia divina eloquia cum legente crescunt; nam tanto illa quisque altius intelligit, quanto in eis altius intendit. Unde nec elevantur rotae, si non elevantur animalia, quia nisi legentium mentes ad alta profecerint, divina dicta, velut in imis, non intellecta jacent. Cum enim legenti cuilibet sermo Scripturae sacrae (si tepidus videtur sensus divini eloquii) ejus mentem non excitat, et in cogitatione sua nullo intellectus lumine emicat, rota et otiosa et in terra est, quia animal non elevatur a terra. At vero si animal ambulet, id est bene vivendi ordinem quaerat, et per gressum cordis inveniat quemadmodum gressum boni operis ponat, ambulant pariter et rotae, quia tantum in sacro eloquio provectum invenis, quantum apud illud ipse profeceris. Si vero pennatum animal sese in contemplatione tetenderit, rotae protinus a terra sublevantur, quia terrena non esse intelligis, quae prius in sacro eloquio juxta terrenum morem dicta credidisti. Fitque ut Scripturae sacrae verba esse coelestia sentias, si accensus per contemplationis gratiam temetipsum ad coelestia suspendas. Et mira atque ineffabilis sacri eloquii virtus agnoscitur, cum superno amore legentis animus penetratur. Quia ergo animal ad alta se sublevat, rota volat. Sequitur: VERS. 20. — Quocunque ibat spiritus, illuc eunte spiritu et rotae pariter levabantur, sequentes eum.

9. Quo enim spiritus legentis tendit, illuc et divina eloquia levantur, quia si in eis altum quid videndo et sentiendo quaesieris, haec eadem sacra eloquia tecum crescunt, tecum in altiora ascendunt. Bene autem de eisdem rotis dicitur: Sequentes eum. Legentis enim spiritus, si quid in eis scire morale aut historicum quaerit, sensus hunc moralis historiae sequitur. Si quid typicum, mox figurata locutio agnoscitur. Si quid contemplativum, statim rotae quasi pennas accipiunt, et in aere suspenduntur, quia in verbis sacri eloquii intelligentia coelestis aperitur. Quocunque ergo ibat spiritus, illuc eunte spiritu et rotae pariter levabantur, sequentes eum. Rotae enim spiritum sequuntur, quia verba sacri eloquii, ut saepe jam dictum est, juxta sensum legentium per intellectum crescunt.

10. In una enim eademque Scripturae sententia alius sola historia pascitur, alius typicam, alius vero intelligentiam per typum contemplativam quaerit. Et fit plerumque ut, sicut dictum est, in una eademque sententia cuncta simul tria valeant inveniri. S. Moyses enim cum de ardenti rubo vocatus fuisset (Exod. III, 3), accessit propius ut videret visum, et ecce rubus ardebat, et non consumebatur. Magnum est hoc miraculum. Si solam in eo historiam requiras, est unde legentis nutriatur animus, ut videas quod in ligno ignis ardeat, et non consumat. Jam vero si typicam intelligentiam quaeras, quid flamma nisi legem, de qua scriptum est: In dextera ejus ignea lex (Deut. XXXIII, 2)? et quid rubus ille, nisi Judaicum populum designavit, peccatorum suorum spinis obsitum? Sed rubus ardens consumi non potuit, quia Judaicus populus et ignem quidem legis accepit, et tamen peccatorum suorum spinas non deseruit, nec ejus vitia divini sermonis flamma concremavit. Fortasse in hoc facto alius majora per typum contemplari desiderat. Hujus quia sensus excrescit, elevantur pariter et rotae. Inter homines enim perfectus homo factus est unicus Dei Filius, qui sua peccata non habuit, sed spinas nostrae nequitiae suscepit, atque usque ad passionem pro nobis humiliari dignatus est, et in semetipso ignem

tribulationis nostrae suscipere. Sed arsit, et non arsit, quia et ex humanitate est mortuus, et tamen immortalis ex divinitate permansit. Suscepit a nobis unde sacrificium fieret pro nobis, et tamen impassibilis atque incommutabilis permansit in propriis, ut nos commutaret a nostris. Alius fortasse per historiam, moralitatem, atque alius per allegoriae intelligentiam contemplationem requirit. Patet cunctis juxta historiam hoc quod in lege scriptum est, ut turtur quae pro peccato offertur, retorqueatur caput ejus ad pennulas, ita ut collo inhaereat, et non penitus abrumpatur (Levit. I, 15; V, 8). In quibus verbis dubius legentibus sensus historicus non est. Sed si haec intelligere moraliter requiras, agitatur rota dum ad moralem intelligentiam ducitur sacri verbi sententia. Nos enim ipsi in omnipotentis Dei sacrificio esse turtur debemus, ita ut caput nostrum retorqueatur ad pennulas, id est animus ad virtutes. Non enim immerito per caput mentem intelligimus, quia sicut caput corpus, ita mens actiones regit. Sed caput ad pennulas retorqueri praecipitur, ut ea quae dicis facias, et os ad opera conjungas. Nec ita caput abscindendum est, ut a corpore dividatur, sed ex parte decisum, corpori suo jubetur inhaerere, quia videlicet mens nostra a carnali delectatione incidenda est, sed a carnis cura necessaria incidenda non est. Hinc enim scriptum est: Carnis curam ne feceritis in desideriis (Rom. XIII, 14). Quae ergo in desideriis fieri prohibetur, procul dubio in necessitate conceditur. Caput ergo turturis ex parte abscissum est, et ex parte inhaeret, ut, sicut dictum est, et a voluntate carnis mens nostra incisa sit, et tamen a necessitate non sit abscissa. Quid, si hoc sacrificii genus sub typica Redemptoris nostri intelligentia alius ad contemplationem requirat? Ascendat ergo ad fortiora animus, eleventur animalia, ut eleventur pariter et rotae. Quis enim caput nostrum est, nisi Redemptor generis humani? De quo scriptum est: Ipsum dedit caput supra omnem Ecclesiam, quae est corpus ipsius (Ephes. I, 22). Quem cum Judaei persequerentur, nomen ejus delere de terra conati sunt. Cumque eum crucifixum et sepultum viderent,

hunc se ab amore omnium divisisse crediderunt. Sed caput turturis et incisum est, et tamen a suo corpore divisum non est, quia ex eo quod pro nobis mortem pertulit, omnes nos sib verius in ipsa sua morte conjunxit; et per hoc quod se nostris oculis visibiliter subtraxit, nostris se mentibus invisibiliter radicavit. Caput ergo turturis incisum inhaesit corpori, quia pro nobis quidem Redemptor noster passus est, sed a nobis separatus per passionem non est. Quia igitur dicta sacri eloquii cum legentium spiritu excrescunt, recte nunc dicitur: Quocunque ibat spiritus, illuc eunte spiritu et rotae pariter levabantur, sequentes eum. Et subditur: IBID. — Spiritus enim vitae erat in rotis.

11. In rotis enim spiritus vitae est, quia per sacra eloquia dono spiritus vivificamur, ut mortifera a nobis opera repellamus. Potest etiam intelligi quia spiritus vadit cum legentis animum diversis modis et ordinibus tangit Deus, quando hunc per verba sacri eloquii modo in zelo excitans, ad ultionem erigit, modo ad patientiam mitigat, modo in praedicationem instruit, modo ad poenitentiae lamenta compungit. Sed curramus breviter per haec eadem verba quae diximus, et videamus quomodo sequuntur rotae spiritum, qui vitae spiritus dicitur, et rotis inesse perhibetur. Certe si legentis animum spiritus vitae in zeli fervore tetigerit, protinus in sacris eloquiis videt quod Moyses, ad castra rediens, et populum per idola peccasse cognoscens, hunc per fervorem spiritus gladiis stravit (Exod. XXXII, 27); quod Phinees, persequendo luxuriam, iram Domini gladio placavit (Num. XXV, 8); quod Petrus sibimet mentientes, verbo perculit et occidit (Act. V, 5, 10). Quod Paulus, negligentibus discipulis, virga minatur (I Cor. IV, 21).

12. Si vitae spiritus legentis animum ad servandam patientiam tangit, statim sequuntur et rotae, quia in sacris eloquiis invenit quod Moyses et Aaron, cum loquentes recta persecutionem populi passi sunt, ad tabernaculum cucurrerunt, pro ipso populo exorantes quem fugiebant (Num. XX, 6). Sancta autem eorum mens et tumorem superbientium pertulit, et

tamen contra eos ad odium non erupit. Patientia enim vera est, quae et ipsum amat quem portat. Nam tolerare, sed odisse, non est virtus mansuetudinis, sed velamentum furoris. In eisdem quoque eloquiis (I Reg. VIII, 22) invenit quod Samuel de principatu dejectus orasse se etiam pro dejicientibus confitetur; quod nemo sanctorum ad coelestem gloriam nisi patientiam servando pervenit; quod ipse auctor generis humani sputa, colaphos, spineam coronam, crucem, lanceam pertulit, et tamen pro persecutoribus oravit.

13. Si vitae spiritus legentis animum ad studium praedicationis excitat, statim sequuntur et rotae, quia in sacris eloquiis invenit S. Moyses, jubente Domino, contra Aegypti regem in quantis se praedicationis liberae verbis erexit (Exod. V, 10); quod S. Stephanus Judaeis perfidiantibus diceret: Vos semper Spiritui sancto restitistis (Act. VII, 51), nec inter lapides timuit (Ibid., 57); quod S. Petrus, fustibus caesus, ne in nomine Jesu loqueretur, cum magna libertate respondit: Obedire oportet Deo magis quam hominibus (Ibid., V, 28, 29); quod S. Paulus catenarum vinculis stringitur (Philip. I, 14), sed tamen verbum Dei non est alligatum (II Tim. II, 9).

14. Si vitae spiritus ad poenitentiae lamenta compungit, sequuntur protinus et rotae, cum Scripturae sacrae verba S. David poenitentem proferunt; quod et reprehensus a propheta, quia subjectus coelesti Regi non fuit, subjecto increpanti non erubuit confiteri quod fecit (II Reg. XII, 13); quod publicanus, qui reatum suae nequitiae cognovit, etsi injustus ad templum venit, justificatus a templo rediit (Luc. XVIII, 13, 14); quod S. Petrus negationis maculas lacrymis lavit (Matth. XXVI, 75); quod latro qui in cruce cognovit culpam, in ipsa jam morte invenit veniam (Luc. XXIII, 43). De quibus adhuc rotis eadem propheta replicat, atque subjungit: VERS. 21. — Cum euntibus ibant, et cum stantibus stabant; et cum elevatis a terra pariter elevabantur et rotae, sequentes ea, quia spiritus vitae erat in rotis.

15. Haec, sicut nostis, fratres charissimi, ex maxima parte jam dicta sunt, sed iterata descriptione narrantur. Nec nos itaque pigeat eadem breviter exponendo repetere, quae spiritus per prophetam dignatus est replicando narrare. Hoc enim solum in his verbis novum additur, quod dictum est: Cum stantibus stabant. Sunt autem quidam qui usque ad hoc proficiunt, ut terrena quae acceperunt bene dispensare noverint, misericordiae operibus intendant, oppressis subveniant. Hi videlicet vadunt, in eo quod se ad proximi utilitatem tendunt. Cum his ergo rotae gradiuntur, quia sacra eloquia dictorum suorum passus in eorum itinere disponunt. Et sunt alii qui in fide quam acceperunt ita ad tenendum fortes sunt, ut adversis quibusque resistere valeant, et non solum minime ad perversitatem trahantur perfidiae, sed etiam perversa loquentes impugnent, eosque ad rectitudinem pertrahant. Cum istis stantibus stant etiam et rotae, quia eis rectitudinem suam sacri eloquii verba confirmant, cum in eis audiunt: State et tenete traditiones quas didicistis (II Thess. II, 15). Et rursum: Adversarius vester diabolus, tanquam leo rugiens, circuit quaerens quem devoret, cui resistite fortes in fide (I Petr. V, 8, 9). Et sunt alii qui omnia terrena despiciunt, nulla quae praetereunt, possidere dignantur, et in Dei se, ut praedictum est, contemplatione suspendunt. Cum his ergo elevatis et rotae pariter levantur, quia in quantum quisque ad alta profecerit, intantum ei et sacra eloquia de altioribus loquuntur. Vadunt ergo animalia ad utilitatem proximi, stant ad custodiam sui, elevantur ad contemplationem Dei.

16. Sed et rotae pariter vadunt, stant, elevantur, quia quaesita sacra lectio talis invenitur, qualis et fit ipse, a quo quaeritur. Ad activam enim vitam profecisti, ambulat tecum. Ad immobilitatem atque constantiam spiritus profecisti, stat tecum. Ad contemplativam vitam per Dei gratiam pervenisti, volat tecum. Et rursum subditur: Quia spiritus vitae erat in rotis. Quod idcirco secundo dicitur vitae spiritus in rotis esse, quia Scripturae sacrae duo sunt Testamenta, quae utraque Dei spiritus scribi voluit, ut nos a morte

animae liberaret. Vel certe quia duo sunt praecepta charitatis, dilectio videlicet Dei, et dilectio proximi, per quae utraque nos sacrae Scripturae dicta vivificant. Secundo ergo dicitur quod spiritus vitae erat in rotis, quia dilectionem Dei et proximi capimus in eloquiis divinis. Per praecepta enim Scripturae sacrae reviviscimus, qui mortui in culpa jacebamus. Unde omnipotenti Domino per Psalmistam dicitur: In aeternum non obliviscar justificationes tuas, quia in ipsis vivificasti me (Psal. CXVIII, 93). Justificationes enim praecepta Domini dicuntur, in quibus nos corrigendo justificat. De quibus Psalmista apertius dicit: In tuis justificationibus meditabor, non obliviscar sermones tuos (Ibid., 16). In eis itaque nos vivificat, quia per haec nobis spiritualem vitam demonstrat, eamque per afflatum spiritus nostris mentibus infundit. Quod quia quotidie per donum gratiae in electorum mentibus agitur, recte dicitur: Spiritus vitae erat in rotis.

17. Haec nobis Scriptura in tenebris vitae praesentis facta est lumen itineris. Hinc etenim Petrus ait: Cui benefacitis intendentes, quasi lucernae lucenti in caliginoso loco (II Petr. I, 19). Hinc Psalmista dicit: Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum, Domine, et lumen semitis meis (Psal. CXVIII, 105). Scimus tamen quia et ipsa nobis nostra lucerna obscura est, nisi hanc nostris mentibus veritas illustret. Unde iterum Psalmista ait: Quoniam tu illuminas lucernam meam, Domine, Deus meus, illumina tenebras meas (Psal. XVII, 29). Quid enim lucerna ardens, nisi lumen est? Sed lumen creatum nobis non lucet, nisi illuminetur a lumine non creato. Quia ergo omnipotens Deus ad salutem nostram sanctorum Testamentorum dicta et ipse creavit, et ipse aperuit, spiritus vitae erat in rotis. Sequitur: VERS. 22. — Et similitudo super capita animalium firmamenti, quasi aspectus crystalli horribilis, extenti super capita eorum desuper.

18. Haec, largiente Domino, duobus modis exponemus, ut lectoris judicio quid eligendum censeat relinquamus. Possunt enim firmamenti

nomine coelestes potestates intelligi. Quod firmamentum recte quasi aspectus crystalli dicitur, quia videlicet crystallum forte quidem nimis est, sed ex aqua solidatur. Et natura angelica, quando creata est, liberum arbitrium accepit, utrum vellet in humilitate persistere, et in omnipotentis Dei conspectu permanere, an ad superbiam laberetur, et a beatitudine caderet, per similitudinem aqua fuit. Sed quia cadentibus aliis, sancti angeli in sua beatitudine perstiterunt, atque hoc acceperunt in munere, ut jam cadere omnino non possint, in eis natura sua, quia jam duci mutabiliter non potest, quasi in magnitudinem crystalli durata est. Quod crystallum horribile et extensum super capita animalium dicitur, quia illae potestates angelicae, quae omnipotentis Dei conspectui assistunt, nobis adhuc in hac corruptione positis, terribiles atque pavendae sunt. Quarum nunc gaudia, quia sensum nostrarum mentium excedunt, super capita animalium esse memorantur. Quis enim in carne corruptibili positus comprehendere valeat quae sit illa angelorum ineffabilis et sine fine laetitia? quae beatitudo, sine defectu vultum videre creatoris, atque in ejus delectatione sine immutatione persistere?

19. Potest autem firmamenti nomine ipse per figuram noster Redemptor intelligi, verus Deus super omnia, et factus inter omnia homo perfectus, in quo nostra natura apud Patrem confirmata est. De quo etiam per Psalmistam prophetando dicitur: Fiat manus tua super virum dexterae tuae, et super filium hominis quem confirmasti tibi (Psal. LXXIX, 18). Humana etenim natura priusquam a creatore omnium susciperetur, terra erat; nam firmamentum non erat. Peccatori quippe homini dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). At postquam assumpta est ab auctore omnium, atque in coelis sublevata, et super angelos ducta, firmamentum facta est, quae terra fuit. Sed firmamentum quod aspicitur, cujus habeat similitudinem, subinfertur, cum dicitur: Quasi aspectus crystalli horribilis. Crystallum, sicut dictum est, ex aqua congelascit, et robustum fit. Scimus

vero quanta sit aquae mobilitas. Corpus autem Redemptoris nostri, quia usque ad mortem passionibus subjacuit, aquae simile juxta aliquid fuit, quia nascendo, crescendo, lassescendo, esuriendo, sitiendo, moriendo, usque ad passionem suam per momenta temporum mobiliter decucurrit. Cujus cursum Propheta intuens, ait: Exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam (Psal. XVIII, 6). Sed quia per resurrectionis suae gloriam ex ipsa sua corruptione in incorruptionis virtutem convaluit, quasi crystalli more ex aqua duruit, ut in illo et haec eadem natura esset, et in ipsa quae jam fuerat corruptionis mutabilitas non esset. Aqua ergo in crystallum versa est, quando corruptionis ejus infirmitas per resurrectionem suam ad incorruptionis est firmitatem mutata.

20. Sed notandum quod hoc crystallum horribile, id est pavendum, dicitur. Quis autem nesciat cujus pulchritudinis sit crystallum? Et mirum quomodo in hoc crystallo conveniat pulchritudo cum pavore. Sed omnibus vera scientibus constat quia Redemptor humani generis cum judex apparuerit, et speciosus justis, et terribilis erit injustis. Quem enim mansuetum aspiciunt electi, hunc eumdem pavendum atque terribilem conspiciunt reprobi. Sed hunc ideo tunc electi terribilem non videbunt, quia modo terrorem illius considerare non cessant. Studiose enim considerant quam terribilis ad judicium veniat, culpas anteactas deflent, imminentes declinant; pavorem illius quotidie ante oculos mentis ponunt, et quam tremendus appareat sine cessatione suspecti sunt, atque quotidie timendo agunt ne quando venerit pertimescant. Similitudo ergo super capita animalium firmamenti quasi aspectus crystalli horribilis. Et quia ipse pavor ejus, quem in suis cogitationibus tenent, eorum mentes protegit, recte subjungitur: Extenti super capita eorum desuper. Firmamentum hoc quod in similitudinem crystalli super capita eorum animalium apparet, et horribile et extentum est, quia bonorum mentes unde terret, inde protegit. Si enim pavendus in eorum cordibus non esset, protector et modo a peccatis et post

a suppliciis non fuisset. Quia autem semper considerant qui pavor ex judicio immineat, virtutum pennas in rectitudine conservant. Unde et apte mox subditur: VERS. 25. — Sub firmamento autem pennae eorum rectae alterius ad alterum. 21. Tunc pennae virtutum sub firmamento rectae sunt, quando bonum quod alter habet, hoc alteri impendit, ut qui terrenam substantiam accepit, indigentis proximi inopiam sublevet; qui doctrinae gratia plenus est, ignorantis proximi tenebras verbo suae praedicationis illustret, qui temporali potestate subnixus est, oppressos a violentiis relevet; qui prophetiae spiritu plenus est, a vita proximi mala imminentia, bona suadendo, declinet; qui gratiam curationis accepit, intercessione sua saluti infirmantium pie et humiliter impendat; qui, a terrenis actibus liber, soli Deo vacare meruit, pro delinquentibus proximis exoret. Fit autem saepe ut qui terrena substantia nimis occupatur orationi non quantum debet invigilet. Et fit plerumque ut is qui ad exorandum Dominum cunctis mundi oneribus exutus vacat sustentationem vivendi non habeat. Sed dum dives porrigit alimentum atque vestimentum pauperi, et dum pauper orationem suam animae divitis impendit, pennae animalium rectae alterius ad alterum tenduntur. Nam dum ille mihi verbum praedicationis exhibet, et lumine veritatis ex corde meo ignorantiae tenebras expellit, dumque illi ego, quia fortasse a mundi hujus potente opprimitur, solatium meae defensionis impertior, atque hunc de violentis manibus evello, vicissim nobis pennas nostras tendimus, ut nos affectu et ope vicaria ex bono quod accepimus tangamus. Unde bene primus pastor admonet, dicens: Omnium finis appropinquavit. Estote itaque prudentes, et vigilate in orationibus; ante omnia mutuam in vobismetipsis charitatem continuam habentes, quia charitas operit multitudinem peccatorum. Hospitales invicem sine murmurationibus. Unusquisque sicut accepit gratiam, in alterutrum illam administrantes (I Petr. IV, 7, seq.). Quod ergo apud Ezechielem penna, hoc apud Petrum apostolum accepta gratia dicitur. Et quod ille ait: Rectae

pennae alterius ad alterum, hoc Ecclesiae pastor dicit: Unusquisque sicut accepit gratiam, in alterutrum illam administrantes (Ibid., 10). Pennae enim nostrae rectae jam non sunt, si ad utilitatem nostram solummodo reflectuntur. Sed tunc rectae fiunt, cum in utilitatem proximi dirigimus quod habemus. Quia enim bona nostra non a nobis sunt, sed ab eo haec accepimus a quo factum est ut essemus, tanto ea nobis non debemus retinere privata, quanto ea nobis conspicimus ab auctore nostro ad communem utilitatem data. Unde recte Petrus apostolus in exhortatione hujus rei subdit, dicens: Sicut boni dispensatores multiformis gratiae Dei (I Petr. IV, 10). Atque adhuc adjicit: Si quis loquitur, quasi sermones Dei; si quis ministrat, tanquam ex virtute quam administrat Deus (Ibid., 11). Ac si aperte dicat: Humiliter impendite bonum proximis, quia scitis vobis non a vobis esse quod habetis. Quaelibet enim penna virtutis cum ad proximum impertiendo tenditur, recta non erit, si humilitate caruerit. Sequitur: IBID. — Unumquodque duabus alis velabat corpus suum, et alterum similiter velabatur.

22. Quia per corpus actio, per alas vero virtutes signentur, supra jam diximus (Hom. 4, n. 5). Et cum dicat: Sub firmamento autem pennae eorum recte alterius ad alterum, quaerendum est qualiter subditur: Unumquodque duabus alis velabat corpus suum. Qua in re hoc patenter indicatur, quia et pennas alius ad alterum tendebant, et tamen duabus alis corpus proprium velabant. Quid est hoc, nisi quia sic debemus virtutes quas accepimus, aliis impendere, ut ea in quibus peccavimus, non desinamus caute cogitare, et reatum nostrum quotidie per timorem et poenitentiam plangere? Duas enim alas superius, quibus corpus velatur, timorem et poenitentiam diximus. Sic ergo in charitate crescamus, ut pennas tendamus in proximos; et nunquam desinamus cogitare et plangere nosmetipsos. Pennae tendantur juxta, pennae cooperiant corpora, ut et de bonis actibus praebeamus exempla, et mala quae egimus abscondant a judicio timor et poenitentia. In translatione autem

veteri de his alis dicitur: Singulis duae conjunctae, et tegentes corpora eorum. In quibus verbis intelligitur quia et ipsae erant pennae quae jungebantur alterius ad alterum, et ipsae quae eorum corpora cooperiebant. Quod per figuram bene accipitur, quia illae nos virtutes apud omnipotentem Deum protegunt, quas ex charitate proximis impertimur atque conjungimus; cum quibus dum concorditer vivimus, mala quae fecimus velamus. Possunt ergo etiam per has alas duo praecepta charitatis intelligi, amor scilicet Dei, et proximi. Amando enim Deum, nostra in nobis mala persequimur, id est corpus velamus. Diligendo autem proximum, ei in quo prodesse possumus festinamus, id est alas ad alterum tendimus.

23. Hoc autem quod subditur, Et alterum similiter velabatur, in translatione veteri non habetur. Et quaeri potest cur postquam dictum est: Unumquodque duabus alis velabat corpus suum, subjungitur: Et alterum similiter velabatur. Translationem autem Septuaginta interpretum, Aquilae, Theodotionis, et Symmachi sollicite perscrutantes, nihil ex his verbis invenimus; sed beati Hieronymi scripta relegentes agnovimus quia hanc sententiam in Hebraea veritate ita positam, non quidem juxta verbum, sed juxta sensum invenerit. Quaeri etenim potest cur postquam dictum est: Unumquodque velabat corpus suum, statim subditur: Et alterum similiter velabatur. Si enim diceret unum et alterum, loquendi ratio staret. Postquam vero dictum est Unumquodque, cur adjicitur alterum, cum in unoquoque omnes comprehenduntur? Sed si et perfectorum vitam, et proficientium merita distinguimus, et unumquodque et alterum non irrationabiliter positum videmus. Qui enim et sua deflent, et virtutum pennas ad proximos in exemplum tendunt, procul dubio perfecti sunt. Sunt autem plerique parvulorum qui eorum lacrymas conspiciunt et imitantur. Et qui nudi in suis pravitatibus esse potuissent, sanctos vigilantioresque viros considerant; moxque suis pravitatibus irati, accenduntur ut plangant, et inflammantur ad poenitentiam. Atque ut velare sanctos corpora sua conspiciunt, ita ipsi

quoque lacrymarum suarum alis velantur. Seipsos enim magnis increpationibus feriunt; cur qui virtutes non habent peccata sua minime deplorant, si adhuc et illi plangere non desinunt, qui jam virtutum pennas per exempla ad proximos tendunt.

24. In quibus verbis necesse est ut nos qui parvuli adhuc sumus perfectorum semper et virtutes et lacrymas ante mentis nostrae oculos ponamus. Imitemur quae in fillis aspicimus, ut dum coeperimus per incrementa crescere, possimus ab illo districto examine mala quae fecimus velare. In assiduis enim fletibus, in quotidiana nostra poenitentia habemus sacerdotem in coelis, qui interpellat pro nobis. De quo etiam per Joannem dicitur: Si quis peccaverit, advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Jesum Christum justum, et ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris (I Joan. II, 1). Ecce exsultat animus cum advocati nostri potentiam audimus. Sed exsultationem nostram iterum remordet timor, quia ipse qui nobis advocatus est dicitur justus. Nos enim causas injustas habemus, justus vero advocatus injustas causas nullo modo suscipit, nec verba dare pro injustitia consentit. Quid ergo agimus, charissimi fratres mei? Sed ecce occurrit animo quid agamus. Mala quae fecimus, et deseramus, et accusemus. Scriptum est: Justus in principio accusator est sui (Prov. XVIII, 17). Quilibet etenim peccator conversus in fletibus jam justus esse inchoat cum coeperit accusare quod fecit. Cur enim justus non sit qui contra suam injustitiam jam per lacrymas saevit? Justus igitur advocatus noster justos nos defendet in judicio, quia nosmetipsos et cognoscimus et accusamus injustos. Non ergo in fletibus, non in actibus nostris, sed in advocati nostri allegatione confidamus, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA VIII

A versu 24 quae supersunt capitis primi explicantur, cum initio capitis secundi; et de Christi divinitate, de verbi Incarnatione, de praedicatione, de Ecclesiae congregatione, multiplicatione, unitate, plurimis disseritur.

Quod per exempla justorum multi proficiunt, superioris locutionis fine tractatum est. Atque hoc ipsum propheta nobis certius aperit cum his quae dixerat adjungit: VERS. 24. — Et audiebam sonum alarum, quasi sonum aquarum multarum.

1. Solent in sacro eloquio per aquas, populi designari. Unde per Joannem dicitur: Aquae vero sunt populi (Apoc. XVII, 15). Idcirco autem aquis populus designatur, quia et in vita sonum habet ex tumultu carnis, et quotidie defluit ex decursu mortalitatis. Ut autem saepe jam diximus, alae sunt animalium, virtutes sanctorum. Quid est ergo quod propheta alarum sonum audit quas sonum aquarum multarum, nisi quod omnipotentis Dei pietate illae alae virtutum, quae in paucis prius sanctis sonabant, etiam nunc praedicatione diffusa, in multarum populorum conversatione resonant? Incarnato enim, passo, ac resurgente Domino, pauca pennata animalia fuerunt, quia rari valde exstiterunt, qui coelestia desiderarent, et virtutum pennis se in alta suspenderent. Sed postquam divinitatis ejus praedicatio in mundo diffusa est, quanti jam parvuli, quanti graviores, quanti fortes juvenes, quanti imbecilles, quantae conversae peccatrices, quantae anus virgines per fidem, per spem, per amorem ad coelestia evolant, quis dicere, quis aestimare sufficiat? Ecce alarum sonitus, qui prius in paucis animalibus fuit, jam nunc in populis resonat, jam nunc mundi multitudinem ad coeleste desiderium pennae virtutum levant. Bene ergo dicitur: Et audiebam sonum alarum, quasi sonum aquarum multarum, quia, sicut praefati sumus, ille virtutum sonus qui in aurem Dei prius ex paucis sanctis factus est, postmodum ex aquis multis id est ex innumerabilibus est populis

multiplicatus. De quo sono adhuc bene additur: IBID. — Quasi sonum sublimis Dei.

2. Quid est quod alarum sonus in sanctis animalibus quasi sonus sublimis Dei dicitur, nisi quod omnipotens Deus et ipse implet mentes sanctorum coelesti desiderio, et ipse exaudit impletas? Ipse etenim creat in sanctorum cordibus amorem, et ipse ex amantibus cordibus precem suscipit. Negationem suam Petrus flevit amare, sed tamen illic praemittitur quia Jesus respexit Petrum (Luc. XXII, 61, 62). Venit Maria Magdalene post multas maculas culpae, ad pedes Redemptoris nostri cum lacrymis (Ibid., VII, 38); sed quis illam infudit intus, nisi qui benigne suscepit foris? Quis illam ad lacrymas urgebat per compunctionis spiritum, nisi qui hanc exterius coram simul recumbentibus recipiebat ad veniam? Redemptor igitur noster peccatricis mulieris mentem extrahebat cum de culpa compungeret, suscipiebat ut a culpa liberaret. Bene ergo iste alarum sonus quasi sonus sublimis Dei dicitur, quia quidquid in sanctorum virtutibus agitur, ejus est gratiae qui merita largitur:

3. Qui recte per prophetam sublimis Deus esse memoratur. In Scriptura etenim sacra aliquando Deus nuncupative, aliquando vero essentialiter dicitur. Nuncupative enim dicitur, sicut scriptum est: Ecce constitui te deum Pharaonis (Exod. VII, 1). Et sicut Moyses ait: Si quis hoc vel illud fecerit, applica illum ad deos, videlicet ad sacerdotes (Exod. XXII, 8). Qui rursum dicit: Diis non detrahes (Ibid., 28), id est sacerdotibus. Et sicut Psalmista ait: Deus stetit in synagoga deorum, in medio autem deos dijudicat (Psal. LXXXI, 1). Essentialiter autem Deus dicitur, sicut ipse ad S. Moysen dicit: Ego sum Deus patris tui, Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, Deus Jacob (Exod. III, 6). Unde Paulus apostolus volens nuncupativum Dei nomen ab essentiali discernere, de Redemptore nostro locutus est, dicens: Quorum patres, ex quibus Christus secundum carnem, qui est super omnia Deus benedictus in saecula (Rom. IX, 5). Qui enim nuncupative dicitur Deus, inter omnia; qui

vero essentialiter, Deus super omnia est. Ut ergo ostenderet Christum naturaliter Deum, non hunc Deum tantummodo, sed Deum super omnia esse memoravit, quia et electus quisque, sicut praemisimus, vel in exemplo justitiae praerogando positus dici Deus potest, sed inter omnia, quoniam nuncupative deus; Christus autem Deus est super omnia, quia naturaliter Deus. Quem ergo Paulus Deum super omnia, hunc Ezechiel propheta Deum sublimem nominat. Postquam vero dictum est: Audiebam sonum alarum, quasi sonum aquarum multarum, quia adhuc additur: Quasi sonum sublimis Dei, etiam hoc intelligere possumus quod futurum electis omnibus scimus. Alarum etenim sonitus, sicut diximus, fuit in praedicatoribus sanctis: aquarum sonitus, in conversis et sequentibus populis. Sed idem ipse sonitus erit quandoque sonus sublimis Dei, quia multitudo, quae nunc ad fidem per sanctos doctores trahitur, quandoque in coelestem patriam congregabitur, ut ibi omnes electi sine fine laudent, cum viderint sine fine quem laudent. Et quia tunc perfecte corpus Redemptoris efficitur omnis multitudo sanctorum, juxta Pauli vocem dicentis: Quia et ipsa creatura liberabitur a servitute corruptionis in libertatem gloriae filiorum Dei (Rom. VIII, 21); eique ita tunc inhaerent, ut eis de corruptione, quae per resurrectionem vincitur, jam nihil in suo sancto amore contradicat, sed unita gloriae sui Redemptoris fiat; recte dicitur: Quasi sonum sublimis Dei.

4. Notandus est ordo describentis, quia prius sonus ex alis animalium, qui postmodum quasi sonus aquarum multarum, ad extremum vero quasi sonus sublimis Dei dicitur. Quod enim prius praedicaverunt sancti, hoc postmodum crediderunt atque tenuerunt conversi ad fidem populi, qui ad extremum quoque liberatori omnium reddent laudem in coelestia sublevati. Sonus itaque animalium fit quasi sonus aquarum, et sonus aquarum fit quasi sonus sublimis Dei, quia laudem omnipotentis Domini, quam prius in mundo pauci, hanc postmodum multi clamaverunt. Et quam nunc multi clamant, cum adhuc eis in semetipsis sua corruptio repugnat, hanc in

coelestem patriam electi omnes suo jam capiti uniti resonabunt. Adhuc autem sanctorum animalium opera virtutesque describuntur, cum subditur: IBID. — Cum ambularent, quasi sonus erat multitudinis, ut sonitus castrorum.

5. Si per sonitum sublimis Dei laus nostri creatoris in coelesti patria designatur, mirandum non est quod rursus ad sanctorum opera in hac adhuc vita viventium propheticus sermo refunditur, quia sanctus Spiritus in corde prophetarum, quod simul ostendit intus, non simul ejicit per linguam foras. Aqua quippe scientiae qua prophetantis animus repletur, in contemplatione vehementer exuberat. Sed quia angustum est spiritui omne os hominis, id est foramen carnis, ad explendam illam immensitatemquae conspicitur, proferendo lingua variatur. Postquam ergo sonum alarum quasi sonum sublimis Dei esse conspexit in coelis, rursus ad terras redit, et pennata animalia quid hic agant loquitur, ut illic summo mereantur, dicens: Cum ambularent, quasi sonus erat multitudinis, ut sonitus castrorum. Cum praedicatores sancti mundum praedicando et trahendo circumeunt, animalia ambulant. Et quia hi etiam quos colligunt, statim ut crediderint, in laudem nostri creatoris exsurgunt, fit sonus quasi sonus multitudinis. Et quia in praedicatione eadem bellum contra aereas potestates sumunt, recte subjungitur: Ut sonitus castrorum. Cum enim sanctis praedicatoribus fideles populi conjunguntur, contra malignos spiritus in procinctu fidei multitudines castrorum fiunt. Et dum quotidie fideles quique coelestibus desideriis replentur, terrena despiciunt, dura sibi pro amore supernae patriae proponunt, contra potestates aereas castra fiunt, quia armati fide et bonis operibus muniti gradiuntur. Quasi enim quibusdam castris spiritalis exercitus per Paulum dicitur: Induite vos armaturam Dei, ut possitis stare adversus insidias diaboli, quia non est nobis colluctatio adversus carnem et sanguinem, sed adversus principes et potestates, adversus mundi rectores

tenebrarum harum, contra spiritalia nequitiae in coelestibus (Eph. VI, 11, 12).

6. Sanctorum ergo multitudines castra sunt; quae bellum contra potestates aereas susceperunt. Unde et sancta universalis Ecclesia ita sub specie dilectae describitur, ut dicatur: Pulchra es, amica mea, suavis et decora sicut Jerusalem, terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata (Cant. VI, 3). Quia enim Jerusalem pacis visio interpretatur, cujus nomine patria coelestis exprimitur, sancta Ecclesia suavis et decora ut Jerusalem dicitur, quia ejus vita et desiderium, visioni jam pacis intimae comparatur, ut in eo quod auctorem suum diligit, quod ejus speciem videre concupiscit, de quo scriptum est: In quem desiderant angeli prospicere (I Petr. I, 12), per ipsa jam amoris sui desideria angelis similis dicatur: quae quanto Deo amabilis efficitur, tanto agit ut malignis spiritibus terribilis fiat. Qualiter autem sit terribilis, subjuncta comparatione ostenditur, id est, Ut castrorum acies ordinata (Cant. VI, 5). Quid est quod sancta Ecclesia hostibus suis ut castrorum acies sit timenda? Non enim a magno intellectu vacat ista comparatio, et idcirco est subtiliter intuenda. Scimus enim et constat quia castrorum acies tunc hostibus terribilis ostenditur, quando ita fuerit constipata atque densata, ut in nullo loco interrupta videatur. Nam si ita disponitur, ut locus vacuus per quem hostis possit ingredi dimittatur, profecto jam suis hostibus terribilis non est. Et nos ergo cum contra malignos spiritus spiritalis certaminis aciem ponimus, summopere necesse est ut per charitatem semper uniti atque constricti, et nunquam interrupti per discordiam inveniamur, quia quaelibet bona in nobis opera fuerint, si charitas desit, per malum discordiae locus aperitur in acie, unde ad feriendos nos valeat hostis intrare.

7. Antiquus vero inimicus castitatem in nobis, si sine charitate fuerit, non timet, quia ipse nec carne premitur, ut in ejus luxuria dissolvatur. Abstinentiam non timet, quia ipse cibo non utitur, qui necessitate corporis

non urgetur. Distributionem terrenarum rerum non timet, si eidem operi charitas desit, quia divitiarum subsidiis nec ipse eget. Valde autem in nobis charitatem veram, id est amorem humilem quem nobis vicissim impendimus timet, et nimis concordiae nostrae invidet, quia hanc nos tenemus in terra, quam ipse tenere nolens amisit in coelo. Bene ergo dicitur: Terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata (Cant. VI, 9), quia electorum multitudinem eo maligni spiritus pertimescunt, quo eos per charitatis concordiam unitos contra se et conglobatos aspiciunt.

8. Quanta autem sit concordiae virtus ostenditur, cum sine illa virtutes reliquae, virtutes non esse monstrantur. Magna enim est virtus abstinentiae; sed si quis ita ab alimentis abstineat, ut caeteros in cibo dijudicet, et alimenta eadem quae Deus creavit ad percipiendum cum gratiarum actione fidelibus etiam damnet (Rom. XIV, 3, 6), quid huic virtus abstinentiae facta est nisi laqueus culpae? Unde Psalmista quoque nullam esse abstinentiam sine concordia designans, ait: Laudate eum in tympano et choro (Psal. CL, 4). In tympano enim corium siccum resonat, in choro autem voces concorditer cantant. Quid ergo per tympanum nisi abstinentia, et quid per chorum nisi charitatis concordia designatur? Qui itaque sic abstinentiam tenet, ut concordiam deserat, laudat quidem in tympano, sed non laudat in choro. Et sunt nonnulli qui dum plus sapere quam necesse est student, a proximorum pace resiliunt, dum eos velut habetes stultosque contemnunt. Unde per se Veritas admonet, dicens: Habete in vobis sal, et pacem habete inter vos (Marc. IX, 49), ut quisquis habere sal sapientiae studet, curet necesse est quatenus a pace concordiae nunquam recedat. Quod vero de his duabus virtutibus diximus, hoc de caeteris omnibus sentiendum est. Unde Paulus terribiliter admonet, dicens: Pacem sequimini cum omnibus, et sanctimoniam, sine qua nemo videbit Deum (Hebr. XII, 14).

9. Quia autem nil sine concordia Deo placeat. ipsa per se Veritas demonstrat, dicens: Si offers munus tuum ad altare, et ibi recordatus fueris

quia frater tuus habet aliquid adversum te, relinque ibi munus tuum ad altare, et vade prius reconciliari fratri tuo, et tunc veniens offeres munus tuum (Matth. V, 23, 24). Ecce a discordantibus accipere non vult sacrificium, holocaustum suscipere recusat. Hinc ergo perpendite, quantum sit malum discordiae, propter quod et illud abjicitur, per quod culpa laxatur. Quia vero electi semper in charitate conjuncti sunt, et haec eadem eorum charitas sonum laudis reddit auctori, malignis vero spiritibus, id est antiquis suis hostibus poenam incutit timoris, recte nunc de pennatis animalibus dicitur: Cum ambularent, quasi sonus erat multitudinis, ut sonitus castrorum.

10. Libet autem ab exortu sanctae Ecclesiae fidei oculo usque ad finem mundi tendere, et haec eadem castra quomodo ambulent videre. Castra enim multitudines appellantur exercitus, cum in procinctu pergunt, aut in certo quolibet loco in itinere demorantur. Castris ergo via est vita praesentis saeculi, omnibus concorditer viventibus sanctis. Alia autem sunt castra praedicantium, qui huc illucque pro colligendis animabus in sancti operis procinctu laborant. Alia castra continentium, atque ab hoc mundo recedentium, qui contra malignorum spirituum bella quotidie in corde se praeparant. Alia castra bonorum conjugatorum, qui viventes in amore omnipotentis Dei concorditer, sic vicissim sibi carnis debitum solvunt, ut tamen quid Deo de bonis operibus debeant, nullatenus obliviscantur. Sed et si qua ut homines delinquunt, haec incessanter piis actibus redimunt. Quia ergo distincti fidelium ordines, ab exortu sanctae Ecclesiae usque ad finem mundi concorditer viventes, contra potestates aereas dimicant, castra ambulant; et fit quasi quidam castrorum sonitus, quia in eis ad laudem omnipotentis Dei et virtutum gladii et arma miraculorum sonant. De sanctis vero animalibus adhuc subditur: IBID. — Cumque starent, demittebantur pennae eorum.

11. Stant sancta animalia quando ea quae Dei sunt intenta contemplatione considerant. Sed eorum pennae deponuntur, quia dum alta Dei judicia aspiciunt, suae eis virtutes vilescunt. Quod aperte exponitur cum statim subditur: VERS. 25. — Nam cum fieret vox super firmamentum quod erat super caput eorum, stabant et submittebant alas suas.

12. Firmamentum superius sub intellectu duplici judicavimus exponendum. Possunt enim, sicut dictum est (Hom. 1, n. 18, 19), firmamenti nomine coelestes potestates intelligi. Et potest firmamenti nomine incarnatus Unigenitus, per hoc quod in eum natura nostra ad aeternitatem firmata est, designari. Prius ergo quid sentimus de angelis, et postmodum de Domino angelorum, loquamur. Ecce enim dicitur: Cum fieret vox super firmamentum, stabant, et submittebant alas suas. Quo in loco, hoc primo sciendum est, quia submittere, non ab inferiori ad superiora tendere, sed a superiori ad inferiora alas deponere debet intelligi, propter hoc quod praemissum est: Cum starent demittebantur pennae eorum. Quaerendum itaque nobis est quae sit vox quae super firmamentum fit. Sed eamdem vocem melius intelligimus, si, ab imis ad superiora gradientes, quasi quibusdam passibus ascendamus. Sicut auditus corporis excitatur voce, ita sensus mentis excitatur intellectu, qui de interioribus agitur. Vox ergo est in mente, quasi quidam sonus intelligentiae. Sed sciendum est quia nostris sensibus aliquando vox carnis loquitur, aliquando vox animae, aliquando vox firmamenti, aliquando vox quae super firmamentum est.

13. Ponamus enim ante oculos quod quispiam sit laesus a proximo, qui ex humana ratione cogitat ut vicem laesioni reddat, malum pro malo retribuat, huic vox carnis loquitur in mente, quia cum divina mandata praecipiant bene nos facere his qui nos oderunt (Matth. V, 44), quisquis malefacere se odientibus cogitat, in ejus animo vox carnis sonat. Multa terrena quotidie agimus, post haec ad orationem redimus. Accenditur ad compunctionem animus, sed earum rerum quas egimus imagines versantur

in mente, et intentionem compunctionis praepediunt in oratione; et quod volentes foris egimus, hoc interius patimur inviti, ut quaedam cogitationum phantasmata mentem per imagines corporeas dispergant, ne stricte totam in oratione se colligat. Haec quoque vox carnis est.

14. Cum vero et ista subigimus, atque ab oculis mentis cunctas corporeas imagines effugamus, ipsam in nobismetipsis naturam animae quaerentes, qualis sit quae carnem vivificare potest, sed semetipsam stringere in bonis cogitationibus sicut desiderat non potest, invenimus quemdam intellectualem spiritum per creatoris potentiam viventem, corpus quod sustinet vivificantem, sed tamen oblivioni subditum, mutabilitati subjectum, quem saepe timor afficit, laetitia extollit. Ipse itaque intellectus animae vox ejus est, quia sonat quod est, quae tamen adhuc vox sub firmamento est.

15. Sed transcendentes animam, vocem de firmamento quaerimus, cum illa sanctorum angelorum innumera multitudo in omnipotentis Domini conspectu qualis sit investigamus, quae sit in eis sine fine festivitas visionis Domini, quae laetitia sine defectu, qui amoris ardor non crucians, sed delectans; quantum in eis sit desiderium visionis Dei cum satietate, et quanta satietas cum desiderio. In quibus nec desiderium poenam generat, nec satietas fastidium parit. Quomodo inhaerendo beatitudini sint beati, quomodo contemplando semper aeternitatem sint aeterni, quomodo conjuncti vero lumini facti sint lux, quomodo aspicientes semper incommutabilem mutati sint in incommutabilitatem. Sed cum ista de angelis cogitamus, adhuc vox de firmamento est, non super firmamentum.

16. Transeat ergo animus, et ab ipsis transcendat omne quod creatum est. In solo creatoris sui lumine fidei oculos figat, quod unus vivificet omnia qui creavit Deus; quod ubique est et ubique totus est; quod incircumscriptus et incomprehensibilis sentiri potest, et videri non potest; quod nusquam deest, et tamen ab iniquorum cogitationibus longe est; quod nec ibi deest, ubi longe est, quia ubi non est per gratiam, adest per vindictam; quod omnia

tangit, nec tamen aequaliter omnia tangit. Quaedam enim tangit ut sint, nec tamen ut vivant et sentiant, sicut sunt cuncta insensibilia. Quaedam tangit ut sint, vivant, et sentiant, nec tamen ut discernant, sicut sunt bruta animalia. Quaedam tangit ut sint, vivant, et sentiant, et discernant, sicut est humana et angelica natura. Et cum ipse nunquam sibimetipsi sit dissimilis, dissimiliter tamen tangit dissimilia. Quod ubique praesens est, et inveniri vix potest; quod stantem sequimur, et apprehendere non valemus. Ponamus ergo ante oculos mentis quae illa natura sit quae tenet omnia, implet omnia, circumplectitur omnia, superexcedit omnia, sustinet omnia. Nec alia ex parte sustinet, atque alia superexcedit; neque alia ex parte implet, atque alia circumplectitur; sed circumplectendo implet, implendo circumplectitur, sustinendo superexcedit, superexcedendo sustinet. Hujus naturae potentiam cum strictus in ea cogitat animus, vox super firmamentum fit, quia ejus intellectum concipit, qui et angelorum sensum sua incomprehensibilitate transcendit.

17. Cum ergo vox super firmamentum fit, stant animalia, et submittunt alas suas, quia sanctorum mentes cum creatoris sui potentiam intenta contemplatione considerant, vilescunt eorum animo virtutes quas habent; et tanto fiunt apud se humiles, quanto eis illud altum est quod super angelos sonat. Fortasse enim doctores sunt; sed cum coeperint tacita mente cogitare quae sit ineffabilis Dei sapientia, quae mentes hominum sine strepitu verborum docet, et quomodo haec eadem sapientia si auditorum mentes non doceat, vox docentium vacue laborat, sua eis doctrina protinus vilescit, quia neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus (I Cor. III, 7). Fortasse prophetae sunt; sed cum tacita mente considerant quia prophetiae suae oculo simul omnia Divinitatis mysteria penetrare non possunt, quoniam sicut ait Apostolus: Ex parte cognoscimus, et ex parte prophetamus (I Cor. XIII, 9), in illa immensitate secretorum vident quia parum est omne quod vident, atque ex ipsa immensa altitudine luminis

considerant quam minus sit illud quod intento oculo quasi per rimas viderunt. Deponant ergo alas suas, cum vox super firmamentum fit, id est humilientur in eo quod apprehendunt cum superna conspiciunt quae ab eis comprehendi non possunt.

18. Saepe etiam sanctorum cogitationibus ipsa quae habent bona blandiuntur, ut eorum mentes in aliqua sui fiducia elevent; sed protinus ad occulta Dei judicia, recurrunt, quomodo alii ex virtutibus ad infernum per elationem corruunt, alii ex vitiis correcti ad coelum per humilitatem levantur. Unde nos ad humilitatem revocans Propheta terret et admonet, dicens: Venite, et videte opera Domini, quam terribilis in consiliis super filios hominum (Psal. LXV, 5). Quis enim digne considerare valeat quantus super nos terror sit consiliorum Dei, quando et alter ex virtutibus in finem tendit ad vitia, et alter ex vitiis in virtutibus concludit finem? Quia juxta Salomonis vocem: Sunt justi atque sapientes, et opera eorum in manu Dei. Nec tamen scit homo utrum amore vel odio dignus sit, sed omnia in futuro servantur incerta (Eccle. IX, 1), Et: Est via quae videtur hominibus recta, et novissimum ejus ducit ad mortem (Prov. XIV, 12). Haec itaque occulti judicii profunda cogitare, quid est aliud quam alas deponere, id est de nulla jam virtute confidere, sed sub magno timore trepidare? Sive enim omnipotentis Dei naturam considerent, sive ejus judicia perpendant, trepidant, pertimescunt. Eis ergo quasi alas deponere est virtutes quas habent humiliare.

19. Sic Abraham alas deposuit, qui quando loqui cum Deo coepit, pulverem et cinerem se esse cognovit dicens: Loquar ad Dominum meum, cum sim pulvis et cinis (Genes. XVIII, 27)? Sic Moyses alas deposuit, qui eruditus omni scientia Aegyptiorum (Act. VII, 22), mox ut verba Domini audivit, verba se non habere deprehendit, dicens: Obsecro, Domine, non sum eloquens ab heri et nudiustertius. Ex quo enim locutus es ad servum tuum, impeditioris et tardioris linguae sum (Exod. IV, 10). Ac si aperte

diceret: Postquam a te verba vitae audio, confusum me in verbis prioribus agnosco. Sic Isaias, cujus vita Domino ad praedicandum placuerat, cum, eumdem Dominum contemplatus, carbone de altari in ore tactus est, ait: Vae mihi quia tacui, quia vir pollutus labiis ego sum (Isai. VI, 3). Ecce ad superiora sublevatus, sibimetipsi de labiorum pollutione displicuit. Nisi enim coelestis munditiae alta conspiceret, esse se judicabilem non invenisset. Sic loquente Domino Jeremias clamat: A, a, a, Domine Deus, ecce nescio loqui, quia puer ego sum (Jerem., I, 6). Juxta enim ea verba quae audiebat verba se non habere cognoverat. Sic Daniel sublimem visionem videns, per plurimos dies elanguit et aegrotavit (Dan. VIII, 27), quia hi qui in virtutibus fortes sunt, cum altiora Dei conspiciunt, in sua sibimet aestimatione infirmi atque imbecilles fiunt. Sic beatus Job, de quo Dominus amicis illius dixit: Non estis locuti coram me rectum, sicut servus meus (Job. XLII, 7), cum verba Dei colloquentis audiret, respondit, dicens: Insipienter locutus sum, et quae ultra modum excederent scientiam meam (Ibid., 3). Et paulo post: Idcirco ipse me reprehendo, et ago poenitentiam in favilla et cinere (Ibid., 6). Qui enim quantum ad homines sapienter locutus fuerat, loquentem sibi Deum audiens, insipienter se locutum fuisse reprehendit, quia in contemplatione verae sapientiae sua ei sapientia viluit. Ad vocem ergo desuper venientem animalia alas deponunt, quia virtutem Dei sive in natura sua contemplari requiramus, sive in occultis judiciis investigare cogitemus, pro eo quod ejus alta nobis impenetrabilia sunt, nostra nobis si qua inesse bona credebantur vilescunt. Et qui in quantulacunque scientia volare credebamur, invisibilem super nos naturam, et impenetrabilia ejus judicia perpendentes, submissis alis humiliter stamus. Sequitur: VERS. 26. — Et super firmamentum quod erat imminens capiti eorum, quasi aspectus lapidis sapphiri, similitudo throni; et super similitudinem throni, similitudo quasi aspectus hominis desuper.

20. Quid per thronum nisi illae virtutes angelicae designantur, quae ipsos quoque angelos dignitate loci superioris excedunt? Nam cum angeli nuntii dicantur, et saepe angeli ad annuntianda quaedam hominibus veniant, throni missi ad ministerium nuntii nusquam leguntur, quia eis longe sublimius creator omnium praesidet. Unde Paulus apostolus ordines coelestium agminum, quos ad tertium coelum raptus viderat, describens, ait: Sive throni, sive dominationes, sive principatus, sive potestates, omnia per ipsum, et in ipso creata sunt (Col. I, 16). Thronos igitur ante eos angelorum ordines dixit, quibus illos praelatos esse cognovit. Bene autem thronus lapidi sapphiro comparatur, quoniam lapis sapphirus aereum habet colorem. Virtutes ergo coelestium lapide sapphiro designantur, quia hi spiritus, quibus Deus omnipotens altius praesidet, superioris loci in coelestibus dignitatem tenent. Super thronum vero similitudo hominis, quia et super illas virtutes, quae et ipsos angelos antecedunt, nostri est gloria Redemptoris. Notandum ergo qui ordo servatur. Super animalia enim firmamentum, super firmamentum thronus, super thronum homo esse describitur, quia et super sanctos homines adhuc in hac corruptione corporis viventes angeli, et super angelos superiores et Deo proximae angelicae potestates, super potestates vero Deo proximas elevatus est Mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus.

21. Sin vero, ut praediximus, firmamenti nomine Mediator Dei et hominum pro assumpta humanitate debet intelligi, quia sub unius nominis appellatione solent per prophetiae spiritum multa signari, vox super firmamentum facta est, quae super baptizatum Dominum de coelo sonuit, dicens: Tu es Filius meus dilectus, in te complacui (Luc. III, 22). Vel sicut per evangelistam alium dicitur: Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui (Matth. III, 17). Quaeramus igitur quomodo hanc vocem animalia audiunt, et alas deponunt. Habacuc propheta requisitus dicat: Domine, audivi auditum tuum, et timui; consideravi opera tua, et expavi

(Habac. III, 1). Quid est autem quod Pater de Filio loquitur, dicens: In quo mihi complacui? Omnis enim qui poenitendo corrigit aliqua quae fecit, eo ipso quod poenitet, se sibi displicuisse indicat, quia emendat quod fecit. Et quia omnipotens Pater, sicut intelligi ab hominibus poterat, humano modo de peccatoribus locutus est, dicens: Poenitet me fecisse hominem super terram (Genes. VI, 6), quasi sibimetipsi displicuit in peccatoribus quos creavit. In solo autem sibi unigenito Domino nostro Jesu Christo complacuit, quia hunc inter homines hominem creasse eum non poenituit, in quo peccatum nullum omnimodo invenit, sicut de illo per Psalmistam dicitur: Juravit Dominus et non poenitebit eum, tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech (Psal. CIX, 4). In solo ergo sibi Redemptore nostro complacuit Pater, quia in eo solo non invenit culpam, in qua se reprehendat quasi per poenitentiam.

22. Sancta itaque animalia vocem super firmamentum audiant, et pertimescant, quia si solus sine peccato est, in ejus innocentia aspiciunt in quantis ipsa quotidie delinquant, quae necesse est ut incessanter defleant. Considerent quoque quia et ipse auctor vitae sine passionis dolore ex hac vita non exiit. Et haec ergo vox super firmamentum facta est, quia omnipotentis Patris sententia etiam de morte ac resurrectione Unigeniti processit. Sed cum vox super firmamentum fit, stant animalia, et submittunt alas suas, quia sancti quique cum ipsum quoque Unigenitum flagellatum in hoc mundo conspiciunt, deponunt si quid de suis meritis praesumunt. Nam si ipse hinc sine flagello non exiit, qui venit sine peccato, quomodo flagellis digni non erunt, qui huc cum peccato venerunt? Ipsum ergo firmamentum, quod est super caput animalium, id est quod transcendit mentes sanctorum, habet super se vocem, quia Redemptor noster eam quam cum Patre disposuit ex divinitate sententiam pertulit in carne, quam audientes justi terrentur, et omnem de suis viribus praesumptionem deponunt. Quibuslibet

etenim virtutibus polleat, quid digna est vita peccatorum, si et ejus vita pro nobis flagello subjacuit, quae subdita nulli peccato fuit?

23. Sed ecce gravis nobis quaestio oritur, cum dicitur quia super firmamentum quod erat imminens capiti eorum, quasi aspectus lapidis sapphiri, similitudo throni. Si enim per firmamentum Dominus, et per lapidem sapphirum, et similitudinem throni summae illae potestates angelicae figurantur, quomodo super firmamentum, id est super Dominum esse credendae sunt, cum et mox subditur: Et super similitudinem throni, similitudo quasi aspectus hominis desuper? Nam si ita, ut dictum est, per firmamentum exprimitur Dominus, et rursus homo accipitur Dominus, qua ratione potest intelligi et ipse super thronum, et ipse sub throno? Sed astrictos hujus quaestionis nodos ipse solvit, de quo loquimur, qui afflatu sancti Spiritus ea quae clausa sunt aperit. Incarnatus enim Unigenitus Patris per hoc quod homo factus est, infra angelos fuit, sicut de eo scriptum est: Minuisti eum paulo minus ab angelis (Psal. VIII, 6). Resurgens autem et ascendens in coelos, omnibus angelicis potestatibus praesidet, sicut de eo illic rursum scriptum est: Omnia subjecisti sub pedibus ejus (Ibid., 7). Et sicut ipse ait: Data est mihi omnis potestas in coelo et in terra (Matth. XXVIII, 18). Firmamentum ergo sub throno, et homo super thronum est, quia per humanae assumptionem naturae et ipse est sub angelis natus, et ipse super angelos exaltatus. Qui et priusquam per resurrectionis exaltaretur gloriam, divinitate super angelos fuit; sed tamen ab angelis, ut dictum est, humanitate minoratus, ex qua morti subjacuit. At postquam mortem resurgendo calcavit, humanitatem suam etiam majestatibus archangelorum superposuit. Prius itaque thronus super firmamentum, et post homo super thronum visus esse describitur, quia humani generis Redemptor humanitatem, quam descendendo sub angelis assumpsit, ascendendo super angelos exaltavit. Sic vero factum eum sub angelis dicimus, sicut factum sub lege, praedicante Apostolo, audivimus (Philip. II, 9). Assumptam ergo

humanitatem sub angelis accipimus pro ea minoratione in qua dignatus est apparere.

24. Nam mox ut Verbum caro factum est, mox Deus homo potestate super angelos fuit. De ipso quippe ante passionem scriptum est: Ecce angeli accesserunt, et ministrabant ei (Joan. I, 15; Matth. IV, 11). Sed tamen ut humanitatis ejus infirmitas monstraretur, rursum de eo scriptum est: Apparuit illi angelus de coelo, confortans eum (Luc. XXII, 43). In documento ergo utriusque naturae huic et angeli ministrare, hunc et angelus confortare describitur. Unus quippe in utraque natura, quoniam qui Deus ante saecula exstitit, homo factus est in fine saeculorum. Cui tamen ante passionem suam et angeli ministrant, et hunc angelus confortat. Post passionem vero atque resurrectionem ejus, huic angeli ministrare possunt, sed jam hunc confortare non possunt, quia, ut praedictum est, etsi prius firmamentum sub throno apparuit, jam tamen homo super thronum est. In cujus persona, ut propheta sanctus adunationem utriusque naturae se vidisse ostenderet, protinus adjunxit: VERS. 27. — Et vidi quasi speciem electri.

25. Quid est quod aspectus hominis videtur in throno quasi species electri, nisi quod in electro, sicut longe superius diximus (Supra hom. 2, n. 14), aurum argentumque miscetur, ut res una ex metallis duobus fiat? In qua et per argentum auri claritas temperatur, et per auri claritatem species clarescit argenti. In Redemptore autem nostro utraque natura, id est divinitatis et humanitatis inconfuse ac inseparabiliter unita sibimet atque conjuncta est ut et per humanitatem divinitatis ejus claritas nostris posset oculis temperari, et per divinitatem humana in eo natura claresceret, atque exaltata fulgorem ultra hoc quod creata fuerat haberet. Ipse vero aspectus hominis super thronum, et species electri quam vidit qualis ei apparuerit adhuc describens subjungit: IBID. — Velut aspectus ignis intrinsecus per circuitum, a lumbis ejus et desuper; et a lumbis ejus usque deorsum vidi quasi speciem ignis splendentis in circuitu.

26. Quid est quod Mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus a lumbis et desuper aspectum ignis intrinsecus per circuitum habere describitur, et a lumbis et deorsum speciem ignis splendentis in circuitu? Investigandum namque est quare a lumbis et desuper ignem intrinsecus, nec tamen splendentem ignem habere narratur; a lumbis vero et deorsum habere ignis speciem dicitur, non tamen hunc habere intrinsecus memoratur, quia et splendentem et in circuitu hunc habere describitur. Quid enim lumborum nomine, nisi propago mortalitatis exprimitur? Propter quod etiam de Levi dicitur quia adhuc in lumbis patris erat cum Melchisedech occurrit Abrahae (Hebr. VII, 10). De lumbis vero Abrahae virgo Maria exiit, in cujus utero Unigenitus Patris per Spiritum sanctum incarnari dignatus est. Ex qua incarnatione universo innotuit mundo Deus, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Accingere gladium tuum circa femur tuum, potentissime (Psal XLIV, 4). Gladium etenim circa femur potentissimus sumpsit, quia sermo praedicationis illius ex incarnatione convaluit. Quid vero iste ignis designat, nisi ardorem sancti Spiritus, qui corda quae repleverit incendit? De quo ipsa Veritas dicit: Ignem veni mittere in terram (Luc. XII, 49). Quid est ergo quod in hoc aspectu hominis qui prophetae apparuit a lumbis superius intrinsecus per circuitum ignis ardet, a lumbis vero inferius non ignis intrinsecus, sed in circuitu resplendet, nisi quod ante incarnationem unigeniti Redemptoris nostri, sola intra se Judaea ardorem amoris ejus habuit; post incarnationem vero illius in circuitu ejus ignis resplenduit, quia in universo mundo gentibus claritatem sancti Spiritus effudit? Prius ergo ignis intrinsecus erat, sed splendor non erat, quia Spiritus sanctus in multis quidem patribus Judaeam replebat, sed ad notitiam gentium necdum ejus lumen emicuerat. A lumbis vero ejus et deorsum ignis in circuitu splendet, quia postquam de Virgine carnem sumpsit, in humano genere longe lateque sancti Spiritus dona dilatavit. Et notandum quod ignis iste a lumbis superius per circuitum esse describitur, non extrinsecus sed intrinsecus, quia amoris

flamma, sicut dictum est, in electis atque spiritalibus viris ubique in suis finibus Judaeam replevit. Nec tamen exibat extrinsecus, quia sese in multitudinem gentium non dilatabat. Quae ardoris flamma visa est postmodum in circuitu splendere, quia per mundi cardines in universis gentibus omnipotentis Dei coepit amor excrescere.

27. Erat ergo prius ignis intrinsecus, cum Jacob diceret: Salutare tuum exspectabo, Domine (Genes. XLIX, 18). Quod enim salutare dicimus Latine, hoc verbo Hebraico Jesus dicitur. In quo verbo beati Jacob mens ostenditur quomodo Jesu desiderio ardebat, quem se moriens exspectare perhibebat. Ardebat ignis cum Moyses diceret: Si inveni gratiam in conspectu tuo, ostende mihi temetipsum, ut videam te (Exod. XXXIII, 13). Ardebat ignis in mente cum David diceret: Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum; quando veniam et parebo ante faciem Dei mei? (Psal. XLI, 3.)? Qui incarnationem Verbi desiderans, ait: Ostende nobis, Domine, misericordiam tuam, et salutare tuum da nobis (Psal. LXXXIV, 8). Ardebat ignis cum Simeon, de corruptione vitae praesentis exire desiderans, audivit non prius visurum se mortem, nisi videret Christum Domini (Luc. II, 26). Sed ecce jam ignis iste quasi sub lumbis exterius resplendet, quia universa gentilitas incarnati Dei est amore succensa.

28. Quod tamen intelligi et aliter potest, quia Redemptor noster Deus Dominus Jesus Christus per humanitatem suam hominibus innotuit, qui per divinitatem notus angelis et ante incarnationem fuit. Nobis ergo a lumbis inferius resplendet in circuitu, cujus ignis intrinsecus a lumbis superius ardet in coelo, quia illi coelestes spiritus eum in divinitate sua conspiciunt, et amoris ejus ignibus accenduntur. Nos vero, qui hunc ex assumpta humanitate diligimus, adhuc in hac corruptibili vita positi, splendorem ignis illius foris habemus. Unus itaque super thronum est, qui et super lumbos ignem intrinsecus habet in angelis, et sub lumbis ignem in circuitu habet in hominibus, quia in omne quod ab angelis amatur, per omne quod ab

hominibus desideratur, unus est qui in cordibus ardet amantium. Hinc est enim quod magnae illae potestates angelicae Seraphin, id est incendium, nominantur. Hinc de ipso omnium Creatore scriptum est: Deus noster ignis consumens est (Hebr. XII, 29; Deut. IV, 24). Ignis enim Deus dicitur, quia flammis amoris sui incendit mentes quas replet. Et idcirco seraphin incendium dicuntur, quia potestates ei proximae in coelis inaestimabili amoris ejus igne succensae sunt. Ex hoc igne succensa ardent in terra corda justorum. Hoc igne calefacta redeunt ad poenitentiam corda peccantium, quae inflammata vehementer timorem in amorem vertunt. Nam quae prius tabescere metu coeperant, postmodum igne amoris flagrant. Et quia ejus membra sunt electi angeli in coelo, ejus membra sunt conversi homines in terra; unus homo est qui et super lumbos ardet intrinsecus, et sub lumbis inferius ignis sui splendorem in circuitu emittit, quia et angelos ad amorem suum per divinitatem tenuit, et homines ad sancti ardoris sui desiderium ex humanitate revocavit. Sequitur: VERS. 28. — Velut aspectus arcus, cum fuerit in nube in die pluviae.

29. Arcum omnipotens Deus inter se atque homines in signo posuit, ut ultra mundum diluvio non deleret, dicens: Arcum meum ponam in nubibus, et erit signum foederis inter me et inter terram. Cumque obduxero nubibus coelum, apparebit arcus meus in nubibus, et recordabor foederis mei vobiscum (Genes. IX, 13). Unde et in arcu eodem color aquae et ignis simul ostenditur, quia et ex parte est coeruleus, et ex parte rubicundus, ut utriusque judicii testis sit, unius videlicet faciendi, et alterius facti, sed quia mundus quidem judicii igne cremabitur, sed jam non ulterius faciendi, aqua jam diluvii non deletur (II Petr. III, 7). Quid est autem quod splendentem ignem a lumbis hominis throno praesidentis, sicut aspectus arcus cum fuerit in nube in die pluviae, propheta conspexit? Quia enim per ignem, sicut dictum est, ardor sancti Spiritus designatur, quae similitudo est arcus et spiritus ut ignis qui apparuit quasi aspectus arcus apparuisse diceretur? Sed

si ipsi quam praediximus visioni arcus intendimus, quomodo arcus significet spiritum videmus. In arcu quippe, sicut praefatus sum, aqua et ignis apparent. Et post Mediatoris adventum, eo virtus Spiritus sancti in humano genere claruit, quo electos Dei et aqua baptismatis lavit, et igne divini amoris incendit. Quasi enim admisto colore aquae simul et ignis quidam arcus in nube ad propitiationem ponitur, cum Veritas dicit: Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu sancto, non potest introire in regnum Dei (Joan. III, 5). Qui arcus in nube est in die pluviae, quia in dominica incarnatione, et in effusione praedicationis ostenditur, ut ad veniam corda credentium, Domino parcente, revocentur. Nubem enim Redemptoris carnem non inconvenienter accipimus, de qua per Psalmistam dicitur: Qui ponit nubem ascensum suum (Psal. CIII, 3). Nubem quippe ascensum suum posuit, quia is qui divinitate ubique est, carne ad coelestia ascendit. Expleta vero omni mystica visione, subjungit: IBID., ET CAP. II, VERS. 1. — Hic erat aspectus splendoris per gyrum, et haec visio similitudinis gloriae Domini.

30. Quid enim in universo mundo sancti Spiritus gratia agat aspiciens, ait: Hic erat aspectus splendoris per gyrum. Quae vero interius ejusdem sancti Spiritus gloriae maneat, considerare volens, sed sicut erat non valens, subjungit: Et haec visio similitudinis gloriae Domini. Non enim ait: Visio gloriae, sed similitudinis gloriae, ut videlicet ostendatur quia quantalibet se intentione mens humana tetenderit, etiamsi jam phantasias imaginum corporalium a cogitatione compescat, si jam omnes circumscriptos spiritus ab oculis cordis amoveat, adhuc tamen in carne mortali posita videre gloriam Dei non valet sicut est. Sed quidquid de illa est quod in mente resplendet, similitudo, et non ipsa est. Unde et ille praedicator qui raptus usque ad tertium coelum fuerat dicebat: Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate (I Cor. XIII, 12).

31. Qua in re non despicienda nobis quaestio oritur, quomodo Joannes evangelista, cum erga miracula Redemptoris nostri Judaeorum perfidiam etiam ex verbis propheticis descripsisset, adjungit, dicens: Haec dixit Isaias quando vidit gloriam ejus, et locutus est de eo (Joan. XII, 41). [a 1Kb] Et si Ezechiel non gloriam, sed gloriae similitudinem vidit, quid est quod iste similitudinem gloriae, et ille ejus gloriam vidisse describitur? Sed cum Joannes evangelista prius miracula Redemptoris nostri narravit, atque infidelitatem Judaeorum postmodum subdidit, hanc ejusdem Redemptoris nostri gloriam, quae in mundo apparuit, Isaiam vidisse manifestat. Omne enim quod in terra mirum divinitus agitur gloria omnipotentis Dei est, et ejus gloria in omnibus factis videtur. Isaias ergo ejus gloriam in terra vidit; Ezechiel vero ejus gloriam in coelo, sicuti est, videre non potuit, quia aliter est gloria ejus in rebus factis, atque aliter in semetipso. Haec ergo ejus gloria quae in rebus est videri potest, illa vero quae in ipso est videri modo nisi per similitudinem non potest. Sed hanc eamdem similitudinem gloriae quia propheta vel sublevatus portare non potuerit cognoscamus. Sequitur: IBID. — Et vidi, et cecidi in faciem meam.

32. Quid ergo de hoc viro fieret, si ita ut est ejus gloriam vidisset, qui similitudinem gloriae illius videns, sed ferre non valens, cecidit? Qua in re cum magno moerore pensare et considerare cum lacrymis debemus in quantam miseriam et infirmitatem cecidimus, qui et ipsum bonum ferre non possumus ad quod videndum creati sumus. Est tamen et aliud quod de prophetae facto consideremus in nobis. Propheta enim mox ut gloriae Domini similitudinem vidit, in faciem suam cecidit. Cujus similitudinem gloriae quia nos per spiritum prophetiae videre non possumus, hanc assidue cognoscere et sollicite contemplari in sacro eloquio, in coelestibus monitis, in praeceptis spiritualibus debemus. Qui cum aliquid de Deo conspicimus, in faciem nostram cadimus, quia ex malis erubescimus, quae nos meminimus perpetrasse. Ibi enim cadit homo, ubi confunditur. Unde et

Paulus quasi quibusdam in facie jacentibus dicebat: Quem ergo fructum habuistis tunc in illis, in quibus nunc erubescitis (Rom. VI, 21)?

33. Ecce coelestis gratiae dono largiente, obvolutum mysteriis libri initium in Ezechiel propheta discussimus, et dicta mystica mortaliter disserentes, volantem prophetiae theoriam ad terram traximus, ut quae prius parvulorum animis mihique similium volabat, sed non elevabat, jam nunc ab eis legatur et cognoscatur, et volet et levet. Agamus ergo gratias Redemptori nostro, qui spiritali semper alimento nos reficit, qui panis vivus descendit de coelo, et dat vitam mundo (Joan. VI, 33). Qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA IX

Ezechielis caput secundum explanatur; qua in expositione non solum multa moraliter explicantur, sed etiam non pauca de gratiae praevenientis necessitate, de liberi arbitrii consensu et cooperatione, de sacrae Scripturae obscuritate et interpretatione doctissime edisseruntur.

1. Initium libri in Ezechiel propheta magnis obscuritatibus clausum, et quibusdam mysteriorum nodis ligatum, in homiliis octo, Domino nostro Jesu Christo largiente, discussimus. Jam nunc planiora sunt, et minus difficilia quae sequuntur. Charitati itaque vestrae colloquimur, eidem omnipotenti Deo gratias referentes, quia post tot opaca silvarum, tandem laeti ad campos exivimus, in quibus liberis gressibus locutionis nostrae intrepidum pedem ponamus. Ecce enim postquam propheta similitudinem gloriae Domini contemplatus, in faciem suam cecidit, adjungit: — EZECH. II, 1. — Et audivi vocem loquentis, et dixit ad me: Fili hominis, sta super pedes tuos, et loquar tecum. Ubi adhuc subditur: VERS. 2. — Et ingressus est in me spiritus, postquam locutus est mihi, et statuit me super pedes meos. 2. Ecce divina vox jacenti prophetae jussit ut surgeret. Sed surgere omnino non posset, nisi in hunc omnipotentis Dei spiritus intrasset, quia ex omnipotentis Dei gratia ad bona opera conari quidem possumus, sed haec implere non possumus, si ipse non adjuvat qui jubet. Sic Paulus cum discipulos admoneret, dicens, Cum metu et tremore vestram ipsorum salutem operamini (Philip. II, 12), illico quis in eis haec ipsa bona operaretur adjunxit, dicens: Deus est enim qui operatur in vobis et velle et perficere pro bona voluntate (Ibid., 13). Hinc est quod ipsa Veritas discipulis dicit: Sine me nihil potestis facere (Joan. XV, 5). Sed in his considerandum quia sic bona nostra si omnipotentis Dei dona sunt ut in eis aliquid nostrum non sit, cur nos quasi pro meritis aeternam retributionem quaerimus? Si autem ita nostra sunt ut dona Dei omnipotentis non sint, cur ex eis omnipotenti Deo gratias agimus? Sed sciendum est quia mala nostra

solummodo nostra sunt; bona autem nostra, et omnipotentis Dei sunt, et nostra, quia ipse aspirando nos praevenit ut velimus, qui adjuvando subsequitur ne inaniter velimus, sed possimus implere quae volumus. Praeveniente ergo gratia, et bona voluntate subsequente, hoc quod omnipotentis Dei donum est fit meritum nostrum. Quod bene Paulus brevi sententia explicat, dicens: Plus illis omnibus laboravi (I Cor. XV, 10). Qui ne suae videretur virtuti tribuisse quod fecerat, adjunxit: Non autem ego, sed gratia Dei mecum (Ibid.). Quia enim coelesti dono praeventus est, quasi alienum se a bono suo opere agnovit, dicens: Non autem ego. Sed quia praeveniens gratia liberum in eo arbitrium fecerat in bonum, quo libero arbitrio eamdem gratiam est subsecutus in opere, adjunxit: Sed gratia Dei mecum (Ibid.). Ac si diceret: In bono opere laboravi, non ego, sed et ego. In hoc enim quod solo Domini dono praeventus sum, non ego; in eo autem quod donum voluntate subsecutus, et ego. His igitur breviter contra Pelagium et Coelestium dictis, ad exponendi ordinem redeamus. Fili hominis, sta super pedes tuos, et loquar tecum (Ezech. II, 1).

3. Notandus nobis est ordo locutionis et operis, quia prius similitudo gloriae Domini apparet ut dejiciat, postmodum alloquitur ut elevet, deinde superabundantis gratiae spiritum mittit et levat, ac supra pedes statuit. Nisi enim aliquid de aeternitate in mente videremus, nunquam in faciem nostram poenitendo caderemus. Sed jam jacentes vox Domini consolatur ut in opere surgamus, quod tamen nos facere nostra virtute non possumus. Ipsius ergo non spiritus implet et levat, et super pedes nostros statuit, ut qui proni in poenitentia pro culpa jacuimus, recti postmodum in bono opere stemus. Sed stans propheta quid audierit adjungit, dicens: VERS. 2, 3. — Et audivi loquentem ad me, et dicentem: Fili hominis, mitto ego te ad filios Israel, ad gentes apostatrices, quae recesserunt a me.

4. Sic propheta describit sua, ut significet nostra. Nam quid est hoc (I p., dist. 30) quod ei jacenti dicitur: Sta super pedes tuos, et loquar tecum? Qui

enim jacenti loquebatur, cur non se nisi stanti promittit esse locuturum? Sed sciendum quia alia sunt quae jacentes, alia quae stantes audire debeamus. Jacenti enim dicitur ut surgat, stanti autem praecipitur ut ad praedicationem proficisci debeat. Adhuc enim in infirmitatis confusione jacentibus praeberi non debet auctoritas praedicationis. Sed cum jam in bono opere surgimus, cum jam recti stare coeperimus, dignum est ut ad lucrandos alios in praedicationem mitti debeamus. Stans ergo propheta visionem spiritalem vidit, et cecidit; cadens vero jam monitionis verbum suscepit ut surgeret, surgens autem praeceptum audivit ut praedicaret. Nam qui adhuc ex superbiae vertice stamus, cum jam de aeternitatis timore aliquid sentire coeperimus, dignum est ut ad poenitentiam cadamus. Et cum infirmitatem nostram subtiliter cognoscentes humiliter jacemus, per divini verbi consolationem surgere ad fortia opera jubemur. Et cum jam in bonorum operum soliditate persistimus, necesse est ut unde nosmetipsos correximus, inde jam praedicantes et alios levemus. Jacenti ergo non praecipitur ut ad praedicationem pergat, ne infirmus quisque hoc quod verbo aedificare potest opere destruat. Unde recte quoque per Psalmistam dicitur: Eduxit me de lacu miseriae, et de luto faecis; statuit supra petram pedes meos, et direxit gressus meos; et immisit in os meum canticum novum, hymnum Deo nostro (Psal. XXXIX, 3, 4). Prius enim de luto pravitatis educitur, ut ejus pedes per fidem in petra solidentur. Sed quia rectam fidem recta subsequi debet operatio, gressus ejus directi sunt, ut post directionem gressuum, id est post perfectionem boni operis, in ore acciperet etiam novum canticum praedicationis. Sic Saulus, dum superbus Damascum pergeret (Act. IX, 6), Redemptoris voce prostratus jacuit. Et qui praedicator futurus erat, non tamen mox ut praedicaret quod viderat audivit, sed ei jacenti dicitur: Ingredere in civitatem, et dicetur tibi quid te oporteat facere (Ibid., 7). Jacens ergo hoc solum audire potuit, ut surgens disceret quod audiret; surgens vero hoc didicit, ut quae cognoverat praedicaret.

5. Sed quaerendum nobis est cur Ezechiel et Paulus in faciem cadunt, et de ascensore equi, id est de eo qui in hujus mundi gloria elatus est, dicitur: Ut cadat ascensor ejus retro (Genes. XLIX, 17)? Rursumque de persecutoribus Domini scriptum est: Abierunt retrorsum, et ceciderunt in terram (Joan. XVIII, 6). Quid est hoc, quod electi in faciem, et reprobi retrorsum cadunt, nisi quod omnis qui post se cadit ibi procul dubio cadit, ubi non videt; qui vero ante se ceciderit, ibi cecidit, ubi videt? Iniqui ergo quia in invisibilibus cadunt, post se cadere dicuntur, quia ibi corruunt, ubi quid eos tunc sequatur modo videre non possunt. Justi vero, quia in istis visibilibus semetipsos sponte dejiciunt, ut in invisibilibus erigantur, quasi in faciem cadunt, quia, timore compuncti, videntes humiliantur.

6. Notandum vero quod dicitur: Mitto ego te ad filios Israel, ad gentes apostatrices, quae recesserunt a me. Sicut enim duobus modis a Deo receditur, ita duobus modis a Deo apostatae homines fiunt. Nam unusquisque a conditore suo aut fide recedit, aut opere. Sicut ergo qui a fide recedit apostata est, ita qui ad perversum opus quod deseruerat redit, ab omnipotente Deo apostata absque ulla dubietate deputatur, etiamsi fidem tenere videatur. Unum enim sine altero nil prodesse valet, quia nec fides sine operibus, nec opera adjuvant sine fide, nisi fortasse pro fide percipienda fiant; sicut Cornelius ante pro bonis operibus meruit audiri quam fidelis existeret (Act. X, 4). Qua ex re colligitur quia bona opera pro fide percipienda faciebat. Nam cui ab angelo dicitur: Orationes tuae et eleemosynae tuae ascenderunt in memoriam in conspectu Dei (Ibid.), et mox pro eadem ascensione praecipitur ut ad Simonem mittat, qui ei veniens praedicare debeat, constat quia hoc petiit, unde meruit exaudiri. Sequitur: VERS. 3, 4. — Patres eorum praevaricati sunt pactum meum usque ad diem hanc, et filii dura facie et indomabili corde sunt, ad quos ego mitto te.

7. Ecce est una culpa superbiae, quia praevaricati sunt pactum. Ecce altera obstinationis, quia usque ad diem hanc. Ecce in iniquitate filiorum

culpa gravis imprudentiae, quia dura facie, quoniam mala quae faciunt, jam non erubescunt, et nunquam vel post culpas ad poenitentiam redeunt, quia indomabili corde sunt. Cum vero tantae pravitatis, tantaeque obstinationis sint hi ad quos propheta mittitur, quis jam non videat, quia persona prophetae a tam perversis hominibus despici valeat? Sed ecce auctoritas personae tribuitur, cum subditur: VERS. 4. — Et dices ad eos: Haec dicit Dominus Deus. Ac si aperte diceretur: Quia ex te despicieris, ex mea voce necesse est ut loquaris. Ne contemnaris ipse qui mitteris; verba mea proferens, ostende qui misit. Sequitur: VERS. 5. — Si forte vel ipsi audiant, et si forte quiescant, quia domus exasperans est.

8. Dum constat quod omnipotens Deus omnia sciat, mirandum valde est cur dicatur: Si forte audiant, et si forte quiescant. Quapropter sciendum nobis est quia ista dubitatio locutionis Dei non ex ignorantia, sed ex aliqua significatione descendit. Nam quis nesciat quod qui fecit et videt omnia, omnia sciat? Et per semetipsam in Evangelio Veritas de Antichristi praedicatoribus dicit: Dabunt signa magna et prodigia, ita ut in errorem inducantur, si fieri potest, etiam electi (Matth. XXIV, 24). Cur hoc sub dubitatione dicitur, cum quid futurum sit a Domino praesciatur? Unum vero e duobus est, quia si electi sunt, fieri non potest; si autem fieri potest, electi non sunt. Et tamen dicitur: Ut in errorem inducantur, si fieri potest, etiam electi. Ista ergo Dominici sermonis dubitatio, ex electorum cordibus designatio tentationis fuit, quia qui electi sunt ad persistendum, per signa praedicatorum Antichristi tentabuntur ad cadendum. Per hoc ergo quod dicitur, Si fieri potest, hoc exprimitur, quod electi in corde tentabuntur. Nutant enim, sed non cadunt. Dicitur ergo, Si fieri potest, quia trepidabunt; et tamen dicuntur electi, quia non cadent. Dubitatio itaque sermonis a Domino in electis exprimit trepidationem mentis. Quos et electos nominat, quia cernit quod in fide et bono opere persistant. Unde hic quoque dicitur: Si forte audiant, et si forte quiescant. Per hoc enim quod dicitur, Si forte,

quia ex magna multitudine pauci audituri sint demonstratur. Per dubitationem ergo sermonum Dei quid significatur aliud, nisi paucitas auditorum?

9. Notandum vero quod postquam mala parentum defunctorum dixerat, mittens prophetam ad filios dicat: Si forte vel ipsi audiant, et si forte quiescant. Quid est dicere Vel ipsi, nisi quia eorum patres qui in culpa defuncti sunt audire noluerunt? Pensemus, rogo, quae virtus sit in hoc dominici sermonis defectu, ut dicat: Si forte vel ipsi audiant. Nobis hoc nobis aperte dicitur, qui afflicti, obsessi, conclusi, omnia quae in hoc mundo habuimus bona perdidimus. Urbes erutas, eversa castra, depopulatos agros, suffossas Ecclesias videmus; et tamen adhuc parentes nostros ad iniquitates sequimur, ab eorum elatione quam vidimus non mutamur. Et illi quidem inter gaudia, nos vero, quod est gravius, et inter flagella peccamus. Sed ecce omnipotens Deus iniquitates judicans, jam priores nostros abstulit, jam ad judicium vocavit. Nos adhuc ad poenitentiam exspectat, nos ad revertendum sustinet. Et qui in illis jam judicium exercuit, nobis suae patientiae longanimitatem praerogat, ne cum nostris nos prioribus perdat, dicens: Si forte vel ipsi audiant, et si forte quiescant, quia domus exasperans est.

10. Omnis anima etiam post acceptam fidem in perversitate sua aut permanens, aut revertens, domus exasperans vocatur, quia eum quem per fidem susceperat repellit a se pravis moribus habitatorem Deum. Nam domus inhabitatur a domino. Si ergo domus, quare exasperans? Si vero exasperans, quare domus, quae utique jam non habitatur? Sed domus, quia in ea Deus per fidem habitare coeperat; exasperans vero est, quia ab ea pravis moribus repulsus exiit, ut vacua remaneat, quam prius coelestis inhabitator replebat. Unde etiam, sicut Veritatis voce cognovimus nequissimus spiritus cum septem aliis rediens, domum scopis mundatam invenit (Matth. XII, 45), quia mentem a virtutibus alienam replet. Sequitur: IBID. — Et scient quia propheta fuerit in medio eorum.

11. Malis scire bonos, aut ad adjutorium salutis proficere, aut ad testimonium damnationis solet. Sciant ergo quia in medio eorum propheta fuerit, ut audita praedicatione aut adjuventur ut surgant, aut sic damnentur ut excusatione careant. Sequitur: VERS. 6. — Tu ergo, fili hominis, ne timeas eos, neque sermones eorum metuas, quoniam increduli, et subversores sunt tecum, et cum scorpionibus habitas.

12. Patet ad quam perversos in praedicatione mittitur, qui ne timeat admonetur. Et quia pravi quique bona sibi loquentibus alia iniqua faciunt, et adhuc alia minantur, propter illa quae faciunt dicitur: Ne timeas eos; et propter hoc quod minatur, adjungitur: Neque sermones eorum metuas. Vel certe quia reprobi et mala bonis ingerunt, et eorum semper actibus derogant, propheta missus admonetur, ne eorum vel crudelitatem metuat, vel verba pertimescat. In hoc itaque quod dicitur: Ne timeas, prophetae datur auctoritas praedicationis. Et quia omnes qui in Deo vivimus organa veritatis sumus, ut saepe per alium mihi, saepe vero aliis loquatur per me; sic nobis boni verbi inesse auctoritas debet, ut et is qui praeest dicat recta libere, et is qui subest inferre bona humiliter non recuset. Bonum enim quod majori a minore dicitur tunc vere bonum est, si humiliter dicatur. Nam si rectitudo sentiendi humilitatem loquendi perdiderit, radicem sensus in ramo linguae vitiavit. Quod videlicet vitium jam non ex ramo, sed ex radice est, quia nisi cor intumesceret, lingua minime superbiret. Inesse ergo ad loquendum priori humilis auctoritas, inesse autem minori libera humilitas debet. Sed saepe in hominibus ipse loquendi ordo confunditur, sicut et longe superius diximus. Nam aliquando quis per tumorem elationis loquitur, et loqui se per auctoritatem libertatis existimat; et aliquando alius per stultum timorem tacet, et tacere se per humilitatem putat. Ille locum sui regiminis attendens, non metitur sensum tumoris; iste, locum suae subjectionis considerans, timet dicere bona quae sentit, et ignorat quantum charitati reus efficitur tacendo.

13. Sic vero sub auctoritate superbia, et humanus timor sub humilitate se palliat, ut saepe nec ille valeat considerare quid Deo, nec iste quid debeat proximo. Nam ille dum eos qui sibi subjecti sunt conspicit, et ei cui omnes subjacent non intendit, in elatione attollitur, et de elatione sua velut de auctoritate gloriatur. Iste vero nonnunquam dum timet ne majoris gratiam amittat, atque per hoc aliquid temporalis damni sustineat, recta quae intelligit occultat, atque apud se tacitus ipsum timorem quo constringitur humilitatem nominat. Sed eum cui nil vult dicere, tacendo in cogitatione dijudicat; fitque ut unde se humilem existimat, inde gravius sit superbus. Discernenda ergo semper sunt libertas et superbia, humilitas et timor, ne aut timor humilitatem, aut superbia se libertatem fingat. Ezechiel itaque quia non solum populo, sed etiam senioribus loqui mittebatur, ne incautum timorem humilitatem crederet, ut timere non debeat admonetur, dum dicitur: Ne timeas eos. Ac ne forte derogationis eorum verba pertimescat, adjungitur: Neque sermones eorum metuas.

14. Cur autem linguas derogantium timere non debeat, etiam causa subjungitur, cum protinus subinfertur: Quoniam increduli et subversores sunt tecum, et cum scorpionibus habitas. Timendi enim essent hi quibus loqui mittebatur, si in fide et opere Deo omnipotenti placuissent. Quia autem increduli et subversores sunt, in suis sermonibus derogantes, timendi non sunt, quia stultum valde est si illis placere quaerimus quos non placere Domino scimus. Debent autem haberi in metu et reverentia judicia justorum, quia membra omnipotentis Dei sunt, et hoc ipsi in terra reprehendunt, quod Dominus redarguit e coelo. Nam perversorum derogatio vitae nostrae approbatio est, quia jam ostenditur nos aliquid justitiae habere, si illis displicere inspicipimus qui non placent Deo. Nemo etenim potest in una eademque re omnipotenti Domino atque ejus hostibus gratus existere. Nam Deo se amicum denegat, qui ejus placet inimico. Et inimicis veritatis adversabitur, qui eidem veritati in mente subjugatur. Unde sancti viri in

vocis liberae increpatione succensi, eos ad sua odia excitare non metuunt, quos Deum non diligere cognoscunt. Quod Propheta ardenter exhibens, creatori omnium quasi in munere obtulit, dicens: Nonne qui oderunt te, Deus, oderam illos, et super inimicos tuos tabescebam (Psal. CXXXVIII, 21)? Perfecto odio oderam illos, et inimici facti sunt mihi (Ibid., 22). Ac si aperte dicat: Pensa quantum te diligo qui tuorum hostium excitare contra me inimicitias non pertimesco. Hinc etenim dicit: Qui retribuunt mala pro bonis detrahebant mihi, quoniam subsecutus sum justitiam (Psal. XXXVII, 21). Bonum valde est quod justus tribuit, quando male agentibus libera voce contradicit. Sed perversi mala pro bonis retribuunt cum justis derogant, quia contra eos justitiae defensionem servant. Non enim justi humana judicia, sed aeterni judicis examen aspiciunt, atque ideo derogantium verba contemnunt. Hinc etenim derogantibus Corinthiis Paulus dicebat: Mihi autem pro minimo est ut a vobis judicer, aut ab humano die (I Cor. IV, 3). Qui nec in corde suo unde se reprehendere potuisset inveniens, adjungit: Sed neque meipsum judico. Videns autem quia ei ad perfectionem sanctitatis nec suum judicium sufficeret, subdidit: Sed non in hoc justificatus sum. Cur vero nec sibimetipsi de seipso credidit, causam reddidit cum subjungit: Qui autem judicat me Dominus est (Ibid., 4). Ac si aperte dicat: Nec meo de me judicio credendum existimo, quia ille me judicat, cujus ego judicium non comprehendo. Hinc beatus Job cum per amicorum derogantium linguas inter dolores vulnerum pateretur jacula verborum, cogitatione protinus ad conscientiam recurrit, atque ubi mentem solidam haberet, aspexit dicens: Ecce enim in coelo testis meus, et conscius meus in excelsis (Job. XVI, 20). Qui etiam subdidit: Verbosi amici mei, ad Deum stillat oculus meus (Ibid., 21).

15. In omne enim quod de nobis dicitur, semper taciti recurrere ad mentem debemus, interiorem testem et judicem quaerere. Quid enim prodest si omnes laudent cum conscientia accuset? Aut quid poterit obesse

si omnes nobis derogent, et conscientia sola nos defendat? Beatus ergo Job inter linguas derogantium inflexa mente persistens, quia in terra se impugnari falsis sermonibus vidit, in coelo testem quaesivit. Hinc Isaias ait: Popule meus, qui beatificant te, ipsi te decipiunt, et viam gressuum tuorum dissipant (Isai. III, 12). Qui videlicet populus ne verba suae laudis attenderet, et in culpis altius periret, statim dicitur quem aspiciat, cujus judicium pertimescat, cum subditur: Stat ad judicandum Dominus, stat ad judicandos populos (Ibid., 13). Ac si aperte diceretur: Judicia humana cur sequeris, qui stare super te coelestem judicem scis.

16. Hinc est quod Joannem Baptistam Veritas esse arundinem vento agitatam negat, dicens: Quid existis videre in desertum? Arundinem vento agitatam? (Matth. XI, 7, seq.) Quod quia negando dixerit, non affirmando, subjuncta verba testantur. Ait enim: Sed quid existis videre in deserto? Hominem mollibus vestitum? Ecce qui mollibus vestiuntur in domibus regum sunt. Arundo autem vento agitata modo flatibus erigitur, modo flatibus inclinatur. Omnis autem infirmus animus, qui vel derogatione dejicitur, vel laudibus exaltatur, arundo vento agitata est. Quod Joannes non erat, quia inflexibilem mentis verticem inter laudes hominum et derogationes tenebat.

17. Sed magna inquisitione res indiget, cum recti operis viam tenemus, utrum semper despicere derogantium verba debeamus, an certe aliquando compescere. De qua re sciendum est quia linguas detrahentium sicut nostro studio non debemus excitare ne ipsi pereant, ita per suam malitiam excitatas debemus aequanimiter tolerare, ut nobis meritum crescat; aliquando autem etiam compescere, ne, dum de nobis mala disseminant, eorum qui audire nos ad bona poterant corda innocentium corrumpant. Hinc est enim quod Joannes obtrectatoris sui linguam redarguit, dicens: Is qui amat primatum gerere in eis Diotrepes non recipit nos; propter hoc si venero, commoneam ejus opera quae facit, verbis malignis garriens in nos (III Joan., 9). Hinc

Paulus iterum de detrahentibus Corinthiis loquitur, dicens: Epistolae, inquiunt, graves sunt et fortes, praesentia autem corporis infirma, et sermo contemptibilis; hoc cogitet qui hujusmodi est, quia quales sumus verbo per epistolas absentes, tales et praesentes in opere (II Cor. X, 10).

18. Hi etenim quorum vita in exemplum imitationis est posita debent, si possunt, detrahentium sibi verba compescere, ne eorum praedicationem non audiant qui audire poterant, et, in pravis moribus remanentes, bene vivere contemnant. Sed hac in re, subtili inquisitione necesse est ut semetipsum animus investiget, ne fortasse suae laudis gloriam quaerat, et animarum lucra se quaerere nostra cogitatio simulet. Saepe enim sui nominis laude animus pascitur, et quasi sub obtentu lucrorum spiritalium, cum de se bona dici cognoverit laetatur. Et saepe suae gloriae defensione contra detrahentes irascitur, et fingit sibimet quod hoc ex eorum zelo faciat quorum corda a bono itinere detrahentis sermo perturbat. Illi ergo debent magnopere curare ne contra eorum opinionem detrahentium verba praevaleant, qui suam conscientiam subtiliter discutientes, se in ea inveniunt de amore privatae gloriae nihil habere.

19. Hinc est enim quod justi atque perfecti aliquando virtutes suas praedicant, bona quae divinitus acceperunt narrant, non ut ipsi apud homines sua ostensione proficiant, sed ut eos quibus praedicant exemplo suo ad vitam trahant. Unde Paulus apostolus quoties fustibus caesus, quoties lapidatus, quoties naufragium pertulit, quanta pro veritate sustinuit, quod ad tertium coelum raptus, quod in paradisum ductus sit, Corinthiis narrat (II Cor. XI, 25), ut eorum sensum a falsis praedicatoribus avertat, ut dum se innotesceret qualis esset, illi eis vilescerent, quos ab eis cognoverat inique venerari. Quod perfecti cum faciunt, id est cum virtutes proprias loquuntur, in hoc quoque omnipotentis Dei imitatores sunt, qui laudes suas hominibus loquitur, ut ab hominibus cognoscatur. Nam cum per Scripturam suam praecipiat, dicens: Laudet te alienus, et non os tuum (Prov. XXVII, 2),

quomodo facit ipse quod prohibet? Sed si virtutes suas omnipotens Deus taceret, eum nullus agnosceret; si eum nullus agnosceret, nullus amaret; si nullus amaret, nullus ad vitam rediret. Unde et per Psalmistam de eo dicitur: Virtutem operum suorum annuntiabit populo suo, ut det illis haereditatem gentium (Psal. CX, 6). Virtutes ergo suas annuntiant, non ut laudibus suis ipse proficiat, sed ut hi qui hunc ex sua laude cognoverint ad perpetuam haereditatem veniant. Justi itaque atque perfecti non solum cum vituperationis suae verba reprehendunt, sed etiam cum virtutes quas habent infirmis loquuntur reprehensibiles non sunt, quia per suam vitam quam referunt aliorum animas ad vitam quaerunt.

20. De quibus tamen sciendum est quia nunquam bona sua detegunt, nisi eos, ut dixi, aut proximorum utilitas, aut certe nimia necessitas cogat. Unde Paulus apostolus cum virtutes suas Corinthiis enumerasset, adjunxit: Factus sum insipiens, vos me coegistis (II Cor.XII, 11). Fit vero aliquando, ut necessitate compulsi, in bonis quae de se referunt, non aliorum utilitatem, sed suam requirant, sicut beatus Job facta sua enumerat, dicens: Oculus fui caeco, et pes claudo, pater eram pauperum, et causam quam nesciebam, diligentissime investigabam (Job. XXIX, 15, 16). Et multa alia quae saepe egisse se commemorat. Sed quia, in vulnere doloris positus, ab amicis increpantibus ipse impie egisse, et violentus proximis atque oppressor pauperum fuisse dicebatur, vir sanctus, inter flagella Dei et humanae increpationis verba deprehensus, mentem suam graviter concuti atque ad desperationis foveam conspexit impelli; qui jamjamque cadere poterat, nisi ad memoriam sua bene acta revocasset, ut ad spem animus reduceretur, ne oppressus verbis et vulneribus in desperatione periret. Quod ergo bona sua enumerat, non innotescere aliis quasi ex laude desiderat, sed ad spem animum reformat. Justi itaque sicut sine arrogantia loquuntur aliquando bona quae agunt, ita sine zelo privatae gloriae detrahentium sibi linguas redarguunt, quia noxia loquuntur. Cum vero linguae derogantium corrigi

nequeunt, aequanimiter sunt per omnia tolerandae. Nec obtrectationis sermo timendus est, ne dum vituperatio perversorum metuitur, recti operis via deseratur. Unde nunc Ezechieli prophetae dicitur: Sermones eorum ne metuas, quia increduli et subversores sunt tecum.

21. Minus autem mali essent, si hi qui sunt increduli subversores minime fuissent. Quia enim ipsi vel coelestis regni praemia, vel gehennae esse supplicia non credunt, in suis pravitatibus dimissi, a fide et opere etiam alios subvertunt, ut regnum quod ipsi appetere non volunt, nec alter assequatur. Hi namque cum teneriores quosdam bona incipere, mala jam devitare cognoverint, modo irridendo quod in coelis promittitur, modo despiciendo quod Deus omnipotens de inferni suppliciis minatur, modo laudando bona temporalia, et delectationes praesentis saeculi callida persuasione pollicendo, deflectunt mentes innocentium, eorumque itinera pervertunt. Gaudent si quos potuerint a vita revocare, ad mortem trahere; laetantur in pravitatibus suis, exsultant et in alienis. His nimirum poena sua non sufficit, qui agunt ne soli moriantur. At si fortasse justum quempiam tantae jam virtutis invenerint, ut ei loqui contraria non praesumant, quia subversores esse non possunt, statim scorpiones fiunt. Scorpio enim palpando incedit, sed cauda ferit; nec mordet a facie, sed a posterioribus nocet. Scorpiones ergo sunt omnes blandi et malitiosi, qui bonis quidem in faciem non resistunt, sed mox ut recesserint derogant, alios quos valuerint inflammant, quaeque possunt noxia immittunt, mortifera inferre occulte non desinunt. Scorpiones ergo sunt qui blandi et innoxii in facie videntur, sed post dorsum portant unde venenum fundant. Qui enim in occulto feriunt quasi mortem latenter trahunt. Unde etiam per Psalmistam dicitur: Circumdederunt me sicut apes, et exarserunt sicut ignis in spinis (Psal. CXVII, 12). Apes enim in ore mel habent, in aculeo caudae vulnus. Et omnes qui lingua blandiuntur, sed latenter ex malitia feriunt, apes sunt, quia loquendo dulcedinem mellis proponunt, sed occulte feriendo vulnus

inferunt. Ista vero facientes exardescunt sicut ignis in spinis, quia per flammas detrahentium non justorum vita comburitur, sed si quae in eis esse poterant peccatorum spinae, concremantur. Dicatur ergo: Increduli et subversores sunt tecum, et cum scorpionibus habitas. Increduli scilicet Deo, subversores vero infirmantibus proximis, scorpiones autem etiam fortibus et robustis. Quibus etsi in facie contradicere non praesumunt, ex occulto tamen vulnus derogationis inferunt. Increduli quippe simul et subversores et scorpiones sunt, quia et audita ea quae Dei sunt non credunt, et eos quos praevalent a bonis moribus subvertunt, et quos inflectere non valent occultis machinationibus feriunt.

22. Qua in re hoc quoque notandum est, quia cum prophetae dicitur: Increduli et subversores sunt tecum, et cum scorpionibus habitas, nobis consolationis medicamentum profertur, quos saepe taedet vivere, dum nolumus cum malis habitare. Querimur etenim cur non omnes boni sunt qui nobiscum vivunt. Mala proximorum ferre nolumus, omnes sanctos jam debere esse decernimus, dum esse nolumus quod ex proximis portemus. Sed hac in re luce clarius patet, dum malos portare renuimus, quam multum adhuc ipsi de bono minus habeamus. Neque enim perfecte bonus est, nisi qui fuerit et cum malis bonus. Hinc beatus Job de semetipso asserit, dicens: Frater fui draconum, et socius struthionum (Job. XXX, 29). Hinc Paulus apostolus discipulis dicit: In medio nationis pravae et perversae, inter quos lucetis sicut luminaria in mundo (Philip. II, 15). Hinc Petrus gregis dominici pastor dicit: Justum Lot oppressum a nefandorum injuria conversatione eripuit. Aspectu enim et auditu justus erat, habitans apud eos qui de die in diem animam justi iniquis operibus cruciabant (II Petr. II, 7). Saepe vero cum de vita proximorum querimur, mutare locum conamur, secretum vitae remotioris eligere; videlicet ignorantes quia si desit spiritus, non adjuvat locus. Idem enim Lot de quo loquimur, in Sodomis sanctus exstitit, in monte peccavit (Genes. XIX, 2, 30, seq.). Quia autem loca mentem non

muniunt, ipse humani generis primus testatur parens, qui et in paradiso cecidit (Genes. III, 7). Sed minus sunt omnia quae loquimur ex terra. Nam si locus salvare potuisset, Satan de coelo non caderet. Unde Psalmista ubique in hoc mundo tentationes esse conspiciens, quaesivit locum quo fugeret, sed sine Deo invenire non potuit munitum. Ex qua re et ipsum sibi locum fieri petiit, propter quem locum quaesivit dicens: Esto mihi in Deum protectorem, et in locum munitum, ut salvum me facias (Psal. XXX, 3). Tolerandi ergo ubique sunt proximi, quia Abel fieri non valet quem Cain malitia non exercet.

23. Unum vero est pro quo vitari societas debet malorum, ne si fortasse corrigi non valent, ad imitationem trahant; et cum ipsi a sua malitia non mutantur, eos qui sibi conjuncti fuerint pervertant. Unde Paulus ait: Corrumpunt bonos mores colloquia mala (I Cor. XV, 33). Et sicut per Salomonem dicitur: Noli esse amicus homini iracundo, nec ambules cum viro furioso, ne forte discas semitas ejus, et sumas scandalum animae tuae (Prov. XXII, 24). Sicut ergo perfecti viri perversos proximos non debent fugere, quia et eos saepe ad rectitudinem trahunt, et ipsi ad perversitatem nunquam trahuntur, ita infirmi quique societatem declinare debent pravorum, ne mala quae frequenter aspiciunt, et corrigere non valent, delectentur imitari. Sic enim verba proximorum audiendo quotidie sumimus in mente, sicut flando atque respirando aerem trahimus corpore. Et sicut malus aer assiduo flatu tractus inficit corpus, ita perversa locutio assidue audita, infirmantium inficit animum, ut tabescat delectatione pravi operis, et assidui iniquitate sermonis. Sequitur: IBID. — Verba eorum ne timeas, et vultus eorum ne formides, quia domus exasperans est.

24. Ideo boni timendi sunt ne offendantur, ne forte per eos ille provocetur ad iram, qui eorum corda semper inhabitat. Nam, sicut superius dictum est, si malos offendimus, timere minime debemus, quoniam illis nostra actio displicet, quibus nec justitia creatoris placet. Quid ergo

timendum est, si nobis ingrati sunt, qui Deo amabiles non sunt? Unde recte nunc dicitur: Verba eorum ne timeas, et vultus eorum ne formides, quia domus exasperans est. Ac si aperte diceretur: Timendi essent, nisi me in suis actibus exasperarent. De quibus adhuc subditur: VERS. 7. — Loqueris ergo verba mea ad eos, si forte audiant, et quiescant, quia irritatores sunt.

25. Omnis qui peccat, quid aliud quam conditoris sui in se iracundiam irritat? Et scimus quia quoties actu, quoties verbo, quoties cogitatione delinquimus, Deum contra nos toties irritamus. Sed tamen sustinet, et clementer exspectat, per se patientiam, per praedicatores autem suos verbum nobis exhortationis praerogat. Omnis autem qui recta praedicat, si auditur, iram irritati creatoris super praevaricatorem populum placat. Unde necesse est ut ipse non debeat agere malum, quod solet in populo furorem conditoris sui irritare. Propter quod etiam subditur: VERS. 8. — Tu autem, fili hominis, audi quaecunque loquor ad te, et noli esse exasperans, sicut domus exasperatrix est.

26. Id est, mala quae fieri conspicis, ipse non facias, ne hoc quod prohibere mitteris ipse committas. Omnis etenim praedicator intenta semper debet mente pensare ne qui missus est lapsos erigere ipse in pravitate operis cum lapsis cadat, et Pauli hunc sententia feriat dicentis: In quo alterum judicas teipsum condemnas (Rom. II, 1). Unde Balaam Dei spiritu repletus ad loquendum, sed tamen in carnali vita suo spiritu detentus, de semetipso loquitur, dicens: Dixit auditor sermonum Dei, qui novit doctrinam Altissimi, et visiones omnipotentis videt, qui cadens apertos habet oculos (Num. XXIV, 14, 16). Cadens apertos oculos habuit, qui rectum quod diceret vidit, sed recte vivere contempsit. Cadens videlicet in perverso opere, et apertos habens oculos in sancta praedicatione.

27. Est tamen aliud quod possit intelligi cur beatus Ezechiel, qui ad praedicationem mittitur, esse exasperans prohibetur. Nisi enim ad loquenda verba cum mittebatur obediret, omnipotentem Dominum sicut populus de

perverso opere, sic propheta de suo silentio exasperasset. Nam sicut mali ideo Deum exasperant quia loquuntur vel faciunt mala, ita nonnunquam boni exasperant, quia reticent bona. Illis itaque culpa est perversa agere, istis recta reticere. In hoc ergo cum malis etiam boni simul Deum exasperant, quia cum perversa non increpant, eis per suum silentium proficiendi licentiam praestant. Sequitur: IBID. — Aperi os tuum, et comede quaecunque do tibi.

28. Aperimus os nostrum cum recta loquimur; et comedimus quae a Deo accipimus, quia et tribuitur et augetur in nostris sensibus cibus vitae, cum praedicare coeperimus. Unde propheta alius dicit: Os meum aperui, et attraxi spiritum (Psal. CXVIII, 131). Non enim spiritum attraheret, nisi os aperiret, quia nisi ad praedicandum proximis se impenderet, spiritalis doctrinae in eo gratia non crevisset. Sequitur: VERS. 9. — Et vidi, et ecce manus missa ad me, in qua erat involutus liber; et expandit illum coram me, qui erat scriptus intus et foris.

29. Sicut per prophetam praedicatorum ordo, sic per librum quem accepit Scripturae sacrae paginae designantur. Liber autem involutus est Scripturae sacrae eloquium obscurum, quod profunditate sententiarum involvitur, ut non facile sensu omnium penetretur. Sed coram propheta liber expanditur, quia coram praedicatoribus sacri eloquii obscuritas aperitur. Involutum librum manus Dei porrexerat, cum apostolis dicebat: Simile factum est regnum coelorum homini qui seminavit bonum semen in agro suo. Cum autem dormirent homines, venit inimicus ejus, et superseminavit zizania in medio trilici, et abiit. Cum autem crevisset herba, et fructum fecisset, tunc apparuerunt et zizania (Matth. XIII, 24, seq.), et reliqua quae charitas vestra etiam me reticente reminiscitur. Sed librum quem involutum ostenderat expandit cum hoc quod per aenigmata loquebatur exposuit dicens: Qui seminat bonum semen, est filius hominis. Ager autem est mundus. Bonum vero semen hi sunt filii regni; zizania autem filii sunt nequam. Inimicus

autem qui seminavit ea est diabolus. Messis vero consummatio saeculi, messores autem angeli sunt. Sicut ergo colliguntur zizania, et igni comburuntur, sic erit in consummatione saeculi (Matth. XXIII, 37, seq.). Involutus itaque liber expanditur, quando hoc quod obscure prolatum fuerat, per latitudinem intellectus aperitur. Hunc involutum librum Veritas expandit quando in discipulis egit quod scriptum est: Tunc aperuit illis sensum, ut intelligerent Scripturas (Luc. XXIV, 43).

30. De quo adhuc libro subditur: Qui erat scriptus intus et foris. Liber enim sacri eloquii intus scriptus est per allegoriam, foris per historiam. Intus per spiritalem intellectum, foris autem per sensum litterae simplicem, adhuc infirmantibus congruentem. Intus, quia invisibilia promittit; foris, quia visibilia praeceptorum suorum rectitudine disponit. Intus, quia coelestia pollicetur, foris autem quia terrena contemptibilia qualiter sint, vel in usu habenda, vel ex desiderio fugienda, praecipit. Alia namque de secretis coelestibus loquitur, alia vero in exterioribus actionibus jubet. Et ea quidem quae foris praecipit patent, sed illa quae de internis narrat plene apprehendi nequeunt. Unde scriptum est: Extendens coelum sicut pellem, qui tegis in aquis superiora ejus (Psal. CIII, 2). Quid enim coeli nomine nisi sacra Scriptura signatur? De qua nobis et sol sapientiae, et luna scientiae, et ex antiquis Patribus stellae exemplorum atque virtutum lucent. Quod sicut pellis extenditur, quia, per scriptores suos carnis lingua formatum, ante oculos nostros per verba doctorum exponendo displicatur. Quid vero aquarum nomine, nisi sanctissimi angelorum signantur chori? De quibus scriptum est: Et aquae quae super coelos sunt laudent nomen Domini (Psal. CXLVIII, 4). Hujus coeli superiora Dominus in aquis tegit, quia alta sacri eloquii, id est ea quae de natura divinitatis vel de aeternis gaudiis narrat, nobis adhuc nescientibus, solis angelis in secreto sunt cognita. Coelum ergo hoc et coram nobis extenditur, et tamen in aquis superiora ejus conteguntur, quia et quaedam sacri eloquii jam nobis per apertionem spiritus patent, et

quaedam quae solis angelis possunt esse manifesta nobis adhuc servantur occulta. De quibus tamen occultis jam partem per spiritalem intelligentiam sentimus, jam sancti Spiritus pignus accepimus, quia haec et plene necdum cognovimus, et tamen medullitus amamus, et in multis spiritalibus sensibus, quos jam cognovimus, veritatis pabulo pascimur.

31. Dicat ergo: Qui erat scriptus intus et foris, quia in sacro eloquio et dictis occultioribus atque sublimioribus satiantur fortes, et praeceptis apertioribus nos parvuli nutrimur. Unde scriptum est: Montes excelsi cervis, petra refugium herinaciis (Psal. CIII, 18). Habeant enim montes intelligentiae, qui jam contemplationis saltus dare noverunt. Sed petra sit refugium herinaciis, quia nos parvuli et peccatorum nostrorum spinis cooperti, etsi intelligere alta non possumus, in petrae nostrae refugio, id est, in Christi fide salvamur. Unde et quibusdam dicitur: Nihil me judicavi scire inter vos nisi Christum Jesum, et hunc crucifixum (II Cor. II, 2). Ac si diceret: Quia vos capere divinitatis ejus mysteria non posse pensavi, sola vobis humanitatis ejus infirma locutus sum. Sequitur: IBID. — Et scriptae erant in eo lamentationes, carmen, et vae.

32. Carmen aliquando in bono, aliquando vero in malo dici dubium non est, quia et laetum carmen, et lugubre carmen dicere possumus. Sed nos Scripturae sacrae usum sequentes, quae pene semper carmen ponere in prosperis solet, hoc in loco pro bona parte dictum carmen accipimus. Nam cum omnipotens Deus populum suum de mari Rubro liberasset, scriptum est: Tunc Moyses et filii Israel cecinerunt carmen Domino (Exod. XV, 1). Et cum David victoriam de hostibus fecisset, scriptum est: Locutus est David Domino verba carminis hujus (II Reg. XXII, 1). Salomon quoque ait: Acetum in nitro, et qui cantat carmina cordi pessimo (Prov. XXV, 20). Acetum quippe si mittatur in nitro, fervescit nitrum protinus et ebullit. Et perversa mens quando per increpationem corripitur, aut praedicationis dulcedinem bona suadetur, de correptione fit deterior; et inde in

murmurationis iniquitate succenditur, unde debuit ab iniquitate compesci. Per Heliu quoque de ingrato ac sese desperante dicitur: Et non dixit, Ubi est qui fecit me, qui dedit carmina in nocte? (Job. XXXV, 10). Carmen quippe in nocte est laetitia in tribulatione. Carmen in nocte accipimus, quando in pressuris praesentibus de futuris gaudiis consolamur. Carmen nobis in nocte ostendebat apostolus cum dicebat: Spe gaudentes, in tribulatione patientes (Rom. XII, 12). Carmen in nocte se David habere indicat, dicens: Tu es mihi refugium a pressura quae circumdedit me; exsultatio mea, redime me a circumdantibus me (Psal. XXXI, 7). Qui enim circumdari se pressuris narrat, et tamen Deum sibi esse exsultationem nominat, procul dubio carmen in nocte cantat. Quia igitur pene semper in bono carmen ponere Scriptura sacra consuevit, ita a nobis etiam in hoc loco debet intelligi.

33. Vae autem in Scriptura sacra saepius de aeterno luctu quam praesenti solet intelligi. Unde scriptum est: Vae impio in malo; retributio enim manuum ejus fiet ei (Isai. III, 11). Et beatus Job loquitur, dicens: Si impius fuero, vae mihi est; si autem justus, non levabo caput, saturatus afflictione et miseria (Job. X, 15). Justorum enim afflictio temporalis est. Vae ergo quod dixit, a temporali afflictione distinxit, qui et justum afflictionem, et impium vae habere perhibuit. Per semetipsam quoque Veritas dicit: Vae mundo a scandalis (Matth. XVIII, 7), et, Vae vobis qui ridetis, quoniam flebitis (Luc. VI, 25). Et, Vae praegnantibus et nutrientibus in illis diebus (Ibid., XXI, 23). Pensandum ergo nobis est quomodo haec tria in sacro volumine scripta sint, lamentationes, carmen, et vae.

34. Lamentationes videlicet, quia in eo scripta est poenitentia peccatorum. Carmen vero, quia ibi praenuntiantur gaudia justorum. Vae autem, quia illic expressa est damnatio reproborum. Ut ergo peccata punias, lege quae in hoc volumine scripta sunt lamenta: Scindite corda vestra, et non vestimenta vestra (Joel. II, 13). Et rursus: Miseri estote, et lugete; risus vester in luctum convertatur, et gaudium in moerorem (Jac. IV, 9). Ut autem

de promissione gaudii sequentis hilarescas, cognosce quae in hoc volumine scripta sunt carmina laudis aeternae: Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine, in saeculum saeculi laudabunt te (Psal. LXXXIII, 5). Et sicut per quemdam sapientem de coelesti Jerusalem dicitur: Et lapide pretioso et mundo omnes plateae ejus sternentur, et per omnes vicos ejus alleluia cantabitur (Tobiae XIII, 22). Hoc nobis carmen coelestis patriae nuntiare cives ejus venerant, qui concorditer clamabant: Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II, 14). Sed si adhuc praesenti saeculo mente inhaeres, si adhuc terrenis voluptatibus delectaris, amare non potes gaudia aeterna quae audis. Cognosce ergo in hoc volumine vae quod in eo scriptum est, atque ab animo per timorem expelle quod diligis, ut possis ex judicio carmen amare quod legis. Ibi quippe sub unius damnati specie multitudo omnis exprimitur reproborum, cum voce Veritatis dicitur: Ligatis pedibus ejus ac manibus, mittite eum in tenebras exteriores; illic erit fletus et stridor dentium (Matth. XXII, 13). Tunc enim reprobi in exteriores tenebras cadunt, quia nunc in interioribus sua se sponte dejecerunt, ut veritatis lumen nec credendo nec bene operando sequerentur. In quibus ligatis pedibus ac manibus mitti praecipiuntur, quia nunc dum tempus operandi atque currendi est, habere manus et pedes liberos in bona actione noluerunt. Ibi vae reproborum scriptum est: Vermis eorum non morietur, et ignis eorum non exstinguetur (Isai. LXVI, 24). Ibi damnatis ac repulsis dicitur: Discedite a me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, qui paratus est diabolo et angelis ejus (Matth. XXV, 41). In hoc itaque volumine cuncta quae aedificant, omnia quae erudiunt, scripta continentur. Peccasti enim, et jam te poenitet illicita perpetrasse, ut ad agendam poenitentiam docearis, ibi invenis lamenta. Spe coelestium gaudiorum mentem relevare desideras, ibi ad consolationem tuam invenis carmen. Sin vero et mala perpetrasti, et haec te perpetrasse non poenitet, sed cervicem mentis erigis, ad nullas poenitentiae lamentationes inclinaris, nulla coelestium gaudiorum

exspectatione corrigeris, velis nolis, ibi scriptum auditurus es vae, ut quem nec timor ad poenitentiam humiliat, nec spes ad superna praemia exaltat, damnationis suae jam nunc poenam prospiciat, et sine excusatione in aeternum supplicium cadat.

35. Quid igitur, fratres, quid agendum est miseris nobis, nisi ut evigilemus ad hujus verba voluminis, et mala quae nos egisse meminimus fletibus puniamus, ut per lamenta poenitentiae perveniamus ad carmen vitae? Ne si affligi modo poenitendo nolumus, vae postmodum sine fine sentiamus. Nec nos nostrorum vulnerum multitudo in desperationem deprimat, quia major est potentia medici, quam magnitudo languoris nostri. Quid est enim quod reparare ad salutem non possit, qui potuit omnia ex nihilo creare? Unigenitus quippe est omnipotenti Patri coaeternus, qui cum eo vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA X

In explicatione priorum versuum capitis tertii usque ad quintum decimum commendat maxime Scripturam sacram, ejus assiduam lectionem, meditationem, et praedicationem.

1. Solent quidam scripta sacri eloquii legentes, cum sublimiores ejus sententias penetrant, minora mandata quae infirmioribus data sunt tumenti sensu despicere, et ea velle in alium intellectum permutare. Qui si recte in eo alta intelligerent, mandata quoque minima despectui non haberent, quia divina praecepta sic in quibusdam loquuntur magnis, ut tamen in quibusdam congruant parvulis, qui per incrementa intelligentiae quasi quibusdam passibus mentis crescant, atque ad majora intelligenda perveniant. Unde nunc sancto prophetae dicitur: EZECH. III, 1. — Fili hominis, quodcunque inveneris comede.

2. Quidquid enim in sacra Scriptura invenitur edendum est, quia et ejus parva simplicem componunt vitam, et ejus magna subtilem aedificant intelligentiam. Sequitur: IBID., ET VERS. 2. — Comede volumen istud, et vadens loquere ad filios Israel. Et aperui os meum, et cibavit me volumine illo.

3. Scriptura sacra cibus noster et potus est. Unde etiam Dominus per prophetam alium minatur: Mittam famem in terram, non famem panis, neque sitim aquae, sed audiendi verbum Domini (Amos. VIII, 11). Qui ergo, subtracto suo eloquio, fame ac siti nos dicit atteri, quia ejus verba et cibus noster et potus sint demonstrat. Sed notandum quod aliquando cibus, aliquando potus sunt. In rebus enim obscurioribus quae intelligi nequeunt nisi exponantur, Scriptura sacra cibus est, quia quidquid exponitur ut intelligatur, quasi manditur ut glutiatur. In rebus vero apertioribus potus est. Potum enim non mandendo glutimus. Apertiora ergo mandato bibimus, quia etiam non exposita intelligere valemus. Pro eo autem quod multa Ezechiel propheta obscura atque perplexa auditurus erat, nequaquam ei de sacro

volumine dicitur, bibe, sed comede. Ac si aperte diceretur: Pertracta et intellige, id est prius mande, et tunc degluti. Sed in verbis sacri eloquii iste debet studii nostri ordo servari, ut haec ideo cognoscamus, quatenus de iniquitate nostra compuncti, cognoscentes mala quae fecimus, vitemus ne alia faciamus.

4. Et cum jam ex magno usu lacrymarum de peccatorum remissione coeperit esse fiducia, per verba Dei quae intelligimus ad vitam quoque et alios trahamus. Ad hoc enim intelligenda sunt, ut et nobis prosint, et intentione spiritali aliis conferantur. Unde bene nunc dicitur: Comede volumen istud, et vade, loquere ad filios Israel. Ac si ei de sacro cibo diceretur: Comede et pasce, saturare et eructa, accipe et sparge, confortare et labora.

5. Et notandum quod propheta subjungit, dicens: Et aperui os meum et cibavit me volumine illo. Os in corde esse alius Propheta testatur, dicens: Labia dolosa in corde, et corde locuti sunt mala (Psal. XI, [Col.0887C] 3). Os ergo aperimus, quando sensum ad intelligentiam sacri verbi praeparamus. Itaque ad vocem Domini propheta os aperit, quia ad spiramentum dominici praecepti cordis nostri desideria inhiant, ut de cibo vitae aliquid sumant. Sed tamen hoc ipsum sumere nostrarum virium non est, nisi ipse cibaverit qui ut comedatur jussit. Ille etenim cibatur, qui per se edere non potest. Et quia ad capienda verba coelestia idonea nostra infirmitas non est, ipse nos cibat, qui nobis in tempore mensuram tritici temperat, quatenus in sacro verbo dum hodie intelligimus quod hesterno die nesciebamus, cras quoque comprehendamus quod hodie nescimus, per divinae dispensationis gratiam quotidiano alimento nutriamur. Omnipotens etenim Deus quasi toties ad os cordis nostri manum porrigit, quoties nobis intellectum aperit, et cibum sacri eloquii in nostris sensibus mittit. Cibat ergo nos volumine, cum sensum nobis Scripturae sacrae dispensando aperit, et ejus dulcedine nostras cogitationes replet. Unde et subditur: VERS. 3. —

Et dixit ad me: Fili hominis, venter tuus comedet, et viscera tua replebuntur volumine isto quod ego do tibi.

6. In translatione veteri non habetur, Venter tuus comedet, sed, Os tuum comedet, et viscera tua replebuntur. Os enim nostrum comedit, dum verbum Dei legimus; viscera vero nostra complentur, cum intelligimus atque servamus ea in quibus legendo laboramus. In posteriori autem translatione, quam et veraciorem credimus, scriptum est: Venter tuus comedet, et viscera tua replebuntur. In sacro vero eloquio nonnunquam venter pro mente poni consuevit. Unde per Jeremiam dicitur: Ventrem meum, ventrem meum doleo (Jerem. IV, 19). Quod quia de spiritali et non corporeo ventre dixerat, adjunxit: Sensus cordis mei conturbati sunt (Ibid.). Neque enim ad salutem populi pertinebat, si propheta ventrem corporeum se dolere praedicaret. Sed ventrem doluit qui mentis afflictionem sensit. Sed cur exemplum prophetae proferimus, cum testimonium Domini apertius habeamus? Et necesse est ut cum per semetipsam Veritas loquitur, propheta taceat, quia lucerna claritatem non habet in sole. Ait enim: Qui credit in me, sicut dicit Scriptura, flumina de ventre ejus fluent aquae vivae (Joan. VII, 38). Quia enim de mente fidelium sanctae praedicationes defluunt, quasi de ventre credentium aquae vivae flumina decurrunt. Ventris autem viscera quid sunt aliud nisi mentis interna, id est recta intentio, sanctum desiderium, humilis ad Deum, pia ad proximum voluntas? Unde nunc recte dicitur: Venter tuus comedet, et viscera tua replebuntur, quia cum mens nostra pabulum veritatis acceperit, interna nostra non jam vacua remanent, sed alimento vitae satiata.

7. Pensemus, charissimi fratres mei, quam sit pia ista promissio, qua dicitur: Venter tuus comedet, et viscera tua replebuntur volumine isto quod ego do tibi. Multi etenim legunt, et ab ipsa lectione jejuni sunt. Multi vocem praedicationis audiunt, sed post vocem vacui recedunt. Quorum etsi venter comedit, viscera non replentur, quia etsi mente intellectum sacri verbi percipiunt, obliviscendo et non servando quae audierint, haec in cordis

visceribus non reponunt. Hinc est enim quod per prophetam alium quosdam Dominus increpat, dicens: Ponite corda vestra super vias vestras. Seminastis multum, et intulistis parum; comedistis, et non estis satiati; bibistis, et non estis inebriati (Aggae. I, 6). Multum cordi suo seminat, sed parum infert, qui de mandatis coelestibus vel legendo, vel etiam audiendo multa cognoscit, sed negligenter operando pauca fructificat. Comedit et non satiatur, qui, verba Dei audiens, lucra vel gloriam saeculi concupiscit. Bene autem non satiari dicitur, quia aliud mandit, et aliud esurit. Bibit et non inebriatur, qui ad vocem praedicationis aurem inclinat, sed mentem non mutat. Solet enim per ebrietatem bibentium sensus mutari. Qui ergo ad cognoscendum Dei verbum devotus est, sed ea quae sunt hujus saeculi adipisci desiderat, bibit, et debriatus non est. Si enim debriatus esset procul dubio mentem mutasset, ut jam terrena non quaereret, jam vana et transitoria quae amaverat non amaret. De electis namque per Psalmistam dicitur: Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuae (Psal. XXXV, 9). Quia tanto omnipotentis Dei amore repleti sunt, ut mutata mente sibimetipsis extranei esse videantur, implentes quod scriptum est: Qui vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum (Matth. XVI, 24). Semetipsum abnegat qui mutatur ad meliora, et incipit esse quod non erat, et desinit esse quod erat.

8. Saepe autem quosdam videmus ad vocem praedicationis, quasi ex conversione compunctos, habitum, non animum mutasse, ita ut religiosam vestem sumerent, sed anteacta vitia non calcarent; irae stimulis immaniter agitari, malitiae dolore in proximi laesionem fervescere, de ostensis quibusdam bonis ante humanos oculos superbire, praesentis mundi lucra inhianter quaerere, et de solo exterius habitu quem sumpserunt, sanctitatis fiduciam habere. Quibus quid aliud dicendum est, nisi hoc quod magister egregius quibusdam legis exteriora servantibus loquitur, dicens: Quia in Christo Jesu neque circumcisio aliquid valet, neque praeputium, sed nova

creatura (Gal. V, 6)? Non enim magni est meriti, si quid foris erga nos agatur in corpore, sed magnopere pensandum est quid agatur in mente.

9. Nam praesentem mundum despicere, transitoria non amare, mentem medullitus in humilitate Deo et proximo sternere, contra illatas contumelias patientiam servare, et, custodita patientia, dolorem malitiae a corde repellere, egenis propria tribuere, aliena minime ambire, amicum in Deo diligere, propter Deum et eos qui inimici sunt amare, de afflictione proximi lugere, de morte ejus qui inimicus est non exsultare, haec est nova creatura, quam idem magister gentium apud alios discipulos vigilanti oculo requirit, dicens: Si qua igitur in Christo nova creatura, vetera transierunt, ecce facta sunt omnia nova (II Cor. V, 17).

10. Ad veterem quippe hominem pertinet praesentem mundum quaerere, transitoria ex concupiscentia amare, mentem in superbiam erigere, patientiam non habere, ex dolore malitiae de proximi laesione cogitare, sua indigentibus non dare, atque ad multiplicandum aliena quaerere, nullum pure propter Deum diligere, inimicitias inimicitiis reddere, de afflictione proximi gaudere. Cuncta haec vetusti sunt hominis, quae videlicet de radice trahimus corruptionis. Sed qui jam ista exsuperat, et ad praecepta dominica mentem in benignitatem commutat, de hoc recte dicitur: Quia vetera transierunt, ecce facta sunt omnia nova.

11. Tunc ergo in nostris mentibus nova fiunt, cum a nobis vetusti hominis vitia transeunt; et tunc vitia vetusti hominis transeunt, quando sacri verbi praeceptum venter comedit, et viscera medullitus replentur. Saepe enim quosdam vidimus tota se mente ad sanctae lectionis studium contulisse, atque, inter verba dominica recognoscentes in quantis deliquerint, semetipsos in lacrymis mactare, moerore continuo affici, in nullis hujus mundi prosperitatibus delectari, ita ut eis vita praesens oneri et lux ipsa fastidio fieret; vix ad colloquendum communia admittere, atque a rigore disciplinae animum difficile relaxare, pro amore conditoris, luctu

solummodo et silentio gaudere. Horum venter sacrum volumen comedit, et viscera repleta sunt, quia praecepta vitae quae sensus capere potuit memoria non amisit, sed haec collectus in Deo animus lugendo semper et recolendo servavit.

12. Et fit plerumque ut tales quique ex dono caelestis gratiae etiam verbum doctrinae percipiant, atque de veritatis pabulo quod ipsi intrinsecus dulciter ruminant et proximos suaviter pascant. De quorum profecto ore praedicatio tanto audientibus dulcis est, quanto eorum actio contraria suis praedicationibus non est, quia de propria vita sumunt quod per linguam proximis conferunt. Unde recte hic quoque propheta subjungit: IBID. — Et comedi illud, et factum est in ore meo sicut mel dulce.

13. Liber qui viscera replevit dulcis in ore sicut mel factus est, quia ipsi de omnipotenti Domino sciunt suaviter loqui, qui hunc didicerint in cordis sui visceribus veraciter amare. In ejus quippe ore Scriptura sacra dulcis est, cujus vitae viscera mandatis illius replentur, quia ei suavis est ad loquendum, cui interius impressa ad vivendum fuerit. Nam sermo dulcedinem non habet, quem vita reproba intra conscientiam remordet. Unde necesse est ut qui verbum Dei loquitur prius studeat qualiter vivat, ut pos ex vita colligat quae et qualiter dicat. Ad praedicandum namque plus conscientia sancti amoris aedificat, quam exercitaio sermonis, quia amando coelestia intra semetipsum praedicator legit quomodo persuadeat ut despici debeant terrena. Qui enim vitam suam interius pensat, et exemplo suo foris admonendo alios aedificat, quasi in corde linguae calamum tingit, in eo quod manu verbi proximis exterius scribit. Unde admirabilis praedicator cum multa discipulis exhortando dixit, quia nullam intra semetipsum de conscientia contrarietatem pertulit, securus adjunxit: Si qua virtus, si qua laus disciplinae, haec cogitate; quae et didicistis, et accepistis, et audistis, et vidistis in me, haec agite, et Deus pacis erit vobiscum (Phil. IV, 8, 9).

Sequitur: VERS. 4. — Et dixit ad me: Fili hominis, vade ad domum Israel, et loqueris verba mea ad eos.

14. In eo quod Dominus prophetae dicit, Loqueris verba mea ad eos, quid aliud quam ejus ori frenum moderaminis imponit, ne quae prius intus non audierit, foris dicere praesumat? Nam prophetae falsi sua et non Dei verba loquebantur, de quibus scriptum est: Nolite audire verba prophetarum, qui prophetant vobis, et decipiunt vos; visionem cordis sui loquuntur, non de ore Domini (Jerem. XXIII, 16). Et rursum: Non loquebar ad eos, et ipsi prophetabant (Ibid., 21). Qua ex re quoque colligendum est quia et quisquis expositor in explanatione sacri eloquii, ut fortasse auditoribus placeat, aliquid mentiendo componit, sua et non Domini verba loquitur, si tamen placendi vel seducendi studio mentiatur. Nam si in verbis dominicis virtutem requirens, ipse aliter quam is per quem prolata sunt senserit, etiamsi sub intellectu alio aedificationem charitatis requirat, Domini sunt verba quae narrat, quia ad hoc solum Deus per totam nobis sacram Scripturam loquitur, ut nos ad suum et proximi amorem trahat. Sequitur: VERS. 5-7. — Non enim ad populum profundi sermonis et ignotae linguae tu mitteris, ad domum Israel; neque ad populos multos profundi sermonis et ignotae linguae quorum non possis audire sermones. Et si ad illos mittereris, ipsi audirent te. Domus autem Israel nolunt audire te, quia nolunt audire me.

15. In ipso jussionis exordio quo propheta ad praedicandum mittitur, aperte et vocatio gentium et Israelitarum repulsio designatur. Nam cum dicitur: Non ad populos multos profundi sermonis et ignotae linguae mitteris quorum non possis audire sermones, atque statim subditur: Et si ad illos mittereris, ipsi audirent te, aperte declaratur obedientia gentium, quae quandoque praedicatorum voces essent sine tarditate secuturae. Et cum subditur: Domus autem Israel nolunt audire te, quia nolunt audire me, Judaeae duritia designatur, quae verba praedicantium et cognovit, et sequi noluit. Ignota autem lingua gentium ad obediendum moram non fecit,

quamvis extranea ab eloquio legis fuit. Bene autem dicitur: Nolunt audire te, quia nolunt audire me, secundum hoc quod scriptum est: Qui vos spernit, me spernit (Luc. X, 16). Causa quoque cur non audiant subinfertur, cum dicitur: VERS. 7. — Omnis quippe domus Israel attrita fronte est, et duro corde.

16. Cum domus Israel attrita fronte esse perhibetur, quid aliud sentiendum, quidve cogitandum est, nisi quod frontem cordis in impudentia atterit culpa frequens, ut quo crebrius committitur, eo de illa committentis animus minus verecundetur? Atque ideo ad tantam cordis duritiam quandoque peccator pervenit, ut jam in correptione sensibilis non sit, quia qui usu peccandi induruit nullo modo corripientis verbum, id est manum palpantis, sentit, sicut Judaeae quoque crebrius delinquenti dicitur: Frons mulieris meretricis facta est tibi, noluisti erubescere (Jerem. III, 5). Vel certe attrita frons est in hujus mundi actibus assueta, quia sicut sunt nonnulli qui quietem cunctis mundi praemiis atque honoribus praeponunt, ita nonnulli ut in hoc mundo aliquid esse videantur terrenis laboribus insudant, insistunt causis, permiscentur jurgiis. Et quamvis se corpore deficere inter labores sentiant, amore tamen terrenarum rerum devicti, delectabiliter fatigantur. Quibus per prophetam dicitur: Ephraim vitula docta diligere trituram (Osee X, 11). Vitula etenim in tritura areae assueta, etiam si relaxatur a labore, sponte redit. Sic quibusdam pravis mentibus nihil est laboriosius quam si eis praecipitur ut in hujus mundi actibus non laborent. Nam saepe quidam repulsi ab actione terrena deprecantur ut redeant, rogant ut premantur, grave se incurrisse periculum quietem putant. Attrita ergo fronte sunt, qui non solum labores non fugiunt, sed neque importuni videri in laboribus qui sibi negantur erubescunt. Sequitur: VERS. 8. — Ecce dedi faciem tuam valentiorem faciebus eorum, et frontem tuam duriorem frontibus eorum.

17. Sicut verecundia laudabilis est in malo, ita reprehensibilis est in bono. Erubescere enim malum sapientiae est; bonum vero erubescere,

fatuitatis. Unde scriptum est: Est confusio adducens peccatum, et est confusio adducens gloriam (Eccli. IV, 25). Qui enim erubescit poenitendo mala quae fecit, ad vitae libertatem pervenit. Qui vero erubescit bona facere, a statu rectitudinis cadit, atque ad damnationem tendit, sicut per Redemptorem dicitur: Qui me erubuerit et meos sermones, hunc Filius hominis erubescet, cum venerit in majestate sua (Luc. IX, 26). Et sunt quidam qui bona jam in mente concipiunt, sed necdum malis aperte contradicunt. Hi nimirum quia boni sunt in mente, sed auctoritatem non habent in locutione, apti ad veritatis defensionem non sunt. Ille enim esse veritatis defensor debet, qui quod recte sentit loqui nec metuit, nec erubescit. Unde nunc in magno munere prophetae promittitur: Ecce dedi faciem tuam valentiorem faciebus eorum, et frontem tuam duriorem frontibus eorum. Quid est autem peccator, nisi vulneratus? et qui praedicator, nisi medicus? Si ergo non erubescit peccator qui jacet in vulnere, cur erubescat medicus qui per medicamenta providet salutem? Saepe vero contingit ut praedicator reverenter audiatur; nonnunquam vero a perversis ita despicitur, ac si eis nihil utilitatis loquatur. Unde recte nunc dicitur: VERS. IX. — Ut adamantem et ut silicem dedi faciem tuam.

18. Adamas et silex utraque dura; sed unum horum pretiosum est, alterum vile. Adamas ad ornamentum sumitur, silex ab itinerantibus calcatur. Et saepe contingit ut hos quos correptionem suam conspicimus nimis humiliter audire, verecundemur eis aliqua dicere. Nonnunquam vero evenit ut eos quos increpationem suam videmus postponere, et despectui habere, trepidemus eis verbum praedicationis inferre. Sed si recte sapimus, et ad eos a quibus nos honorari conspicimus, et ad eos a quibus nos despici videmus, auctoritatem exhortationis vel increpationis sumimus, ut nec illorum humilitatem debeamus erubescere, nec horum superbiam formidare. Dicatur ergo: Dedi faciem tuam ut adamantem, id est, si ab auditoribus honoraris; Dedi faciem tuam ut silicem, si ab auditoribus conculcaris atque

despiceris, ut nec per illatum honorem refrenetur lingua ex verecundia, nec per despectum taceat ex infirmitate. Sequitur: IBID. — Ne timeas eos, neque metuas a facie eorum, quia domus exasperans est.

19. Hoc jam superius dictum est. Sed notandum quam aspera domus habetur, cujus asperitas tam crebro replicatur. Increpandus itaque peccator est, et nunquam timendus, quia domus exasperans est. Timeri enim homo debuerat, si ipse auctorem omnium ut homo timuisset. Nam qui rationis sensum ad timorem Dei non habuit, tanto in nullo timendus est, quanto hoc quod esse debuit, non est. Sequitur: VERS. 10, 11. — Et dixit ad me: Fili hominis, omnes sermones meos quos loquor ad te, assume in corde tuo, et auribus tuis audi; et vade, ingredere ad transmigrationem filiorum populi tui.

20. Vigilanter intuendum est quod voce Domini ad Prophetam dicitur ut prius sermones ejus audiat, et postmodum loquatur. Audimus enim verba Dei, si facimus. Et tunc ea proximis recte loquimur, cum prius ipsi fecerimus. Quod bene Marcus evangelista confirmat, cum factum Domini miraculum narrat, dicens: Adducunt ci surdum et mutum, et deprecabantur eum ut imponat illi manum (Marc. VII, 32). Cujus ordinem curationis insinuat, subdens: Misit digitos suos in auriculas, expuensque tetigit linguam ejus, et suspiciens in coelum ingemuit, et ait illi: Ephphetha, quod est adaperire. Et statim apertae sunt aures ejus, et solutum est vinculum linguae ejus, et loquebatur recte (Ibid., 33, seq.). Quid est enim quod creator omnium Deus cum surdum et mutum sanare voluisset, in aures illius suos digitos misit, et expuens linguam ejus tetigit? Quid per digitos Redemptoris, nisi dona sancti Spiritus designantur? Unde cum in alio loco ejecisset daemonium, dixit: Si in digito Dei ejicio daemonia, profecto pervenit in vos regnum Dei (Luc. XI, 20). Qua de re per evangelistam alium dixisse describitur: Si ego in spiritu Dei ejicio daemones, igitur pervenit in vos regnum Dei (Matth. XII, 28). Ex quo utroque loco colligitur quia digitus

Dei spiritus vocatur. Digitos ergo in auriculas mittere, est per dona Spiritus sancti mentem surdi ad obediendum aperire. Quid est vero quod exspuens linguam ejus tetigit? Saliva nobis est ex ore Redemptoris accepta sapientia in eloquio divino. Saliva quippe ex capite defluit in ore. Ea ergo sapientia quae ipse est dum lingua nostra tangitur, mox ad praedicationis verba formatur. Qui suspiciens in coelum ingemuit; non quod ipse necessarium gemitum haberet, qui dabat quod postulabat, sed nos ad eum gemere qui coelo praesidet docuit, ut et aures nostrae per dona Spiritus sancti aperiri, et lingua per salivam oris, id est per scientiam divinae locutionis solvi debeat ad verba praedicationis. Cui mox Ephphetha, id est adaperire dicitur; et statim apertae sunt aures ejus, et solutum est vinculum linguae ejus. Qua in re notandum est quia propter clausas aures dictum est Adaperire. Sed cui aures cordis ad obediendum apertae fuerint, ex subsequenti procul dubio etiam linguae ejus vinculum solvitur, ut bona quae ipse fecerit etiam facienda aliis loquatur. Ubi et bene additur: Et loquebatur recte. Ille enim recte loquitur qui prius obediendo fecerit quae loquendo admonet esse facienda.

21. Quod vero ad transmigrationem populi admonendam propheta mittitur, non solum ea transmigratio debet intelligi quae ejus populi erat in corpore, sed etiam quae facta fuerat in mente. A Jerusalem quippe ad Babyloniam venerat. Et quid Jerusalem nisi visio pacis, quid Babylonia nisi confusio vocatur? Quisquis vero a rectis operibus in perversis actibus cadit, quoniam a bono studio ad vitia defluit, quasi ab Jerusalem ad Babyloniae civitatem venit. Culmen enim bonae contemplationis deseruit, atque in transmigratione confusionis jacet. Quod illis solet saepe evenire qui cum bona agunt, in his de sua virtute gloriantur. Unde Psalmista ne a visione pacis, id est a bonis actibus captivus ad Babyloniam emigraret, Domino supplicans, dicit: Adjutor meus, non emigrabo (Psal. LXI, 7). Si enim in se confideret, a justitiae operibus cadendo migrasset.

22. Sed neque hi qui a statu rectitudinis in pravam actionem ceciderunt desperandi sunt, quia ecce propheta ad transmigrationem Babyloniae mittitur. Et per prophetam alium Dominus dicit: Et venies usque Babylonem, et ibi liberaberis (Mich. IV, 10). Saepe enim quis postquam in confusionem vitiorum ceciderit, erubescens mala quae perpetravit, ad poenitentiam redit, seque a suis lapsibus bene vivendo erigit. Quid ergo iste nisi usque ad Babylonem venit, et ibi liberatus est? Qui postquam, confusus mente, perversa perpetravit, haec ipsa erubescens mala quae fecit, se contra se erigit, et bene operando ad statum rectitudinis redit. In Babylone itaque liberatus est, qui per divinam gratiam ostenditur etiam de confusione salvatus. Propheta ergo ad transmigrationem loquitur, cum illos increpat qui a statu rectitudinis ad erroris vitia transmigrando ceciderunt. Sequitur: VERS. 11. — Et loqueris ad eos, et dices: Haec dicit Dominus Deus: si forte audiant, et quiescant.

23. Quod toties divinis vocibus difficultas audiendi repetitur, ut dicatur, Si forte audiant, quid aliud quam transmigrati populi duritia designatur? In quibus verbis magna est nostra consolatio, quia si omnipotens Deus prophetam mittens a perverso populo verba sua denuntiat difficile audiri, cur nos miseri contristamur, cum saepe a fratribus in nostra admonitione contemnimur? Nam crebro delinquentes alloquimur, frequenter increpamus, saepe cum eis blandis sermonibus agimus, et tamen si alter audit, alter audire contemnit; alter ex parte verbum exhortationis suscipit, et ex parte recipere recusat; ita ut quotidie impleri videamus hoc quod per prophetam alium Dominus narrat quae fecerit iratus, cum dicit: Plui super civitatem unam, et super alteram non plui. Pars una compluta est, et pars quae compluta non est aruit (Amos IV, 7). Cum enim sanctae exhortationis verba alia mens suscipit, alia suscipere recusat, super unam civitatem Dominus pluit, et super alteram non pluit. Cum vero et ipse proximus qui audit ab aliis se vitiis corrigit, atque ab aliis emendare se contemnit, una eademque

civitas et ex parte compluitur, et ex parte arida remanet, in qua a se praedicationis pluviam repellit. Sunt etenim quidam qui exhortationis verba omnino non audiunt, hi penitus suscipere pluviam nolunt. Et sunt quidam qui audiunt, sed tamen hanc medullitus non sequuntur, quia alia in se vitia resecant, sed in aliis graviter perdurant. Saepe enim quosdam videmus qui per praedicationis verbum a semetipsis avaritiae aestum repellunt, et non solum jam aliena non rapiunt, sed et propria indigentibus largiuntur; nec tamen irae stimulos edomant, nec patientiae moderamina per mentis tranquilitatem servant. Et saepe alii ad exhortationis verbum in semetipsis jam carnis immunditiam vincunt, corpus in castitate custodiunt, nec tamen adhuc animum, sicut debent, proximis inclinant, sed per rigorem superbiae in cogitatione se elevant. In istis pars una compluta est, quia fructum fecit, et pars quae compluta non est aruit, quia exhortationis verbum non plene suscipiens, a bono opere sterilis remansit. Sequitur: VERS. 12. — Et assumpsit me spiritus, et audivi post me vocem commotionis magnae; Benedicta gloria Domini de loco suo.

24. Quid est hoc, quod propheta postquam ad transmigrationem filiorum populi mittitur, vocem post se magnae commotionis audit, dicentem: Benedicta gloria Domini de loco suo? Conversus quippe ad peccatores Babyloniae fuerat, et vocem gloriae Domini de loco suo post tergum audiebat. Locus enim est Dei Jerusalem, id est visio pacis, quia nimirum illa corda vident ea quae Dei sunt, quae ad transmigrationem Babyloniae, hoc est ad confusionis vitia, non descendunt. Ibi enim inhabitat Deus ubi vera pax quaeritur, internae contemplationis gloria amatur. Nam qui ad perversitatem defluunt, locus Dei esse contemnunt. Locus ergo gloriae Dei est vel sancta quaeque anima, vel unusquisque in coelestibus permanens angelicus spiritus. Et gloria Domini de loco suo benedicitur, cum vel ab electis hominibus, vel a sanctis angelis auctori omnium laus aeterna cantatur. In eo ergo quod justi de convertendis peccatoribus cogitant, quia

eorum vitia considerando ad carnales actus oculum ducunt, quasi ad Babyloniam intendunt. Qui tamen pro statu suae rectitudinis, quia in laudem Dei bona sanctorum considerare nunquam desinunt, quamvis per cogitationem alio intendant, quasi post se vocem gloriae Domini a Jerusalem, id est de loco suo audiunt.

25. Sed cur in istis immoramur, qui haec prophetae verba, largiente Domino, per sensum alterum et subtilius intelligere, et apertius dicere valemus? Ait enim: Et assumpsit me spiritus. Praedicatorem spiritus assumit, cum ejus mentem in amorem Dei omnipotentis elevatam a terrenis jam desideriis alienam reddit, ut nihil ei agere libeat, nisi ea quibus lucra spiritalia congreget, et ad regna coelestia quotidiani sui operis fructum portet. Unde et nobis praedicatoribus jubetur: Operamini non cibum qui perit, sed qui permanet in vitam aeternam (Joan. VI, 27).

26. Bene autem subditur: Et audivi post me vocem commotionis magnae. Propheta, sancto Spiritu repletus, quasi transacta narrat, quae facienda praevidet, quia et in praedestinatione jam facta sunt, quae adhuc in opere sequuntur. Unde et in translatione veteri per Isaiam dicitur: Qui fecit quae futura sunt (Isai. XLV, 11, sec. LXX). Quid est ergo quod post se propheta vocem audivit commotionis magnae, nisi quod post sermonem praedicationis, qui fit ad corda peccantium, lamenta poenitentium sequuntur?

27. Perversi etenim quique dum prava agunt, et a justis recta non audiunt, nesciunt quam sint gravia quae committunt, atque ex ipsa sua ignorantia, in suo stupore securi sunt; et jacentes in culpis, quasi molliter quiescunt, sicut de quodam peccatore et securo populo dicitur: Requievit in faecibus suis, quia securus jacuit in peccatis (Jerem. XLVIII, 11).

28. Cum vero audire perversi verbum praedicationis coeperint, quae sint supplicia aeterna cognoscere, qui terror judicii, quam subtilis examinatio de singulis quibusque peccatis, illico contremiscunt, implentur gemitibus, et

non se capientibus suspiriis anxiantur, atque, magno pavore concussi, in luctu et fletibus erumpunt. Prophetam ergo vox magnae commotionis sequitur; quia post verbum praedicationis, conversorum atque poenitentium luctus audiuntur. Qui enim prius quieti jacebant in vulnere, tacti postmodum manu medicinae, cum dolore redeunt ad salutem. De hac commotione poenitentium per prophetam alium dicitur: Pedes ejus steterunt, et commota est terra (Zach. XIV, 4), quia cum veritatis vestigia in mente audientium figuntur, ipsa mens in sui consideratione turbata commovetur. Hinc Psalmista pro peccatoribus exorat, dicens: Qui sedes super cherubim, moveatur terra (Psal. XCVIII, 2). Hinc pro afflictis et poenitentibus deprecans, ait: Commovisti terram, et conturbasti eam, sana contritiones ejus, quia mota est (Psal. LIX, 4). Terra quippe commota et turbata, est peccator de cognitione reatus sui anxius, et ad poenitentiae lamenta perductus. Peccanti etenim homini dictum est: Terra es, et in terram ibis (Genes. III, 19). Exoret ergo ut sanetur contritio terrae, quia mota est, quatenus peccator qui de culpis suis affligitur, de coelestis misericordiae gaudio consoletur. Haec est itaque vox commotionis magnae, quando unusquisque sua acta dijudicans, in afflictione poenitentiae perturbatur.

29. Sed quid vox ipsa dicat audiamus: Benedicta gloria Domini de loco suo. Locus enim maligni spiritus fuerant corda peccantium; sed cum sibimetipsis irati per poenitentiam redeunt ad vitam, gloriae Domini locus fiunt. Jam enim se contra se erigunt, jam poenitentiae lacrymis insequuntur mala quae commiserunt. Inde ergo auditur benedictio gloriae in laude Domini, unde prius sonabat Creatoris injuria de amore praesentis saeculi. Et corda poenitentium fiunt jam Domino locus suus, quae prius in peccatis posita, fuerant locus alienus. Ipsi autem qui a peccatis suis ad Dominum convertuntur, non solum delent lacrymis perversa quae fecerunt, sed etiam miris operibus ad alta proficiunt, ut sancta animalia Dei omnipotentis fiant, ut signis et virtutibus ad alta evolent, ut terram funditus deserant, et acceptis

donis sese ad coelestia per desiderium suspendant. De quibus adhuc subditur: VERS. 13. — Et vocem alarum animalium percutientium alteram ad alteram.

30. Audit post se propheta vocem commotionis magnae, quia, sicut dictum est, verbum praedicantium luctus poenitentium sequitur. Audit post se vocem alarum animalium, quia ex ipso luctu poenitentium oriuntur virtutes sanctorum, ut tanto magis in sancta actione proficiant, quanto se ante cognitionem vitae nequiter egisse meminerunt. Sed est in his verbis magna dubitatio, quia non aperte per prophetam dicitur utrum unumquodque animal alas suas in semetipsis percutiat, an certe haec eadem sancta animalia alis suis se vicissim feriant, ut ala hujus alterum, et ala alterius istud animal tangat.

31. Sed quia plerumque in sacro eloquio ideo aliquid obscure dicitur, ut dispensante mirabiliter Deo multipliciter exponatur, nos charitati vestrae utraque exponere largiente Domino debemus. Saepe jam alas animalium virtutes diximus esse sanctorum. Quomodo ergo unumquodque animas alas suas excutiens alteram ad alteram percutit, nisi quod aperte datur intelligi qua, si sancta animalia efficimur, virtus in nobis virtutem excitat, dum una alteram ad perfectionem pulsat? Ecce etenim quis habet jam verbi Dei scientiam, discit ut viscera etiam misericordiae habeat. Per scientiam quippe verbi Dei discit: Date eleemosynam, et ecce omnia munda sunt vobis (Luc. XI, 41). Cumque jam esse misericors in eleemosynis coeperit, verba sanctae auctoritatis legit; et quidquid in eis de misericordia dicitur, ulterius per experimentum intelligit. Ibi enim scriptum est: Pater eram pauperum (Job. XXIX, 16). Quod fortasse antea legebat, et praeteribat. Sed cum in ejus corde jam misericordia coeperit imitari naturam, quid sit patrem esse pauperum, legit et recognoscit, quia introrsus rediens, in semetipso intelligit quod foris audit. Aliud namque est eleemosynam ex praecepto facere, atque aliud ex charitate. Ex praecepto enim facere bonum, inchoantium est; ex

charitate autem facere bonum, perfectorum, qui non solum quia jubetur faciunt, sed etiam diligunt faciendo quod jubetur. Hinc est enim quod in magna virtute per Psalmistam dicitur: Vide quia mandata tua dilexi, Domine, in tua misericordia vivifica me (Psal. CXVIII, 159). Mandata enim Dei pro jussione facere servientis et obedientis est, diligendo autem facere obedientis et amantis est. Quia ergo et per scientiam charitatis misericordia discitur, et per charitatem misericordiae in corde compuncto scientia multiplicatur, ala in nobis alam percutit, quia virtus virtutem excitat. Sic qui castitatis bonum in suo corpore custodit contra luxuriantes zelo accenditur, ut ab immunditiae maculis expientur. Et saepe dum quosdam in lapsibus invenit, edomat, affligit, atque ad castitatis munditiam restringit. Cujus si forte mens de immunditia luxuriae fuerit tentata, ex ipso zelo quo alios correxit semetipsam convenit, et erubescit immunda cogitare, quae se in aliis recolit correxisse. In hoc ergo ala alam percutit, dum virtus virtutem pulsat, et ab immunditia custodit.

32. Sin vero, ut praefati sumus, vicissim se alis suis animalia feriunt, et altera ad alteram ala percutitur singulorum, hujus quoque descriptionis, largiente Domino, sensus patet. Quid est ergo quod haec pennata animalia vicissim alas alteram ad alteram feriunt, nisi quod omnes sancti se invicem suis virtutibus tangunt, et sese ad provectum excitant ex consideratione virtutis alienae? Non enim uni dantur omnia, ne in superbiam elatus cadat, sed huic datur quod tibi non datur, et tibi datur quod illi denegatur, ut dum iste considerat bonum quod habes et ipse non habet, te sibi in cogitatione praeferat; et rursum dum tu habere illum conspicis quod ipse non habes, te illi in tua cogitatione postponas, et fiat quod scriptum est: Superiores sibi invicem arbitrantes (Philip. II, 3). Ut enim pauca ex multis loquar, isti mirae abstinentiae virtus tribuitur, et tamen verbum scientiae non habet. Illi autem datur verbum scientiae; et tamen virtutem perfectae abstinentiae apprehendere conatur, et non valet. Huic libertas vocis tribuitur, ut,

oppressis quibusque protectionis solatia impendens, ad defensionem justitiae libere loquatur; sed tamen adhuc multa in hoc mundo possidens, relinquere omnia vult, et non valet. Illi vero jam datum est omnia terrena relinquere, ut nihil in hoc mundo cupiat habere; sed tamen adhuc auctoritatem vocis contra peccantes quosque non praesumit exercere. Et qui ideo plus loqui libere debuit, quia jam non habet mundo teneatur, loqui contra alios libere recusat, ne ipsam vitae suae quietem perdat. Isti virtus prophetiae data est, multa jam quae ventura sunt praevidet; sed tamen praesentis proximi aegritudinem conspiciens atque compatiens, non valet curare. Illi data est curationis gratia, atque a corpore proximi molestiam quae in praesenti est orationibus repellit, sed tamen quid seipsum paulo post sequatur ignorat. Mira itaque dispensatione omnipotens Deus sic in electis suis sua dona dispensat, ut et isti det quod illi denegat, et alteri majus quod alteri minus tribuat, quatenus dum vel iste habere illum conspicit quod ipse non habet, vel ille hunc majus accepisse considerat quod sibi minus adesse pensat, dona Dei alter in altero, id est vicissim, omnes admirentur, atque ex hac ipsa admiratione humilietur alter alteri, et quem videt habere quod non habet, eum divino judicio sibi praelatum putet. Alis ergo suis vicissim se animalia feriunt cum sanctae mentes alternis se virtutibus tangunt, et tangendo excitant, atque excitata ad provectum volant.

33. Videamus Paulum quomodo apostolorum alis tactus, atque ad poenitentiam excitatus fuerat, qui, mala praeteritae persecutionis suae et apostolorum innocentem vitam considerans, dicebat: Ego enim sum minimus apostolorum, qui non sum dignus vocari apostolus, quia persecutus sum Ecclesiam Dei (I Cor. XV, 9). Consideravit quippe apostolorum innocentiam, et propter praecedentem malitiam vilis in ejus oculis facta est omnis quam exhibebat in Ecclesia sollicitudo sua; et quam multos ex accepto intellectu praecederet non attendit, quia, illorum innocentiam pensans, persecutorem aliquando fuisse se doluit. Sed

videamus si quis ex apostolis eum qui Paulo datus est intellectum miratur. Ipse nobis apostolorum primus requirendus est, qui discipulos admonens ait: Sicut et charissimus frater noster Paulus secundum datam sibi sapientiam scripsit vobis; sicut in omnibus epistolis, loquens in eis de his in quibus sunt quaedam difficilia intellectu, quae indocti et instabiles depravant (II Petr. III, 15). Miratur itaque in apostolis omnibus Paulus innocentiam, miratur apostolorum primus in Paulo sapientiam. Alis ergo se tangunt qui inde se vicissim ad provectum excitant, unde volant.

34. Hoc itaque omnipotens Deus agit in cordibus hominum, quod facit in regionibus terrarum. Poterat namque unicuilibet regioni fructus omnes tribuere; sed si una quaelibet regio alterius regionis fructibus non indigeret, communionem cum altera non habuisset. Unde fit ut huic vini, alii vero olei abundantiam tribuat; hanc multitudine pecudum, illam vero ubertate abundare faciat frugum, ut cum illa defert quod ista non habet, et ista reddit quod illa non detulit, per communionem gratiae sibi simul etiam divisae terrae conjunctae sint. Sicut ergo regiones terrarum, ita sunt mentes sanctorum, quae dum vicissim sibi conferunt quod acceperunt, quasi fructus suos regiones regionibus impendunt ut in una omnes charitate jungantur.

35. Sed inter haec sciendum est quia sicut electi quique hoc semper in aliis attendunt quod a Deo melius acceperunt quam ipsi, ut eos sibi in cogitatione praeferant, seque illis in humilitate substernant, ita reproborum mens nunquam considerat quid alter boni amplius quam ipsa, sed quid boni ipsa amplius quam alter habeat. Neque enim pensant quae bona spiritus alter acceperit et ipsis desint, sed quae bona ipsi, et quae mala adsint alteri. Et dum omnipotens Deus ad hoc virtutes singulis dividat, ut alterum alteri in cogitatione humiliet, ad hoc reprobi pertrahunt bonum quod acceperunt, ut ex eo in elatione perdantur, dum semper considerant bona quae ipsi habent et alii non habent, et nunquam perpendere student quanta bona alii habeant et ipsi non habeant. Quod ergo divina pietas in augmentum disponit

humilitatis, hoc mentes reprobae in augmentum vertunt elationis; et ex diversitate munerum a bono deficiunt, unde crescere humilitatis bono debuerunt.

36. Propter hoc ergo necesse est, fratres charissimi, ut in vobis hoc semper debeatis aspicere quod minus habetis, in proximis vero hoc quod vobis amplius acceperunt, quatenus dum super vosmetipsos eos pro bono quod ipsi habent et vos non habetis aspicitis, ad hoc quoque obtinendum etiam vos ex humilitate crescatis. Si enim et vos in illis accepta bona perpenditis, et illi in vobis considerant dona quae habetis, vicissim vos alis tangitis, ut excitati semper ad coelestia voletis. Sequitur: VERS. 13. — Et vocem rotarum sequentium animalia, et vocem commotionis magnae.

37. In rotis sacri eloquii Testamenta signari superius diximus. Vox igitur rotarum est sermo Testamentorum. Post vocem itaque alarum animalium auditur etiam vox rotarum, quia praedicantium sermone suscepto, dum virtutes sanctorum ad altiora agenda evolant, seque vicissim ad provectum pulsant, sanctae Ecclesiae status erigitur, ut per universum mundum sacrorum Testamentorum paginae legantur. Ubique etenim jam sanctum Evangelium ubique apostolorum dicta, ubique lex et prophetae resonant. Post alarum ergo vocem vox rotarum sequitur, quia post sanctorum miracula verba sacri eloquii intra sanctam Ecclesiam libere licenter audiuntur. Quae rotae animalia sequuntur, quia, ut superius dictum est, postquam in honorem venit vita sanctorum, veneranda quoque apparuerunt hominibus eloquia Testamentorum.

38. Vel certe animalia sequuntur, quia in sanctorum Patrum vita cognoscimus quid in sacrae Scripturae volumine intelligere debeamus. Illorum quippe actio nobis aperit hoc quod in suis praedicationibus pagina Testamentorum dicit. Sed quaerendum nobis est cur postquam superius dictum est, Audivi post me vocem commotionis magnae, post vocem

quoque alarum atque rotarum subditur: Et vocem commotionis magnae. Quod si diligenter aspicitur, inveniri potest quia non otiose repetitur.

39. Duae quippe sunt commotiones magnae, quibus corda nostra commoventur. Una quippe commotio ex timore est, altera ex charitate; una fit ex luctu poenitentium, alia ex fervore amantium. Post praedicationis ergo verbum prima commotio est, cum plangimus mala quae fecimus; post vocem vero alarum et rotarum, secunda commotio est, dum magnis fletibus quaerimus coelestia bona quae audimus. Ecce enim quia intra sanctam Ecclesiam de multis Patribus virtutum exempla cognoscimus, quasi alarum sonitum quotidie audimus, quia ubique sacra eloquia personant, quasi rotarum vocibus excitamur. Et quia per eadem sacra eloquia ad amorem nostri conditoris accendimur, magni fervoris ignibus ardentes, esse nos longe adhuc ab omnipotentis Dei facie plangimus. Post primam ergo vocem commotionis magnae ad extremum quoque vox magnae commotionis fit, quia qui cognoscendo Deum coepimus peccata plangere, jam diligendo quem cognovimus non cessamus eum cum fletibus desiderare. Post rotarum itaque vocem vox magnae commotionis sequitur, quia cum Testamenta Dei in aure cordis sonare coeperint, audientium spiritus ex amore compunctus ad lamenta commovetur. Hinc est enim quod Scripturae sacrae verba fiunt in corde legentium sapida, hinc est quod ab amantibus plerumque in silentio quasi furtive et tacite leguntur. Unde per prophetam quoque alium dicitur: Praecidisti in alienatione capita potentium, movebuntur in ea gentes, adaperient ora sua sicut pauper edens in occulto (Habac. III, 14). Omnipotens enim Deus in alienatione capita potentium praecidit, quia Judaeorum superbiam a semetipso alienando repulit. In qua alienatione gentes motae sunt, quia dum Judaei a fide caderent, ad cognitionem fidei corda gentilium cucurrerunt. Quae videlicet gentes in sacrae lectionis pabulo os cordis aperiunt, et in occulto sicut pauper comedunt, quia cum festinatione et silentio verba vitae legentes sumunt.

40. Sed sciendum est quia quanto auditores in charitate atque intellectu proficiunt, tanto sanctis praedicatoribus major gratia spiritus datur. Unde cum prius propheta dixisset: Assumpsit me spiritus, et audivi post me vocem commotionis magnae, post vocem commotionis magnae alarum atque rotarum, atque iterum commotionis magnae, illico subjungit: VERS. 14. — Spiritus quoque elevavit me, et assumpsit me.

41. Cur qui se assumptum jam a spiritu dixerat iterum elevatum et assumptum narrat? Sed ad altiora mens praedicantium proficit cum per eos sensus audientium ad omnipotentis Dei desiderium commovetur. Qui videlicet praedicatores sancti idcirco proficiunt, ut per eorum ministerium dona gratiae in sancta Ecclesia multiplicentur, sicut de hac eadem sancta Ecclesia scriptum est: Rivos ejus inebrians multiplica generationes ejus, in stillicidiis suis laetabitur cum exorietur (Psal. LXIV, 11). Rivi quippe Ecclesiae sancti praedicatores sunt, qui terram nostri cordis infundunt. Sed cum inebriantur rivi, generationes Ecclesiae multiplicantur, quia cum uberiorem gratiam spiritus praedicatores accipiunt, fidelium numerus augetur. Quae sancta Ecclesia in suis stillicidiis laetatur. In stillicidio enim aqua de tecto in terram cadit, quae de coelo ceciderat in tectum. Tectum vero Ecclesiae sancti praedicatores sunt, qui nos intercedendo et admonitionibus muniendo protegunt. Sed quia illorum cor divinitus in praedicatione infunditur, quasi aqua de coelo venit in tectum. Quia vero nos eorum verbis irrigamur, quasi aqua de tecto defluit in terram. Sancta itaque Ecclesia, dum exoritur, in stillicidiis suis laetatur, quia cum in fide et bonis operibus nascitur, ea quae accepit dona considerat, et in verbis praedicantium exsultat. Quia ergo auditoribus ad meliora surgentibus, eorum quoque praedicatoribus gratia multiplicatur, propheta dicit: Spiritus quoque elevavit me, et assumpsit me. Inde enim praedicator magis ac magis elevatur et assumitur, unde auditor ad meliorem vitam mutatur.

42. Sed quaerendum nobis est, cum spiritus mentem non elevet nisi assumpserit, cur prius elevavit et postmodum dicitur assumpsit? Sed hoc loco assumpsit dictum est constanter tenuit. Nam sunt nonnulli quos elevat sed non assumit, quorum et intellectus ad spiritalia emicat, sed tamen vita in factis carnalibus remanens, intellectui non concordat. Balaam namque per prophetiae spiritum elevatus erat, sed assumptus non erat, quia et veraciter potuit longe post futura prospicere, et tamen a terrenis desideriis mentem noluit separare (Num. XXIV, 4, 5). Sed quia propheta sanctus scientia elevatus est, et vita pariter assumptus, jam qualis in praedicationem pergat audiamus: IBID. — Et abii amarus in indignatione spiritus mei.

43. Pensate, fratres charissimi, cui dona sancti Spiritus creverant cur amarus abibat? An omne cor quod idem spiritus assumit amarum in indignatione sui spiritus facit? Unde sciendum est quia cui adhuc praesens vita dulcis est, etiamsi verbum Dei loqui videatur, elevatus et assumptus praedicator non est. Mentem enim quam Spiritus sanctus replet in amaritudinem temporalium delectatione aeternorum commovet. Dulce enim est esse in rebus humanis, sed ei qui adhuc de coelestibus gaudia nulla gustavit, quia quanto minus aeterna intelligit, tanto delectabilius in temporalibus requiescit. At si quis jam cordis ore gustaverit quae sit illa dulcedo coelestium praemiorum qui illi hymnidici angelorum chori, quae incomprehensibilis visio sanctae Trinitatis, huic quanto illud dulce fit quod intus videt, tanto in amaritudinem vertitur omne quod foris sustinet. Rixatur secum de his quae male egisse se recolit, et sibimetipsi displicet, cum ei ille placere jam coeperit qui omnia creavit. Reprehendit se de cogitationibus, insequitur de verbis, et punit flendo de factis. Supernis inhiat, terrena jam omnia per mentis despectum calcat. Et quandiu illud quod desiderat adhuc per speciem non habet, flere dulce habet, seseque continuis lamentis affligere. Et quia necdum se esse in patria ad quam creatus est videt, in hujus vitae exsilio nil ei plus aliud quam sua amaritudo placet. Dedignatur

etenim subjacere temporalibus, et ardenter suspirat aeternis. Unde recte quoque per Salomonem dicitur: Eo quod in multa sapientia multa sit indignatio, et qui apponit scientiam apponit dolorem (Eccle. I, 18). Coelestia etenim cognoscentes, terrenis animum subdere dedignamur. Et dum plus sapere incipimus de his quae male egimus, nobis ipsis irascimur, et fit in multa sapientia multa indignatio, quia quanto plus proficimus in cognitione, tanto nobis indignamur amplius de perverso opere. Atque cum scientia dolor crescit, quia quanto magis aeterna cognoscimus, tanto magis esse nos in hujus exsilii miseria dolemus. Vel sicut in translatione alia dicitur: Et qui addit scientiam addit laborem. Quo enim scire incipimus quae sint coelestia gaudia, eo magis ut errorum nostrorum laqueos possimus evadere, flendo laboramus. In multa ergo sapientia multa est indignatio, quia si aeterna jam sapimus, concupiscere temporalia dedignamur. Si aeterna jam sapimus, nosmetipsos despicimus egisse hoc quod nos potuit ab aeternitatis amore separare. Reprehendit semetipsam conscientia, accusat quod egit, damnat per poenitentiam quod accusat, fit rixa in animo, parturiens pacem cum Deo.

44. Sic Achab, rex iniquus, a propheta reprehensus, cum contra se divinam sententiam audisset, pertimuit, et magno moerore depressus est, ita ut prophetae suo Dominus diceret: Nonne vidisti humiliatum Achab coram me? Quia igitur humiliatus est mei causa, non inducam malum in diebus ejus (III Reg. XXI, 29). In quibus Domini verbis pensandum est quomodo ei in electis suis moeror amaritudinis placeat qui amittere timent Dominum, si sic ei et in reprobo poenitentia placuit qui timebat perdere praesens saeculum? Aut quomodo ei grata sit spontanea afflictio pro culpis in eis qui placent, si haec ad tempus placuit et in illo qui displicebat? Sed sciendum quia nullus haec pro amore omnipotentis Domini ex toto corde agere praevalet, nisi is cujus animum Spiritus sanctus assumpserit. Nam quando homo ex sua virtute sufficiat terrena despicere, coelestia amare, pacem cum

Deo quaerere, secum rixam subire, in cogitatione semetipsum reprehendere, et gemitibus punire? Nullus haec agere nisi quem divina gratia roboraverit valet. Unde et subditur: IBID. — Manus enim Domini erat mecum, confortans me.

45. Ad bona quippe assurgere perfecte non possumus, nisi nos spiritus et praeveniendo elevet, et subsequendo confortet. Sed quaerendum est, cum superius de volumine quod acceperat scriptum sit: Et factum est in ore meo sicut mel dulce, qua ratione postmodum dicitur: Abii amarus in indignatione spiritus mei? Mirum quippe valde est si dulcedo simul et amaritudo conveniant. Sed juxta superiorem sensum sciendum est quia cui sermo Dei in ore cordis dulcis esse coeperit, hujus procul dubio contra semetipsum animus amarescit. Quo enim in illo subtiliter discit qualiter reprehendere se debeat, eo se durius per amaritudinem poenitentiae castigat, qui tanto sibi magis displicet, quanto in sacro volumine amplius de omnipotente Deo videt quod amet. Sed quia ad ista proficere sua virtute non valet homo, recte nunc dicitur: Manus Domini erat mecum, confortans me. Manus enim Domini in sacro eloquio aliquando etiam unigenitus Filius appellatur, quia omnia per ipsum facta sunt (Joan. I, 3). Et de cujus ascensione per Moysen Pater omnipotens loquitur, dicens: Tollam in coelum manum meam (Deut. XXXII, 40). Haec manus quae electorum suorum corda confortat, discipulis dicebat: Sine me nihil potestis facere (Joan. XV, 5). In omne ergo quod cogitamus, in omne quod agimus, semper orandum est, ut et ipso aspirante cogitemus, et ipso adjuvante faciamus, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA XI

Explanationem capitis III Ezechielis prosequitur a versu 15 ad 20, ubi de officio pastorali, de peccatis praelatorum et subditorum invicem connexis, ac de mentis obcaecatione praesertim disseritur. Inter caetera prophetiae miracula hoc quoque mirandum habent libri prophetarum, quod sicut in eis verbis res, ita nonnunquam verba rebus exponuntur, ut eorum non solum dicta, sed etiam res gestae prophetiae sint. Unde nunc dicitur: EZECH. III, VERS. 15. — Veni ad transmigrationem ad acervum novarum frugum, ad eos qui habitabant juxta flumen Chobar.

1. Cum causa exigeret ut indicare debuisset quia ad transmigrationem veniret, quae dicendi necessitas fuit ut per fruges locum quoque exprimeret, dicens: Ad acervum novarum frugum, nisi quod saepe per res et loca causae signantur? Multi quippe Ezechiele prophetante jam captivitatis anni defluxerant, atque ex his qui in captivitatem ducti fuerant plures jam in morte carnis obierant, ad quorum filios loqui propheta veniebat. Unde et ei superius dicitur: Fili hominis, mitto ego te ad filios Israel, ad gentes apostatrices, quae recesserunt a me. Patres eorum praevaricati sunt pactum meum usque ad diem hanc, et filii dura cervice et indomabili corde sunt, ad quos ego mitto te (Ezech. II, 3, seq.). Ex quibus quia multi fuerant credituri, atque per obedientiam ad fertilitatem boni operis perventuri, acervus frugum vocantur. Quia enim bonae animae fruges appellantur Dei, propheta alius testatur, dicens: Sanctus Israel Domino, primitiae frugum ejus (Jerem. II, 3). Fruges etenim Domini etiam conversae ad fidem gentes postmodum factae sunt. Sed quia prius Israel Domino credidit, recte hunc propheta frugum ejus primitias appellavit. Quia ergo propheta missus non priori populo, sed filiis ejusdem populi verba intulit, ad acervum frugum novarum venit. Quid vero per Chobar fluvium designetur, supra jam diximus (Hom. II, n. 6); quae nequaquam modo repetimus, ne repetendo fastidium

generemus. Sequitur: VERS. 15. — Et sedi ubi illi sedebant, et mansi ibi septem diebus moerens in medio eorum.

2. Notandum captivo populo propheta sanctus quanta compassione se copulat, eorumque se moeroribus consedendo et moerendo conjungit, quia radix verbi virtus est operis. Et ille sermo ab audiente libenter accipitur, qui a praedicante cum compassione animi profertur. Sic ferrum cum ferro jungitur, liquatur prius, ut postmodum vicissim a semetipso teneatur. Si enim prius minime mollescit, postmodum tenere se fortiter non sufficit. Sic propheta captivo populo consedit, et moerens in medio eorum exstitit, ut dum per charitatis gratiam condescendendo se ei molliorem redderet, eum statim per verbi fortitudinem teneret. Sin vero Israeliticus populus, qui domus exasperans vocatur, quia culpas nec inter flagella cognovit, nullo moerore animum depressit, propheta inter gaudentes moerens sedere studuit, ut tacendo ostenderet quod loquendo venerat docere. Et priusquam verba faceret, in hoc quod moerens tacuit formam verborum sumpsit. Sequitur: VERS. 16. — Cum autem pertransissent septem dies, factum est verbum Domini ad me, dicens.

3. In eo quod septem diebus moerens sedit, et post diem septimum verba dominicae jussionis accepit ut loqui debuisset, aperte indicat quia eisdem diebus moerens tacuerat. Missus autem ad praedicandum fuerat, et tamen septem diebus sedens tacebat. Quid est hoc quod nobis propheta sanctus in hoc suo silentio innuit, nisi quia ille loqui veraciter novit, qui prius bene tacere didicerit? Quasi enim quoddam nutrimentum verbi, est censura silentii. Et recte per excrescentem quoque gratiam sermonem accipit, qui ordinate ante per humilitatem tacet. Hinc enim per Salomonem dicitur: Tempus tacendi, et tempus loquendi (Eccle. III, 7). Non enim ait, Tempus loquendi, et tempus tacendi, sed prius tacendi praemittit tempus, et postmodum subdit loquendi, quia non loquendo tacere, sed tacendo debemus loqui discere. Si ergo propheta sanctus qui missus ad loquendum

fuerat diu prius tacuit, ut postmodum recte loqueretur, pensandum nobis est quanta ei culpa sit non tacere, quem nulla cogit necessitas loqui. Sequitur: VERS. 17. — Fili hominis, speculatorem dedi te domui Israel.

4. Notandum quod eum quem Dominus ad praedicandum mittit speculatorem esse denuntiat. Cui enim aliena cura committitur, speculator vocatur, ut in mentis altitudine sedeat, atque vocabulum nominis ex virtute actionis trahat. Non est enim speculator qui in imo est. Speculator quippe semper in altitudine stat, ut quidquid venturum est longe prospiciat. Et quisquis populi speculator ponitur, in alto debet stare per vitam, ut possit prodesse per providentiam. Hinc propheta alius speculatorem admonet, dicens: Super montem excelsum ascende tu, qui evangelizas Sion (Isai. XL, 9). Ut videlicet qui praedicationis locum suscepit ad altitudinem bonae ascendat actionis; ad excelsa transeat, et eorum qui sibi commissi sunt opera transcendat; quatenus subjectorum vitam tanto subtilius videat, quanto et terrenis rebus quas despicit animum non supponit.

5. O quam dura mihi sunt ista quae loquor, quia memetipsum loquendo ferio, cujus neque lingua, ut dignum est, praedicationem tenet, neque inquantum tenere sufficit vita sequitur linguam. Qui otiosis verbis saepe implicor, et ab exhortatione atque aedificatione proximorum torpens et negligens cesso. Qui in conspectu Dei factus sum mutus et verbosus, mutus in necessariis, verbosus in otiosis. Sed ecce sermo Dei de speculatoris vita compellit ut loquar. Tacere non possum, et tamen loquendo me ferire pertimesco. Dicam, dicam, ut verbi Dei gladius etiam per memetipsum ad configendum cor proximi transeat. Dicam, dicam, ut etiam contra me sermo Dei sonet per me. Ego reum me esse non abnego, torporem meum atque negligentiam video. Erit fortasse apud pium judicem impetratio veniae ipsa cognitio culpae.

6. Et quidem in monasterio positus, valebam et ab otiosis linguam restringere, et in intentione orationis pene continue mentem tenere. At

postquam cordis humerum sarcinae pastorali supposui, colligere se ad semetipsum assidue non potest animus, quia ad multa partitur. Cogor namque modo Ecclesiarum, modo monasteriorum causas discutere, saepe singulorum vitas actusque pensare; modo quaedam civium negotia sustinere, modo de irruentibus barbarorum gladiis gemere, et commisso gregi insidiantes lupos timere; modo rerum curam sumere, ne desint subsidia eis ipsis quibus disciplinae regula tenetur, modo raptores quosdam aequanimiter perpeti, modo eis sub studio servatae charitatis obviare. Cum itaque ad tot et tanta cogitanda scissa ac dilaniata mens ducitur, quando ad semetipsam redeat, ut totam se in praedicatione colligat, et a proferendi verbi ministerio non recedat? Quia autem necessitate loci saepe viris saecularibus jungor, nonnunquam mihi linguae disciplinam relaxo. Nam si in assiduo censurae meae rigore me teneo, scio quia ab infirmioribus fugior, eosque ad hoc quod appeto nunquam traho. Unde fit ut eorum saepe et otiosa patienter audiam. Sed quia ipse quoque infirmus sum, in otiosis sermonibus paulisper tractus, libenter jam ea loqui incipio, quae audire coeperam invitus; et ubi taedebat cadere, libet jacere. Quis ergo ego vel qualis speculator sum, qui non in monte operis sto, sed adhuc in valle infirmitatis jaceo? Potens vero est humani generis creator et redemptor indigno mihi et vitae altitudinem, et linguae efficaciam donare, pro cujus amore in ejus eloquio nec mihi parco.

7. Esse ergo speculatoris vita et alta debet semper, et circumspecta. Ne enim terrenarum rerum amori succumbat, alta sit; ne occulti hostis jaculis feriatur, ex omni latere circumspecta. Neque hoc speculatori sufficit, ut altum vivat, nisi et loquendo assidue ad alta auditores suos pertrahat, eorumque mentes ad amorem coelestis patriae loquendo succendat. Sed tunc haec recte agit, cum lingua ejus ex vita arserit. Nam lucerna quae in semetipsa non ardet, eam rem cui supponitur non accendit. Hinc enim de Joanne Veritas dicit: Ille erat lucerna ardens et lucens (Joan. V, 35). Ardens

videlicet per coeleste desiderium, lucens per verbum. Ut ergo servetur veritas praedicandi, teneatur necesse est altitudo vivendi. Unde recte quoque sanctae Ecclesiae sponsi voce in Cantico canticorum dicitur: Nasus tuus sicut turris Libani (Cant. VII, 4). Quae ergo laus est, fratres mei, ut sponsae nasus turri comparetur? Sed quia per nasum semper odores fetoresque discernimus, quid per nasum nisi speculatorum discretio designatur? Qui nimirum nasus et sicut turris esse, et Libani dicitur, quia videlicet praepositorum discretio et munita semper debet esse circumspectione, et in altitudine vitae consistere, id est in valle infirmi operis non jacere. Sicut enim turris in monte idcirco ad speculandum ponitur, ut hostes qui veniunt longius videantur, sic praedicatoris vita semper in alto debet fixa permanere, ut more narium discernat fetores vitiorum odoresque virtutum. Incursus malignorum spirituum longe prospiciat, et commissas sibi animas per suam providentiam cautas reddat. Sequitur: IBID. — Et audies ex ore meo verbum, et annuntiabis eis ex me.

8. Ecce iterum monetur propheta ne praesumat loqui quod non audierit, sed prius aurem cordis aperiat vocicreatoris, et postmodum os sui corporis aperiat auribus plebis. Unde propheta alius dicit: Inclinabo ad similitudinem aurem meam, aperiam in psalterio propositionem meam (Psal. XLVIII, 5). Qui enim recte praedicat prius, sicut dictum est, aurem cordis locutioni intimae inclinat, ut postmodum os corporis in propositione admonitionis aperiat. Sequitur: VERS. 18. — Si dicente me ad impium, Morte morieris, non annuntiaveris, neque locutus fueris, ut avertatur a via sua impia, et vivat; ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram.

9. In quibus verbis quid nobis notandum est, quid sollicite cogitandum, nisi quia nec subjectus ex culpapraepositi moritur, nec praepositus sine culpa est quando, verba vitae non audiens, ex sua culpa moritur subjectus? Impio etenim mors debetur, sed ei a speculatore via vitae nuntianda est, et

ejus impietas increpanda. Si vero speculator taceat, ipse impius in iniquitate sua morietur, quia impietatis ejus meritum fuit, ut dignus non esset ad quem speculatoris sermo fieret. Sed sanguinem ejus Dominus de manu speculatoris requirit, quia ipse hunc occidit, quia eum tacendo morti prodidit. In quibus utrisque pensandum est quantum sibi connexa sunt peccata subditorum atque praepositorum, quia ubi subjectus ex sua culpa moritur, ibi is qui praeest, quoniam tacuit, reus mortis tenetur. Pensate ergo, fratres charissimi, pensate, quia et quod nos digni pastores non sumus etiam ex vestra culpa est, quibus tales praelati sumus. Et si quando vos ad iniquitatem defluitis, etiam ex nostro hoc reatu est, quos obsistentes atque reclamantes in pravis desideriis non habetis. Vobis ergo et nobis parcitis, si a pravo opere cessatis. Vobis et nobis parcimus, quando hoc quod displicet non tacemus. O quam liber a commissorum sibi sanguine fuerat praedicator egregius qui dicebat: Mundus sum a sanguine omnium; non enim subterfugi quominus annuntiarem omne consilium Dei vobis (Act. XX, 26). Si enim non annuntiasset, mundus a sanguine non esset. Sed quibus omne consilium Dei annuntiare studuit, ab eorum sanguine mundus fuit. In qua voce nos convenimur, nos constringimur, nos rei esse ostendimur, qui sacerdotes vocamur, qui super ea mala quae propria habemus alienas quoque mortes addimus, quia tot occidimus, quot ad mortem ire quotidie tepidi et tacentes videmus.

10. Cum vero dicitur: Sanguinem autem ejus de manu tua requiram, si hoc in loco sanguinis nomine mors corporis designatur, valde nobis de nostro silentio augetur metus, quia si in subjectis suis is qui praelatus ad speculandum est etiam de morte corporis quandoque morituri tam graviter reus tenetur, quo reatu de morte animae subjectorum constringitur, quae potuisset semper vivere, si verba correptionis audisset? Sed melius possunt sanguinis nomine peccata signari. Unde quidam, cum peccata carnis defleret, dixit; Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meae (Psal. L,

16). Sanguis ergo morientis de manu speculatoris requiritur, quia peccatum subditi culpae praepositi, si tacuerit, reputatur. Est ergo quod faciat, ut etiam moriente subdito se liberum reddat. Surgat, invigilet, malis actibus contradicat, sicut scriptum est: Discurre, festina, suscita amicum tuum, ne dederis somnum oculis tuis, nec dormitent palpebrae tuae (Prov. VI, 3). Unde hic quoque additur: VERS. 19. — Si autem tu annuntiaveris impio, et ille non fuerit conversus ab impietate sua, et a via sua impia; ipse quidem in impietate sua morietur, tu autem animam tuam liberasti.

11. Tunc enim subjectus moritur sine te, quando in causa mortis contradictorem pertulerit te. Nam morti, cui non contradicis, adjungeris. Et notandum quae sunt quae debeant a speculatore praedicari, nimirum fides et operatio. Nam ait: Si autem tu annuntiaveris impio, et ille non fuerit conversus ab impietate sua, et a via sua impia. Impietas quippe ad infidelitatem pertinet, via vero impia ad pravam actionem. Et omnis speculator hoc habere debet studii, ut prius ad pietatem fidei, postmodum ad piam viam, id est ad bonam actionem trahat.

12. Sed quia de exhortatione sermo se intulit, innotescere breviter debemus in ore pastoris quantus esse debeat ordo atque consideratio locutionis. Pensare etenim doctor debet quid loquatur, cui loquatur, quando loquatur, qualiter loquatur, et quantum loquatur. Si enim unum horum defuerit, locutio apta non erit. Scriptum quippe est: Si recte offeras, recte autem non dividas, peccasti (Genes. IV, 7, sec. LXX). Recte autem offerimus cum bono studio bonum opus agimus; sed recte non dividimus, si habere discretionem in bono opere postponamus. Considerare etenim debemus quid loquamur, ut juxta Pauli vocem, Sermo noster semper in gratia sale sit conditus (Coloss. IV, 6).

13. Pensandum vero nobis est cui loquamur quia saepe increpationis verbum quod haec admittit persona, altera non admittit. Et saepe ipsa eadem persona secundum factum fit altera. Unde Nathan propheta David post

adulterium forti increpationis sententia percussit. Qui cum de raptore ovis diceret: Filius mortis est vir qui fecit hoc, ei protinus respondit, dicens: Tu es ille vir (II Reg. XII, 5). Cui tamen cum de Salomonis regno loqueretur (Ibid., 7), quia culpa defuit, ei se humiliter in adoratione prostravit. In una ergo eademque persona quia causa dispar exstitit, etiam sermo propheticus dissimilis fuit.

14. Pensandum quoque est quando loqui debeamus, quia saepe etsi differtur increpatio, postmodum benigne recipitur. Et nonnunquam languescit, si hoc quo ante proferri debuit tempus amiserit. Nam et sapiens mulier Nabal ebrium videns (I Reg. XXV, 36, 37), increpare de culpa tenaciae noluit, quem digesto vino increpationis suae verbis utiliter percussit. Et Propheta adulantium linguas non esse in subsequenti tempore differendas annuntiat, qui ait: Confundantur statim erubescentes, qui dicunt mihi, Euge, euge (Psal. LXIX, 4). Adulatio etenim si vel ad tempus patienter suscipitur, augetur, et paulisper demulcet animum, ut a rigore suae rectitudinis mollescat in delectatione sermonis. Sed ne crescere debeat, statim est et sine mora ferienda.

15. Pensandum quoque nobis est qualiter loquamur. Nam saepe verba quae hunc ad salutem revocant, alium vulnerant. Unde Paulus quoque apostolus qui Titum admonet, dicens: Argue cum omni imperio (Tit. II, 15), Timotheum exhortatur, dicens: Argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientia et doctrina (II Tim. IV, 2). Quid est quod uni imperium, et alii patientiam praecipit, nisi quod unum lenioris, alterum vero ferventioris spiritus esse conspexit? Leni per auctoritatem imperii injungenda erat severitas verbi, is autem qui per spiritum fervebat per patientiam temperandus fuerat, ne si plus justo infervesceret, non ad salutem vulnerata reduceret, sed sana vulneraret.

16. Curandum quoque quantum loquamur, ne si ei qui multa ferre non valet verbum vel exhortationis vel increpationis longius trahimus,

auditorem nostrum ad fastidium perducamus. Unde idem praedicator egregius Hebraeis loquitur, dicens: Obsecro vos, fratres, ut sufferatis verbum solatii, etenim perpaucis scripsi vobis (Hebr. XIII, 22). Hoc tamen infirmis praecipue congruit, ut pauca quidem, et quae praevalent capere, audiant, sed quae eorum mentem in poenitentiae dolorem compungant. Nam si eis uno in tempore exhortationis sermo fuerit multipliciter dictus, quia multa retinere non valent, simul amittunt omnia. Unde et medici corporum pannos quos infirmantibus stomachis ponunt, apto quidem medicamine, sed subtiliter liniunt, ne si repleti multo medicamine fuerint, infirmitatem stomachi non roborantes adjuvent, sed opprimentes gravent.

17. Sciendum tamen quia etsi quando modum suum sermo prolixior transeat, periculosum hoc auditoribus non est. Si autem qualiter quid dicatur, et quibus dicatur, non vigilanter conspicitur, valde periculosum est. Verecundae etenim mentes, si quas fortasse culpas admiserint, leniter arguendae sunt, quia si asperius increpentur, franguntur potius quam erudiantur. At contra mentes asperae atque impudentes, si increpatae leniter fuerint, ad majores culpas ipsa lenitate provocantur.

18. Quod bene in eodem egregio praedicatore discimus, qui cum Corinthios cognosceret pro amore personarum in schismate divisos, eorum verecundiae consulens, locutionem suam eis a gratiarum actione et laudibus coepit, dicens: Gratias ago Deo meo semper pro vobis in gratia Dei, quae data est vobis in Christo Jesu, quia in omnibus divites facti estis in illo, in omni verbo et in omni scientia, sicut testimonium Christi confirmatum est in vobis (I Cor. I, 4). Qui adhuc adjungit et dicit: Ita ut nihil desit vobis in ulla gratia, exspectantibus revelationem Domini nostri Jesu Christi (Ibid., 7). Quaeso te, Paule, si jam nihil deest, cur eis scribendo fatigaris? Cur in longinquo positus loqueris? Pensemus ergo, fratres charissimi, quantum laudat. Ecce eis gratiam Dei datam asserit, factos in omnibus divites dicit in omni verbo et in omni scientia; Christi testimonium, id est quod de

semeptiso moriendo et resurgendo testatus est, in eorum vita confirmatum esse perhibet, et nihil eis deesse in ulla gratia testatur. Quis, rogo, credat quia paulo post eos corripiat, quos ita laudat? Nam post caetera subjungit: Obsecro autem vos, fratres, per nomen Domini nostri Jesu Christi, ut idipsum dicatis omnes, et non sint in vobis schismata (Ibid., 10). Quid enim potuit tam perfectis tanquam laudabilibus schisma subrepere? Significatum enim est mihi de vobis, fratres mei, ab his qui sunt Chloes, quia contentiones inter vos sunt. Hoc autem dico quod unusquisque vestrum dicit: Ego quidem sum Pauli, ego autem Apollo, ego vero Cephae, ego autem Christi (Ibid., 11 et 12). Ecce quos in omni verbo et in omni scientia laudaverat, quibus nihil deesse in ulla gratia dixerat, paulisper loquens, ad increpandum leniter veniens, divisos erga seipsos reprehendit; et quorum prius salutem narraverat, postmodum vulnera patefecit. Peritus enim medicus vulnus secandum videns, sed aegrum timidum esse conspiciens, diu palpavit, et subito percussit. Prius blandam manum laudis posuit, et postmodum ferrum increpationis fixit. Nisi enim verecundae mentes fuerint palpando reprehensae, ita ut ex aliis rebus audiant quod in consolationem sumant, per increpationem protinus ad desperationem cadunt.

19. Sed nunquid mentitus est Paulus, ut prius eis nil deesse in omni gratia diceret, quibus postmodum dicturus erat unitatem deesse? Absit hoc: quis de illo talia vel desipiens credat? Sed quia erant inter Corinthios quidam omni gratia repleti, et erant quidam in personarum favoribus excisi, coepit a laudibus perfectorum, ut modesta invectione ad reprehensionem pertingeret infirmorum. Et in hoc quoque ad medicinam cordis a medicina corporis usum trahens. Nam cum feriendum vulnus medicus aspicit, prius ea membra quae circa vulnus sana sunt palpat, ut post ad ea quae vulnerata sunt leniter palpando perveniat. Cum ergo Paulus perfectos in Corinthiis laudavit, sana membra juxta vulnus tetigit; cum vero infirmos de divisione reprehendit, vulnus in corpore percussit.

20. Videamus tamen hunc ipsum qui tanta modestia atque mansuetudine ad corripiendos Corinthios ducitur, qualiter contra Galatas, qui a fide discesserant, exercetur. Nulla enim modestiae patientia praemissa, nulla locutionis dulcedine praerogata, eos quos a fide discessisse cognovit, ab ipso epistolae suae exordio invehendo redarguit. Nam praemissa salutatione, sic coepit: Miror quod sic tam cito transferimini ab eo qui vos vocavit in gratia Christi (Galat. I, 6). Quibus etiam in aperta increpatione post caetera subjungit: O insensati Galatae, quis vos fascinavit (Ibid. III, 1)? Mentes etenim durae nisi aperta essent increpatione percussae, nullo modo malum cognoscerent quod egissent. Nam saepe hi qui impudentes sunt tantum se peccasse sentiunt, quantum de peccatis quae fecerint increpantur, ut minores culpas suas aestiment, quas minor invectio castigat, et quas vehementer objurgari viderint, majores esse deprehendant. Unde necesse est ut semper sermo praedicantis cum auditorum debeat qualitate formari, ne aut verecundis aspera, aut impudentibus lenia loquatur. Quid autem mirum si hoc verbi Dei erogator faciat, cum et agricola qui semina in terram mittit prius terrae qualitatem praevidet quibus seminibus apta videatur, et postquam qualitatem praeviderit, tunc semina spargit? Sed quia de qualitate doctrinae locutionem longius traximus, oportet ut ad eum quem coepimus exponendi ordinem redeamus. VERS. 20. — Sed etsi conversus justus a justitia sua fecerit iniquitatem, ponam offendiculum coram eo; ipse morietur, quia non annuntiasti ei. In peccato suo morietur, et non erunt in memoria justitiae ejus quas fecit; sanguinem vero ejus de manu tua requiram.

21. Quia justo qui in peccato cecidit praedicator tacuit, ejus sanguinis reus tenetur. Et qui sollicitus esse non studuit in praedicatione, factus est particeps in damnatione. Sed cum dicitur: In peccato suo morietur, et non erunt in memoria justitiae ejus quas fecit, hoc nobis maxime considerandum est, quia cum mala committimus, sine causa ad memoriam bona nostra

transacta revocamus, quoniam in perpetratione malorum nulla debet esse fiducia bonorum praeteritorum. Sed quaeri potest utrum justo postquam ceciderit praedicandum sit, an et priusquam cadat? Invigilare praedicator debet, ne ad casum veniat, procul dubio et priusquam cadat. Nam sequitur: VERS. 21. — Si autem tu annuntiaveris justo ut non peccet justus, et ille non peccaverit, vivens vivet, quia annuntiasti ei; tu autem animam tuam liberasti.

22. Si ergo praedicator ideo animam suam liberavit quia justo ne peccaret denuntiavit, cum justus ad peccatum, praedicatore tacente, cecidit, praedicator quia tacuit, reus tenetur. Sed quis nostrum, rogo, ad haec sufficiat, ut non solum peccatores studiose corripiat, sed etiam justis invigilet ne cadant? Nos enim, infirmitatis nostrae conscii, cum justos viros conspicimus, admonere eos non praesumimus ut justitiae viam teneant, quam quia tenent videmus; et tamen praedicatoris est debitum etiam justos admonere. Unde praedicator egregius dicebat: Sapientibus et insipientibus debitor sum (Rom. I, 14).

23. In his vero omnibus quae de justo ad iniquitatem converso dicta sunt, hoc est laboriosum ad loquendum, hoc valde pertimescendum, quod Dominus dicit: Ponam offendiculum coram eo. Ait enim: Si conversus justus a justitia sua fecerit iniquitatem, ponam offendiculum coram eo. Nos enim dicimus quia si iniquitatem fecerit, offendit, et verum est omnino quod dicimus. Cur adhuc ei Deus omnipotens offendiculum ponit, quem jam impegisse et cecidisse per iniquitatem quam perpetraverit conspicit? Sed districta sunt omnipotentis Dei judicia; et qui peccatorem diu exspectat ut redeat, non redeunti atque contemnenti ponit adhuc ubi gravius impingat.

24. Peccatum quippe quod per poenitentiam citius non deletur, aut peccatum est et causa peccati, aut peccatum et poena peccati, aut peccatum simul et causa et poena peccati. Omne enim quod prius committitur peccatum est. Sed si citius poenitendo non tergitur, justo judicio omnipotens

Deus obligatam peccantis mentem etiam in culpam alteram permittit cadere, ut quae flendo et corrigendo noluit emendare quod fecerit, peccatum incipiat peccato cumulare. Peccatum ergo quod poenitentiae lamento non diluitur, peccatum simul est et causa peccati, quia ex illo oritur unde adhuc peccatoris animus altius obligetur. Peccatum vero quod ex peccato sequitur, peccatum simul est et poena peccati, quia, excrescente caecitate, ex retributione prioris culpae generatur, ut quasi jam quaedam sint in peccatore supplicia ipsa incrementa vitiorum. Fit vero nonnunquam ut unum idemque peccatum et peccatum sit et poena peccati, simul et causa peccati. Ponamus enim ante oculos quempiam rem proximi concupisse, quam quia aperte non valuit, furto diripuit, sed in furti accusatione positus, se hanc diripuisse jurejurando denegavit. Huic ergo concupiscentia peccatum fuit et causa peccati, quia per eam pervenit ad rapinam. Ipsum vero furtum quo rem concupitam diripuit, et peccatum ei factum est et poena peccati, quia ex retributione jam non repressae concupiscentiae factum est ut veniret ad furtum, et culpa cordis excresceret in opere ex ultione caecitatis. Sed quia furtum perjurio tegere curavit, ex peccato rursum peccatum genuit. Furtum ergo quod ex concupiscentia processit, et perjurium protulit, peccatum et poena peccati factum est culpae praecedenti, peccatum et causa peccati culpae subsequenti, quia de illa natum hanc genuit. Quod bene Paulus de quibusdam Deum intelligentibus, sed non honorantibus insinuavit, dicens: Cum cognovissent Deum, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt, aut gratias egerunt, sed evanuerunt in cogitationibus suis (Rom. I, 21). Ecce est peccatum et causa peccati. Ex qua causa quid sequatur adjungit: Et obscuratum est insipiens cor eorum. Dicentes enim se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt; et mutaverunt gloriam incorruptibilis Dei in similitudinem imaginis corruptibilis hominis, et volucrum, et quadrupedum, et serpentium (Ibid., 22, 23). Ecce est peccatum, et poena peccati. Sed peccatum solummodo et poena peccati esset, si non adhuc ex hoc peccato et aliud

sequeretur. Nam post infidelitatem eorum subditur: Propter quod tradidit illos Deus in desideria cordis eorum, in immunditiam, ut contumeliis afficiant corpora sua in semetipsis (Ibid., 24). Qui igitur cognoscentes Deum, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt, ex eo peccato et causa peccati ad hoc quoque perducti sunt, ut ad cultum serpentium et volucrum laberentur. Sed quia per hanc etiam caecitatem usque ad immunditiam et carnis contumelias ceciderunt, ipsa infidelitatis eorum caecitas praecedenti intellectui et peccatum est, et poena peccati, subsequenti vero immunditiae peccatum facta est et causa peccati. Sed quia de his in libris Moralibus diu tractatum est (Lib. XXV Moral., n. 23, 24), nobis nunc in eis diutius immorandum non est.

25. Hoc autem nobis cum tremore considerandum est quomodo justus et omnipotens Deus, cum praecedentibus peccatis irascitur, permittit ut caecata mens etiam in aliis labatur. Unde S. Moyses ait: Nondum completa sunt peccata Amorrhaeorum (Genes XV, 16). S. David quoque ait: Appone iniquitatem super iniquitatem ipsorum, ut non intrent in justitiam tuam (Psal. LXVIII, 28). Propheta etiam alius dicit: Maledictum, et mendacium, et homicidium, et furtum, et adulterium inundaverunt, et sanguis sanguinem tetigit (Osee IV, 2). Sanguis enim sanguinem tangit quando peccato peccatum additur, ut ante Dei oculos adjunctis iniquitatibus anima cruentetur. Paulus apostolus ait: Ut impleant peccata sua semper (I Thess. II, 16). Joanni quoque per angelum dicitur: Qui nocet, noceat adhuc; et qui in sordibus est, sordescat adhuc (Apoc. XXII, 11). Unde nunc etiam Dominus dicit: Si conversus justus a justitia sua fecerit iniquitatem, ponam offendiculum coram eo. Ac si aperte dicat: Quia videre poenitendo noluit ubi jam impegit, justo eum judicio deserens, ponam ei ut et alibi impingat. Quod tamen Domini ponere est nequaquam ad peccandum premere, sed nolle a peccato liberare; sicut de Pharaone dicitur: Ego indurabo cor ejus (Exod. VII, 3). Non enim cor peccantis Dominus obdurat, sed obdurare

dicitur, cum ab obduratione non liberat. Misericors enim Deus tempus nobis ad poenitentiam relaxat; sed cum ejus gratiae patientiam nos ad augmentum vertimus culpae, hoc ipsum tempus quod ad parcendum pie disposuit districtius ad feriendum vertit, ut cum reverti quis etiam spatio temporis accepto noluerit, per hoc mala sua ad reatum augeat, per quod ea diluere potuit, si converti voluisset. Unde scriptum est: Ignoras quoniam benignitas Dei ad poenitentiam te adducit? Secundum duritiam autem tuam et cor impoenitens thesaurizas tibi iram in die irae et revelationis justi judicii Dei (Rom. II, 4). De benignitate ergo omnipotentis Dei iram sibi in die irae reprobus thesaurizat, quia dum ad poenitendum tempus accipitur, et ad peccandum exhibetur, ipsum remedium gratiae vertit in augmentum culpae. Unde et omnipotens Deus, quia collata remedia conspicit ad culpae augmentum trahi, ipsam benignitatem quam contulit in judicii districtionem vertit, ut inde post amplius feriat, unde modo amplius exspectat. Et quia homo deserere malum non vult ut vivat, auget unde moriatur. Sed sive justus in culpam, sive peccator in mortem corruat, speculatori timendum est ne hunc ex suo silentio reatus peccantium pariter involvat.

26. Sed interim dum loquor, avertere a memetipso oculos volo, et ecce iterum sermo divinus me impingit in memetipsum, ut meam negligentiam videam, et mihi dici haec quae audio pertimescam. Sicut enim superius dixi (Num. VI), cujus cor in curis innumeris exsparsum se ad se colligat? Quando etenim possum et ea quae circa me sunt sollicite omnia curare, et memetipsum adunato sensu conspicere? Quando possum pravorum nequitias insequendo corrigere, bonorum actus laudando et admonendo custodire, aliis terrorem atque aliis dulcedinem demonstrare? Quando valeo et de his quae sunt necessaria fratribus cogitare, et contra hostiles gladios de urbis vigiliis sollicitudinem gerere, ne incursione subita cives pereant, providere, et inter haec omnia pro animarum custodia plene atque efficaciter verbum exhortationis impendere? Loqui etenim de Deo quietae valde et

liberae mentis est. Tunc namque bene lingua dirigitur in sermone, cum secure sensus quieverit in tranquillitate, quia nec concussa aqua imaginem respicientis reddit, sed tunc in ea vultus intendentis aspicitur, cum non movetur. Quam ergo exhortationem vobis speculator vester, fratres charissimi, faciat, quem tot rerum confusio perturbat? Certe is de quo loquimur propheta revelatione ultima templum videns, quae in eodem templo conspexerit inter caetera narrat, dicens: Terra usque ad fenestras, et fenestrae clausae (Ezech. XLI, 16). Paulus quoque apostolus dicit: Templum enim Dei sanctum est, quod estis vos (I Cor. III, 17; II Cor. VI, 16). In hoc autem templo fenestrae sacerdotes et speculatores sunt, qui in populo fidelium lumen sanctae praedicationis fundunt. Sed cum terra usque ad fenestras est, fenestrae clausae sunt, quia cum terrena cogitatio in sacerdotum cordibus excrescit, fenestrae lumen non fundunt, quia sacerdotes ab officio praedicationis obmutescunt.

27. Est et aliud valde in ordine sacerdotum grave, quia non sicut hi qui vitam quietam ac remotam ducunt fixi valent in sua cogitatione permanere. Hi enim, sicut superius diximus, qui a loco regiminis longe sunt possunt peccatorum suorum maculas et fletibus lavare, et post fletus in eodem mentis moerore persistere, sicut de bona quoque muliere scriptum est, quae ad tabernaculum oraverat, et ab intentione sua animum post compunctionis gratiam non mutabat, cum dicitur: Vultusque ejus non sunt, amplius in diversa mutati (I Reg. I, 18). In qua nobis considerandum est quia si sic planxit mulier quae quaerebat filium, quomodo debet plangere anima quae quaerit Deum? Sacerdos vero etiam post compunctionem ac lacrymas cogitur necessaria quaeque filiorum suorum cognoscere, et ea quae refugit animus patienter audire, atque post suspiria coelestium quorumlibet carnalium hominum onera portare, et saepe cum supervenientibus cor in diversas qualitates transfundere. Nam aliquando de lucris spiritalibus gaudet, sed cum quilibet moerens supervenerit, nisi ejus moerorem in se

susceperit, tribulationi illius compatiens non est. Et aliquando de damnis animarum luget, et repente superveniunt qui de quibusdam suis prosperitatibus laetantur; quorum si laetitiae sacerdos non congaudet, minus amare creditur filios in quorum gaudio non exsultat, praecipue cum Paulus dicat: Gaudere cum gaudentibus, flere cum flentibus (Rom. XII, 15).

28. Nihil ergo tam onerosum ordini sacerdotum video quam rigorem mentis compatiendo flectere, et cum personis supervenientibus animum mutare; et tamen hoc valde est necessarium. Nam quando ex praedicatione ejus ad boni operis gratiam peccator reducitur, si ipse praedicator videtur ingratus? Unde per hunc quoque eumdem prophetam in extrema parte dicitur: Et cum sacerdotes intrinsecus ministrant, vestibus laneis non utantur (Ezech. XLIV, 17). De quibus subditur: Cumque egredientur atrium exterius ad populum, exuent se vestimenta sua in quibus ministraverant, et reponent ea in gazophylacio sanctuarii (Exod. XXVIII, 43; Ezech. XLIV, 19). Grossiora quippe vestimenta sunt lanea. Sed cum sacerdos ad sanctum ministerium accedit, cum intus per compunctionem ingreditur, subtiliori intellectu necesse est quasi lineo vestimento vestiatur. Sed cum ad populum foras egreditur, oportet ut vestimenta in quibus intrinsecus ministraverat reponat, atque populo aliis vestibus indutus appareat, quia si in compunctionis suae rigore se teneat, si in eo quem orationis tempore habuit moerore perduret, exteriorum rerum verba suscipere non admittit. Et quid grex de necessariis faciat, si audire atque perpendere et hoc quod praesens tempus exigit, Pastor recusat? Grossiora ergo vestimenta sacerdos exiens ante populum induat, ut mentis suae habitum pro utilitate filiorum etiam ad terrena toleranda componat. Pensate, rogo, fratres charissimi, quantus speculatori labor sit et ad sublimia cor tendere, et hoc repente ad ima revocare, et in sublimitate cognitionis intimae extenuare animum, et propter exteriores causas proximorum, ut ita dicam, subito in cogitatione crassescere.

29. Non ergo mihi modo necesse est prophetae verba exponere, sed meam coram vobis miseriam deflere. Unde peto ut vestra me oratio talem faciat qualis et mihi valeam et vobis prodesse. Potens est indigno mihi et infirmo ex vestra intercessione ista tribuere, qui ex sua pietate pro nobis dignatus est infirmari. Virtus enim Dei est atque sapientia (I Cor. I, 24), quae nostram infirmitatem sumpsit, ut ex sua nos firmitate roboraret, Jesus Christus Dominus noster, qui vivit et regnat cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA XII

Quod residuum est capitis tertii decurrit, et usque ad versum 4 capitis quarti suam explanationem perducit, quam ad varia sive praecepta sive consilia moralia pro praedicatoribus et auditoribus inflectit.

1. Servata veritate historiae, divina eloquia aliquando ex tempore, aliquando ex loco causas designant, quas aperto sermone non indicant. Ex tempore etenim, sicut praedicante Judaeis Domino per evangelistam dicitur: Hiems erat (Joan. X, 22). Inter illa enim mysteria quae Veritas loquebatur quid causae fuit ut nomen hiemis adderetur, nisi ut per qualitatem temporis ostenderet frigus cordis? Quia et cum verba veritatis acciperent, frigida Judaeorum corda remanebant. Aliquando vero ex loco, sicut carnali Israelitico populo, descendente de monte Moyse, lex in campestribus data est (Exod. XX, seq.); et sanctis apostolis Dominus in monte sedens summa et spiritalia praecepta locutus est (Matth. V, 1), ut ex locis videlicet monstraretur quia et illis tanquam carnalibus mandata minima dabantur in valle terrarum, et isti tanquam spiritales et sancti in monte mandata coelestia audirent, quatenus aperte monstraretur quod ascendentes corde ad coelestia infima mundi relinquerent, et in mentis culmine starent. Unde nunc Ezechiel propheta quid jubente Deo in locis egerit describit, ut per locorum qualitates indicet quid in posterum de prophetiae mysteriis sequeretur. Ecce enim ait: VERS. 22. — Facta est super me manus Domini, et dixit ad me: Surgens egredere in campum, et ibi loquar tecum.

2. Quid est hoc, quod prius Dominus in medio Israelitarum locutus ad prophetam suum fuerat, et tamen postmodum dicit: Egredere in campum, et ibi loquar tecum, nisi quod prophetiae suae gratiam et prius Judaeae infundere, et hanc postmodum dignatus est in latitudinem gentium demonstrare? Neque enim immerito per campum gentilitas designatur, quae longe lateque, id est in universo mundo distenditur. Ubi et subditur: VERS.

23. — Et surgens egressus sum in campum, et ecce ibi gloria Domini stabat, quasi gloria quam vidi juxta flumen Chobar.

3. In campo gloriam Domini propheta vidit, quam juxta flumen Chobar in medio Israelitarum viderat, quia ipsa ejus majestas gentibus apparuit, quae prius se electis in Judaico populo, revelante Spiritu, declaravit. Sequitur: IBID. — Et cecidi in faciem meam.

4. Visa gloria Domini in faciem suam propheta cadit, quia quamvis homo ad intelligenda sublimia elevetur, ex contemplatione tamen majestatis Dei infirmitatem suae conditionis intelligit; et quasi statum non habet, qui se ante Dei oculos esse cinerem et pulverem videt. Sequitur: VERS. 24. — Et ingressus est in me spiritus, et statuit me super pedes meos.

5. Cum nos humiliter Deo sternimus, cum esse nos pulverem cineremque cognoscimus, cum infirmitatem conditionis propriae pensantes, statum rigiditatis et superbiae non habemus, omnipotens Deus per suum nos spiritum levat, et super pedes nostros statuit, ut qui humiliter apud nos ex infirmitatis nostrae cogitatione jacuimus et jacemus, in bono post opere quasi super pedes ex rectitudine stemus. Quod cur in campo de propheta agitur, nisi ut specialiter designetur quia etiam electis gentium Spiritus sanctus dandus esset, qui eos quos assumeret, et prius a superbiae suae statu dejiceret, et postmodum super pedes suos, id est super bona opera solidaret? Sicut per Paulum dicitur: Remissas manus et dissoluta genua erigite, et gressus rectos facite pedibus vestris (Hebr. XII, 12). Sequitur: IBID. — Et locutus est mihi et dixit ad me: Ingredere et includere in medio domus tuae.

6. Quid est, quod de medio Israelitici populi propheta ad campum educitur, atque ad domum postea de campo revocatur, nisi quod praedicationis gratia a Judaico populo ablata, in latitudine gentilitatis sparsa est? Sed tamen in fine mundi dum Judaei ad fidem redeunt, quasi ad domum propheta reducitur, ut in suo populo rursus praedicatio inhabitet, quae modo velut in campo ita diversis gentibus fulget. Scriptum quippe est:

Donec plenitudo gentium subintraret, et sic omnis Israel salvus fieret (Rom. XI, 25). Quia et per prophetam alterum dicitur: Si fuerit numerus filiorum Israel quasi arena maris, reliquiae salvae fient (Isai. X, 22; Rom. IX, 27). Exeat ergo propheta de medio populi ad campum, de campo redeat ad domum, ut praedicatio quae Judaeae facta est, egrediatur ad gentes, et repletis fide, gentibus, recipiat Judaea spiritalis doctrinae dona, quae amisit. Includi autem propheta in medio domus suae praecipitur, quia Antichristi tempore ab eis gentibus quae in infidelitate remanserint plebs conversa Judaeorum duris persecutionibus angustatur. Unde scriptum est: Atrium autem quod est extra templum ejice foras, et ne metiaris illud, quoniam datum est gentibus, et civitatem sanctam calcabunt mensibus quadraginta duobus (Apoc. XI, 2). VERS. 25, 26. — Et tu, fili hominis, ecce data sunt super te vincula, et ligabunt te in eis, et non egredieris in medio eorum; et linguam tuam adhaerescere faciam palato tuo, et eris mutus, nec quasi vir objurgans, quia domus exasperans est.

7. Quae videlicet verba si per typicae expositionis ordinem sequimur, propheta in domo sua vincula suscipit et ligatur, quia in extremis, cum Judaea crediderit, gravissimas Antichristi tempore persecutiones sentit, ita ut praedicationes ejus ministri iniquitatis non recipiant, sed resistendo has vinculis dolorum premant. Et in medio eorum non egreditur, quia ad corda pravorum praedicatio non pervenit, dum lingua bonorum ligata tribulationibus tacet. Erunt etenim tunc multi ex Judaeis infidelibus qui eosdem ipsos qui ex Judaeis crediderint persequentur. Unde notandum est quod hic quoque dicitur, quia in domo sua vincula propheta sustineat: ut videlicet designetur quoniam et ex ipso suo genere Judaea cum fidelis fuerit tribulationem persecutionis portet. Dum enim Unigenitus summi Patris incarnatus ac mortuus resurrexisse atque ad coelos ascendisse non creditur, sicut per sacrae Scripturae paginas praedicatur, nimirum apud Judaeos

prophetia ligata erit. Quae si ita ut dicta est in eorum intellectum decurreret, quasi gressus liberos suae praedicationis habuisset.

8. Reprobis ergo tunc praedicatorum scientia tacere compellitur. Unde et hic subditur: Et linguam tuam adhaerescere faciam palato tuo, et eris mutus, nec quasi vir objurgans, quia domus exasperans est. Sed quia, Enoch et Elia praedicante, multi ex his qui tunc ex Judaeis in infidelitate remanserint ad cognitionem veritatis redeunt, sicut de eodem Elia dicitur: Elias veniet, et ipse restituet omnia (Matth. XVII, 11; Marc. IX, 12; Malach. IV, 5), qui utrique per Zachariam duae olivae (Zach. IV, 3), et per Joannem duo candelabra nominantur (Apoc. XI, 4), recte hic quoque subjungitur: VERS. 27. — Cum autem locutus fuero tibi, aperiam os tuum, et dices ad eos: Haec dicit Dominus Deus.

9. Tunc enim velut in extremo os prophetae aperitur, cum in praedicatione Enoch et Eliae a Judaeis ad fidem redeuntibus prophetia sacri eloquii de Christo fuisse cognoscitur. Sed quia haec typice diximus, nunc verba eadem charitati vestrae moraliter disseramus.

10. Quid enim est, quod exire propheta ad campum jubetur, nisi quod unusquisque qui praedicat propter eos quos extra se positos corrigit, atque ab iniquitate compescit, loquendo ad campum exit? Ibique gloriam Domini videt, quia tanto largius doctrinae gratiam percipit, quanto se in labore praedicationis ex amore proximorum tendit. Foras ergo exeundo in altam visionem ducitur, quia unde in alienis cordibus ignorantiae caecitatem ministerio suae locutionis illuminat, inde eum superna gratia in altiorem intelligentiam exaltat. Sed quia semper praedicator debet ad mentem recurrere, humilitatem atque munditiam intrinsecus custodire, post campum necesse est ut ad domum redeat, quatenus in his quae dicit qualis etiam ipse sit intra conscientiam agnoscat. Si enim aut hoc quod loquitur minime custodit, aut de his quae loquitur temporalem gloriam requirit, loquendo quidem ad campum exit, sed non cogitando semetipsum ad domum redire

contemnit. Accepto etenim spiritu, in medio domus includimur, quando per ejus gratiam ad discutienda mentis nostrae secreta revocamur, ut apud seipsum in Deo animus quiescat, et non jam per exteriores concupiscentias in appetitum laudis et gloriae cogitationis mobilitate discurrat.

11. De hac domo cordis cuidam sanato per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Tolle grabatum tuum, et vade in domum tuam (Joan. V, 8; Marc. II, 9). Per grabatum quippe in quo carnis est requies, ipsa caro signatur, per domum vero conscientia figuratur. Et quia cum mente mortui in vitiis jacemus, in carnis delectatione quiescimus, infirmi portamur in lecto; cum vero sanati fuerimus mente, ut jam pulsantibus carnis vitiis resistamus, necesse est ut et tentationum contumelias de nostra carne toleremus. Aegro itaque ad salutem reducto praecipitur: Tolle grabatum tuum, id est porta lectum in quo portatus es, quia necesse est ut sanatus quisque portet contumeliam carnis, in qua prius jacebat aegrotus. Quid est ergo dicere: Tolle grabatum tuum, et vade in domum tuam, nisi, porta tentationes carnis, in quibus hactenus jacuisti, ac revertere ad conscientiam tuam, ut videas quae fecisti? Propheta itaque post campum in domo includi praecipitur, ut praedicator semper, post gratiam doctrinae quam proximis ministrat, ad conscientiam redeat, seque ipsum subtili examinatione discutiat, ne de his quae foris praedicat aliquid ipse apud se intrinsecus transitoriae laudis quaerat.

12. Unde et per Salomonem dicitur: Bibe aquam de cisterna tua, et fluenta putei tui. Deriventur fontes tui foras, et in plateis aquas divide (Prov. V, 15); habeto eas solus, nec sint alieni participes tui (Ibid., 16). Valde autem contraria esse videntur quae dicit: Deriventur fontes tui foras, et in plateis aquas divide, cum protinus adjungit: Habeto eas solus, nec sint alieni participes tui. Quomodo enim aquam scientiae solus habere poterit, si hanc in plateis dividit? Quomodo alieni aquae ejus participes non sunt, si fontes illius foras derivantur? Sed cum praedicamus populis, nimirum in plateis aquas dividimus, quia in auditotorum multitudinem scientiae verba

dilatamus. Cum vero nos, adjuvante divina gratia, intrinsecus custodimus, et ne maligni spiritus qui jure a nobis alieni sunt quia sortem beatitudinis perdiderunt, nobis in elatione subripiant, sollicitudine cauta circumspicimus, soli habemus aquas quas in plateis dividimus, ut nobis in eis alieni participes non sint. Hi nimirum, de quibus scriptum est: Alieni insurrexerunt in me, et fortes quaesierunt animam meam (Psal. LIII, 5). Aquas ergo et in plateis dividit, et solus habet, qui per hoc quod multis praedicat, se in cogitatione temporalis gloriae non exaltat. Tunc enim possidet homo quod docet, quando se non gaudet innotescere, sed prodesse. Ex campo ergo propheta ad domum reducitur, ut is qui ex Deo loquitur, postquam pro utilitate proximorum loquendo foras exierit, ex humilitate semper ad discutienda cordis sui secreta revocetur. Unde et subditur: VERS. 25. — Et tu, fili hominis, ecce data sunt super te vincula, et ligabunt te in eis, et non egredieris in medio eorum.

13. Cum enim praedicator quisque ad conscientiam domus suae reducitur, super eo vincula dantur, et ligatur in eis, quia quanto plus se in cogitatione discusserit, tanto amplius agnoscit justi anima quantis mortalitatis suae infirmitatibus sit ligata. Nisi enim se ligatum conspiceret Paulus, minime dixisset: Desiderium habens dissolvi, et cum Christo esse (Philip. I, 23). Hinc per Psalmistam dicitur: Ut audiret gemitum vinculatorum, et solvat filios interemptorum (Psal. CI, 21). Et rursus: Intret in conspectu tuo gemitus compeditorum (Psal. LXXVIII, 11). Saepe autem cum jam anima ad Redemptoris sui speciem contemplandam exire desiderat, cum coelestibus gaudiis interesse suspirat, ipsa mortalitatis suae vincula conspicit et gemit, quibus adhuc in praesenti mundo ligata retinetur. Hinc est enim quod subtile omnipotentis Dei judicium intuens Jeremias, ait: Circumaedificavit adversum me ut non egrediar, aggravavit compedem meam (Thren. III, 7). Habemus enim compedes, ipsam infirmitatem atque corruptionem mortalitatis nostrae; sed cum tribulatio nobis et gemitus

additur, ipsae nostrae compedes aggravantur. Et quidem quandiu in hac vita justus moras patitur, loquendo bona, prodesse aliis festinat; sed cum duras mentes conspicit, easque considerat contentionibus occupari, praedicationis verbum retinet. Et in medio eorum non egreditur, quia a bonis quae loqui poterat obmutescit, sicut per Paulum dicitur. Nihil per contentionem (Philip. II, 3). Et rursus: Si quis vult contentiosus esse, nos talem consuetudinem non habemus (I Cor. XI, 16). Unde hic quoque apte subjungitur: VERS. 26. — Et linguam tuam adhaerescere faciam palato tuo, et eris mutus, nec quasi vir objurgans, quia domus exasperans est.

14. Aliquando vero etiam contra resistentium linguas praedicantium corda zelo sui Dominus accendit ne taceant, sed dicta fallacium verbis veritatis premant. Unde hic subditur: VERS. 27. — Cum autem locutus fuero tibi, aperies os tuum, et dices ad eos: Haec dicit Dominus Deus.

15. Sed haec quae breviter sub duplici intellectu discussimus placet ut juxta considerationem litterae leviter tangendo transeamus. Quid enim nobis amplius per ipsa verba historiae quam virtus obedientiae commendatur? Cum modo ad transmigrationem juxta fluvium Chobar pergere, modo ad campum egredi, modo ex campo ad domum redire propheta praecipitur? Ut prius ex jussione pergens, et paulo post exiens, atque iterum domum rediens, et semetipsum recludens, semper suae voluntatis arbitrium ad divini eloquii praeceptum frangat, quatenus, in coelesti jussione suspensus, non suam, sed conditoris sui voluntatem impleat? Cui dicitur: Et tu, fili hominis, ecce data sunt super te vincula, et ligabunt te in eis, et non egredieris in medio eorum. Qua in re notandum est quod adversa propheta praenoscit, ut contra omnia paretur. Minus enim mala contra mentem praevalent, quae inopinata non veniunt; et tamen dum contraria praenoscuntur, quanta sit in eo obedientiae virtus ostenditur, qui et cognoscit quod adversa passurus est, et tamen voci dominicae inobediens non est. Magna autem consideratione indigent verba quae protinus

adduntur: Et linguam tuam adhaerescere faciam palato tuo, et eris mutus, nec quasi vir objurgans, quia domus exasperans est. Discernendum quippe nobis est utrum pro solis malis auditoribus, an aliquando etiam pro vitio praedicantis praedicationis sermo subtrahatur.

16. Quatuor enim qualitatibus res haec considerata distinguitur. Nam aliquando propter malos auditores bonis tollitur sermo doctoribus. Aliquando vero propter bonos auditores datur sermo doctoribus etiam malis. Aliquando autem propter docentium atque audientium justificationem bonis sermo doctoribus datur, ut et ipsi per meritum crescant, et auditores eorum in intellectu et vita proficiant. Aliquando vero quia nec hi digni sunt accipere quibus doctrinae sermo profertur, neque illi doctrinae verbum proferre qui locum docendi tenent, praedicationis sermo tollitur, ut utraque pars districte judicetur. Propter malos namque auditores bonis sermo doctoribus tollitur, sicut nunc ad Ezechielem dicitur: Linguam tuam adhaerescere faciam palato tuo, et eris mutus, nec quasi vir objurgans, quia domus exasperans est. Et sicut Paulo dicitur: Festina et exi velociter ex Jerusalem, quoniam non recipient testimonium tuum de me (Act. XXII, 18). Et sicut volentibus apostolis praedicare in Asia, scriptum est quia prohibuit eos spiritus Jesu (Act. XVI, 6). Propter bonos auditores etiam malis doctoribus sermo datur, sicut de Pharisaeis Dominus dicit: Omnia quaecunque dixerint vobis servate et facite, secundum vero opera eorum nolite facere; dicunt enim, et non faciunt (Matth. XXIII, 3). Propter docentium quoque meritum et audientium justificationem sermo doctrinae tribuitur, sicut sanctis apostolis dicitur: Euntes docete omnes gentes (Ibid., XXVIII, 19). Propter malos vero auditores et indignam vitam eorum qui docere debuerant, sermo doctrinae subtrahitur, sicut Heli ad corrigendos filios districtae increpationis verbum non habuit (I Reg. II, 29; III, 13) quia et ejus negligentia, et filiorum exigebat vita, ut cum eis et populus caderet, et arca Domini capta ad Allophylos transiret (Ibid., IV, 11, seq.) Magna

enim omnipotentis Dei est gratia cum inique agentibus durus a doctoribus sermo increpationis profertur. Quo contra nunc dicitur: Et eris mutus, nec quasi vir objurgans. Delinquentes etenim objurgasset, si digni ipsa objurgationis gratia fuissent.

17. Sed cum in doctrina atque in silentio sit meritorum tanta diversitas, ut sciri facile non possit, utrum ex auditoris an ex ejus vitio qui doctrinae locum videtur tenere docendi sermo subtrahatur, quid aliud nobis quam servari semper in rebus dubiis humilitas jubetur? Ut et quando loqui possumus non extollamur, ne fortasse haec ipsa locutionis nostrae gratia non nobis, sed auditoribus nostris collata sit; et rursus quando loqui non possumus, hi qui nobis commissi sunt minime nos dijudicent, ne fortasse non ex nostro, sed ex peccato audientium loqui minime possimus. Ad hoc ergo nobis cuncta de meritis nostris incerta sunt, ut unam certam gratiam teneamus humilitatem, quatenus et nos cum loquimur, ex omnipotentis Dei dono hoc esse, vestrum meritum putemus. Et quando a locutione doctrinae obmutescimus, quamvis nostra culpa sit, vos tamen hanc esse vestram specialiter credatis, ut cum vicissim mala nobis tribuimus, et bona aliis, per ipsam humilitatis gratiam fiat ut doctrinae sermo, qui ablatus fuerat, redeat. Sequitur: VERS. 27. — Cum autem locutus fuero tibi, aperies os tuum, et loqueris ad eos: Haec dicit Dominus Deus: Qui audit, audiat; et qui quiescit, quiescat, quia domus exasperans est.

18. Saepe quidam verbum Dei audire desiderant, sed dum alios conspiciunt aurem avertere, etiam ipsi a salutis auditu deviant; et plerumque multi quiescere appetunt, atque a cunctis mundi hujus actibus vacare, nullis jam desideriis terrenis succumbere, sed dum vident alios inquiete agendo proficere, atque in hoc mundo divitiis et honoribus extolli, quia necdum in via rectitudinis firmi sunt, ad prava opera ex aliorum exemplo delabuntur. Hinc est enim quod in typo infirmantium Psalmista loquens, dicebat: Mei autem pene moti sunt pedes, pene effusi sunt gressus mei (Psal. LXXII, 2,

3), quia zelatus sum in peccatoribus, pacem peccatorum videns. Hinc iterum dicit: Dum superbit impius, incenditur pauper (Psal. X, 2), Hinc ad Jeremiam prophetam voce dominica de Juda et Israel dicitur: Nunquid vidisti quae fecerit aversatrix Israel? Abiit sibimetipsa super omnem montem excelsum, et sub omne lignum frondosum, et fornicata est ibi. Et dixi cum fecisset haec omnia: Ad me convertere, et non est reversa (Jerem. III, 6, 7). Ubi statim subditur qualiter ex aemulatione ejus etiam Juda cecidit, quae stare videbatur. Ait enim: Et vidit praevaricatrix soror ejus Juda, quia pro eo quod maechata esset aversatrix Israel, dimisissem eam, et dedissem ei libellum repudii; et non timuit praevaricatrix Juda soror ejus, sed abiit et fornicata est etiam ipsa (Ibid., et 8). Ecce misericors Deus contemnitur et vocat, aversantibus se signum misericordiae aperit, quia peccanti dicit: Ad me convertere, et tamen non est conversa (Ibid., 7). Sed quia omnipotentem Deum plebs Israelitica deseruit, reverti nolens, libellum repudii accepit. Deseruit videlicet peccando, sed libellum repudii accepit in suis iniquitatibus sine flagello remanendo. Anima enim quae peccat, recedit. Sed si eam post peccatum prosperitas sequitur, nulla disciplina, nulla districtionis increpatio revocat ad cor; in divisione quam inter se et Dominum fecit, etiam libellum repudii accepit, ut jam, velut aliena derelicta, faciat mala quae vult, zeli Dei flagella non sentiat, quatenus ad aeterna supplicia profundius descendat. Sed soror ejus Juda, quoniam dimissam Israeliticam plebem in suis voluptatibus vidit, ipsa quoque in immunditiam fornicationis exarsit. Quia enim aspexit adulteram in sua perversitate florere, etiam ipsa non timuit deterius peccare, atque a conjunctione Domini, quasi a viri legitimi cubili, recedere. Unde necesse est ut peccantes quosque tunc consideremus amplius miseros, quando eos conspicimus in culpa sua sine flagello derelictos. Hinc enim per Salomonem dicitur: Aversio parvulorum interficiet eos, et prosperitas stultorum perdet illos (Prov. I, 32). Qui enim a Deo avertitur et prosperatur,

tanto perditioni fit proximus, quanto a zelo disciplinae invenitur alienus. Dicatur ergo: Qui audit audiat, et qui quiescit quiescat, quia domus exasperans est. Ac si aperte diceretur: Vos, qui jam et verba veritatis audire, et a prava coepistis actione quiescere, nolite illos imitari quorum me exasperari moribus videtis.

19. Quod tamen intelligere et aliter possumus. Quidam enim verbum audientes non audiunt, quoniam aurem ad sacrum eloquium ponunt, sed cor a mundi desideriis non evellunt. Et sunt nonnulli qui quiescentes minime quiescunt, quia a pravis quidem actibus otiosi sunt corpore, sed perversitates operum ex dilectione versant in mente. Hinc est enim quod de Judaea ad captivitatem perveniente scriptum est: Viderunt eam hostes, et deriserunt Sabbata ejus (Thren. I, 7). Hostes quippe Sabbata derident, quando maligni spiritus otiosae menti pravas cogitationes injiciunt, ut et si quiescit ab opere, non quiescat a malorum operum delectatione. Recte ergo nunc dicitur: Qui audit audiat, quatenus sic fiat sermo in aure corporis, ut sonet in aure cordis. Et qui quiescit quiescat, ut pravitatis desideria repellantur a cogitatione, cum jam repulsa videntur ab opere. Ubi ne malorum, sicut diximus, exempla sequamur, adjungitur: Quia domus exasperans est. Mali autem etsi diu tolerantur, subito corruunt, et eorum poenas infirmi conspiciunt, ne quorum culpas impunitas existimant imitentur. Unde hic quoque ejusdem Judaeae desolatio subjungitur, quae domus exasperans vocatur, cum protinus prophetae suo Dominus dicit: EZECH. IV, 1, 2, 3. — Et tu, fili hominis, sume tibi laterem, et pones eum coram te, et describes in eo civitatem Jerusalem, et ordinabis adversus eam obsidionem, et aedificabis munitiones, et comportabis aggerem, et dabis contra eam castra, et pones arietes in gyro. Et tu sume tibi sartaginem ferream et pones eam murum ferreum inter te et civitatem, et obfirmabis faciem tuam ad eam, et erit in obsidionem, et circumdabis eam. Signum est domus Israel.

20. In quibus videlicet verbis quid aliud juxta historiam nisi Jerosolymae urbis obsessio atque destructio designatur, et peccatoris populi afflictio exprimitur? Qui domus exasperans vocatur, cum aperte dicitur: Ordinabis adversus eam obsidionem, et aedificabis munitiones, et comportabis aggerem, et dabis contra eam castra, et pones arietes in gyro. Sed quia verba prophetiae sic plerumque narrant historica, ut per haec etiam mystica describantur, oportet ut haec eadem dicta quae protulimus spiritaliter disseramus, maxime quia in eis interponitur quod teneri posse ad litteram non videtur, cum dicitur: Et tu sume tibi sartaginem ferream, et pones eam murum ferreum inter te et civitatem, et obfirmabis faciem tuam ad eam, et erit in obsidionem. Nisi enim rebus historicis mystica miscerentur, quid sartago ferrea necessaria prophetae fuit, ut hanc inter se et civitatem poneret, quatenus se ab ejus obsidione separaret? Cum enim dicitur: Sume tibi sartaginem ferream, et pones eam murum ferreum inter te et civitatem, aperte declaratur quia per eamdem sartaginem ferream ab obsidione civitatis propheta se liberum reddat. Unde et quod praedixit subjungitur: Et obfirmabis faciem tuam ad eam, et erit in obsidionem. Ex qua re ostenditur quia propheta in eadem obsidione non erit, si sartaginem ferream inter se et civitatem murum ferreum ponit. Et certe sive in ea captivitate quae prius, sive in ea quae postmodum Israelitico populo contigit, nullus ab ejusdem captivitatis periculo liber fuit, sed omnes simul par calamitas involvit. Quid ergo intelligi juxta litteram potest, ut propheta inter se et civitatem quae obsidenda est sartaginem ferream ponat? Sed quamvis omne hoc quod in descriptione lateris sub signo Jerosolymorum civitatis legitur juxta litteram factum sit, nobis tamen sciendum est quia typicum aliquid per sartaginem figuratur, et obsessio Jerosolymorum vera describitur.

21. Ex quare instruimur, ut dum aliud completum juxta historiam scimus, et aliud juxta historiam a ratione vacare cognoscimus, in sacro verbo utraque teneamus, quatenus et obsessionem Jerosolymorum, quae juxta

litteram postmodum facta est, in prophetae verbis et factis credamus esse figuratam, et tamen per eamdem obsidionem obsidio alia, id est interior, designetur. In qua jure quaerimus quid per sartaginem ferream, quae murus ferreus dicitur, valeat designari. Illam itaque obsidionem qua Jerosolymorum civitas destructa est, jam factam novimus; sed nunc aliam intrinsecus, quae quotidie agitur, requiramus. De qua per significationem dicitur: Et tu, fili hominis, sume tibi laterem, et pones eum coram te, et describes in eo civitatem Jerusalem.

22. Sed ante nobis inquirendum est cur Ezechiel propheta vel quoties sublimia conspicit, vel quoties agere aliqua mystica jubetur, prius filius hominis appellatur? Saepe enim sublevatur ad coelestia, et occultis ac invisibilibus rebus ejus mens pascitur. Necesse ergo est ut inter occulta quae penetrat, filius hominis vocetur, ut semper agnoscat quod est, et nunquam extollatur de his ad quae ducitur. Quid est enim prophetae ad spiritalia sublevato semper fili hominis dicere, nisi eum infirmitatis propriae memorem facere? Ut conscius conditionis infirmae, elevari in cogitatione non debeat de magnitudine contemplationis suae.

23. Quia vero idem propheta, ut supra jam diximus, typum praedicantium vel doctorum tenet, recte ei nunc dicitur: Sume tibi laterem, et pones eum coram te. Omnis enim doctor cum terrenum quempiam auditorem ad coelestis verbi doctrinam suscipit, laterem assumit. Cui dum loqui coeperit quae sit retributio coelestis patriae, quae visio pacis supernae, civitatem Jerusalem describit in latere. Quem coram se ponit, quia intenta mente qualitatem audientis considerat, id est provectum vel defectum conspicit, et juxta ejusdem intelligentiam praedicationis suae verba moderatur, ut describi in audientis mente civitas Jerusalem, id est visio pacis, possit. Dicatur ergo: Sume tibi laterem, videlicet proximi cor terrenum. Et pones eum coram te, scilicet ut vitam atque intellectum illius intenta mente custodias. Et describes in eo civitatem Jerusalem, ut ei quae

sint superna gaudia de visione pacis innotescas. Quasi enim jam Jerusalem in latere descripta est, cum terrena mens coeperit quae sint illa internae pacis gaudia vera cognoscere, et ad conspiciendam gloriam patriae coelestis anhelare. Quasi in terra visio pacis describitur, quando mens, quae prius terrena sapuerat, per amorem jam ad contemplandam gloriam regni coelestis elevatur. 24. Sed mox ut animus amare coelestia coeperit, mox ut ad visionem pacis intimae tota se intentione collegerit, antiquus ille adversarius qui de coelo lapsus est invidet, et insidiari amplius incipit, et acriores quam consueverat tentationes admovet, ita ut plerumque sic resistentem animam tentet, sicut ante nunquam tentaverat quando possidebat. Unde scriptum est: Fili, accedens ad servitutem Dei, sta in justitia et timore, et praepara animam tuam ad tentationem (Eccli. II, 1). Unde et daemoniacus qui a Domino sanatur, ab exeunte daemone discerpitur, sicut scriptum est: Et clamans et multum discerpens eum, exiit ab eo (Marc. IX, 25). Quid est enim quod obsessum hominem antiquus hostis quem possessum non discerpserat, deserens discerpsit, nisi quod plerumque dum de corde expellitur, acriores in eo tentationes generat, quam prius excitaverat quando hoc quietus possidebat? Unde et Israelitae quoque ad Moysen et Aaron dicunt: Videat Dominus, et judicet, quoniam fetore fecistis odorem nostrum coram Pharaone et servis ejus, et praebuistis ei gladium, ut occideret nos (Exod. V, 21). In Moyse enim et Aaron lex et prophetae figuratae sunt. Et saepe apud se infirmus animus quasi contra sacra eloquia murmurat, quia postquam verba coelestia audire et sequi coeperit, regis Aegyptii adversitas, id est maligni spiritus tentatio, excrescit.

25. Debet ergo vigilanter doctor proficienti animae quae illam tentationes sequantur innotescere, ut cautam se valeat contra maligni spiritus insidias praeparare. Unde bene nunc, post descriptam civitatem Jerusalem in latere, dicitur prophetae: Et ordinabis adversus eam obsidionem, et aedificabis munitiones, et comportabis aggerem. In qua enim

jam pacis visio describitur, ei necesse est ut tentationum bella nuntientur. Nam ut valeat ad illa pacis gaudia aeterna pertingere, hanc hic procul dubio oportet tribulationum certamina multa sustinere. De qua bene dicitur: Ordinabis adversus eam obsidionem. Praedicator quippe contra erudiendam animam obsidionem ordinat cum praemuniendo indicat quibus se modis vitia virtutibus opponant, quomodo luxuria castitatem feriat, qualiter ira tranquillitatem animi perturbet, quantum inepta laetitia vigorem mentis resolvat, qualiter multiloquium munitionem cordis destruat, quomodo invidia charitatem interficiat, quemadmodum superbia arcem humilitatis effodiat, qualiter fallacia cum veritatem in sermone corruperit, hanc etiam in cognitione corrumpat, ut qui verum dicere noluit quod intellexit jam nec intelligat, quod dicere valeat. Ordinatur ergo a praedicatore obsidio cum per sanctae admonitionis verba singulis quibusque virtutibus quae vel quibus modis vitia insidientur ostenditur. Et contra Jerusalem, quam describit in latere, praedicator munitiones aedificat quando mala quaeque quam munita contra mentem veniant demonstrat, ut sese vitia sub virtutum specie abscondant; quatenus, sicut saepe jam diximus, immoderata ira justitia videri appetat, et disciplinae remissio mansuetudo videri velit, et tenacia sese parcimoniam nominet, et inordinata rerum effusio se benevolentiam appellet. Quasi enim aedificatae contra mentem munitiones sunt, quando vitia sub virtutum specie excrescunt, et in alto se ostendunt per imaginem, quae in imo jacent semper per actionem. 26. Adhuc quoque additur: Et comportabis aggerem. Quo enim mens desiderare coelestia coeperit, eo in illam maligni spiritus tentationibus suis terrenas amplius cogitationes exaggerant. Propheta ergo aggerem comportat cum praedicator sanctus bonis mentibus qualiter terrena desideria subrepere solent denuntiat. Atque adhuc additur: Et dabis contra eam castra, et pones arietes in gyro. Quasi dat contra animam doctor castra, quando malignorum spirituum contra eam

collectas atque adunatas insidias indicat, ut aliquando non solummodo ex uno, sed ex conjunctis vitiis simul tentent.

27. Nam sunt quaedam vitia quasi per quamdam sibi cognationem propinqua, sicut dissolutio spiritus, appetitus gulae, et immunditia luxuriae, sicut multiloquium, fallacia, atque perjurium. Ex dissolutione quippe spiritus mens ad ingluviem ventris rapitur, et dum cibis venter extenditur, ad luxuriam caro trahitur superbiendo captiva. Et rursum ex multiloquio fallacia generatur, quia valde difficile est ut qui multa loquitur non etiam mentiatur; et saepe mendacium etiam perjurio tegitur, ut ante humana judicia veletur. Superbia quoque esse sine invidia atque inani gloria nullatenus potest. Superbus etenim quisque honorem quem ipse ambit aliis invidet. Et cum hunc fortasse obtinuerit, in elationem gloriae temporalis attollitur, atque quod alios conspicit minime percipere potuisse, hoc se per inanem gloriam gaudet prae caeteris habere.

28. Sciendum quoque est quia saepe nonnulla vitia ad mentem non simul veniunt, sed supponuntur, ut unum alteri in tentatione succedat. Et aliud contra faciem venit, aliud vero in tentationem se ex latere subjicit, quatenus dum alteri resistitur, ab altero mens decepta capiatur. Ipsa enim quae superius diximus vitia plerumque se alia pro aliis furtive supponunt, sicut nonnunquam dum iram vincere in nobismetipsis conamur, plus quam necesse est lenitas mentem occupat, ut asperitatem peccantibus quam oportet minime proponat. Saepe vero dum nobis inesse incauta lenitas displicet, zelus se in furorem trahit, atque extra patientiae limitem animum captivum rapit. Quia ergo permista simul vitia atque adunata contra mentem veniunt, recte in praedicatoris ore contra descriptam Jerusalem castra proponuntur. Et quia aliquando singula hinc inde sensum feriunt, in gyro arietes ordinantur. Ponit ergo praedicator arietes in gyro, dum caute denuntiat quam blande luxuria percutit, quam aspere impatientia occidit, quam laboriose avaritia accendit et interimit, quam tumide superbia

exstinguit. In gyro itaque arietes ponere est praedicando ostendere qui undique soleant animam mucrones vitiorum ferire.

29. Sequitur: Et tu sume tibi sartaginem ferream, et pones eam murum ferreum inter te et civitatem. Quia ferrum forte metallum est, et in sartagine cibus frigitur, quid per sartaginem ferream, nisi spiritalis zeli fortis frixura signatur? Omnis quippe spiritalis zelus doctoris animam frigit, quia valde cruciatur dum infirmos quosque aeterna deserere et rebus temporalibus delectari conspicit. Quam bene Paulus sartaginem ferream sumpserat, cum zelo animarum cruciatus dicebat: Quis infirmatur, et ego non infirmor? Quis scandalizatur, et ego non uror (II Cor. XI, 20)? Ipsum suum cor quod animarum zelo succenderat, quid aliud quam sartaginem fecerat, in quo amore virtutum contra vitia ardebat? Quod enim urebatur, sartago erat. Inardescebat enim et coquebat, quia incendebatur amaritudine, sed virtutum alimenta praeparabat ex sua afflicta cogitatione.

30. Sed quid est quod eamdem sartaginem propheta inter se et civitatem murum ferreum ponit, nisi quod idem fortis zelus qui nunc in mente doctoris agitur in die extremi judicii inter eum et animam quam a vitiis zelat testis est? ut etsi audire is qui docetur noluerit, doctor tamen pro zelo quem exhibet de auditoris negligentia reus non sit. Murum ergo ferreum inter se et civitatem ponit, quia ultionis tempore inde doctor a damnationis periculo munitur, unde nunc per zelum custodiae cordis frixuram patitur. Nullum quippe omnipotenti Deo tale est sacrificium, quale est zelus animarum. Hinc enim Psalmista ait: Zelus domus tuae comedit me (Psal. LXVIII, 10). Quantum vero frixura cordis quae spiritali zelo agitur omnipotentem Dominum Deum placat, aperte ostenditur cum offerri per legem simila in sacrificium jubetur. De qua scriptum est: In sartagine oleo conspersa frigetur, offeretque eam calidam in odorem suavissimum Domino sacerdos qui patri jure successerit, et tota cremabitur in altari (Levit. VI, 21, 22). Tunc enim simila in sartagine frigitur, cum munda mens justi per zeli sancti

ardorem crematur. Quae conspergi oleo praecipitur, id est claritatis misericordiae misceri, quae in conspectu omnipotentis Domini ardet et lucet. Conspergatur ergo oleo mens quae in sartagine frigitur, quia sancti zeli districtio necesse est ut ex misericordiae virtute et ardeat et clarescat. Amat enim eumdem ipsum quem insequi videtur. Unde et calida in odorem suavissimum Domino offerri praecipitur, quia si amorem zelus non habet, ea quae de sartagine offertur calorem simila amisit. Et notandum quis eam offerre praecipitur, videlicet sacerdos qui patri jure successerit. Ille enim sacerdos patri jure succedit, qui esse se omnipotentis Domini filium demonstrat moribus, atque a nobilitate intima operum suorum ignobilitate non discrepat. Quae in altari tota cremari praecipitur, ut videlicet holocaustum fiat. Holocaustum enim totum incensum dicimus. Unde et in translatione altera hoc in loco haec eadem simila quae in sartagine frigitur holocaustum fieri jubetur. Hoc autem inter holocaustum et sacrificium distat, quia omne quidem holocaustum sacrificium est, non autem omne sacrificium holocaustum. Sunt enim multa bona quae aguntur sacrificia, sed holocausta non sunt, quia totam mentem in amorem spiritalem minime incendunt. Qui enim sic operantur ea quae Dei sunt, ut tamen et quaedam quae sunt saeculi non relinquant, nimirum sacrificium et non holocaustum offerunt. Qui autem cuncta quae mundi sunt deserunt, et totam mentem igne divini amoris incendunt, hi nimirum omnipotenti Domino sacrificium et holocaustum fiunt. Simila itaque in sartagine est munda mens justi in zeli spiritalis afflictione; quae per sollicitudinem animarum frigitur, et non solum sacrificium, sed etiam holocaustum Domino esse deputatur. Sumamus ergo sartaginem ferream, et ponamus eam murum ferreum inter nos et civitatem, id est assumamus zelum fortem, ut inter nos et auditoris nostri animam inveniamus hanc postmodum fortem munitionem. Tunc enim hunc murum ferreum inventuri sumus, si nunc eum fortiter tenemus, videlicet docendo, custodiendo, suadendo, increpando, mulcendo, terrendo,

aliquando leniter, aliquando vero etiam severius agendo. De qua severitate recte subditur: Et ob firmabis faciem tuam ad eam, et erit in obsidionem.

31. Quid est obfirmare faciem ad Jerusalem in latere descriptam, nisi ut ei animae cui coelestis pacis visionem doctor denuntiat, si adhuc eam infirmari in suis actibus conspicit, remissiorem et clementiorem se minime ostendat? Unde scriptum est: Filiae tibi sunt? serva corpus illarum, et non ostendas hilarem faciem tuam ad illas (Eccli. VII, 26). Infirmae quippe animae atque ad appetitum mundi deditae, aliquando melius ex severitate servantur, ut obfirmata facies, id est per severitatis custodiam ab omni spe frivolae remissionis abducta, inconstantem animam terreat, atque a delectatione vitiorum districtionis vigore constringat. Quod cum a doctore agitur, semper necesse est ut dulcedo et humilitas in corde teneatur, quatenus et multum amet, et nunquam contra eum per elationem superbiat, cui tamen amorem suum et humilitatem pro utilitate ejus prodere recusat.

32. Sequitur: Et circumdabis eam. Circumdat doctor auditoris animam, cum in omne quod in hac vita agitur tentationum laqueos apponi posse denuntiat, ut dum ubique fit mens pavida, ubique circumspecta, quanto timidior, tanto vigilantior vivat.

33. Sequitur: Signum est domus Israel. Si ad historiam obsidionis quae juxta litteram facta est, signum est domus Israel quod propheta fecit; si ad mysterium quod quotidie erga uniuscujusque animam a doctore agitur, signum est domus Israel et hoc quod egit, et hoc quod agendo nuntiavit, quia sicut domus Israel obsidionem corporaliter pertulit, ita unaquaeque anima quae jam servire omnipotenti Deo incipit obsidentes se insidias malignorum spirituum sentit. A quibus si vere eripi appetit, scire debet quia eripi sua virtute non possit; sed ejus necesse est ut adjutorium speret qui nos, et in carne corruptibili viventes, per redemptionis suae mysterium potest etiam super spiritus qui sunt sine carne roborare, Jesus Christus

Dominus noster, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

LIBER SECUNDUS

HOMILIA I

In explicatione trium priorum versuum cap. XL Ezechielis, et quarti inchoati, de Christo et Ecclesia, de electis et de occultis erga eos Dei judiciis, praesertim disseritur. EZECH. XL, 1. — In vigesimo et quinto anno transmigrationis nostrae, in exordio anni, decima mensis, quarto decimo anno postquam percussa est civitas, ipsa hac die facta est super me manus Domini, et adduxit me illuc.

1. Dicturus mystica, narrationem historicam praemittit, ut figat ex tempore, quod credatur ex revelatione. Notandum vero quod in exordio libri hujus quo anno prophetare coeperit indicavit; in fine vero inseruit quo extremam visionem vidit, ita ut cognosci valeat in quot annis prophetiae suae librum duxerit. Tempus namque quo prophetare coepit, in locutionis suae initio posuit, dicens: Aperti sunt coeli, et vidi visiones Domini in quinta mensis; ipse est annus quintus transmigrationis regis Joachin (Ezech. I, 1). Nunc vero loquitur, dicens: In vigesimo et quinto anno transmigrationis nostrae. Idem namque propheta in captivitate prima cum Joachin rege fuerat in Babyloniam transductus (IV Reg. XXIV, 25). Nam de secunda Jerosolymorum captivitate subjungit: Quarto decimo anno postquam percussa est civitas. Undecim quippe annis Sedecias post captivitatem primam, in qua Ezechiel propheta cum Joachin rege ductus est in Babylonem, in Jerosolymorum urbe regnaverat. Post captivitatem vero ejusdem Sedeciae, quae jam secunda erat urbis captivitas, quarto decimo anno propheta visionem ultimam videbat. Undecim itaque et quatuordecim simul juncti faciunt viginti et quinque. Si igitur visionem primam quinto captivitatis prioris anno locutus est, atque hanc ultimam vigesimo et quinto anno factam fuisse describit, profecto patet quod in viginti annis locutionis suae moras usque ad ultimae visionis suae verba tetenderit. Nec moyere quempiam debet quod in medio prophetiae suae volumine, cum de Babylonico rege loqueretur, vigesimi ac septimi anni memoriam facit. Quo

in loco cum nihil de tempore suae captivitatis interserit, aperte demonstrat, quia ejus regis tempora describat, de quo ut prophetaret acceperat. Quod vero ait: In exordio anni, decima mensis, tempus simpliciter exprimit, ut ex ipso quoque tempore in corda audientium juxta litteram verbi radicem figat, ex qua spiritales fructus postmodum proferat.

2. Notandum vero quod ait: Quartodecimo anno postquam percussa est civitas, ipsa hac die. Quid est enim quod per hanc visionem ultimam omnipotens Deus ea ipsa die dignatus est promissionis suae misericordiam facere, qua die in percussa civitate iram justitiae implevit, nisi quod illa divinitatis vis, quae in diversitatis motum et mutabilitatem non ducitur, ea ipsa luce justitiae afflictos ac poenitentes vivificat, qua superbientes ac rigidos percutit? Praemisso itaque visionis suae tempore, subjungit: VERS. 1, 2. — Facta est super me manus Domini, et adduxit me illuc in visionibus Dei: adduxit me in terram Israel, et dimisit me super montem excelsum nimis, super quem erat quasi aedificium civitatis vergentis ad Austrum.

3. Cujus videlicet civitatis aedificium accipi juxta litteram nullatenus potest. Nam paulo post subdit hoc ipsum aedificium calamo sex cubitorum et palmo, portam vero ejusdem aedificii quatuordecim cubitis mensuratam, cujus portae frontes esse perhibet sexaginta cubitorum. Quae cuncta stare juxta litteram nullatenus valent. Quomodo enim totum simul aedificium calamo, id est sex cubitis et palmo mensuratur, et portae aedificii in quatuordecim cubitis, frontes vero portarum in sexaginta cubitis extenduntur? Porta enim in civitate est, frontes vero in portis. Et nulia recipi ratio permittit, quia minus est hoc quod continet ab eo quod continetur. In Scriptura autem sacra et ea quae accipi secundum historiam possunt, plerumque spiritaliter intelligenda sunt, ut et fides habeatur in veritate historiae, et spiritalis intelligentia capiatur de mysteriis allegoriae. Sicut illud quoque novimus quod Psalmista ait: Quoniam videbo coelos tuos, opera digitorum tuorum, lunam et stellas, quas tu fundasti (Psal. VIII, 4).

Ecce enim in exteriori descriptione stat sermo rationis, quia et coeli opera Dei sunt, et luna ac stellae ab eo creatae atque fundatae sunt. Sed si hoc Psalmista juxta sola exteriora opera, et non etiam secundum intellectum mysticum asserit, qui coelos opera Dei esse professus est, dicturus lunam et stelias, cur non etiam solem, quem scimus quia ejus opus est (Genes. I, 16), pariter enumeravit? Si enim juxta solam litteram loquebatur, dicturus luminare minus, prius luminare majus dicere debuit, ut ante solem, et post lunam atque stellas fundatas esse perhiberet. Sed quia juxta intellectum mysticum loquebatur, ut lunam sanctam Ecclesiam, et stellas sanctos omnes accipere deberemus, solem nominare noluit, quia videlicet ipsi aeterno Soli loquebatur, de quo scriptum est: Vobis autem qui timetis Dominum, orietur sol justitiae (Malac. IV, 2). De quo reprobi in fine dicturi sunt: Sol justitiae non ortus est nobis. Dicendo ergo, Lunam et stellas quas tu fundasti (Sap. V, 6), et tamen tacendo solem qui factus est, indicavit quia illi Soli locutus est qui non solum solem et lunam atque stellas corporaliter, sed etiam lunam Ecclesiam atque stellas sanctos omnes spiritaliter fecit. Si ergo cum aliquid deest historiae, aperta ratione ducimur ad intellectum allegoriae; quanto magis illa spiritaliter accipienda sunt, in quibus juxta rationem litterae nihil historicum sonat? Facta est super me manus Domini, et adduxit me illuc in visionibus Dei; adduxit me in terram Israel. Quod dixerat, Adduxit me illuc, hoc replicans subdidit: Adduxit me in terram Israel. Ait enim: Facta est super me manus Domini, et adduxit me illuc in visionibus Domini. Manus etenim virtutem potestatis, visiones vero ipsam quam acceperat revelationem significant. Manus quippe in visione est virtus in contemplatione. Quibus verbis quid aperte indicat, nisi quia nihil de civitate quam viderat juxta litteram dicat? Nam spiritaliter de ea loquitur quam spiritaliter contemplatur.

4. Et dimisit me super montem excelsum nimis. Quem ergo significat mons excelsus nisi Mediatorem Dei et hominum hominem Christum

Jesum? Qui de terra quidem, sed ultra terram est, quia caro ejusdem Redemptoris nostri de imis habet materiam, sed in summis praeeminet ex potestate. Quem minus erat ut excelsum diceret, nisi adderet nimis, quia non solum homo, sed ex ejusdem humanitatis conceptione quae ab eo assumpta est Deus homo, non solum homo ultra homines, sed homo etiam super angelos factus. Hinc enim de illo per Isaiam dicitur: In die illa erit fructus terrae sublimis (Isai. IV, 2). Creator etenim noster, quia pro nobis incarnatus est, fructus terrae factus est nobis. Sed jam fructus terrae sublimis est, quia homo natus in terra super angelos regnat in coelo, quia juxta David et Pauli vocem, Omnia subjecit sub pedibus ejus (Psal. VIII, 8; Hebr. II, 8). In eo enim quod ei subjecit omnia, nihil demisit non subjectum ei. Mons ergo iste est et excelsus, et nimis, quia etsi de terra est per substantiam humanitatis, incomprehensibilis tamen est ex altitudine divinitatis. Hinc est enim quod eumdem Dominum cum Isaias propheta prospiceret in carne esse venturum, per prophetiae spiritum sublevatus, ait: Et erit in novissimis diebus praeparatus mons domus Domini in vertice montium (Isai. II, 2). Domus enim Domini Israeliticus populus fuit. Mons itaque domus Domini ille appellatus est, qui ex Israelitico populo incarnari dignatus est. Fuerunt autem in eodem populo sancti viri qui montes jure vocarentur, quia per vitae meritum ad coelestia propinquaverunt. Sed incarnatus unigenitus istis montibus aequalis non fuit, quia naturam, vitam, merita omnium ex sua divinitate transcendit. Unde et recte mons super verticem montium dicitur, quia excelsus ex divinitate sua inventus est, etiam super cacumina sanctorum, ut hi qui multum in Deo profecerant, ejus vestigia vix potuissent tangere ex vertice cogitationis. Qui ergo illic mons super verticem montium dicitur, ipse hic mons excelsus nimis esse perhibetur. Sequitur:

5. Super quem erat quasi aedificium civitatis vergentis ad Austrum. Notandum est quod non dicitur, Super quem erat aedificium, sed quasi aedificium, ut videlicet ostenderetur quod non de corporalis, sed de

spiritalis civitatis aedificio cuncta dicerentur. Qui enim non se aedificium, sed quasi aedificium vidisse perhibet, cor audientium ad spiritalem fabricam mittit, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Jerusalem quae aedificatur ut civitas (Psal. CXXI, 3). Quia etenim illa internae pacis visio ex sanctorum civium congregatione construitur, Jerusalem coelestis ut civitas aedificatur. Quae tamen in hac peregrinationis terra dum flagellis percutitur, tribulationibus tunditur, ejus lapides quotidie quadrantur. Et ipsa est civitas, scilicet sancta Ecclesia, quae regnatura in coelo adhuc laborat in terra. Cujus civibus Petrus dicit: Et vos tanquam lapides vivi superaedificamini (I Pet. II, 5). Et Paulus ait: Dei agricultura, Dei aedificatio estis (I Cor. III, 9). Quae videlicet civitas habet hic in sanctorum moribus magnum jam aedificium suum. In aedificio quippe lapis lapidem portat, quia lapis super lapidem ponitur; et qui portat alterum, portatur ab altero. Sic itaque, sic in sancta Ecclesia unusquisque et portat alterum, et portatur ab altero. Nam vicissim se proximi tolerant, ut per eos aedificium charitatis surgat. Hinc enim Paulus admonet, dicens: Invicem onera vestra portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi (Galat. VI, 2). Cujus legis virtutem denuntians, ait: Plenitudo legis charitas (Rom. XIII, 10). Si enim ego vos portare negligo in moribus vestris, et vos me tolerare contemnitis in moribus meis, charitatis aedificium inter nos unde surgit, quos vicaria dilectio per patientiam non conjungit? In aedificio autem, ut praediximus, lapis qui portat portatur, quia sicut ego jam mores eorum tolero qui adhuc in conversatione boni operis rudes sunt, ita ego quoque ab illis toleratus sum, qui me in timore Domini praecesserunt et portaverunt, ut portatus portare discerem. Sed ipsi quoque a majoribus suis portati sunt. Lapides vero qui in summitate atque extremitate fabricae ponuntur, ipsi quidem portantur ab aliis, sed alios nequaquam portant, quia et hi qui in fine Ecclesiae, id est in extremitate mundi nascituri sunt, tolerantur quidem a majoribus, ut eorum mores ad bona opera componantur; sed cum non eos sequuntur qui per illos proficiant, nullos super se fidelis

fabricae jam lapides portant. Nunc itaque alii portantur a nobis, nos vero portati sumus ab aliis. Omne autem pondus fabricae fundamentum portat, quia mores simul omnium solus Redemptor noster tolerat. De quo Paulus ait: Fundamentum enim aliud nemo potest ponere praeter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Jesus (I Cor. III, 11). Portat fundamentum lapides, et a lapidibus non portatur, quia Redemptor noster omnia nostra tolerat, sed in ipso malum non fuit quod tolerari debuisset. Unde bene nunc dicitur: Dimisit me super montem excelsum nimis, super quem erat quasi aedificium civitatis, quia mores et culpas nostras solus ille sustinet, qui totam sanctae Ecclesiae fabricam portat. Qui per prophetae vocem de perverse adhuc viventibus dicit: Laboravi sustinens (Jerem. VI, 11). Non autem sustinendo Dominus laborat, cujus divinitatis potentiam nulla fatigatio contingit; sed, verbis humanis loquens, ipsam suam circa nos patientiam laborem vocat.

6. Et notandum quod eamdem civitatem quam propheta conspexit ad Austrum vergentem vidit. Auster enim ventus quia in sancti Spiritus typo poni soleat, hi qui in sacro eloquio studiosi sunt recognoscunt; sicut e contrario per Aquilonem saepe diabolus designatur, quia et ille relaxat in calore, et iste constringit in frigore. Et Veritas dicit: Abundabit iniquitas, et refrigescet charitas multorum (Matth. XXIV, 12). Propheta quoque de Judaea asserit, dicens: Sicut frigidam facit cisterna aquam, sic frigidam fecit malitiam suam (Jerem. VI, 7). Hinc enim diabolus, propheta eodem attestante, dixisse perhibetur: Sedebo in monte Testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis (Isai. XIV, 13). At contra haec civitas ad Australem partem vergit, quia torporem mentis sancti Spiritus gratia relaxat. Hinc Psalmista ait: Converte, Domine, captivitatem nostram, sicut torrens in Austro (Psal. CXXV, 4). Captivitas enim nostra, quae torporis frigore ad sequendum Deum pigra remanserat, per calorem sancti Spiritus relaxatur, ut currat in amorem Dei. Unde et nunc dicitur quod civitas quae in monte constituta est

ad Austrum vergit, quia electorum Ecclesia cogitationes suas in afflatu sancti Spiritus aperit, atque, ab omni superbiae suae vertice descendens, in Deo, cui credit, amoris calorem concipit, ut nihil ei libeat, nisi ejus gratiae submitti, dilectione calefieri, ejus afflatus semper munere repleri. Unde et valido amore succensus contemplator dicebat: Anima mea exsultabit in Domino, et delectabitur super salutari ejus (Psal. XXXIV, 9). Qui enim Latine salutaris, ipse Hebraice Jesus dicitur. Propheta igitur quia vias ejus atque miracula redemptionis quoque nostrae mysterium per prophetiae spiritum contemplabatur, exsultare se in Domino et delectari super Jesu perhibet, quia inde gaudium in mente conceperat unde per amorem fortiter ardebat. Pensemus itaque si mentes spiritalium patrum in illo delectatae sunt qui necdum venerat, sed praevidebatur, cujus reatus sit ejus vias, ejus exempla, ejus monita, postquam venit et redemptionem exhibuit, non amare. Haec ergo civitas ad Austrum vergere dicitur, ac si aperte diceretur quod prior illa civitas, scilicet Synagoga, in infidelibus suis ad Aquilonem stetit, quae in frigore perfidiae duravit. Sancta vero Ecclesia, quae charitatem fidei concepit, per calorem ad Austrum vergit, et quasi calido vento innititur, quia non in sui fiducia, sed in dono spiritalis gratiae laetatur. Sequitur: VERS. 3. — Et introduxit me illuc.

7. Coelestis civitatis aedificium ille intrat, qui in sancta Ecclesia bonorum vias imitando considerat. Intrare quippe est aedificium super montem, electos sanctae Ecclesiae in virtutum culmine constitutos qualiter in Domino proficiant amando considerare. Iste enim vitam conjugio ligatam ducit, propriis rebus contentus est, aliena non diripit, de suo quidquid praevalet indigentibus largitur, peccata sine quibus quotidiana vita a conjugatis duci non potest flere non negligit. Pro eo enim quod ipsa familiaris cura animum conturbat, sese ad lacrymas excitat. Ille vero jam cuncta quae sunt mundi deseruit, nil ejus habere appetit, solius contemplationis exercitatione pascitur, spe praemiorum coelestium cum

fletibus laetatur, transcendit ipsa etiam quae haberi concessa sunt, quotidianum cum Domino habere secretum quaerit, nulla ejus animum praetereuntis mundi cura perturbat, mentem semper in exspectatione coelestium gaudiorum dilatat. Alius vero jam hujus mundi cuncta deseruit, ejusque mens in contemplationem coelestium sublevatur; sed tamen pro aedificatione multorum, locum regiminis tenens, qui rebus praetereuntibus ex desiderio non succumbit, ad eas aliquando propter proximorum compassionem reflectitur, ut ex earum cura indigentibus misereatur; verbum vitae auditoribus praedicat, animabus simul et corporibus necessaria ministrat. Et qui propter se ad coeleste desiderium jam per contemplationem evolat, adhuc tamen pro provectu et utilitate proximorum in rebus temporalibus desudat. Quisquis ergo in sancta Ecclesia considerare sollicite studet, ut aut in bonorum conjugatorum vita, aut in arce continentium et omnia quae sunt hujus mundi derelinquentium, aut etiam in praedicatorum summitate proficiat, jam civitatis in monte positae aedificium intravit. Nam qui considerare meliorum vitam ut proficiat negligit, adhuc extra fabricam stat. Et si honorem quem jam sancta Ecclesia in mundo habet admiratur, quasi aedificium foris conspicit et obstupescit. Et quia exterioribus solis intentus est, intus ingressus non est. Sequitur: IBID. — Et ecce vir, cujus erat species quasi species aeris.

8. Ipse signatur in viro, qui figuratur in monte. Vir autem iste metiri aedificium dicitur. Et recte Dominus per virum signatur et montem, quia et ipse omnia intra sanctam Ecclesiam judicando disponit, et ipse eamdem sanctam Ecclesiam portat, et portando ad coelestia sublevat. Sic in sancto quoque Evangelio idem Redemptor noster loquitur, dicens: Qui intrat per ostium, pastor est ovium (Joan. X, 1). Et paulo post: Ego sum ostium (Ibid., 7). Atque iterum post pauca subjungit: Ego sum pastor bonus (Ibid., 11). Si igitur ipse pastor, et ipse ostium, et intrat pastor per ostium, cur non hoc loco et ipse mons, et ipse vir intelligitur, qui aedificium metitur in monte? 9.

Sed quaerendum nobis est cur de hoc viro dicitur, Cujus species erat quasi species aeris. Cuncti autem novimus, fratres, metallum aeris valde esse durabile, atque omnimodo sonorum. Quid est ergo quod aspectus Mediatoris Dei et hominum speciei comparatur aeris, nisi hoc quod aperte novimus, quia unigenitus Filius, formam servi accipiens, fragilitatem carnis humanae per resurrectionis suae gloriam vertit in aeternitatem, quia in eo caro facta est jam sine fine durabilis? Nam surgens a mortuis jam non moritur, mors ei ultra non dominabitur (Rom. VI, 9). Quid est autem, quod ipsa ejus incarnatio sonoro metallo comparatur, nisi quod per eamdem assumptionem humanitatis nostrae insonuit omnibus gloria majestatis suae? Et quasi aspectum aeris habet in corpore, quia Deus mundo innotuit ex carne. Unde et per Joannem dicitur: Habebat in vestimento et in femore suo scriptum: Rex regum, et Dominus dominantium (Apoc. XIX, 16). Quid enim vestimentum ejus est, nisi corpus quod assumpsit ex Virgine? Nec tamen aliud ejus vestimentum est, atque aliud ipse. Nam nostrum quoque vestimentum caro dicitur, sed tamen ipsi nos sumus caro, qua vestimur. Hoc autem vestimentum illius longe ante Isaias aspiciens per crucem passionis sanguine cruentatum, dixit: Quare rubrum est indumentum tuum, et vestimenta tua quasi calcantium in torculari? (Isai. LXIII, 2.) Cui ipse respondit: Torcular calcavi solus, et de gentibus non est vir mecum (Ibid., 3). Solus enim torcular in quo calcatus est calcavit, qui sua potentia eam quam pertulit passionem vicit. Nam qui usque ad mortem crucis passus est, de morte cum gloria surrexit. Bene autem dicitur: Et de gentibus non est vir mecum (Ibid.), quia hi pro quibus pati venerat passionis ejus esse participes debebant, qui pro eo quod illo tempore necdum crediderant, de ipsis in passione queritur, quorum vita in illa passione quaerebatur. Per femur vero propagatio carnis est. Quia ergo per propagationem generis humani, sicut generationum ordines Matthaeo (Matth. I, 1, seq.), vel Luca (Luc. II, 7; III, 23, seq.) narrantibus describuntur, in hunc mundum venit ex virgine, et per

incarnationis suae mysterium quia Rex esset et Dominus cunctis ubique gentibus indicavit, in vestimento et femore scriptum habuit: Rex regum, et Dominus dominantium (Apoc. XIX, 16). Unde enim in mundo innotuit, ibi de se lectionis scientiam infixit. Praedicatio ergo ejus ex carne, quasi quidam sonitus ex aere est. Dicatur igitur recte: Cujus species quasi species aeris. Sequitur: IBID. — Et funiculus lineus in manu ejus.

10. In Septuaginta interpretibus funiculus lineus non habetur, sed funiculus caementariorum. Quorum si in hoc versu translationem ad exponendum tenemus, quid aliud caementarios quam sanctos doctores accipimus, qui, loquendo spiritalia, ad coeleste aedificium vivos lapides, id est electorum animas, componunt? Quidquid enim antiqui patres, quidquid prophetae, quidquid apostoli, quidquid apostolorum successores locuti sunt, quid aliud fuit quam compositio lapidum in hac quae quotidie construitur fabrica sanctorum? In funiculo autem caementariorum hoc agi solet, ut cognosci aequalitas vel rectitudo surgentis parietis valeat; et si lapis intus est, foras ejiciatur; si exterius prominet, interius revocetur. Et certe quotidie hoc agit praedicatio doctorum, ut unaquaeque anima, cui regiminis onera suscipere fortasse non expedit, etiamsi foris apparere appetat, interius revocetur; et rursum quae latere vult et sui tantummodo curam gerere, si sibi ac multis esse utilis potest, etiam cum latere desiderat, exterius producatur ut appareat. Sicque fit ut sanctorum lapidum ordo teneatur, dum saepe et volens ad honorem venire repellitur, et honorem fugiens in sacri ordinis arce sublevatur. Sed quia, ut per interpretem nostrum didicimus, Hebraeorum historia non habet caementariorum, sed funiculus lineus in manu ejus, hoc quod apud nos certius habetur, exponere debemus. Scimus autem quod funiculus lineus subtilior est quam si funiculi fiant aliunde. Et quid in funiculo lineo, nisi subtiliorem praedicationem, id est spiritalem debemus accipere? Censura etenim legis funiculus fuit, sed lineus non fuit, quia rudem populum non subtili praedicatione coercuit, in quo per poenae

sententiam non peccata cogitationis, sed operis resecavit. At postquam per semetipsum Dominus etiam cogitationes hominum praedicando religavit, et perfectum esse peccatum etiam in corde innotuit, funiculum lineum in manu tenuit. Ait enim: Audistis quia dictum est antiquis: Non moechaberis; ego autem dico vobis, quia qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam moechatus est eam in corde suo (Matth. V, 27; Exod. XX, 14). Funiculus ergo lineus praedicatio est subtilis, quae mentem audientis ligat, ne se vel in misera cogitatione dissolvat. Et notandum quod dicitur, quia ei funiculus in manu est, id est praedicatio in operatione. In se enim ostendit omne quod docuit, sicut scriptum est: Quae coepit Jesus facere et docere (Act. I, 1). Et quia ipsa quae dixit etiam scripturae tradidit, ut ad posteros mandarentur, recte subjungitur: IBID. — Et calamus mensurae in manu ejus.

11. De sancta Ecclesia per prophetam alium Dominus pollicetur, dicens: Orietur in ea viror calami et junci (Isai. XXXV, 7). Quod in loco alio exposuisse me memini (Lib. XXIX Moral., n. 51), ut per calamum scriptores, per juncum vero debeant auditores intelligi. Sed quia ad humorem aquae et juncus et calamus nasci solet, et ex una eademque aqua utraque proficiunt, et calamus quidem ad scribendum assumitur, cum junco vero scribi non potest, quid in junco et calamo accipere debemus, nisi quod una est doctrina veritatis, quae multos auditores irrigat? Sed irrigati alii ad hoc usque proficiunt in verbo Dei, ut etiam scriptores fiant, videlicet tanquam calami; alii vero verbum vitae audiunt, bonae spei et rectorum operum viriditatem tenent, sed tamen ad scribendum proficere nullatenus possunt. Hi quid in aqua Dei nisi quidam, ut ita dicam, junci sunt? Qui quidem viridescendo proficiunt, sed litteras exprimere nequaquam possunt. Redemptor igitur noster, quia verba quae dixit etiam per doctorum studium scribi largitus est, in manu calamum tenuit. Qui calamus mensurae dicitur, quia in ipsa doctorum studia sub quadam occulti judicii dispensatione detinentur, ut et aliis legentibus prosint, et aliis legentibus prodesse non

possint. Unde sancti apostoli, cum magistrum veritatis sibi apertius loquentem requirerent cur turbis in parabolis loqueretur, audierunt: Quia vobis datum est nosse mysterium regni coelorum, illis autem non (Matth. XIII, 11). Vel certe calamus mensurae est, quia in ipso sacro ejus eloquio, quod nobis conscriptum est, occultas esse dispensationes ejus agnoscimus. Nam per incomprehensibile ejus judicium et alter intra mensuram electorum mittitur, et alter foras relinquitur, ut nullo modo ad electorum numerum pertinere mereatur. Habet ergo funiculum, habet in manu calamum mensurae. Qui enim funiculo locum metitur, alibi funiculum trahit, aliunde retrahit, et huc ducit quem aliunde subducit. Sic nimirum, sic Redemptor noster in collectione hominum facit, dum alios a suis iniquitatibus educit, alios in sua iniquitate derelinquit. In his enim quos colligere dignatus est occultae mensurae funiculum traxit, et ab his quos derelinquendos esse judicavit, quid aliud nisi funiculum retraxit? ut et boni intra mensuram coelestis fabricae teneantur, et mali extra fabricam, in quibus bona quae aestimantur non sunt, quasi sine mensura remaneant.

12. Hunc funiculum et mensurae calamum in manu sua Redemptor noster tenuit, cum Paulum apostolum per apparentem virum Macedonem admonere dignatus est, ita ut idem Macedo vir diceret: Transiens adjuva nos (Act. XVI, 9). Et tamen volentes apostolos ad praedicandum ire in Asiam, non permisit Spiritus Jesu. Quid est quod sancti apostoli et ibi vocantur ire ubi fortasse pergere non cogitabant, et illuc ubi desiderabant pergere ire prohibentur, nisi quia occulti judicii funiculus et mensurae calamus tenetur in manu, ut et alii verba vitae audiant, et alii audire nullatenus mereantur? Funiculus ergo mensurae est, qui alio tractus est, aliunde retractus.

13. Sancto quoque Evangelio testante didicimus quod venit qui diceret: Magister, sequar te quocunque ieris (Matth. VIII, 19). Cui responsum est: Vulpes foveas habent, et volucres coeli nidos, Filius autem hominis non habet ubi caput suum reclinet (Ibid., 20). Venit alter qui diceret: Magister,

sine me primum ire, et sepelire patrem meum. Cui dicitur: Sine mortuos sepelire mortuos suos, tu autem me sequere, et annuntia regnum Dei (Ibid., 21, 22). Quid est quod ille promittit se ire, et deseritur; iste domum vult redire, et tamen ut sequi debeat jubetur? Ille non suscipitur, iste nec ad horae momentum ab obsequio relaxatur. Interna ergo occulti judicii dispensatione funiculus et mensurae calamus ducitur, in quo et iste trahitur, et ille relinquitur, ut coelestis fabrica non sine pio et justo examine construatur.

14. Potest etiam calamus mensurae Scriptura sacra pro eo intelligi, quod quisquis hanc legit, in ea semetipsum metitur vel quantum in spiritali virtute proficit, vel quantum a bonis quae praecepta sunt longe disjunctus remansit; quantum jam assurgat ad bona facienda, quantum adhuc in pravis actibus prostratus jaceat. Sequitur: IBID. — Stabat autem in porta.

15. Quisquis in porta stat, ex quadam parte intus est, ex quadam vero foris, quia aliud ejus foris aspicitur, aliud intus absconditur. Redemptor itaque noster, pro nobis misericorditer incarnatus, ante humanos oculos quasi in porta stetit, quia et per humanitatem visibilis apparuit, et sese invisibilem in divinitate servavit. Hinc enim Judaei qui hunc ex prophetarum promissione sustinuerant perfidiae suae confusione turbati sunt, quia eum quem ad ereptionem suam venire crediderant, mortalem videbant. Qui igitur in porta stat, sicut superius dictum est, ex quadam parte foris, ex quadam vero parte intus videtur. Unde nec ipsa Judaeorum perfidia sine divinae virtutis ostensione est derelicta. Nam miracula ejus videntes trahebantur ut crederent, sed rursum passiones illius perpendentes, dedignabantur Deum credere, quem carne mortalem videbant; unde factum est ut de ejus cognitione dubitarent. Videbant enim esurientem, sitientem, comedentem, bibentem, lassescentem, dormientem, et purum hunc hominem esse aestimabant. Videbant mortuos suscitantem, leprosos mundantem, caecos illuminantem, daemonia ejicientem, et esse hunc ultra

homines sentiebant. Sed ipsa ejus miracula in eorum corde cogitata humanitas perturbabat. Unde sancta Ecclesia sub sponsae voce hunc aperte jam videre desiderans, ait: En ipse stat post parietem nostrum (Cant. II, 9). Qui enim humanis oculis hoc quod de mortali natura assumpsit ostendit, et in seipso invisibilis permansit, in aperto se videre quaerentibus quasi post parietem stetit, quia videndum se manifestata majestate non praebuit. Quasi enim post parietem stetit, qui humanitatis naturam quam assumpsit ostendit, et divinitatis naturam humanis oculis occultavit. Unde et illic subditur: Respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per cancellos (Ibid.). Quisquis enim per fenestras, vel per cancellos respicit, nec totus latet, nec totus videtur. Sic sic nimirum Redemptor noster ante dubitantium oculos factus est, quia si miracula faciens nil pertulisset ut homo, plene eis apparuisset Deus; et rursum humana patiens, si nulla fecisset ut Deus, purus putaretur homo. Sed quia et divina fecit, et humana pertulit, quasi per fenestras vel per cancellos ad homines prospexit, ut Deus et appareret ex miraculis, et lateret ex passionibus, et homo cerneretur ex passionibus, sed tamen esse ultra hominem ex miraculis agnosceretur. Sed quia vir iste stare in porta dicitur, quaerendum nobis est utrum facie interius, et tergo exterius? Qua in re si ea quae sunt praemissa et subjuncta conspicimus, citius qualiter steterit invenimus. Prius enim dicitur: Erat quasi aedificium civitatis vergentis ad Austrum, et introduxit me illuc. Et paulo post de eodem viro subditur: Stabat autem in porta. Statimque subjungitur: VERS. 4. — Et locutus est ad me idem vir.

16. Qui enim introducto prophetae in aedificium stans in porta locutus est, profecto constat quia facie interius, et tergo exterius stetit. Sed introductus propheta, cui vir stans in porta locutus est, procul dubio faciem ad portam tenebat, unde verba loquentis audiebat. Quid est ergo, quod vir interius aspicit, propheta foris? Quid est quod ejusdem viri facies ad aedificium, prophetae vero oculi ad portam sunt, nisi quod Unigenitus Patris

idcirco incarnatus est, ut nos ad spiritale aedificium, id est ad sanctae Ecclesiae fidem introduceret? Cujus oculi aedificium suum semper aspiciunt, quia quantum quisque in virtutibus proficiat indesinenter attendunt. Propheta vero ad portam respicit, quia qui verba Dei audit semper oculos cordis ponere ad exitum debet, et sine cessatione meditari quando a praesenti vita exeat, atque ad aeterna gaudia pertingat. Propter hoc quippe incarnatus est Deus, ut nos introducat ad fidem, et reducat ad speciem visionis suae. Unde quoque in sancto Evangelio Veritas loquitur, dicens: Per me si quis introierit, salvabitur, et ingredietur et egredietur, et pascua inveniet (Joan. X, 9). Ingredietur videlicet ad fidem, egredietur autem ad speciem, pascua vero inveniet in aeterna satietate. Hinc etiam Psalmista ait: Dominus custodiat introitum tuum, et exitum tuum (Psal. CXX, 8). Custodit enim Dominus uniuscujusque animae introitum, quo intrat ad fidem, et exitum quoque quo exit ad speciem, ut neque intrans Ecclesiam erroribus supplantetur, neque ab hac temporali ad aeternam exiens, ab antiquo hoste rapiatur. Propter hunc vero egressum nostrum quem quotidie debemus mente meditari, Apostolus de Redemptore nostro loquitur, dicens: Ut sanctificaret per suum sanguinem populum, extra portam passus est. Exeamus igitur ad eum extra castra, improperium ejus portantes. Non enim hic habemus manentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus (Heb. XIII, 12, 13, 14). Vir itaque qui apparuit in porta stetit, atque ita locutus est, quia Mediator Dei et hominum Christus Jesus in ipso quoque passionis suae tempore praecepta vitae discipulis dedit, ut hi qui in eum credunt ad portam semper respiciant, et, passionem ejus sollicita consideratione pensantes, a suo quoque exitu cordis oculos non avertant. Nos quoque cum jam claustra carnis despicere, mortalitatis nostrae angustias per immortalitatis desiderium transire, ad supernae lucis libertatem tendere, ad coelestis patriae gaudia anhelare coeperimus, ad portam oculos tenemus, quia dum a sacramentis temporalibus transire ad

aeterna cupimus, quasi jam praesenti vitae terga dedimus, et cordis faciem in desiderio nostri exitus habemus. Scriptum quippe est: Corpus quod corrumpitur, aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem (Sap. IX, 15). Sic itaque per contemplationem jam mente extra carnis angustias tendimus, adhuc tamen in sacramentis quae cognovimus ipsa carnali angustia intra portam tenemur.

17. Saepe namque animus ita in divina contemplatione suspenditur, ut jam se percipere de aeterna illa libertate quam oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit (I Cor. II, 9), aliquid per quamdam imaginem laetetur; sed tamen, mortalitatis suae pondere reverberatus (Isai. LXIV, 4), ad ima relabitur, et quibusdam poenae suae vinculis ligatus tenetur. Portae igitur intendit, qui verae libertatis suae gaudia conspicit, jamque exire concupiscit, sed adhuc non valet. Hinc est quod Hebraicus populus, de Aegypti servitute liberatus, cum loquente Deo columnam nubis cerneret, unusquisque in tabernaculi sui foribus stabat, et adorabat (Exod. XXXIII, 10). De quibus paulo superius dicitur: Cum egrederetur Moyses ad tabernaculum, surgebat universa plebs, et stabat unusquisque in ostio papilionis sui (Ibid., 8). Ibi etenim stamus, ubi mentis oculos figimus. Unde Elias ait: Vivit Dominus, in cujus conspectu sto (III Reg. XVII, 1). Ibi utique stabat, ubi cor fixerat. Quid est autem populum columnam nubis aspicere, et in tabernaculi sui foribus stare atque adorare, nisi quod humana mens cum superiora illa atque coelestia utcunque in aenigmate conspicit, jam claustra habitationis corporeae per sublevatam cogitationem exit, atque illum humiliter adorat, cujus etsi videre substantiam non valet, jam tamen ejus potentiam per illuminationem spiritus miratur? Et cum Moyses tabernaculum ingreditur, ejus terga populus aspicit, et in papilionum suorum ostiis consistit, quia cum sanctus quisque praedicator alta de Deo loquitur, supernae habitationis jam utcunque tabernaculum ingreditur. Cujus praedicationis infirmi quique etsi virtutem plene pensare non possunt, tamen velut terga aspiciunt, quia

postrema quae praevalent, per intellectum sequuntur. Sed et in ipsis quoque minimis quae capere sufficiunt jam de suis papilionibus quasi exeunt, atque in ostiis stant, quia et habitacula carnis relinquere et ad illa aeternae vitae gaudia quae audiunt progredi conantur. Hinc est etiam quod Elias, cum vocem Domini secum loquentis audiret (III Reg. XIX, 9), in speluncae suae ostio stetisse describitur, et faciem velasse, quia cum per contemplationis gratiam vox supernae intelligentiae fit in mente, totus homo jam intra speluncam non est, quia animam carnis cura non possidet, sed stat in ostio, quia mortalitatis angustias exire meditatur.

18. Sed jam qui in ostio speluncae consistit, et verba Dei in aure cordis percipit, necesse est ut faciem velet, quia dum per supernam gratiam ad altiora intelligenda ducimur, quanto subtilius levamur, tanto semper per humilitatem nosmetipsos in intellectu nostro premere debemus, ne conemur plus sapere quam oportet sapere, sed sapere ad sobrietatem (Rom. XII, 3); ne dum nimis invisibilia discutimus, aberremus; ne in illa natura incorporea corporei luminis aliquid quaeramus. Aurem enim intendere et faciem operire est vocem interioris substantiae audire per mentem, et tamen ab omni specie corporea oculos cordis avertere, ne quid sibi in illa corporale animus fingat, quae ubique tota et ubique incircumscripta est. Nos itaque, fratres charissimi, qui jam per Redemptoris nostri mortem ac resurrectionem, atque ad coelos ascensionem, gaudia aeterna didicimus, qui in testimonium divinitatis ejus apparuisse exterius cives nostros angelos illius scimus, concupiscamus Regem, desideremus cives quos cognovimus, atque in hoc sanctae Ecclesiae aedificio stantes oculos in porta teneamus; demus terga mentis huic corruptioni vitae temporalis, intendamus cordis faciem ad coelestis patriae libertatem. Sed ecce adhuc multa sunt quae nos de cura vitae corruptibilis premunt. Quia ergo perfecte exire non possumus, saltem in speluncae nostrae ostio stemus, exituri quandoque prospere per

gratiam Redemptoris nostri, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA II

In duobus cap. XL versibus, quarto videlicet ac quinto, explicandis, de activa et contemplativa vita fuse disserit sanctus Doctor, et plurima, suo more, documenta moralia inspergit.

1. Ne quidam me fortasse tacita cogitatione reprehendant quod Ezechielis prophetae tam profunda mysteria a magnis expositoribus intentata discutere praesumo, qua mente id faciam agnoscant. Non enim hoc temeritate aggredior, sed humilitate. Scio enim quia plerumque multa in sacro eloquio quae solus intelligere non potui coram fratribus meis positus intellexi. Ex quo intellectu et hoc quoque intelligere studui, ut scirem ex quorum mihi merito intellectus daretur. Patet enim quia hoc mihi pro illis datur quibus mihi praesentibus datur. Ex qua re, largiente Deo, agitur ut et sensus crescat, et elatio decrescat, dum propter vos disco quod inter vos doceo, quia (verum fateor) plerumque vobiscum audio quod dico. Quidquid ergo in hoc propheta minus intellexero, meae caecitatis est; si quid vero intelligere apte potuero, ex divino munere vestrae venerationis est. Saepe autem per omnipotentis Domini gratiam in ejus eloquio quaedam intelliguntur melius cum sermo Dei secretius legitur, atque animus, culparum suarum conscius, dum recognoscit, quod audierit, doloris se jaculo percutit, et compunctionis gladio transfigit, ut nihil ei nisi flere libeat, et fluentis fletuum maculas lavare. Inter quae etiam aliquando ad sublimiora contemplanda rapitur, et in eorum desiderio suavi fletu cruciatur. Dolet se hic esse anima, ubi adhuc prostrata per infirmitatem jacet, atque illic adhuc non esse ubi illuminata fortiter vigeat, et jam mentis oculum ad mortalitatis tenebras non reducat. Hinc itaque, hinc ardor nascitur in mente, luctus oboritur ex ardore. Et quia inhaerere coelestibus necdum valet, fervore suo in lacrymis fessa requiescit. Sed aliud est cum de unius profectu res agitur, aliud cum de aedificatione multorum. Ea itaque doctrinae sermone, largiente Deo, proferenda sunt quae vitam audientium moresque

componunt. Nunc ergo quidquid nos ad studium bonae operationis aedificet in prophetae verbis, sicut coepimus, exsequamur. EZECH. XL, 4. — Fili hominis, vide oculis tuis, et auribus is audi.

2. Ad testimonium spiritalium rerum deducto, quid est quod cum dicitur: Vide oculis, additur tuis, et cum subditur Audi auribus, adjungitur tuis? Sed sciendum quia oculi atque aures corporis adsunt etiam carnalibus, eisque sunt in usu rerum quae corporaliter videntur. Oculi vero atque aures cordis solummodo spiritalium sunt, qui invisibilia per intellectum vident, et laudem Dei sine sono audiunt. Has omnipotens Dominus aures quaerebat, cum diceret: Quis habet aures audiendi audiat (Luc. VIII, 8). Quis namque in illo populo esse tunc poterat, qui aures corporis non haberet? Sed cum dicitur: Qui habet aures audiendi audiat, aperte monstratur quod illas aures quaereret quas omnes habere non poterant. Dicatur ergo: Fili hominis, vide oculis tuis, et auribus tuis audi. In priori autem locutionum nostrarum parte jam diximus cur propheta, quoties ad videnda spiritalia ducitur, filius hominis appellatur. Sed ne hoc mente excesserit, breviter replico, quia hac appellatione memoratur semper quid est ex infirmitate, ne extollatur de contemplationis magnitudine. Et notandum quia diversa sunt ut dicatur, Oculis tuis vide, auribus tuis audi, et tamen filius hominis vocetur. Sed per haec verba quid ei aliud aperte dicitur, nisi, spiritalia spiritaliter aspice, et tamen carnales infirmitates tuas memorare?

3. Hinc est etiam quod plerumque qui plus in contemplatione rapitur, contingit ut amplius in tentatione fatigetur; sicut quibusdam saepe contingere bene proficientibus solet, quorum mentem dum aut compunctio afficit, aut contemplatio super semetipsam rapit, statim etiam tentatio sequitur, ne de his ad quae rapta est extollatur. Nam compunctione vel contemplatione ad Deum erigitur, sed tentationis suae pondere reverberatur ad semetipsam, quatenus tentatio aggravet, ne contemplatio inflet; et item contemplatio elevet, ne tentatio demergat. Si enim sic contemplatio

attolleret, ut tentatio funditus deesset, in superbiam animus caderet. Et si sic tentatio premeret ut contemplatio non elevaret, plene in culpam laberetur. Sed mira dispensatione, in quodam medio anima libratur, ut neque in bonis superbiat, neque in malis cadat. Unde et per beatum Job de Domino dicitur: Et aquas appendit mensura (Job XXVIII, 25; XIX, 25). Aquas quippe Deo mensura appendere est inter prospera et adversa, inter dona et tentationes, inter summa et infima animarum sensum in humilitate custodire. Sic Elias ignem de coelo deposuerat, aquas coelo ligaverat, et tamen pavore unius mulieris territus, per deserta fugiebat (Reg. XVIII, 38; XVII, 1; XIX, 3). Apparet fugienti angelus, cibum praebet, quia longum iter restat praedicit, et tamen timorem de corde non excutit (III Reg. XIX, 7, 8), quia in prophetae mente magna erat custodia fortitudinis, illa infirmitas timoris. Sequitur. VERS. 4. — Pone cor tuum in omnia quae ego ostendam tibi, quia ut ostendantur tibi adductus es huc. Annuntia omnia quae tu vides domui Israel.

4. Pone cor tuum. Ac si dicatur: Considera. Quia ut ostendantur tibi adductus es huc, et annuntia omnia quae vides. Id est, ideo adductus es ut videas, et ideo vides ut annunties, quia quisquis spiritalia videndo proficit, oportet ut haec loquendo etiam aliis propinet. Videt quippe ut annuntiet, qui in eo quod in se proficit etiam de profectu proximi praedicando curam gerit. Unde et alibi scriptum est: Qui audit dicat: Veni (Apoc. XXII, 17). Cui enim jam vox vocantis Dei efficitur in corde, necesse est ut proximis per praedicationis officium erumpat in voce; et idcirco alium vocet, quia jam ipse vocatus est. Unde et sponsus quoque in Canticis canticorum loquitur, dicens: Quae habitas in hortis, amici auscultant, fac me audire vocem tuam (Cant. VIII, 13). In hortis enim sancta Ecclesia, in hortis unaquaeque anima habitat, quae jam viriditate spei est et bonorum operum charitate repleta. Sicca quippe spes est hujus saeculi, quia omnia quae hic amantur cum festinatione marcescunt; et Petrus nos apostolus festinare admonet, dicens:

In haereditatem incorruptibilem, incontaminatam, immarcescibilem (I Petr. I, 4). Quae ergo jam in hortis habitat, oportet ut sponsum suum vocem suam audire faciat, id est canticum bonae praedicationis emittat, in qua ille delectetur quem desiderat, quia amici auscultant, videlicet omnes electi, qui, ut ad coelestem patriam reviviscant, verba vitae audire desiderant. Sed jam propheta ea nobis quae videt aperiat. Sequitur: VERS. 5. — Et ecce murus forinsecus in circuitu domus undique.

5. Plerumque in sacro eloquio ex protectionis suae munimine murus dici ipse incarnatus Dominus solet, sicut de sancta Ecclesia per prophetam dicitur: Ponetur in ea murus, et antemurale (Isai. XXVI, 1). Ipse enim nobis murus est, qui nos undique custodiendo circumdat. Antemurale autem muri nostri prophetae omnes fuerunt, qui priusquam Dominus appareret in carne, ad construendam fidem prophetando missi sunt. In sancta ergo Ecclesia Dominus murus nobis et prophetae ejus antemurale sunt positi, quia ad nos, quos ipse perfecte protegit, etiam prophetarum verba in fidei constructione venerunt. Unde et bene prius murus, et post antemurale ponitur, quia vocati ex gentibus, nisi prius Dominum cognosceremus, prophetarum illius dicta minime suscepissemus. Et notandum quod iste murus spiritalis aedificii esse forinsecus dicitur. Murus quippe qui ad munitionem aedificii construitur, non interius, sed exterius poni solet. Quid ergo necessarium fuit ut diceretur forinsecus, cum nunquam poni murus intrinsecus soleat? quia necesse est ut exterius positus ea quae intus sunt defendat. Sed in hoc verbo quid aperte nisi ipsa dominica incarnatio demonstratur? Murus enim nobis intus est Deus, murus vero foris est Deus homo. Unde ei per quemdam prophetam dicitur: Existi in salutem populi tui, ut salvos facias christos tuos (Habac. III, 13). Iste etenim murus incarnatus, videlicet Dominus, murus nobis non esset, si forinsecus non fuisset, quia intus nos non protegeret, si exterius non appareret. Sed neque hoc negligenter praetereundum est, quod idem murus positus dicitur in circuitu domus undique. Domus quippe Dei non solum

angeli sancti, de quibus Psalmista ait: Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuae, et locum tabernaculi gloriae tuae (Psal. XXV, 8), sed etiam nos sumus, quorum mentes inhabitare dignatur. Et murus iste undique in circuitu domus est, quia Unigenitus Patris, qui sursum est firmitas angelorum, ipse deorsum factus est redemptio hominum. Illis fortitudo ne cadant, nobis adjutorium ut surgamus post casum.

6. Si vero per domum Dei hoc loco sola redemptorum hominum multitudo signatur, undique nobis Dominus et per circuitum murus est, quia, ut nos perfecte custodiret, omnia quae docuit ostendit, sicut scriptum est: Quae coepit Jesus facere et docere (Act. I, 1). Quia enim vocare nos ad coelestem patriam venit, nimirum despicere nos bona transitoria docuit, et mala temporalia non timere. Unde et opprobria non despexit, injurias pertulit, mortem non timuit, crucis patibulum non refugit; et cum hunc voluissent rapere, et regem constituere, statim fugit (Joan. VI, 15); quid nobis aliud his exemplis innuens, nisi ut debeamus hujus mundi et adversa non metuere, et prospera vitare? quia plus plerumque ejus bona occupant animum quam mala perturbant. Ante passionem vero suam contumelias audivit, nec tamen contumelias reddidit; traditorem suum diu tacitus pertulit, eique ficte salutanti dare osculum non recusavit; suscepit mortem, ne mori timeremus; ostendit resurrectionem, ut nos resurgere posse crederemus. Post passionem quoque suam de his qui se crucifixerant ad fidei gratiam vocavit, donum pro iniquitate reddidit. Qui ergo nos exemplo suo de omnibus instruxit, murus nobis per circuitum et undique factus est. Sequitur: IBID. — Et in manu viri calamus mensurae sex cubitorum et palmo.

7. Praeterita lectione (Hom. sup. n. 14) jam diximus quia per calamum Scriptura sacra signatur. Qui calamus mensurae esse dicitur, quia in ipsa omnem vitae nostrae actionem metimur, ut scilicet videamus vel quantum proficimus, vel quantum longe a profectu distamus. Nam saepe aliquid

agentes, jam cujusdam meriti esse nos credimus; sed cum ad verba Dei recurrimus, praecepta sublimia audimus, ibi cognocimus quantum a perfectione minus habeamus. Calamus ergo mensurae est, quia per manus scribentium vita mensuratur auditorum. Qui calamus in manu viri esse dicitur, sive quia sacrum eloquium in potestate est Mediatoris Dei et hominum, hominis Christi Jesu, seu certe quia hoc quod scribi voluit operando complevit. Idem vero calamus sex cubitorum et palmo esse describitur. Duae etenim vitae sunt, in quibus eos omnipotens Deus per sacrum eloquium erudit, activa videlicet et contemplativa. Et per sex cubitos quid aliud quam activa vita exprimitur? quia sexto die perfecit Deus omnia opera sua (Genes. II, 1). Palmus vero, qui super sex cubitos esse dicitur, jam de septimo est, sed tamen cubitus non est. Activa ergo vita signatur per sex cubitos, contemplativa per palmum, quia illam opere perficimus, de ista vero etiam cum contendimus, vix parum aliquid attingere valemus.

8. Activa enim vita est, panem esurienti tribuere, verbum sapientiae nescientem docere, errantem corrigere, ad humilitatis viam superbientem proximum revocare, infirmantis curam gerere, quae singulis quibusque expediant dispensare, et commissis nobis qualiter subsistere valeant providere. Contemplativa vero vita est charitatem quidem Dei proximi tota mente retinere, sed ab exteriore actione quiescere, soli desiderio conditoris inhaerere, ut nil jam agere libeat, sed, calcatis curis omnibus, ad videndam faciem sui Creatoris animus inardescat; ita ut jam noverit carnis corruptibilis pondus cum moerore portare, totisque desideriis appetere illis hymnidicis angelorum choris interesse, admisceri coelestibus civibus, de aeterna in conspectu Dei incorruptione gaudere. In palmo itaque manus et digiti tenduntur. Sed parum quid de mensura cubiti per palmum contingitur, quia quantolibet amore animus ardeat, quantalibet virtute se in Deum cogitatione tetendit, non jam quod amet perfecte videt, sed adhuc inchoat

videre quod amat, quia sicut fortissimus praedicator dicit: Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate, tunc autem facie ad faciem (I Cor. XIII, 12). Et, Nunc cognosco ex parte, tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum (Ibid.). De septimo ergo cubito palmum tangimus, quia in hac vita positi contemplationis intimae sola initia degustamus. Activa enim vita quia perfecte teneri potest, et sexto die homo est conditus (Genes. I, 27), qui bona debet operari, sex cubitos calamus habet.

9. Bene has utrasque vitas duae illae mulieres signaverunt, Martha videlicet et Maria (Luc. X, 40): quarum una satagebat circa frequens ministerium, alia vero sedebat ad pedes Domini, et audiebat verba de ore ejus. Cumque contra sororem Martha quereretur quod se adjuvare negligeret, respondit Dominus, dicens: Martha, occuparis et satagis circa multa; porro unum est necessarium. Maria autem optimam partem elegit, quae non auferetur ab ea (Ibid., 41, 42). Ecce pars Marthae non reprehenditur, sed Mariae laudatur. Neque enim bonam partem elegisse Mariam dicit, sed optimam, ut etiam pars Marthae indicaretur bona. Quare autem pars Mariae sit optima, subinfertur cum dicitur: Quae non auferetur ab ea. Activa etenim vita cum corpore deficit. Quis enim in aeterna patria panem esurienti porrigat, ubi nemo esurit? Quis potum tribuat sitienti, ubi nemo sitit? Quis mortuum sepeliat, ubi nemo moritur? Cum praesenti ergo saeculo vita aufertur activa, contemplativa autem hic incipitur, ut in coelesti patria perficiatur, quia amoris ignis qui hic ardere inchoat, cum ipsum quem amat viderit, in amore ipsius amplius ignescet. Contemplativa ergo vita minime aufertur, quia subtracta praesentis saeculi luce perficitur.

10. Has utrasque vitas, sicut et ante nos dictum est (Ab August., l. XXII contra Faustum, c. 54, 55), duae beati Jacob mulieres signaverunt, Lia videlicet et Rachel (Genes. XXIX, 16). Lia quippe interpretatur laboriosa, Rachel vero ovis, vel visum principium. Activa autem vita laboriosa est, quia desudat in opere; contemplativa vero simplex ad solum videndum

principium anhelat, videlicet ipsum qui ait: Ego principium, propter quod et loquor vobis (Joan. VIII, 25). Beatus autem Jacob Rachel quidem concupierat, sed in nocte accepit Liam, quia videlicet omnis qui ad Dominum convertitur, contemplativam vitam desiderat, quietem aeternae patriae appetit; sed prius necesse est ut in nocte vitae praesentis operetur bona quae potest, desudet in labore, id est Liam accipiat, ut post ad videndum principium in Rachel amplexibus requiescat. Erat autem Rachel videns, sed sterilis; Lia vero lippa, sed fecunda; Rachel pulchra et infecunda, quia contemplativa vita speciosa in animo est, sed dum quiescere in silentio appetit, filios non generat ex praedicatione. Videt et non parit, quia dum quietis suae studium diligit, minus se in aliorum collectione succendit; et quantum introrsus conspicit, aperire aliis praedicando non sufficit. Lia vero lippa et fecunda est, quia activa vita, dum occupatur in opere, minus videt, sed dum modo per verbum, modo per exemplum ad imitationem suam proximos accendit, multos in bono opere filios generat. Et si in contemplatione mentem tendere non valet, ex eo tamen quod agit exterius, gignere sequaces valet. Recte ergo in mensura calami prius sex cubiti, et postmodum palmus dicitur, quia ante activa agitur, ut ad contemplativam postmodum veniatur.

11. Sed sciendum est quia sicut bonus ordo vivendi est ut ab activa in contemplativam tendatur, ita plerumque utiliter a contemplativa animus ad activam reflectitur, ut per hoc quod contemplativa mentem accenderit, perfectius activa teneatur. Debet ergo nos activa ad contemplativam transmittere, et aliquando tamen ex eo quod introrsus mente conspeximus contemplativa melius ad activam revocare. Unde et idem Jacob post Rachelis amplexus ad Liae rediit, quia et post visum principium laboriosa vita boni operis non est funditus deserenda.

12. Est autem in contemplativa vita magna mentis contentio, cum sese ad coelestia erigit, cum in rebus spiritalibus animum tendit, cum transgredi

nititur omne quod corporaliter videtur, cum sese angustat ut dilatetur. Et aliquando quidem vincit, et reluctantes tenebras suae caecitatis exsuperat, ut de incircumscripto lumine quiddam furtim et tenuiter attingat; sed tamen ad semetipsam protinus reverberata revertitur, atque ab ea luce, ad quam respirando transiit, ad suae caecitatis tenebras suspirando rediit. Quod bene sacra historia designat, quae beatum Jacob cum angelo luctatum narrat. Cum enim ad parentes proprios rediret, in via angelum invenit, cum quo in luctamine magnum certamen habuit (Genes. XXXII, 24). Is enim qui certat in luctamine, aliquando superiorem se, aliquando vero eum cum quo contenderit inferiorem invenit. Designat ergo angelus Dominum, et Jacob qui cum angelo contendit uniuscujusque perfecti viri et in contemplatione positi animam exprimit. Quae videlicet anima cum contemplari Deum nititur, velut in quodam certamine posita, modo quasi exsuperat, quia intelligendo et sentiendo de incircumscripto lumine aliquid degustat; modo vero succumbit, quia et degustando iterum deficit. Quasi ergo vincitur angelus, quando intellectu intimo apprehenditur Deus.

13. Sed notandum quod idem victus angelus nervum femoris Jacob tetigit, eumque marcescere statim fecit, atque ab eo tempore Jacob uno claudicavit pede, quia scilicet omnipotens Deus cum jam per desiderium et intellectum cognoscitur, omnem in nobis voluptatem carnis arefacit. Et qui prius quasi duobus pedibus innitentes, et Deum videbamur quaerere, et saeculum tenere, post agnitionem suavitatis Dei unus in nobis pes sanus remanet, atque alius claudicat, quia necesse est ut, debilitato amore saeculi, solus convalescat in nobis amor Dei. Si ergo tenemus angelum, uno claudicamus pede, quia dum crescit in nobis fortitudo amoris intimi, infirmatur procul dubio fortitudo carnis. Omnis quippe qui uno pede claudicat soli illi pedi innititur quem sanum habet, quia cui desiderium terrenum jam arefactum fuerit, in solo pede amoris Dei tota virtute se sustinet. Et in ipso stat, quia pedem amoris saeculi quem ponere in terra

consueverat, jam a terra suspensum portat. Et nos ergo si ad parentes proprios, id est ad spiritales patres redimus, teneamus in via angelum, ut suavitate intima apprehendamus Deum. Contemplativae etenim vitae amabilis valde dulcedo est, quae super semetipsam animam rapit, coelestia aperit, terrena autem debere esse contemptui ostendit, et spiritalia mentis oculis patefecit, corporalia abscondit. Unde bene Ecclesia in Canticis canticorum dicit: Ego dormio, et cor meum vigilat (Cant. V, 2). Vigilanti etenim corde dormit, quia per hoc quod interius contemplando proficit, ab inquieto foris opere quiescit.

14. Sed inter haec sciendum est quia quandiu in hac mortali carne vivitur, nullus ita in contemplationis virtute proficit, ut in ipso jam incircumscripto luminis radio mentis oculos infigat. Neque enim omnipotens Deus jam in sua claritate conspicitur, sed quiddam sub illa speculatur anima, unde refota proficiat, et post ad visionis ejus gloriam pertingat. Sic namque Isaias cum se Dominum vidisse fateretur, dicens: Anno quo mortuus est rex Ozias, vidi Dominum sedentem super solium excelsum et elevatum, protinus adjunxit: Et ea quae sub eo erant implebant templum (Isai. VI, 1). Quando Ozias rex superbus ac praesumptor moritur, Dominus videtur, quia cum mundi hujus elatio a desiderio mentis occiditur, tunc ipsa mens Dei gloriam contemplatur. Et notandum quod Dominus super solium excelsum et elevatum sedet. Quid namque est ejus solium, nisi creatura angelica vel humana, cui per intellectum quem dedit praesidet? Quod videlicet solium excelsum et elevatum dicitur, quia et natura humana ad coelestem gloriam elevata proficit, et creatura angelica dum multis spiritibus cadentibus jam solidata est in coelo ne cadat, inde elevata est unde et confirmata. Templum vero ejus hoc est quod solium, quia aeternus Rex ibi habitat ubi sedet. Nos ergo templum illius sumus, in quorum mentibus habitare dignatur. Sed ea quae sub eo erant implebant templum, quia quidquid de illo modo conspicitur, adhuc non est ipse, sed sub ipso est.

Sic Jacob angelum vidit, et vidisse se Dominum fatetur (Genes. XXXII, 30), quia cum ministeria ejus conspicimus, jam multum est quod super nosmetipsos levamur. Notandum vero quod dicitur: Implebant templum, quoniam etsi angelus apparet, infirmae tamen mentis desiderio satisfacit, ut si adhuc majus non potest, jam tamen minus quod videt admiretur. Ea ergo quae sub eo sunt implent templum, quia, sicut dictum est, et cum mens in contemplatione profecerit, non jam quod ipse est, sed id quod sub ipso est contemplatur. In qua videlicet contemplatione jam quietis internae gustus contingitur. Cujus quia quaedam quasi pars est, et perfecta nunc esse non potest, recte in Apocalypsi scriptum est: Factum est silentium in coelo, quasi media hora (Apoc. VIII, 1). Coelum quippe est anima justi, sicut per prophetam Dominus dicit: Coelum mihi sedes est (Isai. LXVI, 1). Et, Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei (Psal. XVIII, 1). Cum ergo quies contemplativae vitae agitur in mente, silentium fit in coelo, quia terrenorum actuum strepitus quiescit a cogitatione, ut ad secretum intimum aurem animus apponat. Sed quia haec quies mentis esse in hac vita perfecta non potest, nequaquam hora integra factum in coelo silentium dicitur, sed quasi media hora, ut neque ipsa media hora plene sentiatur, cum praemittitur quasi, quia mox ut se animus sublevare coeperit, et quietis intimae lumine perfundi, redeunte citius cogitationum strepitu, de semetipso confunditur, et confusus caecatur. Vita igitur contemplativa quae illic hora quasi media dicitur, apud Ezechielem prophetam non cubitus, sed palmus appellatur. Ecce, fratres charissimi, dum uniuscujusque vitae causas exprimere cupimus, paulo latius per excessum locuti sumus. Sed bonis mentibus, quibus utraque eadem vita est ad agendum amabilis, esse non debet ad audiendum gravis. Sequitur: IBID. — Et mensus est latitudinem aedificii calamo uno, altitudinem quoque calamo uno.

15. Omnipotens Deus, qui nec in magnis tenditur, nec in minimis angustatur, sic de tota simul Ecclesia loquitur ac si de una anima loquatur.

Et saepe quod ab eo de una anima dicitur nil obstat si de tota simul Ecclesia intelligatur. Latitudo itaque aedificii ad charitatem pertinet, de qua Psalmista dicit: Latum mandatum tuum nimis (Psal. CXVIII, 96). 1330 Nil enim latius quam omnes in sinu amoris recipere, et nullas odii angustias sustinere. Sic quippe lata est charitas, ut in amplitudine dilectionis suae capere etiam inimicos possit. Unde et praecipitur: Diligite inimicos vestros, benefacite iis qui oderunt vos (Luc. VI, 27). Considerandum quoque nobis est quia latitudo in aequalitate, altitudo vero in sublimitate tenditur. Latitudo ergo pertinet ad charitatem proximi, altitudo ad intelligentiam conditoris. Sed latitudo et altitudo aedificii uno calamo mensuratur, quia videlicet unaquaeque anima quantum lata fuerit in amore proximi, tantum et alta erit in cognitione Dei. Dum enim se per amorem juxta dilatat, per cognitionem se superius exaltat; et tantum super semetipsam excelsa fit, quantum se juxta se in proximi amorem tendit. Et quia aedificium quod inhabitat Deus ex angelica simul et humana natura perficitur, per hoc quod angelica creatura sursum est, et humana adhuc deorsum, potest per latitudinem atque altitudinem aedificii utraque haec creatura significari, quia ista adhuc in imis degit, illa vero in sublimibus permanet. Sed uno calamo mensuratur utraque, quia humilitas hominum quandoque ad aequalitatem perducitur angelorum. Unde scriptum est: Neque nubent, neque nubentur, sed erunt sicut angeli Dei in coelo (Matth., XXII, 30). Et unde per Joannem dicitur: Mensura hominis quae est angeli (Apoc. XXI, 17). Quia usque ad illam altitudinem gloriae homo perducitur, in qua solidatos se angeli laetantur. Latitudo ergo aedificii tanta est, quanta et altitudo, quia electi quique qui modo in imis laborant, quandoque illis beatissimis spiritibus non erunt inaequales. Sed nos inter haec redeamus ad mentem, ac totis medullis cordis Deum diligamus et proximum. Dilatemur in affectu charitatis, ut exaltemur in gloria celsitudinis. Compatiamur per amorem proximo, ut conjungamur per cognitionem Deo. Condescendamus fratribus minimis in terra, ut

coaequemur angelis in coelo, quia vir qui sua imagine Redemptorem signat, mensus est latitudinem aedificii calamo uno, altitudinem quoque calamo uno. Nunc igitur metitur mores, pensat opera, cogitationes considerat, ut sine fine postmodum retributionem reddat Jesus Christus Unigenitus Patris, qui cum eo vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA III

In trium versuum explicatione potissimum describitur Ecclesiae aedificium ex omnibus sub utroque Testamento justis constructum.

1. Vir cui calamus mensurae in manu esse describitur. EZECH. XL, 6. — Venit ad portam quae respiciebat ad viam Orientalem. Quis vero alius portae hujus appellatione signatur, nisi ipse Dominus ac Redemptor noster, qui nobis janua factus est regni coelestis? Sicut ipse ait: Nemo venit ad Patrem, nisi per me (Joan. XIV, 6). Sed cum eumdem virum lineis indutum figuram Domini tenere dixerimus, quaerendum nobis est qua ratione conveniat ut idem Dominus et per virum designari valeat, et per portam, dum vir veniat ad portam? Nunquidnam ipse venit ad semetipsum? An ita est, quia et in Evangelio ipse testatur, dicens: Qui non intrat per ostium in ovile ovium, sed ascendit aliunde, ille fur est et latro. Qui autem intrat per ostium, pastor est ovium (Joan. X, 1, 2). Et paulo post dicit: Ego sum ostium (Ibid., 9). Atque iterum subjungit: Ego sum pastor bonus (Ibid., 14). Si ergo pastor intrat per ostium, et ipse est ostium, ipse pastor, ipse procul dubio intrat per semetipsum. Ecce dum Ezechielis sensum enodare cupimus, de Evangelio etiam quaestionem ligamus. Quaerendum nobis itaque est qualiter et ipse intret, et per semetipsum intret. Dominus enim ac Redemptor noster, cum sancta Ecclesia, quam redemit, secundum carnem una substantia est, Paulo attestante qui ait: Adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi in carne mea pro corpore ejus, quod est Ecclesia (Coloss. I, 24). Hujus capitis corpus Ecclesia est, et hujus corporis caput Christus (Ephes. I, 22). De quo suo capite exsultat corpus, id est sancta Ecclesia, cum per Psalmistam dicit: Nunc autem exaltavit caput meum super inimicos meos (Psal. XXVI, 6). Quia enim quandoque ipsa etiam exaltanda est, jam nunc caput suum super inimicos suos exaltatum gaudet in coelis. Cum ergo electi quique ad vitam perveniunt, quia membra ejus per eum intrant ad eum, ipse per se intrat ad se. Ipse enim in suis membris est qui intrat, ipse

caput ad quod intrantia membra perveniunt. Quod Ezechiel propheta multipliciter insinuat, qui virum venisse dicit ad portam, et quae eadem porta sit ostendit, dicens: Quae respiciebat ad viam Orientalem. Ipse etenim nobis est via, qui dixit: Ego sum via, veritas et vita (Joan. XIV, 6). Ipse etiam Orientalis via, de quo scriptum est: Ecce vir, Oriens nomen ejus (Zach. VI, 12). Porta ergo viam Orientalem respicit, quia illum signat qui nobis iter ad ortum fecit luminis.

2. Potest etiam portae nomine unusquisque praedicator intelligi, quia quisquis nobis januam regni coelestis ore suo aperit porta est. Unde et duodecim portae vel in Joannis Apocalypsi (Apoc. XXI, 21), vel in extrema hujus prophetae visione describuntur. Potest etiam portae nomine Scripturae sacrae scientia non inconvenienter intelligi, quae, dum nobis intellectum aperit, coelestis regni januam pandit. Possumus portae nomine et fidem accipere, quam primam contingimus, ut ad virtutum aedificia intremus. Unde hic aperte subjungitur: IBID. — Et ascendit per gradus ejus.

3. Quid enim gradus sunt hujus portae, nisi merita virtutum? Sive enim in cognitione Mediatoris Dei et hominum, hominis Jesu Christi, seu in scientia divini eloquii, seu in ipsa fide quam de illo accepimus, quibusdam gradibus ad altiora incrementa pervenimus. Nemo enim repente fit summus, sed in bona conversatione a minimis quisque inchoat, ut ad magna perveniat. De his gradibus per Psalmistam dicitur: Deus in gradibus ejus dignoscetur dum suscipiet eam (Psal. XLVII, 4). Dum enim sanctam Ecclesiam Dominus suscipit, in gradibus ejus dignoscitur, quia ejus gloria per illius incrementa declaratur. Quantum enim sancta Ecclesia ascendendo profecerit, tantum Deus hominibus ex ejus virtutibus innotescit. De his quoque gradibus beatus Job loquitur, dicens: Per singulos gradus meos pronuntiabo illum (Job. XXXI, 37). Omnipotentem quippe Dominum per singulos gradus suos pronuntiat, qui per incrementa virtutum quae accipit ei semper laudem suae pietatis reddit. Si quidam gradus in cordis ascensione

non essent, Psalmista non diceret: Ambulabunt de virtute in virtutem (Psal. LXXXIII, 8).

4. Nec mirum si de virtute in virtutem gradus sunt, quando unaquaeque virtus quasi quibusdam gradibus augetur, et sic per incrementa meritorum ad summa perducitur. Aliud namque sunt virtutis exordia, aliud provectus, aliud perfectio. Si enim ipsa fides ad perfectionem suam non quibusdam gradibus duceretur, sancti apostoli minime dixissent: Adauge nobis fidem (Luc. XVII, 5). Et quidam venit ad Jesum, qui curari voluit filium suum, sed requisitus an crederet, respondit: Credo, Domine, adjuva incredulitatem meam (Marc. IX, 24). Pensate, rogo, quod dicitur. Si credebat, cur incredulitatem dicebat? Si vero incredulitatem habere se noverat, quomodo credebat? Sed quia per occultam inspirationem gratiae meritorum suorum gradibus fides crescit, uno eodemque tempore is qui necdum perfecte crediderat simul et credebat et incredulus erat.

5. Hos nimirum gradus Dominus sub messis nomine describit, dicens: Sic est regnum Dei, quemadmodum si jaciat homo semen in terram, et dormiat, et exsurgat nocte ac die, et semen germinet et crescat, dum nescit ille. Ultro enim terra fructificat primum herbam deinde spicam, deinde plenum frumentum in spica. Et cum se produxerit fructus, statim mittit falcem, quoniam adest tempus messis (Marc. IV, 26, seq.). Semen homo jactat in terram, cum cordi suo bonam intentionem inserit. Et postquam semen jactaverit dormit, quia in spe boni operis quiescit. Nocte vero exsurgit ac die, inter adversa et prospera proficit. Et semen germinat et crescit, dum nescit ille, quia et cum adhuc metiri incrementa sua non valet, semel concepta virtus ad provectum ducitur. Et ultro terra fructificat, quia, praeveniente se gratia, mens hominis spontanee ad fructum boni operis assurgit. Sed haec eadem terra primum herbam, deinde spicam, deinde plenum frumentum producit in spica. Herbam quippe producere est inchoationis bonae adhuc teneritudinem habere. Ad spicam vero herba

pervenit, cum se virtus animo concepta ad profectum boni operis pertrahit. Plenum autem frumentum in spica fructificat, quando jam in tantum virtus proficit, ut esse robusti et perfecti operis possit. At cum se produxerit fructus, statim mittit falcem, quoniam adest tempus messis. Omnipotens enim Deus producto fructu falcem mittit, et messem suam desecat, quia cum unumquemque ad opera perfecta perduxerit, ejus temporalem vitam per emissam sententiam incidit, ut granum suum ad coelestia horrea perducat. Cum igitur desideria bona concipimus, semen in terram mittimus. Cum vero operari recta incipimus, herba sumus. Cum autem ad provectum boni operis crescimus, ad spicam pervenimus. Cumque in ejusdem boni operis perfectione solidamur, jam plenum frumentum in spica proferimus.

6. Herba etenim Petrus fuerat, qui, passionis tempore, per amorem Dominum sequens, hunc confiteri ante ancillae vocem timebat (Luc. XXII, 57). Erat enim jam viriditas in mente, quia credebat omnium Redemptorem, sed valde adhuc flexibilis pede conculcabatur timoris. Jam in spicam surrexerat quando eum quem moriturum confiteri timuerat, nuntiante Angelo, in Galilaea viventem videbat. Sed tunc plenum granum in spicam pervenerat, quando, veniente desuper Spiritu, et suam mentem in illius amore roborante, ita solidatus est, ut vires persequentium caesus despiceret, et Redemptorem suum libere inter flagella praedicaret (Act. V, 29). Nullus itaque qui ad bonum propositum adhuc in mentis teneritudine esse conspicitur, despiciatur, quia frumentum Dei ab herba incipit, ut granum fiat. Vir ergo vestitus lineis, venit ad portam, quia Dominus ac Redemptor noster membris suis intrantibus perducitur ad se. Et ascendit per gradus ejus, quia, nobis proficientibus, eo nobis amplius exaltatur, quo altus et incomprehensibilis esse cognoscitur. In virtutum quippe nostrarum gradibus ipse ascendere dicitur, quia tanto ipse sublimior nobis ostenditur, quanto noster animus a rebus infimis separatur. Sequitur: IBID. — Et mensus est

limen portae calamo uno in latitudinem, id est limen unum calamo uno in latitudinem.

7. Cur postquam dictum est, Limen portae, statim subjungitur, Limen unum, nisi quia aperte innuit quod adhuc inferius limen aliud dicatur? Porta autem a limine surgit ut porta sit. Si igitur porta Dominus, quis hujus portae limen est, nisi illi antiqui patres, ex quorum progenie Dominus incarnari dignatus est? Sicut per Paulum dicitur: Quorum patres, ex quibus Christus secundum carnem, qui est super omnia Deus benedictus in saecula (Rom. IX, 5). Notandum vero est in hac Pauli sententia quod dii et caeteri hominum sunt vocati, sicut Moysi dicitur: Ponam te in deum Pharaoni (Exod. VII, 1). Et per Psalmistam dicitur: Ego dixi, dii estis (Psal. LXXXI, 6). Et rursum: Deus stelit in synagoga deorum (Ibid. 1). Sed aliud est nuncupative, aliud naturaliter dici Deum. Et si Moyses in deum Pharaoni est positus, sed deus intra omnia, non deus super omnia dicitur. Qui vero est intra uterum Virginis incarnatus, Deus super omnia vocatur. Itaque limen portae sunt antiqui patres, ex quibus ille natus est qui nobis aditum regni coelestis aperuit. Limen autem portae uno calamo mensuratur, quia ipsi antiqui patres, qui potuerunt Redemptorem nostrum et prophetando et bene vivendo praedicare, tanquam sex cubitos in perfectione operis, et palmum in inchoatione contemplationis habuerunt. Quia enim eorum vitam in unitatem fidei et perfecta operatio, et inchoata contemplatio sublimem reddidit, in uno calamo mensura liminis fuit. Sequitur: VERS. — Et thalamum uno calamo in longum, et uno calamo in latum.

8. Consideremus quid agi in thalamo soleat, atque exinde hoc quod in sancta Ecclesia agitur colligamus. In thalamo quippe sponsus et sponsa foederantur, sibique in amore junguntur. Quid ergo sunt in sancta Ecclesia thalami, nisi eorum corda in quibus anima per amorem sponso invisibili jungitur, ut ejus desiderio ardeat, nulla jam quae in mundo sunt concupiscat, praesentis vitae longitudinem poenam deputet, exire festinet, et amoris

amplexu in coelestis sponsi visione requiescere? Mens itaque, quae jam talis est, nullam praesentis vitae consolationem recipit, sed ad illum quem diligit medullitus suspirat, fervet, anhelat, anxiatur. Vilis ei fit ipsa salus corporis, quia transfixa est vulnere amoris; unde et in Canticis canticorum dicit: Vulnerata charitate ego sum (Cant. II, 5, sec. LXX). Mala autem salus est cordis, quae dolorem hujus vulneris nescit. Cum vero anhelare jam in coeleste desiderium et sentire vulnus amoris coeperit, fit anima salubrior ex vulnere, quae prius aegrotabat ex salute.

9. Menti autem sponsum suum fortiter amanti, de mora vitae praesentis una solet esse consolatio, si per hoc quod ipsa ab ejus visione differtur, aliorum animae ejus verbo proficiant, et ad coelestem sponsum amoris facibus inardescant. Moeret, quia differri se conspicit; triste est ei omne quod aspicit, quia illum adhuc non videt, quem videre concupiscit. Sed est, ut dixi, non parva consolatio, si cum fervens anima differtur, per eam multae colliguntur, ut tarde eum cum multis videat, quem sola videre citius volebat. Unde rursus in Cantico canticorum sponsa dicit: Fulcite me floribus, et stipate me malis, quia amore langueo (Cant. II, 5). Quid namque sunt flores nisi animae bonum jam opus inchoantes et desiderium coeleste redolentes? Quid mala de floribus, nisi perfectae jam bonorum mentes, quae ad fructum perveniunt boni operis de initio sanctae propositionis? Quae ergo amore languet, fulciri quaerit floribus, et stipari malis, quia si illum quem desiderat, videre adhuc non permittitur, magna est ei consolatio si de aliorum provectibus laetetur. Anima ergo sancto amore languida, floribus malisque fulcitur, ut requiescat in bono opere proximi, quae adhuc contemplari non valet vultum Dei.

10. Pensemus, rogo, qualis thalamus Pauli mens fuerat, qui dicebat: Mihi vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum (Philip. I, 21); omnipotenti Deo in quantum se amore conjunxerat, qui sibi vitam Christum tantummodo, et mori lucrum esse deputabat? Hinc est quod iterum dicit: Desiderium habens

dissolvi, et cum Christo esse multo magis melius (Ibid., 23). Sed ecce qui dissolvi desideras quo amore langueas videamus. Quia interim differri te conspicis, fulciri quaeso floribus non requiris? Quaeris plane, nam sequitur: Permanere autem in carne necessarium propter vos (Ibid. 24). Et proficientibus discipulis dicit: Quae est enim nostra spes, aut gaudium, aut corona gloriae? Nonne vos ante Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum? (I Thess. II, 19.)

11. Hinc est quod idem thalamus uno calamo in longum, et uno calamo in latum dicitur mensus. Longitudo quippe ad longanimitatem exspectationis pertinet, et latitudo ad amplitudinem charitatis. Tantum ergo unusquisque thalamus habet in longitudinem, quantum et in latitudinem habere potuerit, quia mens coelesti desiderio succensa, quantum amorem habuerit ad colligendum proximum, tantum et longanimitatem exhibet ad exspectandum Deum, et patienter portat moras longitudinis, quia se in provectu proximi dilatat amplitudo charitatis. Potest etiam ipsa longitudo longanimitatem patientiae quae exhibetur proximo designare. Et quia latitudo charitatem signat, quae sinum mentis aperit, et amicos simul atque inimicos in amorem recipit, tanta est longitudo thalami, quanta latitudo, quia quantum lata mens fuerit per amorem, tantum erit et patiens per longanimitatem. Nam tantum quisque portat proximum quantum amat. Si enim amas, portas; si desistis amare, desistis tolerare. Quem enim minus diligimus, minus etiam toleramus, quia, irruente fastidio, citius facta proximi adducuntur in gravedinem ponderis quae nobis non levigat penna charitatis. Sequitur: IBID. — Et inter thalamos, quinque cubitos.

12. Unum supra thalamum dixerat, et postmodum quinque cubitos esse inter thalamos narrat: ea videlicet ratione qua multi thalami unum faciunt, sicut et multae Ecclesiae una Ecclesia vocatur. Unde et in Joannis Apocalypsi septem Ecclesiis scribitur, per quas una catholica designatur. Hi itaque qui in sancta Ecclesia, sicut diximus, ferventi amore Deum videre

sitiunt, eique jam per desiderium conjunguntur, thalami vocantur. Sed tamen sunt in ea quidam qui penetrare subtilia non valentes, et quinque adhuc corporis sensibus depressi, tanto minus amant eum qui fecit omnia, quanto amplius in his quae facta sunt illigantur. Et jam quidem exercere se in timore Domini, et amore proximi tendere student, bona opera corporaliter agere, eleemosynis peccata redimere; sed quia amore intimo ardere ad coeleste desiderium nesciunt, quasi adhuc devincti corporeis sensibus tenentur. Isti itaque thalami non sunt, sed tamen inter thalamos continentur, quia per eorum ducatum qui visionem Dei perfecte diligunt, et ipsi ad provectum mentis diriguntur. Inter thalamos ergo quinque sunt cubiti, quia hi qui ab exterioribus quinque sensibus adhuc ad intellectum mysticum non assurgunt, dum inter eos sunt qui spiritu amoris fervent, velut manentes inter thalamos in fidei constructione proficiunt, et a mensura coelestis aedificii disjuncti non sunt. Nam et paulisper se ab appetitu corporalium sensuum subtrahunt, et dilatato mentis spatio, imitantes charitatem quam conspiciunt, hinc inde ad thalamos extenduntur. Quod ergo non per sex cubitos, sed per quinque descripti sunt, ipsa adhuc eorum imperfectio designatur.

13. Sed tamen per bonum desiderium in mensura spiritalis aedificii esse memorantur, quia et voce sanctae Ecclesiae per Psalmistam dicitur: Imperfectum meum viderunt oculi tui, et in libro tuo omnes scribentur (Psal. CXXXVIII, 16). Hinc iterum idem Psalmista dicit: Benedixit omnes timentes se Dominus, pusillos cum majoribus (Psal. CXIII, 13). Hi itaque etsi imperfecti sunt et pusilli; in quantum tamen cognoscere praevalent, et Deum et proximum diligunt, atque ideo bona quae possunt non negligunt operari. Qui etsi necdum ad spiritalia dona proficiunt, ut vel ad perfectam operationem, vel ad succensam contemplationem animam exerant, tamen ab amore Dei et proximi, in quantum animo capere praevalent, non recedunt. Unde fit ut ipsi quoque etsi minori loco, in sanctae tamen Ecclesiae

aedificatione sint positi, quia et si ad doctrinam, si ad prophetiam, si ad miraculorum gratiam, si ad contemptum mundi plenius exsequendum fortasse minores sunt, tamen in timoris et amoris fundamento sunt, in quo solidantur, quia etsi igne coelestis desiderii non ardent, in ipsis exterioribus quae exercere sufficiunt vapore charitatis animantur, et inter proximorum praecellentium aedificia continentur. Unde et recte sponsa in Canticis canticorum loquitur, dicens: Ferculum fecit sibi rex Salomon de lignis Libani, columnas ejus fecit argenteas, reclinatorium aureum, ascensum purpureum, media charitate constravit propter filias Jerusalem (Cant. III, 9, 10). Neque enim credendum est Salomonem tantae magnitudinis regem, qui sic immensis divitiis affluebat, ut pondus auri ejus aestimari non posset, et argentum in diebus illis pretium non haberet, quia ferculum sibi ligneum fecit. Sed est Salomon videlicet pacificus noster, qui sibi de lignis Libani ferculum fecit. Libani quippe ligna cedrina valde sunt imputribilia.

14. Ferculum itaque Regis nostri sancta Ecclesia est, quae de fortibus patribus, id est de imputribilibus mentibus est constructa. Quae recte ferculum dicitur, quia ipsa fert quotidie animas ad aeternum convivium conditoris sui. Cui ferculo columnae argenteae factae sunt, quia praedicatores Ecclesiae sanctae eloquii luce resplendent. Est autem cum columnis argenteis reclinatorium aureum, quia per hoc quod a sanctis praedicatoribus lucide dicitur, mentes audientium fulgorem claritatis intimae, in qua reclinentur, inveniunt. Per hoc enim quod luculente et aperte audiunt, in illud quod clarescit in corde requiescunt. Columnae ergo ejus argenteae et reclinatorium aureum factum est, quia per lucem sermonis invenitur apud animum claritas quietis. Ille quippe fulgor internus mentem irradiat, ut per intentionem ibi requiescat, ubi praedicationis gratia non quaeratur. De eadem quippe sancta Ecclesia scriptum est: Pennae columbae deargentatae, et posteriora dorsi ejus in specie auri (Psal. LXVII, 14). Quae enim hic spiritu mansuetudinis impleta quasi columba pennas deargentatas

habet, in posteriora dorsi ejus speciem auri continet, quia hic praedicatores suos sermonis luce induit; in posteriori autem saeculo fulgorem in se claritatis ostendit. Sed ad hoc quod clarum intus ostenditur, qualis sit ascensus adjungit, cum de eodem ferculo protinus subdit: Ascensum purpureum (Cant. III, 10). Vera quippe purpura, quia de sanguine tingitur, non immerito in colore sanguinis videtur. Et quia maxima multitudo fidelium in exordio nascentis Ecclesiae per martyrii sanguinem pervenit ad regnum, Rex noster ascensum purpureum fecit in ferculo, quia ad clarum quod intus aspicitur per tribulationem sanguinis pervenitur.

15. Quid ergo nos miseri atque ab omni fortitudine destituti, quid acturi sumus? Ecce in hoc ferculo columnae esse non possumus, quia in nobis nec fortitudo operis, nec lumen emicat praedicationis. Reclinatorium aureum non habemus, quia necdum sicut oportet per intellectum spiritalem requiem internae claritatis aspicimus. Ascensus purpureus non sumus, quia pro Redemptore nostro fundere sanguinem non valemus. Quid ergo de nobis agendum est? Quae spes erit, si nullus ad regnum pervenit, nisi qui summis virtutibus praeditus fuerit? Sed adest quoque nostra consolatio. Amemus in quantum possumus Deum, diligamus et proximum, et simul quoque nos ad Dei ferculum pertinemus, quia sicut illic scriptum est: Media charitate constravit. Habe quippe charitatem, et ibi sine dubio pervenis, ubi et columnae argenteae eriguntur, et ascensus purpureus tenetur. Nam quia hoc propter nostram infirmitatem dicitur, aperte monstratur, cum illic protinus subdidit: Propter filias Jerusalem. Sermo etenim Dei qui non filios, sed filias dicit, quid aliud per sexum femineum quam mentium infirma signavit? Quod ergo illic inter columnas argenteas, reclinatorium aureum, et ascensum purpureum, inesse media charitas dicitur propter filias Jerusalem; hoc hic inter thalamos per quinque cubitos designatur, quia et qui in virtutibus infirmantur, si ipsi bona quae possunt facere cum charitate non

negligunt, a Dei aedificio alieni non sunt. Sequitur: IBID. — Et limen portae juxta vestibulum portae intrinsecus, calamo uno.

16. Dum limen quod modo describitur juxta vestibulum portae intrinsecus esse memoratur, aperte ostenditur quia limen quod prius descriptum est extrinsecus fuit. Sed si porta est Dominus, quod sit limen portae intrinsecus et extrinsecus requiramus. Per limen etenim portam unusquisque ingreditur. Et quae sunt duo haec limina, nisi patres Testamenti Veteris, et patres Testamenti Novi? Non solum quippe hi de quibus Dominus incarnari dignatus est, sed omnes Testamenti Veteris patres portae hujus limen fuerunt, quia hi qui eum praedicere et in eo sperare meruerunt, cunctis ad eum venientibus aperuerunt aditum fidei; et omnes qui per hos crediderint Dominum, quasi jam portam hujus liminis intraverunt. Sed cur ante limen exterius et post limen interius dicitur, nisi quia prius Testamenti Veteris patres, et postmodum Novi Testamenti doctores fuerunt? Recte autem limen exterius Testamenti Veteris patres designat, quia per eorum praedicationem opera perversa punita sunt. Per dicta vero novorum patrum uniuscujusque animus etiam ab illicitis cogitationibus coercetur, dum reatus esse perfectus et in deliberatione cordis ostenditur. Illi quippe a flagitiis, a crudelitatibus, a rapinis auditorum animas prohibere curaverunt; isti vero dum non solum perversa opera, sed etiam illicita cogitationum resecant, quid nobis aliud nisi limen intrinsecus facti sunt? Unde et ipsa Veritas loquitur dicens: Audistis quia dictum est antiquis: Non occides, qui autem occiderit, reus erit judicio. Ego autem dico vobis, quia omnis qui irascitur fratri suo sine causa, reus erit judicio (Matth. V, 21, 22). Recte quoque exterius limen illos patres designat, qui ab ipsa incarnatione Redemptoris nostri per intervalla temporum longius constiterunt. Et quidem ab Abel sanguine passio jam coepit Ecclesiae, et una est Ecclesia electorum praecedentium atque sequentium. Sed tamen quia discipulis dicitur: Multi reges et prophetae voluerunt videre quae vos videtis, et non viderunt (Luc.

X, 24); antiquis patribus quasi foris stetisse est, Redemptoris nostri praesentiam corporaliter non vidisse. Exterius igitur, sed tamen non divisi a sancta Ecclesia fuerunt, quia mente, opere, praedicatione, ista jam fidei sacramenta tenuerunt, istam sanctae Ecclesiae celsitudinem conspexerunt, quam nos non adhuc praestolando, sed jam habendo conspicimus. Sicut enim nos in praeterita passione Redemptoris nostri, ita illi per fidem in eadem ventura sunt salvati. Illi ergo foris non extra mysterium, sed extra tempus.

17. Unde et in constructione tabernaculi, ut columnae argenteae interius starent, paxilli aerei figi per circuitum exterius jussi sunt, in quibus religatum tabernaculum teneretur. Columnae itaque argenteae interius, paxilli vero aerei exterius figuntur, atque in ipsis funes ligati sunt, ut tabernaculum fixum maneret, quia videlicet ut sancti apostoli in luce sermonis sui solidi starent, ut totum tabernaculum, id est sancta Ecclesia in fidei integritate consisteret, tanquam paxilli aerei patres Testamenti Veteris ac prophetae exterius fixi sunt, qui verborum suorum funibus praedicatorum mentes in soliditate stringerent, atque hoc Dei habitaculum in statu fidei ligarent. Extra ergo paxilli sunt, qui ante tempus hujus sanctae Ecclesiae fuerunt. Sed tamen eos ligant qui in ipsa sunt, quia dum coelestia mysteria ventura praedicant, haec postquam ostensa sunt, credibilia omnibus fecerunt. Ut ergo intus columnae immobiles stent, foris paxilli funes continent, quia ut sancti apostoli perfecte incarnationis dominicae mysterium crederent, illorum praedicatio obtinuit, qui hoc priusquam fieret, et videre et praedicere potuerunt. Unde recte quoque ipse primus apostolorum, magna scilicet columna veri tabernaculi, loquitur dicens: Habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem, cui bene facitis intendentes, quasi lucernae lucenti in caliginoso loco (II Petr. I, 19). Quibus verbis indicat quia quamvis ad altiora surrexerit ex culmine, ibi religata persistat in fide. Quae tamen lucerna prophetici sermonis jam quidem intelligentibus

lucet, sed adhuc non intelligentibus cooperta allegoriarum obscuritatibus permanet. Unde etiam per Psalmistam de eisdem dictis prophetarum dicitur: Tenebrosa aqua in nubibus aeris (Psal. XVII, 12), quia videlicet occulta est scientia in prophetis. Nec immerito columnae argenteae, paxilli vero aerei facti sunt, quia quod clare jam apostoli praedicant, hoc prophetae sub intellectu mystico obscure locuti sunt. Recte ergo per aeris metallum signati sunt, qui clari in suis praedicationibus non fuerunt. Sancti vero apostoli, quia de Redemptoris nostri mysterio lucem praedicationis habuerunt, argenteis columnis expressi sunt. Et notandum, quod argentum sonat et lucet, aes vero sonat et non lucet, quia praedicatores Novi Testamenti aperte locuti sunt quae etiam monstrare potuerunt. Praedicatores vero Testamenti Veteris quia per allegoriarum umbras de coelesti mysterio obscura dicta protulerunt, quasi sine luce sonitum dederunt. Quod ergo illic per paxillos et columnas, hoc hic per limen exterius et limen interius designatur.

18. Si vero portam Scripturam sacram hoc in loco accipimus, ipsa quoque duo limina habet, exterius et interius, quia in litteram dividitur et allegoriam. Limen quippe Scripturae sacrae exterius, littera; limen vero ejus interius, allegoria. Quia enim per litteram ad allegoriam tendimus, quasi a limine quod est exterius, ad hoc quod est interius venimus. Et sunt in ea permulta, quae ita juxta litteram mentem aedificant, ut per hoc quod exterius agitur audientis mens interius trahatur. Ibi quippe invenimus praedicamenta operis ex exempla virtutis; ibi jubetur quid agere etiam corporaliter debemus; ibi hoc quod ad operandum praecipitur in sanctorum virorum ac fortium actione monstratur, ut postquam nos apertiora praecepta atque exempla justorum ad bonam operationem instruunt, tunc ad limen interius, id est ad intellectum mysticum intimae contemplationis, tendamus, si possumus, pedem mentis. Studete, quaeso, fratres charissimi, Dei verba meditari, nolite despicere scripta nostri Redemptoris, quae ad nos missa

sunt. Multum valde est quod per ea animus refricatur ad calorem, ne iniquitatis suae frigore torpescat.

19. Cum illa praecedentes justos fortiter egisse cognoscimus, et ipsi ad fortitudinem bonae operationis accingimur, sanctorum exemplorum flamma animus legentis incenditur. Videt quae fortia ab eis facta sunt, et valde indignatur sibi, quia talia non imitatur. Unde recte sponsi voce ad sponsam dicitur in Canticis canticorum: Sicut turris David collum tuum, quae aedificata est cum propugnaculis suis. Mille clypei pendent ex ea, omnis armatura fortium (Cant. IV, 4). In collo etenim guttur, in gutture vox est.

20. Quid ergo per collum sanctae Ecclesiae, nisi sacra ejus eloquia designantur? In qua dum mille clypei dependere memorantur, per hunc perfectum numerum numerus universus ostenditur, quia universa nostra munitio in sacro eloquio continetur. Ibi quippe sunt praecepta Dei, ibi exempla justorum. Si enim torpet animus a conditoris sui desiderio, audiat quod dicitur: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex tota mente tua, et ex tota virtute tua (Matth. XXII, 37). In odio fortasse labitur proximi? Audiat quod dicitur: Diliges proximum tuum, sicut te ipsum (Ibid., 39). Res alienas concupiscit? Audiat quod illic scriptum est: Non concupisces rem proximi tui (Exod. XX, 17). De injuria quae a proximi ore vel facto illata est, ad iram mens accenditur? Audiat quod dicitur: Non quaeres ultionem, nec memor eris injuriae civium tuorum (Levit. XIX, 18). In carnis concupiscentiam male sauciata mens accenditur? Ne sequatur oculus mentem, audiat quod paulo superius dictum est: Qui viderit mulierem ad concupiscendum eam, jam moechatus est eam in corde suo (Matth. V, 28). Contra inimicum forsitan quisquam animum suum relaxare disponit in odium? Audiat quod illic scriptum est: Diligite inimicos vestros, benefacite his qui oderunt vos (Luc. VI, 35). Sed is qui aliena jam non rapit, adhuc forsitan sua inordinate retinet? Audiat quod illic dicitur: Vendite quae possidetis, et date eleemosynam (Ibid., XII, 33). Infirmantis animus perfrui

desiderat Deo simul et saeculo? Audiat quod illic scriptum est: Nemo potest duobus dominis servire (Matth. VI, 24). Alius non ad necessitatem stipendii, sed ad voluntatem desiderii possessa retinet? Audiat quod illic dicitur: Qui non renuntiaverit omnibus quae possidet, non potest esse meus discipulus (Luc. XIV, 33). Quidam enim relinquunt omnia, multi autem etiam possidendo renuntiant, quia sic ad usum possessa retinent, ut eis ex desiderio non succumbant. Torpere quisquam appetit, et laborem subire pro Domino etiam cum praevalet refugit? Audiat quod illic scriptum est: Qui mecum non colligit, spargit (Ibid. XI, 23). In collo ergo Ecclesiae, id est in sacri eloquii praedicatione, quod pro sua munitione et altitudine turri David simile dicitur, mille clypei dependent, quia quot illic praecepta sunt, tot etiam pectoris nostri munimina.

21. Ad servandam itaque innocentiam etiam laesi a proximo perdurare in humilitate festinamus? Abel ante oculos veniat (Genes. IV, 8), qui et occisus a fratre scribitur, et non legitur reluctatus. Mentis munditia etiam in conjugali copula eligitur? Enoch debet imitari, qui et in conjugio positus ambulavit cum Deo, et non inveniebatur, quia transtulit illum Deus (Ibid., V, 22). Praecepta Dei festinamus praesenti nostrae utilitati praeponere? Noe ante oculos veniat, qui, cura domestica postposita, ex jussione omnipotentis Domini, per centum annos ad arcae fabricam vixit occupatus (Ibid., VI, 14). Subire obedientiae virtutem nitimur? Aspicere Abraham debemus (Ibid., XII, 5), qui, relicta domo, cognatione, patria, obedivit exire in locum quem accepturus erat in haereditatem, et exiit nesciens quo iret (Hebr. XI, 8); qui paratus exstitit ut pro aeterna haereditate dilectum quem acceperat occideret haeredem. Et quia unicum Domino offerre non distulit, universam multitudinem gentium in semine accepit (Genes. XXII, 16, 17). Morum simplicitas placet? Isaac ad mentem veniat, quem in omnipotentis Dei oculis vitae suae tranquillitas ornavit (Ibid., XXIV, seq.). Laboriosa fortitudo, ut obtineri debeat, quaeritur? Jacob ad memoriam deducatur

(Ibid., XXIX, 20; XXX, 29), qui postquam scivit fortiter servire homini, ad eam quoque virtutem perductus est, ut non potuisset a luctante angelo superari (Ibid., XXXII, 25). Conamur carnis illecebram vincere? Joseph ad memoriam redeat, qui, tentante se domina, studuit carnis continentiam etiam cum vitae periculo custodire (Ibid., XXXIX, 12, 20). Unde factum est ut quia membra sua bene noverat regere, regendae quoque omni Aegypto praeficeretur. Mansuetudinem atque patientiam obtinere quaerimus? Moysen ante oculos deducamus (Num. XII, 3), qui, exceptis parvulis ac mulieribus, sexcenta millia armatorum regens, mitis fuisse describitur super omnes homines qui habitabant super faciem orbis terrae. Rectitudinis zelo contra vitia accendimur? Phinees ante oculos deducatur (Ibid., XXV, 7, 8, 11), qui coeuntes gladio transfigens, castitati populum reddidit, et iram Dei iratus placavit. De spe omnipotentis Dei praesumere in dubiis quaerimus? Josue ad memoriam revocemus (Josue III, 5, 8), qui, dum dubia certamina certa mente subiit, ad victoriam sine dubietate pervenit. Jam mentis inimicitias ponere cupimus in benignitate animum dilatare? Samuel in cogitationem deducatur (I Reg. VIII, 5), qui, de principatu dejectus a populo, cum idem populus peteret ut pro eo Domino preces effunderet, respondit dicens: Absit a me hoc peccatum in Domino, ut cessem orare pro vobis (Ibid., XII, 23). Culpam quippe vir sanctus perpetrare se credidit, si eis quos adversarios pertulerat usque ad dejectionem, benignitatem gratiae non reddidisset in prece. Qui rursus, cum, jubente Domino, mitteretur ut David ungeret in regem, respondit: Quomodo vadam? Inveniet enim me Saul, et occidet me (Ibid., XVI, 2). Et tamen quia iratum Deum eidem Sauli cognoverat, in tanto se luctu afflixerat, ut ei per se Dominus diceret: Quousque tu Saulem luges, cum ego illum abjecerim (Ibid., 1)? Pensemus ergo ejus animum quantus ardor charitatis incenderat, qui et illum flebat a quo timebat occidi. Cavere autem volumus quem timemus? Sollicita nobis mente pensandum est, ne si locum fortasse reperimus, malum pro malo

reddamus ipsi quem fugimus. David ergo ad memoriam redeat, qui persequentem se regem et invenit ut potuisset occidere, et tamen, in ipsa feriendi potestate positus, elegit bonum quod ipse deberet facere, non autem malum quod ille merebatur pati, dicens: Absit a me ut mittam manum meam in christum Domini (Ibid., XXIV, 7; XXVI, 11). Et cum idem Saul post ab hostibus fuisset interemptus, eum, quem persecutorem dum viveret pertulit, flevit occisum (II Reg. I, 17). Errantibus hujus mundi potentibus libere loqui decernimus? Joannis auctoritas ad animum reducatur, qui, Herodis nequitiam reprehendens, pro verbi rectitudine occidi non timuit (Marc. VI, 18, 27). Et quia Christus est veritas, ipse ideo pro Christo, quia pro veritate, animam posuit. Carnem jam nostram pro Deo ponere in morte festinamus? Petrus ad mentem veniat (Act. V, 41), qui inter flagella gaudet, qui caesus principibus resistit, qui vitam suam pro vita despicit. Cum mortis appetitu disponimus adversa contemnere? Paulum ante oculos deducamus, qui non solum alligari, sed et mori paratus pro Christo, non facit pretiosiorem animam suam quam se (Act. XX, 22, 24). Succendi cor nostrum igne charitatis quaerimus? Joannis verba pensemus, cujus omne quod loquitur charitatis igne vaporatur (I Joan. I, seqq.).

22. Quia ergo in voce sacri eloquii cujuslibet dum quaerimus munimen virtutis invenimus, mille clypei pendent ex ea, omnis armatura fortium (Cant. IV, 4). Si enim pugnare contra spiritalia nequitiae volumus, in collo Ecclesiae, quae nobis sicut David turris erecta est, id est in divino eloquio protectionis arma requiramus, ut ex discretione praecepti, contra vitia sumatur virtus adjutorii. Ecce enim contra aereas potestates festinamus fortes existere? In hac turri armaturam nostrae mentis invenimus, ut inde praecepta conditoris, inde sumamus exempla praecedentium, per quae contra adversarios nostros inexpugnabiliter armemur. Dum enim quamlibet virtutem subire appetis, et hanc illic a patribus jam impletam vides, ibi armaturam tuam invenis, per quam contra spiritalia bella muniaris.

Dependent in ea quippe mille clypei: si quis pugnare appetit, assumat, et ex ea virtute pectus muniat, et verborum jacula emittat.

23. Et notandum quia aedificata cum propugnaculis suis dicitur. Hoc quippe agunt propugnacula, quod clypei, quia utraque pugnantem muniunt. Sed inter utraque hoc distat, quia clypeum pro nostro munimine ubicunque volumus movemus; propugnaculo autem defendere nos possumus, sed hoc movere non possumus. Clypeus in manu est, nam propugnaculum non tenetur. Quid ergo inter propugnacula et clypeos distat, nisi quod in sacro eloquio patrum praecedentium et miracula legimus, et virtutes bonorum operum audimus? Ibi namque cognoscimus quod alius potuit mare dividere, alius solem figere, alius mortuum suscitare, alius paralyticum verbo erigere, alius umbra aegrotos curare, alius per sua semicinctia febribus obviare (Act. XIX). Qui tamen omnes et patientiae longanimitate mites, et zelo rectitudinis ferventes fuerunt; verbi praedicatione divites, simul et misericordiae largitate. Hi itaque quam vera de Deo dixerint testantur miracula, quia talia per illum non facerent, nisi de illo vera narrarent. Et quam pii, quam humiles, quam benigni exstiterint, eorum testantur operationes. Si igitur de fide tentamur, quam ex illorum praedicatione concepimus, loquentium miracula conspiciamus, et in fide quam ab eis accepimus confirmamur. Quid ergo illorum miracula, nisi nostra sunt propugnacula? Quia et muniri per illa possumus, et tamen haec in manu nostri arbitrii non tenemus, nam talia facere non valemus. Clypeus vero in manu est, et defendit, quia virtus patientiae, virtus misericordiae, praecedente nos gratia, et in potestate est arbitrii, et a periculo protegit adversitatis. Turris itaque nostra cum propugnaculis suis aedificata est, in qua mille clypei dependent, quia in Scriptura sacra et sub miraculis patrum a jaculis adversitatis abscondimur, et conversationis sanctae munimina etiam in manu operis tenemus. Notandum vero quod limen portae uno calamo mensuratur. Calamus autem in sex cubitis et palmo tenditur, quia

videlicet in Scriptura sacra et doctrina perfectae operationis et initium supernae contemplationis invenitur. Sin vero porta hoc loco unusquisque praedicator accipitur, limen exterius in porta est vita activa, limen vero interius vita contemplativa. Per illam quippe ambulatur in fide, per hanc vero festinatur ad speciem. Illa exterius ducit, ut unusquisque bene vivere debeat; ista interius perducit, ut ex bona vita ad gaudia aeterna pertingat. Haec nos hodie tractasse sufficiat. Quia enim, transeuntes ad alia, diu per excessum locuti sumus, ea quae subjuncta sunt lectioni alteri reservemus, reparandi per silentium, sperantes in Verbo, quod vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA IV

Quatuor versibus a nono ad duodecimum allegorice aut moraliter explicatis, absolvitur.

1. Vir, cujus erat species quasi species aeris, — EZECH. XL, 9: — Mensus est vestibulum portae octo cubitorum, et frontem ejus duobus cubitis. Ac ne vestibulum extra portam esse crederemus, subditur: IBID. — Vestibulum autem portae erat intrinsecus. Quid autem per interius vestibulum, nisi aeternae vitae latitudo signatur, quae modo inter angustias vitae praesentis jam per spem mente concipitur? De qua per Psalmistam dicitur: Intrate portas ejus in confessione, atria ejus in hymnis confessionum (Psal. XCIX, 4). Cum enim peccata nostra per lacrymas confitemur, angustae vitae portam ingredimur. Sed cum post haec ad aeternam vitam perducimur, portae nostrae atria in confessionum laudibus intramus, quia ibi jam angustia non erit, cum nos laetitia perpetuae festivitatis exceperit. Propter confessionis nostrae angustiam Veritas dicit: Intrate per angustam portam (Matth. VII, 13). Et cum se Psalmista recipi in latitudinem gaudii aeterni praesumeret, dicebat: Statuisti in loco spatioso pedes meos (Psal. XXX, 9). Ad atrium ergo per portam tenditur, quia ad latitudinem solemnitatis pertingitur ab angustia confessionis. Illa itaque gaudia quae apud David atria, apud Ezechielem vestibulum intrinsecus vocantur. Unde et hoc ipsum vestibulum octo cubitis dicitur mensuratum. Ibi enim omnes recipiendi sunt, qui nunc et in exercitio operis laborant, et ad aeterna gaudia per contemplationis gratiam suspirant.

2. Nec immerito mensura vestibuli in octo cubitis ponitur, quia septem diebus universum tempus evolvitur. Aeterna etenim dies, quae expleta septem dierum vicissitudine sequitur, scilicet octava est. Unde etiam Psalmista, resurrectionis diem considerans, quia de extremi judicii districtione erat locuturus, praemisit titulum, dicens: In finem Psalmus S. David pro octava (Psal. VI, 1). Ut enim quam octavam diceret demonstraret

diem illam tremendi terroris, in Psalmi inchoatione secutus est, dicens: Domine, ne in ira tua arguas me, neque in furore tuo corripias me (Ibid., 2). Modo enim quisquis per flagella corripitur, et correptionibus emendatur, in mansuetudine corripitur, non in ira. In districto autem illo examine omnis argutio atque correptio furor et ira est, quia venia post correptionem non est. Hujus octonarii numeri causa est, quod post Sabbatum Dominus voluit a morte resurgere. Dies quippe Dominicus, qui tertius est a morte dominica, a conditione dierum numeratur octavus, quia septimum sequitur. Unde et ipsa vera Redemptoris nostri passio, et vera resurrectio, figuravit aliquid de suo corpore in diebus passionis suae. Sexta enim feria passus est, Sabbato quievit in sepulcro, Dominico autem die resurrexit a morte. Praesens etenim vita nobis adhuc sexta est feria, quia in doloribus ducitur, et in angustiis cruciatur. Sed Sabbato quasi in sepulcro quiescimus, quia requiem animae post corpus invenimus. Dominico vero die, videlicet a passione tertio, a conditione ut diximus octavo, jam corpore a morte resurgimus, et in gloria animae etiam cum carne gaudebimus. Quod ergo mire Salvator noster fecit in se, hoc veraciter signavit in nobis, ut nos et dolor in sexta, et requies in septima, et gloria excipiat in octava. Hinc per Salomonem dicitur: Da partem septem, necnon et octo, quia ignoras quid mali futurum sit super terram (Eccle. XI, 2). Partem etenim septem simul et octo damus, quando sic ea quae septem diebus evolvuntur disponimus, ut per haec ad bona aeterna veniamus; ut dum modo caute agitur, postmodum venientis tremendi judicii ira devitetur. Octo itaque cubitis vestibulum mensuratur intrinsecus, quia per lucem quae post septem dies sequitur, latitudo nobis aeternitatis aperitur.

3. Sed nemo ad illam venit, nisi qui hic dilectionem Dei ac proximi devota mente tenuerit. Unde et subditur: Et frontem ejus duobus cubitis. Frons etenim portae est bonum meritum vitae praesentis. Sicut enim vestibulum intrinsecus aeterna requies debet intelligi, ita per frontem portae

necesse est qualitatem visibilis vitae signari. Frons ergo portae duobus cubitis mensuratur, quia quisquis hic dilectionem Dei et proximi servare studuerit, ipse ad aeternitatis atrium pertinget. Vita igitur nostra ut duobus cubitis sit mensurata, tendi quotidie per charitatem debet in amorem Dei simul et proximi. Non est enim charitas vera, si minus a duobus cubitis habet. Unde Moyses cum per colores vestium, electorum virtutes exprimeret, in ornamento pontificis bis tinctum coccum jubet adhiberi (Exod. XXVIII, 5). Quid namque per coccum nisi charitas designatur, quae semper per flammam amoris accenditur? Sed coccus bis tingitur, quando non solum ex amore Dei, sed etiam proximi nostra charitas inflammatur. Nam quisquis sic amat Deum, ut commissi sibi proximi curam relinquat, adhuc in eo coccus semel tinctus est. Et quisquis sic amat proximum, ut imminuat desiderium quo flagrare debet ad Deum, non est adhuc in eo color tincturae geminatus. Debemus ergo et amare eos cum quibus vivimus, et ad illum totis desideriis anhelare in quo veraciter vivamus. Ecce etenim ad fidem atque ad audiendum verbum omnipotentis Domini nos qui religioso induti habitu videmur, ex diversa mundi qualitate convenimus, atque ex dissimilibus iniquitatibus in sanctae Ecclesiae concordiam congregati sumus, ita ut jam patenter factum esse videatur quod de promissione Ecclesiae per Isaiam dicitur: Habitabit lupus cum agno, et pardus cum haedo accubabit (Isai. XI, 6). Nam per sanctae charitatis viscera lupus cum agno habitat, quia hi qui in saeculo raptores fuerunt cum mansuetis ac mitibus in pace conquiescunt. Et pardus cum haedo accubat, quia is qui peccatorum suorum maculis varius fuit, cum eo qui se despicit et peccatorem fatetur humiliari consentit. Ubi et subditur: Vitulus et leo et ovis simul morabuntur (Isai. XI, 6), quia is qui per contritum cor ad quotidinaum se Deo sacrificium praeparat, et alius qui tanquam leo ex crudelitate severiter saeviebat, et alter qui velut ovis in innocentiae suae simplicitate perdurat, in caulis sanctae Ecclesiae convenerunt. Ecce qualis est charitas,

quae diversitates mentium accendit, concremat, conflat, et quasi in unam auri speciem reformat. Sed in eo quod se electi sic amant, ad illum necesse est ut festinent, quem aeterno gaudio in coelis videre mereantur. Unus est etenim Dominus ac Redemptor noster, qui et hic electorum suorum corda ad unanimitatem ligat, et ad supernum amorem per interna desideria semper stimulat. Unde et illic subditur: Et puer parvulus minabit eos (Ibid.). Quis iste est puer parvulus, nisi de quo scriptum est: Puer natus est nobis, filius datus est nobis (Ibid., IX, 6)? Qui simul habitantes minat, quia ne in terrenis rebus corda nostra inhaereant, haec per internum desiderium quotidie inflammat. Et hoc ipsum ejus minare est ad suum nos amorem incessanter accendere, ne cum nos vicissim diligimus, mente in hoc exsilio remaneamus, ne quies hujus vitae sic placeat, ut ad oblivionem patriae perducat, ne delectata mens prosperis torpeat. Unde et donis suis flagella permiscet, ut nobis omne quod nos in saeculo delectabat amarescat, et illud incendium surgat in animo quod nos semper ad coeleste desiderium inquietet, excitet, atque, ut ita dicam, delectabiliter mordeat, suaviter cruciet, hilariter contristet. Puer ergo nos parvulus minat, quia is qui paulo minus quam angeli minoratus est per charitatem quam nobis tribuit, in hoc nos mundo mentem figere non permittit. Bis tinctus itaque in nobis coccus est, si et hic proximos nostros sicut nos diligimus, et ad auctorem omnium cum ipsis quos diligimus festinamus. Si igitur vita nostra de perfecta charitate bis tingitur, frons in nobis portae duobus cubitis mensuratur. Sive igitur doctor, seu sacrum eloquium, vel certe fides portae nomine signetur, in mensura utriusque cubiti charitas non inconvenienter accipitur, quam ille vere praedicat qui Dei ac proximi amorem docet; et ipsa est certa scientia, quam charitas aedificat; et fides robusta est, quae se in dilectione Dei ac proximi exercet. Sequitur: VERS. 10. — Porro thalami portae ad viam Orientalem, tres hinc, et tres inde, et mensura una trium.

4. Quid thalami, quid via Orientalis designet, jam superius diximus (Hom. 3, n. 8 et seqq.), nec replicare ea latius necessarium putamus. Sed quaerendum nobis est quid est quod dicitur, Tres hinc, et tres inde. Thalami quippe juxta viam Orientalem sunt corda ferventium in amore Dei. Et sive hi qui electi in testamento veteri fuerunt, sive qui in testamento novo secuti sunt, nimirum constat quia omnes ex amore Trinitatis accensi sunt. Neque enim vere Deum diligerent, si ejusdem Trinitatis, quae Deus est, gratiam non accepissent. Juxta viam ergo Orientalem tres hinc et tres inde sunt thalami, quia dum inter veteres et novos patres Dominus incarnari dignatus est, quasi in medio thalamorum via Orientalis apparuit, qui thalami ad veram virtutum speciem in Trinitatis sunt cognitione decorati. Sin vero ad virtutes electorum eumdem numerum referamus, tres sunt virtutes, sine quibus is qui aliquid operari jam potest, salvari non potest, videlicet fides, spes, charitas. Et quia eadem fides, spes, et charitas in antiquis patribus quae in novis doctoribus fuit, juxta Orientalem viam tres hinc, et tres inde thalami describuntur.

5. Vel certe quia tres patrum veterum distinctiones fuerunt, tres quoque novorum sub gratia sequuntur. Vetus quippe populus habuit patres ante legem, ac deinde in lege, et postmodum prophetas. In novo autem populo prius Hebraeorum primitiae crediderunt, postmodum plenitudo gentium in fide secuta est, ac deinde in fine saeculi Hebraeorum reliquiae salvantur (Rom. IX, 27). Quia ergo incarnatio Domini et ex superiori parte patres ante legem, patres in lege, atque ad extremum prophetas habuit, et ex posteriore fideles ex Hebraeis, fideles ex gentibus, ac postmodum Hebraeorum reliquias colliget, Orientalis via tres hinc et tres inde thalamos habere memoratur. Sed hoc quoque non inconvenienter accipimus, si tres esse fidelium ordines dicamus. Sive namque in veteri, seu in novo testamento, alius est ordo praedicantium, alius continentium, atque alius bonorum conjugum. Unde et idem propheta in superiori parte tres viros liberatos

vidit: Noe, Daniel et Job (Ezech. XIV, 14); in quibus videlicet tribus praedicatores, continentes et conjugati signati sunt. Nam Noe arcam in undis rexit, atque ideo figuram rectorum tenuit (Genes. VII, 1, 2, seq.). Daniel in aula regia abstinentiae deditus fuit, et idcirco vitam continentium signavit (Dan. I, 16). Job vero in conjugio positus, et curam domus propriae exercens, placuit Deo, per quem digne bonorum conjugum ordo figuratur (Job. I, 8). Quia ergo etiam ante Mediatoris adventum, et praedicatores, et continentes, ac boni conjugati fuerunt, qui eumdem ejus adventum praestolati sunt, et magna hunc siti desiderii videre cupierunt, et postmodum praedicatores, et continentes, ac boni conjugati, sicut cernimus, existunt, qui Redemptorem nostrum non jam desiderant incarnandum, sed in majestatis suae gloria contemplandum, Orientalis via tres hinc, et tres inde thalamos habet, juxta Psalmistae vocem, qui de eadem via, videlicet Redemptore nostro, dicit: In circuitu ejus tabernacula ejus (Psal. XVII, 12).

6. Sed pensandum nobis est sollicita intentione quod dicitur, quia mensura una trium. Cum enim longe sit a continentibus et tacentibus excellentia praedicatorum, et valde a conjugatis distet eminentia continentium, quid est quod una mensura dicitur trium? Conjugati quippe quamvis et bene agant, et omnipotentem Deum videre desiderent, domesticis tamen curis occupantur, et necessitate cogente, in utroque mentem dividunt. Continentes autem ab hujus mundi actione remoti sunt, et voluptatem carnis etiam a licito conjugio restringunt, nulla conjugis, nulla filiorum cura, nullis noxiis ac difficilibus rei familiaris cogitationibus implicantur. Praedicatores vero non solum se a vitiis coercent, sed etiam alios peccare prohibent, ad fidem ducunt, in studio bonae conversationis instruunt. Quomodo ergo una eorum mensura est, quorum vitae aequalitas una non est? Sed mensura una trium est, quia etsi in eis meritorum magna est diversitas, tamen distantia in fide in qua tenduntur non est. Nam eadem fides quae istos solidat in maximis, illorum infirmitatem continet in parvis.

Vel certe trium una mensura est, quia in retributione ultima quamvis eadem dignitas omnibus non sit, una tamen erit omnibus vita beatitudinis. Unde et per semetipsum Dominus dicit: In domo Patris mei mansiones multae sunt (Joan. XIV, 2). Sed tamen qui in vineam ducti sunt, quamvis diversis horis venerint, unum denarium perceperunt (Matth. XX, 9). Qua itaque ratione conveniant mansiones multae cum uno denario, nisi quia diversae quidem beatorum civium dignitates erunt, sed tamen una quies aeternae retributionis? Nam etsi dispar erit meritum singulorum, non erit diversitas gaudiorum, quia etsi alter minus atque alius amplius exsultat, omnes tamen unum gaudium de conditoris sui visione laetificat.

7. Hoc quoque est, sive de veteribus, seu de novis patribus sentiendum, quia Orientalis via cum tres hinc et tres inde thalamos habeat, mensura una trium est, quoniam ipsa fides atque ipsum meritum tenuit corda praecedentium quae replevit corda sequentium sub testamento novo positorum, sicut et per Paulum dicitur: Habentes autem eumdem spiritum fidei, sicut scriptum est: Credidi, propter quod locutus sum (Psal. CXV, 1): et nos credimus, propter quod et loquimur (II Cor. IV, 13). Spiritales quippe illi patres omnipotentem Deum Trinitatem ita esse crediderunt, sicut eamdem Trinitatem novi patres aperte locuti sunt. Isaias namque audivit angelica agmina in coelo clamantia: Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus sabaoth (Isai. VI, 3). Ut enim personarum trinitas monstraretur, tertio sanctus dicitur; sed ut una esse substantia Trinitatis appareat, non Domini sabaoth, sed Dominus Deus sabaoth esse perhibetur. Quod David quoque similiter sentiens, ait: Benedicat nos Deus, Deus noster, benedicat nos Deus (Psal. LXVI, 8). Qui cum tertio dixisset Deum, ut unum esse hunc ostenderet, subdidit: Et metuant eum omnes fines terrae. Paulus quoque loquitur dicens: Quoniam ex ipso, et per ipsum, et in ipso sunt omnia (Rom. XI, 36). Ex ipso, videlicet ex Patre; per ipsum, per Filium; in ipso autem, in Spiritu sancto. Qui cum ipsum tertio dixisset, adjunxit: Ipsi gloria in saecula

saeculorum. Amen (Ibid.). Qui enim non dixit, ipsis, sed ipsi, dicendo ter ipsum, distinxit personas, et subjungendo Ipsi gloria, non divisit substantiam. Quia itaque una est veterum ac novorum patrum fides, recte thalamorum describitur mensura una trium. Quod verbis aliis replicatur cum subditur: IBID. — Et mensura una frontium ex utraque parte.

8. Ex utraque enim parte est una mensura frontium, quia patres nostri vel prius a veteri, vel nunc a novo testamento venientes, in una Mediatoris fide conveniunt. Qui pro eo quod charitate pleni sunt, carnem suam abstinentia edomant, corda audientium praedicationis lumine illustrant, signa faciunt, virtutes operantur, per hoc quod eorum bona nobis foris innotescunt, non immerito hujus coelestis aedificii frontes vocantur. Omne enim quod nunc in aperto ostenditur, frons est, ut illud sit vestibulum aedificii, quod nobis interius reservatur. Unde et sanctae Ecclesiae in Canticis canticorum dicitur: Sicut cortex mali punici genae tuae, absque occultis tuis (Cant. VI, 6). Genae quippe sunt sanctae Ecclesiae spirituales patres, qui nunc in ea miraculis coruscant, et velut in ejus facie venerabiles apparent. Cum enim videmus multos mira agere, ventura prophetare, mundum perfecte relinquere, coelestibus desideriis ardere, sicut cortex mali punici sanctae Ecclesiae genae rubent. Sed quid mistud est omne quod miramur in illius rei comparatione de qua scriptum est: Quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se (I Cor. II, 9; Isai. LXIV, 4)? Bene ergo, cum miraretur genas Ecclesiae, subdidit: Absque occultis tuis (Cant. VI, 6). Ac si aperte diceretur: Ea quidem quae in te non latent magna sunt, sed illa valde ineffabilia, quae latent. Sequitur: VERS. 11. — Et mensus est latitudinem liminis portae decem cubitorum, et longitudinem portae tredecim cubitorum.

9. Multa superius de portae significatione jam diximus, sed unum tenere aliquid debemus per quod possit et caetera lectoris prudentia penetrare. Dictum quippe est per portam Scripturam sacram posse figurari. Sed hoc

nobis modo laboriose discutiendum est, cur latitudo liminis portae decem cubitis, et longitudo portae tredecim mensuratur. Hoc autem loco longitudo portae altitudo dicitur, sicut nos longae staturae dicimus quem altum videmus. Nam longitudo portae dici in transversum non potest, cujus latitudo per decem cubitos demonstratur. Quid ergo latitudo liminis portae, nisi lex testamenti veteris fuit, et longitudo portae, nisi gratia testamenti novi? Quia videlicet Scriptura sacra dum per testamentum vetus crimina operum compescuit, dari decimas praecepit (Deut. XII, 6), quasi per mandata humilia in liminis latitudine jacuit. Sed dum per testamentum novum cogitationes pravas coercuit, derelinqui omnia, et pro Deo vitam corporis jussit cum praesenti saeculo despici (Matth. XV, 19; Marc. VII, 21; Luc. IX, 24), quasi porta nostra in longitudinis altitudinem surrexit. Minora quippe praecepta Israelitico populo per legem data sunt: unde et eidem populo Moyses in campo locutus est (Exod. XIX, 7, seq.). Altiora Dominus sanctis apostolis dedit, unde et eos de mandatis vitae in monte docuit. Dum vero Redemptor noster per Evangelium dicit: Nolite putare quoniam veni solvere legem aut prophetas; non veni solvere, sed adimplere (Matth. V, 17). Adimplere enim venerat legem qui legis justitiae gratiam addidit, ut quod illa jubebat in minimis, ipse perfici adjuvaret in summis, et quod illa coercebat ab opere, ipse resecaret a corde. Intellecta ergo lex, quae in latitudine jacuit, in altitudinem surrexit. Ipsa enim Dei cognitio quae apud illam in spiritalibus patribus fuit, nota omni Hebraeorum populo non fuit. Nam omnipotentem Deum, sanctam videlicet Trinitatem, cum prophetae praedicarent, populus ignorabat; solum Decalogum tenebat in lege, fidem Trinitatis nesciens. Mensuratur ergo latitudo liminis portae decem cubitis, quia durus ille populus, subtilitatem fidei ignorans, mandatis serviebat Decalogi. Mensuratur vero longitudo portae tredecim cubitis, quia per testamentum novum in corde fidelis populi super mandata Decalogi, quae

verius custodit, cognitio Trinitatis crevit. Et eo mandata legis perficit, quo Trinitatem esse omnipotentem Dominum credit.

10. Ubi et quaeri rationabiliter potest cur istam latitudinem liminis portae, quam superius dixerat uno calamo mensurari, inferius subjunxit quod decem cubitis mensuretur, ac deinde subditur quod longitudo portae tredecim sit cubitis mensurata. Unus etenim calamus, sicut jam saepe dictum est, sex cubitos habet et palmum, decem vero cubiti jam mensuram suam super calamum tenent, tredecim vero amplius quam decem. Quid est ergo quod prius uno calamo limen portae, postmodum latitudo ejus decem cubitis, ad extremum quoque longitudo portae tredecim mensuratur, nisi quod sancti patres, quos per sanctam Scripturam ante legem fuisse cognoscimus, unum quidem omnipotentem Deum, sanctam videlicet Trinitatem esse noverunt, sed eamdem Trinitatem quam cognoverunt aperte minime praedicaverunt? Qui ejus jussionibus obedientes, et vitae munditiam conservantes, quasi in sex cubitis calami habuerunt perfectionem operis, et saepe angelos videntes habuerunt palmum contemplationis. Data autem lege, rudis ille Hebraeorum populus mandata Decalogi servare conatus est, sed tamen de cognitione sanctae Trinitatis eruditus non est. Et quamvis hanc spiritales patres perfecte cognovissent, multitudo tamen magna Synagogae nec invenire mysterium Trinitatis potuit, nec quaerere scivit.

11. Superveniente autem gratia per testamentum novum, omnis fidelis populus unum Deum Trinitatem esse cognovit, et virtutem Decalogi in ejus agnitione complevit. Prius ergo limen portae mensuratur calamo uno, postmodum latitudo ejus cubitis decem, atque ad extremum longitudo portae cubitis tredecim, quia et sanctis patribus ante legem activa et contemplativa vita non defuit, et sub legis Decalogo populus divinae substantiae mysterium nesciens, in mandatorum latitudinem servivit. Et

nunc sub gratia, custoditis verius Decalogi praeceptis, omnis qui ad fidem venerit sanctae Trinitatis mysterium cognoscit.

12. Qua in re hoc quoque nobis sciendum est quia et per incrementa temporum crevit scientia spiritalium patrum. Plus namque S. Moyses quam S. Abraham, plus prophetae quam S. Moyses, plus apostoli quam prophetae in omnipotentis Dei scientia eruditi sunt. Fallor si haec ipsa Scriptura non loquitur: Pertransibunt, inquit, plurimi, et multiplex erit scientia (Dan. XII, 4). Sed haec eadem quae de S. Abraham, S. Moyse, prophetis et apostolis diximus, ex ejusdem Scripturae verbis, si possumus, ostendamus. Quis enim nesciat quia S. Abraham cum Deo locutus est (Genes. XII, seq.)? et tamen ad S. Moysen Dominus dicit: Ego sum Deus Abraham, Deus Isaac, et Deus Jacob, et nomen meum Adonai non indicavi eis (Exod. VI, 3; Ibid., III, 6)? Ecce plus S. Moysi quam S. Abrahae innotuerat, qui illud de se S. Moysi indicat quod se S. Abrahae non indicasse narrabat. Sed videamus si prophetae plus quam S. Moyses divinam scientiam apprehendere potuerunt. Certe Psalmista dicit: Quomodo dilexi legem tuam, Domine? tota die meditatio mea est (Psal. CXVIII, 97). Atque subjunxit: Super omnes docentes me intellexi; quia testimonia tua meditatio mea est (Ibid., 99). Et iterum: Super seniores intellexi (Ibid. 100). Qui ergo legem meditari se memorat, et super omnes docentes se ac super seniores intellexisse testatur, quia divinam scientiam plus quam S. Moyses acceperat manifestat. Quomodo autem ostensuri sumus quia plus sancti apostoli edocti sunt quam prophetae? Certe Veritas dicit: Multi reges et prophetae voluerunt videre quae videtis, et audire quae auditis, sed non viderunt (Luc. X, 24). Plus ergo quam prophetae de divina scientia noverunt, quia quod illi solo spiritu viderunt, isti etiam corporaliter viderunt. Impleta itaque est ea, quam superius diximus, S. Danielis sententia: Quia pertransibunt plurimi, et multiplex erit scientia (Dan. XII, 4). Mensura ergo calami, qui est sex cubitorum et palmi, ducatur ad cubitos decem; et mensura decem cubitorum

ad extremum surgat in tredecim, quia quanto mundus ad extremitatem ducitur, tanto nobis aeternae scientiae aditus largius aperitur. Sequitur: VERS. 12. — Et marginem ante thalamos cubiti unius.

13. Sicut saepe diximus, thalami corda electorum sunt, omnipotentis Dei amore ferventia. Quid ergo per marginem ante thalamos, nisi fides exprimitur? quia nisi prius ipsa teneatur, nullo modo ad spiritalem amorem pertingitur. Non enim charitas fidem, sed fides charitatem praecedit. Nemo enim potest amare quod non crediderit. Margo itaque est ante thalamos, fides ante ardorem charitatis, quia, sicut dictum est, nisi ea quae audis credideris, ad amorem eorum quae audieris nullatenus inflammaberis. Sed margo ante thalamos cubiti unius est, quia tunc fides corda audientium in amore Deo copulat, quando per errores et schismata divisa non est, sed in unitate perdurat, ut videlicet margo unius cubiti audientis animum ad thalamum perducat, quia coelestis sponsi speciem quam hic praedicat postmodum in coelestibus demonstrat. Ubi et bene subditur: IBID. — Et cubitus unus finis utrinque.

14. Utrinque autem dicitur, ac si dicatur utrique, scilicet limini et portae. Per latitudinem quippe liminis et longitudinem portae vetus ac novum testamentum diximus designari. Ad extremum vero additur quod cubitus unus sit finis utrinque, quia videlicet et testamentum vetus unum nobis Mediatorem Dei et hominum nuntiavit, et testamentum novum eumdem nobis nuntiat in aeterna claritate venturum, quem jam pro nobis cognovimus incarnatum. Cubitus ergo unus finis utrorumque est, quia et quem lex praedixit in carne apparuit, et ipse quem nunc Testamentum Novum loquitur, in gloria majestatis apparebit. Et tunc utrorumque finis erit, cum visus in divinitatis suae potentia, omnia quae sunt praedicta compleverit. Scriptum namque est: Finis legis Christus ad justitiam credenti (Rom. X, 4). Finis videlicet, non qui consumit, sed qui perficit. Tunc etenim legem perfecit, cum, sicut lex praedixerat, incarnatus apparuit. Sed adhuc de ejus

judicio multa Novum Testamentum loquitur, adhuc multa de regno illius narrat, quae necdum videmus impleta. Ecce quotidie Evangelium legitur, ventura vita praedicatur. Tunc ergo erit et novi testamenti finis, cum ea quae de se promisit Dominus compleverit.

15. Finietur vero testamentum novum, quia perficietur. Nam cum ipse de quo loquitur visus fuerit, ejusdem testamenti verba cessabunt. Unde et sanctae Ecclesiae veri luminis diem quasi tempus vernale praestolanti, per sponsi vocem dicitur: Surge, propera, amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea, et veni. Jam enim hiems transiit, imber abiit et recessit, flores apparuerunt in terra (Cant. II, 10, 11). Sive enim sancta Ecclesia, seu unaquaeque electa anima, coelesti sponso est amica per amorem, columba per spiritum, formosa per morum pulchritudinem. Quae cum jam de corruptione carnis educitur, ei procul dubio hiems transit, quia praesentis vitae torpor abscedit. Imber quoque abit et recedit, quia cum ad contemplandum in sua substantia omnipotentem Deum educitur, jam verborum guttae necessariae non erunt, ut pluvia debeat praedicationis infundi. Nam quod minus audire potuit, amplius videbit. Tunc apparent flores in terra, quia cum de aeternae beatitudinis vita quaedam suavitatis primordia praegustare anima coeperit, quasi jam in floribus odoratur exiens, quod postquam egressa fuerit, in fructu uberius habebit. Unde et illic subditur: Tempus putationis advenit (Ibid., II, 12). In putatione quippe sarmenta sterilia reciduntur, ut ea quae praevalent uberius fructum ferant. Nostrae itaque putationis tempus tunc advenit quando infructuosam ac noxiam corruptionem carnis deserimus, ut ad fructum animae pervenire valeamus. Qui fructus nobis erit uberrimus, visio unius. Cubitus ergo unus est finis utrinque, quia unus est ille qui dixit: Singulariter sum ego donec transeam (Psal. CXL, 10). Qui solus cum Patre et sancto Spiritu praesidet in coelo, sicut passer unicus in aedificio (Psal. CI, 8). Quemadmodum implevit legem per mysterium incarnationis et perfectae humanitatis suae, ita

testamenti novi promissa impleturus est per ostensam gloriam claritatis suae.

16. Hunc unum nobis cubitum mensura quoque arcae locuta est. Arca enim, quae trecentis cubitis fieri in longitudine jussa est, sexaginta vero in latitudine, triginta autem in altitudine (Genes. VI, 15), in uno est cubito consummata. Quid enim per arcam nisi sancta Ecclesia figuratur, quae inferius ampla est, superius angusta? Quae a trecentis, et sexaginta, ac triginta cubitis ad unum cubitum colligitur, quia ab ea latitudine quam sancta Ecclesia in membris suis adhuc infirmantibus habet paulisper angustata, et in altum proficiens, ad unum tendit. Ipsa enim ratio exigit ut credamus quod in illa arcae latitudine omnes bestiae, cuncta quadrupedia atque reptilia in inferioribus fuerunt, homines atque volatilia nimirum in superioribus. Juxta superiorem etenim partem fenestra fuit in latere, de qua corvum et columbam dimisit homo, ut si jam diluvii transissent aquae, cognosceret. Et quia arca eadem in uno fuit cubito consummata, homines et volatilia juxta cubitum fuerunt. Recte itaque per arcam universa Ecclesia designatur, quae adhuc in multis suis carnalibus lata est, in paucis spiritalibus angusta. Et quia ad unum hominem, qui est sine peccato, colligitur, quasi in uno cubito consummatur.

17. Videmus etenim multos intra ejusdem sanctae Ecclesiae sinum in superbia erigi, in carnis voluptate dissolvi, acquirendis terrenis rebus inhiare, imperante avaritia maria transire, deservire iracundiae, jurgiis vacare, proximos quos praevalent laedere. Sed quia eos adhuc sancta Ecclesia tolerat ut convertantur, quasi in arcae latitudine deorsum bestiae morantur. Videmus alios jam aliena non quaerere, illatam injuriam aequanimiter portare, rebus propriis esse contentos, humiliter vivere. Sed quia isti jam pauci sunt, angustatur arca. Alios autem conspicimus etiam possessa relinquere, nullum terrenis rebus studium dare, inimicos diligere, carnem a cunctis voluptatibus domare, motus omnes sub rationis judicio

premere, per coeleste desiderium contemplationis penna sublevari. Sed quia tales quique valde rari sunt, jam arca juxta cubitum ducitur, ubi homines et volatilia continentur. Quaeratur tamen si quis in eis esse valeat sine peccato, et nullus invenitur. Quis itaque homo sine peccato est, nisi ille qui in peccatis conceptus non est? In uno ergo cubito consummatur arca, quia unus est auctor et Redemptor sanctae Ecclesiae sine peccato, ad quem et per quem omnes proficiunt, qui se esse peccatores noverunt. Dicatur itaque de limine et porta: Et cubitus unus, finis utrinque, quia cum unus Mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Jesus in majestate su apparuerit, omnia utriusque testamenti quae praedicta et promissa sunt complebit.

18. Sin vero utraque hoc loco marginem ac thalamos memorat, neque hoc ab hac sententia abhorret, quia cum majestas Redemptoris nostri nobis fuerit ostensa, finitur fides, cum jam coeperit videre homo quod credidit. Et ad finem suum perveniunt thalami, quia corda fidelium incomparabiliter longe quam modo sunt, in amore illius perficiuntur. Cubitus ergo unus finis utrinque est, quia unius Domini et Salvatoris visio in electis suis fidem finit, et charitatem perficit.

19. Considerare libet qui nos sumus qui ista tractamus. Certe ex gentibus venimus, certe parentes nostri lignorum ac lapidum cultores fuerunt. Unde ergo hoc nobis, ut ea quae nunc usque Hebraei nesciunt Ezechielis prophetae tam profunda mysteria rimemur? Agamus ergo gratias uni, qui cuncta quae de eo in sacro eloquio scripta sunt opere implevit, ut quae intelligi audita non poterant, visa panderentur. Ibi quippe incarnatio, ibi passio, ibi mors, ibi resurrectio, ibi ascensio illius continetur. Sed quis nostrum haec audita crederet, nisi facta cognovisset? Signatum ergo librum, sicut in Joannis Apocalypsi legitur (Apoc. V, 3, 5), quem aperire et legere nemo poterat, leo de tribu Juda aperuit, quia omnia ejus nobis mysteria in sua passione ac resurrectione patefecit. Et per hoc quod infirmitatis nostrae mala pertulit, suae nobis potentiae et claritatis bona monstravit.

20. Caro enim factus est, ut nos spiritales faceret; benigne inclinatus est, ut levaret; exiit, ut introduceret; visibilis apparuit, ut invisibilia monstraret; flagella pertulit, ut sanaret; opprobria et irrisiones sustinuit, ut ab opprobrio aeterno liberaret; mortuus est, ut vivificaret. Agamus ergo gratias vivificanti et mortuo, et ideo amplius vivificanti, quia mortuo. Unde bene salutem nostram, et passionem illius Isaias contemplatus ait: Ut faciat opus suum, alienum opus ejus; ut operetur opus suum, peregrinum est opus ejus ab eo (Isai. XXVIII, 21). Opus etenim Dei est animas quas creavit colligere, et ad aeternae lucis gaudia revocare. Flagellari autem atque sputis illini, crucifigi, mori, atque sepeliri, non hoc in sua substantia opus Dei est, sed opus hominis peccatoris, qui haec omnia meruit per peccatum. Sed peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum (I Petr. II, 24). Et qui in natura sua manet semper incomprehensibilis, in natura nostra comprehendi dignatus est ac flagellari, quia nisi ea quae erant infirmitatis nostrae susciperet, nunquam nos ad suae fortitudinis potentiam sublevaret. Ut ergo faciat opus suum, alienum opus ejus; et ut operetur opus suum, peregrinum est opus ejus ab eo, quia incarnatus Deus, ut nos ad suam justitiam colligeret, dignatus est pro nobis tanquam peccator homo vapulare. Et alienum opus fecit ut faceret proprium, quia per hoc quod infirmans mala nostra sustinuit, nos qui creatura illius sumus, ad fortitudinis suae gloriam perduxit, in qua vivit et regnat cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA V

Ab extrema duodecimi versus parte ad decimum septimum, Ezechielis cap. quadragesimum exponitur, ac de contemplatione praesertim disseritur.

1. Memoratis superius thalamis, propheta subjungit, quia thalami sex cubitorum erant hinc et inde. Qua in re magna nobis quaestio generatur, cur superius thalamum uno calamo mensuratum dixit, quem videlicet calamum sex cubitos et palmum habere perhibuit, atque inferius thalamos sex solummodo dicit cubitis mensurari. Si enim non calamo, sed sex cubitis mensurantur, palmus deest, qui superius in mensura calami dicebatur adesse. Sed si thalami sunt sensus atque cogitationes fidelium, in quibus castae animae conditori suo in amore junguntur, et per sex cubitos perfecta operatio, per palmum vero inchoatio contemplationis exprimitur, sanctae universalis Ecclesiae debemus membra conspicere, et citius invenimus quia sunt in ea thalami uno calamo, et sunt alii sex tantummodo cubitis mensurati. Nam fideles quidam in illa omnipotentem Deum ita amant, ut et in opere perfecti sint, et in contemplatione suspensi. Hi profecto calamum in mensura habent, quia et sex cubitos operationis, et palmum contemplationis possident. Quidam vero omnipotentem quidem Deum diligunt, et perfecte in bonis operibus exercentur, sed tamen contemplari ejus magnitudinem subtiliori intellectu nesciunt. Amant autem, sed investigare gaudia ejus claritatis ignorant. Hi itaque sex cubitos habent et palmum non habent, quia ei jam per amorem juncti sunt, sed ex contemplatione disjuncti. Qui tamen thalami post commemorationem cubiti unius hinc et inde esse referuntur, quia videlicet in amore auctoris ac Redemptoris nostri fideles animae et ex Judaico populo et ex gentilitate convenerunt.

2. Unde et idem Redemptor noster, cum, Asellum sedens, Jerusalem tenderet, sicut Evangelista testatur, multi vestimenta sua straverunt in via; alii autem frondes caedebant de arboribus, et sternebant in via; et qui

praeibant et qui sequebantur clamabant, dicentes: Hosanna, benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini (Marc. XI, 7, seq.). Salvator enim noster asellum sedens Jerusalem tendit, quando uniuscujusque fidelis animam regens, videlicet jumentum suum, ad pacis intimae visionem ducit. Jumentum sedet etiam cum sanctae Ecclesiae universaliter praesidet, eamque in supernae pacis desiderium accendit. Multi autem vestimenta sua in via sternunt, quia corpora sua per abstinentiam domant, ut ei iter ad mentem parent, vel exempla bona sequentibus praebeant. Alii autem ramos vel frondes de arboribus caedunt et sternunt in via, quia in doctrina veritatis verba atque sententias patrum ex eorum eloquio decerpunt, et haec in via Dei ad auditoris animum venientes humili praedicatione submittunt. Quod indigni quoque et nos modo facimus. Nam cum patrum sententias in sermone exhortationis assumimus, frondes de arboribus caedimus, ut has in via Dei omnipotentis sternamus. Sed qui praeibant et qui sequebantur clamabant: Hosanna. Praecessit quippe Judaicus populus, secutus est gentilis. Et quia omnes electi, sive qui in Judaea esse potuerunt, sive qui nunc in Ecclesia existunt, in Mediatorem Dei et hominum crediderunt et credunt, qui praeeunt et qui sequuntur Hosanna clamant. Hosanna autem Latina lingua, salva nos dicitur. Ab ipso enim salutem et priores quaesierunt, et praesentes quaerunt; et benedictum qui venit in nomine Domini confitentur, quoniam una spes, una fides est praecedentium atque sequentium populorum. Nam sicut illi exspectata passione ac resurrectione ejus sanati sunt, ita nos praeterita passione illius ac permanente in saecula resurrectione salvamur. Quem enim priores nostri ex Judaico populo crediderunt atque amaverunt venturum, hunc nos et venisse credimus et amamus, ejusque desiderio accendimur, ut eum facie ad faciem contemplemur. Thalami ergo ejus hinc et inde sunt, quia corda amantium fidem quae in illo est et a priori parte saeculi et ab ultima complectuntur. Sequitur: VERS. 13. — Et mensus est

portam a tecto thalami usque ad tectum ejus, latitudinem viginti et quinque cubitorum.

3. Saepe jam diximus, portam fidem, et per eamdem fidem ipsum Dominum ac Redemptorem nostrum, Mediatorem Dei et hominum Jesum Christum posse signari, quia per fidem quae in eo est introitus ad vitam patet. Sed etiam Scripturam sacram, quae nobis eamdem ipsam fidem in Redemptoris nostri intellectum aperit, non immerito portam accipimus, quia, ea ut oportet cognita, ad intelligenda invisibilia intramus. Si igitur hoc in loco, ut praediximus, porta Scriptura accipitur, quaerendum est quid per tectum thalami, quid per tectum portae signetur. Sed habet thalamus tectum, quia operta est mens amantium, et adhuc fervor amoris in occulto est. Habet quoque et porta tectum, quia Scriptura tota quidem propter nos scripta est, sed non tota intelligitur a nobis.

4. Multa quippe in illa ita aperte scripta sunt, ut pascant parvulos; quaedam vero obscurioribus sententiis velantur, ut exerceant fortes, quatenus cum labore intellecta plus grata sint. Nonnulla autem ita in ea clausa sunt, ut dum ea non intelligimus, agnoscentes infirma nostrae caecitatis, ad humilitatem magis quam ad intelligentiam proficiamus. Sunt enim quaedam quae ita de coelestibus loquuntur, ut solis illis supernis civibus in patria sua persistentibus pateant, necdumque nobis peregrinantibus reserentur. Nam si quis ad urbem incognitam pergens multa de illa in via audiat, quaedam quidem ex ratione colligit, quaedam vero, quia necdum videt, nullo modo cognoscit; ipsi vero cives qui in ea sunt, et quae de illa tacentur vident, et quae de illa dicuntur intelligunt. Nos igitur in via adhuc sumus, multa de illa coelesti patria audimus, alia jam per spiritum et rationem intelligimus, quaedam vero non intellecta veneramur. Unde et de eodem sacro eloquio scriptum est: Extendens coelum sicut pellem, qui tegis in aquis superiora ejus (Psal. CIII, 2). Coelum quippe sicut pellis extenditur, quia per ora mortalium Scriptura sacra nobis in expositionibus

explicatur. Sed sunt aquae in coelo, superiores videlicet multitudines, id est angelorum agmina, in quibus ejusdem coeli teguntur superiora, quia ea quae in sacro eloquio altiora et obscuriora sunt, angelicis solummodo spiritibus patent, et nobis adhuc incognita perdurant. Habet ergo thalamus tectum, quia nescit adhuc proximus quantum amatur a proximo. Porta quoque, id est sacrum eloquium habet tectum, quia necdum omnia penetrare intellectu possumus quae de coelestibus audimus.

5. Restat ergo ut in his quae intelligimus in profectu quotidie charitatis ambulemus. Et quamvis in nobis proximi quoque nostri non videant quantum diligantur a nobis, atque in sacro eloquio ea quae necdum intelligimus humiliter veneremur, in his tamen ad quae intelligendo pervenimus, dilatari per bonam operationem debemus. Unde et dicitur: Et mensus est portam a tecto thalami, usque ad tectum ejus, latitudinem viginti et quinque cubitorum. Quinque enim carnis sensibus praediti sumus, videlicet visu, gustu, olfactu, auditu atque tactu. Idem vero quinarius numerus, per semetipsum multiplicatus, ad vigesimum et quia tum numerum surgit. Operari autem exterius quiddam de mandatis coelestibus sine istis corporeis quinque sensibus non valemus. His quippe officiis suis judex animus interius praesidet, et quid exterius agere juste vel misericorditer possit, quasi eisdem officiis renuntiantibus ac deservientibus agnoscit. Cum ergo timore omnipotentis Domini animus impletur, necesse est ut quinque nostri sensus nobis velut subjecta officia in bona operatione deserviant. Per quos cum aliquid agere misericorditer coeperimus, plus se quotidie ipsa misericordia aperit, et quasi quidam sinus boni operis expandit. Quinque igitur sensus multiplicantur in se, dum hoc quod per ipsos agitur in bono quotidie opere per profectum multiplicatur. Unde et latitudo esse viginti et quinque cubitorum dicitur, quia timor, tenacia et pigredo, angustia est. Quisquis enim ideo indigenti dare panem metuit, ne sibi desit, adhuc in angustia timoris est. Quisquis ideo vestimentum algenti

non porrigit, quia hoc solus habere concupiscit, adhuc tenaciae suae angustia coarctatur. Quisquis ideo bonum non agit, quia tepore animi pigrescit, ipse ei suus torpor angustia est. Respicere autem inopem, exaudire precem, largiri stipem, praebere defensionem, atque pro ejusdem defensione pauperis adversantis cujuslibet inimicitias non timere, magna mentis latitudo est. Mensuretur ergo inter thalamum et portam ea quae interjacet latitudo, cubitis viginti et quinque, quia in exteriorum sensuum operatione probatur et cognoscitur quae intrinsecus largitas bonitatis habeatur. Nam quid jam de Scriptura sacra didiceris et quantum proximum tacitus ames, in latitudine boni operis ostendis.

6. Pateat itaque viginti et quinque cubitis latitudo inter thalamum et portam, quia inter charitatem et scientiam testis est bona operatio. Quae si fortasse defuerit, profecto certum est nec cognovisse te Deum, nec diligere proximum; id est, nec portam sacri eloquii, nec amoris thalamum habere. Et notandum est quod a tecto thalami usque ad tectum portae dicitur mensuratum. Per ea enim quae nobis in sacra Scriptura cooperta sunt, nostra humilitas approbatur, quia quidquid in illa non intelligimus, non superbe reprehendere, sed venerari humiliter debemus. Unde et de Domino scriptum est: Palpebrae ejus interrogant filios hominum (Psal. X, 5). Palpebrae quippe ejus judicia sunt, quae aliquid nobis claudunt, et aliquid aperiunt. Quae aperiendo nos interrogant si intelligendo non extollimur. Claudendo nos interrogant si non despicimus quae intelligere non valemus. Per ea autem quae de charitate nostra proximis nostris non loquimur, in conspectu Dei verius probamur. In quorumdam enim ore charitas ficta est, in quorumdam vero cordibus vera. Et saepe de charitate ostenditur quod non est, et non demonstratur quod est. Amorem itaque nostrum erga proximum plus bona operatio loquitur quam lingua, ut in ipso bono opere proximus noster amari se videat. Et cum tantum non possumus quantum volumus operari, omnipotenti Deo occulta amoris nostri sufficiant. A tecto ergo

thalami usque ad tectum portae sit magna latitudo, ut ab occultis nostrae charitatis propter proximum usque ad humilitatem scientiae, et propter Deum, in quantum intelligimus et valemus, bona semper operemur.

7. Potest etiam porta ipse jam aditus regni coelestis intelligi. Habet nunc thalamus tectum, habet et porta tectum, quia et quanta sit nostra charitas in Deum et proximum, non cognoscitur, et quando de hoc saeculo ad aeternae vitae requiem introducamur ignoratur. Esse enim nobis conditor noster diem mortis nostrae incognitum voluit, ut, dum semper ignoratur, semper esse proximus credatur; et tanto quisque ferventior sit in operatione, quanto et incertus est de vocatione. Unde et latitudo viginti et quinque cubitorum a thalamo ad portam tenditur, quia per charitatem quam semel in Deo et proximo concepimus, usque ad ingressum regni debemus omne quod possumus multipliciter atque incessanter operari. A tecto itaque thalami usque ad tectum portae magna latitudo est, quia ex gratia qua inchoamus Deum diligere, usque ad ipsam dilectionem quae nobis aditum regni coelestis aperit, debemus nosmetipsos in magna bonorum operum actione dilatare, adversa patienter perpeti, bona libenter impendere, ipsos etiam quos patimur amare, habita tribuere, non habita non ambire, proximos sicut nosmetipsos diligere, eorum bona nostra credere, eorum mala quasi propria deflere. In tali ergo mente magna latitudo est, in qua angustia odiorum non est. Quam profecto latitudinem ex Dei et proximi amore concepimus, et per sacra mandata cognovimus. Nam et ipsos latitudinis viginti et quinque cubitos non inconvenienter intelligimus, si eos juxta sacrum eloquium discutere velimus. Sex enim cubitis mensuratos thalamos dixerat, et sexto die homo est conditus (Genes. I, 27); eo quoque die Dominus perfecisse opera sua describitur. Unde etiam pro perfectione poni senarius numerus solet. Et quia omnem operationem bonam per quatuor sancti Evangelii libros agnovimus, si sex quater ducimus, ad viginti et quatuor pervenimus. Cui monas additur, quia unus est per quem bene omnes operantur. Viginti

ergo et quinque cubitis latitudo haec explicari debuit, quia omnis bona operatio per quatuor sancti Evangelii, ut diximus, libros agnoscitur, et in unius Dei cognitione et confessione completur. Sequitur: VERS. 13. — Et ostium contra ostium.

8. Hoc loco contra non ad adversitatem ponitur, sed ad rectitudinem. Ostium enim contra ostium est cum recto itinere ab exteriore ad interiorem aditum pervenitur. In cognitione vero omnipotentis Dei primum ostium nostrum fides est, secundum vero species illius, ad quam per fidem ambulando pervenimus. In hac etenim vita hanc ingredimur, ut ad illam postmodum perducamur. Ostium ergo contra ostium est, quia per aditum fidei aperitur aditus visionis Dei. Si quis vero utraque haec ostia in hac vita velit accipere, neque hoc a salubri intelligentia abhorret. Nam saepe volumus omnipotentis Dei naturam invisibilem considerare, sed nequaquam valemus; atque ipsis difficultatibus fatigata anima ad semetipsam redit, sibique de seipsa gradus ascensionis facit, ut primum semetipsam, si valet, consideret, et tunc illam naturam quae super ipsam est, in quantum potuerit, investiget. Sed mens nostra si in carnalibus imaginibus fuerit sparsa, nequaquam vel se vel animae naturam considerare sufficit, quia per quot cogitationes ducitur, quasi per tot obstacula caecatur.

9. Primus ergo gradus est ut se ad se colligat, secundus ut videat qualis est collecta, tertius ut super semetipsam surgat, ac se contemplationi auctoris invisibilis intendendo subjiciat. Sed se ad se nullatenus colligit, nisi prius didicerit terrenarum atque coelestium imaginum phantasmata ab oculis mentis compescere, quidquid de visu, quidquid de auditu, quidquid de odoratu, quidquid de tactu et gustu corporeo cogitationi ejus occurrerit, respuere atque calcare, quatenus talem se quaerat intus, qualis sine istis est. Nam haec quando cogitat, quasi quasdam umbras corporum introrsus versat. Abigenda ergo sunt omnia manu discretionis ab oculis mentis, quatenus talem se anima consideret, qualis sub Deo super corpus creata est,

ut a superiore vivificata, vivificet inferius quod administrat. Quae et sic infusa est corpori, ut non per membrorum partes partibus sit divisa. Nam si in quolibet loco pars corporis percutitur, tota dolet. Miro autem modo una eademque vivificatione membris praesidens, cum ipsa per naturam non diversa sit, per corpus tamen agit diversa. Ipsa quippe est quae per oculos videt, per aures audit, per nares odoratur, per os gustat, per membra omnia tangit, et tangendo leue ab aspero discernit. Et cum tam diversa per sensus operatur, non haec diversa, sed una illa in qua creata est ratione disponit. Cum ergo seipsam sine imaginibus corporis cogitat anima, jam primum ostium intravit. Sed ab hoc ostio ad aliud tenditur, ut de natura Dei omnipotentis aliquid contempletur. Anima itaque in corpore vita est carnis, Deus vero qui vivificat omnia vita est animarum. Si igitur tantae est magnitudinis, ut comprehendi non possit vita vivificata, quis intellectu comprehendere valeat quantae majestatis sit vita vivificans? Sed hoc ipsum considerare atque discernere jam est aliquatenus intrare, quia ex sua aestimatione anima colligit quid de incircumscripto spiritu sentiat, qui ea incomprehensibiliter regit quae incomprehensibiliter creavit.

10. Conditor etenim noster longe incomparabiliter creaturae suae praesidet, et quaedam operatur ut sint, nec tamen vivant; quaedam vero ut sint et vivant, nec tamen discernere aliquid de vita valeant; quaedam autem ut sint, vivant, atque discernant. Et operatur unus omnia, sed in omnibus non divisus (I Cor. XII, 6). Est enim vere summus, et nunquam sibi dissimilis. Anima autem etsi per naturam sibimetipsi diversa non est, per cogitationem tamen diversa est. Eo enim momento et ictu quo de visu cogitat, de auditu cogitare obliviscitur; et eo momento et ictu quo de auditu vel gustu cogitat, de odoratu vel tactu cogitare non praevalet, quia per intentionem et oblivionem fit semper sibimetipsi dissimilis, ut nunc hoc, nunc illud cogitatione teneat. Omnipotens autem Deus, quia sibimetipsi dissimilis non est, ea virtute videt qua audit omnia, ea virtute creat qua

judicat creata. Ejus ergo et videre simul omnia administrare est, et administrare conspicere. Nec alia cogitatione justos adjuvat, atque alia injustos damnat, sed una eademque vi naturae singularis sibi semper indissimilis dissimilia disponit. Cur autem hoc de potentia Creatoris admiremur, qui virtutis ejus vestigia et in creaturis conspicimus? Natura quippe luti et cerae diversa est. Solis vero radius non est diversus, et tamen cum diversus non sit, diversa sunt quae in luto operatur et cera, quia uno eodemque sui ignis calore lutum durat, et ceram liquat. Sed fortasse hoc in natura luti vel cerae est, non in ipsa solis substantia, quae in naturis diversis diversa videtur operari. Omnipotens autem Deus in semetipso habet sine immutatione mutabilia disponere, sine diversitate sui diversa agere, sine cogitationum vicissitudine dissimilia formare. Longe ergo dissimiliter operatur dissimilia nunquam sibi dissimilis Deus, qui et ubique est, et ubique totus est. Ait enim: Coelum mihi sedes est, terra autem scabellum pedum meorum (Isai. LVI, 1). Et de ipso scriptum est: Qui coelum metitur palmo, et terram pugillo concludit (Ibid., XL, 12).

11. Ex qua re considerare necesse est quia is qui coelo velut sedi praesidet, super et intus est. Et qui coelum palmo, et terram pugillo concludit, et exterius, superius, et inferius est. Ut ergo indicaret omnipotens Deus interiorem se esse, et superiorem omnibus, coelum ipse sibi sedem esse perhibuit. Ut vero se ostenderet omnia circumdare, coelum metiri palmo, et terram se asserit pugillo concludere. Ipse est ergo interior et exterior, ipse inferior et superior: regendo superior, portando inferior; replendo interior, circumdando exterior. Sicque est intus, ut extra sit; sic circumdat, ut penetret; sic praesidet, ut portet; sic portat, ut praesideat. Cum ergo elevata ad seipsam anima suum modulum intelligit, et quia corporalia omnia transcendat agnoscit, atque ab intellectu suo se ad auctoris intellectum tendit, quid jam haec nisi ostium quod est contra ostium aspicit? Unde et auctori omnium Propheta dicit: Mirabilis facta est scientia tua ex

me (Psal. CXXXVIII, 6), quia quantumlibet intenderit, semetipsam anima perfecte non sufficit penetrare, quanto magis illius magnitudinem qui potuit et animam condere? Cumque in scientia Dei intellectu laboraret, lassescens ac deficiens subdidit: Confortata est, nec potero ad eam (Ibid.). Sed cum conantes atque tendentes quiddam jam de invisibili natura conspicere cupimus, lassamur, reverberamur, repellimur; et si interiora penetrare non possumus, tamen jam ab exteriore ostio interius ostium videmus. Ipse enim considerationis labor ostium est, quia ostendit aliquid ex eo quod intus est, etsi adhuc ingrediendi potestas non est. Sequitur: VERS. 14. — Et fecit frontes per sexaginta cubitos, et ad frontem atrium portae undique per circuitum.

12. Saepe jam diximus (Hom. 2, lib. II, n. 7, seq.) senario numero perfectionem boni operis designari, non illud sequentes quod conati sunt hujus saeculi sapientes astruere, dicentes idcirco senarium numerum esse perfectum, quia suo ordine numeratus perficitur, ut cum unus, duo, tres dicuntur, senarius numerus impleatur; vel quia in tribus partibus dividitur, id est sexta, tertia et dimidia, videlicet in uno, duobus et tribus; sed idcirco senarium numerum dicimus esse perfectum, quia, sicut paulo ante dictum est, sexto die perfecit Deus omnia opera sua (Genes. I, 21; II, 1). Quoniam vero peccatori homini legem dedit, quae in decem praeceptis scripta est, et sex decies ducta in sexagenarium surgunt, recte per sexaginta cubitos bonorum operum perfectio designatur. Quod aperte etiam Dominus in Evangelio designat, qui, cum parabolam seminantis exponeret, dixit: Aliud cecidit in terram bonam, et dabat fructum ascendentem et crescentem, et afferebat unum triginta, et unum sexaginta, et unum centum (Matth. XIII, 8; Marc. IV, 8; Luc. VIII, 8). Fructus etenim terrae bonae triginta affert, cum mens perfectionem fidei, quae est in Trinitate, conceperit. Sexaginta affert, cum bonae vitae opera perfecta protulerit. Centum vero affert, cum ad aeternae vitae contemplationem profecerit. Sinistra enim nostra est vita

praesens, dextera vero est vita ventura. Et recte per centenarium numerum aeternae vitae contemplatio designatur, quia cum post triginta ac sexaginta ad centesimum numerum computando pervenimus, idem centenarius numerus in dexteram transit. Fides atque operatio adhuc in sinistra est, quia hic adhuc positi, et credimus quod non videmus, et operamur ut videamus. Cum vero jam se animus in contemplationem aeternae vitae suspenderit, quasi ad dexteram manum computus pervenit. Fecit itaque frontes per sexaginta cubitos. Quia enim per sexagenarium numerum perfectio, quid per frontes aedificii nisi ipsa opera designantur quae exterius videntur? Praedicationis enim verbum tribuere, alimenta esurientibus, vestimenta algentibus dare, et pro bono opere patienter adversa sustinere, quid aliud quam frontes sunt aedificii coelestis? quia pulchritudo operum exteriorum ornat habitaculum Dei, quod adhuc latet intrinsecus. Sed istae frontes habent atrium undique per circuitum, quia in hoc magna sunt opera, si haec in mente dilatat amplitudo charitatis. De charitate quippe scriptum est: Latum mandatum tuum nimis (Psal. CXVIII, 96). De hac iterum Psalmista ait: Statuisti in loco spatioso pedes meos (Psal. XXX, 9).

13. Sed ecce, dum loquor, animo occurrit quomodo lata est charitas. Si per charitatem pertingitur ad Deum, et per semetipsam Veritas dicit: Intrate per angustam portam (Matth. VII, 13). Et rursum Psalmistam audio dicentem: Propter verba labiorum tuorum ego custodivi vias duras (Psal. XVI, 4). Atque in Evangelio Dominus dicit: Jugum enim meum suave est, et onus meum leve (Matth. XI, 30). Quomodo ergo aut lata charitas, si angusta porta? aut quomodo jugum suave est et onus leve, si in praeceptis Dei viae durae sunt quae custodiuntur? Sed hanc nobis quaestionem citius ipsa charitas solvit, quia via Dei et inchoantibus angusta est, et perfecte jam viventibus lata. Et dura sunt quae contra consuetudinem spiritaliter animo proponimus, et tamen onus Dei leve est, postquam hoc ferre coeperimus, ita ut pro amore ejus etiam persecutio placeat, et omnis pro eo afflictio in

mentis dulcedine veniat, sicut sancti quoque apostoli gaudebant cum pro Domino flagella tolerabant (Act. V, 41). Ipsa ergo angusta porta amantibus lata fit, ipsae viae durae spiritaliter currentibus molles et planae fiunt; dum enim scit animus se pro temporalibus doloribus gaudia aeterna recipere, et hoc incipit quod affligitur amare. Atrium ergo ante frontes ejus est in perfectione operis latitudo dilectionis.

14. Et notandum quod dicitur Undique per circuitum, ut videlicet homo per omne quod agit semper se in charitatis amplitudine dilatet, ne hunc aut timor aut odia angustent. Si quis ergo de verbo Dei loquitur, et charitatem quam praedicat in mente non servat, aedificii frontem habet, sed atrium ante frontem non habet. Si quis eleemosynam indigentibus largitur, et per hanc fortasse in corde extollitur, nec ex charitate proximi inopiae subvenit, sed se elatione tacita extollit, frontem quidem in aedificio ostendit, sed juxta frontem atrium non fecit. Si quis illatas a proximo contumelias tolerat, et mala objecta tacitus portat, magna est patientia quam demonstrat, sed si dolorem in corde non habeat, si lucrari ad tranquillitatem mansuetudinis etiam ipsum qui male excesserat quaerat. Nam si patientiam exterius adhibens intus dolorem tenet, nec amat eum quem sustinet, habet quidem frontem in aedificio, sed ante frontem atrium non habet, quia is qui se angustiae odiorum subdidit, profecto charitatis latitudinem amisit. Nam sicut in superiori parte jam diximus (Hom. 9, maxime n. 22, seq.), patientia ea vera est quae et ipsum amat quem portat. Nam tolerare, sed odisse, non est virtus mansuetudinis, sed velamentum furoris. Et notandum quod hoc ipsum atrium portae dicitur. Porta quippe nostra est aditus ad regnum. Et Deum ac proximum perfecte amare jam ad ingressum regni est tendere. In quantum enim quisque amat, in tantum ad ingressum propinquat. In quantum vero amare negligit, in tantum ingredi recusat, quia nec studet videre quod appetit. Tunc ergo habemus atrium portae, quando ex latitudine charitatis ad supernam vitam quam adhuc contingere minime possumus jam

per desiderium intramus. Itaque cum bonum opus erga proximum agitur, restat ut ejusdem boni operis intentio discernatur, si non praesentis gratiae retributionem quaerit, sed spem suam animus ad futuram promissionem tendit, ut ex temporalibus aeterna, ex terrenis coelestia speret. Spes enim coelestium mentem solidat, ne concutiatur fluctibus tumultuum terrenorum. De qua et per Paulum dicitur: Quam sicut anchoram habemus animae tutam ac firmam, et incedentem usque ad interiora velaminis (Hebr. VI, 19). De quibus interioribus hic quoque subjungitur: VERS. 15. — Et ante faciem portae quae pertingebat usque ad faciem vestibuli portae interioris, quinquaginta cubitos.

15. Hoc quod hoc loco dicitur, Ante faciem portae, non exterior, sed interior ante portam locus describitur, dum usque ad faciem vestibuli portae interioris pertingere perhibetur. Unde et idem locus quinquaginta cubitis dicitur mensuratus. Per quinquagenarium enim numerum requies aeterna signatur. Habet enim septenarius numerus perfectionem suam, quia eo die dierum numerus est completus. Et per legem Sabbatum in requiem datum est (Exod. XX, 8, 10). Ipse autem septenarius numerus per semetipsum multiplicatus ad quadraginta et novem ducitur, cui si monas additur, ad quinquagenarium pervenitur, quia omnis nostra perfectio in illius unius contemplatione erit, in cujus nobis visione jam minus aliquid salutis et gaudii non erit. Hinc etiam jubilaeus, id est annus quinquagesimus, in requiem datus est, quia quisquis ad omnipotentis Dei gaudia aeterna pervenerit, laborem et gemitum ulterius non habebit.

16. Notandum vero quia locus qui describitur per quinquaginta cubitos tendi, ad faciem vestibuli portae interioris pertingere memoratur. Non ergo hoc loco propheta jam ipsum vestibulum portae interioris, sed locum interius qui tendit ad vestibulum portae interioris, narrat. Per quem locum utique, sicut diximus, spes nostra signatur, quae dum aeternam requiem quaerit, mentem ad vestibulum portae interioris ducit. Hoc ipsum enim,

quod desideramus coelestia, quod ad promissa gaudia suspiramus, quod aeternae vitae requiem quaerimus, jam ad interioris vestibuli faciem propinquamus. Signetur ergo per portam fides, per atrium charitas, per locum vero qui ad faciem vestibuli portae interioris propinquat figuretur spes, sine quibus tribus virtutibus quisquis jam uti ratione potest, ingredi ad coeleste aedificium non potest. Habeatur ergo fides in porta, quae introducit ad intelligentiam, charitas in atrio, quae mentem dilatat in amorem; spes in loco qui quinquaginta describitur cubitis, quia per desideria atque suspiria introducit animum ad secreta gaudia quietis. De qua quiete etsi adhuc, sicut est, veritatis lumen non cernimus, jam tamen per rimas intelligentiae aliquid videmus. Unde et hic subditur: VERS. 16. — Et fenestras obliquas in thalamis.

17. In fenestris obliquis pars illa per quam lumen intrat angusta est, sed pars interior quae lumen suscipit lata, quia mentes contemplantium quamvis aliquid tenuitur de vero lumine videant, in semetipsis tamen magna amplitudine dilatantur. Quae videlicet et ipsa quae conspiciunt capere pauca vix possunt. Exiguum quippe valde est quod de aeternitate contemplantes vident, sed ex ipso exiguo laxatur sinus mentium in augmentum fervoris et amoris; et inde apud se amplae fiunt, unde ad se veritatis lumen quasi per angustias admittunt. Quae magnitudo contemplationis, quia concedi nonnisi amantibus potest, in thalamis obliquae fenestrae esse perhibentur, vel in his quae juxta thalamos non jam extrinsecus, sed esse intrinsecus dicuntur. Nam de eisdem fenestris subditur: IBID. — Et in frontibus eorum quae erant intra portam undique per circuitum.

18. Erant enim in thalamis, erant et in frontibus eorum, quae intra portam undique per circuitum fuerant constructa, quia qui cor intus habet, ipse quoque lumen contemplationis suscipit. Nam qui adhuc exteriora immoderatius cogitant, quae sint de aeterno lumine rimae contemplationis ignorant. Neque enim cum corporearum rerum imaginibus illa infusio

incorporeae lucis capitur, quia dum sola visibilia cogitantur, lumen invisibile ad mentem non admittitur. Sed quisquis jam lumini contemplationis intendit, curare magnopere debet, ut mentem semper in humilitate custodiat, nunquam se de gratia qua infunditur extollat, et ipsas quae mentes contemplantium signant quales sint obliquae fenestrae consideret. Per obliquas etenim fenestras lumen intrat, et fur non intrat, quia hi qui vere speculatores sunt semper sensum in humilitate deprimunt, atque ad eorum mentes intelligentia contemplationis intrat, sed jactantia elationis non intrat. Et patent itaque fenestrae, et munitae sunt, quia et aperta est in mentibus eorum gratia qua replentur, et tamen ad se adversarium ingredi per superbiam non permittunt.

19. Notandum vero quod intra portam undique per circuitum fenestrae obliquae esse memorantur. Non enim contemplationis gratia summis datur et minimis non datur, sed saepe hanc summi, saepe minimi, saepius remoti, aliquando etiam conjugati percipiunt. Si ergo nullum est fidelium officium, a quo possit gratia contemplationis excludi, quisquis cor intus habet, illustrari etiam lumine contemplationis potest, quia intra portam undique per circuitum fenestrae obliquae constructae sunt, ut nemo ex hac gratia quasi de singularitate glorietur. Nullus se donum veri luminis aestimet habere privatum, quia in eo quod se habere praecipuum putat, saepe alter est ditior, quem habere apud se boni aliquid non putabat. Unde hic quoque adhuc apte subjungitur: IBID. — Similiter autem erant et in vestibulis fenestrae per gyrum intrinsecus.

20. Postquam dixit fenestras in frontibus, adjungit fenestras in vestibulis per gyrum intrinsecus, quia non solum alta sanctae Ecclesiae membra quae praeeminent habent contemplationis gratiam, sed plerumque hoc donum etiam illa membra percipiunt quae, etsi jam per desiderium ad summa emicant, tamen adhuc per officium in imo jacent. Nisi enim et his qui despecti videntur omnipotens Deus lumen contemplationis infunderet,

fenestrae in vestibulis non fuissent. Videmus itaque alios in summis locis sanctae Ecclesiae constitutos alta de coelestibus loqui, miro studio, in quantum illustrata mens sufficit, supernae patriae secreta rimari: fenestrae sunt in frontibus. A ii vero in sanctae Ecclesiae sinu continentur, et despecti humanis oculis videntur, sed apud se sapientiae studiis vacant, ad coelestia anhelant, atque, in quantum praevalent, quae sint gaudia aeterna considerant: fenestrae itaque obliquae sunt, sed in vestibulis.

21. Bene autem dicitur per gyrum, quia omnis inquisitio secretarum rerum gyrum habet, dum in cogitatione sua dicit animus: Putasne hoc? putasne illud est? Quasi circuit, ut inveniat quod quaerit. Cui cum incircumscriptum lumen erumpere in cognitione coeperit, quasi per obliquam fenestram radius veritatis venit. Sic quippe in contemplatione nostra multa cogitationibus circumeundo proficimus, sicut exempla bonorum saepe quaerimus, ut in moribus proficiamus. Nam cum jam cogitat animus ad meliora transire, quidquid melius de aliis audire possit exquirit, nunc hujus, nunc sancti alterius vitam ventilat. Unde et electus quidam, qui in expanso sinu sanctae Ecclesiae per universum mundum mentis oculos miserat, bonorum vitam ad imitationem requirens, dicebat: Circuibo et immolabo in tabernaculo Dei hostiam jubilationis (Psal. XXVI, 6). Ecce ut immolaret jubilationis hostiam circuibat, quia nisi animum huc illucque ad bonorum vitam exquirendam mitteret, ipse usque ad jubilationis sacrificium non perveniret. Cum vero sancti viri intra sanctam Ecclesiam ad loca summa perducuntur, eorum vita quasi in speculo ponitur, ut cuncti videant bona quae debeant imitari. Unde et adhuc apte subjungitur: IBID. — Et ante frontes pictura palmarum.

22. Quid per palmas, nisi praemia victoriae designantur? Ipsae quippe dari vincentibus solent. Unde et de his qui in certamine martyrii antiquum hostem vicerant, et jam victores in patria gaudebant, scriptum est: Et palmae in manibus eorum, et clamabant voce magna, dicentes: Salus Deo

nostro, qui sedet super thronum, et Agno (Apoc. VII, 9). Palmas quippe in manibus habere est victorias in operatione tenuisse. Cujus operationis palma ibi retribuitur, ubi jam sine certamine gaudetur. Unde et hic non dicitur: Palmae ante frontes, sed ante frontes pictura palmarum. Ibi enim victoriae palma videbitur, ubi jam sine fine gaudebitur. Nam hic plerumque sanctos viros aspicimus mira agere, virtutes multas facere, leprosos mundare, daemonia ejicere, tactu aegritudines corporum fugare, prophetiae spiritu ventura praedicere. Cuncta haec necdum palmae sunt, sed adhuc pictura palmarum, nam haec aliquando dantur et reprobis. Unde et per Evangelium Veritas dicit: Multi dicent mihi in die illa: Domine, Domine, nonne in nomine tuo prophetavimus, et in tuo nomine daemonia ejecimus, et in tuo nomine virtutes multas fecimus? Et tunc confitebor illis, quia nunquam novi vos; discedite a me qui operamini iniquitatem (Matth. VII, 22, 23). Unum vero signum electionis est soliditas charitatis, sicut scriptum est: In hoc scietur quia discipuli mei estis, si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem (Joan. XIII, 35). Haec autem miracula cum electi faciunt, longe dissimiliter a reprobis faciunt, quia quod electi ex charitate, hoc reprobi student agere per elationem. Sed eisdem electis et ipsa mira quae per charitatem faciunt, non jam palmae, sed adhuc pictura palmarum, quia de eis foris ostenditur quales apud omnipotentem Dominum intus habeantur. Ibi autem eis palma erit, ubi jam mortis contentio non erit. Nam praedicator egregius tunc aspexit palmam veram vincentibus dari, cum resurrectionem praevidit mortuorum fieri, sicut dicit: Oportet enim corruptibile hoc induere incorruptionem, et mortale hoc induere immortalitatem. Cum autem mortale hoc induerit immortalitatem, tunc fiet sermo qui scriptus est: Absorpta est mors in victoria. Ubi est, mors, victoria tua? ubi est, mors, stimulus tuus (I Cor. XV, 53, seq.)? Tunc ergo erit perfecta victoria, cum mors plene fuerit absorpta. In omne autem quod modo mirabiliter de signis agi conspicimus, non jam ipsam victoriam, sed adhuc imagines victoriae videmus. Quia ergo

plerumque sanctis etiam et in locis sublimioribus positis, ut ad bona opera alii provocentur, virtutes et signa dantur, ante frontes interioris aedificii palmarum pictura ostenditur. Haec hodierno die tractata sufficiant, ut ad ea quae subjuncta sunt, valentiores, adjuvante Domino nostro Jesu Christo, veniamus, qui vivit et regnat cum Deo Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA VI

Tres duntaxat versus explicantur, et quanta in Christianis, maxime vero in apostolis, perfectio eluxerit ostenditur.

1. Postquam de contemplationis gratia obliquas fenestras insinuans propheta multa locutus est, eductum se exterius dicit, et gazophylacia vidisse commemorat. In quibus gazophylaciis quid aliud quam doctorum scientia designatur? Sed recte hac in re quaeri potest, cum doctores sancti spiritalia atque interna doceant, cur propheta eductum se exterius dicit, et gazophylacia foris vidisse? Sed sciendum est quia alia est contemplatio quae tantum videt quantum dicere non valet, alia vero scientia atque doctrina, quae tantum videt, quantum exprimere per linguam possit. In comparatione quippe illius luminis quod voce exprimi non potest quasi hoc totum foris est quod exprimi voce potest. Ait itaque: EZECH. XL, 17. — Et eduxit me ad atrium exterius, et ecce gazophylacia, et pavimentum stratum lapide in atrium per circuitum.

2. Quia sermone Graeco phylaso servare dicitur, et gazae lingua Persica divitiae vocantur, gazophylacium locus appellari solet quo divitiae servantur. Quid itaque per gazophylacia designatur, nisi, ut praediximus, corda doctorum sapientiae atque scientiae divitiis plena? Quia, juxta Pauli vocem: Alii datur per spiritum sermo sapientiae, alii sermo scientiae in eodem spiritu (I Cor. XII, 3). Sunt enim quidam qui per donum gratiae et ipsa intelligunt quae exponi a doctoribus non audierunt; hi videlicet sermonem sapientiae perceperunt. Et sunt quidam qui per semetipsos intelligere audita nequeunt, sed ea quae in expositoribus legerint retinent, atque scienter proferunt quae lecta didicerunt. Unde itaque isti nisi sermone scientiae pleni sunt? Quamvis hoc intelligi et aliter possit, quia sapientia ad vitam, scientia vero pertinet ad doctrinam. Qui igitur bene vivit, et prudenter praedicat, gazophylacium spiritalis aedificii recte nominatur, quia ab ejus ore coelestes divitiae dispensantur. His divitiis abundare discipulos

idem magister gentium viderat, cum dicebat: Divites facti estis in illo, in omni verbo et omni scientia (I Cor. I, 5). Sunt itaque in sanctae Ecclesiae aedificio constructa gazophylacia, quia abundat divitiis scientiae lingua doctorum. Has veras esse divitias ipsa per se Veritas denuntiat, cum de transitoriis divitiis dicit: Fallacia divitiarum suffocat verbum (Matth. XIII, 22). Sapientia etenim atque scientia doctrinae spiritalis verae sunt divitiae, in quarum comparatione quae transire possunt falsae nominantur. De his divitiis per Salomonem dicitur: Thesaurus desiderabilis requiescit in ore sapientis (Prov. XXI, 20). Excepto autem eo, quod ad aeternam patriam divitiae spiritales ducunt, est eis a terrenis divitiis magna distantia, quia spiritales divitiae erogatae proficiunt, terrenae autem divitiae aut erogantur et deficiunt, aut retinentur et utiles non sunt. Qui ergo has in se veras divitias continent, recte gazophylacia dicuntur.

3. Et habent ipsa gazophylacia pavimentum per circuitum, quia eis adhaeret ac subjacet humilitas auditorum. Quod pavimentum recte stratum lapide in atrium dicitur, quia in latitudinem charitatis vicissim sibi junctae sunt animae fideles. Quae et lapides appellantur in fortitudine fidei, et stratae in pavimento sunt in compage humilitatis. Has fidelium mentes Petrus apostolus fortes in fide conspexerat, cum dicebat: Et vos tanquam lapides vivi superaedificamini domus spiritalis (I Petr. II, 5). De his lapidibus sanctae Ecclesiae Dominus per Isaiam dicit: Ponam jaspidem propugnacula tua, et portas tuas in lapides sculptos universos terminos tuos, in lapides desiderabiles omnes filios tuos doctos a Domino (Isai. LIV, 12). Omnipotens enim Deus sanctae Ecclesiae propugnacula jaspidem, qui lapis viridis coloris est, posuit, quia praedicatorum illius mentes internae viriditatis amore solidavit, ut transitoria cuncta despiciant, nihil in hoc mundo qui fine clauditur appetant, cuncta ejus gaudia velut arida contemnant. Unde et ipse pastor Ecclesiae, auditores suos ad pascua aeternae viriditatis vocans, de Deo loquitur, dicens: Secundum magnam

misericordiam suam regeneravit nos in spem vivam, per resurrectionem Jesu Christi ex mortuis, in haereditatem incorruptibilem et incontaminatam et immarcessibilem, conservatam in coelis (I Petr. I, 3, 4).

4. Hujus sanctae Ecclesiae portae in sculptos lapides ponuntur, quia hi, per quorum nos vocem ad vitam aeternam ingredimur, sancta opera quae divinitus praecepta sunt, dum in semetipsis ostenderent, quasi in se sculpta tenuerunt. Portae etenim non sculptae, sed purae essent, si vocem quidem promerent, sed sancta in se opera non demonstrarent. At ubi secundum hoc se ostendunt vivere quod loquuntur, et portae sunt, quia intus ducunt; et sculptae, quia vivendo custodiunt quae aliis loquuntur. Hujus sanctae Ecclesiae universos terminos in lapides desiderabiles positos videmus, dum in ea fideles quosque fortes in fide et charitate conspicimus. Qui, ut quos dixerit lapides demonstraret, adjunxit: Omnes filios tuos doctos a Domino (Isai. LIV, 13). Quod ergo Isaias universos terminos Ecclesiae lapides desiderabiles vidit, hoc Ezechiel pavimentum lapide stratum per circuitum esse perhibuit, quia adhuc de gazophylaciis subdit: IBID. — Triginta gazophylacia in circuitu pavimenti.

5. Denarius numerus pro perfectione semper accipitur, quia in decem praeceptis legis custodia continetur. Activa etenim ac contemplativa vita simul in Decalogi mandatis conjuncta est, quia in eo et amor Dei, et amor servari proximi jubetur. Amor quippe Dei ad contemplativam, amor vero proximi pertinet ad activam. Sed unusquisque doctor, ut in activam vitam plene se dilatet, atque in contemplativam vigilanter surgat, in sanctae Trinitatis fide debet esse perfectus. Unde et eadem gazophylacia triginta esse commemorantur, ut cum denarius ter ducitur, vita et lingua doctoris in Trinitate solidetur.

6. Sed hac in re illud nobis est vigilanter intuendum, quod propheta, dum gazophylacia descripsisset, adjunxit: Pavimentum per circuitum. Atque inferius subjunxit: Gazophylacia in circuitu pavimenti. Quatenus et

gazophylacia in circuitu pavimenti, et pavimentum in circuitu gazophylaciorum esse videatur. Pavimentum quippe et gazophylacia eo sunt ordine distincta, ut gazophylacia inter pavimentum et pavimentum inter gazophylacia fuerit stratum. Non hoc, fratres, sine magno mysterio est, quod in circuitu gazophylaciorum dicitur esse pavimentum, et in circuitu pavimenti narrantur esse gazophylacia. Habet enim pavimentum in circuitu gazophylacia, quia vitam audientium erudit quotidie et custodit lingua doctorum. Doctores etenim boni in sanctae eruditionis verbis modo fomentis dulcedinis, modo asperitate increpationis invigilant, ut auditorum suorum vitam a vitiis defendant. Sed habent ipsa quoque gazophylacia in circuitu pavimentum, quia saepe etiam doctorum cor vitiorum tentationibus tangitur, ut modo elevetur jactationis superbia, modo irae stimulis inflammetur. Sed cum bonorum auditorum vitam considerant, eamque profecisse suis exhortationibus pensant, erubescunt tales non esse quales auctore Deo per se conspiciunt alios factos esse, et ante se in mente stabiliunt quam plene in culpam labantur. Nam cum ipsa sua doctoribus verba ad memoriam redeunt, erubescunt non servare quod dicunt. Unde per Salomonem quoque dicitur: Anima laborantis laborat sibi, quia compulit eum os suum (Prov. XVI, 26). Os enim nostrum nos compellit ad laborem, quando per hoc quod dicimus a vitiis refrenamur, quia turpe nimis est ibi nos negligendo cadere, unde praedicando conati sumus alios levare. Habent ergo gazophylacia in circuitu pavimentum, quia doctorum magna custodia est vita venerabilis auditorum. Et suus eis sermo fit in adjutorium, quia erubescunt pulsantibus vitiis non resistere, qui contra vitia alios armaverunt.

7. Quia enim quandiu in hac vita vivimus, contra malignos spiritus quid aliud quam in acie stamus? sicut praediximus, doctoris animus forsitan aliqua elatione pulsatur. Sed sive ne ipse pereat, sive ne per exemplum suum alios ad perditionem trahat, vigilanter se et festine circumspicit, in cogitationibus remordet; adducta auditorum suorum vita ad memoriam,

semetipsum humiliat, et quibus praevalet modis agit ne elatio principetur in mente, ne dominetur in opere. Scriptum quippe est: Initium omnis peccati superbia (Eccl. X, 15). Quis ergo erit ante Dei oculos fructus boni operis, si ex radice putruit elationis? Saepe, ut praedictum est, ejus animus tentatur ex ira; sed citius se ad se circumspiciendo recolligit, et disciplinae se pondere deprimens agit ne motus animi transeat in sermone, ne erumpat in voce. Fitque ut ira perturbati animi, ubi per negligentiam oritur, ibi per judicium suffocata moriatur. Qua ex re agitur ut ex concepta culpa animus virtutem pariat, quia etsi se fortiter custodire noluit ne ad motum surgeret, se tamen in commotione fortiter vicit. Unde bene per Salomonem dicitur: Melior est patiens viro forti, et qui dominatur animo suo expugnatore urbium (Prov. XVI, 32). Recte autem expugnatori urbium patiens praefertur, quia in illa actione victoriae homo victor est hominum, in hac autem mansuetudine patientiae animus victor est sui. Sequitur: VERS. 28. — Et pavimentum in fronte portarum secundum longitudinem portarum erat inferius.

8. Si portarum longitudinem ad locum referimus in quo portae fuerant constructae, secundum longitudinem portarum pavimentum erat inferius, quia quantum tenere locus portarum poterat, tantum tendebatur et pavimentum quod erat inferius. Longitudo ergo pavimenti a portis non erat dissimilis, sed tamen aequalitas pavimenti non erat cum portis. Quid est ergo quod pavimentum cum portis longum similiter erat, sed aequale non erat, nisi quod longe distat vita populorum a vita docentium? Quia etsi ad regna coelestia tendentes eamdem longanimitatem spei habent, eadem tamen vivendi studia non habent. Tendatur ergo pavimentum similiter in longum, quia ipsam fidem, ipsam spem in se retinent auditores, quam habere certum est praedicatores. Sed pavimentum inferius jaceat, ut omnes auditores praedicatores suos longe a suis meritis excellere cognoscant. Sin vero longitudinem portarum ipsam, sicut superius diximus, earum altitudinem intelligere debemus, dum, sicut paulo post scriptum est, ad

portas gradibus ascendebatur, tanto pavimentum jacet inferius quanto unaquaeque porta surgit in altitudinem. Quia quanto sanctior est vita doctoris, tanto fit humilior sensus audientis. Et semetipsum despicit, dum praedicatoris sui vitam in magnam surgere altitudinem perpendit. Imitari etenim bona ejus alia forsitan potest, alia non potest. In quibus praevalet, proficit; in quibus minime praevalet, ad humilitatem crescit. Et hoc ipsum ergo ei in provectu est, quod ei imitabile ad provectum non est.

9. Ecce enim si praedicatorum nostrorum ea quae legimus dicta et facta pensamus, in quantam altitudinem surrexerint portae cognoscimus. Ut enim taceamus de ostensione signorum, loquamur de virtutibus cordium. Certe Paulus, qui se legi mortuum per legem dicit, quia ut in Christum crederet, ei hoc et lex ipsa praedicavit (Rom. II, 10), magno fidei ardore succensus, praecepta legis tenere carnaliter noluit, circumcisionem in gentibus fieri vetuit. Et cum Petrus apostolus servari adhuc in circumcisione legis consuetudinem vellet, ei in faciem restitit, eumque hac in re fuisse reprehensibilem dicit (Galat. II, 11). Et hoc ejus studium, discipulis loquens, non solum culpam, sed, quod est majus, hypocrisim, id est simulationem, nominat, dicens: Cum venisset Petrus Antiochiam, in faciem ei restiti, quia reprehensibilis erat (Ibid., 11). Et paulo post: Et simulationi ejus consenserunt caeteri Judaei (Ibid., 13). Idem vero apostolorum primus cum multa discipulos admoneret, atque a quibusdam detrahi de Pauli scriptis agnosceret, dicit: Sicut charissimus frater noster Paulus secundum datam sibi sapientiam scripsit vobis, loquens in eis de his in quibus sunt quaedam difficilia intellectu, quae indocti et instabiles depravant, sicut caeteras scripturas, ad suam ipsorum perditionem (II Pet. III, 1). Ecce Paulus in Epistolis suis scripsit Petrum reprehensibilem, et ecce Petrus in Epistolis suis asserit Paulum in his quae scripserat, admirandum. Certe enim nisi legisset Petrus Pauli Epistolas, non laudasset. Si autem legit, quia illic ipse reprehensibilis diceretur invenit. Amicus ergo veritatis laudavit etiam quod

reprehensus est, atque ei et hoc ipsum placuit, quia in his non placuerat quae aliter quam debuerat sensit. Seque etiam minori fratri ad consensum dedit, atque in eadem re factus est sectator minoris sui, ut etiam in hoc praeiret, quatenus qui primus erat in apostolatus culmine esset primus et in humilitate. Pensate ergo, fratres charissimi, in quo mentis vertice stetit qui illas Epistolas laudavit in quibus scriptum se vituperabilem invenit. Quae illa mansuetudo tanta esse potuit, quae quies animi, quae soliditas mentis, atque imperturbatio cogitationis? Ecce a minore suo reprehenditur, et reprehendi non dedignatur. Non ad memoriam revocat quod primus in apostolatum vocatus sit, non quod claves regni coelestis acceperit, non quod peccata quaecunque in terra solveret, essent soluta et in coelo (Matth. IV, 18; XVI, 19, seq.), non quod in mare pedibus ambulavit (Matth. XIV, 29), non quod paralyticos in Jesu nomine jubendo erexerat (Act. IX, 33), non quod aegros corporis sui umbra sanaverat (Ibid. V, 15), non quod mentientes verbo occiderat (Ibid. V, 10), non quod mortuos oratione suscitabat (Ibid. IX, 40). Ne igitur increpationis verba dedignaretur audire, omnia dona quae acceperat quasi a memoria repulit, ut unum fortiter humilitatis donum teneret. Quis rogo nostrum, si vel extremum aliquod signum fecisset a minori fratre increpatus, increpationis verba patienter audiret? Nihil enim signi fecimus, et si quis nos fortasse de actione nostra reprehenderit, statim intumescimus, magnos quosdam nos tacite cogitamus, virtutes nobis ad animum reducimus, etiam quas non habemus. At contra Petrus cum virtutibus humilis in reprehensione permansit, sed porta surrexit in altitudinem. Hanc autem tantam mansuetudinem nos imitari non possumus; sed quia pavimentum sumus, longe inferius jacemus.

10. Sunt vero nonnulli qui non Petrum apostolorum principem, sed quemdam alium eo nomine qui a Paulo sit reprehensus accipiunt. Qui si Pauli studiosius verba legissent, ista non dicerent. Dicturus etenim Paulus: Cum venisset Petrus Antiochiam, ei in faciem restiti (Galat. II, 11), ut de

quo Petro loqueretur ostenderet, in ipso suae narrationis initio praemisit, dicens: Creditum est mihi Evangelium praeputii, sicut Petro circumcisionis. Qui enim operatus est Petro in apostolatum circumcisionis, operatus est et mihi inter gentes (Ibid., 7, 8). Patet ergo de quo Petro Paulus loquitur, quem et apostolum nominat, et praefuisse Evangelio circumcisionis narrat.

11. Et fuerunt quidam qui secundam Petri Epistolam, in qua Epistolae Pauli laudatae sunt, ejus dicerent non fuisse. Sed si ejusdem Epistolae verba pensare voluissent, longe aliter sentire potuerant. In ea quippe scriptum est: Voce delapsa ad eum hujuscemodi a magnifica gloria: Hic est Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui (II Petr. I, 17). Atque subjungitur: Et hanc vocem nos audivimus, cum essemus cum ipso in monte sancto (Ibid., 18). Legant itaque Evangelium, et protinus agnoscent quia cum vox ista de coelo venit, Petrus apostolus in monte cum Domino stetit. Ipse ergo hanc Epistolam scripsit qui hanc vocem in monte de Domino audivit.

12. Sed quia pauca de Petro diximus, nunc si placet, ad Pauli mansuetudinem convertamur, et pensemus si possumus ille qui tanti ardoris est in zelo praedicationis, ut apostolorum quoque primo non parceret, quantae fuerit mansuetudinis in studio longanimitatis. Taceamus autem quod ter virgis caesus est, quia semel lapidatus est, quia ter naufragium fecit, quia nocte ac die in profundo maris fuit, quia a Judaeis quinquies quadragenas una minus accepit (II Cor. XI, 2, 3, seq.). Minus enim animum ad iracundiam commovent ea mala, quae nobis ab apertis adversariis irrogantur: hoc plus solet dolere, quod a propriis patimur. Unde et per Psalmistam ipsa Veritas contra traditorem suum loquitur, dicens: Quoniam si inimicus meus maledixisset mihi, supportassem utique. Tu vero unanimis dux meus, et notus meus, qui simul mecum dulces capiebas cibos (Psal. LIV, 15). Pensemus ergo, si possumus, Paulus apostolus, qui tantum patiens inter persecutores, quantum mansuetus inter discipulos fuerit. Certe Corinthum veniens, ab idolorum servitio Corinthios retraxit, quis esset

verus Deus innotuit, et aeternae eis vitae gaudia praedicavit. Et cum magnam multitudinem populi in fide collegisset, tantam illic inopiam pertulit, ut victus sui gravi necessitate laboraret. Et panem terrae a discipulis non accepit, quibus panem coeli praedicavit. Insistebat verbo pro vita audientium, insistebat labori manuum pro vita corporis sui (I Cor. IV, 12; I Thess. II, 9; II Thess. III, 8). De terris quoque aliis stipendia ei a discipulis mittebantur, ut Corinthiis praedicare sufficeret. Ipse quippe ad eosdem Corinthios post per Epistolam loquitur, dicens: Cum essem apud vos, et egerem, nulli onerosus fui; nam quod mihi deerat suppleverunt fratres qui venerunt a Macedonia (II Cor. XI, 9). Quibus ad magnum quoque improperium praemisit, dicens: Alias Ecclesias spoliavi, accipiens stipendium ad ministerium vestrum (Ibid. 8). Pensemus ergo, si possumus, cujus hoc mansuetudinis fuerit, panem spiritus praedicare, et panem carnis non accipere; corda audientium de divitiis aeternis instruere, et inter eosdem discipulos fideles et abundantes fame laborare; inter satiatos pati inopiam, nec tamen quod patiebatur dicere; quae patiebatur non dicere, nec tamen dolere; videre dura erga se corda auditorum tenacium, nec a praedicatione desistere. Nam sicut apostolorum Acta testantur, anno et sex mensibus continue in eadem civitate praedicavit (Act. XVIII, 11). Cumque ab eisdem Corinthiis recessisset, ad eos postmodum scripsit quod apud eos positus pertulit (II Cor. XI, 23 seq.). Quare autem hoc eis cum inter eos viveret, nunquam dixit? Ne scilicet quod erga eum factum ex bona voluntate non fuerat, fieret ex jussione; et cum innotesceret eorum misericordia, remaneret voluntas ignota. Quare autem hoc postmodum longe positus scribit? Ne omnimodo discipuli incorrecti remanerent, et quales magistro in tenacia fuerant, aliis quoque fratribus tales essent. Vere in hoc Paulus, vere magister gentilium, sua negligens, aliena curans, implevit quod praedicaverat: Nemo quod suum est quaerat, sed quod alterius. Et non quae sua sunt singuli cogitantes, sed ea quae aliorum (I Cor. X, 24). Quanta itaque ista

mansuetudinis virtus est? Quanta tranquillitas spiritus? Quis autem nostrum, si unum hujus mundi divitem ad omnipotentis Dei servitium convertisset, seque egere conspiceret, et illum sibi vitae subsidia non praebere, non protinus de ejus vita desperasset? Quis non incassum laborasse se diceret! Quis non ab ejus exhortatione obmutesceret, quem in semetipsum primum ferre fructum boni operis non videret?

13. Sed Paulus per mansuetudinem in virtutum vertice solidatus perstitit, praedicavit, dilexit, et bonum quod coeperat explevit, atque portando et persistendo discipulorum corda ad misericordiam perduxit (II Cor. IX, 3, 4, seq.). Nam eorum profectum postmodum scire se indicans, in eadem Epistola scribit: De ministerio quod fit in sanctos ex abundantia est mihi scribere vobis. Scio enim promptum animum vestrum, pro quo de vobis glorior apud Macedonas, quoniam Achaia parata est ab anno priore, et vestra aemulatio provocavit plurimos (Ibid., 1). De quibus rursus ait: Qui non solum facere, sed et velle coepistis ab anno priore (II Cor. VIII, 10). In quibus enim non tam opera quam pia vota requirebat, in eis procul dubio plus laudat pia vota quam opera. Notandum tamen est quia habet improperium haec ipsa consolatio, cum dicitur: Ab anno priore. Bonum quidem, sed tarde fecerant, atque ideo hoc magister non sine reprehensione laudabat. Medicus quippe est, medicamentum vulneri apponit, quod et ea quae purgata sunt refovet et ea quae putrida inveniuntur mordet. Sed haec tolerando atque praedicando, explevit quod coepit. Et mira longanimitatis virtute discipulorum duritiam emollivit ad misericordiae viscera, quia longitudo portae surrexit in altitudinem. Sed infirmi nos ad imitandum tantae mansuetudinis longanimitatem idonei non sumus, quia videlicet pavimentum sumus, et despecti in nostris moribus jacemus.

14. Ecce autem dum de duobus ducibus coelestis exercitus loquor, martyr quoque Stephanus memoriae occurrit, qui tentus pro Creatoris sui nomine, et in medium persecutorum deductus, imperterritus stetit,

fiducialiter docuit, et ex zelo veritatis persecutores suos fortiter increpavit, dicens: Vos semper Spiritui sancto restitistis (Act. VII, 51). Cumque illi ad lapides currerent, et eum lapidibus necarent, flexo genu pro eisdem persecutoribus oravit, dicens: Domine, ne statuas illis hoc peccatum (Ibid., 59). Quae itaque ista virtus est, sic zelo fervere, ut eis a quibus tenebatur perfidiae suae improperia fiducialiter diceret; et sic diligere, ut in morte quoque pro eis a quibus moriebatur oraret? Sic quippe ex zelo inferbuit, ac si mansuetudinis nihil haberet; et sic mansuetus in eorum dilectione perstitit, ac si contra eos fervoris nihil habuisset. Pensemus inter haec ubi nostrae conscientiae reatus jacet. Quis enim nostrum, si saltem verbi contumeliam a proximo acceperit, non statim contumeliam reddit, non funditus commovetur, non ad odium erumpit, non praeceptum dilectionis obliviscitur? Sed hoc beatus Stephanus ex omnipotentis Dei gratia potuit, quia surgens in altitudinem porta fuit. Hoc nos miseri nostra virtute imitari non possumus, quia longe inferius sicut pavimentum jacemus.

15. Quid autem nos in vita sanctorum de nostra admiratione dicimus, cum ipsi quoque antiqui patres praedicatorum sanctae Ecclesiae vitam considerantes, valde admirati sunt? An non eorum vitam Psalmista admiratus est, cum dicebat: Mihi autem nimis honorati sunt amici tui, Deus, nimis confortatus est principatus eorum (Psal. CXXXVIII, 17)? Quod de quibus ejus amicis dicat Evangelium interroga, in quo Veritas praedicatoribus dicit: Vos amici mei estis (Joan. XV, 14). Isaias quoque eorum vitam intuens, ait: Qui sunt isti qui ut nubes volant, et quasi columbae ad fenestras suas (Isai. LX, 8)? Recte autem praedicatores sancti nubes appellati sunt, quia verbis pluunt, miraculis coruscant. Qui volare quoque ut nubes dicuntur, quia et in terra viventes extra terram fuerunt per omne quod egerunt. Unde et per quamdam nubem dicitur: In carne enim ambulantes non secundum carnem militamus (II Cor. X, 3)? Priores enim patres conjugiis utebantur, filios procreabant, substantias possidebant, curis

rei familiaris intendebant. Istos autem per prophetiae jam spiritum praevidentes substantias deserere, conjugia non appetere, filios non procreare, nil in terra quaerere, nihil possidere, non eos per terram velut homines ambulantes, sed ut nubes volantes nominant. Velant etenim, quia mente ea quae sunt coelestia contemplantur. Qui terram quasi non tangunt, quia in ipsa nil appetunt. Qui et ad fenestras suas quasi columbae sunt, quia per mansuetudinis suae spiritum in hoc mundo per oculos nil concupiscunt. Consideremus ergo quantae altitudinis istae spiritalis aedificii portae sunt, quas et spiritales patres admirantur. Quantum itaque nos in earum admiratione humiliari necesse est, qui pavimentum sumus? Sed quia sub longitudinis appellatione altitudinem portarum audivimus, nunc aliquid de earum latitudine cognoscamus. Sequitur: VERS. 29. — Et mensus est latitudinem a facie portae inferioris, usque ad fontem atrii interioris extrinsecus, centum cubitos ad Orientem et ad Aquilonem.

16. In quibus verbis si portam aditum accipimus, quo ad cognitionem Domini intramus, porta inferior fides est, atrium vero interius contemplatio. Habet autem porta inferior latitudinem in facie, quia videlicet fides per charitatis suae amplitudinem habet eam quae videtur a proximis operationem. Quam dum fortiter a perfectioribus agi conspicimus, nos, qui in bonis actibus angustamur, exempla per eos magnae operationis accipimus. Et unaquaeque sancta actio quasi quaedam nobis fit latitudo itineris, quae prius erat angustia difficultatis. Habet quoque atrium interius frontem, quia contemplativa vita per quaedam signa desideriorum et gemituum ostendit quantum intus videat quae tantum amat. Denarius autem numerus per semetipsum multiplicatus in centenarium surgit. Unde recte per centenarium magna perfectio designatur, sicut de electis Veritas dicit: Omnis qui relinquit domum, vel fratres, aut sorores, aut patrem, aut matrem, aut uxorem, aut filios, aut agros propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet, et vitam aeternam possidebit (Matth. XIX, 29). Neque etenim sanctus

quisque ideo terrena deserit, ut haec possidere in hoc mundo multiplicius possit, quia quisquis terreno studio terram relinquit, terram non relinquit sed appetit. Nec qui unam uxorem deserit centum recepturus est; sed per centenarium numerum perfectio designatur, postquam etiam vita aeterna promittitur, quia quisquis pro Dei nomine temporalia atque terrena contemnit, et hic perfectionem mentis recipit, ut jam ea non appetat quae contemnit, et in sequenti saeculo ad aeternae vitae gloriam pervenit. Centies itaque recipit quod dedit, qui perfectionis spiritum accipiens, terrenis non indiget, etiamsi haec non habet. Ille enim pauper est, qui eget eo quod non habet. Nam qui et non habens habere non appetit, dives est. Paupertas quippe in inopia mentis est, non in quantitate possessionis. Nam cui cum paupertate bene convenit, non est pauper. Mensus est ergo vir latitudinem a facie portae inferioris, usque ad frontem atrii interioris extrinsecus, centum cubitos, quia Redemptor noster quotidie per magistros atque doctores in mensura perfectionis metitur vitam fidelium, vel in specie boni operis per fidem, vel in sanctis desideriis per contemplationem.

17. Multi etenim videntur in fide positi magna operari, sed in centum cubitis non mensurantur, quia per ipsa quae faciunt terrenam gloriam quaerunt. Et quidam videntur per abstinentiam cruciari, gemitibus insistere; sed eorum mensura ad centum cubitos minime ducitur, quia in his quae agunt ab humano judicio favores requirunt. Quis ergo est qui per centum cubitos mensuratur, nisi is cujus bona operatio recta intentione utitur, ut in eo quod agit non ad terrena lucra appetenda aut ad laudes transitorias reflectatur?

18. Ecce enim misericordiam proximis exhibere, possessa largiri, cum celeritate indigenti tribuere, latitudo in facie portae inferioris est. Sed si tua dans aliena non appetas, si terrenam gloriam de ipso bono opere non requiras, recte in centenario numero, id est in perfectione mensuraris. Nam qui videtur dare misericorditer propria, et rapit forsitan violenter aliena, iste

adhuc quae sit via perfectionis ignorat, nec cognovit unde ad perfectionem tenditur, quia nec ipsum ejus initium invenit. Prius enim appetitum evellere a mente debuit, et postea quae jure possidet largiri. Unde scriptum est: Declina a malo et fac bonam (Psal. XXXVI, 37). Quid enim potest esse boni quod facit, qui necdum a malo declinavit? Et sunt quidam qui, sicut dictum est, ab alimentis abstinent, carnem cruciant, sed tamen si pulsati fuerint, cognoscuntur quia ad mundi gloriam anhelent. Isti frontem atrii interioris ostendunt, sed per centum cubitos non mensurantur.

19. Hi ergo in numero perfectionis sunt, de quibus per Paulum dicitur: Qui carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis (Galat. V, 24). Et notandum quia non dicitur quod intrinsecus, sed extrinsecus ista mensurantur, quia videlicet Redemptor noster cum per nos facta hominum vel approbat, vel judicat, non intrinsecus, sed extrinsecus metitur. Unde et per Evangelium dicit: Ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos (Matth. VII, 16). Qui enim per hoc quod videmus cognoscimus operantis animum quem non videmus, sive latitudinem quae in facie portae est inferioris, sive frontem atrii interioris extrinsecus metimur. Cum enim alios conspicimus largiri eleemosynam, afflictis concurrere, oppressis subvenire, nihil eos in hoc mundo gloriae quaerere, nullis hujus mundi compendiis inhiare, atque alios videmus carnem domare, lacrymis insistere, verbis coelestibus occupari, nihil transitorii honoris appetere, quid aliud debemus nisi eos perfectos esse credere, sanctos aestimare? Quia ergo per hoc quod aspicimus eos perfectos esse videmus, eorum vitam per centum cubitos extrinsecus metimur.

20. Et quia multi in Judaea, plerique vero in gentilitate positi, ad hanc perfectionis summam pervenerunt, recte subjungitur: Ad Orientem et ad Aquilonem. Judaicus etenim populus Oriens jure dictus est, de cujus carne ille est natus, qui Sol justitiae vocatur. De quo per prophetam dicitur: Vobis autem qui timetis Dominum, orietur Sol justitiae (Malac. IV, 2). Per Aquilonem vero gentilitas figuratur, quae diu in perfidiae suae frigore

torpuit, et in cujus corde ille regnavit, qui, attestante propheta, apud semetipsum dixit: Ponam sedem meam ad Aquilonem (Isai. XIV, 13). Quia itaque incarnatus omnipotens Deus alios perfectos ex Judaea, alios ex gentilitate perfectos intra sanctam Ecclesiam fecit, centum cubitos non solum ad Orientem mensus est, sed etiam ad Aquilonem.

21. Sed quia sub Aquilonis nomine de gentilitate sermo se intulit, considerare libet quantum super nos effusa sunt viscera Creatoris nostri. Omnes enim nos ex gentilitate venimus. Antiqui parentes nostri lignis et lapidibus servierunt, et, derelinquentes Deum a quo facti sunt, deos venerati sunt quos fecerunt. Nos autem per omnipotentis Dei gratiam ad lucem de tenebris educti sumus. Recolamus ergo de quibus tenebis venimus, ut de luce quam accepimus gratias agamus. Neque enim divinam misericordiam intelligit qui suae miseriae memor non est. Unde et per Psalmistam Deo dicitur: Mirifica misericordias tuas, Domine, qui salvos facis sperantes in te (Psal. XVI, 7). Tunc enim nobis Dei misericordiae mirae fiunt, cum nobis ad memoriam miseriae nostrae revocantur, quia, recolentes quid fuimus, intelligimus cui debemus quod sumus. Cantemus itaque cum gaudio Creatori nostro, quia de servitio creaturae colla mentis excussimus. Gaudeamus in nobis impletum esse quod per Isaiam dictum est: Et frenum erroris quod erat in maxillis populorum, canticum erit vobis, sicut vox sanctificatae solemnitatis (Isai. XXX, 23, 29). Frenum quippe erroris maxillas populorum constrinxerat, quando idolorum errore obligata gentilitas Deo vero confessionis laudem dare nesciebat. Sed hoc ipsum erroris frenum jam nobis in canticum versum est, cum gaudendo psallimus atque cantamus: Omnes dii gentium daemonia, Dominus autem coelos fecit (Psal. XCV, 5). Et rursum: Simulacra gentium argentum et aurum, opera manuum hominum: os habent, et non loquentur; oculos habent, et non videbunt; aures habent, et non audient; nares habent, et non odorabunt; manus habent, et non palpabunt; pedes habent, et non ambulabunt (Psal.

CXIII, 29, seq.). Qui itaque haec omnipotenti Domino psallendo dicimus, ipsum erroris nostri frenum, quod a laude Dei ora nostra ligaverat, vero Domino canticum fecimus. Bene autem dicitur: Sicut nox sanctificatae solemnitatis (Isai. XXX, 29), quia dum confessionis laudem Deo reddimus, in sanctificata solemnitate gaudemus. Respondeamus ergo moribus tantae misericordiae Redemptoris nostri, et qui lucem cognovimus, pravorum operum tenebras declinemus.

22. Quid est jam, rogo, quod in hoc mundo libeat? Ubique luctus aspicimus, undique gemitus audimus. Destructae urbes, eversa sunt castra, depopulati agri, in solitudinem terra redacta est. Nullus in agris incola, pene nullus in urbibus habitator remansit; et tamen ipsae parvae generis humani reliquiae adhuc quotidie et sine cessatione feriuntur. Et finem non habent flagella coelestis justitiae, quia nec inter flagella correctae sunt actionis culpae. Alios in captivitatem duci, alios detruncari, alios interfici videmus. Quid est ergo quod in hac vita libeat, fratres mei? Si et talem adhuc mundum diligimus, non jam gaudia, sed vulnera amamus. Ipsa autem quae aliquando mundi domina esse videbatur qualis remanserit Roma conspicimus. Immensis doloribus multipliciter attrita, desolatione civium, impressione hostium, frequentia ruinarum; ita ut in ea completum esse videamus quod contra urbem Samariam per hunc eumdem prophetam longe superius dicitur: Pone ollam, pone, inquam, et mitte in ea aquam, et congere frusta ejus in ea (Ezech. XXIV, 4). Et paulo post: Efferbuit coctio ejus, et discocta sunt ossa illius in medio ejus (Ibid., 5). Atque iterum: Congere ossa, quae igne succendam: consumentur carnes, et coquetur universa compositio, et ossa tabescent. Pone quoque eam super prunas vacuam, ut incalescat, et liquefiat aes ejus (Ibid., 10, 11). Tunc enim nobis olla posita est, cum haec est civitas constituta. Tunc in eam aqua missa est, et frusta ejus congesta sunt, quando ad eam undique populi confluebant, qui velut aqua calens actionibus mundi fervescerent, et quasi frusta carnium in ipso

suo fervore liquarentur. De qua bene dicitur: Efferbuit coctio ejus, et discocta sunt ossa ejus in medio illius, quia prius quidem in ea vehementer incaluit actio gloriae saecularis, sed postmodum ipsa gloria cum suis sequacibus defecit. Per ossa etenim potentes saeculi, per carnes vero populi designantur, quia sicut carnes portantur ossibus, ita per potentes saeculi infirmitas regitur populorum. Sed ecce jam de illa omnes hujus saeculi potentes ablati sunt; ossa ergo excocta sunt. Ecce populi defecerunt, carnes ejus liquefactae sunt. Dicatur itaque: Congere ossa, quae igne succendam; consumentur carnes, et coquetur universa compositio ejus, et ossa tabescent. Ubi enim senatus? Ubi jam populus? Contabuerunt ossa, consumptae sunt carnes, omnis in ea saecularium dignitatum fastus exstinctus est. Excocta est universa compositio ejus. Et tamen ipsos nos paucos qui remansimus adhuc quotidie gladii, adhuc quotidie innumerae tribulationes premunt. Dicatur ergo: Pone quoque eam super prunas vacuam. Quia enim senatus deest, populus interiit, et tamen in paucis qui sunt dolores et gemitus quotidie multiplicantur, jam vacua ardet Roma. Quid autem ista de hominibus dicimus, cum, ruinis crebrescentibus, ipsa quoque destrui aedificia videmus? Unde apte de civitate jam vacua subditur: Incalescat, et liquefiat aes ejus. Jam enim et ipsa olla consumitur, in qua prius et carnes et ossa consumebantur, quia postquam defecerunt homines, etiam parietes cadunt. Ubi autem sunt qui in ejus aliquando gloria laetabantur? Ubi eorum pompa? Ubi superbia? Ubi frequens et immoderatum gaudium?

23. Impletum est in ea quod contra destructam Niniven per prophetam dicitur: Ubi est habitaculum leonum, et pascua catulorum leonum (Nahum. II, 11)? An ejus duces ac principes leones non erant, qui, per diversas mundi provincias discurrentes, praedam saeviendo et interficiendo rapiebant? Hic leonum catuli inveniebant pascua, quia pueri, adolescentes, juvenes saeculares, et saecularium filii huc undique concurrebant, cum proficere in hoc mundo voluissent. Sed jam ecce desolata, ecce contrita, ecce gemitibus

oppressa est. Jam nemo ad eam currit, ut in hoc mundo proficiat; jam nullus potens et violentus remansit, qui opprimendo praedam diripiat. Dicamus ergo: Ubi est habitaculum leonum, et pascua catulorum leonum? Contigit ei quod de Judaea novimus per prophetam dictum: Dilata calvitium tuum sicut Aquila (Mich. I, 16). Calvitium quippe hominis in solo capite fieri solet, calvitium vero Aquilae in toto fit corpore, quia cum valde senuerit, plumae ejus ac pennae ex omnibus membris illius cadunt. Calvitium ergo suum sicut Aquila dilatat, quia plumas perdidit, quae populum amisit. Alarum quoque pennae occiderunt, cum quibus volare ad praedam consueverat, quia omnes potentes ejus exstincti sunt, per quos aliena rapiebat (Joan. Diac., l. IV, c. 66).

24. Haec autem quae de Romanae urbis contritione dicimus, in cunctis facta mundi civitatibus scimus. Alia etenim loca clade desolata sunt, alia gladio consumpta, alia fame cruciata, alia terrae hiatibus absorpta. Despiciamus ergo ex toto animo hoc praesens saeculum vel exstinctum; finiamus mundi desideria saltem cum mundi fine: imitemur bonorum facta quae possumus. Apud Orientem enim et Aquilonem multi sunt qui pro perfectione vitae centum cubitis mensurantur. Ex Judaea etenim et gentilitate, sicut dictum est, ad sanctitatis culmen excreverunt. Quamvis intelligi per Orientem et Aquilonem etiam justi et peccatores possint. Oriens quippe non immerito justi nominantur, qui, sicut in luce fidei nati sunt, in innocentia perstiterunt. Per Aquilonem vero recte peccatores accipimus, qui mentis frigore dilapsi sub peccati sui umbra torpuerunt. Sed quia omnipotentis Dei misericordia etiam tales ad poenitentiam revocat, compunctione et lacrymis lavat, virtutibus ditat, et usque ad perfectionis gloriam sublevat, non solum ad Orientem centum cubiti, sed etiam ad Aquilonem ducuntur, dum cum justis etiam peccatores per dona et poenitentiam ad perfectionem veniunt, largiente Domino nostro Jesu

Christo, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA VII

Septem versuum, a 20 ad 27, explicationem complectitur, plurimaque simul exhibet praecepta moralia, de Spiritus sancti donis, gradibusque ad ea ducentibus, de vera perfectione ac de bonorum operum necessitate.

1. Magna legentium debet esse discretio, ut in sacro eloquio cum quilibet unus sermo dicitur, non semper unam eamdemque rem significare credatur, sicut aliquando sol in bono, aliquando vero accipitur in malo. Solis etenim nomine aliquando ipse Redemptor noster signatur, aliquando persecutio. Attestante enim libro Sapientiae, in inferno impii dicturi sunt: Erravimus a via veritatis, et sol justitiae non luxit nobis (Sap. V, 6). Et de jactis seminibus Dominus dicit: Orto sole aruerunt (Matth. XIII, 6), quia videlicet, facta persecutione, in reproborum cordibus praedicationis verba siccantur. Sic leo Dominum signat. Unde scriptum est: Vicit leo de tribu Juda (Apoc. V, 5). Sic leonis nomine diaboli similitudo exprimitur, sicut per primum pastorem dicitur: Adversarius vester diabolus, sicut leo rugiens, circuit quaerens quem devoret (I Petr. V, 8). Sic bovis nomine sapiens designatur. Unde scriptum est: Non junges bovem et asinum (Deut. XXII, 10), id est, sapientem cum stulto in praedicatione non socies. Sic per bovem fatuus figuratur, sicut de eo qui in turpitudine amoris captus est, dicitur: Statimque eam sequitur, quasi bos ductus ad victimam (Prov. VII, 22); id est, sicut fatuus trahitur ad mortem. Haec igitur dixi, ne quia portam significare Dominum, vel praedicatores, vel Scripturam sacram, vel fidem exposui, ubicunque jam in hoc propheta porta legitur signare aliud non credatur. Cum enim de una porta propheta loqueretur, recte fides intellecta est, quia una est omnium electorum fides. Cum vero aliae portae nominantur, intelligi ora praedicatorum possunt, per quae vera vita cognoscitur, et per quae ascenditur ad sacramentorum spiritalium cognitionem. Nam porta per quam significari fidem diximus, notandum nobis est quia inferior appellatur. In hac enim vita dum sumus, quasi in imo positi adhuc inferius tenemur. Et

recte inferior porta fides est, quia nobis in terra positis aperit cognitionem Dei. Itaque nunc dicitur: VERS. 20-22. — Portam quoque quae respiciebat viam Aquilonis atrii exterioris mensus est tam in longitudine quam in latitudine. Et thalamos ejus tres hinc, et tres inde; et frontes ejus, et vestibulum ejus secundum mensuram portae prioris: quinquaginta cubitorum longitudinem ejus, et latitudinem viginti et quinque cubitorum. Fenestrae autem ejus, et vestibulum, et sculpturae secundum mensuram portae quae respiciebat ad Orientem; et septem graduum erat ascensus ejus, et vestibulum ante eam.

2. De porta quae respiciebat viam Aquilonis atrii exterioris, ea ipsa replicantur quae jam de porta alia superius dicta sunt, atque alia subjunguntur quae de praedicta porta propheta tacuerat. Ut ergo de his latius disseramus quae necdum discussa sunt, debemus ea quae jam dicta sunt sub brevitate replicare. Porta enim viam Aquilonis respicit, cum praedicator quisque vitam peccatoris agnoscit, eique interiora vitae per verbum praedicationis aperit. Quae porta atrii exterioris dicitur. Exterius quippe est atrium vita praesens, in qua omne quod corporaliter agitur corporaliter etiam videtur. Quae tam in longitudine quam in latitudine mensuratur, quia cum ad fidem peccator ducitur, necesse est ut ejus doctor consideret, vel quantum in longitudinem spei, vel quantum in latitudinem charitatis ex ejus admonitione proficiat. Qui enim ad Deum convertitur, si adhuc bona vitae praesentis sperat, longitudinem non habet, quia brevis est vita in qua spem posuit. Si per terrenarum rerum concupiscentiam, et adhuc per proximi odium coangustatur, latitudinem non habet, quia nescit vel transitoria contemnere, vel se in proximi amore dilatare. Cum vero conversus quisque aeternae vitae gaudia longanimiter sperat, proximorum molestias cum charitate tolerat, et ea quae non habet concupiscere contemnit; longitudinem et latitudinem porta habet, quia gloria praedicatoris est profectus auditoris. Unde quibusdam per magnum praedicatorem dicitur: Gaudium meum et

corona mea (Philip. IV, 1). Et rursum: Ecce nunc vivo, si vos statis in Domino (I Thess. III, 8). Atque iterum: Quae est nostra spes aut gaudium? Nonne vos ante Dominum (Ibid., II, 19)? Longitudo ergo et latitudo portae est quae ad Aquilonem respicit, quia cum infidelem quempiam in peccati sui frigore torpentem praedicator ad fidem converterit, per hoc quod eum in longitudinem spei tendit, et in amplitudinem charitatis dilatat, ejus gloriam suam facit. Et quia in cognitione sanctae Trinitatis ex verbo praedicationis auditores quique in ejusdem Trinitatis amore proficiunt, habet haec eadem porta thalamos tres hinc, et tres inde, quia omne quod per Testamentum Novum de Trinitate conditor loquitur, hoc etiam de Testamento Veteri ostendit. Et cor audientium in amore coelestis patriae proficit, ut anima inhaerens Deo quasi sponsa cum sponso in quodam jam thalamo sedeat, atque se a terrenis desideriis funditus avertat.

3. Vel certe, ut longe superius dictum est (Hom. 4, n. 5), quia tres sunt ordines bene viventium, bonorum scilicet conjugatorum, continentium, atque praedicatorum, et quia alii etiam in conjugiis positi amore coelestis patriae anhelant, alii autem spe aeterni gaudii etiam carnem macerant, omnesque actus terrenos refugiunt, et in cura hujus saeculi implicari contemnunt, alii vero et terrena bona despiciunt, et coelestia gaudia praedicant, quae cognoverunt, quid isti nisi in spiritali aedificio thalami sunt in quorum cogitatione et meditatione anima coelesti sponso sociatur? Quos tres bonorum ordines, quia non solum Ecclesia ex gentibus habet, sed aliquando etiam Synagoga habuit, dum magna multitudo spiritalium Redemptoris gratiam ardenter exspectavit, porta aedificii coelestis tres hinc, et tres inde thalamos habet, quia praedicator quisque, cum ad supernam patriam auditorem provocat, et novos patres et veteres anhelasse coelesti desiderio demonstrat. Plus enim plerumque exempla quam ratiocinationis verba compungunt; et cum praedicator dicit quales alii in conjugio, vel in continentia, vel in praedicatione erga omnipotentis Dei amorem in novo

testamento fuerint, vel alii quales in veteri, porta quae loquitur ternos ex utroque latere habere se thalamos ostendit. Quae porta habet et frontem, quia sunt in praedicatoris vita aperta opera quae videntur. Habet et ante frontem vestibulum, quia priusquam bona opera insinuet, praedicat fidem, per quam anima humiliter veniens ad bonorum actuum altitudinem sublevetur. Quae cuncta secundum mensuram portae prioris sunt, juxta hoc quod subditur: VERS. 21. — Quia mensus est quinquaginta cubitorum longitudinem ejus, et latitudinem viginti quinque cubitorum.

4. Haec jam superius latius me dixisse meministis (Hom. 5, l. II). Per quinquagenarium enim numerum requiem diximus figurari, quia et quinquagesimus annus veteri populo in requiem datus est, quia appellatus est jubilaeus; et septenarius numerus, per quem hoc omne tempus evolvitur, septies multiplicatus ad quadraginta et novem ducitur. Cui monas additur, quia in unius contemplatione requies aeterna perficitur. Idem ergo quinquagenarius numerus nobis in longitudinem est, quia pervenire ad illam requiem non potest, nisi qui ad eam spem suam modo tendere longanimiter potest. Quia enim per quinquagenarium numerum ad aeternam requiem provocamur, etiam hoc nos omnino instruit quod in tabernaculo decem cortinae jussae sunt fieri, quae haberent ansulas quinquagenas, et circulos aureos quinquagenos a latere et summitate (Exod. XXV, 4, seq.). Cortinae etenim tabernaculi sancti omnes sunt, qui ex diversis virtutum coloribus in sanctae Ecclesiae ornamento proficiunt. Qui et interiora velant, et exteriora omnimodo exornant, quia eorum vita in quantum videtur, ornamentum est; et eorum intellectus intus absconditur, dum coelestia quae in mente servant, et dicere non possunt, in eis aliquo modo velantur. Recte autem decem cortinae sunt, quia per Decalogi custodiam ipsa sanctorum corda profecerunt. Hyacinthinae vero ansulae cortinarum fieri quinquaginta praeceptae sunt. Hyacinthus coeli speciem habet. Ansulae ergo cortinarom sunt praecepta coelestia, in quibus ligantur animae, ut ab inferioribus

sublevatae superius pendeant. Quae videlicet ansulae habent et circulos aureos, intellectum scilicet vera sapientia fulgentem. Qui intellectus, quia esse debet per omnia circumspectus, et cautae sollicitudinis vigilantia munitus, recte per circulos designatur.

5. Et notandum quod a latere et summitate jubentur ansulae, vel circuli in cortinis fieri, quia praecepta coelestia et intellectus spiritualis, non solum debet nos sursum in Dei amorem suspendere, sed etiam proximo in charitate sociare. In eo enim quod conditorem nostrum diligimus, quasi per superiores ansulas in aere pendemus. In eo vero quod sicut nosmetipsos proximos amamus, ansulas et circulos a latere habemus, ut cortinae tabernaculi, id est fidelium animae per charitatem conjunctae sint, et non per discordiam divisae. Unde et hic post longitudinem quinquaginta cubitorum protinus latitudo subjungitur viginti et quinque cubitorum, quae videlicet latitudo ad charitatem proximi pertinet. Ipsa enim in fratrum amorem se dilatat, atque erga eos omne quod potest boni operis exercet. Cuncta autem bona opera quae corporaliter fiunt, per quinque corporis sensus exhibentur, videlicet per visum, auditum, tactum, gustum, odoratum. Quinarius vero numerus per semetipsum ductus ad vicesimum et quintum pervenit, quia bona opera cum agi coeperint, per fervorem animum ad augmentum excitant, et per semetipsa multiplicantur. Unde et latitudinem menti faciunt, ut non sit angusta per teporem, sed expansa in bonis actibus per charitatem. Omnis enim torpor teporis angustia est, omnis vero benignitas charitatis, magna latitudo. Nam etsi res desunt quae fortasse indigenti proximo praebeantur, ampla est substantia voluntatis bonae, quae sufficit ad regni retributionem, sicut scriptum est: In terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II, 14). Sequitur: VERS. 22. — Fenestrae autem ejus, et vestibulum, et sculpturae secundum mensuram portae quae respiciebat ad Orientem.

6. Cuncta haec jam superius latius dicta sunt, et idcirco sermo non debet morosa expositione tardari. Hoc tamen magnopere notandum est, quod porta ad Aquilonem ea omnia habere perhibetur quae porta ad Orientem, fenestras scilicet contemplationis, vestibulum humilitatis, sculpturam bonae operationis. Omnes enim qui per hoc quod Deo in conversatione nati sunt in innocentia perstiterunt, portam ad Orientem habent, quia eis coelestis regni aditus patet a lumine quod acceperunt. Et omnes qui in peccatis postmodum lapsi torporis sui frigore sunt depressi, sed, dum per poenitentiam redeunt, ad amorem coelestis patriae recalescunt, portam ad Aquilonem habent, quia eis etiam post peccati sui frigus coelestis regni aditus per misericordiam patet. Ea ergo habere dicitur porta ad Aquilonem quae habet porta ad Orientem, quia et conversi peccatores sic ditantur virtutibus, sicut illi sunt divites qui cadere in peccatum vitaverunt. Unde et Psalmistae voce per Dominum dicitur: Cinerem sicut panem manducabam (Psal. CI, 10), quia sic poenitentes recipit ut justos. Scriptum quippe est de peccatoribus: Olim in cilicio et cinere poenitentiam egissent (Matth. XI, 21). Cinis ergo sicut panis comeditur, quando ad auctoris sui gratiam peccator per poenitentiam sicut innocens revocatur. Porta igitur ad Aquilonem habet fenestras, habet vestibulum, habet sculpturas, quia cum peccator ad vitam post culpas reducitur, saepe lumen contemplationis accipit, atque de ipsa memoria iniquitatis suae gratiam magnae humilitatis bonae quoque operationis efficaciam sumit, ut omne quod fieri praecipitur, in vita ejus quasi sculptum esse videatur. IBID. — Septem vero graduum erat ascensus ejus, et vestibulum ante eam.

7. Septem gradibus ad portam ascenditur, quia per sancti Spiritus septiformem gratiam aditus nobis vitae coelestis aperitur. Quam septiformem gratiam Isaias in ipso nostro capite, vel in ejus corpore, quod nos sumus, enumerans dicit: Requiescet super eum spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis, et

replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini (Isai. XI, 2). Quos gradus, de coelestibus loquens, descendendo magis quam ascendendo numeravit, videlicet sapientiam, intellectum, consilium, fortitudinem, scientiam, pietatem, timorem. Et cum scriptum sit: Initium sapientiae timor Domini (Prov. IX, 10), constat procul dubio quia a timore ad sapientiam ascenditur, non autem a sapientia ad timorem reditur, quia nimirum perfectam habet sapientia charitatem. Et scriptum est: Perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem (I Joan. IV, 18). Propheta ergo, quia de coelestibus ad ima loquebatur, coepit magis a sapientia, et descendit ad timorem. Sed nos qui a terrenis ad coelestia tendimus, eosdem gradus ascendendo enumeremus, ut a timore ad sapientiam pervenire valeamus. In mente etenim nostra primus ascensionis gradus est timor Domini; secundus, pietas; tertius, scientia; quartus, fortitudo; quintus, consilium; sextus, intellectus; septimus, sapientia. Est enim timor Domini in mente. Sed qualis est iste timor, si cum eo pietas non est? Qui enim misereri proximo ignorat, qui compati ejus tribulationibus dissimulat, hujus timor ante omnipotentis Dei oculos nullus est, quia non sublevatur ad pietatem. Sed saepe pietas per inordinatam misericordiam errare solet, si fortasse pepercerit quae parcenda non sunt. Peccata enim quae feriri gehennae ignibus possunt disciplinae verbere sunt corrigenda. Sed inordinata pietas cum temporaliter parcit, ad aeternum supplicium pertrahit. Ut ergo vera et ordinata sit pietas, ad gradum est alium sublevanda, id est ad scientiam, ut sciat vel quid ex judicio puniat, vel quid ex misericordia dimittat. Sed quid si sciat quid agere quisque debeat, virtutem vero agendi non habeat? Scientia ergo nostra crescat ad fortitudinem, ut cum videt quid agendum sit, hoc agere per mentis fortitudinem possit, ne timore trepidet, et, pavore collapsa, non valeat bona defendere quae sentit. Sed saepe fortitudo si improvida fuerit, et minus contra vitia circumspecta, ipsa sui praesumptione in casum ruit. Ascendat ergo ad consilium, ut praevidendo praemuniat omne quod agere fortiter

potest. Sed esse consilium non potest, si intellectus deest, quia qui non intelligit malum quod agentem gravat, quomodo potest bonum solidare quod adjuvat? Itaque a consilio ascendamus ad intellectum. Sed quid si intellectus magno quidem acumine vigilet, et moderari se nesciat per maturitatem? Ab intellectu ergo ascendatur ad sapientiam, ut hoc quod acute intellectus invenit, sapientia mature disponat. Quia igitur per timorem surgimus ad pietatem, per pietatem ad scientiam ducimur, per scientiam ad fortitudinem roboramur, per fortitudinem ad consilium tendimus, per consilium in intellectum proficimus, per intellectum ad maturitatem sapientiae pervenimus, septem gradibus ad portam ascendimus, per quam nobis aditus vitae spiritalis aperitur. Bene autem dicitur quia vestibulum erat ante eam, quia nisi quis prius humilitatem habuerit, ad hos gradus donorum spiritalium non ascendit, sicut scriptum est: Super quem requiescet spiritus meus, nisi super humilem et quietum, et trementem sermones meos (Isai. LXVI, 2). De quo per Psalmistam dicitur: Ascensus in corde ejus disposuit in convalle lacrymarum (Psal. LXXXIII, 6). Convallis quippe humilis locus est, et peccator quisque dum se in lacrymis humiliter affligit in corde, per ascensum virtutum proficit. Qui rursus ait: Emittit fontes in convallibus (Psal. CIII, 10), quia omnipotens Deus dona spiritalis gratiae humilibus praestat.

9. Potest quoque per vestibulum fides intelligi. Ipsa quippe est ante gradus et portam, quia prius ad fidem venimus, ut postmodum per spiritalium donorum gradus coelestis vitae aditum intremus. Non enim per virtutes venitur ad fidem, sed per fidem pertingitur ad virtutes. Cornelius enim centurio, cujus eleemosynae ante baptismum, angelo testante, laudatae sunt, non operibus venit ad fidem, sed fide venit ad opera (Act. X, 1, seq.). Nam et ei per angelum dicitur: Orationes tuae et eleemosynae ascenderunt in conspectu Dei (Ibid., 4). Si enim Deo vero et ante baptismum non crediderat, quem orabat? vel quomodo hunc omnipotens Deus exaudierat, si

non ab ipso se in bonis perfici petebat? Sciebat igitur Creatorem omnium Deum, sed quod ejus omnipotens Filius incarnatus esset ignorabat. Neque enim poterat bona agere, nisi ante credidisset. Scriptum namque est: Sine fide impossibile est placere Deo (Hebr. XI, 6). Fidem ergo habuit, cujus orationes et eleemosynae placere Deo potuerunt. Bona autem actione promeruit ut Deum perfecte cognosceret, et incarnationis ejus mysterium crederet, quatenus ad sacramenta baptismatis perveniret. Per fidem ergo venit ad opera, sed per opera est solidatus in fide. Vestibulum itaque ante gradus est, quia qui prius credidit, ipse post virtutum gradibus ad portae aditum ascendit. Sequitur: VERS. 23. — Et porta atrii interioris contra portam Aquilonis, et Orientalem.

10. Hoc loco contra non pro adversitate ponitur, sed pro rectitudine; ita enim porta interioris atrii posita monstrabatur, ut porta Aquilonis et Orientis recto ad eam aditu tenderet. Quid est ergo quod porta interior recto itinere posita contra portam Orientis et Aquilonis ostenditur, nisi hoc, quod aperte datur intelligi, quia sive Judaico et gentili populo, seu justis et peccatoribus, sed post peccata conversis, aeque aditus regni coelestis aperitur? Larga est enim misericordia Creatoris nostri. Et porta interior non solum portam Orientis respicit, sed etiam Aquilonis, quia non solum his qui in innocentia permanent, sed etiam peccatoribus peccata sua poenitendo damnantibus aperiuntur interioris atrii gaudia, ut ineffabilia mysteria patriae coelestis agnoscant, agnoscendo sitiant, sitiendo currant, currendo perveniant. Haec interni gaudii secreta cognoverat, qui dicebat: Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum, quando veniam et apparebo ante faciem Dei (Psal. XLI, 3)? Praedicator gentium ad hunc aditum regni coelestis anhelabat, cum dicebat: Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo (Philip. I, 23). Haec exsultationis occultae secreta cognoverat sponsa, quae dicebat: Dilectus meus misit manum suam per foramen, et venter meus intremuit ad tactum ejus (Cant. V, 4). Dilectus etenim manum per foramen mittit, quando virtute sua Dominus

nostrum animum per subtilem intellectum pulsat. Et venter in tactu illius contremiscit, quia infirmitas nostra per hoc quod coelestis gaudii intellectu tangitur, ipsa sua exsultatione turbatur, et fit in mente pavor cum laetitia, quia jam sentit quid de coelesti gaudio diligat, et adhuc metuit ne non recipiat quod vix tenuiter sentit. Quid igitur restat nisi ut se ad perfectionis vitae cursum dirigant omnes qui illa gaudia patriae coelestis agnoscunt? Unde et hic apte subjungitur: IBID. — Et mensus est a porta usque ad portam centum cubitos.

11. Centenarium numerum, quia decies per denarium ducitur, jam superius diximus esse perfectum (Hom. 6, n. 16). Is itaque qui aditum atrii interioris videt, profecto necesse est ut per vitam perfectionis currat, et a porta inchoationis usque ad consummationis ingressum perveniat. Mensuretur ergo atrium interius, quod a portis exterioribus usque ad portam interiorem tenditur, centum cubitis, ut qui intrare amando coepit, latitudinem perfectionis habeat in mente, quatenus in eo quem diligit hunc nec adversa coangustent, nec prospera elevent, sed, transitoria cuncta despiciens, quousque ad gaudia secreta perveniat, per atrium perfectionis currat. Sunt etenim multi qui jam in septem gradibus aditum portae exterioris intraverunt, juxta quemdam supernae dispensationis modum, per timorem Dei humiles, per pietatis studium misericordes, per scientiam discreti, per mentis fortitudinem liberi, per consilium cauti, per intellectum providi, per sapientiam maturi; sed, adhuc quibusdam necessitatibus obligati, hujus mundi curis inserviunt, et unde jam ex magna parte excusserunt animum, ibi adhuc tenentur inviti. Cumque superimposita terrenae occupationis portant onera, minus in praeceptis coelestibus exercentur. Anhelare medullitus ad aeternam patriam non vacat, ipsa in eis sua aliquo modo desideria languescunt, quia nimirum curis temporalibus praepeditum vera gaudia quae cognovit amare non tantum licet quantum libet. Hi plerumque a jugo mundi colla mentis excutiunt, omnia deserunt,

terrenae curae pondera deponunt, atque ut ad coeleste desiderium latius animi sinum laxent, vitam remotam petunt, et in sanctis precibus intenti, sacris meditationibus dediti, quotidiano se fletu afficiunt, et vetustatem cordis igne amoris conflant, atque ad coeleste gaudium accendendo se innovant. Hi plerumque, in ipso suo desiderio accensi, exire jam de carne concupiscunt, atque ad vitam praesentem redire post fletum nolunt. Sed tamen differuntur, ut dilatus amor ex ipsa sua dilatione proficiat, et ardenti desiderio quasi quod negatur crescat. Sic in regione Gerasenorum qui liberatus a legione daemonum fuerat jam cum Domino ire volebat, sed tamen ei dicitur: Revertere in domum tuam, et narra quanta fecerit tibi Dominus (Luc. VIII, 39). Sic sponsa in Canticis canticorum sanctis desideriis anxia loquitur, dicens: In lectulo meo per noctes quaesivi quem diligit anima mea. Quaesivi illum, et non inveni (Cant. III, 1). In lectulo enim dilectum quaerit, quando in ipso suo otio et vacatione quam appetit jam videre anima Dominum concupiscit, jam ad eum exire desiderat, jam carere praesentis vitae tenebris anhelat. Sed quaerit illum, et non invenit, quia quamvis magno amore desiderat adhuc tamen ei non conceditur videre quem amat.

12. Tales itaque sanctorum mentes quid aliud in hoc desiderio faciunt, nisi quod jam a portis exterioribus per atrium interius ad portam currunt? Quibus saepe evenit ut cum se viderint magno coelestis gratiae munere compunctos, jam se perfectos existiment, et obedientes putent; sed quia nullus est qui dura praecipiat, patientes esse se credant, sed quia nemo eos per contumelias et adversitates pulsat. Et plerumque contingit ut spiritale ministerium vel inviti suscipiant, atque ad gubernationem fidelium deducantur. Qui cum magnis tribulationibus fuerint hinc inde pulsati, turbati mente, sese imperfectos inveniunt, qui non pulsati, perfectos se esse crediderunt. Qua ex re agitur ut se ad semetipsos colligant, et apud se tacite opprobrium suae infirmitatis erubescant, atque, ex ipsa sua confusione

roborati, contra adversa patientiam opponant, et ex tribulatione proficiant, qui prius in otio ex ipsa sua securitate torpebant. Et veraciter esse tales incipiunt quales se esse prius inaniter putaverunt. Hi itaque cum a portis exterioribus usque ad interiorem portam per boni studii atrium differuntur, hoc ipsum in eis atrium centum cubitis mensuratur, quia dilatione et exercitatione sancta quotidie ad perfectionem proficiunt. Per quotidiana enim desideria in mente proficere, quasi centum est cubitis interius atrium mensurari. Idcirco ergo a portis usque ad portam centum sunt cubiti, ut quasi quaedam mora eundi sit ipsa dilatio vivendi, per quam quotidie in virtutibus crescitur, ut ad interiorem aditum perfectius perveniatur. Sequitur: VERS. 24-26. — Et eduxit me ad viam Australem, et ecce porta quae respiciebat ad Austrum; et mensus est frontem ejus, et vestibulum ejus juxta mensuras superiores; et fenestras ejus, et vestibula in circuitu, sicut fenestras caeteras, quinquaginta cubitorum longitudinem, et latitudinem viginti quinque cubitorum. Et in gradibus septem ascendebatur ad eam, et vestibulum ante fores ejus.

13. Cuncta haec in Orientis et Aquilonis porta jam dicta sunt, et congruum non est ut ea quae semel ac secundo exponentes diximus saepius replicemus. Notandum tamen nobis est quia in spiritali aedificio alter aditus ad Orientem, alius ad Aquilonem, atque alius ad Austrum patet. Sicut enim Aquilonis frigore peccatores, ita per Australem viam ferventes spiritu designantur, qui, calore sancti Spiritus accensi, velut in meridiana luce virtutibus excrescunt. Pateat itaque porta ad Orientem, ut hi qui sacramenta fidei bene inchoaverunt, et in nulla postmodum vitiorum profunditate demersi sunt, ad gaudia secreta perveniant. Pateat porta ad Aquilonem, ut hi qui post inchoationem caloris et luminis in peccatorum suorum frigore et obscuritate dilapsi sunt per compunctionem poenitentiae ad veniam redeant, et quae sit internae retributionis vera laetitia cognoscant. Pateat porta ad Meridiem, ut hi qui sanctis desideriis in virtutibus fervent per spiritalem

intellectum quotidie interni gaudii mysteria penetrent. Inter haec autem quaeri potest, cum quatuor hujus mundi partes sint, cur in hoc aedificio exterioris atrii non quatuor, sed tres portae esse memorantur? Quod recte quaerendum fuerat, si Propheta non spiritale, sed corporale aedificium vidisset. Sancta enim Ecclesia, id est spiritale aedificium, ut ad secreta gaudia pertingat, tres solummodo portas habet, videlicet fidem, spem, atque charitatem: unam ad Orientem, aliam ad Aquilonem, tertiam ad Meridiem. Porta quippe ad Orientem est fides, quia per ipsam lux vera nascitur in mente. Porta ad Aquilonem spes, quia unusquisque in peccatis positus, si de venia desperaverit, misericordiam funditus perdit. Unde necesse est ut qui per suam iniquitatem exstinctus est, per spem misericordiae reviviscat. Porta ad Meridiem charitas, quia igne amoris ardet. In meridiana etenim parte sol in altum ducitur, quia per charitatem lumen fidei in Dei et proximi dilectione sublevatur. Tribus igitur portis ad interius atrium tenditur, quia per fidem, spem, atque charitatem ad gaudia secreta pervenitur. Alia quoque quaestio oritur, cur porta atrii interioris posita contra portam Orientis et Aquilonis dicitur, et quod ad Australem portam pateat tacetur. Sed quia per Orientem inchoantes, per Aquilonem lapsos diximus designari, dignum fuit ut vel de inchoantibus, quibus adhuc sol in tepore est, vel etiam de lapsis, sed per conversionem redeuntibus, aperte diceretur quod eis porta atrii interioris pateat, quatenus ex ipsis nos certos faceret de quibus dubitari potuerat. Hoc autem de porta Australi dicendum non erat, quia eos ad gaudia interna pertingere qui fervore spiritus in virtutibus permanent nullus ignorat. Usus quippe est sacri eloquii ea de quibus dubitari poterat aperte dicere, et ea quae constant tacere. Sequitur: VERS. 26. — Et caelatae palmae erant, una hinc, et altera inde in fronte ejus.

14. Quid hoc est, quod prius in frontibus pictura palmarum, nunc autem caelatae palmae in fronte esse memorantur? In caelatura quippe lapidum foris opera esse videntur. Sed, sicut jam superius diximus, pictura palmarum

est ostensio signorum. Nunc vero caelatura palmarum dicitur, ut bonorum operum demonstratio designetur. Ipsis enim summis praedicatoribus dicitur: Videant opera vestra bona, et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in coelis est (Matth. V, 16). Qui igitur in vita sua impressa esse sancta opera demonstrant, palmas in fronte caelatas habent, quia quanta illos in posterum victoria sequatur, jam nunc in sanctis suis operibus ostendunt. Vel certe quia fidem per Orientis, spem per Aquilonis, charitatem vero per Australem portam diximus designari, notandum nobis est quia in Orientis porta pictura palmarum, in Aquilonis vero et Meridiei, caelatura esse perhibetur, quia contingit saepe ut hi qui adhuc inchoantes sunt, necdum se in operibus solidis ac magnis exerceant; hi vero qui post iniquitates ad virtutes redeunt, plerumque, ut culpas suas ante omnipotentis Dei oculos tegere valeant, in magnis operibus exercentur. Et qui jam fervore spiritus in virtutibus excreverunt, quasi Meridies in sanctis actibus inardescunt. In Orientis ergo porta pictura est, in Aquilonis vero et Meridici caelatura, quia signum victoriae quod in inchoantibus ostenditur, hoc in revertentibus atque ferventibus jam solidius et robustius tenetur.

15. Notandum quoque magnopere est quod dicitur, Hinc et inde. Omnes enim qui ad vitae aditum tendimus, et ex dextro et ex sinistro latere habere palmam debemus. Quod enim hinc et inde dicitur, latus utrumque signatur. A dextro igitur palmam habet is quem prospera non extollunt; a sinistro palmam habet is quem adversa non dejiciunt. Quasi ex utraque parte portabat Paulus palmam cum diceret: Per arma justitiae a dextris et a sinistris, per gloriam et ignobilitatem, per infamiam et bonam famam, ut seductores, et veraces (II Cor. VI, 7). Non hunc adversa frangebant, non prospera in mentis tumorem sublevabant. Hinc inde ergo gestabat palmam, quia et in adversitate fortis, et in prosperitate humilis permanebat. Quisquis enim de prosperis extollitur, habere in dextera parte palmam nescit. Quisquis in adversitatibus frangitur, portare palmam a sinistro latere

ignorat. Ut ergo hinc et inde palma gestetur in fronte, adesse semper nostris mentibus debet et in adversis fiducia, et in prosperis timor, ne aut adversa in desperationem pertrahant, aut prospera animum in sui fiduciam extollant. Hinc est quod idem egregius praedicator dicebat: Scio et humiliari, scio et abundare, ubique et in omnibus institutus sum. Et satiari et esurire, et abundare et penuriam pati, omnia possum in eo qui me confortat (Philip. IV, 12).

16. Nunquid nam, fratres, ars est aliqua, humiliari et abundare, satiari et esurire, abundare et penuriam pati, ut pro magno se ista scire tantus praedicator insinuet? Ars omnino, et mira disciplinae scientia, quae toto nobis cordis est adnisu discenda. Quem enim penuria sua non frangit, a gratiarum actione non retrahit, in rerum temporalium desiderium non accendit, scit humiliari. Hoc enim loco Apostolus humiliari, dicit penuriam pati. Nam statim e contrario subjungit: Scio et abundare. Qui enim acceptis rebus non extollitur, qui eas ad usum vanae gloriae non intorquet, qui solus non possidet quod accepit, sed hoc cum indigentibus misericorditer dividit, scit abundare. Qui acceptis alimentis non ad ingurgitationem ventris utitur, sed ad reparationem virtutis, nec plus carni tribuit quam necessitas petit, scit satiari. Qui alimentorum inopiam sine murmuratione tolerat, nec pro necessitate victus agit aliquid unde anima peccati laqueum incurrat, scit esurire. Quem ergo nec in abundantia superbia elevat, nec in necessitate cupiditas irritat, novit abundare, novit penuriam pati. Qui cum statim subderet, Omnia possum, ne elationis esse verba crederemus, adjunxit in quo, In eo qui me confortat. Ecce in altum ramus prodiit, sed quia in radice se tenuit, in viriditate permansit. In altum enim surgens aresceret, si se a radice divisisset. Sibi enim nihil tribuit, quia omnia se posse non in se, sed in eo qui se confortat fatetur. Hinc et inde ergo praedicator egregius palmam habet, quem nec abundantia in superbiam, nec inopia ad avaritiam pertrahit.

17. Discamus itaque, fratres, non solum in prosperis, sed in adversis quoque gratias agere. Pater enim nobis ex pietate sua factus est conditor noster, nosque adoptivos filios ad haereditatem regni coelestis nutrit. Et non solum donis reficit, sed etiam flagellis erudit. Discamus igitur abundare, ut cuncta quae ab eo accepimus, cum indigentibus partiamur. Et mentem abundantia non elevet, ne fortasse gaudeat quia hoc adest sibi quod deest alteri, et non jam communi bono, sed proprio laetetur. A privato gaudio Veritas ad commune discipulos revocat, cum eos de praedicatione redeuntes, et de subjectione daemonum laetantes admonet, dicens: Nolite gaudere super hoc, sed potius gaudete et exsultate, quia nomina vestra scripta sunt in coelo (Luc. X, 20). Non enim omnes electi daemonia ejiciunt, sed tamen electorum omnium nomina coelo tenentur ascripta. Admonentur ergo discipuli privatam laetitiam deponere, de communi autem et perpetua felicitate gaudere. Quisquis itaque in eo gaudet quod alter non habet, ex ipsa sua abundantia deterior factus, gaudium privatum habet. Contra hujus nos appetitum abundantiae Joannes admonet, dicens: Nolite diligere mundum, neque ea quae in mundo sunt (I Joan. II, 15). Qui mox rationem subdidit, quare: Si quis diligit mundum, non est charitas Patris in eo (Ibid.). Nemo enim potest duobus dominis servire (Matth. VI, 24), quia non valet simul transitoria et aeterna diligere. Si enim aeternitatem diligimus, cuncta temporalia in usu non in affectu possidemus. Qui eamdem rationem protinus subdidit, dicens: Quia omne quod in mundo est concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitae (I Joan. II, 16).

18. Ideo enim habere aliquid homines et ultra quam necesse est concupiscunt, ut habendo superbiant, et quia hoc alius non habet se in cogitationibus extollant. Quisquis itaque talis est, adhuc ad portandam abundantiam doctus non est. Saepe autem quod avaritia ex appetitu suggerit, necessitatem putat, et cum minora sufficiant, dolet majora deesse,

atque incautus animus quamdam quasi necessitatem patitur quam parit. Et cum nimia sint quae desiderat, suam sibi avaritiam aliquo modo excusat. Abundantia itaque superbiae vicina est. Quam si quando etiam cupiditas intercepit, hanc, ut ita dixerim, quasi peregrina captivitas invasit. Si igitur abundandi artem scire volumus, necesse est ut non solum ea quae vicina sunt, sed ea etiam quae de longinquo veniunt vitia fugiamus. Discamus penuriam pati, ne ea quae non habemus habere etiam cum culpa requiramus, nec felices putemus quos rebus onustos cernimus. Nimia valde sunt ea quae sibi quasi in sumptus vitae praesentis praeparant. Multa portant, sed in via brevi magna est nobis in hoc itinere socia paupertas, quae animum non angustat, cum deest terrena substantia de qua aeterno judici rationes ponamus. Liberius ad patriam tendimus, quia quasi in via pondere caremus.

19. Discamus satiari, ne in sumendis alimentis corporis gulae magis quam necessitati serviamus Plus enim concupiscentia quam necessitas petit. Et saepe dum carnis inopiae satisfacere curamus, voluptas subrepit, modum refectionis excedit. Unde fit ut culpa transeat ad culpam, quia plerumque inde alia tentatio carnis nascitur, dum carni immoderatius in refectione servitur. Ex peccato etenim primi hominis, infirmante natura, in hoc mundo cum nostris tentationibus nascimur. Et caro nobis aliquando adjutrix est in bono opere, aliquando autem seductrix in malo. Si igitur ei plus quam debemus tribuimus, hostem nutrimus. Et si necessitati ejus quae debemus non reddimus, civem necamus. Satianda itaque est caro, sed ad hoc usque, ut in bono nobis opere famulari sufficiat. Nam quisquis ei tantum tribuit, ut superbiat, satiari penitus ignorat. Ars itaque magna est satiari, ne unusquisque per satietatem carnis ad iniquitatem prorumpat turpitudinis. Discamus esurire, ut nobis propter abundantiam sequentem nostra hic inopia placeat, ne nos ventris necessitas ad culpam trahat, ne peccatum menti ipsi indigentia suggerat; et dum caro fame afficitur, ad cupiditatem

animus irritetur, et quaerat cum culpa providere unde carni valeat in necessitate satisfacere, ne cor in indignationem prosiliat, et linguam in murmurationis amaritudinem accendat. Qui igitur in carnis suae inopia se hinc inde circumspicit, atque a peccati laqueo custodit, novit esurire.

20. Nos itaque, fratres charissimi, iram atque avaritiam in adversitate fugientes, et elationem et immoderata gaudia in prosperitate declinantes, quia per fidem, spem, atque charitatem, interioris vitae atrium tribus portis intrare concupiscimus, palmas hinc et inde teneamus. Libet adhuc alterum civem coelestis patriae ad mentem reducere, et qualiter hinc inde palmam teneat demonstrare. Beatus etenim Job cum esset viris Orientalibus ditior, et ei prospera cuncta suppeterent, filii pollerent, familia cresceret, greges exuberarent, in tanto omnipotentis Dei timore perstitit, ut inter custodiam disciplinae, inter acta justitiae, inter multa humilitatis obsequia, misericordiae operibus intentus, sacrificiis offerendis deditus holocausta Domino pro singulis filiis immolaret, ne quis eorum saltem in corde peccasset (Job. I, 2, seq.). Pensemus ergo quanta et erat custodia boni operis, qui in filiis suis expiabat sacrificiis culpas cordis. Sed quam justus esset, in prosperitate innotuerat, valde autem ignotum erat si perseverare justus et inter flagella potuisset. Tangendus ergo erat verbere, ut vir ille sanctus in prosperis interrogaretur adversis, ut qui notus erat omnipotenti Domino, notus per flagella fieret nobis et sibimetipsi. Disponente itaque Domino consumpti sunt greges, interfecti custodes, eversa domus, exstincti filii, percussa caro a planta pedis usque ad verticem. Remansit uxor incolumis, quae verborum jaculis vulnera augeret. Sed hanc vir sanctus in tentatione, sanus in vulnere prudenter docet, eique respondet, dicens: Si bona accepimus de manu Domini, mala quare non suscipiamus (Job II, 10)? Amici quoque ad consolandum veniunt, ad contumelias prorumpunt, et in dolore vulnerum, addunt adhuc vulnera verborum. Immisericordem dicunt, raptorem nominant, violentum denuntiant, oppressorem pauperum fatentur.

Quid igitur miles Dei faceret inter dolentia vulnera et amara verba deprehensus? Ecce flagella Dei et verba hominum simul afflictum animum ad desperationem premunt; sed, virtute spiritus plenus, carnis vulneribus jacens, mentis robore stans, contra desperationis impulsum reduxit ad memoriam bona quae egerat. Quia misericors fuerat, dicit: Oculus fui caeco, et pes claudo (Job. XXIX, 15). Et rursum: Pater eram pauperum (Ibid., 16). Quia et disciplinae custos et benignus, dicit: Cumque sederem quasi rex, circumstante me exercitu, eram tamen moerentium consolator (Ibid., 25). Quia humilis fuerit, dicit: Si contempsi subire judicium cum servo meo et ancilla mea, cum disceptarent adversum me (Job. XXXI, 13). Quia hospitalis fuerit, fatetur: Si despexi praetereuntem, eo quod non habuerit indumentum (Ibid., 19). Quia largus in donis, dicit: Si non benedixerunt mihi latera ejus, et de velleribus ovium mearum calefactus est (Ibid., 20). Quia violentus non fuerit testatur, dicens: Si levavi super pupillum manum meam, cum viderem me in porta superiorem (Ibid., 21). Quia de inimici periculo nunquam exsultaverit, dicit: Si gavisus sum ad ruinam ejus qui me oderat (Ibid., 29). Quia patiens fuit, et etiam suorum malitiam aequanimiter pertulit, dicit: Si non dixerunt viri tabernaculi mei, Quis det de carnibus ejus ut saturemur (Ibid., 31)? Quid est ergo quod vir sanctus tot suas virtutes inter flagella enumerat? Quid est quod ore suo opera quae fecerat laudat nisi quia inter vulnera et verba quae hunc ad desperationem trahere poterant, ad spem animum reformant? Et qui in prosperitate humilis fuit, revocatis bonis suis ad memoriam, infractus in adversitate permansit. Cujus enim animum inter tot flagella illa verba ad desperationem non impellerent, nisi sibi ad memoriam bona quae fecerat revocasset? Vidit igitur sanctus vir mentem suam auditis tot malis ad desperationem concuti, et mirabiliter studuit in spe certa ex bonis suis actibus solidari. Sic impletur quod scriptum est: In die bonorum ne immemor sis malorum, et in die malorum ne immemor sis bonorum (Eccli.

XI, 27). Si enim cum bona habemus malorum reminiscimur quae aut jam passi sumus, aut adhuc pati possumus, accepta bona mentem non elevant, quia eorum gaudium timor memoriae malorum premit. Et si cum mala habemus bonorum reminiscimur quae aut jam accepimus, aut adhuc nos posse accipere speramus, malorum pondus animum in desperationem non deprimit, quia hunc ad spem memoria bonorum levat. Si itaque, fratres charissimi, sic per praecepta Dominica et per sanctorum exempla gradimur, ut nos nec prosperitas elevet, nec adversitas frangat, habere nos ante omnipotentis Dei oculos palmas hinc et inde monstramus. Cui est honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA VIII

Versus 27 ac reliqui, usque ad 38 inclusive, plerique cursim, alii fusius exponuntur, et dogma de resurrectione potissimum astruitur.

1. Prophetae verba quae, largiente Domino, hodie charitati vestrae loquenda sunt lectione magis indigent quam expositione. Ea enim in tribus portis interioribus replicantur quae secundo jam, vel tertio de exterioribus dicta sunt. Pauca vero in earum descriptione permutantur. Unde necesse est ea nos quae jam dicta sunt legendo transcurrere, ut ea quae necdum dicta sunt licentius possimus enodare. Itaque nunc dicitur: VERS. 27-30. — Et porta atrii interioris in viam Australem, et mensus est a porta usque ad portam in via Australi centum cubitos. Et introduxit me in atrium interius ad portam Australem, et mensus est portam juxta mensuras superiores, thalamum ejus, et frontem ejus, et vestibulum ejus eisdem mensuris, et fenestras ejus, et vestibulum ejus in circuitu quinquaginta cubitos longitudinis, et latitudinis viginti quinque cubitos, et vestibulum per gyrum. Cuncta haec superius dicta atque exposita esse meministis (Maxime hom. superiori). Necdum vero est dictum quod de eodem vestibulo subditur: VERS. 30, 31. — Longitudine viginti et quinque cubitorum, et latitudine quinque cubitorum, et vestibulum ejus ad atrium exterius. Atque iterum hoc quod jam superius dictum fuerat replicatur, cum dicitur: Et palmas ejus in fronte (Ibid.). Et statim quod adhuc dictum non fuerat subditur: Et octo gradus erant in quibus ascendebatur ad eam (Ibid.). Hoc quoque quod de Australi porta scriptum est, de Orientali quoque porta in eodem ordine narratur. Nam protinus subinfertur: VERS. 32-34. — Et introduxit me in atrium interius per portam Orientalem, et mensus est portam secundum mensuras superiores, thalamum ejus, et frontem ejus, et vestibulum ejus sicut supra, et fenestras ejus, et vestibula ejus in circuitum longitudine quinquaginta cubitorum, et latitudine viginti quinque cubitorum. Et vestibulum ejus, id est atrii interioris, et palmae caelatae in fronte ejus hinc

et inde, et in octo gradus ascensus ejus. Ea quoque quae de Australi porta et Orientali dicta sunt, in eisdem verbis etiam de porta quae ad Aquilonem respicit replicantur. Nam subditur: VERS. 35-37. — Et introduxit me ad portam quae respiciebat ad Aquilonem, et mensus est secundum mensuras superiores, thalamum ejus, et frontem ejus, et vestibulum ejus, et fenestras ejus per circuitum, longitudine quinquaginta cubitorum, et latitudine viginti quinque cubitorum. Et vestibulum ejus respiciebat in atrium exterius, et caelatura palmarum in fronte illius hinc et inde, et in octo gradibus ascensus ejus.

2. Quid itaque interiori atrio, quid thalamo, quid frontibus, quid vestibulo, quid fenestris, quid longitudine et latitudine, quid palmarum caelatura signetur, late jam superius diximus (Hom. 6 et 7), nec oportet ut in eisdem iterum, sed in his solummodo quae necdum dicta sunt occupemur. Nunc ergo quaerendum nobis est quae istae tres portae interiores sint, vel quid est quod earumdem portarum vestibula viginti quinque cubitis in longitudine, et quinque cubitis in latitudine metiuntur; vel cur ad eas non septem, sicut de portis exterioribus dictum fuerat, sed octo gradibus ascenditur. Porta enim atrii interioris quae superius dicta est de his tribus portis interioribus non est, quia illa contra Orientis et Aquilonis portam respicere dicitur, istae autem singulae interius ad Austrum vel Orientem et Aquilonem positae esse memorantur. Unde recte per illam aditus interior designatur, quia, sicut praecedenti locutione jam dictum est, vel Judaeis et gentilibus, vel inchoantibus atque in bono perseverantibus, vel a bono cadentibus, sed post culpas per poenitentiam surgentibus patet. Nunc autem postquam singulae in Oriente et Aquilone et Austro portae descriptae sunt, cur interioris atrii rursum portae singulae in Austro et Oriente atque Aquilone describuntur? Aspirante Domino, magna intentione opus est sinum tantae profunditatis indagare. Si enim portarum nomine sanctos praedicatores accipimus, sciendum nobis est quia una est Ecclesia in

praedicatoribus testamenti veteris ac novi. Portae autem septem vel octo gradus habent, quia sancti Spiritus septiformem gratiam concorditer praedicant, octavo vero gradu annuntiant praemium retributionis aeternae. Unde scriptum est: Da partem septem, necnon et octo (Eccles. XI, 2). Quid itaque dicere possumus exteriores portas, nisi antiquos patres fuisse, qui per praecepta legis noverant opera populi magis quam corda custodire? ut interiores portas praedicatores sanctae Ecclesiae debeamus accipere, qui spiritalibus monitis discipulorum suorum corda custodiunt, ne malis quae non faciunt vel in cogitationibus delectentur. Per illas enim septem gradibus ascendi dicitur, istarum vero octo graduum ascensus esse perhibetur, quia et in veneratione legis dies septimus fuit, et in novo testamento octavus dies in sacramento est, is videlicet qui Dominicus appellatur, qui tertius a passione, sed octavus a conditione est, quia et septimum sequitur.

3. Sin vero portarum nomine solos intelligimus sanctos apostolos designari, qui videlicet primi nobis sunt sanctae Ecclesiae praedicatores, et nos fidem, spem, atque charitatem summopere tenere docuerunt, ipsi itaque nobis in his virtutibus portae sunt, qui nos per easdem virtutes ad interiorem intellectum aeternae sapientiae perducunt. Sed si ipsi exteriores portae sunt, quos accipimus interiores? Si vero ipsi interiores sunt, quos intelligimus exteriores? Qua in re intelligi utiliter potest quia ipsi nobis exteriores simul et interiores portae sunt. Cum enim adhuc inchoantibus non alta et mystica, sed quaedam quae capi praevalent, praedicant, portae exteriores sunt; cum vero perfectis profunda et mystica loquuntur, portae interiores. Videamus qualiter porta exterior pateat: Non potui vobis loqui quasi spiritalibus, sed quasi carnalibus, tanquam parvulis in Christo lac vobis potum dedi, non escam (I Cor. III, 1). Videamus qualiter porta interior pateat: Sapientiam loquimur inter perfectos (Ibid. II, 6). Videamus utrum ipsa eadem sit porta interior et exterior: Sapientibus et insipientibus debitor sum (Rom. I, 14). Qui rursum dicit: Sive mente excedimus, Deo; sive sobrii sumus, vobis (II

Cor. V, 13). In hoc enim quod contemplando et loquendo sapientibus mente excedit, porta interior est; in hoc vero quod parvulis sobrie in praedicatione se temperat, et quanta ebrietate spiritus infundatur in mente cum praedicat non ostendit, exteriorem portam se esse manifestat. Ipsi itaque et exteriores portae nobis sunt et interiores, qui nos et in primo aditu fidei, spei atque charitatis instituunt, et cum jam proficientibus coelestis regni mysteria praedicant, per subtiliorem sensum nos ad interiora perducunt.

4. Unde et per septem gradus prius ascensus earum describitur, et postmodum per octo. Per octavum etenim gradum illius vitae mysteria signantur, quam in secretis suis perfecti intelligunt, qui jam cuncta temporalia mente transcendere noverunt, qui praesentem vitam quae septem dierum curriculo evolvitur plene despiciunt, qui de intima contemplatione pascuntur. Habent igitur portae spiritalis aedificii septem gradus, quia timorem Domini, pietatem et scientiam, fortitudinem et consilium, intellectum et sapientiam suis auditoribus praedicant. Sed cum jam omnia dimitti praecipiunt, cum nihil in hoc mundo diligi admonent, nil per affectum teneri, cum contemplationi coelestis patriae intendi, atque in ejus suadent mysteriis delectari, gradum addunt, et ad interiora trajiciunt. Iste gradus, docente Veritate, cuidam ostensus est, cui cum legis praecepta dicerentur, respondit: Haec omnia custodivi a juventute mea (Matth. XIX, 20). Quasi enim jam in septem gradibus stabat, cum a juventute sua omnia custodisse se diceret. Sed ei mox dicitur: Adhuc unum tibi deest: Si vis perfectus esse, vade, vende omnia quae habes, et da pauperibus, et habebis thesaurum in coelo, et veni sequere me (Ibid., 21). In quibus verbis octavum quidem gradum vidit, sed ascendere noluit, quia tristis abscessit. Quisquis itaque, contemptis rebus temporalibus, aeternitatis contemplatione pascitur, coelestis regni gaudia rimatur, post septem gradus quos timendo et operando atque intellectu sapientiae succrescendo tenuit, octavo gradu interioris portae aditum intravit.

5. Per octavum quoque numerum et dies aeterni judicii, et carnis resurrectio designatur. Unde et Psalmus qui pro octava scribitur a pavore judicii est inchoatus, cum dicitur: Domine, ne in ira tua arguas me, neque in furore tuo corripias me (Psal. VI, 2). Nunc enim tempus est misericordiae, in illo autem judicio dies irae. In quo videlicet die omne hoc tempus finitur quod septem diebus evolvitur. Quia autem post septem dies sequitur, jure octavus appellatur. In quo et caro nostra resurget ex pulvere, ut sive bona, sive mala quae egit, recipiat a Veritate. Unde et per legem quoque octavo die fieri circumcisio jubetur. Nam per membrum quod circumciditur mortalis propagatio generatur, decedentium quoque et succedentium numerus augetur. Sed quia in resurrectione mortuorum nec carnis jam propagatio agitur, et decessio atque successio nulla erit, quia sicut scriptum est: Neque nubent, neque nubentur, sed erunt sicut angeli in coelo (Matth. XXII, 30), octava die praecipitur praeputium incidi. Ibi enim locum jam carnis propagatio non habet, ubi resurgens caro perseverantiam aeternitatis habet. Per hoc membrum mater virgo descendit, quae Deum in utero sine virili admistione concepit, qui primus nobis aeternae patriae gloriam in sua resurrectione monstravit. Qui resurgens a mortuis, jam non moritur, et mors ei ultra non dominabitur (Rom. VI, 9). Nobisque exemplum dedit, ut ea fieri in die ultimo de nostra carne credamus quae facta de carne illius in die resurrectionis agnovimus.

6. Sed quia de carnis resurrectione nobis sermo se intulit, triste nimis et valde lugubre est quod quosdam in Ecclesia stare, et de carnis resurrectione dubitare cognoscimus [quod est haereticum]. Hanc autem antiqui patres venturam esse certissime crediderunt, etiam cum nullum adhuc ejusdem resurrectionis exemplum tenerent. Qua igitur damnatione digni sunt qui et exemplum jam dominicae resurrectionis acceperunt, et tamen adhuc de sua resurrectione diffidunt? Pignus tenent, et fidem non habent. Ecclesiam replent, sed quia de resurrectione sua dubitant, mente vacua stant. De hac

resurrectione per beatum Job dicitur: Scio quod Redemptor meus vivit, et in novissimo die de terra surrecturus sum, et rursum circumdabor pelle mea, et in carne mea videbo Deum; quem visurus sum ego ipse, et oculi mei conspecturi sunt, et non alius (Job. XIX, 25, seq.). Hinc etiam per Psalmistam dicitur: In conspectu ejus procidunt universi qui descendunt in terram (Psal. XXI, 29). In terra enim mortui non spiritu, sed corpore descendunt. In conspectu ergo Domini procidunt qui in terram descendunt, quia resurgendo ad judicium veniunt qui nunc in pulvere putrescunt. Hinc iterum dicit: Sitivit in te anima mea, quam multipliciter et caro mea (Psal. LXII, 2). Sitit anima ut Deum videat; caro quid sitit, nisi ut resurgat? Hinc rursus ait: Aufer spiritum eorum, et deficient, et in pulverem suum revertentur (Psal. CIII, 29). Moxque de carnis resurrectione subjungit: Emitte spiritum tuum, et creabuntur, et renovabis faciem terrae (Ibid., 30). Hinc iterum dicit: Exsurge, Domine, in requiem tuam, tu et arca sanctificationis tuae (Psal. CXXXI, 8). Exsurrexit enim Dominus in requiem suam cum carnem suam de sepulcro suscitavit. Post hunc quoque exsurgit et arca, quia resurgit Ecclesia. Hinc per eumdem prophetam de quo loquimur scriptum est: Ossa arida, audite verbum Domini. Haec dicit Dominus Deus ossibus his: Ecce ego intromittam in vos spiritum, et vivetis. Et dabo super vos nervos, et succrescere faciam super vos carnes, et superextendam in vos cutem, et dabo vobis spiritum, et vivetis (Ezech. XXXVII, 4, seq.). Hinc est quod propheta alius per resurrectionem Domini humanum genus vidit in fine suscitari, atque ait: Vivificabit nos post duos dies, in die tertia suscitabit nos, et vivemus in conspectu ejus (Osee VI, 3). Hinc est quod cum de semetipso Dominus loqueretur, adjunxit: Nolite mirari hoc, quia venit hora in qua omnes qui in monumentis sunt audient vocem Filii Dei. Et procedent qui bona fecerunt in resurrectionem vitae; qui vero mala egerunt, in resurrectionem judicii (Joan. V, 28, 29). Hinc Paulus ait: Unde etiam salvatorem exspectamus Dominum Jesum Christum, qui

reformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae, configuratum corpori claritatis suae (Philip. III, 20). Hinc iterum dicit: Si enim credimus quod Jesus mortuus est et resurrexit, ita et Deus eos qui dormierunt per Jesum, adducet cum eo (I Thess. IV, 14). Qui rursus ait: Primitiae dormientium Christus (I Cor. XV, 20). Si enim nos a mortis somno non surgimus, quomodo resurrectionem dominicam primitias habemus?

7. Ecce veteres ac novi Patres uno sibi spiritu de carnis resurrectione concordant. Ecce ipsa per se Veritas prius voce docuit quod de resurrectione carnis postmodum opere demonstravit, et tamen adhuc quorumdam infirmitas fidem non habet in domo fidei stans. Sed mirari solent qualiter caro reviviscere possit ex pulvere. Mirentur igitur altitudinem coeli, molem terrae, abyssos aquarum, omnia quae in mundo sunt, ipsos quoque angelos creatos ex nihilo. Minus est valde aliquid ex aliquo facere quam omnia ex nihilo fecisse. Ipsa nobis elementa, ipsae rerum species, resurrectionis imaginem praedicant. Sol enim quotidie nostris oculis moritur, quotidie resurgit. Stellae matutinis horis nobis occidunt, vesperi resurgunt. Arbusta aestivis temporibus plena foliis, floribus, ac fructibus videmus, quae hiemali tempore nuda foliis, floribus ac fructibus, et quasi arida remanent, sed vernali sole redeunte, cum a radice humor surrexerit, suo iterum decore vestiuntur. Cur ergo de hominibus diffiditur, quod fieri in lignis videtur? Sed saepe pulverem putrescentis carnis aspiciunt et dicunt: Unde ossa et medullae, unde caro vel capilli poterunt in resurrectione reparari? Haec itaque requirentes, parva semina ingentium arborum videant, atque si possunt dicant: Ubi in eis latet tanta moles roboris, tanta diversitas ramorum, tanta multitudo et viriditas foliorum, tanta species florum, tanta ubertas, sapor atque odor fructuum? Nunquidnam semina arborum odorem vel saporem habent, quem ipsae post arbores in suis fructibus proferunt? Si ergo ex semine arborum quod videri non potest produci potest, cur de

pulvere carnis humanae diffiditur quia ex eo reparari forma valeat quae non videtur?

8. Saepe autem objicere inanem quaestiunculam solent, qua dicunt: Carnem hominis lupus comedit, lupum leo devoravit, leo moriens ad pulverem rediit, cum pulvis ille suscitatur, quomodo caro hominis a lupi et leonis carne dividitur? Quibus quid respondere aliud debemus, nisi ut prius cogitent qualiter in hunc mundum venerint, et tunc invenient qualiter resurgant? Certe tu homo qui hoc loqueris, aliquando in matris utero spuma sanguinis fuisti, ibi quippe ex patris semine et matris sanguine parvus ac liquidus globus eras. Dic, rogo, si nosti, qualiter ille humor seminis in ossibus duruit, qualiter in medullis liquidus remansit, qualiter in nervis solidatus est, qualiter in carnibus crevit, qualiter in cute extensus est, qualiter in capillis atque unguibus distinctus, ita ut capilli molliores carnibus, et ungues essent teneriores ossibus, carnibus duriores? Si igitur tot et tanta ex uno semine per species distincta sunt, et tamen in forma remanent conjuncta, quid mirum si possit omnipotens Deus in illa resurrectione mortuorum carnem hominis distinguere a carne bestiarum, ut unus idemque pulvis et non resurgat in quantum pulvis lupi et leonis est, et tamen resurgat in quantum pulvis est hominis? Vide itaque, homo, qualiter ad vitam venisti, et nequaquam dubites ad vitam qualiter redeas. Cur autem ratione vis comprehendere quomodo redeas, qui ignoras quomodo venisti? Da potentiae Creatoris tui quod comprehendere non vales de temetipso. Certe enim quia tu ex terra factus es, terra vero ex nihilo, tu es creatus ex nihilo. Ne ergo de carnis tuae resurrectione desperes, perpende prudenter quia minus est Deo reparare quod erat quam fecisse quod non erat.

9. Sed si non potes resurrectionis effectum ratione comprehendere, perpende quam multa sunt quae non intelligis qualiter sint, et tamen esse non dubitas. Dic, rogo, si nosti gyros coeli, terrae cardines, aquarum abyssos, ubi finiuntur, ubi suspensi sunt? Scimus autem quia quod ex nihilo

factum est pendet in nihilo. Sed si est aliquid quod dicitur nihilum, jam nihil non est. Si autem nihil est nihilum, nusquam mundi moles dependet, nec est ubi sit quod creatum est ut sit. Quomodo ergo nusquam est quod novimus quia est? Sed haec fortasse ad te multa sunt, ad temetipsum homo revertere. Certe ex spiritu es creatus et limo, uno invisibili, altero visibili; uno sensibili, et altero insensibili. Quomodo ergo permisceri in te potuit spiritus et limus, atque ex diverso fieri res non diversa, ita ut in tanta convenientia misceretur spiritus et limus, ut cum caro atteritur spiritus marceat, et cum spiritus affligitur caro contabescat? Sed forsitan necdum praevales discutere temetipsum. Perpende, rogo, si vales, quomodo Rubrum mare virga divisum est (Exod. XIV, 21), quomodo petrae duritia percussione virgae undas emanavit (Num. XX, 11), quomodo Aaron virga sicca floruit (Ibid., XVII, 8), quomodo ex ejus genere veniens Virgo concepit, quomodo et in partu virgo permansit (Luc. I, 27, seq.; III, 23, seq.); quomodo quatriduanus mortuus, jussione suscitatus, ligatis manibus ac pedibus de sepulcro exiit, quem postmodum solvi Dominus per discipulos jussit (Joan. XI, 44, seq.); quomodo idem Redemptor noster, in vera carne atque ossibus resurgens, clausis ostiis ad discipulos intravit. (Joan. XX, 26).

10. Ecce haec investigare non vales, et tamen credis. Cur ergo de resurrectionis gloria disputando et discutiendo dubitas, qui tam multa mysteria sine discussione credidisti? Qui tamen si resurrectionem carnis non credis, omnia sine causa credidisti, quia in hoc angelorum spectaculo videris quidem velociter currere, sed postquam cursum peregeris, ne bravium accipias aversaris. Unde per Paulum dicitur: Sic currite ut comprehendatis (I Cor. IX, 24). Qui rursus ait: Si in hac vita in Christo tantum sperantes sumus, miserabiliores sumus omnibus hominibus (I Cor. XV, 19). Divinae autem virtutis mysteria quae comprehendi non possunt non intellectu discutienda sunt, sed fide veneranda. Sciendum itaque nobis est quia quidquid ratione hominis comprehendi potest mirum esse jam non

potest, sed sola est in miraculis ratio potentia facientis. Ecce dum de resurrectione carnis loquimur, ab expositionis ordine paululum digressi sumus. Ad ea ergo quae coepimus redeamus.

11. Habent autem interiores portae vestibula, quae viginti et quinque cubitis in longitudinem metiuntur. Si enim octo ter ducimus, ad viginti et quatuor pervenimus. Cui unus additur, ut viginti et quinque teneamus. Auditores etenim boni, qui quasi quaedam vestibula sunt portarum, aeternae spei longanimitatem tenent, octavum diem in Trinitatis fide sustinent. Quae Trinitas, quia unus est Deus, octo quidem per tria ducunt, sed in unius Dei confessione solidantur. Plana sunt vestibula, quia humilia sunt corda bonorum auditorum. Habent longitudinem, quia in spei perseverant longanimitate. Viginti et quinque cubitis earum longitudo mensuratur, quia resurrectionem carnis in octava per Trinitatem credunt, et eamdem sanctam Trinitatem unum esse Deum fatentur. Habent quoque quinque cubitos in latitudinem, quia per vitam simplicem quae quinque sensibus ducitur circa amorem proximi dilatantur. Et notandum quia postquam portarum vestibula superius alia dicta sunt, postmodum vestibulum quod quinque cubitos habet in latitudinem exterius respicere dicitur, quia nimirum sunt auditores alii qui intellectum interioris vitae magis virtutibus proficiendo penetrant, et sunt quidam simplices qui bene quidem sed juxta sensus corporeos vivunt. Unde et exterius respicere dicuntur. Quasi enim extra respiciunt, quia juxta sensus corporeos vivunt. Sed tamen et exterius respicientes, intus sunt, quia etsi sensus corporeos intelligendo transcendere nesciunt, fidem tamen atque charitatem humiliter tenent. Et intus ergo sunt in spiritali aedificio per amorem, et quasi foris respiciunt per simplicitatem.

12. Potest per vestibulum quod exterius respicit fides inchoantium designari, et per vestibulum quod est interius fides perfectorum, qui jam per eam in signis et virtutibus emicant. Possunt etiam per vestibulum interius praecepta altiora, per vestibulum vero quod respicit exterius praecepta

adhuc minima figurari. Per vestibulum quippe itur ad gradus et ad portam, quia per praecepta praedicationis pertingitur ad virtutes atque aditum gratiae coelestis. Cum vero jubetur aliis in cogitatione sua aeterna meditari, coelestia sapere; eisque dicitur in psalmis et hymnis et canticis spiritalibus vivere (Coloss. III, 16), quasi interius vestibulum ostenditur, quod quinquaginta cubitis longitudine, et viginti quinque latitudine mensuratur. De quibus numeris nunc tacemus, quia ex his jam multa superius diximus. Cum vero aliis praecipitur, Uxori vir debitum reddat, similiter autem et uxor viro (I Cor. VII, 3), quasi vestibulum quod exterius respicit designatur. Quod quamvis extra respiciat, tamen intus est, quia rudis auditor et adhuc agit quod carnis est, et tamen a bonorum numero alienus non est.

13. Potest autem et per Orientis portam Dominus, et per Austri Judaea, per Aquilonis vero conversa gentilitas designari. Portam autem Dominum dicimus, quia per ipsum intramus ad ipsum. Portas vero Judaeam et gentilitatem non incongrue nominamus, quia prius Hebraeis, et postmodum patribus ex gentilitate venientibus aditum aedificii coelestis agnovimus. Sed hac in re quaestio animum pulsat, cur in superiori narratione prophetae, prius Orientalis, postmodum Aquilonis, ac deinde Austri porta descripta est. Cumque easdem portas in interiori atrio narraret, prius portam Austri, deinde Orientis, et tertio in loco descripsit Aquilonis. Cur autem non eumdem ordinem quem coeperat tenuit, sed hunc in portarum descriptione permutavit, ut et prius diceret Orientis portam, Aquilonis et Austri, et postmodum Austri, Orientis et Aquilonis? Sed si Aquilonis nomine gentilitas designatur, cunctis studiose legentibus liquet quia ante Synagogam gentilitas fuit. Nam Heber ipse, a quo Hebraei appellati sunt, ex gentibus est electus (Genes. X, 21). Dicatur ergo porta Orientalis ante portam Aquilonis et Austri, quia in divinitate sua Dominus ante gentilitatem et Judaeam natus est, qui et ante omnia saecula. Dicatur vero narratione subsequenti porta Austri, Orientis et Aquilonis, quia Redemptor noster in

humana natura inter Judaeam et gentilitatem nasci dignatus est, quia et in fine Synagogae venit, et ante initium Ecclesiae, quam ex gentibus collegit. In prima ergo descriptione sit Orientalis porta ante portam Aquilonis et Austri; in secunda autem inter portam Austri et Aquilonis Orientis porta nominetur, quia et ex divinitate antecessit omnia, et ex humanitate venit inter omnia, qui et decedentis Judaeae finis factus est, et subsequentis gentilitatis initium. Igitur quia ea quae necdum dicta fuerant, ut, Domino largiente, potuimus, rimati sumus et ea quae saepius sunt replicata transcurrimus, nunc ad ea veniamus quae sic jam per ordinem dicuntur, ut in eis pene nihil de his quae dicta sunt replicetur: VERS. 38. — Et per singula gazophylacia ostium in frontibus portarum.

14. Gazophylacia superius (Hom. 6, olim. 18, n. 1 et seq.) diximus corda doctorum, quae scientiae divitias servant. Frontes autem portarum sunt verba atque opera praedicatorum, in quibus eos foris agnoscimus quales apud se intrinsecus vivant. Est autem ostium per gazophylacia singula in frontibus portarum, quia unusquisque doctor in corde auditoris intellectum aperit in dictis et operibus patrum. Cum enim Petri apostoli praedicationem discutimus, cum Pauli verba perscrutamur, cum Joannis Evangelium investigamus, atque ex eorum verbis auditores nostros ad interiorem intellectum trahimus, quid aliud agimus, nisi ostium in portarum frontibus aperimus? Dicatur ergo: Per singula gazophylacia ostium in frontibus portarum, quia si doctor hoc quod loquitur apostolorum dictis minime confirmat, in frontibus portarum ostium non habet. Et si ostium non habet, dici jam gazophylacium spiritalis aedificii non potest, quia si intellectum non aperit, doctor non est. Cum vero auditores boni per ora docentium apostolorum dicta et opera cognoscunt, culpas suas apud semetipsos tacite reprehendunt, et lacrymis insequuntur omne quod se egisse inique meminerunt. Unde hic quoque de ostio quod est in frontibus portarum subditur: IBID. — Ibi lavabant holocaustum.

15. Qui enim se per fidem in conversatione sancta Domino devoverunt, holocaustum Domino facti sunt. Sed quia adhuc multa in se de corruptibili sua carne patiuntur, quia adhuc in eis cordis munditia sordidis cogitationibus inquinatur, quotidie ad lacrymas redeunt, assiduis fletibus affliguntur. Sanctorum enim patrum dicta et facta considerant, et cum se indignos pensant, in portarum ostio holocaustum lavant. Ecce etenim quis pro timore omnipotentis Domini esse patiens devovit, nulli convicium pro convicio reddere, omnia aequanimiter tolerare, et tamen cum hunc contumelia ab ore proximi illata subito percusserit, turbatus forte aliquid loquitur, quod loqui non debuit. Certe iste jam holocaustum est, sed adhuc inquinatum. Fortasse contra illatas contumelias patientiam exhibuit, tacitus permansit; sed tamen contra easdem contumelias quas portat dolore tangitur, ejusque animus in charitate sauciatur. Patientia enim vera est, quae et ipsum amat quem portat. Nam tolerare, sed odisse, non est virtus mansuetudinis, sed velamentum furoris. Hic itaque saepe in cogitatione sua se judicat, reprehendit semetipsum quia dolet, nec tamen apud se praevalet obtinere ne doleat. Jam ergo per bonam devotionem holocaustum est, sed tamen per dolorem quo tangitur adhuc inquinatum. Alius ea quae possidet apud semetipsum decrevit indigentibus cuncta tribuere, nil sibimet reservare, vitam suam soli supernae gubernationi committere; sed dum praebet pauperibus quae habet, fortasse cogitatio menti subrepit quae dicit: Unde vives, si cuncta dederis? Nec tamen desistit tribuere, sed quod laetus dare coeperat postmodum tristis praebet. Quid hujus mens nisi misericordiae holocaustum est? sed tamen per tristitiam cogitationis inquinatum. Aut enim deliberare summa non debuit, aut post deliberationem nullo modo dubitare. Alius, contempta mundi superbia, honores atque dignitates hujus saeculi decrevit vitare, ultimum appetit inter homines locum tenere, ut tanto excelsior inveniatur in permanenti gloria, quanto humilior aspicitur in transeunte vita. Is fortasse cum subito se a

proximo despici agnoscit, dedignatur cur despicitur. Vult quidem esse in loco humili, sed tamen videri contemptibilis non vult. Hunc jam devotio elevat, sed adhuc infirmitas gravat. Jam ergo per devotionem holocaustum est, sed adhuc ex infirmitate inquinatum. Hi itaque qui in eis quae optime devoverunt, in aliqua infirmitatis suae culpa tanguntur, cum per verba doctorum dicta patrum intelligunt, et in quanta culpa jaceant agnoscunt, seque ipsos poenitentiae lamentis afficiunt, holocaustum in ostio portarum lavant.

16. Sciendum vero est quia hoc inter sacrificium atque holocaustum distat, quod omne holocaustum sacrificium est, sed non omne sacrificium holocaustum. In sacrificio etenim pars pecudis, in holocausto vero totum pecus offerri consueverat. Unde et holocaustum Latina lingua totum incensum dicitur. Pensemus ergo quid est sacrificium, quid holocaustum. Cum enim quis suum aliquid Deo vovet, et aliquid non vovet, sacrificium est. Cum vero omne quod habet, omne quod vivit, omne quod sapit, omnipotenti Deo voverit, holocaustum est. Nam sunt quidam qui adhuc mente in hoc mundo retinentur, et tamen ex possessis rebus subsidia egentibus ministrant, oppressos defendere festinant. Isti in bonis quae faciunt sacrificium offerunt, quia et aliquid de actione sua Deo immolant, et aliquid sibimetipsis reservant. Et sunt quidam qui nihil sibimetipsis reservant, sed sensum, linguam, vitam, atque substantiam quam perceperunt omnipotenti Domino immolant. Quid isti nisi holocaustum offerunt; imo magis holocaustum fiunt? Israeliticus etenim populus primum sacrificium in Aegypto obtulit, secundum vero in eremo (Exod. XII, XIII). Qui itaque adhuc mentem habet in saeculo, sed boni jam aliquid operatur, Deo sacrificium obtulit in Aegypto. Qui vero praesens saeculum deserit, et agit bona quae valet, quasi jam Aegypto derelicta sacrificium praebet in eremo, quia, repulso carnalium desideriorum strepitu, in mentis suae quiete atque solitudine Deo immolat quidquid operatur. Quamvis ergo, sicut dictum est,

sacrificium sit etiam holocaustum, majus tamen est holocaustum sacrificio, quia mens quae hujus mundi delectatione non premitur, totum in omnipotentis Dei sacrificio incendit quod habet.

17. Sed sciendum nobis est quia sunt quidam qui, etiam saeculum relinquentes, totum quidem quod habent offerunt, sed tamen in bonis quae agunt minime compunguntur; et quidem bonum quod agunt holocaustum est, sed quia flere ac semetipsos dijudicare nesciunt, seque ex amore ad lacrymas non accendunt, perfectum eorum holocaustum non est. Hinc per Psalmistam dicitur: Memor sit Dominus omnis sacrificii tui, et holocaustum tuum pingue fiat (Psal. XIX, 4). Holocaustum quippe siccum est bonum opus quod orationis lacrymae non infundunt. Holocaustum vero pingue est quando hoc quod bene agitur corde humili etiam per lacrymas irrigatur. Unde rursus dicitur: Holocausta medullata offeram tibi (Psal. LXV, 15). Quisquis enim bonum opus agit, sed ex omnipotentis Dei amore atque desiderio flere nescit, holocaustum habet, sed medullam in holocausto non habet. Qui vero bona operatur, et visioni jam Creatoris sui inhiat, atque ad aeternae contemplationis gaudia pervenire festinat, seque ipsum ex amore quo accenditur in fletibus mactat, holocausta Domino medullata dedit. Studendum ergo nobis est et mala funditus relinquere, et bona quae sufficimus operari, atque in ipsis bonis quae agimus amore aeterni luminis compungi. Ipse enim cordis tenebras discutit amor lucis, ut subtilius videre valeamus ne qua in bonis quae agimus prava misceantur. Considerandum nobis quippe est opus nostrum quale sit quae cogitatio in opere, quae intentio in cogitatione. Et cum nostro bono operi admistum aliquid malitiae vel pravae delectationis agnoscimus, redeamus ad lacrymas, lavemus holocaustum.

18. Sunt autem quidam qui semetipsos in magnis actionibus Domino devoverunt, atque ad tantam perfectionem perveniunt, ut ab eis nulla unquam difficultate flectantur, quatenus deliberatione castitatis nequaquam

caro in pravae cogitationis delectatione animum sternat. Nam et si quando per suggestionem pulsat, surgere non permittitur, quia vigore judicii calcatur. In deliberatione quoque patientiae nec sermo inordinatus ab ore prodeat, nec dolor tacitus animum premat, ut in largitate eleemosynae nulla inopiae suspicio tristitiam generet, ut in deliberatione humilitatis nullus despectus animum mordeat. Sed cum jam in his quae recte devoverunt sese fortiter exhibent, priora tamen peccata quae ab ipsis ante bonam deliberationem perpetrata sunt ad memoriam reducunt, et plangunt quidquid illicite se egisse meminerunt. Hi itaque per vitam quam tenent holocaustum sunt, sed per vitam quam ante tenuerunt inquinatum. Lavant ergo holocaustum in ostio portarum, quia in intellectu quem perceperunt de dictis patrum, lamentis se quotidianis afficiunt, et mundant vitam lacrymis, quam pravis aliquando actibus inquinaverunt. Nos itaque inter haec ad vitam praeteritam mentis oculos reducamus, reminiscamur qui fuimus, cum mundi hujus concupiscentias sequeremur. Et si jam Domino toto corde servimus, quia nos peccasse meminimus defleamus, in fletibus lavemus holocaustum.

19. Ecce omnipotenti Deo devovimus castitatem nostram; sed si adhuc immunda cogitatio mentem inquinat, redeamus ad lacrymas, lavemus holocaustum. Ecce patientiam nos servare decrevimus. Sed si adhuc ira perturbat, si mentem tacitus dolor excruciat, redeamus ad lacrymas, lavemus holocaustum. Ecce, jam novimus possessa tribuere, atque in hoc mundo humilem locum tenere; si qua adhuc animum inopiae suspicio deprimit, si despectus proximi in aliqua nos indignatione confundit, redeamus ad lacrymas, lavemus holocaustum. Magnus est enim Creatori nostro ad recipiendos fletus humilium misericordiae sinus. Ubi enim innumerabilium hominum fletus suscepti sunt, ibi locum suum inventurae sunt et lacrymae nostrae. Pensemus quid per alium prophetam dicitur: Et erit qui offenderit ex eis in illa die quasi David, et domus David quasi Dei, sicut angelus Domini in conspectu ejus (Zach. XII, 8). Haec est dies

misericordiae, quae nobis de adventu Redemptoris nostri promissa est. Qui itaque offenderit erit quasi David, quia peccator ad poenitentiam redit; domus autem David quasi Dei, quia reversus quisque ad justitiam habitatio efficitur Creatoris sui, ut sit sicut angelus in conspectu ejus, quia misericordiae viscera quae in se expertus est annuntiando et aliis propinat. Hinc etiam paulo post illic dicitur: In die illa erit fons patens domus David habitantibus Jerusalem, in ablutionem peccatoris et menstruatae (Zach. XIII, 1).

20. Fons quippe occultus est unigenitus Patris invisibilis Deus. Fons vero patens est idem Deus incarnatus. Qui fons patens recte domus David dicitur, quia ex David genere noster ad nos Redemptor processit. Jerusalem vero visio pacis interpretatur. Hi autem Jerusalem habitant, qui in visionem pacis intimae mentem figunt. Peccator vero et menstruata est vel is qui delinquit in opere, vel mens quae labitur in prava cogitatione. Menstruatae namque ista pollutio est, quia et aliena carne non tangitur, et sua carne inquinatur. Sic itaque, sic est omnis anima, quae etsi malum opus non agit, polluta tamen cogitatione sordescit. Unde etiam per prophetam alium sub Judaeae specie de anima immundis desideriis occupata dicitur: Omnes qui quaerunt eam non deficient, in menstruis ejus invenient eam (Jerem. II, 24). Maligni quippe spiritus quaerentes non deficiunt cum inferre perditionem cupiunt, et nulla bonae cogitationis rectitudine repelluntur. Atque in menstruis suis animam inveniunt, quando in pollutis cogitationibus positam facile ad perversam operationem trahunt. Dicatur ergo: In die illa erit fons patens domus David habitantibus Jerusalem, in ablutionem peccatoris et menstruatae (Zach. XIII, 1), quia apertus jam nobis est fons misericordiae Redemptor noster, qui in domo David incarnari dignatus est, ut peccatorem lavet a perverso opere, et menstruatam mentem diluat ab immunda cogitatione. Patet igitur fons; curramus cum lacrymis, lavemur in hoc fonte pietatis.

21. In hoc fonte ipse quoque David lotus est cum rediit ad lamenta poenitentiae post maculas gravis culpae. Ipsum quippe invenire fontem quaerebat cum diceret: Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui, et spiritu principali confirma me (Psal. L, 14). Jesus enim Hebraice, Latine salutaris dicitur. Et quid est quod sibi laetitiam Jesu reddi postulabat, nisi quod hunc ante culpam contemplari consueverat, ejusque contemplationis gaudia in culpa perdiderat? Unde recte post poenitentiam visionis ejus laetitiam sibi reddi quaerebat. In hoc fonte misericordiae lota est Maria Magdalene, quae prius famosa peccatrix, postmodum lavit maculas lacrymis, detersit maculas corrigendo mores (Luc. VII, 37, 38, seq.). In hoc fonte misericordiae coram omnibus lavit Petrus quod negaverat, quia flevit amare (Matth. XXVI, 75). In hoc fonte misericordiae in fine suo lotus est latro, qui, semetipsum in morte reprehendens, a culpa sua ablutus est confessione veritatis (Luc. XXIII, 41). 22. Cur igitur pigri sumus? cur torpentes et frigidi remanemus, qui in hoc fonte pietatis tantos jam se lavisse cognovimus? Ergone de emundatione nostra desperabimus, qui tot exempla misericordiae in pignore tenemus? et cessamus veniam quaerere, atque cum lacrymis fiduciam habere, qui tantorum jam emundationem spei nostrae pignus accepimus? Quaerere enim misericordiae fontem deberemus, etiamsi clausus esset. Patet nunc, et negligimus. Mittamus oculos fidei in mundum universum, consideremus quanti peccatores diebus ac noctibus per lamenta in hoc fonte misericordiae lavantur, quanti post tenebras ad lucem, quanti post maculas ad munditiam redeunt. Curramus ergo cum talibus post mortis tenebras ad aquam vitae; consideremus quantum peccavimus, quantum quotidie peccamus, atque, ut appareamus mundi post culpas, lavemus holocaustum. Ad haec agenda adest gratia Redemptoris nostri, qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA IX

Quinque versus, a 39 ad 43, exponendi proponuntur, et vix tentato sensu litterali, spiritualis et moralis proferuntur, ac de pastoris officio in primis disseritur. Quid sumus de mysticis sensibus Ezechielis prophetae locuturi, qui ipsa ejus historiae verba vix capimus? Ecce etenim dicit: VERS. 39-41. — Et in vestibulo portae duae mensae hinc, et duae mensae inde, ut immoletur super eas holocaustum, et pro peccato, et pro delicto. Et ad latus exterius, quod ascendit ad ostium portae quae pergit ad Aquilonem, duae mensae; et ad latus alterum ante vestibulum portae, duae mensae. Quatuor mensae hinc, et quatuor mensae inde per latera portae. Octo mensae erant, super quas immolabant.

1. In quibus videlicet verbis magna caligo dubietatis oboritur, utrum haec de una porta qualibet, an de duabus, aut de singulis portis dicantur. Sed dum quaternae mensae per latera describuntur, ac postmodum in summa conclusionis dicitur: Octo mensae erant super quas immolabant, patet quia hoc spiritus non de singulis portis quas superius descripserat dicat, quia si portae sex superius enarratae quaternas mensas per latera haberent, simul omnes non octo, sed quadraginta et octo dicerentur. Rursum si hoc de una dicitur, magno obstaculo nostra intelligentia reverberatur, quod post descriptum portae vestibulum, ubi duae mensae hinc et duae mensae inde esse narratae sunt, adhuc ad latus exterius, quod ascendit ad ostium portae quae pergit ad Aquilonem, duae mensae esse memorantur, atque subjungitur: Et ad latus alterum ante vestibulum portae duae mensae. Si enim intra vestibulum portae binae per latera mensae erant, cum subditur: Et ad latus exterius duae mensae, atque ad latus alterum ante vestibulum duae mensae, inter quas etiam porta quae respicit viam Aquilonis esse memoratur, profecto patet aliud vestibulum intrinsecus, atque aliud extrinsecus fuisse, quia et prius porta interior, et postmodum hoc in loco exterior Aquilonis porta describitur. Nam eum tres portas superius

descripsisset, tres quoque alias interioris atrii esse memoravit, quarum extremam Aquilonis portam narraverat, sed, ut praedictum est, atrii interioris. Nunc ergo cum duae mensae hinc in portae vestibulo et duae mensae inde describuntur, adhuc de eadem interiori porta sermo contexitur, quippe cum protinus subinfertur quia ad latus exterius, quod ascendit ad ostium portae quae pergit ad Aquilonem, duae mensae; et ad latus alterum ante vestibulum portae, duae mensae. Porta ergo interior binas per latera in vestibulo mensas habere descripta est, et porta exterior similiter binas. Quatuor autem hinc et quatuor inde mensae pariter fiunt, dum per latera singula binae in vestibulo portae interioris et binae hinc et inde exterius in Aquilonis porta describuntur, quae simul omnes octo sunt, in quibus immolatur. His itaque de exteriori narratione discussis, ad spiritalem intellectum sermo redeat, qui tanto jam esse, largiente Domino, facilior debet, quanto nos exterioris descriptionis ignorantia non angustat.

2. Possunt etenim portarum nomine, sicut superius dictum est, sancti praedicatores intelligi, ut vestibulum portae sit populus. Qui dum mente humili verba praedicationis suscipit, in eo mensae ad sacrificium ex virtutibus construuntur. Rursum nihil obstat si portam accipimus hoc, quod nobis per ora praedicantium sacri eloquii intellectus aperitur, ut vestibulum portae ejusdem nobis praedicationis verba sint quae prius humiliter accipimus, ut post ad sacri eloquii intelligentiam veniamus. Sit itaque nobis porta interior Testamentum Novum, porta vero exterior Testamentum Vetus, quia et hoc spiritalem intellectum aperit, et illud rudibus adhuc mentibus in historia sacri eloquii litteram custodivit. Habet autem porta interior in magna jam multitudine fidelium populorum duo latera, videlicet dilectionem Dei et dilectionem proximi. Binae autem mensae sunt hinc et inde, quia in dilectione Dei necessario tenenda est fides et vita, in dilectione autem proximi debet summopere patientia et benignitas custodiri. Est enim in dilectione Dei necessaria fides et vita, quia videlicet scriptum est: Sine

fide impossibile est placere Deo (Hebr. XI, 6). Et rursus scriptum est: Fides sine operibus mortua est (Jac. II, 20, 26). Est autem in dilectione proximi nobis patientia et benignitas conservanda, quia de eadem dilectione scriptum est: Charitas patiens est, benigna est (I Cor. XIII, 4). Patiens scilicet, ut illata a proximis mala aequanimiter portet, benigna autem, ut sua bona proximis desiderabiliter impendat. Habet quoque porta exterior, videlicet lex, duo latera, spiritales patres et carnalem populum. In quibus singulis binae mensae sunt, quia habet in spiritalibus patribus doctrinam et prophetiam, habet in carnali populo circumcisionem et sacrificium. In his itaque octo mensis immolatur, quia quidquid fides credit, quidquid vita in exemplo boni operis ostendit, quidquid patientia humiliter tolerat, quidquid benignitas largiter ministrat, quidquid doctrina salubriter docet, quidquid prophetia in posterum praemonet, quidquid circumcisio ad mandatum exterius ligavit, quidquid sacrificium ex devotione offerentis egit, in omnipotentis Dei oculis hoc esse victimam ostendit. In lege enim etiam per carnale sacrificium quid aliud populus nisi devotionem sui cordis immolabat? Notandum vero quod quatuor mensae solummodo ad holocaustum fuisse memorantur, quas videlicet vestibuli portae interioris accipimus, ut de reliquis quatuor sentiamus quia ad sacrificium constructae fuerunt, non ad holocaustum. Holocaustum enim, sicut praecedenti jam locutione professus sum (Homil. super.), totum incensum dicitur. Et lex quidem Deum ac proximum diligi, divina mandata custodiri praecipit, ab alienarum rerum concupiscentia compescit; non tamen omnia dimitti jubet. In Testamento autem Novo nos Veritas contestatur, dicens: Nisi quis renuntiaverit omnibus quae possidet, non potest esse meus discipulus (Luc. XIV, 33). Atque iterum dicit: Qui vultpost me venire, abneget semetipsum (Ibid. IX, 23). Mensae ergo interioris portae holocaustum habent, quia in virtutibus Testamenti Novi quasi per holocaustum omnia incendimus, quando omnibus quae hujus mundi sunt renuntiamus. Mensae vero portae

exterioris sacrificium habent, sed holocaustum non habent, quia praecepta legalia decimas offerri jubent, sed dimitti omnia non jubent.

3. De interioris autem vestibuli quatuor mensis dicitur: Ut immoletur super eas holocaustum, et pro peccato, et pro delicto. Hoc etenim inter peccatum et delictum distat, quod peccatum est mala facere, delictum vero est bona derelinquere, quae summopere sunt tenenda. Vel certe peccatum in opere est, delictum in cogitatione. Recte ergo in interioris portae quatuor mensis immolatur holocaustum, et pro peccato, et pro delicto, quia quicunque potuerit hoc praesens saeculum pleniter contemnere, et, derelinquens omnia, semetipsum Domino holocaustum dare, ipse jam perfecte novit et peccata operis plangere, et delicta cogitationis, vel quod malum fecit, vel quod bonum quod debuit facere non fecit. Qui etenim totum dimisit, culpas suas in fletibus jam liberius conspicit. Cumque ejus mentem terrena cura non praepedit, pro opere simul et cogitatione plangendo mentem suam omnipotenti Domino quid aliud quam holocaustum dedit?

4. Neque hoc a ratione videtur extraneum, quod propheta cum latus exterius diceret, et ostium portae nominaret, addidit: Quae pergit ad Aquilonem. In exteriori enim custodia litterae lex data tenebatur. Ostium vero portae est ipse historicus intellectus legis, qui ad Domini timorem ducit. Quae porta ad Aquilonem pergere dicitur, quia lex eadem sub timore mortis frigida Judaici populi corda constrinxit. Quasi enim per calorem ille populus curreret, si praecepta dominica ex amore servasset. Sed quia sub timore mortis propositae litteram custodivit, quasi in torpore frigoris remansit. Unde novis populis aeterna praemia amantibus, non autem temporalia tormenta timentibus, atque jam calentibus, dicitur: Non accepistis spiritum servitutis iterum in timore, sed spiritum adoptionis, in quo clamamus, Abba pater (Rom. VIII, 15). Dicatur autem: Quatuor mensae hinc, et quatuor mensae inde per latera portae. Dum enim fides et vita,

doctrina et prophetia in bonorum mentibus custoditur, porta nostra, id est intellectus sacri eloquii, quatuor ex latere mensas habet. Cumque in proficientibus populis sancta praedicatio patientiam et benignitatem servat, quae prius in carnalibus circumcisionem et sacrificium custodivit, mensae quoque quatuor quasi ex alio latere monstrantur. Quae simul omnes octo ad immolandum fiunt, quatuor videlicet interiores ad holocaustum, quatuor vero exteriores ad sacrificium, quia et hi qui in sancta Ecclesia fidem, vitam, patientiam atque benignitatem custodiunt, summis jam procul dubio virtutibus pollent; et hi qui in synagoga doctrinam et prophetiam, circumcisionem et sacrificium cognoverunt, alia offerendo, atque sibimetipsis alia retinendo, devotionis suae victimam omnipotenti Domino dederunt. Sed quia superius dictum est idcirco mensas quatuor interioris vestibuli constructas, ut immoletur super eas holocaustum et pro peccato et pro delicto, unde mensae ipsae constructae sint inferius aperitur, cum subditur: VERS. 42. — Quatuor autem mensae ad holocaustum de lapidibus quadris exstructae.

5. Quos enim hoc loco lapides quadros accipimus, nisi quoslibet sanctos, quorum vita in prosperitate atque adversitate novit fortiter stare? Lapis etenim quadrus aeque stat, in quocunque latere fuerit versus. Quisquis ergo in prosperitate non extollitur, in adversitate non frangitur, suasionibus ad malum non trahitur, vituperationibus a bono opere non revocatur, lapis quadrus est. Et quasi ex omni latere statum habet, quia casum in qualibet permutatione non habet. Certe cum Judaeorum populum propheta a fide perire cognosceret, et sanctos apostolos surgere in Ecclesia praevideret, per quos multi sunt ex gentibus in fidei et vitae fortitudine solidati, in magna consolatione locutus est, dicens: Lapides ceciderunt, sed quadris lapidibus aedificabimus (Isai. IX, 10). Videns quippe in sancta Ecclesia apostolos, Martyres, atque doctores surgere, de lapidum casu, id est de Judaeorum perditione minus doluit, quia omnipotentis Dei aedificium, id est sanctam

Ecclesiam de quadris lapidibus aedificari conspexit. Mensae ergo quatuor de quadris lapidibus construuntur, quia fides et vita, patientia et benignitas de vita sanctorum in exemplum datae sunt sequentibus populis, ut jam vestibulum mensas habeat, id est virtutes vitae populus teneat, in quibus omnipotenti Deo orationis sacrificium in ara sui cordis incendat. Quidquid enim boni fideles sanctae Ecclesiae populi vel fecerunt, vel faciunt, hoc in exemplum de praedicatorum suorum vita susceperunt. Unde enim mensas hoc vestibulum haberet, nisi quadros lapides invenisset? Ut enim unum de quadris lapidibus breviter ad medium deducamus, vultis, fratres charissimi, fidem videre? Mihi vivere Christus est, et mori lucrum (Philip. I, 21). Vultis vitam cognoscere? Mihi mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo (Galat. VI, 14). Vultis patientiam audire? Usque in hanc horam et esurimus, et colaphis caedimur, et instabiles sumus, et laboramus operantes manibus nostris; maledicimur, et benedicimus, persecutionem patimur, et sustinemus; blasphemamur, et obsecramus (I Cor. IV, 11-13). Vultis benignitatem cognoscere? Ego autem libentissime impendam, et superimpendar ipse pro animabus vestris (II Cor. XII, 15). Ac ne forsitan credamus quia eorum amori pro quibus impendi desiderat debitor fuerit, mox ad eosdem discipulos subjungit, dicens: Licet plus vos diligens, minus diligar (Ibid.). Cum ergo a populo fideli ad imitandas virtutes sanctorum praedicatorum vita cognoscitur, profecto in vestibulo de quadris lapidibus mensae construuntur. Habuit vero et Synagoga spiritales patres in doctrina atque prophetia, ex quibus exemplum vitae in virtutibus traheret. Sed rudis ejus populus, magis per timorem serviens quam per amorem sequens, vitam patrum noluit imitari quam vidit, atque ideo porta exterior quae ad Aquilonem pergit, mensas non habet ad holocaustum. Sed quia haec moraliter diximus, restat adhuc ut easdem mensas per intelligentiam typicam perscrutemur.

6. Porta etenim nostra in interiori vestibulo quatuor mensas habet, quia sancta Ecclesia quatuor evangelistarum praedicatione erudita est, per quorum doctrinam didicit cor in amorem Dei omnipotentis ascendere, et suas ei in sacrificio cogitationes immolare. Quarum duae hinc, et duae inde esse referuntur, quia duo evangelistae et quae de Domino viderunt attestati sunt, et duo illa narraverunt quae praecedentium auditu didicerunt. Vel certe quatuor mensae sunt interioris vestibuli, hoc quod patenter aspicimus, quia sancta Ecclesia ad eruditionem fidelium populorum quatuor regentium ordines accipit, quos Paulus ex dono omnipotentis Dei enumerat, dicens: Ipse dedit quosdam quidem apostolos, quosdam autem prophetas, alios vero evangelistas, alios autem pastores et doctores (I Cor. XII, 28; Ephes. IV, 11). Pastores vero et doctores unum regentium ordinem nominat, quia gregem Dei ipse veraciter pascit qui docet. Habuit quoque et porta exterior mensas quatuor, quia videlicet Synagoga obsequii exterioris observantiam per principes sacerdotum et seniores populi, per Scribas atque Pharisaeos tenuit. Qui scilicet Pharisaei etiam legis doctores vocati sunt. Sive autem exteriori seu interiori portae duae mensae hinc sunt, et duae inde, quia in exordiis suis sancta Ecclesia apostolos et prophetas habuit. Prophetas autem dicimus non eos qui in veteri populo fuerunt, sed eos qui in sancta Ecclesia post apostolos sunt exorti. Posteriori quoque tempore, quod nunc est, habet evangelistas atque doctores. Quia vero Evangelium bonum nuntium dicitur, evangelistas utique appellamus qui rudibus populis bona patriae coelestis annuntiant. Qui videlicet evangelistae atque doctores et priori quidem tempore fuerunt, sed et nunc usque, Domino largiente, permanent, quia adhuc quotidie et infideles populos ad fidem trahi, et fideles quosque in bonos mores per doctores erudiri cognoscimus. Apostoli vero et prophetae ab hoc tempore praesenti sublati sunt, atque ideo dicimus quia mensae hae portae nostrae, id est sanctae Ecclesiae quasi in alio latere fuerunt.

7. Habet et porta quae pergit ad Aquilonem duas mensas hinc, et duas inde, eosdem quos diximus principes sacerdotum et seniores populi in majori auctoritate regiminis, Scribas quoque et Pharisaeos, qui rudi illi populo minori loco praefuerunt. Sed hae mensae juxta portam sunt quae ad Aquilonem pergit, quia cum quatuor isti ordines populo praeessent, Synagoga in persecutione Redemptoris nostri saeviens, ad torporem perfidiae prorupit. Quae tamen mensae habuerunt sacrificium, quod juxta solam litteram tenuerunt; unde et ad torporem frigoris lapsi sunt, quia flamma spiritus succensi non sunt. Interiores autem mensae holocaustum habent, quia sive in cordibus apostolorum atque prophetarum, seu in mente evangelistarum atque doctorum, ignis spiritus et arsit et ardet. Qui pro eo quod omnem eorum cogitationem in bono opere absumit, flamma amoris Dei quasi holocaustum totum simul quod invenit incendit. Holocaustum enim offerunt, qui sive in bono opere, seu in sancta cogitatione medullitus accenduntur

8. Mensae vero hae ex quadris lapidibus factae sunt, quia dum quotidie sacri eloquii in suis cordibus verba meditantur, ad offerendum Domino orationis holocaustum, quasi ex quadris lapidibus construuntur. Verba etenim Scripturae sacrae lapides quadri sunt, quia ubique stant, quia ex nullo latere reprehensibilia inveniuntur. Nam in omne quod praeteritum narrant, in omne quod venturum annuntiant, in omne quod moraliter praedicant, in omne quod spiritaliter sonant, quasi in diverso latere statum habent, quia reprehensionem non habent. Corda itaque sanctorum mensae Dei sunt ad holocaustum ex quadris lapidibus constructae, quia qui Dei verba semper cogitant semetipsos Domino a carnali vita in cogitatione mactant. Unde scriptum est: Lex Dei ejus in corde ipsius, et non supplantabuntur gressus ejus (Psal. XXXVI, 31). Et unde rursum dicitur: In corde meo abscondi eloquia tua, ut non peccem tibi (Psal. CXVIII, 11). Sed quia mensae hae unde sint constructae cognovimus, etiam cujus mensurae

sint audiamus. Sequitur: VERS. 42. — Longitudine unius cubiti et dimidii, et latitudine cubiti unius et dimidii, et altitudine cubiti unius.

9. Hunc locum quidam exposuit, dicens: Longitudine et latitudine habent mensae cubitum unum et dimidium, id est per quadrum, quae simul juncta tres cubitos faciunt. Qui tres cubiti habent in altitudinem cubitum unum, ut mysteria Trinitatis unius cubiti, hoc est divinae majestatis, mensuram conservent. Qui videlicet sensus expositionis idcirco non potest stare, quia in illa summa Trinitate quae omnia creavit, omnia continet, dimidium nihil est, nec ex duobus dimidiis aliquid unum. Neque enim quidquam imminutionis ac decisionis habet illa substantia, quae semper incommutabilis manens, nec detrimentum recipit, nec augmentum. Saepe autem diximus longitudinem ad longanimitatem spei, latitudinem vero ad charitatis amplitudinem pertinere. Mensae ergo quae ad holocaustum constructae sunt, longitudine cubiti unius et dimidii metiuntur, quia sancti patres atque doctores, qui se longanimiter ad secreta spei intimae extendunt, per hoc quod in virtutibus vivunt, quantum ad humanam quidem mensuram pertinet, valde perfecti sunt, quantum vero ad divina illa mysteria quae plene ab homine capi non possunt, quandiu in hac mortali carne subsistunt, perfecti non sunt. In semetipsis ergo jam cubitum habent, in Deo autem adhuc cubitum non habent, quia jam quidem in virtutibus plene proficiunt, sed tamen aliquid de Deo adhuc ex parte cognoscunt. Ecce iterum in mensura mensae ad testimonium Paulus occurrit. Videamus an ejus vita cubito integro mensuretur. Dicit enim: Quotquot perfecti sumus, hoc sapiamus (Philip. III, 15). Videamus si in his quae de Deo sentit jam se ad percipienda mysteria perfecte tetenderit: Ego me non arbitror comprehendisse (Ibid., 13). Qui rursus ait: Ex parte cognoscimus, et ex parte prophetamus; cum autem venerit quod perfectum est, evacuabitur quod ex parte est (I Cor. XIII, 9, 10). Qui iterum dicit: Nunc cognosco ex parte, tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum (Ibid., 12). Si ergo

perfectus est, et ex parte cognoscit, cubitum habet, quantum ad se, sed tamen dimidium super se. Tendantur ergo in longanimitate spei corda sanctorum, tendantur in perfectione quam habent, cubito uno. Sed quia adhuc plene videre non possunt, ubi spei oculum mittunt, hoc quod super unum cubitum habent, in dimidio cubito recidatur, quatenus in hac vita semper se imperfectos aspiciant, et ardentius ad perfectionem currant.

10. Habent quoque mensae latitudinem cubiti unius et dimidii, quia sanctorum corda in charitatis amplitudine dilatata juxta proximum quem diligunt et vident habent cubitum. Possunt enim perfecte diligere quos perfecte valent juxta aliquid scire. Omnipotentem vero Deum medullitus diligunt, medullitus sequuntur, sed tamen tantum diligere non possunt quantum debent, quia adhuc non valent videre quem diligunt; et mensura amoris minor est ubi adhuc mensura minor est cognitionis. Super unum ergo cubitum habent et dimidium, quia hoc eis jam in animo integrum est, quod valde minus est, id est charitas cum proximo; atque illud in eis quod valde majus est, id est amor Dei quem non vident, adhuc integrum non est. De hoc amore, qui hic incipitur, ut ex visione Domini in aeterna patria perficiatur, recte Isaias loquitur, dicens: Vivit Dominus, cujus ignis est in Sion, et caminus ejus in Jerusalem (Isai. XXXI, 9). Plus est autem caminum esse quam ignem, quia esse ignis et parvus potest, in camino autem vastior flamma succenditur. Sion vero speculatio, Jerusalem autem visio pacis dicitur. Pacem vero nostram hic interim speculamur, ut illic postmodum plene videamus. Ex amore ergo Domini in Sion ignis est, in Jerusalem caminus, quia hic amoris ejus flammis aliquatenus ardemus, ubi de illo aliquid contemplamur; sed ibi plene ardebimus, ubi illum plene videbimus quem amamus.

11. Altitudo vero mensarum est cubiti unius. Quae est enim altitudo sanctorum, nisi fides invisibilium? Per fidem enim creditur quod non videtur, atque ideo per hanc justorum mens ad altitudinem ducitur, ut cuncta

visibilia despiciat in terra, et ea quae audit invisibilia sequatur in coelo. Sed unum cubitum habet altitudo mensarum, quia unitas est fidei in corde omnium sanctorum. Unum Deum esse Trinitatem et patres testamenti veteris, et praedicatores professi sunt testamenti novi. Altitudo itaque mensarum nil uno cubito amplius, nil minus habet, quia in magna sibi unitate concordat omnium fides patrum. Sed hi qui, jam in longanimitatem spei summis virtutibus proficientes, unum et dimidium cubitum habent, atque in latitudine charitatis uno ac dimidio cubito metiuntur, in altitudinem vero fidei uno cubito excrescunt, magni sunt, et summa admiratione venerandi. Debent ergo parvulorum animas in sinu suae conversationis suscipere, atque eas in conspectu Domini velut quoddam holocaustum ac sacrificium offerre. Unde aperte sequitur: IBID. — Super quas ponunt vasa in quibus immolatur holocaustum et victima.

12. Quid enim sunt animae fidelium, nisi vasa sancta quae verba pietatis capiunt, ut ex eorum mentibus holocaustum vitae atque orationis immoletur? Hinc est enim quod Paulus cum adhuc rudis esset in fidei vocatione, quia jam Domini verba perceperat, et coelesti gratia plenus erat, vas appellatur, cum dicitur: Vas electionis mihi est (Act. IX, 15). Hinc pastores atque doctores propheta admonet, dicens: Mundamini qui fertis vasa Domini (Isai LII, 11). Ipsi etenim quasi mensae vasa Domini portant, qui vitam fidelium erudiendo tolerant, ut quandoque hanc Domino ad holocaustum et sacrificium perducant. Sed neque hoc negligenter intuendum est, quod in eisdem vasis holocaustum et victima dicitur immolari. Holocaustum enim, sicut et superius diximus (Hom. superiori), victima est, non tamen victima semper holocaustum, quia cum quid ex parte offertur, et ex parte retinetur, sacrificium quidem est, sed holocaustum non est. Sunt vero in multitudine magna fidelium alii qui ea quae mundae sunt omnia relinquunt, cuncta quae possident tribuunt, nil sibimetipsis reservant, ad aeternam patriam medullitus anhelant, seque ex toto corde in lacrymis

mactant. Hi videlicet vasa super mensam sunt, in quibus immolatur holocaustum. Et sunt alii qui curam propriae domus gerunt, de filiis cogitant, eisque haereditatem servant, qui tamen, aeterni judicii memores, misericordiam pauperibus impendunt, alimenta ac vestimenta eis ex parte qua decreverint tribuunt. Hi nimirum vasa super mensam sunt, in quibus victima immolata est, non holocaustum. Quia enim patientia et doctrina sanctorum admonendo et sustinendo, suadendo atque terrendo, aliorum corda usque ad hoc erudiunt, ut omnia deserant, et totos se in amore Domini accendant, aliorum vero ad hoc usque instruunt, ut quia omnia relinquere non valent, vel ex parte qua praevalent, misericordes fiant, et carnis curam cum animae cura partiantur, mensae Domini de quadris lapidibus instructae vasa portant, in quibus immolatur holocaustum et victima, quia et perfecti, sicut dictum est, cum omnia deserunt, totum cor in amorem Domini accendunt, et imperfecti sacrificium offerunt, quod ex parte devoverunt. Sequitur: VERS. 43. — Et labia earum palmi unius, reflexa intrinsecus per circuitum.

13. Quid est hoc, quod mensarum labia palmo metiuntur, nisi quod in palmo manus tenditur, et sancti patres atque doctores ea praedicant in quibus auditorum opera tenduntur? Quasi enim manum extendimus cum opera nostra dilatamus. Loquatur ergo unusquisque doctor, cor audientis exerceat, otiosorum torporem excutiat. Quos dum ad bona opera tetenderit, palmum se habere in labiis ostendat. Pensandum quoque quia in palmo digitus major ac minimus tenditur. Quid vero in majori ac minimo digito, nisi magna et extrema actio designatur? Palmum ergo mensae in labiis habeant, quatenus in doctorum suorum praedicatione magna opera faciat, ut agere et minima non omittat. Sic minimis intentus sit, ut piger in agendis majoribus non sit. Unde per Evangelium Veritas dicit: Vae vobis, scribae et Pharisaei hypocritae, quia decimatis mentham et anethum et cyminum, et relinquitis quae graviora sunt legis, judicium, misericordiam et fidem; haec

oportuit facere, et illa non omittere (Matth. XXIII, 23). Per judicium quippe, et misericordiam, et fidem, major digitus operationis ostenditur. Per mentham vero, et anethum, et cyminum, digitus procul dubio minimus figuratur. Haec ergo oportuit facere, et illa non omittere, quia si opus nostrum palmo metiri volumus, sic necesse est ut tendatur minimus, quatenus major digitus non attrahatur.

14. Bene autem cum mensarum labia metiuntur, et mensura palmi dicitur, additur unius, ut ex doctorum praedicatione sicut unitas tenetur in fide, ita quoque unitas mentium servetur in opere, ne per opus bonum quod alter agit, alter ad discordiae malum prorumpat. Ita enim bona facere opera debemus, ut per haec quoque cum his cum quibus vivimus unanimitatem, in quantum recte possumus, conservemus, id est non deserendo quod agimus, sed praeveniendo bonis persuasionibus malum discordiae quod timemus. Sic in suis operibus unitatem palmi custodiens Paulus, discordiam generari prohibebat, cum quemdam lapsum atque ab Ecclesia abjectum jam velle recipere Corinthios videret, dicens: Si cui aliqud donastis, et ego. Nam et ego si quid donavi, propter vos in persona Christi, ut non circumveniamur a Satana (II Cor. II, 10). Qui videlicet solet de bonis mala generare, et hoc quod charitate agitur ad discordiam trahere. Unde et mox de ipso subjecit, dicens: Non enim ignoramus cogitationes ejus (Ibid., 11). Doctor autem qui per bona quae praedicat in suis auditoribus rectam operationem format, si mentes operantium ad unanimitatem non ligat, in labiis palmum habet, sed eam quae dicta est palmi unitatem non habet.

15. Pensandum vero est valde quod dicitur, quia earumdem mensarum labia interius sunt reflexa. Tunc enim mensarum labia intrinsecus reflectuntur, quando doctores ad conscientiam revocant tacita cogitatione quod dicunt, quando semetipsos subtiliter perscrutantur si faciunt quod loquuntur. Recte autem cum reflexa intrinsecus mensarum labia dicuntur, additur quoque per circuitum, ut non in una qualibet se parte considerent,

atque ex alia semetipsos perpendere praetermittant, sed ubique semetipsos inspiciant, et, in quantum praevalent, studeant singula opere implere quae docent, ne si praedicantes facere bona dissimulant, sui vastatores sint cultores alieni. O doctor, ecce jam mensa es, jam vasa portas, jam in vasis fidelibus pondus holocausti et victimae sustines, sed intus reflecte labium, id est ad cor revoca sermonem. Audi quod dicis, operare quod praedicas. Si enim negligis implere quod praedicas, aliis messem seminas, et ipse a frumenti participatione jejunas. Unde scriptum est: Cujus messem famelicus comedet (Job. V, 5). Messem quippe doctoris qui bona loquitur, sed non operatur, famelicus comedit, quia is qui panem justitiae esurit operatur mandata quae audit, et ipse fructum non habet, qui seminando laboravit. Hinc Salomon ait: Abscondit piger manum suam sub ascella, nec ad os suum porrigit eam (Prov. XIX, 24). Nemo ita piger est, ut ad os manum vel comedendo reducere laborem putet. Sed piger nec ad os manum suam porrigit, qui nec hoc vult operari quod dicit. Hinc iterum de bene docentibus et male operantibus dicitur: Filii Ephraim intendentes areum, et mittentes sagittas, conversi sunt in die belli (Psal. LXXVII, 9). Intendunt arcum, atque sagittas mittunt, qui Scripturae sacrae sententias proponunt, et verbis rectis auditorum vitia feriunt; sed convertuntur in die belli, quia post semetipsos redeunt in tentatione vitiorum, et pectus opponere non volunt, quia in tentationum certamine non resistunt. Hinc iterum dicitur: Avertisti adjutorium gladii ejus, et non es auxiliatus ei in bello (Psal. LXXXVIII, 44). Gladius quippe doctoris est sermo Dei. Unde per Paulum dicitur: Et gladium spiritus, quod est verbum Dei (Ephes. VI, 17). Omnipotens itaque Deus cum doctorem respicit nolle operari quae dicit, in die belli adjutorii ejus gladium avertit, quia in tentationum certamine non permittit ei esse in adjutorium doctrinae verba quae dedit. Habet igitur gladium, sed hunc in bello non adjuvat, quia cum adversitas tentationis eruperit, verbi obliviscitur quod docebat. Ecce enim de patientia forsitan sermo doctori est, doctrinae

suae magisterio dicere cogitur qualiter contra illata damna, contra auditas contumelias patientia servetur. Sed cum ipse vel damno, vel contumelia fuerit lacessitus, oblitus quod docuerat, vel in laesione proximi, vel in reddenda gravius contumelia excedit. Inter haec itaque cogitet quia mensa Dei est, labium intus reflectat, servet quod praedicat. Scriptum quippe est: In patientia vestra possidebitis animas vestras (Luc. XXI, 19). Et rursum scriptum est: Doctrina viri per patientiam noscitur (Prov. XIX, 11). Si itaque index doctrinae patientia est, tanto quisque doctus ostenditur, quanto patiens fuerit. Hinc est enim quod bonus ille discipulus qui magistrum tolli in aera videbat, per magnae charitatis affectum clamabat, dicens: Pater mi, pater mi, currus Israel et auriga ejus (IV Reg. II, 12). Quid est, fratres charissimi, quod Elias currus Israel et auriga dicitur, nisi quia auriga agitat, currus portat? Doctor ergo qui mores populi et per patientiam sustinet, et sacri eloquii verbis docet, et currus dicitur et auriga. Currus, quia tolerando portat; auriga, quia exhortando agitat. Currus, quia mala sustinet; auriga, quia populum bonis admonitionibus exercet.

16. Fortasse autem contra vanam gloriam sermo doctori est, et mire insinuans qualiter debeat declinari, eisdem ipsis sermonibus vanam gloriam quaerit, quibus contra eamdem vanam gloriam disputat. Si igitur hoc appetit adipisci quod prohibet, mensa intus labium non reflectit. Tunc autem mensa Domini ex quadris lapidibus exstructa habebit intus labium reflexum, si studuerit audire quod dicit. Scriptum quippe est: Ne quid per contentionem, neque per inanem gloriam (Philip. II, 3). Atque eisdem rursus egregius praedicator dicit: Nec quaerentes ab hominibus gloriam, neque a vobis, neque ab aliis (I Thess. II, 6). De praedicationis etenim labore laudem transitoriam quaerere, quid est aliud quam rem magnam vili pretio venundare? Sed est in doctrinae verbis grave periculum, quia saepe sermonem docentium favores audientium sequuntur, et cum doctores ab eo quod bene innotuerint, apparere jam minores in dictis nolunt, doctrinae

verbum quod pro acquirendis animabus auditorum ex omnipotentis Dei amore inchoaverunt, in hoc postmodum pro acquirendis laudibus laborant. Et qui in verbis Dei quaerebant prius lucra spiritalia, temporales postmodum favores sequuntur. Unde fit ut sive recta quaelibet opera, seu sanctae doctrinae verba, in omnipotentis Dei judicio pereant, cum per haec quisque transitoriis favoribus anhelat. Hinc etenim per prophetam Judaeae dicitur quod in se ipsa incauta mens invenit, si saltem post culpam suas caute cogitationes rimetur: Olivam uberem, pulchram, fructiferam, speciosam vocavit Dominus nomen tuum. Ad vocem loquelae grandis exarsit ignis in ea, et combusta sunt fruteta ejus (Jerem. XI, 16). Olivam quippe uberem et pulchram, fructiferam et speciosam Dominus vocat, cujus vel efficaciam in operatione, vel sancta studia in verbis scientiae approbat. Sed ad vocem loquelae grandis exarsit ignis in ea, quia cum laudari quis coeperit, erubescit forsitan minor videri quam dicitur, et studet esse quod dicatur. Vox enim grandis loquelae est favor adulantis. Unde scriptum est: Qui benedicit proximo suo voce grandi de nocte consurgens, similis est maledicenti (Prov. XXVII, 14). Ad vocem ergo loquelae grandis exarsit ignis in ea, quia in magnitudine favoris flamma in corde accenditur de amore laudis. Sed omnia olivae fruteta comburuntur, quia ante omnipotentis Dei oculos, vel quae bene gesta vel quae scienter sunt dicta depereunt, cum jam non amore Domini, sed intentione transitoriae laudis fiunt. Sic enim saepe cogitationi bonae cogitatio sinistra subjungitur, ut vix ipse qui easdem cogitationes generat animus cognoscat. Unde praedicator egregius, cum loquens subtiliter diceret: Vivus est sermo Dei et efficax, et penetrabilior omni gladio ancipiti, et pertingens usque ad divisionem animae ac spiritus (Hebr. IV, 12). illico subjunxit: Compagum quoque et medullarum, et discretor cogitationum et intentionum cordis (Ibid.).

17. Distinguit enim Dei sermo compages et medullas, quia discernit cogitationes et intentiones cordis. Per compages quippe ossibus ossa

junguntur. Et saepe dum quid recta cogitatione agimus, sed subito in laudis amorem declinamus, atque hoc pro laude facimus quod prius facere pro veritate coeperamus, quia cogitationes cogitationibus adjunguntur, quasi quaedam in spiritu compages fiunt. Sed habent ossa, quae in compage juncta sunt, etiam medullas. Quod praedicator sanctus apertius intulit, cum subjunxit: Discretor cogitationum et intentionum cordis (Ibid.). Compages enim nostrae cogitationes sunt, medullae autem intentiones. Et saepe aliud cogitamus, atque aliud est quod per cogitationem intendimus. Nam si quis proposito nummorum praemio pupilli vel viduae causam defendat, et, fortasse Ecclesiam ingrediens, in suis precibus Deo dicat: Tu vides quia causam pupilli et viduae defendo, iste procul dubio quod cogitat scit, sed quo intendat ejus cogitatio ignorat. Aliud quippe cogitat, atque alio intendit. Non enim defensionem pupilli vel viduae, sed mercedem nummorum quaerit. Nam tolle temporale praemium, et pupillum ac viduam non defendit. Sermo itaque Dei discretor est cogitationum et intentionum cordis, quia non aspicit quid apud temetipsum cogitas, sed per medullam compagis, id est per intentionem cogitationis quid accipere requiras. Restat ergo ut doctor, cum loquitur, quasi mensa Dei semper intus labium reflectat, ne aut mala intentione loqui inchoet, aut cum bene coeperit, seductus favoribus, in appetitum alium declinet.

18. Fortasse autem de custodia disciplinae sermo doctori est. Et saepe etiam contingit ut disciplinae regulam quam scit dicere nesciat tenere, quia aut, nimio zelo motus, minus se per mansuetudinem temperat; aut nimia mansuetudine placidus, minus se contra vitia in zeli stimulo inflammat. Magna enim consideratione debemus pensare quod scriptum est, quia in vasis templi inter coronas et plectas, boves et leones et cherubim exsculpta sunt, et subter boves et leones lora dependentia (III Reg. VII, 29). Coronae quippe signum victoriae, plectae autem concordiae unanimitatem signant; Cherubim vero plenitudo scientiae dicuntur. Sacerdotes enim atque doctores

inter coronas et plectas, id est inter fortitudinem boni operis qua ad victoriam currunt, et charitatis concordiam, qua a se vicissim non discrepant, per boves et leones atque cherubim designati sunt, quia in plenitudine scientiae quam habent necesse est ut et boum mansuetudinem teneant, et fervorem leonum, quatenus in disciplina quam praedicant, et ex sancto zelo accensi sint, et ex paterna dulcedine tranquilli. Quibus subter se lora dependeant, ut disciplinae suae retinacula quibus ipsi ligati sunt etiam subjectis suis sollicite impendant. Subter eos enim lora dependere est custodiae vincula subditis tenere. Quae tunc recte servantur, cum nec boum mansuetudo in zeli fervore amittitur, nec leonum terror in mansuetudine declinatur. Tanta quippe debet esse discretio, ut nec disciplina nimia, nec misericordia sit remissa, ne si inordinate culpa dimittitur, is qui est culpabilis, in reatu gravius astringatur; et rursus, si culpa immoderate retinetur, tanto qui corrigitur deterior fiat, quanto erga se nil ex benignitatis gratia agi considerat. Exhibenda itaque pravis est asperitas in ostensione, charitas in mente; ut et dura ostensio delinquentem coerceat, et charitatis custodia mercedem mansuetudinis non amittat.

19. Ecce, dum loquor, Joseph animum pulsat, ut ad ostendenda quae dico ipse testis veniat. Certe somnium quod de profectu suo viderat, fratribus narrans, per hoc quod innocenter retulit, malitiae contra se stimulos excitavit (Genes. XXXVII, 5). Ab eisdem fratribus Ismaelitis est venditus (Ibid., 21), in Aegyptum ductus, mira omnipotentis Domini dispensatione eidem Aegypto praelatus est (Ibid., XLI, 41). Cumque in terra Chanaan fames exsurgeret, fratres ad Aegyptum venerunt, Joseph praelatum Aegypto repererunt, eumque submissis ad terram cervicibus adoraverunt (Ibid. XLII, 7). Et quia mutare Dei consilium non valuerunt, quem ideo vendiderant ne adorarent, adoraverunt quia vendiderunt. Tunc ipse vir Dei, spiritu discretionis plenus, cognovit fratres non cognitus. Sed memor culpae, et remissor injuriae, mala fratrum nec reddere studuit, nec sine purgatione

laxare. Nam suspecta voce protinus dixit: Exploratores estis vos; ut videatis infirmiora terrae venistis, jam nunc experimentum vestri capiam. Per salutem Pharaonis non egrediemini hinc (Ibid. XLII, 9). O jaculum in corde! Peregrini venerant, famis periculum fugiebant, frumenta quae quaerebant non acceperant, et feriri se insuper jactatione criminis videbant. Inter haec ducuntur ad carcerem, et, post triduum educti, adhuc in eadem asperitate terrentur. Jam reditur ad cor, jam culpae memoria pulsat animum, atque inter se invicem locuuntur: Merito haec patimur, quia peccavimus in fratrem nostrum, videntes angustiam animae illius, cum deprecaretur nos, et non audivimus; idcirco venit super nos ista tribulatio (Ibid., 21). In his autem cor Joseph amore vincitur, secessum petit, solvit flendo quod pietati debuit. Severus ad fratres revertitur, ut cruciatus eorum animus a culpa liberaretur. Post haec unus religatur in vinculis, dimittuntur caeteri cum frumentis, ut unus frater veniat, quem minimum habere se dixerant (Ibid., 34, 35). Venit postmodum frater. Vincebat mentem pietas cum frater innocens videretur; sed permanebat in ostensione asperitas, ut fratres noxii purgarentur. Frumenta dantur, scyphus in sacco junioris fratris absconditur, furti post eos quaestio movetur (Genes. XLIV, 2). Mittitur ut reducantur, addici in servitutem decernitur apud quem scyphus fuisset inventus. In sacco ultimi fratris invenitur. Tunc Benjamin reducitur, afflicti omnes fratres sequuntur. O tormenta misericordiae! Cruciat, et amat. Reversi igitur, in terram cum lacrymis prostrati, veniam postulant. Memores enim quid de illo patri promiserant, moerore intolerabili tabescebant. Tunc se ultra cohibere non valens pietas clausa prorupit ad medium, et excussit charitatis lacrymas de vultu severitatis (Genes. XLV, 1). Detersa est ira quae apparebat, et non erat; ostensa misericordia quae erat, et non apparebat. Sic vir sanctus facinus fratrum et dimisit, et vindicavit. Sic in vigore clementiam tenuit, ut delinquentibus fratribus nec sine ultione pius existeret, nec sine pietate districtus.

20. Ecce hoc est magisterium disciplinae, ut culpas et discrete noverit parcere, et pie resecare. Qui autem discretionis spiritum non habent, aut sic dimittunt peccata, ut non corrigant, aut sic quasi corrigendo feriunt, ut non dimittant. Doctor ergo cui de disciplinae moderamine loqui necesse est mensam Dei esse se sciat, atque intus labrum reflectat, ut quod docendo loquitur, hoc sub discretionis spiritu vigilanter operetur. Nec si quaedam sibi deesse considerat, oportet ub ab eorum praedicatione conticescat. Locus quippe ejus exigit ut loquatur. Verbis ergo suis semetipsum conveniat; et si non ideo loquitur quia non operatur, ideo operetur quia loqui compellitur. Ubi itaque se conspicit opere implere quod dicit, ibi auditores admoneat, eorumque animos ad studium bonae operationis accendat. Ubi autem necdum se videt implesse quod loquitur, ad bona de quibus auditores admonet se quoque pariter inflammet, ut ipse etiam simul discat in opere quod per eum loquitur veritas in praedicatione. Saepe enim quod vivendo nescimus, compulsi locutione doctrinae, loquendo discimus; et dum cogitatione nostrae pigritiae reatus nascitur in mente, eamdem mentem compunctio subito oborta transverberat, et sua voce excitata evigilat in opere, quae prius torpebat in otio sine voce. Ecce autem cum mensae labium palmo tenditur, id est cum per doctoris os contra vitia disputatur, atque ad bona opera cor auditorum accenditur, multi qui ejus verba audiunt quanta vel qualia mala perpetraverint recognoscunt; atque ad eum confitentes veniunt, eumque pro peccatis suis intercessorem fieri cum fletibus petunt, ut ipse orando deleat culpas quas praedicando manifestat. Unde et subditur: VERS. 43. — Super mensas autem carnes oblationis.

21. Doctores etenim sancti cum pro compunctis peccatoribus atque confitentibus omnipotenti Domino preces fundunt, per hoc quod veniam pro carnali eorum vita postulant, mensae Domini carnes oblationis portant. Ut ergo sint pro quibus conversis et flentibus rogent, oportet ut eisdem prius in peccato positis praedicent; et cum jam coeperint peccata relinquere, atque

ad innocentiam festinare, necesse est ut erga eos in ore doctoris incrementa praedicationis excrescant, et quibusdam doctrinae suae verbo tanto vehementius insistat, quanto eos gravius cecidisse considerat, videlicet sciens quod ipse tanto mercedem magnae remunerationis accipiat, quanto verbis suis alios de profundioribus peccatis levat.

22. Libet inter haec sancti Evangelii ad medium verba deducere, cujus sacra historia per hoc quod factum miraculum narrat, mira quae quotidie aguntur denuntiat. Nam cum fessi atque jejuni ad Dominum populi convenissent, discipulis Dominus dixit: Misereor super turbam, quia ecce jam triduo sustinent me, nec habent quid manducent; et si dimisero eos jejunos in domos suas, deficient in via; quidam enim ex eis de longe venerunt (Marc. VIII, 2, 3). Turba triduo Dominum sustinet, quando multitudo fidelium peccata quae perpetravit, per poenitentiam declinans, ad Deum se in opere, locutione, atque in cogitatione convertit. Quos dimittere jejunos in domum suam Dominus non vult, ne deficiant in via, quia videlicet conversi peccatores in praesentis vitae via deficiunt, si in sua conscientia sine doctrinae sanctae pabulo dimittantur. Ne ergo lassentur in hujus peregrinationis itinere, pascendi sunt sancta admonitione. Valde autem pensanda est pia sententia quae processit ex ore Veritatis, qua dicitur: Quidam enim ex eis de longe venerunt (Ibidem). Est autem qui, nihil fraudis et nihil carnalis corruptionis expertus, ad omnipotentis Dei servitium festinavit. Iste de longinquo non venit, quia per incorruptionem et innocentiam proximus fuit. Alius nulla impudicitia, nullis flagitiis inquinatus, solum autem conjugium expertus, ad ministerium spiritale conversus est. Neque iste venit de longinquo, quia usus conjunctione concessa, per illicita non erravit. Alii vero post carnis flagitia, alii post falsa testimonia, alii post facta furta, alii post illatas violentias, alii post perpetrata homicidia ad poenitentiam redeunt, atque ad omnipotentis Dei servitium convertuntur: hi videlicet ad Dominum de longinquo veniunt.

Quanto etenim quisque plus in pravo opere erravit, tanto ab omnipotente Domino longius recessit. Nam et prodigus filius, qui patrem deseruit, abiit in regionem longinquam, in qua porcos pavit, quia vitia nutrivit (Luc. XV, 16). Dentur igitur alimenta eis etiam qui de longinquo veniunt, quia conversis peccatoribus doctrinae sanctae cibi praebendi sunt, ut in Deum vires reparent, quas in flagitiis amiserunt. Qui saepe a doctoribus tanto necesse est ut a largioribus cibis doctrinae satientur, quanto fessi majoribus vitiis venerunt. Et cum jam confiteri coeperint mala quae commiserunt, atque confitendo relinquere et fletibus punire, necesse est ut doctores sancti pro eorum peccatis sollicite exorent, quatenus mensae Domini carnes oblationis portent. Quod quoties agunt, in hoc quod pro alienis peccatis interveniunt, sua ante Dei oculos amplius detergunt, quia ea ipsa charitate se justificant, qua mira pietate pro alienis iniquitatibus se in lamentis mactant. Nec laboriosum debet esse doctoribus pro conversis peccatoribus lacrymas fundere, quando et ipse qui omnia creavit, homo factus, pro nostris iniquitatibus in cruce sanguinem fudit, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

HOMILIA X

Quatuor versus, a 44 ad 48, exponendo sanctus Doctor de fide, spe, charitate, ac de bonis operibus Deo in cordis altari offerendis liberius excurrit, et hoc opus absolvit.

1. Sacri eloquii mysticos sensus Propheta per aspirationem sancti Spiritus prudenter intelligens, dicit: Mirabilia testimonia tua, ideo scrutata est ea anima mea (Psal. CXVIII, 129). Qui rursus ait: Revela oculos meos, et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua (Ibid., 18). Qui enim necdum occulta de apertis intelligit, oculos velatos habet. Qui vero jam intelligit, revelatis oculis mirabilia de lege Dei considerat, quia, spiritaliter litterae verba discutiens, quae interius magnitudo lateat pensat. An non est mirabile quando aliud auribus sonat, atque aliud exit ad intelligentiam quod non sonabat? Cui ergo verbum sacri eloquii nisi lapidi simile dixerim, in quo ignis latet? Qui manu quidem frigidus tenetur, sed, percussus ferro, per scintillas micat, atque hoc emittit ignem qui post ardeat, quod prius manus frigidum tenebat. Sic etenim, sic verba sunt sacri eloquii, quae quidem per narrationem litterae frigida tenentur; sed si quis haec, aspirante Domino, intento intellectu pulsaverit, de mysticis ejus sensibus ignem producit, ut in eis verbis post animus spiritaliter ardeat, quae prius per litteram ipse quoque frigidus audiebat. Ecce enim propheta dicit: VERS. 44. — Et extra portam interiorem gazophylacia cantorum in atrio interiori, quod erat in latere portae respicientis ad Aquilonem; et facies eorum contra viam Australem unam, ex latere portae Orientalis quae respiciebat ad viam Aquilonis.

2. In his itaque verbis litterae ad amorem Dei cujus animus infervescat, quin potius non ex ipsa eorum lectione tepefiat? Si autem latens in littera spiritalis medulla discutitur, per hoc scintillae intellectus exeunt, et incendunt quod prius cordis auribus frigidum sonabat. Nobis tamen, ut se aspirante Domino interior intellectus aperiat, ipsa prius narratio juxta litteram patefiat. Ait enim quia porta erat interior, atque extra hanc atrium,

quod appellatur interius; ac deinde aliae, id est Aquilonis, Austri, atque Orientis portae describuntur, ut ipsum atrium quod esse extra portam interiorem dixerat a portis exterioribus esse interius ostendat. Atrium ergo hoc et foris, et intus est: foris, quia extra portam interiorem; intus autem, quia intra portas exteriores. Gazophylacia quoque cantorum esse in hoc eodem atrio narrantur, quae a latere portae posita dicuntur respicientis ad Aquilonem. Sed ipsa eadem gazophylacia ad Australem viam respiciunt. Et subditur: Ex latere portae Orientalis, quae respiciebat ad viam Aquilonis. In quibus verbis aperte intelligitur quia cantorum gazophylacia inter latus portae respicientis ad Aquilonem, et latus portae Orientalis fuerant posita, quae porta videlicet respiciebat ad viam Aquilonis. Facies itaque gazophylaciorum contra viam Australem, sed positio inter portam erat Orientis et Aquilonis. Porta ergo interior habebat ex latere portam Aquilonis, ex alio quoque latere portam Australem. In fronte vero vestibuli Orientalis porta surrexerat, atque sic atrium quod erat extra portam interiorem, ut hoc quoque esset interius, portae exterius ambiebant.

3. Haec de verbis litterae sub brevitate transcurrimus, ut in eis sensus mysticos non breviter exquiramus. In parte autem superiori tres portae descriptae sunt, id est Orientis, Aquilonis, et Austri; moxque interioris atrii tres aliae narratae, id est Austri, Orientis, et Aquilonis, ac deinde porta atrii interioris dicta est, in qua mensae de quadris lapidibus exstructae memorantur; et porta quae respiciebat ad Aquilonem, in qua mensae essent ad sacrificium, non ad holocaustum. Unde in interiori diximus significari Ecclesiam, in exteriori Synagogam. Sed, his expletis, rursum propheta incipit interiorem portam, atque tres alias, id est Aquilonis, Austri et Orientis describere, et in earum atrio interiori, quod erat extra portam interiorem, esse gazophylacia, cantores, sacerdotes, templum, altare, sacrificia perhibet. In quibus verbis quia de sanctae Ecclesiae institutione narrare alia ab eis quae prius dixerat coepit, patet quod interioris portae

intellectum mutavit. Si enim sub uno intellectu omnia diceret, novo ordine ipsa atque alia non replicaret. Nam quomodo possumus extra portam interiorem atrium, gazophylacia, cantores, sacerdotes, templum, altare, sacrificia dicere, si per eamdem portam interiorem hoc loco sancta Ecclesia designatur? Cum enim cuncta haec intra ipsam sint, quomodo extra portam interiorem sunt, si extra Ecclesiam non sunt? Intelligi ergo porta interior potest ea de qua jam longe superius locuti sumus, quae contra portam Aquilonis et Orientalem dicitur posita, per quam figurari diximus aditum qui nobis ad interiora gaudia patriae coelestis aperitur, ut hic quoque per portas quae circa vestibulum narrantur sancta Ecclesia, per portam vero interiorem coelestis regni aditus figuretur. Sed ne quis me verba sancti Spiritus aestimet ad intellectum meum violenter inflectere, et dicat quia de porta interiori significationem sanctae Ecclesiae quam semel dixi mutare non debui, infulgente Dei omnipotentis gratia, quae coepimus ipsa teneamus, ut et porta interior signet Ecclesiam, quae nos ad interiora gaudia perducit; et gazophylacia, cantores, sacerdotes, templum, altare, sacrificia sint in atrio quod est extra portam, et tamen entra Ecclesiam non sint. Si enim subtili investigatione perquirimus, nil obstat intelligi ut interiorem portam, sicut dictum est, sanctam Ecclesiam sentiamus. De qua nunc dicitur: Et extra portam interiorem gazophylacia cantorum in atrio interiori. Duo sunt etenim quae dicuntur: porta interior, atque extra hanc atrium interius, quatenus hoc ipsum atrium et exterius sit et interius, a porta exterius, interius autem, sicut praediximus, portis quas narrando subjunxit.

4. Sancta enim Ecclesia duas vitas habet, unam quam temporaliter ducit, aliam quam in aeternum recipit; unam qua laborat in terra, aliam qua remuneratur in coelo; unam qua mercedes colligit, aliam vero in qua jam de receptis mercedibus gaudet, atque in utraque vita offert sacrificium. Hic videlicet sacrificium compunctionis, et ilic sacrificium laudis. De hoc sacrificio dicitur: Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus (Psal. L, 19). De

illo autem scriptum est: Tunc acceptabis sacrificium justitiae, oblationes et holocausta (Ibid., 21). De quo rursus ait: Ut cantet tibi gloria mea, et non compungar (Psal. XXIX, 13). In utroque autem sacrificio carnes offeruntur, quia hic oblatio carnis est maceratio corporis, ibi oblatio carnis est in laudem Dei gloria resurrectionis. Tunc quippe illic quasi in holocaustum offeretur caro, quando in aeterna incorruptione permutata nil contradictionis, nil mortalitatis habuerit, quia tota simul amoris ejus ignibus accensa in laude sine fine permanebit. Porta ergo haec interior, id est in sancta Ecclesia habeat interiora sua, illam videlicet vitam quae adhuc oculis nostris occulta est. Habeat extra eam atrium exterius, id est vitam praesentem, in qua omne bonum agitur, ut ad bonum sine fine perveniatur.

5. Sint ergo in interiori atrio, quod tamen extra portam est, gazophylacia cantorum, quia electi quique atque perfecti, qui adhuc in carne mortali subsistunt, et intra sinum sunt sanctae Ecclesiae, et adhuc extra secreta gaudia interioris vitae. Sint gazophylacia cantorum interius et exterius, quia corda sanctorum quae omnipotenti Deo desiderium suum per magni ardoris amorem cantant, et jam intus sunt, et adhuc intus non sunt, quia in sanctae Ecclesiae sinu posita, et jam vident per spiritum quod intus fortiter ament, et tamen adhuc non vident perfecte quod amant. Sint itaque in interiori atrio gazophylacia, sed extra portam, ut jam et intus sint per desiderium, et adhuc intus non sint per plenarium effectum. Quid sunt autem gazophylacia cantorum, nisi sancta desideria amantium? Qui praecepta divina quasi quasdam divitias custodiunt in mente, quas cantando servant, quia mandata Dei non ex timore, sed ex amore perficiunt; eisque ipsis sacri eloquii praeceptiones cantabiles fiunt, quia non ex tristitia, sed ex desiderio semper operantur. Vultis cor justi quasi cujusdam cantoris gazophylacium audire? Cantabiles mihi erant justificationes tuae in loco incolatus mei (Psal. CXVIII, 54). Justificationes Dei dicimus praecepta divina, quae nos justos faciunt, si impleantur. Quae tunc nobis in loco incolatus nostri cantabiles

fiunt, quando in hac peregrinatione vitae praesentis ipsa eadem mandata diligimus, et ex desiderio implemus. Hinc est quod idem Psalmista iterum ex cantorum gazophylacio se insinuat, qui ait: Misericordiam et judicium cantabo tibi, Domine (Psal. C, 1).

6. Misericordiam Domini, qua peccata laxantur, cantare etiam peccator debet, id est hanc cum gaudio dicere atque sperare. Sed quis ita justus est, ut ejus sibi aeternum judicium ante mentis oculos revocet, et non contremiscat, ac potius venire ad illud examen tanti judicis praesumat, festinet, et gaudeat? Quisquis ille est, magnus est, quia, jam misericordiam Domini et judicium cantando, omnipotentem Deum, qui ejus peccata misericorditer relaxat, toto mentis affectu diligit, ac propterea ejus judicium non pertimescit. Charitas namque perfecta, ut Joannes apostolus ait, foras mittit timorem (I Joan. IV, 18). Cantat quippe judicium, ad quod intrare non trepidat. Sit ergo mens illius gazophylacium cantorum, ut per divitias misericordiae quas accipit laetus pergat ad judicium, quod jam non pertimescit. Videamus si placet, fratres charissimi, aliud quoque gazophylacium cantoris. Forsitan et ipse judicium cantat. Quid etenim dicit? Ego enim jam delibor, et tempus meae resolutionis instat. Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi; de reliquo reposita est mihi corona justitiae, quam reddet mihi Dominus in illa die justus judex (II Tim. IV, 6, seq.). Qui laborum suorum conscius, memor certaminis quod egit, memor fidei quam servavit, esse sibi in judicio repositam coronam dicit, eamque sibi in illa die reddi sperat potius quam donari, profecto patet quia judicium cantat, quod venire desiderat. Unde etiam subdit: Non solum autem mihi, sed et his qui diligunt adventum ejus (Ibid., 8). Nemo enim adventum judicis diligit, nisi qui se habere causam in judicio bonam novit. Eorum ergo corda qui adventum judicis diligunt gazophylacia cantorum sunt, quia per praesumptionem gratiae et vitae, per virtutes sancti desiderii cantant justi judicium, quod omnes injusti pertimescunt.

7. Meminit autem charitas vestra quia superiori locutione per portam Orientis fidem, per Aquilonis spem, per Austri autem charitatem diximus designari. Haec itaque gazophylacia inter portam Orientis et Aquilonis esse memorantur, atque ad viam Australem respicere, quia corda sanctorum, inter fidem et spem posita, Australem viam respiciunt, quoniam sanctae charitatis ignibus exardescunt. Ipsa quoque Orientalis porta respicere dicitur ad viam Aquilonis, quia nobis per fidem quidem omnia in baptismate peccata laxantur, sed tamen dum adhuc hic vivimus, etiam post fidem saepius ad peccata declinamus. Et quasi Orientis porta viam Aquilonis respicit, cum vita nostra post perceptam fidem adhuc aliquatenus in frigore culpae torpescit. Quis enim in hac vita valeat post fidem sine culpa vivere, cum Joannes dicat: Si dixerimus quia peccatum non habemus, ipsi nos seducimus, et veritas in nobis non est (I Joan. I, 8)? Cujus verbis Jacobus concordans, ait: In multis enim offendimus omnes (Jac. III, 2). Si autem peccata praeterita in fidei perceptione dimissa sunt, et adhuc post fidem ad peccata declinatur, quae nobis erit praesumptio justitiae, quae spes vitae permanentis nisi ut nunc, dum adhuc inter portam Orientis et Aquilonis sumus, ad viam Austri mentis oculos levemus, quatenus, ex sancta charitate ferventes, calor nos amoris liberet a culpa torporis et frigoris? Sint ergo gazophylacia inter portam Orientis et Aquilonis; sed, sicut dictum est, ad Australem viam facies intendant, ut inter hoc, quod nati in fide sumus, et quod post, ad peccata delapsi, de spe pietatis praesumimus, exerceamus nosmetipsos in ardore charitatis, et ibi tendamus oculos cordis, ubi accendimur ignibus amoris.

8. Potest autem per Aquilonis portam gentilitas, per Austri viam Judaea, per Orientis autem portam ipse Dominus designari. Per Aquilonem quippe non immerito gentilitas figuratur, quam ille in torporis frigore possedit qui dixit: Sedebo in monte testamenti, in lateribus Aquilonis (Isai. XIV, 13). Per Australem quoque portam recte Judaea accipitur, in qua spiritales patres

coelesti amore ferbuerunt. Quorum unus loquitur, dicens: Converte, Domine, captivitatem nostram, sicut torrens in Austro (Psal. CXXV, 4). Quae etsi carnalem populum habuit in quo velut Aquilonis frigora portavit, in sanctis tamen suis doctoribus ac Prophetis ad Deum ac proximum calore charitatis arsit. Orientalis autem porta non immerito ipsum signat, de quo scriptum est: Ecce vir, Oriens nomen ejus (Zach. VI, 12). Et de quo Zacharias ait: Visitavit nos Oriens ex alto (Luc. I, 78). Sint ergo gazophylacia cantorum ex latere portae Aquilonis, quia non solum in Judaea fuerunt corda sanctorum spiritaliter accensa, sed etiam in gentilitatis multitudine ad sanctae fidei sacramenta conversae ardent corda sanctorum amore coelestis patriae, inhiant gaudiis aeternis, suspirant ad societatem suorum civium in coelo; sed tamen exempla hujus ardoris, quem dono sancti Spiritus acceperunt, a spiritalibus patribus Synagogae capiunt. Unde ipsa quoque gazophylacia et in Aquilonis latere posita oculos ad viam Australem tendunt. Ecce enim ex gentibus venimus; sed in hoc quod per sancti Spiritus amorem calemus, Judaeae patres aspicimus, qui nobis in suis dictis quotidie sancti desiderii exempla praebent.

9. An non quasi calore meridiani fervoris ardebat, qui aestuabat, dicens: Sicut cervus desiderat ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus. Sitivit anima mea ad Deum vivum; quando veniam et parebo ante faciem Dei (Psal. XLI, 2, 3)? Qui rursus ait: Psallam et intelligam in via immaculata, quando venies ad me (Psal. C, 2). Hoc quoque ardore succensus fuerat qui dicebat: Nunc dimittis, Domine, servum tuum secundum verbum tuum in pace, quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum (Luc. II, 29, 30). Quia ergo ex gentilitate venimus, sed sanctos Judaeae patres nobis in divini amoris imitatione proponimus, quasi quaedam cantorum gazophylacia ex latere portae quae viam Aquilonis respicit sumus, sed ad viam Austri facies tenemus.

10. Et notandum quod haec cadem gazophylacia inter portam Aquilonis et Orientis esse perhibentur, quia videlicet post incarnationem Dominicam multitudo gentium ad fidem venit, atque inter ipsos fideles populos et sacramenta dominicae incarnationis quam medullitus diligunt, corda amantium surgunt. Habeant ergo sancta gazophylacia, hinc Orientis portam, et inde Aquilonis, quia inter ipsa redemptionis suae mysteria quae sequuntur, et carnales quosdam quos et intra sanctam Ecclesiam tolerant, multi in Deum forti amore proficiunt, virtutibus excrescunt, aeterni judicis adventum quaerunt, et inter ea quae amant atque illa quae tolerant, quasi quaedam gazophylacia, divitias spiritus in mente servant. Nec inter sacramenta quae diligunt et quaedam contraria quae portant deficiunt, quia ad Australem viam facies intendunt. Quid enim patimur quod patres nostri pro amore Domini antea non pertulerunt.

11. Notandum vero quod inter portam Austri et Aquilonis Orientalis porta esse describitur, quia Dominus ac Redemptor noster de Judaea est natus, moxque in fide sua Ecclesiam ex gentibus traxit. Quasi enim inter meridianam portam et Aquilonis apparuit, quia ex illa venit, et istam in suum servitium convertit. Unde et bene dicitur quod porta eadem Orientalis ad viam respicit Aquilonis, quia natus Dominus Synagogam deseruit, et multitudinem gentium collegit. Notandum quoque est quod dum de gazophylaciis diceretur: Et facies eorum ad viam Australem, additum est unam, ut videlicet aperte sentiamus quia non alia est via ad coelestem patriam nobis qui ex gentilitate venimus, atque alia illis patribus qui fuerunt in Judaea; sed haec eadem una via est nobis et illis, quae nos ad aeterna gaudia perducit, quae nobis per Evangelium dicit: Ego sum via, veritas, et vita (Joan. XIV, 6). De qua Psalmista ait: Ut cognoscamus in terra viam tuam, in omnibus gentibus salutare tuum (Psal. LXVI, 3). Quod enim Hebraice Jesus, hoc Latine dicitur salutaris. In terra ergo via cognoscitur, quia Jesus, Deus ante saecula, et homo factus in fine saeculorum, gentibus

est manifestatus. Una ergo est via et illis qui ab Austro sunt, et his qui ab Aquilonis parte respiciunt, quia electis Judaeis et gentibus Dominus ac Redemptor noster, expulsa poena formidinis, ad Patrem factus est iter amoris, atque adjutorium perventionis. Sequitur, — VERS. 45: — Et dixit ad me: Hoc gazophylacium quod respicit viam meridianam, sacerdotum est qui excubant in custodiis templi. Atque mox subditur: VERS. 46. — Porro gazophylacium quod respicit ad viam Aquilonis sacerdotum erit qui excubant ad ministerium altaris.

12. In quibus prophetae verbis prius nobis quaerendum est qui sint majoris ordinis sacerdotes, utrum hi qui in custodiis excubant templi, an qui in ministerio altaris. Sed quia paulo post subditur: Altare erat ante faciem templi, aperte ostenditur illos esse majoris ordinis sacerdotes qui in custodiis templi excubant, quia profecto in altari quod est interius ministrant. Hi autem qui ad altare quod ante faciem templi est excubant tanto inferiores sunt quanto in exterioribus ministrant. Quaerendum ergo nobis est qui sacerdotes sint qui templum custodiunt, et qui ad ministerium altaris excubare perhibentur. Magister gentium, fidelibus scribens, ait: Templum Dei sanctum est, quod estis vos (I Cor. III, 16). Qui itaque sacerdotes sunt qui templum Dei custodiunt, nisi hi qui orando, praedicando, spiritalibus actibus vigilando, sanctam Ecclesiam a malignorum spirituum immissionibus, a pravorum suasionibus, ab haereticorum erroribus defendunt? An non custos templi fuerat qui, labores suae passionis enumerans, dicit: In labore et aerumna, in vigiliis multis, in fame et siti, in jejuniis multis, in frigore et nuditate (II Cor. XI, 27)? Atque statim subdit: Praeter illa quae extrinsecus sunt, instantia mea quotidiana, sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum (Ibid., 28). Pensate, quaeso, custos templi quanta sollicitudine vigilet. Ecce enim in seipso inaestimabilia patitur, et cordis sui sollicitudinem aliis impartitur. Cujus rogo virtutis est plus de utilitate proximorum quam de sua afflictione cogitare? Quis hoc digne

aestimet? quis digne penset? Laborat, luget, esurit, sitit, alget, jejunat, vigilat, et tamen vigilando de Ecclesiarum omnium sollicitudine cogitat. Ecce est solertissimus custos templi in exemplo propositus. Imitetur qui valet. Adversa etenim pro veritate pati, bona proximis impendere, circa animarum sollicitudinem vigilare, ne quis in perfidiam, ne quis in superbiam, ne quis in rapinam, vel immunditiam labatur, exquirere atque compescere, hoc est templum Dei, id est sanctam Ecclesiam, custodire.

13. Sunt autem minoris ordinis sacerdotes, qui ad ministerium altaris excubant, qui videlicet in adjutorium majorum peccata delinquentium subtiliter investigant, et vitam carnalium corrigunt, atque ad hoc usque perducunt, ut per lamenta poenitentiae quasi incendant carnem in sacrificio, quam prius vivere permiserant in peccato. Non enim hi qui sanctis Ecclesiis praesunt per semetipsos cuncta agere praevalent. Sed dum ipsi causis spiritalibus occupantur, si qua prava ac carnalia perpetrantur, haec aliis discutienda atque corrigenda committunt. Per quos dum carnalis vita corrigitur, et usque ad abstinentiae atque orationis studium a proficientibus pervenitur, quasi in altari jam caro incenditur, ut in conspectu omnipotentis Domini inde sacrificium redoleat, unde prius culpa displicebat.

14. Sed hac in re quaestio oritur, cum superius dictum sit quod gazophylacia ad Australem viam facies haberent, qua ratione nunc dicatur quia gazophylacium quod respicit viam meridianam sacerdotum est qui excubant in custodiis templi, et gazophylacium quod respicit viam Aquilonis sacerdotum qui excubant ad ministerium altaris. Si enim utraque facies ad Australem viam tendebant, quomodo nunc unum ad meridianam atque aliud ad Aquilonis viam respicere dicitur? Sed in his verbis agnoscimus quod gazophylacium sacerdotum qui excubant in custodiis templi ita positum fuerat, ut solam meridianam viam respiceret; gazophylacium vero sacerdotum qui excubant ad ministerium altaris ita erat in atrio, ut et ad Australem viam et Aquilonis faciem tenderet, quatenus et

cum gazophylacio sacerdotum qui excubant in custodiis templi meridianam viam aspiceret, et tamen sine gazophylacio eorumdem sacerdotum gazophylacium sacerdotum qui excubant ad ministerium altaris Aquilonis viam videret. Sed quid est hoc, fratres charissimi? quid in his verbis mysticum possumus intueri, nisi hoc quod secundum ea quae praemissa sunt jam spiritalis auditor intelligit, quia sacerdotes majoris ordinis, qui excubant in custodiis templi, solam meridianam viam respiciunt, quoniam, solis studiis spiritalibus occupati, semper his quae amoris Dei sunt sollicite intendunt; sacerdotes autem minoris ordinis, qui discutiendis peccatis delinquentium praesunt, etiam ad Aquilonis viam oculos reflectunt, ut in mente peccantium quae sint torporis frigora videant, et haec, verbis correptionis usque ad poenitentiae gemitus perducentes, quasi carnes in altari Domini incendant? Respiciant etiam cum magnis sacerdotibus ad meridianam viam, quia, quantum ad semetipsos est, fervent igne charitatis, et succensi sunt flammis amoris Dei. Sed quia peccata delinquentium crebro corrigunt, etiam ad Aquilonis viam oculos reducunt. De utrisque autem sacerdotum ordinibus subditur: IBID. — Isti sunt filii Sadoch, qui accedunt de filiis Levi ad Dominum ut ministrent ei.

15. Sadoch Latine dicitur justus. Quis autem justus est, nisi ipse cui dicitur: Justus es, Domine, et rectum judicium tuum (Psal. CXVIII, 137)? Qui vero sunt filii justi, nisi hi de quibus scriptum est: Quotquot autem crediderunt in eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri (Joan. I, 12)? Levi autem interpretatur assumptus. Quis autem a Domino assumptus est, nisi populus fidelis, qui per sacramenta fidei est a perfidis segregatus? Omnes ergo qui perseveranter spiritalibus actibus intendunt filii sunt justi. Et de filiis populi assumpti accedunt ad Dominum ut ministrent ei, quia de ipsis quoque fidelibus eliguntur, qui ad omnipotentis Dei ministerium veniant, et coelestibus studiis pro eruditione populi intendant.

16. Sed nobis solerter inquirendum est qui sunt qui Domino ministrant. Neque enim omnes qui legunt, omnes qui praedicant, omnes qui propria tribuunt, omnes qui per carnis abstinentiam corpus castigant, Domino ministrant. Qui enim legendo atque praedicando, gloriam propriam quaerunt, largiendo quae habent, et corpus in abstinentia macerando, laudes recipere ab hominibus appetunt, sibi, non Domino, ministrant. Quo contra per Psalmistam Dominus dicit: Ambulans in via immaculata, hic mihi ministrabat (Psal. C, 6). Habet enim maculam in via qui in bono opere quod agit terrenae gloriae sibi praemium proponit, qui in hoc mundo recipere mercedem quaerit, et foedat in conspectu Dei speciem boni operis macula pravae intentionis. Fortasse etenim quis disciplinae studio intentus fervet, culpas delinquentium resecat, qui tamen ad haec agenda si non ex omnipotentis Dei amore, sed zelo proprio ducitur, sibi in his, et non Domino, ministrat. Alius, ne asper esse videatur, multa leniter tolerat quae prave perpetrantur. Iste itaque, quia videri pro Domino districtus non vult, per lenitatis suae studium sibi, et non Domino, ministrat. Restat ergo ut sive in verbi ministerio fatigemur, sive indigentibus nostra largiamur, sive per abstinentiam carnem domemus, sive zelo moveamur, sive per patientiam aliquando leniter prava toleremus, ut nos summopere debeamus intentionem nostram discutere, quatenus omne quod facimus, non nostro, sed Domini zelo faciamus, ne in his quae agimus nobis potius quam Domino ministremus. Non enim Domino, sed sibi, ministraverant de quibus Paulus dicebat: Omnes quae sua sunt quaerunt, non quae sunt Jesu Christi (Philip. II, 21). Idem vero Paulus cum electis fratribus non sibi ministrare, sed Domino, et vivendo et moriendo festinabat, dicens: Nemo nostrum sibi vivit, et nemo sibi moritur. Sive enim vivimus, Domino vivimus; sive morimur, Domini sumus (Rom. XIV, 7, 8). Sibi enim sancti nec vivunt, nec moriuntur. Sibi non vivunt, quia per omne quod agunt, ad lucra spiritalia anhelant, atque orando, praedicando, sanctis operibus insistendo, coelestis

patriae cives multiplicare desiderant. Sibi minime moriuntur, quia in conspectu hominum Deum de sua morte glorificant, ad quem pervenire etiam moriendo festinant. Pensemus itaque in morte sanctorum non quantum eorum opprobrium ab infidelibus fuit, sed quanta laus Domini in corde fidelium excrevit. Qui si suam laudem quaererent, profecto pati tot opprobria in morte timuissent. Sed nemo nostrum sibi vivit, et nemo sibi moritur, quia suam gloriam nec vivendo, nec moriendo quaesierunt. Videamus si ipse primus pastor Ecclesiae, qui sibi non vixit, sibi sit mortuus. Joannes ejus socius requiratur, et ex verbis Domini de morte pastoris ejusdem dicat: Hoc autem dixit significans qua morte clarificaturus esset Deum (Joan. XXI, 19). Non ergo sibi est mortuus qui Deum clarificavit in morte. Discamus igitur, fratres mei, intentionem nostram in omne quod agimus sollicita inquisitione discutere, et nostra non quaerere, si omnipotenti Deo volumus ministrare. Sed quia ex fideli populo filios Sadoch ad omnipotentis Dei ministerium diximus assumi, nunquid in eodem populo non sunt multi qui inveniantur in mandatis Dei vivere perfecti? Sunt omnino; nam subditur: VERS. 47. — Et mensus est atrium longitudine centum cubitorum, et latitudine centum cubitorum per quadrum.

17. Saepe jam per longitudinem longanimitatem spei, per latitudinem vero charitatis amplitudinem diximus signari. Centenarius autem numerus in quo denarius decies ducitur, quod summam perfectionis signet, plene superius dictum est (Hom. 6, olim 18, num. 16). Quid est igitur atrium spiritalis aedificii, nisi amplitudo fidelium populorum? Ipsa autem longanimitas spei et latitudo charitatis vacua in cordibus fidelium non est, nam per fidem quidquid valet operatur. Unde per Paulum dicitur: In Christo Jesu neque circumcisio aliquid valet, neque praeputium, sed fides quae per dilectionem operatur (Gal. V, 6). Si ergo in vita fidelium juxta quemdam modum per singulos perfecta est longanimitas spei, perfecta latitudo charitatis, perfecta certitudo fidei, perfectum studium operationis, atrium

templi per quadrum centum cubitos habet. In mensura autem quadri non aliud latus majus est, atque aliud minus, sed cuncta simul quatuor latera aequali spatio tenduntur, quia et ipsas easdem virtutes, quas diximus, fidem scilicet, spem, charitatem atque operationem, quandiu in hac vita vivimus, aequales sibi esse apud nosmetipsos invenimus. Idcirco autem major spe et fide charitas dicitur, quia postquam ad auctoris nostri speciem pervenitur, spes quidem et fides transit, sed charitas permanet. Nam nunc et quantum credimus, tantum amamus; et quantum amamus, tantum de spe praesumimus. De fide quoque et operatione Joannes apostolus fatetur, dicens: Qui se dicit nosse Deum, et mandata ejus non custodit, mendax est (I Joan. II, 4). Notitia quippe Dei ad fidem pertinet, mandatorum custodia ad operationem. Cum ergo virtus, tempus et locus operandi suppetit, tantum quis operatur, quantum Deum noverit; et tantum se nosse Deum indicat, quantum pro Deo bona operatur. Metiantur ergo fidelis populi virtutes in quadrum, quia unusquisque qui in activae vitae exercitio versatur tantum credit quantum sperat, et amat, et operatur; tantum sperat quantum credit, operatur et amat; tantum amat quantum credit, sperat et operatur; tantum operatur quantum credit, amat et sperat. Quia itaque in sanctae Ecclesiae populo multi sunt et robusti per fidem, et longanimes per spem, et ampli per charitatem, et efficaces per operationem, atrium templi centum cubitis in quadro mensuratur.

18. Nam ut aliquid quoque de eorum virtutibus loquamur, saepe ex eis quosdam videmus prudentes per intelligentiam, fortes in adversitate, justos in operatione, temperantes a voluptatibus, atque in omni zelo discretionis se mensura moderantes. Qui dum prudentiam, fortitudinem, justitiam, atque temperantiam, vel, sicut eas enumerare quibusdam placet, prudentiam, temperantiam, fortitudinem, atque justitiam tenent, mensuram spiritalis atrii in quadro habent. Ecce enim ipsae virtutes quas habere bonos ac fideles diximus ita in quadro sunt, ut una aliam non excedat. Magna quippe est

prudentia; sed si minus est a voluptatibus temperans, minus in periculis fortis, minus in operationibus justa, profecto minus est prudens. Magna est temperantia; sed si minus intelligit unde se temperet, si adversa sustinere per fortitudinem minus valet, atque in timore animum dejicit, si per praecipitationem suam aliquando ad injustitiae opera prorumpit, minus est temperans. Magna est fortitudo; sed si minus intelligit quae bona custodiat, quibus malis resistat, si minus a voluptatis appetitu se temperat, sed vincitur delectatione, si justitiae opera minus tenet, atque aliquando in injustitiae dominatione superatur, minus est fortis. Magna est justitia; sed si minus quam debet inter justa et injusta opera discernit, si minus cor a mundi delectatione temperat, si minus se contra adversa confortat, minus est justa. Mensuretur ergo perfectorum fidelium vita per quadrum, et tantum habeat spiritalis atrii latus unum, quantum latera singula, quia unusquisque tantum prudens est quantum temperans, fortis et justus; tantum temperans quantum prudens, fortis et justus; tantum fortis quantum prudens, temperans et justus; tantum justus quantum prudens, temperans et fortis fuerit. Sunt tamen inter eos plurimi qui adhuc carnaliter vivunt. Qui et si fortasse litteras ignorant, et praecepta Dei legere non valent, certe in multorum fidelium conversatione bona quae imitentur vident. Ecce in Ecclesia voces sancti Evangelii atque apostolorum sonant, ecce exempla bene viventium quotidie omnium oculis opponuntur. Nec in excusatione dicere poterunt: Non vidimus quod imitari deberemus. Unde et subditur: IBID. — Et altare ante faciem templi.

19. Quid est templum, nisi fidelis populus? sicut per Paulum apostolum discipulis dicitur: Templum enim Dei sanctum est, quod estis vos (I Cor. III, 17). Et quid est altare Dei, nisi mens bene viventium? Qui peccatorum suorum memores lacrymis maculas lavant, carnem per abstinentiam macerant, nullis se mundi hujus actionibus miscent, quae habent indigentibus tribuunt, et habere quae non habent non concupiscunt. Recte

igitur horum cor altare Dei dicitur, ubi ex moerore compunctionis ignis ardet, et caro consumitur. Et nunquid non tales, fratres charissimi, quotidie in sancto hoc fideli populo quasi in templi atrio videmus? Nunquid non eorum vitam nobis ad exemplum propositam indesinenter aspicimus? Altare ergo ante faciem templi est, cum multi in sanctae Ecclesiae conspectu sunt positi, qui, aeterni judicii memores, semetipsos quotidie Deo sacrificium in lamento compunctionis mactant. Qui, ut praedictum est, corpora castigant, quatenus hoc quod per Magistrum gentium dicitur impleant: Ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem (Rom. XII, 1). Hostia quippe occiditur ut offeratur. Sed hostia vivens est corpus pro Domino afflictum. Quod et hostia dicitur, et vivens, quia vivit in virtutibus, et est a vitiis occisum. Hostia videlicet, quia jam huic mundo est a pravis actibus mortuum; vivens autem, quia cuncta quae praevalet bona operatur.

20. Sed quia sub altaris nomine de compunctionis flamma sermo se intulit, necessarium puto quae sit diversitas ejusdem compunctionis ostendere. Alia quippe compunctio est quae per timorem nascitur, alia quae per amorem, quia aliud est supplicia fugere, aliud praemia desiderare. Unde etiam in tabernaculo per legem duo altaria fieri jubentur, unum videlicet exterius, aliud vero interius; unum in atrio, aliud ante arcam; unum quod aere coopertum est, aliud quod auro vestitur. Atque in altari aereo cremantur carnes, in altari vero aureo incenduntur aromata (Exod. XXXIX, 37, 38; XL, 5, seq. etc.). Quid est hoc, fratres charissimi, quod foris concremantur carnes, intus aromata, nisi hoc quod quotidie videmus, quia duo sunt compunctionis genera, quia alii adhuc per timorem plangunt, alii vero jam se per amorem in lamentis afficiunt? Multi namque, peccatorum suorum memores, dum supplicia aeterna pertimescunt, quotidianis se lacrymis affligunt. Plangunt mala quae fecerunt, et incendunt vitia igne compunctionis, quorum adhuc suggestiones in corde patiuntur. Quid isti nisi

altare sunt aereum in quo carnes ardent, quia adhuc ab eis carnalia opera planguntur?

21. Alii vero, a carnalibus vitiis liberi, aut longis jam fletibus securi, amoris flamma in compunctionis lacrymis inardescunt, coelestis patriae praemia cordis oculis proponunt, supernis jam civibus interesse concupiscunt. Dura eis apparet servitus, longitudo peregrinationis suae. Regem in decore suo videre desiderant, et flere quotidie ex ejus amore non cessant (Isai. XXXIII, 17). Quid isti nisi altare sunt aureum, in quorum corde aromata incensa sunt, quia virtutes ardent? Bene autem de eodem altari dicitur quod ante velum arcae sit positum in sancta sanctorum. Arca quippe testamenti ipse nobis factus est de quo scriptum esse novimus: In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et scientiae absconditi (Colos. II, 3). Arca intra velum est Redemptor noster in coelo. Altare vero aureum in quo thymiama incenditur ante velum sanctorum corda, quae cum magnis virtutibus in Dei amore succensa sunt, per sanctum desiderium in illo ardent quem adhuc revelata facie videre non possunt. Inter arcam quippe et altare velum est, quia hoc quod nos adhuc a visione Dei separat corruptionis nostrae obstaculum remotum non est. Sed quousque ante velum sumus oportet ut quasi thymiamatis incensum flamma amoris ardeamus. Per compunctionis autem lacrymas nil terrenum, nil transitorium quaerere debemus. Solus ipse nobis sufficiat qui fecit omnia. Transcendamus per desiderium omnia, ut mentem colligamus in unum. Non jam timore poenarum, non memoria vitiorum, sed amoris flamma succensi, ardeamus in lacrymis cum odore virtutum.

22. Ista electorum oratio jam prospiciebatur, cum in sponsae laude diceretur: Quae est ista quae ascendit per desertum sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus myrrhae et thuris, et universi pulveris pigmentarii (Cant. III, 6)? Sancta quippe electorum Ecclesia cum ab hoc mundo in sanctis precibus ardenti amore se erigit, per desertum quod deserit ascendit. Qualiter vero

ascendat adjungit: Sicut virgula fumi ex aromatibus (Ibid.). Fumus de incenso nascitur, sicut per Psalmistam dicitur: Dirigatur oratio mea sicut incensum in conspectu tuo (Psal. CXL, 2). Fumus excutere lacrymas solet. Itaque fumus est ex aromatibus, compunctio orationis concepta ex virtutibus amoris. Quae tamen oratio fumi virgula dicitur, quia dum sola coelestia postulat, sic recta progreditur, ut ad terrena atque temporalia petenda minime reflectatur. Et notandum quod non virga, sed virgula nuncupatur, quia interdum in compunctionis ardore tantae subtilitatis est vis amoris, ut hanc nec ipse animus possit comprehendere, qui illuminatus meruit habere.

23. Bene autem dicitur, myrrhae et thuris. Thus enim ex lege Domino in sacrificio incenditur. Per myrrham vero corpora mortua condiuntur, ne a vermibus corrumpantur. Myrrhae ergo et thuris sacrificium offerunt qui et carnem afficiunt, ne eis corruptionis vitia dominentur, et redolentem in conspectu Domini amoris sui hostiam incendunt, seque ipsos Deo in sanctis virtutibus exhibent. Unde et illic subditur: Et universi pulveris pigmentarii. Pulvis est pigmentarii virtus bene operantis. Et notandum quod virtutes bene operantium non pigmenta, sed pulveres dicuntur. Cum enim quaelibet bona agimus, pigmenta offerimus. Cum vero ipsa etiam bona quae agimus retractamus, et, ne quid in his sinistrum sit, judicio retractationis attendimus, quasi ex pigmentis pulverem facimus, ut orationem nostram Domino per discretionem et amorem subtilius incendamus.

24. Ecce haec, ut, Deo largiente, potuimus, coram vobis, fratres charissimi, rimati sumus. Nemo autem me reprehendat, si post hanc locutionem cessa vero, quia, sicut omnes cernitis, nostrae tribulationes excreverunt: undique gladiis circumfusi sumus, undique imminens mortis periculum timemus. Alii, detruncatis ad nos manibus redeunt, alii capti, alii interempti nuntiantur (Joan. Diac., l. IV, c. 67). Jam cogor linguam ab expositione retinere, quia taedet animam meam vitae meae (Job. X, 1). Jam nullus a me sacri eloquii studium requirat, quia versa in luctum cithara mea,

et organum meum in vocem flentium (Ibid., XXX, 31). Jam cordis oculus in mysteriorum discussione non vigilat, quia dormitavit anima mea prae taedio (Psal. CXVIII, 28). Jam minus lectio animo dulcis est, quia oblitus sum manducare panem meum a voce gemitus mei (Psal. CI, 5). Cui autem vivere non licet, de Scripturae sacrae sensibus loqui mystica qualiter libet? Et qui cogor quotidie amare bibere, quando possum dulcia propinare? Quid igitur restat, nisi ut inter flagella quae ex nostris iniquitatibus patimur cum lacrymis gratias agamus? Ipse etenim qui nos creavit etiam pater nobis factus est per adoptionis spiritum quem dedit. Et aliquando filios pane nutrit, aliquando flagello corrigit, quia per dolores et munera ad haereditatem perpetuam erudit. Sit itaque gloria omnipotenti Domino nostro Jesu Christo, qui vivit et regnat cum Patre in unitate Spiritus sancti Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Expositio in Canticum Canticorum

Postquam a paradisi gaudiis expulsum est genus humanum, in istam peregrinationem uitae praesentis ueniens caecum cor ab spiritali intellectu habet.

Cui caeco cordi si diceretur uoce diuina: sequere deum uel dilige deum, sicut ei in lege dictum est, semel foris missum et per torporem infidelitatis frigidum non caperet, quod audiret.

Idcirco per quaedam enigmata sermo diuinus animae torpenti et frigidae loquitur et de rebus, quas nouit, latenter insinuat ei amorem, quem non nouit.

Allegoria enim animae longe a deo positae quasi quandam machinam facit, ut per illam leuetur ad deum.

Interpositis quippe enigmatibus, dum quiddam in uerbis cognoscit, quod suum est, in sensu uerborum intellegit, quod non est suum, et per terrena uerba separatur a terra.

Per hoc enim, quod non abhorret cognitum, intellegit quiddam incognitum.

Rebus enim nobis notis, per quas allegoriae conficiuntur, sententiae diuinae uestiuntur et, dum recognoscimus exteriora uerba, peruenimus ad interiorem intellegentiam.

Hinc est enim, quod in hoc libro, qui in canticis canticorum conscriptus est, amoris quasi corporei uerba ponuntur: ut a torpore suo anima per sermones suae consuetudinis refricata recalescat et per uerba amoris, qui infra est, excitetur ad amorem, qui supra est.

Nominantur enim in hoc libro oscula, nominantur ubera, nominantur genae, nominantur femora; in quibus uerbis non irridenda est sacra descriptio, sed maior dei misericordia consideranda est: quia, dum membra corporis nominat et sic ad amorem uocat, notandum est quam mirabiliter

nobis cum et misericorditer operatur, qui, ut cor nostrum ad instigationem sacri amoris accenderet, usque ad turpis amoris nostri uerba distendit.

Sed, unde se loquendo humiliat, inde nos intellectu exaltat: quia ex sermonibus huius amoris discimus, qua uirtute in diuinitatis amore ferueamus.

Hoc autem nobis sollerter intuendum est, ne, cum uerba exterioris amoris audimus, ad exteriora sentienda remaneamus et machina, quae ponitur ut leuet, ipsa magis opprimat ne leuemur.

Debemus enim in uerbis istis corporeis, in uerbis exterioribus, quidquid interius est quaerere et, loquentes de corpore, quasi extra corpus fieri.

Debemus ad has sacras nuptias sponsi et sponsae cum intellectu intimae caritatis, id est cum ueste uenire nuptiali, necesse est: ne, si ueste nuptiali, id est digna caritatis intellegentia, non induimur, ab hoc nuptiarum conuiuio in exteriores tenebras, id est in ignorantiae caecitate, repellamur.

Debemus per haec uerba passionis transire ad uirtutem impassibilitatis.

Sic est enim scriptura sacra in uerbis et sensibus, sicut pictura in coloribus et rebus: et nimis stultus est, qui sic picturae coloribus inheret, ut res, quae pictae sunt, ignoret.

Nos enim, si uerba, quae exterius dicuntur, amplectimur et sensus ignoramus, quasi ignorantes res, quae depictae sunt, solos colores tenemus.

Littera occidit, scriptum est, spiritus autem uiuificat.

Sic enim littera cooperit spiritum, sicut palea tegit frumentum.

Sed iumentorum est paleis uesci, hominum frumentis.

Qui ergo humana ratione utitur, iumentorum paleas abiciat et frumenta spiritus edere festinet.

Ad hoc quippe utilis est, ut mysteria litterae inuolucris tegantur, quatenus sapientia requisita plus sapiat.

Hinc enim scriptum est: sapientes abscondunt intellegentiam: quia nimirum sub tegmine litterae spiritalis intellegentia cooperitur.

Hinc rursum in eodem libro dicitur: gloria dei celare uerbum menti enim deum quaerenti tanto deus gloriosius apparet, quanto subtilius atque interius inuestigatur, ut appareat.

Sed numquid, quod in mysteriis deus celat, nos requirere non debemus?

Debemus utique; nam sequitur: et gloria regum inuestigare sermonem qui enim iam corpora sua uel motus carnis regere et inuestigare nouerunt, reges sunt.

Regum ergo gloria est inuestigare sermonem: quia bene uiuentium laus est perscrutari secreta mandatorum dei.

Humanae ergo conuersationis uerba audientes, quasi extra homines esse debemus: ne, si humaniter quae dicuntur audimus, nihil diuinitatis de his, quae audire debemus, sentire possimus.

Quasi iam non homines esse desiderabat paulus discipulos suos, quibus dicebat: cum enim sit inter uos zelus et contentio, nonne homines estis?

Quasi non iam aestimabat homines discipulos suos dominus, cum dicebat: quem dicunt homines esse filium hominis?

Cui, cum uerba hominum respondissent, illico adiunxit: uos autem quem me dicitis? Cum enim super dicit homines ac deinde subiungit uos autem, inter homines et discipulos quandam distantiam fecit: quia uidelicet, diuina eis insinuans, esse eos supra homines faciebat.

Ait apostolus: si qua igitur in christo noua creatura, uetera transierunt et scimus, quia in resurrectione nostra ita corpus spiritui adnectitur, ut omne, quod fuerat passionis, in uirtute spiritus adsumatur.

Is ergo, qui deum sequitur, imitari debet cotidie resurrectionem suam: ut, sicut tunc nihil passibile habebit in corpore, ita nunc nihil passibile habeat in corde; ut secundum interiorem hominem iam noua creatura sit, iam quidquid uetustum sonuerit calcet, et in uerbis ueteribus solam uim nouitatis inquirat.

Scriptura enim sacra mons quidam est, de quo in nostris cordibus ad intellegendum dominus uenit.

De quo monte per prophetam dicitur: deus a libano ueniet et sanctus de monte umbroso et condenso iste mons et condensus est per sententias et umbrosus per allegorias.

Sed sciendum est quia, cum uox domini in monte sonat, uestimenta lauare praecipimur et ab omni carnis inquinatione mundari, si ad montem accedere festinamus.

Scriptum quippe est quia, si bestia tetigerit montem, lapidabitur.

Bestia enim tangit montem, quando irrationabilibus motibus dediti scripturae sacrae celsitudini propinquant, et non eam secundum quod debent intellegunt, sed irrationabiliter ad suae uoluptatis intellegentiam flectunt.

Omnis enim absurdus uel sensu piger, si circa hunc montem uisus fuerit, atrocissimis sententiis ueluti lapidibus necatur.

Ardet enim mons iste: quia scriptura sacra uidelicet, quem spiritaliter replet, amoris igne succendit.

Vnde scriptum est: ignitum eloquium tuum unde, cum uerba dei quidam in uia ambulantes, dixerunt: nonne cor nostrum ardens erat in nobis, cum aperiret nobis scripturas?

Vnde per moysen dicitur: in dextera eius ignea lex sinistra dei iniqui accipiuntur, qui in dextera parte non transeunt; dextera dei electi sunt, qui a sinistris separantur.

In dextera ergo dei lex ignea est: quia in electorum cordibus, qui ad dexteram ponendi sunt, flagrant praecepta diuina et caritatis ardore succensa sunt.

Iste ergo ignis, quidquid in nobis est exterius rubiginis et uetustatis, exurat: ut mentem nostram uelut holocaustum in dei contemplatione offerat.

Nec uacue adtendendum est, quod liber iste non canticum sed canticum canticorum uocatur.

Sicut enim in ueteri testamento alia sunt sancta et alia sancta sanctorum, alia sabbata et alia sabbata sabbatorum, ita in scriptura sacra alia sunt cantica et alia cantica canticorum.

Sancta erant in tabernaculo et quae exterius agebantur, sabbata erant quae et singulis ebdomadibus celebrabantur; sed sancta sanctorum secretiori quadam ueneratione suscipiebantur, et sabbata sabbatorum nonnisi in suis festiuitatibus colebantur.

Ita cantica canticorum secretum quoddam et sollemne interius est.

Quod secretum in occultis intellegentiis penetratur: nam, si exterioribus uerbis adtenditur, secretum non est.

Sciendum est etiam, quia in scriptura sacra alia sunt cantica uictoriae, alia cantica exhortationis et contestationis, alia cantica exultationis, alia cantica adiutorii, alia cantica coniunctionis cum deo.

Canticum uictoriae est, quod maria, transacto mari rubro, cecinit dicens: cantemus domino: gloriose enim honorificatus est, equum et ascensorem proiecit in mare canticum exhortationis et contestationis est, quod moyses israhelitis ad terram repromissionis propinquantibus dixit: adtende, caelum, et loquar: audiat terra uerba ex ore meo canticum exultationis est, quod anna, prospecta fecunditate ecclesiae in semetipsa cecinit dicens: exultauit cor meum in domino ubi per semetipsam figuram fecunditatem prolis ecclesiasticae expressit, cum dicit: sterilis peperit plurimos et, quae multos habebat filios, infirmata est canticum adiutorii dauid post proelium cecinit dicens: diligam te, domine, uirtus mea canticum uero coniunctionis cum deo hoc est canticum, quod in nuptiis sponsi et sponsae canitur, id est canticum canticorum.

Quod tanto est omnibus canticis sublimius, quanto et in nuptu sollemnitatis sublimioris offertur.

Per illa enim cantica uitia deuitantur, per ista uero unusquisque uirtutibus locupletatur; per illa cauetur hostis, per haec dominus familiari amore

complectitur.

Et notandum, quia aliquando se dominus in scriptura sacra dominum uocat, aliquando patrem, aliquando sponsum.

Quando enim uult se timeri, dominum se nominat; quando uult honorari, patrem; quando uult amari, sponsum.

Ipse per prophetam dicit: si dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus?

Si pater ego sum, ubi est honor meus?

Et rursum dicit: desponsaui te mihi in iustitia et fide uel certe: recordatus sum diei desponsationis tuae in deserto et quidem apud deum quando et quando non est; sed, quia prius timeri se uult ut honoretur, et prius honorari ut ad eius amorem perueniatur, et dominum se propter timorem nominat et patrem propter honorem et sponsum propter amorem: ut per timorem ueniatur ad honorem, per honorem uero eius perueniatur ad amorem.

Quanto ergo dignius est honor quam timor, tanto plus gaudet deus pater dici quam dominus: et, quanto carius est amor quam honor, tanto plus gaudet deus sponsus dici quam pater.

In hoc ergo libro dominus et ecclesia non dominus et ancilla, sed sponsus nominatur et sponsa: ut non soli timori, non soli reuerentiae, sed etiam amori deseruiatur et in his uerbis exterioribus incitetur affectus interior. Cum se dominum nominat, indicat quod creati sumus; cum se patrem nominat, indicat quod adoptati; cum se sponsum nominat, indicat quod coniuncti.

Plus autem est coniunctos esse deo, quam creatos et adoptatos.

In hoc ergo libro, ubi sponsus dicitur, aliquid sublimius insinuatur, dum in eo foedus coniunctionis ostenditur.

Quae nomina in testamento nouo (quia iam peracta coniunctio uerbi et carnis, christi et ecclesiae, celebrata est) frequenti iteratione memorantur.

Vnde iohannes dicit, domino ueniente: qui habet sponsam, sponsus est unde idem dominus dicit: non ieiunabunt filii sponsi, quandiu cum illis est

sponsus unde ecclesiae dicitur: desponsaui uos uni uiro uirginem castam exhibere christo et rursum: ut exhiberet gloriosam ecclesiam, non habentem maculam aut rugam et rursum in apocalypsi iohannis: beati, qui ad cenam nuptiarum agni uocati sunt! Et rursum ibidem: et uidi sponsam quasi nouam nuptam descendentem de caelo

nec hoc a magno mysterio abhorret, quod liber iste salomonis tertius in opusculis eius ponitur.

Veteres enim tres uitae ordines esse dixerunt: moralem, naturalem et contemplatiuam; quas graeci uitas ethicam, fisicam, theoricam nominauerunt.

In prouerbiis quoque moralis uita exprimitur, ubi dicitur: audi, fili mi, sapientiam meam et prudentiae meae inclina aurem tuam in ecclesiasten uero, naturalis: ibi quippe, quod omnia ad finem tendant, consideratur, cum dicitur: uanitas uanitantium et omnia uanitas in canticis uero canticorum contemplatiua uita exprimitur, dum in eis ipsius domini aduentus et adspectus desideratur, cum sponsi uoce dicitur: ueni de libano, ueni hos etiam ordines trium patriarcharum uita signauit: abraham, isaac uidelicet et iacob.

Moralitatem quippe abraham oboediendo tenuit.

Isaac uero naturalem uitam puteos fodiendo figurauit: in imo enim puteos fodere est per considerationem naturalem omnia, quae infra sunt, perscrutando rimari.

Iacob uero contemplatiuam uitam tenuit, qui ascendentes et descendentes angelos uidit.

Sed, quia naturalis consideratio ad perfectionem non perducitur, nisi prius moralitas teneatur, recte post prouerbia ecclesiastes ponitur.

Et, quia superna contemplatio non conspicitur, nisi prius haec infra labentia despiciantur, recte post ecclesiasten cantica canticorum ponitur.

Prius quippe est mores conponere; postmodum omnia, quae adsunt, tamquam non adsint considerare; tertio uero loco munda cordis acie superna et interna conspicere.

His itaque librorum gradibus quasi quandam ad contemplationem dei scalam fecit: ut, dum primum in saeculo bene geruntur honesta, postmodum etiam honesta saeculi despiciantur, ad extremum etiam dei intima conspiciantur.

Sic autem generaliter ex uoce ecclesiae aduentus domini in hoc opere praestolatur, ut etiam specialiter unaquaeque anima ingressum dei ad cor suum tamquam aditum sponsi in thalamum adspiciat.

Et sciendum, quia in hoc libro quatuor personae loquentes introducuntur: sponsus uidelicet, et sponsa, adulescentulae uero cum sponsa, et greges sodalium cum sponso.

Sponsa enim ipsa perfecta ecclesia est; sponsus, dominus; adulescentulae uero cum sponsa sunt inchoantes animae et per nouum studium pubescentes; sodales uero sponsi sunt siue angeli, qui saepe hominibus ab ipso uenientes apparuerunt, seu certe perfecti quique uiri in ecclesia, qui ueritatem hominibus nuntiare nouerunt.

Sed hi, qui singillatim adulescentulae uel sodales sunt, toti simul sponsa sunt, quia toti simul ecclesia sunt.

Quamuis et iuxta unumquemque tota haec tria nomina accipi possint.

Nam, qui deum iam perfecte amat, sponsa est; qui sponsum praedicat, sodalis est; qui adhuc nouellus uiam bonorum sequitur, adulescentula est.

Inuitamur ergo, ut simus sponsa; si hoc necdum praeualemus, simus sodales; si neque hoc adepti sumus, saltem adhuc thalamum adulescentulae conueniamus.

Quia igitur sponsum et sponsam dominum et ecclesiam diximus, uelut adulescentulae uel ut sodales audiamus uerba sponsi, audiamus uerba sponsae, et in eorum sermonibus feruorem discamus amoris.

Itaque, sancta ecclesia, diu praestolans aduentum domini, diu sitiens fontem uitae, quomodo optet uidere praesentiam sponsi sui, quomodo desideret, edicat:

osculetur me osculis oris sui angelos ad eam dominus, patriarchas ad illam et prophetas miserat, spiritalia dona deferentes; sed ipsa uero munera non per seruos sponsi, sed ipsum iam sponsum percipere quaerebat.

Ponamus ante oculos omne genus humanum ab exordio mundi usque ad finem mundi, totam uidelicet ecclesiam, unam esse sponsam, quae arras spiritali dono per legem perceperat; sed tamen sponsi sui praesentiam quaerebat, quae dicit: osculetur me osculis oris sui suspirans enim sancta ecclesia pro aduentu mediatoris dei et hominum, pro aduentu redemptoris sui, ad patrem uerba orationis facit, ut filium dirigat et sua illam praesentia inlustret, ut eidem ecclesiae non iam per prophetarum sed suo ore adlocutionem faciat.

Vnde et de eodem sponso in euangelio scriptum est, cum sederet in monte et sublimium praeceptorum uerba faceret: aperiens autem iesus os suum, dixit ac si dicatur: tunc os suum aperuit, qui prius ad exhortationem ecclesiae aperuerat ora prophetarum.

Sed ecce, cum suspirat, cum quasi absentem quaerit, subito intuetur praesentem.

Habet enim hoc gratia creatoris nostri, ut, cum de illo quaerentes eum loquimur, eius praesentia perfruamur.

Vnde in euangelio scriptum est, quia, dum cleopas et alius de illo in itinere uerba facerent, praesentem eum uidere meruerunt. Dum ergo sancta ecclesia incarnandum sponsum adhuc absentem desiderat, subito intuetur praesentem atque subiungit: quia meliora sunt ubera tua uino et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata uinum fuit scientia legis, scientia prophetarum.

Sed ueniens dominus, quia sapientiam suam per carnem uoluit praedicare, quasi fecit eam in carnis ubera lactescere: quam enim in diuinitate sua capere minime poteramus, in incarnatione eius agnosceremus.

Vnde non inmerito eius ubera laudantur: quia praedicationis eius condescensio hoc egit in cordibus nostris, quod doctrina legis agere minime ualuit.

Plus enim nos nutriuit incarnationis praedicatio quam legis doctrina.

Dicat ergo: meliora sunt ubera tua super uinum quod adhuc confirmans, subiungit ac dicit: et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata unguenta domini uirtutes sunt, unguentum domini spiritus sanctus fuit.

De quo ei per prophetam dicitur: unxit te deus, deus tuus, oleo laetitiae prae consortibus tuis hoc oleo tunc unctus est, cum incarnatus: non enim prius homo extitit, et postmodum spiritum sanctum accepit; sed, quia spiritu sancto mediante incarnatus est, eodem hoc oleo tunc unctus est, cum homo creatus est.

Odor ergo unguenti eius est flagrantia spiritus sancti, qui, ex illo procedens, in illo permansit.

Odor unguentorum eius est flagrantia uirtutum, quas operatus est.

Hauriat autem ecclesia aromata: quia habuit multa spiritus dona, quae in domo dei, id est in congregatione sanctorum, odorem bonae opinionis redderent et suauitatem futuri mediatoris nuntiarent.

Sed odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata: quia flagrantia uirtutum sponsi, quae per incarnationem eius facta est, uicit praedicamenta legis, quae in arris ab sponso fuerant praerogata.

Tanto quippe amplius ad intellectum creuit ecclesia, quanto et amplioris uisionis gratia meruit inlustrari.

Illa legis aromata per angelos amministrata sunt, istud unguentum per praesentiam sponsi datum est.

Sed, quia claritate eius praesentiae superata sunt bona legis, quae sublimia esse credebantur, dicatur recte: odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata hoc autem, quod generaliter de cuncta ecclesia diximus, nunc specialiter de unaquaeque anima sentiamus.

Ponamus ante oculos esse animam quandam donorum studiis inherentem, intellectum ex aliena praedicatione percipientem: quae per diuinam gratiam etiam ipsa inlustrari desiderat, ut aliquando etiam per se intellegat: quae nihil se intellegere nisi per uerba praedicatorum considerat; et dicat: osculetur me osculo oris sui ipse me tangat intus, ut cognoscam intellegentia, et non iam praedicatorum uocibus sed internae eius gratiae tactu perfruar.

Quasi osculo oris sui osculabatur moysen dominus, cum ei per fiduciam familiaris gratiae intellectum porrigeret.

Vnde scriptum est: si fuerit propheta, in somnium loquar ad eum, et non sicut famulo meo moysi: os enim ad os loquor ei os quippe ad os loqui quasi osculari est et interna intellegentia mentem tangere.

Sequitur: quia meliora sunt ubera tua uino ubera dei sunt, sicut prius diximus, humillimae incarnationis eius.

Sapientia autem saeculi quasi quoddam uinum est: debriat enim mentem, quia ab intellectu humilitatis alienam reddit.

Quasi quodam uino debriantur philosophi, dum per saecularem sapientiam uulgi morem transeunt.

Quam sapientiam sancta ecclesia despiciat, humillimam praedicationis dominicae incarnationem appetat: plus ei sapiat, quod per infirmitatem carnis eius nutritur, quam quod mundus hic per elationem falsae prudentiae extollitur; et dicat: quia meliora sunt ubera tua uino id est: humillima incarnationis tuae praedicatio elatam mundi sapientiam superat.

Vnde scriptum est: quod infirmum est dei, fortius est quam hominis: et, quod stultum est dei, sapientius est quam hominis sed, quia ipsi huius

saeculi sapientes nonnumquam uidentur quibusdam uirtutibus studere (uideas enim plerosque habere caritatem, seruare mansuetudinem, honestatem exteriorem in omnibus exercere: quas tamen uirtutes, non ut deo, sed ut hominibus placeant, exhibent: quae idcirco uirtutes non sunt, quia deo placere non appetunt), olet tamen in humanis naribus, dum humano iudicio bonam opinionem reddunt.

Sed conparentur haec uero odori redemptoris nostri, conparentur ueris ueris uirtutibus; et dicatur: odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata id est: flagrantia uirtutum tuarum omnem speciem uirtutum sapientium mundi superat, quia uidelicet fictas eorum imagines ex ueritate transcendit.

Quia secundo loco sentiri hoc, quod dictum est, de unaquaque anima diximus, adhuc eundem sensum, si possumus, adiuuante domino subtilius exequamur.

Omnis anima, quae timet deum, iam sub iugo eius est, sed adhuc longe, quia timet: nam tantum quisque ad deum proficit, quantum poenam timoris amittit et gratiam de illo caritatis percipit.

Ponamus ante oculos animam electi cuiuslibet, quae continuo desiderio in amorem uisionis sponsi accenditur: quia, quod in hac uita perfecte percipere non ualet, contemplatur eius celsitudinem et ex ipso amore conpungitur.

Ipsa enim conpunctio, quae per caritatem fit, quae ex desiderio accenditur, quasi quoddam osculum est: totiens enim anima osculatur deum, quotiens in eius amore conpungitur.

Sunt enim multi, qui iam quidem dominum metuunt, iam bonam operationem recipiunt; sed necdum osculantur, quia amore eius minime conpunguntur. Quod bene in conuiuio pharisaei signatum est, qui, cum dominum recepisset que cum osculanti mulieri pedes eius in corde suo derogaret, audiuit: intraui in domum tuam, osculum mihi non dedisti: haec autem, ex quo ingressa est, non cessauit osculari pedes meos omnis, qui iam

elemosinas facit, qui iam bonis operibus studet, quasi christum in conuiuium recipit: christum pascit, qui eum in membris suis sustentare non desinit.

Sed, si nondum per amorem conpungitur, adhuc eius uestigia non osculatur.

Praeponitur ergo pastori mulier, quae osculatur: quia praeponitur exteriora suadenti is, qui in interno mentis ardore in desiderio domini conpungitur.

Bene autem dictum est: non cessauit osculari pedes meos non enim sufficit in amorem dei semel conpungi et quiescere, sed et conpunctio esse debet et crebrescere.

Vnde mulier ideo laudatur, quia osculari non desistit, id est conpungi minime cessauit.

Vnde et per prophetam dicitur: constituite diem sollemnem in confrequentationibus usque ad cornu altaris dies sollemnis est domino conpunctio cordis nostri.

Sed tunc in frequentatione dies sollemnis constituitur, cum ad lacrimas prae amore eius assidue mens mouetur.

Cui uelut si diceremus: quandiu ista acturi sumus?

Quandiu tribulationibus afficimur?, Illico terminum, quousque fieri debeat, subiunxit dicens: usque ad cornu altaris cornu quippe altaris est exaltatio sacrificii interioris: ubi cum peruenerimus, iam nequaquam necesse est, ut sollemnem diem domino de nostra lamentatione faciamus.

Anima ergo, quae iam per amorem conpungi desiderat, quae iam contemplari uisionem sponsi sui appetit, dicat: osculetur me osculo oris sui uel certe osculum oris eius est ipsa perfectio pacis internae: ad quam cum peruenerimus, nihil remanebit amplius, quod quaeramus.

Vnde et apte subiungitur: quia meliora sunt ubera tua uino uinum enim est scientia dei, quam in ista uita positi accepimus.

Vbera autem sponsi tunc amplectimur, cum eum in aeterna patria iam per amplexum praesentiae contemplamur.

Dicat ergo: meliora sunt ubera tua uino ac si dicat: magna est quidem scientia, quam de te mihi in hac uita contulisti; magnum est uinum notitiae tuae, quo me debrias; sed ubera tua uino meliora sunt: quia tunc per speciem et per sublimitatem contemplationis transcenditur, quidquid de te modo per fidem scitur.

Et odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata habet hic sancta ecclesia aromata, dum uirtute scientiae, uirtute castitatis, uirtute misericordiae, uirtute humilitatis, uirtute caritatis pollet.

Si sanctorum uita odorem aromatum ex uirtutibus non haberet, paulus non diceret: christi bonus odor sumus in omni loco sed longe excellentior est illa unctio contemplationis dei, ad quam quandoque ducendi sumus; longe excellentior est odor unguentorum dei aromatibus uirtutum nostrarum: et, si iam magna sunt, quae accepimus, ualde tamen potiora sunt, quae de contemplatione creatoris nostri accepturi sumus.

Vnde anhelet anima et dicat: odor unguentorum tuorum super omnia aromata id est: illa bona, quae per contemplationem tuam praeparas, ista omnia uirtutum munera, quae in hac uita tribuisti, transcendunt.

Dicamus huic ecclesiae, dicamus huic animae, sic amanti, sic aestuanti in amorem sponsi sui, unde tantum desiderium perceperit, unde notitiam diuinitatis eius apprehenderit.

Sed ecce, unde ipsa exprimit et dicit: unguentum effusum nomen tuum unguentum effusum est diuinitas incarnata.

Si enim sit unguentum in uasculo, odorem exterius minus; si uero effunditur, odor effusi unguenti dilatatur.

Nomen ergo dei unguentum effusum est: quia ab inmensitate diuinitatis suae ad naturam nostram se exterius fudit et, ab eo quod est inuisibilis, se uisibilem reddidit.

Si enim non se effunderet, nequaquam nobis innotesceret.

Effudit se unguentum, cum se et deum seruauit et homo exhibuit.

De qua effusione paulus dicit: qui, cum in forma dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem deo; sed semetipsum exinaniuit, formam serui accipiens quod paulus dixit exinaniuit, hoc salomon dixit effudit.

Quia ergo humano generi dominus per humilitatem incarnationis innotuit, dicatur ei: unguentum effusum est nomen tuum sequitur: ideo adulescentulae dilexerunt te quid hoc loco adulescentulas accipimus, nisi electorum animas per baptismum renouatas?

Vita quippe peccati ad ueterem hominem pertinet, uita iustitiae ad nouum.

Quia ergo unguentum foras se fudit, in amore suo adulescentulas ardentes fecit: quia renouatas animas desiderio suo flagrantes exhibuit.

Puerilis aetas amori necdum congruit, senilis ab amore desinit.

Puer est, qui uitae ardentis studium necdum coepit; senis est, qui coeperat quidem, sed desiit. Quia ergo neque hi flagrant in domino qui necdum coeperunt, neque hi qui iam quidem coeperant sed friguerunt, postposita puerili uel senili uita, adulescentulae currere dicuntur, id est illae animae quae in ipso feruoris amore sunt.

Quod tamen intellegere aliter possumus.

Potest enim adulescentia ad infirmitatem referri.

Iuueniles quippe aetates sunt ordo angelorum, quia nulla debilitate uicti sunt, nulla infirmitate superati.

Dicatur ergo: unguentum effusum est nomen tuum: ideo adulescentulae dilexerunt te id est: quia per incarnationem tuam notitiam tuam exterius effudisti, idcirco infirmae animae natura humana diligere praeualent.

Illae quippe uirtutes summae quasi aetates iuuenales etiam ibi te diligunt, ubi fusus non es: quia et ibi te uident, ubi in statu diuinitatis tuae contines.

Qui ergo ab illis summis ordinibus quasi a iuuenalibus aetatibus etiam non fusus uideris, exterius propter homines funderis: ut etiam ab adulescentulis, id est ab infirmis mentibus, diligaris.

Sequitur: trahe me omnis, qui trahitur, aut non ualens aut non uolens inuitus ducitur.

Sed, qui dicit: trahe me, habet aliquid quod uult, habet aliquid quod non ualet.

Natura humana sequi deum uult; sed, infirmitatis consuetudine superata, sicut debet, sequi non praeualet.

Videt ergo aliud in se esse quo tendit, aliud in se esse quod non ualet; et recte dicit: trahe me quasi uolentem nec ualentem se uiderat paulus, cum diceret: mente seruio legi dei, carne autem legi peccati; et: uideo aliam legem in membris meis, repugnantem legi mentis meae quia ergo est in nobis aliud quod nos incitat, aliud quod grauat, dicamus: trahe me post te curremus in odorem unguentorum tuorum in odorem unguentorum dei currimus, cum donis eius spiritalibus afflati in amore uisionis eius inhiamus.

Sciendum uero est, quia in eo, quod homines deum sequuntur, aliquando ambulant, aliquando currunt, aliquando fortiter currunt.

Quasi post deum ambulat, qui tepide sequitur; currit, qui feruenter sequitur; perfecte currit, qui perseueranter sequitur.

Inmobile enim erat cor ad sequendum deum et post eum ambulare nolebat, cum aduentus domini in mundo apparuit et ab insensibili sua statione humanas mentes mouit.

Vnde scriptum est: pedes eius steterunt, et mota est terra hic autem non motus sed cursus dicitur: quia non sufficit, ut sequamur, nisi etiam desiderando curramus.

Quia uero neque currere sufficit, nisi etiam perfecte curratur, paulus dicit: sic currite, ut conprehendatis et nonnulli, dum nimis currunt, in indiscretione dilabuntur: plus enim, quam necesse est, sapiunt et se iam ei,

quem sequebantur, praeferunt, dum suas uirtutes eligunt et eius, quem sequebantur, iudicia postponunt.

Vnde bene, cum diceretur currimus, praemissum est post te.

Post deum enim currunt, qui eius iudicia considerant, eius uoluntatem sibi praeferunt et peruenire ad eum sub digna operatione discretione contendunt.

Hinc propheta, uoluntatem dei considerans et sequens, ait: adhesit anima mea post te hinc petro consilium danti dicitur: redi post me, satanas! Non enim sapis, quae dei sunt, sed quae hominum quia ergo perfectae animae summa cautela dei iudicia contuentur et neque per torporem neque per indiscretum feruorem praeuenire praesumunt, bene dicitur: post te currimus in odorem unguentorum tuorum tunc enim post te currimus, quando et amando sequimur et timendo diuina iudicia non praeuenimus.

Introduxit me rex in cubiculum suum.

Exultabimus et laetabimur in te ecclesia dei quasi quaedam domus regis est.

Et ista domus habet portam, habet ascensum, habet triclinium, habet cubicula.

Omnis, qui intra ecclesiam fidem habet, iam portam domus istius ingressus est: quia, sicut porta reliqua domus aperit, ita fides reliquarum uirtutum ostium habet.

Omnis, qui intra ecclesiam spem habet, iam ad ascensum domus uenit: spes enim eleuat cor, ut sublimia appetat et ima deserat.

Omnis, qui in ista domo positus caritatem habet, quasi in tricliniis deambulat: lata enim est caritas, quae usque ad inimicorum dilectionem tenditur.

Omnis, qui in ecclesia positus iam sublimia secreta rimatur, iam occulta iudicia considerat, quasi in cubiculum intrauit.

De porta domus istius dicebat quidam: aperite mihi portas iustitiae et ingressus in eas confitebor domino de ascensu spei dicebat: ascensus in corde eius disposuit de tricliniis latis domus istius dicitur: latum mandatum tuum nimis in mandato lato specialiter caritas designatur.

De cubiculo regis loquebatur, qui dicebat: secretum meum mihi; et alias: audiui archana uerba, quae non licet hominibus loqui primus ergo aditus domus istius porta fidei, secundus prouectus ascensus spei, tertius latitudo caritatis, quartus iam perfectio caritatis ad cognitionem secretorum dei.

Quia ergo sancta ecclesia in membris suis perfectis, in sanctis doctoribus, in eis, qui iam pleni et radicati sunt in mysteriis dei, quasi ad sublimia secreta peruenit et adhuc in ista uita posita iam illa penetrat, introduxit me rex in cubiculum suum ait. Per prophetas enim, per apostolos, per doctores, qui in ista uita positi iam sublimia secreta illius uitae penetrabant, ecclesia in cubiculum regis illius ingressa fuerat.

Et caute intuendum est, quia non dicit in cubiculum sponsi sed in cubiculum regis.

Nominando enim regem, reuerentiam secretorum uult ostendere: quia, quanto potens est cubiculum, tanto maior est reuerentia exhibenda in his, ad quae intratur.

Ne ergo, dum cognoscit secreta dei unusquisque dum occulta iudicia rimatur, dum ad sublimia contemplationis adtollitur, extollatur et in superbia delabatur, regis dicitur cubiculum intrare.

Id est: cui tanto maior reuerentia exhibenda est, quanto magis anima ad cognoscenda eius secreta ducitur: ut unusquisque, qui proficit, qui iam exaltatus per gratiam et ad sublimia secreta peruenit, se ipsum adtendat et ex ipso profectu amplius humilietur.

Vnde et hezechihel, quotiens ad sublimia contemplanda ducitur, filius hominis uocatur.

Ac si ei dicatur: adtende, quod es: et non extollaris de his, ad quae adtolleris.

Sed paucorum est in ecclesia ista sublimia et occulta iudicia dei rimari et conprehendere.

Tamen, dum uidemus fortes uiros posse ad tantam sapientiam peruenire, ut contemplentur secreta dei in cordibus suis, et nos paruuli habeamus fiduciam.

Quia quandoque ad ueniam, quandoque ad eius gratiam ueniamus.

Vnde et ex uerbis adulescentularum subditur: exultabimus et laetabimur in te dum ecclesia in his, qui perfecti sunt, ingreditur cubiculum regis, adulescentulae spem sibi exultationis promittunt: quia, dum fortes ad sublimia contemplanda perueniunt, infirmi spem de uenia peccatorum sumunt.

Introduxit me rex in cubiculum suum.

Exultabimus et laetabimur in te, memores uberum tuorum super uinum.

Recti diligunt te habet iste sponsus ubera, qui etiam rex propter reuerentiam uocatur.

Habet ubera, sanctos uiros corde adherentium sibi.

Vbera in arca pectoris fixa sunt: ex interno nutrimento trahunt ad eos, quos foras nutriunt.

Sancti ergo uiri ubera sponsi sunt: quia ex intimis trahunt et exterius nutriunt.

Vbera illius sunt apostoli, ubera illius sunt omnes praedicatores ecclesiae.

Vinum, sicut et superius diximus, fuit in prophetis, uinum fuit in lege; sed, quia ampliora mandata data sunt per apostolos, quam data fuerant per prophetas, memores uberum tuorum super uinum: quia, qui ista possunt implere, quae in nouo testamento mandata sunt, illam scientiam legis sine dubio transcendunt.

Quod tamen intellegere et aliter possumus.

Memores uberum tuorum super uinum sunt multi, qui uinum quidem sapientiae habent, sed cognitionem humilitatis non habent: istos scientia inflat, quia caritas non aedificat.

Sunt uero multi, qui sic habent uinum scientiae, ut sciant considerare dona doctrinae, dona spiritalis gratiae: dona enim spiritalis gratiae quasi quaedam mamillae sunt in pectore, quae subtiliter occultis meatibus spiritalibus ministrant et nutriunt.

Memores ergo uberum tuorum super uinum: quia hi, qui sectari sciunt dona gratiae tuae, ut sibi non tribuant quod sapiunt, et de eadem sapientia quam acceperunt non extolluntur, super illos, qui de sapientia sua extolluntur, et efferuntur.

Plus est enim humiliter sapere, quam sapere; neque enim uere sapere est, humiliter non sapere.

Memores ergo uberum tuorum super uinum: quia scientes considerare dona spiritalis gratiae transcendunt eos, qui scientiam quidem habent, sed cognitionem in memoriam donorum non habent.

Aperte ergo dicere est: memores uberum tuorum super uinum: quia fortior est humilitas quam scientia.

Vinum enim est scientia, quae inebriat; memoria uberum, quae debriat, quae ad cognitionem donorum reuocat.

Memores ergo uberum tuorum super uinum: quia uincit humilitas abundantiam scientiae.

Recti diligunt te ac si diceret: non recti adhuc timent.

Recti diligunt te omnis enim, qui bona opera pro timore agit, etsi in opere rectus est, in desiderio rectus non est: uellet enim non esse, quod timeret, et opera bona non faceret. Qui uero opera bona pro amore agit, et in opere et in desiderio rectus est.

Sed dulcedo amoris timentibus absconditur.

Vnde scriptum est: quam magna multitudo dulcedinis tuae, domine, quam abscondisti timentibus te, et perfecisti eam sperantibus in te! Dulcedo enim dei timentibus deum incognita est, amantibus fit nota.

Qui ergo per amorem studuerit rectus esse, perfecta dilectio illius est: ut iudicem uenientem non timeat, ut, quidquid de aeternis suppliciis audierit, non formidet.

Vnde et paulus, dum de aduentu iudicis spectaret, dum praemia uitae aeternae quaereret, dixit: quae praeparauit deus non solum mihi, sed et omnibus qui diligunt aduentum eius praemia enim aeterna diligentibus a iudice praeparantur: quia omnis, qui se opera mala agere scit, iudicem uenientem timet; qui uero de operibus suis praesumit, iudicis aduentum quaerit.

Parantur ergo praemia expectantibus aduentum dei et diligentibus aduentum eius: quia non diligunt aduentum iudicis, nisi de causa sua praesumentes.

Omnis autem certitudo rectitudinis in dilectione est, et ideo recte dicitur: recti diligunt te nigra sum et formosa, filiae hierusalem, sicut tabernacula cedar, sicut pellis salomonis.

Nolite me considerare, quod fusca sim: quia decolorauit me sol scimus quia in primordiis ecclesiae, dum praedicata fuisset gratia redemptoris nostri, alii crediderunt ex iudaea, alii non crediderunt; sed hi, qui crediderunt, ab infidelibus despecti sunt et persecutionem passi quasi in uia gentium discessisse iudicati sunt.

Vnde ecclesia in eisdem clamat aduersus eos, qui conuersi non sunt: nigra sum, sed formosa, filiae hierusalem nigra quidem uestro iudicio, sed formosa per inlustrationem gratiae.

Quomodo nigra? Sicut tabernacula cedar cedar interpretatur tenebrae: cedar enim secundus fuit de genere ismahel; et cedar tabernacula esau fuerunt.

Quomodo ergo nigra? Sicut tabernacula cedar: quia in conspectu uestro ad similitudinem gentium iudicata sum, id est ad similitudinem peccatorum.

Quomodo formosa? Sicut pellis salomonis fertur salomon, quando templum aedificauit, omnia illa uasa templi factis pellibus cooperuisse.

Sed nimirum pelles salomonis decorae esse potuerunt, quae tabernaculo aptae essent.

Quae, si in tabernaculo eius fuerunt, nonnisi decorae esse potuerunt in obsequium regis.

Sed, quia salomon interpretatur pacificus, nos ipsum uerum salomonem intellegamus: quia omnes animae adherentes deo pelles salomonis sunt, macerantes se ipsas et in obsequium regis pacis redigentes.

Sum uero in iudicio uestro sicut tabernacula cedar, quia quasi in uia gentium discessisse iudicor; sed iuxta ueritatem sicut pelles salomonis sum, quia in obsequium regis adhereo.

Nolite me considerare, quod fusca sim: quia decolorauit me sol peccatricem adtendebat illam partem, quae christo crediderat, pars illa, quae non crediderat.

Sed dicat ista: nolite me considerare, quod fusca sim: quia decolorauit me sol sol, ipse dominus, ipse ueniens decolorauit me.

Praeceptis suis ostendit, quia pulchra non fuit in praeceptis legis.

Sol, quem arctius tangit, ipsum decolorat.

Ita et dominus ueniens, quem per gratiam suam strictius tetigit, decolorauit: quia, dum plus appropinquamus ad gratiam, plus nos peccatores esse cognoscimus.

Videamus paulum ex iudaea uenientem, in sole decoloratum: quod si uolentes in christo iustificari, inuenti sumus et ipsi peccatores qui se in christo peccatorem inuenit in sole se decoloratum inuenit.

Sed ecce, pars ista, quae ex iudaea credidit, persecutionem ab infidelibus iudaeis passa est, afflicta multis tribulationibus pressa.

Vnde sequitur: filii matris meae pugnauerunt contra me: quia filii synagogae, qui in infidelitate remanserunt, bellum persecutionis contra synagogae fideles gesserunt.

Sed, dum persecutionem patitur ea pars, quae ex iudaeis uenit ad fidem, discessit ad praedicationem gentium: deseruit iudaeam et uenit ad praedicationem gentium.

Vnde et sequitur: posuerunt me custodem in uineis, uineam meam non custodiui: quia, dum me persequuntur hi, qui in iudaea sunt, in ecclesiis me custodem fecerunt.

Vineam meam non custodiui: quia iudaeam deserui.

Vnde et paulus dicit, unde et apostoli: nobis missum fuerat uerbum dei; sed, quia indignos uos iudicastis, ecce imus ad gentes ac si dicat: nos uineam nostram custodire uolumus; sed, quia nos ipsi respuitis, ad alienarum nos uinearum custodiam transmittitis.

Ista, quae de synagoga diximus ad fidem conuersam, dicamus modo de ecclesia ad fidem uocatam: nigra sum, sed formosa, filiae hierusalem ecclesia ex gentibus ueniens considerat fidelium animas, quas inuenit, quas et filias hierusalem uocat. Hierusalem quippe uisio pacis dicitur.

Considerat quid fuit, quid facta est: et confitetur praeteritas culpas, ne superba sit, confitetur praesentem uitam, ne ingrata; et dicit: nigra sum, sed formosa nigra per meritum, formosa per gratiam; nigra per uitam praeteritam, formosa per conuersationem sequentem.

Quomodo nigra? Sicut tabernacula cedar cedar tabernacula gentium fuerunt, tabernacula tenebrarum fuerunt; et gentibus dictum est: fuistis aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in domino quomodo formosa?

Sicut pellis salomonis macerati enim sumus per paenitentiam.

Mortificata caro per paenitentiam quasi pellis in obsequium regis adducitur.

Omnes per paenitentiam se ipsos affligentes membra christi se faciunt.

Membra ergo christi per paenitentiam afflicta pellis salomonis sunt, quia mortificata caro fiunt.

Sed ecce, erant in iudaea fideles, qui dedignabantur ad fidem uenire gentiles.

Vnde et petrum redarguunt, quod cornelium susceperat.

Vnde in ecclesia gentium subiungit: nolite me considerare, quod fusca sim nolite despicere gentilitatem infidelitatis meae, nolite despicere peccata priora, nolite adtendere quod fui.

Quare? Quia decolorauit me sol sol in eo decolorat, in quo arctius et districtius se inprimit.

Deus, quando districtum iudicium tenet, quasi districtionem suam amplius exhibet; et decolorat, dum amplius fulget: quia, dum districtionem subtilius exercet, districte adiudicat.

Quasi enim radios suos suspendit sol, quando clementer opera nostra considerat; quasi districte uirtutem suam exhibeat, quando districte opera nostra pensat.

Dicat ergo ecclesia: inde sum fusca, inde peccatrix, quia me sol decolorauit: quia, creator meus dum me deserit, ego in errore lapsa sum.

Sed o tu, sic afflicta, sic destituta, quid meruisti?

Quid ex dono consecuta es? Filii matris meae pugnauerunt contra me filii matris sunt apostoli: mater enim omnium hierusalem superna est.

Ipsi pugnauerunt contra ecclesiam, dum ab infidelitate in fide praedicationibus suis quasi quibusdam lanceis confoderunt.

Vnde et paulus quasi quidam pugnator dicit: cogitationum consilia destruentes et omnem altitudinem extollentem se aduersus scientiam dei quia altitudinem destruit, utique pugnator est.

Isti ergo pugnatores, isti filii matris hierusalem debellauerunt ecclesiam ab errore suo, ut illam fundarent ad iustitiam.

Filii matris meae pugnauerunt contra me et quid fecerunt pugnantes?

Posuerunt me custodem in uineis uineae ecclesiae sunt uirtutes, quae fructificant: quia, dum depugnant in me uitia, quasi de mala mea me expugnant.

Fructificationem et uirtutum studia mihi dederunt: in uineis me custodem fecerunt, ut fructificationem afferrent.

Post expugnationem specialiter dicat: uineam meam non custodiui uinea ecclesiae antiqua consuetudo erroris est: quae, dum custos ad uirtutes ponitur, deseruit uineam illam antiquam consuetudinem erroris sui.

Diximus de synagoga ad fidem uenientem, diximus de gentilitate conuersa; dicamus modo generaliter de tota simul ecclesia, et specialiter quid de unaquaque anima sentiendum est.

Solent praui auditores doctores suos non considerare quod sunt, sed quod fuerunt; sani uero doctores et confitentur quod fuerunt, et proferunt quod sunt: ut nec peccatores se abscondant, nec iterum dona uelut ingrati denegent.

Dicat ergo in istis ecclesia: nigra sum, sed formosa nigra per me, formosa per donum; nigra de praeterito, formosa ex eo quod facta sum in futuris.

Quomodo nigra? Quomodo formosa? Nigra sicut tabernacula cedar, formosa sicut pellis salomonis et non est iustum, ut aliquis ex praeterita uita pensetur, et non magis adtendatur quod fuit, sed quod est.

Vnde subiungit: nolite me considerare, quod fusca sim: quia decolorauit me sol aliquando in scriptura sacra sol ponitur nimius aestus terrenorum desideriorum.

Vnde ergo fusca? Quia decolorauit me sol et ardore amoris terreni apud sponsum decolorata sum, id est indecora apud regem facta.

Filii matris meae pugnauerunt contra me in omni creatura duae creaturae rationales sunt conditae, humana et angelica. Cecidit angelus, persuasit homini.

Mater enim omnis creaturae benignitas et potentia dei.

Nos ergo et angeli, ex eo quod rationales conditi sumus, quasi quandam societatem fraternitatis habemus.

Sed, quia angeli ab eadem potentia conditi sunt, a qua et nos, qui tamen cadentes angeli cotidie contra nos bellum gerunt, dicat: filii matris meae pugnauerunt contra me ecce, dum pugnant isti spiritus rationales, isti spiritus filii matris, dum pugnant contra animam, faciunt eam rebus terrenis incumbere, actionibus saecularibus uacare, res transitorias quaerere.

Vnde et subiungit: posuerunt me custodem in uineis, uineam meam non custodiui uineae enim sunt actiones terrenae.

Ac si dicat: in actionibus terrenis custodem me posuerunt.

Et quid? Vineam meam, id est animam meam, uitam meam, mentem meam, custodire neglexi: quia, dum exterius in rerum terrenarum actione inuoluta sum, ab interna custodia elapsa sum.

Plerique ex eo se considerant quod iuxta ipsos est, non ex eo quod sunt.

Iuxta ipsos sunt dignitates, iuxta ipsos sunt exteriora ministeria: et, dum custodiunt quod iuxta se habent, se ipsos custodire neglegunt.

Dicat ergo: posuerunt me custodem in uineis, uineam meam non custodiui id est: dum exteriori custodiae in actionibus saeculi deseruio, interioris custodiae sollicitudinem amisi.

Sed ecce, reducta anima ad gratiam creatoris sui iam amet, iam requirat ubi redemptorem suum inueniat.

Vnde sequitur: indica mihi, quem diligit anima mea: ubi pascis, ubi cubas in meridie in meridie sol feruentior est.

Omnis, qui in fide feruet, in amore desiderii feruet.

Iste sponsus, qui subter hinnulus uocatur, in corde ipsorum pascit uirtutum uiriditatem, in corde ipsorum recumbit in meridie, in feruore caritatis.

Indica mihi, quem diligit anima mea: ubi pascis, ubi cubas in meridie quare sic quaeris, ubi pascat, ubi cubet?

Causam reddidit inquisitionis suae: ne uagari incipiam post greges sodalium tuorum sodales dei sunt amici, familiares, sicut sunt omnes, qui bene uiuunt.

Sed multi apparent sodales esse, et sodales non sunt.

Multi enim doctores, dum peruersam doctrinam suaderent, sodales quidem uidebantur, sed inimici extiterunt.

Dum adhuc doctor esset arrius, sabellius, montanus, quasi sodales uidebantur: sed, dum districte discussi sunt, inimici apparuerunt.

Et plerumque fideles animae, dum inherent uerbo dei, dum amant in doctoribus unde proficiant, cauere nesciunt peruersorum uerba doctorum et ex ipsorum ore deficiunt.

Quam multae enim plebes istae, quae de sodalibus crediderunt et, dum eos sequuntur, per greges sodalium errauerunt! Dicit ergo: indica mihi, ubi pascas, ubi cubes in meridie: ne uagari incipiam post greges sodalium tuorum ac si dicat: indica, in quorum corda ueraciter requiescis: ne incipiam uagari post greges eorum, qui sodales tui uidentur, id est qui familiares tui creduntur, et non sunt.

Omnes sacerdotes, omnes doctores sodales dei sunt, quantum ad speciem; quantum uero ad uitam, multi non sodales sed aduersarii sunt.

Sed haec ipsa, quae diximus de hereticis magistris, possumus de catholicis non bene agentibus dicere.

Multi enim paruuli intra ecclesiam fideles appetunt bene uiuere, uolunt uitam rectitudinis tenere, considerant uitam sacerdotum, qui eis praepositi sunt: et, dum sacerdotes ipsi non bene uiuunt, dum hi qui praesunt non recte uiuunt, hi qui subsequuntur in errorem dilabuntur.

Vnde ecclesia quasi in eisdem paruulis et fidelibus dicit: indica mihi, quem diligit anima mea: ubi pascis, ubi cubas in meridie uitam mihi

ueraciter seruientium tibi indica: ut sciam ubi pascis uiriditatem uirtutum, ut sciam ubi cubes in meridie, id est ubi requiescas in feruore caritas; ne, dum greges sodalium tuorum adspicio, ipsa uagari nesciens incipiam, cui me uerbis et doctrinis committam.

Caute enim debet omnis auditor, omnis infirmus considerare, cuius uerbis se credere debeat, cuius magisterio uti debeat, cuius exempla sequi debeat.

Et ecce, uerba sponsi redduntur ad sponsam: si ignoras te, o pulchra inter mulieres, egredere et abi post uestigia gregum et pasce hedos tuos iuxta tabernacula pastorum omnis anima nihil debet amplius curare, quam ut se ipsam sciat.

Qui enim se ipsum scit, cognoscit quia ad imaginem dei factus est.

Si ad imaginem dei factus est, non debeat similitudinem iumentorum sequi, siue in luxuria siue in appetitu praesenti dissolui. De qua ignorantia alibi dicitur: homo, cum in honore esset, non intellexit: conparatus est iumentis insipientibus et similis factus est illis uestigia gregum sunt actiones populorum: quae, quanto multae tanto sunt, inpeditae, tanto peruersae.

Dicatur ergo ecclesiae: si ignoras te, o pulchra inter mulieres, egredere et abi post uestigia gregum et pasce hedos tuos iuxta tabernacula pastorum o tu, quae foeda per ignorantiam, per fidem pulchra facta es inter aliorum animas! Quod euidenter dicitur ad ecclesiam electorum.

Si ignoras te: id est, si hoc ipsum, quod ad imaginem meam facta es egredere: id est, exi.
Si uero non cognoscis, a quo facta es, egredere et abi, uade post uestigia gregum: sequere, non exempla mea, sed exempla populorum.

Et pasce hedos tuos iuxta tabernacula pastorum hedi nostri sunt motus carnales, hedi nostri sunt temptationes inlicitae.

Abi post uestigia gregum: id est, discede post exempla populorum.

Et pasce hedos tuos: id est, nutri motus carnales, non iam sensus spiritales sed motus carnales.

Abi iuxta tabernacula pastorum.

Si agnos pasceres, in tabernacula pastorum pasceres: id est, in doctrinis magistrorum, in doctrinis apostolorum, in doctrinis prophetarum.

Si uero hedos pascis, iuxta tabernacula pastorum pasce; ut fide uoceris christiana et non operibus, quia intra uideris esse per fidem et non intra per opera.

Quia ecce increpasti, ecce redarguisti (quid enim non dicis, quod tu benigne iam in ea operatus es?), Dic plane: nam sequitur: equitatui meo in curribus pharaonis adsimilaui te, amica mea omnes, qui luxuriae, qui superbiae, qui auaritiae, qui inuidiae, qui fallaciae deseruiunt, adhuc sub curru pharaonis sunt: equi quasi quidam sub curru pharaonis sunt, id est sub regimine diaboli.

Omnis uero, qui in humilitate, in castitate, in doctrina, in caritate feruet, iam equus effectus est creatoris nostri, iam in curru dei positus est, iam sessorem deum habet.

Vnde cuidam, cui iam dominus praesidebat, dicitur: durum est tibi aduersus stimulum calcitrare ac si diceret: meus equus es: iam contra me calces iactare non potes, iam tibi ego praesideo.

De istis equis alibi dicitur: misisti in mari equos tuos turbantes aquas multas habet ergo currus deus, qui animabus sanctis praesidet et per animas sanctas circumquaque percurrit.

Vnde scriptum est: currus dei decem milia, multiplex milium laetantium habet currus pharao: qui tamen currus in mari rubro summersi sunt, quia multi peruersi in baptismate mutati sunt.

Dicat ergo sponsus: equitatui meo in curribus pharao adsimilaui te, amica mea id est: dum adhuc tu esses in curribus pharaonis, dum adhuc operibus daemonicis deseruires, ego te equitatui meo adsimilaui: quia

adtendi, quid per praedestinationem in te fecerim; et equis meis te conparaui.

Videt enim multos deus adhuc luxuriae, adhuc auaritiae seruientes; et tamen adtendit in secreto iudicio, quid iam de ipsis operatus est: quia habet equos deus, sed multos uidet adhuc equos esse pharaonis.

Et, quia condiderat occulto iudicio, occulta praedestinatione ad bonum commutandos, similes illos adtendit iam equis suis: quia uidet illos ad currum suum ducturus, qui prius in curru pharaonis deseruiebant.

Vbi consideranda sunt occulta iudicia: quia multi uidentur per praedicationem, per sapientiam, per castitatem, per largitatem, per longanimitatem equi dei esse; et tamen occulto dei iudicio equis pharaonis adsimilantur: et multi uidentur per auaritiam, per superbiam, per inuidiam, per luxuriam equi pharaonis esse; et tamen occulto dei iudicio equis dei adsimilantur: quia et illos uidet de bono ad mala uerti, et istos uidet de malo ad bona reduci.

Sicut ergo per discretionem multi, qui equi uidentur dei, equi sunt pharaonis per reprobam uitam, quae illos sequitur: ita per pietatem multi, qui equi pharaonis uidentur, eius electi per sanctam uitam, quam in fine suo seruaturi sunt, equis dei adsimilantur.

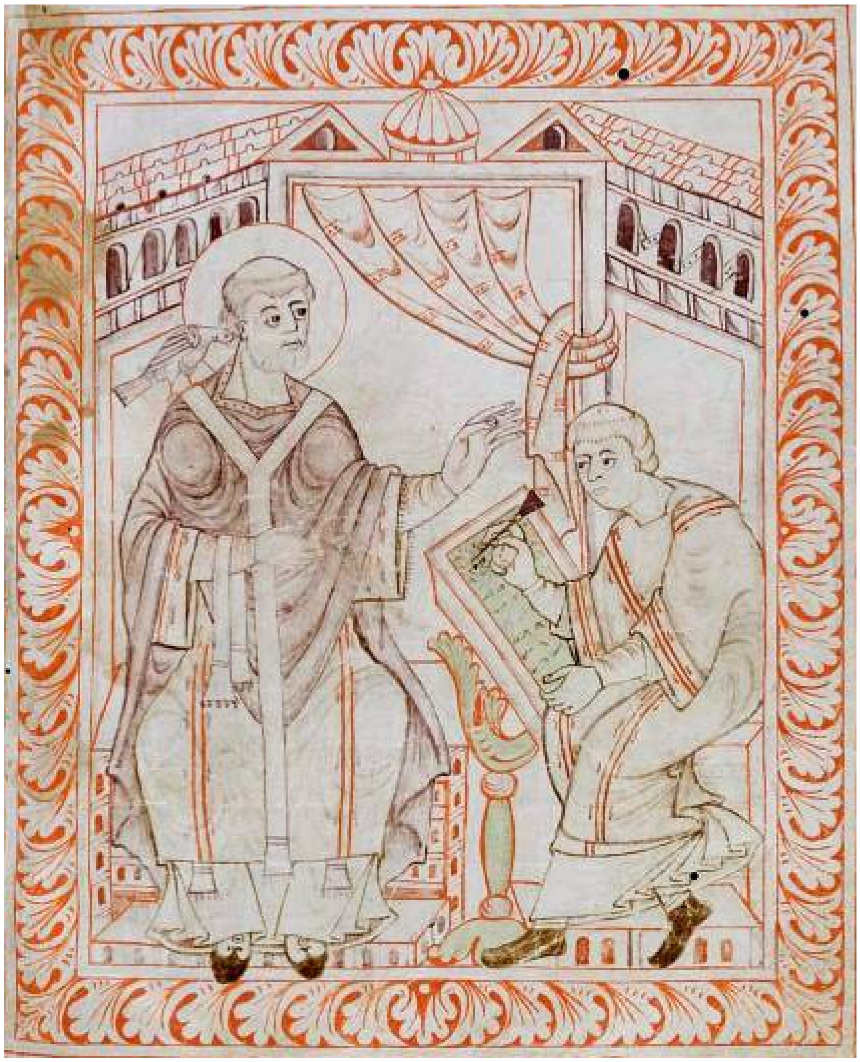
Vnde blanditur sponsus et dicit: equitatui meo in curribus pharaonis adsimilaui te, amica mea id est: tu adhuc in curribus pharaonis subdita deseruiebas, sub uitia currebas; sed ego adtendi, quid de te per praedestinationem feci.

Equitatui meo te adsimilaui: id est, electis meis similem te adtendi.

The Biographies



The state of Anglo-Saxon England at the time Æthelberht came to the throne of Kent — in the late sixth century Pope Gregory sent a group of missionaries to Kent to convert Æthelberht, launching the now famous 'Gregorian mission'.



A portrayal of Gregory dictating, tenth century manuscript

Extracts from ‘The Ecclesiastical History of the English People’ by Bede

Translated by A. M. Sellar

CONTENTS

Chap. XXIII.

How the holy Pope Gregory sent Augustine, with other monks, to preach to the English nation, and encouraged them by a letter of exhortation, not to desist from their labour. [596 a.d.]

In the year of our Lord 582, Maurice, the fifty-fourth from Augustus, ascended the throne, and reigned twenty-one years. In the tenth year of his reign, Gregory, a man eminent in learning and the conduct of affairs, was promoted to the Apostolic see of Rome, and presided over it thirteen years, six months and ten days. He, being moved by Divine inspiration, in the fourteenth year of the same emperor, and about the one hundred and fiftieth after the coming of the English into Britain, sent the servant of God, Augustine, and with him divers other monks, who feared the Lord, to preach the Word of God to the English nation. They having, in obedience to the pope's commands, undertaken that work, when they had gone but a little way on their journey, were seized with craven terror, and began to think of returning home, rather than proceed to a barbarous, fierce, and unbelieving nation, to whose very language they were strangers; and by common consent they decided that this was the safer course. At once Augustine, who had been appointed to be consecrated bishop, if they should be received by the English, was sent back, that he might, by humble entreaty, obtain of the blessed Gregory, that they should not be compelled to undertake so dangerous, toilsome, and uncertain a journey. The pope, in reply, sent them a letter of exhortation, persuading them to set forth to the work of the Divine Word, and rely on the help of God. The purport of which letter was as follows:

"*Gregory, the servant of the servants of God, to the servants of our Lord.* Forasmuch as it had been better not to begin a good work, than to think of

desisting from one which has been begun, it behoves you, my beloved sons, to fulfil with all diligence the good work, which, by the help of the Lord, you have undertaken. Let not, therefore, the toil of the journey, nor the tongues of evil-speaking men, discourage you; but with all earnestness and zeal perform, by God's guidance, that which you have set about; being assured, that great labour is followed by the greater glory of an eternal reward. When Augustine, your Superior, returns, whom we also constitute your abbot, humbly obey him in all things; knowing, that whatsoever you shall do by his direction, will, in all respects, be profitable to your souls. Almighty God protect you with His grace, and grant that I may, in the heavenly country, see the fruits of your labour, inasmuch as, though I cannot labour with you, I shall partake in the joy of the reward, because I am willing to labour. God keep you in safety, my most beloved sons. Given the 23rd of July, in the fourteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the thirteenth year after the consulship of our lord aforesaid, and the fourteenth indiction."

Chap. XXIV.

How he wrote to the bishop of Arles to entertain them. [596 a.d.]

The same venerable pope also sent at the same time a letter to Aetherius, archbishop of Arles, exhorting him to give favourable entertainment to Augustine on his way to Britain; which letter was in these words:

"*To his most reverend and holy brother and fellow bishop Aetherius, Gregory, the servant of the servants of God.* Although religious men stand in need of no recommendation with priests who have the charity which is pleasing to God; yet because an opportunity of writing has occurred, we have thought fit to send this letter to you, Brother, to inform you, that with the help of God we have directed thither, for the good of souls, the bearer of these presents, Augustine, the servant of God, of whose zeal we are assured, with other servants of God, whom it is requisite that your Holiness readily assist with priestly zeal, affording him all the comfort in your power. And to the end that you may be the more ready in your help, we have enjoined him to inform you particularly of the occasion of his coming; knowing, that when you are acquainted with it, you will, as the matter requires, for the sake of God, dutifully dispose yourself to give him comfort. We also in all things recommend to your charity, Candidus, the priest, our common son, whom we have transferred to the administration of a small patrimony in our Church. God keep you in safety, most reverend brother. Given the 23rd day of July, in the fourteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the thirteenth year after the consulship of our lord aforesaid, and the fourteenth indiction."

Chap. XXV.

How Augustine, coming into Britain, first preached in the Isle of Thanet to the King of Kent, and having obtained licence from him, went into Kent, in order to preach therein. [597 a.d.]

Augustine, thus strengthened by the encouragement of the blessed Father Gregory, returned to the work of the Word of God, with the servants of Christ who were with him, and arrived in Britain. The powerful Ethelbert was at that time king of Kent; he had extended his dominions as far as the boundary formed by the great river Humber, by which the Southern Saxons are divided from the Northern. On the east of Kent is the large Isle of Thanet, containing, according to the English way of reckoning, 600 families, divided from the mainland by the river Wantsum, which is about three furlongs in breadth, and which can be crossed only in two places; for at both ends it runs into the sea. On this island landed the servant of the Lord, Augustine, and his companions, being, as is reported, nearly forty men. They had obtained, by order of the blessed Pope Gregory, interpreters of the nation of the Franks, and sending to Ethelbert, signified that they were come from Rome, and brought a joyful message, which most undoubtedly assured to those that hearkened to it everlasting joys in heaven, and a kingdom that would never end, with the living and true God. The king hearing this, gave orders that they should stay in the island where they had landed, and be furnished with necessaries, till he should consider what to do with them. For he had before heard of the Christian religion, having a Christian wife of the royal family of the Franks, called Bertha; whom he had received from her parents, upon condition that she should be permitted to preserve inviolate the rites of her religion with the Bishop Liudhard, who was sent with her to support her in the faith. Some days after, the king came

into the island, and sitting in the open air, ordered Augustine and his companions to come and hold a conference with him. For he had taken precaution that they should not come to him in any house, lest, by so coming, according to an ancient superstition, if they practised any magical arts, they might impose upon him, and so get the better of him. But they came endued with Divine, not with magic power, bearing a silver cross for their banner, and the image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a board; and chanting litanies, they offered up their prayers to the Lord for the eternal salvation both of themselves and of those to whom and for whom they had come. When they had sat down, in obedience to the king's commands, and preached to him and his attendants there present the Word of life, the king answered thus: "Your words and promises are fair, but because they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot consent to them so far as to forsake that which I have so long observed with the whole English nation. But because you are come from far as strangers into my kingdom, and, as I conceive, are desirous to impart to us those things which you believe to be true, and most beneficial, we desire not to harm you, but will give you favourable entertainment, and take care to supply you with all things necessary to your sustenance; nor do we forbid you to preach and gain as many as you can to your religion." Accordingly he gave them an abode in the city of Canterbury, which was the metropolis of all his dominions, and, as he had promised, besides supplying them with sustenance, did not refuse them liberty to preach. It is told that, as they drew near to the city, after their manner, with the holy cross, and the image of our sovereign Lord and King, Jesus Christ, they sang in concert this litany: "We beseech thee, O Lord, for Thy great mercy, that Thy wrath and anger be turned away from this city, and from Thy holy house, for we have sinned. Hallelujah."

Chap. XXVI.

How St. Augustine in Kent followed the doctrine and manner of life of the primitive Church, and settled his episcopal see in the royal city. [597 a.d.]

As soon as they entered the dwelling-place assigned to them, they began to imitate the Apostolic manner of life in the primitive Church; applying themselves to constant prayer, watchings, and fastings; preaching the Word of life to as many as they could; despising all worldly things, as in nowise concerning them; receiving only their necessary food from those they taught; living themselves in all respects conformably to what they taught, and being always ready to suffer any adversity, and even to die for that truth which they preached. In brief, some believed and were baptized, admiring the simplicity of their blameless life, and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine. There was on the east side of the city, a church dedicated of old to the honour of St. Martin, built whilst the Romans were still in the island, wherein the queen, who, as has been said before, was a Christian, was wont to pray. In this they also first began to come together, to chant the Psalms, to pray, to celebrate Mass, to preach, and to baptize, till when the king had been converted to the faith, they obtained greater liberty to preach everywhere and build or repair churches.

When he, among the rest, believed and was baptized, attracted by the pure life of these holy men and their gracious promises, the truth of which they established by many miracles, greater numbers began daily to flock together to hear the Word, and, forsaking their heathen rites, to have fellowship, through faith, in the unity of Christ's Holy Church. It is told that the king, while he rejoiced at their conversion and their faith, yet compelled none to embrace Christianity, but only showed more affection to the believers, as to his fellow citizens in the kingdom of Heaven. For he had

learned from those who had instructed him and guided him to salvation, that the service of Christ ought to be voluntary, not by compulsion. Nor was it long before he gave his teachers a settled residence suited to their degree in his metropolis of Canterbury, with such possessions of divers sorts as were necessary for them.

Chap. XXVII.

How St. Augustine, being made a bishop, sent to acquaint Pope Gregory with what had been done in Britain, and asked and received replies, of which he stood in need. [597-601 a.d.]

In the meantime, Augustine, the man of God, went to Arles, and, according to the orders received from the holy Father Gregory, was ordained archbishop of the English nation, by Aetherius, archbishop of that city. Then returning into Britain, he sent Laurentius the the priest and Peter the monk to Rome, to acquaint Pope Gregory, that the English nation had received the faith of Christ, and that he was himself made their bishop. At the same time, he desired his solution of some doubts which seemed urgent to him. He soon received fitting answers to his questions, which we have also thought meet to insert in this our history:

The First Question of the blessed Augustine, Bishop of the Church of Canterbury. — Concerning bishops, what should be their manner of conversation towards their clergy? or into how many portions the offerings of the faithful at the altar are to be divided? and how the bishop is to act in the Church?

Gregory, Pope of the City of Rome, answers. — Holy Scripture, in which we doubt not you are well versed, testifies to this, and in particular the Epistles of the Blessed Paul to Timothy, wherein he endeavours to show him what should be his manner of conversation in the house of God; but it is the custom of the Apostolic see to prescribe these rules to bishops when they are ordained: that all emoluments which accrue, are to be divided into four portions; — one for the bishop and his household, for hospitality and entertainment of guests; another for the clergy; a third for the poor; and the fourth for the repair of churches. But in that you, my brother, having been

instructed in monastic rules, must not live apart from your clergy in the Church of the English, which has been lately, by the will of God, converted to the faith, you must establish the manner of conversation of our fathers in the primitive Church, among whom, none said that aught of the things which they possessed was his own, but they had all things common.

But if there are any clerks not received into holy orders, who cannot live continent, they are to take wives, and receive their stipends outside of the community; because we know that it is written concerning the same fathers of whom we have spoken that a distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. Care is also to be taken of their stipends, and provision to be made, and they are to be kept under ecclesiastical rule, that they may live orderly, and attend to singing of psalms, and, by the help of God, preserve their hearts and tongues and bodies from all that is unlawful. But as for those that live in common, there is no need to say anything of assigning portions, or dispensing hospitality and showing mercy; inasmuch as all that they have over is to be spent in pious and religious works, according to the teaching of Him who is the Lord and Master of all, "Give alms of such things as ye have over, and behold all things are clean unto you."

Augustine's Second Question. — Whereas the faith is one and the same, are there different customs in different Churches? and is one custom of Masses observed in the holy Roman Church, and another in the Church of Gaul?

Pope Gregory answers. — You know, my brother, the custom of the Roman Church in which you remember that you were bred up. But my will is, that if you have found anything, either in the Roman, or the Gallican, or any other Church, which may be more acceptable to Almighty God, you should carefully make choice of the same, and sedulously teach the Church

of the English, which as yet is new in the faith, whatsoever you can gather from the several Churches. For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things. Choose, therefore, from every Church those things that are pious, religious, and right, and when you have, as it were, made them up into one bundle, let the minds of the English be accustomed thereto.

Augustine's Third Question. — I beseech you, what punishment must be inflicted on one who steals anything from a church?

Gregory answers. — You may judge, my brother, by the condition of the thief, in what manner he is to be corrected. For there are some, who, having substance, commit theft; and there are others, who transgress in this matter through want. Wherefore it is requisite, that some be punished with fines, others with stripes; some with more severity, and some more mildly. And when the severity is greater, it is to proceed from charity, not from anger; because this is done for the sake of him who is corrected, that he may not be delivered up to the fires of Hell. For it behoves us to maintain discipline among the faithful, as good parents do with their children according to the flesh, whom they punish with stripes for their faults, and yet they design to make those whom they chastise their heirs, and preserve their possessions for those whom they seem to visit in wrath. This charity is, therefore, to be kept in mind, and it dictates the measure of the punishment, so that the mind may do nothing beyond the rule prescribed by reason. You will add to this, how men are to restore those things which they have stolen from the church. But let not the Church take more than it has lost of its worldly possessions, or seek gain from vanities.

Augustine's Fourth Question. — Whether two full brothers may marry two sisters, who are of a family far removed from them?

Gregory answers. — Most assuredly this may lawfully be done; for nothing is found in Holy Writ on this matter that seems to contradict it.

Augustine's Fifth Question. — To what degree may the faithful marry with their kindred? and is it lawful to marry a stepmother or a brother's wife?

Gregory answers. — A certain secular law in the Roman commonwealth allows, that the son and daughter of a brother and sister, or of two full brothers, or two sisters, may be joined in matrimony; but we have found, by experience, that the offspring of such wedlock cannot grow up; and the Divine law forbids a man to "uncover the nakedness of his kindred." Hence of necessity it must be the third or fourth generation of the faithful, that can be lawfully joined in matrimony; for the second, which we have mentioned, must altogether abstain from one another. To marry with one's stepmother is a heinous crime, because it is written in the Law, "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father:" now the son, indeed, cannot uncover his father's nakedness; but in regard that it is written, "They twain shall be one flesh," he that presumes to uncover the nakedness of his stepmother, who was one flesh with his father, certainly uncovers the nakedness of his father. It is also prohibited to marry with a sister-in-law, because by the former union she is become the brother's flesh. For which thing also John the Baptist was beheaded, and obtained the crown of holy martyrdom. For, though he was not ordered to deny Christ, and it was not for confessing Christ that he was killed, yet inasmuch as the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, said, "I am the Truth," because John was killed for the truth, he also shed his blood for Christ.

But forasmuch as there are many of the English, who, whilst they were still heathens, are said to have been joined in this unholy union, when they attain to the faith they are to be admonished to abstain, and be made to know that this is a grievous sin. Let them fear the dread judgement of God, lest, for the gratification of their carnal desires, they incur the torments of eternal punishment. Yet they are not on this account to be deprived of the

Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, lest they should seem to be punished for those things which they did through ignorance before they had received Baptism. For in these times the Holy Church chastises some things with zeal, and tolerates some in mercy, and is blind to some in her wisdom, and so, by forbearance and blindness often suppresses the evil that stands in her way. But all that come to the faith are to be admonished not to presume to do such things. And if any shall be guilty of them, they are to be excluded from the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. For as the offence is, in some measure, to be tolerated in those who did it through ignorance, so it is to be rigorously punished in those who do not fear to sin knowingly.

Augustine's Sixth Question. — Whether a bishop may be consecrated without other bishops being present, if there be so great a distance between them, that they cannot easily come together?

Gregory answers. — In the Church of England, of which you are as yet the only bishop, you cannot otherwise ordain a bishop than in the absence of other bishops. For when do bishops come over from Gaul, that they may be present as witnesses to you in ordaining a bishop? But we would have you, my brother, to ordain bishops in such a manner, that the said bishops may not be far asunder, to the end that there be no lack, but that at the ordination of a bishop other pastors also, whose presence is of great benefit, should easily come together. Thus, when, by the help of God, bishops shall have been ordained in places near to one another, no ordination of a bishop is to take place without assembling three or four bishops. For, even in spiritual affairs, we may take example by the temporal, that they may be wisely and discreetly conducted. For surely, when marriages are celebrated in the world, some married persons are assembled, that those who went before in the way of matrimony, may also partake in the joy of the new union. Why, then, at this spiritual ordinance, wherein, by means of the

sacred ministry, man is joined to God, should not such persons be assembled, as may either rejoice in the advancement of the new bishop, or jointly pour forth their prayers to Almighty God for his preservation?

Augustine's Seventh Question. — How are we to deal with the bishops of Gaul and Britain?

Gregory answers. — We give you no authority over the bishops of Gaul, because the bishop of Arles received the pall in the old times of my predecessors, and we must by no means deprive him of the authority he has received. If it shall therefore happen, my brother, that you go over into the province of Gaul, you are to concert with the said bishop of Arles, how, if there be any faults among the bishops, they may be amended. And if he shall be lukewarm in keeping up discipline, he is to be fired by your zeal; to whom we have also written, that aided by the presence of your Holiness in Gaul, he should exert himself to the utmost, and put away from the behaviour of the bishops all that is opposed to the command of our Creator. But you shall not have power to go beyond your own authority and judge the bishops of Gaul, but by persuading, and winning them, and showing good works for them to imitate, you shall recall the perverted to the pursuit of holiness; for it is written in the Law, "When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayest bruise the ears with thine hand and eat; but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbours' standing corn." For thou mayest not apply the sickle of judgement in that harvest which thou seest to have been committed to another; but by the influence of good works thou shalt clear the Lord's wheat of the chaff of its vices, and convert it by exhortation and persuasion in the body of the Church, as it were, by eating. But whatsoever is to be done by authority, must be transacted with the aforesaid bishop of Arles, lest that should be omitted, which the ancient institution of the fathers has appointed. But as for all the bishops of Britain, we commit them to your care, that the unlearned may be

taught, the weak strengthened by persuasion, and the perverse corrected by authority.

Augustine's Eighth Question. — Whether a woman with child ought to be baptized? Or when she has brought forth, after what time she may come into the church? As also, after how many days the infant born may be baptized, lest he be prevented by death? Or how long after her husband may have carnal knowledge of her? Or whether it is lawful for her to come into the church when she has her courses, or to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion? Or whether a man, under certain circumstances, may come into the church before he has washed with water? Or approach to receive the Mystery of the Holy Communion? All which things are requisite to be known by the ignorant nation of the English.

Gregory answers. — I do not doubt but that these questions have been put to you, my brother, and I think I have already answered you therein. But I believe you would wish the opinion which you yourself might give and hold to be confirmed by my reply also. Why should not a woman with child be baptized, since the fruitfulness of the flesh is no offence in the eyes of Almighty God? For when our first parents sinned in Paradise, they forfeited the immortality which they had received, by the just judgement of God. Because, therefore, Almighty God would not for their fault wholly destroy the human race, he both deprived man of immortality for his sin, and, at the same time, of his great goodness and loving-kindness, reserved to him the power of propagating his race after him. On what ground, then, can that which is preserved to human nature by the free gift of Almighty God, be excluded from the privilege of Holy Baptism? For it is very foolish to imagine that the gift can be opposed to grace in that Mystery in which all sin is blotted out. When a woman is delivered, after how many days she may come into the church, you have learnt from the teaching of the Old Testament, to wit, that she is to abstain for a male child thirty-three days,

and sixty-six for a female. Now you must know that this is to be received in a mystery; for if she enters the church the very hour that she is delivered, to return thanks, she is not guilty of any sin; because the pleasure of the flesh is a fault, and not the pain; but the pleasure is in the copulation of the flesh, whereas there is pain in bringing forth the child. Wherefore it is said to the first mother of all, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." If, therefore, we forbid a woman that has brought forth, to enter the church, we make a crime of her very punishment. To baptize either a woman who has brought forth, if there be danger of death, even the very hour that she brings forth, or that which she has brought forth the very hour it is born, is in no way prohibited, because, as the grace of the Holy Mystery is to be with much discretion provided for those who are in full life and capable of understanding, so is it to be without any delay administered to the dying; lest, while a further time is sought to confer the Mystery of redemption, if a small delay intervene, the person that is to be redeemed be dead and gone.

Her husband is not to approach her, till the infant born be weaned. An evil custom is sprung up in the lives of married people, in that women disdain to suckle the children whom they bring forth, and give them to other women to suckle; which seems to have been invented on no other account but incontinency; because, as they will not be continent, they will not suckle the children whom they bear. Those women, therefore, who, from evil custom, give their children to others to bring up, must not approach their husbands till the time of purification is past. For even when there has been no child-birth, women are forbidden to do so, whilst they have their courses, insomuch that the Law condemns to death any man that shall approach unto a woman during her uncleanness. Yet the woman, nevertheless, must not be forbidden to come into the church whilst she has her courses; because the superfluity of nature cannot be imputed to her as a crime; and it is not just that she should be refused admittance into the

church, for that which she suffers against her will. For we know, that the woman who had the issue of blood, humbly approaching behind our Lord's back, touched the hem of his garment, and her infirmity immediately departed from her. If, therefore, she that had an issue of blood might commendably touch the garment of our Lord, why may not she, who has her courses, lawfully enter into the church of God? But you may say, Her infirmity compelled her, whereas these we speak of are bound by custom. Consider, then, most dear brother, that all we suffer in this mortal flesh, through the infirmity of our nature, is ordained by the just judgement of God after the fall; for to hunger, to thirst, to be hot, to be cold, to be weary, is from the infirmity of our nature; and what else is it to seek food against hunger, drink against thirst, air against heat, clothes against cold, rest against weariness, than to procure a remedy against distempers? Thus to a woman her courses are a distemper. If, therefore, it was a commendable boldness in her, who in her disease touched our Lord's garment, why may not that which is allowed to one infirm person, be granted to all women, who, through the fault of their nature, are rendered infirm?

She must not, therefore, be forbidden to receive the Mystery of the Holy Communion during those days. But if any one out of profound respect does not presume to do it, she is to be commended; yet if she receives it, she is not to be judged. For it is the part of noble minds in some manner to acknowledge their faults, even when there is no fault; because very often that is done without a fault, which, nevertheless, proceeded from a fault. Thus, when we are hungry, it is no sin to eat; yet our being hungry proceeds from the sin of the first man. The courses are no sin in women, because they happen naturally; yet, because our nature itself is so depraved, that it appears to be defiled even without the concurrence of the will, a defect arises from sin, and thereby human nature may itself know what it is become by judgement. And let man, who wilfully committed the offence,

bear the guilt of that offence against his will. And, therefore, let women consider with themselves, and if they do not presume, during their courses, to approach the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord, they are to be commended for their praiseworthy consideration; but when they are carried away with love of the same Mystery to receive it according to the custom of the religious life, they are not to be restrained, as we said before. For as in the Old Testament the outward works are observed, so in the New Testament, that which is outwardly done, is not so diligently regarded as that which is inwardly thought, that the punishment may be with discernment. For whereas the Law forbids the eating of many things as unclean, yet our Lord says in the Gospel, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." And afterwards he added, expounding the same, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." Where it is abundantly shown, that that is declared by Almighty God to be polluted in deed, which springs from the root of a polluted thought. Whence also Paul the Apostle says, "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure." And presently, declaring the cause of that defilement, he adds, "For even their mind and conscience is defiled." If, therefore, meat is not unclean to him whose mind is not unclean, why shall that which a woman suffers according to nature, with a clean mind, be imputed to her as uncleanness?

A man who has approached his own wife is not to enter the church unless washed with water, nor is he to enter immediately although washed. The Law prescribed to the ancient people, that a man in such cases should be washed with water, and not enter into the church before the setting of the sun. Which, nevertheless, may be understood spiritually, because a man acts so when the mind is led by the imagination to unlawful concupiscence; for unless the fire of concupiscence be first driven from his mind, he is not to think himself worthy of the congregation of the brethren, while he sees

himself burdened by the iniquity of a perverted will. For though divers nations have divers opinions concerning this affair, and seem to observe different rules, it was always the custom of the Romans, from ancient times, for such an one to seek to be cleansed by washing, and for some time reverently to forbear entering the church. Nor do we, in so saying, assign matrimony to be a fault; but forasmuch as lawful intercourse cannot be had without the pleasure of the flesh, it is proper to forbear entering the holy place, because the pleasure itself cannot be without a fault. For he was not born of adultery or fornication, but of lawful marriage, who said, "Behold I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin my mother brought me forth." For he who knew himself to have been conceived in iniquity, lamented that he was born from sin, because he bears the defect, as a tree bears in its bough the sap it drew from the root. In which words, however, he does not call the union of the married couple iniquity, but the will itself. For there are many things which are lawful and permitted, and yet we are somewhat defiled in doing them. As very often by being angry we correct faults, and at the same time disturb our own peace of mind; and though that which we do is right, yet it is not to be approved that our mind should be disturbed. For he who said, "My eye was disturbed with anger," had been angry at the vices of sinners. Now, seeing that only a calm mind can rest in the light of contemplation, he grieved that his eye was disturbed with anger; because, whilst he was correcting evil actions below, he was obliged to be confused and disturbed with regard to the contemplation of the highest things. Anger against vice is, therefore, commendable, and yet painful to a man, because he thinks that by his mind being agitated, he has incurred some guilt. Lawful commerce, therefore, must be for the sake of children, not of pleasure; and must be to procure offspring, not to satisfy vices. But if any man is led not by the desire of pleasure, but only for the sake of getting children, such a man is certainly to be left to his own judgement, either as to

entering the church, or as to receiving the Mystery of the Body and Blood of our Lord, which he, who being placed in the fire cannot burn, is not to be forbidden by us to receive. But when, not the love of getting children, but of pleasure prevails, the pair have cause to lament their deed. For this the holy preaching concedes to them, and yet fills the mind with dread of the very concession. For when Paul the Apostle said, "Let him that cannot contain have his own wife;" he presently took care to subjoin, "But this I say by way of permission, not of commandment." For that is not granted by way of permission which is lawful, because it is just; and, therefore, that which he said he permitted, he showed to be an offence.

It is seriously to be considered, that when God was about to speak to the people on Mount Sinai, He first commanded them to abstain from women. And if purity of body was there so carefully required, where God spoke to the people by the means of a creature as His representative, that those who were to hear the words of God should abstain; how much more ought women, who receive the Body of Almighty God, to preserve themselves in purity of flesh, lest they be burdened with the very greatness of that inestimable Mystery? For this reason also, it was said to David, concerning his men, by the priest, that if they were clean in this particular, they should receive the shewbread, which they would not have received at all, had not David first declared them to be clean. Then the man, who, afterwards, has been washed with water, is also capable of receiving the Mystery of the Holy Communion, when it is lawful for him, according to what has been before declared, to enter the church.

Augustine's Ninth Question. — Whether after an illusion, such as is wont to happen in a dream, any man may receive the Body of our Lord, or if he be a priest, celebrate the Divine Mysteries?

Gregory answers. — The Testament of the Old Law, as has been said already in the article above, calls such a man polluted, and allows him not

to enter into the church till the evening, after being washed with water. Which, nevertheless, a spiritual people, taking in another sense, will understand in the same manner as above; because he is imposed upon as it were in a dream, who, being tempted with uncleanness, is defiled by real representations in thought, and he is to be washed with water, that he may cleanse away the sins of thought with tears; and unless the fire of temptation depart before, may know himself to be in a manner guilty until the evening. But a distinction is very necessary in that illusion, and one must carefully consider what causes it to arise in the mind of the person sleeping; for sometimes it proceeds from excess of eating or drinking; sometimes from the superfluity or infirmity of nature, and sometimes from the thoughts. And when it happens either through superfluity or infirmity of nature, such an illusion is not to be feared at all, because it is to be lamented, that the mind of the person, who knew nothing of it, suffers the same, rather than that he occasioned it. But when the appetite of gluttony commits excess in food, and thereupon the receptacles of the humours are oppressed, the mind thence contracts some guilt; yet not so much as to hinder the receiving of the Holy Mystery, or celebrating Mass, when a holy day requires it, or necessity obliges the Mystery to be shown forth, because there is no other priest in the place; for if there be others who can perform the ministry, the illusion proceeding from over-eating ought not to exclude a man from receiving the sacred Mystery; but I am of opinion he ought humbly to abstain from offering the sacrifice of the Mystery, but not from receiving it, unless the mind of the person sleeping has been disturbed with some foul imagination. For there are some, who for the most part so suffer the illusion, that their mind, even during the sleep of the body, is not defiled with filthy thoughts. In which case, one thing is evident, that the mind is guilty, not being acquitted even in its own judgement; for though it does not remember to have seen anything whilst the body was sleeping, yet it calls to

mind that, when the body was awake, it fell into gluttony. But if the illusion of the sleeper proceeds from evil thoughts when he was awake, then its guilt is manifest to the mind; for the man perceives from what root that defilement sprang, because what he had consciously thought of, that he afterwards unconsciously endured. But it is to be considered, whether that thought was no more than a suggestion, or proceeded to delight, or, what is worse, consented to sin. For all sin is committed in three ways, viz., by suggestion, by delight, and by consent. Suggestion comes from the Devil, delight from the flesh, and consent from the spirit. For the serpent suggested the first offence, and Eve, as flesh, took delight in it, but Adam, as the spirit, consented. And when the mind sits in judgement on itself, it must clearly distinguish between suggestion and delight, and between delight and consent. For when the evil spirit suggests a sin to the mind, if there ensue no delight in the sin, the sin is in no way committed; but when the flesh begins to take delight in it, then sin begins to arise. But if it deliberately consents, then the sin is known to be full-grown. The seed, therefore, of sin is in the suggestion, the nourishment of it in delight, its maturity in the consent. And it often happens that what the evil spirit sows in the thought, in that the flesh begins to find delight, and yet the soul does not consent to that delight. And whereas the flesh cannot be delighted without the mind, yet the mind struggling against the pleasures of the flesh, is after a manner unwillingly bound by the carnal delight, so that through reason it opposes it, and does not consent, yet being bound by delight, it grievously laments being so bound. Wherefore that great soldier of our Lord's host, groaned and said, "I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." Now if he was a captive, he did not fight; but he did fight; wherefore he was a captive and at the same time therefore fought against the law of the mind, which the law that is in the members opposed; but if he

fought, he was no captive. Thus, then, man is, as I may say, a captive and yet free. Free on account of justice, which he loves, a captive by the delight which he unwillingly bears within him.

Chap. XXVIII.

How Pope Gregory wrote to the bishop of Arles to help Augustine in the work of God. [601 a.d.]

Thus far the answers of the holy Pope Gregory, to the questions of the most reverend prelate, Augustine. Now the letter, which he says he had written to the bishop of Arles, was directed to Vergilius, successor to Aetherius, and was in the following words:

"*To his most reverend and holy brother and fellow bishop, Vergilius; Gregory, servant of the servants of God.* With how much kindness brethren, coming of their own accord, are to be entertained, is shown by this, that they are for the most part invited for the sake of brotherly love. Therefore, if our common brother, Bishop Augustine, shall happen to come to you, let your love, as is becoming, receive him with so great kindness and affection, that it may refresh him by the benefit of its consolation and show to others how brotherly charity is to be cultivated. And, since it often happens that those who are at a distance first learn from others the things that need correction, if he bring before you, my brother, any sins of bishops or others, do you, in conjunction with him, carefully inquire into the same, and show yourself so strict and earnest with regard to those things which offend God and provoke His wrath, that for the amendment of others, the punishment may fall upon the guilty, and the innocent may not suffer under false report. God keep you in safety, most reverend brother. Given the 22nd day of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the eighteenth year after the consulship of our said lord, and the fourth indiction."

Chap. XXIX.

How the same Pope sent to Augustine the Pall and a letter, along with several ministers of the Word. [601 a.d.]

Moreover, the same Pope Gregory, hearing from Bishop Augustine, that the harvest which he had was great and the labourers but few, sent to him, together with his aforesaid envoys, certain fellow labourers and ministers of the Word, of whom the chief and foremost were Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus, and Rufinianus, and by them all things in general that were necessary for the worship and service of the Church, to wit, sacred vessels and altar-cloths, also church-furniture, and vestments for the bishops and clerks, as likewise relics of the holy Apostles and martyrs; besides many manuscripts. He also sent a letter, wherein he signified that he had despatched the pall to him, and at the same time directed how he should constitute bishops in Britain. The letter was in these words:

"*To his most reverend and holy brother and fellow bishop, Augustine; Gregory, the servant of the servants of God.* Though it be certain, that the unspeakable rewards of the eternal kingdom are reserved for those who labour for Almighty God, yet it is requisite that we bestow on them the benefit of honours, to the end that they may by this recompense be encouraged the more vigorously to apply themselves to the care of their spiritual work. And, seeing that the new Church of the English is, through the bounty of the Lord, and your labours, brought to the grace of God, we grant you the use of the pall in the same, only for the celebration of the solemn service of the Mass; that so you may ordain twelve bishops in different places, who shall be subject to your jurisdiction. But the bishop of London shall, for the future, be always consecrated by his own synod, and receive the pall, which is the token of his office, from this holy and

Apostolic see, which I, by the grace of God, now serve. But we would have you send to the city of York such a bishop as you shall think fit to ordain; yet so, that if that city, with the places adjoining, shall receive the Word of God, that bishop shall also ordain twelve bishops, and enjoy the honour of a metropolitan; for we design, if we live, by the help of God, to bestow on him also the pall; and yet we would have him to be subject to your authority, my brother; but after your decease, he shall so preside over the bishops he shall have ordained, as to be in no way subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop of London. But for the future let there be this distinction as regards honour between the bishops of the cities of London and York, that he who has been first ordained have the precedence. But let them take counsel and act in concert and with one mind dispose whatsoever is to be done for zeal of Christ; let them judge rightly, and carry out their judgement without dissension.

"But to you, my brother, shall, by the authority of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, be subject not only those bishops whom you shall ordain, and those that shall be ordained by the bishop of York, but also all the prelates in Britain; to the end that from the words and manner of life of your Holiness they may learn the rule of a right belief and a good life, and fulfilling their office in faith and righteousness, they may, when it shall please the Lord, attain to the kingdom of Heaven. God preserve you in safety, most reverend brother.

"Given the 22nd of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the eighteenth year after the consulship of our said lord, and the fourth indiction."

Chap. XXX.

A copy of the letter which Pope Gregory sent to the Abbot Mellitus, then going into Britain. [601 a.d.]

The aforesaid envoys having departed, the blessed Father Gregory sent after them a letter worthy to be recorded, wherein he plainly shows how carefully he watched over the salvation of our country. The letter was as follows:

"*To his most beloved son, the Abbot Mellitus; Gregory, the servant of the servants of God.* We have been much concerned, since the departure of our people that are with you, because we have received no account of the success of your journey. Howbeit, when Almighty God has led you to the most reverend Bishop Augustine, our brother, tell him what I have long been considering in my own mind concerning the matter of the English people; to wit, that the temples of the idols in that nation ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let water be consecrated and sprinkled in the said temples, let altars be erected, and relics placed there. For if those temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God; that the nation, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more freely resort to the places to which they have been accustomed. And because they are used to slaughter many oxen in sacrifice to devils, some solemnity must be given them in exchange for this, as that on the day of the dedication, or the nativities of the holy martyrs, whose relics are there deposited, they should build themselves huts of the boughs of trees about those churches which have been turned to that use from being temples, and celebrate the solemnity with religious feasting, and no more offer animals to the Devil, but kill cattle and glorify God in their feast, and return thanks to

the Giver of all things for their abundance; to the end that, whilst some outward gratifications are retained, they may the more easily consent to the inward joys. For there is no doubt that it is impossible to cut off every thing at once from their rude natures; because he who endeavours to ascend to the highest place rises by degrees or steps, and not by leaps. Thus the Lord made Himself known to the people of Israel in Egypt; and yet He allowed them the use, in His own worship, of the sacrifices which they were wont to offer to the Devil, commanding them in His sacrifice to kill animals, to the end that, with changed hearts, they might lay aside one part of the sacrifice, whilst they retained another; and although the animals were the same as those which they were wont to offer, they should offer them to the true God, and not to idols; and thus they would no longer be the same sacrifices. This then, dearly beloved, it behoves you to communicate to our aforesaid brother, that he, being placed where he is at present, may consider how he is to order all things. God preserve you in safety, most beloved son.

"Given the 17th of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, the eighteenth year after the consulship of our said lord, and the fourth indiction."

Chap. XXXI.

How Pope Gregory, by letter, exhorted Augustine not to glory in his miracles. [601 a.d.]

At which time he also sent Augustine a letter concerning the miracles that he had heard had been wrought by him; wherein he admonishes him not to incur the danger of being puffed up by the number of them. The letter was in these words:

"I know, dearly beloved brother, that Almighty God, by means of you, shows forth great miracles to the nation which it was His will to choose. Wherefore you must needs rejoice with fear, and fear with joy concerning that heavenly gift; for you will rejoice because the souls of the English are by outward miracles drawn to inward grace; but you will fear, lest, amidst the wonders that are wrought, the weak mind may be puffed up with self-esteem, and that whereby it is outwardly raised to honour cause it inwardly to fall through vain-glory. For we must call to mind, that when the disciples returned with joy from preaching, and said to their Heavenly Master, 'Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy Name;' forthwith they received the reply, 'In this rejoice not; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.' For their minds were set on private and temporal joys, when they rejoiced in miracles; but they are recalled from the private to the common joy, and from the temporal to the eternal, when it is said to them, 'Rejoice in this, because your names are written in heaven.' For all the elect do not work miracles, and yet the names of all are written in heaven. For those who are disciples of the truth ought not to rejoice, save for that good thing which all men enjoy as well as they, and in which their joy shall be without end.

"It remains, therefore, most dear brother, that amidst those outward actions, which you perform through the power of the Lord, you should always carefully judge yourself in your heart, and carefully understand both what you are yourself, and how much grace is bestowed upon that same nation, for the conversion of which you have received even the gift of working miracles. And if you remember that you have at any time sinned against our Creator, either by word or deed, always call it to mind, to the end that the remembrance of your guilt may crush the vanity which rises in your heart. And whatsoever gift of working miracles you either shall receive, or have received, consider the same, not as conferred on you, but on those for whose salvation it has been given you."

Chap. XXXII.

How Pope Gregory sent letters and gifts to King Ethelbert. [601 a.d.]

The same blessed Pope Gregory, at the same time, sent a letter to King Ethelbert, with many gifts of divers sorts; being desirous to glorify the king with temporal honours, at the same time that he rejoiced that through his own labour and zeal he had attained to the knowledge of heavenly glory. The copy of the said letter is as follows:

"*To the most glorious lord, and his most excellent son, Ethelbert, king of the English, Bishop Gregory.* Almighty God advances good men to the government of nations, that He may by their means bestow the gifts of His loving-kindness on those over whom they are placed. This we know to have come to pass in the English nation, over whom your Highness was placed, to the end, that by means of the blessings which are granted to you, heavenly benefits might also be conferred on your subjects. Therefore, my illustrious son, do you carefully guard the grace which you have received from the Divine goodness, and be eager to spread the Christian faith among the people under your rule; in all uprightness increase your zeal for their conversion; suppress the worship of idols; overthrow the structures of the temples; establish the manners of your subjects by much cleanness of life, exhorting, terrifying, winning, correcting, and showing forth an example of good works, that you may obtain your reward in Heaven from Him, Whose Name and the knowledge of Whom you have spread abroad upon earth. For He, Whose honour you seek and maintain among the nations, will also render your Majesty's name more glorious even to posterity.

"For even so the most pious emperor, Constantine, of old, recovering the Roman commonwealth from the false worship of idols, brought it with himself into subjection to Almighty God, our Lord Jesus Christ, and turned

to Him with his whole mind, together with the nations under his rule. Whence it followed, that his praises transcended the fame of former princes; and he excelled his predecessors in renown as much as in good works. Now, therefore, let your Highness hasten to impart to the kings and peoples that are subject to you, the knowledge of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that you may surpass the ancient kings of your nation in praise and merit, and while you cause the sins of others among your own subjects to be blotted out, become the more free from anxiety with regard to your own sins before the dread judgement of Almighty God.

"Willingly hear, devoutly perform, and studiously retain in your memory, whatsoever counsel shall be given you by our most reverend brother, Bishop Augustine, who is trained up in the monastic rule, full of the knowledge of Holy Scripture, and, by the help of God, endued with good works; for if you give ear to him when he speaks on behalf of Almighty God, the sooner will Almighty God hear his prayers for you. But if (which God forbid!) you slight his words, how shall Almighty God hear him on your behalf, when you neglect to hear him on behalf of God? Unite yourself, therefore, to him with all your mind, in the fervour of faith, and further his endeavours, by that virtue which God has given you, that He may make you partaker of His kingdom, Whose faith you cause to be received and maintained in your own.

"Besides, we would have your Highness know that, as we find in Holy Scripture from the words of the Almighty Lord, the end of this present world, and the kingdom of the saints, which will never come to an end, is at hand. But as the end of the world draws near, many things are about to come upon us which were not before, to wit, changes in the air, and terrors from heaven, and tempests out of the order of the seasons, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes in divers places; which things will not, nevertheless, all happen in our days, but will all follow after our days. If,

therefore, you perceive that any of these things come to pass in your country, let not your mind be in any way disturbed; for these signs of the end of the world are sent before, for this reason, that we may take heed to our souls, and be watchful for the hour of death, and may be found prepared with good works to meet our Judge. Thus much, my illustrious son, I have said in few words, with intent that when the Christian faith is spread abroad in your kingdom, our discourse to you may also be more copious, and we may desire to say the more, as joy for the full conversion of your nation is increased in our mind.

“I have sent you some small gifts, which will not appear small to you, when received by you with the blessing of the blessed Apostle, Peter. May Almighty God, therefore, perfect in you His grace which He has begun, and prolong your life here through a course of many years, and in the fulness of time receive you into the congregation of the heavenly country. May the grace of God preserve you in safety, my most excellent lord and son.

“Given the 22nd day of June, in the nineteenth year of the reign of our most religious lord, Mauritius Tiberius Augustus, in the eighteenth year after his consulship, and the fourth indiction.”

Chap. XXXIII.

How Augustine repaired the church of our Saviour, and built the monastery of the blessed Peter the Apostle; and concerning Peter the first abbot of the same.

Augustine having had his episcopal see granted him in the royal city, as has been said, recovered therein, with the support of the king, a church, which he was informed had been built of old by the faithful among the Romans, and consecrated it in the name of the Holy Saviour, our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, and there established a residence for himself and all his successors. He also built a monastery not far from the city to the eastward, in which, by his advice, Ethelbert erected from the foundation the church of the blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and enriched it with divers gifts; wherein the bodies of the same Augustine, and of all the bishops of Canterbury, and of the kings of Kent, might be buried. Nevertheless, it was not Augustine himself who consecrated that church, but Laurentius, his successor.

The first abbot of that monastery was the priest Peter, who, being sent on a mission into Gaul, was drowned in a bay of the sea, which is called Amfleat, and committed to a humble tomb by the inhabitants of the place; but since it was the will of Almighty God to reveal his merits, a light from Heaven was seen over his grave every night; till the neighbouring people who saw it, perceiving that he had been a holy man that was buried there, and inquiring who and whence he was, carried away the body, and interred it in the church, in the city of Boulogne, with the honour due to so great a person.

Chap. XXXIV.

How Ethelfrid, king of the Northumbrians, having vanquished the nations of the Scots, expelled them from the territories of the English.

[603 a.d.]

At this time, the brave and ambitious king, Ethelfrid, governed the kingdom of the Northumbrians, and ravaged the Britons more than all the chiefs of the English, insomuch that he might be compared to Saul of old, king of the Israelites, save only in this, that he was ignorant of Divine religion. For he conquered more territories from the Britons than any other chieftain or king, either subduing the inhabitants and making them tributary, or driving them out and planting the English in their places. To him might justly be applied the saying of the patriarch blessing his son in the person of Saul, "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." Hereupon, Aedan, king of the Scots that dwell in Britain, being alarmed by his success, came against him with a great and mighty army, but was defeated and fled with a few followers; for almost all his army was cut to pieces at a famous place, called Degsastan, that is, Degsa Stone. In which battle also Theodbald, brother to Ethelfrid, was killed, with almost all the forces he commanded. This war Ethelfrid brought to an end in the year of our Lord 603, the eleventh of his own reign, which lasted twenty-four years, and the first year of the reign of Phocas, who then was at the head of the Roman empire. From that time, no king of the Scots durst come into Britain to make war on the English to this day.

Book II

Chap. I.

Of the death of the blessed Pope Gregory.[604 a.d.]

At this time, that is, in the year of our Lord 605, the blessed Pope Gregory, after having most gloriously governed the Roman Apostolic see thirteen years, six months, and ten days, died, and was translated to an eternal abode in the kingdom of Heaven. Of whom, seeing that by his zeal he converted our nation, the English, from the power of Satan to the faith of Christ, it behoves us to discourse more at large in our Ecclesiastical History, for we may rightly, nay, we must, call him our apostle; because, as soon as he began to wield the pontifical power over all the world, and was placed over the Churches long before converted to the true faith, he made our nation, till then enslaved to idols, the Church of Christ, so that concerning him we may use those words of the Apostle; "if he be not an apostle to others, yet doubtless he is to us; for the seal of his apostleship are we in the Lord."

He was by nation a Roman, son of Gordianus, tracing his descent from ancestors that were not only noble, but religious. Moreover Felix, once bishop of the same Apostolic see, a man of great honour in Christ and in the Church, was his forefather. Nor did he show his nobility in religion by less strength of devotion than his parents and kindred. But that nobility of this world which was seen in him, by the help of the Divine Grace, he used only to gain the glory of eternal dignity; for soon quitting his secular habit, he entered a monastery, wherein he began to live with so much grace of perfection that (as he was wont afterwards with tears to testify) his mind was above all transitory things; that he rose superior to all that is subject to change; that he used to think of nothing but what was heavenly; that, whilst detained by the body, he broke through the bonds of the flesh by contemplation; and that he even loved death, which is a penalty to almost all men, as the entrance into life, and the reward of his labours. This he used

to say of himself, not to boast of his progress in virtue, but rather to bewail the falling off which he imagined he had sustained through his pastoral charge. Indeed, once in a private conversation with his deacon, Peter, after having enumerated the former virtues of his soul, he added sorrowfully, “But now, on account of the pastoral charge, it is entangled with the affairs of laymen, and, after so fair an appearance of inward peace, is defiled with the dust of earthly action. And having wasted itself on outward things, by turning aside to the affairs of many men, even when it desires the inward things, it returns to them undoubtedly impaired. I therefore consider what I endure, I consider what I have lost, and when I behold what I have thrown away, that which I bear appears the more grievous.”

So spake the holy man constrained by his great humility. But it behoves us to believe that he lost nothing of his monastic perfection by reason of his pastoral charge, but rather that he gained greater profit through the labour of converting many, than by the former calm of his private life, and chiefly because, whilst holding the pontifical office, he set about organizing his house like a monastery. And when first drawn from the monastery, ordained to the ministry of the altar, and sent to Constantinople as representative of the Apostolic see, though he now took part in the secular affairs of the palace, yet he did not abandon the fixed course of his heavenly life; for some of the brethren of his monastery, who had followed him to the royal city in their brotherly love, he employed for the better observance of monastic rule, to the end that at all times, by their example, as he writes himself, he might be held fast to the calm shore of prayer, as it were, with the cable of an anchor, whilst he should be tossed up and down by the ceaseless waves of worldly affairs; and daily in the intercourse of studious reading with them, strengthen his mind shaken with temporal concerns. By their company he was not only guarded against the assaults of the world, but more and more roused to the exercises of a heavenly life.

For they persuaded him to interpret by a mystical exposition the book of the blessed Job, which is involved in great obscurity; nor could he refuse to undertake that work, which brotherly affection imposed on him for the future benefit of many; but in a wonderful manner, in five and thirty books of exposition, he taught how that same book is to be understood literally; how to be referred to the mysteries of Christ and the Church; and in what sense it is to be adapted to every one of the faithful. This work he began as papal representative in the royal city, but finished it at Rome after being made pope. Whilst he was still in the royal city, by the help of the grace of Catholic truth, he crushed in its first rise a new heresy which sprang up there, concerning the state of our resurrection. For Eutychius, bishop of that city, taught, that our body, in the glory of resurrection, would be impalpable, and more subtile than wind and air. The blessed Gregory hearing this, proved by force of truth, and by the instance of the Resurrection of our Lord, that this doctrine was every way opposed to the orthodox faith. For the Catholic faith holds that our body, raised by the glory of immortality, is indeed rendered subtile by the effect of spiritual power, but is palpable by the reality of nature; according to the example of our Lord's Body, concerning which, when risen from the dead, He Himself says to His disciples, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." In maintaining this faith, the venerable Father Gregory so earnestly strove against the rising heresy, and with the help of the most pious emperor, Tiberius Constantine, so fully suppressed it, that none has been since found to revive it.

He likewise composed another notable book, the "Liber Pastoralis," wherein he clearly showed what sort of persons ought to be preferred to rule the Church; how such rulers ought to live; with how much discrimination they ought to instruct the different classes of their hearers, and how seriously to reflect every day on their own frailty. He also wrote forty

homilies on the Gospel, which he divided equally into two volumes; and composed four books of Dialogues, in which, at the request of his deacon, Peter, he recounted the virtues of the more renowned saints of Italy, whom he had either known or heard of, as a pattern of life for posterity; to the end that, as he taught in his books of Expositions what virtues men ought to strive after, so by describing the miracles of saints, he might make known the glory of those virtues. Further, in twenty-two homilies, he showed how much light is latent in the first and last parts of the prophet Ezekiel, which seemed the most obscure. Besides which, he wrote the "Book of Answers," to the questions of the holy Augustine, the first bishop of the English nation, as we have shown above, inserting the same book entire in this history; and the useful little "Synodical Book," which he composed with the bishops of Italy on necessary matters of the Church; as well as private letters to certain persons. And it is the more wonderful that he could write so many lengthy works, seeing that almost all the time of his youth, to use his own words, he was frequently tormented with internal pain, constantly enfeebled by the weakness of his digestion, and oppressed by a low but persistent fever. But in all these troubles, forasmuch as he carefully reflected that, as the Scripture testifies, "He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," the more severely he suffered under those present evils, the more he assured himself of his eternal hope.

Thus much may be said of his immortal genius, which could not be crushed by such severe bodily pains. Other popes applied themselves to building churches or adorning them with gold and silver, but Gregory was wholly intent upon gaining souls. Whatsoever money he had, he took care to distribute diligently and give to the poor, that his righteousness might endure for ever, and his horn be exalted with honour; so that the words of the blessed Job might be truly said of him, "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I

delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgement was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not, I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." And a little after: "If I have withheld," says he, "the poor from their desire; or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof: (for from my youth compassion grew up with me, and from my mother's womb it came forth with me.")

To his works of piety and righteousness this also may be added, that he saved our nation, by the preachers he sent hither, from the teeth of the old enemy, and made it partaker of eternal liberty. Rejoicing in the faith and salvation of our race, and worthily commending it with praise, he says, in his exposition of the blessed Job, "Behold, the tongue of Britain, which only knew how to utter barbarous cries, has long since begun to raise the Hebrew Hallelujah to the praise of God! Behold, the once swelling ocean now serves prostrate at the feet of the saints; and its wild upheavals, which earthly princes could not subdue with the sword, are now, through the fear of God, bound by the lips of priests with words alone; and the heathen that stood not in awe of troops of warriors, now believes and fears the tongues of the humble! For he has received a message from on high and mighty works are revealed; the strength of the knowledge of God is given him, and restrained by the fear of the Lord, he dreads to do evil, and with all his heart desires to attain to everlasting grace." In which words the blessed Gregory shows us this also, that St. Augustine and his companions brought the English to receive the truth, not only by the preaching of words, but also by showing forth heavenly signs.

The blessed Pope Gregory, among other things, caused Masses to be celebrated in the churches of the holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, over their bodies. And in the celebration of Masses, he added three petitions of the utmost perfection: “And dispose our days in thy peace, and bid us to be preserved from eternal damnation, and to be numbered in the flock of thine elect.”

He governed the Church in the days of the Emperors Mauritius and Phocas, and passing out of this life in the second year of the same Phocas, he departed to the true life which is in Heaven. His body was buried in the church of the blessed Apostle Peter before the sacristy, on the 12th day of March, to rise one day in the same body in glory with the rest of the holy pastors of the Church. On his tomb was written this epitaph:

Receive, O Earth, his body taken from thine own; thou canst restore it, when God calls to life. His spirit rises to the stars; the claims of death shall not avail against him, for death itself is but the way to new life. In this tomb are laid the limbs of a great pontiff, who yet lives for ever in all places in countless deeds of mercy. Hunger and cold he overcame with food and raiment, and shielded souls from the enemy by his holy teaching. And whatsoever he taught in word, that he fulfilled in deed, that he might be a pattern, even as he spake words of mystic meaning. By his guiding love he brought the Angles to Christ, gaining armies for the Faith from a new people. This was thy toil, thy task, thy care, thy aim as shepherd, to offer to thy Lord abundant increase of the flock. So, Consul of God, rejoice in this thy triumph, for now thou hast the reward of thy works for evermore.

Nor must we pass by in silence the story of the blessed Gregory, handed down to us by the tradition of our ancestors, which explains his earnest care for the salvation of our nation. It is said that one day, when some merchants had lately arrived at Rome, many things were exposed for sale in the market place, and much people resorted thither to buy: Gregory himself went with

the rest, and saw among other wares some boys put up for sale, of fair complexion, with pleasing countenances, and very beautiful hair. When he beheld them, he asked, it is said, from what region or country they were brought? and was told, from the island of Britain, and that the inhabitants were like that in appearance. He again inquired whether those islanders were Christians, or still involved in the errors of paganism, and was informed that they were pagans. Then fetching a deep sigh from the bottom of his heart, "Alas! what pity," said he, "that the author of darkness should own men of such fair countenances; and that with such grace of outward form, their minds should be void of inward grace." He therefore again asked, what was the name of that nation? and was answered, that they were called Angles. "Right," said he, "for they have an angelic face, and it is meet that such should be co-heirs with the Angels in heaven. What is the name of the province from which they are brought?" It was replied, that the natives of that province were called Deiri. "Truly are they *De ira*," said he, "saved from wrath, and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of that province called?" They told him his name was Aelli; and he, playing upon the name, said, "Allelujah, the praise of God the Creator must be sung in those parts."

Then he went to the bishop of the Roman Apostolic see (for he was not himself then made pope), and entreated him to send some ministers of the Word into Britain to the nation of the English, that it might be converted to Christ by them; declaring himself ready to carry out that work with the help of God, if the Apostolic Pope should think fit to have it done. But not being then able to perform this task, because, though the Pope was willing to grant his request, yet the citizens of Rome could not be brought to consent that he should depart so far from the city, as soon as he was himself made Pope, he carried out the long-desired work, sending, indeed, other preachers, but himself by his exhortations and prayers helping the preaching

to bear fruit. This account, which we have received from a past generation, we have thought fit to insert in our Ecclesiastical History.

Pope St. Gregory I by Gilbert Roger Hudleston

From 'Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume 6', 1913

CONTENTS

Doctor of the Church; born at Rome about 540; died 12 March 604. Gregory

“is certainly one of the most notable figures in Ecclesiastical History. He has exercised in many respects a momentous influence on the doctrine, the organization, and the discipline of the Catholic Church. To him we must look for an explanation of the religious situation of the Middle Ages; indeed, if no account were taken of his work, the evolution of the form of medieval Christianity would be almost inexplicable. And further, in so far as the modern Catholic system is a legitimate development of medieval Catholicism, of this too Gregory may not unreasonably be termed the Father. Almost all the leading principles of the later Catholicism are found, at any rate in germ, in Gregory the Great. (F.H. Dudden, “Gregory the Great”, 1, p. v).”

This eulogy by a learned non-Catholic writer will justify the length and elaboration of the following article.

I. FROM BIRTH TO 574

Gregory's father was Gordianus, a wealthy patrician, probably of the famous *gens Amicia*, who owned large estates in Sicily and a mansion on the Caelian Hill in Rome, the ruins of which, apparently in a wonderful state of preservation, still await excavation beneath the Church of St. Andrew and St. Gregory. His mother Silvia appears also to have been of good family, but very little is known of her life. She is honoured as a saint, her feast being kept on 3 November. Portraits of Gordianus and Silvia were painted by Gregory's order, in the atrium of St. Andrew's monastery, and a pleasing description of these may be found in John the Deacon (Vita, IV, lxxxiii). Besides his mother, two of Gregory's aunts have been canonised, Gordianus's two sisters, Tarsilla and Æmilians, so that John the Deacon speaks of his education as being that of a saint among saints. Of his early years we know nothing beyond what the history of the period tells us. Between the years 546 and 552 Rome was first captured by the Goths under Totila, and then abandoned by them; next it was garrisoned by Belisarius, and besieged in vain by the Goths, who took it again, however, after the recall of Belisarius, only to lose it once more to Narses. Gregory's mind and memory were both exceptionally receptive, and it is to the effect produced on him by these disasters that we must attribute the tinge of sadness which pervades his writings and especially his clear expectation of a speedy end to the world. Of his education, we have no details. Gregory of Tours tells us that in grammar, rhetoric and dialectic he was so skilful as to be thought second to none in all Rome, and it seems certain also that he must have gone through a course of legal studies. Not least among the educating influences was the religious atmosphere of his home. He loved to meditate on the Scriptures and to listen attentively to the conversations of his elders, so that he was "devoted to God from his youth up". His rank and prospects pointed him out naturally for a public career, and he doubtless held some of

the subordinate offices wherein a young patrician embarked on public life. That he acquitted himself well in these appears certain, since we find him about the year 573, when little more than thirty years old, filling the important office of prefect of the city of Rome. At that date the brilliant post was shorn of much of its old magnificence, and its responsibilities were reduced; still it remained the highest civil dignity in the city, and it was only after long prayer and inward struggle that Gregory decided to abandon everything and become a monk. This event took place most probably in 574. His decision once taken, he devoted himself to the work and austerities of his new life with all the natural energy of his character. His Sicilian estates were given up to found six monasteries there, and his home on the Caelian Hill was converted into another under the patronage of St. Andrew. Here he himself took the cowl, so that “he who had been wont to go about the city clad in the *trabea* and aglow with silk and jewels, now clad in a worthless garment served the altar of the Lord” (Greg. Tur., X, i).

II. AS MONK AND ABBOT (C. 574-590)

There has been much discussion as to whether Gregory and his fellow-monks at St. Andrew's followed the Rule of St. Benedict. Baronius and others on his authority have denied this, while it has been asserted as strongly by Mabillon and the Bollandists, who, in the preface to the life of St. Augustine (26 May), retract the opinion expressed earlier in the preface to St. Gregory's life (12 March). The controversy is important only in view of the question as to the form of monasticism introduced by St. Augustine into England, and it may be said that Baronius's view is now practically abandoned. For about three years Gregory lived in retirement in the monastery of St. Andrew, a period to which he often refers as the happiest portion of his life. His great austerities during this time are recorded by the biographers, and probably caused the weak health from which he constantly suffered in later life. However, he was soon drawn out of his seclusion, when, in 578, the pope ordained him, much against his will, as one of the seven deacons (*regionarii*) of Rome. The period was one of acute crisis. The Lombards were advancing rapidly towards the city, and the only chance of safety seemed to be in obtaining help from the Emperor Tiberius at Byzantium. Popo Pelagius II accordingly dispatched a special embassy to Tiberius, and sent Gregory along with it as his *apocrisiarius*, or permanent ambassador to the Court of Byzantium. The date of this new appointment seems to have been the spring of 579, and it lasted apparently for about six years. Nothing could have been more uncongenial to Gregory than the worldly atmosphere of the brilliant Byzantine Court, and to counteract its dangerous influence he followed the monastic life so far as circumstances permitted. This was made easier by the fact that several of his brethren from St. Andrew's accompanied him to Constantinople. With them he prayed and studied the Scriptures, one result of which remains in his "Morals", or series of lectures on the Book of Job, composed during this period at the request

of St. Leander of Seville, whose acquaintance Gregory made during his stay in Constantinople. Much attention was attracted to Gregory by his controversy with Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople, concerning the Resurrection. Eutychius had published a treatise on the subject maintaining that the risen bodies of the elect would be "impalpable, more light than air". To this view Gregory objected the palpability of Christ's risen body. The dispute became prolonged and bitter, till at length the emperor intervened, both combatants being summoned to a private audience, where they stated their views. The emperor decided that Gregory was in the right, and ordered Eutychius's book to the burned. The strain of the struggle had been so great that both fell ill. Gregory recovered, but the patriarch succumbed, recanting his error on his death bed. Mention should be made of the curious fact that, although Gregory's sojourn at Constantinople lasted for six years, he seems never to have mastered even the rudiments of Greek. Possibly he found that the use of an interpreter had its advantages, but he often complains of the incapacity of those employed for this purpose. It must be owned that, so far as obtaining help for Rome was concerned, Gregory's stay at Constantinople was a failure. However, his period as ambassador taught him very plainly a lesson which was to bear great fruit later on when he ruled in Rome as pope. This was the important fact that no help was any longer to be looked for from Byzantium, with the corollary that, if Rome and Italy were to be saved at all, it could only be by vigorous independent action of the powers on the spot. Humanly speaking, it is to the fact that Gregory had acquired this conviction that his later line of action with all its momentous consequences is due.

In the year 586, or possibly 585, he was recalled to Rome, and with the greatest joy returned to St. Andrew's, of which he became abbot soon afterwards. The monastery grew famous under his energetic rule, producing many monks who won renown later, and many vivid pictures of this period

may be found in the “Dialogues”. Gregory gave much of his time to lecturing on the Holy Scriptures and is recorded to have expounded to his monks the Heptateuch, Books of Kings, the Prophets, the Book of Proverbs, and the Canticle of V+Canticles. Notes of these lectures were taken at the time by a young student named Claudius, but when transcribed were found by Gregory to contain so many errors that he insisted on their being given to him for correction and revision. Apparently this was never done, for the existing fragments of such works attributed to Gregory are almost certainly spurious. At this period, however, one important literary enterprise was certainly completed. This was the revision and publication of the “Magna Moralia”, or lectures on the Book of Job, undertaken in Constantinople at the request of St. Leander. In one of his letters (Ep., V, liii) Gregory gives an interesting account of the origin of this work. To this period most probably should be assigned the famous incident of Gregory’s meeting with the English youths in the Forum. The first mention of the event is in the Whitby life (c, ix), and the whole story seems to be an English tradition. It is worth notice, therefore, that in the St. Gall manuscript the Angles do not appear as slave boys exposed for sale, but as men visiting Rome of their own free will, whom Gregory expressed a desire to see. It is Venerable Bede (Hist. Eccl., II, i) who first makes them slaves. In consequence of this meeting Gregory was so fixed with desire to convert the Angles that he obtained permission from Pelagius II to go in person to Britain with some of his fellow-monks as missionaries. The Romans, however, were greatly incensed at the pope’s act. With angry words they demanded Gregory’s recall, and messengers were at once dispatched to bring him back to Rome, if necessary by force. These men caught up with the little band of missionaries on the third day after their departure, and at once returned with them, Gregory offering no opposition, since he had received what appeared to him as a sign from heaven that his enterprise should be abandoned. The

strong feeling of the Roman populace that Gregory must not be allowed to leave Rome is a sufficient proof of the position he now held there. He was in fact the chief adviser and assistant of Pelagius II, towards whom he seems to have acted very much in the capacity of secretary (see the letter of the Bishop of Ravenna to Gregory, Epp., III, lxvi, "Sedem apostolicam, quam antae moribus nunc etiam honore debito gubernatis"). In this capacity, probably in 586, Gregory wrote his important letter to the schismatical bishops of Istria who had separated from communion with the Church on the question of the Three Chapters (Epp., Appendix, III, iii). This document, which is almost a treatise in length, is an admirable example of Gregory's skill, but it failed to produce any more effort than Pelagius's two previous letters had, and the schism continued.

The year 589 was one of widespread disaster throughout all the empire. In Italy there was an unprecedented inundation. Farms and houses were carried away by the floods. The Tiber overflowed its banks, destroying numerous buildings, among them the granaries of the Church with all the store of corn. Pestilence followed on the floods, and Rome became a very city of the dead. Business was at a standstill, and the streets were deserted save for the wagons which bore forth countless corpses for burial in common pits beyond the city walls. Then, in February, 590, as if to fill the cup of misery to the brim, Pelagius II died. The choice of a successor lay with the clergy and people of Rome, and without any hesitation they elected Gregory, Abbot of St. Andrew's. In spite of their unanimity Gregory shrank from the dignity thus offered him. He knew, no doubt, that its acceptance meant a final good-bye to the cloister life he loved, and so he not only refused to accede to the prayers of his fellow citizens but also wrote personally to the Emperor Maurice, begging him with all earnestness not to confirm the election. Germanus, prefect of the city, suppresses this letter, however, and sent instead of it the formal schedule of the election. In the

interval while awaiting the emperor's reply the business of the vacant see was transacted by Gregory, in commission with two or three other high officials. As the plague still continued unabated, Gregory called upon the people to join in a vast sevenfold procession which was to start from each of the seven regions of the city and meet at the Basilica of the Blessed Virgin, all praying the while for pardon and the withdrawal of the pestilence. This was accordingly done, and the memory of the event is still preserved by the name "Sant' Angelo" given to the mausoleum of Hadrian from the legend that the Archangel St. Michael was seen upon its summit in the act of sheathing his sword as a sign that the plague was over. At length, after six months of waiting, came the emperor's confirmation of Gregory's election. The saint was terrified at the news and even meditated flight. He was seized, however, carried to the Basilica of St. Peter, and there consecrated pope on 3 September, 590. The story that Gregory actually fled the city and remained hidden in a forest for three days, when his whereabouts was revealed by a supernatural light, seems to be pure invention. It appears for the first time in the Whitby life (c. vii), and is directly contrary to the words of his contemporary, Gregory of Tours (Hist. Franc., X, i). Still he never ceased to regret his elevation, and his later writings contain numberless expressions of strong feeling on this point.

III. AS POPE (590-604)

Fourteen years of life remained to Gregory, and into these he crowded work enough to have exhausted the energies of a lifetime. What makes his achievement more wonderful is his constant ill-health. He suffered almost continually from indigestion and, at intervals, from attacks of slow fever, while for the last half of his pontificate he was a martyr to gout. In spite of these infirmities, which increased steadily, his biographer, Paul the Deacon, tells us "he never rested" (Vita, XV). His work as pope is of so varied a nature that it will be best to take it in sections, although this destroys any exact chronological sequence. At the very outset of his pontificate Gregory published his "Liber pastoralis curae", or book on the office of a bishop, in which he lays down clearly the lines he considers it his duty to follow. The work, which regards the bishop pre-eminently as the physician of souls, is divided into four parts. He points out in the first that only one skilled already as a physician of the soul is fitted to undertake the "supreme rule" of the episcopate. In the second he describes how the bishop's life should be ordered from a spiritual point of view; in the third, how he ought to teach and admonish those under him, and in the fourth how, in spite of his good works, he ought to bear in mind his own weakness, since the better his work the greater the danger of falling through self-confidence. This little work is the key to Gregory's life as pope, for what he preached he practiced. Moreover, it remained for centuries the textbook of the Catholic epioscopate, so that by its influence the ideal of the great pope has moulded the character of the Church, and his spirit has spread into all lands.

(1) Life and Work in Rome

As pope Gregory still lived with monastic simplicity. One of his first acts was to banish all the lay attendants, pages, etc., from the Lateran palace,

and substitute clerics in their place. There was now no *magister militum* living in Rome, so the control even of military matters fell to the pope. The inroads of the Lombards had filled the city with a multitude of indigent refugees, for whose support Gregory made provision, using for this purpose the existing machinery of the ecclesiastical districts, each of which had its deaconry or "office of alms". The corn thus distributed came chiefly from Sicily and was supplied by the estates of the Church. The temporal needs of his people being thus provided for, Gregory did not neglect their spiritual wants, and a large number of his sermons have come down to us. It was he who instituted the "stations" still observed and noted in the Roman Missal (see STATIONS). He met the clergy and people at some church previously agreed upon, and all together went in procession to the church of the station, where Mass was celebrated and the pope preached. These sermons, which drew immense crowds, are mostly simple, popular expositions of Scripture. Chiefly remarkable is the preacher's mastery of the Bible, which he quotes unceasingly, and his regular use of anecdote to illustrate the point in hand, in which respect he paves the way for the popular preachers of the Middle Ages. In July, 595, Gregory held his first synod in St. Peter's, which consisted almost wholly of the bishops of the suburbicarian sees and the priests of the Roman titular churches. Six decrees dealing with ecclesiastical discipline were passed, some of them merely confirming changes already made by the pope on his own authority.

Much controversy still exists as to the exact extent of Gregory's reforms of the Roman Liturgy. All admit that he did make the following modifications in the pre-existing practice:

- In the Canon of the Mass he inserted the words "diesque nostros in tua pace disponas, atque ab aeterna damnatione nos eripi, et in electorum tuorum jubras grege numerari";
- he ordered the Pater Noster to be recited in the Canon *before* the breaking of the Host;

- he provided that the Alleluia should be chanted after the Gradual out of paschal time, to which period, apparently, the Roman use had previously confined it;
- he prohibited the use of the chasuble by subdeacons assisting at Mass;
- he forbade deacons to perform any of the musical portions of the Mass other than singing the Gospel.

Beyond these and some few minor points it seems impossible to conclude with certainty what changes Gregory did make. As to the much-disputed question of the Gregorian Sacramentary and the almost more difficult point of his relation to the plain song or chant of the Church, for Gregory's connection with which matters the earliest authority seems to be John the Deacon (Vita, II, vi, Xvii), see GREGORIAN CHANT; SACRAMENTARY. There is no lack of evidence, however, to illustrate Gregory's activity as manager of the patrimony of St. Peter. By his day the estates of the Church had reached vast dimensions. Varying estimates place their total area at from 1300 to 1800 square miles, and there seems no reason for supposing this to be an exaggeration, while the income arising therefrom was probably not less than $1,500,000 a year. The land lay in many places - Campania, Africa, Sicily, and elsewhere - and, as their landlord, Gregory displayed a skill in finance and estate management which excites our admiration no less than it did the surprise of his tenants and agents, who suddenly found that they had a new master who was not to be deceived or cheated. The management of each patrimony was carried out by a number of agents of varying grades and duties under an official called the *rector* or *defensor* of the patrimony. Previously the rectors had usually been laymen, but Gregory established the custom of appointing ecclesiastics to the post. In doing this he probably had in view the many extra duties of an ecclesiastical nature which he called upon them to undertake. Thus

examples may be found of such rectors being commissioned to undertake the filling up of vacant sees, holding of local synods, taking action against heretics, providing for the maintenance of churches and monasteries, rectifying abuses in the churches of their district, with the enforcing of ecclesiastical discipline and even the reproof and correction of local bishops. Still Gregory never allowed the rectors to interfere in such matters on their own responsibility. In the minutiae of estate management nothing was too small for Gregory's personal notice, from the exact number of *sextarii* in a *modius* of corn, or how many soluli went to one golden pound, to the use of false weights by certain minor agents. He finds time to write instructions on every detail and leaves no complaint unattended to, even from the humblest of his multitude of tenants. Throughout the large number of letters which deal with the management of the patrimony, the pope's determination to secure a scrupulously righteous administration is evident. As bishop, he is the trustee of God and St. Peter, and his agents must show that they realize this by their conduct. Consequently, under his able management the estates of the Church increased steadily in value, the tenants were contented, and the revenues paid in with unprecedented regularity. The only fault ever laid at his door in this matter is that, by his boundless charities, he emptied his treasury. But this, if a fault at all, was a natural consequence of his view that he was the administrator of the property of the poor, for whom he could never do enough.

(2) Relations with the Suburbicarian Churches

As patriarchs of the West the popes exercise a special jurisdiction over and above their universal primacy as successors of St. Peter; and among Western churches, this jurisdiction extends in a most intimate manner over the churches of Italy and the isles adjacent. On the mainland much of this territory was in the hands of the Lombards, with whose Arian clergy

Gregory was, of course, not in communion. Whenever opportunity offered, however, he was careful to provide for the needs of the faithful in these parts, frequently uniting them to some neighboring diocese, when they were too few to occupy the energies of a bishop. On the islands, of which Sicily was by far the most important, the pre- existing church system was maintained. Gregory appointed a vicar, usually the metropolitan of the province, who exercised a general supervision over the whole church. He also insisted strongly on the holding of local synods as ordered by the Council of Nicaea, and letters of his exist addressed to bishops in Sicily, Sardinia, and Gaul reminding them of their duties in this respect. The supreme instance of Gregory's intervention in the affairs of these dioceses occurs in the case of Sardinia, where the behaviour of Januarius the half-witted, aged Metropolitan of Cagliari, had reduced the church to a state of semi-chaos. A large number of letters relate to the reforms instituted by the pope (Epp., II, xlvii; III, xxxvi; IV, ix,xxiii-xxvii, xxix; V, ii; IX, i, xi, ccii-cciv; XIV, ii). His care over the election of a new bishop whenever a vacancy occurs is shown in many cases, and if, after his examination of the elect, which is always a searching one, he finds him unfitted for the post, he has no hesitation in rejecting him and commanding another to be chosen (Epp., I, lv, lvi; VII, xxxviii; X, vii). With regard to discipline the pope was specially strict in enforcing the Church's laws as to the celibacy of the clergy (Epp., I, xlii, 1; IV. v, xxvi, xxxiv; VII, i; IX, cx, ccxviii; X, xix; XI, lvi a; XIII, xxxviii, xxxix); the exemption of clerics from lay tribunals(Epp., I, xxxix a; VI, xi, IX, liii, lxxvi, lxxix; X, iv; XI, xxxii; XIII, 1); and the deprivation of all ecclesiastics guilty of criminal or scandalous offences (Epp., I, xviii, xlii; III, xlix; IV, xxvi; V, v, xvii, xviii; VII, xxxix; VIII, xxiv; IX, xxv; XII, iii, x, xi; XIV, ii). He was also inflexible with regard to the proper application of church revenues, insisting that others should be as strict as he was in disposing of these funds for their proper ends (Epp., I, x,

lxiv; II, xx-xxii; III, xxii; IV, xi; V, xii, xlviii; VIII, vii; XI, xxii, lvi a; XIII, xlvi; XIV, ii).

(3) Relations with Other Churches

With regard to the other Western Churches limits of space prevent any detailed account of Gregory's dealings, but the following quotation, all the more valuable as coming from a Protestant authority, indicates very clearly the line he followed herein: "In his dealings with the Churches of the West, Gregory acted invariably on the assumption that all were subject to the jurisdiction of the Roman See. Of the rights claimed or exercised by his predecessors he would not abate one tittle; on the contrary, he did everything in his power to maintain, strengthen, and extend what he regarded as the just prerogatives of the papacy. It is true that he respected the privileges of the Western metropolitans, and disapproved of unnecessary interference within the sphere of their jurisdiction canonically exercised. . . . But of his general principle there can be no doubt whatever" (Dudden, I, 475). In view of later developments Gregory's dealings with the Oriental Churches, and with Constantinople in particular, have a special importance. There cannot be the smallest doubt that Gregory claimed for the Apostolic See, and for himself as pope, a primacy not of honor, but of supreme authority over the Church Universal. In Epp., XIII, l, he speaks of "the Apostolic See, which is the head of all Churches", and in Epp., V, cliv, he says: "I, albeit unworthy, have been set up in command of the Church." As successor of St. Peter, the pope had received from God a primacy over all Churches (Epp., II, xlvi; III, xxx; V, xxxvii; VII, xxxvii). His approval it was which gave force to the decrees of councils or synods (Epp., IX, clvi), and his authority could annul them (Epp., V, xxxix, xli, xliv). To him appeals might be made even against other patriarchs, and by him bishops were judged and corrected if need were (Epp., II, l; III, lii, lxiii; IX, xxvi,

xxvii). This position naturally made it impossible for him to permit the use of the title Ecumenical Bishop assumed by the Patriarch of Constantinople, John the Faster, at a synod held in 588. Gregory protested, and a long controversy followed, the question still at issue when the pope died. A discussion of this controversy is needless here, but it is important as showing how completely Gregory regarded the Eastern patriarchs as being subject to himself; "As regards the Church of Constantinople," he writes in Epp., IX, xxvi, "who can doubt that it is subject to the Apostolic See? Why, both our most religious lord the emperor, and our brother the Bishop of Constantinople continually acknowledge it." At the same time the pope was most careful not to interfere with the canonical rights of the other patriarchs and bishops. With the other Oriental patriarchs his relations were most cordial, as appears from his letters to the patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria.

(4) Relations with the Lombards and the Franks

Gregory's consecration as pope preceded by a few days only the death of Authari, King of the Lombards, whose queen, the famous Theodelinde, then married Agilulf, Duke of Turin, a warlike and energetic prince. With Agilulf and the Dukes Ariulf of Spoleto and Arichis of Benevento, Gregory soon had to deal, as, when difficulties arose, Romanus, the exarch, or representative, of the emperor, preferred to remain in sulky inactivity at Ravenna. It soon became clear that, if any successful resistance was to be made against the Lombards, it must be by the pope's own exertions. How keenly he felt the difficulty and danger of his position appears in some of the earliest letters (Epp., I, iii, viii, xxx); but no actual hostilities began till the summer of 592, when the pope received a threatening letter from Ariulf of Spoleto, which was followed almost immediately by the appearance of that chief before the walls of Rome. At the same time Arichis of Benevento

advanced on Naples, which happened at the moment to have no bishop nor any officer of high rank in command of the garrison. Gregory at once took the surprising step of appointing a tribune on his own authority to take command of the city (Epp., II, xxxiv), and, when no notice of this strong action was taken by the imperial authorities, the pope conceived the idea of himself arranging a separate peace with the Lombards (Epp., II, xlv). No details of this peace have come down to us, but it seems certain that it was actually concluded (Epp., V, xxxvi). Dr. Hodgkin (Italy and her Invaders, v, 366) pronounces Gregory's action herein to have been wise and statesmanlike, but, at the same time, undoubtedly ultra vires, being quite beyond any legal competency then possessed by the pope, who thus "made a memorable stride towards complete independence". Gregory's independent action had the effect of rousing up Romanus the exarch. Wholly ignoring the papal peace, he gathered all his troops, attacked and regained Perugia, and then marched to Rome, where he was received with imperial honours. The next spring, however, he quitted the city and took away its garrison with him, so that both pope and citizens were now more exasperated against him than before. Moreover, the exarch's campaign had roused the Northern Lombards, and King Agilulf marched on Rome, arriving there probably some time in June, 593. The terror aroused by his advance is still mirrored for us in Gregory's homilies on the Prophet Ezechiel, which were delivered at this time. The siege of the city was soon abandoned, however, and Agilulf retired. The continuator of Prosper (Mon. Germ. SS. Antiq., IX, 339) relates that Agilulf met the pope in person on the steps of the Basilica of St. Peter, which was then outside the city walls, and "being melted by Gregory's prayers and greatly moved by the wisdom and religious gravity of this great man, he broke up the seige of the city"; but, in view of the silence both of Gregory himself and of Paul the Deacon on the point, the story seems scarcely probable. In Epp., V, xxxix, Gregory

refers to himself as "the paymaster of the Lombards", and most likely a large payment from the papal treasury was the chief inducement to raise the seige. The pope's great desire now was to secure a lasting peace with the Lombards, which could only be achieved by a proper arrangement between the imperial authorities and the Lombard chiefs. On Queen Theodelinde, a Catholic and a personal friend, Gregory placed all his hopes. The exarch, however, looked at the whole affair in another light, and, when a whole year was passed in fruitless negotiations, Gregory began once again to mediate a private treaty. Accordingly, in May, 595, the pope wrote to a friend at Ravenna a letter (Epp., V, xxxiv) threatening to make peace with Agilulf even without the consent of the Exarch Romanus. This threat was speedily reported to Constantinople, where the exarch was in high favour, and the Emperor Maurice at once sent off to Gregory a violent letter, now lost, accusing him of being both a traitor and a fool. This letter Gregory received in June, 595. Luckily, the pope's answer has been preserved to us (Epp., V, xxxvi). It must be read in its entirety to be appreciated fully; probably very few emperors, if any, have ever received such a letter from a subject. Still, in spite of his scathing reply, Gregory seems to have realized that independent action could not secure what he wished, and we hear no more about a separate peace. Gregory's relations with the Exarch Romanus became continually more and more strained until the latter's death in the year 596 or early in 597. The new exarch, Callinicus, was a man of far greater ability and well disposed towards the pope, whose hopes now revived. The official peace negotiations were pushed on, and, in spite of delays, the articles were at length signed in 599, to Gregory's great joy. This peace lasted two years, but in 601 the war broke out again through an aggressive act on the part of Callinicus, who was recalled two years later, when his successor, Smaragdus, again made a peace with the Lombards which endured until after Gregory's death. Two points stand out for special

notice in Gregory's dealings with the Lombards: first, his determination that, in spite of the apathy of the imperial authorities, Rome should not pass into the hands of some half-civilized Lombard duke and so sink into insignificance and decay; second, his independent action in appointing governors to cities, providing munitions of war, giving instructions to generals, sending ambassadors to the Lombard king, and even negotiating a peace without the exarch's aid. Whatever the theory may have been, there is no doubt about the fact that, besides his spiritual jurisdiction, Gregory actually exercised no small amount of temporal power.

Of Gregory's relations with the Franks there is no need to write at length, as the intercourse he established with the Frankish kings practically lapsed at his death, and was not renewed for about a hundred years. On the other hand he exercised a great influence on Frankish monasticism, which he did much to strengthen and reshape, so that the work done by the monasteries in civilizing the wild Franks may be attributed ultimately to the first monk-pope.

(5) Relations with the Imperial Government

The reign of Gregory the Great marks an epoch in papal history, and this is specially the case in respect to his attitude towards the imperial Government centered at Constantinople. Gregory seems to have looked upon Church and State as co-operating to form a united whole, which acted in two distinct spheres, ecclesiastical and secular. Over this commonwealth were the pope and the emperor, each supreme in his own department, care being taken to keep these as far as possible distinct and independent. The latter point was the difficulty. Gregory definitely held that it was a duty of the secular ruler to protect the Church and preserve the "peace of the faith" (Mor., XXXI, viii), and so he is often found to call in the aid of the secular arm, not merely to suppress schism, heresy, or idolatry, but even to enforce discipline

among monks and clergy (Epp., I, lxxii; II, xxix; III, lix; IV, vii, xxxii; V, xxxii; VIII, iv; XI, xii, xxxvii; XIII, xxxvi). If the emperor interfered in church matters the pope's policy was to acquiesce if possible, unless obedience was sinful, according to the principle laid down in Epp. XI, xxix; "Quod ipse [se imperator] fecerit, si canonicum est, sequimur; si vero canonicum non est, in quantum sine peccato nostro, portamus." In taking this line Gregory was undoubtedly influenced by his deep reverence for the emperor, whom he regarded as the representative of God in all things secular, and must still be treated with all possible respect, even when he encroached on the borders of the papal authority. On his side, although he certainly regarded himself as "superior in place and rank" to the exarch (Epp., II, xiv), Gregory objected strongly to the interference of ecclesiastical authorities in matters secular. As supreme guardian of Christian justice, the pope was always ready to intercede for, or protect anyone who suffered unjust treatment (Epp., I, xxxv, xxxvi, xlvii, lix; III, v; V, xxxviii; IX, iv, xlvi, lv, cxiii, clxxxii; XI, iv), but at the same time he used the utmost tact in approaching the imperial officials. In Epp., I, xxxix a, he explains for the benefit of his Sicilian agent the precise attitude to be adopted in such matters. Still, in conjunction with all this deference, Gregory retained a spirit of independence which enabled him, when he considered it necessary, to address even the emperor in terms of startling directness. Space makes it impossible to do more than refer to the famous letters to the Emperor Phocas on his usurpation and the allusions in them to the murdered Emperor Maurice (Epp., XIII, xxxiv, xli, xlii). Every kind of judgement has been passed upon Gregory for writing these letters, but the question remains a difficult one. Probably the pope's conduct herein was due to two things: first, his ignorance of the way in which Phocus had reached the throne; and second, his view that the emperor was God's representative on earth, and therefore deserving of all possible respect in his

official capacity, his personal character not coming into the question at all. It should be noted, also, that he avoids any direct flattery towards the new emperor, merely using the exaggerated phrases of respect then customary, and expressing the high hopes he entertains of the new regime. Moreover, his allusions to Maurice refer to the sufferings of the people under his government, and do not reflect on the dead emperor himself. Had the empire been sound instead of in a hopelessly rotten state when Gregory became pope, it is hard to say how his views might have worked out in practice. As it was, his line of strong independence, his efficiency, and his courage carried all before them, and when he died there was no longer any question as to who was the first power in Italy.

(6) Missionary Work

Gregory's zeal for the conversion of the heathen, and in particular of the Angles, has been mentioned already, and there is no need to dwell at length on the latter subject, as it has been fully treated under AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY, SAINT. In justice to the great pope, however, it must be added that he lost no opportunity for the exercise of his missionary zeal, making every effort to root out paganism in Gaul, Donatism in Africa, and the Schism of the Three Chapters in North Italy and Istria. In his treatment of heretics, schismatics, and pagans his method was to try every means - persuasions, exhortations, threats - before resorting to force; but, if gentler treatment failed, he had no hesitation in accordance with the ideas of his age, in resorting to compulsion, and invoking the aid of the secular arm therein. It is curious, therefore, to find him acting as a champion and protector of the Jews. In Epp., I, xiv, he expressly deprecates the compulsory baptism of Jews, and many instances appear in which he insists on their right to liberty of action, so far as the law permitted, both in civil affairs and in the worship of the synagogue (Epp., I, xxxiv; II, vi; VIII, xxv;

IX, xxxviii, cxcv; XIII, xv). He was equally strong, however, in preventing the Jews from exceeding the rights granted to them by the imperial law, especially with regard to the ownership by them of Christian slaves (Epp., II, vi; III, xxxvii; IV, ix, xxi; VI, xxix; VII, xxi; VIII, xxi; IX, civ, ccxiii, ccxv). We shall probably be right, therefore, in attributing Gregory's protection of the Jews to his respect for law and justice, rather than to any ideas of toleration differing from those current at the time.

(7) Gregory and Monasticism

Although the first monk to become pope, Gregory was in no sense an original contributor to monastic ideals or practice. He took monasticism as he found it established by St. Benedict, and his efforts and influence were given to strengthening and enforcing the prescriptions of that greatest of monastic legislators. His position did indeed tend to modify St. Benedict's work by drawing it into a closer connection with the organization with the organization of the Church, and with the papacy in particular, but this was not deliberately aimed at by Gregory. Rather he was himself convinced that the monastic system had a very special value for the Church, and so he did everything in his power to diffuse and propagate it. His own property was consecrated to this end, he urged many wealthy people to establish or support monasteries, and he used the revenues of the patrimony for the same purpose. He was relentless in correcting abuses and enforcing discipline, the letters on such matters being far too numerous for mention here, and the points on which he insists most are precisely those, such as stability and poverty, on which St. Benedict's recent legislation had laid special stress. Twice only do we find anything like direct legislation by the pope. The first point is that of the age at which a nun might be made abbess, which he fixes at "not less than sixty years" (Epp., IV, xi),. The second is his lengthening of the period of novitiate. St. Benedict had prescribed at

least one year (Reg. Ben., lviii); Gregory (Epp., X, ix) orders two years, with special precautions in the case of slaves who wished to become monks. More important was his line of action in the difficult question of the relation between monks and their bishop. There is plenty of evidence to show that many bishops took advantage of their position to oppress and burden the monasteries in their diocese, with the result that the monks appealed to the pope for protection. Gregory, while always upholding the spiritual jurisdiction of the bishop, was firm in support of the monks against any illegal aggression. All attempts on the part of a bishop to assume new powers over the monks in his diocese were condemned, while at times the pope issued documents, called Privilegia, in which he definitely set forth certain points on which the monks were exempt from episcopal control (Epp., V, xlix; VII, xii; VIII, xvii; XII, xi, xii, xiii). This action on Gregory's part undoubtedly began the long progress by which the monastic bodies have come to be under the direct control of the Holy See. It should be mentioned that in Gregory's day the current view was that ecclesiastical work, such as the cure of souls, preaching, administering the sacraments, etc., was not compatible with the monastic state, and in this view the pope concurred. On the other hand a passage in Epp., XII, iv, where he directs that a certain layman "should be tonsured either as a monk or a subdeacon", would suggest that the pope held the monastic state as in some way equivalent to the ecclesiastical; for his ultimate intention in this case was to promote the layman in question to the episcopate.

(8) Death, Canonization, Relics, Emblem

The last years of Gregory's life were filled with every kind of suffering. His mind, naturally serious, was filled with despondent forebodings, and his continued bodily pains were increased and intensified. His "sole consolation was the hope that death would come quickly" (Epp., XIII, xxvi). The end

came on 12 March, 604, and on the same day his body was laid to rest in front of the sacristy in the portico of St. Peter's Basilica. Since then the relics have been moved several times, the most recent translation being that by Paul V in 1606, when they were placed in the chapel of Clement V near the entrance of the modern sacristy. There is some evidence that the body was taken to Soissous in France in the year 826, but probably only some large relic is meant. Venerable Bede (Hist. Eccl., II, i) gives the epitaph placed on his tomb which contains the famous phrase referring to Gregory as *consul Dei*. His canonization by popular acclamation followed at once on his death, and survived a reaction against his memory which seems to have occurred soon afterwards. In art the great pope is usually shown in full pontifical robes with the tiara and double cross. A dove is his special emblem, in allusion to the well-known story recorded by Peter the Deacon (Vita, xxviii), who tells that when the pope was dictating his homilies on Ezechiel a veil was drawn between his secretary and himself. As, however, the pope remained silent for long periods at a time, the servant made a hole in the curtain and, looking through, beheld a dove seated upon Gregory's head with its beak between his lips. When the dove withdrew its beak the holy pontiff spoke and the secretary took down his words; but when he became silent the servant again applied his eye to the hole and saw the dove had replaced its beak between his lips. The miracles attributed to Gregory are very many, but space forbids even the barest catalogue of them.

(9) Conclusion

It is beyond the scope of this notice to attempt any elaborate estimate of the work, influence, and character of Pope Gregory the Great, but some short focusing of the features given above is only just. First of all, perhaps, it will be best to clear the ground by admitting frankly what Gregory was not. He was not a man of profound learning, not a philosopher, not a

conversationalist, hardly even a theologian in the constructive sense of the term. He was a trained Roman lawyer and administrator, a monk, a missionary, a preacher, above all a physician of souls and a leader of men. His great claim to remembrance lies in the fact that he is the real father of the medieval papacy (Milman). With regard to things spiritual, he impressed upon men's minds to a degree unprecedented the fact that the See of Peter was the one supreme, decisive authority in the Catholic Church. During his pontificate, he established close relations between the Church of Rome and those of Spain, Gaul, Africa, and Illyricum, while his influence in Britain was such that he is justly called the Apostle of the English. In the Eastern Churches, too, the papal authority was exercised with a frequency unusual before his time, and we find no less an authority than the Patriarch of Alexandria submitting himself humbly to the pope's "commands". The system of appeals to Rome was firmly established, and the pope is found to veto or confirm the decrees of synods, to annul the decisions of patricarchs, and inflict punishment on ecclesiastical dignitaries precisely as he thinks right. Nor is his work less noteworthy in its effect on the temporal position of the papacy. Seizing the opportunity which circumstances offered, he made himself in Italy a power stronger than emperor or exarch, and established a political influence which dominated the peninsula for centuries. From this time forth the varied populations of Italy looked to the pope for guidance, and Rome as the papal capital continued to be the centre of the Christian world. Gregory's work as a theologian and Doctor of the Church is less notable. In the history of dogmatic development he is important as summing up the teaching of the earlier Fathers and consolidating it into a harmonious whole, rather than as introducing new developments, new methods, new solutions of difficult questions. It was precisely because of this that his writings became to a great extent the *compendium theologiae* or textbook of the Middle Ages, a position for

which his work in popularizing his great predecessors fitted him well. Achievements so varied have won for Gregory the title of “the Great”, but perhaps, among our English-speaking races, he is honoured most of all as the pope who loved the bright-faced Angles, and taught them first to sing the Angels’ song.

IV. HIS WRITINGS

Genuine, Doubtful, Spurious

Of the writings commonly attributed to Gregory the following are now admitted as genuine on all hands: “Moralium Libri XXXV”; “Regulae Pastoralis Liber”; “Dialogorum Libri IV”; “Homiliarum in Ezechielem Prophetam Lobri II”; “Homiliarum in Evangelia Libri II”; “Epistolarum Libri XIV”. The following are almost certainly spurious: “In Librum Primum Regum Variarum Expositionum Libri VI”; “expositio super Cantica Canticorum”; “Expositio in VII Psalmos Poenitentiales”; “Concordia Quorundam Testimoniorum S. Scripturae”. Besides the above there are attributed to Gregory certain liturgical hymns, the Gregorian Sacramentary, and the Antiphonary. (See ANTIPHONARY; SACRAMENTARY.)

Works of Gregory; complete or partial editions; translations, recensions, etc.

“Opera S. Gregorii Magni: (Editio princeps, Paris, 1518); ed. P. Tossianensis (6 vols., Rome, 1588-03); ed. P. Goussainville (3 vols., Paris, 1675); ed. Cong. S. Mauri (Sainte-Marthe) (4 vols., Paris, 1705); the last-named re-edited with additions by J. B. Gallicioli (17 vols., Venice, 1768-76) and reprinted in Migne, P.L., LXXV-LXXIX. “Epistolae”, ed. P. Ewald and L. M. Hartmann in “Mon. Germ. Hist.: Epist.”, I, II (Berlin, 1891-99); this is the authoritative edition of the text of the Epistles (all references given above are to this edition); Jaffe, “Regesta Pontif,” (2nd ed., Rome, 1885), I, 143-219; II, 738; Turchi, “S. Greg. M. Epp. Selectae” (Rome, 1907); P. Ewald, “Studien zur Ausgabe des Registers Gregors I.” in “Neues Archiv”, III, 433-625; L.M. Hartmann in “Neues Archiv”, XV, 411, 529; XVII, 493; Th. Mommsen in “Neues Archiv”, XVII, 189; English translation: J. Barmby, “Selected Epistles” in “Nicene and Post-Nicene

Fathers", 2nd Series, XII, XIII (Oxford and New York, 1895, 1898), "Regula Pastoralis Curae", ed. E. W. Westhoff (Munster, 1860); ed. H. Hurter, S.J., in "SS. Patr. Opusc. Select.", XX; ed. A. M. Micheletti (Tournai, 1904); ed. B. Sauter (Freiburg, 1904); English translations: "King Alfred's West Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care", ed. H. Sweet (London, 1871); "The Book of Pastoral Care" (tr. J. Barmby) in "Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers", 2nd Series, XII (Oxford and New York, 1895). "Dialogorum Libri IV": very many editions of the whole work have appeared, and also of Bk. II, "Of the Life and Miracles of St. Benedict", separately; an old English translation has been reprinted by H. Coleridge, S. J. (London, 1874); L. Wiese, "Die Sprache der Dialoge" (Halle, 1900); H. Delehaye, "S. Gregoirele Grand dans Phagiographie Grecque" in "Analecta Bolland." (1904), 449-54; B. Sauter, "Der heilige Vater Benediktus nach St. Gregor dem Grossen" (Freiburg, 1904). "Hom. XL in Evangelia", ed. H. Hurter in "SS. Patrum Opuse. Select.", series II, Tom. VI (Innsbruck, 1892). G. Pfeilschifter Gregors der Gr." (Munich, 1900). "Magna Moralia", Eng. tr. in "Library of the Fathers" (4 vols., Oxford, 1844); Prunner, "Gnade und Sunde nach Gregors expositio in Job" (Eichstätt, 1855).

CHIEF SOURCES.-First of all come the writings of Gregory himself, of which a full account is given above, the most important from a biographical point of view being the fourteen books of his Letters and the four books of Dialogues. The other early authorities are ST. GREGORY OF TOURS (d. 594 or 595), Historia Francorum, Bk. X, and the Liber Pontificalis, both practically contemporary. To the seventh century belong ST. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE. De Viris Illustribus, XL, and ST. ILDEPHONSUS OF TOLEDO, De Viris Illustribus, I. Next come the Vita Antiquissima, by an anonymous monk of Whitby, written probably about 713, and of special interest as representing an essentially English tradition in regard to the saint; THE VEN. BEDE, Hist. Eccles., II, whose work was finished in 731;

PAUL THE DEACON, who compiled a short Vita Gregorii Magni between 770 and 780, which may be supplemented from the same writers more famous work Historia Longobardorum; lastly JOHN THE DEACON, who, at the request of John VIII (872-882), produced his Vita Gregorii in answer to the complaint that no history of the saint had yet been produced in Rome. Besides these direct authorities considerable light on the period of St. Gregory's life may be gathered from the works of various contemporary chroniclers and historians.

WORKS ON GREGORY. - (1) General. - GREGORY OF TOURS, Historia Francorum, X, i, in P.L., LXXI; the best edition of this is by ARNDT AND KRUSCH in Mon. Germ. Hist.; Script. Rerum Meroving., I; Liber Pontificatis, ed. DUCHESNE (Paris, 1884), I, 312; ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, De Vir. Illustr., I, ibid.,XCVII; Vita It. Papae Gregorii M. (MS> Gallen, 567), written by a monk of Whitby, ed. GASQUET (Westminster, 1904): see also on same work EWALD, Die alteste Biographie Gregors I in Historische Aufsatze dem Andenken an G. Waitz gewidmet (Hanover,1886), 17-54; VEN. BEDE, Hist. Eccles., I, xxiii-xxxiii; II, i-iii; V, xxv; in P. L., XCV; PAUL THE DEACON, Vita Gregorii M. in P.L.,LXXV; IDEM, De Gestis Longobard., III, 24; IV, 5; In P.L., XCV; JOHN THE DEACON, Vita Gregorii M., ibid., LXXV; Acta SS., 12 March; VAN DEN ZYPE, S. Gregorius Magnus (Ypres, 1610); SAINTEMARTHE, Histoire de S. Gregoire (Rouen, 1677); MAIMBOURG, Histoire du pontificat de S. Gregoire (Paris, 1687); BONUCCI, Istoria del B. Gregorio (Rome, 1711); WIETROWSKY, Hist. de gestis praecipuis in pontificatu S. Gregorii M. (Prague, 1726-30); POZZO, Istoria della vita di S. Gregorio M. (Rome, 1758); MARGGRAF, De Gregorii I. M. Vita (Berlin, 1844); BIANCHI-GIOVINI, Pontificato di S. Gregorio (Milan, 1844); LAU, Gregor I, der Grosse (Leipzig, 1845); PFAHLER, Gregor der Grosse (Frankfort, 1852); LUZARCHE, Vie du Pape Gregoire le Grand (Tours,

1857); ROMALTE, Vie de S. Gregoire (Limoges, 1862); PAGNON, Gregoire le Grand et son epoque (Rouen, 1869); BELMONTE, Gregorio M. e il suo tempo (Florence, 1871); BOHRINGER, Die Vater des Papsiiums, Leo I und Gregor I (Stuttgart, 1879): MAGGIO, Prolegomeni alla storia di Gregorio il Grande (Prato, 1879); BARMBY, Gregory the Great (London, 1879; reissue, 1892); CLAUSIER, S. Gregoire (Paris, 1886); BOUSMANN, Gregor I, der Grosse (Paderborn, 1890); WOLFSGRUBER, Gregor der Grosse (Saulgau, 1890); SNOW, St. Gregory, his Work and his Spirit (London, 1892); GRISAR, Roma alta fine del mondo antico (Rome, 1899), Pt. III; IDEM, San Gregorio Magno (Rome, 1904); DUDDEN, Gregory the Great, his Place in History and in Thought (2 vols.,London, 1905); CAPELLO, Gregorio I e il suo pontificuto (Saluzzo, 1904); CEILLIER, Histoire general des auteurs ecclesiastique, XI, 420-587; MILMAN, History of Latin Christianity, Bk. III, vii; MONTALEMBERT, Monks of the West, tr. Bk. v; GREGOROVIUS, Rome in the Middle Ages, tr., II, 16-103; HODGKIN, Italy and her Invaders, V, vii-ix; GATTA, Un parallelo storico (Marco Aurelio, Gregorio Magno) (Milan, 1901); MANN, Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages (London, 1902), I, 1-250.

(2) Special. (a) The Patrimony. - ORSI, Della origine del dominio temporate e della sovranita del Rom. Pontif. (2nd ed., Rome, 1754); BORGIA, Istoria del dominio temporale della Sede Apostolica nelle due Sicilie (Rome, 1789); MUZZARELLI, Dominio temporale del Papa (Rome, 1789); SUGENHEIM, Gesch. der Entstehung und Ausbildung des Kirchenstaates (Leipzig, 1854); SCHARPFF, Die Entstchung des Kirchenstaates (Freiburg im Br., 1860); GRISAR, Ein Rundgang durch die Patrimonien des hl. Stuhls i, J. 600, in Zeitschr, Kuth, Theol., I, 321; SCHWARZLOSE, Die Patrimonien d. rom. K. (Berlin, 1887); MOMMSEN, Die Bewirtschaftung der Kirchenguter unter Papst Gregor I, in Zeitsch, f. Socialund, Wirtschaftsgesch., I, 43; DOIZE, Deux etudes sur

l'administration temporelle du Pape Gregoire le Grand (Paris, 1904). (b) Primacy and Relations with other Churches. - PFAFF, Dissertatio de titulo l'atriarchoe (Ecumenici (Tubingen, 1735); ORTLIEB, Essai sur le systeme eccles, de Gregoire le Grand (Strasburg, 1872); PINGAUD, La politique de S. Gregoire (Paris, 1872); LORENZ, Papstwahl und Kaisertum (Berlin, 1874), 23; CRIVELLUCCI, Storia della relazioni tra lo Stato e la Chiesa (Bologna, 1885), II, 301; GORRES, Papsi Gregor der Grosse und Kaiser Phocas in Zeitsche, fur wissenschaftliche Theol., CLIV, 592-602. (c) Relations with Lombards and Franks. - BERNARDI, I Longobardi e S. Gregorio M. (Milan, 1843); Troya, Storia d'Italia del medio evo, IV: Codice diplomatico longobardo dal 568 al 774 (Naples, 1852); DIEHL, Etudes sur l'administration byzantine dans l'Exarchat de Ravenne (Paris, 1888); HARTMANN, Unters, z. Gesch. d. byzant, Verwaltung in Italien (Leipzig, 1889); LAMPE, Qui fuerint Gregorii M. p. temporibus in imperii byzantini parte occident, exarchi (Berlin, 1892); PERRY, The Franks (London, 1857); KELLERT, Pope Gregory the Great and his Relations with Gaul (Cambridge, 1889); GRISAR, Rom. u. d. frankische Kirche vorneehmlich im 6. Jahr. in Zeitschr. kath. Theol., 14. (d) Monasticism and Missionary Work. - MABILLON, Dissertatio de monastica vita Gregorii Papoe (Paris, 1676); BUTLER, Was St. Augustine of Canterbury a Benedictine? in Downside Review, III, 45-61, 223-240; GRUTZMACHER, Die Bedeutung Benedikts von Nursia und seiner Regel in der Gesch. des Monchtums (Berlin, 1892); CUTTS, Augustine of Canterbury (London, 1895); GRAY, The Origin and Early History of Christianity in Britain (London, 1897); BRIGHT, Chapters on Early English Church History (Oxford, 1897); BENEDETTI, S. Gregorio Magno e la schiavitu (Rome, 1904). (e) Writings. - ALZOO, Lehrb. der Patrologie (Freiburg im Br., 1876); HARNACK, Lehrb. der Dogmengeschichte, III (Freiburg im Br., 1890); LOOFS, Leits. zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte (Halle, 1893);

SEEBERG, Lehrb. der Dogmengeschichte, II (Leipzig, 1898); BARDENHEWER, Patrology, tr. SHAHAN (Freiburg im Br., 1908).

G. ROGER HUDLESTON

Saint Gregory by Frederick Homes Dudden

From ‘1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 12’

SAINT GREGORY, surnamed the Great (*c.* 540–604), the first pope of that name, and the last of the four doctors of the Latin Church, was born in Rome about the year 540. His father was Gordianus “the regionary,” a wealthy man of senatorial rank, owner of large estates in Sicily and of a palace on the Caelian Hill in Rome; his mother was Silvia, who is commemorated as a saint on the 3rd of November. Of Gregory’s early period we know few details, and almost all the dates are conjectural. He received the best education to be had at the time, and was noted for his proficiency in the arts of grammar, rhetoric and dialectic. Entering on a public career he held, about 573, the high office of prefect of the city of Rome; but about 574, feeling irresistibly attracted to the “religious” life, he resigned his post, founded six monasteries in Sicily and one in Rome, and in the last — the famous monastery of St Andrew — became himself a monk. This grateful seclusion, however, he was not permitted long to enjoy. About 578 he was ordained “seventh deacon” (or possibly archdeacon) of the Roman Church, and in the following spring Pope Pelagius II. appointed him “apocrisiarius,” or resident ambassador, at the imperial court in Constantinople. Here he represented the interests of his church till about 586, when he returned to Rome and was made abbot of St Andrew’s monastery. His rule, though popular, was characterized by great severity, as may be inferred from the story of the monk Justus, who was denied Christian burial because he had secreted a small sum of money. About this time Gregory completed and published his well-known exposition of the

book of Job, commenced in Constantinople: he also delivered lectures on the Heptateuch, the books of Kings, the Prophets, the book of Proverbs and the Song of Songs. To this period, moreover, Bede's incident of the English slave-boys (if indeed it be accepted as historical) ought to be assigned. Passing one day through the Forum, Gregory saw some handsome slaves offered for sale, and inquired their nation. "Angles," was the reply. "Good," said the abbot, "they have the faces of angels, and should be coheirs with the angels in heaven. From what province do they come ?" "From Deira." "Deira. Yea, verily, they shall be saved from God's ire (*de ira*) and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of that country named?" "Ælla." "Then must Allelulia be sung in Ælla's land." Gregory determined personally to undertake the conversion of Britain, and with the pope's consent actually set out upon the mission, but on the third day of his journey he was overtaken by messengers recalling him to Rome. In the year 590 Pelagius II. died of the plague that was raging in the city; whereupon the clergy and people unanimously chose Gregory as his successor. The abbot did his best to avoid the dignity, petitioned the emperor Maurice not to ratify his election, and even meditated going into hiding; but, "while he was preparing for flight and concealment, he was seized and carried off and dragged to the basilica of St Peter," and there consecrated bishop, on the 3rd of September 590.

The fourteen years of Gregory's pontificate were marked by extraordinary vigour and activity. "He never rested," writes a biographer, "he was always engaged in providing for the interests of his people, or in writing some composition worthy of the church, or in searching out the secrets of heaven by the grace of contemplation." His mode of life was simple and ascetic in the extreme. Having banished all lay attendants from his palace, he surrounded himself with clerics and monks, with whom he lived as though he were still in a monastery. To be spiritual needs of his

people he ministered with pastoral zeal, frequently appointing “stations” and delivering sermons; or was he less solicitous in providing for their physical necessities. Deaconries (offices of alms) and guest-houses were liberally endowed, and free distributions of food were made to be poor in the convents and basilicas. The funds for these and similar purposes were supplied from the Patrimony of St Peter — the papal estates in Italy, the adjacent islands, Gaul, Dalmatia and Africa. These extensive domains were usually administered by specially appointed agents, — rectors and defensors, — who resided on the spot; but the general superintendence devolved upon the pope. In this sphere Gregory manifested rare capacity. He was one of the best of the papal landlords. During his pontificate the estates increased in value, while at the same time the real grievances of the tenants were redressed and their general position was materially improved. Gregory’s principal fault as a man of business was that he was inclined to be too lavish of his revenues. It is said that he even impoverished the treasury of the Roman Church by his unlimited charities.

Within the strict bounds of his patriarchate, *i.e.* the churches of the suburbicarian provinces and the islands, it was Gregory’s policy to watch with particular care ever the election and discipline of the bishops. With wise toleration he was willing to recognize local deviations from Roman usage (*e.g.* in the ritual of baptism and confirmation), yet he was resolute to withstand any unauthorized usurpation of rights and privileges. The following rules he took pains to enforce: that clerics in holy orders should not cohabit with their wives or permit any women, except those allowed by the canons, to live in their houses; that clerics accused on ecclesiastical or lesser criminal charges should be tried only in the ecclesiastical courts; that clerics in holy orders who had lapsed should “utterly forfeit their orders and never again approach the ministry of the altar”; that the revenues of each

church should be divided by its bishop into four equal parts, to be assigned to the bishop, the clergy, the poor and the repair of the fabric of the church.

In his relations with the churches which lay outside the strict limits of his patriarchate, in northern Italy, Spain, Gaul, Africa and Illyricum and also in the East, Gregory consistently used his influence to increase the prestige and authority of the Roman See. In his view Rome, as the see of the Prince of the Apostles, was by divine right "the head of all the churches." The decrees of councils would have no binding force "without the authority and consent of the apostolic see": appeals might be made to Rome against the decisions even of the patriarch of Constantinople: all bishops, including the patriarchs, if guilty of heresy or uncanonical proceedings, were subject to correction by the pope. "If any fault is discovered in a bishop," Gregory wrote, "I know of no one who is not subject to the apostolic see." It is true that Gregory respected the rights of metropolitans and disapproved of unnecessary interference within the sphere of their jurisdiction canonically exercised; also that in his relations with certain churches (*e.g.* those in Africa) he found it expedient to abstain from any obtrusive assertion of Roman claims. But of his general principle-there can be no doubt. His sincere belief in the apostolic authority of the see of St Peter, his outspoken assertion of it, the consistency and firmness with which in practice he maintained it (*e.g.* in his controversies with the bishops of Ravenna concerning the use of the pallium, with Maximus the "usurping" bishop of Salona, and with the patriarchs of Constantinople in respect of the title "ecumenical bishops"), contributed greatly to build up the system of papal absolutism. Moreover this consolidation of spiritual authority coincided with a remarkable development of the temporal power of the papacy. In Italy Gregory occupied an almost regal position. Taking advantage of the opportunity which circumstances offered, he boldly stepped into the place which the emperors had left vacant and the Lombard kings had not the

strength to seize. For the first time in history the pope appeared as a political power, a temporal prince. He appointed governors to cities, issued orders to generals, provided munitions of war, sent his ambassadors to negotiate with the Lombard king and actually dared to conclude a private peace. In this direction Gregory went farther than any of his predecessors: he laid the foundation of a political influence which endured for centuries. "Of the medieval papacy," says Milman, "the real father is Gregory the Great."

The first monk to become pope, Gregory was naturally a strong supporter of monasticism. He laid himself out to diffuse the system, and also to carry out a reform of its abuses by enforcing a strict observance of the Rule of St Benedict (of whom, it may be noted, he was the earliest biographer). Two slight innovations were introduced: the minimum age of an abbess was fixed at sixty, and the period of novitiate was prolonged from one year to two. Gregory sought to protect the monks from episcopal oppression by issuing *privilegia*, or charters in restraint of abuses, in accordance with which the jurisdiction of the bishops over the monasteries was confined to spiritual matters, all illegal aggressions being strictly prohibited. The documents are interesting as marking the beginning of a revolution which eventually emancipated the monks altogether from the control of their diocesans and brought them under the direct authority of the Holy See. Moreover Gregory strictly forbade monks to minister in parish churches, ordaining that any monk who was promoted to such ecclesiastical cure should lose all rights in his monastery and should no longer reside there. "The duties of each office separately are so weighty that no one can rightly discharge them. It is therefore very improper that one man should be considered fit to discharge the duties of both, and that by this means the ecclesiastical order should interfere with the monastic life, and the rule of the monastic life in turn interfere with the interests of the churches."

Once more, Gregory is remembered as a great organizer of missionary enterprise for the conversion of heathens and heretics. Mose important was the two-fold mission to Britain — of St Augustine in 596, of Mellitus, Paulinus and others in 601; but Gregory also made strenuous efforts to uproot paganism in Gaul, Italy, Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica, Arianism in Spain, Donatism in Africa, Manichaeism in Sicily, the heresy of the Three Chapters in Istria and northern Italy. In respect of the methods of conversion which he advocated he was not less intolerant than his contemporaries. Towards the Jews, however, he acted with exceptional lenity, protecting them from persecution and securing them the enjoyment of their legal privileges. The so-called "simoniacal heresy," particularly prevalent in Gaul, Illyricum and the East, he repeatedly attacked; and against the Gallican abuse of promoting laymen to bishoprics he protested with vigour.

The extent and character of Gregory's works in connexion with the liturgy and the music of the church is a subject of dispute. If we are to credit a 9th century biographer, Gregory abbreviated and otherwise simplified the Sacramentary of Gelasius, producing a revised edition with which his own name has become associated, and which represents the groundwork of the modern Roman Missal. But though it is certain that he introduced three changes in the liturgy itself (viz. the addition of some words in the prayer *Hanc igitur*, the recitation of the Pater Noster at the end of the Canon immediately before the fraction of the bread, and the chanting of the Allelulia after the Gradual at other times besides the season of Easter) and two others in the ceremonial connected therewith (forbidding deacons to perform any musical portion of the service except the chanting of the gospel, and subdeacons to wear chasubles), neither the external nor the internal evidence appears to warrant belief that the Gregorian Sacramentary is his work. Ecclesiastical tradition further ascribes to Gregory the

compilation of an Antiphonary, the revision and rearrangement of the system of church music, and the foundation of the Roman *schola cantorum*. It is highly doubtful, however, whether he had anything to do either with the Antiphonary or with the invention or revival of the *cantus planus*; it is certain that he was not the founder of the Roman singing-school, though he may have interested himself in its endowment and extension.

Finally, as Fourth Doctor of the Latin Church, Gregory claims the attention of theologians. He is the link between two epochs. The last of the great Latin Fathers and the first representative of medieval Catholicism he brings the dogmatic theology of Tertullian, Ambrose and Augustine into relation with the Scholastic speculation of later ages. "He connects the Graeco-Roman with the Romano-Germanic type of Christianity." His teaching, indeed, is neither philosophical, systematic nor truly original. Its importance lies mainly in its simple, popular summarization of the doctrine of Augustine (whose works Gregory had studied with infinite care, but not always with insight), and in its detailed exposition of various religious conceptions which were current in the Western Church, but had not hitherto been defined with precision (*e.g.* the views on angelology and demonology, on purgatory, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and the efficacy of relics). In his exposition of such ideas Gregory made a distinct advance upon the older theology and influenced profoundly the dogmatic development of the future. He imparted a life and impulse to prevailing tendencies, helping on the construction of the system hereafter to be completed in Scholasticism. He gave to theology a tone and emphasis which could not be disregarded. From his time to that of Anselm no teacher of equal eminence arose in the Church.

Gregory died on the 12th of March 604, and was buried the same day in the portico of the basilica of St Peter, in front of the sacristy. Translations took place in the 9th, 15th and 17th centuries, and the remains now rest

beneath the altar in the chapel of Clement VIII. In respect of his character, while most historians agree that he was a really great man, some deny that he was also a great saint. The worst blot on his fair fame is his adulatory congratulation of the murderous usurper Phocas; though his correspondence with the Frankish queen Brunhilda, and the series of letters to and concerning the renegade monk Venantius also present problems which his admirers find difficult of solution. But while it may be admitted that Gregory was inclined to be unduly subservient to the great, so that at times he was willing to shut his eyes to the vices and even the crimes of persons of rank; yet it cannot fairly be denied that his character as a whole was singularly noble and unselfish. His life was entirely dominated by the religious motive. His sole desire was to promote the glory of God and of his church. At all times he strove honestly to live up to the light that was in him. “His goal,” says Lau, “was always that which he acknowledged as the best.” Physically, Gregory was of medium height and good figure. His head was large and bald, surrounded with a fringe of dark hair. His face was well-proportioned, with brown eyes, aquiline nose, thick and red lips, high-coloured cheeks, and prominent chin sparsely covered with a tawny beard. His hands, with tapering fingers, were remarkable for their beauty.

Gregory’s Works. — The following are now universally admitted to be genuine: — *Epistolarum libri xiv., Moralium libri xxxv., Regulae pastoralis liber, Dialogorum libri iv., Homiliarum in Ezechielem prophetam libri ii., Homiliarum in Evangelia libri ii.* These are all printed in Migne’s *Patrologia Latina*. The *Epistolae*, however, have been published separately by P. Ewald and L. M. Hartmann in the *Monumenta Germaniae historica* (Berlin, 1887–1899), and this splendid edition has superseded all others. The question of the chronological reconstruction of the *Register* is dealt with by Ewald in his celebrated article in the *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, iii. p-625; and briefly by T. Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, v. 333-343. For information about these writings of Gregory, consult especially G. I. T. Lau, *Gregor I. der Grosse*, pt. ii. chap. i. *Die Schriften Gregors* and F. Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great* (see Index II. B.). In addition to the above-mentioned works there are printed under Gregory’s name in Migne’s *Patrologia Latina*, vol. Ixxix., the following: — *Super Cantico Canticorum expositio, In librum primum Regum variarum expositionum libri vi., In septem psalmos poenitenttales expositio* and *Concordia quorundam*

testimoniorum s. scripturae. But (with the possible exception of the first) none of these treatises are of Gregorian authorship. See the discussions in Migne, Lau and Dudden.

Authorities. — (a) The principal ancient authorities for the life and works of Gregory are given in their chronological order. They are: Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, x. I ; *Liber pontificalis*, "Vita Gregorii Magni"; Isidore of Seville, *De vir. illustr.* 40, and Ildefonsus of Toledo, *De vir. illustr.* i.; an anonymous *Vita Gregorii* (of English authorship) belonging to the monastery of St Gall, discovered by Ewald and published by F. A. Gasquet, *A Life of Pope St Gregory the Great* (1904); Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, ii. c. i ; Paul the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii Magni* (770–780); John the Deacon, *Vita Gregorii* (872–882). (b) Recent Literature: J. Barmby, *Gregory the Great* (1892); T. Bonsmann, *Gregor I. der Grosse, ein Lebensbild* (1890); F. Homes Dudden, *Gregory the Great: his place in History and Thought* (2 vols., 1905); G. J. T. Lau, *Gregor I. der Grosse nach seinem Leben und seiner Lehre geschildert* (1845); C. Wolfsgruber, *Gregor der Grosse* (1897). See also F. Gregorovius, *Rome in the Middle Ages* (Eng. trans.) ii. 16-103; T. Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, v. cc. 7-10; H. K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes*, i. 1-250; F. W. Kellett, *Pope Gregory the Great and his Relations with Gaul*; L. Pingaud, *La Politique de Saint Grégoire le Grand*; W. Wisbaum, *Die wichtigsten Richtungen und Ziele der Tätigkeit des Papstes Gregors des Grossen*; W. Hohaus, *Die Bedeutung Gregors des Grossen als liturgischer Schriftsteller*; E. G. P. Wyatt, *St Gregory and the Gregorian Music*; and the bibliographies of Gregory in Chevalier, *Répertoire des sources historiques du moyen age*, and A. Potthast, *Bibliotheca historica medii aevi*.

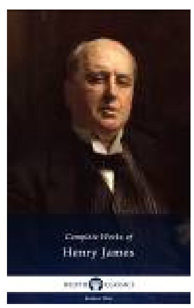
(F. H. D.)

The Delphi Classics Catalogue

We are proud to present a listing of our complete catalogue of English titles, with new titles being added every month. Buying direct from our website means you can make great savings and take advantage of our instant Updates service. You can even purchase an entire series (Super Set) at a special discounted price.

Only from our website can readers purchase a complete *Parts Edition* of our titles. When you buy a Parts Edition, you will receive a folder of your chosen author's works, with each novel, play, poetry collection, non-fiction book and more divided into its own special volume. This allows you to read individual novels etc. and to know precisely where you are in an eBook. For more information, please visit our *Parts Edition* page.

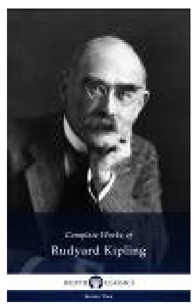
Series Contents



Series One

Anton Chekhov
Charles Dickens
D.H. Lawrence
Dickensiana Volume I
Edgar Allan Poe
Elizabeth Gaskell
Fyodor Dostoyevsky
George Eliot
H. G. Wells
Henry James
Ivan Turgenev
Jack London
James Joyce

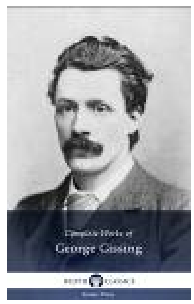
Jane Austen
Joseph Conrad
Leo Tolstoy
Louisa May Alcott
Mark Twain
Oscar Wilde
Robert Louis Stevenson
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Sir Walter Scott
The Brontës
Thomas Hardy
Virginia Woolf
Wilkie Collins
William Makepeace Thackeray



Series Two

Alexander Pushkin
Alexandre Dumas (English)
Andrew Lang
Anthony Trollope
Bram Stoker
Christopher Marlowe
Daniel Defoe
Edith Wharton
F. Scott Fitzgerald
G. K. Chesterton
Gustave Flaubert (English)
H. Rider Haggard
Herman Melville
Honoré de Balzac (English)

J. W. von Goethe (English)
Jules Verne
L. Frank Baum
Lewis Carroll
Marcel Proust (English)
Nathaniel Hawthorne
Nikolai Gogol
O. Henry
Rudyard Kipling
Tobias Smollett
Victor Hugo
William Shakespeare



Series Three

Ambrose Bierce
Ann Radcliffe
Ben Jonson
Charles Lever
Émile Zola
Ford Madox Ford
Geoffrey Chaucer
George Gissing
George Orwell
Guy de Maupassant
H. P. Lovecraft
Henrik Ibsen
Henry David Thoreau
Henry Fielding
J. M. Barrie
James Fenimore Cooper

John Buchan

John Galsworthy

Jonathan Swift

Kate Chopin

Katherine Mansfield

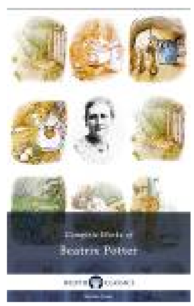
L. M. Montgomery

Laurence Sterne

Mary Shelley

Sheridan Le Fanu

Washington Irving



Series Four

Arnold Bennett

Arthur Machen

Beatrix Potter

Bret Harte

Captain Frederick Marryat

Charles Kingsley

Charles Reade

G. A. Henty

Edgar Rice Burroughs

Edgar Wallace

E. M. Forster

E. Nesbit

George Meredith

Harriet Beecher Stowe

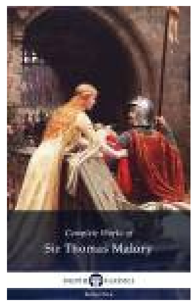
Jerome K. Jerome

John Ruskin

Maria Edgeworth

M. E. Braddon

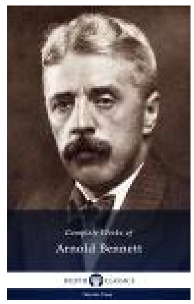
Miguel de Cervantes
M. R. James
R. M. Ballantyne
Robert E. Howard
Samuel Johnson
Stendhal
Stephen Crane
Zane Grey



Series Five

Algernon Blackwood
Anatole France
Beaumont and Fletcher
Charles Darwin
Edward Bulwer-Lytton
Edward Gibbon
E. F. Benson
Frances Hodgson Burnett
Friedrich Nietzsche
George Bernard Shaw
George MacDonald
Hilaire Belloc
John Bunyan
John Webster
Margaret Oliphant
Maxim Gorky
Oliver Goldsmith
Radclyffe Hall
Robert W. Chambers
Samuel Butler

Samuel Richardson
Sir Thomas Malory
Thomas Carlyle
William Harrison Ainsworth
William Dean Howells
William Morris



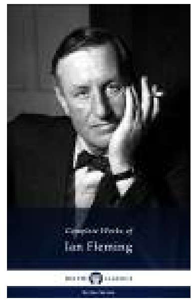
Series Six

Anthony Hope
Aphra Behn
Arthur Morrison
Baroness Emma Orczy
Captain Mayne Reid
Charlotte M. Yonge
Charlotte Perkins Gilman
E. W. Hornung
Ellen Wood
Frances Burney
Frank Norris
Frank R. Stockton
Hall Caine
Horace Walpole
One Thousand and One Nights
R. Austin Freeman
Rafael Sabatini
Saki
Samuel Pepys
Sir Issac Newton
Stanley J. Weyman
Thomas De Quincey
Thomas Middleton

Voltaire

William Hazlitt

William Hope Hodgson



Series Seven

Adam Smith

Benjamin Disraeli

Confucius

David Hume

E. M. Delafield

E. Phillips Oppenheim

Edmund Burke

Ernest Hemingway

Frances Trollope

Galileo Galilei

Guy Boothby

Hans Christian Andersen

Ian Fleming

Immanuel Kant

Karl Marx

Kenneth Grahame

Lytton Strachey

Mary Wollstonecraft

Michel de Montaigne

René Descartes

Richard Marsh

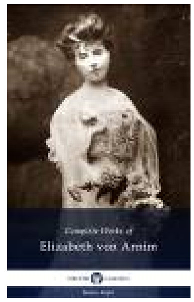
Sax Rohmer

Sir Richard Burton

Talbot Mundy

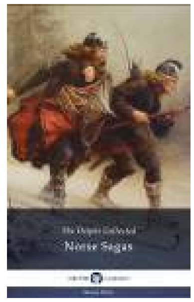
Thomas Babington Macaulay

W. W. Jacobs



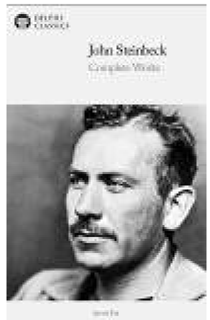
Series Eight

Anna Katharine Green
Arthur Schopenhauer
The Brothers Grimm
C. S. Lewis
Charles and Mary Lamb
Elizabeth von Arnim
Ernest Bramah
Francis Bacon
Gilbert and Sullivan
Grant Allen
Henryk Sienkiewicz
Hugh Walpole
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
John Locke
John Muir
Joseph Addison
Lafcadio Hearn
Lord Dunsany
Marie Corelli
Niccolò Machiavelli
Ouida
Richard Brinsley Sheridan
Sigmund Freud
Theodore Dreiser
Walter Pater
W. Somerset Maugham



Series Nine

Aldous Huxley
August Strindberg
Booth Tarkington
C. S. Forester
Erasmus
Eugene Sue
Fergus Hume
George Moore
Gertrude Stein
Giovanni Boccaccio
Izaak Walton
J. M. Synge
Johanna Spyri
John Galt
Maurice Leblanc
Max Brand
Molière
Norse Sagas
R. D. Blackmore
R. S. Surtees
Sir Thomas More
Stephen Leacock
The Harvard Classics
Thomas Love Peacock
Thomas Paine
William James



Series Ten

A. E. W. Mason

Abraham Lincoln

Baruch Spinoza

Carolyn Wells

Charles Brockden Brown

Earl Derr Biggers

Evelyn Waugh

F. Marion Crawford

Fred M. White

Frederick Douglass

Gaston Leroux

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

George Berkeley

Howard Pyle

John Kendrick Bangs

John Steinbeck

John Stuart Mill

Martin Luther

Penny Dreadfuls Collection

Sherwood Anderson

Thomas Dekker

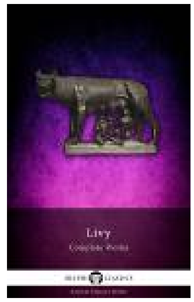
Thomas Hobbes

Thomas Jefferson

Willa Cather

William Faulkner

William Le Queux



Ancient Classics

Achilles Tatius

Aeschines

Aeschylus

Ammianus Marcellinus

Apollodorus

Appian

Apuleius

Apollonius of Rhodes

Aristophanes

Aristotle

Arrian

Athenaeus

Augustine

Aulus Gellius

Bede

Callimachus

Cassius Dio

Cato

Catullus

Cicero

Claudian

Clement of Alexandria

Cornelius Nepos

Demosthenes

Dio Chrysostom

Diodorus Siculus

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Diogenes Laërtius

Ennius

Epictetus
Euripides
Florus
Frontius
Fronto
Herodotus
Hesiod
Hippocrates
Homer
Horace
Isocrates
Josephus
Julian
Julius Caesar
Juvenal
Livy
Longus
Lucan
Lucian
Lucretius
Marcus Aurelius
Manetho
Martial
Nonnus
Ovid
Pausanias
Petronius
Pindar
Plato
Plautus
Pliny the Elder
Pliny the Younger
Plotinus
Plutarch
Polybius
Procopius
Propertius
Quintus Curtius Rufus
Quintus Smyrnaeus

Sallust

Sappho

Seneca the Younger

Septuagint

Sidonius

Sophocles

Statius

Strabo

Suetonius

Tacitus

Terence

Tertullian

Theocritus

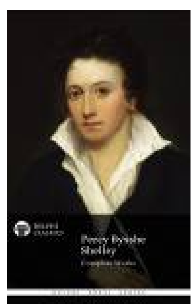
Thucydides

Tibullus

Varro

Virgil

Xenophon



Delphi Poets Series

Adam Mickiewicz

A. E. Housman

Alexander Pope

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Algernon Charles Swinburne

Andrew Marvell

Beowulf

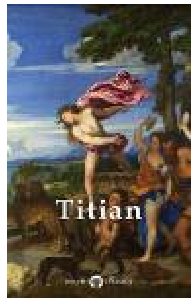
Charlotte Smith

Christina Rossetti

Confederation Poets

D. H Lawrence (poetry)
Dante Alighieri (English)
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Delphi Poetry Anthology
Edgar Allan Poe (poetry)
Edmund Spenser
Edward Lear
Edward Thomas
Edwin Arlington Robinson
Ella Wheeler Wilcox
Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Emily Dickinson
Epic of Gilgamesh
Ezra Pound
Friedrich Schiller (English)
George Chapman
George Herbert
Gerard Manley Hopkins
Gertrude Stein
Hafez
Heinrich Heine
Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey
Henry Lawson
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Isaac Rosenberg
James Russell Lowell
Johan Ludvig Runeberg
John Clare
John Donne
John Dryden
John Gower
John Keats
John Milton
John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester
Joseph Addison
Kahlil Gibran
Leigh Hunt
Lord Byron
Ludovico Ariosto

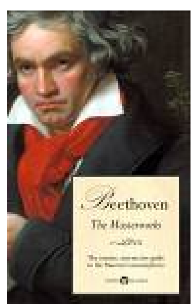
Luís de Camões
Matthew Arnold
Matthew Prior
Michael Drayton
Nikolai Nekrasov
Paul Laurence Dunbar
Percy Bysshe Shelley
Petrarch
Rabindranath Tagore
Ralph Waldo Emerson
Robert Browning
Robert Burns
Robert Frost
Robert Southey
Rumi
Rupert Brooke
Sanskrit Epics
Sara Teasdale
Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Sir Philip Sidney
Sir Thomas Wyatt
Sir Walter Raleigh
Thomas Chatterton
Thomas Gray
Thomas Hardy (poetry)
Thomas Hood
Thomas Moore
Torquato Tasso
T. S. Eliot
W. B. Yeats
Walter Savage Landor
Walt Whitman
Wilfred Owen
William Blake
William Congreve
William Cowper
William Wordsworth



Masters of Art

Albrecht Dürer
Amedeo Modigliani
Artemisia Gentileschi
Berthe Morisot
Camille Pissarro
Canaletto
Caravaggio
Caspar David Friedrich
Claude Lorrain
Claude Monet
Correggio
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Diego Velázquez
Donatello
Edgar Degas
Édouard Manet
Edvard Munch
El Greco
Eugène Delacroix
Francisco Goya
Giotto
Giovanni Bellini
Gustave Courbet
Gustav Klimt
Hieronymus Bosch
Jacques-Louis David
James Abbott McNeill Whistler
Jan van Eyck
J. M. W. Turner

Johannes Vermeer
John Constable
Leonardo da Vinci
Masaccio
Michelangelo
Paul Cézanne
Paul Gauguin
Paul Klee
Peter Paul Rubens
Pierre-Auguste Renoir
Pieter Bruegel the Elder
Piet Mondrian
Sandro Botticelli
Raphael
Rembrandt van Rijn
Thomas Gainsborough
Tintoretto
Titian
Vincent van Gogh
Wassily Kandinsky



Great Composers

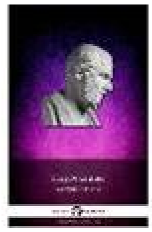
Antonio Vivaldi
Antonín Dvořák
Franz Schubert
Frédéric Chopin
Giuseppe Verdi
Johann Sebastian Bach
Joseph Haydn
Ludwig van Beethoven

Piotr Illitch Tchaïkovsky

Richard Wagner

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Alphabetical List of Titles

A. E. Housman

A. E. W. Mason

Abraham Lincoln

Achilles Tatius

Adam Mickiewicz

Adam Smith

Aeschines

Aeschylus

Albrecht Dürer

Aldous Huxley

Alexander Pope

Alexander Pushkin

Alexandre Dumas (English)

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Algernon Blackwood

Algernon Charles Swinburne

Ambrose Bierce

Amedeo Modigliani

Ammianus Marcellinus

Anatole France

Andrew Lang

Andrew Marvell

Ann Radcliffe

Anna Katharine Green

Anthony Hope

Anthony Trollope

Anton Chekhov

Antonín Dvořák
Antonio Vivaldi
Aphra Behn
Apollodorus
Apollonius of Rhodes
Appian
Apuleius
Aristophanes
Aristotle
Arnold Bennett
Arrian
Artemisia Gentileschi
Arthur Machen
Arthur Morrison
Arthur Schopenhauer
Athenaeus
August Strindberg
Augustine
Aulus Gellius
Baroness Emma Orczy
Baruch Spinoza
Beatrix Potter
Beaumont and Fletcher
Bede
Ben Jonson
Benjamin Disraeli
Beowulf
Berthe Morisot
Booth Tarkington
Bram Stoker
Bret Harte
C. S. Forester
C. S. Lewis
Callimachus
Camille Pissarro
Canaletto
Captain Frederick Marryat
Captain Mayne Reid
Caravaggio

Carolyn Wells
Caspar David Friedrich
Cassius Dio
Cato
Catullus
Charles and Mary Lamb
Charles Brockden Brown
Charles Darwin
Charles Dickens
Charles Kingsley
Charles Lever
Charles Reade
Charlotte M. Yonge
Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Charlotte Smith
Christina Rossetti
Christopher Marlowe
Cicero
Claude Lorrain
Claude Monet
Claudian
Clement of Alexandria
Confederation Poets
Confucius
Cornelius Nepos
Correggio
D. H Lawrence (poetry)
D.H. Lawrence
Daniel Defoe
Dante Alighieri (English)
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
David Hume
Delphi Poetry Anthology
Demosthenes
Dickensiana Volume I
Diego Velázquez
Dio Chrysostom
Diodorus Siculus

Diogenes Laërtius
Dionysius of Halicarnassus
Donatello
E. F. Benson
E. M. Delafield
E. M. Forster
E. Nesbit
E. Phillips Oppenheim
E. W. Hornung
Earl Derr Biggers
Edgar Allan Poe
Edgar Allan Poe (poetry)
Edgar Degas
Edgar Rice Burroughs
Edgar Wallace
Edith Wharton
Edmund Burke
Edmund Spenser
Édouard Manet
Edvard Munch
Edward Bulwer-Lytton
Edward Gibbon
Edward Lear
Edward Thomas
Edwin Arlington Robinson
El Greco
Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Elizabeth Gaskell
Elizabeth von Arnim
Ella Wheeler Wilcox
Ellen Wood
Émile Zola
Emily Dickinson
Ennius
Epic of Gilgamesh
Epictetus
Erasmus
Ernest Bramah
Ernest Hemingway

Eugène Delacroix
Eugene Sue
Euripides
Evelyn Waugh
Ezra Pound
F. Marion Crawford
F. Scott Fitzgerald
Fergus Hume
Florus
Ford Madox Ford
Frances Burney
Frances Hodgson Burnett
Frances Trollope
Francis Bacon
Francisco Goya
Frank Norris
Frank R. Stockton
Franz Schubert
Fred M. White
Frédéric Chopin
Frederick Douglass
Friedrich Nietzsche
Friedrich Schiller (English)
Frontius
Fyodor Dostoyevsky
G. A. Henty
G. K. Chesterton
Galileo Galilei
Gaston Leroux
Geoffrey Chaucer
Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
George Berkeley
George Bernard Shaw
George Chapman
George Eliot
George Gissing
George Herbert
George MacDonald
George Meredith

George Moore
George Orwell
Gerard Manley Hopkins
Gertrude Stein
Gertrude Stein
Gilbert and Sullivan
Giotto
Giovanni Bellini
Giovanni Boccaccio
Giuseppe Verdi
Grant Allen
Gustav Klimt
Gustave Courbet
Gustave Flaubert (English)
Guy Boothby
Guy de Maupassant
H. G. Wells
H. P. Lovecraft
H. Rider Haggard
Hafez
Hall Caine
Hans Christian Andersen
Harriet Beecher Stowe
Heinrich Heine
Henrik Ibsen
Henry David Thoreau
Henry Fielding
Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey
Henry James
Henry Lawson
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Henryk Sienkiewicz
Herman Melville
Herodotus
Hesiod
Hieronymus Bosch
Hilaire Belloc
Hippocrates
Homer

Honoré de Balzac (English)
Horace
Horace Walpole
Howard Pyle
Hugh Walpole
Ian Fleming
Immanuel Kant
Isaac Rosenberg
Isocrates
Ivan Turgenev
Izaak Walton
J. M. Barrie
J. M. Synge
J. M. W. Turner
J. W. von Goethe (English)
Jack London
Jacques-Louis David
James Abbott McNeill Whistler
James Fenimore Cooper
James Joyce
James Russell Lowell
Jane Austen
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Jerome K. Jerome
Johan Ludvig Runeberg
Johann Sebastian Bach
Johanna Spyri
Johannes Vermeer
John Buchan
John Bunyan
John Clare
John Constable
John Donne
John Dryden
John Galsworthy
John Galt
John Gower
John Keats
John Kendrick Bangs

John Locke
John Milton
John Muir
John Ruskin
John Steinbeck
John Stuart Mill
John Webster
John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester
Jonathan Swift
Joseph Addison
Joseph Addison
Joseph Conrad
Joseph Haydn
Josephus
Jules Verne
Julian
Julius Caesar
Juvenal
Kahlil Gibran
Karl Marx
Kate Chopin
Katherine Mansfield
Kenneth Grahame
L. Frank Baum
L. M. Montgomery
Lafcadio Hearn
Laurence Sterne
Leigh Hunt
Leo Tolstoy
Leonardo da Vinci
Lewis Carroll
Livy
Longus
Lord Byron
Lord Dunsany
Louisa May Alcott
Lucan
Lucian
Lucretius

Ludovico Ariosto
Ludwig van Beethoven
Luís de Camões
Lytton Strachey
M. E. Braddon
M. R. James
Manetho
Marcel Proust (English)
Marcus Aurelius
Margaret Oliphant
Maria Edgeworth
Marie Corelli
Mark Twain
Martial
Martin Luther
Mary Shelley
Mary Wollstonecraft
Masaccio
Matthew Arnold
Matthew Prior
Maurice Leblanc
Max Brand
Maxim Gorky
Michael Drayton
Michel de Montaigne
Michelangelo
Miguel de Cervantes
Molière
Nathaniel Hawthorne
Niccolò Machiavelli
Nikolai Gogol
Nikolai Nekrasov
Nonnus
Norse Sagas
O. Henry
Oliver Goldsmith
One Thousand and One Nights
Oscar Wilde
Ouida

Ovid
Paul Cézanne
Paul Gauguin
Paul Klee
Paul Laurence Dunbar
Pausanias
Penny Dreadful Collection
Percy Bysshe Shelley
Peter Paul Rubens
Petrarch
Petronius
Piero della Francesca
Pierre-Auguste Renoir
Piet Mondrian
Pieter Bruegel the Elder
Pindar
Piotr Illitch Tchaïkovsky
Plato
Plautus
Pliny the Elder
Pliny the Younger
Plotinus
Plutarch
Polybius
Procopius
Propertius
Quintus Curtius Rufus
Quintus Smyrnaeus
R. Austin Freeman
R. D. Blackmore
R. M. Ballantyne
R. S. Surtees
Rabindranath Tagore
Radclyffe Hall
Rafael Sabatini
Ralph Waldo Emerson
Raphael
Rembrandt van Rijn
René Descartes

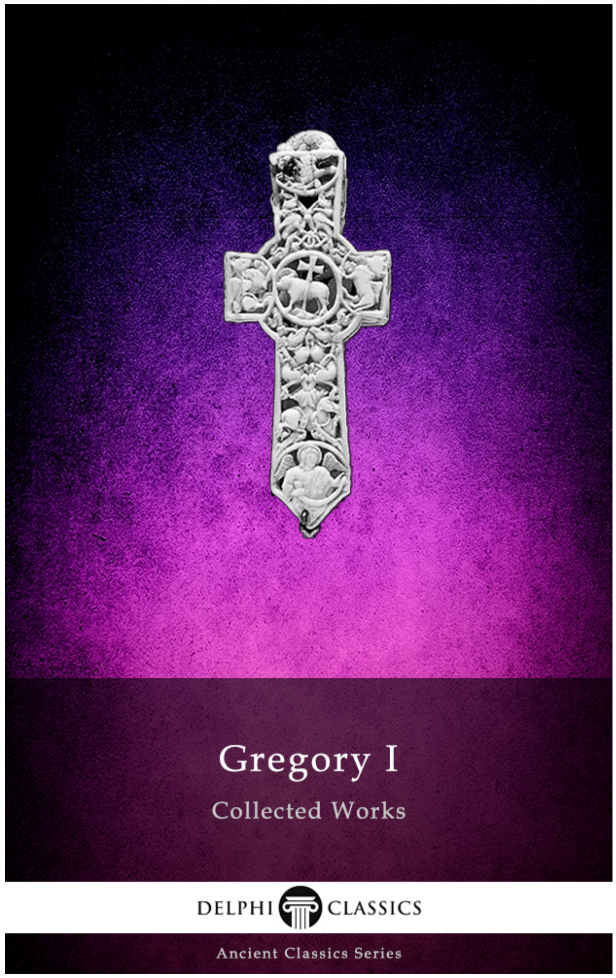
Richard Brinsley Sheridan
Richard Marsh
Richard Wagner
Robert Browning
Robert Burns
Robert E. Howard
Robert Frost
Robert Louis Stevenson
Robert Southey
Robert W. Chambers
Rudyard Kipling
Rumi
Rupert Brooke
Saki
Sallust
Samuel Butler
Samuel Johnson
Samuel Pepys
Samuel Richardson
Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Sandro Botticelli
Sanskrit Epics
Sappho
Sara Teasdale
Sax Rohmer
Seneca the Younger
Septuagint
Sheridan Le Fanu
Sherwood Anderson
Sidonius
Sigmund Freud
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Sir Issac Newton
Sir Philip Sidney
Sir Richard Burton
Sir Thomas Malory
Sir Thomas More
Sir Thomas Wyatt
Sir Walter Raleigh

Sir Walter Scott
Sophocles
Stanley J. Weyman
Statius
Stendhal
Stephen Crane
Stephen Leacock
Strabo
Suetonius
T. S. Eliot
Tacitus
Talbot Mundy
Terence
Tertullian
The Brontës
The Brothers Grimm
The Harvard Classics
Theocritus
Theodore Dreiser
Thomas Babington Macaulay
Thomas Carlyle
Thomas Chatterton
Thomas De Quincey
Thomas Dekker
Thomas Gainsborough
Thomas Gray
Thomas Hardy
Thomas Hardy (poetry)
Thomas Hobbes
Thomas Hood
Thomas Jefferson
Thomas Love Peacock
Thomas Middleton
Thomas Moore
Thomas Paine
Thucydides
Tibullus
Tintoretto
Titian

Tobias Smollett
Torquato Tasso
Varro
Victor Hugo
Vincent van Gogh
Virgil
Virginia Woolf
Voltaire
W. B. Yeats
W. Somerset Maugham
W. W. Jacobs
Walt Whitman
Walter Pater
Walter Savage Landor
Washington Irving
Wassily Kandinsky
Wilfred Owen
Wilkie Collins
Willa Cather
William Blake
William Congreve
William Cowper
William Dean Howells
William Faulkner
William Harrison Ainsworth
William Hazlitt
William Hope Hodgson
William James
William Le Queux
William Makepeace Thackeray
William Morris
William Shakespeare
William Wordsworth
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Xenophon
Zane Grey



Rome — believed to be where Gregory spent his final days


Gregory I
Collected Works
DELPHI CLASSICS
Ancient Classics Series